



Wightman Park Stormwater Project Phase II Meeting Summary 2/23/2021 – 6:30 to 8:00 PM

Presentation

Rebecca Zito, Senior Manager of Public Affairs welcomed the group, reviewed the purpose of the meeting, and introduced the project team.

Tony Igwe, Senior Group Manager; Stormwater reviewed Pittsburgh’s stormwater challenges and the contributing factors. He provided additional information about how our stormwater projects are helping to address these challenges and explained that the Stormwater Master Plan that we will begin developing in later this year, will also help to identify additional solutions and opportunities to better manage stormwater.

Barton Kirk, Ecological Engineer at Ethos Collaborative explained how the Phase Two improvements will convey the stormwater that falls in the neighborhood to the park. Stormwater planters will intercept and redirect stormwater at four intersections: Wightman Street and Solway Street, Negley Avenue and Solway Street, Negley Avenue and Woodmont Street, and Murray Avenue and Solway Street. A long linear planter will also be installed along Solway Street in front of the school, with a step out zone for vehicle passengers and pavement connections to the sidewalk. The planters, some trench drains, and an underground pipe crossing will carry the stormwater to the park. Rainfall of up to 1.5 inches will enter the planters, while rainfall above that amount will enter new stormwater inlets that lead to the combined sewer system. The plant species for the planters have been selected for their ability to tolerate and thrive in salty, tough conditions.

Rebecca Zito reviewed the construction schedule, project phasing and construction impacts. Phase Two design is complete, and construction is expected to start in April 2021 and continue through the end of the year. The construction will be done in five sequenced phases to minimize disruption to the entire neighborhood. Construction will begin at Wightman Street and Solway Street and continue eastward to finish at Murray Avenue and Solway Street.

The construction hours are Monday through Thursday from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM; Friday will serve as a make-up day. Traffic detours will be posted and flaggers will be on site to help direct traffic. No parking signs will be posted where active construction work is taking place. Rebecca encouraged the audience to reach out to her with questions about construction. She will be a liaison between the community and construction team. Her email address is rzito@pgh2o.com.

Design Discussion

Billy Li - We just had a sewage back up today on Northumberland lol :(

Ben Grunauer - Snowmelt can do that, not just rainwater.

James Kwalwasser - Is the system designed to accommodate water from private properties (e.g., from roof drains that empty onto lawns)?

Barton – Design process was a street level survey and looked at aerial photography to analyze the homes that have disconnected downspouts to analyze drainage. There are no direct connections from homes, but it was analyzed in the planning phase and was not feasible.

Paul M – How much water are you pulling out of the system on a numerative basis?

Barton - The capacity of the system is 58000 CF of storage. Any given event there is potential to hold and store that much water. The system is sized to manage an 1.5” storm completely but also mitigates larger storms that may overcharge sewers.

Paul – I have been around stormwater a lot and taking off the front-end of the large storms is helpful. Good Work.

James K - Will there be separate stormwater lines installed in the future on any of these streets (e.g., on Solway St.) and will homeowners be required to connect into the new stormwater line?

Tony – Right now, there isn’t planning to do any major separation in this area or other areas. If it were to be added it would have been done during this project. We are not looking at separating it here at this point. PWSA and the City are discussing a strategic plan for stormwater and will discuss the best way to handle flooding. This planning will look at the 1.5” storms and large storms beyond that. This will lead to future planning for separation.

Open Discussion

Donald Mann - I have been in civil engineering design, construction, and inspection for more than 40 years. I am a neighbor of Wightman Field and observed the construction. I have not seen the plans, but it appears that there is insufficient access to the storage area to accommodate required maintenance. If this area fills with sediment, we end up with a very expensive temporary solution. It is relatively easy to commit funds to improvement, but seemingly quite difficult to provide funding for maintenance, which ultimately requires more capital investment.

I was at the opening ceremony and asked about this issue. Someone with oversight experience told me that the curb inlet structures were sufficient. They apparently have never been ankle deep in mud along the Solway Street curbs as we have. For many years, the city cleaned the 1400 block of Wightman Street, which is a 10% grade, and self-cleaning, but did not clean Solway Street, which appears to be about 1/2 %.

Barton – Very important comment. Management of sediment from urban streets is certainly our biggest concern and primary consideration. There are multiple tiers of sediment prevention throughout what is constructed in these spaces and in the park to make sediment to maintain and control. For the park itself. Most of the water comes into a water quality manhole that has a special filter and design that allows the sediment to settle out. In the streets, each bump out has sediment forebays to hold back the sediment. All water that gets into the park will settle out in the WQ manhole and also go through many inlet filter bags.

Wightman Park Phase 2 Public Meeting Notes – Questions and Comments
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James K - During phase 1 construction, after significant jackhammering, I observed some settlement in my building, which has c. 1850 foundation. I complained to the City's 311 but never received a response. If this happens again, who should I contact?

John – This instant you will need to reach out to the PWSA claims office and it will get the ball rolling on investigating the issue

Steve Dines – I live on Solway near Negley. I am looking forward to solving the problem of backup. There is an underground stream that has risen in the last 15 years. Does that underground stream get intercepted by the infrastructure, so I don't have a wet basement?

Barton – Right where your house is there historically was a stream and the park was the confluence of these streams. This project is focused on surface stormwater runoff and there isn't any part of this proposed project where it intercepts that underground stream. The stormwater retention may be able to lower the amount of water getting into the underground stream.

Tony – The stormwater retention may be keeping the underground stream lowered but we wouldn't help it directly.

Steven - Would there be another project to address this?

Tony – It is hard to say we would need more information. We haven't focused on this on the past and we would need more information to address these types of issues. We are really focused on surface water. This is something we will take into consideration for other areas in the city.

Steve – I've looked at historical maps and that stream goes right by my house.

Rebecca – Do you want me to reach out to Steve and get his address

Tony – yes having this piece of information will let us know if this is a problem we can address.

Mark Fischman - You talked about collecting debris in these manholes. How is that cleared?

Barton – That's cleared by a vacuum truck that is managed by PWSA or their contractors.