



WILDWOOD

MEMORANDUM

To: Administration/Public Works Committee Members

From: Rick C. Brown, Director of Public Works / City Engineer

Date: June 5, 2023

Re: Sanitary Sewer Lateral Repair Program

Background

The Department of Public Works had a follow up meeting with representatives with the St. Louis County Department of Public Works to further refine details of the proposed sewer lateral repair program (SLRP) for the Committee's further consideration. This program aims to provide significant benefits to homeowners by addressing the costs and challenges associated with sewer lateral repairs.

Program Overview: The SLRP is designed as an insurance program to alleviate the financial burden on homeowners by funding 100% of the eligible costs for lateral line repairs or replacements. The program would be operated by St. Louis County through an agreement with the City. To fund the program, the City will determine an annual assessment (or premium) for property owners, ranging between \$28 and \$50 per year (the Department recommends \$33.50/year). The program must be presented to the public for a vote, the earliest of which is the November 2023 election. All property owners, regardless of a public or private sewer, would be eligible for the program and would be required to pay the annual assessment / premium.

Eligible Systems: Under the SLRP, traditional sewer connections are eligible for the replacement of the lateral line from just outside the house to the point of connection to the main. It is important to note that 100% of the eligible costs for these replacements will be covered by the program. The SLRP will also extend its coverage to septic systems and grinder pumps not connected to a public sewer system. Septic systems will be eligible for lateral line repairs/replacements from the house to the tank or from the tank to the junction box or drain field. (See **Exhibit A.**) Grinder pumps, on the other hand, are eligible for coverage up to the point of connection of more than one lateral. The program would not cover work on septic drain fields or the grinder pump beyond the specified coverage point. By including septic systems and grinder pumps within the program's scope, we ensure that all homeowners can benefit from the program.

Funding and Financial Structure: St. Louis County has identified a total of 11,916 residential parcels within the City of Wildwood. Based on a minimum premium of \$28 per year, the program would generate approximately \$330,000 annually. The average cost of a lateral repair, as determined by the County, is \$3,330, however, the Department feels this value is low. With the minimum premium, the program would be able to cover approximately 100 lateral repairs annually. However, it is recommended by the County to have funds available to cover 1% of connections, which would amount to approximately 120 repairs. To ensure sufficient coverage for this projected repair count, the Department recommends that the annual assessment or premium should be set at \$33.50, which would generate nearly \$400,000 annually. (For comparison, \$33.50/year is significantly better and cheaper coverage than is offered through American Water at \$9.00/month:



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<https://www.awrusa.com/product/63040/mo150/residential/sewer-line-protection-program>)

Mandatory Participation: The SLRP would operate on a mandatory participation basis. If the program is approved through public vote, no individual property owner will have the option to opt out of the program. The assessments or premiums, determined by the City and collected annually by the County, would apply to all property owners.

Application and Repair Process: Under the SLRP, property owners will submit their applications directly to St. Louis County, specifying the requested repair. The County will review, and if eligible, approve the request. Once approved the County will prepare a scope of work and bid the project to contractors prequalified by St. Louis County. The County would administer the repair and compensate the contractor for the approved work. St. Louis County will conduct two inspections during the repair: one when the sewer line is laid/repared and another once the ground is restored.

Expenditure Reporting and Financial Management: The County will provide the City a monthly report detailing the program's expenditures.

Building Code Compliance: To enter into an agreement with the County to administer the program, the City will be required to ensure our building codes match the County so as to avoid conflicting requirements. If differences are found, passage of an ordinance may be required to update our requirements.

Funding Depletion: If the program's funds are nearing depletion, there are two options for managing the program. Firstly, the County can narrow the scope of work, if necessary, to minimize costs. Secondly, if funds are entirely exhausted, the program will temporarily halt new projects and prioritize the affected resident as the first recipient in the following year's funding cycle.

Recommendation:

If the Committee approves a motion approving the proposed SLRP, Department will work with the City Attorney and City Clerk to prepare the necessary legislation, which if approved by the Council, would place the program on the ballot for consideration of the voters at the recommended municipal election.

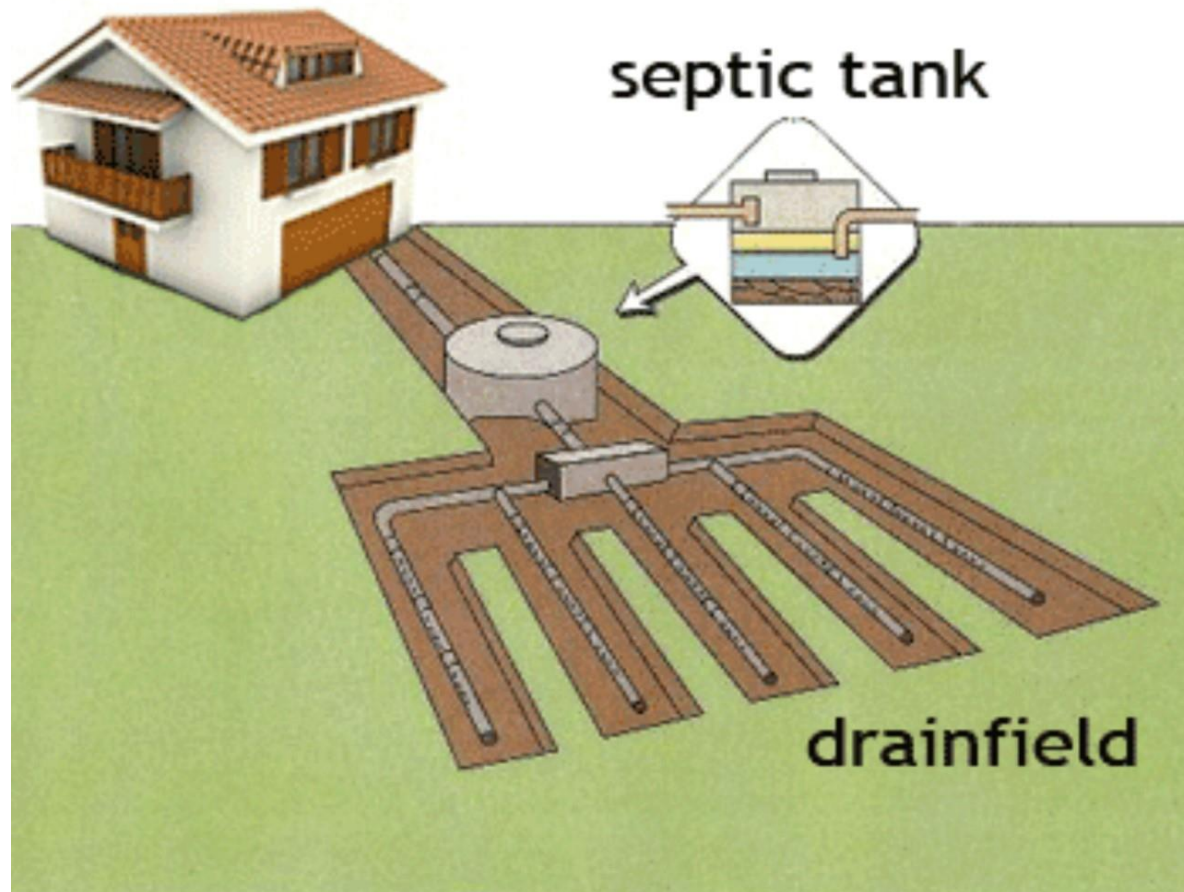
Interim City Administrator Thomas Lee and I will be available for discussion or questions pertaining to this matter at the June 6, 2023, Administration and Public Works Committee meeting.

RCB



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Exhibit A



St. Louis County
Public Works
Sewer Lateral Repair Program

1050 N. Lindbergh Blvd.
Saint Louis, MO 63132

(314) 615-8427

www.stlouisco.com



Sam Page
County Executive

Stephanie Leon Streeter, P.E.
Acting Director



Sewer Lateral Repair Program

On April 6, 1999, the citizens of unincorporated St. Louis County voted YES on Proposition 1 on the St. Louis County Election ballot. Proposition 1 - the Sewer Lateral Repair Program (SLRP) - covers the cost of repairing a defective residential sewer lateral in unincorporated St. Louis County and in some municipalities that contracted with the County. The program began assisting homeowners with sewer lateral repairs on January 1, 2000.

What costs does the program cover?

- ✓ The cost of the portion of the residential sewer lateral that runs from the foundation of a house to the sewer main.
- ✓ The cost of repairing the excavated yard area with seed and straw.
- ✓ The cost of repairing pavement areas, which have been disturbed during the repair process.

What costs are NOT covered by the program?

- ✓ The SLRP **does not cover** septic tank replacement or private treatment systems.
- ✓ The SLRP **does not cover** the cost to replace any trees, shrubs, flowers, sod, decks, decorative concrete, retaining walls or outbuildings that may be affected during the repair of the sewer lateral.

How does the program work?

Step 1 When a backup/blockage occurs or a sinkhole is noticed, the property owner is required to hire a St. Louis County licensed plumber/drainlayer to have the sewer lateral cabled in an attempt to clear the blockage. If the problem is not resolved by cabling, the property owner should proceed to Step 2.

Step 2 The property owner should contact the SLRP at (314) 615-8427 for information on the program and to request an application. Applications are available online at www.stlouisco.com. In addition, some plumbing / drainlaying contractors have the application available. Once the application has been received, the application must be completed by the property owner, adjacent property owner (if necessary), as well as by a St. Louis County licensed plumber / drainlayer.

Step 3 The completed application, along with a video of the inside of the sewer lateral (performed by a St. Louis County licensed plumber / drainlayer), should be sent to the SLRP office for review. The location of the defective sewer lateral on the property should be clearly marked by the plumber / drainlayer, with paint, stakes and/or flags.

The following actions will take place when an application is received:

1. The SLRP staff will notify the applicant when their application is received and verify the applicant's annual Sewer Lateral Repair fee has been paid. The fee is included in real estate tax bills issued to residents of unincorporated St. Louis County.
2. The Department of Public Works will solicit at least three (3) bids from the SLRP qualified contractor's "Repair List" to perform the repair.
3. After a contract has been awarded, the applicant will be notified of the contractor who will be making the repair.
4. Inspections will be made by all relevant agencies.
5. After the repair has been completed, the contractor will submit an invoice to the Department of Public Works.
6. Upon approval of the final inspection of the repair and the receipt of all required documentation, St. Louis County will pay the contractor.

What if I need an emergency repair?

In those cases where an emergency repair of a residential sewer lateral is necessary, either the property owner or a licensed St. Louis plumber / drainlayer is required to call SLRP at (314) 615-8427.

If you have any questions regarding the Sewer Lateral Repair Program, please contact the Department of Public Works at (314) 615-8427. For more information on the program, you may visit our web site at www.stlouisco.com.