

**Millbourne Communities
Flood Prevention Public Consultation
Held November 21, 2013 at Leefield Community Hall**

Attendance: 45 (approximate)

Presenters: Leigh Makarewicz, Board member, North Millbourne Community League
Denise Tonowski, Board member, Leefield Community League
Todd Wyman, Director, Drainage Planning, City of Edmonton

Ward 11 Councillor Mike Nickel was in attendance.

Presentation

Leigh Makarewicz spoke briefly of the work the North Millbourne Community League Board has done to bring flooding issues and concerns to the attention of City Council and the Drainage Branch. She noted this included involvement in the Task Force and sharing information with residents. Denise Tonowski, a member of the Leefield Community League, echoed her comments.

Note: The following is a brief summary of the topics covered in the presentation made by Mr. Wyman. The full presentation is available at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention (click on Public Consultations)

- This is the third consultation held with the community since the July, 2012 flooding. In addition, the Millbourne Flood Prevention Task Force met three times through the summer to discuss in detail community concerns and flood prevention options. Two Task Force activity updates were issued to residents in June and September.
- Drainage Services presented to the City's Utilities Committee in August and November, emphasizing the urgent need for flood prevention improvements in at-risk neighbourhoods like Millbourne. The committee were very supportive.
- Flood prevention upgrades in Millbourne, and the rest of Mill Woods and southwest Edmonton have been identified and prioritized. Many Millbourne projects have been classified as a high priority. Some existing funding will go to Millbourne design and construction work to be done in 2014.
- Even with City Council approval of the \$162M funding package needed to pay for all recommended projects, new capital funding will not be available until 2015. Construction work for some key projects targeted for 2015, such as expansion of the dry pond along 91st Street, is being accelerated by doing design work in 2014. All projects, if approved, will take a number of years to complete.
- Three measures have already been taken to provide interim flood relief: installation of two culverts through the 91st Street berm, upgrading of the existing 91st Street storm pond inlet structure, and plugging of finger holes in manhole covers to prevent stormwater from entering the sanitary sewer system.
- Mr. Wyman went through a number of recommended flood prevention projects Drainage Services believes will:
 - Reduce pooling of surface water on the street and yards, and stormwater flooding of homes
 - Reduce the risk of sanitary backups and basement flooding
 - Reduce property damage
 - Save homeowners and the City time, money and inconvenience

Recommendations

- Expand the existing Tweddle Place dry pond along 91st Street. This would require removal of the berm to allow better overland flows to the expanded dry pond and expanded capacity to hold water diverted from stormwater pipes. The berm would be replaced by a noise barrier equal to or better than what exists now. A living wall (a three meter earth berm bracketed with closely packed willows) was proposed as a viable barrier because it absorbs noise, is low maintenance, aesthetically pleasing, environmentally friendly, and graffiti-resistant. The living wall has been endorsed by the Task Force as the preferred option if various concerns regarding effectiveness, maintenance, access, etc. can be resolved to the community's satisfaction.
- Build a new dry pond in the Malcolm Tweddle-Edith Rogers schools open space. Discussions are already taking place with school board officials to prepare for this work.
- Build a new storm trunk sewer across Michaels Park from 66 St. to the new dry pond in the Malcolm Tweddle-Edith Rogers school open space.
- Create better overland flow routes and localized hydraulic improvements in Richfield.
- Do new sanitary storage sewer upgrades including more in-line storage in all four neighbourhoods.
- Add/enlarge relief storm sewer lines in Lee Ridge, Richfield and Tweddle Place.

Since overflow patterns are east to west throughout Millbourne, the improvement work is largely focused on capturing and diverting this flow into holding areas like dry ponds. Sanitary improvements are being made to provide relief in areas susceptible to sewage backup.

Next steps

- A 2015-2018 financial plan regarding drainage projects has been reviewed by the Utilities Committee. A Flood Prevention Program capital funding package will then be presented to City Council for budget approval.
- Consult and work with internal stakeholders like transportation, recreation and parks, Edmonton Public Schools and local residents to pave the way for dry ponds and other major works.
- Keep the community informed of progress and consult as appropriate on design and construction matters.

Comments and Feedback

Following the presentations, neighbourhood residents split into two groups for a focused discussion and question and answer period on issues and the recommended projects that directly impact their neighbourhoods. Following is a summary of each discussion.

Lee Ridge/Richfield

Generally, residents were satisfied with the drainage flood mitigation plans for their area. Questions related to details about the living wall, the walking path, how dry ponds will work and explanations about the sewer projects for their area. They also voiced concerns about some of the work done by the City's transportation department related to neighbourhood renewal that continues to cause drainage problems, as well as concerns about access to their homes when construction takes place.

Specifically, concerns about no gutters along Richfield Road were raised. Drainage will work with Transportation to ensure any Drainage project work that rips up a street includes appropriate street repair with good drainage afterwards. It was noted that Drainage will be doing more detailed work regarding the viability of the living wall as a suitable berm replacement. This detailed work will answer questions about access, effectiveness, durability, walking path, etc. The wall will not extend past 39 Avenue (Mill Woods Road).

In response to a question, a dry pond south of 39 Avenue along 91st Street is not being recommended because it is not needed to reduce flood risk. The other recommended projects will provide effective relief for Richfield and Leefield.

Michaels Park/Tweddle Place

There were concerns that too much of the proposed work was focused on overland stormwater. Drainage staff noted that storm and sanitary sewer upgrades will also be done to increase pipe capacity. The plugging of manholes will prevent stormwater from getting into the sanitary system.

A number of people had concerns about removing the berm and, if the berm were removed, replacing it with a 'living wall' of earth and willows. It was explained that options were considered, including putting a dry pond on the west side of 91st Street, but a variety of factors led to recommending enlarging the existing dry pond, which requires removal of the berm. A show of hands showed 6 opposed and 7 in favour of replacing the berm. Many people abstained. Those in opposition suggested lift stations, diversion to Whitemud Freeway, increased catch basin capacity and pipes through the existing berm as alternatives.

Drainage staff indicated more detailed work will be done to answer questions about the suitability of a living wall as a berm replacement. Issues like saving trees and ensuring the noise barrier is as good as or better than it is now will be dealt with in consultation with the community.

Several people repeated concerns from previous meetings that the work would take up to 10 years to complete. It was explained that the funding cycle, required planning, high priorities in other Edmonton neighbourhoods and manpower/equipment limitations prohibit doing everything in 1 or 2 years. However, Drainage Services sees the majority of Millbourne neighbourhood projects as high priorities and will be pushing for completion as quickly as possible. The City may approach the province for funding support.

In response to several questions, Drainage Services reiterated that work such as inserting culverts through the berm and plugging manholes are only interim solutions until something more permanent can be done. It was acknowledged that the dry pond that exists along 91st Street is not as functional as it could be because of inadequate pipe capacity. This will be rectified when the larger berm is build and other pipe infrastructure improvements are made.

A couple of residents suggested expropriation of a few houses in a very low lying area was a cheaper, more effective option to the recommended projects. Staff noted current City policy is to exhaust all other possibilities first and use options that don't require the demolition of homes. It would also require a discussion with City Council. A few people complained they were receiving little or no information about meetings or updates. A commitment was made to fill any information gaps and broaden the awareness net as much as possible.

Written Feedback

Twenty-three people filled out a written feedback form. The results of the principle question asked in the survey are shown below. *“Thinking now about the information discussed with you, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 5 means “strongly agree”.*”

	NR	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
a. Drainage Services has taken into account all relevant factors.	3		5	5	7	3	3.4
b. I agree with Drainage Services' recommendations to reduce the risk of flooding in my neighbourhood.	2	2	3	5	6	5	3.4
c. I think Drainage Services needs to provide more information about its programs and plans for my area.	1		3	7	7	5	3.6
d. The Flood Prevention Task Force is a good way to represent citizens' interests in developing flood prevention solutions.	1			3	7	12	4.4
e. I agree with expanding the dry pond along 91 Street, which requires removing the existing berm.	2	2	2	5	6	6	3.6
f. I agree with replacing the berm with a living wall.	3	2	4	4	4	6	3.4
g. I am still concerned about flooding in my area but I am more confident now that the City will do something meaningful to reduce the problem.	1	1	1	12	6	2	3.3

Updates/Mailing List

Updates to residents are provided via direct mail or email for those on the stakeholder list. More information is available at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention, look under Public Consultations. To join the mailing list or for additional comments or questions, contact Todd Wyman at 780-495-1948 todd.wyman@edmonton.ca