

Clogged, undersized storm drains major culprit on - Herald-Times (Bloomington, IN) - June 10, 2008

June 10, 2008 | Herald-Times (Bloomington, IN) | Sarah Morin 331-4363 | smorin@heraldt.com

The city's stormwater system that was updated and expanded in 2000 likely would have prevented the standing water Wednesday at the intersection of Kirkwood and Dunn, had the rush of rainfall been able to enter the culvert.

That's the assessment of City of Bloomington Utilities, which gave an update Monday to the utilities service board.

Street inlets clogged with debris were a culprit, blocking water from draining into the system where it belongs, rather than sloshing on the streets.

Knowing this, inlets throughout the city were checked and cleared Monday to help stop another back-up in preparation for more severe storms coming this way, utilities director Patrick Murphy said.

Murphy requested more information following the flash flood and the knee- to waist-high water at the Kirkwood and Dunn intersection where a \$2.8 million project called the **Big Dig** upgraded a portion of the city's aging stormwater system. More inlets were also placed along Kirkwood Avenue.

An outside consultant who monitors flow meters and tipping buckets installed in the city's stormwater system found that the amount of rain dropped Wednesday was equivalent to a 25-year-storm.

The **Big Dig** was built to handle a 100-year-storm.

But the collection system, Murphy said, is sized for 10-year events and overloaded quickly, unable to accommodate the volume.

ADS Environmental Service also reported back that the ground was already saturated by the time the flash flood hit. And when it hit, it hit hard.

ADS discovered that within 10 minutes — from 4:50 to 5 p.m. — one inch of rain pelted the area.

Murphy called it "the straw that broke the camel's back."

Future stormwater projects are planned west of Kirkwood, about 2,500 feet downstream to provide a uniformity in expanded capacity.

"The grand plan, of course, is to complete the renovation of all that culvert," said Mike Bengston, assistant director of engineering.

The city's water and wastewater systems, Murphy said, were unaffected by Wednesday's storms.

Pre- vs. post-Big Dig

Measurements of the new, larger underground stormwater culverts with greater capacity that were installed in 2000:

WHERE: Jordan River tunnel under Chipotle (previously McDonald's) and behind Trinity Church.

THEN: 16 feet by 5 feet, 9 inches.

NOW: 23 feet by 4 feet, 9 inches at the walls and 5 feet at the center.

WHERE: Jordan River Tunnel from the intersection of Dunn Street and the east/west alley north of Kirkwood to the Linnemeier building (422 E. Kirkwood Ave.; Blast Off Balloons is one of the businesses there).

THEN: 17 feet by 5 feet at the center.

NOW: 22 feet by 4 feet, 9 inches.

NOTE: The section of culvert under the Linnemeier building was not replaced; replacement would require razing the building.

SOURCE: CITY OF BLOOMINGTON UTILITIES

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