9.11.18 and 9.13.18 Mystic River Watershed Stormwater Management Community Support Informational Calls

Q&A Topics: Overarching Project Goal; Community Involvement; Project Schedule + Deliverables; EPA Report; Other

Overarching Project Goal:

- We are planning to work with two communities, in addition to the project team, to build relationships and a community of practice within the Mystic for the future progress on stormwater management.

- The project intends to work with two communities together to build relationships and share lessons learned. We anticipate the meetings to be working sessions where participants will think through these hard questions together.

Geographic Scope:

- Will municipalities that are only partially in the Mystic River Watershed be penalized for not being entirely in the Mystic? Will that count against us?

  o We will be reviewing applications from all interested municipalities, regardless of where or to what extent the town is located in the watershed.

Community Involvement:

- Regarding community involvement, what numbers are you looking for? How broad should the efforts be across departments or can it be focused on one division? Should there be a civilian component?

  o This project is not meant to involve a citizen component, as it is focused on municipal operations. If there is only one relevant department in your municipality, representatives with decision-making ability from that group are fine. We are asking for 2-6 municipal staff to participate to keep the group size small as well as to be respectful of the municipal staff time and resources.

Project Schedule + Deliverables:

- What is the schedule for these meetings over the 6 months?

  o We have not finalized the schedule. As soon as the two municipalities are selected, we will work with them to select times that work for meetings every 4-6 weeks lasting approximately three hours. The project is scheduled to end in June, and we want to get started as soon as possible.

- Where will the meetings be located?

  o Meetings will alternate between venues in the two communities

- Is there a commitment required from the town to construct these projects after the workplan is completed in June? We have a very small pool of capital funding available – as much as I'd like to commit to doing these over a 5-10-year horizon, I can't necessarily make that commitment. Is there a long-term workplan with flexibility, given unforeseen circumstances?
  - The commitment would be developed with the plan. We will not be binding the towns to anything specific. Our goal will be to help the municipalities create plans that are workable for them and leverage available resources in an efficient way.
  - We see this project as developing a strategy and plan going forward to meeting communities' long-term goals as well as the water quality goals. We are providing technical support because there are innovations that could be implemented over the long-term, and we are hoping to learn from the communities how this innovation can be directed to meet communities' concerns.
  - The biggest commitment for this project is openness to have constructive dialogue, as well as your time to attend multiple meetings over the next few months, with some in-between work. We want this to serve as a learning opportunity for everyone involved.

- What is the deliverable for June?
  - The planned deliverable is to have a general stormwater management work plan for each municipality including any innovations we have discussed in meetings that seem right to the communities.
  - One of the agencies' other main objectives is learning how to better communicate important information to municipalities. Therefore, another deliverable is recommendations on transferring information more effectively than we have in the past so that we can make our Information more user-friendly.

- Will the deliverable include specific locations with recommendations for what BMPs that may work there?
  - Possibly. This process will be flexible to adapt to discussions and needs, and it is very possible that one of the best ways is to look at real sites and real controls that will be effective. However, we do have limited resources, so we don't want to commit to only that deliverable content because we want to collectively learn how to do this work to support the municipalities. We have a technical team able to handle those initiatives as well.
  - Often times designs or BMP strategies are not fully worked out through the planning process with the eventual site owners, and we sometimes miss their perspectives, negatively impacting the long-term operation and maintenance of these facilities. We hope to identify a suite of BMPs that are applicable in each community and for which the owners understand their operations and maintenance requirements, so they aren't neglected.

- As a more general question, this effort seems to be largely focused on BMPs. Is there a portion of this project that will included the challenges of MS4?
  - The project efforts will not be focused MS4 permit deliverables, as we are more focused on retrofits and opportunities for structural BMPs, but we also want to hear about challenges faced in MS4 maintenance and developing updated ordinances.
  - MS4 permit writers will be a part of the group, so participants will have opportunities to ask them questions, though MS4 is not the main focus. We are trying to learn as much as we can and starting off with available resources and the needs we know exist in the Mystic.

- I liked what you said about helping develop pilot communities that can take a leading edge in this issues area. Is there an explicit or implied hope that the participants would be available and involved in outreach throughout the watershed, or is that something we aren't necessarily committing people's time to?
  - We will not be committing participating communities to any future outreach obligations, although we would encourage it.

EPA Report:

- Does [the Mystic River eutrophication study] that EPA is finishing include specific studies on the Aberjona River, or was it just in the Mystic mainstem?
  - Yes, the study is looking at the entire watershed, including the Aberjona River, as we were especially looking at sources and loads of nutrients. While we are looking at nutrients, we know that there are other water resource issues in the watershed.

- Is the report available to review?
  - The report is currently under development, and we are nearing the end of the two-year project. The modeling is nearly complete. We are working on developing different management scenarios for attaining water quality goals. The report will be finished this calendar year. We hope to present the finalized report in the most informative ways to Mystic communities.

- Will there be a public hearing process with regards to this report?
  - We will be having conversations with the Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee. We are very interested in having effective communication on the results, but will be deciding on a communication strategy when the report is finalized.
  - The Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee meeting on October 11 (open to all) will focus in part on the preliminary results.

Other:

- My municipality has been working with a group of residents and MyRWA for new NRD funding that's becoming available, focusing mostly on some green infrastructure coordination across municipalities. Is there any opportunity to use the NRD funding to help with the construction of possible BMPs coming out of this project or any way to coordinate these efforts and NRD funding?
    - This effort should be linked to other opportunities and activities where possible. The context each community is working in, and their opportunities and challenges, will shape the best ways to manage water quality for them.
    - The NRD funding and this initiative could connect very well, as a lot of the information we would like to share would help you understand your options for NRD-funded projects and things like long-term maintenance issues. Our project team includes experts from multiple firms to share their expertise and learn from your reality.