West St. Paul Program History

- 2006 – City notified by Met Council (MC) we would receive initial surcharge of ~ $820k ($132k for 2007).
- May 2006 – City solicited proposals & hired SEH to complete an I/I Study.
  - Study separated the City into 17 different districts for flow monitoring.
  - Study determined the worst districts for I/I.
  - Study recommended some form of private service inspections.
I/I Study – Sewer District Map
Program History (cont.)

- Summer 2007 – Had many meetings with Council subgroup on potential I/I program.
  - Overall, City had done a decent job on I/I mitigation on the public portion of sanitary system; it was the private side that was ignored
  - Initially thought we’d go with a more passive inspection program (i.e. POS or PMP)
  - Council subgroup concluded it would take too long to corral I/I problem with passive program
  - Subgroup opted for a more aggressive in-home inspection program
Program History (cont.)

- Fall 2007 – City was notified by MC that our surcharge was increasing to over $180k/year.
- December 2007 – Kicked off the public process with a City-wide “Sewer Fair”
  - 50+ people attended
April 2008 – I/I ordinance allowing for in-home inspections was adopted.

- Defines clear water drainage & makes it illegal to discharge clear water into the sanitary sewer
- Defines the legal construction of a sump pump for buildings
- Provides a process for inspections of private sewer services by City staff or their designee
- Provides a 30-day time frame for property owners to allow inspection after being notified by City
- Addresses violations found from inspection by placing a surcharge on sewer bill of $50/month for residential and $300/month for non-residential if violations are not corrected within 180-days
Inspection Program

- Began inspections in Sept. 2008 on a “volunteer basis.”
- Public process included: previous Sewer Fair, mailed notices to worst I/I area, another public meeting, newspaper and website.
- Inspection process worked like this…
Inspection Flowchart

1. Resident volunteers for inspection.

2. SEH contacts resident to schedule inspection.

3. Inspection completed.

INSPECTION COMPLIANT

4. SEH provides inspection record.
5. City mails letter officially listing property as compliant with I/I ordinance.

INSPECTION NON-COMPLIANT

4. SEH provides record on-site.
5. City mails out official non-compliance letter; provides date & 6-month repair deadline.

6. No repairs made within 6-months so City begins surcharge penalty.

6. Resident has repairs made and contacts City for approval.

7. Go back to #2 and proceed from there.
Inspection Program (cont.)

City had a few financial assistance programs to offer residents:

- **Sewer Service Repair Grant** – City funded 50% of most I/I sewer line repairs (not disconnects or sump pump fixes).

- **Sewer Assessment** – City allowed residents to have their portion of sewer repair cost assessed to property taxes, (terms = 3% over 10-years).

- **Senior/Disabled Resident Assessment Deferral** – City allowed residents 65 & older or those with permanent disability to have their assessment deferred until the property is sold or death.
Initially thought there wouldn’t be much interest in allowing City to come into home… we were wrong.

- MC grant program – covered 50% up to a max. of $2k for sewer repairs.

- Between City & MC grants, some residents paid little, if nothing, for sewer service repairs.

- By early ‘09, City switched from voluntary to mandated inspections on a block-by-block basis.
Inspection Program (cont.)

- Victim of our own success – the program’s popularity “drained” our sewer fund reserves ($1M+).
- By Oct. ‘09, had to reduce our City grant from 50% to 15%.
- Currently, still have I/I program; concentrated on public infrastructure in 2011.
Challenges

- Popularity of our program
  - Dealing with the # of residents (760 out of 900 lots)
  - Explaining the program to so many individuals
- Spending proper amount of funds in each metered area.
- Explain/justify to elected Council people that the program is beneficial & reducing I/I.
Questions?

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