



# 2022-2024 Strategic Plan

MILWAUKEE METROPOLITAN SEWERAGE DISTRICT

# 2022-2024 Strategic Plan

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Lincoln Creek



Kinnickinnic River





## Message from the Executive Director

I am pleased to present MMSD's 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. This Plan, with input from staff throughout the organization, outlines our goals and strategies to help us realize our vision of a cleaner, healthier, resilient region. Our region's development and history are built on water and MMSD is committed to protecting this crucial resource. In this era defined by a tragic pandemic, we are reminded that access to clean water and reliable wastewater services are critical to our everyday lives. We are also mindful of the importance of providing affordable services in an environmentally responsible way. The pandemic affirmed our commitment to planning for an uncertain future.

The overarching goal of the Plan is to assure the core mission of the District, to protect public health and the environment through world-class, cost-effective water resource management, leadership, and partnership, is well supported into the future. This plan aims to set our priorities, focus our energy and resources, strengthen our operations, and ensure that employees and stakeholders are working toward common goals.

The public counts on us to handle any crisis that comes along, while meeting their evolving needs. This Plan defines our destination yet maintains needed flexibility so that we can deal with the uncertainty. We look forward to implementing the Plan and will continue to deliver reliable services, support the region's recovery from the pandemic, advance equity, and anticipate and respond to our public's needs. As always, we welcome your feedback.



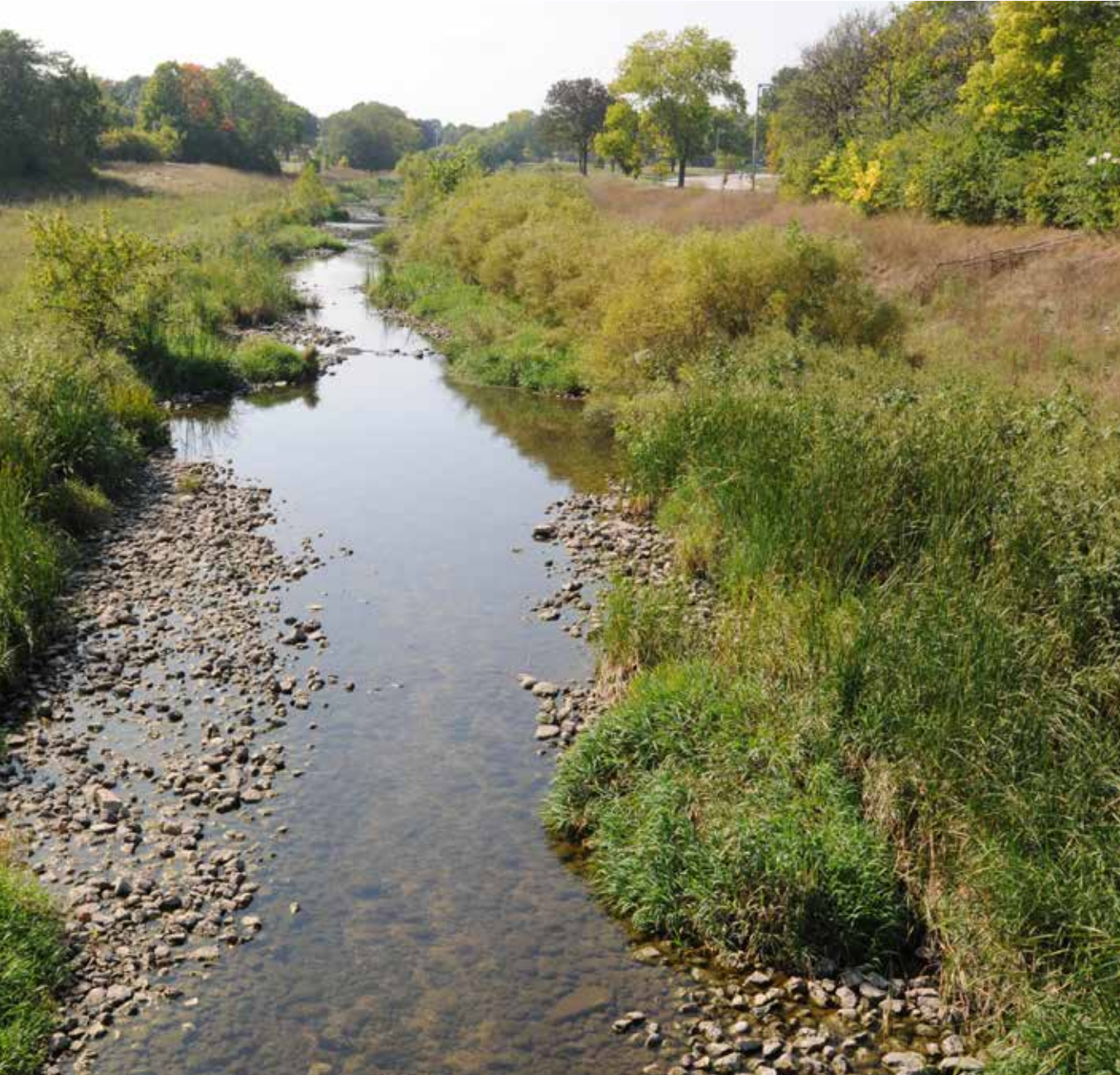
**Kevin Shafer**

*MMSD Executive Director*

Lighthouse on  
Lake Michigan



# MMSD Vision, Mission, and Values



## Vision

*MMSD envisions a healthier, cleaner, resilient region*

## Mission

*MMSD protects public health and the environment through world-class, cost-effective water resource management, leadership, and partnership*

## Values

*Stewardship, integrity, quality, collaboration, diversity, innovation*

Lincoln Creek





Lake Michigan





Installing the College Avenue Pigging Station

## Plan Elements

The three-year strategic plan is shaped by the 2035 Vision framework. The District's work and priorities are also weighed against the nationally recognized guidelines of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) Effective Utility Management initiative for water and wastewater utilities and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The NACWA Effective Utility Management (EUM) Initiative, launched in 2007, has been used by a growing number of utilities across the U.S. to improve operational performance. EUM has been recognized

by the collaborating utility organizations as the best way to promote sustainable water and wastewater systems. EUM identifies Ten Attributes of Effectively Managed Utilities. These ten attributes help management maintain a balanced approach to all aspects of utility operations, while focusing on areas of improvement.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) suggest that development should balance social, economic, and environmental needs. The goals were developed by the United Nations to provide a

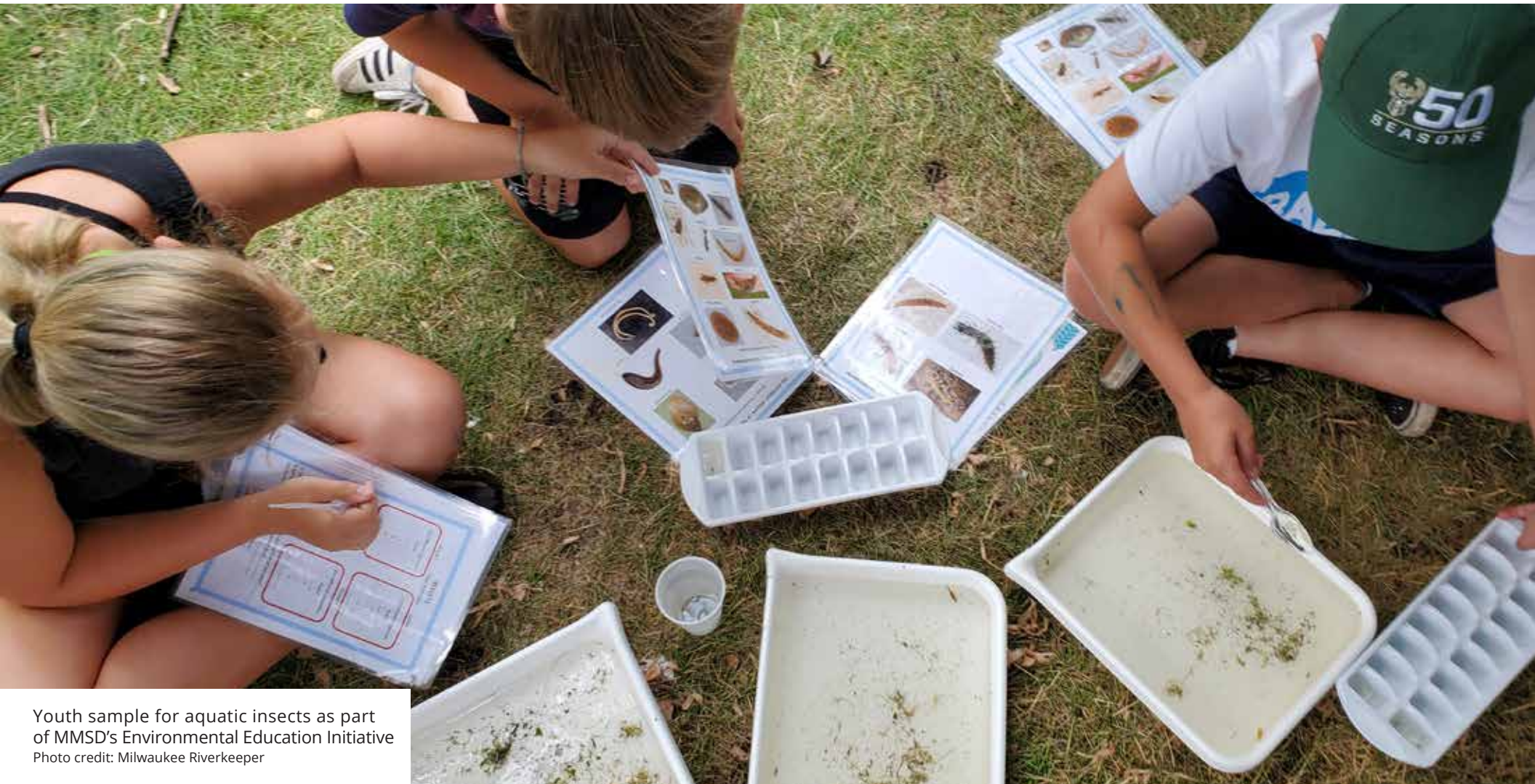
global roadmap to improve conditions for current and future generations. The UN SDGs provide guidance for MMSD as it pursues projects and initiatives. The District's goals in the 2022-24 Strategic Plan take into consideration actions the District can take to further the UN SDGs. The SDGs and MMSD's history suggest that local government is most effective when it works in partnership with the region. We will continue to collaborate with private businesses, community organizations, and other orders of government to achieve our mission.



# Planning Process

As a first step, the Strategic Planning Committee, made up of division directors and the Office of Management and Budget, gathered the information needed to identify the issues, challenges, and trends that will shape and affect the District over the next three years. The Committee gathered data from two Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analyses, one completed by executive staff and one completed by a group of employees representing all divisions. The SWOT analyses included both internal and external factors.

All staff were invited to share their priorities with the Strategic Planning Committee. The Strategic Planning Committee then analyzed the results from the two SWOT analyses and reviewed trends identified in the 2022 budget process. The results of the two SWOT analyses had several commonalities. The Strategic Planning Committee ranked and prioritized focus areas and identified the objectives and action items for the next three years. The Executive Director provided the final feedback of his priorities to include in the plan.



Youth sample for aquatic insects as part of MMSD's Environmental Education Initiative  
Photo credit: Milwaukee Riverkeeper



# 2035 Vision

In 2010, the District's Commission adopted the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's 2035 Vision and Strategic Objectives to improve the area's waterways and attain zero overflows, zero basement backups, and improved storm water management. The Vision also states that MMSD will be a model in its management of climate change impacts on wet weather and its focus on energy efficient and sustainable operations. The 2035 Vision gives guidance on how to reach the District's ultimate goal of a healthier, cleaner, more resilient region. Ten years into the twenty-five-year initiative, the District is dedicating its three-year strategic plan to mapping out specific achievable actions in support of the 2035 Vision. The 2022-2024 Strategic Plan sets forth a clear path over the next three years to build on the District's strengths that have resulted

in numerous awards and a strong national reputation. The plan also builds on the significant operational improvements achieved over the past ten years and enables the District to focus its energy and resources on transformational growth to achieve our long-term 2035 Vision.

The 2035 Vision framework includes two guiding principles and two objectives. The guiding principles are the basic truths that guide the organization toward the right decisions, practices, and processes. MMSD's guiding principles are sustainable bottom line and water quality leadership and collaboration. By practicing the sustainable bottom line, future planning, design, and operational decisions balance economic, environmental, operational, and social values. Water quality leadership and collaboration

includes MMSD expanding its leadership role in developing regional approaches to protecting and improving water quality, developing and fostering strategic alliances, and advocating for a watershed approach to managing the region's water resources.

The two objectives laid out in the 2035 Vision are integrated watershed management and climate change mitigation/adaptation with an emphasis on energy efficiency. An integrated approach to watershed management responds to inter-jurisdictional opportunities and limitations and includes external public, private, and nonprofit sector partners. Focusing on climate change mitigation and adaptation and emphasizing energy efficiency helps the District plan for the impact of climate change on our services and tailor our operations to be able to respond.



The Pulaski Park project reduces the risk of flooding in the Kinnickinnic River watershed.





# Goal

## Sustainable Bottom Line

The sustainable bottom line is a framework designed to help organizations think about the environmental, social, financial, and operational impacts, benefits, and trade-offs of the organization's decisions. MMSD has a long history of strong financial planning.

### Objectives

- Build an agile internal and external workforce that anticipates new strategic staffing needs, promotes training, and reflects our region's diversity
- Create a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism Action Plan and the infrastructure to implement the plan to focus our efforts
- Implement the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software effectively and ensure its functions are fully integrated into daily operations
- Work with stakeholders to determine options for operations at the expiration of the ten-year operations agreement in 2028
- Ensure the long-term viability of Milorganite®

Clean waterways are economic drivers that benefit communities, businesses and quality of life





Public tours of the Jones Island Water Reclamation Facility help MMSD engage and educate our constituents



# Goal

## Water Quality Leadership and Collaboration

We know that water does not follow municipal boundaries and that we are stronger when we partner as a region. MMSD has a history of providing strong leadership and cooperation to protect the area's water resources. We seek partnerships to provide economies of scale and operational efficiencies.

### Initiatives

- Align our research and innovation program with issues that are relevant to the District
- Strengthen communication and engagement with stakeholders
- Advance partnerships to enhance programs and reduce duplication of effort

Youth explore the local waterways through MMSD's Environmental Education Initiative  
Photo credit: Urban Ecology Center







MMSD's summer intern program develops our workforce of the future



# Goal

## Integrated Watershed Management

Integrated watershed management is a continuous adaptive process of managing human activities and ecosystems at the watershed scale. It integrates land and water use planning, and it evaluates cumulative effects from multiple environmental stressors. Integrated watershed management brings people and their activities together to build relationships. In order to work across watershed boundaries, MMSD depends on relationships and strong communication with its stakeholders.

### Objectives

- Optimize funding opportunities from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
- Complete the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern projects
- Work to improve the urban water cycle
- Increase green infrastructure implementation by 25 percent

Installing green infrastructure such as a green roof provides stormwater management benefits and improves biodiversity in the city.







MMSD naturalized the channel at Underwood Creek



# Goal

## Climate change adaptation and mitigation with an emphasis on energy efficiency

Climate change impacts MMSD's operations and flood protection efforts. MMSD must plan ahead for the consequences and costs of climate change. In order to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of climate change, MMSD is evaluating options to improve the resilience of its operations, infrastructure, and finances.

### Objectives

- Prepare for climate change by pursuing projects that are eligible for Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding
- Strive for energy neutrality and waste neutrality in MMSD operations

MMSD captures methane gas from the digesters and uses it to generate electricity at the South Shore Water Reclamation Facility





# Strategic FRAMEWORK

## VISION

MMSD envisions a healthier,  
cleaner, resilient region

## MISSION

MMSD protects public health and the  
environment through world-class,  
cost-effective water resource management,  
leadership, and partnership

## VALUES

MMSD is committed to the following values:

- Stewardship
- Integrity
- Quality
- Collaboration
- Diversity
- Innovation

## GOALS



### SUSTAINABLE BOTTOM LINE

Balancing environmental, social, financial,  
and operational impacts, benefits, and  
trade-offs in our decisions



### WATER QUALITY LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Providing strong leadership and  
cooperation to protect the area's  
water resources



### INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Managing human activities and  
ecosystems at the watershed scale  
and integrating land and water  
use planning



### CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION / MITIGATION WITH A FOCUS ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Preparing for and mitigating the impacts  
of climate change by evaluating options to  
improve the resilience of our operations,  
infrastructure, and finances

## MEASURES

1. Increase the number of knowledge transfer opportunities
2. Increase the number of participants in MMSD workforce development programs
3. Increase MMSD staff understanding of DEIAR
4. DEIAR Action Plan targets met
5. ERP system used to its fullest capability throughout the organization
6. Goals in operations management documented
7. Increased public awareness about the benefits of Milorganite®
8. Milorganite® sales meet its net revenue goals



## STRATEGIES

1. Define the purpose of MMSD's internal training strategy
2. Increase the number of opportunities for job training in the water sector
3. Create a DEIAR Action Plan and the infrastructure to implement the plan
4. Launch a new ERP system
5. Work with stakeholders to determine options for operations at the expiration of the ten-year operations agreement in 2028
6. Ensure Milorganite® remains a viable product



1. Complete peer review of research programs
2. Increase the community awareness of MMSD initiatives
3. Increase the number of external partnerships

1. Define the purpose of the MMSD research program
2. Strengthen communication and engagement with stakeholders
3. Advance partnerships to enhance programs and reduce duplication of effort



1. Funding secured from the IIJA for MMSD projects and programs
2. Complete Milwaukee Estuary of Concern projects on time
3. Increased public awareness of the One Water, Our Water campaign
4. Implement at least 4 million gallons of green infrastructure capture capacity in the service area

1. Optimize funding opportunities from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
2. Complete the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern projects
3. Work to improve the urban water cycle
4. Increase green infrastructure implementation by 25 percent



1. Increase the number of projects funded that support climate change adaptation and mitigation
2. Climate resilience standards incorporated in project development by 2024
3. Decrease MMSD greenhouse gas emissions

1. Prepare for climate change by pursuing projects that are eligible for Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding
2. Strive for energy neutrality and waste neutrality in MMSD operations





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