

Engineering Division of the Public Works Department

To: Chairman Arnett & Members of the Public Works Commission

From: Maureen McBroom, Stormwater Project Manager

Date: September 16, 2026

Subject: Update, no action required: MS4 Permit Audit

Background

The City of Watertown's first Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit was issued in 2006 by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). DNR staff currently try to audit each MS4 Permit holder once per permit term (5 years). However Watertown's MS4 Permit Program has not been audited before. DNR staff are scheduled to audit the City's MS4 Permit Program on Monday, September 21, 2026. A MS4 Permit audit typically includes both in-house documentation reviews and in-field site inspections.

The MS4 Permit Programs DNR has expressed interest in auditing include:

- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (finding and removing sills and other pollutants from the storm sewer system)
- Construction Site Pollution Control (erosion control)
- Post-Construction Stormwater Management (BMPs such as wet ponds, biofilters, etc.)
- Pollution Prevention (municipal operations, including street sweeping, leaf collection, winter snow and ice management, stormwater pollution prevention measures at municipal yards, etc.)

City staff will provide a high-level overview of the September 21, 2026 audit at the September 22, 2026 Public Works Commission meeting. Formal DNR correspondence regarding the audit is anticipated at a later date.

Financial Impact

The City's MS4 Permit program is funded through the stormwater utility and supplemented by grant funds when possible. Any MS4 Permit program updates that result from the audit would be funded through the stormwater utility and/or grant funding if applicable.

Budget Goal

1. Create a community where all can feel safe and strive for economic success.

2. Encourage community growth by assessing opportunities, involving ALL stakeholders, environmental needs, modern code and policy priorities.
3. Strengthen employee trust and retention by fostering a workplace culture of respect, service, and responsiveness to internal and community needs.

Recommendation

Staff will attend the September 21, 2026 MS4 Permit Program audit and will provide a summary to the Public Works Committee for awareness and planning purposes.