

City of Cincinnati



801 Plum Street, Suite 349
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Phone (513) 352-4610
Email david.mann@cincinnati-oh.gov
Web www.cincinnati-oh.gov

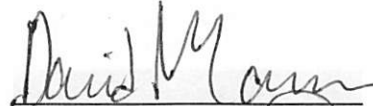
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David S. Mann
Councilmember

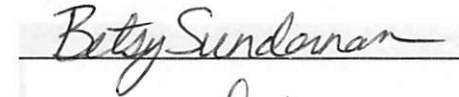
July 12, 2021

MOTION

I move that the Administration develop a long-term plan for addressing the reality that hundred-year floods are now a regular challenge for our community and that is no longer acceptable that businesses and residents may at any time find livelihoods and households severely damaged or destroyed by predictable events.



Councilmember David Mann







STATEMENT

The rain event of July 1, 2021 was a reminder of the difficult task which MSD and SMU have in dealing with the new reality of unusual storm events in the context of past and present development, aging infrastructure, Consent Decree and political issues. This last event is reminiscent of 2016 when several 100-year storms hit our city. We have been warned by climate scientists that our region is already seeing increased precipitation with the same trends going into the foreseeable future. Within this complex reality, we must at least address issues that we can control locally, as opposed to issues requiring national and international actions. Learning from 2016, MSD has now in place a better process able to respond to citizens faster and more efficiently, but little can be done by MSD to deal with issues strictly related to storm water.

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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

[Handwritten signatures and text, including "FBI" and "Special Agent in Charge"]

APPROVED:

FOR THE DIRECTOR OF THE FBI
[Illegible handwritten text]



David S. Mann
Councilmember

Past Development: At the local level, we need to recognize that past development has often followed creek beds. With increased rain and with these creek beds piped to carry more moderate water flows of the past, these developments are in jeopardy of being flooded each time an exceptional storm event occurs. And more exceptional storms have become the norm. It is the case along Delta Avenue in Cincinnati - the former Crawfish Creek. It is the case for the properties along Muddy Creek Road in Green Township.

Aging Infrastructure: With an underground pipe system built starting in the 1800's, our forefathers have not put the proper resources in on-going maintenance for this "out of sight, out of mind" infrastructure. In addition, this infrastructure was designed for a different reality, with less storms and less hard-surface development. The existing infrastructure is simply inadequate to carry large storms.

Consent Decree: The Consent Decree is based on water quality under the Clean Water Act. At a time of increased precipitation, this focus based on 1970's to 1980's reality may not be what the focus should be.

Political stalemate: The present structure of MSD, with the city managing and the county responsible for the purse, adds confusion and lack of focus toward effective solutions. In addition, the balkanization of the control of storm water throughout the county fails to recognize that water flows toward the lowest topographical point of the region, which is the City of Cincinnati.

A WAY FORWARD

We need, first and foremost, to settle the governance issue of MSD. The engineering and scientific issues MSD must deal with are very complex and the future of MSD needs to acknowledge this complexity. In the formulation of MSD's future, we need to involve not only Cincinnati and Hamilton County, but also Townships, and Municipalities all must be part of the final decision.

The massive amount of storm water in Hyde Park Square, water not able to get into the sewers and instead flooding buildings by entering their "front doors," clearly demonstrates that the July 1 flooding is not only an MSD issue but also a Stormwater Management Utility (SMU) issue. Too much finger pointing on "who's water it is" leads to inaction. Considering the dramatic increase in intensity of storms, we need to revisit the decision to separate MSD and SMU.

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The Consent Decree was created in a different reality. It makes no sense currently to focus a lot of resources on water quality instead of water quantity. We need federal assistance to deal with aging infrastructure, asset replacement and storm water mitigation. Even with very expensive sewer bills, MSD and SMU cannot spend enough on infrastructure.