



Mark Jeffreys
Councilmember

Motion: Building A More Flood-Resilient Cincinnati

July 27, 2026

WE MOVE that the administration within 30 days report on the following:

- Share a comprehensive 2026 “after action” analysis - either as a report or in presentation to City Council – from the 2026 flash floods that evaluates what worked/did not work, and what the city needs to start, stop and continue doing going forward.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the administration within 60 days report on the following:

- Explore the feasibility of installing oversized underground regional detention facilities in high flood areas where there is proposed new private development beyond what the project requires including in Hyde Park.
- Deploy a Watershed Study to identify medium term solutions where the greatest volume of temporary stormwater storage could be created in both the Mill Creek and Duck Creek Watersheds with an objective of slowing flash flood waters. This would include evaluating underground storage tanks and vaults, dry detentions, permeable pavement in parking lots (including schools such as Hyde Park school), bioswales and rain gardens. It would include evaluating upstream (e.g. in Alm Park) options as well as in areas that have experienced significant flooding e.g. Mt Lookout & Hyde Park Square, Madisonville, Oakley, etc. It would also include the recommended locations of the just allocated \$500K for these types of investments in the Mill Creek Watershed.
- An understanding of whether we should revisit the decision in 2020 not to accept the Kleingers Group recommendation to replace a bridge on Madison Road due to the existing bridge being a “severe restriction to the flood flows in Duck Creek” and whether we should be making that investment now.

STATEMENT

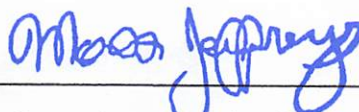
The recent flash floods on Cincinnati's East Side have made it clear that yesterday's stormwater infrastructure is no longer designed for today's storms. And we have seen flooding in other parts of the city

including the Beeckman Corridor and Evanston. More rain is falling in shorter periods of time, overwhelming storm sewers, flooding homes and businesses, washing out roads, and putting lives at risk. While an emergency response is essential, responding after every flood is not a strategy. We need to plan for infrastructure that can temporarily store and slow enormous volumes of stormwater before it surges through our neighborhoods. Just as the Lick Run project dramatically reduced flooding on the West Side through regional stormwater infrastructure, we should determine whether similar approaches – and smaller more medium-term infrastructure – can protect Hyde Park, Mt. Lookout, Oakley, Madisonville, and other East Side neighborhoods. We also need to identify specific locations for \$500K in stormwater infrastructure – such as bioswale, raingardens, etc. – to help with stormwater in the Mill Creek Watershed that was just included in the just-passed budget.

This motion asks for the analysis necessary to make informed decisions. It asks to explore whether there is an opportunity with proposed private development to incorporate large underground detention facilities in these high flood areas at a significantly lower incremental cost than building one as a standalone project in the future. It also seeks a comprehensive watershed study, which could be incorporated into the currently underway masterplan, to identify where regional detention, permeable surfaces, bioswales, rain gardens, and other green and gray infrastructure can provide the greatest benefit. Finally, it asks for a better understanding of previous decisions in 2020 regarding a bridge over Duck Creek and whether we should be investing in that bridge now.

The cost of inaction is millions of dollars in not only damaged property, but in disrupted lives, closed businesses, strained public resources, and growing concern every time heavy rain is forecast. Cincinnati has a long history of solving difficult infrastructure challenges through careful planning and sound engineering. This motion is the first step toward developing a data-driven strategy that will make our neighborhoods more resilient, better protected, and better prepared for the increasingly intense weather events we are experiencing.

The Stormwater Management Utility (SMU) is currently working on a long-term masterplan that would lay out the infrastructure across the city needed in the next few decades to address many of these conditions. That is the right analysis. The intent of this motion is to inform interventions that could take place before that long-term masterplan is completed and implemented.



Councilman Mark Jeffreys

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