

Board Byline

By: Susan Keil, Board Chair

Investing in our local infrastructure is crucial for our community's health and prosperity. Oak Lodge Water Services (OLWS) is working to update its collections pipes to keep providing safe and reliable service for years to come.

The OLWS collections system has a problem with extra rainwater getting into it, which can cause sanitary sewer overflows. This happened recently at Lift Station 2 when our community experienced heavy rain. Under normal, dry weather conditions, the flow into the wastewater treatment plant is **3 million gallons per day (MGD)**. However, during wet weather events, the flow into the plant can surge to as much as **15 million gallons per day (MGD)**.

To address this problem, OLWS is actively taking steps to reduce the infiltration of excess rainwater into the system. There are 34 places in the collections pipes near Lift Station 2 and Trunk Main A that need to be repaired or replaced. Some of these pipes are on private property, while others are in public areas owned by Clackamas County. Based on inspections, most of the repairs can be done without digging deep open trenches. Instead, methods such as cured-in-place pipe or pipe bursting can be used.

OLWS has conducted closed-circuit television inspections on 98 percent of the collections system piping. The pipe condition information has been used to represent the likelihood of failure of those pipes. OLWS is working to minimize the risk of failure. In Figure B, a map of the OLWS service area visually represents each pipe, color-coded to indicate its individual level of failure rating.

Level of Failure Key

Level 1 - Excellent: Minor Defects. Failure is unlikely.

Level 2 - Good: Defects which are unlikely to fail for at least 20 years.

Level 3 - Fair: Moderate defects that will continue to deteriorate in 10 - 20 years.

Level 4 - Poor: Severe defects that will become grade 5 within 5 - 10 years.

Level 5 - Immediate Attention: Defects requiring immediate attention, which have failed or will likely fail within the next 5 years

Definition of Inflow and Infiltration:

Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) happens when rainwater and groundwater get into the pipes that collect our wastewater, especially when it rains a lot. This extra water can be too much for the system and the wastewater treatment plant to handle, which can cause sanitary sewer overflows into rivers and streams. This is not good for the environment and also makes the wastewater treatment plant work harder.

Figure A.

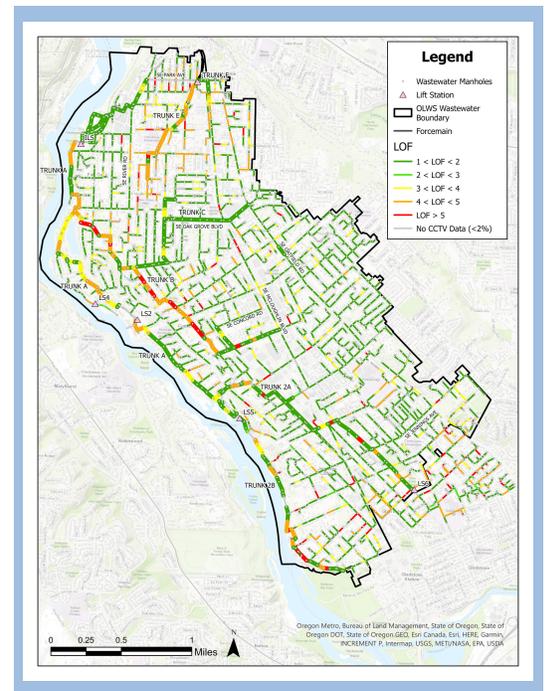


Figure B.

Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG)

FOG – fats, oils, and grease — is a problem for all of us. When FOG goes down the drain it cools and hardens which sticks to the pipes in your home or business and in the public wastewater system. It builds up in pipes, and eventually blocks water from flowing through. When that happens, used water can back up into your home or business and cause a wastewater overflow. It's messy, and it can be expensive, but we can all take steps to prevent FOG.

By following a few simple steps, you can help prevent wastewater backups by:

- Pouring cooled fats, oils and grease into a covered, disposable container and tossing it into your garbage instead of down sink drains.
- Soaking up remaining FOG with paper towels and placing in the trash.
- Scraping food scraps into your compost or trash before washing dishes.
- Using sink strainers to catch any remaining food waste while washing dishes.

Sandbags Available

If you need sandbags for residential water flow protection, a small number are available for our customers. Call ahead to ensure sandbag availability: (503) 353-4207. Locations of other sandbag stations in Clackamas County can be found here: clackamas.us/dm/sandbags.html



Your OLWS Bill

The Board of Directors has set a goal to move to monthly billing. Right now, nearly all customers receive a bi-monthly bill. OLWS is committed to providing regular updates as we progress toward the monthly billing transition. If you have questions about your bill, please contact a Billing Specialist by email at billing@olws.org or call (503) 654-7765.

Community Participation

You're invited to attend OLWS Board meetings. The public may attend through Zoom video conference or in-person (14496 SE River Road). The upcoming meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. on:

November 21 | December 19 | January 16

Learn how to attend at OakLodgeWaterServices.org or email info@olwsd.org for assistance.

Emergency Contact Information

Our team is available 24 hours a day at (503) 654-7765. If you see water gushing up out of either the street, ground, or from a manhole, please call us. Use the same number if you notice sewer spills or if you see someone illegally dumping into a storm drain.

Stay Connected

Stay connected with us. If you're interested in learning more about projects happening in your area, check out the "Active Projects" page on our website: OakLodgeWaterServices.org/active-projects. You can also view an enlarged version of Figure B (page 1) on the Active Projects page.



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