



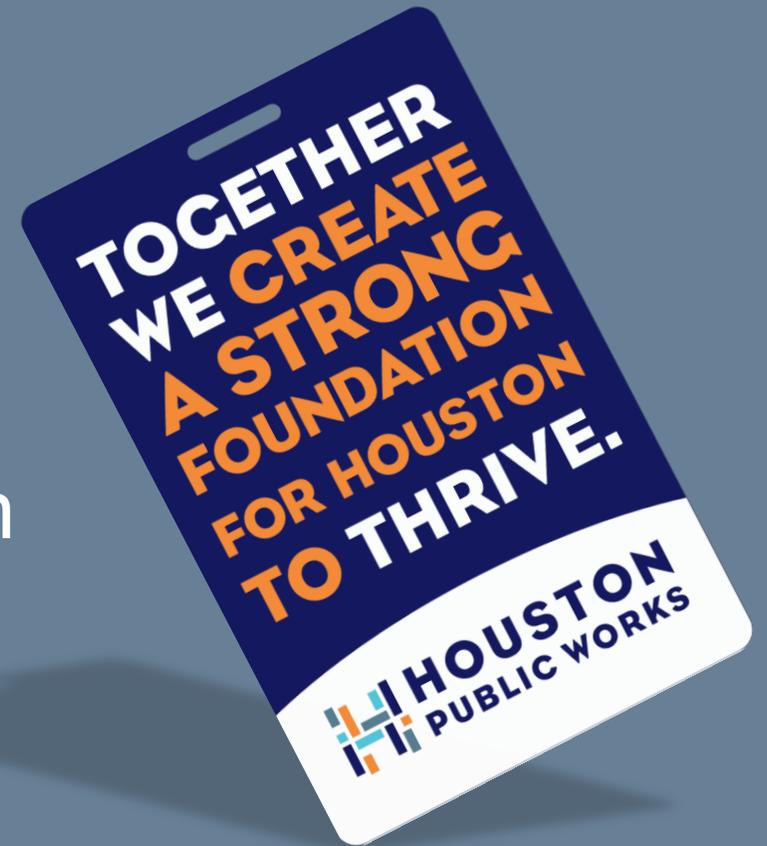
CONSENT DECREE UPDATE

**YVONNE FORREST, DIRECTOR
HOUSTON WATER**



PURPOSE

together we create a strong foundation
for Houston to thrive



5 TO THRIVE VALUES

integrity | teamwork | ownership | communication | respect

WASTEWATER CONSENT DECREE

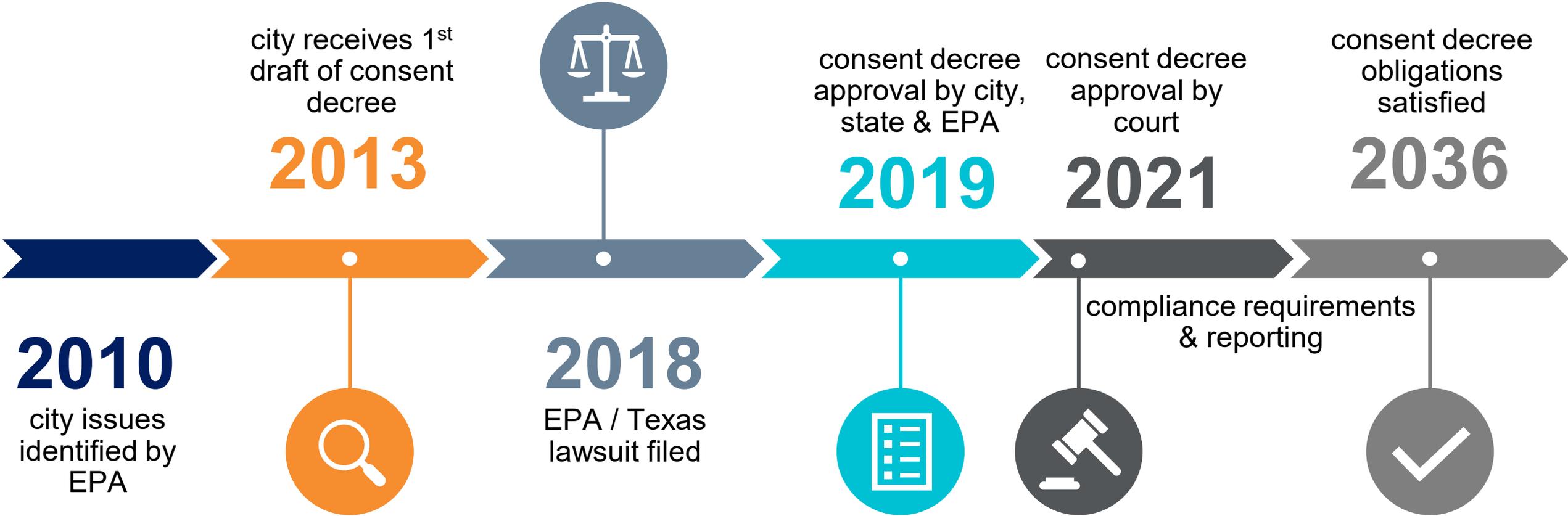
court-approved legal document

- **Houston's consent decree was approved March 31, 2021**

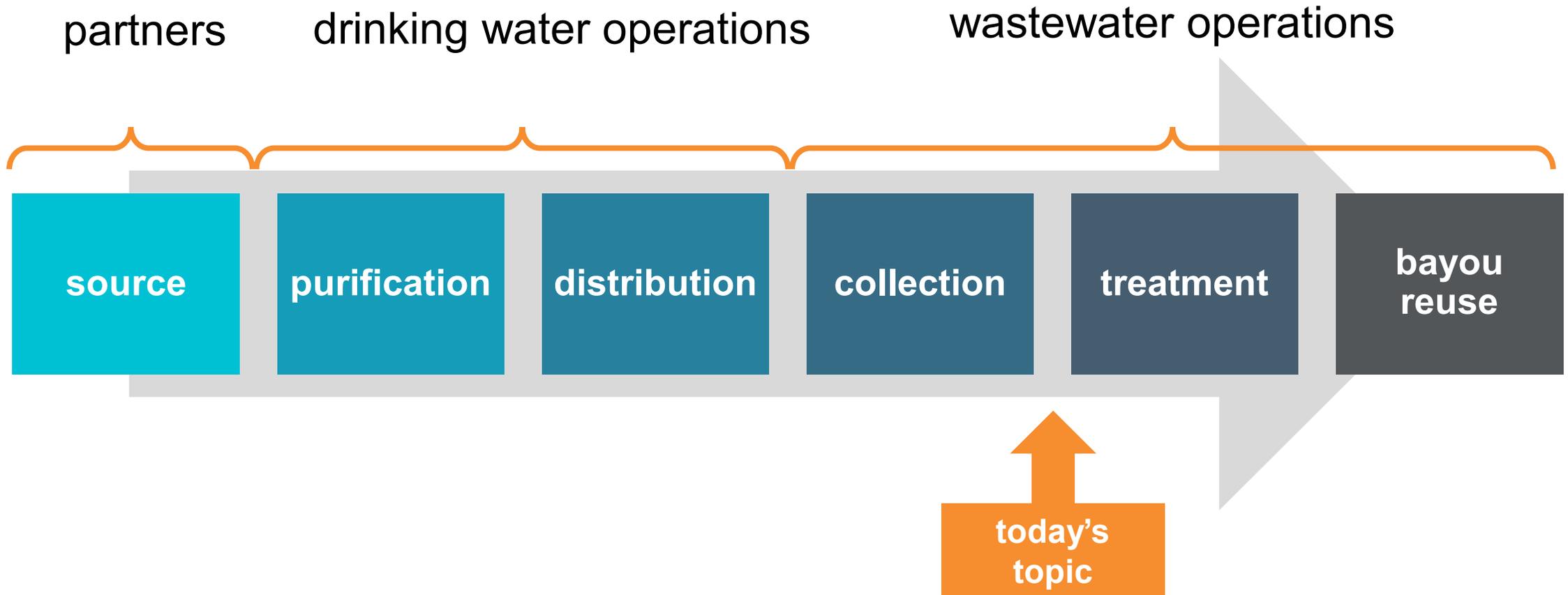
formalizes program to improve wastewater system performance

complete work within 15 years

TIMELINE



WATER CYCLE



SANITARY SEWER OVERFLOWS

release of raw sewage from wastewater lines and manholes

causes	impacts
fats, oils & grease	threaten human health
tree roots	contaminate environment
heavy rainfall	damage property
illegal connections	



INVESTING IN HOUSTON

primary work categories

early action projects

capacity assessment & remediation

condition assessment & remediation

capacity, management, operations & maintenance

wet weather facilities evaluation & remedy

advanced sewer monitoring

WEBSITE SNAPSHOT

PUBLICWORKS.HOUSTONTX.GOV

The City of Houston
Official Site for Houston, Texas

I WANT TO GOVT RESIDENTS BUSINESS DEPARTMENTS VISITORS EN ESPAÑOL

Welcome to the City of Houston eGovernment Center

Houston Public Works

BUILD HOUSTON FORWARD

Houston Waterbills Online Pay Online

WASTEWATER CONSENT DECREE

Sidewalk Programs

Green BUILDING RESOURCE CENTER

HOUSTON PERMITTING center

Storm Water Action Team

OFFICE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

SUBSTITUTE SERVICE LINE PROGRAM

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

The Director of Houston Public Works, the largest and most diverse public works organization in the country, is responsible for Houston's strong foundation. The Department has over 4,000 dedicated employees and an annual operating budget of \$2.1 billion.

[Office of the Director](#)

PUBLIC WORKS SERVICE LINES

- > [Capital Projects](#)
- > [Customer Account Services](#)
- > [Houston Permitting Center](#)
- > [Houston Water](#)
- > [Transportation and Drainage Operations](#)

HELPFUL LINKS

- Choose -

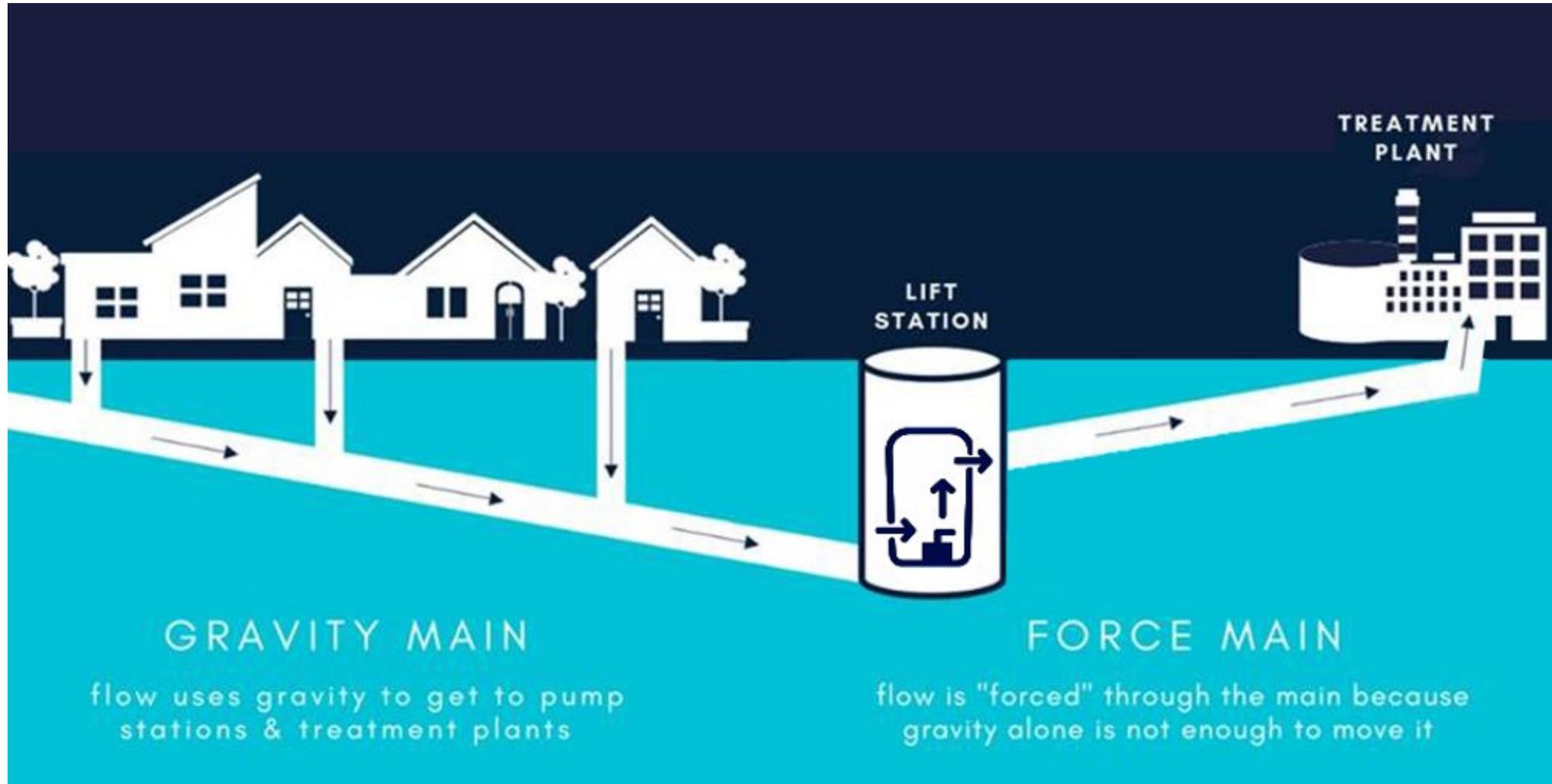
[Go](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Public Works

611 Walker
Houston, Texas 77002
Phone: 832.395.2500
Email: pwe_director@houstontx.gov
Safety and Security Emergency Contact Number 713.843.5483

THE WASTEWATER SYSTEM



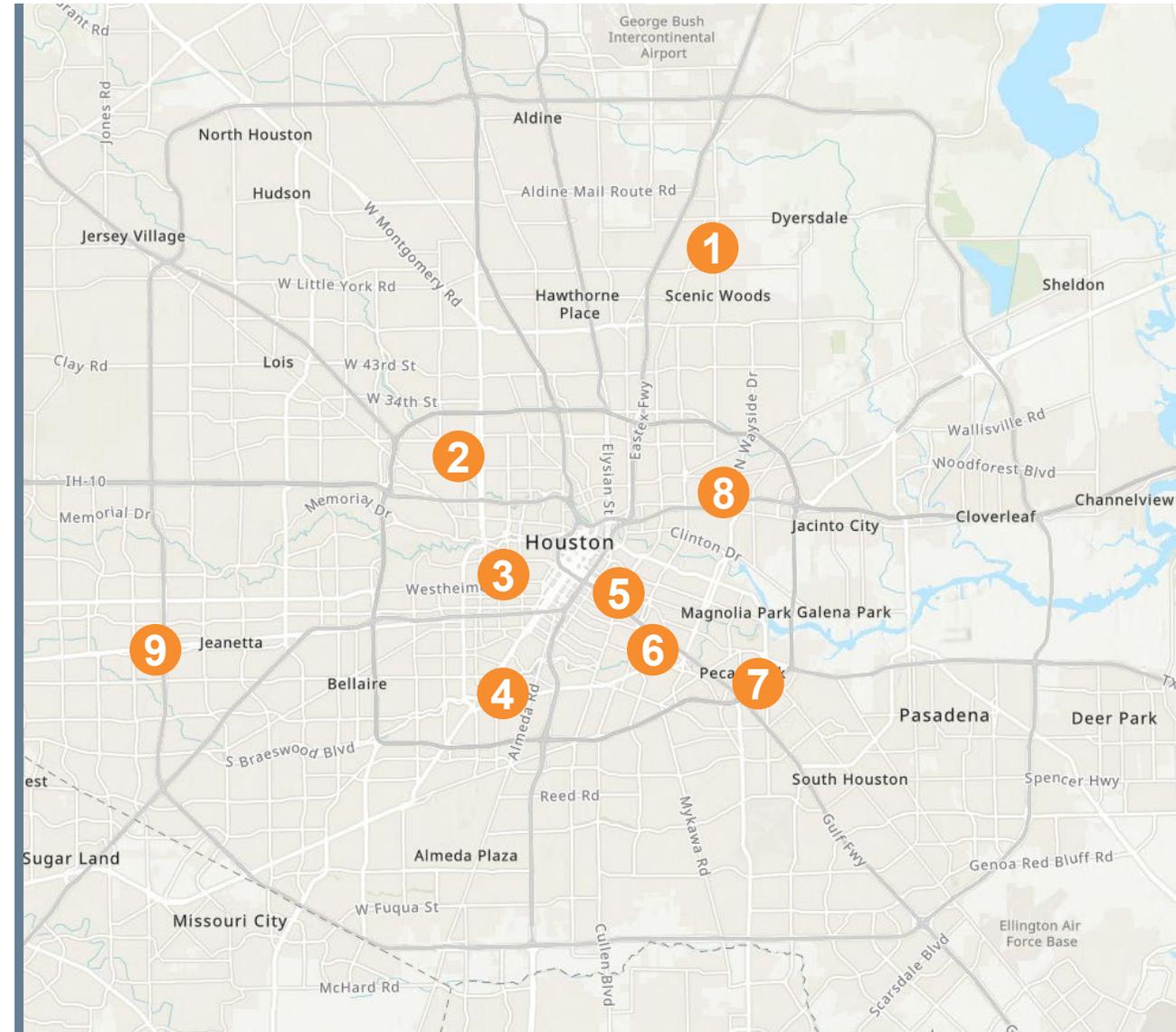
EARLY ACTION PROJECTS

SCOPE	WORK TO BE DONE	WORK COMPLETED	COMPLETION DATE
lift station renewal & replacement <i>CD Section V, Paragraph 11a</i>	107 lift stations	12 lift stations	2030
force main renewal & replacement <i>CD Section V, Paragraph 11b</i>	74K linear feet of force main	19K linear feet of force main	2030
consolidation projects <i>CD Section V, Paragraph 11c</i>	33 lift stations 8 WWTP 143K linear feet of force main	13 lift stations 1 WWTP 27K linear feet force main	2028
wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) <i>CD Section V, Paragraph 11d</i>	8-10* WWTP	5 WWTP	2026

*2 WWTP projects are pending FEMA determination on Hurricane Harvey impacts

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT & REMEDIATION

9 areas - repeat SSOs during rainfall
develop plan to fix each area in **2 years**
complete work in **10 to 15 years**





CAPACITY ASSESSMENT & REMEDIATION

identify new areas with repeat SSOs

develop plan to fix each new area

CONDITION ASSESSMENT & REMEDIATION

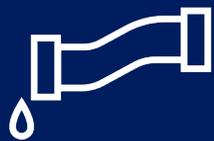
wastewater treatment plant

inspect & assess condition & operation of 39 plants every 5 years

implement remedial measures to address any issues

wastewater collection system

inspect & assess structural condition of entire system every 10 years



6,200

MILES OF
SEWER MAINS
(GRAVITY & FORCE MAINS)



129,600

MANHOLES



381

LIFT STATIONS

rehabilitate/renew or replace

2.5% or ~155 miles of gravity sewer mains per year

5% or ~19 lift stations per year

CAPACITY, MANAGEMENT, OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

clean high SSO areas in first 2 years

clean all gravity sewers every 10 years

implement preventative sewer cleaning program
for repeat SSO areas

continue fats, oil & grease education program

ProtectOurPipes.org





WET WEATHER FACILITIES

operate during storm events when stormwater inundates wastewater system

new alternate method of storing & treating wastewater must be designed

EPA requires upgrading or elimination of wet water facilities discharge in 13 to 15 years

WORK TO BE DONE

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

advanced sewer system monitoring

install 3,000 new “smart” manholes

- allows Houston Public Works to see real time flow conditions in sewer pipes
- enables Houston Public Works to anticipate & prevent SSOs

CIVIL PENALTIES & ATTORNEY'S FEES

PENALTY / FEES	
civil penalty - Texas	\$2.2M
civil penalty - EPA	\$2.2M
attorney's fees - Texas Attorney General	\$0.2M
total	\$4.6M

**resolves civil claims of the US & Texas against Houston
for alleged wastewater violations since 2005**

STIPULATED PENALTIES

failure to timely complete requirements

\$1,000 - \$4,500 per deliverable per day (depending on length of delay)

wastewater treatment plant effluent exceedances & sanitary sewer overflows

\$300 - \$5,000 per violation per day (depending on duration, volume & date of occurrence)

stipulated penalty assessment

future noncompliance with consent decree terms or Clean Water Act
United States & State reserve right to assess or waive

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- cost of work identified in consent decree is estimated to be a total of \$6B which represents an increase in our normal wastewater budget of \$2B over 15 years
- costs to implement the consent decree over the next year are in the FY21 budget already approved & FY22 budget that will be presented to council
- water & wastewater rate update set for council action in May 2021 includes consent decree costs for next 10 years
- wastewater rates proposed in the current rate study are below EPA's affordability threshold of 2% of median household income

TAKEAWAYS

consent decree obligates Houston to implement a scope of work to improve the wastewater system throughout the city under defined timelines

penalties apply for non-compliance

consent decree scope of work is an investment that will improve Houston's wastewater system for future generations as it aligns with goal 26.1 of the Resilient Houston plan

thank you!



houstonpublicworks.org

  @houpublicworks