

**West Edmonton* Communities Consultation on Flood Prevention
held May 3 at Meadowlark School**

Consultation Summary

**Includes the communities of West Meadowlark, Meadowlark, Jasper Park, Sherwood, Parkview Summerlea, Thorncliffe, La Perle.*

Attendance: 40

Main presenters: Douwe Vanderwel and Paul Hoffart, Senior Engineers & Flood Prevention Project Leaders 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 and Mr. Hoffart then reviewed drainage engineering findings for west Edmonton communities. Recommended system improvements for these communities include:

- Construction of a large, deep storm sewer tunnel to reduce system pressure and transport water more quickly to the North Saskatchewan River. This will benefit many neighbourhoods in west Edmonton.
- Add new sewer lines in Sherwood and Parkview to increase flow capacity and relieve system pressure.
- Upgrade and enlarge storm sewer piping along 92A Avenue to reduce pooling of water on local streets.
- Re-grade Arrowhead Trail to improve overland stormwater flows away from homes and local streets, primarily in Thorncliffe.
- Divert some stormwater collected in Summerlea to a pond located north of the community. This will relieve pressure on the local system.
- Build a sanitary relief pipe from 81 Avenue south to Whitemud Drive.
(Project underway, funding in place)
- Seal selected sanitary manhole covers to prevent rainwater from entering the sanitary system.

The estimated cost of implementing system improvements is \$23.2 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.

Although not part of the consultation area, it was noted that a stormwater dry pond proposed for Aldergrove will also provide some system relief for communities like Thorncliffe and La Perle.

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

Most meeting participants were supportive of the recommended improvement plan. One resident made a point of saying that he would support a rate increase of \$2 or \$3 per month if it would prevent the nearly \$40,000 in damage he incurred from the July 2004 flood.

One resident felt the recommended improvements would not improve his situation as he believes the problem lies in neighbourhood street grading. This remains a flooding concern because of the low level of his property and home in relation to the street. Similarly, another resident wanted to see poor drainage in back alleys resolved as part of the plan. One meeting participant questioned whether a sewer back-up 20 years ago in Meadowlark on 157 Street was ever resolved.

Mr. Vanderwel explained that the recommended changes will benefit a large number of homeowners in many neighbourhoods but street or block specific problems may still exist. He encouraged residents to contact Drainage Services about a pooling of water on the surface or suspected problems with a catch basin or pipe. He indicated very specific concerns might be resolved within Drainage Services existing resources and budget.

There were a number of questions about lot grading and backwater valves. One person said they had sanitary backup coming through their toilet. It was noted that there is a subsidy available for the installation of a backwater valve to homeowners who qualify. Educational workshops on backwater valves and a free, on-site Home Flood Prevention Check-up program are being offered again by Drainage Services. It was suggested that anyone with concerns about drainage on their private property take advantage of the Check-up program.

One individual said a neighbour was flooded despite having a backwater valve in place. It was suggested corrosion may have caused the valve to fail. Newer models are made of plastic and therefore has less likelihood of failing if properly maintained.

There was a concern that foundation settlement is caused by wetlands that existed when west Edmonton neighbourhoods were built. Similarly, one resident wondered if new development to the west is placing added pressure on older neighbours and contributing to the flood risk. Mr. Hoffart said these concerns were legitimate and while the proposed storm sewer tunnel would not lower the water table, it would significantly reduce the pressure on the stormwater system throughout the west end.

In response to a question, Mr. Hoffart noted that commercial owners of parking lots are required to capture and store stormwater on their property until the stormwater system has the capacity to drain it away.

Updates

Updates to residents on improvement plans for west Edmonton communities 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 douwe.vanderwel@edmonton.ca or to Mr. Hoffart at 496-5537 paul.hoffart@edmonton.ca.