



Title: Stakeholder Relationship Management Discovery II

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Purpose:

Provide background information to support a discussion of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District's (MCWD or District) stakeholder relationship management processes and systems at the March 27, 2025, Policy and Planning Committee (PPC) meeting.

Background:

At the [February 27, 2025, PPC meeting](#), committee members began discussing opportunities to improve the District's approach to relationship management, which was a principal focus outlined in the [2020 Strategic Direction for Outreach](#).

Outreach Strategy and Implementation Progress:

The Strategic Direction aligned MCWD's outreach approach with its Balanced Urban Ecology (BUE) philosophy, refocusing limited outreach resources to support relationship-based engagement with land use decision-makers as the key audience for advancing capital project partnerships and influencing policy change. The Strategic Direction also emphasized that the most effective channels for building support within the land use community are context-specific, interpersonal communications delivered by MCWD's "relationship managers."

Since 2020, the Outreach Program has made progress toward implementing the Strategic Direction with added staff capacity, new tools to support high-quality communications and engagement with key audiences, and targeted campaigns to advance key projects and policy initiatives. To support continuous improvement of the District's Outreach Program, staff are working to assess relationship management practices and needs, to identify opportunities to better support MCWD's relationship managers and promote the success of mission-driven projects and initiatives.

February 27, 2025, Discussion:

At the February 27, 2025, PPC meeting, the committee reflected on how the 2020 Strategic Direction's outreach focus has served the organization since its adoption. Committee members expressed support for the District's outreach approach, recognizing it has resulted in strong community and intergovernmental relationships. Though relationships are often critical to advancing capital project and policy initiatives, the committee acknowledged it can be difficult to measure the success of relationship management because there is limited data available to analyze and often, this work is not explicitly reflected in final outputs.

Staff and committee members discussed the need to transition relationship capital and hand off management responsibilities to new generations of staff to support the organization's growth and development. Committee members expressed interest in discussing relationship management practices further, to understand the impact of these efforts, evaluate progress, and identify opportunities to improve relationship management systems and approaches as the organization scales.

March 27, 2025, PPC Meeting:

At the March 27, 2025, PPC meeting, staff will facilitate a discussion with staff and committee members to assess current relationship management practices and identify opportunities to better support relationship managers in cultivating high-impact partnerships.

The following questions are offered in preparation for the discussion:

- How do relationships support the District's projects, programs, and policy initiatives?
- How do staff and Board Managers build and manage stakeholder relationships? What does it take?
- How can relationship capital and management responsibilities be systematically transitioned to support the organization as it scales?
- How can the Outreach Program better support the Board and staff in managing stakeholder relationships?

Supporting documents:

- [2020 Outreach Strategic Direction](#)
- [Partnership Principles – Historic Insights and Principles of Success](#)