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## MEMO

**To:** TJPD Commissioners  
**From:** Rochelle Garwood  
**Date:** April 30, 2009  
**Reference:** Green infrastructure plan

**Purpose:** To provide Commissioners with an update on the work to date and receive feedback on its future direction.

**Background:** The TJPDC first received funding from the Virginia Department of Forestry to do a green infrastructure plan in October 2006. Green infrastructure is defined as “an interconnected network of green spaces that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to human populations.” A green infrastructure system includes large areas called hubs, which anchor the system; links, which connect the system together; and sites, which are smaller than hubs but significant. Benefits of green infrastructure include improved water quality and quantity, preservation of biodiversity by providing large habitat areas and corridors for movement between them, provision of areas for recreation, stormwater and flooding control, protection of air quality, enhancement of community appearance, increased property values, and an attraction for tourists.

Mapping is an integral part of green infrastructure planning. I’ve been meeting with a technical committee consisting of locality, state and non-profit staff since August 2007 to discuss which map layers belong in our green infrastructure plan. Some issues, such as which habitat layers to use, were settled relatively quickly; others have been less clear, more contentious, or both. At its last meeting on March 30, the committee decided that the following should be considered the critical layers:

- Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment Habitat Cores 1 & 2 and Corridors, Albemarle Precious Places
- Steep slopes (25%)
- Major streams (3<sup>rd</sup> order and above with 100-foot buffer)
- Public lands
- Lands under permanent easement
- Adopted greenway/trail plans

The concept for the plan at this point is that the other layers be presented on a chapter-by-chapter basis. The following have been suggested as possible chapters:

- I. Economic Development
  - a. Historic Resources

- b. Tourism Resources
- c. Bike Trails
- d. Wineries
- e. Agro tourism
- f. Ecotourism
- g. Heritage Tourism Layer
- II. Habitat
- III. Water Quality
  - a. Drinking water
  - b. Healthy waters
  - c. Impaired waters
- IV. Recreation
  - a. Proposed Trails as separate section
  - b. Smaller, or informal trails
- V. Cultural Lands
- VI. Working Landscape
  - a. Forestry
  - b. Agriculture
  - c. Buy Fresh Buy Local Resources

**Issues:** The grant from VDOF ends September 30, 2009 (although we have additional funding from the Federal Highway Administration for another two years to continue to work to integrate green infrastructure into transportation and comprehensive plans), so it is time to start putting this in a final form.

- Does the approach suggested by the technical committee seem acceptable to the Commission?
- Does the Commission agree with the list of critical layers?
- Does the outline of chapters seem appropriate? What about the chapter contents?
- What recommendation does the Commission have on public involvement? How can the team best keep public officials informed and engaged in the process?

**Action Needed:** Input from the Commission on questions posed above or any other aspect of the project.