



Accelerating implementation with MIDS

September 2016 Snapshots



Accelerated Implementation Grants (AIG) invest in building the capacity of local governments to accelerate on-the-ground projects that improve or protect water quality and perform above and beyond existing state standards for protecting and restoring water quality. Typically, AIG focus on conducting inventories of potential pollutant sites impacting a priority water resource, then use existing analytical targeting tools to identify and prioritize potential projects. Another approach to accelerate on-the-ground projects is to enhance community ordinances and building codes to improve water quality during new and redevelopment projects.

The Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) is using a \$127,000 AIG grant to work with 13 communities in the St. Croix River Basin to voluntarily adopt ordinance and code revisions to incorporate Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS). MIDS are the next generation of stormwater management in Minnesota, and emphasize keeping water where it falls to minimize rainwater runoff and subsequent pollution. The voluntary standards and procedures in MIDS are effective, flexible, and adaptable tools designed to manage stormwater and provide solutions for numerous issues associated with development projects. MIDS also incorporate technology and best management practices to maintain or mimic a development site's natural hydrology.



MSWCMO staff present MIDS at a Lakeland City Council meeting.

The incorporation of MIDS across targeted communities allows for cohesive stormwater quality and volume standards for developers working in the region. The goal is to eliminate stormwater runoff and pollutants from development projects during 1.1 inch or smaller rain storms. This would keep 75% of the sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants from these sites out of the local waterways and the St. Croix River. Additionally, MIDS promote consistency between communities and watersheds, streamline the stormwater review process for development, and allow for a more flexible approach to stormwater management.

For MSCWMO, the process is all about helping communities adopt MIDS by implementing a review process of current ordinances in order to learn what changes need to be made. Support was leveraged in communities by having workshops with city staff, planning commissions, city councils, residents, and attorneys to better understand how these revisions will impact the community.

Through these workshops, recommended revisions to local ordinance and zoning codes were integrated into a draft ordinance and code package in collaboration with city staff. These recommendations vary by community and may include MIDS around new development standards, redevelopment standards, stormwater retrofits, voluntary source reduction practices, and education and outreach.



The Lakeland City Council discusses local ordinance and zoning codes as part of the MIDS presentation.

MIDS was first piloted in Chisago and Anoka Counties with three communities – Center City, Chisago City, and Lindstrom – adopting MIDS ordinances. A fourth, East Bethel, is currently discussing components of the package.

To date, of the 13 eligible Middle St. Croix Watershed communities, nine have either adopted or are in the process of adopting ordinance and code revisions to include MIDS. A detailed report on the complete process is expected in September.