

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, July 20, 2016

Media Contact: Gunnar Olson
515-334-0075 | golson@dmampo.org

Detailed plan finalized to improve Walnut Creek

A recently adopted plan lays out actionable, measurable steps that local governments, developers and farmers can take to improve the Walnut Creek watershed that runs through rural and urban parts of central Iowa.

The Walnut Creek Watershed Management Plan was adopted last month by the Walnut Creek Watershed Management Authority (WMA), which was formed in 2014 to address environmental concerns including high nitrate levels, high bacteria levels, high turbidity, flash flooding and stream-bank erosion. Walnut Creek is a tributary of the Raccoon River, which is a source of drinking water for the Des Moines metro area.

“It is critically important to demonstrate that meaningful progress is possible through regional collaboration,” said Clive City Council member Susan Judkins, who is the chair of the Walnut Creek WMA.

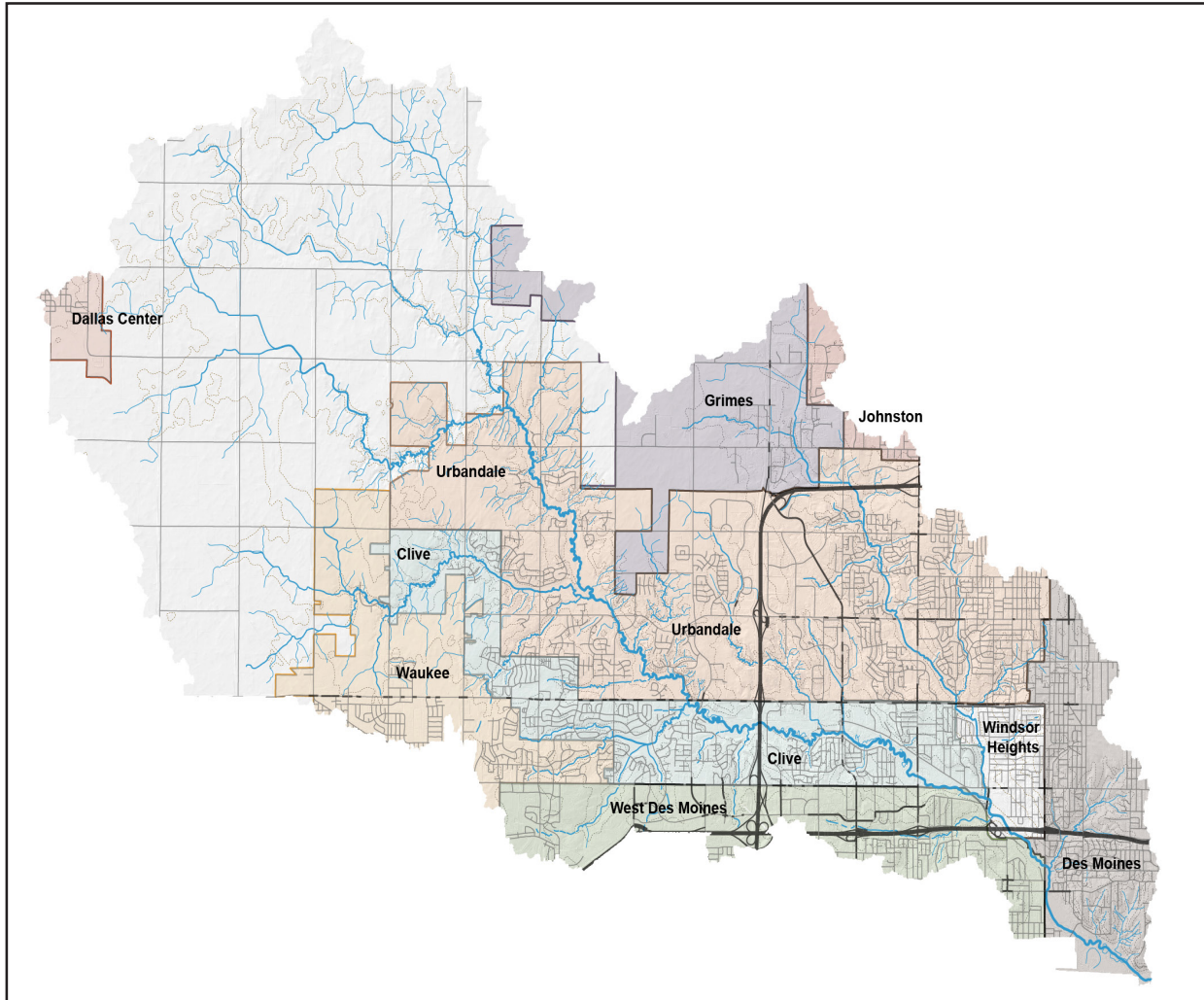
Judkins, who recently led a group of central Iowa leaders who accepted a challenge from U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to “think big” on water quality in Iowa, said WMAs are an effective mechanism for all interested parties -- public and private, rural and urban -- to collaborate on improving water quality in Iowa.

The full Walnut Creek Watershed Management Plan is available online at www.dmampo.org/walnut-creek-wma. The plan’s recommendations include:

- Adopt and use newer statewide stormwater design guidelines in urban areas to create ponds, wetlands, and other practices that capture and use water as a resource. Such systems would reduce the potential for poor water quality, streambank erosion, property damage and flash flooding.
- Promote the use of bioreactors, saturated buffers and other agricultural management practices to sustain topsoil health and decrease pollution levels in runoff, using Iowa’s Nutrient Reduction strategy as a guide.
- Improve implementation and enforcement of pollution prevention measures at construction sites. In so doing, the sediment load to Walnut Creek may be reduced by approximately 4,500 tons per year.
- Protect the 100-year floodplain by maintaining flood storage capacity, restricting new development within the floodplain, and reserving open space where flooding or stream movement is expected.

For more information, visit www.dmampo.org/walnut-creek-wma, email info@dmampo.org or call 515-334-0075.

Walnut Creek Watershed



What is a Watershed Management Authority?

A Watershed Management Authority, also known as a WMA, is a mechanism for cities, counties, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and stakeholders to cooperatively engage in watershed planning and management. The WMA is formed by a Chapter 28E Agreement, does not have taxing authority and may not acquire property through eminent domain.

Voting members of the Walnut Creek Watershed Authority: Polk County, Clive, Dallas Center, Des Moines, Grimes, Johnston, Urbandale, Waukee, West Des Moines, Windsor Heights, Dallas County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Polk County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Other stakeholders in planning process: Iowa Soybean Association, Iowa Agriculture Water Alliance, Des Moines Water Works, Green and Sustainable Clive, the Walnut Creek Watershed Coalition, RDG Planning & Design, and Snyder & Associates.

The **Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** acts as a regional forum to ensure coordination between the public and local, state, and federal agencies in regard to planning issues and to prepare transportation plans and programs. MPO develops long- and short-range multimodal transportation plans, selects projects for federal funding based upon regional priorities, and develops methods to reduce traffic congestion.