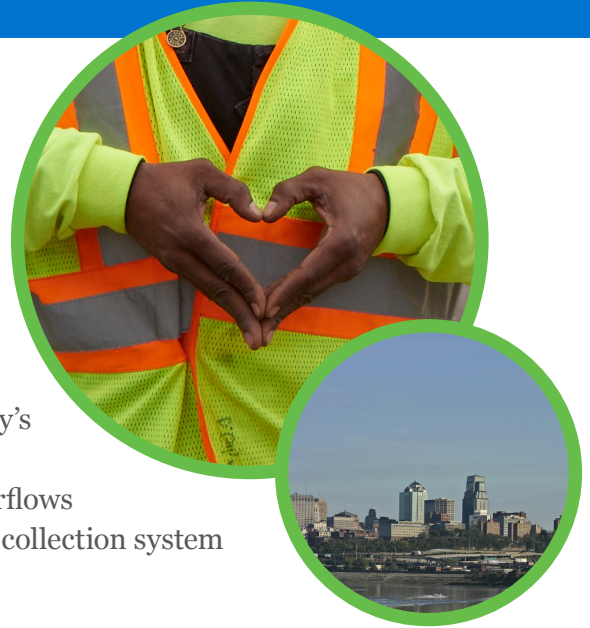


# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHAT IS THE SMART SEWER PROGRAM?

In 2010, the City of Kansas City, Missouri entered into a Consent Decree with the United States Environmental Protection Agency to reduce the volume of overflows from the City's sewer system. KC Water's Smart Sewer program is a 30-year, multi-billion dollar program to address this challenge by 2040. The program helps protect our community's environment by reducing the amount of stormwater entering our sewer system, which will reduce the volume of sewer overflows and the potential for basement backups. When complete, the collection system throughout our community will be restored to like-new conditions.



## WHY IS OUR SEWER SYSTEM IN NEED OF SUCH EXTENSIVE REPAIR?

**It's old.** More than 150 years ago, Kansas City began building the basic sewer infrastructure that would allow the City to grow and prosper. Some of that infrastructure is still in use today, but its condition has declined due to age and the forces of nature; it must be updated and replaced.

**It's big.** Kansas City's aging, overall sewer system includes both combined and separate sewer systems totaling approximately 318 square miles.

- The *combined sewer system* consists of 58 square miles, primarily located in the oldest areas of the City. During rainfall events, the system will reach capacity, overflow and discharge a mixture of wastewater and rainwater directly into local creeks, streams, and rivers.
- The *separate sanitary sewer system* consists of 260 square miles, runs alongside separate stormwater pipes, and is only intended to collect and convey wastewater to a wastewater treatment plant. However, rainwater can enter the system through leaky sewer pipe joints, broken sewer pipes, manholes, and illicit connections to the stormwater system causing the system to become overloaded during rainfall events. When this system exceeds its capacity, it too overflows a mixture of wastewater and rainwater from various manholes throughout the system.

**It's essential.** Improving and maintaining our shared sewer system is vital to protecting the health of our entire community, including our local streams and rivers.

## HOW DOES THE SMART SEWER PROGRAM AFFECT MY WATER BILL?

Kansas City's multi-billion dollar Smart Sewer program is funded solely through wastewater revenues. This has required significant wastewater rate increases, resulting in higher bills paid by KC Water customers. Residents in Kansas City were faced with double-digit wastewater rate increases in recent years, which more than doubled the average monthly bill for consumers. Fortunately, the City has taken action to renegotiate the Consent Decree with the EPA to lower future rate increases for Kansas City residents.



## WHAT IS THE CITY DOING TO LOWER MY SEWER BILL?

The [Third Amended Consent Decree](#) was signed by a federal judge on March 3, 2021 after several years of negotiations. This amendment extends the final compliance date from 2035 to 2040 and outlines new performance criteria for reducing the annual volume of combined sewer overflows. This renegotiation reduced the cost of the Smart Sewer program to 2035 from the originally planned \$4.7 billion to \$2.3 billion by focusing on cost-effective green infrastructure solutions and shifting priorities to improving our existing assets rather than building costly new infrastructure. Additional investments beyond 2035 will be needed to comply with the Third Amended Consent Decree.



## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

For additional information about the Smart Sewer program, please contact:

3-1-1 or (816) 531-1313  
[www.kcsmartsewer.us](http://www.kcsmartsewer.us)

