



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

MEMO

To: BCWMC Plan Steering Committee
From: Administrator Jester
Date: February 18, 2025

RE: Report on Plan TAC Feedback on issues, goals, activities for Education & Engagement and Organizational Effectiveness

The Plan TAC group met virtually on February 7th to provide feedback on 1) issue statements, 10-year goals, and potential activities in the Education & Engagement category and Organizational Effectiveness category; and 2) updates to development requirements. Meeting attendees included:

Commission/TAC Representatives	Agency and Partner Staff
Commissioner Hauer	Brad Wozney and Jen Dillum, BWSR
Administrator Jester	Amy Riegel and Kris Guentzel, Hennepin County
Engineers Chandler, Johnson, Williams	Amy Timm, MPCA
TAC Chair Scharenbroich	Abby Shea and Dereck Richter, MDH
TAC Member Eckman	Brian Vlach, TRPD
TAC Member Struve	Rachael Crabb, MPRB
TAC Member Francis	Jason Swenson, MnDOT
TAC Member Wolf	
TAC Member Stout	
TAC Member Schweiger	
TAC Member Macklem	

In addition to feedback at the meeting, representatives with BWSR and MPCA sent further comments via email which are incorporated here.

After introductions at the meeting, staff briefly reviewed feedback received from the Plan TAC in December 2023 and July 2024, and briefly reviewed the Commission's new diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA)-related policies. Multiple partners voiced their support and praise for the DEIA policies.

Feedback on the issue statements, 10-year goals, and potential activities in the Education and Engagement Category centered on measurability of the goals. There was acknowledgment that measuring success of education programs is challenging and that if quantifiable goals aren't possible, that measurable metrics and indicators should be included with activities. There was discussion about how a survey of residents at the beginning of plan implementation and again near the end of the plan implementation may help indicate if the general public has more knowledge about water resource issues. It was noted that there are various metrics that could be used to count engagement activities, such as count number of attendees, count handouts distributed, track website use, etc. It was noted that kind of

detail should be tracked over time and included in the evaluation section of the Education and Engagement Plan (E&E Plan). That plan is currently being reviewed by the Education Committee and will come back to the PSC in the coming months.

Additional comments on education goals:

- Certain researchers at the U of M (including Mae Davenport) may be able to help craft a public survey or otherwise develop methods for assessing measurable engagement and change in public values and knowledge.
- Hennepin County has the education piece “10 Things You Can Do to Improve Water” translated into Spanish and Somali. Watersheds are welcome to use them.
- Education on the Flood Control Project should be included. (Staff noted it’s one of the educational messages in the E&E Plan.)
- Suggestion for presenting activities in the plan: specify which activities will be new endeavors and which will be ongoing.
- Wondered if the Plan should include a list of underrepresented communities that are the focus of DEIA-related goals. (Staff noted some known communities could be included as examples, likely in the more specific E&E plan, but that an actual list is inappropriate because some groups may be currently unknown.)
- MPCA noted they get many calls from homeowners about stormwater pond conditions. This could be an educational topic to consider.

In response to this input, Commission staff added some notes to the strategies and actions column of the issues/goals table for the Education & Engagement category (see tracked changes).

The group then turned to discussion of the issue statements, 10-year goals, and potential activities in the Organizational Effectiveness Category. Commission staff recommends some adjustments to a few goal statements. See tracked changes.

Agency staff indicated support for an organizational assessment but had questions on how the plan would be crafted if the eventual organization structure and funding mechanisms were unknown. Staff recognized that an organizational assessment would ideally have come before plan development. They noted that the current draft plan includes lofty goals and that future plan amendments may be needed to align the Commission’s capacity with intended outcomes.

BWSR staff wondered if the capacity of member city’s collaborative work with the Commission should be explicitly included in the goal related to assessing organizational capacity. Commission staff noted that many different scenarios and information from a variety of sources would be used for the assessments and that it’s not appropriate to call out one subject specifically. BWSR staff also noted that the 10-year goals for completing assessments of organizational structure and funding mechanisms seemed more like actions (see potential revisions as tracked).

There was discussion about how funding for city operations and maintenance (O&M) should not be included in BCWMC budgets. Commission staff noted that the potential activity related to a “maintenance levy” was meant to be for maintenance of BCWMC CIP projects, not city infrastructure.

For the 2nd goal related to progress assessment, BWSR staff wondered how success would be measured. Staff recommends a slight change in wording to make it more measurable.

BWSR staff also recommended expanding the term “equity” in the following issue statement to include all DEIA concepts. Staff noted that “equity” was meant as a broad term that incorporates all DEIA. *Additional focus is needed to ensure equity in the delivery of BCWMC projects, programs, and decision making.*

Regarding ditch management goals, Hennepin County staff noted their support for cities taking over ditch management authority or seeking legislation to abandon the jurisdictional ditch labels.

Regarding the goal related to the carbon footprint of BCWMC projects, BWSR staff noted the language is too passive and recommended that the goal plainly state what the Commission is committed to doing. Commission staff does not recommend a change because this is a low priority and because evaluating the carbon footprint of projects is a costly activity and is likely to be used in limited circumstances.

Commission staff then presented the likely updates to BCWMC standards and requirements for linear projects, stream and wetland buffers, and chloride management plans. There was not enough time for an in-depth discussion at the meeting. During the meeting, there were no comments regarding the linear project and stream/wetland buffer standards. There was some discussion of chloride management plans; Hennepin County staff noted that it’s important to keep in mind the status of projects (e.g., applicator contractors would not be known yet). MPCA staff indicated by email that it was good to see a focus on improving conditions with redevelopment and finding a way to hopefully reduce chloride use.

See Education & Engagement
and Organizational Effectiveness
potential changes (tracked) on
following pages

EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT – with potential additional activities in response to Plan TAC comments
Issue Statements, Desired Future Conditions, 10-year Goals: APPROVED DECEMBER 2024

1. Public awareness and action – Medium Priority

Issue Statement: Lack of knowledge and resources for action limit the ability and interest of watershed residents and stakeholders to be good caretakers of the BCWMC waterbodies and ecosystems

Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)
<p>Watershed residents and stakeholders understand their relationship with and impact on waterbodies and ecosystems and are good caretakers of these ecosystems through their actions and behaviors.</p>	<p>1A. Increase public knowledge of and participation in programs or practices for waterbody and ecosystem caretaking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate as active member of West Metro Watershed Alliance - Collaborate and coordinate with member cities on creating and delivering education - Support implementation of small-scale BMP cost-share program (could be with some small amount of funding as incentive in conjunction with workshops?) [could be similar to channel maintenance fund where cities are implementing the cost share with residents or others] - Advertise existing grant programs maintained by partners - Utilize CIP projects to educate adjacent communities - Incorporate targeted outreach to watershed residents as part of CIP projects, where applicable - Events: creek clean ups, water ceremonies, trainings/workshops – <u>keep track of numbers of events and number of engagements/participants</u> - <u>Use a survey of public knowledge at start of plan implementation and again near end of plan life. Might also consider using data from city surveys and/or asking city surveys to incorporate water resources knowledge</u>
	<p>1B. Increase the number of people who access watershed information and improve accessibility to information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support development and distribution of educational materials through West Metro Watershed Alliance - Maintain the BCWMC website - Provide BCWMC communications in multiple languages - Incorporate targeted outreach to watershed residents as part of CIP projects, where applicable - Update BCWMC website and key documents in compliance with ADA requirements - \$20,000 estimate - Consider ADA accessibility during planning and design of CIP projects. - <u>UseTrack metrics such as number of people accessing website, number of people engaged at events; number of handouts distributed; etc.</u>
	<p>1C. Support community science and volunteer efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue supporting CAMP program including recruiting and coordinating volunteers

EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT – with potential additional activities in response to Plan TAC comments
Issue Statements, Desired Future Conditions, 10-year Goals: APPROVED DECEMBER 2024

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - include Track current and future number of volunteers so can measure if there is an increase over the years - Support volunteer activities such as native plantings, invasive species removals, clean ups, etc.
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2. Engagement of diverse communities – Medium Priority

Issue Statement: Efforts are needed to engage and build relationships with communities that have been under-represented in past BCWMC planning, programs, and projects.

Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)
All communities, and especially those historically and currently under-represented, are positively engaged in relevant BCWMC planning, programs, and projects.	2A. Establish and maintain relationships and communication avenues with under-represented communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify diverse, minority, and underrepresented communities and their representative contacts - Develop and implement plans for an engagement, communication, and relationship building - Regularly submit communications to neighborhood newsletters or other publications - Annually attend meetings or events in diverse, minority, or underserved communities - Provide BCWMC communication materials in multiple languages
	2B. Seek, consider, and respond to input from all impacted communities as part of the BCWMC’s plans, programs, and projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperate with partners (e.g., Metro Blooms) on implementing projects and programs in environmental justice communities - Partner with cities already doing DEIA -related work.
	2C. Incorporate Dakota place names, history, culture, and Indigenous knowledge into BCWMC projects and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use both Dakota and English names for Bassett Creek on maps, documents, and signage. - Promote ĦaĦá Wakpádaŋ oral history project and pronunciation video. - Learn about Native land and water care practices - Participate in annual water ceremony

3. Recreation Opportunities – Low Priority

Issue Statement: Opportunities to protect or enhance recreational use of, and access to, natural areas in the watershed may be lost without proactive consideration by the BCWMC and its partners in their activities.

Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)
Recreational uses and access are maintained or enhanced, as	3A. Support recreational uses of and access to lakes, streams and natural areas, particularly in underserved communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inventory/list priority waterbody recreation access/functions (i.e., what will be maintained) - Provide technical and other support for city and partner projects impacting recreational access to/use of priority waterbodies.

EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT – with potential additional activities in response to Plan TAC comments
Issue Statements, Desired Future Conditions, 10-year Goals: APPROVED DECEMBER 2024

appropriate, for priority waterbodies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporate trails, parks, and natural areas into BCWMC watershed map or other BCWMC communications. (to be included with current map update) - Maintain interactive Bassett Creek paddling map in partnership with City of Golden Valley. (found here) 	
	3B. Consider protecting and enhancing recreational functions of and access to waterbodies and natural areas during BCWMC planning and projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider opportunities for recreation enhancement when designing BCWMC projects 	

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS – with potential revisions in response to Plan TAC comments
Issue Statements, Desired Future Conditions, 10-year Goals: APPROVED DECEMBER 2024

1. Organizational capacity and staffing – High Priority

Issue Statement: Current BCWMC staff capacity and organizational structure are likely not sufficient to achieve intended goals and effectively execute projects and programs.

Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)
BCWMC organization exists in its most efficient and effective structure <u>to achieve its identified goals</u>	1A. Understand the <u>In first year of Plan implementation, perform assessment of</u> options, benefits, and challenges of various organizational structures for effective and efficient management of the Bassett Creek watershed <u>through a comprehensive assessment undertaken in first year of Plan implementation.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete comprehensive assessment of BCWMC organization structure and staffing options, benefits, and challenges. - \$50K estimate - Restructure organization, as needed, pending results of comprehensive assessment and as approved by the BCWMC.
	1B. <u>Improve organization capacity, efficiency, and effectiveness as warranted and desired by implementing</u> implement outcomes of organizational assessment to improve organizational capacity, efficiency, and effectiveness.	

2. BCWMC funding mechanisms – High Priority

Issue Statement: Additional funding sources and/or alternate funding mechanisms for BCWMC administration and implementation are needed to achieve the most efficient, equitable, and robust outcomes

Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)
BCWMC operations are adequately funded for ongoing administration and robust implementation	2A. Understand <u>In first year of Plan implementation perform assessment of all</u> potential funding mechanisms for BCWMC work related to various organizational structures <u>through an assessment undertaken in the first year of Plan implementation.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In conjunction with assessment of organization structure options, complete comprehensive assessment of funding mechanisms available to BCWMC. - Establish maintenance levy <u>for BCWMC CIP projects</u> through Hennepin County in accordance with MN Statute 103B.251.
	2B. Expand potential funding streams through grants and partnerships with public and private entities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a framework or process to streamline private-public funding partnerships - Apply for competitive project and planning grants, as appropriate
	2C. <u>Improve funding capacity in conjunction with changes</u> Implement funding mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Implement new funding mechanisms, as needed based on the results of funding and organizational structure assessments.</u>

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS – with potential revisions in response to Plan TAC comments
Issue Statements, Desired Future Conditions, 10-year Goals: APPROVED DECEMBER 2024

	appropriate to the organizational structure and functions of the BCWMC.		
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3. Progress assessment – High Priority			
Issue Statement: Evaluation of progress toward achieving 10-year goals is critical to process improvement.			
Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)	
BCWMC is effective in its implementation through evaluation and adaptive management.	3A. Understand the effectiveness of implementation and progress towards reaching each of this plan’s 10-year goals	- Complete progress assessment biennially (every two years) (MN Rule 8410) and use assessment results to guide future policy decisions and implementation activities.	
	3B. Adapt implementation activities <u>are adapted</u> to reflect changing conditions or pace of progress.	- Amend Watershed Plan, as needed, as new data become available or conditions, organizational structure, or priorities change	

4. Projects and programs implemented through a DEIA lens – Medium Priority			
Issue Statement: Additional focus is needed to ensure equity in the delivery of BCWMC projects, programs, and decision making.			
Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)	
BCWMC work is equitably implemented.	4A. Prioritize and implement programs and projects with guidance from social vulnerability metrics.	- Develop and use social vulnerability indices for project and program prioritization. - Incorporate equity metric in CIP prioritization table	
	4B. Diversify representation on BCWMC Board of Commissioners, contractors, consultants and vendors such that they reflect community diversity	- Implement outreach, communication, and engagement activities in diverse communities - Seek contractors, vendors, etc. that represent diverse communities - Encourage cities to seek Commissioner applicants from diverse communities	

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS – with potential revisions in response to Plan TAC comments
Issue Statements, Desired Future Conditions, 10-year Goals: APPROVED DECEMBER 2024

5. Public ditch management – Low Priority			
Issue Statement: The Plan must address management of the public ditches within BCWMC jurisdiction (per MN Statutes 103B)			
Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)	
Public ditches in the watershed are either transferred to municipal authority or abandoned, where appropriate.	5A. Public ditches function in a manner that allows their current use as streams and altered waterways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage member cities to petition Hennepin County to transfer authority over public ditches in the BCWMC to the member cities (per MN Statute 383B.61). - Support the efforts of other entities to pursue legislation abandoning public ditches on land zoned non-agricultural, in consideration for the original function of public ditches to provide drainage of agricultural lands. 	
	5B. If ditch authority is transferred to the member cities, the BCWMC and cities will manage the ditches similar to other BCWMC waterways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manage abandoned or transferred public ditches that are part of the BCWMC trunk system consistent with this Plan. Member cities will be responsible for management of abandoned or transferred public ditches that are not on the BCWMC trunk system, but are currently part of their municipal drainage system. 	

6. Carbon footprint of BCWMC projects – Low Priority			
Issue Statement: Carbon released in the construction and ongoing maintenance of BCWMC projects is not currently considered and contributes to climate change			
Desired Future Condition	Goal (10-year)	Strategy, Action, or Task (some potential examples; highlight = new activity)	
The BCWMC understands the carbon footprint or lifecycle impacts of its activities and considers mitigative measures during implementation.	6A. Consider use of tools available to assess the impact and mitigate the effects of BCWMC activities on greenhouse gas emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When appropriate, use carbon footprint assessment tools when prioritizing projects or options. - Encourage use of renewable energy and carbon release reduction practices in projects and programs. 	