



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

May 27, 2020, 4:00-5:30 pm

Virtual Meeting

### ATTENDEES

#### *Stakeholder Advisory Group Members*

American Association of Retired Persons (Kealii Lopez)  
Appleseed Policy Center (Gavin Thornton)  
Freshwater Initiative (Mark Fox)  
Hawaii Reserves, Inc. (Jeff Tyau)  
Honolulu Board of Water Supply (Barry Usagawa)  
KUA (Wally Ito)  
Neighborhood Board #4 (Sharon Schneider)  
Neighborhood Board #25 (Bernie Marcos)  
The Nature Conservancy (Kim Falinski)  
University of Hawaii (Roger Babcock)

#### *Public Agency Staff*

Randall Wakumoto (City and County of Honolulu Department of Facility Maintenance)  
Ross Sasamura (City and County of Honolulu Department of Facility Maintenance)  
Tonya Ketzka (City and County of Honolulu Department of Facility Maintenance)

#### *Consultant Team*

Juli Beth (JB) Hinds (Birchline Planning LLC)  
Joan Isaacson (Kearns & West)  
Cami Kloster (G70)  
Janice Jensen (G70)  
Taylor York (Kearns & West)  
Jessica Chaim (AECOM)

#### *Members of the Public*

Dana Okano (Hawaii Community Foundation)  
Ariana Claveria  
Lauren Hill  
Jeffrey Harris  
Taylor Agra

### 1. Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Overview

Joan Isaacson (Kearns & West) welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda. Randall also welcomed and announced the new National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit is in the process of being issued by the State of Hawaii Department of Health to the City and County of Honolulu.

Prior to the meeting, Ross Sasamura provided a briefing to the City Council Public Infrastructure Technology and Sustainability (PITS) Committee, and Ross and Randall are providing written responses to 10 questions that were raised regarding where the Storm Water Utility is headed and the challenges of COVID-19. Ross explained Councilmember Fukunaga's mention of a Storm Water Utility bill, which is not related to this storm water utility study. She likely was referring to an active bill introduced in 2019 by Councilmember Kobayashi, Bill 62, with a focus on responsibility for erosion and flood storm water damage.



## Q&A/Discussion

**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.

- Are there additional questions beyond the packet that was provided for the PITS meeting?
  - o Ross noted that the additional questions are to respond to anticipated constituent concerns and questions.
- Has the special fund mentioned in the PITS meeting been established?
  - o Ross responded that no Special Fund for storm water has been established, and that all storm water funds continue to go straight into the general fund.
- What is the City Council's level of support for a storm water utility at this time?
  - o It seemed like Councilmember Fukunaga was supportive. Other Councilmembers may have additional questions.
  - o The Councilmembers will need to understand and address issues raised by constituents. The response that DFM would defer the establishment of the fund until economic indicators are reached can in part address that.
- What can the Stakeholder Advisory Group do to support the effort?
  - o To the extent to which people feel comfortable, share what you have learned about Storm Water Utility process within your circles.
  - o The comments and concerns brought to the table are reflective of what we have heard in the community and are greatly appreciated.
  - o Joan noted that the Stakeholder Advisory Group's support in spreading information on the Round 2 community meetings is needed now and will continue to be needed in the future.

## 2. Updates: Storm Water Utility Study and Round 2 Community Outreach

Cami Kloster (G70) provided a brief overview of the outreach process for the second round of community outreach.

Publicity for the nine community meetings included print advertisements in the Star Advertiser, Midweek and North Shore News publications, an article and editorial in the Star Advertiser, Associated Press picking up the story, Facebook posts/advertisements, a public service announcement on Spectrum, newsletter to City storm water contacts and attendees of the first round of community meetings, and an email with a two-page information flyer sent to neighborhood board members.

During each of the community meetings a poll was given. The most common response to how people learned of the meeting was 'someone told me about it'. To date 67 people have participated in the seven meetings that have been held. There are two meetings remaining. Daytime meetings have had the best participation, including the Memorial Day holiday. About 75% of meeting attendees were first-time participants. Overall people have been interested in learning more and have had excellent questions.



Community meeting presentation slides are posted on the project website, and a video of the presentation will be posted with closed captions will be posted on the webpage. The project team will be preparing a feedback summary as they did with the first round.

#### Q&A/Discussion

- We have asked people to submit comments via StormWaterUtilityOahu.org. When will we stop taking these comments? Is the 30th the last day?
  - o There is not a last day to submit comments. However, to have comments incorporated into the next community input summary report, they should be submitted by Friday June 5<sup>th</sup>.

### 3. Q&A / Discussion about May 18th Meeting Materials

#### Q&A/Discussion

- When should we provide recommendations on addressing hardship?
  - o JB responded this is needed as soon as possible because recommendations on this topic will be discussed at the upcoming June meeting.
- What is the new timeline, in consideration of the COVID-19 modifications?
  - o A fiscal year shift is currently proposed. FY22 or FY23 would be a realistic schedule and more can be accomplished in the meantime including more community outreach.
  - o Ross replied that usually by December in the calendar year the bill drafting is completed and is then ready to submit in March of the following year.
  - o Other steps that can be taken during this period of delay include the development of credits and rebates, structuring of the special fund, and researching billing options. The original schedule was very aggressive and there is now time to develop more elements of the Storm Water Utility.
- What are the next steps for the issue of revenue neutrality and that discussion?
  - o The next step is for Joan and Jeff Tyau to coordinate on the language and possible polling questions for the next Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting.
- Will there be discussion on the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) report that was sent out?
  - o The Stakeholder Advisory Group can let the project team know if there are any specific questions on the report.

Joan posed the following question to Stakeholder Advisory Group members: *Do you have any insight/ideas on the big topics that should be included in the Storm Water Master Plan effort for Oahu?*

JB offered that storm water master plans can be very varied – some are vision statements that are 30 pages long, and others are much larger and have detailed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects. Common elements of successful plans include benchmarking – e.g. where would we like to be, and how do we know if progress is being made. Benchmarking provides a good framework for reporting back to the community as well.



Successful storm water master plans provide a framework for coordination. For example, Joan and JB met with the Hawaii Association of Watershed Partnerships and learned about their work in the mauka conservation areas. Master plans can also identify whether there needs to be an ongoing group for the Storm Water Utility to coordinate activities as well as the responsibilities of different City departments to see how they could potentially transition under a Storm Water Utility.

- We're on the periphery of the Ala Wai Watershed issue. Is there any consideration of some cooperation with the group?
  - o Once prepared, the master plan can help guide how projects are implemented. It can be big picture perspective and help with the day to day management/operations.
- It is great to see a Storm Water Master Plan being proposed. The City's Development Plan and Sustainable Community Plans call for functional plans for storm water (in addition to ones for wastewater, water, etc.) that Council adopts by ordinance. The best definition was in the Central Oahu Sustainable Community Plan which states that a functional plan is/should contain:
  - A resource
  - Financing plan
  - Development schedule
  - Service and facility design standards
  - Community outreach guidelines
  - o The Storm Water Master Plan may or may not fulfill the detailed standards of a functional plan such as, for example, questions regarding whether the storm drain systems are adequate? When considering climate change, they will not be. The Department of Design and Construction may need to be involved in the master plan as they are involved in infrastructure design and construction. There are already areas that are flooding. Flooding is a significant part of climate change and may not be part of the upcoming Storm Water Master Plan although it is eventually needed. Green infrastructure may mitigate some of these effects.
- How will the Department of Facility Maintenance coordinate with the Department of Planning and Permitting to allow designs to be credited for tax relief?
  - o Under Department of Planning and Permitting new technical rules were established in 2017 and are referred to as the City's Water Quality Rules. These Rules pertain to new development and redevelopment and require the implementation of permanent storm water quality improvements (i.e. green infrastructure) for larger projects. Designs consistent with the Water Quality Rules would almost certainly qualify for some type of credit if a Storm Water Utility were to be established.
- Have the Consultants proposed benchmarks to monitor already?
  - o No benchmarks have been proposed at this time.
- Are these rules and credit guidelines easily accessible to businesses and residential property owners so they may consider retrofitting system designs costs for current property conditions? Cost/benefit to determine if they install systems or pay taxes. Are there guidelines based on controlling water runoff or suspended solids/pollutant reduction?
  - o A credit manual has not been written as the fee has not been adopted by City Council.
  - o Typically, the credit manual is not part of the City ordinance and is worked out in the rules administratively.



- A good example of a credit manual is one produced by the Philadelphia Water Department. [https://www.phila.gov/water/PDF/scaa\\_manual.pdf](https://www.phila.gov/water/PDF/scaa_manual.pdf).
- Will the credit manual be based on suspended solids or runoff volume?
  - The project team recommendation is to pick one or the other. San Diego has a combination of water quality and quantity, and it is hard to manage and understand.
  - Randall noted that City has Water Quality Rules under the Department of Planning and Permitting. The Rules require storm water improvements for larger sites (greater than one acre) and some smaller sites. These improvements are intended for water quality purposes and not for addressing large storm events. To address water quality, the Rules call for treatment of 1" of depth of rainfall over entire site. Treatment designs may also need to address potential pollutant issues with a site (e.g. parking lots). The Water Quality Rule requirements have a formal documentation and approval process including a stamp by a licensed engineer. For credits and rebates, the Storm Water Utility would want to make it easy for property owners to take actions and obtain benefits on their fees.
  - JB noted that in some cases it is better to have rebates which are one-time payments for activities that benefit water quality, rather than ongoing reductions in SWU bills.
- If we write a Storm Water Master Plan, we need to plan infrastructure projects to address the flooding.
  - Randall said that the Department has been hearing these conversations and interfacing with Department of Planning and Permitting, which is coming up with a Primary Urban Corridor/One Water plan that will go out to the public this summer. This may address some of the storm water and flooding issues which could be incorporated into the master plan process.
  - Joan reported that Los Angeles did a One Water plan several years ago.
  - JB shared that Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage did a 2035 master plan, a level above the functional plan.  
[https://www.mmsd.com/application/files/5515/8040/7484/2020\\_Operations\\_and\\_Maintenance\\_and\\_Capital\\_Budgets\\_web\\_version.pdf](https://www.mmsd.com/application/files/5515/8040/7484/2020_Operations_and_Maintenance_and_Capital_Budgets_web_version.pdf) Every department in that utility now reports their progress toward the plan goals and provides statistics on the broader context.
- I like the community financial analysis and consideration in the Milwaukee plan.
- The Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) is working on integrated Watershed Management Plans and is having as much storm water information incorporated as possible. They are also trying to incorporate sea level rise and resiliency topics into the plan. BWS would like to discuss further and make sure the storm water issues are appropriately captured in a broad framework.
- I used to work at Hickam AFB. When storms and high tides occurred at the same time, water used to flow out of the stormwater drains on the entire base. So, I can understand the BWS's effort.

#### 4. Upcoming Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting Preview

The next meeting dates are Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup> and Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup>. These will be regular meetings, conducted virtually. The June meeting will focus on credits/rebates and possible approaches for



addressing hardships. The July meeting will focus on distributing island-wide benefits and will pick up on the revenue neutrality discussion.

## **5. Wrap Up**

Everyone was encouraged to let the community know about last two remaining community meetings for Round 2