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BEECHWOOD VILLAGE

Sewer project starts this month

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David Russo feels as if he's living in a "big bowl" along Marshall Drive in Beechwood Village off Shelbyville Road.

After heavy rains, "We collect water from everywhere else," said Russo, who has had water up to his front and back porches.

Russo was at a recent meeting held by the Metropolitan Sewer District to answer questions about a \$12 million sewer replacement project that's getting under way this month in the small city next to St. Matthews. MSD is paying the full cost of the project, which will require access to every home and is projected to take two years.

MSD plans to install new sanitary sewer lines along all the streets, and all 585 homes in the city will get new connections to the lines.

Plumbers were scheduled to start visiting homes this week to inspect pipes, and engineers also were expected to begin surveying the neighborhood for the project, said Cathy Cornish, an MSD customer specialist. The engineers are expected to be in the neighborhood about three months.

The project is supposed to eliminate the need for MSD to pump overflow storm water and sewage into nearby Beargrass Creek, and it should also help reduce standing water in the city, MSD officials say.

Currently, the sanitary sewer lines are "overwhelmed during heavy rains," Cornish wrote in a letter to residents. That's partly because some property owners have basement sump pumps connected to sanitary sewer lines, and the pumps "illegally discharge ground water directly into the sanitary sewer system," she wrote.

After a deluge in 1997, MSD visited residents of Beechwood Village to offer to disconnect sump pumps but was denied access by some, Cornish said. "One sump pump can flood seven basements," she said.

General drainage in the city also is impeded by "multiple layers of shallow shale" in the ground and old pipes that have been infiltrated by tree roots, Mark Johnson, a representative of Heritage Engineering, said at the MSD meeting. New, watertight plastic pipes will be installed as part of the project, he said.

Beechwood Village Mayor Christopher Dunn said the new project is important for residents "who have had so many problems over the years."

MSD made a presentation about the project to the City Council last month and Dunn said the council took the extra step of voting to support it -- even though MSD has to do it.

The project is part of an \$800 million MSD project in the Louisville area required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to minimize sewage discharges and overflows into area streams and waterways.

The Beechwood Village project will require digging in yards and streets to correct the overall problem.

"It'll be inconvenient in the short term," said Kelly Carls, who also lives on Marshall. "But if it fixes it in the long term, I'm all for it."

Reporter Martha Elson can be reached at (502) 582-7061.

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