

Minutes

Environment Committee



Meeting Date: January 23, 2024

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Steet

Members Present:

E Chair, Peter Lindstrom, D10
 Vice Chair, Wendy Wulff, D16

E Tyronne Carter, District 3
 Yassin Osman, District 7
 Anjuli Cameron, District 8

Diego Morales, District 9
 Gail Cederberg, District 11
 = present, E = excused

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Wulff called the regular meeting of the Environment Committee to order at 4:00 p.m.

Agenda Approved

It was moved by consensus to approve the agenda. Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by CM Cederberg, seconded by CM Morales to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2023 regular meeting of the Environment Committee. **Motioned carried.**

Consent Business

Consent Business Adopted (2024-12JT)

1. **2024-12 JT: City of Empire 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Sewer Plan, Review File 22304-1** (Kyle Colvin, 651-602-1151) Proposes that the Metropolitan Council adopt the attached Review Record and take the following actions:

Recommendations of the Community Development Committee

1. Authorize the City of Empire to place its 2040 Comprehensive Plan into effect.
2. Advise the City to implement the advisory comments in the Review Record for Water Supply.

Recommendation of the Environment Committee

Approve the City of Empire's Comprehensive Sewer Plan.

Advise the City to implement the advisory comments in the Review Record for Wastewater.

Advisory Comments

The following Advisory Comments are part of the Council action authorizing the City of Empire to implement its 2040 Comprehensive Plan (Plan).

Community Development Committee

As stated in the *Local Planning Handbook*, the City must take the following steps:

- a. Adopt the Plan in final form after considering the Council’s review recommendations as contained in the body of this report.
 - b. Submit one hard copy and one electronic copy of the Plan to the Council. The electronic copy must be submitted as one unified file.
 - c. Submit to the Council a copy of the City Council resolution evidencing final adoption of the Plan.
3. The *Local Planning Handbook* also states that local governments must formally adopt their comprehensive plans within nine months after the Council’s final action. If the Council has recommended changes to the Plan, local governments should incorporate those recommended changes into the Plan or respond to the Council before “final adoption” of the comprehensive plan by the governing body of the local governmental unit. (Minn. Stat. § 473.858, subd. 3)
 4. Local governments must adopt official controls as identified in their 2040 comprehensive plans and must submit copies of the official controls to the Council within 30 days after the official controls are adopted. (Minn. Stat. § 473.865, subd. 1)
 5. Local governmental units cannot adopt any official controls or fiscal devices that conflict with their comprehensive plans or which permit activities in conflict with the Council’s metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stat. §§ 473.864, subd. 2; 473.865, subd. 2). If official controls conflict with comprehensive plans, the official controls must be amended within 9 months following amendments to comprehensive plans (Minn. Stat. § 473.865, subd. 3).

Environment Committee

The Council-approved Comprehensive Sewer Plan becomes effective only after the Plan receives final approval from the local governmental unit’s governing body. After the Plan receives final approval from the City and the Comprehensive Sewer Plan becomes effective, the City may implement its Plan to alter, expand, or improve its sewage disposal system consistent with the Council-approved Comprehensive Sewer Plan.

6. A copy of the City Council resolution adopting its 2040 comprehensive plan, including its Comprehensive Sewer Plan, must be submitted to the Council.

It was moved by CM Morales, seconded by CM Osman.

Motion carried.

Non-Consent Business

1. **2024-27: Intergovernmental Agreement with Vadnais Heights for 1-VH-422** (Chris Remus, 651-602-4538)

It was moved by CM Morales, seconded by CM Cameron, that the Metropolitan Council authorize its Regional Administrator to execute a Cooperative Construction Agreement with the City of Vadnais Heights for the design and construction of access improvements to Interceptor 1-VH-422 for an amount not to exceed \$900,000.

Discussion

CM Wulff asked: Are they going to be doing any filling in of wetland to accomplish this?

Staff responded: Yes, there will be earth berms constructed wide enough to allow vehicle access. This will require filling in the wetland, which the city will be working through the wetland mitigation and impacts.



Motion carried.

2. **2024-28: Ratification of Declaration of Emergency Repair of Orono Interceptor 7113** (Chris Remus, 651-602-4538)

It was moved by CM Morales, seconded by CM Cederberg, that the Metropolitan Council ratify the Emergency Declaration for repairs to Interceptor 7113 in Orono in an amount not to exceed \$3,750,000.

Motion carried.

3. **2024-29: Lake Elmo West End Connection, Project No. 808687, Contract 23P076** (Tim Wedin, 651-602-4571)

It was moved by CM Morales, seconded by CM Osman, that the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to award and execute contract 23P076 with Engineering & Construction Innovations, Inc. to construct the Lake Elmo West Connection in an amount not to exceed \$28,795,749.

Discussion

CM Wulff asked: How does the bid compare to the engineers estimate?

Staff responded: I don't remember the exact figure. I think it was around \$25 to \$26 million dollars. It is within the range of the Capital Improvement budget.

CM Cameron: The MCUB goal seem relatively small for this bid, can you provide more details?

Staff responded: The project goal was based on the scope of the work. We don't have a lot of MCUB firms that can perform when the work is in the area of interceptors. There are 8 MCUB firms that are participating on this project. We are confident that the goal for this project is appropriate.

Motion carried.

4. **2024-30:2024-2026 Water Efficiency Grant Program** (Judy Sventek 651-602-1156, Henry McCarthy 651-602-1946, Jennifer Kostrzewski 651-602-1078)

It was moved by CM Morales, seconded by CM Osman, that the Metropolitan Council approves Business Item 2024-30 on the process for the 2024-2026 Water Efficiency Grant Program and authorizes staff to advertise the availability of grant funding and solicit applications.

Discussion

CM Cameron: How are we communicating with communities?

Staff responded: We will post the information on GovDelivery. We also send it to the network of the communities we've worked with in the past.

Staff responded: Can it be sent to council members so we can share it with our communities?

Staff responded: Yes, we will make sure to do that.

CM Osman asked: Who sets the criteria? Is it the Met Council or the city?

Staff responded: The Council selects who gets the awarded amount based on criteria developed by Council staff The cities develop the criteria for each individual programs.

Motion carried.



Information

1. **Value of Water in the Twin Cities Region: A Community Centered Framework** (Jennifer Kostrzewski 651-602-1078, John Clark 651-602-1452)

Jennifer Kostrzewski, Assistant Manager of Water Planning and Policy and John Clark Principal Environmental Scientist presented the Value of Water in the Twin Cities Region: A Community Centered Framework in collaboration with the University of Minnesota. This presentation focuses on resident water values and perspectives in the twin cities region. The information collected will:

- Inform policies
- Develop metrics to support successful outcomes
- Help prioritize actions and investments
- Align regional and state water planning
- Inform outreach, engagement, and other actions
- Enhance trust in water services
- Partner with community members to co-identify challenges and co-develop solutions
- Make equitable and sustainable water decisions

The Community Centered Framework commits to using rigorous and inclusive social science research and methodologies to gather and share different narratives of water with communities and community leaders. The objective of this study was to engage culturally diverse Twin Cities community members, especially Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) residents to assess their water-related values, beliefs, and behaviors, including drinking water, stormwater, and surface water resources.

A mail survey was conducted in 2021, during the pandemic, followed by in-person surveying at community cultural events in 2023. Overall survey findings found priorities for protecting water as follows: 1. Future generations 2. Equitable access to clean drinking water 3. Drinking water that is safe and clean 4. Equitable access to public waters for all Minnesotans 5. Habitat for native fish and wildlife to survive. Findings show that while core water values are consistent across groups, Black, Indigenous, people of color, and female residents valued water and its uses more highly, and across a wider range of activities. Additionally, over 200 metro area cities, counties, and watershed organizations were contacted to collect and collate past community survey data. Data from 58 of 182 communities and 3 of 7 counties were received.

Water-related questions assessed the quality and dependability of water services, quality of local water resources, concerns about water supply or quality, and the importance of water to the community. Next steps include organizing interactive policy development workshops for decision makers that include and represent those stories

2. **Water Policy Plan Update** (Jennifer Kostrzewski 651-602-1078, Judy Sventek 651-602-1156, Kyle Colvin 651-602-1151)

Jennifer Kostrzewski, Assistant Manager of Water Planning and Policy continued the discussion on the Water Policy Plan update. The purpose of this plan is to develop the 2050 Water Policy Plan which focuses on ensuring sustainable water resources in the region. It provides a framework for integrative water planning. It contains water policies, strategies and actions for both the Met Council and our 180+ local governments within the seven-county region. The draft Water Policy plan objectives are as follows: Sustainable Waters, Climate, Infrastructure, Funding, Health, and Equity.

Staff reviewed the policy template that will be used as well as the draft policy topics. Draft policy topics included:

- Integrated Water Policy
- Water and Land Use Connection Policy
- Water and Climate Resiliency Policy
- Equitable Water Outcomes Policy
- Water Conservation and Efficient Use Policy
- Water Monitoring, Data, and Assessment Policy

Staff requested that committee members participate in smaller group discussions via breakout sessions. The presentation concluded with a summary of the committee member brainstorming breakout session as follows:

- We need to be clearer with our messaging so we aren't projecting vague commitments
- Share how we plan to show up for the region with this plan; how are we going to partner?
- Added desired outcome: That there is economic prosperity so there is enough water for business for our region
- We currently have 13 policy, that we will continue to work towards

Reports

General Managers Report: No report.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Environment Committee meeting of January 23, 2024.

Council Contact:

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