



Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities 2012 Request for Letters of Interest (RFLI)

Overview

Communities across the United States are turning their attention to smart growth and sustainable development approaches to revitalize their economies, create jobs, protect clean air and water, and improve residents' quality of life. However, when trying to implement these approaches, many communities run into barriers such as outdated zoning codes and other local regulations, lack of consensus around where and how to grow, and misconceptions about sustainable approaches in general. Moreover, many communities lack the technical expertise to implement smart growth strategies and the resources to educate local stakeholders about the environmental, economic, health, and quality of life benefits these approaches can bring.

The Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program seeks to provide technical assistance to up to 44 communities on the use of various tools to help them achieve their goals for growth. The assistance includes both "ready to go" tools developed and tested over the past decade and newer tools that are being refined and developed. 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 Building Blocks program supports the priorities of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities,¹ a collaborative effort among the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to improve access to affordable housing, increase transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment. The Partnership agencies coordinate federal investments in housing, transportation, and environmental protection to help communities become prosperous, healthy, environmentally sustainable, and rich in opportunities.

For a selected community, each technical assistance project includes:

- An option for public engagement (e.g., a meeting or workshop that is open to the public).
- Direct consultation with decision-makers whose work relates to the specific barrier to smart growth and/or sustainable growth. These can include planning, transportation, environmental, and economic development department heads; commissioners; senior municipal staff; and elected officials. The relevant decision-makers will vary in each community and will depend upon the tool being delivered. For example, the *Using Smart Growth to Produce Economic and Fiscal Health* tool might require meetings with the city manager or mayor, head of the department of economic development, local or regional Chamber of Commerce, and elected officials.
- A five-page memo outlining options for specific next steps to implement some of the ideas generated during the technical assistance workshop.

Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities is geared toward communities that are relatively new to sustainable communities approaches but have a basic understanding of smart growth principles and how they apply locally. Communities most appropriate for the Building Blocks program recognize that they have

¹ More on the Partnership for Sustainable Communities: <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov>

development challenges and are trying to kick-start efforts to address a specific local issue.

Technical assistance to selected communities will be provided over one to two days and will require some preparation by the community, including “community homework” and data collection. Communities might also receive limited follow-up assistance after the workshop. Assistance will be provided through analysis of the community’s prepared materials and homework, presentations, meetings with community stakeholders, and/or activities that educate participants about the impacts of the community’s development policies.

The program operates as follows:

1. In submitting a letter of interest, communities will select one of nine tools offered by EPA (See descriptions on pages 5-13). Communities can submit multiple letters of interest, but each letter should be specific to one tool.
2. EPA will contact the selected communities to schedule a workshop, discuss mutual expectations as well as roles and responsibilities, and review details about the program. The EPA technical assistance team and the community will participate in at least two conference calls.
3. EPA’s contractors, along with EPA headquarters and/or regional office staff, will conduct a one- to two-day visit to the community to deliver the assistance related to the selected tool. This workshop will occur between December 2012 and May 2013. A memorandum summarizing the results of the visit and potential next steps will be provided to the community within three weeks of the workshop.

This is the third round of the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program. Selected communities will test new tools or finalize tools that were offered in previous years.

How to Apply

EPA requests a letter of interest from each community that would like to receive assistance. The letter of interest should contain the following information and must be **no longer than two (2) pages**. (Please do not submit letters of support, maps, or other supplemental information.)

1. **Identify the ONE tool for which you are seeking assistance.** Select one (1) of the nine (9) tools described on pages 5-13.
2. **Describe the nature of the smart growth or sustainable communities-related challenge(s) facing your community**, including any relevant data to demonstrate the challenge. If applicable, describe how this challenge affects low-income, minority, tribal, and/or other communities facing disproportionate environmental or health risks.
3. **Explain the relevance of the selected tool to the challenge(s).** Recipients may select only one type of assistance per letter of interest. Communities can submit multiple letters of interest, but the nature of the challenge should correspond with each tool requested. Applicants must describe how the community’s issues can be addressed through the technical assistance workshop.
4. If applicable, briefly **describe your plan for engaging traditionally underrepresented communities**, including low-income, minority, tribal, and/or overburdened² communities, in the technical assistance workshop.

² An overburdened community is defined as a community with “minority, low-income, tribal, and indigenous populations and communities in the United States that experience disproportionate environmental harms and risks as a result of greater vulnerability to environmental hazards. This increased vulnerability may be attributable to an accumulation of negative and a lack of positive

5. **Describe the community’s expected capacity for implementation**, e.g., local policy change, additional consideration for physical improvements, new incentives, etc. EPA looks to assist communities that are ready for implementation and success once the building blocks workshop and next steps memo are complete. EPA will monitor progress of next steps implementation; therefore, communities should request assistance only if they believe they have the capacity for implementation. If applicable, include a short description of the benefits the assistance is expected to provide to low-income, minority, tribal, and/or overburdened communities. **EPA will follow up with the community after the workshop to determine the impact of the assistance and to inquire about what changes have been made as a result. Selected communities should be prepared to provide this feedback.**

6. If applicable, **describe how this assistance will complement work being done using other federal funding your community is receiving**, particularly assistance from other Partnership for Sustainable Communities agencies. Specifically highlight:
 - The likelihood that the proposed work will advance the Livability Principles³.
 - This workshop’s alignment with a local or regional integrated planning process.
 - The strength of plans for involvement of community residents in the workshop’s planning and implementation, including historically underrepresented and overburdened populations.

7. **Affirm that the community can provide the information or materials listed in the “What the Community Provides” section of each tool description.**

8. **List the primary point of contact and other key stakeholders who will be involved in the technical assistance work, including name, title, address, email, and phone number.**

Letters must be signed by a mayor, city manager, elected official, or other official representative of the community. **This signature represents the community’s support and commitment to this program and assistance.**

Letters of interest must be submitted in an attachment (Microsoft Word or PDF file) by email to Sarah Dale (dale.sarah@epa.gov) no later than **October 26, 2012, at 3:00 p.m.** Eastern Daylight Time. If you have questions about this solicitation, please contact Ms. Dale at dale.sarah@epa.gov or 202-564-6998.

environmental, health, economic, or social conditions within these populations or communities.”
(<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/ej/resources/policy/plan-ej-2014/plan-ej-rulemaking-2011-09.pdf>)

³ <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/aboutUs.html>

Please save your file using the following format: Name of Jurisdiction Name of State and corresponding tool number (#x) based on the following list. For example: Catonsville, Maryland #1.

Tool #1: Planning Bikeshare Programs
Tool #2: Supporting Equitable Development
Tool #3: Neighborhood Planning for Healthy Aging
Tool #4: Parking Audit
Tool #5: Creating a Green Streets Strategy

Tool #6: Using Smart Growth to Produce Economic and Fiscal Health
Tool #7: Green Building Toolkit
Tool #8: Sustainable Strategies for Small Cities and Rural Areas
Tool #9: Land Use Strategies to Protect Water Quality

No previously submitted letters of interest will be considered. Please note that only letters submitted in response to this request for letters of interest will be considered for assistance.

Selection of Communities

EPA will review the letters of interest based on communities' response to items 1-8 above⁴. Reviewers will include staff from EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities as well as each of EPA's 10 regional offices. Given the anticipated demand for this program, many communities will not receive direct technical assistance. However, communities not selected will receive a finalized version of the Building Blocks tool that they requested when it is ready for distribution. This tool will be in a user-friendly format that allows the community to conduct the workshop independently or with assistance from national or regionally focused experts. Securing this supplemental assistance is at the discretion of the community and is not EPA's responsibility.

EPA's Role

EPA will bear full responsibility for contracting the services to be provided and for distributing an appropriate number of hard-copy publications and/or tools to the community. EPA staff will be integrally involved in all planning, including planning of the workshop, and in reviewing all materials developed in association with the workshop

Timeframe

EPA expects to select recipients by early December 2012 and provide all technical assistance by May 2013.

⁴ Further guidance will be available on EPA's website. http://www.epa.gov/dced/buildingblocks_faq.htm

TOOL #1: PLANNING BIKESHARE PROGRAMS

Communities nationwide are investing in bikeshare as a public transportation option. This tool will provide a framework for exploring a community's potential to establish a bike share program.

Community Benefits

While communities across the United States are interested in starting bikeshare programs, they need to explore several issues to determine if it makes sense for them. This tool will provide an overview of the items to be considered before investing in bikeshare. These include understanding bike share technologies (i.e., how bikeshare works), tools for developing demand and revenue estimates, and strategies for using sponsorship or advertising to close the gap between costs and operating revenues. Workshops will identify possible organizational structures (i.e., who owns and operates the system) and illustrate how bikeshare can function without requiring public agency capacity. Prior to workshops, communities will complete a checklist to identify local factors relevant to bikeshare planning (i.e., existing organizations or potential funding partners) so the workshops can incorporate local examples and leave the community with pertinent next steps.

Areas of Focus

The tool will focus on the following areas:

- Feasibility: Understand bikeshare system options, including both low-technology and advanced systems.
- System planning: Understand tools for identifying service area, system size and system phasing.
- Business plan: Identify funding, phasing, and management models for bikeshare systems. Learn strategies to engage local partners to explore public-private partnerships.
- System operations: Understand the operational needs for system balancing, equipment maintenance, and related items.
- Health, safety, and social equity: Understand potential health benefits, safety issues, and strategies to ensure bikeshare is accessible to a wide segment of the population.

Who Should Attend:

- / Elected officials.
- / City/county staff, including public works and transportation staff.
- / Community and neighborhood leaders.
- / Potential system partners, including financial institutions, healthcare institutions, universities, etc.
- / Other stakeholders.

How It Works:

- / One- to two-day assistance, including an evening public presentation, a morning work session with local government departments and other key stakeholders, and an afternoon meeting with local government leaders.
- / Applies national examples to the community's needs and opportunities.

What the Community Provides:

- / Marketing of public workshop.
- / Invitations to key stakeholders to attend work sessions.
- / Local logistics.
- / Local key contact.
- / Decision-makers' commitment to attend the workshop.
- / Completed checklist/questionnaire to identify local conditions.

Outcomes:

- / A better understanding of how bikeshare programs work.
- / An understanding of the basic elements of implementing a bikeshare program.
- / Identification of potential barriers to bikesharing and strategies to overcome them.
- / An understanding of legal, health, and social equity implications.
- / A framework for assessing the feasibility of bikesharing.

TOOL #2: SUPPORTING EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

This tool will help communities evaluate their needs around equitable development and identify the most effective tools and strategies to address those priorities.

Community Benefits

Although economic growth and revitalization are common goals in many lower-income communities, achieving these goals is frequently accompanied by concerns that new development will displace existing residents. Equitable development principles provide communities with a path to improve their quality of life and economic opportunities while ensuring that existing residents are not displaced and have full access to the benefits of these improvements. Equitable development is not just about affordable housing; it includes the full range of factors that contribute to residents' quality of life, including access to high-quality employment; safe, walkable neighborhoods; regional transportation connections; and access to the amenities, services, and community institutions residents need to thrive.

Areas of Focus

This tool will guide communities through the process of identifying the most pressing equitable development priorities and selecting mechanisms to address them. Each community will receive a self-assessment questionnaire to help identify its goals and needs, including a step-by-step guide to gathering key existing conditions metrics in neighborhoods. This self-assessment will be structured around the following components, which will also provide the framework for the workshop:

- Preservation and development of housing that is affordable to a range of income levels.
- Preservation and strengthening of commercial business districts and locally important destinations.
- Access to high-quality employment opportunities for local residents.

In the workshop, participants will review the findings of the assessment and identify the tool(s) most relevant to addressing community priorities. National experts will lead stakeholders in an interactive exercise to match the appropriate tools to the community's specific goals and context. Experts will also provide specific options for next steps, including the identification of key community institutions and potential partnerships.

Who Should Attend:

- / Elected officials.
- / City/county staff, including economic development and planning staff.
- / Community and neighborhood leaders.
- / Other stakeholders.

How It Works:

- / Community will receive an assessment tool before the workshop.
- / One- to two-day session will begin with a public workshop to gather community input.
- / Consultants will conduct an in-depth session with staff and key participants to review community goals and self-assessment, discuss equitable development tools, and match to local needs and context.

What the Community Provides:

- / Marketing of public workshop.
- / Invitations to key stakeholders to attend work sessions.
- / Local logistics.
- / Local key contact.
- / Decision-makers' commitment to attend the workshop.
- / Self assessment and background information on demographics, market conditions, and community issues and concerns.

Outcomes:

- / Knowledge of best practices in equitable development.
- / An understanding of local needs and areas of vulnerability.
- / Identification of strategies to promote equitable growth.
- / Options for next steps and additional data analysis.

TOOL #3: NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR HEALTHY AGING

As a community's population ages, it will be necessary to plan for the changing needs and abilities of older citizens. Supportive neighborhood design can help residents "age in place" and maintain healthy, active lives. This tool will help communities create great places for aging residents.

Community Benefits

Neighborhood design that supports aging allows residents to remain active, independent, and engaged in their community as they grow older. Such a lifestyle can reduce isolation and depression, improve individual fitness, and reduce disabilities related to aging, which improve quality of life while easing the caretaking burden on family and others. For public agencies, planning for an aging population can reduce the cost of providing services. Although the specific solutions will vary from one community to the next, the tool will help to identify focus areas for action and prioritize actions that support healthy aging. Strategies could include improving neighborhood walkability, safety, and comfort; improving transit access; and increasing the diversity of housing types.

Areas of Focus

The tool is focused on evaluating the built environment and planning strategies that can support aging populations. It will identify neighborhoods with current or projected concentrations of elderly residents and evaluate whether current neighborhood design supports or hinders older adult mobility, accessibility, housing choice, and social interaction. A presentation on best practices for aging populations and discussion and ranking of community strengths, needs, and priorities will help to stimulate thinking about the types of solutions that will be most appropriate for residents and how to prioritize and implement them. The tool will be action-focused, with an emphasis on practical strategies that can be implemented across different agencies and sectors.

Who Should Attend:

- / Elected officials.
- / City/county staff, including community development, public works / transportation, parks and recreation, and planning staff.
- / Community and neighborhood leaders.
- / Local Area Agency on Aging staff.
- / Social service providers.
- / Organizations and advocates for disabled persons, affordable / senior housing, and low-income populations.

How It Works:

- / One- to two-day assistance including a day-long work session with local government departments and other key stakeholders to assess local conditions and discuss strategies and priorities. Findings will be presented and discussed in follow-up meetings with key decision-makers.

What the Community Provides:

- / Promotion and coordination of work session.
- / Invitations to key stakeholders to attend work session.
- / Local logistics.
- / Local key contacts and meeting coordination.
- / Decision-makers' commitment to attend the workshop.
- / Support in neighborhood and asset mapping.

Outcomes:

- / Identification of focus neighborhoods within the community.
- / An understanding of best practices for the built environment that support healthy aging.
- / Articulation of community priorities related to healthy aging and a prioritized set of strategies and action items to create communities that support healthy aging.
- / An understanding of agency roles to implement the strategies and commitments to action.

TOOL #4: PARKING AUDIT

A parking audit provides an opportunity to review and evaluate local parking policies and practices and offer advice based on parking management strategies from across the nation, with an emphasis on what has led to success in other communities.

Community Benefits

Effective parking policy and management can be a key element in local and regional growth. Parking policies can help or hurt a community's ability to support economic vitality and resilience; new and infill development; and effective, balanced transportation options. Often cities and commercial districts struggle with managing parking supply and demand in parking policies, requirements, and enforcement strategies. By addressing all five elements of parking—demand, supply, economics, enforcement, and administration—an audit helps local leaders and stakeholders see parking policy in the context of overall growth management and economic strategies.

Area of Focus

The parking audit will focus on the parking issues of a specific district or neighborhood in the context of citywide policies and programs. The community can apply the results to other areas of the municipality. The audit could tackle issues such as promoting a park-once environment, managing on-street parking, or promoting shared parking. The one-day program is designed to engage key stakeholders, which might include residents, property owners, and owners of local businesses. The workshop will help facilitate the conversation between these community members and local officials about which parking strategies are most appropriate for the community and how those strategies could be adapted and implemented.

Who Should Attend:

- / Elected officials.
- / City/county staff, including public works and transportation staff.
- / Community and neighborhood leaders.
- / Law enforcement officials.
- / Merchants and property owners.
- / Other stakeholders.

How It Works:

- / One- to two-day assistance includes an evening public presentation, a morning work session with local government officials and other key stakeholders, a tour of the relevant parking area, and an afternoon meeting with local government leaders.

What the Community Provides:

- / Marketing of evening presentation.
- / Invitations to key stakeholders to attend work sessions.
- / Local logistics.
- / Local key contact.
- / Decision-makers' commitment to attend the workshop.
- / Current ordinances and related materials to describe community parking issues.
- / Current data on parking supply and demand.

Outcomes:

- / Answers to specific technical questions and problems.
- / Options for low-cost ways to gather data and estimate demand.
- / Community members build a common vocabulary, debunk myths, focus on shared values, build or validate common visions, and learn basic principles and practices.
- / Practical strategies for improving the built environment in ways that increase economic vitality.

TOOL #5: 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 help communities develop strategies for greening their streets based on national models and case studies.

Community Benefits

This tool will showcase a range of national best practices for incorporating green streets strategies for public areas in the street right-of-way. Communities will learn about green infrastructure elements such as street trees, rain gardens, and permeable paving. Communities 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, improved air quality, and reduced demand on a community's sewer collection system. Beyond the environmental benefits, green streets strategies can also make the streets more pleasant for pedestrians and cyclists while still accommodating automobiles.

Areas of Focus

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 a variety of 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.](#)" for examples of what other communities have done.

Who Should Attend:

- / Elected officials.
- / City/county staff, including public works and transportation staff.
- / Community and neighborhood leaders.
- / Other stakeholders.

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, and an evening public workshop.

What the Community Provides:

- / Marketing of public workshop.
- / Invitations to key stakeholders to attend work sessions.
- / Local logistics.
- / Local key contact.
- / 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.
- / An understanding of how green streets help a community meet its environmental goals.
- / Identification of barriers to green streets and how to address them.
- / A framework to guide the creation of a long-term green streets strategy.

Tool #6: USING SMART GROWTH TO BUILD FISCAL AND ECONOMIC HEALTH

Smart growth strategies have inherent efficiencies and can minimize private and public costs while maximizing property values and associated revenues.

Community Benefits

This tool outlines strategies and approaches that can help cities integrate their land development policies, their municipal budgets, and their long-term economic development goals. These strategies could reduce service and infrastructure costs and increase revenues in an era when limited resources mean that growing inefficiently is no longer an option. While the public sector will see ongoing benefits from more efficient development patterns, developers can realize efficiencies at the project level that can increase their returns and preserve capital that they can invest elsewhere.

Areas of Focus

The technical assistance has two parts:

- An evening presentation to key stakeholders showing attendees how smart growth land use strategies can help strengthen local fiscal health, which in turn encourages economic development.
- A working session with staff the next day defining the factors that are driving change in the community and showing how to build on the community's strengths to address these trends and build value for the community. This tool will facilitate a discussion among economic development, finance, and planning staff.

At the end of the technical assistance, the community will gain strategies for allocating municipal resources (including land, municipal services, facilities, and infrastructure projects such as water, sewer, transportation, and public facilities) in a way that will build a more sustainable fiscal and economic position for the community.

Who Should Attend:

- / Elected officials.
- / City staff, including economic development, planning, public works, and finance staff.
- / Community and neighborhood leaders and other stakeholders.

How It Works:

- / One-and-a-half-day session begins with an overview of how land use, fiscal health, and economic benefits intersect.
- / Sessions highlight case studies and apply examples to local needs and opportunities.
- / Includes assessment of key factors contributing to your community's fiscal health.

What the Community Provides:

- / Marketing of event.
- / Local logistics.
- / Local key contact.
- / Decision-makers' commitment to attend the workshop.
- / Background information on the economic conditions and issues of the community.
- / Parcel-based property tax analysis by land use type.

Outcomes:

- / An understanding of how land use patterns can help communities save money and make money.
- / Strategies for applying lessons from other places around the country to local opportunities and needs.
- / An understanding of community assets needed to maintain economic and fiscal health, e.g., how do we do more with what we have?
- / An understanding of how to leverage opportunities and where leveraging opportunities are—e.g., federal investment in transit, new employment center, disaster relief, etc.

TOOL #7: GREEN BUILDING TOOLKIT

The process of designing, developing, and inhabiting the built environment has a profound influence on a community's economy, environment, and quality of life. This tool focuses on identifying community policies that will support compact development featuring sustainably built, healthful homes and commercial buildings.

Community Benefits

Green building offers local jurisdictions many tools to improve the health and environmental sustainability of their communities. Through this workshop, community members will learn about the basic elements of green building—sustainable siting and site management, materials and resource conservation, energy conservation, water efficiency, and indoor air environmental quality—and the economic, public health and environmental benefits of green building approaches. The community will discuss possibilities for enabling these green building elements through public policies or code changes.

Areas of Focus

This assistance will focus on the EPA publication [Sustainable Design and Green Building Toolkit for Local Governments \(PDF\)](#) (92 pp, 15MB, [About PDF](#)). Before the workshop, communities will use this publication to conduct an assessment of their existing policies and codes to evaluate the extent to which they currently support or hinder green building. During the workshop, experts will work with the community to evaluate the assessment results and to develop options for revising policies and codes to address obstacles identified in the assessment and to achieve the community's goals.

Who Should Attend:

- / Local government “green teams.”
- / Code officials.
- / Law enforcement officials.
- / Building professionals.
- / City planning and zoning staff.
- / Elected officials and key staff.
- / Other stakeholders.

How It Works:

- / Community will receive an assessment tool before the workshop.
- / One-to-two day session with community leaders and staff begins with an overview of the principles of smart growth and green building.
- / Review of the assessment tool results and discussion of potential options for addressing gaps, including examples from other communities.
- / Facilitated session to discuss an action plan for supporting greener building practices through local policies.

What the Community Provides:

- / Results of the assessment.
- / Background information such as local codes and plans.
- / Organization of workshop and tour.
- / Decision-makers' commitment to attend the workshop.
- / Local logistics.
- / Local key contact.

Outcomes:

- / Identification of local green building goals and options for policies and code changes to implement them.
- / Understanding of the benefits that the community can achieve by adopting greener building practices.

Tool #8: SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES FOR SMALL CITIES AND RURAL AREAS

This workshop, tailored to small cities and rural areas, will offer a menu of “quick fixes” local governments can make to their zoning codes to promote smart growth.

Community Benefits

Identifying hurdles to smart growth in local development codes—and ways to remove them—will help small cities and towns promote community goals, sustainable and efficient development patterns, and economic growth. This workshop will help participants understand the basic principles of smart growth and potential code changes that could be adopted to promote compact, walkable communities that encourage investment in existing neighborhoods while preserving farmland and open space. Participants will develop an initial list of priority “fixes” to their local codes and an implementation strategy.

Areas of Focus

This tool will draw on several publications, including *Essential Smart Growth Fixes For Rural Planning, Zoning, and Development Codes*, [*Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities*](#), and others. Topics can include planned unit developments, right-sizing roads, protecting sensitive natural and agricultural areas, rural commercial development, fiscal impact analysis, annexation policies, and conservation development, among others. The presentations and discussions will focus on implementation issues and strategies drawing on experiences in other rural communities.

Who Should Attend:

- / Community and neighborhood leaders.
- / Builders and developers.
- / Landowners.
- / Elected officials and key staff.
- / Other stakeholders.

How It Works:

- / One- to two-day session with community leaders and staff begins with an overview of smart growth principles and some typical disconnects between those principles, community goals, and local development codes. Tips on overcoming these shortcomings are presented from best practices in other communities.
- / Driving/walking tour of the community to discuss priority fixes to perceived problems on the ground.
- / Hands-on working session with local officials to conduct an initial zoning code assessment and identify 4-6 priority fixes and a strategy for implementing them.

What the Community Provides:

- / Background information such as local codes and plans.
- / Organization of workshop and tour.
- / Decision-makers’ commitment to attend the workshop.
- / Local logistics.
- / Local key contact.

Outcomes:

- / Identification of local smart growth goals and options for code changes to implement them.
- / Understanding of smart growth principles and how zoning codes can help accomplish them.
- / Specific list of local priority code fixes and tips and advice on implementation strategies.

Tool #9: LAND USE STRATEGIES TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY

Communities are looking for ways to maximize the opportunities and benefits associated with growth while minimizing and managing its environmental impacts, especially stormwater runoff. This tool helps communities talk through green infrastructure approaches to tackle these impacts.

Community Benefits

This workshop walks the community through each of the four prongs of green infrastructure (see bullets below) to identify possible ways the community might use development practices to better manage stormwater runoff. This workshop is not intended as a guide on how to design and construct a rain garden, but rather how the community might use development approaches to meet its stormwater requirements and strengthen its economy.

Areas of Focus

Communities will be introduced to strategies that will help them prioritize investments and coordinate their efforts around key themes such as compact development, streets, parking, open space preservation, and site-specific stormwater management practices. Specifically, this tool will help communities:

- Preserve and enhance natural features, such as undisturbed forests, meadows, wetlands, regional and neighborhood greenways, trails, and other natural areas.
- Recycle land by directing new development to already-degraded land, such as parking lots, vacant buildings, and abandoned malls.
- Reduce land consumption and development footprint by using land more efficiently.
- Reuse stormwater by directing it back into the ground through infiltration, evapotranspiration, or through capture and reuse techniques.

Who Should Attend:

- / Planners.
- / Economic development officials.
- / Transportation officials.
- / Community commissioners.

How It Works:

- / One- to two-day assistance includes a morning work session with local government officials and other key stakeholders, an afternoon meeting with local government leaders, and an evening public workshop.

What the Community Provides:

- / Marketing of public workshop.
- / Invitations to key stakeholders to attend work sessions.
- / Local logistics.
- / Local key contact.
- / Decision-makers' commitment to attend the workshop.
- / Background information on current and planned sustainability initiatives.

Outcomes:

- / An understanding of the relationship between water quality and land use.
- / Possible approaches to modify local codes, ordinances, and policy to meet the community's land development, water quality, and economic development goals.
- / Community prioritization for next steps to implement strategies discussed in the workshop.