



**Title:** Responsive Program Name

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**Summary:**

Background

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD or District) recognizes that what happens on the land is the primary driver of ecosystem health and the District can best achieve its mission by working in close partnership with those who change the landscape. Since adopting its Balanced Urban Ecology (BUE) Policy in 2014 and building its 2017 Watershed Management Plan (WMP) around the same principles, MCWD has begun putting this commitment into action. One of the initiatives to support this policy direction is the development of a process for identifying, evaluating, and responding to partnership opportunities created through land use change by public and private partners (aka Responsive Program).

Program Intent

At the [July 22, 2021](#) Board Meeting and [September 23, 2021](#) Policy and Planning Committee Meeting, staff presented draft implementation guidance for the program including the purpose, goals, scope, structure, and operations. The program's purpose is to provide support for public and private projects that are well-coordinated with the District and align with District goals and priorities. MCWD's intent under the Responsive Program is to achieve the following goals:

- Improve water resources
  - Achieve significant, measurable progress towards District goals by capitalizing on opportunities created through land use change.
- Improve integration and early coordination with land-use planning
  - Promote and incentivize closing the gap between land-use and water resource planning by establishing clear pathways and an orderly process for early coordination.
- Provide service and value to communities
  - Remain responsive to needs outside of the District's focal geographies by providing support for partner-led projects that address water resource needs and priorities identified by the District.
- Maintain focus and flexibility
  - Operate the program in a way that supports the District's principles of focus and flexibility, by maintaining focus on high-impact projects and ensuring the flexibility to develop creative partnerships.

The program is designed to leverage opportunities created when public and private partners pursue land-use change by providing technical and financial support to incentivize water resource improvement.

Responsive Program Name

At the [October 21, 2021 Board Meeting](#) staff presented a preliminary stakeholder engagement plan for the District to engage land use partners to vet and build support for this program. In preparation for this engagement, staff flagged that alternative names for the Responsive Program were under consideration as part of the development of external messaging and outreach materials. The name "Responsive Program" has been utilized internally during program development but has not been heavily used with external audiences to date. In previous discussions with the Board, staff recommended selection of a program name that is more descriptive and compelling for external public and private audiences.

Staff discussed a range of program name options with the District's communications consultants, John Himle and Tom Horner. Based on these discussions, staff brought forward the recommendation of "Minnehaha Land and Water Partnership" at the [December 16, 2021 Board Meeting](#). The Board provided useful feedback on the proposed name, and staff agreed to take it under consideration and come back with a recommendation.

Based on Board feedback and further staff consideration, it is recommended to remove geography references (e.g., Minnehaha) to avoid redundancy with the understanding the name will be framed as MCWD's [name selected] program. In addition, staff re-visited key words and name options while incorporating the Board's feedback. To-date staff have considered a range of key words to convey program purpose and the top names that are being considered are:

- Land & Water Partnership
- Water Partners or Water Partnership
- Community Partnership

Staff are still in the process of weighing these potential name options and gathering feedback from additional District staff and advisors. At the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, staff will be seeking the Board's input on program name recommendations to determine if the Board is comfortable proceeding with one of the recommended names. This external facing name will be incorporated into the Stakeholder Engagement Process's kickoff publication that is currently being developed. If the Board is comfortable with the recommendation, action could be taken to approve the name at the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. If there is a need for further consideration, it could be brought back at the January 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Supporting documents:**

N/A