



Title: Authorization to Renew Metro Watershed Partners Membership

Resolution number: 26-006

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Recommended action: Authorize Metro Watershed Partners membership renewal and participation in their Clean Water MN and Adopt-a-Drain programs

Schedule: Membership Effective: 1/1/2026
Membership Expires: 12/31/2026

Budget considerations: Fund name and code: Dues and Subscriptions - 4250
Fund budget: \$10,000
Expenditures to date: \$0
Requested amount of funding: \$6,000

Past Board action: Res # 25-011 [Authorization to Renew Metro Watershed Partners Membership](#)

Summary:

Outreach staff recommend authorizing annual membership in Metro Watershed Partners and their Clean Water MN and Adopt-A-Drain programs in 2026. The \$6,000 annual membership fee provides the benefits outlined below.

Background:

On February 27, 2020, the Board adopted [Resolution 20-018](#), approving a new Strategic Direction for Outreach that shifted focus away from broad-based efforts aimed at brand awareness and individual action, toward relationship-based engagement of stakeholders and community members around MCWD's major projects and initiatives. The new Strategic Direction for Outreach suggested identifying automated tools and third-party resources to serve the needs of broader audiences without a significant draw on limited Outreach resources.

The Metro Watershed Partners membership is an existing contract identified to help the District maintain quality broad-based programming with minimal staff time. The membership provides access to two valuable broad-based outreach tools: Adopt-a-Drain and Clean Water MN. The Adopt-A-Drain program allows MCWD to connect residents interested in volunteering to tangible clean water action that is centrally coordinated and quantitatively tracked. The Clean Water MN program provides the District access to high quality digital communications materials on topics related to resident-focused best management practices.

Clean Water MN and Adopt-a-Drain Program:

[Clean Water MN](#) is an outreach program that educates metro area residents on water-friendly practices with curated written materials. Clean Water MN is sponsored by the Metro Watershed Partners, a coalition of over seventy public, private, and non-profit organizations in the Twin Cities metro area working to inspire people to protect water quality in their watershed. Founded in 1997, Metro Watershed Partners is a project of Hamline University in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Twenty-two watershed districts and watershed management organizations are members of the group, in addition to numerous municipalities. MCWD joined Metro Watershed Partners in 2012.

Adopt-a-Drain, a metro-wide program created by Metro Watershed Partners, encourages residents to adopt storm drains in their neighborhood to protect their local lake or river from pollution. By adopting a storm drain, they commit to keeping it clear of debris throughout the year. Participants sign up for the program online at www.Adopt-a-Drain.org and create an account that allows them to adopt and un-adopt drains, report the amount of debris they collect, and share stories and photos on social media. This provides interested residents with a tangible activity to protect clean water and results in quantifiable metrics. The program allows MCWD to offer a compelling volunteer opportunity to its residents with minimal administrative overhead.

A comprehensive annual report for Adopt-a-Drain program participation in the Minnehaha Creek watershed will be provided by Metro Watershed Partners in Q1 of 2026, when 2025 data is finalized.

Program Membership Costs and Benefits:

Members of Metro Watershed Partners—cities, counties, watershed districts, and non-profits—pay an annual membership fee. Cities pay seven cents per person (based on total population) per year, and watershed districts pay a recommended fee based on their annual operating budget. For an annual budget of \$5,000,000+, memberships range from a high of \$20,000 to a low of \$6,000. MCWD’s membership level, \$6,000, is at the low end of this range.

Membership is required to participate in the Clean Water MN and Adopt-a-Drain programs.

The two programs provide a range of benefits for supporting watershed districts and cities:

- Help in meeting Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements for public participation, outreach, and education, including key data about related activities.
- Communications materials for residential best management practices and volunteer opportunities
- A list of area residents who are interested in water issues.
- Professional networking and peer learning among program staff with watershed districts, state and local water resource professionals, academia, and non-government organizations.
- Improved water quality and reduced flood risk by engaging residents to remove and prevent pollutants from clogging storm drains and entering waterways.



RESOLUTION

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- WHEREAS, In 2020, the MCWD Board of Managers set a new direction for the Outreach program that shifted focus from broad-based outreach toward targeted, strategic engagement of stakeholders and community members around key District projects and initiatives;
- WHEREAS, To achieve that shift in focus, the Strategic Direction for Outreach suggested identifying automated tools and third-party resources that could continue to serve the needs of broader audiences outside of District initiatives;
- WHEREAS, The Metro Watershed Partners membership was one such contract identified to maintain quality broad-based programming with minimal staff time;
- WHEREAS, Members of Metro Watershed Partners are provided access to their programming and educational resources, which includes Clean Water MN and Adopt-A-Drain programs that promote water resource stewardship and individual action;
- WHEREAS, The outreach and education activities provided through these programs help MCWD meet the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements and promote its mission;
- WHEREAS, The Board of Managers has reviewed the benefits provided by Metro Watershed Partners membership and finds the program to be aligned with the goals of MCWD Outreach;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorize the District Administrator to spend \$6,000 to renew MCWD's Metro Watershed Partners annual membership.

Resolution Number 26-006 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____. Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___ abstentions. Date: 1/22/2026

Secretary Date: _____