

ELEMENT 11: COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

This section highlights the communications and outreach plan developed for the City of San Jose's Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP).

The City of San Jose's primary "customers" are the residential, industrial, and commercial customers that connect to the sewers located within San Jose. In addition, seven "satellite agencies" contribute flow to the City of San Jose sanitary sewer collection system. These contributing agencies are the City of Santa Clara, the City of Milpitas, West Valley Sanitation District, Cupertino Sanitary District, Burbank Sanitary District, Sunol Sanitary District and County Sanitation Districts 2 and 3. The primary customers of the satellite agencies are the residential, industrial, and commercial customers that connect to the collector sewers located within the service areas of each of the contributing agencies.

Communications with Contributing "Satellite" Agencies

The City developed and implemented a communications program with its seven contributing agencies. The plan has established a collaborative approach to communicate with contributing agencies and work together during the development and implementation of, and future improvements, to the SSMP. The City plans to work with all of the contributing agencies as they develop their SSMP's and facilitate meetings to discuss common issues and provide support during the SSMP development process.

Subsequent meetings will be held each quarter with representatives who are responsible for development and maintenance of the SSMP at each contributing agency. The agenda or topics for quarterly meetings with satellite agencies may include master plan, capacity issues, emergency response plans, and capital programs.

Communications with and outreach to residential, industrial, and commercial customers and the general Public.

The City provided a link at the DOT public website where the public is encouraged to view and comment on draft SSMP sections as they are developed. The DOT SSMP website provides a list of the SSMP Sections, PDF files for draft SSMP sections, and a link for customers to provide feedback and comments on the draft sections. The site is also referred to in all other outreach efforts.

The City of San Jose conducts extensive public outreach and education to residents and businesses related to sanitary sewer overflows, preventing grease blockages and Best Management Practices for handling of grease waste. Residential education includes targeted radio advertisements and public service announcements, distribution of "grease scrappers" and information at community events and garbage bills inserts. Additionally,

the City's Environmental Enforcement Program inspects approximately 1200 food service facilities annually for compliance with Best Management Practices storm water discharges and grease removal device maintenance, and distributed educational materials during these inspections. The City also conducts approximately 200 Plan Checks for all new and remodeling restaurants and other food service facilities in Water Pollution Control Plant's Tributary Area to determine proper grease removal device sizing.

The City annually mails informational flyers to all residential and business property owners and tenants describing the negative impacts of discharging fats, oil, and grease into the sanitary sewer system. In areas where a sewer overflow is attributed to the build up of fats, oil, or grease in the sewer pipes, the City canvasses the vicinity with door hanger type flyers notifying the neighbors of the event and reinforcing the message to avoid pouring these items down the drain and describe the continued negative impacts that this will likely have on the sewer system. Both the annual mailer and the door hanger provide information in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

The City's communications program involve mailing, emailing, and posting on the City's website the SSMP and other related information, and inviting stakeholders to SSMP development, implementation, and performance review meetings for input and information dissemination.

Communications with and outreach to land developers, consultant engineers, contractors

The City has disseminated information, in meetings and/or by flyers, to land developers, consultant engineers, and plumbing contractors regarding the need and methods to reduce SSOs. The City has communicated and solicited input regarding the SSMP requirements with emphasis on design and construction practices that reduces sewer overflows.

The City is reviewing the need for updates to the existing Sewer Level of Service Policy adopted in 1982. There will be outreach effort to the development communities and City Council to discuss City's master plan effort, capacity issues, SSMP requirements for capacity assurance, and recommended updates to the existing policy.

For the Sewer Connection Fee Study, the City will outreach to ratepayers, local neighborhood associations and the development communities and City Council discuss proposed rate changes and impacts on capital programs with such changes.

Internally, City will communicate within various departments, such as Environmental Services, Public Works, Transportation, and Building and Code Enforcement regarding the overall SSMP, program audits, emergency response plan, FOG program, and design standards.

For Capital Improvement Program, key stakeholders may be outreached to includes engineering consultants and contractors. Potential issues of interests include design standard, capital program, and consulting and contracting opportunities.

Outreach to Plumbers and Building Contractors

Plumbers and sewer contractors have access to all available City of San Jose plans, specifications and standard details. The City of San Jose participated with BACWA in developing an outreach flyer for these entities. Information was disseminated on construction standards, proper operations and maintenance activities, and effective measures for removing blockages.

Communications with City elected officials

The City of San Jose's Mayor's Office and City Council have been advised of the SSMP progress. The SSMP Development Plan and Schedule was approved by the City Council in October, 2007. It is anticipated that the final SSMP will be approved by the City Council in August, 2008.