



MUNICIPAL MONEY MATTERS

Philadelphia City Controller Christy Brady

August 2026

The Cost of Managing Philadelphia's Flood Risk

Heavy rainfall and severe storms can cause significant flooding, as Philadelphia experienced during storms on June 22 and July 11. These events brought intense rainfall and localized flooding to neighborhoods across the city.

With hurricane season running from June 1 through November 30, the summer and fall months are an important time to understand how Philadelphia manages stormwater and prepares for flooding.

Managing Stormwater

The Philadelphia Water Department manages stormwater through a combination of traditional or

"gray" stormwater infrastructure and green infrastructure. Gray infrastructure, including drains, stormwater pipes, and treatment facilities, collects and transports stormwater. Green infrastructure uses plants, soil, and stone to absorb and slow runoff. Together, these systems help manage stormwater runoff and reduce flooding.

Philadelphia property owners pay a monthly stormwater fee to support the city's stormwater management system including maintenance of the city's network of pipes and inlets. According to PWD, the city's annual stormwater management costs exceed \$100 million.

The city's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has also introduced a new tool to help residents prepare for flooding. In May, OEM launched a public flood monitoring system that provides real-time information about water levels and conditions across the city. Residents can search by address or location and view live cameras in flood-prone areas.

Long-Term Infrastructure Costs

A 2023 climate cost study by the Center for Climate Integrity estimated that Philadelphia could face nearly \$1.9 billion in costs by 2040 to expand storm drainage capacity for increased wet weather events. The same study estimated that protecting Philadelphia's public infrastructure from rising sea levels could cost another \$223 million by 2040. These projections highlight the importance of long-term planning for Philadelphia's stormwater infrastructure and future flood-related costs.



Flooding in Wynnefield Source: 6abc Action News

Each month, Controller Brady looks forward to bringing transparency and accountability of our city, right to you.