
CALUMET STORMWATER COLLABORATIVE

MEETING SUMMARY – April 2, 2021
Metropolitan Planning Council
Zoom meeting



Attendees

Angela Larsen, Alliance for the Great Lakes
Matt Moffitt, Baxter & Woodman
Carmen Franks, Brown & Caldwell
Zach Wirtz, Chicago Region Trees Initiative at The Morton Arboretum
Thomas Burke, Christopher B. Burke Engineering
Graig Neville, CERA Solutions
Mary Beth Falsey, DuPage County Stormwater Management
Lisa Krause, IDNR Coastal Management Program
Christine Davis, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
David Souther, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Eliana Brown, Illinois Extension/Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant
Layne Knoche, Illinois Extension/Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant
Chelsey Grassfield, Friends of the Chicago River
Patrick Lach, Hey and Associates
Saki Handa, Mott MacDonald
Justin Keller, Metropolitan Planning Council
Audrey Wennink, Metropolitan Planning Council
Ryan Wilson, Metropolitan Planning Council
Dean Alonistiotis, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, Office of
Commissioner Du Buclet
Bill Wood, SmithGroup
Jen Jenkins, The Nature Conservancy
Ted Haffner, unaffiliated
Karen Kreis, Village of Midlothian
Danielle Gallet, Waterwell, LLC
& others

Member Updates

Lisa Krause from IDNR Coastal Management Program announced pre-application materials for the 2021 round of Coastal Grants are now available on their website. Grants provide funding for projects that protect, preserve, and restore the natural and cultural resources along the Illinois Lake Michigan shoreline. Funding is available for projects focused on: 1) habitats and species; 2) public access, recreation, and economic development; and 3) coastal community resilience. [Grant guidelines, application materials, and other resources are available here.](#) The pre-application deadline is April 14, 2021.

Chelsey Grassfield said Friends of the Chicago River along with the Environmental Law & Policy Center, Openlands, the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, and the City of Chicago are hosting a

meeting about sewage and other discharges into the river system via combined sewer outfalls. Chicago's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit is expired and needs to be updated. Do you have expertise related to NPDES permit compliance and combined sewer overflows? Do you live in, recreate along, or represent a community group along the river? If so, join the NPDES Permit Review Community Meeting on Friday, March 19 from noon-1:00 p.m. via Zoom. Please RSVP or send questions to Chelsey Grassfield at cgrassfield@chicagoriver.org.

Ted Haffner said Illinois Environmental Council (IEC) is working to initiate a group around creating legislation to promote nature-based solutions to climate change and integrate them with the national 30x30 initiative. The outcome will likely be similar to the CEJA legislation that IEC helped create that is now under consideration in the state legislature. They are still looking for interested parties to participate and help shape this legislation. [A sign on letter indicating the overall goals for this national initiative can be found at this link](#) that will provide further general details on the policy initiatives they are exploring. Interested parties should reach out to IEC if interested in participating: Tonyisha Harris (tharris@ilenviro.org), Lindsay Keeney (lkeeney@ilenviro.org), and Eliot Clay (eclay@ilenviro.org).

Justin Keller from the Metropolitan Planning Council shared a [fact sheet about The American Jobs Plan](#), which discusses the need to "Safeguard critical infrastructure and services, and defend vulnerable communities" because "People of color and low-income people are more likely to live in areas most vulnerable to flooding and other climate change-related weather events. They also are less likely to have the funds to prepare for and recover from extreme weather events." These are things CSC members have long known, and it is exciting to see these priorities in a major spending bill.

We also heard updates on the Green Infrastructure Baseline Inventory, the Urban Flooding Baseline, and the initiative to build a statewide green infrastructure inventory, which is currently seeking funding.

Extended Member Update

TNC's StormStore Opportunity Fund

Jen Jenkins, The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is looking for stormwater projects in the Little Calumet River watershed. TNC will manage project design, construction, and many of the administrative elements. Also, no match funding is required, but partners must commit to being part of the StormStore marketplace and generate stormwater credits on their property. Partners must commit to long-term maintenance. The [Call for Projects](#) lists project requirements, based both on the funding received from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the goals of the StormStore program. Of note, TNC is primarily interested in nature-based solutions. Permeable pavers are acceptable, but they would need to be combined with a green space park, for example. Additionally, priority will be given to TNC Greenprint communities which may lack

capacity to participate in the marketplace otherwise. Contact Jen Jenkins with any questions at jennifer.jenkins@tnc.org.

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*

Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO) Program Update and Application: Tips to Improve Your Chance to Get Some Green (\$) for your Green Infrastructure Project!

Christine Davis, Illinois EPA, Bureau of Water

GIGO is the sister program to the former Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant (IGIG) program. They are siblings but not twins, so make sure to read the notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) carefully. The goal of the GIGO program is to decrease stormwater runoff to Illinois streams, rivers, and lakes by addressing localized or riverine flooding. It is a 5-year program with \$5 million available per year. Projects can be a single BMP, BMPs in series, or multiple BMPs in a watershed. The maximum available per applicant is \$2.5 million, so there could be just two projects funded.

Successful applicants in the previous round of funding applied for the right practice in the right place at the right place. (See examples in slides.) Illinois EPA is looking for the projects with the best chance of being successful as soon as possible. Some of the reasons other projects were not selected include not meeting the primary goal of improving water quality, including other project elements in the funding request (e.g., lighting), or not giving sufficient thought to operations and maintenance. Chris's advice is to write the application narrative as though the reviewers know nothing about stormwater management. If they don't see something in the application, they will assume it's not included (and you will be docked points).

Calumet Connect Databook

Olga Bautista, Alliance for the Great Lakes

Chicago has conducted industrial corridor studies, and stakeholders in southeast Chicago started to gather data to inform planning and policy for the Calumet Industrial Corridor. The Calumet Connect Working Group gathered qualitative and quantitative data which has been compiled into the Calumet Connect Databook. The corridor was compared with other parts of the city, and several key findings were identified. First, coronary heart disease is higher in the Calumet Industrial Corridor compared to elsewhere in Chicago, even the other industrial corridors. Rates of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease are higher in the corridor, too. Despite these disproportionate health impacts, the corridor is underserved by medical facilities.

On top of that, local industries are releasing unsafe levels of pollutants, as indicated by the U.S. EPA Risk-Screening Environmental Indicators model. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of clean air, especially for people with respiratory diseases. This was attributed to a failure of zoning and land use policies. From the 1990s through the 2010s, transportation and institutional land uses increased without acknowledgement of the lived experience for local

residents. The Databook reflects the demands of local stakeholders to adopt land use policies which prioritize economic development, job growth, and public health. They want the city to attract sustainable businesses to the corridor and demand that businesses be restorative and repair the harm done to the community.

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

Next Meeting

Work Group-focused meeting

Friday, May 7, 2020

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Location: virtual

For more information contact:
Metropolitan Planning Council

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