

**Bearspaw Community Consultation on Flood Prevention
held November 6 at Southminster-Steinhauer United Church**

Consultation Summary

Attendance: 32

Presenters: Russell Barth, Senior Engineer & Flood Prevention Project Leader
for Ward 5, Drainage Services, City of Edmonton;
Bernie Amell, Environmental Consultant, Riparia

Presentation

The consultation began with introductions and a review of what the City of Edmonton has done since the last meeting with the community on May 8. A number of concerns and suggestions were made by residents in May about options for improving the stormwater management efficiency of Bearspaw Lake. Mr. Barth indicated these influenced the two Bearspaw Lake concept designs being brought forward now for the community's consideration.

Two design options were presented. Both options would ensure existing drainage pipes going into the lake would no longer contain water during dry weather. Option 1 would lower the entire lake about 1.3 metres. The water line would drop but the depth of the lake (about 2.5 metres) would remain the same. Option 2 would see about two-thirds of the main lake retained but a causeway would separate the remaining third. The water level in this remaining third would be lowered substantially.

In both options, a wetland on the eastern edge of the lake would be built to provide more stormwater capacity during heavy rains. The wetland could be large or small. Mr. Amell noted that both options could include features like walking trails, boardwalks, interpretative signage, and various landscaping treatments. The special features and final landscaping would be determined in consultation with the community.

Mr. Barth said modifying Bearspaw Lake is a high priority because it will have the biggest beneficial impact on Bearspaw and surrounding communities. Tentative plans call for detailed design to be completed in 2007 with the project finished by 2009. Funding has been approved.

Other sanitary and stormwater upgrades in Bearspaw are less critical and are scheduled for completed in 2010-2015. Sanitary improvements include enlarging pipes along 109 Street and a portion of 11 Avenue; along 17 Avenue and a portion of Bearspaw Drive East. Stormwater sewer pipes at eight locations in the northern half of Bearspaw will also be upgraded to reduce water pooling.

Input from Residents

Residents were generally in favour of modifying the lake to improve its efficiency but most wanted the surface area to be as large as possible. Option 1 was preferred, mainly because of this reason. Several people noted there was room for expanding the lake to the west, south and east.

A wetland at the east end of the lake was seen as favourable. However, naturalization of other areas of the lake was not desired. Most were not in favour of constructed walkways as grassed paths were preferred. The idea of a footbridge between the lake and a wetland met with some support.

Concerns expressed about wetlands and special features largely related to how they might change the lake's use, look and activities. For example, anything that was perceived to encourage teenagers to gather (such as low areas, bushes) and engage in illicit practices was not supported. Others felt constructed pathways would look less natural, affect wildlife and increase pedestrian and dog traffic from other neighbourhoods. A couple of people were concerned that a wetland might attract more insects, garbage and infringe on existing play areas.

However, most people felt that appropriate landscaping and the addition of thoughtfully considered features would be beneficial. A few residents felt the small creek entering the lake from the east and the outlet pipe to Blackmud Creek needed more regular maintenance in order to flow properly. They believed the creek flow has steadily declined over the years. One person suggested the outlet pipe be enlarged to improve drainage out of the lake.

Not all residents felt modifying the lake was necessary. A couple of residents believed other alternatives, such as providing everyone with a backwater valve, would work as effectively to prevent flooding.

For the next meeting, residents wanted to see an overlay of the proposed design over the existing lake and a construction schedule.

Next Steps

Work will continue using resident's input to guide a final proposed design. This will be presented to the community in early 2007. Once residents and other stakeholders are comfortable with the proposal, detailed design will begin. This is expected to be completed by the end of 2007 with construction starting in 2008.

Any comments or questions regarding Bearspaw flood prevention measures may be forwarded to Mr. Barth at 496-5552 or russell.barth@edmonton.ca. More information on the City of Edmonton's flood prevention program is available on Drainage Services' website at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention.