

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

MEETING DATE: June 13, 2019

TITLE: Authorization to execute a contract for strategic communications and engagement plan consultant

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 19-059

PREPARED BY: Telly Mamayek

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TELEPHONE: 952-641-4508

REVIEWED BY: Administrator Counsel Program Mgr. (Name): _____
 Board Committee Engineer Other:

WORKSHOP ACTION:

<input type="checkbox"/> Advance to Board mtg. Consent Agenda.	<input type="checkbox"/> Advance to Board meeting for discussion prior to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to a future workshop (date): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to taskforce or committee (date): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Return to staff for additional work.	<input type="checkbox"/> No further action requested.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): Final Action on June 13, 2019	

PURPOSE or ACTION REQUESTED:

Authorization to execute a contract with Himle LLC for the development of a strategic communications and engagement plan

PAST BOARD ACTIONS:

- February 2017 Approval of Strategic Alignment Report, recommending the development of a comprehensive 2-3 year Communications-Education Plan, leveraging all communications channels to accomplish the top strategic priorities of the organization.
- September 2018 Approval of 2019 budget which included \$50,000 for communications planning
- March 14, 2019 Authorization to release RFP for the strategic communications and engagement plan

SUMMARY:

Project Purpose:

To accomplish measurable change in water quality, water quantity and ecological integrity within the watershed, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District has adopted an organizational strategy focused on implementing high-impact capital improvements and integrating land-use and water policy to enhance opportunities for partnership.

Executing this strategy requires the awareness, understanding, support from the public and private land use community (policy makers, community development, planning and zoning, public works, developers, architects, landscape architects, civil engineers, etc.).

Consistent with recommendations outlined in the 2017 Strategic Alignment Report, the proposed contract with Himle LLC will assist District staff in creating a framework to focus, integrate and align the organization's communications and outreach efforts to support the District's strategy.

Generally, the Strategic Communications and Engagement planning process involves conducting research into target audiences, synthesizing insights from that research, and using those insights to focus and align MCWD communication and outreach programming.

Equally important, the information gathered will help inform other strategic initiatives the District is currently planning, including shaping policy within the Permitting and Responsive Programs, guiding the content strategy for the District's website, and informing the District's overall approach to cultivating value added partnerships within the land use community.

Request for Proposals Process:

To assist in the development of the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan, the Board authorized release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select a strategic communications and engagement consultant.

Staff began preparing the RFP in 2018 by creating a draft list of goals for the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan with input from the Leadership Team, Board and CAC.

The review process resulted in the following broad goals, which align with the strategic priorities outlined in MCWD's 2017 Watershed Management Plan.

1. The MCWD has the support and assistance of local and state officials for its major capital project initiatives
2. The MCWD has the support and cooperation of local government officials and developers for early coordination on land use change
3. The MCWD receives more funding and leverages more partnership contributions for its capital projects, operations and programs
4. The MCWD's responsive program has the support of its key stakeholders across the District
5. The MCWD is perceived by its key stakeholders and the general public as a credible, transparent and responsive agency that adds value in its communities.

To further inform the drafting of the RFP, staff reviewed sample projects from other local government agencies.

On March 14, 2019 the Board of Managers approved the release of the RFP for a strategic communications and engagement consultant.

Seven proposals were received in response to the RFP. The responses were reviewed by staff based on the selection criteria outlined in the RFP, and in coordination with MCWD Board liaisons (President Sherry White and Manager Jessica Loftus) four finalists were selected for interviews.

On April 18, 2019 a review committee led by the project manager (MCWD's Communications and Education Manager Telly Mamayek) comprising select staff, MCWD Board Manager Miller (sitting in for Board liaisons who could not attend), District counsel Louis Smith and District public relations advisor John Himle interviewed the four finalists.

Interviews were evaluated based on demonstrating project understanding and articulation of how the goals of the project would be met. Based on the interviews, the review committee reached unanimous consensus to not select any of the finalists.

Staff Recommendation:

Following the RFP process, the review committee discussed the opportunity to increase the utilization of District staff to develop the Communications and Engagement Plan in coordination with John Himle (Himle LLC) who has a deep and unique understanding of the District's vision, mission and strategy, through the past completion of many successful communications initiatives for the District, and his years working as a public relations consultant.

Staff subsequently worked, and is recommending, the attached scope of work with Himle LLC summarized below into phases:

Discovery – The strategic communications and website redesign consultants and MCWD will aggregate information that is already known about MCWD's positioning and the perceptions of MCWD's target audiences, and MCWD will conduct an assessment its outreach programming.

Research – The strategic communications and website redesign consultants and MCWD will do primary research of key stakeholders.

Insights – The strategic communications consultant will collect the data from the research and work with MCWD and the website redesign consultant to develop an insights report.

Strategy Development – The strategic communications consultant will collaborate with MCWD to create a Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan that includes measurable objectives, strategies, suggested tactics, estimated costs, and evaluation methods to help the MCWD successfully communicate and engage with key stakeholders to accomplish the Plan's goals. The Plan will be tailored to MCWD's major initiatives over the next 3 years.

Implementation Plan – MCWD will develop a plan to execute the new strategy for outreach programming, and identify the operational and programmatic changes and timeline needed for implementation.

Project approval – The strategic communications consultant will work with the project manager to present the Plan for approval to the MCWD Board of Managers.

Attached:

Contract (including scope of services and timeline) with Himle LLC for the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 19-059

TITLE: **Authorization to execute a contract for strategic communications and engagement plan consultant**

WHEREAS, the MCWD has adopted an organizational strategy focused on implementing high impact capital improvements and integrating land-use and water policy

WHEREAS, to support the District's identified strategy the 2017 Strategic Alignment Report recommended developing a comprehensive 2-3 year Communications and Education Plan, leveraging all communications channels to accomplish the top priorities of the organization.

WHEREAS, the MCWD's 2019 budget includes \$50,000 for strategic communications planning; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Managers authorized the release of a request for proposals to select a consultant to assist District staff in developing a Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan to focus, integrate and align the organization's communications and outreach efforts to support the District's strategy.

WHEREAS, the following high-level goals were established to guide the development of the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan:

1. the MCWD has the support and assistance of local and state officials for its major capital project initiatives,
2. the MCWD has the support and cooperation of local government officials and developers for early coordination on land use change,
3. the MCWD receives more funding and leverages more partnership contributions for its capital projects, operations and programs,
4. the MCWD's responsive program has the support of its key stakeholders across the District
5. the MCWD is perceived by its key stakeholders and the general public as a credible, transparent and responsive agency that adds value in its communities; and

WHEREAS, information gathered through the Strategic Communications and Engagement planning process will inform other strategic initiatives the District is currently planning, including policy development within the Permitting and Responsive Programs, the content strategy for the District's website, and the District's overall approach to cultivating value added partnerships within the land use community.

WHEREAS, following a request for proposals process, including the selection of and interview of four consultant teams, the District's review panel concluded none of the finalists demonstrated a full understanding of the scope of work or articulated how they would complete all aspects of the project, and opted not to select any of the respondents.

WHEREAS, the District's project team subsequently engaged in discussion with John Himle (Himle LLC), whose long history of successful work with the District, deep understanding of the District's vision, mission and strategy, and expertise in public relations makes him uniquely qualified for the project.

WHEREAS, District staff and Himle LLC have developed a proposed contract and scope of services

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers hereby authorizes the District Administrator, on advice of course and with any non-material changes, to execute the contract with Himle LLC for the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan in an amount not to exceed \$55,000.

Resolution Number 19-059 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____.
Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___ abstentions. Date: _____.

Secretary Date: _____

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN
MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT and
HIMLE LLC
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

This agreement is entered into by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, a public body with powers set forth at Minnesota Statutes chapters 103B and 103D (MCWD), and Himle LLC (“CONSULTANT”). In consideration of the terms and conditions set forth herein and the mutual exchange of consideration, the sufficiency of which hereby is acknowledged, MCWD and CONSULTANT agree as follows:

1. Scope of Work

CONSULTANT will perform the work described in the Scope of Services attached as Exhibit A (the “Services”). Exhibit A is incorporated into this agreement and its terms and schedules are binding on CONSULTANT as a term hereof. MCWD, at its discretion, in writing may at any time suspend work or amend the Services to delete any task or portion thereof. Authorized work by CONSULTANT on a task deleted or modified by MCWD will be compensated in accordance with paragraphs 5 and 6. Any addition to the Scope of Services, or change to timelines and/or contract price, must be detailed and agreed to in writing (email is acceptable) by both the MCWD and the CONSULTANT. Scope modifications that materially impact the focus of work, or materially increase the contract price beyond the contingency costs agreed to in writing by both the MCWD and the CONSULTANT, require authorization by the MCWD Board of Managers. Time is of the essence in the performance of the Services.

2. Independent Contractor

CONSULTANT is an independent contractor under this agreement. CONSULTANT will select the means, method and manner of performing the Services. Nothing herein contained is intended or is to be construed to constitute CONSULTANT as the agent, representative or employee of MCWD in any manner. Personnel performing the Services on behalf of CONSULTANT or a subcontractor will not be considered employees of MCWD and will not be entitled to any compensation, rights or benefits of any kind from MCWD.

3. Subcontract and Assignment

CONSULTANT will not assign, subcontract or transfer any obligation or interest in this agreement or any of the Services without the written consent of MCWD and pursuant to any conditions included in that consent. The MCWD consents to Horner Strategies LLC as a subcontractor. MCWD consent to any subcontracting does not relieve CONSULTANT of its responsibility to perform the Services or any part thereof, nor in any respect its duty of care, insurance obligations, or duty to hold harmless, defend and indemnify under this agreement.

4. Duty of Care; Indemnification

CONSULTANT will perform the Services with due care and in accordance with national standards of professional care. CONSULTANT will defend MCWD, its board members, employees and agents from any and all actions, costs, damages and liabilities of any nature arising from; and hold each such party harmless, and indemnify it, to the extent due to: (a) CONSULTANT’s negligent or otherwise wrongful act or omission, or breach of a specific contractual duty; or (b) a subcontractor’s negligent or otherwise

wrongful act or omission, or breach of a specific contractual duty owed by CONSULTANT to MCWD. For any claim subject to this paragraph by an employee of CONSULTANT or a subcontractor, the indemnification obligation is not limited by a limitation on the amount or type of damages, compensation or benefits payable by or for CONSULTANT or a subcontractor under workers' compensation acts, disability acts or other employee benefit acts.

5. Compensation

MCWD will compensate CONSULTANT for the Services at a firm fixed price of \$50,000 with an additional \$5,000 in contingency costs that are agreed to in writing by both the MCWD and the CONSULTANT. Payment for undisputed work will be due within 30 days of receipt of invoice. Based on the project services timeline shown in Exhibit A, the CONSULTANT will submit invoices for services according to the following schedule:

JUNE	\$ 5,000
JULY	\$17,500
AUGUST	\$10,000
SEPTEMBER	\$ 5,000
OCTOBER	\$ 5,000
NOVEMBER	\$ 5,000
<u>DECEMBER</u>	<u>\$ 2,500</u>
TOTAL:	\$50,000

The total payment for the Services will not exceed \$50,000. Total payment means all sums to be paid whatsoever, including but not limited to direct costs and subcontract costs.

CONSULTANT will maintain all records pertaining to fees or costs incurred in connection with the Services for six years from the date of completion of the Services. CONSULTANT agrees that any authorized MCWD representative or the state auditor may have access to and the right to examine, audit and copy any such records during normal business hours.

6. Termination; Continuation of Obligations

This agreement is effective when fully executed by the parties and will remain in force until all work identified in Exhibit A is completed unless earlier terminated as set forth herein.

MCWD may terminate this agreement at its convenience, by a written termination notice stating specifically what prior authorized or additional tasks or services it requires CONSULTANT to complete. CONSULTANT will receive full compensation for all authorized work performed, except that CONSULTANT will not be compensated for any part performance of a specified task or service if termination is due to CONSULTANT's breach of this agreement.

Insurance obligations; duty of care; obligations to defend, indemnify and hold harmless; and document-retention requirements will survive the completion of the Services and the term of this agreement.

7. No Waiver

The failure of either party to insist on the strict performance by the other party of any provision or obligation under this agreement, or to exercise any option, remedy or right herein, will not waive or relinquish such party's rights in the future to insist on strict performance of any provision, condition or obligation, all of which will remain in full force and affect. The waiver of either party on one or more occasion of any provision or obligation of this agreement will not be construed as a waiver of any subsequent breach of the same provision or obligation, and the consent or approval by either party to or of any act by the other requiring consent or approval will not render unnecessary such party's consent or approval to any subsequent similar act by the other.

Notwithstanding any other term of this agreement, MCWD waives no immunity in tort. This agreement creates no right in and waives no immunity, defense or liability limit with respect to any third party.

8. Insurance

At all times during the term of this Agreement, CONSULTANT will have and keep in force the following insurance coverages:

- A. General: \$1.0 million, each occurrence and aggregate, covering CONSULTANT's work, including personal and advertising injury, on an occurrence basis and including contractual liability.
- B. Automobile liability: \$1.0 million combined single limit each occurrence coverage for bodily injury and property damage covering owned and hired vehicles on an occurrence basis.
- C. Workers' compensation: in accordance with legal requirements applicable to CONSULTANT.

CONSULTANT will not commence work until it has filed with MCWD a certificate of insurance clearly evidencing the required coverages and naming MCWD as an additional insured for general liability, along with a copy of the additional insured endorsement establishing coverage as primary coverage on a noncontributory basis. The certificate will name MCWD as a holder and will state that MCWD will receive written notice before cancellation, nonrenewal or a change in the limit of any described policy under the same terms as CONSULTANT.

9. Compliance With Laws

CONSULTANT will comply with the laws and requirements of all federal, state, local and other governmental units in connection with performing the Services and will procure all licenses, permits and other rights necessary to perform the Services.

In performing the Services, CONSULTANT will ensure that no person is excluded from full employment rights or participation in or the benefits of any program, service or activity on the ground of race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, public assistance status or national

origin; and no person who is protected by applicable federal or state laws, rules or regulations against discrimination otherwise will be subjected to discrimination.

10. Data and Information

All data and information obtained or generated by CONSULTANT in performing the Services, including documents in hard and electronic copy, software, and all other forms in which the data and information are contained, documented or memorialized, are the property of MCWD. CONSULTANT hereby assigns and transfers to MCWD all right, title and interest in: (a) its copyright, if any, in the materials; any registrations and copyright applications relating to the materials; and any copyright renewals and extensions; (b) all works based on, derived from or incorporating the materials; and (c) all income, royalties, damages, claims and payments now or hereafter due or payable with respect thereto, and all causes of action in law or equity for past, present or future infringement based on the copyrights. CONSULTANT agrees to execute all papers and to perform such other proper acts as MCWD may deem necessary to secure for MCWD or its assignee the rights herein assigned.

MCWD may immediately inspect, copy or take possession of any materials on written request to CONSULTANT. On termination of the agreement, CONSULTANT may maintain a copy of some or all of the materials except for any materials designated by MCWD as confidential or non-public under applicable law, a copy of which may be maintained by CONSULTANT only pursuant to written agreement with MCWD specifying terms.

11. Data Practices; Confidentiality

If CONSULTANT receives a request for data pursuant to the Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes chapter 13 (DPA), that may encompass data (as that term is defined in the DPA) CONSULTANT possesses or has created as a result of this agreement, it will inform MCWD immediately and transmit a copy of the request. If the request is addressed to MCWD, CONSULTANT will not provide any information or documents, but will direct the inquiry to MCWD. If the request is addressed to CONSULTANT, CONSULTANT will be responsible to determine whether it is legally required to respond to the request and otherwise what its legal obligations are, but will notify and consult with MCWD and its legal counsel before replying. Nothing in the preceding sentence supersedes CONSULTANT's obligations under this agreement with respect to protection of MCWD data, property rights in data or confidentiality. Nothing in this section constitutes a determination that CONSULTANT is performing a governmental function within the meaning of Minnesota Statutes section 13.05, subdivision 11, or otherwise expands the applicability of the DPA beyond its scope under governing law.

In the event of a requester's administrative objection or a legal proceeding asserting a failure by the MCWD, CONSULTANT or CONSULTANT's subcontractor to comply with the DPA, the MCWD and CONSULTANT will cooperate toward the goal of establishing the MCWD as the party in interest. The MCWD will defend CONSULTANT with respect to any asserted failure to comply with the DPA, and will indemnify CONSULTANT for any liability determined for such failure except where CONSULTANT or CONSULTANT's subcontractor has failed to comply with the DPA.

CONSULTANT agrees that it will not disclose and will hold in confidence any and all proprietary materials owned or possessed by MCWD and so denominated by MCWD. CONSULTANT will not use any such materials for any purpose other than performance of the Services without MCWD written consent. This restriction does not apply to materials already possessed by CONSULTANT or that CONSULTANT received on a non-confidential basis from MCWD or another party.

12. Notices

Any written communication required under this agreement to be provided in writing will be directed to the other party as follows:

To MCWD:

Administrator
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
15320 Minnetonka Boulevard
Minnetonka, MN 55345

To CONSULTANT:

John Himle
HIMLE LLC
13908 Emerald Ridge
Minnetonka, MN 55305

Either of the above individuals may in writing designate another individual to receive communications under this agreement.

13. Choice of Law; Venue

This agreement will be construed under and governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota. Venue for any action will lie in Hennepin County.

14. Whole Agreement

The entire agreement between the two parties is contained herein and this agreement supersedes all oral agreements and negotiations relating to the subject matter hereof. Any modification of this agreement is valid only when reduced to writing as an amendment to the agreement and signed by the parties hereto. MCWD may amend this agreement only by action of the Board of Managers acting as a body.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, intending to be legally bound, the parties hereto execute and deliver this agreement.

CONSULTANT

By _____
Its _____

Date: _____

Approved as to Form and Execution

MCWD Attorney

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

By _____
Its _____

Date: _____

Exhibit A

Strategic Communications Planning Scope of Services

Executive Summary

While changes in the landscape affect water resources, land use and water planning remain largely separated for purposes of governance, policy and planning. This ‘governance gap’ has been identified by various regional, state, and national policy evaluations as a challenge point in achieving more effective levels of water management and the design of thriving, sustainable communities.

Based on these assessments a call for improving the integration of land use and water planning has been issued. The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD or District) has answered the call to action with the adoption of a vision policy titled, *In Pursuit of a Balanced Urban Ecology*. This policy highlights the MCWD’s belief that investment in natural systems, when meaningfully integrated with the built environment, can underpin community identity, cultivate a sense of place, and create social and economic value.

In 2016, to begin aligning the organization around *A Balanced Urban Ecology*, the MCWD Board of Managers commissioned a strategic planning process. This was subsequently followed in 2017 by the Board’s adoption of a Strategic Alignment Plan, identifying the District’s priority focus on:

- Implementing high impact capital improvements, integrated into the urban landscape, through collaboration with the public and private land use community.

- Shaping local, regional and state policy to improve the integration of land use and water planning.

To successfully execute this organizational strategy the District’s Plan directed all of the MCWD’s programming to align around these priorities, and work together in new synergistic ways. As part of the 2017 Strategic Alignment Plan it was identified that the District’s outreach programming (education and communications) must shift away from its traditional baseline, and refocus its efforts on priority audiences within the public and private land use community (policy makers, staff, land developers, consultants, etc.).

To continue enhancing its cost-effective delivery of high impact capital improvements that measurably improve watershed conditions, key audiences within the land use community must be increasingly aware of, understand, and support the added-value realized when the MCWD is involved early in land use planning processes (comprehensive planning, small area planning, parks and open space planning, infrastructure planning, economic development planning, etc.).

With greater awareness and support, it is a goal to have these audiences change policy to better integrate land use and water planning – bridging the ‘governance gap’, and creating positive feedback loops that increase the volume and quality of capital improvements and landscape change that benefit the natural and built environments of the watershed.

To achieve the realignment of MCWD's outreach programming, a team of District staff, Board liaisons, consultants, and advisors will work in coordination to:

- Cultivate preliminary insights regarding key audiences, based on the District's work and experiences to date.
- Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and alignment of existing outreach programming.
- Conduct interviews and assemble data and insights regarding key audiences.
- Identify new strategies to guide the future of MCWD's outreach programming.
- Develop an implementation roadmap that outlines the programmatic and operational changes and timeline needed to implement the identified outreach strategies.

Background:

The Land Use Water Governance Gap:

The effect of urbanization and land use on watershed systems is well established. Landscape changes can remove natural vegetation, create impervious surface, reduce infiltration of rainfall, and increase runoff, discharge rates, flooding and pollutant loading. Therefore, waterbodies and their affiliated natural resources are a product of land use within the watershed. (Lenat, 1994; O'Driscoll, Clinton, Jefferson, Manda & McMillan; 2010 United States Geological Survey, 2014).

Given the established relationship between water resources and their surrounding landscape, significant coordination is required between land-use and water planning agencies. However, water quality components are often absent from land use plans, and land use planning is rarely integrated into water quality management. This is primarily due to the fact that land use planning and water management are administered by separate agencies, not in a perpetual state of coordination (Wang, 2001).

While water managers, by necessity, are acutely aware of the hydrologic changes produced by an evolving urban landscape, land use modifications are typically handled reactively via well-established regulatory frameworks, rather than strategically and proactively integrating land use and water planning. Over time, a regulatory centric approach has served to reinforce the fragmentation of the respective disciplines, which often exhibit weak or indirect policy connection (Woltjer, 2013).

With water resource agencies relying on regulation as a principal strategy, water managers are often viewed in opposition to growth and economic development. Consequently, water planning has tended to be viewed as subordinate to land use planning. This disconnect has occurred through decades of uncoordinated actions, and has persisted due to the separate legal bases for each area of governance (Bates, 2012).

Looking at the land use side of the equation, the practice of urban planning *has* evolved in attempt to better integrate transportation, housing, open space, education, economic development, historic preservation, aesthetics and the environment. However, while the goal of planning may be to serve the broader public interest by harmonizing growth, environmental preservation and social justice, in reality planners are often restricted by professional and fiscal constraints to serve the narrow interests of their clients, that is, authorities and bureaucracies (Campbell, 1996).

Consequently, environmental factors are still largely only considered in planning processes as a regulatory burden to be implemented by natural resource agencies, rather than as an opportunity to catalyze the attainment of other, often primary, goals.

The Call for Integrating Land Use and Water Planning:

In recent years, a number of regional, state, and national policy analyses have evaluated the governance framework and interface between land use and water planning:

- 2007 – Office of the Legislative Auditor
 - [Evaluation Report on Watershed Management](#)
- 2009 – Minnesota Environmental Initiative
 - *Land and Water Policy Project*
- 2011 – Humphrey School of Public Affairs
 - [Hennepin County Water Governance Project](#)
- 2013 – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
 - [Water Regulation and Governance Evaluation – Linkage of Land Use and Water](#)
- 2016 – American Planning Association
 - [Policy Guide on Water Planning](#)

These evaluations generally reached a set of shared conclusions:

- The quality and quantity of surface water is directly tied to local land use decisions, and efforts to manage water quality are most effective when performed in coordination with land use planning.
- Water and land planning in Minnesota is compartmentalized at all levels, under separate bodies of regulation and various agency jurisdictions, creating complication, conflict and significant coordination costs between politically managed built environments and technically managed watershed systems.
- Local water and watershed plans tend to focus on engineering solutions rather than land use driven issues or trends, and opportunities to address the land use and water connection in Minnesota have waned in recent decades.
- Water is a central and essential organizing element in healthy urban environments.
- Major goals of state water management statutory outcomes can only succeed with strong links to land use management, and new mechanisms for interdisciplinary efforts are critical to water management, including:
 - Innovative land use planning and urban designs to improve and protect water environments.
 - A planning practice that employs an integrated, systems-oriented, comprehensive approach to water management.

A Balanced Urban Ecology – MCWD’s Strategy of Land Use and Water Integration:

Both in response to these evaluations, and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District’s own self-assessments, in 2014 the MCWD Board of Managers adopted a vision policy to guide and align the organization, [*In Pursuit of a Balanced Urban Ecology*](#).

This policy underscores the inextricable link and interdependence between the healthy natural environments and green spaces, which are the signature of the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and our quality of life and economic wellbeing.

It emphasizes that government structures haven’t quite caught up with that reality. Land use activities continue to be primarily the focus of private enterprise as well as the various planning, zoning, public works and job creation agencies in several layers of government.

Meanwhile, other interests, mainly non-profits and other government agencies are focused on conserving natural assets and protecting them from the damage that development can inflict. However, no single entity has the authority or the resources to cope with all of these questions, or to strike a reasonable balance.

The District recognizes that this is why collaboration is so important. Successful, sustainable, livable communities are built on a foundation of *integrated* planning – planning that recognizes communities as living organisms and takes into consideration all components of the urban ecology. MCWD’s work will be strengthened through the collaborative efforts of multiple partners across various sectors.

Therefore, the District’s aim is to develop a deeper understanding of the needs and desires of communities, government agencies, developers and private land owners; in order to develop watershed projects that are more broadly conceived and appreciated, leverage scarce resources, and maximize benefits by enhancing social and economic viability as well as the health of the natural environment.

Project Purpose and Process:

Purpose:

The targeted purpose of this Strategic Communications and Engagement planning project is to develop new outreach strategies and programming that directly support the MCWD's organizational priorities of:

- Implementing high impact capital improvements, integrated into the urban landscape, through collaboration with the public and private land use community.
- Shaping local, regional and state policy to improve the integration of land use and water planning.

To enhance the cultivation of cross-sector collaborations that further the delivery of cost-effective capital improvements that measurably improve watershed conditions, key audiences within the land use community must be increasingly aware of, understand, and support the added-value realized when the MCWD is involved early in land use planning processes (comprehensive planning, small area planning, parks and open space planning, infrastructure planning, economic development planning, etc.).

With greater awareness and support, it is a goal to have these audiences change policy to better integrate land use and water planning – bridging the 'governance gap' and creating positive feedback loops that increase the volume and quality of capital improvements and landscape change that benefit the watershed.

This project will also support the following broad goals of the District:

1. The MCWD has the support and assistance of local and state officials for its major capital project initiatives.
2. The MCWD has the support and cooperation of local government officials and developers for early coordination on land use change.
3. The MCWD receives more funding and leverages more partnership contributions for its capital projects, operations and programs.
4. The MCWD's responsive model has the support of its key stakeholders across the District.
5. The MCWD is perceived by its stakeholders as a credible, transparent, and responsive agency that adds value in its communities.

Process:

To achieve the realignment of MCWD's outreach programming, a team of District staff, Board liaisons, consultants, and advisors will work in close coordination to:

- Cultivate preliminary insights regarding key audiences, based on the District's work and experiences to date.
- Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and alignment of existing outreach programming.
- Conduct interviews and assemble data and insights regarding key audiences.
- Identify new strategies to guide the future of MCWD's outreach programming.
- Develop an implementation roadmap that outlines the programmatic and operational changes needed to implement the identified outreach strategies.

Project Team:

The development of the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan will be completed by a team of District staff, Board liaisons, consultants and strategic advisors (PROJECT TEAM).

- The project will be managed by the District's Communication and Education Manager (PROJECT MANAGER), with support from District Education and Communications staff.
- The project will receive guidance and oversight from MCWD Board liaisons (Sherry White and Jessica Loftus), the District Administrator and Leadership Team, and strategic advisors (e.g. Louis Smith and Chris Meehan) (STEERING GROUP).
- The project will receive consulting support from Himle LLC (CONSULTANT).

The project will also draw on internal cross-departmental support and insight, as needed, from select Program Managers and Planner – Project Managers.

Target Audiences:

Target audiences for this project may be refined throughout the process. Current priority audiences are outlined below:

- Tier 1:
 - Elected and appointed policymakers and staff that directly influence the land use and water interface. Land developers and their supporting consulting teams and trade organizations. MCWD Board, Citizen Advisory Committee, Staff and District consultants
- Tier 2:
 - Property owners and interested members of the public (riparian landowners, water recreation enthusiasts, lake association members, master water stewards). The general public.

Scope of Work:

Phases of Work:

This project will be developed in the following phases:

- Discovery → Research → Insights → Strategy Development → Implementation Plan

1. Discovery:

The purpose of the Discovery phase is to assemble, synthesize, and draw preliminary insights from all existing information regarding the District's current brand positioning, the perceptions of stakeholders, and existing outreach programming. The following work will be completed:

- **PROJECT MANAGER.**
 - Assemble all pertinent background information (e.g. MCWD's guiding documents, stakeholder surveys, literature, etc.), complete a preliminary environmental scan of current and threats and opportunities (external pressure points) for MCWD, and synthesize findings.
 - Complete internal workshops with District staff to complete a preliminary assessment of target audiences, and synthesize findings, including:
 - Historic and current perceptions of MCWD
 - Desired actions of target audiences by MCWD
 - Barriers to taking desired actions
 - Effective messages and delivery channels
 - Complete internal workshops with District staff to assess the strengths and weaknesses of MCWD's current outreach programming, and synthesize findings. Assessment will include, but not be limited to:
 - Documenting steps taken to align since 2017 Strategic Alignment Plan.
 - What is working and why. What is not working and why.
 - Preliminary recommendations.
 - Deliver this synthesized information to the CONSULTANT.
- **CONSULTANT.**
 - Review and refine synthesis delivered from PROJECT MANAGER, and develop written insights and recommendations to inform PROJECT TEAM's discussion of Research Phase.
 - Work with PROJECT MANAGER to facilitate discussion of discovery phase insights with PROJECT TEAM.
- **PROJECT TEAM.**
 - PROJECT TEAM will convene to receive CONSULTANT recommendations, discuss Discovery phase insights, and establish a plan for the Research phase, including:
 - Objectives of interviews
 - List of interviewees
 - Questions and potential online survey

- Division of work between CONSULTANT and PROJECT MANAGER for Research Phase.

2. Research:

The purpose of the Research phase is to conduct interviews, assemble data, and synthesize insights regarding the District's target audiences, to inform the development of effective outreach strategies.

- PROJECT MANAGER.
 - Work with Board liaisons, Leadership Team, and the District Administrator to conduct interviews of Tier 1 target audience members to supplement those completed by CONSULTANT.
 - Conduct online survey and CAC focus groups to support Tier 2 audience research. Coordinate as needed with MCWD website consultant.
- CONSULTANT.
 - Interview, and document, a minimum of 35 individual Tier 1 target audience members.

3. Insights:

The purpose of the Insights phase is to synthesize the Research phase work into a deeper intuitive understanding of target audience perceptions, in order to inform new effective outreach strategies (messages and delivery) that support the District's organizational priorities.

- PROJECT MANAGER.
 - Synthesize research conducted into an insights report, which also incorporates any research completed by the District's website consultant of Tier 2 audiences, and identify preliminary recommendations for outreach strategies to be considered by the CONSULTANT and PROJECT TEAM.
 - Workshop the synthesized insights and feedback and recommendations from PROJECT TEAM with the MCWD CAC and the Planning and Policy Committee (PPC).
- CONSULTANT.
 - Synthesize research conducted into an insights report, which documents thematic perceptions of target audiences and identifies preliminary recommendations for outreach strategies to be considered by the PROJECT TEAM.
 - Work with PROJECT MANAGER to facilitate discussion of insights reports by the PROJECT TEAM.
- PROJECT TEAM.
 - PROJECT TEAM will convene to review and discuss the insights and preliminary recommendations generated by the PROJECT MANAGER and CONSULTANT.

4. Strategy Development:

The purpose of the Strategy phase is to translate the insights developed into new outreach strategies and programmatic direction that supports the District's organizational priorities.

- CONSULTANT.
 - Taking feedback from the PROJECT TEAM, conduct work-sessions with District staff to refine organizational outreach strategies, for priorities including:
 - Capital Project Planning
 - E.g. Minnehaha Creek, Six Mile Creek Halsted Bay
 - Land Use – Water Policy Integration
 - E.g. Responsive Program, Permitting Program
 - Emerging Threats and Opportunities
 - E.g. Grays Bay Dam Operations, Climate Adaptation
 - Synthesize work-session feedback into draft recommendations, and work with PROJECT MANAGER to facilitate discussion with PROJECT TEAM.
 - Work with PROJECT MANAGER to develop a draft report of recommendations for outreach strategies and changes in outreach programming.
- PROJECT TEAM.
 - Convene to review and discuss the recommended strategies of CONSULTANT and PROJECT MANAGER
- PROJECT MANAGER.
 - Workshop the draft recommendations from PROJECT TEAM with the MCWD and PPC.

5. Implementation Plan:

The purpose of the Implementation Plan phase is to evaluate the recommended strategies against the identified strengths and weaknesses of current outreach programming, and identify the operational and programmatic changes and timeline needed to implement the recommendations outlined from the Strategy phase.

- PROJECT MANAGER.
 - Work in coordination with internal staff team and CONSULTANT to develop a plan to execute the new strategy for outreach programming, including consideration of department structure, training and fiscal resources needed and timeline.
- PROJECT TEAM.

- Review and discuss the recommendations made by the PROJECT MANAGER.

6. Project Approval:

The purpose of the Approval phase is to route the final recommendations for organizational review, consideration and approval.

- PROJECT MANAGER.
 - Review the final project recommendations with the Operations and Programs Committee (OPC)
 - Review the final project recommendations with the CAC
 - Work with the CONSULTANT to present the final project recommendations for Board consideration.

Deliverables:

CONSULTANT will deliver the following:

- Discovery:
 - Written package of preliminary insights regarding current positioning of MCWD, audience perceptions, actions MCWD desires audience to take, barriers, and messages, based on PROJECT MANAGER'S discovery synthesis
 - Written recommendations regarding purpose of interviews, list of audience members to be interviewed, and questions to ask.
 - Work with PROJECT MANAGER to facilitate discussion of discovery phase insights with PROJECT TEAM.
- Research:
 - Conduct a minimum of 35 individual interviews of Tier 1 target audience
 - Provide written documentation and synthesis of the interviews
- Insights:
 - Transform synthesis of interviews into a written insights report, which documents thematic perceptions of target audiences and identifies preliminary recommendations for outreach strategies to be considered by the PROJECT TEAM.
 - Work with the PROJECT MANAGER to facilitate a work session with the PROJECT TEAM to review and discuss the insights report and preliminary outreach strategies.
- Strategy Development:
 - Facilitate work session with District staff to refine outreach strategies

- Synthesize work session feedback into written recommendations for outreach strategies
- Work with PROJECT MANAGER and the PROJECT TEAM to prepare a final draft report synthesizing work from Discover, Research, Insights, and the recommended outreach strategies.
- Implementation Plan:
 - Coordinate as needed with PROJECT MANAGER to provide information and guidance regarding the implementation plan.
- Approval:
 - Work with PROJECT MANAGER to present the final report to the MCWD Board of Managers.

Budget:

The budget for the communications CONSULTANT for this project is \$50,000

Timeline:

A detailed project timeline is attached to this scope as Exhibit B.

Exhibit B - Strategic Communications Planning Timeline

	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
CONTRACT APPROVAL	Jun 13 Board									
KICKOFF MEETINGS	Week of June 17									
DISCOVERY	Review existing data and conduct audience analysis; Assess MCWD's current outreach programming; Consult with liaisons									
	Joint meeting to share information and plan for interviews/surveys.		Jul 16 Joint meeting							
	Present strat comm plan overview to CAC		Jul 17 CAC							
	Present Discovery phase findings to PPC		Jul 25 PPC							
RESEARCH	Finalize interview questions; Consult with liaisons									
	Collect new audience data via interviews, online surveys, focus groups, etc.									
	Present Research phase summary to PPC				Sept 26 PPC					
INSIGHTS	Joint meeting to compare research results with discovery phase findings				Sep 10 Joint meeting					
	Develop draft insights report; Consult with liaisons									
	Workshop draft Insights Report with the PPC and CAC					Oct 24 PPC	Nov 6 CAC			
STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT	Work session with staff to identify strategies					Oct 30 Work session				
	Create draft strategy recommendations; Consult with liaisons									
	Workshop draft recommendations with PPC and CAC						Dec 19 PPC	Jan CAC		

<p>IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</p>	<p>Develop a plan to execute strategy; Consult with liaisons</p>										
<p>PROJECT APPROVAL</p>	<p>Present plan to OPC, CAC and Board</p>								<p>Feb OPC</p>	<p>Mar CAC and Board</p>	