

# SIX STEPS TO ASSESSING INFRASTRUCTURE

## The Green Community Technologies<sup>®</sup> approach

### 1. Understand community goals

Infrastructure should be designed and maintained to support community goals. What's the estimated growth of the city? Are amenities planned, like walking trails? How important is water resource stewardship?

### 2. Assess history and current conditions

Every community has a unique history with respect to how it has chosen to meet its infrastructure needs over time. Understanding this history can be extremely helpful in customizing solutions to address current and future needs.

### 3. Identify issues and opportunities

How does the community use and abuse the water resource? How can communities promote water conservation, lakescaping, stormwater reduction, wastewater reuse, and other practices that decrease costs and improve the environment? How do local policies promote or prevent a responsible approach to water resources?

### 4. Consider conventional and alternative approaches

Some examples: Encourage residents to re-discover the old-fashioned rain barrel for non-drinking use like lawn and garden watering and car washing. Use permeable surfaces for walking paths, outdoor play areas and low-use, low-speed parking areas and driveways. Water seeps through and allows for natural filtration instead of run-off.

### 5. Recognize available resources

Who has information about the condition, vulnerability and availability of water resources in your community? Who in Minnesota and elsewhere has experimented with solutions to similar problems? What types of resources can you learn from to make better decisions? Some communities already have people who are excellent water stewards in their own backyards or have Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-rated buildings that are designed with water quality protection in mind.

### 6. Partner for implementation

Who shares the benefits and goals of better stewardship of water resources? Are there other communities upstream or downstream with whom you should partner to achieve optimal results? Are there businesses that will benefit from your efforts? Are there lake associations or other nonprofits focused on the environment in your community? What about the schools? You need partners that combine insights into community development, planning, technologies and economic impact to identify and implement the best long term solutions at the local level.

Communities that gather information about their goals, the history and current conditions of their water-related infrastructure, observable issues, information on water resources and local policies will be in a good position to begin a comprehensive water infrastructure assessment, particularly if they engage their local staff and city engineers in the conversation from the beginning.