

**Lawn and Ophelia Stormwater Project  
Virtual Community Meeting Notes  
6:30 – 7:30 p.m. on Monday, May 16, 2022**

**Attendees**

The 15 meeting participants included local residents, project stakeholders, and representatives from community organizations.

**Presentation**

Elaine Hinrichs, Education and Outreach Associate at PWSA introduced the project team and provided an overview of stormwater challenges in Pittsburgh. Maria Natoli, Design Project Manager at PWSA, described the project background and the final design. Elaine summarized what to expect for construction impacts and communications in 2022. The presentation slides and a recording of this meeting are available at [www.pgh2o.com/lawn-and-ophelia](http://www.pgh2o.com/lawn-and-ophelia).

**Discussion (Organized by Topic with Updates in Red Text)**

Project Design and Maintenance

- Joan: Correction about presentation. The playground there was going to be decommissioned specifically to fill the need for a storm water storage. Done with the encouragement of the Registered Community Organization (RCO).
  - Maria Natoli (PWSA): That is correct. The City let PWSA know that they were planning to decommission the playground and it was an opportunity to manage stormwater. The community was supportive of stormwater management.
- Joan: Is any of the water coming from the other street sewers further up the hill. Or does this just capture the water coming from the sky?
  - Maria Natoli (PWSA): The drainage area is 1.86 acres of impervious surfaces. This capture area includes stormwater runoff from streets and roofs as well as directly from the sky.
- Bob: Who maintains the rainwater garden after construction? The City or PWSA?
  - Maria Natoli (PWSA): PWSA will maintain the green infrastructure components. PWSA's maintenance contractor, currently a company called Landforce, handles the maintenance for all PWSA green infrastructure and will be maintaining the rain garden.

## Traffic and Parking Impacts During Construction

- Millie: So how will people access the 200 block of Ophelia Street? It is a narrow street.
- Geof: Hi my name is Geof Becker, I live at 200 Ophelia St., right beside the parklet, with Ophelia being one-way, how will I get my car to my house? There is a currently a circle turnaround at the end of Ophelia Street.
  - Barton Kirk (Ethos Collaborative): As the design consultant, we drafted up a proposed plan for maintenance of traffic during construction. Zottola, the construction contractor, is currently planning to follow that plan but they may change it to meet construction needs. The current plan would temporarily mark Ophelia Street as a two-way street to allow for two-way traffic while the current intersection of Lawn and Ophelia streets is closed during construction. Exactly where the turnaround has not been specified, so we will clarify that with the contractor.
  - **ACTION:** The PWSA project team will clarify with the contractor Zottola where they plan to provide turnaround points if Ophelia Street and Lawn Street are to be closed.
  - **UPDATE:** See revised traffic control plan description below.
- Geof: How would that work for two-way traffic on such a narrow street with a parking lane?
  - Barton Kirk (Ethos Collaborative): This would work as a yield street, where it is a negotiation between drivers. Many other narrow streets in Pittsburgh work this way currently, where there is insufficient width for two lanes of traffic and a parking lane. Particularly in a construction situation, this is a “yield street” system used to navigate the work. We understand the inconvenience.
- Geof: The street curbs are very high – cars will have a hard time jumping the curb to yield. Also, lots of college student tenants will be moving in during August. I think there would need to be a culture of education with the students for this traffic and parking. I think the current proposed traffic process during construction would be incredibly difficult to navigate. I think the construction crews should leave part of that turnaround by the parklet open for Lawn and Ophelia streets. I encourage a less rigid closing of the streets during the project.
  - Barton Kirk (Ethos Collaborative): Your concerns are heard. We will re-visit the traffic plan.
  - **ACTION:** The PWSA project team will revisit the traffic control plan, considering feedback from residents regarding two-way traffic, turnaround spaces, and parking.
  - **UPDATE:** The project team has put together a revised traffic control plan for construction:
    - No Parking signs will be posted on the sections of Lawn Street and Ophelia Street right beside parklet. These No Parking areas on the street next to the parklet will be used for equipment and materials staging.
    - Keep one lane open to local one-way traffic on both Lawn Street and Ophelia Street around the parklet for the majority of construction. Steel plates will be placed over portions of the road at times to allow local traffic through.
    - Brief closures of Lawn Street and Ophelia Street next to the parklet will be required for construction of pipe crossings in the road. These closures are expected to last one workday each for the two pipe crossings. The contractor will facilitate traffic flows during those brief road closures.

- Elizabeth: How long will the Lawn/Ophelia area be closed to traffic?
  - Maria Natoli (PWSA): As of now, based on the current traffic control plan, we expect road closures right next to the parklet to last the duration of the project, so approximately mid-June to end of November.
  - **UPDATE:** Construction at the parklet is now expected to start in early July and last through November 2022. See revised traffic control plan description on page 2 for more information.
  
- Elena: What will be the impact on our permit parking? Will large construction vehicles be parked for weeks at a time? Is there a plan for workers to obtain parking off site? Will street blockages allow workers to park while residents are blocked from parking? Will workers be using the technique of putting their green shirts over their license plates so as to not get a ticket for parking in an RPP area?
  - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): The contractor will have large construction vehicles like trucks coming and going at the construction site in order to complete the work. We are not planning for large construction vehicles to be parked on the street for weeks at a time. This construction project will have a relatively small crew onsite, so there will likely be about 3 pickup trucks parked onsite for workers' commuting purposes, and they will likely park on the sidewalk next to the parklet. There is not currently a plan for off-site parking for the workers. If there are parts of the street closed, that is directly created for construction vehicles to park and maneuver. If the contractor's construction vehicles are parked within their specific construction zone, they won't be ticketed. We will have a construction inspector onsite. If he sees misuse of available parking, that will be dealt with during construction.
  - Elena: Where will construction workers not arriving in construction vehicles be parking since no offsite parking for them is being provided?
  - **UPDATE:** It is the contractor's responsibility to find parking for their workers.
  
- Joan: Exactly which permit parking spots will be closed during this time?
  - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): The current plan is to close the streets directly adjacent to the park. We will revisit that traffic control plan though based on this meeting's conversation, so that may change.
  - **ACTION:** After revisiting the traffic control plan, the PWSA project team will clarify with attendees about which streets and permit parking spots may be closed during construction.
  - **UPDATE:** See revised traffic control plan description on page 2.
  
- Elena: And what about the folks in the first block of Lawn St - from Hamlet to parklet?
  - Maria Natoli (PWSA): The current traffic control plan has the first block of Lawn and Ophelia streets from Hamlet Street to the park closed to through-traffic. The plan would still allow residents on that block to drive to their home. Street permitting parking on those blocks between the park and Hamlet Street will not likely be taken away during this construction.

## Construction Controls and Scope of Work

- Millie: Will there be dust mitigation? Workers may be working only one or two days, but the total project will take months. Thus extended inconvenience to residents. What about noise mitigation?
  - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): There will be erosion and sediment control methods in place during construction. As far as noise, the contractor is only allowed to work with loud noise starting at 7 AM. If noise or other site conditions become an issue, you can contact Elaine Hinrichs, PWSA Education and Outreach Associate at [ehinrichs@pgh2o.com](mailto:ehinrichs@pgh2o.com) or 412-738-1887.
  
- Geof: Does the project call for paving the section of Lawn and/or Ophelia street?
  - Maria Natoli (PWSA): Right now, the project area does not include paving the streets up to that extent. We will tell the City Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI), who is responsible for roads in the city, about the conditions as there are very bad potholes on the streets. It is not going to be paved as part of this stormwater project.
  - **ACTION:** Maria Natoli will report the poor road conditions on Lawn and Ophelia streets outside the project area to DOMI.
  - **UPDATE:** PWSA reported street/sidewalk issues outside of the project area to DOMI.
  
- Millie: I would like to see the sidewalk repaired at the intersection of Lawn and Ophelia too. Somehow it got crushed by previous work. It was the tip of the intersection, on the Forbes Ave side.
  - Maria Natoli (PWSA): We will look into that. The stormwater project wasn't planning to impact that section of sidewalk, but we can see if we can do that repair while our contractor is mobilized in that area.
  - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): We can contact DOMI too.
  - **ACTION:** Maria Natoli will report the damaged sidewalk on the Forbes Avenue side of the Lawn and Ophelia intersection to DOMI, and will look into repairing that portion of the sidewalk while PWSA's contractor is doing construction at the parklet.
  - **UPDATE:** PWSA reported street/sidewalk issues outside of the project area to DOMI.

## Stormwater Codes, Permitting, and Development

- Millie: Has there been any stats gathered about new building projects and the storm water problem? Like with all of the new building down by the Allegheny River near the Strip -- when those went up, did it affect the run-off problem? Where is that data?
  - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): All those private development projects are required to meet City code. Private developers usually build stormwater tanks underground to comply with code requirements to manage their property's stormwater runoff. That data is stored internally with PWSA and the City. There have been recent changes to the Stormwater Code requirements, and the City's Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections (PLI) will be taking over enforcement of the Stormwater Code.
    - Millie: Does this get thrown to the City then? Worried about enforcement.
      - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): The City's permit office has the staff to enforce the Stormwater Code.

- Millie: Oakland going to have a lot of development. How do we keep updated about that? How to be sure that enforcement is happening?
  - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): I don't know if PLI will have a public forum for development tracking. You could reach out to them to ask. The Stormwater Code updates have made stormwater management requirements more stringent, to account more for current issues and future climate change. Private developments are required to submit their designs and those designs will be reviewed by engineers. If the stormwater management is not adequate, the City won't allow them to build.
  
- Elena: And what about how new large buildings overload the sewage system?
  - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): Any additional flow from new developments does stress the existing sewer system. That is why the City has code requirements for private development to manage their stormwater on their private property. PWSA is also building projects to manage stormwater from existing hard surfaces on public property.
  - Barton Kirk (Ethos Collaborative): In addition to what the City is doing, for larger disturbances over 1 acre, those developments are also reviewed through the County (Allegheny County Conservation District) and are required to meet the County requirements. The County requirements are much older, so the larger developments know that they need to go through those stormwater requirements. The developments that are less than 1 acre are getting up to speed on these sort of stormwater requirements within the City.
  
- Lizabeth: Will these building permits be accessible through OneStop and or CivicCentral?
  - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): I don't know the public availability of stormwater construction sets.
    - Lizabeth: Currently anything that is built in the City is on those portals.
      - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): PWSA's construction permits for this project are on the portal. I'm not sure where the City stores the private stormwater sets.
      - **ACTION:** Ben Grunauer will ask the City where they store the private developers' stormwater permit sets, then inform Lizabeth Gray.
  
- Lizabeth: When does the City and PLI take over PWSA permits?
  - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): PWSA in the process of turning it to PLI currently with trainings.
  
- Joan: What text would there be in the developer's proposal that shows they desire to conform (for more than an acre of disturbance)? Because of visibility, it is difficult.
  - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): Private developers submit pages and pages of blueprints and plans of what they are designing to build to manage stormwater. Yes, because the stormwater tanks are underground, it is hard to know they are there.
    - Joan: What text should I look for in private developer's paperwork to show that they recognize the stormwater management needs?
      - Ben Grunauer (PWSA): The private plan drawings have a summary page where they overview their intent. Here is an example of a definitive statement in a report that the plan meets the code requirements: "The

proposed stormwater management system has been designed so that the post-development release rates are not greater than the pre-development release rates and the post development runoff volume is not greater than the pre development runoff volume per the requirements set forth by the City of Pittsburgh."

#### Community Meeting Follow Up

- Elena: Request that PWSA gets back to us about everything you said you would follow up on.
  - Elaine Hinrichs (PWSA): Yes, I will add all the meeting attendees to our Lawn and Ophelia Project interested parties email list. The final meeting notes will include PWSA's updated answers for items we said we would follow up on. The meeting notes will be posted to the project webpage and sent via email.
  - **ACTION:** Elaine Hinrichs will add the meeting attendees' email addresses to the Lawn and Ophelia interested parties email list.
  - **UPDATE: Completed.**
  - **ACTION:** Elaine Hinrichs will include PWSA's updated answers for follow-up questions within the meeting notes that will be posted to the project webpage and sent out via email. Elaine will also include a general overview of the updated answers in the email body.
  - **UPDATE: Completed.**
  
- Lizabeth: Elaine, could you send out an email tomorrow with the questions that PWSA is following up on, so that we know what you are planning to get back to us about, and so that we can add additional questions if we think of them?
  - Elaine Hinrichs (PWSA): Yes, I can do that.
  - **ACTION:** Elaine Hinrichs will send out email tomorrow to meeting attendees with questions from the meeting that PWSA is following up on.
  - **UPDATE: Completed.**