

Addai Julius¹ and Meerow Sara^{1 2}. *Where Best Laid Plans Get Waylaid: Assessing The Green Infrastructure Planning Implementation Gap In US Cities*

Many cities worldwide are planning for green infrastructure (Hammack & Barber, 2021), with others taking steps to devise multifaceted implementation strategies (Caparrós-Martínez et al., 2020). While many acknowledge a general implementation gap in planning, little empirical work has assessed green infrastructure implementation (Kim & Tran, 2018) and impact (Meerow et al., 2021). This study addresses this gap, tracking implementation of green infrastructure projects identified by analyzing the content of 50 plans from 12 diverse cities across the US through a combination of document reviews, geospatial technology, web searches, and key informant interviews. The results show that even among trackable projects with clearly defined green infrastructure types and proposed locations in plan documents, only 35% had started construction, with larger cities (population greater than 500,000) having a larger proportion of projects in construction (42%). Limited funding, competing priorities, lack of a clearly-defined green infrastructure workplan, and limited staffing turned out to be the major impediments to green infrastructure implementation in US cities. Using Tucson and Denver as exemplary case studies for green infrastructure planning and implementation, actions such as green infrastructure regulatory requirements and incentives, a city-wide work plan for green infrastructure implementation, and prioritized green infrastructure investment strategies are recommended ways for US cities to achieve greater green infrastructure implementation. Furthermore, clearly defined green infrastructure projects and a frequently updated system for tracking and assessing green infrastructure projects for their benefits were found to be ways for cities to garner public support and increase funding appeal for green infrastructure implementation.

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