Investigating Side Sewer Assistance Options for SPU Customers

CDWAC

9/14/16

Seattle Public Utilities

Outline

- Current Effort & Approach
- Side Sewers Explained
- Defining the Problem
- Solutions Used Elsewhere
- Next Steps

Seattle Public Utilities

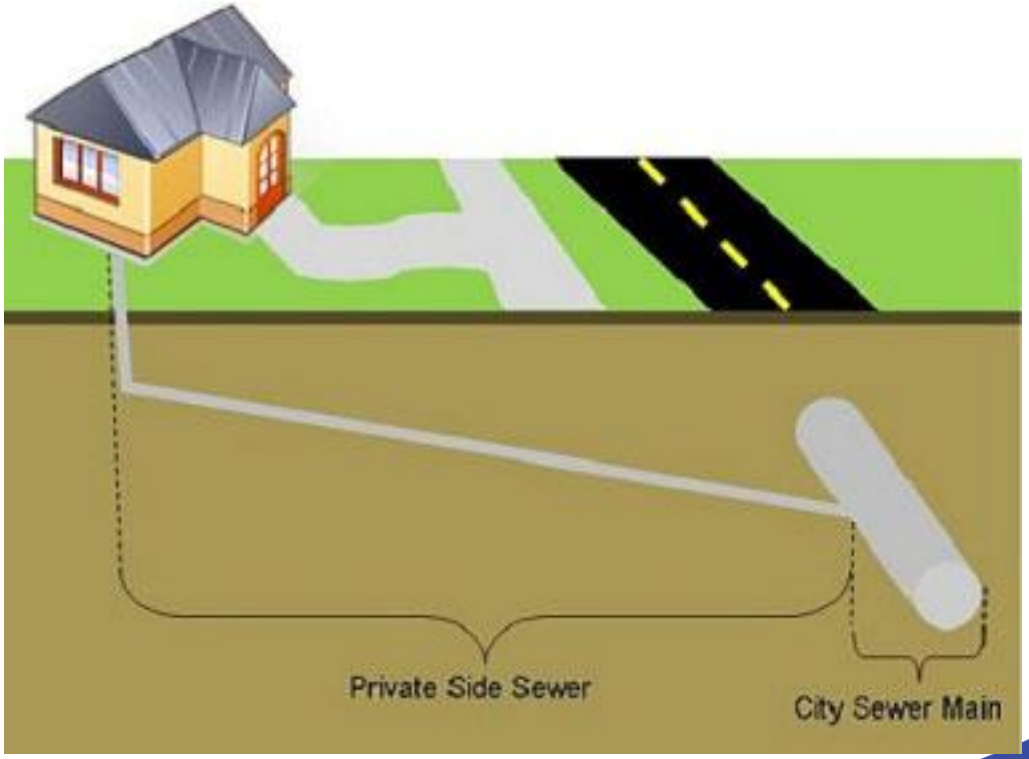
Project Overview

- Problem Statement
- Team is tasked with:
  - Identifying solutions used by other utilities
  - Conduct options analysis
  - Provide draft recommendation to SPU leadership
  - Circle back with CDWAC for input!

Seattle Public Utilities

Side Sewers Explained

- What is a side sewer?
- Who owns them?
- Who maintains them?



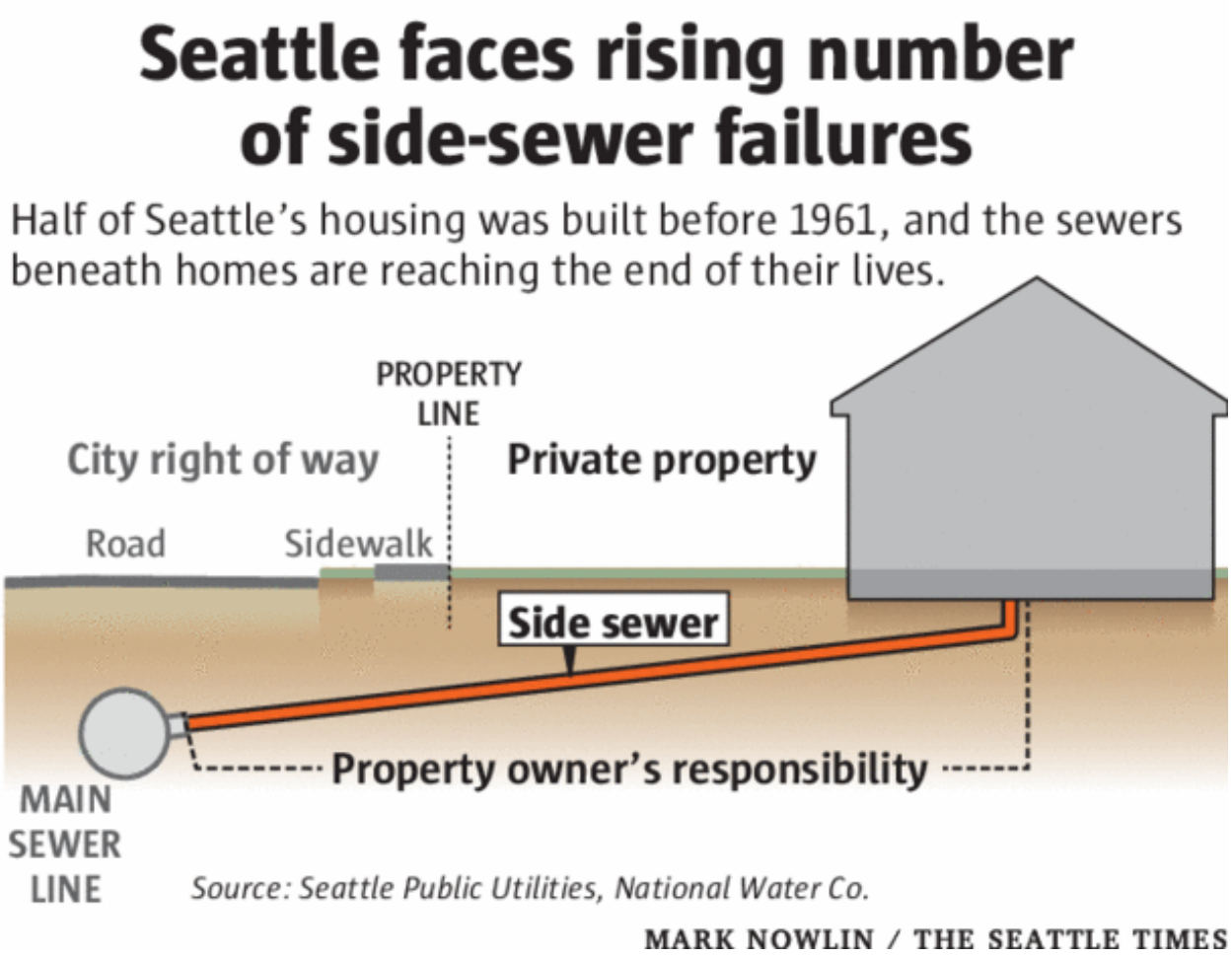
Seattle Public Utilities

Side Sewers in Seattle

- Why are they important?
- Are they all the same?
- By the numbers:
  - ~1400 miles of sewer mains
  - ~4100 miles of side sewers
  - ~5500 total miles of pipe

Seattle Public Utilities

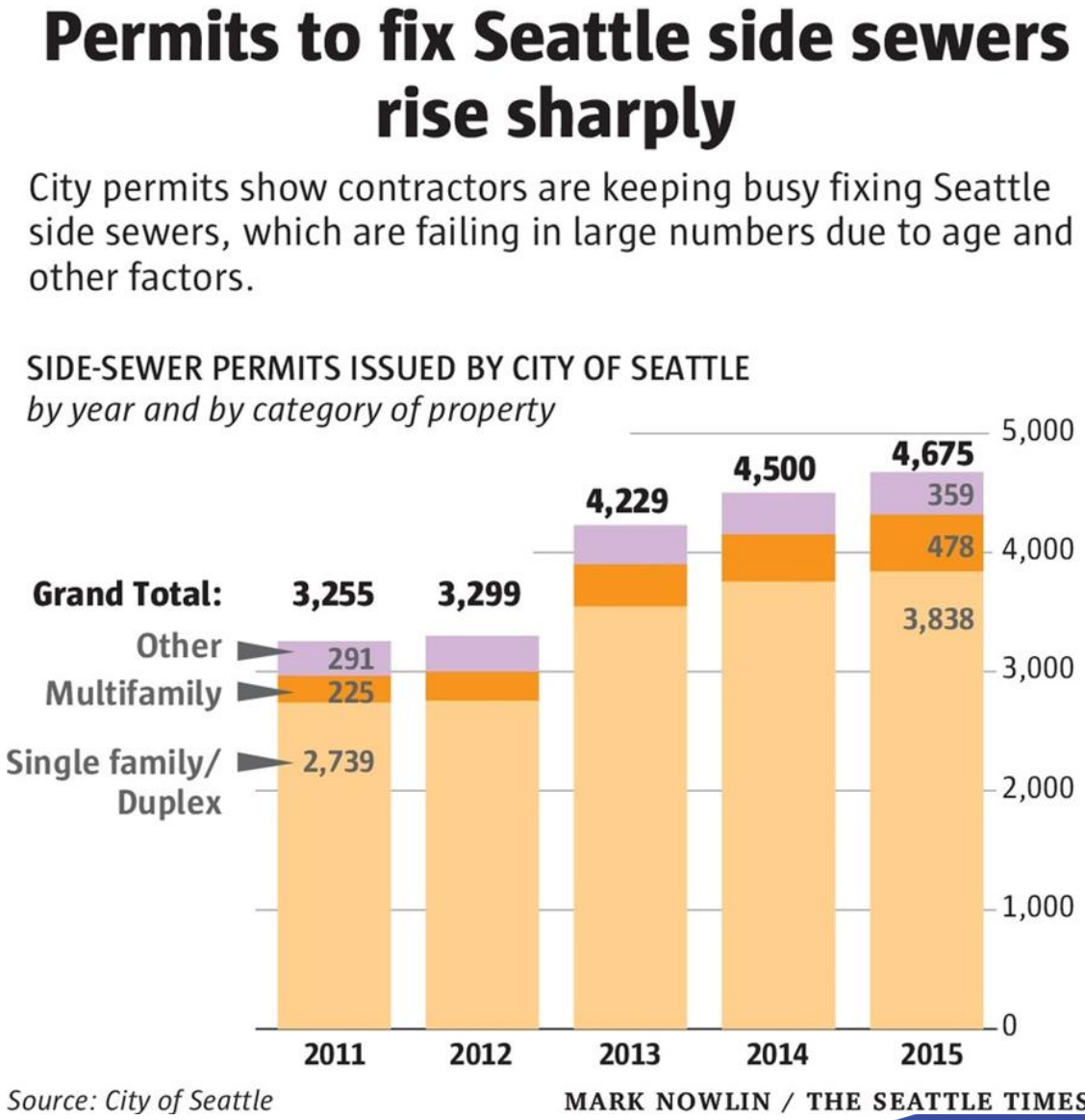
What is the Issue?



http://o.seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/realestate/2028178107_sidesewersxml.html

Seattle Public Utilities

Exhibit A: Side Sewer Permits



Seattle Public Utilities

Why is it important to SPU?

- Failures can cause backups into customer's buildings & other property
- Increases costs to SPU
- Repair costs can be a hardship on customers
- Customer costs can vary greatly from one building to the next

Seattle Public Utilities

What's the Issue?

- Average age
  - All buildings in Seattle = 72
  - Buildings with repair permits (2005-14) = 66
- 5-year average repair permits/year = 2260
- Total number of connections ~ 130,000
- Increase in permits from 2008-15 = 68%

Seattle Public Utilities

Policy Goals

- Draft policy recommendation goals:
  - Reduce costs for customers
  - Increase service equity
  - Improve service options

- *Effort is not focused on:*
  - Sewer Backup Prevention
  - Inflow & Infiltration

Seattle Public Utilities

What's Most Important?

- Ranking Criteria prioritized
  - Customer Service Equity
    - *Does the solution address customer costs?*
    - *Would many people be eligible?*
    - *Does the solution require a lot of effort on the customer's part to understand and take part in?*
    - *Could the solution account for socioeconomic differences that exist in Seattle?*
  - Timeliness
  - Utility Rates

Seattle Public Utilities

What Have we Found so Far?

- Comparing Seattle to others
  - SPU not too dissimilar from other large cities when it comes to private side sewers
  - Seattle dissimilar from most cities according to 2015 Water Environment Federation Survey
  - Requirements for pavement restoration can be a cost driver for customers
  - Many customers repair their side sewers each year

Seattle Public Utilities

What are Current Drivers?

- Often, Consent Decree with EPA (not the case in Seattle)
- Combined or sanitary sewer overflows
- Jurisdictions or utilities develop programs aimed to:
  - Reduce CSO's & SSO's
  - Reduce inflow & infiltration (surcharge in pipes)

Seattle Public Utilities

Initial Approaches

- Outreach & Education
- Utility Managed Side Sewer Programs
- Financial Incentives
- Warranty/Insurance Programs
- Regulations or Code Solutions
- Operations & Maintenance

Seattle Public Utilities

Outreach and Education

- Geared to encourage customers to be proactive
- Social-based marketing techniques
- Customer notification
  - Example: Los Angeles Root Notification Program

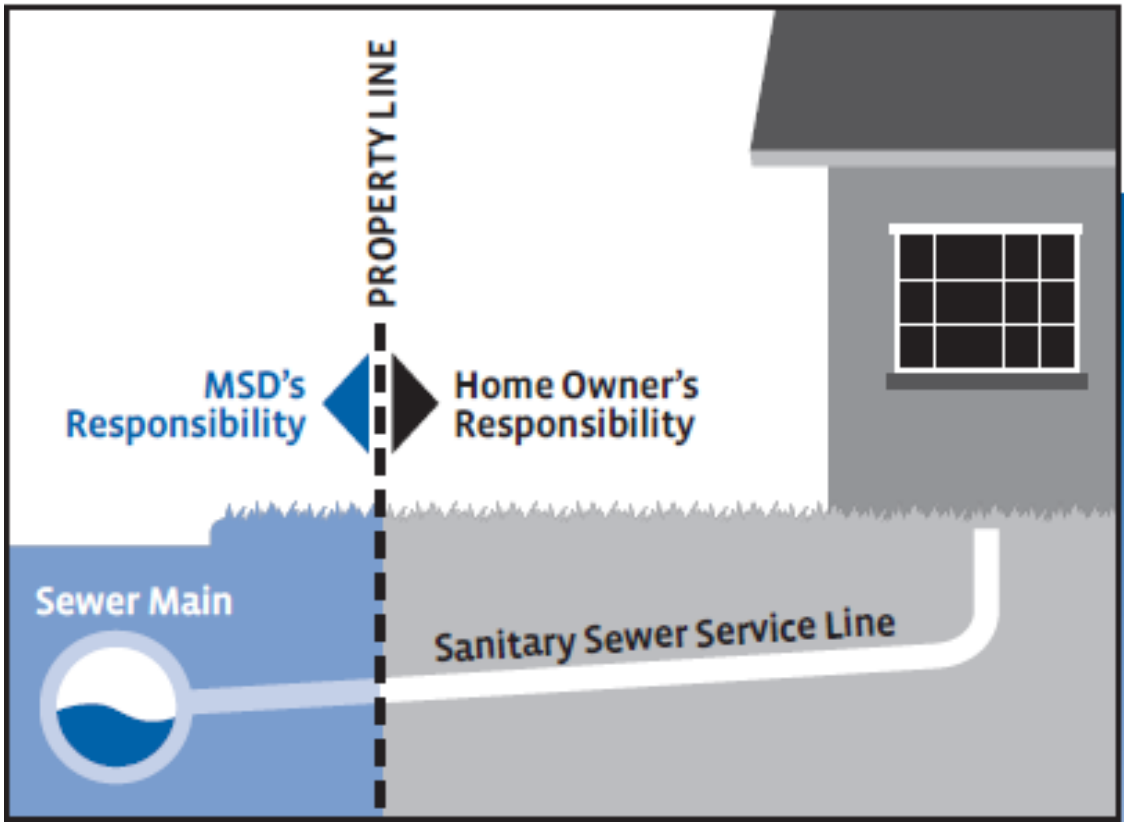
Seattle Public Utilities

Utility Side Sewer Maintenance, Repair or Replacement

- Utility maintains some portion of side sewer between sewer main and building
  - Most often within the right-of-way
  - Examples: San Antonio, Washington D.C., Louisville, San Diego*

Seattle Public Utilities

Utility Side Sewer Program



Side sewer ownership as defined in Louisville, KY

Seattle Public Utilities

Financial Incentives

- Loans, grants, rebates, and reimbursements aimed to reduce the upfront or out of pocket costs of side sewer replacement and sometimes, restoration in the right of way,
  - Utility or 3rd party managed

- Examples: Philadelphia, Boston, Louisville

Seattle Public Utilities

Warranty / Insurance Programs

- Aimed to reduce total costs of side sewer repair and replacement for customers
- Utility or 3rd party managed
  - St Louis County, MO
  - Several vendors (local and national) currently serving Seattle market

Seattle Public Utilities

Regulatory or Code Solution

- Closed-circuit TV verification and certificate requirement triggered by:
  - Property transactions
  - Water service level changes
  - Remodel projects that meet a given dollar threshold (e.g. $100k);

- Example: East Bay MUD

Seattle Public Utilities

*Operations & Maintenance

- Utility performs some aspect of inspection or maintenance of side sewers during routine O&M

**Not found in literature or options research*

Seattle Public Utilities

*Opportunistic

- Customer notification in advance of capital improvement projects or O&M
  - Major road repair projects
  - Sewer main repairs

**Not found in literature or options research*

Seattle Public Utilities

Summary

- Many approaches:
  - Reduce costs for customers
  - Fix broken side sewers
  - Have worked very well (and, in combination)

  - In some cases, the approach didn't work
    - East Bay MUD Private Sewer Lateral Program
    - Incentive did not entice additional customers to opt-in

Seattle Public Utilities

Next Steps

- Team currently evaluating options
- Economic analysis of top option(s)
- Revisit CDWAC to gather input

Seattle Public Utilities

Questions?

Seattle Public Utilities