



Michael B. Coleman,
Mayor

Major Reinvestment in Public Utilities Continues

The Columbus Department of Public Utilities continues to make major progress on addressing aging sewer and water infrastructure and ensuring adequate water supplies. One only needs to see the national news stories on water shortages in other areas such as Texas to see the importance of proper long-range planning.

To ensure adequate watersuppliesintothe future, the city broke ground on a long-planned upground reservoir in June. When completed in 2013, this 843-acre site (shown in photo) will hold 9 billion gallons once full and provide an additional 29 million gallons of water a day. This northwestern Delaware County site is upstream of the Dublin Road Water Treatment Plant on the Scioto River. During high water elevations, it will divert water from the river to the reservoir to hold it for dry weather periods when additional water is needed in the river to flow to the plant. Having the additional water supply will provide protection from a 50-year drought, support drinking water needs, growth and development, all of which help the economic health of our region. Total cost for the project, which also includes a pump station and raw water pipeline, is expected to be around \$129 million, funded through low interest loans and water user fees.



Other water improvements include replacement or rehabilitation of many aging waterlines across the city. Columbus owns 2,550 miles of waterline and maintains an additional 1,000 miles in contracted suburban areas. Some of these pipes date back to the 1880s. Over the last few years, the waterline rehabilitation and

replacement budget has been tripled, from about \$5 to \$15 million per year. These improvements will help reduce main water breaks and improve reliability and water pressure in many areas.

Many water plant upgrades are also underway to meet water demand and to comply with increasing Environmental Protection Agency

regulatory requirements on water treatment.

Compliance with clean water mandates also drives the need for improvements to our wastewater treatment plants, and affects stormwater management. Much has been accomplished and many improvements continue on Columbus' 40-year Wet Weather Management Plan, which began in 2005. Overall goals of the program include reduced sewer overflows into local waterways and reduction of basement backups due to capacity issues during wet weather. Both wastewater treatment plants have received extensive upgrades.

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Phase II of a major project in the plan, known as the Olentangy-Scioto-Interceptor-Sewer Augmentation Relief Sewer or OARS, is under construction now. This \$341.4 million tunneling project (see photo below) will greatly reduce combined sewer overflows in the downtown and surrounding areas.

4,625 miles of sanitary, storm and combined sewers are maintained by the city, some of which also date back to the 1800s when Columbus was in its early development phase. Sanitary sewers have been rehabilitated or replaced in many older neighborhoods and this work will continue, as well as the studies that identify the work that needs to be done. These are known as inflow and infiltration studies, which help identify various sources of extraneous water that finds its way into the sanitary sewers from rain and melting snow through public and private sewer sources. Eight neighborhood areas currently in various phases of these studies and improvements include: Livingston-James, Early Ditch, Miller-Kelton, Northwest Alum Creek, Sullivant Avenue, Plum Ridge, West Fifth and Barthman-Parsons.

Stormwater improvements also continue in many areas that were originally built without modern drainage in order to alleviate neighborhood flooding.

Work also begins this fall on replacing several aged streetlight circuits across the city. Reinvestment for the three phases of work to be done over the next several months is expected to total \$1 million. The improvements will increase the reliability of streetlights and decrease outages caused by circuit failure.

Utility maintenance needs are addressed as reported and preventative maintenance programs are in place such as, tree root foaming of sewers and cleaning and televising sewer lines.

To learn more about how the Columbus Department of Public Utilities is addressing the dual challenge of maintaining an aging infrastructure while also preparing for continued growth, please visit our Web site at utilities.columbus.gov.

To report a water, sewer, stormwater, city power or streetlight maintenance need, please call 311 or 645-3111 and follow the prompts to the 24-hour utility dispatch centers.



For more information, please call 311, 645-3111 or visit www.utilities.columbus.gov