



Maps highlighting three areas where water replacement projects will be taking place during the 2024 construction season.

- **41st St. (12th Avenue to 19th Avenue East)**
 - Existing 8" Cast Iron Pipe
 - Installation Date: Unknown
 - Breaks Recorded: 7
 - Estimated Cost= \$2.9 million
- Trunk Hwy 169 (23rd Street to 25th Street)**
- Existing 30" Cast Iron Pipe
 - Installation Date: ~1956
 - Two breaks in July of 2023 caused of major service outages.
 - Estimated Cost= \$1.9 million

Water replacement projects have been planned out to the Summer of 2027 as part of the HPU Watermain Capital Improvement Plan. These three projects have been identified for the Summer of 2024 to replace approximately 8,000 linear feet of failing watermain lines. Work is scheduled to begin in late Spring of 2024 and will be completed by October of 2024.

With these and future projects HPU looks to continually improve our utility

services for the community we represent. As a publicly owned Utilities Company, we act in best interests of our community. The more informed and engaged that community is, the better we can represent them. Information regarding these projects has already and will continue to be made public as the projects progress. If you would like to know more, follow our public meetings on hpuc.com/meetings or call HPU at 218-262-7700.

For updates and information about these projects, visit hpuc.com/2023/04/26/2023-capital-watermain-improvements/

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WATERMAIN REPLACEMENT PLAN

With the 2023 construction in the books, we hope that you have noticed the work we completed to date on Hibbing's Watermain Infrastructure. Our city is geographically the largest in the state. Its limits encompass over 180 square miles. Hibbing Public Utilities has over 100 miles of watermain piping within those limits and approximately 50% were installed before 1960. These cast-iron pipes are well worn after a nearly century of use. Withstanding not just Minnesota frost and thaw but the monthly blasting from the Hibbing Taconite and Keewatin Taconite. These conditions led to sixty-four (64) line breaks in Hibbing's water utility system in 2022. These breaks drop system pressure, introduce impurities to the water, and in 2022 cost rate payers an estimated \$840,000 in wasted water and repairs.



Retired waterline pipes are piled up in Frank Hibbing Park after being removed from service. Records indicate this section of cast-iron piping was installed in the 1922. The Watermain Capital Improvement Plan will increase the service reliability within the most problematic areas of Hibbing.

Age of Construction	Total Pipe Distance	
Pre-1920/Unknown	21 miles	~50% installed before 1960
1921-1940	13 miles	
1941-1960	13 miles	
1961-1980	14 miles	
1981-2000	20 miles	
2001-Current	21 miles	

The 2023 Watermain Capital Improvement plan (Watermain CIP) was implemented to address these pressing issues. By replacing what was identified as the most problematic sections of watermain piping, HPU looks to increase service reliability and decrease operating costs of the water utility spent on repairs. The 2023 Watermain projects took place at the following locations:

- Stuntz Drive and Hematite Street
- 18th Avenue and 27th Street
- Minnesota Street and 8th Avenue East

These sections of piping were directly responsible for a total of twenty (20) watermain breaks. In this first phase of HPU's Watermain Replacement Plan, these three projects were all substantially completed before or on the contractual end date of October 31, 2023. Additionally, these projects were finished \$211,849 under budget. With the successful completion of these three projects HPU looks continue to earn the support of the community of Hibbing for the continuation of this essential work for years to come.

UPCOMING PROJECTS FOR 2024
First Avenue, First Street to Fourth Street (Kelly Lake)

- Existing 6" Cast Iron Pipe
- Installation Date: Unknown
- Breaks Recorded: 10
- Estimated Cost= \$2.9 million

See **Watermain**, back page

A look ahead: 2024 Rate Updates

Hibbing's city limits encompass more than 180 square miles and serves a population of approximately ~16,000 residents. These disparities in population and service area provide each of HPU's ratepayers with a higher individual burden of maintaining the infrastructure to provide the necessities of power, water, and heat. Although this is not the only factor that goes into deciding our rates, it is instrumental to understanding how HPU has gotten to where it is today.

HPU's utility rates are incredibly important to us. We know the direct impact that a utility bill can have on the financial security of our community members. In the past, due specifically to Hibbing's low population density, the risk posed by raising rates and creating a large financial burden on its community, led the Utilities Commission to defer required system maintenance. Regardless of whether this was the right or wrong decision, without this required maintenance being routinely completed, infrastructure began to age and fail. Money was spent on reactionary maintenance to patch over the problem, rather than on fixing the problem through the replacement of old infrastructure. The outages that have plagued Hibbing's residents in recent years are a direct result of that aging and failing infrastructure. Without intervention this will lead to system-wide failure. This is why HPU must act now to make up for almost 40 years of lost time. With the action and investment of the community, HPU will ensure reliable and safe utilities for Hibbing's residents both now and in the future.

In 2022 the Hibbing Public Utility's board of Commissioners identified three investments to make an immediate and long-term improvement to the quality and reliability of services being delivered to ratepayers. These plans went into action beginning in 2023.

Watermain Capital Improvement Plan

HPU aims to replace 2% of its watermain infrastructure every year. In 2022 alone Hibbing's watermains produced 64 watermain breaks which cost ratepayers and estimated

\$840,000 in repairs. HPU has identified its most problematic and costly sections of piping and will be systematically replacing them.

Capital Investments in Hibbing Renewable Energy Center

The Hibbing Renewable Energy Center (HREC) is the fulcrum point for the future of Hibbing's energy independence. The operation of our local power plant stands to save Hibbing \$5



These before-and-after photos show the one of the community-facing capital investments made at the Hibbing Renewable Energy Center (HREC). We are continually making improvements inside the to work towards creating the future of Hibbing's energy independence.

million dollars per year on the cost of electrical production, as compared to utilities in surrounding communities. These savings are being invested into existing and new power production equipment will allow HPU to produce more power, more consistently.

Increased Vegetation Control

Investments in Vegetation Control will have the most immediate benefit to the reliability of the electric power distribution. Encroaching trees and overhanging branches will be cleared away from the powerlines to prevent outages. Vegetation Control will also help prevent against interruptions cause by wildlife. Squirrels could still be a cause of outages, but they will no longer be allowed to be an excuse.

In order to fund these projects, the Commission voted to raise rates across all utility services by 2.5% with an additional 1.5¢ increase across electrical rates. This rate increase took effect June 1, 2023 and will be directly contributing to completion of these projects.

money matters: Free energy audit

Improvements to Energy Efficiency is a great way to increase home value and save money on heating and utility expenses for years to come. Hibbing Public Utilities wants to help you identify and complete these projects. Through a partnership with Frontier Energy, HPU is now offering Free Home Energy Audits to our residential customers. Through this program HPU will send a Frontier Energy Efficiency Expert to conduct an energy audit, identify inefficiencies in your home, and provide a comprehensive improvement plan to save you money.

Home Energy Audit Services

- Perform a basic analysis of your utility bills
- Discuss any specific concerns
- Conduct a comprehensive whole house inspection
- Thermographic infrared camera inspection of envelope and steam equipment
- Analyze insulation levels throughout the building
- Develop customized solutions to address air leaks and overall conditioned air loss
- Examine the age, efficiency and general condition of your mechanical systems
- Identify and discuss energy efficiency opportunities
- Report delivered to you with the recommendations discussed on site

Direct Install Options

While on site, the energy expert will install up to three LED screw-in light bulbs at the location of your choice. The direct install may also include up to two high efficiency shower heads, two faucet aerators, assess/make an adjustment to the water heater set point temperature, install foam weather stripping around exterior doors and install electrical outlet insulation gaskets for exterior wall outlets and switches.

Beware of scammers

We have noticed an increase in reports of utility-based scammers in the region. Area homeowners in targeted neighborhoods in town have received an influx of mailings from companies offering water leak insurance. Always check with your existing insurance provider before buying anything new and be mindful of out-of-region folks peddling utility wares.



Big windows? Aging windows? Drafty Ducts? We all have home-owner woes. Invite our Energy Efficient Expert to your home to help identify areas of improvement for future cost-savings at your house.

Arrangements for an Energy Audit can be made by accessing the application through www.hpuc.com/add-change-service/ or by requesting one at our front desk.

Energy Audit Success

In Early 2023 Boomtown Brewery & Woodfire Grill partnered with HPU to perform an Energy Audit at their Howard Street location in Hibbing. The Frontier Energy Efficiency Expert identified eight Energy Conservation Measures Boomtown could take to same money on utilities.

Although the utility needs of the typical residential home and this restaurant are quite different, the premise is exactly the same; lowering your utility bill and keeping more money in your pocket. Allow HPU to help you simplify that process by signing up for your Free Energy Audit today.

WE NEED YOUR TREE!

Unplug and undecorate your Christmas Tree and turn it into electricity for the community with our tree recycling program. **Learn more, visit hpuc.com**

