



# 2025 Watershed Management Plan

## Stakeholder Outreach Plan

April 2022

**Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission**

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## **I. Introduction**

In developing its 2025 Watershed Management Plan, the BCWMC has an opportunity to engage and receive input from a broad group of stakeholders within the watershed. Input on watershed issues and concerns will be sought from traditional stakeholder groups including state and regional agencies, Hennepin County, member cities, and partnering organizations. BCWMC is also committed to gathering meaningful input from diverse, minority, and traditionally underserved communities.

Consideration of stakeholder input is an important step in establishing Plan priorities and is key in fostering the community support and cooperation necessary to successfully implement BCWMC projects and programs. This stakeholder outreach plan provides information on the proposed methods by which BCWMC staff and commissioners will engage stakeholders throughout Plan development.

## **II. Targeted Stakeholders**

BCWMC has strong, existing relationships with its member cities, Hennepin County, and state/regional agencies, and partners such as Three Rivers Park District and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Input from these groups will be important for maintaining relationships and collaborating on future projects and programs.

Additionally, a new emphasis and considerable effort will be placed on gathering input from diverse voices-- residents and groups who have not traditionally been represented in BCWMC planning efforts. This Plan update process offers an opportunity to begin building relationships in historically underserved communities to promote improving environmental outcomes and overall community health and equity in these areas.

Overall, the planning effort will seek input from a variety of sectors and groups including:

- Watershed residents
- Residents and groups in underserved or diverse communities including (but not limited to) Minneapolis neighborhood associations and faith-based organizations including: Harrison Neighborhood Association, Northside Residents Redevelopment Council, Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
- Indigenous community members
- Friends of Bassett Creek
- Association of Medicine Lake Area Citizens
- Sweeney Lake Homeowners Association
- Volunteers with the Metropolitan Council's Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program
- Westwood Hills Nature Center
- Metro Blooms
- Three Rivers Park District
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- Member cities (9) including staff, councils, and commissions
- Hennepin County
- Adjacent watershed management organizations and watershed districts

- State/regional agencies including: the Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), and MN Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
- BCWMC Board of Commissioners

### III. Engagement Activities and Methods

Several concurrent outreach efforts will be utilized to obtain meaningful and representative input from a diverse group of Plan stakeholders over several months. Strategies are described below, and Figure 1 shows the sequence of engagement strategies.

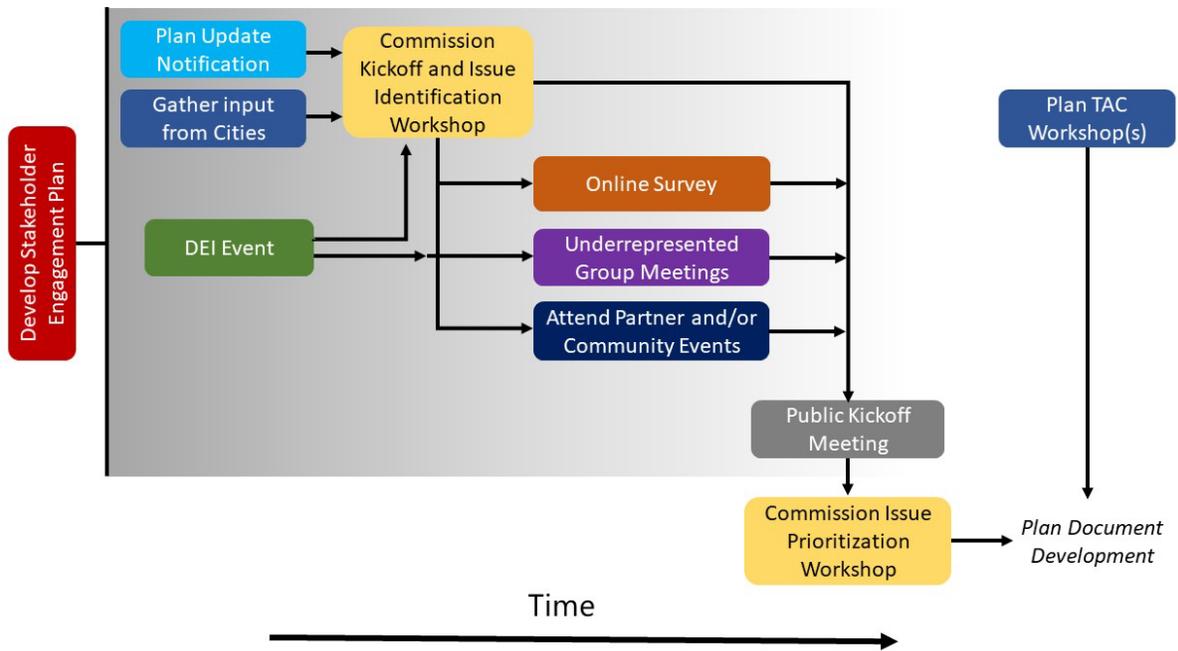


Figure 1. Sequence of Engagement Activities

#### A. Plan Update Notification

April – May 2022

Consistent with MN Rules 8410.0045 Subp. 3 and Subp. 4, the BCWMC will electronically send a notification of the 2025 Plan update to plan review agencies and the plan review authorities. The notification will request that recipients provide information about their respective priority issues, goals, and data relevant to the 2025 Plan within 60 days. The notification will also ask recipients to identify potential TAC member(s) from their organization.

## **B. Gather input from member cities regarding priority issues**

April – May 2022

City staff from several BCWMC member cities attend Commission meetings and are active partners in watershed management. In addition to this participation, the BCWMC will ensure that input on watershed issues is gathered more broadly from member cities. Commission staff will develop a Plan Update overview fact sheet and generalized list of questions and discussion topics to aid in gathering information. Commissioners and TAC members will gather information about priority concerns related to water and natural resources management and BCWMC implementation activities from their city departments, city councils, and/or city commissions. Distribution of the list of questions and discussion topics is intended to serve as the plan update notification to member cities required per MN Rules 8410.0045.

## **C. Hosting an “Equity in Watershed Management” Workshop**

April 2022

The workshop is intended to develop a shared foundation of knowledge by learning how BCWMC’s work provides opportunities to address historically entrenched inequities. This workshop will be hosted in conjunction with Shingle Creek and West Mississippi WMOs and will be facilitated by Hennepin County Commissioner Fernando. Speakers from Metro Blooms, Hennepin County, Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, and others will help answer questions like:

- What do terms like “diversity, equity, and inclusion” really mean?
- What is the history of environmental injustice in Hennepin County and where do we find environmental justice communities today?
- What are examples of environmental inequities and how do they impact the lives of community members?
- How are cities incorporating equity in their work and what role do they see for watershed organizations?
- How are other watershed organizations addressing inequities and making connections in underserved communities?
- What are the challenges, opportunities, and best practices for environmental healing in relationship with underserved communities?

## **D. Commission workshop to kickoff Plan update process and identify overarching issues**

June 2022

Commissioner input will be sought throughout the planning process. This will officially get underway through a Commission workshop. While stakeholder engagement is an opportunity to hear broad input from diverse stakeholders, the Commission will focus issue identification and prioritization efforts on those areas within the charge of the BCWMC. Commission staff will prepare and deliver a presentation on the history of the BCWMC, the purposes of the Watershed Plan, and the Plan update process at a workshop attended by commissioners and alternates.

The workshop will include a review of responses to the Plan update notification letter, city input and a planned gaps analysis. Commission staff will facilitate discussion to identify key overarching issues that

must be addressed during Plan development, challenging issues that may require greater effort to address than others, and issues that may be a priority to partners but are outside of the Commission's roles and responsibilities.

#### **E. Plan Update Webpage and Online survey**

Webpage: May 2022 – September 2025

Survey: July – December 2022

The BCWMC will develop and maintain a planning webpage with pertinent documents, dates, and input opportunities as a “one stop shop” throughout the Plan update process. Additionally, the BCWMC will develop and host an online survey intended to gather input from a variety of sectors including residents, property owners, business owners, and other individuals who live, work, or recreate in the watershed. The survey will be brief (e.g., approximately five questions) to encourage participation and allow some or all of the survey questions to be asked during potential future face-to-face interactions with stakeholders. The questions will be designed to understand how stakeholders value and interact with the water and natural resources within the watershed.

The survey will be linked from the BCWMC website, partner websites, and advertised through social media and targeted e-mailing. Paper copies of the survey will also be available at events or upon request. Staff will summarize the results of the survey for use during the Commission issue prioritization workshop and will include the summary as an appendix of the Plan.

#### **F. Meetings with underrepresented community groups**

July – September 2022

The BCWMC Administrator will work with commissioners, city staff, and partners (such as Metro Blooms) to identify communities within the watershed for targeted engagement to better understand their community values and concerns as well as opportunities for collaboration. Groups will include (but are not limited to): Harrison Neighborhood Association, Northside Residents Redevelopment Council, and Jordan Area Community Council. Faith-based organizations, multi-family housing communities, and other groups or organizations may also be engaged. Diverse or underrepresented groups in areas outside of Minneapolis may also be contacted.

Once a list of potential organizations or groups has been established, the Administrator will contact leaders within those organizations or communities to set up interviews performed by the Administrator and/or commissioners. An intern from Dougherty Family College (through St. Thomas University) will also be hired to assist with this work. Existing events such as community gatherings, celebrations and farmers markets may also be utilized for outreach in these communities. The meetings and outreach through events will help identify opportunities for the Commission to help promote equitable environmental outcomes.

Input from Indigenous communities will also be sought through a partnership with Valley Creek Presbyterian Church's “Bassett Creek Oral History Project.”

### **G. Engaging the public at partner/community events**

June – December 2022

Events focused on water resource management typically draw few attendees, and the attendees often have very specific concerns. Conversely, community events within the watershed present ready-made opportunities for BCWMC representatives (commissioners, member city staff, BCWMC staff) to engage with a broader cross-section of potential stakeholders.

To leverage these opportunities, BCWMC staff will contact member city staff and commissioners to identify up to 10 community events at which engaging with residents and groups would be beneficial. Similar to outreach in underrepresented communities above, events might include farmers markets, city celebrations, and community gatherings. The events may lend themselves to a BCWMC booth or table where commissioners, city staff, and/or BCWMC staff can engage in conversation about the watershed, answer questions, and ask interested individuals to complete the survey online or on paper. Large presentation boards and one-page handouts including a watershed map, a brief introduction to the BCWMC, and the 2025 Plan development process will be prepared. BCWMC representatives will provide a summary of each community event at a Commission meeting.

### **H. Hosting a public kickoff/initial planning meeting**

February 2023

Per Minnesota Rules 8410.0045 Subp. 5, the BCWMC must publicly notice and host an “initial planning meeting presided over by the organization’s governing body to receive, review, and discuss input” on the 2025 Plan. The meeting must occur after receipt of responses to the Plan update notification (or after the 60-day response period has passed).

The BCWMC initial planning meeting will be held after full or substantial completion of the other initial stakeholder engagement tasks so that these events may provide input for this meeting. The Administrator will work with the Commission to identify a meeting date, secure a meeting location, publicly notice the meeting, and “market” the meeting to residents and stakeholder groups. The Commission representatives (including Engineer, Administrator, and/or commissioners) will prepare and present information about the BCWMC and the 2025 Plan. The agenda will likely include facilitated, small-group discussions following the initial presentation to identify and discuss issues important to meeting attendees.

### **I. Establishing and meeting with a Planning Technical Advisory Committee (Planning TAC)**

June 2023 – July 2024

The BCWMC will convene a Planning Technical Advisory Committee (Planning TAC) comprised of member city staff, plan review authority staff from state agencies, Hennepin County, and Met Council, park districts, and other technical partners identified by the Commission. The Administrator will coordinate holding in-person or virtual meetings of the Planning TAC to review and provide input on draft Plan content throughout the project. Approximately four Planning TAC meetings are anticipated. The Commission Engineer and the Administrator will cooperate to present draft Plan content at these meetings. The Administrator will summarize Planning TAC meeting discussions in minutes provided to the Commission. Likely meeting subjects include, but are not limited to:

- Measurable goals
- BCWMC policies and performance standards
- Implementation actions, schedule and budget

#### **IV. Stakeholder Engagement After Initial Input Phase**

The stakeholder engagement activities described above are concentrated at the beginning of the Plan update process to maximize use of the information gathered in the subsequent development of the Plan content, including identifying priority issues and resources, measurable goals, and implementation activities. However, BCWMC will continue to engage stakeholders through the Plan update process by:

- Maintaining a robust and up-to-date Plan Update webpage
- Gathering input and feedback on draft plan sections from commissioners, member city staff, and the Planning TAC throughout the plan development process
- Inviting comments from partners, stakeholders, and the public through the formal 60-day review period
- Hosting a formal public hearing on the Plan after distribution of responses to comments received during the formal 60-day review