



**Title:** Authorization to Initiate Stakeholder Engagement for the 2027 Watershed Management Plan

**Resolution number:** 24-069

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**Recommend action:** Adoption of Framework and Authorization to Initiate Stakeholder Engagement

**Past Board action:** Resolution #18-004 Adoption of MCWD's 2017 Watershed Management Plan  
Resolution #22-084 Adoption of MCWD's Climate Action Framework

**Summary:**

The District's current Watershed Management Plan (Plan) was adopted in January 2018 and is due for revision by the end of 2027. In September 2024, staff initiated a series of discussions with the Board of Managers to develop a clear scope of work for the 2027 Plan update. These discussions have informed the development of the attached 2027 Watershed Management Plan Framework, which outlines the Plan purpose, primary focus, scope of work, and stakeholder engagement plan.

The 2017 Plan update marked a significant shift in MCWD's approach to watershed management, focusing on the Balanced Urban Ecology (BUE) policy. From 2015-2017, MCWD led a robust stakeholder engagement process to build awareness of its new vision and partnership approach. This approach of partnership and integrated planning has received strong support from the District's communities and other stakeholders, and has led to the successful implementation of several high-impact projects.

The Board has expressed support for positioning the 2027 Plan update as a continuation of this BUE policy direction, while building out several key areas. The primary focus of the 2027 Plan update will be the collaborative development of a watershed-wide flood management strategy. The District recognizes that climate change is already impacting the state and its water resources, and the effects of climate change are expected to accelerate in the coming decades. In order for the District to continue to work toward its BUE vision, it must develop a strategy to ensure that the watershed remains as resilient as possible. The Board adopted the [Climate Action Framework](#) (CAF) in December 2022, which outlines MCWD's approach to enhance its understanding of vulnerabilities across the watershed and collaborate with partners to develop shared goals and a coordinated strategy to be memorialized in the 2027 Plan.

The purpose of the 2027 Watershed Management Plan Framework is to establish a shared understanding between staff and the Board of Managers as to the policy focus, scope of work, and engagement process for the Plan update prior to initiating external stakeholder engagement. Staff have refined the Framework based on feedback from the Board during the September through November Policy and Planning Committee discussions, as well as review with the Citizens Advisory Committee in November.

At the December 19, 2024, Board meeting, staff will review the final 2027 Plan Framework and seek Board adoption of the Framework and authorization to initiate the stakeholder engagement process. Upon Board authorization, staff will begin preparing for individual partner meetings, kickoff publication, and kickoff events in early 2025.

**Supporting documents:**

Attachment 1: 2027 Watershed Management Plan Framework



**RESOLUTION**

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**Title:** Authorization to Initiate Stakeholder Engagement for the 2027 Watershed Management Plan

WHEREAS, in January 2018, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) Board of Managers adopted its current Watershed Management Plan (Plan) which reflected a significant shift in MCWD’s approach to watershed management centered around its Balanced Urban Ecology Policy which identifies partnerships, geographic focus, and flexibility as key principles to guide implementation;

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Minnesota Statutes §103B.231, the MCWD must update its Plan within ten years from the date the Plan was approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources, giving MCWD a deadline of December 20, 2027;

WHEREAS, the Plan is intended to set overarching thematic direction for the next 10 years, align MCWD and cities around priority policy areas, facilitate communication of MCWD’s purpose and priorities to stakeholders, and provide organizational transparency and accountability;

WHEREAS, MCWD’s region is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, including localized and regional flooding, and MCWD recognized the need for a comprehensive strategy to improve the watershed’s resilience;

WHEREAS, MCWD conducted an internal planning process that resulted in the adoption of a Climate Action Framework (CAF) on December 15, 2022 that outlines MCWD’s approach to enhance its understanding of vulnerabilities across the watershed and collaborate with partners to develop shared goals and a coordinated strategy to be memorialized in the 2027 Plan;

WHEREAS, staff developed the attached 2027 Watershed Management Plan Framework to establish a shared understanding with the Board of Managers as to the policy focus, scope of work, and engagement process for the Plan update prior to initiating external stakeholder engagement;

WHEREAS, this framework has been refined based on discussions with the Board of Managers and Citizens Advisory Committee between September and November 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Managers has reviewed the framework and finds that it represents and clearly communicates the strategic direction for MCWD’s 2027 Plan update and engagement efforts between 2025-2027;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the MCWD Board of Managers hereby adopts the 2027 Watershed Management Plan Framework and authorizes staff to initiate the stakeholder engagement process.

Resolution Number 24-069 was moved by Manager \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Manager \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Motion to adopt the resolution \_\_\_ ayes, \_\_\_ nays, \_\_\_ abstentions. Date: 12/19/2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Secretary Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# 2027 Watershed Management Plan Framework

December 2024 Draft

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## Purpose

The purpose of this 2027 Watershed Management Plan (Plan) Framework is to establish a shared understanding between Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) staff and the Board of Managers as to the policy focus, scope of work, and engagement process for the Plan update prior to initiating external stakeholder engagement.

The current Plan was approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) on December 20, 2017, and is due for revision ten years from that date, giving a deadline of December 20, 2027. The MCWD Plan serves four primary purposes:

- Sets overarching thematic direction for the 10-year plan cycle;
- Aligns MCWD and cities around priority policy areas;
- Facilitates communication of MCWD's purpose and priorities to stakeholders; and
- Fulfills regulatory requirements that ensure organizational transparency and accountability.

The following sections outline the organizational strategic framework that will guide the Plan, the primary focus and scope of work for the Plan update, a stakeholder engagement plan, and a preliminary schedule.

# Organizational Strategic Framework

The 2027 Watershed Management Plan (Plan) will carry forward and build on the strategic direction set in the 2017 Plan.

## Vision

A landscape of vibrant communities where the balance of natural and built environments create value and enjoyment.

## Mission

To collaborate with public and private partners to protect and improve land and water for future generations.

## Goals

Water Quality - To preserve and improve the quality of surface and groundwater.

Water Quantity - To manage the volume and flow of stormwater runoff to minimize the impacts of land use change on surface and groundwater.

Ecological Integrity - To restore, maintain, and improve the health of ecological systems.

Thriving Communities - To promote and enhance the value of water resources in creating successful, sustainable communities.

## Strategic Focus

Projects – Building high-impact projects that measurably benefit the watershed.

Policy – Developing policy at the intersection of land and water planning to foster partnership and influence development's impact on the watershed.

# 2027 Plan Focus

## What – An Integrated Flood Management Strategy

The primary focus of the 2027 Plan update will be on the collaborative development of a watershed-wide flood management strategy to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change and the integration of this strategy into existing project and policy approaches.

## Why – The Challenge

- Minnehaha Creek watershed’s history of flooding
  - MCWD was petitioned into existence in 1966 for the purpose of flood control.
  - Extreme rain events in 1987 and 2014 again created major flooding problems for local communities, impacting property and infrastructure.
  - Flooding events will always be a threat and strategic opportunity for MCWD to provide value at the nexus of land use and water management.
- Land use change
  - Land use decisions are a primary driver of watershed health, impacting the quantity and quality of runoff.
  - Historic land use decisions have resulted in significant loss of water storage and a flashy system that can lead to both flooding and drought.
  - Conveyance is a common solution to localized flooding, but conveyance alone transfers risk downstream and can contribute to negative cumulative impacts.
- Climate change
  - Climate change is exacerbating the impacts of these flashy systems with more extreme changes in precipitation, leading to increased risk of flooding and drought.
  - The watershed has experienced both extremes during the last plan cycle and seen significant regional flooding impacts to both the natural and built environment.
  - The region is projected to continue to become warmer and wetter, with warmer winters, wetter springs with heavier rain events, as well as increased summer heat and the potential for more intense droughts.

## How - Guiding Principles

- Data-Driven Decision Making – MCWD relies on scientific data and analyses as the foundation for wise decisions.
- Partnership and Integrated Planning - Because land use drives water resource issues, MCWD can be most effective by working in partnership with those making land use decisions to align goals, plans, and investments for shared benefit.
- Maximizing Regional Benefit – MCWD will maximize its impact by planning on a watershed scale and focusing on solutions that provide the greatest regional benefit.

# Scope of Work

## Areas of Work

Four primary areas of work have been identified for the 2027 Plan update:

1. **Integrated Flood Management Strategy** – The primary focus for stakeholder engagement and policy development will be the development of an integrated flood management strategy to reduce flood risk and increase resilience to climate change. The District will apply its data-driven approach of understanding the issues and drivers of flooding, and convening our partners to develop shared goals, policies, and management strategies to improve resilience to climate change and reduce flood risk across the watershed.
2. **Focal Geographies** – The Plan will carry forward the District’s proven implementation model of focusing in areas of high need and opportunity to achieve significant regional benefit. This will involve identifying focal geographies for the next plan cycle and developing implementation plans in collaboration with local partners. The process will also integrate flood management strategies and priorities into the subwatershed plans.
3. **Land & Water Partnership (LWP) Program** – The Plan will also carry forward the District’s complementary implementation model of responding to needs and opportunities across the watershed through the LWP program. To continue building out this new program, this work will focus on the identification of regional opportunity areas and coordination improvements to support more targeted and proactive opportunity identification with partners.
4. **Evaluation Framework** - As a data-driven organization it is important that we continually evaluate our effectiveness in achieving our four strategic goals of improving water quality, water quantity, ecological integrity, and thriving communities. This work will involve the development of clear metrics, tracking systems, and evaluation and reporting frameworks that can be consistently applied and integrated into existing planning processes.

The next four pages describe each of the work areas in greater detail, including the following:

- Objectives – Descriptions of what MCWD aims to achieve through the planning and stakeholder engagement process.
- Outputs - Desired outputs or deliverables for 2027. This does not include longer-term outputs to be achieved during the 2027 plan cycle.
- Engagement Needs - General characterization of what engagement will look like for each work area.

# Integrated Flood Management Strategy

## Objectives

- Build shared understanding of the range of potential flood impacts to the watershed and our communities from climate change
- Utilize MCWD's data-driven approach to work with communities to evaluate and prioritize flood management strategies within the watershed
- Collaborate with communities to determine MCWD's role in managing volume and conveyance across municipal boundaries
- Engage public partners to shape policy direction, identify priority areas, and develop a shared implementation framework

## Outputs

- Assessment of current and future flood risk, informed by the 2D model
- Shared flood management goals with communities across the watershed
- Consensus on the prioritization and appropriate application of various flood management strategies
- An implementation framework, including policies, strategies, priority areas, roles, and potential funding sources
- Broad support for MCWD's engagement process and resulting flood management strategy

## Engagement Needs

- Primary focus for TAC and PAC engagement, involving the following phases:
  - Discovery - Understand partners' goals for the process; identify existing flood impacts
  - Direction Setting - Identify management goals; identify strategies and their potential application and tradeoffs
  - Data Analysis - Use 2D model to identify current and future flood risk and evaluate strategies
  - Decisions - Develop policies and implementation framework
- CAC involvement will include:
  - Upfront vetting of messaging and approach
  - Informed of progress and outcomes of TAC and PAC process
- General public:
  - Informed of process and outcomes via website, email updates, and public meetings



# Focal Geographies

## Objectives

- Maintain MCWD’s approach of focusing in areas of high need and opportunity to achieve significant regional benefits across MCWD’s four strategic goals
- Evaluate and identify focal geographies for the next decade based on a data-driven approach
- Identify the water resource issues, drivers, and appropriate management strategies for each focal geography
- Engage key stakeholders and partners within selected areas to understand land use plans and priorities to develop integrated project solutions
- Incorporate flood adaptation strategies, opportunities, and priorities from the broader flood management planning effort
- Build and maintain coalitions of partners for each focal geography

## Outputs

- Clear justification for the selected focal geographies
- Updated/new focal geography implementation plans, including but not limited to:
  - Six Mile Creek-Halsted Bay – Updated subwatershed plan based on progress under 2017 Plan
  - Minnehaha Creek – Updated plan for Greenway and new management unit plans for Minneapolis
  - Painter Creek – Updated plan with more detailed issues, drivers, strategies, and priority projects based on diagnostic work
  - Long Lake Creek – Integration of existing Long Lake Creek Roadmap
- Broad partner support for each focal subwatershed plan

## Engagement Needs

- Vetting of focal geographies with TAC, PAC, and CAC
- Engagement of local partners in diagnostic work and development of subwatershed plans:
  - Minnehaha Creek – Continue engagement of Minneapolis and MPRB technical staff and policymakers as outlined in the cooperative agreement
  - Six Mile Creek-Halsted Bay – Reconvene the SMCHB Planning Partnership to update and vet the subwatershed plan
  - Painter Creek - Develop and implement an engagement strategy for the Painter Creek-Jennings Bay Roadmap
  - Long Lake Creek – Engagement of staff and policymakers to maintain support and advance implementation of the Long Lake Creek Roadmap

# Land & Water Partnership (LWP) Program

## Objectives

- Support implementation of high-impact LWP projects through the identification of regional opportunity areas
- Build on MCWD's data-driven approach by collecting data on partner plans and priorities to proactively identify project opportunities that align MCWD and partner goals
- Leverage the LWP program to support incorporation of MCWD's integrated flood management strategies into partner-led projects
- Identify opportunities to integrate water resource management considerations earlier in land use planning processes
- Evaluate potential of stormwater and wetland banks as a management tool to meet MCWD goals

## Outputs

- Integration of the LWP program goals and processes into the Plan
- Identification of regional opportunity areas to guide MCWD and our partners in identifying priority projects
- Tools to strengthen partner coordination, proactively screen for LWP opportunities, and integrate partner goals into regional opportunity assessment:
  - Interactive map to integrate partner priorities into regional opportunity areas
  - External map to communicate MCWD regional opportunity areas to support partners' screening of projects
  - Guidance for partner screening and utilization of tools
- Assessment of regional banking strategies (benefits, risks, approaches)
- Best practice recommendations to further integrate water resources into land use planning processes and documents

## Engagement Needs

- Throughout the TAC/PAC process, committee members will:
  - Vet regional opportunity areas identified by MCWD and inform partner guidance for opportunity screening
  - Provide input to support assessment of regional banking strategies
  - Explore options for further integration of water and land use planning
- Subwatershed planning sessions:
  - TAC, PAC and other agency departments will vet and pilot interactive map

# Evaluation Framework

## Objectives

- Create an evaluation framework to support continuous improvement, informed by data-driven decision making
- Increase transparency and accountability, for both internal and external audiences
- Demonstrate effectiveness of MCWD's partnership approach
- Integrate data from MCWD's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work to support MCWD's goal to create Thriving Communities
- Streamline MCWD tracking and reporting of progress to support MCWD's strategic planning process, regulatory requirements, and communication of MCWD's successes

## Outputs

- Defined metrics and systems for tracking progress under each of MCWD's four organizational strategic goals
- Adoption of an evaluation framework to ensure alignment between program resources, activities, and intended outcomes
- Evaluation of progress under the 2017 Plan
- Consistent system and cycle for ongoing evaluation and reporting, aligned with processes for developing 2-year work plans and 5-year strategic plans

## Engagement Needs

- Primarily an internal process for MCWD staff and Board to define how the organization will measure success and evaluate progress
- CAC will vet the approach and outputs to stress test and provide outside perspectives
- TAC will provide input on development of objectives, metrics, and tracking methods for Thriving Communities goal through the committee process
- Utilize survey or other methods to gather input from partners and general public on MCWD's work to inform progress assessment

# Engagement Plan

MCWD's 2027 Plan is subject to certain engagement requirements outlined in MN Statutes §§ 103D.331, 103D.337, 103B.231, and MN Rules §8410, which have been integrated into the engagement process. To support MCWD's organizational strategic direction, achieve the Plan's purpose, and accomplish the proposed scope of work, the following objectives are recommended to guide the engagement process:

## Engagement Process Objectives

### **Build Trust in MCWD as a Partner, not just a Regulator**

- Co-design policy interventions and regulations with our communities.
- Prioritize active listening to understand our stakeholders' goals and incorporate their feedback into MCWD's decision-making when feasible.
- Seek to add value for our partners wherever possible, such as helping cities meet new local water plan requirements.
- Create engaging spaces for relationship-building by incorporating fun, food, humor, and time for connection.

### **Provide a Regional Lens and Systems Understanding**

- Clearly communicate the scope of the 2027 Plan update and MCWD's role, ensuring partners understand our vision, goals, and process.
- Provide a systems-based lens to understand the watershed, needs, impacts, and solutions.
- Ensure partners see their goals represented within MCWD's regional scope and have a sense of ownership over the 2027 Plan.
- Daylight areas of disagreement early on and facilitate consensus-building to keep the process moving forward.

### **Establish Credibility in our Decision-Making**

- Leverage best practices from scenario planning processes to inform our approach.
- Build consensus on how we will use relevant datasets and climate scenarios to guide the development of solutions.
- Establish early stakeholder support for MCWD's new 2-D model by providing transparency on the model development process and how partners' datasets are incorporated.
- Leverage regional partners like Hennepin County and Met Council in process design and engagement for mutual benefit.

### **Maintain Alignment Between a Diverse Array of Stakeholders**

- Facilitate coordination and feedback across city/agency departments throughout process.
- Create and maintain alignment and direction between and across advisory committees.
- Ensure MCWD has the capacity and expertise to support an effective process.
- Achieve broad support for the 2027 Plan's direction and outcomes by addressing stakeholder concerns early and engaging them at every stage of the process.

## Stakeholders

To achieve the objectives outlined above and ensure the 2027 Plan serves our communities, MCWD must engage a range of key stakeholders. The table below specifies each audience’s level of participation by each of the Plan’s four areas of work, based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework, which clarifies how each audience will contribute to decision-making.

- Local/regional public agencies: cities, counties, MPRB, TRPD, Met Council, LMCD
  - Primary Staff Contacts – water resources, public works, planners, community development, engineers, regulators
  - Policy makers - councils, administrators, commissioners
- State agencies: BWSR, MPCA, DNR, MDH, MDA, MNDOT
- CAC Members
- Community-based organizations: lake/creek associations, neighborhood associations, indigenous organizations, and other community groups
- General Public

<i>Stakeholder Engagement by Work Area</i>					
Work Area	Local/Regional Public Agencies		State Agencies	CAC members	General Public & Community Organizations
	Primary Staff Contacts	Policy Makers			
Flood Management Strategy	Collaborate	Collaborate	Consult	Consult	Inform
Focal Geographies	Collaborate	Collaborate	Inform	Consult	Consult
Land & Water Partnership Program	Involve	Involve	Inform	Consult	Inform
Evaluation Framework	Consult	Consult	Consult	Involve	Consult

## Engagement Methods

Staff have identified a portfolio of methods to engage the Plan’s key stakeholders effectively. The following sections describe the methods staff will employ to engage each audience throughout the Plan update process. The MCWD Board of Managers will also be engaged throughout the process by receiving updates on progress, engaging in workshops for each of the Plan’s four work areas, and serving as liaisons to the Policy Advisory Committee.

<i>External Stakeholder Engagement Methods</i>					
Audience	Local/Regional Public Agencies		State Agencies	CAC Members	General Public & Community Organizations
	Primary Staff	Policy Makers			
Soft Rollout (kickoff publication, 1:1s, calls)	X	X	X		
Kickoff Events	X	X	X	X	X
TAC Meetings	X				
PAC Meetings		X			
CAC Meetings				X	X
Written Communications (factsheets, email updates, webpage, media)	X	X	X	X	X
1:1 Meetings	X	X	X		
Focal Geography Planning Meetings	X	X			X
Subwatershed Planning Meeting & Interactive Mapping Tool	X	X			
Online Survey				X	X
Public Meetings (open houses, townhalls)				X	X
Public Hearing and 60-Day Comment Period	X	X	X	X	X

## Soft-Rollout

**Audience:** Public agency staff and policymakers

**Description:** MCWD staff will introduce the upcoming planning process during routine coordination meetings, calls, and engagement with city staff and policymakers across the watershed. MCWD will also develop and distribute a kick-off publication and cover letter to notify stakeholders of upcoming engagement opportunities, such as kick-off events.

**Timeline:** January 2025 – April 2025

## Kick-Off Event(s)

**Audience:** Public agency staff and policymakers, state agencies, CAC members, community-based organizations, and the general public

**Description:** MCWD will host 2-3 kick-off meetings across the watershed to introduce the scope of the 2027 Plan update, collect input on the proposed process, and preview upcoming engagement opportunities for key stakeholders across the watershed. Public notice will be provided at least two weeks prior to all events.

**Timeline:** April 2025

## Advisory Committee Process

### *Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)*

**Audience:** Public agency staff

**Description:** In-person meetings with a committee of 15-20 technical staff members to work through discussions on the four plan focus areas. TAC members will collaborate on an implementation framework to support flood management, vet focal geography areas, advise on opportunities for land use and water integration, and provide input on evaluation methods for MCWD's goals.

**Timeline:** Bimonthly meetings June 2025 – March 2027

### *Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)*

**Audience:** Public agency policymakers

**Description:** In-person meetings with a committee of 15-20 policymakers across the watershed to gather feedback on the policy direction and structure of the Plan. PAC members will provide direction on an integrated flood management strategy, vet focal geography areas, and advise on opportunities for land use and water integration.

**Timeline:** Quarterly meetings June 2025 – March 2027

### *Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)*

**Audience:** CAC members and the general public (all CAC meetings are open to the public)

**Description:** Throughout the regular bimonthly CAC meeting schedule, CAC members will vet plan messaging and strategy, provide input to inform how MCWD can evaluate progress toward its goals, and receive updates on the Plan process.

**Timeline:** Bimonthly throughout the process

### Written Communications

**Audience:** Public agency staff and policymakers, state agencies, CAC members, community-based organizations, and the general public

**Description:** MCWD will provide regular updates on the Plan process by providing relevant factsheets and publications, posting updates on the District’s website, publishing news releases, sending email newsletters to subscribers, and highlighting key milestones on social media.

**Timeline:** May 2025 – December 2027 (at key milestones throughout the process)

### 1:1 Meetings

**Audience:** Public agency staff and policymakers, state agencies

**Description:** MCWD staff will offer 1:1 meetings to interested stakeholders to provide updates on the Plan process, solicit input on the four work areas, and answer relevant questions to supplement other engagement methods.

**Timeline:** As needed throughout the engagement process

### Focal Geography Planning Meetings

**Audience:** Public agency staff and policymakers

**Description:** MCWD will convene coalitions of partners within each of our selected focal areas to review diagnostic data, align goals, develop and refine subwatershed implementation plans, and maintain support for project implementation in the District’s focal geographies.

**Timeline:** March 2025 – June 2027



## Subwatershed Planning Meeting & Interactive Mapping Tool

**Audience:** Public agency staff and policymakers

**Description:** MCWD will host a meeting to vet regional opportunity areas identified within each subwatershed, gather input on local plans and priorities, and pilot an interactive mapping tool to support Land & Water Partnership program opportunity screening by MCWD and partners.

**Timeline:** April 2026 – June 2026

## Online Survey

**Audience:** CAC members, community-based organizations, and the general public

**Description:** MCWD will publish an online survey to collect input on how MCWD can evaluate progress over the next Plan cycle.

**Timeline:** January 2026 – March 2026

## Public Meetings

**Audience:** CAC members, community-based organizations, and the general public

**Description:** MCWD will leverage community-based organizations to support participation in public meetings, such as open houses or townhalls where staff will share progress updates and collect input on the Plan.

**Timeline:** July 2026 – September 2026; March 2027 – May 2027

## Public Hearing & 60-Day Comment Period

**Audience:** Public agency staff and policymakers, state agencies, CAC members, community-based organizations, and the general public

**Description:** As required by state statute, MCWD will facilitate a 60-day comment period as well as host and notice a public hearing prior to Plan adoption to collect final ideas. MCWD will publish and provide written responses to all comments received.

**Timeline:** May 2027 – August 2027

## Key Messages

To support effective communication about the Plan update, staff have developed the following list of key messages that will be refined and expanded throughout the Plan update process.

- Recognizing that land use change is a primary driver of water resource issues and opportunities, MCWD's 2017 Plan aimed to achieve integration of land use and water planning to realize our vision of balanced urban ecology and produce greater social, economic, and environmental benefits.
- MCWD's 2027 Plan will build on this approach by continuing to strengthen partnerships with the land use community, expand our portfolio of high-impact capital projects, and shape policies that support thriving, sustainable communities.
- To prepare for the future, MCWD's 2027 Plan will integrate a regional strategy to build flood resilience, address historic land use changes, and respond to the impacts of climate change on the watershed's communities.
  - Historic land use decisions, such as the filling of wetlands and ditching of streams, have reduced water storage capacity, creating a system that is prone to flooding.
  - Climate change is exacerbating these issues with more extreme precipitation, impacting both the built and natural environment.
- We want our partners' help to understand climate vulnerabilities, establish shared goals, evaluate and prioritize strategies to build resilience across the watershed, and build an implementation framework to support a sustainable future for the region.
  - Water doesn't follow political boundaries, so we need a coordinated, watershed-wide flood management strategy designed in collaboration with our communities.
  - Our new 2-dimensional model will support the data-driven evaluation of flood management strategies and help MCWD and its partners determine how to apply infrastructure and nature-based solutions to balance both local and regional benefits.
  - Infrastructure solutions like increased conveyance can play an important role in adapting to increased precipitation but restoring and creating storage capacity is critical to addressing the risks of both flooding and drought.
  - When water storage is integrated into the landscape, we can create projects that provide a range of benefits for flood resilience, water quality, community greenspace, and place-making.
    - We've seen this approach in action with projects like Arden Park in Edina, Cottageville Park in Hopkins, and the East Auburn Stormwater Ponds in Victoria.

- Though an integrated flood management strategy is the principle focus of our 2027 Plan, we will also be engaging our communities to improve our approach to capital project implementation and create an evaluation framework to assess our progress.
  - We're engaging coalitions of partners in areas of high need and opportunity to identify and prioritize high-impact projects for the next decade.
  - To support the implementation of LWP program projects, we're working with our partners to build new tools for opportunity screening and assess regional banking strategies.
  - We're using this process to develop metrics, tracking systems, and reporting frameworks with our stakeholders to provide accountability and help us communicate our successes.
- There are many ways to engage with MCWD throughout the Plan update process. Visit our website and subscribe to our newsletter to stay informed and find ways to participate!

