

CSPDC Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) Program Stakeholder Meeting Summary October 25, 2023 | 10:00 a.m. CSPDC Office and via Zoom

In attendance:

Nesha McRae, DEQ (virtual)	Zach Beard, CSPDC
Arne Glaeser, City of Lexington (virtual)	Allyson Finchum, CSPDC
Patrick Madigan, City of Lexington (virtual)	Morgan Shrewsbury, Augusta County (virtual)
Peter Kesecker, City of Staunton (virtual)	Adam Schellhammer, VCC (virtual)
Fred Blanton, Lewis Creek WAC (virtual)	Austin Garber, Town of Timberville (virtual)
Gaither Hurt, Town of Elkton (virtual)	Tom Roberts, City of Buena Vista (virtual)
Tammy Stone, Rockingham County Schools (virtual)	Mark Frondorf, Shenandoah Riverkeepers (virtual)

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Zach Beard, the CSPDC's new WIP Coordinator, began the meeting at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining the meeting in-person or virtually. He asked the group to introduce themselves.
- Mr. Beard reviewed the meeting agenda, which included providing a short overview of the WIP program and the 2024 calendar year WIP Scope of Service, and the two main activities: 1) developing urban tree canopy assessments and 2) the CSPDC's new mini-BMP grant program

2. 2024 WIP Scope of Work

- Mr. Beard provided an overview of the CSPDC's 2024 WIP Scope of Work. He noted that in spring 2023 CSPDC staff coordinated with 13 of the 16 unregulated localities in the CSPDC region. Staff used the locality feedback to inform the 2024 Scope, which focuses on three different activities:
 - 1) is developing at least urban tree canopy assessments,



- 2) developing a mini BMP grant program to providing funding for small BMP projects that is extremely easy to apply for, has minimal requirements, and allows smaller communities with no time or funding to easily access BMP funding; and
- 3) grant writing.

3. Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Assessments

- Mr. Beard then began providing an overview of UTCs, and that the CSPDC is planning to assist localities with UTCs beginning in January 2024
- Mr. Beard explained that UTC assessments evaluate the existing tree canopy in relation to environmental, social, and economic factors; identify planting needs; develop a prioritized list of planting locations on public space; and identify the most appropriate tree species to plant.
- He continued by saying that UTC assessments are typically conducted in larger communities – the smallest community on this list is Vinton and Purcellville, which have around 8,000 in population, and I know regionally there have been assessments done in Woodstock and Luray, but typically UTCs are done in cities, not smaller towns
- Mr. Beard then explained each of the five main considerations for UTC assessments: identifying purpose, appropriate scale, planting prioritization, analysis, and goals

Purpose

- The first step in conducting a UTC is to establish the study purpose and goals that align with community objectives.
- Ideally, project goals are developed in collaboration with community stakeholders
- One common goal is to assess the existing tree canopy cover to identify gaps and prioritize areas for future planting

Scale

- There are two main approaches: top-down and bottom-up
- The top-down approach is the conventional method for conducting UTCs, and UTCs are as a result a very GIS-intense and map-heavy exercise; A top-down approach is limited in the amount of detail you can collect and doesn't account for all sorts of on-the-ground site factors and constraints, it only can provide a percentage of tree cover vs actual number of trees
- A bottom-up approach involves collecting field data to provide more detailed information like species composition, number of trees, size, condition, and other attributes like potential planting sites, existing site constraints like utilities, and ROW.
- The limits to this approach is that it's time-intensive to walk around and ID every tree, which limits the geographic area you can assess



Prioritization

- UTC analysis takes the data collected both via GIS or in the field and then determines the best places to plant trees based on your goals and interests.
- This is the point where we start layering data on top of the data collected from GIS and in the field, and that can include anything from gaps in tree canopy in relation to parcels and zoning, proximity to school or business, floodplains, ROW, population density, slope, etc.

Analysis

• Here are two other simple examples of analysis, with the image on the left characterizing UTC cover by parcel, and the image on the right showing the different map data layers being used to compare tree canopy cover in relation to stormwater, disadvantaged populations, etc.

Goals

 The next section is the goals and recommendations, which can include identifying specific tree species that are best suited to site based on existing land use, site conditions, tree structure, and tree function – again we're synthesizing the data from the GIS work and any field work and using it to inform things like what types of trees to plant and where

4. Mini-Grant Program

Overview

- During the community outreach we conducted with localities earlier this year, we also heard back that localities don't have the staff time to pursue BMPs
- In response, we are currently developing our own stand-alone mini grant program under the working title CSPDC BMP Local Assistance Program

General Parameters

- We are currently working through all of the parameters and requirements of the grant
 - The grant will be open in early 2024 and applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and awarded based on documented need
 - Funding is 100%; with no actual match required, but it is expected some sort of in-kind match is documented
 - The application would need to describe how it meets Chesapeake Bay agreement goals, provide a budget and schedule
 - Eligible activities really will include anything within the Virginia BMP clearinghouse, and can include stand alone projects, or contribute to the completion of a component that is part of a larger project



5. Questions

- The City of Staunton asked if a UTC study was required for any currently available grant funding
- The Valley Conservation Council asked if there are any existing UTC examples in the Shenandoah Valley area

VIII. Adjourn

• With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

CENTRAL SHENANDOAH PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) October 25, 2023



Agenda

1) WIP 2024 Overview

2) Tree-planting & planning assistance

3) BMP Mini-Grant Program

2024 WIP Scope of Work

"The intent of this project initiative is for each Virginia PDC covering Chesapeake Bay watershed localities to provide technical assistance for Best Management Practice (BMP) implementation to local governments of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Area."

Locality Outreach Results: Trees!

Participating Unregulated Localities (13 out of 16)

- Counties: Rockbridge, Bath, Highland, Rockingham
- Cities: Lexington, Buena Vista

CommuniTree

n the Roots Up"

• Towns: Mount Crawford, Elkton, Timberville, Broadway, Grottoes, Monterey, Goshen

2024 WIP Scope of Service

Three activities:
1) Urban Tree Canopy Assessments
2) BMP Local Assistance grant program
3) Write grants

Trees are infrastructure!

Inventory existing conditions, identify needs, prioritize planting areas, develop goals and recommendations

UTC Across the Commonwealth



UTC Outline

1. Develop Scope

Define purpose and objectives with stakeholder input.

2. Data Collection

Collect data on existing conditions.

3. Analysis

Analyze data to prioritize tree protection, planting, and maintenance.

4. Goals & Recommendations

Identify goals, recommendations, and action plan.

5. Monitoring & Maintenance

Implement short- and long-term monitoring to assess tree canopy change and progress in reaching goals.



Beyond "Trees are Good"



Develop Scope

Environmental

- Stormwater
- Heat island
- Air quality
- Carbon
- Habitat

Social

- Health
- Walkability
- Sense of place
- Education
- Equity

Economic

- Health
- Tourism
- Commerce
- Real estate value
- Energy savings

Define purpose and objectives

Develop Scope





Data Collection "Top-Down"



Source: Eric Wiseman, Virginia Tech

Data Collection "Bottom-up"

Analysis: Prioritization

- Parcels & zoning
- Proximity to commercial areas, schools, etc.
- Overhead utilities
- Soils
- Floodplains and riparian areas
- Property values, home ownership
- ROW availability
- Commercial density
- Population density
- Heat island mapping
- Topography and slope
- Socio-economic (income, elderly, crime, etc.)
- Planned projects (parks, transportation, etc.)



Iap prepared by Dexter H. Locke. NYC Urban Field Station. Northern Research Station. USDA Forest Service in July. 2011.

Analysis







Goals & Recommendations: Tree Type Selection



Goals & Recommendations

- Update comprehensive plan
- Ordinance model language
- Set tree canopy coverage expansion percentage
- Address flooding areas
- Plant trees along Main Street to improve commerce
- Wildlife habitat
- Improve walkability along sidewalks and trails
- Engage private landowners in certain areas
- Establish a tree commission/board
- Become a Tree City USA member





Final Deliverables

- Maps
- Report
- Begin in January 2024
- 5 months



CSPDC BMP Local Assistance Program

Open: Early 2024; rolling basis and awarded based on need

Eligible Applicants: local governments, non-profit organizations, schools, civic groups

Funding: 100%; some sort of in-kind match documentation

Application: Project description, needs addressed in relation to meeting Chesapeake Bay Agreement goals and outcomes, funding requested, budget (personnel, supplies, travel, contractual), schedule

Eligible Activities – Tree Planting, Riparian Plantings, Stormwater, Bioretention/Raingardens, Rainwater Harvesting, Filter Strips & Street Cleaning, Storm Drain Cleaning & Treatment, Soil Restoration, Pet Waste, Permeable Pavers, etc.

Grant Assistance

DOF "Trees for Clean Water" Grant

- Up to \$50,000
- Covers trees, tree planting, and costs associated with site preparation
- Provide tree list, planting specifications, site photos
- Document in-kind match, community engagement, site identification, and maintenance plan



Summary

Beginning in January 2024:
1) Urban Tree Canopy Assessments and Inventories
2) BMP Local Assistance grant program
3) Grant writing support

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