

BACKGROUND: COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOWS

Peoria built its first sewers in the late 1800s to carry rainwater and melting snow away from homes, businesses and streets. When indoor plumbing came later, homeowners and business owners hooked their sewage lines to those same sewers, combining stormwater and sewage in one pipe. This was standard practice in many U.S. cities at the time, especially in the Northeast and Midwest.

By 1931, the combined sewers were connected to the new Greater Peoria Sanitary District treatment plant through a new riverfront interceptor sewer. However, the old sewers still retained their ability to overflow when sewage levels got too high. If they didn't have this escape valve, raw sewage would back up into people's basements and streets. (In new neighborhoods today, we avoid this problem by building separate sewers for stormwater and sewage.)

PEORIA SEWER OVERFLOW LOCATIONS:

The dots on the map show where sewers may overflow during wet weather.

Due to sewer improvements completed in the 1990s, some of these overflow pipes are inactive. During a typical rainfall, overflows occur at an average of five locations.

– City of Peoria CSO Public Outreach Education Handout, 2009

Peoria began addressing the continued sewer overflow problems as early as the 1970s. In 1986, the Illinois Water Pollution Control Board allowed the City to proceed with \$10 million in projects to reduce sewer overflows. The City completed construction of these projects in 1994.

