

# REPORT / RECOMMENDATION



**To:** MAYOR AND COUNCIL

**Agenda Item #:** IV.H

**From:** Ross Bintner P.E.  
Environmental Engineer

**Action**   
**Discussion**   
**Information**

**Date:** December 18, 2012

**Subject:** Report on Townes Road Wetland

## Action Requested:

Affirm implementation of the Comprehensive Water Resource Management Plan and 2013-2017 Capital Improvement Program recommendations as the preferred method to address flood and wetland issues in this landlocked basin. Alternatively, provide staff with direction.

## Information / Background:

Detailed background information is provided in the attached report and appendices.

The current recommendation from the Engineering Department is to address flood protection, clean water and wetland services for the landlocked basin (designated as MNH\_I) through implementation of the Comprehensive Water Resource Management Plan (CWRMP) as part of the 2013-2017 Capital Improvement Program. The watershed area for potential improvements to solve CWRMP priority E-16 overlaps with the project areas included in the 5 year recommendation for neighborhood reconstruction program (ENG-12-003.)

The Engineering department recommendation is to study the contributing factors to flood, water quality and wetland services in 2015, and coordinate major capital improvements to flood protection and clean water infrastructure during the planned 2017 neighborhood reconstruction project.

## Attachments:

Townes Road Landlocked Wetland MNH\_I Report



# REPORT

## ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

### CITY OF EDINA

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#### TOWNES ROAD LANDLOCKED WETLAND MNH\_1

December 10, 2012

**BACKGROUND:** This report was drafted at the request of the City Council and provides context to concerns raised in a July 25 letter, and at the August 6 City Council meeting community comment agenda item. Staff presented a draft of this report to nearby residents and held a public informational meeting soliciting feedback from residents in November.

**ISSUE:** The White Oaks area is a rolling landscape with many small landlocked basins, meaning there is no gravity surface or piped outlets, and only in the most extreme precipitation events would a basin fill to the point of overtopping. The landlocked wetland adjacent to Townes Road, south of Sunnyside Road has experienced a notable change in wetland vegetation and tree canopy cover in the last decade. Landlocked basins are a common occurrence in Edina; historically, some have been routed downstream via gravity pipe, while many remain and are managed through temporary pumping or with permanent storm lift stations.

The area has infrastructure associated with local flood protection that moves water off the roads, but does not have infrastructure associated with the water quality service level in the subject drainage area such as sump manholes, ponds or infiltration systems to intercept sediment. The only practice providing sediment and nutrient reduction is the City street sweeping operation. While street sweeping is a very cost effective tool to reduce sediment and nutrients, the frequency of operations is currently only 2 times per year.

**WETLAND:** While there are a variety of landlocked basins in the vicinity, and in White Oak, this report will focus on the large basin in question west of Townes Road and south of Sunnyside Road, designated MNH 1 in the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan and those landlocked basins with the potential to overflow to it, MNH 40 and MNH 49 (Map 1). The lowland at MNH 1 was classified in 1999 as part of the City CWRMP development, and again in 2003 as part of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed wetland plan. The wetland classification was a predominantly hardwood swamp surrounding a small shallow marsh. Lowland Hardwood Swamp wetland types are noted in the CWRMP as being highly susceptible to stormwater impacts. Management recommendations for highly susceptible wetlands include maintaining the degree of water level fluctuation, inundation period, keeping outlet control elevations above the wetland, and removing and managing invasive species.

Public benefits of the wetland stated in the plan include exceptional downstream flood protection, high groundwater recharge, moderate wildlife and vegetative diversity, and moderate aesthetic value. The wetland has experienced notable changes in wetland type and vegetative mix since the 1999 wetland survey.

#### Contributions to Wetland Change

In 1997, a large flood event caused flooding and structure damage on Arden Avenue. A 1997 engineering report provided options to providing relief for, or replace and upgrade the function of the existing stormwater system that serves Arden Avenue and was originally installed in the 1920's.

The chosen option included disconnection of drainage areas flowing to the Arden Avenue low point to reduce flood risk. This option was chosen in favor of a variety of complex and prohibitively expensive options including; a large flood storage vault and pump system under Arden Avenue, a 30 foot deep, 60 inch diameter pipe alignment along Arden Avenue, Country Club Road and Bruce Avenue, raising and flood proofing low homes on Arden Avenue, or a pipe alignment that would direct water to a separate landlocked wetland south of 48<sup>th</sup> Street West (MNH 11) and a stormwater pump station at that location.

In 2000 the City installed new stormwater pipe diverting water from parts of Casco Avenue west along Bridge Street, and a separate system diverting a part the drainage from Sunnyside Road east to the wetland in question. This choice is one of the contributing factors to the changes seen in the mix of wetland vegetation and diversity in wetland MNH 1.

Since the 1999 wetland survey significant redevelopment has occurred in the drainage area of MNH 1 on a site by site basis. A comparison of 2000 and 2009 aerial photography showed 10 homes with increased roof and driveway area. This increase in imperviousness also results in additional runoff. Redevelopment is another contributing factor to the changes in wetland MNH 1.

A related contributing factor that is harder to measure is the contributing subscription rate of automatic irrigation systems in the watershed. Wide uses of these system increases soil moisture and resulting rainfall runoff and overspray drains directly to the wetland. Increased use of irrigation systems is also a probable contributing factor to the changes in MNH 1.

Another possible contributing factor causing increase runoff to this wetland that require additional data gathering include potential drainage changes on private property or to private drainage networks that cause a decrease upstream runoff storage or changing outlet conditions in the two upstream landlocked basins, MNH 40 and 49. Other factors may also exist, and will require further investigation including groundwater mounding from leaking pressure main or services and sedimentation of wetland causing a reduction of infiltration capacity.

**HYDROLOGY:**

The City of Edina manages its surface water runoff networks to meet two key services; clean water and flood protection. As a first ring suburb, the period of urbanization happened at a time of developing national standards for the flood protection service level. Weather Bureau Technical Paper 40 (1961) was the first comprehensive statistical tool used by engineers to design storm water flood conveyances for probable storm events and was based on a period of record from the early 1930s to late 1950s. The first national standards for urban hydrology were developed with the Soil Conservation Service Technical Release 55, (1975) (revised 1986.) The period of urbanization in the area generally occurred before modern standards for water quality were set into motion by the Clean Water Act (1972) and resulting National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System phase 2, (1990.)

Flood protection has typically been provided in urban areas through the use of networked gutters and pipes that route flood waters away from roads and buildings and store and convey them in low areas, ditches and creeks. As this method of water resource management was implemented nationally, a variety of conflicts arose balancing the sometimes competing service demands of flood protection and clean waters and wildlife habitat.

**RECOMMENDED SOLUTION:** The Engineering Department provides recommendations that attempt to meet flood protection and water quality service levels in an equitable way citywide. There are numerous areas of the City that do not meet current flood protection and water quality standards, all detailed in CWRMP. While the connection or pumping of landlocked basins can be an effective solution to local water resource needs, it can come at a cost to downstream flood protection and the increasingly important clean water service and must be considered in a comprehensive way with coordination with local watershed districts.

Whenever priorities from the CWRMP overlap with those from the neighborhood reconstruction program the Engineering Department seeks to coordinate improvements to the flood protection and water quality systems with rehabilitation and renewal of sanitary sewers, water main and streets. By coordinating capital projects we can provide efficiencies in staff efforts, running engineering design and resident engagement concurrently. Coordinating capital projects also provides reduced construction and contract costs such as project management, equipment and contractor mobilization and site restoration.

A majority of the road and utility infrastructure in the contributing drainage area of the subject wetland are prioritized for reconstruction and renewal in 2017, therefore; an opportunity is presented to cost effectively engineer and construct infrastructure to alleviate runoff that effect flood risk and changes to wetland and water quality.

The Edina Comprehensive Water Resource Management Plan (December 2011) prioritizes 46 construction projects (C1-46) and 16 engineering (E1-16) studies to improve local flood protection and surface water quality. Investigation of the landlocked basins in the White Oaks neighborhood is listed as priority E-16. The

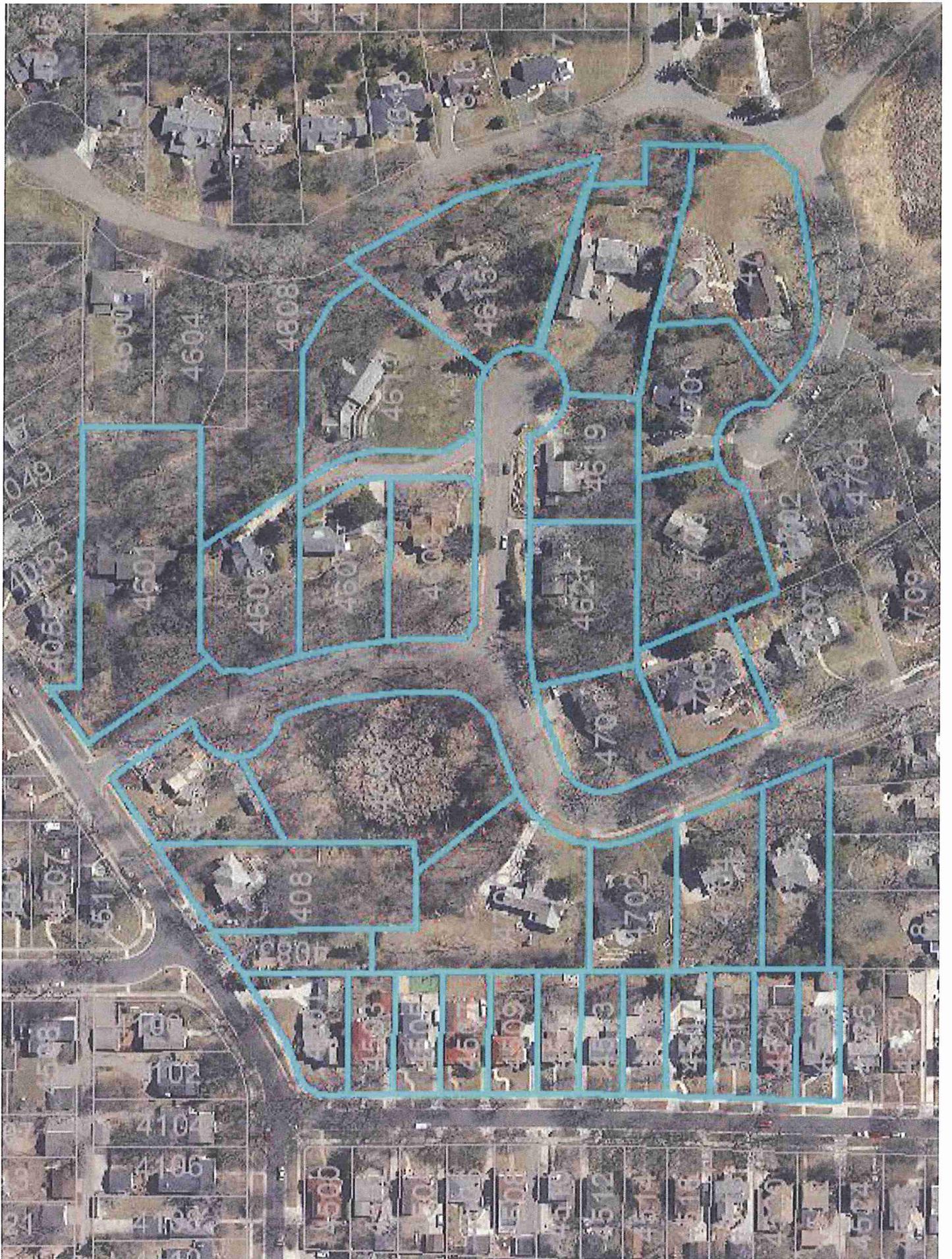
current recommendation from the Engineering Department as part of the 2013-2017 Capital Improvement Program is to study the contributing factors to flood, water quality and wetland services in 2015, and coordinate major capital improvements to flood protection and clean water infrastructure during the planned 2017 neighborhood reconstruction project.

There is potential to expand the scope of the engineering study to investigate expanded runoff volumes as a citywide policy issue, ahead of a 2015 amendment of the CWRMP. If this direction is desirable, moving the study ahead to 2013 or 2014 may be appropriate as it could inform the broader policy direction.

## APPENDIX

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Map 1	Mailing area for public informational meeting invitation
9/10/12 Letter	Barr Engineering technical review
Figure 1	Subwatershed drainage area map tributary to MNH_1
Correspondence 1	7/25/12 Letter Resident letter to Mayor and Council
Correspondence 2	11/14/12 Letter to residents and invitation to information meeting
Correspondence 3	Summary of correspondence following informational meeting





September 10, 2012

Mr. Ross Bintner  
Environmental Engineer  
City of Edina  
4801 West 50<sup>th</sup> Street  
Edina, MN 55424

**Re: High Water Conditions in Subwatershed MHN\_1 (White Oaks Area)**

Dear Mr. Bintner:

In a July 25, 2012 letter to Mayor James Hovland and Edina City Council members and during a presentation at the August 1, 2012 City Council meeting, a group of residents expressed concerns regarding high water conditions in the low lying area located on Townes Road just south of Sunnyside Road in the White Oaks neighborhood. In response to these concerns, the City asked Barr Engineering to further investigate the residents' concerns and address possible steps forward to finding a solution.

The main concerns identified by the residents in the July 25, 2012 letter include (attached):

- Historically, the area was wooded with a small wetland in the center. Recently the area has become more frequently inundated with stormwater which has impacted existing trees.
- In 2000, a storm sewer was constructed by the city to alleviate flooding problems along Arden Avenue by redirecting additional stormwater into the wetland.
- When water levels are high, inundation extends on to private property.
- Fluctuating water levels leads to high water directly adjacent to Townes Road and unsightly mud and odor problems when water levels recede.

The area of concern is located in subwatershed MHN\_1 (City of Edina Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan, December 2011). Properties surrounding the wetland in MHN\_1 are either City owned or private property. This area is landlocked, meaning that the area does not have a low level outlet. According to the wetland inventory conducted for the City in 1999, the low lying area is identified as a Class 7 wooded wetland. This wetland was also assessed for the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District by Barr Engineering from 2001 to 2003 in the *Functional Assessment of Wetlands (FAW)*. Based on a preliminary review of the wetland assessments, some general observations include:

- The forested part of the wetland is dominated by silver maple, which is typically considered as a higher value wetland type.
- There is considerable buckthorn and reed canary grass within the wetland, which lowers the vegetative diversity rating.
- The water level in the wetland appeared elevated in 2002 when Barr Engineering assessed it as part of the FAW.
- The primary value of the wetland, based on the assessment, is to protect downstream waters by treating stormwater and reducing flood flows.

- None of the biological functions in the assessment rated high (i.e., vegetative diversity, wildlife and fisheries).
- The wetland was rated Exceptional for sensitivity to stormwater. Based on this rating, stormwater bounce should be minimized and pretreatment of stormwater prior to discharge into the wetland is encouraged as part of future infrastructure improvements.
- Any future actions that would minimize stormwater fluctuations would benefit the wetland and would likely alleviate some of the concerns expressed by residents.

There are three apparent factors that have resulted in recent high water conditions in the low lying area:

1. The area does not have a low level piped outlet. Landlocked depression areas are subject to high and low water levels based on climatic conditions.
2. The construction of the storm sewer redirected additional stormwater from an area along Sunnyside Road between Grimes Avenue and Casco Avenue to the low lying area (see Figure 1). This area was previously tributary to the low lying area along Arden Avenue, where flooding impacted structures during intense rainstorm events.

The storm sewer construction increased the drainage area to the low lying area by 2.8 acres, which represents an increase of about 10%. Prior to the storm sewer being connected in 2000 the total drainage area tributary to the wetland was 28 acres, including subwatersheds MHN\_1, MHN\_68, MHN\_64, and portions of MHN\_40. After the construction of the storm sewer, the tributary drainage area was increased to approximately 31 acres.

The storm sewer construction resulted in a 15% increase in impervious area tributary to the wetland in MHN\_1. Based on 2008 aerial photography and 2009 GIS roof outlines provided by the City, the total impervious area tributary to the MHN\_1 wetland is 9.4 acres, including driveways, roofs, and streets. 1.2 acres are within the area redirected by the 2000 storm sewer construction (Figure 1).

Without a more detailed analysis, it is difficult to determine the impacts on water levels in the wetland resulting from the increased drainage area. Many factors will affect water levels, including the volume of stormwater runoff under varying antecedent moisture conditions (dependent on rain patterns and/or irrigation practices) and the amount of seepage that occurs from the wetland throughout the year. A simplified approach to approximate the effects of the increased drainage area is to assume that all precipitation falling on impervious surfaces (driveways, streets and roofs) within the drainage area will flow into the wetland and not be subjected to losses (depression storage, infiltration). Given the estimated 15% increase in impervious area as a result of the storm sewer construction, it can be estimated that 15% more water from each storm event will run off into the wetland in MHN\_1.

3. In addition, the increase in impervious area within the drainage area due to home remodeling has increased runoff volume to the wetland in MHN\_1. Home additions, driveway expansions, and patio construction all increase the amount of impervious surface, which results in increased runoff.

To better understand the problem and identify improvement options, the following should be considered:

- One future action item is completion of the "White Oaks Landlocked Area Flooding Analysis and Feasibility Study", as identified in Table 15.4 of the Edina Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan (2011). In addition to evaluating flooding potential in this landlocked area, we

recommend that this study also include a more detailed water balance analysis to evaluate water level fluctuations within the wetland in MHN\_1. The water balance will provide a better understanding of the hydrology of the wetland and surrounding watershed and the extent that water levels have been and/or will be impacted by past or future stormwater management changes.

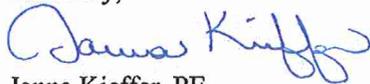
- In preparation for conducting a detailed water balance, we recommend that the City consider monitoring the water levels in the wetland in MHN\_1 for an extended period of time. Collection of water level information will help verify runoff predictions from the City's hydrologic models and estimate the amount of seepage that occurs from the wetland throughout the year(s).

Based on our preliminary understanding of the problem, a few possible solutions that will be considered include:

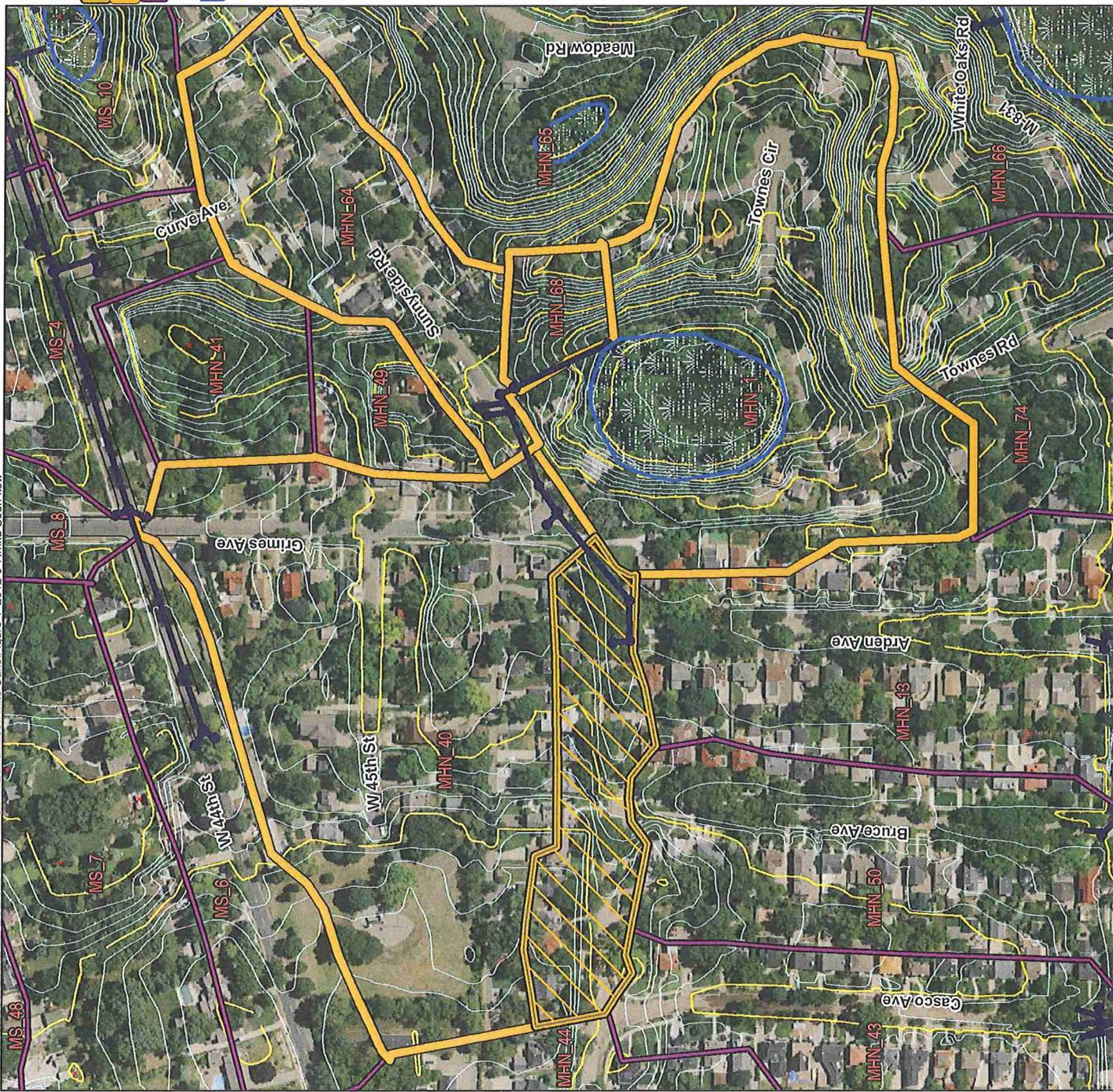
- Installation of a pumped or low level piped outlet for the wetland in MHN\_1.
- Implementation of volume reduction Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the tributary drainage area to decrease the runoff that reaches the wetland from impervious surfaces such as driveways, streets, and roofs.

Please give us a call if you have any questions. We look forward to working with the City of Edina and residents in finding a solution to the management of water levels in the White Oaks neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Janna Kieffer, PE  
Senior Water Resources Engineer



-  Area Redirected to MHN\_1 in 2000 via Storm Sewer
-  Subwatersheds Draining to Wetland in MHN\_1
-  Other Subwatersheds
-  Storm Sewer
-  Wetland Boundary (based on MCWD FAW)
-  10 Foot Contour
-  2 Foot Contour

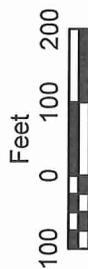


Figure 1  
**SUBWATERSHEDS  
 DRAINING TO MHN\_1**  
 White Oaks Area  
 City of Edina  
 Edina, MN

July 25, 2012

Mayor James Hovland and  
Edina City Council Members  
4801 W. 50<sup>th</sup> Street  
Edina MN 55424

Dear Mayor Hovland and Council Members,

We are writing to express our concern over flooding in the natural area located on Townes Road just south of Sunnyside Road in the White Oaks neighborhood, and to ask for your help in addressing this situation.

One of the signature natural areas in White Oaks has always been the wooded area on Townes Road. Many Edina residents, including those from the surrounding Country Club and Morningside areas, enjoy walking past this area, making Townes Road a popular walking route.

Historically, this natural area was densely wooded with one small wetland area in the center. In recent years, however, this woodland has been inundated with storm water, resulting in the loss of almost all its trees. Because the area has no outlet, there is stagnant standing water within a few feet of the roadway for much of the year. Please see the attached photos, which were taken while standing on Townes Road.

This woodland was once an attractive asset in our neighborhood and was the reason so many Edina residents enjoyed walking through White Oaks. We are concerned that the water levels that have been allowed to accumulate have killed the majority of the trees, have created health and safety concerns, and are rapidly turning this natural area into a detriment rather than an asset.

We are especially concerned because Edina residents have long worked to save this natural area from development and to ensure that it remained in its natural state.

In the late 1980s, the lot that comprises the southern portion of the woodland was sold to a developer who listed it as a residential building site. Because the lot was viewed as part of one of the signature natural areas in White Oaks, over ninety residents from White Oaks and surrounding neighborhoods signed a petition to the City Council opposing the development.

Throughout 1988 and 1989, the White Oaks neighborhood association worked with the City to negotiate a purchase of the lot from the developer. White Oaks neighbors raised \$20,000 in private donations for the purchase, the city contributed a matching amount, and the developer agreed to sell the lot at a bargain price.

In exchange for its \$20,000 contribution, the neighborhood received assurances from the City that the lot would remain in its natural state. It was understood that the area would receive some storm water runoff as it always had, but that the character of the area as a wooded natural area would remain the same.

Aerial photos from the 1990s confirm that the area was largely wooded at this time. Neighbors recall that it was possible to walk through most of the area. In addition, the City's 1999 Wetland Inventory identified the area as a Class 7 wooded wetland, indicating that trees were the dominant vegetation.

In 2000, the City approved a storm water project that was designed to address a water level problem on Arden Avenue in the Country Club neighborhood. Unbeknownst to residents of White Oaks, part of the project involved redirecting storm water from Sunnyside Road between Grimes and Casco into the Townes Road natural area.

Within a few years, higher water levels had killed all the trees in the center of the area. Cattails moved in and took over the former woodland, and as the cattails pushed out from the center, the water that accumulated after significant rain events collected in the remaining areas on the perimeter. As the attached photos show, the few remaining trees now frequently stand in significant amounts of water and it is only a matter of time until they are also lost.

White Oaks neighbors who expressed concern over the loss of trees in the natural area were told that the higher water levels were simply due to higher levels of rain. It was not until recently that White Oaks residents finally learned about the actual change in the direction of storm water from the Country Club neighborhood.

We are troubled by the City's decisions regarding the management of this natural area for several reasons:

- The City's Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan states that Class 7 wooded wetlands are "highly susceptible" to degradation from storm water impacts and that inundation should be avoided. This management guideline obviously has not been followed.
- As the marshy area fills in with cattails, the higher water levels are forcing water on to the property of adjacent homeowners. It is not acceptable for the City to use these residents' property for storm water containment.
- The alternating condition between stagnant water and mud in the area is smelly and extremely unattractive and amounts to a nuisance for the entire neighborhood because it is so close to the roadway. The standing water is an insect breeding ground, and is undoubtedly highly polluted, raising both health and safety concerns.

Because the city created this nuisance by choosing to direct run-off from other neighborhoods into the area, we believe it is the City's responsibility to find a way to manage this natural area in a way acceptable to the nearby residents. We have met with the City's new Environmental Engineer, Ross Bintner, and have been impressed with his knowledge and interest in the matter. However, we believe that this issue needs immediate attention and we are requesting that the Council direct staff to prioritize finding a solution and to take immediate steps to improve the appearance and health of this natural area.

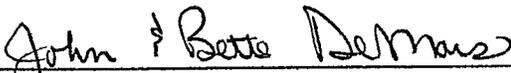
We think these steps should include consideration of the following measures:

- re-directing the storm water from Sunnyside Road to a different location and returning the area to former water levels;
- developing a plan to ensure that storm water does not accumulate on private property;
- ensuring that future storm water projects do not add to, and, if possible, work to **reduce** the amount of run-off into the area;
- clearing of dead trees by the City;
- planting or seeding of a healthy and attractive buffer area along the roadway and possibly periodic mowing of this buffer; and
- consulting with adjacent property owners and White Oaks residents regarding all plans for the management of this area.

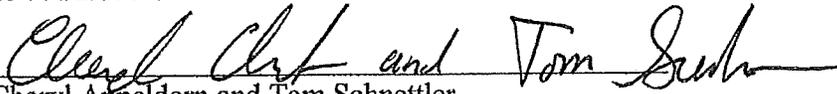
Most importantly, we believe a plan must be developed and action taken in the near future. The City's forester has confirmed that most trees cannot withstand being submerged for more than a couple of weeks, and it is highly likely that the remaining trees in the area will be lost if something is not changed.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important concern – we look forward to working with you to find a solution.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. John and Bette DeMars  
4600 Townes Road

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Ed and Cheryle Clausam  
4544 Meadow Road

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Cheryl Appeldorn and Tom Schnettler  
4611 Townes Circle

C. Rhodes Dekko & Jeff Dekko

Dr. Christie Rhodes Dekko and Jeff Dekko  
4704 White Oaks Road

Patty & Brooks O'Neil

Patty and Brooks O'Neill  
8 Bridge Lane

Heather Wallace & John Schuetzle

Heather Wallace and John Schuetzle  
4701 Townes Road

Susan and David Graham (via email)

Susan and David Graham  
4700 Townes Road

Gary & Susan Wahman

Gary and Susan Wahman  
4715 Meadow Road

Lynne Morishita

Lynne Morishita  
4001 West 48<sup>th</sup> Street

Diane & Michael Feldman

Dr. Diane Feldman and Mike Feldman, M.D.  
4083 Sunnyside Road

Connor & Kathy Schmid

Connor and Kathy Schmid  
4711 Meadow Road

Frank & Peggy Johnson

Frank and Peggy Johnson  
4701 White Oaks Road

Dr. Tom and Arlene Wilson

Dr. Tom and Arlene Wilson  
4707 Townes Road

Dr. Harry & Judy Johnson

Dr. Harry and Judy Johnson  
4708 Townes Road

From: Susan Graham <[sgraham@blakeschool.org](mailto:sgraham@blakeschool.org)>  
Subject: **Re: White Oak Marsh - Letter**  
Date: July 31, 2012 1:57:16 PM CDT  
To: Cheryl Appeldorn <[appeldornc@aol.com](mailto:appeldornc@aol.com)>

Perfect.  
Thanks!  
Susan

On Mon, Jul 30, 2012 at 11:09 AM, Cheryl Appeldorn <[appeldornc@aol.com](mailto:appeldornc@aol.com)> wrote:  
Hi Susan -

If its ok with you I'm going to send the letter with a note that you have signed via email, and attach your email to me -

Have a great vacation!

Cheryl

On Jul 26, 2012, at 3:27 PM, Susan Graham wrote:

Cheryl,  
I should have mentioned when we spoke on the phone that David and I are out of town until 8/8. If you send the letter without our signatures, we'd be happy to go into City Hall and add them once we get home.

Thanks again for all of your hard work!  
Susan

On Wed, Jul 25, 2012 at 7:47 PM, Cheryl Appeldorn <[appeldornc@aol.com](mailto:appeldornc@aol.com)> wrote:  
Hi all -

I've got most of the signatures, but need to connect with all of you. Unfortunately I have to go out tonight - I wanted to let you know that the letter is on my front stoop in a plastic folder - you can stop by any time tonight or tomorrow during the day if that could work out - we are just having one member of each couple sign.

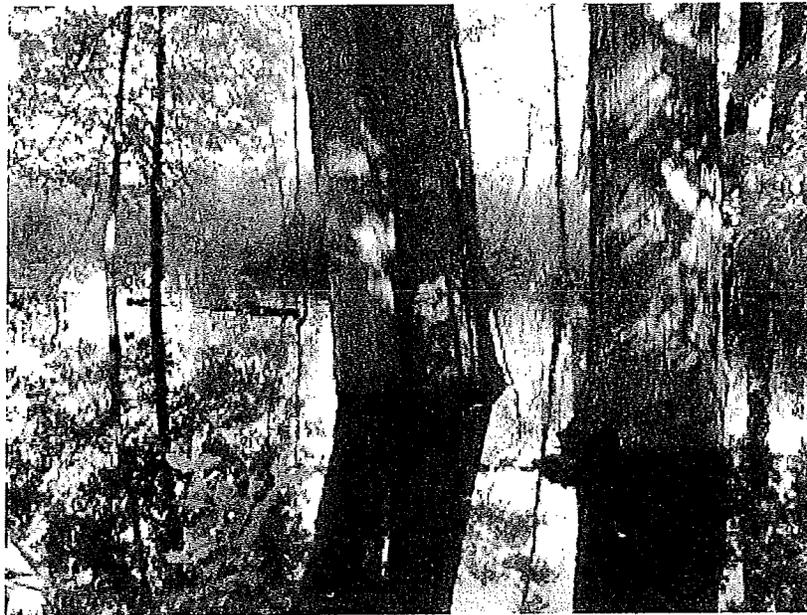
Tomorrow evening we have company - so I'd love to get the signatures before then if I could -

Thanks!

Cheryl

Cheryl Appeldorn  
[appeldornc@aol.com](mailto:appeldornc@aol.com)

Cheryl Appeldorn  
[appeldornc@aol.com](mailto:appeldornc@aol.com)





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November 14, 2012

**RE: Townes Road Landlocked Wetland; MNH\_1**

Dear Resident,

The City of Edina is taking public input on a draft report responding to a complaint of nuisance drainage and changes to a landlocked wetland occurring over the last 10 years.

This letter is going out to property owners identified on the enclosed map that are in the immediate drainage area of this wetland and would be most affected by potential solutions including temporary or permanent flood pumping facilities or volume reducing practices such as storm water storage and infiltration features or rain gardens.

Please review the enclosed report, technical memorandum, and original resident correspondence and provide comments to me. I am happy to answer any questions you have or take your comments either via email at [rbintner@edinamn.gov](mailto:rbintner@edinamn.gov), by phone at 952-903-5713, or in person at a public informational meeting at 7450 Metro Boulevard from 4:30pm-5:30pm November 20. If you are aware of anyone else from the neighborhood that is interested in providing comment, please pass on my contact information.

The enclosed report will be forwarded on to City Council with a summary of all resident input at an upcoming presentation to the City Council, tentatively scheduled for December 18.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ross Bintner".

Ross Bintner P.E.  
Environmental Engineer

Cc: Wayne D. Houle, P.E. Director of Engineering

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**ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**

7450 Metro Boulevard • Edina, Minnesota 55439  
[www.EdinaMN.gov](http://www.EdinaMN.gov) • 952-826-0371 • Fax 952-826-0392

## **Summary of Resident Correspondence**

### **Correspondence from John and Bette DeMars, 4600 Townes Circle 12/4/2012 Via Email**

Ross,

I greatly appreciate the time you spent listening to some of us from White Oaks regarding the marsh created along Townes Road by storm sewer run-off from the surrounding area. We understand that Edina has many issues that need to be addressed, so know that our concerns are not your foremost priority.

As the lowest property adjacent to the marsh, we are the ones most affected by the changes that have occurred since storm sewer run-off was redirected. We realize that change needs to occur and had resigned ourselves to the fact that what was once a woods was becoming a wetland. However, due to dead fall, trash accumulation, and water encroaching ever further onto our property we believe this city property is becoming a detriment to the White Oaks neighborhood rather than an asset as it once was.

We have two major concerns:

Upkeep and maintenance: Edina owns the land so should be taking responsibility for this area in the midst of a beautiful neighborhood. Over the past several years we have personally picked up trash, planted curly willow trees (which are potential survivors), chipped fallen limbs, removed buckthorn, and cut down trees that are about to fall. The past two years we have organized others in the neighborhood to help in this effort, and to its credit in the spring of 2012 the city hauled away the brush pile this effort accumulated. We have owned our property on Townes Road for 31 years, but will not always be able to provide this voluntary effort for the city. We're disappointed in how little the city has cared for its property. If this were privately owned land, we suspect the city would force owners to clean up the property or face a financial penalty.

Increasing spread of water from the drainage area onto our property: As the marsh fills in centrally, water covers an ever larger area, killing more trees and covering more of our property. Improvements would require confining water to the center of the marsh or limiting the amount that could collect there.

It is our hope that the White Oaks Association's concerns will be addressed with a plan in place prior to the spring of 2013.

Bette and John DeMars

### **Correspondence from Frank Johnson, 4701 White Oaks Road 11/24/2012 Via Email**

Ross....a more minor item in the grand scheme of things, but I'm writing to suggest that in my experience irrigation systems

are not a contributing factor to the changes in MNH-1.

Our front yard is a south facing hill. Prior to our installing an irrigation system several years ago, by mid-summer our grass had turned brown and the dirt was pretty hard; heavy rainfall ran off the hill. With the irrigation system, our lush grass holds the rain water and the soil readily absorbs any rain; no runoff.

Overspray on to the street/driveway is a non-factor. It only occurs on two of the seven stations, only at the end of the rotation, and only when a wind is blowing. The sprinkles hit the pavement, don't run anywhere, and evaporate.

So in our experience, irrigation systems are a positive factor in reducing the water level of the Townes Road Marsh.

Frank Johnson

**Correspondence from Ed Clausman, 4544 Meadow Road 11/20/2012 Via Email**

Ross, thanks for meeting with us tonight. I was hoping for solutions which we didn't get. I don't think it is fair that Edina redirected surface water into the marsh. We partnered with them on that property and they turned around and literally dumped on us. They had to know that they would destroy it. I think it should be the City of Edina's responsibility to correct the problems they created.

I was also disappointed that they put us on a five year plan. Something needs to be done much quicker than that.

Ed Clausman, 4544 Meadow Rd, Edina 952-927-5507

**Correspondence Cheryl Appeldorn, 4611 Townes Cr 12/7/2012 Via Email**

Dear Ross,

I'm following up on our meeting of Nov. 20. In addition to all the comments that were made at that meeting, I wanted to specifically mention 3 things regarding the report to the City Council.

1. I'm not sure the report adequately describes what the City's guidelines were for management for the Townes Road area was when it was identified as a hardwood swamp.

As I understand it, the City's documents state that these types of areas should have been managed to avoid inundation by storm water and extreme changes in water levels, and I'm not sure how the decision to re-direct the water from Sunnyside complied with that management guideline. The purpose of that guideline was to protect the trees in

these areas, and I think residents were entitled to assume that the City would comply with its own guidelines.

As others at the meeting pointed out, the fact that White Oaks residents had demonstrated a particular concern for this area by working to save it from development makes it even more concerning that the City did not inform neighbors that the re-direction of the storm water was a significant deviation from its own management guidelines and would probably result in the loss of the woodland.

2. The report does not discuss how much storm water this area can handle and what would happen in a very significant storm. The pictures that were attached to the letter the neighborhood wrote last June were taken after a couple of fairly unremarkable rainfalls and even then the water was within a couple of feet of the road. What would happen if we had a 50 year or 100 year rainfall event?

Further, there is a power line that runs right over the area that now frequently fills with open water and then over Townes Road - if a large storm filled this area with open water and blew down these power lines - are there safety concerns with that? Would this increase the difficulty the power companies would have in restoring these lines?

3. As we discussed, the report does not address who has responsibility for the aesthetic appearance of this area. Apparently, as a natural area, it is not the responsibility of the parks department. When it truly was an undeveloped natural area, it may have made some sense that there was no specific responsibility within the city for the maintenance of the area. But now it is no longer a "natural area" that can essentially be left alone - it's a storm water pond that is in a highly visible location on a residential street.

The city should develop some immediate plan to improve this area - at least in the short run, including at least some plan to remove invasive species, remove dead trees, and improve the boulevard. And it should directly communicate with the nearby neighbors to get their input and feedback on the plans to improve the appearance of the area.

Thank you for your work on this.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Appeldorn  
4611 Townes Circle

