



CITY OF NILES
Department of Public Works
SANITARY SEWER LATERAL REPAIR POLICY

The Background:

The City of Niles understands the financial burden that our citizens face when repairs to a sanitary sewer lateral are necessary. The sewer repair policy was adopted by the Niles City Council in 1982, providing financial assistance to property owners when repairs within the street right-of-way are necessary. While each individual sewer lateral is owned by the property owner from the connection point at the main sewer to the connection at the building, the City adopted a repair policy that allows for reimbursement for repair work completed within the street right-of-way area.

Should a property owner experience a complete or partial backup in their sanitary sewer lateral, the first course of action should be to contact the Department of Public Works and request that the main sewer be checked for blockage. Once the main has been checked and assuming it is found to be clear of any obstruction, it is recommended that the property owner contact a firm to rod the lateral from the building to the connection point at the main sewer. Many times an object gets into the sewer lateral that, for a variety of reasons, may be unable to make its way to the main sewer, causing a blockage. Roots in pipe joints, a broken pipe, and separated pipe sections are also common causes for sewer problems. Many times a simple cleaning of the sewer will clear up a blockage problem, but if a blockage still exists a good contractor will be able to diagnose the problem and determine its location.

The Policy:

The property owner is obligated to take any initial action at his/her expense to determine the probable cause and location of a blockage, including initial cleaning, rodding, televising, or other work, regardless of where the problem may be occurring.

Should it be determined that repairs are needed to the sewer lateral at a location within the street right-of-way, the property owner shall contract with a firm to make necessary repairs. Provided the firm has proper insurance, an excavation bond, obtains a Right-of-Way Permit, and follows all rules related to the repair policy, the City of Niles will pay for all reasonable and customary charges for repair work. If charges exceed reasonable and customary, the City of Niles will pay up to the amount that is determined to be reasonable and customary. Repair work shall include excavation, pipe replacement/repair, roadway repairs, sidewalk and driveway repairs, boulevard repairs, and any other restoration work within the right-of-way. Repairs to or replacement of decorations or special landscaping in the right-of-way is not covered.

The firm performing repair work must NOT remove any sewer pipe until such time that a representative of the Department of Public Works is on site and personally observes the exposure and removal of the pipe which is to be repaired or replaced. The DPW official must be present to certify that the City is liable for repair costs. Removal of pipe without a DPW official present is a violation of the repair policy and the City will not pay for the repair work.

In the event that an excavation in the right-of-way is made but no sewer problem requiring repairs is discovered, the City will not pay for any work performed and the cost for repairs to the roadway, sidewalk, driveway, boulevard, and any other restoration work within the right-of-way will be borne by the firm performing the work or the property owner.

All sewer repair work performed in the public right-of-way shall be inspected by a Department of Public Works employee, regardless of whether or not there is expected to be a claim per the sewer repair policy. Not only does the City have to confirm that proper materials, slope and connections are in compliance with the City Sewer Use Ordinance, but it is also important that a record of the repair work be kept, which provides valuable information to the property owner, the City, and in future years for a contractor that may be looking for the location and depth of the sewer lateral.

Member Michigan Municipal League

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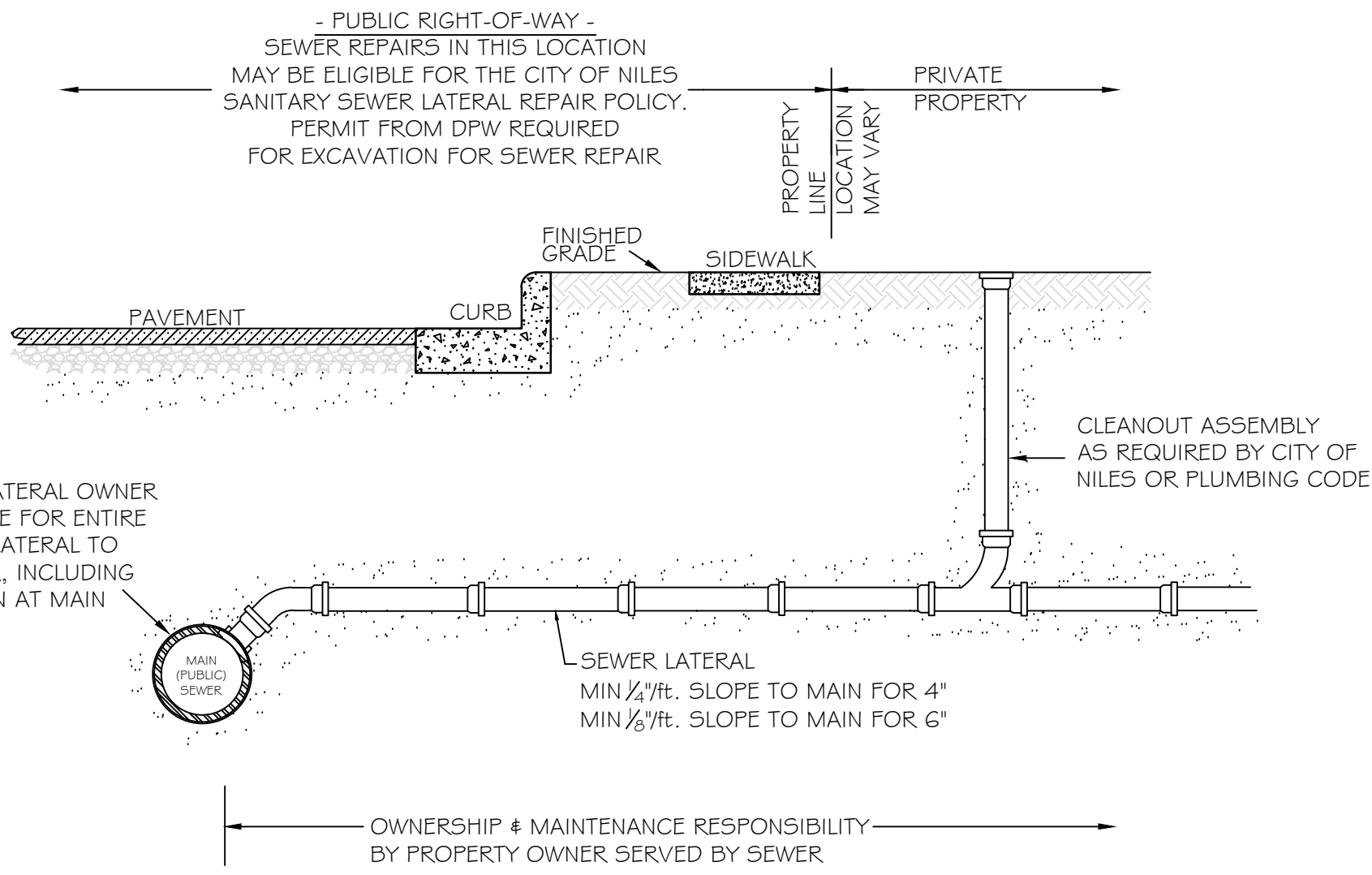
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