

Meeting Summary

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| Subject | Blue-Green-Grey Funding Program Environmental Panel | Date | April 14, 2021 |
| Facilitator(s) | Karla Weaver, Shawn Conrad, Sydnee Steelman | Time | 10:00 am – 11:00 am |
| Location | Teams Meeting | Recorded by | Sydnee Steelman |
| Meeting Purpose | The purpose of this panel was to obtain feedback from interested parties about the previously implemented Blue-Green-Grey (BGG) funding program for consideration as NCTCOG develops a future funding call. | | |

| Discussion Items | |
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| 1. Welcome and Introductions by NCTCOG Staff | |
| 2. Panel Overview/Purpose of Blue-Green-Grey (BGG) Program | |
| <p>Karla Weaver summarized the purpose of the BGG initiative, and the three elements (water, environment, and transportation infrastructure) that comprise the program.</p> <p>The purpose of the BGG program is to promote the planning and construction of green or sustainable infrastructure in the region. The program also seeks to advance small projects with innovative outcomes and provide seed money to develop ideas for funding or implementation.</p> <p>The purpose of the BGG Panel is to gather feedback from stakeholders on previously implemented BGG projects that will be presented to NCTCOG boards in the coming months. This feedback will then be incorporated in the development of a future call for projects.</p> | |
| 3. Previously Funded Projects | |
| <p>Shawn Conrad discussed the previously funding BGG projects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farmers Branch Conceptual Bus Stop Designs - Southlake BioPod – Burney Lane Reconstruction - DART Hatcher Station Community Garden - Bishop Arts Bicycle Parking Retrofitting Pilot - University Park Micro-Detention Project - Watauga Biofiltration System <p>More information about the BGG program and each funded project can be found here: North Central Texas Council of Governments - Green Infrastructure.</p> | |
| 4. Selection Criteria | |
| <p>Ms. Weaver outlined the selection criteria that were used during the last project call. They consisted of team qualifications, impact, innovation/significance, and applicability, adaptation, transferability, and practicality.</p> | |
| 5. Next Steps | |
| <p>Ms. Weaver discussed the upcoming call for projects and funding amounts that could be available. Up to \$300,000 for the full program and up to \$75,000 per funded project are anticipated.</p> | |

6. Questions and Comments:

What do you think of the previously funded projects? What do you like or not like? How replicable do you think they will be in the region? Were they innovative?

Questions:

Julie Winchell: Was the design from the micro-detention project installed and did you see improvements?

- Nathan Drozd: a CAD design was developed after partnering with a university program to have them installed.
- John Ho: City has not constructed but they are considering having it implemented on future projects.

Comments: Announcing completed projects region-wide would be good just to make people more aware of the program and potential projects. NCTCOG staff could possibly coordinate with our marketing team to advertise projects.

Should the program expand to other categories outside of blue-green-grey? What other areas would you like to see included?

Comments: Meeting participants were generally satisfied with the current program scope of blue-green grey. Most comments were related to the expansion of those areas within the program, such as including schools and youth in future projects. Some participants commented that having more emphasis on nature-based solutions and projects would be good.

What project limitations arise at the \$30-\$50K funding level?

Comments: Participants stated that previous award funding amounts were adequate and helped to encourage their organizations to find partners. A project sponsor representative stated that the funds were sufficient; they didn't cover all expenses, but that was acceptable given the overall purpose and goal of this program funding.

Staff received a comment about the difficulties some organizations have had trying to bid for project contractors for internal projects of similar funding amounts. If the project is a mid-level contract, it can be too much of a project for smaller contractors but not enough funding for larger contractors. NCTCOG Staff stated that they could look further into this and potentially host a future meeting with regional contractors to discuss upcoming projects.

Does the mix of projects adequately address blue, green, and grey? Are there other types of projects you would like to see funded?

Comments: Participants were interested in the idea of using funds to model and identify the most suitable areas for conservation. NCTCOG staff mentioned a project in Cedar Hill that evaluated the economic return on preservation of green space. A meeting participant suggested consulting John Crompton, professor at Texas A&M who evaluated the dollar value of green space. Other projects that were mentioned for looking at as examples included the Oak Cliff green area that received HUD Section 108 funding for open spaces, and the Austin Watersmark project.

Another comment related to floatable litter. The current program design doesn't allow for that topic to be explored and there was interest in seeing that considered in the future. NCTCOG staff mentioned possibly

submitting a testing project that would fund or create different tools and treatments for addressing this issue.

Are there any criteria you would like to see changed or added for the next call?

Comments: Giving points for educational elements and points for collaboration with cities or other entities is a good idea. Also, including an equity component to the scoring. Points for working with historically underserved communities or with organizations that represent them, especially given the economic impact of green infrastructure that's being discussed.

Maximum funding amounts may be broken out by design and construction allowing higher funding maximum for construction projects. This might allow larger projects to be installed. NCTCOG staff stated that right now, these aren't construction projects - only info on how much it would cost to construct is included as reference.

Smaller communities with lower income levels often don't have staff to do these types of projects. Those communities may need more direct assistance from NCTCOG. As more projects move through, putting together a mentoring program for smaller cities to consult with larger cities for information/guidance could be beneficial.

Expanding examples outside of larger cities or communities that are always discussed. Maybe targeting other cities that aren't always as involved in calls for projects. Also, using creative interpretation of BGG is important rather than simply checking all of the boxes on the project application.

Stormwater education should be considered as a part of scoring – for example, the bus stop project is a great opportunity.

To encourage green solutions, the scoring criteria should be heavily weighted in favor of using vegetation as part of the project.

| Action Item(s) | | | |
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| | Item | Responsibility | Target Completion Date |
| 1 | NCTCOG to post meeting materials on website | NCTCOG | ASAP |
| 2 | NCTCOG to distribute meeting notes and other materials | NCTCOG | ASAP |

| Meeting Attendees | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Name | Email | Organization |
| Shawn Conrad | SConrad@nctcog.org | NCTCOG |
| Michelle Wood-Ramirez | Michelle.Wood-Ramirez@trwd.com | TRWD |
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