

Public Works Policy

STORMWATER IMPROVEMENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

April 1, 2003

References: Resolutions 3326 and 2395

Applicability: These policies and procedures apply to all proposals for stormwater improvement projects, including storm drainage improvement districts, storm sewer rehabilitations, and bank stabilizations.

Policy: It is the policy of the City to assist property owners in implementing effective solutions to storm water problems, including flooding, bank stabilization, and nuisance flooding, when those projects are beyond the means of individual property owners. Projects are prioritized on the basis of the following factors: severity of need, engineering feasibility, economic feasibility, benefits of the project relative to its cost; the degree of neighborhood support; and the date upon which the requests was made.

Procedure:

1. Property owners may request consideration of storm drainage projects, preferably with a letter or petition that outlines the nature and history of the problem and indicates their support for improvements.
2. Once a request is made, a preliminary study will generally be initiated. The staff engineer will send a letter to the petitioner with preliminary comments and an anticipated schedule for the study, with a copy of the letter distributed to the ward Councilmembers.
3. The preliminary study will be tailored to provide relevant information for decision-making with a limited investment in resources. Generally, it will include a problem description, proposed design and alternatives, evaluation of environmental and property impacts, preliminary cost estimate, and benefit rating.
4. A benefit rating will be calculated to assess economic feasibility. Benefit points are assigned based on the rating table in Appendix A. The estimated cost of the proposed project is divided by the total benefit points to yield a "cost for benefit ratio." Cost for benefit ratios are not intended to be precise and are only one factor to be considered.
5. Questionnaires may be sent out to residents and owners in the neighborhood to obtain additional information. Property owners will be informed that questionnaire results are not confidential, will be maintained on file, and may be subject to open records rules.

6 Once completed, preliminary studies are distributed to the neighborhood and a follow up meeting held if needed. If the neighborhood wishes to move forward, the project goes next to the Public Works Committee for consideration.

7. If the Public Works Committee and Governing Body approve the project concept, the neighborhood is then given the opportunity to make formal commitments. Generally, the formal commitment involves creation of an improvement district. If improvement districts are not required, then the neighborhood commitment is in the form of executed permanent and temporary easements, donated at no cost to the City, from all property owners.

8. Once a neighborhood commitment is made, the project is eligible for addition to the Capital Improvement Program (C.I.P). In general, projects will be added to the C.I.P for the upcoming two years, so as to allow for unforeseen future commitments. If more projects are eligible for addition than there are funds, the City Engineer will make a recommendation for project priority. The recommendation will consider a variety of factors, including

- Engineering and economic feasibility, including cost for benefit ratio.
- Date upon which projects was first requested.
- Timing considerations of outside funding sources or of other nearby street or storm drainage improvements that would benefit from coordination.
- Strength of neighborhood support.

9. The City Engineer will maintain a project priorities list that contains all projects currently under consideration and relevant information on the prioritization of each. This list will be available for public review and updates presented to the Public Works Committee as needed.

APPROVED BY:

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Director of Public Works

Appendix A
Benefit Point Assignments

Condition	Points Assigned
House or Building Flooding, per house or building(*), when flooding:	
is Severe: occurs frequently (in 10 year storm or less), and to depths of 2 ft or more during the estimated 100-year storm.	20
is Light: flooding occurs only rarely (50-year storm or greater); and is unlikely to be more than 4 inches deep in the 100-year storm.	5
is Moderate: all other conditions.	10
is Light or Moderate and building is in FEMA designated floodplain.	10
affects only a yard, resulting in occasional damage to landscaping fences, or outbuildings.	2
(* for non-residential buildings, every 1500 square foot of first floor interior area that floods may be counted as the equivalent of a separate building. For apartment buildings, each ground floor dwelling unit that floods counts as a separate house.)	
Bank stability problems for single and two-family homes, per home affected:	
if home lies within or very close to the expected zone of failure and could potentially be damaged with continued erosion or slide.	20
if the threat of damage appears eminent and potentially catastrophic.	40
if the damage is primarily limited to yard, fences, exterior structures, and there is no reasonable concern for the stability of the home.	5
Street crossings, per location, in which water depth exceeds City standards and the City Engineer determines that improvements are in the interest of the traveling public:	
for improved thoroughfares that flood 18" or greater in the 25 year.	80
for improved thoroughfares, all other cases in excess of City standards.	40
for collector crossings that flood 18" or greater in the 25 year.	30
for collector crossings, all other cases in excess of City standards.	15
for residential/local street flooding in excess of City standards.	15
Inadequate downstream drainage prevents the improvement of an existing, ditched, residential street to City standards, for each house that lies along the unimproved street.	3
Other benefits from stormwater controls, generally for every \$150 in annual average benefit received, or \$3000 in present worth benefit (assumes 100-year design life with a 5% discount rate).	1