



# A Resident First Stormwater and Flood Prevention Plan for District 8 and Orange County

*By Isaiah Anderson*

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## **Introduction**

When people talk about flooding in Orange County, the conversation usually starts after the damage is already done. Roads flood. Cars stall. Retention ponds overflow. Insurance costs rise. Families miss work. Businesses lose money. Then the cycle repeats itself with the next storm. But the reality is this: flooding in District 8 is no longer just a hurricane issue. It is an infrastructure issue, a planning issue, a growth management issue, and ultimately a quality of life issue. Communities like Meadow Woods, Southchase, Hunters Creek, Wyndham Lakes, Sawgrass, Moss Park, and Lake Nona are all experiencing the effects of rapid expansion without infrastructure keeping pace. Drainage systems designed decades

ago are now expected to handle modern development levels they were never built for. This plan is about restoring balance. It is not anti growth. It is not anti business. It is pro resident growth. I believe we can modernize infrastructure, preserve affordability, protect neighborhoods, and continue growing responsibly without forcing working families to carry the burden alone.

## **Understanding the Current Reality**

Orange County is one of the fastest growing regions in Florida, and District 8 continues sitting directly in the center of that expansion. Lake Nona continues seeing major medical, commercial, and residential investment. Moss Park and the eastern corridors continue experiencing new development pressure. The issue is not growth itself. Growth is inevitable. The issue is whether growth is occurring responsibly and whether existing residents are being protected while that growth happens. Residents throughout District 8 continue reporting roadway flooding, overwhelmed retention systems, standing water in neighborhoods, drainage bottlenecks, and increased insurance concerns. These are signs that long term planning must improve immediately.

## **Current Efforts Already Underway**

Orange County has already acknowledged stormwater management and watershed protection as major priorities. Existing county efforts currently include drainage maintenance programs, canal clearing operations, retention pond systems, floodplain management initiatives, environmental protection efforts, and regional watershed planning studies. The County's Stormwater Management Division continues working to improve flood protection, reduce water pollution, maintain drainage systems, and preserve environmentally sensitive areas. I believe in

acknowledging what is already working before proposing improvements. These programs are important foundations, but residents across District 8 still regularly experience flooding concerns and infrastructure strain. That tells us clearly that the current pace of implementation is not matching the pace of development.

## **My Vision**

I believe District 8 should become the model for resident focused infrastructure planning in Orange County. Residents must come before unchecked expansion. Growth should help fund infrastructure. Prevention is always cheaper than disaster recovery. We need proactive planning instead of reactive government.

## **Flood Vulnerability Mapping**

The first phase of this plan would create a transparent public flood vulnerability assessment for District 8. This assessment would identify repetitive flooding intersections, overloaded drainage corridors, undersized pipe systems, retention pond concerns, roadway vulnerabilities, and future development pressure zones. Priority review areas would include Meadow Woods, Southchase, Hunters Creek, Sawgrass, Wyndham Lakes, Moss Park, and Lake Nona corridors. Residents deserve transparency. Infrastructure decisions should never feel hidden from the public.

## **Growth Pays for Growth**

Large scale developments seeking rezoning approvals or public infrastructure support should contribute directly toward localized flood mitigation and drainage improvements. That includes retention upgrades, roadway drainage improvements, wetland restoration contributions, environmental mitigation partnerships, and

stormwater infrastructure expansion. The goal is simple: growth should help fund the infrastructure demand it creates instead of shifting that burden onto homeowners.

## **Protecting Residents**

One of my biggest concerns is ensuring infrastructure improvements do not unintentionally push residents out of the communities they helped build. This plan prioritizes affordability, stable property taxes, developer funded infrastructure partnerships, responsible growth management, and resident first planning. The purpose of infrastructure is not simply economic growth. The purpose is improving quality of life for the people already living here.

## **Final Vision**

I believe District 8 can lead Orange County in building a smarter, more transparent, and more resident focused future. Flooding is no longer just an environmental issue. It is a transportation issue. A housing issue. An affordability issue. A public safety issue. And ultimately, a quality of life issue. If we continue allowing infrastructure to fall behind growth, working families will continue paying the price. But if we act responsibly now, District 8 can become a model for how communities grow intelligently while protecting the people who already call those communities home. This is our path forward.

*“The only path that truly moves a community forward is the right path.”*

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## **Sources and References**

- Orange County Stormwater Management Division
- Orange County Watershed Master Plan
- FEMA Flood Map Service Center
- St. Johns River Water Management District
- Orange County Environmental Protection Division