COMMUNICATION CONSULTANTS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PRACTICES: AN INTERNSHIP WITH ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT, INC.

by Kelly Walsh

Through examining my role and experiences as an intern at Environmental Quality Management, Inc., an environmental consulting company in Cincinnati, Ohio, I begin to explore themes of audience and power. My first three chapters provide an overview of the company, descriptions of the clients I worked for and their projects I worked on, and detailed information about two major projects that I took the lead on. These chapters offer a frame of reference for the final chapter that looks at how communication consultants fit into public participation practices for environmental projects. I then propose a communication model that shows how communication consultants can leverage the public’s role to play a more integral part when participating in decision-making processes for environmental projects.
Table of Contents

List of Tables ................................................................. iv

List of Figures ................................................................. v

Chapter 1: Introduction and General Description of Internship at EQ ......................... 1
  Company Description ....................................................... 1
  Community Relations Department ...................................... 2
  Descriptions of Clients Served in Community Relations Department .................. 3
  My Role at EQ .................................................................. 7

Chapter 2: Detailed Description of Internship Projects .......................................... 9
  Dayton Power & Light (DP&L) ............................................... 10
  INEOS Public Advisory Group (PAG) .................................... 11
  Metropolitan Sewer District’s (MSD) Sewer Backup Response Program .............. 12
  MSD Environmental Programs ............................................ 14
  Chapter 2 Conclusion .......................................................... 23

Chapter 3: Detailed Description of MSD Newsletters and the Green Roof Loan Program Fact Sheet ................................................................. 25
  Part 1: MSD Newsletter ....................................................... 25
  Part 2: Green Roof Loan Program fact sheet ...................................... 30
  Chapter 3 Conclusion .......................................................... 33

Chapter 4: Environmental Communications and Consulting ................................ 34
  Environmental Communications and Audience ........................................... 36
  Attitudes Toward Public Involvement ............................................. 37
  Communications Consulting and Audience ......................................... 38
  Lick Run Alternative and Audience .............................................. 40
  Audience Outreach and the Lick Run Alternative ...................................... 41
  Public Participation and the Lick Run Alternative ....................................... 42
  Recap of Lick Run Workshops and Community Relations Activities ............... 43
  Community Input at Community Design Workshops and Town Hall Meetings ...... 44
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Model</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Communication Model</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 Conclusion / Looking Forward</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1: EQ Organization Chart</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2: Dayton Power &amp; Light Safety Logo Contest Flier</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3: SBU Brochure</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4: Project Groundwork Fact Sheet</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5: MSD Newsletter Front Page</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 6: Green Roof Loan Program Fact Sheet</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1: Pre-meeting tasks ................................................................. 21
Table 2: Day-of-meeting tasks ............................................................ 22
Table 3: Post-meeting tasks ................................................................. 23
**List of Figures**

Figure 1: Number of hours worked for each client ................................. 8  
Figure 2: Projects timeline ................................................................. 9  
Figure 3: Newsletter responsibilities .................................................. 27  
Figure 4: Newsletter work process ...................................................... 28  
Figure 5: Partial participation/pseudoparticipation model ....................... 49  
Figure 6: Lick Run Alternative communication model ............................ 50  
Figure 7: Proposed Lick Run Alternative communication model ............... 53
Chapter 1: Introduction and Description of Internship at EQ

My environmental communications internship at Environmental Quality Management, Inc. (EQ) began on January 10, 2011 and ended on August 21, 2011 (with the completion of 560 required hours). I was hired as an EQ intern by Deb Leonard, the community relations manager. Throughout the work of my internship (and beyond), I have gained experience in consulting, professional and technical writing and communications, building and fostering professional relationships, and writing for different audiences. Projects such as developing fact sheets, organizing and setting up public meetings, developing marketing materials while defining consistency standards, and other community relations activities have provided first-hand experience in several communication arenas.

Company Description

Established in 1990, with headquarters in Cincinnati, EQ is an environmental consulting, engineering, remediation, and construction management company that primarily offers services in wastewater management, air emission regulations, compliance, and industrial hygiene. Clients served include those in both industrial and governmental sectors. An industrial client, for example, could be a manufacturing company, and consulting work for them may include monitoring air quality at their site by regularly collecting samples and compiling the data into a formal report. An example of a government project is collecting information—soil samples, site layout, etc.—from government-owned properties (former firing ranges, chemical storage facilities) and compiling reports for public review and comment.

EQ is organized by internal upper-level functions, such as finance, sales / marketing, and IT. On this same level are umbrella groups that serve outside clients. These include industrial hygiene, remediation / construction, and engineering and consulting. Branched under those are the environmental specialties that serve clients and include but aren’t limited to wastewater compliance, air compliance, auditing, emission measurements, and community relations (see Appendix 1 for a simplified version of EQ’s organization chart).
EQ has served a number of clients, both locally and nationally from the Cincinnati office. Some include:

- The Boeing Company
- AK Steel
- Whirlpool Corporation
- Wright Patterson Air Force Base
- Brown-Forman Corporation
- Procter and Gamble
- The Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati

**Community Relations Department**

I served as an intern in the community relations department, which consists of Deb Leonard and at the time, Ken Perica who worked on an as needed basis. Deb is a graduate of Miami’s IES program and has a background in journalism. She also has an Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) from the Public Relations Society of America, and she has worked on a number of projects where she serves as the liaison between corporations / businesses and the public. Deb is my immediate supervisor.

EQ’s community relations department provides several services to both government and industrial clients. Our department assists clients in communicating with the public about environmental, health, and safety issues. This assistance can ensure that clients fulfill legal public involvement obligations under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA); the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA); or Consent Decree Orders, or we can help a company reach out to the public about an environmental issue or project. The community relations department, like other departments or practice groups at EQ, works somewhat independently from EQ’s other practice groups. The work in the community relations department does not typically overlap with the work being done in other departments; we have our own set of clients, and our projects usually involve just the

________________________

1 Any words underlined within the text can be found in the glossary at the end of the report on page 62.
work of our team. For example, a group within EQ may be working on an air quality monitoring project for a client that has a community relations component; however, the community relations component may already be assigned to a different consulting agency because that particular client already has a working relationship with them. That’s not to say that the different specialty groups within EQ don’t promote each other’s services.

**Descriptions of Clients Served in the Community Relations Department**

In order to understand my work and how I fit into EQ, I first provide information about the clients and their main projects that were served through EQ’s Community Relations Department. Because EQ is a consulting firm, the majority of the work I did for the company was based on the work I completed for clients, who, in some way, are also my employers.

Since the time I have been at EQ, the community relations department has managed six different clients: the Alliance for Chemical Safety, Dayton Power and Light (DP&L), INEOS ABS, Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) Environmental Programs, MSD Office of Director (OOD), and MSD’s Sewer Backup response program (SBU). The list below offers descriptions of the clients along with the types of projects the community relations department has worked on for them. I later include more detail on how I came to fit into these projects.

- **The Alliance for Chemical Safety** (ACS) is a non-profit organization made up of community members, government agencies, and manufacturing facilities that focuses on understanding and communicating associated risks of stored, manufactured, and transported chemicals in the community. Their mission is to promote public understanding and involvement in chemical risk management. The group meets monthly to listen to a speaker or visit a site of interest. Deb is the organizer and facilitator of this group.

- **Dayton Power & Light** is a power utility that serves residents in West Central Ohio. The community relations department worked on three projects for the company. Two of the three projects were environmentally based (permit renewal and gypsum landfill construction project), while the third was in creating a safety communication plan, an effort to make safety programs at DP&L more uniform.
INEOS ABS is a plastics manufacturing company located in Addyston, Ohio. The company has gone through a number of ownership changes throughout the years and was most recently known as Lustran Polymers. Prior, the site was owned by LANXESS, Bayer, and Monsanto, among others. Through all the changes, however, plastics have been the main products.

EQ’s community relations department works with the company’s Public Advisory Group (PAG). The PAG is made up of area trustees, residents, and elected officials of nearby communities (Addyston, Miami Township, North Bend, Saylor Park). The group meets every other month to discuss plant news, health and safety issues, and community concerns and questions. Our department provides an agenda, facilitates the meetings, distributes past meeting minutes, and acts as a third party advisor. The PAG also puts out a newsletter that EQ manages and sends to citizens and businesses in the surrounding communities. The work the community relations department does for this client is not about managing the company’s image to the public, which is common assumption about the role of community relations. Rather, the community relations department advises and coordinates with the company on how to better communicate with the public and also encourages the public to ask questions and participate in the company’s community relations events.

The PAG has been important to INEOS because of the site’s environmental history and past relationship with area communities. In 2010, INEOS ABS, LANXESS, the U.S. EPA, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Ohio EPA entered a Consent Decree agreement in response to plant emissions and air pollution. The Consent Decree sites that the plant committed several violations of the Clean Air Act, including:

1. exceedances of emission limits for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) under the Ohio State Implementation Plan; (2) violations of regulations relating to required heat content of the flare and the facility’s Title V permit control efficiency requirement; and (3) violations of leak detection and repair (LDAR) regulations. The complaint also alleges Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know (EPCRA) and Comprehensive Environmental Response,
Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) violations for delayed reporting of releases of hazardous substances to the National Response Center and state and local authorities. (http://www2.epa.gov/enforcement/ineos-abs-usalanxess-clean-air-act-settlement).

These violations received national attention in part because of the EPA’s air toxics monitoring initiative that began looking more closely at air quality around schools. The Meredith Hitchens Elementary School, located across the street from the plastics manufacturing facility, closed because high levels of butadiene and acrylonitrile (two of the three [styrene is the other] main chemicals used in making INEOS’s plastics) were detected near the school. Since the school’s closing, the plant has been working to improve its relationship with the community while also taking steps to fulfill the Consent Decree agreement and become compliant with EPA regulations. The PAG, which was in existence well before the Consent Decree agreement, offered important community perspective and input about the issues surrounding the Consent Decree. The PAG provided INEOS a direct line of communication to community members and offered insight into what kind of information and actions the public wanted.

- **MSD’s Office of Director (OOD)** projects were focused on internal organization communication rather than to the outside public. I worked on MSD’s monthly newsletter, The Inside Story for about 11 months until MSD decided to produce the newsletter in-house with its communications department. EQ was responsible to help plan the content of the newsletter, write stories, layout the pages, and work with a professional printer to produce the final copy that would be distributed to all MSD employees.

- **MSD’s Sewer Backup Response Program (SBU)** provides assistance with cleanup and damage claims in the event of a sewer backup into a home. The SBU went through changes throughout the years (it used to be known as the Water-In-Basement program), and EQ assisted in creating and updating communication materials to reflect these changes.

- **MSD’s Environmental Programs** oversees various MSD environmental projects and partnerships. For this client, our community relations department planned public
meetings, wrote letters to community members, created and disseminated fact sheets, and provided communication and community relations support for projects. MSD’s Environmental Programs is largely focused on actions outlined within a Consent Decree agreement among MSD, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the State of Ohio. The Consent Decree is a response to combined sewer overflows (CSO) in Cincinnati; the city contributes about 14 billion gallons of CSOs a year. The Consent Decree mandates that Hamilton County reduce all CSOs by 85% and all sanitary sewer overflows (SSO) by 100% by 2018. Within the Consent Decree, MSD is required to eliminate 2 billion gallons of CSOs in the Lower Mill Creek Watershed, which is the main watershed in Cincinnati. This watershed includes eight sub-watersheds, covering several Cincinnati neighborhoods and surrounding townships and municipalities. The Lick Run Watershed, which is one of the sub-watersheds in Lower Mill Creek, is home to CSO #5, the largest sewer overflow point within Lower Mill Creek.

The Consent Decree requires that MSD reduce combined sewer overflows by implementing a 1.5-mile-long, 3-foot-diameter underground tunnel that would store excess flows during heavy rains. The CSOs in the storage tank would be treated at a wastewater facility and then discharged to the Mill Creek. However, MSD was granted the option to seek alternative solutions to the underground tunnel. After much research and study, community relations work, and communications with the Regulators, MSD proposed a solution called the Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy (LMCPR) to address the overflows. This approach is a mix of green and gray infrastructure projects and includes a large waterway restoration and urban revitalization project called the Lick Run Alternative. Because the sewer district was given freedom to seek an alternative solution, community input and dialogue have been essential.

The Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy project, especially the Lick Run Alternative portion, gained a lot of community and stakeholder support. However, while the project is really positive from an environmental standpoint, some community members oppose MSD’s proposal of the alternative solution. The Lick Run Alternative proposes a series of stormwater sewer separation projects throughout the Lick Run watershed that would
allow natural drainage and stormwater flows to be directed to the Mill Creek. The more
controversial aspect of the Lick Run Alternative is the proposal to daylight the Lick Run
Stream, which would ultimately resurface a portion of the stream that once flowed
through the city’s main corridor but had been diverted in underground pipes along Queen
City Avenue. The project also proposes to rebuild the area around the stream,
incorporating green infrastructure along with public amenities such as walkways, parks
spaces, benches, etc. The Lick Run Alternative project is centralized in South Fairmount,
a low-income neighborhood on Cincinnati’s West Side, and in order to develop the
infrastructure to support the project, some buildings, including homes and businesses,
would need to be demolished, relocated, or temporarily out of service. MSD has been
purchasing property in order to have the land to implement this project.

My Role at EQ

When I was hired as an intern at EQ, my role was to provide assistance in the community
relations department, working alongside Ken to assist Deb with projects. Specifically, the duties
were to include creating, updating, and modifying fact sheets, assisting with the MSD newsletter,
creating brochures for the SBU prevention program, and assisting with any other projects that
came through the community relations department. The description at the time that I started my
internship was somewhat vague because the projects vary with clients’ needs, and we often did
d not have advanced notice on assignments. However, the type of work that I was assigned fit my
skill set and training: researching, writing, editing, layout / design, and general communication
efforts.

Because I wasn’t able to start full time when I began my internship, I had to accumulate 560
hours, which is equivalent to 14 weeks of full-time employment, to fulfill the MTSC program’s
requirements. Given the hour calculations, my internship was officially complete on August 21. I
accumulated 574.5 hours at this point—there are a few more hours because I tracked through the
week’s end. Below, I show the hours I worked in relation to the projects I have worked on, based
on client. Note: Fewer hours than 574.5 were used for the chart because some hours I worked
were for clients outside of my department or fall under administrative tasks.
In the following pages of this report, I provide detailed descriptions of the major projects I worked on with EQ, the challenges I faced with some of the projects, and how I attempted to resolve those challenges. Chapter 2 includes detailed descriptions of select projects I worked on for each major client. Chapter 3 highlights my process of completing two major projects that had presented challenges and describes my problem-solving process. Chapter 4 explores the theme of agency by looking at public participation in environmental decision-making processes and the role of a consultant in that process. Chapter 4 also discusses obstacles I faced as an intern in a fairly large consulting firm. In this section, I attempt to provide advice to other student interns in similar positions on how to build client relations and also how to gain a foothold outside of your designated department.

**Note:** My report includes work that was completed beyond the date in which I fulfilled my MTSC hour requirement because many of the projects do not have a definitive end and because my learning process extends beyond the ending date.
Chapter 2: Detailed Description of Internship Projects

Chapter 2 describes select major projects I worked on while at EQ to provide readers an overview of the type of work I have completed. Highlighted projects include a safety logo contest poster for Dayton Power & Light; the INEOS Public Advisory Group Newsletter; MSD’s Sewer Backup Response Program (SBU) brochures; two fact sheets for MSD’s Environmental Programs; and communications support, document control, and public meeting coordination for MSD’s Environmental Programs. In describing my work on the projects in this chapter, I include my learning process about the relationship between the consultant and the client and begin to explore the theme of agency as it pertains to a consultant. Chapter 3 highlights additional projects I worked on but from the angle of providing detail about the work flow and the problem-solving process.

Please see Figure 2 below for a timeline of projects that are referred to throughout this report.

![Figure 2: Projects timeline](image-url)
**Dayton Power & Light (DP&L)**

I only worked on one project with Dayton Power & Light because the internal organization of their program shifted, and we lost them as a client.

**SAFETY LOGO CONTEST**

As I progressed through my internship, I began doing more page layout, design, and graphics work. One of the first design-based projects that I was given where I was completely free to develop the concept on my own was the creation of a poster / flier for Dayton Power & Light (DP&L). The company was launching its new safety campaign, and they needed a logo to represent it. The DP&L safety committee decided to hold a logo creation contest open to all employees.

This project seemed pretty straightforward. However, as I began to sketch out ideas and learn more about the safety campaign, I found out that DP&L had a weakened relationship with employees regarding safety, and this logo contest was in part an effort to bridge a gap that had developed between upper administration and company employees. With this information, I wanted the poster to be as inviting as possible while also getting the message across that the client wanted, which was input / help from employees.

Having different audiences for a communication piece is a situation that I encountered quite a bit in consulting. The audience that I would reach with my flier was different from the audience that would give the final approval for the use of the flier. Balancing these two audiences as a consultant is something I have given a lot of thought to and is something that I still struggle with as a communicator. I explore audience further in the final chapter of this report.

My strategy in creating the poster was to design an eye-catching front page that would appeal to readers while also representing DP&L in some way. I did this by using a large light bulb graphic with a colorful radiating background (the light bulb represented both an idea and electric power). I also made the prize element of the contest a large part of the front page because I thought it would help garner interest. The back page contained all of the smaller details of the contest (see Appendix 2 for the flier). I also created a few different designs, which was intentionally strategic on my part. I wanted the client to have the option to choose between a more conservative and a
more creative design. But I also wanted to show the client — and Deb — that I was a versatile designer.

This project was in some ways a turning point in my awareness of audience and my thinking about audience in working as a communications consultant. In this case, I knew what the client wanted and what the client wanted for the audience. But, I didn’t know the audience, nor did I have access to the audience. I had to find out as much as I could about the audience second hand and try to fill in the blanks the best I could. While this project was not a large one, it helped me begin an audience analysis process that I would use in later projects.

**INEOS Public Advisory Group (PAG)**

**NEWSLETTER**

As described in the first chapter, INEOS is a plastics manufacturing company that has been working to build its relationship with surrounding communities after being cited for violations to the Clean Air Act. The Public Advisory Group (PAG) has played a role in attempting to open communication lines, but not every concerned citizen is a part of this group. The INEOS newsletter is a tool that the PAG uses to reach out to these community members and inform them of important activities at the plant.

Around June of 2011, the PAG decided it was going to put out another issue of its newsletter. The last issue of the newsletter was in 2008 when the plant got a new site manager. The company did not really want to produce a new newsletter, but the PAG pushed it since the last issue was so long ago.

When I was first informed of the newsletter project, I was asked to produce a draft of the new issue. The story topics had been agreed upon by the PAG, and we had a general sketch of the newsletter layout, so my job was to create much of the content within the newsletter and layout the pages. Many of the stories were similar to past ones; they just needed updated, so I had to communicate with INEOS managers to fill in the needed information. A handful of stories, however, were completely new. My biggest challenge with these stories was that I knew very little about the client and their work, aside from the very basics. To understand the client better, I
researched INEOS on EPA’s Web site and on news sites. I also went through INEOS’s folder on EQ’s shared drive and read any additional newspaper articles, past newsletters, meeting minutes, letters, etc. that would help me gain general background knowledge about INEOS and the PAG.

In working on this project, I experienced what I both like and dislike about consulting work. There are constantly new topics and angles to tackle, which are great learning opportunities. On the other hand, a consultant is always indebted to the client, and the client ultimately has the final decision. For example, one of the stories I was assigned was an update of the Consent Decree activities. I thought it was a really important piece for the community to read because the information showed that the plant has taken considerable action to go above and beyond the basic requirements in the Consent Decree. The piece was cut, however, because the PAG decided that another story took priority over it. Being made up of citizens, the PAG should have the final say on issues like this. It was, however, a lesson to me about the level of control a consultant has.

**Metropolitan Sewer District’s (MSD) Sewer Backup Response Program**

**SBU BROCHURES**

The Sewer Backup Response Program (SBU) provides services to MSD customers who experience sewer backups on their properties. Work with this client has focused on communication needs regarding sewer backup issues, mostly focusing on educating customers about what sewer backups are and how the SBU works.

Toward the beginning of my internship, I was given a series of SBU brochures to review. The brochures had been distributed to customers several years ago, and MSD was in the process of updating them. There were three brochures, each focusing on a different angle of the SBU program. With the changes in the SBU program, MSD wanted to create updated brochures with less, simplified text.

I came on board as an intern while this project was already well in progress. A team of graphic design students from the University of Cincinnati (UC) worked on re-branding the SBU program as part of a class and began to create new brochures to match the new branding. MSD liked the
design of the brochures that they came up with, but there were issues with consistency of the text and editing errors. Initially, my role was to edit the brochures’ text for grammar, consistency, and adherance to MSD’s suggestions. I also simplified the text / content.

The project evolved into my being in charge of finalizing the brochures. I ran into several problems during this process. First, the files that I got from the graphic design team were set up in a way that was very different from how I set up documents. There was one file for all of the different brochures that also included all of the drafts of their ideas. The set up made sense, but it was challenging at first to jump into a different work style.

The second issue with the brochures was much larger and was partly the result of not having been present in the planning stages of this project. I created a few drafts for Deb to review, and after looking over them, she told me to take ownership of the brochures and to be creative. I then felt that I could really run with this project. When I finished my design for review, I was disappointed because it seemed as if I missed the mark. For instance, one of the larger changes I made was with the page size of the brochures (from letter to legal) because I thought it made the information fit better and allowed for better use of white space. However, not to my knowledge, the team of MSD employees overlooking the project had already agreed on page sizing because of printing costs.

After reviewing my revisions of the brochures, Deb decided that one of the students who was still willing to work on the brochures would focus on the layout, and I would focus on the text within the brochures. I was initially disappointed and frustrated because I felt as if I had failed. However, in looking back at this project in relation to the process of relationship-building that had been stressed in the MTSC program, I realized that I was never equipped to take over the project in the first place because I hadn’t been present in the planning stages to develop the relationship needed with the client to effectively gather the specifics of the project.

I later learned that Deb kept the UC student on the project because MSD wanted him to remain part of the project. Deb wanted to get the project done but also didn’t want to upset the client by shifting responsibilities away from the student, so separating the project was a way to compromise. This particular experience is another example of a consultant’s agency. In this case, the work process was controlled in part by the client. Though I found this project frustrating, it
shaped the way that I approach projects because I saw the importance of getting information first hand.

After the contract between MSD and EQ was renewed, Deb was able to remove the UC students’ involvement with the brochures and pass the responsibility of the brochures on to me. At this point, the brochures were almost complete, but additional changes needed to be incorporated. There was a new MSD project leader for the brochures who wanted to change the brochures to have a cleaner look. Per her instructions, drop shadows, extra design elements, and gradients were to be removed. Additionally, all text was to be the same sans-serif font.

This experience again demonstrates why consulting can at times be frustrating. Some of the requests for changes to the brochures made sense to me from a design standpoint. However, I disagreed with other changes. For example, the drop shadows worked to emphasize certain elements, and the serif body text font was chosen specifically because of readability. These explanations, however, did not convince the client. As a consultant, I ultimately wanted and needed to please our client, and even though I disagreed with the changes, I made them as requested. (See Appendix 3 for an example of one of the brochures).

**MSD Environmental Programs**

This section focuses on the Project Groundwork and the Mill Creek Watershed fact sheets as well as communications support, document control, and public meetings for MSD’s Environmental Programs. The majority of the work that I have done for my internship has been for this client.

**PROJECT GROUNDWORK AND MILL CREEK WATERSHED FACT SHEETS**

The communication pieces for MSD’s Environmental Programs were mostly information pieces — fact sheets, emails, print invitations / announcements, Web site updates, press releases, follow-ups, surveys, etc. — related to Project Groundwork, which is MSD’s initiative to reduce sewer overflows and improve its sewer system. Many of the communication pieces, such as the fact sheets, were first prepared as materials to be distributed at public meetings. Because of ongoing updates to Project Groundwork, the information pieces constantly needed to be updated.
The fact sheets, therefore, were not static pieces of information. Making sure they remained updated was an ongoing project for me. Additionally, the fact sheets not only served as resources for the public, but they also contained the language and information that other communication pieces were based on. Much of the information on the Web site and information needed by other consultants to update materials they are responsible for can be found within the fact sheets.

The first major public meeting that MSD had in relation to Project Groundwork was the Lick Run Open House, which was the first formal introduction from MSD to the public about Project Groundwork and the Lick Run Alternative Project. The open house was an attempt to have one-on-one dialogue with community members while providing a space for the public to ask questions and express concerns to MSD representatives. The open house had eight information stations, each focusing on a different aspect of Project Groundwork. The first two stations introduced the problems and possible solutions to the combined sewer overflows (CSOs) in the Lick Run Watershed. The stations to follow provided information on how the project could affect the community, including more details on possible economic benefits, business and home relocations, early success projects, and future community workshops.

My first assignment related to this client was to create a fact sheet describing Project Groundwork. The fact sheet’s design was based on MSD’s fact sheet template. The Project Groundwork fact sheet was going to be distributed at the open house. To start on the project, I was given a flier on the Cincinnati sewer system, and I was directed to the Project Groundwork Web site to gather additional information. At the time, I had little knowledge or sense of scope for Project Groundwork, and at this point, I was fairly removed from the public since I was pretty new to the internship. When I was given this assignment, I had a few days to produce a draft, after which Deb and I would go over together. To our surprise, the client asked for the fact sheet much sooner than expected.

Though the process was tedious and frustrating, especially with a rushed deadline, I learned a lot about the project itself (i.e., MSD and Project Groundwork), and I also learned important tacit information such as appropriate tone and scope for the fact sheets. For example, because this was the public’s introduction to the project, I learned that it had to include adequate information on why the project was being considered; there had to be an underlying “selling” of the project to
readers, so it was important to focus on the positive aspects of the project. The fact sheet also needed to clearly describe how the project would be approached and completed by MSD; general logistical questions that I had about the project were relevant because those were questions that the public would want to know as well. Finally, as I began to understand how the larger and smaller pieces of Project Groundwork fit together, I also realized that this particular fact sheet served as an introduction for the public to terms and concepts that would subsequently be used in other information pieces; it provided readers with base information about the project, and it also provided readers with the language needed to talk about the project.

In addition to content, working on this first fact sheet allowed me to become familiar with smaller design and page layout details that I hadn’t yet developed an eye for (i.e., proper alignment of the masthead, spacing between design elements, leading of paragraphs, etc.). I also quickly learned that as a consultant, I was often at the whim of the client; last minute changes and needs aren’t uncommon. Often, edits and revisions that seem simple from the client’s end can take a considerable amount of time on the production end. For example, a client may insert text into a document. When there is only one page to work with, finding the space for additions can be difficult.

Since developing this first fact sheet, we have produced several fact sheets on most of the smaller watersheds within Lower Mill Creek. The Project Groundwork fact sheet can be found in Appendix 4. Depending on the topic and if it made sense for me given the time restraints and my knowledge of the project, I played different roles in the creation of the fact sheets. For some, I was in an editor-type role where I simply laid out the information given to me on the page and edited the content at a sentence level. For other fact sheets, I researched and gathered information, wrote text, acquired photos / graphics, and designed the document. Chapter 3 looks more closely at a couple of the fact sheets that I had more control over throughout the process.

To provide a generalized overview of the process in creating the fact sheets, it is important to know that the majority of the fact sheets focus on specific watersheds. While I was creating the Project Groundwork fact sheet, one of the other consulting companies created a fact sheet on the Lower Mill Creek Watershed. The Project Groundwork fact sheet and the Lower Mill Creek Watershed fact sheet contained similar information that was combined to make a template that
would be the front page of all the watershed fact sheets. The only changing content on the front of the watershed fact sheets were titles, introductory paragraphs, and the masthead photographs. The body text of the front page always provided an overview of Project Groundwork. The titles were the names of the watershed, and the introductory paragraph contained information specific to the watershed: the size, the amount of overflow volume, the location, and the neighborhoods within the watershed. The photo used on the front was an image of the Mill Creek tributary in that particular watershed.

All of the watershed fact sheets had similar content on the front page, similar layout, and similar overall structure. The reasoning behind the similar front-page content was that not everyone reading the fact sheets will have read the background provided on the Project Groundwork fact sheet. The front page provided a condensed version of the overview information found in the Project Groundwork fact sheet.

The back of the fact sheets contained watershed specific information, such as particular problems that watershed faced and the projects that were being considered within the watershed. The information on the back page was intended to show readers how a particular watershed contributed to the problems that Project Groundwork was addressing while also showing a need for the proposed sewer improvement projects. All of this information was obtained through interviews with MSD project managers who worked on projects within the watersheds. The MSD project manager collected data about the watershed, gained an understanding of the main problems within the watershed, and worked to develop and implement a solution for that watershed.

**COMMUNICATION SUPPORT, DOCUMENT CONTROL, AND PUBLIC MEETINGS**

A portion of the work that I have done for MSD’s Environmental Programs is not as document-based and information heavy as was the development of the fact sheets. Our department also provided general communication support (which is explained below), document control services, and organizing and setting up public meetings.

*Communication Support*
Communication support is a catch-all term that entails updating and maintaining contact lists, sending out event invitation emails, organizing and planning logistics for meetings and events, making mailing labels, sending out letters to community members, and assembling packages for distribution at events. One of these items that I spent a good deal of time on was growing and updating MSD’s stakeholder email list as related to Lick Run. I set up an excel spreadsheet and used the tab functions to create separate categories of contacts. Part of this work involved talking with community members and leaders to learn who should be on those lists. I used the spreadsheet to ensure that the email list online was accurate.

**Document Control**

In conjunction with ensuring that the documents we created contained the most up-to-date information about the projects, I took an active role to ensure that our record system was accurate, updated, and easy to navigate and that our documents were named, dated, and stored accordingly. While this seemed like a menial task, I was continually reminded of the importance of document control, especially when I couldn’t find a document I needed or couldn’t find the most updated version. Part of the issue with document control was that EQ has its own document storage system, which is a web of folders, and the clients that we worked with didn’t share this system. Complicating this issue was that individuals didn’t have a uniform document management approach. Deb and I coordinated ours, but our clients renamed documents or sometimes didn’t distinguish newer versions from older ones in their own systems.

EQ has an online server organized by project number that all EQ employees are able to access and use. The system, which is a web of folders, isn’t very sophisticated but is functional. Since Deb and I sometimes worked away from the office, we saved our files to our desktops and uploaded to the server later. This wasn’t always the best approach for long-term document control because we sometimes forgot to upload or because there were so many folders on the server that Deb didn’t know exactly where I uploaded updated documents and vice versa.

Though my fix of the organization and document control problems on our server wasn’t perfect, I tried to develop a system that was logical easy to follow. First, I renamed and dated all of the fact sheet files. The document names were the same as the titles on the top of the fact sheets with the month and year that the fact sheet was last updated. Second, I created a folder designated for
just the most up-to-date versions of the fact sheets. That way, we preserved older versions of the fact sheets and kept a record of what version was used at specific meetings or events.

Because the fact sheets were constantly reused and repurposed, the document itself and the information within the document were in a constant active state. In the article, “A Case for Merging Document Control and Records Management,” the authors (Beck, Dionne, Koti, Loris, McLain, & Veal, 2010) claim that with the onset of electronic storage spaces replacing physical filing systems of documents, the idea of a record has taken on new meaning. They note, “Records [which are earlier defined as documents that have reached a state of retention] sit as active documents in file shares, e-mail, instant messages, and in collaborative spaces” (p 25). Documents are no longer dormant pieces of paper. While I took steps to ensure that documents were up-to-date and stored properly for future use within our server, I had little control on the client’s end. For example, I received emails asking for updated changes to be made to an attached document that had already been updated for other uses.

**Public Meetings**

As noted earlier, the MSD public meetings I was involved with were for community members to learn about the sewer improvement projects in their neighborhoods and for attendees to provide input and ask questions. MSD held two sets of meetings. The first set was the Lick Run Community Design Workshops. This series began in January 2011 and ended in February 2012. These meetings focused on the Lick Run Alternative plan and consisted of three community meetings that were set up as hands-on workshops. The second set of meetings was open houses targeted at four major sub-watersheds in the Lower Mill Creek Watershed: Lick Run, Bloody Run, West Fork, and Kings Run watersheds.

The public meetings were big events for MSD, not only because they were opportunities to solicit feedback that would guide future projects in the watershed, but they were also opportunities for MSD to be human, not just an entity. The meetings provided opportunities for community members to talk with MSD employees and consultants who were working on the projects. They also provided a space for different community members to hear each other’s points of view. The community meetings were also settings for me to meet and interact with my audience. The meetings provided me with an idea of what the community was interested in, their
range of feelings about the projects, and general demographics of the community. The problem was, however, that the meeting attendees weren’t an accurate representation of the community, given statistical data of the community.

All of the Lick Run Community Design Workshops were jointly planned by EQ, urban design consulting organizations, and MSD. The three Lick Run workshops followed similar agendas, with each meeting building off of the previous by honing in on community preferences that were expressed. The meetings began with opening remarks from the director of MSD, followed by information from MSD’s director of environmental programs. The first meeting featured four breakout sessions that participants attended to learn about and provide feedback on the project proposals. The sessions were guided by themes so that participants could focus on specific aspects of the community (i.e., historical landmarks that would only be known by someone living in that community). Attendees were given “visual preference surveys” to fill out. The surveys had attendees look at posters of renderings that contained several possibilities regarding a single aspect of the project. Attendees had to decide which aspect they preferred. For example, attendees were asked if they preferred historic style architecture or modern style architecture. They had a rendering of what each of these looked like and had to choose which they would like to see in their community. At the second meeting, attendees worked in smaller groups at tables where a facilitator was present. They looked at large posters together, marked them up and offered comments. The third Lick Run Community Design Workshop presented a preliminary plan for the Lick Run project based on information collected at the past two meetings and gathered feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the plan. The plan that was ultimately put together was presented to the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners.

The four watershed open houses were more loosely structured than the Lick Run workshops but still had the goal of getting information out to the community and providing a setting for two-way dialogue. The open houses were also organized by stations that contained explanatory posters. Attendees would ideally visit each station and learn about and ask questions about the proposed sewer improvement projects in their neighborhoods.

To provide context for EQ’s role at these public meetings, the tables below show the tasks that Deb and I completed before, during, and after each of the meetings.
### Table 1: Pre-meeting tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deb Leonard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated with Environmental Programs manager to determine station content and general format of public meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secured meeting location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated with graphic designers to create and print posters for meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated involvement with government agencies, local experts, and non-profit organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oversaw the completion of tasks assigned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kelly Walsh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publicized the meeting:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Created postcard invitations to be sent out to community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Created mailing list for distribution of postcards (make sure we have the most updated information on community council presidents and city council reps, research community organizations, businesses, schools, etc., that should be included).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contacted relevant community councils by phone and email to alert of meeting; sent them a short article to help publicize the meeting; offered to help publicize the meeting in any other way they may suggest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contacted community newspapers and provided them with press releases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coordinated with printing services to get postcards produced and mailed on time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared and updated needed fact sheets; print and organize them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created, printed, and organized name tags for everyone helping at the event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created and printed sign-in sheet for attendees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compiled packets of information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made signs for stations, and made signs to direct attendees where to go.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Day-of-meeting tasks

The blue highlighted rows distinguish the work that was done while the meeting was in progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deb Leonard</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensured that all people involved and materials needed were prepared and</td>
<td>prepared and ready to go.  This included materials that I was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ready to go. This included materials that I was responsible for and</td>
<td>responsible for (i.e. posters, easels, tables).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>materials others were responsible for (i.e. posters, easels, tables).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalized the agenda.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up the room.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered questions from attendees or referred them to an engineer or</td>
<td>REFERRED THEM TO AN ENGINEER OR PROJECT MANAGER WITH MORE TECHNICAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>project manager with more technical knowledge.</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakdown the room and ensured materials go to where they need to be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stored.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kelly Walsh</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensured that all materials were ready to go:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Final reading of fact sheets, agenda, name badges, and sign-in sheet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Made any last minute changes on fact sheets and agenda.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped setup the room (tables, easels, hanging signs, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeted incoming attendees, described how the meeting was organized,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>referred specific questions that I could not answer to a project manager</td>
<td>REFERRED SPECIFIC QUESTIONS THAT I COULD NOT ANSWER TO A PROJECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who could.</td>
<td>MANAGER WHO COULD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensured food and drinks were replenished.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took photographs for later use on the Web site, brochures, postcards,</td>
<td>TAKEN PHOTOGRAPHS FOR LATER USE ON THE WEB SITE, BROCHURES,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>posters, Powerpoints, etc.).</td>
<td>POSTCARDS, POSTERS, POWERPOINTS, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped breakdown the room.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22
Table 3: Post-meeting tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deb Leonard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oversaw post-meeting activities that EQ was responsible for and that other consultants were responsible for (i.e. summary brochure, Web site updates, Powerpoints for summary meetings).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kelly Walsh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Created electronic version of sign-in sheet and comment cards:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organized information on sign-in sheet to show how many people from specific neighborhoods were represented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Categorized attendees into the following: community members, consultants, government agencies, organizations, and interested others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Used the information above to calculate statistics of attendees. This information was then used for the Web site and was included in the summary brochures that all attendees were sent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated server with files related to meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If any photos were going to be used for another purpose, obtained permission to use photo from people in them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped send thank you letters and brochures to attendees.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The projects associated with MSD’s Environmental Programs provided a range of work experiences that not only allowed me to gain technical writing skills but provided me with insight to a public participation process from a government-run utility.

**Chapter 2 Conclusion**

The work highlighted in this chapter shows the varied communication needs of clients, and the varied nature of the work I completed. I worked on smaller projects such as putting a flier
together for one event, and I worked on larger projects where several, ongoing communication pieces contributed to the goals of a much larger effort. Being in an environment where I was new and not as familiar with the projects and the clients, I was able to offer the perspective of the customer / end user. For example, with the SBU brochures I had to learn about the workings of different types of sewers. While using this information for the brochures, I kept asking, “What is most important to the end user?” and “Who is the end user?” In being new to the information, I was able to answer the first question a little better. I used all the information and experiences I could, including attending public meetings as opportunities to help answer the second. I found this process frustrating because I saw a need for user testing and more user input that co-workers and clients did not see a need for. The following chapter explores this issue by looking closely at projects I worked on.
Chapter 3: Detailed Description of MSD Newsletters and the Green Roof Loan Program Fact Sheet

This chapter provides detailed descriptions for two major projects: the MSD newsletter and the Green Roof Loan Program fact sheet.

Part 1: MSD Newsletter

When I began my internship, one of my major activities was to assist with the MSD newsletter, *The Inside Story*, with the intent of eventually taking over the newsletter responsibilities. Part 1 of this chapter describes the newsletter activities in detail and also chronicles my gradual increased responsibilities with the project.

The newsletter is a monthly communication piece available to all MSD employees; 700 copies were printed and delivered to MSD toward the beginning of each month, and an electronic version of the newsletter was posted to MSD’s internal Web site. The purpose of the newsletter was for employees to have a sense of what was going on company-wide, to learn about different MSD departments and projects, and to learn about different employees at the utility. Another purpose of the newsletter was to create a sense of community among the staff. It was also a way for staff members who worked in the field to keep up with any major news at the utility.

The newsletter generally followed a standard format each month. The front page contained a letter from MSD’s executive director and one or two front page stories — usually hard news such as an article that described a technology upgrade that affected employees. The inside pages and back page had softer news stories: a feature of an event that MSD participated in, a feature of an employee, or an updated process at one of the plant locations, to name a few. There were also two columns of news briefs, which generally included awards received by employees, publications employees published in, praise from customers, or touching stories about an employee or something that happened at one of the work sites. The other major piece to the newsletter was the “Comings and Goings” page. This page included short bios and pictures of all new MSD employees, and it also announced retirements, transfers, promotions, and reassignments.
Each month, EQ and MSD’s newsletter board got together to brainstorm ideas for that month’s issue. Employees often emailed possible story ideas, so the meeting was spent deciding which of the submitted news pieces should go into the newsletter. The board also decided who would write the stories — usually board members, Deb and I, and those who had submitted stories. I did not have the opportunity to be a part of the planning process, in part because I didn’t have the relationship history with the MSD staff that Deb did. Deb had built a rapport with the MSD newsletter team through years of work. Had our contract renewed for this project, I would have been able to step into the planning process. Deb had intended to pass most of the newsletter activities over to me in the new contract, but MSD ended up discontinuing the print version of the newsletter and producing an electronic version by internal staff.

My first assignment for the newsletter was to layout the “Comings and Goings” page for the February issue of *The Inside Story*. I was given most of the information and page elements to be used, and I just had to fit everything into the space we had on the page. While the assignment at first was frustrating because I thought it was going to be easy, I soon realized that there was a lot of attention to detail needed to layout the page according to MSD’s standards. I learned MSD’s newsletter style rules while working on this first layout project. As I continued working on subsequent issues of the newsletter and as I began to know the client a better, I understood why the layout assignment was my first for this project. This was an introduction for me to see if I was up to the challenge of the newsletter, and it was a way to ease me into a project that could easily become overwhelming. Additionally, from Deb’s perspective, it wouldn’t be wise to hand over a large project or large portions of the project to someone who didn’t have the chance to build a relationship with the client yet. Deb and the client both had to gain trust in me.

My work responsibilities with the newsletter continued at a gradual pace. The next month I laid out “Comings and Goings” page but additionally had to gather the information for the new employee bios for the page. This entailed contacting all of the new employees to get information from. After this, I was handed over most of the “Comings and Goings” page responsibilities.

The work I did for the newsletter was important in earning the trust of the client and of Deb. Deb developed and fostered EQ’s relationship with this client, so it was important for me to prove that I was also able to work with the client and meet their expectations.
In consulting, there are a lot of other consultants competing for work. If a consultant cannot deliver for the client, there are plenty of others willing to take over. Producing high-quality work is not only important in and of itself, but it also helps secure a consultant’s reputation and job.

Figure 3 below shows the building of my responsibilities with the newsletter and important learning processes along the way as well as important steps in becoming more integrated with the newsletter process.

**Figure 3: Newsletter responsibilities**

Throughout working on this project, I developed relationships with MSD employees who served as resources for the newsletter. I regularly verified information with and received information from the HR department; I was in regular contact with MSD’s photographer to request photos that I needed for the newsletter; and I called plant managers to get in touch with them or their employees. The process of building relationships was ongoing and incredibly important in producing a successful newsletter. It was also important to secure my role in the process.

While Deb and I didn’t follow a predetermined workflow when working on the newsletter, we developed a rhythm that worked for both us and the client. Our work process is shown in the Figure 4. The bullets under the headings discuss the process from my point of view.
Invention and planning

- Deb met with the newsletter board to decide what will be in the newsletter and where pieces will go.

- Deb and I discussed stories, and I made a clean outline to work from.

Layout sketch up

- I mocked up the pages. At this point, we usually didn’t have all of the written content, but the mockup gave us an idea of how long stories should be.

- I usually had most of the pieces for the third page, so I made as complete a draft as possible.

- In this step of the process, we usually had most of the photos and graphics that we were using for the newsletter. One of my goals was to use high-quality graphics and photos, so this stage of the process involved editing graphic elements.

Develop content

- Depending on what information we had and who was writing what, this step usually involved a lot of research. I had to clarify information with sources, read additional sources, or get in touch with a contact person to gather information.

- As content was developed and submitted to me, I placed it in the designated spaces. Usually, there was too much text, and I had to edit stories down.

- Once I had a rough draft, I gave it to Deb for review, and she made suggestions for editing changes.

- Once Deb and I edited the stories, we asked authors to review their articles for accuracy.

- When we had a solid draft, we sent it to the MSD newsletter employees and to anyone else in the newsletter for review. We had an agreement with MSD that we would send the draft to them two days before it went to print.

Edit and review

- When the document was sent out for review, there were usually several emails or phone calls to alert us of changes needed.

- This step was the most tedious because we often got conflicting opinions from reviewers.

- After we got all of the changes in from everyone, we sent it to the newsletter editorial board one last time.

- When we got the final okay, I created a high-resolution PDF for the print shop.

Revision

Finalize document

Figure 4: Newsletter work process
The process above worked well in pleasing the client, and aspects aligned with what I learned in the MTSC program. The writing and editing process were similar to the peer review and technical review processes that we often used in MTSC classes. When we finished a draft of the newsletter, it was sent out to MSD’s administrative staff, anyone mentioned in the newsletter, and the newsletter board, to allow the draft to be seen from several angles and eyes. This process caught mistakes regarding specialized information that Deb or I would not have been able to know to correct. For instance, I wrote an article about MSD’s IT initiative to move their server to a cloud-based system. I researched and talked with the IT team about the process and new system and tried to learn as much as I could, but the concepts were fairly new to me, and I didn’t have the language to easily write about this topic. After we sent the draft out, the IT employees were able to see my gaps in language and provide specific corrections for inaccurate or technically incorrect language. My inexperience with the field, however, mostly worked to my advantage in writing the IT article because I had a sense of what needed to be defined and explained more.

My struggle with the newsletter process, at least at first, was not having a relationship with the client and feeling disconnected from the audience of the newsletter. Deb had gained a lot of tacit knowledge about MSD that I didn’t have access to. She knew the best contact persons for questions, and she also had a more clear understanding of the audience for the newsletter. She often worked in MSD’s offices and knew the administrative staff, worked with MSD’s engineers, communicated with field workers, etc. I did not have the same kind of knowledge about the audience, so I used each of my encounters with MSD staff, in any capacity, as a learning experience about the audience. For example, I once visited a proposed sewer improvement project site to get a sense of the neighborhood and surrounding space. While there, an MSD service worker was at the site for regular maintenance work. Deb and I spent time talking with him about what he did for MSD and learning about the sewer system from his angle. While this wasn’t a newsletter assignment, getting to talk with him allowed me to see what he did on a daily basis at work, where his interests were in the company, and what his thoughts were on some of the sewer projects taking place (See Appendix 5 for the front page of a newsletter).
Part 2: Green Roof Loan Program Fact Sheet

While I briefly discussed my work in helping create fact sheets for MSD in Chapter 2, this section of Chapter 3 highlights my involvement in developing the Green Roof Loan Program fact sheet. After editing and assisting in developing content for other MSD Project Groundwork fact sheets, I was given the assignment to develop the Green Roof Loan Program fact sheet. This fact sheet provided information to property owners about loans available for green roofs. The fact sheet would be posted on the Project Groundwork Web site and passed out at open house events.

At this point, I knew the expectation for the content and layout, and I had begun to communicate more directly with our clients. Because I was given almost total control over this project, I was able to develop my own process for completing the fact sheet. My steps included:

- Research and Information Gathering
- Planning organization and drafting content
- Review
- Rethinking process / Revision

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION GATHERING

I had an application that the City of Cincinnati’s Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ) turned in to the Ohio EPA to get involved with this program, so my research began with reading the document closely, taking notes, and noting questions in the margins. From there, I met with an MSD employee who was involved with the program and was overseeing the completion of the fact sheet. She was able to answer some of my questions but led me to a contact at OEQ who could provide answers to the more in-depth questions I had. This was helpful because the information in the application was directed at the granting organization and not necessarily at those applying for grants, which was the type of information I needed. Also, the document I had

---

2 A green roof is a vegetated roof system used to prevent or slow rainwater from entering the sewers. They also help insulate and cool buildings, and they lower temperatures in urban areas. The roof is usually covered with plants and has several filtration layers underneath it.
read was outdated, so specifics about how applicants would complete the application process changed.

**PLANNING ORGANIZATION AND DRAFTING CONTENT**

Once I was confident about my research and felt as if I had understood the material enough to write about it, I created a plan for the fact sheet using an outline with headings that correlated with what would appear in the fact sheet. These included:

- Program Description
- General information about green roofs
- Program Components
- Eligibility
- Implementation

From there, my task seemed easy; I just had to fill in the blanks with the information I had gathered.

**REVIEW**

After putting all of the pieces together, I sent my draft to Deb for an initial review. She had a lot of questions and suggestions related to tone and technical register. She did not know very much about the project, so her input was really useful to me, especially because she easily found large gaps that needed to be addressed. One of these gaps was that the draft did not address why MSD would be a partner in this type of program. Though the Green Roof Loan Program was a joint initiative, this fact sheet was coming from MSD and needed to provide the readers with a better sense of MSD’s stake in the program.

**RETHINKING PROCESS / REVISION**

After thinking about what I was missing in my process, I realized that I didn’t spend enough time on understanding the document’s purpose and the audience. So given the feedback I got, I rethought my approach for the fact sheet and focused much more on document purpose and audience needs.
First, in the feedback I received from Deb in the review process about providing information on why MSD would be part of this partnership, I also realized that this document was a way to tell the audience that MSD cares about the environment, especially stormwater. So in my general description of green roofs at the beginning of the fact sheet, I included a section that highlighted positive environmental impacts of this type of green infrastructure. I made sure to put stormwater management benefits first.

In working to understand my audience, I had a little more difficulty because I didn’t know my intended audience first hand. I knew the green roof loan program was intended mostly for businesses, but I didn’t know where to start in contacting those who would be interested in this type of green infrastructure. I also knew that the information in the fact sheet was not yet public information, so I didn’t feel comfortable doing any kind of audience testing / review with my document. Instead of working directly with my audience, I began with what I knew and worked with an imagined audience to fill in any holes in my fact sheet. Not looking at my fact sheet draft, I made a list of questions that I thought potential readers of the fact sheet would want to have answers to. These included:

- Do I meet the criteria to make me eligible for this program? If I am unsure, how do I find the answer to this question?
- Are there any risks associated with the program?
- Is the program beneficial in terms of long-term costs?
- How long of a commitment is the program?
- What do I have to do to enroll?
- What kind of support does the program offer?
- What do I have to do to ensure that I maintain my status within the program?

With this list of questions, I was able to revise my fact sheet to better clarify the loan process by using my imagined audience as my guide. I also wanted the audience to better understand how green roofs work, so I included a photograph of a green roof being installed and developed a graphic showing the different parts of a green roof.

After the content of the fact sheet was approved, I continued to work on the tone so it wasn’t so technical. The fact sheet was then approved by Deb and submitted to MSD for review. Once I
made edits received from MSD, the fact sheet was posted to their Web site. (See Appendix 6 for the final fact sheet).

**Chapter 3 Conclusion**

Both the newsletter and the fact sheet were projects that not only allowed me to gain experience in developing content but also provided me with opportunities to learn about client-consultant relationships and building trust. The final chapter looks at client-consultant relationships in more detail, especially in relation with the role of the audience. I often felt like I was in the middle of the client and the audience as the consultant.
Chapter 4: Environmental Communications and Consulting

Throughout my report, I have noted instances of feeling frustrated at being distanced from the audience I needed to reach. I also struggled in balancing two audiences that I have had to work with as a consultant: the client and the end user. These issues have not been particular to one project or client, which has sparked my interest in looking more closely at the role of a consultant in environmental communication projects. The theme of agency is weaved throughout this chapter, especially as related to the consultant and the public (audience).

In this chapter, I look at publications dealing with environmental communications, consulting, and audience awareness in hopes of understanding where the audience stands with environmental decisions when communications consultants are part of the process. While not always one in the same, in the project I use as an example in this chapter, the audience and the public become one. This chapter focuses on examples from MSD’s Lower Mill Creek Project because it is the largest project I have worked on and because it best encapsulates issues I have struggled with in terms of my understanding and relationship with the audience. I highlight the project’s efforts of involvement with the audience, point out gaps/opportunities where public involvement could have been stronger, and develop a model of communication specific to environmental communications and consulting that involves all affected while also solving a larger environmental problem.

For me, the importance of exploring who the audience is and where the audience stands is an issue of who holds the power in environmental decision-making processes. Environmental decisions are often based on research and studies conducted by entities that have specialized, technical knowledge. Environmental decisions, however, do not typically directly affect those who make the decision. Rather, the affected are groups of people — audiences, who have to live with and among the decision made — who may be absent from the thinking and the knowledge-

---

3 The audience for me has not always been just the client or just the end user. Sometimes the end user is the client, but I want to focus on instances when I am working to please two audiences because that is where I have had the most difficulty.
building process that went into the decision. The audiences, however, can contribute meaningful and necessary knowledge for a project’s success.

Consider the following real-life case that demonstrates the way local, public knowledge could have been used to improve a stormwater runoff project. The project is one that was completed more than 20 years ago by Cincinnati Parks. Along West Fork Road at the base of Mt. Airy Forest in Cincinnati, there is a 100 year flood plain area. A woman who has lived in that area for most of her life has seen continual flood issues first hand, and she has also seen attempts to improve flood situations. Across the street from her house at the bottom of a steep incline from Mt. Airy Forest is a flat piece of land that rainwater would sometimes collect on and consequently contribute to street flooding. Cincinnati Parks implemented a project to mitigate the flood situation by transporting excess water flow through a pipe to an area that was not overwhelmed with flood water. In addition, a small ditch was constructed to create a physical barrier between the water coming out of the wooded area and the street. After the project was completed, little upkeep to the area was ever conducted. The pipe clogged with debris, and the ditch slowly eroded. The flooding problems returned shortly thereafter.

The woman who has lived there her whole life functions as an audience or an end-user, and she (along with her neighbors who have expert local knowledge) was an important missing piece to this environmental improvement project. From continually seeing the rain events, she knew that the worst of the flooding occurred about a half a block north to where this project took place. Had she been involved in some way, this knowledge might have been considered into the project, making it successful. Her involvement may have also been able prompt the need for follow-up and upkeep with this project.

While this example is from 20 years ago, and I believe the involvement of the public has improved, I have still seen a lack of audience awareness in environmental projects. Environmental-related projects are implemented to improve the environmental conditions in an area. Sometimes these efforts are the results of changing laws, Consent Decrees, new regulations, or community improvement needs. All of these reasons for environmental projects are ultimately to improve the living conditions of society—cleaner drinking water, cleaner air, less flooding, etc. The audience and the end user for the environment are people, especially those
living in the area of an environmental project. If planners, agencies, utilities, etc., took a more rhetorical, audience-centered approach, I believe that environmental projects could both improve the environment and improve conditions for the users of that environment and come up with a solution that is more holistic and meets more than just one need.

**Environmental Communications and Audience**

Environmental Communication is a broad term that can be applied to many situations. According to Cox (2006) “environmental communication is the symbolic medium that we use in constructing environmental problems and negotiating society’s different responses to them” (p. 37). While I believe that there is and should be a negotiation involved in environmental communications, I use the term to indicate a dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders, community members, and decision makers. Essentially, I see environmental communication as not being separate from public participation. Ideally, environmental communication is a process in which the public is involved with decisions regarding environmental issues where the public’s role is not just to be the informed but also the informant. Environmental issues such as the one described above about flooding demonstrates a lack of true environmental communication, as defined by Cox. The environmental problem was identified by Cincinnati Parks, but a full construction of the environmental problem was not done because of the lack of involvement and consideration of local knowledge.

The issue of audience involvement and the lack thereof in real-life solutions to problems is experienced in not just environmental realms. In the article, “Recovering Delivery for Digital Rhetoric and Human-Computer Interaction (2008), what James Porter looks at in terms of rhetorical theory and Internet communications can easily be applied to approaches in environmental problem solving: “What I see in too many tutorials, manuals, and workshops on web design is a degraded form of rhetoric – i.e., the reduction of the art to routinized procedures, abstracted from context, without the full comprehensive *techne* kind of knowledge, which includes knowledge and understanding about audience, effects, and choices” (pg. 6). Involving the community in environmental projects can provide comprehensive knowledge that Porter refers to.
While much debate can be had over whether the public should even be involved in scientific-based decisions, I am working under the school of thought that it is imperative for the public to be involved. Public input for environmental decisions serves a number of purposes. Public involvement, according to Glicken (1999) “contributes to the competence of decision makers through the generation of better decisions, provides greater legitimacy to those decisions through greater accountability on the part of the decision maker, and constitutes part of the proper conduct of a democratic society” (Glicken 302). These are accomplished because the public is able to shed light on considerations (local knowledge, social implications) that technical experts may not possess. In addition, I believe that active public involvement can help foster important, long standing relationships of trust between the public and technical experts, which are not only important in present decisions and issues but also for future ones that may present themselves.

**Attitudes Toward Public Involvement**

Though public involvement can provide a more holistic basis for the decision-making process, public participation is often seen by technical experts and decision makers as a requirement that is merely fulfilled to adhere to regulations or a nuisance. The public, as Simmons phrases it in *Participation and Power* (2007) has a “marginalized status” in the decision-making process (p. 41). As a requirement, environmental communications sometimes becomes a box to check for technical experts, allowing for the least amount of effort to take place, thus damaging a potentially fruitful process and relationship. Similar to Simmons’s interview with an Army representative where she was told that the purpose of the public meeting was not to learn about citizens’ concerns and feedback, I overheard a comment from technical experts at a Lick Run Design Workshop regarding public involvement that summed the attitude toward public participation as being a hassle: “I can’t wait until all of this [public hearings, community meetings, etc.] is over so we can just move forward with the project.” Another technical expert responded, “They [the local community members] should be thankful they are getting all this, which is more than usual.” While I believe that the ideal process of public involvement is a balanced give and take of ideas, suggestions, concerns, etc., the reality of public involvement is often far from this.
Communications Consulting and Audience

I have come to understand first hand that consultants are in an odd position in terms of power with the several entities they interact with and the audience relationship. Consultants have several groups to please at once: their “host” company, their clients, fellow consultants, and audience members. At times these groups are at odds with each other. Because communication professionals see the audience in a different light than those of other professions, because clients oftentimes see the audience (the public in some cases) as a nuisance rather than a possible asset, and because project timelines don’t always allow for extensive public involvement work, consultants’ work with the audience can often become second to producing deliverables.

In the article “Research and Consulting in Technical Communication,” Palmer and Killingsworth (2002) look at knowledge development and the transition from theory to practice in technical communication by interviewing seven top consultants in their field. Part of the authors’ goal was to gain an understanding of the development of authority in consulting (Research and Consulting in Technical Communication):

Only one of our respondents (C1) said outright that her work as a researcher qualified her as a technical communication consultant. Experience and reputation appeared to take precedence over other credentials. A typical response was this one by C2: “I think one of the qualifications I have is that I have seen a lot of different companies and a lot of government agencies and a lot of situations. And so I have a breadth of understanding of corporate cultures and different needs and different industries and different types of documentation and now of course software, and even now Web situations” (p. 392).

This means that as a consultant, your ability to connect with and understand an audience, is not what companies see as your best asset. As another respondent in the study noted, “The very first thing we do is find out who the audience is, and oftentimes my customers don’t know” (p. 394). Finally, another respondent noted, “Consulting is a client-oriented service rather than a knowledge-oriented investigative practice” (p. 407). Clients often show a lack of interest in the audience as a whole.
Pulling from research from public relations since there are overlaps with community relations and technical communications, there are considerable misconceptions from those outside of the field about audience and the role audience plays. While public relations often attempts to manage reactions and opinions of the public, I’ve tried to avoid research that defines public relations in that way. Authors Glen M. Broom and George D. Smith in the article “Testing the Practitioners Impact on Clients” (1979) studied the ways in which clients viewed consultants, based on five different categories of consultants. Two categories seem to fit the community relations work that we have done for our MSD client. The first category is technical services provider. Services needed from the consultant for the client include specialized technical needs such as photography, graphic arts, publications, event planning, and special exhibit planning (pg. 49): “One major variable affecting success under this consultant-client relationship is the adequacy of the client’s problem definition and selected solution. After diagnosing the problem and deciding upon a solution, the client then becomes the recipient and critical evaluator of the consultant’s services” (pg. 49-50). This attitude results in a compartmentalization of the consultant’s role (pg. 50).

The second category that the article looks at is the communication process facilitator role. Here, consultants operate “as a ‘go-between’ or information mediator. The primary function is to facilitate the exchange of information so the parties involved have adequate information for dealing with each other and for making decisions of mutual interest” (50). In the work I have done, the two roles noted in the study work together because the information gained from being the go-between can inform the information that needs to go into the technical service. For instance, as part of the MSD Lick Run Project, we put together several FAQs for the audience. In order to know what type of information was needed for a specific FAQ document, we had to continually listen to the questions and concerns of the general public. In the study conducted by Broom and Smith, the second lowest ranking type of consultant by the client was the communication process facilitator—the role that links the client to the audience. The reasoning given was because “clients tended to view consultants acting as sympathetic listeners and empathetic supporters as ‘do-nothings’ and ‘yes men’” (pg. 58). With this attitude toward the consultant and in not seeing the importance of the audience, it is difficult for the consultant to complete communications work based on audience analysis.
In her study about perceptions of the public relations field, Shannon Bowen (2002) notes, “Negative connotations of the field persist among those outside the discipline or among journalists. Ideological confusion among publicity, marketing, advertising, integrated marketing communication, and propaganda, has further degraded understanding of the function and purposes of public relations” (pg. 200). Where audience and research are central to the theoretical role of the communications consultant, this ideal role is often difficult to achieve because of the misconceptions noted above. Additionally, these misconceptions can be used by outsiders to put impossible tasks on the communications consultant, such as changing the public’s perception of an issue without the groundwork available to do so. Attitudes toward the value of the consultant’s work with the public and attitudes toward the public from clients and technical experts can put both parties at a disadvantage when trying to involve the public in decision-making processes. Consultants need to a way to both advocate for the public and please their client. In the last part of this chapter, I propose a communication model that can help leverage the role of the consultant and the public.

**Lick Run Alternative and Audience***

The Lick Run Alternative has been the most controversial aspect of Project Groundwork, thus requiring more work with the community. The public involvement efforts of the Lick Run Alternative fall under Project Groundwork and Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy (LMCPR) communication needs. The Project Groundwork communication plan states that the goal of the Project Groundwork communication efforts is to “educate Greater Cincinnati residents about Project Groundwork, how it will affect them personally, and the positives it will create for the region.” The LMCPR communication plan notes that the overall goal of its communication effort is to engage Greater Cincinnati citizens in the process of selecting a preferred solution for the LMCPR by increasing awareness of the LMCPR among Lower Mill Creek watershed residents, businesses, property owners and interested citizens, as well as city and county agencies and non-

---

*The legal language coupled with terms coined by MSD to describe efforts under the Consent Decree can be confusing, especially because various terms are used to describe different levels of the same issue. While I try to briefly define the terms within the text and simplify their use of them, please refer to the Glossary portion of this document for clarification.*
profit organizations, by increasing awareness among ratepayers across MSD’s service area, and by increasing opportunities for the community to provide input into the decision-making process for selecting a preferred solution.

Audience members for the Lick Run Alternative were defined as anyone who would be affected by the project, those living in South Fairmount and other affected communities, and also any MSD ratepayers. Given this, the audience was extremely vast. However, there are some ways to categorize the audience. In addition to the ratepayers, other general community stakeholders included municipalities, townships, Cincinnati community councils, environmental groups, and other interested parties (such as local universities).

**Audience Outreach and the Lick Run Alternative**

In order to engage the Lick Run community in the Consent Decree activities, several communication strategies were initiated by MSD through its communication plan starting in 2009. The following strategies were to be carried out by MSD and/or consultants working on the projects:

- Develop and disseminate information pieces about Project Groundwork and the Lick Run Alternative
  - Launch the Project Groundwork Web site and include pages for each subwatershed, individual projects, reports, etc.
  - Develop fact sheets – several fact sheets were created to help describe Project Groundwork projects and efforts
  - Create brochures
  - Create ”Frequently Asked Questions” handouts
  - Make presentations at community council meetings to educate, to provide opportunities for questions, and to allow for feedback.

- Attend community events, festivals, etc. – Community events have included neighborhood cleanups, Earth Day celebrations, neighborhood summits, etc.

- Provide more than one avenue for citizens to give input and feedback – Citizens wanting to give input about projects or ask questions were able to email, call, and if necessary, meet one-on-one with an MSD representative.
• Engage the media – While newspapers and some other media outlets have picked up the Lick Run story on their own, other efforts were more deliberate.

• Engage key property owners / community stakeholders in one-on-one dialogue – Properties most affected by Lick Run projects are those in South Fairmount where some homes will be demolished and where businesses will be temporarily or permanently relocated. Communication efforts with owners of these properties were ongoing. The South Fairmount Business Association, which includes businesses that will be affected by the Lick Run Alternative, held several meetings with MSD, and an MSD representative has attended their monthly meetings. Additionally, community stakeholders such as leaders from local churches, apartment complexes, etc., were consistently in contact with MSD during the community engagement process.

• Conduct workshops, open houses, and town halls – As noted earlier in the report, MSD held several public meetings where information was disseminated and where community members were given opportunities to speak one-on-one with MSD representatives to voice concerns, to ask questions, to talk with other community members, and to gather information.

MSD made extensive efforts to reach out to the community and provided as much information as possible. Doing so provided the groundwork for the public to participate in the decision-making process with the Lick Run Alternative. However, while the list is extensive, and the public had a say in some aspects of the Lick Run Alternative, improvements could have been made to the process that would have more effectively engaged the audience at an earlier point in the decision-making process. Doing so would have provided more power to the public.

Public Participation and the Lick Run Alternative

The Lick Run Alternative differs slightly from much of the research about public participation because the project wasn’t attempting to change environmental policy, so there wasn’t legislation outlining what kind of public participation must occur. Rather, the project was the result of a Consent Decree, and public participation was included and emphasized because the regulating community will look more positively on a project that has community support and because moving forward on such a large project needs the support of community members.
While Chapter 2 describes some of the community outreach and public participation activities, this section looks at these activities more closely and examines the role of public participation in MSD’s decision to propose the Lick Run Alternative. In this section, I show some of the feedback given from the community regarding the Lick Run Alternative. Using this information and the activities described above, I first present a visual for the communication model that was used. I then propose a new communication model that includes more voices from community members and outlines a clearer role for a communications consultant.

**Recap of Lick Run Workshops and Community Relations Activities**

As previously noted, the Lick Run Open House was an introduction to the public on the consent decree and the possible solutions to the combined sewer overflow problem. Following the open house were three Lick Run Community Design Workshops. The purpose of the workshops was to “allow all voices within South Fairmount to share unique perspectives and offer direct feedback on how the area may be transformed by the alternative solution” (pg. 5, Lower Mill Creek Community Outreach Report). The first workshop on August 11, 2010 focused on the proposed alternative solution in South Fairmount with topics ranging from waterway characteristics to recreational opportunities. On October 26, 2011, MSD held the second community design workshop, which built on feedback from the first. The proposed concepts were revised and presented for review by the attendees. The third community design workshop on February 23, 2012 used feedback collected from the first two workshops, and revised concepts for the proposed urban waterway were presented for comment and input. Part of the purpose of these workshops was to collect feedback to develop a Lick Run Master Plan that considered community needs.

For each of the workshops, 6,500 invitation postcards were mailed out to South Fairmount residents and community stakeholders. In addition, community newspapers were contacted and community councils were notified. The average number of residents attending the meetings was about 100.

While each of these meetings focused on the Lick Run Alternative, there was also information about the default solution – the underground storage tunnel and enhanced high rate treatment
plant. Even though MSD had claimed that the workshops and meetings weren’t intended to persuade the public on either one of the solutions, and even though MSD hadn’t decided which solution they were going to submit to the Regulators for review, the amount of focus on the Lick Run Alternative at the meetings likely presented an unbalanced view of the scope of solutions available. This focus could also have easily been seen as MSD pushing toward one solution over another. In December 2012, MSD recommended the Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy – which includes the Lick Run Alternative – to the Regulators as the preferred solution.

In addition to the Lick Run Community Design workshops, MSD held two Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy Town Hall meetings in August 2012 to review and compare potential solutions for reducing CSOs in Hamilton County. The meetings also collected community feedback through written and verbal comments. The Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners also held four additional public hearings to allow for feedback from community members.

**Community Input at Community Design Workshops and Town Hall Meetings**

Overall, the Lick Run Alternative project had the support of the South Fairmount community – at least from those who voted on their comment cards at meetings. For those who supported the efforts of the project, the hope was that South Fairmount would be revitalized economically, socially, and environmentally. Those who opposed the project feared that the area would see an increase in crime, fear that businesses would not be attracted back into the area, and fear that people would not relocate to South Fairmount as the project progresses.

The two town hall meetings that MSD held and the public comment period near the time that a decision needed to be put forward about the Consent Decree solution allowed for a lot of feedback about both the project and the planning process. The comments gathered during this time reflected an audience that was supportive of the project even though the comments included criticism. Below are several comments that show the range of concerns that community members had about the project.\(^5\) I’ve categorized the comments to show some trends that I saw in the concern.

---

\(^5\) All public comments submitted to MSD about the Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy Project can be found in “The Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy (LMCPR) Community Outreach Report” at:
Long-term costs of deep tunnel

- I wanted to say that of the two alternatives presented, the deep tunnel and the sustainable alternative, that I’m very skeptical of the deep tunnel because I’m concerned about the ongoing operational costs. As I say, it’s not the cost but the upkeep, you know, to pump all that water down. Let the water drain down down down to a deep tunnel and then pump it up again, you know, after every heavy rain it’s just going to be extremely expensive. And I do not see energy costs getting cheaper over time.

Community Asset

- And I want to remind you that the EPA has a long proud history here in Cincinnati. I know it personally for many years, and was acquainted with an agency. They could always assign a special group and unit that would see to it that this is not an open ditch, that it’s sustained. And it would be a feather in our hat and a feather in their hat to turn something good like that out of Cincinnati.

Water quality and other (economic, social) benefits

- In Ohio it is macroinvertebrates and fish that determine our water quality. And water quality standards are used in — as in support of the biological water quality or biocriteria. We hate to see underground structures. There’s no, there’s no purification that occurs in underground structures. In fact, they are biofilms that create places for nanobacteria to grow and perpetrate and slough off. It’s the sunshine, shallow waters, bubbling creeks, small retention ponds, rain gardens that are going to be the solution.
- So if the MSD can bring a project that’s going to be beneficial for the environment as well as economically beneficial to the neighborhood, then there’s a strong following of South Fairmount residents who are behind you and want to see this daylighted.
- There is a strong following of South Fairmount residents who are excited to see positive change in our community. Therefore, we support the sustainable solution to the combined sewer problem. We have witnessed South Fairmount diminish from a community to a blighted neighborhood. Although the objective of the project is to reduce the volume of
water being treated, the side effect of the project is improved quality of life for the residents of South Fairmount. We have been waiting for something like this for a long time.

- I believe the MSD’s project is a catalyst needed to improve this area and hope that the businesses affected by the project can work with MSD to improve the area for the residents that are here 24/7!
- This letter is being sent to show support for the Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy for the Lick Run watershed. While, a tunnel may move storm water quickly, thus meeting the quantity specified to be removed in the US EPA Consent Decree, it doesn’t have the same ability to improve storm water quality or impact the surrounding area. The community in question, South Fairmount, is economically disadvantaged, and needs a jump start to return the area to a more prosperous time. If money is going to be spent, it seems best to maximize every dollar to ensure we get the most for rate payer money.

General support

- Furthermore, I feel rather strongly that the community would like to move forward with the implementation of MSD’s Lick Run alternative plan (provided that appropriate measures are in place for routine upkeep and maintenance).

Negative social impacts

- The solution needs to be based on sustaining South Fairmount. The solution must have business anchors located and defined by South Fairmount Residents, not by consulting firms. The solution must consider and be defined by community historic assets designing around as necessary. The solution must be based on community wants, needs and don't wants. MSD’s tunnel alternative funds only proposed open ditch, no more. MSD’s alternate will change South Fairmount forever and a day. South Fairmount deserves more than clear cutting a hundred and 62 years of history and architecture.

- We do not support the alternative as it would destroy historic fabric. And there is no concrete redevelopment plan with signed commitments. We support the proven grey approach that’s been used in other cities.
Negative economic impacts

- We want to know how we can change the laws so it doesn’t cost the property owners personal income. Because the only thing available out there is monies available from the City at two percent or whatever, but it’s got to be paid back. So we’re going to be relocated if this goes through and we want to know what kind of law, what kind of laws can be brought into effect to compensate us for our expenses.

Community input/distrusts or questions information given

- MSD has only one plan, a glorified drainage ditch. They have lied to the residents and business community. Public forums were held not to receive real input, but to direct that input in the direction MSD wants to go. And their reports do not reflect the real position of my neighborhood or South Fairmount. There’s a lot of information out there about other cities that have done tunnels. And I think it would be beneficial for us to see what’s actually happened to Chicago and other cities where they’ve had the tunnel projects.

- I would like to recommend that to keep this process open and more transparent as an ongoing process that there be established in some sort of oversight committee. Some sort of steering committee made up of citizens who would be directly involved in the outcome of this whole process. I’m talking about a citizen-driven steering committee, oversight committee, which would be made up of private citizens who would be a part of the community. Oversee the input that would come from the neighborhoods themselves, environmentalist, community development.

- The impact zone of these three projects encompasses about 68 million dollars in sales. I personally have signed an affidavit, I interviewed the business owners. 68 million in sales reported about 22 of the 30 businesses in South Fairmount representing about 600 jobs. Myself, personally, I do believe that the daylighting is a done deal. To me this says it’s a done deal. And I believe that these meetings and workshops, etcetera, have been fulfilling a legal formality.

- And this is not the first time that MSD has created projects that are more for economic development than to solve a sewer problem.
• And of that 300 people most of them [who attended workshops] were MSD employees, City employees or consultants. And this is part of the outreach effort. Somehow the MSD is not getting out to the general public. You’ll notice in tonight's presentation that Tony said nothing about businesses in South Fairmount that will be affected by this Project Groundwork including the viaduct and possibly Westwood Avenue. Total of about 68 million dollars in sales are representing of about 22 of the 30 companies that are there. And also I want to say we’ve invited the USEPA to come to our meetings twice and they refused saying they don’t have money in their budget. And we’ve offered to pay for their airfare.

• How accurate are they [overflow volumes]? We know MSD says they’re very confident, but we need to see real data and real validation by actual flow monitors and so on to know both the flow is right and also what the actual water quality at the point of overflow is.

• There should be more clear language about why individual year-to-year costs are increasing, so that we can respond to our rate payers who call us at our City Hall to complain about the eight to ten percent. Secondly there should be a better job of explaining why the variation between the original cost estimates and the more recent ones. I have the advantage of having been on the original plan committee, so I know a lot more. But we really do need explanations, people, why the cost estimates have gone up so much.

While the comments above don’t reflect the number of comments received during the public comment period, they do reflect some trends in the comments received. The number of comments that indicate a distrust of information, a distrust of intent, or a distrust of the communication process shows that even aggressive communication efforts with several occasions of public inclusion will be criticized if the communication model doesn’t provide direct power to the public in the decision-making process.

**Communication Model**
The process of public input and the Lick Run Alternative follows a modified version of the partial participation / pseudoparticipation model. As defined by Simmons, in this model, “technical experts determine a plan for addressing an environmental issue, propose the plan to the public, and establish public meetings and comment periods for collecting public concerns and opinions about the plan before it is implemented (96). This model, as Simmons notes, only allows for feedback “at the end of the policy production process” (96). The partial participation / pseudoparticipation is shown below in Figure 5 (p. 96).

Figure 5: Partial participation / pseudoparticipation model

While the above diagram is intended to be a simple visual to show the partial participation / pseudoparticipation model, the diagram that I created to show the Lick Run Alternative decision process includes activities to show where in the above model communication efforts took place as well as different lines of communication; however, the basic model is the same.
Figure 6: Lick Run Alternative communication model
Figure 6 roughly begins around the time that the revised Consent Decree was approved by the Judge in 2010. Shortly before this same time, Hamilton County worked to “change State law to clarify opportunities for cost-effective options for stormwater removal. Accordingly, the Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy Study was negotiated to . . . develop a source control alternative approach having the same objectives as the default tunnel – to reduce combined sewer overflows throughout the Lower Mill Creek. A study and any proposed alternatives must be submitted to the Regulators by December 31, 2012” (Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy Study, pg. 6). The process of communication regarding these studies and amendments took place among local and federal decision makers long before the public entered the conversation. Only after an alternative was developed was the public more heavily involved.

As Figure 6 shows, the public’s main involvement was in providing feedback on the alternative solution. This feedback, however, could be thought of as superficial because community members were asked mostly about the aesthetics regarding Lick Run Alternative Project. For instance, they were asked if they preferred a waterside pedestrian walkway to a community park and were shown graphic renderings of these possibilities. The strength of the workshops was that after activities were completed, time was provided for the audience to express questions and concerns to the larger group (outside of the small group breakdown). This allowed everyone the chance to hear both positive and negative comments from each other. While, the tunnel solution was not ignored at the workshops, this solution wasn’t given nearly as much attention or energy as the alternative was. Additionally, the public only had input on these two solutions. They weren’t given the opportunity to provide input on other solution possibilities.

The communication model also shows the role of the communication consultants as being an intermediary between the local decision makers and the public. The relationship between MSD, the communication consultants, and the public is shown this way because while the communication consultants are not necessarily working with the public to persuade them in any way, the consultants are paid by MSD to get information out to the public regarding their efforts. If MSD’s efforts are mostly being put toward the alternative, then the consultants’ efforts will be mostly directed at the alternative. This creates an imbalance of power and misuses the full capabilities of the communication consultants. I would like to clarify that the public did have access to information sources other than the communication consultants. They had opportunities
to speak with MSD decision makers, engineers, technical experts, etc. What they were really lacking was communication with state and federal decision makers, which would have happened if the public was involved earlier in the decision-making process.

**Proposed Communication Model**

While I don’t think it is completely possible to reach a solution that would allow all of the stakeholders involved in meeting the Consent Decree’s requirements happy, I do think it is possible to create a communication model that would give more equal treatment to the many voices that are part of the process. Figure 7 outlines a model that would allow more input from the public that could be used in making decisions earlier in the process.
Figure 7: Proposed Lick Run Alternative communication model
The top portion of Figure 7 includes the actions that took place concerning the original Consent Decree. These are activities that cannot be changed, as they were dictated by the Clean Water Act.

Below the dotted line shows communication activities that would occur after the original Consent Decree was in place. Here, the communication consultants are being funded and sourced by state and federal decision makers. Added to this relationship is a third-party watchdog-type group that does not necessarily have financial allegiance to an entity. They would serve to ensure that the process and communication relays are accurate and fair. This group was included because while state and federal Regulators may not necessarily have a stake in how the conditions of the Consent Decree are fulfilled, they may have a preference that could help serve their agenda. Even though a default solution was proposed by the Regulators, the EPA, for example, might be more interested in a greener model. The watchdog group would also help citizens feel more at ease with the fairness of the process.

In this model, the role of the communication consultant is to facilitate communications among stakeholder parties and to provide any communication support needed before solutions are developed. This could include developing fact sheets, maps, mailings, etc. The communication consultants are provided by the state and federal Regulators because it gives a direct line of communication between all stakeholders and this important entity. Guidance would be provided throughout to ensure that the proposed solutions would meet federal and state criteria.

Putting groups into neat boxes and showing that they would work together to solve a problem does not necessarily mean that different opinions would not develop and that there would not be any kind of incongruity in the thinking among entities. However, the communication consultants (with the watchdog group) would help ensure that each group is acting transparently and would provide tools to enable different opinions to work together.

In having the first outcome include more than just one alternative and then having a public vote on which alternative would be pushed forward, the public would have more of a say on what the best solution is for their community. This process would allow the public to have more of a voice in deciding what the choices were, rather than having the choices decided for them. The
options would be decided with input from technical experts, local decision makers, and the public, allowing for a more holistic and fair process.

In this model, MSD and local decision makers are on a more even playing field with other entities, serving as collaborators who offer expert knowledge. Since the public has to pay for the solution with their tax dollars, this model includes them more in the decision-making process and allows them to have more of a say as to what solution is considered by their utility. At the end of the process, the three entities work together to hash out the details of the default and alternative solutions (with the communication consultants and watchdogs facilitating), coming to a final decision on what solution will be pushed forward.

While the proposed decision-making process would be extremely time consuming, it allows for more voices to be heard with more equality throughout. The public would have a more direct line of communication with federal agencies; they would have more access to technical information, allowing them to make decisions based on both local and technical knowledge; they would be able to voice their concerns and directly work with technical experts on creating a plan that would address those concerns; they would have more control in how their money would be spent; and they would have a financially neutral entity present. In allowing for this type of involvement, everyone within the public may not be satisfied with the final decision, but they would not feel as if they were being deceived in any way or led through a process in order to fulfill a requirement on a checklist.

If those behind environmental improvement projects looked at the work’s success in terms of audience as technical communicators do when creating communication pieces, the audience would be much more concrete and tangible, and frustrated community members would have had an opportunity to be a part of the project. According to Summers and Summers in Creating Web sites that Work, “The best way to accommodate user goals is to design with specific people in mind” (27). Rather than focusing exclusively on the environmental goal, environmental projects need to consider user goals with just as much weight.
Chapter 4 Conclusion / Looking Forward

At many points in my internship, I felt thwarted in my ability to move forward. Some of these feelings stemmed from inexperience with consulting and not being familiar with consulting work structure; others had to do with internal politics at the workplace and my personal difficulties in asserting myself in situations where I was inexperienced. Given the above, my internship and work situation have been an exercise in understanding power dynamics on several levels: organizational, personal, positional, etc. It has been a journey in finding personal and professional power and in figuring out how to navigate power structures while attempting to abide by communication practices that I learned in the MTSC program.

In consulting, as noted in the report, power dynamics are somewhat different than in “normal” work environments. Issues I have seen as a result from these power dynamics include:

- Communication gaps between creator of content and audience
- Difficulty with asserting expertise to clients
- Resentment from clients toward consultants
- Lack of respect in regards to boundaries (time)

As I began to recognize how some of the above issues can take hold in consulting, I also realized — as I began to gain confidence while learning / understanding the projects better — that these issues weren’t a condition of consulting; there are ways to prevent or address them. In advising someone just starting out in a communication consulting role, I would offer the following:

- Address any communication issues between client and consultant directly when they first arise rather than waiting for them to work themselves out.
- Assert yourself as the communications expert.
- If the client doesn’t recognize the importance of a recommended action, be persistent and offer support to back up your suggestion, including support from other employees.
- If working with a large organization or company, network with other employees in the company who may be able to be an additional resource.
- Talk with other consultants about issues without mentioning specific clients.
- Attend seminars about consulting and about your particular field.
• Establish boundaries with your client by asking for specific deadlines and milestones.

A lot of what I struggled with when I first started my internship was simply due to a lack of experience. Not only was I at a new company and working in a new type of employment environment, I was also new to all of the clients we had to do work for. Looking back, there are several things I would have done differently to better position myself within the EQ and with our clients. For interns who find themselves in a similar role as I was, the following advice may be useful:

• Get a copy of the company’s organization chart (especially at a larger company with several different departments), and learn who does what.
• Set up formal meetings with project managers to learn about their role and their projects and to explain what you do. Find ways that you could be useful to them.
• Go to extracurricular events.
• Learn if anyone external does things for your company that you could do internally. For example, I began updating the Web site, creating business cards, developing marketing brochures for EQ because it was a need that the company was paying outside companies to do.
• Talk with clients before and after events.
• Begin learning how job / project agreements are developed.
• Speak up when you feel like you are ready for more responsibility.

My internship has been an incredibly valuable learning experience. I have just begun to learn how to better navigate the world of consulting, which will ultimately help me become a better communicator in this role. I’ve also been able to see up close experts and citizens work together on shared problems, and in doing so, I have learned the value a communication consultant can provide in that relationship. I’ve also become immersed in many of the environmental issues of Cincinnati, and in making connections through consulting work, I have found ways to become a part of the solution.
References


Glossary

Terms

Combined Sewer Overflow: Sewer systems that collect wastewater and stormwater in the same pipes are called combined sewers. The contents of a combined sewer are typically directed and treated at a sewage treatment facility. However, during heavy rain events, combined sewers become overwhelmed with stormwater and overflow at overflow points along waterways.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA): A law enacted by Congress to clean up hazardous contaminated sites. The process must include public involvement through public meetings and availability of information.

Consent Decree: A lawsuit settlement where one party agrees to take specific actions without admitting fault.

Daylight: Redirecting/restoring a stream that is underground to aboveground. When sewers and streets were built, streams and parts of streams were put into underground pipes and became part of the sewer system.

Default Solution: The solution provided in the Consent Decree that the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati entered into to reduce combined sewer overflows was considered the default solution. This solution was to install an underground storage tank, pump station, and enhanced high-rate treatment plant that would capture and treat overflows and then release the treated overflows to the Mill Creek.

Green Infrastructure: The use of uses natural features to manage stormwater and provide environmental benefits.

Gray Infrastructure: The process of using sewer pipes to transport and dispose of stormwater.

Lick Run Alternative: The Lick Run Alternative is a possible solution and part of the Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy that MSD may implement instead of the underground storage tunnel. The Lick Run Alternative is a series of sewer separation projects that are intended to remove stormwater and natural drainage from the combined sewer system in the Lick Run watershed. A major component of the Lick Run Alternative is a stormwater conveyance system in the form of a “daylighted stream” in South Fairmount between Queen City and Westwood avenues east of
White Street. If implemented, the projects are estimated to reduce the annual volume of sewer overflows into Mill Creek through CSO 5 (an outfall at the end of Queen City Avenue) by about 750 million gallons annually.

**Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy:** The Lower Mill Creek is the main watershed in Cincinnati. It flows into the Mill Creek and covers 40,000 acres in Hamilton County. More than half of the CSOs in Hamilton County occur in the Lower Mill Creek watershed, and MSD is mandated to implement a Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy (LMCPR) to significantly reduce overflows by 2018. The means for achieving the LMCPR has not yet been approved; however, MSD has been studying two possible ways of achieving compliance. Federal and state regulators are requiring MSD to an underground storage tunnel about 30 feet in diameter and 1.2 miles long. This partial remedy (known as the default solution) would store excess flows during heavy rains in the tunnel that would eventually discharge to an enhanced high-rate treatment facility (EHRT). The regulators are allowing MSD to explore alternatives to the default tunnel solution. Source controls, such as stream separations, stormwater detention basins and rain gardens, can reduce the amount of stormwater entering the sewer system, freeing up capacity for wastewater flows from other areas within the Lower Mill Creek watershed and lowering operation and maintenance costs associated with treating the flows.

**Project Groundwork:** MSD’s initiative to reduce sewer overflows and improve its sewer system. According to the Project Groundwork communications plan, Project Groundwork is described as follows:

> MSD executive management desired to provide a unique identity to its Consent Decree wet weather construction program. Branding the construction provided a singular reference point for the Consent Decree work, especially since MSD would at the same time be undertaking non-Consent Decree capital improvement efforts. As part of the brand strategy, all Consent Decree or wet weather construction references are now labeled as Project Groundwork efforts.

**Regulators:** The US EPA, Department of Justice, and the State of Ohio

**Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA):** A law that regulates the management of, hazardous waste materials that includes public involvement components such as holding public meetings, having public comment periods, and making available documents.
**Sewer Separation**: The process of separating stormwater and sanitary flows from a combined sewer pipe.

**Source control**: Solutions to stormwater overflows that focus on preventing / controlling stormwater. These solutions include controlling runoff from hillsides, removing / redirecting streams from combined sewer system intakes, installing stormwater retention basins and using other controls such as pervious pavement or rainwater harvesting systems that prevent or delay stormwater from reaching combined sewers.

**Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**ACS**: The Alliance for Chemical Safety

**EQ**: Environmental Quality Management, Inc.

**LMCPR**: Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy

**MSD**: Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati

**OOD**: Office of Director (MSD)

**PAG**: Public Advisory Group (in this report, it refers to INEOS’s public advisory group)

**SBU**: Sewer Backup Response Program

**SSO**: Sanitary Sewer Overflow
We need your help to create an eye-catching logo and slogan for our new Safety Campaign.

Put on your thinking caps, get out your sketchbooks and let the ideas flow!

See rules on back for details.
Contest Rules

Entries due by July 31
Winner to be announced August 15
Prize is a $100 gift card

Submission Specifics:
- Contest is open to all DP&L employees and family members.
- Individuals can submit one or more logos. Please include only one logo per page.
- Provide a sketch of the design that includes the slogan. Please label all colors.
- Submit entries on 8.5 x 11 inch paper.

Slogans should:
- Be a simple phrase that promotes working safely.
- Include a version of the word “safe.”
- Address an audience that includes all union and management employees and visitors.
- Identify DP&L’s philosophy.

Logo designs should:
- Be simple, using one or two colors. The slogan can be a different color. (Note: winning entry will be provided to a graphic artist for final design. Minor changes may be made to accommodate reproduction.
- Be original (clip art can be included but copyrighted material cannot).
- Not be a photo.

Submit to:
- Electronic: joanne.rau@dplinc.com
- Hard copy: JoAnne Rau, MacGregor Park
  1065 Woodman Park Drive
  Dayton, OH 45432

If you do not receive confirmation of submission receipt, please contact JoAnne either by phone, or email (above).

Entries will be judged by the Safety Steering Committee.
Appendix 3: SBU Brochure

When it rains, sewer backups can occur in homes and businesses served by either combined or sanitary sewer lines. The backups generally occur when a large volume of stormwater enters the sewers, overwhelming their capacity and causing the flow to back up. The Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) is working to reduce sewer backups related to capacity issues through Project Groundwork, a multi-year initiative that includes hundreds of sewer improvements and stormwater control projects across Hamilton County.

For many years, affected property owners and tenants were responsible for the cleanup and damages caused by these sewer backups. In January 2004, MSD launched a Sewer Backup (SBU) Response Program to respond to sewer backups in the MSD service area and prevent chronic sewer backups.

For more information about sewer backups and MSD's SBU program, please visit the website: www.call.msdgc.org.
Preventing Sewer Backups

Do you experience recurring sewer backups in your home or business?

The Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) offers sewer backup prevention services to eligible MSD customers under its Sewer Backup (SBU) Response Program.

Through this program, property owners who have experienced multiple sewer backups within the last five years related to a capacity issue in MSD’s public sewer system may receive assistance to prevent future backups.

MSD can install backup prevention devices on site at no cost to the property owner.

If you would like to be considered for the sewer backup prevention program, please call (513) 352-4292 to begin the eligibility and enrollment process.

Eligibility & Enrollment Questionnaire: Task 1

To be eligible for sewer backup prevention services from MSD, your property must experience recurring sewer backups caused by a capacity issue in MSD’s public sewer system.

Backups related to private building sewers or stormwater entering buildings through windows, doorways and cracks in the foundation do not qualify.

To determine eligibility, you must complete an enrollment questionnaire regarding the history of backups at your property.

If your property qualifies for assistance, an MSD representative will contact you by telephone to set up an interview and initial site survey. If your property is not eligible, you will receive an explanatory letter by mail.

Property Owner Interview & Initial Site Survey: Task 2

An MSD representative will interview you either in person or by telephone to gather additional information about your property. Following this interview, a comprehensive property investigation will be conducted.

Comprehensive Property Investigation: Task 3

An MSD crew will visit your property to investigate and identify the source of the sewer backup. This investigation can include:

- Examining the inside of your building sewer and internal plumbing systems using a video camera.
- Dye testing your internal plumbing system and gutters, downspouts or drains.
- Measuring elevations of the property and collecting information on your property’s drainage, layout and construction.

The results of this investigation will be used to identify a potential solution.

Solution Identification Design: Task 4

MSD will develop a solution specific to your property’s needs to prevent future backups. Possible solutions include:

- Installing a backflow prevention device.
- Installing a wastewater pump system.

An MSD representative will work closely with you to review the design plan and installation process and to discuss and approve all plans and schedules prior to the start of any work.

Once an agreement is reached, you will be required to sign a binding Covenant and Agreement document. This is your legal acceptance of the proposed modifications to your property. This contract also applies to any future owners of your property and may be recorded on the property’s deed.

Construction/Installation: Task 5

MSD will select a contractor to install the backup solution and will work with you to schedule the work. Any proposed modifications will be documented with drawings and/or photographs.

MSD will obtain all necessary permits for the job.

During construction, you must provide sufficient access to the property so the work can be done.

To ensure the solution is working properly, MSD may perform periodic maintenance inspections and contact you following significant rain events.
Appendix 4: Project Groundwork Fact Sheet

Project Groundwork Fact Sheet

Project Groundwork is a multi-year and multi-billion dollar initiative to improve and rebuild our sewer system.

What’s the Challenge?
Below our streets lies a maze of sewers that transports wastewater from our homes and businesses to one of seven major treatment plants across Hamilton County.

The majority of this buried infrastructure was designed to meet the needs of an earlier generation and not our modern society. For most people, sewers are “out of sight” as well as “out of mind.”

Today, parts of this sewer system are deteriorating because of age, and during heavy rains, portions of the system do not have the capacity to manage all wastewater flows.

As a result, about 14.1 billion gallons of raw sewage — mixed with stormwater — overflow from our sewers each year into local rivers and streams and can also back up into basements.

Overflows are not only nuisances; they can affect the quality of streams and rivers, carry unsightly debris into communities and degrade aquatic wildlife and habitats.

The vast majority of overflows occurs from combined sewers, which carry both sewage and stormwater in the same pipe. Combined sewers are typically located in the older areas of Hamilton County, where many of the pipes are over 100 years old.

Hamilton County is among the top five locations in the nation for urban combined sewer overflows (CSOs). Overflows can occur as many as 105 times a year at some locations.

What’s the Solution?
To resolve this public health and environmental issue, MSD has embarked on the largest public works project in the history of our community to rebuild and improve our sewer system.

Called Project Groundwork, this multi-year and multi-billion dollar initiative includes hundreds of sewer improvements and stormwater control projects.

Federal and state regulators, including the U.S. EPA, Ohio EPA and the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO), have mandated that MSD capture, treat or remove at least 85% of the 14 billion gallons of annual overflows from combined sewers and eliminate all overflows — about 100 million gallons annually — from sanitary only sewers.

A Three-Pronged Approach
To reduce or eliminate sewer overflows, MSD is focusing on three different strategies:

- **Storage and conveyance**: Constructing larger sewers to transport wastewater to treatment plants, or constructing large underground storage tunnels to capture excess wastewater

- **Treatment (product control)**: Upgrading existing treatment plants to handle more wastewater, or constructing enhanced high-rate treatment facilities to treat flows at the CSO outfall prior to discharge

- **Source control**: Controlling CSOs by reducing the amount of stormwater entering combined sewers during heavy rains. Source control solutions eliminate the need to convey and treat essentially “clean” water. These solutions are called “source control” because they control the source of the problem: stormwater.

To better protect public health and the environment, MSD must rebuild and improve our sewer system.
How Does it Work?
Project Groundwork is being conducted in two phases: Phase 1 (2009-2018) and Phase 2 (after 2018).
Phase 1, estimated to cost about $1.145 billion, must be completed by 2018 (or before) and includes:
• 109 construction projects, including seven bundles or groupings of multiple projects across Hamilton County.
• A three-year action plan for the Lower Mill Creek area to resolve two billion gallons of CSOs each year.
• Special projects to address, reduce and/or eliminate overflows, including MSD’s Sustainable Infrastructure (Source Control) Program.
Phase 2, estimated to cost about $2.1 billion, will be completed after 2018. This phase has not yet been fully developed but is anticipated to include:
• More than 250 construction projects across Hamilton County.

What are the Benefits of the Program?
Project Groundwork is designed to make our communities cleaner, healthier and more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. Some benefits include:
• Reducing CSOs into rivers and streams.
• Eliminating sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) in a typical year.
• Eliminating sewage backups into basements caused by MSD’s public sewer.
• Creating jobs and business revenues for local contractors.
• Encouraging more recreational use of waterways and potentially serving as a catalyst for urban renewal.

Who is Paying for Project Groundwork?
Project Groundwork is funded mainly by MSD customers through monthly or quarterly sewer bills, but MSD is seeking additional funding sources.
To keep the program affordable and beneficial to ratepayers, MSD is committed to finding sustainable solutions that are cost-effective and meet the environmental, social and economic needs of affected communities.

Our 180-year-old sewer system must be improved to meet the needs of our modern society.

Need More Information?
For more information contact:
MSD Engineering Customer Service Line at (513) 557-3594
or MSD.Communications@cincinnati-oh.gov
or visit: www.projectgroundwork.org
Appendix 5: MSD Newsletter Front Page

MSD to Host Two Community Events

Later this month, we will host two community events: our annual stakeholder breakfast at the Sharonville Convention Center and the second Lick Run Community Design Workshop.

Held every October, the stakeholder breakfast gives us an opportunity to talk to local elected officials and community leaders about current and future MSD programs and activities. At this year’s event on October 25, we will be showcasing our new Strategic Plan for 2012-2014. Stakeholders will also have an opportunity to discuss sewer-related issues in their communities.

At the second Lick Run workshop, to be held the evening of October 26 at Gilbert A. Dater Montessori in Westwood, participants will provide additional input on the proposed Lick Run Alternative.

This storm sewer separation project would eliminate about 800 million gallons of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) annually in the Lick Run watershed.

To learn more about the proposed Lick Run Alternative and to view results from the first workshop, visit www.projectgroundwork.org/lickrun.

Preview of MSD’s 2012-2014 Strategic Plan

MSD has completed the planning phase for its new Strategic Plan, “Expanding Our Horizons: Vision 2012-2014” and will be deploying it for workforce training and implementation during the balance of 2011.

The new Strategic Plan is both a continuation and expansion of the 2009-2011 MSD Strategic Plan, “Aligning Our Horizons.” The new plan continues a focus on the five areas identified in the current plan critical to MSD’s strategic and everyday success: infrastructure, employees, environment, customers and finances. The new plan adds a revised sixth goal area that is essential to MSD’s future: organizational performance measurement and sustainability.

During the final Strategic Plan retreat in August, MSD Executive Director Tony Parrott borrowed a line from “This Is It,” a popular Kenny Loggins song. “This is it … the waiting is over,” he said of the new plan’s completion. “It is the culmination of hard work by the MSD Superintendents, the existing goal team members and the Transformational Leadership Program graduates. It embraces and expands the accomplishments we’ve achieved under the current strategic plan and positions us for our future.”

The new Strategic Plan builds upon initiatives that began in 2009, such as the MSD Core Competency project and its output: the identification of key workforce behavioral traits (labeled as the “MSD DNA”) used for everyday HR processes such as recruitment and selection, performance evaluations, training and career development efforts.

The 2012-2014 plan additionally expands directions earmarked in 2009, like infrastructure reliability, incorporating it into sustainable watershed-based planning and facilities management.

Some new directions are innovative, challenging ourselves to seek new revenues through cooperative business ventures, such as regional bio-solids processing and disinfecting hypochlorite generation.

Every MSD employee will receive training on the plan.

During the training, each MSD employee will receive their copy of the Strategic Plan, which will be a workbook that can be used for personal performance goal setting.

“The 2012-2014 Strategic Plan, like its predecessor, is a blueprint for MSD’s success,” said Biju George, MSD’s Deputy Director and also Interim Director of Greater Cincinnati Water Works. “This plan continues to demonstrate the power of more than 600 people to carry out the Mission, with their eye on the Vision, working toward the same goals every day.”
Appendix 6: Green Roof Loan Program Fact Sheet

The Green Roof Loan Program, a joint initiative between the City of Cincinnati’s Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ), the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) and the Ohio EPA provides, local property owners with access to low-interest loans for green roofs and accompanying on-ground stormwater controls.

What is the Green Roof Loan Program?
The Green Roof Loan Program offers low-interest loans to property owners for the design and construction of green roofs with an option to incorporate on-ground stormwater controls. Acceptable on-ground systems include cisterns, bioswales, indoor grey water harvesting, rain gardens, rain barrels and/or pervious pavement.

The owners of new and existing residential, commercial and industrial buildings are eligible to apply.

What are Green Roofs and their Benefits?
A green roof is a roof of a building that is partially or completely covered by plants and soil over a waterproof membrane and drainage system.

Green roofs are appealing because of their positive environmental and economic benefits, such as:

Stormwater Management
Green roof projects help reduce stormwater runoff in two ways: (1) Green roofs use rainwater before it reaches the ground and flows to sewers, and (2) green roofs delay the runoff process, allowing water to enter the sewer system after a wet weather event has passed.

In addition to reducing sewer overflows, the runoff from green roofs is filtered through the vegetation, thus, reducing pollutants that would be carried to local waterways.

Green roofs can benefit MSD by reducing the amount of stormwater runoff that enters sewer systems, a major cause of sewer overflows. When it rains, sewer pipes can fill beyond capacity, sometimes resulting in sewer overflows into local rivers and streams or basement backups.

Temperature and Air Quality Improvements
Because green space is limited in many urban areas, cities are experiencing a phenomenon known as the “Heat Island Effect,” which causes temperatures to be significantly higher at night than in nearby rural areas. Green roof vegetation counteracts this effect by removing heat and moisture in the air. The roof vegetation also filters pollutants and greenhouse gases from the air.

Energy Use Reductions
Since green roofs store and use heat that would normally be absorbed by a conventional roof, a building with a green roof uses less energy from its indoor cooling system. During winter months, a green roof helps insulate the building and prevent heat loss.

How to Apply to the Green Roof Loan Program
Interested property owners need to complete an application for OEQ along with additional project information to ensure compliance with the program’s criteria. The application is available by calling (513) 352-5340. This additional information includes:

- A thorough description of the green roof design.
- Construction drawings.
- Maintenance plans for the green roof.
- A structural report from a licensed, independent, third-party professional that shows the building can support a green roof.
- Stormwater runoff calculations.
- Proof that the property is owned by the applicant and is within the MSD service area.
- Plans for an on-ground stormwater control (if being included).
- Verification that the roof will be constructed and maintained by a trained and experienced person.
- Verification that the project complies with all applicable laws, regulations and codes.

Accepted applicants will be issued a Certificate of Qualification that is then submitted to a participating lending institution to begin the bank’s loan screening process.

Applications that are not accepted will be returned with comments regarding which areas did not meet the criteria.

Green Roof Layers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetation</th>
<th>Growth medium</th>
<th>Drainage, aeration, water storage</th>
<th>Insulation</th>
<th>Root barrier</th>
<th>Roofing membrane</th>
<th>Structural support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

While green roofs can differ in design, the diagram above shows common green roof components.
What Costs are Covered Under the Green Roof Loan Program?
Most costs associated with installing the green roof and on-ground stormwater controls are covered through the loan. These costs include:

- The design and installation of the green roof and on-ground stormwater control system.
- Building and roof upgrades needed to support increased weight of roof.
- All materials needed for a green roof system.
- Maintenance contract or operation and maintenance for up to five years.
- Roof accessibility for maintenance.
- Permitting costs related to installation.
- Warranty costs for green roofs.
- Roof repairs that are not covered under warranty if roof failure is not the result lack of maintenance.
- Permanent educational signage on site.

Loans will not cover:

- Construction or repair of non-roof building components.
- Construction or repair not related to on-ground stormwater controls.
- Retention or detention basins.

What are the Terms and Conditions of the Program?
Applicants must comply with the following terms and conditions as part of the program, such as:

- Any necessary building permits must be applied for by the applicant.
- All building code requirements must be followed, including codes for structure, access, plumbing and safety.
- A maintenance plan must be in place, and the owner must agree that the green roof will exist for its predicted life span.
- Property owners must be provided with at least a 20-year warranty for waterproofing and green roof components.
- Property owners must be provided at least a three-year warranty for plant life & health and establishment & coverage (80% in three years).
- Documentation of energy costs (bills from energy provider) must be provided by property owner to MSD for five years after green roof installation.

How is the Green Roof Loan Program Funded?
The Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance has made funding available for stormwater best management practices and has partnered with participating lending institutions to make the funding available through the Linked Deposit Loan Program.

What are the Minimum Design Standards for the Green Roof Loan Program?
The following design standards must be adhered to for the program:

- Project must comply with Historic Preservation guidelines (if applicable).
- Within two years, the system must decrease net rainwater runoff and capture 80% of one inch of rain.
- The green roof must have continuous growth that measures at least 500 square feet or 50% of the ground floor area.
- The green roof should include a mix of vegetation with a sustainable growing medium that replenishes nutrients and retains moisture. If applicant proposes using just one vegetation type, documentation of its sustainability and appropriateness must be included.
- Vegetation must be appropriate for roof conditions and Cincinnati’s climate.
- Maintenance and irrigation guidelines for vibrant plant health must be provided by the green roof manufacturer or installer.

Taft Information Technology High School: A 32,000-square foot shallow vegetative roof was installed on the roof of the Taft Information Technology High School.

Need More Information?
For more information contact:
Ms. Robin Henderson, OEQ at (513) 352-5340  
or email Robin.Henderson@cincinnati-oh.gov