

**Bearspaw Community Consultation on Flood Prevention
held May 8 at Greenwood Inn**

Consultation Summary

Attendance: 12

Main presenter: Russell Barth, Senior Engineer & Flood Prevention Project Leader
for Ward 5, Drainage Services, City of Edmonton

Presentation

The consultation began with introductions and what the City of Edmonton has done since the severe flooding of July 2004. This overview included a number of flood prevention programs and educational activities initiated by Drainage Services in 2005. Mr. Barth then reviewed drainage engineering findings for the community and presented recommended system improvements. These were:

- Upgrade Bearspaw Lake to eliminate water backup in existing drainage pipes and increase its efficiency as a stormwater management lake. It was recommended this be done by lowering the lake level by 1.5 meters and constructing a dry pond adjacent to the northeast side of the lake to provide additional stormwater storage capacity.
- Enlarge sanitary sewer pipes along 109 Street and a portion of 11 Avenue, along 17 Avenue and a portion of Bearspaw Drive East. This would increase capacity and relieve system pressure.
- Upgrade stormwater sewer pipes at eight locations in the northern half of Bearspaw to increase flow capacity and reduce water pooling on streets.
- Seal selected sanitary manhole covers to prevent rainwater from entering the sanitary system.

The estimated cost of implementing system improvements is \$14.3 million. Approximately \$9.4 would be spent on Bearspaw Lake enhancements. These enhancements are considered an implementation priority as it would provide the greatest relief to the most people. The suggested timeframe is to complete the lake improvements before 2010, and the sewer upgrades between 2010 and 2015. Implementation of the plan depends on further stakeholder discussions, funding and the capacity to do the work.

Next Steps

Moving ahead with the recommendations and an implementation plan is contingent on receiving City Council's approval of a funding package. This package was presented by Drainage Services to Council on April 25. It called for \$146M in flood prevention improvements for 43 at risk neighbourhoods. Council will consider funding options in the next month or two. A public hearing on the matter will be held at City Hall on September 26, 2006.

In the meantime, design work is continuing. A portion of the funding for the package comes from a provincial infrastructure grant. It is proposed that the remainder come from utility rates paid for by all users, not just residents in affected neighbourhoods.

Input from Residents

Most of the comments and questions from those at the meeting centred on the planned changes for Bearspaw Lake. While participants recognized improving the stormwater management capabilities of Bearspaw Lake would benefit the community, they questioned the recommended approach.

As an alternative, some suggested improving drainage around the lake or away from it into an adjacent creek. Two suggested methods were enlarging the outlet pipe and/or increasing the capacity of a gulley that currently runs south of the lake to a creek. One person offered that installing a pump station might reduce and stabilize the lake level sufficiently.

One person supported the concept of a dry pond, as it would provide for recreation opportunities that do not currently exist. However, others felt dry pond construction would be too disruptive to the community and waterfowl. Meeting participants noted residents like the existing lake. Any dramatic change to its look would be difficult to accept. However, changes that would be a natural extension of the lake, such as wetlands, would likely receive a more favourable reception.

One person questioned the need for dropping the lake by 1.5 metres given the rarity of the storm event that occurred in July 2004. Mr. Barth explained drainage pipes entering the lake are too low, causing water to back up into the pipes even during dry weather. This prompted the recommendation to drop the lake water level.

Another felt drainage from South Edmonton Common might be a contributing factor. Mr. Barth said South Edmonton Common does not affect Bearspaw, as it contains its own flows through on site stormwater management.

Meeting participants were supportive of the proposed sanitary and storm sewer line upgrades. One resident noted there is regular pooling of water at 11 Avenue and 109 Street. He suggested it might be resolved by adding a catch basin or channelling surface water to a nearby open space. Mr. Barth indicated he would look into it.

Updates

Regular updates to residents on improvement plans for Bearspaw will be provided via information bulletins and Drainage Services' website at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention. Additional comments or questions may be forwarded to Mr. Barth at 496-5552 or russell.barth@edmonton.ca