



# BOROUGH OF TARENTUM

May 4, 2026

Tarentum Borough is beginning a series of targeted improvements to the water system. These projects are designed to lower Total Trihalomethane (TTHM) levels, modernize aging infrastructure, and improve water quality for every resident we serve. You will begin seeing work in the streets and at Borough facilities this week.

## WHAT YOU WILL SEE

Permanent Automatic Flushers	Treatment Process Upgrades	Davidson Street Water Line
<i>Starting This Week (5-2-2026)</i>	<i>Within 60 Days</i>	<i>Bids in Progress</i>
Installation begins on Cedar, Summit, Highlands, and West 11th. These devices move water continuously through low-flow areas to prevent stagnation.	A contractor will relocate potassium permanganate feed to the pump house and install mixers in the storage tanks to keep water consistently moving.	The Borough has been awarded approximately \$450,000 to replace the water line on Davidson Street. Bid documents are being finalized now.

## WHAT ARE TTHMs?

TTHMs, or Total Trihalomethanes, are chemical compounds that form when chlorine reacts with naturally occurring organic matter in the water. Chlorine is essential. It is what keeps your drinking water safe from harmful bacteria and pathogens. But as chlorine travels through a distribution system, it continues reacting. In areas where water moves slowly or sits in pipes and storage tanks for extended periods, those reactions have more time to occur. The result is elevated TTHM levels.

This is not unique to Tarentum. It is a known challenge across the country, particularly in older water systems with aging infrastructure.

## WHY IS TARENTUM SEEING ELEVATED TTHMs?

**Two factors drive TTHM levels in our system.**

<p><b>Water Age</b></p> <p>When water sits in pipes or tanks for too long, the disinfectant continues to react. Dead-end lines, low-use areas, and storage tanks without adequate circulation all extend the time water spends in the system before it reaches your tap. More time means more reaction. More reaction means higher TTHMs.</p>	<p><b>Age of the System</b></p> <p>Tarentum's water infrastructure is old. Approximately 90 percent of the distribution piping is over 100 years old and has exceeded its expected lifespan. The system was not designed to meet modern water quality standards. Older, smaller pipes and slower-moving water create exactly the conditions that allow TTHM levels to climb.</p>
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## HOW THESE IMPROVEMENTS REDUCE TTHMs

**Each project targets a specific cause. None of these are temporary fixes.**

<b>Permanent Flushers</b>	Moving water through dead-end lines on Cedar, Summit, Highlands, and West 11th reduces the time water sits in low-use areas. Less stagnation means less reaction time for TTHMs to form.
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**Tank Mixers**

Storage tanks without circulation develop stagnant zones where water age spikes. Mixers eliminate those zones and keep chlorine distributed evenly throughout the tank.

**Permanganate Relocation**

Moving the potassium permanganate feed to the pump house applies treatment earlier in the process, before water enters the distribution system. Better treatment at the source means the system works as intended from the start.

**Davidson Street Replacement**

Replacing aging pipe improves flow through that corridor, reduces water age in the area, and eliminates a section of infrastructure that has exceeded its useful life by decades.

**WHY HAS THIS TAKEN TIME?**

We understand the question. When residents receive a TTHM notice, they want action immediately. The Borough has been working on this since the issue was identified. Here is an honest account of what that work involved.

**Engineering and Design**

Before any contractor lifts a shovel, engineers must assess the system, identify the right solutions, and produce construction-ready plans. Skipping this step produces poor outcomes.

**Regulatory Coordination**

Projects involving a public water system require review and coordination with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. That process has its own timeline.

**Securing Funding**

The \$450,000 Davidson Street award did not appear automatically. The Borough pursued and applied for grant funding to avoid a major rate increase. That process takes months.

**Procurement**

Public bidding law governs how municipalities hire contractors. We cannot skip that process. Advertising, bid period, review, and award all take time.

**Phased Scheduling**

Multiple projects running in sequence require contractor coordination and scheduling. The work is structured to minimize disruption while moving as quickly as possible.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

These projects represent a long-term investment in infrastructure that has served this community for over a century. The Borough is committed to continued improvement. You may see increased activity in the streets and around Borough facilities over the next several months.