

NOTES FROM 11/14/12 COMMUNITY MEETING – THORNTON CREEK CONFLUENCE

SPU staff provided an overview of the project goals, the comments received on the 60% design, how the comments were evaluated, and what design modifications were adopted. Please see the presentation and SPU's response to comments on the project website.

The floor was then opened for questions, comments and concerns.

Questions, Comments & Issues

Can SPU salvage the trees and reuse, perhaps as art work at Community Center?

SPU plans to use conifers as habitat in the stream restoration and the conifers to be removed have been incorporated in the design. We can explore the use of non-conifer trees with Arts & Cultural Affairs or investigate other ways to reuse them.

What is the pump house that is referred to in the area?

The structure located at the southern end of 36th Ave NE is the SPU pump station. The pump station is used to make sure that sewage in the sewer line continues to travel downstream and often is used in areas where the flow needs to move against gravity (i.e., pump it up a hill).

Will pond be closed during construction?

We expect that the pond will be closed during part of 2013 to make those improvements to the pond that were delayed due to the permit appeal in 2012. For construction of the Confluence project in 2014, we aren't sure if the pond will need to be closed. We would rather avoid three consecutive summers where the pond is closed and will do our best to reduce any additional closures.

What will floodplain look like?

For the most part, the floodplain will look like a gravel area adjacent to the stream which will get smaller over time as the trees and shrubs that are planted there grow. The artistic rendering of the site (shown in presentation introduction slide) is a good visual representation. For the plantings, we are choosing a mix of native species that are hardy and able to compete with invasive species like blackberry and knotweed.

Will 35th be closed?

35th Ave NE will be closed in some manner during construction of the new culvert. We are hoping to do a full closure with a shorter duration, but will have to defer to SDOT and King County METRO regarding bus service and emergency vehicle access needs.

Will access to Teen Center be blocked?

We do not anticipate making the Teen Center or other facilities at the high school or community center inaccessible. We may need to occupy some parking at the Community Center parking lot or alter the car circulation in the lot temporarily, but those impacts are still being determined. We will be working with the Community Center to avoid what we can.

What about the flooding on 110th?

The ponding that occurs on the south side of 110th, near 35th Ave NE, is on our localized flooding list. We have about 70 such sites on that list and are systematically working through a few each year, since our resources are stretched at the moment. This site is not at the top of the list at this time, but a fix should occur in the future.

Can you define 25- and 100-year floods?

The terms 25-year and 100 year are statistical designations based on historical data about rainfall. A 25-year storm is expected to have a 25-year recurrence level. The probability of that storm happening is 4 times in 100 years. In other words, a storm of that magnitude has a 4 percent chance of happening in any year and can occur more than once during a year. Likewise, a 100-year storm has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any year.

Is flood storage described in square footage or cubic footage?

Flood storage is described in cubic footage. The Pond has a certain total capacity which can be divided into “live” storage and “dead” storage. Live storage functions as the Pond’s flood storage. Live storage is the water in the Pond that can be evacuated by gravity, whereas dead storage is water that remains in the pond. The dead storage creates fish habitat and allows sediments to settle. Generally, the area needed for sediment to settle is described in square footage.

What is the source of funding for project?

The project(s) are funded by two sources:

- Surface Water Management fee shown on King County property tax statements
- \$2.4 Million Opportunity Fund from the King County Flood Control District

Informal trails/educational opportunities

We hope to have details about educational opportunities and informal trails worked out as we get closer to 90% design.

We appreciate SPU’s responsiveness to comments, but it seems that keeping the conifers on an island could have lots of benefits. Trees can hold a lot of water.

We considered leaving a peninsula but determined that it wouldn't gain flood storage volume and would create new hidden dead-ends for illegal dumping and other unwanted activities. An island would take away 2000 cubic yards of new flood storage. This would require would require a living wall to contain soil and would cut off maintenance access. King County requires maintenance and removal of noxious weeds on islands which was underway this summer until our crews encountered fledgling birds and stopped maintenance.

What about the 2008 study/memorandum that suggested a closure to the high flow bypass?

In 2008 Stillwater Sciences was tasked to look into the effectiveness in trapping sediment. The technical memo produced suggested that closing off the bypass would allow more flows into the pond, thereby depositing more sediment. That suggestion assumes that there is stream capacity downstream to accommodate flow that would normally go into the bypass. Unfortunately there is not capacity downstream between the pond and Lake Washington. If the bypass is closed, there would significantly more flooding in downstream areas.

Why not expand the forebay and dredge that more often?

SPU currently dredges the forebay every 3-5 years now. US Fish & Wildlife (USFW) doesn't want any dredging as it is, but allows SPU to do so. Expanding the forebay would increase the amount of material dredged. USFW opposes dredging because it removes larger sediments which are essential for Salmon spawning downstream.

What are vector trucks?

Vector trucks are large trucks with a vacuum system that are used to remove debris from various sewage and drainage infrastructure. Vectors trucks and other SPU maintenance vehicles require better access to the inlet to the high flow bypass in order to perform maintenance more efficiently and safely..

What about culvert at 93rd east of Sandpoint Way?

The creek culvert at 93rd and Sandpoint is scheduled for repair next summer (2013).

How much woody debris will the confluence project contain?

The project currently is utilizing 160 pieces – logs and trees.

How often will the Pond be dredged?

When the confluence project come online, we anticipated that the pond will need to dredged every 10-15 years depending on measured sediment levels.

What work will be done next summer at the Pond?

- Meadowbrook Pond expansion
- Floating habitat islands
- Improved maintenance ramps and access to high flow bypass trash rack

Will there be new artwork at either the Pond or Confluence?

The confluence project does have 1% for Art funds and an artist has been selected. There will be no new art at the Pond. The current artwork is maintained by Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs.

What about volunteer projects?

We haven't established anything yet, but we're willing to work with Green Seattle Partnership and involve Friends of Meadowbrook Pond. SPU is not set up for volunteers like the Parks Department.

Volunteer involvement builds ownership

Yes, but SPU remains responsible overall.

Will there be access for boats?

Two ramps will be constructed on the south side of the pond and one on the north side. These are designed for maintenance purposes and SPU prohibits the use of these ramps for recreational purposes. SPU security and field operations staff are being consulted to determine the best method for restricting access at these ramps, while maintaining accessibility for our maintenance staff.

Is the project funding threatened?

No, it is in current budget, which was approved by City Council on November 19, 2012.