

**Pleasantview Community Consultation on Flood Prevention
Held March 29, 2005 at Pleasantview Hall**

Consultation Summary

Attendance: 43

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

Presentation

Following introductions, Mr. Barth reviewed the drainage engineering findings for the community and discussed options for reducing the risk of flooding in the future. He noted that the findings show better flood prevention requires action on the part of both the City and homeowners. System improvements for Pleasantview under consideration by Drainage Services include:

- Partially separating the combined sewer system located underneath Pleasantview's low lying area. A separate stormwater system would be built and the existing catch basins at street level redirected to the new stormwater pipes. The pipes would be connected to an existing stormwater tunnel on 111 Street.
- Building a new combined line along 51 Avenue to draw and divert combined flow away from Pleasantview, relieving some pressure on the neighbourhood's system.
- Building a new manhole at 106 Street and 51 Avenue and redirecting sanitary flow south, away from Pleasantview.
- Extending a stormwater pipe on 55 Avenue and connecting to an existing stormwater system at 107 Street.
- Sealing sanitary manhole covers to prevent rainwater from entering the sanitary sewer system.
- Subsidizing the installation of backwater valves in all homes in the low lying area.

The estimated cost of implementing these options is \$3.1 million. In addition, homeowners were asked to improve their own on-site drainage as much as possible. Options include:

- Better lot grading to ensure surface water gets away from the house.
- Repairing and maintaining good eavestroughs and downspouts.
- Having downspout extensions that channel water at least 6 feet (1.8 metres) away from the house. If an extension is not possible, to drain onto a splash pad.
- Installing and/or maintaining a backflow prevention valve.
- Installing, if appropriate for the situation, a sump pump.

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Input from Residents

People at the meeting had only a few questions or comments about the options. Most of the evening was spent discussing the sewer system and flood prevention home improvements like lot grading.

A number of residents encouraged Drainage Services to review other parts of Pleasantview for drainage issues not referred to in the engineering findings or suggested options. Several specific examples were provided at the meeting:

- Pooling of water overtop of two manhole covers at 60 Avenue and 107 Street.
- A manhole surrounded by dirt and snow at 109 Street and 52 Avenue.
- A “constant lake” at 51 Avenue between 103 and 104 Streets.
- Water pooling in the back lane behind 54 Avenue and at Allard Way.
- Removal of some interconnections between the sanitary and storm systems several years ago. There was a concern this may have had a negative effective on drainage.

It was suggested a number of homes that were flooded in Pleasantview had not been counted in the City’s statistics, as some residents did not know they were to report. One individual suspected a number of these unreported floods were in homes along 59 Avenue between 107 and 108 Streets.

Some residents asked when the options would be implemented and how access to homes might be restricted. It was important to residents that access to homes not be impeded, especially for those who are disabled. A couple of residents were concerned that construction may lead to more wall cracks in their foundation or sinking sidewalks.

Two people said the options offered only a temporary solution, as they believed the system was deteriorating or fundamentally flawed in design. Another person was concerned that there were few flood prevention system options presented for homes located outside of the low lying area. One individual questioned the benefit of building a separate storm system as neighbourhoods with a separate storm and sanitary system also were flooded. Another resident suggested developments south of the Whitemud Freeway have had a negative impact on Pleasantview’s drainage system.

It was noted that last July’s storm resulted in hail and leaves blocking catch basins. It was recommended that the City provide public education to residents living in heavily treed neighbourhoods, encouraging them to clean local catch basins during large storms.

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Homeowner Options

Many at the meeting sought advice and direction regarding lot grading. It was noted that lot grading is an issue between some neighbours because there is confusion or a lack of concern about where water is channelled. One person suggested the City regulate lot grading. Others wanted better information about proper lot grading and any City regulations that may apply.

Similarly, people were interested in knowing more about backwater valves, weeping tile, sump pumps and other home drainage elements. Questions ranged from what financial support was available to installation. There was concern that plumbers may be reluctant to put in backwater valves in retrofit situations because of the work involved. It was suggested that Drainage Services consult with plumbers about backwater valves before encouraging, through subsidy, the installation of backwater valves in all Pleasantview low lying area homes.

One individual suggested a bylaw be put into place requiring new homes to have deep lawns that will soak up more water.

Next Steps

Input from the community and other stakeholders regarding system options will be incorporated into a more detailed implementation plan. This plan will be discussed with the community before being presented to City Council in the fall. Mr. Barth noted a number of funding options were being considered, including federal and provincial support. Implementation plan timing will depend on funding and the capacity to do the work. Community residents will be notified of the next consultation. Additional comments or questions may be forwarded to Mr. Barth at 496-5552 or russell.barth@edmonton.ca

Other Key Contacts

Call 496-5539 to be added to the flood prevention program mailing list or to receive future updates and notices by e-mail. Call the 24-hour drainage hotline at 496-1717 if there is a drainage or sewer problem on your property or on your street.

More information about drainage services and the flood prevention program is available at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention