



Kevin L. Shafer, P.E.
Executive Director

October 27, 2016

Chairman Jim Bohl
Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development Committee
Milwaukee Common Council
200 W. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

RE: Estabrook Dam

Dear Chairman Bohl and Members:

I am following up on the October 25, 2016, Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development (ZND) Committee meeting in which you requested additional information from the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) on the Estabrook Dam, which, in 2012, was declared by a Milwaukee County Circuit Court to be a public nuisance.

On October 24, 2016, the MMSD Commission voted to approve our agency's temporary acquisition of land in Estabrook Park, which would allow us to carry out the dam removal project. The project is included in the MMSD's 2017 Budget and is currently scheduled to be completed in mid-2018; however, we will not move forward with preliminary engineering until the Common Council approves the rezoning and we acquire the parcel needed for the construction project.

As you know, MMSD's Commission voted unanimously on May 18, 2015, in support of removing the Estabrook Dam, because doing so reduces flood elevations supporting MMSD's goal of reducing the risk of structural flooding for the 100-year (1% probability event) storm event. Right now, nearly 1,300 homes and businesses sit in a floodplain in Milwaukee County. That is down from 3,800 in the late 1990's when MMSD started tackling numerous flood management projects to help protect the people we serve.

The cost to rebuild, operate, and maintain Estabrook Dam is estimated, currently, at more than \$8.0 million. Tearing it down will take \$1.7 million, reduce the risk of flooding for more than 50 homeowners, and eliminate a water quality impediment on the Milwaukee River. In addition, the many environmental benefits resulting from removing the dam make the project eligible for several federal and private grants that are not available for repairing the dam. Acquiring these grants to pay for the project would make removal an even bigger win for taxpayers.



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In response to questions at the ZND Committee meeting regarding annual operating cost of repairing the dam contained in Milwaukee County's AECOM report, my staff contacted Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Dam Safety Engineer, William D. Sturtevant. Mr. Sturtevant is very familiar with the AECOM report that concluded that repairing the dam would cost \$207,302 in annual operating cost in 2014 dollars. He believes that this is a credible estimate and that anything lower would be suspect. He indicated that he would be happy to discuss the report further with anyone with questions and may be reach at 608.266.8033 and william.sturtevant@wisconsin.gov.

In response to the question of MMSD authority to own a dam, MMSD has owned and operated a High Hazard Dam that it constructed at the Milwaukee County Grounds Floodwater Management Facility since 2011. This is a large dam with a capacity of 315 million gallons, and we are fully compliant with our WDNR Dam Operator permit.

Thank you for interest in this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me with addition questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin L. Shafer".

Kevin L. Shafer, P.E.
Executive Director