



**Haverhill Stormwater Improvements Project
Community Meeting Notes
6:00 – 7:15 p.m. on Thursday, October 13, 2022**

**CCAC Homewood-Brushton Center
Virtual on Zoom**

Attendees

The 8 meeting participants included local residents, representatives from UpstreamPgh, and members of the project team.

Presentation

The members of the project team introduced themselves to start the meeting. Ryan Quinn, Project Manager at the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA), provided an overview of stormwater issues in Pittsburgh. Barton Kirk, Project Manager at Ethos Collaborative, explained the two sites within the Haverhill Stormwater Improvements Project: 1) Haverhill Street near Oakwood Street; and 2) existing stormwater infrastructure constructed in 2016 by Upstream Pittsburgh at the intersection of Oakwood and Batavia streets. Barton Kirk explained some of the issues that are impacting the Oakwood and Batavia site, including groundwater seeps and an associated landslide on Haverhill Street and multiple vehicles driving into the stormwater bump-outs. The roadway on Haverhill Street has also been degraded by the groundwater seeps. Barton shared the project's design updates since the last community meeting in June. The current landslide remediation plan is to use a smaller rock buttress at the toe of the slope, with a landscaped area above. On Haverhill Street, the project plans also include sewer improvements, repaving, and guard rails. For the Oakwood and Batavia stormwater infrastructure, the project plans include redesigned forebays for better stormwater filtration and easier maintenance. The plans also include re-planting with new grasses, perennial plants, and street trees. Based on feedback from the last community meeting, PWSA and the City of Pittsburgh's Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) have been coordinating traffic safety improvement plans for the Oakwood and Batavia intersection area, parts of which may be incorporated into this stormwater project construction. PWSA is also in communication with other utilities on Haverhill Street, such as People's Gas and Wilksburg Penn Joint Water Authority, to potentially coordinate other utility line improvements before repaving. The schedule is subject to change; currently final design is expected by early 2023, with stormwater project construction expected to start in summer 2023 and last approximately 5 months. The presentation slides and a recording of this meeting are available at www.pgh2o.com/haverhill.

Discussion

- Zinna Scott (UpstreamPgh board member and resident): How often are the filters at the Oakwood and Batavia site checked and changed?
 - Barton Kirk (Ethos Collaborative): Generally speaking, the filters would be checked monthly with a visual inspection of the filter material. They are changed as needed.
 - Zinna Scott: How does road salt affect these filters?
 - Barton Kirk: They are intended for capturing stormwater runoff specifically, but I will check with the supplier.

- Zinna Scott: What about the apartment building that faces Oakwood next to Haverhill.
 - Barton Kirk: We did change that area in our design - we are no longer planning to re-paving the sidewalk there. The guard rail will come up to the edge of the sidewalk. The sidewalk immediately in front of the apartment building will remain.
 - Zinna Scott: The apartment building isn't lived in, so I am more concerned about how you are planning work around it.
 - Barton Kirk: Because we are not doing anything to the sidewalk there, we will avoid touching that private retaining wall.
 - Zinna Scott: Things can change once you get heavy equipment up there though.
 - Barton Kirk: We have done boring into the soil within 25 feet of the sidewalk, and our geotechnical experts are not recommending additional stabilization below the apartment building as part of construction at this time. Reducing the groundwater seep erosion in that area through this project is expected to reduce further degradation of that retaining wall.

- Aaron Birdy (UpstreamPgh): For the new vegetation plans at Oakwood and Batavia, I noticed a mix of grasses shown. I know the existing switchgrass at Oakwood and Batavia tends to collapse outward. Will these be dwarf species?
 - Barton Kirk: Ethos Collaborative's landscape architect, Matt, will know more about whether they are dwarf species. We used the new stormwater planting palette from the City.

- Barton Kirk: Mike, do you have anything to add about the DOMI traffic plans?
 - Mike Panzitta (DOMI): The EngagePGH page for the traffic safety plans is a good resource: <https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/Homewood-mobility-plan>.

- Zinna Scott: What are we doing with Wilkinsburg Avenue?
 - Ryan Quinn (PWSA): We haven't made changes to Wilkinsburg Avenue at this time. PWSA is trying to get more information about stormwater issues across the city to inform our strategic plan, and that's why we want to know more about your experiences with stormwater issues on Wilkinsburg Avenue.
 - Zinna Scott: It becomes a hazard in the wintertime. It is a fresh spring across the road, about two lanes wide. We no longer have public salt bins on the road, so dependent on the city salt trucks. It is coming down Dornbush Street. In the wintertime, the salt truck actually backs up the hill as far as it can, because it can't come down Dornbursh Street.

- Aaron Birdy: Dornbursh Street is one of the steepest streets in Pittsburgh.
 - Zinna Scott: Yes, I thought it was.
- Aaron Birdy: I believe that area you are talking about is one of the historic streams of Nine Mile Run. Water will always find its way back to where it wants to be.
 - Zinna Scott: Yes, it is.
- Ryan Quinn: The Haverhill project was more of a City responsibility because the landslide occurred on City property.
 - Zinna Scott: When the landslide on Haverhill Street first happened, I had taken a video, which I since deleted unfortunately, of the muddy water coming down Haverhill. I contacted Brenda at Upstream, and she got someone to come out and look at it.
 - Ryan Quinn: That was 2018, and there were a lot of landslides occurring that year.
 - Zinna Scott: Then I took a City person up there and showed them that. I don't live right in the immediate area, but I live in the overall area.
- Aaron Birdy: Ryan, you said part of why PWSA can get involved in this landslide on Haverhill is because it's on City property, right?
 - Zinna Scott: The water on Wilkinsburg is coming out of a hillside where there aren't any houses, so it's probably City property. It's wooded area.
 - Ryan Quinn: We'll check it out.
 - **ACTION:** Ryan Quinn (PWSA) will look into the Wilkinsburg Avenue seep location and whether it comes off a City-owned property.
- Zinna Scott: The City went out and did something to try to redirect the water on Wilkinsburg Ave.
 - Ryan Quinn: Curbing or something else?
 - Zinna Scott: I think it was curbing. For a long-term solution, I could see building a dam to retain the water and then building under-street piping to take it under the road into the sewer.
 - Ryan Quinn: Also, something to consider is that groundwater seeps can change seasonally or year to year, so investigations are needed to design a solution that manages the amount of flow over time.
- Aaron Birdy: We should schedule a time for us to visit the Wilkinsburg Avenue seep together, Zinna.
 - Zinna Scott: Absolutely.
 - Ryan Quinn: Please take photos too.
 - **ACTION:** Aaron Birdy (UpstreamPgh) and Zinna Scott (UpstreamPgh board member and resident) will plan to visit the Wilkinsburg Avenue seep.
- Barton Kirk: I don't think I've seen the Haverhill Street seep not flowing this year.
 - Zinna Scott: Probably because of all the rain we've been getting.

- Aaron Birdy: I wanted to add that we at Upstream are very much in support of this project. The goals to improve drainage, improve the neighborhood, and improve the watershed.
 - Zinna Scott: I function as both member of the Upstream board and a community member. I know we haven't had much community attending these meetings.
 - Elaine Hinrichs (PWSA): It has been low attendance at this project's community meetings. I have been trying many multiple methods of getting the word out about this project and the meetings, including postcards, doorhangers, emails, robocalls, social media, and partner outreach. I will keep trying and adjusting for future meetings.

- Zinna Scott: How much will this work impact Singer?
 - Barton Kirk: This work won't directly impact Singer Place, but we did look at Singer Place during our investigations. There are some areas of needed stormwater improvements, with inlets needing cleaning and potentially replacement, but generally speaking the curb is continuous, so Singer Place was not included in this project.