



**City and County of Honolulu Storm Water Utility Study Stakeholder Advisory Group**

April 4, 2022, 4:00-6:30 pm

Hybrid Meeting

Zoom & Mission Memorial Auditorium

**ATTENDEES**

AARP (Kealii Lopez)

American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) (June Nakamura)

Board of Water Supply (BWS) (Barry Usagawa)

‘Iolani School (Jaron Kawamura)

Neighborhood Board #4 (Sharon Schneider)

Neighborhood Board #31 (Levani Lipton)

Oahu Resource Conservation and Development Council (Megan Gonsalves)

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Hawaii (Frank Doyle)

The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii (Kim Falinski)

At-Large (Mark Fox)

Hawaii Community Foundation (Dana Okano)

Hawaii Reserves (Jeff Tyau)

*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)

Roger Babcock (Director, City and County of Honolulu Department of Environmental Services)

Matt Gonser (City and County of Honolulu Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency)

*Consultant Team*

Juli Beth (JB) Hinds (Birchline Planning, LLC)

Joan Isaacson (Kearns & West)

Laurens van der Tak (Jacobs)

Ming Ding (AECOM)

Cami Kloster (G70)

Janice Jensen (G70)

Jessica Chiam (AECOM)

*Members of the Public*

Lauren Roth Venu

Mr. & Mrs. Kawamura

Dr. Yvonne Chan, ‘Iolani School



## 1. Welcome and Agenda Overview

Joan Isaacson (Kearns & West) welcomed everyone.

See slides 1 to 5 of the presentation materials provided at [stormwaterutilityoahu.org](http://stormwaterutilityoahu.org).

## 2. Public Comment

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

## 3. Milestone Acknowledgements

Dawn Szewczyk (DFM) recognized Jaron Kawamura, the Stakeholder Advisory Group student member who is graduating from 'Iolani this year. See slide 8 of the presentation materials.

## 4. Storm Water Utility Updates and Discussion/Q&A

### a. DFM leadership activities/Presentation of Ordinance to City Council, including timing

Randall Wakumoto (DFM) provided an update on their leadership's activities which include meetings this month with Department of Budget and Fiscal Services on billing and rate analyses and with Department of Human Resources on workforce development.

The timing of introducing an ordinance to establish a storm water utility to City Council has not been determined. The Mayor strongly supports the utility, but considerations for the timing of a bill introduction are economic and must reflect City Council concerns.

See slides 9 to 11 of the presentation materials.

### b. State of Hawai'i legislature activity re-proposed exemptions

Randall reported on the proposed state legislation that would have exempted all State of Hawaii properties from storm water utility fees. The bill had 16 letters in opposition and no testimony in support, and it did not move forward. Mahalo to everyone who submitted testimony.

See slides 12 and 13 of the presentation materials.

### c. Federal funding application updates

Randall provided an update on the pursuit of federal funding, which has been done with support from the Hawaii Community Foundation for both the application process and for assuring that the City and County meets other qualifications. Packages were submitted to the offices of various congressional representatives.

The City is looking to obtain funding for a GSI Implementation Plan via the EPA/DOH Clean Water State Revolving Funds. Although this funding is a loan, there is a "loan forgiveness" provision that essentially makes this into a grant.



The City is also applying for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that were provided to the counties and states during COVID. The request for funds to develop a comprehensive storm water master plan was prepared and in the process of being submitted to the Mayor's office for review and consideration. Requests have also been prepared for four (4) green stormwater infrastructure implementation projects.

See slides 14 and 15 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.

- BWS was asked to defer approval of the BWS new connection impact fee increases due to the proposed submittal of the storm water fee to City Council. Given the opposition, what advice can you give BWS now? I think the Directors should meet to discuss.
  - o Dawn noted that she could talk to Ernie Lau since DFM doesn't want to hold up BWS efforts to update its new connection fee.
- One of the best potential outcomes for the O'ahu Storm Water Utility is the strategic and proactive projects that Randall just shared. Very exciting.
- Can we please get clarification again as to why the Highway Funds transfer would no longer be available?
  - o JB shared that there have been options for various rates, financing, and exemptions. If the Highway Funds were no longer transferred, it would significantly increase the rates. There is a meeting this week to talk to Budget and Fiscal Services (BFS) to confirm BFS's position on this.

## 5. Rate Analysis

### a. Summary of Prior Rate Analysis

The summaries of the previous rate scenarios were presented as a refresher to show the options that have been considered before looking at other options and scenarios under analysis.

See slides 16 to 18 of the presentation materials.

### b. Monster Homes

JB described analysis that has been done in response to a request from the City Council. Beginning in 2014, there have been community concerns about monster homes in single-family neighborhoods on O'ahu. In 2020 the City adopted zoning changes that regulate floor area and number of bathrooms to address prevalence of monster homes. The project team was asked to look into the potential to charge differential or supplemental storm water fees for monster homes due to the greater intensity of site development relative to those in the surrounding neighborhood.



For the analysis, the project team asked two questions:

- Can realistic criteria be established to identify monster homes in order to look at potential differential fees for them?
- Could a surcharge or other additional storm water fee reasonably be designed, and if so, what revenue might be generated?

DPP's changes to the zoning established three criteria for what a "monster house" is, though the term "monster house" has never been specifically defined. One criterion is a limit on the total number of bathrooms. The analysis using number of bathrooms demonstrated that properties with more bathrooms than now allowed by zoning were not very different from homes with fewer bathrooms from a development intensity and thus, from a storm water perspective would not provide a fair and equitable criteria for assessing a fee; therefore, not recommended by the technical team as a valid approach. This type of interior criterion is, however, important for zoning and other purposes.

From a storm water perspective, two factors are important in identifying monster homes: Impervious Surface Ratio (ISR) and Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Floor area ratio is a building's floor area in relation to the size of the lot that the building is on and is one way to measure the intensity of development. The impervious surface area ratio (sometimes referred to as maximum lot coverage) is the total impervious area of a property in relation to the total area of its lot; this ratio can highlight properties that do not have less capacity for infiltrating water on site than properties in the surrounding zoning district.

The analysis found that these two factors do a better job of identifying intensely-developed properties relative to neighboring properties. These criteria may also be useful to address fee differentials for high rise condominiums. The City of Seattle already does this using FAR. JB shared a possible formula for using FAR to calculate some type of development intensity surcharge or supplement to standard, IA-related storm water fees.

The advantage of this fee differential is that it addresses intensity of development and could shift the overall fee burden away from single-family dwellings. The disadvantage is that many small residential properties have high FARs but do not exceed ISR or have minimal livable square footage. As noted on the slides, a minimum amount of total square feet of lot area and developed area would need to be set above which a surcharge would apply so that very small single family houses would not be penalized. Laurens noted that another significant disadvantage of differentiating by development intensity is the additional layer of complexity this adds to the rates.

### Q&A/Discussion

- I do not care for monster homes. However, I think we ought not get caught up in this issue. Our focus should still be on pervious and non-impervious surface area. Will this same consideration be used for non-single-family lots, i.e., condos or business offices? Does the project team have recommendations on this?
  - o This issue of equity with the larger buildings came up at the community meetings and this dataset is useful in understanding the properties that could be affected.



- This could be a future option for all properties, and this is first step in exploring the implications of this. This might mean that condo owners, instead of paying less than a dollar per month, might pay a few dollars a month. Additional analysis is needed. The project team now has a tool to test out the impacts.
- In utility planning it is common for project teams to look at many scenarios. These scenarios do not necessarily lead to recommendations; however, they can help the project team discover different facets of the fee that are important. The purpose of the Stakeholder Advisory Group is sharing and bouncing ideas around.
- If we go away from strictly Impervious Area, the fee might be less defensible. Higher density impacts might be tougher to show/explain.
- The project team agrees this concept would be a lot to explain. Seattle added this as a differential fee after the basic storm water fee had already been established.
- There is a municipality that is looking at basing a high intensity use on vehicle trips generated. This has not yet been tested out and is **not** a project recommendation.
- Perhaps the reason this monster home issue is important is that it is a really visible example of impervious surfaces that people will understand.
- Worth considering what the impact of something like this would be on issues related to the development of affordable housing, ADUs, O'hana housing, etc.

See slides 19 to 33 of the presentation materials.

## 6. Draft Storm Water Strategic Plan

### a. Focused discussion on strategies and metrics

Cami Kloster (G70) introduced the eight long-term goals, strategic measures, and metrics for the first four goals. JB continued by highlighting the strategies and measures for the last four goals. For each goal selected strategies and measures were highlighted.

See slides 34 to 51 of the presentation materials.

### Q&A/Discussion

- Glad to see the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals. DEI is increasingly becoming a requirement for federal and private dollars, so it's good that they are being thought about and planned for now.
- What you covered is consistent with the discussions and input I believe we have provided. Thanks for capturing these long-term goals.
- Overall, the Strategic Plan looks great. How would the categories/metrics be prioritized between and within each category? Seems that if a solution meets multiple metrics, it can have a higher priority. While the main focus is water quality, should there be ties to water quantity benefits? Storm water capture, recharge, reuse...
  - Good points regarding potential prioritization of projects. In the future, the Stakeholder Advisory Group or a related entity might also provide input on project prioritization.



## **b. Stakeholder Advisory Group review & comments**

Comments on the draft Storm Water Strategic Plan are requested by Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup> and can be sent to Randall Wakumoto.

The City agencies have been provided the draft Plan for review and comment and were given a presentation. The Strategic Plan will be revised based on City and Stakeholder Advisory Group comments before providing the draft to the public and holding a virtual meeting to give an overview presentation.

The goals from this Strategic Plan will be utilized for the Master Plan and other reports / reporting. The comprehensive Master Plan process will start to create implementable plans. For the remainder of this year, the City will be working on a gap analysis and collecting more input from the City departments.

Randall highlighted that this Storm Water Strategic Plan plan is dynamic and will be revisited on a 3 to 5-year cycle.

See slides 52 to 53 of the presentation materials.

## **7. Wrap up**

### **Next Meeting: proposed for September 2022**

Joan thanked everyone for their patience with the first hybrid meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Group. She also asked people to put into the chat “why did you participate remotely?”

The next meeting may include a possible re-orienting of the Stakeholder Advisory Group from being focused solely on storm water utility formation to also being a sounding board for future plans and efforts and tracking of Strategic and Storm Water Master Planning progress.

See slides 54 to 56 of the presentation materials.