

**Our Aging Water Infrastructure It's more than just water...**

Over 1.5 million people in Hampton Roads are served by public water systems every day. As a region, our daily water use is approximately 135 million gallons. When you pay your utility bill, you're making an investment into the future of these essential quality of life services.

It's more than water and sewer services, it's also the people needed to operate and maintain these systems, as well as the often unseen network of pipes and equipment it comes to the systems that carry water to and from our homes. Beneath our cities, there is a vast amount of infrastructure in place and much of it we never see because it is buried beneath our streets. ~~We have~~ more than 6,500 miles of water distribution pipeline and ~~over~~ 5,800 miles of sanitary sewer lines throughout Hampton Roads. These systems, and the people who maintain them, work silently and reliably to keep the water flowing. Because they are out of sight, we often take them for granted, but their proper maintenance is essential.

As our water and sewer pipes age, it's important that municipalities plan ahead to upgrade and replace this critical infrastructure. Throughout Hampton Roads, our citizens can currently see the return on their investments with ongoing water and sanitary sewer construction projects. Although many of these systems were built to last many decades, it's important to keep up the momentum as communities grow and pipes approach the end of their expected serviceability. The U.S. Government Accountability Office has noted that water and wastewater utilities do not generate enough revenue from user rates to cover their full cost of service. Without action now, this shortfall will lead to postponed or delayed repairs and replacement projects, posing a threat to the environment, our local economy and public health.

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**GOOD TO KNOW-----**

**Our infrastructure is aging and must continually be improved, was built to last, but eventually it must be replaced.**

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America's water infrastructure — the 800,000 miles of water pipe and 600,000 miles of sewer line that deliver and remove your water and wastewater — is aging and needs to be repaired, but funding for improvement projects has reached an historic low. This fact, coupled with an increased demand for water from an ever-growing population, means we must take action now.

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As our pipes age and our communities grow, we need water and sewer systems that are capable of meeting the needs of our customers. When you pay your utility bill, a portion of it goes toward future system upgrades. You're investing in the future.

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**Water is a value.**

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Comparatively, water and sewer service is a bargain in Hampton Roads.

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▲ 5,000 gallons of water = \$75 per month / \$900 per year

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▲ 2 smart phones with data plans = \$140 per month / \$1680 per year. Compare the price of water to other household needs. Water is essential for good health and hygiene, it protects our communities from the risk of fire, and it fuels our economies. It's hard to imagine a day without life-sustaining water.

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**GOOD TO DO-----**

**Don't take water for granted.**

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Water is life. The water we use now is all we'll ever have, so we must use it wisely. [Fix household leaks that waste water.](#) ~~You can conserve in~~[Responsible water use -small ways that](#) makes a big difference to preserve and protect our water resources.

***Support and invest in infrastructure.***

~~It is critical that we support the investment necessary to replace our aging infrastructure. Our quality of life and health cannot be sustained without continued and improved access to clean drinking water and sanitation services.~~

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***Think before you flushProtect our wastewater collection systems from blockages.***

~~Your home's plumbing and the municipal wastewater collection systems can clog when not used properly. Sewer backups are unpleasant and simple practices can avoid major problems for you and your neighbors. Take care and avoid costly visits from a plumber. Do not put grease down a drain. Dispose of it's a toilet, not a trash can! You'll save your pipes (and avoid a costly visit from the plumber) by putting~~ paper towels, ~~disposable~~-wipes, feminine hygiene products, ~~paper towels~~, etc. in the trash where it belongs.

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***Stay informed about water quality issues.***

Learn more about what happens to the water you drink and use. Start by reading and understanding your locality's annual water quality report: Chesapeake | Franklin | Gloucester County | Hampton | Isle of Wight County | James City County | Newport News | Norfolk | Poquoson | Portsmouth | Southampton County | Suffolk | Virginia Beach | Williamsburg | York County

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