



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District *of* Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## MWRD seeks feedback on creative solutions to flooding in Hickory Hills, Justice, Palos Hills, Bedford Park and Bridgeview

Into every life a little rain must fall. Unfortunately, that “little rain” often causes a big mess and a lot of headaches, like flooding in homes and basements.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) and its engineering consultants are conducting a study to fully understand the scope of the house, basement and street flooding problem within the “Roberts Road Study Area,” which includes most of Hickory Hills, Justice and Palos Hills, and portions of Bedford Park and Bridgeview.

“Through this comprehensive study, MWRD is evaluating a wide range of potential solutions to reduce urban flooding and basement backups,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “We know that to eventually reduce or eliminate these problems will require a creative, multi-faceted approach.”

This fall, MWRD wants to hear from residents and business owners in this area to get feedback on the full range of possible solutions, particularly at the private property level. The MWRD team is hosting two public engagement meetings in November.

“Many homeowners in these communities have suffered from house, basement and street flooding for years, but these problems are not necessarily permanent. We can reduce their occurrence through a combination of gray and green infrastructure, but we’re going to have to be creative,” said President Spyropoulos.

Gray infrastructure refers to traditional engineered solutions to flooding problems, like sewers. Gray infrastructure is often designed to move rainwater to another location to reduce flooding. Alternately, green infrastructure practices treat water where it falls, allowing the water to sink slowly into the ground.

“Cook County’s sewer system was designed before so much of our community was covered in pavement. It wasn’t designed to carry this much water,” said President Spyropoulos. “Now we need to come up with creative or different ways to get some of that water into the ground so our sewer systems and creeks are not as overwhelmed during storms.”

Public meetings will be held beginning on Thursday, Nov. 5, at 6 p.m. at Conrady Junior High School, 7950 W. 97th St, Hickory Hills. The second is Thursday, Nov. 12, at 6 p.m. at Bridgeview Public Library, 7840 W. 79th St., Bridgeview.

All residents and business owners in the study area are welcome and encouraged to attend. The study area is bisected by Roberts Road and includes part or all of the municipalities of Bedford Park, Bridgeview, Hickory Hills, Justice, and Palos Hills.

After collecting input from the public this fall, MWRD and the engineering team will recommend a suite of possible alternatives to reduce flooding. These recommendations will be shared with the municipalities and the public in spring 2016.

“Flooding happens because too much stormwater is overwhelming our stormwater management systems. With little opportunity within our area for stormwater storage, our city has for many years improved stormwater conveyance throughout the community with good results,” said City of Palos Hills Mayor Gerald R. Bennett. However, some of our efforts to manage stormwater are negated when the Roberts Road stormwater systems are overwhelmed. The stormwater simply has nowhere to go. Something has to change. Finding and developing local/regional stormwater storage solutions and improving stormwater conveyance seems like our only options. Together, homeowners, business owners and government agencies have the power to solve this problem.”

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*Established in 1889, the MWRD ([www.mwr.org](http://www.mwr.org)) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.*