



TO: Albany City Council

VIA: Wes Hare, City Manager
Mark W. Shepard, P.E., Assistant City Manager/Public Works and Community
Development Director

FROM: Jeff Blaine, P.E., Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer

DATE: March 14, 2016, for the March 9, 2015, City Council Work Session

SUBJECT: Stormwater Discussion Part 2 – Why is Stormwater Important & Current Planning
Activities

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:

At the January 12, 2015, work session, staff introduced a program to provide Council with a series of stormwater discussions that would take place over the course of the year. At Monday's work session, Council will receive the second presentation in that series. The presentation will focus on why stormwater is important and what planning/design efforts are currently underway.

When considering stormwater management practices for a municipality, it is important to consider both stormwater quantity and quality. The importance of addressing stormwater quantity is self-explanatory; we want to avoid flooded roads, houses, and yards. This desire is what led to traditional municipal development practices that relied on collecting stormwater in inlets and transporting it through piped systems to the nearest waterway. Waterways receiving stormwater were viewed as conveyance and disposal systems, and were not identified as important community assets or sensitive ecosystems. This approach was industry standard and not unique to Albany.

Over time there has been increasing awareness of the negative impacts that stormwater quantity and quality can have on waterways if not properly managed. Regardless of water quality, increased runoff rates and volumes created by converting natural landscapes into impervious surfaces can seriously harm receiving streams through erosion and subsequent loss of land and habitat. When water quality is considered, further harm is done to aquatic species through contaminants consistently found in urban runoff whether it be from spills, leaky vehicles, brake pads, pesticides, lawn fertilizers, or roof treatments. Under traditional stormwater practices, these contaminants entered waterways untreated, creating a potential problem for downstream water users.

The increased awareness of stormwater issues has led to changes in numerous regulations that impact development practices across the country. While Albany has responded through recent adoption of Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control (EPSC) and Post-Construction Stormwater Quality (PCSWQ) programs, additional measures are needed, and will be required.

As an example, the primary tool for managing and evaluating stormwater quantity impacts in Albany is the Stormwater Master Plan. Without a Master Plan, staff cannot determine how big major pipelines need to be to serve growth or where deficiencies exist. Albany's current Master Plan was adopted in 1988 and is nearly irrelevant. North Albany hasn't been studied since the County last completed a master plan in the mid to late 1970's. Obviously, these plans need to be updated to reflect the current level of development, regulatory requirements, and policies of the City of Albany. A master plan update that includes consideration of stormwater impacts on waterways is currently underway. This update will be a valuable tool for residents, developers, and City staff. Council will be hearing more about this master plan update in coming months as we move forward with our public outreach plan as previously directed by Council.

With a growing City and tightening federal regulations Albany will need to continue to identify ways to proactively manage stormwater quantity and quality. By making informed decisions now, Albany can both promote economic development and protect our local natural resources for future generations.

Budget Impact:

There is no budget impact at this time.

JJB:kw

c: Chris Bailey, Assistant Public Works Director/Operations Manager
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