



Tiffany D. Thomas
Houston City Council Member, District F

July 14, 2022

To: Briarmeadow Homeowners
Cc: John Weatherly, HOA President

RE: City Council Meeting Follow-up

Dear Stephanie Cruz,

Please see the following responses provided by Houston Public Works (HPW) in reference to your June 29th inquiry.

1. Can you provide clarity on when it was determined that the data was "entirely outdated"?

The "Outdated" statement is just recognizing that the Pre-Engineering Study performed in 2012 and presented to the community in 2015 is not based on new drainage requirements adapted by the City of Houston since that time.

2. When was the funding decision determined? My understanding was that this would have happened much earlier than the March 2022 communication about data.

The Briarmeadow Drainage and Paving Improvement Project M-410009-0001 has been in the 5-year CIP since 2014 as it was being planned and designed to move to construction. The project scope within the 5-year CIP plan always has been the subproject as it was outlined within the Pre-Engineering Report as Phase 1. The 5-year CIP; which is updated and voted upon by Council every year since 2014 has never included subprojects labeled in the Pre-Engineering Report as Phases 2 and 3. Briarmeadow Drainage and Paving Improvement Project M-410009-0001 construction started in 2020 and was substantially completed in November 2021. Below is general description of the 5-year CIP as presented in the CIP book.

"The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a five-year plan updated annually, addressing the infrastructure needs for the City of Houston. For example, the current Fiscal Year 2023-2027 CIP is a forward-looking document outlining the City of Houston's infrastructure improvement strategy. This plan organizes projects by priority, project capacity and timing constraints, and identifies funding sources for all anticipated projects. This organization creates a realistic plan to address the current and expected infrastructure needs of Houston, subject to resource constraints."

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The five-year CIP is revised annually to include new projects, reflect changes in priorities, and extend the plan an additional year. The first year of the plan is the City's current fiscal year, which runs from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. It is adjusted throughout the year, as needs dictate or when changes are made to existing approved projects. This year's CIP continues the Administration's priorities of rehabilitation and reconstruction of the City's existing facilities."

3. How does the city plan CIP projects for multiple years out given the ever changing data? Is there a process for monitoring plans and refreshing to ensure delivery of projects?

Projects within the 5-year CIP plan move from year to year due to circumstances such as natural disasters, due to new rules and regulations such as revised ATLAS 14 new rainfall intensity rates, due to funding constraints, and due to construction cost escalation. The process is monitored by bringing the 5-year CIP plan before Council for consideration each-and-every year.

4. Our neighborhood generally identifies as BRIARMEADOW, but it's now clearly North Briar Meadow and South Briar Meadow. Does the city have precedent for indefinitely pausing or canceling CIP major projects within a single neighborhood? If so, can you share those?

Project phasing plans are almost always determined based on drainage patterns and functional boundaries and barriers; not based on neighborhood boundaries. That means a project may include two portions of two separate neighborhoods, and/or part of a single neighborhood. In the Pre-Engineering Report as Phase 1 was critical phase out of the three phases since the trunk line which supports Phase 2 area drainage is included in Phase 1.

5. We know that funding is currently unavailable for phase 2 of the Briar Meadow CIP – BUT, per the CIP meeting and comments from you and the Mayor, if funds were to be freed from other projects that are either under budget, reduced scope, deprioritized and/or cancelled there could *maybe* be an opportunity to advance the project.

As mentioned in the previous response; Phase 1 was critical phase out the three phases that were identified in the Pre-Engineering Report to be considered for full reconstruction since the trunk line of the Briar Meadow neighborhood which supports Phase 2 is within Phase 1 scope of work. Although it is unlikely that funds will be available within the current typical CIP funding sources to fully reconstruct Phases 2 and 3; the City is already utilizing rehabilitation strategies like the SWAT project, Briar Meadow South, that includes upsizing 18-inch leads to 24-inch and replacing B inlets with BB inlets to double the inlet drainage capacity from the pavement to underground storm pipes.



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6. What is the city's process for prioritizing and reallocating funds?

Even though there is not an immediate need to prioritize and reallocate funds within the next 5-years as Mayor and Council approved the 5-year CIP in June 2022; HPW is undertaking city-wide Storm Water Modeling effort that will identify drainage needs throughout the City. In addition to the model outputs, a draft methodology to prioritize drainage needs will be developed. HPW will come to the public to solicit input so there will be opportunity for the public to provide input. Projects within the 5-year CIP plan ultimately must be approved by Mayor and Council each-and-every year.

7. Can this actually happen if we don't have the new data and plans? If so, how does that work, given that funds couldn't previously be allocated because of the entirely outdated information?

If Phases 2 and 3 go through the prioritization methodology and if they are selected for reconstruction; the design effort will start with the "outdated" data from the Pre-Engineering Report, and we will update the analysis and design using current design standards at the time of design.

8. How can we be engaged in those conversations and is there anything else we can do to keep advocating on this?

Participate during HPW public participation effort mentioned in response to Question #6 and reach out to HPW and Council Office via 311 if there are any immediate needs.

Are phases 2 & 3 pulled (cancelled) or paused? Is there a difference and if so what is it and how does the process differ?

Subprojects labeled in the Pre-Engineering Report as Phases 2 and 3; have never been within the 5-year CIP for design and/or construction.

9. Related to sidewalk projects, I am of course very grateful and excited for my sidewalk, but from the start I noted that I was not in this for the sole benefits of Stefanie Cruz and I want to make sure we're able to deliver for the neighborhood. Several neighbors have reached out ready and eager to complete their sidewalk applications, but we want to make sure we coordinate to the best of our ability. We don't want your office flooded with duplicative requests and we don't want neighbors wasting time on submissions and resubmissions if a neighbor has already taken care of it. I've shared the application details and example photos with neighbors but promised to follow-up with additional guidance once we received clarity on the following

It is alright to apply for sidewalk as the neighborhood and/or individual desires.

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10. Can we confirm if the sidewalk improvements for Pagewood will be for THE ENTIRE BLOCK (north and south sidewalk of the same street block)– not just one side of the block?

The option selected is one side of the street the entire block (Option 2, see attached drawing). A notice to proceed is issued and the contractor is planning to start work early August. Notice to proceed with map was provided in the June 24th District F newsletter.

11. Is there a more effective/streamlined way to request our neighborhood receive ADA-compliant sidewalks or must we submit the request per single block? I have to imagine that aside from being an incredibly inefficient process to submit, processing and bidding out individual blocks likely doesn't hit economies of scale for projects. A larger project would likely have better pricing - unless the city has no project launch cost and only pays a standardized price per foot that is paid for every sidewalk, regardless of the project size and other details.

HPW does not bid individual sidewalks block by block. The department procures sidewalk construction contract amount that could range between \$2 to \$3 million and use that capacity to issue task orders for any size of sidewalk improvements.

12. How does the city monitor completed work to understand if they have further helped or harmed our community? What is the timeline and process for remediation of work that does not deliver intended results?

HPW takes great care in analyzing and designing solutions that will address drainage problems and we are confident the improvements we implement will improve the community. There are always unintended consequences that arise with every project; as such, we are always available to listen to residents if they notice anything that does not seem right. In that case if there are unintended consequence; we will always respond and address any confirmed problems.

Other questions:

13. Are there any concerns about the impact of the housing development going in alongside our community and how that may further burden the existing and troubled drainage for the area?

The City of Houston adapted new more stringent drainage detention requirements in 2018 which is applicable to every development that substantially alters their site. As such, all development submittals go through the permitting system of checks to assure they meet the new drainage detention requirements.



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15. Can you explain the pay as we go system to me like I'm a 5 year-old?

I'm sorry if I seem dense because I know you have gone over this - but I am not getting it. I'm hoping being able to read it or see it will help me process/learn vs. hearing it as a bullet in meetings. I'm trying to get my mind to understand pay as you go, then skip/pause/cancel, and move on to next CIPs. In my mind, which is not calibrated with what's happening, pay as you go would mean the city pays as the project progresses and allocates funds per phase of the project until they are complete. If projects or funds are delayed, then payments may be delayed, but that would/should just push all projects? YES, several instead, it seems pay as you go is more of a way to potentially avoid longer-term commitments and project fulfillment. The city has CIP projects adopted through 2026 and proposed through 2027 - how do they determine which ones actually get funded based off this model? I know you mentioned the previous model was more flawed and to me seemed like it was anchored in empty promises -- but this feels the same.

The program "Build Houston Forward" is pay-as-you-go system. I would encourage you to go to the website, www.buildhoustonforward.org and read the material included in the page titled "About". In addition to the explanation on the funding system and revenue sources, the website explains our three strategies of maintaining an operating our infrastructure (Repair, Rehabilitate, and Reconstruct). Finally, in regards, to your comment/question "If projects or funds are delayed, then payments may be delayed, but that would/should just push all projects?"; the answer is yes. Based on the revenue actuals that may defer from the projection used within the 5-year CIP plan, project may be delayed and moved from one year to another. That is why we adjust the 5-year plan every year including adding the fifth year.