

## Minutes of the

### REGULAR MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA WATER SUPPLY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

#### Committee Members Present:

Sam Paske (ES Staff as Acting Chair), Scott Anderson, Kristin Asher, John Dustman, Dale Folen, Lin-in Rezania, Matt Saam, and Jim Westerman.

\*Note Jamie Wallerstedt has been promoted and has resigned from TAC. Gary Krueger and Liz Kaufenberg are present to represent the MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) as her replacement(s) Gary is the primary replacement and Liz is his back-up for now.

#### Committee Members Absent:

Mark Maloney (Chair), Robert Ellis, Crystal Ng, Jim Stark, Jamie Wallerstedt, Bruce Westby and Ray Wuolo.

#### CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Acting Committee Chair Paske called the regular meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Area Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to order at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 19, 2021.

Acting Chair Paske read aloud The Metropolitan Council Chair's Statement, as follows:

NOTICE: The Metropolitan Council Chair has determined it is not practical or prudent to conduct in-person meetings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, committee members will participate in this meeting via telephone or other electronic means and the meeting will be conducted under Minnesota Statutes section 13D.021 at the date and time stated above. We encourage you to monitor the meeting remotely. If you have comments, we encourage members of the public to email us at [public.info@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:public.info@metc.state.mn.us). We will respond to your comments in a timely manner.

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Without objection the agenda was approved by consensus.

Without objection, the minutes of the August 17, 2021, Metropolitan Area Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee Meeting were approved

#### INFORMATION

##### 1. Recommendations and Local Perspectives Regarding Infrastructure

Staff gave a presentation on the following:

- Draft problem statement and recommended actions
- Regional information: Drinking Water Security and Resiliency Project – Phase 1, presented by Emily Steinweg.
- Process, next steps, and call for volunteers to develop a statutorily required 2022 report from MAWSAC to the Council and MN Legislature

As part of the presentation, TAC members shared their perspectives and experiences related to infrastructure. Topics discussed included status of physical interconnections, data security with a region-wide database of

physical infrastructure, how to adapt and handle new contaminants and changing health limits, and upcoming changes to the lead and copper rule.

Jim Westerman stated he recognizes that the PFAS issue in the East Metro has led to some great things, however Woodbury has some challenges responding to the new water plan. The city is seeing a two-water-quality-system at this point, which will require huge infrastructure investments. They are faced with the question of how to find tens of millions of dollars to fund the 2-system plan. Emerging contaminants may require massive infrastructure needs. The East Metro was fortunate to have the funding mechanism brought about by the 3M Settlement. The available funding only covers part of the cost and the remaining cost is forcing the city into other investments.

Gary Krueger stated that he sees emerging contaminants as an issue across the region and dealing with East Metro PFAS quantity and quality issues is a challenge. This is particularly true when planning to incorporate treatment facilities into existing city infrastructure where some wells will be treated but others will not.

Lih-in Rezania stated that the lead and copper rule revision is anticipated to be finalized by the end of the year. The action level could be lowered, focusing on the need for utility monitoring plans and implementation work related to lead service lines. Expect to see more water systems with an exceedance, the need to apply corrosion control, replacement of service lines, or other actions. Local responses are complicated by different ownership structures for services lines, while some cities may own them, they may be privately owned in others. The EPA wants to prioritize full replacement of lead service lines. Corrosion control is another possible measure, which could increase phosphate loading to wastewater systems, although this conversation has been ongoing for decades.

Scott Anderson agreed that there are challenges for water utilities to respond to contaminants of emerging concern and changes in detection methods that lead to changes in action levels. Funding is also a challenge related to aging infrastructure and cyber security. Water supply and wellhead protection challenges also exist where source water protection areas cross jurisdictional boundaries. He also stated that equity and rate affordability are concerns and when looking for funding to address aging infrastructure, new treatment, or source water protection, consider water affordability on a customer scale and balance revenue needs with affordability needs of the community. He added that implemented drought restrictions were consistent with the Water Supply Plan, but anticipated results weren't necessarily realized. The reality of trying to address a drought situation is probably not found in odd-even watering bans. How do we have discussions about what actions are most effective at reducing demand?

Dale Folen had the following advice for newer water systems: always think of the next treatment project after the current treatment project. If they are exploring the possibility of using ozone treatment, consider what space would be needed on the campus. Use a holistic approach to infrastructure, paying attention to all aspects of the utility. From supply all the way to the distribution system, identify maintenance and renewal needs as well as possible disruptions.

Kristin Asher indicated that people assume everything is hunky dory but, in her role, she sees that there is a lot of inconsistency in how much people know about the system they are operating. There is a tendency to assume that things are okay even if they are not. Addressing this gap in understanding should be a priority. How do we impart this need to the Legislature when available information and condition assessments are not consistent? There is no clear message at work and investment is needed. Safety Plan system documentation might be an avenue to address this issue.

Committee Members indicated that the following information should be shared in the MAWSAC Report to the Metropolitan Council and the MN State Legislature: Water Suppliers hit with emerging contamination have indicated they would have benefitted from having some sort of established funding to respond to the sudden need to enhance treatment. Scott Anderson indicated we need to educate the Legislature about the extent and cost of infrastructure renewal needs so they understand the magnitude of the problem. We should also highlight the conflicting goals that commonly exist between land use and water supply considerations.

## 2. Group exercise using Mural, Digital Workspace for Visual Collaboration

Exercise to gather input regarding:

- Level of support for the draft problem statement
- Suggested changes to improve Committee member support
- Revisions to proposed actions and prioritization based on ease of implementation and potential impact
- Actions that could be taken sooner rather than later, including:
  - Examples of efforts and key takeaways to inform our efforts
  - Key stakeholders (potential leaders and partners)

Committee members were invited to join an online Mural board for this exercise.

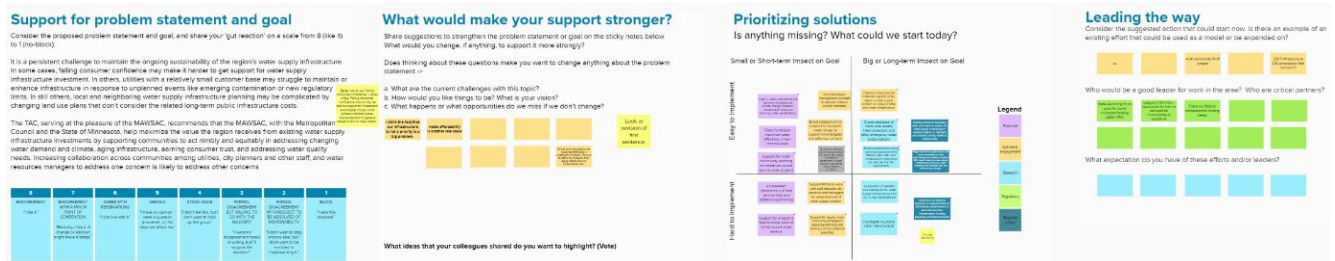


Figure 1. Illustration of the Mural activity.

Committee members were asked to share their level of support for the draft problem statement on a scale of 1 to 8, with 1 being no support and 8 being full endorsement. Five committee members participated. Two votes were recorded for each endorsement and agree with reservations, one vote was recorded for formal disagreement with request to be absolved of responsibility.

Committee members shared their suggestions to strengthen their support for the draft problem statement. Issues were raised with “falling consumer confidence” in the first sentence of the problem statement. Scott Anderson stated that falling consumer confidence may or may not be tied to support for investment and that it’s not only small utilities/customer bases that are challenged by maintaining/enhancing infrastructure. Dale Folen and Jim Westerman agreed. Committee members indicated the following would strengthen their support for the draft problem statement:

- The fact that our infrastructure is not a priority is a big problem.
- Water affordability is a real issue.
- Overall tone is focused on the suspected difficulties in meeting the problems. Reword to define the problems first: aging infrastructure and contamination, etc.

During group discussion, John Dustman brought up the previous interconnection work performed by the Council and suggested that project be re-done and shared. That project had other data that would be helpful to get a better picture of the region’s infrastructure. Dale Folen asked about the security of that data. Both Scott Anderson and Jim Westerman brought up physical interconnections

and wondered if they are the best option for emergency water supply. Issues relate to ownership of the interconnect, water pressure and water quality differences between interconnects, and agreements to use those interconnections.

Committee members reviewed the proposed actions described in the posted meeting materials and added their input on the Mural board and via discussion. Most recommendations on the Mural board were not ranked and included:

- Consider how feasible physical interconnections are, given water quality implications, agreements in place, condition, goal of the interconnection, and ownership

Committee members were given votes to prioritize recommendations most important to them, with the following tally:

- 3 votes for:
  - Support for programs that fund the cost of infrastructure asset renewal
- 2 votes for:
  - Consider how feasible physical interconnections are, given water quality implications, agreements in place, condition, goal of the interconnection, and ownership.
  - Invest in water sustainability and resiliency of system (ex: climate change mitigation, infrastructure rehab and planning, water use efficiency); and
  - Support for multi-community planning of infrastructure and source water projects.
- 1 vote for:
  - Creation of educational materials specific to the region's water supply context, re: value of water and water infrastructure
  - Support PWSs to work with and educate city councils and managers re: value and cost of water supply system
  - Support for regular multi-community emergency response planning and training such as table-top exercises
  - Identify criteria for targeting state and regional support for water supply infrastructure-related projects, to highlight and address priority areas of need (at risk)
  - Guidance for regional agencies to support PWSs in addressing replacement of lead service lines; infrastructure funding planning, and improvements
  - Regional policies, system plans, and local comprehensive plans acknowledge and address long-term (30+ years) impact on water supply infrastructure and source water protection from planned land use and land use changes
  - Create database of metro area assets, interconnection, and other emergency water supply options
  - Investigate equitable water rate structure
  - Explore relationships among equity and socioeconomic factors, water rates, and infrastructure investments (ex: lead service line replacement)
- The following were suggested as existing efforts that could be used as a model or be expanded upon:
  - Multi-Community WHP Pilot Project (West Metro)
  - 2007 infrastructure database compiled by Met Council
- The following were suggested as potential leaders and critical partners in these efforts:
  - State Revolving Fund for increased funding (MDH, PFA)
  - League of MN Cities – opportunity to advocate for municipalities at legislature

- Federal resources for funding needs

When asked what Committee Members would want the Legislature to hear, Kristin Asher indicated, and Scott Anderson agreed that it seems as if City Councils and the Legislature have not grasped the total extent and cost of necessary infrastructure renewal, possibly because they aren't involved. Does the Legislature need education or lobbying support? Scott Anderson stated that land use implications make managing infrastructure a challenge because land use and water supply often have conflicting goals.

### 3. Legislative Update

Ali Elhassan stated that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) honored Metropolitan Council Environmental Services as a 2021 Excellence Award winner for strategic collaboration for the 2019-2022 Water Efficiency Grant Program and the Turfgrass Irrigation Efficiency Project.

<https://metro council.org/News-Events/Wastewater-Water/Newsletters/WaterSense-Excellence-Award-2021.aspx>

### Next steps

- TAC perspectives will be shared with MAWSAC.
- TAC input will be used to continue drafting MAWSAC's 2022 Report to the Metropolitan Council and the MN State Legislature
  - Need 3 volunteers from TAC to help draft which will include:
    - Approx. 12 hours of time commitment from October-December 2021
    - 2-4 meetings and independent review time
- Joint MAWSAC/TAC/Sub-Regional Workgroup Forum to review the draft report on Tuesday, December 7 at 1:00 PM.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Jinger Pulkrabek  
Recording Secretary