Meeting Title: Master Water Supply Plan Community Technical Work Group Meeting #1

Date: February 17, 2015 Time: 1-3 p.m. Location: 390 Robert St., St. Paul - Room LLA

Members in Attendance:
Michael Thompson, Maplewood
Steve Lillehaug, Brooklyn Center
Bob Cockriel, Bloomington
Shahin Rezania, Minneapolis
Jim Graupmann, St. Paul
Brian Olson, Edina
Bert Tracy, Golden Valley
Steve Albrecht, Burnsville
Russ Matthys, Eagan
Mark Maloney, Shoreview
Jennifer Levitt, Cottage Grove

Members Absent:
Klay Eckles, Woodbury

Met Council Staff in Attendance:
Leisa Thompson
Keith Buttleman
Jeannine Clancy
Ali Elhassan
Lanya Ross
Anneka Munsell
Deb Manning

Other Attendees:
Todd Olson, Metro Cities

Meeting Notes:

Welcome & Introductions
Jeannine began today's meeting by welcoming members and asking them to introduce themselves. She encouraged attendees to ask questions and stressed a desire to keep the Work Group informal. The main meeting objectives were outlined: clarification of roles, building capacities for interaction, discussing the Water Supply Planning Process and sustainability, and sharing information. Members were invited to add items to the agenda, by contacting Jeannine in advance of the meeting.

Background
Leisa Thompson discussed the Met Council's role in water supply planning, in developing a regional plan, maintaining a base of technical information needed for sound decision-making, providing plan development assistance and review to local entities, and analyzing and providing solutions for emerging issues. Leisa stated that we all understand the significance of water as a part of the state's identify, the

importance to the environment and our regional and local economies. She stated that the Met Council wants communities to retain control of their future. She stated that the Met Council is not a water supplier, nor do we want to be.

Leisa explained that the Met Council is not the regulator of water supply, but that it shares a regulatee perspective as a provider of wastewater services. Leisa emphasized the importance of an open dialogue and the goal of finding a wise way of going forward that will allow the region to continue to be successful economically, socially, and environmentally.

The scope and core purposes of the Work Group were explained:
• To exchange relevant data to help with current and future water supply planning
• To provide formative input to MCES on technical, financial, and operational issues related to regional water supply planning from a local community perspective
• To develop common ground on water supply and integrated water resource management so we can think effectively to prevent problems and co-create solutions

Leisa discussed the four basic principles of our philosophy of collaboration:
• Establishing a basis for working together and finding common ground
• Spending time learning and exploring the subject together
• Reaching a shared and compelling purpose for motivation to make a difference
• Believing that working together enables us to achieve much greater value in achieving our purpose

The concept of "One Water Management" was discussed as a method to collaborate to create a water supply rich future. Leisa explained that while we may not yet be able to agree on an approach to sustainable water for region, most of us agree that the status quo will not lead us to our best future as a region, and that integrated water management provides a better future than if decisions are made in silos.

Members questioned how regulators, and specifically the DNR, fit into this process, and whether they were invited to dialogue at the level of the workgroup rather than at a higher level later on. Concerns were expressed that the DNR's not being at the meeting represented a missed opportunity for them to be embedded in the planning process from a regional standpoint.

There was general agreement that the group might have more success bringing the DNR into the process if the desire for their involvement was expressed by both MCES staff and workgroup members. Keith Buttleman mentioned a meeting taking place with DNR staff the following week and said MCES could bring it up with them on that occasion. A member added that their not being involved could lead to the perception of siloing in decision-making, and reiterated the need for them for all major players to be involved.

Elements of Water Supply Plan and adoption schedule
Lanya Ross explained the background of the development and approval of the Met Council's 2010 Regional Master Water Supply Plan, which began in 2005, and which the DNR was involved with. She added that the DNR is also represented on the Council's Water Supply Committee.

However, since the release of the 2010 Water Supply Plan, a new regional plan (Thrive MSP 2040), new population and employment forecasts, and additional technical information have become available, necessitating the plan's update.

Lanya presented a timeline, with a goal of getting the plan updated and adopted in the summer of 2015 and communicating the information to communities so they can include water supply planning in their comprehensive planning process. Milestones were given for workgroup meetings 1-4 from February through April, 2015, finalization of the Master Plan draft in late April, public hearings and comments from May through July, and the plan's adoption in August.

The process for the Work Group's feedback updating the plan was explained, with an exchange of information back and forth between MCES and the Work Group prior to its review by MAWSAC and approval by the DNR and Metropolitan Council.

Lanya discussed the elements of water supply plan:
- Emphasizing conservation
- Inter-jurisdictional cooperation
- Long-term sustainability (≥ 30 years)
- Address reliability, security, and cost-effectiveness of metro water supply system and components
- Recommendations for clarifying proper roles and responsibilities
- Recommendations for ongoing and long term funding for activities and capital investments

A member requested clarification on the role of the DNR in the approval process, since the DNR has a representative on MAWSAC. He asked whether the DNR's approval is in a different statute, and Keith responded that it's in statute 473.

Issues and Trends in Regional Water Supply
Ali Elhassan discussed some of the issues and trends in the regional water supply and pointed out that our water supply is not in crisis. We have plenty of water from multiple sources, and this process is not a result of a shortage. However, our problem is that we rely heavily on one source, and we are beginning to see signals of stress on this source. Since we are sharing the same water supply, what we do has an impact on our neighbors.

Regional water demand is growing steadily, and most of the recent years' demand has relied heavily on groundwater. This trend is not sustainable long-term, and is causing declines in aquifers and impacts to lakes, streams, and wetlands. It's clear based on MN Geological Survey studies that there's a strong relationship between aquifers and surface water features above them.

Ali presented a list of some cities planning groundwater treatment facility upgrades over the next five years to address a variety of water quality issues. Members questioned what message this slide was intended to send, and requested that it be updated to provide a more balanced view of the costs of both groundwater and surface water, since this is an important issue for cities and comes up frequently at meetings on related topics. Ali and Leisa explained that the context of the slide was not to present a solution that MCES is trying to get everyone to agree to, but rather as additional information, with examples of some (not all) cities that are investing in facility upgrades.

Note: MCES staff has reviewed the slides regarding "planned upgrades." MCES staff will share these revisions with the CTWG at a later meeting.

Leisa added that we'd like to back off from solutions at this time and focus on considering all possible ways we might go about the water supply planning process. She said that MCES would get back to cities on the feedback they had provided on this information.

Ali continued with information about the regional forecast for continued population and employment growth, with a projected population increase of about 1 million people. He discussed a menu of sustainable water use approaches from which communities can choose when planning for their future water supply:

- Groundwater
- Surface water
- Reclaimed wastewater
- Enhanced recharge
- Stormwater
- Conservation

Factors in determining whether an approach is sustainable were discussed, including impacts to ecosystems, water quality, or water supply for future generations. Optimum use also included supplying current and future human use, maintaining ecosystems, and preventing the spread of pollutants.

A member asked if the new projections for growth through 2040 show population growth occurring in areas that are easily served by surface water, and Anneka said MCES would have to get back to the group on that, as we have not looked closely at that yet. It was suggested that we compare areas of projected growth with areas that are served by surface water, groundwater, or no water service (e.g. wells).

Another member asked whether the Met Council can try, through the long-term planning process, to direct growth into areas that already have excess surface water capacity rather than into areas where this isn't the case. Lanya mentioned that one of the major goals for this workgroup and updated plan is to provide information so water supply planning can be more integrated with other planning.

Keith commented that in terms of planning for the entire metro region, it's not as simple as one overall plan, with every part of the plan applying equally to all parts of region. Optimizing combinations of sources for where needs are and growth is projected to occur is a complex issue that will require sub-regional approaches based on specific conditions.

A member pointed out that there is a barrier for small communities in that while the long-term costs of surface water and groundwater systems may be comparable, the initial investment for a surface water system is much larger, and this presents a problem for cities trying to plan for future growth while their population is too small. The sustainable choice requires a larger upfront capital investment that they may not have enough people to fund at that time, and previous attempts to discuss this issue have not led to solutions.

Ali then discussed potential issues in achieving optimum aquifer use, including well interference; impacts to aquifer levels, surface water features, and wildlife; and problems with contamination, along with the concern of being able to provide reliable water supplies with reasonable rates.

In response to the inclusion of reuse on the alternative sources slide in the presentation, a member asked how we can overcome regulatory barriers to make recharge a viable option. Ali responded that

there is currently no standard for this in the state, and that one purpose for this group is to bring this issue to regulatory agencies. Leisa pointed out that regulators respond better to concrete, specific information than to theoreticals, and that some knowledge MCES gained during the East Bethel groundwater recharge project could be applied to this.

Members from Minneapolis and St. Paul commented that their cities are not prioritizing a conservation-based approach, since their usage is already down.

Water Demand Projections
Anneka Munsell provided background on the process of projecting future demand (based on the projected population and historical per capita water use) and of seeking feedback from local communities, which included several meetings and written comments from about 90 communities. The second draft of the projections was sent to communities in January for an additional round of feedback, which will then be incorporated into the models.

She explained that results of the current projections make it clear that different communities will require different approaches to water planning; "one size does not fit all."

Anneka then introduced Metro Model 3 (MM3) groundwater modeling as a tool for regional water supply planning that will allow the evaluation of different what-if scenarios and help with determining sustainable limits and long-term impacts. She explained that this tool can be a starting place for more localized studies, but is not an ideal tool for very localized ground/surface water impact analysis.

An overview of differences between the old MM2 and the new MM3 explained that MM3 included a larger area to register the impact of growth outside the metro, and includes 82,000 calibration points rather than the previously-used 15,000. Key assumptions for the 2040 demand scenarios were that demand will continue to be supplied by sources used in 2012, and that the 2040 demand is likely to fall in the range of 20% above or below the projected demand.

Three scenarios were mapped: one with the projected demand, and one each for 20% above and below that number. Anneka and Ali asked the group for comments and specifically for feedback on models based on conservation.

A member asked whether the three models would be available on the Met Council's website, and Anneka said that we'd email PDFs out, as the goal was for cities to have a chance to look at them before they received questions from the press or citizens.

Other members inquired why data they knew the cities possessed wasn't included in the models, and Anneka explained that MCES doesn't have access to all of the cities' data, but are interested in including it if cities can submit it to the MN Water Resources Library. It was asked whether we could work around the challenge of importing data from proprietary software often used by consultants. Anneka suggested that we can use the supporting data to integrate it into the model to get around that problem.
Lanya then gave a little background about the type of data used, and how we tried to rely on verified data, such as from the Department of Health.

Conclusion
Jeannine reminded attendees that we are preparing the agenda for meeting #2, and that receiving input ahead of time will allow us to be as prepared as possible. Ali reiterated the request for suggestions for

model run scenarios. Leisa requested that the members also send us any questions they think the group should talk through at future meetings.

The next meeting will be Monday, March 9th from 1-3 p.m. at Metro 94, 455 Etna Street, St. Paul, MN 55106, in Suite 32, South Conference Room.

Adjournment
3:00 p.m.