



May 23, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: Stormwater Management Commission
From: Mike Prusila, Planning Supervisor
Ashley Strelcheck, Water Resource Professional

RE: Approval of North Branch Chicago River and Lake Michigan Watershed-Based Plans

ACTION REQUESTED: APPROVE AND RECOMMEND LAKE COUNTY BOARD APPROVE THE NORTH BRANCH CHICAGO RIVER AND LAKE MICHIGAN WATERSHED PLANS

Staff requests approval of the Lake Michigan (LM) Watershed-Based Plan and the North Branch Chicago River (NBCR) Watershed-Based Plans. SMC has worked with numerous agencies and units of government to develop draft watershed-based plans for each planning area. After stakeholder meetings and completion of draft plan reports, SMC held a 30-day public review period that included a public information meeting (LM: March 09, 2023, in Waukegan & March 14, 2023, virtually and NBCR: March 08, 2023 in Deerfield) and a public hearing (March 15, 2023 in Waukegan). Both watershed-based plans were approved by Illinois EPA and meet Clean Water Act guidelines for watershed planning.

SMC held public meetings as well as targeted focus discussions with local units of government and land management organizations in each watershed to inform the plans.

1. LM: SMC held 3 public stakeholder meetings and 18 focused discussion meetings with individual stakeholder organizations, including all municipalities in the planning area, between April 2019 and December 2020. In total, more than 100 individuals participated in planning meetings.
2. NBCR: SMC was able to reach over 64% of the communities in the watershed in public meetings as well as targeted focus discussions. SMC held 7 public stakeholder meetings between February 2019 – November 2020 and coordinated individually with 14 communities and entities. The public information meetings held in conjunction with the North Branch Chicago River Watershed Workgroup (NBWW) reached over 140 individual meeting participants.

The draft watershed-based plans were revised based on the public comments received throughout the review period. The watershed-based plans are now complete in final publication format and available for viewing or download on the SMC website at: North Branch: <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/2433/North-Branch-Chicago-River-Watershed> and Lake Michigan: <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/2418/Lake-Michigan-Watershed>. The watershed plan web mapping application and executive summaries are also available at the links above. Please contact Ashley Strelcheck (astrelcheck@lakecountyil.gov; 847-377-7710) or Mike Prusila (mprusila@lakecountyil.gov; 847-377-7713) with questions or comments. Thank you.

Attachments: Lake Michigan and North Branch Chicago River Watershed-Based Plan public comment response documents