





Baton Rouge Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) Control and Wastewater Facilities Program



The Baton Rouge City/Parish Department of Public Works is implementing a Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) Control and Wastewater Facilities Program in order to address existing sewer overflow and wastewater treatment challenges in the City/Parish while at the same time trying to plan for the future growth in the area. This Program is a necessity...not just because it is the right thing to do for the citizens of Baton Rouge, but also because it is mandated by state and federal regulatory agencies. The Program itself includes some treatment plant upgrades, in addition to rehabilitation of existing sewer lines and other infrastructure components. These projects will improve the quality of life for residents of the City/Parish and allow the City/Parish to comply with federal Consent Decrees and Administrative Orders.

Background

The Baton Rouge City/Parish operates a highly complex wastewater collection system constructed over the past 100+ years. The system includes treatment plants, a combination of gravity sewers, lift stations, and an extensive manifold force main system with in-line booster pumps. Like many other cities nationwide, Baton Rouge has been encountering SSOs throughout its wastewater collection system. SSOs occur for many reasons. Dry weather SSOs can be caused by blockages in the sewer line (caused by fats/oils/grease buildup, pipe deterioration or failure, tree roots, debris or rocks, vandalism, or construction activities), failure of pump stations (due to power outages or mechanical failure), and lack of sewer capacity. Wet weather SSOs occur during rainstorms, when excess rainwater/groundwater enters the sewer system (through improper or illegal connections of drains or catch basins, defective manholes, and cracks/breaks in the sewer lines or private laterals), because of insufficient capacity in the pipes, or failure of upstream treatment plants during wet weather.

In the late 1980's and 1990's, the federal government, through the Clean Water Act, called for the elimination of SSOs and set more stringent wastewater treatment requirements. This action affected every wastewater system in the country, including the Baton Rouge City/Parish Department of Public Works (DPW). Eventually, the Department of Justice and Environmental Protection Agency began enforcing these rulings in large cities; many cities were fined for Clean Water Act violations. In 1989, DPW entered into negotiations with the EPA, DOJ, and the State of Louisiana to establish a formal program that would be recognized and supported by the government. The resulting agreement is called the original Consent Decree. Since that time, additional negotiations associated with the Consent Decree have taken place and in 2002, the Baton Rouge City/Parish DPW signed a modified Consent Decree with state and federal regulatory agencies that requires upgrades to the wastewater treatment plants in order to meet wastewater discharge permit limits, and upgrades to the sewer collection system, in order to reduce the number of SSOs. These two requirements will help improve water quality in the lakes, bayous, creeks and rivers of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Program Description

Since the Consent Decree was signed in 2002, several projects have been identified and approved by the Baton Rouge City/Parish DPW, City Council, EPA and LDEQ, and are currently in design and construction. In addition, the Baton Rouge City/Parish SSO Control and Wastewater Facilities Program Team has been actively working on planning the other required projects that will be implemented as a part of the program, taking into account regulatory requirements, City/Parish growth, cost effectiveness, as well as technical approach in order to achieve the goals of the program. A comprehensive Program Delivery Plan has been developed outlining the details of the additional projects that make up this plan. To spread the physical and financial impacts of the work, the projects are expected to start at different times throughout the life of the Program.

Community Impact

The City/Parish is committed to open communications with affected stakeholders in order to try to minimize any disruptions this work will have on the community. The communication process will include written and broadcast notification of impending construction activity, presentations at community meetings, a website, and expanded use of the Department of Public Works 311 hotline. The Department of Public Works and Program Management offices will be available to address any concerns regarding this program. If you have questions, call the Department of Public Works at (225) 389-3090 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.