

Public Involvement in the Planning Process

Original Planning Process

In winter 2010 the District adopted the following planning process for development and adoption of the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The process called for extensive participation by the public and representatives of the District's member cities.

	2010				2011
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Rule & Permit Requirements	*				
Plan Issues & Concerns	*				
Resource Trends & Implications	=====	*			
Issues & Concerns	====	=====	*		
Goals & Measures			=====	*	
Agency Review					*

Projected Rule and Permit Revisions

In 2010 the Board of Managers reviewed the following as probable changes to the rules governing both the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Planning and planning conducted as part of NPDES permit updates:

- Emphasize implementation
- Emphasize mapping and location of infrastructure and problems
- Incorporate or emphasize Minimum Impact Design standards (MIDS)
- Include Performance based measures
- Include methods for demonstrating success
- Begin to emphasize coordinated water planning
- Begin to emphasize varying levels of treatment for protection

Initial Planning Issues and Concerns

Beginning in March 2010 the District engaged key stakeholders in surfacing key issues concerns and priorities. They were:

Board of Managers

- Enforcement: Effective and quick
- Getting ahead of key water quality concerns
- Water quantity versus water quality conflict – Working through these issues with State agencies
- Groundwater vs. Surface water connection – addressing factors that may be beyond the District's control

Board of Water & Soil Resources

- Showing status of progress – What has been completed

- Public Involvement Process – Include City environmental committees and neighborhood associations
- General schedule of O&M and Capital priorities and implementation – for use in grant applications
- Detailed water monitoring program – Include budget; key water bodies, party collecting data, type of data collected and trends
- Goals and objectives – reasonable and measurable

- MPCA**
- Adoption of Low Impact Design and Minimum Impact Design principals
 - Goals for impaired waters
 - Stormwater runoff goals and standards
 - Implementation schedule and responsibilities
 - Wetland functions and values assessment
 - Wetland regulations consistent with MR 7050
 - Monitoring program

- Technical Advisory Committee**
- Water Quality: Identify impairments and City involvement in TMDL development
 - Lake management plans for other lakes
 - Earth friendly ditch management
 - Buffer strips
 - Infiltration – groundwater effect
 - Credit for ponds that infiltrate
 - Coordination of monitoring for state/other permit reports
 - Wetland Functions & Values Assessment
 - Documentation of Information & Education collaboration efforts
 - Documentation of District retrofit efforts
 - Effect of mining/dewatering on surface waters
 - Groundwater modeling standards

Involvement

The Board of Managers conducted an open and meaningful public participation process in the development of this Comprehensive Plan. Public involvement has entailed more than 20 meetings with citizens, District and municipal committees and staffs and a spectrum of activities ranging from informing or notifying the public about the planning process, to working collaboratively and cooperatively to share ideas and develop plan components.

Planning Advisory Committee

In 2010 the District formed a Planning Advisory Committee (PAG). The PAG consisted of one or more members of all of the local agencies within the watershed. Invitations were extended all of the State agencies with which the District works or interacts or have authority to review the District’s plan. The PAG met as a group four times as a group during the planning process. Involvement is shown below:

Invitee	3/30/10	7/14/10	10/6/10	4/27/11
Attendance	16	18	13	27

Local Agencies

Invitee	3/30/10	7/14/10	10/6/10	4/27/11
Anoka Conservation District	*	*		*
Anoka County	*	*	*	*
Andover	*	*	*	*
Blaine	*	*	*	*
Columbus				
Coon Rapids		*	*	*
Crooked Lake Area Association	*	*		*
Ham Lake	*	*	*	*
Fridley ¹			*	*
Spring Lake Park ¹				*

¹ Fridley and Spring Lake Park petitioned to become part of the District in August 2010. BWSR approved the petition in December 2011

State Agencies

Invitee	3/30/10	7/14/10	10/6/10	4/27/11
BWSR	*	*	*	*
DNR	*	*	*	*
Met Council	*	*	*	*
MPCA		*	*	*
MnDOT	-			
MOA - Ag				
MDH - Health				

Other Groups and Participants

Group	Attendance	Date
Coon Rapids Sustainability Commission	8	8/12/10
Andover City Council	9	8/24/10
Blaine Park Board	9	8/24/10
Ham Lake Park & Tree Commission	8	9/15/10
Crooked Lake Area Association	6	9/16/10
Anoka Conservation District Board of Supervisors	6	9/20/10
Wetland Functions & Values Review Group	11	11/12/10

Merger with Six Cities WMO

In January 2011 the District was made aware that the Six Cities WMO was experiencing difficulty and may be dissolved by the BWSR. The Six Cities WMO did dissolve in March of that year leading to an approximately nine month process that ended with the BWSR ordering the inclusion of select lands formerly within the SCWMO to be included in the Coon Creek Watershed District in December of 2011.

At the completion of the merger it was the Districts’ understanding that the BWSR would provide a supportive role and allow the CCWD a reasonable amount of time (1 year) to update its Comprehensive Plan. The merger process and the desire to include a comprehensive assessment of the water resources within the former SCWMO led to a major delay in completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Adjustments in the Planning and Public Participation Process

Because the merger occurred late in the planning process a revised involvement process was required which involved personal briefings and individual meetings to surface issues and concerns and review goals and objectives. The adjusted process also relied heavily on the District’s Technical Advisory Committee and Citizen Advisory Committee members to surface issues, concerns priorities and programs in the amended area and the programs and efforts currently underway to address them.

Reliance on Advisory Committees

During 2012 the District met with its Citizen Advisory Committee (including members from the ‘new’ area) on 10 different occasions. The Comprehensive Plan was the focus of 9 of those meetings.

The District attempted to parallel this process with the Technical Advisory Committee but substituted some of the group meeting for individual meetings or contacts.

Rough Draft Review as Reality Check

On October 22, 2012, the Board approved the release of a rough draft of the District Comprehensive Plan for review by the District Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Copies of the plan were distributed to the:

Board of Managers	October 8
CAC	October 10
TAC	October 11

CAC and TAC had 14 week days to review and comment on the plan. The CAC reconvened to review the plan October 30. The TAC met on October 31.

241 Comments needing responses were received. This figure does not include the comments, suggestions and corrections concerning punctuation, word choice or formatting.

- 142 of the comments were accepted and the plan was changed or corrected.
- 80 comments received responses noting the comment and either clarifying or making note of the comment.
- 14 of the comments were actually questions.
- 12 comments addressed or revealed issues/concerns requiring some additional work

**Advisory
Committee
Comments**

Implementation Specifics: There were numerous requests and verbal comments for either:

- a) More implementation specifics regarding budget or work plan level directives for the 10-year period
- b) A clear(er) connection between the goals and outcomes through clarification of inputs, outputs and outcomes
- c) Clarification at the Objectives level, noting means for achieving objectives, related activities, timeframes and milestones (Current plan takes this approach).

At Present

The rough draft plan identifies specific actions (identified by program) and repeats those actions in the implementation section and provides a time and estimated cost for implementation.

The Board opted to:

Leave as is: Implementation timing and effort are handled through program/ strategy/cost center descriptions. On the other hand, the State (MPCA & BWSR) emphasis is on implementation and estimated costs. The ‘Cost Center approach provides a closer immediate connection to District accounting and funding system.

Standards: An observed and noted fact was that the District's management principles and standards were not available in the rough draft. These principles and standards provide the basis and technical guidance for the best management practices used in the District and the need and reasonableness of the District's rule.

The absence of the standards was an oversight. The section needs to be included and updated to address water quality actions.

Mining: An issue that was addressed as needing consideration early in the planning process was mining and its effect on groundwater. The issue pertains primarily to Ham Lake but also could have significant bearing on Blaine and Andover where large amounts of material have been removed to balance the site and homes have been built around the edge of the resulting pond or lake. The issue stated in this manner is a land use/development concern and will never rank very high, because the District avoids land USE allocation decisions.

However, when we consider the fact that most of the water filling these man-made lakes and ponds is ground water from the surficial/drift aquifer and that this water resource has been in steady decline, then creating additional open water bodies exposes this resource to additional, potentially significant loss through evaporation, transpiration or both. If we factor in the decline in humidity levels in the spring (lower than the southwest U.S. in early spring), we add an element leading to potentially significant seasonal loss.

At Present

The rough draft plan only brushes on the effects of mining and construction of impoundments through discussion of water balance and climate change

The Board opted to:

The Board opted to Include a special study that addresses exposed groundwater specifically and recommends actions and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. Include in Plan a special study (SAMP) that specifically addresses the consequences of exposing the drift aquifer to loss from evapotranspiration.

Weather Stations: There was interest by the TAC in the identified need and value of establishing weather stations capable of assisting in identifying micro storms and variation within the watershed as early as possible. One member expressed interest in cost-sharing with the District.

At Present

The purchase of stations is not scheduled in the capital equipment portion of CIP.

The Board opted to:

Note interest and further evaluate specific need and value for stations through the CIP budget process. Note interest and further evaluate specific need and value for stations through the CIP budget process (Staff Recommendation).

Water Rates & Use of Grey Water: Several reviewers felt that a more full review and discussion of both of these items was warranted.

At Present

The rough draft plan discusses the basics of conservation pricing, where incrementally or in a block fashion, the user pays more the more water is used (marginal price increases with marginal cost) and because water rates/water supply is controlled by the cities, the plan proposes that the District conduct a study and act as a forum and catalyst for the cities to address water conservation through this method.

The rough draft plan does not address grey water specifically. Grey water use is a huge issue with regional and statewide implications. The rough draft plan, however, does address the need for cities to discuss re-use or harvesting options. To some parties this may be a distinction of no difference. However, “re-use” and harvesting offers many more options and scales of implementation from private cisterns and rain barrels to retrofitting parking lots and business campuses for landscape watering or other uses.

The Board opted to:

Leave as is: focus on conservation pricing and encouraging water re-use.