



# Storm Water Management Oversight Committee

Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Special Meeting

Art Center Meeting Room, Palo Alto Art Center

1:00 pm

Committee Members Present:

David Bower, Peter Drekmeier, Marilyn Keller, Hal Mickelson, Ron Owes, Bob Wenzlau

Committee Members Absent:

Dena Mossar

Public Members Present:

David Moss (Parks and Recreation Commission, Liaison)

Staff Present:

Pam Boyle Rodriguez, Michel Jeremias, Karin North, Loretta Olmos, Vicki Thai, Isabel Zacharczuk

Call to Order: 1:04 by Chairperson Mickelson.

Oral Communications: None

Old Business

1. Approval of Minutes from the December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Storm Water Management of Oversight Committee Meeting.

New Business

2. Presentation on the Fiscal Year 2019 Expenditures for the Storm Water Management Fund / 3. Committee Discussion and Report to Council on Findings of the Fiscal Year 2019 Expenditures for the Storm Water Management Fund
  - North: moved dollars from Innovative Projects to help fund GSI Plan Implementation.
  - Keller: why is the dollar amount lower for actual expenses?
    - i. North: A lot of the City's consultant support for RFPs is taking 9+ months for approval due to only having one contract administrator. As a result, projects are being pushed out and money is being carried over.
  - Keller: can SWMOC help with staffing limitations/procurement concerns? SWMOC can consider sending a letter to Council that outlines these concerns?
    - i. North: this can be included in a letter to Council regarding budget (since SWMOC sent a letter to Council last year following budget process).
  - Wenzlau: do any of these Purchasing delays create a compliance problem?
    - i. North: No—the Stormwater Management Fee (SWMF) created a new position for the City (Associate Engineer for the Watershed Protection Group).
4. Staff Presentation on Capital Improvement Project



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- a. Jeremias: the Storm Drain CIP list was established to meet 10-year storm requirements by design and prepared during the Storm Drain Master Plan.
  - i. Highest priority: East Bayshore/Corporation project—ponding occurs because flap gates are gravity-driven. If there is not enough pressure behind flap gate *and* creek levels are too high, then ponding will occur behind flap gates.
- b. Some projects timelines are shifting so these projects don't overlap with other City CIPs, such as the Bike Bridge project over 101.
- c. Drekmeier: regarding project sequencing—what if we accrued funding and waited until a recession to do more projects at a lower cost?
  - i. Jeremias: right now, City is completing one project per year to stay on schedule (assuming City has enough funds)—not sure if we can keep on this track.
- d. Drekmeier: is it possible to have three projects going on at the same time?
  - i. Jeremias: yes, rehabilitation projects occur at the same time as SDMP projects.
  - ii. Wenzlau: is there any way to borrow on the fund to pull money forward and construct projects sooner than later (if interest rates are lower than inflation)?
    1. Jeremias: City hasn't evaluated SWMF to see if this can be done, but can be considered for creative spending.
    2. North: Stormwater is an enterprise fund—possible to borrow and then pay back in the future. Staff will consider. If we had “shovel-ready” designs, these would be a good option for low interest rate loans.
- e. Mickelson: letter to Council needs to clearly state that SWMF budget is being used appropriately. Council may ask—“we're three years into a 15-year fund, and not much is happening in terms of completed projects”; what is the concise way for SWMOC to respond to that concern?
  - i. North: the goal from the start was to let SWMF fund build up in the first few years, so that it could be spent quickly once money accumulated.
  - ii. Jeremias: City benefits from completing certain projects in parallel, which is why certain projects haven't been completed as early as possible. Also, certain projects were being completed when SWMF first began (that were not part of the SDMP project list).
- f. Vicki Thai: presenting on Loma Verde project (Vicki is the design engineer)
  - i. Design Overview: intersection of Loma Verde and Louis Road all the way to canal easement, past Maddux Drive.
    1. Storm drain currently lacks capacity for 10-year storm—proposing to upsize storm drain main line. Increasing diameter and material of the pipe (moving away from reinforced concrete pipe).
    2. Replacing storm drain laterals and catch basins, in addition to main line. Resurfacing the roads and replacing striping. Replacing handicap ramps since some are not currently ADA-compliant.
    3. Wenzlau: why is RCP (reinforced concrete pipe) being replaced with HDPE (high density polyethylene) for new pipe material?
      - a. Thai: HDPE material is stronger and part of City standards.



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4. Wenzlau: why are laterals being replaced as part of the project? Are they part of the capacity issue (in addition to the main line)?
  - a. Vicki: City staff won't know lateral conditions until we dig them up, but some need to be replaced based on design elevation of storm drain pipe (pipe may have been dropped in new design to make a new connection around existing Utilities). If catch basins and laterals are in good condition and can be connected, then they will be saved; but, cost is being calculated to replace the laterals so that budget is accounted for.
- ii. GSI Inclusion:
  1. Considered bioretention sizing relative to the amount of water that needs to be treated and bioretention location—want to avoid tree dripline since that would be too close to tree rootball.
    - a. Spoke to City's Landscape Architect—didn't think it was the best idea to incorporate GSI into this specific project.
  2. Space is limited on this project site, especially since a lot of fiber runs through planting strips—Utilities can be as shallow as eight inches and as deep as two feet. Ideal to avoid Utilities with GSI installation.
  3. Wenzlau: notion that bioretention can't be installed near trees is issue for Palo Alto in particular, being a "Tree City"—ask staff to work harder to accommodate GSI near trees. Not being able to install GSI near trees would undermine our aspiration to install GSI throughout the City.
  4. North: understands that staff will coordinate further with Engineering to accommodate GSI with trees—GSI Implementation Plan will also focus on streamlining this coordination.
  5. Keller: trees can hold significant amount of water—does not want staff to lose sight of tree benefits for stormwater management and quality. Trees also delay waterfall by about 5 minutes to help moderate flow.
  6. Wenzlau: have semi-permeable bottoms in storm drain lines been considered? To function similar to an infiltration system?
    - a. Thai: staff discussed holes under storm drain pipe—may not be necessary for Loma Verde project. Some catch basins in the City have holes drilled to allow water to pour out. Also need to be careful of high groundwater table in this area.
  7. Boyle Rodriguez: can consider allowing tree roots to grow under sidewalks and implementing treatment soil.
  8. Bower: is it worthwhile to have a liaison between Parks and Rec and Stormwater to discuss GSI options before trees are installed?
    - a. Moss: Walter Passmore is responsible for this coordination.
5. Staff Presentation on Progress on Stormwater Compliance Program (Pam Boyle Rodriguez)
  - a. Let staff know if someone else would like a hard copy of the GSI Plan.
  - b. Working with Office of Sustainability and Utilities staff to develop GSI/Sustainability Policy—policy and associated tools can be reviewed during December 2020 meeting.



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- c. Green Streets Symposium: Pam Boyle Rodriguez and Sylvia Star-Lack (Transportation) have helped with planning. Holly Boyd will present on Charleston-Arastradero Corridor. Speakers from City of San Jose, SFEI, and other transportation-related efforts to present.
- d. David Moss: Is Stormwater presenting to Parks and Recreation Commission soon?
  - i. Boyle Rodriguez: have not finalized agenda with Daren yet.
- e. Keller: who is the consultant for the funding analysis contract?
  - i. Boyle Rodriguez: SCI Consulting Group (recently helped City of Cupertino pass stormwater ballot measure).
- f. Grant Proposal: considering a certification program for Grassroots Ecology (GrE) and Conservation Corps staff, in addition to a parking lot improvement program for downtown parking lots or parks throughout the City.
- g. Wenzlau: GSI can be a good learning opportunity—can we install GSI on school sites?
  - i. Boyle Rodriguez: Stormwater staff meeting with Sustainability Director for PAUSD to start discussions.
  - ii. Drekmeier: consider working with Sustainable Schools Committee.
- h. Drekmeier: is staff familiar with San Francisco onsite water reuse policy?
  - i. KN: no plans to incorporate at this time, but we can talk further about this.
- i. Tentative GSI Project—Hopkins at Rinconada Park
  - i. Coordinating with City's Landscape Architect. No storm drainage on Hopkins.
- j. June meeting may include tour of JMZ and new GSI as part of agenda.
- k. Grassroots Ecology (GrE) Partnership
  - i. Drekmeier: where does the overflow go in Southgate?
    1. PBR: infiltration columns are installed in bioretention in Southgate since there is no storm drain system in this neighborhood.
  - ii. Bioretention has accumulated plants not part of original design. Rocks used to be best practice, but mulch is currently best practice for bioretention. Site prep will include rock removal, soil testing and amendment, new mulch, new plants, and fixed irrigation.
  - iii. Peter: are we able to use some GSI funding to hire GrE to do some of this work?
    1. PBR: Not currently. New RFP for GSI Implementation will include five years of maintenance help. GrE found out yesterday (2/12/20) that they received a grant from Valley Water to update other GSI in Southgate. Grant will pay for GrE staff for some of this work.
  - iv. Planting Day will be Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>—SWMOC encouraged to attend
- l. Mentioned NVCAP and upgrades that are being planned for Boulware Park

## Committee Member Comments and Announcements

- No announcements – adjourned at 3:03 pm

## Tentative Agenda Items for Future Meetings and Review Action Items

- Staff will send out Survey Monkey to prioritize future agenda items.
- Staff will check in with SWMOC ten (10) days prior to upcoming meetings to confirm quorum.