

Water Infrastructure at a Turning Point

Throughout North America, water pipes running below our streets are in need of replacement. It's time to bring the conversation about water infrastructure above ground.

- The million miles of water pipes below our streets represent an enormous public trust largely built and paid for by earlier generations.
- Much of the water infrastructure below our streets was constructed during three periods: the late 1800s, the Roaring 1920s and during the Post World War II baby boom.
- The pipes from these different eras are due to wear out concurrently over the next three decades.
- In the United States alone, the cost of replacing water infrastructure in the next 30 years will top \$250 billion, according to a 2001 study by the American Water Works Association.
- The expense of replacing water infrastructure will be met mostly through higher water rates that better reflect the full cost of the service.
- The stewardship of our buried water pipes falls to us. Reinvesting in water infrastructure will prevent today's concerns from becoming a crisis in the future.

Did You Know?

Water and wastewater utilities require more than twice as much capital investment per dollar of revenue than electric utilities.

We are at the 'Dawn of the Replacement Era'

- An extensive American Water Works Association study of 20 large and medium utilities suggests that by 2030 the average utility will spend about three and a half times as much on pipe replacement as it does today.
- The average household served by large and medium utilities will have to spend \$550 and \$2,300 over 30 years to meet repair and replacement costs.
- Households served by small water systems will be impacted two or three times greater than larger systems, since there are fewer people to pay the costs.
- Communities that begin addressing water infrastructure today will avoid "rate shock" in the future.



**American Water Works
Association**

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