

Stormwater Funding Program Stakeholders Work Group



Ecology Headquarters
Room ROA-32
December 20, 2013

DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

December Meeting Summary

VC	Andy	Rheume	City of Redmond	X	Jessica	Schwing	Ecology
TC	Anne	Dettelbach	Ecology	VC	Jon	Morrow	City of Ellensburg
X	Bill	Moore	Ecology	TC	Laura	Merrill	Washington State Association of Counties
TC	Bruce	Wulkan	Puget Sound Partnership	X	Pat	Brommer	Ecology
X	Carl	Schroeder	Association of Washington Cities	TC	Rebecca	Ponzio	Washington Environmental Council
TC	Darcy	Nonemacher	Washington Environmental Council		Rick	Romero	City of Spokane
TC	Dave	Tucker	Kitsap County Public Works	TC	Ron	Wierenga	Clark County
X	Dawn	Anderson	Pierce County		Russ	Connole	Spokane County
TC	Debbie	Terwilleger	Snohomish County		Gerry	O'Keefe	Washington Public Ports Association
X	Dan	Garipy`	Ecology	VC	Marcia	Davis	City of Spokane
X	Jeff	Nejedley	Ecology		Denise	Clifford	Ecology
VC	Cynthia	Wall	Ecology	X	Jodi	Garon	Ecology

Agenda

9:00 Review/Discuss Meeting Notes from 11/18

Purpose/Goal: Ensure everybody is on board with the eligibility recommendations discussed during the last meeting. Re-visit action items.

9:20 Overview of Ecology Grant Application Review Process

Purpose/Goal: Ensure that everyone in the group has a basic understanding of the process Ecology uses to review and rank proposals.

9:40 Review Example Applications and Discuss Scoring

Purpose/Goal: Confirm that the scoring criteria fit the objectives of the funding program, brainstorm ways to develop more quantitative assessments of program value and how to score projects with different scales.

11:45 Wrap-up

Purpose/Goal: Assess where we are in the discussion, capture key points and action items.

Meeting Notes

Updates and revisions to the 11/18/13 include: 1) revision of LID discussion to reflect that definition used in the Phase I and II permits will be used in the interim program with the option to revisit the issue in the long-term program; 2) addition of a follow-up item to review planning grant projects to see examples; 3) change previously funded projects to previously funded and executed; 4) correct "for new development" to read "from new development"

The question was raised– Can a community apply for several rounds of grants to build a project that requires more than \$1M? i.e. - build a war chest. This is not permissible unless the project can reasonably be built in phases and the phases can function independently.

The group also re-visited the action item where we would determine if limitations on activity projects exist because the funding source comes from capital funds. The upcoming budget proposal may move some of the funding from ELSA to bond funds which may have some impact. Consensus was not reached on the funding limitations as they relate to activity projects.

Review of Grant Application Process

Applications are submitted, applications are screened for eligibility, if changes such as budget totals, or legislative district are required applicants may be given an opportunity to correct, applications are then reviewed by an Ecology engineer and two reviewers- one from within the region and one from outside the region. If the two reviewer's scores are more than 100 points apart in review, the reviewer discuss the project scores, if they cannot get within 100 points the application goes to a third reviewer. Tie breakers include scores for water quality problem and readiness to proceed. All reviewers meet as a group to discuss ratings and rankings. Once projects are ranked funding is allocated starting from the highest scoring project until no funds remain or until all projects with scores above 600 are funded.

Discussion of Project Evaluation Criteria

Scope of Work- scores are generally in line with overall project scores; this question helps the reviewers determine that the applicant has thought through all the steps necessary to complete the project.

Proposed Budget – most applicants score well on this section. There was discussion on how to determine if a project is a good value. Using/requiring an engineer's estimate was suggested as a way to help curtail costs and prevent excessive design cost- 12% was suggested a good limit for design cost. Potential problems that may arise from using the engineers estimate or capping the design cost include making it hard for design/build projects to compete and making it hard for smaller retrofits, which typically have a proportionally higher design cost, to compete for funding. The group identified that value has two parts- the first being a reasonable cost for the actual building of the project and the second the value of the water quality improvement. These two parts have been separated in the EAGL electronic grant application.

Severity of Stormwater Problem- this question has proved to be problematic for applicants. Applicants often identify that the project is within a watershed that is under a TMDL but fail to show how the project will address the TMDL. Issues relevant to assessing value included, assessing value to education and outreach programs which may not result in direct benefit, problems with lack of planning documents, equalizing for the skill of the grant writer, using the engineers' estimate to "truth check" the feasibility of the application.

The group discussed the challenges of addressing a TMDL in the application since most BMPs do not directly address problems like dissolved oxygen or fecal pollutants which are commonly

listed under TMDLs. There also challenges for many communities that do not know exactly where water quality issues are located and in many cases widespread monitoring is cost prohibitive.

There was a suggestion to allow applicants to address issues brought up by reviewers, which may create an equity issue. Program administrators prefer to provide training and guidance on the front end and it is up to the applicants to take advantage of these opportunities.

Several existing planning documents planning documents were discussed:

- Watershed Characterization- Puget Sound only, qualitative,
- Local Integrating Organizations (LIO) – Puget Sound only, qualitative, may include several WRIs (Water Resource Inventory Areas)

These types of planning documents seem like a good thing to ask for, but because they are not statewide and in some cases do not directly address stormwater, they cannot fully answer the question of project value for rating and ranking in a statewide program.

An idea was brought forth that the program may want to focus on funding projects that will benefit restorable aquatic habitat restoration and that it might not be the best use of resources to focus on pristine area or areas that have been massively impacted. Representatives from Eastern Washington pointed out that aquatic habitat is not the only measure to judge water quality and that flow control and aquifer protection are also important, especially in the eastern portion of the state.

The next topic of discussion centered on the idea of other benefits that could be derived from the projects, outside of water quality. Some members of the group strongly felt that projects that provide multiple benefits including environmental justice, or green space should have some advantage in the scoring and ranking process. The group also identified projects that work in tandem with toxic cleanup sites at potentially good use of resources.

The value of monitoring was discussed and generally the group was hesitant to fund extensive monitoring due to the high cost. The group preferred to focus on implementation and any monitoring would need to be carefully assessed to ensure it was both valuable and non-duplicative of previous monitoring efforts.

Other comments that were generated in the discussion of this question include a caution not to plan on dividing up the points too much, as it tends to dilute the most important questions.

Action Item: Rebecca, Darcy and Jessica will research how other states/jurisdictions have approached the “multiple benefits” issue and discuss it with the group at the February Meeting.

Project Team- there was some discussion of removing this item, but the group decided that overall knowing about the proposed project team provided good information to the reviewers

about the applicant's knowledge of what types of skill sets would be necessary to complete the project. There was support for the idea of moving this item under the readiness to proceed question if that works within the larger integrated program.

Next Meeting

January 7, 2014 from 1-4pm at Ecology HQ