

## Wisconsin's Urban Forests: Partnership in Action

### The Challenge

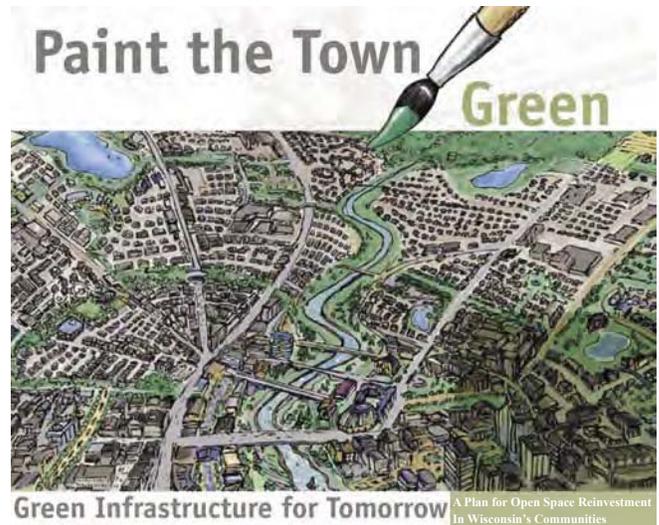
The development and expansion of urban life in Wisconsin has delivered tremendous benefits and created significant new challenges. Urban living affords many residents greater comfort, convenience, and intellectual stimulation, but may not be meeting residents' needs for social connectivity, recreation, aesthetics, sense of place, neighborhood, and nature.

### The Solution

Community planners are discovering an exciting new concept called "green infrastructure." Green infrastructure is an interconnected network of open spaces and parkways that makes cities a more productive and desirable place to live. In today's climate of tightening budgets and increasing demand for services, green infrastructure stands out as a city's most effective resource for attracting and retaining businesses, encouraging new housing, increasing local tax bases, managing storm water, providing venues for civic life, and cultivating an environmental ethic among urban residents.

Thanks to a grant by the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area, the Urban Open Space Foundation organized a broad-based coalition of nearly 40 agencies, forming the Community Open Space Partnership. The Community Open Space Partnership held a series of information-sharing forums to gain public input. Together they developed a plan to encourage the state of Wisconsin and its communities to build and expand upon networks of open spaces in order to increase the vitality of urban areas.

*Visit [www.ouopenspaces.org](http://www.ouopenspaces.org) to access "2002 Green Infrastructure Forums – Summary" and the "Green Infrastructure for Tomorrow: A Plan for Open Space Reinvestment in Wisconsin Communities."*



*Wisconsin's vision for green infrastructure can be found in their new plan "Paint the Town Green: Green Infrastructure for Tomorrow."*

### Resulting Benefits

Wisconsin has a plan for improving urban life as well as forest health and vitality. The results of these forums were published in a report entitled "2002 Green Infrastructure Forums – Summary." This document distills forum discussions into a plan for green infrastructure. From this initial work, "Green Infrastructure for Tomorrow: A Plan for Open Space Reinvestment in Wisconsin's Communities" emerged. This document describes their vision for green infrastructure in Wisconsin and provides recommendations for community action.

### Sharing Success

Wisconsin's Community Open Space Partnership has developed a number of tools to promote green infrastructure. Among these is the Virtual Resource Center on their web site at [www.ouopenspaces.org](http://www.ouopenspaces.org). The Virtual Resource Center is a place that features and celebrates Wisconsin's best practices and the people that make them happen. The web site also highlights critical issues like brownfield restoration, stream-bank restoration, tree planting and maintenance, and storm water management.



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