



CITYWIDE PRIVATE SEWER LATERAL COST SHARING PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

City of San Mateo

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SUMMARY

What is a Private Sewer Lateral?

A private sewer lateral carries sewage from private property to the City sewer main. Property owners are responsible for maintaining their private sewer lateral (San Mateo Municipal Code 7.38.432). In the City of San Mateo, private sewer laterals are defined as the pipe extending from the property structure all the way to and including its connection with the City sewer main. This applies whether the private sewer lateral is under a public right-of-way (street) or on private property in an easement.

Sewer Lateral Cost Sharing Program History

In 2009, the California Regional Water Board (Water Board) issued the City a Cease and Desist Order which resulted in a fine for excessive sanitary sewer overflows. The City and Water Board reached a resolution to use part of the fine money to fund a cost-sharing program; the program aimed to assist property owners with a portion of the expense incurred to repair or replace their private sewer laterals. The program, originally titled “Health Home,” was structured as a grant and loan program using \$760,000 of fine monies and targeted the most compromised sewer laterals. The program required properties be owner-occupied, single family residence with household incomes below \$82,200.

In September 2011, the City Council approved the implementation of the Citywide Private Sewer Lateral Cost Sharing Program (PSLCSP). The PSLCSP was a grant and loan program based on the Healthy Home model but extended to all property types and removed household income requirements. The program was funded with 10% of the annual sewer maintenance and repair budget, which was approximately \$370,000.

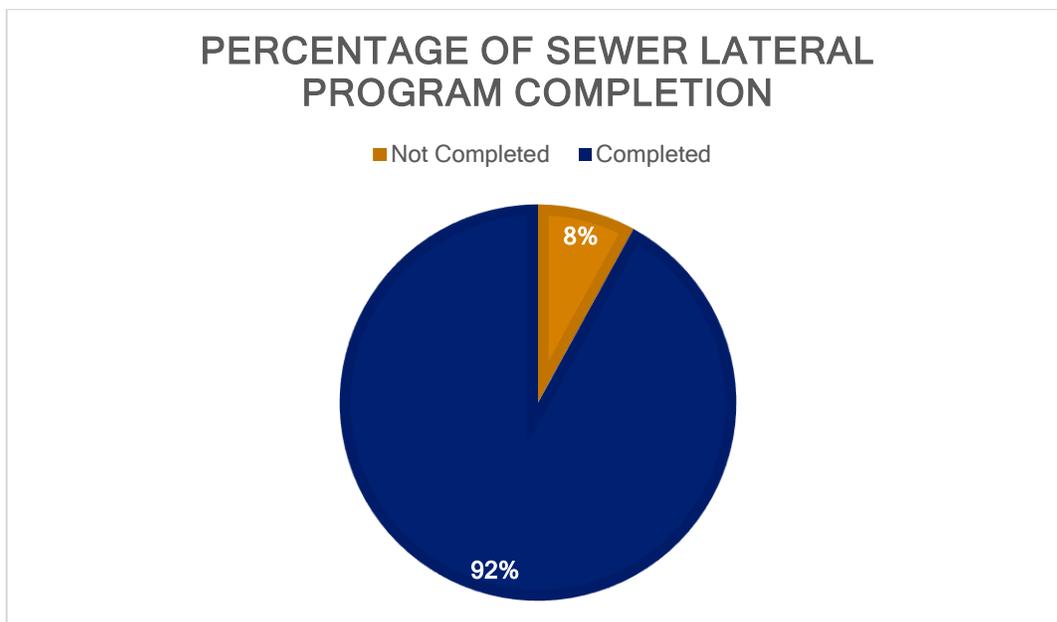
In 2013, staff recommend the PSLCSP provide a 50% reimbursement to property owners, up to a maximum of \$5,000, for a full sewer lateral replacement. This remains the current program parameters.

How does the Sewer Lateral Cost Sharing Program Work?

The City budgeted \$750,000 for the PSLCSP, for the 2021/2022 fiscal year. Applications were accepted for the program starting July 1, 2021. The maximum number of participants for FY 20/21 was estimated based on the maximum grant reimbursement (\$5,000); this allowed 150 initial applicants. A waitlist was implemented after the initial 150 applicants were accepted into the program. Property owners were taken off the waitlist after reimbursements were processed and funds became available. The program was fully subscribed by September 2021. 187 total applicants were accepted into the program.

Upon acceptance into the program, the property owner has three months to complete the replacement and submit reimbursement paperwork to the City. If a property owner is unable to complete the work within that timeframe, their application becomes void, and they are no longer eligible to claim a reimbursement.

Of the 187 accepted applicants, 92% (172) participants completed the program within the fiscal year. 8% (15) of applicants did not complete the process. Of the available grant fund, 93% (\$697,867) of available funds were reimbursed to participants.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The PSLCSP assists the Clean Water Program in achieving its desired outcomes and goals. The program does this by preventing inflow and infiltration from broken private sewer laterals which contribute to higher possibilities of sanitary sewer overflows during wet weather storms. Broken or leaking laterals present environmental concerns, undermine the integrity of public roadways, and impact inflow and infiltration, ultimately affecting the wastewater treatment system.

In the last 5 years, the PSLCSP contributed to 35,741 feet (6.77 miles) of replaced sewer lateral piping, 703 building cleanouts, and 529 wye connections. This year alone the PSLCSP contributed to more than 7,000 feet (1.32 miles) of replaced sewer lateral piping, 139 building cleanouts, and 138 wye connections.