

System Development Charges

Portland Water Bureau



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Why SDCs are important.

System Development Charges (SDCs), also known as impact fees, provide revenue to utilities from new user hook ups to recover costs of existing and future capacity enhancing capital improvements. New customers' use of the existing water system infrastructure reduces existing capacity and may also lead to the need for construction of new facilities. A common objective of SDCs is to have "growth pay for growth." From an economic perspective this is true, but unfortunately in the case of construction of new facilities, the burden of paying for new facilities falls mainly on the existing ratepayers in the near term as new customers join the utility gradually over the life of those new facilities.

Why the Water Bureau charges SDCs

Current engineering studies, such as the Distribution Infrastructure Master Plan and the Water Management and Conservation Plan, show no significant constraints on future near term capacity. Therefore, the Bureau's SDCs are based on a "buy-in" to the water system (i.e., a reimbursement method) per Oregon Revised Statutes.

The Bureau pays for capital improvements in five ways:

- Uses cash on hand raised from user rates
- Sells bonds or debt financing
- Assesses SDCs for new development
- Requires up-front reimbursement from developers or customers who directly benefit from an improvement
- Uses interest earned on Construction Fund balances

SDCs are one-time charges paid by customers when they apply for a new water connection (or increase the size of an existing connection). By charging SDCs for new or larger connections to the system, the Bureau assigns the costs of capital improvements, at least in part, to those who may potentially cause an increase in demand rather than to existing customers through higher user charge rates. Money collected through SDCs from new customers for their share of the costs of capacity is more equitable than raising rates on all customers to pay for capital improvements that are needed primarily just to serve the new or increased demand. Although debt financing pushes repayment into the future, the repayment is still usually from user rates.

Description of Methodology

The Bureau's SDC is a reimbursement fee calculated in accordance with the language and intent of the Oregon state legislation as specified in ORS 223.297 to 223.314. The Portland Water Bureau's SDC adheres to the definition in ORS 223.299 (3) of a "Reimbursement fee means a fee for costs associated with capital improvements already constructed, or under construction when the fee is established, for which the local government determines that capacity exists."

The Bureau’s buy-in SDC is essentially the “cost per equivalent meter unit” times the size of the meter (in equivalent units) added to the water system. Cost per equivalent meter unit is simply the net “value” of the water system divided by the total number of “equivalent meter units (5/8” meter = 1 equivalent meter unit)” served by the system.

The net value of the water system begins with the value of existing water facilities using estimated replacement cost, less accumulated depreciation (net replacement cost book value). Construction work in progress, current planned spending capital construction through year-end, and projected year-end fund cash balances, are added. Customer contributions and unpaid bond principal are deducted. The resulting total is the net “value” of the water system.

The equivalent meter unit is a ratio based on the capacity of larger meters as compared to the capacity of a base meter such as a typical residential customer’s 5/8” meter (see details in Appendix).

Details of SDC Calculation

The details of the FY 2016-17 SDC reimbursement fee per Section 223-304 1(a) are as follows:

Net replacement cost book value of existing facilities *	\$1,151,845,718
Add Estimated cost of facilities under construction in capital plan *	144,176,331
Less Contributions	(120,353,486)
Less Outstanding debt (principal only)	(602,315,000)
Add Fund cash balances (accrual)	128,252,348
 Total System Net Value	 \$701,605,911
 Total Equivalent Meter Units *	 292,386
 Cost per Equivalent Meter Unit	 \$2,400

* See Appendix for details

In effect, every retail customer using the system today (with a 5/8" meter = 1 equivalent meter unit) has an investment value of \$2,400 in net replacement value terms for a share of the capacity of the system assets. Therefore, new customers pay a reimbursement fee that brings their investment in line with that of existing customers.

The next table lists the SDCs for 5/8” to 24” meters based on the unit cost and equivalency capacity ratios.

SDC Schedule for FY 2016-17

The cost per equivalent meter unit is multiplied by the equivalency ratio schedule.

Meter Size	Equivalent Capacity Ratio	FY 2016-17 SDC
5/8"	1	\$2,400
3/4"	1.5	3,599
1"	2.5	5,999
1-1/2"	5	11,998
2"	8	19,197
3"	15	35,994
4"	25	59,990
6"	50	119,980
8"	80	191,967
10"	142.5	345,061
16"	412.5	989,831
24"	750	1,799,693

Over the past 10 fiscal years, the SDC for a 5/8" meter has increased from \$1,787 to \$2,400. In FY 2010-11 the depreciation asset valuation was changed to match the City's financial system.

Fiscal Year	Water SDC (5/8" Meter)
FY 07-08	\$1,787
FY 08-09	\$1,760
FY 09-10	\$1,793
FY 10-11	\$1,710
FY 11-12	\$1,732
FY 12-13	\$1,817
FY 13-14	\$2,183
FY 14-15	\$2,185
FY 15-16	\$2,337
FY 16-17	\$2,400

Comparison of Water SDC Charges

The 2016-17 Water SDC for a 5/8” meter (\$2,400) is below the national average SDC rate of \$3,184 reported in the AWWA 2015 Water and Wastewater Rate Survey (published every two years) The SDC rate is also less than rates charged by a sample of other Oregon municipal water utilities.

	Water SDC (5/8” Meter)	Notes
National average	\$3,184	(1)
West Linn, City of	\$10,001	(2)
Tigard, City of	\$8,127	(2)
Lake Oswego, City of	\$7,304	(2)
TVWD (Washington County)	\$6,687	(2)
Beaverton, City of	\$5,411	(2)
Gresham, City of	\$4,153	(2)
Portland, City of	\$2,400	
EWEB (Eugene)	\$2,276	(2)

(1) RFC/AWWA 2015 Water and Wastewater Rate Survey

(2) City or Utility website or related fee schedule

SDC Revenue Funds Capital Improvements

Per ORS Section 223.307, SDC revenue is spent only on capital improvements associated with the water system. Details, including a description and forecast cost, of the capital improvements being funded with system development charge revenue are included in the capital improvement plan. The annual audit provides data on the cost of capital construction and capital funding sources.

Administrative Procedures

The Portland City Council adopted ordinance #183448 adding and amending City Code to define and exempt qualified affordable housing projects from Water SDCs effective July 1, 2010. Ordinance #183688 suspended Water SDCs for accessory dwelling units (between April 15, 2010 and June 30, 2013). On April 13, 2016, Council adopted Resolution 37201 extending the SDC waiver for accessory dwelling units through July 31, 2018. Refer to Portland City Code Sections 21.16.170 and 30.01.095 for more information.

In accordance with ORS 223-302 and 223-304, interested persons may either object to the calculations or challenge an expenditure of SDC revenues under the Bureau’s administrative review procedures.

The Bureau will maintain a list of interested parties. The Bureau may periodically delete names from the list, but at least 30 days prior to removing a name from the list, the Bureau shall notify the person whose name is to be deleted that a new written request for notification is required if the person wishes to remain on the notification list. Citizens on the list will receive notice of intent to modify the SDC at least 90 days prior to the first hearing. The methodology supporting the system development charge must be available at least 60 days prior to the first hearing.

Legal action intended to contest the methodology used for calculating a system development charge may not be filed after 60 days following adoption or modification of the system development charge ordinance or resolution by the City Council. A person requesting judicial review of the methodology used for calculating a system shall submit the request in writing to the Administrator.

To challenge SDC expenditures, interested parties must file with the Administrator of the Bureau within two years of the expenditure(s).

Conclusions

System Development Charges (SDCs) are one-time capital charges for new customer hook ups to compensate a utility and its existing ratepayers for existing investments and/or costs of anticipated growth. The Portland Water Bureau's SDC is a buy-in or reimbursement fee for all pertinent water infrastructure (including supply and transmission) because the water system continues to have unused capacity. Mainly for this reason and because Portland's system tends to be older than that of many other communities in Oregon, water SDCs paid in Portland are lower than the average charge assessed by cities in Oregon. When the time comes for development of new supply and transmission assets or other significant facilities, future SDCs may include a component for an improvement fee SDC. SDC annual revenue forecast for FY 2016-17 to FY 2020-21 averages \$3.0 million in current dollars or \$0.2 million greater than the \$2.8 million from the previous five-year forecast. The increased revenue is anticipated from increased development activities.

Appendix

SDC Summary of Calculation

Net book value of Existing Facilities (1. below)		\$1,151,845,718
Add Construction in Progress (1. below)	115,925,606	
Add Cost of Facilities in Capital Plan under construction (1. below)	28,250,725	144,176,331
Less Contributions		(120,353,486)
Less Outstanding Debt (principal only)		(602,315,000)
Add Fund cash balances (accrual)		128,252,348
Total System Net Value		\$701,605,911
Total Equivalent Meter Units (2. - 4. below)		292,386
Cost per Unit (System value/Equivalent Meters)		\$2,400

1. The following table provides detail on the asset values. The cost basis of Existing Facilities is depreciated replacement cost. Assets under construction (WIP) and in the Current Capital Plan are at cost and estimated cost respectively. Contributions are inflated to current dollars.

Functional Description	Net book value	Project in progress	Under construction capital plan	Current contribution
Bull Run Watershed	\$ 83,972,841	\$2,348,267	\$887,797	-
Conduits	83,811,918	244,635	79,480	-
Customer/Billing Meters	716,755	-	-	-
Distribution Storage	49,081,774	67,129,489	9,507,536	-
Distribution Transmission	18,280,458	13,961,784	-	-
Distribution/Direct Fire	72,693,333	2,375,211	-	(12,514,586)
Groundwater	54,498,926	1,499,935	739,353	-
Indirect	145,778,381	12,719,541	6,018,900	-
Pipe	461,880,705	2,126,315	3,763,342	(107,838,900)
Pumping	11,965,344	13,197,895	4,265,625	-
Terminal Storage	152,104,316	-	1,905,281	-
Transmission	4,550,934	-	-	-
Treatment	12,510,033	322,534	233,916	-
Terminal TB	-	-	849,495	-
	<u>\$1,151,845,718</u>	<u>\$115,925,606</u>	<u>\$28,250,725</u>	<u>\$(120,353,486)</u>

2. Detail on the number of meters by size of meter in the system as of March 21, 2016.

Meters by Size	Total number of Meters
5/8"	138,966
3/4"	19,550
1"	14,030
1 1/4"-1 1/2"	2,627
2"	3,219
3"	505
4"	457
6"	261
8"	81
10"	64
12"	0
16"	4
24"	1
Total	<u>179,765</u>

3. Engineering estimates of the capacity ratio of different meter sizes.

Meters by Size	Equivalency Capacity Ratio
5/8"	1.0
3/4"	1.5
1	2.5
1 1/4" -1 1/2"	5.0
2"	8.0
3"	15.0
4"	25.0
6"	50.0
8"	80.0
10"	143.8
12"	231.3
16"	412.5
24"	750.0

4. Calculation showing numbers of meters (by size) times meter equivalency (by size) = Total equivalent meters.

Meters by Size	Total number of meters	Equivalent Unit Ratio	Total Equivalent Units (Meters X Ratio)
5/8"	138,966	1.0	138,966
3/4"	19,550	1.5	29,325
1"	14,030	2.5	35,075
1 1/4"-1 1/2"	2,627	5.0	13,135
2"	3,219	8.0	25,752
3"	505	15.0	7,575
4"	457	25.0	11,425
6"	261	50.0	13,050
8"	81	80.0	6,480
10"	64	143.8	9,203
16"	4	412.5	1,650
24"	1	750.0	750
Totals	<u>179,765</u>		<u>292,386</u>

5. Final SDC schedule

Meter Size	Equivalency Ratio Schedule	FY 2016-17 Calculation
5/8"	1	\$2,400
3/4"	1.5	\$3,599
1"	2.5	\$5,999
1 1/4"-1 1/2"	5	\$11,998
2"	8	\$19,197
3"	15	\$35,994
4"	25	\$59,990
6"	50	\$119,980
8"	80	\$191,967
10"	143.8	\$345,061
16"	412.5	\$989,831
24"	750	\$1,799,693