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WATERSHED DISTRICT
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Land & Water Partnership Initiative

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #8 Summary

June 2, 2023 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Agenda Overview

- MCWD Policy Planning Manager, Becky Christopher, welcomed TAC members to the final meeting of the TAC process and thanked them for their time and energy throughout the initiative. Christopher outlined the agenda for Meeting 8, which is divided into two parts. The first half provides a synthesis of the TAC process including the feedback received from the TAC and next steps for each element of the TAC workplan. The second portion introduces MCWD's climate action framework and the upcoming engagement and planning processes.

Summary of Land & Water Partnership Initiative Outcomes and Next Steps

- Christopher reviewed the overarching goals and purpose of the Land & Water Partnerships Initiative. MCWD recognizes that healthy natural systems support thriving communities, and therefore values the integration of land use and planning. Throughout the TAC process, MCWD shared examples of success stories where this approach has yielded impactful results. The initiative has been geared at building systems to support coordination and partnership. Within that purpose, MCWD broke out the TAC workplan into three focus areas: vetting the Land & Water Partnership (LWP) program, optimizing the permitting experience, and building systems of coordination.
- For each of the three focus areas, Christopher reviewed the goals, key areas of TAC input, and next steps, as presented in the summaries in the Meeting 8 packet.
- After the synthesis and next steps were presented for each area of the TAC workplan, TAC members were asked to give input on the summary's quality. TAC members noted that the summary was complete, and no elements were missing.
- TAC members were then asked to enter additional feedback using Mentimeter (see attached results).
- In small groups, TAC members were asked to discuss how MCWD might measure the success of this initiative. TAC members suggested tracking the following potential metrics:
 - The number of repeat cities that want to use the LWP program again
 - The number of projects that go beyond the regulatory minimum, and the added water resource benefits
 - The number of new partners that work with the MCWD

- Creating a library of new and unique case studies that show the diverse range of benefits provided through partnership
- Establishment of regional treatment/volume reduction projects
- Staff retention rates
- The speed of permitting approvals, including review times, rounds of submittals/incomplete applications, coordination touchpoints
- The number of multi-jurisdictional projects completed with support from diverse funding entities
- The number of permit violations
- The number of newly identified opportunity areas and their incorporation in municipal comprehensive plans
- TAC members also suggested that MCWD use customer surveys for both the LWP program and permits to create some benchmarks for evaluation. Finally, members suggested that MCWD assess the impact of data sharing technologies in improving coordination and reducing redundancy.
- To evaluate TAC members' satisfaction with the TAC process and outcomes, MCWD is sharing a post-TAC survey with TAC members. MCWD will also produce a publication to share the outcomes of the process with a broader stakeholder group. To support this publication, MCWD is asking whether TAC members would provide a quote or letter of support for the LWP Initiative.
- MCWD will continue working to implement the next steps outlined in Meeting 8 and will provide progress updates.

Climate Planning Preview

- Kate Moran, MCWD Policy Planning Coordinator, introduced Kailey Cermak and Brian Beck, members of MCWD's Research & Monitoring program. Moran provided an overview of the second portion of Meeting 8, which includes background and next steps for MCWD's climate planning effort, as outlined in MCWD's [Climate Action Framework](#).
- Over the past several years, MCWD recognized the need for a coordinated, strategic approach to address climate change at a watershed scale. Throughout the watershed, communities are experiencing the impacts of climate change with intense cycles of drought and flooding. Data from the DNR's climatology office indicate that Minnesota's weather will continue to become warmer and wetter.
- MCWD's staff worked with its Board of Managers and Citizens Advisory Committee to conduct a situational assessment. This discovery process involved several key questions: What's happening? What are the threats? What's being done? What is our role? MCWD's situational assessment yielded several key principles for navigating the changing climate landscape: sound science, partnership, flood adaptation, and watershed-scale solutions. These principles informed MCWD's Climate Action Framework, which is structured on three pillars of climate work.

- The first pillar is “Understand & Predict” and communicates the need for a strong scientific understanding of current and future vulnerabilities to inform management efforts.
- The second pillar is “Convene & Plan” which recognizes the need to work directly with partners to develop a coordinated strategy to build resilience across the watershed.
- The third pillar, “Implement, Measure, Adapt,” establishes MCWD’s commitment to action as well as continued evaluation and adaptation.
- MCWD is currently advancing steps to implement the first pillar. This includes building out a network of real-time sensors to improve data collection and short-term water level predictions. These efforts also support the optimization of Gray’s Bay Dam operations. Cermak and Beck are leading a process to build out a 2-dimensional, watershed-wide model to generate a comprehensive understanding of how water is moving through the watershed. To inform the watershed-wide build, MCWD recently completed development of a pilot model. MCWD is also scoping next steps for the second pillar, “Convene & Plan.” In the next year, MCWD will begin convening partners to identify priorities and challenges, and develop a coordinated strategy for improving resilience, using data from the 2-D watershed model to understand how communities will be affected. This engagement process will kick off in 2024 alongside the building of the model.
- Later this summer, MCWD will be inviting TAC members and other public partners to a briefing to learn more about how the model will support climate action planning and provide input.
- TAC members were invited to ask questions and provide input on topics they were interested in exploring in the climate engagement process starting in 2024.
 - TAC members asked about the scale of the model and the software being considered for the model.
 - MCWD staff explained that it would be a watershed-wide model with the capability to identify local flooding. Staff also noted that MCWD is in the process of meeting with local and national model experts to assess options for the best model platform to meet MCWD’s needs. Interested TAC members can learn more about this at the upcoming model briefing.
 - A TAC member also inquired on whether the new model will become MCWD’s new regulatory model.
 - Christopher and Beck explained that this model will be selected primarily for its ability to inform climate planning and will likely not replace, but rather work in complement to, MCWD’s current model since each will likely serve different uses. This will also be a focus of discussion at the upcoming briefing.

- One TAC member shared that recent legislative action instituted a climate planning requirement for municipal comprehensive plans. It was also noted that the Metropolitan Council is working on developing a model to cover the seven-county metropolitan area and is coordinating closely with MCWD.
- Regarding topics for the climate engagement process, one TAC member commented that they are interested in having a session to discuss goals and priorities to explore how they align between the MCWD and its member communities.

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

- MCWD staff once again expressed gratitude for the TAC's efforts and invited TAC members to join staff for a celebratory lunch. Christopher and Moran invited TAC members to fill out a survey to help staff assess the TAC process before wrapping up the meeting.

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Photo credit: Ernesto Ruiz

Land & Water Partnership Initiative

TAC Meeting #8

thank
you!



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thank
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Thank
You

Agenda

- Overview and Recap
- LWPI Outcomes and Next Steps
- Break
- Climate Action Planning
- Wrap-up and Survey
- Lunch (optional)



In Pursuit of a Balanced Urban Ecology

- Healthy natural systems support thriving communities
- Changes on the landscape impact water resources and present opportunities
- Partnership and integrated planning can produce a triple bottom line



Purpose of the Land & Water Partnership Initiative

Create systems to support partnership and integration of land use and water planning



TAC Work Plan



Vetting the new Land & Water Partnership Program



Optimizing the Permitting Experience



Building Sustainable Connections for Ongoing Collaboration

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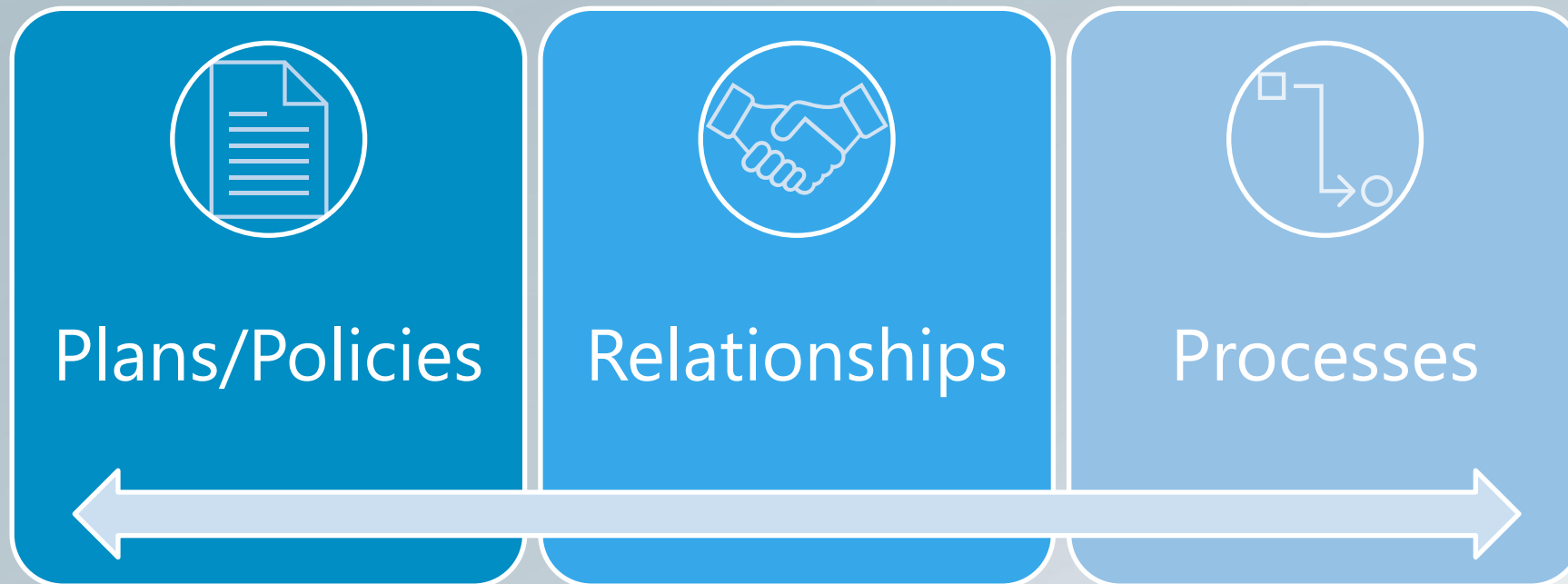
LWPI Outcomes and Next Steps



Coordination Framework

Goal:

- Building sustainable connections for ongoing collaboration



Coordination Framework – Key Areas of Input

- Coordination on Public Projects
- Coordination on Private Development Review
- Identifying Opportunity Areas
- Regular Coordination Meetings
- Regional Flood Management



Coordination Framework – Public Projects



TAC Input

- Benefits of partnership
- Keys to success



Next Steps

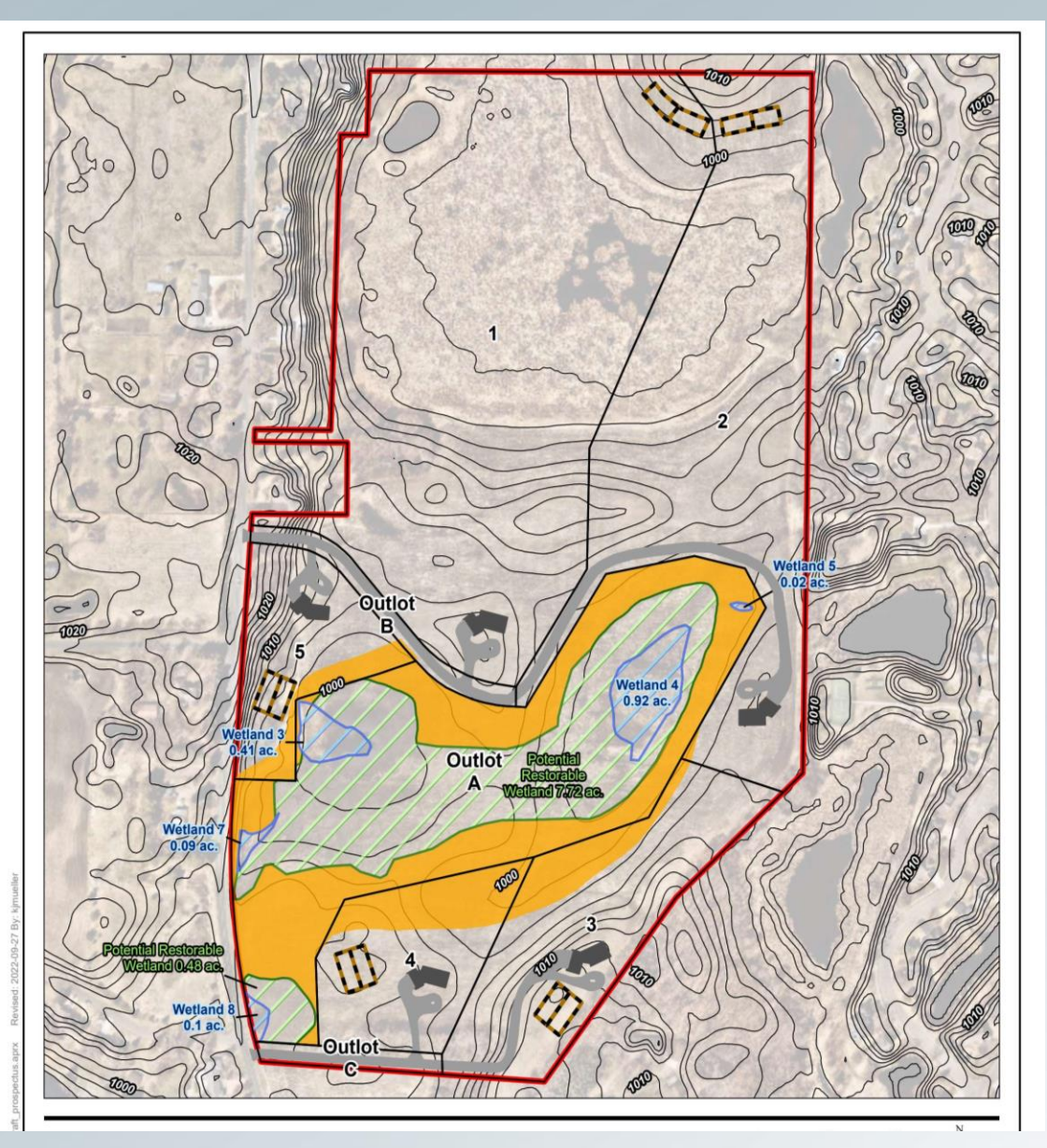
- Partner engagement of MCWD early on in project planning
 - Sharing CIPs, small area plans, etc.
 - Discuss at annual meetings
 - Utilize LWP program process/services

Coordination Framework – Private Development



TAC Input

- Value in early engagement
- Planning staff are key connection
- Cities willing to engage MCWD early



10/16/2022 10:00 AM
Revised: 2022-05-27 By: jmueller

Coordination Framework – Private Development



TAC Input

- Value in early engagement
- Planning staff are key connection
- Cities willing to engage MCWD early



Next Steps

- City engagement of MCWD during pre-app or sketch plan stage for large-scale projects
- MCWD outreach to city planners

Coordination Framework – Opportunity Areas



TAC input

- Identify opportunities for regional treatment/storage
- Integrate into city land use plans
- Potential for regional banks/credit systems



Next Steps

- Identification of opportunity areas for next watershed/city plan updates
- Systems analysis through LWP program
- Development of shared mapping tool

Coordination Framework – Coordination Meetings



TAC Input

- Interest in annual staff meetings
- Value in city council/planning commission presentations each term cycle



Next Steps

- MCWD to initiate annual meetings
- MCWD will develop approach for engaging city councils/planning commissions on a regular cycle

Coordination Framework – Regional Flood Mgmt



TAC Input

- Interest in LWP program support for flood management projects
- Interest in how MCWD might regulate regional volume management



Next Steps

- Planning and engagement process for climate action starting spring 2024
- Near-term modeling/analysis to inform regulation/management decisions

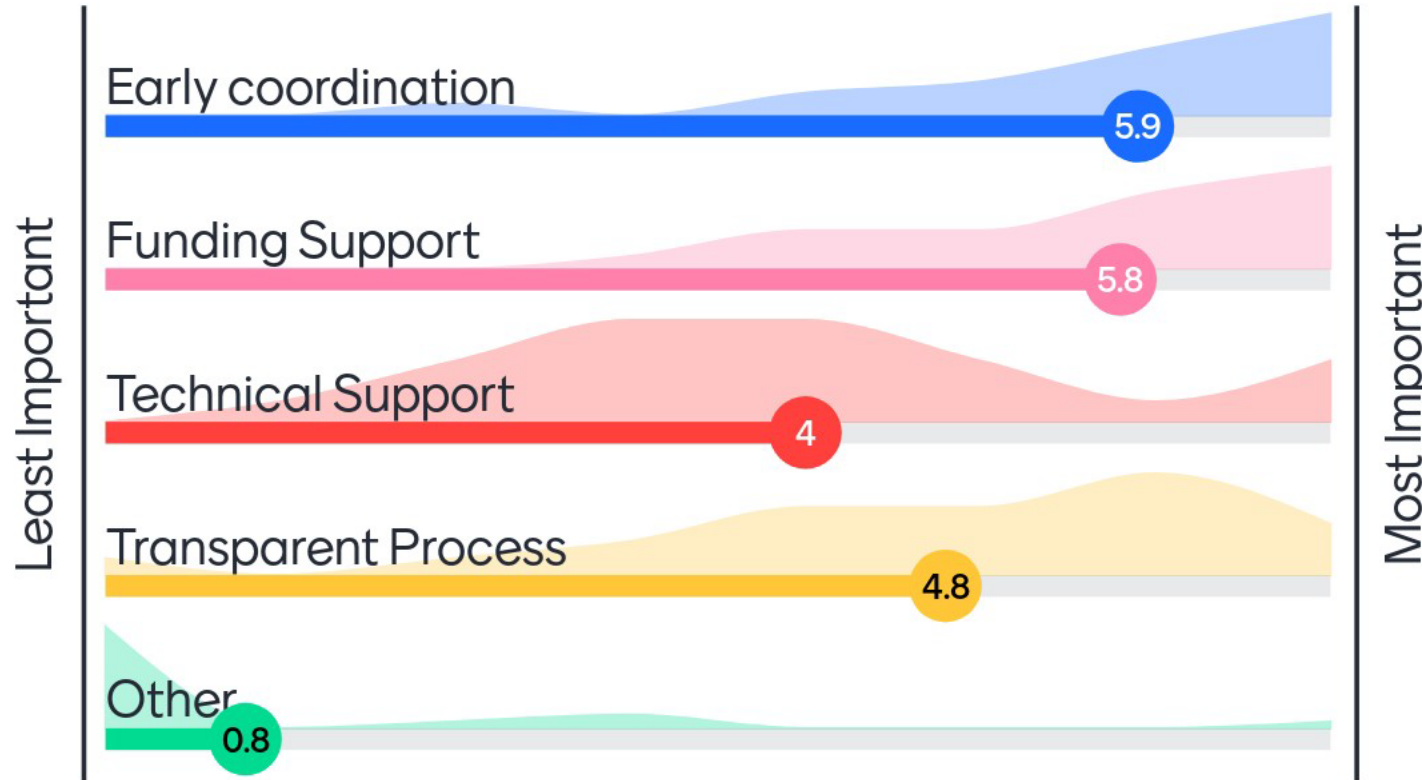


Land & Water Partnership (LWP) Program

Goals:

- Increase early coordination and integration of land use and water planning
- Leverage opportunities created through land use change to improve water resources
- Provide service and value to communities across the watershed

What do you think is most important for LWP to achieve its purpose and goals?



LWP Program – Key Areas of Input

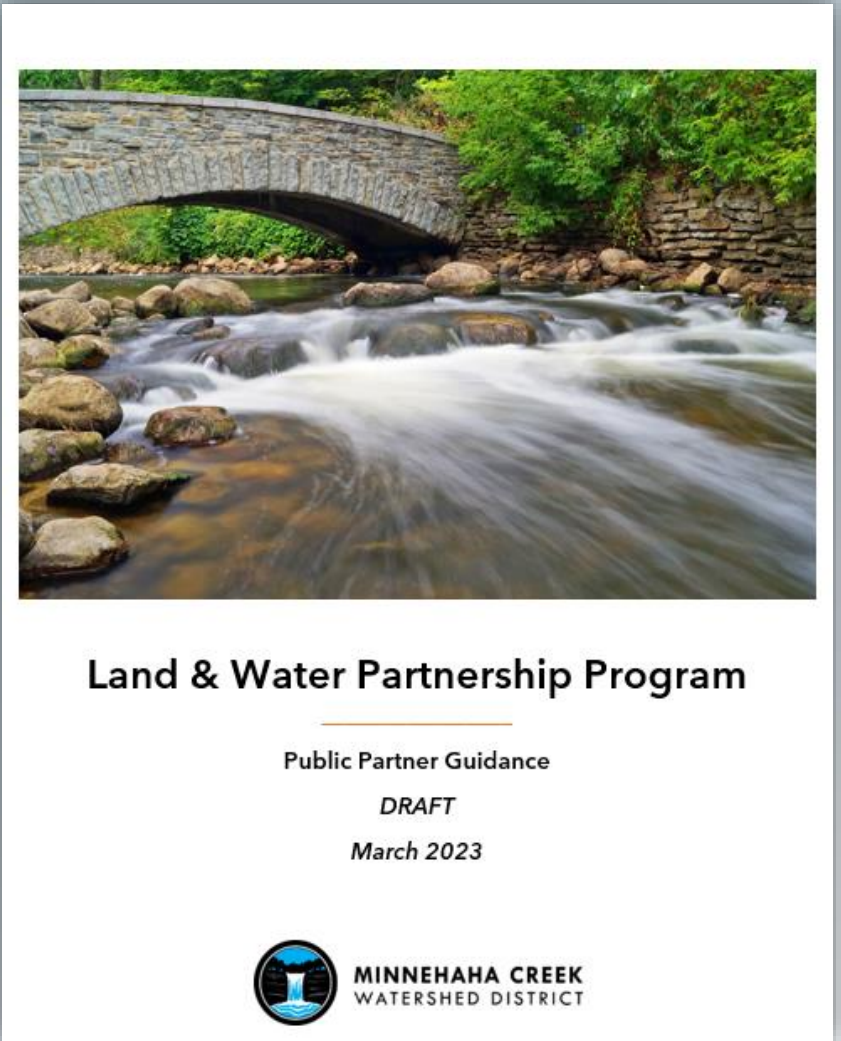


- Support for program purpose and scope
 - Watershed-wide approach to supporting partner projects
 - Technical/\$ support for concept development
- Recommendations for improved clarity
 - Eligibility, evaluation criteria, funding levels
- Comfort with process and submittals
 - Need for flexible schedule for private development opportunities

LWP Program – Next Steps



- Pilot program continuing through 2023
- Finalize and adopt program by end of 2023
- Outreach and engagement
- Ongoing evaluation



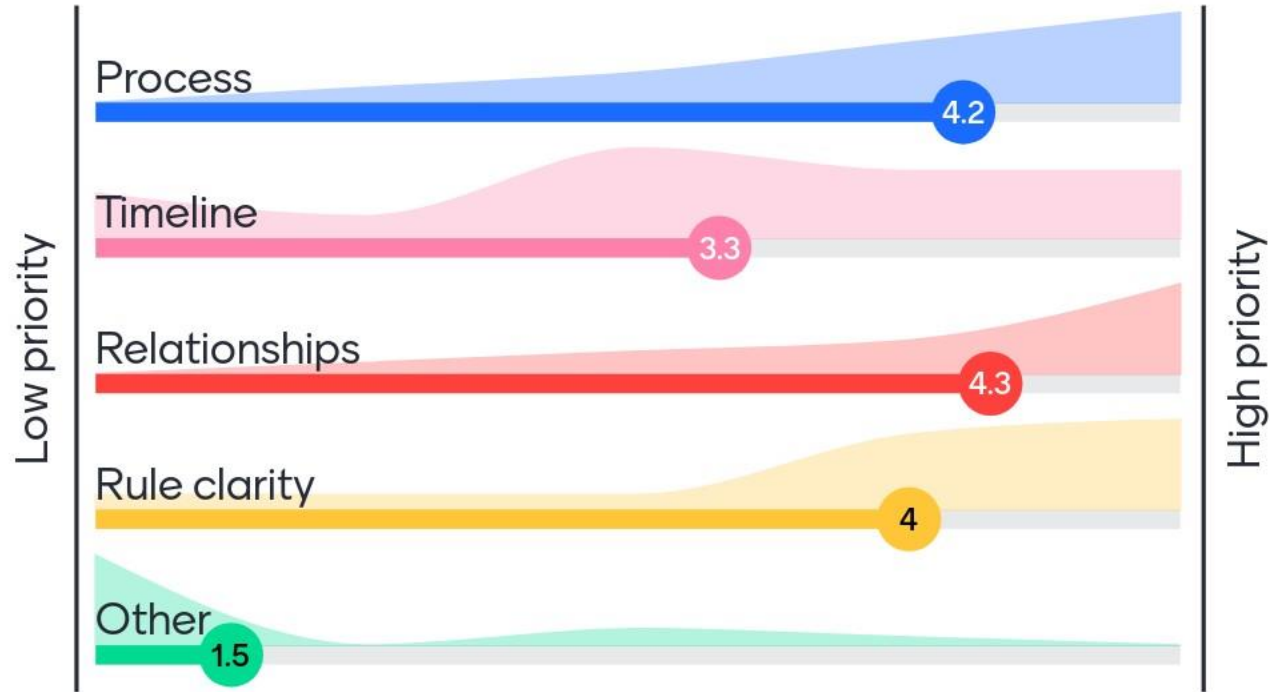


Permitting Program Improvements

Goals:

- Improving MCWD rules by aligning with state standards for consistency and simplifying language to enhance clarity.
- Making the program more efficient and effective by tailoring regulations and field presence to natural resource risk.
- Exploring formal partnerships with municipalities to improve coordination, reduce duplication of efforts, and leverage each other's capabilities.

How can your permitting experience be improved?



Which improvements are most valuable to you?



Permitting Program – Key Areas of Input



- Scope of Improvements
- Rule Revisions
- Compliance Framework
- Formalizing Regulatory Partnerships
- Data Sharing



Permitting Program – Scope of Improvements



TAC Input

- Support for program improvements
- Importance of staff retention/continuity for relationship building



Next Steps

- Relationship building
 - Compensation evaluation
 - Staff training
 - Consider dedicated contacts

Permitting Program – Rule Revisions



TAC Input

- Support for MS4 alignment, streamlining, and simplifying language
- Recommendations for additional refinement, clarification, and streamlining



Next Steps

- Provide responses to specific comments via Extended Feedback Form
- Incorporate TAC recommendations and draft side-by-side versions
- 45-day public comment period in September-October
- Adoption by end of 2023

Permitting Program – Rule Revisions Summary

- Erosion Control – comfort with GP with inspection prioritization, further alignment with MS4 permit
- Shoreline – no major changes proposed/recommended
- Waterbody Crossings - streamline process for in-kind culvert/outfall replacement
- Dredging - streamline process for outfall dredging
- Wetlands – comfort with added buffer flexibility
- Variance – clarity for review of projects that can't provide compensatory storage
- Floodplain – comfort with keeping freeboard requirement as is
- Stormwater – comfort with revised treatment tables, flexibility on linear cost-effectiveness determination, clarify BMP requirement, prevention of volume increases

Permitting Program – Compliance Framework



TAC Input

- Support for formalizing process for inspection prioritization and enforcement in policies
- Suggested refinements – past contractor experience, inspection frequency



Next Steps

- Use 2023 as trial period to test inspection prioritization protocol
- Incorporate TAC recommendation and finalize policies for adoption

Permitting Program – Data Sharing



TAC Input

- Potential to use IT improvements to share permit and inspection information to support coordination



Next Steps

- Explore development of shared GIS mapping tool to provide access to active permits, inspection priority level, and last inspection

Permitting Program – Formalizing Partnerships



TAC Input

- Interest in formalizing regulatory partnerships to reduce redundancy, improve coordination, and provide role clarity
- Need for partnerships to be customizable



Next Steps

- Develop template agreement to share with cities
- Work with interested cities to refine and test partnership framework

Discussion Questions (large group)

- How well did the information shared capture the key takeaways from the TAC process?
- What insights would you add?

Mentimeter



Discussion Questions (pair share)

- How should MCWD measure the success of this initiative?
- What would success look like in five years?

Next Steps

- TAC survey on satisfaction with process and outcomes
- Refine synthesis based on TAC feedback
- Develop and distribute synthesis publication to broader stakeholder group
 - Survey question requesting quote/letter of support
- Implement the next steps outlined in the synthesis and provide progress updates



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Break

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Climate Planning Preview

TAC Meeting 8

June 2, 2023

Overview

- Background on climate planning
- MCWD's Climate Action Framework
- Looking forward

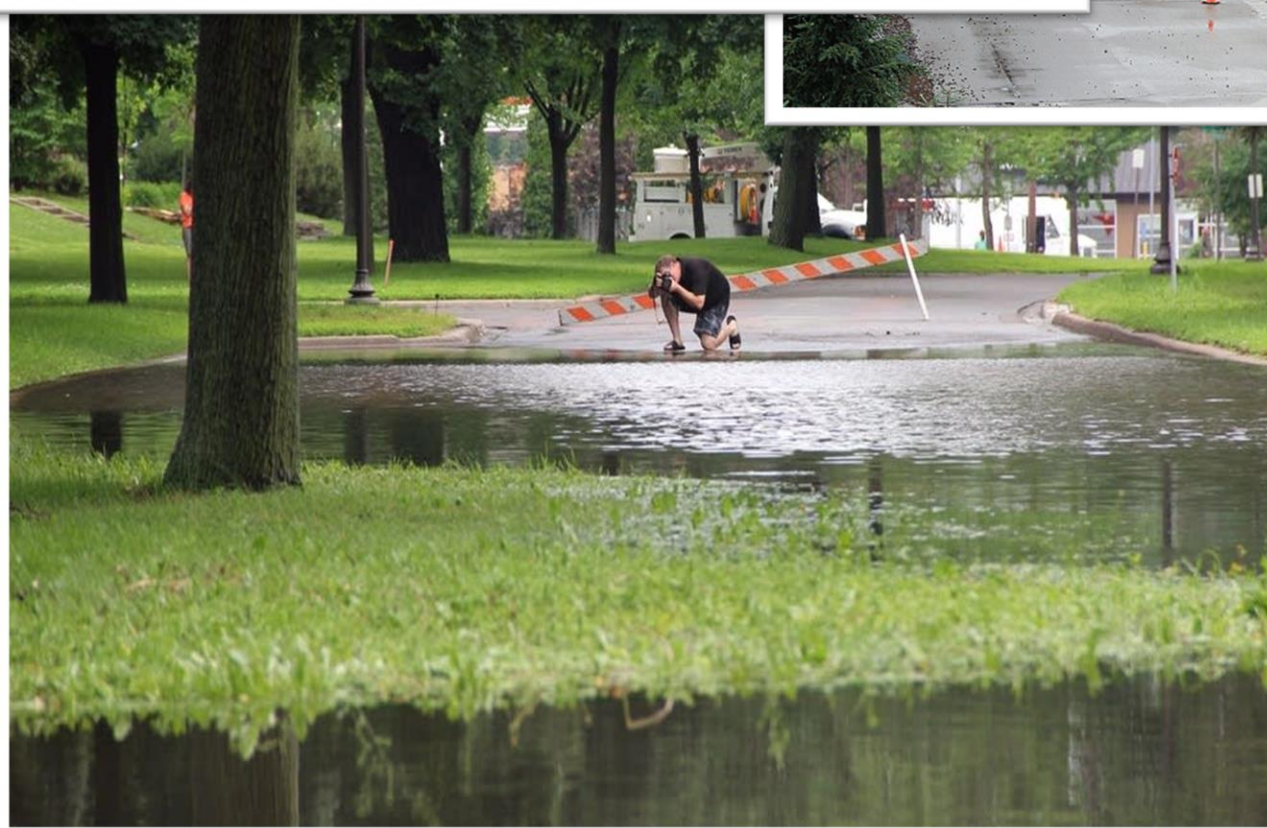


Setting Climate Direction

- Climate change is already impacting our region
- MCWD recognizes climate change poses a significant threat to its ability to carry out its mission and achieve our goals
- Need for a coordinated approach to address climate change at watershed scale







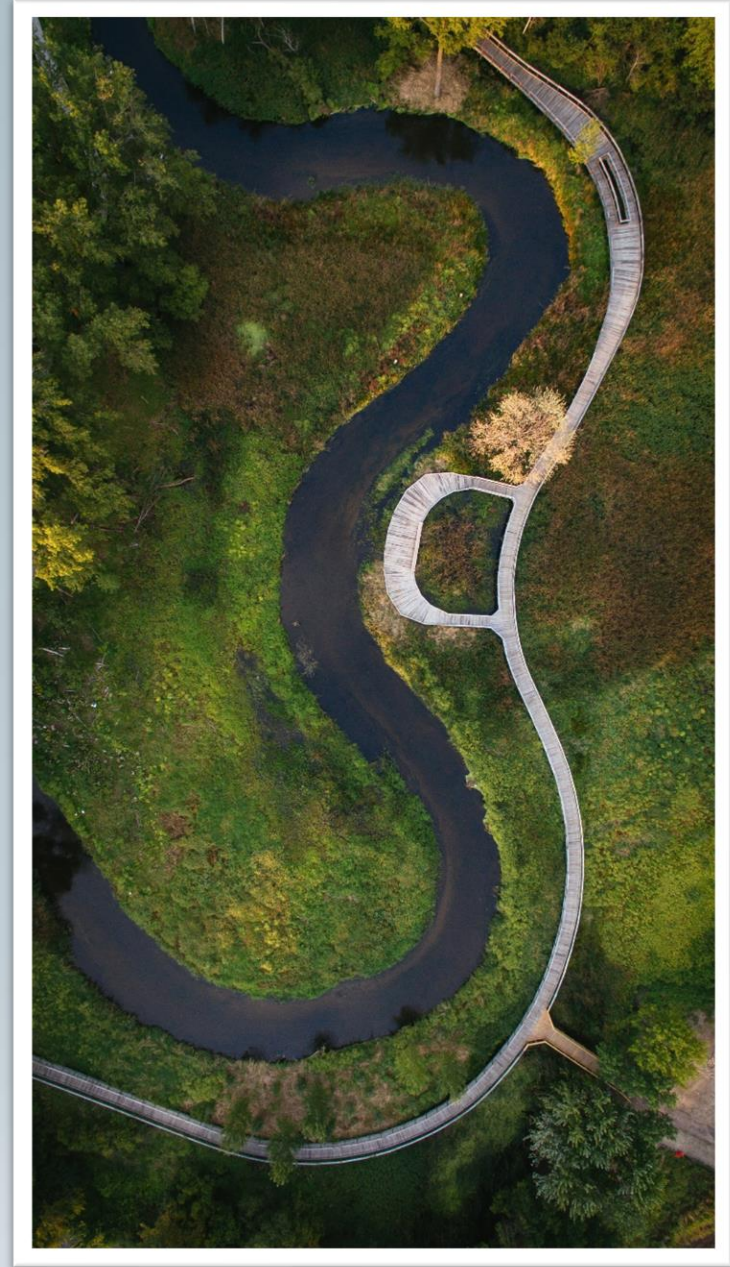
Setting Climate Direction



- What's happening?
- What are the threats?
- What's being done?
- What's our role?

Guiding Principles

- Sound Science
- Partnership
- Flood Adaptation
- Watershed-Scale Solutions



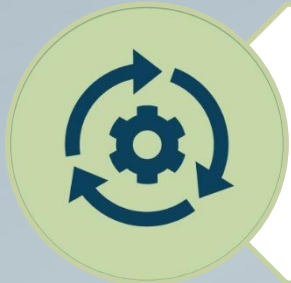
Climate Action Framework



Pillar 1: Understand & Predict



Pillar 2: Convene & Plan



Pillar 3: Implement, Measure, & Adapt

Climate Action Framework



Pillar 1: Understand & Predict



Pillar 2: Convene & Plan

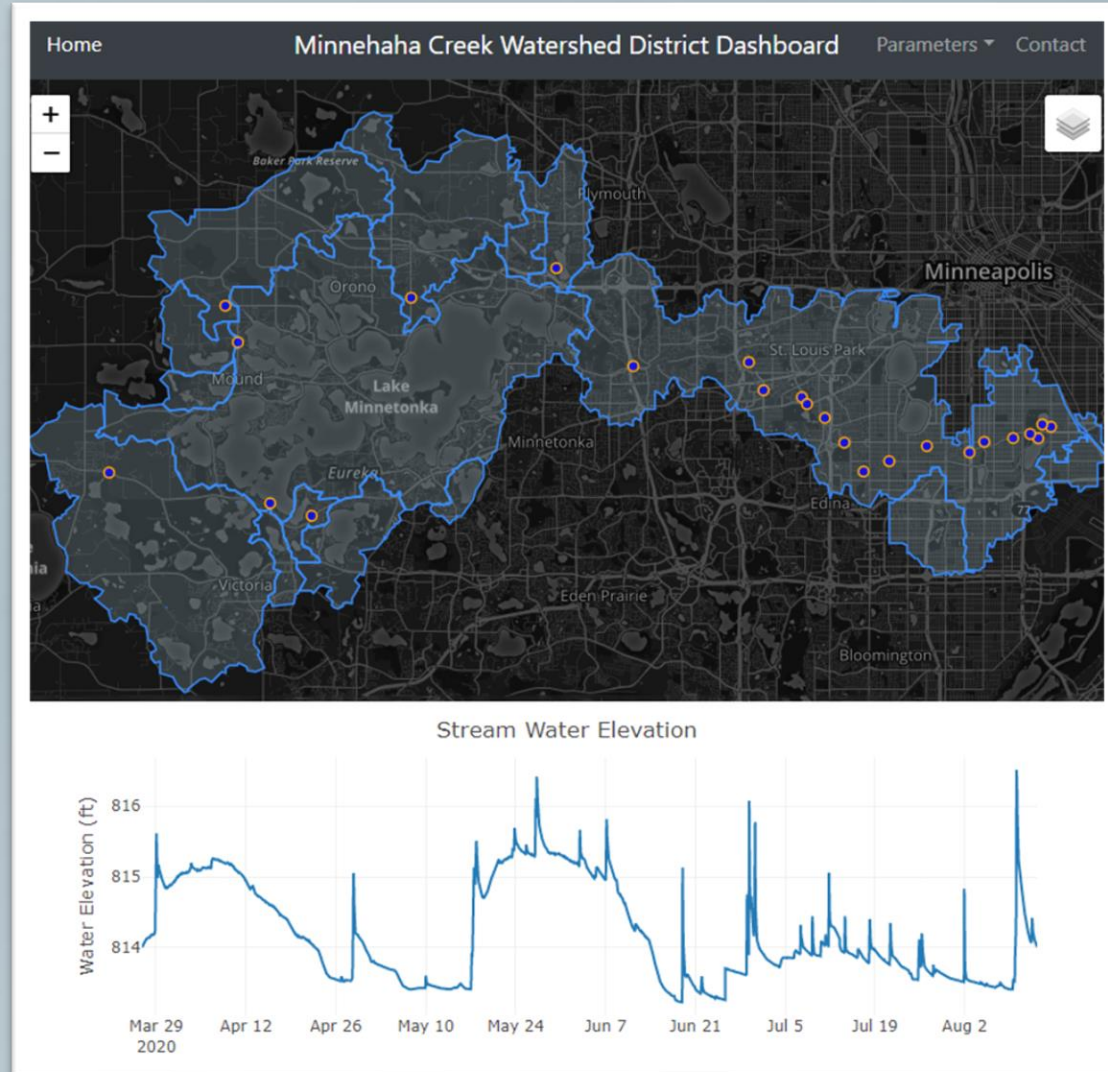


Pillar 3: Implement, Measure, & Adapt

Climate Action Framework



Pillar 1: Understand & Predict



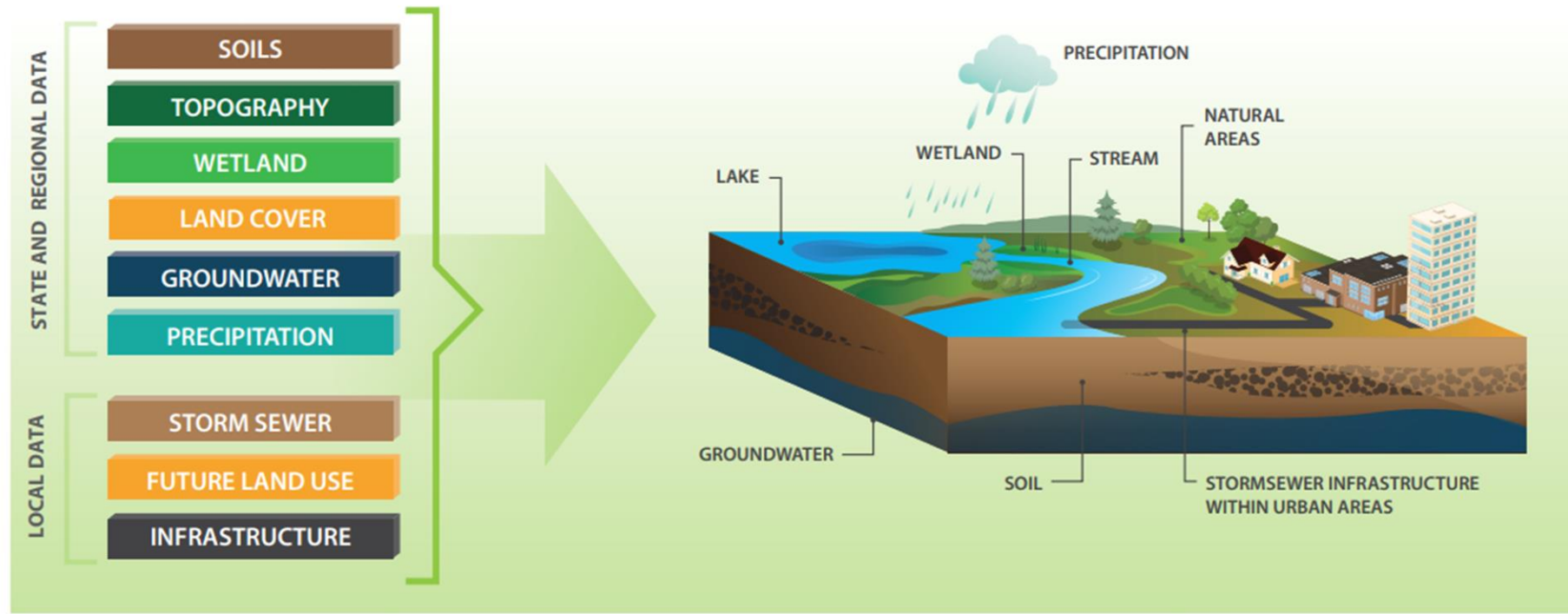
Climate Action Framework



Pillar 1: Understand & Predict

Leveraging Innovations in Data Analytics for Project Implementation (Project #2023-238)

Summary: Integrating newly-available datasets into a 21st-century planning tool, widely called for by our communities, that forecasts the impacts of changing precipitation patterns and quantitatively compares the most cost-effective solutions.



OUTPUTS

High-resolution understanding of complex watershed

Predict impact of changing climate

Identify natural resources most in need of protection

Quantitatively compare proposed projects

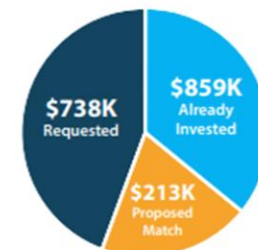
Improve flood forecasting and emergency response

4 Partners

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT | Hennepin | DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | USGS science for a changing world

14 Letters of Support

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA | Hennepin | Minneapolis City of Lakes | St. Louis Park WISCONSINA | USGS | MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | W | MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



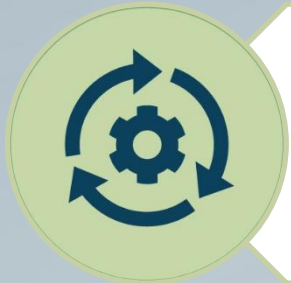
Climate Action Framework



Pillar 1: Understand & Predict



Pillar 2: Convene & Plan



Pillar 3: Implement, Measure, & Adapt

Climate Action Framework



Pillar 2: Convene & Plan

- Learning the challenges facing partners
- Using new 2D watershed model to develop shared understanding
- Aligning goals, priorities, and strategies

Climate Action Timeline

Watershed Wide Model

Q2 2023

Understand and Predict

Convene and Plan

Engagement Planning

Q3 2023

Engagement Kickoff

Q1 2024

Discovery and Grounding

Q3 2024

Climate Scenario Analysis

Q4 2024

Q1 2025

Project and Policy Strategy Development

Watershed Management Plan Development

Q4 2025

Q2

Q3

Q1

Q3

Q4

Q1

Q4

Q4

2023

2024

2025

2026

2027

Looking Forward

- Wrap-up Pilot Model
- Upcoming decision point on 2D Watershed Model
- City Briefing on 2D Watershed Model and next steps

Discussion

- What topics are you interested in exploring in the next engagement process?

Land & Water Partnership Initiative Post-TAC Survey



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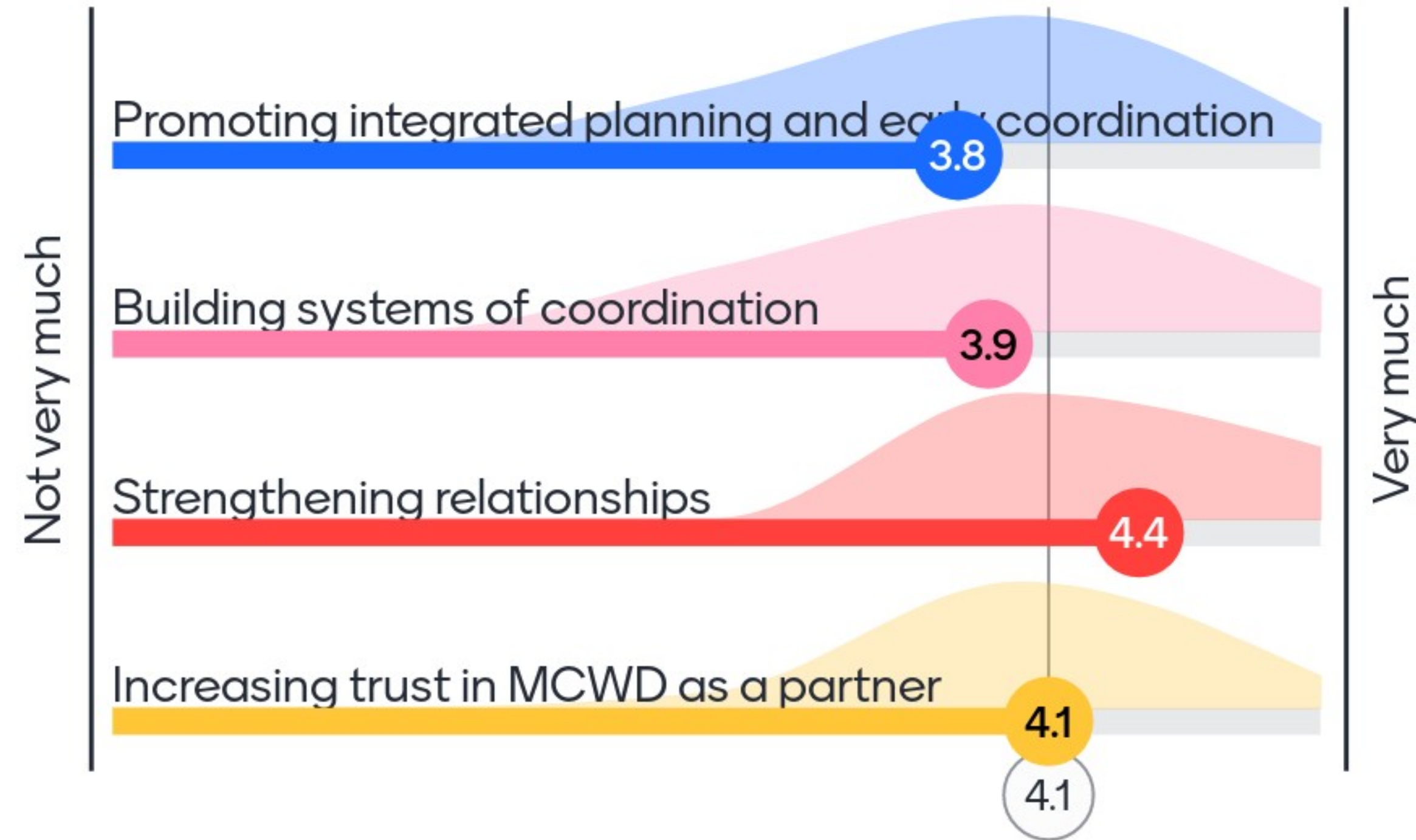
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Thank you!

<https://www.minnehahacreek.org/climate>

From your perspective, how much will the proposed improvements/next steps advance the goals of the LWP initiative?



What's your biggest takeaway from this process?

15 Responses

Generally looking ahead to even better coordination between city & District.

Opportunities exist to reshape the regulatory and partnership framework. Benchmarking and evaluation will be important going forward.

It was a good example of watershed/city communication and co-creation

Importance of communication and coordination.

Helpful having multiple meetings and opportunities to provide comments and have meaningful discussions

Hopefully, MCWD can follow through on the coordination commitment.

Rule simplification was successful.

I like the effort the district is putting in to think about process improvements and how to better work with communities a dnr private partners

Permitting staff retention is important

What's your biggest takeaway from this process?

15 Responses

Rules are complex, relationships matter, early coordination can lead to good outcomes, opportunities can be missed easily without flexibility

Nice having multiple meetings and opportunities to provide feedback

Nice having multiple meetings and opportunities to provide feedback

Building relationships is an ongoing process not a one-time event

Many opportunities exist to reshape the partnership and regulatory framework. Evaluation will be important going forward.

Lots of engagement and interest from most of our communities