

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OCTOBER 23, 2009

ITEM NUMBER: 11

SUBJECT: City of Santa Barbara Sanitary Sewer Collection System Status Report

DISCUSSION

At the December 2008 Board Meeting, Board members commented on the number of sewer spills in the City of Santa Barbara and asked that the city provide an update about its sanitary sewer collection system at a future Board Meeting. The City implements an ongoing sewer system management program for its sanitary sewer collection system. The City will present an overview of its sanitary sewer collection management program.

Water Board staff has reviewed sanitary sewer overflow data from June 2007 through June 2009. In analyzing available sanitary sewer overflow data for comparably sized collection systems, Water Board staff realized that not all collection systems within the region have been reporting sanitary sewer overflow data to the sanitary sewer overflow database for the same time period. Water Board staff has implemented a progressive enrollment strategy involving enrolling collection systems in the statewide general permit for sewer collection systems as individual collection system waste discharge requirements come up for review. Because of that strategy, not all collection systems have been reporting spills to the sanitary sewer overflow database for the time period including June 1, 2007, through June 30, 2009.

Keeping in mind the constraints on the available data, the city had 25.9 sewer overflows per 100 miles of collection system from June 1, 2007, through June 30, 2009, more than any other similarly sized (more than 100 miles) collection system in the Central Coast Region (City of San Luis Obispo – 19.1 spills/100 miles, City of Santa Maria – 18.4 spills/100 miles, City of Monterey – 15.2 spills/100 miles). During that time, the city had 72 sanitary sewer overflows. Of the 72 overflows, 65 were less than 1,000 gallons in volume. Root intrusion was determined to be the cause for 42 of the overflows. Approximately 35% of the 72 overflows entered storm drains or water bodies, and approximately 15,333 gallons could not be recovered in spite of the city's attempts to clean up the spills. Over the same time period from June 1, 2007, through June 30, 2009, the city collected and treated approximately 5.3 billion gallons of wastewater. The city has seen an increasing trend in the number of sewer overflows over the past several years and is working to reduce the number of overflows through implementation of its sewer system management plan.

In January 2008, the city updated its sewer system management plan. The plan includes an operation and maintenance program and an overflow emergency response plan. The city cleans the majority of the collection system every two years and cleans areas with a history of problems more frequently. The city conducts closed circuit television (CCTV) inspections of the collection system, inspecting 20 miles of sewer line per year. The city employs a repair crew that corrects problems identified by the inspections. The city maintains information on service

calls, blockages, and overflows. City staff analyze the data and the results of the analysis are used to modify the city's approach to operations and maintenance. The city has an ongoing sewer rehabilitation and replacement program with the goal to rehabilitate or replace an average of 1% (2.5 miles) of its wastewater collection system per year with an annual budget of approximately \$750,000.

The city initiated a sewer lateral inspection program in January 2007. The city identifies problem laterals during CCTV inspections and sends letters to property owners requiring maintenance or replacement of laterals. A city ordinance requires private sewer lateral inspections if there has been a spill from the lateral, if the city observes lateral problems during inspection of city lines, or if problems are noted during smoke testing. Lateral inspections are required for residences that add 400 square feet of living space and for residences that add two or more plumbing fixtures. Commercial, condominiums, and other common interest developments are required to inspect their laterals a minimum of once every ten years. The city offers an incentive program to encourage property owners to inspect and repair sewer laterals. The city provides reimbursement up to \$150 for lateral inspections and up to \$2,000 for lateral repairs.

Water Board staff has reviewed the city's sewer system management plan and has discussed sanitary sewer overflows with city staff. The city has an aggressive operation and maintenance program with ongoing evaluation of problem areas and has identified roots as the city's primary issue. The city cleans most of the system every two years in an effort to prevent overflows. The city's operations and maintenance program coupled with the capital improvement program should help reduce the number of overflows. Water Board staff supports the city's efforts to eliminate sewer overflows with their proactive program and will continue to work with the city to identify ways to improve the sewer system management program and will continue to evaluate spill data. Water Board staff recommends evaluating the effects of the updated sewer system management plan for the next two years to see if the changes result in reduced overflows.

As stated in the introductory paragraph of the staff report, City of Santa Barbara staff will present an overview of their sanitary sewer collection management program to the Water Board members.