Streamlining Integrated Infrastructure Implementation

Presentation to the Maryland Association of
Floodplain and Stormwater Managers
October 2016
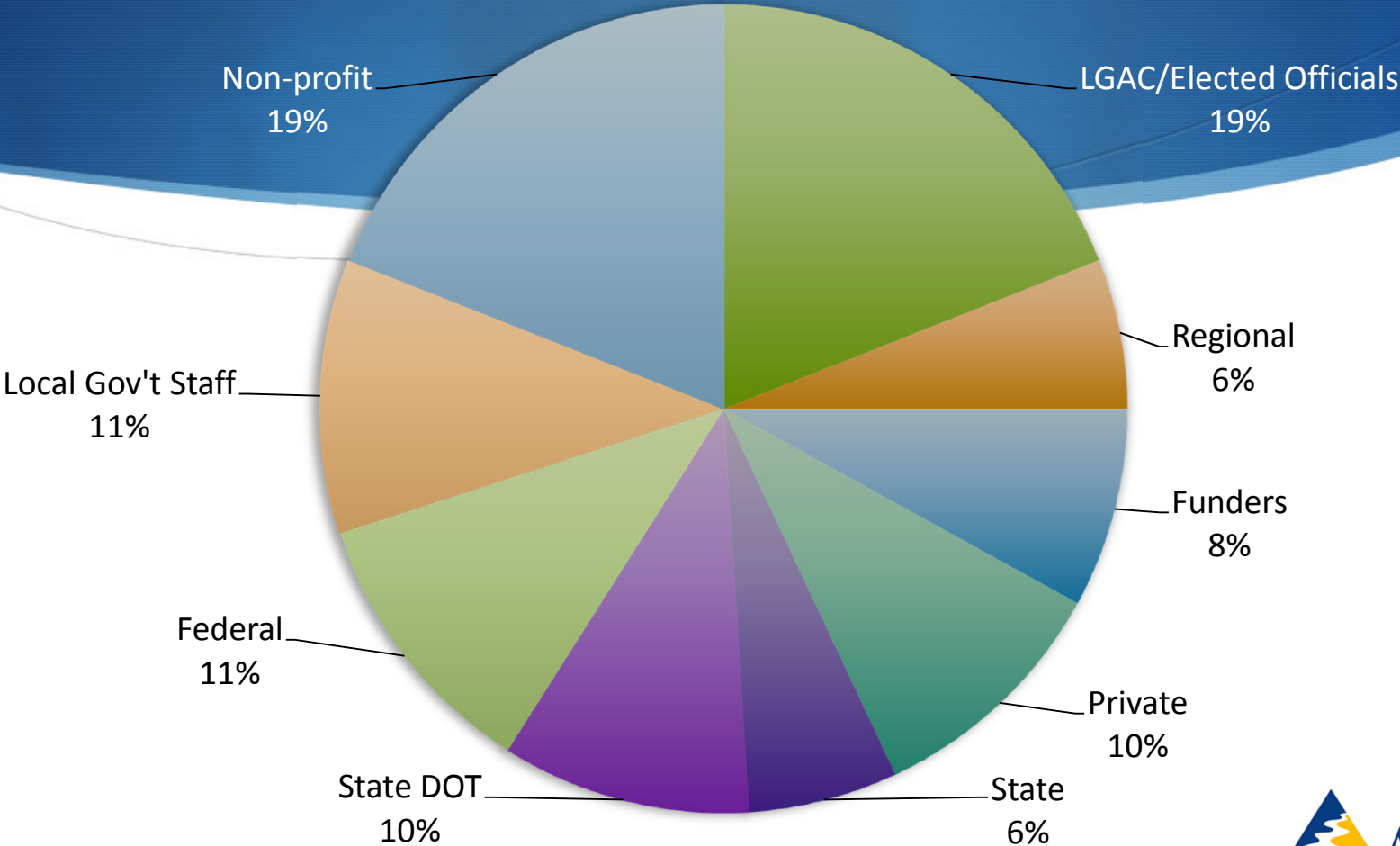
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Preliminary Observations

- Capital projects rarely address (or even consider opportunities to address) water quality goals.

- The stars need to align for administration, procurement, funding, plan review, permitting, staffing, and schedules – even for a single project – and we need to implement many of them!

- Capital project and stormwater staffs (often in different departments) need to seek mutual opportunities, with guidance from the elected officials.

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Problem Statement

Only recently has stormwater infrastructure (e.g., pipes, inlets, quality and quantity treatment practices) begun to be been considered a full part of municipal infrastructure, alongside roads, water lines, sewer, utilities (gas, electric), etc. This recognition of stormwater infrastructure is quite variable among Chesapeake Bay localities. However, as communities across the watershed face the challenge of complying with MS4 permits and TMDL plans, significant capital investments in stormwater infrastructure will be required. One option to address these challenges is to integrate stormwater infrastructure (especially green infrastructure) with other capital projects for roads, utilities, parks, schools, and other projects in order to streamline the process and achieve more cost-effective solutions. However, before this approach can be successful, administrative, procurement, funding and financing, staffing, and operational systems need to be adapted to optimize the process.

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Streamlining Integrated infrastructure: Attendance by Sector

Non-profit 19%
LGAC/Elected Officials 19%
Regional 6%
Funders 8%
Private 10%
State 6%
State DOT 10%
Federal 11%
Local Gov't Staff 11%

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Issues Identified by Participants

- Municipal Processes & Activities

- Funding & Financing

- Personnel & Technical Guidance

- Planning, Prioritizing & Feasibility

- Regional Collaboration & Peer-to-Peer Networking

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Strategies and Recommendations

1. Adapt Municipal Processes and Activities, e.g. planning, feasibility, and prioritization

2. Pool Resources and Collaborate Regionally

3. Address Funding and Financing Restrictions and Limitations

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Table 3.1 Recommendations for Adapting Municipal Processes and Activities e.g. Planning & Prioritization
Organized as increasing levels of sophistication

Increased Communication & Coordination	• Identify and engage partners • Clearly establish purpose, need, and context for GI; Identify & quantify co-benefits • Be sure to educate elected officials, keeping the message simple and compelling • Develop some type of "plug and play" tool that makes it simple to understand and communicate to public works or CIP staff how GI can be integrated when infrastructure is built or repaired • Add GI sites to GIS and infrastructure maps
Municipal Codes, Policies & Processes	• Identify and change local codes and policies that present impediments for GI • Adopt policies to at least consider GI with all departmental concept and CIP planning • Develop a watershed plan that identifies and prioritizes specific GI projects • Develop procedures to identify and prioritize candidate GI projects • Build a feasibility step into project planning • Ensure all projects have maintenance agreements with a duration of at least 10 years
Staffing	• Have a "GI champion" • Provide ongoing training to deal with staff turnover • Provide in-house training, career advancement, and other incentives to build capacity for long-term GI maintenance • *Potential opportunity for shared regional positions*
Policies at Higher Levels	• Work with the CBP and states to send stronger signals and rewards for local GI implementation

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Table 3.2 Recommendations for Pooling Resources & Collaborating Regionally
Organized as increasing levels of regional collaboration

Platform for Peer-to-Peer Learning	• A platform for practitioners to share case studies, lessons learned, credible guidance, and other resources • Regional tours, awards, recognitions • Some prefer that this NOT be another website • Shared GIS and data were also noted, with the example of DC's open data platform
Secure Professional Services as a Region	• Local entities within a region could pool resources, supplemented by grants, to retain the services of a regional expert • This could also be operated through an existing regional entity, such as a soil & water district, regional planning agency, or similar consortium
Cooperative Regional Programming	• Cooperative programming for funding, GIS, project identification and prioritization, CIP planning, procurement and purchasing, project management, and other functions directly related to implementation

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Table 3.3 Recommendations for Addressing Funding & Financing Restrictions and Limitations	
Local Options	• Establish dedicated funding through stormwater utilities or dedicate a certain percent of general fund revenues to a stormwater fund (e.g., Fairfax County, VA). • Utilize State Revolving Funds to supplement grants • Consider partnering with state DOTs to jointly fund projects of mutual benefit • Consider Community Based Public Private Partnerships (CBP3) and other strategies to leverage business investment. • Make use of resources through the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), Environmental Finance Center (EFC), and others
2. Funding Agencies	• Examine current funding strategies to achieve better alignment with local CIP cycles. Ensure proper use of *some* funds for feasibility and watershed planning. • Many infrastructure grant programs exist at the state and federal levels (e.g., DOT Tiger, PA Parks), but could be better "weighted" to provide extra incentives to incorporate GI into capital projects

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Additional Issues Raised by Participants

- Maintenance

- BMP design standards and planting guidelines

- Technical expertise – design, construction, and maintenance

- Regulatory drivers, BMP pollutant removal crediting, and Bay program policies

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Audience Feedback / Q & A

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