

## **FIXING OUR PIPES**

Massachusetts has over 5,000 miles of leak-prone natural gas pipes. In addition to safety risks, gas leaks are a problem because methane (the main ingredient in natural gas) suffocates the roots of trees and other plants and increases ground-level ozone, which is associated with asthma. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas with heat-trapping potential many times higher than CO<sub>2</sub>. Leaks are also a financial burden for ratepayers, with the cost of lost gas totaling an estimated \$90 million per year. The utilities don't pay for the leaks—consumers do.

Replacing all of the state's leak-prone pipes will not be easy or cheap. It will take 20 to 25 years and cost multiple billions of dollars, according to MAPC analysis of Department of Public Utilities data. One way to save money and minimize disruption is for gas companies and municipalities to coordinate pipe replacement with other utility projects, roadway reconstruction, or repaying.

Increasingly, municipalities are establishing policies to encourage this type of coordination so that gas companies are tapped to fix pipes before roadway or utility work. This way, the gas company doesn't need to cut into a newly paved street, saving them the cost of repaving and reducing damage to roadways. These savings can enable companies to replace more pipes each year, accelerating the overall repair timeline and ultimately saving money for both ratepayers and taxpayers.

Learn more at **FIXOURPIPES.ORTG.**