## NORTHWEST MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE

1600 East Golf Road, Suite 0700 Des Plaines, Illinois 60016 (847) 296-9200 • Fax (847) 296-9207 www.nwmc-cog.org



A Regional Association of Illinois Municipalities and Townships Representing a Population of Over One Million

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## North Branch of the Chicago River Watershed Planning Council AGENDA

Tuesday, September 2, 2025 10:00 a.m.

**Via Zoom Video Conference** https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84201034610

Meeting ID: 842 0103 4610 Passcode: 048842

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. June 3, 2025, Meeting Notes (Attachment A)
- IV. Capital Improvements Update

Timilehin Ogutuga will provide an update on projects in the watershed.

V. Small Streams Maintenance Program Update

Fabio Monteiro will give an update on the Small Streams Maintenance Program.

VI. Improving WPC Meetings Roundtable Discussion

Clare Adams will lead a Roundtable Discussion on how WPC meetings can be improved

- VII. Other Business
- VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the North Branch Chicago River Watershed Planning Council will be held Tuesday, December 2 via video conference unless otherwise noted.

IX. Adjournment

	Page 1
1	NORTH BRANCH OF THE CHICAGO RIVER
	WATERSHED PLANNING COUNCIL
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	* * * *
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4	Held on Tuesday, June 3, 2025, commencing
	at the hour of 10:00 o'clock, a.m., via Zoom.
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6	PRESENT:
7	NORTHWEST MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE:
	Larry Bury
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9	METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT
	Clare Adams
10	Matt Aldrich
11	Constance Mihalache
12	Rich Fisher
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15	ALSO PRESENT:
16	Aram Beladi
17	Tadhg Scanlon
18	J. McDougall
19	Robyn Flakne, Glenview
20	Jorge Cruz, Wilmette
21	Georgia Mihalopoulos, Wilmette
22	Chris Tomich, Morton Grove
23	Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
24	Mark Toll, Northfield Township, Daniel Creaney Co.

MR. BURY: Good morning, everyone. In the interest of time, I'm going to call the meeting to order.

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This is the North Branch Watershed
Planning Council. Normally, Eric Czarnota would be
your host for this meeting. He is unavailable today.
I'm Larry Bury, Deputy Director of the Northwest
Municipal Conference.

And with that, I'm going to call the roll of members of the Watershed Planning Council.

As I call you, if you could please sign into the chat with your name and who you are representing.

So starting with the list: Chicago,

Deerfield Elmwood Park, Evanston, Glencoe, Glenview, Golf, Harwood Heights, Kenilworth, Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, Niles, Norridge, Northbrook, Northfield, Oak Park, Park Ridge, Skokie, Wilmette, Winnetka, Unincorporated Cook County, Evanston Township, Maine Township, New Trier Township, Niles Township, Northfield Township, Norwood Park Township, and Oak Park Township.

And then item 3 on the agenda is the meeting minutes from March 4, 2025. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to reach out to Eric,

and he'll get back to you with an answer on that.

With that I'm going to move on to item number 4, which is the Capital Improvements Update.

Matthew.

MR. ALDRICH: Good morning and welcome to the North Branch of the Chicago River Watershed Plan Council meeting. My portion will be covering the capital improvement updates for the North Branch of the Chicago River Watershed Planning area.

My name is Matt Aldrich, and I'm an Assistant Civil Engineer with MWRD.

The MWRD has engaged in 34 stormwater management infrastructure projects. the North Branch Watershed planning area, the three regional projects have all been completed, nine local partnership projects have been completed, 15 green infrastructure projects have all been completed, five Space-To-Grow projects have been completed and there have been two flood-prone property acquisitions that all have been completed. Collectively, these projects benefit over 5,800 structures and create over 13.4 acre feet of stormwater storage or 4.6 million gallons of stormwater storage.

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Our partnerships help communities manage stormwater, improve the resilience to flooding.

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Applications are currently closed for the stormwater partnership. Applications are planned to reopen late spring.

The Stormwater Partnership Program funds the construction of traditional stormwater infrastructure to help manage stormwater and reduce flooding including detention basins, storm-sewer upgrades and stream channel improvements.

The Green Infrastructure Partnership
Program funds the construction of green alleys, rain
gardens, permeable pavement and other permeable
surfaces that manage rainwater where it lands.

Communities that need technical assistance to study and design solutions for local stormwater issues can apply for our conceptual project partnership.

Finally, we also provide funding to help municipalities acquire property in the floodplain through our Voluntary Flood-Prone Property Acquisition Program. Please visit the website at the bottom of the slide, mwrd.org/stormwater/partnership

for more information.

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So we have some resources, please visit our partnership homepage. We have several prerecorded webinars that go through what information and documentation is needed to apply, as well as recent updates to each partner program's requirements. We have project highlight videos with interviews of past partners where they share how their partnership with the MWRD helped them build their stormwater project.

On to Stormwater Partnership

Program. The Village of Winnetka will design and construct multiple wetland storage area and underground stormwater storage near the Skokie River. This project will provide relief to an estimated 3,095 residential structures and numerous businesses and institutional facilities. The MWRD contribution has been fully reimbursed.

For replacement of storm sewers in Glencoe, the construction began in June 2024 and was substantially completed in October 2024. Final punch-list items to be completed in the summer of 2025.

For the Green Infrastructure

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projects, last update there was one green street project, five green parking lots, eight green alleys and one project that dealt with the park with multiple types of green infrastructure. There is a 9.6 million estimated total in green infrastructure conception cost, 22 acre area draining to the project, estimated. There is 1,800,000 gallons of design detention capacity estimated from this project this year.

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One of the projects is the Village
Hall green parking lot improvement in Glenview. The
IGA was completed in 2025, design to be completed
this year. Construction will begin next year, spring
or summertime.

Our Rain Barrel Program: MWRD is continuing with the Rain Barrel Program in 2025 by offering Cook County residents discount pricing while supplies last. The rain barrels capture rainwater from your roof and save it for later use. Rain barrels can help prevent basement backups, street flooding and sewer overflows by keeping rainwater out of the sewer system.

You can use the rain barrel water to water your lawn or garden, wash your car or clean

work boots, tools and bikes.

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MWRD rain barrels include a leaf and mosquito filter screen, spigot, overflow adapter and overflow hose. Not available yet, but -- Well, it will be available this spring or is available currently.

For the Restore the Canopy Program,

MWRD provides free native tree saplings for the

Restore the Canopy, Plant a Tree Program. Trees can
help reduce flooding by soaking up rainwater.

Since our tree program began in 2016, we had the distributed more than 100,000 free -- 100,000 free native trees. The free trees are available for pick up every Wednesday from April through October from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the MWRD Water Reclamation Plants.

For orders of 50 or more, please complete a form online. Deliveries are available but not to individual homes.

Also note that saplings can grow up to 50 to 80 feet tall.

Upcoming events: We have the Follow the Flush. Our MWRD next virtual tours are scheduled for June 9th at 2:00 p.m. and July 10th at 10:00 a.m.

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and August 7th at 2:00 p.m. Join us for an inside look at how we reclaim water, protect our waterways, reduce pollution and even turn waste into renewable resources all from the comfort of your home or office. Sign up to receive a fresh perspective on Water Reclamation. You can see the website -- the url in the slide, mwrd.org/virtual-tour.

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There is another event we have upcoming this summer. There is the Patronal reclamos on Saturday, June 14th. The MWRD will participate in the 47th annual Puerto Rico People's Parade. The parade runs along Division Street from Western to Sacramento Streets.

We also have the 2025 Chicago Pride
Parade. Organizers of the Chicago Pride Parade
invited an MWRD float to participate in the annual
Pride Parade. That event kicks off at 11:00 a.m. at
Broadway and Sheridan on June 29th. Participating in
the parade reflects our commitment to inclusion,
unity and environmental stewardship.

Also, the MWRD will participate in the 55th annual Independence Day Parade in Evergreen Park on Friday, June 27th at 6:30 p.m. down 95th Street from Springfield Avenue to Richmond Avenue

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We also have the open house at the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant set for August 2nd. There will be tours and educational activities for all ages to see how the MWRD recovers resources and transforms water. That will be on August 2nd, Saturday from 10:00 to 2:00.

We also have an event to celebrate the Salt Creek restoration, a ribbon-cutting ceremony. It will be on August 19th, Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. at the Graue Mill & Museum. In addition, to removing the 90-year-old Graue Mill Dam, the project revitalized the mile upstream Salt Creek by stabilizing the streambank, diversifying habitat for aquatic life and planting native vegetation along the stream.

For monitoring, research seminars,
MWRD hosts seminars at the Stickney Water Reclamation
Plant. They're open to the public. These seminars
are eligible for professional development credits or
CEUs. All seminars start at 10:30 a.m. Central time.
In person, like I said, will be at the Stickney Water
Reclamation Plant at 6001 West Pershing Road, Cicero,
Illinois. Please have your reservations in at least

24 hours in advance by e-mailing Dr. Heng Zhang at his e-mail address right there, and we also have a virtual tour on the presentation date for link access to the seminar.

If you have any questions about our Stormwater Management Program, call for projects or current capital improvement projects, we have contact information on the slide. It's stormwater management e-mail to stormwater@mwrd.org.

And that is my presentation.

MR. BURY: Thank you, Matt.

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Any questions?

(No response.)

MR. BURY: If not, item 5 on the agenda is the Watershed Management Ordinance Update.

Constance.

MS. MIHALACHE: Hello. So my name is

Constance Mihalache. I'm also with MWRD, and I will
be presenting on the Watershed Management Ordinance
and the Infiltration & Inflow Control Program and our
updates on those.

So as a reminder, we have a relatively new MWRD website with new links available for submitting WMO permit applications online through

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our WPASS system and also links for making electronic payments. So those can be found on our website at mwrd.org/wmo, and the red arrows show the permit application submittal button and where the electronic payment button are situated.

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We have also updated our checklists. So we have two new checklists posted to our website. So on the right-hand side we have the minimum permit application acceptance requirements checklist. this is a checklist for the items that are needed before we assign a WMO permit number and before we start review. And so this includes things like the permit application with all the appropriate signatures, a signed and sealed plan set fees, and so And then we also have uploaded a minimum issuance checklist which includes the minimum items that would be needed before a WMO permit is issued. So it includes general requirements, also requirements specific to Articles 4, 5, 6 and 7. please note this is still just a minimum issuance checklist. There may be additional requirements, depending on each permit application.

We have also made updates to our WMO amendment in the past year. So the following

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Articles and Appendicis were recently amended, and the changes includes substantive updates, minor clarifications, revised section references and so on. I will go through some of the more substantive updates.

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So for the May 2024 WMO amendment, the amendment was mainly targeted for the requirement to submit a Corps jurisdictional determination letter, so a jurisdictional determination from the US Corps -- Army Corps of Engineers whenever a wetland was identified on a property. And so the Chicago District of the Corps recently refined its workload priorities away from the jurisdictional determinations. And because of the Corps' policy, in order to prevent delays in the -- in issuing WMO permit applications, updates were made to Articles 3 and 6. The table here summarizes the updates. for example, if a wetland is determined to be Corps' jurisdictional or is believed to be Corps' jurisdictional and no wetland impact is proposed, we would ask that a document be submitted from the Corps that indicates whether it's a jurisdictional wetland. However, if a document is not available, we will regulate the wetland as an isolated wetland and the

1 | permit application review process will continue.

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So changes were also made more recently under an amendment which was approved January 9, 2025. So the amended Ordinance can be found on our website, and it includes a red-line document on our website, as well as a summary of substantive updates. So that can be found at mwrd.org/wmo.

I'll go through some of the more significant changes. So within Article 2, for the pilot study that we have ongoing for offsite detention-based practices and offsite detention facilities within Lower Des Plaines and Little Calumet River Watershed Planning areas, the deadline for that was extended from 2025 to 2026.

In terms of permit applicability, we've got a few changes and clarifications. Projects solely within the flood-protection area adjacent to Lake Michigan that meet the requirements of Section 200.4.C will not require a WMO permit. That is one of the provisions.

For new or reconstructed outfalls to a waterway, if the outfall is to one of the waterways designated in Appendix D of the WMO or to Lake

Michigan, then we will require a permit for that, but we would not require a permit for outfalls to other waterways. So just the ones designated in Appendix D. And I will go through which ones are specifically designated in Appendix D in future slides and in addition to all other permit applicability requirements.

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We also require a permit for modification of greater and/or equal to half an acre of the detention surface area of a District permitted detention facility or major stormwater system.

And we also require a permit for -under the new provisions for the control structure of
the facility configuration or storage volume changes
to a permitted volume-control facility, detention
facility or compensatory storage facility. So
previously, we only required a permit for such
changes to a detention facility, but now we're also
requiring it for changes to volume control and
compensatory storage facilities.

So this is the exhibit that's included in Appendix D of the WMO for the designated waterways. So basically -- So it's depicted on the right here. So basically, it includes Chicago area

waterway system or the CAWS which -- and the waterway names are provided on the left. For the North Branch Chicago River Watershed, you can see that it's basically NorthShore Channel and North Branch of Chicago River downstream of the NorthShore Channel.

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We have also made updates to Article 5 of the WMO for stormwater management. So for the offsite detention based practices and offsite detention facility section, we added a grandfather provision for projects in the pilot program area. So basically, projects in the Lower Des Plaines or Little Calumet River Watershed planning areas, if they submit a WMO permit application for the offsite facilities before January 2026, then in the future, if a WMO permit is submitted after January 1, 2026 proposing to utilize those offsite facilities, that would be possible since the original application for the facility, itself, was submitted prior to January 1, 2026.

We also added a new provision that detention storage is not required for development that is on property holdings immediately adjacent to the waterway specified in Appendix D. So that was the list in the exhibit I provided in the earlier

So any property holdings immediately adjacent to that would not require detention storage for the new provision.

And then we also added a provision that once detention is provided for a previously aggregated development in full, then we would restart re-aggregating the development up to the .5 acre threshold again following that.

We also made updates to Article 6 of the WMO which includes our provisions on floodplain, wetlands and riparian environments. So in terms of floodplain requirements, we have a new provision noting that compensatory storage is not required when the fill is proposed within the flood protection area of Lake Michigan. So just for the flood protection areas of Lake Michigan.

And then for our wetland mitigation section, we made updates to the hierarchy of wetland mitigation alternatives for offsite wetland mitigation within Cook County and also for the purchase of wetland credits for the mitigation bank that's closest to the development in Cook County.

Within the riparian environment section, we clarified that riparian impacts should be

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avoided or minimized, and we -- and the provision includes a requirement for documentation of no reasonable alternatives to the riparian impacts.

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We also established a minimum threshold for impacts. This would only apply to certain circumstances, specifically installation of stormwater outfalls and public access recreational activities. And so we provided a minimum threshold for a riparian environment impact for those two cases.

And we also clarified that floodcontrol projects are exempt from the riparian environment requirements of the WMO.

And the term flood-control project is specifically defined within the WMO. So it only addresses certain types of projects.

Article 7 of the WMO, which includes our sewer construction requirements, we also made some updates. So we clarified the criteria for defining qualified sewer. Some of these were, you know, already considered qualified sewer construction, but we added clarifications to that section of the WMO. So qualified sewer includes extensions to the public sewer system. It also

currently includes use or reinstatement of an existing un-permitted sewer, so that would be considered qualified sewer construction requiring a permit. Sanitary sewer construction work within the regulatory flood protection areas or areas regularly subject to surface water inundation, qualified sewer, as well as outfalls to the District controlled waterways that are specified in Appendix D.

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For the direct connections to

District facilities and District infrastructure, we clarified that upstream sewer and upstream auxiliary manhole would need to be owned, operated and maintained by permittee or sole permittee.

And then we also clarified and specified that backflow prevention devices are required at the point of connection between a private storm sewer and combined sewer.

We also made updates to our review times for WMO permit applications in Article 14. So previously, all permit applications had an initial review time of 15 workdays or three weeks. The updated review times are based on project complexity. So a simpler project, such as -- when the permit application does not involve detention, flood

protection areas, outfalls, direct connections to District infrastructure or District real estate and also simpler permit type like single-family home permit, NRI permit, earthwork permit, so those would still have an initial review time of 15 working days or three weeks; however, more complex projects, such as projects that include Schedule D, delegacy for detention; Schedule O for outfalls; Schedule H for floodplain or riparian environments and Schedule W for wetlands or riparian environments, those would have an initial review time of 25 working days or five weeks. And likewise, our facility connection or wetland riparian environment verification forms, those also have a review time of up to 25 working days or five weeks. But after the initial submittal, the re-submittal review times are the same for all permit types, and that would be 15 working days or three weeks.

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We also made updates to Appendix A of the WMO which includes -- which is our definitions. So we updated the definitions listed here, but we also added some new definitions that were previously not included. But the term violation report, watershed specific release rate and

unrestricted release rate were added.

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And then in addition, Appendix F of the WMO where we provide our permit fees, initially under the previous WMO, if a violation was discovered by the District, we had a violation fee of \$250 per inspection for that violation. And we replaced that with a \$750 flat fee for the violation. The violation fee may be required before a WMO permit is issued, for example, for cases where construction occurred without a WMO permit or before the permit was issued. And we could also provide fees upon invoicing if a violation is discovered, for example, during construction under an issued permit.

And that is a summary of the amendment updates. Our next steps are to revise our permit application forms. We're currently working on that and hoping to have that within the first half of 2025.

And then we're also revising our TGM articles. So we already started sending drafts to our Technical Advisory Committee to review this spring.

So the next Technical Guidance

Manual articles that will be updated are listed here.

We're working on Article 5 for stormwater management, but we're also looking at Article 2 which is just applicability and general conditions; Article 3, which is permit submittal requirements; Article 6, for flood-protection areas; and Article 7, for qualified sewer.

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So as a reminder, construction under issued WMO permits is monitored by MWRD Local Sewer System Section Field Office Unit. So the Field Office must be notified ahead of the start of construction or work under a WMO permit.

Notification can be made by calling (708) 588-4055 or

And as a reminder, development for which a WMO permit is required may not begin until the MWRD permit is issued.

by sending an e-mail to wmojobstart@mwrd.org.

Also, as a reminder, villages are responsible to ensure new staff are aware of the WMO and the responsibilities of the village as permittee. So the villages play a critical role in preventing construction without a permit or in advance of receiving a WMO permit.

We recommend that -- We suggest that villages do not issue grading permits before WMO

permits are issued, and also if villages would not issue occupancy permits until after the RFI is signed. As system engineers and permittee, the village would also be expected to inspect the work under construction and to sign the RFIs.

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So we also created a new guidance flowchart for permittee and co-permittee after a WMO permit is issued. So the flowchart can be seen here, on the right-hand side. The left-hand column in green are the next steps for the co-permittees and they include activities such as notifying the Field Office before construction, coordinating inspections and submitting the request for final inspection, the RFI. So that's for co-permittee.

And on the right-hand side are the next steps for permittees. So for municipalities, they include tasks such as monitoring the job site, notifying the District if critical work is occurring without the inspector present and attending the final inspection.

So switching gears from the WMO to the IICP Program. As a reminder, the annual summary report is due March 1st of each year detailing the progress of the program requirements. The five-year

period of the short-term requirements is past due. If you have not done so already, please submit the following as soon as possible: the past annual summary reports that have not yet been submitted and the LTOFP and PSP documents. Once the short-term requirements are complete and approved by MWRD, satellite entities transition to the long-term program. And any reports should be submitted to the following e-mail address, mwrdii@mwrd.org.

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If you are not sure whether you are in compliance with the District's IICP or if you have any other questions, please contact Ann Gray at graya@mwrd.org.

And also, if you have GIS sewer system files, we encourage you to please share them with us. That would include sanitary sewer, storm sewer and combined sewer GIS files. If you would like to share them with us, our e-mail address is mwrdii@mwrd.org for submittal of those GIS files.

And lastly, these are the contact updates that we currently have. I'm still the main contact for permit determination requests. So if you're not sure if a WMO permit is required, you can please feel free to e-mail me at mihalachec@mwrd.org.

If you would like to schedule a pre-application meeting, you could contact Jeremiah Campion at campionj@mwrd.org. If you're interested in copies of previously issued SPO or WMO permits, the e-mail address to request that would be mwrdpi@mwrd.org or you can submit a permit inquiry form on our website at mwrd.org/wmo.

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If you have any questions on the IICP Program or GPS units, you can contact Ann Gray at graya@mwrd.org.

And if you have any questions on WPASS, our online permit application submittal system or any questions while submitting a permit application, you can contact us through a dedicated e-mail, which is wpass@mwrd.org.

If you would like to be on our e-mail list for WMO updates, such as WMO amendments, when new forms will be posted, I & I updates, et cetera, you can send an e-mail to wmoupdates@mwrd.org to join the e-mail list.

And we also ask that you please download and use the most recent WMO forms, and we encourage other permit applicants to do so, especially if we are going to be updating some of the

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at 10:36 a.m.)

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