

Meeting Minutes

Project:	OSDS Strategic Planning	
Subject:	Task Force Meeting No. 3	
Date:	Thursday, September 19, 2019	
Location:	2664 Riva Rd, Independence Conference Room	
Attendees:	Community Representatives: Jesse Iliff (South River Federation) Lloyd Lewis (Mayo) Sally Hornor (AA Community College/Severn River)	Anne Arundel County Representative: Jessica Haire (County Council) Matt Pipkin (County Council – Jessica Haire) Matthew Johnston (Office of the County Executive) George Heiner (Department of Public Works) Ed Peters (Department of Health) Albert Herb (Department of Health) Chris Phipps (Department of Public Works) Chris Murphy (Department of Public Works) Chris Saunders (Department of Public Works) OSDS Strategic Planning Team: Jeff Eger (HDR) Ed Shea (HDR) Joe Sowinski (HDR) Carita Parks (HDR) Ziwei He (HDR)

HDR facilitated the third Septic Task Force meeting on September 19, 2019. The objectives of this meeting are to update from policy working group and the last Task Force meeting, update on the survey status, discuss entry requirements to the program, and discuss ranking strategies and criteria. The following is a summary of key points:

1. HDR summarized Task Force Meeting No. 2 decisions, action items, and progress.
 - a. Sea level rise is now established as a stand-alone criteria, and will be weighed 11% in the prioritization matrix, along with Onsite Wastewater Management Problem Areas (OWMPA), and Critical Area. Proximity to sewer, cost/lb TN remain at 33%. 7 of the top 8 management areas (MAs) remain in the top 8.
 - b. It was found that 650 properties that are less than 1 acre directly front existing sewer, 190 of which are in the Critical Area or OWMPA. Additionally, 350 larger lots (>1 acre) directly front existing sewer.
 - c. No updates on cost models have been made – awaiting willingness to pay information from surveys.
2. Survey update: the surveys have been sent out in August. To date, 900 results were received, and a total of 1200 results are needed for analysis. Areas of interest were represented well in the results so far.
3. HDR updated the group on Policy Working Group Meeting No. 1.
 - a. Several tenets were proposed to gauge program success. The working group narrowed them down to four. The Task Force was asked for feedback on

additional tenets suitable for the program. Councilwoman Jessica Haire added quality of life improvements for the citizens because of cleaner water. Matthew Johnston added if the program gets carried out, it would be the first funded initiative of the County to address climate change resiliency.

- b. The Policy Working Group considered three conversion processes:
 - i. 50% Deferment to OWMPA only with existing petition process. Full repayment is required though initial property owner cost is reduced.
 - ii. Pilot full scale program in top 5 management area with incentive and deferment. The concerns are lack of openness, and that one of the 5 communities is a lot more affluent than the rest of the county.
 - iii. Open application process with location criteria with incentive and deferment.
 - c. The Policy Working Group favored the open application process, which allows for Department of Public Works (DPW) and County flexibility, and is open to all properties with public criteria. The existing petition process will remain and can include deferment for OWMPA. The existing process still applies to petitions for water service as well.
 - d. Councilwoman Jessica Haire recommended two levels of subsidies, one for people with lower income, and one for everyone else.
 - e. Sally Hornor asked if would be expensive for someone at the end of the row to connect without connecting neighbors that the pipes pass through. Brian Balchunas answered that in this case more public outreach is needed to encourage voluntary connections to make this area financially feasible to connect.
4. HDR presented the draft OSDS conversion policy framework.
- a. A flow chart was presented to show the procedure of how the application will be requested, submitted, ranked, and approved. The areas converted would be reviewed by DPW to assess its financial feasibility. If the cost is within certain percentage of budget (e.g. 5%), the county would absorb the additional costs and deliver project with the original promised budget. If not, the County needs to redesign the area, layout or conduct value engineering. If those methods still do not produce reasonable costs, the County would go back to the community.
 - i. George Heiner commented that it would be a problem if a portion of a community wants to connect, but DPW determines that more residents are needed to connect for it to be cost effective, but those portion of the residents decline and 50% vote cannot be achieved.
 - ii. Matthew Johnston asked how much time it would take for the whole process, Chris Phipps answered it would probably take 3 years until the time of bidding.
 - iii. Councilwoman Jessica Haire asked if it is possible to execute this process within the current petition framework. Chris Phipps answered that open application is a different process, and some features cannot be easily accommodated by the current petition process. One example is that DPW lacks the ability to modify the proposed project boundary.

- iv. Councilwoman Jessica Haire explained that it is easier to add a deferment in County code than to overhaul the existing petition process to the new process. She preferred a forked approach.
 - v. Chris Phipps said that a phased approach may be necessary – phase 1 is to add deferment in code, and develop new procedure in phase 2. Brian Balchunas added that phase 2 needs to be rolled out relatively quickly so that people more suited to the open application process do not spend more than they should applying under phase 1.
- b. HDR presented the costs and incentives for the top 5 MAs. Onsite costs are not included. Task Force members commented that the lump sums at the end of bond term are not insignificant.
- c. HDR presented a program outreach map. The idea is to publish the map online so that residents can search their address and quickly check their eligibility.
 - i. Sally Hornor commented that the effect of nitrogen on the waterway would not be instant and have to educate people that they are not going to see effects overnight. However, fecal contamination issues would be cut down quickly.
 - ii. George Heiner asked if the prioritization scores would be visible to the residents. Brian Balchunas answered it would not be visible, and the map would only show if a property falls in or out of the boundary.
 - iii. Councilwoman Jessica Haire stated that she prefers the area to be an encouragement for application instead of being a requirement. Other areas should also be permitted to enable County flexibility.
- d. The Task Force preferred 50% +1 vote during the application process.
- e. Vacant lot issues still need to be discussed. George Heiner stated that properties extensions can either be initiated by the petitioners or by DPW, and vacant lots fall in between. Karen Henry suggested to include a section in the code addressing vacant lots. Upzoning is not allowed.
- f. The Task Force discussed if County subsidy can be used for onsite costs, and Ed Peters from Health Department confirmed that County's Failed Sewage and Private Well Fund C501100 is an example where County funds can be used for onsite work. Other programs like the Pittsburgh example provided by Jeff Eger cannot use state funds for private property work.
- g. Matthew Johnston stated that it is not necessary to use sunset provision in the program. Future Councils will have the authority to rescind the program.
- h. Some procedural considerations were mentioned such as coordination with Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) to develop global policy on Priority Funding Area (PFA), the area determines if the properties are eligible for State Revolving Loan Fund. Coordination with MDE is necessary to ensure Bay Restoration Fund septic and wastewater grants can be used. Queen Anne's County South Kent Island agreement may be an example, but should not determine the contents of this program.

5. In the next policy working group meeting (9/24/2019), all relevant code will be presented on screen and edited in real time. DPW to provide all relevant code documents.