

Questions & Responses

January 24, 2018 Public Presentation

Questions and comments were gathered on comment cards collected at the Public Presentation by the Maumee Watershed Conservancy District and Stantec on Wednesday, January 24, 2018 in the Winebrenner Auditorium at the University of Findlay. Additional comments were received verbally. The following is a summary of the questions and comments received.

- Why are additional floodplain benches downstream, upstream, and/or on the opposite side of the river from the project site not being installed?
 - *Many alternatives were evaluated prior to developing the scope of Phase 1 of the Hydraulic Improvement project. The goal of this design is to improve the Blanchard River's hydraulic efficiency while minimizing cost and impacts to private property owners, public utilities, and the environment. In general, the current project location was selected because of the availability of predominantly City and County owned properties, minimal environmental impacts, potential water quality improvements, and minimal impacts to public utilities and existing infrastructure. These items provide a unique opportunity to create a cost-effective, permittable project that do not exist in other locations along the river.*
 - *The opposite side of the river is not an effective location due to the substantial number and size of underground infrastructure that would be adversely impacted. Additionally, the areas behind the existing berm along the south side of the river are currently within the regulatory floodplain and become inundated quite rapidly during a flood event. The benefit derived from removing the berm on the south side of the river does not appear to provide a significant reduction in the water surface for larger events.*

- Why is the sediment buildup in the river downstream of the project site not being removed as part of this project?
 - *While we understand that there may be isolated blockages within the river in various locations, the scope for Phase 1 of the Hydraulic Improvements project is focused on the area near Swale Park for the reasons stated in the above response. It should also be noted that sediment buildup and log jams may negatively affect water surface elevation during small flood events. Debris near the bottom of the river has a relatively small effect on the water surface elevation during larger flood events when the water surface elevation rises above the river banks.*

- Will this floodplain bench push the flood waters further north and make flooding worse on Defiance Ave?
 - *The floodplain bench will nominally reduce the water surface elevation (WSE) within the regulatory floodplain at Defiance Ave. during flood events and will not push flood waters into areas that are not currently prone to flooding.*

- Why did the floodplain bench length change between earlier public meetings and tonight?
 - *The general footprint of the proposed floodplain benching areas has been consistent from the original Proof of Concept to the 60% design documents presented on January 24, 2018 at over 3,500 linear feet in length. We are unsure of the origin of the length of the project that was presented elsewhere. The proposed design for the floodplain benching has and will continue to be refined as the design progresses. Although we are confident with the design as presented, it could be affected by outside elements such as easement acquisitions, utility conflicts, and permitting requirements.*

Hancock County Commissioners and Maumee Watershed Conservancy District
Hancock County Flood-Risk Reduction Program

- Why aren't you raising bridges through the City (especially Main Street which acts like a dam)?
 - *Stantec reviewed alternatives related to several bridge structures over the Blanchard River throughout the community. Modeling results show the Norfolk Southern Railroad bridge acts as a hydraulic constriction because the top of the bridge and its embankments are above the 1% ACE. Other bridges, including the bridge at Main Street, do not impact the water surface elevation of the Blanchard River nearly as much either because the 1% ACE inundates the entire structure or the clear opening beneath the structure has sufficient capacity to convey the flows. For example, preliminary modeling results show that completely removing the Main Street bridge would decrease the water surface elevation upstream of the existing bridge by about 0.05 feet, or slightly more than half an inch.*

- What is the status for the Proof of Concept update?
 - *The original Proof of Concept Report developed by Stantec in 2017 is being updated to further include refinements within the hydrologic and hydraulic models to represent the existing conditions within the Blanchard River watershed more accurately. Additional data has been obtained to reflect the typical storm conditions that affect this region of the state and the specific conditions that occurred during the July 2017 event. These updates will result in a more accurate hydraulic model and better define conditions for the evaluation and refinement of prior concepts and alternatives. Review of updated concepts is underway and public meetings will be held later in 2018 to present the findings of the Proof of Concept Update.*