



**WORK SESSION MEETING
OF THE
CITY COUNCIL
City of Maplewood, Missouri**

City Council Chambers, City Hall
7601 Manchester Road, Maplewood, MO 63143

**Tuesday, February 25, 2025
6:30 PM**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Design & Review Board Vacancy Appointment Candidate
4. Sewer Lateral Fund Sustainability
5. Adjournment

Addressing the Council

Individuals wishing to speak during Public Hearings or Public Comment periods must sign in before the meeting and will be called to the podium when it is their turn. Each speaker has a three-minute time limit. Written comments may be emailed to cityclerk@maplewoodmo.gov by 12:00 PM (noon) on the meeting day. The Council will receive all emailed comments, but comments will not be read aloud during the meeting.

Accessibility Notice

The City of Maplewood is committed to making public meetings accessible to all residents. To request accommodations or assistance, please contact the Deputy City Clerk at cityclerk@maplewoodmo.gov or 314-646-3602, or Relay Missouri at 800-736-2966 (TTY). Please make your request at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to ensure appropriate arrangements can be made.

Virtual Access

Watch this meeting live or view previous meetings at www.youtube.com/@cityofmaplewood8819

Posted on February 21, 2025, at Maplewood City Hall and maplewoodmo.gov

Memorandum



To: Mayor and City Council
From: Amber Withycombe, City Manager
Date: February 20, 2025
Re: Design & Review Board Vacancy Appointment

A vacancy has arisen on the Design & Review Board due to a member relocating outside of Maplewood. We have received one application for this position from DJ Howard, a new resident who has expressed strong interest in serving.

Mr. Howard is a licensed Professional Engineer who recently moved to Maplewood and resides in Ward 1. He brings relevant experience as a business consultant and former tech start-up executive. The applicant has ranked the Design & Review Board as one of his top preferences for service and has confirmed his ability to attend regular meetings. One of his two references is a current Maplewood resident.

If approved, this appointment would be scheduled for the March 11 Council meeting.

Boards and Commissions Application

Print

Del

Submitted by: DJ Howard

Submitted On: 2024 11 11 11:48:43

Submission IP: (66.190.131.147)

proxy-IP (raw-IP)

Status: Open

Priority: Normal

Assigned To: City Council

Due Date: Open



City of Maplewood, MO

Boards and Commissions Application

Contact Information

* **First Name:**

DJ

* **Last Name:**

Howard

* **Address:**

2023 Bredell Ave

* **City:**

Maplewood

* **State:**

MO

* **Zip:**

63143

* **Email Address**

[REDACTED]

* **Primary Phone (numbers only)**

Other Phone (numbers only)

[REDACTED]

Ex. (123) 456-7890

Personal Information

Current Employer (optional)

Self Employed

Occupation (optional)

Professional Engineer

Work Phone (numbers only)

Ex. (123) 456-7890

* Are you a Maplewood resident?

Yes No

* Do you work for a Maplewood business?

Yes No

* Reason(s) for wanting to serve on a board or commission:

Recently moved into Maplewood. Would like to get involved

* What experience or qualifications do you have relating to the function of the board or commission?

Licensed Professional Engineer. Experienced business consultant. Previous Tech Start Up Executive.

* Do you currently hold, or have you previously held, any local, state, or federal government positions, appointments or office(s)?

Yes No

If you checked yes, please list date(s) and position(s) held.

List civic or community activities with which you have been involved.

Vice President of the Board at Columbia Airport, Sackman Field. Advisory Board Member South Tech High School.

If you would like to attach any documents or items that may be of interest to the Mayor or Council for the application review process, please do so below.

Choose File No file chosen

References

Please list two references. At least one reference needs to be a Maplewood resident who is familiar with your experience and abilities.

* Reference Name:

Scott O'Daniel

* Reference Email Address:

[Redacted]

* Reference Phone (numbers only):

[Redacted]

* Maplewood resident?

Yes No

* Reference Name

Tryanna Tandy

* Reference Email Address

[Redacted]

* Reference Phone (numbers only)

[Redacted]

* Maplewood resident?

Yes No

I am interested in serving on the following Board(s) or Commission(s):

(Please rank in order of preference, 1 being your most preferred board/commission.)

* Board of Adjustment and Housing Board of Appeals

1 ▼

* Civil Service Commission

5 ▼

*** Design & Review Board and Historic Preservation Commission**

1



*** Human Services Commission**

Not interested in serving on this board/commission.



*** Library Board**

Not interested in serving on this board / commission.



*** Parks & Recreation Commission**

4



*** Plan and Zoning Commission**

1



*** Special Business District Tax Advisory Commission**

4



Members of the SBD Tax Advisory Commission must be individuals who own property or operate as a municipally licensed business within the boundaries of the district.

*** Sustainability Commission**

Not interested in serving on this board / commission.



*** Have you read the duties and responsibilities of the board or commission for which you are applying?**

Yes No

*** Will you be able to attend the regular meetings of the boards and commissions to which you may be appointed?**

Yes No

By submitting this form, you affirm that the information contained in this application is true and accurate to the best of your knowledge and that you are the person named in the applicant section of this form. In addition, you acknowledge that upon receipt by the City, this form is a public record and its contents will be provided to anyone requesting a copy and that your name, street number/address will be made available to the public via the council meeting agenda, which is posted on the internet.

If you have any questions, please contact the City Clerk at (314) 646-3604 or cityclerk@cityofmaplewood.com.

*** Electronic Signature**

DJ Howard

*** Date**

11/11/2024

Format: MM/DD/YYYY

*** Email address**

[REDACTED]

This field is not part of the form submission.

Memorandum



To: Mayor and City Council
From: Anthony Traxler, Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Works
Date: February 20, 2025
Re: Sewer Lateral Fund Sustainability - Options for Consideration

BACKGROUND

The City of Maplewood's Sewer Lateral Fund has required periodic borrowing from the General and Capital funds for over a decade to cover repair costs. The fund is sustained by an annual \$50 tax assessment on approximately 2,300 residential properties (single-family to six-family units), generating approximately \$115,000 per year. However, with an average of 60 repairs annually, this equates to only \$1,917 per repair—well below actual costs.

In 2014, voters approved an increase from \$28 to \$50, which temporarily stabilized the fund. However, rising material costs and an increase in real estate transactions have driven up repair demand. Real estate agents frequently recommend sewer lateral inspections as part of home sales, increasing the number of repairs requested. Repair volumes have grown from 37 in 2014 to an average of 64 between 2022 and 2024. Current projections estimate 60 repairs for this fiscal year.

The annual revenue can fluctuate from year to year due to several factors affecting the tax base. The approximate count of properties cited is derived from dividing our expected Sewer Lateral Fund revenue by the \$50 assessment rate, as precise property counts from St. Louis County are not included in the City's fund revenue statements. Tax appeals, assessment adjustments, and the timing of delinquent collections contribute to revenue variations. These factors explain why actual annual collections have ranged from \$105,000 to nearly \$117,000 in recent years, despite the consistent \$50 assessment rate.

Prior to 2019-20, when a waitlist was maintained to limit expenditures, residents often waited several years for repairs. The City Council addressed this issue by directing City staff to utilize Capital Improvement Fund resources to reduce and eventually eliminate a backlog of approximately 40 homes. This concerted effort was successful in eliminating the waitlist. However, the city's auditor and bond ratings agency have expressed disapproval of continued transfers from the Capital Improvement Fund into the sewer lateral account, leading to restrictions on such transfers.

Despite previous success in eliminating the waitlist, financial constraints have led to its return. Currently, 26 property owners are on the waitlist for sewer lateral repairs. While average wait times previously were only 30 days, since June 2024 delays have extended significantly as staff implemented stricter financial controls during the Prop S bond sale and S&P ratings process. Repairs involving serious health or safety concerns continue to be addressed within 4-5 calendar days. The combination of rising repair costs, increased demand, and financial constraints has further strained available funds, necessitating a sustainable solution.

Property owners seeking sewer lateral repairs must:

- Present documentation from a plumbing or sewer cabling company indicating a broken, collapsed, or severely shifted pipe, or demonstrating inability to open the line
- Have the line cabled and videotaped
- Provide the video recording to the Public Works Department

CURRENT REPAIR COSTS & FINANCIAL IMPACT

Annual repair costs fluctuate based on variables such as repair depth, location (e.g., under streets, driveways), and whether city staff or contractors perform the work. The tables below provide an overview of repair costs.

Sewer lateral repair costs have increased due to inflation, labor expenses, and rising material costs—such as pipe lining costs nearly doubling from \$120 per foot to \$228 per foot under the city’s most recent contract. The figures above reflect both direct repair costs and city labor/equipment expenses, providing a comprehensive financial picture.

Yearly Summary (Materials, Supplies, and Contractor Costs Only)

Year	Total Repairs	Average Cost per Repair	Total Repair Cost
2019-20	49	\$3,051	\$149,522
2020-21	50	\$2,740	\$136,981
2021-22	62	\$1,943	\$120,469
2022-23	69	\$2,724	\$187,929
2023-24	60	\$3,232	\$193,894

Yearly Summary (All Costs Including Personnel & Equipment)

Year	Total Repairs	Total Repair Cost	Equipment Costs	Personnel Costs	Average Cost per Repair	Total Program Cost
2019-20	49	\$149,522	\$3,920	\$44,688	\$4,043	\$198,130
2020-21	50	\$136,981	\$4,000	\$37,855	\$3,577	\$178,836
2021-22	62	\$120,469	\$4,960	\$48,608	\$2,807	\$174,037
2022-23	69	\$187,929	\$5,520	\$55,959	\$3,615	\$249,408
2023-24	60	\$193,894	\$4,800	\$50,340	\$4,151	\$249,034

“Total Repair Cost” and “Total Program Costs” are not directly reflected in the Sewer Lateral Fund performance and projections (below) because of two key factors: total repair costs have historically been drawn from multiple sources, including the General Fund and the Capital Improvement Fund. Total program costs include equipment and personnel costs that are accounted for in the Public Works budget.

FUND PERFORMANCE AND PROJECTIONS

The Sewer Lateral Fund has experienced persistent negative fund balances for several years. Historical fund performance and future projections are detailed below.

Historical Performance

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenses	Over/Under	Ending Fund Balance	Balance as % of Expenses
FY 18/19	\$116,187	\$102,620	\$13,567	(\$17,474)	-17%
FY 19/20	\$154,300*	\$149,522	\$4,778	(\$12,696)	-8%
FY 20/21	\$116,955	\$174,836	(\$57,881)	(\$70,577)	-40%
FY 21/22	\$107,176	\$120,469	(\$13,293)	(\$83,870)	-70%
FY 22/23	\$116,812	\$187,929	(\$71,117)	(\$154,987)	-82%
FY 23/24	\$105,000	\$63,000	\$42,000	(\$112,987)	-179%
FY 24/25	\$190,000*	\$77,000	\$113,000	\$13	0%

Current and Projected Performance

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenses	Over/Under	Ending Fund Balance	Balance as % of Expenses
FY 25/26	\$117,875	\$81,100	\$36,775	\$36,788	45%
FY 26/27	\$120,822	\$84,300	\$36,522	\$73,310	87%
FY 27/28	\$123,842	\$86,400	\$37,442	\$110,752	128%
FY 28/29	\$126,938	\$89,500	\$37,438	\$148,191	166%

**Includes transfers in from other accounts*

Key Financial Observations:

1. Critical Deficit Period (FY18-23): The fund operated with persistent deficits, reaching a negative balance of nearly \$155,000 by FY22/23, requiring transfers from other funds to continue operations.
2. Recovery Strategy (FY23-24): We implemented two key changes:
 - o Significantly reduced the number of repairs performed
 - o Transferred \$75,000 from the Capital Improvement Fund (one-time transfer)
3. FY24/25 Budget Structure:
 - o Revenue of \$190,000 includes:
 - Regular property tax assessment
 - Transfers from Capital Improvement Fund
 - o Limited repair expenditures to \$77,000
 - o Projected to finally achieve a positive fund balance by year-end
4. Future Sustainability Concerns (FY26-29):
 - o Projections show gradually building reserves if we maintain limited repair volumes
 - o Revenue consists primarily of the \$50 per property assessment plus interest
 - o No additional capital transfers are planned or recommended
 - o Projected expenses remain significantly below historical averages, indicating continued service limitations
5. Long-term Sustainability Challenges:
 - o The current financial model is achievable only by restricting service levels
 - o Current waitlist of 26 properties will continue to grow under the restricted service model
 - o Long-term sustainability requires structural changes to either funding sources or program design

This financial analysis underscores the need for Council to consider the funding options presented in this memo. The current recovery strategy, while effective at addressing the immediate financial deficit, is not sustainable if we wish to restore historical service levels. Without program modifications or additional revenue, we must continue to significantly limit repairs, resulting in extended waitlists and potential infrastructure deterioration.

FUNDING OPTIONS

To ensure long-term sustainability, Council must determine whether to fund only materials, supplies, and contractor costs or fully cover staff and equipment costs. Below are six potential funding approaches:

1. Resident Offset Payment

Utilizing the most recent year's reconciled account (2023-24) and assuming we will have 60 annual repairs, charging each lateral repair an off-set payment of \$1,250 per sewer lateral should cover all costs for the near future. This approach would provide immediate financial stability but places higher direct costs on residents.

2. Cap Amount the City Pays for Lateral Repairs

Most municipalities we surveyed limit their contribution to lateral repairs. For example:

- Richmond Heights caps city payment at \$5,000
- Brentwood caps city payment at \$3,500
- Glendale caps city payment at \$3,000

If Maplewood were to implement a \$2,000 cap per repair, the program could remain sustainable given that the current average repair cost is \$1,917. Under this structure, many residents would likely incur minimal out-of-pocket expenses.

However, this option presents several challenges. Residents requiring extensive repairs could face significant out-of-pocket costs for extensive repairs. Cost variations exist between repairs performed by city staff versus contractors, creating inequitable resident expenses based solely on staff availability.

Additionally, program administration becomes more complex due to the differential between city staff and contractor costs for similar repairs.

3. Offset Payment & Cap Combination

Maplewood could implement a combined approach similar to Rock Hill's program, which uses multiple cost-sharing elements:

- Initial offset payment of \$275
- Resident contribution of 10% of project costs
- Resident responsibility for costs exceeding \$4,500

By adopting this multi-tiered structure, Maplewood could set a higher overall cap than proposed in Option #2, reducing the risk of residents facing unmanageable costs for extensive repairs.

4. Property Tax Increase

[NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING AMOUNTS ARE PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES BASED ON 2024 RATES]

A property tax increase of \$0.0297 per \$100 of assessed valuation would generate approximately \$75,000 annually in additional revenue to cover materials, supplies, and contractor costs. To fully fund the program, including staff and equipment costs (\$130,000), a rate of \$0.0515 per \$100 would be required.

Maplewood's current tax rates per \$100 of assessed value are:

- Residential: \$0.8840 (Total 2024 assessed valuation: \$137,241,980)
- Commercial: \$1.4510 (Total 2024 assessed valuation: \$83,784,680)
- Personal Property: \$1.6100 (Total 2024 assessed valuation: \$32,060,610)

Adding the proposed increase would result in total tax rates of:

- For \$75,000 funding level (\$0.0297 increase):
 - Residential: \$0.9137
 - Commercial: \$1.4807
 - Personal Property: \$1.6397
- For full funding level (\$0.0515 increase):
 - Residential: \$0.9355
 - Commercial: \$1.5025
 - Personal Property: \$1.6615

For example, on a residential property valued at \$200,000 (assessed at 19% or \$38,000), the annual increase would be:

- \$11.29 for the \$75,000 funding level (\$0.94 monthly)
- \$19.57 for the full funding level (\$1.63 monthly)

5. Perform Repairs Only when Revenue is Available

Under this option, repairs would be performed only when sufficient funds are available in the program. This approach would create significant administrative challenges and likely result in extensive waiting periods, with non-emergency repairs potentially delayed for years. This option would effectively create a first-come, first-served system that could negatively impact property values and resident satisfaction while potentially leading to more costly emergency repairs in the future.

6. Third-Party Service Line Warranty Program

The National League of Cities (NLC) Service Line Warranty Program offers an alternative approach through partnership with HomeServe. This program operates at no cost to the city and provides voluntary coverage for homeowners. Coverage includes restoration of ground surfaces after repairs. The program uses licensed, local contractors and typically completes repairs within 24 hours. There are no service fees or deductibles for covered repairs.

However, this approach would likely cost residents more than the current municipal program or proposed modifications, as private insurance programs typically charge \$150-300 annually

per household compared to our current \$50 assessment.

REGIONAL PROGRAM COMPARISON

City	Annual Fee	Coverage Limit	Program Structure
Ballwin	\$28	Up to \$4,500	Application fee \$150; designed for non-functioning laterals, not home sales; normal root maintenance not covered
Brentwood	\$50	Up to \$3,500	City manages repair; owner obtains three quotes; owner pays excess
Clayton	\$28	Up to \$2,000	100% reimbursement; video and plumber certification required
Creve Coeur	Included in taxes	70% up to \$7,500	Owner must attempt cleaning first; video inspection required; owner obtains 3 bids; city reimburses 70% after completion; owner must pay in full first and provide lien waiver and paid tax receipt; requires city pre-approval
Florissant	\$50	Full cost of repair*	\$300 deposit (refunded if approved); video inspection; emergency repairs prioritized (*Excludes 5' from house)
Glendale	\$50	Up to \$3,000	City manages repair; owner pays costs above cap
Kirkwood	\$28	75% of lowest bid	\$400 deposit; city contractor video inspection; owner obtains 3 bids; city pays contractor directly 75% of invoice
Manchester	\$50	Up to \$10,000	\$400 application fee (refunded if denied); city manages repair; owner pays excess
Maplewood	\$50	No cap	Full coverage; no resident contribution
Olivette	\$50	Up to \$3,500	Owner pays 20%; owner obtains 3 bids; 80% reimbursement up to \$3,500
Richmond Heights	\$28	Up to \$5,000	City manages repair; owner pays excess
Rock Hill	\$50	Up to \$4,500	\$275 application fee; owner pays 10% of project costs and any amount over cap
University City	\$28	Up to \$2,500	City pays first \$2,500; includes excavation, repair, backfill, pavement, seeding/straw; excludes landscaping
Valley Park	\$30	Up to \$3,500	\$250 video inspection deposit; city performs video inspection; city repairs or owner obtains 3 bids if city unable
Webster Groves	Included in real estate taxes	Up to \$3,500 (\$8,000 if repair is in the street)	Homeowner must first attempt cabling. If unresolved, submit an application with a cabling receipt. The city conducts an inspection. If a break is found, the homeowner obtains 3 bids. The city pays 80% of the lowest bid. Homeowners cover remaining costs and anything above the

			limit. Minor defects and blockages are not covered.
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SUMMARY & CONSIDERATIONS

Analysis of regional programs demonstrates that Maplewood’s current structure providing full coverage with no resident contribution is unique among communities with similar home values (\$250,000-\$300,000). Most peer communities have adopted sustainable funding models that include some form of cost sharing. For example, Creve Coeur covers 70% up to \$7,500, Webster Groves pays 80% up to \$3,500 (or \$8,000 for street repairs), and Kirkwood covers 75% of costs. These percentage-based approaches help programs automatically adjust for inflation in repair costs.

Other communities like Rock Hill and Manchester use hybrid models combining fixed fees with coverage caps, typically requiring residents to pay a base fee (\$275-400) plus a percentage of repair costs. Under these various models, resident costs for an average Maplewood repair (\$4,151 including staff time and equipment costs) would range from \$690 to \$1,245, compared to no cost under our current program.

Staff has not historically tracked certain data points that could help inform long-term program decisions, including what proportion of repair requests originate from real estate transactions versus existing homeowner-identified issues. The Public Works Department plans to enhance data collection moving forward to better inform future program adjustments.

I will attend the February 25, 2025, City Council work session to answer any questions the council may have on this matter. In the interim, if you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding this matter or if you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 314-646-3635.