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Full-building mural converting key downtown corner to visual oasis

MSD brightening 4th Street Flood Pump Station with artistic representation of local waterways

LOUISVILLE – While typically providing safe, clean waterways for Louisville through its wastewater treatment, stormwater management, and flood protection, MSD is brightening downtown with a new, building-sized mural.

What was once a drab and nondescript mechanical building at a busy downtown intersection – Fourth and Main streets – is coming to life with a lively and dimensional artist’s representation of flowing local waterways. Entitled “Waterfall” by local artist Whitney Olsen, the four-sided, full-building mural will transform MSD’s Fourth Street Flood Pump Station into a celebration of nature amid its concrete neighbors.

The improvement to the downtown pump station comes as an additional benefit of MSD’s Waterway Protection Tunnel—the agency’s largest infrastructure project to date. This four-mile tunnel, 18 stories below ground, running from 11th and Rowan to Grinstead Drive and Lexington Road, will store a mixture of stormwater and wastewater during periods of heavy rain, preventing it from combining with sewage and overflowing into the Ohio River and Beargrass Creek.

“As we work on these important infrastructure improvement projects, we are looking for opportunities to provide additional community benefits beyond the utility of the infrastructure itself,” said MSD Executive Director Tony Parrott.

MSD determined it would build the underground storage tunnel as opposed to four planned storage basins in part to reduce the significant multi-year construction disruptions throughout the downtown, NuLu and Butchertown areas, the community’s hub for commerce, tourism and entertainment.

“Our facilities are crucial to maintaining the health and safety of local waterways. When it came time to repaint our downtown pumping station, rather than go back with the same old white paint that made this structure look more like a bunker, we thought, let’s further honor that commitment to downtown and do something that can create a community asset,” Parrott said.

Artist Whitney Olsen partnered with Louisville creative agency Bandy Carroll Hellige on the mural project. It features a modern and colorful patterned design that incorporates fused glass mosaic and metal sculptural elements and will take on different appearances at different times due to how the light hits the building. She states, “I would love that when people see the work, they think about our waterways and about this lush life, how it fuels our world, and that they choose to treat it better. Wouldn’t that be great?”

The building mural project is expected to be complete this fall.

MSD’s [Waterway Protection Tunnel](#) is expected to be operational in 2022.

Access image [package](#)

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About MSD

The Louisville/Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) works to achieve and maintain clean, environmentally safe waterways for a healthy and vibrant community. The organization’s more than 670 employees provide wastewater management, drainage and flood protection services across the 376 square miles of Louisville Metro, and wastewater service in portions of Oldham County. In addition to operating and maintaining Louisville Metro’s sewer system, floodwall system, water quality treatment centers and flood pumping stations, MSD invests in hundreds of infrastructure improvement projects each year, plants more than 1,000 trees and other vegetation annually to enhance water filtration and reduce runoff, and provides numerous outreach programs to inform and educate the community about protecting our waterways.