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M E E T I N G

CAL-SAG WATERSHED PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING

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Palos Hills City Hall  
10335 South Roberts Road  
Palos Hills, Illinois

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Wednesday, September 27, 2023  
6:13 o'clock P.M.

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M E E T I N G

CAL-SAG WATERSHED PLANNING COUNCIL

METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT

OF GREATER CHICAGO

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Held on Wednesday, September 27, 2023,  
commencing at the hour of 6:13 o'clock P.M., at  
10335 South Robert Road, Palos Hills, Illinois.

1 PRESENT: (District Personnel)

2 MR. RICHARD FISHER, Principal Civil Engineer

3 MS. LOLITA THOMPSON, Principal Civil Engineer

4 MR. HERMAN LOPEZ, Associate Civil Engineer

5 MR. DOUGLAS MCCLELLAN, Associate Civil Engineer

6 MS. PATRICIA THERESA FLYNN, Commissioner

7 ALSO PRESENT:

8 MS. VICTORIA SMITH, SCM, Executive Director

9 MS. BRITTANY MATYAS, SCM

10 MR. GERALD R. BENNETT, City of Palos Hills

11 MR. SCOTT MUNIS, Village of Oak Lawn

12 MR. PAUL MALLO, Village of Oak Lawn

13 MS. COLEEN BARKMEIER, Village of Oak Lawn

14 MR. ADAM METZ, Village of Oak Lawn

15 MS. SUSAN LEHR, City of Hickory Hills

16 MR. MATTHEW ZAREBCZAN, Village of Justice

17 MR. LANCE BEIGH, Village of Justice

18 MR. KEITH PEKAU, Village of Orland Park

19 MR. SCOTT LUEKEN, Village of Orland Park

20 MR. CHARLES TOKAR, Village of Chicago Ridge

21 MR. ADAM JASINSKI, City of Palos Heights

22 MR. DAVE BRADY, Village of Bedford Park

23 MR. GARY D. LEWIS, Village of Bridgeview

24 MR. JOHN RYAN, Village of Alsip

1 ALSO PRESENT (continued):

2 MR. RICK BOEHM, Village of Palos Park

3 MS. PAMELA HANEY, Moraine Valley CC

4 MR. STEVE PAPPAGEORGE, Moraine Valley CC

5 MS. CLARE NAWROCKI, Equitable

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Members of the Public

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1 MR. BENNETT: I will call this meeting to  
2 order of the Cal-Sag Watershed Planning Council.

3 Gentlemen, I apologize. I didn't realize  
4 that you needed a projector and I would have had one  
5 here for you but --

6 MS. SMITH: It's my fault.

7 MR. BENNETT: Blame Vicky.

8 Vick, you want to call the roll, please.

9 MS. SMITH: Sure.

10 Alsip.

11 MR. RYAN: Mayor John Ryan.

12 MS. SMITH: Bedford Park.

13 MR. BRADY: Dave Brady, village president.

14 MS. SMITH: Blue Island.

15 (No response.)

16 MS. SMITH: Bridgeview.

17 MR. LEWIS: Trustee Gary Lewis.

18 MS. SMITH: Burbank.

19 (No response.)

20 MS. SMITH: Chicago.

21 (No response.)

22 MS. SMITH: Chicago Ridge.

23 MR. TOKAR: Chicago Ridge, Chuck Tokar,  
24 mayor.

1 MS. SMITH: Crestwood.  
2 (No response.)  
3 MS. SMITH: Evergreen Park.  
4 (No response.)  
5 MS. SMITH: Hickory Hills.  
6 MS. LEHR: Sue Lehr, public works.  
7 MS. SMITH: Hometown.  
8 (No response.)  
9 MS. SMITH: Justice.  
10 MR. ZAREBCZAN: Matt Zarebczan, economic  
11 development.  
12 MS. SMITH: Lemont.  
13 (No response.)  
14 MS. SMITH: Merrionette Park.  
15 (No response.)  
16 MS. SMITH: Midlothian.  
17 (No response.)  
18 MS. SMITH: Oak Forest.  
19 (No response.)  
20 MS. SMITH: Oak Lawn.  
21 MR. MALLO: Paul Mallo, trustee.  
22 MS. SMITH: Orland Hills.  
23 (No response.)  
24 MS. SMITH: Orland Park.

1 MR. PEKAU: Keith Pekau, mayor.

2 MS. SMITH: Palos Heights.

3 MR. JASINSKI: Adam Jasinski, public  
4 works.

5 MS. SMITH: Palos Hills.

6 MR. BENNETT: Jerry Bennett, mayor.

7 MS. SMITH: Palos Park.

8 MR. BOEHM: Rick Boehm, village manager.

9 MS. SMITH: Robbins.

10 (No response.)

11 MS. SMITH: Summit.

12 (No response.)

13 MS. SMITH: Tinley Park.

14 (No response.)

15 MS. SMITH: Willow Springs.

16 (No response.)

17 MS. SMITH: Worth.

18 (No response.)

19 MS. SMITH: Unincorporated Cook County.

20 (No response.)

21 MS. SMITH: Bremen Township.

22 (No response.)

23 MS. SMITH: Calumet Township.

24 (No response.)

1 MS. SMITH: Lemont Township.

2 (No response.)

3 MS. SMITH: Lyons Township.

4 (No response.)

5 MS. SMITH: Orland Township.

6 (No response.)

7 MS. SMITH: Palos Township.

8 (No response.)

9 MS. SMITH: Stickney Township.

10 (No response.)

11 MS. SMITH: Worth Township.

12 MR. BENNETT: Ladies and gentlemen, we  
13 have a quorum, and before you are the minutes of the  
14 previous April 26th meeting. I will entertain a  
15 motion to approve the minutes.

16 MR. BRADY: So moved. Dave Brady, Bedford  
17 Park.

18 MR. PEKAU: Second.

19 MR. BENNETT: Mayor.

20 MR. PEKAU: Keith Pekau, Orland Park,  
21 mayor.

22 MR. BENNETT: All those in favor, signify  
23 by a vote of aye.

24 (Chorus of ayes.)



1 MR. BENNETT: All opposed, a vote of no.

2 (No response.)

3 MR. BENNETT: Motion carries. Thank you.

4 First item on the Agenda is the  
5 July 2nd storm and subsequent extreme weather  
6 events, the observations.

7 Is that anybody in particular?

8 MR. FISHER: Yeah. So my name is Rich  
9 Fisher. I'm with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation  
10 District. And really at all our watershed planning  
11 council meetings this quarter, because of the storm  
12 on July 2nd, we are kind of getting it out there  
13 to hear if there's like anything, I guess,  
14 unexpected flooding. Obviously it was a big event,  
15 you know, Cicero, Berwyn, and some of those areas.

16 Basically we wanted to kind of get an  
17 opportunity to kind of collect data on that event.  
18 It was a significant amount, and we would like to  
19 hear, you know, kind of some information from you on  
20 that. We did send out a questionnaire, I think it  
21 was like the end of July, and we closed it in end of  
22 August, about, you know, some of the information  
23 associated with that event.

24 The one thing I would say, it's important

1 that when we do have events like this that we record  
2 it the best you can. It doesn't necessarily need to  
3 be extremely sophisticated. Really pictures are an  
4 excellent source for recording the event. And that  
5 type of information comes in really handy for when  
6 there is a national declaration or presidential  
7 declaration like there was for the July 2nd event  
8 because that kind of gives credence to when you go  
9 for projects that could be FEMA funded or even HUD  
10 funded. They look for, like, that tie back to a  
11 specific event.

12 So any kind of information that you  
13 collect like that, calls, that type, it's good to  
14 kind of keep that so that if you do look for FEMA or  
15 HUD funding with a disaster declaration, that  
16 information is very useful when you go for funding  
17 for stuff like that.

18 Also just to kind of mention, I know we  
19 had the July 2nd event up there, but actually we  
20 had another event just week and a half ago, last  
21 Sunday, kind of hit the south suburbs. It was  
22 another very significant event, and actually it was  
23 pretty comparable to the one of July 2nd if you  
24 look at the rainfall data. Kind of went through

1 Harvey, Calumet City was the ones that really got  
2 hit hard.

3 But we're going to be sending out another  
4 survey, actually I think it was going out today, to  
5 collect information on that. So if you see it, we  
6 really do appreciate being able to provide any kind  
7 of information you have on that and respond to it.  
8 It helps us. We are looking at areas as far as  
9 addressing flooding in the area and looking for, you  
10 know, helping communities address flooding. So  
11 if --

12 MR. BENNETT: The point to that is that to  
13 declare an emergency, there has to be X number of  
14 dollars lost that the fed will consider --

15 MR. FISHER: Yes.

16 MR. BENNETT: -- declare that. That's  
17 what you're talking about on the second event.

18 MR. FISHER: Yeah.

19 MR. BENNETT: So if any town has -- had  
20 problems with that second event, hopefully the  
21 public works people documented it or the public  
22 works people that are here documented that for  
23 potential recovery.

24 MR. FISHER: Yeah. And for that point,

1 like I know Illinois Emergency Management Agency and  
2 FEMA both have offices that are like in their area  
3 to collect the information on that, and they're in  
4 the process of collecting information on that event  
5 to determine if that one can be also declared a  
6 presidential disaster, the flood.

7 MR. BENNETT: Yeah, I know the  
8 July 2nd event came close to us, I think  
9 Bridgeview and our communities just to the north of  
10 us may have been more impacted than we were further  
11 south on that event. So that money is out there  
12 right now, right, to --

13 MR. FISHER: Yeah. And to kind of go  
14 along with that, so they're currently processing  
15 that funding, but kind a point too to make on the  
16 presidential disaster declarations is whenever there  
17 is presidential disaster declaration, FEMA  
18 automatically puts an additional 15 percent, like  
19 whatever cost for the damages, FEMA will allocate  
20 another 15 percent to that area for mitigation  
21 purposes. And so they're right now with the  
22 July 2nd one, they're in the process of  
23 calculating what that's going to be.

24 They're expecting that -- IEMA has

1 announced that they're going to be coming out  
2 probably in the springtime for -- you can submit  
3 projects for funding in the springtime for funding  
4 that would be available from that disaster  
5 declaration. It's called Hazard Mitigation Grant  
6 Program, so you'll probably see a notification from  
7 IEMA, and we'll kind of get that information out  
8 too.

9 MR. BENNETT: How does that tie in with  
10 you guys as far as those projects?

11 MR. FISHER: It's -- with those type  
12 information, you know, we've applied -- or really we  
13 kind of can assist communities in applying for  
14 dollars; and, you know, a lot of times if it's a  
15 project that we have already or kind of work on  
16 developing, we can actually add that to it and  
17 supplement the funding that they can provide. For  
18 us, that's an easy kind of a -- for us to make a  
19 decision to kind of participate in that because it's  
20 FEMA and IEMA are going to kind of vet those  
21 projects, and any kind of dollars we are putting  
22 toward it, we're getting the FEMA dollars into it.  
23 So it's definitely something we like to help  
24 communities go after, and we can provide assistance

1 in going after those funds.

2 MR. BENNETT: The Berwyn area which  
3 obviously was devastated by that, they're in a  
4 combined system though, aren't they?

5 MR. FISHER: Yeah.

6 MR. BENNETT: That's the problem.

7 MR. FISHER: Yeah; yeah. So, yes, for  
8 Berwyn and Cicero are combined sewer systems.

9 MR. BENNETT: It's going to take a lot of  
10 local investment that's going to need help in there.

11 MR. FISHER: Yes. It's a tough situation  
12 in those areas for sure.

13 MR. BENNETT: Yeah, I don't know if  
14 Bridgeview or some of those towns, if they had  
15 problems or --

16 MR. LEWIS: Areas of street flooding. Our  
17 library took a big hit. It's below level. So I  
18 know that they have funds. That will be something  
19 that we could look at.

20 MR. FISHER: That would be great. Thank  
21 you.

22 MR. BENNETT: And I think the point of you  
23 consider capital project in and around that area to  
24 potentially alleviate that going forward.

1 MR. FISHER: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you  
2 very much.

3 MR. BENNETT: Any other questions on  
4 mitigation? Storm?

5 Great. Thanks.

6 Next item is on the capital improvement  
7 update. Is somebody out there? Come on in.

8 Sorry I don't have a screen here.

9 MR. LOPEZ: No problems.

10 So as we usually do, we select a couple of  
11 projects that have been subjected to some updates in  
12 the past quarter. Let's see.

13 We would like to highlight 23-IGA-12,  
14 Roberts Road drainage improvements here in Palos  
15 Hills. Preliminary design is completed, and  
16 currently the path forward is waiting to secure  
17 funding from FEMA before proceeding with final  
18 design.

19 MR. BENNETT: We have the funding. Just a  
20 matter of the bureaucracy of getting it.

21 MR. FISHER: Yeah. It's a challenge.

22 MR. BENNETT: No, they have been pretty  
23 good so far. There was a direct allocation from  
24 Congressman Newman and Congressman Casten is taking

1 over. We have the moneys in the bank.

2 MR. FISHER: Yeah. That's great.

3 MR. LOPEZ: Yeah, we wanted to highlight  
4 this one because it has transitioned from a  
5 conceptual project to an intergovernmental IGA with  
6 Palos Hills.

7 Palos Heights local flood control project  
8 at 131st Street and Cypress Lane, the status for  
9 this project is that prebid documents, prebid design  
10 plans, and contract documents are reaching  
11 conclusion, so the District is preparing to bid, to  
12 advertise for bidding and the construction is  
13 anticipated to start in spring 2024.

14 Another update is the flood control  
15 project in Worth Woods subdivision. The project  
16 will provide detention and conveyance improvements  
17 to address flooding in the Worth Woods subdivision  
18 north of 111th Street. The consultant is reaching  
19 98 percent of design documents. The IGA is being  
20 finalized. It went to the board, the Village of  
21 Worth board, and it was approved the past month.  
22 Construction start is anticipated in 2024.

23 Oak Lawn, 23-IGA-11, the project aims to  
24 provide underground detention and stormwater sewer



1 improvements. Project is at 60 percent design and  
2 construction is scheduled for fall 2024.

3 Orland Township study of possible  
4 alternatives to mitigate flooding, 157th Street and  
5 surrounding residential properties caused by high  
6 water levels of Spring Creek during periods of high  
7 precipitation. The project is led by Orland  
8 Township for the District. \$150,000 were -- came  
9 from our fund. This project was completed in  
10 2024 -- May 2023.

11 Related to green infrastructure projects  
12 resulting from the 2022 call for projects, ten GI  
13 projects were selected and will begin construction  
14 in 2023, the entire service area. Around  
15 17.6 million estimated total GI construction costs,  
16 26.5 acre-area drain into project. Estimated  
17 26.5-acre drain to the projects and with the design  
18 retention capacity of around 800,000 gallons.

19 In this specific watershed, there are  
20 three GI projects to be constructed. One of them is  
21 23-IGA-03, City of Hickory Hills Police Department  
22 parking lot project. The District partially fund  
23 construction for the parking lot using permeable  
24 pavers or pervious concrete asphalt providing over

1 140,000 gallons of design retention capacity with an  
2 estimated construction cost of over a million  
3 dollars. The District is contributing just under  
4 \$700,000. IGA negotiations are underway, and  
5 construction is anticipated to start next month,  
6 September 2023.

7 Chicago Ridge permeable parking lot,  
8 23-IGA-15, this is also a GI project. The  
9 construction costs are estimated at over \$600,000  
10 with the District's contribution of \$250,000. IGA  
11 negotiations are under way, and the construction is  
12 anticipated to begin in 2024.

13 We would like to highlight stormwater call  
14 for projects that will be released soon.  
15 Applications for the GI partnership program are  
16 currently open. The pre-application deadline is  
17 December 31st, 2023. Also for conceptual  
18 projects, which is a different program, MWRD  
19 provides technical assistance to study your flooding  
20 problem and design an alternative. Call for  
21 conceptual projects will be announced this fall.

22 Flood-prone property acquisition program.  
23 MWRD provides funding to acquire flood-prone  
24 properties. Acquisitions are voluntary. Call for

1 FPPA projects will be announced this fall as well.

2 And the SPP, or the stormwater partnership  
3 program, MWRD provides funding to build stormwater  
4 management projects that are in design or shovel  
5 ready. Call for projects will be announced this  
6 fall as well.

7 So this is like a highlight of the  
8 different programs that the stormwater management  
9 department sends out for call for projects. I would  
10 like to recap a little bit. The GI program, the  
11 conceptual project, that conceptual projects  
12 program, the flood-prone property acquisition, and  
13 stormwater partnership program.

14 MR. BENNETT: With the recent floods that  
15 have -- heavy rains, is the District initiating  
16 based upon your survey and data collection on  
17 certain areas, are you coming up with any projects  
18 yourself on your own?

19 MR. FISHER: Really we kind of rely on the  
20 communities to come to us as far as if they want to  
21 proceed with projects. With the two programs that  
22 he kind of mentioned, the GI, the call for projects,  
23 the preliminary is out. The conceptual projects,  
24 that one, actually that announcement is going out

1 next week. You all will see notices for that, and  
2 then also the one with the flood-prone property  
3 acquisition will be going out with close in January  
4 on those. And then Stormwater Partnership Program  
5 with the -- that's kind of like shovel-ready  
6 projects, it will be -- the announcement will be  
7 going out in November with kind of selection in like  
8 the springtime.

9           If communities approach us and they need  
10 assistance with development projects, that would be  
11 kind of like the conceptual ones, you know. We kind  
12 of really -- we really rely on the communities to  
13 kind of lead what they want. We do have kind of  
14 like planning tools as far as looking at addressing  
15 flooding, but really our kind of position is that,  
16 you know, we don't necessarily want to step on  
17 anybody's toes, make sure that, you know, we are not  
18 necessarily creating a priority that's not their  
19 priority. So we rely on the villages to convey this  
20 is the project we would like to accomplish, and  
21 that's how we proceed with that.

22           MR. BENNETT: Well, I think funding, with  
23 the funding you're not going to step on anybody's  
24 toes.

1 MR. FISHER: Yeah.

2 MR. BENNETT: I think the concept of the  
3 District, when we initiated the improvements to --  
4 we created the watersheds, and the concept was for  
5 the District, because of the taxation given to you,  
6 to undertake these projects that we were under the  
7 impression it was going to be all MWRD money and  
8 not -- but over the years, it's slowly been more of  
9 a buy -- not necessarily buy-in but a percentile of  
10 projects itself.

11 So that's why I asked if the District  
12 themselves in looking at our watershed have  
13 identified major watershed problems or improvements  
14 that could be made without asking necessarily the  
15 municipalities to participate financially with it.

16 MR. FISHER: Yeah, it's -- I mean, we did  
17 do -- we had the master planning exercises that, you  
18 know, for instance this one, we did a master plan  
19 for the Roberts Road area. We provided, you know,  
20 that report to the villages that's in that area.  
21 It's got a number of projects in there, and, you  
22 know, these communities are free to say, okay, these  
23 are the ones that we would like to proceed with.

24 But really it's kind of like at a point

1 where, again, like with these projects, they're  
2 going to be owned and operated by the villages, and  
3 we really depend on the villages to initiate that  
4 priority. It's like, hey, there's a problem we need  
5 to address and we'll do it. We, you know, we  
6 definitely demonstrated --

7 MR. BENNETT: Yeah, I say that only  
8 because of the limited ability of municipalities to  
9 come up with the substantial dollars on some matches  
10 that some of these projects are requiring. And if  
11 not for us individually going to another outside  
12 source to provide that funding mechanism to match  
13 what the District is asking, I'm just wondering what  
14 towns have not come forward because of the cost  
15 being so cost prohibitive. I mean, you're talking  
16 about multimillion dollar projects that a lot of our  
17 small communities --

18 MR. FISHER: Absolutely.

19 MR. BENNETT: -- find it very difficult to  
20 come up with a match.

21 So again, going back to the premise of  
22 creating and giving the authority, statutory  
23 authority to the water district, you know, to bring  
24 flood relief, you know, to the metro area and giving

1 the opportunities to use taxpayer dollars once -- we  
2 all share to pay to provide a hundred percent  
3 funding, some of these projects.

4 So again, I'm just throwing this out.  
5 It's been a while since I've asked that question,  
6 but now it appears that, you know, you're just  
7 waiting for a town to initiate a project, but with  
8 that comes a substantial cost sharing in getting  
9 those things done.

10 MR. FISHER: Yeah. There is.

11 MR. BENNETT: I've been waiting on a  
12 project, the planning goes back almost 17 years on  
13 Roberts Road, this Roberts Road bridge project.  
14 We're at the end of the watershed, but we couldn't  
15 do it until we finally got a grant from Congress of  
16 almost \$3 1/2 million to support and Cook County  
17 Highway Department to support this project.  
18 Otherwise, it would still be sitting there as a  
19 plan.

20 MR. FISHER: Yep. I understand.

21 MR. BENNETT: So I don't know who makes  
22 those kind of decisions going forward or whether  
23 there's a change of thought or different approach as  
24 to the funding of these. Just throwing it out

1 there.

2 MR. LOPEZ: So in order to understand some  
3 of these challenges that different municipalities  
4 encounter and that they learn from partnerships with  
5 the District, we sent out last year a stormwater  
6 survey in which we were requesting for different  
7 types of information. So the survey more or less  
8 led the respondents through a workflow in which  
9 initially it was asked if the municipalities had  
10 partnered before with the District. That led to a  
11 different set of questions that allowed us to  
12 identify which challenges that municipalities were  
13 encountering as part of the IGA negotiations,  
14 whether there were [inaudible] requirements, but  
15 everything was based upon the fact if they had  
16 applied or they had not applied or they had applied  
17 and not been accepted.

18 After that initial portion, all of the  
19 respondents, if they did not -- considering they had  
20 applied, if they had not applied, or if had applied  
21 and were not selected were led to some  
22 municipality-specific questions that would give us  
23 some information on the different challenges in  
24 terms of drainage and stormwater and flooding issues



1 that they encounter. And of course the different  
2 municipalities deal with different types of problems  
3 all around the service area, but that gave us some  
4 insight.

5 One of the challenges that we encounter  
6 from this survey was the response rate. Of the 128  
7 municipalities that the District serves, only  
8 42 percent responded. From those, that 54 total  
9 responses, 44 percent of the respondents had never  
10 applied to a call for project. So almost half of  
11 the respondents have never even applied to one of  
12 our call for projects. 20 percent of the  
13 respondents had applied before but were not  
14 selected, and 35 percent of the respondents had  
15 applied before and were indeed selected. From the  
16 total respondents, 78 percent provided contact  
17 information in the 2022 responses.

18 For this specific watershed, we received a  
19 33 percent response rate. This specific watershed,  
20 four respondents stated, so that means one, two,  
21 three, four, five, six -- yeah, seven of the  
22 21 municipalities in this watershed responded to our  
23 2022 survey.

24 Four respondents -- sorry, eight.

1           Four respondents stated that the  
2 jurisdiction had never applied to a call for  
3 projects. One of the respondents stated that the  
4 jurisdiction had applied, obtained funding, and  
5 finished the project or finished the project. And  
6 three of the respondents stated that they had  
7 applied but were not selected. That means  
8 50 percent of the respondents had never applied to a  
9 call for projects.

10           To your point of funding from outside  
11 sources, we asked if the municipalities had had a  
12 project resulting from a partnership outside, with  
13 outside agencies, not with the District. Four  
14 respondents said that they had never applied, one  
15 respondent applied but was not selected, and three  
16 respondents had applied to obtain funding and/or  
17 finish the project.

18           From the respondents that had applied and  
19 had entered into an agreement with the District, we  
20 asked for specific feedback. That feedback that --  
21 those questions were divided to different sections.  
22 One of those were the IGA negotiations, how did they  
23 go, the terms of the conditions. Another section  
24 was specific to the procurement act or the MPLA

1 requirements of the District, the Affirmative Action  
2 Ordinance, and the reimbursement process.

3 In addition to specific questions -- so we  
4 had this specific questions like encompass all the  
5 different programs, right, the SPP program, the  
6 green infrastructure program, and flood-prone  
7 property acquisition program. Based on the  
8 responses and what type of projects they had built  
9 with the District, we requested specific information  
10 based on the type of program that they had been  
11 involved. These responses were use to enhance our  
12 2022 and 2023 call for projects. So now the new  
13 batch of IGAs that are coming, we are incorporating  
14 feedback from the different municipalities.

15 Another section of the survey was looking  
16 for reasons why the municipalities had never  
17 applied, so what prevented you from submitting an  
18 application. Common responses were no project  
19 suitable for the program, limited staff capacity to  
20 submit applications, unable to provide and achieve  
21 funds, maintenance requirements post construction is  
22 too challenging, or do not have any stormwater  
23 infrastructure.

24 When it came to municipality-specific

1 questions, we asked -- for example, one of the  
2 questions that was included there was how long ago  
3 did the municipality to do a stormwater  
4 infrastructure project? Six respondents stated that  
5 the last infrastructure project built in the  
6 municipality was less than ten years ago, and this  
7 is included, for example, conveyance focused  
8 projects, some of them with green infrastructure was  
9 incorporated, or detention focused projects. Or  
10 type of projects were sewer separation that we  
11 usually saw those type of responses when it came to  
12 projects that are over ten years old.

13 Main fundamental challenges faced by  
14 municipalities are funding, the enforcement and code  
15 establishment limitations, staff, equipment, and  
16 maintenance. Over 70 percent of the respondents  
17 stated the communities have programs to deal with  
18 flooding. Half of the respondent stated that they  
19 foresee opportunities to work together with upstream  
20 on downstream communities to reduce flooding in  
21 their own community.

22 That is an overview of the survey.

23 So one of the take-home messages from the  
24 analysis of the survey results is that we do need to

1 increase participation from communities of these  
2 type of District-led programs.

3 MR. BENNETT: Which goes back to my  
4 question and point about knowing that, knowing  
5 those, that feedback, how is the District going to  
6 try to address that to get more participation? And  
7 again, whether or not that's additional assistance  
8 administratively to apply, or probably most  
9 importantly, how can we overcome the requirement of  
10 matching funds or the degree of matching funds and  
11 whether or not the District itself would change that  
12 policy. Because if you're not going to change the  
13 policy, you're still going to get the same answer:  
14 I can't meet a match.

15 MR. FISHER: I guess the issue is, is  
16 really cost of solving flooding. When we did the  
17 Roberts Road master plan, we did several others  
18 along with that; and when we did that, we did  
19 estimate of what it could cost to solve flooding for  
20 all of Cook County, and it's a \$70 billion problem  
21 and really kind of demonstrated to us that really  
22 solving the problem is not, it's not going to be a  
23 spectator sport. It's going to have to require that  
24 everybody gets involved. We've got to leverage, you

1 know, all resources that we can. And if we're just  
2 going to rely on the District's funding, it's really  
3 going to limit the number of projects that can get  
4 out. We have to leverage, you know, all the  
5 funding, manpower that we can to get at these to  
6 solve the issue in general.

7 MR. BENNETT: But in general you're -- you  
8 are already limiting the projects because they're  
9 not happening because somebody can't meet a match.  
10 So I guess my question back to the District, what  
11 has your allocation been over the last, say,  
12 five years knowing your ability to bond or to  
13 provide funding for these projects? Not going to  
14 happen overnight, and I understand, you talk about  
15 long term, but we are all patient enough to wait, we  
16 have already been waiting, but things to be on the  
17 radar, on the map, that this project may take  
18 five years but you have allocation of funds for  
19 X number of dollars each year.

20 I have no idea what the District -- I  
21 don't know what their -- they were given the  
22 authority to bond up to annually for these projects.  
23 I have no idea what you guys are doing lately on an  
24 annual basis.

1           MR. FISHER: Well, like this past year,  
2           it's over a hundred million dollars we're putting  
3           toward stormwater projects. That's what -- this  
4           past year it's over a hundred million. That's what  
5           it's been for the last couple years.

6           MR. BENNETT: That's across all  
7           watersheds; right?

8           MR. FISHER: Across all the watersheds.

9           MR. BENNETT: Yeah, how's that compare to  
10          the prior years, or what have you averaged over the  
11          years?

12          MR. FISHER: I don't have that data right  
13          offhand, but I can tell you like the last four or  
14          five years it's been over a hundred million dollars.  
15          It's that big of a problem.

16          MR. BENNETT: And the ones that are being  
17          built are obviously those who are stepping up to the  
18          plate and meeting some type of match and/or  
19          contribution substantial because in reading your  
20          projects, some of things are, you know, on a  
21          \$700,000 project, you're only providing 250,000,  
22          maybe a permeable paver type of thing; but those are  
23          big, those are large amounts of money, you know,  
24          just talking about local government to pick up. So

1 those who have the money can receive dollars versus  
2 those who do not have money.

3 MR. FISHER: I mean, we look at each  
4 community individually and look at their capacity to  
5 fund these things. Some communities obviously have  
6 more capacity to do that than others, and we take  
7 that into consideration in our funding allowance.

8 MR. BENNETT: Okay. Kind of like to know  
9 those facts on in just the last five years, what  
10 projects from what areas have gone versus -- and  
11 numbers from those type compared throughout the  
12 watershed.

13 MR. FISHER: We can -- like in the  
14 presentation, he's got all the projects listed,  
15 pointed out, on whole Cook County and in this  
16 watershed.

17 MR. BENNETT: Yeah, I'd like to see that.  
18 I know we have a Commissioner in the audience that  
19 has her ears open. I'm also preaching to the choir  
20 for the higher-ups.

21 MR. LOPEZ: Yeah, in this specific  
22 watershed, we have 10 ongoing projects in different  
23 stages and over 20 closed projects.

24 MR. BENNETT: Okay, I'm sorry. We'll keep



1 moving on here.

2 MR. LOPEZ: Yep. That's -- I finished the  
3 portion of capital improvement update.

4 Doug.

5 MR. BENNETT: Mayors, any questions  
6 regarding that issue of the projects we have or  
7 reasons why you have not submitted it because of a  
8 funding type of thing, I would think is number one.

9 MR. RYAN: Mr. Lopez, can I ask you, like,  
10 most of the projects that you're identifying, do  
11 they always have to be flooding projects? I mean, I  
12 have drainage issues and so forth. Because in Alsip  
13 I understand we are not on a floodplain. I was in  
14 Orland Park a few years ago for a big meeting there  
15 with MWRD, and basically like you're not on a  
16 floodplain, which is good to hear, you know, we're  
17 not flooding like we do, but our infrastructure  
18 always needs a lot of support. And we put  
19 substantial money into that every year with zero  
20 help and might be part of the reason why we are not  
21 even applying for this. I mean...

22 MR. FISHER: Yeah, it's not limited to  
23 FEMA floodplain now. If you have a flooding issue,  
24 it doesn't have to be within a FEMA flood designated

1 area.

2 MR. BENNETT: Okay. Who we got next on  
3 small streams? Is that Douglas?

4 MR. MCCLELLAN: Yeah, I'm Doug McClellan.  
5 I'm an associate civil engineer for the waterway  
6 section at MWRD presenting the Small Streams  
7 Maintenance Program portion of the presentation.

8 Small Streams Maintenance Program was  
9 conceived and established in 2006, follows MWRD's  
10 stormwater management mission to relieve flooding in  
11 urbanized areas through immediate and relatively  
12 simple remedies. The objective of the program is to  
13 remove obstructions and debris in the waterways that  
14 impede the natural drainage of small streams and  
15 rivers.

16 We use various equipment to accomplish  
17 this. We have a contractor on retainer to provide a  
18 Gradall with a boom extension to reach hard-to-get  
19 areas. One crew has a skidsteer with a winch and  
20 grapple attachment to pull things out of the  
21 waterways and lots of chainsaws and manual labor  
22 also.

23 Total debris removed from the various  
24 watersheds from 2007 to 2021 is 383,000 cubic yards.

1 In 2001 [sic], the Small Streams Maintenance Program  
2 removed a total of 17,000 cubic yards of debris  
3 approximately. Yeah, and that's our latest data  
4 point on this table here. Here in the Cal-Sag  
5 watershed, going back to 2007, totaled 95,000 cubic  
6 yards of debris removal from the small stream areas.

7 And to report a issue in a stream, you can  
8 go to our website, mwrld.org, go to the services,  
9 pull-down and go to report an issue. You can call  
10 it in. You can call (708)588-3171 and talk to  
11 Arturo Hernandez, and we can get a crew out to  
12 investigate your blockage in a creek. You can also  
13 e-mail Arturo at hernandeza@mwrld.org. You can also  
14 download our free citizen incident reporting app for  
15 IOS, or you can search for MWRD CIR on iTunes. CIR  
16 stands for citizen incident reporting.

17 The MWRD has a Rain Barrel Program. The  
18 use of rain barrels is an environmentally friendly  
19 way for residents to help out in the fight against  
20 flooding. Collected rainwater can be used to water  
21 lawns and plants and gardens, as well as to wash  
22 cars and work boots and tools, et cetera. Collected  
23 rainwater is especially useful during drier periods  
24 of the year.

1           Since 2014, MWRD has distributed  
2   141,865 rain barrels as of February of 2022 to  
3   homeowners, businesses, and community organizations.  
4   If you're interested in purchasing a rain barrel,  
5   please visit [rainbarrel.ca/MWRD](http://rainbarrel.ca/MWRD), and for Cook County  
6   residents, the price would be \$43 with free delivery  
7   to your home. For information on installation,  
8   please visit [mwrld.org/rainbarrels](http://mwrld.org/rainbarrels). And contact our  
9   Office of Public Affairs with any questions,  
10  (315)751-6633, or at the public affairs e-mail would  
11  be [public.affairs@mwrld.org](mailto:public.affairs@mwrld.org).

12           The program is in its 16th year. The  
13  MWRD is continuing our Rain Barrel Program by  
14  offering Cook County residents discounted pricing.  
15  The recycled rain barrels include a leaf and  
16  mosquito filter screen, a spigot, and an overflow  
17  adapter and overflow hose.

18           The District also has a Restore the Canopy  
19  Program. The District offers free oak tree saplings  
20  available to the public at our water reclamation  
21  plants. The initiative was launched in 2016 to  
22  empower residents of Cook County with an opportunity  
23  to restore the region's depleted tree canopy. Since  
24  2016, approximately 93,000 saplings have been

1 distributed to communities across Cook County.

2 Trees are a powerful and effective form of  
3 green infrastructure in which a medium-sized oak  
4 tree can help prevent flooding by absorbing  
5 2,800 gallons of rainfall per year.

6 So if that is -- interests you, you can  
7 pick up your free saplings on Wednesday mornings  
8 from 9:00 A.M. to noon at each of our water  
9 reclamation plants. The Calumet plant is located at  
10 400 East 130th Street in Chicago. Also at the  
11 Egan plant in Schaumburg, the Hanover Park plant in  
12 Hanover Park, the Kirie plant in Des Plaines, the  
13 O'Brien plant in Skokie, and the Stickney plant here  
14 at 6001 West Pershing in Cicero, or please call the  
15 Office of Public Affairs for more information, if  
16 needed, at (312)751-1633, visit our website, or  
17 e-mail public affairs also.

18 And there's bulk orders. If you have a  
19 bulk order, those would be delivered. Otherwise, if  
20 you're just going to pick up a couple, they're  
21 available at the water reclamation plants.

22 Yeah, if you have any questions, I'll be  
23 happy to answer them the best I can.

24 MR. BENNETT: Any questions on the stream

1 maintenance program?

2 MR. RYAN: Alsip, Mayor John Ryan.

3 You were saying -- I was just making some  
4 notes here. Arturo Hernandez, does he oversee more  
5 than just complaints. I mean, if the swales haven't  
6 been cleared, he can handle those kind of complaints  
7 too? Is that what we're talking about?

8 MR. MCCLELLAN: Yeah, I mean, there's  
9 guidelines for which swales we would service, but in  
10 general if it's causing blockage that needs to be  
11 cleared, that's something that we would investigate  
12 and look at.

13 MR. RYAN: I've seen some being completely  
14 overgrown at this point. Years ago they used to  
15 clear them all the time. I had to hire a  
16 third-party contractor just recently to clear the  
17 stream from Pulaski eastbound all the way to Blue  
18 Island, and they were pulling sofas out of there and  
19 everything else that stuck in it so.

20 MR. MCCLELLAN: Yeah, definitely call him  
21 to take a look.

22 MR. BENNETT: They should take care of  
23 that.

24 Any questions?

1 Thank you, Doug.

2 MR. MCCLELLAN: Yep.

3 MR. BENNETT: Any other business,  
4 District?

5 Okay. If I can ask at our next meeting  
6 you maybe bring a little more information or a  
7 little bit more deeper in the surveys that you did,  
8 have some more questions about that, about servicing  
9 the towns that -- or actually the towns that have  
10 not asked why.

11 MR. FISHER: Yeah. We do, like we do send  
12 out questionnaire. We try to -- I know a lot of  
13 people do that.

14 MR. BENNETT: But when you get that and  
15 you get the responses, or get the answers for  
16 responses, I'm sorry, coming up with some solutions  
17 to it and why not. Why haven't -- why is this  
18 taking place? Why haven't towns even thinking about  
19 applying? Is it funding? Is it capacity of  
20 personnel, whatever? I'd like to know these.  
21 Anyway.

22 MR. FISHER: A lot of that is in this one.  
23 We'll make sure to provide this presentation to you  
24 because a lot of that information is in this

1 presentation.

2 MR. BENNETT: Okay, good. I appreciate  
3 it.

4 MS. SMITH: I'll send it out. Thank you.

5 MR. BENNETT: Any other questions before  
6 the board -- we're going to take about a 10-minute  
7 break, and we start our regular conference meeting  
8 at 7:00 o'clock. There's a lot of food back there  
9 so please help yourself.

10 And with that in mind, I'll entertain a  
11 motion to adjourn.

12 MR. PEKAU: So moved.

13 MR. BENNETT: Orland Park. Second?

14 MR. TOKAR: Chicago Ridge.

15 MR. BENNETT: All in favor, signify by a  
16 vote of aye.

17 (Chorus of ayes.)

18 MR. BENNETT: Opposed, a vote of no.

19 Motion carries.

20 Thank you, gentlemen.

21 (WHEREUPON, at 6:54 P.M. the  
22 proceedings were concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE  
OF  
CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER

I, RHONDA K. WEILAND, a Certified  
Shorthand Reporter of the State of Illinois, CSR  
License No. 084-004438, do hereby certify that I  
stenographically reported the proceedings had at the  
meeting, as aforesaid, and that the foregoing  
transcript is a true and accurate record of the  
proceedings had therein.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I do set my hand at  
Chicago, Illinois, this 16th day of October, 2023.



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