



MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Date: April 3, 2025
To: CLFLWD Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney, District Administrator
Subject: Office Space Site Visits



District Wide

Background/Discussion:

As a part of a previous scope of work, Administrator Kinney and Kevin Biehn of EOR communicated with and held meetings with current and past staff of other metro watershed districts who had previous experience with the process of relocating their office spaces. The purpose of this agenda item is to review those site visits to other watershed district facilities and the takeaways of each.

Attached
EOR Memo

Project Name | District Facility Planning**Date** | 3.26.2025**To / Contact info** | Administer Kinney and Board of Managers**Cc / Contact info** | Greg Graske & Anne Wilkinson – EOR**From / Contact info** | Kevin Biehn – EOR**Regarding** | Summation of Precedent Facility Interviews

Background

At the 7.11.2024 Board meeting, the Board of Managers approved budget for EOR to provide District office facility planning assistance. The primary tasks and itemized budget of this effort is as follows:

- 1) LESSONS LEARNED FROM METRO WATERSHED & LEARNING CENTER PRECEDENTS [\$9,400]
- 2) ASSIST CULTIVATED ADVISORS IN → DETERMINING, UNIFYING, & COMMUNICATING (THE DISTRICT'S) VISION [\$11,800]

Task 1 has been completed and is summarized herein. The District relied on greater EOR support for Task 1 than scoped. The District has not engaged EOR in Task 2 to date. At the date of this memo, roughly 12k remains from budget allocation.

Context & Methodology - Precedent Watershed & Learning Center Interviews and Tours

Metro Watershed Districts/Organizations with precedent facilities (e.g., Mississippi Watershed Management Organization) were solicited to inform CLFLWD vision and approach. Insight on the following was requested via interviews and tours to help inform CLFLWD's approach to a future office/facility:

- Approach to opposition from constituents and/or others
- Budget → land acquisition, legal, design, construction, operations
- Design decision making process and delegation
- Experience with consultants
- Experience with intendent “tenants”
- Financing
- Key commitments from Board and/or staff to effectively realize vision
- Pitfall avoidance
- Projecting growth and strategies to accommodate
- Space programing & sizing

The following four organizations were approached, and all graciously accommodated the District's request to interview staff and tour their facility. The full transcriptions of the interviews are included herein. Per the direction of Administrator Kinney, no additional interviews are planned at this time.

- Nine Mile Creek Watershed District (NMCWD)
- Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO)
- Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD)
- Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD)

Summary and/or Key Attributes of Precedents

➤ NMCWD

- Facility is referred to / branded as *Discovery Point*
- Property and building (SF residence) were donated
- Facility is located in a residential setting, which spurred some zoning/compatibility hurdles
- Existing home was remodeled to suit District needs, with subsequent additions
- 5-acre wooded parcel



➤ MWMO

- Urban, new construction
- Public access to the Mississippi riverfront, with beach area and boat access
- 11,000-square-foot facility is heated and cooled by geothermal energy, and is powered in part by an array of solar photovoltaic panels on the roof



➤ CRWD

- Urban renovation of existing single-story building
- The campus includes two buildings, both of which have been renovated by CRWD. A portion of the space is leased to a partner organization (Great River Greening).
- Design Principles (included herein) guided & united the District's efforts



➤ RWMWD

- New construction on vacant lot, purchased from the City of Little Canada
- Oldest of the four precedents, celebrating 20-years in this space this December
- Parcel includes water resource (Gervais Creek)



Summary of Findings - Precedent Watershed & Learning Center Interviews and Tours

There is a wealth of information that was garnered from the precedents and all expressed further support should CLFLWD have questions going forward. We are drawing attention to the following select insights and recommendations:


Recurring Themes Expressed by Two or more Precedents:

1. Plan/build for the future narratives were voiced. Precedents noted the need for additional space within short order of occupancy.
2. Office has served as a staff recruitment advantage.
3. ~10-year return period when comparing the cost of leasing.
4. It is going to take more time than you realize. This will be the primary focus for dedicated staff during peak planning.
5. Include the wow elements to make the space memorable and vivid.
6. Outside use of facility is generally free for community groups, local governments, agencies, and water/natural resource nonprofits. Compensation has come in the form of watershed awareness and partnership building.
7. Watershed Boards during commitment were opportunistic, united, and capitalized on opportunity.
8. Being a valued partner with immediate neighborhoods was evident.

Other Insightful Perspectives

9. MWMO
 - a. Faced some pressure to move to existing underutilized government space. Stakeholders resisted this path, in part due to the perspective that “secondary facilities” reinforces a secondary value, and stakeholders aspired for a facility that elevated the organization and its mission.
 - b. A key justification for the investment for the MWMO was that the facility would be a vibrant community activated asset.
10. CRWD
 - a. Developed and followed guiding principles, prior to hiring a design team, which became essential for prioritization and coalescing around a common vision.
 - b. Assigned various initiatives/programs to individual staff leaders and teams to delegate workload and pair needs with interest/talents
 - i. BMPs, Landscaping and Exterior
 - ii. Function, Form and Furnishings
 - iii. Outreach, Art, and Aesthetics

Note – blank responses were not relevant and/or not addressed via the interview.

CONTEXT	Precedent	
	Address	<i>Discovery Point 12800 Gerard Drive, Eden Prairie, MN</i>
	Interview/Tour Date	<i>1.23.2025</i>
	Interviewees	<i>Erica Sniegowski – District Administrator Kevin Bigalke – former District Administrator (at time of planning and construction)</i>
	Interviewers	<i>Mike Kinney – CLFLWD District Administrator Kevin Biehn – EOR</i>
	Lease / Own	<i>Own</i>
	FTE Staff (at occupancy)	
	FTE Staff (current)	
	Facility SF - Total	
	Facility SF - Office	
	Facility SF - Garage/Other	
	Acreage	<i>5</i>
	Narrative	<p><i>The Story of Discovery Point</i> <i>The land and original home on the site were donated to the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District by Barbara Kaerwer, a longtime Eden Prairie resident. The District renovated and added to the house and began operating there in late 2014. Barbara dedicated her life to protecting the natural environment. Through her tremendous act of kindness, Discovery Point has become a place for all visitors to learn how to be good stewards of the land.</i></p> <p><i>The 5-acre, wooded site is located in a residential neighborhood in Eden Prairie overlooking the Cardinal Creek Conservation Area. Discovery Point provides visitors with direct and memorable experiences with stormwater management and conservation—in both residential and commercial settings.</i></p> <p><i>For more information visit www.ninemilecreek.org/9-mile-creek-discovery-point/what-is-discovery-point/</i></p>



OVERVIEW	Q1	What were the goals and/or motivation(s) for building or purchasing a facility?		
	A1	<p><i>The genesis of Discovery Point was fortuitous → the District had notions of realizing a facility, but the facility came to be because of a generous land donation. The District seized this opportunity and prioritized:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Education/outreach</i> ➤ <i>Walking the walk → demonstration</i> ➤ <i>Sustainable motivations;</i> ➤ <i>Non-impactful as possible;</i> ➤ <i>Match prairie style architecture of home</i> ➤ <i>Labor of love;</i> ➤ <i>Honor the wishes of donor and her initiative;</i> ➤ <i>Strings attached to donation – property was to be available to public as a park; architecture commitment;</i> 		
	Q2	Timeline → what year did you initiate:		
	A2	<i>Initiative</i>		
		<i>Property acquisition</i>		2012
		<i>Design</i>		2013
		<i>Construction</i>		2013-2014
<i>Occupancy</i>			2014	
	<i>Other milestone(s)</i>	<i>Completed addition for staff growth → additional staff offices (2020)</i>		



PLANNING & EXECUTION	Q3	How did your organization delegate tasks/roles & decision making amongst your staff?	
	A3	<i>Administrator had approval for asks/expenses up to \$ threshold;</i> <i>Most responsibility fell to administrator; he became a “developer” and the Board was comfortable w/ Board president oversight;</i> <i>Mostly on administrator’s shoulders;</i>	
	Q4	How did your organization delegate tasks/roles & decision making amongst your Board?	
	A4	<i>Regular monthly meetings with special meetings as needed;</i> <i>Had a couple subcommittees for design decisions;</i> <i>Board wasn’t afraid to take risks and capitalize on this opportunity;</i>	
	Q5	Were there key stakeholders outside your organization and if so what role(s) did they play?	
	A5	<i>Key neighborhoods advocates, some of which ultimately became CAC and Board members</i> <i>Two critical council members who were advocates;</i> <i>Donor was so well-respected in the community, helped grease the skids;</i>	
	Q6	What were the primary considerations in the planning/selection of your facility?	
	A6	Size	
		Program	<i>Work with existing home; create a facility that was “always there”</i>
		Location	
		Cost	
		Other	
	Q7	Did you face any opposition to the use of taxpayer dollars to realize your facility and if so, what approaches did you take to resolve?	
A7	<i>Some ‘NIMBY’ government property in a residential community;</i> <i>Some tax role concerns, but no opposition from the neighbors;</i> <i>City did not readily accept and fought use/zoning; utilized Smith & Partners to get use accepted;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Went through a full PUD process → traffic study; stormwater, tree inventory; structure survey of structure; economic study to demonstrate offset tax loss and utility cost, etc.;</i> ➤ <i>Required to conduct public information meetings w/ neighbors;</i> ➤ <i>Ask to lead a petition but District didn’t want to look like they were strong arming it; eventually neighborhood led petition, which came in with 150 in support of facility and just 3 opposed;</i> <i>Ultimately</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Community approved because they didn’t want to see 5 new homes;</i> ➤ <i>Planning commission support;</i> ➤ <i>Political gamesmanship; needed a 4/5 council vote because of the zoning changes;</i> ➤ <i>Building zoned as public/administrative and balance of the site is zone parks/open space and is also under conservation easement with MN Land Trust (easement was in place at time of acquisition from owner);</i> ➤ <i>City Council put limitation on # of staff and # of meetings, (have since gone back to City to increase those #'s a couple of times);</i> 		
Q8	Was there a vision, goal, and/or ‘uniter’ that was instrumental in realizing your vision?		
A8	<i>Being a valued partner with the neighborhood, try to extend restoration efforts to adjacent neighbor and City properties (i.e. Buckthorn removal efforts)</i>		



DESIGN PARTNERS	Q9	Who were the design partners, and would you recommend them?	
	A9	Realtor	None
		Financier	
		Architect	LHB
		Civil	Barr
		Landscape	
		Legal	Smith Partners
		Other	
	Q10	How did you identify, vet, and ultimately select design support?	
	A10	<i>Interviewed 2 small "mom & pop shops", ultimately went w/ LHB based on their resume and preparation;</i>	
Q11	What are your recommendations for meeting and collaborating with the design partners?		
A11	<i>Frequent meetings, establish clear ideas at the Board level to bring to design partners</i>		

FUNDING/FINANCING	Q12	How was the project funded? (e.g., grants, general fund/levy, donations)	
	A12	<i>Was in a good position to pay cash, general fund levy; had built up a reserve; used budget reserve;</i>	
		<i>Limited / delayed some watershed initiatives to prioritize building – this was okay due to the water/education commitment of the building;</i>	
		<i>Looked at bonding (City or County on Districts behalf) – but decide to "pay for it as we go"</i>	
	Q13	Were there any partnerships with local businesses or community organizations to help fund the project?	
	A13		
	Q14	Any lending/financing advice?	
	A14	<i>District Considered working with Hennepin County for Bonding, but decided not to pursue this.</i>	
Q15	What was the approximate construction cost of your build and in what year is this number based?		
A15			

CONSTRUCTION	Q16	Who were the construction partners, and would you recommend them?	
	A16	General	<i>Synergy Construction (great to work with, but no longer in business)</i>
		Key subcontractor	
		Key subcontractor	
		Other	
	Q17	How did you identify, vet, and ultimately select a contractor?	
	A17	<i>RFP process</i>	
	Q18	Were there any concerns/recommendations regarding the contract vehicle utilized?	
	A18		
Q19	What were the biggest challenges faced during construction and what would you have done differently to avoid them?		
A19			



IMPACT & USE	Q20	How has your facility improved operational efficiency for your organization?
	A20	
	Q21	Does your facility host any programs beyond traditional watershed operations? If so, please describe.
	A21	<i>Grounds formally open dusk to dawn;</i> <i>Access thru property to City trail and other public property;</i> <i>Numerous outside entities (teacher trainings, boy scouts, etc.) utilize inside meeting and program spaces;</i>
	Q22	Are there spaces dedicated to community outreach or education? If so, please describe how this has benefited your organization and the public.
	A22	<i>Have interpretive signs that explain the BMPs onsite, have an outdoor classroom space</i>
	Q23	How do you measure the impact of your facility on your watershed management efforts?
	A23	
	Q24	Does your facility contain any BMPs and is your organization maintaining or operating these practices?
	A24	<i>Permeable paver parking stalls and sidewalk, 4 raingardens, cistern, reinforced turf overflow parking, vernal wetland, extensive buckthorn removal and habitat restoration; have interpretive signs explaining the BMPs; contract out maintenance of habitat restoration and weeding of raingardens</i>


HINDSIGHT	Q25	What lessons did you learn that could benefit other Districts?	
	A25		
	Q26	What would you have done differently?	
	A26	<i>With Staff</i>	
		<i>With Board</i>	
		<i>With greater community(s)</i>	
		<i>Site Selection</i>	
		<i>Design</i>	
		<i>Construction</i>	
		<i>O&M – Post Occupancy</i>	
Q27	What data or expertise did you wish you had available to you?		
A27	<i>Wished they would have thought 10 years forward in terms of needs/space;</i>		

FUTURE	Q28	What future facility plan(s) do you have for your organization?
	A28	
	Q29	How do you plan to maintain your facility in the long term?
	A29	

ADDITIONAL	Q30	Any other guidance or perspective?
	A30	<i>Didn't appreciate how many decisions there are and how much time this takes;</i>
	Q31	
	A31	
	Q32	
	A32	



Note – blank responses were not relevant and/or not addressed via the interview.

CONTEXT	Precedent	
	Address	2522 Marshall St NE, Minneapolis, MN 5541
	Interview/Tour Date	1.29.2025
	Interviewees	<p>Abby Moore – Outreach Program Manager</p> <p>Kevin Riech – Executive Director; (former Minneapolis Councilman @ time of facility planning)</p> <p>Dan Kalmon – Planning Principal (on staff during planning)</p> <p>Nancy Stowe – Projects and Outreach Director</p>
	Interviewers	<p>Mike Kinney – CLFLWD District Administrator</p> <p>Kevin Biehn – EOR</p>
	Lease / Own	Own
	FTE Staff (at occupancy)	
	FTE Staff (current)	
	Facility SF - Total	11,000
	Facility SF - Office	
	Facility SF - Garage/Other	
	Acreage	
	Narrative	<p><i>The MWMO’s Stormwater Park and Learning Center offers visitors the chance to experience a living laboratory of green infrastructure. We offer a variety of interpretive features, educational exhibits and community meeting space to help promote good stewardship of our water resources and habitat.</i></p> <p><i>Located on the corner of Lowry Avenue and Marshall Street in Northeast Minneapolis, the Stormwater Park and Learning Center features a series of visible stormwater control measures that have been built into the landscape. As a result of these features, not a drop of stormwater that falls on our site reaches the Mississippi River; it is all captured, filtered and absorbed into the ground.</i></p> <p><i>The 11,000-square-foot facility is heated and cooled by geothermal energy, and is powered in part by an array of solar photovoltaic panels on the roof. It was designed to consume just one-third of the energy of a typical, comparably sized commercial building. The facility also houses the MWMO’s staff, equipment and laboratory space</i></p> <p><i>More info can be found at www.mwmo.org/learn/visit-us/</i></p>



OVERVIEW	Q1	What were the goals and/or motivation(s) for building or purchasing a facility?	
	A1	<p><i>Goal/Aspirations:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A “secondary facility” reinforces a secondary value – building was intended to better position the District and elevate position and awareness; ➤ Key justification was that the facility would be “activated” and there was considerable public debate around activation; ➤ Provide river access, which was more limited at the time of planning; ➤ Energy efficiency; ➤ Education, monitoring and planning – programs were the driver; ➤ Demonstrate the work of the Organization and make mission apparent to the public ➤ Initially looking for 20 acre site, where they could do research and big events activities; ➤ Think tank model <p><i>Other Motivations:</i></p>	
	Q2	Timeline → what year did you initiate:	
	A2	Initiative	2008
		Property acquisition	
		Design	
Construction			
Occupancy		2012	
Other milestone(s)	<p>At 13 years old the WMO is starting to replace fixtures, carpets, and misc. finishes;</p> <p>Covid – required space for facilitating virtual meetings;</p> <p>Plans to grow over the garage</p>		

PLANNING & EXECUTION	Q3	How did your organization delegate tasks/roles & decision making amongst your staff?	
	A3	N/A – Two staff at time of planning	
	Q4	How did your organization delegate tasks/roles & decision making amongst your Board?	
	A4	Conducted multiple “what does this look like” sessions with the Board @ the planning & visualization stage and didn’t get into the details, stuck to goals	
	Q5	Were there key stakeholders outside your organization and if so what role(s) did they play?	
	A5	The site afforded river access and future trail linkage, which interested/united the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board;	
		The local neighborhood organizations were kept informed and engaged, which helped with local buy in	
	Q6	What were the primary considerations in the planning/selection of your facility?	
	A6	Size	
		Program	
		Location	
		Cost	
		Other	
Q7	Did you face any opposition to the use of taxpayer dollars to realize your facility and if so, what approaches did you take to resolve?		
A7	Not from the public, but a few elected officials voiced desire for MWMO to be housed in existing underutilized public spaces		
Q8	Was there a vision, goal, and/or ‘uniter’ that was instrumental in realizing your vision?		
A8			



DESIGN PARTNERS	Q9	Who were the design partners, and would you recommend them?
	A9	<i>Realtor</i>
		<i>Financier</i>
		<i>Architect</i>
		<i>Civil</i>
		<i>Landscape</i>
		<i>Other</i>
		<i>Other</i>
	Q10	How did you identify, vet, and ultimately select design support?
	A10	
Q11	What are your recommendations for meeting and collaborating with the design partners?	
A11		

FUNDING/FINANCING	Q12	How was the project funded? (e.g., grants, general fund/levy, donations)
	A12	<i>Entirely levy, with grants (DEED) for soil remediation</i>
	Q13	Were there any partnerships with local businesses or community organizations to help fund the project?
	A13	<i>No</i>
	Q14	Any lending/financing advice?
	A14	
	Q15	What was the approximate construction cost of your build and in what year is this number based?
	A15	

CONSTRUCTION	Q16	Who were the construction partners, and would you recommend them?
	A16	<i>General</i>
		<i>Key subcontractor</i>
		<i>Key subcontractor</i>
		<i>Other</i>
	Q17	How did you identify, vet, and ultimately select a contractor?
	A17	
	Q18	Were there any concerns/recommendations regarding the contract vehicle utilized?
	A18	
Q19	What were the biggest challenges faced during construction and what would you have done differently to avoid them?	
A19		



IMPACT & USE	Q20	How has your facility improved operational efficiency for your organization?
	A20	
	Q21	Does your facility host any programs beyond traditional watershed operations? If so, please describe.
	A21	<i>Facility is available to LGU's, partners, and the community – interest has remained strong; Decided to cut back on who could use and charges for use outside of regular business hours;</i>
	Q22	Are there spaces dedicated to community outreach or education? If so, please describe how this has benefited your organization and the public.
	A22	
	Q23	How do you measure the impact of your facility on your watershed management efforts?
	A23	
	Q24	Does your facility contain any BMPs and is your organization maintaining or operating these practices?
	A24	

HINDSIGHT	Q25	What lessons did you learn that could benefit other Districts?	
	A25	<i>Project almost got killed from a zoning implication.....(didn't have the right expertise @ the time); had to make some setback & frontage accommodations</i>	
	Q26	What would you have done differently?	
	A26	<i>With Staff</i>	
		<i>With Board</i>	
		<i>With greater community(s)</i>	
		<i>Site Selection</i>	<i>Context and acreage doesn't adequately accommodate buses and large school groups</i>
		<i>Design</i>	<i>If programing for outside guests/functions prioritize separate kitchens for staff and guests; Build where you can add on later</i>
		<i>Construction</i>	<i>More site assessment – did not account for amount of contamination and necessary remediation; Do research on solid subs and/or ensure that general has that covered;</i>
		<i>O&M – Post Occupancy</i>	<i>Containing sound and echo (solid concrete surfaces) – limits user groups and incurred IT cost to remedy Greeter/front desk separated from 'front door' and 1st floor entrance More staff space; less shared space Security / safety (not just IT) but intention design (sight lines, etc.)</i>
	Q27	What data or expertise did you wish you had available to you?	
	A27		




FUTURE	Q28	What future facility plan(s) do you have for your organization?
	A28	
	Q29	How do you plan to maintain your facility in the long term?
	A29	

ADDITIONAL	Q30	Any other guidance or perspective?
	A30	<p><i>If you want schools to come to you and to be motivated to do so – the space should be designed to accommodate (110+ students, noise, lunch, bus parking & circulation, restroom facilities);</i></p> <p><i>Hire a public engagement official (5k is worth it);</i></p> <p><i>Include the wow elements to make the space memorable and vivid;</i></p> <p><i>Go bigger than you think! Adequate size → respect your staff and the organization</i></p> <p><i>Location, location, location – river, brownfield, stormwater, urban, nexus;</i></p> <p><i>The facility is a significant staff recruitment tool;</i></p> <p><i>Justify – lots of value on communication;</i></p>
	Q31	
	A31	
	A32	



Note – blank responses were not relevant and/or not addressed via the interview.

CONTEXT	Precedent	
	Address	595 Aldine St, Saint Paul, MN 55104
	Interview/Tour Date	1.31.2025
	Interviewees	Anna Eleria – District Administrator
	Interviewers	Mike Kinney – CLFLWD District Administrator Kevin Biehn – EOR
	Lease / Own	Own
	FTE Staff (at occupancy)	
	FTE Staff (current)	
	Facility SF - Total	18,000
	Facility SF - Office	15,000
	Facility SF - Garage/Other	3,000
	Acreage	1.99 (two parcels with Aldine parcel being the main office campus)
	Narrative	<p>CRWD moved to the Midway neighborhood of Saint Paul in 2018. Our offices at 595 Aldine Street use green building principles, including stormwater management and energy-saving practices, to conserve natural resources and create a healthy workplace. The grounds include a watershed learning center, a pocket park, and interactive features designed to draw in neighbors and visitors.</p> <p>The campus includes two buildings, both of which have been renovated by CRWD. A portion of the space is leased to a partner organization (Great River Greening). This space provides future growth and diversification opportunities for the District.</p> <p>For more information visit https://vimeo.com/375979935 and https://www.capitolregionwd.org/crwd-feels-fortunate-to-call-hamline-midway-home/</p>



OVERVIEW	Q1	What were the goals and/or motivation(s) for building or purchasing a facility?	
	A1	<p>Genesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Started via 2nd Generation Plan process (2010) <p>Goals/Motivations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Model/demonstrate green buildings and infrastructure; ➤ Had outgrown prior space ➤ Desire for shop and other operational spaces to be connected with main portion of building ➤ Afford future growth; ➤ Desire to own and invest in the District <p>Parcel Interests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Centroid/geographic → operational efficiencies ➤ Proximity to public transportation and/or major highway corridor ➤ Proximity to water/resource (did not realize) ➤ Neighborhood center ➤ Off street Parking ➤ Considered pairing with partner organizations 	
	Q2	Timeline → what year did you initiate:	
	A2	Initiative	2010's
		Property acquisition	2012 - 2016
		Design	2016-17
		Construction	2017-18
	Occupancy	December 2018	
	Other milestone(s)	2020 final close out	



PLANNING & EXECUTION	Q3	How did your organization delegate tasks/roles & decision making amongst your staff?	
		<p><i>Staff led – from initiative through design and construction with a supportive Board;</i></p> <p><i>Developed and followed guiding principles, which became essential for prioritization and coalescing around a common vision;</i></p> <p><i>Administrator (former) addressed majority of initial property search and realtor coordination, started pulling in staff once a number of tangible properties were under consideration;</i></p>	
	A3	<p><i>Assigned various initiatives/programs to individual staff leaders and teams to delegate workload and pair needs with interest/talents</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>BMPs, Landscaping and Exterior</i> ➤ <i>Function, Form and Furnishings</i> ➤ <i>Outreach, Art and Aesthetics</i> <p><i>Very capable staff → innovative, demonstrative, personal values</i></p> <p><i>All staff had an opportunity to be involved</i></p>	
	Q4	How did your organization delegate tasks/roles & decision making amongst your Board?	
	A4	<i>Created a Board Manager committee to facilitate input and decisions;</i>	
	Q5	Were there key stakeholders outside your organization and if so what role(s) did they play?	
	A5	<i>No significant contributions → the City was engaged early and often and the District was proactive with the neighborhood</i>	
	Q6	What were the primary considerations in the planning/selection of your facility?	
	A6	Size	<i>Target was 10,000 sf but realized an 18,000 sf facility</i>
		Program	
		Location	
		Cost	<i>Initial remodel budget was 3.6M, final investment was 11.5M</i>
		Other	
Q7	Did you face any opposition to the use of taxpayer dollars to realize your facility and if so, what approaches did you take to resolve?		
A7	<p><i>No significant opposition;</i></p> <p><i>Price tag gave staff and Board some pause, but they continued to believe in this as an investment for the future;</i></p> <p><i>Informed neighborhood District council and proactively engaged adjacent neighbors & hosted events;</i></p> <p><i>Proactively made spaces for the public and created amenities for them;</i></p>		
Q8	Was there a vision, goal, and/or 'uniter' that was instrumental in realizing your vision?		
A8			



DESIGN PARTNERS	Q9	Who were the design partners, and would you recommend them?	
	A9	Realtor	Avison Young
		Financier	
		Architect	MSR Design
		Civil	EOR
		Landscape	EOR
		Other	
	Other		
	Q10	How did you identify, vet, and ultimately select design support?	
	A10		
Q11	What are your recommendations for meeting and collaborating with the design partners?		
A11			

FUNDING/FINANCING	Q12	How was the project funded? (e.g., grants, general fund/levy, donations)	
	A12	<i>Fund balance, bonding (30-yr), and small interest income</i>	
	Q13	Were there any partnerships with local businesses or community organizations to help fund the project?	
	A13		
	Q14	Any lending/financing advice?	
	A14		
	Q15	What was the approximate construction cost of your build and in what year is this number based?	
	A15	<i>Construction cost = 7.5M Land acquisition cost = 1.4M</i>	

CONSTRUCTION	Q16	Who were the construction partners, and would you recommend them?	
	A16	General	JE Dunn Construction
		Key subcontractor	
		Key subcontractor	
		Other	
	Q17	How did you identify, vet, and ultimately select a contractor?	
	A17		
	Q18	Were there any concerns/recommendations regarding the contract vehicle utilized?	
	A18		
	Q19	What were the biggest challenges faced during construction and what would you have done differently to avoid them?	
A19			



IMPACT & USE	Q20	How has your facility improved operational efficiency for your organization?
	A20	
	Q21	Does your facility host any programs beyond traditional watershed operations? If so, please describe.
	A21	<i>Public facing intentions evolved over time – serve the public as well as the District</i> <i>Use of facility is free; generally available during business hours only for community, local governments, etc. who have similar mission and work to CRWD</i> <i>“Payment” is awareness for the Watershed District</i>
	Q22	Are there spaces dedicated to community outreach or education? If so, please describe how this has benefited your organization and the public.
	A22	
	Q23	How do you measure the impact of your facility on your watershed management efforts?
	A23	
	Q24	Does your facility contain any BMPs and is your organization maintaining or operating these practices?
A24	<i>Over 9 different BMP’s were realized, many 1st such applications for Minnesota and/or the region</i>	

HINDSIGHT	Q25	What lessons did you learn that could benefit other Districts?	
	A25	<i>See response to Q30</i>	
	Q26	What would you have done differently?	
	A26	<i>With Staff</i>	
		<i>With Board</i>	
		<i>With greater community(s)</i>	
		<i>Site Selection</i>	
		<i>Design</i>	
		<i>Construction</i>	
		<i>O&M – Post Occupancy</i>	
Q27	What data or expertise did you wish you had available to you?		
A27			

FUTURE	Q28	What future facility plan(s) do you have for your organization?
	A28	
	Q29	How do you plan to maintain your facility in the long term?
	A29	



ADDITIONAL	Q30	Any other guidance or perspective?
	A30	<i>It's going to take more time than you realize, but the extra effort and \$ are worth it;</i>
		<i>Get on the same page with your staff and board – unite behind a vision;</i>
		<i>Get Board & other staff out to see these precedents;</i>
		<i>Document ideas, vision, commitments for posterity and accountability;</i>
		<i>Establish building goals early and return to them often;</i>
		<i>Small decisions can have big benefits;</i>
		<i>Revisit goals after living in space;</i>
	Q31	
	A31	
	Q32	
	A32	



CRWD New Workplace Design Principles

February 8, 2017

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) is redeveloping a 1.99-acre site located at 595 Aldine Street in Saint Paul for its new office. The 1.99-acre Site is comprised of two parcels and currently has three buildings that include a 14,538-square foot building built in 1949 and a pole shed for storage built in 1978 on the east parcel (595 Aldine St.), and a separate garage built in 1949 on the west parcel (1736 Thomas Ave). The Site is currently unoccupied.

CRWD proposes to renovate the former 14,538 square foot building located on the east parcel for use as office space and to demolish the pole barn and construct a new single story garage/vehicle storage and laboratory space. CRWD does not currently have any planned use for the west parcel or the building located there. The space is intended to be a mix of office and meeting space with ample room for public meetings. This project will also be a brownfield redevelopment due to diesel impacted soils west of the building and solvent vapors beneath the slab inside the building.

CRWD has established an initial set of design principles for guiding the design of CRWD's new workplace, which reflect the values and overarching goals of the organization. The principles shall be used by the professional design team and CRWD's Board of Managers, Building Committee, Design Team and staff committees. They will help to establish and maintain good design practice and consistency throughout the design and construction process.

1) Overall

- a) Create a well-designed workplace that provides all the space, equipment and support systems that CRWD staff need to excel at their job.
- b) Create a sustainable workplace using green building principles to conserve natural resources, protect water resources including the Mississippi River and create a healthy workplace.
- c) Adopt voluntarily the City of Saint Paul's Sustainable Building Policy, which requires compliance with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or Minnesota B3 Rating Systems and the Saint Paul Overlay.
- d) Provide flexible workplace that can accommodate organizational growth without the need to acquire additional building space.
- e) Maintain integrity and character of the 1949 building .
- f) Address site's brownfield issues.
- g) Ensure CRWD is economically responsible and obtains maximum benefit for its investment.
- h) Ensure that building design is inclusive and accessible for all.

2) BMPs, Landscaping and Exterior

- a) Implement innovative stormwater best management practices suitable for an urban brownfield site with an emphasis on green infrastructure practices that utilize rainwater as a resource.
- b) Create artful landscaping that utilizes native plant species adapted to MN climate to minimize maintenance and water use.
- c) Meet or exceed the District's stormwater management requirements. Explore options for creating a net zero runoff site and/or treating off-site runoff.
- d) Provide shared stacked stormwater management for both the Aldine and Thomas parcels.
- e) Create outdoor amenities for employees and visitors.
- f) Increase and enhance greenspaces and reduce overall impervious surfaces.
- g) Create clearly designated and welcoming public entrances.


3) Function, Form and Furnishings

- a) Create an open and unified office layout that fosters a workplace culture of communication, collaboration and partnership amongst staff and within and across divisions.
- b) Create multiple, flexible meeting and work spaces that can accommodate large, medium and small groups, formal meetings, informal gatherings, social areas, and quiet and private spaces.
- c) Provide the latest and most efficient technologies in computer and telecommunication systems including mobility-enabling technologies that allow staff to work anywhere throughout the workplace.
- d) Create a comfortable, productive work environment by maximizing natural lighting and offering natural ventilation, thermal comfort, high indoor air quality, and sound control.
- e) Encourage a healthy work environment with ergonomic furniture, flexible workstations, locker rooms, bike racks, etc.
- f) Provide a safe and secure environment for employees, Board of Managers, CAC members, and visitors.
- g) Provide short and long term flexible storage space for District needs.

4) Outreach, Art and Aesthetics

- a) Create an aesthetically pleasing design that reflects our goals of water quality and public service by incorporating artistic elements, color, and a consistent design style.
- b) Create a watershed education and outreach center that demonstrates and offers on-site learning about stormwater best management practices, technologies and activities.
- c) Provide community gathering space for neighborhood groups and other local organizations that is visible and welcoming, which can help create and strengthen partnerships.
- d) Create a workplace that reflects the identity and character of Capitol Region Watershed District and instills a sense of pride, purpose and dedication for the organization.
- e) Consider the history of the site and neighborhood in site and building design.
- f) Ensure that the design of accessible and visible spaces reflect the communities we serve and offers opportunities for meaningful engagement.

Note – blank responses were not relevant and/or not addressed via the interview.

CONTEXT	Precedent	
	Address	2665 Noel Drive Little Canada, MN 55117
	Interview/Tour Date	2/10/2025
	Interviewees	Tina Carstens – District Administrator
	Interviewers	Mike Kinney – CLFLWD District Administrator Kevin Biehn – EOR
	Lease / Own	Own
	FTE Staff (at occupancy)	24
	FTE Staff (current)	18
	Facility SF - Total	
	Facility SF - Office	Approx. 6200 SF
	Facility SF - Garage/Other	Originally 1150 SF but then added upper garage at approx. 1500 SF
	Acreage	1.8 acres
	Narrative	<p>Our office demonstrates sustainable design and stormwater management features. The District office, constructed in 2005 along Gervais Creek in Little Canada, includes green architecture, stormwater management features and Minnesota native plants. It is designed to capture 100 percent of rain and snowmelt from the property, stopping runoff pollution from entering the creek and downstream waters. For more information visit https://rwmwd.org/projects/district-office-site/</p> <p>Background:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At City of Maplewood Public Works building prior – the City needed the space, which forced the move conversation • Vetted leasing vs owning (ten-year return forecasted – pushed the Board into ownership) • Was in temp space during planning • Ended up purchasing vacant lot owned by the City <p>Size at Opening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parcel = 40,500 sq. ft. • Building footprint = 7647 sq. ft. • Parking lot = 7000 sq. ft. • Six rain gardens = 3184 sq. ft. • Vegetated garage roof = 1140 sq. ft. • Other impervious, including walks = 100 sq. ft. • Standard turf = 1000 sq. ft. • Everything else is native prairie or no-mow turf (approx. 20,000 sq. ft.)



OVERVIEW	Q1	What were the goals and/or motivation(s) for building or purchasing a facility?	
	A1	<p><i>Goal/Aspirations:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider storm water runoff as a resource and develop a project that results in zero off-site runoff • Demonstrate how a building can be wonderful to work in, integrated with its site and surrounding environment • Provide a living lab of educational opportunity • Reduce the environmental impact of this building over its lifetime by reducing its annual energy consumption by 30% of current building code • Reduce the ecological footprint of this building through the selection of materials and waste disposal strategies • Demonstrate environmentally responsible leadership by taking measured risks and using well-chosen strategies <p><i>Other Motivations: When we were faced with a sudden need to find new office space, we compared the cost of leasing to cost of building and found that the cost of building equaled the cost of leasing for 10 years. Very few sites met our spatial needs, but we were able to secure our top site, across the street from the Little Canada City Hall. The site is adjacent to Gervais Creek, and just upstream from stormwater ponds we constructed in 1992. We designed our site to reduce stormwater runoff volume by 95% in an average year, thereby significantly reducing stormwater runoff volume and its pollutants from washing into Gervais Creek.</i></p>	
	Q2	Timeline → what year did you initiate:	
	A2	Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2004 – hired project manager to identify space needs and prepare scope and budget • July 2004 – approved prelim budget \$1,950,000 with construction of \$1,260,000 • August 2004 – prepared RFP for architect • Sept 2004 – conducted design charette with 2 architects • Oct 2004 – hired Sarah Nettleton Architects with Michael Huber • Nov 2004 – Completed program needs assessment with board, staff and building design committee, prepared initial site plan and schematic design • Nov 2004 – prepared RFP and hired project general contractor – James Stelle Construction. Contractor completed pricing estimate on design at \$1,950,000. – completed phase 1 of value engineering with revised budget total increase to \$2,400,000 and construction \$1,600,000.
		Property acquisition	
		Design	
		Construction	
		Occupancy	December 2005
		Other milestone(s)	



PLANNING & EXECUTION	Q3	How did your organization delegate tasks/roles & decision making amongst your staff?		
	A3	<i>Cliff Aichinger (District Administrator during facility planning and design) and one other staff person were the point people. Held many all staff focus groups to identify needs and wants. Cliff ultimately decided what stayed and what went.</i>		
	Q4	How did your organization delegate tasks/roles & decision making amongst your Board?		
	A4	<i>Two board members were on the building design team that helped identify the key components of the building and how we would reach our goals. But they weren't involved in the day to day during construction.</i> <i>Board was very supportive, champion of BMPs and demonstration. Cohesive group that had been together for a long time.</i>		
	Q5	Were there key stakeholders outside your organization and if so what role(s) did they play?		
	A5	<i>We had two residents that were part of the building design team that were members of our CAC.</i> <i>City of Little Canada (Mayor and City Administrator) was supportive – found it beneficial to have WD nearby → partnerships MS4, TMDL, etc.</i>		
	Q6	What were the primary considerations in the planning/selection of your facility?		
	A6	Size		
		Program	<i>Many program needs assessments were done and used to determine each program area needs. Cliff had the task of determining the ultimate need vs want.</i>	
		Location	<i>In the watershed but also in a place close to a water resource that we manage was desirable.</i>	
		Cost	<i>After the original budget was determined with the help of CBRE, the board did increase the budget to accommodate the program needs. But once that was increased a few different value design sessions were held and architect design elements were adjusted.</i>	
		Other		
	Q7	Did you face any opposition to the use of taxpayer dollars to realize your facility and if so, what approaches did you take to resolve?		
A7	<i>Not that I recall. There was some push back from residents about building on this city of Little Canada site but many city council workshops and planning commission meetings later, they were hesitantly supportive, and the city staff and council were very supportive and willing to go to bat for us.</i>			
Q8	Was there a vision, goal, and/or 'uniter' that was instrumental in realizing your vision?			
A8				



DESIGN PARTNERS	Q9	Who were the design partners, and would you recommend them?	
	A9	Realtor	CBRE
		Financier	Northland Securities
		Architect	Sarah Nettleton and Michael Huber
		Civil	Barr Engineering
		Landscape	Barr Engineering
		Other	Project General Contractor – James Steele Construction
		Other	
	Q10	How did you identify, vet, and ultimately select design support?	
	A10	Executed a design charrette with three architects (paid stipend) as a means to select design firm	
Q11	What are your recommendations for meeting and collaborating with the design partners?		
A11			

FUNDING/FINANCING	Q12	How was the project funded? (e.g., grants, general fund/levy, donations)	
	A12	Bonding	
	Q13	Were there any partnerships with local businesses or community organizations to help fund the project?	
	A13		
	Q14	Any lending/financing advice?	
	A14		
	Q15	What was the approximate construction cost of your build and in what year is this number based?	
A15	In 2005, our budget was \$2,465,000 including the land purchase which we made for \$150,000. In the end the budget was underspent by \$61,000 which was ultimately used to make some additional indoor and outdoor improvements. This included the original site and the 10 foot of property purchased at the time from the adjacent land owner, Norm's Tires. Several years later the upper garage and associated land to increase the parking lot size was purchased from Norm's Tire as they prepared to sell the store.		

CONSTRUCTION	Q16	Who were the construction partners, and would you recommend them?	
	A16	General	James Steele
		Key subcontractor	
		Key subcontractor	
		Other	
	Q17	How did you identify, vet, and ultimately select a contractor?	
	A17	RFP	
	Q18	Were there any concerns/recommendations regarding the contract vehicle utilized?	
	A18		
Q19	What were the biggest challenges faced during construction and what would you have done differently to avoid them?		
A19			



IMPACT & USE	Q20	How has your facility improved operational efficiency for your organization?
	A20	<i>From the start and continues to be a great demonstration site. We still give tours of the BMPs and talk about small site design and the possibilities to have a zero runoff site. Increasing our garage size makes it much more efficient to run our NR and WQ monitoring programs as well as our education and regulatory. Can house all the vehicles we own.</i>
	Q21	Does your facility host any programs beyond traditional watershed operations? If so, please describe.
	A21	<i>Before COVID, our site was used by outside nonprofit groups for their meetings and tours etc. We don't have that as much anymore due to many organizations moving to online meetings. More common users of space includes entities like Audubon, BWSR, and small organizations and government units; space is designed to accommodate; not charging;</i>
	Q22	Are there spaces dedicated to community outreach or education? If so, please describe how this has benefited your organization and the public.
	A22	<i>The building was designed to be office space on one half that can be closed off for privacy – and then the other half is public. That includes spaces like the work room and board room. We also have outside spaces like the patio that we use for education and outreach efforts. School groups come to our site. The daycare down the street and elementary school along the trail will walk here and our staff will do education with them. Typically, our school groups (~25 classrooms a year) have formal instruction in their classroom with follow up visit to our facility and/or District projects.</i>
	Q23	How do you measure the impact of your facility on your watershed management efforts?
	A23	<i>First off, we wanted to show that you can have new development and not impact negatively the water resources. In 2005 and on, we also used the site to show developers and engineering various BMPs that are available to them. Our monitoring efforts can show the success.</i>
	Q24	Does your facility contain any BMPs and is your organization maintaining or operating these practices?
	A24	<i>Yes, we have NR maintenance staff that maintain many areas throughout the district so this was just one of many sites they are responsible for. As we have grown in sites, we have hired maintenance contractors that manage certain sites including our office sites for vegetation management. The District has been monitoring the campus since occupancy and only 2± stormwater discharges have been recorded in 20-years. Green Building Initiatives Employed:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Site Design: use of native plants, take advantage of solar exposure, infiltrate runoff, minimize hard surfaces</i> • <i>Energy conservation: use of efficient lighting and daylighting strategies, high efficiency operable windows, ceiling fans for air movement, in-floor heating, high efficiency mechanical system, efficient building envelope, use local materials</i> • <i>Water conservation: natural landscape (no irrigation requirements), use of rain barrels for rain capture, water conserving fixtures</i> • <i>Storm Water management: all site stormwater infiltrates or is stored up to the 2.5 inch rainfall event, site also manages a portion of Noel Drive runoff in raingardens, treating runoff from Norm's Tire, lobby demonstration exhibit, green roof on garage.</i>



HINDSIGHT	Q25	What lessons did you learn that could benefit other Districts?	
	A25	<i>Build/plan for the future – we were short office and garage space (vehicles, boats, trailers, ATV, monitoring equipment, etc.) at initial occupancy</i>	
	Q26	What would you have done differently?	
	A26	<i>With Staff</i>	
		<i>With Board</i>	
		<i>With greater community(s)</i>	
		<i>Site Selection</i>	
		<i>Design</i>	<i>Small detail but had some challenges with not having all design members under one contract with clear authority. More communication, collaboration, and commonly understood objective was needed across all parties. Allocated more space to the Board Room and Kitchen.</i>
		<i>Construction</i>	
		<i>O&M – Post Occupancy</i>	
Q27	What data or expertise did you wish you had available to you?		
A27			

FUTURE	Q28	What future facility plan(s) do you have for your organization?
	A28	
	Q29	How do you plan to maintain your facility in the long term?
	A29	

ADDITIONAL	Q30	Any other guidance or perspective?
	A30	<i>In 2012, we had the opportunity to purchase the upper garage and land from Norm's Tire and we expanded the parking lot.</i>
		<i>In 2013, we did an office remodel to close off two office spaces in the building whereas in the original design only Cliff had a private office. This allowed a space to have private conversations for staff as well as our office manager to be able to lock her office door. We also used that space over the year as a mother's room.</i>
		<i>In 2020-2021, we did another remodel to increase the number of office spaces as our staff had increased in size. We changed our large 2 desk bays into 4 desk bays in three areas and improved the function and furnishings including standing desks for all.</i>
	Q31	
	A31	
Q32		
A32		

