

LOCAL INVESTMENT IN GREAT LAKES PROTECTION & RESTORATION

A Collaborative Project between the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes
and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
With funding support from the Joyce Foundation

Work Plan

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to accurately characterize local expenditures throughout the Great Lakes basin to protect, enhance and restore the Great Lakes.

Milestones and Outcomes: A database of local units of governments in the Great Lakes basin; a survey designed to gather information about local restoration spending and a final report that analyzes and presents the results of the information gathered through the survey.

- I. **Project scoping:** The Great Lake Commission will initiate a brief project scoping exercise to formalize the project administrative structure, work responsibilities, tasks, activities and associated timelines.
 - a. **Meet with Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.** Review and refine draft workplan; clarify and designate roles and responsibilities; identify potential members of the Experts Workgroup, and formalize a general timeline.
 - b. **Form Experts Workgroup.** Outreach to secure workgroup membership. GLC will develop and distribute invitational letter, in consultation with GLSLCI. Send out invitation letters to potential workgroup members and initiate first conference call meeting. The workgroup will provide the expertise in understanding and interpreting municipal budgets as well as local natural resource management. The Experts Workgroup will guide the scoping element, which will include resolving the following issues/questions:
 - *What is the geographic scope of the project?* GLC and GLSLCI have suggested the entire GL Basin with Quebec City being the Eastern boundary. Whether the entire St. Lawrence River Basin or just the shoreline portion of the Lawrence River will be included will need to be determined.
 - *What is survey population?* The survey population will include all GLSLCI members; cities and counties in the U.S. and Canadian portions of the Great Lakes Basin; and municipal regions in the Canadian portion. Townships and villages will not be included in this project effort. Cities will be categorized by the size of populations – small, medium and large. Parameters for these categories need to be determined.
 - *What constitutes Great Lakes restoration, protection and enhancement expenditures?* A key task for the workgroup will be to identify those local government programs and activities that can be considered as contributing to the enhancement, protection or restoration of the Great Lakes and is the focus of Task III (below).
 - c. **Finalize a Formal Workplan** (set target date for this and each previous task and subtask)

- II. Design and develop database of municipalities:** The Commission GIS specialists will map U.S. and Canadian cities and counties and Canadian, regional municipalities within and straddling the Great Lakes basin boundary. The Commission may employ one or more student interns to verify mailing addresses and contact information of those municipalities. The database will provide information on the real population of municipalities in the region from which we can form a random, stratified population sample for the survey. Information will also include population size from the U.S. Census.
- a. Meeting with GLC tech staff. Identify all sources of information and information gaps.
 - b. Coordination with GLSLCI. Get all city data from GLSLCI (addresses, contact info., and any related GIS data if available)
 - c. Fill in data gaps. Obtain missing data (e.g., contact information, population size, etc.) for municipalities will be researched and inputted in the database. Additional research help from interns may be required depending on the extent to which data is missing.
 - d. Data Synthesis. Once the data layers are gathered and overlaid on a GIS map with the basin boundaries, those municipalities outside the basin boundary will be eliminated. (We will have to decide whether to include municipalities straddling the basin boundary.) Data would be sorted by geographic area and population size in order to stratify the survey population sample across the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin.
 - e. Generate database of selected municipalities – The final product for this project element is a database in an MS Excel format of selected municipalities [i.e., cities, counties, and regional municipalities (Canada)] for Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River basin. In addition to determining the survey population for this project, this product will be use for future GLSLCI activities.
- III. Define local restoration, protection and enhancement activities:** The Experts Workgroup will assist in developing the itemized list of Great Lakes restoration activities at the municipal level. Included activities may be things such as wastewater and drinking water infrastructure, wetlands restoration, dam removal or decommissioning, shoreline restoration and improvement, and storm water management programs, among others. This will not be an exhaustive list of all possible restoration activities, but will be developed in such a way as to consistently and accurately measure and record local investments in common activities that are protective or restorative to the Great Lakes basin. Considerations will be given to generating categories of activities that correspond to local budget line items.
- a. Conduct a literature review on local level restoration activities. This task includes reviewing the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) Strategy as well as other white papers, professional journals and peer-reviewed journal articles to identify local level protection and restoration activities. List of activities of will be developed.
 - b. Conduct brainstorming event with the Experts Workgroup. The brainstorming event will identify additional local level restoration activities not mentioned in the GLRC Strategy.
 - c. Refining definitions of local restoration activities. Activities determined to be easy for respondents to give a budget line item expenditure will be surveyed. Definitions for each of these activities will be developed and reviewed by the Experts Workgroup. This

brainstorming event may be conducted by an in-person meeting facilitated by both the GLC and GLSLCI.

- d. Develop a publication, illustrating the types of local activities. Add real on-the-ground case studies will be included references for interested municipalities to further explore implementing these activities.

IV. Survey development: The survey will be developed by Commission staff and reviewed by the workgroup. Staff will create the online version of the survey which will be piloted to a select group of cities, as identified by the Great Lakes Cities Initiative. Based on feedback from the pilot survey, it will be further refined.

- a. Develop survey population sample. From the database of municipalities, a stratified (in size and geographic location) will be developed. A consultant may be used to ensure that our sampling methodology will render statistical significant results.
- b. Develop and refine survey. The survey will incorporate the list of defined restoration/protection activities to avoid ambiguities in its interpretation and reduce the response errors. Survey will be drafted and tested (in hard copy format) with a selected group of municipalities participating in the Experts Workgroup or members of the Cities Initiatives. Based on their feedback, the survey will be further refined. The finalized survey will be developed into an online survey along with a database.
- c. Develop municipal expenditure database. Based on the survey design, a database will be developed for municipal expenditure. The online survey results will be instantaneously inputted into the database.

V. Survey dissemination and response collection: The selected cities, counties, and regional municipalities for this survey will receive a formal letter to participate in the survey. Follow-up phone calls to key survey recipients may occur to ensure a significant and balanced response rate.

- a. Initial outreach to survey population. Formal letters will be sent from the Cities Initiatives to mayors and other local government heads to call their attention to the importance of this survey effort. This will also allow local officials to inform their programmatic staff that this survey will be coming. Information about this project will be briefly described, and contact for further information provided. Other outreach vehicles such as the Cities Initiative newsletter and annual meeting can be means of updating the mayors about disseminating the survey.
- b. Disseminate Survey. In form of a postcard, letter and/or email from the Cities Initiative and Commission, survey population will be asked to complete the online (and/or paper) survey.
- c. Phone call and email follow-up. To ensure, we get a representative response sample, phone calls will be conducted to selected municipalities if they haven't responded by the deadline. Interns may be needed for this task.
- d. Data Collection and Input. If survey is in an online format, data collection will be instantaneous; data will be directly inputted in the database. If survey is in paper form, data will be inputted into the database.

VI. Final report: Financial investments of cities in Great Lakes restoration: The final report will summarize the survey methodology, synthesize and present data results, and provide additional insights of trends in the data, if warranted. The final survey outcomes will provide an estimate of how much municipalities are investing in Great Lakes protection and restoration. An executive summary will be developed for use by the project partners. This summary will include examples of cities' efforts.

a. Dissemination of final Products/Outreach

- i. *Internet:* All products of the project will be made available on a project website hosted by the Great Lakes Commission and will be also be linked to the web site of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. In addition, products will be extensively linked with, and prominently highlighted on the Commission-managed Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN). Also, the GLSLCI will be able to share interim and final project products through the bimonthly updates to its members.
- ii. *Conventional "Hard Copy" Dissemination:* Product dissemination will also include a conventional hard copy approach which will take place at two levels. First, the Great Lakes Commission's newsletter will be used as a means to disseminate project update information/announcements. Additionally, a special insert, similar to a stand-a-lone executive summary will be prepared to publicize the effort and the final products. Second, hard copy versions of the final report will be published, publicized and made available to members of the Cities Initiative and all interested parties upon request.
- iii. *Meetings and Conferences:* The semiannual and annual meetings of the Great Lakes Commission will be use to report on progress, receive feedback and release final products. The GLC and GLSLCI staff will also present interim and final products at the annual meeting of the GLSLCI. GLSLCI will also present findings at additional meetings/conferences such as the U.S. Mayors Conference and Great Lakes Day.

Project Timeline

Project Elements	1 st Q (Jan-Mar)	2 nd Q (Apr.-June)	3 rd Q (July-Sept.)	4 th Q (Oct.-Jan.)
I. Project scoping	X			
a. Meet with Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative	Jan. 23			
b. Form Experts Workgroup				
i. Mail invite letters	Jan. 26			
ii. Confirm membership	Feb. 2			
iii. Initial Workgroup Conference call	wk of Feb. 12			
iv. In-person Workgroup meeting	wk of Feb. 26			
c. Finalize a formal work plan	Jan. 30			
II. Design and develop database of municipalities	X	X		
a. Meeting with GLC tech staff	Jan. 23			
b. Coordination with GLSLCI	Jan. – Feb.			

Project Elements	1 st Q (Jan-Mar)	2 nd Q (Apr.-June)	3 rd Q (July-Sept.)	4 th Q (Oct.-Jan.)
c. Fill in data gaps	Mar. 30			
d. Data Synthesis		April 13		
e. Generate database of selected municipalities		April 13		
III. Define local restoration, protection and enhancement activities	X	X	X	
a. Conduct a literature review on local level restoration activities	Mar. 30			
b. Conduct brainstorming event with the Experts Workgroup	Mar. 30			
c. Refining definitions of local restoration activities	Mar. - May			
d. Develop a publication, illustrating the types of local activities.		June-July		
IV. Survey development		X	X	
a. Develop survey population sample		April 30		
b. Develop and refine survey		April –early June		
c. Develop municipal expenditure database		April –early June		
V. Survey dissemination and response collection		X	X	X
a. Initial outreach to survey population		June 11		
b. Disseminate Survey		June 18		
c. Phone call or email follow-up			July – August	
d. Data Collection and Input			July- August	
VI. Final report and Product Dissemination			-	Dec.-Jan.