

## **REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

### **HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**MEETING DATE:** November 18, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Low Impact Development Initiative

**PRESENTER:** Christine Wittmeier

**ATTACHMENTS:** Yes  
1. Low Impact Development Initiative

#### **SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Henderson County Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) voted on the final version of the Low Impact Development Initiative. On October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Henderson County Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) submitted a letter to the Board of Commissioners presenting the Low Impact Development Initiative. The document can be included as an appendix with designer and engineering Request For Qualifications (RFQs) that are released by the County. This initiative is not an attempt to increase regulation or create statutory requirements. Rather it should act as a guidance document for both county staff and outside consultants to aid in the decision-making process in a cradle-to-grave approach.

#### **BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:**

The Board is requested to adopt the attached Low Impact Development Initiative to be included as an appendix for RFQs.

#### **Suggested Motion:**

*I move that the Board adopt the attached the Low Impact Development Initiative to be included as an appendix for designer and engineering RFQs.*



## HENDERSON COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ANDREW MYERS · CHRIS GROSE · LUCY BUTLER · JOHN HARRISON  
RAYMOND SAVAGE · SHANE LAUGHTER · STEPHEN TILLOTSON · GRAYDON NANCE

To: Henderson County Board of Commissioners

Date: October 14, 2019

**Re: Low Impact Development Initiative**

Please find the attached Low Impact Development (LID) Initiative. The intention of this document is to provide a general framework for future county development projects. Our desire is that a LID approach will be taken seriously from the beginning to end of a project, from conceptual planning through construction, and continually in the long-term operation and maintenance of the site.

Ideally, this document would be included as an appendix with designer and engineer RFQs that are released by the County. This guidance is not an attempt to increase regulation or create statutory requirements. Rather it should act as a guidance document for both county staff and outside consultants to aid in the decision-making process in a cradle-to-grave approach.

Ultimately, the goal of this initiative is to give Henderson County residents better capital improvement projects for the same price. We must demand more innovation and more creativity from our development consultants—we are paying them for that anyway!

Respectfully,

Henderson County Environmental Advisory Committee

## **Low Impact Design Initiative**

The natural resources within Henderson County are a rare and valuable asset. Our position in the French Broad valley is uniquely flat and is surrounded by the Southern Appalachian Mountains. Steep bedrock and cobble-lined streams cascade down to the valley, emptying into lethargic sand-bed streams such as Mud Creek and the French Broad River. This natural landscape constrains development, transportation, and agriculture within the county.

Due to the natural topography, historic development practices, and high rainfall accumulation, Henderson County's urban and suburban areas are experiencing symptoms of urban stream syndrome. Urban stream syndrome is exhibited by a flashier hydrograph, elevated concentrations of nutrients and contaminants, altered channel morphology, and reduced biotic richness in the form of increased dominance of pollution-tolerant and invasive species. This makes our land, and specifically our streams, significantly less attractive to citizens and visitors.

The intent of this policy statement is to encourage county staff and site development consultants (architects, engineers, and landscape architects) to approach capital improvements as Low Impact Developments (LID) throughout the entire process, from land acquisition through site planning to long term operation and maintenance. Our hope is that the Henderson County government can provide leadership on these issues—showing a more responsible way to develop or re-develop a site—and set an example as stewards of this great land by building projects in such a way that increases the health of our water bodies as opposed to continuing business as usual: exacerbating the symptoms of urban stream syndrome.

A LID approach to site development does not have to include large, expensive structural measures, but should consider the whole process, leveraging conservation practices and smart-design decisions where practical. Some considerations to include in this approach are:

- site selection
- impervious surface reduction
- limitation of site disturbance (leave areas undeveloped)
- site layout with less space (pedestrian-based instead of vehicular-based infrastructure)
- structural stormwater measures
- infiltration potential
- bioremediation
- vegetated roofs
- capture and reuse
- extension of stormwater flow paths

This is not an exhaustive list of considerations, rather an example of ideas to exploit throughout the site development process. If any of these considerations are outside of a particular project's budget, then they should be left on the cutting-room floor. But, if these types of measures can be exploited for the same cost to County, then they should be used. Ultimately, the goal of this guidance is to give Henderson County residents contextually appropriate capital improvements that have been designed with the wholistic LID approach, for the same price as conventional development.

**END OF MEMORANDUM**