

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Tech Committee Item 2

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board Technical Committee

**FROM:** Michael Farrell, Transportation Planner IV  
Department of Transportation Planning

**SUBJECT:** Green Streets Policy Discussion and April 8<sup>th</sup> Green Streets Workshop

**DATE:** April 25, 2013

At its December 19 meeting, the TPB received a request from the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership to adopt a regional Green Streets policy, parallel to its adopted regional Complete Streets policy. Green Streets use landscaping, trees and other design elements to capture and filter stormwater runoff within the right of way. The Partnership cited the Prince George's County Complete and Green Streets Policy as an example.

The TPB Technical Committee discussed the proposal at its January meetings, and suggested that a stakeholders workshop should be held, to learn more about what agencies are doing, and determine what gaps, if any, a regional policy could help fill, as well as potential obstacles. Accordingly, DTP and DEP staff organized a Green Streets Workshop, which was held on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

Over 90 people attended the Green Streets workshop. Most of the attendees were agency staff from around the region, including planners, public works and DOT staff, and environmental staff. The workshop allowed the various agencies involved in stormwater runoff, including both public works and environmental departments, to discuss their policies and practices with respect to Green Streets.

The keynote speaker was Dominique Leukenhoff, Acting Deputy Director for the Water Protection Division at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Ms. Leukenhoff discussed EPA's support for green infrastructure, and its effectiveness in converting stormwater runoff, a waste product, into groundwater, a resource. She described a "Green Streets" approach as being a cost-effective response to the new rules, and one which provides multiple benefits to communities. Federal funding and technical assistance are available under the "Green Streets, Green Jobs" program, of which the Edmonston, Maryland Green Streets program is a notable local example.

The second featured speaker, Christine Knapp, Director of Strategic Partnerships for the Philadelphia Water Department, showed how the City of Philadelphia is reducing its combined sewage overflow problem with green infrastructure such as rain gardens, avoiding the need for cost-prohibitive new "gray infrastructure" drainage tunnels and detention reservoirs.

DDOT, VDOT, MDOT, Fairfax County, Arlington County, and Prince George's County representatives also presented on their Green Streets policies, practices, and projects. While many of the agencies represented did not have explicit Green Streets policies, clean water regulations, cost considerations, and a desire to improve local streetscapes are motivating them towards Green Streets practices. Designs and manuals are still under

development (as most of the designs originated on the west coast and need to be adapted for the eastern climate), but the trend is toward using Green Streets solutions wherever possible. Green Streets can successfully incorporate Complete Streets elements to accommodate all users and modes of travel. Several examples of Green Streets projects were also “Road Diet” projects, in which the number of travel lanes and/or impervious surface was reduced, improving both safety and runoff.

The TPB Technical Committee will be briefed on the outcome of the workshop, as well the results of a survey on Green Streets policies and practices of the local governments in the Washington region, at its May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, and will at that time discuss potential next steps.