
CALUMET STORMWATER COLLABORATIVE



To: Northeast Illinois Resilience Partnership
From: Calumet Stormwater Collaborative
Re: Northeast Illinois Resilience Partnership's Regional Approach Framework
Date: September 30, 2015

On September 11, 2015, members of the [Calumet Stormwater Collaborative](#) had the opportunity to review and weigh in on the draft regional approach framework that is being used to inform the region's Phase 2 applications to the National Disaster Resilience Competition. Approximately 40 active members of the Collaborative participated, and together vetted the compiled set of potential activities provided to us by the Foresight Design Initiative. For the purposes of the discussion we set aside our exclusive focus on the Calumet area of southern Chicago and Cook County, and vetted these possible actions with the State of Illinois and DuPage County in mind as well. It is our collective hope that these recommended actions and policy priorities below will help the NDRC applicants as you finalize your respective applications and communicate a strengthened regional approach with specific, achievable goals and outcomes.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

On behalf of the Calumet Stormwater Collaborative,

Josh Ellis
Metropolitan Planning Council

Priority items for regional collaboration

Shared Actions – **Modeling/Alert Systems**

1. A top priority is to pursue collaboration on building a regional Hydrologic & Hydraulic Model. Having access to a regional 'super model' at the watershed planning level would help improve planning at 'local' level. We should strive to have full coverage of H/H modeling information for the region as our ultimate goal, just as we have with other types of datasets that were spotty or nonexistent even 10 years ago.
2. Regional H&H modeling should also be integrated with another priority area: filling the current gap between sewershed and watershed planning, particularly at the regional level. Having regional modeling available augments opportunities for collaboration and improved planning.
 - a. Sequencing: inventory tracking – where do models currently exist and how do we expand existing clusters to cover the entire region?
 - b. Urgency: high, but mindful this is a long-term process to completion
 - c. Impact: greater data availability to inform local planning and align local actions across the region
3. Include USGS stream gauges and text-based alert systems as an existing tool that can be leveraged.
4. Another top priority is to improve and update regional climate and precipitation projection models.

Shared Actions – **Policy**

1. Include supporting living wage policies, as well as those that improve quality of life (i.e., complete streets, open space, etc.) to address social vulnerability.
2. A top priority should be to update ordinances and codes at state, county and local levels - including plumbing and building codes – to allow for reuse of non-potable water, and producing model zoning and development ordinances for managing stormwater.

Shared Actions – **Capacity Building**

1. Different approaches and target audiences are recommended for audiences of different scales and sectors, as capacity needs vary by application. Customization is a priority.
2. The people actually implementing these actions on the ground should be the focus: landscaping companies, engineers, stormwater engineer firms, restoration companies, plumbing manufacturing and installation, etc. A CSC sub-group on green infrastructure is already working with the American Society of Landscape Architects, Illinois Landscape Contractors Association, and the Midwest Ecological Landscape Association.
3. Also targeting community-facing agencies and service providers, like Health & Human Services, or building inspectors can further facilitate capacity building of professionals “in the trenches” interacting with community residents. This can further enhance regional collaboration on proactive resilience capacity building.
 - a. Sequencing: identify entity(s) for capacity building delivery and curriculum
4. A top priority is also to implement state-wide resilience academies (trainings) for regional planning councils, elected officials, local governments, and communities.

Shared Actions – **Scaling**

1. A top priority is to create a mechanism for scaling successful projects to other adjacent communities across the region.
2. One approach could be to identify “place types” throughout the region and organize working groups (for regional collaboration, sharing lessons learned) around similarities by such place types, such as in land use, etc. This differs from traditional “thematic” working groups (i.e. flooding, transit systems).
3. Webinars work best as method of communication. Ohio State hosts monthly webinar series, potential model to look into for approach.

Shared Actions – **Information/Data**

1. A top priority is to update Bulletin 71 to represent current rainfall frequency.
2. Sharing relevant data in accessible formats, both GIS and as interactive maps for municipalities who do not have GIS capacity.

Shared Actions – **Design Guidelines**

1. We do not suffer from a shortage of design guidelines, and there should be no proposed action to “develop more guidelines.” We should commit to a thorough review of what design guidelines are used by the applicants, their departments and divisions (i.e. IDOT, CDOT, Cook County Highways), and peer organizations, like the Tollway Authority, and then requiring use of leading edge design guidelines.

Shared Actions – **Workforce Development**

1. We do not need more workforce programs at this time, and until there is a marketplace for trained green infrastructure workers, there is no point in scaling up these training programs. We lack a robust market for green infrastructure – if we commit to building the marketplace, that will build demand for workers. How do we do that?
2. All MS4 communities (including Chicago) are required by their MS4 permit to hire contractors/firms “trained/certified in green infrastructure design and installation.” However, there is no official certification program in Illinois. One, this means everyone is in violation of their MS4 permit, but it also means every firm potentially does things a little differently. So, the State of Illinois (likely IEPA or IDNR, or both together) needs to develop and implement a green infrastructure training and certification program.
 - a. Ideally, those training and certification programs would be using some of the existing design guidelines mentioned above.
 - b. Then, there needs to be strong oversight that MS4 communities actually are hiring folks with that certification.
 - c. And, the existing workforce training programs need to be aligned with this, so that graduates are training to implement the design guidelines and certified approaches.

Shared Services

1. The group felt that while shared services are important, they are not necessary to prioritize at the regional level.

Shared Metrics

1. A top priority is having high-level regional or state indicators to measure success, as well as local metrics that respond to community context. This is valuable for identifying what's working, identifying gaps, etc.
2. Important consideration to monitor what's happening in both physical as well as social realms (CSO and also community basement flooding incidents).
 - a. Sequencing: important to develop metrics and indicators early in the process to be able to show progress
 - b. Capacity: would require data sharing platform
 - c. Impact: opportunity to alert people and build community preparedness
3. Include health impacts as these data sets have the potential to motivate behavior. Is there a way to partner with hospitals to keep track of this? Also, the Space to Grow model may have some good indicators to use.
4. Another top priority is to include monitoring component in all local pilot projects to determine effectiveness of interventions and inform replicability and scalability across the region.

Shared Assets

1. Rather than say "consider stormwater fees, social impact bonds, and value-capture mechanisms," a more specific action everyone could commit to would be along the lines of "The applicants will conduct or commission a formal assessment of optimal revenue generation options for transformative, sustained, long-term investment in stormwater infrastructure, operations and maintenance. This assessment will include recommendations for revenue generation tailored to the goals, legal responsibilities and needs of each relevant government participating." Something like that. Commit to a comprehensive study, perhaps done by the University of Illinois or someone comparable.
2. Efforts to update the State Revolving loan funds in the Clean Water Initiative should include a principal forgiveness component.

Shared Insurance Strategy

1. Include the following steps for addressing the insurance issues in the region:
 - a. Identify ways insurance can be used as a way to incentivize home retrofits.
 - b. Work with insurance companies to discuss opportunities for investment in regional approach to reduce risk of flooding.
 - c. And as a top priority, increase consumer education on flood insurance riders to expand coverage.

Calumet Stormwater Collaborative members

as of 10/7/2014

City of Blue Island
Center for Neighborhood Technology
City of Chicago
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Chicago Park District
Chicago Wilderness
Cook County
Delta Institute
Forest Preserve District of Cook County
Ill. Dept. of Natural Resources
Ill. Environmental Protection Agency
Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant
Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
Metropolitan Planning Council
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
OAI, Inc.
Openlands
South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Village of Homewood
Village of Midlothian
Village of Park Forest