



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Meeting Notes of the
Watershed Plan Steering Committee
January 3, 2025 @ 8:30 a.m.
Brookview, Golden Valley

Meeting Attendees:

Committee Chair Kennedy; Alternate Commissioner Polzin; Commissioners Hauer and Pentel; TAC Members Eckman and Scharenbroich; Administrator Jester; Commission Engineers Chandler, Johnson, and Williams

1. WELCOME

Committee Chair Kennedy opened the meeting at 8:32 a.m.

2. REVIEW DECEMBER 11 MEETING NOTES

There was a consensus that the meeting notes were appropriate as presented.

3. REVIEW PLAN PROGRESS TRACKER

The group reviewed the plan progress tracker, noting topics that will be the focus of future discussions.

4. REVIEW PLAN DEVELOPMENT BUDGET STATUS

Engineer Williams presented information on the status of the plan development budget, reminding committee members that the original scope for plan development included a budget of almost \$163,000 but that the final expenditures are likely to be closer to \$350,000. He reported that many factors have led to plan development being over budget and behind schedule by several months including a slower pace of progress and lengthy discussions on complex topics not included in the original scope. There was recognition that those early discussions did a good job of building consensus around the need for a robust plan. It was noted that the original plan development and scope assumed the plan update would not entail a significant overhaul of the plan and the Commission's work.

Committee members expressed dismay at the budget status. There was recognition that three Commission Engineers attend most Plan Steering Committee (PSC) meetings and biweekly check-in meetings with Administrator Jester – the costs of which add up with more meetings. It was noted that each engineer brings their own expertise to the process. It was also noted that Commission Engineers divvy up work on specific tasks "behind the scenes."

Staff noted that savings of \$10,000 - \$15,000 could be realized if the final plan is not published in In Design but rather kept in Microsoft Word. There was consensus to keep the plan in Word. Committee member Polzin wondered if MN Statute 103B.241 could be used to levy for watershed plan development. Administrator Jester said she would investigate that. Staff agreed to being more intentional about sending fewer engineers to committee meetings moving forward, when warranted.

There was consensus to bring the budget status to the Commission's January meeting and a request to bring budget status reports more frequently to the committee. There was a question about whether the updated budget forecast includes contingency. Engineers Williams indicated it does not but it does assume the same slower pace of progress even though staff believes the process is moving more quickly now.

5. REVIEW TAC INPUT ON LINEAR PROJECT STANDARDS

Engineer Chandler reported that at their November meeting, the PSC agreed with Commission Engineer recommendations for updating triggers and requirements for linear project standards and that those recommendations were discussed at the December 18th TAC meeting. She reviewed the TAC input on linear project standards, noting that some TAC members expressed concerns about meeting the proposed rate control standard due to site constraints, but other TAC members noted the importance of rate control for protection of downstream resources. TAC members also noted that the standard would be triggered at a smaller project size than the current requirements, which may present difficulties. She reported that the TAC requested a comparison of the MS4 permit's Infiltration Prohibitions and Treatment Constraints with the BCWMC flexible treatment options (FTOs). Finally, she noted the TAC asked about the proposed checklist, wondering what it would include and whether the cities could provide documentation they already develop, rather than a new checklist.

Engineer Chandler noted that her recommendations for linear project standards were revised to reflect TAC input. She reviewed her new recommendations which include:

- More information about the rate control standard
- An alternative rate control standard for when the rate control requirement cannot be met at the project boundary for projects that result in more than one-acre, but less than five acres, of new / fully reconstructed impervious area.
- "Other documentation" option instead of a checklist

There was discussion about specific language and formatting in the proposed standards. Committee member Harwell noted that the language about rate control flexibility should be reformatted for clarity and the term "value" could be changed to "integrity." There was discussion about how linear projects have significant constraints, and the possibility of future TMDL implementation plans incorporating stricter linear standards. There was also discussion about the required timing for cities to submit documentation – possibly at the time of city permit/BCWMC project review and approval, or at the end of the year. It was acknowledged that the Commission does not want to impose undue reporting burdens on cities.

There was consensus that the updated Commission Engineer recommendations for linear project standards are appropriate although they may need some minor adjustments to language or formatting. The committee also agreed with allowing flexibility in the timing of city documentation submittals.

6. REVIEW TAC INPUT ON STREAM AND WETLAND BUFFER STANDARDS

At the PSC's request, the TAC discussed both stream and wetland buffer standards at their December 18th meeting. Engineer Chandler reviewed TAC feedback on the committee's recommended triggers and standards including their desire for flexibility in applying the buffer standards. There was consensus that both stream and wetland buffer standards include less strict requirements for single family home lots vs. other types of properties. There was also consensus that alternative buffer widths for streams (but not wetlands) could be allowed in certain circumstances, similar to Shingle Creek WMC's alternative buffer standard.

There was discussion on the definition or reference for "ordinary high water level" for streams (e.g., use MDNR's definition or something else) and that more definition of the ordinary high water level should be brought to the TAC meeting. There was also discussion and confirmation that the stream buffers only applied to priority streams. There was discussion about city reporting with consensus that cities should be required to report on all instances and reasons for use of the alternative stream buffer

standards. Reports could be sent at the time of the occurrence or at the end of the year.

7. DISCUSS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHLORIDE MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS

The committee discussed TAC input on potential requirements for chloride management plans (or winter maintenance plans). It was noted that there should be flexibility allowed for the actual management plan format and that the BCWMC requirement could include the minimum content required in a plan. It was noted that requiring a winter maintenance plan gives cities leverage and authority to discuss chloride use and site conditions that lead to oversalting. Administrator Jester noted that cities would be managing and enforcing winter maintenance plans as opposed to the Commission. Administrator Jester noted that chloride management plan requirements will be discussed at the February TAC meeting.

8. REVIEW DRAFT OF IMPLEMENTATION SECTION 5.1

Although the committee ran out of time for this item, it was noted that the section should include specific links to issues and goals. Committee member Pentel recommended that staff review the Education and Engagement goals and language related to equity in the Education and Engagement Plan and add to the implementation section as needed. There was also a request to view a table of contents for the whole plan so PSC members could get a sense of the overall plan structure and other sections and content.

Before adjourning, Administrator Jester announced the upcoming virtual Plan TAC meeting to discuss the Education & Engagement, and Organization & Effectiveness issues and goals. She noted the meeting would be held, likely virtually, in late January or early February.

There was also an important discussion about whether the recommendations for linear project standards, buffer standards, and chloride management plans should go to the January Commission meeting. Committee member Polzin expressed her preference for the PSC to see the entire Requirements Document with highlighted changes before sending on to the Commission.

9. ADJOURN – The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:35 a.m.