
CALUMET STORMWATER COLLABORATIVE

MEETING SUMMARY – January 8, 2016

Metropolitan Planning Council

140 S. Dearborn, Suite 1400



Attendees

John Mick II, Baster & Woodman, Inc.
Burrell Poe, Center for Neighborhood Technology
Marcella Bondie Keenan, Center for Neighborhood Technology
Rodger Cooley, Chicago Food Policy Action Council
Nora Beck, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Kate Evasic, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Jason Navota, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Chris Mulvaney, Chicago Wilderness
Thomas Burke, Christopher Burke Engineering
Monica Giermek, Christopher Burke Engineering
Tom Price, Conservation Design Forum
Graig Neville, EDI
Stephanie Nurre, Strategic Alliance for Risk Reduction
Lyndon Valicenti, Foresight Design Initiative
Eric Otto, Forest Preserves of Cook County
Anthony Cefali, Friends of the Chicago River
Julia Plumb, High Bridge
Lisa Cotner, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Nancy Williamson, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Margaret Schneemann, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant
Jeff Edstrom, Independent Consultant
Mark Wagstaff, M3 Engineering Group
Sarah Cardona, Metropolitan Planning Council
Josh Ellis, Metropolitan Planning Council
Danielle Gallet, Metropolitan Planning Council
Peter Skosey, Metropolitan Planning Council
Valerie Poulos, Metropolitan Planning Council
Kelsey Pudlock, Metropolitan Planning Council
Brent Shraiberg, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
John Watson, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Sarah Coulter, Millennium Reserve
Lindsay Darling, The Morton Arboretum
John Legge, The Nature Conservancy



Ted Haffner, Openlands
Genny Boesem, South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium
Dennis Latto, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
Moira Zellner, University of Illinois at Chicago
Karen Kreis, Village of Midlothian
Daniel Goldfrab, Wildlife Habitat Council

Member Updates

Stephanie Nurre, Strategic Alliance for Risk Reduction, announced that FEMA will be hosting a workshop seminar titled, *From Concrete to Grass Roots: Community Strategies to Reduce Flood Risk*, for community officials to learn more about initiatives, mitigation and outreach concepts to help reduce flood risks. The seminar is scheduled for Wednesday, February 3rd, from 1:00-4:30pm at the offices of the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (1904 W. 174th Street, East Hazel Crest, IL). For more information and to RSVP, please click [here](#).

Monica Giermek, Christopher Burke Engineering, announced that Argonne will be having a lecture on water through its Outloud Lecture Series. The lecture, "The End of Water as We Know It," will discuss what lies ahead, and what can be done now to respond and adapt. It will also cover some of the research Argonne has been doing to address water resource issues. It is scheduled for January 28th from 7:00-8:00pm. In-person registration is closed due to an overwhelming response to attend this lecture, however you will be able to stream it online using [Argonne's live stream channel](#).

Lisa Cotner, IDNR, reiterated that the IDNR Coastal Management Program will be funding another round of coastal grant applications. The application deadline is January 29, 2016. They will be funding projects that range from \$20,000 to \$100,000 as well as smaller grants of approximately \$1,000 to \$5,000. Application materials and instructions can be found [here](#) on IDNR's website. Total funding available is dependent upon federal funding. Past grant rounds have awarded between \$550,000 and \$975,000 per funding year.

Genny Boesem, South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium, announced that they will be continuing their Link and Leverage Forum in 2016. The first forum of the year will be on January 21, 2016 from 7:30-11:00am at the Moraine Valley Community College (900 W. College Parkway, "M" Building Moraine, Room 2, Palos Hills, IL). The Consortium will be working with the Caucus to align environmental issues, resources and actions at the local and regional levels to help municipalities achieve meaningful and measurable environmental sustainability and resilience. You can register for the event [here](#).

John Watson, MWRD, reminded the CSC that MWRD is putting together criteria and a standardized process for selecting green infrastructure projects for partial or full funding. Requests for projects are expected to be coming out in the next few months. A CSC member asked how much previous design or study is needed on the communities' end for the RFP. Watson suggested that preliminary design work would be beneficial but is not required; he recognizes that communities do not always have the resources to put this together. Danielle Gallet, MPC, mentioned that this would be a good opportunity for communities to use Delta's and MWRD's green infrastructure design templates. The RFP will be distributed to municipalities once announced.

Josh Ellis, MPC, announced that the next Chicago Southland Green Drink will be held on Wednesday, January 20th, from 6:00-8:00pm at the Rock Island Public House in Blue Island. The topic of discussion will be road salt and its effects on our water resources. Steve McCracken, Director of Watershed Protection for The Conservation Foundation, will be speaking along with representatives from Cook County and MWRD. If you are interested in attend this event, please contact Josh at jellis@metroplanning.org.

Facilitated Discussion: Work planning process for CSC in 2016

Value of CSC

Prior to the start of the meeting, CSC members were asked to write down on post-its what value(s) they and/or their organization have experienced to-date in participating in the CSC. This activity was the start of a three-part planning process for the 2016-2017 Work Plan.

To kick-off the value discussion, Gallet went over the CSC's mission and vision in order to have everyone revisit the overall intentions of this volunteer, member-based group, which everyone agreed with.

Mission Statement

The Calumet Stormwater Collaborative builds intergovernmental and cross-sector partnerships to increase the effectiveness of stormwater management initiatives for the communities and ecosystems of the Calumet region through knowledge sharing, coordination and deployment of interventions at appropriate scales

Vision Statement

The Calumet Stormwater Collaborative will be a model of coordinated deployment of knowledge, technology and financial resources to minimize the negative impacts of precipitation and maximize the positive to make the Calumet region a better place to live, work and recreate.

Gallet then thanked everyone who participated in the post-it exercise about value, and kicked-off a short discussion by asking people to share what they thought was the biggest value of the CSC is to-date. Following is some of the feedback from members:

- Sarah Coulter, Millennium Reserve, said that the biggest value has been bringing everyone together in one room to talk about these issues, and using a format that is consistent and efficient.
- Nancy Williamson, Illinois Department of Natural Resources stated that the CSC group has created a seismic shift in how the state looks at stormwater management. As a result, they are forming state links and talking between agencies about stormwater, which didn't happen three years ago. She pointed out that many of the CSC's core members have helped make this happen, and seeing people working together is very valuable.
- Karen Kreis, Village of Midlothian, said that the biggest value of the CSC has been the networking opportunity. Municipalities like Midlothian don't have a lot of resources, and having the CSC as a resource and being able to reach out to members has been a tremendous bonus to Midlothian. She highlighted that the Village has had a number of accomplishments from projects with MWRD and Floodlothian Midlothian's popularity. Kreis thanked all of those who have helped them in the last year.
- Jason Navota, CMAP, said that the biggest value has been the inspiration and the change in the field that he believes is taking place as a result of the collaboration. He highlighted that

it's inspiring to have all of the CSC's members moving in the same direction, and to him it definitely feels like things are moving.

- John Watson, MWRD, said the biggest value has been the opportunity to hear what other people are working on as well as their priorities. He pointed out that it is interesting to see everyone addressing different components of these issues. At the same time, he believes that there could be more coordination and better planning within our region.
- Nora Beck, CMAP, said the biggest value, for her personally, has been learning a lot more about our stormwater issues through guest speakers.
- Julia Plumb, High Bridge, said that the CSC serves as an endorsement of or stamp-of-approval for their work, particularly when they are working on site-based projects in various south suburban communities. The resources, knowledge and evidence behind the CSC has helped High Bridge's image and reputation.

What changed in 2015

The meeting also included a discussion about external changes that occurred in 2015 that impacted or will impact the CSC. Changes discussed by the group included the following:

The Illinois state budget impasse, which is something everyone had to contend with and continues to contend with into the New Year. The CSC put together a \$5 million grant proposal to seed fund members of the collaborative on various initiatives; a decision about this funding is on hold until the budget impasse is ironed out. Also due to the budget impasse is a reduced Springfield presence at some meetings due to travel approval reductions, this will also hopefully be alleviated soon.

The National Disaster Resilience Competition came about in 2015, and many CSC members spent a lot of time and effort on this project to help potentially fund resiliency in the region. As this opportunity arose, members slightly altered the work plan; in turn, their participation hopefully had a positive influence on the applications. The results of the competition will be announced this winter. Congratulations to those that were able to contribute.

The group applauded MWRD in having the Thornton Reservoir come online. The Reservoir is referred to as the "Grand Canyon of the south suburbs," can accommodate 12 Soldier Fields and holds up to 7.9 billion gallons of water. The group looks forward to seeing the positive impacts on the completion of this project for the Calumet region this year.

A CSC member called out that there was a big shift in 2015 for water in general – from mayors, regional leaders and groups in the area (for example, the nature conservancy had a water summit this past year). So attention on water has been increasing over 2015.

Another CSC member mentioned that CDOT created Sustainable Urban Infrastructure Policy and Guidelines, which if incorporated into public right of ways and integrated into projects, would have a big impact on regional stormwater management

It was also mentioned that IDNR completed its Urban Flooding Awareness Act Report– some of which is about insurance law and creates different/new avenues of stormwater interventions, which the CSC can help investigate and implement. IDNR also updated its implementation of the Wildlife Action Plan, which can help direct resources related to initiatives CSC members might implement. This plan will help guide the state with funding allocation based on available revenue streams.

It was also mentioned that CMAP made great progress in designing and rolling out its LTA stormwater program and planning.

FAST Act: Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act was passed at the beginning of December 2015. It's the first multi-year transportation bill in 20 years, and embedded within are opportunities for stormwater implementation in road right-of-ways.

Another Collaborative member mentioned that there have been a lot of changes, interest and concern about conservation and stormwater management by industry and companies in the Calumet region – based on what a lot of partnerships are doing in the area.

It was also mentioned that it would be beneficial if members of the CSC would show up to MWRD board meetings and provide feedback on the various initiatives it has rolled out to-date. It was pointed out that if this community could show up to speak at the meetings, it would be good for the commissioners to hear from those that are addressing stormwater management and planning. Everyone would benefit if CSC representatives were in attendance.

Breakout Group Exercise: Impacts CSC collectively wants to achieve in 2016

After discussing what had changed in 2015, the CSC transitioned into an interactive exercise to think big, and brainstorm about the kinds of impacts they want to see at the end of 2016. The point of the exercise was to think about the 'what' not the 'how' for new ideas related to how the CSC can beneficially impact stormwater issues in the Calumet region.

The CSC broke out into small group discussions; each table was assigned a moderator, and participants were asked to write on post-it notes at least five impacts he/she wants to see in 2016 that would not otherwise happen if not for the CSC. As impacts were articulated, post-it notes were placed on a nearby wall. After 10 minutes of brainstorming, the moderator helped categorized the post-its into themes to help identify commonalities across the group's impacts. Participants were then given two sticker dots to vote on what they believed were the priority impacts coming out of their group. After the voting, each group reported on their top priority impacts. Impacts identified by each group are listed below:

Group 1

Within this group, there was a tie between priorities. The top priority is to identify and secure funding, not only for convening purposes, but also for the actions that we intend to take. There were four additional priorities that received the same number of votes. Some of these are predicated on others and some are intertwined. The four include:

1. Robust training program for workforce and construction programs around maintenance and installation;
2. Incorporation of green infrastructure into capital projects or other municipal guidelines (whether it's redoing the streets or roadways);
3. Engage community efforts around these issues; and
4. Monitor the impact of these strategies.

It was noted that these were higher level categories under which the group had provided very specific ideas about each.

Group 2

Within this group, four impacts were identified. They include the following:

1. Allow for the reuse of water. Relevant projects would be adjusting the existing plumbing code, and providing more opportunities for municipalities to reuse water.
2. Engage more communities (e.g. Midlothian x100) about the knowledge and benefits of the CSC and articulating the services the group offers in the New Year.
3. Having more green infrastructure on vacant land (or at least doing an assessment to see if this is feasible), and setting up a collaboration with the land banks.
4. Show the effectiveness of green infrastructure by getting projects in-the-ground.

Group 3

This group categorized impacts in broad themes—implementation, data development, policy-large scale influence, and knowledge sharing/collaboration with Calumet communities. Themes that were prioritized included:

1. Implementation: This would entail seeing on-the-ground projects that are informed by previous planning efforts. These projects would also include monitoring to determine if projects were successful and be able to leverage more money in the future.
2. Large policy changes in the near future: A couple of examples of a large policy change would be changing state law so money could be better allocated, and implementing some of the policy recommendations identified in the Urban Flood Awareness Act. The CSC also believes they can help MWRD refine the watershed ordinance by developing more detailed standards for watersheds that are specific to the Calumet.
3. Community involvement within the Calumet region (with a particular focus on educating communities more about the value of the CSC and what they can gain from it.)

Group 4

Impacts identified by this group revolved around one of these three common themes—green infrastructure integration, funding, and outreach and education. Impacts in no particular order included:

1. Create a statewide method to integrate Best Management Practices (BMPs) into all projects; this would likely entail enforcing CDOT's Sustainable Urban Infrastructure Guidelines.
2. Geographically use the CSC as a model for water across all scales within the Midwest region.
3. Carry out better outreach so local municipalities know where, when and how to look for resources.
4. Develop a system for measuring, evaluation and reporting on progress and impacts; this will help the CSC find more funding.

The groups did a great job working through the exercise, and identified useful impacts for consideration in the creation of the CSC's next work plan.

Closing Remarks

Danielle Gallet, MPC, walked the CSC through the plan for developing the groups next work plan, and how January's meeting was the start of a three-part planning process for the 2016-2017 Work Plan. This process, designed by Lyndon Valicenti, Foresight Design Initiative, and Danielle Gallet, MPC, crafted January's meeting to focus on the value and desired future impacts of the CSC (which was accomplished). The subsequent February and March meetings will focus on setting new goals/actions for 2016, and exploring the overall structure of the CSC to achieve those goals, respectively.

Josh Ellis, MPC, commented that many of the folks in this room have been in the CSC since the beginning; those who have not were encouraged to come and join based-off a recommendation from an existing member. Ellis requested that all CSC members call at least one person within a suburban community of the Calumet and encourage them to come, especially given that the group is in the midst of changing the work plan. The goal is to get five more communities to the next meeting. Ellis believes the CSC can reach this goal quickly through word-of-mouth.

Next Meeting

Friday, February 5, 10:00am – 12:00pm

Metropolitan Planning Council

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