



MEMORANDUM

To: MCWD Board of Managers
From: Becky Christopher, Policy Planning Manager
Date: August 19, 2019
Re: Stakeholder engagement process for partnership model

Purpose:

At the August 22, 2019 Planning and Policy Committee (PPC) Meeting, staff will review and seek Board feedback on a proposed process for engaging stakeholders in the development of the District's partnership model, including its policy program, responsive model, and permitting program alignment.

Background:

The District's Watershed Management Plan (Plan), adopted in January 2018, solidified the Balanced Urban Ecology policy as the underlying organizational strategy. This strategy prioritizes partnership with the land use community to integrate policy, planning and implementation and to leverage the value created when built and natural systems are in harmony.

To implement this strategy, the Plan articulated an approach that is two-pronged:

- Focusing in areas of high need and opportunity to achieve significant, measurable resource improvement
- Remaining responsive to needs and opportunities district-wide through coordination with partners

This new approach was strongly supported by the District's communities throughout development of the Plan. Since the Plan's adoption, the District has been working to deliver on its policy commitments and further develop its partnership model by making improvements to its programs and promoting the continued understanding and support of our partners. As outlined in the District's 2019 work plan, priority activities for 2019 include:

- Developing education, engagement and communications programming to promote early coordination of public and private planning and investments

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- Improving the District’s permitting program to streamline and simplify requirements and create incentives for partnership while maintaining protections
- Developing the District’s responsive model to provide support for public and private projects that are well coordinated and align with water resource needs and priorities
- Collaborating with local, regional, state and private entities to identify policy and procedural changes that would improve land-use water integration

Over the course of the last year, staff has been working to develop the scope, process, and initial concepts to advance these efforts in coordination with the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Planning and Policy Committee (PPC), and Operations and Programs Committee (OPC). Staff is now proposing to initiate an external stakeholder process to gather input and vet ideas through the use of advisory committees and other tactics. These topics will continue to come back to the PPC and OPC for discussion on a parallel track.

Summary:

The attached document outlines a draft framework for the external stakeholder engagement process, including:

- Purpose and scope
- Engagement goals
- Target audiences
- Engagement strategies
- Key messages
- Process and timeline

Staff will provide an overview and will be seeking Board feedback to help refine the engagement process before initiating it later this year. This engagement process will be closely coordinated with, and informed by, the development of the Strategic Communications Plan.

If there are questions in advance of the meeting, please contact: Becky Christopher at (952) 641-4512 or bchristopher@minnehahacreek.org.

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Draft Framework for 2020 External Stakeholder Engagement Process

Purpose and Scope

The District has adopted a partnership approach to achieve its mission by integrating land use and water planning for greater environmental, social, and economic benefit. The District is undertaking a suite of program improvements to operationalize its new strategy.

The success of the partnership approach relies heavily on the understanding and cooperation of public and private entities acting on the landscape to coordinate early and effectively with the District. Therefore, the District is initiating a process to engage these public and private entities to get feedback on how the District is operationalizing its partnership approach.

There are 3 main areas of focus:

- Developing a policy program and communications strategy to improve integration and early coordination of land use and water planning
- Developing the responsive model to support partner projects that align with District goals
- Revamping the permitting program to streamline process, improve customer service, and promote partnership

Engagement Goals

- Support and cooperation of local government officials and developers for early coordination on land use change
- District perceived by local government officials and developers as adding value
- Support of local government officials for the District's focal/responsive implementation model and understanding of how to access District services
- Support of local government officials and developers for the District's rule revisions
- Support of local government officials for partnering on regulation, compliance, and opportunity identification

Target Audiences

- Cities/counties/agencies:
 - Policymakers
 - Staff – water resources, planning, community development, public works, etc.
- Private developers

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Engagement Strategies

- Soft roll-out:
 - Individual calls and meetings with key staff and policymakers to introduce the proposed process and gather feedback
- Brochure:
 - ~8-page brochure to introduce the purpose and scope of the engagement process, the proposed program improvements with examples, and how to participate
 - To be used during soft roll-out and with invitation to kickoff meeting
- Stakeholder events:
 - Intended primarily for policymakers and staff who are not serving on the TAC
 - To provide a high level overview of the goals and direction and build support
 - One kickoff meeting (Dec. 2019) and 2 update meetings in 2020, annual/semi-annual meetings beyond 2020
 - 2-3 dates/locations for each event to manage size and maximize turn-out
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):
 - Comprised of city/county/agency staff across the District, appointed by Board
 - To gather feedback and guidance on the proposed program improvements
 - Monthly meetings during 2020 and quarterly/as needed beyond 2020
- Developer work group:
 - To gather feedback on the permitting process and ways to improve customer service and promote early coordination
 - 3-4 meetings throughout 2020
- Webpage and monthly newsletter:
 - To provide progress updates to policymakers, staff not serving on the TAC, and any other interested parties
- Metro Watershed District (WD) coordination:
 - To engage other WDs in discussions about partnering with the land use community and promote a consistent approach and messaging across the metro
 - Discuss at Metro MAWD, WD permitting group, and other venues
- Other:
 - Seek opportunities to reach target audiences by presenting at other venues (e.g. MN Cities Stormwater Coalition, Sensible Land Use Coalition)

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Key Messages

- Purpose:
 - The District has adopted a partnership approach, recognizing that we can achieve greater environmental, economic, and social benefit by working together to integrate land use and water planning.
 - The District is undertaking a suite of program improvements to support its partnership approach and deliver on policy commitments made in our 2017 Plan.
 - The District had a high level of engagement and support through the development of the 2017 Plan, and we want to reengage our communities to get input on how we're implementing this new direction.

- Scope:
 - There are 3 main areas of focus, all centered around improving integration of land use and water planning:
 - Identifying policy and procedural changes that would improve land-use water integration and outreach strategies to promote them
 - Developing our responsive model to support partner projects that align with District goals
 - Revamping our permitting program to streamline process, improve customer service, and promote early coordination
 - Proposed engagement process:
 - Establish a TAC to provide the feedback and direction on these topics
 - Hold larger stakeholder events and create a newsletter to keep policymakers and other stakeholders engaged
 - In addition to these areas of focus for 2020, we intend to continue these engagement strategies into the future to stay in sync with our partners.

- Policy and Outreach:
 - Purpose:
 - Identify opportunities at local/regional/state level to change policies and procedures to improve integration of land use and water planning
 - Identify communication and engagement strategies to promote integration and early coordination

- Responsive Model:
 - Purpose – Provide a clear and transparent framework for partners to access District services, which will involve:
 - Opportunity identification through early coordination of land use change
 - Opportunity screening and evaluation for alignment with District goals

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- Determining District response through a range of services to support project development and implementation
- Permitting Program:
 - Purpose – maintain current protection standards while working to exceed them through collaboration and partnership
 - Goals of the program update:
 - Promote early coordination through improvements to process and outreach
 - Improve customer service by making the process and rules clear and approachable
 - Streamline the process and requirements to save the applicants and District time and money
 - While this will include updates to the rules, the focus is not on creating new, higher standards

Process and Timeline

- September-October – Soft roll-out: calls/meetings with individual cities
 - Introduce the proposed process and gather feedback; share brochure
 - Divide out amongst staff based on existing relationships and work areas
 - Engage MCWD Board Members in policymaker meetings
- December – Stakeholder kickoff event
 - Outline goals, scope of work, and process and gather feedback
- January-December 2020 – TAC meetings
 - January – 2020 TAC work plan: goals, scope, direction, process, flag TAC issues/concerns
 - February – policy and outreach ideas for promoting early coordination
 - March – scope of regulation/MCWD role in regulatory framework
 - April - rule standards: streamlining, MS4 compliance
 - May – partnership framework: staged submittals process, incentives
 - June-July - responsive model framework, criteria, and process
 - August - municipal partnerships: regulation, compliance, opportunity identification
 - September-October – revised rule language review/discussion
 - November-December – future work plan
- January-December 2020 – Monthly newsletter and website updates
- March-June 2020 - Developer workgroup meetings

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- June and September – Stakeholder update events
 - Provide progress updates and opportunities for input
- September-December 2020 - Formal rule revision process
 - 45-day public comment period, revisions, adoption
- TBD - Other outreach
 - Metro WD coordination
 - Other events/presentations

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