



White Bear Lake Comprehensive Plan Update

Environment Committee





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Comprehensive Plan Legislation



The Minnesota legislature appropriated \$2 million in funding for the Metropolitan Council to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure communities in the White Bear Lake area have access to sufficient drinking water to allow for municipal growth while simultaneously ensuring the sustainability of surface and groundwater resources to supply the needs of future generations.

Work Group Members



The Metropolitan Council is establishing a work group consisting of:

- Commissioners or designees from the DNR, MDH, and MPCA
- Representatives from Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (MAWSAC), and St. Paul Regional Water Services.
- The communities of Stillwater, Mahtomedi, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Lino Lakes, North St. Paul, Oakdale, Vadnais Heights, Shoreview, Woodbury, New Brighton, White Bear Lake, White Bear Township, and North Oaks.

Background (1/3)



- **2012**
Lawsuit filed against the DNR claimed the DNR allowed communities and businesses in the White Bear Lake area to use too much groundwater.
- **2016**
The DNR established a protective elevation of 922.0 for White Bear Lake to recognize and balance the ecosystem benefits and negative recreational impacts of lake levels.

Background (2/3)



- **2017**

The District Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and imposed a number of restrictions and requirements on the DNR including:

1. Prohibited from issuing new groundwater appropriation permits and increases in existing groundwater appropriation permits within 5 miles of White Bear Lake.
2. Amend existing groundwater permits within a 5-mile radius of White Bear Lake with the following stipulations:
 - Residential irrigation ban when the water level of White Bear Lake drops below 923.5 feet.
 - All permittees to develop a plan to reduce residential per capita water to 75 gallons per day and total water use to 90 gallons per day.
 - Public water suppliers to develop a contingency plan to shift their source of water from groundwater to surface water.

Background (3/3)



- **2022**
 - DNR used its transient groundwater flow model to establish a collective annual withdrawal limit for White Bear Lake. This analysis determined that a reduction in water use of approximately 40% would be needed to maintain the protective lake elevation of 922.0.
 - DNR determined that applying this reduction would result in an allocation of 55 gallons per person per day, at current population levels...basically enough for domestic water use only. All other lower priority water uses for agriculture production, commercial, industrial and institutional purposes would need to be curtailed.

Comprehensive Plan Objectives (1/4)

1. Evaluate methods for conserving and recharging groundwater in the area, including:

- Converting water supplies that are groundwater dependent to total or partial supplies from surface water sources;
- Reusing water, including water discharged from contaminated wells;
- Projects designed to increase groundwater recharge; and
- Other methods for reducing groundwater use;



Comprehensive Plan Objectives (2/4)

2. Determine which existing groundwater supply wells, if converted to surface water sources, would be the most effective and efficient in ensuring future water sustainability in the area;

3. Identify a long-term plan for converting groundwater supply wells identified in clause 2 to surface water sources

Comprehensive Plan Objectives (3/4)

4. Include any policy and funding recommendations for converting groundwater supply wells to surface water sources, treating and reusing wastewater, and any other recommendations for additional measures that reduce groundwater use, promote water reuse, and increase groundwater recharge;



Comprehensive Plan Objectives (4/4)

5. Include any policy and funding recommendations for local wastewater treatment and recharge; and

6. Submit plan to the chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representative and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources finance and policy by June 30, 2027.



Previous Regional Water Supply Studies/Tools

Feasibility Assessment of Approaches to Water Sustainability in the Northeast Metro – Metropolitan Council, December 2014

Report to the Minnesota State Legislature: Concept Cost Report for Augmentation of White Bear Lake with Surface Water – DNR, February 2016

Regional Groundwater Recharge and Stormwater Capture and Reuse Study – North and East Metro Study Area – Metropolitan Council, May 2016

Minnesota's PFAS Blueprint – MPCA, February 2021

Conceptual Drinking Water Supply Plan for PFAS in the East Metro Area – MPCA, August 2021

Reuse of Stormwater and Rainwater in Minnesota – MDH, January 2022

Groundwater Modeling Analysis for White Bear Lake Court Case – DNR, June 2022

Next Steps – Preliminary Schedule

| Milestone | Date |
|--|-----------------------|
| Schedule and hold one-on-one meetings with each of the group members | Completed |
| Award up to two consultant contracts for communications support | Nov.-Dec. 2023 |
| Work Group kickoff meeting | Jan. 2024 |
| Monthly Work Group meetings for introductions, initial scope development, and drafting of consultant RFPs for technical and financial work | Feb.-March 2024 |
| Award consultant contracts for technical and financial analysis work | June 2024 |
| Quarterly Work Group meetings and plan development | July 2024 – Dec. 2026 |
| Submit final Metropolitan Council adopted plan to the House of Representatives, Senate committees, and divisions with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources finance and policy | June 30, 2027 |

Questions

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