

## Restoring Urban South Africa through a Sustainable Green Infrastructure Approach

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**Abstract :** Referring to the entire green network within urban environments, at all spatial scales, green infrastructure is considered as an important constituent of sustainable development within urban areas through planning for a healthy environment and simultaneously improving quality of life for the people. Green infrastructure has made its appearance internationally in terms of the infrastructural urban environment focussing on ecological systems and sustaining society while building with nature. Within South Africa, the terminology of green infrastructure has, however, not continuously been entertained, mainly due to more pressing realities and challenges faced within urban areas of South Africa that include but are not limited to basic service provision, financial constraints and a lack of guiding policies and frameworks. But the notion of green infrastructure planning has changes, creating a newfound movement within urban areas of South Africa encouraging green infrastructure for urban resilience. Although green infrastructure is not an entirely new concept within the local context of South Africa, the benefits thereof constantly needs to be identified in order to measure the value of green infrastructure. Consequently challenges faces within urban areas of South Africa, in terms of human and nature, could be restored through focussing on a sustainable green infrastructure approach. This study does not focus on the pressing challenges and realities faced within urban areas of South Africa but rather aims solely on improving a green infrastructure approach within urban areas of South Africa. At the outset, the study will commence by introducing the concept of a green infrastructure approach by means of a local and international comparison. This will ensure an improved conceptual understanding of green infrastructure within a local South African context. The green infrastructure concept will be elaborated on through the inclusion of South African case study evaluations. The selected case studies will illustrate existing green infrastructure implementation within South Africa along with the benefits provided through the implementation thereof in terms of human (the people) and nature (the natural environment). As green infrastructure within South Africa continues to remain a fairly new concept with moderate levels of implementation thereof, room for improving on the approach in terms of implementation and maintenance exist. For this reason, the study will conclude with alternative green infrastructure suggestions and approaches to possibly be enforced within South Africa, led by international best practices.

**Keywords :** green infrastructure, international best practices, sustainability, urban South Africa

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