

DRAFT 9/25/2013

# DRAFT Green Streets Policy for the National Capital Region

## I. Background

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) supports a transportation system that enhances the region's natural environmental quality and the appearance of its communities, makes alternate travel modes such as walking and bicycling more attractive, and focuses economic development in walkable activity centers. These goals are embodied in COG's *Region Forward* (2010), the TPB *Vision* (1998), and the draft Regional Transportation Priorities Plan.

Storm-water runoff from impervious surfaces, including urban streets and roads is a major threat to water quality in the Washington region. Urban roads, along with sidewalks and parking lots, are estimated to constitute almost two-thirds of the total impervious surface cover and contribute a similar ratio of storm-water runoff.

On December 18, 2012, the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership requested that the TPB develop and approve a regional policy on Green Streets, similar to the regional policy on Complete Streets. At the direction of the TPB Technical Committee, a stakeholder workshop was held on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to review current Green Streets policies and practices. Workshop participants concluded that Green Streets are often the most cost-effective response to storm-water runoff regulations, and that a directive from the top of a government can help ensure that various agencies within a government will cooperate to implement Green Streets.

Staff then drafted *Green Streets Policy* and *Guidance* documents with input from the TPB Technical Committee.

## II. Definitions

### (1) GREEN STREET.

Green Streets are an alternative to conventional street drainage systems designed to more closely mimic the natural hydrology of a particular site by infiltrating all or a portion of local rainfall events. A green street uses trees, landscaping, and related environmental site design features to capture and filter storm-water runoff within the right of way, while cooling and enhancing the appearance of the street.

### (2) GREEN STREETS POLICY.—The term “green streets policy” means

A directive at the local, state, regional, or federal level that requires the use of green streets techniques to manage storm-water runoff from transportation facilities in a manner appropriate to the function and context of the relevant facility.

### (3) GREEN STREETS PRINCIPLE;—The term “green streets principle” means

A specific component of a Green Streets policy.

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#### **IV. Policy Statement**

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board endorses the concept of Green Streets and strongly encourages its member jurisdictions and agencies that do not already have a Green Streets policy, or who are revising an existing policy, to adopt a Green Streets policy that includes common elements that the TPB believes reflect current best practices, as represented by the attached *Green Streets Guidance and Policy Template*.

#### **V. Documentation and Reporting**

1. Within six months of the adoption of this policy, and every two years thereafter, Transportation Planning Board staff will conduct a survey of the TPB member jurisdictions and agencies regarding their adoption and implementation of Green Streets policies.
2. Within two years of the adoption of this policy, the TPB will create a regional information clearing house, which will provide access to state and local project web sites where detailed and timely information on the design of transportation projects can be found, so that the public may judge whether and how well such projects implement Green Streets principles.

#### **V. Promotion**

With six months of the adopting of this policy, the TPB will sponsor training on Green Streets best practices for personnel responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of streets.