



Council Agenda Item

Meeting Date: November 4, 2025

Agenda Item: Staff Report – Implementation Plan

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BACKGROUND

(Enter the who, what when, where, why)

The recently adopted Stormwater Quality Management Plan includes an Implementation Plan outlining a series of projects to be completed over the next 25 years. These projects are designed to help the City meet its phosphorus removal requirements. One of the key projects under consideration is the Starin Park Underground Wet Detention Basin, which is being prioritized at this time for several important reasons:

- **Rising Construction Costs:** The project's estimated cost has increased significantly—from \$1.2 million in 2017 to \$2.7 million in 2023, with a projected cost of \$3.6 million in 2026. This represents a 200% increase since 2017.
- **Funding Opportunities:** The project may qualify for up to 40% Principal Forgiveness through the Clean Water Fund.
- **Existing Funding:** The project has already secured a \$150,000 Construction Grant from the DNR.
- **Limited-Time Federal Support:** The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has temporarily increased funding available through the Clean Water Fund. These additional funds are set to expire in 2026, making near-term action advantageous.
- **Partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater:** The basin would also treat stormwater from University property. The University has expressed interest in partnering on the project and contributing a prorated share of costs based on the area served. Final approval will be required from the Board of Regents and the State Building Commission.
- **Cost-Efficiency and Long Term Need:** This project will eventually need to be completed regardless, and construction costs, particularly for materials, are expected to continue rising faster than labor costs. For context, the West Main Street Detention Pond (DLK property) was estimated at \$328,000 in 2017 and \$454,000 in 2026, a 38% increase, compared to Starin Park's 200% increase over the same period.
- **Comparative Cost-Effectiveness:** When analyzed based on cost per pound of phosphorus removed, the Starin Park project remains competitive, particularly with principal forgiveness applied:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Cost per Pound Phosphorus Removed</u>
• W Main St/DLK	\$24,430
• Starin Park (with Principal Forgiveness)	\$41,965
• Armory	\$54,430
• Starin Park (without Principal Forgiveness)	\$69,942
• E Main Street	\$82,531
• Universal Blvd	\$109,661

The Implementation Plan also includes Water Quality Trading (WQT) projects. These typically involve partnerships with farmers or agricultural property owners, where the City funds runoff control improvements or converts farmland into prairie to generate phosphorus reduction credits.

However, these agreements are typically short-term (10–15 years). Once they expire, the City must renegotiate new terms; if a new agreement cannot be reached, the associated phosphorus credits are lost.

Because WQT projects are inherently temporary, staff recommends prioritizing permanent, infrastructure-based solutions, such as the Starin Park project, before pursuing additional temporary credit agreements.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS
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(Dates, committees, action taken)

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT

(If none, state N/A)

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

N/A

ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED

(If none, state N/A)

1. Implementation Plan and Proposed Projects
