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# CALUMET STORMWATER COLLABORATIVE

MEETING SUMMARY – December 5, 2014

Metropolitan Planning Council

140 S. Dearborn Ave, Suite 1400, Chicago



## Attendees

Brent Denzin, Ancel Glink  
Mason Throneburg, CH2M HILL  
Nora Beck, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Jason Novota, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Louise Yeung, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Lyndon Valicenti, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Benet Haller, City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development  
Amy Ellingson, Cook County – Office of Commissioner Gainer  
Dominic Tocci, Cook County Department of Planning and Development  
Eric Otto, Forest Preserve District of Cook County  
Maddie Mahan, Friends of the Chicago River  
Jeff Wickenkamp, Hey & Associates  
Mary Ellen Guest, Historic Chicago Bungalow Association  
Lisa Cotner, Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Amy Walkenbach, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency  
Momcilo Markus, Illinois State Water Survey  
Dan Gambil, Illinois State Water Survey  
Amanda Flegel, Illinois State Water Survey  
Josh Ellis, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Kevin Symcox, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Kate Calabra, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Brent Shraiberg, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago  
John Watson, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago  
James Yurik, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago  
Andrew Szwak, Openlands  
Sean Kelly, Robinson Engineering  
Katrina Phillips, sierra Club, Illinois Chapter  
Dennis Latto, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association  
Reggie Greenwood, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association  
David Bucaro, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Bob Newport, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Barbara Minsker, University of Illinois



## Review of draft 2015 CSC Work Plan

Josh Ellis opened the meeting with a review of the Collaborative's Work Plan, including the mission, vision statement, key challenges, priority actions, and success measures. The mission states:

*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.*

The vision states:

*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 create.*

Benet Haller suggested rephrasing the mission statement in a way that emphasizes building collaboration across agencies and government entities. Eric Otto suggested exploring a different angle in regards to "negative impact of precipitation," so as to not put blame for problems on precipitation itself, but on management of it. John Watson agreed that the components of the statements reflect the interests of all parties; now the challenge is paring them down to something more succinct.

The key challenges identified in the work plan are causes and consequences of non-overbank flooding; declining performance and sufficiency of grey and green infrastructure over time; a drain on public and private resources from repeated ineffective and partial interventions. There were no comments regarding the key challenges.

The priority actions identified in the work plan are short-term information sharing and long-term research alignment; inventory of existing stormwater activities; fast-tracking Section 319 planning and approval; data sharing and modeling; streamlining green infrastructure installation, troubleshooting and maintenance; developing effective community engagement and communications strategies; lateral line diagnostics and property interventions at scale; and landing as a stormwater tool. There were no comments regarding the priority actions.

The success measures identified in the work plan are reduction in peak wet weather flows; reduced risk of basement backups in reasonable expected precipitation events; number of government units with green/gray infrastructure projects embedded in long-term capital improvement plans of comprehensive plans increases; number of partners using shared messaging; audience reached with shared messages increases, increase in public recognition that we are making progress toward improved stormwater management; reduced reliance on grant funding for green infrastructure installation; number of government units using optimization tools increases; increase in connectivity and interjurisdictional partnerships between Collaborative members; and full-time equivalents (FTE) created through this work. Benet Haller suggested a need to stress local jobs gained in the south suburbs, to which Louis Yeung added that the Collaborative needs to think about the type of jobs created, the skills needed, and how the jobs are dispersed across the region. Agreeing with Benet and Louise, John Watson suggested that the Collaborative also think about how long term the jobs might be. Josh reiterated that an assessment of job creation, type, duration, etc., stemming from stormwater infrastructure investments was one of the elements of the joint proposal to IEPA.

## **Review of final proposal to Ill. Environmental Protection Agency**

Josh reviewed the final proposal to IEPA and presented a brief summary of each program element.

### Building shared tools and capacity for proactive, data-driven stormwater planning and investment

The premise of this category and these elements is to begin to build systems that will aid all of the actors in the Calumet, from Illinois EPA to MWRD to individual municipalities, in planning for more optimized investments in integrated green and gray stormwater solutions.

- Improving the links between local sewer diagnostic testing, property improvements and capital planning – South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
- Hydrologic and hydraulic model development – Metropolitan Planning Council
- Providing Local Technical Assistance to facilitate improved long-term planning – Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- Developing a green infrastructure co-benefits calculation methodology for NE Illinois – Delta Institute
- Establishing Section 319 eligibility for existing flood control plans – Metropolitan Planning Council

### Ensuring long-term maintenance through coordination of on-the-ground projects and workforce development initiatives

The premise of this category and these elements is to use a range of near-term on-the-ground green infrastructure investments – all of which are beneficial in themselves - as a real world test case for determining the amount of work, skill sets, and training programs required to ensure that there is a ready pool of workers and volunteers capable of maintaining the designed performance of distributed green infrastructure in the long-term.

- On-the-ground projects
  - Lake Riverdale/138<sup>th</sup> Street – South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
  - Green infrastructure retrofits for Park Forest municipal facilities – Village of Park Forest
  - Green infrastructure retrofits for historic Chicago Bungalows – Historic Chicago Bungalow Association
  - Green infrastructure retrofits for Chatham and Midlothian homes through Rain Ready – Center for Neighborhood Technology
  - Mobilizing trees as green stormwater infrastructure – Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
- Targeting near-term workforce training to meet the needs of these (and other) on-the-ground projects – OAI Inc.
- Assessing the demand for green infrastructure workforce and volunteer training to meet foreseeable future needs, based on these on-the-ground projects and other drivers for green infrastructure investment – Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant

Assuming these initiatives are funded, Josh outlined possible next steps. He suggested implementing priority actions, seeking additional funding (such as Cook County CDBG and IDNR Coastal Grants), developing a workable model for inter-municipal sewer maintenance services sharing, and taking part in the HUD National Disaster Resiliency Challenge.

## HUD's \$1 billion resiliency challenge vis-a-vis the Calumet Stormwater Collaborative

Louise Yeung of Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) gave an overview of the HUD National Disaster Resilience Competition, which is funded by CDBG disaster recovery. The Rockefeller Foundation has partnered with HUD to offer technical assistance to communities submitting applications.

### Defining Resiliency Exercise

Collaborative members were presented with three words: Prevention, Accommodation, and Response. Members were asked to vote for the word that most resonated with them in terms of defining resiliency. Members were also given an option to provide an alternative word. The following is a summary of the exercise:

1. **Prevention** - Preventing a threat, disruption, or disaster. Votes: 29
2. **Accommodation** - Accommodating a threat, disruption, or disaster. Votes: 33
3. **Response** - Proactively and/or reactively responding to a threat, disruption, or disaster. Votes: 29
4. **Alternatives:**
  - Preparation/Contingency Planning for Resiliency
  - The ability to endure and thrive under unpredictable challenges
  - Anticipation/Preparation... be ahead of change
  - Strength
  - Preparation (x3)
  - Ability to plan in advance for, as well as respond to major environmental events and make real changes going forward
  - Being ready for the worst expected outcome
  - Prepared for a the full range of situations
  - Recover (recover & return to their previous state rapidly)
  - Protection from exogenous cost increases related to natural resources, commodity pricing, and infrastructure failures
  - Enhancing the ability to absorb a disruption and maintain system integrity (may involve change)

### Breakout Discussion

The Collaborative broke out into small groups, facilitated by CMAP, to further discuss how the Collaborative defines resiliency, how the Collaborative can contribute to the region's Resilience Competition application and how participating in the Resilience Competition is beneficial to the Collaborative. The following is a summary of the break out discussions:

#### ***Reflections on Defining Resiliency***

"Adaptation" is the key concept of resiliency (i.e., the concept of intentional changes to improve over time), under which the other concepts of preparation, accommodation, response and prevention fall.

"Response" should be seen as an interim step until we have adapted to be able to accommodate and prevent.

However, today we are left with a legacy of recovery, and with too little time or resources to plan for future scenarios/events.

Beyond disaster-related resiliency, we must also consider the need to be resilient to socio-economic threats (i.e., cost of energy, regulatory environments, etc.). Many of the actions taken to make our communities more resilient to these social-economic threats will make them more resilient to disaster-related threats. For instance, by decentralizing energy generation and distribution, we will build in redundancy to a vulnerable system.

The cost of living is a huge factor in resiliency. Many will not be able to afford to adapt.

We should be using the term “resiliency” to advocate for proactive approaches to preparedness and acting now.

In planning for resiliency, the first step is to understand our vulnerabilities (physically, geographically, demographically, etc.) to inform specific strategies.

### ***Lessons from the Calumet Stormwater Collaborative***

The benefits of the Collaborative in aligning diverse stakeholders include:

- Collecting and sharing resources (data, information, funding opportunities, etc.)
- Consistent meetings allow for regular communication and
- Aligning strategies and best practices, sharing lessons learned
- Resist tendency to be redundant through better coordination

It would be worthwhile to build off effort of Collaborative in planning for regional resiliency.

### ***Social Side of Resiliency***

It is critical to put people at the center of our regional resiliency planning approach. We must understand what strategies people can live with. Through (user-centered design and social science) research, we must identify what is needed on the social side to make our residents more collectively resilient.

### ***Resiliency Efforts Outside of the Collaborative***

- US Army Corps of Engineers is integrating projections for future conditions in their planning and implementation, as they recognize the need for long time spans required for planning, repairing, and adapting infrastructure.
- Friends of the Chicago River has developed a land use plan for MWRD parcels to improve habitat, recreation, and stormwater management opportunities.
- Delta Institute has developed land use management strategies for vacant and unused lands.

## Meeting logistics for 2015

Josh introduced the proposed meeting dates and times for 2015 Collaborative meetings. The proposed schedule is below. Note the rotating locations and times.

- Friday, January 9, 10:00am to 12:00pm, Midlothian Village Hall
- Friday, February 6, 10:00am to 12:00pm, MPC
- Friday, March 6, 2:00pm to 4:00pm, MPC
- Friday, April 3, 10:00am to 12:00pm, Calumet location TBD
- Friday, May 1, 10:00am to 12:00pm, MPC
- Friday, June 5, 2:00pm to 4:00pm, MPC
- Friday, July 10, 10:00am to 12:00pm, Calumet location TBD, social event to follow
- Friday, August 7, 10:00am to 12:00pm, MPC
- Friday, September 11, 2:00pm to 4:00pm, MPC
- *September 26-30, WEFTEC (high possibility of Collaborative-led summit)*
- Friday, October 9, 10:00am to 12:00pm, Calumet location TBD
- Friday, November 6, 10:00am to 12:00pm, MPC
- Friday, December 4, 2:00pm to 4:00pm, MPC, social event to follow

## Next Meeting

Friday, January 9, 10:00am to 12:00pm  
Midlothian Village Hall  
14801 Pulaski Road, Midlothian

**For more information contact:**

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