



Protecting Our Environment



Coloring Our Communities Green

by David Wenzel,
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(NAPSA)—Going green is more than making our individual homes, buildings and cars friendlier to the environment.

It's thinking green for the entire community.

Sustainable towns and cities are within our reach, thanks to innovations that provide public services while protecting, as well as improving, our environment, including:



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- **Roads less**

traveled. Changing the way we get around can make a big difference. Fewer as well as more efficient cars on the road would have the most impact. Washington state has set goals for reducing vehicular miles driven. Greater use of public transportation also has received more attention. So has a focus on renewing neighborhoods that puts people closer to their jobs.

- **Creative drainage.** Modern systems route drainage through crushed rock banks along the roadside, filtering and cooling the water, then running it underground where temperatures are lower. The water reaching rivers is cleaner and cooler, which is healthier for plants, fish and other wildlife.

- **Stormwater planters.** Streets also are being designed to channel filtered drainage into roadside "stormwater planters" made up of native flowers and grasses. They appeal to the eye and offset carbon emissions while reusing drainage water in a positive manner.

- **Tires as fill.** Tires are being ground up and mixed with sand and other soils to use as fill in construction projects. This reduces waste and conserves natural materials.

- **Combining renewables.** In a number of communities, plans are being considered to use a combination of solar panels, wind towers and underwater river turbines to light a parks area, including roads, trails and bridges.

- **Methane captured.** Sewage treatment plants discharge methane 24 hours a day, usually into the open air, when it can be put to better use. As an example, some plants now capture and burn methane to generate energy and power the facility.

Having met with more than 40 transportation officials across the country, it's clear to me that sustainability has become a requirement for many communities.

A recent survey from HNTB shows the public agrees. More than six in 10 (64 percent) are willing to pay more today for national infrastructure that is energy-efficient and less wasteful in order to save money and resources in the long run.

Americans should work together, carefully planning, designing and constructing infrastructure that improves our quality of life and our economic competitiveness while respecting the environment.

We owe that to ourselves and to the next generation.

To learn more about America's sustainable infrastructure, visit www.hntb.com.

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