



PROJECT GROUNDWORK
your pipeline to clean water

Lick Run FAQs

The Lick Run Project – part of the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati's (MSD) solution for Lower Mill Creek – will eliminate about 400 million gallons of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) into the Mill Creek each year during a typical year of rain. This fact sheet answers commonly asked questions about the project.

1. What is the Lick Run Project?

The Lick Run Project is comprised of 12 separate projects to collect stormwater from the Lick Run watershed and convey or carry it to the Mill Creek. The projects are a mix of “green” and “gray” infrastructure. Green projects include an urban waterway (constructed channel that mimics a natural stream) in South Fairmount, wetland forebay, bioinfiltration basins, stream restoration, bioswale, stormwater detention basins and other more natural solutions. Gray projects include new storm sewers and other sewer infrastructure.

2. Was the Lick Run Project approved?

Yes, the Lick Run Project was officially approved by the U.S. EPA and other regulators in May 2013 as part of MSD's Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy. The U.S. EPA also approved projects in the West Fork, Kings Run and Bloody Run watersheds. For more information, please visit www.projectgroundwork.org/lowermillcreek.

3. Is MSD still going to build a tunnel?

No, MSD will not build a tunnel as part of the Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy.

4. What is the Lick Run Master Plan and was it approved?

The Lick Run Master Plan is a master planning document that covers project background, technical foundations, community needs, an exploration of alternatives, a base plan for the Lick Run Greenway, and a long-term watershed vision plan. The master plan was developed with extensive community input during 2011 and 2012 and was approved by the City Planning Commission and Cincinnati City Council in 2013. It is available online at www.projectgroundwork.org/lickrun or by contacting MSD Engineering Customer Service at (513) 557-3594 or MSD.Communications@cincinnati-oh.gov.

5. How much will the Lick Run Project cost?

The Lick Run Project will cost about \$193 million (in 2006 dollars) to design and construct. It is anticipated to cost around \$800,000 annually to operate and maintain (in 2012 dollars).

6. How much will sewer bills go up as a result of the Lick Run Project?

Sewer bills will not go up specifically as a result of the Lick Run Project.

The Lick Run Project is part of Project Groundwork, a multi-year program to rebuild and improve MSD's sewer system. Project Groundwork includes hundreds of sewer improvements and stormwater management projects across MSD's service area.

Project Groundwork is primarily funded by MSD customers (ratepayers) because there is no government funding source to pay for the sewer improvements. Therefore, MSD ratepayers are supporting the cost of the entire program and not any one project in particular.

Rate increases are expected to continue to fund the anticipated costs associated with Project Groundwork. The Hamilton County Commissioners approve all MSD rate increases and MSD conducts rate studies to determine future rate and debt service coverage needs.

MSD seeks grant funding and/or low-interest loans wherever possible to offset the costs of Project Groundwork.

7. Will all stormwater be removed from the combined sewer system in Lick Run?

No. It is too costly and not feasible to fully separate all stormwater from the combined sewer system in Lick Run.

The Lick Run Project will keep nearly half a billion gallons of stormwater out of the combined sewer system annually, during a typical year of rain. This will result in the elimination of about 400 million gallons of CSOs at CSO 5 (an outfall at the end of Queen City Avenue) annually.

8. Will the combined sewer in South Fairmount be removed as part of the Lick Run Project?

No, the combined sewer will stay in place and will continue to convey sanitary sewage and a smaller volume of stormwater to the Mill Creek treatment plant.

9. Will there continue to be overflows from CSO 5 into the Mill Creek?

Yes. We are eliminating the vast majority of overflows, but there is still the potential for some overflows to occur because we are not removing all the stormwater from the combined sewer system.

10. What is the Lick Run Greenway?

The Lick Run Greenway is a stormwater conveyance system to carry or convey stormwater from the Lick Run watershed to the Mill Creek. The Greenway will be about 1.5 miles long and will run from old Queen City Avenue to the Mill Creek between Queen City and Westwood avenues.

It includes the following features:

- 1-mile-long urban waterway (constructed channel that mimics a natural stream)
- 1.5-mile-long stormwater conveyance box running beneath the entire system to handle runoff from large storms
- Wetland forebay and bioinfiltration basins along old Queen City Avenue
- Headwaters area near White Street where the urban waterway will start
- Pond feature between Harrison Avenue and State Street

11. How will traffic be affected by the Lick Run Project?

Many of the Lick Run projects will cause impacts on traffic once they go into construction, including temporary or long-term lane and/or road closures. Each project has its own Maintenance of Traffic plan which must be approved by the Cincinnati Department of Transportation and Engineering. We try to keep traffic disruptions to a minimum, but lane and road closures are needed to complete projects and to keep our construction contractors safe.

12. How many properties does MSD currently own (title transferred to MSD)?

92 project parcels are needed for the Lick Run Greenway. MSD has secured 91 of the 92 project parcels to date (as of January 2017). We anticipate owning the last project parcel by this spring.

13. How are these vacant properties being maintained by MSD?

Once property is acquired, it is secured by boarding all windows and doors to prevent unauthorized access. MSD is responsible for property maintenance, including lawn mowing, trash and debris removal.

MSD posts signs on the buildings it owns notifying the public to keep out of the building. The Cincinnati Police Department has been working with MSD and is committed to providing surveillance on these properties. Please call 911 to report any crime in the area. Please contact MSD Engineering Customer Service at (513) 557-3594 or MSD.Communications@cincinnati-oh.gov to report any issues regarding property maintenance.

15. Is MSD going to demolish structures on purchased properties?

Yes, MSD needs to demolish 91 buildings (including garages and large sheds) in the project area. About 54 buildings have been demolished to date, and the rest must be demolished by June 1. The Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority is assisting MSD with demolitions.

MSD is working with Building Value LLC to salvage reusable building materials from the structures prior to demolition as well as to remove recyclable items during demolition.

16. Will all the properties in the corridor be purchased and demolished?

No, there are a number of properties that can remain, as they are not in the path of the Lick Run Greenway or in the 100-year floodplain. One example is the strip mall on Queen City Avenue containing Xtreme Sound.

17. How many historic buildings will be affected by the Lick Run Greenway?

There are five buildings in the path of the VCS that are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

18. What has MSD done to help mitigate the loss of potentially historic property?

MSD has prepared a mitigation plan that is available online at www.projectgroundwork.org/lickrun or by contacting MSD Engineering Customer Service at (513) 557-3594 or MSD.Communications@cincinnati-oh.gov.

To date, two local artists have developed a video history of South Fairmount, MSD is working on signage that will include historical/cultural information, and a local plant nursery has cloned second-generation moon trees that will be planted along the Greenway.

19. What transportation-related changes will be made to Queen City and Westwood avenues?

At this time, the City of Cincinnati has decided not to pursue any transportation-related changes along Queen City and Westwood avenues due to cost.