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MEDIA RELEASE

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Large sewer lines under both W and E Broadway are in need of repair

LOUISVILLE, KY – While work was ongoing to repair sections of a large sewer pipe under E Broadway, MSD contractors inspecting a sewer line under W Broadway as part of a comprehensive sewer line rehabilitation project found sections of that pipe also in need of repair.

"The rehabilitation of the 160-year-old brick sewer under East Broadway is one of our most important capital investments this year. Disrupting this portion of Broadway for an extended time is not the desire of any utility. We understand the impact to the community, but this repair will extend the life of this sewer many years and avoid future disruption to local businesses, travelers and the crucial hospital district," states MSD Chief Engineer David Johnson.

W Broadway

MSD contractors found two locations requiring repair inside the sewer pipe that runs under W Broadway's center lane, between 36th and 37th streets. This 128-inch diameter brick sewer pipe has served the community since 1873. It is part of MSD's Western Outfall, which is an extensive network of sewer pipes that collect wastewater from a large portion of the city.

The center lane on W Broadway between 36th and 37th streets will remain closed throughout the repair, which will begin at the end of the month and should be complete in early January. One eastbound and one westbound lane, and both intersections are open to traffic. The sidewalks are also available. Local sewer service will continue during the repair.

E Broadway Update

The tedious work of removing debris consisting of rocks, dirt, sand, soil and fallen bricks—which has built up over time—continues inside a four-block stretch of the sewer pipe under E Broadway between S Brook and S Hancock streets. As workers clear and clean sections of the pipe, they install round custom-made tunnel liner plates to stabilize and repair the damaged sewer line. As the liner plates are installed, the entire four-block stretch of pipe receives a coating of epoxy that will essentially form a new pipe inside the old one.

Additionally, "lateral" or connecting pipes along the route are under review. Each of these connecting pipes will be inspected and repaired as needed.

Once the repairs in this four-block section are complete, MSD will proceed with the long-term rehabilitation of the 1-mile-long brick sewer pipe that runs from Second street east to Campbell Street. The entire length will receive an epoxy coating, essentially forming a new pipe inside the old pipe.

Background

MSD contractors inspecting the sewer line under E Broadway as part of a comprehensive sewer line rehabilitation project discovered damage to the pipe under E Broadway in two places.

Small breaks in a brick sewer can lead to large holes. During heavy rains, if one or two bricks fall out of place, the pipe can begin to unravel. As the gap becomes more extensive, more bricks cascade down, and soil surrounding the pipe flows into the line pulled by the rushing water leaving a void or space around the pipe and under the pavement.

This 96-inch diameter brick sewer—installed in 1866—has experienced failures in different locations as recently as 2018, 2015, 2014 and 2009.

MSD maintains more than 3,300 miles of sewer lines – enough to stretch from California to Maine, and many dating back 75 years or more. Annually, the agency inspects 450 to 525 miles of sewer pipe as part of a 20-year inspection cycle.

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About MSD

The Louisville/Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) works to achieve and maintain clean, environmentally safe waterways for a healthy and vibrant community. The organization's more than 630 employees provide wastewater management, drainage and flood protection services across the 376 square miles of Louisville Metro and sections of Oldham County. In addition to operating and maintaining Louisville Metro's sewer system, floodwall system, water quality treatment centers and flood pumping stations, MSD invests in hundreds of infrastructure improvement projects each year, plants more than 1,000 trees and other vegetation annually to enhance water filtration and reduce runoff, and provides numerous outreach programs to inform and educate the community about protecting our waterways.