

Minutes

Metropolitan Area Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)



Meeting Date: June 21, 2022

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Steet

Members Present:

- Chair, Mark Maloney
- Scott Anderson
- Kristin Asher
- John Dustman
- Robert Ellis

- Dale Folen
- Gary Krueger
- Crystal Ng
- Sam Paske
- Lin-in Rezanian
- Matt Saam

- Jim Stark
- Bruce Westby
- Jim Westerman
- Ray Wuolo

= present, E = excused, A = absent

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Council Chair Maloney called the regular meeting of the Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:15 p.m.

Agenda Approved

Agenda was reviewed and approved by consensus. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Information Items and Committee Work

Guiding regional plan updates – regional values, vision and goals; community designations; scenario planning; and water issues white papers

Emily Steinweg introduced the presentations with a high-level overview of how we intend to stay grounded in the 2022 MAWSAC workplan, highlighting the focus area goals which were shared with the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole (COW) and legislative bodies. She also lifted up the regional planning framework, highlighting a proposal to add a level of sub-regional chapters to assist with the grassroots, collaborative style we are implementing for the newest version of the Master Water Supply Plan.

Related handout: Updated MAWSAC TAC work plan

Emily then introduced guest presenters for the following areas, and asked committee members to capture their questions for presenters on the paper provided:

1. Presentation: Regional values, vision and goals

Michael Larson: He is leading the process to define regional values, vision and goals. This work helps set the tone and direction for what we want to achieve through regional planning and what success might look like. He included a showed a high-level vision process flowchart. A consistent use of language across policy plans is also a big part of this work – setting clear and consistent objectives, policies, and strategies to create accountability within the process. He invited the members to help his team articulate the issues they are encountering and noted that the 2022 MAWSAC report that TAC contributed has been a valuable resource for this work.

2. Presentation: Community designations

Lanya Ross for Raya Esmaeili: Raya was unable to attend the meeting, so Lanya presented for her and asked the committee to look for an email from Raya and her team with some questions to inform the community designation project.

The community designations project is part of the 2050 regional planning efforts. Community designations show groupings of communities in the region based on their similarities and differences and they help:

- Further regional policy outcomes
- Plan and implement regional policies at the local level
- Are the basis for land use policies and density expectations
- Help recognize diversity and commonality of communities in the region
- Guide growth in areas with urban infrastructure; and
- Protect agricultural land and natural amenities

Updating the community designations will result in a set of criteria for defining community designations; proposed community designation(s) for each jurisdiction; descriptions of each community designation; density expectations based on community designation; and a series of related maps.

The criteria for defining community designations is changing over time. The variables considered in the last round included: the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA); the percentage of developable land committed to urban uses; the age of the housing stock, which is a proxy for age of infrastructure and general development patterns; intersection density, which indicates connectivity, urban form, and accessibility; and the Long-term Wastewater Service Area.

The engagement process includes both external and internal partners. The team has been engaging with Council committees, particularly the Land Use Advisory Committee, which is the body to make the final recommendation on Community Designations.

The schedule is to complete work for Community Development Committee and Metropolitan Council adoption this winter.

3. Presentation: Scenario planning; and water issues white papers

Dan Marckel: Scenario planning is an effort leading into the update of the 2050 regional development guide and related policy and system plan, which will be adopted in 2024. The purpose of this work is to support more robust thinking and planning that acknowledges and explores some key uncertainties the region faces. For example, we do not know what telework will do to where people will live, and this is a large part of that uncertainty. Outcomes will include:

- Shared awareness and approach to regional issues.
- Identified risks and opportunities from regional uncertainties
- More nimble policies that anticipate a wider range of possible futures
- Incorporating issues like Water Supply from the start

He shared four phases of the work and noted that the team is moving into phase 2 – identifying impacts on regional issues and responsibility. So far, the work has involved Council technical staff, advisory committees, and volunteers.



He invited TAC to consider and advise on how four alternative futures would affect water supply and planning in the region during the small group discussions to follow.

4. Presentation: Water issues white papers

Judy Sventek: Met Council Environmental Services staff are working on a set of white papers which are intended to Provide policy makers with a summary of the current understanding of water issues, define the Council's role, and provide policy recommendations to address regional needs.

Developing these white papers allows us to evaluate proactively the issues of the region before we start drafting the policies. Judy shared a high-level timeline for the project and highlighted how feedback will be incorporated throughout the summer and fall to finalize this winter. The white papers are being written in three phases. Her team is finishing the first round of white papers and starting the second round. All are planned to be complete at the end of the year, and MAWSAC and TAC will have opportunities to review them.

They can then be used to support stakeholder engagement as the 2050 Water Resources Policy Plan is drafted. Seven topics are being explored:

- Water quality
- Wastewater concerns
- Water and climate
- Source water protection and vulnerable areas
- Rural concerns
- Water Availability
- Water reuse

In addition to MAWSAC and TAC, the Water Policy Advisory Group (WAG) are key advisors. Three TAC members are also on the WAG and are a good connection between TAC and the Council's policy work: Mark Maloney, Scott Anderson, and Bruce Westby.

Related handout: Water issues - white papers: Draft framing papers for water resource policy plan topics

5. Presentation: Approach to subregional engagement to update master water supply plan

Ali Elhassan and Lanya Ross: Ali began with a call to the committee to help chart a clear approach to regional water supply planning. He highlighted the need to balance and address different stakeholder perspectives and tensions about the Council's role to guide growth in areas with water supply challenges versus communities' authority to not limit growth due to local water supply challenges (water supply can be extended).

Lanya then introduced a proposed approach to updating the master water supply plan in a way that uses subregional water supply work groups to better reflect and support different local perspectives.

QUESTIONS

From Mentimeter for Michael Larson



Who approves the regional values and vision? He responded that the Council would approve the final product, after substantial engagement to develop the content.

From John Dustman

Commended presenters, noting that seeing all these topics together really re-engaged him with this work. He asked if the information can be shared more broadly – with legislators, for example? Jim Stark noted that legislators will be very different after the next election; this may be an opportunity to reach out to them early before the session and suggested a forum for new legislators before the session. Ali asked members about their interest in having MAWSAC and TAC connect with their metro legislators about water topics after the elections and before the session.

From Mark Maloney for Michael Larson and Dan Marckel

Highlighted his appreciation at hearing that water supply topic organically rose in discussions without being forced. Also stressed the question of how we get legislators to appreciate the importance of water supply.

From Mark Maloney for Ali Elhassan

Mark asked for more information about the connection between the water supply planning atlas and the master water supply plan – is it a specific part, just a reference, an appendix, or just referred to? Ali highlighted that is a standalone product but that it will be an important source of information to draw from for the master water supply plan, particularly the proposed subregional chapters. The atlas will be shared with TAC at a future meeting.

From Jim Stark for Ali Elhassan

Jim asked if the water supply planning atlas will be built on the county geologic atlas program? Ali noted that the water supply planning atlas will include information from the geologic atlases and several other sources.

From Ray Wuolo for Ali Elhassan

Will the water supply planning atlas be available in digital or other format? Ali said that the project team is looking at multiple formats. Currently, it is being drafted as a printable PDF.





BREAK

Small group discussion among committee and presenters (Lanya & Emily)

Emily gave an overview of the topics and the plan for the next segment. She expressed that the Project Managers will not be taking detailed notes to include in the meeting minutes; rather, they are capturing what they need to directly inform their work. Committee members will be asked to share highlights with the full group at the end of the small group discussions.

Large group report out: Highlights and TAC questions and requests for MAWSAC

Emily asked the small groups to think about and call-out the highlights to the day's conversations:

Scenarios:

- The practice of water supply planning can accommodate shifts, supports resiliency.
- How can we rely on water supply for all else that we have to do (water is critical)?
- While water supply may be resilient (ex: through interconnections, emergency planning), it may not be sustainable when it comes to growth. Consider groundwater contamination and limitations or increased costs to supply.

Subregional approach to water supply planning:

- Some investments are better shared with neighbors
- TAC identified barriers to a subregional approach, such as development pressures, autonomy/local control, competition between communities, not seeing interconnectedness across communities and water systems (natural and built)
- Supports a unified approach with a shared set of goals and approaches (due to similar geology, risks)
- Help prepare for uncertainties, collaboration Example: different types of commercial and industrial development in different subregions
- Can help with regional aquifers and risks, not just local (example: broader source water protection). Note that MDH is moving to more regional wellhead protection planning
- How to share information about overlapping plans so we all see the same things?

Regional values, vision:

6. Water is valued, but taken for granted
7. Values around surface water are more obvious, but groundwater is unseen
8. Should be more explicit value of water as an integrated resource
9. Need for more proactive identification of the value of water to the economy, recreation, and others (example: we are 9th in the nation for water technology businesses)
10. "Adopt and Aquifer" program
11. Maybe too much trust in water resource management programs in the past – assuming that water supply was taken care of
12. Cities should be able to implement comprehensive plans and meet their water needs
13. Water = driver of economic development
14. Climate change might have some positive impacts for water supplies

Government affairs and legislative update (Ali Elhassan, 651-602-1066; Sam Paske, 651-1015)

Ali asked for support from the members in order to get approval for the Clean Water Fund. A template will be provided for anyone interested in sending a letter of support to the Clean Water Council and legislators. This will support the very successful efficiency grant program and other work identified by MAWSAC and TAC.

Next Steps

- Exchange TAC and MAWSAC perspectives



- Committee member input for July 19, 2022 meeting
- Opportunities for further input on today's topics
- Volunteers to support CWC request – staff will provide examples of past letters of support

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee meeting of Month 00, 2022.

Approved this 00 day of Month 2022.

Council Contact:

Lanya Ross, Recording Secretary
Lanya.Ross@metc.state.mn.us

