

## **DRAFT FOR ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 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.

#### **WASTEWATER SUSTAINABILITY**

**Overall Policy:**

The Council will provide efficient and high quality regional wastewater infrastructure and services. The Council will pursue wastewater reuse where economically feasible as a means to promote sustainable water resources.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Efficiently use existing sewer investments in developing and redeveloping areas.
- Preserve unsewered areas inside the Long Term Wastewater Service Area for future economical sewer development.
- Preserve areas outside the Long Term Wastewater Service Area for agricultural and rural uses, while protecting significant natural resources, recharging groundwater aquifers, and allowing limited unsewered development.

- Identify and pursue options to reuse treated wastewater to supplement groundwater and surface water as sources of water to support regional growth.

#### Policy on Growth:

The Council will use the wastewater system plan to support the orderly and economic development and re-development of the metropolitan area. A community's comprehensive plan is expected to accommodate the forecasts and to meet the densities specified in the Council's Thrive MSP 2040 plan.

A community's comprehensive plan shall include a water supply plan that is consistent with the regional water supply master plan, a local surface water management plan that is consistent with Council policy and does not impact the regional wastewater system, and a comprehensive sewer plan that is consistent with the regional wastewater system plan.

Inconsistencies will provide the Council with grounds for finding that the community's plan is more likely than not to have a substantial impact on, or contain a substantial departure from, the metropolitan system plan, thus requiring modifications to the local comprehensive plan.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- Provide a level of wastewater service commensurate with the needs of the growing metropolitan area, and in an environmentally sound manner.
- Provide sufficient wastewater infrastructure capacity to meet the approved growth projections and long-term service area needs identified in approved local comprehensive sewer plans. Any capital improvements that the Council needs to provide will be scheduled so that the infrastructure is available prior to the need identified in the approved comprehensive sewer plan.
- Potentially implement early land acquisition and work closely with communities to preserve utility corridors when it is necessary to expand its facilities or locate new facilities needed to implement the wastewater system plan.
- Extend wastewater service to communities based on one of the following criteria:
  1. Service area is designed to receive an average flow of at least 500,000 gallons per day or contains at least 1,000 developable acres; or
  2. Service area includes at least 90 percent of the ultimate wastewater flow originating in a community.
- Require that all communities currently served by the regional wastewater system shall remain in the system.
- Acquire wastewater treatment plants from developing communities, based upon request through the comprehensive plan and comprehensive sewer plan process.

#### Policy on Inflow and Infiltration:

The Council will not provide additional capacity within its interceptor system to serve excessive inflow and infiltration.

The Council will establish inflow and infiltration goals for all communities discharging wastewater to the regional wastewater system. Communities that have excessive inflow and infiltration in their sanitary sewer systems will be required to eliminate the excessive inflow and infiltration within a reasonable time period.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- Maintain and rehabilitate Council interceptors to minimize inflow and infiltration.
- Develop inflow and infiltration goals for all communities by metershed.
- Require all communities served by the regional wastewater system to include its inflow and infiltration mitigation program in its comprehensive sewer plan.
- Limit increase in service within those communities where excessive inflow and infiltration jeopardizes the Council's ability to convey wastewater without an overflow or backup occurring, or limits the capacity in the system to the point where the Council can no longer provide additional wastewater services. The Council will work with those communities on a case-by-case basis, based on the applicable regulatory requirements.
- Potentially institute a wastewater rate demand charge for those communities that have not met their inflow and infiltration goal(s), if the community has not been implementing an effective inflow and infiltration reduction program as determined by the Council, or if regulations and/or regulatory permits require Council action to ensure regulatory compliance. The wastewater demand charge will include the cost of wastewater storage facilities and/or other improvements necessary to avoid overloading Council conveyance and treatment facilities, plus the appropriate sewer availability charges for use of Council conveyance and treatment facilities.
- Work with the State to attempt to: i) make funds available for inflow and infiltration mitigation, and ii) promote statutes, rules, and regulations to encourage I/I mitigation.

#### Policy on Serving the Rural Area:

The Council will acquire municipally owned wastewater treatment plants in the rural area, based upon request through the comprehensive plan and comprehensive sewer plan processes, and based upon criteria that ensure regional benefits.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- Accept the request only when the following criteria are met:
  - The community accepts the Council's growth forecasts, as well as preserves at least 1,000 developable acres for growth through the land use planning authority of the County or adjacent township(s) or through an orderly annexation agreement or similar mechanism to provide for staged, orderly growth in the surrounding area.
  - The community has adequate water supply.
  - The community has adequate transportation access.
  - The community lies within the long-term wastewater service area or other regional benefits accrue, such as economic development unique to the rural area or preservation of high value water resources.

- There are feasible and economical options for siting and permitting an expanded wastewater treatment plant, or for extending interceptor service.
- Require that if the most economical and beneficial wastewater service option is to construct a regional interceptor to serve the community, the wastewater treatment plant will not be acquired by the Council, and the community will be responsible for de-commissioning its treatment plant.
- Disallow connections to the regional wastewater system outside the sewerered rural community. The Council may provide capacity for the long-term needs of the rural and agricultural planning areas. Service will not be provided until the Council, in consultation with the appropriate community, designates the area as a developing community and the community amends its comprehensive plan accordingly.

#### Policy on System Operation:

The Council will operate and maintain its regional wastewater system to comply with all regulatory permits.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- The Council will implement and enforce Waste Discharge Rules for the regional wastewater system.
- The Council will preserve its regional wastewater system assets through effective maintenance, condition and capacity assessment, and capital investment.
- The Council will accept septage, biosolids, leachate, and other hauled liquid waste at designated sites provided that the waste can be efficiently and effectively processed.

#### Policy on Sustainability:

The Council shall conduct its regional wastewater system operations in a sustainable manner, not only related to water sustainability, but also by increasing energy efficiency and using renewable energy sources, which also reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and by reducing, reusing, and recycling solid wastes.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- Identify and pursue options to reuse treated wastewater to supplement groundwater and surface water as sources of water to support regional growth.
- Potentially invest strategically to further the region's non-point source pollution prevention and control program's effectiveness and to ensure efficient investment to achieve regional water quality objectives.
- Incent industries to pretreat wastewater to reduce its strength and thus provide the most environmental and economical benefit for the region.
- Generate energy from biosolids processing, utilize energy efficient processes and equipment, and reduce building energy use.
- Pursue other renewable energy sources, such as solar power generation, thermal energy recovery, and new technologies as they become proven and economical, such as fuel cells.

- Reduce the volume and stabilize biosolids through thermal processing or anaerobic digestion, and utilize the remaining solids as fertilizer and soil conditioner.

#### Policy on System Finance:

The Council will continue to implement regional wastewater service fees and charges based on regional cost of services.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- Regional wastewater charges will be allocated among communities based on volume of wastewater treated.
- Industrial wastewater strength charges will be proportionate to discharge strength.
- Sewer availability charges will be uniform within the urban area. Sewer availability charges for a rural growth center will be based on the reserve capacity and debt service of facilities specific to the rural growth center.
- Cost sharing between the Council and a local governmental unit may be used when construction of regional wastewater facilities provides additional local benefits for an incremental increase in costs.
- Facilities that are no longer a necessary part of the regional wastewater system will be conveyed to the benefiting local governmental unit, or will be abandoned or sold, pursuant to related statutes.

#### Policy on Private Wastewater Systems:

Communities that permit the construction and operation of subsurface sewage treatment systems and other private wastewater treatment systems within their communities are responsible to ensure that these systems are installed, maintained, managed, and regulated consistent with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency rules. The Council will not provide financial support to assist communities if these systems fail.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- The Council will use its comprehensive plan review authority to ensure that communities fulfill their current and future obligations regarding subsurface sewage treatment systems and other private wastewater systems.
- The Council will continue to support State rules for subsurface sewage treatment systems and other private wastewater systems and work with the local governments to assist in their implementation.
- The Council will allow the community to connect a failing subsurface sewage treatment system or other private wastewater treatment system to the regional wastewater system at the community's expense.