

Building Cities in the Rain Work Group
Current Operating Assumptions
3-31-15

1. Using a prioritized watershed approach is expected to yield cost effective and better environmental outcomes than the default approach under the permit. (1/27/15)
2. The guidance will focus on how to plan for stormwater control transfers per the request from PSRC and the South Central LIO, as well as the Phase II settlement agreement¹. (1/27/15)
3. Phased approach – the first phase of guidance will focus on sending areas in Regional Growth Centers. The group generally agreed to focus on regional growth centers as a first phase of the project, and to see how it goes. The group can then consider whether a broader application makes sense (10/27/14).
4. Broad policies adopted in the local comprehensive land use plan shall provide the basis for restoring receiving waters. (12/11/14, updated 1/27/15)
5. The goals and policies of the stormwater control transfer program must be clearly linked with land use under the GMA comprehensive plan and development regulations. (E.g. zoning for sending and receiving areas) (12/11/14 meeting)
6. Ecology's Watershed Characterization is an acceptable starting point for prioritization unless the local government has developed an equivalent watershed analysis. The local government will then make refinements based on local and regional data, such as Ecosystem Recovery Targets in the Action Agenda. (12/11/14, updated 1/27/15)
7. The stormwater control transfer program, including identification of sending and receiving areas, must be in a plan that is adopted by the local government and approved by Ecology. (12/11/14, updated 1/27/15)
8. Any stormwater control transfer program must, at a minimum, fully implement the current municipal stormwater permit and fully comply with the applicable aspects of the Clean Water Act. (1/27/15)
9. Receiving areas can be located in Regional Growth Centers. [It was noted that designation of Regional Growth Centers may have taken the environment into account, but not necessarily stormwater issues.] (2-3-15)
10. Not all Regional Growth Centers will be designated as sending areas. [It was noted that cities within the 40/20 zones would not have a reason to adopt a stormwater control transfer program for flow control as these areas only need to match pre-project conditions for flow control. Others may be identified as an environmental priority to target for retrofit.] (2-3-15)
11. Sending areas will not be "written off". Local governments will still be required to hold the line in those areas and the program must include backstops to make this happen. A local government must prioritize the ones to fix first, or it won't have anything to show after many years of investment. (2-24-15)
12. While the focus of this guidance is on cities as sending and receiving areas, the group is not closing the door to prioritizing watersheds as receiving areas in the county. It would require an interlocal agreement between the city and the county. [NOTE: Such a transfer, while possible, could present an accounting challenge.] (3-16-15)

¹ "Ecology agrees to continue to work with Phase II Coalition members, other permittees, and the Washington State Department of Commerce to explore options for meeting stormwater development/flow control standards on small, redevelopment sites in urban growth centers."

13. Every jurisdiction needs to prioritize based on local conditions. They just need to explain their prioritization process.
14. Programs should focus on streams with middle conditions (not high quality and not low quality) with the most opportunity for environmental lift.