

Water Resources Policy Plan Draft Policies and Strategies
May 8, 2014 LUAC Meeting

WATER RESOURCES POLICY PLAN OVERALL GOAL AND POLICY

Overall Water Resources Policy Plan 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.

Overall Water Resources Policy Plan 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.

WATER SUPPLY POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Overall Water Supply Sustainability Policy

The Council and region will work to assure adequate and high quality ground and surface water supplies to protect public health and support economic growth and development by promoting wise use of water through optimizing surface water and groundwater use, conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge, and other practices.

Policy on Growth

The Council shall support and plan for the sustainable use of water sources to ensure that supplies of potable water are adequate for the region's current population and projected growth.

Strategy 1: Update the Master Water Supply Plan which provides the institutional framework for coordinated regional water supply planning.

Strategy 2: Review local water supply plans to ensure consistency with the Master Water Supply Plan

Strategy 3: Promote water conservation measures.

Strategy 4: Encourage environmentally sound land use and cooperative water use practices that minimize impacts on aquifers.

Policy on Assessing and Protecting Water Supplies

The Council shall support technical assessments and planning activities that protect and enhance the quantity and quality of the region's source water.

Strategy 1: Assess the use, capacity, quality and vulnerability of the regional water supply system along with identifying high potential areas for recharge

Strategy 2: Promote water supply resiliency by increasing surface water use when appropriate

Strategy 3: Promote the use of best management practices for stormwater to minimize aquifer impacts and maximize groundwater recharge.

Strategy 4: Investigate reusing treated wastewater and, when cost-effective, implement reuse.

Policy on Cost-effectiveness and Funding

The Council shall support cost-effective sub-regional water supply infrastructure investments in its effort to promote sustainable use and protect the region's water supplies.

Strategy 1: Develop criteria to identify water supply projects with regional benefit

Strategy 2: Support cost-benefit analyses of alternative water supply options

Strategy 3: identify funding mechanisms for regionally-beneficial water supply development projects

Strategy 4: Promote equitable cost-sharing structure for regionally-beneficial water supply development projects

Policy on Leadership and Regional Collaboration

The Council will foster regional and local collaboration and convene discussion to address water supply challenges and limitations.

Strategy 1: Establish sub-regional work groups and lead discussions to address water supply limitations

Strategy 2: Collaborate with agency partners in the development and implementation of Groundwater Management Areas, wellhead protection plans, water appropriation permit review, and aquifer recharge projects

Strategy 3: Provide technical assistance to local units of government in the development of local water supply plans, wellhead protection plans, water appropriation permit review, and aquifer recharge projects.

SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Overall Surface Water Management Sustainability 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.

Strategy 1: Providing technical assistance to local governments and other partners.

Strategy 2: Monitoring and assessing the condition of the region's lakes, rivers and streams.

Strategy 3: 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).

Strategy 1: 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).

Strategy 2: 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 protection and restoration of water resources.

Strategy 3: Use the total watershed management approach to achieve goals identified in impaired waters studies for nutrients and solids.

Strategy 4: 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.

Strategy 1: 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.

Strategy 2: 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.

Strategy 1: Support and provide technical assistance for water management activities in the region.

Strategy 2: Provide a venue for users to obtain water quality and quantity and surface water management information.

Strategy 3: Support research and promote the development of innovative best management practices including low impact development technologies and agricultural best practices.

Strategy 4: 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.

Strategy 1: Facilitate discussions on regional issues as need arises.

Strategy 2: Coordinate comments sent on TMDL studies, proposed standards and regulations, and other documents out for public review that have a regional impact.

Strategy 3: Coordinate and/or host water related training events and meetings on topics of concern.

Strategy 4: 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.

Strategy 1: With our partners monitor the quality of regional lakes, quality and flow of regional rivers and streams, and assess gaps in data collection.

Strategy 2: Annually assess and make available the information collected as part of our monitoring programs.

Strategy 3: Periodically prepare reports that evaluate regional trends and water resource conditions and identify key issues to be addressed.

Strategy 4: Maintain a regional database (EIMS) that contains water quality, quantity and other water related information.

WASTEWATER POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Overall Wastewater Sustainability 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.

Strategy 1: Efficiently use existing sewer investments in developing and redeveloping areas.

Strategy 2: Preserve unsewered areas inside the Long Term Wastewater Service Area for future economical sewer development.

Strategy 3: 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.

Strategy 4: Identify and pursue options to reuse treated wastewater to supplement groundwater and surface water as sources of water to support regional growth.

Policy on Investment

The Council will strive to maximize regional benefits from regional investments.

Strategy 1: Invest in wastewater reuse, i.e. additional treatment for a portion of the region's wastewater and a non-potable water distribution system, when justified by the benefits for supplementing groundwater and surface water as sources of water to support regional growth, and by the benefits for maintaining water quality.

Strategy 2: Invest in non-point source pollution control when the cost and long-term benefits are favorable compared to further upgrading wastewater treatment.

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.

Strategy 1: Provide a level of wastewater service commensurate with the needs of the growing metropolitan area, and in an environmentally sound manner.

Strategy 2: 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.

Strategy 3: *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.*

Strategy 4: *Extend wastewater service to communities based on one of the following criteria:*

- *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*
- *Service area includes at least 90 percent of the ultimate wastewater flow originating in a community.*

Strategy 5: *Require that all communities currently served by the regional wastewater system shall remain in the system.*

Strategy 6: *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.

Strategy 1: *Maintain and rehabilitate Council interceptors to minimize inflow and infiltration.*

Strategy 2: *Develop inflow and infiltration goals for all communities by metershed.*

Strategy 3: *Require all communities served by the regional wastewater system to include its inflow and infiltration mitigation program in its comprehensive sewer plan.*

Strategy 4: *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.*

Strategy 5: *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.*

Strategy 6: *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.

Strategy 1: *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 developed or 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.*

Strategy 2: *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.*

Strategy 3: *Disallow connections to the regional wastewater system outside the sewer 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.

Strategy 1: *The Council will implement and enforce Waste Discharge Rules for the regional wastewater system.*

Strategy 2: *The Council will preserve its regional wastewater system assets through effective maintenance, condition and capacity assessment, and capital investment.*

Strategy 3: *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.

Strategy 1: *Identify and pursue options to reuse treated wastewater to supplement groundwater and surface water as sources of water to support regional growth.*

Strategy 2: 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.

Strategy 3: Incent industries to pretreat wastewater to reduce its strength and thus provide the most environmental and economical benefit for the region.

Strategy 4: Generate energy from biosolids processing, utilize energy efficient processes and equipment, and reduce building energy use.

Strategy 5: 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.

Strategy 6: 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.

Strategy 1: Regional wastewater charges will be allocated among communities based on volume of wastewater treated.

Strategy 2: Industrial wastewater strength charges will be proportionate to discharge strength.

Strategy 3: Load charges for septage, portable toilet waste, holding tank wastewater and out-of-region wastes will be uniform for each type of load, and based on the volume of the load and the average strength of the types of loads.

Strategy 4: 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.

Strategy 5: 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.

Strategy 6: 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.

Strategy 1: 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.

Strategy 2: 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.

Strategy 3: 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.