

Etobicoke Waterfront Stormwater Management Facilities Study

Public Information Centre No. 1
November 12, 2009

The Assembly Hall, East Room
1 Colonel Smith Park Drive
7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

SUMMARY NOTES

1.0 Introduction and Welcoming Remarks

7:10 pm-7:15 pm

Josie Franch of the City of Toronto opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. She welcomed the attendees, introduced herself and the other project team members including City staff and Stantec Consulting. She then explained the public consultation process and the goals of the evening and gave a brief overview of the format for evening which would consist of a short presentation and a question and answer period, followed by an opportunity to view displays and speak with project staff.

2.0 Presentation

7:15 pm – 7:45 pm

Note: The slides from this evening's presentation are available online at http://www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/etobicoke_waterfront_ea/index.htm. The notes below are only a very brief synopsis of the presentation.

Gustavo Jacome from **Stantec Consulting** began the presentation. He explained that stormwater pollution is an issue which impacts fisheries, aquatic habitats and the quality of beaches. The objectives of the study are to improve water quality and examine the consolidation of storm sewer outfalls along the Etobicoke waterfront. The many different options for stormwater treatment were also reviewed (note: participants were provided a handout outlining the different stormwater treatment options, titled "Stormwater Management Methods: End-of-Pipe (EOP) Controls". It is available online at: http://www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/etobicoke_waterfront_ea/pdf/2009-11-12/2009-11-12_factsheet.pdf)

The study area is bounded by the QEW to the north, Lake Ontario to the south, and Mimico and Etobicoke Creeks to the east and west. Currently, there are 30 stormwater outfalls discharging into Lake Ontario, and the study will look at consolidating the number of outfalls. The project team has examined all the available options, and drafted a number of possible plans and alternatives. Public input is now needed to help evaluate between the various alternatives and identify the preferred system alternative (minor consolidation – 5 to 8 sites, moderate consolidation – 2 central sites + satellite sites, major consolidation – 1 central site + satellite sites). The various alternatives will be evaluated based on a variety of criteria including technical, natural, social, cultural and economic factors. The goal is to identify a preferred system alternative by February 2010.

3.0: Question and Answer Period

7:45 pm – 8:30 pm

Following the presentation, participants were invited to ask questions of the project team. This is summarized below with the corresponding responses given by staff and the consultant. Answers appear in bold.

Q: Sheila Paxton, Executive Assistant to Councilor Grimes said that stormwater is a serious issue for residents in the area. There have been a number of floods in the past year. Will this study address the capacity of the system and deal with flooding?

A: This study is not addressing capacity issues, but focusing instead on water quality. The study will look at treating the first 25mm of rainfall, the so called “first-flush.”

Q: On page 1 of the handout, it says that maintenance of the facilities will cause habitat destruction. This will not do. There has been enough habitat destruction in the area and, if anything, there needs to be more green space, not less.

A: Some of the operating facilities will require periodic maintenance. But overall, this project will improve the water quality and habitat in the area.

Q: Lake Ontario is a very large lake. How will this plan affect water quality when we are only talking about a small portion?

A: This is only one of many projects now underway. The City has similar studies along the remaining parts of the waterfront - from Etobicoke to Scarborough and other municipalities are doing the same. The City of Toronto has been identified as an area of concern by the International Joint Commission because of the stormwater and combined sewer discharges into the lake. Major efforts are also underway along the inner harbour and at the mouth of the Don River. The City of Hamilton and other municipalities in the U.S. are doing similar work.

Q: You mentioned that there are a number of alternatives for consolidation. How will you decide which option is chosen? Do you have a preferred alternative now?

A: There are 12 different alternatives, and using a pair wise comparison, we will evaluate these alternatives against the same criteria. We do not have a preferred alternative and are seeking input into how to weigh the various criteria.

Q: Suppose all the catchments are consolidated into a single catchment and the one site is at Colonel Samuel Smith Park. What would the stormwater treatment facility be like? How large an area will be needed? How will it impact the park?

A: There Open House displays provide a map and images depicting each of the various stormwater treatment options for Colonel Samuel Smith Park. The figures in the legend are to scale.

Q: A wetland does not appear to be an option at Colonel Samuel Smith Park. Why is this?

A: Wetlands are shallow, and a wetland handling this volume of water would be too large to fit into the space available. A wet pond is similar, but deeper, and so can handle more water in a smaller footprint.

Q: How often would a wet pond need dredging?

A: It depends on the specifics, but roughly every 5-10 years.

Q: How long would dredging take?

A: It usually takes a week or less.

Q: Would habitat be affected by dredging? As a Friend of Samuel Smith Park, I'm concerned about this project, but also see it as an opportunity to improve and develop more habitat.

A: A stormwater management pond contains an area that collects grit, which has to be cleaned more frequently, but the whole pond would have to be dredged every 5-15 yrs. The routine cleaning of the small area would not affect habitat, but the larger maintenance likely would.

Q: A wet pond was created in Humber Bay Shores, intended to collect rain water, but during the summer months, the pond is stagnant and needs to be aerated so it doesn't become a breeding ground for mosquitoes and West Nile Virus. Is there a minimum size needed to construct a well-functioning wet pond?

A: Each wet pond is designed to suit a particular area. They typically require a minimum catchment area of 20 hectares. The size of pond depends on the size of catchment, but in this area the catchments are pretty large.

Q: Can a wet pond be used in Norris Crescent?

A: No. Norris Crescent is the second largest catchment area and the volume of water from this catchment cannot be captured in a wet pond in such a small park.

Q: Is the blue pipe on your diagrams a new sewer pipe? How large will it be? What is involved in installing this pipe vis-à-vis construction impacts?

A: The pipe is approximately 1.5 metres in diameter at its largest point and under 2 feet in diameter at its smallest point. With respect to the construction of the pipe, there are options available. The construction methods include either open cut or tunnelling. We have not yet determined which option will be chosen. Tunneling is more expensive, but would cause less of an impact.

Q: Would the installation of the interceptor pipe improve the capacity of the system? Could it not divert some of the flow?

A: Not really. We are not dealing with quantity here, but quality. We are trying to capture the first flush.

Q: We understand that these different options have different costs. When will you put orders of magnitude on these costs so we can compare them?

A: We have done capital, maintenance and lifecycle costs for all these alternatives already. These numbers will be included in the Environmental Assessment report once it is completed. We can provide these numbers at the next public information centre as well.

Q: This work is intended to improve the water quality and beaches in the area, but what about other factors which affect our area such as the Toronto Island Airport? What about activities on the American side of the Lake? Is this a wise use of money if these other factors are not being addressed as well? What else is being done to improve water quality in Lake Ontario?

A: A remedial action plan has been developed to address water quality in Lake Ontario, and there will be a meeting in December and future public consultations. The initiative is run through the Toronto & Region Conservation Authority. This initiative is separate from tonight's meeting, but if you're interested we can provide you the contact.

Q: How is this project being funded? Is money from the federal stimulus package going into this?

A: This plan is not far enough along to be eligible for the federal government's infrastructure stimulus funds. Some of Toronto's water quality initiatives and projects are being funded by stimulus dollars, but not this project because it is still in the planning stage. The strategy will be completed by 2010 and at that point we may apply for funding if available.

Q: Where in the park will the facilities be located?

A: We are not sure yet. That will be determined in the next phase of planning. We need to choose which technology will be used first, and then consult on where to put it.

Q: Non-experts have difficulty making an informed decision concerning these matters. It's difficult to assess and weigh the options.

A: That is precisely the point of this evening: to help the public better understand the project, and we will continue to work with the public to demonstrate the pros and cons of each of the available alternatives. We want the community's input.

Q: There is a little overflow near the Yacht Club in Colonel Samuel Smith Park. This overflow gets covered by scum and smells of sulphur. Will this site be improved?

A: That impoundment is working as intended, but it is an old style facility from the 1970s. It should have periodic maintenance though. And, this outflow and other older outflows will be upgraded as part of this project. Those types (oil and grit separators) of facilities where the outflows are exposed to the atmosphere are no longer used.

Q: The City is tight for money, and tunneling sounds expensive. Will more expensive options really be entertained?

A: We all have constraints, and the City does too; money is a factor. Which option will be chosen depends on the weights assigned to each criteria, of which cost is only one. We need the public's input to help us figure out what matters the most.

Q: You mentioned stormwater sewers, but what about combined sewer overflows?

A: There are no combined sewers in this study area, so it is not an issue we are looking at here.

Q: There are some combined sewers north of the study area that empty into Black Creek. Won't these sewers affect water quality here?

A: We have a study underway looking at some of the discharges into Black Creek, but that is separate from this study.

Q: Where will the interceptor pipe end?

A: In a stormwater management facility which has not yet been chosen.

Q: Is it reasonable to expect issues like those faced in the Western Beaches area?

A: That system is for combined sewers, and the sewers in this area are not combined. Here, we are only dealing with stormwater.

Q: I noticed a lot of checkmarks next to the tank options. Is it likely that we will have a lot of tanks? Tanks require a lot of maintenance.

A: We will look at measures to mitigate issues with tanks if chosen as the preferred method.

Q: What will be done with the sediment from the interceptor pipe?

A: There are several options. It may be trucked to landfill, sent to a sewage treatment site, or some other option may be employed.

Q: Have you considered the Lakeview plant as a treatment option? Currently there is an agreement whereby Humber takes sewage from Northview, and Lakeview takes sewage from our area. Can we pump this stormwater to Lakeview too?

A: That is a possibility, but that is another municipality so it may be challenging.

Q: There is snow storage which exits from a pipe along Birmingham Street. Do you know where this pipe goes? Has snow storage and melt been factored into this plan?

A: Not at this time.

Q: From what I understand, there will be a snow melt pond on New Toronto Street which goes into the pipe on Birmingham, but I don't know where that pipe will go. Are these future facilities incorporated into this plan?

A: Any surface drainage that gets to the existing system will be captured by the new system too.

Q: The snow melt facility won't be ready for 2 years, and there will be issues from these outfalls until this new system is in place. The City has spent two million dollars studying

snow melt and management, and there will be a lot of salt coming from this pipe. Will you be looking at this? Do you have the ability to deal with it?

A: The timing of these two projects is not in sync, so there will be some lag time, but we will look into this.

Q: Mimico Park is in a densely populated area. The park has many functions: a baseball diamond, tennis club, climbing gym, etc, and the community raised the money for much of what is there. How will this plan affect this park?

A: The construction activities will impact the park, but once construction is complete, everything will be returned to its former state. The plan is to enhance and protect existing park functions.

Q: So, what exactly do you want with respect to public input tonight?

A: We want three things: public comments about the various parks and facilities, comments about the locations of the facilities, and comments concerning the weighting of criteria.

4.0: Open House Period

8:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Josie Franch announced the completion of the question period, and the beginning of the open house portion of the evening. People were invited to view the display panels, provide feedback directly on the boards and speak with staff and ask questions. She thanked everyone for coming, and reminded participants to fill out and submit their comment sheets.

ATTENDANCE:

Thirty-two members of the public signed in at the meeting in addition to the following staff:

City of Toronto

- George Theodorlis
- Ted Bowering
- Tracy Manolakakis
- Josie Franch

Consulting Staff

- Gustavo Jacome – Stantec Consulting
- Stephane D'Aoust – Stantec Consulting

Councillor's Office

- Sheila Paxton – Executive Assistant to Councillor Mark Grimes