



CASCADE CITY COUNCIL APPROVES NEW UTILITY RATE STRUCTURE

CASCADE, Idaho (Nov. 1, 2026) – The Cascade City Council approved a new tiered utility rate structure on Monday, based on a rate study and public outreach process that reviewed how the City charges customers for water and sewer services. The new rates will account more accurately for customer water use and are expected to slightly lower monthly utility bills for most Cascade residents. The City plans to begin billing under the new rates in December.

The City began reviewing its utility rates to ensure it could continue operating and maintaining its water and sewer systems for years to come. Cascade's current utility rate structure is largely based on meter size. Most homes have their own meters and receive individual utility bills. However, homes connected to a shared meter are billed together rather than separately. This means properties with shared meters pay fewer base charges, which, over time, has resulted in a structure that treats similar utility customers differently.

The City reviewed utility costs and customer usage data and conducted a community feedback process to hear utility customers' priorities and concerns. Based on interviews with community members, which included homeowners, renters, business owners, long-time and newer residents, customers on a single meter, and customers on shared meters, the City began designing a rate structure that distributes costs more fairly among customers and supports community priorities for system reliability, water quality, and affordability.

Under the approved structure, utility bills will include a base charge and a charge for water used beyond a monthly allowance. The base charge will be based on each account's average water usage, measured in Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs). One EDU equals 5,000 gallons, the average amount Cascade customers use each month. Every account will be assigned at least one EDU, with additional EDUs assigned to accounts that use more water.

The base charge covers fixed operating costs the City pays regardless of water use, including maintaining pipes, wells, storage tanks, and treatment facilities. The usage charge covers costs that vary with customer water use, such as electricity, chemicals, and pumping. The City will review EDU assignments annually based on the previous 12 months of water usage. The City expects most residential customers to see a small decrease in their monthly bills, while some higher-usage accounts will see an increase.

"We've spent a lot of time working through this because Cascade has some unique circumstances when it comes to how people use and pay for water," said Mayor Judith Nissula. "The rate study gave us the numbers, and the conversations we had with community members helped us understand priorities across residents of all backgrounds. We made adjustments along the way to come up with a structure that makes sense for our community, and we're pleased that most customers are expected to see their bills go down."



The new rates are expected to take effect with November utility billing, which will be sent out in December. The City will share information about the changes through utility bill notices, City newsletters, the website, social media, and other communication channels to share information on the rate structure ahead of any changes taking place.

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