

Providing Statewide Training for Low Impact Development

The problem

To address polluted stormwater runoff, the Department of Ecology (Ecology) updated municipal stormwater permits for the next permit term to require low impact development (LID) in new development and re-development of properties. Low impact development is a construction technique that uses vegetation, healthy soils, porous pavement, and other tools to keep stormwater from running off a site and carrying pollution downstream.

New LID requirements will create a high demand for training from a very large and diverse audience throughout our state.

In the over 100 local jurisdictions and special districts with Municipal Stormwater General Permit coverage, Ecology can conservatively estimate that at least 1,200 staff level employees will need some type of training – and this doesn't include elected officials. We estimate there are more than 650 elected officials who would need "LID 101" briefings or information sessions so they can make informed land use decisions affecting their communities. Training for local governments will need to range from high-level "LID 101" types of sessions for elected officials to technical training for staff that includes details for ordinance/code writing, plan review and design, construction, and operation and maintenance.

According to the Building Industry Association of Washington, there are approximately 25,000 businesses in need of some type of LID training. These include builders, contractors, landscapers, roofers, and a myriad of other professionals involved in development, redevelopment, and building material supply. Training topics will range from high-level trainings to technical trainings to include code development, site layout and design, construction sequencing, clearing and grading, soils, pervious pavements, and others.

WHY IT MATTERS

Polluted stormwater runoff is the biggest threat to waters in our state's most populated areas. Runoff from hardened surfaces picks up chemicals and bacteria and carries it downstream into our lakes, rivers and into Puget Sound. Most of the time, stormwater is not treated, even when it goes into a street drain.

Stormwater discharges affect drinking water, degrade salmon habitat, threaten our shellfish industry, and pollute urban water bodies.



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Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.

The solution

Ecology convened a LID Training Steering Committee made up of a broad group of partners, including representatives of the building industry, cities, counties, the environmental community, and the Puget Sound Partnership to work together to plan, develop, and implement a statewide training plan.

The Committee proposes that the state proactively meet the demand for LID training by designing and implementing a series of training over the next five years. These trainings would prepare elected officials, local government staff, developers, builders, landscapers, and others for this significant statewide transition to LID.



Bioswale photo courtesy of the Washington Stormwater Center

Ecology’s proposal

Ecology proposes that the Legislature provide \$2 million this biennium to implement LID training around Washington State. Training opportunities will be created for a myriad of audiences involved in land use activities from local jurisdictions to builders and landscapers, as well as to others such as commercial compost and soil providers, realtors, and roofers.

How it will work



Permeable Pavers photo courtesy of the Washington Stormwater Center

Ecology, under the advisement of the Steering Committee, commissioned Washington State University (WSU) and the Washington Stormwater Center to conduct a comprehensive LID training needs assessment and market analysis.

The needs assessment identifies all the different audiences for LID training and the knowledge and skill deficits of each audience. The market analysis identifies what training opportunities already exist around the state—and the quality and capacity of these opportunities—as well as potential providers of future LID trainings.

These efforts inform a training plan that will identify the best way to provide all the different audiences with the appropriate LID training, when and where they need it most, in order to transition the state to LID practices and meet the permit requirements that phase in over the next five years.

The \$2 million budget request for the next biennium would fund implementation of this plan as well as adaptive management to plan for the FY 2015-2017 LID training needs.

How it will benefit Washington

Designing and then providing targeted no cost trainings to permittees and the development community is critical to meet the water quality challenges facing the state.



Bioswale photo courtesy of the Washington Stormwater Center

The demand for high quality LID trainings and projects will increase rapidly in the next five years as driven by upcoming permit requirements and a strong interest in LID methods. *This demand for LID training will exceed our state's current capacity.* If the implementation of the comprehensive LID training plan goes unfunded, local governments and other key groups will be unsupported and unprepared to make the transition to LID, and it is likely that permittees will implement permit requirements in haphazard ways—leading to improper siting or construction.

This budget request will allow local governments, developers, and others to get the training needed in the near and mid-term to prepare for new permit requirements.

LID projects will contribute significantly to protecting and restoring water quality statewide and in Puget Sound. It will support economic development and help local jurisdictions prepare for a water pollution *prevention* approach to development and redevelopment.

Cleaning up polluted water is far more expensive than keeping it clean. Our state is highly dependent upon clean water as both a quality of life issue for its citizens and an economic issue for Washington industries.

The shellfish industry, which relies on clean water for its livelihood, generates \$270 million annually to our state's economy, and directly and indirectly supports 3,200 jobs. Recreational oyster and clam harvesters generate \$3 million annually in state revenue and contribute more than \$27 million annually to coastal economies. Tourism and other fishery-dependent industries are dependent on clean water as well. Without clean water, Washington industry's and our economic future is at risk.

Funding LID training in this upcoming biennium is crucial to moving the state towards better stormwater management techniques that will help protect Washington's waters now and into the future.

More information

Developing Low Impact Development (LID) Standards

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/LIDstandards.html

Municipal Stormwater Permits

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/PermitsPermittees.html

2012 Municipal Stormwater General Permit Reissuance

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/2012Reissuance.html



Green roof on top of The Columbian newspaper building in Vancouver, Washington.