

CURRENTS

Planning for Water Reliability: First Up, Upgrades in Highland Park



Rendering of the new Highland Park pump station.

PWSA has shifted our mindset and culture towards proactivity, and this change for the better is manifesting itself in many ways, perhaps most notably in an ambitious series of projects known as the Water Reliability Plan that will repair and rejuvenate our water system for the next 80 – 100 years.

The projects in the plan are an investment of roughly \$300 million over the next five years. This series of once-in-a-generation projects to renew key components of our water production and distribution systems will strengthen our water system, add redundancy, and provide an uninterrupted supply of quality water that the people of Pittsburgh can rely on for many years to come.

Resiliency means that all crucial portions of the system, like pump stations and large-diameter water mains, will deliver a continuous supply of reliable and safe water service. Redundancy means that if there is a failure, the system is designed in such a way that there is always another way to supply water and maintain service.

The capital projects that make up the Water Reliability Plan include rehabilitating the 100-year-old Aspinwall Pump Station, rebuilding the Bruecken Pump Station, replacing reservoir liners and covers, updating electrical and backup power systems, and repairing various large-diameter water mains throughout the system. The work will culminate with the complete restoration of the Clearwell, a large, century-old water storage facility that is critical

to the operations of our entire system and currently operates without redundancy or backups in place.

These projects included in the Water Reliability Plan will take place sequentially over the next five years starting with [projects in Highland Park](#).

In 2022, PWSA anticipates breaking ground on the construction of a new 50 million gallon per day drinking water pumping station and large water distribution pipes, known as rising mains, in Highland Park.

The new pump station will replace the existing station that was used to supply water to the Garfield Tank water supply system. Due to the age of the equipment and operating conditions that made it unreliable, PWSA ceased operation and installed a temporary pump next to the existing pump house. In addition, the new station will house pumping equipment that will provide a supplemental and redundant supply of drinking water to the Highland I Reservoir water district. This will ensure an uninterrupted and reliable water supply to over one-third of PWSA customers.

COMING UP:

Next Board Meeting: October 22

For a complete list of PWSA's board and community meetings, please visit pgh2o.com/events-meetings.

Following COVID-19 restrictions, meetings are held virtually and may be tentative or postponed.

To connect the new pumping station to the Highland I Reservoir water supply system, a new 48-inch rising main will also be constructed. The alignment of the rising main will be near the upper entrance to Highland Park and was chosen to minimize impact to existing trees in the area.

The century-old original supply main conveying drinking water from the Highland II Reservoir to the pump station, as well as the aging Highland II Reservoir cover and liner will also be replaced during the construction of the pump house and rising main, to minimize overall downtime.

This major investment in our water and sewer infrastructure is unequivocally good for the people of Pittsburgh. These improvements will provide current and future generations with a modern water system that delivers reliable, high-quality water for the next century.

DIRECTOR'S CUT

By Chief Executive Officer Will Pickering

PWSA's Recent Rate Settlement Reflects "One Water" Approach



From drinking water, wastewater, and now stormwater to affordability, equity, and assistance for our most financially vulnerable customers, our [recent rate settlement](#) signifies the complexity of a modern water utility.

In recent years, the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority has steadily increased investment in critical water and sewer projects and has developed a robust customer assistance program. With the [new stormwater fee](#), slated to go into effect in early 2022, we will establish a dedicated funding source to improve stormwater management and deliver these necessary services in a more equitable way.

Some of the funding generated by the stormwater fee will be used to construct new stormwater infrastructure. Over time, the benefits of this investment will show up in ways that improve the functionality of our sewer system, reduce pollution in local waterways, and positively affect the quality of water we drink.

How is that possible? When it rains, our sewer system is frequently overwhelmed causing sewage to spill into rivers, which are the primary source of drinking water for us and our downstream neighbors. Since water is a finite resource, even in a water rich region such as Pittsburgh, we want to encourage a "One Water" mindset which asks all of us to value water in all its states — whether its clean drinking water from the tap, rain falling in the river, or wastewater flowing in a sewer.

We need to manage water at every stage and ensure that everyone has equitable access to this essential resource.

The new stormwater fee will be based on a properties' impervious or hard surface, which is a more equitable way to charge for stormwater than charging based on metered water usage. The average amount of impervious surface on a property in Pittsburgh is 1,650 square feet. This is equal to one equivalent residential unit (ERU) of impervious surface.

Approximately 70% of all homeowners fall into the second residential tier, or one ERU. Non-residential customers will also be billed based on the ERU system. When the new rates go into effect in early 2022, the typical residential customer currently paying \$79.34 per month would see an increase of \$5.65 per month, to \$84.99.

The stormwater fee also includes a credits and incentives program for residential and non-residential customers who build projects to manage stormwater on their property. We also are seeking an 85% discount for income-eligible customers enrolled in the Bill Discount Program so people who are least able to afford this new fee are not overly burdened. Additionally, the settlement continues to expand existing customer assistance programs to ensure no one has to choose between paying their water bill and other essential expenses.

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission is reviewing the settlement and expected to make a final decision on or before December 16, 2021.

For more information, please visit [Pwh2o.com/our-water-future](https://pwh2o.com/our-water-future).

Stormwater Monthly Fees	ERUs	2022	2023
Residential Tier 1 (≥400 to <1,015 sf)	.5	\$2.98	\$3.98
Residential Tier 2 (≥1,015 to <2,710 sf)	1	\$5.96	\$7.95
Residential Tier 3 (≥2,710 sf)	2	\$11.92	\$15.90
Non-Residential	Per ERU	\$5.96	\$7.95

70% of all Pittsburgh homeowners fall into Residential Tier 2.

Going above and beyond!

Fantastic Water Fix

A crew consisting of Water Repair Foreman, Chris Bruecken; Utility Workers, Brian Sites, Bill Schempp, and Jeff D'Allesandro; Truck Driver, Chuck Schmitt; and Heavy Equipment Operator, Rob Wilson, were thanked by a Northside customer for their work on a water main repair.

The customer remarked that everyone was given updates, bottled water, and filters after his lead service line was replaced as part of the work.

"You all made one mistake and that was not stopping by my home and collecting the cookies that my wife made for the crew," the customer said.

Amazing job, guys! Keep up the great work.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

Lead Help Desk Determination

A customer living in Squirrel Hill reached out to express his satisfaction with the assistance of Lead Help Field Liaison, Bianca Alton, during the lead service line replacement process.

"Bianca was thorough in explaining what to expect, explain what the city would do, and answering my questions," wrote the customer. "She was so pleasant and helpful."

The customer also noted that the service he received was "unbelievably quick and efficient."

Thank you for your outstanding work, Bianca!

Engaging with our neighbors



PGH2O Cares Analyst, Michael Anania (right), with the winner of the Homewood Day of Hope gift basket sponsored by PWSA.

From community meetings to awareness campaigns and project events – we are doing meaningful work throughout Pittsburgh to highlight many aspects of the services we provide.

Throughout the summer our Stormwater and PGH2O Cares teams have been in the community to talk about two important topics impacting customers: stormwater issues and customer assistance

programs. We've been to community events and meetings from Homewood to Carrick and many neighborhoods in between.

We designated August as [Sewer Awareness Month](#) in Pittsburgh, which kicked-off with a proclamation from Mayor William Peduto. This month-long campaign highlighted the importance of our sewers and the things we all can do to [keep them flowing](#).

On August 25th, we held a ground breaking to recognize the start of construction on the Thomas and McPherson Stormwater project. This project in North Point Breeze features solutions that will capture, hold, and slowly release stormwater into the combined sewer system.



PWSA Chief Executive Officer, Will Pickering, speaks at the Thomas and McPherson ground breaking in North Point Breeze.



PRESS RELEASES

Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority Announces Rate Settlement with PA Public Utility Commission, September 7

Statement from Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority on this week's weather outlook, August 31

PWSA Breaks Ground on Green Stormwater Infrastructure in North Point Breeze, August 25

Mayor Peduto and Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority Declare August "Sewer Awareness Month" in Pittsburgh, August 6

PWSA Receives Low-Interest Loan for Sewer Line Repairs, July 26

Employee Spotlight: Sarah Collins, Talent Acquisition Specialist



Hired in May of this year, Sarah Collins, PWSA's new Talent Acquisition Specialist, hit the ground running, leveraging her tech-savvy skillset and dedication to building a more diverse workforce to jumpstart significant recruitment improvements within the Authority.

What improvements did you make to PWSA's recruitment process?

Right after I was hired, I was asked to build an e-recruitment process within our hiring platform. Our main

goal here was to move away from a paper process and towards a digital application process, making the hiring experience easier for our applicants and streamlining that work for us. The project was really exciting for me. Not only did I have to "jump right in" and build the whole module myself (within about a month, no less!), but I also undertook the training of our employees on the process itself. This last piece really allowed me to get to know our remote sites and the employees who work there more.

What are you undertaking on the diversity and inclusion hiring front?

PWSA wants to build the most diverse workforce. That's a sizeable challenge for any organization, and we're doing a few things to move the needle on this. What I think works is establishing, building, and maintaining partnerships with organizations that have a diversity

and inclusion mindset and local universities or industry organizations to publicize our open positions. And the new e-recruitment process, which makes our hiring experience better, doesn't hurt!

Why is diversity and inclusion important?

Without it, life would be boring! A diverse and inclusive workforce allows us to better innovate, collaborate, and come up with better ideas and strategies to address our challenges.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I take jazz and tap dance classes. My husband Chris and I are outdoor enthusiasts, and we love to hike and camp – this past spring we backpacked the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail. And we adore our rescue cat, Frank.

Interested in working at PWSA?

We are looking for dedicated and talented people to join our team! Visit [Pgh2o.com/careers](https://pgh2o.com/careers)

New Hires

WELCOME ABOARD!

Thomas, Apitsch, Utility Worker I

Maurice Carwise, Plumber

Ryan Fichter, Utility Worker I

Jade Gaines, Customer Service Representative

Tamika Germany, Compliance Analyst

Jacqueline Johnson, Customer Service Representative

Rocco Leffakis, Plumber

Christopher Lott, Plumber

Shawn Lucas, Steamfitter

Devon Nelson, Utility Worker I

Justin Newman, GIS Intern

Tyler Oliver, Chemist I

Rick Sands, Utility Worker I

Daniel Sokoll, Utility Worker I

Jayme Thomas, Plumber

Maurice Turner, Plant Operator

Aziza Wood, Customer Service Representative

William Wagner, TV Truck Specialist I

Promotions

CONGRATULATIONS!

Michael Dusch, Senior Manager, Sewer Operations

Russell Kirk, Valve & Hydrant Specialist

John Murray, Maintenance Manager

Joseph Tewell, Deputy Director, Operations

Philip Tranter, Utility Worker

Anthony Venenziano, Leak Detection Specialist

PGH2O Excellence Award

We applaud our employees' exceptional efforts! These talented individuals set a high standard and inspire our team to go above and beyond expectations. Congratulations to the following employees:

Duygu Altintas, Associate Project Manager for Engineering and Construction

Matt DeMarines, SCADA Technician

Liz Kennedy, Senior GIS Analyst

Raquel Ludinich, IT Project Manager

Erich Schafrick, Chemist II

Donna Scullon, Administrative Assistant

Eugene Tyler, Truck Driver Special Winch Operator

Sarah Viszneki, Pgh2o Cares Coordinator

Stormwater Projects Progress Through Summer 2021

The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority broke ground on four stormwater projects this summer. These projects will more effectively manage stormwater by reducing the amount of rain that enters our sewer system during intense and heavy storms. By using green infrastructure such as vegetated planters, dry stream bed channels lined with gravel, and stone and gravel storage we can work towards reducing basement backups and overflows of combined sewage and stormwater to the rivers. We are also rehabilitating a [century-old sewer outfall](#) along the Monongahela River, which is part of the larger Four Mile Run Stormwater Project. These projects, along with the rehabilitation of aging sewer pipes will strengthen our sewer system, better protect residents from flooding, and reduce pollution in our rivers and streams.

Woodland Road in Shadyside



This huge excavation along Woodland Road, on Chatham University's Shadyside campus, is for underground storage tanks, which will slow the flow of rainwater from storms into our overwhelmed sewer system. A dry stream bed with vegetation will also be installed above ground. Learn more at [Pgh20.com/woodland-road](https://pgh20.com/woodland-road).

Thomas Boulevard in North Point Breeze



Construction crews are installing a system of catch basins, pipes, and underground gravel layers on Thomas Boulevard in North Point Breeze. The system will capture and hold rainwater during a storm, then drain back into the sewer system afterward. Learn more at [Pgh20.com/thomas-mcpherson](https://pgh20.com/thomas-mcpherson).

Wightman Park in Squirrel Hill



Near Wightman Park in Squirrel Hill, construction crews have been forming concrete bump-out planters next to sidewalks to capture stormwater and increase pedestrian safety. When finished, the deep planter boxes will be filled with soil and vegetation, and will help carry stormwater to the new underground storage tanks in Wightman Park. Learn more at [Pgh20.com/wightman-park-2](https://pgh20.com/wightman-park-2).

Maryland Avenue in Shadyside



We recently completed the first permeable paver parking lane for the Maryland Avenue Stormwater Project in Shadyside. The pavers, which were installed on the south 5800 block of Kentucky Ave, allow rainwater to pass through their cracks into layers of gravel and pipe storage below. Learn more at [Pgh20.com/maryland-ave](https://pgh20.com/maryland-ave).

More information about our stormwater program is available at [Pgh20.com/stormwater](https://pgh20.com/stormwater).

2021 Capital Spending

PWSA Continues to invest in our Water Future through capital funding initiatives

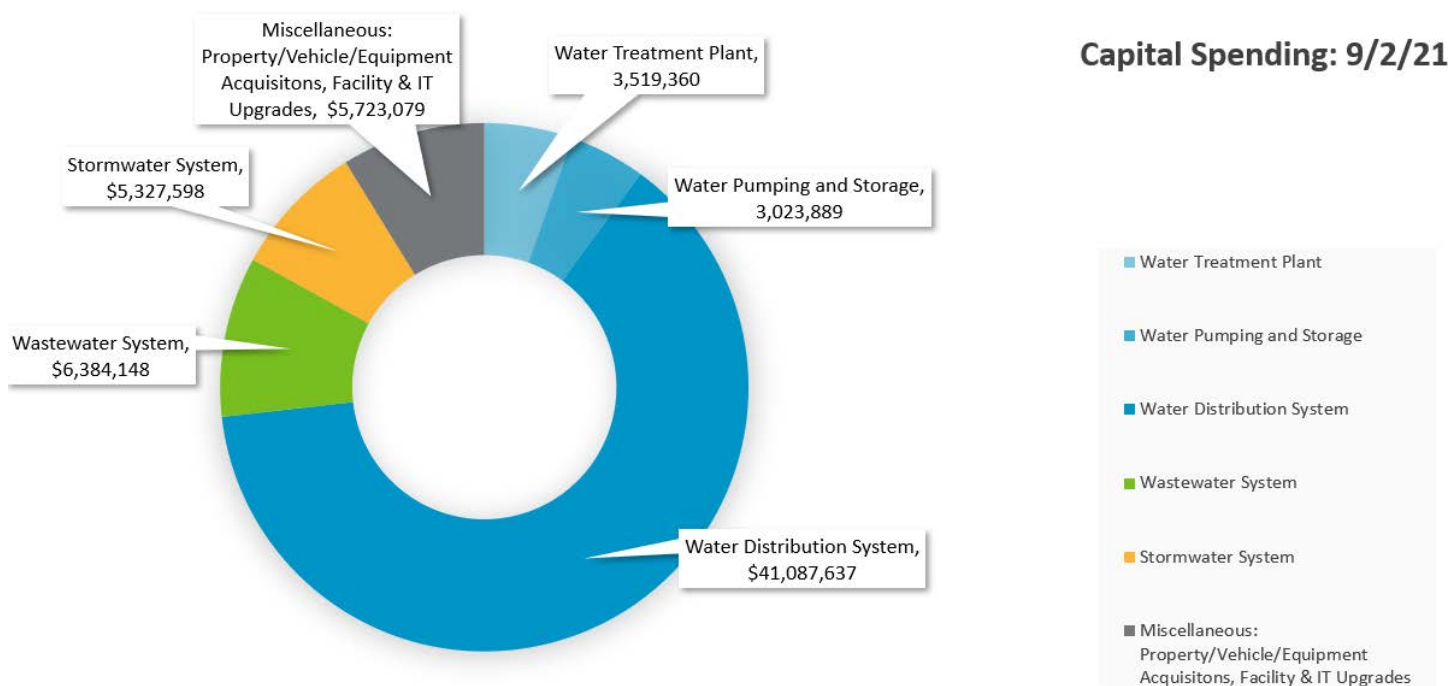


Construction crews prepare trench for water main replacement in Homewood

Through September, The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority has invested over \$65 million in our Capital Improvement Projects program. As our spending reports indicate, the water distribution system spending is a significant focus of the capital improvements in 2021. By committing funding to rehabilitate and replace our water infrastructure, we are providing better services to our customers. The 2020 Small Diameter Water Main Replacement continues to be our largest water-related program this year, with over \$29 million spent on the

program through the end of August. PWSA strategically determines these small diameter pipe replacement projects as areas that are aged and in need of repairs. Using prioritization techniques, our team outlines plans to target locations throughout our service area that need improvements. Aside from our Small Diameter Replacement program, we have ongoing initiatives focused on lead service line replacements, large diameter water main improvements, and our water relay programs, among many others. In addition to our water program, PWSA is investing significantly in our sewer and stormwater systems.

With 25,000 catch basins in our service area, the 2020 and 2021 Catch Basin and Inlet Replacement program is an important part of our CIP that focuses on their strategic replacement. They are the first point of entry for stormwater flowing from our streets into the sewer system. By replacing these assets, we are improving the reliability of our sewer system and providing better control of stormwater. We are advancing several sewer rehabilitation programs, including the Small Diameter Pipes, Large Diameter Pipes, and the Sewers Under Structures programs, to improve the reliability of our sewer system. The Capital Improvement Projects graphic below shows a financial breakdown through 2021.



PGH₂O WATER WISE

Stormwater Tip: Become a Sewer Superhero!



Pittsburgh has more than 25,000 storm drains that direct stormwater from streets and paths into underground sewer pipes. When functioning properly, sewers provide Pittsburghers with crucial public health benefits. However, some people have gotten in the habit of putting things into storm drains that don't belong in our sewers. These materials can clog our pipes, cause flooding and basement backups, and pollute our streams and rivers – all of which have a negative and costly impact on our infrastructure and the environment.

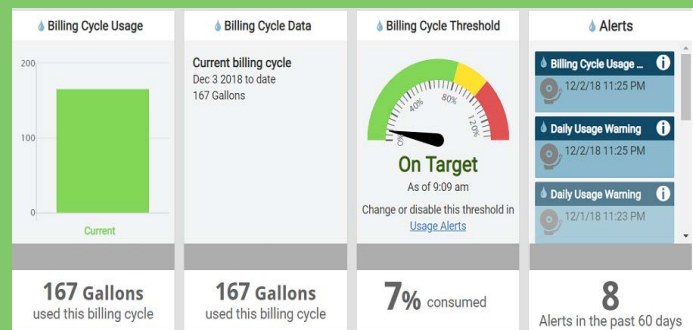
Help keep sewers flowing properly:

- **Only rain down the drain!** Never dump vehicle fluids, grass clippings, leaves, trash, or other materials into storm drains.
- **Report illegal dumping of concrete, asphalt, paint, or other materials into storm drains.** Call our 24/7 Dispatch at 412-255-2423 (Press 1) and note the license plate or company name if possible.
- **Be a Gratekeeper!** Sign up at alleghenycleanways.org/get-involved.html to adopt a storm drain in your neighborhood.
- **Report broken or clogged storm drains.** Call our 24/7 Dispatch, contact us @pgh2o on Twitter, or fill out the form at Pgh2o.com/report-an-issue so that we can send a crew out.

Learn more at Pgh2o.com/reducing-stormwater-pollution.



Track Your Water Usage and Save Money!



Did you know that you can track your household's water usage on your monthly bill or through our online Customer Usage Portal?

Our bill layout includes your total gallons of water used during the billing period, your average daily use, and a graph comparing your average use for the current month and past months to help you spot seasonal or monthly changes in usage.

Our online Customer Usage Portal allows you to track your real-time water usage and set up text message or email alerts for spikes above a customizable threshold. The portal's dashboard includes the gallons of water used in the current billing cycle, billing cycle data, and the status of your usage threshold. Alert options include daily usage alerts, billing cycle usage alerts, and vacation alerts.

If you experience a sudden spike in your bill, it could be due to increased water use or a leak in your plumbing after your meter. Detecting and repairing leaking toilets, faucets, and other plumbing is often easy and can save you up to 10 percent on your water bills.

Learn more at Pgh2o.com/check-your-water-usage.



Customer Assistance Programs

Our Customer Assistance Programs are designed to provide financial relief for income-qualified residential customers who are having difficulty paying their water and wastewater bill.

For more information about our programs, including the Winter Shut Off Moratorium, Bill Discount, Flexible Payment Plans, Hardship Grant, and Lead Line Reimbursements, please visit Pgh2o.com/CAP or call Dollar Energy Fund at [866.762.2348](tel:866.762.2348).

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Donate to the Hardship Grant Program online at Pgh2o.com/give.

Do We Have Your Number?

Did you know that we call customers during water emergencies and outages? It is important to verify that we have the best number to reach you. You can even add multiple numbers for your account, so your entire household is informed about our work.

HOW DO I UPDATE MY CONTACT INFORMATION?

Call PWSA Customer Service: [412.255.2423](tel:412.255.2423) (Press 5)

Visit our website: Pgh2o.com/update-contact-info

Enroll in eBilling

Use our paperless billing and payment portal to receive and pay your bill and manage your PGH2O account from your desktop or phone.

Visit Pgh2o.com/ebilling to enroll.

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Will Pickering
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Rebecca Zito
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Industry Relations Manager

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Senior Public Affairs Coordinator

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Internal Communications Specialist

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Penn Liberty Plaza 1
1200 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Customer Service

T 412.255.2423 (Press 5)
info@pgh2o.com

Emergency Dispatch

412.255.2423 (Press 1)
Available 24/7