

# Stormwater Management Program

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



**Metropolitan Water  
Reclamation District  
of Greater Chicago**

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**MISSION**

The mission of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago Stormwater Management Program is to protect the safety of Cook County’s residents, minimize flooding damage and improve water quality by coordinating, planning, implementing, financing, and operating regional stormwater management projects and to develop and enforce reasonable rules with respect to watershed development.

**COVER** Water flows over a riffle of boulders and rocks to oxygenate the water through Salt Creek near Oak Brook after the MWRD removed the Graue Mill dam as part of a restoration project that protects water quality, restores the banks and allows for new fish and boat migration upstream. The water travels through deeper pools and new riparian zones and is expected to create a 30 percent increase in fish diversity for areas of the creek 17 miles north of the dam.



## BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

For years, stormwater management in Cook County was a patchwork of efforts by local, regional, state and federal agencies. The Illinois General Assembly enacted Public Act 93-1049 in November of 2004, allowing for the creation of a comprehensive stormwater management program in Cook County under the supervision of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD).

The Act required the MWRD to develop the Cook County Stormwater Management Plan. The Cook County Stormwater Management Plan provides the framework for the stormwater management program, including its mission, goals, and program elements. The MWRD Board of Commissioners (Board) adopted the plan in February 2007. Adoption of the plan and the implementation of the MWRD's countywide stormwater management program afford Cook County the means to address a range of stormwater management issues through proper watershed regulations and watershed planning.

Under this plan, the MWRD has established Watershed Planning Councils and completed Detailed Watershed Plans for all six major watersheds in Cook County, initiated a Stormwater Management Capital Improvement Program, initiated a Small Streams Maintenance Program, and adopted and implemented the Watershed Management Ordinance (WMO). The six major watersheds are Calumet-Saganashkee Channel (Cal-Sag Channel), Little Calumet River (Little Calumet), Lower Des Plaines River (Lower Des Plaines), North Branch of the Chicago River (North Branch), Poplar Creek and Upper Salt Creek.

The program expanded significantly in 2014. The Cook County Stormwater Management Plan was amended in July 2014 to be consistent with Public Act 98-0652, which granted the MWRD authority to facilitate the acquisition of flood-prone properties and to plan, implement, and finance local stormwater management projects. The MWRD entered a Consent Decree with the Environmental Protection Agency in January 2014, establishing the Green Infrastructure Program. Additionally, the Infiltration/Inflow Control Program was incorporated into the WMO in 2014.

Through a variety of engineered solutions, both green and gray, and flood-prone property acquisitions, the MWRD's Stormwater Management Program addresses both regional and local flooding problems throughout Cook County. The MWRD has made significant investments in developing over 300 capital stormwater projects since it assumed the authority for stormwater management in 2004. These projects, which range in both size and scope, provide flood protection for thousands of homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure.

For more information visit <https://mwrld.org/stormwater>

**BELOW** Excavation takes place at Springdale Park in Western Springs where the MWRD is collaborating on a detention basin that temporarily stores water and eliminates the extended time it takes for stormwater to drain from the playing fields after heavy rains.





## 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

As the MWRD continued to advance its mission and goals to alleviate the impact of flooding and erosion, its Stormwater Management Program has also been aligned with the new organization-wide Strategic Plan released in June 2022 (<https://mwrld.org/strategic-plan>). Under this new Strategic Plan, goals and objectives have been established to ensure our approach to mitigate flooding across Cook County is done through a proactive and equitable approach for stormwater management, including implementation of gray and green infrastructure, enforcement of the WMO, and acquisition of flood-prone property.

Following the two presidential disaster orders issued in 2023 after intense storms and rainfall caused significant flooding of homes, businesses and streets, the MWRD worked with affected communities to document flood impacts and identify needed stormwater improvements.

In 2024, projects under construction in partnership with municipalities included large scale flood control and streambank stabilization projects; Green Infrastructure (GI) projects in numerous communities; and new stormwater storage and conveyance systems throughout Cook County. Further details concerning these projects and other stormwater management activities are provided in this Annual Report.

### 2024 Accomplishments for the Stormwater Management Program include the following:

- Advanced preliminary engineering, intergovernmental agreements, and design of stormwater projects through a subrecipient agreement with Cook County that provides for \$18.0 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding;
- Finalized an intergovernmental agreement with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and advanced negotiations for a partnership with the Chicago Park District for the planning, prioritization, design, and oversight of green infrastructure projects and other Stormwater Management initiatives. Through regular coordination with the City of Chicago, additional partnerships with City agencies are also being developed;
- Assisted communities impacted from severe storm events in July and September 2023 to identify and prioritize flood mitigation projects and funding to prepare for future storm events;
- Advanced construction of channel improvements along Addison Creek in the communities of Northlake, Melrose Park, Stone Park, Bellwood, Westchester, and Broadview;
- Identified 26 flood-prone structures for acquisition throughout Cook County;
- Contributed \$1.3 million to the Village Commons Parking Lots Permeable Paver Project in North Riverside, which can capture up to 539,000 gallons of stormwater that could otherwise overwhelm village sewers during heavy storm events;
- Amended the WMO to facilitate compliance with wetland regulations in light of the decision of the Chicago District of the Army Corps of Engineers to no longer prioritize issuance of jurisdictional determinations.



**CLOCKWISE** MWRD commissioners and staff join the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways, Cook County leaders and mayors in June 2024 to announce new funding relief of \$20 million to assist in completing 26 stormwater management projects through the American Rescue Plan Act; MWRD commissioners recognize the completion of the North Creek Flood Relief Project with a ribbon-cutting ceremony with officials from Lansing. This project, funded by the MWRD at a cost of \$1.6 million, involved constructing a new culvert for North Creek to alleviate flooding and safeguard 56 residential structures in the vicinity of Flanagan Park; The MWRD, Robbins officials and area leaders mark the halfway point of the Robbins Heritage Park and Midlothian Creek Restoration Project that addresses overbank flooding.



*Completed in 2024, the MWRD's Acacia Acres Flood Relief Project in Lyons Township includes the construction of a detention facility along with conveyance improvements to reduce flooding.*









## 2024 COMPLETED PROJECTS

### **Flood Control Project on 1st Avenue from Roosevelt Road to Cermak Road**

**Contract:** 14-111-5FR  
**Watershed:** Des Plaines River  
**Location:** Proviso Twp  
This project will increase the 1st Avenue drainage conveyance capacity by replacing the existing storm sewer system with two parallel trunk sewers ranging in size from 18-inches to 48-inches on the east side and 18-inches to 36-inches on the west side. Multiple bioswales, in conjunction with the "daylighting" of lateral sewers and the installation of underdrains  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$10,195,300.00  
**Status:** Substantially Complete

### **Wenonah Avenue Basin Flooding Relief Improvements in Forest View**

**Contract:** 18-IGA-28  
**Watershed:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area  
**Location:** Forest View  
This project will construct storm sewers and outfall for a residential area in Forest View.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$1,300,000.00  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,350,000.00  
**Status:** Closed

### **Wetland and Park Storage Projects in Winnetka**

**Contract:** 18-IGA-24  
**Watershed:** North Branch of the Chicago River  
**Location:** Winnetka  
This project will provide a wetland and an underground stormwater storage area near the Skokie River and will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained by the Village of Winnetka.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$25,434,569.00  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$500,000.00  
**Status:** Substantially Complete

### **Lake Katherine Commuter Parking Lot in Palos Heights**

**Contract:** 18-IGA-14  
**Watershed:** Calumet-Sag Channel  
**Location:** Palos Heights  
This project is for the City of Palos Heights to install a permeable parking lot along with rain gardens, bioswales, and a detention basin at Lake Katherine, located at Harlem Avenue and College Drive (Illinois Route 83). The District will be providing reimbursement funding for up to 29.0 percent of the total \$634,000 construction cost through an intergovernmental agreement.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$870,602.50  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$184,000.00  
**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

### **Diversion Channel for Flood Control Project on Midlothian Creek in Robbins**

**Contract:** 14-253-AF  
**Watershed:** Calumet-Sag Channel  
**Location:** Worth Township  
This project is a Flood Control Project that will create a naturalized wetland detention along with channel improvements to resemble a park setting. This portion is for the Phase I diversion channel. The project will reduce flood damages for over 92 structures.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$10,532,842.76  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$8,691,596.84  
**Status:** Contract Closeout

### **Van Buren & 5th Area Storm Relief Project in Maywood**

**Contract:** 20-IGA-29  
**Watershed:** Des Plaines River  
**Location:** Maywood  
This project is for the Village of Maywood to install new storm sewers to alleviate overland flooding and basement backups. The Village will be responsible for operations and maintenance.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$7,062,263.62  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$3,760,253.62  
**Status:** Closed

### **Oriole Avenue Flood Mitigation Project in Harwood Heights**

**Contract:** 20-IGA-30  
**Watershed:** Des Plaines River  
**Location:** Harwood Heights  
This project involves the installation of a 0.54 acre-feet underground stormwater detention culvert under Oriole Avenue, and larger storm sewers along Strong Street.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$2,941,129.70  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$411,600.00  
**Status:** Closed

### **Flanagin Subdivision: North Creek Flood Relief Project in Lansing**

**Contract:** 20-IGA-37  
**Watershed:** Little Calumet River  
**Location:** Lansing  
This project is for the construction of a new culvert for North Creek in Flanagin Subdivision separate from the subdivision drainage so that the backwater will not flood the subdivision through the open lids in the region.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$1,600,000.00  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,600,000.00  
**Status:** Closed

### **Main Street Improvements Project in Evanston**

**Contract:** 21-IGA-06  
**Watershed:** Lake Michigan  
**Location:** Evanston  
This project with the City of Evanston will reconstruct the parking lanes along several blocks of Main Street using permeable pavers. The City of Evanston

will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$430,000.00  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$322,500.00  
**Status:** Closed

### **Acacia Acres Flood Relief Project in Lyons Township**

**Contract:** 22-IGA-08  
**Watershed:** Des Plaines River  
**Location:** Lyons Township  
This project will construct a detention facility along with conveyance improvements to reduce flooding.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$1,052,855.00  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,052,855.00  
**Status:** Closed

### **Springinsguth West Branch DuPage River Stream Corridor Improvements in Schaumburg and Hanover Park**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-13  
**Watershed:** Upper DuPage River  
**Location:** Hanover Park  
This project, with both the Village of Hanover Park and the Village of Schaumburg, proposes to grade and stabilize a combined 4,685 linear feet of streambank, install new stormwater outlets, and restore existing wetlands, buffers, woodlands, and prairies. The Villages will be responsible for the operations and maintenance of the project.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$3,831,545.00  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,209,397.48  
**Status:** Closed

### **Burlington Avenue Storm Sewer Improvements in Brookfield**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-31  
**Watershed:** Des Plaines River  
**Location:** Brookfield  
This project will install new storm sewers and an outfall to Salt Creek, along with the construction of drainage structures and storm laterals.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$4,266,598.65  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,075,745.00  
**Status:** Closed

### **Drainage Improvements in Schiller Park**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-30  
**Watershed:** Des Plaines River  
**Location:** Schiller Park  
This project extends storm sewers along multiple local roads, including Wesley Terrace, Grace Street, Kolze Avenue, and Gremley Avenue, to redirect stormwater from the combined sewer system to an existing storm sewer on Seymour Avenue. The Village of Schiller Park will be responsible for the maintenance and operations of the project.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$1,900,000.00  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,000,000.00  
**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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**South Green Bay Road Stormwater Improvement Project**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-32

**Watershed:** North Branch of the Chicago River

**Location:** Glencoe

This project is an IGA with the Village of Glencoe to upsize storm sewers, install new storm sewers, and provide stormwater detention within the Village right-of-way west of Green Bay Road in Glencoe to alleviate flooding in the area.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$3,405,360.45

**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,000,000.00

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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**Green Alley Project in La Grange Park**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-19

**Watershed:** Des Plaines River

**Location:** La Grange Park

The project will reconstruct two alleys using permeable pavers. The Village of La Grange Park will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$425,033.63

**MWRD Contribution:** \$209,966.61

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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**Commuter Lot 8 Green Parking Lot in Riverside**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-23

**Watershed:** Des Plaines River

**Location:** Riverside

The project will reconstruct one parking lot using permeable pavers. The Village of Riverside will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$674,712.35

**MWRD Contribution:** \$258,084.40

**Status:** Closed

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**Green Alley Project in Forest Park**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-17

**Watershed:** Des Plaines River

**Location:** Forest Park

The project will reconstruct two alleys using permeable pavers. The Village of Forest Park will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$735,388.25

**MWRD Contribution:** \$494,000.00

**Status:** Closed

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**Green Infrastructure Alley Paving Improvements 2 in Cicero**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-16

**Watershed:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area

**Location:** Cicero

The project will reconstruct four alleys using permeable pavers. The Town of Cicero will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$621,000.00

**MWRD Contribution:** \$355,000.00

**Status:** Closed

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**OPPOSITE** The MWRD replaces an existing storm sewer system to increase the 1st Avenue drainage conveyance capacity and installs multiple bioswales and underdrains along Cook County Forest Preserve areas between Roosevelt Road to Cermak Road near Forest Park.

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**Green Alleys and Parking Lot 10 Project in Oak Park**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-22

**Watershed:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area

**Location:** Oak Park

The project will reconstruct four alleys and one parking lot using permeable pavers. The Village of Oak Park will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$2,318,346.77

**MWRD Contribution:** \$500,000.00

**Status:** Closed

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**Green Alley Program 2 in Skokie**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-24

**Watershed:** North Branch of the Chicago River

**Location:** Skokie

This project will reconstruct three alleys using permeable pavers. The Village of Skokie will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$927,443.17

**MWRD Contribution:** \$309,598.80

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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**Green Infrastructure Alley Improvements 2 in Maywood**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-20

**Watershed:** Des Plaines River

**Location:** Maywood

The project will reconstruct five alleys using permeable pavers. The Village of Maywood will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$897,167.50

**MWRD Contribution:** \$628,914.42

**Status:** Closed

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**Green Alleys Project 2 in Calumet City**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-14

**Watershed:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area

**Location:** Calumet City

The project will reconstruct four alleys using permeable pavers. The City of Calumet City will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$660,297.00

**MWRD Contribution:** \$528,237.60

**Status:** Closed

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**Milwaukee Avenue Green Alley in Niles**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-21

**Watershed:** North Branch of the Chicago River

**Location:** Niles

This project will reconstruct one alley using permeable pavers. The Village of Niles will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$222,120.87

**MWRD Contribution:** \$122,662.17

**Status:** Closed

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**Green Alley Reconstruction Project 2 in Westchester**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-25

**Watershed:** Des Plaines River

**Location:** Westchester

The project will reconstruct four alleys using permeable pavers. The Village of Westchester will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$883,100.11

**MWRD Contribution:** \$529,860.07

**Status:** Closed

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**Parking Lot 3 Green Infrastructure Retrofit in La Grange**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-18

**Watershed:** Des Plaines River

**Location:** La Grange

The project will reconstruct one parking lot using permeable pavers. The Village of La Grange will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$373,422.70

**MWRD Contribution:** \$165,052.83

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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**East Police Department Permeable Paver Parking Lot Project in Chicago Ridge**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-15

**Watershed:** Calumet-Sag Channel

**Location:** Chicago Ridge

The project will reconstruct a portion of one parking lot using permeable pavers. The Village of Chicago Ridge will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$333,837.16

**MWRD Contribution:** \$171,177.08

**Status:** Closed

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**Lincoln Street Downtown Green Alley in Glenview**

**Contract:** 24-IGA-11

**Watershed:** North Branch of the Chicago River

**Location:** Glenview

This project will convert an existing impervious alley to green infrastructure using inlets throughout the alley that drain to underground storage. The Village of Glenview will be responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$325,000.00

**MWRD Contribution:** \$160,848.00

**Status:** Closed

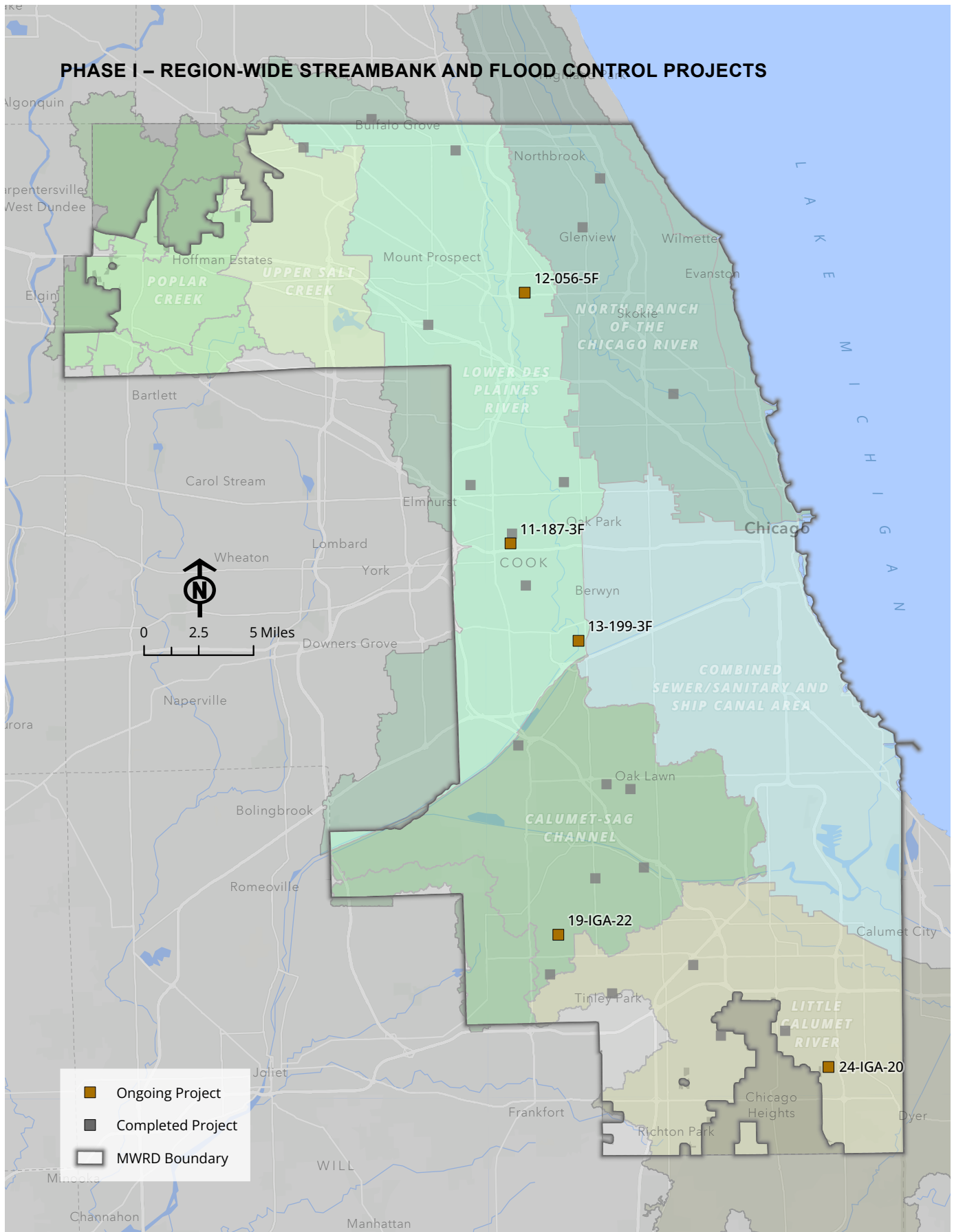
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## PHASE I – REGION-WIDE STREAMBANK AND FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS





# MWRD STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## PHASE I – REGION-WIDE STREAMBANK AND FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS

One of the initial goals of the Stormwater Management Program was to develop Detailed Watershed Plans (DWP) for each of the six watersheds in Cook County. The DWPs identify and prioritize regional stormwater projects based on a benefit to cost ratio. Projects are identified into two categories.

- 1.) Streambank stabilization projects, which address critical active streambank erosion threatening public safety, structures, and/or infrastructure.
- 2.) Flood control projects address regional overbank flooding through traditional measures such as stormwater detention reservoirs, levees, and conveyance improvements.

The MWRD Board has approved over 30 regional projects moving forward to design and construction.

## STREAMBANK STABILIZATION PROJECTS (PHASE I – REGIONAL)

The following is a detailed list of ongoing streambank stabilization projects. For projects completed in 2024, refer to page 5. Locations of both ongoing and completed streambank stabilization projects can be found on page 8.

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### Streambank Stabilization Along Tinley Creek

**Contract:** 19-IGA-22   **Watershed:** Cal-Sag Channel   **Location:** Orland Park, IL

Cost-sharing agreement with the Village of Orland Park. The project will stabilize approximately 2,800 linear feet of Tinley Creek between 151st Street and Oriole Court and 2,200 linear feet between 86th Avenue and 159th Street using geolifts, live stake vegetation, and gentler slopes.

**Estimated Construction Cost:** \$3,800,000   **MWRD Contribution:** \$3,800,000   **Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

## FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS (PHASE I – REGIONAL)

The following is a detailed list of ongoing flood control projects. For projects completed in 2024, refer to page 5. Locations of both ongoing and completed flood control projects can be found on page 8.

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### Addison Creek Channel Improvements

**Contract:** 11-187-3F

**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Bellwood, IL  
Channel conveyance improvements in Northlake, Melrose Park, Stone Park, Bellwood, Westchester, and Broadview.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$85,719,567

**MWRD Contribution:** \$67,495,300

**Status:** Construction

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### Flood Control Project on Farmers and Prairie Creeks

**Contract:** 12-056-5F

**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Maine Township, IL  
Flood storage and conveyance improvements along Prairie Creek, including channel modifications, detention expansion, and streambank stabilization.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$33,941,442

**MWRD Contribution:** \$33,941,442

**Status:** Design

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### Lyons and McCook Levee Improvements

**Contract:** 13-199-3F

**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Lyons, IL  
Restoration and improvement of the Lyons Levee, located on the east bank of the Des Plaines River, to provide flood protection and prevent overtopping with severe storms.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$3,003,066

**MWRD Contribution:** \$5,059,825

**Status:** Design

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### Levee along Thorn Creek at Arquilla Park

**Contract:** 15-IGA-14

**Watershed:** Little Calumet

**Location:** Glenwood, IL  
Construction of a levee at Arquilla Park to protect residential structures from overbank flooding.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$5,355,997

**MWRD Contribution:** \$3,683,000

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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### Multi-Benefit Flood Control Project in Southeast Cook County

**Contract:** 24-IGA-20

**Watershed:** Little Calumet

**Location:** Glenwood, IL  
Partnering with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to design and construct floodwater storage near the confluence of Deer Creek and Third Creek, to reduce flood damage and provide increased flood protection for communities along Deer Creek, Thorn Creek, and the Little Calumet River.

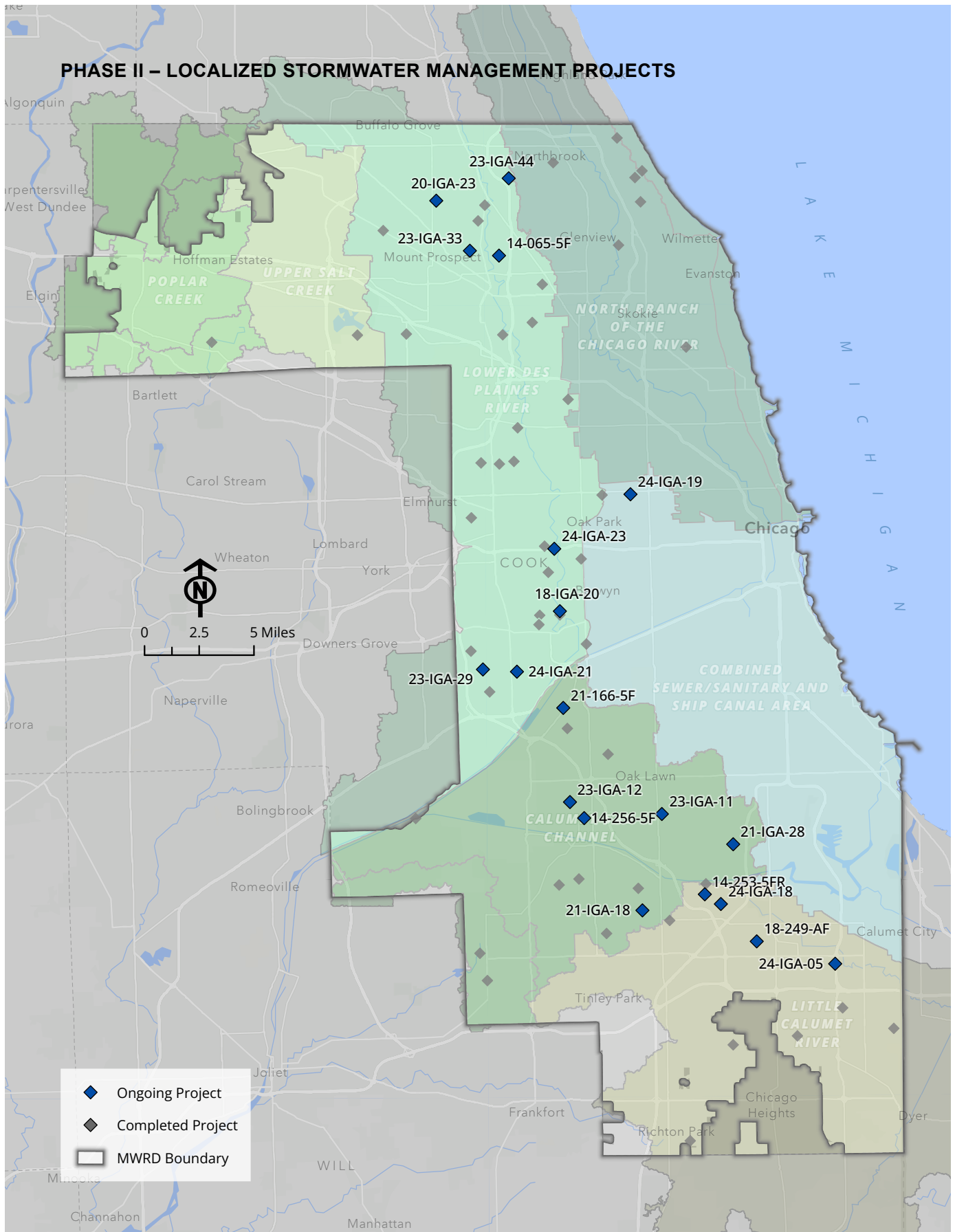
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** TBD

**MWRD Contribution:** TBD

**Status:** Planning

## PHASE II – LOCALIZED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS





## PHASE II – LOCALIZED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

In 2014, the State Legislature expanded the authorities of the MWRD's stormwater management legislation to address local drainage and flooding problems, and to acquire flood-prone property from property owners on a voluntary basis. These legislative changes form the basis of the MWRD's Phase II Stormwater Management Program. The MWRD is also conducting Stormwater Master Plan studies to address flooding by identifying potential projects within publicly- and privately-owned property.

### LOCAL STORMWATER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

The MWRD initiated the Stormwater Partnership Program and Conceptual Projects Program to directly support municipalities with stormwater management. These programs assist municipalities throughout Cook County in identifying, funding, and building projects that address localized flooding and drainage concerns. These projects utilize a variety of traditional engineered solutions such as localized detention, upsizing critical storm sewers and culverts, pumping stations, and establishing drainage way, alongside green infrastructure (GI). Since 2013, 84 projects have been either completed or are ongoing.

The Conceptual Projects Program provides technical assistance to municipalities that have identified flooding or other stormwater related issues, but no engineering analysis has been performed. Assistance is provided by the MWRD through a preliminary engineering study to identify solutions to the stormwater related issues.

The Stormwater Partnership Program reimburses construction costs for stormwater projects with an established scope and design. Projects are prioritized on their ability to reduce localized flooding and the number of structures benefitted by the project amongst other criteria. As funding allows, the MWRD and agency enter into an IGA to partner on the project, with long term maintenance responsibilities assigned to the partnering agency. Design and/or construction of each installation is monitored by the MWRD. After completion, the MWRD inspects the project installation, ensuring maintenance is in line with the project's operation and maintenance plan, with long term maintenance responsibilities assigned to the partnering agency.

### LOCALIZED FLOODING PROJECTS (PHASE II)

The following is a detailed list of ongoing localized flooding projects. For 2024 completed projects, refer to page 5. Locations of both ongoing and completed localized flooding projects can be found on page 10.

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#### **Flood Control Project on Central Road from Des Plaines River to Glenwood Lane**

**Contract:** 14-065-5F

**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Des Plaines, IL

Upsizing storm sewers and constructing a new stormwater storage area.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$29,000,000

**MWRD Contribution:** \$29,000,000

**Status:** Design

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#### **Flood Control Project on Midlothian Creek in Robbins**

**Contract:** 14-253-5FR

**Watershed:** Little Calumet

**Location:** Robbins, IL

Flood reduction through creation of rain gardens, vegetated swales and a diversion channel. The project is designed to reduce flood damages for over 92 structures.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$20,198,931

**MWRD Contribution:** \$20,198,931

**Status:** Construction

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#### **Flood Control Project in Worth Woods Subdivision**

**Contract:** 14-256-5F

**Watershed:** Cal-Sag Channel

**Location:** Worth, IL

Construction of a swale and a 24-inches to 72-inches storm sewer, in the vicinity of 112th Place and Beloit Avenue, with an outlet to Lucas-Berg Quarry.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$4,308,946

**MWRD Contribution:** \$4,313,083

**Status:** Design

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#### **Central Park Stormwater Detention Basin and Separate Storm Sewer Improvements in Harvey**

**Contract:** 18-249-AF

**Watershed:** Little Calumet

**Location:** Harvey, IL

Construction of a 23 acre-foot stormwater detention basin on the site of a future park in the City of Harvey. A separated storm sewer will be constructed to convey stormwater to the proposed basin and allow discharge into the Wood Street storm sewer system.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$11,045,905

**MWRD Contribution:** \$11,045,905

**Status:** Design

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#### **Groveland Avenue Levee Improvements**

**Contract:** 18-IGA-20

**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Riverside, IL

MWRD to provide non-federal share of design and construction costs for levee improvements, pumping station, raised street through an IGA with Village of Riverside, which is partnering with the Army Corps of Engineers.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$16,508,000

**MWRD Contribution:** \$4,907,014

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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#### **Flood Control Project on Willow Road at McDonald Creek Tributary A**

**Contract:** 20-IGA-23

**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Prospect Heights, IL  
Elevation of Willow Road and local roads to reduce flooding by extreme storms and installation of culverts and storage.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$3,870,000

**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,800,000

**Status:** IGA Executed

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**71st Street Ditch Regional Flood Mitigation in the Vicinity of Bedford Park**

**Contract:** 21-166-5F

**Watershed:** Cal-Sag Channel

**Location:** Bedford Park, IL  
Diversion of stormwater runoff away from the 71st Street Ditch to reduce flooding in Bedford Park and neighboring communities.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** TBD

**MWRD Contribution:** TBD

**Status:** Under Development

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**Flood Control Project on Calumet-Sag Tributary C in Bremen Township, Midlothian, and Crestwood**

**Contract:** 21-IGA-18

**Watershed:** Cal-Sag Channel

**Location:** Midlothian, IL  
Reconstruction and improvements of channel, culvert replacement and stabilization to reduce flooding along Cal-Sag Tributary C in the vicinity of 143rd Street and Linder Avenue.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$5,500,000

**MWRD Contribution:** \$5,500,000

**Status:** IGA Executed

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**Flood Control Project for the Washington Street Area in Blue Island**

**Contract:** 21-IGA-28

**Watershed:** Cal-Sag Channel

**Location:** Blue Island, IL  
Construction of a new sanitary sewer line and pumps to move excess stormwater to higher elevation along Washington Avenue from 119th Place to 121st Street.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$5,700,000

**MWRD Contribution:** \$5,700,000

**Status:** Negotiation / Evaluation

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**Stormwater Storage at Community High School District 218 Administration Sports Field and Storm Sewer Improvements in Oak Lawn**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-11

**Watershed:** Cal-Sag Channel

**Location:** Oak Lawn, IL  
Construction of stormwater management improvements including a detention facility and upsizing storm sewers.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$13,689,695

**MWRD Contribution:** \$6,500,000

**Status:** IGA Executed

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**Roberts Road Drainage Improvements in Palos Hills**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-12

**Watershed:** Cal-Sag Channel

**Location:** Palos Hills, IL  
Construction of two 2'x10' box culverts along 101st Street and 78th Avenue and a 60-inch storm sewer along 103rd Street with an 84-inch outfall to the Lucas Diversion Ditch.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$3,500,000

**MWRD Contribution:** \$3,500,000

**Status:** Negotiation / Evaluation

---

**Springdale Drainage Improvements in Western Springs**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-29

**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Western Springs, IL  
Construction of a supplemental storm sewer system and storage basin for flood mitigation, benefiting approximately 20 homes and two local roads.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$5,300,000

**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,000,000

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

---

**Craig Manor Drainage System Improvements**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-33

**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Des Plaines, IL  
Construction of drainage system improvements including underground detention facility, relief sewers to convey flow into the detention facility and outlet storm sewers to convey flow out of the detention facility.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$1,000,000

**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,000,000

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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**Citation Lake Stormwater Improvements in Northfield Township**

**Contract:** 23-IGA-44

**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Northfield Township, IL  
Installation of stormwater storage vaults and new storm sewers.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$3,000,000

**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,500,000

**Status:** IGA Executed

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**Thorn Ditch Flood Mitigation Project in South Holland**

**Contract:** 24-IGA-05

**Watershed:** Little Calumet

**Location:** South Holland, IL  
Replacement of existing culverts along Thorn Ditch and construction of stormwater storage at local parks. The Village will be responsible for operations and maintenance of the project.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$5,811,351

**MWRD Contribution:** \$5,860,000

**Status:** IGA Executed

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**Stormwater Improvements in Posen**

**Contract:** 24-IGA-18

**Watershed:** Little Calumet

**Location:** Posen, IL  
Providing technical assistance to the Village of Posen to address flooding issues by building upon the recommendations from a recent Army Corps' study and identifying potential stormwater improvements within the study area to advance to preliminary engineering design.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** TBD

**MWRD Contribution:** TBD

**Status:** Design

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**LeMoyne Street and Maypole Avenue Underground Storage Projects in Chicago**

**Contract:** 24-IGA-19

**Watershed:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area

**Location:** Chicago, IL

Provide excess capacity to the combined sewer system through the use of large box culverts installed underground on half-block sections where other utilities are largely absent.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$12,000,000

**MWRD Contribution:** \$6,000,000

**Status:** IGA Executed

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**IDOT 55th Street Relief Sewer - West Phase II**

**Contract:** 24-IGA-21

**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Countryside, IL

Construction of a 60-inch relief sewer on 55th Street, between La Grange Road and East Avenue.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$17,321,300

**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,621,500

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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**I-290 Frontage Road Sewer and Outfall in Maywood**

**Contract:** 24-IGA-23

**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Maywood, IL

Proposed construction, with IDOT, of a new large diameter trunk storm sewer along the I-290 Frontage Road with a dedicated outfall to the Des Plaines River.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** TBD

**MWRD Contribution:** TBD

**Status:** Negotiation / Evaluation

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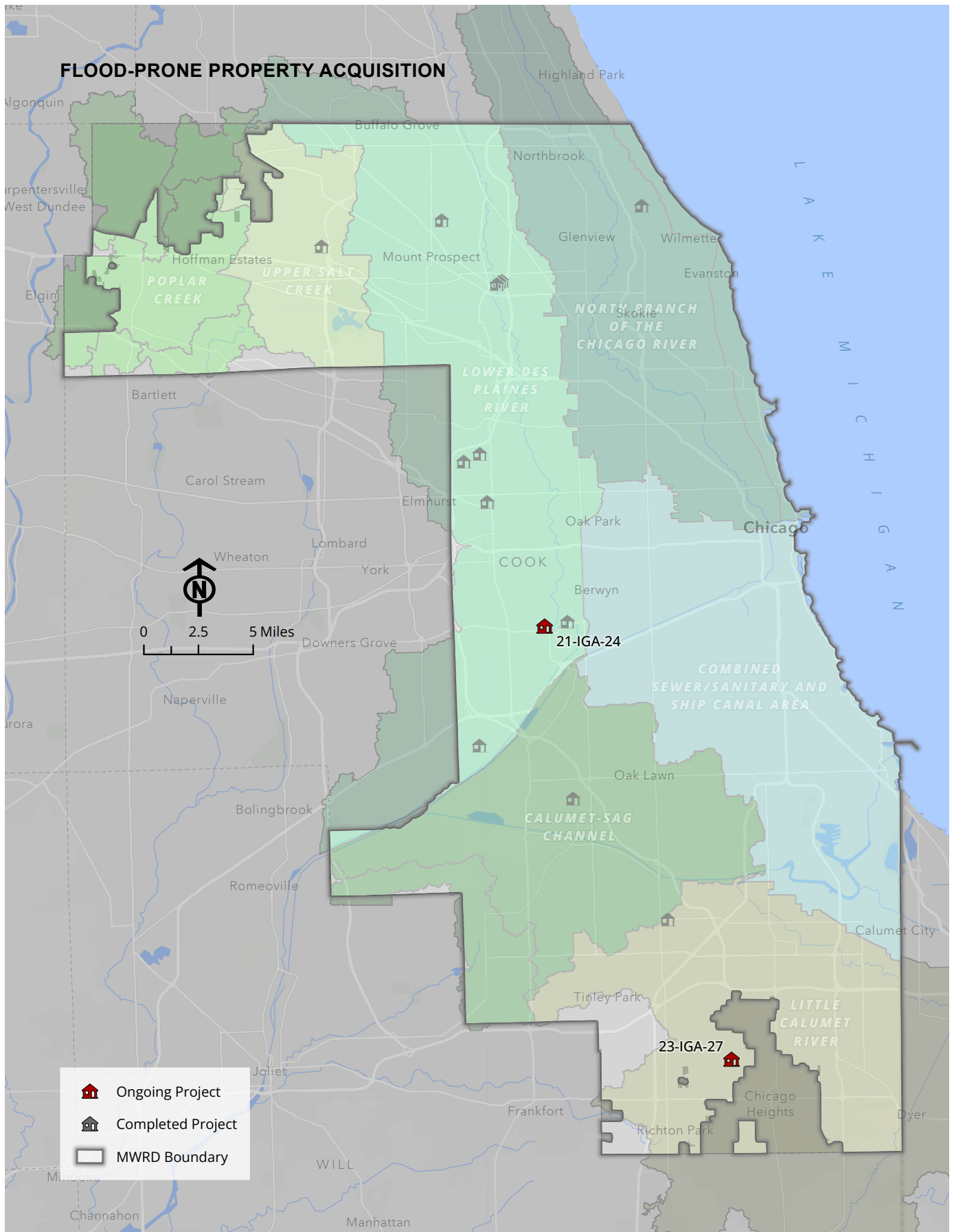




**ABOVE** The MWRD continues channel conveyance improvements along Addison Creek in Bellwood, protecting neighboring homes and businesses from overbank flooding.



**ABOVE** A new diversion channel completed by the MWRD in 2024 provides drainage for Robbins that will reduce flood damages, while creating an inviting spot and trail along the Cal-Sag Channel.





# VOLUNTARY FLOOD-PRONE PROPERTY ACQUISITION

On August 7, 2014, the MWRD Board adopted a policy on the selection and prioritization of projects for acquiring voluntary flood-prone property. This program is comprised of three distinct components:

- **Local Sponsor Assistance Program:** The MWRD's top priority will be to facilitate the Illinois Emergency Management Agency's federally funded program by assisting Local Sponsor communities in providing their share of the cost for property acquisition.
- **MWRD Initiated Program:** In communities where the MWRD Board approved capital projects from the MWRD's Detailed Watershed Plans, should the cost of a property acquisition alternative be less than the capital project while providing equivalent benefits, the acquisition alternative will be pursued.
- **Local Government Application Program:** The MWRD will consider applications directly from local governments requesting property acquisition of specific flood-prone structures.

Since 2017, the MWRD solicited applications from municipalities and townships for assistance with the acquisition of flood-prone structures located throughout Cook County. The MWRD has entered into IGAs with several municipalities and the Cook County Land Bank Authority and has acquired 120 flood-prone properties at the end of 2024. Upon acquisition, the structures are removed and deed restrictions are placed on the acquired properties, requiring them to remain as open spaces in perpetuity.

## VOLUNTARY FLOOD-PRONE PROPERTY ACQUISITION PROJECTS

The following is a detailed list of ongoing flood-prone property acquisition projects. For 2024 completed projects, refer to page 5. Locations of both ongoing and completed flood prone property acquisition projects can be found on page 14.

### Acquisition of Flood-Prone Properties in Lyons

**Contract:** 21-IGA-24  
**Watershed:** Lower Des Plaines  
**Location:** Lyons, IL  
Acquisition and demolition of up to 26 homes in the floodway and floodplain.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** TBD  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$5,500,000  
**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

### Acquisition of Flood-Prone Property in Flossmoor

**Contract:** 23-IGA-27  
**Watershed:** Little Calumet  
**Location:** Flossmoor, IL  
One structure removal from the floodplain with property to be maintained as open space.  
**Estimated Construction/Acquisition Cost:** \$349,720  
**MWRD Contribution:** \$115,000  
**Status:** Negotiation / Evaluation



**ABOVE** The MWRD is leading the acquisition and demolition of up to 26 homes in the floodway and floodplain in Lyons. The MWRD's voluntary Flood Prone Property Acquisition program rescues homeowners who cannot sell homes that repeatedly flood and returns the land to passive spaces that can absorb more stormwater.





## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green Infrastructure (GI) focuses on engineered systems that capture and manage precipitation where it falls rather than traveling through conventional stormwater systems. By addressing the increase of impervious area due to land development, GI can reduce combined sewer discharges, localized flooding and stormwater impacts in an area. GI includes natural systems which use vegetation, such as bioswales and rain gardens, to manage rainfall. GI also includes manufactured solutions such as rain barrels, permeable pavement, and rainwater harvesting. Established in 2014, the Green Infrastructure Program seeks to increase the acceptance and investment of GI throughout Cook County through numerous partnerships.

### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The MWRD introduced the Green Infrastructure Partnership Program to scale its investment into GI. The program seeks to partner with local communities and public agencies throughout Cook County to fund and build GI projects. These projects vary in size and scope and can include roadside bioswales and rain gardens, green roofs, permeable pavement alleys, green streetscapes, and eco-orchards.

The program is available to government organizations within the MWRD's corporate boundaries. Projects are prioritized on their ability to capture and store water (measured as design retention capacity), flood risk, and structures benefitted by the GI amongst other criteria. The MWRD and a partnering agency execute an IGA to facilitate the project, with long term maintenance responsibilities assigned to the partnering agency. Design and construction of each installation are monitored by the MWRD to optimize benefits. After completion, the MWRD inspects the installation, ensuring maintenance is in line with the project's operation and maintenance plan.

In 2017 through 2023, 118 projects were selected. The projects that have since completed construction have provided a total of 8.1 million gallons of design retention capacity (DRC).

In 2024, an additional 14 projects were selected from the round of applicants that were reviewed in the previous year. These will provide a combined estimated DRC of 2,521,876 gallons. Also in 2024, the MWRD opened the latest round of Green Infrastructure Partnership Program applications, with selections to be finalized in Summer 2025.

The following is a list of GI ongoing projects scheduled for construction in 2024. For completed projects, refer to page 5. Locations of both ongoing and completed GI projects can be found on page 16.

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#### Garfield Park Community Eco Orchard in Chicago

**Contract:** 18-IGA-05

**Waterway:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area

**Location:** Chicago, IL

Divert stormwater to areas with native plantings at vacant City-owned land on 5th Avenue between Mozart Avenue and Kedzie Avenue.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$900,000

**MWRD Contribution:** \$500,000

**Status:** IGA Executed

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#### Suburban Green Schoolyard Pilot Project 1 in Burnham

**Contract:** 24-279-5F

**Waterway:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area

**Location:** Burnham, IL

Installation of green infrastructure and other site amenities in the Burnham Elementary School's schoolyard.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$2,124,799

**MWRD Contribution:** \$1,744,243

**Status:** Design

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#### Public Library Green Roof in Blue Island

**Contract:** 24-IGA-06

**Waterway:** Cal-Sag Channel

**Location:** Blue Island, IL

Green roof installation on the existing Blue Island Public Library, with the Public Library being responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$436,410

**MWRD Contribution:** \$265,839

**Status:** IGA Executed

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#### 17th and Lexington Public Parking Lot Improvements in Broadview

**Contract:** 24-IGA-07

**Waterway:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Broadview, IL

Replacement of an existing parking lot with permeable pavers, with the Village of Broadview being responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$457,383

**MWRD Contribution:** \$341,821

**Status:** IGA Executed

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#### Pacific Avenue and Washington Street Green Infrastructure in Franklin Park

**Contract:** 24-IGA-10

**Waterway:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Franklin Park, IL

Installation of several rain gardens and green islands along Pacific Avenue and Washington Street, with the Village of Franklin Park being responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$1,790,479

**MWRD Contribution:** \$203,878

**Status:** IGA Executed

---

#### Village Hall Green Parking Lot in Hoffman Estates

**Contract:** 24-IGA-12

**Waterway:** Poplar Creek

**Location:** Hoffman Estates, IL

Installation of bioswales and replacement of impervious parking spaces with permeable pavers at the Village Hall parking lot, with the Village of Hoffman Estates responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$2,059,673

**MWRD Contribution:** \$438,594

**Status:** IGA Executed

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#### Green Alley Program in Markham

**Contract:** 24-IGA-13

**Waterway:** Little Calumet

**Location:** Markham, IL

Conversion of impervious alleys with permeable pavers, with the City of Markham being responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$618,597

**MWRD Contribution:** \$459,000

**Status:** IGA Executed



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### Green Alley Project in North Riverside

**Contract:** 24-IGA-14

**Waterway:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** North Riverside, IL  
Replacement of impervious alleys with permeable pavers, with the Village of North Riverside responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$1,012,513

**MWRD Contribution:** \$636,423

**Status:** IGA Executed

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### Public Library Permeable Parking Lot in Northlake

**Contract:** 24-IGA-15

**Waterway:** Lower Des Plaines

**Location:** Northlake, IL  
Replacement of impervious parking lot with permeable pavers at the Northlake Library, with the Village of Northlake responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$633,022

**MWRD Contribution:** \$360,635

**Status:** IGA Executed

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### Town Center Green Infrastructure Improvements in Willow Springs

**Contract:** 24-IGA-16

**Waterway:** Cal-Sag Channel

**Location:** Willow Springs, IL  
Replacing impervious streets with permeable pavers, with The Village of Willow Springs responsible for operations and maintenance.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** \$2,169,403

**MWRD Contribution:** \$954,394

**Status:** IGA Executed

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### Green Infrastructure at Bradwell Elementary School in Chicago (Space To Grow)

**Contract:** 24-IGA-02-Bradwell

**Waterway:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area

**Location:** Chicago, IL

Design and construction of playground at Bradwell Elementary School in Chicago using green infrastructure.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** TBD

**MWRD Contribution:** TBD

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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### Green Infrastructure at Farmer Elementary School in Chicago (Space To Grow)

**Contract:** 24-IGA-02-Farmer

**Waterway:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area

**Location:** Chicago, IL

Design and construction of playground at Farmer Elementary School in Chicago using green infrastructure.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** TBD

**MWRD Contribution:** TBD

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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### Green Infrastructure at Mollison Elementary School in Chicago (Space To Grow)

**Contract:** 24-IGA-02-Mollison

**Waterway:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area

**Location:** Chicago, IL

Design and construction of playground at Mollison Elementary School in Chicago using green infrastructure.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** TBD

**MWRD Contribution:** TBD

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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### Green Infrastructure at Ryder Elementary School in Chicago (Space To Grow)

**Contract:** 24-IGA-02-Ryder

**Waterway:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area

**Location:** Chicago, IL

Design and construction of playground at Ryder Elementary School in Chicago using green infrastructure.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** TBD

**MWRD Contribution:** TBD

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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### Green Infrastructure at Till Elementary School in Chicago (Space To Grow)

**Contract:** 24-IGA-02-Till

**Waterway:** Combined Sewer/Sanitary and Ship Canal Area

**Location:** Chicago, IL

Design and construction of playground at Till Elementary School in Chicago using green infrastructure.

**Estimated Construction/Acquisition**

**Cost:** TBD

**MWRD Contribution:** TBD

**Status:** Cost Sharing Agreement

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**BELOW** Native plants and permeable pavers line the streets of Willow Springs where the MWRD helped fund the Town Center Green Infrastructure Improvements that now provide more than 1 million gallons of stormwater storage capacity.





**ABOVE** Space to Grow partners present design concepts to students and teachers at Farmer Elementary School, 4214 S St Lawrence Ave in Chicago. The school community will then vote on specific elements contained within each concept for the project that is aimed at giving kids a place to play while also addressing stormwater management.

## SPACE TO GROW

Space to Grow is an innovative public-private partnership with a mission of transforming Chicago schoolyards into vibrant green spaces for physical activity, outdoor learning and play. As centers of school and community life, Space to Grow schoolyards typically feature expanded and safer playground equipment, track and field areas, multi-purpose courts, turf fields, outdoor classrooms and vegetable gardens. The schoolyards also incorporate many GI design elements to reduce water pollution and neighborhood flooding. These features include permeable play surfaces, native plantings and rain gardens.

The program is co-managed by the Healthy Schools Campaign and Openlands with capital funding, leadership and expertise from the MWRD, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the City of Chicago Department of Water Management. The MWRD also provides technical support for GI elements to ensure that the new schoolyards provide optimal stormwater capture benefits.

Space to Grow schools are prioritized based on flood risk, site suitability and socioeconomic factors. Numerous community meetings were held to describe project details and benefits. The MWRD and CPS executed an IGA to facilitate the projects whereby long-term maintenance responsibilities are assigned to CPS. The MWRD maintains the right to inspect the GI to ensure it is being properly maintained in accordance with the operations and maintenance plan developed for each school.

Starting in 2014 through 2024, the MWRD invested over \$15.8 million into 36 schools providing 6.5 million gallons of design retention capacity. A new IGA was executed in 2024 to facilitate another three years of schools within the program. The first two schools under this agreement were substantially complete in late 2024, providing an additional 494,118 gallons at \$2,422,529 of District funding. The new IGA and amendments between the District and CPS will facilitate the Space to Grow projects through 2026. Under the agreement, long term maintenance responsibilities are assigned to CPS. The District has perpetual rights to inspect the GI to ensure it is being properly maintained in accordance with the O&M Manual developed for each school. The District reviews and provides comments on the construction drawings and GI storage calculations at various intervals during design. During construction, the District frequently visits the sites to gain knowledge on the installation of GI, while monitoring progress.



## SUBURBAN GREEN SCHOOLYARD PILOT PROGRAM

In 2020, the MWRD conducted a feasibility study for a GI program for suburban Cook County schools similar to the Space to Grow Program. Subsequently, the MWRD performed pilot project selection process and recommended the following pilot locations: 1) the Burnham School District 154.5's Elementary School; 2) the Des Plaines School District 62's Forest Elementary and Algonquin Middle Schools' shared campus; 3) the Morton High School District 201's Morton East High School in Cicero; 4) the Summit School District 104's Graves Elementary and Heritage Middle Schools' shared campus. In 2023, Des Plaines School District 62 declined further participation in the pilot program and the MWRD invited Leyden High School District 212's Leyden East High School to participate.

The current status of the pilot projects is as follows:

<b>Burnham School District 154.5's Elementary School</b>	IGA between the MWRD and Burnham School District executed February 2025	Final design was completed and construction contract advertised in April 2025	Construction to begin in 2025 and complete in 2026.
<b>Summit School District 104's Graves Elementary and Heritage Middle Schools (shared campus)</b>	60% design complete	Targeting Final Design completion in late 2025 for construction to begin Summer 2026	
<b>Morton High School District 201's Morton East High School in Cicero</b>	60% design ongoing	Targeting Final Design completion in late 2025 for construction to begin Summer 2026	Preliminary conversations have begun with Town of Cicero to incorporate additional stormwater storage onsite
<b>Leyden High School District 212's Leyden East High School in Franklin Park</b>	30% design ongoing	Targeting construction to begin Summer 2027	

To support advancing the pilot program and potential expansion, the MWRD has actively pursued multiple funding avenues, including federal and state grants, philanthropic partners, and municipal cost-share opportunities.

**BELOW** The MWRD and consultants meet with students at Burnham Elementary School to decide on what design elements and features to include in a new schoolyard the MWRD plans to construct that will use permeable surface materials that reduce puddling in play areas while mitigating community flooding.



# STORMWATER MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION

## CAPITAL PROJECT MAINTENANCE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS

Regular upkeep and maintenance are necessary for the new installations to function properly and provide the expected stormwater benefit. For that reason, routine maintenance is required as dictated by an operation and maintenance plan developed for each project.

Agencies that receive financial assistance from the MWRD enter into an IGA, which includes an operation and maintenance plan defining the partner agencies’ responsibilities for inspection, operation, and maintenance of the project. The MWRD reviews inspection reports generated to assess the operation of the final project and to ensure proper maintenance is being performed. The MWRD may also conduct their own inspections of the project on an as-needed basis.

## SMALL STREAMS MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Through the management of the Small Streams Maintenance Program, the MWRD’s Maintenance & Operations Department works to reduce flooding in urbanized areas. Cook County has little elevation change; therefore, its streams tend to move slowly and are naturally prone to flooding. Many developed areas were originally uninhabited muddy marshes with meandering streams that often overtopped their banks. The streams that flow through the neighborhoods of Cook County are more than just a scenic part of the landscape or a habitat for wildlife. They serve the vital function of draining stormwater and preventing flooding. Minor blockages can build up quickly in heavy rains, restricting flow and creating a potential for urban flooding. In order to function properly, the streams must be maintained.

The Small Streams Maintenance Program was established in 2006. The program follows the MWRD’s stormwater management mission to relieve flooding in urbanized areas through immediate and relatively simple remedies. The program’s top priorities are to maintain creeks, streams, and waterways by removing blockages, obstructions, and debris. The program also prevents future blockages by removing dead and unhealthy trees, which can fall into streams. Maintenance crews also remove harmful invasive species, such as buckthorn and honeysuckle, which can choke out native plants and leave the ground vulnerable to erosion.

The MWRD and contractor crews removed approximately 12,161 cubic yards of debris in 2024. In addition, 2,027 cubic yards of river and canal debris was removed by the MWRD’s debris and skimmer boat crews along the Chicago Area Waterways. In 2024, the MWRD continued to utilize a two-year stream maintenance contract, paying a total of \$1,757,401 to contractors to provide stream maintenance. Listed in the table below are the debris amounts removed in each watershed for the past two years.

**BELOW** The MWRD’s Small Stream Maintenance Program addresses blockages on the Des Plaines River near Summit and McCook and other area waterways.





TOTAL DEBRIS REMOVED BY WATERSHED (CUBIC YARD)

Watershed	2024	2023
Little Calumet River	4,682	5,420
Calumet-Sag Channel	1,801	2,823
Lower Des Plaines River	3,709	4,131
North Branch Chicago River	1,255	1,607
Upper Salt Creek	329	170
Poplar Creek	385	1,535
Total	12,161	15,686

The 2024 expenditure for the Small Streams Maintenance Program was \$1,757,401, with an average cost per cubic yard of debris removed of \$144.50.

The Small Streams Maintenance Program will continue in 2025 and is anticipating removal of approximately 14,000 cubic yards of debris. Major goals include standardizing procedures, identifying critical stream areas, scheduling critical inspections, and continuing to introduce MWRD's small stream crews to local governments to increase the public's awareness of MWRD's presence and execution of the program.

Citizens are encouraged to report waterway blockages and request removal of debris from small creeks or waterways in Cook County by visiting [mwrld.org > What We Do > Stormwater Management](https://gispub.mwrld.org/ssmp/) <https://gispub.mwrld.org/ssmp/>

You can also report a waterway blockage by contacting Arturo Hernandez by email at [hernandeza@mwrld.org](mailto:hernandeza@mwrld.org) or call 708-588-3171.

STORMWATER PLANNING

In 2024, the MWRD has focused on advancing the development of the "Volumetric Approach" to stormwater planning, a significant evolution from the traditional, study-by-study planning method. This change was prompted by the realization that the traditional planning approach could take decades to cover the entirety of the County and can also quickly become outdated due to factors like changing climate and development patterns. The new data-drive strategy leverages the idea of volume control, one of the core principles of the WMO, and applied it on a county-wide scale to more quickly identify flood-prone areas and develop projects to reduce flood risks.

A key activity in 2024 was the continued development of a Geographic Information System (GIS) database and an associated web-based planning platform. The purpose of this platform is to provide





the MWRD staff and our partners easy access to mapping data, allowing a more accurate determination of flood problem areas, pinpointing opportunities for mitigation projects, and prioritizing projects for implementation. This work also includes a publicly accessible portal and application that allows the general public to view information on all our stormwater projects and track our progress on the implementation of the volumetric approach by watershed. It is anticipated that the public portal will be released in 2025.

## **WATERSHED MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE**

The MWRD began requiring stormwater detention in 1972 under the Sewer Permit Ordinance for development projects greater than five acres. In 2007, the MWRD began work on a new stormwater management regulatory ordinance known as the Watershed Management Ordinance (WMO). Numerous public hearings were held on the WMO in order to receive public input. The MWRD Board subsequently approved the WMO, which became effective on May 1, 2014. The WMO is a comprehensive regulatory ordinance drafted with the assistance of an Advisory Committee consisting of regulatory agencies, municipalities, and non-governmental organizations.

The WMO aims to protect public health, safety, and welfare, and Cook County homes and businesses from flood damage by managing and mitigating the effects of development and redevelopment on stormwater drainage. It provides uniform minimum stormwater management regulations for Cook County that are consistent with the region. The WMO replaced the MWRD's Sewer Permit Ordinance with more comprehensive permit requirements. Components regulated under the WMO include drainage and detention, volume control, floodplain management, isolated wetland protection, riparian environment protection and soil erosion and sediment control. The MWRD has included a GI component in the ordinance which requires the capture of 1-inch of runoff from impervious surfaces for parcels greater than one-half acre in size when a WMO permit is required.

The WMO was amended by the MWRD Board on July 10, 2014, to incorporate the Infiltration/Inflow Control Program (Article 8). It was amended again on May 16, 2019, to include watershed specific release rates. The WMO was also amended on May 7, 2020, to allow the regional stormwater detention and volume control trading program pilot study in the Lower Des Plaines and Little Calumet watershed planning areas to commence. References to current rainfall data were also updated. The most recent amendment to the WMO was adopted on April 7, 2022. This amendment added new regulatory requirements and terminology for projects involving and/or impacting wetlands. This amendment also included clarifications to requirements for development in flood protection areas.

**BELOW** MWRD work progresses on the Addison Creek Channel to reduce flooding to approximately 2,200 properties in six different communities along Addison Creek. The channel improvements project includes a mix of natural design, gabion baskets, soldier pile walls, concrete, riprap, articulated concrete blocks, vegetation clearing and removal of three bridges.





MWRD has developed the Technical Guidance Manual (TGM), which serves as a technical reference to the WMO, and updates the TGM as needed. The WMO webpage, [mwrdd.org/wmo](http://mwrdd.org/wmo), contains more information on both the WMO and the Technical Guidance Manual.

## **GIS/GPS ASSISTANCE**

In 2017, the MWRD purchased six Global Positioning System (GPS) units to provide sewer system owners with resources to begin mapping their sewer systems in a Geographic Information System (GIS) or to improve their existing sewer system maps. In return, sewer system owners provide the MWRD with their sanitary, storm and combined sewer data. To obtain GPS equipment and related software at no cost, sewer system owners must enter into an IGA with the MWRD. Since 2017, ten municipalities have entered into an IGA with the MWRD to utilize the GPS units. Three new GPS units were since purchased to replace the outdated units purchased in 2017. To date, one municipality has requested to use the new GPS units for a period of twelve months and is currently reviewing the required IGA. Sewer system owners that wish to be added to the list for the next available GPS unit should submit a letter of intent to the MWRD's Director of Engineering. A template IGA and modifiable letter of intent can be found at the following link: [Geographic Information System Assistance](#).

## **INFILTRATION / INFLOW CONTROL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

MWRD's Infiltration/Inflow Control Program provides a framework for asset management of separate sewer systems to meet the following goals:

- Maintain infrastructure to prevent sanitary sewer overflows and basement backups due to sewer surcharging and other adverse sewer system conditions.
- Comply with the MWRD's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- Minimize extraneous flows transported to the MWRD's facilities due to defective system components or illegal connections.

The Infiltration/Inflow Control Program is implemented due to special conditions imposed within the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits issued by the IEPA for the MWRD's Water Reclamation Plants. In addition to adopting a Capacity, Management, Operation and Maintenance Program for the conveyance and treatment facilities, the MWRD is required to take action to reduce excessive Infiltration/Inflow within the local sanitary sewer systems. The Infiltration/Inflow Control Program Annual Summary Report that is provided to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) each year can be found at [https://www.mwrdd.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/2024%20IICP\\_Annual\\_Status\\_Report\\_Vol\\_09.pdf](https://www.mwrdd.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/2024%20IICP_Annual_Status_Report_Vol_09.pdf).

All satellite entities (sewer system owners) within the MWRD's separate sewer area that discharge directly or indirectly into the MWRD's facilities are required to identify and address infiltration and inflow sources within the public and private sewer systems. This will be accomplished by the individual satellite entities performing ongoing inspections and conducting maintenance and rehabilitation work on the sewer system. All satellite entities must annually report work completed to meet the goals of the Infiltration/Inflow Control Program to the MWRD.

## INFILTRATION / INFLOW CONTROL PROGRAM SATELLITE ENTITIES

Alsip	Hickory Hills	Orland Park
Aqua Illinois	Hillside	Palatine
Arlington Heights	Hinsdale	Palos Heights
Bartlett	Hodgkins	Palos Hills
Bedford Park	Hoffman Estates	Palos Park
Bellwood	Homewood	Park Ridge
Berkeley	Illinois American Water	Plum Grove Estates SD*
Bridgeview	Indian Head Park	Plum Grove Woodlands SD*
Broadview	Inverness	Prospect Heights
Brookfield	Justice	Richton Park
Buffalo Grove	Kenilworth	River Grove
Burr Ridge	Kimberly Heights SD*	Riverdale
Calumet City	La Grange	Robbins
Chicago Ridge	La Grange Highlands SD*	Rolling Meadows
Country Club Hills	La Grange Park	Roselle
Countryside	Lansing	Rosemont
Crestwood	Lemont	Sauk Village
Deer Park	Leyden Township	Schaumburg
Des Plaines	Lynwood	Schiller Park
Dolton	Markham	South Barrington
East Hazel Crest	Matteson	South Holland
Elk Grove Township	McCook	South Lyons Township SD*
Elgin	Melrose Park	South Palos Township SD*
Elk Grove Village	Merrionette Park	South Stickney SD*
Evergreen Park	Midlothian	Stone Park
Flagg Creek WRD**	Mission Brook SD*	Streamwood
Flossmoor	Morton Grove	Thornton
Ford Heights	Mount Prospect	Tinley Park
Forest River SD*	Niles	Westchester
Franklin Park	Norridge	Western Springs
Garden Homes SD*	Northbrook	Wheeling
Glenbrook SD*	Northfield	Willow Springs
Glencoe	Northfield Township	Wilmette
Glenview	Northfield Woods SD*	Winnetka
Glenwood	Northlake	Woodley Road SD*
Hanover Park	Oak Forest	Worth
Harvey	Oak Lawn	
Harwood Heights	Oak Meadow SD*	
Hazel Crest	Olympia Fields	

\*Sanitary District

\*\*Water Reclamation District



## PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

### JOINT FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR STREAM GAGING STATION IN COOK COUNTY

The MWRD entered into a Joint Funding Agreement with the United States Geological Survey beginning in 2006 and has since renewed the agreement annually to fund the continued maintenance and operation of various stream gages and rain gages within Cook County. Under the 2024-2025 agreement, the MWRD is funding the following ten stream gages:

- Salt Creek at Rolling Meadows
- Salt Creek near Elk Grove Village
- Salt Creek at Western Springs
- Des Plaines River at Lyons
- North Branch of the Chicago River at Deerfield
- North Branch of the Chicago River at N Pulaski Rd at Chicago
- Deer Creek near Chicago Heights
- Calumet Union Drainage Ditch at Markham
- Natalie Creek at Midlothian
- Tinley Creek near Palos Park

The MWRD is also funding two rain gages located on Salt Creek near Rolling Meadows and at Calumet Union DR Canal near Markham. The data from the streamflow gaging stations has proven useful for the MWRD with calibration of the hydrologic and hydraulic models in the Detailed Watershed Plan development, and the MWRD will continue to use data from these stations in ongoing and future planning and design of stormwater improvements. Real time data from the stream gages are available on the United States Geological Survey's website at <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>. Precipitation data is available at <https://il.water.usgs.gov/gmaps/precip/index.php>.

**BELOW** Through the MWRD and its Space to Grow partners, the schoolyard at Ronald H. Brown Community Academy in the West Pullman neighborhood of Chicago was reimaged into a vibrant, multi-functional green space designed to benefit both students and the environment.



## **Cook County Hazard Mitigation Plan**

The Cook County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is the use of long-term and short-term policies, programs, projects, and other activities to alleviate the death, injury and property damage that can result from a disaster. Cook County, MWRD, and a coalition of planning partners prepared the Cook County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan in order to identify the risks posed by hazards and find ways to reduce their impacts. The plan reduces risk for those who live in, work in, and visit the County. MWRD continues to work closely with Cook County and our other planning partners to mitigate flooding through projects identified in our annual report. MWRD is actively partnering with Cook County in ensuring the HMP is updated regularly.

## **Watershed Planning Councils**

The Watershed Planning Councils were formed in 2005 to serve as advisory bodies to the MWRD for its Stormwater Management Program. Municipalities and townships are represented in the councils by their chief elected officials or designees. Unincorporated areas are represented by the Cook County Board President or his or her designee. Councils meet at least quarterly for the watersheds of the North Branch of the Chicago River, the Lower Des Plaines River, the Calumet-Sag Channel, the Little Calumet River, Poplar Creek, and Upper Salt Creek. Watershed Planning Council meetings serve as a mechanism for representatives of municipalities and townships to be updated on MWRD's stormwater management program as well as to communicate the public's concerns to MWRD.

The following Councils of Government are responsible for coordination of the WPCs:

- Northwest Municipal Conference
- West Central Municipal Conference
- South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
- Southwest Conference of Mayors

The MWRD negotiated agreements with each of the Councils of Government to provide administrative assistance related to coordination of the Watershed Planning Councils; the current agreement was renewed for 2024 through 2028. The Councils of Government assist the MWRD by arranging meeting schedules, drafting and distributing meeting agendas, distributing information from the MWRD to council members, assembling contact information for council representatives, and forwarding information about stormwater management concerns from the council members to the MWRD.

Visit the WPC Meeting Calendar to view the current Watershed Planning Council meeting schedule.

## **Public Affairs**

In 2024, the MWRD staff provided information about the MWRD and the Stormwater Management Program at various events for communities throughout the region and at various virtual technical conferences. The MWRD attends all Watershed Planning Council meetings to provide updates on watershed planning efforts, changes to the WMO, and stream maintenance activities. These meetings are open to the public and provide an opportunity for concerns of the public to be communicated to the MWRD. The Space to Grow projects in partnership with CPS and City of Chicago Department of Water Management also have a large public affairs component, including community meetings to recommend design elements, community planting days and ribbon cutting ceremonies, where the value of GI is demonstrated.

The MWRD staff will continue to participate in community outreach events in 2025, virtually and in person.

A list of stormwater management press releases issued in 2024 can be found on <https://mwrdr.org/news>.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

As we work to manage stormwater across the county, the MWRD cannot do it alone.

You can help reduce stormwater runoff and improve the quality of our waterways. Click on the links below to learn more.

**Understanding your sewer:** Follow the flush and the stormwater to the sewers and places it will go.

**How you can help reduce flooding and protect water quality:**

Learn how you can help in your backyard

**Rain barrels:** Discounted rain barrels are available to Cook County residents while supplies last.

**Restore the canopy:** MWRD gives away free native tree saplings. Find out where.

**Go easy on the salt:** Too much road salt can harm our environment. What can you do?

**Green Neighbor Guide:** Get a PDF guide on how you can stop sending stormwater to the sewers.

**Disposal of medical products:** How to keep medicines out of the waterways.

**Report a waterway blockage:** See something? Say something. It's easy to report.



## 2024 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTED EXPENDITURES

<b>Services in-house</b>	<b>\$ 12,542,972</b>
Preliminary Engineering	\$ 387,644
Final Engineering and Post Award	\$ 4,022,638
<b>Services: consultants (subtotal)</b>	<b>\$ 4,410,282</b>
Small Streams Maintenance Program	\$ 2,121,547
Small Streams Maintenance Program waste disposal	\$ 144,521
Court Reporting Services	\$ 10,402
Contractual Services NOC	\$ 151,409
Land Acquisition and Appraisals	\$ 1,484,931
Waterways Facilities Structures (Construction)	\$ 43,816,030
Army Corps of Engineers Services	\$ 100,000
Permit Review	\$ 576,564
IGAs	\$ 20,153,725
Payments for Easements	\$ -
Miscellaneous Contractual Services	\$ 22,520
<b>Contractual Services (subtotal)</b>	<b>\$ 68,581,649</b>
Materials, Equipment, & Supplies	\$ 276,068
<b>Administrative Expenses (subtotal)</b>	<b>\$ 276,068</b>
<b>Total 2024 Committed Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 85,810,971</b>



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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[mwrdd.org](http://mwrdd.org) 312.751.6633



**Metropolitan Water  
Reclamation District  
of Greater Chicago**

100 East Erie Street • Chicago, Illinois 60611-3154

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Established in 1889, the MWRD is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.

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