



Our Water Supply

Helping Redwood City to be a WaterWise Community

Details on Proposed Water Rate Increase

Council Considering Equity, Effectiveness of Proposed Rate Increase Structure

As of press time for this publication, the City Council of Redwood City had opened a public hearing on how the City's necessary water rate increases should be implemented. The information provided here is based on the staff's recommendation to Council, and represents the rate increases that the Council is considering. As of press time a final decision had not been made; the Council will deliberate and come to a decision at a Council meeting on June 5th. Please visit redwoodcity.org/water or call 780-7464 for up-to-date information.

Last year, the City made necessary rate changes after working with the community to develop a rate increase scenario consistent with community values and equity, as expressed at a community roundtable workshop. The City Council's Utilities Committee has agreed that the considerable community input and results of that workshop should be considered in the course of determining this year's recommended rate increases. Additionally, in order to ensure ample opportunity for the community to comment on this issue and offer ideas and opinions, the Council has set a significant public comment period - it commenced on April 3rd and closes on June 5th.

Rate Increase Recommendation

- ◆ The recommendation under consideration by the City Council calls for the monthly basic service charge (currently \$12) to be raised to \$14.25, and the "consumption rates" (the charge for the amount of water used) to increase by 10¢ per "unit" of water used (one unit = 748 gallons). Under Redwood City's *progressive water conservation rate structure*, the more water you use, the more you pay per unit of water, based on your maximum usage level. This offers an incentive to use less water. **For the typical residential customer, the proposed rate increase amounts to an estimated additional \$3.35 per month.**
- ◆ Historically, Redwood City has enjoyed water bills significantly lower than the average for similar cities, and even with the necessary increases we will still be providing water at rates that are among the lowest on the Peninsula. **If the rate increase is approved by the City Council, then all water used as of June 5th will be charged at the new rates, and will be reflected in customers' water bills beginning on August 4th.**

Why a Water Rate Increase is Necessary

- ◆ Redwood City buys all of our community's drinking water from one source - the Hetch Hetchy regional water system, administered by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. When the wholesale cost of water increases, we must pass that increase along to our customers. This year, a 14% increase in the wholesale cost of water, from \$1.02 to \$1.16 per unit of water, will occur in July. Additionally, the proposed increase will help to fund the City's ongoing investment in water conservation and new water supply and distribution systems, including our recycled water program. These efforts will result in a reliable and efficient water supply for the near future, *and* for the generations to come.

What the Future Holds...

- ◆ The Council is considering directing staff to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing "tiered" rate structure, and offer alternative rate structures that may better address equity and conservation effectiveness.
- ◆ Finally, the Council will be considering a sewer service charge increase, to help fund infrastructure improvements and modernization of the regional wastewater treatment plant, the South Bayside System Authority. More information will be available as soon as a recommendation is crafted for City Council consideration.

Redwood City's Water Conservation Programs Will Help YOU to

Save Water & Money

What if you could reduce your monthly water bill by **10%**? How about **20%**? Or even **30%**! You'd be doing a great job of using water efficiently, helping the environment, and saving money, all at the same time.

Read below to learn how **Redwood City's Water Conservation Programs** make it easy to do just that!

- **Water Use Allocation Program**

To start saving water and money, here's where you should start! The City's *Water Use Allocation Program* helps determine the average amount of water that your household *should* be using. It also sets the stage for providing a fair and equitable way to distribute water during possible future droughts, and will help you compare your actual water use with your water use target. You can easily compare your personalized water budget with your actual water use by visiting redwoodcity.org/conservation.

- **"Smart Home" Water-Use House Calls**

We'll come to your home to help figure out the best ways to conserve water inside the house, in your garden, and on your lawn. We will also install low flow showerheads and faucet aerators and give you a low flow garden nozzle – it's all free!

- **Free "Smart Home" Water Conservation Kit**

We will mail you a free kit, which includes detailed instructions for you take four easy steps to Wise Water use, leak detection tablets, drip gauge, shower head flow meter, sink faucet aerator, and a home plumbing handbook.

- **Redwood City's Website**
(www.redwoodcity.org/conservation)

Visit our website for more information on our conservation programs - and save money!

- **High Efficiency Toilet Replacement Program**

This outstanding program will have you saving water and money by installing a high-efficiency toilet in your home – Redwood City will give you a brand new FREE toilet, and deliver and install it for FREE! We'll even remove and take away your old water-wasting toilet for recycling.

To qualify, you must be a Redwood City water customer and have an existing old toilet that uses 3.5 gallons or more per flush. After we receive and qualify your application, the City's contractor will call to make an appointment to come to your home, remove your old water-waster, and install your new free high-efficiency toilet.

- **High Efficiency Clothes Washer Rebate Program**

When you buy a high or ultra-high efficiency clothes washer, you'll save water, energy, and detergent, and you'll get a **rebate of up to \$250!**

High-efficiency washing machines deliver excellent performance while reducing water use and energy consumption by up to 50% over conventional top-loading washers, and require less detergent. Save an average of 5,100 gallons of water and reduce your energy bill by \$78 per year. And, decreasing the amount of phosphate-laden detergent discharged to the sensitive Bay ecosystem will help keep our Bay water clean, and protect plants and wildlife.

How do you get more information and sign up for any of these great water-saving programs? Just call 780-7436 or go to redwoodcity.org/conservation - it's that easy!

Your service club, neighborhood association, community organization, or other group can learn more about water conservation — Redwood City offers a **Water Conservation Speakers Bureau** that provides an informative and interesting presentation for your gathering. Call 780-7436 to schedule a speaker for your group.