



Environmental Advisory Board

Meeting Agenda

August 26, 2026, 3:00 P.M.

Centennial II Griesel Conference Room

Order of Business

- I. Public Comment**
- II. Call to Order**
- III. Administrative Action***
 - Approval of July 29, 2026 – Meeting minutes
- IV. Office of Environment and Sustainability Comments**
 - Storms and City response, Green Infrastructure report request
 - Benchmarking updates
 - Environmental Justice codification
- V. Information/Updates**
 - Western Hills Viaduct construction
- VI. Open Discussion**
 - House Bill 303 resolution
 - Sustainability Central resolution
- VII. Items for Vote***
 - House Bill 303 Resolution
 - Sustainability Central Resolution
- VIII. Presentations**
 - Green Umbrella Climate Action Fellowship Impact – Jamiya Barnett
- IX. Next Meeting**
 - The next EAB meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 30, 2026, at 3:00 PM.
- X. Adjournment**

Agenda Packet Materials:

- July 29, 2026 Meeting minutes
- Environmental Justice Recommendations letter
- House Bill 303 Resolution
- Sustainability Central draft letters of support

Environmental Advisory Board

Minutes of July 29, 2026

Members Present:

- **In Person:** Dave Schmitt; Douglas Walton; Susan Sprigg; Andrew Musgrave
- **Virtual:** Emmy Shroeder; Ericka Copeland; Kylie Johnson; Megan O'Keefe; Michael Roman; Monica Perdomo; Nathan Alley; Nayana Shah; Van Sullivan; Yasmine Allen

Members Absent: Ashlee Young; Briana Mazzolini-Blanchard; Carla Walker; Sarah Kent

Staff Present: Amanda Testerman; Lauren Clark; Ben Russ; Rachel Bickett; Rob McCracken

Meeting: A meeting of the Environmental Advisory Board was held on July 29, 2026, at 3:00 PM at Centennial II HR Conference Room A, 805 Central Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

Meeting Agenda:

- I. **Public Comment**
- II. **Call to Order at 3:05 PM**
- III. **Administrative Action***
 - Approval of June 24, 2026 – Meeting minutes
- IV. **Office of Environment & Sustainability Comments- Amanda Testerman, Lauren Clark, Rob McCracken, Rachel Bickett**
 - Benchmarking Policy draft – Rob McCracken
 - Seeds of Change awards – Rachel Bickett
 - Climate Equity Indicators Report update – Lauren Clark
 - West Fork Incinerator Demolition – Amanda Testerman
- V. **Items for Vote***
 - None
- VI. **Presentations-**
 - **Councilmember Ryan James**
 - **Sustainability Central** – Colleen McSwiggin
- VII. **Discussion**
 - Western Hills Viaduct
- VIII. **Next Meeting**
 - Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at 3:00 PM
- IX. **Adjournment at 4:34 PM**

To: Councilmember Meeka Owens
From: City of Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board
Date: December 18, 2025
Subject: Initial Recommendations for Codifying Environmental Justice in Cincinnati

Dear Councilmember Owens,

The Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) respectfully submits this set of initial recommendations for your consideration to advance codification of environmental justice in city decision-making mechanisms, with the attached Fair Shake Environmental Services assessment and Climate Equity Indicators Report as supporting documents.

We recommend both immediate steps and long-term exploration. By starting with an administrative baseline (recommendations 1 and 2) and directing staff to analyze more complex tools (recommendations 3 and 4), Council can ensure that Cincinnati builds a defensible, equitable framework that prioritizes community voice and aligns with the city's Climate Equity Indicators Report and the Green Cincinnati Plan. These recommendations represent the first phase of the Board's work, and additional recommendations may be offered in the future.

Recommendations:

1. **Update Climate Equity Indicators Report:** Request that Council submit a motion to update the 2021 report to track progress and disparities (e.g., urban heat, air quality, energy burden).
2. **Improve Citywide Language Access:** Work with the Administration on language access processes. Pilot a centralized contract and appoint a Language Access Coordinator; begin with translation of essential EJ-related materials.
3. **Explore Participatory Budgeting:** Direct staff to conduct a feasibility study, referencing Columbus' successful 2025 initiative and Cincinnati's charter city authority.
4. **Explore Community Benefits Fund:** Request legal and financial analysis of whether a dedicated revenue model (similar to Portland's Clean Energy Fund) is viable under Ohio law and in Cincinnati.

These recommendations reflect several months of EAB discussions with Fair Shake Legal Services and the Office of Environment and Sustainability. We have distilled those conversations into a phased approach tailored to Cincinnati's community and government landscape. Included below are key findings from the Fair Shake assessment that support our recommendations. We welcome further discussion and stand ready to support you and Council in advancing this work. Thank you for your continued equity and climate justice leadership for our city.

Sincerely,

City of Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board

Fair Shake Assessment Supporting Findings

- **Language Access (Page 4):** Cities budget \$200k-\$1.4M annually; centralized contracts reduce costs.
- **Participatory Budgeting (Page 8):** Columbus launched a \$9M initiative for 2026; Cleveland faced state preemption; Ohio law requires elected officials to sign off on expenditures, limiting community-only decision authority.
- **Portland Clean Energy Fund (Page 10):** Dedicated revenue stream for community-driven climate projects via surcharge on large retailers; governed by a community-appointed committee.
- **Cincinnati-specific considerations (Page 18):** Most tools in assessment are complementary; participatory budgeting must avoid state preemption; permit-denial authority may reduce needs for Community Benefit Agreements; administrative tools (language access, reporting) strengthen all other mechanisms by ensuring transparency and reducing redundancy.
- **Key Themes (Page 16):** Administrative actions are quick, low legal risk, low-cost; Contractual actions are enforceable with medium implementation complexity, but are limited in scope as they only apply to incentivized projects; Statutory actions are the strongest legal tool but legally complex.

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NO. _____ - 2026

DECLARING the Council of the City of Cincinnati's support for state legislation allowing for the creation of a Community Energy pilot program in the State of Ohio.

WHEREAS, community energy facilities allow customers to choose the source of their electricity, including customers that desire to purchase solar energy but do not have suitable conditions to install their own solar facilities; and

WHEREAS, community solar facilities are a more decentralized, resilient and efficient way to deliver electricity to ratepayers; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, Ohioans saw a 26 percent increase on their electricity bills, and community solar facilities have been shown to save households 5 percent to 20 percent on their electricity costs; and

WHEREAS, while Ohio imports 20 percent of its energy, and regional energy prices are increasing significantly, a community energy pilot program would produce energy locally, avoiding costly transmission upgrades and improving grid reliability for all ratepayers; and

WHEREAS, a study from Ohio University determined that a "Community Solar Pilot Program" would generate an estimated \$5.6 billion in gross output and \$409.5 million in local tax revenues; and

WHEREAS, Ohio-based solar manufacturing companies and workers will benefit from local community solar projects enabled by this legislation; and

WHEREAS, 24 other states currently have specific enabling legislation for community energy, which provides a framework that supports the production of community energy facilities in those states; and

WHEREAS, community energy is consistent with the goals and recommendations of the Green Cincinnati Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Legislature is considering House Bill 303, the Community Energy pilot program, in this 136th General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 303 passed the Ohio House with a 77 to 8 affirmative vote and is awaiting passage in the Ohio Senate; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That the Council of the City of Cincinnati finds that House Bill 303, the Community Energy pilot program, is a suitable introduction to community energy and will benefit residents of the City of Cincinnati and Ohio.

Section 2. That the Council calls upon the Ohio legislature to authorize a community energy pilot program.

Section 3. That the Council urges the Ohio legislature to pass House Bill 303.

Passed: _____, 2026

Aftab Pureval, Mayor

Attest: _____
Clerk

To the Members of Cincinnati City Council:

On behalf of the Environmental Advisory Board for the City of Cincinnati, we are writing this letter in support of Sustainability Central and their acquisition of the soon-to-be-closed Cincinnati Police Department gun range in Evendale. Sustainability Central's plan to transform the site into a campus with space for multiple environmentally-oriented non-profit organizations and businesses is both visionary and needed in the region, since co-location will allow organizations to streamline processes, increase collaborations, and increase impacts in a number of areas, including workforce development, landfill diversion, and organics processing.

In addition, we believe the campus will be a community asset and help heal some of the damage that was done to the gun range's neighbors in Lincoln Heights and Woodlawn, who have had to listen to gunfire for decades. We know that Sustainability Central is also making a concerted effort to make sure that the neighbors of those villages have a say in "what comes next" at the site, and to make sure that neighbors will play an active role in the work done at the campus.

We hope you will consider supporting the formation of the sustainability campus, including one of the following options:

- donating the site to Sustainability Central,
- leasing it to them for \$1 a year for a minimum of 80 years (to match how long the gun range has been open), or
- selling it to them at a reduced rate.

We recommend that a Memorandum of Understanding be worked out between the City and Sustainability Central to delineate which of those relationships is most feasible for both parties, since we believe the benefits for the City, including impacts for dozens of the Green Cincinnati Plan's Priority Actions, will far outnumber Cincinnati's initial financial support.

Although we know it will take years for the entire campus to be built, we very much look forward to promoting the work that will be accomplished there.

Sincerely,

Dave Schmitt
City of Cincinnati
Environmental Advisory Board Chair

To Whom It May Concern:

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Although we know it will take years for the entire campus to be built, we very much look forward to promoting the work that will be accomplished there, since we believe that the benefits to Cincinnati, including for dozens of the Green Cincinnati Plan's Priority Actions, and to the region will be considerable.

Sincerely,

Dave Schmitt
City of Cincinnati
Environmental Advisory Board Chair



CITY OF KENT, OHIO

August 6, 2026

The Honorable Heidi Workman
Ohio State Representative, District 72
77 South High Street, 11th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Representative Workman:

The City of Kent is writing to express its strong support for enacting House Bill (HB) 303 to establish Ohio's first pilot programming in support of small-scale, community-based energy power sources including solar, natural gas, and other emerging energy technologies.

Passage of HB 303 will significantly further Kent's efforts to move forward with the installation of a proposed solar array on a 17-acre brownfield site. Under current Ohio regulations and available programming options, the proposed project is not financially viable if residents and commercial entities in the area cannot sign up as users at the new energy facility. The primary objective of HB 303 is to develop community-based energy facilities. The inclusion of a provision in the proposed bill that encourages such projects be developed on brownfield sites further supports Kent's plan to redevelop a local brownfield property and provide those in the community with a new local and sustainable energy source option.

As Ohio works to address rising electricity demand and increasing pressure on energy prices, it is imperative that Ohio's policymakers approve legislation that supports innovative programming to expand power source options throughout Ohio. HB 303 will create real opportunities for communities to develop small-scale local energy facilities that will result in greater consumer choice, encourage the redevelopment of more brownfield sites, and promote economic development by enabling improved energy grid reliability and speed which are necessary for attracting new businesses and keeping Ohio competitive in an ever-evolving economy.

Thank you for all you do for the City of Kent and your consideration of HB 303. Your support of this critical legislation will continue the great work you do for District 72.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack Amrhein', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Jack Amrhein
Honorable Mayor

On behalf of the Members of Kent City Council

Melissa Celko	Eric Dreger	Robin Turner	Chris Hook	Heidi Schaffer Bish	Jeff Clapper	Benjamin Tipton	Tracy Wallach	Sarah Wesley
Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	At Large	At Large	At Large



Environmental Advisory Board

August 26, 2026





Environmental Advisory Board

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Public Comment

- Members of the public may provide comments to the Board or its committees in writing to OES staff or in person at a public meeting.
- Written comments shall be submitted to OES no later than 4:00p.m. on the business day before the meeting, and shall be distributed by OES to all Board or committee members.
- Comments made during a public meeting are referred to as “Public Comment”. A person providing Public Comment is limited to **two minutes**.
- Public Comment shall be limited to items of interest before the Board, and shall only be permitted prior to the commencement of the business portion of the meeting.

Public Comment Open:

- In-person Attendees
- Online Attendees



Administrative Action

- Approval of July 29, 2026 Meeting Minutes



OES Updates

- Storms and City Response, Green Infrastructure report request
- Benchmarking updates
- Environmental Justice codification

A Warmer, Wetter Atmosphere

How climate change shaped the July 17, 2026 storm and flash floods

Rising heat • Rising humidity • Rising rainfall intensity • Rising system stress



July 17: A 1,000-Year Storm

5–6"

Amount of rain in roughly one hour

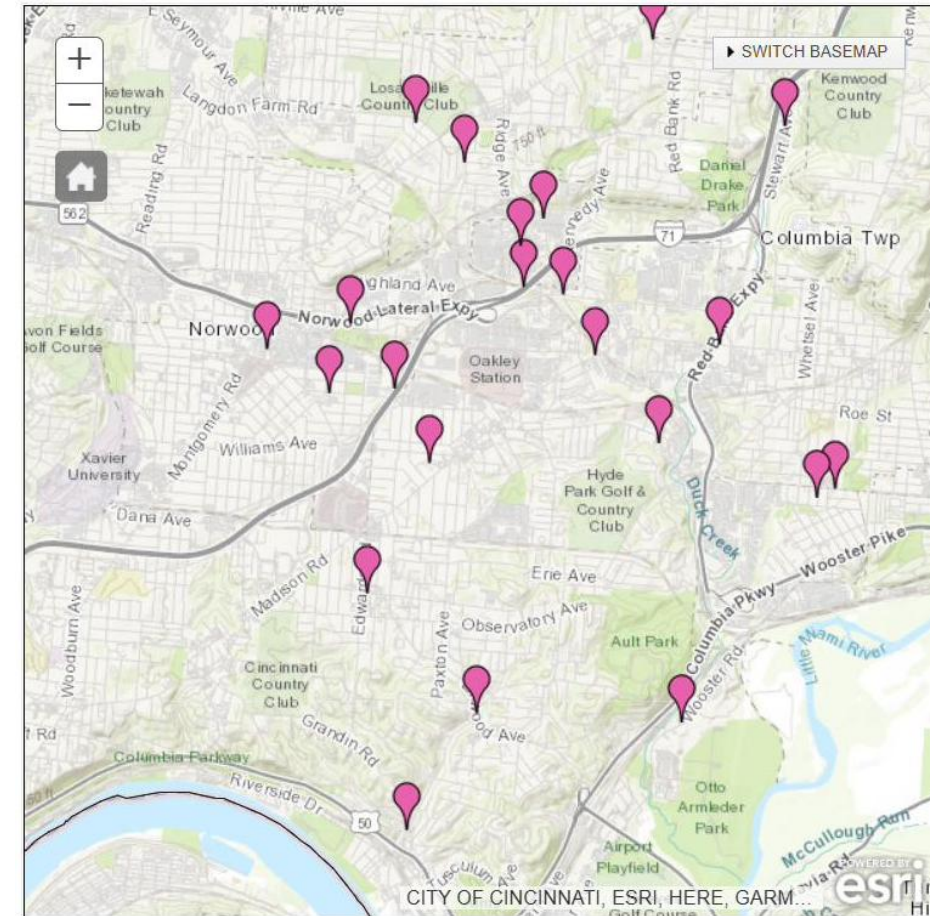
**1,000-year
storm**

This storm was beyond the annual average 85% wet weather flow design capacity of modern sewer systems

1,600+

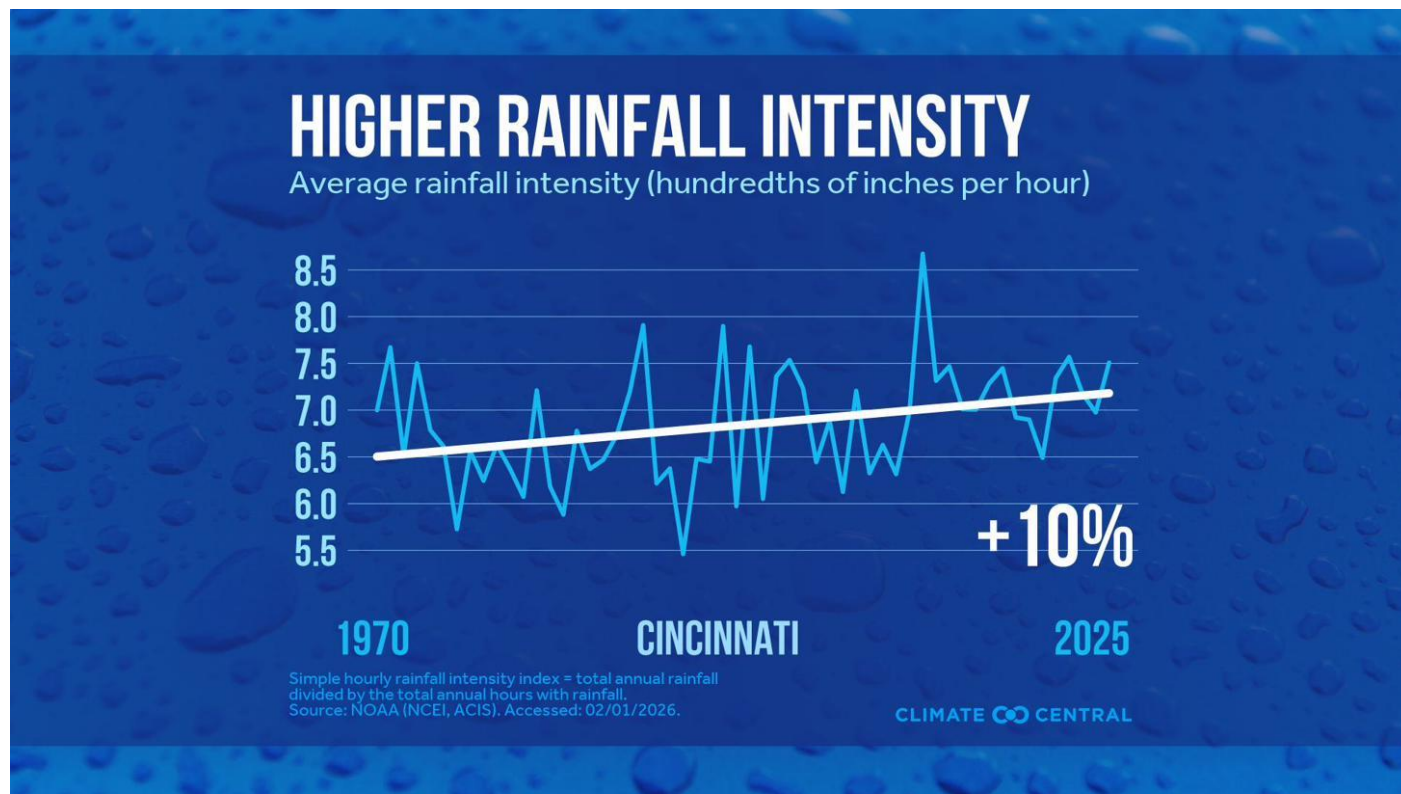
The number of sewer backups and flooded basements reported to MSD

**Oakley • Madisonville • Hyde Park • Pleasant Ridge •
Mt. Lookout • Norwood • Fairfax**



Confirmed flash flood reports, afternoon and evening of Friday, July 17, 2026.

Increasing Storm Intensity



The same amount of rain, delivered faster. Sewer inlets are sized for rate, not total. This can create capacity strain.

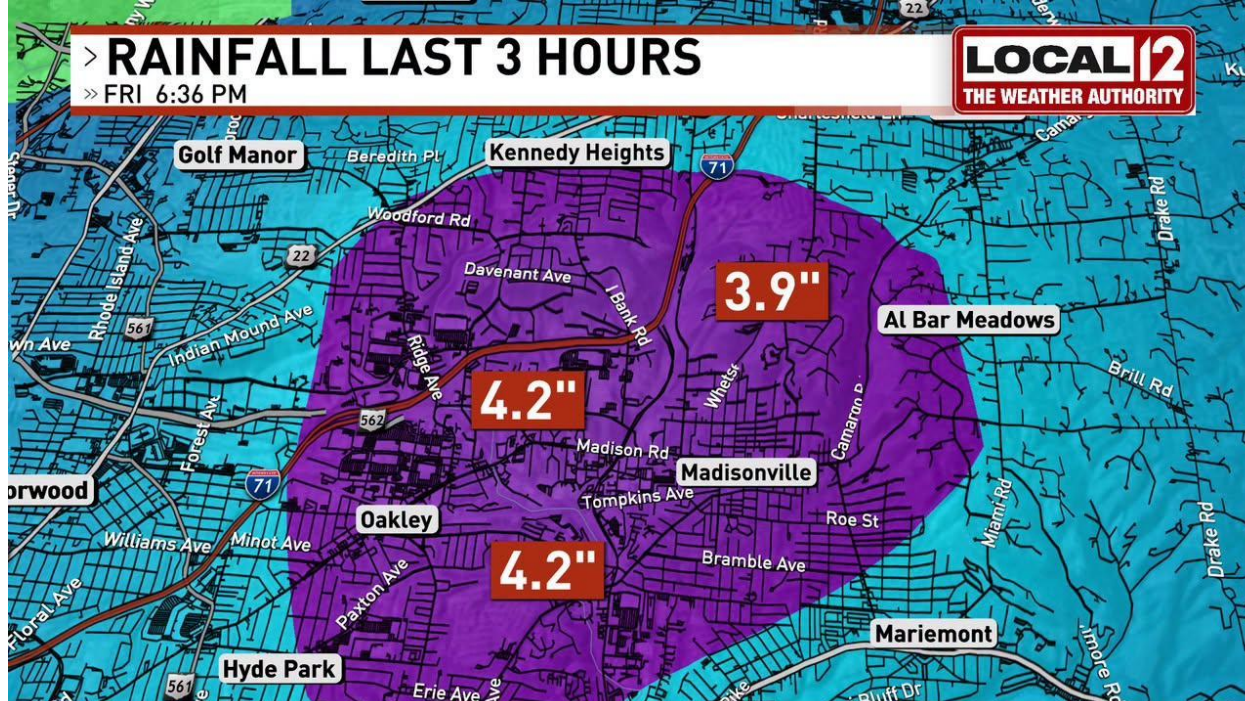
+10%

Average hourly rainfall intensity in Cincinnati, 1970–2025

+0.26"

Increase in annual precipitation per decade in Ohio since 1896

Comparable Rain. A Fraction of the Time.



Three-hour rainfall totals over Oakley, Madisonville and Kennedy Heights, 6:36 PM.

2016

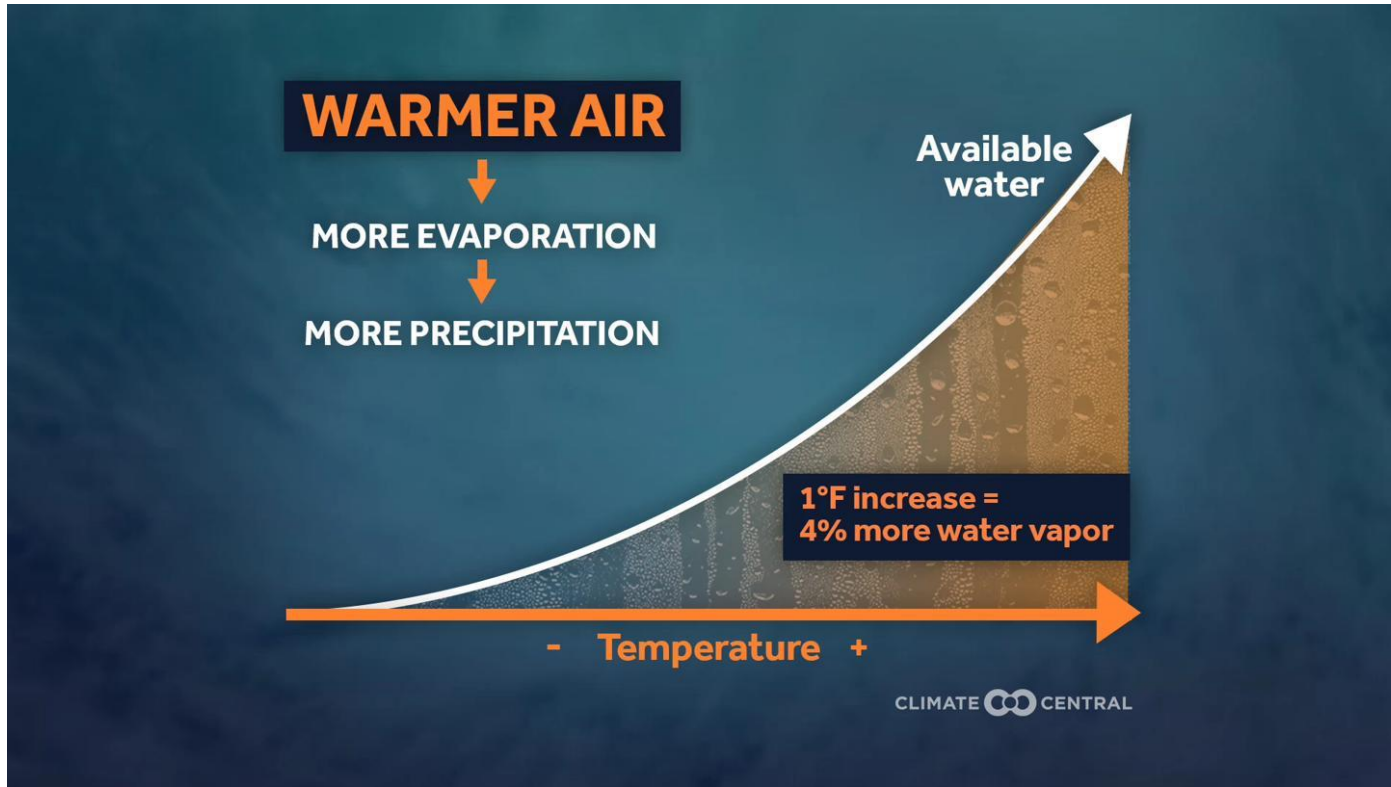
August 16: a comparable storm total, spread across a relatively longer period of time that day

2026

July 17: a comparable or greater total delivered in a fraction of the time

An unprecedented number of intense rainstorms in quick succession this summer, on ground that never fully dried.

Warmer Air Holds More Water

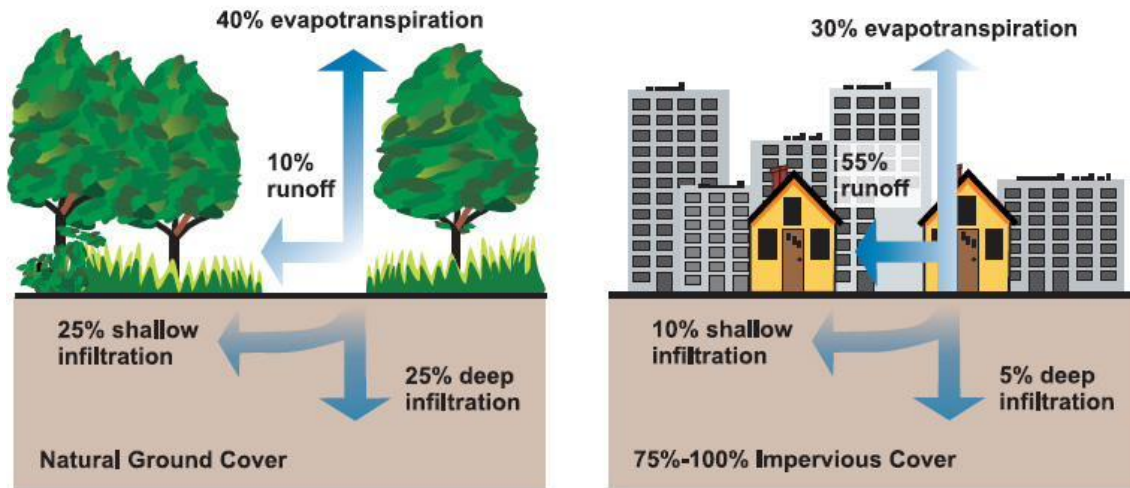


+4%

More water vapor in the air for every 1°F of warming

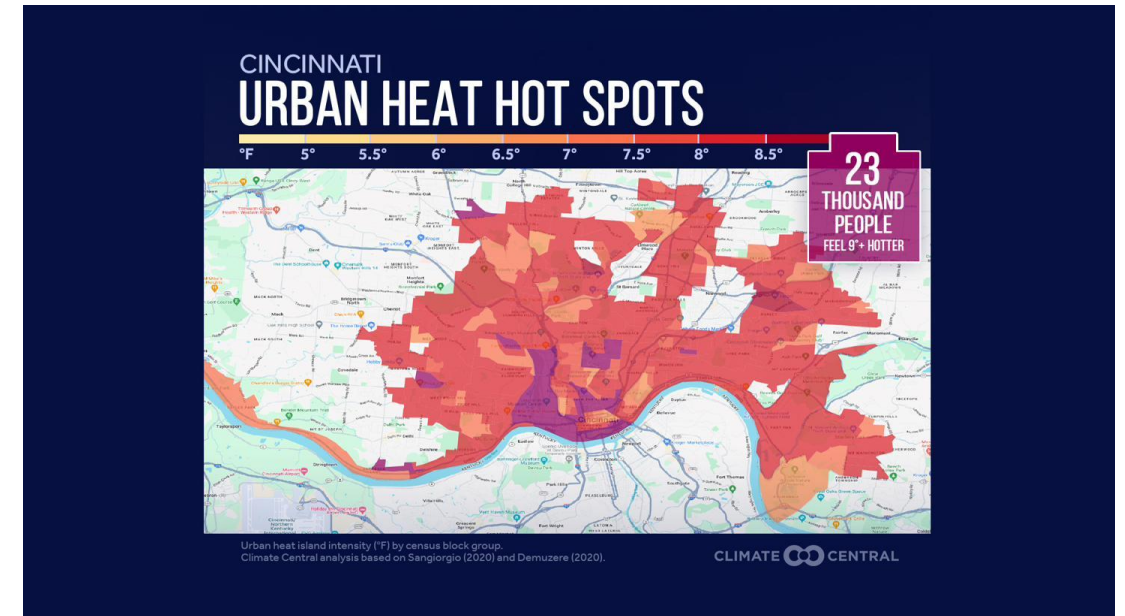
- **Heat is the engine.**
Warmer surfaces and warmer air drive more evaporation.
- **Humidity is the fuel.**
Mid-July air masses now carry more water vapor to work with.
- **Stalling concentrates it.**
Weak upper-level winds cause cells to sit over the same geography rather than moving across quickly.

Pavement Influences Where Water Flows



Natural ground cover vs. 75–100% impervious cover: runoff rises from 10% to 55%.

Impervious cover shortens the time between rainfall and peak flooding, concentrating runoff in low-lying areas and producing rapid overland flooding.



Urban heat island intensity by census block group.

23,000 residents live in blocks that run 9°F+ hotter. These are the same blocks where pavement influences runoff.

Capacity Stress Across Systems

● HARD INFRASTRUCTURE

- Storm inlets and sewers exceeded; rain arrives faster than it can enter
- Combined system overwhelmed; overflows and backups followed
- Streets became conveyance; low-lying blocks became detention
- Saturated, steep hillsides add landslide and retaining-wall risk

● SOFT INFRASTRUCTURE

- Simultaneous emergency calls across multiple neighborhoods
- 1,000+ backup reports requiring individual field investigation
- Household displacement, shelter, cleanup and insurance navigation
- Repeat events as on July 21, 2026 compound faster than recovery can finish

Action Items

SMU: Stormwater
Management Plan

Council Report: After
Action Analysis
(Motion 202602476)

Build the Sponge City

Let stormwater infiltrate soil rather than enter the sewer system
and size the built system for the storms ahead.



Green Cincinnati Plan

● NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Street trees, rain gardens, green roofs and bioswales. Build on Lick Run Greenway, Northside and Spring Grove detention, North Fairmount rain gardens, Evanston and Avondale bioswales.

● TARGET BY RISK

Prioritize green infrastructure in and upstream from our most flood-prone and heat-burdened communities. Incentivize action.

● BUILT DETENTION & CONVEYANCE

Compliment green infrastructure. Build upon MSD's Mill Creek pump station replacement and expansion of the wet weather smart sewer detention system.

● INVEST EQUITABLY

Equitable restructuring of sewer rates and sewer infrastructure improvements, so cost does not track vulnerability.



Information & Updates

- Western Hills Viaduct construction



Open Discussion

- House Bill 303 resolution
- Sustainability Central resolution



Items for Vote

- House Bill 303 resolution
- Sustainability Central resolution



Presentations

- Green Umbrella Climate Action Fellowship Impact – Jamiya Barnett



2026 CLIMATE ACTION FELLOWSHIP OVERVIEW

City of Cincinnati
Environmental Advisory
Board

AUGUST 26, 2026

FELLOWSHIP AT A GLANCE



9

CLIMATE ACTION FELLOWS

Emerging professionals
supporting climate action
across the region

8

PLACEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Local governments + GU
Internal Programs

10

WEEKS OF PROJECT-BASED CLIMATE WORK

Project-based climate work
supported by mentorship,
field experiences +
professional development

HOW THE FELLOWSHIP WORKS



HOST-DRIVEN PROJECTS

Projects are based on real community and organizational needs.

FELLOW CAPACITY

Fellows provide dedicated summer support for research, planning, engagement and implementation.

GREEN UMBRELLA SUPPORT

Training, mentorship, check-ins, field trips, technical connections and regional resources.

Cincinnati + Hamilton County

City of Cincinnati - Innovation Team

SUMMER PROJECTS

- Heat at Bus Stops
- Sustainable Procurement
- BuildReady Cincinnati
- Cooling Hubs in Cincinnati
- Green Cincinnati Plan (2023) Review

Hamilton County, OH

SUMMER PROJECTS

- Sustainability Planning
- Climate Budgeting
- Climate Migration
- Energy Benchmarking
- Sustainable Procurement



Covington + Oxford

City of Covington, KY

SUMMER PROJECTS

- Energy Benchmarking
- Plan Review
- Sustainable Procurement
- Climate Budgeting
- Green Schools Development
- Climate Migration
- Greenspace Programs
- Community Engagement
- Policy Adoption
- Sustainability Dashboard

City of Oxford, OH

SUMMER PROJECTS

- Tornado Risk + Resilience Assessment
- Sustainable Procurement: Pesticide + Herbicide Alternatives
- Energy Benchmarking



Mariemont + Anderson Township

Village of Mariemont, OH

SUMMER PROJECTS

- Parks Recycling
- Sustainable Restaurant Program
- Hillside Stabilization
- Energy Benchmarking

Anderson Township, OH

SUMMER PROJECTS

- Comprehensive Plan Analysis + Sustainability Recommendations
- Clough Pike Floodplain Restoration
- Greenspace Story Map
- Climate Relevance Heat Map



Green Umbrella Programs

Greenspace Alliance

SUMMER PROJECTS

- 25 Communities Comprehensive Plan Review
- Greenspace Policy Recommendations
- Thrive Together Greenspace Recommendations
- Anderson + Covington Fellow Collaboration
- Climate Migration Blog
- Greenspace Alliance Working Groups + Partnerships

Green + Healthy Schools Network

SUMMER PROJECTS

- Green + Healthy Schools Symposium Evaluation
- Composting + Recycling Project
- Green + Healthy Schools Team Development
- GHS Webinar + Workshops



ONE SUMMER. A WIDE RANGE OF CLIMATE ACTION.



PLANNING + POLICY

Comprehensive Plans

Climate Action
Planning

Climate Budgeting

Procurement

Policy
Recommendations

DATA + RESILIENCE

Energy Benchmarking

Heat

Climate Migration

GIS + Mapping

Flood + Storm
Resilience

COMMUNITY + IMPLEMENTATION

Greenspace

Schools

Waste + Recycling

Community
Engagement

Funding +
Partnerships

THE WORK DOESN'T END IN AUGUST

Fellowship projects create a foundation for continued partnership, resources and implementation support.



25 COMMUNITIES PROJECT

Continuing The Work

- **Follow-up support** on fellowship projects + recommendations
- **Peer learning** across participating local governments
- **New programming + resources** based on community needs
- **Connections** to GU staff, partners, funding + technical expertise



Green Umbrella

REGIONAL CLIMATE COLLABORATIVE



Next Meeting

- September 30, 2026 at 3pm
 - Centennial II Griesel Conference Room