

Part 4: Streetscape Elements

Green Street Components / Landscaping

Easton's Complete Streets should also be green and sustainable streets when feasible. Green streets incorporate trees and plantings in several ways, including boulevard strips, street trees, planter boxes, rain gardens, and swales. Vegetation in Complete Streets design provides multiple benefits – calming traffic, enhancing aesthetics, reducing runoff, adding comfort and shade for pedestrians, improving environmental health, and increasing access to nature. The benefits of these vegetated functional spaces can be incorporated into large- and small-scale Complete Streets projects and should be identified early in project development.



Easton streets already possess wonderful green street components and promote the use of trees and vegetative spaces in Complete Streets projects when feasible. The guidance presented below describes planning and design considerations for green street components as part of Complete Streets projects.

Street Trees

The character and structure of a street can be greatly influenced by street trees. Street trees are typically canopy trees but can also include smaller varieties. Street trees

contribute to a comfortable pedestrian environment providing valuable shade on hot summer days.

The size and placement of street trees should correspond to the street width and surrounding community. On wide streets, tall trees with overarching canopies should be used when possible; while on smaller narrower streets, medium sized trees can be used to provide a similar effect. Tree spacing is critical in walkable activity centers, as the goal is to provide a near seamless tree canopy. Finally, the type of street tree to include in a design depends on available soil volume, root system, canopy cover, and street width.



When determining the placement of street trees, consideration should be given to Street Type and whether or not gaps should be provided between trees for sightlines at cross streets, pedestrian crossings, and street level businesses. Street trees may be planted up to intersections; however, on higher speed roadways with little residential or commercial activity, gaps between trees should be provided for improved sightlines.

Gardens and Vegetated Areas

Plants add character and diversity to Complete Streets. Depending on the Street Type and available space, plants can be incorporated in a number of ways, including:

- Planter boxes
- Conservation landscaping
- Planted curb bumpouts and islands
- Median plantings
- Parklets



These can be above ground containers or at-grade landscaped areas with perennials and shrubs. Use of native species is recommended, and use of non-native invasive species is discouraged. Additionally, planted areas can also incorporate site furnishing, such as

seating, low walls, and public art. While gardens and plants are typically permanent, they can also be incorporated into quick build roadway enhancements such as parklets, public space, portable round and linear planters, and seating areas.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI)

GSI consist of best management practices (BMPs) that collect stormwater runoff for water quality treatment (e.g., filtering to remove pollutants) and/or detaining a portion of the runoff for slow, controlled release that mitigates adverse downstream impacts such as flooding or erosion. Often called Environmental Site Design (ESD), these micro-scale practices can include but are not limited to:

- Micro-bioretenention
- Rain gardens
- Swales

The location of trees, gardens and vegetated areas, and GSI within the Town right-of-way should be evaluated carefully and consider the following:

- Utility conflicts: Locations that are free of existing underground utilities are preferred, however, in some cases, utilities can be encased or otherwise protected and allowed to pass through or under a planting area. Availability of connections to existing storm drain systems should be evaluated for feasibility of locating GSI facilities.
- Cost-effectiveness: While any component of a Complete Street must be considered for cost, for GSI in particular, it is important to consider the cost per impervious drainage area treated to make it cost-justified.
- Maintenance: Define who (internal Town responsibility or external partner) is responsible for maintenance of planted areas, and the maintenance schedule and requirements of the vegetation.
- Adaptability to site: Plants selected should be well adapted to site conditions, including soils and compaction, salt exposure, heat and drought, sun/shade, appropriate height for visibility and safety, and other considerations.
- Year-round interest: Visual interest and wildlife benefits should be considered when selecting plants and trees. Species should be selected that provide various types of sensory interest (visual, aroma, textural, etc.) at different times of the year – (e.g., timing and color of flowers, summer foliage, fall color, and evergreen foliage or stem / branch structure in the winter).
- Maintenance of adequate sight lines: Sight distance shall be measured and evaluated for each proposed point of street access. Also, street tree maintenance should proactively trim so points of interest can be seen easily to minimize confusion and promote economic development.

- Integration into Complete Street goals: The installation of green street components should support and enhance the creation of a safe and accessible multi-modal design.

Utilities

All new utilities should be free from the Pedestrian Clear Subzone and generally constructed within the Curb Buffer Subzone in activity centers and frontage zone in the suburban areas.

Lighting

Streetlighting should be integrated into the design of all streets, varying in approach based on the Street Type. When designing lighting for streets in Easton, the following principles should be followed:

1. Design for safety first: Streetlighting should illuminate travel lanes and sidewalk / path areas along the street and be strategically located at intersections (and mid-block crossings) to maximize safety for all users of all abilities. When feasible, deploy cobra-style fixtures at intersections to fully illuminate crosswalks and conflict areas. Complement the lighting of intersections with lighting to improve the safety of pedestrians on sidewalks / paths and street users.
2. Be Sustainable: Streetlight technology provides an important opportunity to invest in sustainable infrastructure. Lighting fixtures provide the following sustainability benefits:
 - a. LED technology reduces operations and maintenance costs.
 - b. Fixture selection can address Dark Sky friendly illumination.
 - c. LED technology is flexible in illuminating a variety of color temperatures.
3. Style matters: Streetlight fixtures and poles should be compatible with the street's environment and streetscape plan.
4. Deploy smart cities capabilities where appropriate: Some LED streetlights can be programmed to vary the brightness by time of day or community setting. This feature allows for brighter lights for crime



prevention as well as dimmer lights in neighborhoods. The dimming feature saves operating costs and reduces intrusive light in residential neighborhoods.

5. Consider maintenance when striving to achieve 1-4 above. LED technology has a longer life than high-pressure sodium illumination, reducing maintenance / replacement needs. Selecting streetlight fixture and pole types should match the community but be limited in types to manage equipment storage, cost, and availability.
6. Be cost-effective when achieving 1-4 above: LED technology reduces operations and maintenance costs compared to high-pressure sodium illumination.

Lighting should be scaled both to the Sidewalk Zone and for the Roadway Zone. Pedestrian lighting can be used alone or in combination with overhead roadway-scale lighting in high activity areas to encourage nighttime use. Pedestrian lighting can be located on the same pole (if the pole meets the structural design specs.) as roadway lighting to reduce the number of poles within the Curb Buffer Subzone.