



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

MEMO

To: BCWMC Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners
From: Laura Jester, Administrator
Date: April 12, 2023

RE: 2025 Watershed Plan Development Update

The Commission has been working on development of the 2025-2035 Watershed Management Plan since early last year and are on track with the timeline and budget as laid out in the [scope of work for Plan development](#) approved in March 2022. The Plan Steering Committee will begin its work soon (Section 1 below); progress on the tasks in Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the Plan development process are reported in Section 2.

1. Plan Steering Committee (PSC)

The first PSC meeting will likely be held at the end of May or early June to review the Plan purpose, content, and the PSC's role in the Plan development process. The input gathered from the public, cities, county, agencies, partner organizations and adjacent WMOs will be reviewed along with the outcomes of the Gaps Analysis and complex issues investigation (Phase 2 as noted below). The committee will work to refine and prioritize the issues as a recommendation to the full Commission.

2. Plan Development Progress

Phase 1: Initial Stakeholder Engagement

Activities for gathering input from stakeholders began early in 2022 and continue today. Below is a list of activities from the scope of work and the current status/outcome of each.

1. Developing a stakeholder engagement plan for BWSR review and approval

The [stakeholder engagement plan](#) was developed in April 2022 and reviewed/approved by MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) staff. The plan essentially mirrors the outreach and engagement plan outlined in Phase 1 of the overall scope of work. Staff have been implementing this plan as noted in the items below.

2. Notifying plan review authorities of the plan update and summarizing responses

The official notification letter was sent to plan review authorities in April 2022. Responses were submitted by BWSR, MN Pollution Control Agency, MN Department of Natural Resources, Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, and Three Rivers Park District. Individual response letters can be found here: www.bassettcreekwmo.org/document/2025-plan-update.

3. Gathering input from BCWMC member cities regarding priority issues, including:

- a. Input from city technical staff gathered by Commission staff
- b. Input from city councils/commissions gathered via commissioners and/or city staff

Input from city staff, councils, and city commissions was sought last spring and early summer. A [Plan Update factsheet, plan process graphic, and questionnaire](#) were developed for use by city staff. Most cities provided input, which was presented at a Commission workshop in July 2022 (see below) and will be used by the Plan Steering Committee and commissioners to prioritize issues and set goals.

4. Hosting Commission workshop to kickoff Plan update process and identify overarching watershed issues and future implementation strategies, opportunities, and challenges

This [workshop was held in July 2022](#) and resulted in a list of issues where more information was needed to better understand the issue and the possible role for the Commission to address. This information led directly to the scope of work for Phase 2 of the Plan Update scope (see below).

5. Hosting an “Equity in Watershed Management” workshop

This workshop was held in April 2022 to learn how equity principles (like diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA)) can be incorporated and addressed within watershed management. The event featured speakers from multiple organizations and small group discussions. The agenda, presentations, and documents are available at: <https://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/document/2025-plan-update>.

6. Hosting an on-line survey to gather input from residents and various stakeholder groups

The [online survey](#) was open June 2022 – January 2023 (and was recently reopened at the request of Minneapolis neighborhoods). Results through January were summarized and presented at the February 2023 Public Open House. Additional results will be gathered and summarized in the coming weeks and months.

7. Meeting with members of underrepresented community groups

Progress on reaching these community groups has been slower than hoped. The Administrator and/or Minneapolis commissioners attended a few neighborhood association meetings but, aside from gathering some survey responses, very little input was received. In December 2022, the Commission approved a policy for compensating community members for their participation in focus group meetings or individual interviews. We are hosting a focus group meeting on April 22nd with residents in the Jordan neighborhood. We are still in discussions with leadership of the Harrison Neighborhood Association and Northside Residents Redevelopment Council on how best to engage with residents in those areas.

8. Engaging the public at partner/community events (as health restrictions allow)

The following meetings, events, and outreach mechanisms were attended by commissioners, TAC members, and/or Commission staff to relay information about the BCWMC, the plan development process, and to promote the online survey.

- Haha Wakapadan Community Event, Golden Valley, 6/4/2022
- Electric Vehicle Showcase, Golden Valley, 6/16/2022
- National Night Out, Medicine Lake, 8/2/2022
- Plymouth Kids Fest, Plymouth, 8/4/2022
- Jordan Area Community Council Event with Metro Blooms, Minneapolis, 9/8/2022

- Elim Church Harvest & Creation Care Celebration, Robbinsdale, 9/25/2022
- Golden Valley Sustainability Fair, Golden Valley, 9/25/2022
- Sun Sailor article, multiple cities, 9/8/2022
- Sun Post guest column, multiple cities, 9/15/2022
- Northside Resident Redevelopment Council Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, 10/17/2022
- New Hope City Days, New Hope, 11/1/2022
- Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Assoc Board Meeting, Minneapolis, 11/9/2022
- Jordan Area Community Council Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, 11/15/2022
- Northside Resident Redevelopment Council Board Meeting, Minneapolis, 11/21/2022

Commissioners, TAC members, and/or Commission staff will continue to attend meetings and events throughout the plan development process.

9. Hosting a public kickoff/initial planning meeting

The public open house was held February 28, 2023 at the Golden Valley Library. Thirty-four residents, stakeholders and partners joined twenty-two commissioners, staff, and TAC members at the event to learn about the BCWMC and lend their input. See the full report in this meeting packet (Item 5Cii).

10. Summarizing stakeholder input and hosting a Commission issue prioritization workshop

This workshop of the whole Commission is tentatively slated for the June Commission meeting or later in June, depending on the wishes and schedules of commissioners. The PSC will tackle this activity first (refine and prioritize issues) and will bring recommendations to the whole Commission at this workshop.

11. Establishing a Planning Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for input throughout Plan development

A Planning TAC that includes member city staff, plan review authority staff from state agencies, Hennepin County, Metropolitan Council, and other technical partners (such as Three Rivers Park District and Minneapolis Park and Rec Board) identified by the Commission will be convened this summer.

Phase 2: Pre-Plan work to address challenging issues

As part of the 2025 Watershed Management Plan (Plan) update, several complex issues should be evaluated to determine the appropriate role for the Commission. These are issues that are estimated to require consideration beyond the scope of a typical Plan update due to their complexity, emerging nature, or other factors. In September 2022, the Commission approved the [scope and budget for Phase 2](#), which was based on results of the July 11, 2022 Commission workshop.

Gaps Analysis

A gaps analysis was completed in May 2022. Results were presented at the July 2022 Commission Workshop (and included with [workshop materials](#)). The matrix below provides a qualitative comparison of 1) the relative effort or complexity to address each gap, and 2) the relative priority to address each gap as estimated by Commission staff. Priority level is subject to further discussion by the Commission.

		Priority to address		
		Low	Medium	High
Complexity / difficulty to address	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community BMP grants 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEI CIP process Chloride pollution H&H modeling and mapping Linear project requirements
	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WBIF policies Grant funding for flood risk reduction Sediment deltas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ALS management Buffer standard implementation Impaired waters and TMDLs Update priority waterbodies Assess organizational capacity* Stream health assessment Bassett Creek Valley Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal measurability* Progress assessment* Water quality modeling Climate change and precipitation trends Education program
	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance standards documentation Groundwater mgmt. roles Shoreline habitat monitoring NPDES construction stormwater permit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infiltration guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetland priority areas*

* Plan content requirement per Minnesota Rules 8410

Challenging Issues and Linear Project Standards

Many of the challenging issues will be considered through the general development of issues, goals, policies and programs as the Plan development unfolds. Other challenging issues are more technical and require the analysis and investigation by the Commission Engineers and TAC. Analyses continue for many of the technically challenging issues (listed below). A report on the outcomes of the analyses will be presented at the first PSC meeting to aid in refining and prioritizing issues.

Technically challenging issues:

- Assess impacts of climate change on water resources and build climate resiliency
- Strategies to address chloride pollution
- Water quality standards for linear projects
- Stormwater management in Bassett Creek Valley
- Programs to manage or restore riparian areas
- Evaluate stream health to address biotic impairments

Regarding the complex issue of linear project standards - options for possibly updating the Commission's standards for linear projects were presented at the February 2023 Commission meeting after initial input from the TAC. After some discussion of the options, commissioners requested the addition of advantages and disadvantages to each option so they could better rank their preference. At a subsequent TAC meeting, city staff provided further input on the options and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Due to the complexity of the issue and numerous options to consider, staff recommends that the PSC first review the information and bring a recommendation to the full Commission.

Phase 3: Development of the draft Plan document

Although some preliminary Phase 3 work has begun (developing plan format and layout), the concentrated work in this phase will begin in earnest upon the completion of the Commission issue identification and prioritization workshop. Additional Phase 3 work related to the land and water resource inventory will occur in preparation for PSC and Commission meetings/workshops.