



Update on capacity charge studies

King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) has two studies that may change the capacity charge:

- Low-Income Customer Affordability Study
- Rate Design Study

The affordability study [report is now available](#). The findings from the rate design study will be forthcoming later this year.

The capacity charge helps to pay for the system of pipes, treatment plants and other wastewater facilities that serve a growing regional customer base.

Affordability study report now available online

WTD wants to better serve low-income customers and improve the affordability of wastewater services and housing. As part of the study, we looked at demographic trends and talked with local sewer agencies, developers and low-income housing advocates to better understand and address affordability concerns. For more information on our findings, please review the [affordability study report](#) on our [website](#).

WTD will use the report to create recommendations for assisting customers who are low-income or experiencing temporary financial hardship. Some assistance programs we are considering include:

- Connect customers to Washington 211 as a potential resources for a variety of services. Washington 211 is a network of call centers that offers health and human service information and referrals to anyone who dials 211.
- Payment plans that allow customers to make smaller, more frequent payments.
- Property lien placement that allows eligible low-income customers enrolled in State and County property tax relief programs to defer payment on the balance owed until they sell the property.
- Reduced charge for new affordable housing projects that meet criteria.



New buildings that connect to the sewer system pay the capacity charge.

The King County Council and Executive will consider these recommendations in spring and summer 2019.

We want to hear from you

We want your feedback on the capacity charge recommendations and the affordability study report. Please take this short [Public Input](#) survey by April 30, 2019, and WTD will provide a summary of public feedback to decision-makers. If you have questions or would like more information, contact Eunice Lee at elee@kingcounty.gov or 206-263-1614.

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS AVAILABLE
206-477-5371 / 711 (TTY Relay)



Rate design study research continues

We are also looking at how the capacity charge is allocated to different groups of customers. Currently, the capacity charge is designed based on the type of unit (for residential buildings) or plumbing fixtures (for commercial structures). We are working closely with representatives from local sewer agencies on this study and plan to release a report of our findings later this year.

The goal of the rate design study is to develop a basis for the capacity charge that:

- Reflects the approximate amount of wastewater each type of building sends to the sewer
- Is administratively workable

When a new building connects to the sewer system, we cannot predict exactly how much wastewater it will produce. However, we can estimate its use based on similar types of buildings. After analyzing data from local sewer agencies, developers, and others, we are considering some potential changes for how the rate is designed:

- Adding more unit types, such as small medium and large single family, multi-family, micro housing, etc.
- Water meter capacity
- Number and type of plumbing fixtures
- Interior square footage

How to stay updated

For more information, contact Eunice Lee, King County Wastewater Community Services, at elee@kingcounty.gov or 206-263-1614, or visit the capacity charge studies webpage: <https://kingcounty.gov/services/environment/wastewater/capacity-charge/review-studies.aspx>.