

# ANNUAL WORK PLAN

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## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

FY 2026

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## INTRODUCTION

The **Stormwater Management Advisory Commission (SMAC)** is pleased to present its **Annual Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2026** to the Raleigh City Council for review and approval. SMAC welcomes the Council's ongoing input related to themes, priorities, and/or particular areas of focus within this Work Plan.

**SMAC's charge from City Council** includes the following key activities:

- Review and recommend to City Council stormwater management policies, policy changes, long range plans, and their budgetary and rate impacts;
- Review and comment to City Council on the annual stormwater capital improvements plan;
- Respond to City Council and staff requests for advice on matters related to stormwater services and the utility;
- Present to City Council an Annual Report and Annual Work Plan for review and approval.

SMAC's work also aligns with multiple priorities within the **City's FY26 – FY29 Strategic Plan**, most notably **Environmental Resilience**. SMAC's work and the City's Stormwater Management Program helps address and support the following key areas of Environmental Resilience within the City's Strategic Plan.

### **Help More Residents Access Climate Resilience Programs**

Expanding programs through climate resilience hubs and private-public partnerships to give residents tools, resources, and information to enhance our urban ecosystems and better prepare for extreme weather, flooding, and other climate risks.

### **Keep Neighborhoods Safer from Flooding**

Investing in stormwater projects that help prevent flooding by moving water away from homes, streets, and businesses, especially in the areas most at risk.

### **Implement Smarter Green Stormwater Infrastructure**

Making sure every dollar we invest in stormwater projects and green infrastructure delivers strong results, like cleaner water and reduced flood risk.

### **Support Residents Living in Flood-Prone Areas**

Providing information and resources to residents in flood-prone areas so they have what they need to stay safe and recover quickly.

# SMAC MEMBERS



Graham Smith  
**Chairperson**



Nicola Hill  
**Vice Chairperson**



Samantha Krop  
**SMAC Liaison**



Josh  
Dalton



Barrett  
Jenkins



Ian  
McMillan



Robert  
Paschal



Lou Ann  
Phillips



Marinel  
Ubaldo Streit



Melody  
Whitford



*SMAC Chairperson Graham Smith presenting Stormwater's Capture It! Awards at Earth Day*

## SMAC's MISSION STATEMENT

Support and advise the City's Stormwater Management Program in managing stormwater to preserve and protect life, support healthy natural resources, and complement sustainable growth for the community.

## SMAC's VISION STATEMENT

Support and advise the City's Stormwater Management Program in achieving the "Smartest" Stormwater Program possible to economically and fairly achieve its 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 online, though public comments are limited to in-person and via email.



*SMAC engaging with City Stormwater Staff in Review of Floodplain Management*

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH

SMAC is continually focused on representative, diverse, and fair engagement for all of the Raleigh community. Stormwater management is important community-wide and must be managed holistically, objectively, and systematically to function safely for the public and for environmental and natural resource protection. SMAC invites and welcomes public input related to stormwater management matters near the beginning of each Commission meeting.

SMAC has encouraged community outreach, engagement, and involvement for Commission meetings, for watershed studies and stormwater system planning, stormwater improvement project identification and prioritization, stormwater and floodplain management policy improvements, the Flood Early Warning Program, the Raleigh Rainwater Rewards program, and daily stormwater services operational and projects delivery. This important work will continue into FY26 and beyond.

SMAC continues to support the City's and Stormwater's operational equity work. This work to date has provided analysis and review of stormwater's communications and outreach strategies, project prioritization, utility fee crediting strategies, and human resources activities.

SMAC also supports continued implementation of the \$3 million received from the City's allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to implement priority stormwater projects in areas of Raleigh that are disproportionately impacted communities. SMAC will remain actively involved with Stormwater's ARPA-funded projects as they move towards completion over the next several years.

SMAC and supporting Stormwater staff partner with diverse organizations and City of Raleigh departments, such as the Department of Economic & Social Advancement; the Office of Sustainability; Parks, Recreation and

Cultural Resources; and Office of Strategy and Innovation, to advance environmental equity, community resilience, and sustainability.

SMAC also plans to review and update the Commission Bylaws to bring forward to City Council during FY2026.



*SMAC engaging with Stormwater Staff during a post-meeting field tour of a major stormwater capital improvements project*

## GUIDING THEMES FOR FY 2026

The following are **five Guiding Themes** established and updated by the Stormwater Management Advisory Commission to carry forward into FY2026. They represent foundational categories of focal stormwater policy and thematic topics that SMAC intends to advise and engage with Raleigh Stormwater during FY26. Specific high priority work items relate to one or more of the five Guiding Themes.

### **Guiding Theme 1 (GT1) – Sustainable and Responsible Growth**

- Advising staff in reviewing, updating, and developing stormwater management initiatives supporting environmental resilience and stewardship within the city and implementing stormwater programs focused on ensuring sustainable, resilient, and responsible growth that enhances quality of life in Raleigh

### **Guiding Theme 2 (GT2) – Operational Service Effectiveness**

- Supporting staff in ensuring effective and fair stormwater services delivery to and increasing engagement with all communities throughout the city with continued heightened support for more vulnerable communities

### **Guiding Theme 3 (GT3) – Education, Outreach, and Involvement**

- Supporting staff in furthering educational programs and community involvement related to stormwater management in the city

### **Guiding Theme 4 (GT4) - Budgetary and Fiscal Stewardship**

- Feedback for staff regarding pertinent budgetary and fiscal guidelines including reviews and feedback for proposed Stormwater Program budgets and utility fee rate recommendations supporting levels of service

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

- Helping inform the public and supporting staff and the program in proactively addressing potential health and safety concerns related to storms, floods, stormwater management, and community resilience. This theme also incorporates the Commission's review of Stormwater's Flood Early Warning Program, Capital Improvements Program, and stormwater projects.

## HIGH PRIORITY WORK ITEMS FOR FY 2026

Translating its **Guiding Themes** into action, SMAC has collectively identified and prioritized its **High Priority (HP)** work items for FY26. Moreover, there are many items and themes which are multi-year, longer term, or ongoing in scope and schedule.

SMAC envisions that each of the High Priority work items will be specifically addressed during FY26 with one or more focused or related discussions at Commission meetings along with staff presentations as helpful.

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

**HP1 – Continue to Engage with Planning Commission and Comprehensive Planning, Discuss Development Cases of Stormwater Interest, and potentially create a SMAC Planning Sub-Committee**

**HP2 – Continue Support for Advancing Raleigh’s Floodplain Management Program**

**HP3 - Review Stormwater’s FY27 Operational and Capital Improvement Program Budget and Utility Fee Rate Proposals**

**HP4 – Support Continued Advancement of Raleigh’s Flood Early Warning System (FEWS) and Program**

**HP5 – Heighten Awareness of Stormwater’s Operational Services including Drainage System Maintenance**

**HP6 – Engage Further in Stormwater’s Use of Data and Data Analytics**

**HP7 – Review New Drainage Assistance and Stream Stabilization Projects**

**HP8 – Heightened Support for Watershed Planning and related Public Engagement Efforts**

**HP9 – Heighten Involvement with Major Capital Improvement Projects including Field Tours**

**HP10 - Support Continued Advancement of Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Action Plan**

**HP11 - Support for City’s National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (NPDES MS4) Permit Compliance**

**HP12 – Heighten Awareness of Stormwater’s Riparian and Stream Buffer Programs**

**HP13 – Support Advancement of the Pilot Pipe Inspection and Public Engagement (PIPE) Program and Stormwater Asset Management Programs**

# ADDITIONAL CITY OF RALEIGH STORMWATER PROGRAM WORK ITEMS

In addition to the High Priority work items identified for FY2026, 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.

## **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 practice 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. Further improvements for the Raleigh Rainwater Rewards Program, begun in FY24 and recommended in FY25, will continue to be evaluated.

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**

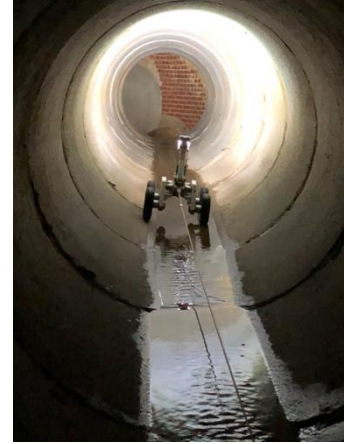
Support watershed planning: Review watershed planning program approach as a means of understanding the condition and performance of the City's stormwater system and identifying project priorities and community needs to improve system performance and mitigate system risks.

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 for the public.

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.

*Public Engagement is an important theme for SMAC and the Stormwater Program Staff*