



MEETING NOTES 2050 WATER POLICY PLAN UPDATE ADVISORY GROUP February 20, 2024

ATTENDANCE

Members Present:

Bryan Bear
Brian Dodds
Laura Jester
Russ Matthys
Richard McCoy
Vanessa Strong

Absent:

Scott Anderson
Phil Belfiori

Andy Brotzler
Paul Carpenter
Charlie Howley
Bruce Elder
Tim Kelly
Jennifer Levitt
Paul Moline
Nick Tomczik
Tom Wesolowski
Bruce Westby
James Wisker

Staff:

John Chlebeck
Steve Christopher
John Clark
Kyle Colvin
Jen Kostrzewski
Sam Paske
Emily Schon
Shannon Skally
Judy Sventek

WELCOME

Jen Kostrzewski welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda. She shared the feedback and engagement plans and noted that the policy document is in draft format and will change as different groups of stakeholders provide feedback.

DRAFT WATER POLICY PLAN POLICIES

Jen Kostrzewski reviewed the purpose and draft objectives of the Water Policy Plan. She explained the components of the policy template that is used as a guide for each policy.

Jester asked what the outreach to watersheds and counties will look like. Kostrzewski responded that there are four workshop type meetings planned for watershed and city staff similar to the subregional meetings. There will also be an information session open to a larger group of stakeholders. Strong suggested inviting the tribes to both meetings.

Jester asked if the desired outcomes are supposed to occur within a certain timeframe. Kostrzewski noted that while 2050 is the technical endpoint, the plan is updated every 10 years. Sventek encouraged participants to add notes about timelines or other suggestions to the draft policies.

The group split into breakout sessions and discussed the following policies and provided the following feedback to each.

Policy #5: Water and Land Use Connections

- Most of discussion resulted in tweaks and minor edits to wording to add clarification
- Definition of 'source' varies from person to person and group to group
- The regional approach is more beneficial than city-to-city
- Think through wording – if 'protecting', what are you protecting? Is it source water or recharge or something else.

- Decisions made in land use planning are very important – do you want to protect a recharge area or enhance recharge? You want quality of drinking water but not quantity of floodwater. Integrated water management comes into play.
- Emphasized regional planning must happen before local planning and be reviewed through a lens
- How to do things best considering equity – maybe investing in some areas more than other
- Consider identifying contiguous corridors for protection
- Implement and promote nature-based green infrastructure on Met Council properties (unsure if others' properties are covered). If not, partnering on non-MC properties should be considered.
- How do Priority Waters dovetail into this plan?
- Ideas of corridors is a good one – regional approach to development
 - Corridors may be water or natural. They provide access, ecological health, and flood protection
- Regional planning needs to come before local planning and reviewed through a water sustainability lens.
- There is unparalleled language in the bullets. Some state actions The Met Council will do whereas it applies to all.
- How to MCEs' priority resources relate to these actions (Priority Water document)?
- Balance water abundance and clean water supply – There is no 'normal'. We need to operate at the extremes
- Outcomes should be phased from a regional approach.
- Offer funding for water resources and groundwater planning.

Policy #6: Water Reuse:

- In general, it's complex, especially when talking about wastewater there are a lot of hurdles to convincing other agencies that it's safe
- Spell out if it's for stormwater or wastewater
- Wondered about the order of the actions – it doesn't really matter, but they could be reshuffled to better convey priorities
- MC greywater reuse policies and ordinances to start
- Glad there is a water reuse policy here.
- At the beginning it talks about working with partners to reduce barriers – water reuse is complicated, hard to do, expensive because it goes against regulation
- Right now, the path of least resistance is gw – to reduce regulatory barriers to reuse is first step
- A request that MC treat for chloride and PFAS so that water could be reused for things
- Met Council should lead process to reduce regulation resulting in improved implementation, efficiency, and frequency.
- Prioritize discussions with MDH to eliminate barriers of reuse.
- Met Council should address PFAS & chloride in wastewater to increase reuse opportunities for the region.

Policy #7 Sustainable and Efficient Water Use:

- Clarify what “mitigation elsewhere” means. ‘Invest in nonpoint-source pollution control when the cost and long-term benefits are favorable compared to further upgrading wastewater treatment.’
- Do we need to map the critical recharge areas or is that covered already?
- Not much to say about policy – regional and interconnected region
- More questions in Partner, Plan, Provide section. There are conflicts.
 - Scratch out “to increase the water conservation”
- Co-created funding requests:
 - not necessarily connecting systems
 - how to fund if not integrated
 - What does “multiple mean”
 - Scratched out ‘w’ in no mow
- Stop developers from turfgrass
- Work with LGUs to limit HOA preventions
- Less infrastructure is needed with conservation

Policy #9 Water Contaminants:

- Liked this policy and lots of discussion but not many changes
- Desired outcome was broad
- Confused what ‘chemical connectedness’ means – what are you really trying to say? Maybe physical connectedness or chemicals between
- Treating landlocked chloride impaired lake and discharge into wastewater system – against Met Council policy now, but Met Council accepts for industrial customers
- Lime softening treatment plants. Added under Plan Action: Research/coordinate with MPCA on regional lime softening to reduce chloride from water softening.
- Looking to Met Council to take the lead to reduce chloride regionally as it doesn’t seem to be something that the cities can address themselves.
- Continue discussion on accepting chloride-laden water in sanitary sewers in certain circumstances such as from land-locked, chloride impaired waters. May need change in Met Council policy because Council does accept chloride leachate through industrial permit

NEXT STEPS AND ACTION ITEMS

Steve Christopher noted that next steps include:

- Send out notes to other participants so others can add their comments or additional comments can be added.
- Next meeting will be Tuesday, March 19, 2024, from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. in-person at the Met Council Metro 94 location (455 Etna St., St. Paul, MN 55106)
- Updated policies will be distributed
- All policies will be up for comment

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:57 p.m.

Shannon Skally
Recording Secretary
Shannon.Skally@metc.state.mn.us