



Title: Look Ahead 2026

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Purpose:

To frame the January Citizens Advisory Committee's (CAC) "Look Ahead" meeting, designed to orient and help shape the CAC's involvement in strategic initiatives over the next 12-24 months.

Introduction:

Over the next two years, MCWD will be engaging its partners in developing its next ten-year [Watershed Management Plan](#) (WMP or Plan), which will build upon the strategic direction established in the [2017 WMP](#). Central to the 2017 Plan was MCWD's introduction of [Balanced Urban Ecology](#) as the organization's guiding vision. Balanced Urban Ecology recognizes that through effective partnership to integrate the natural and built environments, the District can deliver the broad environmental, social, and economic benefits its communities expect and deserve. Over the last decade the CAC has played a pivotal role in shaping this philosophy and refining its implementation and it will continue to do so as MCWD carries this approach forward in the [2027 Plan](#).

Overview of MCWD's Look Ahead:

The Look Ahead presentation will highlight several areas of organizational focus that will support the 2027 Plan:

1. Project Planning

Central to the 2027 planning process will be MCWD's efforts to convene partners to understand local priorities, and to integrate shared priorities for high-impact capital improvements into the Plan, using a balanced approach of focal subwatershed planning in [key geographies](#) and integration with local priorities through the [Land and Water partnership program](#). To support the next decade of project implementation, MCWD is applying its focused approach to develop actionable, next-generation subwatershed plans for current and emerging geographies: Minnehaha Creek Subwatershed, Six Mile Creek – Halsted Bay Subwatershed, Long Lake Creek Subwatershed, and the Painter Creek Subwatershed.

2. Policy Planning

Policy development in the 2027 Plan will emphasize:

- Outlining an Integrated Flood Management Strategy
 - Assessment of current and future flood risk
 - Evaluation of flood mitigation strategies
 - Implementation framework
- Improving Land Use and Water Integration
 - Best practices for coordinating land use development
 - Local policy tools to support land and water integration
 - Interactive mapping tool to visualize land and water data
 - Framework for wetland and stormwater banking
- Building an Evaluation Framework to Measure and Communicate Impact
 - Progress under the 2017 Plan
 - Metrics to track for the 2027 Plan cycle

3. Engagement Strategy

MCWD is designing a comprehensive public partner engagement process involving Technical and Policy Advisory Committees and subwatershed planning sessions to shape capital project implementation plans and support policy development. Building from MCWD's Inclusive Engagement Framework, MCWD is also exploring targeted engagement with community groups, including the watershed's indigenous communities, business leaders, and residents in key areas of investment, to evaluate the success of integrated planning models on communities' quality of life, discover areas of interest and alignment, explore new partnership opportunities for MCWD's next Plan cycle, and build support for the District's approach.

January 14, 2026, CAC Meeting:

At the January 14, 2026, CAC Meeting, members will be asked to vet and refine the 2026 CAC Calendar, to strengthen alignment with the MCWD's strategic priorities for the two-year horizon and ensure CAC engagement is meaningful and focused. CAC members will be asked to consider the following questions:

- How could the 2026 CAC schedule increase the Committee's understanding of MCWD's strategic priorities?
- How can CAC feedback strengthen MCWD's approach on key initiatives in 2026 and 2027?
- What schedule refinements would improve the CAC's connection to MCWD's initiatives?
- How do we balance organizational needs with the committee's capacity and interests?

A preliminary 2026 CAC meeting schedule is offered to inform discussion:

| Date | Tentative Meeting Topic | Board Liaison |
|--------------------|---|-----------------|
| January 14, 2026 | Look Ahead | Manager Maxwell |
| March 18, 2026 | Lake Management Framework | Manager Olson |
| May 20, 2026 | 2027 Watershed Management Plan – Evaluation Framework & Metrics | Manager Miller |
| TBD 2026 | Field Trip: New Member Onboarding Capstone | N/A |
| July 15, 2026 | 2027 Draft Budget and Capital Improvement Plan | Manager Loftus |
| September 16, 2026 | 2027 Watershed Management Plan – Integrated Planning Policy Tools | Manager Hejmadi |
| November 10, 2026 | 2027 Watershed Management Plan – Engagement Strategies | Manager Sando |