

Berwyn, CMAP to gather public feedback for stormwater management plan

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By AIMEE BARROWS

Email



BERWYN – Berwyn residents are invited to give feedback on how the city can better manage stormwater and mitigate sewer backups during an open house from 4 to 7 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Berwyn Public Library.

The city is working with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning to develop a stormwater management plan. City engineers and representatives from CMAP will be available to answer questions and listen to residents' concerns and suggestions.

Nicole Campbell, engineer for the city of Berwyn, said the city has been experiencing a number of flooding issues in recent years because of heavy storms. Sewers have backed up, resulting in basement and street flooding, she said.

Campbell said Berwyn wants to know about residents' experiences with flooding and the steps they're taking to reduce flooding, as well as get their ideas to better manage stormwater.

“Any info from the residents during the open house will be very beneficial in developing our plan. We’re hoping for a big turnout, and we’d like to get as much input as we can,” she said. “The open house will also be educational because residents can learn to better protect their homes and understand green infrastructure.”

Green infrastructure will be a major component of the plan, said Kate Evasic, associate planner at CMAP. Green infrastructure uses trees, plants and soil to soak up stormwater to help keep it out of the sewers. The plan also will look at areas in the city that need further engineering study.

Berwyn and other heavily populated cities have struggled with urban flooding because there are fewer open spaces to absorb the runoff, Evasic said.

She said while Berwyn is already taking steps to mitigate the problem, the CMAP plan will provide the city with a more complete roadmap to help address the issue.

“We want to make sure the city is investing in green infrastructure and cost-sharing programs,” Evasic said. “But this isn’t the city’s problem alone to solve. Homeowners, businesses and developers also have to make improvements to help solve the problem. It’s a tough issue.”

She said some things homeowners can do are install overhead sewers to prevent basement backup and install a rain garden, which is a low-lying garden area that soaks up water in their backyards. Schools can install soft, permeable surfaces in playground areas to help absorb water, she said.

“The idea is these practices will form a larger system that will allow the city to better manage stormwater, but we’re all in this together,” Evasic said. “We want to hear from residents about what improvements they’ve made or want to make, as well as the barriers that prevent them from making improvements.”

She said the plan should be completed this spring, when it will be presented to the public and eventually to the full Berwyn City Council for adoption.

For more information about the open house, email Evasic at kevasic@cmmap.illinois.gov or call 312-386-8782.

If you go

WHAT: Berwyn Stormwater Management Plan Open House

WHEN: 4 to 7 p.m. Feb. 7

WHERE: Berwyn Public Library community room, 2701 S. Harlem Ave., Berwyn

INFO: shawurl.com/3807

