

# Lafayette Mayors Challenge: Unlocking Development Through Smarter Infrastructure

City Council Update

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# What is the Mayors Challenge?

Lafayette was **selected as one of 24 winning cities** in the Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge.

Through this award, **Lafayette is receiving: \$1 million in implementation funding**, dedicated program staff, and operational support.

## OUR WINNING IDEA

Help homeowners **fix broken private sewer lines** and **invest in the surrounding neighborhoods**, so Lafayette can reduce stormwater entering the sewer system, make smarter use of public dollars, and create **room for more homes in the heart of our city.**

# Why does this work matter?

**Problem**: **60% of identified pipe breaks are on private property.** During heavy rains, stormwater enters aging sewer lines through cracks and broken laterals, overwhelming the system and reducing capacity for new housing.

**Impact**: Repair private sewer lines to **reduce stormwater infiltration and unlock capacity for up to 13,000 new housing connections** while also **investing in neighborhood revitalization** so everyone has a place to call home near opportunity in the heart of our city.

## Our vision is to...

...**strengthen sewer infrastructure**  
so the system can support more  
homes and businesses

...**improve and revitalize core  
neighborhoods** by pairing repairs  
with neighborhood betterment

...**support cost-efficient growth** by  
aligning sewer repairs with future  
development opportunities

# What have we already learned from early testing?



Last summer, before the formal program launched, Lafayette tested this concept in McComb-Veazey.

Early results showed:

- **More than 78** leaks identified
- **20 public-side and 23 private-side repairs completed** by LUS
- **Noted reduction** in stormwater infiltration
- Potential to **unlock more than 50 housing units**
- Targeted sewer repairs can create room for **more homes at about one-fifth the per-unit cost** of a new lift station

**We saw that targeted repairs can make a measurable difference and that people wanted to participate. Now we are building the system to do this at scale.**

# What is happening in the program now?

**Now that we've won, Lafayette's Mayors Challenge work is moving forward on two tracks:**

- 1. Pilot:** Complete the remaining private line repairs identified last summer in McComb-Veazey.
- 2. Expansion planning:** Begin smoke and dye testing this summer in three lift station zones to identify where Lafayette should focus pipe repairs and neighborhood investment.

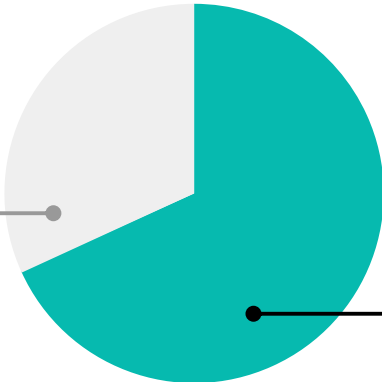
## **Current priorities include:**

- Hiring a Program Manager and Data Specialist
- Re-engaging property owners for pilot repairs and for neighborhood improvements
- Launching smoke and dye testing in approved priority areas
- Continuing coordination across the Taylor Center, Lafayette Utilities System, the Mayor-President's Office, and other City partners

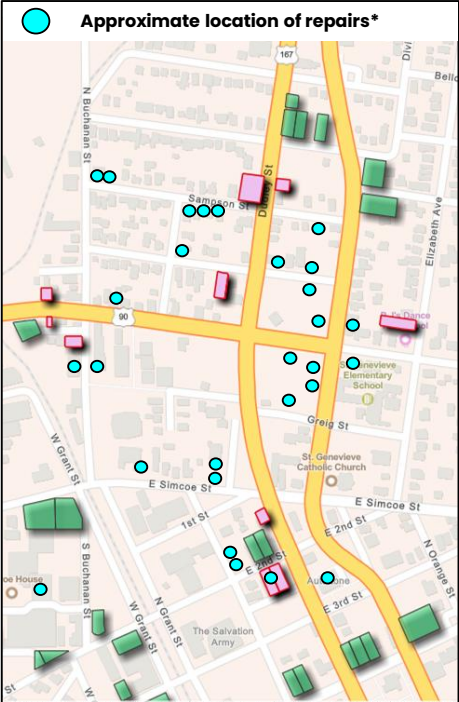
# What is our pilot repair approach?

**Goal:** Test what it takes to move from identified to completed repair on private property, including outreach, consent, scheduling, construction, and validation.

23 private and 20 public repairs  
Completed last summer through initial testing



~33 repairs\*  
Remain and will be completed as a pilot



# What is our expansion planning approach?

**Goal:** Use smoke and dye testing to identify where private sewer repairs can most meaningfully reduce stormwater infiltration, improve system capacity, and guide future neighborhood investment.\*

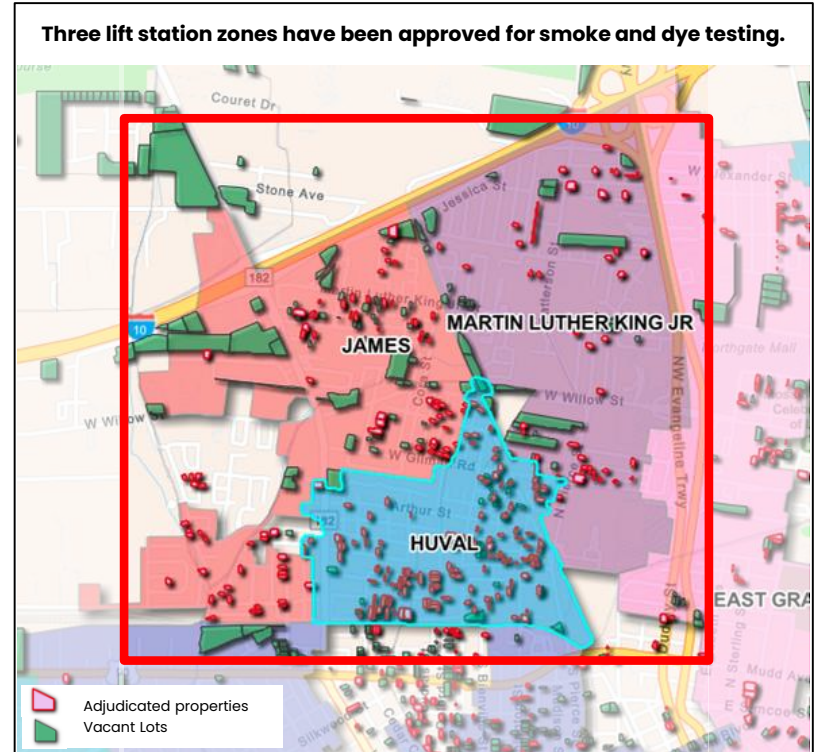
## Approved areas for smoke and dye testing are:

- Huval lift station zone (*University/Cameron*)
- James lift station zone (*I-10/University/Ambassador Caffery*)
- Martin Luther King Jr. lift station zone (*I-10/Evangeline Thruway*)

## These areas were selected because they have:

- Preliminary LUS indication of high infiltration and inflow
- A mix of zoning that may support development
- A high number of vacant lots and adjudicated properties

\*Neighborhood selection for the expansion phase will likely begin in the fall of 2026, after smoke and dye testing.



# How will residents and property owners be engaged?

**Once neighborhoods are selected, residents can expect two connected activities:**

## **Above ground**

Residents will be invited to share what they love about their neighborhood, what they want to see improved, and what kinds of neighborhood investments would make the biggest difference.

## **Underground**

Property owners with identified repair needs will be contacted directly by City staff. Staff will explain eligibility, the repair process, the consent form, and what participation involves. Once an owner agrees, licensed contractors will complete the repair on a scheduled timeline, and disrupted property will be restored.

### **Message to residents:**

*“Starting this fall, Lafayette will begin early sewer repair and neighborhood outreach in priority areas while testing continues to guide the next phase of work.”*

# How will residents and property owners be engaged?

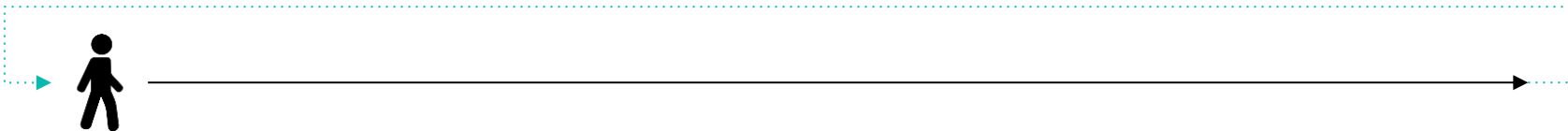
## The outreach process will include:

- **Direct outreach** to eligible property owners by City staff
- **Clear information** about why the City is doing this work and how it connects to sewer capacity, housing, and neighborhood investment
- **Step-by-step explanation** of the repair process, consent form, schedule, and property restoration
- **Support for residents** who need help completing forms or using Neighborly
- **Conversations with residents** about their home, neighborhood, and priorities
- **Neighborhood investments** informed by what residents say they need
- **Referrals to other Taylor Center or City programs** where helpful
- **Ongoing opportunities** for residents to stay engaged with the City beyond this repair process

### Call to action:

*If you are contacted by the City, please ask questions, review the information provided, and consider participating. Your input will help shape both sewer repairs and neighborhood improvements.*

# How will resident input shape the work?



As part of outreach, residents will be asked what they love about their neighborhood, what they want more of, what they want to change, and how the City can stay engaged with them beyond this project.

## The program needs resident input to:

- **Identify** neighborhood public investments that may be addressed during the program
- **Understand** longer-range neighborhood priorities that may require future planning, funding, or coordination
- **Connect** residents to ongoing civic engagement opportunities
- **Build** a stronger picture of neighborhood needs alongside the sewer repair work



# What is the timeline of this work?

July–Aug 2026

Sept–Dec 2026

2027

## TRACK 1: Pilot [first small test]

Confirm remaining repairs

Secure owner agreements and complete repairs

Track results and lessons learned

## TRACK 2: Expansion [second larger test]

### Summer: Start testing

Begin smoke and dye testing in first approved lift station zone

Identify early repair needs

### Fall: Begin initial program work

Start outreach and repair coordination in priority areas where needs are already identified

Begin resident conversations about neighborhood priorities

Continue smoke and dye testing in additional lift station zones

Use early repair data and outreach lessons to refine the broader expansion plan

### Expand and prioritize

Complete additional testing and map repair needs

Prioritize neighborhoods for larger-scale repair and investment work

Continue outreach, repairs, resident listening, and before/after tracking

# Questions?

Thank you!

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# Appendix

# What is our long term vision for this work?

**2 years**  
2028

- Prove the **repair model in 3 core neighborhoods**
- Theory: Increase sewer capacity so up to **400 additional units are able to connect**
- **Engage 200 residents and property owners** in delivery

**5 years**  
2031

- **Scale repairs** to additional neighborhoods
- Turn sewer capacity into **housing commitments**
- Establish a **repeatable city delivery model**

**10 years**  
2038

- **Reduce sewer constraints** across the City's core
- Support progress toward **13,000 new connections**
- Continue using **sewer data to target future repairs** and neighborhood projects

# How we are choosing priority areas?

Done



## Phase 1: LCG and LUS each create maps of potential overlap based on:

- Known infrastructure issues
- Initial community signals

We are here



## Phase 2: Testing and engagement refine the overlap

Some areas will drop out:

- Too expensive to fix
- No real development interest
- Community resistance

Some areas will become stronger candidates:

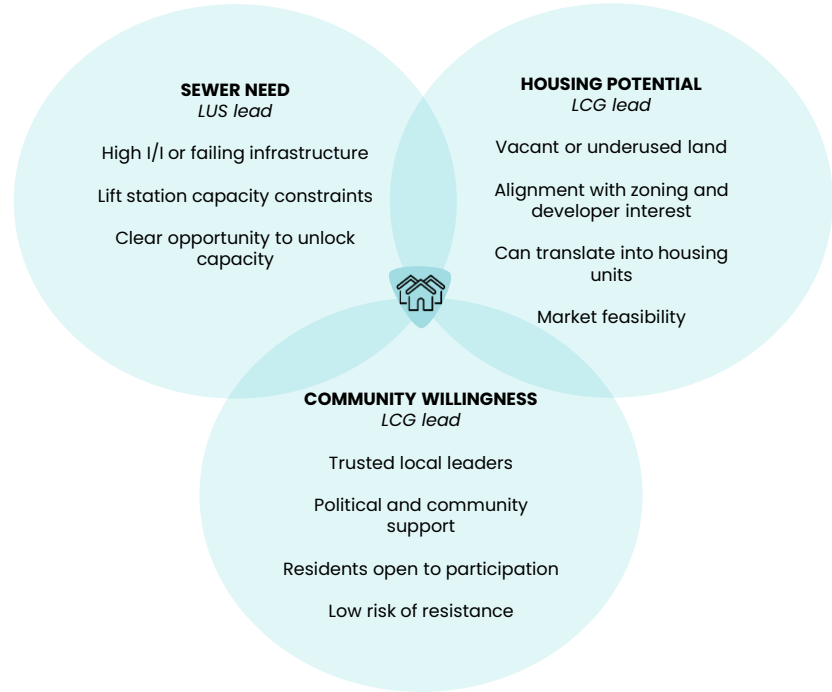
- Clear capacity unlock
- Strong champions
- Feasible delivery

## Phase 3: Final overlap determines selection

- Higher-confidence set of neighborhoods



The City is targeting locations where three things overlap:



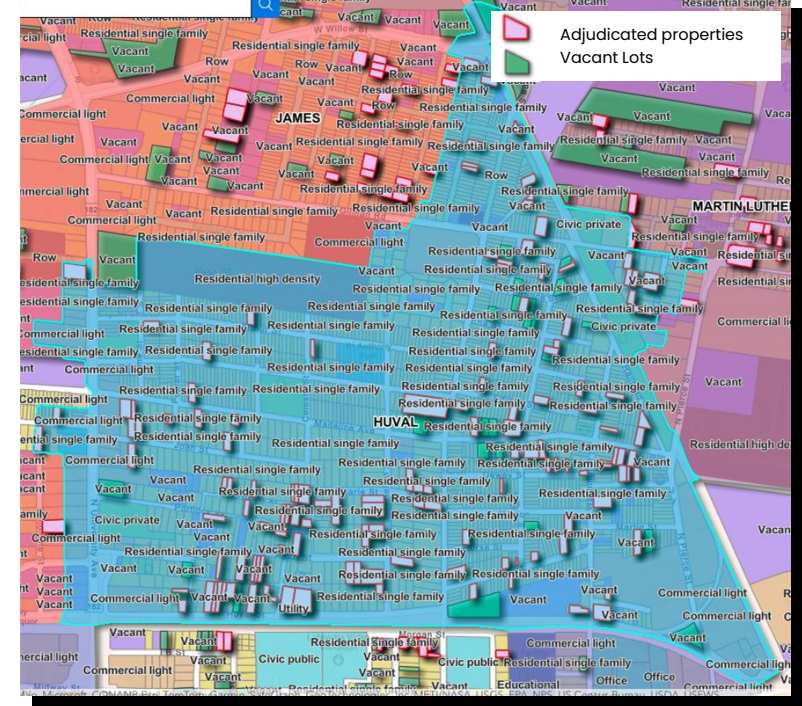
# What is our selection criteria for smoke and dye testing?

Criteria	Why it matters
<b>Sewer need</b>	
High I/I burden confirmed by pump or flow data	<b>Wet-day volumes should significantly exceed dry-day baselines</b> to separate zones where the I/I problem is severe enough to act on from those where it is marginal.
Lift station capacity can be meaningfully unlocked	<b>Smaller zones show faster impact</b> because fewer repairs make a difference at the treatment plant. Larger zones risk diluting the impact.
Repairs produce a measurable signal in one drainage zone	<b>A concentration of repairs is needed</b> , because improvements that cross drainage boundaries do not show up clearly in lift station data.
No treatment plant capacity ceiling blocking new development	Where the downstream <b>treatment plant is already overwhelmed on wet days, I/I repairs may not unlock housing capacity</b> even if the lift station improves (e.g., <i>NE Treatment Plant</i> → <i>Brown Park &amp; East Gravity</i> ).
Separate from South Gravity lift station	Commingling repairs with the South Gravity lift station project would <b>make it hard to measure the program's impact independently</b> .
<b>Housing potential*</b>	
High density of adjudicated properties and/or vacant lots	<b>Zones with low adjudication and vacancy have less room to unlock new housing.</b>
Sewer repair, combined with available incentives, is sufficient to tip developer interest	<b>Sewer repair combined with other initiatives</b> (e.g., <i>Opportunity Zone 2.0 designation, NMTC eligibility, etc.</i> ) <b>may make development more viable.</b>
Overlaps with planned city corridor investment	<b>Layering sewer repair on top of planned public investment concentrates value</b> and strengthens the development case (e.g., <i>Evangeline Thruway, University Ave</i> ).
<b>Community*</b>	
Trusted local leaders or Coteries present	An existing community relationship or champion makes outreach feasible.

\*More detailed criteria for community and developer validation will be informed by lessons from the pilot and developed after zones are selected for smoke and dye testing.

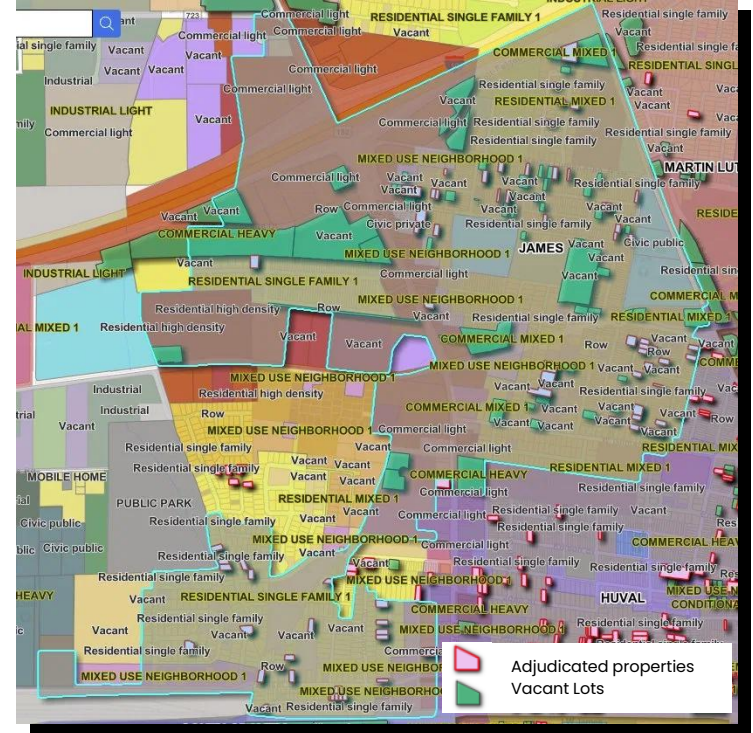
# Recommendation to test the Huval lift station zone

- Small zones need fewer repairs to move the needle at the treatment plant, making Huval ideal for a clean before/after impact measurements.
- Adjacent to James and has a high density of adjudicated parcels and vacant lots.
- Primarily zoned for residential single-family use, with some residential high density, civic public, and commercial light.



# Recommendation to test the James lift station zone

- High confirmed I/I and is separate from South Gravity
- Fairly high concentration of adjudicated parcels and vacant lots
- Zoned as residential mixed (single family and residential medium), civic public, and commercial mixed



# Recommendation to test the Martin Luther King Jr. lift station zone

- Adjacent to James and Huval, helping extend the testing picture for the same corridor without adding a separate geographic area.
- Mostly residential, with some commercial mixed zoning.
- Moderate density of adjudicated parcels and vacant lots.
- Identified by LUS, alongside James and Jimmie, as one of the highest I/I zones.

