1 **Collective Vision and Stakeholder Involvement**

Engaging property owners and the community early in the visioning process is critical to securing support for LID landscapes. Early involvement ensures that the LID landscape will meet aesthetic expectations. Maintenance concerns and expectations should be addressed early in the design phase ensuring that owners understand and are committed to long-term maintenance requirements.

2 **Aesthetics & Visual Marketing**

LID landscapes must invoke instant appeal. The LID landscape should blend into the urban fabric and maintain visual interest throughout all seasons. LID landscapes should be well designed to be colourful, lush, visually pleasing, interesting and functional while being neat and clean throughout all seasons.

3 **Design Principles**

Design principles for LID practices should conform to typical urban landscaping principles, unlike stormwater ponds or stream restorations which follow a natural landscape plan. Urban principles include colour, simplicity, mass grouping, rhythmic repetition, balance, consistency of placement and spacing as well as exploring various textures, lines and forms. Favourite urban landscapes have a clean, tidy, orderly appearance. See CVC’s Top 10 Principles of LID Landscape Design fact sheet for more details.

4 **Choose the Right Plants**

Vegetation is a vital component of the environmental and hydrologic function of LID practices. It is important to choose appropriate plants to meet functional and aesthetic objectives. This will ensure long-term success and enhanced function of any LID project. Choosing best plants for the site will contribute to public acceptance of the new landscape and the stormwater control method. In choosing plants, a designer must consider species readily available from local suppliers. While common native plants are preferred, non-native or introduced plants that are non-invasive are also acceptable. In areas adjacent to natural heritage features, common native plants should be used exclusively.
Choose the Appropriate Soil Mixture
Soils are one of the most important components of vegetated LID practices but are often the most misunderstood. In order for LID practices such as bioretention areas, rain gardens and green roofs to function properly, soils must meet the exact specifications outlined in the design plan. For other areas, soil amendments may be used to improve water drainage, moisture penetration, soil oxygenation and/or water holding capacity. Soil amendments are typically organic matter such as compost, mulch and forestry by-products. Compaction of soils during construction should be avoided or limited because it restricts root penetration and impedes water infiltration – critical components for success of LID practices.

The Establishment Period
Establishing LID landscapes from plugs or seeds may take one to three years. In most urban landscapes where an LID practice is installed, the practice must look appealing within year one and beyond. Often vegetated LIDs need to be immediately functional and cannot be kept offline during an establishment period. In these cases, large, mature vegetated stock (rather than seeds or plugs) should be used.

Watering
Watering is the most critical aspect of establishing LID plants and sustaining LID practices through extreme dry periods. Watering for LID practices is sometimes overlooked because chosen plants (such as natives) are capable of sustaining themselves through short-term wet and dry periods. LID plants need to be watered regularly, however, after planting and during extended dry periods. This can be through an irrigation system or with a nearby water source connected to hoses and sprinklers.

Maintenance
Property owners should participate and be familiar with the types of plants being used and should be comfortable and committed to required maintenance. The planting plan should meet the owner’s abilities and commitment to scheduled maintenance. The property owner should be familiar with maintenance requirements including trimming/pruning, fertilizing, removing litter/debris, removing weeds and replacing dead plants. Monthly inspections are encouraged to ensure the LID practice is functioning properly.

Training
Regular education and guidance for property owners is important. This includes informing about proper function of the LID practice(s) and plants within the practice(s) through fact sheets and clear maintenance instructions.

Outreach & Communication of LID
It is essential to always use beautiful images of landscaped LID spaces to communicate to property owners and stakeholders the value and importance of maintaining vegetative components in LID practices.