

Side Sewer Repair Customer Focus Groups and Interviews

*Presentation to Creeks, Drainage and
Wastewater Advisory Committee*

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Presentation Overview

- Side Sewer Repair Research
 - Recruitment process
 - Participant demographics
 - Focus group recommendations
- Side Sewer Maintenance Research Update
 - Goal
 - Audience groups
 - Next steps

Side Sewer Repair Focus Group Goal:

Learn more about residents' experiences with recent side sewer repairs so that SPU can consider how to offer better resources and support to customers.

Note:
Anecdotal
Customer
Input

Focus Group Recruitment

- Side sewer permit data from SDCI (*voluntary*)
 - Permits registered in calendar year 2017
 - Diversity in gender and neighborhood/zip code
 - Repairs listed as "emergency," "spot repair," "add..."; not *new* construction or *new* connections to main sewer
- Notice of Violation (NOV) letter recipients from side sewer enforcement program spreadsheet (*involuntary*)

Focus Groups: Observations

Who was in the room?

- Many retired or working architects, planners, contractors, realtors, and engineers

Not many online resources to help understand what the problem could be or how to fix it

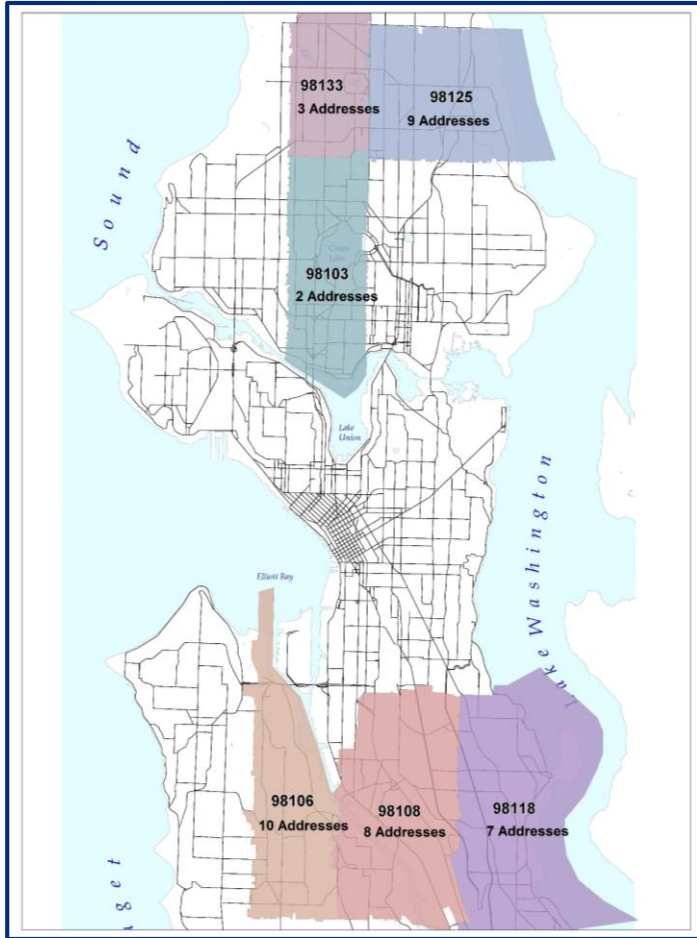
Estimates varied from actual costs

City of Seattle website hard to navigate

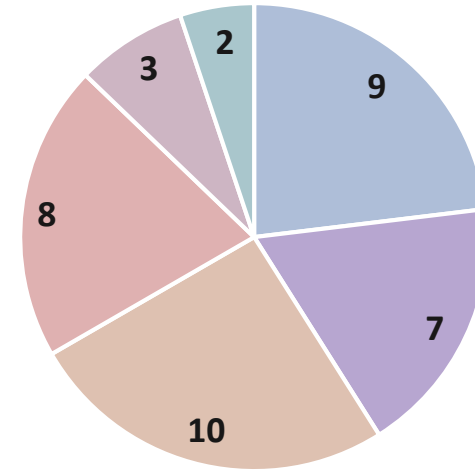
Hard to find available plumbers and contractors

Key Themes

Equity Considerations: Additional Interviews



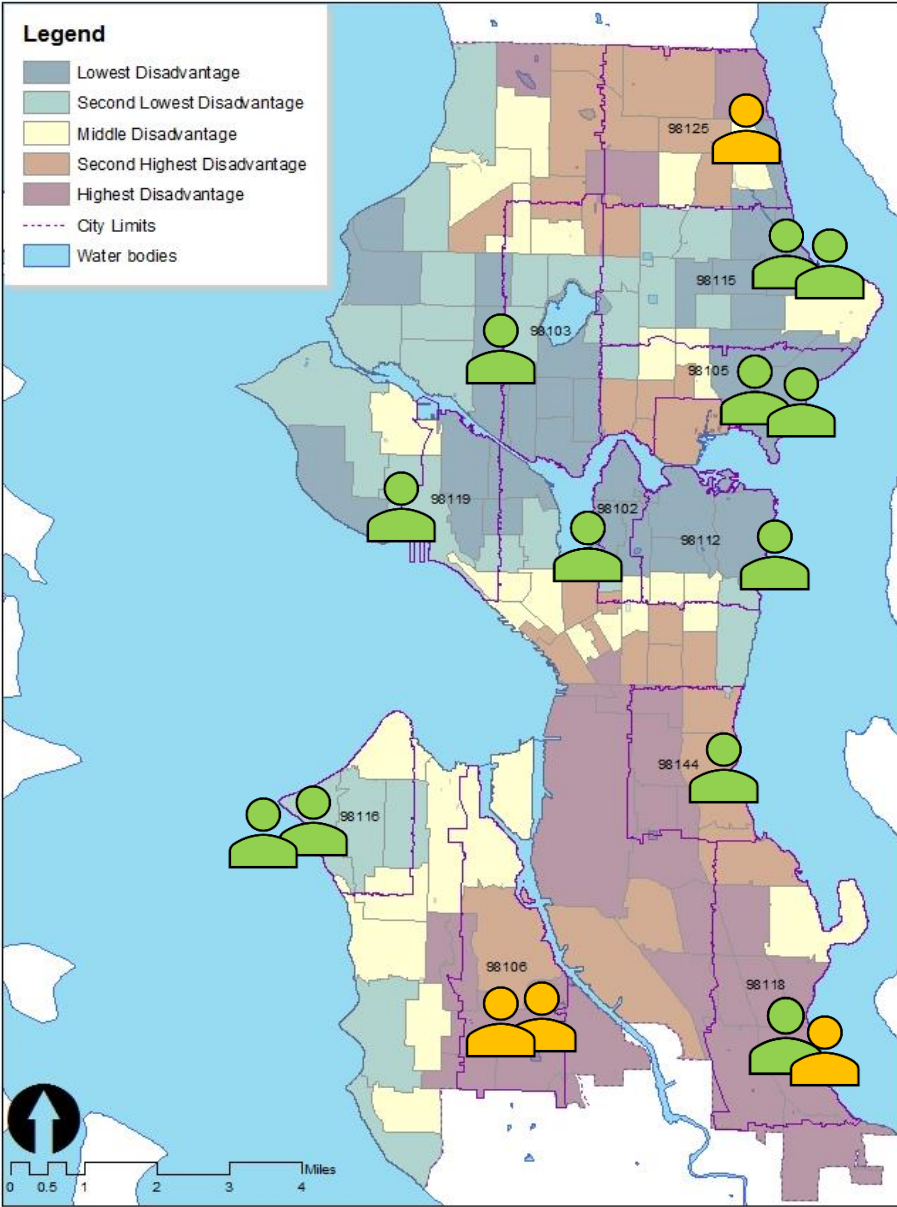
Recruitment for Additional Interviews:
Zip Codes Represented





- 98125 - Lake City
- 98118 - S. Beacon Hill / Rainer Beach
- 98106 - Delridge / Highland Park
- 98108 - South Park
- 98133 - Bitter Lake / East Broadview
- 98103 - Greenwood / Northgate

Focus Group and Interview Participant Demographics (n=18)

Age Range	Hispanic Origin	Race / Ethnicity	Languages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-34 (1) • 35-54 (6) • 55-64 (1) • 65+ (7) • Decline/No info (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No (13) • Decline/No info (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White (10) • Chinese (1) • Korean (1) • African American (1) • Decline/No info (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English (17) • Korean (1)
Gender	Household Size	Building Type	Household Income
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female (6) • Male (12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One (3) • Two (7) • Three (1) • Four (1) • Five + (2) • Decline/No info (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House (17) • 5+ Units (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$50k-\$75k (3) • \$75k-\$100k (1) • \$100k-\$150k (1) • \$150k+ (6) • Decline/No info (7)



Focus Group/Interview Property Locations

-  Participants in first round of focus groups/interviews
-  Additional interview participants

Lessons Learned: Recruitment Process

- Written letters and emails to permit holders
 - Self-selected audience
 - Overrepresentation of affluent, experienced, white, English-speaking, male individuals
- Letters to targeted addresses
 - Still self-selected, a bit more diversity
- Future considerations
 - Consider more direct, in-person outreach
 - Work with community partners



Focus Group Suggestions: Feedback on Resources

- Provide hotline number for customers to get information/answers
- Document permitted customer repairs: locations, contractors, repairs, and cost
- Create side sewer repair checklist for homeowners
- Elevate side sewer scoping importance at point of sale
- Improve Seattle.gov site map and quick links



Focus Group Suggestions: Recommendations to Other Homeowners

- Be proactive and get side sewer scoped regularly
- Get repairs done before there's a backup
- Save up for potential repair work
- Hire separate companies to do scoping vs. repairs
- Scope as part of pre-sale home inspection process
- Understand conditions and responsibilities



Focus Group Suggestions: Recommendations for City of Seattle

What could SPU/SDCI consider?

- Share emergency hotline (386-1800)
- Share inspector hotline (SDCI)
- Neighborhood *Inspector Forums* where people can ask questions (SDCI)
- Consider developing a more comprehensive list of pre-approved side sewer contractors (SDCI and/or SPU)
- Provide range of what certain types of repairs should cost

What broader issues may need to be examined?

- City vs. private responsibility (policy)
- Conflicts between City and County codes
- Online permitting process (SDCI)
- Financing options (e.g., loans)

Side Sewer Maintenance Customer Research (2018-2019) Goal:

- Develop research-based strategies for SPU to better inform and educate Seattle property owners about their responsibility to maintain privately-owned pipes (side sewers).



Research Audience Groups

- Single-family homeowners
 - Survey (WWSA/DSA partnership)
 - Direct outreach
- Multi-family property managers (6)
- Plumbers (12 – completed in Dec 2017)
- Real estate professionals (7)
- Side sewer inspectors (3)



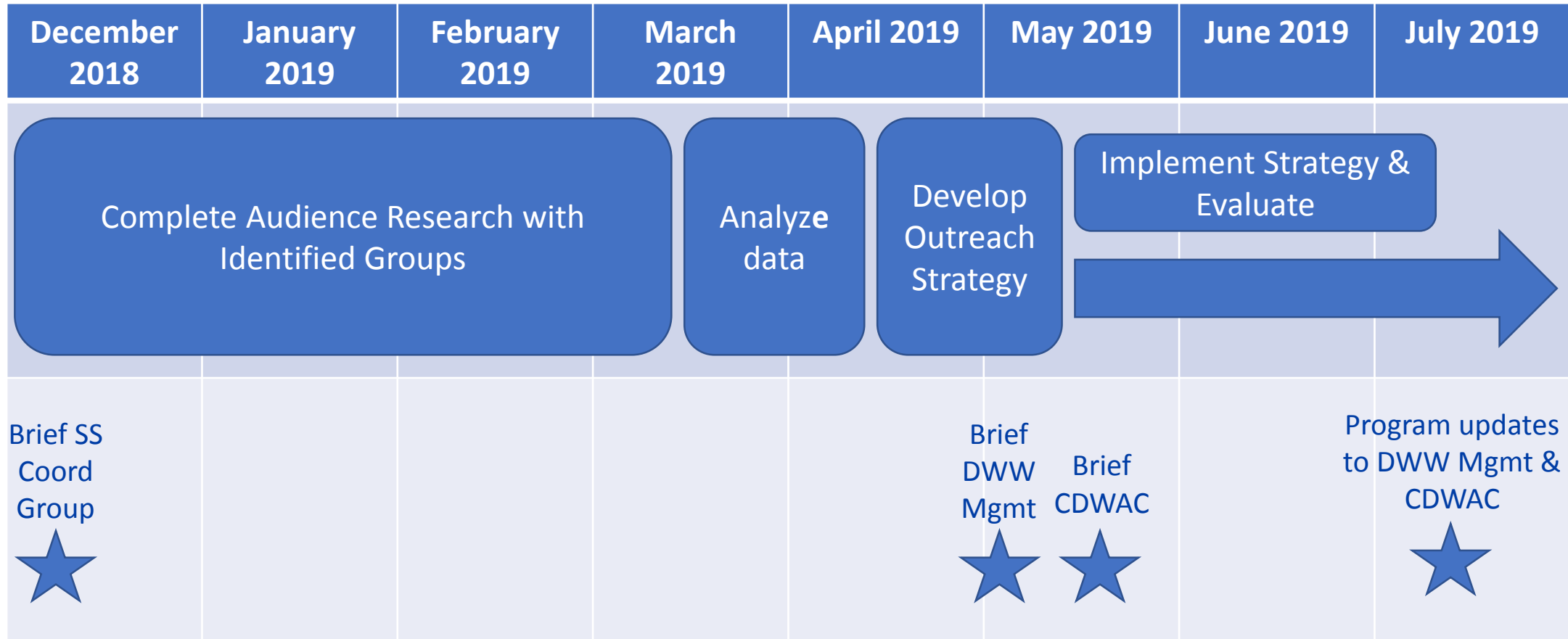
Survey audience

- Tree root data
 - SSOs (2010 to present) with primary cause of FOG
 - SSOs (2010 to present) with secondary cause of FOG
 - Recent Maximo CCTV data (2017-2018) where severe (rated 5 on scale of 1-5) root balls/barrels were observed
- Race and Social Justice Composite Index
- Modeled system capacity issues (Systems Analysis)
- Direct outreach (Southeast Seattle, Delridge)

Side Sewer Outreach Campaign Development



Side Sewer Maintenance Research Timeline



Thank You & Questions

