

Letter To The Editor: Is The Flood Wall Best Solution For Alton's Flooding Problems?

by Libby Reuter Alton
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Letter to the Editor:

Flood Wall? At a recent meeting of the Alton Riverfront Committee (March 20, 2023), a committee member suggested that the group divide into four smaller groups to discuss issues, including the flood wall. The woman sitting next to me said, "I thought that the flood wall had been voted down."



In spite of the lack of public input, and the question of whether this wall is the best solution for Alton's flooding problems, the wall is happening. Engineers are developing a plan for a permanent, five-foot-tall concrete flood wall along Sugar Alley, just feet from Broadway/ Highway 67 between Piasa and William streets.

It is my understanding that the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) completed a study of Alton flooding and suggested a number of alternatives for flood mitigation with a flood wall as the most expensive option. Why was the wall option selected and Broadway deemed the best place to put a wall? Will the planned structure accommodate the additional water displaced by the new Ardent Mills' flood wall? In spite of these and other concerns, the city development director said that they will present completed plans to the city council "late spring or early summer" for a vote to proceed with construction.

The \$10,000 flood wall, which will cost the city three million, is not a permanent fix for flooding or the annual budget drain that it causes. The wall will have gaps at Piasa, State, and William streets, requiring the public works department to construct temporary walls every time it floods. According to the city's public works department director at the March 20th Committee of the Whole, the city doesn't have the money to pay for the time and materials to even the moderate flooding anticipated this year.

Flooding is becoming more and more frequent, and Alton needs a good plan to reduce the risk of damage over the long term. Come to the Riverfront Committee meetings (April 25, May 23, June 27, July 25, August 22 at 2 p.m. in the City Council chambers) to learn more. Don't let this wall be built without public and professional input. Please, share your concerns about the flood wall with your neighbors and your alderperson.

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