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## Deep tunnel to catch Indy's sewer overflow

*Star report*

Mayor Greg Ballard this morning announced that federal officials approved a change to city sewer improvement plans that will more quickly capture billions of gallons of sewage now overflowing into the White River.

A \$257-million Deep Rock Tunnel Connector project will replace earlier plans to connect the city's two wastewater treatment plants with a smaller tunnel in shallower ground. Ballard said the revised plan will capture more than half of the city's overflows -- or 3.5 billion gallons a year -- several years ahead of schedule.

He said it will also save money in the long run as the city follows a 20-year, \$1.7 billion consent decree mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2011 and to be completed in 2016.

"By going deeper, residences and groundwater supplies will not be impacted nearly as much," Ballard said. "This is exceeding the requirements of the consent decree."

Ballard and officials from the Department of Public Works made the announcement at the site of an overflow pipe from the city's sewer system on the Near Southside.

On rainy days like today, the city's treatment plants can't handle the volume of rain and untreated sewage, dumping it into area streams and creating health hazards and environmental damage.

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