

Information Item: Work Plan Process and Proposal

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MAWSAC-TAC Workshop: March 23, 2021



Requested Action

Review and provide input on the proposed 2021-2022 committee work plan

Memorandum

DATE: March 23, 2021

TO: Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Water Supply Policy and Technical Advisory Committees (MAWSAC and TAC)

FROM: Lanya Ross (Environmental Analyst) and Emily Steinweg (Senior Engineer), Metropolitan Council Water Supply Planning

SUBJECT: MAWSAC and TAC Work Plan for 2021-2022

Request to MAWSAC and TAC Members

- 1. Review and provide input on the proposed 2021-2022 committee work plan

Background

The Metropolitan Area Water Supply Policy Advisory Committee (MAWSAC) is responsible to assist the Council in its water supply planning work. The Metropolitan Area Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) informs MAWSAC’s work by providing scientific and engineering expertise. This work plan, shaped by committee member input, will guide the committees’ business and meeting agendas in 2021 and into 2022. The timing of the topics may shift, especially given uncertainties during Covid-19 pandemic. Committee chairs may modify the work plan when approving agendas.



2021-2022 Work Plan Goal

By 2022, produce a set of recommendations and supporting information around high-priority water supply topics to support the update of the Council's regional development guide and related policy plans.

Policy makers and influencers will be better informed to develop and implement policies that ensure a sustainable water supply for the region.

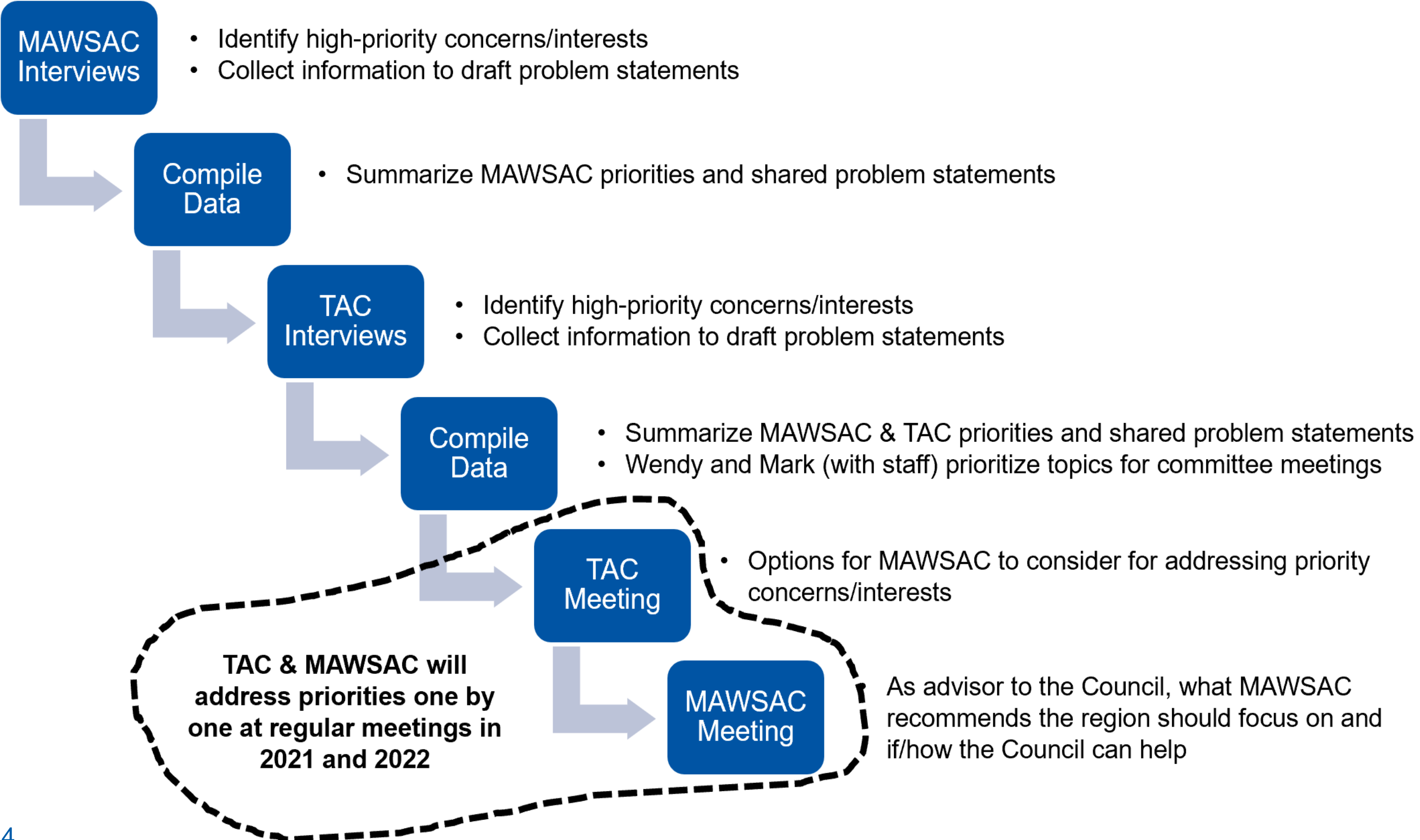
Recommendations to the Council and the Legislature may address:

- Technical studies,
- Policy updates,
- Collaboration, and/or
- Funding

Note: past committee input and recommendations led to activities summarized in the Council's 2020 report to the MN Legislature



Work Plan Development Process



Proposed Meeting Schedules and Topics

TOPIC	DATES
Work Plan Kickoff	March 23, 2021
1) Contamination and Water Quality	April 20, 2021 (TAC) and May 18, 2021 (MAWSAC)
2) Intersection of Land Use and Water Supply	June 15, 2021 (TAC) and July 20, 2021 (MAWSAC)
3) Groundwater - Surface Water Interaction	August 17, 2021 (TAC) and September 21, 2021 (MAWSAC)
4) Infrastructure	October 19, 2021 (TAC) and November 16, 2021 (MAWSAC)
Subregional Work Group Forum	December 2021 (TAC and MAWSAC)
Approval of Recommendation Report	January 18, 2022 (MAWSAC, with TAC input)
Outreach and Engagement	First and second quarters of 2022 (TAC and MAWSAC)

Proposed Meeting Outcomes: Draft Policy Recommendations

Problem or need

Concise description of the challenge in the context of the region.

Policy statement

MAWSAC recommends that the Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Legislature, and/or fellow committee member organizations do _____ to achieve the goal of _____.

Solutions (tactics)

- Research & education
- Planning & regulation
- Technology, process or infrastructure changes
- Financial support

Committee member ideas: What can be done?

A lot of data is collected, and communities have no idea how it is used. Demonstrate how it is used and package it in a way that is useful for various stakeholders to apply to their questions.

Maybe a meeting to encourage conversations between cities regarding cost of water supply?

MAWSAC is a forum to identify issues presented by the folks who have to manage them, and it is a forum to discuss individual and joint opportunities for solutions. MAWSAC is most important, from my perspective, for bringing these folks together to deal with issues and try to address them.

A campaign about the value and quality of our water.

Feasibility studies of rural water systems would be another research topic -looking at the feasibility of rural water systems or expanding existing water systems into areas with dense populations of private wells and septic systems.

MAWSAC could help by supporting infrastructure expansion and upgrade in rural centers with contaminated private and public wells. An analysis to see if bigger cities can provide to smaller (nearby) communities and private wells might be useful.

We need to package demand with conservation and groundwater monitoring and modeling to highlight when it will be needed to jump into reuse.

Cities are interested in streamlining reporting to government (minimize redundancy).

Focus analysis of water treatment system needs and costs on those who need treatment systems, and target conservation practices in areas that will have the best impact.

Can we have a shared plan for monitoring regional water supply sources that would clearly define agency roles and responsibilities? As part of WHPP, the city decided to seal those wells after communication with DNR. Then we heard complaints later asking for more monitoring wells in the city...

A next step is to understand if what we've done is working (water reuse and conservation)

Tabletop exercises are not required in the AWIA plans but doing this with multiple communities could add value. It may also be worthwhile to look at evaluating interconnections – are they documented with agreements for use, functional, any water quality issues with using them? There are many new people and conversations a critical for knowledge transfer.

A sound understanding about the implications of how citizens view their water may be something that needs to be on the radar screen for MAWSAC and Met Council.

It is critical to share information among cities, because what one entity does can impact others (example: pumping).

The Council and MAWSAC/TAC might help answer the question: How do we know if our water is affordable? When we start to answer that question ourselves, we can't because we don't have the data. We need household size and income linked to a water bill. Maybe the Council could help to the degree that census data could be refined and dug into more with the outcome of how to define 'this is affordable water'.

Bold decisions are needed.

I think the Council and MAWSAC can help develop tools and education information to help individual communities deal with issues: identify them and identify non-coercive ways of mitigating risk

Develop a map of existing information of water tables that are shallow and adjacent to water bodies with rapid infiltration to identify areas most susceptible to high water levels or slope failure. That would be a tangible planning tool that cities would find valuable.

Make sure regional policies for recharge/infiltration emphasize aspects like maintenance expenses and long-term operation of these conservation tools.

Does MAWSAC have a role in identifying and understanding land uses or other practices that could help lessen land use impacts on water supply quality and related treatment costs and in helping to communicate about those issues?

We need to address the elephant(s) in room. TAC especially has representatives from communities experiencing issues, but they don't talk about these issues in meetings. DNR is the one with authority, but they also don't talk openly about these issues. There are potentially difficult and politically unpopular decisions that need to be made.

Water reuse is very expensive to initially install. It would be impactful to do financial feasibility models to build more cheaply and get credits.

MAWSAC/TAC can be valuable by helping with guidance and support for best practices, sharing best practices, and coordination and collaboration - particularly for small counties without the resources that larger metro counties have.

Educational support would be helpful – sharing best practices. How can we educate the public?

The Met Council can best support water conservation/efficiency efforts by supporting local efforts and recognizing it's not a one size fits all approach.

It would be useful to have MAWSAC share input about rules and guidance given in the fact sheets from the MPCA and MDH on key contaminants in drinking and source water.

Questions

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