



## MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

**Date:** January 2, 2024  
**To:** CLFLWD Board of Managers  
**From:** Mike Kinney, District Administrator  
**Subject:** ISG Facility Feasibility Study and Presentation



**District Wide**

### Background/Discussion

The District has been reviewing its facility and office needs on multiple occasions over the past 9+ years. Presently, the District is considering different options to meet both the District's and community's needs. ISG was hired to help formalize the vision for the office space, lead stakeholder engagement, and create an implementation strategy to support decision-making. The purpose of this agenda item is for ISG staff to present its final Facility Feasibility Study and address any Board member questions related to the study.

ISG's Facility Feasibility Study accompanies this memo. It provides the estimated space needs for such a potential facility. The other most relevant parts of the study include an engineer's opinion on probable costs for a new building and garage, potential partner and funding opportunities, an overview of the community engagement and survey results, and community profile information.

Board members are invited to send any questions from their initial review of the feasibility study to staff before the January 9, 2024, presentation. Staff will share any questions with ISG staff in advance.

**Attached:** ISG Space Analysis



# **COMFORT LAKE - FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**

## **Facility Feasibility Study**

**November 3, 2023**



**CLFLWD**  
WATERSHED DISTRICT

FOR:

**Michael Kinney**

*District Administrator*

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PROJECT #23-27091



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

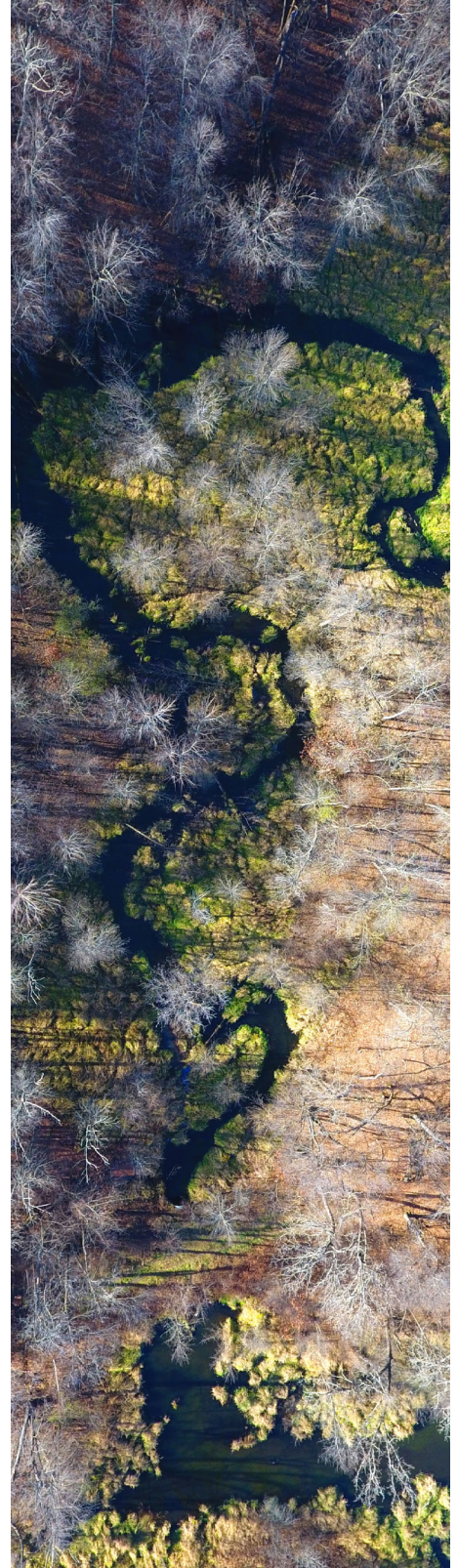
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the space needs and feasibility of a new facility within the Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District (District). Several criteria were considered to assess the feasibility of a new facility, community support, space needs, and construction costs. The District, in partnership with ISG, hosted one community engagement event, conducted group and individual interviews, and administered a survey to gauge community support for a new facility. These community engagement efforts helped to inform and shape the recommendations.

As a result of the feasibility study, the need for approximately 5,800 square-feet of space is needed for the District to accommodate office and support workspace, meeting space, a lab, restroom and shower areas, and other needs. The meeting space could also be utilized as a rental option for public and private events. This option would provide the District with a source of revenue generation for rentals. A three-stall garage space was also identified for District storage, vehicles, and equipment. Cost estimates are provided for the proposed space need solutions.



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**COMMUNITY  
PROFILE**

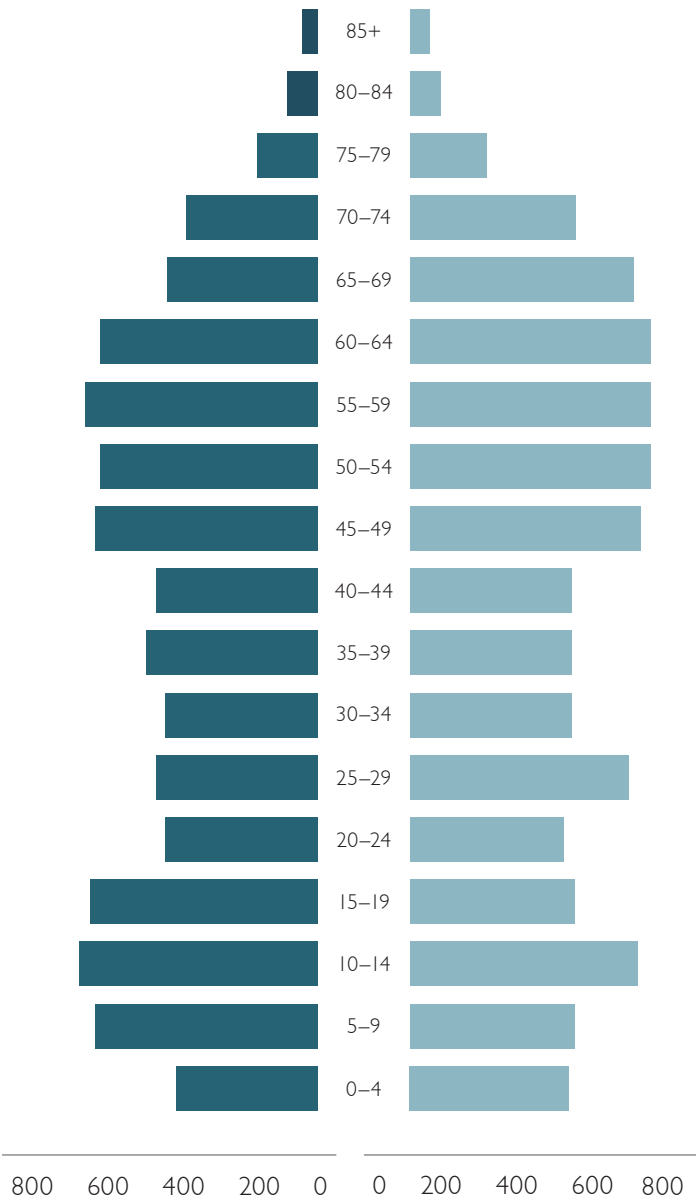


# COMMUNITY PROFILE

## DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

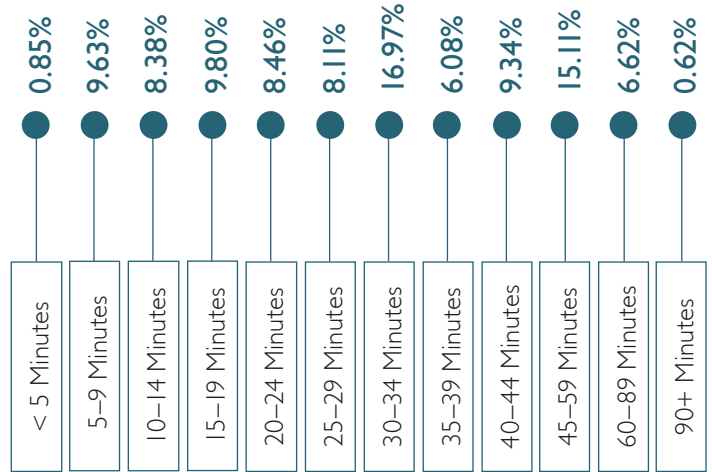
### POPULATION (2022)

Male (Population 9,221) Female (Population 9,111)

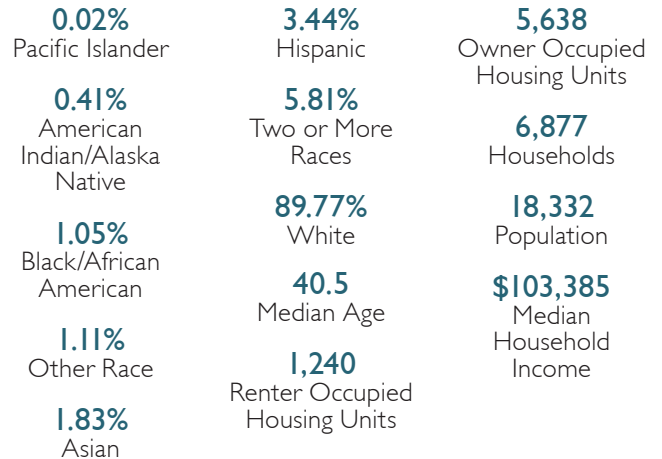


### COMMUTE (2020)

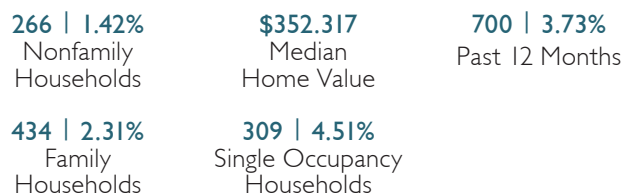
28 Minutes  
Average Commute



### DEMOGRAPHIC (2022)



### POVERTY LEVEL (2020)



<b>-0.06%</b> 2020-2022 Population: Compound Annual Growth Rate	<b>392.8</b> 2022 Population Density (Per Square Mile)
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BUSINESSES

Advertising + Marketing	7   2.61%	Fitness + Nutrition	4   1.49%	Photography	1   0.37%
Apartments	12   4.48%	Funeral Home	1   0.37%	Professional Services	10   3.37%
Attraction	4   1.49%	Garbage	2   0.75%	Real Estate	12   4.48%
Automotive	5   1.87%	Golf Course	1   0.37%	Recreation	10   3.73%
Beauty + Spa	3   1.12%	Government	5   1.87%	Recycling	2   0.75%
Boat Sales + Service	1   0.37%	Health Care	24   8.96%	Senior Living + Senior Services	2   0.75%
Catering	1   0.37%	Home Repair + Improvement	13   4.85%	Sewer Drain + Line Cleaning	1   0.37%
Cleaning	4   1.49%	Identity Theft Services	1   0.37%	Sewer Services	2   0.75%
Coaching	1   0.37%	Insurance	15   5.6%	Sewer Services	2   0.75%
Computer + IT	5   1.87%	Laundromat	1   0.37%	Shopping	14   5.22%
Construction (Commercial)	6   2.24%	Legal	2   0.75%	Storage + Mini-Storage	1   0.37%
Construction (Residential)	7   2.61%	Lodging	4   1.49%	Travel Agency	2   0.75%
Dining	14   5.22%	Manufacturing	5   1.87%	Utilities	5   1.87%
Education	3   1.12%	Marina	1   0.37%	Wedding-Related	9   3.36%
Employment + Staffing	2   0.57%	Media	2   0.57%		
Excavation Services	2   0.75%	Mortgage	1   0.37%		
Financial Services	21   7.84%	Non-Profit	12   5.57%		
		Orthodontist	1   0.37%		
		Painting	1   0.37%		
		Personal Care Services	2   0.75%		

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**COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT**

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# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

### SUMMARY

The District, in partnership with ISG, hosted one community engagement event, conducted group and individual interviews, and administered a survey to gauge community support for a new facility. The most challenging aspect to assess was community support, due to low participation and interest in the research question. The following community engagement efforts were conducted.

### INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

District staff provided a list of individuals from community organizations to connect with. Interviews were conducted with staff from Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District, Forest Lake Community Development, District Board Members, Lakes International Language Academy, Washington County Supervisors, and Washington County Conservation District.

### FOCUS GROUPS

One focus group interview was successfully conducted with the Bone Lake Association. Forest Lake Association, Comfort Lake Association, and the City of Forest Lake staff declined interviews.

### OPEN HOUSE

ISG and the District hosted an open house on June 6, 2023 to gather public feedback on a new facility. The event was posted on the District Facebook page and emailed to the District mailing list. ISG staff, one District staff member, and one District Board Manager were present, no one from the community attended.

### COMMUNITY SURVEY

Postcards were mailed to promote survey responses. Of the 2,000 postcards sent, approximately 440 or 22% were addressed to Chisago County residents and 1,560 or 78% were to addressed to Washington County residents. Given the district population of 18,322 a representative sample size would be 377 responses. 79 survey responses were received at the District facility survey. Due to the lack of adequate response, we were not able to achieve a representative sample of the population. Survey responses demonstrate that quality of life within the watershed is the primary reason that people are attracted to and remain in the area and clean water is key to the quality of life.

### PRIORITY THEMES + COMMENTS

Survey and interview results demonstrate that residents value the lakes in the area and cite them and their clear, high-quality water as one of the reasons they moved to and stay in the area. Community safety and rural or small-town atmosphere were also mentioned as key attractions to the area. Results also showcase that the work and mission of the District is not well known by the community, however, respondents that were aware of the District had great appreciation for their work.

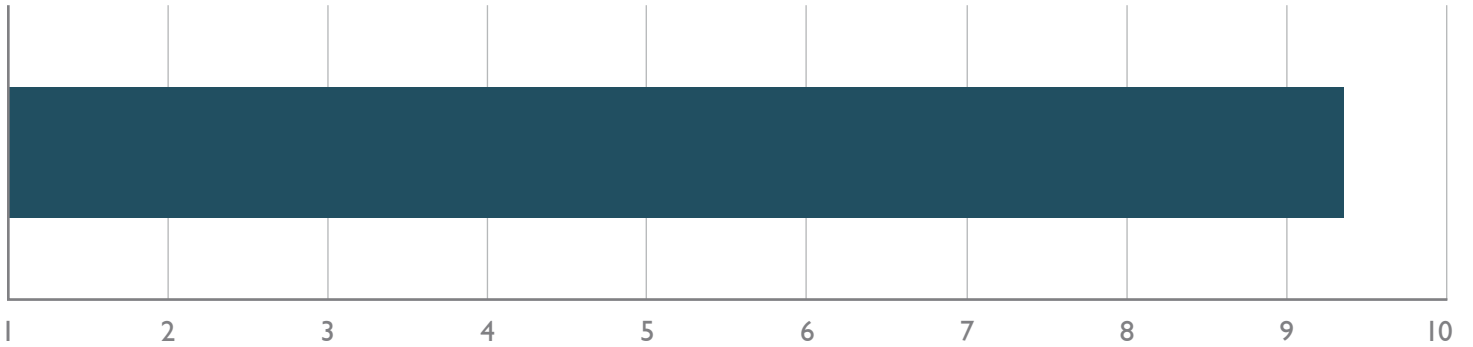
**Q6: On a scale of 1–10, how important is clean water to the quality of life in your community?**

*One being the least important and 10 being the most important.*

Answered: 76 | Skipped: 1



Average Number: 9



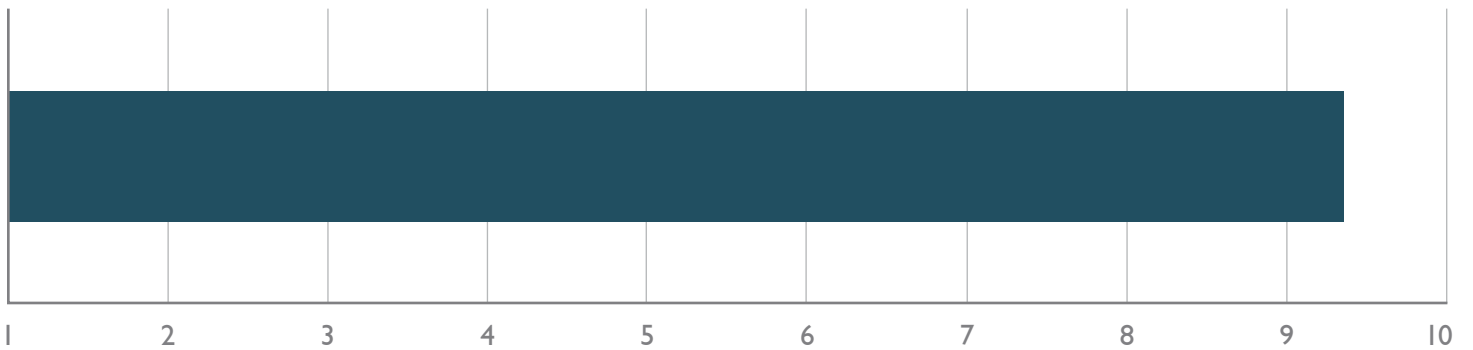
**Q7: On a scale of 1–10, how successful do you think the Watershed District is at preserving and improving water quality?**

*One being the least successful and 10 being the most successful.*

Answered: 75 | Skipped: 2

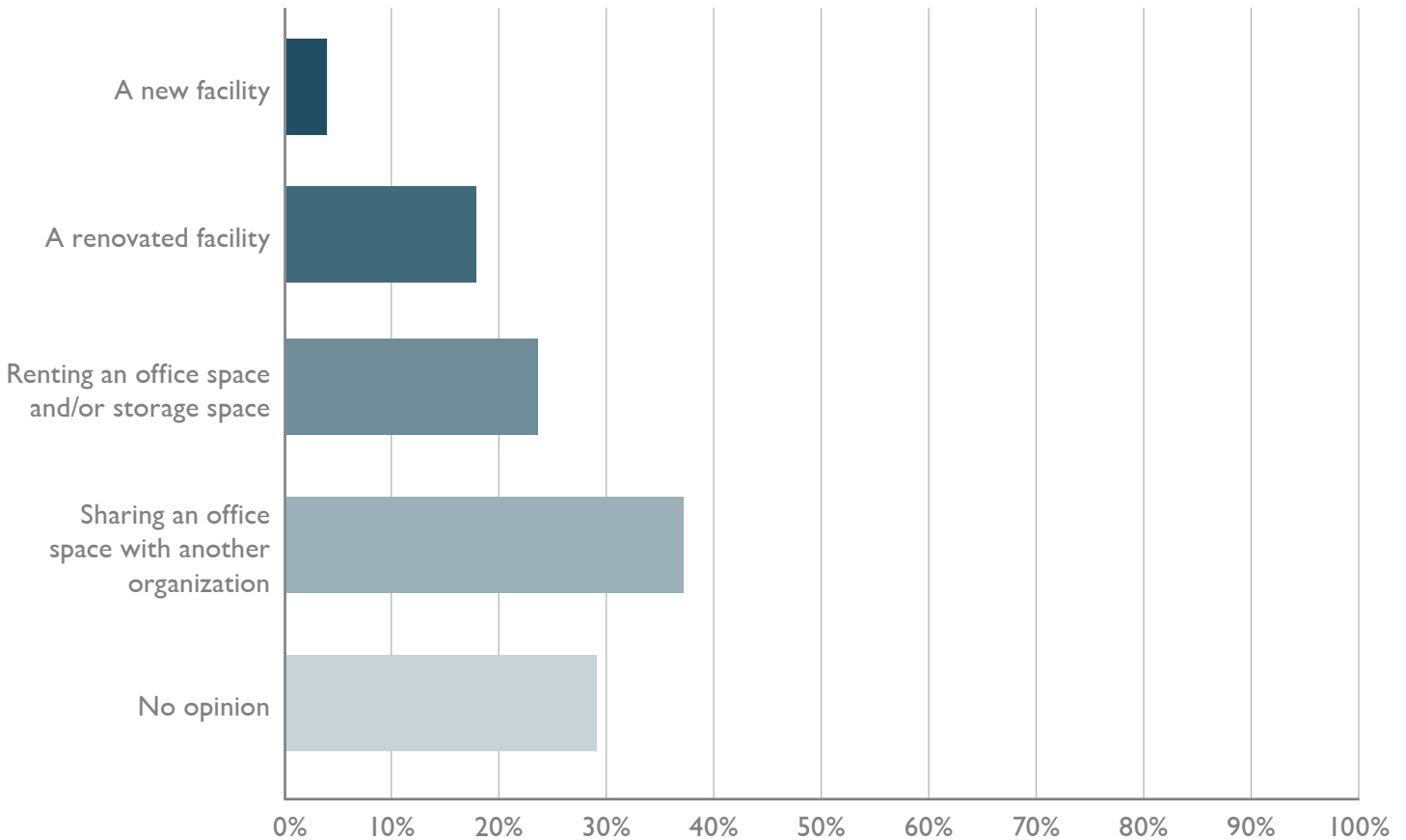


Average Number: 7



Q11: Which option below would you prefer for a Comfort Lake–Forest Lake Watershed District Facility? Please choose one and explain why.

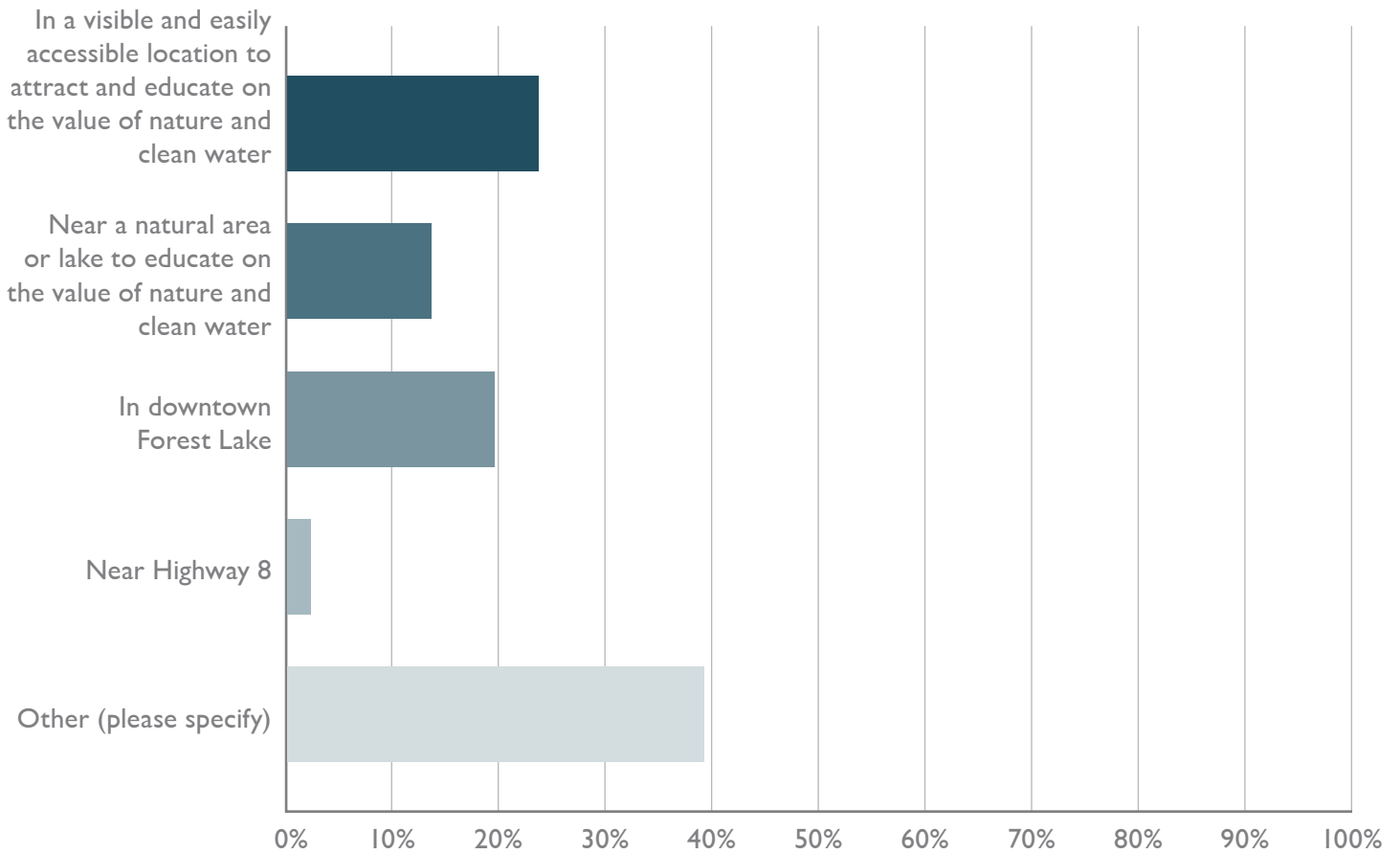
Answered: 75 | Skipped: 2



Respondents ranked laboratory and storage facilities for staff to cost-effectively conduct field work and water quality monitoring as the highest priority, followed by demonstration projects for stormwater treatment, shoreline protection, educational programming, and land stewardship. When asked what option was preferred for a new facility, respondents stated in descending order: sharing an office space with another organization (39%), no opinion (29%), renting an office space with storage (24%), a renovated facility (17%), and new facility (4%). The preferred location of the new facility would be: visible and easily accessible to attract and educate community members (24%), in Downtown Forest Lake (20%), near a natural area or lake to educate people on the value of nature and clean water (14%).

Q13: Where should a Watershed District Facility be located?

Answered: 71 | Skipped: 6





## IDENTIFICATION OF PARTNERSHIP + FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### POSSIBLE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR A FACILITY

- Bonding similar to those used by the Capital Region Watershed District (CRWD) for a \$8.5 million construction total
- Using reserve funds, similar to those used by CRWD to buy their land and design a building

### POSSIBLE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD)
- Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
- Minnesota Public Facilities Authority (MPFA)
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED)
- United States Department of Rural Development (USDA RD)
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR)
- Xcel Energy
- Great River Energy
- Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
- Minnesota Historical Society
- Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)
- McKnight Foundation
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD)
- Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF)
- Health Care organizations: Allina Health, M-Health, and Wyoming Hospitals

## WHAT DO YOU VALUE ABOUT THE COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE AREA?



MINNESOTA GRANT DATABASE

Funding Program	Department or Source	Program Description	Project Category or Type	Link	Typical Deadlines	Notes
Business Expansion Loan Program	Great River Energy	Designed to facilitate new commercial and industrial investment in areas served by cooperative member owners of Great River Energy. The program provides loans for large, high-impact projects and may be used for most business expansion or start-up costs. Funding is available to commercial businesses or a municipality serving a commercial customer of a cooperative member-owner of Great River Energy.	Energy and Utilities, Business and Economic Development	<a href="https://econdev.greatriverenergy.com/media/userfiles/subsite_2/files/Incentive%20Programs/Business%20Expansion%20program%20description.pdf">econdev.greatriverenergy.com/media/userfiles/subsite_2/files/Incentive%20Programs/Business%20Expansion%20program%20description.pdf</a>	Applications are accepted on a rolling basis	Loan amounts range from \$100,000 to \$500,000 and are limited to 50% of the total project cost
Clean Water Fund (CWF) Multipurpose Drainage Management (MDM) Grants	BWSR	The purpose of this program is to facilitate MDM practices to reduce erosion and sedimentation, reduce peak flows and flooding, and improve water quality, while protecting drainage system efficiency and reducing drainage system maintenance for priority Chapter 103E drainage systems.	Agriculture + Drainage, Water Quality, Water Resources, Wetland Restoration, and Flood Mitigation	<a href="https://bwsr.state.mn.us/grant-profile-multipurpose-drainage-management">bwsr.state.mn.us/grant-profile-multipurpose-drainage-management</a>	Application period begins in July, with grant deadlines in August, and grant awards announced in December	Matching funds of at least 25% are required; SWCDs and Chapter 103E drainage authorities are eligible for funding
CWF Projects + Practices	BWSR	This grant program makes investments in on-the-ground projects and practices that will protect or restore water quality in lakes, rivers, or streams, or will protect groundwater or drinking water.	Water Quality, Flood Mitigation, Stormwater Management, Conservation, Wetland Restoration, Agriculture and Drainage	<a href="https://bwsr.state.mn.us/grant-profile-projects-and-practices">bwsr.state.mn.us/grant-profile-projects-and-practices</a>	Application period begins in July, with grant deadlines in August, and grant awards announced in December	Matching funds of at least 25% are required; SWCDs, watershed districts, WMOs, counties, and cities are eligible for funding
Clean Water Revolving Fund	MPCA + MPFA	Provides below-market-rate loans to finance wastewater treatment projects. Loan terms are amortized up to maximum of 20 years, or up to 30 years in some cases.	Wastewater, Water Resources, Water Quality, and Loan Program	<a href="https://mn.gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/cleanwaterrevolvingfund.jsp">mn.gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/cleanwaterrevolvingfund.jsp</a>	Loan applications are accepted within six months after approval of the Intended Use Plan (IUP); the IUP is amended once a year but may be amended	Projects must be on the project priority list (PPL) prior to applying
Cleanup Revolving Loan Program	MPCA + MN DEED	Low-interest loan program through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to cleanup contaminated sites that can be returned to marketable use. Loans may pay for cleanup-related site sampling and monitoring, and costs associated with meeting requirements for public participation in project review. Funds may also be used to demolish buildings under certain conditions.	General Development, Brownfield Redevelopment, and Environmental	<a href="https://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/cleanup/cleanuprevolvingloanprogram.jsp">mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/cleanup/cleanuprevolvingloanprogram.jsp</a>	Applications are accepted twice a year; current deadlines are May 1 and November 1	Applicant must own the project site, the site must be enrolled in the MPCA voluntary cleanup program, and have a pre-approved Response Action Plan
Community Facilities Direct Loan Program	USDA RD	Affordable loans and grants to develop essential community facilities in rural areas including health centers, public facilities, community support services, public safety centers, educational services, utility services, and local food systems.	Community Development, Rural Development, Community Facilities, Public Facilities, Education, and Public Safety	<a href="https://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program">rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program</a>	Applications are accepted on a rolling basis	Loan terms or grant funding may vary depending on community size and income levels
Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program	MnDNR	The MnDNR manages the CPL grant program to provide competitive matching grants aimed at restoring, protecting or enhancing prairies, wetlands, forests, or habitat for fish, game or wildlife in Minnesota. Grants are available in the Traditional, Metro, and Expedited Conservation Project grant cycles. Restoration and enhancement projects must be on public land or have public access.	Water Quality, Flood Mitigation, Stormwater Management, Conservation, Habitat Enhancement, and Wetland Restoration	<a href="https://dnr.state.mn.us/grants/habitat/cpl/index.html">dnr.state.mn.us/grants/habitat/cpl/index.html</a>	The traditional grant cycle applications due in September each year; expedited conservation projects have continuous application rounds	Applications should identify the direct habitat benefit of a project; matching funds of at least 10% are required

Funding Program	Department or Source	Program Description	Project Category or Type	Link	Typical Deadlines	Notes
Contamination Cleanup + Investigation Grants	MN DEED	Helps communities pay for assessing and cleaning up contaminated sites for private or public redevelopment. Grants pay up to 75% of the costs to investigate and clean up polluted sites. Both publicly and privately owned sites with known or suspected soil or groundwater contamination qualify. Cities, port authorities, housing and redevelopment authorities, economic development authorities, and counties are eligible to apply.	General Development, Brownfield Redevelopment, Environmental	<a href="https://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/cleanup/contamination.jsp">mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/cleanup/contamination.jsp</a>	Applications are accepted twice a year; current deadlines are May 1 and November 1	Matching funds of at least 25% are required; projects are ranked on the tax base increase resulting from the cleanup, number of jobs created, reduced threat to public health and environment, and level of private investment
Credit Enhancement Program	MPFA	Program provides limited state bond guarantees, which result in higher credit ratings for counties and lower interest rates on general obligation bonds.	General Development	<a href="https://mn.gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/credit-enhancement.jsp">mn.gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/credit-enhancement.jsp</a>	Ongoing basis	
DNR Signs at Water Accesses	MnDNR	The MnDNR will provide "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers" to successful applicants at no cost.	Recreation + Water Resources	<a href="https://dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/ais/prevention/ais_signs.html">dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/ais/prevention/ais_signs.html</a>	Ongoing basis	
Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRF)	MPFA	Provides below-market-rate loans to upgrade and construct public drinking water systems. Loan terms are amortized up to maximum of 20 years, or up to 30 years in some cases.	Water, Water Resources, and Loan Program	<a href="https://mn.gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/drinking-water.jsp">mn.gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/drinking-water.jsp</a>	Loan application must be submitted to the MPFA within six months after IUP goes into effect in August or September	Project must be on Project Priority List (PPL) prior to application
Energy Design Assistance	Xcel Energy	Program offers expertise to help you incorporate energy efficiency strategies in your building design, along with incentives to reduce your implementation costs.	Energy + Utilities	<a href="https://xcelenergy.com/programs_and_rebates/business_programs_and_rebates/new_construction_and_whole_building/energy_design_assistance">xcelenergy.com/programs_and_rebates/business_programs_and_rebates/new_construction_and_whole_building/energy_design_assistance</a>	Ongoing basis	
Energy Efficient Buildings	Xcel Energy	Free offering comprised of the Energy Design Assistance (EDA) and Energy Efficient Buildings (EEB) programs which encourage customers to incorporate energy efficiency measures in order to optimize their new construction, expansion or renovation projects; integrated design approach targeted at larger facilities; it utilizes energy modeling to determine the overall building impacts and a customized rebate amount.	Energy + Utilities	<a href="https://xcelenergy.com/staticfiles/xeresponsive/Programs%20and%20Rebates/Residential/19-03-523_MN_EEB_IS-INT_P01.pdf">xcelenergy.com/staticfiles/xeresponsive/Programs%20and%20Rebates/Residential/19-03-523_MN_EEB_IS-INT_P01.pdf</a>	Ongoing basis	
E3 Loan Program	Great River Energy	Provides a low-interest loan to cover the costs of acquisition and installation of energy efficient equipment and beneficial electrification projects.	Energy + Utilities	<a href="https://econddev.greatriverenergy.com/media/userfiles/subsite_2/files/Incentive%20Programs/one%20page%20E3%20program%20description%208-29-172.pdf">econddev.greatriverenergy.com/media/userfiles/subsite_2/files/Incentive%20Programs/one%20page%20E3%20program%20description%208-29-172.pdf</a>	Ongoing basis	Loans ranging from \$50,000 to \$350,000 with interest rates determined by energy savings achieved
Greater Minnesota Legacy Grants	Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission	The purpose of the program is to assist in the acquisition, development, improvement, or restoration of regionally significant parks and trails outside of the metro counties.	Parks & Recreation, Recreational Trails	<a href="https://gmrptcommission.org/">gmrptcommission.org/</a>	Application opens in early April each year, and deadline for completion is July 31	

Funding Program	Department or Source	Program Description	Project Category or Type	Link	Typical Deadlines	Notes
Greater Minnesota Public Infrastructure Grant Program	MN DEED	Provides grants to cities of up to 50% of the capital costs of the public infrastructure necessary to expand or retain jobs in the area, increase the tax base, or expand or create new economic development.	Business + Economic Development	<a href="https://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/business-funding/infrastructure/">mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/business-funding/infrastructure/</a>		
Historical + Cultural Heritage Grants	Minnesota Historical Society	Supports history programs and projects to preserve historic and cultural resources; this grant program can be applicable for parks and trails that preserve and/or promote historic and cultural resources.	Historic Preservation, and Arts & Culture	<a href="https://mnhs.org/preservation/legacy-grants">mnhs.org/preservation/legacy-grants</a>	Large Grants: pre-applications due in May, application due in July; Small Grants: application due in July	
Innovative Business Development Public Infrastructure (BDPI)	MN DEED	Program focuses on job creation and retention through the growth of new innovative businesses and organizations; provides grants to local governmental units on a competitive basis statewide. The amount of a grant may not exceed the lesser of the cost of the public infrastructure or 50% of the sum of the cost of the public infrastructure plus the cost of the completed eligible project.	Business + Economic Development	<a href="https://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/business-funding/innovative/">mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/business-funding/innovative/</a>		
Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources — Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund (LCCMR/ENRTF)	LCCMR	Funded from trust fund dollars for special environment and natural resource projects	Conservation, Water Quality, Water Resources, Habitat Enhancement	<a href="https://lccmr.leg.mn/">lccmr.leg.mn/</a>	Typical Timeline: RFP issued in February, proposals due in April, presentations of selected proposals in July, funding recommendations finalized in December	Drainage projects are not scored favorably, projects need to be highlighted for their environmental benefit
Local Trails Connection Program	MnDNR	The purpose of the program is to accelerate the acquisition of local trail connections where people live to public resources. It is not intended to develop significant trails or significant trail networks.	Recreational Trails	<a href="https://dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_local.html">dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_local.html</a>	Applications are due in the spring with awards announced in July	
McKnight Foundation	McKnight Foundation	This foundation is one of the country's largest foundations and is based in Minnesota; areas of interest for grant funding include climate solutions, equity and inclusion, arts, international crop research, and neuroscience.	Arts & Culture, Climate & Sustainability, and Equity & Inclusion	<a href="https://mcknight.org/programs/">mcknight.org/programs/</a>	Application deadlines vary depending on the grant program, check with the Foundation's website to verify	
Minnesota Investment Fund	MN DEED	Provides financing to help add new workers and retain high-quality jobs on a statewide basis; focus is on industrial, manufacturing, and technology-related industries to increase the local and state tax base and improve economic vitality.	Business + Economic Development	<a href="https://mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/deed-programs/mif/">mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/deed-programs/mif/</a>		
Outdoor Recreation Grant Program	MnDNR	The purpose of this program is to provide funds to local governments for acquiring parkland and redeveloping/developing outdoor recreation facilities and parks	Parks & Recreation, Recreational Trails, and Recreation	<a href="https://dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/outdoor_rec.html">dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/outdoor_rec.html</a>	Applications are typically due in March of each year	Grants are reimbursed up to 50% of total eligible costs, with a maximum grant award of \$250,000
Point Source Implementation Grants	MPFA	Provides grants to units of local government to assist with the cost of water infrastructure projects necessary to meet wasteload reductions, reduce the discharge the phosphorous, and meet other water quality concerns, including nitrogen concentration limits.	Water + Wastewater	<a href="https://mn.gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/point-source-grants.jsp">mn.gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/point-source-grants.jsp</a>	Applications are typically due in July of each year, projects should be ready to construct the following year if grant dollars are awarded	Grants are available for up to 80% of eligible costs up to a maximum of \$7 million

Funding Program	Department or Source	Program Description	Project Category or Type	Link	Typical Deadlines	Notes
Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Conservation Easement Program	BWSR	This program provides funds for the acquisition and enhancement of critical habitat, including but not limited to restoring wetlands, improving forest habitat, preserving and protecting habitat for rare plant and animal species, protecting native prairie and grasslands, and preserving spawning and reproduction areas for fish. This program takes environmentally sensitive lands out of agricultural production.	Habitat Enhancement, Water Resources, Conservation, and Wetland Restoration	<a href="https://bwsr.state.mn.us/reinvest-minnesota-overview">bwsr.state.mn.us/reinvest-minnesota-overview</a>	Accepted on a rolling basis	
Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) for Financing Water and Wastewater Projects	USDA RD	Program helps qualified nonprofits create revolving loan funds that can provide financing to extend and improve water and waste disposal systems in rural area.	Water + Wastewater	<a href="https://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/revolving-funds-for-financing-water-and-wastewater-projects">rd.usda.gov/programs-services/revolving-funds-for-financing-water-and-wastewater-projects</a>		
Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems + Energy Efficiency Improvements	USDA RD	Provides funding for agricultural producers and rural businesses for renewable energy systems or to make efficiency improvements.	Renewable Energy + Rural Development	<a href="https://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency/mn">rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency/mn</a>	Applications accepted on a rolling basis	Applicants must provide at least 75% of the project cost if applying for the grant only; Applicants must provide at least 25% of the project cost if applying for a loan
Small Cities Development Program	MN DEED	Helps cities fewer than 50,000 residents and counties fewer than 200,000 residents with funding for housing, public infrastructure, and commercial rehabilitation projects. Projects must meet one of three federal objectives: benefit people of low and moderate incomes, eliminate slum and blight conditions, or eliminate an urgent threat to public health or safety.	General Development, Housing, Water, Wastewater, Stormwater Management, and Emergency Funding	<a href="https://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/community-funding/small-cities.jsp">mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/community-funding/small-cities.jsp</a>	Applications are typically due in November of each year	This is Minnesota's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program
Small Community Wastewater Treatment Program	MPFA	Program provides technical assistance grants and construction grants and loans, with construction financing up to \$2 million per year at 1% interest and grants up to 80% based on affordability criteria, for public subsurface sewage treatment systems.	Wastewater	<a href="https://mn.gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/smallcommunitywastewatertreatmentprogram.jsp">mn.gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/smallcommunitywastewatertreatmentprogram.jsp</a>		
Small Town Grant Program	Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation	The Small Town Grant program seeks to invest in collaborative initiatives which improve the way communities work to address challenges. SMIF seeks proposals from communities under 10,000 which impact the culture, education, economy and/or social aspects of the town.	Parks + Recreation	<a href="https://smifoundation.org/grants/for-grant-seekers/small-town-grants/">smifoundation.org/grants/for-grant-seekers/small-town-grants/</a>	Applications due in June	Award amount up to \$10,000
Wastewater and Stormwater Financial Assistance	MPCA	Provides low-interest loans for municipal stormwater projects and wastewater projects (collection or treatment facilities), funds may also be available through Point Source Implementation Grants (PSIG). Projects must be listed on the state Project Priority List (PPL) to be eligible to receive funds through this program.	Stormwater Management, Wastewater, Water Resources, and Water Quality	<a href="https://pca.state.mn.us/water/wastewater-and-stormwater-financial-assistance">pca.state.mn.us/water/wastewater-and-stormwater-financial-assistance</a>	Project plans are typically due in March to be eligible for placement on the PPL, funding priorities for this program is determined after PPL placement	

Funding Program	Department or Source	Program Description	Project Category or Type	Link	Typical Deadlines	Notes
Water Infrastructure Fund	MPFA	Provides supplemental grants to help communities build wastewater and drinking water projects that replace aging infrastructure and meet permit requirements. Fund provides matching grants to communities that meet affordability criteria and receive PFA loans or financing from the USDA RD.	Water	<a href="http://gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/wastewater.jsp">gov/deed/pfa/funds-programs/wastewater.jsp</a>	Applications are accepted on a rolling basis	
Water & Disposal Loan and Grant Program	USDA RD	Program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.	Water, Wastewater, Stormwater Management, and Rural Development	<a href="http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program/mn">rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program/mn</a>	Applications are accepted on a rolling basis	Interest rates change on a quarterly basis
Water + Waste Disposal Predevelopment Planning Grants	USDA RD	Assists low-income communities with initial planning and development of applications for USDA RD water and waste disposal loan and grant programs.	Water, Wastewater, Rural Development, and Planning Assistance	<a href="http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-predevelopment-planning-grants">rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-predevelopment-planning-grants</a>	Applications are accepted on a rolling basis	Maximum grant amount is \$30,000 or 75% of pre-development planning costs
Natural + Scenic Area Grants	MnDNR	Provides matching grants to local units of government and school districts for up to 50% of the cost of acquisition of natural and scenic areas. Minimal betterment activities are eligible as part of an acquisition project including site surveying, boundary signage, and immediate measures needed to stabilize the site and ensure the safety of users and active restoration efforts that would significantly improve the site's natural resource values.	Parks + Recreation	<a href="http://dnr.state.mn.us/grants/land/natural-scenic-app-cycle.html">dnr.state.mn.us/grants/land/natural-scenic-app-cycle.html</a>	Application due March 31, 2023	The maximum grant award is \$500,000

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**SPACE  
NEEDS**



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# SPACE NEEDS

## MEETING SPACE STUDY

### SUMMARY

To provide the District with a more complete understanding of facility and space needs, ISG conducted research to quantify space needs, meeting room rental availability, and consideration of costs related to additions and new construction. The study included a multi-step process starting with data collection and analysis of existing planning documents such as long-range plans. An analysis of architectural space allocations from leading authorities were tabulated. ISG then worked with the District to identify stakeholders to gain feedback for facility planning by conducting a series of user group meetings. Following a systematic evaluation of the corresponding technical space requirements, order of operations, potential efficiencies, and required proximities to meet staffing needs, ISG researched off-site rental and meeting space options. The findings are provided in this report for the District to use as a tool in making facility decisions.

### INTRODUCTION

The District is currently leasing office space in downtown Forest Lake. The space is inadequate as it was originally a hair salon. There are no private meeting areas or private offices. Meeting space is shared with storage of water monitoring equipment, and parking is limited. Storage is rented off-site. The leased space is in a building that was sold in January of 2023, and the new owner is obligated to honor the existing lease through 2024.

### DISTRICT BOARD + STAFFING

The District Board of Managers (Board) consists of five members. District staff includes approximately 13 members. The number of participants at regular District meeting can range from 12 to 25 members per meeting excluding public attendance. Based on staffing levels and public needs, it is estimated that space for approximately 50 to 100 occupants could be anticipated, including staff, public members, and any future District project requirements excluding storage and parking requirements.

### SPACE PROGRAM ANALYSIS

The feasibility study found that approximately 5,782 square feet of space is needed for the District to accommodate office and support workspace, meeting space, a lab, restroom and shower areas, and other needs. This does not include a three-stall garage. See the Space Program Analysis Table on the next page.

## SPACE PROGRAM ANALYSIS TABLE

Space #	Space Name	# of Areas	Space Standard	Net Square Feet	Gross Factor	Gross Square Feet
I.01	Offices	2	120	240	1.30	312
I.02	Staff Conference Rooms	2	120	240	1.30	312
I.03	Large Conference Room	1	160	160	1.30	208
I.04	Informational Collaborative Staff Meeting Space	1	170	170	1.30	221
I.05	Workstation for 13 Staff + 8 Drop-In Staff	8	36	288	1.30	374
I.06	Central Flies	0	64	0	1.30	0
I.07	Board Room + Education Room	1	1,346	1	1.30	1,750
I.08	Table + Chair Storage	0	200	0	1.30	0
I.09	Reception + Waiting Area	1	250	250	1.30	325
I.10	Common Work Room	1	250	250	1.30	325
I.11	Water Lab	1	160	160	1.30	208
I.12	Lab Storage	1	400	400	1.30	520
I.13	Toilet Room	1	64	64	1.30	83
	Shower Room	1	45	45	1.30	59
I.14	Accessible Toilet	1	64	64	1.30	83
Sub-Total						4,780
Wall Factor (12%)						574
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>5,782</b>

\* Does not include three-stall garage

## OTHER SPACE CONSIDERATIONS

### INDOOR EDUCATIONAL SPACE

After numerous interviews and public engagement, it is evident there is a need for a community educational and meeting space. This space could include a classroom or conference room, a whiteboard, multimedia presentation system, projector, desks, and chairs. The president of the Forest Lake School District Board also expressed interest in a meeting space that could be used by the community. The planning team believes that this educational space could serve as an anchor point for creating community connection while teaching others about the mission and vision of the District. The educational space should have the flexibility to be used as a classroom and work room to ensure it is consistently utilized.

Outdoor open areas create a sense of calm and balance. Neighboring watershed districts have used outdoor spaces for public engagement events, activities, and youth education. The Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) created an outdoor educational fountain that collects rainwater for landscaping purposes.

### VEHICLE STORAGE

The space assessment above of 5,782 square feet does not include the requested three-stall garage parking spaces.

## PUBLICLY AVAILABLE MEETING SPACE

The need for public meeting space was identified through interviews with District staff and community member interviews. The available meeting space in the District office serves as storage and reception area. Available meeting spaces are inadequate for the District's technical needs and privacy requirements. Three options could address meeting space needs: rent space outside of the District office, build an addition to the existing office, or construct a new facility.

### RENTAL OPTIONS

Rentals for meeting spaces in Forest Lake are limited. According to research, only three rental spaces were identified that are suitable for District requirements and needs. Two of which, the Vocate Meeting Space and Uncommon Loon Brewing Company, are located outside of the District's boundary area. All spaces are well equipped with amenities that are essential for the meetings and are priced at \$150 to \$200 for two hours.

The spaces located within the District boundary are not suitable meeting spaces, Forest Lake High School cafeteria and the performance arts center are not equipped to accommodate meetings, are larger than needed, and are only available after the school day ends at 3 p.m. Both meeting spaces are reasonably priced and could be used as backup meeting spaces if needed. The religious spaces within the District boundary area are not available for work or public meetings. The two hotels within the District boundary area do not have a meeting space or the only space available is by converting the food service area for into a meeting space after the lunch hour. The breakfast area option is reasonably priced at \$75 for two hours, or \$37.50 per hour, yet the space is not equipped with any form of technology or amenities and is only available after 1 p.m. The last option identified were restaurants and dining spaces. Three restaurants were identified that can be reserved for meetings. One of the restaurants offers only a semi-private space in the dining hall that is portioned with glass panels. The other two options can rent out the entire dining area for meetings. However, this would increase the meeting space rental cost. All three restaurants require catering services and reservations made in advance.

The planning team identified a community need for secure and well-equipped meeting spaces within the District boundary to help accommodate needs for staff, Board, and public meetings. The meeting space could also be used to generate income. It could be offered free of charge as a public service for non-profit events. See the Rental Space Table on the next page.

## RENTAL SPACE TABLE

Meeting Space	Meeting Space Description	Maximum Capacity	Amenities Included With Rental	Total Rental Cost
American Inn by Wyndham Forest Lake	Lobby area	NA	NA	NA
Country Inn & Suites by Radisson	Breakfast area	25–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small TV</li> </ul>	\$75 per two hours
Uncommon Loon Brewing Company	Two rooms available with the smaller room being suitable for meetings; all reservations should be made months in advance.	50–70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TV with HDMI</li> <li>• Wi-Fi</li> <li>• Round Tables</li> </ul>	Weekdays are \$50 per hour with a drink minimum of \$150
Lakes International Language Academy	Forest Lake High School performance area or cafeteria	25–50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light + Sound System</li> </ul>	Cafeteria is \$37 per hour, and the performance area is \$37–\$62 per hour
Vocate Meeting Space	Two meeting spaces available with the gathering room being the most suitable	25–50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Kitchenette</li> <li>• 80-Inch Projector + Large TV</li> <li>• Coffee + Tea</li> </ul>	\$150–\$200 per two hours
Mallards	Semi-private space with glass panels separators	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Amenities</li> <li>• Catering is Required</li> </ul>	Depends on event type
The Old Log Cabin	No private space is available. Only the dining hall is suitable for meetings.	25–50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Amenities</li> <li>• Catering is Required</li> </ul>	Amount varies depending on day scheduled and anticipated attendance
Stella's On 97	No private space is available. Only the dining hall is suitable for meetings.	50–100 <i>*Including Patio Space</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small TV</li> <li>• Catering is Required</li> </ul>	Requires booking in advance, rates vary

## CONCLUSION

The space study concluded that approximately 5,782 square feet of space is needed for the District to accommodate office and support workspace, meeting space, a lab, restroom and shower areas, and other needs. The existing building currently provides 2,664 square feet of space. Meeting space for rent opportunities are limited throughout the community and there is a need for public meeting room space in the Comfort Lake – Forest Lake office, which could be an income generator.

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# CONSTRUCTION COSTS

# CONSTRUCTION COSTS

## ENGINEER'S OPINION OF PROBABLE COST

The schedule below reflects estimated costs for a new building, with parking and utilities, and a three-stall garage.

No.	Item Description	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Amount
1	New Building Includes Site Parking + Utilities	Square Foot	5,782	\$325	\$1,879,150
2	Three-Stall Garage Includes Site Parking + Utilities	Square Foot	1080	\$110	\$118,800
Construction Costs					\$1,997,950
20% Contingency					\$399,590
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>					<b>\$2,397,540</b>



**APPENDIX A:  
REVIEW OF  
RELEVANT LAND  
USE PLANS**



# APPENDIX A

## RELEVANT COMMUNITY GOALS

### MISSION STATEMENT

The District's mission is to protect and improve its water resources through adaptive management and education of local stakeholders.

### VISION STATEMENT

The City of Forest Lake is known for its natural resources and outdoor recreation. The City's overall vision is to serve as a regional hub while maintaining its natural resources and providing a range of recreation opportunities.

## REVIEW OF RELEVANT LAND USE PLANS

### COMFORT LAKE – FOREST LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

The implementation plan of the Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed Management Plan (Watershed Management Plan) is organized into three categories:

- Administration
- Programs
- Projects

A facility that educates the community and inspires staff is essential to the implementation portion of the Administrative and Program sections of the Watershed Management Plan.

### FOREST LAKE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The goals of the Forest Lake Comprehensive Plan and Watershed Management Plan are highly aligned and complimentary to one another. The City of Forest Lake Comprehensive Plan supports management of the District to protect the ecological quality of environmental systems, natural resources, and sensitive areas throughout the community, including soils, woodlands, wetlands, natural water courses, open spaces, and steep slopes.

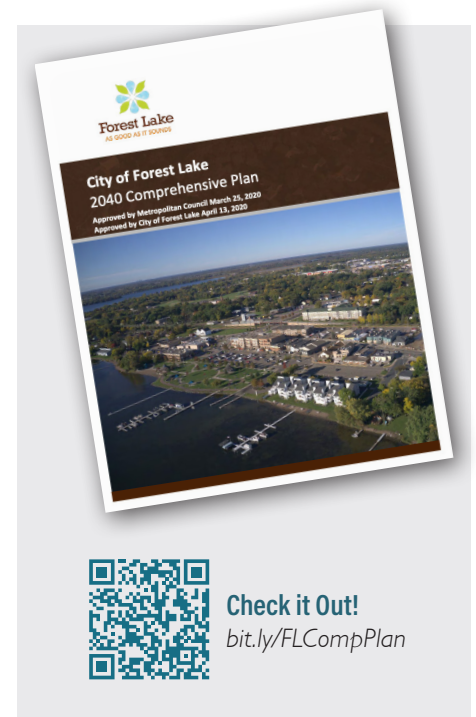
## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATES

The City of Forest Lake Comprehensive Plan supports management of the Watershed Management Plan to protect the ecological quality of environmental systems, natural resources, and sensitive areas throughout the community, including soils, woodlands, wetlands, natural water courses, open spaces, and steep slopes.

### OVERARCHING GOALS

The following five overarching goals for the City of Forest Lake expand upon the above vision and further guide the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan update:

- Protect Natural Resources
- Provide for Parks + Recreation Opportunities
- Guide Land + Manage Growth
- Plan for an Effective Transportation System
- Create + Expand Opportunities for Employment Growth



## LAND USE GOALS + OBJECTIVES

**Goal:** Maintain or improve the ecological quality, environmental function, and aesthetics of environmental systems within the City. Objectives include:

- Maintaining a balance between the expanding urban area and the rural nature of the community
- Requiring new development to be designed to preserve and be compatible with the site's important natural features
- Using the Planned Unit Development (PUD) where appropriate to enhance unique design opportunities in creating neighborhoods and to protect environmentally sensitive areas
- Promote the use of diverse plant species in landscape plans to minimize impacts from and spread of plant diseases and pests.
- Develop plans to promote reforestation, prairie management, wetland restoration and preservation, wildlife management, and other natural area and resource management.

**Goal:** Protect natural resources and sensitive areas throughout the community, including soils, woodlands, wetlands, natural water courses, open spaces, and steep slopes. Objectives include:

- Restricting development in highly sensitive natural resource areas
- Working with the MnDNR, MDA, Washington County, watershed districts, environmental organizations, and other stakeholders to identify ecologically and agriculturally significant resources
- Educating developers and landowners of the location and value of open space in Forest Lake
- Encouraging the use of incentive-based tools such as conservation easements, purchased development rights, transferred development rights, and acquisition to conserve significant natural resources
- Preserving environmentally sensitive areas as open space with reasonable utilization of land and in accordance to applicable federal, state, and local regulations. Where preservation is not feasible, minimize impacts
- Identifying greenways or green corridors to facilitate wildlife corridors

### *Natural Resources*

Natural resources are beneficial to the social, environmental, and economic vitality of a community. To ensure their quality and benefits, it is essential to plan and manage natural resources and areas as we do residential and commercial areas. The City of Forest Lake will promote, preserve, and enhance the natural resources within the City and protect them from adverse effects occasioned by poorly sited development or incompatible activities. This will be done by:

- Regulating land disturbances or development activities that would have an adverse and potentially irreversible impact on water quality and fragile environmentally-sensitive land
- Minimizing conflicts and encouraging compatibility between land disturbing and development activities, and water quality and environmentally-sensitive land
- Requiring detailed review standards and procedures for land disturbing or development activities proposed for such areas.

These tactics will allow the City to achieve a balance between urban growth, development, and the protection of water quality and natural areas.

## PARKS + TRAILS

**Goal:** Develop parks, trails, and open spaces with consideration of preservation of and education about natural habitats.

Objectives include:

- Promoting an understanding of the value of open space and natural habitats
- Preserving and protecting diverse and unique ecosystems
- Encouraging biodiversity of native plants and animals
- Providing opportunities for education in the community's parks, trails, and open spaces
- Encouraging policies for the integration of best management practices to manage storm water quality
- Establishing levels of maintenance and management for different areas
- Promoting efficiencies in design and construction.

## EXISTING PARKS + TRAILS

### Regional Parks + Trails

The regional park system, as identified by the Metropolitan Council, includes four main components or facility types: regional parks, park reserves, special recreation features, and regional trails. Within the City of Forest Lake, the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail is the only facility that is identified as being a part of this regional system. There are no regional parks, park reserves, or special recreation features located within the City currently, nor are there any planned.

### Proposed Local Park System Improvements

The existing parks and trail system includes several new proposed trails and parks that offer a local network of non-motorized transportation connections and recreational destinations. The map includes areas for four future neighborhood parks in locations where significant future residential development and accompanying demand for recreational opportunities are anticipated.

## WATER RESOURCES

### Sanitary Sewer System

The municipally owned sanitary sewer system provides service to approximately 75% of the residents and businesses in the City of Forest Lake while the remainder are served by privately owned individual sewer treatment systems. Based on Metropolitan Council population, household, and employment forecasts and existing conditions, the City is anticipated to have increasing sewer demand. The Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) has sufficient capacity for future needs.

### Wastewater

Forest Lake's wastewater system currently consists of 479,300 lineal feet of gravity sewer, 2,100 sanitary sewer manholes, 82,200 lineal feet of force main and 46 sanitary sewer lift stations. All infrastructure ultimately connects to the Metropolitan Council Interceptor 7029.

Forest Lake's system makes several connections at different locations, with the primary connection point at 210th Street North and Highway 61 (CL4.1). Interceptor 7029 travels south through Forest Lake to meter number 043 (Metropolitan Council Lift Station L02) at the border with the City of Hugo. The Metropolitan WWTP is designed to treat an average flow of 251 million gallons per day. The City of Forest Lake will work with developers to encourage orderly development within existing sewer service areas before opening the next staged development area and expanding sewer services.



## WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN FINDINGS SUMMARY

The District is a special purpose unit of local government, which was created to restore local water resources to pre-settlement water quality conditions and manage flooding. The District is governed by a five-member Board appointed by Chisago and Washington counties. The District includes portions of the City of Wyoming, Chisago City, Chisago Lake Township, Franconia Township, the City of Forest Lake, and the City of Scandia.

The District covers 49 square miles in southwestern Chisago County and northwestern Washington County. Surface water resources within the District include major recreational lakes like Bone Lake, Forest Lake, Comfort Lake and the exceptionally high-quality Lake Keewahtin, as well as 19 additional named lakes and several rivers and streams. The District area is considered the headwaters of the Sunrise River and ultimately drains to the St. Croix River, a federally protected wild and scenic riverway. The District area includes 90 miles of watercourses, of which 31% are altered, and nearly 9,600 acres of wetlands. The land use is consistently distributed, with the most common land use of hay/pasture covering 25% of the total area and the least common land use of cropland covering 12% of the total area. Developed land use covers 14% of the District. The annual cost of the District's programs and projects is \$3.8 million.

The District's water resource management approach is based on a core framework of:

**Adaptive Management:** An iterative approach of resource assessment, problem identification, project implementation, progress evaluation, and course correction.

**Diagnostic Monitoring:** Wetland soil and lake sediment monitoring to identify pollutant hotspots.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis:** With limited funding, diagnostic monitoring data is used to target projects in locations where they result in the greatest pollutant reductions and water quality improvements, as 80% of the pollutant loads or reductions will be achieved from 20% of the sources or projects.

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## EXPERTISE

Architecture  
Engineering  
Environmental  
Planning

## WORK

Commercial  
Education  
Food + Industrial  
Government + Cultural  
Healthcare  
Housing  
Mining  
Public Works  
Sports + Recreation  
Telecommunications + Energy  
Transportation  
Water



Rogers, AR  
Des Moines, IA  
Storm Lake, IA  
Waterloo, IA  
Bloomington, MN  
Mankato, MN  
Rochester, MN  
St. Louis Park, MN  
Pierre, SD  
Sioux Falls, SD  
Green Bay, WI  
La Crosse, WI  
Milwaukee, WI

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*On January 12, 2017, ISG formally announced its transition of firm ownership to a 100% employee stock ownership plan (ESOP). As a multi-disciplinary firm that started 50+ years ago, ISG has since grown to be a Top 500 Design Firm as recognized by Engineering News-Record (ENR), a Zweig Group Hot Firm, and PSMJ Circle of Excellence recipient, illustrating the progressive increase in talent, expertise, and market share.*

