COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
Request for Board Action

MEETING DATE: March 23, 2015
AGENDA NUMBER: 6
ITEM: Blaine Local Water Plan

POLICY IMPACT: Policy
FISCAL IMPACT: Budgeted

REQUEST
Adopt findings and approve Blaine Local Water Plan

BACKGROUND
On January 28 the City of Blaine submitted a Draft of its Local Surface Water Management Plan (LWP). The plan is required under Minnesota Statute 103B.235 Subd. 3. The city is required to “submit its water management plan to the watershed management organization for review for consistency with the watershed plan.”

The District has 60 days to review the plan and then shall approve or disapprove the local plan or parts of the plan. If the organization fails to complete its review within the prescribed period, the local plan shall be deemed approved unless an extension is agreed to by the local unit. The 60 days end March 29.

Staff met with Blaine Staff March 6 to discuss District review and preliminary findings.

Blaine has noted that the LWP submitted contains only minor updates to remain consistent with the comp plans of the Rice Creek and Coon Creek Watershed Districts.

The District review focused on the following:
1. Plan content
2. Assessment of Existing or Potential Problems
3. Assessment of Implementation
4. Implementation Priorities
5. Implementation Program
6. Coordination with the District

NOTE 1: The Blaine Comprehensive Plan is due to be updated in 2018. Changes in statute require that the Local Water Plan requirements be addressed in the City’s Comprehensive Plan and reflected in the City’s ordinances and CIP.

NOTE 2: The current Comprehensive Watershed Plan addressed the review and approval of Local Water Plans by referencing the statutory requirements, but sought to recognize that the cumulative effect of State and Federal requirements, on Cities in particular, is to
emphasize planning and to manage water through preparation and publishing or paper. The District’s plan sought to simplify the planning process and focus on implementation and leverage as much as possible work and requirements satisfied in the City’s SWPPP and stormwater chapter of its Comp Plan as well as reference to the District’s Plan. The Staff’s review has sought to honor this approach in order to focus on results and actions

ISSUES/CONCERNS

Met Council Comments: The MC comments note that:
1. The LWP focuses on the transfer of areas from the old Six Cities WMO to the RCWD & CCWD
2. The city plans a more substantial update to their LWP as part of their required Comprehensive Plan update in 2018.
3. The plan provides an excellent framework for managing water resources within the City.

Rice Creek Watershed District Comments: The RCWD comments: The RCWD noted that:
1. The plan addresses the surface water management needs of the City
2. There remain minor comments that have yet to be addressed

REVIEW

Plan Content: Could not easily find an assessment of problems or corrective actions

Assessment of Existing or Potential Problems: The problems cited in section 6.2 (New Stormwater programs, WMO Standards, Implementation of TMDL and aging infrastructure) are not reflected in the remainder of the plan. The issues that do seem to get priority are volume, water quality and nondegradation.

Assessment of Implementation: The city has done an excellent job at identifying and describing their nonstructural, programmatic and structural solutions to water volume management, water quality, nondegradation, wetlands and erosion and sediment control.

Implementation Priorities: Section 8 of the plan addresses funding levels, which appear to be good. The specifics of links between funding source and problem, CIP and utility budget and a clear link to regional, watershed and state and Federal priorities are wanting.

Implementation Program: A simple list of ordinance and section; and standards and amendment needs would be helpful as would a map to orient the location of actions and issues would be helpful.

Coordination with the District: The plan adequately addresses and references the roles and goals of the District relative to water management in the District
FINDINGS
The Blaine 2015 Local Water Plan:

1. Substantially complies with the plan content requirements of M.S. 103B.

2. Adequately identifies the existing and potential problems facing the City

3. Adequately addresses the actions to address and manage those problems

4. Addresses the roles and goals of the Coon Creek Watershed District in managing and assisting the City of Blaine in addressing the water and related resource concerns within the city until the City’s Comprehensive Plan is updated

RECOMMENDATION
Adopt findings and approve plan