



Private Sewer Laterals (PSL) & Sewer Ownership

The property owner is responsible for routine maintenance and repair of the sanitary sewer line from the house or structure, to its connection with the city main. Typically, a homeowner's insurance policy exclude sewer line repairs from coverage as the insurance industry interprets this as a lack of maintenance issue.



The sewer system within the City of West St. Paul is comprised of roughly 66-miles of underground pipes. The larger pipes (sewer “mains”) are publicly owned, meaning the City is responsible for maintenance issues; however, the sewer laterals are entirely owned by the private property owner they serve.

The laterals extend from the building to the mainline within the street (or within an easement at the rear of your home). The laterals typically range from four to six inches in diameter while the City’s mainline is typically at least eight inches in diameter. The private property owner is responsible for the entire length of the lateral, which includes that portion of the pipe that may be located within the public right of way (in the street) and its physical connection to the city main.



Unfortunately, sewer laterals are not often maintained by private property owners until a disaster occurs. Out of sight, out of mind is a typical approach to sewer lateral maintenance and operation by many. It is a good idea to maintain your lateral through proper cleaning, repair, and replacement of the pipe as needed, and do not place improper items into the sewer such as fats, oils, and grease or make improper connections to the sewer.