



ALL ABOUT THE SEWER RATE STUDY

WHY ARE RATES GOING UP?

Cities across Oregon are raising sewer rates for a mix of urgent and long-term reasons - and it's not just about balancing budgets. It's about keeping essential infrastructure functioning, safe, and compliant with environmental laws. Many sewer systems in Oregon were built decades ago and are now deteriorating. Rockaway's sewer system was constructed in 1954 and underwent two major expansions in 1979 and 1981. Repairs and replacements are costly, and sufficient revenue is needed to avoid breakdowns and environmental hazards. The last rate adjustment was done over 15 years ago, not keeping up with inflation or rising costs. Since then the cost of labor, energy, materials and regulatory compliance has surged. Cities must meet stricter wastewater treatment standards - which require upgrades to treatment plants and monitoring systems that are expensive, but legally required. Infrastructure isn't free. Building, maintaining and operating this infrastructure is expensive - and those costs are spread across users.

WHAT WILL THE MONEY BE USED FOR?

Increased rates allow the city to keep our community's wastewater system safe, reliable, and up to code. These rates allow the city to:

- Replace aging pipes, pumps and treatment facilities - most of which are many decades old;
- Invest in advanced filtration and monitoring systems to protect the natural environment and meet stricter regulations;
- Pay for skilled staff, equipment, and chemicals needed to treat and transport wastewater;
- Ensure the utility can keep pace with economic changes, like inflation; and
- Maintain reserve funds for emergencies and future capital projects.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T RAISE RATES?

If rates are not raised when needed, it might feel like a win for residents in the short-term - but it can lead to serious consequences down the line. It's a bit like skipping oil changes in your car for years - it might run fine for a while, but eventually, the engine is going to have problems. For the sewer system, this could result in deferred maintenance, infrastructure decay, reduced service quality, and other problems. Keeping rates artificially low might save money now, but when emergencies arise, these surprise expenses often lead to sudden, steep rate hikes - which impact residents more than gradual increases.

NEXT STEPS

November 12th at 4:30 PM

HRD Engineers will present a rate analysis to the City Council at the Council Workshop.

December 10th at 6:00 PM

The City Council will hold a public hearing to consider adoption of new sewer rates.

January 1, 2026

New sewer rates to take effect.



QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Send an email to ratestudy@corb.us

An FAQ will be prepared based on questions received.



SCAN QR CODE

to view a Rates 101 presentation and learn more about this project