

# Watershed-based Organization

Sub-Committee



## Meeting Notes

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**Meeting Date:** November 1, 2017

**Time:** 9:00 am -12:00 pm

**Meeting Location:**

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

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### Attendees:

#### Watershed-Based Organization Sub-Committee

Rob Beilfuss – City of Olathe  
Lorraine Basalo – City of Overland Park  
Randy Gorton – BHC Rhodes  
Tom Jacobs – Mid-America Regional Council  
Andy Sauer – Burns and McDonnell  
Les Barnt – GBA

#### JC SMP

Lee Kellenberger  
Heather Schmidt  
Sarah Smith

#### Consultant Team

Patti Banks – Vireo  
Triveece Penelton – Vireo  
Andrew Smith – B&V  
Justina Gonzalez – B&V

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### Agenda Objectives

Provide update of preliminary outcomes of sub-committees

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#### Handouts:

Agenda  
Preliminary Outcomes Handout

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## Notes

### Introduction / Update of Implementation Status / 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting Goals

- Andrew of B&V welcomed attendees to the fifth meeting of the watershed-based organization sub-committee. He provided a quick update of the SMP strategic plan implementation to date. He also provided a review of what the sub-committee previously accomplished.
  - **Strategic Plan Implementation Status:** The sub-committee had four initial meetings earlier in the year that ended in May. From those meetings, the sub-committee developed a draft organizational structure. The group then took a hiatus to allow the other sub-committees do their work in regards to system management, water quality, and flood damage reduction initiatives. Implementation is beginning to move into phase 3, which is finalizing the future framework. The funding sub-committee is also meeting and there will likely be some back and forth iteration with them.
  - **Watershed-Based Organization Sub-Committee Review:** Main outcomes from previous meetings included the sub-committee dividing the County amongst watershed groupings and deciding key elements of the watershed-based organizations. The sub-committee discussed membership, voting rights, officers, representation to the SMP, and watershed planning initiatives.

- Andrew outlined the agenda and goals of the fifth watershed-based organization meeting.
  - **Watershed-Based Organization Sub-Committee 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting Goals:** The purpose of the fifth meeting is to update the sub-committee on what the other groups have accomplished and discussed. The goal is to review preliminary outcomes so that all parties can be working towards a common framework.

### Review of Sub-Committee Preliminary Outcomes

- Consultants provided a brief update of the preliminary outcomes of the other sub-committees to date. A review of key highlights is provided below along with summarized comments from the watershed-based sub-committee.
  - **System Management:** Over the course of five meetings, the system management sub-committee defined the system and asset registry. The sub-committee also identified strategies for information management and development of an asset management plan. The County is not proposing to take on maintenance of systems, but will facilitate the compiling of data to develop prioritization. During the later development of a county-wide asset and system management plan, the County would like to incorporate city representatives for input. The future program will focus on both likelihood and consequence of failure. Having an informed system and asset management program may take 2 to 3 years but the SMP does not intend to delay investment for that time either.
  - **Participant Comments:**
    - Asset management should be a tool for the watershed-based organizations but the organizations should not be generating these projects. System management projects will often be local and the cities would like a neutral body in deciding what to fund.
    - A discussion on design standards should be further had. The program should make sure that the system is not being added on to with later management problems that could have been mitigated.
    - From a public viewpoint, there should be a way to distinguish assets on issues of ownership. Governing bodies may prevent initiatives with natural systems unless there is an extreme basis.
    - Many of stormwater problems are institutional and about ownership. The prevailing idea has been that if we manage what comes from the outfall then the stream will be fine. But that is clearly not the case. It would be a tremendous mistake to think of streams as just conveyance because they are complex systems that provide multiple benefits beyond that. Participants should also be thinking about the economic benefits of the natural system and how to create spaces that people want to live in.
  - **Water Quality:** The water quality sub-committee had five meetings, during which they were able to identify top issues and overarching goals. Participants strongly noted the importance of preservation and preventing future degradation of high quality areas. The sub-committee spent a good deal of time discussing criteria to quantify measures and how to estimate project effectiveness. A draft project prioritization scheme was also evaluated.
  - **Participant Comments:**
    - For evaluating water quality projects, a simpler matrix should be considered with parameters that can be readily tracked over time without getting into models or sediment curves. An example would be a goal that 10% of the watershed be controlled by some BMP or green solution. Another example is Philadelphia that looks at controlling impervious area. While metrics of nutrient reductions and macroinvertebrate estimates are all important, there is significant variability in how to measure such values. There are also challenges in how to report and communicate the impact of that information to the public.
    - In regards to protecting some of the best areas left, MARC has developed a riparian health index. The index was largely accurate for Olathe, for instance, and gives an immediate sense of where some of the best areas may be. MARC also has a 15 parameter water quality model that may be of relevance for SMP objectives.

- **Flood Damage Reduction:** Via five meetings, the flood damage reduction sub-committee was able to identify top issues and priorities to address. The sub-committee proposed stand-alone home buyout and home-owner's technical assistance programs. The sub-committee considered prioritization of a regional approach with large, impactful solutions. In regards to local drainage, the sub-committee recognized that there is still a need for such projects. But a tiered funding approach has been proposed, with multi-jurisdictional projects receiving higher funding. The sub-committee also discussed the NOAA Atlas 14 revisions and relevance for planning purposes. It is important to note that APWA will also be discussing NOAA Atlas 14 revisions.
- **Participant Comments:**
  - As a region, the JC area needs to update planning and design standards beyond just what a voluntary committee can do. Some cities have not adopted APWA. In regards to NOAA Atlas 14, if we don't include the new precipitation data then we aren't using the best science available. That could easily change the calculus of how we are prioritizing for today and we are not being mindful of how it is going to change over time.
  - From a climate change perspective, NOAA Atlas 14 may be the first shot across the bow. To say we are not going to do updates when we know that future extreme rainfall events will be more common seems to be an inadequate response.
  - Floodplain maps do have a lot of conservatism built in the analysis. Recent extreme events were within the boundaries of our maps. The flood storms this summer really didn't have any outliers and were quite accurate in their prediction. Planners should be clear that updates will happen at some point, but we haven't come to that yet.
  - Changing the precipitation values will have a domino effect in other parameters. But that can even affect what kind of level of service that cities can provide. Implication costs should be considered as well.
- **Funding:** The funding sub-committee has met three times and still has a considerable amount of items to discuss. The sub-committee has discussed funding suggestions provided by the other sub-committees, identified concerns related to un-obligated funds, and discussed funding models in national case studies. System management has been considered as a separate funding entity with water quality and flooding included under CIPs. One idea to consider is that at the beginning these watersheds will be very focused on capturing JC SMP funds. But, the hope is that over time the JC SMP will be a source of funds amongst more diverse funding strategies. Since program inception, the sales tax has generated \$270 million with city match resulting in \$360 million towards stormwater. So the program is looking at what can be done with that funding as a long range program beyond the one year cycle. The program would like to see regional attenuation and potential cost-sharing opportunities with development communities. The program is also looking at how to eliminate barriers for multi-jurisdictional projects via funding.
- **Participant Comments:**
  - The MARC BMP manual was designed to stack water quantity with water quality. There are opportunities to incorporate flood damage reduction with water quality.
  - It would be a good use of public funds to help development communities with their systems. We can discuss issues of equity, but these are valid needs.

### Closing/Next Steps

- The meeting ended with consultants calling for any final comments or questions. Participants stated:
  - JC SMP has made good progress since the sub-committee concluded. Implementation is starting to get into the substance of these key issues.
  - The sub-committee should look at what the watershed plans should encompass, such as scope of work. That would be a very beneficial conversation amongst the group.
- The next meeting is scheduled for December 6<sup>th</sup> at the same time, same place
- JC SMP and consultants thanked participants for their time and feedback.