East Subregion Meeting Summary

Date: September 21, 2026

Time: 1:30 - 3:30 PM

Location: Ojibway Park (2695 Ojibway Drive, Woodbury MN, 55125)

Background

Following the East Subregion's 2023–2024 collaboration with the Met Council to develop parts of the 2050 Water Policy Plan (part of Met Council's Imagine 2050 regional development guide), we are moving into the next phase of this work - implementation. This new phase brings together local planners, utilities, watershed leaders, and other partners to broaden the past engagement to include a more "One Water", integrated water planning approach, coordinate efforts, set shared priorities, and begin carrying out the identified actions needed to achieve shared goals for the east subregion to build a more sustainable and equitable water future.

Meeting Goal

To share and align the work in the East subregion over the coming years across different organizations that relate to the priority focus areas identified at the last subregion meeting. To understand to what extent certain priority areas are already being addressed in the subregion, and which are lacking attention to help inform where the subregion might focus future project ideas.

If you'd like to access the PowerPoint presentation shared at this meeting, it may be accessed at this link.

Workshop Agenda:

- Welcome and introductions
- Background
- Activity – Shared Timeline Mapping of Existing and Planned Work
- Next steps and wrap-up

Attendees

Total attendance: 14 people

Representing…

- Watershed/Conservation Districts: 2 people
- County: 2 people
- Cities/Townships: 4 people
- State agencies: 3 people
- Met Council: 3 people

Attendees represented a diverse set of professions, from land use planners to city administrators and engineers. The common thread is everyone's work touches water resource management in some way, and everyone who attended the meeting has a stake in the East Subregion of the metro area.

Background of East Subregion Work

A brief background of the subregional work and the East subregion work was presented. This included a recap of the last East subregion meeting, held in May 2026 (notes from that meeting may be accessed here) and information about the next comprehensive planning cycle now getting underway for cities. More information about comprehensive planning can be accessed through the Met Council's Local Planning Handbook web resource.

The group also revisited the subregion's "Vision of Success" statement for the East subregional engagement effort. The Vision is as follows:

> The East Subregion works together toward a sustainable, resilient, and equitable water future through coordinated, proactive planning across jurisdictions. Groundwater and surface waters in the East Subregion face threats from contaminants like PFAS and chloride, land use, climate change, and limited public knowledge of water protection. Because water does not follow jurisdictional boundaries, the East Subregion builds the cross-jurisdictional relationships, shared advocacy, and adaptive management practices needed to get ahead of these challenges to ensure clean, affordable, and sustainable water for people and ecosystems, while balancing these objectives with future growth potential and innovation, such as stormwater reuse.

Timeline Mapping Activity

The purpose of this activity was to better understand the work already underway across the East Metro subregion that relates to the priority focus areas identified at the May 20, 2026 meeting. These priority focus areas are listed in Appendix B.

Attendees were asked to identify work in their jurisdiction that is ongoing or planned within the next 3-5 years and relates to one or more priority focus areas. This work could be a program, study, partnership, initiative, capital improvement project (CIP), or any other effort. Participants recorded each item on an individual sticky note.

Attendees then placed their notes on a large wall timeline and briefly shared their work with the group. The resulting timeline showed work underway or planned across the East Metro subregion that relates to the priority focus areas. **Appendix A: Work Happening in East Subregion Related to Priority Focus Areas lists all work shared at the meeting, along with the priority focus area it best relates to.** To give members who couldn't attend a chance to contribute, the Met Council also sent out an Excel survey asking the same questions as the meeting activity: what work is being pursued in your area now and over the next 3-5 years, and which priority focus area it best relates to. We received a handful of completed surveys, the information from which is also included in Appendix A. Please note the content in Appendix A is not a complete picture of the subregion. Some jurisdictions were not present at the meeting, and others did not return the follow-up survey sent to collect this information, so their work is not represented. If your organization did not have a chance to contribute, we would still welcome your input to help build a fuller picture of the work happening across the East subregion—please reach out to Lila or Maureen (contact information at the bottom of this document) and we would be glad to resend you the survey.

A quick clustering exercise of the sticky notes showed that most of the work shared fell under the "Healthy Land for Healthy Water" priority focus area. This work includes

shoreland restoration projects, stormwater BMPs, habitat improvement and native landscaping.

The second most common focus area was “Contaminants.” This work centers improving water quality by addressing I & I, treating for PFAS, and studying the impacts of chloride and ways to keep chloride levels down.

Finally, the group discussed a series of questions to reflect on the work happening throughout the subregion:

- Partnership: In reflecting on the work items (programs, studies, CIPs, etc.) your jurisdiction is or will be pursuing, is there an opportunity for partnership with others in the subregion? How would that partnership work? Are others in the room doing similar work with whom you could collaborate or from whom you could learn?
- Obstacles: What are potential obstacles to the success of certain work items?
- New opportunities: Did you hear about work today from another participant that you would like your organization to get involved in or begin pursuing?
- Gaps: Considering all the work shared today, do any gaps stand out?

The discussion that took place around the gaps question is continued in the next section.

Gap Analysis and Ideas for Joint Action

One objective of carrying out the activity described above was to understand where gaps in implementation might exist related to the priority focus areas, and attendees had an opportunity to discuss this briefly after the main activity.

The main gap raised was that, while there are many project- and program-level partnerships happening, there is less structural coordination happening between entities across the East Subregion, and less collective advocacy for priority issues. Participants recommended hosting more forum style meetings where people from across the East Subregion could “share and compare” their approaches to common water resource challenges, such as residential irrigation and data sharing.

Many of the organizations in the room shared a concern about the amount of water going toward residential irrigation in the subregion, and the group discussed potentially tackling this issue together in some form. One attendee described their city’s work to explore separate water meters for irrigation-only use, which would allow that water to be subject to sales tax. One suggestion was to advocate for this change at the legislative level in an upcoming session.

The discussion then turned to native vegetation. State law (Minn. Stat. § 412.925) prevents cities from prohibiting native vegetation, but it does not apply to homeowner's associations (HOAs), which can restrict or prohibit it through their own rules. Participants suggested this could be another issue for collaborative lobbying.

Lastly, it was noted that there are no consistent private well standards and no centralized testing system. Clinics in this subregion run only once or twice a year, so there might be an opportunity to think about a project that offers more frequent and consistent opportunities to test private wells.

Next steps:

The September 21 meeting focused on building a shared understanding of the work already happening in the East Metro that relates to the priority focus areas. The resulting baseline catalogue of work helps to identify gaps in that work and point toward future collaborative projects.

At the next subregion meeting, which we aim to hold in winter/early spring 2027, we will begin scoping possible projects for the East subregion based on the top priority areas and the gap analysis discussion. Between now and then, we ask that you consider the following question:

- **What collaborative project ideas could be implemented over the next three years that fall under one of the priority themes or clusters and help fill a gap in work not already happening in the East Metro subregion?**

Contact information:

If you have any questions or feedback on the material presented in this summary, please feel free to reach out to us! Thank you!

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Appendix A: Work Happening in East Subregion Related to Priority Focus Areas

The following tables document work happening across the East Subregion that is related to the subregion's priority focus areas (which can be found in Appendix B.) The work was shared at the September 21st East Subregion meeting or through a survey sent to East Subregion contacts. Each of the following tables groups work under the priority focus area it best matches. **Please note that the priority focus areas of Collaboration, Funding, and Education are not listed as separate categories. Because they are generally methods of carrying out the other priority focus areas rather than topics in their own right, work related to them appears within the other tables.** Also please note that not every entity within the East Subregion is represented here, as they may not have completed the survey or attended the East Subregion meeting. Some plans and programs have been hyperlinked if you'd like to learn more about them.

Work related to Priority Focus Area - Contaminants

Organization	Work Description	Timeline of work (if given)
Bayport	Sewer Lining Project, helping address I & I	2027
Cottage Grove	Two new treatment plants for PFAS	
Cottage Grove	Winter Salt Use Reduction • Salt spreader control upgrade • SWWD funding support	
Lake Elmo	PFAS treatment plant – PFAS testing private wells, update well protection plan	
Oakdale	PFAS water treatment plant expansion – 3M Settlement funded expansion of existing WTP	2027-2028
Oakdale	Stream Diversion – 3M Settlement Funded Stream Diversion to eliminate PFAS migration	2026
Brown's Creek WD	Investigate heavy metals to Brown's Creek and Long Lake	2027-2030
Brown's Creek WD	Support chloride reductions through smart salting, legislative options and consider through rule revisions	
Brown's Creek WD	PFAS surface water (lake) monitoring every 5 years	Start 2031
CMSCWD	Wrapping up bottom water chloride sampling (established baseline values) over last three years	

EMWREP	Collaborate with MPCA to host SMART salt trainings for public works and contractors and outreach to general public about SMART salting	
SWWD	Groundwater Modeling - Add detail to Met Council's Metro Model update so that SWWD and its partners can better understand surface water/groundwater interactions and target subwatersheds for pollution prevention emphasis.	2031 or later
SWWD + EMWREP + RWMWD + RCWD	Winter maintenance – ongoing funding to provide and promoted use of grit over chloride deicers and to sponsor annual smart salting training courses (Get Gritty program)	Ongoing
Wash Co Public Health	SSTS and Well Low Interest Loan Program	Ongoing
Wash Co Public Health	SSTS Fix Up Grants for Low-Income Residents	Ongoing
Wash Co Public Health	Pharmaceutical drop-off program	Ongoing
Wash Co Public Health	Environmental centers – hazardous waste drop-off	Ongoing
Wash Co Public Works	Chloride Management Plan	
Wash Co Public Works	Update snow and ice policy	
MPCA	Ensure PFAS sampling is available for private wells	
MPCA	Continue tracking PFAS plume from 3M disposal sites. Investigate PFAS from unknown sources through site assessment.	

Work related to Priority Focus Area – Sustainable Groundwater Supply

Organization	Work Description	Timeline of work (if given)
Bayport	Irrigation Reduction – Staff reviews water bills for excess use and personally calls high users	Ongoing
Lake Elmo	WBL Plan – water conservation plans, work towards 75/90 GPD	
Oakdale	Engaged with WBL Study Group – Working to find surface water solution for WBL augmentation, avoiding groundwater impacts	2026
Brown's Creek WD	Groundwater monitoring (elevation and surface water interaction)	2027-2036
SWWD	Groundwater conservation and protection incentives – Refined Incentive program to promote water conservation and	Ongoing

	efficiency. Has previously been focused on irrigation controllers. Will be expanded to other things like water softening and fixtures.	
MDH	Wellhead Protection Plan Amendments – Cottage Grove and Oak Park Heights	2026-2029
MDH	DWSMA delineation – St. Croix Montessori and Cimarron Park	2028-2031
MDH	Wellhead Protection Plan Amendment – Lake Elmo and Stillwater	2029-2032
Wash Co Public Health	Environmental specialist focused on groundwater – opportunity for increased groundwater education	Ongoing

Work related to Priority Focus Area – Healthy Land for Healthy Water

Organization	Work Description	Timeline of work (if given)
Bayport	Invasive Species removal - Buckthorn - Constant removal of buckthorn in two city parks to allow for better stormwater infiltration	Ongoing
Bayport + MSCWMO	Stormwater BMP Installations - City collaboration with MSCWMO to install bmp's related to water infiltration, streambank establishment, native plantings along stream banks, flood mitigation, etc	Ongoing
Bayport + MSCWMO	Partnership with MSCWMO to oversee the stormwater requirements of the city code	Ongoing
Cottage Grove	Enhanced street sweeping – new sweeper with SWWD funding support	
Woodbury	Establishment of natural areas in new developments/project areas	
Woodbury	Restore Tamarack Nature Preserve Native Vegetation	
Woodbury	Development of La Lake Park and fishing/lake access improvement	
Brown's Creek WD	Promote natural asset management by supporting member communities in identifying, valuing, and protecting natural features that provide flood storage, stormwater management, and watershed resilience	2027-2036
Brown's Creek WD	Establish (2029) and implement (2030) cost-share with businesses/development community for stormwater management above and beyond rules.	2029-2030
Brown's Creek WD	Utilize district cost-share or stewardship to help residents install water quality improvement projects.	2027-2036

Brown's Creek WD	Cost-share partnership for member communities to implement water quality improvement/retrofit projects	2027-2036
Brown's Creek WD	Review and revise land conservation priorities to reflect current resource protection needs (e.g. recharge areas, unique resources, headwaters of Brown's Creek and land adjacent to water resources)	
Brown's Creek WD	Buffer improvements on water resources.	
Brown's Creek WD	Review and revise rules.	2027
CMSCWD	Buffer restoration tech assistance and cost share program	
CMSCWD	Maintain surface water quality for natural resources $1.1-$2M/year just for this purpose	
CMSCWD	Soil health tech assistance and cost share	
EMWREP	Continue outreach and education with HOAs related to green infrastructure and grounds maintenance (lawns and winter)	
EMWREP	Utilize Blue Thumb, WCD site visits, watershed cost-share grants, and other tools to promote native landscapes that use less water and chemicals and reduce runoff pollution	
SWWD	Water quality monitoring – continue to operate comprehensive monitoring program to understand state of water resources, monitor for change, and inform management	Ongoing
SWWD	Implementation of targeted watershed BMPs to reduce pollution to SWWD resources	Ongoing
SWWD	Pursue protection or acquisition of priority lands (those with the most potential to impact overall watershed health) and then restore and maintain natural landcover.	Ongoing
SWWD	Launch a refined agriculture BMP cost share program that incentivizes long-lasting operational changes.	Ongoing
SWWD	R, R & R Program - Continued operation of SWWD's former CCIP program. This program provides cost share funding to District partners to incentivize work that reduces stormwater pollution, reduces chloride use, builds resiliency, prevents flooding, etc. This is a significant source of funding for work in the district. Currently funded at $650,000/yr.	Ongoing
SWWD	Continued support for enhanced municipal street sweeping programs to reduce watershed loading of sediment and nutrients to downstream resources and decrease BMP maintenance need.	Ongoing
Washington Conservation District	Urban soil health program: pilot plots on city-owned and residential properties to show benefits of soil health BMPs on turf areas	

Washington Conservation District	Support farmers in implementing soil health practices that reduce runoff and nitrate groundwater contamination. Cover crops, nutrient management, rotational grazing, row crops --> hay and prairie, no-till (Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership also involved)	
Washington County	Washington County Land and Water Legacy Program – land protection and park acquisition program, County is going for a bond referendum on the 11/3/2026 ballot to renew funding for the program, so continued implementation is dependent on it passing	2027 onward
Washington County	County habitat protection and enhancement grant program - Outdoor Heritage Fund: Funding program for land protection in collaboration with the Minnesota Land Trust, habitat enhancement over county conservation easements in Woodbury, and a new county land steward position to steward regional park system	2026-2031
Washington County + WCD	County Natural Resource Framework - this plan will cover county land protection, natural resource stewardship, natural resource education, funding partnership. The plan covers work led by the County and the Washington Conservation District	2027 onward
Wash Co Public Health	AIS funding – Distribute state aid funds for watercraft inspections, vegetation management	Ongoing annually

Work related to Priority Focus Area – Innovation

Organization	Work Description	Timeline of work (if given)
Woodbury	Update modeling for flood-prone areas with new data and sharing results	
CMSCWD	Revamping CMSCWD permit program public facing communications	2028-2030
CMSCWD	Working with communities (where interested) to: 1. Update ordinances 2. Improve permittee guidance/communications 3. Establish MOUs that clearly define permitting and enforcement roles between CMSCWD and communities	2026-2030
CMSCWD	Rule revisions for stormwater	2028-2030
SWWD	Research and innovation – ongoing support (staff time and funding) for research partnerships like the MN Stormwater Research Council.	Ongoing

Work related to Priority Focus Area – Wise Use

Organization	Work Description	Timeline of work (if given)
Bayport	Implementation of more restrictive land use related to water supply - deeper topsoil requirements for developments, single source irrigation source for entire development, specific seed mix, stormwater reuse, etc	Ongoing
Cottage Grove	Annual Water Conservation Program - Smart Irrigation Controllers with SWWD support - Irrigation assessments - HOA Irrigation Retrofit cost share - Water Conservation Education	
Cottage Grove	Met Council Water Efficiency Grants	
Cottage Grove + SWWD	Water re-use at utility and engineering building with SWWD funding support	
Lake Elmo	Stormwater reuse - need backup water due to drought-- reuse state regulations need to be updated	
Oakdale	Rate Structure Study - Reexamining tiered rate structure	2026
Oakdale	Water Main Replacements - Replace leaking water mains	2030-2035
Woodbury	Implement Water Efficiency Programs including irrigation efficiency, water softener rebates and turf conversion	
Brown's Creek WD	Continue operation of existing (Applewood/Oak Glen) stormwater reuse systems and ensure maintenance of private reuse and operation systems (Liberty Academy, Brixton townhomes, Elliot Crossing, Stillwater Oaks)	
Brown's Creek WD	Partner with local businesses to implement stormwater reuse (golf course target audience, loggers, Stillwater country club) ($150K)	2028
SWWD + EMWREP	Education - Ongoing education and outreach efforts to promote understanding of watershed management, issues in the District, and ways that individuals to help to address issues. Also includes funding for EMWREP.	Ongoing
SWWD	GW conservation and protection incentives - Refined incentive program to promote water conservation and efficiency. Has previously been focused in irrigation controllers. Will be expanded to other things like water softening and fixtures.	Ongoing
Wash Co Public Health	Advocacy for stormwater reuse	
Wash Co Public Health	Sell discounted rain barrels	Ongoing

Work related to Priority Focus Area – Private Systems

Organization	Work Description	Timeline of work (if given)
CMSCWD	Support EMWREP and Wash Co free well testing (for N + Cl) 2x/year throughout Wash Co	Ongoing
EMWREP + MNWOO + MGWA + Wash Co Public Health	Collaborate with MN Well Owners org and MN Groundwater org to offer well screening clinics for private well owners 1x a year in Washington County (Cl + N)	Ongoing
Wash Co Public Health	Private well testing	Ongoing
Wash Co Public Health	Abandoned well sealing grants	Ongoing

Work related to Priority Focus Area – Resilience

Organization	Work Description	Timeline of work (if given)
Cottage Grove	Expansion of Regional Stormwater Basin (LP-3) - SWWD support - Just upstream of Mississippi River	
Woodbury	Regional stormwater treatment for linear projects	
SWWD	Active Controls Feasibility Study - Evaluate feasibility and potential benefit of active controls in SWWD's northern watershed (Woodbury) as related to reducing flood risk.	2027-2029
SWWD	Watershed Modeling - Maintain up to date watershed models to assess state of watershed and evaluate impacts of proposed projects	Ongoing
Wash Co Public Health	Washington County Climate Action Plan	

Appendix B: East Subregion Priority Focus Areas – est. May 20th, 2026

DOTS **= first priority** **= second** **= third** **= fourth**	**THEME (or "cluster")**	**PRIORITY**
OOO	Contaminants	Inflow and infiltration
		PFAS and emerging contaminants
		People have access to PFAS testing
		Chlorides and their impacts
		Create partnership and shared voice to pursue limited liability and support BMPs to reduce chloride from road salt and water softeners
		Reduce and prevent groundwater contamination (PFAS, nitrates, SSTS, etc.)
OO	Sustainable groundwater supply	Sufficient safe groundwater to drink (groundwater quantity)
		Ensure water is affordable and safe (metric: indoor domestic water use continues to be affordable)
		Reduce volume of groundwater needed, with numeric goal identified
		Address the fact that water value, complexities, and management are in silos
		Aquifer levels are stable and managed
		Water appropriations
OOO	Healthy land for healthy water	Invasive plant impacts
		Land protection along/near surface water and sensitive groundwater areas
		Increase implementation of BMPs that improve soil health and decrease pollution from ag practices
		Maintain surface water quality for natural resources
O	Collaboration	Water planning can be better coordinated within and across jurisdictions such as active communication and adaptive management
		Better interagency water data sharing
		Coordinated management of DWSMAS with overlapping jurisdictions

o	Innovation	Address regulatory barriers to innovation
		Updating technologies (time and money)
o	Wise Use	Reduce unnecessary water use
		Promote and implement water conservation and efficiency efforts
		Value of water
		Stormwater reuse and irrigation challenges
		Reuse should be supported to reduce groundwater demand
o	Private systems	Private well testing and treatment
		Private well/septic owners not left behind
		Consistent standards for privately owned wells are established
		Reduce contamination from SSTS through free testing, income- and non-income-based replacement assistance, and enforcement of performance rules
		Private well and SSTS owners know how to maintain systems and protect their health
		Access to affordable or free testing for contaminants of interest to owner is available through centralized system
(no dots)	Education	Promote and implement water conservation and efficiency efforts
		Groundwater education
		Public education and awareness
(no dots)	Funding	Cost of doing business will only increase
		Funding for changing water quality regulations
		Funding for private well issues
(no dots)	Resilience	Future flood storage is accomplished
		Balancing and prioritizing resources for climate resilience
		Flood mitigation – research and minimizing impacts
		Increase resiliency of water supply systems