Storm Water Management Oversight Committee

MINUTES: Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Special Meeting
El Camino Room, Downtown Library
1:00 PM

Committee Members Present:
David Bower, Peter Drekmeier, Marilyn Keller, Hal Mickelson, Bob Wenzlau, Richard Whaley

Committee Members Absent:
Dena Mossar

Staff Present:
Michelle Austin, Maybo AuYeung, Phil Bobel, Holly Boyd, Pam Boyle-Rodriguez, Brad Eggleston, Michel Jeremias, Karin North, Gina Magliocco, Jamie Perez, Valerie Tam, Julie Weiss, Isabel Zacharczuk; Jill Bicknell (consultant)

Call to Order: 1:07pm

Oral Communications: None

Old Business

Chairperson Mickelson talked about the draft minutes for the February 21, 2018 meeting. After discussion, Whaley moved to approve the minutes in condition to edits discussed. Drekmeier seconded. All in Favor.

New Business

Introduction of Jill Bicknell, consultant from EOA Inc. who is the consultant selected to assist in developing the Palo Alto Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Plan. Bicknell is also a Palo Alto resident.

1. Staff update and committee discussion regarding green stormwater infrastructure Plan development

Last meeting provided background of project and GSI permit requirements. This meeting focused on process of how staff prioritizes proposed projects in the city to include GSI features.

Bicknell reviewed the Storm Water Resource Plan (SWRP) process: (1) Initial screening via GIS; (2) Metrics analysis and prioritization based on feedback from cities in Santa Clara County (total number of potential projects exceeded anticipated amount, e.g. 50,000 green streets); (3) Cities (including PA) selected subset of projects for further analysis by consultant team (hydrological model) to consider conceptual design. As part of the SWRP, there are 2,500 regional and parcel projects and 50,000 green street projects reviewed, 10% or 5,000 green street segments remain in the project list after eliminating projects that were too steep or speed limit is too high.

Boyle-Rodriguez then explained how staff focused on Palo Alto projects near SWRP projects and identified 3 concept projects for further analysis by consultant team. (1) Greer Park, a multi-jurisdictional project provides additional support for potential funding. It is a huge draining area, and is close to Matadero pump station. (2) Cornelis Bol Park, has a bike path that ends at Gunn High School. The creek is currently not a concrete channel, so there is potential to provide access to public and environmental education opportunities. (3) E. Charleston Green St. between San Antonio Rd and Independence Ave, a more impacted area in Palo Alto boardering Mountain View, stormwater drains into Mountain View's system, potential partnership.

The prioritization of the projects or areas are based on planned and proposed CIP projects, Stormwater drainage issues, bike and pedestrian safety improvement, redevelopment areas, etc. Presentation included maps of planned and proposed projects throughout Palo Alto and survey results of staff's priority on incorporating GSI based on categories like traffic safety improvement, maintenance requirements, pollutant reduction, etc. Current plan for the GSI plan is 50% completion in August 2018, 80% completion in early December 2018, and the final version to be adopted in June 2019 by council.

Questions, comments, discussion during presentation:

- Wenzlau asked if there are other GSI besides infiltration to be used around Greer Park. North explained filtering cells could be used to filter and clean water where water could be reused or put back into Matadero Creek. Stormwater storage is also a potential for infiltration during summer. Boyle-Rodriguez added another benefit to installing GSI is the potential to capture litter while assisting the City to meet MRP trash reduction credits.

- Drekmeier asked about the ownership of the undeveloped land between Bol Park and Gunn High School, it is confirmed that VA owns the land.

- The Palo Alto landfill is shown on the groundwater plume, where leachate from the landfill is pumped to the wastewater treatment plant for treatment before discharge.

- Wenzlau suggested Stanford Shopping Center could be an opportunity to consider public/private partnership where city and the private sector both contribute funds for a larger benefit.
  Staff responded to identify this as a next step in the GSI plan, currently North Ventura area is also a potential partnership which is an opportunity to negotiate with the developer for this private development. Jeremias brought up the parking lots at Stanford Research Park and Stanford Shopping Center have bio-retention areas and swales on site to treat stormwater.

- Discussion on GSI potentials at schools: Public schools are exempt from C3 stormwater treatment feature requirements, so we can't capture opportunities during parking lot updates. Private schools are not exempt. Bicknell stated the State Board is intending to put schools under state-wide general permit in the next 2 – 3 years, which would require stricter regulations similar to C.3.

  Drekmeier asked if the City can use funds for GSI to supplement and cover the expense difference between pervious and impervious parking lot repaving project in schools as an incentive to promote pervious materials. Staff show interests in reaching out to school district on this matter. Keller believe schools would likely to work with the City if we can do the legwork.

- The Palo Alto local green building ordinance gives credit if development uses permeable material in the projects.

- Discussion on GSI opportunities for planned and proposed CIP projects: Boyle-Rodriguez explained the list showed high priority projects which were discussed with city staff from other departments. Downtown Library is on the proposed CIP list, however the discussion with Caltrans has not happened yet, therefore Caltrans parking lot was not included.
  Wenzlau commented that the amount of time spent to discuss the parking lot project with Caltrans would be much more beneficial compared to discussing the Downtown Library parking lot.
  Eggleston also stated the city effort on the Cubberley Master Plan will start in June/July and be completed by end of 2019, it will be an opportunity for GSI discussion.

- Drekmeier asked about channel restoration at Bolware Park.
  Staff explained that will be removing cement from the Matadero Creek channel on the park side, not the bank next to private properties, however the ecological value will not be improved significantly.

2. Staff update and committee discussion on the proposed fiscal year 2019 Storm Water Management fund budget

AuYeung and Boyle-Rodriguez presented on the GSI long term (6 years: FY2018-2023) funding needs, which include grant writing assistance, city plans collaborations, on-going maintenance, GSI concepts, CIP design and construction, future MRP GSI implementation requirements, pilot projects, etc. The short term (3 years: FY 2018-2020) funding needs will include GSI features for the Charleston/Arastradero corridor project, GSI plan completion, GSI engineering specifications document development, GSI maintenance and monitoring manual development, etc.

As part of the short term GSI expenses, the SWM fund has allocated $330K in FY2018, and $330K in FY2019 for the Charleston/Arastradero project. Senior Engineer Holly Boyd presented project info and GSI features to be installed. Project phase 1 is from Foothill Expressway to Clemo Ave, it received $1M Federal grant funding; phase 2 is from Alma St to Middlefield Rd, it received $450K Safe Routes to School State funding. Both funding has timing condition on the project start and complete time, thus the segmented project on Charleston/Arastradero Road.
A cross section of the corridor depict the 42K square feet of landscaped medians, bulb outs, and bio-retention areas, widened sidewalks and bike paths, etc. The whole Charleston/Arastradero corridor project is planned to include 8 bio-retention areas, approximately 4,500 square feet. Without GSI features, the project will cost $800K less with traditional landscaping installed. Stormwater will flow from the asphalt street into the bio-retention areas, through the biofiltration soil mix and permeable rocks. If the bio-retention area is saturated, excess water will flow into the overflow inlet connected to the existing strain drain system. Plants used in these bio-retention areas are a mix of native and drought tolerant plants recommended by the contracted landscape architect.

Staff presented other short term GSI expenses to include: (1) GSI engineering specifications document development, this document will provide design guidelines, concept designs, and standardized specifications to city departments such as Engineering, Transportation, Utilities, Parks, etc. and will assist in coordination between department to include GSI features in future projects. (2) GSI maintenance and monitoring manual development, will provide similar benefits on future maintenance and monitoring needs.

Questions, comments, discussion during presentation:

- Wenzlau would like to see more CIP projects in FY2019 to include GSI, and asked how will we know if there will be more projects in FY2020, whether we have enough funding to allocate towards a richer portfolio of GSI.
  Eggleston explained other projects with construction during FY2020 will include GSI, because many of these are regulated projects where funding

is secured and will not utilize Stormwater fee collected.
Bobel mentioned the reality will be having too many potential GSI projects, rather than a lack of GSI projects, but these projects will have to fund themselves, where the Stormwater Fund will be used mainly as "seed money" to jumpstart GSI Plan and ensure the City is on the same page for GSI integration.

- Drekmeier asked if we can allocate innovative project budget towards Gunn High School to install GSI features similar to those at Southgate.
  Bower believed the schools boards might be difficult to work with due to lack of City jurisdiction.
  Jeremias pointed out only two applications for rebate program were received and approved, 1 cistern installation and 1 permeable paver installation, and rebate funding is part of the innovative project budget.

- Wenzlau asked what the impacts are if the Committee, hypothetically, rejects GSI funding for Charleston/Arastradero project.
  Eggleston explained the Charleston/Arastradero project is one of the City infrastructure projects facing a $6M funding gap. The initial design of the project did not include GSI at the landscape medians, it was added on per Blue Ribbon Committee recommendation. If the Committee rejects, the project would likely revert to original designs that don't include GSI.
  Bobel mentioned there is currently no other competing projects for GSI related funds, so Charleston/Arastradero project is a good use of the available fund.

- Wenzlau asked about $0 transferred to fund reserve showed in the proposed FY2019 budget.
  AuYeung explained staff expects remaining balance from FY2018 to be transferred to the fund reserve. In FY2019, CIP projects planned will utilize budgeted funds and funds reserve, resulting in minimal balance to replenish fund reserve at the end of FY2019. Similar 2-year cycles will continue until debt obligation ends in FY2024.
  Bower commented that there's no purpose in expanding the reserve because this budget is self-funded by the Stormwater Fee to cover costs.

After discussing the Proposed Fiscal Year 2019 budget, a draft memorandum 'Review of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2019 Storm Drainage Fund Budget" was presented. Drekmeier moved to approve Proposed Fiscal Year 2019 budget and the memo. Bower seconded. All in favor.

Adjournment: 3:17pm