

Washington Homes Association  
PO Box 26723  
Wauwatosa, WI 53213

October 21, 2024

Wauwatosa City Hall  
7725 W. North Ave  
Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Dear Mayor McBride, Alders, and Administrator Archambeau,

The Washington Highlands Board and other neighbors shared information at the October 15, 2024 meeting of the Community Affairs Committee about the proposal for Schoonmacher Watershed. Unfortunately, there was not a quorum, so a recommendation was not presented. It is understood that this matter will be discussed at the Common Council meeting on October 22, 2024 and the recommendation is to proceed with "Option B," a storm sewer beneath Martha Washington Boulevard.

Regardless of the chosen option, the open channel will still be a significant part of the overall storm water solution for the watershed. In the 50- and 100-year floods, we would expect the water, even with the added capacity, will break its banks. It is clear to the casual observer that the amount and speed of water in the open channel has caused significant erosion over the years and continues to be a safety risk.

We believe, as residents within the watershed, that the City's solution should include all components of the watershed, and not just cherry pick certain aspects. We strongly urge the Committee to include the restoration or improvement of the open channel as part of the overall project investment.

Some may believe addressing the open channel is a specific Washington Highlands issue but that is not accurate. Neighbors conducted a census of who uses South Park in the Highlands. We were not surprised to find that 77% of people that used the park were not Highlands residents. This is, for all intents and purposes, a City park and is used by a diverse group of people.

In our positive interactions and discussions with City engineering staff we have repeatedly heard that the Common Council has given directions to City staff not to work on the open channel. This was reinforced at a meeting with Highlands neighbors and City staff on November 7, 2023 when several ideas were discussed but not advanced. This has limited the City engineering department and has prevented them looking at a holistic solution.

The city has benefitted for many years from the open channel of the creek that runs through our neighborhood. Disregarding this benefit when addressing the future watershed flood strategy to the south and north of our neighborhood is unfair and perpetuates the safety concerns that are present.

The WHA Board requests the Common Council consider an amendment to address the open channel when considering future plans for the Schoonmacher watershed.

Please include this letter in the official meeting items/packet.

Respectfully,

The WHA Board of Directors