



STORMWATER STRATEGIC PLAN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. WHAT IS PWSA'S STORMWATER STRATEGIC PLAN?

The broad goals of the Stormwater Strategic Plan are to achieve a significant reduction of flooding, improve the quality of life for residents, develop cost-effective solutions that address wet weather challenges and regulatory requirements, and incorporate broad public and stakeholder support. The Stormwater Strategic Plan will create a community that is healthier, safer, and more resilient to the impacts of stormwater.

The strategic planning process is led by a visionary project team from PennPraxis and the Water Center at Penn, and they are joined by sub-consultants that bring both national expertise and knowledge of local water issues.

2. WHY IS THE STRATEGIC PLAN NEEDED?

Currently, there is no comprehensive approach to managing stormwater in Pittsburgh. When it rains, the combined sewer system overflows into rivers and streams, streets flood, and basements backup with raw sewage. The region often experiences intense and frequent rainstorms that cause property damage and threatens the health and safety of Pittsburgh residents, a problem that's worsening over time due to climate change and aging infrastructure.

From the Citywide Green First Plan adopted in 2016 to a review of existing stormwater codes and ordinances currently underway, Pittsburgh's stormwater challenges are well documented. The Stormwater Strategic Plan will create a global model to be Pittsburgh's blueprint to address local stormwater challenges by focusing on reducing combined sewer overflows (CSO's), urban flooding, and contamination of local waterways.

3. HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM PAST PLANNING EFFORTS INCLUDING THE 2016 CITYWIDE GREEN FIRST PLAN?

Past planning efforts began to look at how Pittsburgh could use green infrastructure to manage stormwater and improve water quality. The 2016 Citywide Green First Plan prioritized watersheds throughout Pittsburgh and identified projects that would help to reduce combined sewer overflows. In 2019, the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN), the agency that treats wastewater for Pittsburgh and other municipalities in the county, received approval of its Clean Water Plan, a regulatory document defining strategies to reduce combined sewer overflows into our rivers by 2036.

The Stormwater Strategic Plan will build upon these past planning efforts without duplicating existing plans and analyze the effects of climate change. The strategic plan will help determine the level of storm protection to provide across Pittsburgh, identify short-term stormwater projects, and create climate data projections to plan for future projects. It will also recommend funding strategies and governance models to create a sustainable and more resilient city that prioritizes public health and wellness.

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4. HOW IS THE STORMWATER STRATEGIC PLAN FUNDED?

PWSA has allocated \$250,000 of the estimated \$500,000 project costs towards this planning effort and is receiving funding support from local foundations.

5. WHEN IT RAINS, MY BASEMENT FREQUENTLY BACKS UP WITH SEWAGE OR MY NEIGHBORHOOD OFTEN FLOODS. HOW WILL THE STRATEGIC PLAN ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES? WILL IT STOP THEM FROM OCCURRING?

This plan will identify ways to significantly reduce the frequency, volume, and impact of flooding throughout Pittsburgh. Through a collaborative process with stakeholders and the Pittsburgh community, the strategic plan will establish principles and the framework for a minimum level of storm protection to equitably protect Pittsburgh residents.

6. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE LEVEL OF SERVICE DISCUSSION AS A COMMUNITY?

By having this discussion with the Pittsburgh community, we can ensure that residents and businesses participating in the process understand the benefits and limitations of the level of service that PWSA can provide to mitigate stormwater, and see the cost associated with implementation of stormwater mitigation projects. For example, a level of service that prevents flooding during all the severe storms could result in extraordinarily large rate increases.

7. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO COMPLETE THE STRATEGIC PLAN?

It will take approximately one year to complete the strategic plan. PWSA initiated the work with PennPraxis and the Water Center at Penn in June 2021. We anticipate the holistic and integrated stormwater management plan to be completed in June 2022.

8. WHEN WILL I START SEEING RESULTS AT MY HOME OR IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD?

After the plan is completed in June 2022, design and construction to implement the plan will take several years. The pace of implementation will also be affected by the amount of Federal and State funding available to ensure affordability.

9. HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THIS PLANNING PROCESS?

Public engagement with residents, ratepayers and stakeholders is key to the success of this project. Community-based planning will be accomplished through meetings with established community organizations that can convey the neighborhood's issues and needs. The team creating the strategic plan will meet with a variety of stakeholders to learn about stormwater challenges and barriers. Special attention will be paid to engaging stakeholders and communities not typically at the table for stormwater conversations but are impacted by stormwater issues such as flooding and basement backups.

10. WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PWSA'S STORMWATER PLANNING?

For more information about the Stormwater Strategic Plan, visit www.pgh2o.com/stormwater. For information about stormwater projects currently in design, construction, or recently completed by PWSA, visit www.pgh2o.com/search-all-projects. For information about the proposed stormwater fee, visit www.pgh2ostormwater.com.

