

# **WATER RESOURCES POLICY PLAN**

## **CHAPTER 3 WATER SUSTAINABILITY**

### **REGIONAL POLICY**

Water Sustainability Goal: The region's water resources are sustainable, supported by a regional strategy that balances growth and protection to improve and maintain the quality and quantity of our water in our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater.

Water Sustainability Policy: The Council will work with state, local and regional partners to provide for sustainable water resources through effective water supply, surface water, and wastewater management.

The Council will achieve the water sustainability goal and policy by:

- Promoting water sustainability in communities through the Wastewater System Plan, the Water Supply Master Plan and through the review of local water supply plans, surface water management plans, and comprehensive sewer plans.
- Continued collaboration with partners to provide technical assistance related to wastewater, water supply and surface water management.
- Incorporating water sustainability considerations in all areas of Council policy and actions, including overall development patterns, water management, transportation, housing, and regional parks.
- Identifying subregional and local water sustainability solutions that balance regional needs and local objectives.

### **SUSTAINABILITY OF REGIONAL WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY**

Overall Policy:

The Council and region will work to maintain and improve the quality and availability of the region's water resources (rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands) to support habitat and ecosystem health while providing for recreational opportunities, all of which are critical elements of our region's quality of life.

Implementation Strategies:

- Providing technical assistance to local governments and other partners.
- Monitoring and assessing the condition of the region's lakes, rivers and streams.
- Providing direction and guidance on best management practices for effective surface water management.

#### Policy on Watershed Approach:

The Council will work with our partners to develop and implement a regional watershed based approach that addresses both watershed restoration (improving impaired waters) and protection (maintaining water quality in unimpaired waters).

#### Implementation Strategies:

- Actively work with the watershed management structure in the metro area to prepare water management plans that promote the protection and restoration of local and regional water resources (lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater).
- Through the comprehensive plan and local water plan review process, make water resources management a critical part of land use decisions, planning protocols and procedures to ensure these plans are making progress toward achieving state and regional goals for restoration and protection of water resources.
- Use the total watershed management approach to achieve goals identified in impaired waters studies for nutrients and solids.
- Recognize the need to work with agricultural communities in and outside the metro area, both of which directly or indirectly impact the water resources within the region.

#### Policy on Cost Effectiveness:

The Council will balance costs and benefits in its efforts to protect and restore the region's water resources.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- Work with federal, state, and local governments to balance point and nonpoint source pollution reduction measures to obtain the maximum benefit for the money and efforts expended.
- Work with federal, state, and local governments to balance urban and agricultural pollution reduction measures needed to obtain the maximum benefit for the money and efforts expended.

#### Policy on Promoting Water Quality Sustainability:

The Council will provide technical assistance and organizational support as part of our efforts to create sustainable water resources.

### Implementation Strategies:

- Support and provide technical assistance for water management activities in the region.
- Provide a venue for users to obtain water quality and quantity and surface water management information.
- Support research and promote the development of innovative best management practices including low impact development technologies and agricultural best practices.
- Install and monitor innovative nonpoint source reduction practices at our facilities and support projects that demonstrate new technologies and their effectiveness.

### Policy on Providing Leadership:

The Council will foster collaboration and convene discussion on regional issues related to water resource protection and restoration.

- Facilitate discussions on regional issues as need arises.
- Coordinate comments sent on TMDL studies, proposed standards and regulations, and other documents out for public review that have a regional impact.
- Coordinate and/or host water related training events and meetings on topics of concern.
- Investigate the need to develop and/or recommend water monitoring and assessment protocols, and other standard operating procedures for use by partners to move toward consistent approaches in the region.

### Policy on Assessing and Protecting Regional Water Resources:

The Council will continue to collect and assess the essential data needed to evaluate impacts on regional water resources and measure success in achieving regional water goals.

### Implementation Strategies:

- With our partners monitor the quality and quantity of regional lakes, rivers and streams, and assess gaps in data collection.
- Annually assess and make available the information collected as part of our monitoring programs.
- Periodically prepare reports that evaluate regional trends and water resource conditions and identify key issues to be addressed.
- Maintain a regional database (EIMS) that contains water quality, quantity and other water related information.

