



**Storm Water Workgroup
Meeting Notes
January 30, 2012
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
H-GAC Conference Room C, Second Floor**

DRAFT

Attendees

David Beyer (Storm Water Solutions), Christopher Gilbert (Howard Hughes Corp.), Angie Hallimore (R.G. Miller), Bruce Heiberg (Bayou Preservation Association), Jonathan Holley (HCFCD), Anita Hunt (Hunt & Hunt Engineering Corp.), Steve Hupp (Bayou Preservation Association), Stephen Johnston (TCEQ/GBEP), Randy Jones (Terra Visions, LLC), Carole Lamont (Harris County), Craig Maske (Dodson & Assoc.), Alisa Max (Harris County), Jack Murphy (League City), Rachel Powers (H-GAC), Mary Purzer (AECOM), Jim Robertson (Conservation), Nick Russo (Harris County), Maggie Yancy (Greater Houston Builders Association)

Discussion

Overview

The Implementation Plan was still undergoing internal review at TCEQ. TCEQ had not formally requested any changes to the document. Informally, TCEQ requested modification to the inside cover pages, which were made without changes to content.

The annual report will contain information about progress on activities identified in the Implementation Plan. The workgroup will be an important means for collecting information about implementation.

Review Progress. Items identified in the discussion will be included in the annual plan.

IA 4.1: Continue Existing Programs

- Interim, measureable milestone: “80 programs will continue.”

All existing programs have been continued and are expected to continue.

IA 4.2: Model Best Practices

- Interim, measureable milestones:
 - “Four to six networking meetings each year”
 - “Five local programs highlighted on H-GAC or other appropriate website each year.”

H-GAC has initiated an annual series of workshops focusing on the six minimum control measures of a Phase II MS4 Permit. Workshops so far have covered construction, post-construction, IDDE, and Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping. The next meeting, on March 13, will address public education, outreach, participation, and involvement.



H-GAC has begun planning a “welcome to the MS4 program” workshop in the fall for communities that anticipate getting an MS4 operators permit based on census designation of urbanized areas. EPA plans to release the designations in October 2012. Rachel asked for volunteers who might be interested in helping to plan this event.

H-GAC has received copies of Notices of Intent (NOIs) and 2010 annual reports for MS4 Phase II operators in the region. H-GAC is in the process of posting these on the website. H-GAC will be collecting additional reports and posting them on-line as well.

IA 4.3: Encourage Expansion of Storm Water Management Programs

- Interim, measureable milestone:
 - “By year five, all permit holders shall expand or focus their existing storm water programs as appropriate”
 - “By year five, 30 previously unpermitted entities shall develop new programs”

On August 24, 2011, the Bureau of the Census released its “Urban Area Criteria for the 2010 Census.” The Federal Register announcement is available on the Census website: <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/2010urbanruralclass.html>. The changes will be processed and the resultant new maps are supposed to be available in October 2012. Presumably, new MS4s—previously unpermitted entities--will be included in the new delineation of urban areas, and thus will become subject to the MS4 General Permit.

In addition to the regulatory expansion, existing programs are focusing some of the MS4 programs on bacteria, rather than nonpoint-source pollution in general. For example, the Joint Task Force (City of Houston, Harris County, Harris County Flood Control District, and TxDOT) continues to target bacteria and refine their programs.

IA 4.4: Promote Recognition Programs for Developments that Voluntarily Incorporate Bacteria Reduction Measures

- Interim, measureable milestones:
 - “Within five years, develop a recognition program”
 - “Upon completion of the program development, recognize at least one community each year for five years and an increasing number of communities/projects thereafter, or as specified as part of the program development process.”
 - “Two communities each year analyze regulations and programs to accommodate participation in existing programs.”

Neither H-GAC nor other stakeholders have begun developing a recognition program. Stakeholders suggested that the Greater Houston Builders Association would be a critical partner for such an endeavor. Rachel will work with Maggie at GHBA to begin discussing the possibility.

Harris County reported that in April 2011, Harris County and Harris County Flood Control adopted new criteria to facilitate low impact development in the county (http://www.eng.hctx.net/watershed/lid_green_infra.html). Harris County is hopeful that the new criteria will accommodate the low impact development in the county.



IA 4.5: Provide a Circuit Rider Program

- Interim, measureable milestone: “Each year, contact 50 stakeholders and provide five in-depth community consultations.”

As part of compiling information about MS4 operators from annual reports, H-GAC has compiled a contact list of MS4 operators. This information can be used to contact stakeholders. H-GAC has not begun developing a circuit rider program, although it is looking for funding opportunities for such a project.

The North Central Texas COG is beginning a peer-to-peer site visit and information exchange program. Work group participants expressed interest in such a program, provided that it is strictly an information exchange program. Participants indicated concern that peer reviews might lead to identification of violations that must be reported; rather, they would like the opportunity to improve their programs based on suggestions without the specter of enforcement. It would be important to use the term “information exchange program” rather than “peer review” to describe the activities. Rachel will keep track of progress and will report back to the workgroup as appropriate.

IA 4.6: Petition the TCEQ to Facilitate Reimbursement of Bacteria Reduction Measures

- Interim, measureable milestone: “Letter of commitment (or similar) from TCEQ within three years”

Participants indicated that they were not aware of progress on this issue, and they were curious to see if the issue would change if/when TCEQ approves the I-Plan. Randy Jones indicated that one of his clients has asked TCEQ to consider approving reimbursement for a project with a wet-bottom pond; the meeting attendees are curious to learn the results.

The group discussed how, as a result of the drought, developers and agencies have been revisiting the idea of wet-bottom ponds. While wet ponds appear to help reduce bacteria in some instances, the ponds often require the provision of water, which becomes expensive and possibly inappropriate during a drought.

Identify Priorities

The workgroup felt that adequate progress was being made and felt that information gathering and collection of examples was an appropriate focus of effort right now.

Discuss potential additions to the annual report and modifications to the I-Plan

The workgroup did not identify modifications to the I-Plan that it wished to recommend at this time.

The group discussed possible inclusion of preservation/improvement of tree cover as a possible best management practice, and indicated that it would be appropriate to discuss this in the annual report.

The group discussed whether activities specific to industrial storm water should be included. The group felt that this might be an appropriate topic for research.



Participants indicated concurrence with the intent to report on changes in water quality, identifying data for tracking progress against the milestones identified in the 9-elements table, and highlighting success stories.

Wrap-up

Rachel will provide notes for the meeting, including links to documents referenced in the discussion.

BIG Annual Meeting: May 22, 2012

Adjourn

