ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE

Resource priority project to develop a fact-based approach to prioritizing protection & mitigation areas

Kindy Kruller

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Project Mission

- Work with Chicago Wilderness partners in the region to improve understanding and consideration of sensitive natural resources (and the GIV) in planning and design for significant surface transportation projects
- Facilitate understanding and agreement on resource protection priorities and conduct education on transportation funding and project development process with local environmental stakeholders

Project Goals

- Educate transportation professionals about environmental resources
- Educate local environmental stakeholders on the transportation funding & project development process
- Develop tools to facilitate early engagement

Initiative Background

- Developed out of Chicago Wilderness Sustainability team
- July 2008 - Workshop with 60 attendees
  - Transportation professionals
  - Environmental Resource Agencies
  - Local environmental stakeholders
- 2009 Work Plan developed from stakeholder feedback and implemented project with McHenry Cty
  - 4 workshops
  - Identified additional partners

Feedback from Transportation Planners

- Environmental experts have been key in identifying critical resource protection areas and coming up with alternatives
- Environmental groups are not unified (don't know what they want or don't agree on what they want)
- Environmental groups are one of a number of stakeholder groups and don't always do a good job of reaching out to other stakeholders
- Environmental agencies and groups are not always on the same page

Local Partners

- Chicago Wilderness
- McHenry County, IL
- Northwest Indiana
- Project funder

Meetings and Workshops

- **Mapping and Consensus Building**
  - **Meeting #1- Priority Resource Map Scoping** Engage the local Committee in scoping for the development of a GIS map that would depict important environmental resources and begin to discuss priorities for protection or other best practices relating to new surface transportation projects.
  - **Meeting #2- Priority Resource Map Refinement**. The local GIS consultant would present several prioritization and weighting scenarios for the Committee to review, discuss and refine.
  - **Meeting #3- Finalize Priority Resource Map.** In addition to reviewing map revisions the Committee would discuss long-term maintenance and ownership of the map.

Meetings and Workshops (con't)

- **Education and Capacity Building**
  - **Transportation Training Workshop.** Educate members of the local Committee and other local stakeholders on the transportation funding and project development process, green highway models and case studies.
  - **Transportation Training.** Training with the Committee on participating in local transportation council meetings to ensure that environmental concerns are expressed and considered in the "public input" phase of the transportation planning process.

Meetings and Workshops (con't)

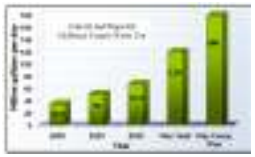
- Ground Water Protection Workshops
  - In development with McHenry County and CMAP
  - Included presentations from:
    - McHenry County on their work
    - Presentations from ISWS, ISGS, and USGS
    - CMAP to present Water 2050
  - Two workshops: one focused on McHenry and one broad workshop for the whole region held in May 2011

Focus today on groundwater

- Regional studies identify need for protection of groundwater and water resources
- Transportation projects should understand the project impact on groundwater and water resources
- Build more capacity and education in region
  - Transportation planners
  - City Planner
  - Elected officials
  - Developers

McHenry County as a model

- 100% of potable water is groundwater
- County growth projections extends beyond availability
- Focus on quantity and quality
- www.mchenryh2o.com



McHenry County as a model

- Groundwater task force started in 2007
- *Water Resources Action Plan* adopted 2009
- Living document with many resources:
  - Draft ordinances
  - Design standards
  - Maps

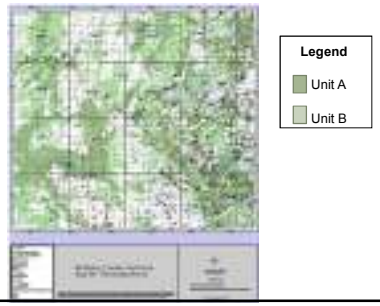
SARA Map-
Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Map

- Groundwater quality and quantity through data
- Map compiles:
  - ISGS Circular 559
  - US Soil Survey 2001 and 2008
- Development of a recharge map bridges the gap between water resource planning and land use planning
- Guide land use planners in the planning stages of development to protect groundwater resources

SARA Map

- **Map Unit A:** High Potential for Aquifer Recharge/ Contamination: Sand and gravel deposits are more than 20 feet thick (commonly 50 feet thick) and lies within 20 feet of the surface. About 37% of the County falls in Unit A.
- **Map Unit B:** Moderately High Potential for Aquifer Recharge/Contamination: Sand and gravel deposits less than 20 feet thick and generally lie within 20 feet of surface and are either at land surface or overlain by the Haeger diamicton or fine-grain deposits. 20% of County classified as Unit B.

SARA Map



CMAP Regionalized McHenry model

Synergy between transportation planning & water

- Focus on education
- Engagement of content experts
- Incorporate existing tools, standards and approaches
- Continued leadership

Resources

- CMAP Water 2050
- ELPC Groundwater Series
- What's Our Water Worth
  - Interactive website that shows source of water supply
- EPA WaterSense
  - Focus on Water Efficiency
- IDOT ILAST Guide

Thank you

Kindy Kruller, LEED AP
Delta Institute
kkruller@delta-institute.org
312-554-0900 ext 28