

Minutes

Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee



Meeting date: June 18, 2025

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

- ☒ Chair, Wendy Wulff, Met Council
- ☒ Jeff Berg, Dept of Agriculture
- ☒ Pooja Kanwar, DNR
- ☒ Erik Smith, MPCA

- ☐ Tiffany Determan, Isanti County
- ☐ Rich Hibbard, Saint Paul Regional Water Services
- ☐ Julie Jeppson, Anoka SWCD
- ☒ Valerie Neppl, Dakota County

- ☒ Annika Bankston, Minneapolis
- ☒ Brad Larson, Savage
- ☒ Kevin Watson, Vadnais Heights
- ☒ = present

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

Call to order

Committee Chair Wulff called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee to order at 12:02 p.m.

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment was read by Chair Wulff.

Agenda approved

Chair Wulff noted that without a quorum a few items would not be able to be approved. Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Approval of minutes

No quorum being present, approval of the February 26, 2025, and December 11, 2024 minutes were tabled for the next meeting.

Business items

1. Bylaws update (Jen Kostrzewski)

Kostrzewski noted that the approval of the Bylaws would be brought back to the December 10, 2025 meeting due to a lack of a quorum.

2. Appointment of new TAC member (Greg Johnson)

Due to a lack of quorum, the appointment would be tabled until the December 10, 2025, meeting. Johnson noted that there are three openings and gave an update on potential candidates.

3. Convene the TAC Appointment Working Group for remaining vacancies (Greg Johnson)

Johnson asked for three volunteers for the TAC Appointment Working Group. Annika Bankston, Erik Smith, and Pooja Kanwar volunteered.

Information items and committee work

1. White Bear Lake Area Comprehensive Plan project update and connections to regional policy and local planning (Greg Johnson, Judy Sventek)

Sventek and Johnson gave a presentation on the White Bear Lake Area Comprehensive Plan project update and connections to regional policy and local planning as outlined in the materials/presentation provided.

Johnson reviewed current and upcoming studies being done. He also reviewed milestones and status of the next steps as listed in the presentation. He noted a link will be sent to committee members.

2. Update on technical projects to support the Water Policy Plan (Greg Johnson)

Johnson gave an update on technical projects to support the Water Policy Plan as outlined in the materials provided. Lanya Ross added that a summary of agency input on regional groundwater model update was included in the meeting materials provided.

3. System Statements and minimum requirements (Steve Christopher, Lanya Ross)

Christopher gave a presentation on system statements and their minimum requirements outlined in the presentation and materials provided.

The group discussed where the minimum requirements come from. Staff noted that system statement content and minimum requirements come from regional policy and statute where appropriate; staff will work to clearly articulate those connections. The Met Council is also working to provide guidance to local planners about demonstrated best practices to go beyond minimum requirements. When the Met Council reviews local plans, staff may comment that a local plan is incomplete or inconsistent with regional policy if the minimum requirement is not included or is not consistent with regional policy or state statute. Staff may also offer advisory comments recommending best practices that go beyond minimum requirements, but those are advisory only.

4. Local Planning Handbook and PlanIt update (Steve Christopher, Jen Kostrzewski, Peter Miller)

Christopher gave a presentation on the Local Planning Handbook and Plan It update. He introduced a summer Intern Peter Miller who will help with this work. Also introduced was Lila Franklin, a new Senior Water Resource Planner.

The Committee was asked to review Water Supply minimum requirements (copies provided) and to discuss as small groups and provide feedback.

The following notes were shared by committee members as notes on the discussion worksheets:

Comments about surface water minimum requirements

- Surface water minimum requirements seem somewhat stormwater-centric. Should there also be more about surface water resources? Example: Innovation(?), TMDLs, MS4, lake management plans, etc.

General comments regarding water supply minimum requirements

- Be sure there is a clear, compelling connection between each minimum requirement and

regional policy and/or state statute.

- Move reference and requirement to be consistent with Met Council forecasts (and what this means for future water demand estimates) to the very first sentence/top.
- Reword “attach and respond to comments...”
- For adjacent communities’ review of neighbors’ water supply/comp plans, can a guidance document be provided to facilitate review and provide comments to respond to? “Guide to providing comments”.
- For Municipal community public water supplies: Forecasted water demand by wholesale customers for 2030, 2040, 2050. Timing of forecasts by wholesale customers to roll up into suppliers’ forecasts.

Comments about source water protection

General comments

- Watershed Management Organizations may have sub-watershed plans that address (some of) these questions, too. Ask this? Acknowledge amount of DWSMA/SWPA outside of official controls. How do county groundwater plans fit it?
- Don’t questions 1-3 apply, regardless of overlap?
- Provide “Stories from the Source”, from MDH

Minimum requirement 1.1

- Clarify where “likely water supply quality risks by land use type” supplied from. What is the source of this information? Are typical land use changes correlated to growth projections or is it too random?

Minimum requirement 2

- Drinking Water Supply Management areas for surface water sources (DWSMA-SW) is at the HUC 12 watershed scale. Those DWSMAs are outside the community boundary/jurisdiction. Consider focusing on spill management areas (24-hour time of travel, 500 feet from source) and Emergency Response Area (8-hour time of travel).
- Minneapolis and St. Paul Regional Water Services’ large surface water systems DWSMA-SW will extend to far northwest extent and beyond the 7-county metro. Should limits regarding risks to water quality from development be limited to communities in Spill Management Areas?

Minimum requirement 3.3

- Consider adding tools as well as fiscal and collaboration to the requirement.

Minimum requirement 3.4

- Clarify – is this typical? Would they need to be directed to add this specific information? Or would it be generally addressed across all “addressing potential...issues”

Minimum requirement 4

- Clarify if this includes if the city’s DWSMA extends into a neighboring community (beyond land use control boundaries). Is the Met Council or MDH offering support for areas that have overlapping DWSMAs? Provide examples of collaborating and shared policies/plans between adjoining political units.

Comments about privately owned wells and non-municipal water supply systems

General comments

- Should private well types be itemized and distinguished regarding use (i.e., domestic water supply versus industrial, irrigation, etc.)?

- Be cautious to respect local authority and its limits. Consider differences in perspectives like League of Minnesota Cities, MDH, others.
- Consider local examples such as Woodbury private well ordinance, others.

Minimum requirement 1

- Clarify what is meant by non-municipal water supply systems. Is this another community supply such as for manufactured home parks, large water users, other? I like that this requirement makes communities think about protecting private well drinking water. May need to identify if this is just domestic use, irrigation, etc. Provide examples of what other communities are doing to protect private well water quality. This also applies to water quantity (making sure well interference doesn't occur). I am thinking about cities that have private wells and have data centers proposed – this is coming up as a concern.

Municipal community public water supply systems

Minimum requirement 1 under 'Because your community is served by a municipal community public water supply'

- Will groundwater modeling be available to show supporting aquifer/surface water quantity?

Minimum requirement 4.3 under 'Because your community is served by a municipal community public water supply'

- What if they have a significant difference with the Met Council forecasts (e.g. new high water user industry is proposed)?
- Share information about data center possibilities?
- Minimum requirement 4.5.1 under 'Because your community is served by a municipal community public water supply'
- Call out redundancy and back-up planning for water supply operations.

Minimum requirement 4.6

- Provide a definition: look for 20-year Capital Improvement Plan or higher level(?) regarding new connections, new appropriations, major treatment improvements that enable withdrawals from a new source or continued use of existing.
- Will there be a definition of "new water supply infrastructure"?
- Does the Met Council want 20-year capital improvement plans with renewal or rehab projects? Or is the Met Council looking for "big" projects that enable new or expanded sources of drinking water?
- Requesting strategies to implement goals and policies in addition to the goals and strategies seems like a lot of overreach. Make minimum requirement 3 and 3.1 a "go beyond the minimum"?

Minimum requirement 1 under 'Because your community gets water from a neighbor as part or all of the primary supply'

- Relate to redundancy and contingency plan.
- Ask for back-up planning/redundancy in water supply.

The following highlights from their small group discussions were reported out to the full committee:

- Regarding emergency preparedness, it was suggested to reframe as back-up or redundancy planning for water supply; this recommendation also applies for communities who get water from a neighboring jurisdiction and water is unavailable at some point.
- Tools for strategies and actions would be helpful.

- Include the Met Council forecasts at the beginning, front and center.
- Source water protection minimum requirement 1.1 should have resources that help planners associate land use changes with water supply risks. Minnesota Department of Health may have some resources to support this.
- Municipal Public Water Supply Systems minimum requirement 4 may raise questions for local planners. Think about what information may be needed to evaluate the difference between current capacity and future need, particularly related to uncertainty about future water needs such as potential new high-volume users. Staff stated they are working on resources.
- What if there is a significant difference between current capacity and future demand? The Met Council and DNR should provide clear guidance about what plan expectations would be in that case. (i.e., Rosemount gaining data centers using a high amount of water.) Staff discussed how the DNR's local water supply plan template, particularly content related to alternative water supply sources, will help address that.
- What is the requirement for water demand from the Met Council? Staff clarified that the Met Council does not have specific requirements regarding water demand; the Met Council only requires that water demand be estimated by the community in a way that is consistent with the Met Council forecasts for population, employment, and households. While the Met Council has provided estimates of future water demand for communities to use if they choose, communities are not required to use those estimates and may develop their own. Staff will work to include this messaging in guidance.
- Consider how the DWSMA minimum requirements will apply to communities like Minneapolis/St. Paul, who use surface water for drinking water supply and whose DWSMAs are watershed-based, different from groundwater-supplied communities. Think about guidance to improve alignment between water supply and surface water plans. MDH staff shared that there will soon be an update to Minneapolis and St. Paul's DWSMAs: Phase 1 – looking at water quality; Phase 2 – looking at implementation.

Ross discussed a request, from the Local Planning Assistance team leading the Local Planning Handbook update, for the top 5 resources that would be useful for local planners to develop a good water supply plan. Committee members shared:

- Access to other communities' and watersheds' data or their plans.
- Condition assessment of existing infrastructure and knowing what needs replacement, fixing, expansion, and how to pay for it all – especially in communities without a lot of growth. How to do repairs so they don't have water main breaks?
- Information about how different parts of the comprehensive plan and their related state requirements intersect and conflict. For example: how watershed organization priorities and requirements conflict with meeting housing needs coming from the state. This may be particularly challenging in suburban edge communities with both rural and urban development.
- Groundwater information sharing (including water quality) to inform new water management strategies (well locations, watershed management, etc.)
- Information to inform communities who are considering groundwater recharge, including how it may conflict with plans to increase density.

Updates

1. Government affairs and legislative update (Judy Sventek)

Reported at the beginning of the meeting that the Met Council will be getting an additional

\$750,000 for the White Bear Lake Project.

2. Committee member round robin (All)

Ross talked about the great work being done in their organizations and asked members if they have anything they'd like to share.

Question asked about large water use guidance. Kostrzewski discussed a 20–30-page report coming out with a fact sheet (for quick reference) that will be user friendly. They are using Dakota County as a case study, but it will reflect the entire region.

Ross discussed the MN Ground Water Association Conference that was very good and noted that a recording and slides can be provided.

3. MAWSAC Chair updates (Wendy Wulff)

Chair Wulff presented a certificate of participation for Jeff Berg who will be retiring and thanked him for his service to this committee.

Next steps

1. Next meetings:

- All-subregion workshop – TBD (November 2025)
- Joint meeting of MAWSAC and TAC – December 10, 2025

Staff noted that a quorum will be needed at the December 10th meeting and will be sending out a survey of meeting preferences, to maximize attendance.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee meeting of June 16, 2025.

Approved this 10th day December 2025.

Council contact:

Sandi Dingle, Recording Secretary
Sandi.dingle@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1312

