



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Public Works

Date: March 3, 2015

To: Honorable Kevin Reich, Chair Transportation and Public Works Committee

Subject: **Metropolitan Council Draft 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan
Comments**

Recommendation:

Approve attached comments pertaining to the Metropolitan Council Draft 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan and direct staff to submit the attached comments to the Metropolitan Council by the end of the 45-day comment period (March 20, 2015).

Previous Directives:

None

Department Information

Prepared by: Lisa Cerney, P.E., Director of Surface Water & Sewers 673-3061
Paul Mogush, AICP, Principal City Planner 673-2074

Approved by: _____
Steven A. Kotke, P.E., Director of Public Works

Presenters in Committee: Paul Mogush, CPED; Lisa Cerney, Public Works

Financial Impact

- No financial impact

Community Impact

- City Goals – This initiative supports the following city goals:
- A hub of economic activity and innovation: Businesses – big and small – start, move, stay and grow here.
- Living well: Minneapolis is safe and livable and has an active and connected way of life. High-quality and convenient transportation options connect every corner of the city.
- Great Places: Natural and built spaces work together and our environment is protected.
- Comprehensive Plan - Supports Comprehensive Plan Goals

Supporting Information

Background:

Thrive MSP 2040 and Regional Policy Plans

Thrive MSP 2040, the region's vision for the next 30 years, was adopted by the Metropolitan Council on May 28, 2014. After review of the document by various departments within the City, the City of Minneapolis submitted comments on Thrive on April 28, 2014.

The April 28, 2014 City comments are enclosed as Attachment 3.

The adopted Thrive MSP 2040 is linked here:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/Planning/Projects/Thrive-2040/Thrive-MSP-2040-Plan.aspx>

Every ten years the Metropolitan Council is required by state law to prepare a comprehensive development guide for the seven-county metropolitan area. Local municipalities within the Seven-County Metropolitan Area must consequently develop comprehensive plans that are consistent with this regional development guide. *Thrive MSP 2040* provides a shared vision for the future of our region over the next 30 years, setting directions and guidelines for the region's growth and development. Local communities such as Minneapolis are served by regional systems planned by the Council, including housing, transportation, wastewater collection and treatment, and recreational opportunities offered by regional parks.

Thrive MSP 2040 sets a vision that is applied by four policy plans: The Housing Policy Plan, the Transportation Policy Plan, Regional Parks Policy Plan and the Water Resources Policy Plan. Each policy plan provides a greater level of detail than is present in the overall *Thrive MSP 2040* document.

The Metropolitan Council has adopted three of the four 2040 policy plans, and the City of Minneapolis has commented on each. The current schedule of the review timelines is outlined below.

Housing Policy Plan

- City comments were transmitted to the Metropolitan Council on the draft plan on September 26, 2014
- Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Council on December 10, 2014

Transportation Policy Plan

- City comments were transmitted to the Metropolitan Council the draft plan on October 1, 2014
- Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Council on January 14, 2015

Regional Parks Policy Plan

- City comments were transmitted to the Metropolitan Council on the draft plan on October 30, 2014
- Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Council on February 11, 2015

Water Resources Management Policy Plan

- 45-Day Public Review and Comment period: January 15, 2015 – March 20, 2015
- Comments at City Council Transportation and Public Works Committee: March 3, 2015.
- Met Council public hearing on draft plan: March 10, 2015
- Action on comments by full City Council: March 20, 2015.
- Expected plan adoption by the Met Council: April 2015

The adoption of *Thrive MSP 2040* and the four policy plans listed above set the stage for local municipalities to begin their comprehensive planning process. Minneapolis' comprehensive plan will need to operate within the framework created by these plans. While CPED is already

preparing for this pending update, the local comprehensive planning process begins in earnest in the fall of 2015 when the Metropolitan Council provides communities with system statements – specific benchmarks for planning that are based on the above referenced policy plans.

Metropolitan Council authority and responsibility for regional water resources

The Metropolitan Council has varying levels of authority and responsibility for the three main areas of regional water resources planning and service delivery:

Wastewater Collection and Treatment – This is the area in which the Met Council has the most direct responsibility and authority among the three areas of water resources. The Council owns and operates the regional wastewater collection and treatment system, providing these services to over 90% of the metro area population. Wastewater service is the most basic element of public infrastructure that determines the pace, character, and location of population and employment growth in the region. The council has a role in review and approval of the local sanitary sewer plan for consistency with the regional Water Resource Policy Plan.

Surface Water Management – The Met Council plays a monitoring and review role in surface water management. While the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Department of Natural Resources and local watershed districts have more direct responsibility, the Council is responsible for ensuring that water quality management policies and programs are implemented in the metro for both point- and nonpoint-source pollution. This responsibility is designated to the Metropolitan Council by the federal Clean Water Act. The Council also has a role in reviewing local water management plans and watershed plans for consistency with regional water quality policies.

Water Supply – The Met Council plays a coordination role for water supply as mandated by state statute and with the advisement of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee. The Met Council prepares a Master Water Supply Plan aimed at ensuring a sustainable water supply for the region. An update to that plan is now underway as part of a separate, but related effort. The update to the region's Master Water Supply Plan will be available for public review later this year. CPED and Public Works will continue to review and advise on matters related to that plan, as needed.

Overview of the draft 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan

The Metropolitan Council has prepared the draft 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan for a number of reasons:

- To fulfill requirements under state and federal law
- To articulate in greater detail broader policies adopted in *Thrive MSP 2040* as they relate to water resources
- To prepare for systems statements, which will be released by the Met Council later this year, and comprehensive plan updates, which are due to the Met Council in 2018

A key theme of the draft 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan is the integration of policies and strategies related to wastewater treatment, surface water management, and water supply. Whereas previous versions of the plan provided policies for each of these subjects in separate sections of the document, the new draft weaves them together with an overarching goal of water resource sustainability.

Major comments on the Water Resources Policy Plan

City staff from CPED, Public Works, Regulatory Services, Health & Family Support, and Intergovernmental Relations have reviewed this document and have prepared comments

which can be found in Attachment 2. The public comment period for the Draft 2040 Transportation Policy Plan is from January 15, 2015 to March 20, 2015.

The following statements are the key elements that CPED, Public Works, and other departments have identified in the Metropolitan Council's draft 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan. Further details on each of these elements can be found in the draft cover letter and draft staff comments that Public Works and CPED are proposing to submit to the Metropolitan Council as official comments on the Water Resources Policy Plan.

Staff found much to be supportive of in the draft plan. Staff are encouraged by the Metropolitan Council's efforts to integrate surface water management, water supply, and wastewater services into one cohesive policy document. While the Met Council has varying levels of responsibility for each of these functions, there is a clear regional benefit to coordinated water policies and strategies. This integration theme is accompanied by an environmental sustainability theme, both of which are prevalent throughout the document.

Staff also highlight the manner in which the plan addresses the relationship between water resources and regional growth. In the City's comments on Thrive MSP 2040, we asked that the Metropolitan Council rethink its population and employment projections to better match the forward-thinking policies in the plan, which favor population and employment growth around transit corridors. In the attached draft comments, we ask the Metropolitan Council to more clearly tie these policies to those of wastewater treatment services. We also point out that in its efforts to address equity, the document often blurs equity with equality. This especially comes into play with the discussion of the Sewer Access Charge (SAC), a topic that receives insufficient attention in this document considering the high level of interest. The staff comments continue to encourage the Metropolitan Council to look for opportunities to simplify SAC and charge reasonable rates.

The Metropolitan Council will hold a public hearing on the draft Transportation Policy Plan on March 10, 2015 at 5PM at the Metropolitan Council in St. Paul.

Attachments

1. Draft 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/Wastewater-Water/Planning/2040-Water-Resources-Policy-Plan.aspx> (linked only, no hard copy)
2. Draft detailed comments to the Metropolitan Council, dated March 20, 2015
3. City of Minneapolis Comments on *Thrive MSP 2040*- dated April 28, 2014