



Department of Public Works
Infrastructure Services Division

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September 7, 2007

Alderman Joe Dudzik
Room 205
City Hall

Subject: Sewer Database

Dear Alderman Dudzik:

This letter is in response to Mr. Thomas Shaffer August 15, 2007 letter requesting information on our Environmental Engineering's "sewer line database." We wish to respond to each of the questions point-by-point:

1. *Q: "When did the transfer of sewer line locations from index cards to a computerized database take place?"*
A: The information on our paper Sewer Plan index cards was transcribed to a Microsoft Access database program from May through December 2006.
2. *Q: "Was the data conversion done in-house or contracted? If contracted, who was the vendor and what was the selection process?"*
A: The entire project was done by Environmental Engineering staff.
3. *Q: "How accurate is the database?"*
A: Any database is only as accurate as the original data and the individuals that input this data into the Access file. In our experience, the original data on the Sewer Plan index cards was accurate, and the transcribed data on the Sewer Plan database likewise is accurate.
4. *Q: "How often is that database tested?"*
A: Prior to the release of the Sewer Plan database, it was spot checked. The database is used regularly as we prepare plans or use data for all the proposed sewer projects. If an error is found, it is corrected.
5. *Q: "What percentage of the database is sampled on a test run?"*
A: As indicated in the answer to question 4, the database is used on a regular basis. Any problems found are addressed.
6. *Q: "Have the index cards been retained and stored?"*
A: All of the original Sewer Plan index cards have been saved; nothing has been thrown away. They are now stored at the DPW facility on the former Tower Automotive site in the event that we may need to refer to an original index card.

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7. Q: *"Please provide a list of the entities that use the database. Is Diggers Hotline one of those entities?"*

A: Only Environmental Engineering has access to the Sewer Plan index database. We, however, use this database to assemble prints of City sewers for outside entities' requests including Diggers Hotline.

8. Q: *"For the Years 2005 thru 2007 to date, please provide a detailed breakout of incidences where contractors have damaged sewer lines as a result of incorrect sewer line location information provided by the database. What was the dollar value of those sewer line damages? Was the cost then the City's responsibility?"*

A: We have no record from 2005 to 2007 of damaged sewer lines as a result of using our Sewer Plan Index database.

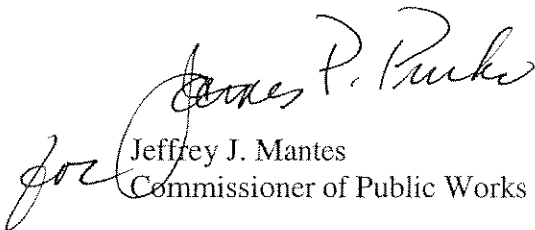
The objective of moving the typewritten Sewer Plan File data from the index files into the Access Database was to:


- Make this data available to Environmental staff at their Personal Computer (PC) without having to leave to walk to the Plan File index card area.
- Once a staff member retrieves the relevant file information, that person can then likewise retrieve the scanned image of the sewer plan at his or her PC.
- A shortcoming with the old card file is that occasionally a card would get misfiled or lost. This will no longer be a problem.
- Permission to access this information can be given to individuals from other City Departments. They can retrieve this information themselves without having to wait.

This Sewer Plan database initiative is part of Environmental Engineering Section's overall strategic objective of streamlining work flow processes, improving data source access, as well as continuous quality and productivity improvement.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Martín A. Aquino at (414) 286-2462.

Very truly yours,


Jeffrey J. Mantes
Commissioner of Public Works

 FPC:mn
c: Jeffrey Polenske
Thomas Schaffer (LRB)
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