

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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Tuesday, September 30, 2025
6:12 PM

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 Tuesday, September 30, 2025, commencing
at the hour of 6:12 PM, at 10335 South Roberts Road,
Palos Hills, Illinois.

1 PRESENT: (District Personnel)

2 MR. RICHARD FISHER, Principal Civil Engineer

3 MR. GEORGE VELEZ, Assistant Civil Engineer

4 MS. CLARE ADAMS, Assistant Civil Engineer

5 MR. FABIO MONTEIRO, Associate Civil Engineer

6 ALSO PRESENT:

7 MR. GERALD R. BENNETT, President, City of
8 Palos Hills

9 MS. VICTORIA SMITH, SCM, Executive Director

10 MS. BRITTANY MATYAS, SCM

11 MR. JOHN RYAN, Village of Alsip

12 MR. GARY D. LEWIS, Village of Bridgeview

13 MS. SUSAN LEHR, City of Hickory Hills

14 MR. KRZYSZLOF WASOWICZ, Village of Justice

15 MR. MATTHEW ZAREBCZAN, Village of Justice

16 MR. LANCE BEIGH, Village of Justice

17 MR. GEORGE SCHAFER, Village of Lemont

18 MR. TYE SWANSON, Village of Midlothian

19 MR. TERRY VORDERER, Village of Oak Lawn

20 MR. PAUL MALLO, Village of Oak Lawn

21 MS. COLEEN BARKMEIER, Village of Oak Lawn

22 MR. BRIAN O'NEILL, Village of Orland Hills

23 MR. JOEL VAN ESSEN, Village of Orland Park

24 MR. ALADDIN HUSAIN, Village of Orland Park

1 ALSO PRESENT (continued):

2 MR. JIM DODGE, Village of Orland Park

3 MR. DEAN CASPER, Village of Orland Park

4 MR. ROBERT STRAZ, City of Palos Heights

5 MR. ADAM JASINSKI, City of Palos Heights

6 MS. NICOLE MILOVICH-WALTERS, Village of Palos
7 Park

8 MS. MARY WERNER, Village of Worth

9 MR. JOE SEYMOUR, Cook County Department of
10 Transportation and Highways

11 MR. STEVE PAPPAGEORGE, Moraine Valley CC

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15 Members of the Public
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1 MR. BENNETT: Ladies and gentlemen, if I
2 can begin this meeting of the Cal-Sag Watershed
3 Council. Welcome, everybody.

4 And, Vicky, you want to read the roll
5 call, please.

6 MS. SMITH: Absolutely.
7 Alsip.

8 (No response.)

9 MS. SMITH: Bedford Park.
10 (No response.)

11 MS. SMITH: Blue Island.
12 (No response.)

13 MS. SMITH: Bridgeview.

14 MR. LEWIS: Gary Lewis, trustee.

15 MS. SMITH: Burbank.
16 (No response.)

17 MS. SMITH: Chicago.
18 (No response.)

19 MS. SMITH: Chicago Ridge.
20 (No response.)

21 MS. SMITH: Crestwood.
22 (No response.)

23 MS. SMITH: Evergreen Park.
24 (No response.)

1 MS. SMITH: Hickory Hills.

2 MS. LEHR: Sue Lehr, public works.

3 MS. SMITH: Hometown.

4 (No response.)

5 MS. SMITH: Justice.

6 MR. WASOWICZ: Kris Wasowicz.

7 MS. SMITH: Lemont.

8 MR. SCHAFER: George Schafer,

9 administrator.

10 MS. SMITH: Merrionette Park.

11 (No response.)

12 MS. SMITH: Midlothian.

13 MR. SWANSON: Tye Swanson, public works.

14 MS. SMITH: Oak Forest.

15 (No response.)

16 MS. SMITH: Oak Lawn.

17 MR. VORDERER: Mayor Terry Vorderer.

18 MS. SMITH: Orland Hills.

19 MR. O'NEILL: Brian O'Neill, village

20 administrator.

21 MS. SMITH: Orland Park.

22 MR. DODGE: Jim Dodge, mayor.

23 MS. SMITH: Palos Heights.

24 MR. STRAZ: Bob Straz, mayor.

1 MS. SMITH: Palos Hills.

2 MR. BENNETT: Jerry Bennett, mayor.

3 MS. SMITH: Palos Park.

4 MS. MILOVICH-WALTERS: Nicole

5 Milovich-Walters, mayor.

6 MS. SMITH: Robbins.

7 (No response.)

8 MS. SMITH: Summit.

9 (No response.)

10 MS. SMITH: Tinley Park.

11 (No response.)

12 MS. SMITH: Willow Springs.

13 (No response.)

14 MS. SMITH: Worth.

15 MS. WERNER: Mary Werner, Village of

16 Worth.

17 MS. SMITH: Unincorporated Cook County.

18 (No response.)

19 MS. SMITH: Bremen Township.

20 (No response.)

21 MS. SMITH: Calumet Township.

22 (No response.)

23 MS. SMITH: Lemont Township.

24 (No response.)

1 MS. SMITH: Lyons Township.

2 (No response.)

3 MS. SMITH: Orland Township.

4 (No response.)

5 MS. SMITH: Palos Township.

6 (No response.)

7 MS. SMITH: Stickney Township.

8 (No response.)

9 MS. SMITH: Worth Township.

10 (No response.)

11 MR. BENNETT: Ladies and gentlemen, we
12 have a quorum. For the mayors who are new here, the
13 watershed council is all-encompassing of the
14 watershed area which includes many of the towns
15 south and townships involved with the organization.

16 As we begin this meeting, I ask that if
17 you ask a question or make a response, please give
18 your full name for the court reporter so that we
19 keep track of who is speaking.

20 MS. SMITH: And we'll approve the
21 transcripts at the next meeting.

22 MR. BENNETT: Yeah, I had a notice myself
23 that the minutes will be approved at the next
24 meeting.

1 MS. SMITH: Thank you.

2 MR. BENNETT: We'll move on. I'll turn
3 the lights down. Capital improvement update.
4 George.

5 MR. VELEZ: Thank you.

6 Good evening. My name is George. I'm a
7 civil engineer with the Metropolitan Water
8 Reclamation District, and I'll be presenting on
9 capital improvement updates in this Cal-Sag Channel
10 watershed.

11 So this slide shows the total stormwater
12 projects in this watershed. There are 40 projects
13 total: Seven regional projects, 17 local projects,
14 14 GI projects, one Space to Grow project, and one
15 flood-prone property acquisition. There's around
16 nine that are ongoing.

17 I'm just going to talk a little bit about
18 the MWRD stormwater partnership. So we have four
19 stormwater partnership programs. One is the
20 stormwater partnership program for shovel-ready
21 stormwater management projects. We have another one
22 for green infrastructure partnership project. We
23 have one for voluntarily flood-prone property
24 acquisition. And we have one for conceptual

1 projects where MWRD provides technical assistance to
2 study the flooding problem and come up with the
3 solution.

4 The application for the stormwater
5 partnership program, green infrastructure, and
6 conceptual are due December 31st. The
7 pre-applications and applications for flood-prone
8 acquisitions are due on March 6th, 2026.

9 If you want to apply or learn more about
10 the stormwater partnership program, you can visit
11 this website at mwrdd.org/stormwater/partnerships.
12 There's a lot of resources on there and recorded
13 webinars that go into detail on the program.

14 Starting on the 2025 stormwater
15 partnership applications, we had 54 applications
16 from 43 organizations, and 24 applications from
17 agency organizations that were from
18 disproportionally impacted areas. We had
19 50.9 million in requests, 104.8 million in
20 construction costs.

21 Fifteen of the applicants identified other
22 grant cost-sharing funding with five of the
23 applicants confirming awards totaling 6.9 million.
24 Some other grant and cost-sharing funding included

1 18.8 million from FEMA, 5 million from IEPA,
2 5 million from Illinois DCEO, and 0.3 million from
3 the American Rescue Plan Act.

4 For the stormwater partnership program in
5 particular, we received 19 pre-applications, and
6 11 new projects were prioritized based on benefited
7 structures, extent of flooding, sewer service area
8 detention provided, and median income, among other
9 criteria. 13.9 million was requested from MWRD, and
10 a total construction cost of 26.1 million estimated.

11 For the GI program, we received
12 29 pre-applications through December of 2024.
13 Sixteen GI projects were identified and one is in
14 IGA negotiations with construction anticipated in
15 2026 for those projects. There's a total
16 construction, estimated construction cost of
17 \$9.6 million and 1.8 million gallons of designed
18 capacity.

19 For the conceptual projects, three
20 applications were received through December of 2024.
21 The three projects were prioritized for technical
22 assistance. Assistance includes developing and
23 engineering solutions to deter stream bank erosion,
24 engineering assistance to develop green

1 infrastructure plans, and stormwater planning
2 including inventory of existing stormwater
3 infrastructure. Work on these projects is being
4 advanced.

5 For the voluntary flood-prone property
6 acquisition program, three applications were
7 received through January of 2025, 40 properties were
8 reviewed for the program, and 22 properties were
9 found to be cost-effective and met the eligibility
10 requirements for the program with an estimated
11 6.4 million of fair market value. Applicants are
12 being notified based on a prioritization list and
13 IGA negotiations are being advanced.

14 Now I'll give an update on the ongoing
15 stormwater partnership programs in this area.

16 The first project is the Robbins flood
17 control project. This project is split up into two
18 phases. Phase 1 reached final completion in October
19 of 2024 with the ribbon cutting held on
20 October 31st, 2024. Phase 2 includes the
21 construction of a stormwater park, work along
22 Midlothian Creek, work along Kedzie Avenue, storm
23 sewer improvements, and rain garden west of Kedzie.
24 This project began July of 2024, and substantial

1 completion is expected around November 2025. And
2 there's a picture of the project from -- I think it
3 was August.

4 The next project is a flood control
5 project in Worth Woods. The current status of the
6 project is that they're working on final design and
7 land acquisition. Current schedule shows that it
8 will probably be advertised in fall of 2026, so
9 around a year from now. There's a flood control
10 project in Palos Heights. It involves the
11 installation of drainage swales and downstream sewer
12 and outfall to Navajo Creek so it will protect
13 properties from flooding during the hundred year
14 storm event. This project was -- reached final
15 completion in July of this year and ongoing work
16 which includes maintenance will be done by the city.

17 This project is a flood control project on
18 Cal-Sag Tributary C in Midlothian and Crestwood.
19 Updates on the project are that the IGA has been
20 executed and we're currently working on land
21 acquisition. And we'll be getting environmental
22 site assessments for around seven parcels that need
23 to be acquired for the project. And funding
24 includes 1.5 million from the American Rescue Plan

1 Act.

2 This project is a detention basin in
3 Oak Lawn as well as storm sewer work. This project
4 was awarded by the village board on September 2025.
5 Preconstruction meeting is scheduled for
6 October 10th, 2025. This project will start
7 construction of the detention basin in November of
8 this year, and the storm sewer work will occur in
9 March of next year.

10 Now I'll talk about conceptual project
11 partnership projects.

12 This project is on 157th Street and
13 Spring Creek flood study in Orland Township. The
14 final design will look into raising 157th Street
15 and providing compensatory storage to mitigate
16 flooding of surrounding residential property. This
17 has 150,000 in funding from the American Rescue Plan
18 Act, and IGA between Orland Township Road District
19 and MWRD has been executed.

20 This project is an alternative stormwater
21 diversion plan in Bedford Park, Justice, and Summit.
22 There's a planned study to address flooding and
23 drainage issues within the Village of Bedford Park
24 and neighboring communities. The village

1 constructed a new storm sewer and new outfall to the
2 Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal to upsize the IDOT
3 storm sewer on Harlem Avenue and to construct a
4 detention basin at the Summit Park District. E3 is
5 under contract with MWRD for design of the project,
6 and surveying has begun.

7 Now I'll talk about the GI projects in
8 this area.

9 This one is Lake Katherine commuter
10 parking lot in Palos Heights. It involved
11 installing permeable pavement at the commuter
12 parking lot at Lake Katherine Nature Center on
13 Harlem Avenue, and it provides 120,000 gallons of
14 designed retention capacity. This project was
15 completed in June of this year.

16 This is a public library green roof in
17 Blue Island. The project will install a green roof
18 on the existing Blue Island Public Library,
19 providing 2,760 gallons of designed retention
20 capacity. An IGA was executed in December 2024,
21 design is complete, and construction is expected to
22 be completed by fall of 2025.

23 This is a Town Center green infrastructure
24 improvements in Willow Springs. This project will

1 also install permeable pavers and provide an
2 estimated 1 million gallons of designed retention
3 capacity. The IGA was completed in January 2025,
4 and the project reached substantial completion in
5 July of 2025.

6 Now we are just going to talk about some
7 upcoming events we have at MWRD.

8 This is a Latino heritage stewardship
9 event. It's on October 18th, 2025, at 10:00 AM to
10 12:30. It involves identification and mitigation of
11 invasive species threatening the local ecosystem,
12 and participants will gain insight into sustainable
13 gardening practices aimed at creating a healthier
14 environment. We'll also be removing invasive
15 buckthorn and honeysuckle. And it's a joint effort
16 by MWRD, the Forest Preserve, and Latino Outdoors.

17 We also have a Latino Heritage Month
18 Business Roundtable on October 8th from 12:00 to
19 1:00, and this is at our main office building at
20 100 East Erie.

21 And then we also wanted to put a slide so
22 you know you can request a MWRD speaker to give an
23 educational presentation, and we have a list of some
24 of the presentation subjects. You can also request

1 MWRD representatives to come out to a community
2 event. That includes back to school events,
3 environmental fairs, farmers' markets, municipal
4 events, and community festivals.

5 October 15th we have a virtual tour,
6 Follow the Flush. It goes into the wastewater
7 treatment process, how to protect our waterways,
8 reduce pollution, and turn waste into renewable
9 resources. If you want to sign up, you can follow
10 that link.

11 Then we have monthly seminars that we host
12 at the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant. It's open
13 to the public, and they're eligible for professional
14 development credits and CEUs. You can go to the
15 plant or attend online but you need to reserve, make
16 a reservation by sending e-mails to
17 mnrseminars@mwr.org or calling the number listed
18 there.

19 We have the 13th Annual Sustainability
20 Summit on Thursday, November 3rd, from 10:00 AM to
21 12:00 in the town of Cicero. This event is
22 dedicated to learning, collaboration, and action
23 toward a cleaner, greener future.

24 And we have a Meet the Creek Brookfield

1 Conservation Commission, Saturday, October 4th, from
2 1:00 to 4:00 PM at the Kiwanis Park Pavilion, has
3 canoe rides, children scavenger hunt, and fish and
4 animal counters.

5 That's all I have for my presentation, if
6 anyone has any questions.

7 MR. BENNETT: Thank you. Any questions on
8 those projects at all?

9 (No response.)

10 MR. BENNETT: Thanks.

11 MR. VELEZ: Thanks.

12 MR. BENNETT: Next we have small streams
13 maintenance. Fabio.

14 MR. MONTEIRO: Good evening. My name is
15 Fabio Monteiro. I'm an associate civil engineer
16 with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District,
17 the Small Streams Maintenance Program. For this
18 watershed plan council meeting, I will present what
19 we do and how you can be part of it and also touch
20 on the other two programs, the rain barrel and
21 Restore the Canopy.

22 So Cook County has very little elevation
23 change throughout, so the streams tend to flow very
24 slowly, and they're prone to flooding. So any

1 little block can -- any minor blockage can build up
2 with heavy rains and become a problem and increase
3 the potential for flooding. So the streams must be
4 maintained.

5 So in 2006 our SSMP program was created,
6 and we removed thousand of debris every year. As
7 our primary -- outside of primary mission, which is
8 removing those blockages, we also prevent future
9 blockages by removing dead trees and unhealthy trees
10 on the banks. We remove invasive species. We also
11 do on a limited basis beaver tracking and erosion
12 control. We do not do any dredging at the moment.
13 And those are some pictures of before and after of
14 our work.

15 So here, a table with the total of debris
16 removed from watershed in 2024. The Cal-Sag
17 watershed, we removed 1,801 cubic yards of debris in
18 2024. We had close to about \$1.8 million spent with
19 an average per cost for cubic yard of \$146.

20 We continue in 2025 with some goals such
21 as standardizing procedures, identifying critical
22 stream areas, improving methods, steady creek
23 inspections, increase public awareness of MWRD
24 presence and execution of the programs. We do rely,

1 you know, in natural growths to do the work, polls,
2 and inspections. So if you see any issues with the
3 water rates, please let us know.

4 Here's the map of the watershed and the
5 work locations that we done in Chicago. The blue
6 dots are the work areas we have done in 2024.

7 Here's some pictures of before and after
8 SSMP work along Midlothian Creek, along the Cal-Sag
9 Road in Palos Heights near Trinity Christian
10 College. You can see that the flooding was
11 substantially there in the area. So we got to
12 maintain that creek so the residents are safe.

13 Another example, that's Tinley Creek near
14 127th Street in Palos Park, another area of flooding
15 in the area.

16 So the equipment that we use to do the
17 work is skid steer, mini skid steer, chipper,
18 Gradall excavator. So depending on the type of
19 material that is the blockage, usually it's wooden
20 material, we will assess case by case if you're
21 going to bank the material or chip it. If we do
22 chip, we'll work with the municipality for the
23 disposal of the wood chips.

24 The equipment that we have are capable to

1 winch, pick up, drag. The mini skid tear has the
2 same capability but for more sensitive areas so we
3 don't cause any damage to residents' backyards.

4 So how can you help with the waterway
5 blockages. Reporting the blockages through e-mail
6 on our website. Also, by not leaving yard waste in
7 your streams, don't litter, proper disposal of
8 trash. And if you live on a stream, landscape with
9 native plants and removing invasive plants such as
10 buckthorn. Many native plants have a strong root
11 structure that helps with erosion.

12 So reporting waterway issue to our
13 website, mwrdd.org, Contact Us, and Report a Block
14 and Debris in the streams. I'll show you on the
15 slide what it looks like. Or you can call
16 Arturo Hernandez or me, or e-mail us, just notify us
17 immediately when you see an issue.

18 This is how it looks like on the website.
19 Our main page, we can scroll down, it's the easiest
20 way to find the form, scroll down to click on
21 Contact Us, and then Report Blockages and Debris in
22 Streams. The form will pop up. It's very, very
23 quick. We just need your contact information and
24 the location of the blockage.

1 If you have -- if you need more
2 information, come visit our web page at mwrdd.org,
3 Stormwater Management and Stream Maintenance; or if
4 you have any further questions, you can e-mail
5 Arturo.

6 So about the Rain Barrel Program. We
7 continue with selling the rain barrels to Cook
8 County residents. And you can go on our website,
9 Community Action, Rain Barrels. They come with a
10 mosquito screen, a spigot and hose connector. It's
11 very important to keep some of the stormwater away
12 from the system. You can reuse the water later for
13 watering your lawn, washing your boots. If you have
14 more, if you have questions, you can call Public
15 Affairs.

16 The next program we have is Restore the
17 Canopy Program. We do offer free tree saplings
18 until October, end of October. You can pick up the
19 tree at any MWRD water reclamation plant. The
20 trees, they grow up to 50 to 80 feet tall so be
21 aware of that. And very important because they can
22 soak up rainwater and keep rainwater away from our
23 sewer system. And since 2016, we have distributed
24 nearly 100,000.

1 MR. BENNETT: You said that if a town
2 wanted a bunch of them, you would deliver them?

3 MR. MONTEIRO: Yeah, yeah, we'll deliver
4 them.

5 MR. BENNETT: So just contact the District
6 and they would -- if you have some event going on,
7 they will drop off whatever you need almost.

8 MR. MONTEIRO: Yes. Yes, Public Affairs.
9 That's it. Thank you.

10 MR. BENNETT: Any questions of Fabio?

11 (No response.)

12 MR. BENNETT: All right. Moving on to how
13 do we improve these meetings. Clare. Do you need
14 the screen on?

15 MS. ADAMS: I do, yes. I'm just going to
16 swap them out.

17 MR. BENNETT: By the way, the sign-in
18 sheet --

19 MS. SMITH: Yeah. Everybody, please sign
20 in.

21 MS. ADAMS: All right. Hi, everyone. My
22 name is Clare Adams. I'm an assistant civil
23 engineer in stormwater with the MWRD, and I'm going
24 to talk about improving the WPC meetings, and then

1 there will also be a section where there will be
2 time for discussion.

3 All right. So in recent years attendance
4 for these watershed planning meetings has been lower
5 than we would like.

6 MR. BENNETT: Except for ours.

7 MS. ADAMS: Except -- well. We have been
8 going around to the different watersheds to find out
9 what we can do to increase attendance and make sure
10 that there's something that attendees can take home
11 having learned from these meetings.

12 So we first started with just having an
13 initial call to discuss format and times and
14 potential agenda topics. Some issues that we heard
15 is that the meetings can be repetitive, there's
16 little participation or guided discussion outside of
17 the usual agenda topics which are capital
18 improvements, small streams maintenance programs and
19 the Watershed Management Ordinance; and ultimately
20 we decided to conduct a survey from the watershed
21 planning members for feedback.

22 So last March, with help from the councils
23 of government, we sent out a survey to all the
24 watershed planning council members -- and received

1 eight responses back from Cal-Sag -- with questions
2 having to do with meeting format time and the topics
3 as well as current stormwater issues and experience
4 with grant and partnership programs. We weren't
5 really satisfied with the results of this, so we
6 continued to talk about this in these meetings in
7 quarter three to elaborate on answers that people
8 gave.

9 So our findings showed that -- save
10 Cal-Sag -- most of the WPCs preferred in person than
11 virtual, doesn't apply to this watershed. Updates
12 to the other meetings will be collaborated with each
13 of the councils of government and shared in next
14 quarter's meetings, but it does seem like Cal-Sag is
15 satisfied with their meeting time.

16 So as for updates to regular agenda items,
17 for capital improvements, we plan to streamline
18 these focusing on just major updates that have
19 occurred since the last meeting with more pictures
20 emphasizing the changes before and after
21 construction, as well as providing project metrics,
22 including number of projects, the cost, the time
23 frames of each project, and the impact in terms of
24 numbers. For SSMP and WMO, we are going to

1 alternate those every other quarter also making
2 these more engaging with more photos.

3 A section that we are adding is a grant
4 section. That will include available opportunities
5 and due dates for relevant grants. We'll give an
6 overview of the opportunity and provide resources
7 and contact information. This meeting I didn't have
8 a relevant grant to share with you guys that had an
9 upcoming deadline, but rest assured that I am paying
10 attention and seeing if there's anything I can bring
11 to these meetings in terms of grants.

12 We are also adding an annual WPC review
13 similar to what we are doing now every year so we
14 can continue to make sure that these are what we
15 want them to be.

16 Okay. So in addition to updating the
17 regular agenda of the meetings, we wanted to provide
18 information that would more directly help or address
19 an issue that WPC members are facing. So we offered
20 seven potential one-time meeting topics and ranked
21 them in order of importance or had the respondents
22 rank them in order of importance. Those topics are:
23 Funding and grant opportunities for stormwater
24 projects; stormwater management best practices;

1 operation and maintenance of stormwater
2 infrastructure; overview of federal, state, and
3 county permitting processes; green infrastructure;
4 the MWRD's role in stormwater management, and public
5 communication for stormwater projects. We will talk
6 about each of these further down the line.

7 We had respondents rank the most pressing
8 issues in their community. Unsurprisingly, the top
9 two were flooding and funding, which was not very
10 specific, so that's something that we also want to
11 elaborate on later.

12 As for grants, we had a separate question
13 having to do with just that. Twenty-three out of 33
14 of the respondents reported having applied for a
15 grant at some point in time. Sixteen of the 30
16 reported having been awarded. And the major
17 feedback that we received was that the processes are
18 long and extensive but not necessarily too difficult
19 to complete. It's more a matter of capacity of
20 having the hours available to dedicate to managing
21 applying for grants. And then of those respondents,
22 two of them mentioned that they had a dedicated
23 staff member or consultant that handled their grants
24 for them.

1 Going back to the one-time meeting topics,
2 we brainstormed for some potential presentation
3 topics for each category, and it will take time to
4 develop presentations, so we want to take time now
5 to see what the priority of this WPC is in terms of
6 hearing these.

7 The first of this is funding and grant
8 opportunities for stormwater projects. Some
9 concerns that we noted in the survey were that
10 respondents had issues keeping up to date on
11 available grants, providing matching funds, timing
12 the grants with their projects, the complexity of
13 grants, and the administration administering them,
14 and that they did not have staff available to apply
15 or manage the grants so wanting to increase their
16 budget but not having the budget to delegate that
17 work.

18 Some possible ideas that we have are
19 general best practices for funding projects. We can
20 lay out what types of funding are available, what
21 some strategies are for applying, as well as
22 managing that workload. We could do a deep dive on
23 how to apply for a specific grant or cost share,
24 like FEMA or IEPA. In quarter four we plan to have

1 a presentation that would go on a deep dive with how
2 to apply to our partnership program, so that MWRD
3 portion of that should be taken care of.

4 And then lastly, we could have a
5 testimonial from a guest speaker on their
6 experience, finding, applying for, and administering
7 grants with the intention of it being someone who
8 successfully funded a project with a grant and how
9 they did that.

10 Oh, my gosh. Didn't mean to skip. Does
11 anybody have any thoughts on grants and what would
12 be helpful for them and the municipality?

13 MR. BENNETT: I think you've pretty much
14 outlined the concerns on grants is, again,
15 availability, the process of applying for those
16 grants, where it starts, what partnerships are out
17 there, where it's matching funds or how to go about
18 seeking intergovernmental cooperation agreements
19 with whether it's Cook County Highway or yourselves
20 or another municipality. I think those things are
21 in general questions that I've seen over the years
22 that keep popping up.

23 MS. ADAMS: Thank you. Anyone else or do
24 you want to [inaudible].

1 All right. So the next possible meeting
2 topic is stormwater management best practices and
3 O&M of stormwater infrastructure. So some concerns
4 we noted in terms of this topic that respondents had
5 were keeping up to date with the latest designs and
6 maintenance procedures, learning about stormwater
7 projects that get grant and cost share funding,
8 which types of projects are successful versus which
9 are not, funding of maintenance and operations was a
10 big one, maintenance of detention ponds and stream
11 bank erosion issues.

12 So some agenda items that we have are best
13 practices on operating and maintaining municipal
14 stormwater and sewer infrastructure including green
15 infrastructure. We could highlight a local
16 stormwater project in your watershed, including a
17 green infrastructure one. We could highlight a
18 multiphase project outside of your watershed. We
19 could present on how to work with the consultant to
20 complete studies, designs, and how to manage a
21 stormwater project, or we can do a deep dive on a
22 specific stormwater issue and what to do with the
23 design, construction, and maintenance.

24 Does anyone have any thoughts on this one?

1 MR. MALLO: Paul Mallo, Village of Oak
2 Lawn.

3 The picture is like you said. I think
4 it's important that we see exactly what's kind of
5 going on. I feel like I've seen a lot of these
6 pictures again and again and again. There's, you
7 know, being able to see new things, where it
8 started, where it is, what's going on, did you find
9 couch somewhere, that we could all see that, you
10 know, happen, but it seems to be the same thing.

11 MS. ADAMS: Okay, yeah. Thank you for
12 that.

13 Is there like a specific type of
14 infrastructure anyone would be interested in hearing
15 more about for the municipality or anything like
16 that?

17 MR. VORDERER: How many dredging?

18 MS. ADAMS: Dredging?

19 MR. VORDERER: You don't do that?

20 MS. ADAMS: (Shaking head.)

21 MR. BENNETT: Again, there's probably such
22 a variety of different projects that are out there
23 from a simple detention area to a reinforcement of
24 embankment projects to more complicated projects

1 that involve, again, multiple jurisdictions or
2 watershed going through a couple towns, whether
3 it's -- certainly been in our watershed, or
4 possibly, you know, if it's something different that
5 could be applicable to maybe some thoughts or ideas
6 that the mayors may have here as to how they can do
7 that in their area.

8 So, yeah, you had mentioned that, whether
9 you can get somebody to come in directly, that's had
10 a project, and explain briefly as to how they went
11 about it and what the effects were and feedback of
12 it was.

13 MS. ADAMS: Yeah. Well, this will come up
14 again in the presentation but that's another option.
15 We could have testimonials from a project manager.
16 We can also have on-site visits for this sort of
17 thing if that's something you would be interested
18 in. I'd be happy to help set that up.

19 Anything else on this slide, or is it all
20 right if I move on?

21 (No response.)

22 MS. ADAMS: Okay. Next is an overview of
23 federal, state, and county permitting processes. In
24 the survey, people mentioned difficulty coordinating

1 with other county and state agencies as well as
2 dealing with the Watershed Management Ordinance
3 permitting process and understanding the role of
4 their municipality and how to coordinate with
5 developers.

6 Some agenda topics are permitting and
7 interagency collaboration. So you can have another
8 testimonial from someone explaining lessons learned
9 during the construction of a multiphase regional
10 project. We could have a guest speaker from a
11 specific permitting agency discussing their
12 permitting process, like the Army Corps or IDOT or
13 EPA. We could do a more in-depth presentation of
14 Watershed Management Ordinance than we usually give
15 explaining how to go through that permitting
16 process. And we could also go through FEMA flood
17 maps and amendments and explain that long process
18 and why it takes FEMA the amount of time it does.

19 All right. Any thoughts on permitting?
20 Are there any areas of permitting that are -- yeah.

21 MS. MILOVICH-WALTERS: I think the guest
22 speaker thing is a great idea, but I almost think
23 almost a recorded one that we could share with our
24 department heads and stuff, especially they could

1 use that when they're training somebody new or
2 somebody underneath them to kind of take on a role,
3 that might be a really great tool, as opposed to
4 hearing it from me. It's going to go in one ear and
5 probably out the other. So.

6 MR. BENNETT: You bring up a point,
7 whether or not outside of possibly even this
8 meeting, that we consider something down the road
9 where we have public works, engineers on an
10 individual topic or multi topics as something
11 different than having actually at this meeting.

12 MS. MILOVICH-WALTERS: Yeah. I think
13 that's where it would be most beneficial from my
14 perspective.

15 MS. ADAMS: Yeah, thank you for that.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So Army Corps, I'd
17 be interested to hear about the wetland permitting
18 process specifically, wetland banking. Like we're
19 looking to conceptual projects for, like, enhancing
20 wetlands and using those credits. And then
21 navigating the WMO process, just from the
22 perspective of an authorizing municipality. I
23 remember --

24 MS. ADAMS: Oh, yes. Yeah.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- someone brought
2 it up that they weren't even aware that there's that
3 program for the authorizing municipality to issue
4 WMO permits, but I think that would be benefit
5 generally too.

6 MS. ADAMS: Thank you.

7 MR. BENNETT: One more.

8 MR. LEWIS: Gary Lewis. I've seen FEMA
9 referenced several times, and there's all kinds of
10 rhetoric going on with our government about the
11 elimination of that agency.

12 What is the word that we can take back to
13 our people?

14 MS. ADAMS: What is the word? Oh.

15 MR. FISHER: I can answer that. I can
16 give a nonanswer. My name is Rich Fisher from the
17 MWRD.

18 We're in regular contact with the Illinois
19 Emergency Management Agency and really they are the
20 ones that partner with FEMA. It's a little unknown
21 right now. And getting anything even out of FEMA
22 right now, the kind of direction where they're
23 going, is a little unknown.

24 There is a lot of speculation going on.

1 Even things that we've heard on the news and found
2 out it's not necessarily exactly true. So it's a
3 little bit up in the air right now. That's about
4 the best I can give you.

5 MR. LEWIS: Okay.

6 MR. FISHER: I know it's not the greatest,
7 but it's a little bit under consideration right now.

8 MR. BENNETT: Go ahead, Mayor.

9 MS. MILOVICH-WALTERS: Nicole
10 Milovich-Walters.

11 Is there a branch of this, that especially
12 if they did presentations, that you could YouTube or
13 something that would be geared toward the homeowner?
14 Like, I have people in town that have wetlands, and
15 maybe they want to do an addition but they --
16 figuring out how to jump through the hoops of what
17 they need to do, whether it's the Army Corps of
18 Engineers or MWRD. We have been trying to guide
19 them, but it would be kind of great if there --
20 maybe it already exists and I don't know about it --
21 that we could share with them that would help guide
22 them personally to address it.

23 MS. ADAMS: Yeah, I can look into that for
24 you. My understanding is that the audience of these

1 presentations is for local government and
2 municipalities, but I don't think that necessarily
3 means that it couldn't be how to interact with
4 homeowners as the purpose of these. But it -- we
5 tend to lean towards more local government than
6 general public.

7 But I can look in to see if there's
8 resources already with MWRD. We do, like, some,
9 like Fabio laid out, best management practices, like
10 the rain barrels and that sort of thing, and I know
11 that there are some on our website, but I'll look
12 into it.

13 MS. MILOVICH-WALTERS: Thanks.

14 MR. BENNETT: Mayor, go ahead.

15 MR. WASOWICZ: Kris Wasowicz, Village of
16 Justice. My biggest problem with all this is that
17 on any project, you got three massive bureaucracies.
18 Try to pull them together. Believe me, I have
19 experience on projects where government agencies get
20 together.

21 Let's say we do a project. We ask MWRD
22 for a permit. You should be the agency on the
23 project and you should take care of FEMA and Army
24 Corps of Engineers. The process should be

1 streamlined and simplified because otherwise a mess.
2 You know, it's a firing squad. Everybody points a
3 finger at everybody. And time passes, money is
4 leaking, and nothing is happening. That's the scary
5 part.

6 MR. BENNETT: Mayor, that's a good point.
7 I think any project, and you discussed earlier about
8 timing of projects and how long it takes going
9 through the phasing of engineering and also dealing
10 with other agencies, whether it's the county, state,
11 or Corps of Engineers, hopefully not. By the time
12 those projects are actually going out to bid, the
13 cost is just -- I shouldn't say "just" -- it's
14 inflationary, and by the time you do get around to
15 the project two, three years down the road, you can
16 be up 10, 15 percent of the project which again
17 possibly blows the budget. But that's just -- go
18 ahead.

19 MR. STRAZ: Two or three years being the
20 quickest. I mean I've had projects -- and I'm happy
21 with all the capital projects I've gotten from MWRD
22 because I got a number for Palos Heights -- Bob
23 Straz, by the way. I have gone anywhere from
24 20 years to little over five years to get a project

1 done, and it just drags on and on and on. And as
2 Jerry said, the costs go up, contractors change, we
3 don't -- we miss deadlines, they're not bid at the
4 present time, and just being kicked down the road.
5 That's the frustration we have on the construction
6 side.

7 MR. BENNETT: You can go on.

8 MS. ADAMS: All right. This is our last
9 type of presentation, last umbrella topic that it
10 could fall under, which is the MWRD's role in
11 stormwater management and public communication for
12 stormwater projects. Some feedback we got from the
13 survey, and sounds like what I'm hearing now, is
14 just wanting to understand the MWRD partnerships
15 better.

16 So one agenda idea is public engagement
17 for stormwater management projects. Another one is
18 what to do during a flood, which would explain from
19 start to finish how to document flood damage, how to
20 coordinate between the agencies, laying out which
21 each of the agencies do, what data they handle, and
22 public communication during that time in order to
23 deliver good resources or the response -- what's it
24 called -- assistance, the flood assistance, once

1 received, to make sure that residents are able to
2 see those benefits of it.

3 Another option is an overview of MWRD's
4 stormwater management program explaining its history
5 in greater Chicago and its ongoing role as well as
6 an overview of the programs we offer and how they
7 help municipalities. This is another thing that
8 will be addressed, at least in part, in quarter four
9 when we do a more in-depth examination of our
10 partnerships.

11 And then lastly, we could explain our
12 large infrastructure throughout Cook County,
13 including our intercepting sewers, our water
14 reclamation facilities, and our tunnel and reservoir
15 plan.

16 Yeah, any thoughts on this?

17 MR. BENNETT: Actually, this last section
18 you talk about is very good. It's educational, it's
19 historical, for all of us to be knowledgeable -- not
20 that we work for the MWRD, but to understand as
21 mayors the system out there, what's it now -- or how
22 it's like now and where you're going in the future
23 with it, to expand it.

24 The flood thing is really great. You

1 know, whether you have a best practice. Somebody --
2 maybe not in our area, thank God, but some other
3 area about addressing when a major flood takes
4 place, what you need to do, how you need to report
5 it, and all that good stuff.

6 So it's all very good. We appreciate you
7 giving us this opportunity for input on future
8 meetings. I think all of us here are appreciative
9 of that. And I know we'll work with Vicky as these
10 topics will be talked about or brought to us in the
11 future once you feel you've narrowed it down to some
12 areas that you're ready to make that kind of
13 presentation.

14 MS. ADAMS: All right.

15 MR. BENNETT: Appreciate it, Clare.

16 MS. WERNER: And I know, I think Brittany
17 is always looking for things for public works for
18 their meetings. She's always begging people for
19 they're like information. So some of these
20 subjects, I think, would be very good at your public
21 works meeting.

22 MR. BENNETT: I agree.

23 MS. WERNER: Yeah.

24 MS. ADAMS: If you have any questions or

1 have any thoughts that come to you later after this
2 meeting, you can reach out to stormwater@mwrdd.org
3 and we'll respond to you there. But that's all I
4 have.

5 MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Clare.

6 MS. WERNER: Thank you.

7 MR. BENNETT: Is there any other business
8 before we adjourn? Again we have that sign-in
9 sheet.

10 MS. SMITH: Please sign in, everyone.

11 MR. BENNETT: I'll wait about a few
12 minutes before we start our regular council meeting.
13 We have a couple mayors, go in the back, grab
14 something to eat before we come back out.

15 With that in mind, I'll entertain a motion
16 to adjourn.

17 MR. VORDERER: So made. Mayor Vorderer.

18 MR. STRAZ: Second. Bob Straz.

19 MR. BENNETT: Moved and seconded? Any
20 questions?

21 (No response.)

22 MR. BENNETT: If not, signify in the usual
23 manner.

24 (Chorus of ayes.)

1 MR. BENNETT: Meeting adjourned. We'll be
2 back in about ten minutes.

3 (WHEREUPON, at 6:58 PM
4 proceedings were adjourned.)
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meeting, as aforesaid, and that the foregoing
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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I do set my hand at
Chicago, Illinois, this 15th day of October, 2025.



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