
CALUMET STORMWATER COLLABORATIVE

MEETING SUMMARY – November 1, 2019
UIC College of Urban Planning & Public Affairs
412 S. Peoria Street, Chicago, IL 60607



Attendees

Emily Grimm, Baxter & Woodman, Inc.
John Mick II, Baxter & Woodman, Inc.
Kim Siemens, CDMSmith
Emily Okallau, Chicago Region Trees Initiative/ The Morton Arboretum
Drew Williams-Clark, Center for Neighborhood Technology
Alice Chen, Cook County
Lyndon Valicenti, Daylight
Chelsey Grassfield, Friends of the Chicago River
Katie DeMuro, Greenleaf Advisors
Patrick Lach, Hey and Associates
Lisa Krause, IDNR Coastal Management Program
Vidya Balasubramanyam, IDNR Prairie Research Institute
Casey Sebetto, IDNR Prairie Research Institute
Jeff Edstrom, Illinois Coastal Program
Iyana Simba, Illinois Environmental Council
Jennifer Coryell, JLC Environmental Corp.
Saki Handa, Mott MacDonald
Danielle Gallet, Metropolitan Planning Council
Justin Keller, Metropolitan Planning Council
Adam Slade, Metropolitan Planning Council
Jessica Hanlon, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Justin Hart, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Bob Newport, OAI, Inc.
Daniella Pereira, Openlands
Katherine Moore Powell, The Field Museum
Jen Jenkins, The Nature Conservancy

Member Updates

Saki Handa from Mott MacDonald talked about the recent Bulletin 70 Updates Seminar hosted by the ASCE Environmental & Water Resources Institute (EWRI). The event had a good turnout, and 12 presenters talked about expected changes as a result of the new data. Specifically, MWRD, DuPage County, McHenry County, Lake County SMC, Will County, IDNR-OWR, CCDOTH, IDOT, and ISTHA all evaluated the data and will be requiring it in their respective stormwater ordinances and policies starting in early 2020. Also, one of the report's co-authors, Momcilo Markus from ISWS, said a second part of the report with additional calculations will be released soon.

Emily Okallau from Chicago Region Trees Initiative/The Morton Arboretum will be traveling to Shenzhen, China to attend an innovation lab to work on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Congrats, Emily! We look forward to hearing all about it.

On behalf of Dean Alonistiotis from MWRD Comm. DuBuclet's office, Justin Keller from MPC talked about [Project Accelerator](#), an initiative of the [WaterNow Alliance](#), which is accepting applications to help launch water projects or programs. This program offers up to 250 hours of professional support over 3-6 months. Past projects have included research and engagement to support water conservation and sustainability, development of a water-efficient landscaping program, and assessing green streets. Applications are due November 22.

Danielle from MPC was recently involved in a press announcement with Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot about the proposed Utility Billing Relief (UBR) program. This program will provide low-income residents with a reduced rate on their water, sewer, and water-sewer taxes. Check out the Curbed article [here](#), and read more about the program [here](#).

Moira Zellner from UIC said via email that the Urban Data Visualization Lab (UDVL) will celebrate GIS Day 2019 at the University Library on Friday, November 22, 10am-3pm. This year, the event will showcase a range of techniques exploring different aspects of Community and Global Disparities and will include a keynote speaker, talks, a panel, a poster session and competition, and a hands on-workshop. Five poster winners will be awarded an individual ArcGIS Personal Use license! Register for GIS Day 2019 [here](#), submit a poster abstract [here](#), or contact udvl@uic.edu with any questions.

Presentations

Theme: Advancing the CSC's Goal 2: Grey and green infrastructure maintains its designed performance over time; and Goal 3: Increase municipal capacity and reduce fragmentation across Calumet government actors

Big Trees: Exponentially Better

Emily Okallau, Chicago Region Trees Initiative/The Morton Arboretum

Through the Chicago Region Trees Initiative, Emily works with municipalities and park districts to provide support with the goal of increasing the breadth and health of the tree canopy in northeastern Illinois. Trees have multifarious benefits, such as improving physical and socioemotional health, increasing property values, lowering electric bills, and helping to infiltrate precipitation and decrease runoff. Trees are measured and categorized several ways, including the diameter at breast height (DBH) of the trunk and by canopy cover (i.e., how much ground is covered by limbs/branches), often measured using LiDAR. At the last census, there were 157 million trees and 15.5% tree canopy cover in the seven county region. Cook County has 28% tree cover, but 32% is buckthorn, an invasive species which they are trying to remove. Gaps in the canopy and resulting heat islands overlap with vulnerable populations, and researchers are using this data compare areas with canopy gaps against high crime, poverty, non-native English speakers, etc. with the intent of having the greatest impact through their tree planting efforts.

A helpful tool for tree advocates is iTree, a software program with a suite of tools that allow you to calculate how much carbon a certain tree is able to sink, how much precipitation it helps infiltrate, and attaches a dollar value to the cumulative benefits of a particular tree. Big trees are important and worth maintaining and protecting against development pressures. They are resilient, having survived many stresses and, on average, have good genes. Additionally, as DBH goes up, the amount of stormwater capture increases, but they also become more vulnerable. Larger trees need maintenance, and the maintenance requirements are more specialized (e.g., special equipment, special training). In short, trees are incredibly valuable but need advocates, and modeling can help demonstrate their value and influence policy change.

Research to Date on Shared Service Agreements & their Potential for Green Infrastructure Maintenance in the Calumet

Lyndon Valicenti, Daylight, and strategy consultant to MPC

Lyndon is working with OAI, Inc. (see [Oct. 4 meeting summary](#)) to research what shared service agreements and arrangements make the most sense for green infrastructure maintenance in the Calumet region. Because of municipal differences related to funding, governance styles, and capacity, it is difficult to align and match up all of the regulatory elements of shared service agreements. However, there are economies of scale which can result in efficiencies and cost savings for the actors involved. Based on preliminary research, there is a range of how these agreements are formalized, from a simple handshake to an MOU/IGA all the way to creation of a special district like MWRD. There are also multiple models for how it can work. In one example, Chicago Ridge pays Oak Lawn to share their fire chief. Another model is for two or more municipalities to pay a 3rd party contractor to do some form of work, such as snow removal.

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus conducted a survey and found that 95% of municipalities in our region share services, and 99% found it beneficial, so it is actually quite common. Key considerations when working out shared service agreements are costs, skills or special expertise required, and timing (e.g., on-demand, recurring, etc.). Some of the big challenges are related to liability and risk, accountability, different expectations and needs, trust and compromise, loss of local control, and vendor capacity to take on the larger scope of work. Currently, Lyndon is compiling best practices and case studies from around the country to identify the “I wish I had known...” lessons from folks who have already established shared service agreements.

The conversation then transitioned to facilitated discussions around context, advocacy, and pitfalls to consider as the research continues.

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

Next Meeting

Friday, December 6, 2019

10:00am to 12:00pm

Calumet Collaborative

1000 E. 111th, Suite 650

Chicago, IL 60628

For more information contact:
Metropolitan Planning Council

Justin Keller
312.863.6033
jkeller@metroplanning.org