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SANITATION

Blocked sewage pipe affects high school

Marizka Coetzer

There was no quick fix to a blocked sewage pipe overflowing on the pavement of Hoërskool Wonderboom where raw sewage runs down the street.

Besides the stench in the air, pupils were forced to walk on the road into traffic to avoid stepping in the sewage that's been running down the street for several months.

Wonderboom principal Marius Lezar said they had been struggling for several months to get the City of Tshwane to unblock the sewage line outside the school.

"The blockage somewhere in the line has been left unattended for many months now," he said.

"This has caused the manhole on the side of the school to overflow, and the raw sewage to flow into the stormwater drain a few metres from there. This means that literally thousands of litres of raw sewage end up in the runoff water system daily, which



FOUL SMELL. Sewage overflows from a burst sewage pipe outside Hoërskool Wonderboom in Pretoria. Picture: Marizka Coetzer

eventually ends up in the river and dam systems."

Lezar said the city's version was that the pipe was blocked because it was crushed by the retaining walls of the school.

"There is no sign of any sagging in the retaining wall or any adja-

cent area, which makes this conclusion hard to believe," he said.

"It is hard to imagine that anybody could believe a story such as that, as the school was built in 1949 on the slope of the Magaliesberg Mountain."

Lezar said it meant the depart-

ment of public works knowingly built a retaining wall over an underground sewage line. "This is just as hard to believe," he said.

Lezar said it was the city's responsibility to install a new sewage line, whether it was crushed by the retaining wall or not.

"The school does not have jurisdiction to do any work on sewage lines that fall under the auspices of the town council. A new trench would possibly have to be dug across the road," he said.

Ward councillor Elma Nel said it was not like nothing was being done. She said the sewage line was laid before the school built the rugby fields.

"You can imagine the field weight and those stone walls around the school have caused a partial collapse of the sewage system," she said.

"Weekly teams attend to the sewage block and clean it because the city cannot afford to dig up the rugby field, take down the stone wall and rebuild the sewage system."