



Around the Lake

Water and Sewer-Related News and Information

Taking Care of our Customers During COVID-19

by Commissioner Shauna Willner



As a provider of essential water and sewer services, Silver Lake Water and Sewer District remains in continuous operation to provide service to customers through the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure the District meets this commitment, we

have taken several steps to ensure our employees and customers are protected and supported.

Ensuring Employee Safety

We have provided field staff with personal protective equipment (PPE), implemented staggered shifts, spread out work across multiple locations, and are ensuring all of our employees work as socially distanced as possible for their various operations.

While our office is closed to in-person customer service, our employees are working both remotely and in the office to answer phones, process payments, read meters and bill accounts, maintain technology infrastructure, process requests for public information, and issue new connection permits. We are proud of the ways we've been able to continue our essential services to the community.

Offering a Financial "Pay Back" Plan

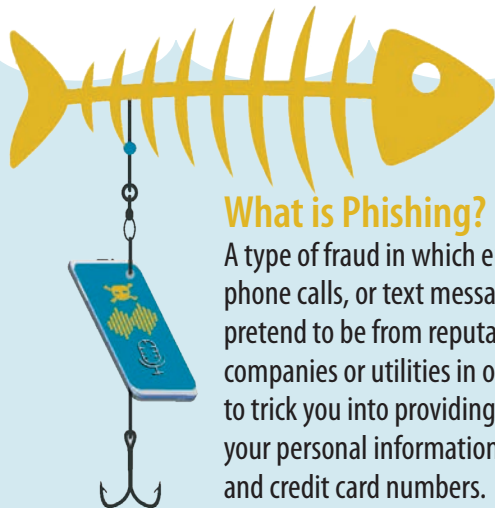
The District recognizes that the pandemic has impacted some customers' financial situations. Beginning in March, we suspended all water service shut offs and penalties for payment delinquencies—an action mirrored in Governor Inslee's subsequent proclamation adopting these same measures statewide through December 31, 2020.

Once the Governor's order expires, we are offering a financial "pay back" plan to assist customers with past due amounts, allowing them to repay in installments over time. As long as a customer pays their current balance, along with an applicable installment towards the past due balance, their service will be maintained with no late fees or interest. We will be sending out letters about our "pay back" plan to those who are significantly past due.

Identifying Additional Financial Support

District staff has also been in contact with Snohomish County regarding their Federal Family CARES Act funding for rental assistance, which we're told may also be used for utility bills. This program is available to households that have lost their primary job—as long as someone residing in the household is 65 years or older, or has an underlying medical condition. The program is being administered by Volunteers of America and customers can call 211 for more information.

Are You Being "Phished?"



What is Phishing?

A type of fraud in which emails, phone calls, or text messages pretend to be from reputable companies or utilities in order to trick you into providing your personal information and credit card numbers.

We have recently received reports from customers about scammers targeting them via text messages and telephone calls, attempting to scare them into providing sensitive information. These "phishing" attempts have an increased level of sophistication that can be difficult to recognize. Don't get caught! For more info and special precautionary steps, visit our website at www.slwsd.com/scamnotice.html

Utility Rate Update

In 2020, our Board of Commissioners voted to defer all rate increases due to the financial impacts of the pandemic on so many of our customers. A Study is underway to identify rate adjustments for 2021.

Your Water and Sewer Rates are adjusted in two ways: an **annual** adjustment known as the “Pass-Through” rate, and **periodic** rate adjustments for all Other District Service costs.

Annual Pass-Through Rate Adjustment

Silver Lake Water and Sewer District purchases sewer treatment services and water on a wholesale basis from outside agencies. These wholesale costs, which are “passed through” to us, represent the largest cost in our overall operating budget, which is why the associated rates are adjusted on an annual basis.

- Collected sewage waste is passed along for contracted treatment services by either the City of Everett or by King County Metro, through the Alderwood Water & Wastewater District (AWWD).
- Water is purchased directly from the City of Everett, or indirectly from the City through the Clearview Water Supply Agency or the Alderwood Water & Wastewater District (AWWD).

Periodic Other District Service Costs Rate Adjustment

Periodic service rate adjustments are made upon the completion of a Rate Study by an independent consultant that reviews all of our Other District Service costs. The last time we adjusted these rates was in 2015.

General Facility Fee

The District collects a separate General Facility Fee for each new connection to our system. These fees reflect our capital infrastructure costs, and are reviewed when we adopt a new Capital Facilities plan. The most recent Capital Facilities Plan was adopted for the Water System late in 2017, and for the Sewer System in early 2019. General Facility Fees were last adjusted in 2011.

Impending Rate Adjustments

Early in 2020, prior to the onset of COVID-19, the District initiated a Water and Sewer Rate Study to address these three rate components. At that time, we intended to adopt new Pass-Through rates in April, and then review the General Facility Fee, followed by our Periodic Service cost rates, upon the completion of the study later in 2020. With the onset of the pandemic, the Board of Commissioners decided in April 2020 to defer the 2020 Water and Sewer Pass-through Rate, absorbing the increased costs on a temporary basis. The following Table outlines the deferred Pass-Through rates:

Pass-Through Rates Deferred in 2020 (due to COVID-19)

| Description: | Water | | | Sewer | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|
| | Base | Winter | Summer | Everett | AWWD |
| 2019 Current Rate | 7.60 | 2.15 | 2.60 | 58.25 | 57.65 |
| 2020 Pass-Through Rate | - | - | - | 3.65 | 0.15 |
| 2020 Other District Service Costs | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2020 Forecasted Rates | 7.60 | 2.15 | 2.60 | 61.90 | 57.80 |
| 2020 Forecasted Increase | - | - | - | 3.65 | 0.15 |
| 2020 Forecasted % Increase | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 6.27% | 0.26% |

While work has continued on the Rate Study, the first review was postponed due to the restrictions on conducting public meetings in person. As it is now apparent that this limitation will continue for the foreseeable future, work is again proceeding via virtual meetings.

On October 22, 2020, the Board of Commissioners was provided with a draft report to implement new General Facility Fees. The consultant presented this report on November 12, 2020; a public hearing to adopt the new General Facility Fee is currently scheduled for December 10, 2020. It is anticipated that adjustments to our Pass-Through Rates and Other District Service Cost Rate will continue to be deferred for existing customers until early 2021.



Don't Get Frozen Pipes this Winter!

Included in your most recent billing statement was a “Winterization Checklist” insert with detailed instructions about...

- Protecting your pipes
- Locating and shutting off your main water valve in the event of an emergency
- Additional safety measures for sprinkler systems, cabins, and more
- How to thaw a frozen pipe
- What to do if a pipe breaks

If you need another copy, visit:
www.slwsd.com/publications/winterization.pdf

Sewer Lift Station Improvements Around the District

Silver Lake Water and Sewer District has 22 sewer lift stations that use powerful motors to pump sewage from lower elevations to higher elevations, where it can then flow by gravity to a treatment plant. Because several of our lift stations are between 20 to 30 years old, they are nearing the end of their life cycle and need to be replaced or rehabilitated—all while keeping the existing facility continuously in service.

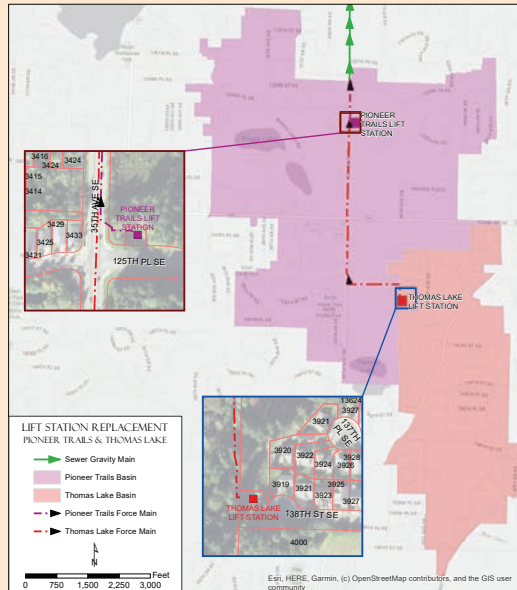
Waldenwood Lift Station in the Pinehurst subdivision, in the 10900 block of 51st Ave. SE

Built in 1998, this Lift Station pumps wastewater approximately 350 vertical feet uphill, then along 116th Street SE to an Everett gravity sewer main approximately 1.3 miles away. After more than 20 years of service, it was ready to be replaced. Work began in September 2019, and construction is expected to be complete by the end of November 2020. The new lift station will have three new horizontally mounted variable speed pumps, upsized to handle increased flows in the future. The total project cost including design, construction, and contingency, is approximately \$4.8 million.

Phase 1 pre-design work for all three of the following projects will be completed by the end of 2020, with full design work starting in early 2021:

Pioneer Trails Lift Station on 125th Pl. SE just east of 35th Ave. SE

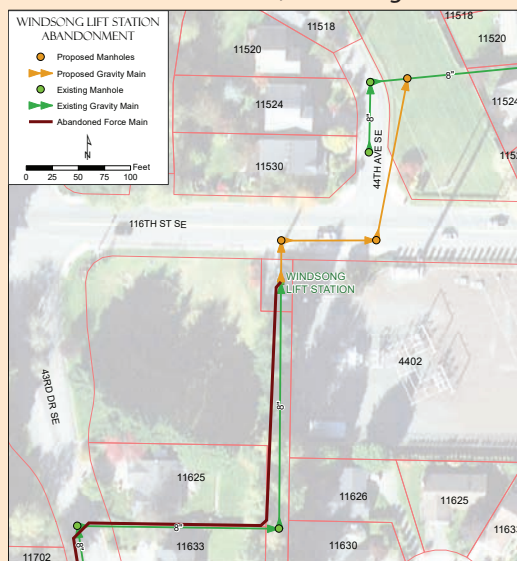
Built in 1987, this Lift Station has one of the deepest storage chambers in the District. Because it serves a large area undergoing significant development (including The Farm at Mill Creek on the south side of 132nd Street SE), its capacity needs to be increased, including a larger discharge pipe on 35th Avenue SE.



Pioneer Trails and Thomas Lake projects above



Waldenwood above; Windsong below



Thomas Lake Lift Station at the end of 138th St. SE, west of Seattle Hill Rd.

This Lift Station was built in 2000 and is ready to be replaced. Its service area is essentially built out, so no further capacity upgrades are planned.

Lift Station 4 10600 block of 35th Ave. SE

This Lift Station was rehabilitated in 2005, however it currently needs a new backup generator. With associated upgrades to motor starters and controls, we will be able to install a smaller, more cost-efficient generator.

Windsong Lift Station Abandonment 116th St. SE near 44th Ave. SE

Once the Waldenwood project is complete in early 2021, a new pipe will be installed across 116th Street and between two existing houses to allow sewage to flow downhill by gravity instead of being pumped uphill. This will enable us to abandon the Windsong Lift station, saving the expense of maintaining and operating this 30+ year old facility, as well as any future replacement or rehabilitation.



Silver Lake Water & Sewer District



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Bothell, WA 98012-6114

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit# 1327
Seattle, WA

Silver Lake Water & Sewer District

Address

15205 - 41st Avenue SE
Bothell, WA 98012-6114

Phone

425-337-3647

Fax

425-337-4399

Office Hours • Our physical office is temporarily closed due to COVID-19

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Closed Saturday, Sunday,
and major holidays.

Public Meetings

Silver Lake Water and Sewer District's Board of Commissioners' meetings are held the on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. **Currently, these meetings are being held virtually. Visit our webpage at www.slwsd.com for more information.**

How to Pay Your Bill

Types of Payments Accepted

Check, money order, and credit card
(Visa, MasterCard, American Express)

Pay By DropBox

A payment drop box—for checks and money orders only—is available in the parking lot of our office at 15205 - 41st Avenue SE in Bothell.

Pay Online

www.slwsd.com

Pay By Phone

1-877-814-9773

Pay With Your Own Bank Bill Pay System

Please allow 7 business days for delivery

Pay In Person • Temporarily Unavailable

15205 - 41st Avenue SE
Bothell, WA 98012-6114

Transaction Fee

There is a \$3.85 per transaction convenience fee when you pay with a debit/credit card or e-check (when paid by phone, website, or in person).

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In Case of Emergency

District staff are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist you with water and sewer emergencies.

(425) 337-3647

If you are calling after hours, press "1" to hold for an Emergency Operator.