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# SOUTH PARK COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT

Sonoma Water and the City of Santa Rosa (City) are in a multi-year transition process that will result in the City fully operating and managing the South Park County Sanitation District (District). During the transition period, Sonoma Water has been implementing a new rate structure that sets sewer rates based partially on the District’s fixed costs and partially on an estimate of the amount of sewage generated by each household, which is based on water usage during winter months. Each year, the fixed-costs portion of the sewer bill have decreased, and the portion based on water usage during winter months (volumetric) have increased.

The rate structure during this transition period, which is now consistent with the City’s billing method, calculates charges as generally 30% Fixed cost, 70% Volumetric. This change provides customers greater control over their sewer bill as it is based on water usage during winter months. Given that outside watering should be avoided throughout

the winter, this technique offers a more realistic estimate of average use. The District has also entered into an agreement with the City to facilitate monthly customer billing.

Within the next five years, the District intends to undertake infrastructure improvements. Existing sewage pipes installed in the 1950s and 1960s are reaching the end of their functional lives due to cracks, fractures, and roots. Staff are evaluating the cost of these investments in order to calculate and update the capacity charges that customers must pay in order to connect to the system.

The District covers about 1,500 acres, 2,200 parcels, and collects wastewater from about 4,300 equivalent single-family dwellings. Wastewater from the District is treated and disposed of by the City at the Laguna Sub-regional Treatment Plant on Llano Road. Most of the treated water is reused for power generation and irrigation.



# About Your District

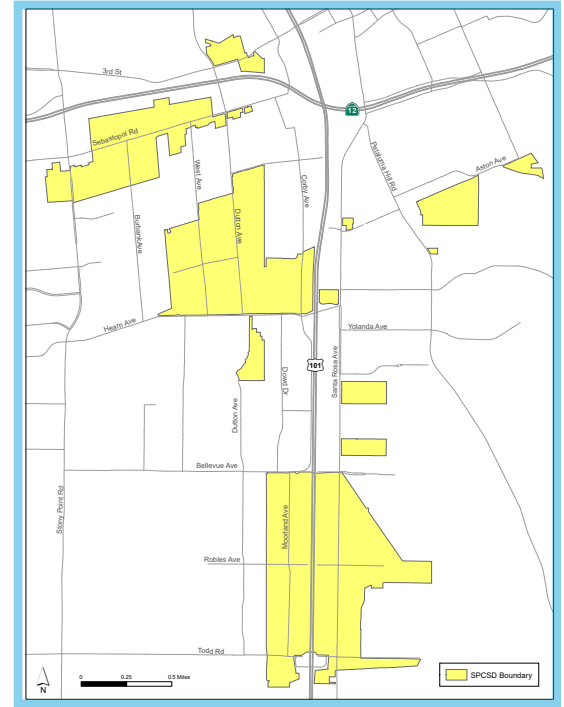
In 1995 Sonoma Water assumed responsibility from the County of Sonoma for managing the county sanitation zones and districts, including your District. The collection system serves approximately 4,371 Equivalent Single-Family Dwellings within a 1,460-acre service area. Wastewater collected by the District is treated at the Laguna Wastewater Treatment Plant. Most of the treated water is reused for power generation and irrigation.

## Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

Local hazard mitigation plans (LHMP) promote risk-based decision-making to protect people, property, and the economy from earthquakes, fires, and floods. For state, tribal, and municipal governments to receive pre- and post-disaster federal hazard mitigation funds, the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires a five-year LHMP. The LHMP is reviewed by the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and requires Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) review and approval.

Sonoma Water is updating the 2018 LHMP with stakeholders. The LHMP planning process is as important as the plan itself and must include public and stakeholder input. The Sonoma Water LHMP includes a natural hazard and vulnerability assessment for its water supply system, flood protection infrastructure, and sanitation districts and zones systems.

If you are interested in following the LHMP preparation, approval, and adoption process or providing input, visit [SonomaWater.org/LHMP](http://SonomaWater.org/LHMP). Drafts, staff reports, public hearing notices, and hazard maps, will be posted here for public review. You can submit questions or comments by sending an email to [LHMP@scwa.ca.gov](mailto:LHMP@scwa.ca.gov).



## Fats, Oils, and Grease (F.O.G.s) Cause Clogs

Wipes can catch on tree roots and accumulate with fats, oils and grease becoming large obstructions in the pipes. Further down the line, they weave together and create giant rags which get stuck in pumps, collection systems, and motors, causing backups and equipment failures.

We are asking residents not to discard wipes in the toilet, but instead to throw them in the trash to avoid backups and overflow. Protect your sewer pipes by disposing of fats, oils, and grease in the trash, not down the drain. For More information, please visit: [SonomaWater.org/PollutionPrevention](http://SonomaWater.org/PollutionPrevention).



## Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)

LIHWAP offers a one-time payment to qualifying low-income households to help pay past due water or wastewater (sewer) bills. There is no date restriction for when the overdue amount occurred. The size of a benefit varies depending on the past due balance of the household's residential water and wastewater bills. Households that qualify could reduce their water and/or wastewater charges by up to \$2,000.

### How do I apply?

Households can apply for LIHWAP assistance through the local LIHWAP service provider, North Coast Energy Services. Applications must be returned directly to the service provider. For more information and to apply visit

[SonomaWater.org/sanitation-districts-and-zones](http://SonomaWater.org/sanitation-districts-and-zones).

## Water Rebates In Your District

### Water Saving Rebate Programs Available:

As a sanitation customer, you have some water saving tools at your fingertips! Please take advantage of water saving programs which are offered on a first-come, first-served basis through the City of Santa Rosa.

**Receive Rebates For:** High-Efficiency Toilets, High-Efficiency Clothes Washers, Recirculating Hot Water Pumps, Cash for Grass Program, Irrigation Upgrades, Graywater Reuse, Rainwater Harvesting, Sustained Water Reduction, and much more.

**For more information:** Visit: <https://srcity.org/834/Rebates-Free-Services> E-mail: [wue@srcity.org](mailto:wue@srcity.org) Call: 707-543-3985

# Maintaining and Repairing Aging Infrastructure

Sonoma Water has managed eight wastewater districts and zones throughout Sonoma County since 1995 when it took over management and operations from the Sonoma County Public Works Department. The districts and zones range in age from 70-plus years (Sonoma Valley, Occidental) to 40 years (Russian River, Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup) and they all face financial challenges. The aging collection and treatment systems require ongoing maintenance and replacement projects.

As water quality regulations become more stringent, operational and capital costs of compliance increase. The small size of most of the districts and zones means there are relatively few ratepayers to share these new costs.

This year the proposed rate increases for many of the districts and zones are larger than they have been in recent years. Sonoma Water recognizes the rate increases can present a financial hardship for ratepayers, and every effort is being made to seek out grants and loans to offset some of the costs for capital projects. Rate increases are needed for the maintenance and replacement of aging infrastructure, deferred maintenance in some cases, to maintain the integrity of these publicly owned assets and to responsibly manage the systems to protect public health and the environment.

The information below details the proposed rate increase for your district or zone and provides a breakdown of how funds are collected and spent. There is also a list of projects planned for the coming year.

	FY22-23	FY23-24 Proposed
ESDs*	4,371	4,364
Annual Rate Per ESD	\$1,112	\$1,150
Annual Increase	\$38	\$38
Monthly Rate per ESD	\$92.63	\$95.83
Monthly Increase	\$3.13	\$3.20
Rate Increase	3.5%	3.5%
Increased Revenue	\$164,306	\$164,300

\*Fixed Rate sewer bills are calculated based on usage of an Equivalent Standard Dwelling ("ESD"). An ESD is defined as what an average single family home would use in a given year.

## Budget Approval

After the proposed budgets and rates are developed, the budgets are available for public review at the end of March. The draft proposed budgets for all sanitation districts and zones will be available for review at Sonoma Water's office located at 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, California 95403, and on Sonoma Water's website at [SonomaWater.org/Current-Budget](https://www.sonomawater.org/Current-Budget).

In addition, owners of the properties in district and zones receive notice of the proposed rates in this newsletter. The public can protest rate increases up to the date of the rate hearings, which this year are scheduled for May 16, 2023 at the Board of Supervisors chambers. (A protest form and rate hearing information are available on pages 5-7 of this notice).

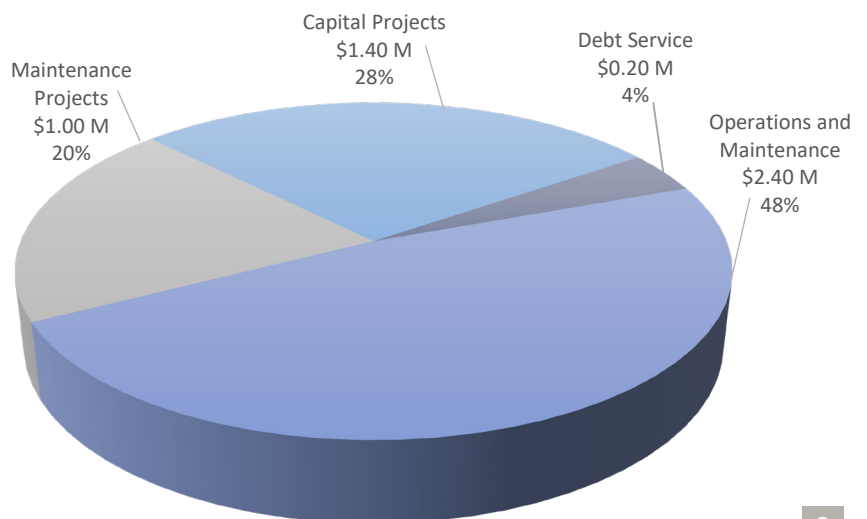
## FY 2023-2024 Budgeted Expenditures - \$5 Million

### Capital Projects - \$1.4 Million

- Santa Rosa Avenue Sewer Improvements Conceptual Design
- Barbara-Winston Collection System Replacement Project

### Maintenance Projects - \$1 Million

- Agreement with City of Santa Rosa for Future Sewer Billing
- Manhole Realignment during Road Repavement Projects



# **PROPOSITION 218**

## **South Park County Sanitation District**

### **Notice of Public Hearing Regarding Proposed Sewer Service Rate Increase**

#### **Date, Time, and Place of Public Hearing**

On **May 16, 2023 at 1:40 p.m.** or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, the Board of Directors (Board) of the South Park County Sanitation District (District) will conduct a public hearing to consider increasing the annual sewer service charge (Sewer Charge) and make rate structure modifications. If approved, the increased Sewer Charge will become effective on July 1, 2023.

**Please note:** The public hearing will be held in the Board Meeting Room, 575 Administration Drive, Room 102A, Santa Rosa, California. If the Board will offer a virtual option to accommodate public participation online, information regarding the virtual option will be available on the Board's agenda 72 hours prior to the meeting at <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/calendar.aspx>.

The Sewer Charge will be imposed on each parcel with one or more structures that are connected to the system. The Sewer Charge will be collected on the general property tax bill administered by Sonoma County. Payment of the Sewer Charge will be the responsibility of the owner of the parcel.

#### **Reasons for the Sewer Charge and Use of the Funds Collected**

The Sewer Charge is imposed to pay for the cost of providing safe and reliable sewer service to your property in conformance with legal requirements, and is necessary: (a) to finance the ongoing operation and maintenance costs of the system; (b) to pay the capital replacement program costs of the system, which provides for the long-term replacement of system facilities as they wear out; and (c) to maintain sufficient reserves.

#### **Calculation of the Sewer Rate Increase**

The District is working with the City of Santa Rosa on a multi-year transition process to turn over the operation and management of the District to the City. The District's rate structure historically included only fixed charges. The District has moved to a new rate structure that includes both (A) fixed charges; and (B) volumetric charges that are based on the amount of water used by the customer. This rate structure is designed to fund the cost of District services and it also provides customers greater control over their sewer bill. It is also consistent with industry best practices and is similar to the City's rate structure.

##### **A. Fixed Charge Calculation**

The fixed charge is calculated based on usage of a standard "equivalent single-family dwelling" (ESD). A standard single-family home constitutes one ESD which is defined as what an average single family home would use in a given year. Properties that are not single family homes are converted to ESDs based on industry standard methods and more information about this conversion is available from the District. The fixed charge funds 40 percent of the District's costs to provide sewer services, including costs associated with the sewage treatment and collection system that are incurred regardless of increased or decreased sewage flow into the system.

Effective July 1, 2022, the District proposes a fixed charge of \$439.48 per ESD per year. This represents an increase of \$14.86 above the current year. All District customers will pay the fixed charge.

The proposed fixed charge component of the Sewer Charge will be calculated as follows:

**\$439.48 per ESD x Number of ESD's = Fixed Charge Component of the Sewer Charge**

The number of ESDs for your parcel is included in this newsletter in the box to the left of your mailing address.

**B. Volumetric Charge Calculation**

The volume-based charge recovers 60 percent of the District’s costs to provide sewer services, including the costs associated with the sewage treatment and collection system that vary with the amount of sewage conveyed and treated. The District will use City of Santa Rosa water usage data to calculate the annual volumetric charge portion of the Sewer Charge. All District customers will pay an annual volumetric charge.

The Volume-Based Component of the Sewer Charge has two parts, which are multiplied together:

**Annual Water Usage x Charge per thousand gallons = Volume-Based Component of Sewer Charge**

The District has four categories of customers for the volumetric charge calculation:

1. Residential Customers with a City of Santa Rosa Water Connection
2. Residential Customers with No City of Santa Rosa Water Connection
3. Non-Residential Customers with a City of Santa Rosa Water Connection
4. Non-Residential Customers with No City of Santa Rosa Water Connection

Residential customers include single-family dwellings, duplexes, and condominium complexes. Non-residential customers include multiple-family units, apartments, mobile home parks, commercial, industrial, and institutional properties. The calculations for each are described below. Annual Water Usage calculations will be based on customer water consumption. For Residential Customers, average winter water usage will be used because it provides the best available estimate of indoor water usage since outdoor irrigation is minimal during the winter months. For Non-Residential Customers, annual water usage is based on actual water usage.

**Table 1: Residential Customers: Annual Water Usage and Charge Per Thousand Gallon Calculation**

Sewer Customers	Calculation of Annual Water Usage	Charge Per Thousand Gallons
With a City of Santa Rosa Water Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District will calculate Customer’s average monthly winter water usage.</li> <li>• Average winter water usage will be multiplied by 12 to determine annual water usage.</li> </ul>	\$12.84
With No City of Santa Rosa Water Connection part or all of the time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District will calculate Customer’s average monthly winter water usage of similar residential customers that have a City of Santa Rosa water connection.</li> <li>• Water use will be estimated based on household size and water use data from comparable metered customers.</li> <li>• Average winter water usage will be multiplied by 12 to determine annual water usage.</li> </ul>	\$12.84

**Table 2a: Non-Residential Customers: Annual Water Usage Calculation**

Sewer Customers	Calculation of Annual Water Usage	Charge Per Thousand Gallons
With a City of Santa Rosa Water Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District will add up the customer’s actual monthly water usage for 12 months to arrive at the total annual water usage.</li> </ul>	Based on estimated wastewater strength, shown in Table 2b below
With No City of Santa Rosa Water Connection part or all of the time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District will average annual water usage from similar customers based on City of Santa Rosa water usage data.</li> <li>• Water use will be estimated based on household size, if applicable, or on the type and size of use. Additional information on estimation methodologies is available from the District.</li> <li>• Average winter water usage will be multiplied by 12 to determine annual water usage.</li> </ul>	Based on estimated wastewater strength, shown in Table 2b below

**Table 2b: Non-Residential Customers: Examples of Charge Per Thousand Gallon Calculation**

Categories of Wastewater Strength and Examples of Types of Uses	Charge per Thousand Gallons
<b>Low Strength</b> - car wash, glass products	\$11.04
<b>Standard Strength</b> – residential, condominium complexes, multi-family complexes, mobile home parks, warehouses, general commercial/industrial including retail, schools, churches, auto sales, dental and medical offices.	\$12.84
<b>Medium Strength</b> – mixed use commercial; hotel/motel, convenience store, bar, winery, brewery, auto repair.	\$14.76
<b>High Strength</b> – bakery, restaurant, coffee shop, meat and food processing, miller, hospital, veterinary clinic.	\$18.24

**C. Fixed Charge and Volumetric Charge Calculation Combined for Total Sewer Charge**

Each Residential Customer with a sewer connection will be charged an annual Sewer Charge calculated as follows:

$$\text{\$439.48 per ESD X Number of ESDs (Fixed Charge Component) + } \\ \text{\$12.84 per thousand gallons x Annual Water Usage in thousand gallons (Volumetric Charge Component)}$$

Each Non-Residential Customer with a sewer connection will be charged an annual Sewer Charge calculated as follows:

$$\text{\$439.48 per ESD X Number of ESDs (Fixed Charge Component) + Annual Water Usage x Applicable Charge per thousand } \\ \text{gallons shown in Table 2b (Volumetric Charge Component)}$$

The draft proposed budget for fiscal year 2022-23 describes the total annual expenses in detail and is available for review at the South Park County Sanitation District, c/o the Sonoma County Water Agency, 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, California 95403, and on Sonoma Water’s website at [SonomaWater.org/current-budget](http://SonomaWater.org/current-budget).

**Further Information Available Prior to the Hearing**

At the hearing, the Board will consider adoption of an ordinance that will establish the increased Sewer Charge. A copy of the ordinance will be on file and available for review at the Sonoma County Water Agency, 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. In addition, the following person may be contacted at the Agency at (707) 526-5370 for further information and/or obtaining copies of the draft proposed budget for fiscal year 2023-24: Kathy Badger, Administrative Aide.

**Protest Procedure**

This notice has been mailed to you because records of the Sonoma County Assessor list you as an owner of one or more parcels within the District that will be subject to the Sewer Charge while connected to the system. In the event you have sold property you may have owned within the District, please send this notice to the new owner. This document can be found in the spring newsletter online at: [SonomaWater.org/spcsd](http://SonomaWater.org/spcsd).

Prior to the public hearing, property owners, or tenants who are directly liable for the payment of the Sewer Charges, may submit written protests respecting the Sewer Charge. At the public hearing, the Board will consider all written protests that have been received by the prescribed deadline. In order to be considered, a written protest must be made on the attached form. Only one protest will be counted per parcel. Only protests signed by the current owner(s), or tenant(s) directly liable for paying the Sewer Charge, will be allowed and protests must be received no later than the following deadlines:

*If submitted by mail, the protest must be received (NOT postmarked) no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 15, 2023 at the mailing address on the form.*

*If hand delivered, the protest must be delivered no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 15, 2023 at the mailing address on the form.*

Sonoma Water  
404 Aviation Blvd.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

There is a 120-day statute of limitations for challenging any new, increased, or extended fee or charge.

**Date of this Notice: March 31, 2023**

# RATE PROTEST FORM

**NOTE: IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED, ANY PROTEST MUST BE ON THIS FORM**

## WRITTEN PROTEST

I am the parcel owner of the property located at the address on the back of this form, or a tenant that is directly liable for paying the Sewer Charge for the property. I am submitting this form to protest the proposed Sewer Charge increase.

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Use opposite side or attach additional sheets if needed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Property Owner Required

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

*Fold Here First*

Place  
Postage  
Here

South Park County Sanitation District  
c/o Sonoma Water  
404 Aviation Blvd  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

*Fold Here Second*

South Park County Sanitation District  
c/o Sonoma Water  
404 Aviation Blvd.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

## IMPORTANT Sewer Service Fee Notice

(Prop 218) enclosed for  
South Park County  
Sanitation District

### HEARING DATE

May 16, 2023 at 1:40 p.m.

### HEARING DETAILS

Hearing details can be found  
72 hours prior to the meeting at

<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/calendar.aspx>



## Included In This Issue

Proposition 218 Notice for proposed  
Fiscal Year 2023-2024 sewer rates.

The Notice with information about the proposed rates  
is included on pages 5-6 of this newsletter.  
The return protest form is located on page 7.



## Importante

**Aviso De Tarifa De Servicio De Alcantarillado**  
(Prop 218) incluida para el Distrito de Saneamiento del Condado  
en South Park

### FECHA DE LA AUDIENCIA

16 de mayo de 2023 a las 1:40 p.m.

### DETALLES DE LA AUDIENCIA

Los detalles de la audiencia estarán disponibles 72 horas antes  
de la reunión en

<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/calendar.aspx>

## Incluido en esta Edición

**Aviso de la Proposición 218 de las tarifas de  
alcantarillado propuestas para el año fiscal 2023-2024.**  
El aviso con información sobre las tarifas propuestas se incluye  
en las páginas 5-6 de este boletín. El formulario de protesta se  
encuentra en la página 7.

Este boletín y otros materiales sobre saneamiento están  
disponibles en español en [SonomaWater.org/espanol](https://SonomaWater.org/espanol).



**Sonoma  
Water**

Clean. Reliable. Essential. Every day.  
[SonomaWater.org/SPCSD](https://SonomaWater.org/SPCSD)