

Water Resources Policy Plan Overall Goals and Policy

Thrive MSP 2040 Water Sustainability Direction:

The region's water resources are sustainable, supported by a regional strategy that balances growth and protection to improve and maintain the quality and quantity of water in our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater.

The Council will work with state, local and regional partners to provide for sustainable water resources through effective water supply, surface water, and wastewater planning and management.

Water Supply Sustainability Goal:

To provide adequate and high quality ground and surface water supplies to protect public health and support economic growth and development by optimizing surface water and groundwater use, conservation, reuse, and aquifer recharge.

Surface Water Sustainability Goal:

To maintain and improve the quality of the region's rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands to support habitat and ecosystem health and provide for recreational opportunities, which are essential to our region's quality of life.

Water Supply Policies and Strategies

Policy on Regional Growth:

The Council shall support and plan for the sustainable use of water sources to ensure that supplies of potable water are sufficient for the region's current population and projected growth.

Implementation Strategies:

- Update the Twin Cities metropolitan area Master Water Supply Plan which provides the framework for coordinated water supply planning.
- Review local water supply plans to ensure consistency with the Twin Cities metropolitan area Master Water Supply Plan.
- Promote water conservation measures.
- Provide technical assistance to local units of government in the development of local water supply plans, wellhead protection plans, and in reviewing water appropriation permits and aquifer recharge projects.

Policy on Assessing and Protecting Water Supplies:

The Council shall support technical assessments and planning activities that protect and enhance the quantity and quality of the region's source water.

Implementation Strategies:

- Assess the use, capacity, quality and vulnerability of the local and sub-regional water supply systems and identify high potential areas for recharge.
- Promote water supply resiliency by increasing surface water use when appropriate.

- Promote the use of best management practices for stormwater to minimize aquifer impacts and maximize groundwater recharge, where practical.
- Encourage low-impact development, land uses, and cooperative water use practices that minimize impacts on aquifers.
- Investigate reusing treated wastewater and, when cost-effective, implement reuse.
- Collaborate with agency partners in developing and implementing Groundwater Management Areas, wellhead protection plans, review of water appropriation permits, and aquifer recharge projects.
- Establish subregional work groups and lead discussions to address water supply limitations.

Policy on Cost-Effectiveness and Funding:

The Council shall support cost-effective investments in multi-community water supply infrastructure to promote sustainable use and protect the region's water supplies.

Implementation Strategies:

- Develop criteria to identify water supply projects with regional benefit.
- Promote equitable cost-sharing structure for regionally-beneficial water supply development projects.
- Support cost-benefit analyses of alternative water supply options.
- Identify funding mechanisms for regionally-beneficial water supply development projects.

Surface Water Management Policies and Strategies

Policy on Watershed Approach:

The Council will work with our partners to develop and implement a regional watershed-based approach that addresses both watershed restoration (improving impaired waters) and protection (maintaining water quality in unimpaired waters).

Implementation Strategies:

- Continue to work with the watershed management structure in the metro area to prepare water management plans that promote the protection and restoration of local and regional water resources (lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater).
- Through the review process for comprehensive plans and local water plans, make water resources management a critical part of land use decisions, planning protocols and procedures to ensure these plans are making progress toward achieving state and regional goals for protection and restoration of water resources. (Appendix C-2 includes the local water plan requirements).
- Provide technical and financial assistance to local governments and other partners on water management activities.
- Provide direction and guidance on best management practices to use for effective surface water management.
- Facilitate discussions on regional issues as need arises.

Policy on Assessing and Protecting Regional Water Resources:

The Council will continue to assess the condition of the region's lakes, rivers, and streams to evaluate impacts on regional water resources and measure success in achieving regional water goals.

Implementation Strategies:

- With our partners, monitor the quality of regional lakes and rivers and quality and flow of regional streams.
- Continue to assess and fill gaps in lake, stream and river data.
- Assess and evaluate long-term water quality trends for the region's lakes, streams, and rivers and identify key issues to be addressed.
- Maintain a regional database that contains water quality, quantity and other water related information collected as part of the Council's monitoring program.
- In partnership with others, research and promote the development of innovative best management practices including low impact development technologies and agricultural best practices.
- Install and monitor innovative nonpoint source reduction practices at Council facilities and support projects that demonstrate new technologies and their effectiveness.
- Investigate the need to develop and/or recommend water monitoring and assessment protocols, and other standard operating procedures for use by partners to move toward consistent regional approaches.

Policy on Cost-Effectiveness:

The Council will balance costs and benefits to protect and restore the region's water resources.

Implementation Strategies:

- Work with federal, state, and local agencies to reduce urban and agricultural non-point source pollution and make improvements to our wastewater treatment facilities to gain the maximum benefit for the money and effort expended.
- Use monitoring data collected by the Council and its partners to assess nonpoint source pollutant "hot spots" in the metro area and target them with improvement projects to obtain the maximum benefit for the money spent.

Wastewater System Policies and Strategies

Policy on Regional Growth:

The Council will use the wastewater system plan to support the orderly and economical development and redevelopment of the metropolitan area. A community's comprehensive plan is expected to accommodate the forecasts and to meet the densities specified in the Council's *Thrive MSP 2040* plan.

A community's comprehensive plan must include:

- a water supply plan that is consistent with the regional water supply master plan

- a local surface water management plan that is consistent with Council policy and does not adversely impact the regional wastewater system, and
- a comprehensive sewer plan that is consistent with the regional wastewater system plan.

Inconsistencies between the local plans and the Council's plans may result in the Council's finding that the community's plan is more likely than not to have a substantial impact on, or contain a substantial departure from, the metropolitan system plan, thus requiring modifications to the local comprehensive plan.

Implementation Strategies:

- Provide a level of wastewater service commensurate with the needs of the growing metropolitan area, and in an environmentally sound manner.
- Provide sufficient capacity in the wastewater system to meet the approved growth projections and long-term service area needs identified in approved local comprehensive sewer plans. Any capital improvements that the Council needs to provide will be scheduled so that the infrastructure is available prior to the need identified in the approved comprehensive sewer plan.
- Potentially implement early land acquisition and work closely with communities to preserve utility corridors when it is necessary to expand its facilities or locate new facilities needed to implement the wastewater system plan.
- Efficiently use existing sewer investments in developing and redeveloping areas.
- Preserve unsewered areas inside the Long-Term Wastewater Service Area for future development that can be sewer ed economically.
- Preserve areas outside the Long-Term Wastewater Service Area for agricultural and rural uses, while protecting significant natural resources, supporting the recharge of groundwater aquifers, and allowing limited unsewered development.
- Extend wastewater service to developing communities based on one of the following criteria:
 - Service area is designed to receive an average flow of at least 500,000 gallons per day or contains at least 1,000 developable acres; or
 - Service area includes at least 90% of the community's long-term wastewater service area.
- Require that all communities currently served by the regional wastewater system shall remain in the system.
- Acquire wastewater treatment plants from developing communities, based upon request through the comprehensive plan and comprehensive sewer plan process.

Policy on Serving the Rural Area:

The Council will acquire wastewater treatment plants owned by Rural Centers, based upon request through the comprehensive plan and comprehensive sewer plan processes, and based upon criteria that ensure regional benefits.

Implementation Strategies:

- Accept the acquisition request only when the following criteria are met:
 - The community accepts the Council's growth forecasts, as well as preserves at least 1,000 developed or developable acres for growth through the land use planning authority of the county or adjacent township(s) or through an orderly annexation agreement or similar mechanism to provide for staged, orderly growth in the surrounding area.
 - The community has adequate water supply.
 - The community has adequate transportation access.
 - The community lies within the long-term wastewater service area or other regional benefits would result, such as economic development unique to the rural area or preservation of high-value water resources.
 - There are feasible and economical options for siting and permitting an expanded wastewater treatment plant, or for extending interceptor service.
- Require that if the most economical and beneficial wastewater service option is to construct a regional interceptor to serve the community, the Council will not acquire the community's wastewater treatment plant, and the community will be responsible for decommissioning its treatment plant.
- Not allow connections to the regional wastewater system outside the sewered rural community. The Council may construct capacity for the long-term needs of the rural and agricultural planning areas, but will not provide service until the Council, in consultation with the appropriate community, designates the area as a developing community and the community amends its comprehensive plan accordingly.

Policy on Private Wastewater Systems:

Communities that permit the construction and operation of subsurface sewage treatment systems and other private wastewater treatment systems within their communities are responsible for ensuring that these systems are installed, maintained, managed, and regulated consistent with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency rules. The Council will not provide financial support to assist communities if these systems fail.

Implementation Strategies:

- The Council will use its review authority for local comprehensive plans to ensure that communities fulfill their current and future obligations regarding subsurface sewage treatment systems and other private wastewater systems.
- The Council will continue to support State rules for subsurface sewage treatment systems and other private wastewater systems and work with the local governments to assist in their implementation.
- The Council will allow the community to connect a failing subsurface sewage treatment system or other private wastewater treatment system to the regional wastewater system at the community's expense.

Wastewater Sustainability Policy:

The Council will provide efficient, high-quality, and environmentally sustainable regional wastewater infrastructure and services.

The Council shall conduct its regional wastewater system operations in a sustainable manner as is economically feasible. Sustainable operations relates not only to water resources but also to increasing energy efficiency and using renewable energy sources, reducing air pollutant emissions, and reducing, reusing, and recycling solid wastes.

Implementation Strategies:

- Implement and enforce Waste Discharge Rules for the regional wastewater system.
- Preserve regional wastewater system assets of the Council through effective maintenance, condition and capacity assessment, and capital investment.
- Accept septage, biosolids, leachate, and other hauled liquid waste at designated sites provided that the waste can be efficiently and effectively processed.
- Reuse treated wastewater to meet water needs within Council wastewater treatment facilities where economically feasible.
- Identify and pursue options to reuse treated wastewater to supplement groundwater and surface water as sources of water to support regional growth, when economically feasible.
- Potentially invest strategically to further the effectiveness of the region's non-point source pollution prevention and control program and to ensure efficient investment to achieve regional water quality objectives, as allowed by law and funding availability.
- Provide industries with incentives to pretreat wastewater to reduce its strength and thus provide the most environmental and economical benefit for the region.
- Generate energy from biosolids processing, utilize energy efficient processes and equipment, and reduce building energy use.
- Pursue other renewable energy sources, such as solar power generation, thermal energy recovery, and new technologies – such as fuel cells - as they become proven and economical.
- Stabilize and reduce the volume of biosolids through thermal processing or anaerobic digestion, and utilize the remaining solids as fertilizer and soil conditioner.
- Improve sustainability of wastewater operations, when economically feasible.

Policy on Inflow and Infiltration:

The Council will not provide additional capacity within its interceptor system to serve excessive inflow and infiltration.

The Council will establish inflow and infiltration goals for all communities discharging wastewater to the regional wastewater system. Communities that have excessive inflow and

infiltration in their sanitary sewer systems will be required to eliminate the excessive inflow and infiltration within a reasonable time period.

Implementation Strategies:

- Maintain and rehabilitate Council interceptors to minimize inflow and infiltration.
- Develop inflow and infiltration goals for all communities served by the regional wastewater system.
- Require all communities served by the regional wastewater system to include its inflow and infiltration mitigation program in its comprehensive sewer plan, including a program to mitigate sources of inflow and infiltration from private property.
- Limit expansion of service within those communities where excessive inflow and infiltration jeopardizes the Council's ability to convey wastewater without an overflow or backup occurring, or limits the capacity in the system to the point where the Council can no longer provide additional wastewater services. The Council will work with those communities on a case-by-case basis, based on the applicable regulatory requirements.
- Potentially institute a wastewater rate demand charge for those communities that have not met their inflow and infiltration goal(s), if the community has not been implementing an effective inflow and infiltration reduction program as determined by the Council, or if regulations and/or regulatory permits require Council action to ensure regulatory compliance.

The wastewater demand charge will include the cost of wastewater storage facilities and/or other improvements necessary to avoid overloading Council conveyance and treatment facilities, plus the appropriate sewer availability charges for use of Council conveyance and treatment facilities.

- Work with the State to attempt to (1) make funds available for inflow and infiltration mitigation, and (2) promote statutes, rules, and regulations to encourage I/I mitigation.

Wastewater System Investment Policy:

The Council will strive to maximize regional benefits from regional investments.

Implementation Strategies:

- Invest in non-point source pollution control when the cost and long-term benefits are favorable compared to further upgrading wastewater treatment, as allowed by law and funding availability.
- Consider pollutant trading or off-set opportunities with non-point sources of pollution when cost-effective and environmentally beneficial.
- Invest in wastewater reuse when justified by the benefits for supplementing groundwater and surface water as sources of water to support regional growth, and by the benefits for maintaining water quality.

Wastewater System Finance Policy:

The Council will continue to implement regional wastewater service fees and charges based on regional cost of services.

Implementation Strategies:

- Metropolitan wastewater charges will be allocated among communities based on volume of wastewater treated.
- Industrial wastewater strength charges will be proportionate to discharge strength above domestic wastewater strength.
- Load charges for septage, portable toilet waste, holding tank wastewater and out-of-region wastes will be uniform for each type of load, and based on the volume of the load, the average strength of the types of loads, and the costs of receiving facilities.
- Sewer availability charges (SAC) will be uniform within the urban area. Sewer availability charges for a rural center will be based on the reserve capacity and debt service of facilities specific to the rural center.
- Other fees representing cost of specific services, as approved by the Council.
- Cost-sharing between the Council and a local governmental unit may be used when construction of regional wastewater facilities provides additional local benefits for an incremental increase in costs.
- Facilities that are no longer a necessary part of the regional wastewater system will be conveyed to the benefiting local governmental unit, or will be abandoned or sold, pursuant to related statutes.