

News Advisory

Release date: September 5, 2017

Contact: Barbara Shaw, Public Affairs Mgr., 251 694-3113 or bshaw@mawss.com

MAWSS Emergency Repairs along Perch Creek Exceed \$1.3 Million



Map: Driftwood24inrep

Mobile Area Water and Sewer System's (MAWSS) emergency repairs to an aging, inaccessible sewer line along Perch Creek have risen to upwards of \$1.3 million dollars. The high costs are due to the length of the sewer line, its inaccessibility and extreme measures needed to prevent overflows while repairs are made.

The problem came to light August 13, when an overflow occurred at MAWSS' Driftwood Drive Lift Station on Charmaine Circle. Crews found a blockage in the 24-inch sewer main downstream of the station caused by large amounts of sand in the line. Investigating further, they discovered the sand had entered at a collapsed manhole north of the station between Hannon Road and Charmaine Circle. The manhole and the blocked line were in low lying, wet and wooded areas that were unreachable by truck. Before repairs could begin, access roads needed to be built so heavy machinery could be brought in.

An emergency bid to set up bypass pumps and replace the manhole was awarded to Ballcon for \$183,500. In the meantime, to prevent further overflows, MAWSS began trucking the wastewater from accessible manholes on Hannon Road and the lift station. This round the clock activity took place for several weeks increasing noise and traffic in the neighborhood.

The 2,300 feet of old gravity sewer line filled with sand will be abandoned. Taking its place will be a directionally drilled force main that will be less susceptible to stormwater intrusion and require less maintenance.

MAWSS Director Charles Hyland fears expensive repairs like this one will increase as underground infrastructure continues to age.

“Many of our sewer lines have reached the end of their useful life,” said Hyland. “Our system needs substantial investment to renew and replace old pipes to stop overflows and other failures that disrupt service and drain resources.”

MAWSS is developing a master plan with engineering firm CH2M that will recommend infrastructure needs as well as review operational practices. While not expected to be complete until 2018, there is expectation that the report will identify needs amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars. MAWSS receives no tax money and is supported solely by customers.