



Michael B. Coleman,  
Mayor

## Investing in Neighborhoods, Customer Service: Improvements in Public Utilities

The Columbus Department of Public Utilities continues to address water, sewer, stormwater and streetlighting infrastructure needs citywide. Many of Columbus' sewer and water lines are very old, with some built 100 or more years ago. Some neighborhoods were built without adequate stormwater systems and drainage issues continue to be addressed. A long-range Wet Weather Management Plan, which includes numerous sanitary sewer and wastewater treatment plant improvements, continues to progress to fulfill two consent orders with the state of Ohio to reduce sewer overflows into waterways. Many projects are in the process of being built or designed, all with the goal of ensuring optimal service to our customers while also protecting our environment.

Unless assistance from the federal government is restored to help cities comply with regulations, ratepayers will continue to shoulder the burden. The city of Columbus is striving to keep water and sewer rates as low as possible, especially during these challenging economic times. The department uses low interest loan programs to finance the improvements, such as those available through the city's Voted Bond Fund and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

Examples of your utility rate dollars at work include:

### Dublin Road Water Plant

The photo above shows a new sodium hypochlorite water treatment facility at the city's Dublin Road Water Plant, which serves about 408,000 customers daily. The drinking water produced at this plant now being disinfected with sodium hypochlorite instead of chlorine,



which is a significant safety and maintenance improvement.

Projects are also underway at the city's two additional water plants such as the South Wellfield Expansion at the Parsons Avenue Water Plant along with pump station and electrical upgrades at the Hap Cremean Water Plant.

### Water Distribution System

Several construction projects are underway to replace existing or build new water mains in various neighborhoods including the east side, university district, Morse Road and West Broad Street areas. Other projects are planned to ensure adequate water

supplies for the central Ohio region into the future.

### Wet Weather Management Plan

This past summer, the Ohio EPA granted draft approval of the city's Wet Weather Management Plan, submitted in 2005. This plan is designed to reduce sanitary and combined sewer overflows into waterways and reduce sewer backups into basements during heavy rain. The plan includes various improvements to add capacity to the sewer collection system, rehabilitation of older sewers, and numerous upgrades at the two wastewater treatment plants, Jackson Pike and Southerly. To date, the city has invested nearly \$1 billion in the mandated consent order sewer projects, including a new \$106 million headworks facility at the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant, completed late last year. This project was necessary to prepare for

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the additional flow that will enter the treatment plant when all of the system capacity upgrades are completed over the next few decades. The total cost of the plan is expected to exceed \$2.5 billion.

The capital improvement projects in the Wet Weather Management Plan will reduce an estimated 1.4 billion gallons of untreated sewer overflows into local waterways annually. The program will mean drier basements and a healthier, greener Columbus, which will benefit all neighborhoods and the downtown area. The water quality of our streams and rivers will be greatly improved for generations to come, which is why the plan is also referred to as Project Clean Rivers.

For more information about the Wet Weather Management Plan, please call Customer Service and request our brochure, "Clean Water for Life."

### Project Dry Basement

While the sewer and wastewater treatment plant improvements progress, Columbus residents experiencing sewer backups into basements do not have to wait for the projects to be completed for relief. Project Dry Basement is a program designed to prevent sewer backups in single and two-family homes due to insufficient capacity in city sewers during heavy rain. If a home is eligible, the Division of Sewerage and Drainage will provide installation of an approved backflow prevention device on your home sewer line, using an approved plumbing contractor. To determine if your home may be eligible, please report any basement backups immediately to the 24-hour Sewer Maintenance Operations Center by calling 311, 645-3111 or 645-7102.

### Stormwater Improvements

Projects to alleviate drainage issues continue to be constructed in a number of neighborhoods on virtually every side of the city. Examples of improvements on the south side: Greenhill Acres, Lockbourne, Moler, Evergreen and Dewberry roads; west side/Hilltop: Midland/Eakin area; McDannald Estates on the north side; and Naghten Street in the downtown area. Various stormwater improvements have been

completed on the east side over the past several years, including the Bliss Run Storm Trunk Sewer, and other east side projects continue such as those in the Idlewild Drive area.

### Lighting Columbus Neighborhoods

In addition to providing electricity service and maintenance to a limited service area, the Division of Power and Water provides a citywide streetlighting program, with the goal of lighting all Columbus neighborhoods. Homeowners who are interested in



more than the standard "cobra" street lights (left photo) can initiate a petition process to install more decorative lights (right photo) through a property assessment program. Streetlights can improve a neighborhood's safety and appearance. Projects underway include the communities of: Case Road, Willow Springs, Walnut Bluffs, Dresden-Radnor, Laurel Canyon, Willow Creek, and Miami Avenue. Those planned include South Linden, Dennison, Preston Road, Agler Road, Renner Road, Broad Meadows, Forest Hills and South Westgate/Sylvan.

To learn more about the services or projects the Columbus Department of Public Utilities provides, please call 311, 645-3111 or visit our Web site at [www.utilities.columbus.gov](http://www.utilities.columbus.gov).