Opportunities for Green Streets and Parking Lots

Why Do We Need Green Infrastructure?
Green street and parking lot projects can bring about small but widespread improvements to watershed health. The illustration to the right shows how sustainable, green infrastructure promotes infiltration of stormwater into the soil, while slowing and reducing the volume of stormwater runoff, and filtering out pollutants. A number of different strategies may be used in green streets and parking lots, ranging from vegetated swales to rain gardens, pervious paving, stormwater curb extensions, and more. These facilities typically use engineered soil with high infiltration rates to facilitate infiltration and remove pollutants from any remaining storm water before it is discharged to the storm drain system.

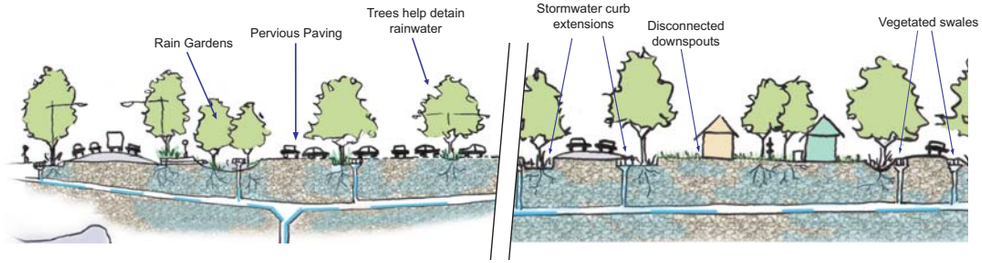
Some of these strategies are featured in the "before and after" illustrations below. These illustrations, and many more, are included in the San Mateo County Sustainable Green Streets and Parking Lots Design Guidebook, which may be downloaded at www.flowstobay.org.

Residential Green Streets

Wide streets not only send more dirty water to conventional storm drains, they can also detract from a neighborhood's attractiveness.

In the same example, a median strip, stormwater curb extensions, pervious paving in the parking lanes, and street trees can help improve water quality and beautify the street.

How Green Infrastructure Works



Green streets and parking lots slow and absorb stormwater, and filter out pollutants before runoff enters the storm drain system.

Commercial Green Streets

Many commercial streets have little or no landscaping and underutilized paved areas.

In the same example, stormwater planters are added to the furnishing zone between the sidewalk and the street while retaining on-street parking.

Arterial Green Streets

Some arterial streets have extra paved shoulder space that offers green street opportunities.

The same stretch of El Camino Real, in San Mateo County, is shown retrofitted with stormwater planters, a bike path and street trees.

Green Parking Lots

In this example, angled parking leaves unused space between the wheelstop and existing non-landscaped planter.

In the same example, the leftover paved space is consolidated into a new stormwater planter.

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