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Restoration Projects and Green Streets: Bureau of Environmental Services improved green street monitoring and is making progress on restoration project monitoring

News Article



This is a one-year follow-up to our 2018 report, "Restoration Projects and Green Streets: Planning and evaluation needed to confirm success."

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Our 2018 audit of Bureau of Environmental Services' green streets and restoration projects found that without formal methods to select projects and document outcomes, the City risked not meeting water quality goals. We recommended that the Bureau commit to a date for completion of the stormwater systems plan to ensure that restoration projects and green streets were located in the highest priority places. We also recommended improved monitoring and reporting.

At year two, the Bureau was continuing its progress toward using an asset management approach to selecting green street and restoration projects. It completed risk assessment maps, continued work on an asset register and

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was developing a new process for selecting priority capital projects across the stormwater, sanitary, and natural systems. The Bureau was close to publishing data on restoration project outcomes. It implemented recommendations related to green streets in 2019 and should be able to ensure that they are maintained on schedule and kept in functioning condition.

Recommendation Status: Implemented

2018 Recommendations

Define quantifiable standards to describe functioning condition for green streets.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

The Bureau modified the number of inspection categories and applied quantitative measurements to report overall condition and to identify assets needing maintenance.

Recommendation Status: Implemented

2018 Recommendations

Update Operation and Maintenance guidelines that support functioning condition.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

The Bureau updated the Stormwater Operations and Maintenance Manual.

Recommendation Status: Implemented

2018 Recommendations

Create oversight procedures to ensure that staff follow Operation and Maintenance guidelines.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

The Watershed Revegetation Program created a new report to flag assets that have not been inspected or are due for maintenance.

Recommendation Status: In Process

2018 Recommendations

Commit to an implementation schedule for components of the stormwater system plan, including risk assessments, asset registry, and condition assessment.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

The Bureau completed Stormwater Risk Assessment maps and plans to finalize an Asset Register within a year. New assets will be added, and the condition of existing assets will be updated on an on-going basis.

Recommendation Status: In Process

2018 Recommendations

Create a method to use the risks identified in the Stormwater System plan to evaluate capital projects.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

The Bureau used the new risk assessment maps in the design of projects being considered for the capital improvement plan. The Bureau was developing a new process for evaluating projects based on four criteria: risk mitigation, life cycle costs, opportunities captured, and benefits provided. The Bureau anticipated completing the new selection criteria and scoring process within the next two years.

Recommendation Status: In Process

2018 Recommendations

Develop an inventory of restoration projects and track information, such as cost, location, project goals, and outcomes.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

The Bureau expanded the spreadsheet it uses to gather data on past projects and will establish an automated process at project closeout to populate the spreadsheet. Management said it will work to identify a more robust data system in the future.

Recommendation Status: In Process

2018 Recommendations

Ensure that all projects have quantifiable goals that are tied to the goals of the Portland Watershed Management Plan or that reduce risks identified in the Stormwater System plan.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

The Bureau developed a Project Effectiveness Monitoring Manual with guidelines for developing monitoring plans that include quantifiable targets. The Bureau used this in some projects and is working to require a monitoring plan at the beginning of each restoration project.

Recommendation Status: In Process

2018 Recommendations

Regularly report project results to ratepayers in a way that explains the connection between projects and outcomes. Reports should also inform ratepayers about how project results contribute to future project selection and design.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

The Bureau is developing a new web interface to display data collected during project effectiveness monitoring. The Bureau said the interface would be publicly-facing and accessible by 2020.

View the [original 2018 audit report and full text of the recommendations](#).

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