

M E E T I N G

CAL-SAG WATERSHED PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING

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Willow Springs Village Hall
One Village Circle
Willow Springs, Illinois

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Wednesday, April 22, 2026
6:11 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 Wednesday, April 22, 2026, commencing
at the hour of 6:11 PM, at One Village Circle,
Willow Springs, Illinois.

1 PRESENT: (District Personnel)

2 MR. JOHN MURRAY, Executive Director

3 MR. JOSEPH KRATZER, Managing Civil Engineer

4 MR. MARK CASTILLO, Senior Civil Engineer

5 MR. GEORGE VELEZ, Assistant Civil Engineer

6 MR. GRAYSON KELLY, Assistant Civil Engineer

7 MR. HERMAN LOPEZ, Associate Civil Engineer

8 MR. FABIO MONTEIRO, Associate Civil Engineer

9 MS. PATRICIA THERESA FLYNN, Commissioner

10 ALSO PRESENT:

11 MR. GERALD R. BENNETT, President, City of
12 Palos Hills

13 MS. VICTORIA SMITH, SCM, Executive Director

14 MR. DAVE BRADY, Village of Bedford Park

15 MR. DAVID GILGENBERG II, City of Burbank

16 MR. KEN KLEIN, Village of Crestwood

17 MR. BRIAN SKALA, Village of Crestwood

18 MS. SUSAN LEHR, City of Hickory Hills

19 MR. KRZYSZLOF WASOWICZ, Village of Justice

20 MR. BILL PETERS, Village of Lemont

21 MS. COLEEN BARKMEIER, Village of Oak Lawn

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

23 MR. ALADDIN HUSAIN, Village of Orland Park

24 MR. JIM DODGE, Village of Orland Park

1 ALSO PRESENT (continued):

2 MR. DARIAN REED, Village of Orland Park

3 MR. ROBERT STRAZ, City of Palos Heights

4 MR. ADAM JASINSKI, City of Palos Heights

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

7 MR. RYAN GRACE, Village of Willow Springs

8 MS. MELISSA NEDDERMEYER, Village of Willow
9 Springs

10 MS. NOREEN LIGINO-KUBINSKI, HBK Engineering

11 MR. LENNY SVOBODA, Altofer CAT Power

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15 Members of the Public
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1 MR. BENNETT: Ladies and gentlemen, I'll
2 call the meeting to order of the Cal-Sag Watershed
3 Planning Council.

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

6 MS. SMITH: Alsip.

7 (No response.)

8 MS. SMITH: Bedford Park.

9 MR. BRADY: Dave Brady, village president.

10 MS. SMITH: Blue Island.

11 (No response.)

12 MS. SMITH: Bridgeview.

13 (No response.)

14 MS. SMITH: Burbank.

15 MR. GILGENBERG: Dave Gilgenberg, mayor.

16 MS. SMITH: Chicago.

17 (No response.)

18 MS. SMITH: Chicago Ridge.

19 (No response.)

20 MS. SMITH: Crestwood.

21 MR. KLEIN: Mayor Ken Klein, Crestwood.

22 MS. SMITH: Evergreen Park.

23 (No response.)

24 MS. SMITH: Hickory Hills.

1 MS. LEHR: Sue Lehr, public works.

2 MS. SMITH: Hometown.

3 (No response.)

4 MS. SMITH: Justice.

5 MR. WASOWICZ: Kris Wasowicz, mayor.

6 MS. SMITH: Lemont.

7 MR. PETERS: Village of Lemont, public
8 works, Bill Peters.

9 MS. SMITH: Merrionette Park.

10 (No response.)

11 MS. SMITH: Midlothian.

12 (No response.)

13 MS. SMITH: Oak Forest.

14 (No response.)

15 MS. SMITH: Oak Lawn.

16 MS. BARKMEIER: Coleen Barkmeier, Oak
17 Lawn.

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, and Adam

1 Jasinski, city administrator.

2 MS. SMITH: Palos Hills.

3 MR. BENNETT: Jerry Bennett, mayor.

4 MS. SMITH: Palos Park.

5 MS. MILOVICH-WALTERS: Nicole

6 Milovich-Walters, mayor.

7 MS. SMITH: Robbins.

8 (No response.)

9 MS. SMITH: Summit.

10 (No response.)

11 MS. SMITH: Tinley Park.

12 (No response.)

13 MS. SMITH: Willow Springs.

14 MS. NEDDERMEYER: Melissa Neddermeyer,
15 president, and Ryan Grace, administrator.

16 MS. SMITH: Worth.

17 (No response.)

18 MS. SMITH: Unincorporated Cook County.

19 (No response.)

20 MS. SMITH: Bremen Township.

21 (No response.)

22 MS. SMITH: Calumet Township.

23 (No response.)

24 MS. SMITH: Lemont Township.

1 (No response.)

2 MS. SMITH: Lyons Township.

3 (No response.)

4 MS. SMITH: Orland Township.

5 (No response.)

6 MS. SMITH: Palos Township.

7 (No response.)

8 MS. SMITH: Stickney Township.

9 (No response.)

10 MS. SMITH: Worth Township.

11 (No response.)

12 MR. BENNETT: Ladies and gentlemen, we
13 have a quorum.

14 Before you are the minutes of our January
15 meeting. I'll entertain a motion to accept the
16 minutes.

17 MR. WASOWICZ: So moved.

18 MS. NEDDERMEYER: Second.

19 MR. BENNETT: Moved by Justice; second by
20 Willow Springs. Any questions?

21 (No response.)

22 MR. BENNETT: If not, signify by a vote of
23 aye.

24 (Chorus of ayes.)

1 MR. BENNETT: All opposed.

2 (No response.)

3 MR. BENNETT: Motion carries.

4 First item on the agenda is the Capital
5 Improvements and Project Highlights. George or
6 Grayson?

7 MR. CASTILLO: Hi. I'm neither George or
8 Grayson. My name is Mark Castillo, Metropolitan
9 Water Reclamation District. I am senior civil
10 engineer with stormwater management.

11 So good evening, everyone. Thank you for
12 attending this night's watershed planning council
13 meeting. We'll be providing a capital improvement
14 update for all the projects within this watershed.

15 Just a quick snapshot of what we've got
16 going on in this watershed. We are engaged in
17 40 stormwater infrastructure projects within the
18 Cal-Sag Channel Watershed. He have seven regional
19 projects; 17 local partnership projects; 14 GI
20 projects, one of which is located right here; Space
21 to Grow project; and one flood-prone property
22 acquisition program. Collectively, these projects
23 provide over 2,087 structures benefited, and they
24 create over 276 acre feet of storage.

1 We are changing it up. We'll have some
2 resources later on where you can dive into the
3 specific projects within your watershed, but we
4 wanted to take the time to highlight two projects
5 within this watershed.

6 First up, we have George Velez who will be
7 discussing the Polaris stormwater storage and storm
8 sewer improvement project in the Village of
9 Oak Lawn.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. VELEZ: Good evening. My name is
12 George Velez, and I'm the project manager for the
13 Polaris stormwater storage and storm sewer
14 improvement project.

15 So this project will be led by the Village
16 of Oak Lawn. It involves the construction of
17 stormwater storage on Polaris Park and storm sewer
18 improvements in the surrounding area to reduce
19 flooding in the Stony Creek subwatershed. This
20 project is currently in construction and Burke
21 Engineering is overseeing construction, and they've
22 provided final design plans for the Village of
23 Oak Lawn.

24 Here's a time line of the project. This

1 project began in 2018 when the Village of Oak Lawn
2 submitted a conceptual project application to the
3 District requesting preliminary engineering
4 assistance. The District conducted preliminary
5 engineering from 2019 to 2023 in which they
6 identified a flood control project and developed a
7 30 percent level of design which was presented to
8 the Village of Oak Lawn.

9 In March of 2023, the Village of Oak Lawn
10 acquired all necessary easements for the project, at
11 which point the project was turned over to the
12 Village of Oak Lawn and it was converted into a
13 shovel-ready IGA project. An IGA negotiation was
14 designed again. This lasted until July of 2025.
15 There was some delays negotiating the IGA due to
16 funding issues, which I will get into later.

17 Construction of the project began November
18 of 2025 and is scheduled to begin -- to reach
19 substantial completion in October of 2026, and the
20 school field will be returned for use to the school
21 district in the spring of 2027.

22 So this is a study limit for preliminary
23 engineering. The study area was chosen by Village
24 of Oak Lawn in their application in this area

1 bounded by Cicero Avenue to the west, 103 Street to
2 the north, Pulaski Road to east, and 111th Street
3 on the south. This scope of work of the preliminary
4 engineering included documenting and evaluating
5 existing flooding issues within this study area,
6 identifying and evaluating potential flood
7 mitigation alternatives, and obtaining stakeholder
8 and community input on the different alternatives;
9 and the preferred alternative was then developed to
10 30 percent design.

11 This slide shows the existing conditions
12 modeling results. The exhibit here shows the
13 two-year modeling results under existing conditions.
14 Under the two-year event, storm sewers in the study
15 area are reaching capacity.

16 This one is a five-year event. During the
17 five-year event, the 60-inch storm sewer on
18 Kilpatrick does not have any more capacity.

19 During the ten-year event, there's
20 flooding on 105th and Kilpatrick Avenue of the road
21 and nearby structures.

22 During 100-year storm event, there is
23 widespread flooding throughout the study area.

24 The modeling results overlap with the

1 locations of reported flooding that was investigated
2 during the preliminary engineering as shown on this
3 exhibit.

4 To address the flooding issue, six
5 alternatives were considered and evaluated. This
6 exhibit shows the six alternatives that were
7 identified. One is the upsizing of critical storm
8 sewers, bio retention in the right-of-way, and
9 detention storage at Lawn Manor, Polaris Park, and
10 Oak View.

11 The six alternatives were presented to the
12 Village of Oak Lawn and as long as -- I mean, as
13 well as preliminary cost estimates. The Village's
14 preferred alternative was a combination of two of
15 those alternatives, which was the stormwater
16 upsizing and retention storage at Polaris Park. The
17 storm sewer upsizing involves 6,600 feet of storm
18 sewer upsizing along Kilpatrick Avenue from
19 110th Street to 115th Street and along
20 105th Street from Kilpatrick Avenue to
21 Kildare Avenue.

22 The stormwater storage at Polaris Park
23 involves 27.5 acre feet of storage, and it has the
24 most storage -- it has greatest storage capacity of

1 the three detention storage evaluated, and it had
2 the highest benefit to structures.

3 Total cost for these two alternatives
4 combined was 9.4 million.

5 This slide shows the storage of
6 Polaris Park taken to a 30 percent level of design.
7 This park has three-to-one slide slopes and
8 underdrains were incorporated underneath the fields
9 to improve drainage.

10 On March 6th, 2023, the Village of
11 Oak Lawn and MWRD formally presented the projects to
12 Illinois School District 218 which are the owners of
13 the Polaris Park. After the presentation, the
14 school board voted unanimously to approve the
15 requested stormwater easement that was needed for
16 the project.

17 Here's a rendering of the proposed park
18 that was developed by Christopher Burke Engineering
19 during final design.

20 And then during IGA negotiations, as I
21 mentioned before, it took more than two years to
22 complete. This was due to funding issues and
23 finalizing the MWRD contribution amount. After
24 preliminary engineering, the cost estimate for the

1 proposed solution was 9.4 million. Based on that
2 number, MWRD proposed 3.5 million in construction
3 costs. After the Village took over for final design
4 and developed a project for 60 percent, their cost
5 estimate was coming up closer to 14 to 15 million.

6 In order to address this funding
7 shortfall, there were several options and
8 alternatives that were pursued. One was having the
9 Village apply for federal funding. They applied for
10 a FEMA Hazardous Mitigation Grant Program and BRIC
11 program. These attempts were unsuccessful so the
12 Village then decided to value engineer the project
13 to lower construction costs. This lowered the price
14 to around 12 million. We also evaluated separating
15 the project into two phases. After all these
16 options were pursued, MWRD increased the
17 contribution amount to 6.5 million, and we also
18 scheduled construction so that payments would occur
19 from 2025 to 2027.

20 I also want to mention the WMO permit,
21 that sometimes this can delay IGA projects. Flood
22 control projects are usually exempt from WMO
23 requirements, but if that flood control project
24 includes qualified sewer construction, then a WMO

1 permit is required. For the most part, flood
2 control projects, this is usually the case. So I
3 just wanted to highlight this. For this permit, we
4 didn't have any issues but it still took over
5 three months for the WMO to be issued by our WMO
6 section.

7 Then this is some of the value engineering
8 that was done on this project. Between preliminary
9 engineering and the final design, Polaris Park was
10 changed from a graded slope to a system using
11 retaining walls. In order to reduce cost, this
12 was -- they kind of went back to the graded system.
13 This time they went with 4 to 1 slope to increase
14 the storage capacity. And there's also work done on
15 the storm sewer upsizing. They reduced the
16 5-by-8 box culverts proposed downstream from the
17 stormwater park since it didn't have any flood
18 benefits due to Polaris Park, the storage.

19 Also, instead of upsized -- removing and
20 upsizing storm sewers, we decided to just -- or the
21 Village added to the project to install a 48 relief
22 parallel storm sewer along 105th Street and along
23 Kilpatrick Avenue instead of removing and upsizing
24 storm sewers, we decided to just install another

1 parallel 58-by-91 elliptical stormwater.

2 Here are just some construction photos.

3 The photo on the right is Polaris Park before
4 construction. The photo on the right is excavation,
5 and it's from March 9th, 2026. Here's some ground
6 shots of Polaris Park on December 4th and
7 March 24th.

8 Here's a picture of a junction chamber
9 that inflows into Polaris Park. During preliminary
10 engineering, we thought there was a 60-inch storm
11 sewer on Kilpatrick, but it turned out there was a
12 60-inch parallel storm sewer. And then the proposed
13 elliptical storm sewer that I mentioned earlier.

14 That's it for my presentation.

15 MR. BENNETT: Any questions?

16 MR. WASOWICZ: Yeah. I have a question.

17 What is the status -- Kris Wasowicz, Village of
18 Justice. What is the status of the study of the
19 71st Street ditch watershed? It affects the
20 Bridgeview, Bedford Park, and Justice. And it's
21 been 15 years and we still don't have a word what's
22 going on with that study.

23 MR. VELEZ: I'm not sure about that study.
24 I can look into it, get back to you.

1 MR. WASOWICZ: I would appreciate it.

2 MR. KRATZER: I can help address that.

3 MR. BENNETT: Identify yourself, please,
4 for the court reporter.

5 MR. KRATZER: Joe Kratzer, MWRD.

6 So we have been working on the
7 71st Street study. We have a consultant working
8 on kind of a continuation of a concept study which
9 was completed last year into final design. So
10 they're looking at a couple different alternatives
11 still to fine-tune a new outlet to the Sanitary and
12 Ship Canal that would provide benefits basically
13 from Archer and 71st Street ditch area over to the
14 west through the Kinder Morgan, Ingredion sites.

15 We are also working to partner with IDOT
16 on a project where they will upsize the storm sewer
17 at Harlem Avenue, provide an additional outlet to
18 Sanitary and Ship Canal up near Archer Road where
19 that crosses the canal. We are working with Summit
20 and the Summit Park District on that piece of it.

21 So the time line in from beginning of
22 design on that which started late last year roughly
23 is about 18 months. So we are working to prepare
24 plans for those improvements, and you guys, when we

1 get to the next design milestone, we'll be sharing
2 that information with you and your engineers.

3 MR. WASOWICZ: Thank you. If I may ask
4 kindly for update once in a while, e-mail or
5 something, so I know what's going on.

6 MR. KRATZER: Sure.

7 MR. BENNETT: Is that an independent
8 project with the District, or is that a
9 collaboration with the towns themselves who
10 submitted the project?

11 MR. KRATZER: So the towns submitted a
12 project request.

13 MR. BENNETT: Was that Summit?

14 MR. KRATZER: Sorry?

15 MR. BENNETT: Was that Summit, the
16 original?

17 MR. KRATZER: Well, Summit and then the
18 other communities, Bedford Park, Justice, and
19 maybe -- that's it. But we're trying to solve
20 multiple problems all in that corridor of Harlem and
21 Archer.

22 MR. WASOWICZ: Thank you.

23 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

24 MR. BRADY: And it's tied in with -- Dave

1 Brady, Bedford Park. It's tied in also with
2 something to do with water coming from the east?
3 That's what I'm hearing.

4 MR. KRATZER: Water coming from the east
5 of?

6 MR. BRADY: East of Harlem.

7 MR. KRATZER: Yeah, I'm not sure where the
8 water you're referring to is at. But, yeah,
9 anything that drains in that corridor, I think it's
10 all tributary currently to 71st Street ditch which
11 can be overwhelmed so that's why we're looking at
12 these other outlets. So it's really more of a
13 matter of getting the water that's causing flooding
14 in that area out to the Sanitary and Ship Canal. We
15 are also looking at providing some detention as part
16 of that project as well, both in collaboration with
17 IDOT, some of the work they're doing with the grade
18 separation project on Harlem and with the Summit
19 Park District.

20 MR. WASOWICZ: Thank you.

21 MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

22 MR. VELEZ: Next up is Grayson Kelly
23 presenting on Blue Island Public Library green roof.

24 MR. KELLY: Hello, everyone. Grayson

1 Kelly. I'm assistant civil engineer at the MWRD,
2 part of the green infrastructure group, and today
3 I'll be showing off the green roof that we installed
4 last year at Blue Island.

5 Again, the location is Blue Island. It's
6 about 1 mile west of I-57 at the public library.
7 The lead agency was the Blue Island Public Library,
8 and the lead engineer, Engberg Anderson Architects.

9 This green roof holds about 2,700 gallons
10 of designed retention capacity, referred to as DRC.
11 I'll be referring to that as DRC throughout this
12 presentation.

13 Here's the project location. You can see
14 it's about -- it's a few blocks north of our SEPA
15 station, if anyone is familiar with that. The
16 project time line, similar to as George had
17 mentioned, but for green infrastructure, our project
18 time lines are around two years. Our first year is
19 going to be IGA executed with some design in there,
20 and then the second year we call the construction
21 year, which was from May '25 to October '25.

22 Starting out with some of the design, the
23 first thing was to determine corrective action to
24 prepare the roof with any supports that would be

1 needed and perform a structural analysis, and you'll
2 see later we had to leave some of the areas bare
3 because the roof could not support them.

4 And our design phase is typically in four
5 iterations for green infrastructure, a 30 percent
6 all the way through 100 percent. The engineering
7 firm will submit their plans to us, and we return
8 with comments. For instance, in the first
9 iteration, they did not include an overflow route so
10 that was one of our comments moving forward.

11 Here is our typical sections. Four of
12 these planting trays. You can see a side view and a
13 typical section to the right. Then below that is
14 our DRC calculation which helps us lead to our total
15 DRC, which in this case was 2,700 gallons.

16 Once construction began, the library did
17 run into some unfortunate unexpected cost due to the
18 discovery of asbestos which then needed abatement so
19 they had to pay for it. And as you can see, there's
20 the bare area on the right side which all came from
21 the structural analysis. And the final
22 determination was that there would be four planting
23 trays throughout the outer edges on this library
24 roof.

1 The educational signage to help educate
2 the public. So as they walk by this public library,
3 they will see this sign which goes over some of the
4 benefits of green infrastructure as a whole and the
5 benefit of the green roof in this case. The general
6 green infrastructure benefit here is getting the
7 stormwater out of our combined sewer systems and
8 then using these native plants to absorb that water.
9 Then the green roof specific benefit is that it's
10 going to reduce the energy cost by keeping it cool
11 in the summer and then keeping it warmer in the
12 winter through insulation. It's also going to
13 promote biodiversity in an urban area through bees,
14 birds, other pollinators.

15 The cost of this project, the total cost
16 ended up being \$560,000; and the way we determined
17 our reimbursement system is through three factors.
18 In this case it was only two. But the first one
19 that we consider for this was the percent of
20 eligible cost which only pertains to the green
21 infrastructure cost, and we determined that
22 95 percent we would pay for. And the second one is
23 our maximum contribution which is determined in the
24 IGA as it's executed. And to determine our total

1 reimbursement is whatever the lowest is of the
2 factors. The third factor is a dollar per gallon in
3 the DRC, but because this is a green roof rather
4 than permeable pavers like we see outside, we did
5 not apply that to this one.

6 Post construction an owner plan is put
7 into place for live roof and walks you through how
8 to keep the plants alive and any other maintenance
9 that may be required, including the biweekly weed
10 walks, general inspection for potential issues such
11 as drain issues, displaced soil, plant health, and
12 pest control. And it's split up depending on the
13 season. And here we did a site visit in November,
14 which it was getting cold so you can see there's
15 some bare spots here, but our owner plan does cover
16 any way to help maximize even though there's colder
17 seasons, use native plants.

18 We do have a website. This QR code will
19 take you there. It takes you more in depth to this
20 project with a video, and there's a live stream also
21 that can show you exactly what the green roof is
22 looking like right now. And they have some fun
23 3D printed characters up there.

24 I am going to open this back up to Mark.

1 MR. CASTILLO: Were there any questions
2 for Grayson?

3 MR. BENNETT: Not me.

4 MR. KELLY: Thank you, guys.

5 MR. BENNETT: Next we have small streams
6 maintenance. Back to you, Mark?

7 MR. CASTILLO: Yeah, it's back to me.

8 MR. BENNETT: We are going to have to put
9 you down for all the names.

10 MR. CASTILLO: That's what the court
11 reporter is for.

12 All right. Thank you, George, Grayson for
13 presenting those two projects. I just want to go
14 through our partnerships and resources that we have
15 available for not only for the local municipal heads
16 but the residents.

17 Partners, like our projects, like the two
18 that we highlighted here, were identified and funded
19 through our partnership programs. Currently, we are
20 looking to reopen these very soon. Pre-applications
21 will be due December 15th with final applications
22 being due March of next year.

23 You can visit
24 mwrdd.org/stormwater/partnerships to view the

1 requirements for each program. We also have
2 resources, such as prerecorded webinars, project
3 highlight videos with previous partners, and the
4 documents and files that you need to participate in
5 the program.

6 I also have a list here where if you would
7 like to sign up for mailing list, stay in touch,
8 stay up to date with where we are in the partnership
9 process, you can sign right there. All these
10 resources I'll share with Vicky, and she'll
11 distribute them to you after this meeting.

12 I wanted to highlight where we currently
13 are with our partnership process, the 2025 round.
14 Last round, we had 48 applications from
15 40 organizations. That includes all pre-applicants
16 and updated applications. There are 140 million in
17 total construction costs requested with -- excuse
18 me, total construction costs of the projects, with
19 52 million requested from applicants. The average
20 cost share is approximately 60/40, MWRD potentially
21 providing up to 60 percent of that cost share.

22 I wanted to highlight that our stormwater
23 partnership program, our GI program, and our
24 flood-prone property acquisition program, our annual

1 budget ranges from 3 to 5 million each year
2 annually. So you can see that the requests greatly
3 outweigh, like, our annual budget.

4 Let's see here. I believe for this
5 watershed, we only received -- we received six
6 applications.

7 I just wanted to kind of, like, summarize
8 what some stats that we've learned from this last
9 round. Thirty applications had some type of storage
10 element, that's underground detention or GI. That's
11 something we love to see. We really encourage
12 applicants to submit projects that do provide that
13 storage.

14 We had very few applicants to our
15 conceptual and acquisition programs. I believe
16 there were only three conceptual applications this
17 last round.

18 I highlighted that the request
19 significantly -- are significantly are greater than
20 our budget. Also highlighting very few applicants
21 are leveraging other funding sources, which is
22 understandable currently right now. Both federal
23 and state funding can be kind of hard to come by.

24 The last thing I wanted to highlight was

1 70 percent of our applicants submitted at the
2 deadline. So that was basically Christmas week.
3 That makes it incredibly difficult for us to review
4 applications, provide feedback in a timely manner,
5 and strengthen that application so that, you know,
6 applicants can provide the best project or present
7 the best project to the MWRD for funding. As a
8 result of that, you know, a handful of the
9 applicants that we got, they were ineligible because
10 they were basically asking for money to do
11 maintenance tasks or they conflicted with program
12 criteria.

13 So as far as the time line for the 2025
14 round, we went to the Board for GI projects this
15 last week. Next month we are going to be going to
16 the Board for the remaining of the programs. And
17 then within, like, May or June, based on our budget
18 and the project's readiness, we'll probably be
19 entering into negotiations with projected start of
20 those projects that are selected starting around
21 2027.

22 We are reopening for the 2026 round. It's
23 going to be a similar time line. We are
24 anticipating applications opening this month.

1 They're going to be due December 15th. March is
2 going to be the full application due date, and then
3 May 2027, making our recommendation to our Board of
4 Commissioners.

5 Taking a step back further, I wanted to
6 summarize, do a little snapshot of the last
7 four years. We had over 200 unique applications, 82
8 of which were recommended to our Board of
9 Commissioners. We have entered or engaged with
10 these applicants, 76 of them, with 40 of them
11 completed.

12 Currently, we have around 29 that are
13 ongoing. That includes recent 2025 selections. We
14 have a handful or more than a handful of conceptual
15 projects that are still under design. Those
16 typically take a year or more to finalize an
17 alternative solution. And then we have four
18 partnership programs that are still waiting federal
19 funding decisions.

20 I think this is important to really
21 highlight what the typical recommended project looks
22 like for our two largest programs. For our
23 stormwater partnership program, total project cost
24 is around 2.5 to 5 million dollars with the MWRD

1 providing about 50 percent. Our largest project
2 that we are supporting is about \$13 million in
3 construction costs with the MWRD providing
4 4 million.

5 For our GI program, that's looking more
6 like 500,000 to 1 million dollars in construction,
7 with MWRD again looking at around 50 percent.
8 Largest project in our GI program right now is about
9 \$2 million.

10 I do want to highlight some factors
11 affecting advancement. When projects are
12 recommended or selected, we reach out to that
13 applicant and kind of find out where they truly are
14 in the -- as far as the status of their project.
15 Funding has been one of the biggest issues affecting
16 advancement. So that can be the project is not in
17 that applicant's budget and is not ready to go.
18 I've mentioned issues with state and federal funding
19 delaying projects. And then sometimes we identify
20 that the partner had not even budgeted for their
21 design. And so that's incredibly important, to make
22 sure that that project is on schedule.

23 Issues come up with right-of-way
24 acquisition that delays how a project is advancing.

1 And then finally completing the required IGA
2 documentation. You know, we need to see
3 documentation regarding right-of-way, regarding your
4 O&M maintenance plan, things like that. Those need
5 to be given to us ahead of time for us to execute
6 that IGA.

7 Last thing, I want to highlight for the
8 last four years, again, over 200 unique
9 applications. Fifty-three communities have applied
10 at least once or twice; however, 25 communities
11 account for around 60 percent of the submissions
12 within the last four years. Now, this does not
13 reflect all of our work. I'll be working with Vicky
14 on this, but there definitely is an opportunity to
15 make sure all communities are aware of and take
16 advantage of our programs.

17 We'll be entering a bit of a pause on
18 updates to our program so I'll -- again, I'll
19 distribute this through Vicky, but we have a survey
20 out asking applicants, you know, what influences
21 your decision to apply for a partnership, what
22 aspects of the application or our partnership
23 process are challenging or time consuming to
24 complete, and if you have any suggestions. So I

1 have a QR code up here, a link that we'll send
2 through Vicky, and we appreciate your feedback to
3 improve our programs.

4 Next up, we have resources available for
5 both yourselves and your residents. I want to
6 highlight that we have a GIS portal up online. It's
7 called Stormwater Central. This is essentially a
8 suite of tools to help the public access and engage
9 with stormwater data that we have. We have a
10 project in Data Explorer so if you want to see what
11 projects you have going on in your watershed, you
12 can go onto this map and you can see exactly what's
13 going on. We have our project data as well as
14 volumetric storage -- pardon me, metrics for each of
15 the communities and watersheds.

16 We also have a story map called
17 Understanding Stormwater Management which will be
18 incredibly useful for your residents. This kind of
19 details the history of stormwater management within
20 Cook County and what MWRD is accomplishing to help
21 stormwater and flooding within the county.

22 Next up, we have a new resource, the Green
23 Infrastructure Community Guide. This is a resource
24 for municipal leaders and their staff and

1 engineering consultants to incorporate GI in their
2 long-term stormwater management planning.

3 This along with the green guide along with
4 publications such as Understanding Your Sewer, our
5 Flood Resource Response Guide, these are all
6 available for yourselves and the public at
7 mwrdd.org/education.

8 I'll have Fabio go through these next two
9 slides for our Rain Barrel Program is reopening as
10 well as or Restore the Canopy program has reopened.
11 These programs, if your residents want to be more
12 involved, you can visit mwrdd.org/community-action
13 for additional resources.

14 You can also learn more about other
15 programs that we have, such as where to put your --
16 pardon me, unused medications; if you want to sign
17 up for overflow action days notifying you of a
18 rainfall event and limiting that water during major
19 rainstorms; and if you want to report a waterway
20 blockage or fly dumping, who to call.

21 Lastly, I want to highlight that the MWRD
22 provides tours and in-person speaking events. You
23 can sign up for that at mwrdd.org/education.
24 Something I really want to highlight is the number

1 of presentations that we can talk to your residents
2 about. So, for instance, we can talk about the
3 history of MWRD and our role in wastewater treatment
4 throughout the county. We can talk about the
5 different sewer systems that each community can
6 have. So, for instance, here, I have a screenshot
7 of what a separate sewer system looks like as well
8 as a combined sewer system, what that looks like.

9 We can also educate your residents as far
10 as, you know, especially if you live within that
11 combined sewer area, you have hundreds of homes as
12 well as the catch basins on the street all
13 collecting water, all going into that local storm
14 pipe which then empties into our interceptors, and a
15 lot of the time because local sewer infrastructure
16 is aging or it's undersized, that water cannot get
17 to our infrastructure fast enough, and that causes
18 basement backups and street flooding. So these are
19 examples of presentations that we can give to your
20 community, better educate your residents on
21 stormwater issues.

22 And then finally, just highlighting
23 participation in these WPC meetings. One of the
24 things about this meeting, and I really credit Vicky

1 for this, is that this is incredibly well attended,
2 and I think it's incredibly important for us to be
3 able to have this, like, back and forth moving
4 forward.

5 So with that, any questions for this
6 section of the meeting?

7 MR. BENNETT: Nothing.

8 MR. CASTILLO: All right. And these are
9 the two links up here. Thank you.

10 MR. BENNETT: We still have one more?

11 MR. CASTILLO: Oh, that's right. Fabio.

12 MR. MONTEIRO: All right. Good evening,
13 everyone. My name is Fabio Monteiro. I'm a civil
14 engineer with MWRD, more specifically with the Small
15 Streams Maintenance Program. For this watershed
16 planning council meeting, I would like to present
17 what we do and how you can be part of it, and I'll
18 also talk a little bit about the other programs,
19 rain barrel and Restore the Canopy.

20 So Cook County has little elevation change
21 throughout so the steams, they tend to move slowly
22 and they're prone to naturally flooding. So minor
23 blockages can build up quickly if there are heavy
24 rains and that contribute to flooding. So the

1 streams must be maintained.

2 In 2006 our program was developed with the
3 main mission of removing those blockages, and we
4 remove thousands of debris and blockages every year.
5 Outside of that primary mission, we also provide
6 beaver trapping, erosion repairs, remove dead trees
7 on the banks, we remove invasive species on the
8 banks. We still do not provide dredging.

9 So here are some pictures of how our work
10 looks like before and after.

11 So our work, it's dependent on the actual
12 calls and inspections. So this map shows the
13 locations of the work where there's inspections and
14 inspections requested in 2025 for this watershed.
15 We had -- throughout Cook County, we had about
16 400 work orders. So the work flow is that we
17 have -- the triangles are the inspection requests,
18 and then the squares which are the inspection
19 tickets, and then that tends to be work orders which
20 are the circles.

21 In 2025, we had in Cal-Sag Channel
22 Watershed 1,003 cubic yards of debris removed; and
23 we spent about 1.7 million with Cook County, giving
24 us an average cost of cubic yard removed of \$254.

1 We are continuing, will be continuing in
2 2026 with the program, and we have some goals such
3 as define critical stream areas, improving methods
4 of inspections, and increasing the public awareness
5 of the program.

6 Here just a couple pictures of -- this is
7 a blockage on Mill Creek western branch in
8 Palos Park that we removed. So if you guys see
9 anything like this on your streams, please call me.

10 Also, this one is a Cal-Sag Tributary B in
11 Oak Forest. A tree fell down on the stream. We
12 also removed that. It was a residential area.

13 Here's another example of work orders.
14 This is erosion repair in Palos Heights, Navajo
15 Creek. We worked with them to get that done.
16 There's a -- it was erosion close to a house and the
17 road.

18 So the equipment that we use for removing
19 the blockages are the skid steer, the main skid
20 steer, chipper, and Gradall excavator, chainsaws.
21 So depending on the stream water level, the
22 location, access, and the type of blockage, usually
23 it's wooden material like a dead tree, we would
24 assess case by case whether we secure the tree on a

1 stream bank or we chip it. If we end up chipping
2 it, we'll work with the municipality for disposal of
3 wood chips. We use the skid steer for picking up
4 material, winching, brush cutting. The same with
5 the boxer. The boxer is more for limited access
6 areas, and we use the Gradall over bridges to pick
7 up material in the water.

8 So how can you help us with the blockages?
9 First, reporting. You can do it through our website
10 or calling or e-mailing, not leaving yard waste in
11 your streams, properly disposing of trash, and if
12 you live by a stream, consider removing invasive
13 species and planting strong root systems, stretcher
14 type of plant, the native ones.

15 So there are two ways of reporting.
16 Right? One is through our MWRD website, which I'm
17 going to show in the next slide, what it looks like,
18 but the other one is calling or e-mailing
19 Arturo Hernandez or me. Most importantly, please
20 notify immediately if you see an issue with the
21 streams.

22 So this is how it looks like on our
23 website. Scroll down in the main page of MWRD,
24 scroll down to Contact Us, find Report Blockages and

1 Debris, click on it, and the small streams form will
2 pop up. It's very simple. Please just put your
3 contact there just in case we need to get more
4 information and then the location of the blockage.

5 If you have more questions or any more
6 interest in our work, please access our website
7 through stormwater maintenance and maintenance.

8 About the Rain Barrel Program, MWRD is
9 continuing with the program in 2026 and offering
10 Cook County residents discounted pricing until
11 supply lasts. The rain barrel will capture rain
12 water on the roof and save it for later use. It's
13 important by, you know, preventing -- it will help
14 preventing backup, basement backups, street
15 flooding, sewer overflows. It's \$22.30 including
16 tax and delivery. If you have any more questions,
17 contact Public Affairs.

18 Restore the Canopy Program. MWRD is also
19 continuing with that program in 2026. You can pick
20 up the saplings on an MWRD water reclamation plants
21 on Wednesdays from 9:00 AM to noon. They're mostly
22 oak trees so they can grow about 50 to 80 feet tall
23 so be aware of that. They do soak up rainwater so
24 that's a good thing about them as well.

1 And since 2016, we have distributed more
2 than 100,000 saplings. If you need any more
3 information about that, also contact the Public
4 Affairs.

5 Thank you. Any questions?

6 MR. BENNETT: Any questions for small
7 stream?

8 (No response.)

9 MR. BENNETT: Thank you very much.

10 Before we conclude this meeting, I would
11 like to recognize our fine MWRD commissioner,
12 Theresa Flynn, who is sitting in the back. Speaking
13 of history, it was this organization back in the
14 late '90s when I approached President Terry O'Brien,
15 invited him to our meeting, and asked him to
16 resolve, help us resolve flooding not only in our
17 area but in Cook County. And through President
18 O'Brien's seven years of lobbying Springfield
19 finally did get the MWRD as the sole agency to
20 alleviate flooding in our area.

21 Since then, it's almost 25 years now, when
22 you consider the start of the whole watershed
23 program, what it's come to or come about.

24 The reason I mention this, Commissioner,

1 not to put you on the spot, but cities and villages,
2 certainly in Cook County, certainly throughout the
3 state, face a very serious dilemma with the
4 governor's proposal about changing housing zoning.
5 The first thing I thought of is all the work that's
6 gone into this organization, your organization in
7 creating the WMO, how that -- his proposals on
8 housing would be complete conflict of what we have
9 tried to strive to improve the flooding in our
10 communities, this would toss it in the air and you
11 would cross over and violate your own WMO if we were
12 forced to give up our local zoning authority and
13 control.

14 I don't know if I'm officially pleading or
15 asking the MWRD to be on the record with us as to be
16 opposed to that housing bill, one of the reasons
17 would be on watershed management. I'm going to save
18 the rest of the discussion for the council meeting,
19 but I didn't mean to put you on the spot,
20 Commissioner, but.

21 COMMISSIONER FLYNN: But you did. So
22 thank you, Mayor, for the acknowledgement.

23 Obviously we do have a lobbyist that's
24 very active in Springfield. I would be speaking out

1 of turn if I didn't check in with Brendan O'Connor
2 who does a great job for the agency and doing what's
3 in the best interest of the agency and the taxpayers
4 of Illinois.

5 Our executive director is here as well.
6 If you have anything to add regarding the WMO or
7 leave it at that with our lobbyist in Springfield.

8 MR. MURRAY: So I'll just say good
9 evening, everyone. I'm John Murray. I'm the
10 executive director at the MWRD.

11 MR. BENNETT: I should have called you
12 first, John, but I didn't see you.

13 MR. MURRAY: I appreciate you giving me
14 time to think about the question.

15 So as our vice president said, we need to
16 talk to our lobbyist and find out what this is all
17 about. I think what you see here tonight is a
18 culmination of a lot of different things that have
19 been done here together in partnership with all the
20 municipalities here; and you can see the WMO, it's
21 important, it's an important component of what we do
22 because we don't want to exacerbate flooding. We
23 certainly have interest in that issue you brought
24 up.

1 I just want to say, you know, if anyone
2 wants to reach out and meet with me on that, please
3 reach out. I'll be happy to meet you.

4 MR. BENNETT: Thanks, John, Commissioner,
5 thank you. And we'll be in contact because this
6 component of concern that we have with watershed
7 management, again, would be in conflict with what is
8 being proposed downstate.

9 COMMISSIONER FLYNN: And please reach out
10 to me with direct questions and I'll share with
11 Brendan O'Connor. And letting you know, we will be
12 in Springfield on May 12th and 13th to speak to
13 our legislators as well.

14 MR. BENNETT: Let them know. Thank you.

15 Any other questions before the Board?
16 We'll be moving right into our regular meeting.

17 With that in mind, I'll entertain a motion
18 to adjourn.

19 MR. WASOWICZ: So moved.

20 MR. DODGE: Second.

21 MR. BENNETT: Move by Justice; second by
22 Orland Park.

23 All in favor, signify by a vote of aye.

24 (Chorus of ayes.)

1 MR. BENNETT: Motion carries. Meeting
2 adjourned.

3 (WHEREUPON, at 7:00 PM the
4 proceedings were adjourned.)
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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 6th day of May, 2026.



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