

Board Byline — Investing in our infrastructure today prevents costly repairs in the future

By: Susan Keil, Board Chair

OLWS provides water, wastewater, and watershed protection services to our customers. Maintaining and investing in our infrastructure is vital to reliably deliver these services to our customers. Today, communities throughout the State and Nation are facing system failures due to insufficient and aging infrastructure. Many water and wastewater systems, built and financed by previous generations, are approaching the end of their useful life, requiring significant upgrades. Much like the homes we live in, our water and wastewater systems require routine maintenance and continuous improvements. Deferred investment often leads to costly repairs and emergency replacements down the line.

Through the following three planning documents, OLWS is evaluating and identifying needed upgrades to its vital infrastructure to help us to best serve you well into the future:

1) Water Master Plan: The Water Master Plan (WMP) offers a 20-year outlook of the community's water resources, including available water supply, current and future demands, and emerging water quality considerations. It evaluates the condition of water infrastructure (pipelines, pump stations, tanks, etc.) and provides recommendations for replacement and repairs. Additionally, the WMP explores the system's ability to withstand unexpected emergencies such as fires, floods, or earthquakes.

2) Wastewater Master Plan: The Wastewater Master Plan (WWMP) is a long-term planning tool that evaluates the wastewater system's current condition, capacity, constraints, and recommendations for improvement. The 30-year plan evaluates OLWS' ability to comply with State and Federal regulations, withstand climate uncertainty, and continue to provide reliable services.

3) Capital Improvement Plan: OLWS' six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) provides a blueprint for sustaining and improving the community's water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, and it details individual projects. The CIP is reviewed and updated annually to reflect evolving needs and priorities.

Upgrading our aging infrastructure today will help us avoid larger and more costly repairs in the future, ultimately saving you money and improving your services.

What does this mean for my rates? On May 16, 2023 the OLWS Board of Directors will meet to adopt the budget with a proposed rate. The Public Hearing for the proposed rate will take place on June 20, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. followed by final rate adoption. You can attend this meeting via Zoom or in-person at 14496 SE River Road. This process will determine what rate increase will be required in the upcoming fiscal year to support the important capital improvements outlined in the documents above. New rates will be effective July 1, 2023.

You're invited to attend Board meetings. Public comment is welcome at each Board meeting. The public may attend through Zoom video conference or in-person at 14496 SE River Road. The upcoming regular meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. on May 16, June 20, and July 18. For more details on OLWS' upcoming infrastructure improvements, visit us at OakLodgeWaterServices.org. For questions, please email info@olwsd.org.

Annual Water Quality Report

OLWS is committed to providing you with safe and reliable drinking water. The Water Quality Report shows the work that goes into maintaining and delivering high quality water from the Clackamas River to your tap.

The 2022 Water Quality Report is now available at OakLodgeWaterServices.org/water-quality-report Request a paper copy of the report at info@olwsd.org or call (503) 654-7765.



Low Impact Recreation on the Clackamas River

The Clackamas River Water Providers received a State Drinking Water Source Protection grant to create the Clackamas Water Trail website. The purpose of this new website is to highlight access points along the lower river, local amenities, and known river conditions and hazards. You may find this website helpful as you plan summer activities on the Clackamas River. See how you can enjoy the Clackamas River while being a good steward by going to ClackamasWaterTrail.org



Celebrate Drinking Water Week

Clean, safe drinking water is vital for protecting public health, the environment, and making pizza! Water is actually a very important ingredient in pizza-making. Come celebrate Drinking Water Week with a free slice of pizza (1 slice per person) from Hearth and Soul Pizza Company on Saturday, May 13 from 11 AM – 1 PM. They will be stationed behind Awakening Coffee (2144 SE Oak Grove Blvd, Oak Grove, OR 97267) in their iconic blue bus. All are welcome to attend.

Tour the Wastewater Treatment Plant

You're invited to take a tour of the Wastewater Treatment Plant to see how the OLWS protects public health as well as our rivers and streams. The Wastewater Treatment Plant is located at 13750 SE Renton Ave, Milwaukie, OR 97222 next to Rivervilla Park. The tour is for all ages and those under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. To schedule a tour, email alexa@olwsd.org.



Emergency Contact Information

Our team is available 24 hours a day at (503) 654-7765. If you see water gushing up out of either the street, ground, or from a manhole, please call us. Use the same number if you notice sewer spills or if you see someone illegally dumping into a storm drain.



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