Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities

New Partners for Smart Growth Conference

Baltimore, MD

January 29, 2015
Roadmap for Today’s Workshop

• Overview
• A Discussion of Benefits and Analytics of Using These Tools
• Review of the Walkability Audit Tool
• Break
• Other Transportation Tools
• Facilitated Discussion of Impacts of Building Blocks Assistance
• Testimony from Community Assistance
• Review of Case Studies
• Wrap Up/Next Steps
Office of Sustainable Communities: What Does it Do and Why?

- **Change the conversation** about development patterns;
- **Change the rules** by removing barriers to smart growth; and
- **Help the willing**, by choosing to work with communities that seek out EPA assistance.

All in support of the economy, equitable development, public health and the environment.

One way to accomplish this is through technical assistance.
The Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program is often the first building block for a community trying to change its development patterns.
Building Blocks Program

- Data gathering and prep work: 4-6 weeks
- One- to two-day workshop: Scheduled from March 2015 through June 2015
- Next Steps Memo: 2-4 weeks later
**Typical Building Blocks**

**Workshop Agenda**

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<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
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<td>• Meet with local stakeholders</td>
<td>• Review key concepts with a targeted audience</td>
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<td>• Tour the community</td>
<td>• Review technical policy solutions</td>
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<td>• Hold an open house to introduce key concepts and issues</td>
<td>• Review core concepts with elected officials during lunch</td>
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<td>• Debrief with stakeholders</td>
<td>• Discuss next steps for policy and implementation</td>
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Widespread Demand for Assistance

- High demand from communities everywhere for help with similar challenges – examples, parking, complete streets, water quality.

**Round 1:** 354 applications received; 30 communities assisted

**Round 2:** 103 applications received; 56 communities assisted

**Round 3:** 121 applications received; 43 communities assisted

**Round 4:** 118 applications received; 20 communities selected
Tools Are Developed Through an Evolving Process

- EPA-formulated Tools
- Tools based on existing efforts
- Tools developed and provided by external experts
Tool Development

- Building Blocks Program and Regional Collaboration
Tool Development

- Preferred Growth Areas:
  - Moving from a concept, to a report, to a tool
Tool Delivery

- Workshops are scheduled with communities and focus on key stakeholders
- Schedule is organized to learn from each workshop and make adjustments
- Tool is refined through the process
- Communities are engaged through development of next steps discussed during workshops
Taking Program to Scale

Coordination with EPA

PPS
PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES

FOR TERRA

GLOBAL GREEN USA

Smart Growth America
Making Neighborhoods Great Together
Taking Program to Scale

Building Blocks Training Academy

• “Train the Trainer” event in Washington, DC December 9-11, 2014

• Focus on 4 transportation related tools:
  – Walkability Audits
  – Parking Audits
  – Green Streets Strategies
  – Preferred Growth Areas

• 35 staff from metropolitan planning organizations, and 10 staff from federal agencies
http://www.walklive.org/project/walkability-workbook/
Parking Audit
What Is Success?

- Short Term (2014) Outcomes/Outputs
- Long Term (5 year horizon) Outcomes/Outputs

- For example
  - X number of organizations reached
  - X number of communities that use tools as a result of “Third Party Providers”
  - X of tools used by Y number of providers
  - Address core office purpose:
    - conversation changed/rules changed/communities served
Measuring Results

• Develop a **tracking mechanism**, so that each tool delivery, or engagement with an outside organization is documented in a written ‘report-out/summary’

• **Qualitative versus quantitative:** communities seek hard numbers and data, not just case studies: what does this look like?

• Building into work assignment, but then what afterwards. Can **documentation be tied to other metrics**?
Contact Information

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