
2005 NPDES Stormwater Management Program and Annual Report

Amendments

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

A Public Hearing notice and a copy of the draft Annual Report were sent to twenty-one environmental groups, governmental entities and other interested parties. The draft Annual Report was also posted on the City's website. A Public Hearing notice was posted in the March 23, 2005 edition of Finance and Commerce. The Public Hearing was held at the April 19, 2005 Transportation & Public Works Committee meeting. Additionally, concerned parties were invited to submit written comments by mail or e-mail until April 19, 2005.

No written comments were received. Three individuals made comments at the Public Hearing. Comments generally included questions on some specific details, recommendations regarding public education, and concerns for additional public participation regarding stormwater management. A record of the comments, along with responses to the comments, is presented below and will be included in the Annual Report.

Comments and Responses:

Comment 1: *The public input process is a big issue. The draft Annual Report was sent to only 21 parties and that seems to be a small number considering the size of Minneapolis. There was not enough notice to bring the public response to this process.*

Response 1: There is public input for the draft Annual Report, and there is public input for the specific projects and programs that are a result of and addressed in the draft Annual Report.

As pertains to the Annual Report: The 21 parties that were mailed the draft Annual Report and invited to provide comments included all of the major organizations with stormwater management affiliation, with the understanding that the information would be shared with each organization's constituents as well as the general public. Also, in the Public Hearing notice, we invited the public to attend the public hearing and/or submit written comments by mail or e-mail on the draft Annual Report. Additionally, a draft Annual Report was also posted on the City's website for public review.

As pertains to the specific projects and programs: As a result of the BMPs identified in the draft Annual Report, specific projects and programs are developed and implemented by the City and/or the Park Board. Both the City and the Park Board invite and receive public input for the individual projects and programs, typically through neighborhood-based meetings, and for the City's and Park Board's capital and operating budgets, typically

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through their respective series of public meetings. Information about additional public input is provided in the response to Comment 2, below.

Comment 2: *The City should do more to involve citizens and educate the public on stormwater management issues. In 2005 there is a transition of the public education program from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to the City, and the educational effort has lessened considerably. Also, where are the brochures that describe the water quality messages? What is the City doing to educate citizens?*

Response 2: The City of Minneapolis has taken the lead educational role, however, the educational program has not lessened. In Minneapolis, public education and outreach are carried out by many entities, including the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, the four watershed management organizations (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, Bassett Creek Water Management Commission and Shingle Creek Watershed Management Organization), a number of non-profit organizations, and some neighborhood-based groups. The City provides information on its website, various news releases and media advisories, billing inserts, and letters to property owners. The City is partnering with several organizations to provide water quality education and training for homeowner-type Best Management Practices (BMPs). The City attends neighborhood meetings to explain its stormwater initiatives. Brochures and bookmarks are given out at community events, and mailed upon request. The City is carrying out a stenciling program and organizing community events. To unify their efforts and for long-term planning, the City and the Park Board, through a Water Quality Monitoring Task Force, are also working with other entities and organizations to determine next steps for identifying a structured, unified and comprehensive approach to public education and outreach using a variety of resources.

Comment 3: *The draft Annual Report states incorrectly that in 2004 a daily 20-minute cable TV show was broadcast.*

Response 3: The draft Annual Report does not mention or require a daily 20-minute cable TV show. In the Public Education section of the report, however, there is reference to a Public Service Announcement developed by the Park Board that was broadcast by Minneapolis cable TV.

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Comment 4: *The draft Annual Report also states incorrectly that in 2004 a monthly Southwest Journal article was published.*

Response 4: A correction will be noted in the final Annual Report that the columns furnished by the Park Board to the Southwest Journal in 2004 were not published monthly, but rather bi-monthly or quarterly.

Comment 5: *Are grit chambers effective, manageable, sustainable, and affordable? Don't grit chambers focus mainly on sedimentation, and is sedimentation the largest issue?*

Response 5: The City places a high priority on sediment removal because sedimentation/trash removal is one of the most effective means of removing pollutants from entering receiving water bodies. Grit chambers are very effective devices for this purpose and are one of the most effective Best Management Practices (BMPs) available. In some cases the City and Park Board use grit chambers as just one component of a "treatment train" approach, where stormwater is routed first through the grit chamber for coarse removal, and then through filtration (swales, infiltration galleries/rain gardens) for additional treatment. In 2004 City sewer maintenance staff removed approximately 700 tons of sediment from grit chambers. Public Works and MPRB also monitor the effectiveness of grit chambers, along with other BMPs.

Comment 6: *The report does not address fecal coliform problems, although the Mississippi River, which is the City's ultimate receiving water, is impacted by fecal coliform.*

Response 6: Fecal coliform is generally beyond the scope of the Annual Report. The City of Minneapolis is aware of the fecal coliform problem, has ordinances in place to assist in alleviating this problem, and supports efforts to address the issue at a regional level.

Comment 7: *The I-35W corridor neighborhood flooding study focused on engineering rather than public participation, which leads to use of a big tunnel. But this will not provide 70% sediment removal. More citizen participation is needed to add the focus of local residential responsibility.*

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Response 7: This project-specific comment is generally beyond the scope of the Annual Report. The comment has been forwarded to the project team and will be considered during the project planning and design.

Comment 8: *The report does not address the problem of automobiles, which generate probably 30% of the nitrogen pollution.*

Response 8: Automobile regulation is beyond the scope of the report. This broad issue may be best addressed at the state/federal level.

Comment 9: *Who is going to maintain the stormwater management system at Heritage Park, funded primarily by \$6 million from the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization?*

Response 9: The Heritage Park system is being built on both City right-of-way and on current or future Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board property. Generally the City of Minneapolis is maintaining the “hard” components (such as grit chambers, culverts and headwalls, pipes, inlets and outfall structures, level spreaders, trench forebays, weir rundowns, pipe drain cleanouts, and flow splitters), and after initial three-year plant establishment periods for each phase, the Park Board will be maintaining the “soft” components, i.e., the vegetation areas (wet/dry meadow filtration galleries, pond edge wetland fringe, and upslope short grass prairie).

Comment 10: *A few months ago, salt storage was observed too close to the Mississippi River at the Minneapolis Upper Harbor Terminal site. It was not good for the river.*

Response 10: The City’s Upper Harbor Terminal was formerly a bulk salt storage site, brought in by barge for metro-wide distribution by truck. Because of concerns for the river, this practice was discontinued several years ago. The incident that occurred this year was on-site storage of a small quantity of salt for internal use on the site’s driveways. The stockpile was poorly placed, in the vicinity of the shoreline, and was initially uncovered. Once noted, it was covered and will remain so, and may be relocated in the future.

Comment 11: *The “Think Clean Water” is no longer the name of the metro-wide education campaign program.*

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Response 11: The observation is appreciated, and the error will be corrected in the Report.

Comment 12: *The stormwater utility bills appear to use higher rates than other metro-area cities. How are the funds used? The 90-day grace period is too short to implement BMPs. The bills do not appear to reflect efforts previously taken to reduce runoff.*

Response 12: The City's 2005 stormwater utility billing initiative, to encourage efforts to reduce runoff, is generally outside the scope of the Annual Report. The comments have been referred to relevant City staff. The use of funds received through the stormwater utility fees is documented as part of the City's annual budget process. Information about applying for BMP credits was provided to the individuals that raised the questions.