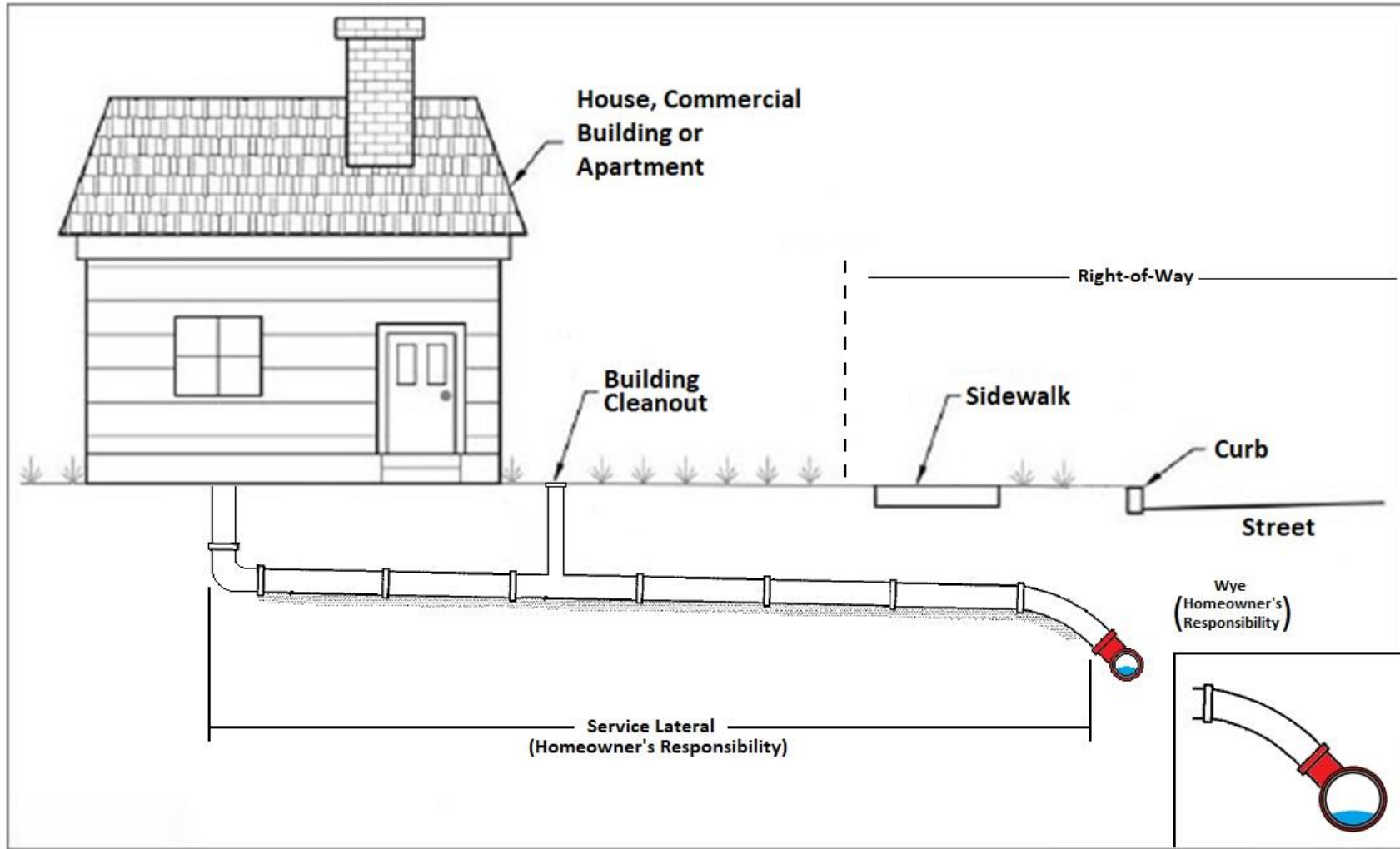




Sanitary Sewer Service Line Repairs
Council Infrastructure Committee Update



Per Municipal Code 13.20.150

The maintenance and repair of a building service line and its connection with the City sewer main is the responsibility of the owner of the property it serves.

“The first indication of sewer failure or potential failure may vary....”



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Catastrophic Failures

Per Municipal Code 13.20.150

Upon inspection, if the City sewer main is deteriorated, it is the City's responsibility to repair.

If the City sewer main is not obstructed, but is open and flowing, and the private sewer line has failed, it then becomes the responsibility of the property owner to make the necessary repairs within seven days.

Initial complaint ➡ City televises line, determines cause

If City line failure ➡ City contracts repairs

If private owner responsibility ➡ call or attempt to knock and talk

If no connection is made with owner ➡ send repair letter

If unable to make contact with owner ➡ WPCD can contract repairs

Pre-2019: Catastrophic failure approach

2016- 2 letters

2017- 4 letters

2018- 1 letters

2019: Proactive approach based on CCTV inspection

47 letters

2020: Reverted to catastrophic failure approach

13 letters

2021: To date, 7 letters

Owner can hire private contractor to make repairs

Owner can request City make repairs and bill them

If charges are not paid, a lien is placed upon the real estate

Halted “courtesy” letters

Personal contact attempts

Educational information included in correspondence

Flexible repair arrangements when appropriate

Sanitary Sewer Service Line Repair Cost Share Program

Pilot program in 2021 in partnership with the Division of Housing Services

Provides funding of up to \$50,000 annually from wastewater budget

**Will allow assistance to approximately 20 low income homeowners
(must meet HUD requirements, 80% of median income)**

City pays 50% of the first \$5,000 in repair costs, up to \$2,500 per applicant

**Separate from existing Emergency Repair Program which addresses
immediate health and safety concerns in property**

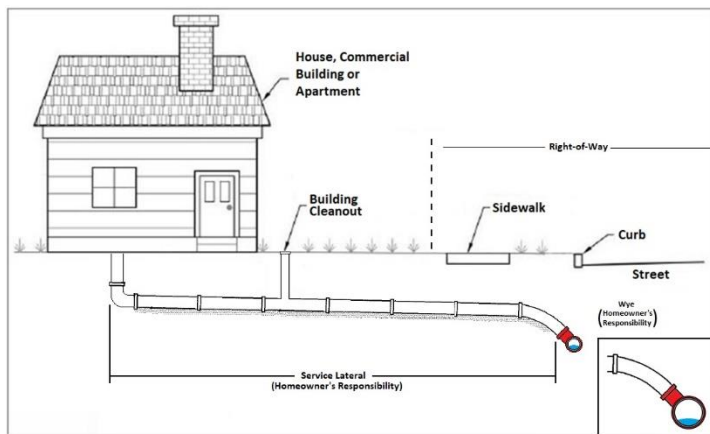


Questions

Sanitary Sewer Service Line Repair Cost Sharing Program



Topeka Municipal Code 13.20.150 makes the property owner responsible for any repairs if there is a failure in the building service line or the wye connection to the City sewer main. Unfortunately, such repairs are costly and often create a hardship for property owners. In the interest of providing the highest level of service to the citizens of Topeka and maintaining the integrity of the City wastewater system, the Utilities Department has developed a pilot program to share the cost of sewer service line repairs with property owners



Overview

Once a failure in the service line or wye has been identified by the City, a letter is sent to the property owner of record notifying them of the failure, their responsibility to make repairs, the timeframe in which repairs must be completed, and contact information for questions.

After receipt of such a letter, the repair process typically proceeds in one of two ways. The property owner hires a plumber to make repairs themselves, or the city addresses the repair and assesses the costs back to the owner.

While it is acknowledged that the costs of such repairs may create a financial strain on some homeowners, that strain does not negate the necessity or urgency of addressing these failures. The purpose of this cost-sharing program is to relieve some of this financial strain while still resolving the failure.

The Division of Housing Services will administer this program and the Division will begin accepting applications for a cost-sharing program to repair failures in the building service line connected to the City sewer main. With annual funding of \$50,000 this program will allow assistance to be provided to approximately 20 homeowners.

Sanitary Sewer Service Line Repair Cost Sharing Program



Program Details

- Up to \$50,000 of funding provided annually.
 - Funds remaining at the end of the year will roll over to the next budget year with a \$75,000 total funding cap.
- The City will pay 50% of the first \$5,000 in repair costs, or up to \$2,500 per applicant.
 - Additional costs may be covered by the City in the event of extraordinary repair costs, as authorized by Ordinance 13.20.150.
- Funding is limited and will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Program Requirements

- Failures must be identified by City personnel and be classified as catastrophic.
- Homeowner(s) must reside in the residence.
- The property must be classified as residential.
- Must meet qualification income guidelines based on HUD limits; 80% of median income
- The homeowner(s) must not have outstanding construction permit violations and no outstanding indebtedness to the city.
- Homeowner(s) must return completed application, along with a copy of the first page of the repair letter received, to be approved.
- Homeowner's portion must be paid at the time of service and cannot be assessed back to the property. *

**Funds may be available to assist with the homeowner's portion of repair costs, contact Division of Housing Services for information and assistance.*