

SAFE, CLEAN WATER PROGRAM DACs, Equity, & Ongoing Stakeholder Involvement Subcommittee

Meeting Summary: February 6, 2018

MEETING IN BRIEF

This was the first meeting of the DACs, Equity, & Stakeholder Subcommittee for the Safe, Clean Water Program. The objectives of the meeting were to:

1. Review Board of Supervisors' purpose and intent for the Safe, Clean Water Program
2. Develop and clarify principles and definitions of equity-related terms.

Attendees

Daniel Bradbury
Russ Bryden
Alina Bokde
Felipe Escobar
Belinda Faustinos
Alberto Grajeda

Peter Herzog
Sabra Johnson
Grace Kast
Soo Kim
David McNeill
Rachel Roque

Melissa Turcotte
Edel Vizcarra
Eric Wolf
Katy Young

Welcome

The goal for the meeting is to conduct listening sessions for County staff and leadership to gather ideas and explore thought lines for Program Content with stakeholders. These meetings also allow for interested parties to hear each other, to better understand each other, and develop a more meaningful and impactful Program, together. These meetings are not meant to achieve consensus.

Review of Board of Supervisors' Purpose and Intent for the Safe, Clean Water Program

The objectives and outcome of the Safe, Clean Water Program were reviewed.

Discussion

What is a DAC Community?

Comments received include:

- Suggestion that there are many definitions of DACs that have been developed over the years. Examples of "tested" definitions can be found in the Parks Measure, Prop 68, SB5, Prop 1, AB 31, and DWR. Some define underserved communities as those to which fewer resources are

allocated.

- Suggestion that the Program define DAC to be consistent with existing definitions so as not to exclude any projects/programs from other funding opportunities.
- Note that the current IRWMP DAC map is a good starting point but caution that the map has deficiencies and does not identify DACs in the context of water.
- Suggestion that FCD consider voiceless people who are unable to organize or engage (i.e. neglected communities) and methods that can be used to engage them. County Parks' Needs Assessment maps may be a good resource with respect to community enhancement.
- Suggestion to coordinate and leverage other efforts. An example of coordinated effort was given as IRWM's collaboration with Parks to develop a DAC map. An example of leveraging effort would be partnering with nonprofit organizations (e.g. First 5, CA Endowment) to benefit from their research, data, analysis, and existing relationships with communities.

What constitutes a tangible benefit to a community?

Comments received include:

- Suggestion of the importance of establishing DAC needs before identifying what constitutes a benefit, and how the benefit needs to relate to stormwater or stormwater capture
- Consideration of how a water supply project would provide a direct benefit to DACs, perhaps in the form of lower water rates, and how a regionally-beneficial project would target a DAC?
- Suggestion that a tangible benefit may be a community enhancement element, may address flooding, may create jobs, or may build capacity in communities and connect to real community issues related to water.

What are some examples of DAC projects and Stakeholder Involvement, and were they successful?

Comments received include:

- Identification of several projects from programs currently being implemented:
 - **Prop O** has implemented great projects, but did not do a good job of getting the word out or getting projects into DAC communities. South LA Wetlands is an example of a good project – it is well-used, and includes community enhancements like walking paths and habitat.
 - **AB 31** had a good community engagement process to inform about the measure itself.
 - **Measure A** is a good model to look at (still in progress). It is important to have civic engagement to inform people of opportunities to participate, that funding decisions will be made, and which entity will make those decisions.
 - **Prop 1** required workshops, meetings, etc., but not until after the funding structure was established.
 - **Elmer Ave Green Street** was a great project initially, but was not successful in resolving long-term maintenance.
- Concerns about the maintenance of projects and with the following suggestions:
 - Maintenance be built into the program and responsible parties be identified for each project.
 - Community engagement may instill ownership and hence maintenance of projects. However, when new owners come in without knowledge of the history, continuity of maintenance is lost.

- Consider maintenance capabilities of communities and that many cities already have challenging budgets, technical abilities, etc. that make long-term maintenance prohibitive. These challenges should not exclude these projects/communities from the Program.
- Program allow applicants to receive funding for maintenance in the years after a project is completed. Prop A is a good model to explore for maintenance
- An overarching construction & maintenance entity might solve this and may address the issue of communities with technical or budgetary challenges. Such an entity will need to have a regional understanding of the uniqueness of the needs and capabilities of different communities. Local community engagement and involvement is key, and local hire-type programs work best.
- Suggestion that engagement efforts should have a large reach from social media to community meetings.
- Suggestion that funding for outreach or increasing capacity of community groups be considered.
- Suggestion to include social justice groups that may have valuable experience to share.
- Suggestion that the Program consider unintended consequences of projects, displacement issues, and impacts to community health.

How can the decision-making process be inclusive?

Comments received include:

- Suggestion that FCD consider how to split costs when a project is located in one area, but benefits another (especially for the Regional Program) and should provide subsidies for ongoing maintenance, since projects in DACs often have difficulty in meeting other programs' maintenance cost requirements.
- Suggestions regarding brownfields and soil contamination:
 - Consider allowing funding towards technical assistance to determine the extent of contamination and brownfields cleanup prior to constructing projects.
 - Remediation of brownfields would be beneficial since it impacts water quality and should make a project more competitive during scoring.
- Note that funding projects in a DAC was difficult due to lack of funding and suggestion that money be available upfront to implement projects rather than reimbursements. Two examples were given: Measure A has a provision for advance funds for nonprofit organizations, and IRWMP allows for 50% upfront, however cash flow issues exist.

How can governance structures be inclusive and what has worked/not worked in other measures?

Comments received include:

- Suggestion that the Program needs to separate regional from local return money.
- Suggestion for consistent, long-term civic engagement is needed to educate DACs on the process to provide input and get projects approved. Engagement may include: engage with communities, engage with project proponents, and give DACs a voice on decision-making committees. The management structure needs to support NGO participation.
- Suggestion that appointees to governance have certain expertise (e.g. expert in brownfields). The official appointees could report to a larger DAC-centric committee. However, it was noted

that this was attempted before without success.

- Suggestion that FCD consider how to close the gap in representation and involvement of community members who are not getting paid to attend meetings.
- Suggestion that a good model to looking at First 5 LA for continued investment in building community voice and leadership.
- Suggestion that governance structures include representation from public health, parks, community, etc. with multiple levels of decision-making, rather than one large committee.

What does inclusion look like for projects? What are some examples of inclusive projects and how can the Program incorporate inclusive projects?

Comments received include:

- Suggestion that the community needs to be well-informed on the Program in order to steer them towards competitive projects, and that the community will be responsive if they have the tools and information to participate.
- Suggestion that benchmarks and set asides for DACs be implemented for success. Early investment in project development is very important. Public agencies need to do a better job of communicating Program intent and benefits to the public, and the community needs a suite of opportunities to participate in Program implementation.

What are successful methods for inclusive contracting?

Comments received include:

- Suggestion that the Program provide a suite of opportunities for maintenance, technical help, job training, etc. to eliminate the back stops for projects to move forward in DACs.
- Suggestion that job training be done at the subregional/local level, due to language barriers and unique community needs.
- A Public Works representative explained that the County has a Target Worker program that requires 30% of labor hours to come from zip codes where the average income is less than 200% of the federal poverty line (10% have to be Target Workers). Projects costing between \$500,000 to \$2.5M are required to make a best effort to implement the program, while it is mandatory for projects costing over \$2.5M. METRO has begun to implement the Target Worker program.
- A Public Works representative explained that the County goal is to reach 25% contracting to disadvantaged enterprises through social enterprise (non-profits would fall under this), disabled veterans program, etc. This includes commodities and services. The County also pursues joint venture partnerships with small businesses.
- Suggest that FCD consider making County efforts a requirement for receiving funding from the Program.
- Suggestion that the Program should consider the career pipeline to help DAC residents obtain entry-level jobs related to these projects.

Next Steps

- Understand other programs and measures to build on their work.
- Consider asking some experts of previous efforts to present to the Subcommittee at the next meeting.

- See how this conversation fits in with other Subcommittee discussions and report back.
- Continue discussion at next meeting and aim to present a proposal at the 3rd meeting.

Public Comment

None

Closing Remarks

Written comments can be submitted via www.safeleanwaterla.org or sent to Russ Bryden (rbryden@dpw.lacounty.gov) or Alberto Grajeda (algrajeda@dpw.lacounty.gov).

Adjourn