

# Bellevue Utilities News



Information about your water, drainage, wastewater and solid waste utility services

JAN/FEB 2021

## 2021 Updated Rates



The Bellevue City Council approved the 2021-2022 budget and new rates for Bellevue Utilities that went into effect on January 1, 2021.

### Average customer bill to increase \$6.91 per month

To continue providing customers with high-quality services, the average single-family residential customer will see an increase of about \$6.91 per month for combined water, wastewater and stormwater services—or about \$0.23 per day.

The following rate increases have been approved for 2021:

- ▶ Drinking water will increase by 3.5%
- ▶ Wastewater will increase by 4.1%
- ▶ Stormwater will increase by 3.5%

### Why are rate increases needed?

- ▶ **Bills that we pay others are increasing.** As shown in the graphic below, over half of Utilities' budget covers costs to pay Cascade Water Alliance for drinking water, King County for wastewater treatment, and taxes and city support services. These external provider costs are outside of our ability to control.
- ▶ **Necessary investments to care for infrastructure.** Delivering utility services requires miles of pipes, pumps and other infrastructure. Much of it is well past its midlife—constructed in the 50s and 60s. We need to make regular investments to renew and replace these critical assets.
- ▶ **No rate increase in 2021 for local operations.** Because of careful cost-tightening efforts, there is no rate increase to cover this primary cost area Utilities controls.

Learn more about current rates, how Utilities' rates are set and our work to minimize rate impacts during COVID at [BellevueWA.gov/Utility-Rates](https://BellevueWA.gov/Utility-Rates).

## What Do Your Rate Dollars Pay for?

Bellevue Utilities provides essential daily services that support and improve our quality of life. These services are funded through rates.

When you pay your utility bill, you get:

- ▶ **Safe, reliable, high-quality drinking water.** To make this happen, we maintain over 600 miles of water mains and 24 reservoirs that store over 40 million gallons of water. [BellevueWA.gov/Drinking-Water-Quality](https://BellevueWA.gov/Drinking-Water-Quality) has more info on how we continually protect your water's safety and quality.
- ▶ **Protection from flooding and polluted stormwater runoff in streams.** Utilities cares for over 80 miles of open streams and over 800 acres of protected wetlands, in addition to over 20,000 storm drains and 400 miles of pipe that keep rain water flowing away from streets and properties.
- ▶ **Protection of your health by preventing sewage overflows.** By maintaining over 600 miles of sewer mains, Utilities safely delivers your wastewater to King County treatment facilities.

This graph shows a breakdown of how each rate dollar Utilities collects is used to pay for services.



**\$0.54 External Provider Costs**  
Cascade, King County, and taxes and city support services

**\$0.29 Infrastructure Investments**

**\$0.17 Local Operations**

Bellevue's utility rates are reviewed regularly by the department, the Environmental Services Commission, and by the City Council. We work to ensure that your daily essential services continue at the level of quality you expect, that our rates stay steady and competitive with neighboring cities, and that Bellevue remains one of the best places to live and work. Visit [BellevueWA.gov/Utility-Rates](https://BellevueWA.gov/Utility-Rates) to learn more about what your rate dollars support.

## Help to Pay Utility Bills



Bellevue Utilities offers several bill support options for our customers facing financial difficulties.

**To learn about bill assistance programs you may be eligible for**, including the Emergency Assistance Program or ongoing

programs for low-income seniors and persons with permanent disabilities, visit [BellevueWA.gov/Utility-Relief](http://BellevueWA.gov/Utility-Relief), or call 425-452-5285.

**For payment plan arrangements**, please call 425-452-6973. During the COVID crisis, additional fees or charges for late payments continue to be waived.

## Simple Resolutions for a Zero-Waste Year

Kickstart the new year with zero-waste goals for yourself and your family! If you want to downsize or declutter, or are simply looking for ways to reduce waste and recycle more in everyday life, these resources can help you take waste actions that protect our environment.

- ▶ **Recycle right!** Keep your eyes out for the new 2021 residential recycling guide from Republic Services inside the next *It's Your City* newsletter.
- ▶ **Become a Super Sorter** and learn responsible reorganizing, how to reduce food waste and ditch disposables, and more in our **Greener Living community classes!** Classes on a variety of zero-waste topics will be offered at no cost throughout the year. Visit [BellevueWA.gov/Greener-Living-Classes](http://BellevueWA.gov/Greener-Living-Classes) to view class topics and register.
- ▶ **Recycle more!** Do you have unusual or bulky items you want to avoid sending to the landfill, but you're not sure what to do with them? Check out the Recycle More guide for local year-round disposal options at [BellevueWA.gov/Recycle-More](http://BellevueWA.gov/Recycle-More).
- ▶ **When in doubt, find out!** Still have questions about waste reduction, recycling, or composting? Contact us at [recycle@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:recycle@bellevuewa.gov) or 425-452-6932.

## Smart Water Meter Project Update



**Your water is about to get a lot smarter!**

Bellevue Utilities is replacing outdated manually-read water meters with new "smart" wireless-read technology. Once connected to the online portal, you will be able

to track your home's water use with near real-time data, manage your water consumption and spot leaks much faster—potentially saving water and money!

After working through some project approach changes and supply delays due to COVID, the project is scheduled for completion in mid-2022. In 2020, most large commercial meters were upgraded. Beginning in March 2021, we will be upgrading all residential meters.

**All customers will receive notice before their meter upgrade.** The process is simple, takes about 15 minutes, and requires no home entry—the meters will be installed outside, exactly where your current meter is.

Look for a postcard to alert you when work will be performed in your neighborhood and what to expect.

**To learn more about the project benefits, timeline and other FAQs**, visit [BellevueWA.gov/Smart-Water-Meter](http://BellevueWA.gov/Smart-Water-Meter).

**Questions or concerns?** We're here to help! Contact [smartwater@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:smartwater@bellevuewa.gov) or 425-452-6973.



### RECYCLING TIP:

Save your broken electronics from landfill and recycle for free at:

- » **Republic Services Drop Off Center**—2'x2'x2' or smaller and under 60 lbs
- » **Call Republic Services for a pick up**—425-452-4762
- » **E-Cycle Washington program**—see [EcycleWA.org](http://EcycleWA.org) for participating locations

**Bellevue Utilities News is available online and in other languages at [www.bellevuewa.gov/utilities](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/utilities).**

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**General information**—425-452-6932  
[utilities@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:utilities@bellevuewa.gov) | [utilities.bellevuewa.gov](http://utilities.bellevuewa.gov)



**Customer Service/Billing**—425-452-6973



**Drinking Water Quality**—425-452-6192



**24 Hour Emergencies**—425-452-7840 (flooding, water main breaks, no water, sewer overflows, pollutant spills)



**Republic Services (solid waste service)**—425-452-4762