



# Newsletter

September 2023

## Century West Engineering, Ecology Move Forward with Sewer Upgrade Project

### Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District

(360) 427-2413

772 E Chesapeake Dr.

Shelton, WA 98584

Email: [info@hpwsd.org](mailto:info@hpwsd.org)

Website: [hpwsd.org](http://hpwsd.org)

General Manager:

*Jeff Palmer*

[gm@hpwsd.org](mailto:gm@hpwsd.org)

Commissioners:

*Andrew Hospador*

[Commissioner1@hpwsd.org](mailto:Commissioner1@hpwsd.org)

*Jim Anderson*

[Commissioner2@hpwsd.org](mailto:Commissioner2@hpwsd.org)

*Stacy Swart*

[Commissioner3@hpwsd.org](mailto:Commissioner3@hpwsd.org)

### Pay Your Bill 24/7

Online: [hpwsd.org](http://hpwsd.org)

By Phone: 360-427-2413

### Billing Office Hours

Mondays: 9:00 am—2:00 pm

Tuesdays: 9:00 am—2:00 pm

Thursdays: 9:00 am—2:00 pm

Board of Commissioners meetings are held on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month at 1:00 pm in the District Office, 119 E Liberty Rd. All meetings are open to the public.

Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District is not associated with or governed by the Hartstene Pointe Maintenance Association. Please direct water-sewer service related questions to the District.

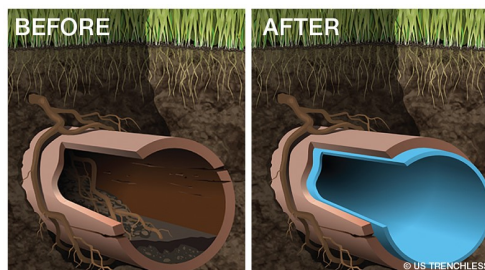
Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

We have some good news! As reported in last March's newsletter, the District applied to WA Dept. of Ecology for funding to address some critical sewer system issues. In June, Ecology released their final funding list and the District was included.

For now, the District was approved for a \$1.3 million loan to begin the *Design & Planning* phase. This will affect the entire community. Soon, you will see surveying work begin. The next phase will be *construction*. At the completion of the *Design & Planning* phase, Ecology will determine if it will fund the *Construction* phase, which is likely to be approved. At this time, we do not know how much of the *Construction* funding will be grant money and how much loan. That will most likely be on the next draft list, to be released next January.

The goal is to have the *Construction* phase ready to send out to contractors for bid next spring, with the goal of starting construction in June 2024. This means there will be traffic disruptions around the Pointe through 2025 and temporary limited access to several driveways. As we get closer to it, we will provide more specific dates and areas to be affected. Please be aware of this when you make plans for next summer and beyond. Note: road replacement/fiber expansion are **not** part of this project, nor planned in future by District; fiber is solely PUD's project.

District staff and commissioners are very excited to move forward with this project. The *Inflow & Infiltration* (I&I) troubles with the wastewater system have been an ongoing problem for decades. It was never going to be an easy fix, since it required a lot of money to pay for it. I&I has caused many sleepless nights for operators, violations from Ecology for exceeding the Permit flow (due to rain and stormwater entering the sewer system) and brought a threat of a lawsuit for violations to the Federal Clean Water Act. The District was able to settle and avoid going to court, partially through proof that the District was already in the process of working to address the needed I&I repairs.



*Inflow & infiltration* problems have been overlooked for decades. Unfortunately many, or perhaps most, municipalities have adopted the "out of sight, out of mind" mindset. This has caused many to scramble to find funds to correct years of neglect. I&I problems are the leading cause of excessive hydraulic overloads, private home sewer

age backups and premature failure of the collection system.

The District is hosting a public hearing at **9:00 am** on **October 7th** at the **HPMA clubhouse**. The Project Engineer will be present and will be able to address some of the community's questions at that time. Coffee and light refreshments will be provided.



# Forever Chemicals in Drinking Water



You may have seen or heard this in the news recently: Toxic “forever chemicals” have contaminated water systems around the nation, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced in August.

As a reminder to everyone, back in our June newsletter, we shared that we had done lab testing for these chemicals, also known as PFAS, in our drinking water. We actually participated in voluntary sampling before it became mandatory. All the tests came back with results of non-detectable. If anyone would like a copy of it, let us know. However, it is definitely not easy reading material.

I’m not surprised by the results, as we’re not located in an area that would likely be contaminated. These chemicals are prevalent at airports, military bases and fire training academies, as a result of foams that are heavily used. They’re also used in the manufacturing of thousands of products, including non-stick cookware, oil and water-repellent clothing, household furnishings and food wrappers. Like nearly everything else that gets rinsed, washed and disposed of these toxic chemicals eventually end up in the ground water and water treatment plants.

However, due to the presence of these chemicals in so many consumer items, it is likely they’re ending up in the wastewater as well. While PFAS in drinking water has been studied for some years, studies are now additionally focused on PFAS in wastewater. We have not received any instructions yet on testing our wastewater, although some states have already begun.

— Jeff Palmer, General Manager



visit [www.nacwa.org/toilets](http://www.nacwa.org/toilets)

# TOILETS ARE NOT TRASHCANS™

Only Flush the 3 P's: Pee, Poop, & Toilet Paper



## Drippy the Droplet's Water-Saving Tip:

**“Install water efficient faucets throughout the house. There are numerous water-saving devices on the market. Look for aerators, flow regulators, and displacement devices to save water!”**

# Utility Locate Paint Marks

In the coming weeks, more utility locate marks will be painted/flagged around the Pointe to identify underground infrastructure for the upcoming wastewater improvement project. These marks will be made on roads, driveways and rights of way. Expect to see surveyors on site once all marks have been made for the planning phase of the project. Marks are color-coded per 8-1-1 guidelines. You’ll primarily see blue, green, red and orange marks identifying water, sewer, electricity and telecommunications.

# Accountability of Public Funds

For small governments, the consequences of failing to recruit capable staff and fully train them can be a loss or misappropriation of public funds and the loss of public trust that comes with lack of accountability.

The city of Soap Lake’s financial health continued to decline and a special investigation found the police chief conducted personal business while working for the city, including purchasing and selling a police vehicle between other cities during work hours.

Soap Lake is not alone. Recently, a WA State Auditor’s Office audit showed the city of Kahlotus lost more than \$5,000 because no one reviewed the city’s bank statements other than the clerk-treasurer, who was ultimately found to be responsible for the misappropriation.

In Springdale, the mayor was responsible for more than \$15,000 in misappropriated public funds using the town’s debit card. No one reconciled bank statements in a timely manner, no one reviewed those reconciliations and the town did not consistently collect receipts to verify that purchases were in the public interest.

There are more such findings in small cities across the state. Locally, there have been questions regarding purchases made by commissioners and employees of a small fire district. Whether ratepayers or taxpayers, people want to know that public funds are being used responsibly. And rightfully so.

As the District moves forward with upcoming costly capital projects, Commissioners and staff wish to remind and reassure the community that the District adheres to robust auditing policies and procedures, even designating an audit commissioner who reviews monthly account reconciliations and payment vouchers. All expenses are reviewed by at least two staff members and a commissioner; the vast majority of expenses are reviewed by administrative staff and the board of commissioners prior to approval for payment.

Later this year (likely in the Fall), administrative staff will welcome an auditor from the State Auditor’s Office (SAO) for a biennial accountability audit. SAO is required by law to perform an accountability audit for every government entity at least once every two years. In previous audits, auditors have commended staff and commissioners for transparency and implementing policies and procedures that hold to a higher standard than is required by law. Auditors also advise staff and commissioners with helpful suggestions where improvements can be made.