

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since 1987, Akron has spent more than \$390 million to improve its sewer system, including millions of dollars on engineering studies of the sewer system and the receiving streams to meet EPA requirements, including upgrades to Akron's wastewater treatment plant, the Akron Water Reclamation Facility in the Cuyahoga Valley.



Cuyahoga Street Storage Basin, Rack 40

In 2002, to show good faith and to end the most significant sewer overflows, Akron spent over \$23 million to build a storage basin on Cuyahoga Street – which holds 9.5 million gallons of water and sewage from the combined sewers until it can be safely treated when the rain event ends. This project alone accounts for 33 percent of the volume of overflows within Akron's system.

Akron has been working to find an acceptable and cost effective way to deal with combined sewer overflows since 1993. Akron introduced a comprehensive plan to address the issue in 2002, which was not approved. In 2008, the City, the U.S. EPA, and the Ohio EPA reached an agreement that was rejected by the federal judge in Akron, and has continued working on projects to improve CSO control throughout this period.

The City developed an Integrated Plan which was submitted to the U.S. EPA August of 2015.



Summit Lake Floating Towpath

Akron has re-engaged the U.S. EPA and the City and the federal agency are working together on a better environmental plan at an affordable cost.

During this time, the City and its consultants also updated the City's "Financial Capabilities Assessment," which was also submitted to the U.S. EPA in August of 2015.

The City has reconstituted and expanded its Integrated Planning Stakeholders committee, which includes more than forty Akron leaders.

This Stakeholders Committee assisted in the development of Integrated Plan, and formed committees to address specific issues.



Akron Greenprint Task Force initiated best sustainability practices

As the Integrated Plan evolves, City officials and their consultants will re-engage with residents in all wards of the City with program updates.

In 2015, several City of Akron employees have received State and National recognition for their work in water, wastewater and engineering, including: Jim Hewitt, City Engineer, Pat Gsellman, Akron Waterways Renewed! Program Manager, Thomas Smith, III, Public Utilities Commissioner, Jim Aiken, Sewer Maintenance Supervisor, and Brian Gresser, Water Reclamation Services Manager.

OUR MISSION

To invest in Akron's environmental future by building infrastructure for the next century that will protect public health and maintain water of the highest quality in the most cost-effective manner and provide local jobs.

OUR VISION

Akron, Ohio will be recognized as a community that has used the Integrated Planning approach in re-building its infrastructure to meet all of its needs with more affordable benefits that are achieved earlier. We can provide effective and efficient wastewater and storm water management services while protecting the environment for this and future generations.



**Akron Waterways
Renewed!**

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**Akron Waterways
Renewed!**

One of Akron's most valuable assets is its abundant supply of fresh water. It represents an important asset that has benefitted the people of Akron for over a century, and which has supported Akron's economic growth and prosperity and provided water resources for its residents. Now, Akron is making the largest investment in its environmental future in its 189 year history.



In late 2014, the City of Akron broke ground for the first in a series of projects that will become the largest single investment in city infrastructure in Akron's 189 year history. The Cascade Village Storage Basin is the first project in the new construction initiative that will address the City's combined sewer overflows, with the potential to restore Akron waterways and the health of its environment and the protection of its water to a level not seen in six generations.



Work is ongoing at Forge Field Storage Basin



Ohio Representatives Emilia Sykes and Rick Perales listen to Akron's Service Director John Moore, during a visit to Forge Field Storage Basin

THE HISTORY Fixing The Mistakes Of Past Generations

Akron was founded as a "canal town" in 1825, and has been linked to the Ohio & Erie Canal and the Cuyahoga River ever since. Akron grew because of the two waterways and its factories, which used the waters of the river and the canal to create booming new industries. They also used the streams and waterways as dumping grounds for wastes as well.



Depression-era workers installing sewers on Crosby Street

Akron grew wildly between 1910 and 1920 because of boom in the rubber shops. Sewers were hastily installed and were never sufficiently sized to handle the surge of new housing. In 1922, the City started work on a new sewage treatment plant in the Cuyahoga Valley - it's where sewage is still treated today for Akron and its neighboring communities. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, when the federal government created a jobs program, the Works Progress Administration, (WPA.) unemployed men were put to work building new sewers. Most of Akron's sewers were designed to carry both storm water and sanitary wastes in one pipe. During dry weather, all the sanitary sewage is transported to the Water Reclamation Facility. During a rain event, the storm water contribution exceeds the capacity of the combined sewer and the storm water, along with a small contribution of sanitary sewage overflows to the stream or river. These are called "Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs)."

THE REASON Why We Are Making This Investment

For most of the 20th century, there would be times during heavy rain events that solid wastes were carried into our waterways, including the Cuyahoga River, the Little Cuyahoga River and the Ohio & Erie Canal.

In 1972, President Nixon signed the Clean Water Act to restore the physical and biological integrity of the nation's waters by preventing pollution from all sources. Over the four decades since it became law, the Clean Water Act and its subsequent amendments have regulated discharge of pollutants into America's waterways. 772 cities nationwide are required to show that their combined sewer overflows do not contribute to the non-attainment of water quality standards.

THE COST Why Our Sewer Rates Increased

During periods of heavy rains each year, Akron's combined sewers continue to deliver some sewage into our waterways. The current price tag under the Federal Consent Decree for Akron to realize a goal of eliminating combined sewer overflows in a typical year is \$1.4 billion.



Akron Water Reclamation Facility in Cuyahoga Valley

The City's CSO "Long Term Control Plan," which was submitted to the federal and state EPA's will improve the sewer system by attempting to achieve zero untreated overflows in a typical year, thereby improving water quality in our streams and rivers.

Some of the money will be spent separating sewer lines from storm water drains.

Where it is more cost-efficient, large basins will be constructed to hold wet-weather flows until treatment can take place in an orderly fashion.

\$300 million - the largest single project - will be the construction of the 6,000 foot long Ohio Canal Interceptor Tunnel.

In all, the project includes seven sewer separation projects (four of which have been completed,) two large tunnels, ten storage basins, and improvements to the Water Reclamation Facility.

Is There A More Affordable Way To Solve The Problem?

This is what the Mayor and City Council have asked its consultants and engineers to focus on as the project develops.

In December, 2013, the City submitted a letter to withdraw the Plan that had been pending in federal court for over two years, so that they could take advantage of new U.S. EPA policies that allow cities to develop an "Integrated Plan."



Ohio & Erie Canal at Lock 1, South Main Street

Such plans allow options including "green infrastructure solutions" that make CSO remediation more sustainable, and in some instances less unaffordable. For example, catching falling rainwater at its source, community gardens and development of wetlands are environmental-friendly solutions, and many times cheaper to construct.

Under the leadership of the Public Service Department, an integrated team of City and consultant staff makes up the Akron Waterways Renewed! Program Management Team. The Program team is charged with meeting federal clean water standards, while implementing an Integrated Plan to address the water-quality issues facing the City of Akron. This Integrated Team brings national experience in helping other cities modify their agreements with the EPA to include increased environmental benefits for less cost.

Innovative plan development, design and construction techniques will minimize project costs. Innovative approaches such as green infrastructure will be more sustainable, and can be implemented in a cost-effective manner, lowering the overall cost of complying with governmental standards.

Why Are We The Only Ones Paying For These Improvements?

The Federal Government has offered no substantial financial assistance since the 1980s to the 700+ cities whose older storm sewer systems carry sewage as well. The State of Ohio has offered some low-interest loans to assist Ohio cities, but the burden falls on the ratepayers of the system: the homeowners and businesses in Akron and surrounding communities. Ratepayers in Fairlawn, Springfield, Coventry, Copley, Bath, Cuyahoga Falls, Tallmadge, and Mogadore will also see increases in their bills.

THE BENEFITS What Will We Get For Our Investment?

Clean waterways - our rivers and canal will be restored to a level not seen in six generations. We will invest in our environment for the coming century, recognizing that the Integrated Planning approach will be able to address the most pressing public health and environmental protection issues first and meet existing regulatory standards.

The project will produce the greatest environmental benefits since the first Europeans moved to the east side of the Portage Path in 1805, and began polluting the water along the Little Cuyahoga River at Case Avenue with their woolen and grist mills.

Workforce Development



In 2013, the City announced a program to train Akron residents to get their Commercial Driver Licenses (CDLs) and employ those Akron residents to assist in site work where needed. Training was provided at no cost, with a requirement to work for the City for at least 90 days, if needed.

The City is also moving forward with the development and implementation of a Green Team, with goal of providing training and jobs to Akron residents.

