

Bringing Green Infrastructure to Keeler Street:

A Community Discussion with Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) and Detroit Public Works Department

January 15, 2015

Meeting Summary

Community residents and local leaders met at the Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation on Thursday, January 15, 2015, to discuss DPW's planned road resurfacing projects on Keeler Street and the opportunity for DWSD to integrate green infrastructure projects into certain areas while undergoing resurfacing.

Green infrastructure is a way to soak up storm water using the natural processes of soils and plants. The proposed project for Keeler Street includes pervious pavers that allow storm water to pass between the pavers and soak into the ground. Pervious pavers reduce sewage overflows into the Rouge River during rain storms by reducing the amount of storm water entering the sewer. It also reduces street flooding.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide participants with information about the proposed project and to provide participants with an opportunity to ask questions and share their concerns. This was the first meeting to gauge the community's interest in the proposed projects. There will be a second meeting in February 2015 to give residents who are directly affected by these proposed projects an opportunity to get more technical information and share their thoughts and concerns.

Provided below is a summary of the questions asked by participants at the January 15, 2015 meeting. The answers provided reflect the answers shared during the meeting or further researched after the meeting to adequately answer a specific question.

Q1. Why not focus on open spaces instead of residential areas with existing infrastructure? We have concerns about basements flooding and associated liability with no flood insurance as a safeguard.

A1. Constructing green infrastructure along local roads is one piece of DWSD's larger Green Infrastructure Plan that includes incorporating green infrastructure on vacant land, commercial land, public properties, and other areas in Detroit. Cumulatively, green infrastructure will assist in reducing storm water that enters and overloads the sewer system.

Basement flooding is typically caused by combined sewer pipes backing up during rain events. It can also be caused by the accumulation of storm water near a house if the ground does not slope away from a house or if downspouts discharge near a house. Pervious pavers will reduce storm water from entering the combined sewer, decreasing the potential for basement flooding. Additionally, the proposed pervious pavers are located outside of the area influencing basement flooding near the house

foundation. Drain pipes will also be installed to ensure the system is draining. So, the design of the pervious pavers and the distance of the pervious pavers away from homes means that they will not promote more water in basements.

Q2. Who to call about basement flooding after a project goes in?

A2. DWSD wants to hear any concerns property owners might have about basement flooding after installation of pervious pavers on Keeler Street. Property owners can contact DWSD via email at public.affairs@dwsd.org or use the 24 hour emergency hotline (313-267-7401).

Q3. Why not use the entire road as storage?

A3. The current design is to drain roadway storm water to parking lanes constructed of pervious pavement. The decision to limit the pervious pavement to the parking lanes is based on cost-effectiveness.

Q4. Why was Keeler Street picked for this project?

A4. Keeler Street is primarily chosen because it is planned to be resurfaced in 2015 and is within the priority area identified in the DWSD Green Infrastructure Plan located on the DWSD web site. Additionally, it is in a low vacancy neighborhood.

Q5. Are these new contractors working on these projects?

A5. Contractors will be hired through an open-bid, low-bid process, but contractors will have to demonstrate that they are qualified.

Q6. There is a need for someone in the field to do quality control. This aspect of projects is often overlooked.

A6. DWSD will have an inspector assigned to the work on Keeler Street to oversee the green Infrastructure portions of the resurfacing work.

Q7. Has anyone contacted Rosedale Historical District about this project?

A7. At the time of this meeting, the Rosedale Historical District had not been contacted. The project team will do so at the suggestion of meeting participants.

Q8. For future meetings, be sure to contact block captains through the Neighborhood District Managers.

A8. The project team appreciates assistance in reaching local residents about this project and will coordinate with the Neighborhood District Manager for the February meeting.

Q9. What maintenance is necessary for pervious pavers to make sure it won't clog?

A9. Pervious pavers will require regular vacuuming to prevent clogging. Discussions with DWSD maintenance crews are ongoing, but this will not be the responsibility of neighborhood residents.

Q10. Will the project remove concrete and put in asphalt?

A10. The project will add layers of asphalt on existing concrete in the middle of Keeler Street as part of the resurfacing. Concrete on the sides of the street will come out in the designated pervious paver locations to allow for installation of the pavers. There will be concrete ribbons between the resurfaced street and the pervious pavers.

Q11. How long will it take for DWSD and DPW to evaluate the pervious pavers?

A11. DWSD needs to develop the evaluation portion of the project. The Green Infrastructure Program in Detroit is a 20 year program, so monitoring will take place over that timeframe.

Q12. Is there evaluation information from other cities?

A12. There is evaluation information from other cities available. The project team will compile evaluation information and include it in an updated project fact sheet.

Participants were asked if they are interested in other possible green infrastructure projects in this area. Responses included the following:

- Road diets/traffic calming
- Curb cuts
- Downspout disconnection/rain gardens (basement flood reduction testimonial from local resident); need training for residents on what to do after downspout disconnections
- Provide physical assistance for disconnecting downspouts for elderly and others who are not able to do it themselves
- Fenkell needs repaving and some green infrastructure (from Southfield to Outer Drive); this has been raised continuously, but the county and city volley responsibility
- Brightmoor has great potential for daylighting the watershed and having that area in the valley provide storage in the floodway ("Brightmoor Creek").