

ANNUAL WORK PLAN

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

FY 2025

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INTRODUCTION

The **Stormwater Management Advisory Commission (SMAC)** is pleased to present its Annual Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2025 to the Raleigh City Council for review and approval. SMAC welcomes the Council's input related to themes, priorities, and/or particular areas of focus within this Work Plan. SMAC's work continues to align with multiple priorities within the City's Strategic Plan, most notably Growth and Natural Resources.

SMAC MEMBERS



Reverend
Jemonde Taylor
Chairperson



Graham Smith
Vice Chairperson



Josh
Dalton



Nicola
Hill



Barrett
Jenkins



Samantha
Krop



Ian
McMillan



Lou Ann
Phillips



Melody
Whitford

MISSION STATEMENT

Manage stormwater to preserve and protect life, support healthy natural resources, and complement sustainable growth for the community.

VISION STATEMENT

Foster the “Smartest” Stormwater Program possible to economically and equitably achieve our Mission.

EVENTS

SMAC holds regular monthly meetings on the first Thursday of each month from 3 PM to 5 PM. Meetings are held in-person and are open to the public. The public may also view the SMAC meetings on-line, though public comments are limited to in-person and via email.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH

SMAC is continually focused on diverse and equitable engagement for all of the Raleigh community. Stormwater management is important community-wide and must be managed holistically and systematically in order to function safely for the public and for environmental and natural resource protection.

SMAC has encouraged equitable community engagement for watershed studies and outreach, stormwater improvement project identification and prioritization, stormwater and floodplain management policy improvements, the Raleigh Rainwater Rewards program, and daily stormwater services operational delivery. This important work will continue into FY25 and beyond.



GUIDING THEMES FOR FY 2025

The following are **five Guiding Themes** established by the Stormwater Management Advisory Commission for FY2025. They represent foundational categories of priority topics that SMAC intends to advise and engage with Raleigh Stormwater during FY25. Prioritized work items relate to one or more of the five Guiding Themes as well as other areas from SMAC's comprehensive work plan.

Guiding Theme 1 (GT1) - Future of Green Raleigh: Sustainable and Responsible Growth

- Reviewing, updating, and developing initiatives supporting environmental stewardship within the City and implementing stormwater programs focused on ensuring sustainable and responsible growth

Guiding Theme 2 (GT2) - Operationalize Equity

- Ensuring stormwater services delivery to, and increasing engagement with, vulnerable communities throughout the City

Guiding Theme 3 (GT3) - Education and Outreach

- Furthering educational programs and community involvement related to stormwater management in the City

Guiding Theme 4 (GT4) - Operational and Fiscal Management

- Reviewing and updating policies and procedures for maintaining effective operations and following all pertinent budgetary and fiscal guidelines

Guiding Theme 5 (GT5) - Public Health, Public Safety, and Community Resilience

- Informing the public, and addressing proactively potential health and safety concerns related to storms, floods, stormwater management, and community resilience

HIGH PRIORITY WORK ITEMS FOR FY 2025

Translating its **Guiding Themes** into action, SMAC has identified and prioritized its **High Priority** work items for FY25.

Moreover, there are many items and themes which are multi-year, longer term, or ongoing in scope and schedule.

These high priority work items for FY25 are described in more detail in the following pages.

High Priority (HP) Work Items for FY25:

HP1 - Advance Operational Equity

HP2 - Create SMAC Planning Sub-Committee

HP3 - Engage in GSI Master Plan Development

HP4 - Review City's Floodplain Management Program

HP5 - Review FY26 Operational and CIP (Capital Improvement Program) Budget

HP6 - Review Use of Data and KPIs

HP7 - Further Development of Flood Early Warning System and Program

HP8 - Review Updated MS4 Permit and Program

HP9 - Review Stormwater Utility Fee Credit Policy

HP10 - Pilot a Consent or Streamlined Agenda Approach for Stormwater Projects Reviewed by SMAC

HP1. Continue to Advance Operational Equity for Stormwater Services

Guiding Themes: Operationalize Equity, Operational/Fiscal Management

- SMAC review and feedback on Stormwater's operational equity work including Stormwater's ARPA-funded projects and the Raleigh Rainwater Rewards 100% funding program.
- Continue to review program policies and further consider how equity and investments in vulnerable communities may be further incorporated into stormwater programs, policies, and services. This work will also be especially helpful in support of the City's goals for enhanced resiliency and climate action planning and implementation.

For FY25, SMAC proposes to review and expand efforts in community engagement including proactive involvement from the Commission in planning for equitable engagement and helping ensure that community residents are represented in the conversations. SMAC desires to place even stronger emphasis on outreach and engagement with community residents.

- Update CIP priority ranking model to include equity-related factors such as vulnerability of communities, environmental justice considerations, and whether communities have been underserved in the past.
- In recent years the Commission and Council have significantly enhanced the Drainage Assistance Program for improved equity with priority projects not requiring financial participation from property owners in order to qualify for the program.
- The Rainwater Rewards Program will be further reviewed for similar equity-related enhancements, both for residential and commercial customers.

HP2. Create SMAC Sub-Committee for Planning Commission Liaison Role

Guiding Themes: Future of Green Raleigh, Operational/Fiscal Management

- During FY25 SMAC proposes to establish an ongoing sub-committee to help with Stormwater Management Advisory Commission reviews of proposed development/redevelopment projects that are referred to the City's Planning Commission and requesting input on stormwater management.

- SMAC envisions listing specific cases to be reviewed and discussed on the regular SMAC agendas when the case may rise to the level of SMAC providing written input to the Planning Commission.

HP3. SMAC Engagement with Development of GSI Master Plan

Guiding Themes: Future of Green Raleigh, Outreach, Public Safety

- SMAC envisions close engagement with Stormwater staff and the community as Stormwater seeks to create the City's first GSI master plan. This item may include but is not limited to input on GSI priorities, helping communicate the City's GSI strategy with and for residents, and input to effective public and private maintenance of GSI devices.

HP4. Review and Feedback for the City's Floodplain Management Vision and Program

Guiding Themes: Future of Green Raleigh, Public Safety

- SMAC reviews and provides feedback for the city's ongoing efforts to enhance Raleigh's floodplain mapping by becoming a cooperating technical partner in collaboration with FEMA and the State of North Carolina. This would give the City more control over when and where local floodplain maps are updated and further oversight for project-specific map changes.
- The City's newly formed floodplain group is reapplying to the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS). This is a crucial step as the CRS program is designed to empower property owners with critical safety knowledge regarding flood events, reduce flood damage by protecting people and property, and provide significant discounts on NFIP flood insurance premiums for property owners in the City of Raleigh.
- SMAC input and feedback for the City's vision for managing its floodplains will be integral to this element of the work plan.

HP5. Review of Stormwater's FY26 Operational and CIP Budget, and Input for Updated Levels of Stormwater Services Desired by the Community

Guiding Themes: Operational/Fiscal Management, Future of Green Raleigh, Outreach

- SMAC review and feedback on Stormwater's FY26 Operational and CIP budget including updated levels of service, stormwater utility fee rates, and plans for incorporating an initial level of debt financing to support and accelerate delivery of priority Stormwater projects for the community.
- Annual Stormwater Operating and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget review will include staff-proposed Operating and CIP budgets, associated funding and rate impacts, priorities for funding, and corresponding program levels of service. SMAC will provide comments and recommendations to the City Council.
- SMAC will provide feedback for innovative financing options to be considered for advancing Stormwater's priority CIP portfolio, such as revenue bonds, state revolving funds, and/or other grants and loan programs as applicable. This will be particularly important to support implementation of identified priority projects that are significant in scope and budget allocation.
- During FY25 SMAC proposes to have a higher level of understanding and engagement with the overall Stormwater CIP program. Engagement with the CIP program could also entail a review of easement dedication and acquisition practices for various types of projects.
- SMAC proposes to periodically review completed Stormwater CIP projects as case studies to identify themes of success along with areas of challenge or continual improvement. This may incorporate field trips as practicable and fitting given SMAC's workload and priorities.

HP6. Review Use of Data and Program-Level Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Stormwater Management Progress

Guiding Themes: Operational/Fiscal Management, Public Safety

- This work item will include a review of Stormwater's use of data and of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Stormwater Management

Program.

- Effective use of data helps the Stormwater Program to make robust recommendations for program implementation and improvement.
- KPIs at a high level allow for showing progress of the program over time. SMAC will review and weigh in on Stormwater's use of KPIs and KPI Dashboards.

HP7. Further Development of City's Flood Early Warning System (FEWS) and Program

Guiding Themes: Outreach, Public Safety, Future of Green Raleigh

- Continue to support staff in the review, development, and ongoing implementation of a Flood Early Warning System (FEWS). This important project and program is helping identify the needs, resources, costs, and benefits associated with a citywide flood early warning system.
- This work will build upon the tools and resources already in use, such as rainfall and stream level monitoring, flood cameras, and flood warning signage. The citywide flood early warning system will continue to be implemented and expanded including recent countywide coverage for the gauge adjusted radar rainfall tool.
- SMAC is keenly interested in activities the City takes in advance of storm events, during storm events, and after storm events to help residents and the community stay safe from flooding hazards.
- While Raleigh-focused, there may be opportunity for the City to help facilitate a more regional approach to flood early warning systems as well through partnering with the County and other local governments and agencies including the State of North Carolina. Regional cooperation would benefit Raleigh and surrounding regions.

HP8. Review of Updated NPDES MS4 Stormwater Permit and Program and other Regulatory Programs within Stormwater

Guiding Themes: Operational/Fiscal Management, Future of Green Raleigh

- SMAC review and feedback on the City's Stormwater Management Plan associated with the regulatory NPDES MS4 stormwater program

and permit. Raleigh Stormwater is renewing the NPDES permit with the State of NC.

- SMAC will particularly help review the City's revised Stormwater Management Plan which will effectively implement requirements of the NPDES MS4 permit.
- Other regulatory-related programs for Stormwater will also be reviewed by the Commission as time allows.

HP9. Review and Implementation of Enhanced Stormwater Utility Fee Crediting Policy for the Community

Guiding Themes: Operationalize Equity, Outreach

- SMAC review and feedback for an enhanced and more equitable Stormwater Utility Fee Crediting Policy for the Raleigh community.
- The Commission will specifically consider finalization and implementation of a fee credit program that would add equitable credits for single-family residential property owners for on-site measures that help reduce stormwater quantity and quality impacts as well as continue consideration of revisions for commercial customers who go above and beyond regulatory requirements in managing their stormwater runoff.
- Moreover, SMAC envisions incorporating an innovative educational credit for K-12 public and private schools to advance stormwater and environmental understanding and awareness. This may also facilitate even greater coordination on stormwater management partnering opportunities at schools in Raleigh.

HP10. Pilot a Consent or Streamlined Agenda Approach for SMAC's Regular Reviews of Drainage Assistance, Stream Stabilization, and Raleigh Rainwater Rewards Projects

Guiding Themes: Operational/Fiscal Management, Operationalize Equity

- The Drainage Assistance Program has recently expanded to include the Stream Stabilization Program. With regards to **Drainage Assistance and Stream Stabilization projects**, review projects proposed for City funding and provide recommendations to City

Council. Also, periodically review and recommend policy revisions as appropriate.

- With regards to **Raleigh Rainwater Rewards projects**, for projects whose property owners request \$30,000 or less in City Stormwater funding, the Commission will continue to review and may approve these projects. For projects whose property owners request more than \$30,000 in City Stormwater funding, the Commission will continue to make recommendations to City Council regarding project funding approval. Review and recommend revisions to the Stormwater Quality Cost Share Policy as staff seek to consolidate current program guidance and identify and evaluate potential enhancements to the program, including potential revisions to program metrics, to improve operations and enhance stormwater management benefits.

ADDITIONAL CITY OF RALEIGH STORMWATER PROGRAM WORK ITEMS

In addition to the high priority work items identified for FY2025, SMAC will continue to review and provide feedback for staff for these comprehensive stormwater management work areas as time and priorities allow.

It should also be noted that topics within SMAC's comprehensive work plan are integrated within the high priority work plan items as fitting and applicable.

SMAC envisions focused effort annually to develop its future work plans and annual reports for Council review.

Sustainable Development and Surface Water Quality

Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI): Work with staff to implement a GSI program as described in the GSI Plan as endorsed by City Council. Continue to evaluate and recommend implementation of GSI practices, with emphasis on City policy for leading by example by routinely and systematically incorporating GSI and other higher- functioning stormwater management practices into the City's development projects, including roadway improvements, park improvements, fire stations, operations and maintenance facilities, and office buildings.

Additional evaluations and recommendations may include ordinance revisions, design guidance, training, and educating the public on the benefits of GSI practices.

Evaluate how Raleigh might incorporate volume-based controls into City ordinances and practices for improving water quality, reducing stream erosion, and improving the health of receiving streams and lakes.

Additional incentives for reducing stormwater impacts: Evaluate introducing new incentives such as new City funding participation and further enhancing existing incentives, including Green Raleigh Review and the Raleigh Rainwater Rewards Program. On a related theme, SMAC will focus a high priority upon development and implementation of an enhanced stormwater utility fee crediting policy and program as noted earlier. Improvements for the Raleigh

Rainwater Rewards Program, begun in FY24, will continue to be evaluated during FY25.

Streambank stabilization and restoration programs: Continue to work with staff to implement the streambank stabilization policy and program aimed at reducing stream erosion, sediment transport, and protecting City infrastructure adjacent to streams. Coordinate this program with other restoration initiatives for streams and lakes. Recommend program priorities, funding levels, and implementation strategies for collaborating with other City departments and initiatives as appropriate.



Stream, wetland, riparian buffer, and nutrient banking and offset program: Provide guidance to staff during development of this program through review of study recommendations and input as to program goals and priorities. Provide input as to how any potential revenues from this program may be prioritized for other stormwater program needs.

Watershed Planning and Asset Management

Support watershed planning: Review watershed planning program approach as a means of understanding the condition and performance of the City's stormwater system and identifying project priorities and community needs to improve system performance and mitigate system risks.

Prioritize watershed planning: Review watershed planning priorities so they are implemented in an equitable manner to help drive other aspects of the stormwater program including maintenance practices and capital improvements to improve the system level of service related to flooding, water quality, risk of asset failure, regulatory compliance, and other stormwater priorities identified by the community.

Capital Improvements and Drainage System Policies

Policies for inspecting, maintaining, and constructing stormwater assets: Review and recommend revisions as appropriate. Support staff in the development of updated levels of service for managing and maintaining municipal stormwater system assets. Provide input as needed to asset risk model development to set priorities for asset management infrastructure investments. Review policies for inspection of assets on private property where there is public interest. This work will advance the stormwater asset management program.

City stormwater drainage policy for drainage improvements on private properties: Review and recommend revisions as appropriate. This review may include revisions to priority setting and project ranking as appropriate.

Policy for public drainage easements for stormwater systems on private properties that will be maintained by the City: Review and recommend revisions as appropriate. The Commission will support staff in reviewing policies for easement dedication based on benefits for both the public and property owner where improvement projects are performed.

Lake Management Evaluation Program reviews: Review candidate lakes deemed as needing capital improvements for consideration under the revised Lake

Management Evaluation program to remain as lakes or to be converted to another best use based on policy guidance and project benefits.

Voluntary flood hazard mitigation buy-out program: Provide input to staff on a priority model and policy for implementation of a voluntary flood hazard mitigation buy-out program using City and/or FEMA funding for purchase of flood prone properties. Policy considerations include equitable treatment of residents involved in the program, including those who may be tenants of rental properties in buy-out situations.

Regulatory Programs – Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)

Planning and development ordinances: Identify and evaluate state and federal laws and local ordinances that impact stormwater management, water quality, and budgeting and expenditure of stormwater utility fee revenue. Review and recommend revisions as appropriate and respond to City Council requests.

Erosion and sediment control ordinance and other requirements related to land disturbance: Review existing ordinance and recommend revisions as appropriate. This would also include any state mandated revisions needed to this ordinance.

Infill development and redevelopment policies and ordinances: Identify ordinances and policies that relate to infill development. Review and recommend revisions as appropriate, including incorporating changes into the stormwater design manual rewrite as referenced above.

Review Stormwater Control Measure (SCM) Maintenance program: Review current process for annual maintenance tracking and internal inspections due to the increasing volume of devices. This would also include a review of the enforcement of ordinances.

Stormwater Education and Outreach Programs

Education programs: Periodically review and recommend revisions as appropriate.

Community outreach and involvement programs: Periodically review and recommend revisions and improvements as appropriate and needed to broaden community engagement in various aspects of stormwater programs. Community outreach programs include consideration of equity and improving communications with vulnerable and underrepresented communities and populations within the city.



Storm Drain Artistry in Nash Square, Downtown Raleigh