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MEDIA RELEASE

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Repair work continues underground on large sewer pipe under E Broadway

Crews continue to carefully remove debris from inside the 90-to 96-inch brick sewer line, which has been in service for more than 150 years. Debris—consisting of rocks, dirt, sand and bricks—has built up over time and must be removed. Workers are installing steel liner plates in areas where bricks are missing to stabilize the pipe and create a safe work environment.

Large tanker trucks equipped with a powerful vacuum are in use to help with the debris removal process. But bricks and larger rocks must be hauled to the surface by hand.

Crews began the repair process by creating a temporary pump-around—removing wastewater flow from the pipe's damaged section—allowing sewer service to continue and workers to enter the empty pipe to make repairs. You may see them enter the sewer line through existing access structures in the pavement at or near the intersections.

Solution

Evaluations are still underway to determine the best solution for both the repair of the damaged portion of the pipe, and the comprehensive rehabilitation of the one-mile long pipe—from Second Street to just east of South Campbell Street. There is no estimate on a completion date at this time.

Traffic and safety

- All intersections and sidewalks are open for pedestrians
- Motorist on E Broadway can go straight or make a right turn onto streets where that is allowed
- Motorists on S Floyd, S Preston and S Jackson can make right turns only onto Broadway
- No traffic can cross the center part of the intersections at Broadway and S Floyd and S Preston streets

Background

MSD contractors inspecting the pipe as part of a comprehensive sewer line rehabilitation project discovered damage to the pipe in two places. Voids or empty spaces have developed under the pavement due to these breaks in the sewer pipe.

Small breaks in a brick sewer can lead to large holes. During heavy rains, if one or two bricks fall out of place, the pipe can unravel. As the gap becomes larger, more bricks cascade down, and soil surrounding the pipe flows into the line pulled by the rushing water leaving a void or space around the pipe and under the pavement.

This 96-inch diameter brick sewer—installed in 1866—has experienced failures in different locations as recently as 2018, 2015, 2014 and 2009. MSD will first repair this damaged area then proceed with the planned full rehabilitation of the 1-mile pipe under Broadway between S Second to the east of Campbell streets.

Layers of utilities, including a 30-inch water main, complicate the repair. Precautions are underway to reroute water service in the area. There will be no disruption of the sewer or other utility services.

MSD maintains more than 3,300 miles of sewer lines – enough to stretch from California to Maine, and many dating back 75 years or more. Annually, the agency inspects 450 to 525 miles of sewer pipe, as part of a 20-year inspection cycle.



About MSD

The Louisville/Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) works to achieve and maintain clean, environmentally safe waterways for a healthy and vibrant community. The organization's more than 670 employees provide wastewater management, drainage and flood protection services across the 376 square miles of Louisville Metro, and wastewater service in portions of Oldham County. In addition to operating and maintaining Louisville Metro's sewer system, floodwall system, water quality treatment centers and flood pumping stations, MSD invests in hundreds of infrastructure improvement projects each year, plants more than 1,000 trees and other vegetation annually to enhance water filtration and reduce runoff, and provides numerous outreach programs to inform and educate the community about protecting our waterways.