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Project may curb flooding problems

By Jenni Vincent / Journal Staff Writer

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INWOOD - Although several improvement alternatives have been developed as part of the Inwood Land Drainage and Water Quality Study to help curb the area's flooding problems, one possibility is being described as "the best bang for the buck" because of its benefits and funding possibilities.

The Green Infrastructure Project, according to Berkeley County Public Service Sewer District General Manager Curtis Keller, would utilize some commercially-owned property to collect water as it comes off the area around Interstate 81.

"It would entail constructing a new large detention pond to capture stormwater runoff from the upper portion of the watershed and then conveying that through a pumped station and forced main to the adjacent watershed where the water would be collected in ponds again, then irrigated onto the property and be allowed to infiltrate back into the groundwater," he said.

While the project's estimated phase one price tag is \$5.7 million, excluding land costs, the good news is that funding may be available for it, Keller said.

Keller said the first phase would include the construction of an off-line detention basin to hold the water as well as a needed new pipe system along Kerns Street, Dellinger Drive and True Apple Way.

A second phase of the project could cost approximately \$4 million but has not yet been designed, he said.

"Since it is a green project, the funding could be coming from Green Infrastructure State Revolving Funds through the state Department of Environmental Protection. That's because there is some value beyond just getting rid of the water and could be used to irrigate some other properties within the watershed, not just channel it out," he said.

Policymakers now are looking at this type of project for funding because they realize "the best alternative isn't just to get the water away as fast as possible" when it comes to stormwater, Keller said.

Engineers believe it would help about one-third of the watershed, he said.

Steven Godfrey, a stormwater engineer with Woolpert Inc. who is helping developing a watershed plan for the area, agreed the green proposal has some unique advantages.

"It would help solve a flooding issue, because it would put in a collection system to collect water and divert it to an off-line storage, so that it can then be redistributed later on after the storm has passed," Godfrey said.

Godfrey also said Monday's public meeting was an important opportunity for outreach and education.

"It's about presenting the work we've done in the past year, from all the data collection and monitoring we've done, to the analysis of determining what floods. We also identified several improvements that could happen and come up with some estimated construction costs. Then the last step would be the funding," Godfrey said.

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