



Excerpt from City Administrator Report

07.24.2012

Calapooia Stabilization – Council needs to make a decision regarding the future outcome of this potential project.

What We Have Learned

1. **Grant Funding Sources Are Not Available.** The City has exhausted every possible opportunity for State and Federal funding. The Governor's Office Regional Solutions Team, the Calapooia Watershed Council, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Linn County Engineer's Office and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have all thoroughly reviewed the stabilization effort.
2. **Construction Techniques.** The State & Federal rules and requirements do not allow the City to place rip rap along the bank for stabilization purposes. River Design Group Incorporated, Cascade Earth Sciences and the Calapooia Watershed Council have done extensive engineering designs around the construction principles allowed in the 21st century. Scott Wright of River Design Group shared with Council at the public hearing in January 2012 approved construction techniques for this type of stabilization effort.
3. **Costs.** Engineering solutions built to the 50 year flood standard would cost the City approximately \$275,000. Engineering solutions built to the 100 year flood standard would be in excess of \$1,000,000.
4. **Risk.** The Calapooia Watershed Council suffered damage to two stabilization efforts just downstream of the City's problem area. A project of this nature does not have a projectable useful life. A flood event like the one in January 2012 could completely destroy any improvement made by the City.
5. **Improvements.** The City has many other capital improvement projects that have high costs associated with their eventual construction.
6. **Budgetary Constraints.** Allocating financial resources for such a project could cause an undue strain on the municipal treasury.

Thoughts

1. **Retreatment Strategy.** Park Board was generally in favor of retreating. The plan presented and reviewed by the Board and Council in November 2011 included removing the gravel road west of the playground, creating a new cul-de-sac turnaround area north of the playground, planting native species along the top of the bank from Gerber's property line to just north of the logging show area. The City would budget to eventually move the playground across from the Community Arts building at some point in the future.
2. **Asset Protection.** What is the City trying to protect? So far the City has retreated out of necessity. The only asset that we had in the area was the restroom that had to be removed.



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3. **Historic Channel.** While we do not know the complete history of the Calapooia River channel, we do know that according to the research on record the channel has never been beyond the west road at the edge of the playground.
4. **Wild River.** All of the presentations have demonstrated one thing – the Calapooia is restless and is continually moving regardless of what manmade structures are created to contain the river's banks and path.
5. **Hard Structures.** There has been a lot of discussion about the hydrology of the river and consternation over the rip-rap corner bend. I would submit for your consideration that the rip-rap was installed around 1964 and the City did not experience the bank destabilization until around 2004. It is hard to extrapolate a direct correlation forty years later.

Decision

Staff needs to know Council's wishes for this project. If the City chooses to move forward with an engineering design, Staff will need to start executing contracts in order to get a substantial design completed by October 2012, otherwise we will miss the opportunity to work in the river in 2013.

Recommendation

The stabilization of the river has been a very emotional issue. Pioneer Park is the crown jewel of Brownsville. Everyone loves the Park. There has been a lot of frustration over the rules and regulations that are in place to protect the environment. Many have offered solutions to the problem, but no one has a viable solution that meets the current regulatory requirements and that will offer long term stability for the bank. The City has worked with every political figure in the State to determine a way to fund and construct this project.

Every Councilor is going to have their own perspective and understanding of what this issue means to both them individually and to the City collectively. My recommendation is to consider a retreatment strategy. I base that recommendation on the fact that the project is a very risky undertaking on three fronts, 1) Politically – people who are wanting something done will be the first to condemn if the project should fail, 2) Financially – spending the taxpayers money to protect no known assets does not make sense to me, and 3) Construction – there is no guarantee that any method used will be effective in the long-term future.

Memory Lane (Summer 2015)

Council made a decision on the river bank in Pioneer Park in the summer of 2012. Above is an excerpt from the City Administrator's report at the time.

Council ultimately decided it was too risky to go out for a bond to fix the river bank when there was no guarantee that the improvements would last for any given amount of time. If the river should pose another threat to property, Council would cause the playground equipment to moved to another location in the Park. Based on historical data, the



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channel of the Calapooia River never went further east than the western edge of the playground structure.