

Questions from SFG Members:

1. **Should the heart of the SFG's discussions be on how to promote and raise the estimated \$135 M bill for stormwater improvements?** How to raise it, whether there are supplemental sources of money from state/feds; timeline (5 years; 20 years?); how to advocate for it with Laramie residents.

Response: No, the role of the SFG is to offer perspective on community expectations of the city to operate and maintain the drainage system and overall services in stormwater management. We discussed priorities in Meeting #1. Meeting 2 will focus on how those expectation should be met in terms of financial policies, with specific policies on implementation of a drainage fee.

2. **Should the group spend time reviewing what were the 24 prioritized projects as listed in the citywide stormwater management plan** (Table 15 in city's master plan; pp.27 - 28)? This was generated using a scoring system, which makes me a tad uneasy. Has anything obvious been left out, based on a seat-of-the-pants assessment? Some of the plans on which prioritized projects are based are now old (esp. West Laramie plan: drafted 2010 - wondering if new developments or time changed the picture....).

Response: Not at this time. Once a financial management strategy in place, there will be opportunities to review criteria for prioritization. Input from various community interests are important as financial resources are defined and Master Plan implementation evolves.

3. **Does the group have a recommendation on who gets to do the bulk of the work, the city, or private contractors?** What is the group's or city's experience with large multimillion projects like this being done by private contractors vs. the city?

Response: Optimization of resources is part of the development of the financial plan and forecast. Typically, there is a threshold based not only on cost but project complexity in determining how implementation should be executed. There is a balance in workload management that best ensures effective project design, construction, and long-term operation.

4. **Given that the Laramie River is an impaired water body per Wyoming DEQ, should Laramie's stormwater and the river be monitored for pollutants from stormwater? If so, how often annually and for what, in addition to sediment?** And: what might this cost annually? Is this the sort of thing that the state might be interested in funding?

Response: Monitoring the discharge from the public drainage system can provide key information on pollutants of concern. This information may identify specific land use activities and/or event triggers that require treatment or preventative actions. Monitoring the river may not be as informative for managing the public system due to upstream pollutant inputs. Sources of revenue to fund a monitoring program will include such options as State grants, general operating funds, and public/private partnerships.

5. Pipe lining seems like a cost-effective way to extend the lifetime of storm drains; green infrastructure is now fashionable among planners; pond retention seems popular. **Should the group try to make some overall recommendations for what constitutes the best bangs-for-the-buck, to help guide prioritization of projects?**

Response: Feedback on operational strategies to address priorities is important in the overall discussions on the level of service. The city's strategy is to use all tools and techniques in the most efficient and effective manner. The perspective of the SFG is valuable and level of service discussions provides an opportunity to share recommendations.

6. How important is it to push for paved roads, curb-and-gutter, and storm drainage in West Laramie? Is there a PR issue in trying to sell that to West Laramie residents?

Response: The perspective on this service area is important. Investments in the West Laramie neighborhood will be included in the education and communication plan. One of the high-priority projects (#22) in West Laramie is currently under construction and will be completed by June 2024. This project will allow future paving projects to occur by providing a storm sewer trunk line to collect runoff from future paved streets and carry it to the Laramie River. A follow-on project to pave Wyoming Avenue from Colorado Ave to Pierce Street is planned for 2024-2025.

7. I ask this since my house is close to Spring Creek, so please delete if this is too specific or likely to be considered self-interested. **Could the old gypsum mine beside Spring Creek be used as a natural retention or diversion area for very heavy flows? If so, how?** This land has multiple private owners, at present. It is something of a wetland. I assume it is being sat on for housing developments. Any potential for grant funding here, if this was turned into a wetland or wetland park?

Response: This location was evaluated for flood management as part of the South Laramie Master Plan, along with other ponds to divert and detain high flows from Spring Creek. It was determined that larger, upstream ponds would be more effective, and had less complicate ownership issues. Also, some of this area has development plans in progress, and the low-lying areas are likely to be used for stormwater detention for the proposed development.

8. How many utility bills are sent out each month?

Response: 9,620 bills are sent out monthly.

9. What is the annual budget for enacting the improvements to the stormwater system?

Response: A separate accounting for stormwater is not set up in the city financial system. During the Phase 1 Study for developing a drainage funding plan, an estimate of annual expenditures for stormwater management services was determined to be \$915,754. This includes all services.

10. What percentage of utility bills are in arrears each month?

Response: The average for utility service shutoff is less than one percent. That tells part of the story. On a monthly basis, 400 to 500 accounts receive late notices; some accounts require payment plans to assist financially challenged customers; most services are quickly restored when service interruption occurs due to non-payment, with fees collected shortly after service interruptions. The property owner is responsible for utility payment.

Additional Questions

1. What are the consequences of a “do nothing” approach? i.e. continue the current level of time, money, and effort regarding the stormwater system?

Response: The existing conditions of local, and at times, significant flooding will continue to occur creating risk of loss of property, personal wellbeing, and environmental quality. A reactive approach to maintenance and capital planning is more costly in the long run than created a dedicated revenue to plan operations most efficiently.

2. What are the stormwater projects or management approaches that absolutely need to be completed, implemented, and funded within the next 1-3 years? i.e. short-term approach and funding

Response: The process underway, to evaluate goals and levels of service will assist the staff in answering this question. Master Plan priority project have been identified and ranked. Maintenance of existing assets, to optimize capacity to handle runoff, along with supporting services such as street sweeping are under review and consideration. Discussion on community expectations for levels of service will be a focus of the SFG meeting on the 15th.

3. A drainage fee as part of the monthly utility bill is the simplest funding option to discuss with the group and may clarify discussion of issues regarding improvement and funding of stormwater system.

What monthly fee is commensurate with achieving critical short-term goals and be potentially acceptable to customers? \$5? \$10? \$15? \$20? (Note: my average monthly utility bill is \$110).

What specific system improvements would be accomplished with the revenue generated by these utility rate increase increments? i.e. system operation, maintenance, repair, monitoring, or improvement project construction?

Response: Upon adoption by Council, the fee will be incorporated into the utility billing system for a monthly charge. The user rate will be determined over the next month, after collaboration with the SFG and Council. The system improvements and maintenance enhancements are in development and will be discussed at the SFG meeting on the 15th.