

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Recent Rain Event and Sewage Overflow Situation in St. Petersburg

Why was there a wastewater overflow at the Southwest Water Reclamation Facility?

Like many other cities in our region, the City of St. Petersburg's wastewater collection system was overwhelmed with a major storm event and was unable to process all of the flow that it received. The rising water table increased pressure on the sewer system, and overburdened the treatment plant's capacity.

Why did the City decide to pump sewage into the regional stormwater treatment facility, located near Clam Bayou?

The lowest point in the city is located in the Southwest district, near Clam Bayou, and this is where any overflow would first occur.

In order to prevent wastewater from flowing down our streets and/or backing up into the homes of our residents overall, and specifically in this area, the City of St. Petersburg chose to pump diluted sewage into a stormwater treatment facility adjacent to Clam Bayou.

What kind of treatment did the stormwater treatment facility provide?

The stormwater treatment facility was not designed to treat wastewater. However, because it is a treatment facility, it did provide some level of treatment. Floating material was captured in the first of the facility's two basins. This material was subsequently collected and removed from the basin. The facility also provided a quiet environment in which heavy solids could settle out of the wastewater.

Why did the City stop pumping into the regional stormwater treatment facility?

The original decision to pump into the regional stormwater facility was taken to mitigate worse conditions. It was never intended as a permanent solution. The temporary pumps were in operation until the rain ceased and the sewage treatment facility could handle the overflows. The pumps were then relocated to the Albert Whitted Water Reclamation Facility in anticipation of additional heavy rain in order to divert the high flows through

portions of the plant for discharge into Tampa Bay. This decision was made based on the larger capacity of Tampa Bay to receive and process this material.

How much sanitary sewage was discharged into Tampa Bay?

On August 8 and August 9, an estimated 1.1 million gallons of partially treated wastewater was discharged through pipes extending approximately 1,000 feet offshore.

What is the water quality of the area in Tampa Bay where the discharge occurred?

Bacteriological tests indicate that the bacteria level is within the acceptable parameters of the Federal Healthy Beaches Program.

What is the City doing in the short term to minimize the chance of these discharges occurring again during an extreme weather event?

The old Albert Whitted Water Reclamation Facility was scheduled to be demolished in 2016. Because of the recent events, this demolition has been deferred until the end of hurricane season. This provides the City with 5 million gallons of additional storage. The temporary facilities to transfer flow into the old Albert Whitted facility will be kept available in case of another extreme weather event.

What is the city doing in the long term to minimize the chance of those discharges occurring again during an extreme weather event?

There are two projects currently under construction at the Southwest Water Reclamation Facility with a total cost of \$5.2 million. A 15 million gallon reject water storage tank is being constructed.

Also, two 450 Hp reclaimed water pumps are being installed. These pumps will be used to increase the amount of water that can be pumped down the injection wells and/or out into the reclaimed water distribution system.

Construction of these two projects will be completed in late spring/summer of 2016.

Additionally, a sewer collection system improvement project in the Maximo Moorings neighborhood to reline, repair and replace sanitary sewers, manholes and laterals will occur.

These three projects will increase storage, pumping capacity and lessen plant inflows.

Why did the City go forward with closing the Albert Whitted Water Reclamation Facility?

Updated regulations required us to construct additional storage facilities. Due in large part to the limited site size and well conditions at the Albert Whitted Plant, and the adequate size and plant capacity at the Southwest Plant, it was recommended by our consultant to construct the additional storage facility at the Southwest Plant, and to divert wastewater flows from Albert Whitted to the Southwest Plant.