

**South Edmonton\* Communities Consultation on Flood Prevention  
held May 9 at Greenwood Inn**

**Consultation Summary**

*\*Includes the communities of Keheewin, Ermineskin, Steinhauer, Duggan, Rideau Park, Empire Park, Royal Gardens, Aspen Gardens, Westbrook Estates, Greenfield and Sweet Grass.*

Attendance: 29

Main presenter: Russell Barth, Senior Engineer & Flood Prevention Project Leader  
for Ward 5, 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. Barth then reviewed drainage engineering findings for south Edmonton communities and presented recommended system improvements. These were:

- Upgrade and enlarge sanitary sewer lines in nine neighbourhoods to increase capacity and relieve system pressure. The work involves 15 major and minor projects.
- Add stormwater sewer pipes in Steinhauer and Rideau Park to increase flow capacity. This will benefit a number of surrounding neighbourhoods in addition to Steinhauer and Rideau Park.
- Build a small dry pond in Duggan to collect and hold excess surface stormwater. The water would be held there until the underground stormwater system had the capacity to drain it away.
- Seal selected sanitary manhole covers to prevent rainwater from entering the sanitary system.

The estimated cost of implementing system improvements is \$12 million. Plans call for about half of the work to be done by 2015. The timing is impacted by the need to make immediate improvements in other Edmonton communities that have more severe flooding problems.

**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.

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**

Meeting participants were supportive of the recommended improvement plan. There were some questions about how detailed the studies were. For example, whether surface ponding in back lanes was analyzed. Several residents cited specific problem areas and Mr. Barth committed to having those locations reviewed. He also extended an invitation to any resident to forward information about other problem areas they know to Drainage Services.

One resident asked about sewer and catch basin maintenance, suggesting this may have contributed to flooding. Mr. Barth noted the studies showed this was not a contributing factor as regular inspections and maintenance are done in all neighbourhoods. He acknowledged that plugged catch basins can be a problem from time to time and encouraged homeowners to call Drainage Services if a problem is discovered.

There were a number of questions about Drainage Services' lot grading and backwater valve programs. It was noted that there is a subsidy available for the installation of a backwater valve to homeowners who qualify but there is no financial help for lot grading. Educational workshops on backwater valves and a free, on-site Home Flood Prevention Check-up program are being offered again by Drainage Services. In response to a question, it was noted that homeowners should not disconnect their downspouts draining into a pipe in the ground unless there is a special reason to do so. This pipe connects to the stormwater system and is an efficient way to dispose of excess water.

There was a concern that flooding in one or more homes on a street may signal potential future flooding in adjacent homes. One person asked if previous plans or records for homes were available from the City. This would help identify whether a new owner's property or neighbouring properties have suffered flooding in the past.

Mr. Barth explained the City does not archive blueprints or renovation records of private homes. Information held by the City about private properties, such as reported flooding, is confidential and is not available to the public. In a similar vein, the detailed engineering studies contain some confidential information and therefore are not available in their entirety to the public.

### **Updates**

Updates to residents on improvement plans for south Edmonton communities will be provided via information bulletins and Drainage Services' website at [www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention](http://www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention). Additional comments or questions may be forwarded to Mr. Barth at 496-5552 or [russell.barth@edmonton.ca](mailto:russell.barth@edmonton.ca)