

**Aldergrove/Belmead Community Consultation on Flood Prevention
held May 2 at Aldergrove Community Hall**

Consultation Summary

Attendance: 7

Main presenter: Douwe Vanderwel, Senior Engineer & Flood Prevention Project Leader
for Ward 1, 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. Vanderwel then reviewed drainage engineering findings for both communities and presented recommended system improvements. These were:

- Build a dry pond in Aldergrove and divert stormwater from low lying areas in Belmead and Aldergrove to the pond. The proposed location is in parkland and a recreation area adjacent to the Aldergrove Community Hall and Aldergrove School at 85 Avenue and 182 Street. Stormwater would be held in the dry pond until the underground system had the capacity to drain it away. There would be multiple connections to the stormwater system to enable quick drainage. Placement of the dry pond is subject to community, school, community league and other stakeholder input. However, recreation facilities such as soccer fields and a toboggan hill would be considered as part of the design features.
- Build a sanitary sewer relief pipe from 81 Avenue along 178 Street to the Whitemud Drive main trunk line. This would increase capacity and relieve system pressure.
- Sealing selected sanitary manhole covers to prevent rainwater from entering the sanitary system.

The estimated cost of implementing system improvements is \$9.55 million. The dry pond is considered a priority for implementation as it would provide the greatest relief to the most people. The suggested timeframe is three to four years. 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

The vast majority of people at the meeting were in favour of the recommended improvements, including the dry pond. Most preferred a square layout for the pond to the north of the schools and hall as this would not require the removal of an existing stand of trees and may allow for more recreational options. One resident expressed a desire to see the improvements “fast tracked”.

There were concerns expressed about safety, particularly given the proposed depth of the excavation (five metres from gradual sloped embankment to bottom) and the pond depth of 1.5 metres. Mr. Vanderwel indicated that a number of safety measures could be incorporated into the pond, including signage, electronic monitoring, on-site security when it reached a certain depth, and safety training for students, teachers and others who frequent the site.

He noted that the pond would fill and drain gradually but only maintain a water level for a short period of time (4-6 hours). Once drained, a City crew would clean-up any debris left behind by the floodwaters. He added that the recommended depth of the pond is necessary to provide relief to a large area of surrounding homes and streets.

One resident noted a dry pond already exists in Belmead at 95 Avenue and 189 Street. While much smaller, Mr. Vanderwel noted the pond there does reduce street flooding for several blocks and the adjacent storm trunk is able to surcharge into the pond providing relief for the trunk. That pond's excavation depth is 6.0 metres.

There was a concern that plugging manhole covers would worsen street flooding. Mr. Vanderwel noted plugging manhole covers relieves pressure on the sanitary system, which helps to prevent flooded basements, but the amount of water diverted to the street is insignificant. He stressed that manholes are not intended to drain water. They are for human access to the system. Surface water should channel to catch basins, which connect to the stormwater sewer.

One person asked if some of the 2004 flooding was caused by overloaded systems in newer neighbourhoods upstream of Aldergrove and Belmead. Mr. Vanderwel said this was not the case for the stormwater system because new neighbourhoods have their own stormwater management facilities. The sanitary systems of new neighbourhoods drain through west Edmonton and increase the load. However, Drainage Services is planning a major sanitary trunk upgrade downstream of west Edmonton that will provide major relief for the sanitary sewer drainage system in many neighbourhoods.

Updates

Updates to residents on the improvement plans will be provided via information bulletins and Drainage Services' website at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention. Additional comments or questions may be forwarded to Mr. Vanderwel at 496-5553 or douwe.vanderwel@edmonton.ca