PRESS RELEASE
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MEDIA CONTACTS:
Marcus J. Barlow
Press Secretary
Office of the Mayor
E-mail: mbarlow@indygov.org
Office: 317-327-3713
Cell: 317-496-5515

Kit Werbe
Public Information Officer
Indianapolis Department of Public Works
E-mail: kwerbe@indygov.org
Office: 317.327.4669

DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS TO REDUCE FLOODING,
IMPROVE HEALTH CONDITIONS IN FROG HOLLOW
$1.5 million project will divert 80 percent of water away from neighborhood

INDIANAPOLIS – (July 1, 2008) Mayor Gregory A. Ballard announced a $1.5 million drainage improvement project in the Frog Hollow area today at Mid-West MC Clubhouse. The Highland Creek and White River Stormwater Diversion Project will dramatically reduce yearly flooding and help reduce septic system failures in the neighborhoods located along Highland Creek, just east of Harding Street and south of Troy Avenue.

When improvements are complete, 80 percent of the water during the majority of floods will be diverted away from the neighborhood. The project will redirect stormwater from Highland Creek to the White River using a combination of box culverts, storm sewer pipe and diversion structures to provide relief from flooding downstream.

“For too long, Marion County has faced flooding problems due to poor infrastructure,” Mayor Ballard said. “Frog Hollow is continuously one of the hardest hit areas in the city. This project is a long overdue step toward providing relief to these Frog Hollow residents and will lessen flooding substantially, resulting in a cleaner, healthier neighborhood.”

The project will positively affect more than 150 structures, which consist primarily of residences and some businesses in and near the area. The project will reduce damage to homes from flooding and improve the functionality of septic systems. When flooding occurs, septic systems can malfunction, and raw sewage can mix with flood waters to create unhealthy conditions. Residents and businesses also will benefit from improved driving conditions and safer travel in and out of the area by emergency vehicles.

“Frog Hollow residents have been voicing their concerns about this problem to the city for years,” Mayor Ballard said. “Today's announcement is an acknowledgement that the city is listening and we are doing something about this problem. Poor drainage in Indianapolis poses health and safety risks.

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In warm weather, standing water and sewage discharges can become a breeding ground for insects. In the winter, frozen water on streets can cause black ice and potholes, and it deteriorates the pavement. This project will help address these issues.”

The Department of Public Works has completed a preliminary study, and four design options for drainage improvements were identified. City engineers are moving forward with the recommended alternative, which will divert stormwater from Highland Creek away from Frog Hollow to the White River. Planning, design and construction will cost approximately $1.5 million.

“The city has looked at a variety of possible solutions for this area over the past 20 years,” said Bob Masbaum, Department of Public Works Acting Deputy Director. “This innovative project approach is a great example of value engineering. We looked at options that cost upwards of tens of millions of dollars and have agreed on a cost-effective, $1.5 million solution that will divert 80 percent of the water away from the neighborhood during major storm events. While the residents will still experience some localized flooding, this will address many concerns.”

The city is also including water quality improvement elements in the project that will reduce the amount of pollutants in the stormwater when it reaches the White River.

The Board of Public Works awarded Bernardin Lochmueller & Associates the design contract for the project Wednesday, June 25. DPW plans to begin construction in 2009 and will hold a series of public meetings to involve residents in the project design in early fall 2008.

The Highland Creek and White River Stormwater Improvement Project is part of the city’s Clean Streams-Healthy Neighborhoods program, which is designed to curb raw sewage overflows into rivers and streams, address chronic flooding, eliminate failing septic tanks and improve quality of life in Indianapolis neighborhoods.

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