

**Flood Prevention Consultation
for Belmead and Aldergrove Communities
held April 7, 2009 at Belmead Community Hall**

Consultation Summary

Attendance: 31

Main presenters: Fernando Sacluti, Senior Engineer, Strategic Planning, Drainage Services,
City of Edmonton
Derek Melmoth, General Supervisor, Public Services, Drainage Services,
City of Edmonton

Presentation

The consultation began with introductions and a short recap of previous meetings with local neighbourhoods. Mr. Sacluti gave a brief overview of engineering studies done to date and the reasons for refining the flood prevention concept plan for Belmead and Aldergrove. The planned improvements outlined to west Edmonton communities in 2007 were:

- Build a dry pond in Aldergrove
- Divert stormwater from 95 Avenue stormwater line to Terra Rosa pond
- Build a new sanitary sewer relief pipe from 81 Avenue along 178 Street to the Quesnell main sanitary sewer truck
- Regrade Arrowhead Trail
- Pipe stormwater from low spots in La Perle and 178 Street to Terra Rosa pond

All of these improvements will still proceed but a dry pond for Belmead has been added. Together, this work will result in a number of benefits including quicker overall drainage for the surrounding area, less surface pooling, less likelihood of basement flooding, less property damage and savings of time and money.

The revised concept takes into account the high water table in the area, which could lead to soggy ground conditions with a deep dry pond. Adding a Belmead dry pond allows the Aldergrove dry pond to be much shallower. It also increases safety, offers improved sightlines, and is more aesthetically pleasing. There will be minimal impact on the playing fields in Aldergrove and Belmead parks.

Mr. Sacluti gave a brief description of the mechanics of a dry pond, which can be used for recreation when dry, is landscaped to fit into the surrounding community and, even at capacity, drains in four to six hours. The dry ponds will have a maximum depth of two metres and would only fill when stormwater exceeds the capacity of underground pipes. The proposed Belmead dry pond could store about 12,000 cubic meters while the Aldergrove pond could store about 24,000 cubic meters.

In addition to moving a flood risk from city streets, dry pond safety features include gentle slopes with grated inlet/outlet fixtures and warning signage. The grates are locked and have an alarm to warn when the pond is filling. This is remotely monitored by the city and in the event of a flooding incident a supervisor will be on hand to monitor the area and oversee post flood event cleanup.

Final design of the recreation facilities within both dry ponds would be subject to agreement between the City parks department, the local school and community. Once built, each dry pond is expected to fill with water infrequently.

Two options exist for the Aldergrove dry pond. Option one would see the dry pond co-existing with an existing stand of trees at the south end of the park. Option two would see the removal of the trees, to be replaced by new landscaping, in order to increase the capacity of the dry pond. A final decision will be made based on stakeholder feedback.

The design process is expected to take the rest of 2009. Bulk excavation, landscaping, restoration and connection to the existing storm sewers is planned to start in early 2010 and continue through the year with the dry pond sites made fully operational in 2011.

Mr. Melmoth spoke to the group on the importance of proper home maintenance in preventing basement and property flooding. Key points included:

- A backwater valve subsidy of \$1,200 is available. A backwater valve workshop can be arranged if there is interest in the community.
- Drainage Services provide free home flood prevention checks, which can take up to an hour and can be scheduled to best suit the homeowner's availability. The home check covers all aspects of home flood prevention. Inspectors give homeowners a list of recommended solutions and upgrades.
- Proper lot grading is the most effective means of preventing home flooding.

Input from Residents Regarding Flood Prevention Improvements

People at the meeting were in favour of the Aldergrove and Belmead dry ponds. People were split on whether to keep the trees at the south end of Aldergrove Park, although many stated that if the trees had to be removed they would want them to be replaced by mature trees (similar to those used in Terra Rosa) in the new landscaping.

Many residents said that they would like to see the landscaping plans before the City decides whether or not to remove the trees. Mr. Sacluti told the group local residents would have an opportunity to do so at a future community open house. He also informed the group the landscaping and recreation fields must meet the parks department's standards before construction will be allowed to start.

A concern was raised over the amount of time the recreation fields would be inaccessible for neighbouring schools. Mr. Sacluti confirmed the recreation fields would be out of commission for approximately one year while being converted to dry ponds and this will be discussed with local schools.

A security concern regarding the inlet/outlet fixtures was raised. Mr. Sacluti said that there would be locked grates installed in the inlet/outlet. There would also be an alarm system which will alert Drainage Services when the dry pond begins to fill.

It was noted by one person that an empty lot on the south-west corner of 87 Avenue and 175 Street regularly floods during rainstorms and is a general eyesore. The person wondered if it could be converted into a dry pond for the Thorncliffe area. Mr. Sacluti said that while he was not familiar with the lot in question Drainage Services currently has no plans for a dry pond in Thorncliffe. However, he would investigate further.

Some people indicated that it would be helpful to include the nearby 'Sugar Bowl' drainage pond in the consultation materials to be used as a comparison to the proposed Aldergrove and Belmead dry ponds.

One resident wondered if the Aldergrove dry pond would alleviate the annual flooding that occurs during spring thaw along 86 Avenue adjacent to Aldergrove Park. Mr. Sacluti indicated the current drainage patterns would be investigated prior to construction of the dry pond, although he suspected the spring flooding may be the result of iced over catch basins in that area.

Another person wondered if the dry ponds were being built at the lowest points in the area and if so how would the dry ponds interact with the water table. Mr. Sacluti indicated that the ponds were in locations that would provide the best drainage value for the area. He noted the neighbourhood water table is five to six meters below ground.

Updates

A copy of the April 7, 2009 presentation and other information about the City of Edmonton's flood prevention program can be found on Drainage Services' website at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention. Additional comments or questions regarding plans for reducing the risk of flooding in the Belmead or Aldergrove neighbourhoods may be forwarded to Fernando Sacluti at 780-496-5537 or Fernando.sacluti@edmonton.ca