

7.0 STORMWATER MASTER PLAN UPDATE FOCUS GROUP

EPWater wanted to involve the community in the process of updating the 2009 SMP. To do this, a SMP Focus Group was formed with representatives that included neighborhood associations, City Open Space Committee, U.S. International Boundary Water Commission (USIBWC), EPCWID No. 1, and various business and community interest groups representing all aspects of the community. The purpose of the Focus Group was to provide a public perspective on the overall city stormwater improvement program, to review and comment on proposed projects, and to provide input on the reprioritization of projects.

The list of community values approved (in Engagement 3 below) by the Focus Group to guide the SMP Update is stated below:

“The mission of the SMP Focus Group is to assist EPWater’s staff in developing a master plan for repairing, constructing and maintaining a system of facilities that safely, efficiently and cost effectively conveys stormwater while minimizing the impacts to water quality, and preserves and enhances the environment.”

A series of four engagements were held between the EPWater, the City, and the Focus Group.

- Engagement 1 (October, 6, 2017). A virtual tour was conducted of city stormwater facilities, notably dams, conveyance (channels), detention/ retention ponds, and pump stations, explaining the function of each type of facility. A physical tour was then conducted of specific dams, pump stations, channels, and ponds in the Central Region.
- Engagement 2 (October 25, 2017). In this meeting:
 - An overview of the 2009 SMP and its project prioritization process was presented;
 - Maps showing location and configuration of proposed improvements were presented with three maps per project: 1) project configuration per 2009 SMP, 2) current recommended changes (deletions, additions, alternatives) to 2009 projects, and 3) the current project configuration per 2017 planning; and
 - Comments were solicited during and at the conclusion of the meeting.
- Engagement 3 (November 1, 2017). In this meeting:
 - EPWater discussed its funding sources and allocation of budget by program (CIP, Open Space, Nuisance Flooding, Maintenance, and Debt Service);
 - The Focus Group reviewed and approved the 2009 SMP goals;

- EPWater solicited input on identified stormwater problem areas and identification of new ones;
 - EPWater solicited input on alternative configurations for the projects presented in Engagement 2;
 - EPWater solicited input on a project ranking system proposed by EPWater staff;
 - EPWater solicited input on the reasonableness of current fees; and
 - Given previous input, the meeting participants assessed effects on project rankings.
- Engagement 4 (March 7, 2018). In this meeting, EPWater presented the final version of the SMP list of prioritized projects. EPWater described how this final list incorporated changes to the prioritization process recommended during Engagement 3 and was approved by the participants (including the Focus Group) at that meeting.

Listed below are the individuals who were invited to participate in the Focus Group:

- Richard Teschner – Open space advocate
- Von Washington – Board chair of the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Walter Miller – Transportation and development chair for the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce
- Bob Ayoub – Chief Public Relations Officer for MIMCO
- Mike Adjemian – President of the Cielo Vista Neighborhood Association
- Debbie Torres – President of the Mission Valley Neighborhood Association
- Denny Neesen – Owner of Rudolph Auto dealerships; member of the New Car Dealers Association
- William Veliz – Member of the Greater El Paso Realtors Association

The following were invited to join the focus group as advisory members

- Unnikrishna Padinare – International Boundary and Water Commission
- Jesus Reyes – General Manager of EPCWID No. 1