



Water Table Funding Subcommittee Meeting Summaries

Subcommittee Purpose

The goal of the Funding Subcommittee is to elevate existing and/or new sources of funding, access to that funding, and ways that funding is administered, to improve the impact on water quality projects and communities in need in the Delaware Watershed. The subcommittee can achieve this through relationship building, information sharing, and exploring ways to improve funding outcomes. In particular, the intention is for this work to result in increased capacity to address water quality issues that plague under-resourced communities in the region, bolster local capacity to pursue this work and make meaningful and lasting infrastructure improvements.

December 13, 2023 Meeting Summary

The concept of a CIP for water infrastructure was captured from the first subcommittee meeting in July. The subcommittee expressed a keen interest in gaining further insights into the potential application of such a program to projects focused on enhancing water infrastructure. Consequently, Jesse Buerk, Manager of the Office of Capital Programs at DVRPC, delivered a presentation to the Subcommittee on the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which was then followed by a group discussion on the adaptability of elements from this approach.

- Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans were mentioned because many include a list of projects, but they were thought not to be a sufficient framework for CIPs due to a lack of detail for most project lists. Cross-referencing them with Hazard Mitigation Plans, Pollution Reduction Plans, and other studies such as Flooding Studies could be a decent starting point for creating a comprehensive list of projects and estimated costs, as well as bringing in more partners (i.e., FEMA).
- The need for buy-in from utilities was suggested, along with addressing scale (big vs small).
- The need for a common set of priorities (where we are trying to go) was suggested, which does not yet exist.
- The need for new sources of funding, because there is not enough, was cited. This will be increasingly important due to the upcoming changes in direction at the WPF, which will pivot away from funding water quality projects.
- A recent [Rutger study of expenditures](#) in the basin shows that the majority of funding goes to land preservation (open space and agriculture).

- The SAN has a collective goal for source water protection, and RASCL has a narrower focus on municipal-level equity efforts, both are good models.
- We have a large and diverse region, so it will be challenging to set high-level goals, it's helpful to be context-sensitive
- The nexus between transportation and stormwater is important, to not disrupt communities during project development. There are attempts to coordinate utility work and transportation improvements, but challenges remain in communications and sharing info between different agencies.
- Multi-municipal coordination on MS4s gives a great bang for the buck/ROI but is not mandated and is time-consuming.

Next Steps

The goal of the Funding Subcommittee is to strengthen relationships, learn, and explore ways to both augment funding and improve the delivery of funding opportunities, especially to underserved areas. As we move forward with meetings scheduled for 2024, we will continue to work to identify potential speakers and topics of interest that the Subcommittee may be interested in exploring further.

Two potential topics of interest that we have identified so far include:

1. Research on Funding in Underserved Communities
2. How to Empower Community-Driven Projects

If you have additional thoughts or suggestions, please pass them along to Emily Goldstein or Patty Elkis at egoldstein@dvrpc.org and pelkis@dvrpc.org respectively.

Additionally, we will be sending out a doodle poll to schedule dates and times for us to meet in the first and second quarters of 2024. Please let us know your availability.

Recap of July and September 2023 meetings

In **July** the kick-off meeting of the funding subcommittee began with a group discussion, guided by questions such as: are there initiatives that your organization is involved with that could be helpful to other organizations; what would you like to learn throughout this process; and what is the desired outcome?

We looked at regional examples of technical assistance providers such as the Delaware Resilient and Sustainable Communities League (RASCL) Program, acknowledged the need to amass local, state, and federal funding mechanisms into a central repository, and the concept of a Capital Improvement Program for Water Infrastructure.

In **September** the subcommittee employed the use of a Logic Model to help organize and determine group intentions and desired outcomes. It was determined, however, that for now, the subcommittee will hold off on returning to the logic model until the group has another chance to discuss funding issues and solutions further.

A clear outcome of the first two meetings is the value in the convening of this particular group of individuals in one forum. The group comes from different perspectives that only sometimes have the chance to engage regularly and seemed to enjoy diving deeper into discussions about funding issues and ways to solve them. It is a convening that has happened infrequently in the past and has demonstrated a need for the continuation of the Subcommittee to meet, discuss, share, and aspire together.

Attachments

- 1. TIP Overview Presentation for the Water Table**