

# Flow meters doing job detecting sewer flaws

Written by [Kevin Kelley](#) on May 23, 2015 — [Leave a Comment](#)

**By Kevin Kelley**

## *Fairview Park*

The flow monitors the city contracted to have placed in the sewers are collecting data and, as intended, indicating likely flaws in the system.

In January, City Council approved contracts with engineering firm Black & Veatch and Hydromax USA to conduct diagnostic work on the city's sewer system in an effort to reduce basement flooding following heavy rains. In a key component of the program, Black & Veatch will create a computer model of the city's sanitary sewer system. That model will indicate if the sewer system is adequate in size, and how badly it is affected by heavy rainstorms.

On May 11, Fairview Park service Director Rob Berner gave council members an update on the progress of those efforts.

"We're getting a lot of good data," Berner told council members in regard to the monitors, which have been in place for a little more than a month.

The project, in which the sanitary and stormwater sewer systems received seven meters each, is on time, Berner said. The consulting engineers have suggested four monitors for each system be added, at an additional cost of about \$11,000, Berner said. That figure will be more than offset, he said, by the fact that some diagnostic work is not needed because the data are already at hand.

Berner said it's far too early for the consulting engineers to say what remedies they will recommend or how much such solutions will cost. Those answers won't come until the fall, he said.

However, preliminary reports indicated unexpected readings from two monitors, indicating possible problems. The readings from one sewer along West 222nd Street were "off the charts," Berner said, and indicated that water is possibly leaking into the storm sewer there.

"We don't just have a backup problem," Berner said. "We do have some structural problems that are probably going to have to be addressed in the future."

While it's too soon to know the extent of the problem, Berner said an example of a structural design problem is a sewer that is not large enough for the area it services.

Preliminary readings also indicated possible issues at pumping stations within the city, Berner said.

Such findings were not unexpected and, in fact, were the goal of the project, Berner said.

"I anticipated all of those things," Berner said at the council meeting.

Once the engineers' recommendations are completed, city officials plan to report to City Council. Then a public meeting will be scheduled to inform residents of the findings.

Berner said he does not expect the remedy to be a single “megaproject,” but rather a number of projects that will be tackled over several years.

That’s because funding of projects is an issue. However, Berner said, a benefit of having a large engineering firm such as Black & Veatch on the case is its expertise on funding solutions.

The city will pursue whatever grant money it can to pay for whatever projects are deemed necessary, the service director said. But most financial aid for these types of infrastructure work involves zero-interest loans, not grants, he said.