



TO: Albany City Council

VIA: Wes Hare, City Manager

FROM: Chris Bailey, Interim Public Works Operations Director *CB*

DATE: August 17, 2015, for the August 24, 2015, City Council Work Session

SUBJECT: Stormwater Discussion Part 4 – Current Operation and Maintenance Practices and Future Needs

RELATES TO STRATEGIC PLAN THEME: ● Great Neighborhoods
● A Safe City
● An Effective Government

Action Requested:

No action is requested at this time. This memo is for information only as part of a series of stormwater discussions.

Discussion:

This memo accompanies the fourth in a series of staff presentations on stormwater management in Albany. This presentation describes the current stormwater operation and maintenance (O&M) practices as well as the requirements the City can reasonably expect as part of an National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Phase II Stormwater Permit.

For decades, the City has recognized the need to manage stormwater as part of keeping the community safe from flooding that can affect property, lives, and transportation. The current stormwater system in Albany is a combination of piped and open infrastructure. There are 128 miles of stormwater pipes, over 4,000 catch basins/inlets, 2,200 storm manholes, and 76 stormwater quality facilities in the City. There are an additional 70 miles of open ditches and channels. Current practice places the responsibility for maintenance of piped infrastructure in the Wastewater Collections group while the Street Maintenance group maintains the open ditches. Maintenance of the stormwater quality facilities is currently being done by the Natural Treatment Systems Specialist and Water Quality Technicians.

Current Stormwater O&M Practices

Public Works staff works to provide an acceptable level of service for stormwater management given our available resources. Currently, this translates into responding to storm events that are creating street flooding issues, responding to spills that will pollute receiving waters, providing street sweeping, and performing minimal storm system cleaning. Roughly half of the storm catch basins, and only two percent of stormwater pipes are cleaned annually. These are pipes that are known to have severe capacity limitations or severe root problems that may limit stormwater flow. This management strategy is best described as reactive rather than proactive.

Future O&M Needs in the Stormwater System

Future stormwater system management would seek to identify potential problems and address them before they become emergencies. Such a program would more closely resemble the current asset management strategy used in the Wastewater Collection system and would include televised

inspection and cleaning of each stormwater pipe, inspection of storm ditches and channels, prioritization of defects and failures within the system, and annual programming of funds to address these issues in a systematic and efficient manner. This type of program will help the City maintain the existing infrastructure for as long as possible and will lead to more efficient use of available funding.

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is developing a new version of the NPDES MS4 Phase II Stormwater Permit. Among other things, the Phase II permit will require the City to submit a Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) for DEQ approval. The SWMP must define goals and objectives that meet the Six Stormwater Minimum Control Measures as described in our last presentation. Staff has been actively participating in a work group that is working with DEQ to craft a Phase II permit that has a realistic chance of being successfully implemented by the permitted municipalities. When the permit is finalized, it will apply to all Phase II communities including new permittees such as Albany.

Future stormwater management under an MS4 Phase II Permit will require a greater emphasis on stormwater quality in addition to the current attention given to stormwater quantity. One example of this is the recent requirement for stormwater quality facilities installed with certain development or redevelopment projects. These facilities represent a departure from the traditional stormwater infrastructure in Albany and the costs and level of effort related to maintaining these facilities are not yet fully understood. In the near term, those costs are being absorbed by the sewer fund. As the number and complexity of stormwater quality facilities grows, this approach may be unsustainable.

Conclusion

Current operational practices related to stormwater in Albany are centered around managing runoff to minimize its impact on property and transportation. Modern asset management strategies would provide a mechanism to achieve proactive, effective, and efficient operation and maintenance of the stormwater infrastructure, but is not possible given current resources. In addition to managing stormwater runoff, the impending Phase II permit will require additional emphasis on runoff quality, further increasing O&M responsibilities and expenditures. While staff is working to ensure the Phase II permit is as manageable as possible, there will certainly be additional work requirements related to operation and maintenance of the City's storm system.

Budget Impact:

There is no budget impact at this time.

CB:prj

- c: Jeff Blaine, P.E., Interim Public Works and Community Development Director (via e-mail)
- Mark A. Yeager, P.E., Utility Services Manager (via e-mail)
- Jeni Richardson, P.E., Civil Engineer III (via e-mail)
- Jeff Babbitt, Senior Accountant (via e-mail)