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MSD Breaks Ground on \$60 Million Underground Shawnee Park Basin

Project to reduce sewer overflows into Ohio River while adding to historic Shawnee Park

MSD broke ground on the \$60 million Shawnee Park Basin Project today, a key project in its effort to reduce sewer overflows into the Ohio River, while preserving the historic nature of Shawnee Park. The basin – which will be largely invisible to the public when completed – will be constructed under a portion of the Great Lawn in Shawnee Park.

The project is a collective effort between MSD, Louisville Metro Parks, The Olmsted Parks Conservancy, community leaders, and local residents that will also feature new park amenities including an open-air pavilion, enhanced greenspace, premium landscaping, a new paved parking area for the spray pad, a resurfaced loop road, renovation of the lily pond, and restoration of the Ball House and athletic courts.

“The Shawnee Park Basin Project will not only help clean up local waterways in a way that’s largely invisible to the community, but the work will also preserve and improve the wonderful park we have in Shawnee Park,” said Tony Parrott, Director, Louisville MSD. “Thanks to basins like these and the Ohio River Tunnel that will run underneath downtown, by 2020, MSD will capture and treat 98 percent of the combined sewer overflow volume for a typical year of rain.”

The 20 million gallon underground Shawnee Park Basin will be a sealed, watertight concrete structure that will capture untreated wastewater during storm events, instead of it flowing into the Ohio River. The top of the basin is approximately 12 feet below grade, with three-foot thick reinforced concrete walls. Wastewater is stored in the basin until the storm subsides, then pumped to the nearest treatment center, treated and returned to local streams or the Ohio River.

Metro Parks will plan and manage the greenspace above the underground storage basin.

The Shawnee Park Basin Project will create 130 local job opportunities, including positions for carpenters, ironworkers, electricians, masons, pipefitters, heavy equipment operators and more. A job fair for local positions will follow in early 2017.

The project is part of an \$940 million mandate from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to clean up local waterways and is one of seven combined sewer overflow basins in planning or construction phases in Louisville, along with the 2.5-mile Ohio River Tunnel. The tunnel will offer the storage capacity of three basins. Basins and tunnels have proven to be an effective way to address combined sewage overflows.

Combining wastewater and stormwater in a single pipe and designing the system to overflow during periods of heavy rainfall was considered state-of-the-art wastewater technology in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when Louisville's combined sewers were constructed. It was a typical infrastructure design for the time, though later in the 20th century, experts realized that the CSOs were contributing pollution to urban streams and rivers.

"This project is a step toward keeping Shawnee Park and the surrounding area a beautiful place while at the same time dealing with drainage problems that we are all too familiar with. In the end, we will have the best of both worlds with new facilities and a cleaner sustainable area of the community."

—Councilwoman Cheri Bryant Hamilton District 5

"As a result of this collaborative community partnership we will have a tremendous amount of successes to celebrate. No matter how you enjoy Shawnee Park these improvements or give backs from MSD will have a positive impact on this great Olmsted Park and Shawnee Community. These changes will breathe new life into Shawnee Park."

— Metro Parks Deputy Director Marty Storch

About MSD

The Louisville/Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) works to achieve and maintain clean, environmentally safe waterways for a healthy and vibrant community. The organization's more than 600 employees provide wastewater management, drainage and flood protection services across the 376 square miles of Louisville Metro. In addition to operating and maintaining Louisville Metro's sewer system, floodwall system, water quality treatment centers and flood pumping stations, MSD invests in hundreds of infrastructure improvement projects each year, plants more than 1,000 trees and other vegetation annually to enhance water filtration and reduce runoff, and provides numerous outreach programs to inform and educate the community about protecting our waterways.