

Office of Environmental Policy - Environmental initiatives, February 2018

The Office of Environmental Policy, OEP, is responsible for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment within the City of Annapolis through policies, programs and projects that include, but are not limited to:

Environmental Policy Development and Initiatives
Watershed Improvement and Stormwater Compliance Coordination
Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)
National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Clean Water Act
Land Trust - Land Conservation
Sustainability
Resiliency
Floodplain Management
Urban Forestry
Environmental Grants
Public Education and Outreach

As many of the City's environmental efforts involve multiple departments, OEP is responsible for cross departmental coordination.

Watershed Improvement:

The City of Annapolis is a Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, MS4, community. We expect to have a new permit issued in the next few months. In addition to the anticipated new requirement to treat impervious surface, the new permits will continue the 6 minimum control measures:

1. Public Education and Outreach
2. Public Involvement/Participation
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Runoff Control
5. Post Construction Runoff Control
6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping

-Funding: A rate study is being conducted to determine the cost of compliance. Consideration should be given to assessing the restoration fee based on impervious surface.

-Public Private Partnership, P3, A Public Private Partnership contract is in the works to hire a contract team to design, build and maintain capital projects to be constructed with the \$1 million in capital improvement funds budgeted by the City Council. Project selection will prioritize projects that address neighborhood drainage and flooding issues. Whenever possible, projects will compensate for sea-level rise.

-Watershed Improvement fee: We should consider changing the fee to the Resiliency Fund Fee to reflect the need to capitalize projects which both improve water quality and address flooding causing by sea-level rise.

-MS4 Operating budget-In the FY18 budget, the watershed improvement fee was increased by 50%. Unfortunately, all of the new funds were earmarked toward capital projects, leaving the operational needs for maintenance, training, education and

planning required by the MS4 permit unfunded. OEP would like to see operating funds budgeted for operating expenses directly related to permit requirements.

-READY: OEP would like to see funds for stormwater maintenance (not related to the work done by DPW's maintenance crew) used to hire local contractors such as READY. READY creates green jobs for young adults. They are currently performing stormwater maintenance and invasive removal work in Anne Arundel and Howard Counties.

(READY stands for Restoring the Environment and Developing Youth)

-Grants: Several restoration projects have been funded by grants to non-profit environmental organizations. OEP will continue to coordinate the implementation of these projects and to apply for grants.

-Stormwater Fee Credit: This program needs to be revamped to allow for graduated credit depending how far projects go beyond what is required by code. Currently, owners of property with recent grading permits are being given credit for compliance with the code. It would make more sense to give credit to those who go beyond compliance, as the City would receive credit for the extra effort. Work will also be done to find the best way to give credit to homeowners who host smaller projects done by non-profits on their property and to insure that the city receives TMDL for those projects.

-Incentives: The City can receive credit for stormwater quality projects on private property which go beyond compliance. They should consider ways to incentivize these projects.

-Street sweeping: The City needs to look at changing how we sweep streets. The City has traditionally swept streets without asking for cars to be moved. We need to revamp this program so that streets can be swept curb to curb.

- Stormwater maintenance training for homeowner's associations, HOA's, will be conducted in April. Many of the large scale stormwater practices and drainage systems are owned by HOA's. This training will teach HOA's the basics of maintaining their systems, how to applying for grants to upgrade their systems and managing invasive plants.

-Green infrastructure options need to be considered for ultra-urban areas, particularly downtown. The use of Silva Cells and other forms of new technology should be considered to manage stormwater and to plant trees downtown. OEP has applied for a grant to preliminary design of some options for downtown.

-Schubert property: OEP is in the running for a grant to restore the stream on the Schubert property, on Woodlawn Ave. The property on which the project would be located, the headwaters to College Creek, has been offered as a donation to the city. A title search has been done as part of the transfer process.

-Adm. Farragut stream restoration project: OEP has partnered with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay to revamp the design and to apply for a grant to restore the stream and to reconnect the floodplain on this property.

-Dog waste collection program: OEP is interested in partnering with HOA's and condominium complexes to establish more of a pet waste program. OEP is exploring grants to buy bag stations to be maintained by private complex owners. OEP would like to purchase door hangers through the grant to educate residents about the health and environmental harm caused by pet waste.

-Entering watershed signs: OEP would like to have signs installed to remind residents they are in a watershed and which waterway they are crossing. OEP will be working across jurisdictions for permission to install the signs.

-Watershed mapping: The City maintains many environmental layers in GIS. MIT could use some additional resources to work with consultants to better utilize, enhance, maintain and make available these resources to help departments make informed decisions. MIT would also like to explore the possibility of making some information publicly accessible for education and transparency.

-No Discharge Zone: Back Creek Conservancy is preparing an application to DNR/EPA to establish Annapolis and Anne Arundel County waters as a No Discharge Zone, prohibiting the discharge of marine sanitation devices, boat toilets, from all vessels. The City and the County will be partners on a joint application.

Resiliency:

-Community Rating System: OEP recently applied for a grant to fund the preparation of City's application to the FEMA Community Rating System, CRS. The CRS assesses property owner's flood insurance risks and outlines step to reduce that risk. Through participation in this program, residents may see a reduction in their flood insurance rates. OEP will be coming to the City Council with recommendation for code changes as part of this process.

-Weather It Together: the final document produced by the Weather It Together initiative includes a number of project and program recommendations. OEP will reviews these recommendations and work with city departments to prioritize them.

-Living shorelines: OEP is working with DNR to identify new locations for living shorelines, similar to the one installed at the Maritime Museum.

-Eastport street ends: OEP is looking for grants to fund some design work for stormwater/resiliency projects on street ends in Eastport.

Urban forestry and natural resources management:

-Tree canopy: OEP continues to maintain the City's tree canopy through pruning, removal of dead and invasive trees, and planning new trees. A recent effort, paid for through funding from BGE, planted 63 new street trees in Parole.

-Tree inventory: a tree inventory will be conducted this spring to establish an inventory of city owned street trees and to identify ideal locations for new street trees, particularly in the critical area.

-City code updates: OEP will be looking at updates to chapters of the code related to tree preservation, 17.09 and 14.12. There are opportunities to encourage the saving of worthwhile trees and removing those that are invasive. Looking at the oversight of trees approvals to remove trees in the historic district should also be examined.

-Erosion at city parks: We have some serious erosion issues at some of the city parks that needs to be addressed. OEP is working on updating a study of the erosion of the trails at Truxtun Park and will be looking at options for fixing the erosion and redesigning the trails.

-Critical Area city code: The options under the Critical Area Code should be examined. This section of the code is weaker than the Forest Conservation Act, with payment of fee-in-lieu of planting often taken instead of planting on site.

-Integrated Pest Management Policy, IPM: OEP plans to expand the City's IPM to discontinue the use of neonicotinoids on city property. OEP would also like to investigate the use of flame weeders instead of Roundup wherever possible.

Historic District environmental improvements: OEP has an interest in making downtown more environmentally friendly. Here are some initial thoughts:

-Green infrastructure: OEP is applying for a grant to fund preliminary concept design work to include green infrastructure on Main Street and downtown. Initial thoughts are to include trees or other plantings on Main Street through the use of Silva cells, with an eye toward preserving **the view of the water**.

-Recycling containers: OEP would like the HPC to consider dual trash and recycling containers for the historic district. These are the recommended best management practice but they have not been allowed by the HPC. Consideration should be given to creating a sponsorship program displaying the names of the sponsors on the containers to add dual container stations downtown. This will allow the concrete barrels with the pebbles to be rotated out of downtown and into park locations. The use of solar powered compacting containers can also be examined.

-Bradford & callery pears: The pears trees in Hopkins Plaza need to be replaced with a more suitable species. OEP will work with the new Market House operators and others to determine the best species. Most of the city owned Bradford pears downtown have been replaced.

-Synthetic mulch: The use of synthetic mulch is being explored for use, where appropriate, to replace the bark mulch. A sample has been installed at the corner West Street and Madison Place.

-Invasives & weak wooded trees: OEP will be reaching out to the Historic Preservation Commission about invasive removal and weak wooded trees. There is concern that property owners are being encouraged to preserve invasive plants like English ivy and weak wooded trees like Bradford pears. OEP will begin an education campaign to encourage the removal of tree of heaven, as they are the reproduction host of lantern fly, a new invasive insect threatening trees and crops in the mid-Atlantic state.

-Shade: OEP would like to encourage the HPC to allow umbrellas downtown. The guidelines currently prohibit the use of umbrellas. With few options for shade and an abundance of dark hard surfaces, OEP will reach out to the HPC to encourage options to curb the heat island effect downtown.

Sustainability:

Sustainability is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987). There are three pillars to sustainability social, environmental and economic.

-STAR: The OEP was recently completed a national sustainability assessment by the STAR Community Rating System. The City was awarded a three-star (out of five star) sustainability rating. There are eight major categories in the STAR program. Over the next eight months we would like to present one category each month to the Environmental Matters Committee. In these presentations you will get a sense of how we rated and the options to improve our score.

-Environmentally friendly purchasing: There are a several code sections outlining environmentally friendly purchasing requirements which are not practiced and the Council may want to consider whether to remove or encourage them.

-Community Action Plan: OEP will be working on a report card of progress toward the goals in the 2010 Community Action Plan. The energy use/carbon footprint reduction

goals of that plan are 25% reduction by the city government of 50% (of 2006 levels) by 2012 and 75% by 2025. The goals for the city at large are 25% by 2012 and 50% by 2025. Here is a link to that plan:

<https://www.annapolis.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/705>

-Mandatory public event recycling & no Styrofoam zones OEP will be recommending legislation to mandate recycling at all special events which require a city permit. If the statewide recycling ban does not pass, we will be introducing a “No Styrofoam Zone” education campaign to discourage the use of Styrofoam by restaurants and cafes.

Land conservation:

-Annapolis Conservancy Board: The City has its own land trust, the Annapolis Conservancy Board, ACB. The ACB inspects conservation properties within the city limits to insure their compliance with easement requirements. Any alterations within conservation easements must be approved by the ACB before they are made.

-Quiet Waters Preserve: The most recent easement added to the ACB’s holdings is the area of 22 homes on the Quiet Waters Preserve development property. The OEP is investigating options to improve the forest in this area and to remove invasives.

-Schubert property: The donation of Schubert property is coming together. The donation of this property has been on the ACB’s radar for years. The City has applied for grants to restore the stream there.

-Easements on City property: Members of ACB, OEP and the Office of Law have met with Maryland Environmental Trust about conservation easements on a couple of pieces of city-owned waterfront property. The City should consider putting the waterfront part of Truxtun Park into conservation easement. A land survey and deeds would need to be funded.

-Future easements: ACB has worked with the worked with Shawn Wampler, GIS specialists to create a web-based tool to identify properties that might be ideal for easements, including possible trail connections.