

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE July 31, 2019

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Illicit Discharge into the Trinity River Near Riverfront Boulevard**

As you may be aware, there was an article in the Dallas Morning News on Tuesday, July 30, 2019, relating to an on-going investigation of an illicit discharge into the Trinity River located near Riverfront Boulevard and the DART rail line crossing the river.

The article specifically mentions that a smelly black liquid had been pouring into the Trinity River from a nearby drainage channel and sewage pipe for nearly a week. The article goes on to say that concerned residents believe the discharge to be raw sewage and that the pollution is turning the Trinity River into an open sewer.

To clarify, the discharge is not raw sewage. Staff first noticed discolored water in the drainage channel on July 23, 2019, and multiple departments have been working together to determine the cause, type and source of the discharge. The characteristics of the initial water quality tests indicate the discharge is consistent with organic material such as rotting fruits and vegetables. Staff has traced the source to a probable site and is currently working to confirm this site to be the source of the discharge.

Staff has visited the site and directed the facility occupants to perform testing on their systems, as well as providing schematics of their site. Pending the findings, our follow up action can range from more frequent inspections to citations and monetary fines. Staff also contacted TCEQ to report the discharge.

Staff has been actively monitoring the drainage channel and any possible changes to the water quality and will continue monitoring the area consistent with our protocol for these types of incidents. Staff will update the City Council on the progress of this investigation including the findings and future actions.

It is noteworthy to mention that as part of our storm water quality program, the City proactively monitors water quality in our creeks, channels and river to assess the overall health of runoff water through sampling programs. Additionally, staff responds to requests where there is a potential water pollutant and/or illicit discharge reported. Residents and businesses have been encouraged to report changes in their creeks and channels through 311, which helps staff identify and respond to these requests. Last fiscal year,

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staff responded to over 700 service requests relating to potential spills, illicit discharges and water quality concerns. To date this fiscal year, staff has responded to 480 service requests of these types.

If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Standifer, at 214-671-9581 or at sarah.standifer@dallascityhall.com.



T. C. Broadnax
City Manager

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| Chris Caso, City Attorney (Interim) | Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager |
| Mark Swann, City Auditor | Nadia Chandler Hardy, Assistant City Manager and Chief Resilience Officer |
| Biliera Johnson, City Secretary | Michael Mendoza, Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services |
| Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge | M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer |
| Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager | Laila Aleqresh, Chief Innovation Officer |
| Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager | Liz Cedillo-Pereira, Chief of Equity and Inclusion |
| Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager | Directors and Assistant Directors |