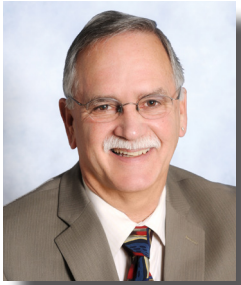


## Commissioners' Corner



Peter Sanchez

At the beginning of 2022, Lakehaven implemented a general increase in the water and sewer rates charged to our customers. I'd like to give you a brief overview of the many factors that influence what the District needs to charge to keep the system operating properly.

District staff works with our consultant, Financial Consulting Solutions Group (FCS), to determine what the District's monetary needs are. FCS has worked with the District, as

well as other utilities throughout the state, for many years. There are many things that FCS takes into consideration when setting water/sewer rates (e.g. historical data, inflationary factors, capital improvement projects, taxes and fees that may be levied by other governmental bodies). The District has a conservative financial policy which FCS helped us develop and which has resulted in a bond rating of AAA from Standard and Poor's. This rating, which is the highest rating possible for a municipal bond issuer, enabled the District to recently issue bonds for the low interest rate of 2.2%, which helps to keep our borrowing costs very low. We are proud to say that Lakehaven is one of only a few utility districts in the state that has this high rating.

Capital improvements are the big driver of the rate increases, mostly on the sewer side as you can see from our rates. Both of our treatment plants have equipment that is over 30 years old and in need of replacement. As an example, the Redondo Treatment Plant needs an upgrade to the electrical and odor control systems, with an estimated price tag of over twenty-one million dollars. The work is expected to be completed in the middle of 2024. At the Lakota Treatment Plant, there are upgrades to the solids handling system that is estimated to cost seventy-seven million dollars, with completion sometime in 2029. These are just two of the big ticket items that the District is working on. There are less costly, but just as important, upgrades to the water distribution system as well that need to be made. Please feel free to contact the District if you would like more detailed information on the projects that are ongoing, as well as those that are in the planning stages.

Continued...

## Lakehaven Links

### Our Mission

The Lakehaven Water and Sewer District is committed to the continued delivery of safe, reliable and high quality drinking water and environmentally responsible sewer service to our customers.

### Board of Commissioners

Len Englund, President

Don Miller, Vice-President

Laura Belvin, Secretary

Peter Sanchez, Commissioner

Jeremy DelMar, Commissioner

Regular Board of Commissioners meetings are held at 6:00 p.m. the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month. Please check the website for meeting information.

### Contact Us

Federal Way: 253-941-1516

Tacoma: 253-927-2922

After Hours Emergencies:  
253-941-1516

Business Hours:

Monday – Friday

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

[www.lakehaven.org](http://www.lakehaven.org)

## Commissioners' Corner, cont. from page 1

Look for the [2022 Rate Comparison Summary](#) enclosed in your upcoming billing statement. Lakehaven has the lowest water rates in the region and the fifth lowest sewer rates. As you can see, our rates are very reasonable. The District is proud of the efforts made over the years to provide you with safe drinking water and proper wastewater collection and treatment.

Finally, a few words on COVID 19. We continue to work hard to protect our employees as much as possible. Between April 2020 and this writing, the District has had forty-five confirmed cases of COVID infections. Fortunately, everyone has recovered. Please get vaccinated and boosted and please wear a mask. We all need to do our part to put this virus behind us.

## Coming Soon! New Headquarters Facility Updates

The District marked the commencement of construction on the new Headquarters Facility with a Groundbreaking Ceremony in November. We'll be posting updates and photos on our website of the progress.

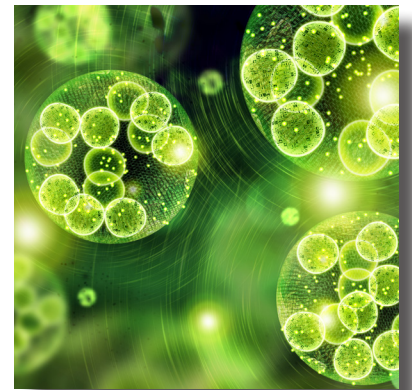
## Meter Replacements - AMR (Automated Meter Reading)

This multi-year project, which began after we completed a pilot study in 2020, is set to replace all manual-read water meters within the District with AMR meters that can be read remotely. With AMR meters, our meter readers can simply drive by homes and businesses to collect water consumption readings, providing for much faster and more accurate collection of water consumption data. This will enable the District to provide you with more information on patterns of water use during your billing cycle. It can also help to determine the existence and duration of water leaks in your plumbing. Staff has replaced over 10,000 of the over 30,000 meters to date. There have been some delays in the implementation of this project since it got underway related to Covid impacts on staffing and supply chain problems. Despite these problems, we remain confident that we will be able to complete all of the meter replacements by late 2024.



## Puget Sound Nutrient General Permit (Update)

In our September/October Newsletter last year, we mentioned that the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) had issued a Draft Puget Sound Nutrient General Permit intended to reduce the amount of total inorganic nitrogen entering into the Puget Sound from wastewater treatment plant effluent. High nitrogen levels in any body of water promotes the growth of algae. When algae dies, it consumes dissolved oxygen, thereby reducing the amount of dissolved oxygen available for fish and other aquatic organisms. In December, the DOE finalized its General Permit and issued it for all wastewater treatment plants discharging to Puget Sound, including our Lakota and Redondo plants. In the draft version, the District was rated as a large discharger. The final version identifies Lakehaven as a moderately sized discharger, which provides us some additional time to begin complying with these new regulations and also reduces the frequency of some of the new monitoring requirements.



In the initial phase of the General Permit, we are required to select a strategy that could begin to reduce the community's nitrogen loading to Puget Sound through operational changes and submit this to the DOE by July 1, 2022. The District has enlisted assistance from an engineering firm in the development of this strategy and we expect to receive a \$200,000 grant to fund this effort. While the General Permit is initially aimed at adding monitoring, operating, and reporting requirements for the District's facilities, it is anticipated that additional treatment requirements will follow to further reduce the level of nitrogen discharged to Puget Sound. This will likely require that we make significant and costly improvements to the wastewater treatment systems at both plants in the future.