

Business Item 2025-05

Joint Meeting of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Policy and Technical Advisory Committees (MAWSAC and TAC)



Meeting Date: December 10, 2025

Topic

Additional information to provide examples of 2025 MAWSAC and TAC accomplishments and influence on regional water supply planning-related efforts, in support of committee discussion of 2026-2027 work plan.

District(s), Member(s): All
Policy/Legal Reference: Minnesota Statute 473.1565
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Division/Department: Environmental Services, Water Resources

Background

The Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (MAWSAC) and its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) assist the Metropolitan Council with regional water supply planning. In 2025, their guidance directly shaped how the Council implemented updated regional water policy.

This report highlights examples of how MAWSAC and TAC informed the Council's work in 2025.

Ensured diverse perspectives on MAWSAC and TAC

Filled vacancies on MAWSAC

The following new members joined MAWSAC: Will Bomier (Department of Agriculture), Steve Bot (City of St. Michael), Marcus Culver (City of Brooklyn Park), Chris Elvrum (Department of Health), Gary Gray (Sherburne County), Ashlee Ricci (Chisago County) and David Strub (City of Hugo). An orientation meeting was held for new MAWSAC members on October 31, 2025.

Departed Members

We extend our sincere appreciation to the members of MAWSAC and TAC who have stepped down over the past year. Their dedication, insights, and contributions have played a vital role in advancing our shared goals. We are grateful for the time and expertise they generously offered, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors: Jeff Berg, Sandeep Burman, and Ray Wuolo.

Approved the Metro Area Water Supply Plan as part of the 2050 Water Policy Plan

Minnesota statute 473.1565 directs MAWSAC to approve a metropolitan area master water supply plan. On February 12, 2025, the Met Council adopted the MAWSAC-approved [Metro Area Water Supply Plan](#) as part of [Imagine 2050](#) and the [2050 Water Policy Plan](#). MAWSAC had previously approved the Metro Area Water Supply Plan in 2024.

Supported continued subregional engagement on water planning

In the MAWSAC-approved Metro Water Supply Plan, MAWSAC and TAC supported work planning and implementation for subregional water supply groups, using subregional chapters of the Metro Area Water Supply Plan as a foundation.

With MAWSAC and TAC's guidance, Metropolitan Council engaged subregional groups in 2023-2024 which provided critical input for the Metro Area Water Supply Plan chapter of the 2050 Water Policy Plan.

In 2025, subregional engagement has pivoted to supporting local planning collaboration and implementation. Subregional groups were convened in all seven subregions. Approximately 123 people participated in one or more events. 47 cities and townships were represented along with 29 non-community organizations such as watersheds, counties, state agencies, consulting firms, private large-volume water users, nonprofit/advocacy groups, and one tribe.

Brought MAWSAC perspective to White Bear Lake Comprehensive Plan Work Group

Minnesota Laws 2023, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 5(f) establishes the White Bear Lake Comprehensive Plan Work Group. The Met Council was assigned the task of forming a work group consisting of representatives from 14 communities in the White Bear Lake area, DNR, MPCA, MDH, St. Paul Regional Water Services, and the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (MAWSAC).

MAWSAC member Phil Klein (City of Hugo) served as the MAWSAC rep until December 2024.

The workgroup began meeting in early 2024 to start the planning process for the White Bear Lake Area Comprehensive Plan and has held eight additional quarterly meetings since then. The workgroup has identified numerous potential solutions that are being evaluated with eighteen individual studies. Ten of the studies have either been initiated or completed to date. The study results will serve as the basis to complete the comprehensive plan to identify a long-term sustainable solution for the White Bear Lake area to serve existing and future growth. The workgroup will continue collecting information and complete the remaining individual studies to determine cost implications and the effectiveness of the proposed solutions to help inform the comprehensive plan. The final plan will be submitted to the Legislature by June 30th, 2027.

Brought MAWSAC/TAC perspectives into collaboration among state water agencies

Aligned Met Council, DNR and MDH planning expectations ("3 Plans" Coordination)

MAWSAC and TAC provided input to a collaborative effort by the Met Council, Minnesota Departments of Health (MDH) and Natural Resources (DNR) to align local water supply plan expectations and technical assistance at meetings on [January 9, 2024](#), [March 12, 2024](#), and [June 18, 2024](#). That work continued throughout 2025.

Water supply stakeholders have repeatedly requested more agency coordination and streamlined or consolidated planning processes. Minnesota Statutes 473.1565 charges MAWSAC and TAC to assist the Metropolitan Council with planning activities that include making recommendations for clarifying the appropriate roles and responsibilities of local, regional, and state government in metropolitan area water supply and for streamlining and consolidating metropolitan area water supply decision-making and approval processes.

Minnesota Departments of Health (MDH) and Natural Resources (DNR) and Metropolitan Council (MC) are all responsible for supporting the region's diverse water supply stakeholders. One of the primary ways these organizations accomplished this is by directing communities and public water suppliers to develop and implement local plans that sustainably manage water supplies. Each organization has a different focus, different planning timelines, and different staff and financial capacities, but all are closely related.

In 2023, DNR, MC, and MDH began an effort to set a clear vision for what DNR, MC, and MDH can do together through their local planning responsibilities to secure a safe and sustainable water supply—for today and for future generations. In addition to a shared vision, this effort also clarified roles and functions for each organization and established a structure to ensure coordinated support for planning.



In 2024, MAWSAC and TAC input helped to shape the scope of work the agencies' collaborative work, better aligned the draft Metro Area Water Supply plan content with Met Council, DNR and MDH local plan expectations, and informed shared definitions to be used in guidance and technical assistance.

In 2025, guided by input from MAWSAC and TAC, the Met Council, DNR, and MDH worked together to align their agencies' water supply planning guidance to local governments. MDH is working on a new web page to better support source water protection as part of metro region comprehensive planning ([coming soon!](#)), and DNR is working on updated guidance, tools, templates, and planning information for local water supply plan updates (to be included on their [website](#), which is being updated).

Informed and promoted projects that support the committees' recommendations

In 2025, MAWSAC and TAC provided input on regional technical projects to implement the MAWSAC-approved and Met Council-adopted Metro Area Water Supply Plan (regional action plan).

Proposed new projects

A proposed list of projects was shared at the joint MAWSAC-TAC meeting on [February 26, 2025](#) and input was used to refine and prioritize potential projects. TAC discussed in more detail at their [May 21, 2025 meeting](#), and MAWSAC was updated at their [June 18, 2025 meeting](#). These regional projects and estimated timeframes include the following:

1. Municipal drinking water infrastructure needs (2025-2027)
2. Groundwater elevations database coordination with DNR (2025-2027)
3. Water and wastewater reuse potential (2025-2027)
4. Regional assessment of aging infrastructure (2025-2027)
5. Regional groundwater model update (2025-2027) - **STARTED**
6. Groundwater-surface water interaction effects and impacts (2025-2027)
7. Potential groundwater impacts from future large industrial users (2025-2027)
8. Historical water use database (2025-2027)
9. Long-term analysis: Groundwater capacity, resource limitations, vulnerability, and growth (2026-2028)
10. Long-term effects of climate change on water supplies (2026-2028)
11. Local planning handbook content regarding water supply (2025) - **STARTED**
12. Guidance for funding opportunities to support local plan implementation (2025)
13. PlanIt Programming regarding water supply (2025-2027) - **STARTED**

Continuation of Multi-Community Wellhead Protection Planning Pilot in the West Metro

In the MAWSAC-approved Metro Area Water Supply Plan, MAWSAC and TAC reiterated a priority identified in their [2022 report](#) to the Met Council and Legislature: ongoing support for collaborative source water protection planning.

Because stakeholders in the west metro had repeatedly expressed interest in working together on shared wellhead protection planning, the Metropolitan Council, MDH and west metro water supply stakeholders undertook a [pilot project](#) that began with a Met Council-funded groundwater model for Drinking Water Supply Management Area delineation and vulnerability assessment (Part 1 of the Wellhead Protection Plan). The Met Council directed part of its Clean Water Fund appropriation to



support this work.

When the MDH approved the state's first shared Drinking Water Supply Management area, communities then embarked on Part 2 of their shared Wellhead Protection Plan: implementation planning. This work is currently underway and is being co-led by the MDH and the Minnesota Rural Water Association.

Continuation of Industrial Water Conservation with the Minnesota Technical Assistance and Intern Program

In the MAWSAC-approved Metro Area Water Supply Plan, MAWSAC and TAC identified the value in the need for normalizing consciousness of water conservation and efficiency and building public support.

Following that recommendation, Metropolitan Council continues a successful, collaborative partnership with the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP) at the University of Minnesota, working together to address the metro-area need for industrial sector water use efficiency awareness and water use reductions. This includes MnTAP technical assistance and the MnTAP Intern Program to assist businesses with identification and implementation of water efficiency projects.

Since the partnership began, MnTAP has worked with numerous operations in the metro providing a range of practical suggestions to improve industrial water efficiency. Since the program started, MnTAP, with Metropolitan Council support, has made hundreds of water efficiency recommendations representing potential annual water savings of over 500 million gallons per year.

To learn more please visit the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program's [Water Stewardship page](#).

Continuation of Partnership with University of Minnesota Turfgrass Science Program

In the MAWSAC-approved Metro Area Water Supply Plan, MAWSAC and TAC identified the value in the need for normalizing consciousness of water conservation and efficiency and building public support.

Following that direction, Metropolitan Council continues to partner with the University of Minnesota Turfgrass Science Program. In 2024, the Metropolitan Council authorized its Regional Administrator to execute a contract amendment with the University of Minnesota for continuation of educating citizens of the Twin Cities metro area about lawn water conservation by reinforcing current outreach efforts and creating new educational materials for homeowners in the form of online videos, signs, pamphlets, and in-person workshops. The current contract amendment with the University of Minnesota includes funding for four seed mixture trial sites located across the metro region. These trials will determine the most drought tolerant seed mixes with the end goal of distributing them to the major sellers in the metro region so they can be purchased by residents and contractors. This work continued in 2025.

To learn more, please visit the University of Minnesota's [Irrigation Resources page](#).

Continuation of the Water Efficiency Grant Program

In the MAWSAC-approved Metro Area Water Supply Plan, MAWSAC and TAC identified the value in the need for normalizing consciousness of water conservation and efficiency and building public support.

In 2025, Metropolitan Council continued to administer a Clean Water Fund-supported [water efficiency grant program](#) that provides grants to communities to support the purchase and installation of products that reduce water use.

Forty-one communities are participating in the 2024-2026 program; they were awarded a total of \$1,097,880. Six communities are participating in the 2025-2026 Equity-Focused Water Efficiency Grant Pilot Program and were awarded a total of \$169,720. Since the program started in 2016, it has incentivized the replacement and assessment of water using-devices with greater than 21,000



water-efficient alternatives through city and township programs, when implemented save an estimated 250+ million gallons of water each year (totals represent grant activity through September 2025).

Shaped Met Council's local planning assistance to help achieve success outlined in Metro Area Water Supply Plan

Minnesota statutes 473.1565 directs MAWSAC, with input from TAC, to make recommendations to streamline the planning process. The Met Council staff providing local planning assistance were guided by the information in the MAWSAC-approved Metro Area Water Supply Plan and the rest of the 2050 Water Policy Plan. This effort will support local plan updates and implementation that align with and advance regional water policies and achieve success as described in the Metro Area Water Supply Plan.

System statements included updated water supply information

At MAWSAC's [June 18, 2025 meeting](#), the committee reviewed proposed water supply content for system statements, as well as surface water and wastewater content.

[2025 System Statements](#) which individually identify how each community is affected by the Metropolitan Council's policy plans for regional systems were distributed in September 2025.

The system statement is a customized document informing each community how it is affected by the Metropolitan Council's newly adopted plans for regional systems – transportation, aviation, water resources, and regional parks and trails. System statements include information about water supply, which reflects the MAWSAC-approved Metro Area Water Supply Plan and the rest of the 2050 Water Policy Plan.

Local planning handbook includes updated guidance for water planning

In September 2025, the Met Council's [Local Planning Handbook](#) was updated, including [water supply content](#). The Local Planning Handbook update included minimum requirements for water supply, which reflects input from MAWSAC ([June 18, 2025 meeting](#)). The Local Planning Handbook will continue to be updated in 2026. Planned additions include:

- More detailed guidance for meeting water supply minimum requirements,
- A template for a local comprehensive plan water chapter, including what water supply content to include
- Factsheets to understand the review process for water supply and to support review by adjacent and affected jurisdictions

MAWSAC and TAC will continue to be engaged based on their interest.

