

## **Jefferson GSI Quarterly Report #1: April 22, 2025 - June 13, 2025** *(submitted June 16, 2025)*

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SIG-NAL's contract with Ciudad SWCD for the Jefferson Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Bump-outs Project was executed on April 22, 2025 while the project was already underway (project work began in November 2024). On April 15, just prior to the start of Ciudad funding, SIG-NAL met on-site with the project team to further discuss the proposed design to improve stormwater infiltration and landscaping on site, and to continue discussing the new review and approval process that the City is creating for small GSI projects like this. The project team includes City of Albuquerque partners from the Department of Municipal Development (DMD), Clean Cities, and Aguas Landscape Architecture, a design firm recently launched by landscape architect and Arid LID Coalition member Mario Nuno-Whelan, who SIG-NAL has contracted to create the design and oversee construction of the Jefferson GSI bumpouts.

Over the last 2 months, funded by Ciudad, SIG-NAL has continued to coordinate between the City of Albuquerque and Aguas Landscape Architecture to move the project forward. Much of the funds drawn down for this quarter went towards creating the final site design details for the southeast and southwest bump-outs, including construction plan and specs, recommended plant list and landscape design, materials list, etc. These design materials will be submitted to the DMD for final review the week of June 16. The project team has set a tentative deadline for DMD to approve the designs with signatures from a DMD engineer and from Clean Cities by June 27. After the designs are considered finalized, SIG-NAL will begin planning for installation, which is anticipated to begin at the end of July.

In addition to installing 2-4 GSI features that will harvest stormwater from Central Ave. and provide social and environmental benefits, this project serves a greater purpose in the ongoing effort to mainstream GSI implementation within the City of Albuquerque. As described in our proposal, the Jefferson GSI project serves as a pilot to support DMD and other City departments as they are creating a novel process for the review and approval of small-scale GSI projects, because such a process does not currently exist. This quarter, SIG-NAL has been engaging closely with DMD and Clean Cities to answer their questions about GSI, provide resources, and support and advise on the development of a review, approval and permitting process for GSI projects. By supporting the creation of this process, SIG-NAL is helping to streamline future GSI projects and allow the City to implement GSI more efficiently and effectively as GSI installation is expected to increase following the new Complete Streets Ordinance.

As we anticipated, trying something new and exploring uncharted territory within a local government has its challenges, and it can be slow to progress at times as we try to get

everyone agreeing and moving in the same direction. Obstacles have come up during this first quarter of Ciudad funding, and SIG-NAL has facilitated the project team to address these challenges and find a way forward. For example, as we were approaching an initial final design at the beginning of May, Clean Cities abruptly changed course and claimed that the existing irrigation boxes in the bump-outs would need to be moved in order for the project to move forward. This task is costly and was not included in our proposed budget, as the City had not brought this issue forward in the previous 6 months of planning. Clean Cities had become concerned about the wires in the irrigation valve box potentially coming into contact with water due to the construction of an adjacent stormwater basin. Given that this is the first GSI project they've engaged with, and they are unfamiliar with the concepts and what they can expect the final product to look like, we understand Clean Cities' desire to be cautious and ensure the protection of their equipment - even if this concern may not be a significant issue in reality. There was a good deal of back and forth, multiple options were explored, and ultimately SIG-NAL was able to negotiate a solution. We worked with Aguas to modify the design and provided additional education and clarity about where the water will be flowing and pooling to show that the valve boxes would not be flooded. While the project is now back on track, going back to the drawing board at a late stage in the design process extended our original timeline for approval, and increased the anticipated cost of the creation of the designs.

Additionally, SIG-NAL was informed for the first time last week that we will need a barricading and excavation permit to install the project. This will require us to use project funding to pay a barricading company for a traffic control plan and rental of barricading equipment. We are currently working on getting bids for this service. The first estimate we received back is around \$500 for a week-long installation of the two bump outs on the south side of Central Ave. We have been in contact with the City of Albuquerque's permitting office to ensure that a lane closure is not required, which would be much more expensive than the simple sidewalk closure we are pursuing now. We are also working with the City to draft a permitting process checklist for GSI features to clarify these permitting requirements for future projects.