



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
SUITE 102
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

ZACHARY PARKER
COUNCILMEMBER, WARD 5

COMMITTEE MEMBER
Facilities and Family Services
Health
Hospital and Health Equity
Housing
Transportation and the Environment

August 25, 2023

Ward 5 neighbors,

I am writing to update you about the flash flooding that occurred in Ward 5 on August 14, 2023. I want to explain shortcomings I have identified in the District's preparation for and response to this event, to explain what steps are being taken to address those shortcomings, and to lay out additional responses I am requesting. To establish context for those assessments, I provide a brief overview of the impact of the flooding on our community and the steps my team and I have taken in the last 11 days.

Impact

Numerous communities across Ward 5 experienced flooding after the August 14, 2023 rainfall, with areas surrounding Rhode Island Ave N.E. and Mt. Olivet Road N.E. most impacted. The flooding that occurred on the 600 and 700 blocks of Rhode Island Avenue N.E. tragically resulted in the deaths of ten dogs and the injury of an employee at the District Dogs facility located at 680 Rhode Island Avenue N.E. Additionally, several residents were rescued from vehicles that were immobilized on Rhode Island Avenue. Flooding and sewage backflow damaged at least two churches in Ward 5: Greater Mount Calvary Holy Church (located at 610 Rhode Island Avenue N.E.) and Bethesda Baptist Church (located at 1808 Capitol Ave N.E.). Flooding also impacted several private residences on W Street N.E. and Adams Street N.E.

Investigation and Response

In the days since August 14, I have requested information from and met with the leaders of agencies with primary responsibility for emergency preparedness, flood mitigation, and emergency response, including: D.C. Water; the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE); the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA); the Office of Unified Communications (OUC); the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS); and the Department of Buildings (DOB). I have also met with representatives of Greater Mount Calvary Holy Church, Bethesda Baptist Church, as well as the families who lost cherished pets in this incident. My team has also been in touch directly with residents of Edgewood and Eckington whose homes experienced flooding.

I had an extensive conversation with Fire and EMS Chief Donnelly on August 14 regarding his team's response and the scale of damage at the 680 Rhode Island Ave District Dogs location. Members of Fire Engine 12 self-dispatched to the flooding on Rhode Island Avenue when they were returning from another call and recognized the dangerous situation unfolding.

On Friday, August 19, 2023, I met with OUC Director McGaffin to discuss reported errors with dispatch during the August 14th response. Per my request, OUC released transcripts of the 911 calls requesting help at District Dogs (see enclosure). I appreciate the timeliness of Director McGaffin's responses to my inquiries.

I met with D.C. Water on Thursday, August 24, 2023. D.C. Water responded thoroughly to my questions, and I am satisfied that the D.C. Water infrastructure available for use on August 14, 2023 performed as designed (see enclosure). The [First Street Tunnel Project](#), completed in October 2016, likely prevented catastrophic flooding that Bloomingdale previously experienced in storms like this, and the catch basins on Rhode Island Avenue N.E. and Mt. Olivet Road N.E. were reportedly not compromised. In the last few days, the City Administrator released a [report](#) from the D.C. Flood Task Force, which is co-chaired by D.C. Water and DOEE, detailing a number of critical steps the District is planning to mitigate and prevent flooding.

I met with DOB representatives on Thursday, August 24, 2023 to discuss the agency's process for issuing permits and certificates of occupancy to businesses in flood-prone areas. Since the 600 and 700 blocks of Rhode Island Avenue N.E. and the 1100 block of Mt. Olivet Road N.E. are not designated federally as flood zones, current laws and regulations do not require DOB to prospectively deny certificates of occupancy in areas susceptible to internal flooding; however, in 2022 the Council [enacted legislation](#) proposed by the Mayor to give DOEE the authority to establish flood hazard locations and require flood insurance as a condition of a certificate of occupancy in those locations. In the wake of the flood, DOB has placarded the ground flood unit of 680 Rhode Island Ave N.E. as dangerous due to flooding conditions, which prevents anyone from entering the facility except for the owner and contractors working to remediate damage. DOB is evaluating what adjustments it can make to ensure the safety of future occupants of 680 Rhode Island Avenue N.E. and similar locations.

HSEMA is preparing an incident report that will reflect the executive branch's review of these events. I will share what I can from that report when it becomes available.

I am actively seeking financial assistance for neighbors severely impacted by flooding as a result of rainfall on August 14th, specifically Bethesda Baptist Church and Greater Mount Calvary Holy Church. I have made requests of D.C. Water and the Mayor's office and continue to believe that more must be done to support neighbors that face damage annually.

Shortcomings and Solutions

The District lacks a comprehensive strategy to reduce the cumulative environmental burdens placed on Wards 5, 7, and 8. Communities in Ward 5 experience (along with those in Wards 7 and 8) [severe cumulative environmental burdens and injustices](#) compared to other parts of the city. Those burdens include the concentration of industrial land, impervious surfaces, and large arterial roads that make flooding like we experienced on August 14, 2023 more likely and more dangerous.

Solution: This fall, I will introduce legislation that will prevent District agencies from taking actions that impose new environmental injustices on overburdened communities.

Rhode Island Avenue has experienced significant internal flooding on numerous occasions, but District agencies lacked operational awareness of that context. While the flooding experienced on August 14, 2023 was severe, it was not unprecedented. Custodians at Greater Mount Calvary Church have reported flooding since the church moved to Rhode Island Avenue in 1991. On September 10, 2020, rainfall resulted in a flash flood that reached [nearly identical levels](#) as [those experienced on August 14, 2023](#). And on [three occasions](#) during the summer of 2022, Rhode Island Avenue flooded to levels that caused floodwater to breach District Dogs.

Solutions: DOEE is already working on an integrated flood model that will map parts of the city prone to interior flooding. This effort is approximately a year from completion but will provide the District with a valuable tool that can reliably inform emergency planning, emergency response, and the regulation of private development. I am also exploring legislation that will require greater scrutiny of businesses attempting to locate in flood-prone areas.

Stormwater runoff capacity was insufficient. D.C. Water’s Northeast Boundary Tunnel will add 90 million gallons of capacity to our sewage and wastewater system in advance of a 2025 deadline; however, the project has yet to be commissioned and was not in operation when the flooding occurred. It was not feasible for the tunnel to have been placed online temporarily in advance of this storm. The tunnel is designed to absorb rainfall from a “15-year storm,” which is a term of art used to describe a storm that has a 7 percent chance of occurring any year. Because of climate change, the District is now experiencing “15-year storms” every 2-3 years. The Northeast Boundary Tunnel will reduce but not eliminate the risk of flooding on Rhode Island Avenue and Mt. Olivet Road N.E.

Solutions: D.C. Water is expecting to commission the Northeast Boundary Tunnel on September 30th, 2023; however, that facility will not fully protect Ward 5 neighborhoods from storms as or more severe as the August 14, 2023 storm. The D.C. Flood Task Force Report identifies [additional flood prevention infrastructure](#) needed at Rhode Island Avenue and Mt. Olivet Road—projects that should be prioritized by Mayor Bowser and my colleagues on the D.C. Council in the upcoming budget cycle. The flooding experienced is an additional reason for the Department of Transportation (DDOT) to invest in the Rhode Island Avenue corridor, which--in addition to being inaccessible and unsafe—is a large, impermeable surface that contributes to flash floods. Side streets in Edgewood, Eckington, Trinidad, and other flood-prone areas of Ward 5 should also be prioritized for bioswale installations.

The Office of Unified Communications, the agency that runs our 911 system, and Fire and EMS lacked protocol and a dispatch code for a flood rescue in a building. The 911 calls requesting emergency assistance at District Dogs did not result in the timely and effective dispatch of emergency responders in part because there was no system in place to communicate this form of dispatch. While Engine 12’s self-deployment and quick action may have saved several drivers from injury or death, there was insufficient awareness of the need to assist a business that was visibly flooded at a time of the day when it should have been presumed to be occupied.

Solutions: OUC and FEMS are working on a protocol and system code so that there is a clear procedure for dispatching a building flood rescue. In partnership with my colleagues on the D.C. Council, I will conduct oversight to ensure that this system is in place as soon as possible. I will also help inform residents and businesses of [Smart 911](#)—a feature that is [already integrated into DC’s 911 system](#). Adding household or business information to this resource can provide responders with critical context about a location and associate multiple phone numbers—including out of state cell phone numbers—with a business or household.

The Office of Unified Communications is still recovering from years of mismanagement and underinvestment. OUC has had well-documented performance issues for many years. I have confidence that Director McGaffin has already taken numerous steps to turn the agency around, including improving training and accountability for staff; addressing serious staffing shortages; transitioning OUC to the PowerPhone dispatching system that will allow for more seamless communication with the Metropolitan Police Department and FEMS; and addressing other legacy decisions that have impaired the agency’s performance.

Solution: I will support efforts to improve recruitment of OUC employees and continue to conduct oversight of OUC to ensure that Director McGaffin follows through on her vision of restoring the agency.

The District lacked ways to warn residents of flash flooding on Rhode Island Avenue and Mt. Olivet Road, N.E. In other flood-prone parts of the city, including Rhode Island Avenue N.W., the District has installed flood warning beacons that alert residents when water is detected at prescribed levels. No such beacons were in place in the two areas that experienced severe flooding on August 14.

Solution: I have requested that the District Department of Transportation install flood beacons on Rhode Island Avenue N.E. and Mt. Olivet Road N.E. Additionally, I’ve requested monitoring at both locations during flash flood warnings as D.C. Water brings the water tunnel online.

Residents, businesses, and local institutions lack flood insurance. Standard insurance policies do not cover damage from floods, which puts the onus on residents, businesses, and institutions in the District to seek separate coverage. Unfortunately, many do not and have to pay out of pocket for damage caused by events like the August 14 storm.

Solutions: The D.C. Flood Task Force has [already identified](#) a need to improve outreach about flood insurance and explore ways to reduce the cost of procuring it. The DC Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking is tasked with implementing most of those solutions, and I will coordinate with my D.C. Council colleagues to conduct oversight so that timely progress is made on these priorities.

The District does not provide adequate financial assistance to help property owners invest in flood resilience or to ease the financial burden of damage caused by floods. The Department of Energy and the Environment has a pilot program called [FloodSmart Homes](#) that uses federal dollars to conduct a free flood resilience assessment for District homeowners. In

fiscal year 2023, this program is also equipped with local dollars to fund at no or minimal cost the recommended upgrades identified; however, no local funds were appropriated for FloodSmart Homes in the fiscal year 2024 budget. After flooding that occurred in Bloomingdale, Edgewood, and Eckington on September 10, 2020, D.C. Water provided up to \$11,000 of assistance to households impacted; however, no such program has been announced for those impacted by the August 14, 2023 flood.

Solutions: I will request that Mayor Bowser reprogram local funds to ensure that DOEE's FloodSmart Homes program can continue to support residents seeking to improve the flood resilience of their homes. I have also requested that D.C. Water make available financial assistance to residents and institutions impacted by the flooding that occurred.

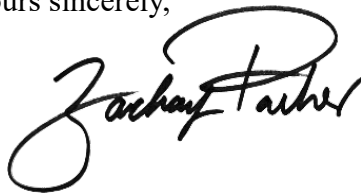
The District needs to take responsibility for its mistakes and respond to tragedies with transparency. It is unfortunate that transcripts of 911 calls and emergency dispatches are not released as a matter of course when there has been a significant incident where the performance of District agencies is questioned. Embracing accountability is not a game of "gotcha;" it is part of delivering the level of service that District residents expect and deserve.

Solution: I am exploring legislation to require OUC, FEMS, and other agencies to proactively produce certain records in the wake of significant safety incidents.

Conclusion

My deepest sympathies go out to the individuals, households, and institutions that were traumatized and impacted in this event. I appreciate and am grateful for the heroic actions of many District and D.C. Water employees who responded to this flooding and who performed admirably in the face of a challenging and fast-moving emergency. I firmly believe that the best way to honor those victimized by this event and those who responded to it is to acknowledge where we could have done better and work to get it right. I am committed to the short and long-term solutions that will help reduce the threat and impact of internal flooding events across the District, and I look forward to working with the Mayor, the executive agencies that report to her, D.C. Water, and my colleagues on the D.C. Council on the action items identified above.

Yours sincerely,



Zachary Parker
Ward 5 Councilmember

Enclosures:

- A. Correspondence to District agencies from Councilmember Parker
- B. Office of Unified Communications 911 Call Transcripts
- C. Response from D.C. Water



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ZACHARY PARKER
COUNCILMEMBER, WARD 5

COMMITTEE MEMBER
Facilities and Family Services
Health
Hospital and Health Equity
Housing
Transportation and the Environment

August 15, 2023

Heather McGaffin
Director, Office of Unified Communications
2720 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue, SE,
Washington, DC 20032

VIA EMAIL

Director McGaffin,

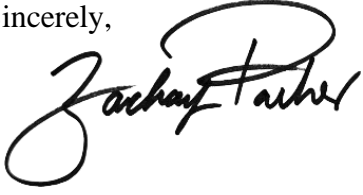
I am writing to request information relating to the August 14, 2023 flash flood on the 600 block of Rhode Island Avenue, N.E. that tragically resulted in the injury of an employee and the deaths of several dogs at District Dogs, a pet care facility located there. I would like to understand the precise timeline of events that occurred yesterday to ensure that we are better prepared to respond effectively in the future.

Accordingly, I am requesting that the Office of Unified Communications provide by August 24, 2023 a written response to this letter or an in-person briefing for me and my team detailing:

- The time of 911 or 311 calls requesting assistance in relation to the August 14, 2023 flash flood on Rhode Island Avenue N.E.;
- The time that D.C. Fire or EMS (FEMS) units were dispatched in response;
- The time that FEMS units arrived on scene;
- The time that FEMS units began assisting the evacuation of District Dogs; and
- The time and substance of communications between OUC and FEMS regarding the response to calls from District Dogs, its employees, or other individuals on scene.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please contact my Deputy Chief of Staff, Conor Shaw, at cshaw@dccouncil.gov or 202-724-8172 to coordinate next steps. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zachary Parker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "Z".

Zachary Parker
Ward 5 Councilmember

cc: Councilmember Brooke Pinto, Chair of the Committee on the Judiciary and
Public Safety



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COMMITTEE MEMBER
Facilities and Family Services
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August 15, 2023

John A. Donnelly, Sr.
Fire & EMS Chief
2000 14th Street, NW, 5th Floor,
Washington, DC 20009

VIA EMAIL

Chief Donnelly,

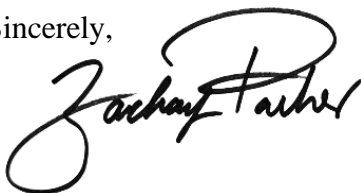
I am writing to request information relating to the August 14, 2023 flash flood on the 600 block of Rhode Island Avenue, N.E. that tragically resulted in the injury of an employee and the deaths of several dogs at District Dogs, a pet care facility located there. I want to express my deep appreciation for D.C. Fire and EMS (FEMS)'s response yesterday, which undoubtedly saved many lives. At the same time, residents have expressed some concerns about aspects of the city's emergency response, and I would like to understand the precise timeline of events that occurred yesterday to ensure that we are better prepared to respond to similar events in the future.

Accordingly, I am requesting that D.C. Fire and EMS (FEMS) provide by August 24, 2023 a written response to this letter or an in-person briefing for me and my team detailing:

- The time that FEMS units were dispatched by OUC in response to calls for assistance on Rhode Island Avenue, N.E.;
- The time that FEMS units arrived on scene;
- The time that FEMS units began assisting the evacuation of District Dogs; and
- The time and substance of communications between FEMS and the Office of Unified Communications regarding the response to calls from District Dogs, its employees, or other individuals on scene.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please contact my Deputy Chief of Staff, Conor Shaw, at cshaw@dccouncil.gov or 202-724-8172 to coordinate next steps. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

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Ward 5 Councilmember

cc: Councilmember Brooke Pinto, Chair of the Committee on the Judiciary and
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COUNCILMEMBER, WARD 5

COMMITTEE MEMBER
Facilities and Family Services
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Housing
Transportation and the Environment

August 15, 2023

David Gadis
Chief Executive Officer and General Manager
D.C. Water
1385 Canal Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Gadis,

I am writing to request information relating to the August 14, 2023 flash flood on the 600 block of Rhode Island Avenue, N.E. that tragically resulted in the injury of an employee and the deaths of several dogs at District Dogs, a pet care facility located there. I understand that severe weather events like the heavy rainfall experienced at this location are likely to be more frequent because of climate change that we have a collective responsibility to address and prepare for. At the same time, in locations such as this, where there is a known risk of flooding, residents deserve to know what precautions are taken when heavy rain is forecast and whether the long-term efforts underway to address flooding and sewage overflow offer sufficient protection.

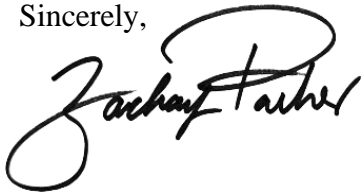
Accordingly, I am requesting that D.C. Water provide by August 24, 2023 a written response to this letter or an in-person briefing for me and my team that addresses the following questions:

- In D.C. Water's assessment, why did the rainfall on August 14, 2023, overwhelm the storm drain and sewage system on Rhode Island Avenue, N.E.?
- On what date prior to August 14, 2023 did D.C. Water last clear the catch basins in the storm drains on Rhode Island Avenue, N.E.?
- Were any of the storm drains on Rhode Island Avenue blocked by construction materials or debris on August 14, 2023?
- What steps does D.C. Water take to ensure drainage systems at areas susceptible to flooding when heavy rain is forecast?

- In a social media post responding to this incident, D.C. Water has represented that “[t]he Northeast Boundary Tunnel . . . will help mitigate flooding at a number of areas like this with chronic flooding.” When do you anticipate that this tunnel will be operational?
- D.C. Water also represented that the Northeast Boundary Tunnel is designed for a “15 year storm.” Please explain how much rainfall a “15 year storm” delivers and whether the rainfall experienced on August 14, 2023; August 10, 2022; August 4, 2002; and July 17, 2022 exceeds or falls within the parameters of a “15 year storm.”
- What additional flood prevention or mitigation measures is D.C. Water implementing in Ward 5 to reduce the risk of life-threatening flooding at flood-prone locations like the 600 block of Rhode Island Avenue NE, the 1000 and 1100 blocks of Mt. Olivet Road NE, and the 100 block of Michigan Ave NE?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please contact my Deputy Chief of Staff, Conor Shaw, at cshaw@dccouncil.gov or 202-724-8172 to coordinate next steps. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Zachary Parker
Ward 5 Councilmember

cc: Councilmember Charles Allen, Chair of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment
Mousa Wone, Vice President, DC Clean Rivers Project, D.C. Water
Hadiyah S. Jordan, Senior Public Outreach Coordinator, DC Clean Rivers Project, D.C. Water



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COUNCILMEMBER, WARD 5

COMMITTEE MEMBER
Facilities and Family Services
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August 22, 2023

Richard Jackson
Acting Director
Department of Energy and Environment
1200 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

VIA EMAIL

Acting Director Jackson,

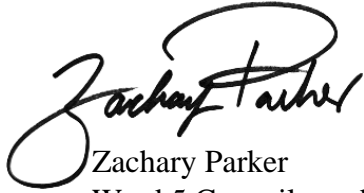
I am writing to request information relating to the August 14, 2023 flash flood on the 600 block of Rhode Island Avenue, N.E. that tragically resulted in the injury of an employee and the deaths of several dogs at District Dogs, a pet care facility located there.

Accordingly, I am requesting that the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) provide by August 31, 2023 a written response to this letter or an in-person briefing for my team and I detailing:

- What are the resilience plans for the District, especially flood mitigation in Ward 5?
- Is the location where District Dogs is located in the designated 100-year and/or 500-year floodplains? Why or why not?
- Do developments on the 600 block of Rhode Island Avenue NE have to comply with the Flood Hazard Rules or obtain any other sort of flood permits?
- Are development projects required to use the [Resilient Design Guidelines](#) when they design and construct projects in the city? Why or why not?
- What is the status of the rulemaking for the Flood Resilience Amendment Act of 2022?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please contact my Legislative Director Kendra Wiley, at kwiley@dccouncil.gov or 202-724-8192 to coordinate next steps. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zachary Parker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "Z".

Zachary Parker
Ward 5 Councilmember

cc: Councilmember Charles Allen, Chair of the Committee on Transportation and Environment

Director Tommy Wells, Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs



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ZACHARY PARKER
COUNCILMEMBER, WARD 5

COMMITTEE MEMBER
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Transportation and the Environment

August 15, 2023

Melissa Deas
Chief Resilience Officer
Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency
2720 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE,
Washington, DC 20032

VIA EMAIL

Melissa Deas,

I am writing to request information relating to the August 14, 2023 flash flood on the 600 block of Rhode Island Avenue, N.E. that tragically resulted in the injury of an employee and the deaths of several dogs at District Dogs, a pet care facility located there as well as other parts of Ward 5 that have flooded in recent weeks. I want to express my deep appreciation for HSEMA's response yesterday. I would like to understand the precise timeline of events that occurred yesterday to ensure that we are better prepared to respond to similar events in the future. Ward 5 residents and businesses are experiencing increasing flooding and damage to their properties.

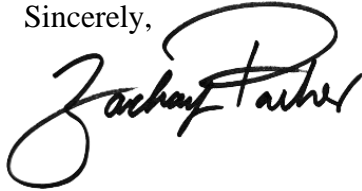
We reached out to D.C. Water to find out the project timeline and completion of the Northeast Boundary Tunnel project, the last time the basins on Rhode Island Avenue were cleared, and how much water the city's drainage systems are prepared to hold when heavy rain is forecasted.

Accordingly, I am requesting that the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA) provide by August 24, 2023 a written response to this letter or an in-person briefing for me and my team detailing:

- What are the resilience plans for the District especially flood mitigation in Ward 5 including, what proactive mitigation measures could be installed at these locations in the event of flash flooding?
- What are the plans to address flooding in parts of Ward 5 including Rhode Island Avenue, Mount Olivet and West Virginia, and Corcoran Street and Capitol Avenue?
- How are developers using the Resilient Design Guidelines when they design and construct projects in the city?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please contact my Legislative Director Kendra Wiley, at kwiley@dccouncil.gov or 202-724-8192 to coordinate next steps. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

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Zachary Parker
Ward 5 Councilmember

cc: Councilmember Brooke Pinto, Chair of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety

Director Tommy Wells, Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs

Position C-103

8/14/2023 1706 hours

Call Taker: What's the address of the emergency?

Caller: (Non-verbal...) Hi, so, ug, ug, there is a location of a dog daycare in NE, DC. 680 Rhode Island Ave. It's flooding horribly. The walls gave out.

Call Taker: What's the location again?

Caller: 680 Rhode Island Ave. It's facing Rhode Island Ave itself.

Call Taker: NE, NW?

Caller: Yes, NE, it's on the bottom floor of the building itself and not on the apartment side. Where are (non-verbal)...going now.

Call Taker: Are you inside the location?

Caller: No, but people are with the animals are inside the building that is flooding. I am the manager of the location and I am watching it from the camera. I am at home, but there are people inside there.

Call Taker: Sir, Let me ask you some questions. What is the name of the dog care?

Caller: District Dogs...(Caller talking in background..."you think in some water..."

Call Taker: You said, District, I sorry.

Caller: District Dogs

Call Taker: What's a call back number for you?

Caller: [REDACTED]

Call Taker: So where is the water coming in at?

Caller: All over, likes it's from the street. That area floods so bad all the time. It broke the wall. The whole building is going under water right now. Water was coming out through the walls and we saw the walls break down through the cameras and what's more that they have big glass windows facing the street. The cameras are not working anymore but we know people are in danger.

Call Taker: What is your last name?

Caller: [REDACTED].

Call Taker: Okay, we will have a unit dispatched out to the location. Call us back with any updates or if anything changes.

Position C-118

8/14/2023 1707 hours

CT: DC 911 What's the address of the emergency?

PG County with a transfer.

Caller: 680 Rhode Island Ave.

CT: Please repeat for me again and let me k know if it's NE or NW?

Caller: It's NE.

CT: Please say the whole address for me again just for confirmation.

Caller: 680 Rhode Island Ave, NE DC

CT: What is at that location? Is that a, um, apartment building, or?

Caller: It's a place of business. It's District Dogs.

CT: District Dogs? Okay. What happen there Ma'm?

Caller: So, I'm watching...I'm the Assistant Manager there and I am watching the cameras and the whole place is flooding and there people in there, animals in there and it's like the whole place is completely flooded.

CT: Okay, uh, flooding inside. Okay. Did you notice any flames or smoke?

Caller: No.

CT: Please don't hang up. Okay, does anyone seem trapped, Ma'm?

Caller: Let me see because they like got stuck when I was, I don't even think it will connect now. Looks like everything is collapsed now. Like the water flooded everything.

CT: Okay, I already sent the call. We sending it to the Fire department so they will be on there way.

Caller: (inaudible)

CT: Yes, Ma'm. Yes, Ma'm. So is the water coming from the door from the outside?

Caller: Yes, it came/coming/came from everywhere to be honest. The whole place it looks like a swimming pool right now. It's like the 3rd/4th time we flooded. This time it's terrible. The last I seen on the camera like the whole everything our gates and everything collapse from the water. The water was coming from everywhere. The walls collapsed.

CT: Was it from a storm the last time?

Caller: Yes.

CT: Okay, Okay. Help is coming, Ma'm. Can I get your name?

Caller: I'm [REDACTED]

CT: Yes, Ma'm. And, the phone number you're calling from?

Caller: [REDACTED]

CT: Okay. Alright. Help is coming, Ma'm. Let me ask you this? Are you in communication with anyone that is there?

Caller: I can try to call them, but.

CT: Okay

I don't know...I'm just concerned that they...we have group chat, so this is how I found out...my General Manager is on leave so she had put in the group chat that they were flooded so that me made me check the cameras. I didn't think it was as serious as it was but no one else that's there at work right now is (inaudible) in the group chat and I am telling everyone in the group chat that the Fire Department and everybody is responding but the General Manager.

CT: Okay, Yes, Ma'm.

Caller: (inaudible)

CT: I'm looking at my screen and looks like other people have called also so we have help going.

Caller: (inaudible) It's so scary.

CT: Yes, Ma'm.

Caller: I'm going to try...Am I able to hang up with you, now? I'm going to try to reach out to one of them. (inaudible)

CT: Well, let me...let me I need you to confirm the building number...say the address again please.

Caller: 680 Rhode Island Ave and place of business is District Dogs. It's not the apartment building it's the business called District Dogs and sitting at end corner of the street.

CT: I'm not...So, it's on the corner of and Rhode Island Ave and what is the cross street, is it 5th Street, 8th Street?

Caller: As soon as you come under that bridge. It's sitting right there on the corner.

CT: Okay]

Caller: I am not sure of the cross street.

CT: I've got it. Help is coming.

Caller: Thank you so much.

CT: So are you in Maryland.

Caller: Yes, Ma'm. I am in Maryland. I was off today.

CT: Okay Alright, help is coming, Ma'm, okay. And just like I said looks like others have called too... and if anything changes before responders get there just call us back.

Caller: Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Bye Bye

CT: Bye Bye

Position C-103

8/14/2023 1706 hours

Call from Inside District Dogs

Calltaker (CT): DC911, What's the location of the emergency?

Caller: We're at 680 Rhode Island Ave, Northwest. District Dogs. Northeast, Northeast, I'm sorry, I'm sorry northeast.

CT: Repeat the address for me.

Caller: Six eight zero Rhode Island Avenue, Northeast at District Dogs.

CT: What's the emergency?

Caller: We are trapped in water. We are trapped in water that is above our heads. There are six people trapped in the water and we have no way out and nothing [inaudible].

Caller: We need the water rescue immediately

CT: stay on the line

Caller: There are six or seven people in here

CT: How high is the water?

Caller: It's about 12 feet high.

CT: Okay.

CT: Stay on the line. The call has been sent out for dispatch, okay. We have help coming out. Just to verify one more time at 680 Rhode Island Avenue. Northeast.

Caller: yes,

CT: District Dogs

Caller, yes, come to District Dogs, that address goes to a lot of places. They come to other places [inaudible]

CT: you said you can't get out

Caller: no, we can't get out

CT: inside the building. How many people are trapped?

Caller: it's about seven people. We have a man in the water who can't hold on to anything and we haven't heard anything back from him in a while. We're afraid he might not be with us anymore.

CT: okay, okay.

Caller: can someone call for that man and see if he's out there. [calling for the man]

CT: okay, we have help being dispatched out to that location. Are you guys on the main level or the basement?

Caller: it's only one level. The main level

CT: we have them responding out to 680 Rhode Island Avenue, Northeast to District Dogs.

Caller: yes, water rescue

CT: Water rescue. Yes, I got you. Stay on the line.

CT: okay, just stay on the line with me. alright

Caller: alright, we're still here.

CT: stay on the line with me.

Caller: the water is going down a little bit.

CT: okay, just stay on the line with me. Try and remain calm, help is on the way. Hold on.

Caller: (to other people in the room). Are you still in the hallway.

CT: I'm still here, okay. Just let me know when you hear the responders.

Caller: okay.

CT: [inaudible]

CT: do you know of any other injuries that I should be aware of so I can let the responders know?

Caller: Does anybody have any injuries or hurt. No. we just have the guy we haven't heard from in a while. We have dogs trapped in the backroom.

CT: you also have dogs trapped. Just let me know when you hear the responders. I'm going to stay on the line with you.

CT: okay.

CT: do you hear anything yet, it's showing they're on scene.

CT: They're probably just trying to get to you guys.

CT: You still there with me?

CT: Hello.

Caller: The water is starting to come down now.

CT: it's starting to go down? Okay, the responders are on scene. Just let me know when you're with the responders. I'm going to stay on the line with you. Keep me updated.

Caller: Hello

CT: I'm still here.

Caller: ok. we're grabbing some dogs out the back door and loading up

CT: okay you said the water is starting to go down?

Caller: no

CT: okay.

CT: and, hello.

Caller: yes, we're here.

CT: Have you been able to make contact with that person you couldn't hear anything from.

Caller: the water went down a little bit and he went out there to see if the man is still out there.

CT: okay. How high would you say the water is now.

Caller: it went down a couple of feet, but it's still above our head. We're standing on a cabinet.

CT: okay, I got you.

Caller: in here in here. [inaudible]

CT: Hello. Is there anyone still there?

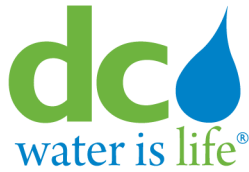
Caller: Hello

Call taker: Yes

Caller: They're here. Should I hang up now?

CT: You can hang up as long as you're with the responders. Yes, ma'am.

**Call is disconnected.



David L. Gadis, Chief Executive Officer

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY | 1385 CANAL STREET, SE | WASHINGTON, DC 20003

August 24, 2023

Councilmember Zachary Parker
Council of the District of Columbia
The John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 302
Washington, DC 20004

SUBJECT: August 14, 2023, Flash Flood
600 Block Rhode Island Avenue, NE

Dear Councilmember Parker:

This is in response to your letter of August 15, 2023, which identified a series of questions regarding the severe and tragic flooding that occurred in the 600 Block of Rhode Island Avenue, NE on August 14, 2023. Our responses are provided below.

Question 1: In D.C. Water’s assessment, why did the rainfall on August 14, 2023, overwhelm the storm drain and sewage system on Rhode Island Avenue, N.E.?

Response:

The 600 Block of Rhode Island Avenue, NE is in the Northeast Boundary drainage area and was constructed as a combined sewer by the United States Federal Government in the late 1800's. It did not have the carrying capacity required for the storm experienced on August 14, 2023.

Question 2: On what date prior to August 14, 2023, did D.C. Water last clear the catch basins in the storm drains on Rhode Island Avenue, N.E.?

Response:

The catch basins in the area of construction that could be impacted by construction debris were last inspected on August 11, 2023. Other catch basins within this area were cleaned October and December 2022 and found to be less than 25% full.

Question 3: Were any of the storm drains on Rhode Island Avenue blocked by construction materials or debris on August 14, 2023?

Response:

As evidenced by the rapid dissipation of the surcharged area when the rain subsided, the catch basin inlet

flows were not impeded.

Question 4: What steps does D.C. Water take to ensure drainage systems at areas susceptible to flooding when heavy rain is forecast?

Response:

When a large intense storm (hurricane or remnants of one) is projected several days out, DC Water’s primary focus is ensuring availability of the storm and sewer pump stations, SCADA functions, and the inflatable CSO dams. Crews are pre staged at Bryant Street and Main Pump Station to provide a quick response, known problem underpasses are inspected, and construction contractors under DC Water are notified to remove storm drain guards (gutter buddies) to permit free flow. For other storms, DC Water Command Center dispatches crews to reported flooding areas.

Question 5: In a social media post responding to this incident, D.C. Water has represented that “[t]he Northeast Boundary Tunnel. will help mitigate flooding at a number of areas like this with chronic flooding.” When do you anticipate that this tunnel will be operational?

Response:

The tunnels are being constructed as part of the Consent Decree for Water Quality. The Anacostia leg of the tunnels are required to be complete in 2025. Considering the additional benefits to the City to mitigate flooding, DC Water has worked with the contractor to expedite completion. While not a contractual date, the current anticipated date to be able to introduce water into the North East Boundary Tunnel (NEBT) is September 30th, 2023.

Question 6: D.C. Water also represented that the Northeast Boundary Tunnel is designed for a “15 year storm.” Please explain how much rainfall a “15 year storm” delivers and whether the rainfall experienced on August 14, 2023; August 10, 2022; August 4, 2002; and July 17, 2022, exceeds or falls within the parameters of a “15 year storm.”

Response:

NOAA publishes data for 1,2,5,10,25,50,100,200, 500 and 1,000 -year storms. The requested information provided below is a result of interpolation between 10 and 25 year storms.

**NOAA 15-Year Average Recurrence Interval
Storm Data**

Duration	Inches of Rainfall
5-min	0.59
10-min	0.95
15-min	1.20
30-min	1.75
60-min	2.31

2-hr	2.74
3-hr	2.96
6-hr	3.63
12-hr	4.49
24-hr	5.49

Rainfall is rarely uniformly distributed in an area and the closest available data from rain gauges are an estimate for areas away from the location of the rain gauge.

Rainfall Characterization for Requested Storms

Date	Inches of Rainfall	Approximate Duration for Recurrence Interval Assessment	NOAA Average Recurrence Interval	DC Water Rain Gage Used for Analysis	Comparison to 15-Year Storm
July 16, 2022	0.84	30-min	Less than 1 year	Brentwood Reservoir	<u>Less</u> severe than 15-year storm
Aug 4, 2022	1.0	30-min	~ 1 year	Bryant Street Pumping Station	
Aug 10, 2022	1.7	30-min	~12 year	Brentwood Reservoir	
Aug 14, 2023	1.85	30-min	~20 year	Brentwood Reservoir	<u>More</u> severe than 15-year storm

Question 7: What additional flood prevention or mitigation measures is D.C. Water implementing in Ward 5 to reduce the risk of life-threatening flooding at flood-prone locations like the 600 block of Rhode Island Avenue NE, the 1000 and 1100 blocks of Mt. Olivet Road NE, and the 100 block of Michigan Ave NE?

Response:

The North East Boundary Tunnel is part of the Anacostia Tunnel System designed for Water Quality in the Anacostia. The additional capacity provided by this tunnel will help alleviate flooding along its route up to a 15 Year storm. The areas where flooding will be mitigated include;

- Mt Olivet Road & West Virginia, NE (1000 and 1100 blocks of Mt. Olivet Road NE)
- Rhode Island Ave under Metro Bridge (600 block Rhode Island Ave NE)
- Rhode Island Ave and 4th St, NE
- Rhode Island Ave and T St NW
- Rhode Island Ave and First Street St NW
- First and V St, Adams and Flagler St, NW (Bloomingdale/LeDroit Park)
- 6th and R S, NW

The North East Boundary Tunnel is not designed to impact the 100 Block of Michigan Ave NE.

August 14, 2023 Flash Flood, 600 Block Rhode Island Ave, NE

August 24, 2023

Page 4 of 4

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information. We are available to meet with you and your staff to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. L. Gadis", with a stylized flourish at the end.

David L. Gadis

Chief Executive Officer and General Manager

c: Councilmember Charles Allen, Chair of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment
Mousa Wone, Vice President, DC Clean Rivers Project, D.C. Water