

Meeting Minutes

Advisory Technical Panel – Updating Infiltration and Inflow Control Program

Location: MWRD LASMA Visitor Center

Date: November 18, 2011 1:30pm to 3:15pm

Attendees: See attached

- A. Mr. David St. Pierre, Executive Director of the MWRD, welcomed the ATP members and introduced Ms. Maureen Durkin, Supervising Civil Engineer. The presentation by Mr. St. Pierre and Ms. Durkin discussed the history and background of the MWRD and the need to develop a new I/I (groundwater infiltration and stormwater inflow) program.
- B. Mr. John Wiemhoff, USEPA, discussed that the goal is to eliminate as much I/I as possible. Eliminating entry of clear water into a sanitary sewer system would reduce conveyance and treatment costs, facilities' expansion costs, and prolong economic life span of the infrastructure. He emphasized that the CMOM (Capacity, Management, Operation and Maintenance) program could be an effective tool in I/I control.
- C. Mr. Rob Sulski, IEPA, discussed that there should be a goal to eliminate I/I. He asked the participants to not focus on a specific number but a goal, with the caveat that if there are recurring sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) and/or backups it may be necessary to reduce wet weather flows closer to the 150-gpcpd limit.
- D. Ms. Durkin and Mr. St. Pierre gave the slide presentation (distributed at the meeting).
- E. Mr. St. Pierre opened the floor for discussion.
- F. Topics of Discussion:
 1. USEPA/IEPA:
 - Mr. Wiemhoff was unaware of recent development on the USEPA's proposed SSO rulemaking that would require local/satellite sewer systems to obtain NPDES Permits, but said he would research the status.
 - Mr. Wiemhoff stated that O&M and Asset Management is critical. Risk management software and model strategies which can be used are available on USEPA's website.
 - Mr. Sulski reinforced the fact that SSOs are prohibited. The approach to be taken is to reduce/eliminate I/I.
 - The 150-gpcpd is the flow rate that will be on the MWRD NPDES permits.

2. Financing:

- Mr. St. Pierre stated that it is going to be cheaper and beneficial to the tax/rate-payers for the local communities to fix the excessive I/I problem than for the MWRD to transport and treat clear water.
- There must be a strategy to eliminate high-cost I/I sources from the private sector. The separate sewer agencies must consider different types of mid- to long-term strategies (e.g., inspection of lateral upon sale of house, disconnection of footing drains, private lateral insurance program, and cost-sharing programs).
- Sources of financing that were discussed included Green Infrastructure grants from the state, SRF Loans and possible development of a sewer surcharge and rebate program.
- It was stated that sewer cleaning and lining projects can be pooled together to obtain economy of scale so that funds are better spent. This type of information should be available to all communities.
- Communities must make a commitment to reinvest in their infrastructure to reduce I/I. 150-gpcpd is a long-term goal and a benchmark number in a permit, but a cost-effective program must be implemented to maintain the system and reduce excessive I/I.
- It was stated that communities have been spending money on maintenance programs but do not have guidelines.

3. Operation & Maintenance:

- It was stated that a major focus should be on a maintenance program to achieve results.
- It was stated that the MWRD has a good O&M program, which can be provided to help guide communities.
- There are approximately 10,000 connections to the MWRD system. A MWRD flow monitoring system, in which the Villages can log into and get their flow data, is an option but the cost has to be shared to develop it.

4. Combined Sewer Areas:

- Combined Sewer Areas are being addressed by TARP, Green Infrastructure and other measures. Green Infrastructure and other programs are being developed to keep water from being introduced into the system in the first place. The MWRD will encourage people to conserve water instead of putting in larger sewers.
- The City of Chicago is the main combined sewer operator and is separating where it makes sense to do so. The MWRD will launch a comprehensive program to look at different neighborhood plans to keep clear water out of the sewer system.
- Communities located in both combined and separate sewer areas should address locations generating the biggest results, unless SSOs are involved.

5. New I/I Control Program Guidelines:

- The new I/I program needs to address the public and private sector issues, which can incorporate elements of CMOM, and determine how on-going I/I control and O&M will be financed.
- The ICAP (I/I Corrective Action Plan) program can be the starting point to developing the new I/I program. However, the ICAP program was a one-size-fits-all type approach, and it has run its course by now.
- The 150-gpcpd limit will result in resistance from communities because it may be unachievable and is threatening. However, there is room for discussion if flow thresholds are discussed.
- Excessive I/I is problematic regardless of whether SSOs are present or not, because it may be affecting the downstream communities.
- A cost/benefit analysis must be made to determine if money is better spent on preventing SSOs under an extraordinary case or spent at removal points of extraneous flows.
- The MWRD can prescribe a framework for the new I/I program, but it does not have the same level of experience with private laterals, local sewer systems, and disconnection of illegal connections, which is why the MWRD wants the committee members to provide their input.
- Considerations must be made of where the community is today and what the goal is when determining what triggers a violation under the new I/I program.
- Measuring the progress/improvement of a system must be addressed under the new I/I program.
- There was a discussion about the reasonableness of the approach of forming subcommittees to help develop the new program. It was acknowledged that group knowledge is lost when working in subcommittees. The development of the WMO was mentioned and how it was developed in a group. The MWRD stated that the intent of forming subcommittees was to have certain groups research an aspect of the program in greater detail and assemble relevant ideas, all of which would then be discussed at the bimonthly meetings as a whole.

- G. MWRD will draft starting points of the topics to be discussed at the next meeting and e-mail them to everyone prior to the scheduled meeting.
- H. It was requested that the COG's share all information discussed in the meeting with the other sewer system owners and the MWRD will convey the information to the sanitary districts.
- I. The next meeting is scheduled at 1:00pm on Wednesday January 18th, 2012 at the LASMA Visitor Center.