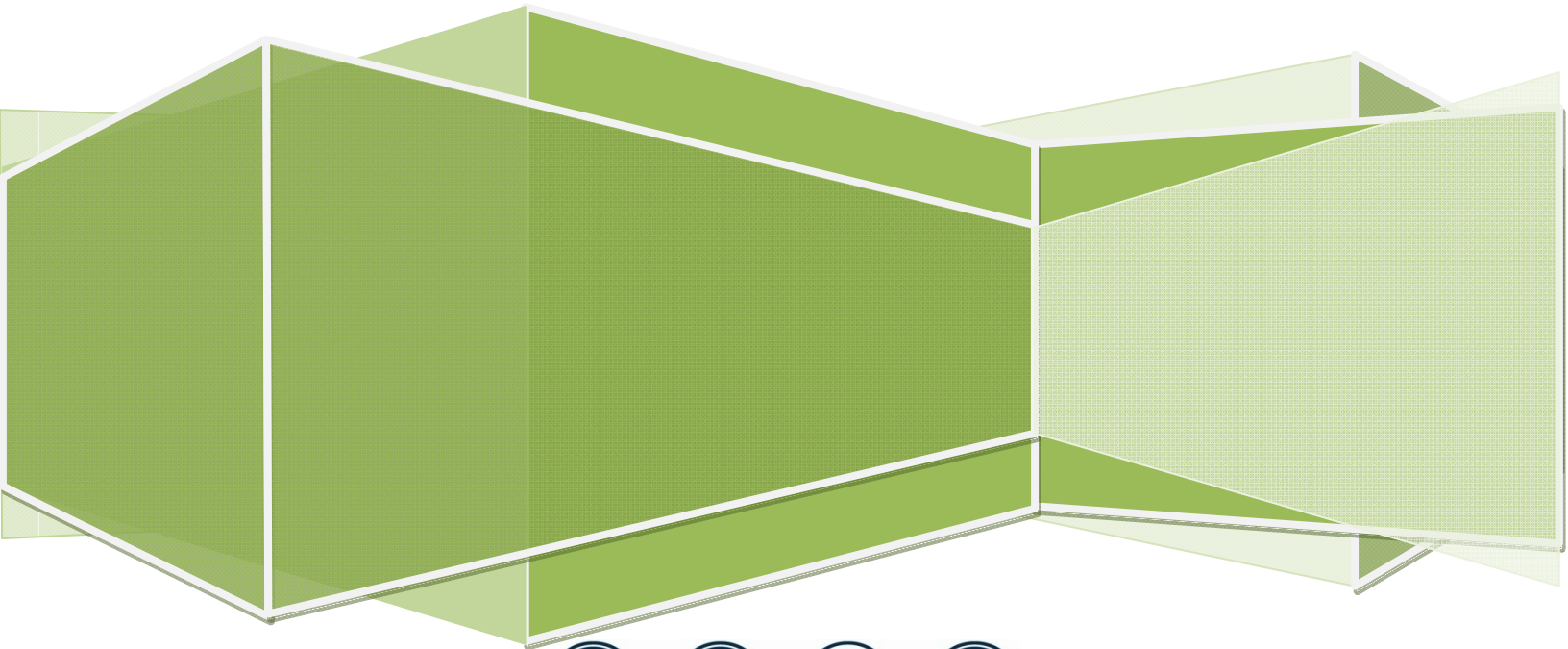


October 2009

# Implementing Green Infrastructure:

Developing a Winning Strategy to Fund  
Philadelphia's Ambitious Visions

Prepared for: The Pennsylvania Environmental Council



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## Executive Summary

“*Greenworks Philadelphia* is not a panacea for the city and its current economic struggles. Rather, it is a vision for how Philadelphia can and should seize this moment, building upon the assets left to us by earlier Philadelphians and creating a better future for ourselves, our children and generations still to come.”

-Mayor Michael A. Nutter  
City of Philadelphia

Philadelphia has ambitions to become the greenest City in America. Its recently released comprehensive sustainability plan, *Greenworks Philadelphia*, articulates that vision. And yet, its infrastructure is crumbling. Facing increasingly scarce resources, simultaneously achieving green-city goals and a state of good repair will require a change of approach.

Enter green infrastructure, an emerging paradigm that couples the economic benefits of traditional infrastructure with the ancillary environmental and social benefits that can accrue from natural design elements. Studies have shown this new approach to be a good dollar-for-dollar investment, particularly for cities seeking innovative ways to undertake cost-effective development programs and promote future economic competitiveness.

Still, green infrastructure’s incorporation into Philadelphia’s redevelopment strategy has been anything but seamless. Despite well-researched plans, clear

economic, environmental, and social benefits, and growing public consensus, stakeholders have failed to develop a consistent method for implementation.

This frustration is not for a lack of vision. Proposed projects and plans languish for lack of funding, but the impasse runs deeper. Solutions demand strategies that match the scale of proposed investments. A scan of national best practices reveals two: making the case, and “routinizing” the investment.

But, of course, lessons from case studies identify several areas of opportunity. But Philadelphia’s unique challenges add complexity to the decision-making process. This reality is reflected in the report. In sum, its recommendations form a comprehensive road map to provide City leaders with new tools for navigating the path towards Philadelphia’s green-city goals.

### **Framework of a Winning Strategy**

#### **Phase 1: Show Visionary Leadership**

With the creation of the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability, the release of *Greenworks*, and the Water Department’s innovative approach to stormwater management, this is well underway. Still, more can be done to:

- Coordinate Internal Capacity
- Demonstrate Public Benefits
- Promote External Partnerships

#### **Phase II: Reconstitute Structures and Policies**

Again, progress has been made, particularly of late by the Zoning Code Commission and Task Force on Tax Policy and Economic Competitiveness. For green infrastructure, additional reforms are necessary to:

- Expand Existing Greening Programs
- Realign Developer Incentives
- Address Fundamental Barriers to TIF

#### **Phase III: Leverage Existing Assets**

Leadership and structural reform will pave the way for more strategic asset management. To accomplish green infrastructure goals in an era of increasing fiscal constraint will require redeploying existing monetary and non-monetary resources. Opportunities are emerging to:

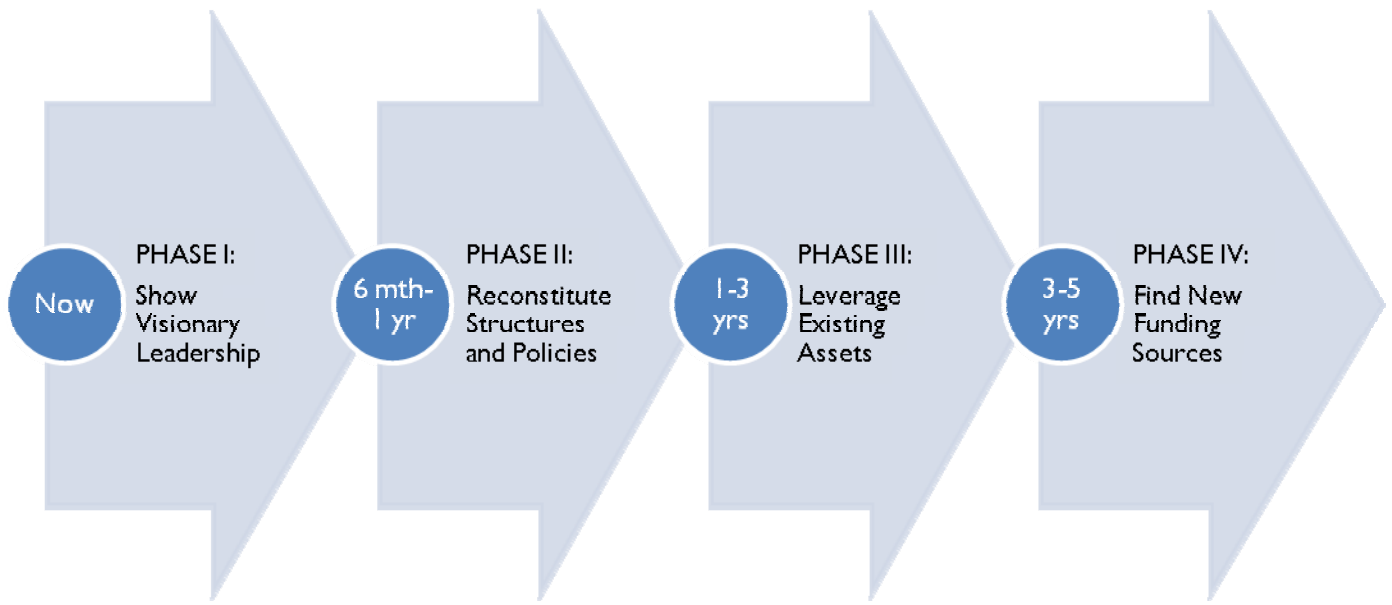
- Reallocate Capital Resources
- Strategically Manage Publicly Owned Land
- Rethink Citywide Open Space

#### **Phase IV: Find New Funding Sources**

Ultimately, achieving ambitious goals will require new resources, particularly at the local level. Leaders should begin planning now so that, when the time is right, the City is prepared to take advantage of opportunities to:

- Leverage State and Federal Resources
- Dedicate Future City Tax Revenues
- Adopt Funding at a Regional Scale

## Five-Year Roadmap to Routinize Green Infrastructure Investment in Philadelphia



- Coordinate Internal Capacity
- Demonstrate Public Benefits
- Promote External Partnerships

- Expand Existing Greening Programs
- Realign Development Incentives
- Address Fundamental Barriers to TIF

- Reallocate Capital Resources
- Strategically Manage Publicly Owned Land
- Rethink Citywide Open Space

- Leverage State and Federal Resources
- Dedicate Future City Tax Revenues
- Fund at a Regional Scale



The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) protects and restores the natural and built environments through innovation, collaboration, education and advocacy. PEC believes in the value of partnerships with the private sector, government, communities and individuals to improve the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians.

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123 Chestnut Street, Suite 401  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
phone: (215) 592-7020  
fax: (215) 592-7026

[www.PECPA.org](http://www.PECPA.org)



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