City of Bellevue

450 110th Avenue NE
Bellevue, WA 98004

Meeting Agenda - Final

Environmental Services Commission

Thursday, May 7, 2026 | **6:30 PM** | **Room 1E-113**

The City of Bellevue Environmental Services Commission meeting for May 7, 2026, will be conducted in a hybrid manner with both in-person and virtual options. To speak at the meeting, you may attend:

- **In-person**
- **By calling (253) 215-8782 and entering Webinar ID: 817 8054 7747; or**
- **www.zoom.us and entering Webinar ID: 817 8054 7747, Password: 040346**

https://cityofbellevue.zoom.us/s/81780547747

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

2. Approval of the Agenda

3. Oral and Written Communications

The total time for oral communications is 30-minutes. Speakers will be allowed up to three minutes to speak; and a maximum of three persons are permitted to speak to each side of any one topic.

Members of the public may address written comments to: Environmental Services Commission, c/o Bellevue Utilities Department, PO Box 90012, Bellevue, WA 98009-9012 or by email to esc@bellevuewa.gov with the subject line "Written Communications – May 7, 2026".

The form to sign-up to speak during Oral Communications will be available at 12:00pm. on the day of the meeting. To be added to the speaker list for oral communications, you may sign-up in person using the QR code posted outside the meeting room or online using this link:

https://bellevuewa.gov/esc-oral-communications

4. Communication from City Council, Community Council, Boards and Commissions

5. Staff Reports

6. Approval of Minutes

a) 26-321 April 2, 2026 Minutes

7. Unfinished Business

8. New Business

a) 26-322 Water System Plan - Draft Review

b) 26-323 2027-2032 Utilities Early Outlook Rates Forecast

c) 26-324 Proposed Changes to Utility Connection Charges

9. Review of Commission Calendar

a) 26-325 Calendars

10. Adjournment

(Meeting adjournment may be extended by majority vote.)

For alternate formats, interpreters, or reasonable modification requests please phone at least 48 hours in advance 425-452-6800 (voice) or email esc@bellevuewa.gov. For complaints regarding modifications, contact the City of Bellevue ADA, Title VI, and Equal Opportunity Officer at ADATitleVI@bellevuewa.gov.

Rules of decorum for public communication and conduct at meetings were adopted by the City Council in Ordinance 6752. Copies of this ordinance can be found on the city's website, and are also available from the City Clerk's Office.

CITY OF BELLEVUE
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday
April 2, 2026

City Hall & Remote
6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Lutterman at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Ken Wan (Chair) (online), Ann Hajnosz, Gabby Lacson, Kurt Lutterman (Vice Chair), Mary Theisen

COUNCIL LIAISON: Councilmember Nieuwenhuis

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Andy Dupertuis, Michael Margolis

OTHERS PRESENT: Lucy Liu, Director; Joe Harbour, Deputy Director; Scott Edwards, Deputy Director; Matt Hobson, Fiscal Manager; Birol Shaha, CIP Portfolio Manager; Dave Baisch Asst. Director, Engineering; Lorissa Warren, Sr. Administrative Assistant; Andrew Williams, Sr. Administrative Assistant; and Laurie Hugdahl, Minutes Taker

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion made by Commissioner Hajnosz, seconded by Commissioner Lacson, to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously (5-0).

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Alex Tsimerman, 14150 NE 20th Street, Bellevue, WA, raised concern about speakers' faces not being shown on Zoom meetings, limited time for comments, and other items not related to the ESC.

4. COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

None.

5. STAFF REPORTS

None.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) MARCH 5, 2026 MINUTES

Motion made by Commissioner Theisen, seconded by Commissioner Lacson, to approve the 3/5/26 minutes as presented. Upon a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously (5-0)

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

8. NEW BUSINESS

a) 2025 Financial Performance Report (Written Brief)

Commissioner Hajnosz referred to Table 2, 2025 R&R Ending Fund Balances, and asked how those numbers compare to targets. She also noted that stormwater seemed to stand out compared to the six-year average. Fiscal Manager, Matt Hobson, noted that targets are not part of the policies for capital reserves. Administrative practice is to try to retain at least two years' worth of CIP in the target reserve. Regarding stormwater, the City is in the active phase of saving money for future replacements to preserve intergenerational equity.

b) Utilities Proposed 2027-2032 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget

Utilities CIP Portfolio Manager Birol Shaha and Asst. Director of Engineering, Dave Baisch made the CIP Proposed 2027-2032 Budget presentation. He reviewed some background and gave an overview of the CIP. Mr. Shaha reviewed budget development goals, the budget development process, and the CIP project prioritization process.

He summarized the Proposed CIP budget of $478M with the following breakdown:

- Water Fund: 17 programs, $287 M
- Sewer Fund: 12 programs, $105 M
- Storm & Surface Water Fund: 10 programs, $86

Major drivers for Changes in the 2027-2032 CIP:

- Accelerated project schedules in Water Fund
- Added new projects and/or construction phase

- Projected delays due to permit and easement acquisition challenges
- Increased construction costs

He reviewed the CIP by Fund for this budget compared to the previous budget. He also discussed differences in areas of investment between the two budgets.

Commissioner Hajnosz asked about cost escalation and wondered if 3% is enough. Mr. Shaha acknowledged that increase in construction costs have outpaced 3% at times due to macro-economic conditions, higher material cost and construction crew labor shortage. Few of the projects have been re-costed accordingly, however recently price appears to begin to stabilize. There was some discussion about variability in contingency costs.

Mr. Baisch gave an overview of the Water CIP and discussed the intentional overspending for water in 2027 to compensate for previous underspending and future replacements. He reviewed key drivers and details of the Water CIP projects:

- W-16 Water Main Replacement
- W-67 Pressure Reducing Valves (PRV) Rehabilitation
- W-85 Reservoir Rehab/Replacement
- W-91 Water Pump Station Rehab
- W-103 West Operating Area Storage
- W-111 Operations and Maintenance Yard
- And various minor budget changes

Commissioner Hajnosz asked what the oldest pipe in the ground is. Staff indicated they would look into this. Commissioner Hajnosz said she would really like to see if they can get to a 1% replacement rate per year.

Mr. Shaha gave an overview of the Wastewater (Sewer) CIP. He compared the proposed CIP to the adopted CIP budget, reviewed key drivers, and provided details of Sewer CIP programs:

- S-16 Sewer Pump Station Improvements
- S-24 Sewer Pipeline Repair & Replacement Program
- S-58 Lake Washington Lake Lines Program
- S-111 Operations & Maintenance Facility
- S-117 Septic Systems Sewer Extensions
- Several programs with minor budget changes

Commissioner Hajnosz asked about cyber security. Mr. Baisch commented that there is typically an effort to separate these systems from the rest of the city. This is something they monitor on an ongoing basis. The security resources are shared with throughout the city.

Mr. Shaha gave an overview of the Storm and Surface Water CIP and compared the proposed CIP budget to the current budget. He reviewed key drivers and provided details of Storm & Surface Water CIP programs:

- D-64 Conveyance Infrastructure Rehabilitation
- D-81 Fish Passage Improvement
- D-94 Flood Control Program
- D-109 Storm Water Quality Retrofit Program
- And programs with minor budget changes

Commissioner Hajnosz asked if there are any more WSDOT projects coming up. Staff explained there is one more coming up.

Mr. Baisch reviewed the community engagement program and the proposed CIP budget schedule.

Commissioner Hajnosz asked if they are anticipating staffing adjustments based on the plan. Mr. Shaha replied that they are not. Commissioner Hajnosz expressed concern about the shrinking water workforce. She suggested that they consider adding internships to keep the pipeline strong.

9. REVIEW OF COMMISSION AND COUNCIL CALENDARS

Deputy Director Harbour reviewed the calendars.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Commissioner Hajnosz, seconded by Commissioner Theisen, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

City of Bellevue

MEMORANDUM

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DATE: May 7, 2026

TO: Environmental Services Commission

FROM: Eric LaFrance - Utilities Planning Manager

Jim Grueber – Utilities Planning Sr. Engineer

SUBJECT: Water System Plan Update – Draft Review

ACTION REQUIRED

This is an informational briefing on the draft Water System Plan Update; no action is currently required by the Commission. Staff will present a review of the WSP purpose along with system analysis findings and recommendations. Staff requests that ESC review the draft Water System Plan's policies and their alignment with Bellevue's broader policies and planning efforts prior to the October ESC meeting, when staff will be seeking the Commission's comments about the Plan.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Public drinking water suppliers maintain a Water System Plan to conform with multiple federal and state laws. Requirements for a WSP are detailed in WAC 246-290. The significant items of evaluation include system capacity, system operation, and water quality. Bellevue's Water System Plan (WSP) is updated on a 10-year cycle, and staff are currently working to complete the next update in 2027. The draft of the WSP update is now complete. At the May 7 meeting, staff will provide a review of the plan's purpose along with system analysis findings and recommendations.

Staff previously provided updates to ESC on the Water System Plan during these meetings:

- November 7, 2024, Utility System Planning Overview, Meeting Details
- May 1, 2025, Water System Plan Presentation, Meeting Details

The next steps in the plan update process include review by adjacent jurisdictions, regional and state agencies, and a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review will take place over the next few months. Staff will also share the plan with the community and host a public open house meeting prior to the October ESC meeting. A summary of comments collected will be presented to the ESC, and Commission comments about the Plan will be requested at that time.

After review and incorporation of comments, the Final Draft Plan will be presented to the ESC in the fall of 2026. Staff will request that the ESC recommend Council adoption of the Plan. The Plan must ultimately be adopted by the Bellevue City Council, then by the King County Council, and then approved by the WA Department of Health.

POLICY ISSUES

Policies related to managing the water system are found in Chapter 2 of the WSP and complement those in the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan. Water system policies are developed by management and recommended for approval by the Environment Services Commission to Council.

The previous update in 2016 added four new policies:

- Drinking Water Storage for Emergency Supply Outages
- Green Buildings
- Water Rights for Supply Redundancy
- Regional Policy Development

In this update, no new policies are proposed, and only minor changes are recommended for the Drinking Water Storage for Emergency Supply Outages Policy; and for the Water Rights for Supply Redundancy Policy. These changes are recommended to better align with the work completed since the previous update, like the Emergency Water Supply Master Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no immediate fiscal impact. Though, project recommendations and/or policy changes could result in future fiscal impacts. Recommendations for new capital investments will likely result from the water system analysis. These recommendations will be incorporated into future budget proposals.

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

A. The Draft Water System Plan will be available for download on Wednesday, May 6 from the city website: Water System Plan | City of Bellevue. We recommend that you focus on the policies found in Chapter 2 – Water Utility Policies and review how they align with the city's broader goals found here in the utilities section of the Comprehensive Plan - Bellevue 2044 Comprehensive Plan Utilities.

City of Bellevue

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 7, 2026

TO: Environmental Services Commission

FROM: Matt Hobson, Utilities Fiscal Manager

SUBJECT: **2027-2032 Utilities Early Outlook Rates Forecast**

ACTION REQUIRED

No action by the Commission is required. This is an informational briefing.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS

On May 7, staff will review with the Commission the Utilities early outlook rates forecast for the period 2027-2032. The purpose of the rates forecast is to provide a preview of the rate adjustments needed to fund the forecasted financial obligations during the planning period. The rates forecast will be updated over the coming months and a finalized rate forecast will be presented to the Commission as part of the preliminary budget later this summer.

Rates are Utilities' primary source of funding. The level of utility rates presented in this forecast are based on the following key Council-adopted financial policies:

- Rates shall be set at a level sufficient to cover current and future expenses and maintain reserves for working capital and operating contingencies.
- Changes in rate levels should be gradual and uniform to the extent that costs can be forecast.
- Cost increases or decreases for wholesale services shall be passed directly through to Bellevue customers.
- Funding for capital investments shall be sustained at a level sufficient to meet the projected long-term capital program costs.
- Funding from rate revenues shall fund current construction and engineering costs, contributions to the Capital Facilities Renewal and Replacement (R&R) Reserve, and debt service, if any.
- Inter-generational equity will be ensured by making contributions to and withdrawals from the R&R Reserve in a manner which produces smooth rate transitions over a long-term planning period.

The forecasted rates reflect a prudent, balanced, and responsible budget to maintain high-quality utility service delivery to the community through continued responsible management of infrastructure assets, leveraging efficiencies, and cost containment.

The attached 2027-2032 Early Outlook Rates Forecast presents the rates and key rate drivers for the water, sewer, and storm and surface water utilities.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Utilities 2027-2032 Early Outlook Financial Forecast

Utilities 2027-2032 Early Outlook Financial Forecast

Water, Sewer, and Storm & Surface Water Funds

Executive Summary:

- *The Utilities Department operates as an enterprise within the city structure and functions much like a private business entity. This forecast supports a prudent, balanced, and responsible budget to maintain high-quality utility service delivery to the community through continued responsible management of infrastructure assets, leveraging efficiencies, and cost containment.*
- *The 2027-2028 biennium includes anticipated wholesale cost increases for wastewater treatment services and drinking water supply, operating and capital impacts due to aging infrastructure, and inflationary increases attributable to operations and maintenance, and internal support costs.*
- *Since all utility functions are primarily supported by rates, this forecast includes funding for operations, asset replacements (e.g., vehicles), capital investment programs, and long-term infrastructure renewal and replacement requirements.*

Key Drivers and Challenges
Below is a summation of the key rate drivers and budget challenges for the Utilities Department.

Wholesale Costs
Approximately 27 percent of the 2026 water operating budget and 51 percent of the 2026 sewer operating budget is related to water supply costs from the Cascade Water Alliance (Cascade), and payments to King County for wastewater treatment, respectively. Rate increases are needed to fund anticipated wholesale cost increases. To ensure sufficient funding to maintain the integrity of utility operations and capital programs, city financial policies direct wholesale cost increases are passed through to city utility customers. This is to ensure the city continues to maintain current levels of service delivery.

Cascade anticipates annual cost increases to the city of 9.3 percent and 9.0 percent in 2027 and 2028 respectively for wholesale water supply. The forecasted annual cost increases for water supply are significantly higher than the city's 2025-2026 mid-biennium forecast. Cascade's updated cost forecast includes an early estimate of the capital funding required for Phase 1 of the Cascade Supply Program ($1.35 billion). Cascade's longer-term outlook anticipates escalating wholesale water supply costs, with the level of increase progressing as project activities and costs increase. Cascade forecasts annual wholesale water supply cost increases for Bellevue ranging from 9.0 to 9.3 percent between 2027 and 2032. The city's cost impact is lower than the average overall Cascade member cost increase. This is due to Bellevue's anticipated water supply requirements growing at a slower rate compared to other Cascade members. The retail impact of projected cost increases in Cascade's wholesale costs to Bellevue will require a 2.7 percent rate increase in 2027 and in 2028, and a 2.9 percent average rate increase from 2029 to 2032.

King County anticipates annual 12.75 percent wholesale wastewater treatment cost increases for 2027 and 2028, which are primarily due to regulatory requirements, growth-related demand, and capital investments. These projected cost increases are consistent with the city's 2025-2026 mid-biennium forecast. King County anticipates annual cost increases ranging from 11.25 percent to 12.75 percent from 2027 to 2032. It is important to note that the wholesale cost increases are in addition to necessary local cost increases to operate, maintain, and replace Bellevue's sewer system, such as Bellevue's lake line replacement projects in development.

Ongoing Impact of Aging Infrastructure on Operating and Capital Programs

Maintaining and replacing the city's aging utility infrastructure continues to be a key rate driver for all three utilities. Most of Utilities' system infrastructure is well past mid-life. As a result, the drinking water, wastewater, and storm and surface water systems are experiencing more failures and increasing costs for system repairs and replacement needs.

- Water CIP – The water system is in active replacement. Water CIP programs include aging water main replacement and reservoir rehabilitations.

- Sewer CIP – The sewer system is moving into active replacement. Sewer CIP programs include aging pipeline repair and replacement as well as pump station improvements. Renewal and replacement funding will continue to ramp up over this decade. These estimates also include preliminary cost estimates from the Lake Line Management Plan.

- Storm and Surface Water CIP – Storm and Surface Water CIP programs include system conveyance and infrastructure rehabilitation as well as environmental preservation to mitigate flood hazards, construct fish passage and stream improvements, and meet regulatory mandates.

Consistent with Utilities financial policies, rate increases for the Water, Sewer, and Storm and Surface Water utilities are needed to fund current capital infrastructure investments and future infrastructure renewal and replacement needs to ensure system integrity and that each generation of customers pay their proportional share of system costs.

Operating Cost Inflation

In addition to wholesale cost increases, this financial forecast also accounts for changes to the following local cost components of the Water, Sewer, and Storm and Surface Water utilities:

- Taxes and Interfund: Includes state and local taxes and franchise fees as well as payments to the general fund for support services. The annualized cost increase for the Water, Sewer, and Storm and Surface Water utilities over the 2027-2032 forecast period is 4.2 percent.

- Operations: Includes direct personnel and non-personnel costs for the operation and management of the utilities. The annualized cost increase for the Water, Sewer, and Storm and Surface Water utilities over the 2027-2032 forecast period is 5.4 percent. The forecast for operations expenses excludes the anticipated budgeted appropriation of one-time asset replacement and operating contingencies.

As Utilities is primarily funded from rates, these inflationary pressures translate into rate increases. See the summaries of each utility fund forecast and key rate drivers for additional information.

Projected Rate Increases

The following table summarizes the forecasted rate adjustments for the Water, Sewer, and Storm and Surface Water utilities and projected impacts to a typical single-family residential monthly bill.

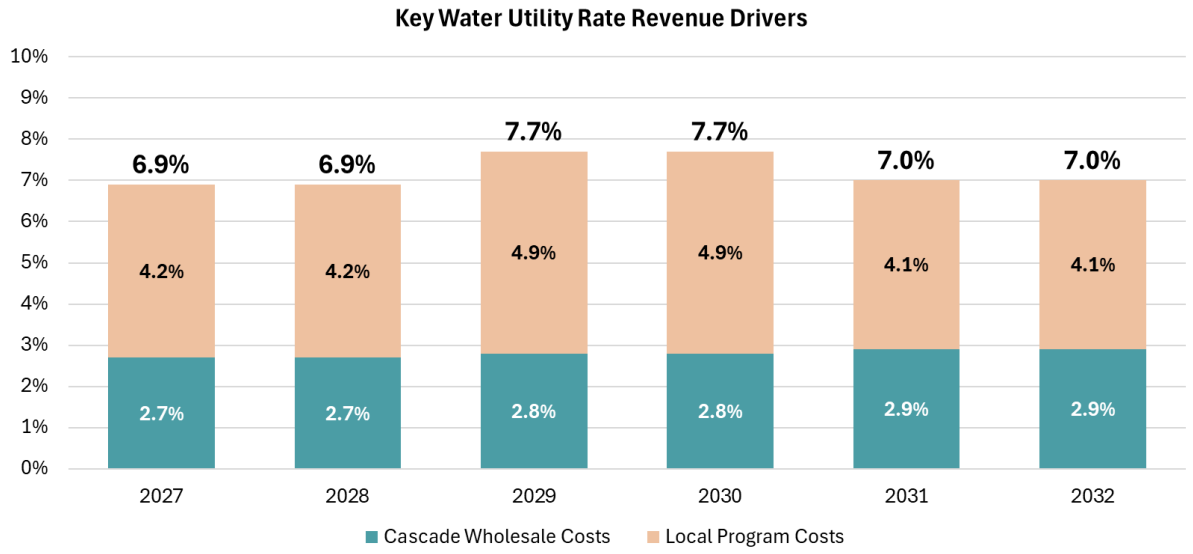
	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Combined Utility Bill						
Bill Increase as a Percent	**8.1%**	**8.2%**	**9.0%**	**9.0%**	**7.9%**	**7.9%**
Prior Year Bill	$ 229.48	$ 248.12	$ 268.36	$ 292.54	$ 319.00	$ 344.30
Increase						
Wholesale	$ 10.18	$ 11.37	$ 12.76	$ 14.27	$ 14.54	$ 16.02
Local	$ 8.46	$ 8.87	$ 11.42	$ 12.19	$ 10.76	$ 11.30
Total Projected Increase	$ 18.64	$ 20.24	$ 24.18	$ 26.46	$ 25.30	$ 27.32
Total Projected Bill	**$ 248.12**	**$ 268.36**	**$ 292.54**	**$ 319.00**	**$ 344.30**	**$ 371.62**

Notes
[a] Sewer bill based on 11 CCF bi-monthly volume
[b] Water bill based on 14 CCF bi-monthly volume
[c] Surface water bill based on 5 chargeable units at moderate development intensity

The typical single-family residential monthly customer bill for Water, Sewer, and Storm and Surface Water management services is projected to increase by 8.1% or $18.64, from $229.48 to $248.12 in 2027. The forecasted annual rate adjustments from 2027 to 2032 are projected to increase the typical single-family residential bill by approximately 7.9 to 9.0 percent each year. See Attachment A (*2027-2032 Forecast of Typical Single-Family Residential Monthly Bill and Impacts*) for additional information.

The following pages provide a brief review of each Utility fund forecast and key rate drivers.

Utilities 2027-2032 Early Outlook Financial Forecast



Water Revenue Requirement	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Allocation of Rate Revenue Increase by Rate Driver						
Wholesale	**2.7%**	**2.7%**	**2.8%**	**2.8%**	**2.9%**	**2.9%**
Local						
CIP/R&R	3.0%	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%	3.2%	3.2%
Taxes/Interfunds	-0.5%	1.2%	1.4%	1.4%	1.1%	1.2%
Operations	1.7%	-0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	-0.2%	-0.3%
Local Subtotal	**4.2%**	**4.2%**	**4.9%**	**4.9%**	**4.1%**	**4.1%**
Total Rate Revenue Increase	**6.9%**	**6.9%**	**7.7%**	**7.7%**	**7.0%**	**7.0%**

Note: Rate revenue increase allocated to Operations includes local operations, changes to non-rate revenue, and contributions to reserves

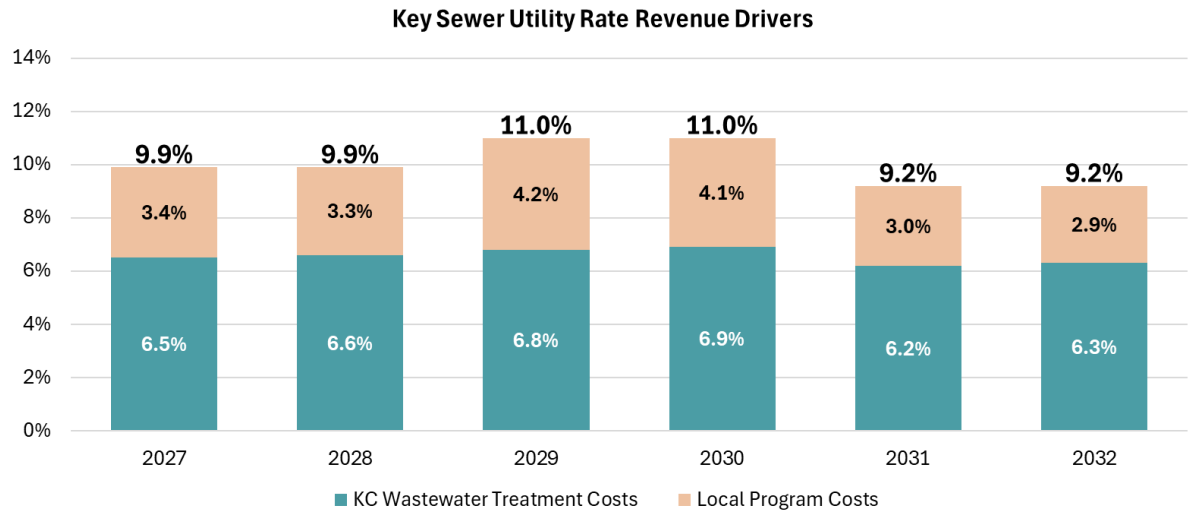
Key Rate Drivers

- **Wholesale Costs (teal column)**
  Drinking water for the City of Bellevue is purchased from the Cascade Water Alliance (Cascade). The wholesale rate is adopted by Cascade, and per city financial policy is passed directly through to the ratepayer. Cascade's wholesale water supply costs to the city of Bellevue are projected to increase by 9.3 percent in 2027. The retail impact of projected cost increases in Cascade's wholesale costs to Bellevue will require a 2.7 percent rate increase in 2027 and in 2028, and a 2.9 percent average rate increase from 2029 to 2032.

- **Capital Program (embedded in the tan column)**
  The projected 2027-2032 water capital investment program (CIP) includes $287.1M to proactively construct, maintain, and replace system assets. The water utility is in active system replacement and the majority of the projected capital program ($216.0M) will be invested to replace existing aging infrastructure. Significant aging infrastructure water CIP projects include water main replacement and reservoir rehabilitation. As part of this forecast, estimates include higher inflation to reflect cost increases seen in recent years. The utility's CIP and long-term renewal and replacement strategy will require a 3.0 percent rate increase in 2027, a 3.1 percent rate increase in 2028, and a 3.2 percent average rate increase per year from 2029 to 2032.

- **Taxes/Interfunds (embedded in the tan column)**
  As an enterprise fund, Bellevue Utilities pays city and state taxes and pays the general fund for support services. These costs are expected to decrease in 2027 and increase thereafter. This will result in a 0.5 percent rate decrease in 2027, a 1.2 percent rate increase in 2028, and a 1.3 percent average rate increase per year from 2029 to 2032.

- **Operations (embedded in the tan column)**
  The cost to operate and maintain the utility, including personnel, professional services, and other maintenance and operating costs are projected to increase in 2027. This will result in a 1.7 percent rate increase in 2027, a 0.1 percent rate decrease in 2028, and a 0.1 percent average rate increase per year from 2029 to 2032.



Sewer Revenue Requirement	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Allocation of Rate Revenue Increase by Rate Driver						
Wholesale	**6.5%**	**6.6%**	**6.8%**	**6.9%**	**6.2%**	**6.3%**
Local						
CIP/R&R	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Taxes/Interfunds	-0.5%	0.8%	0.9%	0.8%	0.6%	0.7%
Operations	1.4%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%	-0.1%	-0.3%
Local Subtotal	**3.4%**	**3.3%**	**4.2%**	**4.1%**	**3.0%**	**2.9%**
Total Rate Revenue Increase	**9.9%**	**9.9%**	**11.0%**	**11.0%**	**9.2%**	**9.2%**

Note: Rate revenue increase allocated to Operations includes local operations, changes to non-rate revenue, and contributions to reserves

Key Rate Drivers

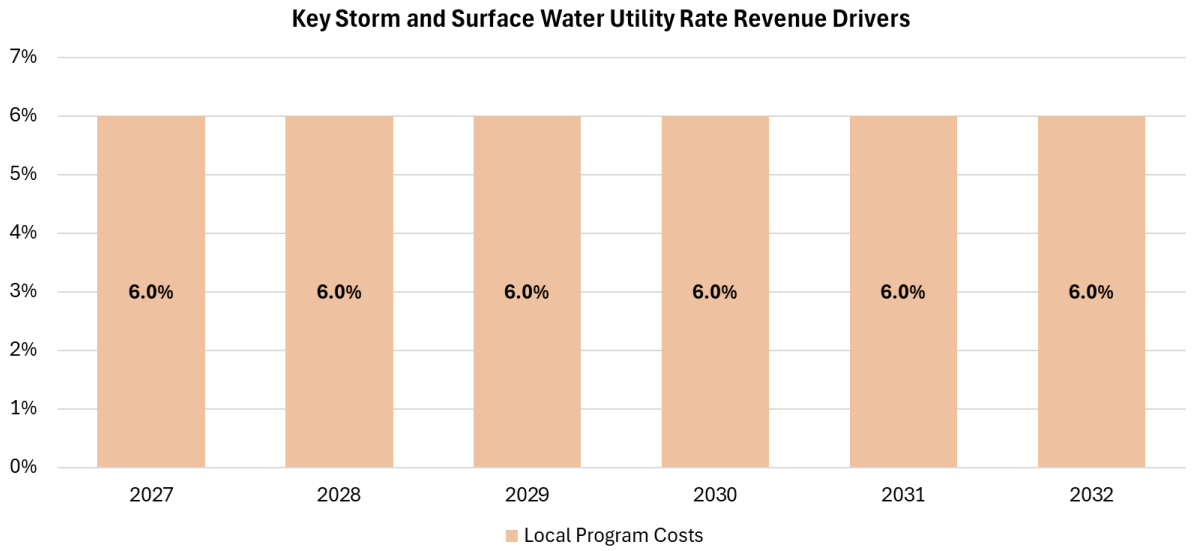
- **Wholesale Costs (teal column)**
  The City of Bellevue purchases wastewater treatment services from King County. The wholesale wastewater treatment rate is established by King County, and per city financial policy, wastewater treatment wholesale cost increases are passed directly through to the ratepayer. The County anticipates 12.75 percent annual cost increases in 2027 and 2028, which are primarily due to regulatory requirements, growth-related demand, and capital investments. The retail rate impacts of increases in wastewater treatment costs to Bellevue require a 6.5 percent rate increase in 2027, a 6.6 percent rate increase in 2028, and a 6.6 average percent rate increase per year from 2029 to 2032.

- **Capital Program (embedded in the tan column)**
  The projected 2027-2032 sewer capital investment program (CIP) includes $104.7M in investments. Unlike the water utility, the sewer utility is just beginning systematic asset replacement. Most of the projected capital program ($95.1M) will be invested to replace existing aging infrastructure. Significant aging infrastructure projects include sewer system pipeline major repairs, sewer pump station improvements, and sewer system pipeline replacements. These estimates reflect the preliminary cost estimates from the Lake Line Management Plan. Funding to support the utility's CIP and long-term renewal and replacement strategy will require a 2.5 percent rate increase in 2027 and 2028, and a 2.5 percent average rate increase per year from 2029 to 2032.

- **Taxes/Interfunds (embedded in the tan column)**
  As an enterprise fund, Bellevue Utilities pays city and state taxes and pays the general fund for support services. These costs are expected to decrease in 2027 and increase thereafter. This will result in a 0.5 percent rate decrease in 2027, a 0.8 percent rate increase in 2028, and a 0.8 percent average rate increase per year from 2029 to 2032.

- **Operations (embedded in the tan column)**
  The cost to operate and maintain the utility, including personnel, professional services, and other maintenance and operating costs are projected to increase in 2027. This will result in a 1.4 percent rate increase in 2027, no rate adjustment in 2028, and a 0.3 percent average rate increase per year from 2029 to 2032.

Utilities 2027-2032 Early Outlook Financial Forecast



Storm and Surface Water Revenue Requirement	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Allocation of Rate Revenue Increase by Rate Driver						
Wholesale	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**
Local						
CIP/R&R	4.5%	5.3%	3.9%	4.5%	4.6%	4.7%
Taxes/Interfunds	-2.3%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%
Operations	3.8%	0.1%	1.5%	0.9%	1.1%	0.7%
Local Subtotal	**6.0%**	**6.0%**	**6.0%**	**6.0%**	**6.0%**	**6.0%**
Total Rate Revenue Increase	**6.0%**	**6.0%**	**6.0%**	**6.0%**	**6.0%**	**6.0%**

Note: Rate revenue increase allocated to Operations includes local operations, changes to non-rate revenue, and contributions to reserves

Key Rate Drivers

- **Wholesale Costs**
  The Storm and Surface Water fund does not have a wholesale component. All elements of Storm and Surface Water management are performed locally by the city.

- **Capital Program (embedded in the tan column)**
  The projected 2027-2032 Storm and Surface Water capital improvement program (CIP) includes $85.9M in investments. Of this amount, $45.5M is for aging infrastructure rehabilitation and replacement. Significant projects include stormwater system conveyance, infrastructure rehabilitation, and minor stormwater capital improvement projects. The remaining Storm and Surface Water utility capital investments are for environmental preservation, including mitigating flood hazards and constructing fish passage and stream improvement projects, and for meeting regulatory mandates. Funding to support the utility's CIP and long-term renewal and replacement strategy will require a 4.5 percent rate increase in 2027, a 5.3 percent rate increase in 2028, and a 4.4 percent average rate increase per year from 2029 to 2032.

- **Taxes/Interfunds (embedded in the tan column)**
  As an enterprise fund, Bellevue Utilities pays city and state taxes and pays the general fund for support services. These costs are expected to decrease in 2027 and increase thereafter. This will result in a 2.3 percent rate decrease in 2027, a 0.6 percent rate increase in 2028, and a 0.5 percent average rate increase per year from 2029 to 2032.

- **Operations (embedded in the tan column)**
  The cost to operate and maintain the utility, including personnel, professional services, and other maintenance and operating costs are projected to increase in 2027. This will result in a 3.8 percent rate increase in 2027, a 0.1 percent rate increase in 2028, and a 1.1 percent average rate increase per year from 2029 to 2032.

Attachment A
2027-2032 Typical Single-Family Residential Monthly Bill and Impacts

	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Water Utility						
Planned Rate Revenue Increase	**6.90%**	**6.90%**	**7.70%**	**7.70%**	**7.00%**	**7.00%**
Prior Year Bill	$ 81.58	$ 87.18	$ 93.20	$ 100.36	$ 108.09	$ 115.66
Increase						
Wholesale	$ 2.19	$ 2.36	$ 2.60	$ 2.81	$ 3.14	$ 3.34
Local	$ 3.41	$ 3.66	$ 4.56	$ 4.92	$ 4.43	$ 4.73
Total Projected Increase	$ 5.60	$ 6.02	$ 7.16	$ 7.73	$ 7.57	$ 8.07
Total Projected Bill	**$ 87.18**	**$ 93.20**	**$ 100.36**	**$ 108.09**	**$ 115.66**	**$ 123.73**
Sewer Utility						
Planned Rate Revenue Increase	**9.90%**	**9.90%**	**11.00%**	**11.00%**	**9.20%**	**9.20%**
Prior Year Bill	$ 108.63	$ 119.32	$ 131.03	$ 145.40	$ 161.32	$ 176.07
Increase						
King County Treatment Charge	$ 7.99	$ 9.01	$ 10.16	$ 11.46	$ 11.40	$ 12.68
Local	$ 2.70	$ 2.70	$ 4.21	$ 4.46	$ 3.35	$ 3.42
Total Projected Increase	$ 10.69	$ 11.71	$ 14.37	$ 15.92	$ 14.75	$ 16.10
Total Projected Bill	**$ 119.32**	**$ 131.03**	**$ 145.40**	**$ 161.32**	**$ 176.07**	**$ 192.17**
Storm and Surface Water Utility						
Planned Rate Revenue Increase	**6.00%**	**6.00%**	**6.00%**	**6.00%**	**6.00%**	**6.00%**
Prior Year Bill	$ 39.27	$ 41.62	$ 44.13	$ 46.78	$ 49.59	$ 52.57
Increase	$ 2.35	$ 2.51	$ 2.65	$ 2.81	$ 2.98	$ 3.15
Total Projected Bill	**$ 41.62**	**$ 44.13**	**$ 46.78**	**$ 49.59**	**$ 52.57**	**$ 55.72**
Combined Utility Bill						
Bill Increase as a Percent	**8.1%**	**8.2%**	**9.0%**	**9.0%**	**7.9%**	**7.9%**
Prior Year Bill	$ 229.48	$ 248.12	$ 268.36	$ 292.54	$ 319.00	$ 344.30
Increase						
Wholesale	$ 10.18	$ 11.37	$ 12.76	$ 14.27	$ 14.54	$ 16.02
Local	$ 8.46	$ 8.87	$ 11.42	$ 12.19	$ 10.76	$ 11.30
Total Projected Increase	$ 18.64	$ 20.24	$ 24.18	$ 26.46	$ 25.30	$ 27.32
Total Projected Bill	**$ 248.12**	**$ 268.36**	**$ 292.54**	**$ 319.00**	**$ 344.30**	**$ 371.62**

Notes
[a] Sewer bill based on 11 CCF bi-monthly volume
[b] Water bill based on 14 CCF bi-monthly volume
[c] Surface water bill based on 5 chargeable units at moderate development intensity

City of Bellevue

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 7, 2026

TO: Environmental Services Commission

FROM: Matt Hobson, Utilities Fiscal Manager
Dave Baisch, Utilities Engineering Assistant Director

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to Utility Connection Charges

ACTION REQUIRED

Staff is seeking the Commission's feedback on possible amendments to city municipal code for the water, sewer, storm and surface water utilities related to connection charges. With ESC feedback, staff anticipate returning to the Commission in June to obtain a recommendation to City Council.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS

The following provides a description of each connection charge type, including its purpose, collection process, and relevant statutory authority.

Capital Recovery Charge

A Capital Recovery Charge or "CRC" is a utility connection fee paid by development, ensuring each new connecting property is assessed its equitable share of the cost of sewer, water, and storm and surface water system demand. Assessing a CRC is authorized by the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) under RCW 35.92.025, which specifies:

RCW 35.92.025 - Authority to make charges for connecting to water or sewerage system—Interest charges.

> "Cities and towns are authorized to charge property owners seeking to connect to the water or sewerage system of the city or town as a condition to granting the right to so connect... in order that such property owners shall bear their equitable share of the cost of such system…"

In addition to the requirements outlined in RCW 35.92.025, the city's municipal code requires that CRCs are:

1. Collected on a monthly basis over a period of up to ten years.
2. Based on the original cost of the existing water utility plant-in-service less the cost of donated facilities, less the cost of city-built local facilities for which direct facilities charges are imposed, plus recoverable interest.
3. Assessed on the basis of a single-family equivalents or "SFE".

The current methods used to assess CRCs in Bellevue were last revised in the mid-1990's when the city was still actively expanding its utility systems through acquisition and construction. At that time, more than half of the water and sewer utility systems were comprised of donated facilities (e.g., assets constructed and paid for by developers, then donated to the utility for maintenance and long-term replacement).[1] By comparison, donated facilities comprise less than 20 percent of the water and sewer utilities' plants-in-service in 2025. The type of

[1] "1995 Bellevue Utilities Department General Facilities Charge Study Summary of Findings." FCS GROUP. P 47.

new development has also changed in Bellevue from the mid 1990's to today as the growth in multi-family residential housing units outpaces single-family residential housing units.[2]

Direct Facility Connection Charge

A Direct Facility Connection Charge or "DFCC" is a type of connection charge that may be assessed to a customer *in addition to CRCs.* A DFCC is a type of local facility charge that is designed to equitably charge new customers for the cost of growth-related localized capital projects required to support them connecting to the utility systems. There are 82 DFCC areas throughout the city, and most of them (55) are sewer extension projects. Unlike CRCs, customers are required to pay the DFCC at the time of permit review.

DFCCs are designed to reimburse the city and its ratepayers for the cost incurred to construct these localized capital projects. However, customers are not required to pay the charge until they decide to develop or redevelop their property, which may be decades after the city incurs the cost to construct the project.

Challenges with Current Methodology

In response to feedback and questions received as well as the changing shape of development in Bellevue, Utilities is exploring changes to how connection charges are calculated and collected. The following summarizes three challenges for homeowners and property developers, which are based on the current fee methodology and assessment process.

- DFCC Big Upfront Costs

  While DFCCs assessed by the city are designed to equitably recover the cost of growth-related projects on the utility systems, they historically have only recovered about half of the full cost of these projects. Since 1976, the city has recovered approximately $22.5M of the $42.5M in project costs.

  DFCCs relatively low-cost recovery level is also influenced by the lack of economies of scale for localized capital projects identified as DFCC-eligible projects. For example, a neighborhood sewer extension project that costs $1 million may only connect 10 homes. Each of these homes would then be required to pay a DFCC of $100,000 ($1 million divided by 10 homes), if they choose to connect to the sewer utility. Accordingly, a potential customer may elect to stay on septic because of the high upfront DFCC charge even though the city and its ratepayers have already incurred the cost to construct the extension.

- CRC Calculation Complexity

  Assessing CRCs on the basis of a SFE can make the charges difficult to understand and offers minimal flexibility to developers to affect the charge.

  When assessing water and sewer CRCs, a SFE generally represents a rolling five-year average of metered annual water use. While this method may be a proxy for measuring changes in water use as a function of new customers connecting to the system, empirical analysis indicates that changes in water use over time are also affected by both short- and long-term changes in water use of existing customers (e.g., uptake of high efficiency water fixtures, climate change). These other factors can and have resulted in significant shifts in the number of SFE used for assessing CRCs even though these factors are unrelated to changes in water or sewer use resulting from new customers connecting to the system.

  To administer the SFE methodology, Utilities uses conversion factors for different types of development. One SFE is equal to:

  - One (1) single-family residence
  - 1.96 multi-family residential dwelling units (water)

[2] Based on data from the US Census Bureau, single-family residential housing counts (e.g., 1-unit attached or 1-unit detached housing) in Bellevue increased 23 percent from 2000 to 2024. By comparison, housing counts for all other housing structure types increased 77 percent over the same time period.

- 1.72 multi-family residential dwelling units (sewer)
- 20 commercial fixtures (water and sewer)
- Annual average of 250 gallons per day (irrigation)

Relying on the SFE basis for assessing CRCs creates challenges for determining connection charges for customers that do not have similar usage or demand characteristics to a typical single-family residential customer. For example, because the city assesses CRCs on the basis of the number of dwelling units for a multi-family residential development project, the connection charge for a large multi-family residential project can quickly grow to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The limitation of the SFE methodology is also demonstrated for irrigation CRCs. Irrigation customers pay CRCs on the basis of annual average use, which does not adequately capture the amount of water capacity irrigation customers require during the peak irrigation season.

While the SFE methodology is recognized as a rational basis for assessing connection charges by the American Water Works Association (AWWA), it does have limitations when applied to a diverse utility customer base. Additionally, Bellevue is the only city among its regional peers to assess water and sewer connection charges on the SFE basis.[3]

- CRC Timing

Assessing CRCs over a ten-year term on the utility bill is an unexpected charge for utility customers as it is separate from and in addition to the standard bi-monthly charges the customer pays for utility services.[4] Unless the customer elects to pay the CRC balance early, the ten-year term and interest rate is fixed. This process precludes utility customers from rolling the CRC into the terms of their mortgage or a financing agreement with a better interest rate.

Unlike other fees assessed on development in the city, across the region, and as outlined within industry best practice, the city assesses CRCs over a ten-year period after a customer connects to the system. While this approach may provide an affordable option for new customers to amortize a one-time charge over ten years, there are several disadvantages of the city's current method for assessing CRCs.

Most development-related fees assessed by the city are charged to developers at the time land use design or construction plans are required for review. Examples of these one-time fees include permit plan review fees, transportation impact fees, and regional capital facility charges collected by the city on behalf of Cascade Water Alliance. The current method is inconsistent with how the city assesses other fees assessed on the condition of development.

With limited exceptions, most cities in the region assess utility connection charges like CRCs to customers at permit review. The industry standard for water rate- and fee-setting methodologies also classifies connection charges like CRCs as "*one-time* charges paid by a new water system customer for system capacity."[5]

Proposed Revisions to the City's Utility Connection Charges

Utilities' staff are proposing three changes to how CRCs and DFCCs are calculated and collected in the future. The updates would align with industry best practices and regional common practice while improving affordability, increasing transparency and preserving equity to homeowners and property developers.

[3] Everett, Kent, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton, Spokane, Seattle, Vancouver, and Cascade Water Alliance assess connection charges on the basis of water meter capacity equivalent or similar measure (e.g., water meter size).
[4] For a single-family residential customer connecting in 2026, the bi-monthly CRC charge is approximately $167. By comparison, a typical bi-monthly utility services bill for a single-family residential customer in 2026 is approximately $513.
[5] American Water Works Association. Principles of Water Rates, Fees, and Charges, 6th Edition. P 261.

- Proposal #1 – No More DFCCs

The first proposal would discontinue the future use of DFCCs as a type of connection charge in Bellevue, and consolidate the unrecovered cost portion of existing DFCCs into the city's water, sewer, and stormwater CRCs. This proposal significantly reduces the one-time fees required to connect to Bellevue Utilities for new customers who are located in areas of the city where local improvements have already been made and paid for by ratepayers to accommodate growth.

Following the completion of the updates to the water and sewer utility comprehensive system plans, Utilities anticipates contracting for an independent third-party study to recommend policy options to the CRC methodology that comply with the City of Bellevue's "growth-pays-for-growth" financial policy and achieve higher cost recovery rates relative to the historical cost recovery results of DFCCs. These policy options will likely be presented to the ESC in 2029.

- Proposal #2 – Simpler Calculation

The second proposal would replace the SFE methodology used to assess water and sewer CRCs with a meter capacity equivalent ratio or "MCE." The MCE methodology sizes the CRC on the basis of maximum safe operating water flow for different sized water meters. These ratios as published by the AWWA are outlined in **Exhibit 1**. For example, a new ¾ inch connection would be assessed a CRC equal to one meter capacity equivalent. A new two-inch water meter would be assessed a CRC based on eight MCEs because a two-inch water meter provides a maximum flow of 160 gallons per minute, which is eight times the maximum flow of a ¾ inch water meter (160 gpm divided by 20 gpm).

Exhibit 1: Example Meter Capacity Equivalencies

Meter Size	Maximum Flow (gpm)	Meter Capacity Equivalent
¾" or similar	20	1.00
1"	50	2.50
1½"	100	5.00
2"	160	8.00
3"	320	16.00
4"	500	25.00
6"	1,000	50.00

Similar to how the city assesses the Cascade Water Alliance Regional Water Capital Facilities Charge (RCFC) for single-family customers, domestic "combination" meters sized to serve both domestic use and fire protection through installed fire sprinkler systems will be charged based on the meter size required for domestic demand alone, excluding fire protection needs. For CRC calculation purposes, the meter will be assumed to be one size increment smaller than the installed meter, and any additional capacity required solely for fire flow will not be subject to CRCs.

Assessing CRCs on the basis of meter capacity equivalents instead of the current SFE methodology improves the **transparency** and **equity** of the city's connection charges. It also aligns with the methodology used by neighboring regional utilities.

Transparency: Developers will know the cost of the CRCs well before plans are required for review by the city. They can also affect the amount of the connection charge by aligning the number and size of water meters with expected capacity requirements. Due to finite water meter size options, the meter capacity

equivalent methodology produces a relatively small and easy-to-understand fee schedule. Conversely, the existing SFE methodology requires multiple technical steps that vary by customer type, and the fee may not be finalized until after the property is constructed.

Equity: Utility connection charges exist for new customers to pay the equitable share for system capacity. Assessing CRCs as a function of water meter capacity strengthens the relationship between the size of the connection charge and amount of system capacity being purchased.

- Proposal #3 Pay Once Upfront

The third proposal would shift the timing of when CRCs are collected so that they are a one-time charge collected at permitting similar to all other city connection charges, development and impact fees. In addition, since full utilities-related project costs are known upfront for the property developer those can be included in any financing they procure or grant applications (for low-income housing). This shift would increase transparency and prevent new utility customers from being surprised by the CRC appearing on their bi-monthly utility bill. The shift in timing and removal of the default ten-year repayment term would resolve a key resident pain point while also aligning with the current practice of regional peer utilities and with industry best practice.

Community Engagement

The city hosted a community listening session with the Bellevue Development Committee (BDC) to share proposed changes to how utility connection charges are calculated and collected, and to hear feedback from the impacted community. This conversation helps ensure our approach is transparent, equitable and informed by community perspectives. A summarized engagement report was shared with the BDC members inviting any additional questions or feedback.

Additionally, Utilities launched a public facing webpage, which allows community members to continue providing feedback and ask questions, and where the department will provide periodic status updates and answer Frequently Asked Questions about the project.

POLICY ISSUES

The proposed rate design options are consistent with the city's comprehensive financial policies and state law regarding utility connection charges. These proposals will require revisions to city municipal code for the water utility (24.02.260 and 24.02.275), sewer utility (24.04.260 and 24.04.275), and storm and surface water utility (24.06.110 and 24.06.120). For each chapter, the revisions would:

- Remove the Direct Facility Connection Charges section
- Remove or re-define the Capital Recovery Charge section to broadly authorize the city to collect connection charges so that each developed property bears its equitable share of the cost of the utility system. This proposed revision removes the detailed methodology that is currently in the code which outlines the cost basis and customer base used to compute the connection charge. Providing broader policy guidance in the municipal code allows the city to respond to future changes in the region and in the industry as they relate to the administration of utility connection charges in Bellevue.

FISCAL IMPACT

Utility connection charges represent a relatively small revenue source for Bellevue Utilities. The city generated approximately $5 million in 2025 from CRC and DFCC revenue. By comparison, water, sewer, and stormwater rate revenue totaled $205 million in 2025. Staff anticipate the fiscal impact of these proposed changes will be managed within available resources and will not have an adverse impact to utility rates.

NEXT STEPS

City staff are requesting feedback from the ESC on the following proposals:

1. Discontinue the future use of DFCCs as a type of connection charge in Bellevue, and consolidate the unrecovered cost portion of existing DFCCs into the city's water, sewer, and stormwater CRCs.
2. Replace the SFE methodology used to assess water and sewer CRCs with a Meter Capacity Equivalent ratio or "MCE".
3. Shift the timing of when CRCs are collected so that they are a one-time charge collected at permitting.

With ESC feedback, staff anticipate returning to the Commission in June to obtain a recommendation to City Council. The recommended changes to connection charges would be presented to City Council in Q3/Q4 2026. If approved, the proposed changes would take effect in 2027.

2026

Environmental Services Commission Calendar *Tentative*

updated 5/1/2026

January 8, 2026
Sewer Cost of Service Analysis (COSA) and Proposed Rate Design

Asset Management Program Update

Utility Bill Assistance Program Update

February 5, 2026
Stormwater Management Plan - Public Hearing

Wastewater System Plan Update

Utilities Financial Policies Review

March 5, 2026
Solid Waste Contract Procurement

Utilities Bill Assistance Program

April 2, 2026
2025 Financial Performance Report (Written Brief)

Utilities Proposed 2027-2032 CIP Plan

May 7, 2026
Water System Plan - Draft Review

2027-2032 Early Outlook Rates Forecast

Proposed Changes to Utility Connection Charges

May 21, 2026 - possible second mtg
Field Trip - CIP (tentative)

June 4, 2026
2027-2028 Operating & Capital Budget Proposals

June 18, 2026
2027-2032 Rate Forecast

July 2, 2026
2027-2028 Budget Recommendation to City Manager

August 2026
Recess

September 3, 2026
2027-2028 Budget & Rates Update -

2027-2028 Budget & Rates Public Hearing

September 17, 2026
2027-2028 Budget & Rates Recommendation to Council

October 1, 2026
2027-2028 Budget & Rates Update - Tentative

October xx, 2026
ESC Chair Presents Recommendation to Council

November 5, 2026
Solid Waste Performance Update

Water System Plan Final Draft & Recommendation

December 3, 2026 Special Meeting
ESC Roles & Responsibilities

Commission 2026 Year in Review

Commission 2027 Look Ahead

January

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2026

Council Calendar

April 29, 2026

**** Council presentations are highlighted ****

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January

1/27	Water Main Replacement & PRV 2025 Ph2

February

2/24	Water Main Replacement 2026 Ph 1
2/24	2 Enatai Dr Lakeline Access

March

3/24	Solid Waste Contract Procurement
3/24	Kelsey Creek Culvert @ Lake Hills Blvd Water/Sewer Replacement

April

4/28	Preserving Equitable Sewer Rates

May

5/5	Cedar Terrace Sewer Pump Station Rehabiliation
5/12	KC Wastewater Treatment Division 2027 Sewer Rate and Capacity Charge Proposal and 20-Year Forecast
5/12	Water Main Replacement 2026 Ph 2 & PRV
5/19	Defect Repair 2025 Storm

June

6/2	Utility Bill Assistance Program Update
TBD	Aqua Vista Sanitary Sewer
TBD	Overlay and Pavement Restoration 2026

July

7/14	Cascade Budget/Rates and Cascade Supply Program
TBD	Water Main Replacement 148th and NE20th
TBD	Defect Repair 2025 Sewer
TBD	North Sammamish Flood Improvements

August

TBD	Defect Repair 2026 Storm

September

TBD	Somerset 2 Pump Station & Reservoir Rehab

October

TBD	Budget and Rates Presentation

November

TBD	Solid Waste Contract Procurement

December

TBD	Water Main Replacement 2028 Ph1
Jan-27	Solid Waste Contract Procurement (January Placeholder)

July

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