

## Environment Committee

Meeting date: April 26, 2016

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of May 25, 2016

**Subject:** Authorization to Negotiate and Execute Memorandum of Understanding with the City of West St. Paul, MCES Ongoing Inflow and Infiltration Mitigation Program

**District(s), Member(s):** Richard Kramer, District 13

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Water Resources Management Policy Plan (WRMPP)

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Jeannine Clancy, 651-602-1210

**Division/Department:** MCES c/o Leisa Thompson, 651-602-8101

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize its Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of West St. Paul and the Metropolitan Council regarding the MCES Ongoing Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Program.

### Background

Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) are terms that describe stormwater runoff and groundwater that makes its way into sanitary sewer pipes and eventually gets treated unnecessarily at wastewater treatment plants. Inflow is clear water that enters the wastewater system through rain leaders, sump pumps, or foundation drains that are illegally connected to sewer lines. The largest amount of inflow occurs during heavy rainstorms. Infiltration is groundwater that seeps into cracked or broken wastewater pipes.

I&I is a problem for a number of reasons:

- It takes up capacity needed for future growth.
- It is costly to communities and their utility ratepayers.
- It can result in public health and environmental concerns when wastewater is released into the environment or backed up into private property during storm events.

The Council's current Ongoing I&I Mitigation program was developed with input from community Task Forces that were convened in 2003 / 2004 and again in 2009 / 2010. The Council recently appointed a Task Force that is working on suggested improvements to the program and the challenges of addressing private property sources. The Council's current I&I mitigation program and policies are that:

- The Council will not provide additional capacity within its interceptor system to serve excessive I&I.
- The Council will establish I&I goals for all communities discharging wastewater to the regional wastewater system. Communities that have excessive I&I in their sanitary sewer systems will be required to eliminate the excessive I&I within a reasonable period of time.

The Council's Ongoing I&I Mitigation Program includes an appeal process. The appeal process recognizes unusual or unique conditions on a case-by-case basis. The City of West St. Paul has appealed to the Metropolitan Council that the program be adjusted to respond to circumstances within their community and requests that the Council enter into a Memorandum of Understanding.

## **Rationale**

West St. Paul is currently experiencing significant challenges in its efforts to address I&I issues over a short timeframe. The age of much of the community's housing stock and the historical building methods used in handling clear water have resulted in a very difficult and cumbersome program. In addition, many corrective measures require excavation into the community's already aging street infrastructure. Finally, property owners in West St. Paul have expressed concern about the financial burden of private service lateral rehabilitation or replacement.

After an attempt to complete I&I inspections on a neighborhood basis, the City is now considering an ordinance that would require service lateral repair and replacement based on the following triggers:

- An I&I compliance inspection would need to occur prior to the sale of the property.
- Properties affected by the city's annual pavement management program would be offered a free lateral inspection and encouraged to have non-compliant services replaced.
- Rental properties would be required to become compliant as part of their annual licensing process.
- Commercial properties and homeowner associations would be required to become compliant within 24 months of the ordinance being approved.

Based upon community input, West St. Paul plans to provide financial assistance to property owners for service lateral repairs. Given the program outlined above, City staff estimate that approximately 400-500 inspections would be accomplished each year. The City currently has approximately 5500 sanitary sewer laterals.

## **Funding**

None.

## **Known Support / Opposition**

There is known verbal support from West St. Paul city staff as well as Metro Cities.