

Watertown Water & Sewer Authority (WSA)

Understanding Sewer System Costs

(Plain Language Summary of Sewer Cost Planning)

Why This Document Matters

The Water & Sewer Authority (WSA) must plan each year for the cost of treating wastewater generated by the community.

This document explains—in simple terms:

- How sewer costs are determined
- Why costs are based on total system flow
- How the Town estimates future sewer expenses

The goal is to make technical budget information easier to understand.

How Sewer Costs Are Determined

Watertown does not treat its own wastewater.

Instead:

- Wastewater is sent to the **City of Waterbury for treatment**
 - The WSA is billed based on the **total volume of wastewater leaving the system**
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How Sewer Flow Is Measured

Unlike water:

- Individual properties are generally **not metered for sewer discharge**
- The entire system is measured at a **single outflow location (meter pit)**

This means:

- The Town is billed based on **total system flow**, not individual usage
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What Affects Sewer Flow?

Sewer flow includes more than just household use.

It also includes **Inflow & Infiltration (I&I)**:

- Groundwater entering through pipes
- Stormwater from improper connections
- Leakage from aging infrastructure

These factors increase total flow—and therefore cost.

How the WSA Estimates Sewer Costs

To plan responsibly, the WSA uses a **multi-year average** of system flow.

Why?

Sewer flow can vary from year to year due to:

- Weather conditions
- Groundwater levels
- System conditions

Using a multi-year average helps:

- Smooth out unusual years
 - Provide a more stable estimate
 - Support consistent budgeting
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What the Planning Process Looks Like

In simple terms:

1. The WSA reviews several years of past system flow
2. It calculates an average annual flow

3. That flow is converted into billable units
 4. A rate is applied to estimate total cost
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What the Estimate Shows

For planning purposes:

- The total annual sewer treatment cost is estimated at approximately:

\$4.04 million

This represents the cost to treat wastewater for the entire system.

How Costs Are Shared

The total system cost is divided between:

WSA Retail Customers

- Represents the majority of system usage
- Accounts for approximately **\$2.65 million**

Watertown Fire District (WFD)

- Treated as a **separately metered customer**
- Accounts for approximately **\$1.39 million**

This ensures fair and accurate allocation of costs.

What This Estimate Does Not Include

This projection:

- Is a **planning estimate only**
- Does not include:
 - Billing adjustments
 - Credits or penalties
 - Unusual or one-time events

Actual costs may vary depending on system conditions.

What This Means for Residents

- Sewer costs are based on **total system flow**, not individual discharge
 - System-wide factors (like I&I) affect overall costs
 - Long-term planning helps reduce sudden changes in rates
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Key Takeaway

- Sewer costs are based on **total wastewater flow leaving the Town**
 - Multi-year averages are used to support **stable and reliable planning**
 - Costs are shared across the system, with certain users billed separately
 - Infrastructure condition plays a major role in long-term costs
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Learn More

Residents who would like to review the full technical details can refer to:

Exhibit C – Projected Sewer Cost

Additional materials are available at:

www.watertownct.org

Departments → Water & Sewer

Final Note

This summary is part of an ongoing effort to provide clear, accessible explanations of WSA operations and financial planning. The information presented is forward-looking and intended to support transparency, understanding, and informed community engagement.