

“Urban Coastal Greenways”

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His agency handles coastal and Submerged Lands management and permit authority. The focus of this presentation is the Providence area of Rhode Island.

Mr. Fugate first reviewed the scope of permits, which are very broad (cover barrier islands, coastal wetlands, freshwater wetlands, and aquaculture). He then reviewed the scope of the SAMP, or Special Area Management Plan.

He then provided background on a former, Metro Bay Area case:

- Coastal and bit of freshwater; a working waterfront and metropolitan region
- Buffer program designed for suburban areas, residential lots; setbacks range from 150-175 ft. of undisturbed, natural vegetation
- The Problem: the program doesn't work for industrial and urban zones

Mr. Fugate noted that there are currently \$4 billion worth of construction projects under review right now. The challenge is to write a new coastal buffer policy that addresses this current situation in Providence. A policy is needed that:

- Acknowledges the hardened shoreline;
- Streamlines the permitting process;
- Reduces variance requests; and
- Increase consistency and predictability.

The process:

- conduct data set analyses;
- rank habitat areas;
- provide SAMP links.

The product: a zoning map with four different regions (ranking system) for development

An “Urban Coastal Greenways Policy” for the region has been written.

- Reviewed goals: vegetation, stormwater management, public access, flexible greenway widths
- Used Low Impact Development (LID), green roofs, filter strips, bio-retention (to reduce impacts of impervious surface; in Providence, this is roughly 80%)
 - o LID design has highest level of functionality during winter months (at most challenging time); addresses primary w/q problem of NPS
 - o LID can help offset challenges of climate change

The next step: coastal hazards and responses, a look at water sheet zoning and how we use it.

The result: The regulations have been in place less than a year and have already opened up 7,050 linear feet of shoreline for the first time in over century. Other policy stipulations: Does not require access. Developer can choose the old route (habitat restoration alternative) and most do not want to do this because it is a lengthy process.

He also referenced a new design manual that covers landscape plants, public access tips, etcetera, and an Interactive Map Service on Internet: www.crmc.ri.gov .