

**Southwest Edmonton Communities
Flood Prevention Public Consultation
Held May 9, 2013 at Royal Gardens Community Hall**

Attendance: 40 (approximate)

City of Edmonton Presenter: Todd Wyman, Director, Drainage Planning.
Councillor Don Iveson was on hand to answer residents' questions.

Presentation

Note: The following is a brief summary of the topics covered in the presentation made by Mr. Wyman. The full presentation is available at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention (click on Public Consultations)

- The July 2012 storms were severe events that overwhelmed the system.
- Plan of action is find main causes, review upgrades underway, develop additional viable solutions, obtain funding, and engage the community to implement solutions.
- Review of drainage improvement work already done or planned for southwest Edmonton.
- System upgrade options under consideration:
 - Westbrook Estates: sanitary and storm sewer upgrades and dry pond on Derrick Golf Courses
 - Aspen Gardens: sanitary upgrades
 - Lansdowne: sanitary upgrades
 - Greenfield: sanitary upgrades
 - Royal Gardens: sanitary upgrades
 - Lendrum Place: sanitary upgrades
 - Pleasantview: sanitary upgrades
 - Parkallen; dry pond
- Benefits of the improvements include less pooling of surface water, reduced risk of sanitary backups and basement flooding, less property damage, savings of time, money and inconvenience.
- Next steps include:
 - Refine and prioritize upgrades based on impact/benefit and estimate costs
 - Consult and work with stakeholders on identified land parcels needed for dry ponds
 - Finalize expanded Flood Prevention Program and present to City Council for funding approval
 - Continue consulting/informing communities on design and construction matters.

Comments and Feedback

The most pressing concern came from residents of Aspen Gardens who noted the pronounced slope of their neighbourhood means that there is a pronounced low spot that is especially prone to annual flooding. Many expressed concerns regarding increased insurance costs, low resale value for their homes and a lack of foresight by developers and the City when the area was developed.

Residents wanted to know how the City's plans would alleviate flooding in the area, where their neighbourhood fell on the city's priority list for storm sewer upgrades and if they were 100 per cent confident that their proposed upgrades would solve the flooding problems.

Drainage personnel explained that when the Aspen Gardens area was developed it was common practice to tie houses weeping tiles into the sanitary sewer system, which causes the system to become overwhelmed during major storms. This is not acceptable today. The city's upgrade plans would remove the sanitary sewer flow from the Westbrook area that currently enters the Aspen Gardens system, freeing up capacity. Staff told the residents that while they cannot guarantee that the upgrades will ensure there is never another flood in the area, they are confident that the proposed changes are the best solution for the situation.

Similar concerns were raised by residents of Lansdowne, which also has a flood-prone low spot at one end of the neighbourhood. They wanted to know how the City was determining which areas would be given priority for upgrades and how much the upgrades will cost in real dollars. Mr. Wyman told the group that priority would be based on the impacts and benefits of each job, how much each job will disrupt a neighbourhood, the manpower available to the City for each job, and the severity of the chronic problems each upgrade is intended to address. He also noted that it was not physically possible for the city to work on all the upgrades at once due to factors such as labour capacity, weather and school seasons.

Councillor Iveson added that the city's next infrastructure budget cycle will run from 2015 to 2017 and until the next cycle begins they will only begin new projects that can be attached to existing work. The estimate cost of the sewer upgrades for this area is \$20 million to \$30 million.

Frustration was expressed by the group over the perceived slow pace of the drainage survey and upgrade design process. Councillor Iveson stated that the city was approximately six months ahead of the pace set by the 2006 Flood Mitigation Project and that it would be irresponsible of the City to begin upgrading the sewers without first doing a diligent and thorough investigation into the current shortcomings of the system and the best possible solutions.

Hope was expressed that the City and the Derrick Golf Club would work together quickly to develop the dry pond on the golf course in order to mitigate the storm runoff from the course that has cause flooding events in the area, especially along Fairway Drive. Mr. Wyman explained that the city and the Derrick Club would need to come to an agreement on the timing of the construction and that further information on this project would be provided to the group when it was available.

Residents asked what they could do to help their neighbourhoods move up on the priority list for flood mitigation upgrades. Councillor Iveson told the group to continue to attend these community meetings when they are held, continue to ask questions, continue to report problems to Drainage Services and continue to engage their City Councillors on the matter.

Other suggestions/comments

- Some residents wanted to know more about the amount of effort the City puts into the maintenance and monitoring of the sewers. Drainage staff will provide follow-up information.
- Concern was raised over the effectiveness and reliability of back-flow valves in preventing sewage back-ups. Staff on hand met with those who expressed concern and those who wanted more information about flood proofing their homes.

Updates

Updates to residents on the improvement plans will be provided via direct mail or email for those who attended the meeting and others who are on the stakeholder list. It will also be communicated through the City of Edmonton's website at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention. Additional comments or questions may be forwarded to Todd Wyman at 495-1948 todd.wyman@edmonton.ca