

ANOKA COUNTY

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Anoka County is located along the northern border of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Growth and increasing density of the region presents challenges and opportunities for the County's twenty-one communities to address transportation, housing, recreation, business development, utilities and services.

Anoka County recognizes and supports the land use authority and responsibility of its local government units to plan for strong and healthy communities. We position ourselves in a facilitation role by providing resources, technical expertise and advice where appropriate. When communities determine that a collective effort is the most viable course to achieve a shared and desired result; Anoka County assists by stepping forward to accept a role in leadership or by providing administration and support to multijurisdictional projects lead by our partners.

Management, preservation and protection of natural resources is a shared responsibility of many federal, state and regional agencies. Watershed management organizations provide for the management and protection of surface water resources such as lakes, rivers, creeks etc. The conservation of wetlands is provided by either the municipality or the watershed management organization.

Anoka County has a history of participating in joint planning and decision-making projects. Of particular focus are projects that assist communities in fulfilling their land use and economic development goals by establishing guidelines and vehicles for ensuring future growth potential and projects that promote coordination or responsiveness in government. Anoka County's established goals and policies are used to evaluate projects in consideration of joint planning and decision-making effort.

GOALS / POLICIES

Social

- a. Provide for actual choice and variety of opportunities living, working and social interaction to persons of all income, racial and age.
- b. Reduce or eliminate disparities in population characteristics between urban, suburban and rural areas.
- c. Provide for adequate recreational opportunities for all residents.

Economic

- a. Promote economic development that provides the necessary range of jobs for the anticipated population growth and profile.

- b. Maintain a viable agricultural economy in the portions of the rural areas suited for this use and determined by local communities.
- c. Ensure opportunities for economic mobility for all residents.

Public Fiscal

- a. Provide public services paid for equitably through public funding.
- b. Ensure tax revenues are efficiently managed to provide appropriate levels of facilities and services when and where needed.

Government

- a. Achieve understandable, responsive and accountable government processes at all levels.
- b. Provide public facilities and services in a coordinated and economic manner.
- c. Provide a system of County services that complement the primary land use and housing responsibilities of communities.
- d. Provide for citizen participation in the government decision making process.
- e. Maintain the compatible and efficient relationships between County and municipal facilities and services.

ESTABLISHED PARTNESHIPS

WATER MANAGEMENT

Water management is a complex issue originally outlined in the Anoka County Groundwater Assessment Report (1995). Federal, state and metropolitan agencies provide information and financial incentives to local government to manage and protect its water resources. It's up to local government to implement local water management programs. It's up to Anoka County, its communities and watershed organizations to comply with the numerous statutory requirements administered by various agencies through their programs.

Anoka County cooperates in the management of water resources through compliance with local land use ordinances at county properties and roads (e.g. buildings, libraries, parks, roads, etc.). County Parks Plan includes compliance with the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area standards in developing and improving parkland along the Mississippi. The Transportation Plan includes compliance with the state and local standards for the maintenance and development of county roads.

In 2009, Anoka County completed a Water Resources Assessment Report under its authority to investigate and determine local public health priorities (MN Stat. 145A.04). The Report was prepared with the advice of local representatives to the Anoka County Water Resources Task Force, an ongoing advisory group. The Report is part of the Anoka County Community Health Services Plan (2009-2014) that is updated on a five-year cycle.

In 2014, Anoka County completed an updated Water Resources Assessment Report (2014). The Report is incorporated into the Community Health Services Plan (2015-2019). The Anoka County Community Health Board determined that "*water quality and sustainable drinking water*" is a most important community health issue. The Community Health Board established a Community Health Improvement Plan (Goal V) and directed Anoka County Environmental Services to implement the recommendations of the 2014 Report:

- Strive for coordinated water management plans;
- Strive for coordinated water education programs;
- Promote local water sustainability;
- Continue drinking water protection initiatives; and
- Identify opportunities in local water management.

Know The Flow Website. Through collaboration with local agencies and the Municipal Wellhead Protection Group, the *Know The Flow* (www.KnowTheFlow.us) county-wide water website was established in 2014 to promote local water management programs. Know-The-Flow brings together and disseminates the various water, water-related and environmental health programs of the local agencies and organizations in the County.

Anoka County Water Task Force. The Anoka County Water Resources Task Force is a forum for representative of municipalities, watershed organizations, county agencies and organizations to collaboration in the management and protection of water resources within the County. The Task Force proves to be helpful in the coordination of local agencies as events occur and changes in state programs affect water resources. Also, the Task Force provides advice in the preparation of the Anoka County Water Resources Report that is incorporated into the Anoka County Community Health Services Plan.

SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT

In Anoka County, surface water management is carried out by the watershed districts (MN Stat. 103D) and watershed management organizations (MN Stat. 103B.201). Organized differently, both are required to prepare and implement watershed management plans approved by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). Two watershed districts and five watershed management organizations encompass and represent all watersheds (partially or entirely) in Anoka County:

- Coon Creek Watershed District
- Rice Creek Watershed District
- Mississippi Watershed Management Organization
- Upper Rum River Watershed Management Organization
- Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization
- Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization
- Sunrise River Watershed Management Organization

Watersheds address surface water management through their management plans and permitting program. In accordance with watershed management plans, municipalities have

developed and are implementing local water management plans to address the protection of surface water resources through their land use authority.

One Watershed One Plan. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources is investigating the potential to establish a focused implementation plan based on watershed boundaries. The *One Watershed One Plan* process would combine the actions indicated in local comprehensive plans, local water management plans and watershed management plan into a coordinated action plan for a defined watershed. The concept of coordinating local government agency actions to improve water management is indicated in the Anoka County Water Resources Assessment Report (2014). Two 1W1P projects include Anoka County watershed management organizations:

- Rum River 1W1P (include the Upper Rum River WMO and Lower Rum River WMO)
- Lower St. Croix 1W1P (Sunrise River WMO)

Impaired Waters. Under the federal Clean Water Act, a body of water (e.g. lake, or segment of a river or creek) is "impaired" if it fails to meet water quality standards to be a drinkable source, fishable, swimmable or other beneficial use. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency administers the Clean Water Act in Minnesota to: monitor and assess the quality of surface waters; create and update (every even-numbered year) a list of impaired waters that do not meet quality standards; and set pollution-reduction goals (Total Maximum Daily Load or TMDL) needed to restore impaired water.

A TMDL is the maximum amount of a pollutant a body of water can receive without violating water quality standards. The TMDL sets the maximum allowable of a pollutant by pollution sources (point and non-point source pollution) contributed to the water body and watershed.

In 2008, the MPCA adopted and employs a Watershed Approach to restoring and protecting rivers, lakes, and wetlands in the state's major watershed. Along with the Watershed Approach the MPCA established a process to identify and address threats to water quality called Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS). There are two major watershed that encompass Anoka County's sub-watersheds:

- Mississippi River - Twin Cities (Coon Creek WD, Rice Creek WD, Upper Rum River WMO, Lower Rum River WMO, Mississippi WMO and Vadnais Lake WMO) and
- Lower St. Croix River (Sunrise River WMO).

There are 158 TMDLs and, or WRAPS listed by the MPCA. The TMDL/WRAPS in Anoka County include:

- Hardwood Creek - Impaired Biota (fish) and Low Dissolved Oxygen TMDL (25)
- Golden Lake - Excessive Nutrients TMDL (29)
- Martin and Typo Lakes - Excessive Nutrients TMDL (71)
- Peltier and Centerville Lakes - Excessive Nutrients TMDL (86)
- Vadnais Lake Area WMO - TMDL and Protection Study (96)
- Sunrise River Watershed - WRAPS and TMDL (97)
- Upper Mississippi River -Bacteria TMDL (103)
- Rice Creek Watershed District Southwest Urban Lakes - Excessive Nutrients TMDL Project (105)

- Twin Cities Metro Area - Chloride TMDL (116)
- Coon Creek Watershed District WRAPS - TMDL Project (121)
- Rum River Watershed - WRAPS and TMDL (137)
- Mississippi River Twin Cities Watershed (multiple sub-watersheds) - WRAPS (141)

Each watershed district or watershed management organization addresses the MPCA lake or watershed impaired waters designation by establishing a TMDL project or WRAPS project that the Agency reviews and approves. The Anoka County Water Task Force monitors the TMDLs in the county.

Shoreland Management. Minnesota Statute 103F requires counties to establish a Shoreland Management Ordinance and administer the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Shoreland Management Program in unincorporated areas of Anoka County. Anoka County has one unincorporated community (Linwood Township). On August 13, 2013, Anoka County and Linwood Township entered into a Shoreland Joint Powers Agreement that enables Linwood Township to administer the Anoka County Shoreland Management Ordinance within the Township. Therefore, Linwood coordinates its land-use management (e.g. zoning and building ordinances) with DNR shoreland management. Linwood is also evaluating the development of a township Shoreland Management Ordinance - compatible with the County ordinance - but providing additional management services to their residents.

Riparian Buffers and Water Quality Protection. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources administers the state riparian buffer rules and standards. Anoka Conservation District has inventoried the buffers along public ditches. Anoka County has established a buffers management program in collaboration with the Conservation District to inform landowners that do not have a sufficient riparian buffer on a public ditch under the County's jurisdiction. The Conservation District provides landowners with information and advice in modifying their land buffer to meet state minimum standards. Anoka County #2017-01 provides for the County to administer and enforce riparian buffers in accordance with MN Stat. 103F.48.

GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AND DRINKING WATER PROTECTION

Anoka County Municipal Wellhead Protection Group. In 1995 Anoka County prepared a Groundwater Assessment Report. Discussions and public meetings were held to determine interest in a collaborative project to manage groundwater resources. Representatives of municipal public works requested the Anoka County Community Health Board to help in facilitating a multi-community project to cooperatively prepare coordinated municipal wellhead protection plans. It is expected that municipal wellhead protection areas may extend into neighboring communities.

In 1997, ten communities and Anoka County established the Anoka County Municipal Wellhead Planning Group (a joint powers organization formed under MN Stat. 471.59) to coordinate the preparation of municipal wellhead protection plans. Anoka County Environmental Services acted as a non-voting member and facilitator to the Wellhead Group as they prepared and

completed their municipal wellhead protection plans. After completion of municipal wellhead plans the joint powers agreement terminated.

In 2010, eight communities (Anoka, Blaine, Centerville, Circle Pines, Fridley, Lexington, Lino Lakes and Spring Lake Park) and Anoka County established a new joint powers group, the Anoka County Municipal Wellhead Protection Group, to jointly implement common elements of their plans. Anoka County Environmental Services, is a non-voting member and facilitator to the Wellhead Group as they implement their municipal wellhead protection plans together.

Three additional communities (Andover, Coon Rapids and St. Francis) joined the Wellhead Group as they completed or revised their wellhead plans. Through the joint power agreement, the members of the Wellhead Group address potential contaminant concerns in a city's wellhead protection area that is located within the neighboring municipality. The protection of the drinking water source for these communities and sustainability of groundwater resources are enhanced through this organization of municipal water supply systems.

Well Water Wise Program. Approximately 21% of Anoka County's population gets their drinking water from over 25,000 private wells (Anoka County Water Resources Report 2014). Anoka County Environmental Services has provided private well water testing to its residents since 1972.

In 2000, Anoka County and its communities (having significant numbers of private wells) combined their efforts to establish an annual project to promote private well testing and distribute testing kits at city halls. The Well Water Wise (3W) project is held in concurrence with the American Water Works Association's Safe Drinking Water Week.

Following the first 3W week promotion, communities extended their participation in distribution of water testing kits at their city hall throughout the year. They determined that private well testing services to their residents promotes health protection and understanding of the importance in protecting the groundwater source of their drinking water.

During the 2018 3W promotion 15 communities and county agencies encouraged private well owners to test their well water. In addition, the 3W program provides vital information regarding the quality and safety of private wells (and groundwater) throughout the rural areas of the County. Water test results have led to investigations of potential groundwater contamination. The contact with private well owners has also permitted Anoka County and its communities to educate homeowners in the best practices to maintain private wells and septic systems.

North & East Metro Groundwater Management Area. Groundwater Management Areas are a tool for the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to address difficult groundwater-related challenges. The designation allows a more comprehensive and focused approach to ensuring that groundwater supplies remain adequate to meet human needs, while protecting lakes, streams and wetlands.

Washington and Ramsey Counties, along with ten communities in Anoka County (Blaine, Centerville, Columbus, Columbia Heights, Circle Pines, Fridley, Hill Top, Lexington, Lino Lakes

and Spring Lake Park) and the portion of Minneapolis on the east side of the Mississippi River have been designated as the North and East Metro Groundwater Management Area.

The DNR's legal responsibility is the management of large users of water and to lead in sustainable groundwater use through its Groundwater Strategic Plan. Anoka County and its communities within the N&E GWMA are coordinating their water appropriations and management programs to enhance the DNR's program to achieve sustainable groundwater use.

SUBSURFACE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Approximately 21% of Anoka County homes have an on-site subsurface sewage treatment system (SSTS) also called a septic system. Local government is responsible to administer the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) SSTS Rules (Minnesota Rules Chap. 7082) for the proper location, design, installation, use and maintenance of septic systems. Local government must prepare an ordinance and employ, or contract for service, a certified SSTS professional to administer SSTS within their community according to MPCA program requirements.

Anoka County and its rural communities have established SSTS ordinances and programs according to MPCA rules. Some developed suburban communities, entirely served by municipal water and sewer infrastructure, do not have SSTS within their jurisdiction and therefore do not maintain an SSTS ordinance and certified staff.

Other communities are near fully developed with only a few SSTS remaining. The few remaining SSTS are permitted to continue unless or until the system fails, at which time the owner must connect to the available municipal sewer.

The transition of local SSTS program administration by communities approaching full development of land and water utilities infrastructure is addressed through cooperation with Anoka County SSTS program. As communities shifts resources to areas of growing demand and away from maintaining an SSTS program and staff - there is a need to maintain services to the owners of SSTS in the community.

Anoka County maintains an ordinance and certified staff to support SSTS management in communities that do not have a program or certified staff. Rural municipal SSTS programs address all types of SSTS (e.g. individual and combined "community" systems serving apartments and multiple properties). SSTS located in communities having complete, or near complete, municipal sewer service are addressed through collaborative agreement with Anoka County as the remaining SSTS are replaced with municipal utilities.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Anoka County, through a collaboration with its communities, has established the 2018 Solid Waste Management Master Plan to determine mutual goals, policies and strategies that guide the management of solid waste generated within the borders of Anoka County. The Master Plan incorporated the vision, goals and objectives of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan 2016-2036. The Master Plan was

prepared pursuant to Minn. Stat. §115A.46, 473.803 and approved by the MPCA on May 24, 2012.

The emphasis in waste management has evolved from viewing waste as having no value to managing waste as a resource. The key elements to achieve the County's policies and strategies, based on solid waste management hierarchy, are accountability, generator responsibility, government as a leader and private sector initiative.

Anoka County emphasizes collaboration with its municipalities and waste haulers. Representatives of the 21 municipalities in the County are appointed by the Anoka County Board of Commissioners to the Solid Waste Abatement Advisory Team (SWAAT)

A collaborative approach is the central theme in Anoka County and community response to meet the aggressive objectives set to protect the public, conserve resources and reduce the amount of material landfilled.