



2A Stormwater Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting Agenda

2-4 p.m., November 17, 2022

Location: 401 Large and Teams

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m. Attendees included Councilman Donelson, Brenda Roy, Richard Mulley, Tim Biolchini, David Havlick, Christine Lowenberg, Christina Aragon, Maren McDowell, Mayor Suthers, Gary Nesbit, Councilman Strand.

Previous minutes were not voted upon; no votes occurred during this meeting. Meeting held for informational purposes only.

The first item was a financial overview and update. At the time of the meeting \$1.2M remained for the year, which placed the Stormwater Enterprise on track through the end of the year. No concerns have arisen about meeting the budget through the end of the year.

Operations and Maintenance is spending down the service level agreement in place. The pipe repair and replacement category represented three major projects that were recently completed (but not fully represented in these numbers).

Mayor Suthers initiated a conversation regarding movement of all bills to the Colorado Springs Utilities bill. Ninety-two percent of accounts are currently being billed through CSU. The CSU system upgrade is underway and will add as separate stormwater service point (Richard Mulledy showed an example of what a bill will look like). There will be two phases before that new bill is fully implemented. An explanation of the phases and process for transfer was provided.

Mayor Suthers asked how many bills will remain (not on CSU) when all is said and done. The answer was about 5,000 bills. The first phase will be everything CSU can currently do. The second phase will add the separate billing point so we can bill the remaining 5,000 bills. There is an estimate of 4-6 months for phase 2. Further discussion was held regarding what would need to happen to bill the remaining 5,000 bills in-house. Richard Mulledy said this work would have to be handled by a contractor, as it would likely require 3-4 FTE's to handle, and that cost would be prohibitive.

\$19.7M currently remains in the Capital expenditures budget; those funds are either under contract or planned for a future project. The enterprise is significantly up in YOY "Billed and Collected." Stormwater fees went up during the year. Collection rates have stayed consistent at about 98 percent.

An explanation was provided of why billing is monthly instead of quarterly. There is a desire to match CSU's billing cycles. A display was shown of what the stormwater bill will look like.

Next was an update on implementation of Green Infrastructure Minimum Standards and minimum infiltration requirements. The requirements are being driven by the federal consent decree. For every area developed since 2002, there has been an analysis run to determine total infiltration volume levels. The enterprise is tasked with checking each property and to ensure infiltration volume numbers are being met.

Richard Mulledy provided information regarding how the City pays the deficit as defined within the consent decree. This is done by repairing other parts of our infrastructure, building water quality infrastructure, implementing a minimum volume infiltration against your “debt of acres” of storage of water quality, etc. In every new development, you can compound interest toward the proverbial debt. This also provides a win for developers. The City has never regulated rate of volume prior to this current minimum infiltration requirement.

Councilman Strand inquired after the response from the development community and asked if there had been pushback.

Mulledy stated that there has been some pushback. The development community has been made aware of this about, beginning in early 2021. Overall, this adoption of standards has been going very well. It is estimated that standards of this type will become requirements for all cities in Colorado in the future. These requirements can ultimately repair problems of the past, can build more, smaller water quality facilities, and allows us to set our own course rather than taking direction from state or federal requirements (which would come eventually anyway). Standards are such that it will be difficult for the state regulators to make more stringent requirements. The Springs is set to set the standard for the state and the west as a whole.

Richard described the new “planned infiltration areas” and explained them in more detail. He showed a drainage report from a developer and how the developer implemented the new requirements and the planned infiltration areas. Richard showed the amount of volume reduced on route to the water quality pond. This allowed the developer to slightly reduce the size of the pond, ultimately giving them more land for development. In the end this was a win for the development, people downstream, and Stormwater can count the infiltration areas against the debt set by the EPA.

Afterward was a discussion of some of the finer points of dirt/plantings/water infiltration analyses, in addition to guidance on what can be claimed for individual properties/backyards.

Committee member Havlick stated, “I feel like it’s progress. Doesn’t impede on development in any dramatic ways, even though it requires more thoughtful development.” Havlick’s provided additional sentiment that reflected he wished standards could be *more* stringent and that green infrastructure can improve stormwater mitigation in a more lasting, less expensive, and more ecological and aesthetic manner than gray infrastructure.

Mulledy said these changes have shown big progress and a major shift in the development community.

An update of some projects was provided. The North Douglas project is currently under construction. If anyone desires a tour, it would be prime for viewing in about a month. It must be completed by March because of the funding source.

Councilman Donelson inquired after homeless people living in SW infrastructure. Flooding? Problems? Is it on the radar of the Stormwater Enterprise?

Mulledy said this is something we constantly pay attention to. There was recently a large cleanup at Templeton Gap near Austin Bluffs and Academy. They cleaned out a big culvert where people have been living. Work was done by local group "Keep Colorado Springs Beautiful." The first day they removed 90k yards of trash and debris from homeless people, including 27 shopping carts.

Mayor Suthers reminded the group that this is not a culvert that can be gated because it could affect flows and create hydraulic flooding and flood Academy. It would be an enormous safety concern.

Donelson wanted to know what can be done. Mulledy said it is possible we could do more frequent inspections and we will continue to watch the hotspots. Most of the areas with huge potential flooding we know about, and we watch. We cannot keep every piece of infrastructure as clean as people would like, but we can keep it safe. Even though there was a ton of debris, that area was not a major risk. 15-16 people were living in the infrastructure. Rich has faith in the inspection system in place.

Richard presented the group with information about a grant he presented to the Army Corps of Engineers- the 7001 Grant. Explanation of the process the grant would follow through federal channels. Projects for this grant range from \$20M-35B. It is not so much a grant as it is appropriation from Congress to the community. The proposal submitted was for the Fountain Creek Confluence Restoration Project.

Discussion of grant requirements and meeting the mission of the Corps. Richard showed how his project aligned with the guidelines; it was submitted in August. At the end of this year, we will be able to see if the project goes on next year's list. The projects we would be doing in that corridor are about \$15M worth of improvements. Total grant application of \$11M for design and \$145M for construction. Richard requested \$9M in study and \$110M in construction. Showed the economic benefits that would occur if this project were funded. Huge grant application.

Mayor Suthers asked where are we in completion of projects in accordance with the IGA? Are we at an appropriate pace?

Richard said that on the IGA side, we are ahead of schedule. On the planning side we are on track.

Currently six years into the IGA. 29 projects are complete. 71 planned. Our most recent report was sent to Pueblo about two months ago. Working well with the Pueblo engineers.

Federal- couple issues but we are working through them. Three audits from last year- supervisory of GEC inspections (fine), 2. Audits of permanent water quality detention facilities- passed. Third type- GEC plan review- we changed our criteria last December, first couple months there were several years on City and development community in effort to implement these new criteria. Audit was failed by one plan. The audit must be submitted as part of the consent decree. Only a certain number of plans can have errors, even the tiniest of errors. One more error than we were allowed. So next year we will have even greater audits.

Adjournment 3:12