



COMMISSION FILE NO: 17-021-2 **DATE INTRODUCED:** February 13, 2017

INTRODUCED BY: Executive Director (Signature on File in the Office of the Commission)

REFERRED BY COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON TO: Policy, Finance, and Personnel Committee

RELATING TO: Amendment of the Watercourse Policy (Commission Policy 1-01.15) to Clarify How the District Will Fund Bridge and Culvert Replacement, Remove the Existing Watercourse Project Prioritization System, and Upgrade Terminology

SUMMARY:

The Commission is requested to amend the District's Watercourse Policy as shown in the attached revised Commission Policy 1-01.15.

The District adopted a watercourse policy in 1999, with the purpose of directing District work efforts at reducing flood risks. The Commission modifies this policy as circumstances change. Staff is proposing four policy amendments as follows:

1. Clarify District funding for bridge and culvert modification and replacement as a structural measure to reduce flood risk and remove policy requirements for historically significant bridges.
2. Remove Section IV, Project Prioritization, in its entirety.
3. Revise terminology to better reflect District's objectives with regard to reducing flood risks.
4. Incorporate and define the phrase "Watercourse Management Plans".

ATTACHMENTS: **BACKGROUND** **KEY ISSUES** **RESOLUTION**
FISCAL NOTE **S/W/MBE** **OTHER** Revised Commission Policy 1-01.15

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COMMITTEE ACTION: _____ **DATE:** _____

COMMISSION ACTION: _____ **DATE:** _____

SUMMARY (Cont'd)

Amendment of the Watercourse Policy (Commission Policy 1-01.15) to Clarify How the District Will Fund Bridge and Culvert Replacement, Remove the Existing Watercourse Project Prioritization System, and Upgrade Terminology

1. District funding for bridges and culverts to reduce flood risk

In the current policy, Section II.B. identifies structural measures that the District may fund for flood risk reduction purposes. The structural measures include:

- Storage facilities.
- Modifications to the channel to increase channel capacity.
- Modifications to restore or maintain natural vegetation and habitat.
- Containment structures (e.g., levees, floodwalls).
- Removal of existing bridges and culverts.

Bridge and culvert capacity modifications are routinely identified as part of watercourse management plans. Historically, the District has participated in funding bridge and culvert modifications; since 2000, the District has participated in about 10 bridge/culvert replacement or modification projects. In terms of future bridge and culvert work, staff has identified over 20 bridges or culverts that need to be modified or replaced.

Existing Commission policy is silent in relation to District funding for bridge or culvert modifications or replacement. In the past, District staff would develop intergovernmental cooperation agreements (ICA) with the bridge/culvert owner, and those ICA's would be brought to the Commission for approval. District funding levels of bridge and culvert replacements and modifications have varied, depending upon the type of improvement proposed (bridge or culvert), the bridge/culvert age, availability of both local and other external funding for the work, affiliated utility relocations, and other factors. There has not been a consistent approach to District bridge/culvert funding.

Given that there is no clear guidance on District funding for bridges and culverts, staff now proposes policy that addresses this issue.

SUMMARY (Cont'd)

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The key elements of the policy follow.

- The District can assist in funding bridge and culvert modifications and replacements.
- Staff will evaluate bridge and culvert alternatives, including costs, to obtain desired capacity.
- The District can fund up to the lowest cost alternative that will achieve the required flow capacity.
- Actual District funding will depend upon:
 - remaining bridge/culvert service life.
 - additional bridge modifications needed to obtain desired capacity.
- In addition, the District will seek to maximize funding from the bridge owner and minimize the District's contribution.
- The District will also take actions to maximize outside funding.

Current policy also requires District staff to determine if alternatives to bridge removal are feasible and cost effective if a bridge is historic.

Staff proposes removing this part of the policy because:

- Any proposed bridge removals or modifications that are already regulated by the State of Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office.
- The District completed a historically significant bridge inventory and has determined that no bridges planned for removal are historic.

2. Remove Section IV, Project Prioritization

This section includes a weighted benefit point system that originally was used to prioritize flood risk reduction projects. This policy was enacted in 1998, when the District's modern day flood management efforts were just beginning and there were over 3,700 flood prone structures spread throughout all watercourses regionwide. To date, the District has implemented projects that reduced the flood risk for over 2,500 structures at a cost of over \$400 million.

The original system worked well at the time; however, this prioritization system is no longer useful for current conditions. Currently, Project prioritization depends upon input from District staff, Commissioners, and stakeholders.

The 2050 Facility Plan will be developing a new prioritization system for future consideration.

SUMMARY (Cont'd)

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District staff propose to remove Section IV, Project Prioritization, in its entirety.

3. Revise flood risk terminology

Throughout the policy, the terms “flood abatement” and “flood control” are used to describe the purpose and objectives of the watercourse work. A more accurate description of the objectives of the policy is reducing the risk of flooding. The District cannot construct projects or implement maintenance measures to control floods. There is always the risk of a flood event that exceeds design standards and leads to impacts to the community. The intent of the work described within the policy is to reduce the risk of flooding to an acceptable level; therefore, District staff propose to replace the terms “flood abatement” and “flood control” with “flood risk reduction” throughout the document.

4. Incorporate Watercourse Management Plans

The policy includes references to Watercourse System Plans. Watercourse System Plans were watershed-based, planning level flood management studies prepared by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) about 15 to 20 years ago. District staff used these plans as the basis for further engineering and design work. Watercourse System Plans identified the number of flood prone structures within the watershed and the recommended watercourse projects. Through the early 2000's, the District relied upon these SEWRPC plans as the foundation for further work. Currently, District staff requests Commission approval to implement the plans and any subsequent plan updates. The Commission approval is subject to annual budget approvals.

District staff proposes to replace the term “Watercourse System Plan” with “Watercourse Management Plan” and to add a new Section II, “Watercourse Management Plans”. This section defines the purpose of those plans and directs staff to seek Commission adoption of those plans.

RESOLUTION

Amendment of the Watercourse Policy (Commission Policy 1-01.15) to Clarify How the District Will Fund Bridge and Culvert Replacement, Remove the Existing Watercourse Project Prioritization System, and Upgrade Terminology

RESOLVED, by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage Commission, that the Watercourse Policy is amended as shown in the attached revised Commission Policy 1-01.15.