

Elk Grove Storm Drain Master Plan Workshop #2 Recap - DRAFT

The City of Elk Grove Public Works department held a Storm Drain Master Plan (SDMP) public workshop on December 3, 2008 from 6–8 p.m. at the City Council chambers. The following items were on the agenda:

- Welcome/Introduction
- Review agenda
- Laguna Creek Watershed Management Plan
- Guiding principles discussion
- Recap of recent activity
- Promenade Mall and Downstream Development Storm Water Quality Monitoring Project update
- Present current development application examples and current policies
- Next steps

A summary of the workshop discussions are outlined below.

Attendees

Over 40 attendees were present. Please see the City Web site to view the sign-in sheet.

Laguna Creek Watershed Management Plan

Carmel Brown from the Laguna Creek Watershed Council presented the Laguna Creek Watershed Management Plan. Please see the City Web site to view the presentation.

Guiding Principles Discussion

Recap of past workshop

At the September workshop, participants brainstormed ideas for guiding principles to be included in the Storm Drain Master Plan. As the facilitator explained, brainstorming is designed to bring forth as many ideas as possible, some of which are applicable to the task at hand and some of which are not. The facilitator reviewed the guiding principles definition and criteria.

Definition

- Principles guide the direction of the document and express intentions of its purpose
- Broad, umbrella statements
- Big picture, not detailed

Criteria

- Must follow terms of settlement agreement
- Must fall under purview of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit
- Must fall under purview of SDMP

Due to time constraints involved with the workshop process, the City took the group's brainstorming and narrowed it down into draft guiding principles:

- Protect public safety and property by ensuring that flood protection is in compliance with the City's policies, ordinances and standards.
- Minimize adverse environmental effects of the storm drainage system by ensuring that the Master Plan is implemented in compliance with NPDES permit requirements and the California Environmental Quality Act.
- Strive to balance concerns regarding environmental effects, capital and operating costs, property rights and economic impacts.

Discussion (the comments in plain text are from participants, the comments in **bold** are responses from the City)
Participants discussed questions and concerns associated with the draft guiding principles.

- The guiding principles only abide by the law and regulations and should address more than NPDES and SDMP.
- The guiding principles do not capture specifics from the previous workshop’s brainstorm session.
- The guiding principles do not reflect embracing green infrastructure.
- The Laguna Creek Watershed Council drafted an alternative set of guiding principles.
- The guiding principles have a narrow scope and should incorporate regional issues beyond Elk Grove. What happens to runoff when it leaves Elk Grove?
- The guiding principles should not just adhere to established policies and standards, but evaluate necessity of the policies, standards and general plan to establish if they are really applicable to the SDMP or need to be improved upon.
- The draft guiding principles do not fit guiding principle criteria because they only establish that the SDMP will abide all rules and balance competing interests, but do not specify the SDMP philosophy and/or vision.
- The guiding principles lack guidance.
- The storm quality design manual is supposed to guide stormwater quality and should be incorporated into the SDMP, not the City’s general plan.
- The guiding principles do not address regional runoff.
- The guiding principles use too many undefined acronyms and jargon. The guiding principles need to have term definitions and transparency.
 - **The guiding principles are broad terms and including specifics are out of the guiding principles criteria**
 - **Capital and operating costs refer to the City’s impact on maintaining the flood plain development economic impacts. Do not refer to jobs.**
 - **Property rights refer to owning property.**
 - **Economic impacts refer to impacts associated with all interests, not just environmental.**
- The guiding principles do not address urban flooding or current flooding problems.
 - **The plan will include an Elk Grove Creek section.**
 - **Filling in the flood plain is forbidden.**
- The guiding principles should be more “green” and encourage the appropriate corresponding changes (to the City’s general plan, etc.) to incorporate “green” practices. The guiding principles should not just obey the law, but go above and beyond to guide the SDMP as a leader in “green” technology. The guiding principles should encourage a blend of all tools, not just focus on one specific approach.
 - **The City will add “green” chapters to the SDMP. However, “green” structures are in their infancy.**
 - **Impervious concrete is under low impact development (LID) within the SDMP. The benefits of impervious concrete can only go so far.**
 - **Implementing LID is not the same as creating a flood control plan. Light rain and large storms require different control structures. LID addresses more than flood control and encompasses water quality control. LID has the opportunity to reduce base flow, but it is not a replacement for flood control.**
 - **The SDMP is an implementation of the City Council’s general plan. Broader environmental ideas should be discussed, but first, the general plan policies must be changed before SDMP policies can be changed as well.**

- The guiding principles should include how the City is going to work with other agencies (get the City on the side of Corps of Engineers, etc.).
 - **The City currently works with many other agencies. Many maintenance activities must be permitted by the California Department of Fish and Game, the Army Corp of Engineers and the US Department of Fish and Wildlife. These agencies regulate set conditions on the type of work that could be done, the time when the work will be accomplished and how the work will be executed. All in-stream work is regulated by any one of the three agencies listed above. In addition, the City coordinates maintenance activities with the Sacramento-Yolo Vector Control District. To address stormwater quality issues, the City has an agreement with surrounding jurisdictions to form the Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership. The Partnership holds a joint NPDES permit from the Regional Water Quality Board to share resources and technical support. The City also communicates on a regular basis with the County to address flood control issues that cross political lines.**
 - **The City developed its own general plan in 2003. In 2007, new improvement standards were adopted that outline drainage standards, etc.**
 - **A new NPDES permit was approved in September 2008.**
- What is the City's highest priority? Environment? Public health and safety?
 - **All of the above.**
- The guiding principles process should model after the previous Sheldon Road public process. That process took more time and was more accommodating to the community.
 - **The City is committed to four meetings.**
- The guiding principles should include flood insurance.
- The guiding principles should include more specifics
 - **The SDMP is a programmatic document and the City will not include detail in the document itself.**
- What is the "balance" between little flooding vs. cost of flood system? Environmental vs. developer rights?

The group then discussed questions and concerns associated with the proposed guiding principles developed by the Laguna Creek Watershed Council.

- The guiding principles are slanted toward the environment. The City's draft guiding principles include a balance of all interests.
- The LCWC's proposed guiding principles did a good job at breaking up the original 40 brainstorm ideas into themes.
- The guiding principles are an "all or nothing" approach. Do not want to pin down policy makers to one strategy. Would like to take a sincere effort to look at all options.
- **The City appreciates LCWC's efforts and does not see any areas of major concern with the proposed guiding principles.**

City staff indicated they would revise the draft guiding principles to better reflect the workshop discussions and incorporate recommended guiding principles. The revised guiding principles will be disseminated by staff to the participants for feedback.

Recent Project Activity Update

Fernando Duenas from the City of Elk Grove Public Works presented an update about recent SDMP activity, including the City's research into different flood control alternatives. Please see the City Web site to review the presentation.

Participant presentation questions and comments

Q= Question

A = Answer

Q: How many inches do you get from each alternative?

A: 1/10 of an inch after downstream reregulation of basins did not help downstream at all. Widening the creek openings pushes the problem downstream.

Q: Are you referring to one strategy for inclusion into the SDMP or is it an early action plan?

A: This will be part of the SDMP. Following, an EIR will be conducted on the entire plan.

Promenade Mall and Downstream Development Storm Water Quality Monitoring Project Update

Dr. Stephen McCord from Larry Walker and Associates presented an update about the Promenade Mall and Downstream Development Storm Water Quality Monitoring Project. Please see the City Web site to view the presentation.

Participant presentation questions and comments

Q= Question

A = Answer

Q: How many sediment samples were taken?

A: Just one in the summer, in Shed C within the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. It's a dynamic process affected by each storm. Deposits are well dispersed and are representative of what is in the refuge.

Q: What is toxicity?

A: A water column toxicity test involves subjecting one-day old minnows and amphipods (the most sensitive organisms) to the sample to see how many survive. Sediment toxicity was conducted on amphipods

Q: Are the samples tested for heavy metals and microbes?

A: Yes, but not in the sediment toxicity test unless toxicity is observed. Water column samples are tested for many toxins including metals as well as toxicity.

Q: What are suspended solids?

A: Turbidity is in the water and we analyze the sample for total suspended solids and their concentration of metals.

Q: What are flow measurements?

A: There are no rating curves available to convert water depth to flow rate. This winter we will measure water depth to get a sense of how depth (which indicates changes in flow rate) changes during storms.

Q: Shed A is a detention basin and Shed B is not?

A: We did not test Shed A. We tested Shed B at Franklin and three sites in Shed C on November 1, 2008, after two days of rain, resulting in less than two inches total.

Q: A sample size of one [for sediment toxicity] is not enough. We need a sense of what is there and how to compare it with future tests. It would be better to increase the sample size to be more confident in our results.

A: One sediment toxicity sample is more representative than it sounds. Sediment has been deposited in this area over the last several years. In January and February, we will have two more events to test water column toxicity. A sediment test in the wet season is not representative because of the movement. We encourage participation and will write a report next year. We can always do more monitoring if that is what you want.

Current Development Application Example and Current Policies Presentation (moved to next workshop)

Due to time restraints, the current development application example and current policies presentation was postponed until the following workshop.

Next steps

Potential Upcoming Workshop Topics

The group brainstormed desired topics to address at upcoming SDMP workshop sessions. The brainstormed topic list is as follows:

- Specific follow-up to today's guiding principles and associated policies.
- See if more meetings, closer together can be arranged (solicit city council, next meeting will be before March 2009)
- Review plan before its finalized
- Need workshop vision – a map/schedule of destination and end product
- Develop a plan or standing committee for continual input
- Guiding principles discussion
- Outline of water quality chapter
- Tale of contents of whole SDMP

Action Items

- City will email the workshop recap to all stakeholders and workshop participants.
- City will reevaluate the draft guiding principles and send to stakeholders and workshop participants for review and comment.
- Workshop #3 – March 4, 2009 from 6-8 p.m.

Handouts

Please see the City Web site to review the workshop handouts.

1. Workshop #2 agenda
2. Workshop #1 recap
3. Guiding principles brainstorm spreadsheet
4. Laguna Creek Watershed Council draft guiding principles