



To: Honorable Mayor Adams and Council
From: Julie Feier, City Manager
Date: February 13, 2009
Subject: Weekly Update

The US Army Corps of Engineers' draft flood mitigation study recommends that home buyouts and flood proofing are the only viable alternatives to eliminating flood hazards in the future. The Corp's 1988 study included the area from Purdue Avenue to Kempland. The current Corp's study covers the area only from Purdue (Heman Park) to Olive Blvd (Royal Bank). The plan has changed substantially since its inception twenty-one years ago due to improvements to the channel north of Olive and the existing structure east of Purdue. The Corps is no longer recommending channel improvements as it did in its 1988 study for flood mitigation.

The recommended plan will be submitted this year and will require up to a year for the Corp's internal review process to be approved. If reauthorization of the recommended plan is required, the Corp's review could take longer and would require Congressional approval. The Corp will provide a 65% grant match to proceed with the buyout of properties identified in the floodway once the plan is approved. They are recommending buyouts of 148 homes in the 5-year floodplain and additional home buyouts in the 10-year floodplain. MSD is working on a plan to assist with funding the required 35% local match for future grants by using past federal funding allocations up to \$6 million dollars. The MSD match would only be available for federal grants through the Corp in the study area. Ongoing assessments will be made as each property is removed from the flood plain. The major goals of the project are to improve public safety and to reduce the future risk of damage to structures due to flooding throughout the basin.

The letters regarding next steps in the **flood remediation process** went out this week. The SEMA grant focuses on the 26 remaining homes on the east side of Wilson, which have been the priority area of concern in the Corps' report. The Corp's study found that the River des Peres reach from Midland to Shaftesbury (Wilson Avenue) had the greatest number of structures within the 5-year-floodplain. We have been fielding some calls from residents on the east side of Wilson regarding the SEMA buyouts. However, most of the calls received thus far, have been from residents from the other side of Wilson, Glenside, Groby, and Mona indicating their interest in also being bought out. There have also been concerns raised from residents outside the study area on streets such as Yale and Belrue.

Finally, issues have also been raised about the **equitable distribution of dollars** of many taxpayers for a small number of residents. As you know, with the current budget situation none of these will be easy decisions for the Council to face. The City expended around \$400,000 responding to the September 14 flash flood event. In reaching its decision to recommend buyouts, the Corp performed a cost-benefit analysis. The analysis considers the cost of acquisition appraisal, demolition, relocation and other costs, weighted against ongoing losses occurring in a flood. Therefore, the Corps determined that the purchasing all of the properties in the 5-yr floodplain and a significant number of structures in the 10-yr floodplain meet their criteria for long-term savings for all taxpayers. Much of the past work was completed in the Third Ward, while none has been completed in the First Ward.

The upcoming **meeting on February 26th** will provide a history of the past flood mitigation projects in University City as well as answer questions such as what flood proofing means by the Corp's standard and by MSD's standards. The presentation materials will be similar to those provided in the presentation from June 2007, which I have provided in your attachments. The main changes will be that several of the options previously mentioned are no longer viable such as bio-stabilization of the channel and levees. The option of using detention basin as a flood mitigation strategy was eliminated by the Corps in June 2007 due to too few upstream sites with too little storage. We will focus on questions concerning the current SEMA grant proposal. Because there will be so many interested parties with questions we will provide time for citizens to meet individually at the beginning and the end of the session to ask specific questions concerning their property with representatives from the Corp, MSD and the City. There will be a follow up meeting with representatives of SEMA. During the meeting, we will collect question /comment cards that will be compiled into a summary document so that ALL questions will be answered and comments recorded. The summary document will be distributed to all those commenting and available to all at the library and on the City's website.

The February 23rd Council Agenda includes the ordinances for placing **three tax initiatives** on the ballot for the August 4, 2009 election. Council gave staff the direction for these measures to help insure balanced budgets through FY 14 without significant service cuts. The three proposed ballot initiatives are being placed on the ballot now to stave off additional service cuts and eliminate the need to go back to the taxpayers for additional funds on a regular ongoing basis. In the past two years, the City has reduced the expenditure side of the equation while maintaining service levels. Without new revenue, however, significant budget cuts would be required and services will be eliminated or shifted to citizens or alternate taxing districts. The three initiatives that have yet to be formally named will be up for your consideration on the 23rd. A ballot initiative can be "Named" by any letter or number. The following are suggestions only for your discussion on Monday.

- 1) **Proposition P** is for an increase in the **property tax levy** by **25 cents** per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation. This levy will be for general municipal purposes. Currently, the City's portion of the total property tax is just under 10%.

- 2) **Proposition S** is for imposing an additional **one-fourth of one percent sales tax** on all retail sales made in University City. This portion of sales tax will be for general municipal purposes.
- 3) **Proposition E** is for imposing an **additional one-fourth of one percent sales tax** on all retail sales within University City for use with **economic development** purposes only.

If the two sales tax increases are approved, the retail sales tax will be 8.075% in the majority of the City and 9.075% in the Loop Trolley Transportation Development District.

University City voters will also be asked to consider the **School District of University City's request** to approve a **\$53.6 million bond measure** known as **Proposition U** during the upcoming **April 7** election. This allows the District to issue new bonds replacing those paying off and passage would not increase the school district's tax rate beyond its current level. If the bond issue fails, residents' property taxes will be reduced by approximately .50 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. The downward adjustment would occur for the 2009 tax year. If approved, funds from Proposition U will finance the construction of two new schools – Barbara C. Jordan and Pershing Elementary Schools, and pay for renovations at the two of the district's existing elementary schools, middle school and high school. The University City Board of Education selected Bond Wolf Architects as the architectural firm for the proposed school construction and renovation projects and approved the selection of Ameresco, Inc. as the energy savings contractor for facility renovations at Flynn Park, Jackson Park, Brittany Woods and University City High School. A separate but related issue is that the District plans to raise its operating levy by approximately .50 cents phased in over time during years 2011, 2013 and 2015. No voter approval will be required because the District would be eliminating the voluntary rollback. Currently, the School District's property tax levy is approximately 60% of the total property tax.

Police Major Ernest Green attended a meeting called by the Vice President of the United States this week. Vice President Biden called together lead representatives of law enforcement organizations such as:

- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- National Sheriffs Association
- Major City Chiefs Association
- National Troopers Coalition
- National Association of Police Officers

The meeting was called to discuss the Vice President's desire to continue funding the COPS initiative started under the Clinton administration. His hope is to get funding for more officers on the street and technology to help combat crime. Biden was instrumental in facilitating the COPS program under the Clinton administration. Vice President Biden was supportive to law enforcement as a Senator and we hope that his support will continue. Thank you and congratulations to Major Green for his participation with this auspicious group.

The residents in the **1100 Block of Wilshire Avenue** are proceeding with the proposed neighborhood improvement project to bring their street to City standards. The City will

participate to bring the street up to code and then take over ongoing maintenance. We will be also participants in the NID as property owners. The details are attached.

Council Member Price requested information on the amount spent from the **Economic Development Retail Sales Tax** on the Loop area and the Olive Blvd. area. Below is that split for the past two years. The original five-year plan identified heavier funding for Delmar in the first two years due to the grant allocations. Phase 3 of the Olive Blvd. Street Streetscape is currently under consideration.

Delmar Loop

\$250,000	Trolley
\$32,374	Loop Directional Signs
\$330,000	Delmar Streetscape
<u>\$50,000</u>	Delmar Parking Lot Maintenance
\$662,374	

Olive Blvd.

\$40,432	Olive Design Standards
\$50,000	Olive Theme Identity
<u>\$390,000</u>	Olive Blvd. Streetscape
\$480,432	

The proposed FY 2009 budget is attached, there is an additional \$320,000 designated for Olive and \$100,000 for Delmar Blvd. Although staff recommendation for the February 17 meeting will be to pull the \$50,000 earmarked for the Trolley and the Wifi study to pull more money back to the general fund. The five-year plan for the Trolley received funding upfront and the Wifi project is not active due to the changes in technology.

Come share time with friends in the Loop for Valentine's Day Saturday, February 14. **Love in the Loop** will include free carriage rides departing from Commerce Bank from 7 PM to 10 PM. Take in the special window and dining displays. Details at <http://visittheloop.com/events/>

Nikki Davenport will host a program on Saturday, February 14, from 9 AM to 11AM as part of the **12th annual Great Backyard Bird Count**. Veteran and new Green Center volunteers are welcome to participate. Attendees will view a presentation on bird identification and help identify and count birds on the Green Center grounds. Jen Porcelli, Green Center Restoration Ecologist will be on-hand to assist with the event. The Green Center is a community agency located in Kaufman Park.

The City of University City is excited to announce their first bi-lingual Chinese Intern through the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University. Intern, Julie Zhang, started work on her Masters in May of 2008. She is working in the City Manager's office and responsible for providing **outreach within the Asian community**. She will complete a bi-lingual community directory as well as translate City forms and information pieces. Residents who have ideas or concerns they prefer to share in Chinese or Cantonese should contact Ms. Zhang directly at 505-8603 or

email: jzhang@ucitymo.org The attached press release will run in the local Chinese Newspapers.

As part of the School District's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP), the district will host a quarterly **Parent & Community Advisory Council (PCAC) Meeting** on Wednesday, February 18 from 6-8 PM. The CSIP outlines the goals of the district as it relates to academic achievement for all students; highly qualified teaching staff; facilities; support and instructional resources; parent and community involvement, and governance and administration. It is meant to be a working blueprint that will map the future direction of the District for the next five years. On the evening following the PCAC meeting, the District will host **Bridges Across Racial Polarization** on Thursday, February 19, from 6-8 PM. Bridges is an innovative program sponsored by FOCUS St. Louis that builds increased communication and understanding among people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Both meetings will feature a light meal or snacks and will take place at the McNair Administration Building at 8136 Groby Rd. To RSVP, call Daphne Dorsey, 290-4016.

On February 10, the St. Louis Jefferson Solid Waste Management District notified us that we would receive \$15,000 of the \$41,500 we requested for **recycling education**. The money will not be available until after the start of the next fiscal year. The update on the recycling program requested by Council Member Price is attached.

After years of experiencing declining revenue, **Metro** is no longer financially able to support the existing level of transit service. Effective March 30, 2009 MetroBus service will be reduced by 43%, MetroLink by 29%, and the van service transporting customers with disabilities, Metro Call-A-Ride, will be reduced by 15%. Should you have questions about the status of public transit in the St. Louis region you may contact Transit Information, Monday through Friday, from 7:00 AM– 7:00 PM at 231-2345 or many answers are available on the website at www.metrostlouis.org. Metro is currently working with civic leaders, business leaders, elected officials and other transit supporters to address the funding crisis that resulted in the loss of service in our area.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

Thursday, February 19:	6:30 PM Civic Series, Public Works
Monday, February 23:	5:30 PM Study Session, Council Rules and Procedures 6:30 PM Council Meeting
Thursday, February 26:	6:30 PM Community meeting at Heman Community Center RE: Flood Mitigation
Thursday, March 12:	6:30 PM Civic Series, Ethics, Conflict of Interest
Monday, March 23:	5:30 PM Study Session, Purchasing Bidding Procedures 6:30 PM Council Meeting
Monday, April 6:	5:30 PM Study Session 6:30 PM Council Meeting
Monday, April 20:	5:30 PM Study Session 6:30 Council Meeting
Thursday, April 23:	Budget Meeting Canceled
Monday, April 27:	6:30 PM Budget Meeting & Public Forum

* Topics subject to change as schedules require.

Attachments:

Wilson Letters

Outreach Press Release

Glickert Letter

FOP Letter

Climbing Tree "Park" Memo

Public Works Week-in-Review

Delmar Tree Planting

Recycling Educating Update

School District Letter

Metro Letter

County League Sales Tax Letter for Interoperable Communications

County League Memo: RE PEG

MODOT Work Zones

Landmarks Letter

Economic Development Retail Sales Tax Board Agenda

Wilshire NID

Newspaper Box Update

ICLEI Update

February 23 Council Agenda

February 23 Study Session Agenda

Previous River des Peres Presentation

School District Flyer

News Clippings