BEST PRACTICES - DISTRICT PLANNING EXAMPLES

THE CASE FOR DISTRICT WATER

While the exact value proposition for a district-wide water system requires detailed research, it is clear that storm-water-related fees for property owners will become increasingly more expensive. DC Water's Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charges (IAC) and the District Department of the Environment's (DDOE) stormwater fees are projected to grow significantly between 2012 and 2018. The IAC helps fund DC Water's investment to reduce pollution in the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers and Rock Creek. It applies to all lots, parcels, properties, and private streets within the District of Columbia. DDOE assesses a stormwater fee to control pollution from stormwater runoff. This fee is based on the average amount of impervious surface on properties.

In 2012 federal property within the area paid approximately $6,800/month in combined fees. This is projected to increase to approximately $32,000/month or $384,000/year by 2018. Together, federal and private development in the area would pay approximately $48,000/month or $576,000/year by 2018.

Both programs are looking at ways to provide credits and rebates for property owners who manage their stormwater. DDOE is currently developing a stormwater fee discount program that will provide the opportunity to receive up to a 55 percent discount off the stormwater fee to rate-paying property owners who implement measures to manage and reduce stormwater runoff. While rebates alone may not justify the initial infrastructure necessary for a district-water system, the savings from reduced potable water use and associated reduction in energy use could make this project economically feasible.

THE CASE FOR DISTRICT ENERGY

District energy helps communities reduce their operating costs and keep more energy dollars local by reducing the need to import fuel for heating and cooling. The environmental impacts of heating and cooling systems are significantly reduced because these district-wide systems improve efficiency. Developing district energy/central heating plant systems can help ease the transition of the power sector as older, polluting coal plants are shut down and removed from the grid. District cooling can cut peak electrical demand that typically occurs in the late afternoon, thus reducing strain on the grid and avoiding expensive peak power costs. (Environmental and Energy Study Institute)

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT – ST. PAUL, MN

District Energy St. Paul provides heating to more than 80 percent of St. Paul's central business district and cooling to more than 60 percent. District Energy St. Paul meets 70 percent of its customers' annual heating from a biomass central heating plant which reduces greenhouse gas emissions by over 200,000 tons annually.

DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND

Cleveland Thermal's district energy network provides 30 percent of the heating and cooling needs of the city's business district. The pipeline spans more than 30 million square feet, bringing steam and chilled water to commercial, institutional, and municipal buildings in downtown Cleveland. Customers reduced their peak power demand, thereby reducing their cost per kilowatt hour.

THE CASE FOR GREAT PUBLIC PARKS

Streetscape and open space improvements will increase property values, boost rents, and establish a more attractive setting for future cultural and residential uses. Case studies show that development in proximity to signature parks can increase property values between 15-50 percent. Enhancements to Manhattan's Bryant Park increased adjacent property values by 50 percent. Studies show that improvements to Chicago's Millennium Park boosted nearby property values by 25 percent. In Philadelphia development within 2,000 feet of a signature park increased rent premiums by 15 percent.