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# CALUMET STORMWATER COLLABORATIVE

MEETING SUMMARY – January 10, 2020  
Metropolitan Planning Council  
140 S. Dearborn, Suite 1400, Chicago, IL 60603



## Attendees

Brad Kasberg, Audubon Great Lakes  
Emily Grimm, Baxter & Woodman, Inc.  
Matt Moffitt, Baxter & Woodman, Inc.  
Drew Williams-Clark, Center for Neighborhood Technology  
Trinity Pierce, Chicago Region Trees Initiative/The Morton Arboretum  
Eric Otto, Forest Preserves of Cook County  
Chelsey Grassfield, Friends of the Chicago River  
Patrick Lach, Hey and Associates  
Cody Eskew, IDNR Coastal Management Program  
Lisa Krause, IDNR Coastal Management Program  
Jeff Edstrom, Illinois Coastal Program  
Margaret Schneemann, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant  
Kira Baltutis, Metro Strategies, Inc.  
Danielle Gallet, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Justin Keller, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Adam Slade, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Ryan Wilson, Metropolitan Planning Council  
John Fox, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago  
Dawn Thompson, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago  
Bob Newport, OAI, Inc.  
Ted Haffner, Openlands  
Bill Wood, SmithGroup  
Jen Jenkins, The Nature Conservancy  
Mary Pat McGuire, University of Illinois  
Karen Kreis, Village of Midlothian

## Member Updates

Margaret Schneemann from Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant said the [Calumet soils research](#) is now complete, though there is ongoing soil sampling. They are forming a working group to develop a toolkit for communities interested in integrating that data into planning. If you are interested in being a part of that working group, contact Margaret at [MSchneemann@cmap.illinois.gov](mailto:MSchneemann@cmap.illinois.gov).

Justin Keller from MPC reminded everyone of the [CSC network impact survey](#) discussed by MPC's Director of Research, Dan Cooper, at the October 2019 meeting. The survey is nearly ready to be shared, so watch your inboxes in the coming weeks, and please make sure to fill out the survey when you receive it.

Lisa Krause from IDNR Coastal Management Program said the Training & Maintenance Work Group is working on an 8-hour training course for green infrastructure maintenance. They have been in communication with the national training instructor, and she is excited about how it can work in conjunction with the [National Green Infrastructure Certification Program](#) (NGICP). They hope that

the introductory 8-hour training program—targeted at new team members—will help people to see the benefit of, and encourage them to register for, the full 5-day program.

Bob Newport from OAI, Inc. added that Parkland College in Champaign is currently the only certified NGICP training center in Illinois. The trainer may be interested in hosting another training in Chicago.

Ryan Wilson from MPC introduced himself again as a new member of MPC since December. He is looking forward to reconnecting with colleagues in the region and working on stormwater issues, especially a stormwater credit trading program.

Bob Newport also congratulated Sarah Cardona for starting a new job as Director of Climate Policy and Advocacy with a NGO in San Francisco. She showed them some of the work she did with the CSC and MPC, and they were thrilled.

## **Presentations**

*Theme: Advancing the CSC's Goal 1: Significant reduction in non-overbank flooding; and Goal 4: Data-driven decision-making is more prevalent in stormwater management planning.*

### **Connecting Wetland Restoration and Community Engagement to Stormwater Management**

Brad Kasberg, Audubon Great Lakes

The National Audubon Society is a bird conservation organization with 115 years of conservation impact. Audubon Great Lakes runs Wild Indigo Nature Explorations, which provide wildlife educational opportunities for multigenerational communities of color, and they are actively working to restore wetlands throughout the Great Lakes region. Wetlands differ from other landscapes because they inherently dynamic, varying year to year from high water, receding water or low water. Restoration work involves creating the conditions that allow wetlands and wetland plants to thrive, which in turn attracts birds.

In the process of restoring wetlands, they have come to understand the impact they can have on stormwater management. In January 2019, they opened the water control structures at Indian Ridge Marsh, hoping to drop the water levels and see new plants emerging in the spring. We then received record-setting precipitation, and water levels rose. Having allowed the water levels to recede, though, there was no flooding on Torrence Ave adjacent to the site. (You can see the [water level figures at CrowdHydrology.com](#), which uses crowdsourcing to collect data about wetland water levels.) Audubon Great Lakes is unable to state definitively that their wetlands restoration work can solve flooding problems—the systems are gravity fed and cannot be drained quickly in response to rain in the forecast—but they know that they can have an impact while still achieving their ecological objectives. The conversation shifted to how they can collaborate with the CSC and bring their community engagement work to stormwater management. If you have ideas, please contact Brad at [Bradford.Kasberg@audubon.org](mailto:Bradford.Kasberg@audubon.org) or by phone at (312) 453-0230 x2005.

### **Leveraging Technology for High Performance Infrastructure: The City Tech Smart Green Infrastructure Monitoring Solution**

David Leopold, City Tech Collaborative

George Letavish, City Tech Collaborative

City Tech Collaborative is an urban solutions accelerator. They tackle problems that are too big for a single organization or sector to take on individually and break down barriers to work on

collaborative solutions. They are based in Chicago but work with many cities on issues related to mobility, health, construction, and wherever there are opportunities. Their model consists of identifying solutions, piloting projects for 3-6 months, and then allowing partners to bring the solutions to scale and take them to market. For example, between June 2015 and November 2017, they worked on a project aimed at improving green infrastructure management through better monitoring, coordinated investments, and performance comparisons against grey infrastructure.

The project team consisted of Microsoft, the City of Chicago, Opti, AECOM and others. They tested four types of green infrastructure installations at four different locations in Chicago. The data was presented in a single dashboard which allowed them to compare their respective performance during the same storm event. Also, because it was cloud based, they pulled in data from rain gauges at O'Hare, data from green infrastructure in other cities which experienced the same storm, etc. The project is now complete, and the data is available on the [Chicago Data Portal](#). It successfully demonstrated the ability to monitor sites. Over 100 sites nationwide are now using their software package to monitor performance, and Opti is working on active control scenarios.

Visit the [CSC website](#) to review the full presentation materials.

## Next Meeting

**\*\*Work Group-focused meeting\*\***

Friday, February 7, 2020

10:00am to 12:00pm

Metropolitan Planning Council

140 S. Dearborn, Suite 1400, Chicago

**For more information contact:**  
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