

Environment Committee

Meeting date: Dec. 12, 2017

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of Dec. 13, 2017

Subject: Wastewater Reuse-Related Amendments to the Water Resources Policy Plan
District(s), Member(s): All
Policy/Legal Reference: 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan
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Division/Department: MCES Leisa Thompson, 651-602-8101

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize a public hearing on the proposed wastewater reuse-related amendments to the Water Resource Policy Plan.

Background

The proposed amendments to the Water Resources Policy Plan are an outgrowth of the Wastewater Reuse Policy Task Force. The task force’s purpose was to review the Council’s existing wastewater reuse policies and recommend clarifications needed to respond to requests for wastewater reuse. The task force was chaired by Sandy Rummel and consisted of staff from 10 communities that are MCES wastewater customers and a representative from Metro Cities. The task force has completed its work. Members reached consensus on a number of policy clarifications and did not reach consensus on the issue of a regional cost share for wastewater reuse projects with a regional benefit.

Proposed Amendments

The following amendments are proposed additions to the Water Resources Policy Plan’s chapter on "An Integrated Strategy for Water Resources", after the Finance section on page 43:

Wastewater Reuse

Wastewater reuse has the potential to become an important component of sustainable water management to support the orderly, economical development of the region. The institutional arrangements and cost of service approach for wastewater reuse are important to the development of wastewater reuse in the region.

Wastewater Reuse Policy

The Council will use a cost-of-service, case-by-case approach to wastewater reuse in cooperation and partnership with local communities. The Council will evaluate the potential regional benefit of a potential wastewater reuse project and, if the Council's criteria are met, will determine an appropriate regional cost share, provided that the cumulative regional cost share shall not exceed 0.75% of the total annual municipal wastewater charges.

Implementation Strategies

1. Criteria to be used to evaluate whether there is a regional benefit to a potential wastewater reuse opportunity shall include: (1) the wastewater reuse opportunity will increase the region's wastewater reuse capability; (2) the wastewater reuse opportunity fosters the region’s environmental sustainability; and (3) the wastewater reuse opportunity fosters regional economic development through job creation



and/or uniquely adding to the region's portfolio of industries/businesses by facilitating industrial/business development that would not happen without reclaimed water.

2. Council shall hold a public hearing to obtain customer and public input prior to making a final determination on regional benefit and regional cost share.
3. Implementation of each wastewater reuse project shall be consistent with the comprehensive plan of the community in which the reclaimed water user is located.
4. Council may enter into a joint powers or other agreement with the community in which the reclaimed water user is located to define the reclaimed water service institutional arrangements and to avoid competition with municipal water suppliers.
5. Council shall enter into a long-term reclaimed water service agreement with each user, using a cost-of-service approach, including a regional cost share where appropriate.
6. Council shall pursue sources of non-Council funding to complement Council funding of wastewater reuse projects, including Clean Water Legacy Funds, state bond funds, and reuse grants.

Rationale

The Council must authorize a public hearing on the proposed policy amendment.

Thrive Lens Analysis

Thrive MSP 2040 sets the direction for the Council's development of wastewater reuse where economically feasible to promote sustainable water resources and emphasizes working with the Council's partners. The proposed amendment aligns with Thrive MSP 2040's goals by developing wastewater reuse capability in a collaborative manner, setting the stage for reuse-dependent job and economic growth, while advancing resource recovery from solid waste and generation of renewable energy.

Funding

None

Known Support / Opposition

As noted above, the Wastewater Reuse Policy Task Force reached consensus on all of the proposed policy amendment except for the regional cost share component, which will be addressed by the Council on a case-by-case basis as specified in the proposed policy amendment.