

City and County of Honolulu
Storm Water of O'ahu Stakeholder Hui (SWOOSH)

January 24, 2023, 4:15-6:45 pm
Hybrid Meeting
via Zoom & Mayor's Conference Room

ATTENDEES

AARP (Kealii Lopez)
American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) (June Nakamura)
Building Owner and Managers Association (BOMA) (Melissa Pavlicek)
Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) (Dana Okano)
Hawai'i Green Growth (Shelley Gustafson)
Hawai'i Reserves (Jeff Tyau)
Koolau Mountains Watershed Partnership (JC Watson)
NAIOP | Commercial Real Estate Development Organization (Darian Chun)
Neighborhood Board #31 (Levani Lipton)
O'ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council (Megan Gonsalves)
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Hawaii (Frank Doyle)
The Nature Conservancy (Kim Falinski)
Waikiki Business Improvement District (BID) (David Willard)
Kamehameha Schools (Gary Evora)
Waipahu High School (Dalen Calistro)
Sustainable Coastlines Hawaii (Rafael Bergstrom)

Public Agency Staff

Randall Wakumoto (Program Administrator, Storm Water Quality Division, City and County of Honolulu
Department of Facility Maintenance (DFM))
Dawn Szewczyk (Director and Chief Engineer, City and County of Honolulu DFM)
Warren Mamizuka (Deputy Director, City and County of Honolulu DFM)

Consultant Team

Juli Beth (JB) Hinds (Birchline Planning, LLC)
Joan Isaacson (Kearns & West)
Laurens van der Tak (Jacobs)
Ming Ding (AECOM)
Clara Leik (AECOM)
Cami Kloster (G70)
Janice Jensen (G70)

Members of the Public

Bob Bourke
Gary Weller
Ashley Endo
Michael Fernandez
Dnakano (ZOOM identification)

1. Welcome, Agenda Overview, and New Member Introductions

Joan Isaacson (Kearns & West) welcomed everyone and reviewed the meeting agenda and guides for productive meetings.

See slides 1 to 5 of the presentation materials provided at StormWaterUtilityOahu.org.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments. See slides 6 and 7 of the presentation materials.

3. Transition to Storm Water of O’ahu Stakeholder Hui (SWOOSH)

Randall Wakumoto (DFM) wished everyone a happy new year and thanked them for attending.

Two new members were introduced: David Willard representing the Waikiki Business Improvement District in place of Jennifer Nakayama who left for a position in Oklahoma, and Dalen Calistro, the new student representative. She is a sophomore at Waipahu High School and involved in the school’s Natural Resources Science Academy.

Randall explained that the group is transitioning from the Stakeholder Advisory Group for the proposed Storm Water Utility to the Storm Water Of O’ahu Stakeholder Hui (SWOOSH). The group’s focus will broaden to encompass the overall direction of the City’s Storm Water Program, not just on the utility and fees. This reflects a change that has been in progress.

Juli Beth “JB” Hinds (Birchline Planning) reviewed that the group started in 2019 and was initially focused only on the storm water utility. While that has been on hold since the pandemic, there has been an increased emphasis on strategic planning and the overall direction and focus of the Storm Water Program.

Joan reviewed the purpose of SWOOSH as defined in the protocol document that Randall will be sending out to members after the meeting.

Meeting summaries and slides will continue to be posted on the StormWaterUtilityOahu.org website and will eventually be posted to the main Storm Water Division website.

See slides 8 to 10 of the presentation materials.

Please note: For all Q&A / Discussion sections, the notes with dashes (-) represent comments and questions from the Stakeholder Advisory Group and the notes with open points (o) represent the project team’s responses.

- Is the new focus for the group replacing the previous focus on the Storm Water Utility, or is it in addition to? Are we capping our old work and starting something entirely new?
 - o Randall explained that the timing introducing a storm water utility bill was not right due to a variety of factors. While it was on hold, the City began to look at its overall storm water management program and work towards developing both a strategic plan, and further enhancing its current efforts. Some SWOOSH discussions will be on topics other than fees. For instance, the City is working on a comprehensive storm water master plan and a green storm water infrastructure implementation plan.

- The process used with the Stakeholder Advisory Group has been really encouraging. Will the process remain the same in SWOOSH, or will that be changing as well?
 - o Joan said that the intent is to keep the process the same. The change is in expansion of topics for member feedback and input.
- Will the stakeholder group be expanding its membership? The Army Corps of Engineers is a potential new member.
 - o Randall is open to expanding the SWOOSH membership and new members will need to be committed to the process. The City is looking at things from an asset management standpoint. The federal government is looking at asset management strategies. There are currently no representatives from the federal government. The question of membership can be discussed further. JB raised the possibility of having representatives from entities such as the Army Corps of Engineers invited to give a presentation without needing to join as a member.
- The state Department of Land and Natural Resources Marine 30x30 initiative is in progress. The fishing community feels they are being unfairly targeted as the primary problem affecting nearshore fisheries and is asking when the storm water issues that are affecting our reefs will be addressed. Representatives from the fishing community might be interested in participating in SWOOSH because storm water impacts have a direct impact on them.
 - o Randall noted that the City is also trying to look at storm water from a conservation standpoint. Fishermen are an important user group. When the Stakeholder Advisory Group began, it was intentionally kept small to facilitate interaction.
 - o Agreement was expressed in support of including representation of fishermen and stewards of the ocean on the SWOOSH.
- Is there a timeline for when the storm water utility bill introduced to City Council?
 - o An update will be given later in the meeting.

4. Roundtable Alohas

Joan invited each of the SWOOSH members to share one of the priorities for their organization this year. Each group member gave a summary of their work and a priority for their organization. See slides 11 and 12 of the presentation materials.

Melissa Pavlicek of BOMA shared that they have received a small grant to take the information from SWOOSH and convey it to their constituents.

5. Update on Storm Water Fee and Funding Options

Dawn gave a quick update that DFM is moving forward several initiatives this year including the Storm Water Utility, Storm Water Master Plan (possibly funded with American Rescue and Preservation Act [ARPA] funding)s, and green storm water infrastructure planning. The biggest focus is on the Storm Water Master Plan. The City has also received Army Corps permits that allow it to conduct routine stream maintenance activities rather than just responding to emergencies.

Randall updated SWOOSH members on the Storm Water Utility. The City is still actively engaged in pursuing a Storm Water Utility, hopefully this year or next. Over the last two weeks the DFM

leadership sat down with each councilmember to give them an update on the utility and DFM's role in City services. The councilmembers understood that there are financial challenges and believe that the utility is an important program. DFM is still doing technical analyses to determine the best approach. The Major's Office is committed to a Storm Water Utility, and the Mayor was surprised that the City had not yet introduced or established one, as many major cities across the US have.

Dawn shared that the Halekauwila Street sinkhole in Kaka'ako was partly caused by degrading storm water infrastructure under the street. It will take \$20 million to repair the sinkhole and the street. If the utility had been in place, there could have been better maintenance to prevent these issues from occurring. Randall said more of these kinds of problems are expected around the island. In Kailua a similar sinkhole occurred near a large culvert that needed to be repaired.

a. Green Storm Water Infrastructure Funding Award

Randall said that DFM is attempting to secure additional funds for storm water projects, especially enhancements, because there are limited funds available within the City. The DFM leadership worked with the state Department of Health and were able to secure funds for a green storm water infrastructure implementation master plan. In addition, with the help of the Hawaii Community Foundation, DFM prepared a package to submit for federal "congressionally directed spending" for \$670,000 for construction of two green storm water infrastructure projects in Kaka'ako. In December of last year, they were informed that the City's proposal was added to the Omnibus spending bill and will be made available to the City for construction.

Randall provided an update on a Gap Analysis that is being conducted as follow-up to the Storm Water Strategic Plan. The Gap Analysis will show challenges and issues for the overall storm water program within the City government structure as an important step towards creating a roadmap for the program direction. DFM asked for support from the other departments directors and met with their staff to understand roles and responsibilities. The Gap Analysis work will continue over the coming months.

See slides 13 and 14 of the presentation materials.

6. Storm Water Strategic Plan

JB shared that one of the critical things from the Stakeholder Advisory Group was questions including, what is the plan, how is the Storm Water Program measuring progress and where is the City on the path to achieving their goals?

There are eight (8) goals in the Storm Water Strategic Plan. DFM is looking at assessment tools to create a dashboard illustrating the progression for each measure. Randall noted that many things in the Strategic Plan represent a significant expansion of the program. The program can start to take some steps forward in those areas that are identified. Some of the information is not tracked right now or is not easily obtained. The hope is to automate the collection process because it is important both for the public and for the City to see progress on these measures.

JB reviewed measures and dashboard concepts for the first four goals of enhanced water quality, flood adaptation and prevention, timely and consistent asset renewal, and financial accountability and transparency.

Cami Kloster (G70) reviewed the measures, and dashboard concepts for the last four goals of community engagement, partnerships and coordination, equity/equality and workforce excellence. She highlighted that new storm water program branding would be incorporated to help people become more aware of the storm water work being conducted across City departments.

See slides 15 to 23 of the presentation materials.

Q&A/Discussion

- How are storm water projects coded now in the City and County budget process? What resources does the Storm Water Program have? Or do you have to ask for resources?
 - o Randall responded that each department has different responsibilities and processes. For the Gap Analysis, meetings were held with various agencies. Each department has its own responsibilities that affect storm water and prepares and coordinates its own budgetary needs and requests. Other departments include Department of Design and Construction (DDC), Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP), and Department of Transportation Services (DTS) are involved with various aspects that pertain to storm water. DDC is involved in the majority of the City's capital improvement project development, design and implementation, while DFM has its own capital improvements focused on water quality. DPP regulates mostly private development, which affects storm water. DTS is responsible for what happens in the roadways, and they have programs that affect transportation within city streets, drainage, and green storm water infrastructure (i.e., the Complete Streets program). The Storm Water Quality Division also engages with Budget and Fiscal Services (BFS), Department of Human Resources (DHR), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and Department of Enterprise Services (DES) that include other departments that may have some impacts such as golf courses or parks. Certain departments only have certain capabilities and may not have the expertise, the personnel, or the equipment for other tasks. For example, DFM will not maintain park facilities for DPR, but will coordinate with them. For the Gap Analysis interviews, the purpose is to understand the issues of each department and where they see themselves in the future.
- Have changes been made to the Draft Strategic Plan since it was first released in mid-2022?
 - o Yes, the document is being finalized and will be ready in the next month or so. Thanks to everyone who provided comments.
- What happened on the issue of the state DOT airports and harbors being exempted from the storm water fees?
 - o A bill in the house and in the senate (HB1101 and SB 1399) were put forward at the start of this legislative session as part of the governor's package with a request to exempt the state from all fees. Randall will send links to these bills to SWOOSH members. The City will be preparing their opposition testimony.
- Is part of the state's argument for HB 1101 that the state taxes would have to go up?
 - o JB explained that an argument could be made that the state would need to collect more funds to pay its storm water fees if the City and County were to impose a fee. It would be a small amount, especially relative to other utility fees that are charged and paid. DFM and study team consultants for the proposed storm water utility have presented opportunities for the state to obtain credits under the utility to make it more affordable. The credits could be offered to state agencies that address storm water on their sites.

- State legislation granted the City and County of Honolulu the authority to establish a storm water utility. At that time, the legislation did not exempt state agencies and doing so now is unfair, wrong and undermines the purpose of the authority.
- “Stormwater” responsibilities are spread across many City and State agencies. What is the City Storm Water Program’s number of full time equivalent (FTE) positions?
 - o We have that information, but not all positions are dedicated exclusively to storm water work. Approximately 310 FTEs work on storm water across all the major departments. In DFM, DDC, and DPP at least 50% or more of their time is spent on storm water activities, but they do have other responsibilities as well. Of the 309 FTEs, there are about 130 vacancies.

7. Additional News and Updates

a. City Outreach Updates and Needs

Cami gave an overview of the City’s public education and outreach program. She and Janice Jensen (G70) provide public education and outreach support to the City’s Storm Water Quality program.

The program effectiveness pyramid diagram guides a lot of the City’s work (see slide 26). The goal is to reach level 6 (the top of the pyramid) with good water quality in the receiving waters (stream and ocean waters). Each level of the pyramid is dependent upon the level beneath it.

Outreach has historically been about sharing information rather than figuring out how to change their behaviors. The idea is to move away from programs at the bottom of the pyramid that simply share information and do not assess impacts. The City is on the leading edge nationally by using social marketing to affect behavior changes. Cami gave a brief explanation of social marketing and how it is being applied by the Storm Water Program (i.e., focusing on the behaviors that affect storm water in different sectors).

Cami explained the current outreach initiatives where the City could use assistance and input from SWOOSH. These include several pilot programs as well as contacts and networking opportunities.

Randall shared that the Storm Water Quality Division has two new hires for recently created positions: a contracts officer and a Geographic Information System (GIS) manager. The grants and contracts officer will help the City navigate the federal grants process and the GIS manager will help leverage GIS information to prioritize long-term items and track progress.

See slides 25 to 31 of the presentation.

b. New City Website Under Development

The City is in the process of revamping the Storm Water Quality Division’s Clean Water Honolulu website. See slide 30.

c. Hawai’i Community Foundation (HCF) – Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Grant/Regional Environmental Finance Center Category 2

Dana Okano (HCF) reported that the HCF Hawai'i Fresh Water Initiative recognizes the pressures on long-term water security and brought together a stakeholder council. This council determined that Hawai'i needs an additional 100 million gallons/day of water supply to be sustainable and that this should come from conservation, reuse, and recharge. It will take a lot of money to address Hawai'i's water infrastructure needs, especially on our neighbor islands, but even on O'ahu. The Fresh Water Council looked into federal funds available to assist. Other places across the country rely on federal funds a lot more than Hawai'i does.

At the end of 2021 Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and HCF talked with partner organizations to see how best to make use of the time and opportunity. Many county and state agencies are not aware of federal monies and were not applying for them. HCF thought it was important to coach them through the process of talking to the congressional delegation, submitting proposals, etc. As mentioned earlier, there was success in December with the recently approved project to fund both the green storm water infrastructure implementation plan, and the construction of two projects in Kaka'ako. HCF also assisted with some competitive grant applications.

Because HCF was already doing this work with the state and county agencies, they applied for Environmental Protection Agency funding to become an Environmental Finance Center and were approved. HCF is currently waiting for those funds to be awarded and continues to do this work. With this funding, HCF will be partnering with government agencies to provide technical assistance with applying for funding and is working with the University of Hawai'i to create career pathways for students by ensuring they get the skills that employers are looking for.

See slides 32 to 40 of the presentation materials.

Q&A/Discussion

- For the Smart Bins program, can you also include beach parks? The trash cans often overflow at Kailua and Kalama.
- Is a pilot program planned for the Smart Bins project? I think you'll run into labor issues with it.
 - o Randall responded that the City is in the early stages of looking at what it would take to implement a pilot program, including partnerships, and have had conversations with Waikiki BID. Information can be shared later to update the SWOOSH.
- There are so many abandoned cars, and they aren't moved for months. This is another issue that would impact the street sweeping program.
- Have any resorts sent people to go through the National Green Infrastructure Certification Program (NGICP)?
 - o Resorts will be a focus for certification this year, as well as golf courses.
- Is there a community version of the NGICP program? A potential cohort would be neighborhood board members who can then reach out to their communities.
 - o Not really, but that would be great to have. The NGICP certification takes two weeks and is intensive, focused on active maintenance.

8. Wrap-Up

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 11, 2023

For either the September or November meeting (dates TBD), the plan is to have everyone attend in person. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Joan thanked everyone attending the meeting.

See slides 41 to 42 of the presentation materials.