

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA WATER SUPPLY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Committee Members Present:

Mark Maloney (Chair), Scott Anderson, Kristin Asher, John Dustman, Robert Ellis, Dale Folen, Lin-in Rezania, Jim Stark, and Bruce Westby.

Committee Members Absent:

Crystal Ng, Matt Saam, Jamie Wallerstedt, Jim Westerman, and Ray Wuolo

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Maloney 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, August 17, 2021.

Chair Maloney 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. 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 June 15, 2021, Metropolitan Area Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee Meeting were approved

INFORMATION

1. Information Item: Recommendations and local perspectives – groundwater-surface water interaction

Staff gave a presentation on the following:

- Draft problem statement and recommended actions
- Regional information: Modeling climate change and infiltration, updating the Council's Priority Waters List Project, and research to understand groundwater-surface water connections and associated impacts for better planning and management
- Process and next steps to develop a statutorily required 2022 report from MAWSAC to the Council and MN Legislature

As part of the presentation, Robert Ellis, Committee Member from the City of Eden Prairie and Mark Maloney, TAC Chair from the City of Shoreview, briefly shared their local experiences related to this topic.

Committee members shared the following questions and considerations following the presentation:

Committee Member Anderson asked MCES Staff Member Emily Resseger to provide more detail about the approach to prioritization for the Priority Waters List (PWL) update. He recognizes that the PWL is an internal prioritization tool, but would like to know if other water agencies such as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) are aware of these efforts and if they have provided any input? Has the potential of inadvertently creating disparities based on the prioritization framework been addressed? Resseger responded that the state agencies are aware of the project. The project team is developing outreach materials that will walk stakeholders and partners through the whole process and will be available in the next month or so. The project team has begun addressing equity, which usually tends to revolve around considering where water is located relative to certain communities. She acknowledged that equity considerations are broader than these specific parameters and welcomed Committee Members to review the product and provide comments on this and any other areas there is room for improvement.

Committee Member Anderson then asked how the PWL might intertwine with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)? Resseger stated that they are complementary. The PWL focuses on how waters are used by and benefit the region, with less focus on the current quality of those waters, which is addressed via TMDLs. The PWL team recognizes that the way we use waters doesn't always align with their current quality and the PWL is a tool that could be used alongside TMDLs to consider how to distribute resources such as staff time, grants, monitoring capacity, etc. The PWL team recognizes that both state and watershed partners are focused on waters defined as impaired by TMDLs. The PWL adds another perspective to direct limited resources based on use.

Chair Maloney asked MCES Staff Member John Clark how this work might inform the wellhead protection efforts already underway and if will add value to Wellhead Protection Plans (WHPPs)? Clark stated that we see it as a complimentary effort. **Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA)** focuses on areas where there are likely impacts (from pumping, etc.), if there is an implied connection. This effort won't change anything about vulnerability in DWSMAs but will inform efforts such as WHPPs by helping to clarify the conceptual model for interaction.

Committee Member Asher stated that the City of Richfield completed Part 2 of the WHPP and areas of groundwater – surface water interaction and two superfund sites (considered areas of high vulnerability) were identified. Residents often express concern when notified of their proximity to a superfund site. The City of Richfield has questions about what to do with information about the close connection between surface water and groundwater. Guidance on how to use this information to make decisions and communicate with residents as a component of this project would be helpful. The City of Roseville also recognizes the need to expand integration of the one water approach.

Clark stated that the project looked at what data is needed describe an impact, which can be a lot of different things. DWSMA information was included as part of the data about where impacts are likely. There is a critical need to build understanding that in these areas surface waters are connected to the groundwater system. This is implied by the DWMA, but by highlighting this information, we can begin to focus resources on these critically important locations whenever possible.

2. Information Item: Recommendations – Mural Group Exercise
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.

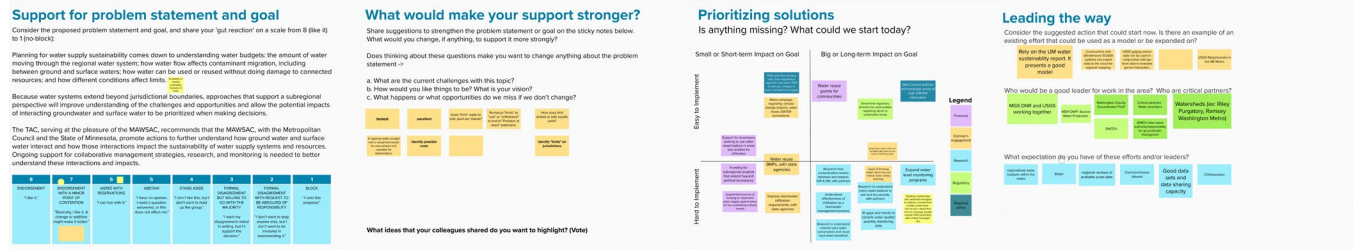


Figure 1. Illustration of the Mural activity.

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. Ten committee members participated, and four committee members endorsed, four committee members endorsed with a minor point of contention, and two committee members agreed with reservations.

Committee members shared their suggestions to strengthen their support for the draft problem statement and then flagged suggestions for prioritization, as follow:

- No votes were placed on the comment: Does “limit” relate to safe yield per statute?
- One vote was placed on the comment: Revise “limits” to “use” or “withdrawal” at the end of “Problem or Need” statement
- No votes were placed on the comment: How does limit related to safe aquifer yield?
- No votes were placed on the comment: A regional water budget with a visual tool would be educational and valuable for stakeholders.
- No votes were placed on the comment: Identify possible costs
- No votes were placed on the comment: Identify “limits” on jurisdictions

Discussion

- Discussion ensued around the meaning of the term “limits”, which means different things in different contexts (such as regulatory conditions for local water utilities and permit holders). Committee members expressed support for the draft problem statement if the word “limits” is replaced with a term such as safe withdrawal, sustainable use, availability, or available volume.
- Committee Member Anderson indicated his general support for the problem statement and goal. However, current methodology and water environment are focused on the autonomy of water systems and water supplies. What would it mean If we moved to a more regional approach? It seems like the best option to address issues that transcend jurisdictional boundaries, but how will DWSMAs, vulnerabilities, and other aspects of providing water be impacted? Committee Member Anderson recognized that this may be coming in the future and he is unsure how it will evolve.
- Chair Maloney and Committee Member Asher stated that relationship building with other communities can be challenging. Both Richfield and Shoreview have DWSMAs that lie partially outside of their jurisdictional boundaries. Committee Member Asher stated that Richfield has faced the challenge of working with Minneapolis to address contaminated sites that lie within Richfield’s DWSMA but within the borders of Minneapolis. How can communities communicate and provide a unified message regarding the need to protect water resources with people outside of their jurisdictions?

Committee members reviewed the proposed actions described in the posted meeting materials and shared on the Mural board and added their input, with results as follow:

In no particular order:

- Support for developers seeking to use water reuse/capture in areas less suitable for infiltration
- Funding for subregional projects that extend beyond political boundaries
- Augmented sources of funding to implement water supply system plans for low probability/unlikely events
- Metro campaign regarding:
 - climate change impacts
 - water reuse
 - GW/SW connections
- Water reuse Best Management Practices (BMPs) with state agencies
- Improve stormwater infiltration requirements with state agencies
- Research how contamination moves between and impacts GW & SW with partners
- Research to understand effectiveness of infiltration as a stormwater management practice
- Research to understand the impacts of past water conservation and reuse
- Streamline regulatory direction to communities regarding stormwater and wastewater reuse
- Ensure Metropolitan Council policies acknowledge areas of high GW/SW interaction

Organized according to ease of implementation and potential impact:

- Relatively easy to implement with more immediate, smaller scale impact:
 - Public Water Suppliers (PWS) should prioritize working with state regulatory agencies and other PWS to discuss changes in water demand and supply
- Relatively easy to implement with longer-term, more significant impact:
 - Water reuse grants for communities
 - Reference the MN Department of Health/University of MN Report on the Future of Drinking Water and put the contents to use for the benefit of the region
- Relatively hard to implement with longer-term or larger impact:
 - Implement holistic water safety planning, as defined in the Future of Drinking Water Report.
 - Conduct research with partners to understand the metro water balance in wet and dry periods
 - Identify gaps and needs to compile water quality/quantity monitoring data
 - Expand water level monitoring programs
 - Establish best practices for building relationships with wellhead managers to address contaminants outside of PWS jurisdiction. Develop a guide for reaching people outside PWS jurisdiction with a unified message. (Recommended by two Committee Members)
- The following were suggested as existing efforts that could be used as a model/expanded upon for a more complete understanding of surface water/groundwater interaction:
 - University of Minnesota Water Sustainability Report
 - Communities with Wonderware Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) industrial control systems where data is exported to the cloud and used for regional mapping.
 - United States Geological Survey (USGS) gauging station data used in conjunction with groundwater level data to evaluate groundwater-surface water interaction
 - USGS reports and work in the Northeast Metro
- The following were suggested as potential leaders and critical partners in these efforts:
 - Minnesota Geological Society
 - Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
 - USGS
 - Minnesota Department of Health (both drinking water and source water protection sections)
 - Washington County (specifically with their groundwater plans)
 - Soil & Water Conservation Districts

- Water Suppliers
- Watershed Management Organizations (specifically those that have some authority/responsibility for groundwater management)
- Watershed Districts
- The following comments were shared when asked what success would look like:
 - Water budgets would be regionalized within the metro
 - Available SCADA data would be reviewed using a regional perspective
 - There would be a common/shared dataset
 - There would be a strong impetus to share quality data for the benefit of the region
 - Collaboration would be expected

3. Legislative Update

MCES staff member Ali Elhassan gave an update on legislative developments as follows:

In June, the [Clean Water Fund appropriations were finalized](#) and passed/approved.

The total Clean Water Fund appropriation for 2022 was \$126,711,00 in SFY2022 and \$130,081,000 in SFY2023. Metropolitan Council was appropriated \$1,544,000 in SFY2022 and \$1,544,000 in SFY2023 (1.2% of the total CWF appropriation). Art. 2, Sec. 8. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL:

- \$919,000 the first year and \$919,000 the second year are to implement projects that address emerging threats to the drinking water supply, provide cost-effective regional solutions, leverage interjurisdictional coordination, support local implementation of water supply reliability projects, and prevent degradation of groundwater resources in the metropolitan area. These projects must provide communities with:
 - potential solutions to leverage regional water use by using surface water, storm water, wastewater, and groundwater;
 - an analysis of infrastructure requirements for different alternatives;
 - development of planning-level cost estimates, including capital costs and operating costs;
 - identification of funding mechanisms and an equitable cost-sharing structure for regionally beneficial water supply development projects; and
 - development of subregional groundwater models.
- \$625,000 the first year and \$625,000 the second year are for the water demand reduction grant program to encourage municipalities in the metropolitan area to implement measures to reduce water demand to ensure the reliability and protection of drinking water supplies.

4. State Drought Task Force:

MCES staff member Ali Elhassan gave an update on legislative developments as follows:

The State Drought Task Force has been convened by the DNR for information sharing, coordination, and planning during the current drought. The Metropolitan Council is a member and attends meetings.

Current Drought Status for MN Link: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?MN>

Most of state is in extreme or severe drought. Highlights from the last few meetings include:

- MnDOT and some Native American communities are ending prescribed burning
- The DNR is prepping for a more active wildfire season
- The DNR has received more well interference complaints. Some wellfields have been drying out (mostly private well owners)
- The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is looking into farmers relief
- The Pollution Control Agency (PCA) is suspending monitoring activities due to low flow
- The Met Council has begun aeration of wastewater effluent due to low flow in rivers

One point of tension is that some municipalities have called out that drought conditions are based on surface water levels, but many communities use ground water as their drinking water source. None of the drought triggers are based on groundwater levels. The DNR's solution is to reduce everyone's water use to January levels.

The next meeting of the Drought Task Force is Thursday, August 20.

Next steps

- TAC perspectives will be shared with MAWSAC
- TAC input will be used to begin drafting MAWSAC's report
- The next TAC meeting will focus on groundwater-surface water interaction

Remote Meetings Update

Staff stated that Metropolitan Council Chair Zelle's Office sent a memo earlier today indicating the following:

The Council and its committees, advisory committees, and work groups will hold their meetings by telephone or other electronic means through at least October 31, 2021. Those meetings will be conducted in accordance with Minnesota Statutes section 13D.021. The public will continue to be notified of upcoming meetings through the Council's website. To the extent practical, the Council will endeavor to allow the public to monitor the meetings electronically from a remote location.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Jinger Pulkrabek
Recording Secretary