

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO.: C(2)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 16, 2012

TITLE: Submittal of Letter of Interest to EPA's Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ___ No <u>X</u>
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Letter	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Randy Dodd – 918-7326 Jeff Brubaker – 918-7329

PURPOSE: The purpose of this agenda item is to receive Board approval for submittal of a letter of interest to EPA's Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program.

INFORMATION: EPA's Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program seeks to provide technical assistance for up to 44 communities on the use of various tools to help them achieve their goals for sustainability and growth. These tools have helped many communities overcome barriers and move toward smarter, more sustainable growth. As a result of this technical assistance, selected local and/or tribal governments will increase their capacity to successfully implement smart growth and sustainable approaches that protect the environment, improve public health, create jobs, expand economic opportunity, and improve overall quality of life.

The EPA technical assistance tool identified by staff as the best immediate fit for issues facing Carrboro is "Creating a Green Streets Strategy." A green street incorporates green infrastructure to manage stormwater while making the street more walkable and aesthetically appealing. This tool will provide assistance by supporting the community in developing a strategy for implementing best practices (e.g., curb extensions, floating islands, street trees, kiosk eco-roofs, photocatalytic pavers, permeable pavement, rain gardens) especially for public areas in the street right-of-way. The community will also learn how to develop interdepartmental cooperation, maintenance strategies, and funding mechanisms to implement and maintain green streets. These actions could result in reduced pollution, reduced flooding, increased green space, traffic calming, improved air quality, mitigation from summer heating, and reduced demand on the community's stormwater collection system. Green streets are specifically timely for the Town to be investigating because of regulatory requirements with the Town's NPDES stormwater permit and Jordan Lake Rules for reducing nutrients from existing development. Beyond the environmental benefits, green streets strategies can also make the streets more pleasant for pedestrians and cyclists while still accommodating automobiles.

The focus of this assistance will be an assessment of the existing conditions for four to six street locations in the community. Assistance will include options for incorporating different green street concepts and ideas into local practice and setting the policy and organizational framework to effectively implement green street concepts. See EPA's web page "Green Streets Initiatives Around the U.S." http://www.epa.gov/owow_keep/podcasts/greenstreetsusa.html for examples of what other communities have done.

How It Works: One- to two-day assistance includes a morning work session with local government officials and other key stakeholders, a tour of existing green infrastructure installations, an afternoon meeting with local government leaders, an evening public workshop, and a follow up report. **What the Community Provides:** Marketing of public workshop, invitations to key stakeholders, local logistics and contacts, decision-makers' commitment to attend the workshop, background information on current and planned

sustainability initiatives. **Outcomes:** an understanding of the relationship between smart growth and green streets and how green streets help the community meet its environmental and livability goals; identification of barriers to green streets and how to address them; a framework to create a long-term green streets strategy.

FISCAL AND STAFF IMPACT: No staff or fiscal impact beyond time planning for the workshop and incidental marketing expenses, in the event of an award, is anticipated.

RECOMMENDATION: The Staff recommends that the Board of Aldermen adopt the attached resolution.