



Title: MCWD Climate Conversations Part 3 – Process to Delineate MCWD Roles

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Purpose:

This Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting will be used to discuss and stress test the proposed high-level framework to delineate Minnehaha Creek Watershed District's (MCWD or District) role(s) within climate adaptation.

Background:

Over the last seven years we have seen the wettest period on record in Minnesota. The region has become wetter and warmer with more frequent, heavy precipitation and warmer winters. Looking to the future, current trends project the region will experience heat extremes and possible drought cycles by mid-century in addition to the heavy precipitation events. MCWD recognizes staff capacity and resources will continue to be requested across the watershed as these events become more frequent and extreme. The District must define its role in addressing impacts from climate change in order to effectively respond to needs within the watershed.

Addressing impacts from climate change cannot be done alone by a single agency, city, county, or country. MCWD's role must provide value to partners and residents while also considering how its sphere of responsibility connects with other agencies and partners' respective roles. Responding to climate change is a large, complex issue and MCWD has started strategically looking at how it can approach developing the most effective role(s) that will provide value to its partners and residents. This prompted District staff to engage the CAC in a series of climate conversations to gather ideas on how the District will define its role(s) to strategically respond to climate change. This process includes:

1. Grounding in Climate Science ([March 3, 2020 CAC Meeting](#))
2. Scanning across Federal, state, regional, and local governments to map existing plans and defined roles in climate adaptation ([June 16, 2020 CAC Meeting](#))
3. Exploring how MCWD will approach defining its role(s) in climate adaptation (October 14, 2020 CAC Meeting)
4. Refining framework/process MCWD will use to develop and implement its role(s) (December 9, 2020 CAC Meeting)

The previous two climate conversations provided a solid foundational understanding of climate science and adaptation planning at a Federal, state, regional and local level. At these two previous meetings, it was clarified upcoming conversations would focus on MCWD's role around climate adaptation (addressing impacts), not climate mitigation (addressing causes).

Proposed Framework to Delineate MCWD's Climate Adaptation Role:

Based on discussions to date, MCWD staff has drafted a high-level framework for thinking about MCWD's role(s) within climate adaptation. Below are the proposed three general buckets of work that will work together to illuminate what MCWD's role(s) could be within climate adaptation.

- Understand: Understand Impacts of Climate Change within Watershed
- Plan: Convene and Plan Solutions with Partners
- Implement: Implement Strategic Response

MCWD is engaging the CAC members to stress test this proposed framework to inform how the process will be further developed going forward. Below are the foundational ideas/assumptions for each bucket of work to help guide the District as it continually works towards delineating its role(s) within climate adaptation.

Understand Impacts of Climate Change within Watershed

One of the biggest challenges facing regions across the globe, including our region, is simply not knowing exactly when, where, and how climate change impacts will occur. In order to effectively plan and provide service, the District first needs to understand what is happening across our watershed today and where the greatest pressure points/impacts from climate change will emerge in the future.

Convene and Plan Solutions with Partners

No one can fully address impacts from climate change alone. Collective action is needed to address these large, complex issues. Therefore, the District will need to bring partners together collaboratively to share information, build common understanding, and determine respective roles and responsibilities.

Implement Strategic Response

The final piece to this process is confirming and communicating MCWD's role(s) in climate adaptation and actions the District will take to help the watershed adapt. This third bucket of work could include implementing actions such as policy changes, projects, outreach/communication initiatives, regulation changes, programming updates, etc.

Workshop Session:

As part of this CAC meeting, the members will participate in a workshop in small breakout groups to stress test the proposed framework, role considerations, and critical next steps. Below are a few questions to consider prior to the October 14, 2020 CAC Meeting:

- Does this proposed framework/process make sense? What are we missing or not considering?
- What are the potential roles for MCWD within this framework? Consider:
 - What are MCWD strengths and weaknesses?
 - What will partners look to us for?
 - What are partners better equipped to do?
- What questions should we be looking to answer regarding impacts within the watershed from climate change that will provide useful information to our cities and to the District to help us adapt?