

DATA CENTERS · ISSUE #9

THE DEEP TUNNEL

Adult / Community Edition · Prestige

CREDITS

The Deep Tunnel · Data Centers #9 · Adult / Community edition

Story and production: GOTB Consulting, Chicago

*Lead: Mateo Olmedo · Heroes: Undertow, Commons, Gridline, The Auditor · On screen:
Lena Ashgrove, Channel 5 · Cameo: Dess*

AI-GENERATED ART, FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

All characters, the town of Prairie Bend and Channel 5 are fictional. Any resemblance to real people is a coincidence. No real logos are shown. Real places, agencies and utilities are named only where public sources are cited; officials appear by role.

Every number was checked against public sources (see Sources). Disputed points carry a CONTESTED stamp and the strongest case on each side.

Nonpartisan: no parties, no politicians.

Never enter storm drains, sewers, tunnels or fast-moving water. Stay out of flooded streets.

Lettering: Bebas Neue, Oswald, Kalam, Libre Baskerville, Courier Prime, Special Elite (set in Pillow; no fonts embedded).

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THE CAST



MATEO OLMEDO

Two chairs, one level.
Gives each side its
strongest voice.



UNDERTOW

Reads the flow. The
lake is shared.



GRIDLINE

Lineworker hero. Pumps
run on the grid.



COMMONS

Crews and neighbors.
Lantern up.



FACT FILE · 01



Four tunnel systems totaling 110 miles; tunnels 8 to 33 feet in diameter, 150 to 300 feet underground. The Des Plaines TARP Tunnel is 26 miles long.

Source: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), "Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

GOTB / DC FILE

UNDER THE STREETS

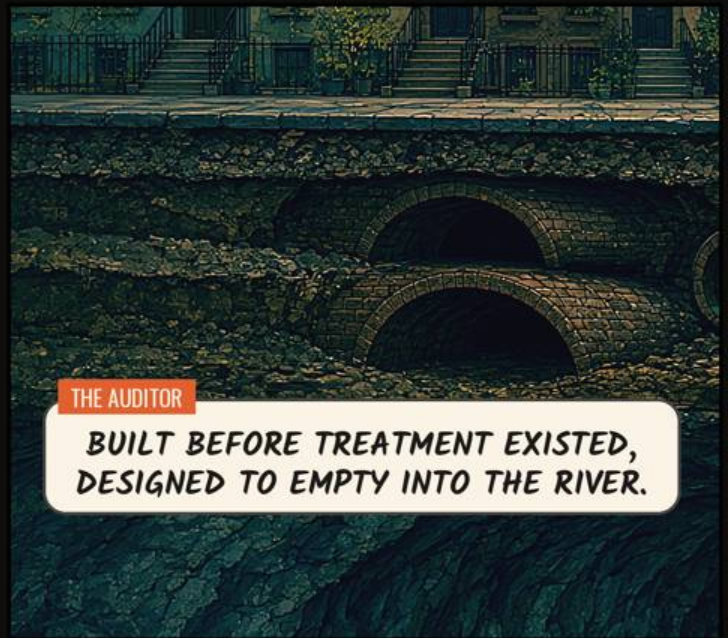
THE AUDITOR

**MOST OF CHICAGO RUNS ON
COMBINED SEWERS: SEWAGE AND
RAINWATER IN ONE PIPE.**



THE AUDITOR

**BUILT BEFORE TREATMENT EXISTED,
DESIGNED TO EMPTY INTO THE RIVER.**



FACT FILE · 02

Most of Chicago has combined sewers: sewage and rainwater share the same pipes. They were built before wastewater treatment existed and were designed to empty into the river; in the early 20th century MWRD built intercepting sewers to send sewage to new treatment plants.

Source: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD),
"Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

GOTB / DC FILE

THE DROP SHAFT



UNDERTOW

TARP.



UNDERTOW

THE DEEP TUNNEL.



UNDERTOW

FOUR SYSTEMS, 110 MILES, 8 TO 33
FEET WIDE, 150 TO 300 FEET
UNDERGROUND.

FACT FILE · 03



TARP, "The Deep Tunnel," is a system of deep, large-diameter tunnels and vast reservoirs designed to reduce flooding, improve water quality in area waterways and protect Lake Michigan from sewer-overflow pollution. Four tunnel systems totaling 110 miles; tunnels 8 to 33 feet in diameter, 150 to 300 feet underground. The Des Plaines TARP Tunnel is 26 miles long.

Source: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD),
"Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

GOTB / DC FILE

HEARING ROOM



MATEO

**CHAIR ONE: DEEP STORAGE PROTECTS
THE LAKE AND THE BASEMENTS;
FINISH IT.**



MATEO

**CHAIR TWO: MORE CONCRETE ISN'T
THE ONLY ANSWER; SLOW THE RAIN
WHERE IT FALLS.**



MATEO

BOTH GET THEIR STRONGEST VOICE.

FACT FILE · 04

Framing panel: the two chairs present the strongest case on each side. Figures appear on the panels that follow, each with its source.

Source: GOTB framing (no statistic)

GOTB / DC FILE

THE RESERVOIR



FACT FILE · 05



Three reservoirs: Majewski (near Elk Grove Village), Thornton Composite (near South Holland), McCook (Bedford Park). Explosives are used to excavate the large TARP reservoirs.

Source: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), "Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

GOTB / DC FILE

CAPACITY

LENA · ON SCREEN

**MORE THAN 11 BILLION GALLONS
TODAY.**



LENA · ON SCREEN

**17.5 BILLION WHEN MCCOOK STAGE 2
IS DONE: OVER 4,666 GALLONS FOR
EVERY PERSON SERVED.**

FACT FILE · 06



VERIFIED

Current capacity: more than 11 billion gallons. When McCook Stage 2 is complete: 17.5 billion gallons, more than 4,666 gallons for each person in the service area.

Source: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD),
"Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

GOTB / DC FILE

THE TIMELINE

THE AUDITOR

FIRST PORTIONS RUNNING IN 1981.
FIRST WATER INTO MCCOOK IN 2018,
FROM THE 33-FOOT MAINSTREAM
TUNNEL.



THE AUDITOR

A PROJECT MEASURED IN DECADES.

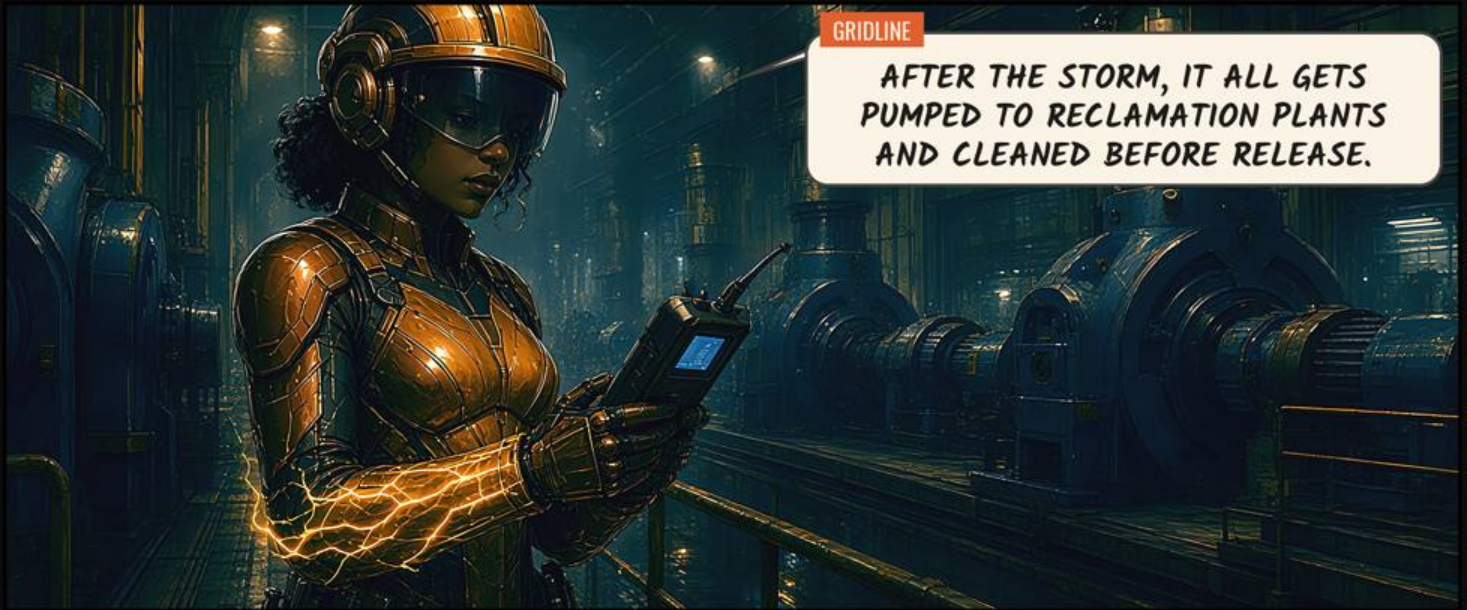
FACT FILE · 07

First portions went into operation in 1981; water first entered McCook Reservoir in 2018, from the 33-foot Mainstream TARP Tunnel.

Source: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD),
"Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

GOTB / DC FILE

THE PUMP STATION



FACT FILE · 08

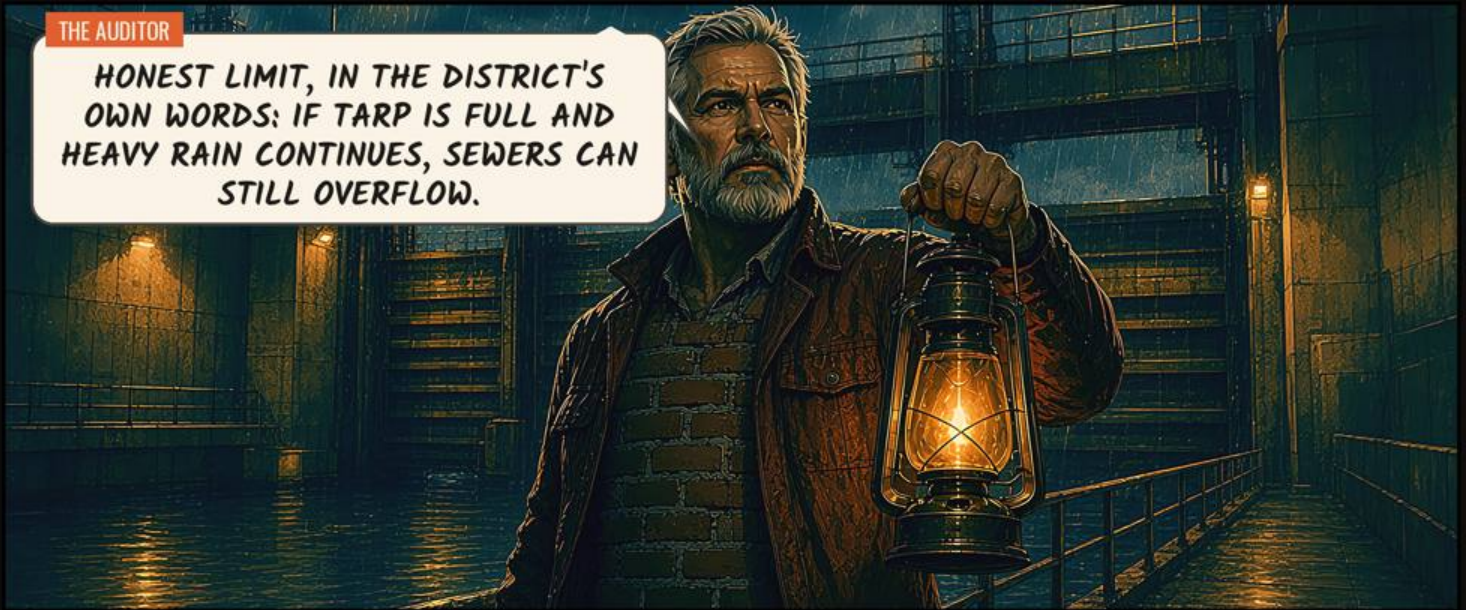
TARP captures and stores combined stormwater and sewage that would otherwise overflow; stored water is pumped to MWRD water reclamation plants to be cleaned before release.

Source: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), "Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

GOTB / DC FILE

THE AUDITOR

HONEST LIMIT, IN THE DISTRICT'S OWN WORDS: IF TARP IS FULL AND HEAVY RAIN CONTINUES, SEWERS CAN STILL OVERFLOW.



FACT FILE · 09



If TARP is full and heavy rain continues, sewers can still overflow to waterways.

Source: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD),
"Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

GOTB / DC FILE

CHAIR ONE



MATEO

CHAIR ONE: THE TUNNEL ALREADY
HOLDS 11 BILLION GALLONS.



MATEO

FINISHING THE LAST STAGE IS
CHEAPER THAN STARTING OVER.

FACT FILE · 10



Current capacity: more than 11 billion gallons. When McCook Stage 2 is complete: 17.5 billion gallons, more than 4,666 gallons for each person in the service area.

Source: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD),
"Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

GOTB / DC FILE

CHAIR TWO



MATEO

CHAIR TWO: PAVED SURFACES GROW ABOUT 1% EVERY FIVE YEARS.



MATEO

STORAGE ALONE CHASES RUNOFF WE KEEP CREATING.

FACT FILE · 11

A 2021 estimate: about 3.5 million miles of storm sewers and 270 million storm drains in the U.S.; impervious surfaces expand about 1% every five years, increasing runoff and urban flooding.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Stormwater"

GOTB / DC FILE

LENA · ON SCREEN

ASCE'S 2021 ESTIMATE: ABOUT 3.5
MILLION MILES OF STORM SEWERS
AND 270 MILLION STORM DRAINS
NATIONWIDE.



FACT FILE · 12



REPORTED

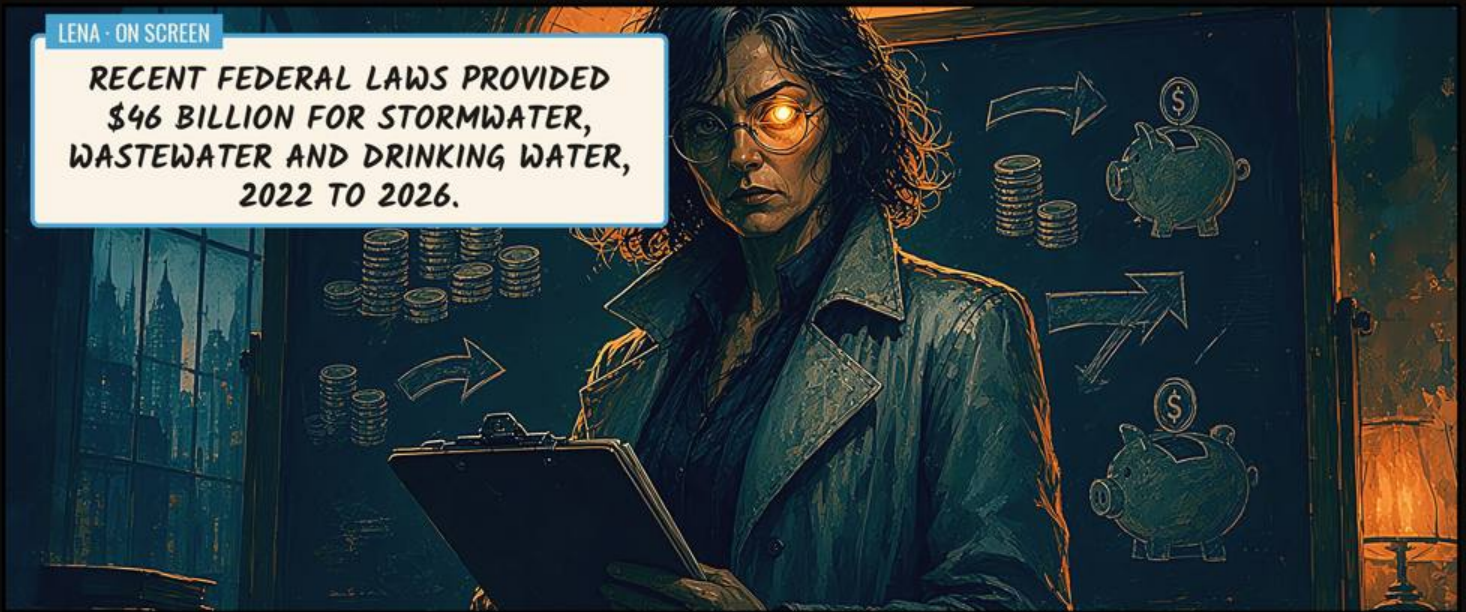
A 2021 estimate: about 3.5 million miles of storm sewers and 270 million storm drains in the U.S.; impervious surfaces expand about 1% every five years, increasing runoff and urban flooding.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Stormwater"

GOTB / DC FILE

LENA · ON SCREEN

RECENT FEDERAL LAWS PROVIDED
\$46 BILLION FOR STORMWATER,
WASTEWATER AND DRINKING WATER,
2022 TO 2026.



FACT FILE · 13

The 2021 infrastructure law and 2022 Inflation Reduction Act provided \$46 billion (2022-2026) for stormwater, wastewater and drinking water.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Stormwater"

GOTB / DC FILE



DESS

A CENTURY AGO THEY TURNED THE SEWAGE AWAY FROM THE LAKE WITH INTERCEPTING SEWERS.



DESS

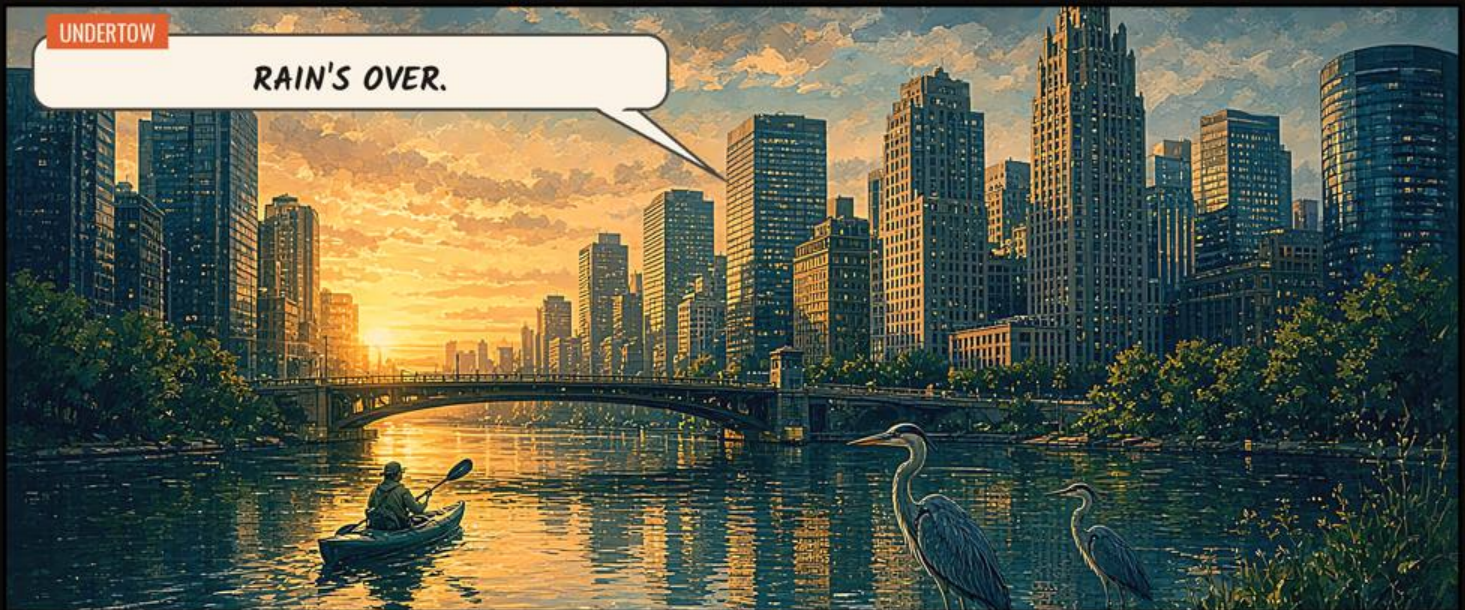
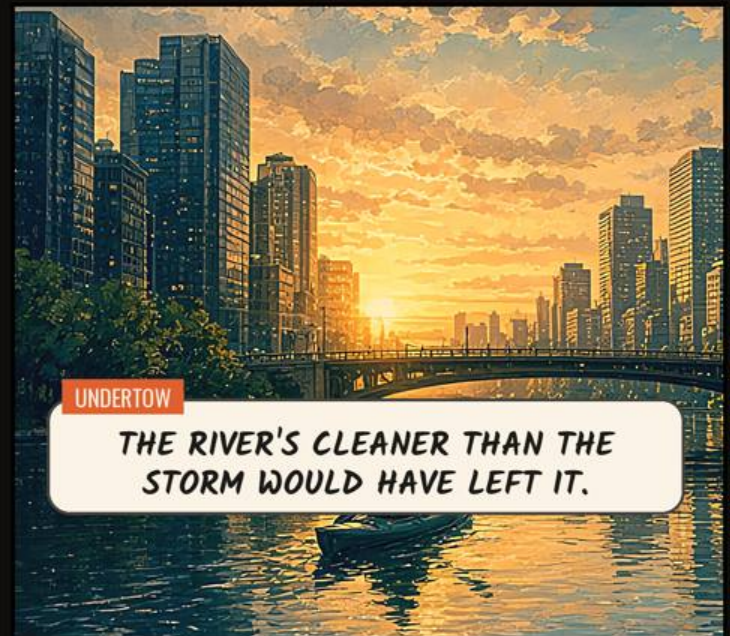
EVERY GENERATION ADDS A LAYER.

FACT FILE · 14

Most of Chicago has combined sewers: sewage and rainwater share the same pipes. They were built before wastewater treatment existed and were designed to empty into the river; in the early 20th century MWRD built intercepting sewers to send sewage to new treatment plants.

Source: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), "Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

GOTB / DC FILE



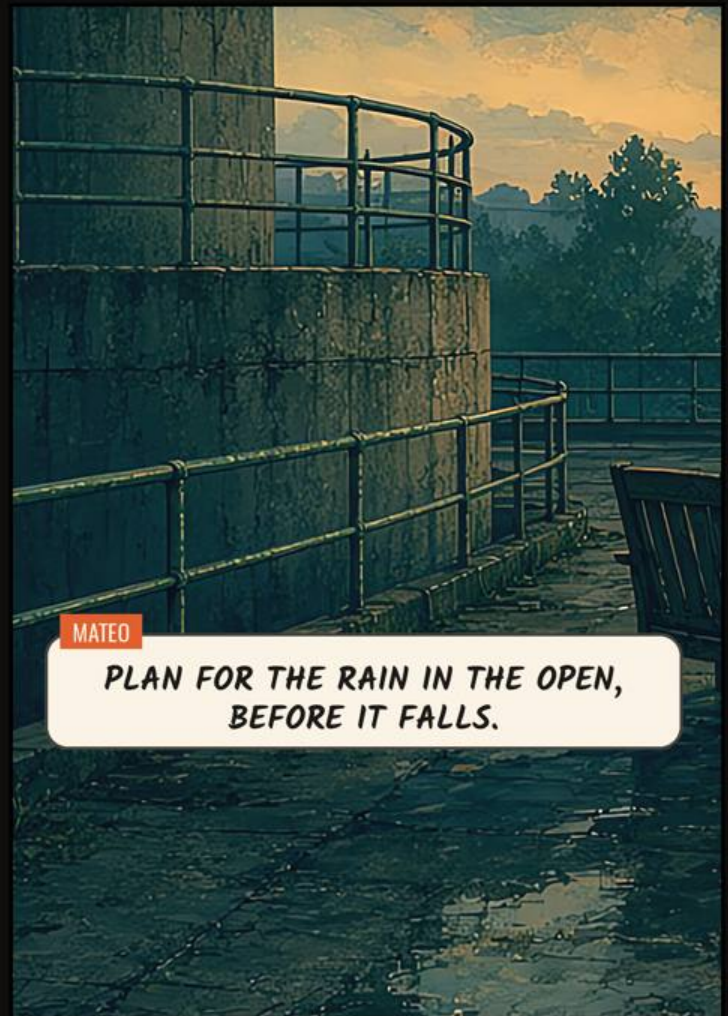
FACT FILE · 15



TARP captures and stores combined stormwater and sewage that would otherwise overflow; stored water is pumped to MWRD water reclamation plants to be cleaned before release.

Source: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD),
"Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

GOTB / DC FILE



GOTB Consulting, Chicago: infrastructure and procurement for the power, water and public works these projects depend on.

BY THE NUMBERS

110 MILES

Four TARP tunnel systems, 8 to 33 feet wide, 150 to 300 feet down. (MWRD)

11 BILLION GALLONS

Storage today. 17.5 billion when McCook Stage 2 is done. (MWRD)

1981 · 2018

First tunnels running; water first enters McCook Reservoir. (MWRD)

3 RESERVOIRS

Majewski, Thornton Composite, McCook. Blasted out of rock. (MWRD)

3.5 MILLION MILES

U.S. storm sewers; 270 million storm drains. (2021 estimate, Reported)

\$46 BILLION

Federal money for storm, waste and drinking water, 2022-2026.

TWO CHAIRS, ONE LEVEL

The strongest case on each side, labeled. Nonpartisan.

BUILD BIG

Deep tunnels and reservoirs catch huge storms in one system and protect the lake.

GO GREEN

Rain gardens, trees and permeable pavement soak rain where it falls.

THE LIMIT

If TARP is full and rain keeps falling, sewers can still overflow. Both approaches help.

WHAT BOTH SHARE

Cleaner rivers, drier basements, decisions made in the open.

YOUR TURN

What would you add on your block to soak up rain? _____

SOURCES

Full list with fact IDs: FACT_BASE.md and NUMBER_CHECK.md (GOTB internal).

METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD),
"Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP)"

ASCE 2025 REPORT CARD

ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Stormwater"

ABOUT GOTB CONSULTING

WHO WE ARE

A Chicago firm working on infrastructure and procurement for the systems communities depend on.

DATA CENTERS

Siting, delivery and community questions.

POWER

Grid connections, substations and lines.

WATER

Supply, treatment and cooling.

PUBLIC WORKS

Roads, pipes and public spaces.

THE END



TWO CHAIRS, ONE LEVEL.

Keep the river clean at the same table where the tunnel gets paid for.

GOTB CONSULTING · CHICAGO

Data centers · Power · Water · Public works

AI-generated art, fictional characters