



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

BCWMC Capital Improvement Program Prioritization Committee

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, April 24, 2018

8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Council Conference Room, Golden Valley City Hall

Committee Members and other present: Commissioners Welch, Prom; Alternate Commissioner Monk; TAC Members Asche and Eckman; Commission Engineers Chandler and Williams; Administrator Jester

1. Why are we here? What is the objective of the committee's work?

Administrator Jester reviewed the committee's primary purpose: to determine if and how capital projects in the watershed can be prioritized for targeted implementation so that the best project gets built in the best location at the best time. She also noted that a related topic can and should be considered by the committee: how to engage private businesses in the implementation of water quality best practices.

Alt. Commissioner Monk asked if there is a policy on why or how different pieces of a CIP project are paid by the Commission. Staff noted that Table 5-1 in the [Watershed Plan](#) includes a list of project components eligible for reimbursement by the Commission and other project costs that will be considered for reimbursement on a project by project basis. It was noted that some items impacted by construction of a project are reimbursed (such as trails or signs) while other items that are new amenities not related to stormwater management or improved water quality have not been reimbursed.

The group agreed that if refinement to Table 5-1 is needed, this committee would be the appropriate body to make recommendations.

Related to the purpose of the committee, Commissioner Welch indicated that he would like the Watershed Plan and the Commission to drive the CIP and he doesn't know if that's the case right now.

Administrator Jester wondered if all the "low hanging fruit" had been implemented in the watershed.

2. How are BCWMC CIP projects currently scheduled? What processes and guidance are currently in place?

The group walked through how the Commission currently develops its CIP list including a brief review of the 2015 – 2025 CIP list in Table 5-3 of the Watershed Plan.

The group also reviewed Policy #110 in Watershed Management Plan:

110. The BCWMC will consider including projects in the CIP that meet one or more of the following “gatekeeper” criteria.

- *Project is part of the BCWMC trunk system (see Section 2.8.1, Figure 2-14 and Figure 2-15)*
- *Project improves or protects water quality in a priority waterbody*
- *Project addresses an approved TMDL or watershed restoration and protection strategy (WRAPS)*
- *Project addresses flooding concern*

The BCWMC will use the following criteria, in addition to those listed above, to aid in the prioritization of projects:

- *Project protects or restores previous Commission investments in infrastructure*
- *Project addresses intercommunity drainage issues*
- *Project addresses erosion and sedimentation issues*
- *Project will address multiple Commission goals (e.g., water quality, runoff volume, aesthetics, wildlife habitat, recreation, etc.)*
- *Subwatershed draining to project includes more than one community*
- *Addresses significant infrastructure or property damage concerns*

The BCWMC will place a higher priority on projects that incorporate multiple benefits and will seek opportunities to incorporate multiple benefits into BCWMC projects, as opportunities allow.

There was also a brief review on existing TMDL Implementation Plans (including [Sweeney Lake, Medicine Lake, Metro-wide Chloride TMDL](#) and [Upper Mississippi River Bacteria TMDL](#)); and acknowledgement that currently, the 5-year “rolling” CIP list starts with TAC recommendations based on opportunity, readiness, and fairness.

Mr. Asche noted that it would be helpful to rank the gatekeeper questions in order of importance or priority. He noted it’s sometimes difficult to match the city’s CIP with the Commission’s CIP and that cities would benefit from knowing the highest priorities of the Commission so they could adjust their CIPs accordingly. It was noted that if the Commission had a geographical or pollutant focus or top priority, cities would know where to look for potential projects. Mr. Asche reported that right now it seems *everything* is equally important.

Commissioner Welch noted that the arbitrary funding “cap” of \$1.3M and the practice of implementing projects around the watershed to be “fair” to each city skew the current CIP process. He also noted the gatekeeper question “address flooding concern” is too broad and vague.

It was noted the Commission can and should set boundaries on what type of projects and where projects should be located (target a subwatershed and prioritize projects within the subwatershed) but should also allow for additional projects outside of targeted areas so that important opportunities aren’t missed. Engineer Chandler thought a top priority could be a certain subwatershed (or two) and a secondary priority could be opportunities elsewhere.

It was also noted that working to complete ALL projects in one subwatershed would take many, many years and those projects would end up in only one or two cities during those years.

Alt. Commissioner Monk noted that it doesn't seem like anything is "broken" but that the Commission should provide better direction and limits within its CIP. He wondered if a review of Commission policies and review of practices on how to involve and engage cities in the process was warranted.

3. How do other organizations prioritize projects?

Engineer Williams briefly reviewed tables that summarize how other watershed organizations and cities prioritize projects and noted that Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District finds all the good projects first, and then prioritizes them. Commissioner Prom asked if there was no limit to the funding, what is the best way to sequence projects? How do you even find all the low hanging fruit? Engineer Chandler reported that most of the low hanging fruit was addressed through the 2005 Watershed Plan including projects identified in TMDLs.

The group discussed the idea of a two-pronged approach focusing on both water quality and flooding issues.

The group decided it might be useful to review maps of the watershed that indicate where gatekeeper criteria exist.

Commissioner Welch noted that the *watershed concept* should drive the CIP schedule and reminded the group that the Commission should not be doing what cities are doing but should be doing what cities can't do; that the Commission should decide what's important watershed-wide. Commissioner Welch also indicated it would be good to take certain types of project *off* the table in order to narrow the scope of the Commission's CIP.

4. What level of annual effort feels right for prioritization exercises in the BCWMC? – NOT DISCUSSED AT THIS MEETING

5. Set next meeting and adjourn

Committee members agreed a presentation by MCWD staff would be useful for the next meeting including how they choose subwatersheds to target and how they prioritize projects within the subwatersheds; and how they engage private businesses.

Committee members asked where the \$1M - \$1.3M annual CIP "cap" originated and how much flexibility there is with the "cap." They also wondered how the Commission's levy amount compares on a per capita or per market value basis with other watersheds.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00.

Future agenda items:

- Presentation from Minnehaha Creek Watershed District on partnerships with private businesses
- Review of grant programs implemented by other watersheds (Shingle Creek WMC, Mississippi WMO)