

## Simrat Dhadli

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**From:** Nora Pimentel  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 30, 2020 1:05 PM  
**To:** Simrat Dhadli  
**Subject:** FW: Adding agenda item to Council Meeting to be held on 04/28/2020 - a request for financial help from resident Mr. Meng Tung Lim regarding Sewer Issue at 1731 Roll Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050 - Lower sewer lateral damage  
**Attachments:** July 2015 Upper Lateral Repair Inv Cost 4250 G-A Plumbing Co\_07072015.pdf; City of Mountain View -SSMP Section B Extract Notes\_04242020.pptx; Apr2020 City Palo Alto Sewer Blockages\_Lateral definition\_04242020.pdf; April2020 City of Sunnyvale, CA - Help SewerProblem\_04222020.pdf; Summary 1731 Roll St Santa Clara CA Sewer Issue\_04252020.docx

**From:** Raj Chahal <RChahal@SantaClaraCA.gov>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 26, 2020 11:05 PM  
**To:** Nora Pimentel <NPimentel@SantaClaraCA.gov>  
**Cc:** Deanna Santana <DSantana@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Hosam Haggag <hhaggag@SantaClaraCA.gov>  
**Subject:** Adding agenda item to Council Meeting to be held on 04/28/2020 - a request for financial help from resident Mr. Meng Tung Lim regarding Sewer Issue at 1731 Roll Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050 - Lower sewer lateral damage

Hi Nora,

Good morning !

One of our resident Mr. Meng Tung Lim has requested council for financial to get repairs to the lower lateral sewer at his house.

If possible, I would like this agenda item be added to the council meeting agenda on 04/28/2020.

His request (in word file) is attached for your reference, also attached are other relevant files: copies of City of Sunnyvale sewer article, City of Palo Alto and City of Mountain View extract Section B from SSMP for your staff reference. He has been trying to get this resolved since last couple of months.

Thanks in advance and please confirm receipt of this email. Please let me know if you need any additional details to make this happen.

Raj Chahal

Councilmember  
City of Santa Clara  
1500 Warburton Ave.  
Santa Clara, CA 95050

**From:** Meng Tung Lim

**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 4:45:27 PM

**To:** Raj Chahal <[RChahal@SantaClaraCA.gov](mailto:RChahal@SantaClaraCA.gov)>

**Cc:** Raj Chahal

**Subject:** Sewer Issue at 1731 Roll Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050 - Lower sewer lateral damage

Dear Raj

As per our telephone discussions this morning, I am attaching copy of my letter in the Word file for your review and use it for your council meeting. Please feel free to make the necessary corrections or modifications to the attached word file. I am also attaching copy of City of Sunnyvale sewer article, City of Palo Alto and City of Mountain View extract Section B from SSMP for your reference

Many thanks for your kind attention and help. Your great help is very much appreciated.

Thanks

Rgds

Meng Lim and wife

Mr. Raj Chahal  
Councilmember  
City of Santa Clara, CA

April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dear Raj

**Re: SSO – Sanitary Sewer Overflow lower sewer lateral at 1731 Roll Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050**

Thank you for trying to help me to resolve the broken Lower Sewer Lateral pipe caused by the tree root of City tree in my front yard at my property at 1731 Roll Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050 since January 2020. I would like to request you to bring this issue as an Agenda to the City of Santa Clara bi-weekly council meeting for further discussions. I would like to have my voice to be heard in the council meeting to share my pains and frustrations over the poor root control managed by the city crews resulting tree root located next to the Turnout penetrating the sewer lateral to cause damage to both lower & upper sewer lateral. **I had already spent \$4,250 to replace the broken upper sewer lateral damaged by the same tree root on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015.** Now, the same tree root had grown bigger to extend its damage to the lower sewer lateral. Therefore, I would like to request financial help from the City for the lower lateral sewer line repairs.

I would like to request the Honorable Mayor and councilmembers to consider below options to help me to reduce my financial burden by providing appropriate financial help.

1.0. Option # 1. The damage of the lower sewer lateral pipeline in my property at 1731 Roll Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050 was caused by the roots of the City Tree next to the Turnout/Manhole outside my house near to the City pedestrian pavement. City of Santa Clara is the Owner of this City Tree. Therefore, the Owner of City tree should be responsible to repair and replace the broken lower sewer lateral pipeline from the Turnout to the City Main Drain in the middle of City road. The total estimated cost \$12,000 (i.e. \$5,000 City Labor and equipment, \$3,500 city permit fees and \$3,500 pipe bursting. **The lower sewer lateral is located within the public right-of-way (i.e. City pavement and City encroachment - city road).**

2.0. Option # 2. Though the damage of the lower sewer lateral pipe was damaged by the City tree, I was told that the lower sewer lateral pipe was the property of the owner of the house property under the City revised Code/Ordinance. This means that I am responsible for the cost of the sewer lateral pipe. Whether this revised City Code make any sense or not, it is still the City Code. Therefore, I have to pay for the cost to repair or replace the lower sewer lateral pipe. However, I would request the total cost (i.e. both the Permit Fees and City Labor plus Equipment depreciation) for the City technicians to complete the two pits to complete the task of replacing the lower lateral sewer pipe to be paid by the City of Santa Clara as the courtesy service to the resident of Santa Clara. To share part of the total cost, I will pay for the pipe bursting job cost (estimated cost \$3,500) to be completed by the outside Plumbing Contractor, City of Sewer.

3.0. Option # 3. If there is any proof showing that the damage of the lower sewer lateral pipeline in my property at 1731 Roll Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050 was caused by my family members using the sewer lines in my property house, I should be responsible for the whole cost (i.e. cost of City technicians to do the job, City permit fees and pipe bursting costs) about \$12,000 (i.e. \$8,500 total estimated cost of City of Santa Clara Labor, Equipment and permit fees, and \$3,500 for the City of Sewer pipe bursting cost.

4.0. Option # 4. If all the above are not going to be acceptable due to whatever reasons, please help me to share part of the cost to replace this lower sewer lateral broken pipe replacement by waiving the City Permit fees of \$3,500 for the Pavement permit and Encroachment Permit Fee. This is inconsideration of our neighboring cities, like City of Sunnyvale paying for the lower lateral cost, City of San Jose may consider to pay for the cost if the sewer failure or damage is caused by another party (example like my case the another party is the City tree), City of Mountain View will provide maintenance and repair services for laterals located within the public right-of-way upon request as a courtesy service to the residents of Mountain View. For the **City of Palo Alto**, the property owner is only responsible for the private sewer line. **Private sewer line runs from the house/building out to the City clean-out just beyond your property line.**

**City of Sunnyvale SSMP** = Sewer System Management Plan. Section B showing the responsibility of City of Sunnyvale to replace the lower sewer lateral pipe. Brief summary as listed below



B. Sanitary Sewer System Facilities

City of Sunnyvale

The City operates a sanitary sewer system that serves a residential population of approximately 147,000 (daytime population approximately 230,000) in a 23 square mile service area.

Sewer service laterals are owned by, and therefore the responsibility of, the property owner to maintain and assure serviceability. The City may provide maintenance services to laterals **located within the public right-of-way as a courtesy service if a property line cleanout exists, and the cleanout and adjacent area are accessible to City staff and equipment. The City may provide maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and/or replacement of the "lower" portion of private sanitary sewer laterals located within the public right of way on a discretionary basis.**

**City of Mountain View SSMP has the Section B of SSMP showing the following statement**

There are approximately 16,000 sanitary sewer laterals in the City. Maintenance and repair of sanitary sewer laterals within the City are the responsibility of the property owner; **however, the City provides maintenance and repair services for laterals located within the public right-of-way upon request as a courtesy service to the residents of Mountain View. The City does not own any portion of the service lateral.**

**City of San Jose SSMP has the following statement**

Sanitary Sewer System - Refers to the portion of the sanitary sewer facilities that are owned and operated by the City of San José. The sanitary sewer system consists of collection sewers, trunk sewers, and pressure sewers (force mains).

Sensitive Area - Refers to areas where an SSO could result in a fish kill or pose an imminent or substantial danger to human health.

Sewer Service Lateral – For the purposes of this SSMP, the sewer service lateral includes both the upper lateral (house connection sewer) and the lower lateral (sewer lateral).

**Sewer Lateral (Lower Lateral) – Refers to the portion of the pipe between the house or building on private property and the sewer main, including the connection to the sewer main. The property owner is responsible to repair any failure or damage in the sewer lateral, including the connection to the sewer main; unless it is determined that another party caused the failure or damage.**

The last sentence " ...unless it is determined that another party caused the failure or damage. ... In my case, the failure or damage was caused by the tree roots of City Tree as another party pe se.

**City of Santa Clara SSMP** showing details of city crews responsible for the sanitary sewer system including root control. In my case, sounds like City of Santa Clara is negligence for the root control for the tree root next to the Turnout resulting tree root to penetrate inside the sewer lateral to **cause damage to both lower and upper sewer lateral pipe.** I had paid for the upper lateral repairs in 2015 and would like to request City to help me to pay for the lower later repairs.. **Or at least for the minimum City of Santa Clara to share part of the costs, like waiving the City permits fees, etc**

**I hope that the council members of City of Santa Clara and Honorable City Mayor will review my above requests to give me your kind and favorable considerations. Your early attention is very much appreciated to prevent or avoid the SSO (Sanitary Sewer Overflow) event such as stoppage or blockage on my lower lateral sewer pipe connecting from the City main drain to Turnout/Manhole in my property.**

Thanks

Sincerely yours,

Signed by

Meng Lim and Lai Ting

1731 Roll Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050

Residents



## Appendix

### City of Palo Alto

Poorly maintained sewer pipes can leak water, attracting plant roots into the pipes that contribute to sewer blockages. It is your responsibility to keep all obstructions and debris out of your private sewer line. **Your private line runs from your house or building out to the City clean-out\*—typically at or just beyond your property line.**

**This Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP) describes the City of Palo Alto's (City's) wastewater collection system management activities.** The purpose of these activities is to:

1. Maintain and improve the condition of the collection system infrastructure,
2. Control infiltration/inflow (I/I) and provide appropriate sewer capacity, and to
3. Minimize the number and impact of sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) that occur.

#### 3.2.4. 16.09.101 Root Control Chemicals.

No person shall discharge, dispose of or add to the sanitary sewer system any substance containing greater than five percent copper by weight, to control roots or for any other purpose. No person shall discharge, dispose or add to the storm drain system any substance to control roots

#### 4.2.3. Emergency Maintenance

Emergency maintenance is conducted as a part of the daily response to the primary or secondary sewer blockages that are called in or observed by the field crew. In general, the secondary lines (laterals) are cleaned after report of a blockage, or if the video of a sewer main indicates grease or roots build up at the connections. After each emergency call, and depending on the severity of the blockage or the age of the pipe, a follow up video inspection of the line is scheduled. **Based on the results of the inspection, if needed, further action such as line replacement, root control or spot repair will be taken.** While the wastewater operation teams maintain the sewer mains and install laterals and access holes, the majority of capital improvement projects are handled through contracts with major construction companies.

**City of Santa Clara SSMP** =Sewer System Management Plan showing some of the responsibility of City of Santa Clara crews to maintain the Sewer and Root Control

Page 17 - Sewer System Management Plan City of Santa Clara Water & Sewer Utility 17 Although private property owners own the entire length of the service lateral associated with their property, the City will clear blockages from the property line clean out to the City sewer main ("service the lower lateral") as a service to the public; provided a property line cleanout exists and the City is made aware of any problems or backups. Overall lateral maintenance and repair is sole responsibility of property owner.

Page 26 - Root Control Following cleaning, or as a part of a customer service request, the Utility treats laterals and smaller mains for root control using a foam product. Crews are responsible for foaming laterals. The current protocol includes cutting the roots and removing them from the sewer, waiting four (4) to six (6) weeks, foaming, and then going back to double check the affected segment of pipe. Manhole Inspection and Repairs Crews are responsible for inspecting and cleaning manholes. Manholes are inspected as mains are jetted. In this way, all manholes are inspected approximately once every three (3) years. Any needed repairs are identified and documented in the block book by the Crew Supervisor. Repair needs are transferred to and completed by particular Crew or may be contracted to a private company. Manhole inspections and cleaning are documented along with other task completion on the daily

Upper sewer lateral was repaired on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at my expense for the total cost \$4,250 completed by outside Plumbing Co – G-A Plumbing Co. Attached Invoice No. 674 dated 07/07/2015 for \$4,250.



# G-A PLUMBING CO.

COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL

1378 N. Capitol Ave., San Jose, CA 95132  
Tel: (408) 981-1818  
Cal. Lic #608-770

## INVOICE

No. 634  
Date 7/7/15  
Sheet No. 1

### Proposal Submitted To:

Name Ming Tang Lim  
Street 1281 BOLL ST  
City SANTA CLARA, CA 95050  
State \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Work To Be Performed At:

Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Plans \_\_\_\_\_  
Architect \_\_\_\_\_

We hereby propose to furnish the materials and perform the labor necessary for the completion of

- ① Replace sewer line from outside the house through existing clean clean out, & install one 2 way clean out
  - ② trench & dig dirt + back fill
  - ③ materials + labor total \$3500.00
  - ④ (if needs permit, will be extra \$500) NO
  - ⑤ change order - install one 2 way clean for addition Bathroom in the back house, materials + dig + labor \$750
- 3500  
Total \$4250.00  
paid in full

All material is guaranteed to be as specified, and the above work to be performed in accordance with the drawings and specifications submitted for above work and completed in a substantial workmanlike manner for the sum of Dollars (\$ 4250.00) with payments to be made as follows: \_\_\_\_\_

Any alteration or deviation from above specifications involving extra costs, will be executed only upon written orders, and will become an extra charge over and above the estimate. All agreements contingent upon permits, accidents or delays beyond our control. Owner to carry fire, burglary and other necessary insurance upon above work. Workman's Compensation and Public Liability Insurance on above work to be taken out by \_\_\_\_\_

Respectfully submitted [Signature]  
Per ALLEN GINNE

Note - This proposal may be withdrawn by us if not accepted within \_\_\_\_\_ days.

**ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL**  
The above prices, specifications and conditions are satisfactory and are hereby accepted. You are authorized to do the work as specified. Payment will be made as outlined above.

Date 7/9/15 Signature [Signature]  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# City of Mountain View

## B. Sanitary Sewer System Facilities

The City operates a sanitary sewer system that serves a population of approximately 74,000 in a 12 square mile service area. The sewer system consists of 158 miles of gravity sewers (approximately 3,850 line segments), approximately one mile of 42" force main, and two pump stations. The sewers range in size from 4" to 42" in diameter. There are approximately 16,000 sanitary sewer laterals in the City.

Maintenance and repair of sanitary sewer laterals within the City are the responsibility of the property owner; however, the City provides maintenance and repair services for laterals located within the public right-of-way upon request as a courtesy service to the residents of Mountain View. The City does not own any portion of the service lateral.





CITY OF PALO ALTO  
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# TAKE ACTION

## TO PREVENT COSTLY PLUMBING OBSTRUCTIONS

Poorly maintained sewer pipes can leak water, attracting plant roots into the pipes that contribute to sewer blockages. It is your responsibility to keep all obstructions and debris out of your private sewer line. Your private line runs from your house or building out to the City clean-out\*—typically at or just beyond your property line.

Regularly scheduled preventive maintenance—at least every 2 to 3 years—will help you avoid costly damage.

(\*Some homes don't have a clean-out. If unsure about whether you do, contact a plumber to check.)

### MORE TIPS FOR AVOIDING SEWER-LINE PROBLEMS:

- Know where your sewer lines are and don't plant trees and shrubs with invasive root systems near them.
- Never put cooking grease or other fats down the drain.
- Never put solid materials including cement, diapers, rags or wipes down the toilet or other drains.



For sewer information, call (650) 496-6982 or visit  
[www.cityofpaloalto.org/sewer](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/sewer)

For Palo Alto tree and root information, call  
**(650) 496-5953**

Individuals with disabilities who require accommodations to access City facilities, services or programs, or who would like information on the City's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, may contact the City's ADA Coordinator at (650) 329-2550 (voice) or e-mail [ada@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:ada@cityofpaloalto.org)

## COVID-19 Impacts on City Services

March 20, 2020: Before calling or visiting a City facility, check the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) page for updates about City services, facilities and important resources.

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# Sewer

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## Have a Sewer Problem?

For sewer backup, call our 24-hour Sewer Response Service at 408-730-7400.

If your toilets are backed up, dirty water is backing up into your bath tub, or a sewer lateral clean-out in your front yard is overflowing, call us before you call anyone else.

**Turn all water off and do not flush toilet, or use laundry, shower, sink, etc. until the source of the problem is located!**

We will respond within two hours and will help identify what part of your system may be causing the problem if not in the mainline.

The City maintains all sewer mains through flushing, video inspection, manhole repair and removal of blockages. In general, sewer laterals (as opposed to the mainline in the street) are the responsibility of the property owner. However, as a courtesy service, the City will assist in locating blockages, and in some cases where a property line cleanout is installed, the City will even remove the blockage on your lower lateral.

[Report a Sewer Issue Online](#)

## Roots and Older Pipes

Older sewer laterals with weak joints are sometimes prone to intrusions by tree roots. Contact us if it's suspected that roots from a [City street tree](#) may have contributed to a blockage in an older private sewer lateral.

## Clog Prevention

**Keep these out of your toilet:**

Disposable wipes, even flushable ones, can clog sewer lines. "Flushable wipes" are one of the biggest causes of sewer backups. Throw all wipes and towelettes as well as condoms, dental floss, feminine hygiene products, product wrappers and paper towels in the trash, and not in toilets.

### **Keep these out of your drains:**

Fats, oil and grease (FOG) clog sewer lines. Sewage backups and overflows can be the result of grease buildup. Never pour grease or cooking oil down drains or garbage disposals, home garbage disposals do not keep grease out the plumbing system. Only water should go down the drain.

If you live in a single-family home:

- Scrape meat drippings, dairy products and sauces into your food scraps pail and place in food side of split cart
- Use food strainers in kitchen sinks to catch food particles, toss into your food scrap pail, then discard in food side of split cart
- Small quantities of cooking oil can be poured into lined food scraps pail and placed in food side of split cart

All residents:

- Small quantities of cooking oil can be mixed with an absorbent material like kitty litter and disposed in the garbage
- Drop off large quantities of cooking oil, sealed in screw top containers, at the [SMaRT Station®](#) for recycling.

## **Related**

[Sewer System Management Plan](#)

Last Updated: Apr 22, 2020