

Water Resources Planning

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Council leads regional water protection efforts

Good, plentiful water is perhaps this region's greatest natural resource. Water is part of the foundation of the region's economy and is critical to the region's quality of life.

Under state law, the Metropolitan Council is required to prepare a comprehensive development guide for the seven-county metropolitan area. The *2030 Water Resources Management Policy Plan (Water Plan)* is one chapter of that guide.

The plan details principles and strategies for stewardship of the region's water supply, for protecting the quality of area water resources, and for providing wastewater services to the region to protect public health and the environment. It also guides local governments as they prepare their local comprehensive plans for land use and growth.

Council studies water supply

Regional water demand totals more than 1.3 billion gallons per day. That demand will grow with the region's eco-

nomy and its population, projected to grow by one million people between 2000 and 2030.

Providing water to homes and businesses is generally the responsibility of local governments. But ensuring that communities have an adequate supply of water as the region continues to grow is one of the primary issues being addressed by the Metropolitan Council and its Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee.

The Council, in 2005, was charged by the Legislature with completing technical studies and developing a master plan to ensure the reliability, security and cost-effectiveness of the water supply system in the seven-county area.

The plan will provide guidance for local water-supply systems and future regional investments. It will emphasize conservation, interjurisdictional cooperation and long-term sustainability.

State law also directs the Council to develop recommendations for clarifying local, regional and state governmental roles related to water supply, streamlining the water supply regulatory and permit-

ting process, and the long-term funding of planning activities and capital investment.

The Council must report its findings, recommendations and continuing planning activities in time for the 2007 legislative session and every five years thereafter. The Council expects to complete the water supply master plan by the end of 2008.

Watersheds are planning focus

The Council focuses on watersheds in its effort to help control pollution from point sources (specific sources, such as industrial discharge pipes) and nonpoint sources (diffuse sources, such as rainwater runoff). The Council has undertaken significant watershed and river modeling projects to better manage water quality and provide local agencies guidance on managing both point and nonpoint sources of pollution. The Council works cooperatively with watershed organizations on watershed planning and implementation, and to support ongoing water quality monitoring. Council staff participate on watershed management organizations'

advisory committees and attend board meetings, and provide technical assistance on a variety of projects.

Council promotes best practices

The Council conducts research to better control and prevent water pollution. For example, the Council has partnered with the Minnesota Dental Association to promote the use of equipment that filters mercury out of dental office wastewater in an effort to reduce mercury loadings to the sanitary sewers. Other research efforts have evaluated the performance of various best management practices (BMPs) for storm-water treatment. The Council also has developed a number of resources, such as the *Minnesota Urban Small Sites BMP Manual*. The manual provides guidance on the design and operation of effective nonpoint-source pollution control.

Council monitors water quality

The Council supports an extensive network of water quality monitoring efforts on the region's rivers, streams and lakes. The lake monitoring program relies on more than 55 volunteer individuals, families and organizations that regularly measure the water quality of 145 lakes in the region. Through these efforts, the region can identify problems, provide data to help improve water quality, and measure progress toward cleanup goals.

Council reviews local water plans

Under state law the Council reviews and comments on the watershed plans prepared by watershed management organizations, as well as surface water management plans prepared by local governments in the region as a component

of their local comprehensive plans. The Council also provides guidance and technical assistance to counties, cities, and towns on issues relating to water resources.

For more information

- To learn more: www.metrocouncil.org/environment/water/index.htm
Or call 651-602-1005.
- Related fact sheets:
 - [Environmental Services](#)
 - [Wastewater Services](#)
 - [Inflow and Infiltration](#)
 - [Water Supply Master Planning](#)

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