

# ENVISION TESTIMONIAL ARTICLE

The following are excerpts taken from a 2021 article written by James W. Patteson, P.E., principal at Blue Heron Leadership Group, LLC,. The article was published by the American Public Works Association, APWA.



In 2020, Envision celebrated 10 years since its inception. Envision grew out of a collaboration between its founders, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the American Public Works Association (APWA), and the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC). Prior to 2010, these organizations were independently working on standards for sustainable infrastructure. Strong leadership was key to guide ISI through the early years of developing Envision into a useful and impactful tool.

Each of the founding organizations challenged each other to stretch their thinking to develop this tool. For example, early in the development, it was debated whether the topic of climate change should be included based on differing national opinions.



Ultimately, there was agreement that this was an important factor in building infrastructure correctly and a consensus was reached to include it. Flexibility and the need to continuously evolve was also built in from the beginning to ensure Envision would remain a relevant tool into the future.

This adaptability is evident with the changes made in Envision 3.0.



Allowing the tool to evolve while staying true to the underlying ethos of not only doing projects right but also doing the right project continues to be embedded in Envision.

Envision is being used to verify projects in over 25 states and 4 countries. In my community where I served as public works director for 10 years, we have 20 ENV-SPs. I have found the impacts of Envision to be multifaceted.

It has helped staff develop a greater appreciation for evaluating all the outcomes (intended and not intended) of a project.

It has also embedded a greater appreciation for engaging the community and stakeholders to find common goals. In short, it is a tool that has improved a staff's ability to deliver successful projects. For elected officials and the community, it has developed greater trust that we are all working together to strengthen the community.

As the current Chair for the APWA Center for Sustainability (C4S), I regularly interact with public works and sustainability professionals across the United States and the world.

Regardless of location, we face similar challenges on how to deliver solutions that address multiple goals to our communities. Budgets are tight so the economics are important. The long-term viability and maintainability of public facilities are important so solutions must be resilient, enduring, and cannot create a future maintenance burden.

Our solutions need to be equitable and create a fair playing field for all members of the community. Finally, our solutions need to be sustainable from an environmental perspective to ensure future generations are not negatively impacted by our actions.