

EarthTalk

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emissions as 1.6 million cars plying our roadways.

“And that’s not even counting the additional water that gets wasted while waiting for hot water to arrive at a lavatory faucet or the kitchen sink,” added Osann.

Waiting for hot water isn’t just a problem in older homes. “As homes grew bigger during the housing bubble, floor plans expanded, piping was extended and wait times grew even longer,” Osann explained.

“Additionally, although the flow rates for new faucets and showers have come down over the last 20 years in response to state and federal efficiency standards, designers often neglect to downsize the pipes serving these more efficient fixtures.”

The result is large amounts of water sitting in pipes cooling between uses.

For its part, the NRDC has been working to reduce this unnecessary waste—especially in new construction—by advocating for upgraded building and plumbing codes.

In 2015, the group scored a double win by convincing both the International Code Council and the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials to upgrade their respective efficiency requirements—which most states and the federal government automatically follow—for hot water piping.

But unfortunately, the International Code Council ignored subsequent calls by NRDC to mandate more

compactly designed hot water pipe layouts in new buildings, although Osann said he thinks it’s only a matter of time before such changes are uniformly adopted by the standards bodies and most states.

As for what you can do now to reduce the waste of water while waiting for it to warm up, Osann recommended clustering tasks that require hot water close together to reduce the “cool-down” effect between uses, and capturing some portion of the initial draw in a container and using it to water the plants or fill up Fido’s dish.

You can also insulate hot water pipes that are exposed in a basement, attic or crawl space to keep the hot water warm while it idles in the pipe awaiting your next shower.

Better yet, replace your hot water heater with a tankless water heater, which heats water directly on demand without the use of a storage tank.

When hot water is turned on, cold water travels through a pipe into the unit, where either a gas or electric burner heats the water instantaneously.

As a result, tankless water heaters deliver a constant supply of hot water and there is no energy or water waste due to waiting or to water cooling—and then needing re-heating later—in your conventional water heater’s storage tank.

EarthTalk® is a weekly syndicated column produced by Doug Moss and Roddy Scheer for the non-profit EarthTalk. To find out more, submit a question, or make a donation, visit us at EarthTalk.org.

SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PLAN

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and projects that require the acquisition of real estate based on property appraisal.

“In some cases, a lump sum cash out is available to a small business in lieu of relocation expense reimbursement,” Koozer said. “TriMet has been in touch

with businesses that may be affected and has invited them to engage and participate.”

The advisory committee will receive the draft impact environmental study sometime in April, according to Metro. The committee will review and process it for the steering committee, which will make the final decisions about the alignment.



Early morning walk through April Hill Park on Feb. 22. The quiet was incredible and the textures were amazing to look at. (Photo by K.T. Emerson)

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