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MEDIA RELEASE

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Public Information, 503-823-8064.

Northeast 23rd Avenue and Skidmore Street Main Break Update

Portland Water Bureau crews are responding to a transmission water main break that occurred at **NE 23rd Avenue and Skidmore Street**. Crews are working to stop water flow in area streets, which has led to widespread road closures in the area from NE 21st to 30th avenues and from NE Alameda Street to Rosa Parks Way. The main is a 30-inch cast iron pipe.

PWB has succeeded in significantly reducing water flow in the main break area. Crews are continuing work to reduce the flow so they can safely access the pipe and make repairs.

The public is advised not to touch standing water. However, there are no health risks from drinking or using the tap water. (Additional information below.)

Water began flowing into the street around 11:30 a.m. Portland Fire and Rescue crews responded to evacuate 12 homes and provide other coordination efforts. Throughout the afternoon, more than 60 firefighters were engaged.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler responded to the scene to assess the City's response and advise the public.

"I want to thank the community for their patience and for allowing responders to do their jobs. Coordination and communication are critical in addressing incidents such as this. I want to acknowledge the efforts of Neighborhood Emergency Team responders, who are volunteers that have knocked on doors and provided information to neighbors."

Please contact us for translation or interpretation, or for accommodations for people with disabilities.

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City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, who oversees Portland Fire & Rescue and the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management, also responded to the scene.

City, county and utility officials urge the public to be mindful of the following safety and traffic considerations:

Tap water: Residents may see discolored tap water in their homes in the affected area. There are no health hazards associated with the sediment in the water. This sediment is always in the water system but it only visible when a change in flow is enough to disturb the sediment. The sediment may affect color, odor and taste. Customers may choose to drink bottled water while they wait for the discoloration to clear.

Standing water: The public is advised to not touch standing water in the street because of various safety hazards.

Sewer backups: As the water recedes, people may experience sewage backing up into homes or businesses in the area. Notify Portland Bureau of Transportation Maintenance Operations Dispatch at 503-823-1700, which is staffed 24 hours a day.

PBOT sewer crews are preparing to clear sewer lines in the area, once the water recedes.

Power: Pacific Power estimates electricity will be restored to all homes by 7 p.m. Saturday night.

Traffic advisory: The public should avoid the immediate area around the break. Use alternate routes if you are traveling in Northeast Portland. Expect to see higher than normal traffic, including people driving, walking and biking on side streets as they avoid the closures. PBOT crews are placing temporary stop signs to provide additional warning to the travelers.

Power in the immediate area was shut off to protect the public. With widespread power outages, traffic signals are out of power in a large area of Northeast Portland, from NE Martin Luther King Boulevard to as far east as Northeast 42nd Avenue. Treat intersections traffic signals out of power as an all-way stop.

Overnight Saturday night, area streets may be darker than normal, so anyone in the area should use extreme caution and drive slowly.

On Sunday, PBOT street sweepers will clean the streets where the flood water spread debris. PBOT crews will assess the damage to area streets and make repairs, which could take days or weeks.

Water cleanup: For additional public health information related to this incident, such as how to safely dispose of water in a basement, visit www.Multco.us and click on "*Responding safely to Portland's water main break.*"

Sandbags available: PBOT has established a location at Northeast 26th Avenue and Mason Street for sandbags, available for anyone who needs them to protect their property.

Check on your neighbor: If you live in the neighborhood, please check on your neighbor to see if they have immediate needs. The Portland Bureau of Emergency Management is overseeing 30 Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) volunteers located at road intersections to help keep people away from flooded areas and safety hazards under the water. NETs are Portland residents trained to provide emergency disaster assistance.

The Portland Water Bureau's Maintenance & Construction crews are ready to respond to emergencies, including water main breaks, 24-hours a day, seven days a week. On average, crews respond to 200 main breaks a year.

For more information, visit portlandoregon.gov/water. For immediate assistance, follow on Twitter @PortlandWater.

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