Lendrum Community Consultation on Flood Prevention
Held March 21, 2005 at Lendrum School

Consultation Summary

Attendance: 86

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 Lendrum under consideration by Drainage Services include:

- Building two dry ponds and diverting surface stormwater to the ponds. The water would be held there until the underground system has the capacity to drain it away. Three locations for the ponds are being considered.
- Building short underground stormwater pipes from street drains to the dry ponds to reduce pooling on three street intersections.
- Building a new sanitary sewer pipe along 113A Street to 60 Avenue to relieve system pressure and increase capacity.
- Upgrading two existing sanitary sewer pipes to reduce bottlenecks and increase capacity.
- Sealing sanitary manhole covers to prevent rainwater from entering the sanitary system.
- Subsidizing the installation of backwater valves in all homes in low lying areas.

The estimated cost of implementing these options is $2.5 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 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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Dry Ponds

Discussion on the proposed dry ponds centred on size, appearance and location. Many individuals did not know what a dry pond looked like or how it was built. It was recommended that more information be provided regarding dry ponds but that any pond built in the neighbourhood is left as a natural or recreation area upon completion.

It was suggested that ponds be considered at two other locations to deal with chronic surface flooding issues. These locations were:

- A community playground at 113A Street and south of 57 Avenue. The playground is higher than the road and currently drains onto 113A Street during a storm.
- University Farms west of 115 St. During the July storms, one resident said water from there drained "like Niagara Falls" into the neighbourhood. If a dry pond is not possible, another resident suggested a berm be built to block surface water coming from University property.

There were questions about whether pipes, gravity or pumps would be used to get water to the ponds. One person noted that one of the lowest spots in the area was at 113A St. and 57 Ave. He recommended a pipe from this intersection to a dry pond be built to quickly drain surface water. While the option of installing dry ponds was generally supported, there was a concern regarding the safety of children when the ponds contained water. It was suggested alternatives to ponds be considered as that option may be unacceptable to some stakeholders.

System Capacity and Maintenance

While residents favoured any upgrade and addition that would relieve stormwater and/or sanitary sewer system pressures, there were concerns that system capacity would still be inadequate to handle large storms. A few residents recommended additional stormwater pipes be built to increase the stormwater system capacity. It was also suggested that a catch basin connected to the storm system be built at the intersection of 56 Avenue and 115 Street to alleviate water pooling there.

A few residents expressed doubts about the adequacy of system maintenance. There was a suggestion that pipes be cleaned at least once per year. There was a request that more evidence be provided regarding what pipes are cleaned and when.

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Homeowner Options

Those at the meeting liked the idea of having every home in a low lying area receive a subsidy to install a backwater valve. It was suggested such a program should be retroactive to compensate those who installed a valve on their own and are not eligible for a subsidy under the City's current rules. One resident said the current subsidy is inadequate to pay for the work, particularly if it is a complicated installation. Another suggested this might in part be due to price gouging by tradespeople.

Some people questioned the valve of sump pumps, noting that Lendrum's high water table causes sump pumps to run regularly. During a storm, there were doubts that a sump pump could manage the extra volume and would not be able to alleviate hydrostatic pressure. A couple of participants were concerned that pumping water to the surface causes icy conditions or pools of water that could be a nuisance or a safety hazard.

A few individuals noted there was confusing information regarding the installation and operation of backwater valves, sump pumps and roof leaders. They suggested more information be provided regarding these and other homeowner flood prevention measures. One person noted that improvements in lot grading and eavestroughs would not have helped him during the July storm as water was up to his front step.

Timing

A number of questions were asked about how quickly the presented flood prevention options might be implemented. Residents were concerned that they may experience another severe storm and subsequent flooding before the changes are made. One individual suggested the flooding program should become a higher priority for the City.

Next Steps

Input from the community 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