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Environmental Commission Resolution in Support of Green Streets Policy

For the past two years the City of Ann Arbor’s Water Committee, a committee of the Environmental Commission, has been discussing the City’s water resources improvements, practices, and policies. The Water Committee decided to focus its efforts on improving stormwater management within the City’s street system. To make sure it’s goals are both attainable and desirable in the community, the Water Committee recently held a series of “Green Streets” focus group meetings to discuss the past, present, and future of stormwater practices within the City’s road right-of-ways.

The terms Green Streets or Green Infrastructure are adaptable terms used to describe an array of products, technologies, and practices that use natural systems - or engineered systems that mimic natural processes - to enhance overall environmental quality and provide utility services. Green Streets usually treat and/or infiltrate storm water which improves water quality and reduces the volume and rate at which stormwater leaves the street.

As a result of the discussions at the Green Street focus group meetings the Environmental Commission Water Committee encourages the City to consider policy changes that would make “Green Streets” the new standard for street design.

Approved by: Environmental Commission on March 22, 2012

Members: Briere, German, Graham, Hohnke, Loch-Caruso, Stead, and Strassberg

Whereas, Impervious surfaces are major contributors to stormwater runoff pollution and volume;

Whereas, Pollutant load is significant in stormwater, especially in the first flush (first ½” of rain during any rain event);

Whereas, In Ann Arbor, the City right-of-way includes 2.9 square miles of impervious area, which represents 25.9% of the total impervious area within the City. Since road surfaces are directly connected to the stormwater management system, it is estimated that 50% of all stormwater runoff within the City is generated from the right-of-ways;

Whereas, New materials and strategies exist with proven success for stormwater management;

Whereas, The term “Green Streets” includes green infrastructure which is an adaptable term used to describe an array of products, technologies, and practices that use natural systems - or engineered systems that mimic natural processes - to enhance overall environmental quality and provide utility services;

Whereas, The US EPA has accepted alternative strategies for stormwater management across the nation;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor’s NPDES permit requires action related to stormwater management;

Whereas, The City is subject to a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) restriction by the State of Michigan for biota (total suspended solids), E. coli and phosphorus from storm water;

Whereas, Stormwater is delivered untreated to the Huron River, which is recognized as a valued natural resource for the Ann Arbor Community; and

Whereas, Weather models are predicting increased frequency and intensity of intense stormwater events;

RESOLVED, that the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission is fully supportive of the Green Streets Initiative of the Environmental Commission Water Committee, and hereby recommends Ann Arbor City Council directs City Staff (from the Systems Planning, Project Management, and Field Operations Units of Public Services; Parks and Recreation, and Planning from Community Services) to work with the Environmental Commission in the development of a Green Streets policy.