

Information Item

Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee



Meeting Date: November 14, 2023

Topic

Update on White Bear Lake Comprehensive Plan

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minnesota Statute 473.1565
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Greg Johnson, Principal Engineer, 651-602-1016
Division/Department:	Environmental Services

Background

The Minnesota legislature appropriated \$2 million in funding for the Metropolitan Council to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure communities in the White Bear Lake area have access to sufficient drinking water to allow for municipal growth while simultaneously ensuring the sustainability of surface and groundwater resources to supply the needs of future generations.

The comprehensive plan must:

1. Evaluate methods for conserving and recharging groundwater in the area including:
 - (i) converting water supplies that are groundwater dependent to total or partial supplies from surface water sources
 - (ii) reusing water, including water discharged from contaminated wells
 - (iii) projects designed to increase groundwater recharge
 - (iv) other methods for reducing groundwater use
2. Based on this evaluation, determine which existing groundwater supply wells, if converted to surface water sources, would be most effective and efficient in ensuring future water sustainability in the area.
3. Identify a long-term plan for converting the identified groundwater wells to surface water sources, including recommendations on water supply governance and concept-level engineering that addresses preliminary design considerations, including: supply source, treatment, distribution, operation, and financing needed to complete any changes to water supply infrastructure.
4. Include any policy and funding recommendations for converting groundwater supply wells to surface water sources, recommendations for treating and reusing wastewater, and any other recommendations for additional measures that reduce groundwater use, promote water reuse, and increase groundwater recharge.
5. Include any policy and funding recommendations for local wastewater treatment and recharge.
6. Be submitted to the chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources finance and policy by June 30, 2027.

MAWSAC role

MAWSAC will be informed of the progress of the comprehensive plan throughout the schedule and provide feedback as requested by Metropolitan Council or partners and stakeholders.

Partners and Stakeholders

Partners and stakeholders shape this work through a Work Group consisting of representatives from the following agencies, utilities, and communities:

- Commissioners or designees from the DNR, MDH, and MPCA
- Representatives from Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (MAWSAC), and St. Paul Regional Water Services
- The communities of Stillwater, Mahtomedi, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Lino Lakes, North St. Paul, Oakdale, Vadnais Heights, Shoreview, Woodbury, New Brighton, White Bear Lake, White Bear Township, and North Oaks

Current status and next steps

Work group representatives have been assigned by each community and agency.

An RFP was issued this fall by Met Council to contract with up to two communications firms to facilitate the work group meetings which are expected to begin in early 2024.

Additional RFPs will be issued in early 2024 to contract with technical experts and possibly a financial consultant.

Learn more

A presentation about the project was shared at the 9/26/2023 meeting of the Metropolitan Council Environment Committee. [Presentation slides](#) are included with the online meeting agenda. The presentation is from minutes 33:18 to 47:12 of the [video recording](#).

