



## Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

### MEMO

To: BCWMC Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners  
From: Laura Jester, Administrator  
Date: October 12, 2023

#### **RE: Updates and Recommendations from Plan Steering Committee**

At their meeting on October 4<sup>th</sup>, the BCWMC Plan Steering Committee (PSC) continued to develop goals to address high priority issues and discussed a variety of topics. They have the following updates and recommendations. As a reminder, all PSC meeting materials can be found on the 2025 Watershed Plan webpage: <https://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/document/2025-plan-update>.

#### **i. Receive Update on Plan Development Budget**

Commission Engineers and I recently reviewed the budget status for the development of the 2025 Watershed Plan. At their meeting on October 4<sup>th</sup>, the PSC received this budget update and asked that it be shared with the whole Commission.

At their meetings in March and September 2022, the Commission approved a Plan development budget for phases 1, 2, and 4 of \$124,380 and a subsequent budget for phase 2 of \$38,375 for a total Plan development budget of \$162,755.

With work completed to date and an estimate of work yet to be completed, staff expects the Plan budget to end up being approximately 20% higher than originally budgeted by the time the Plan is completed in 2025. There are multiple reasons for this likely increase. To date, we had a more complex public kickoff meeting with an open house format that required more preparation time than budgeted; more PSC meetings than expected to prepare for the issues identification workshop and additional material preparation and internal meetings prior to the workshop; and more PSC meeting time spent on process, format, vision statement development, and other topics.

This of this is all good work with good discussions and meaningful progress being made. I do not recommend an official budget amendment at this time but wanted to alert the Commission of the issue. More detail and a possible budget amendment could be developed during 2025 Operating Budget development early next year.

**ii. Consider Approving Recommendation to Develop Scope of Work for Medicine Lake TMDL Assessment**

One of the highest priority goals proposed by the PSC is to improve water quality in Medicine Lake so that it meets State eutrophication (nutrient) standards. Medicine Lake was added to the State's impaired waters list for high nutrients in 2004 and a Total Maximum Daily Load Study (TMDL) was completed in 2009. A TMDL study is a "clean up plan" for the lake that identifies sources of nutrient pollution and determines how much pollution should be reduced from each source such that water quality would improve to meet standards.

Since 2009, the BCWMC, member cities (mainly Plymouth) and other MS4 permit holders (like MnDOT) have been implementing best management practices and capital improvement projects aimed at reducing nutrient pollution in the lake. BCWMC capital projects in the Medicine Lake subwatershed are listed on the Medicine Lake webpage: [www.bassettcreekwmo.org/lakes-streams/medicine-lake](http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/lakes-streams/medicine-lake). Unfortunately, the lake's nutrient levels are still above the State standard.

In order to target future practices and programs with the goal of meeting the water quality standard, an assessment of the status of the TMDL's implementation and full analysis of current lake water quality is needed. Originally, BCWMC staff and the PSC considered including this assessment as an implementation action within the 2025 Watershed Plan. However, performing an assessment now allows the resulting recommended actions to be included in the Plan's implementation program right away.

**Recommendation:** The PSC (and the BCWMC Technical Advisory Committee) recommends that the Commission Engineer be directed to bring a scope of work and budget for this assessment to the November Commission meeting for consideration.

**iii. Receive Update on Committee Progress and Calendar of Work**

As noted above, the PSC continues to refine issues statements and develop measurable goals to address the issues. Specifically, they have been working on the high priority issues of impaired waters and high chlorides. In addition to developing goals, they are also listing possible actions, projects, and policies (tools) that could be used to meet the goals. The PSC recently approved a more user-friendly format for presentation of the issues, goals, and actions and have asked staff to add cost estimates and notes where new policies or actions are being considered.

At their meeting earlier this month, the PSC also reviewed a calendar of work slated for the committee, Commission, and Planning TAC over the next 15 months (see attached).

## Phase 3 Plan Development Calendar

### 1. Updating Physical Environment Inventory

Happening in the background by Barr staff concurrently with other steps below

### 2. Defining issues and measurable goals

21 issues were identified by PSC and confirmed by Commission.

For EACH issue:

- a) Develop succinct issue statement and narrative explaining why and where the issue occurs in the watershed. **What's the problem?**
- b) Develop measurable goals to address each issue. **What is the quantifiable change** in resource, watershed, or organizational condition you expect after you implement the 10-year plan? (Some issues may not have easily quantifiable goals; metrics will vary among issues.)

Examples:

- 1) Achieve State eutrophication standards in Medicine Lake
  
- 2) Reduce average chloride concentrations in Bassett Creek by 10% at the Watershed Outlet Monitoring Program (WOMP) station.

### 3. Revising policies and performance standards

For each goal, determine the strategies, actions, or tasks that will be implemented to achieve each goal. **How will you achieve the goal? What are the implementation actions associated with this goal?** These actions will consist of various tools like policies, requirements, programs, and projects performed by the BCWMC or its member cities.

Examples:

- 1) Assess Medicine Lake TMDL implementation status and existing conditions.
- 2) Perform subwatershed analysis for Northwood Lake.
- 3) Require winter maintenance plans for all applicable projects/locations.

### 4. Creating a targeted implementation program

Determine **when** actions will be taken, **where** they will be taken, **by whom** will they be taken, and the **estimated cost** of each action. The implementation program can be developed concurrently with activities in #3 above. This is an iterative process to make sure we can implement appropriately during the life of the plan.

### 5. Compiling the complete draft plan

Pull everything together into one complete document.

Potential Calendar of PSC Planning Activities:

Month and Year	Plan Steering Committee Work	Commission and Plan TAC* meetings
September 2023	<p>Develop issue statements and measurable goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impaired Waters</li> <li>• Chloride Loading</li> </ul> <p>(Represents 2 of 10 issues in Waterbody and Watershed Quality category)</p>	
October 2023	<p>Consider mission statement, vision statement, and/or guiding principles (NOTE: This activity is not included in plan development scope and budget)</p> <p>Consider adding “desired future condition” to some or all issues (overarching, very long range goals).</p> <p>Example: Water quality in priority waterbodies meets applicable State water quality standards.</p> <p>Discuss plan format and terminology for issues, goals, and actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desired future condition</li> <li>• 10-year Goal</li> <li>• Strategy</li> <li>• Action</li> <li>• Task</li> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Requirement</li> </ul> <p>Review the 2025 Plan update planning process calendar/timeline/budget</p> <p>Finalize goals and review possible implementation actions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impaired waters</li> <li>• Chloride Loading</li> </ul>	
November 2023	<p>Develop issue statements, measurable goals and possible implementation actions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streambank and gully erosion</li> <li>• Lakeshore erosion</li> <li>• Aquatic Invasive Species</li> <li>• Wetland Health and Restoration</li> <li>• Groundwater Surface Water Interaction</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of Riparian Areas</li> <li>• Degradation/Loss of Upland Areas</li> <li>• Groundwater Quality</li> </ul>	
December 2023	<p>Finalize any outstanding issues/goals/action from November.</p> <p>Determine process and format for presenting at January Commission meeting.</p> <p>Review draft Land and Water Resources Inventory (Appendix A).</p> <p>Discuss mechanism for developing land and/or water acknowledgement statements.</p>	Convene Plan TAC to review issues and goals thus far and discuss potential implementation actions
January 2024	<p>Develop issue statements, measurable goals and possible implementation actions for Climate Resiliency category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of climate change on hydrology, water levels, and flood risk</li> <li>• Bassett Creek Valley Stormwater Management</li> <li>• Groundwater Quantity</li> </ul>	Present issue statements and measurable goals for Waterbody and Watershed Quality at Jan 18 <sup>th</sup> Commission meeting
February 2024	<p>Develop issue statements, measurable goals and possible implementation actions for Education and Outreach category and some issues in Organizational Effectiveness category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide outreach to and develop relationships with diverse communities</li> <li>• Protect recreation opportunities</li> <li>• Organizational assessment of capacity and staffing</li> <li>• BCWMC funding mechanisms</li> <li>• Progress assessment</li> <li>• Projects and programs implemented through a DEI lens</li> <li>• Public ditch management</li> <li>• Carbon footprint of BCWMC projects</li> </ul>	
March 2024	<p>Finalize any remaining statements, measurable goals and possible implementation actions</p> <p>Determine process and format for presenting at April Commission meeting.</p>	Convene Plan TAC to complete discussion/input on issues, measurable goals, potential implementation

April 2024	<p>Begin discussing plan implementation: How will the actions be implemented including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who implements CIP projects?</li> <li>• Are changes needed to BCWMC staff capacity?</li> <li>• What policies are needed to achieve desired outcomes?</li> </ul>	<p>Present issue statements and measurable goals for Climate Resiliency, Education, and Organizational Effectiveness at April 18<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting</p>
May 2024	<p>Discuss possible revisions to BCWMC development requirements. Possible topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirements related to winter maintenance and chloride minimization design practices</li> <li>• Changes to linear project standards</li> <li>• Changes to permitted activities in floodplains</li> </ul>	
June 2024	<p>Review updated CIP prioritization metrics to reflect this plan's priority issues.</p> <p>Review potential CIP projects 2025 – 2035.</p>	
July 2024	<p>Consider policies for addressing various goals. What changes, additions, deletions from 2015 policies are needed?</p>	
August 2024	<p>Discuss implementation of plan including CIP implementation and staff capacity.</p>	<p>Convene Plan TAC to discuss implementation items (projects, programs, and policies)</p>
September 2024	<p>Catch up month for unfinished work from last few months.</p> <p>Determine process and format for presenting at October Commission meeting.</p>	<p>Convene Plan TAC to complete discussion/input on implementation items (projects, programs, and policies)</p>
October 2024	<p>Review complete implementation program.</p>	<p>Present draft implementation program at October 15<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting</p>
November 2024	<p>Finalize policies and implementation program</p> <p>Review various plan sections</p>	

\*Plan TAC = Regular city TAC members plus state and local agencies and other partners