



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Meeting Notes of the Watershed Plan Steering Committee

April 3, 2025 @ 10:00 a.m.

Brookview, Golden Valley

Meeting Attendees:

Committee Chair Kennedy, Commissioners Cesnik, Polzin, Pentel and Hauer; TAC Members Scharenbroich and Eckman; Administrator Jester; Commission Engineers Johnson and Williams

1. WELCOME

Committee Chair Kennedy opened the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

2. REVIEW MARCH 19 MEETING NOTES

There was a consensus that the meeting notes were appropriate as presented.

3. FINALIZE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Administrator Jester reviewed the revisions to the CIP program implementation section. She noted the list of metrics to be used in the prioritization matrix (which will be referenced in the plan but will be maintained as a guidance document outside the plan), including a metric related to the project's location relative to areas identified as socially vulnerable. She noted some additions to the list of items required in CIP feasibility studies including "identification of potential eligible project costs." There was brief discussion on whether 50% or 60% plans should be approved by the Commission. It was decided to leave the requirement at 50% and edit a discrepancy between the text and the CIP process graphic.

Commission Engineer Johnson reviewed revisions to the "eligible project costs" table. She noted the most important change was in the table's footnote with a refinement of language describing factors that would be considered for determining which "potential" eligible costs would be included as actual eligible costs on a project-by-project basis. It was also noted that art/aesthetics was added as a potentially eligible project cost. The committee asked that "educational signage" be moved higher in the table of potentially eligible costs to convey that it's a higher priority than other items.

There was discussion on how the eligible project costs table provides the Commission with flexibility and an area of negotiation regarding project implementation. It was noted that some potentially eligible costs could be very expensive (such as property acquisition or wetland replacement) and that those items should be acknowledged in the feasibility study stage. The committee recommended that the table's footnote include the factor of funding availability.

It was noted that the Commission pays 100% of eligible project costs. There was discussion about how neighboring watersheds pay for capital projects. Engineer Johnson noted that as of a few years ago, the MWMO estimated eligible project costs (the maximum amount to reimburse the project implementer) at the start of a project. Cities sometimes indicated that this made it difficult to budget appropriately. Elm Creek and Shingle Creek WMCs provide 25% cost share for capital projects. It was noted that the Commission should reexamine its CIP funding policies in the future, perhaps in conjunction with the organizational assessment.

There was agreement that additional context should be added to better indicate that feasibility studies will be used to gain an understanding of the potential and eligible project costs. It was also noted the eligible project costs table could be reorganized or renamed.

In discussing the 10-year CIP schedule, it was decided that it was not appropriate to show locations of potential CIP project locations on a map in the plan. It was noted that when a project is actually coming to the Commission for implementation consideration is a good time to provide a map. Committee members liked how the table was reorganized by waterbody and requested links to projects or more information, as available. The committee agreed that the TAC needed a thorough review of the draft 10-year CIP. It was also noted that a potential project recommended by MPRB might be missing from the list.

4. REVIEW DRAFT NON-CIP IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

Administrator Jester reviewed the draft table of activities and programs (non-CIP) that will be included in the implementation section of the plan. It was noted that the list of tools in Section 4.1 should be in the same order as in the non-CIP implementation table and that a section for “operations” should be added and described in the narrative of Section 4.1. There was also a suggestion to schedule lower priority projects later in the plan’s life, move development of a social vulnerability index earlier in the schedule, and to add an activity to identify high priority activities to address water quality and stream health within the Bassett Creek main stem watershed (similar to subwatersheds assessments (SWAs) planned for Lost Lake and Northwood Lake). There was a suggestion that one SWA should be completed each year to better target and prioritize other projects and programs, both for the Commission and for member cities. It was noted a watershed-wide wetland assessment and potentially the shoreline assessment should be moved later in the schedule. It was also suggested that SWAs should be estimated at \$75,000 each.

5. REVIEW REVISED IMPLEMENTATION SECTION 4.1 (formerly Section 5.1)

The committee requested to review the entire Implementation Section 4 as a complete document at a future meeting.

6. REVIEW DRAFT INTRODUCTION SECTION 1.0

The committee requested to review Section 1.0 along with the complete draft plan at a future meeting.

7. REVIEW DRAFT EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Committee members commented that the Education and Engagement Plan should include Commission attendance/engagement at neighborhood association meetings, should have a stronger connection to the broader watershed plan (better link to activities in the non-CIP implementation table), and should better acknowledge the current education activities of cities.

8. DISCUSS PLANS FOR COMMISSION WORKSHOP

The committee agreed the next Commission workshop should be held during the May meeting with topics including the 10-year CIP, the non-CIP implementation table, and significant changes to the Requirements Document.

9. DISCUSS PLANS FOR RE-ENGAGING PUBLIC ON DRAFT PLAN

The committee decided that public input should be sought prior to the formal 60-day review period. It was decided that rather than hosting a large public open house, that city environmental commissions (or similar), lake groups, neighborhood associations, and other interested stakeholders be engaged through smaller meetings. Administrator Jester was directed to develop a high-level presentation outlining the major priorities, goals, and strategies in the draft plan and to reach out to cities requesting time on June commission meeting agendas. It was noted that ideally, PSC members would give the presentation rather than Commission or city staff, and that other individuals or groups could be invited to the city commission meetings as well.

10. ADJOURN – The meeting adjourned at 12:00.