

The Combined Sewer Overflow Project

Your Role

City of Lansing Public Service Department
7th Floor, City Hall
124 W. Michigan Ave
Lansing, MI 48933



Andy Schor, Mayor

If you live, own property or have a business within one of the CSO areas, you or your property representative will have a role in the removal of any existing rainwater inflow sources from the sanitary sewer system on your property. You will be notified by letter of meetings in your area before the city's CSO construction activity begins. You will also receive letters and information describing your role in the disconnection of inflow sources from the sanitary sewer service on your property. The mailings will allow you time to complete the work prior to the city's construction project.

The following is a typical list of letters that will be received by property owners within a CSO area prior to the beginning of construction.

Mailings and Meetings

- Owners of properties within the "Downtown" area of any project will receive their first inflow removal letter about three years before construction begins.
- Others will receive their first inflow removal letter about 18 to 21 months before construction begins.
- Commercial property owners will receive notice of the kickoff meeting by letter with the meeting occurring about 14 months before construction begins.
- A second letter will be sent to the commercial properties about ten months before the start of construction to announce a meeting to review access issues and review the preliminary layout of the project.
- About nine months before construction begins, a second letter will be sent to property owners as a reminder to have their inflow sources removed before construction starts.
- A letter will be sent to all property owners to announce a neighborhood meeting on the project that will occur about five months before the start of construction.
- About one month before construction begins, there will be the final neighborhood meeting. This will also be announced by letter to all property owners.
- You are encouraged to attend all the meetings to get information about the project and to help our project team understand any special needs you may have. At any time, you may call our **Private Inflow Removal Helpline at 517.394.5577** to ask questions or request a site visit to review specific issues you may have at your property. A technician will be happy to set a time to meet at your convenience.

Scheduled meetings for current projects under design or construction can be found on the Upcoming Meetings and Events page.

Property Owner Involvement Overview

- Watch for mailings and meeting notices.
- Fill out and return our Private Property Questionnaire.
- Attend project meetings to keep updated and provide any information regarding special needs you have related to the project.
- Inspect your property for rainwater inflow sources connected to your sanitary sewer service.
- Plan, budget for and disconnect rainwater inflow sources from your sanitary sewer service.
- Call the **Inflow Removal Helpline** at 517.394.5577 with any specific inflow removal questions you have.
- Call 517.483.4455 to speak with Alec Malvetis, the City's CSO Project Manager.

Business Owner Involvement Overview

If you own or manage a business in a CSO sewer separation project area, you may be interested in more detail about the project and how we may be able to adapt our project work to accommodate your normal operations.

- Watch for mailings and meeting notices.
- Fill out and return our Commercial Property Survey.
- Attend project meetings.
- Identify your contact who will communicate with design and construction managers throughout the project.
- Coordinate with the property owner if different entity to allow access for any required on-site inflow removal/sewer separation work is required.
- Call 517.394.0226 to speak with Nicole McPherson, our Lead Designer, to further discuss specific design or construction issues that may need to be addressed before or during construction.
- Call 517.483.4455 to speak with Alec Malvetis, the City's CSO Project Manager.

Private Property Inflow Removal

Each property owner in the CSO area has an important role to fulfill in assuring that stormwater runoff from rain events does not find its way into the separated sanitary sewer system. CSO separation generally includes the installation of a new sanitary sewer to collect and transport sewage to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and conversion of the old combined sewer to a storm sewer. Existing sanitary sewage service leads from homes and businesses are disconnected from the old combined sewer and connected to the new sanitary sewer. However, separation is not fully complete until stormwater inflow sources (roof drains, downspouts, yard drains, etc.) that were connected to the service lead prior to separation are disconnected and redirected by the property owner.

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Many inflow sources such as roof downspouts can simply be discharged onto the ground surface. For properties that need a stormwater service lead to discharge ground level drainage structures, a new stormwater lead will be provided by the project from the storm sewer to the property line. The property owner is then responsible to connect/discharge stormwater from their property to the stormwater service lead provided. The CSO design team will work with individual property owners to provide the service lead at a suitable location. To accomplish this task, the property owner should evaluate their property and determine a preferred location for the new stormwater lead before the construction project begins. You will be given a Sewer System Survey Form for residential or commercial properties to fill out to help with this task. The CSO contractor must be able to place the new lead as they proceed down the street with the construction activity.

You will be informed up to 18 months in advance of the construction in your area to begin the process of private inflow removal. Property owners are responsible for any costs associated with inflow removal on their property, and inflow removal must be completed prior to construction.

A **Private Property Inflow Removal Helpline**, 517.394.5577, is available to provide assistance and answer questions concerning inflow removal. It is not necessary for the property owner to wait until notified that the CSO project is coming to your area. Start early, review the site, evaluate alternatives and budget to complete the work.

Click [here](#) for a brochure (PDF, 570KB) that contains more information about inflow removal including do-it-yourself downspout disconnection instructions.

Restoration

As a CSO project is wrapping up, the contractor will apply grass seed, then fertilize and mulch areas that were disturbed by the construction process. The contractor will water, mow and weed the area for the first eight weeks. At the end of the eight-week period, the city will notify the occupant of the property that it is now their responsibility to maintain and care for the new grass area. The door hanger titled "Construction Is Almost Over" will include instructions in the following areas:

- Watering to keep the new lawn growing
- Mulch blanket care
- Weed control
- Mowing
- Fall fertilizer application
- Who to contact

Your help in maintaining the new grass areas until they are fully established is much appreciated!

Staying cleaner and greener around your home

The purpose of the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Control Program is to protect and improve public health and local water quality. There is no doubt that the Grand River and the Red Cedar River are more fishable and swimmable than they were before we started. In fact, by the time the Program is complete, 1.65 billion gallons of CSO will be prevented from entering our rivers each year. CSO "Point Source Pollution" will have been eliminated.

Unfortunately, there are other threats to the health of our rivers that are less obvious because they come from a variety of sources: leaking cars; overuse of fertilizer and pesticide; pet waste; car wash detergents; household hazardous wastes; etc. These are called "non-point source pollutants" and they are a primary source of water pollution in the United States.

But how does this relate to the CSO Program? Non-point source pollution can be conveyed with stormwater runoff to our rivers via the storm sewer system. Storm sewers discharge directly to the river without treatment, so anything spilled or left on the ground can show up as pollution in our rivers.

Non-point source pollution can go unnoticed because it is easy to think that one person can't make a difference. "How can the fertilizer I apply to my lawn harm the river? I don't even live by the river." Every Lansing home is essentially a water-front home in this regard, because storm water drains directly to the river via our storm sewer system. And it isn't just one person's lawn fertilizer - it's the cumulative effect of all our activities that can create a problem.

The good news is that it is easy to prevent non-point source pollution. If everyone could change a few habits, we could significantly improve water quality in our rivers. Here are some simple steps you can take to help protect Lansing's rivers:

1. Never dump anything down a storm sewer. Only rain belongs in the drain!
2. Never hose down spills or debris. Use absorbent materials and a broom instead.

3. Use fertilizer and pesticides sparingly. Always follow package instructions and use the smallest amount necessary.
4. Avoid fertilizing before expected heavy rainfall. Fertilizer is easily washed away to the river by storm water runoff, costing you time and money and impairing water quality in our rivers.
5. Bag pet waste and dispose of it in the trash.
6. Fix car leaks promptly.
7. Wash your car at a commercial car wash or on the lawn.
8. Install a rain garden or rain barrel to collect rainwater for later use, increase groundwater recharge and reduce urban runoff.

To learn more about how you can help, visit www.mywatersheds.org.