

Minutes

Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Steet

Members Present:

- Chair, Scott Anderson
- John Dustman
- Robert Ellis
- Dale Folen

- Elizabeth Kaufenberg
- Kim Larsen
- Matt Saam
- Jim Stark

- Jim Westerman
- Ray Wuolo
- = present

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Anderson called the regular meeting of the Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee to order at 12:07 p.m.

Agenda Approved

Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Folen, seconded by Stark to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2023, regular meeting of the Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Information Items and Committee Work

1. Committee Administration (Greg Johnson 651-602-1016)

It is anticipated that new MAWSAC members will be appointed by the Governor before their November 14, 2023, meeting. MAWSAC will then form a subcommittee to fill TAC vacancies. A short special meeting of MAWSAC may be called to appoint the new TAC members and present a draft of portions of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Plan (MWSP) for review before the January joint meeting.

For the three project update handouts, timelines for questions and feedback vary based on the project. Please reach out to the listed staff for additional information.

2. Water Demand Projections (Greg Johnson 651-602-1016)

Discussion of the proposed water demand projection centered on the following:

- Anderson noted that he likes what is proposed for the lower limit range and asked what increased risk might exist in showing a lower limit that is lower than the actual usage. No concerns were raised.
- Westerman asked about concerns using the 55 GPCD in the private residential wells projection equation as too low. Johnson explained the source of that number and agreed to review it further.
- Ellis asked about the quality of private well usage data. Johnson summarized the data sources available.

- TAC members discussed possible benefits of calculating the four different development scenarios for the water projection. Staff noted it is useful as a planning tool to think about uncertainty in the future, how the development scenarios could affect the populations being served by either ground water and surface water sources, and to highlight the factors that affect the demand projections. TAC asked for clarification on how each scenario would be used in practice.
- TAC was polled on their support of the water demand projection approach. A majority of the group supported it with two members expressing the following reservations:
 - Development driving the water demand
 - The use of 55 GPCD in the private residential wells projection equation

Sventek asked whether TAC could support the overall approach (with the +/- 20% ranges), with the understanding additional investigation would occur into the water use assumptions and the private well components. It was noted that approach makes sense region-wide, but each city is going to use their own methods of projection that make sense for their individual circumstances. Westerman noted that this approach may benefit communities that don't have the resources to look at it individually. Johnson noted the intent to present the water demand projection methodology at the Feb. 29th workshop with subregions and that preliminary forecasts should be released when most or all the missing community water usage data have been updated in MPARS by the DNR (estimated to be sometime this fall according to the DNR).

3. Water Policy Plan and Metro Area Water Supply Plan (Jen Kostrzewski 651-602-1078 and Lanya Ross 651-602-1803)

Ellis asked if closer integration of the MWSP into the Water Policy Plan would change or create new pathways for the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), watershed management organizations, or others to take larger roles in water supply planning, for which cities are better positioned. He noted that if the MWSP is in the Water Policy Plan when it goes out for review that commenting would be more open to those groups than to input received through MAWSAC/TAC. Kostrzewski responded that MAWSAC has final approval authority over any changes proposed to the MWSP. Sventek summarized the process for public comments.

The committee participated in an activity to provide thoughts and feedback on the Water Policy Plan objectives.

Comments that apply to all objectives:

- Back the objectives up with metrics that show success (2x)
- Objectives 1 and 5 are very broad; it feels like everything else fits under these
- Objectives 3 and 6 are possibly in conflict
- Policies need to help clarify what the objectives mean
- Objectives should be six or less

Comments on Objective 1 (Ensure sustainable waters for current and future generations)

- There are multiple facets in this: quality, quantity, and ecosystem health
- There is a firm definition of "sustainable" in state statute, so tie back to that
- Understand what we mean by "ensure"
- Objectives 1 is very broad. It feels like everything else fits under this (similar to Objective 5)

Comments on Objective 2 (Reduce climate impacts on water sources and infrastructure)



- Does this mean resilience, or is it more than that?
- Are we really talking about being resilient to climate impacts?
- Assumes climate change impacts are only negative (what about potential for increased precipitation to offset growing water demand?)
- Make this positively framed as “enhance resilience” or something like that

Comments on Objective 3 (Maximize current regional and local water investments and identify future opportunities)

- Consider removing “local”; focus on supporting statewide and regional investments
- Say “optimize” investments, not “maximize”

Comments on Objective 4 (Sustainably fund regional water protection and planning efforts)

- Very supportive of this objective
- This is important and good
- What do we mean by sustainable funding?
- Alternative wording offered: “create sustainable funding”

Comments on Objective 5 (Protect public and ecosystem health across the region)

- May need to split #5 into public health and ecosystem health, because public health and ecosystem health are very different. Public health is inherent in what water suppliers are doing – where does it fit into what we are doing and what role does Met Council have?
- Objectives 5 is very broad. It feels like everything else fits under this (similar to Objective 1)

Comments on Objective 6 (Ensure equitable water access and affordability throughout the region.)

- Value of water
- Surface water versus groundwater quality/treatment
- Concerns that strategies under this could lead to a “fiscal disparities: model
- Do we need to include affordability if it is a part of the definition of “equitable” used in the plan?
- When thinking about affordability, consider that the cost of water is really affordable but it’s not perceived that way
- Switching to surface water from groundwater as it relates to White Bear Lake touches on equity and affordability; implications for related policy/actions

4. Metro Area Water Supply Plan Update (Lanya Ross 651-602-1803)

Stark noted for the figure illustrating water system interactions in the region that nothing is explicitly identified about threats or vulnerabilities or how regulated and non-regulated concerns affect water planning (i.e., PFAS or other contaminants). Ross noted that a lot of those concerns are encompassed in the Landscapes element.

The TAC participated in a sticky-dot activity where they rated their reaction to the proposed metrics and discussed those metrics that sparked the widest range of responses. Proposed metrics reflected previous discussions with MAWSAC, TAC, and the March 15 subregional workshop, organized in a matrix of water supply system components and MAWSAC-recommended action steps (Table 1).



Table 1. Proposed metrics organized by water supply system components and MAWSAC-recommended action steps.

	Collaborate and build capacity	Assess the region's water supplies	Evaluate hazards and risks	Evaluate mitigation measures
Climate	3 votes in support for: Subregional work group activity Technical assistance for local planners	1 vote in support and 2 votes for concern/needs discussion: Minneapolis/St. Paul climate tracking	5 votes in support for: Drought monitor River monitor	2 votes in support for: Community awareness of drought and flood conditions Local controls for water conservation Mutual aid agreements and interconnections Tree canopy
Landscapes and sources	3 votes in support for: Subregional work group activity Technical assistance for local planners	1 vote for concern/needs discussion: Land use and associated contaminants # of building permits Groundwater quality Surface water quality Sustainable limit of sources Recharge estimates Groundwater levels	3 votes in support for: Land use change that increases contaminants in DWMSAs Widespread groundwater declines and near sensitive resources Well interference, conflicts Emerging sw & gw quality issues, trends Increased # priority waters on the impaired waters list Impervious surfaces limit recharge, increase runoff	1 vote in support for: Local controls for source water protection and conservation Source water protection BMP grants in metro DWMSAs Acres and practices in the Agricultural Preserves program Contaminant site cleanup thru Tax Base Revitalization Account
Local water supply infrastructure	2 votes for concern/needs discussion: Number of community rate payer assistance programs Customer confidence and satisfaction Interconnections and mutual aid agreements	1 vote in support for, 1 vote for concern/needs discussion, and 1 vote against: Firm capacity of existing infrastructure Miles of pipe installed/replaced Current treatment in place	1 vote in support for and 2 votes for concern/needs discussion: Firm capacity versus future demand PWS water quality violations Age of infrastructure Unused wells in DWMSAs	2 votes for concern/needs discussion: Interconnections and mutual aid agreements Funding awarded for treatment, addressing lead Reuse infrastructure Number of unused wells sealed



	Collaborate and build capacity	Assess the region's water supplies	Evaluate hazards and risks	Evaluate mitigation measures
	Number of licensed water operators Subregional work group activity Technical assistance for local planners	Number public and private wells drilled		
Water users	No votes about: Customer confidence and satisfaction (Survey?) Number of licensed water operators Subregional work group activity Technical assistance for local planners	3 votes in support for and 1 vote for concern/needs discussion: Residential, industrial, business use (current and future) Total Per capita water use Total water use of gw versus sw sources Water rates	1 vote for concern/needs discussion: Well interference Ratio of indoor versus outdoor water use or max day pumping Use compared to capacity and to estimated sustainable limits	2 votes in support for and 1 vote for concern/needs discussion: Water efficiency grants/activities funded Local controls for water conservation Setting and tracking progress against regional goal
Local wastewater infrastructure	No votes about: Number of licensed wastewater operators Subregional work group activity Technical assistance for local planners	3 votes in support for and 1 vote for concern/needs discussion: I & I estimates	2 votes in support for: Wastewater spills; actions leading to MPCA permit enforcement	2 votes in support for and 1 vote for concern/needs discussion: Funding awarded for treatment
Regional waste water infrastructure	2 votes in support for: Task forces established with local stakeholders Subregional work group activity Technical assistance for local planners	1 vote in support for: Volume of water treated at regional facilities Regional system condition	1 vote in support for: Wastewater spills; actions leading to MPCA permit enforcement	1 vote in support for, 1 vote for concern/needs discussion, and 1 vote against: Volume of water recharging groundwater (MCES data)

The most supported metrics were those associated with evaluating hazards and risks from climate.

The metrics that caused the most concern were related to assessing local water supply infrastructure and to the volume of reclaimed wastewater recharging groundwater.

There were no opinions expressed for the metrics related to collaboration and capacity building for local wastewater infrastructure or for collaboration and capacity building regarding water users.

Discussion focused on metrics for local water supply infrastructure, water users, and regional wastewater infrastructure. Highlights included:

Local water supply infrastructure metric discussion:

Multiple members expressed concern about proposed metrics exposing sensitive information



about local water supply systems. TAC members were more comfortable with these metrics if they are reported as a regional aggregate and local details remain anonymous.

A TAC member noted that, in their experience, no community had rate assistance for water bills, and it was unclear from where this metric had come. This metric should not be included.

Multiple members suggested that the number of licensed water operators was not a good metric to understand the future availability of workers; no alternative was proposed. Staff mentioned that lack of water operators could be more appropriate under the *Evaluate Risks and Hazards* category.

A TAC member noted that firm capacity is not a good metric, as it is frequently changing. Consider design firm capacity instead. Communication about this metric would also need more detail/qualifiers to be interpreted appropriately.

A TAC member recommended changing the metric on infrastructure age to the existence/implementation of asset management plans and/or emergency response plans, noting that old infrastructure that is well maintained may be performing better than new that is not. Age is just one factor driving the remaining life of an asset.

A TAC member requested that PWS water quality violations not be promoted – they are best published in the impacted city, but we want to avoid eroding trust in water utilities.

A TAC member suggested a metric focused on CECs or spills to illustrate/track hazards and risks to local water supply infrastructure.

A TAC member noted that tracking the number of interconnects might not communicate about risk mitigation for local water supply infrastructure, because there are various reasons that they exist. There are also data sensitivity concerns with reporting this information on a community-by-community basis.

Water users metric discussion:

Members expressed concern that tracking progress against a regional average per person water use goal (such as 90 gallons per person per day) would lead to community shaming.

Regional wastewater infrastructure metric discussion:

Members were confused if this metric if related only to wastewater or had a larger reach.

A TAC member noted that it is doubtful that we can get data about the volume of water recharging groundwater in a way that makes it more than a one-off metric. Currently, MCES only has information about the East Bethel facility.

5. Subregional Engagement for Metro Area Water Supply Plan (Jen Kader 651-602-1114)

This update was provided so that when TAC members see the invitations come through for subregional engagement in their areas they will have background.

6. Water Resources Manager's update (Judy Sventek 651-602-1156)

Still waiting to hear about the MAWSAC appointments from the Governor's office and once they come through how MAWSAC will come together to fill TAC vacancies.

7. Chair update (Scott Anderson 952-563-4867)

Drought Task Force meetings: There is a need to update that plan. Inconsistencies presented themselves as drought conditions varied across the state and these could create confusion with the public. Will be addressing the question of how to navigate the management and protection of the supply in a way that's most effective.

Thank you for attending and providing your input.



Meeting check-in:

- Anderson noted that meetings are a heavy informational load with a lot of information coming in a short time and then on to the next thing.
- The TAC is amenable to reviewing things in advance as homework, with adequate warning, but also likes this forum to hear from others and discuss the information.
- Highland Water Tower in St. Paul is open for tours this weekend.

Next Steps

1. Share TAC input with MAWSAC at MAWSAC's November meeting
2. TAC is invited to share advice on policy research papers, as they become available: <https://metro council.org/Wastewater-Water/Planning/2050-Water-Resources-Policy-Plan/Research.aspx>
3. TAC helps to promote upcoming subregional water supply work group events
4. Next TAC meeting: January 9, 2024 (joint meeting with MAWSAC) – recap 2023 and plan for 2024-2025

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 3:00 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, 2023.

Approved this 00 day of Month 2023.

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