



Title: 2027 Watershed Management Plan Updates

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Purpose:

The purpose of the September 11, 2025, Operations and Programs Committee (OPC) meeting is to initiate a two-part update on progress since adoption of the 2027 Watershed Management Plan (Plan) Framework in December 2024. Staff will share updates on the engagement process and soft rollout, and initiate discussion on a consultant scope of work and selection process.

Background:

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) is required to revise its Watershed Management Plan every ten years under Minnesota Rules 8410. The current 2017 Plan is due for a revision in 2027. In [December 2024](#), the Board adopted the 2027 Plan Framework, which carries forward MCWD's Balanced Urban Ecology (BUE) vision and focus on integrated planning and partnership.

The framework organizes the Plan update around four areas of work: (1) developing a flood risk management strategy, (2) expanding project implementation in focal geographies, (3) strengthening the Land & Water Partnership (LWP) program through targeted, proactive engagement in land use planning, and (4) establishing an evaluation framework to help MCWD measure its progress. It also outlined an engagement strategy and initial messaging to guide staff's soft rollout efforts in 2025.

Summary:

Since adoption of the framework, staff have focused on preparing for the Plan kickoff in late 2025 and the two-year engagement process that will follow. This work has centered on refining the engagement process, advancing the soft rollout through annual meetings, and developing a scope of work for consultant support.

Engagement Process

As staff began to map out the engagement process and prepare kickoff materials and messaging, it became clear that the process would benefit from some additional research on the history of flood management and the effectiveness of various management strategies. This will allow MCWD to draw on a wider range of sources in developing its flood management strategy rather than relying too heavily on technical modeling results that will come later in the engagement process. To ensure the Plan begins with a clear, shared foundation, staff are developing a kickoff publication and a supporting White Paper that explores the topic in depth and helps make the case for integrated planning and nature-based solutions, building on MCWD's BUE philosophy.

A high-level introduction to the White Paper and engagement strategy will be shared at the September 11 OPC meeting. A deeper discussion of engagement strategy and messaging will follow at the September 25 Policy Planning Committee (PPC) meeting, including drafts of both the White Paper and kickoff publication.

Annual Meetings

The purpose of annual meetings has been to test early messaging of the 2027 Plan, gather input on local planning priorities, and identify opportunities to improve land use and water planning with partners. As of the OPC Meeting, staff will have completed annual meetings with 15 cities, as well as Hennepin County and MnDOT, and anticipate completing

all meetings by October 2025. At the OPC meeting, staff will provide a high-level overview of key takeaways to date. A final synthesis of annual meeting outcomes will be brought back this fall alongside the Election Analysis discussion.

Consultant Scoping

In parallel with engagement and messaging work, staff have begun developing a consultant scope of work to provide targeted support and complement MCWD staff capacity. Consultant support will be critical for technical analysis, facilitating engagement processes, and supporting communications to advance the 2027 Plan.

The draft scope is organized around four core areas of work:

- Flood Risk Assessment – Evaluate current and future flood risk under a range of precipitation and land use scenarios.
- Management Strategy Development – Support development and analysis of regional strategies, with an emphasis on nature-based solutions.
- Planning and Engagement Support – Support engagement with Technical and Policy Advisory Committees and assist with communications and facilitation planning.
- Project Management – Provide coordination and documentation across technical, engagement, and communications tasks and teams to ensure integrated strategy.

At the September 11 OPC meeting, staff will review the proposed areas of work and approach to consultant selection and seek Board input before bringing back a request for authorization at the September 25 Board meeting.