

Watershed-based Organization

Sub-Committee



Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: December 6, 2017

Time: 9:00 am -12:00 pm

Meeting Location:

Johnson County Transit Facility, 1701 W Old Hwy 56, Olathe, KS 66061

Attendees:

Watershed-Based Organization Sub-Committee

Rob Beilfuss – City of Olathe
Lorraine Basalo – City of Overland Park
Courtney Christensen – City of Mission Hills
Mike Brungardt – City of De Soto
Tom Jacobs – Mid-America Regional Council
Leslie Rigney – Miami County Conservation District
Les Barnt – GBA
Randy Gorton – BHC Rhodes
Brenda Macke – Burns and McDonnell
Chad Johnson – Olsson Associates

JC SMP

Lee Kellenberger
Heather Schmidt
Sarah Smith

Consultant Team

Patti Banks – Vireo
Andrew Smith – B&V
Jeff Henson – B&V
Justina Gonzalez – B&V

Agenda Objectives

Discuss process for organizational change
Request guidance for watershed-based improvements

Handouts: Agenda

Notes

Introduction / Update of Implementation Status / 6th Meeting Goals

- Andrew of B&V welcomed attendees to the sixth meeting of the watershed-based organization sub-committee. He provided a quick update of the SMP strategic plan implementation to date.
 - **Strategic Plan Implementation Status:** The system management, water quality, and flood damage reduction sub-committees have finished their initial work. The funding sub-committee is currently meeting. This watershed-based organization sub-committee has since reconvened to continue drafting a future structure.
 - **Watershed-Based Organization Sub-Committee 5th Meeting Review:** The November meeting was an informational session on the preliminary outcomes achieved by the other sub-committees. A summary can be found in the [Preliminary Outcomes Handout](#).

- Andrew outlined the agenda and goals of the sixth watershed-based organization meeting.
 - **Watershed-Based Organization Sub-Committee 6th Meeting Goals:** A large portion of the meeting will be spent discussing the road map in implementing organizational change. The sub-committee will provide feedback on the process of what groups to talk to, what materials to share, and what items need to be communicated to make the watershed organizations a reality. During the 6th meeting, the sub-committee will also discuss future efforts of the watershed improvement plans.

Process to Communicate Organizational Change

- Consultants explained that the tentative plan to begin formation of the watershed organizations is to provide an overview of JC SMP changes to the cities and later present a draft inter-local agreement. For the inter-local agreement, cities would have a set comment period to address revisions. After which, the program would pursue city approval of the inter-local agreement and adoption by the Board of County Commissioners.
- Consultants asked the sub-committee for feedback on the best process for communicating organizational change. JC SMP and consultants recognize that there will need to be differing levels of communicating this information, but the overall goal is to be as inclusive and effective as possible. Consultants asked for suggestions on timing, what historical and contextual information to provide, and how to proceed with city presentations.
- Participants gave the following feedback:
 - **Suggestions on Timing:**
 - A 30-day comment period on the inter-local agreement would likely not be enough time to put that as an agenda item for city council meetings. The comment period should be expanded to a reasonable time limit beyond that.
 - Expanding the comment period up front might save time later on in terms of getting buy-in and ultimately moving implementation forward in a quicker manner.
 - Most cities would likely prefer to have a presentation from the County a month before receiving the inter-local agreement.
 - Procedurally it makes sense for the cities to sign the inter-local agreement first. The Board of County Commissioners would endorse it and approve to form, but would likely not sign until cities have.
 - **Suggestions on Informational Materials**
 - Any materials should be clear as to decisions that have been made and where the program is headed. There would be less buy-in if materials just say we are thinking on this.
 - The map of the cities in the different watershed groups should be part of informational materials.
 - The document with preliminary outcomes of the sub-committees is a good outline. But there should be additional detail, such as what were the goals decided by the sub-committee. Something more concise and descriptive in outcomes would be helpful.
 - The executive summary from the strategic plan would be useful in showing the past and proposed program.
 - For water quality, materials should have basic photos and information on what is a water quality project. There is often confusion that water quality is solely for drinking purposes.
 - There should be proper naming and explanation of roles in the materials. For instance, if SMAC will still exist then the name of that new group should be used.
 - Materials should also indicate that the new direction is part of an iterative process. The process will be reviewed and tweaked with stakeholders coming back together within for instance 3 years.

- **Suggestions on Public Presentations**
 - Presentations should be custom tailored per city. Some cities will be receptive to more context material whereas others will need a concise presentation.
 - Presentations should be clear in that JC SMP is County funds and that the Board of County Commissioners wants a more strategic, long term approach beyond annual whims.
 - JC SMP should meet with city managers and mayor group before presenting to city councils. That interim step would be helpful, particularly in that for some communities the mayor writes the meeting agenda.

Benefits of Continuing SMAC-like Structure

- Patti of Vireo asked the sub-committee if there will be a benefit in still having a SMAC-like structure given the anticipated demands the watershed boards will place on cities.
 - Participants had the following comments:
 - The advantage of continuing a SMAC-like structure is that if a city feels that it wasn't heard within its board then it would give an opportunity to voice your case at a higher level.
 - The program will still need checks and balances amongst the boards.
 - Keeping a SMAC-like structure will demonstrate a degree of consistency as the strategic plan is implemented. City councils would be more at ease knowing that a representative from their city is on SMAC.
 - A SMAC-like structure will bring the 6 watershed organizations together and keep them from operating in silos. There is value in being able to communicate amongst the organizations the collaborations and successes that have been achieved.

Guidance for Watershed Improvement Plans

- Andrew explained that JC SMP will likely have two parallel programs, that being 1) watershed capital improvement projects and 2) system/asset management initiatives. Watershed improvement plans will result in a list of flooding and water quality improvements, with opportunities to combine and separate these initiatives.
- Lee stated that the watershed improvement plans will be similar to a preliminary engineering study. The outcome is to have 10-15 watershed level projects that are then assembled onto a County level list of top priorities. There will likely be a whole host of different scenarios in terms of project boundaries. The list may have projects directly within a city boundary or across multiple cities. The list may also have projects that provide primary benefits to a community downstream. While the SMP cannot be everything to everybody, the program does recognize the need to be multi-disciplinary and include viewpoints beyond solely an engineering standpoint.
- Consultants asked participants for guidance on potential themes and outcomes of the watershed improvement plans.
 - Participants had the following suggestions:
 - Separating flooding, water quality, and asset management would be constraining a comprehensive planning approach. Projects will likely combine these initiatives.
 - System management needs to include a water quality component. There should be an over-arching theme that system management should not worsen water quality but pursue opportunities to enhance it.
 - The criteria for these plans will likely be quantity, quality, and management. Projects that include multiple initiatives should rise to the top of the list.
 - The program should also take into consideration the role of the CARS program. A lot of the new inlets and piping for the system come from transportation projects. Transportation improvements should be considered when evaluating the overall system.

- For the plans to go beyond solely an engineering mindset, then the preparers of those plans need to think about the intersection of stormwater improvements and design in improving the social and economic vitality of a community. The best national watershed work has involved multiple disciplines such as architects, ecologists, and engineers.

Closing/Next Steps

- Consultants asked the watershed-based organization sub-committee if they would prefer the next meeting to be a joint meeting with the funding sub-committee.
 - Participants agreed that the joint meeting would be a good opportunity to share what both groups have done and finalize paths forward.
- The next meeting will be a **joint meeting** with the funding sub-committee on January 31st at the same time, same place.
- JC SMP and consultants thanked participants for their time and guidance.