

Report shows Fairview flooding fixes will require long-term effort

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FAIRVIEW PARK, Ohio – The engineering firm commissioned by Fairview Park officials to provide recommendations for fixing decades-old city flooding problems has released its report.

Residents heard from city officials in August that flooding remedies will take time, a fact verified in an Oct. 30 engineering report.
Beth Mlady/Special to Sun News

While city workers will continue to clean and maintain the sanitary and storm sewer systems, **Black and Veatch's** suggested solutions, including developing a skeletal model of the affected flood areas, will take some time to implement.

Fairview Director of Public Service and Development Rob Berner said Wednesday he was not surprised by all of the information contained in the Oct. 30 report.

"There's a lot in here that needs to be done," Berner said. "Understanding the whole modeling thing is probably more important than anything else. We have a lot of residents claiming their sewers are undersized and that we need new sewers, but until we actually do a skeletal model, we don't know that."

According to the report, the severest basement flooding occurs in the west and southwest areas of Fairview. It also states the majority of the city's storm sewer systems were built between 50 and 90 years ago, making it likely they no longer meet current design standards "typically based on a five-year storm event." City records show some flooding problems have been investigated since 1963, and an engineering report addressed Ward 5 storm sewer capacity issues in 1983.

Residents may be unaware the underground sanitary sewer and storm water channels lie atop each other on a shelf and occupy the same trench. If one of those pipes develops a crack, its discharge infiltrates the other system, overloading it and causing flooding during a major storm.

The Oct. 30 report noted **major storm events with "high intensity rains in very localized areas" occurred in May and August of this year**, causing widespread basement flooding. Even areas in which recent sewer rehabilitation projects were completed experienced backups, the report indicates.

Black and Veatch's short-term, "over the next year" recommendations are for the city to focus its projects on "severe flooding areas"; to model the system and identify capacity issues and infiltration/inflow; and flow metering verification of the model. Long-term fixes, the report states, may require "major CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) projects in several areas" and a more extensive system wide model.

"We've been dealing with this for over 50 years, and now it's time to actually deal with (the root cause), as opposed to ... making repairs as they come up," Berner said, adding he hopes to get an intern on board as part of the modeling and mapping process. "Our intention is to actually come up with a comprehensive solution that we can begin to implement. That comprehensive solution will address the problems."

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