



Title: Board Engagement in the 2027 Watershed Management Plan

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Purpose:

At the March 12, 2026 Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) Board Meeting, staff will seek feedback from the Board of Managers on the proposed approach for engaging the Board in policy development and stakeholder engagement for the 2027 Watershed Management Plan (Plan).

Background:

In December 2024, the Board adopted a framework for the 2027 Plan, which carries forward MCWD's Balanced Urban Ecology (BUE) vision and focus on integrated planning and partnership. The scope of work for the 2027 Plan is organized around four areas:

- *Subwatershed Planning*: developing tailored, actionable implementation plans for each subwatershed
- *Land and Water Partnership*: creating policy tools and best practices to support integrated planning
- *Flood Management Strategy*: assessing flood risk and mitigation strategies to establish a regional framework
- *Metrics of Success*: building an evaluation framework to measure and communicate progress

The 2027 Plan will be developed through a multi-year, collaborative process led by MCWD staff and supported by a consultant team that will provide additional capacity and expertise for both the technical and engagement work. For its advisory committees, MCWD will utilize its existing Citizen Advisory Committee and newly appointed Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The MCWD will convene these three committees, as well as subwatershed planning groups, over the course of 2026-2027 to bring together regional and local perspectives across the watershed to inform plan development, improve integration, and strengthen relationships.

Summary:

The Board of Managers plays a critical role in shaping the policy direction of the 2027 Plan and has expressed a desire to be deeply engaged in the process. Engagement planning discussions to date have focused primarily on external stakeholder engagement, and staff would like to use the March 12 Board Meeting to more clearly frame and seek feedback on the proposed approach to engaging the Board throughout the process. Staff recommend the following:

- **Policy and Planning Committee (PPC) Discussions**
 - The Board's monthly PPC meetings will be the primary venue for seeking Board input on policy direction and providing updates on the engagement process and technical analyses as they unfold.
 - Attachment 1 provides a tentative schedule of topics, spanning the four work areas, which would have the Board dedicating approximately half of its PPC meetings to Plan discussions over the next two years.
- **PAC Liaisons**
 - Staff recommend having a direct Board connection with our external policymakers by appointing one-two liaisons to the PAC. This is consistent with the approach taken for the 2017 Plan, where President White served as the liaison.
 - The role of PAC liaison would involve attending and chairing PAC meetings (estimated at five total, see Attachment 2) and meeting with staff in preparation for each PAC meeting.

▪ **Subwatershed Planning Meetings**

- Staff also recommend that the Board attend the Subwatershed Planning meetings, which will include public agency staff and policymakers and will focus on understanding local plans and priorities, identifying partnership opportunities, and discussing strategies for integrated planning.
- The watershed will be divided into three groupings, and each group will have two meetings (see Attachment 2). Staff proposes the following group assignments based on Managers' cities of residence and even distribution across groups:
 - Rural/Upper Subwatershed Group – Olson, Schaefer
 - Suburban/Middle Subwatershed Group – White, Bonner
 - Urban/Lower Subwatershed Group – Maxwell, Hejmadi, Sando

Supporting documents:

Attachment 1 - Proposed Board Agenda Topics and Schedule

Attachment 2 - Proposed Public Agency Meeting Schedule and Subwatershed Groupings

ATTACHMENT 1 - Proposed Board Agenda Topics and Schedule

Month	Meeting	Topic
Jan-26		
26-Feb	Board Meeting	Initial Planning Meeting; TAC/PAC Appointment
26-Mar	Board Meeting	Board Engagement in 2027 Plan
26-Apr	Operations & Programs Committee	Evaluation Framework Approach
	Planning & Policy Committee	Flood Management Goals and Risk Assessment Approach
26-May		
26-Jun	Operations & Programs Committee	Plan Drafting Scope and Budget
	Planning & Policy Committee	Flood Risk Assessment Results; Management Strategy Scoping
26-Jul		
26-Aug	Planning & Policy Committee	Integrated Planning Strategies
26-Sep		
26-Oct	Planning & Policy Committee	Public Engagement Update
26-Nov	Planning & Policy Committee	Diagnostics Findings and Strategy for Focal Geographies
26-Dec	Planning & Policy Committee	Evaluation Framework Update
27-Jan		
27-Feb	Planning & Policy Committee	Flood Management Scenario Results and Strategy
27-Mar		
27-Apr	Planning & Policy Committee	Flood Management Strategy Continued
27-May		
27-Jun	Planning & Policy Committee	Draft CIP
27-Jul		
27-Aug	Planning & Policy Committee	Vetting of Draft Plan Content
27-Sep		
27-Oct	Planning & Policy Committee	Vetting of Draft Plan Content
27-Nov		
27-Dec		

ATTACHMENT 2

Public Agency Meeting Schedule

Schedule	Phase	Meeting Content	TAC	PAC	Subwatershed Groups
Jan. 27, 2026	Kickoff	Kickoff Events			
Apr 2026	Scoping	Vision and Process		X	
Jun-Jul 2026	Water Resource	Water Resource Issues and Goals	X	X	
Jul-Aug 2026	Understanding	Strategies and Scenario Scoping	X		
Oct-Nov 2026	Land Use Integration	Integrated Planning Strategies	X	X	
Jan-Feb 2027		Land Use Priorities and Plans			X
Apr-May 2027	Strategy	Scenario Outcomes	X	X	
Jun-Jul 2027	Development	Regional Strategy	X		
Sept-Oct 2027	Plan Drafting	Subwatershed Implementation Plans			X
Nov-Dec 2027		Draft Plan and Process Wrap-Up	X	X	
Total Meetings			7	5	2 rounds/ 6 meetings

Subwatershed Groups

Subwatershed Group	Proposed Board Representatives	Cities/Partners
Rural/Upper Watershed	Olson, Schaefer	Medina, Long Lake, Orono, Independence, Maple Plain, Minnetrista, St. Boni, Victoria, Laketown Township, Watertown Township, TRPD, Carver County, Carver SWCD, Hennepin County
Suburban/Middle Watershed	White, Bonner	Orono, Plymouth, Wayzata, Woodland, Deephaven, Greenwood, Tonka Bay, Excelsior, Shorewood, Chanhassen, Mound, Spring Park, Mtka Beach, Hennepin County
Urban/Lower Watershed	Maxwell, Hejmadi, Sando	Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, Edina, Golden Valley, Minneapolis, MPRB, Richfield, Hennepin County