



Sanitary Sewer Modified Consent Decree Program



CITY OF BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS 2023 MCD Annual Session Q&A

Baltimore City's Sanitary Sewer Modified Consent Decree (MCD) Annual Public Information Session was held on Thursday, January 19, 2023, at the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), located at 1800 Washington Boulevard, Baltimore, Maryland.

The general session was opened by the Director of the Baltimore City Department of Public Works, Jason W. Mitchell, Ed.D. Following his remarks, Head of the Bureau of Water and Wastewater, Yosef Kebede, P.E., gave a presentation on the MCD for the Sanitary Sewer System and the City's MCD progress over the past 12 months.

Following the presentation, meeting attendees were encouraged to visit the various learning stations around the meeting room, where they could engage directly with subject matter experts from different divisions of DPW. The learning stations highlighted the primary activities of the MCD and the City's progress in each of those areas. Community members were encouraged to ask questions of the team or to provide written comments on forms that were submitted after the meeting.

A summary of each learning station and the questions/comments received are provided below.

Learning Station 1: Collection Systems

Presented by Jemil Yesuf, Engineer Supervisor, Office of Engineering and Construction, Baltimore City Department of Public Works

1. How is the coordination between Baltimore City and Baltimore County regarding the elimination of remaining County Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) structures?

- The City and County have been coordinating regarding the elimination of County SSO Structures located at Marnat Road (SSO#113) and Nunnery Lane, Briarwood Road and Overbrook Road (SSOs #116, #117 and #118). The City has performed hydraulic analyses downstream of each of these connection points between the City and County systems, incorporating assumptions as to the future flows from the County system in some cases, since projected future flows from the County have not been available.
- Downstream facilities in the City are not required for the elimination of these SSOs if the County constructs flow equalization facilities near the City-County border and releases the flows from storage at a controlled rate. If the County does not control the increased peak flows due to the elimination of these SSOs, upgrades to downstream City conveyance facilities may be needed. The SSO structures in question are tributary to two connection locations with City sewers. The Marnat Road (SSO #113) sewer connects with the City sewer located in Labyrinth Road and part of the Jones Falls sewershed. The



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three other SSO structures (SSOs #116, #117 and #118) are tributary to the City's Maidens Choice Interceptor, located in the Gwynns Falls sewershed.

Learning Station 2: Maintenance & Preventative Maintenance

Presented by Jamison Smith, Engineer, Office of Engineering and Construction, Baltimore City Department of Public Works

1. A resident asked about water leaks on two of their properties.

- DPW indicated they would investigate the service history and follow up with the resident should any further action be needed.

2. How do storms contribute to SSOs?

- A separate sanitary sewer system can potentially have various sources of I&I. I&I can come from cracks in pipes, faulty or deteriorating pipe joints, manholes below flood level near streams, roof drains or basement sump pumps illegally connected to a sewer system, illegal stormwater connections, faulty private side laterals, and more. During storms, rainwater can find its way into the system from the various sources above and bring more flow into the sewer system than it can handle. This can lead to an SSO where the system cannot handle the excessive amount of flow in the line.

3. Does Cured in Place Pipe Lining (CIPP Lining) cause restrictions in pipe?

- CIPP lining, when installed correctly, does not cause restrictions in sewer pipes. CIPP can improve the flow because its surface is smoother than the existing/host pipe. Contractors that install CIPP lining are required to perform pre- and post- lining CCTV to verify liner has been installed correctly. Lining smaller pipes (less than 8" in diameter) is not normally encouraged.

Learning Station 3: Building Backup Support

Presented by Terri-Anne McCalla, Liaison Officer, Bureau of Water and Wastewater, Baltimore City Department of Public Works

1. A resident from the Morrell Park area asked why a water main break had not yet been repaired?

- Ms. McCalla provided her email address and advised the resident to forward the work orders to her so she could assist with addressing the resident's concerns.



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Learning Station 4: Compliance

Presented by Kim Grove, Chief, Office of Research and Environmental Protection, Baltimore City Department of Public Works

1. A resident asked about water quality investigation techniques for his workplace in Baltimore County.

- DPW staff highlighted dye tests and optical brighteners as two effective investigation techniques to test water quality.

2. What are examples of Sanitary Discharge of Unknown Origin (SDUOs).

- An SDUO is any discharge of sewage through the City's storm sewer system, where the source of the sewage is unknown. Once the source of the SDUO is confirmed, if it originates from the Collection System, it is then a SSO. When DPW routine water quality monitoring shows a result that is out of range or above a specified threshold, or if the field staff observes/smells a potential pollutant in the water, they will initiate a pollution source tracking (PST) investigation through the storm drain system. This tracking may include supplemental ammonia sampling, primary ammonia sampling, stream impact sampling, visual assessments, and other tools such as record reviews, dye tests, smoke tests, and microbial source tracking. PST investigation results are included in the MS4 Annual Report and can include sources other than sewage. DPW also gave examples of faulty private laterals and direct sewer connections.

3. If the source of the SDUO is found is it reported to the MDE?

- Yes, if the source is an SSO, and if the source is private, it will be included in the quarterly MCD report. In addition, pollution source tracking investigation details are included in the MS4 annual report.

4. A resident noted that the 40-inch diameter sanitary sewer interceptor under Lake Roland is being lined. He asked if there is a flow meter on Jones Falls sanitary system at the City-County line?

- There were five meters installed in 2018-2019 at the City-County line which were used to calibrate the most recent version of the City model. Three of these meters were recently reinstalled to assess changes in flow from the County. Another is scheduled to be reinstalled soon.



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Learning Station 5: Headworks

Presented by Michael Hallmen, Division Chief, Wastewater Facilities Division, Baltimore City Department of Public Works

1. How is Back River Wastewater Treatment Plant performing now since the MDE takeover?

- Back River WWTP has been in compliance with its effluent permit for 8 months and continues to work on necessary repairs and systems for strengthening the necessary resiliency supports.

2. Will there be a similar project at Patapsco Wastewater Treatment Plant?

- There will be a rehabilitation of the existing grit facility, but the work will not be on the same scope as Back River WWTP. Back River needed to address a hydraulic restriction whereas Patapsco WWTP needs rehabilitation and facility designs to remediate the impacts of Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) gas with improved handling technologies and structural improvements.

Learning Station 6: Design Projects

Presented by Carlos Stephenson, Engineer II, Baltimore City Department of Public Works

1. What is the difference between Modified Consent Decree (MCD) and NON-MCD Projects?

- MCD projects refer to those projects that are required by the MCD. These projects typically will reduce I&I that leads to fewer SSOs in the sanitary sewer system. MCD projects also may involve inspection, cleaning, and capacity improvements. NON-MCD projects usually address more maintenance-driven issues of aging sewer assets.

2. Is there any truth to rumors of a stream restoration project along the Herring Run?

- Our environmental section is handling stream restorations in Herring Run. Only if there is a sanitary sewer in the direct line of the stream would it be a part of the MCD.

3. How many miles of work does the MCD encompass and what is the cost per mile? Per linear foot?

- MCD covers 349.95(+/-) miles of CCTV work and the cost per mile equals \$26,000 (+/-). The cost per linear foot is \$5.00 (+/-). (The figures shown in MCD Appendix B.2 are approximations and the actual numbers may vary.)



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4. What is the follow-up status of a water main break at the intersection of Maudlin and Letitia Avenue in southwest Baltimore?

- As of 1/19/23, water was still draining from the location and the neighbors were concerned this may lead to an increase in their water service billing. Water main breaks are not associated with the Consent Decree and the resident was directed to contact 311 for reporting and resolution.

Learning Station 7: Projects in Construction

Presented by Angela Cornish, Construction Project Supervisor II, Baltimore City Department of Public Works

1. No questions were received from the public.

Learning Station 8: Office of Communications & Office of Strategic Alliances

Presented by Jennifer Combs, Public Relations Coordinator, Office of Communications, Baltimore City Department of Public Works

1. How does rain contribute to SSOs?

- A separate sanitary sewer system can potentially have various sources of inflow and infiltration (I&I). I&I can come from cracks in pipes, faulty or deteriorating pipe joints, manholes below flood level near streams, roof drains or basement sump pumps illegally connected to a sewer system, illegal stormwater connections, faulty private side laterals, and more. During storms, rainwater can find its way into the system from the various sources above and bring more flow into the sewer system than it can handle. This can lead to an SSO where the system cannot handle the excessive amount of flow in the line.

2. A Southwest Baltimore resident asked which plant their sewage goes to?

- Southwest Baltimore sewage flows to the Patapsco WWTP.

Learning Station 9: Office of Boards & Commissions

Presented by Deena Joyce, Chief, Office of Boards and Commissions, Baltimore City Department of Public Works

1. What does the Office of Boards & Commissions do?

- The Office of Boards and Commissions (OBC) pre-qualifies contractors and consultants to perform services of \$50,000 or greater on City contracts. The OBC also oversees the City DPW Small Business Development Program (SBDP). The SBDP provides a



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comprehensive 11-week training curriculum that helps prepare small businesses for work with Baltimore City and provides them a chance to learn about upcoming contracting opportunities in the Baltimore Metropolitan Region.

Learning Station 10: Small Business Development Program

Presented by Kerwen Whatley, Small Business Development Program Director

1. No questions were received from the public.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

- There were two SSOs in the Herring Run Watershed along the 3900 block of Bel Air Road occurring December 22, 2022, and December 23, 2022. SSO #7934 and SSO #7935 were tracked by a local citizen (who is also a retired Baltimore City employee) and has noted the reduction in volume of the SSOs as reported by Baltimore City DPW Director Mitchell are reflected in his accounting. While we are seeing a reduction in the amount or frequency of SSO's there is still work to be performed to completely eliminate them.
- Along the York Road corridor there appears to be a large number of food service/restaurant-type businesses contributing to the volume of Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) as reported by one resident. Targeted cleaning and inspection are handled by the Office of Asset Management along with Utility Maintenance.
- A resident commented about the high level of SSOs along York Road, from Belvedere Square to Cold Spring Lane. He requested more community outreach to share proper fats, oils, and grease disposal. (<https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/sewer-consent-decree/clean-drain-campaign>)
- A resident who lives on the 2900 block of North Avenue, noted multiple water main breaks in their area. The resident stated their house shifted in June-July 2021 due to the water main breaks.
- Barbara from Blue Water Baltimore (BWB) stopped by Compliance Learning Station 4 to express gratitude for the good week. She also said Friends of Stony Run are interested in scheduling an outfall screening blitz. She will follow up with Office of Research and Environmental Protection – Water Quality Monitoring and Investigations Section. It was also suggested to schedule these screenings during the earlier part of the week so if the events uncover an illicit discharge, DPW can act quickly on initiative investigation.