

Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project

Water Access, Technology, Education and Recreation

Keep Sewage out of Basements & Canals • Keep Stormwater out of the System • Keep Great Lakes out of the Neighborhood

12 April 2023

Tyrone Clifton, Director
Detroit Building Authority
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 1316
Detroit, MI 48226
tclifton@detroitmi.gov

Suzanne R. Coffey, Chief Executive Officer
Great Lakes Water Authority
935 Randolph Street, Suite 1900
Detroit, MI 48226
suzanne.coffey@glwater.org

Lt. Col. Brett Boyle, Commander
US Army Corps of Engineers
Detroit District
Patrick V. McNamara Federal Building
477 Michigan Avenue, Suite XXX
Detroit, MI 48226
brett.m.boyle@usace.army.mil

RE: Flood Mitigation and Related Actions

Mr. Clifton, Ms. Coffey and Lt. Col. Boyle:

The Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project is a community-based, community-driven and community-supported effort to find solutions to the interconnected water resource management challenges in the neighborhood. Our community, those adjacent to us and others on the City's farwest side received the most rainfall and were most impacted by the infrastructure failures that resulted in over half of the basements in our community being filled with sewage.

Additionally, a huge volume of combined sewage was discharged from the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA), Outfall #80 at the headwaters of Fox Creek at East Jefferson Avenue and Ashland Street. The source of that combined sewage flows from our neighbors to the east.

With the overarching goal of removing the Jefferson-Chalmers community from the recently designation of a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain and resolving our comprehensive interconnected water resource management challenges, we believe this can be accomplished with by assisting residents in securing Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) and identify specific projects that would allow the Administration to secure a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) with FEMA. These actions would both protect residents, reduce cost of housing and protect the expenditure of federal resources.

Given the Michigan Dept. of Transportation's I-94 reconstruction, Great Lake Water Authority and US Army Corps of Engineer's \$3 million Water Resource Development Act Regional Flood Study, Southeast Michigan Council of Government's Green Task Force, Detroit Building Authority's \$1 million Flood Mitigation Study and \$74 million of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds - just to name a few, oblige us to seek unprecedented collaboration and cooperation.

In addition, the enormity of the Federal presence through investments in transportation, environmental stewardship, water resources, infrastructure (ARPA, IIJA, WRDA, etc.) and disaster recovery oblige us to consider the context of President Joe Biden's Executive Order 14008 and the White House Justice 40 Initiative and there is no better definition of a disadvantaged community then the profile of Jefferson-Chalmers.

Therefore, we believe there should be adequate human and financial resources to achieve these objectives and further, we believe community representatives should be partners in the decision-making for identifying projects that will impact our community.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention to these matters as we look forward to hearing from you and the dialogue with all of you about these and other matters as we advance our mutual goals. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel to contact us at info@jeffersonchalmerswaterproject.org or through our Lead Organizer, Jay C. Juergensen at 313.802.2294.

Sincerely yours,

The Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project Team

- > Keep Sewage out of Basements & Canals
- > Keep Stormwater out of the System
- > Keep Great Lakes out of the Neighborhood

Earth = 70% • Humans = 70% • Water = Life

www.jeffersonchalmerswaterproject.org

Exhibit A: Background of Events and Activities

The purpose of this Exhibit is to:

- chronicle recent events and actions of various public agencies;;
- provide situational awareness for all parties;
- encourage coordination amongst local, regional, state and federal agencies in addressing the threat of Great Lakes encroachment and infrastructure improvements that will accommodate the impact of climate change; and
- request formal engagement in these on-going activities as the intersection of these matters have affected the Jefferson-Chalmers community and impact our community like no other.

Flood Insurance Rate Map and Floodplain Updates - In October 2021, the entire Jefferson-Chalmers community was placed in a new Floodplain and new Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) were published by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). This action significantly increased housing costs for many residents while it also has had the impact of restricting or pausing federal investment in the community, including proposed affordable housing developments by Jefferson East, Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) resources designed to specifically assist survivors of the June 2021 National Disaster (MI-4607) and proposed \$9.25 million Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in fish habitat in Alfred Brush Ford Park. The EPA investment is part of the park's revitalization, including the construction of the new Lenox Center with the support of the Penske Foundation.

US Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE or The Corps) Floodplain Management Study - In May 2022, the community first learned of The Corps' Lake St. Clair Flood Risk Reduction Study published by their Floodplain Management Services (FPMS) published in its final form in July 2022. The Study offered three (3) Options for protecting the community from potential Great Lakes encroachment as witnessed in the summer of 2019. In October 2022, residents and stakeholders objected to any temporary or limited access to the community's waterways including Fox Creek and linked canals as well as restricted access to Bayview Yacht Club along Claripointe Avenue.

Detroit Building Authority Tiger Dam Installation - In 2019, the City of Detroit through the Detroit Building Authority and General Services Department ripped through properties to install Tiger Dams and sandbags. While the Tiger Dams have failed throughout the neighborhood and sandbags were collected recently, there has been no information provided to nor any community engagement on the removal of the Tiger Dams and reimbursement for or the completion of repairs to property damaged during their installation and sand bag removal.

Detroit Building Authority Floodplain Mitigation Study - On July 21, 2022, the City of Detroit provided the Detroit Building Authority (DBA) \$1M to conduct a Flood Mitigation Study, the Scope of Services for which is outlined in the Funding Agreement published on DBA website. On September 27, representatives of the various City agencies committed to leadership from the Jefferson-Chalmers community to participate in developing the Scope of Services for that Study. A list of names and contact information was advanced to those representatives on October 8 and the list has recently expanded as residents and stakeholders are taking the lead as members of the Flood Protections Committee. City Administration secure and share the most recent Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H&H) Study that served as the basis for FEMA's decision.

Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Action Plan - On October 4, the Draft Action Plan outlined the allocation of the CDBG-DR funds appropriated by the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by Congress including \$10 million for Jefferson-Chalmers Flood Protection. On October 11, residents rejected Options 1 and 3 of The Corps' previously referenced July report which proposed flood gates, stop logs and flood walls on both the eastern and western edges of the community, limiting access of the canals and water based activities. The November 14 Updated Draft Action Plan submitted to HUD removed the \$10 million and there has been no further communication regarding the use of those funds.

Water Resources Development Act Award - In December, The Corps and the Great Lakes Water Authority were awarded a \$3 million Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) grant for a regional flood study.

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Rain Data Update - December 2022 - HR-4137 - Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct NOAA to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes. The act also requires NOAA to develop guidance and take other actions to update precipitation estimates. As part of the Demonstration Project, NOAA should begin in the Midwest and Michigan, FIRST.

I-94 Reconstruction - The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is planning massive investments in underground storage tanks as part of the reconstruction of Interstate 94 (I-94) to manage stormwater that has caused recurring flooding in I-94, particularly near the Mt. Elliott and Chene interchanges.

Conner Creek CSO Plant Vulnerabilities - In December of 2019, our Representative, now Speaker Joe Tate arranged for a tour of the recently upgraded largest Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO) in Michigan as the Conner Creek CSO Station at the time, the pride of the GLWA system. Its failure in June 2021 has removed some of its luster, but questions about its capacity, its role in the hydraulics and hydrology of a watershed that reaches into Macomb County and the revelation that its operation may be jeopardized if Great Lakes water levels were to rise need to be disclosed and addressed.

GLWA Purchase of East Lake Baptist Church - We understand that GLWA has purchased property currently occupied by Eastlake Baptist Church and we seek to learn about the proposed use of the property.

Detroit River Watershed Management Plan (WMP) - Stakeholders from local and state agencies, regional organizations, NGO stakeholders and others have been meeting since 2012 on a regular and consistent basis to advance a Watershed Plan for the Detroit River. Wayne State University has secured funding for the WMP development process through EGLE and USACE and will continue to lead the WMP development effort with the stakeholder group will likely reconvene as soon as the funding is set, likely in mid-May.

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments Green Task Force - Launched in November 2022 and co-chaired by Mayor Abdullah Hammoud of Dearborn and Mayor Bryan Barnett of Rochester Hills, the Task Force includes representatives from local governments and state agencies, land conservancies, and recreation providers, along with healthcare, utilities, and business leaders. They discussed their visions for the region's future and current efforts to implement GREEN strategies.

Water Subcommittee of the Detroit City Council Green Task Force - Chaired by Erma Leaphart of the Sierra Club, the Subcommittee meets monthly and brings together numerous environmental advocacy groups, non-profit organizations, environmental businesses, government employees and residents focused on water.

GLWA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Expires - On October 1, 2022, GLWA's NPDES Permit expired. Prohibited Outfall #80 discharges the Fox Creek Enclosure into Fox Creek at its headwaters near the intersection of East Jefferson Avenue and Ashland Street. Outfall #80 There is no water quality monitoring and notification to the public is limited under the current permit requirements. The discharge in June 2021 was so powerful it destroyed and relocated Tiger Dams and did severe property damage. The last permit cycle in 2017 took two (2) years for the most recent permit to be finalized. The timing for approval of a new permit should happen immediately and additional monitoring and public notification requirements must be included with the goal of permanently ending the discharge within the next permit cycle.

Grosse Pointe Park Extreme Emergency Relief Valve (EERV) - Approved by State of Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy (EGLE) in February, there was no Public Notice, Public Comment and Public Hearing. The discharge of raw sewage into Lake St. Clair under ANY circumstances should not be allowed.

Grosse Pointe Farms Separation Project - In November, Farms' residents approved a \$45 million bond issue for a project to separate storm and sanitary for a portion of their community.

Distribution:

City of Detroit Administration and Agencies

Lashanda Davis, Mayor's Office, Deputy COO, lashanda.davis@detroitmi.gov
Ken Kucel, Mayor's Office Director of Construction, kucelk@detroitmi.gov
Ray Solomon - Director, Neighborhood Services, solomonr@detroitmi.gov
Caprice Jackson, Director, D4 Neighborhood Services, Caprice.jackson@detroitmi.gov
Eboni Deberry, Dep. Director, D4 Neighborhood Services, Eboni.deberry@detroitmi.gov
Gary Brown, Director, Detroit Water & Sewerage Department, Gary.Brown@detroitmi.gov
David Bell, Director, Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environment Department (BSEED), belld@detroitmi.gov
Rickelle Winton, BSEED Floodplain Coordinator, wintonri@detroitmi.gov
Chrystal Rogers, Department of Public Works, General Manager Environmental Enforcement, gilbertcr@detroitmi.gov

City of Detroit Council and County Commission

Tim Killeen, Wayne County Commissioner, tkilleen@Waynecounty.com
Council President, Mary Sheffield, councilmembersheffield@detroitmi.gov
Councilwoman Latisha Johnson, CMLatisha.Johnson@detroitmi.gov
Dennis Perkins, Deputy Chief of Staff, dennis.perkins@detroitmi.gov
Eftiola Greco, Senior Policy Advisor, Eftiola.Greco@detroitmi.gov
Councilwoman Mary Waters, mary.waters@detroitmi.gov
Councilperson Coleman A. Young, II, coleman.young@detroitmi.gov
Marcel Todd, Director, City Planning Commission, marcell@detroitmi.gov
Rory Bolger, Staff, City Planning Commission, rori@detroitmi.gov
Roland Amarteifio, City Planning Commission, Roland.Amarteifio@detroitmi.gov
Jocelyn Harris, Chair, District 4 Community Advisory Council, upsouthfoods.jh@gmail.com

State of Michigan Elected Officials and Agencies

Kimberly Webb, PE, Regional Engineer, Michigan Dept. of Transportation, WebbK4@michigan.gov
Laura Verona, EGLE District Supervisor, Water Resources Division, VERONAL@michigan.gov
Mindy Steffler, EGLE District Supervisor, Water Resources Division, STEFFLERM@michigan.gov
Andy Hartz, District Supervisor, Water Resources Division, Wetlands Unit, hartz@michigan.gov
Matthew Occhipinti, PE, CFM, EGLE, NFIP Coordinator/ Floodplain Engineer, occhipintim@michigan.gov
State Senator Stephanie Chang, SChang@senate.michigan.gov
Jacquelyn Ramsey, Policy Staff, jramsey@senate.michigan.gov
Speaker of the House - State Rep. Joe Tate, joe@tateformichigan.com
Bobby Lawrence, Detroit District Director-Speaker Joe Tate, blawrence@house.mi.gov

US Senate, House and Federal Agencies

Terry Campbell, Regional Manager, Sen. Debbie Stabenaw, terry.cambell@stabenow.senate.gov
Kevin Hrit, Regional Director, Office of US Senator Gary Peters, Kevin_Hrit@peters.senate.gov
Mike Schmid, Regional Representative, Office of US Senator Gary Peters, Michael_Schmid@peters.senate.gov
Colleen Pobur, Michigan Chief of Staff, Congressman Shri Thanedar, colleen.pobur@mail.house.gov
Chi Chukwuka, Legislative Director, Congressman Shri Thanedar, chi.chukwuka@mail.house.gov
Larissa Richardson, Chief of Staff, Congresswoman Rashida Talib, Larissa.richardson@mail.house.gov
Dr. Jalonnie L. White-Newsome, Sr. Dir. for Env. Justice, White House Council on Env. Quality, jolanne.l.white-newsome@ceq.eop.gov
Amber Falkner, U. S. EPA – Great Lakes National Program Office, falkner.amber@epa.gov
Brian Killen, CFM, Mitigation Division, FEMA Region 5, brian.killen@fema.dhs.gov
James Sink, FEMA Region 5, Regional Flood Insurance Liaison, Mitigation Division, Region 5, james.sink@fema.dhs.gov
Garrett Ray, USACE-Detroit District, Civil Engineer, FRM/FPMS/Silver Jackets, garrett.d.ray@usace.army.mil

Regional Agencies

Todd King, GLWA, Todd.King@glwater.org
Kathryn Grantham, SEMCOG, grantham@semcog.org
Kelly Karll, SEMCOG, Karll@semcog.org

Stakeholders and Experts

Paul Hulsey, Bayview Yacht Club, Commodore2023@byc.com
Erin Stanley, Director of Climate Equity, Eastside Community Network, (ECAC, Flood Task Force), estanley@ecn-detroit.org
Josh Elling and Lutalo Sutalo, Jefferson East, jelling@jeffersonseast.org and lsanifu@jeffersonseast.org
LeJuan Council, Detroit Disaster Recovery Group, LeJuanCouncilMecca@gmail.com
Brent Collins, Detroit Disaster Recovery Group, brentcollinsiifyn@gmail.com
Erma Leaphart, Sierra Club/Chair Water Subcommittee City Council Green Task Force, erma.leaphart@sierraclub.org
Nick Schroeck, Associate Dean and Director of Clinical Programs, University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, schroenj@udmercy.edu
John Mogk, Attorney, Wayne State University, jmogk@yahoo.com,
Lettie Azzar, Penske Foundation, lety.azzar@penskecorp.com