

FACT SHEET: Water and Wastewater Utility Rate Study

September 2019

Summary

Arlington County is conducting a utility rate study that will review the costs associated with water and wastewater services. This is the first study of this type since 2004 and will involve selection of a rate structure to meet the long-term costs of supporting the delivery of safe, high-quality and reliable water services and the collection and treatment of wastewater.

Project Overview

Arlington County provides potable water and wastewater service to residential and commercial customers and collects rates and charges to pay for the cost of these services. Water and wastewater rates and charges fund all operating and capital needs, including the purchase of water from the Washington Aqueduct, operation and maintenance of our water distribution system, wastewater collection and treatment, customer service and billing, and infrastructure rehabilitation and replacement.

The County is beginning a Water and Wastewater Utility Cost of Service and Rate Design Study to help ensure that sufficient revenues are recovered through our rates and that the rate and fee structure are aligned with the County's financial objectives and community values.

The Study process will include:

- Educating the Arlington community on the study's objectives; conducting a cost of service and revenue analysis which includes historical data and forecast for future consumption/usage and gathering feedback from the community on core values that should inform the rate. This will include significant input from a **Rate Study Community Advisory Group (RSCAG)**, which will serve in an advisory capacity to represent the diverse utility and customer base in Arlington. Broader public engagement will continue in parallel to the RSCAG.
- Development of rate alternatives. The analyses will consist of rates necessary to generate sufficient revenues, identification of rate components applicable to each customer class and its impacts.

Next Steps

The Utility Rate Study's public process is augmented through the convening of a Rate Study Stakeholder Advisory Group, as well as broader community engagement opportunities through traditional and non-traditional methods (public workshops, pop-ups and online feedback forms). These activities will occur in the fall of 2019 through winter 2019-2020.

These activities will culminate with a proposed rate structure alternative that will be taken to the County Board for consideration.

What goes into the rate structure?

Rates for water and wastewater services are based directly on the number of gallons of water used by residents and businesses.

Water usage is measured by a water meter installed adjacent to each residence or business. Wastewater services are charged based on the amount of water used as determined by the water meter readings.