



MAYOR CAVALIER JOHNSON
CITY OF MILWAUKEE

News Release

Contact: Jeff Fleming, Jeff.Fleming2@milwaukee.gov
Jonathan Fera, Jonathan.Fera@milwaukeecountywi.gov
Bill Graffin, bgraffin@mmsd.com

For release: Friday, April 17, 2026

Local Leaders Form Flood Mitigation Task Force to Address Current and Future Storm Safety Work

Today, Mayor Cavalier Johnson, County Executive David Crowley, and MMSD Executive Director Kevin Shafer formed a combined Flood Mitigation Task Force to plan for both short-term and long-term flooding safety work. The panel will combine the expertise of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, the City of Milwaukee, and Milwaukee County to address the increasing frequency of serious flooding in our region.

Flooding events last August and again this month have wreaked major damage to homes and businesses.

“This Flood Mitigation Task Force will build on the cooperative work that’s been underway for decades and add a renewed sense of urgency as a result of recent flooding events,” Mayor Johnson said. “The work of the panel will prioritize mitigation in locations facing the highest risk including sites that have been flooded repeatedly in recent years.”

As the effects of climate change continue impacting Wisconsin, County Executive Crowley believes investing in more resilient infrastructure will ensure Milwaukee roads, bridges, and parks can withstand future weather events, streamline repairs, and save taxpayer dollars in the long-run.

“The extreme weather events that have hit Milwaukee County pose a real threat to the infrastructure that supports our environment, economy, and way of life,” said County Executive Crowley. “We must take action before the next major flood or storm further damages the roads, bridges, parks, and essential infrastructure that residents rely on. The Flood Mitigation Task Force represents an expansion of our existing regional partnerships to share resources, identify solutions, and develop a shared understanding for how we continue working together to navigate our evolving climate and prepare for extreme weather events in the future.”

MMSD has invested hundreds-of-millions of dollars in flood prevention work, and that has eased the severity of recent major rain events. The district has continuing plans to keep that work going, including a focus on the Kinnickinnic River vicinity where hundreds of homes remain in the floodplain. The KK River is in the most densely populated watershed in the State of Wisconsin.

-- more --

“The work of this task force can aid MMSD in both prioritizing the work and identifying funding for the projects we have in mind,” Executive Director Shafer said. “Mitigation efforts that the district has previously identified have price tags totaling about \$900-million, and an investment of that scale requires significant public input and buy-in from a number of local governments.”

The Flood Mitigation Task Force will convene in the coming days and anticipates producing recommendations later this year.