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**Title:** Minnehaha Creek Watershed District – Year Ahead 2022

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**Purpose:**

This memo serves to frame the planned Year Ahead 2022 presentation to the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), scheduled for January 19, 2022.

**2022 the Year Ahead:**

Introduction:

MCWD is at an exciting juncture, and 2022 represents a year of possibility, promise, and potential for the organization! As we prepare to collectively look out at what lies ahead, it is equally important that we look back at where we came from and where we sit now as a team. This retrospective offers context for everything we hope to accomplish, not only in 2022, but in the years to come.

Where We Have Been:

The last five years have been transformative for MCWD. In 2017, the District adopted a new ten-year [watershed management plan](#). In many ways, this plan represented MCWD's reintroduction to its member communities and partner organizations, and established MCWD's philosophy moving into the next decade. Carrying forward the vision policy established in 2014 (*In Pursuit of a Balanced Urban Ecology*), the plan cemented that MCWD's approach to water planning recognizes the environmental, social, and economic value created when built and natural systems work in harmony.

Beginning in 2018, MCWD pursued, in earnest, efforts to realign programs and people to live into its Balanced Urban Ecology philosophy, and drive new levels of organizational excellence – defined in a [2017 Alignment Report](#). Since 2018, every program has undergone a shift in structure and focus. In the last two years, in spite of contractions in staffing and disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization has shifted from direction setting and realigning towards implementing these new programmatic directives in ways that are driving MCWD into the future.

Where Are We and What Lies Ahead:

Given this context, 2022 represents another pivotal milestone in MCWD's growth towards achieving its vision. 2022 is the midpoint of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District's 10-year plan, and is also the 5 year anniversary of the District's 2017 plan for strategic alignment. As the District approaches this midterm milestone the Board of Managers has expressed a desire to continue strategic preparations for the future.

The Board has begun a [strategic analysis of its history](#), led by Louis Smith, to look at where MCWD has been over its 50-plus years of watershed management, to derive insights and timeless lessons that can be memorialized, institutionalized, and carried forward to drive future success.

Following a [July 2021 Board Retreat](#) focused on evaluating the organization's current status, the Board has begun conversations about the five-year future of the organization on a policy and project basis:

1. [Climate Action](#) – Leveraging the terrific work of the CAC, the Board is engaging in dialog to develop a Climate Action Framework.

2. [Capital Improvement Planning](#) – Building off of project successes in the last five to ten years, the Board is systematically evaluating capital project planning strategy and priorities across its focal geographies of Six Mile Creek – Halsted Bay and Minnehaha Creek subwatersheds.

As these forward-facing conversations unfold, key initiatives that support this trajectory continue to advance including capital projects like 325 Blake Road, research and monitoring developments like the 2D Model, policy work such as the responsive model (now [Land and Water Partnership](#)) and rule revisions, and outreach work like the development of a new website.

November 19, 2022 CAC Meeting:

During the upcoming meeting, staff will provide an overview of where MCWD currently sits in its strategic trajectory and what lies ahead in 2022 and beyond.

Questions in advance of the meeting can be directed to James Wisker at [Jwisker@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:Jwisker@minnehahacreek.org) or 952.641.4509.