

Warner Park/Cherokee Marsh Watershed Study
Public Information Meeting #1
7/20/2023 – 6:00 PM

Brown and Caldwell Attendees: Mike Wegner, Doug Joachim

City of Madison Attendees: Jojo O'Brien, Janet Schmidt, Hannah Mohelnitzky, Ryan Stenjem, Alder Myadze

Number of Public Attendees: 21

Questions & Answers

Some questions were edited slightly for clarity purposes only

- 1. What can we do to urge the Mayor and the City of Madison to place the Warner Park Renovation [sic] on the city budget? It was approved a couple years ago by the City Parks Board of Supervisors. It is a crucial part of our Northside watershed. It is important to note that our Mayor has stated that this is "not one of my priorities", as this has been placed in the 2032 budget at the earliest, despite its approval by the Board of Supervisors a couple years ago.**

The Warner Lagoon dredging is scheduled for 2027, however, the project requires additional outside funding. The City is working on obtaining funding, such as grants, from state and federal agencies. If an additional funding source is identified, it could move earlier in the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) plan. However, due to the cost of construction escalating, it may require additional City funding which will delay the project. The City is ready to start work on the project if funding is obtained. To put the project in context, it was estimated in the Warner Lagoon water quality plan as a \$4.5 million project. The total stormwater budget is \$7.3 million for six years. Outside funding is necessary to move the project forward.

- 2. Sedimentation from runoff in existing water collection ponds is a big issue, how will this remediation be implemented?**

The City has stormwater ponds that are used to capture sediment. The intent is to have sediment be captured in ponds as that is their job. Once the sediment level accumulates within a pond that it no longer functions, the City will dredge the pond of sediment. As explained previously, dredging is challenging. The City checks ponds every five years to measure sediment depth and has an overall dredging plan. The ponds are designed so the sediment settles near the outfall where it is easier to remove.

- 3. Can you please explain the benefits that will go into the cost-benefits analysis and how those are monetized?**

For flood mitigation efforts, the City looks at a variety of criteria that is put into an analysis. Some of the factors that are considered include emergency services, flood level of service targets, racial equity/social justice, cost, how many homes no longer flooded, among other factors. When a solution is developed from a study, the estimated cost and feasibility is used with the various factors to try to rank projects for completion moving forward. There is a challenge with some projects being very expensive.

4. Do curbs and sidewalks help water flow to directly where it needs to go?

Yes, curbs funnel water towards inlets, where it is supposed to go. From there it enters the storm sewer system. Sidewalks are more for safety which is why they are behind the curb. Sidewalks are designed to allow water to drain across them.

5. Is any consideration being given in the study to the redevelopment on northside where land that can absorb rainfall is replaced by concrete/housing?

The City revised Chapter 37, regarding stormwater, of General Ordinances a few years ago. For a redevelopment the ordinance requires flood mitigation measures. The revisions also included heightened requirements for new development (i.e. open field that is developed). The requirements are more stringent than the prior ordinance version, to help navigate the impacts of climate change and ensure resilience.

6. Did the City of Madison core sampling and analysis show heavy metal contamination in Warner Lagoon? If not, then the plan to spread that Warner lagoon sediment (as suggested by the DNR) can take place on the existing athletic fields. If so, the cost of the Warner Park Lagoon renovation would be substantially reduced (at least 10X less cost according to the Kurt Welke, past DNR fisheries biologist for Dane County).

The City did have core sampling done. Additional testing is needed. The City has been sampling at the lagoon for a while. The results do not indicate heavy metals, however, the City has run into issues in other locations in the city with PFAS in the sediment. This is not believed to be an issue here, but more sampling is needed before the project launches in earnest. This will help to inform future project costs.

7. How do giant parking lots and golf courses affect flooding events (i.e. is there low hanging fruit)?

Large parking lots are treated as an impervious area in the model. These areas generate significant amounts of runoff, which is accounted for in the model and this results in increased flooding. From a modeling perspective, golf courses can be tricky in how much runoff is generated. They are generally open space and grassed, but they do have irrigation and drainage systems. They do absorb more water than parking lots.

8. Is the City of Madison pursuing any federal grant dollars specific to resiliency (if there are any to pursue)?

Yes, the City is always looking to apply for federal money when possible, and there is funding related to resiliency. There is a project on the west side, within the Pheasant Branch watershed, where the road was destroyed on Deming Way during the August 2018 flood. The City has been awarded funding from the FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities grant program for a flood mitigation project there. The City continues to pursue funding of this type whenever possible. Every year the City requests funding from the federal government as part of appropriations, but it is very competitive and the City hasn't had success. The City does have a consultant to assist with grant applications and will continue pursuing grants as much as possible.

9. Is the City working with Sustain Dane to enhance sustainability efforts related to stormwater flooding?

The City has not worked with Sustain Dane on flooding related issues. However, the City will explore a potential partnership on this topic.

10. When should we expect the recording from this meeting to be available on the project website?

The recording will probably be available in 24 hours.

11. For all the property taxes we pay, it sure seems that the Northside is being neglected.

As the watershed studies are being completed, each year the City reviews budget needs and shifts projects. Just because something is programmed on the west side currently, doesn't mean we won't move north side projects up if it makes sense from a cost-benefit perspective.