



**To: New Paltz Town Board**

**From: David Gilmour, AICP, Village Planner**

**Date: August 17, 2015**

**Copy: Village Clerk; Mayor Rogers; Project File.**

**RE: Background on Flood Resilience for Riverine Communities' Technical Assistance Project**

This memo introduces the Village's Technical Assistance Project from US Environmental Protection Agency on Flood Resilience for Riverine & Coastal Communities. Please save the date - there will be a community meeting on Thursday evening, September 17, 2015 plus there will be an all-day workshop for invited stakeholders the next day, Friday, Sept. 18, 2015.

Per the attached two-page letter, Village Planner White applied for Technical Assistance from US EPA. Notification of acceptance was received by Mayor Rogers on June 17, 2015.

Information on the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program is in the six page description from EPA's web site. New Paltz will receive assistance in the form of a consultant-led visit, meeting and workshop led by the team of national experts on flood resiliency. We will also receive a 'next steps' memo from EPA. The latter will be 5-10 pages and provide recommendations for the community to advance flood resiliency and sustainability.

The Village Board was briefed Wednesday, August 12, 2015. There was consensus for the project be structured to be joint with the Town. The Mayor asked to extend an invitation for the Town to participate in the September meetings. The County would also be invited. Also, the workshop will be structured so that land use board members attending can receive training contact hours.

Please save the dates and let me know whether it acceptable to structure the workshops in a way so that we can involve interest Town members on Thursday evening and involved Town land use oriented boards, commissions and committee members on Friday. The project steering group is myself and Village Building Inspector Arms. We are working with EPA's consultant – TetraTech – and EPA staff. The project is informed by data on the community, so the Village is preparing a 16 page self-assessment on a form the team provided.

This project appears to be a good fit with implementation of NY Rising resiliency planning developed at the County and municipal level as well as with long-range planning, including hazard planning and infrastructure development. Overall it should help promote a smart and sustainable approach growth and development.

End of document.



*Jason West, Mayor*

*Rebecca Rotzler, Deputy Mayor*

*Trustees: Thomas Rocco, Sally M. Rhoads & Ariana Basco*

*Nancy Branco  
Treasurer*

*Gene Bleu Terwilliger  
Superintendent Public Works*

*Kathryn Doyle- Bunker  
Village Clerk*

Sarah Dale, US Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Village of New Paltz  
25 Plattekill Avenue  
New Paltz, NY 12561

November 20, 2014

Dear Ms. Dale,

On behalf of the Village of New Paltz, I am seeking assistance on Flood Resilience for Riverine and Coastal Communities (tool #5).

The western edge of our Village sits on along the Wallkill River, a tributary of the Hudson River, in Ulster County, New York. Because of our proximity to this waterway and other tributaries running throughout the Village, New Paltz has experienced significant flooding during events such as Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Even smaller weather events such as summer and winter storms, and drastic variations in temperature in the winter months, negatively impact New Paltz.

Among the challenges faced by this community, the municipal wastewater treatment plant becomes overwhelmed during major storm events because of the large amount of inflow and infiltration that occurs. Also, heavy rainfall events cause flooding with associated traffic detours, building flooding, and business shutdowns. Flooding on some major streets throughout the Village causes an overflow of manholes.

These challenges affect low-income by threatening the homes of those who may not be able to afford to repair them. It would present disproportionate environmental or health risks by promoting mold, mildew, and other potentially dangerous elements into residential living space.

In 2005, the Village hired Hudsonia, an environmental consultant specializing in research, education, training, and technical assistance to protect the natural heritage of the Hudson Valley and neighboring regions. Hudsonia worked on a water study project for the Village, documenting all potential wetland areas.

The Village has been working on flood prevention strategies and stormwater management as opportunities arise. In 2013, the Village unearthed an existing stream under Plattekill Avenue rather than replace a broken pipe and culvert that carried the stream underground. In 2014, the Village of New Paltz became an MS4 community, through which we will develop and implement a stormwater management program (SWMP) to reduce the contamination of stormwater runoff and prohibit illicit discharges.

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On the other hand, New Paltz has Flood District in our Zoning Code for additional protection along the Wallkill River. But it is unclear if this District is appropriate in size, location, and restrictions. The Village Board and residents would appreciate assistance and evaluation of this neighborhood to be included in the workshops.

Education and assistance for flood resilience would greatly benefit the Village of New Paltz. Low income and minority residents are more likely to be negatively impacted by this type of problem. By holding workshops and giving out resulting information to the entire community, the workshop would serve to engage traditionally underrepresented community members. The entire community, including low-income and minority individuals, would benefit from a sustainable community that has proper tools in place to combat flooding, erosion, and other climate change related issues to the environment.

The Village would like to see such workshops on flood resilience result in amendments to Village Code. Through this opportunity, we plan to identify options for our local Comprehensive Plan update, our Hazard Mitigation Plan, and our Building Standards. The Village Board has discussed the possibility of adopting green infrastructure regulations but we don't know where to start. Through these workshops, we could identify places in our current Code that are working against flood resiliency and amend them appropriately.

Last month, New Paltz was awarded a \$201,000 Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) federal grant to build sidewalks at several locations. If awarded this smart growth opportunity for workshops, New Paltz could be more educated in green construction and porous pavement options that could impact how sidewalks are built in the Village.

Also, improving flood resilience through the Village could support the existing community by working toward community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments. Less flooding would certainly enhance the unique characteristics of this community by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods.

The Village of New Paltz can provide the information or materials listed in the "What the Community Provides" section through the Building and Planning Departments and the Village Board.

Contact information is as follows:

-- Brenda White, Director of Planning, Zoning, and Code Enforcement.

[Planning@villageofnewpaltz.org](mailto:Planning@villageofnewpaltz.org). (845)255-3055.

-- Jason West, Mayor. [Mayor@villageofnewpaltz.org](mailto:Mayor@villageofnewpaltz.org). (845)255-0130.

-- Brogan O'Donnell, Planning and Zoning Secretary.

[Planningzoningsecretary@villageofnewpaltz.org](mailto:Planningzoningsecretary@villageofnewpaltz.org). (845)255-3055

[All of the above are located at 25 Plattekill Ave, New Paltz, NY 12561.]

Thank you for your consideration,



Brenda L White

Director of Planning, Zoning, and Code Enforcement

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## Smart Growth

### Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities

**Now open for applications:** EPA grantee Global Green is offering no-cost technical assistance with its sustainable neighborhood assessment tool. Applications from eligible local and tribal governments are due to Global Green by **July 17, 2015, at midnight PST**. Global Green expects to assist approximately six communities. [Click here for more information and the application form.](#)[Exit](#)



This video from EPA describes how a walkability audit -- one of the Building Blocks tools -- was conducted in Blue Springs, Missouri. This video from Housing & Community Solutions, Inc. (HCSI) describes how community members in the 26th Ward of St. Louis, MO worked with HCSI to apply for technical assistance through EPA's Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program. A walkability audit was conducted in the 26th Ward as part of this technical assistance.

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## Background

Many communities around the country are asking for tools to help them achieve their desired development goals, improve quality of life, and become more economically and environmentally sustainable. In response to this demand, EPA developed the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program.

Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities provides quick, targeted technical assistance to selected communities using a variety of tools that have demonstrated results and widespread application. The purpose of delivering these tools is to stimulate a discussion about growth and development and strengthen local capacity to implement sustainable approaches.

A tool includes:

- An agenda, presentations, and exercises that help facilitate discussion around a given topic.
  - Data or information from the community that can be analyzed, helping to drive a conversation.
  - An action-oriented process that leads to a set of potential next steps.
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## Assistance from EPA

Technical assistance is delivered by EPA staff and EPA-hired consultant teams. Each technical assistance project includes:

- Public engagement through a one- to two-day workshop.
- Direct consultation with relevant decision-makers.
- A memo outlining specific steps the community could take to implement the ideas generated during the workshop.

Learn more on our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page.

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## Tools Offered

EPA offers a variety of tools through the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program. Not every tool is offered in every round. Once EPA has used a tool in several communities, the tool will be refined to create a product that any community can use with limited outside assistance.

- **Bikeshare Planning:** Helps communities lay the groundwork to establish a bikeshare system, discussing feasibility, system planning, business plans, system operations, and health, safety, and social equity.
- **Complete Streets:** Teaches communities how to set investment priorities, draft policies, and implement changes to make their streets safe and appealing to all users, including drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit

riders.

- **Creating a Green Streets Strategy:** Helps communities begin to develop strategies for greening their streets by adapting national best practices and case studies to their local context.
- **Flood Resilience for Riverine and Coastal Communities:** Helps communities adapt to climate change and plan for disaster resilience by auditing local plans, policies, and development regulations. For more information on flood resilience, please see our [Flood Resilience Checklist](#).
- **Green Building Toolkit:** Helps local governments identify policies that support compact development that features sustainably built homes and other buildings.
- **Infill Development for Distressed Cities:** Helps local governments in distressed communities identify obstacles to development in their downtown core and strategies for overcoming those obstacles. The tool is based on [Attracting Infill Development in Distressed Cities: 30 Strategies](#).
- **Land Use Strategies to Protect Water Quality:** Helps local governments examine land use approaches to green infrastructure that manage stormwater.
- **Neighborhood Planning for Healthy Aging:** Explores the role of supportive neighborhood design in creating great places for aging residents.
- **Parking Audit:** Evaluates local parking policies and offers advice on parking management strategies, drawing from successful strategies in other communities.
- **Preferred Growth Areas:** Offers a process for communities to review values, opportunities, tools, and constraints to determine the most environmentally beneficial locations for growth.
- **Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development:** Helps the community understand the key principles and decisions at the location, site, and building levels that can result in a more sustainable plan or development proposal.
- **Supporting Equitable Development:** Helps communities evaluate their needs around equitable development and identify strategies to manage neighborhood change and support community goals around housing, culture, and local businesses.
- **Sustainability Strategies for Small Cities and Rural Areas:** Uses EPA's Small Town and Rural Code and Zoning Audit Tool to identify barriers to smart growth in local development codes, programs, initiatives, and policies to help small cities and towns achieve their goals for sustainable development patterns and economic growth.
- **Sustainable Land Use Code Audit:** Evaluates local land use codes, including zoning and subdivision regulations, for opportunities to incorporate community sustainability goals, remove barriers, and create incentives.
- **Using Smart Growth to Produce Fiscal and Economic Health:** Helps communities evaluate how to get better economic results from private development and public investments.
- **Walking Audit:** Guides communities in assessing the pedestrian environment and forming a vision for short- and long-term improvements to sidewalks and streets. This tool, completed in 2012, is now online: [Walkability Workbook](#) <sup>Exid</sup>.

## Communities Selected in 2015

In January 2015, EPA selected 22 communities in 18 states to receive Building Blocks assistance. Five tools were offered:

- **Bikeshare Planning:** Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Fresno, California; Passaic County, New Jersey; St. Petersburg, Florida
- **Infill Development in Distressed Communities:** Canton, Mississippi; Danville, Illinois; Marysville, Washington; Terre Haute, Indiana
- **Flood Resilience for Riverine and Coastal Communities:** Mobile, Alabama; Newburyport, Massachusetts; New Paltz, New York; Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, California; Scituate, Massachusetts
- **Sustainable Strategies for Small Cities and Rural Areas:** Damariscotta, Maine; Nederland, Colorado; Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Wisconsin; Steamboat Springs, Colorado
- **Supporting Equitable Development:** Asheville, North Carolina; Austin, Texas; Cincinnati, Ohio; Polk County, Iowa; Prichard, Alabama

No communities were selected in 2014.

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## Communities Selected in 2013

In February 2013, EPA selected 42 communities in 27 states to receive Building Blocks assistance. Nine tools were offered:

- **Creating a Green Streets Strategy:** Bellevue, Nebraska; Dayton, Ohio; Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Lynchburg, Virginia; Maui, Hawaii
- **Green Building Toolkit:** Boise, Idaho; Vinton, Texas
- **Land Use Strategies to Protect Water Quality:** Atchison, Kansas; Beaverton, Oregon; Caddo, Louisiana; Dubuque, Iowa; Gun Lake Tribe, Michigan; Jersey City, New Jersey; Lake Zurich, Illinois; Petersburg, Virginia; Washoe Tribe, Nevada
- **Neighborhood Planning for Healthy Aging:** Chattanooga, Tennessee; Inyo County, California; Pompano Beach, Florida; Seneca Nation, New York
- **Parking Audit:** Brunswick, Maine; Carpinteria, California; Lawrence, Kansas
- **Planning Bikeshare Programs:** Bridgeport, Connecticut; Denver, Colorado; Fort Collins, Colorado; New Orleans, Louisiana; Portland, Maine
- **Supporting Equitable Development:** Atlanta, Georgia; Buffalo, New York; Stamford, Connecticut; Tulsa, Oklahoma
- **Sustainable Strategies for Small Cities and Rural Areas:** Bowling Green, Florida; Brattleboro, Vermont; Maui, Hawaii; Murray, Kentucky; New Castle, Delaware; Vinton, Texas; Williamson, New York; Yurok Tribe, California; Zolfo Springs, Florida

- **Using Smart Growth to Produce Economic and Fiscal Health:** Fargo, North Dakota; Lake Worth, Florida; Omaha, Nebraska
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## Communities Selected in 2012

In 2012, EPA selected 56 communities in 26 states to receive technical assistance through the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program.

- **Complete Streets:** Binghamton, New York; Burlington, Vermont; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Modesto, California; Pocatello, Idaho; and Roxbury, Massachusetts.
  - **Green Building Toolkit:** Dunwoody, Georgia and Niles, Illinois.
  - **Green Streets Strategy:** East Lansing, Michigan; Passaic County, New Jersey; Northampton, Massachusetts; and Surprise, Arizona.
  - **Linking Land Use to Water Quality:** Campton Hills, Lakemoor, and Round Lake Heights, Illinois.
  - **Parking Audits:** Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Greensburg, Pennsylvania; Hennepin County, Minnesota; Holyoke, Massachusetts; Roanoke, Virginia; Simsbury, Connecticut; and Trenton, New Jersey.
  - **Preferred Growth Areas:** Dickinson, New England, and Richardton, North Dakota.
  - **Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development:** Greensboro, North Carolina; Hazel Crest, Lansing, and Olympia Fields, Illinois; and Salina, Kansas.
  - **Smart Growth Zoning Codes for Small Cities and Rural Areas:** Dallas Center, Iowa; Hays, Kansas; Marietta, Pennsylvania; Onondaga County, New York; Onslow County, North Carolina; University City, Missouri; Van Meter, Iowa; Wakulla County, Florida; and Woodward, Iowa.
  - **Sustainable Land Use Code Audit:** St. Joseph, Missouri.
  - **Using Smart Growth to Produce Fiscal and Economic Health:** Fall River, Massachusetts; Henderson, Nevada; Kelso, Washington; Northampton County, Pennsylvania; Stony Point, New York; and Topeka, Kansas.
  - **Walking Audit:** Blue Springs, Missouri; Contra Costa County, California; Corpus Christi, Texas; Daytona Beach, Florida; Jackson, Michigan; Jersey City, New Jersey; Lewes, Delaware; Newtown Borough, Pennsylvania; Olympia, Washington; and Port Arthur, Texas.
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## Communities Selected in 2011

In 2011, EPA selected 32 communities from two sources to receive Building Blocks assistance.

- **Complete Streets:** McKinney, Texas; Nashville/Davidson, Tennessee; Portland, Maine; and Wichita, Kansas.
- **Preferred Growth Areas:** Bluffton, South Carolina; Ranson, West Virginia; and Rockport, Texas.



- **Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development:** Hellertown, Pennsylvania; Kayenta Township, Arizona; Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and Syracuse, New York.
  - **Smart Growth Zoning Codes for Small Cities and Rural Areas:** Cambridge, Maryland; Essex, Connecticut; Reedsburg, Wisconsin; and Spencer, North Carolina.
  - **Sustainable Land Use Code Audit:** Dover, New Hampshire; Granville, Ohio; Lincoln, Nebraska; and Shelburne, Vermont.
  - **Using Smart Growth to Produce Fiscal and Economic Health:** Bemidji, Minnesota; Chelmsford, Massachusetts; Deerfield Beach, Florida; Erie County, New York; Muskegon, Michigan; and Pike's Peak Council of Governments, Colorado.
  - **Walking Audit:** Helena, Montana; Renton, Washington; and St. Louis, Missouri.
  - **Linking Land Use to Water Quality:** Fitchburg, Wisconsin, and Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania.
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## Assistance from Grantees

In addition to the EPA Building Blocks assistance described on this page, EPA provides grants to nonprofit organizations to provide similar assistance to communities. Learn more about [assistance from the grantees](#).

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## Other Tools and Technical Assistance Programs

Please see our [Tools](#) page and [Technical Assistance](#) page for additional resources.

Last updated on June 16, 2015