
CALUMET STORMWATER COLLABORATIVE

MEETING SUMMARY – May 2, 2014

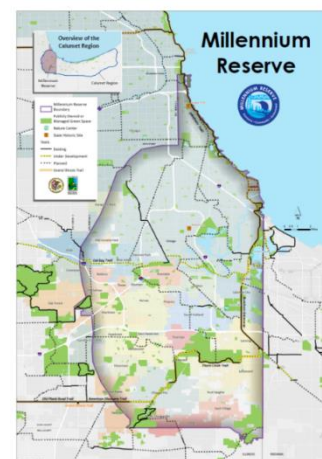
Metropolitan Planning Council

140 S. Dearborn Ave, Suite 1400, Chicago



Attendees

Brent Denzin, Ancel Glink
Christina Negri, Argonne National Laboratory
Megan Lewis, Cardno JF New
Dan Bounds, CDMSmith
Ryan Wilson, Center for Neighborhood Technology
Mason Throneburg, CH2M HILL
Jason Navota, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Nora Beck, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Zhanna Yermakov, Chicago Park District
Nancy Williamson, Chicago Wilderness
Karen Miller, Chicago Wilderness
Thomas Burke, Christopher Burke Engineering
Bryon Swanson, City of Calumet City
Michael Berkshire, City of Chicago Department of Planning & Development
Benet Haller, City of Chicago Department of Planning & Development
Aaron Koch, City of Chicago Department of Water Management
Kevin Schnoes, Cook County Department of Environmental Control
Gene Ryan, Cook County Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Response
Dominic Tocci, Cook County Department of Planning & Development
Margaret Renas, Delta Institute
Peter Nicholson, Foresight Design Initiative
Lyndon Valicenti, Foresight Design Initiative
Mark Willobee, Geosyntec
Joel Baldin, Hitchcock Design Group
Lisa Cotner, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Amy Walkenbach, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Margaret Schneemann, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant
Craig Howard, MacArthur Foundation
Mijo Vodopic, MacArthur Foundation
Edith Makra, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
Josh Ellis, Metropolitan Planning Council
Abby Crisostomo, Metropolitan Planning Council
Caroline Rendon, Metropolitan Planning Council
Kaitlyn McClain, Metropolitan Planning Council
John Watson, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Brent Shraiberg, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Amy Brawley, Openlands



Lenore Beyer-Clow, Openlands
Bob Newport, USEPA
Max Massi, Village of Homewood
Joe Sparrey, Village of Midlothian

Welcome and Introductions

This is our first working session.

Review of April 8 meeting and the purpose of the Calumet Stormwater Collaborative.

Millennium Reserve updates

Soon we will know more about state financial commitments to MR projects. In the Calumet Stormwater Collaborative we will start to explore whether there is a common vision and common understanding of problems to inform our work going forward.

Discussion on ground rules and principles

Calumet Stormwater Collaborative drafted and discussed ground rules for engagement and principles for action. (Rules and principles discussed will be finalized shortly.)

Discussion on creating a collaborative vision for improving stormwater management in the Calumet area:

The group discussed the effects of spring rain and anticipated stormwater events over the summer. Most members agreed that there are few issues with light rain but CSOs and standing water occur more after downpours. However, there are issues with standing water currently in parks and schools, especially in Park Forest, which is preventing recreation and use of these spaces. The group noted frustration with runoff pollution and water entering the sewer systems unnecessarily. CSOs, standing water and flooding could be prevented with different management.

There are different perspectives on how this rain affects the region. We experience the same precipitation in different ways.

In response to the survey results, the group discussed the differences in response between members and the resource group; many agreed that the resource group may have been more pessimistic/realistic in their responses because there were many engineers and other implementers, and members are more often policymakers or advocacy groups. One lesson learned from the survey may be that policy people need to work on pinpointing what the barriers and limitations are to installing or encouraging green infrastructure investments. Much of the engineers' and others frustrations may be a reflection of encountering difficulties in obtaining permits and working with cities. Members recognized an important role for themselves in acting as conduits and advocates for green infrastructure information in their respective organizations. Culture change will be a huge part of getting green infrastructure projects off the ground.

Members expressed concern about the level of knowledge about green infrastructure revealed in the survey and noted the need for better ways to talk about it. "Green infrastructure" sounds highly technical, and we should be emphasizing that it's about restoring a place's ability to handle storms. Education also needs to happen around the best ways to use green infrastructure and getting maximum benefit out of limited resources. It is difficult to scale up from pilot projects with high visibility to bigger projects. Projects can't all be in affluent communities, and demonstrating some flexibility in green infrastructure installations will help us figure out how to scale up. It's also important to be clear about the goals of all projects: is it volume reduction, public education, etc.

There is substantial need for data, mapping and modeling for BMP optimization and ways to guide municipalities toward using green infrastructure tools effectively. Because intergovernmental collaboration is needed to address stormwater issues, education and facilitation may also be an important role.

Discussion on geographic scope of CSC work:

The group noted the need for interactions between scales and boundaries. Watersheds, sewersheds, and political boundaries are all good possibilities. Benefits of working at the watershed level are the opportunity to educate people about where water comes from, that funding is often available at the watershed level, and that more targeted improvements can be made. Using political boundaries is a good way to work within municipalities, but boundaries are arbitrary (including the state line). The Millennium Reserve boundary is fine for now; it contains a lot of overlap and has already galvanized this group. Other possibilities are to examine the overlaps of boundaries where each of the member groups works and work in this area, or to focus first on areas where political will and resources are. The group did not feel a strong push to determine a specific geography at this meeting and will continue to discuss this in the future.

Concluding Remarks:

“The problem” is actually many problems that are understood and experienced differently. This is why systemic change and solutions have not emerged. We will be sending out more surveys and gathering feedback in other ways.

Next Meeting

May, June 6, 10:00am to 12:00pm
Metropolitan Planning Council
140 S. Dearborn Ave., Suite 1400, Chicago

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