

Business Item

Environment Committee



Committee Meeting Date: July 11, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: July 26, 2023

Business Item: 2023-153

2023 Private Property Inflow & Infiltration Task Force Report

District(s), Member(s):	All Districts
Policy/Legal Reference:	Statute 471.342
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Kyle Colvin, Manager, 651-602-1151 Emily Steinweg, Principal Engineer, 651-602-1516 Wastewater Planning & Community Programs
Division/Department:	MCES c/o Leisa Thompson, 651-602-8101

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council accepts the 2023 Private Property Inflow and Infiltration Task Force Report (Attachment A) and authorizes ES to implement the recommendations of the Report for the Private Property Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) Grant Program.

Background

Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) are terms that describe stormwater runoff and groundwater that makes its way into sanitary sewer pipes and eventually gets treated unnecessarily at wastewater treatment plants. Inflow is clear water that enters the wastewater system through rain leaders, sump pumps, or foundation drains that are illegally connected to sewer lines. The largest amount of inflow occurs during heavy rainstorms. Infiltration is groundwater that seeps into cracked or broken wastewater pipes. The intent of this task force was to provide recommendations to ES to design a grant program to help private property owners with I/I mitigation.

The task force was chaired by Council Member Wendy Wulff and included staff from Metro Cities and representatives from 16 communities with public works, wastewater utility, finance, or city manager experience. The membership was diverse in terms of community size, geographic location, and professional expertise. The Met Council has previously convened task forces to work with regional communities to address I/I.

The task force met 4 times in 2023 and concurred with the findings of the Report. In summary, the task force recommended that ES create a grant program for private property I/I mitigation with the following structure:

- Eligibility: Any municipality that has exceeded their I/I goal or come within 20% of their goal
- Grant amount to be 50% of eligible costs up to \$5,000. Up to \$10,000 grant for those meeting the municipality's equity criteria
- Eligible work:
 - o Private lateral repair and/or replacement
 - o Foundation drain disconnections and new sump pump, if associated with the foundation drain disconnect

- Lateral televising and cleaning costs if:
 - Applicant meets the equity need of the participating municipality or
 - Televising and cleaning result in repair or replacement of sewer lateral

Rationale

Private property I/I is the next big challenge to reduce I/I in the system and extend the life and maintain capacity of the wastewater conveyance and treatment system:

- Local communities, through their 2040 Comprehensive Sewer Plan submittals, indicate that at least 50% of I/I comes from private property.
- Service laterals connecting private properties to the wastewater collection system are the **largest source of inflow and infiltration but receive the least mitigation attention** due to several factors:
 - Most property owners are not aware that they own the service lateral or the condition of the lateral.
 - There is a general lack of support from property owners and real estate agents for point-of-sale programs.
 - Communities lack the financial resources to assist property owners with service lateral repairs.
- Case studies show that investing in both public infrastructure and private property mitigation yields the greatest reduction in inflow and infiltration. Regional communities and the Met Council continue to invest significant resources to mitigate I/I from public infrastructure.
- The average cost to repair a sewer lateral has been estimated to be \$8,000.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The work of this task force furthers the Thrive outcomes of Stewardship, Prosperity, Equity, and Sustainability. This task force and resulting program will extend the service life of the Met Council's interceptor system and wastewater treatment plants, reduce negative environmental impacts from potential wastewater spills and/or overflows, protect our environment, financially assist residents of the region with a potentially costly home repair, and invests in existing infrastructure. In addition to satisfying the Met Council's mission and vision, private property I/I mitigation has been a topic of conversation and request of Council members and communities for multiple years. By doing this work, we are responding to our customers and partners.

Funding

Funds for the grant program will come from the existing ES PayGo account which is funded by the Municipal Wastewater Charge (MWC).

