

Northeast Subregion Meeting Summary

Date: May 7, 2026

Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Location: Washington County Public Works (11660 Myeron Rd N, Stillwater, MN 55082)

Background

Following the 2023–2024 East and Northeast water supply collaboration to develop 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 NE subregion to build a more sustainable and equitable water future.

Meeting Goal

Identify and prioritize shared challenges and goals facing the Northeast subregion organizations over the next 10 years - to inform future exploration of actionable water project opportunities to address the identified priorities.

Participants were asked to attend the meeting prepared with a list of their work's top water, climate, and/or natural environment related priorities, and be prepared to discuss.

Workshop Agenda:

- Welcome and introductions
- Background of 2023-2024 subregional work
- Priority mapping exercise
- Next steps and wrap-up

Attendees

- State agency reps: 7
- Regional government reps: 5

- County: 2
- City/Township: 6
- Watershed Org/SWCD: 3

Total attendance: 23 people

Attendees represented a diverse set of professions, from public works directors to land use planners to watershed administrators. The common thread is everyone's work touches water resources in some way, and everyone who attended has a stake in the Northeast metro area.

Background of NE Subregion to Today

A brief background of the subregional work and the NE subregion to today was presented. This included information on the past combined NE/E subregion meeting, the January 2026 integrated water workshop, and upcoming comprehensive planning cycle, and review and approval of the vision of success of the current subregional engagement.

The group reviewed and approved a new draft current vision of success for the NE subregional engagement effort, that was edited based off of feedback received from the group at the NE/E combined meeting. The reviewed and approved vision of success is:

The NE subregion will work together to build a sustainable, resilient, and equitable water future using a one water integrated planning approach. Groundwater and surface waters are threatened by contaminants of emerging concern, unsustainable land use practices, climate change, and lack of awareness and understanding. Since water does not follow jurisdictional boundaries, the subregion will collaborate to protect waters for their environmental benefits, recreational uses, and drinking water, for the overall goal to achieve clean, affordable, and sustainable water for humans and ecosystems.

Presentation is attached separately as a PDF or can be accessed on the NE Subregion webpage [here](#).

Priority Mapping Exercise

Priority Brainstorm

The primary activity of this meeting was mapping water resource priorities across organizations.

Attendees sat with others who work in the same organizational realm – i.e. all the city/township representatives sat together, all the state agency representatives sat together, etc. They were asked to reflect on and document answers on sticky notes to the following questions:

Prioritization

Finally, the last part of the activity had the participants move to new tables, so they sat with new people from varying organizations. Each table was given a set of different colored dots. Each dot color had a different meaning – a red dot signified most important, green was second most important, yellow was third, and blue was fourth.









Small groups discussed at their new tables which of the newly identified themes should be prioritized for the focus of this subregion and its future work, and each table was asked to place their dots accordingly next to the theme they considered to be the top priority, second priority, third priority, etc. with their dot voting.



Table 1, shown below, communicates the priority themes that emerged from this exercise, along with the specific priorities within each theme and which professional group contributed each idea. The themes are ordered based on the number and type of dot they received from the dot voting exercise, i.e. the themes at the top of the list received more “First priority” dots than the themes listed lower in the table. The exact dot breakdown is included in the column labeled “Dots.”

An important note is that certain priority themes received less dots, but attendees pointed out that it was because they felt they were integral to all the work. Notably, coordinated outreach and education and government collaboration. These themes are key to supporting all work.

Table 1: NE Subregion Priority Themes

DOTS  = first priority  = second  = third  = fourth	THEME (or "cluster")	PRIORITY	GROUP THAT CONTRIBUTED PRIORITY
	Water Availability	Reasonable water appropriation allowances	City and township
		Considering water availability with population growth	County
		Growth of communities – domestic water supplies quantity and quality	State agencies
		Expanding industries such as data centers, mining, etc	State agencies
		Increase support of water reuse by agencies and jurisdictions – work collaboratively to address obstacles	Northeast Subregion Water Supply Plan
		Increase community understanding of reuse	Northeast Subregion Water Supply Plan
		Well interference – quantity and quality (ex. Plume interference to public wells)	State agencies
	Funding	Funding	State agencies
		Aging infrastructure and costs of improvements	City and township
		Water rate affordability	City and township
	Regional groundwater science	Science of GW: Scale is beyond local governments	Watershed/SWCD
		Science of GW: Need a clear understanding of data of quality and quantity, measure of status, cost benefit of solutions, measures of success	Watershed/SWCD
		Create centralized testing and data location for groundwater quality	Watershed/SWCD
		Increase understanding of aquifer recharge across subregion, work towards X amount recharged	Northeast Subregion Water Supply Plan
	Contamination	Contaminants (PFAS, microplastics), IDDE (Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination)	City and township
		CECs – identification, tracking, education	Watershed/SWCD
		Chlorides	State agencies
		Chloride reduction	County
		Expanded program for discovering and managing contaminants of emerging concern	Northeast Subregion Water Supply Plan
		Continue tracking of trends (like road salt)	Northeast Subregion Water Supply Plan

		Prevent/minimize water contamination and understand/study effects on consumers	County
		SSTS compliance	State agencies
		For the MPCA: non-point source pollution	State agencies
		PFAS in private wells	State agencies
○	Removing regulatory barriers	Stormwater regulations balanced with housing development needs	City and township
		Permitting/priority clarity and consistency	County
		Allow stormwater reuse under building code	City and township
		Residential/commercial irrigation limits	City and township
		Simplify and combine regulatory and permitting requirements	City and township
		Technology to accommodate regulations	State agencies
○○	Private supply and infrastructure	Safe and sufficient drinking water	County
		SSTS compliance	County
		Private well testing	County
		MDH well management – Private wells and PFAS outside of “plume area”	State agencies
		Private well testing	Watershed/SWCD
		Unsealed, abandoned wells	State agencies
		Safe and clean drinking water from tap for both public and private spaces	Northeast Subregion Water Supply Plan
		Aging (domestic) infrastructure → septic systems	State agencies
○	Government collaboration	Better coordination and “One Water” approach between the many, disparate agencies	City and township
		Emergency response	County
		Government coordination with One Water lens between agencies and jurisdictions	Northeast Subregion Water Supply Plan
		MDH: Implement/enforce Safe Drinking Water Act	State agencies
○	Coordinated education and outreach – strategic messaging	Increase education and awareness of household water use and conservation	Northeast Subregion Water Supply Plan
		Coordinated and educational resources and shared outreach for communities	Northeast Subregion Water Supply Plan
		Changing behaviors and social norms	Northeast Subregion Water Supply Plan
		Maintain protecting resource	State agencies
		DNR: Statewide drought plan/response	State agencies

(no dots)	Holistic resource management	MDH source water protection: quantity and sustainability of surface water	State agencies
		Resiliency	County
		Water conservation	County
		High quality natural resource preservation and restoration	County
		Achieve widespread acceptance of alternative land cover and related practices	Northeast Subregion Water Supply Plan

Next steps:

The May 7th meeting focused on reevaluating the top priorities across jurisdictions in the Northeast subregion to help improve and protect water resources. At the next subregion meeting, which we are aiming to hold in the late summer/early fall of 2026, we will begin scoping out possible projects to pursue in the Northeast subregion based on the top priority areas identified. We ask that between now and the next meeting, attendees think about the following question:

What are your project ideas that could be implemented over the next three years that fall under one of the priority themes/clusters identified during the May 7th meeting?

Contact information:

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

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