



Environment and Natural Resources Committees

Draft Minutes

Thursday, July 1, 2021

9:30 a.m.

Via GoToMeeting:

Members Present: Keary Cragan – U.S. EPA, Martha Dooley – Village of Schaumburg, Andrew Hawkins – Forest Preserve District of Will County, Cynthia Kanner – Environmental Defenders of McHenry County, Debra Kutska (for Deborah Stone) – Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability, Vanessa Ruiz – IDOT District 1 Environmental Studies Unit, Troy Simpson (for Tom Rickert) – Kane County, Sean Wiedel – Chicago Department of Transportation

Members Absent: Lindsay Birt – Xylem, Jack Darin – Illinois Sierra Club, Aaron Durnbaugh – Loyola University Chicago, Elena Grossman – BRACE-Illinois at UIC, Paul May – Northwest Suburban JAWA, Stacy Meyers – Openlands, Ted Penesis – IDNR

Staff Present: Victoria Barrett, Sarah Buchhorn, Alison Case, Michael Collins, Brian Daly, Kate Evasic, Jane Grover, David Louridas, Jen Maddux, Alexis McAdams, Amy McEwan, Annie Parker, Jared Patton, James Pew, Elizabeth Scott, Ryan Thompto, Beatrix Yan

Others Present: Sam Bingham, Jen Jenkins, Lacey Lawrence, Ryan Wilson

1.0 Call to Order / Introductions

Environment and Natural Resources Committee Chair Sean Wiedel called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

2.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

Chair Wiedel stated that as permitted in the Governor's Disaster Declaration from June 25, 2021, the determination has been made that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent for this committee. To ensure as transparent and open a meeting as possible, staff posted the meeting materials one week in advance, will provide a recording of this meeting linked on the CMAP website, and will take all votes by roll call. Kate Evasic made an announcement about CMAP's first-

ever [Regional Excellence Awards](#) and encouraged committee members to submit nominations by July 7.

3.0 Approval of Minutes—May 6, 2021

A motion by Cynthia Kanner to approve the minutes of the May 6 meeting, seconded by Keary Cragan, carried with two abstentions and the remainder in favor.

4.0 Member Recognition

Amy McEwan thanked departing co-chair Sean Wiedel for his contributions to the Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

5.0 CMAP Board Meeting Updates

Amy McEwan provided key updates from the CMAP Board. She announced that CMAP has a new deputy executive director for research, analysis, and programming, Yousef Salama. She reported that the call for CMAQ, STP, and TAP projects is closed and project evaluation is underway. Public comment on those programs will begin following the committee meetings on July 1 and end on July 30. Amy also announced the completion of the *Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region*, which was led by Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and supported by CMAP. She emphasized Kate's announcement on the CMAP Regional Excellence Awards program and encouraged members to spread the word. Finally, Amy explained how CMAP will formally return to the office on September 7 and is tracking changes that the Governor may make regarding allowing for hybrid in-person and online meetings, while complying with the Open Meetings Act.

6.0 StormStore Stormwater Credit Trading – Jen Jenkins, The Nature Conservancy and Ryan Wilson, Metropolitan Planning Council

[StormStore™](#)—a partnership of The Nature Conservancy and the Metropolitan Planning Council—is seeking partners and projects within the Little Calumet and Lower Des Plaines watersheds to participate in a Stormwater Credit Trading pilot. This pilot is enabled by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD's) recent update to the Watershed Management Ordinance, which allows developers to comply with stormwater management regulations by developing facilities offsite, but within the same watershed, through 2024. This StormStore™ pilot is intended to demonstrate that compliance with the WMO can be both beneficial to communities and the environment and cost effective for developers. The [presentation](#) introduced the pilot program and the concept of a trading market, and asked for committee members to help connect the team with potential partners in the Little Calumet and Lower Des Plaines watersheds.

- **Eligibility.** In response to a question about project eligibility for stormwater projects funded through MWRD's grant programs, Ryan Wilson explained that projects funded entirely by an MWRD grant would not be eligible. However, if a stormwater site comprises multiple green infrastructure installations, some of which were funded by MWRD, then the volume control for those installations that were not funded by the District could be available as a credit.
- **Flooding and heat nexus.** Keary Cragan commented how USEPA is looking at the intersection of brownfields, redlining, tree coverage, and urban heat islands, and asked whether The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is considering tree cover or urban heat islands when identifying areas in need of stormwater management. Jen Jenkins responded that TNC's [Greenprint StoryMap](#) includes three indices: flood risk, heat, and air quality. The air quality and heat indices include tree canopy data from the Morton Arboretum. The flood risk index incorporates CMAP's [Urban Flood Susceptibility Index](#), which includes impervious surface data. Ryan Wilson added that urban heat island reduction was a driving factor behind a stormwater project developed by the Village of Franklin Park, which is eligible to sell credits to potential buyers in the Lower Des Plaines watershed.
- **Flood mitigation.** Martha Dooley asked for clarification on how StormStore ensures local flood risk does not become an issue on development sites where off-site credits are purchased. Jen Jenkins emphasized how development sites still have to fulfill a certain amount of stormwater management and that the program will allow for more green infrastructure to be built in places that need it the most. Ryan Wilson added that the program pivots from letting development drive stormwater management planning to allowing MWRD be more strategic about how it is being developed. He added that there are areas in the watersheds where there is a high level of service for stormwater and other areas where the level of service is low. Therefore, shifting stormwater management requirements from a high service area to a low service area can achieve greater benefits. He further noted that each site will be assessed and will not receive a permit if the assessment finds the stormwater infrastructure is not sufficient. In response to a question regarding how credits would be purchased, Jen Jenkins responded that a community can trade with any other community within the watershed.
- **Replicability.** Cynthia Kanner asked if there is potential to pilot a similar program in the northwest suburbs. Ryan Wilson explained that the program is tailored to the development patterns of Cook County, so it would be unlikely that the program could be replicated as is. However, he added that it could take a different

form by targeting nutrient reduction instead of flood reduction. Future changes to stormwater regulations could also lead to new markets for credit trading emerging.

- Outreach. Kate Evasic asked how we can all help with outreach efforts. Jen Jenkins emphasized the team's focus on encouraging partners in the Little Calumet watershed to learn more about the potential to benefit from the opportunity fund. She added that they are also interested in connecting with communities in the Lower Des Plaines watershed that are developing green infrastructure projects that could serve to sell credits. Ryan Wilson added that they are interested in talking to high capacity village staff who are involved in economic development, attracting new developers, and approving capital projects, and will be conducting outreach to Councils of Governments in the coming months.

7.0 North Shore Bike Trail – Jen Maddux, CMAP

The [Northern Lakeshore Trail Connectivity Plan](#) was recently completed through CMAP's Local Technical Assistance program and recommends bicycle and pedestrian related improvements to better connect the communities of Beach Park, North Chicago, Waukegan, Winthrop Harbor, and Zion to one another and to regional trails, Illinois Beach State Park, and the lakefront. CMAP staff provided an overview of the plan.

- Project need. Sean Wiedel highlighted the past and current conditions in the study area that show the need for this type of plan.
- Implementation. Lacey Lawrence noted that the Zion Park District initiated a regional trail widening project with funding from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

8.0 Equitable Engagement Program – Ryan Thompto, CMAP

To support the agency's efforts to pursue equity and inclusive growth, CMAP staff is working with the Center for Neighborhood Technology to design an Equitable Engagement Program that focuses specifically on the inclusion of community, non-profit, and grass roots organizations representing marginalized communities in the regional planning process. CMAP staff provided an [overview](#) of the program's goals, highlight upcoming activities, and solicited feedback from the committee.

- Capacity to participate. Keary Cragan emphasized the importance of the work and noted that equitable engagement is something that all public agencies are contemplating right now. She echoed the challenge of trying to engage community groups that have many competing priorities and lack the time and resources to meaningfully engage. Sean Wiedel commented that CDOT

experienced similar struggles to engage environmental justice communities in its Vision Zero program and is looking into how they can provide compensation for participation.

- Chicago contacts. Sean added that Angela Tovar, the City of Chicago's Chief Sustainability Officer, is a good person to talk to about environmental justice work as well as active community organizations in Altgeld Gardens on the southeast side, such as the Southeast Environmental Task Force.
- McHenry County. Cynthia Kanner noted that while McHenry County is not on the environmental justice map, there are efforts to reach out to underrepresented communities including Conversación de Conservación, a collaborative effort to engage the local Latino community through environmental programs. Cynthia added that Environmental Defenders of McHenry County is interested in building a community solar farm through Illinois Solar For All, which would help low- and moderate-income communities in the area. She also explained that Defenders has hosted lectures on environmental justice and will host a toxic tour in the future.
- Lake County. Sean noted that CMAP should contact groups in Lake County communities, like North Chicago and Waukegan, who have been impacted by industrial areas. He suggested that Lake County Stormwater Management Commission staff could provide CMAP with contacts for those communities.
- Follow up. Ryan Thompto asked Committee members to reach out to him by email (rthompto@cmap.illinois.gov) if they have other thoughts or feedback on the program.

9.0 Other Business

- None

10.0 Public Comment

- None

11.0 Next Meeting

The next ENR Committee meeting will be September 2, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

12.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Daly and Kate Evasic
July 1, 2021