

MEETING SUMMARY
Draft
COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL
MEETING 3

Goodale Park Shelter House
120 W. Goodale Street
Columbus, OH 43215

January 28, 2014
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Members of the Community Advisory Panel (CAP), a group convened by the City of Columbus (the City) to advise on the development of Blueprint Columbus, held their third meeting on January 28, 2014 at the Goodale Park shelter house in Columbus, Ohio. CAP is composed of representatives from Columbus neighborhoods, business, environmental interests, construction, homebuilding, ratepayer and other groups. The panel will meet quarterly over the course of the planning phase, which will conclude in September of 2015 when the draft Blueprint Columbus plan is submitted to the Ohio EPA.

Meeting Objectives:

- Learn about the City's proposed framework for Blueprint Columbus.
- Learn about each component of the proposed framework by participating in interactive stations.
- Discuss questions and concerns about the proposed components and offer suggestions about how best to describe them to Columbus residents.
- Hear updates on the community engagement efforts and the status of plan development.

Welcome and Introductions

The facilitation team welcomed participants and invited brief introductions from CAP members, the project team, and city representatives who showcased the four components of the proposed Blueprint Columbus framework.

Overview of Proposed Framework

Susan Ashbrook, Columbus Department of Public Utilities (DPU), described four primary components of the City's proposed framework: green infrastructure, storm water runoff from rooftops, home sewer laterals and sump pumps. All of the components would be mandatory with the exception of

sump pumps, which would voluntarily be installed in residents' homes. The City anticipates that implementing these components would reduce the amount of rainwater entering the sanitary sewer, which would lessen the number of sanitary sewer overflows, and improve water quality. Jeff Cox, (DPU), added that the components would address the issue of too much water entering the sanitary sewer system at the source of the problem whereas construction of the underground tunnels would address the symptoms of the problem.

CAP members had the following questions and comments after the proposed framework overview. Responses from Ashbrook are *italicized*:

- My understanding was that we would have a choice of whether or not to construct a large sewer or implement green infrastructure and other solutions; but I do not recall the group saying whether or not we want a big sewer or the green infrastructure yet. *The proposed framework is what the City thinks will solve the problem. This meeting, as well as future meetings, is designed to help everyone understand the available options, to collect CAP member feedback on the options, and to hear which options the CAP and community members prefer.*
- The solution could be a combination of green infrastructure and sewer approaches, correct? *Yes, that is correct and we will probably do some of both. But the bigger question is what is preferred: the underground tunnels or the proposed solutions?*
- Are the proposed solutions limited to the City of Columbus? *We have a suburban outreach component and some of the inner ring suburbs will need to implement some of these to be successful, but that outreach is being conducted apart from the CAP.*
- In terms of costs, what portion would be the homeowner's responsibility? How much will the monthly bill increase? *There would be no direct homeowner costs; it would all be City cost. We must stay within the original budget for the tunnels. I do not have the exact figures with me, but the monthly bills will increase as they normally would regardless of whether we construct large tunnels or go with the four components in Blueprint.*
- Would it be easier on the budget if we just built the rain gardens? *It would have to be more than just the rain gardens and we cannot ask residents to pay for the rain gardens or other components themselves.*

Group Tours of the Information Stations

Ms. Ashbrook described each of the stations and CAP members received a handout describing the problem and the solution associated with each component. Information from the handout is included below. A list of questions posed by CAP members follows each component description.

Green Infrastructure

Susan Ashbrook presented at the green infrastructure station. Key points include:

Problem:

- All water that goes into a storm sewer catch basin goes directly to rivers and streams
- Stormwater that is removed from sanitary sewers by Blueprint program will now be going to river untreated

- Stormwater picks up pollutants (trash, oil, grease, fertilizers) from yards and streets and carries it to river

Proposed Solution:

- Install green infrastructure that is designed to clean the stormwater before it enters the storm sewers
- Rain gardens will be primary example, but porous pavement also
- Installations will all be on public property, and may be in front of your house

CAP members asked the following questions about green infrastructure:

Rain Gardens

- Will rain gardens in neighborhoods be designed so they appear to be planned rather than randomly placed throughout a neighborhood?
- Will green infrastructure eliminate street parking?
- Has the City considered that homeowners associations prefer vegetation to be on grade with maintained lawn?
- Why is there standing water in all of the rain garden photos?
- Will the City eliminate sidewalks?
- Will the City take people's land to construct sidewalks or rain gardens?
- What will the City do if a resident has already constructed a large garden in the city right of way prior to the installation of a rain garden?
- Does the city anticipate engaging neighbors for the operation/maintenance of the rain gardens?
- How will the City prevent homeowners from mowing down rain gardens or walking through them?
- Has the City prioritized the locations for rain garden installation?

Porous Asphalt and Concrete

- Will the City vacuum the porous asphalt and concrete?
- Will plants sprout between the pores of the porous asphalt and concrete?
- Are there any locations where porous pavement or asphalt should not be utilized?

General

- How will green infrastructure impact homeowner utility bills?
- Will green infrastructure meet EPA requirements?
- How will the City conduct outreach and interact with the individual community members to determine the locations of green infrastructure?
- Are the costs for sidewalk replacement and repair factored into the overall project costs?

Storm water Runoff from Roofs

Jeff Cox presented at the stormwater runoff from roofs station. Key points from this station include:

Problem:

- Hard surfaces (known as impervious) such as roofs generate more and faster-moving stormwater runoff since none of the water that falls off the surface can soak in
- Roof water can end up in the sanitary sewer in a number of ways
 - It can be piped down the side of the house, and get into the house's foundation drain which may be connected to the home sewer lateral
 - It can be directed into the yard but not very far so it can soak down and enter the foundation drain, or directly into a broken sewer lateral
- Result: too much stormwater runoff from roofs ends up in the City's sewer

Proposed Solution:

- Roof water disconnection/redirection
 - Disconnect roof drains that go underground from foundation drains
 - City can re-direct the gutter downspout out to the road by installing pipes from the house to the street
 - Keeps the roof water from foundation drain and the sanitary lateral
 - Outlet at curb can tie into green infrastructure
 - In some cases, redirection to road is impractical (deck or driveway in the way); need to direct roof water from roof into the yard
 - Studies have found that if roof water is moved far enough away from the house (greater than 7 feet), it does not go back to foundation drain
 - Install dry wells and pop-up emitters to receive roof water in yard far from the house foundation.
- This way, even if foundation drain remains connected to house lateral, it will get less roof water in it

CAP members asked the following questions about capturing stormwater runoff from the roofs:

Roofwater Disconnection/Redirection

- Is there enough elevation in homes for this to work?
- What about houses without gutters?
- Can they be diverted to the alley?

Drywell

- How often does the dry well need to be cleaned out?
- How fast will the dry well fill up?
- What kind of upkeep is required by residents?
- Will the city maintain the drywell?
- Whose responsibility is it to install and maintain?
- How would you get leaves out of the dry well?
- How big is the opening for the top of the drywell?
- Child safety concerns—can kids get the drywell lids off?
- How big are the dry wells?
- What if your yard isn't big enough to get the dry well far enough away?
- Would the dry well create a pool of water in my backyard when it overflows?
- How far away from the house would be the dry well?
- Would the city install and maintain a backyard rain garden?

General

- Have you done the calculations to see if this can handle the rainfall?
- Would this work in all neighborhoods?
- Any maintenance requirements for homeowners?
- Is this voluntary?
- What if a house was too problematic—would you just skip it?
- What percentage of the homes have to be done to achieve the goal?
- Would you individually assess each house to determine the best mix of options?
- When would this be done?
- How long will this take (for each house)?
- Can you do it all at once?

Home Sewer Laterals

John Newsome, DPU, presented at the home sewer laterals station. Key points include:

Problem:

- Every house has a sanitary sewer lateral that takes all of the water from the indoor plumbing (toilets, showers, dishwashers, etc.) to the City's mainline sanitary sewer
- Over time, the sewer lateral can develop problems
 - Pipes can crack, tree roots can grow in, joints can become leaky
- Result: the defective pipes can allow clean stormwater into the lateral, resulting in too much stormwater in the City's sewer

Proposed Solution:

- In most instances, it is possible to line the home sewer lateral with new, waterproof material
 - Lining is usually accomplished by sending a tube of plastic/resin down the sewer lateral
 - The material is heated, which allows it to cure into a hard, water tight pipe that is practically like new
- Minimal disruption to home owner
 - Will need to install a clean out near the house
 - May need temporary access to basement
- In some instances, if lateral is very damaged, may need to excavate yard to install whole new lateral
- Improves the property, as the damaged lateral may be close to getting so clogged that it would have to be repaired anyway.

CAP members asked the following questions about the home sewer laterals station:

Liner material

- How long does it take for the material to cure?
- How long will residents be out of service/how long will it take?
- How long will the material last?
- Is there any odor? Will people have to leave their homes?

- How will this material work going through yard traps?
- Can roots collapse/damage this material?
- How much smaller will the lateral line be?

Access

- How will the lateral line be accessed?
- Will contractors need access prior to the installation?

Lining process and installation

- Does the sewer lateral go out in the back yard?
- If you discover a crack/gap in the pipe, can you leave it as it is?
- How many can be done in a day?
- Is this to do my lateral and the city's too?
- Is there any excavation?
- Will you camera inspect all lateral sewer lines?
- Will there be situations where you can't do this?
- Does it matter if I have a sump pump?
- Is weather a consideration?
- Where will the rain water go that has been diverted from the lined lateral pipe?

Roots, maintenance and Roto Rooter

- What happens if there are roots in the line?
- Will the city force tree removal (because of roots)?
- Is a damaged lateral currently the homeowner's responsibility?
- If something goes wrong in the future – who fixes it?
- Can a lined lateral be damage by Roto Rooter?
- How do we clean out a lined lateral?

Cost

- No matter what condition the lateral is in the homeowner will not incur any cost?
- How much does it cost to do this per house?
- If the lateral lining does not work, will the homeowner pay to have it redone?

General

- What guarantee do you have that this works?
- When is this going to happen in our neighborhoods?
- Do you intend to line every lateral in the city?
- How many houses are going to be done in Columbus?
- How many crews would you need city-wide?
- Are there enough contractors in Central Ohio to do this?

Sump Pumps

Dax Blake, DPU, presented at the sump pump station. Key points include:

Problem:

- Every home needs drainage around the foundation
- Modern homes (after 1963) have separate routes for rainwater and sanitary sewage.
 - Foundation drains collect groundwater and rain water and send it to the sump pump which pumps it out to the street
 - Sanitary sewage is sent to a sanitary lateral and to the City sewer
- Older homes do not always have the two systems separated
 - Foundation drains may be tied directly or indirectly into the sanitary lateral
 - Pipe joints not sealed, which can allow indirect connection
- Result: too much water gets into the City's sewer

Proposed Solution:

- With the homeowner's permission, the City can install a sump pump in older homes and stop the rain water in the foundation drain from getting into the City sewer
- Can include sealing the foundation drain so it is not connected to the sewer lateral
- Cost effective way to address solution
- Brings the home up to modern code standards
- May help cure a wet basement problem

CAP members asked the following questions about sump pumps:

- Where will the sump pumps be located?
- Will the city be digging up basements? Who will take care of that cost?
- What are the conditions/specifications to qualify for a sump pump?
- Where is the water from the sump pump discharging?
- Will be connected to the run off lateral and discharge to the street
- If we volunteer for the Sump Pump program is it necessary to participate in the other 3 options (rain garden, down spouts, and lateral lining)?
- How does water get into the underground bins?
- How would this be paid for? What are the cost implications for me?
- What the total cost to install?
- How many structures/residence would need to have the sump pumps in order for this program to be beneficial?
- Will people who have rental properties have this option?
- Will there be Radon covers for the sump pump?
- Will there have to be updates to electrical wiring? And if so who will incur that cost?

Full Group Discussion and Feedback

After visiting the four stations, CAP members reconvened for a large group discussion, which is summarized below.

CAP members discussed whether or not they acquired enough information at the interactive booths to describe the problems and proposed solutions to other community members. Several CAP members indicated that seeing the components helped them to understand the problems and the

solutions proposed by Blueprint Columbus. But, CAP member opinions varied as to whether or not they could adequately explain the four components to other community members.

Although some CAP members felt prepared to answer some questions about Blueprint Columbus, other CAP members said community members may ask questions the CAP members are not prepared to answer. For example, community members might request more information about what would happen if the city ceases to operate and maintain the green infrastructure or how the voluntary sump pump program would actually work. Community members may also ask how rain gardens could reduce the potential for flooding in neighborhoods where flooding has been an issue, or how sump pumps would change water flow in those areas. Another member said he did not have enough hard data to explain whether or not the independent components would collectively address the problems.

CAP members described the additional information they would like to know about the four components. CAP members made the following suggestions or asked the following questions.

Responses from the City are *italicized*:

- One member suggested providing data about how much water each component could accommodate and the size of storm (50 year storm, 100 year storm, etc.) at which the components would begin to fail. The member also suggested using a hypothetical example home to explain that a roof of size 'R' and yard size 'Y' would create 'X' amount of runoff to be captured. Then, the member suggested the City use the hypothetical example to illustrate how the suite of components would address the problems holistically.
- Another member suggested installing the components at a pilot project home that community members could visit to learn about the components first hand.
- Does the system have the capacity to accommodate the extra water the components would add to the system or would the additional water captured by the components and directed into the system cause the system to overflow? *We do not have the details to answer this in detail tonight, but the Ohio EPA would not approve Blueprint Columbus without conducting a review of the relevant data and potential issues such as this.*
- How is operation and maintenance performed on the cisterns? What happens if the cistern becomes clogged or if more rain falls than the cistern can accommodate?
- It seems like eventually the City will have to touch each individual residence in the city in some form or fashion and that this could take 30 years, correct? *Each home will eventually be incorporated and it could take 30 years to complete.*

Members also provided the following suggestions about the Blueprint Columbus project:

- It may be easier to implement the components in neighborhoods with many rental properties than in neighborhoods where homeowners live in the homes.
- When talking with community members, emphasize that the rate increase will happen regardless of whether the City constructs these four components as part of Blueprint Columbus or if the City builds the large grey infrastructure tunnels.
- When talking with community members, emphasize the importance of creating local job opportunities and paying local organizations to install and maintain the different components as opposed to hiring and paying international companies to construct the large tunnels. Also clearly communicate that operation and maintenance jobs will be paid by rate dollars and not tax dollars, therefore the jobs will not disappear if the economy declines.

- Be transparent with the data used to develop the plan.
- Be transparent about where these components will and will not work, and where traditional grey infrastructure may be required to address water management issues. For example, conditions in the Southside neighborhood are different than in Clintonville. In Southside, the approach may require a new drain in addition to green infrastructure since flooding is already an issue there.

Community Engagement Efforts

Mr. Jon Ross and Ms. Leslie Westerfelt, representatives from RAMA Consulting Group, distributed a handout and provided a brief update on the progress of community engagement efforts. Highlights from the presentation are below.

To establish a baseline understanding of the issues, RAMA distributed approximately 28,000 literature pieces to residents between September and December 2013. Some of this baseline data was translated for Latino and Somalian communities. Additional education information will be distributed in water bills.

Sixteen roadshows were conducted in four areas, Linden, Hilltop, 5th by Northwest, and Livingston-James. Roadshows are conducted in places such as libraries or public events to engage residents in conversations about Blueprint Columbus.

RAMA started to administer baseline surveys to gauge awareness of the Blueprint Columbus brand and general knowledge of sewer overflow issues. An electronic version of the survey was sent to neighborhood organizations via email. Surveys were also administered at public libraries, small businesses, and community centers. Survey efforts will continue through February 2014.

RAMA engaged 46 small and local businesses to date. Engagement with small businesses will continue through March 2014. RAMA also finalized outreach plans for faith-based organizations and contractor/construction companies.

RAMA is ramping up for engagement to begin in Clintonville during the second quarter of 2014. This engagement will coincide with work the City plans to complete in Clintonville.

Mr. Mo Wright, RAMA CEO, requested the CAP members to continue informing RAMA of activities and opportunities where they could present information to community members. For those CAP members who volunteered to serve as ambassadors, he requested they participate in a meeting on February 17.

CAP members had the following questions and comments:

- A member said she has been talking about Blueprint Columbus at civic meetings and invited RAMA to participate in the March meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 pm.