Goal 1: Clean & Clear Equitable Water Quality

Strategies:

1. Sanitary Sewer Overflows
   a. Address issues of inflow and infiltration and other sanitary sewer maintenance causing raw sewage overflows, improving community and environmental health.
   b. Develop a private sewage assessment/maintenance strategy.

2. Stormwater & Erosion Management
   a. Manage stormwater runoff and soil erosion effectively, preventing pollutants and sediment from entering water bodies.
   b. Understand and mitigate the effects of groundwater and high water table on surface water quality and flooding.

3. Litter & Pollution Control
   a. Implement measures to stop litter from entering stormwater systems and water bodies.
   b. Decrease pollutant loading to specified water systems.

4. Water Quality Monitoring
   b. Protect clean drinking water sources through vigilant source water monitoring and proper treatment protocols.

5. Focus First on EJ Communities
   a. Prioritize water quality improvements in watershed communities with documented environmental burdens, low income areas, and communities of color that are experiencing the combined impacts of pollution, climate change, and deferred infrastructure maintenance.

6. Address Historical Inequities
   a. Prioritize environmental remediation projects in areas historically subjected to and overburdened by environmental degradation.

Programs:

1. Sewer System Maintenance and replacement (also see Goal 3)
2. Erosion Control & Conservation
3. Public Awareness & Community Engagement
4. Water Quality Monitoring
5. Home Sewer System Education & Inspection
6. Environmental Justice (EJ) Scholarships
7. Localized Reporting Systems

Policies:

1. Stormwater Management
2. Trash & Litter Management
3. Regular Monitoring & Reporting
4. Flood Modeling & Protection
5. Best Practices & Regulations
6. EJ Impact Assessments
7. Inclusive Planning

Projects:

1. Infrastructure Improvement
2. Erosion & Sediment Control
3. Monitoring Infrastructure
4. Public Spaces & Community Engagement
5. Education & Training
6. Collaboration with Landowners
7. Infrastructure in Environmental Justice (EJ) Areas
8. Economic Opportunities
Goal 2: Flow Wise - Reduce Flooding Impacts (on the Community)

Strategies:

1. Increase Stormwater Management in Upland and Lowland Areas:
   a. Capture, store, and infiltrate stormwater in both upland and lowland areas. This approach aims to manage the flow of water during heavy rainfall events, reducing the risk of flooding for residents.
   b. Incorporate upland areas in stormwater management taxing districts to pay for their share of stormwater management affecting the lowland areas (As well as the upland areas).

2. Repair & Monitor Stormwater Infrastructure Maintenance:
   a. Inspect, repair, and regularly monitor and maintain stormwater storage and conveyance infrastructure to ensure its effective functioning. Proper maintenance is critical for preventing blockages and ensuring that stormwater systems can efficiently handle heavy rainfall. (Refer to Goal 3 for more details on infrastructure repair)

3. Preserve Natural Stream Flow:
   a. Preserve the natural flow of streams and waterways to slow down peak streamflow during rain events. Natural features, such as wetlands and natural floodplains can help to absorb excess water and reduce flooding impacts.

4. Voluntary Buyout and Relocation Assistance of Flooded Residents:
   a. Offer buyout options to residents of flooded properties who wish to move voluntarily. This strategy aims to provide affected residents with an opportunity to relocate to areas and reduce future flood risks to themselves.
   b. Add more flood storage on bought out properties where appropriate to protect residents who choose to stay.

Programs:

1. Coordinated Stormwater Oversight
2. Stormwater Capture Incentives
3. Stormwater Infrastructure Maintenance MOU
4. Regular Debris and Sediment Removal
5. Logjam Survey and Removal
6. Equitable Buyout & Assistance Programs
7. Localized Reporting Systems
8. Public Database for Stormwater Information
9. Public Recognition Programs
10. Youth Wetland Restoration Program

Policies:

1. Preserve Natural Stream Flow
2. Preserve Conservation Lands
3. Revive St. Clair County Stormwater Ordinance
4. Ensure Stormwater Pump Maintenance
5. Manage Infrastructure and Maintenance
6. Identify Entity for Maintenance Reports
7. Create Stormwater Buffer Easements
8. Increase Funding

Projects:

1. Water Detention Features
2. WASCOBs from ACPF
3. Conduct Drainage Study of 255 Corridor
4. Repair and Replace Damaged Infrastructure
5. Remove Obstructions in Canals and Ditches
6. Fix Water Flow and Function Issues of Wetlands
7. Add Pump Station to Divert Water
8. Coordinate with USACE on Drainage Channel Improvements
9. Evaluate and consider further developing projects listed in the USACE East St. Louis & Vicinity report
Goal 3: Fix & Flow - Upgrade Our Water Infrastructure

Strategies:

1. **Increase local maintenance capacity:**
   a. Develop a comprehensive approach for regular maintenance of infrastructure including streets, canals, sanitary sewer pipes, sanitary sewer manholes, ditches, and drains that covers not just neighborhood ditches but also major canals like Harding Ditch that connect to local ditches.

2. **Maintain and retrofit/redesign Infrastructure:**
   a. Provide equitable protection from riverine and inland flooding to all residents, especially in floodplain areas and for disadvantaged communities through levees, flood walls, and associated infrastructure and maintenance.

3. **Prioritize historically marginalized communities**
   a. Continue addressing aging infrastructure to ensure that vulnerable populations do not suffer disproportionately from aging and malfunctioning systems.

4. **Promote green infrastructure in upland areas:**
   a. Use green infrastructure to manage runoff using natural processes and reduce the burden on the existing gray infrastructure downstream.

5. **Develop robust data collection and reporting mechanisms:**
   a. Track infrastructure conditions, maintenance needs, and upgrades, especially in flood prone areas.

Programs:

1. Training programs for municipal staff
2. Public Awareness Campaigns
3. Collaborative programs between local communities
4. Assistance programs for seniors and low-income households

Policies:

1. Update local government maintenance and infrastructure management policies
2. Implement and enforce stricter regulations on illegal dumping
3. Introduce incentives or mandates for property owners
4. Develop policies that promote public-private partnerships to address infrastructure issues

Projects:

1. Infrastructure Inventory and Assessment
2. Infrastructure Upgrades and Repairs
3. Financial Mechanisms for Infrastructure Management
Goal 4: Leading by Stewardship - Strong Leadership & Accountability

Strategies:

1. Transparent Communication:
   a. Establish a watchdog website or digital portal for equitable and transparent communication with communities regarding the construction of projects.
   b. Continue community-led meetings with agencies, legislators, and leadership.

2. Community Empowerment:
   a. Empower local individuals, groups, and communities to continue implementing best management practices through citizen monitoring, transparent communication, accountability to community organizations, and ongoing meetings and reporting.

3. Environmental Justice Awareness:
   a. Foster a regional understanding of environmental justice issues in the watershed, prioritizing and centering the needs and voices of historically underresourced and overburdened, or marginalized communities.

4. Capacity Building:
   a. Offer workshops, training, and resources to local stakeholders, enhancing their ability to take informed actions related to watershed health.

Programs:
1. Training Inspection Program
2. Engage & Train local leaders
3. Small Grants Program
4. BMP Landowner Connection
5. BMP Inventory
6. Community Feedback Platforms

Policies:
1. Project Maintenance and Responsibility
2. Resource Sharing
3. Environmental Justice Integration

Projects:
1. Demonstration Projects
2. Community Engagement and Education
3. Localized EJ Projects
Goal 5: Building Smarter Community-Centered Development

Strategies:

1. Reduce Impervious Surfaces and Flood Risk through low-impact development.
   a. Create programs and implement policies and projects to reduce impervious surfaces in upland and floodplain zones to improve water storage.
   b. Incentivize removal of pavement, downsizing parking requirements, and use of permeable paving techniques.
   c. Remove deteriorated and broken pavement/asphalt from vacant lots.

2. Enhance Floodplain Management:
   a. Implement smart policies to ensure development in a floodplain does not increase flood issues for neighbors.
   b. Encourage municipalities and oversight entities to hire Certified Floodplain Manager(s) or train staff in certification program.

3. Prioritize Green Infrastructure and Conservation of Sensitive Lands and natural resources.
   a. Prioritize green infrastructure in development policies in upland communities to improve water storage and water quality in streams.

Programs:
1. Removal of Impervious Surfaces
2. Green Infrastructure
3. Floodplain Management
4. Low Impact / Smart Development

Policies:
1. Impervious Surfaces
2. Low Impact / Smart Development
3. Green Infrastructure
4. Floodplain Management

Projects:
1. Impervious Surfaces
2. Low Impact / Smart Development
3. Green Infrastructure
4. Floodplain Management
Goal 6:
Structure for Success
- Establish Successful Systems

Strategies:

1. **Responsive Governance:**
   - Address historical concerns by prioritizing responsiveness, ensuring that grievances and feedback are actively addressed.

2. **Transparent Collaboration:**
   - Improve communication between local authorities in the watershed for better coordinated stormwater management and flood response.
   - A Federal coordination position for environmental justice-related issues in the watershed has been created in 2023. This position will assist with coordination among the many different programs and projects happening in the area.

3. **Accountability in Implementation:**
   - Advocate for environmental fines from violations in the watershed to be redirected toward water quality and pollution reduction efforts in the watershed.
   - Develop a process for ongoing community engagement to hold government stakeholders accountable.

4. **Learning and Adaptation:**
   - Provide a data portal or clearinghouse for all entities involved in the watershed to have access to data. Share data and recommendations to state agencies and other infrastructure managing stakeholders. (Refer to Goal 8 Policy 1)

5. **Resource Acquisition:**
   - Leverage funding from diverse sources, such as the American Rescue Plan (ARPA), Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), USEPA Environmental Justice Grants, IEPA 319 Implementation Grant, and others.

Programs:
1. Framework Evaluation
2. Joint Governance Platforms
3. Real-time Progress Dashboards
4. Oversight and Responsibility

Policies:
1. Data Sharing and Transparency
2. Community Centric Accountability
3. Collaborative Management
4. Benchmarking and Standards

Projects:
1. Community Communication
2. Advisory Structures
3. Infrastructure and Equity
4. Regional Collaboration
Goal 7: Healthy Places, Green Spaces - Health & Environment

Strategies:

1. **Riparian Buffer Enhancement and Protection:**
   a. Prioritize the restoration of vegetative zones along waterways to shield disadvantaged communities downstream from flood risks and pollution, which are often exacerbated by upstream activities in wealthier neighborhoods.

2. **Alignment with Existing Plans and Priorities:**
   a. Ensure that all habitat restoration projects in the Prairie du Pont and Judy’s Branch watersheds reference and support existing land management plans, programs, and priorities, both on public and private lands.

3. **Native Grassland and Wetland Restoration:**
   a. Reviving native grasslands and wetlands to enhance natural flood barriers and improve water quality.
   b. Restoring these habitats can lead to increased biodiversity, improved ecosystem services, and enhanced resilience against climate change impacts.

4. **Support improved recreation and community health**
   a. Conversion of empty lots or flood-prone areas to green spaces should contribute to recreation opportunities for communities. Consider improved recreation opportunities at existing parks.

Programs:

1. Riparian Tree Planting for Clean Air and Clean Water
2. Community Habitat
3. Monitor fish and aquatic macro-invertebrate communities
4. Collaborate with state, federal, and local organizations to identify and protect key natural features and wildlife corridors
5. Invasive plant species removal programs
6. Wetland Ambassadors

Policies:

1. Riparian Buffer Zone Ordinance with Recreational Spaces
2. Incentive Program for Landowners
3. Wetland Protection Regulation
4. Land Acquisition and Easements
5. Recreational Trails
6. Identify Entity for Maintenance Reports
7. Create Stormwater Buffer Easements

Projects:

1. Streamside Native Garden Demonstrations
2. Bank Stabilization using Bioengineering
3. Constructed Wetland Projects
4. Prairie Restoration
5. Ponds and Lakes Dredging in Local Parks
Goal 8: Learn & Grow - Expand Our Environmental Understanding

Strategies:

1. **Respect, recognize, and incorporate knowledge, history, and expertise of residents:**
   a. Access this bank of knowledge to benefit and improve projects and programs.

2. **Public Education and Participation:**
   a. Promote public education and engagement in watershed matters. Offer opportunities for residents to learn about the watershed’s challenges, potential solutions, and available resources. Encourage active participation and input from the public in decision-making processes.

3. **Identify opportunities for collaboration:**
   a. Collaboration on watershed management between Municipalities, Levee and Drainage Districts, and community oversight groups.

4. **Educational Programs for students and young adults:**
   a. Deliver educational programs about watershed issues and solutions to elementary and junior high students. Encourage youth to share their knowledge with their parents, fostering a wider understanding of watershed concepts.

5. **Facilitating Connections:**
   a. Connect watershed stakeholders to decision-makers and experts in the field. Facilitating these connections enhances collaboration and the exchange of knowledge, leading to more effective and informed decision-making.

Programs:

1. Training for Green and Gray Infrastructure Maintenance
2. Place signage
3. Provide more educational opportunities
4. Continue Community Meeting
5. Flood Damage Prevention Information

Policies:

1. Open Database for Water Information
2. Guidelines and Ground Rules
3. Provide information about development in high water table areas and flood damage prevention and insurance

Projects:

1. Develop public recognition programs focused on the watershed plan’s goals
2. Use Community Green Spaces
3. Launch Digital Platform
4. Community Monitoring
5. Partner Colleges and Universities