

DRAFT MEETING NOTES
Green Infrastructure Meeting
January 12, 2010

Questions

Will the presentations be available on-line?

A Web site, including the presentations and minutes will come out within the next two weeks. February 23 is the deadline to submit comments about this meeting to Illinois EPA. We will accept hard copies or emails.

How will green infrastructure be funded? Financing for green infrastructure programs in other states should be included in the state surveys. A follow-up speaker stated that utility fees are what will be funding green infrastructure.

- Illinois EPA is looking at various ways to fund green infrastructure. Existing programs such as SRF or Section 319 funds may be potential sources of funding.
- A number of economic incentives are in place (i.e., special services areas, storm water utilities). The developer needs to put them in. Green infrastructure practices are normally less expensive than traditional practices. Green infrastructure makes economic sense.
- Nationally the utility structure is the traditional source of funds. Developing separate budgets in municipalities for storm water service is a positive action. Fees could be based on impervious surface area instead of property value. Nine municipalities in Illinois have storm water utilities in place, and this is a common tool used in other states. Kenosha, Wisconsin is a good example of a successful program in which credit is issued for installing certain storm water BMPs.

Was the portfolio standard in the original legislation?

Yes, but the language was removed. However the concept will be included in our report to Illinois EPA.

Will you be looking at reuse of roof water?

The report will include harvesting of rainwater.

Who will be responsible for maintaining green infrastructure practices? In the example shown today, a community hired a landscaper to do the work. How do you get the private property owners to do the required maintenance?

- We need to change the thought process. Landowners need to manage water on their property, one way or another. Larger pipes and basins are not the answer. All sites need to improve permeability.
- A rain garden is still a garden. Some best management practices could be supported and maintained by private landowners if they could see a benefit.

We need to be able to track the practices as we decentralize facilities onto private property. Perhaps track them on land records, as opposed to having landowner keep records. Education is critical, as many home owners are not ready to accept native vegetation or

rain gardens. Communities are still moving toward acceptance of wetlands and other BMPs.

There are so many different options—not everyone will need a rain garden. Performance standards can be developed, and then local communities can be flexible in choosing the best management practices that their citizens will support and maintain.

What language might a future MS4 permit contain and will there be a new agency/department to oversee this?

At this point, we are exploring ideas. There are no preconceived ideas on how to address this. We plan to revisit issues such as this with the stakeholder group.

When will Illinois EPA receive the final report?

The draft report will be submitted by the University of Illinois - Chicago to Illinois EPA by May 30, 2010. This will provide a small timeframe for comments before Illinois EPA provides a report to the General Assembly.

Comments

1. Since you are already looking at parallel systems, also look at the Illinois partner programs (such as IDNR, CMAP, IDA). Section 319 funds may not be available if this becomes a state law.
2. In the event of an enforcement program, a BMP manual normally comes out first, then the permit is released. For example, Iowa came out with standards and a manual then went to requirements. Soils are different throughout the state and that is a problem that they are having with the Illinois Urban Manual. It is important that the administrative body keep in touch with existing partners, such as SWCDs.
3. Urban trees are being over looked. They have stormwater benefits, carbon benefits, air quality benefits. There are multiple land covers that can be converted into a green infrastructure landscape. Including trees to improve the efficiency of any green infrastructure practice (e.g., permeable pavement parking lot plus trees) would be better. There's a metric available to calculate the percentage of tree canopy coverage. The City of Wilmette has an ordinance to replace the tree canopy after construction. There is also an assessment tool available, i-Tree ECO, developed by the USDA Forest Service. The Morton Arboretum is conducting an analysis of the urban forest for a seven county area, and results will be available sometime in 2011.
4. The Sustainable Sites Initiative, released by the by the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the U.S. Botanic Garden looks at how ecosystems work together, not just picking BMPs here and there.
5. The burden on municipalities could be great to engage homeowners. Work to balance the burden to help the municipalities. Homeowners and landowners will benefit.

6. A portfolio standard should consider nonstructural BMPs, such as site design and layout, disconnections, street sweeping, and fertilizer use. A key issue is for developers and municipalities to have good tools for creative site design. Having many smaller practices versus a few larger practices will put a burden on the community.
7. Measurable goals, such as percent reduction in runoff, is hard to do depending on whether the property is developed or redeveloped. The percentage of green practices should be tied to the development itself and the economy, rather than by ordinance.