Christie Peacock July 2, 2020

In 2001, a teenager decided to explore a sewer near his house in Ottawa. 6 hours and kilometers later, he was rescued by Ottawa Public Works and firefighter staff. Little did he know that the sewer he descended into is a trunk sanitary sewer that drains about ¼ of Ottawa. The flow was deep and fast and he was swept up in a fast-moving current. Luckily, Ottawa has well-designed sewers so the flow wasn’t too turbulent and he was in no danger of drowning. However, he was in complete darkness and had no idea where he was. Luckily for him, City staff have an excellent database and map system of the sewer network. Once the call came in that he was missing, staff calculated where he would be based on sewer connectivity and flow velocities and he was rescued without a hitch. A good shower and some tetanus shots later, he was back at home.

This highlights the need for a robust and reliable database of sewage infrastructure, a matter that LASD takes seriously because we never know if someone’s life depends on our data and maps.

(sanitarysewer.JPG)

A picture containing dark, arch, stone

Description automatically generated (snippet of Ottawa’s GIS map)

Map

Description automatically generated