

Minutes

White Bear Lake Area Comprehensive Plan Work Group



Meeting Date: April 2, 2026 **Time:** 12:30 – 4:00 PM

Location: Peder Pedersen Pavilion at Lions Volunteer Park - 5524 Upper 146th St N., Hugo, MN

Members Present:

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| ✓ Bryan Bear, City of Hugo | ✓ Paul Kauppi, City of White Bear Lake | ✓ Jason Moeckel, DNR |
| ✓ Clark Schroeder, City of Lake Elmo | ✓ Mary Van Milligen, City of Woodbury | ✓ Greg Johnson, Metropolitan Council |
| ✓ Mike Grochala, City of Lino Lakes | ✓ Larry Poppler, White Bear Township | ✓ Judy Sventek, Metropolitan Council |
| ✓ Morgan Dawley, City of North St. Paul | ✓ David Weum, Department of Health | ✓ Sam Paske, Metropolitan Council |
| ✓ Chris Volkers, City of Oakdale | ✓ Dave Strub, Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee | ✓ Jen Kostrzewski, Metropolitan Council |
| ✓ Shawn Sanders, City of Stillwater | ✓ Liz Kaufenberg, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency | ✓ John Chelbeck, Metropolitan Council |
| ✓ Jim Hauth, City of Vadnais Heights | | |

Alternate Members Present:

- ✓ Brian Bachmeier, City of Oakdale

Call to Order

Judy Sventek called the meeting of the White Bear Lake Comprehensive Plan Work Group to order at 12:30 p.m.

Agenda Approved

Work Group members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Information Items and Committee Work

1. Welcome and introductions (Della Young, Young Environmental)
Della Young from Young Environmental welcomed the group.
2. Schedule and summary of projects completed to date (Greg Johnson, Met Council)
Greg Johnson from Met Council provided an update on current studies, upcoming studies, and the overall project timeline. The study reports will be included in the appendix of the comprehensive plan with a summary table. There were no questions from the work group on the project schedule.

3. Amended Study 1 – Redirect stormwater to augment White Bear Lake (Mat Cox, Kimley-Horn)
Mat Cox from Kimley Horn presented an update on Study 1, which was amended to include Bald Eagle Lake, Centerville Lake, Ramsey/Washington Counties Ditch 1, and flood prone areas of Grant as possible surface water sources to augment White Bear Lake. Work group members asked about impacts to water quality from the different water sources, cost of water quality treatment, and the type of contaminants treated. They indicated interest in further investigating surface water augmentation of White Bear Lake from Bald Eagle Lake and ensuring that there are no detrimental effects to downstream water bodies.
4. Study 9B – Model and evaluate raising White Bear Lake outlet elevation update – (Mat Cox, Kimley-Horn)
Mat Cox from Kimley-Horn presented updated Study 9B providing further information on potential impacts from raising the outlet elevation of White Bear Lake. He provided updates on potentially purchasing many easements within or near the 100-year flood plain and the impacts on structures within the floodplain. Cox noted this option is not recommended due to challenges with increasing the discharge rate to mitigate increase in modeled high-water levels of White Bear Lake and the high costs associated with purchasing the many easements within the 100-year flood plain that would be at risk with a raised lake outlet elevation. The work group members asked questions about flood impacts, chances of a problematic flooding, and impacts of different outlet elevation levels. The work group decided not to study this option any further but to keep it as an option for further consideration when all projects are compared to each other near the end of the study period.
5. Study 10 – Lawn watering restrictions policies and smart irrigation controller implementation (Emily Schabert, Kimley-Horn)
Emily Schabert from Kimley-Horn presented on lawn watering restrictions (day of week and time) for each of the communities. Schabert described different policies for lawn watering restrictions, types of smart irrigation controller devices and water savings, monitoring and enforcement, and recommendations. Work group members asked questions about how the estimated water savings would improve lake levels, lifespan of irrigation controllers, and accuracy of data. Greg Johnson noted that the DNR will be modeling and estimating the improvements to the White Bear Lake water elevations for each of the proposed solutions that could save groundwater if implemented.
6. Study 13 – Potential water savings from alternative low input turf grasses (Uma Vempati, Kimley-Horn)
Uma Vempati from Kimley-Horn presented on the different types of low input turfgrasses, potential water savings, and estimated costs. Vempati highlighted recommendations to match turf type to the type of traffic an area receives, adjust irrigation practices, and to consider installing low input turf grasses in existing development areas in addition to passing city ordinances that require it to be used in future development areas.
7. Potential funding sources/methods survey results (Greg Johnson, Met Council)
Greg Johnson from Met Council summarized the survey results from the work group about potential funding sources and methods. Based on Met Council's discussion with Representative Peter Fischer, he noted the legislature is expecting the work group to evaluate multiple funding options, including water rates, if a solution is not fully funded by the state or other sources. Johnson stated that an average rate increase across the entire White Bear Lake area region can be calculated for each of the potential solutions being evaluated, in lieu of evaluating community specific water rate increases. A significant portion of the work group advocated for a statewide solution since there are other areas of the state facing similar water

issues and local support is more likely if it's a state-level priority rather than a localized tax on a small group of communities.

8. A work group member discussed concerns about the legislature's process and how cities were selected for the work group, legal concerns about taxation and benefits, the consequences of inaction and the role of various entities. Johnson responded that it was Met Council's understanding that the communities that influence White Bear Lake from their long-term municipal well pumping were selected for the work group by the legislature.
9. Representative Fischer outlined some potential legislative options for pursuing funding of a solution with a statewide approach and noted that if the work group cannot come to a decision that ultimately there could be judicial action. Sventek stressed that upcoming meetings of the work group will be utilized to move the group towards consensus in the final report and requested patience as the work group moves through different phases of the project. Another work group member emphasized that the enormous cost and timeline of the proposed solutions is a major barrier. Some members highlighted the need to consider water quality goals and the need to account for private well owners in potential fee systems solutions. One work group member emphasized the need for a more formal decision-making process and clearer recommendations and documentation of what the work group does and does not approve. They also emphasized the importance of identifying realistic funding options that support continued community growth.
10. Project Expenditures, questions, and next steps (Judy Sventek, Met Council)
Judy Sventek from Met Council provided an update on how much of the budget has been allocated for current studies and other project expenses to date.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

Next Steps

1. Next meeting: July 16, 2026, at The Rookery Activity Center in Lino Lakes

Met Council contacts:

Judy Sventek – Manager, Water Resources
Judy.Sventek@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1156

Greg Johnson – Principal Engineer, Water Resources
Greg.Johnson@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1016

