

ECONOMICS OF SUSTAINABLE SITE DESIGN AND LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

ECONorthwest has earned a reputation for excellence through an established history of applying economics to environmental, natural-resource, and energy-related issues. Increasingly, developers and municipalities are turning to low-impact development, green building, and sustainable site design to address a wide range of environmental conservation goals. ECO draws from its extensive experience to evaluate the public and private benefits, costs, and economic effects of adopting these approaches. We work with municipalities and non-governmental organizations to identify and quantify the wide-range of benefits – from stormwater control, to increased property values, to meeting climate-change goals – of integrating these approaches into new development and redevelopment projects. We share our experience with policy-makers and practitioners at conferences and in publications across the country. Our thorough and straightforward analyses help local jurisdictions and developers work through economic and practical challenges to achieve a more wide-spread adoption of low-impact development and sustainable site design techniques.



Selected Project Experience

Economics of Low-Impact Development: A Literature Review

For the Waterkeeper Alliance, ECO reviewed the academic and professional literature on low-impact development for economic information, such as the costs of managing stormwater, the value of flood mitigation and improved water quality, and development costs and other economic factors relevant to builders and developers.

Benefit-Cost Analysis of Greenroofs

For the City of Portland, ECO compared the economic benefits and costs of a greenroof to those of a conventional roof. ECO evaluated the net present value of the current and future benefits and costs of each type of roof, including carbon sequestration, energy savings, and avoided stormwater management costs.

Analysis of Sustainable Building Regulations

For the City of Portland, ECO is assessing the economic impacts of the City's High Performance Green Building Policy, which will provide incentives and technical assistance to new construction projects that incorporate green building measures.

Economic Analysis of Ecosystem Services Provided by LID

For the Sustainable Sites Initiative, ECO developed information on the values of ecosystem goods and services provided by low-impact development and sustainable site design.

Evaluation of the Benefits and Costs of LID in a Mixed-Use Development

For a public entity in the Portland metropolitan area, ECO evaluated the benefits and costs of integrating LID techniques into a 400-acre mixed-use development.

Publications and Presentations

Assessing Low-Impact Development Using a Benefit-Cost Approach

2nd National Low-Impact Development Conference
March 2007

The Economics of Low-Impact Development: A Literature Review

For Waterkeeper Alliance
November 2007

The Effect of Low-Impact Development on Property Values

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Water Environment Federation
Sustainability 2008 Conference: Green Practices for the Water Environment

Economics of Low-Impact Development: Lessons for Developers

Home Building News, Home Builder's Association of Metropolitan Portland.
August 2008

Cost-Benefit Evaluation of Ecoroofs

Accepted for presentation at the 2008 International Low-Impact Development Conference
November 2008

These and other reports, presentations, and articles are available for download from our website (<http://www.econw.com/casestudies/casestudy?study=low-impact-development>)

ECONorthwest Approach

Since 1974 ECONorthwest (ECO) has analyzed the economics of investment, resource management, development, and growth for municipalities, public agencies, and private clients. ECO specializes in applying rigorous economic tools and concepts to natural-resource problems requiring forward-thinking solutions. ECO's work has addressed the relationships among natural resources, business profitability, and local economies throughout the U.S. and in other countries, especially in the context of emerging challenges, such as climate change, resource scarcity, and growth management.

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