
Strengthening Community Resilience Through Green Stormwater Infrastructure Lyons, CO

WaterNow Project Accelerator Project Brief Attachment A to the MOU

Background

The Town of Lyons is working to strengthen its stormwater management and expand the use of Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) to reduce runoff, improve water quality, and enhance community resilience to flooding and wildfire. Lyons' stormwater system faces unique challenges due to its topography, burn scar impacts, and limited stormwater utility resources.

WaterNow Alliance (WaterNow) will partner with Lyons to align the Town's GSI goals with potential updates to the Town's Construction Design Manual and Municipal Code. WaterNow will understand Lyons' goals for implementing GSI, develop an internal checklist to guide future decision-making, compile peer community case studies, review relevant code sections and design standards for barriers and opportunities, and provide high-level recommendations to support GSI integration into Town policies.

The resulting deliverables will allow Lyons to take practical next steps to incorporate GSI into its stormwater management, advancing the Town's water quality and resilience objectives.

Project Outline

This project outline describes how WaterNow proposes to partner with the Town of Lyons to support its efforts to strengthen community resilience through GSI policies. WaterNow will work with Lyons to:

- Understand the Town's GSI priorities to inform future implementation and policy decisions.
- Recommend how the Town can incorporate GSI into its construction design manual and municipal code.
- Identify practical next steps that help the Town move forward with priority GSI strategies.

The proposed project is part of the fall 2025 WaterNow Project Accelerator Program, which includes up to 250 hours of technical/program support over a 6-12-month period. Additional support, if requested, may be available on a fee-for-service basis.

Phase 1: Review Town Green Infrastructure Priorities (February - March 2026)

WaterNow will conduct a detailed review of Lyons' policies, ordinances, and planning documents to understand the Town's goals and priorities for integrating GSI into its stormwater management practices. This review will be complemented by an assessment of relevant state-wide and national GSI resources, model codes, and design manual examples to reinforce existing priorities or introduce new options for the Town to consider. These resources will help identify foundational elements to inform Lyons' GSI goals and set the stage for future construction design manual and code updates.

WaterNow will also hold an informational interview with Lyons staff to explore the current GSI implementation challenges, opportunities, and goals. Based on Lyons' priorities and the broader best-practice context, the project team will develop an internal checklist to guide the Town's future GSI decision-making.

Objectives:

- Identify key Town stormwater management, resilience, and sustainability priorities to inform future GSI implementation decisions and project research.
- Understand Colorado-specific and national GSI regulatory contexts, best practices, and common barriers to implementation.
- Establish a strong foundation for subsequent construction design manual and code recommendations by situating Lyons' priorities within regional and national standards.

WaterNow Tasks:

- a. Review Lyons' stormwater management, flood resilience, and sustainability materials, including but not limited to:
 - a. [Stormwater Master Plan](#)
 - b. [Comprehensive Plan](#)
 - c. [Lyons Recovery Action Plan](#)
 - d. [Environmental Sustainability Action Plan](#)
 - e. [St. Vrain Creek Watershed Master Plan](#)
 - f. [Sustainable River Corridor Action Plan](#)
- b. Compile and review Colorado-specific and national GSI implementation strategies, model code language, and design manual resources to identify best practices and clarify regulatory priorities. Resources include, but are not limited to:
 - a. [Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy - City and County of Denver \(2018\)](#)
 - b. [DOLA Model Land Development Code \(2024\)](#)
 - c. [EPA Overcoming Barriers to Green Infrastructure Strategies](#)
 - d. [Green Infrastructure Leadership Exchange GSI Practice Framework](#)
 - e. [Mile High Flood District Resources](#)
 - f. [National League of Cities Model GSI Ordinance](#)
 - g. [Pacific Institute Colorado Stormwater Capture Potential Report \(2024\)](#)
 - h. [Planning for Hazards Stormwater Ordinance Model Code](#)
 - i. [SB24-037: Study Green Infrastructure for Water Quality Management \(2024\)](#)
 - j. Statewide and regional (i.e., [Boulder County](#)) MS4 permits, including associated programs and processes
 - k. [Breaking Down the Barriers to Low Impact Development in Colorado, Wright Water Engineers \(2008\)](#)
 - l. [Enabling Low Impact Development and Green Stormwater Infrastructure Code Audit Manual for Florida Counties and Municipalities \(2022\)](#)
 - m. [Stormwater Infrastructure Code Audit Tool for Florida Counties and Municipalities \(2022\)](#)
- c. Connect with key internal staff through a virtual or in-person informational interview to hear staff perspectives and goals for using green infrastructure to achieve Town stormwater management priorities. The project team will tailor the questions outlined in the University of Florida's [Community Scoping Exercise](#) for this conversation.

WaterNow Deliverables:

- a. A summary memo outlining key goals and priorities for implementing GSI, based on Town documents, state/national resources, and staff conversations, along with an internal GSI priorities checklist to guide the town's decisions for deploying GSI.

Town of Lyons Tasks:

- a. Provide additional relevant materials as needed.
- b. Participate in the staff discussion and invite relevant staff members.
- c. Review and provide timely feedback on the summary memo.

Phase 2: Review Municipal Code and Construction Design Manual (April – May 2026)

WaterNow will review Lyons' Construction Design Manual and Municipal Code to identify opportunities to strengthen and develop new GSI-related land use requirements and stormwater management criteria. The project team will focus on sections most relevant to the Town's priorities identified in Phase 1. This review will clarify where existing regulations already enable GSI, where barriers exist, and where additional guidance or amendments may be beneficial.

Objectives:

- Assess how GSI is currently addressed in Lyons' stormwater-related regulations and identify where provisions could be introduced, expanded, or refined to support improved water quality and flood resilience via GSI.
- Identify regulatory gaps or barriers that may limit the Town's ability to implement green stormwater infrastructure.

WaterNow Tasks:

- a. Review Section 2 of the Town's [Construction Design Manual](#) for storm drainage–related design criteria and note where GSI-supportive standards could be added or clarified.
- b. Review the Town's [Municipal Code](#) for sections related to stormwater management, development review, landscaping, and other relevant areas (i.e., [Chapter 16, Article 17 – Development Review](#), [Chapter 13, Article 7 – Stormwater Utility](#), [Chapter 16, Article 10, Section 16-10-40 – Environmental Impact Analysis](#), etc.) and note where references to the Construction Design Manual can be added or strengthened. The project team will also identify code sections where Lyons may wish to add GSI standards for new private development.

WaterNow Deliverables:

- a. An organized tabulation of relevant construction design manual and municipal code sections, provided either as a spreadsheet or a memo (depending on which format best supports the Town's use and the organization of findings), including a summary of areas of alignment or conflict with GSI priorities.

Town of Lyons Tasks:

- a. Review and provide timely feedback on the summary of relevant code and construction design manual sections.

Phase 3: Research Peer Community Green Infrastructure Standards and Policies (May – June 2026)

WaterNow will research codes, policies, and design standards from 4-6 case study communities (i.e., Longmont, Minturn, etc.) to identify common GSI best management practices. This research will be

guided by the priorities identified in Phase 1 and the gaps and opportunities identified in Phase 2. The project team will concentrate on sections of the peer communities' construction and design standards that address concerns identified in the Phase 2 analysis. Through this research, WaterNow will determine potential strategies and best practices for updating the Lyons Construction Design Manual and Municipal Code to better align with the Town's priorities.

Objectives:

- Align local standards with peer community best practices and state guidance for small municipalities.
- Understand the landscape of green infrastructure codes and design practices in peer communities across the West.

WaterNow Tasks:

- a. Compile and review model peer Colorado and Western community construction and design standards with strong GSI requirements and their corresponding references to GSI requirements in municipal code (i.e., Longmont, Minturn, etc.).
- b. Compile exemplary GSI implementation strategies from small municipalities in Colorado and the Western U.S.
- c. Conduct informational interviews with 1-2 priority communities to understand their GSI implementation processes, lessons learned, and policy strategies.

WaterNow Deliverables:

- a. An Excel spreadsheet with GSI construction and design standards and corresponding code sections from case study communities.
- b. A brief memo highlighting GSI construction and design standards and code language trends, best practices, and informational interview key takeaways.

Town of Lyons Tasks:

- a. Provide input on the 1-2 priority communities selected for informational interviews.
- b. Participate in informational interviews, as available.
- c. Review and provide timely feedback on the research spreadsheet and memo.

Phase 4: Recommend Green Infrastructure Pathways in Lyons' Construction Design Manual and Municipal Code (August – October 2026)

In this Phase, the project team will develop high-level recommendations for integrating green infrastructure into the Lyons Construction Design Manual and referencing these standards in the Municipal Code, focusing on the key sections identified in Phase 2. WaterNow will draw on peer community examples and model design and construction standards to propose updates that reduce barriers to GSI and create clear pathways for implementation. These recommendations will serve as a foundation for the Town's future policy and design standard updates.

To further support the Town, WaterNow will also help identify immediate next steps and develop more detailed, targeted guidance for 1–3 priority, easily implementable strategies (e.g., drafting Design Manual language for incorporating low-impact design). The specific scope of this additional support will be refined as the project reaches this stage.

Objectives:

- Recommend approaches for incorporating green infrastructure best management practices into the Lyons Construction Design Manual and referencing these standards in the Lyons Municipal Code.
- Tailor recommendations to Lyons' unique community values, environmental and geographic conditions, and staff capacity.

WaterNow Tasks:

- a. Update the Phase 2 spreadsheet or memo to include high-level recommendations and peer community example language to align Lyons' Construction Design Manual and Municipal Code with GSI best management practices.
- b. Develop targeted materials for 1–3 priority recommendations (e.g., additional research, draft text, redlines, or other implementation-ready outputs, with input from Lyons).

WaterNow Deliverables:

- a. An updated spreadsheet or memo highlighting exemplary peer community language and summarizing the recommended changes to applicable sections of Lyons' Construction Design Manual and Municipal Code.
- b. Targeted outputs for the 1–3 priority recommendations selected by the Town.

Town of Lyons Tasks:

- a. Review and provide timely feedback on the recommendations and memo.
- b. Participate in discussions to identify 1-3 priority recommendations and the corresponding targeted outputs.

Phase 5: Develop a Final Report and Presentation (November – December 2026)

WaterNow will develop a concise, actionable summary report that synthesizes the project's main findings, recommendations, and next steps from each phase. This report will act as a practical roadmap for future GSI efforts and can be shared across departments and with the Board of Trustees. WaterNow will present the findings and recommendations to Town staff and the Board of Trustees to confirm alignment and keep leadership informed. If of interest, WaterNow will also prepare public-facing materials to aid implementation and raise community awareness.

Objectives:

- Ensure alignment among key internal stakeholders on recommendations and next steps.
- Encourage Town-wide understanding of GSI benefits and support for implementation.
- Provide clear and actionable guidance for integrating GSI priorities into Town policies.

WaterNow Tasks:

- a. Present a project overview and recommended GSI implementation strategies to the Board of Trustees and relevant Town staff.
- b. Develop a final report summarizing key project findings and recommendations.
- c. Create 1-2 public-facing materials (e.g., website language or flyers), if desired.

WaterNow Deliverables:

- a. A summary presentation deck for the Board of Trustees and Town staff discussion.
- b. A final report summarizing findings and actionable next steps.
- c. Public-facing materials, if desired by Town staff.

Town of Lyons Tasks:

- a. Coordinate and participate in the final presentation and review meeting materials.
- b. Review and provide timely feedback on the final report and any public-facing materials.