



Water Supply, Surface Water, Wastewater: Proposed Policy Direction

For confirmation discussion July 17, 2013

Water sustainability approach

The Metropolitan Council recognizes the strategic importance of water resources in maintaining economic growth, integrity and competitiveness, and quality of life in the region. The Council will work to ensure that the region's water resources are sustainable by crafting 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.

Thrive goal-level language for water sustainability: 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.

Thrive policy-level language for water sustainability: 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 work to 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 and 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.

The Council's Water Resources Policy Plan will use the overall water sustainability goal and policy in *Thrive* as direction for developing individual sustainability policies and actions to meet these policies for water supply, surface water management and wastewater.

Water Supply Sustainability Policy and associated action for Water Resources Policy Plan

The Metropolitan Council recognizes the strategic importance of the region's water supply in economic competitiveness, public health and quality of life. The Council also recognizes that problems with the water supply have become more acute in recent years. The Council is committed to working with partners to ensure the long-term sustainability of the region's water supply.

Water Resources Policy Plan policy-level language for water supply sustainability: 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 the wise use of water through rebalancing surface water and groundwater use, conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge, and other practices.

Actions may include:

- Identifying, analyzing and addressing water supply problems with partners in the region.
- Providing technical assistance to local governments and other partners.
- Providing guidance for local water supply systems and future regional investments.
- Addressing the reliability, resiliency, security, and cost-effectiveness of the region's water supplies.

Water Quality Sustainability Policy and associated action for Water Resources Policy Plan

The Metropolitan Council recognizes the significance of the quality and quantity of water in the region's lakes, rivers and streams in protecting the health of ecosystems and the public and in providing for the high quality of life for citizens of the region. The Council is committed to working with partners to protect the surface water of the region.

Water Resources Policy Plan policy-level language for water quality sustainability: 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.

Actions may include:

- Providing technical assistance to local governments and other partners.
- Monitoring and assessing the condition of the region's lakes, rivers and streams.
- Providing direction and guidance on best management practices for effective surface water management.

Wastewater Sustainability Policy and associated action for Water Resources Policy Plan

The Metropolitan Council recognizes the importance of wastewater management in protecting the health and vitality of the region. The Council is committed to working with partners to manage wastewater to ensure efficient and effective service.

Water Resources Policy Plan policy-level language for wastewater sustainability: 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.

Actions may include:

- Efficiently utilizing existing sewer investments in developing and redeveloping areas.
- Preserving unsewered areas inside the Long Term Wastewater Service Area for future economical sewer development.
- Preserving areas outside the Long Term Wastewater Service Area for agricultural and rural uses, while protecting significant natural resources and allowing limited unsewered development.
- Identifying and pursuing options to reuse treated wastewater.

Additional detail about water policy will be developed and adopted in the Water Resources Policy Plan as well as discussed in future conversations about geographic planning areas, regional parks, economic competitiveness and climate change.