

**MEETING SUMMARY
COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL
MEETING 4**

Goodale Park Shelter House
120 W. Goodale Street
Columbus, OH 43215
May 13, 2014
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

The members of the Community Advisory Panel (CAP), a group convened by the City of Columbus (the City) to advise the City on the development of Blueprint Columbus, held their fourth meeting on May 13, 2014 at the Goodale Park shelter house in Columbus, Ohio. The CAP is composed of representatives from Columbus neighborhoods, businesses, environmental interests, construction and homebuilding firms, ratepayer groups, and others. The CAP is scheduled to meet quarterly over the course of the Blueprint Columbus planning phase, which will conclude in September of 2015 when the draft Blueprint Columbus plan is submitted to the Ohio EPA. More information is available at www.blueprint.columbus.gov or by emailing blueprint@columbus.gov. The next CAP meeting is scheduled for September 30, 2014.

Meeting Objectives:

- Present and discuss gray infrastructure options and status of plan development.
- Review prioritization of the work schedule.
- Provide highlights from the April 26th Show & Tell.
- Update CAP members on the community engagement efforts.

Welcome and Introductions

Eric Roberts, facilitator from the Consensus Building Institute, welcomed participants and invited brief introductions from CAP members, the project team, and city representatives. He reviewed the four components of Blueprint presented during the January meeting (green infrastructure, storm water runoff from roofs, lateral relining, and voluntary sump pumps). As a follow-up to the January meeting CAP members had requested more information about the four components of Blueprint Columbus and how they work at the residential level to address sanitary sewer overflows. April 16th the City conducted a Show & Tell at a Columbus residence to demonstrate three of the four components. CAP members were also interested in learning more about the proposed tunnels or the gray approach. The facilitation team designed the May 13, 2014 CAP meeting to provide this additional information.

Susan Ashbrook, City of Columbus, highlighted recent publicity regarding Blueprint Columbus. Mayor Coleman showed support for Blueprint Columbus during his State of the City address and two *Columbus Dispatch* articles favorably described the project.

Gray Infrastructure and Blueprint Columbus

Dax Blake, City of Columbus, presented information about the gray infrastructure option. In 2005 the City submitted a Wet Weather Management Plan (WWMP) to the Ohio EPA to address two different issues: combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows. Combined sewer overflows occur on the older parts of the system, located mainly from OSU to German Village. These sewers are designed to carry both stormwater and sewage.

The 2005 Wet Weather Management Plan includes plant improvement and a tunnel that will eventually limit combined sewer overflows to four events per year. The OSIS (Olentangy Scioto Interceptor Sewer) Augmentation Relieve Sewer (OARS) tunnel, which is currently under construction as a result of the 2005 WWMP, will eliminate more than a billion gallons of combined sewer overflow in an average year. The OARS tunnel is under construction and financed.

The second issue is separate sanitary sewer overflows. These overflows occur on the City's separate sanitary sewers, which are only designed to handle sewage. These sewers can become overwhelmed with rain water that gets into the sewers through cracks, leaks, illicit connections, etc. Two options have been proposed to address the sanitary sewer overflow issue: construction of two tunnels (the Olentangy Relief Tunnel (ORT) and the Alum Creek Relieve Tunnel (ART)), and Blueprint Columbus. Both options would cost approximately \$2.5 billion dollars and will take an estimated 30 years to complete. Both options would address the EPA consent order requirements. However, the approach and ancillary benefits and impacts of each are different.

Construction of the ORT and ART tunnels to address the sanitary sewer overflows would require a large investment to manage a small amount of water. The City would spend approximately \$12.50 per gallon of water managed, which is considered high if looking at national averages for similar types of investments. These tunnels would address the symptom—too much water in the sanitary sewer system—but not the cause, storm water entering the sanitary system. It is anticipated that the ORT and ART tunnels would only be used several times per year when the largest rainfalls occur. If constructed, the ORT and ART tunnels would create temporary local jobs using specialized heavy equipment from overseas and would not significantly impact individual residents.

The City has proposed Blueprint Columbus as an alternative to the ORT and ART tunnels. Blueprint Columbus would address the problem by reducing the amount of storm water entering the sanitary sewer system. This approach would create local jobs, use local materials for construction, require some short-term disruption for many residents, and provide long term neighborhood improvements.

Operations and maintenance costs of both approaches are anticipated to be approximately equal. Preliminary estimates for operation and maintenance costs of the Blueprint Columbus approach were calculated, but more exact operations and maintenance cost estimates will be available after completing pilot projects and assessing real costs that can be extrapolated across the greater Blueprint Columbus project area.

Status of Integrated Plan Development

The plan is due to the Ohio EPA September 2015 and will address the following six elements:

- 1) Identification of issues to address – During this step the city pinpoints issues such as water back-ups in basements, sanitary sewer overflows, combined sewer overflows, and water quality issues that must be addressed. This step will lead to rewriting of the WWMP.
- 2) Existing Systems Description – This is essentially an overview of the entire sewer system and stormwater management infrastructure operated by the City. This step was completed in 2005 and will be updated based on improvements made to the systems since that time.

- 3) Community Stakeholder Involvement – This step includes the convening of the CAP to solicit input and the community outreach work being conducted by RAMA.
- 4) Alternatives Analysis – During this step the City will quantify the anticipated efficacy of the gray infrastructure (ORT and ART tunnels), the Blueprint Columbus approach, and any other alternatives identified to achieve the mandates of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.
- 5) Measuring Success – A monitoring plan will be developed to help evaluate the effectiveness of whichever approach is selected.
- 6) Plan Improvements – After monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the plan, the City will adapt the plan as needed to improve system performance.

Prioritization of Work Schedule

The City explained how the CAP feedback provided at the October 29th, 2013 meeting was used to prioritize the work schedule for the 13 SSO areas. The CAP reviewed and prioritized criteria for ranking each of the areas. The criteria included:

- Number and size of overflows
- Leaky sewers causing a downstream impact
- Public exposure to overflows
- Water in basement events
- Structural/operation and maintenance concerns
- Water quality
- Social parameters: Community acceptance, ability to implement, and neighborhood involvement.

The City used this prioritization of criteria to create a proposed work schedule (see Figure 1). Based on this schedule the City would begin working in the red shaded areas first. The green shading indicates the lower priority areas.

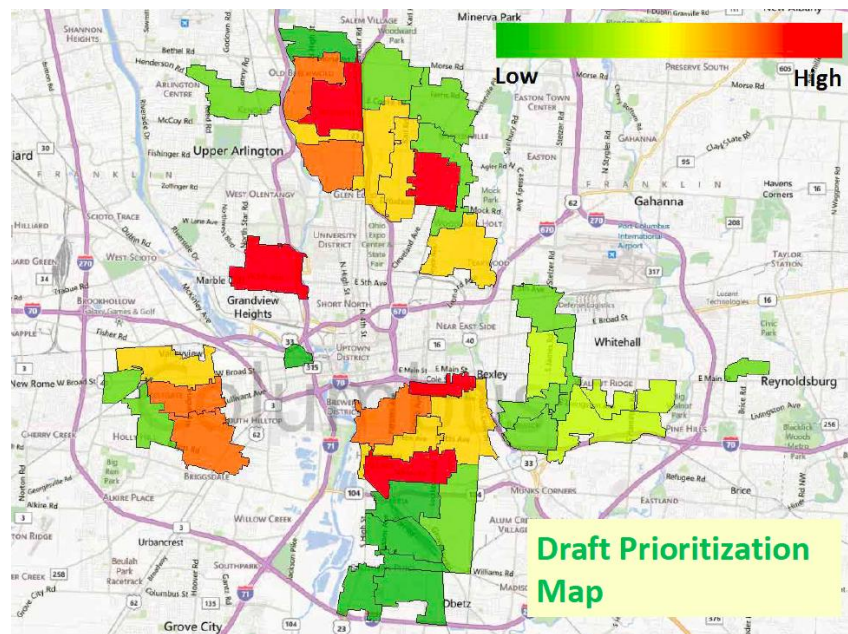


Figure 1: Draft work schedule based on CAP member prioritization of criteria.

Figure 2: Blueprint Linden pilot project location. The red dots indicate areas with overflows.



A pilot project in the Linden area is already underway. The red dots in Figure 2 indicate the locations of overflows in this area. Construction could begin as early as 2016.

CAP members had the following questions and comments. Responses from the City are *italicized*.

- How will the City address the old brick sewers? *A variety of technologies exist to restore old pipelines. For example, for pipes up to six feet in diameter, we can cure them in place. Slip lining can be used on larger pipes, which is essentially putting a smaller diameter pipe within the larger pipe.*
- When you cure pipes in place or complete slip lining, do the pipes gather more water or less water? *It depends. When we only seal the pipes on the City side, we do not completely fix the problem since half of the system is the laterals between the homes and the city pipes and this is where a lot of the storm water is entering the system.*

April 26th Residential Show & Tell



Figure 3: Green lines showing City right of way.

CAP members participated in a Blueprint Columbus residential Show & Tell event on April 26, 2014. A local home was used to demonstrate three of the four components of Blueprint Columbus (sump pumps were not viewed). A green line was painted in the yard of the home to indicate the city right of way (see Figure 3), which is typically about 10 feet wide. The City could construct porous pavement sidewalks or rain gardens within this space.

To demonstrate the flow of rain water off a residential roof, into the downspouts, through the storm water lateral and into the street a hose with running water was placed in the home's gutter and observers could see the water flowing from the lateral (that runs under the front lawn) into the

street. To simulate how rain water can infiltrate sanitary sewer laterals, dyed green water was poured on the ground next to the home's downspout. Cameras in the sanitary sewer showed how the green water percolated through the ground and entered the sanitary sewer after being collected by the foundation drain, which is connected to the sanitary sewer. Most homes have foundation drains, which are necessary to alleviate the water pressure that builds up against the foundation walls as surrounding soil is saturated during a storm event. Dax Blake explained that sump pumps can stop storm water from entering the sanitary sewer because the sump pump is connected to the foundation drain and pumps water away from the home.

Model Demonstration

CAP members viewed a small scale model home designed to demonstrate how the Blueprint components can help to correct sanitary sewer overflows.

CAP members asked the following questions. City responses are *italicized*:

- If you add a sump pump to a home, would it need to be next to the foundation? *It would need to be somewhere along the perimeter of the home. New homes are constructed with sump pumps connected to the foundation drain.*
- What if a person does not have the additional financial resources to pay for the cost of running a sump pump? *Sump pumps are a voluntary component of Blueprint; if the homeowner is concerned about increased electric costs, the homeowner can choose to not participate.*
- What if a sump pump stops functioning because of a power outage? *Battery backups can be used in these cases.*

Community Engagement Update

Mo Wright, RAMA Consulting Group, provided the CAP with an update on community engagement efforts. RAMA is concluding phase two of the four-phase community engagement plan. Since the January CAP meeting, RAMA has focused on smaller community events in target neighborhoods. They launched 32 roadshows at libraries, community centers, earth day festivals, and other community events and visited local small businesses. These events are designed to provide general information to community members about Blueprint Columbus and to answer community members' questions.

RAMA is also conducting baseline surveys to understand whether or not people have heard of Blueprint Columbus and if they have, to learn what they know about it and the issues it would address. RAMA will present the findings of the survey at the next CAP meeting.

During phase 3, which will begin in June, RAMA staff will go door to door to share more detailed information about Blueprint Columbus with homeowners. Flyers describing the four components of Blueprint Columbus will be distributed in the target neighborhoods. RAMA will return in the fall to ask for community member perceptions and understanding of the issues and the Blueprint approach. Outreach will also continue with large businesses and organizations during phase 3. In addition, RAMA is conducting formalized outreach with faith based organizations and civic associations, which will continue throughout the summer.

Mo Wright encouraged CAP members to continue suggesting community events where RAMA could conduct outreach. He also encouraged members to attend events with RAMA and to look for opportunities to engage with community members about Blueprint Columbus.

CAP members made the following comments and questions. Responses are *italicized* unless otherwise noted:

- To help demonstrate the benefits of this project, it might be useful to say "The average cost to fix a lateral is X dollars, and if you have not fixed your lateral in sometime, you may be looking at paying that amount when it breaks. Alternatively, Blueprint Columbus could help pay to replace your lateral line and reduce the overall cost to you." Frame the message as a gift rather than a burden.
- The target neighborhoods for community engagement are not the same neighborhoods where the City is doing pilot projects like Clintonville? *Yes, that is correct. RAMA is working to gauge community acceptability of a proposed project in the target neighborhoods. Outreach in Clintonville is to inform community members of the work already underway.*

- Are Neighborhood Pride areas and the apartment complexes on the list to be engaged? *Neighborhood Pride is on the list. We have not specifically targeted renters, but some apartment owners will be engaged through business outreach.*
- It sounds like the City has already invested in the Blueprint Columbus approach; but the previous presentations seemed to indicate that two alternatives, the green and the gray alternative, were being considered. Now the City is moving forward with Clintonville and in Linden. What will happen if the City completes two or three or more pilot projects of Blueprint Columbus and then residents say they do not want it and the City must implement the \$2.5 billion dollar gray infrastructure project? *One of the nice things about Blueprint is that it is scale-able whereas if you start the grey infrastructure project then it must be finished. If we do not get buy-in from the community on Blueprint, then we can revert to the grey infrastructure plan without having lost anything because the Blueprint approach will still eliminate some water from the system. The pilot projects are not a commitment to Blueprint.*
- The City must explain clearly how individual community members will benefit from water bill increases since so many of us are from the generation where we paid \$30 for three months of water and the past price increases were perceived as very large.
- How long will it take to complete all the work? *It will take about 30 years.*
- Everyone receives advertisements for insurance coverage to pay for lateral line replacements. If Blueprint was implemented it would eliminate this need. Maybe the City should make video clips of someone talking about lateral line breaks and the expense of replacing it.

Next Steps

Maria Mone reminded the group of the Blueprint Columbus website and the email address to contact for more information. She urged CAP members to contact anyone from the facilitation team or RAMA team if they have any concerns they want to raise, want to be an Ambassador, or want to invite someone to speak at a community meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 PM.