

# Seattle Public Utilities Side Sewer Program

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Environmental Compliance Inspector

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From



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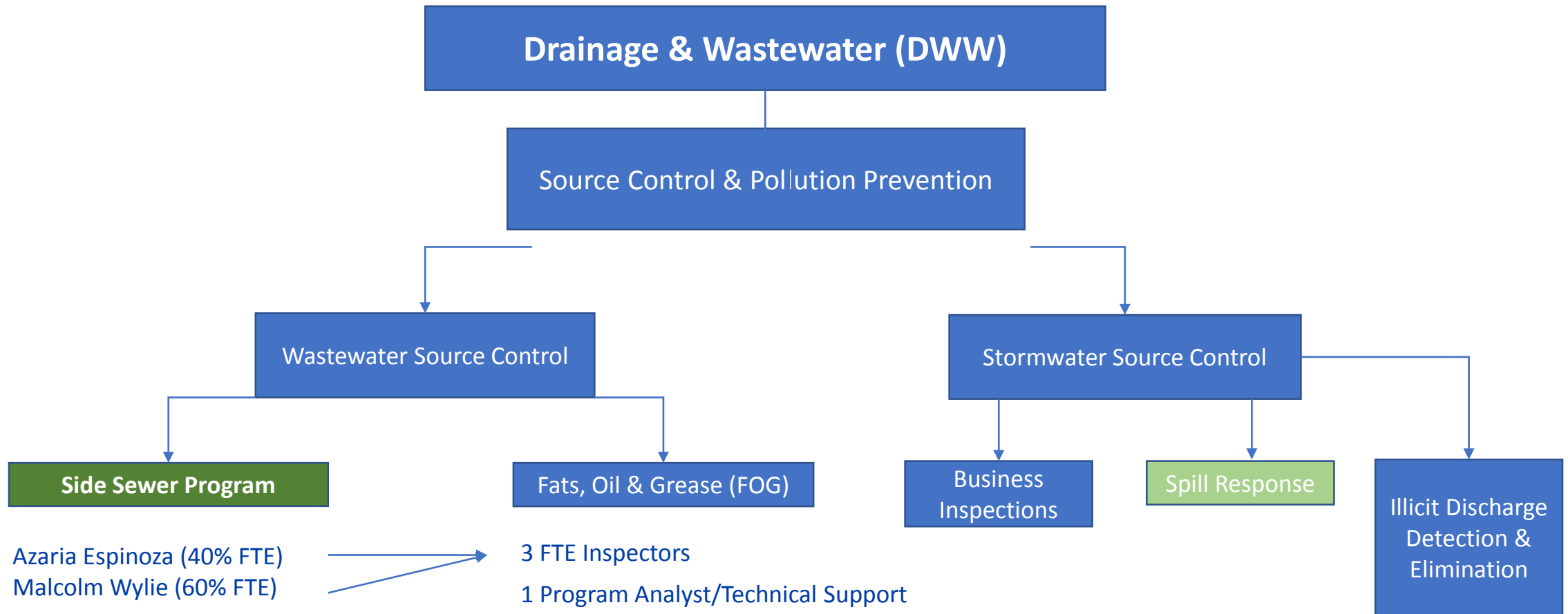




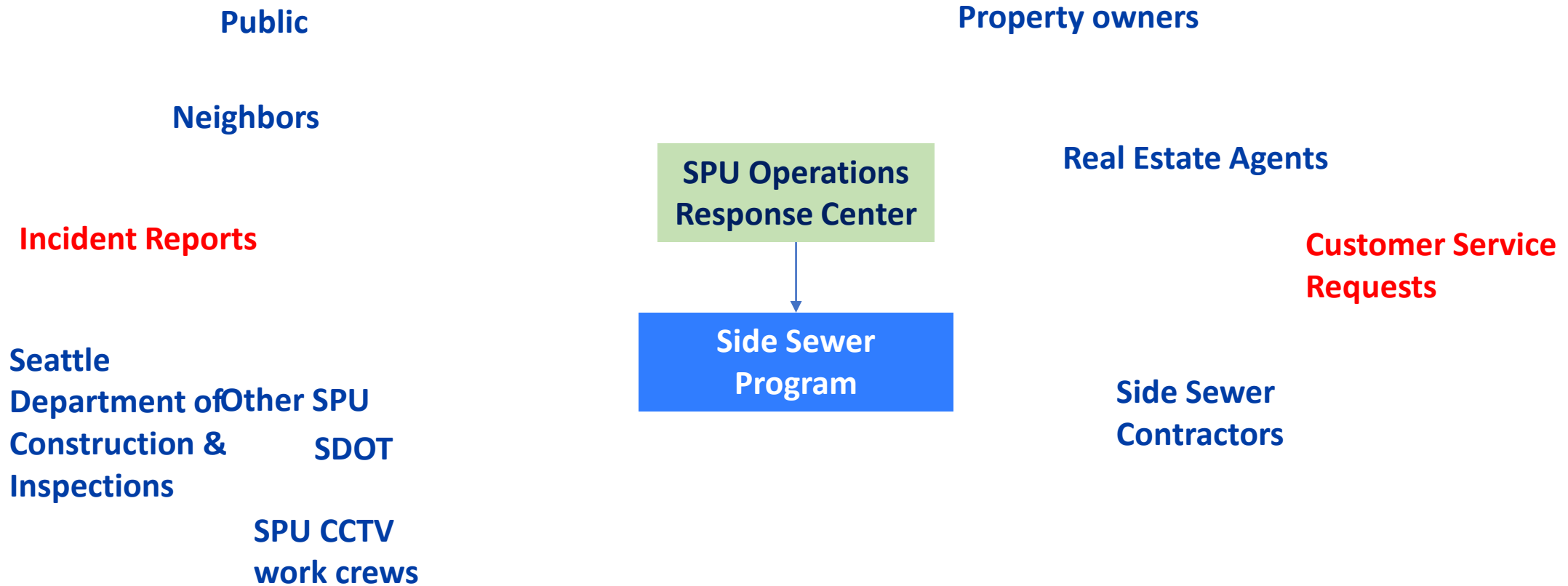
# What I'm covering tonight...

- How the Side Sewer Program (SSP) fits into the Drainage and Wastewater (DWW) Line of Business
- What we do in the SSP
  - Types of Customer Inquiries
  - Side Sewer Code and Enforcement
  - Risk Assessment
- What customers or owners can expect
- Examples of expensive side sewer issues
- Ways we are looking to improve our program

# Where does the Side Sewer Program fit within SPU Drainage & Wastewater?



# Where do most of our reports come from?





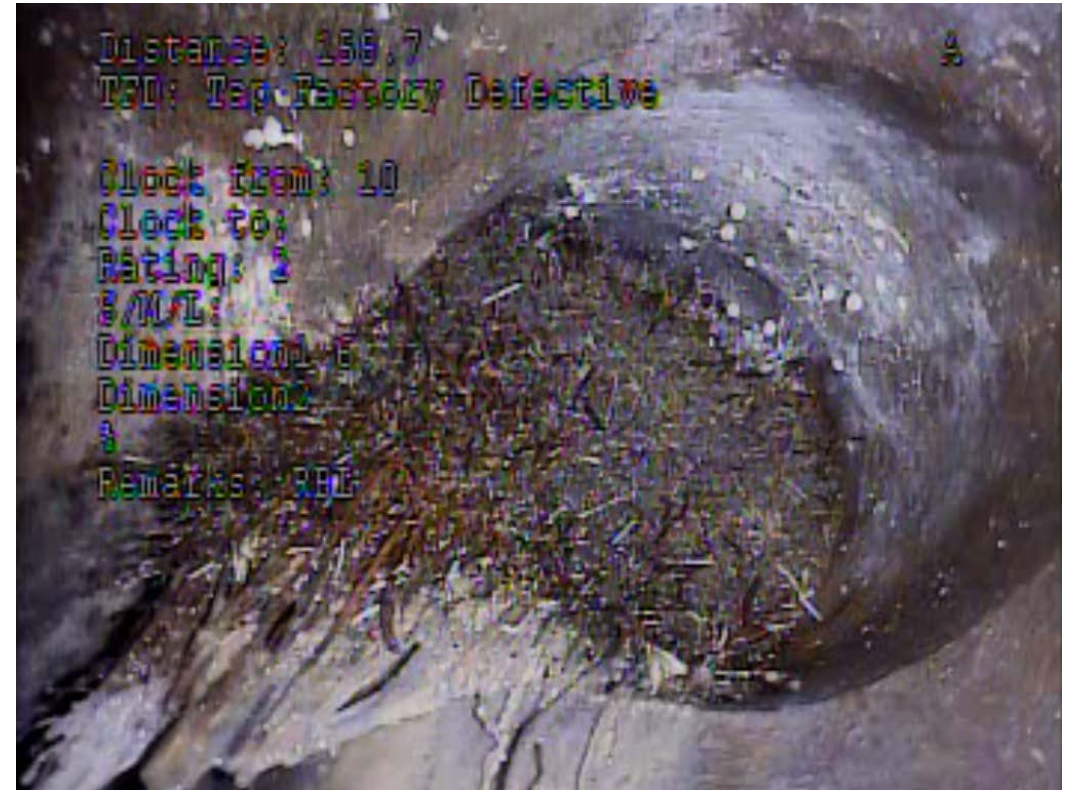
# Types of requests

## 1<sup>st</sup> Connection Reviews



## Types of requests (cont.)

- Responsibility for tree roots
- Responsibility for shared side sewers
- Permit questions
- Location of private side sewer or sewer mainline



# The regulatory basis for the Side Sewer Program

## ***Enforcing the "Side Sewer Code" (Seattle Municipal Code 21:16)***

### ***21.16.180 - Repair of inoperative or inadequate side sewer or drainage system***

**Where it is determined by the Director of Health or the Director of Seattle Public Utilities that a side sewer or drainage system is obstructed, broken, inoperative, or inadequate and is a [menace to health, or is likely to cause damage to public or private property](#) .....**





# Types of reports

- Surfacing sewage / sewage overflows
- Backups
- Voids (sinkholes)
- Protruding liners



# Enforcement Notices



File Number: 2019-SS-016  
Date: April 2, 2019

SEATTLE PUBLIC UTILITIES  
NOTICE OF VIOLATION  
AND  
ORDER FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION AND PENALTY

Name:  
Address:



## PENALTY:

Pursuant to SMC 21.16.362, a penalty of \$250 is hereby imposed to the property owner for the Code violation cited above. This penalty is suspended pending completion of the corrective action by the required deadline and will be waived if compliance is achieved by that deadline. However, if compliance is not achieved by the required deadline, this penalty will be due and payable upon invoice. In addition,





## Public Health



Surfacing sewage cases where it is:

- In the public right-of-way
- On private property where it is coming from a neighboring property

We do not issue an enforcement notice where surfacing sewage is contained on private property, unless:

- It is a rental property
- It is an environmental risk

## Environment



Surfacing sewage cases where it is, or likely to, enter a separated stormwater system or waterbody

*Note: SPU Spill Response is likely to be the first SCPP section to attend. They will do the regulatory reporting, water sampling, and posting of public notices if necessary.*



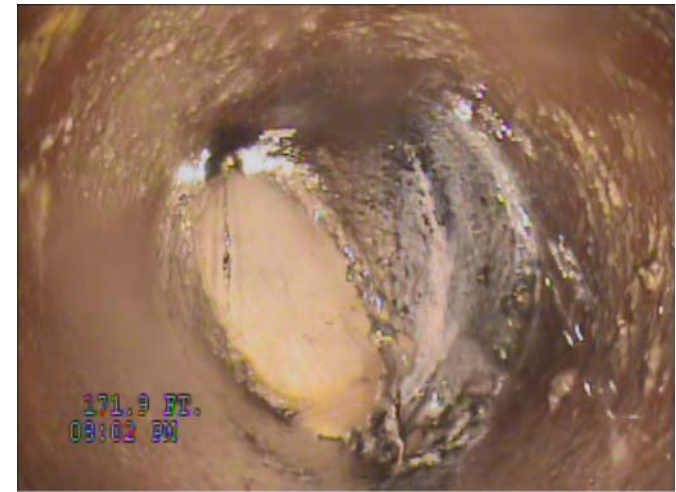
## Damage to City Assets



Voids or sinkholes are one of the most common types of case where we will issue a Notice of Violation. Note that the property owner is responsible for repairing their private side sewer and also responsible for street restoration



# Damage to City Assets





## Private Property



Where a broken private side sewer is allowing sewage to cross onto neighboring property

# How many cases do we get?

## 345 TOTAL (2018)

42 Surfacing Sewage cases

48 Voids

140 1<sup>st</sup> Connection Reviews

27 Backups

17 Root Issues

## 49 Enforcement Notices (2018)

17 Surfacing Sewage

21 Voids

2 Protruding Liners

2 1<sup>st</sup> connections

7 Defective side sewers/discharge



# What can customers or the public expect from us?

- We will prioritize cases where there is risk to public health and/or water quality
- We are consistent in what situations we will issue enforcement notices, and in the timeframes we give to property owners
- We try to give enough information to property owners so that they understand what is required of them
- We will extend deadlines if there are extenuating circumstances and it is not causing an immediate threat to public health, safety, or the environment
- We act as a single point of contact to answer questions on behalf of a number of SPU sections

# Our response guidelines

The WSC section has established targets that we will use to assess the program

For **surfacing sewage** cases

- Field investigation within 1 business day
- NOV issued within 3 business days
- Surfacing sewage cases are resolved within 15 business days

For other enforcement cases:

- Field investigation within 5 business days
- NOV issued within 15 business days
- Cases are resolved within 60 business days

Customer requests are completed within 10 business days





# Areas of Concern

Affordability for owners

Reactive program

Lack of awareness amongst property owners

Aging infrastructure

## Home Repair

The Home Repair Loan Program provides affordable loans to income-qualified homeowners to address critical health, safety, and structural issues. The program is designed for owner-occupied, single family homes with low-to moderate-income households.

The no- and low-interest loans are funded by local and federal programs that prioritize repairs that address health and safety concerns. Homeowners are given as much flexibility as possible, and our trusted staff will offer expert guidance throughout the process to ensure the work is done well, and on budget.

If you do not qualify for a loan, a Home Repair Grant may be available. Call us to learn more.

## Home Repair Loan Program

To request a Home Repair Loan application, please call (206) 684-0458 or email [HomeRepair@seattle.gov](mailto:HomeRepair@seattle.gov).



# Affordability: Case Study 1



Owner had to have company pump out groundwater during repairs. Rip up new sidewalk

“Permits excessive”

Issues in the street have been ongoing – possibly more than just his side sewer



# Affordability: Case Study 2





## Affordability: Case Study 2



= \$60,000 repair. SPU replaced the connection. Costs were shared between SPU and owners upon claim.



# In development

## Side Sewer Customer Engagement Plan (2020 – 2021)

### Goals:

1. Increase awareness/knowledge of side sewer ownership responsibility
2. Increase side sewer maintenance behaviors (scoping and cleaning)

Focus on root hotspots, new homeowners, low income areas of Seattle

Outreach material for Inspectors and work crews to leave at properties

Program specific information on website

More capacity for proactive notifications to owners

## **Areas that we will be working on**

**Outreach material for Inspectors and work crews to leave at properties**

**Program specific information on website**

**More capacity for proactive notifications to owners**





# Questions or concerns?



Would it be better to live here...

...or here?

## How to contact me:

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