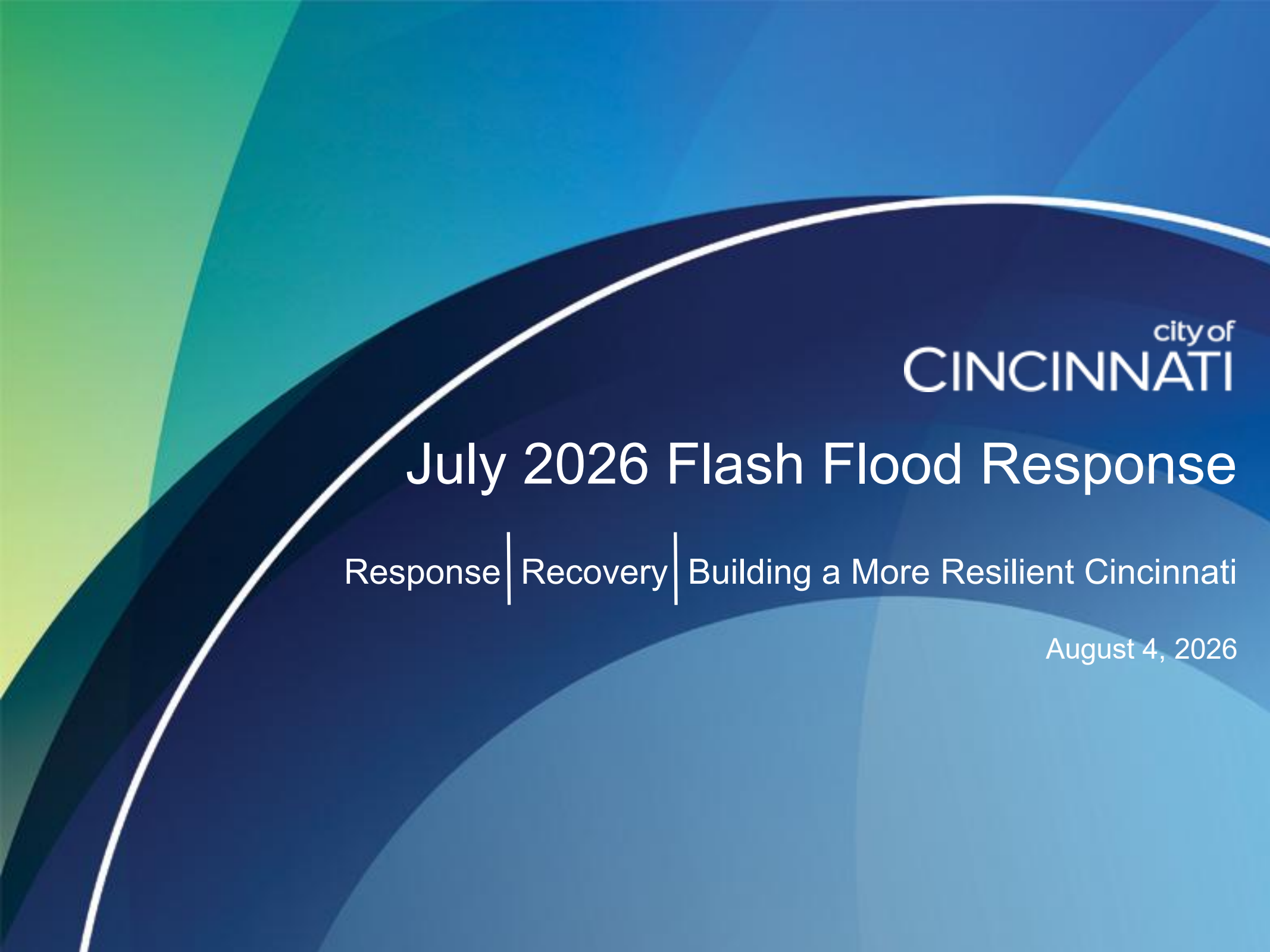




city of
CINCINNATI

July 2026 Flash Flood Response

Response | Recovery | Building a More Resilient Cincinnati

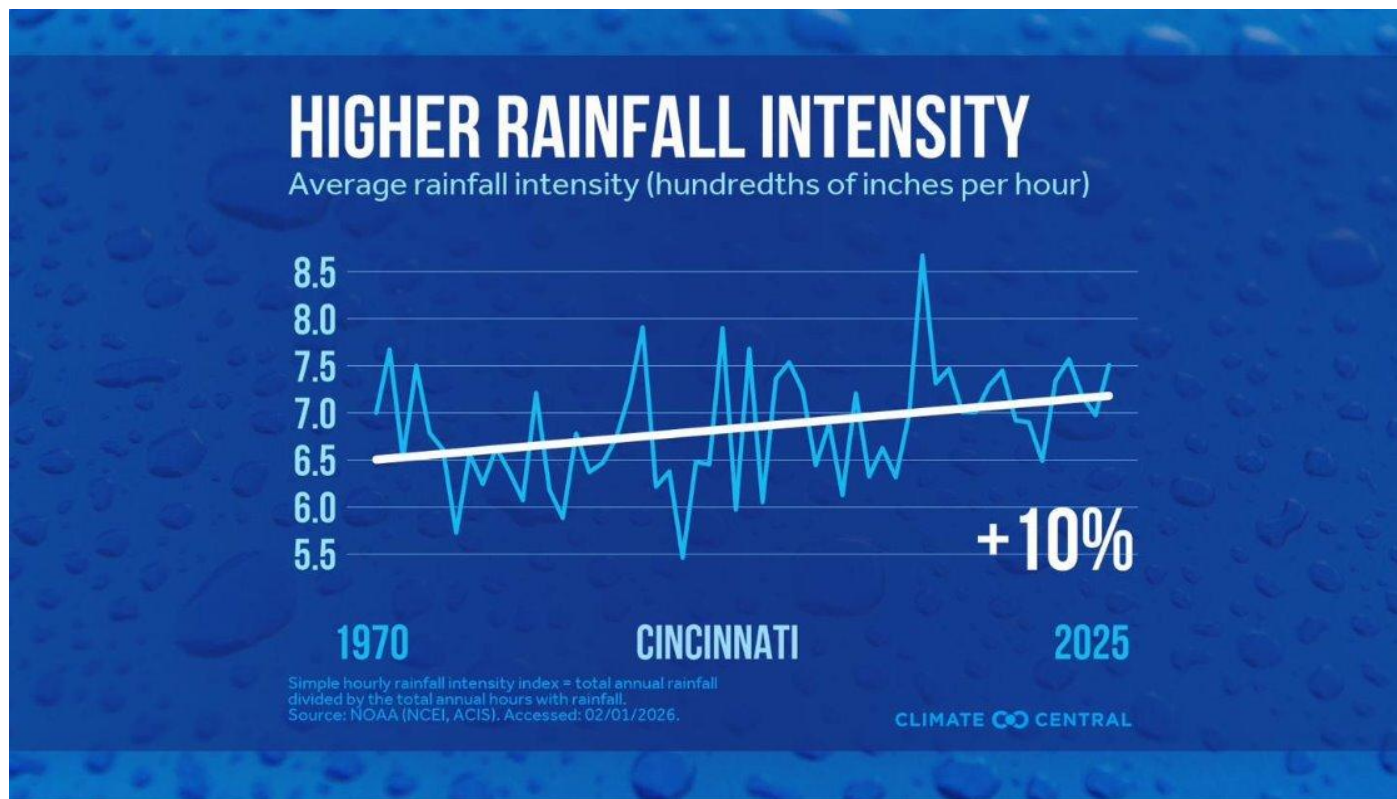
August 4, 2026

Purpose

- Climate Context
- Summarize the July flash flood events
- Review the City's coordinated response
- Highlight ongoing recovery efforts
- Discuss lessons learned and future resilience initiatives

Climate Context

Increasing Storm Intensity



+10%

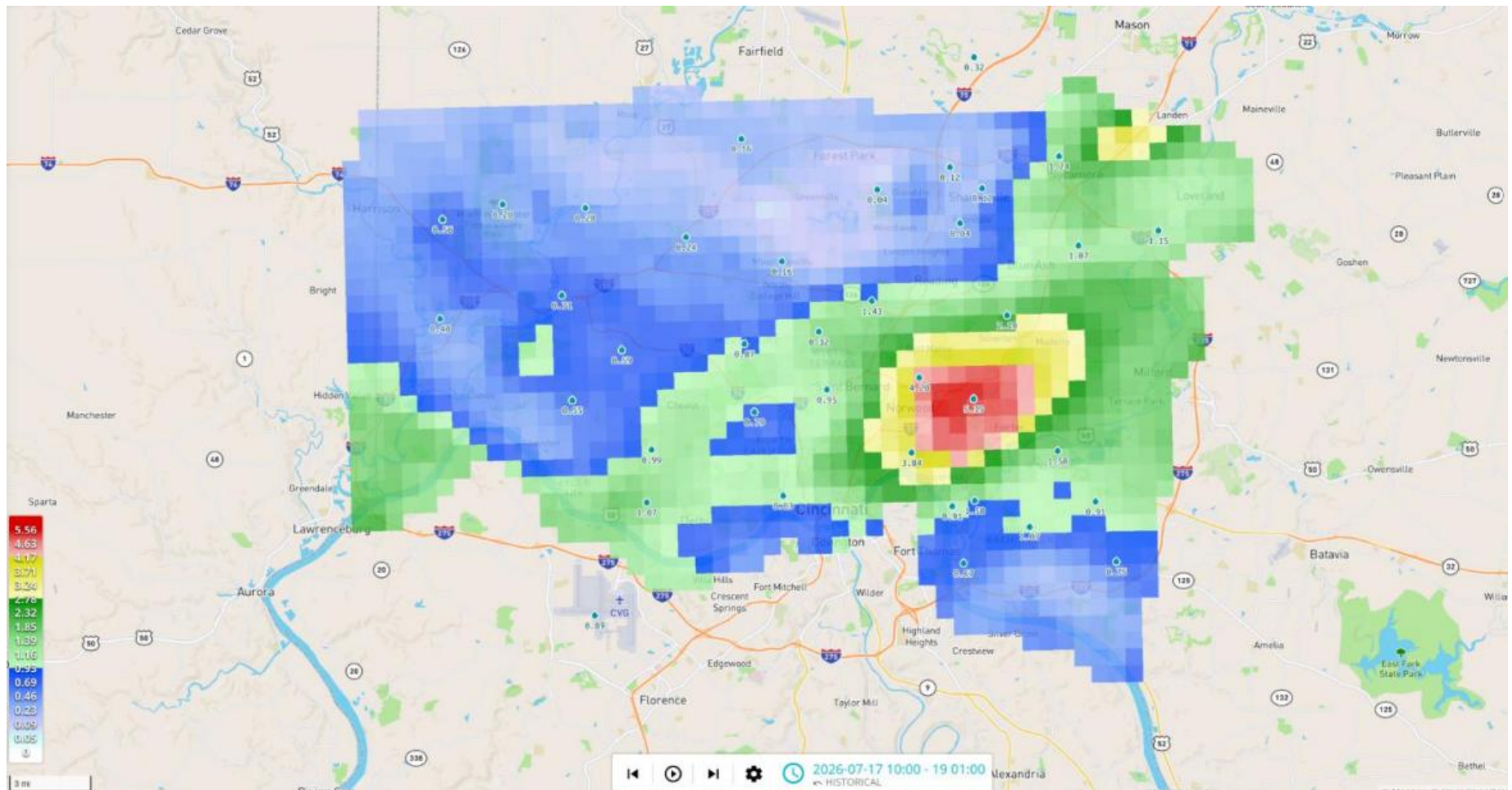
Average hourly
rainfall intensity in
Cincinnati, 1970–2025

+0.26"

Increase in annual
precipitation per
decade in Ohio
since 1896

Climate Context

Rainfall is increasingly localized and delivered faster

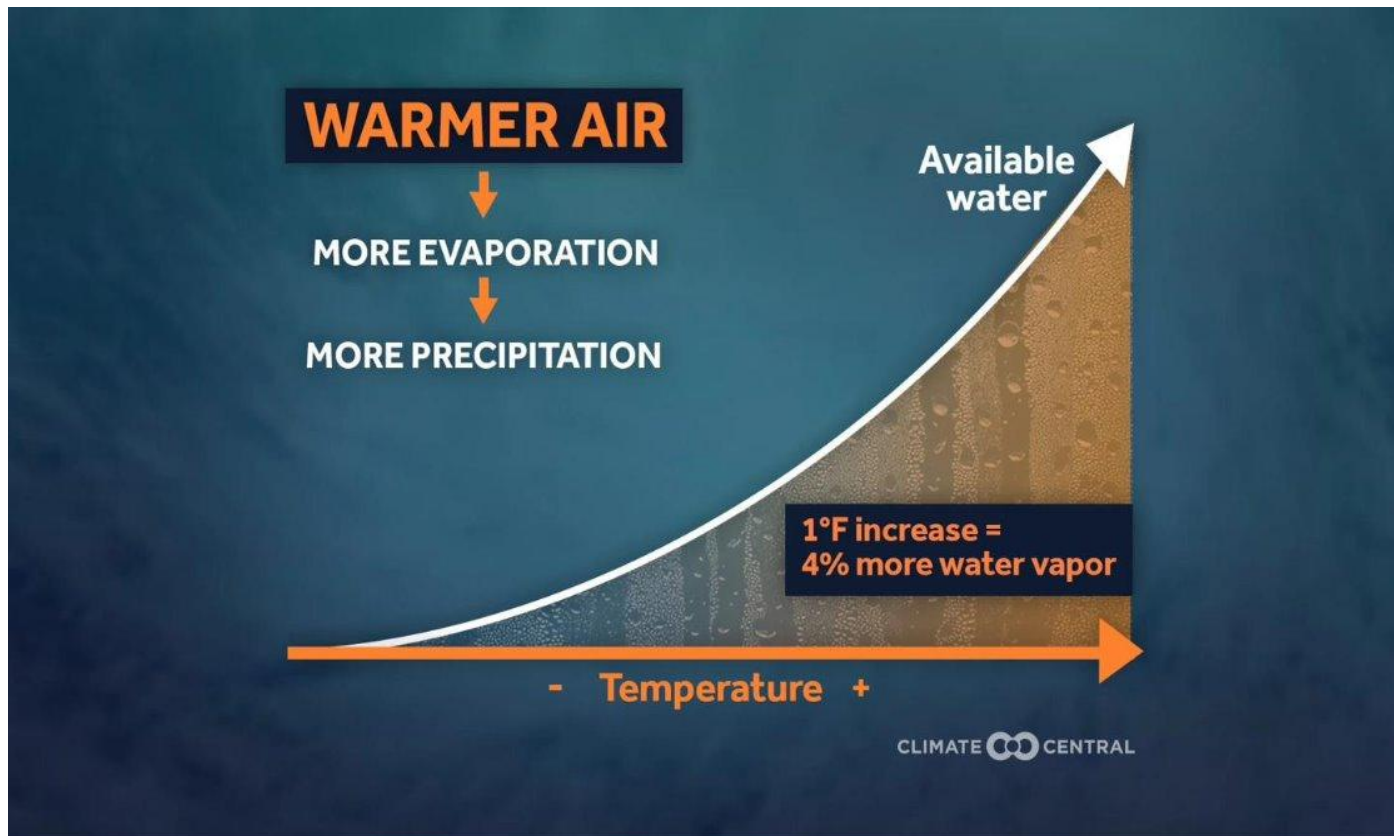


Rainfall totals over the Cincinnati area on evening of July 17. Areas around Hyde Park, Oakley, Madisonville and Kennedy Heights show highest levels of accumulation.

Source: MSD

Climate Context

Warmer Air Holds More Water

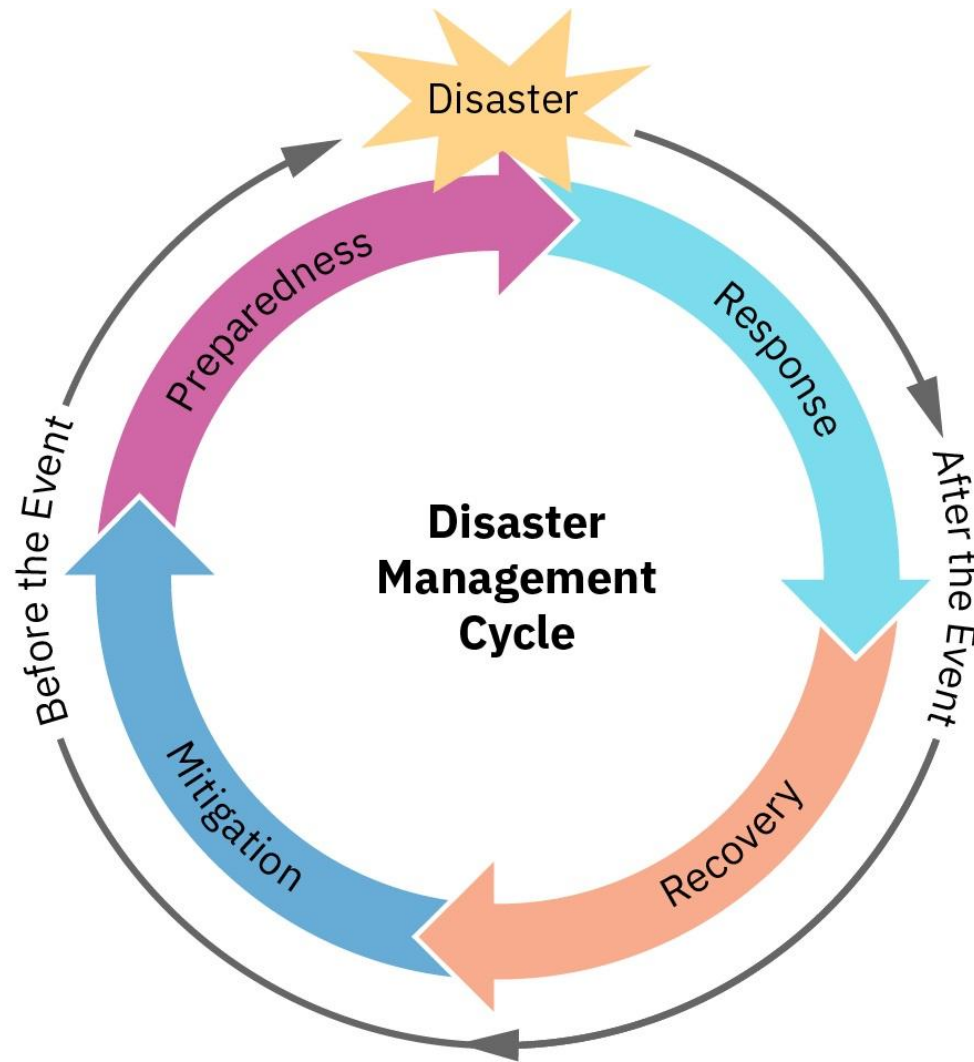


+4%

More water vapor in the air for every 1°F of warming

- **Heat is the engine.** Warmer surfaces and warmer air drive more evaporation.
- **Humidity provides the fuel.** Air masses now carry more water vapor to work with.

Emergency Management Framework



Emergency management framework used to manage disasters before, during, and after an incident.

Incident Overview

- Timeline
- Initial impacts
- Neighborhoods affected



July storms produced intense rainfall over a short period, resulting in widespread flash flooding across several Cincinnati neighborhoods.

Three Incidents in One

Flash Flooding Caused Damage in Multiple Modes

OVERLAND FLOODING



DEFINITION

Excess surface water that flows over the land and roads, unable to enter drainage systems. Flash floods.



COMMON CAUSES

- Intense downpours
- Saturated ground
- Clogged or overflowing storm drains and catch basins
- Rising creeks and rivers

SEWER BACKUPS



DEFINITION

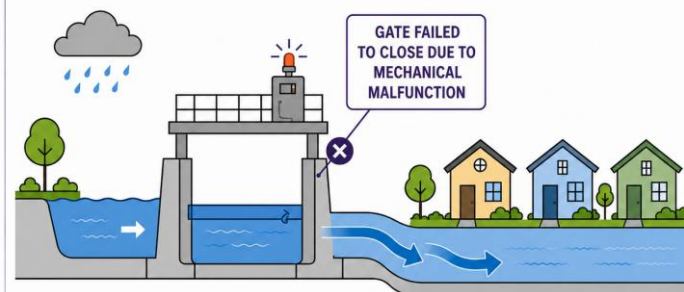
Rainwater entering the sanitary sewer system, causing a backup into homes.



COMMON CAUSES

- Heavy or intense rainfall
- Combined stormwater conveyance
- Sewer capacity constraints – storm events can exceed any sewer system's design capacity

FLOODGATE FAILURE



DEFINITION

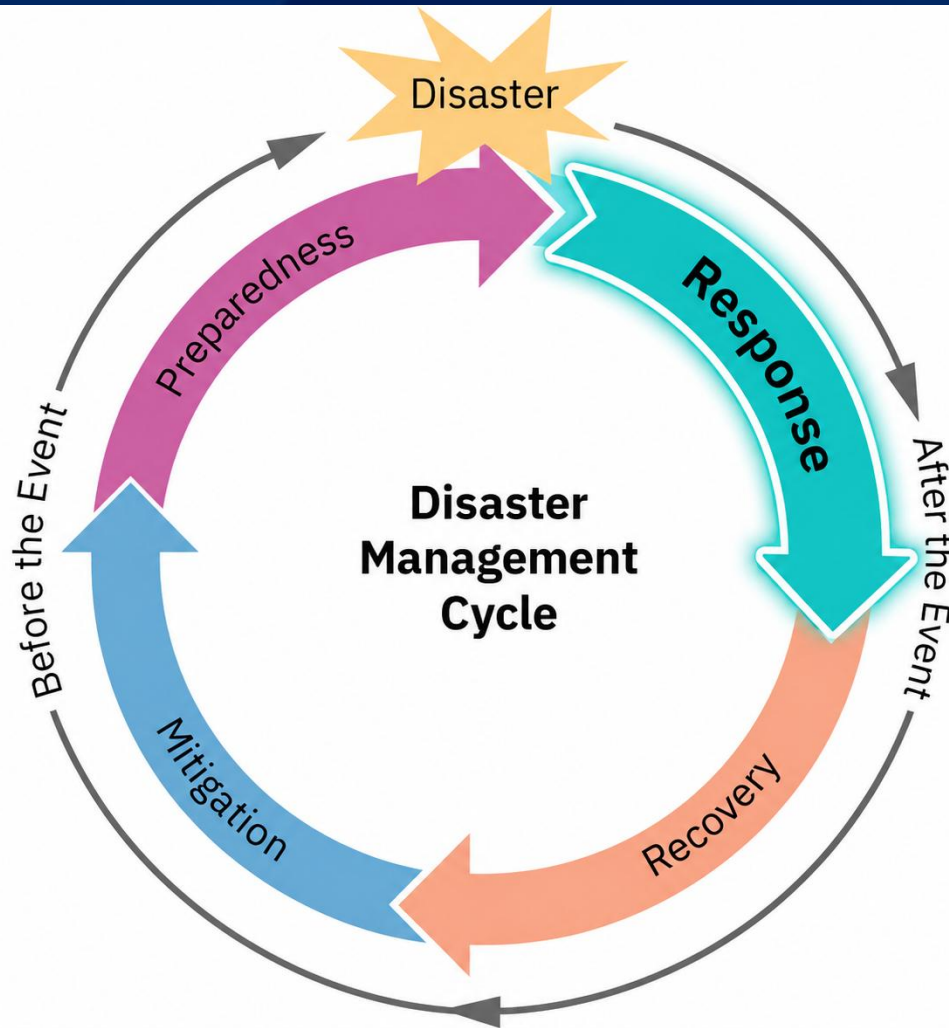
Floodgate designed to close and prevent creek flooding.



FAILURE

- Gate did not close due to mechanical malfunction.
- Creek water bypassed the gate and may have contributed to flooding on approximately 40 nearby properties.

Although all were flood impacts, each required a different operational response and recovery strategy.



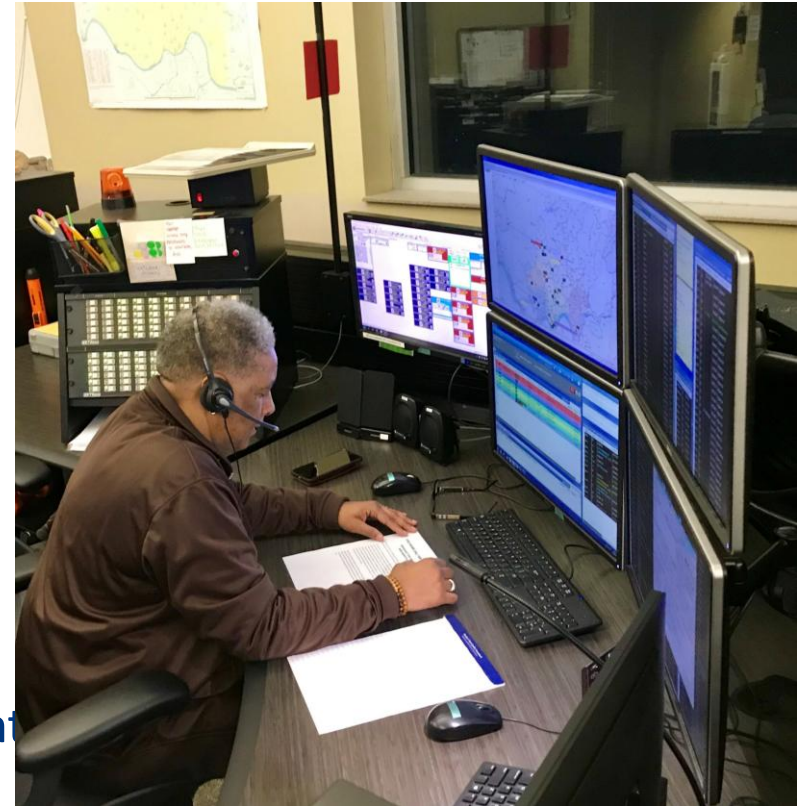
RESPONSE

Emergency Communications Center - ECC

Connecting Residents with Emergency Services

Key Contributions

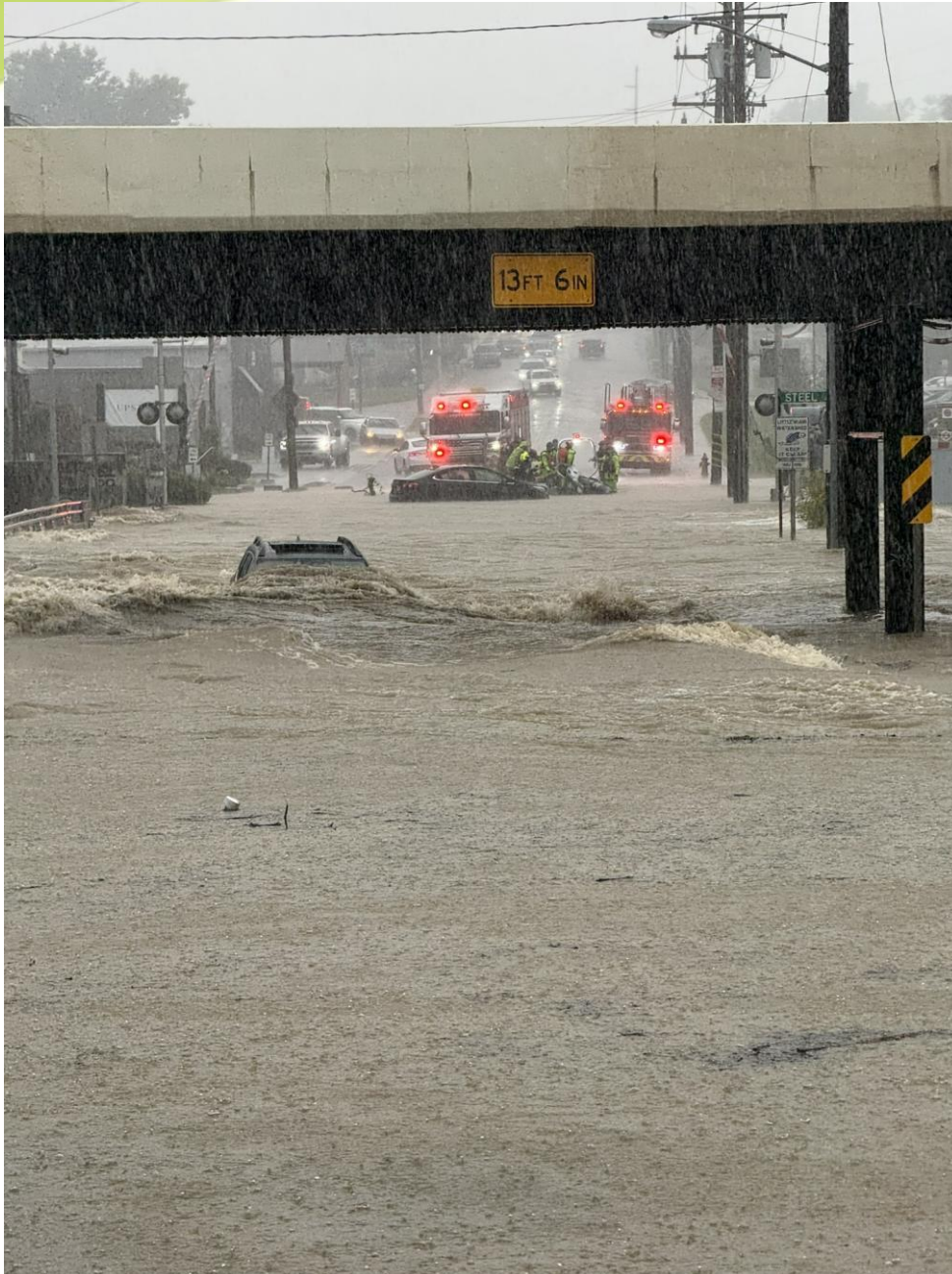
- Managed a rapid increase in 911 call volume
- Prioritized life safety emergencies
- Coordinated dispatch of Fire, Police, and EMS resources
- Expanded 311 operations to support additional community needs and reduce demand on 911
- Maintained communications throughout the incident



*Every emergency response began with the
Emergency Communications Center.*

Cincinnati Fire Department

Protecting Life During the Flood



Key Contributions

- Responded to hundreds of emergency incidents, including 165 rescue and water emergencies
- Conducted **48 civilian rescues**
- Established Unified Command in Oakley
- Coordinated regional mutual aid resources
- Completed primary searches of affected areas

Cincinnati Police Department

Protecting the Community

Key Contributions

- Assisted evacuations
- Secured affected neighborhoods
- Established road closures
- Supported rescue operations
- Assisted Unified Command



Emergency Management Division

Coordinating our City Response

Key Contributions

- Coordinated Emergency Operations Center activities
- Maintained citywide situational awareness
- Coordinated resource requests and interagency support
- Organized damage assessment planning
- Coordinated with Federal/State/Local partners



Coordinated Immediate City Response

Department	Primary Response Mission
Emergency Communications Center	Receive emergency calls and dispatch resources
Cincinnati Fire Department	Rescue, EMS, fire suppression, incident command
Cincinnati Police Department	Public safety, evacuations, traffic control
Emergency Management Division	Coordination, situational awareness, resource support
Metropolitan Sewer District	Intake of SBU calls and initiating investigation process
Buildings and Inspections	Respond to areas of concern to determine whether there are immediate risks

While each department had a distinct mission, their coordinated efforts enabled the City to protect lives, stabilize the incident, and transition into recovery.

RECOVERY

As floodwaters receded, the City's focus shifted from protecting lives to helping residents recover, restoring services, and assessing damage.

Metropolitan Sewer District

Serving residents affected by sewer backups

Key Contributions



- Emergency on-call support activated to respond quickly
- Investigated nearly 2,000 reported sewer backups
- Evaluated system performance during the storm
- Coordinated and scheduled approved customer cleaning
- Now assessing claims for damages covered under SBU Program



Stormwater Management Utility

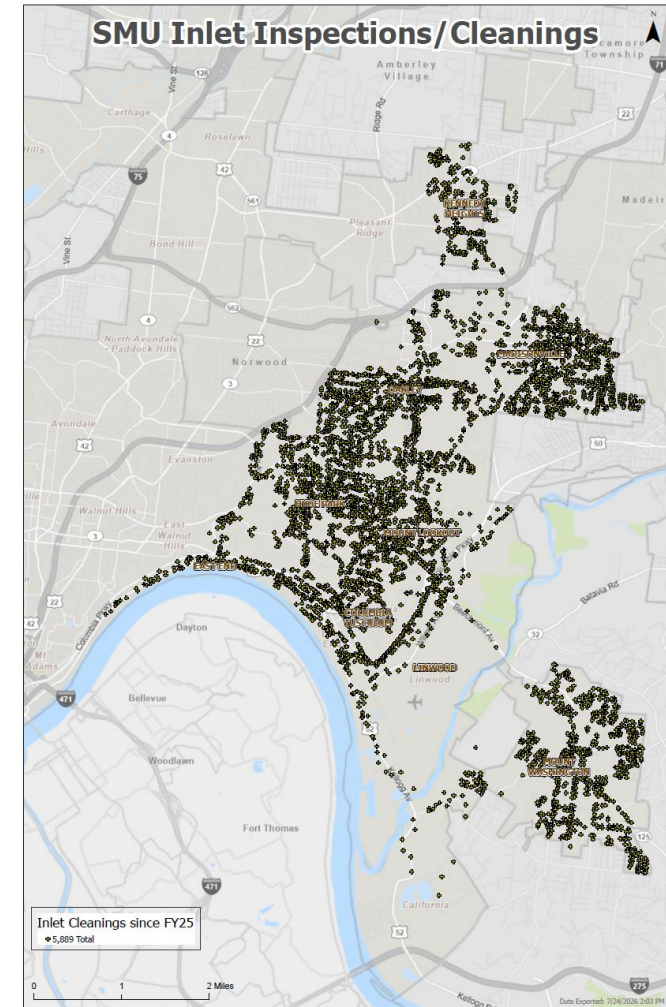
Managing Surface Water and Drainage

Inspections and Cleaning Inlets – 16 communities

- All inlets (~9,300) in sixteen impacted communities are being systematically inspected and cleaned when necessary. Completion expected by the end of next week.

Customer Assistance – Duck Creek/Madison floodgate

- Estimated 40 properties directly impacted (48 owners and tenants).
- Completed initial outreach to all properties with assistance information.
- Direct assistance may include temporary housing, large appliance replacement, and real property damage assessment.
- A dedicated representative is assigned to answer questions about claims process for reimbursement of damage-related expenses.
- Employees of impacted local businesses are being assisted and guided through the damage claim process for automobile and personal property damage reimbursement.



Department of Public Services

Restoring Public Infrastructure

Key Contributions

- Cleared debris from roadways
- Restored access to impacted neighborhoods
- Repaired damaged public infrastructure
- Supported traffic control and recovery operations



Buildings and Inspections

Assessing Building Safety



Key Contributions

- Conducted post-flood damage assessments
- Evaluated structural safety
- Coordinated with property owners
- Documented impacts for recovery planning

Damage Assessment and Assistance

Assistance Process

- Damage Assessments done by B&I
- Submitted to FEMA via State of Ohio - Ongoing
- Ohio and FEMA will make a determination
- Disaster eligibility unlikely, other programs are possible

Emergency Management Division

Key Contributions

- Coordinated volunteer damage assessment teams
- Connected residents with available recovery resources
- Coordinated information sharing among City departments
- Worked with state, county, nonprofit, and volunteer partners
- Supported recovery planning and transition to mitigation

Community Recovery

Neighbors helping neighbors

Community Support

- Conducted neighborhood damage assessments
- Connected residents with available assistance
- Supported information sharing
- Coordinated volunteer resources



Recovery Process

Recovery Activity	Status
Damage Assessments	✓
Building Inspections	✓
Roadway Restoration	✓
Sewer Investigations	✓
Community Assistance	Ongoing
Mitigation Planning	Underway

Recovery continues long after emergency response ends and requires sustained coordination across City departments and community partners.

MITIGATION AND PREPAREDNESS

July flooding reinforced the importance of reducing future risk while strengthening the City's preparedness for increasingly frequent extreme weather events.

What We Learned

Lessons from the July Floods

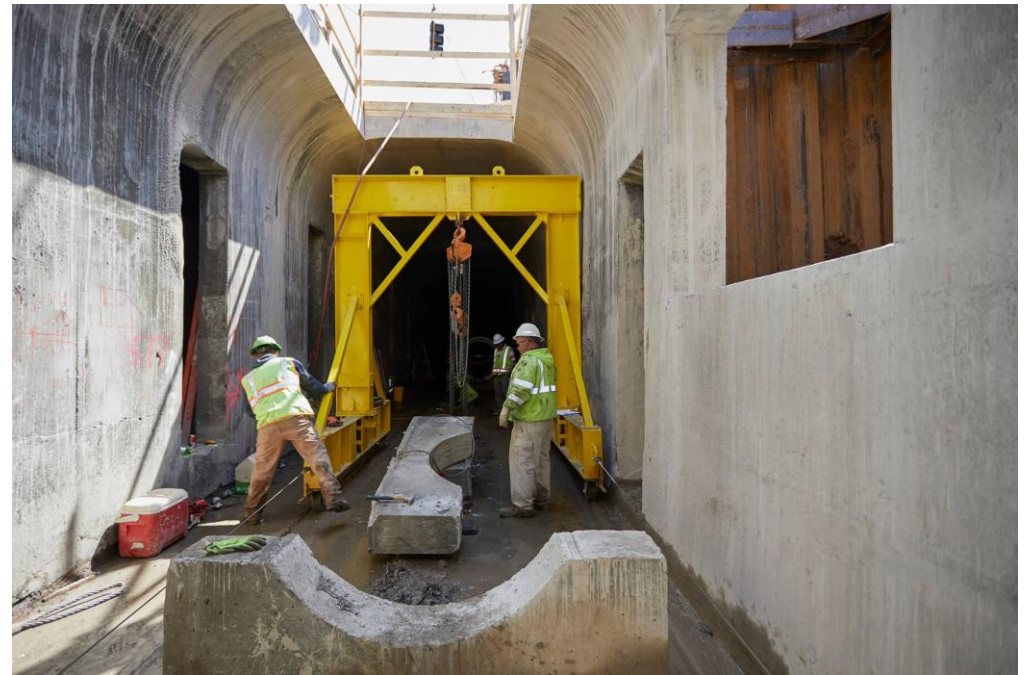
- City emergency services are well-trained and prepared to respond
- Strong relationships with established partners helped in quick deployment of resources to flood victims
- Review whether additional investment and oversight of SMU would have positive impact
- Identifying potential improvements requires regional collaboration.



Building a More Resilient Cincinnati

Ongoing Initiatives

- Green Cincinnati Plan
- Climate adaptation and resilience planning
- Stormwater infrastructure improvements
- Floodgate evaluation and modernization
- Continued interdepartmental coordination



Looking Ahead

Preparedness

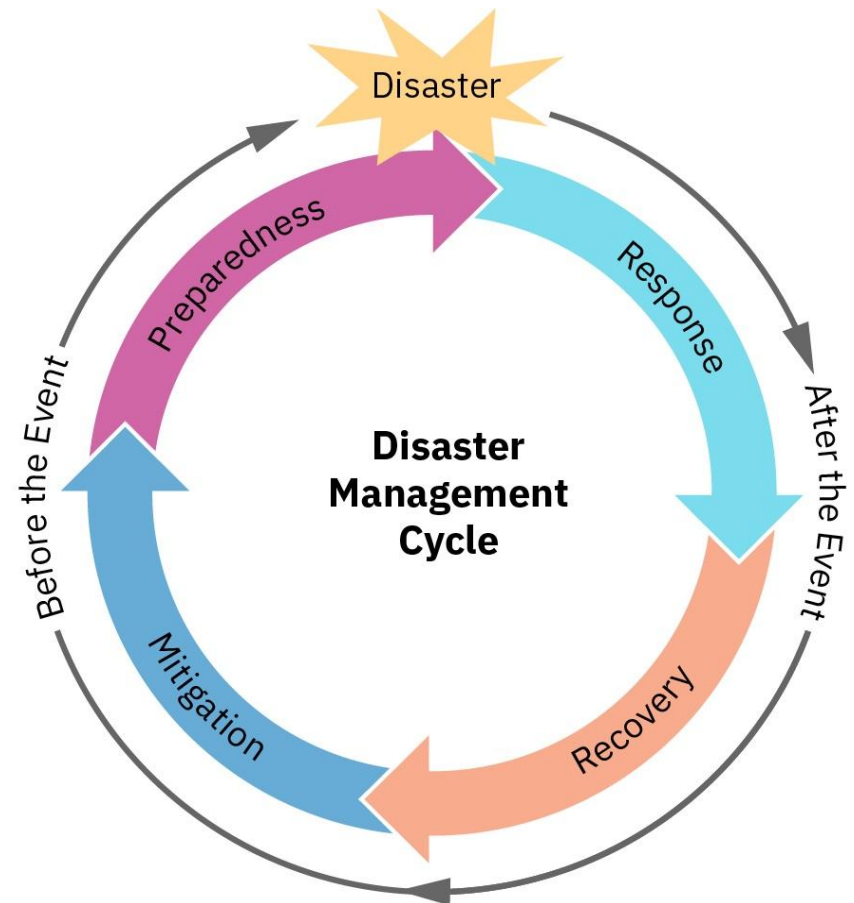
The City continues to prepare for future events through:

- Emergency planning and exercises
- Weather monitoring and situational awareness
- Interagency coordination
- Public preparedness and communication
- Continuous improvement based on lessons learned



Closing

- Strong Coordinated Response
- Collaborative Recovery
- Investing in Future Resilience



QUESTIONS?