

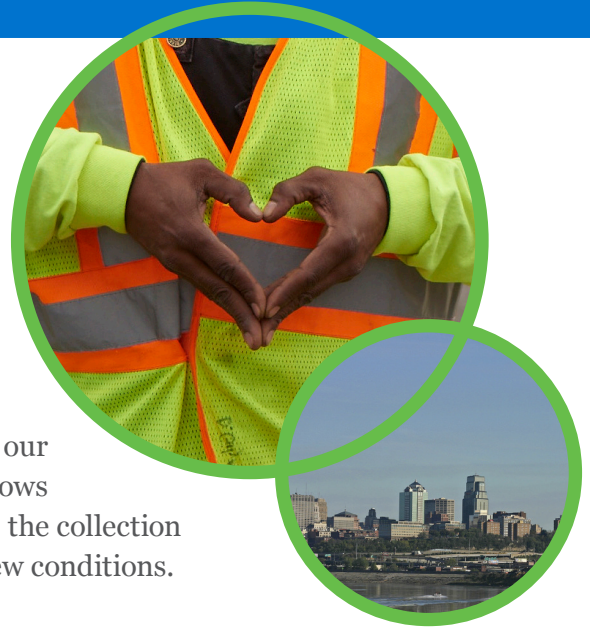


smartsewer

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE SMART SEWER PROGRAM?

In 2010, the City of Kansas City, Missouri entered into a Consent Decree with the United States Environmental Protection Agency to reduce the volume and frequency of overflows from the City's sewer system. The Smart Sewer program is a 25-year, \$4.5 billion plan to address this challenge. The program helps protect our community's environment by reducing the amount of stormwater entering our sewer system, which will lessen the frequency of sewer overflows and building backups in your neighborhood. When complete, the collection system throughout our community will be restored to like-new conditions.



WHY IS OUR SEWER SYSTEM IN NEED OF SUCH EXTENSIVE REPAIR?

It's old. More than 150 years ago, Kansas City began building the basic sewer infrastructure that would allow the city to grow and prosper. Some of that infrastructure is still in use today. Built of clay pipes and in some cases housed in side tunnels lined with brick, these systems have succumbed to age and the forces of nature. They must be updated and replaced.

It's big. Kansas City's aging, overall sanitary sewer system comprises both combined and separate sewer systems totaling approximately 318 square miles.

- The *combined sewer system* consists of 58 square miles, primarily located in the oldest areas of the City. During rainfall events, the system will reach capacity, overflow and discharge a mixture of wastewater and rainwater directly into local receiving streams and rivers.
- The *sanitary sewer system* consists of 260 square miles, and is only intended to collect and convey wastewater. However, rainwater can enter the system through leaky sewer pipe joints, broken sewer pipes, manholes, and illicit stormwater direct connections causing the system to become overloaded during rainfall events. When this system exceeds its capacity, it too overflows a mixture of wastewater and rainwater from various manholes throughout the system.

It's essential. Improving and maintaining our shared sewer system is vital to protecting the health of our entire community, including our local streams and rivers. The Smart Sewer Program was created in direct response to the EPA's federally mandated requirement to improve water quality by reducing wastewater overflows.

DOES THE SMART SEWER PROJECT AFFECT MY WATER BILL?

Kansas City's \$4.5 billion Smart Sewer program is funded solely through wastewater revenues. This requires significant wastewater rate increases, resulting in higher bills paid by KC Water customers. Residents in Kansas City have already been faced with double-digit rate increases in recent years, which have more than doubled the average monthly bill for consumers. Before implementing this unfunded program to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act, customers paid an average monthly bill of \$48 in 2009. Current average residential bills now total over \$100 per month and the City must continue to raise rates annually to meet the requirements of the Consent Decree.

In 2017, Kansas City's mayoral-appointed task force began reviewing possible solutions to the City's growing cost-of-service concerns. The result has been a resounding recommendation to the City to find other cost-efficient solutions to meet the Consent Decree and to work with the EPA to implement those options.



WHAT IS THE CITY DOING TO LOWER MY SEWER BILL?

To reduce the impact to residents of this federally mandated program, the City continues to work with the EPA to modify the Consent Decree to reduce both the heavy financial burden on rate payers and size of future utility rate increases. In addition to rate relief, the proposed modifications will include expanded use of green infrastructure in the combined sewer system and system-wide improvements.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

For additional information about the Smart Sewer program, please contact us at:

3-1-1 or (816) 531-1313
www.kcmo.gov/smartsewer

