

Information Item

Joint Meeting of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Policy and Technical Advisory Committees (MAWSAC and TAC)



Meeting Date: December 20, 2022

Topic

Summary of MAWSAC and TAC 2022 committee accomplishments and influence on water supply planning-related efforts

District(s), Member(s): All
Policy/Legal Reference: Minnesota Statute 473.1565
Staff Prepared/Presented: Lanya Ross, Environmental Analyst, 651-602-1803
Division/Department: Environmental Services, Water Supply Planning

Background

The Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (MAWSAC) is responsible to assist the Council in its water supply planning work. MAWSAC's work is supported by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The Metropolitan Council has started updating various plans and documents and there are several opportunities over the next year for MAWSAC (with TAC input) to contribute to regional plan and policy formation.

This report provides examples (not a complete list) of how MAWSAC and TAC influenced the Metropolitan Council's regional development guide, Water Resources Policy Plan, Metro Area Water Supply Plan, and other regional plans and projects in 2022:

- Promoting MAWSAC recommendations through the 2022 MAWSAC report to the Metropolitan Council and Minnesota Legislature
- Providing input to legislative issues
- Providing committee input to regional planning efforts
- Promoting local projects that support MAWSAC recommendations

Promoting February 2022 MAWSAC report

The 2022 MAWSAC report, bringing committee perspectives into regional policy and planning conversations.

Metropolitan Council

On [February 9, 2022, Metropolitan Council](#) heard a presentation and discussed MAWSAC's report on water supply planning recommendations, with the goal of bringing committee perspectives into regional policy and planning conversations. The report was warmly received, and example responses include:

"There is a lot more interest and a lot more trust in the Council to provide information and help bring people together but not dictate to our partners. We've earned their respect, I think, over time." - Wendy Wulff, Metropolitan Council District 16, MAWSAC Chair

"Thank you for this great report; water supply is always a big deal for local communities. I appreciate that they [MAWSAC] are talking about water runoff and how that hits water

supply, depending on where you are in the metro area. That's important. Are there aspects of water pollution in this report that will go to the Legislature?" - Judy Johnson, Metropolitan Council District 1, Management Committee Chair

"I think this shows where Met Council does its best work. We're not just planners, we're researchers and conveners. And to be a trusted partner is really what we aspire to be." - Charles Zelle, Chair, Metropolitan Council

Clean Water Council Budget and Outcomes Committee (CWC BOC)

On [March 4, 2022, The Clean Water Council's Budget and Outcomes Committee](#) considered the 2022 MAWSAC report, bringing metro perspectives into state-level funding conversations.

MAWSAC member Phil Klein, TAC Chair Mark Maloney, and TAC member Jim Stark contributed to the presentation. Example responses include:

"I would like to draw everyone's attention to the report and what I found extremely interesting: the executive summary is very beneficial and I ask all the members of this committee to look at that. For the seven-county metro area, it goes into a lot of detail including recommendations for water supply planning." - Richard Brainerd, Clean Water Council and City of Mahtomedi City Council Member

"I am heartened to see the way that One Water and integrated water management is showing up throughout." - Jen Kader, Clean Water Council, Vice Chair

Subcommittee on Minnesota Water Policy

On [April 22, 2022, the Subcommittee on Minnesota Water Policy](#) heard a presentation about the 2022 MAWSAC report, bringing metro area water supply issues into state-level water policy work.

Southeast Groundwater Work Group

On May 4, 2022, the Southeast Groundwater Work Group heard a presentation about the 2022 MAWSAC report. A key question from the group was about any funding available to enact the recommendations in the report. Ali Elhassan responded with information about new master contracts for water supply technical analyses and outreach (funding through Metropolitan Council appropriation from the Clean Water Fund) and committed to working with the group to scope future projects.

Providing input to legislative issues

The 2022 MAWSAC report recommended that MAWSAC and TAC support legislative and Clean Water Council recommendations.

Clean Water Fund requests

To support MAWSAC recommendations, [Metropolitan Council requested an appropriation for SFY24-25 from the Clean Water Fund](#) for two programs: Metropolitan Area Water Sustainability Support program (requesting \$2.5M) and the Water Demand Reduction Grant program (requesting \$1.5M).

Stakeholder input to Subcommittee on Minnesota Water Policy

On September 7, 2022, the Subcommittee on Minnesota Water Policy held a [stakeholder meeting](#) on legislative issues relating to groundwater, facilitated by Jim Stark, Subcommittee Director and TAC member. Metropolitan Council staff attended, along with MAWSAC and TAC members Jason Moeckel, Valerie Nepl, and Phil Klein.

Fifteen topics were discussed by the Subcommittee, several of which were related to recommendations made in the 2022 MAWSAC report (in bold font):

1. Needed Update of the 1989 Groundwater Act (N1)
2. Option for Water Scarcity in the Northeast Metro (N2)
3. **Define sustainable groundwater limits using technological advances (B1)** (related to

[2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 rows B.2 and B.3)

4. **Voluntary private well testing (B5)** (related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 rows D.2 D.13)
5. **Ensuring the safety of private wells by identifying and monitoring vulnerable aquifers--water safety for those using private wells (B6)** (related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 row D.13)
6. **Assessing emerging and unregulated contaminants in drinking water (DW1)** (related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 rows B.2, B.5, D.2, D.8, and D.11)
7. **Emerging contaminants-sentinel monitoring program (WP18)** (related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 rows B.2 and perhaps B.5)
8. Water safety plans for cities– a pilot (B7)
9. **Enhanced groundwater recharge (WP14)** (related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 rows B.3 and C.7)
10. **Groundwater quality (WQ1)** (related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 rows B.4, B.8, C.3, C.7 and D.2)
11. Chloride reduction and the MPCA Report (WQ2)
12. **Addressing disconnect between land use and water quality management (WP3)** (related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 rows A.1, C.1, C.3, C.4, C.5, C.6, D.1, D.5, D.6, D. 9, and D.12)
13. **Plan for changes to water resulting from climate change (WP4)** (related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 rows A.6, A.10, B.3, and C.10)
14. Water appropriations: Inter-basin transport protection (WP8)
15. Adjusting water appropriation process for golf courses (WP11)

Providing input to regional planning projects

Committee members contributed to the following regional planning efforts:

Priority Waters List

Following up from presentations at the 8/17/21 TAC meeting ([link](#)) and the 9/21/21 MAWSAC meeting ([link](#)), Priority Waters List project manager Emily Resseger invited MAWSAC and TAC to review the draft Priority Waters List and complete a survey in an email to the committees on March 23, 2022. Her email request was:

“The Metropolitan Council is establishing a Priority Waters List to help focus limited resources to best partner and sustainably manage the region’s waterbodies. This new list adds rivers and streams to the Met Council’s Priority Lakes List, created in 1982 and last updated in 2015.

The Priority Waters List is being developed to anticipate future needs: It will be a tool to help Met Council leaders and water resources staff distribute resources and make decisions, provide a lens for policy development, and help align with regional priorities. We are also offering the tool to other government partners, who might find it useful in their work.

Though the list is primarily an internal tool, it will help the Met Council make sure its work aligns with other government and community partners. We need your input to show where the list aligns with your organization’s priorities and where it can be improved. We will be sharing the final product and methodology at the completion of this process.”

Regional visioning (supporting the 2050 Regional Development Guide and related policy and system plans)

Following up from presentations at the [05/17/2022 MAWSAC meeting](#) and the [06/21/2022 TAC meeting](#), Regional Values, Vision and Goals project manager Michael Larson shared how MAWSAC and TAC discussions informed his work in 2022:

MAWSACA and TAC input are influencing the development of regional values and part of the regional vision, particularly with climate change and drought in the news and the growing awareness around the availability of water supply as an asset we need to protect. The perspectives shared by MAWSAC and TAC are being combined with input from other Council committees, and a notable observation is that we are consistently hearing that water and natural resources are priorities and a shared goal across many groups. We are seeing increased appreciation for water resources and how they affect the health and wellbeing of the region. A presentation summarizing input heard so far – from MAWSAC, TAC and other Council committees and stakeholders - was shared with [Metropolitan Council at their meeting on 11/30/2022](#).

Community designations

Following up from presentations at the [05/17/2022 MAWSAC meeting](#) and the [06/21/2022 TAC meeting](#), Community Designations project manager Raya Esmaeili shared how MAWSAC and TAC discussions informed her work in 2022:

While the scope of the community designations project is narrower than the more policy comments and feedback MAWSAC and TAC provided, it was still valuable feedback. Although committee input did not end up as a variable in the analysis to group designations, it did highlight the ongoing importance of conversations that were had 10 years ago between the Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) and MAWSAC about water supply and community designations, and how that interest is still there and growing. The Community Designations team honored those comments to ensure that water supply was considered in this update. In this update for the 2050 regional development guide and related land use policies, committee comments on water supply were made again, highlighting the importance of water issues even more. A notable difference is that now other groups are also stressing the input of water.

Discussion with MAWSAC and TAC identified a challenge: the kind of water supply data needed for the Community Designations cluster analysis was not available. For example: we have data about water supply sources by community, but it is unclear how that could or should be used to help group communities in the cluster analysis for land use policies.

One output of the Community Designations project will be a discussion of the methodology and considerations for doing things differently going forward for the next round of regional planning and community designations (10 years from now).

A question for MAWSAC and TAC and Council staff to consider is: are the water supply concerns being brought up best addressed through the Community Designations project or through the next steps of the regional plan and policy update process? MAWSAC and TAC input to the Community Designations project highlighted the importance of water supply issues, but it also suggested that it may be more meaningful to address them through policy development. One challenge with incorporating water supply into Community Designations is that, when working with the built environment, the boundaries go beyond one city/jurisdictional boundaries. Aquifers and drinking water supply management areas, for example, are split across communities, watersheds, etc. whereas community designations are mostly based on administrative boundaries of cities and townships.

One observed difference between the 2040 regional development guide plan and this 2050 plan is that last time MAWSAC was alone in raising water supply issues; today, many stakeholders are raising water supply issues as a planning concern.

Going forward, MAWSC and TAC could really help the Council to bring water supply expertise into concrete points of policy – weighing in on policy writers clarify language and identify effective best practices or other implementation actions. The Council doesn't tell communities how to do land use planning, but our technical resources can at least suggest approaches – and they are strongest when backed up with good data and expertise.

Scenario planning

Following up from presentations at the [05/17/2022 MAWSAC meeting](#) and the [06/21/2022 TAC meeting](#), Scenario Planning project managers Baris Gumas-Dawes and Dan Marckel shared how

MAWSAC and TAC discussions informed their work in 2022:

Scenario Planning Team asked MAWSAC members about the impact of four different scenarios on the region and the Council. The Team heard a number of critical issues from committee members including: the different water consumption patterns of different types of businesses and the implications of different scenarios for local water pricing.

The Committee's input showed how the scenarios framework could be used in the day-to-day work of water suppliers. For instance, the regional water demand forecasts associated with each scenario can inform potential variations in local water demand forecasts. The input also highlighted intersections between water issues and other policy areas such as transportation and land use and identified issues for increased policy coordination across policy areas.

The committee's input will be combined with input from other advisory committees such as the TPP Technical Working Group and the Water Advisory Group. The issues and examples provided by advisory groups such as MAWSAC will also be used to flesh out the scenario narratives that will be presented to policy makers.

Team members will share some products associated with each scenario in a future presentation. These products include water demand forecasts, forecasts of increases in water pollutants by watershed, and forecasts of changes in wastewater service demands. In addition, the presentation will contain scenario narratives that include critical issues pertaining to water in each scenario.

Water resource white papers

Met Council Environmental Services' is developing a series of white papers that investigate current and future water concerns in the metro area. These white papers are intended to share current understanding of issues, identify current policy connections or gaps, and to propose future policies and strategies to ensure sustainable water resources. These white papers will inform Met Council's 2050 Water Resources Policy Plan.

Jen Kostrzewski and Judy Sventek presented an overview of the white paper project at the [05/17/2022 MAWSAC meeting](#) and the [06/21/2022 TAC meeting](#). This was MAWSAC's and TAC's first introduction to the project. However, content from past MAWSAC committee work efforts helped to inform the initial selection of white paper topics at the beginning of the project and have been continual guiding resources as Council staff author the papers. Members that sit jointly on MAWSAC or TAC and the Water Advisory Group – Scott Anderson, Mark Maloney, Patrick Shea, and Brue Westby will assist in reviewing the white papers. While all white paper topics can be connected to aspects of regional water supply, the papers most likely of interest to MAWSAC and TAC are a water quality paper; a source water protection paper; and a water availability, access, and use paper as they most closely relate to the content in the [2022 MAWSAC report](#). The white papers are on schedule to be completed by Q2 2023 and will be publicly available on the Met Council's website for feedback and discussion.

Shaping metro area water supply plan update

Throughout the year, MAWSAC and TAC committee work directly informed the update of the metro area water supply plan.

The committees provided guidance to develop a proposed subregional approach for supporting chapters in the metro area water supply plan. This approach was to be shared and revised at a workshop with subregional groups and partners in November 2022 but had to be postponed until early 2023.

In addition, a preliminary draft of chapter one of the updated metro area water supply plan was shared with [MAWSAC on 07/19/2022](#) and [TAC on 09/08/2022](#). Committee members were asked to review it themselves and also to circulate it to their organizations' leadership and key stakeholders.

As of 11/30/2022, chapter one was revised based on comments received from:

- Minneapolis Water Works through MAWSAC member Annika Bankston
- Anoka County SWCD through MAWSAC member Jamie Schurbon



- Dakota County through MAWSAC member Valerie Neppi
- Input from stakeholders across Carver County, facilitated by MAWSAC member Mike Huang
 - Chanhassen
 - Carver County
 - Plymouth
 - Deephaven
 - Chaska
 - Maple Grove
 - Lower Minnesota River Watershed District
 - Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA)
 - Minnetonka (acknowledge document is being drafted and waiting to comment until a more final version is available)
- MPCA through MAWSAC member Catherine Neuschler
- Director of the Subcommittee on Minnesota Water Policy (TAC member)

Metropolitan Council projects

In 2022, Metropolitan Council worked with various partners on the following projects related to recommendations in the 2022 MAWSAC report:

- Grant program with Saint Paul Regional Water Services (*related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 row D.7*)
 - Contract established between Metropolitan council and St. Paul on **DATE**.
- Continuation of the Water Efficiency Grant Program (*related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 row D.7*)
 - **37** communities are participating communities in the 2022-2024 program, awarded a total of \$997,920.
- Water Supply Planning Atlas (*related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 A.10 and rows A.1, A.10 and D.9*)
 - Draft shared with stakeholders for review in August 2022. Input will be used to revise the atlas to publish in 2023.
- Multi-Community Wellhead Protection Planning Pilot in the West Metro (*related to [2022 MAWSAC report](#), Table1 **rows D.1 and D.3***)
 - Delineation and vulnerability assessment work underway in fall 2022 (with Barr Engineering Co.).

