

Comments on ARPA Recommendations to the City Council

My name is David Reed. I am speaking from my position as president of the Long Branch-Sligo Community Association and as a member of Takoma Stormwater Solutions. I would like to address the use of ARPA funds. My comments are organized in three sections: The Good, The Bad and The Actionable.

First, The Good. I congratulate the recommendations' emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable members of our community in response to the pandemic's immediate, destabilizing impacts. I endorse efforts to ensure digital access, housing, job training, social and health services to the more vulnerable among us.

Second, The Bad. The federal legislation authorizes municipalities to expend resources in 7 basic categories. The fifth of those seven categories is Infrastructure that includes 15 sub-categories for addressing water issues.

Staff recommendations for infrastructure total less than 2% of the total City allocation. It proposes funding one water project that has been on DPW's drawing board for years.

In short, there is absolutely no innovation in this recommendation package. There is no vision as to how to use these 'once in a lifetime' financial resources to prepare the City for the coming impacts of climate change.

Third, The Actionable: There are a number of important actions the City can take to correct this imbalance:

One, the City should invest considerable resources in developing a comprehensive strategy for managing far greater volumes of stormwater run-off.

Two, the City should commit considerable resources to educating the citizenry about the potential impacts of climate change. Recently, we submitted to the City Newsletter an article explaining some of the basics of stormwater run-off and flooding. Following a

rigorous vetting process, that article was canceled. No subsequent public educational efforts by the City on stormwater have been forthcoming.

Three, last year we conducted a survey in Long Branch-Sligo Community to assess the breadth and depth of stormwater problems. With a 10% response from the community, we have now launched a broader stormwater survey across the city and have received to date over 150 responses. Two members of the Council supported that initiative and we strongly encourage the entire Council to actively support this information gathering and educational effort.

Four, yesterday four professionals from Casey Trees met with 10 neighbors to respond to chronic run-off problems on the steep drainage area of Poplar, Elm and Sycamore Aves. The City should support this project by contributing the data DPW has collected for stormwater infrastructure along Poplar Avenue. Strengthened concrete pipes and inlets that DPW proposes will not come close to addressing the underlying flooding issues across this drainage area.

To close, we ask that the City reconsider its allocation of resources by:

1. Funding development of comprehensive climate change and stormwater strategy;
2. Providing \$25,000 for a pilot fund to help test and improve water management initiatives that can model best practices across the City.

Thank you for your attention,

David Reed

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