



Frequently Asked Questions Utility Service Rates

Why is the City preparing to raise utility rates?

Rates need to pay for the costs to operate and maintain each utility service provided by the City. City staff recently had a financial plan prepared for each utility to tell us what our revenues should be to pay for staff, projects and programs over the next five years and, unfortunately, increases to rates are necessary in order to do that.

Didn't the City just raise rates?

The last rate increase to our water and refuse rates took place in 2014. That was the last year of a five-year plan approved in 2010. Wastewater rates have not been increased since July, 2000 – over 17years ago.

What will these rate increases pay for?

Some important projects and programs that our current rates can't pay for include:

- Installation of water meters at all service connections as required by the State.
- Operating and maintaining carbon treatment plants at our water wells to remove a contaminant as required by the State.
- Maintenance projects at our wastewater treatment plant.
- More frequent water and sewer system replacement projects and upgrades to prevent leaks and improve efficiency.

Doesn't the City have a lot of money saved that can be used to keep my rates from going up so high?

Although the City does have money in reserves for emergency purposes and projects to benefit the community, public utilities are required to fund operations through service rates only.

Can the City spread the rate increases out over several years so we're not paying all at once?

That is exactly what the City has planned. We do not need the increased revenue all at once so we are not proposing rate increases all at once. The proposed rate tables show the first increase to start July 1, 2017 and it calls for annual increases every July 1st after that for up to four years.

How does my City utility compare to other cities?

Right now, the average Shafter house pays about \$90 every month for water, wastewater and refuse collection. With the first year of the proposed rate increases, that bill should be about \$100 per month. Although services and billing provided by other cities may not be exactly like what Shafter provides, monthly bills for these utilities in other cities are between \$90 and \$120 every month.



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What can I do if I want to learn more about the City's rates and where my rate money is spent?

A public workshop will be held on May 18th at the Shafter Veterans Hall from 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. City staff and Council members will be available then to answer questions or hear any concerns about utility rates. You can also contact the City Clerk during normal City business hours to request additional information at 661-746-5000. Information will also be posted on the City's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/CityOfShafter and on the City webpage: www.shafter.com/utilityrates.