

# Water Resource Policy Plan Advisory Group

March 8, 2022 | 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. | Teams / virtual

## ATTENDANCE

Members: Scott Anderson, Phil Belfiori, Becky Christopher, Bryan Dodds, Bruce Elder, Charles Howley, Mark Maloney, Russ Matthys, Vanessa Strong

Council staff & guests: Kyle Colvin, Jen Kostrzewski, Lanya Ross (guest), Judy Sventek, Tessa Wegenke

## LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

Jen Kostrzewski gave an overview of the levels of engagement of which team members may be asked to partake. The engagement can be throughout this spectrum of participation, in addition to development of water plans. She noted that ThriveMSP is guide for the region and trickles down to the various areas that Met Council touches, including the work which this group is undertaking.

The team did a brief ice-breaker exercise to gauge the level of energy and general feeling of the group.

## COUNCIL UPDATES

### Wastewater Legislative Update

There are two bills which have been introduced to the Minnesota Legislature (Legislature) that may impact Infiltration and Inflow (I/I) mitigation work, with additional infrastructure funding conversations ongoing. One bill expands the ability for the Metropolitan Council (Council) to use revenues for private property I/I work, and was recently signed into law. A taskforce is to be formed, with many of the members from this advisory group likely to be asked to join (Fall 2022).

### Climate Resiliency

The Council submitted a \$5m request to the Supplemental General Fund appropriation to the Governor's Office; this request is to create a web-based planning tool for use by metro area communities and watersheds to protect local infrastructure from extreme weather events. Governor Walz has included this request on his General Fund recommendations list. This project will help guide local government funding regarding design decisions to minimize future [costly] repair of under-designed infrastructure, and to target investments in areas that are at risk from hotter temperatures, severe storms, increased drought, and flooding. This will also focus on roads, bridges, bike paths, housing, and internet. There has been one hearing in the Senate; we are forming a small group to inform the finer details of how this funding will be used.

[Link to Mapping Infrastructure Climate Risk and Resiliency Opportunities](#)

### MAWSAC/TAC Delivers

Lanya Ross, environmental analyst, Water Supply Planning, noted a report was recently published by the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (MAWSAC) and endorsed by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). This is a report from the advisory committee to the legislature, which was presented to the Council in February. They have also been invited to present on the report to the Subcommittee on MN Water Policy. The report has water supply related goals, actions, projects, and information within the figures and data, all of which may be helpful to support conversations around water supply planning.

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- [Full report](#)
- [Summary report](#)

## POLICY OVERVIEW

Judy gave an overview of the previous work and policies to ground us for the conversation today:

- **Levels of Council Water Planning**
- **Current Planning Framework**  
She noted that the graphic (see slides) is to show how the plans are connected – and where requirements are found in the 2040 Framework.
- **2050 Water Resource Policy Plan Draft Content**  
As we noted in the 2040 Framework, the WRPP has multiple inputs from the MDG, our engagement efforts, and our previous policies. All of this combined creates the 2050 WRPP. Today we will be focusing on the new issue areas and the carry over policies. At later meetings we will share about the Vision, Outcomes, Forecasts, MWSP, and Wastewater System Plan.
- **2040 WRPP Policies**  
[Link to Appendix D - Summary of Policies and Implementation Strategies](#)

### Water Resources

- **The Watershed Approach:** The Council will work with our partners to develop and implement a regional watershed-based approach that addresses both watershed restoration and protection.
- **Assessing & Protecting Water Resources:** The Council will continue to assess the condition of the region's lakes, rivers, streams, and aquifers to evaluate impacts on regional water resources and measure success in achieving regional water goals.

### Water Supply

- **Sustainable Water Supplies:** While recognizing local control and responsibility for owning, operating, and maintaining water supply systems, the Council will work with our partners to develop plans that meet regional needs for a reliable water supply that protects public health, critical habitat and water resources over the long-term.

### Wastewater

- **Wastewater Sustainability Policy:** The Council will provide efficient, high-quality, and environmentally sustainable regional wastewater infrastructure and services. The Council shall conduct its regional wastewater system operations in a sustainable manner as is economically feasible.
- **Inflow and Infiltration Policy:** The Council will not provide additional capacity within its interceptor system to serve excessive inflow and infiltration. The Council will establish I/I goals for all communities discharging wastewater to the regional wastewater system. Communities that have excessive I/I in their sanitary sewer systems will be required to eliminate the excessive I/I within a reasonable time period.

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- **Wastewater System Finance Policy:** The Council will continue to implement regional wastewater service fees and charges based on regional cost of services and rules adopted by the Council.
- **Private Wastewater Systems:** Communities that permit the construction and operation of subsurface sewage treatment systems and other private wastewater treatment systems within their communities are responsible for ensuring that these systems are installed, maintained, managed, and regulated consistent with MPCA rules. The Council will not provide financial support to assist communities if these systems fail.

## All Water

- **Serving the Rural Area:** The Council will acquire wastewater treatment plants owned by Rural Centers, based upon their request through the comprehensive plan and comprehensive sewer plan processes, and based upon criteria that ensure direct identifiable regional benefits, after soliciting customer input and conducting a public hearing on the request.
- **Serving the Urban Area:** The Council will plan for sustainable water resources that protect public health, provide recreational opportunities, maintain habitat and ecosystem health, and ensure that supplies of potable water are sufficient for the orderly and economical development and redevelopment of the metro area long into the future.
- **Investment Policy (Amended):** The Council will strive to maximize regional benefits from regional investments.
- **Water Conservation and Reuse (Amended):** The Council will work with our partners to identify emerging issues and challenges for the region as we work together on solutions that include the use of water conservation, wastewater, stormwater reuse, and low-impact development practices in order to promote a more sustainable region.

## MURAL EXERCISE

The team did a Mural exercise focused on the question: *Do these policies and new issue areas encompass the regional needs for water policies?*

- Water Availability, Access & Use
  - Watershed Approach
  - Assessing Protecting Water Resources
- Water Quality
- Source Water Protection
  - Sustainable Water Supplies
- Rural Water Concerns
  - Wastewater (WW) System Finance
  - Private WW Systems
  - WW Sustainability
  - Inflow / Infiltration
- WW Concerns

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- Conservation & Reuse
- Investment Policy
- Serving the Urban Area
- Ag & Rural Water Policies

Additional questions were asked to the team members:

- Does this encompass the regional needs for water policies?
  - WR- Clarify overlap btw PCA, BWSR, DNR
  - Duplication of monitoring efforts
- Are we missing any topic areas?
  - Chlorides (and winterizing chemicals); how would our plan cover or assist with this?\*
  - How do we include climate in the policy; should it be called out, or imbedded in policies?
  - Conflicting goals: stormwater BMP & Chlorides -- "where practical" might not be enough for water supplies
  - Where do we fall on our watershed approach? (clarify where we stand)
  - How do you prioritize conflicting policies?\*
  - Rural areas need to be more thoroughly addressed in the plan
- Should we modify existing policy areas?
  - What are our intentions in LID... large lots? that's not necessarily the best approach. Be thoughtful.
  - Water quantity & Flood Control
  - Water body health (criteria beyond water quality)
  - AIS (water quality)

\* denotes a thumbs up from team members to demonstrate more support / concurrence

The discussion within the Mural exercise and the bulleted lists is below:

Scott Anderson: Yes, these do meet the regional needs for water policy and strategies for reuse, technical assistance and things of that nature. Surface water and water resources, and their overlap, is where there are more questions especially in regard to consistent direction.

- Monitoring & duplication of efforts: Met Council works very closely with partners to ensure we are “filling in the gaps” in regard to monitoring, rather than duplicating efforts. The DNR monitors from quantity and provide us with some of that information.
- MS4 Permit: we do not want to duplicate efforts – we are going to look at this further to see if there are ways we can make simplify and make clearer this process.

Mark Maloney: Call out of Chloride; how is this plan going to help?

- We do have it within the Water Quality segment, we do have Nitrates, Chlorides and PFAs as constituents of concern for this round of planning. We do have some taskforce working specifically on Chlorides, and how we can potentially fit the work into our recommendations.

Becky Christopher: How does Climate Resiliency fit into the plan.

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- We are considering how to fit this in, whether by embedding a climate section within each policy area (as climate will affect policy), or having climate specifically called out as policies.
- Climate is one of the topic areas being discussed with the regional development guide update, as well as a Topic of Concern. It will show up in these plans somewhere in a way that makes sense.

Vanessa Strong: What do you do when you encounter a conflict between policies, and how do you prioritize which is more important, and how do we work through these issues? The segment on rural surface water resources, it could be more robust. Another consideration is the plans for low-impact development.

- Rural water quality is a topic we do want to explore more. Keep these conversations and ideas in mind as we work toward developing our white papers, more specifically the Rural Water Concerns.

Scott Anderson: Echoing sentiments of colleagues with regard to conflicting goals, chloride issue specifically on the policy of water conservation and reuse (e.g. implementation strategy on promoting water supply resiliency through the use of stormwater management best practices). He is looking for more guidance than just “where practical.”

Charlie Howley: Noticed that Appendix D is heavily weighted in wastewater (due to Met Council’s role in this area). Why is the organization which is controlling this policy planning project, and has no jurisdiction over other areas, is creating this document?

- In the beginning of the policy plan we do talk about the Met Council authorities: we do have water supply planning. We work with our partners to do this within the structure in which all have to work; there is room for improvement.

Additional thoughts/areas of concern: rural area(s), water quantity and flood control, and winterizing chemicals.

## Regroup/Share back

### 2050 PLAN

There was a discussion regarding how the 2050 Plan should be formatted in order to best serve the team members’ needs, based upon the different formatting of the 2030 and 2040 Plans. The team thought that although the 2040 plan, which had Policy areas followed by strategies segmented by sector, and then plan requirements and appendices, there could be a better way to make the information better organized. It was suggested that a more integrated way to organize the information may be to develop an outline which followed the water cycle.

## Next Steps

The team will send materials, and a Doodle poll in July/August for a fall meeting. The committee members can anticipate some materials for review being sent in the interim.