

Recently the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT – www.cnt.org)) at 2125 W. North Ave. hosted a meeting called the Gross Gathering (since those who have flooded have found it to be quite gross) to disseminate information about flooding and hear stories from neighbors (throughout the area) who have flooded. Representatives from the City of Chicago, Water Reclamation District and State of Illinois, as well as other organizations were there to discuss programs they offer.

Though to my knowledge RANCH has not been devastated by the severity of flooding that other neighborhoods have experienced, many of us have flooded and the CNT has ideas on how to approach the problem. They stress that with climate change this will be an increasing problem as “rains of the century” become more frequent. Their emphasis is on preventing water from getting in to the sewer system, which becomes overwhelmed and is then responsible for much of the flooding. Disconnecting downspouts, using rain barrels and planting rain gardens are some of the ideas discussed. Many of these ideas are difficult to implement on our small city lots but preserving green space in our yards to allow for permeability and replacing current pavement with permeable surfaces are important components that we can strive for. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized.

This is one of the reasons RANCH works so hard to ensure adequate green space as properties are being developed. As open lots are built on this is an even more important area to emphasize. Urging replacement of pavement with permeable surfaces is another important step in reducing the amount of water reaching the sewer systems. Both CNT and the City of Chicago are establishing community based projects to help implement these solutions. The City of Chicago is starting a basement flooding partnership using a block by block approach (they want at least 70% homeowners participation on the block) using their expertise to make recommendations on how to solve the flooding problem.

As an individual, If you experience (or have experienced it recently) flooding, call 311. This is how the City gets data on which neighborhoods warrant infrastructure changes. If you would like more information on the programs available visit CNT's website.