

# Green Infrastructure Specialist Project



The City of Hartford  
Hartford Climate Stewardship Council  
The Metropolitan District Commission



## Background

In Hartford, interest in environmental issues is peaking, with citizens advocating to advance water quality, stormwater management, and green infrastructure projects. These efforts have culminated in the Hartford Climate Stewardship Initiative, further described at right, which includes active involvement by the local water authority, the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC).

With the encouragement of the MDC, the City of Hartford sought assistance from CIRCA for funding to hire a Green Infrastructure Specialist. As an inland city, Hartford experiences severe challenges related to stormwater management. With large quantities of impervious surface, high levels of clay, and a failing levee system that protects the Connecticut River from rising, the City ground cannot absorb stormwater, and exacerbates the amount of runoff and flooding. Flooding in homes and businesses, even from relatively minor storm events, is already commonplace.

CIRCA's support of Green Infrastructure Specialist for one year will ensure that City government has the expertise to develop and manage projects that will make Hartford more resilient and more livable.

## Goals

1. **Assess green infrastructure techniques** best suited for Hartford.
2. **Identify locations and configurations** where green infrastructure would be most successful.
3. **Review best practices** nationally and re-write City specifications on materials used for milling/paving roads, sidewalks, parking lots and more to incorporate and, where possible, replace existing material specifications with greener solutions.
4. **Identify and implement green infrastructure improvements** for City roads and pedestrian walkways and participate in the creation of the framework to guide the Green, Complete Streets program for the long-term.
5. **Conduct outreach** to community groups in Hartford, as well as other cities in coordination with CIRCA to discuss best practices around the state and country regarding stormwater-related green infrastructure and impact on resilience and sustainability.

## CIRCA Priority Areas

1. **Develop and deploy best practices for climate resilience.** The Specialist's work to review best national practices on green infrastructure will be shared in Hartford and other communities.
2. **Undertake or oversee pilot projects designed to improve resilience and sustainability of the environment along coast and inland waterways.** The Specialist's work to guide and assist in identifying, developing, and carrying out at least one large green infrastructure stormwater pilot project will improve resilience and sustainability in the immediate project area.
3. **Foster resilient actions and sustainable communities-particularly along the Connecticut coastline and inland waterways.** The Specialist's work in changing City policy around the regular use of green infrastructure materials in City projects will have long-term impacts on Hartford and help the surrounding region better adapt to severe storms and the challenges of stormwater infiltration.
4. **Reduce the loss of life and property, natural system and ecological damage, and social disruption from high-impact events.** In many areas of our City, flooding and resulting property damage are regular occurrences. The Specialist's work will reduce property loss.

## Hartford's Climate Stewardship Initiative



**OUR SHARED VALUES:**  
• Environmental Justice  
• Public Health  
• Economic Development

The Climate Stewardship Initiative is an inclusive, community-wide effort, led by Mayor Bronin and the Climate Stewardship Council, which aims to advance the city's economy, improve public health and quality of life, and promote social equity while becoming a global leader in environmental stewardship.

Among other projects, the Climate Stewardship Initiative is developing a climate action plan for the city. One of the 6 areas of focus is water. For much of Hartford's history, the city has faced flood, discharge, and water quality issues, in large part as a result of its location at the juncture of the Connecticut and Park Rivers. Building on recent studies and citywide efforts and initiatives, the Climate Action Plan will recommend a holistic approach to managing the water we use for recreation, irrigation, and drinking in the face of extreme weather events that are caused by climate change and increasing in number and intensity.

The Climate Stewardship Council is the citizens' sustainability task force for the City of Hartford. It brings together citizen associations, nonprofit institutions, regional and state governments, and private businesses from the Hartford region. It has benefitted from research and support from students and professors at UConn Law School, Trinity College, and UC-Berkeley.

## Did You Know?

- Hartford has green infrastructure at the State Capitol, the UConn Law School campus, Bushnell Park North, and the Connecticut Science Center, among other places.
- Hartford's award-winning zoning code protects the city's waterways and water quality by: reducing the amount of impervious coverage, incentivizing green roofs, requiring low-impact infrastructure, and creating watershed buffers prohibiting development along rivers and streams.

## Contact Us

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Connecticut River



Park River



Gully Brook

## Hartford's Waterways

The city of Hartford has several important waterways, each of which has different challenges of which green infrastructure may help to address. First and foremost is the Connecticut River, which was the nation's first National Blueway; it is prone to flooding, and is lined with aging flood infrastructure rated poorly by the Army Corps of Engineers. Second is the Park River, with its North and South Branches, which has been the subject of some research and investment by the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. The Park River struggles with water quality issues, particularly due to stormwater runoff from adjacent properties. Other waterways have been clogged with litter, poorly maintained, and polluted from a variety of sources. The intermittent stream known as Gully Brook in Keney Park, suffers from all of these issues. Each of these waterways will greatly benefit from the planning, research, and implementation offered by the city's new Green Infrastructure Specialist.