

Memorandum

To: Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC)
From: Barr Engineering Co. (Stephanie Johnson, PhD, PE; Jim Herbert, PE; Karen Chandler, PE)
Subject: Proposed Updates to the BCWMC Requirements Document
Date: May 8, 2025

1 Background

The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) created the “Requirements for Development and Improvement Projects” (Requirements) document to assist developers and consultants in designing and managing projects that conform to the policies of the BCWMC and outlines the BCWMC’s requirements for development and improvement projects to achieve the BCWMC’s goals. The BCWMC Requirements document was originally developed in 1998, to align with Commission policies at that time. The Requirements document has been revised several times, including in 2015 to align with Commission policies in the 2015-2025 Watershed Management Plan. The most recent version of the BCWMC Requirements document was updated in January 2023 and can be found on the BCWMC website: [Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission :: Standards & Requirements](#)

This memorandum summarizes a series of proposed updates and revisions to the current Requirements document that were developed as part of the Watershed Management Plan update process. The proposed updates incorporate information on current best practices in stormwater and floodplain management and reflect revisions to the BCWMC’s project review standards and requirements being developed with the new Watershed Management Plan.

The BCWMC Plan Steering Committee (PSC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) have reviewed and accepted the updated standards, requirements, and revisions to the BCWMC Requirements document. The TAC members reviewed and discussed the proposed revised Requirements document at several TAC meetings. Commission Engineers received and reviewed feedback on the document, incorporated edits, and came back to the TAC with proposed revisions. The TAC performed a final review and confirmed the proposed revisions at their May 2025 meeting.

The complete proposed BCWMC Requirements document is included with online meeting materials.

2 Proposed Updates

Proposed updates to the BCWMC Requirements document range from minor text edits to more substantial changes in requirements for proposed projects within the watershed to align with updated goals and newly-approved policies.

2.1 Minor Updates

The Commission Engineers recommended several relatively minor updates to the Requirements document text that are incorporated throughout the proposed revised Requirements document. These updates:

- Clarify wording that had been deemed unclear over the course of project reviews;

- Update guidance associated with the permitting of regional stormwater best management practices, BMP maintenance, and land uses within the floodplain to better align with currently acceptable best practices;
- Incorporate edits previously approved by the BCWMC at their February 2023 meeting after the MPCA Construction Stormwater Permit went into effect; and
- Reflect input received from commissioners and city staff since the document was last revised in January 2023.

2.2 Updates to Reflect New Standards and Requirements

As part of developing the new Watershed Management Plan, the BCWMC has been working to 1) update its regulatory standards and requirements for stormwater management on linear projects; 2) incorporate requirements for chloride management plans in development/redevelopment projects; and 3) consider updates to stream and wetland buffer triggers and regulatory standards.

The following sections summarize results of the recommended changes to the BCWMC's standards and requirements and highlight the primary impacted sections within the proposed revised Requirements document where content has been updated to reflect the new requirements.

2.2.1 Linear Project Standards

Linear projects (like roads) are challenging because of limited right-of-way and the typical presence of utilities and obstructions. The Commission's 2015 standards proved too strict for most city road projects so the Commission significantly relaxed the standards in 2017. The result was that almost no linear projects required water quality treatment after 2017. The Commission began looking into changing the Commission's linear project standards in 2022, as part of their work to address complex issues leading into development of the new Watershed Management Plan. That work included reviewing the 2015 version of the BCWMC's linear project standards, the 2017 version of those standards, the most current version of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) MS4 standards (put in place in 2020), and member city standards.

Options and recommendations for updates to the BCWMC linear project standards were developed and discussed with the BCWMC PSC and TAC on numerous occasions from 2023 through 2025. The TAC reviewed the final proposed linear project standards at their December 2024 meeting; the PSC reviewed the final recommended changes at their January 2025 meeting.

Proposed changes to the BCWMC standards include lowering the trigger for when standards apply to result in more projects requiring water quality improvements, changing the standard to mirror MPCA, and adding tiers for when BCWMC vs. city review is needed:

- Lowering the trigger for rate control and water quality treatment standards to "projects that create one or more acres of new and/or fully reconstructed impervious surface." The rate control standard includes some flexibility for situations when the standard cannot be met at the project site.
 - The current (2017) BCWMC standards require water quality treatment and rate control for linear projects that create 1 acre or more of net new impervious surface.
- Changing the linear project treatment standard to mirror the current MPCA MS4 permit standard: "Capture and retain the larger of 1 inch of runoff off the net increase in impervious area – or 0.5 inches of runoff off the new/fully reconstructed impervious area."

- The current BCWMC standards require linear projects that trigger the standard to capture and retain 1.1-inches of runoff from the net new impervious surface.
- Including tiers, based on size, regarding whether the municipality or BCWMC reviews proposed projects:
 - Linear projects that create one (1) or more acres, but less than five (5) acres of new and/or fully reconstructed impervious surfaces, must be submitted to the BCWMC for rate control and erosion and sediment control review, and submitted to the municipality for water quality review and permitting; the municipality must also complete and submit a checklist or other documentation.
 - Linear projects that create five (5) or more acres of new and/or fully reconstructed impervious surfaces, must be submitted to the BCWMC for water quality, rate control and erosion and sediment control review; the applicant must complete and submit a checklist or other documentation.
- Both the current and proposed linear project standards allow projects to follow the BCWMC's flexible treatment options if volume reduction is not feasible or allowed due to site conditions.

Updates to reflect the new, revised linear project standards are incorporated throughout the BCWMC Requirements document, including sections 2, 5, and 6.

2.2.2 Wetland and Stream Buffer Standards

The Commission requires that member cities maintain and enforce buffer requirements for wetlands and priority streams. The Commission does not specifically review buffers for proposed projects. Each municipality's local controls (ordinances) must include the triggers and minimum buffer requirements shown in the BCWMC Requirements document.

Wetland and stream buffer triggers and standards from the current BCWMC requirements were reviewed and compared with existing requirements from several member cities and a few other watershed organizations. The Commission Engineers developed options and recommendations for updates to the BCWMC requirements and discussed them with the BCWMC PSC and TAC on multiple occasions between 2024 and 2025. The TAC reviewed the final proposed recommendations at their December 2024 meeting; the PSC reviewed the final recommended changes at their January 2025 meeting.

Wetland buffer standards

Proposed changes to the BCWMC standards include:

- Lowering the trigger for wetland buffer requirements to “proposed projects that will result in 200 cubic yards or more of cut or fill, or 10,000 square feet or more of land disturbance” but allowing a less strict trigger for individual single family home lots, where the wetland buffer trigger only applies if the proposed activity is “immediately adjacent to a wetland.”
 - The current BCWMC standards require wetland buffers when a project contains more than one acre of new or redeveloped impervious area.
- Clarifying that buffers are measured from the edge of the “delineated” wetland.

Priority stream buffer standards

Proposed changes to the BCWMC standards include:

- Modifying the trigger for priority stream buffer requirements to match the trigger for wetlands “proposed projects that will result in 200 cubic yards or more of cut or fill, or 10,000 square feet or more of land disturbance.”
 - The current BCWMC standards trigger stream buffers when a proposed project will result in more than 200 cubic yards of cut or fill, or more than 10,000 square feet of land disturbance.
- Clarifying that the ordinary high-water level of the stream is determined as the average top of bank elevation consistent with MDNR guidance (MDNR, 1993).
- Increasing the required buffer width for all projects (except for single family homes) to an average of 30 feet and a minimum of 20 feet (measured from ordinary high-water level).
- Allowing a narrower buffer width for individual single-family homes – at least 10 feet or 25 percent of the distance between the ordinary high water level and the nearest existing structure, whichever is less.
- Allowing narrower, alternative buffer strips under certain situations and requiring municipalities to provide reporting/documentation to the BCWMC regarding occurrences and reasons for when alternative buffer width standards are applied.
 - The current BCWMC standards require buffer widths of at least 10 feet or 25 percent of the distance between the ordinary high water level and the nearest existing structure, whichever is less.

Updates to reflect the proposed changes to the BCWMC’s wetland and priority stream buffer standards are incorporated into the BCWMC Requirements document in Appendix B.

2.2.3 Chloride Management Plan Requirements

The new draft Watershed Management Plan identifies addressing chloride pollution as a high priority goal. The proposed revised Requirements document includes a new section (Section 6.4.2) requiring the development and implementation of a chloride management plan for projects within the BCWMC that require a stormwater maintenance agreement with the city. Chloride management plans must be submitted to the city at the time of permit review and the city will oversee the applicant’s compliance with the plans. Chloride management plans will not require BCWMC review, but the Commission may request reporting from the cities on a periodic basis to confirm compliance. Chloride management plans, at a minimum, must include:

- Contact information for responsible party for overseeing winter maintenance activities at the site;
- Site address;
- Nearest downstream receiving waterbody (lake or stream);

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- List of personnel responsible for conducting winter maintenance activities and their certification and certification expiration date(s);
- Types of deicers to be used and expected rates of application; and
- A map and narrative indicating snow storage and deicer storage locations, and sensitive areas to avoid application.

The TAC reviewed the above recommended approach at their December 2024 meeting; the PSC reviewed the recommended approach at their January 2025 meeting.