

# **Backwater Valve Pilot Program- Backwater Valve Installations within Select Street Reconstruction Projects**



## **Background**

Private property owners own the sewer lateral from the home to the City sewer main and as such are responsible for related maintenance, repairs and replacements. A functional backwater valve may prevent wastewater from a surcharged sewer or water from a water main break from entering the basement of connected homes. Many older Madison homes are not protected by a functional sewer backwater valves and are at risk of experiencing basement sewer backups. Basement sewer backups create a public health and safety hazard and can result in considerable economic losses. Extreme wet weather events are becoming more common in Madison and as such, the frequency of sewer backups into basements of homes not equipped with a functional backwater valve is likely to increase.

The City of Madison Engineering Division has established a pilot program to incentivize the installation and maintenance of backwater valves on homes which do not currently have such a valve. The pilot program will share costs with participating homeowners with the Sewer Utility paying 75% up to \$1,500 to have a backwater preventer installed on selected street reconstruction projects. The backwater valve will be installed in the public right of way. Once installation is completed, the valve will be owned by the property owner and maintenance for the valve will be the responsibility of the property owner.

## **Pilot Program for Backwater Valve Installation within a Street Reconstruction Project**

The City of Madison Sanitary Sewer Utility will designate select street reconstruction projects where there is a documented history of sewer backups, and offer to share costs for the installation of a sewer backwater valve in the right of way provided that the applicant will assume all maintenance responsibilities. Shared costs will include all items associated directly with the sanitary backwater valve installation with the street reconstruction project. The property assessment for the project will include 25% of the installation cost. Property owners may opt out of this program.

Most planned street reconstructions do not include backwater valves.

If there are properties located on street reconstruction projects that do not include the backwater valve installations and the property owner would like a valve, they will need to apply for reimbursement through the Pilot Program for Backwater Valve Installation on Private Property. Property owners may elect to opt out of this program and can still be eligible for the pilot program for Backwater Valve Installation on Private Property (**see: Backwater Valve Pilot Program- Backwater Valve Installations on Private Property**).

# Backwater Valve Pilot Program- Backwater Valve Installations on Private Property



## **Background**

Private property owners own the sewer lateral from the home to the City sewer main and as such are responsible for related maintenance, repairs and replacements. A functional backwater valve may prevent wastewater from a surcharged sewer or water from a water main break from entering the basement of connected homes. Many older Madison homes are not protected by a functional sewer backwater valves and are at risk of experiencing basement sewer backups. Basement sewer backups create a public health and safety hazard and can result in considerable economic losses. Extreme wet weather events are becoming more common in Madison and as such, the frequency of sewer backups into basements of homes not equipped with a functional backwater valve is likely to increase.

The City of Madison Engineering Division has established a pilot program to incentivize the installation and maintenance of backwater valves on homes which do not currently have such a valve. The pilot program will offer participating homeowners a rebate of 75% up to \$1,500 to have a backwater preventer installed in the event that it is determined that their property is not currently protected by a functional backwater valve. The pilot program will be available to all one and two unit properties that have had occupancy for 5 or more years.

## **Pilot Program for Backwater Valve Installations on Private Property**

The City of Madison Sanitary Sewer Utility will share costs for the installation of a sewer backwater valve on private property provided the applicant satisfies the criteria for reimbursement and funds are available via the adopted City of Madison capital budget. Shared costs will include all items associated directly with sanitary backwater valve installation, except for those items excluded by this pilot program.

## **Properties Eligible for Backwater Valve Pilot Program**

One and two unit single family residential properties that are more than 5 years old. The date the property was first issued occupancy by City Building Inspection will be used to determine the age of the property.

**Note: Funds for this program are limited and once all funds have been used, no additional properties can be approved under the pilot program.**

Properties located on selected street reconstruction projects will be offered cost-shared backwater valve installations (**see: Backwater Valve Pilot Program- Backwater Valve Installations within Select Street Reconstruction Projects**). Property owners cannot participate in both of the pilot programs.

### **Pilot Program Backwater Valve Installation Process on Private Property**

1. The property owner completes a backwater valve application.
2. The City will notify the property owner that the property is tentatively eligible, pending the results of the site visit.
3. The property owner shall contact the City Engineering Division to schedule a site visit to determine if their home has a backwater valve and identify any sources of storm water that could result in surcharging their system during a wet weather event.
4. The City shall provide the property owner with a written summary of the site visit and indicate whether or not the property owner is eligible for reimbursement for installation of a backwater valve.
5. If eligible for reimbursement, the property owner shall obtain and provide three (3) cost estimates from qualified contractors for the plumbing conversion on company letterhead.
6. The property owner signs an acknowledgement of ownership to own and maintain the backwater valve and not hold the City liable for any problems that may arise from the backwater valve. The estimates along with the acknowledgement is sent to the City.
7. The City notifies the property owner that they can begin work
8. The property owner's plumber completes the work.
9. The property owner shall submit proof of payment or contractor bill 90 days after completion of work. In instances where the property owner is unable to pay the contractor due to lack of available funds, the payment on behalf of property owner to the contractor can be coordinated by City Engineering with the City issuing a check to both the property owner and the contractor. A completed Reimbursement Application will be required prior to check issuance. Time stamped before and after pictures in jpeg format shall be submitted to City Engineering at time of the reimbursement request. (Digital photos automatically include time stamp information in their metadata).

### **Plumber Requirements for Installations on Private Property**

1. A State of Wisconsin licensed plumber shall complete the work.
2. The property owner or their plumber shall obtain a plumbing permit from the City of Madison and all work shall be inspected by the City of Madison Building Inspector in accordance with City Ordinances and this pilot program (contractor responsibility).
3. The backwater valve is installed on private property, preferably inside of the home.

### **Items Not Reimbursed By the City of Madison for Installations on Private Property**

1. The installation of landscaping including plants, trees, and shrubs.
2. The installation of finished flooring such as new carpet, laminate, tile, hardwood or the replacement of any flooring material not absolutely required for the backwater valve installation. Restoration will only include concrete patching the floor removed to install the valve.
3. Plumbing work not required or any work not required for the backwater valve

installation.

### **Reimbursement Period for Installations on Private Property**

Property owners will have a year to complete the work after the City notifies the property owner that the backwater valve is eligible for reimbursement. After completion of the work, property owners will have 6 months to apply for reimbursement. If either of these deadlines are not met, the property owner will no longer be eligible for reimbursement.

### **Reimbursement Amount for Installations on Private Property**

The City of Madison will reimburse the property owner based on 75% of the low bid or \$1,500, whichever is less. If the property owner chooses a contractor that is not the low bidder, the property owner shall pay the difference. Reimbursement shall be made payable to the property owner or the property owner and the plumber (2 party payment).

### **Prioritization of Applicants for Installations on Private Property**

- 1) Backup History- Applications will be prioritized based upon backup history.
- 2) Location- Applications will be prioritized based upon location. Areas susceptible to sewer backups based upon topography will have priority.