

BOWNESS FLOOD BARRIER COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP

Meeting 11 – April 20, 2020 – 7 to 9 p.m. Online via Microsoft Teams

Working Group Attendees

David Burton
Cherie Deur
Sydney Empson
Jane Kahler
Jolene Moran
Patti Peck
Josie Stiles
Hank Vrielink
Jean Woeller

Working Group Resources

Mariel Higuerey
Judy Hoad
Lauren Minuk
Amy Stansky

Guests

Jason Duxbury
Amber Lapshinoff

Apologies

Anne Campbell
Sheila Clayden
Jacqui Esler
Rae McKenzie
Jeff Riedl
Ralph Smith

Meeting Notes

1. Agenda

- Agenda accepted

2. Review of notes of Meeting 10

- Minutes do not reflect the concerns – but do they reflect the discussion?
 - The City's answers to the questions are reflected but not the concerns – Working group members expressed the need more detail
 - Judy will work to add the concerns/questions and consider the use of an attachment to the minutes and circulate them – she will ask for acceptance when they are circulated

3. Environmental Study Results

Klohn Crippen Berger (KCB) and The City circulated the presentation slide deck prior to the meeting. Clarifications about the presentation and study results included:

- The presentation reflects data collection (current conditions) – the environmental impact assessment would happen after there is a design to assess

- The next step would be to take these observations and consider them with the design if Council approves the next phase of the project

Questions/comments and answers from the Working Group included:

- Soil samples – how many soil samples were taken? How many locations?
 - The soil is mostly pretty homogenous – not that many soil samples were taken
 - Alberta agriculture data and geotechnical drilling data was also used
 - Details of the proportion of different types of soils was not done at this stage – this may or may not be included in further phases
- Impression from the soil slide looked like there was a very small amount of natural soil – could be because it was not broken down
 - Could quantify natural vs. not-natural soil areas
 - Five soil sample areas from the right bank
- Is it possible that the invasive weeds found were propagated from Dale Hodges Park? There was a great deal of effort to weed the park by hand before it was opened.
 - Shows how crucial it is to remove weeds during construction
 - Do not think the weeds in Bowness are because of Dale Hodges Park
- Landowners provided unrestricted access to their properties for the survey even if they did not support the project
 - There was a handful of landowners who offered access and also some who did not – this determined survey points based on the available access
- Landowner access comment – many provided access, sightings, etc. – continue to hear that residents are NIMBYs (Not In My Back Yard) – meeting notes should articulate that Bowness Responsible Flood Mitigation Society (BRFM) and property owners on the river provided free access to properties
- Could the final report indicate how many riverfront residents were contacted and the number that yes or no?
 - Yes, that can be done (KCB can include in the report)
- The vegetation slide information is in other City of Calgary reports. Did KCB draw from some other City studies to develop these results?
 - If referring to maps – those were based on Calgary databases – which probably include direct studies to look at inventories plus other environmental assessments that have occurred across Calgary
- How would you "rate" the condition of residential properties along the bow river and their biodiversity compared to a community like say Arbour Lake?

- Riparian zone, even if it is thin in some spaces, there is still a lot of biodiversity
 - Biodiversity will not be as high as where no development has happened, but it will still be higher than in a new development where there are no trees and shrubs
 - In Bowness it would be relatively high because of the riparian zone
- The presentation leads one to believe that the project area is a disaster in terms of the biodiversity and the environment
 - The biodiversity will not be as high as being outside the city
 - For being inside the city it is relatively high but it still has buildings, etc.
- Slides on animals: Are the animals the ones that the consultants were looking at or the ones that were seen? Should clarify when the slides are posted.
 - The report shows more detail about the species possible vs. those that were seen
 - E.g. the slide with the birds, all were seen: bat slide shows bats that were expected and those seen
 - This could be clearer –better to view the presentation with the report.
- Question from project team: Should we post the presentation as well as the report?
 - If posted, it needs to be clear that this is a baseline assessment and does not address the impacts of the Barrier on biodiversity and biophysical impacts of the project. If you are going to post the presentation publicly can there be an explanation of the purpose and what you are looking for, i.e. natural occurrence and expected versus what was actually seen?
 - It is a condition on the ground, not what people would see or might have seen over a period of time – that needs to be clear because there are expectations on variety/diversity than what is showing on the report
 - The report shows more detail
- It is my understanding that a biophysical assessment serves as a guide to project development, not a determinant of whether or not a project proceeds. Is this a fair comment?
 - It is not a regulatory step the same way as environmental impact assessments would be
 - Eventual step will be Calgary’s regulatory system
- State clearly, the report is a current state, and the impact has not been assessed at this time

- KCB slide (“Engineering – Environment Collaboration” slide) that shows how environmental work interfaces with project work – there’s no reference to the fact that this is a feasibility study right now. We’ve worked really hard to communicate that it’s a feasibility study – either show that it’s a feasibility study or don’t include all of the phases of construction
 - This information is not in the report
 - KCB can remove this slide
- Next steps from The City: the report will be circulated to Working Group and posted once feedback is received from the members

4. Project Manager Update

- Studies:
 - Flood modelling report is being written right now – working toward May 11 working group meeting
 - Groundwater modelling is ongoing – will be looking at a more detailed timeline this week to give more information to the working group
- Note received about the benefit cost model – will be working on this further.
- Suggestion to include it in the meeting with flood modelling but can look at how to answer these questions moving forward
- The Annual Integrated Watershed Management Update was presented to the Council Committee on April 15

Questions/Comments and responses:

- Administration recommended to change the service level in Sunnyside – there was no discussion about the recommendation. Did Council Committee just rubber stamp it? Expected Council to have more discussion – not sure what to expect for Bowness
 - There were meetings with the community and Councillors in advance.
- What are the expectations for Bowness when it comes to the presentation to Committee? When looking at the berm in Sunnyside, are they assuming a berm in Bowness? Or is that an open-ended question still? Generally confused with how this will roll out.
 - Amy will find out
- Does Sunnyside’s design rely on a barrier in Bowness?
 - Part of a barrier design would include studying downstream effects of a barrier

- Amy will ask River Engineering for an answer about how the Bowness study would affect other projects such as Sunnyside or the overall city-wide plan
- Process at Committee Meeting: BRFM members expressed concerns about not being given clear information on April 6 about how to participate at the Standing Policy Committee. At the end of the day, it is about ensuring there is a fair opportunity to provide input.
 - The project team shared the information they were given at the time – the Committee process and timelines are published by the City Clerk’s Office
- There is a concern that a BRFM presenter was cut off.
 - Speakers only given five minutes unless extended by a vote of the Committee
 - Administration cannot influence the meeting process
- Concern: Cllr. Farrell’s asked a question about the difference between Sunnyside and Bowness. Some people in the WG perceived the comment and response to imply the difference is based on “NIMBY” rather than effectiveness and equity and community concerns/questions about the effectiveness of the barrier.
 - Suggestion that the project team send a note of clarity to the Standing Policy Committee.
- BRFM was asked to work through the working group. Could the Working Group send a note to the SPC addressing Cllr Farrell’s question? Could River Engineering send a note?
 - Amy will ask about sending a note to the Committee on behalf of River Engineering
- Raises a question about how the Working Group could have been better involved. There wasn’t a presentation on behalf of the Working Group. Concern that Council Committee members may think that BRFM is representing the community. Does the Working Group need to be more involved in these kinds of opportunities as well? This could bring the Working Group’s mandate of ensuring equity to the Committee.
- Sunnyside definitely seems to be under the impression that a surface barrier will solve all their flooding problems. Has Stantec completed their groundwater study and therefore added a positive reinforcement to this viewpoint?
 - No decision has been made about groundwater as the studies are still underway

5. Engagement Update

- Need to consider the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on engagement
- Rumour that the Stampede Parade has been cancelled
- Need to get feedback from riverfront property owners in particular due to the nature of the potential barrier being on their property – hence suggestion of virtual one-on-ones
- Pop-ups are unlikely to happen – want to leave them on the timeline in case we can do pop-ups after the COVID-19 precautions are lifted
- Working Group initially said they'd meet until June – may need additional meetings. Suggest they would want presentations and discussion until September/October.
- Will need to continue to be flexible

Questions and Comments:

- Comment about online: Bowness Community Association (BCA) just did a survey online on a major new development and received eight responses. This came out of a meeting four months ago that had over 80 people in attendance. Online is a real struggle. For Bowness, Facebook seems to be working better. BCA ends up calling all of the members to find out how things are going. Will have to have another option available.
- Finding that particularly when it is an issue that affects the whole community but not everyone might understand the impacts of the project, need to be proactive
- Struggling with how to present this to the community to understand the issues – goes beyond being a riverfront property owner
- Consider adding mailouts to online to ensure people can participate
- Simplicity of the delivery of information is also important
- Messaging around what the issue is/how it impacts community members
- Riverfront people will get the one-on-one, then there's the larger community and the businesses. What about the people who are flood affected but not riverfront residents? People in the flood zone need one-on-ones just like the riverfront people do.
- Need to drill down on the messaging
- Potential to get the people who are most heavily impacted – the more impacted you are, the more likely you are to want to be involved/engaged/willing to give more of your input
 - Consider using phone calls as BCA has been

- BCA/Business Improvement Areas (BIA) meetings – potential options for those who are flood affected but not riverfront residents
- Potential to include BRFM members in the riverfront property owners’ one-on-ones as had been previously
 - Amy will look into this, as well as whether legal representation could be invited
 - Need to follow Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Could the whole process be delayed due to engagement delays?
 - We would have to look at this – if the engagement cannot meet the project needs we would look at it at that point
 - If COVID-19 restrictions mean that we cannot have the engagement needed then we need to review the timeline and consider delays to the overall project
- Potential to need more Working Group meetings – suggestion to include a discussion on the costs/cost benefit analysis – people in the community might have questions about the cost details
 - Amy checking in on some of the information about when the cost estimate is shared and the review
 - Traditional cost estimate methodology is that the consultant would give an opinion of probable cost which would be reviewed by The City
 - Amy has the process for land cost and will put that together for the working group
 - Let’s consider having this as a working group topic later – economic piece should probably come back to the working group – would like time to think about it – especially around exclusions, inclusions, assumptions
- Other comments on this item please send to Judy after the meeting (as well as on the role of the working group)
- If the groundwater results are available before June 8 could the working group receive the results in advance? Would like to review and would also like to share it with Dr. Dabrowski?
 - Amy will confirm
 - Request has been made to Dan Limacher for the field data for Dr. Dabrowski’s review. There was agreement about that

6. Social Criteria – Triple Bottom Line

- The group reviewed the TBL criteria document previously circulated
- Important to discuss the criteria because there will be different perspectives – would value a virtual conversation over just doing an online survey

- Wanted to get some work done ahead of time with the online survey to get the conversation started and then bring it to a discussion
 - Suggestion to bring that conversation back to all of the people who participate (include guests)
- Social criteria suggestion – will residents be required to evacuate as they did in 2013?
- How to reflect the social cost of landowners vs. other residents – how to balance the two – could that be a part of the discussion?
 - Trying to develop the criteria at this point – options will be evaluated later (this exercise is only developing the criteria at this time)
- Everything regarding social depends on whether there is groundwater protection
- Timeline in this document – develop and rank the social criteria. When do we apply the criteria against the barrier options (and no barrier as an option)? Who does the evaluation and when does the evaluation happen?
 - Amy will report back
- No barrier option – if that's part of the TBL then we have to understand how the upstream mitigation will be managed. E.g. TransAlta agreement/protocol
 - Looking to include that kind of information in the flood modelling discussion
- Please send further comments in writing to Mariel due to time
- Ask of working group members – please consider who you might invite to the discussion (2-3 people)
 - Time commitment would probably be about an hour to get up to speed, about 10-15 minutes to fill out an initial survey and then about an hour for a follow up meeting
- One-pager or something could be helpful to share with people we would ask
 - Mariel will put together one-pager and share a deadline to share the names with her
- Spring event may be revised, will share updates with the working group
- Flood preparedness is going to the working group in May as well

7. Agenda items for next meeting

- Flood modelling/flood preparedness

Final Items

- Judy will circulate date options for additional meetings