

## **StreamWISE Program Series 2 Meeting Summary**

The StreamWISE team conducted the second in a series of four stakeholder meetings the week of June 23, 2007. During these meetings, Zone 7 shared its draft list of key projects and heard valuable input from stakeholders. Following is a summary of comments and questions that were received during these meetings. This summary also includes input from residents of the lower Arroyo de la Laguna (LADLL), who met with the StreamWISE project team that same week.

### **Agriculture Meeting**

The StreamWISE team met with the Alameda County Agricultural Advisory Committee during its scheduled meeting on June 26, 2007. Many of the comments at this meeting related to how the StreamWISE program will be financed. The StreamWISE team explained that the program is anticipated to be paid for with some combination of developer fees, bonds, user fees, and grants, where possible. The next step will be to look at all costs and evaluate all potential funding methods as part of this process, and to develop a recommendation for the implementation strategy. Agricultural stakeholders commented that many projects potentially will be opportunistic, and recommended that Zone 7 leave some flexibility in its projects to respond to opportunities/money that becomes available unexpectedly/quickly. They also emphasized that StreamWISE needs to be designed with a solid strategy that outlines approach, implementation, mitigation, and outreach; and that having it laid out ahead of time will save money.

There was a question about the costs on Arroyo Mocho Bypass and Chain of Lakes Regional Storage project. The StreamWISE team explained that Arroyo de la Laguna (ADLL) is the main outlet for the Livermore-Amador Valley, and it has to be able to move all of the upstream water. Storing upstream water in the Chain of Lakes will relieve pressure from ADLL and allow it to accept these flows without overwhelming its banks.

The group also had comments about mitigation under StreamWISE. StreamWISE engineering costs already include mitigation costs for those projects that are flood-protection-focused. There was a suggestion that Zone 7 needs to get creative moving forward, and that mitigation needs to move quickly to help move projects forward. For instance, some groups have been receiving large funds (\$10–100 million) from Washington D.C.

It was noted that there are no projects on the list that specifically benefit agriculture. Agricultural stakeholders would like to see StreamWISE projects that benefit agriculture, not just urban projects. There was also a request for projects that could create water supply that can be used for agricultural irrigation.

### **Government Meeting**

Much of the government meeting focused on questions about the draft project list. The StreamWISE team explained that the screened project list is not prioritized yet—this will occur later in the year. There will also be further analysis of how projects will interrelate with one

another—e.g., funding, how they could tier off of each other, and so forth. There is some technical analysis that needs to happen before we know if certain projects can be combined—e.g., downstream impacts or how Chain of Lakes water supply and flood protection goals will relate.

There was some concern that projects on the long-term list would be completely ruled out, even if opportunities arise down the road to implement these projects. The StreamWISE team emphasized that the Stream Management Master Plan (SMMP) is a planning document that allows Zone 7 to plan flood protection funding, similar to water project planning. If an opportunity arises that allows for the implementation of a project that is on the long-term list, Zone 7 can re-evaluate it at that time. Also, the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is updated yearly and StreamWISE projects will be analyzed roughly every five years to determine if projects need to be re-organized. Partnering opportunities could also change a project's status. Nothing is cast in stone, and language will be included in the StreamWISE Implementation Plan that discusses this flexibility. Zone 7 acknowledged that whichever projects have the flexibility to be timed with development as it occurs will be taken into consideration.

The Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) commented that they did not include Project R.1-2, the Alkali Sink Management project, as a priority in Series 1 because they were asked to choose only two top projects. LARPD sees environmental opportunities in this area. Representatives from East Bay Regional Parks District previously mentioned that there are trail opportunities in this area, and LARPD would be happy to partner on this.

There was some confusion about why some projects that did not appear to receive stakeholder support from the Series 1 meetings continued to be shown on the screened project list. The team explained that these projects are key to Zone 7's flood protection goals, and must be implemented. Likewise, there are several projects that did not seem to have any flood control benefits, but made the list (i.e. Project R.9-5, I-580 Trail Gap Elimination or Project R.1-2, Alkali Sink Management). Several projects provide related community benefits that do fit the overall vision of the SMMP and the StreamWISE Program. These will be projects led by other agencies or organizations in the community, but supported by Zone 7 through StreamWISE.

There was also a fair amount of discussion about StreamWISE financing. The StreamWISE team clarified that the SMMP originally estimated project costs at about \$720 million, but that was in 2005 dollars. Current costs have been revised to reflect 2007 dollars (based on the ENR index). Stakeholders advised that, because costs are higher than available funding, Zone 7 needs to figure out how to achieve the highest benefits for its customers, with the minimum expenditure of funds. The team added that funding options are currently under review and will be evaluated as a part of Task 3. Zone 7 is looking for ways to make projects stronger by gaining partnership support/funding.

Zone 7 reported that it conducted polling in March to determine the community's awareness of Valley flooding and their openness to various StreamWISE funding options. Among other findings, the poll indicated that not many people know about current flooding issues in the Valley, and that because so many are new to the region they are unfamiliar with the flooding

issues during the 1990's El Nino years and earlier. Zone 7 will continue working with the community to determine funding sources, including development fees, user fees, grants, and/or a possible bond measure. With respect to development, Livermore noted that it recently implemented a new vehicle impact fee that will be phased in over a few years, and that any new similar fees implemented by Zone 7 should do the same. For years fees have been going up and it has not been an issue because of growth; however, now that the housing market is slowing, there might be more concern.

The government stakeholders sought clarity on what types of partnerships Zone 7 will be seeking for StreamWISE. For instance, would Zone 7 expect cities to implement these projects through their own CIPs? There was a suggestion to consider equity in terms of where projects are done and where funds are coming from. For instance, given that ADLL is receiving a lot of attention, will funds go to ADLL regardless of the interests of the contributor? Stakeholders suggested that while this may not necessarily be a criterion that is weighted as heavily as the others, it should be considered.

Finally, it was suggested that the StreamWISE team meet with stakeholders one-on-one before the next meeting series, to identify partnering opportunities, share information, discuss technical details, and so forth. This will help Zone 7 prioritize projects that are important to stakeholders and are a priority now. As we get closer to partnering with the different interests, it may also be beneficial to combine meetings together, especially once some technical analysis has been completed. The group recommended that the business community needs to be more involved in this process—they will want to know what how the program will benefit them, and what it will cost them. Until then, they are unlikely to be interested—until, perhaps, the Series 3 meetings.

### **Recreation Meeting**

The majority of the discussion among recreation stakeholders focused on specific projects and their related partnering and funding opportunities. The team explained that partner agencies will be sought to pay for ancillary costs (those costs not related to flood protection—such as an education center, indoor classroom, trail linkages, and so forth) and mitigation costs for specific non-flood protection projects. Mitigation may also be traded; for example, the removal of fish barriers or a creek restoration in one project could be used as mitigation on another project with greater impacts. These funding aspects will be part of the partnering discussions. Costs will likely be refined as project concepts are fine-tuned.

Stakeholders commented that they do not have a full understanding about Zone 7's goals and purpose for these projects, which makes it difficult to determine what exactly is involved in a potential partnership, or what would be expected from them as a partner. The team explained that details have not been ironed out; the SMMP was a conceptual way to identify projects in order to get a rough estimate about costs.

Livermore and Pleasanton are particularly interested in the following projects.

- Both cities are interested in those projects that provide the regional storage at the Chain of Lakes.

- R.9-5 is one of Pleasanton's priority projects. Funds have already been committed in their CIP. Feasibility study is complete. East Bay Regional Parks will be hiring a consultant to design, which will be a year or year and a half process. The big issue is that the site belongs to Caltrans.
- R.8-2 will benefit Hacienda Business Park because of the connection with BART, promoting a transit-oriented development. Further discussion is needed about R.7-3; this needs clarification on what is involved with project.

LARPD is starting studies for their master plan and should have more technical details by July.

### **Environmental Meeting**

The environmental group was very interested in using StreamWISE to foster public education. For instance, projects R3-3 – R.3-5 are highly visible in Livermore. This section is highly used by the public and could be used to show the public a better way of landscaping (planting natives, attracting pollinators, and so forth) in order to save water. The potential for education is huge, starting with the high school (in ten years the students will be homeowners). The Friends of the Arroyos garden can be used as a "test garden" to show which plants are most drought-tolerant. This garden was only watered twice last year. Flannel bush, cottonwoods, oaks, and sycamores have done very well. Stakeholders were happy to see that these projects remain on the priority list. As an ancillary benefit, StreamWISE could also be used to educate cities, by developing a "big picture" model of water in the Valley that could be used to educate cities about how development impacts runoff.

There was also a discussion about the Springtown Preserve area (Project R.1-2, Alkali Sink), which has traditionally contained vernal pools. Concern was expressed about a history of silt removal in this area and how the resulting rain runoff impacts the vernal pools. Another concern is that the boundary within the preserve itself is not in the city limits. Zone 7 was requested to coordinate on future silt removal/100 year flood plains, and to walk the area with interested parties before any earth moving occurs. Also, some plants were not adapting well in the Springtown Area because they did not have regular water for 1-2 years. The team was advised to water deeply for the first 1–2 summers until the plants establish and can survive the summer with little water. It was noted that the California Native Plant Society is a good resource for plant types, soil types, and so forth of this area.

Concern was expressed about the health of Sycamore Grove, with the message that connecting the Sycamore trail is important to the entire Valley. If something needs to be done with the South Bay Aqueduct (SBA) turnout, this should be a priority.

There was a recommendation to involve a fish biologist that will study what will happen with fish once streams are repaired (i.e. improving fish passage, spawning, gravel, channel restoration and so forth), if Zone 7 is not already doing so.

The Reach 10 area is currently natural flow, but has erosion problems. LADLL is a very visible part of the Valley, and there are property owners down there who are losing 10–20 feet of their property during major storm events. The LADLL area is the only exit from the Valley for storm

water and also accepts releases from Lake Del Valle. The StreamWISE team explained that technical studies, including preliminary geomorphology studies, are currently underway for the ADLL, and the findings and recommendations from these will be discussed with stakeholders.

There was also discussion about the importance of the Chain of Lakes. Certain lakes within the quarry area have been designated to be turned over to Zone 7 for the future Chain of Lakes once mining has been completed. This transfer of property is mitigation for the removal of aquifer material (gravels that contain our underground drinking water) and loss of floodplain. There was a comment that it is important to move forward with the quarries and move the Chain of Lakes project forward—that is the only place that we can temporarily store storm water in the Valley.

A potential partnering opportunity arose during the meeting:

- East Bay Regional Parks is planning a trail connection from Shadow Cliffs Regional Park to Lake Del Valle that would come through Sycamore Grove Park.

### **Lower Arroyo de la Laguna Resident Meeting**

The StreamWISE team presented at the Sunol Advisory Committee and reviewed work performed since the last LADLL resident meeting, as well as Zone 7's technical studies on ADLL that are currently underway. Residents were appreciative of the update and of Zone 7's efforts. Some expressed support for using the Chain of Lakes to temporarily detain and control flow downstream through the Verona Bridge. There was also an overall sense of frustration about the common misperception that impacts to the LADLL area are not the Valley's problem. However, many residents, having lived in the area for over 30 years, state that they have witnessed firsthand that the ADLL used to be a natural creek without the flooding problems they experience today. The logical conclusion reached by LADLL residents is that recent flooding problems in their area must result from increased runoff from Valley development.

Ideas to increase attendance at the next series of meetings:

- People need a better understanding of how this affects them.
- Contact people via telephone.
- Vacations/summer is a factor.
- Need to ensure that residents are represented.