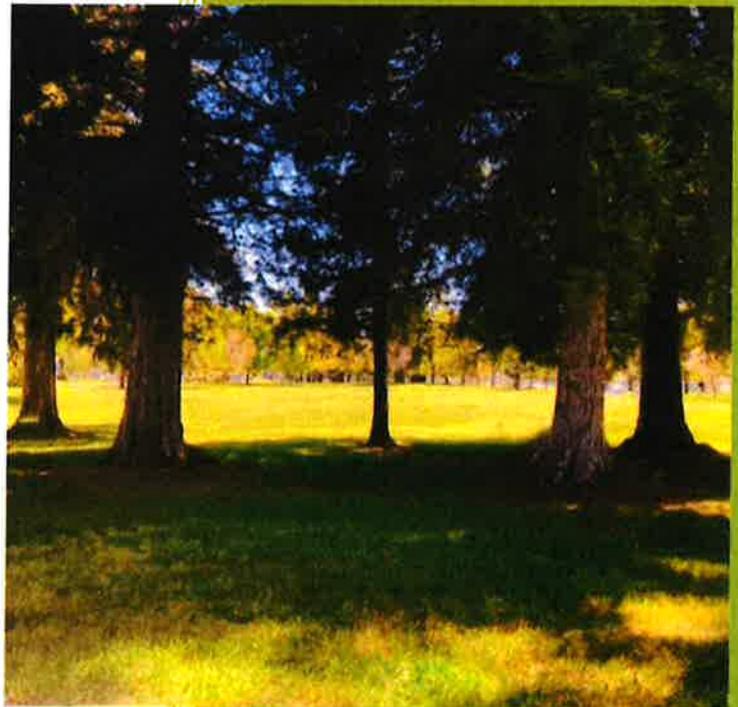


City of Willows Wastewater Rate Study



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PART I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 City of Willows (The City)

The City of Willows, California (The City) was incorporated in 1886, under the provisions of the State of California. The City operates under a Council-Manager form of government and provides the following services: public safety, streets, sanitation, culture-parks-recreation, public improvements, planning and zoning, and general administrative services.

Willows is the county seat of Glenn County, California. The city is a home to regional government offices, including the California Highway Patrol, California Department of Motor Vehicles, the United States Bureau of Reclamation and the main offices of the Mendocino National Forest, which comprises about one million acres of Federal land located mostly in mountainous terrain west of Willows. According to American Community Survey (ACS), Willows population was estimated to be 6,055 in 2017. According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 2.9 square miles, of which, 2.8 square miles is land and 0.03 square miles is water. Willows has a number of notable historical buildings. The current post office building, which was built in 1918, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1.2 Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)

RCAC provides training, technical and financial resources and advocacy so rural communities can achieve their goals and visions. As a nonprofit organization established in 1978, RCAC has provided services to low-income residents of rural, Native American, Alaska Native and native Hawaiian communities in 13 western states and the Western Pacific. RCAC program areas include environmental infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, solid waste), affordable housing, community development finance, and economic and leadership development.

PART II. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

2.1 Wastewater System

The City owns and operates a sewer infrastructure system that serves the residents and commercial connections within the city and residents of the Northeast Willows Community Services District. The system includes a wastewater treatment plant, a sewer collection system and sewer lift stations. The system provides tertiary treatment of sanitary wastewater as well as treatment and conditioning of the solids removed at the treatment plant. RCAC was contracted by The City to complete a comprehensive analysis of the sewer enterprise current service rates. The analysis includes detailed review of historic and budgeted costs, with an eye toward cost savings.

2.2 Fiscal Sustainability

An accurate and useful rate analysis not only identifies the total annual revenue required by a utility to conduct its normal day-to-day operations, but it also anticipates and plans for future operating and capital needs. Furthermore, the analysis attempts to determine whether the projected revenue under existing rates will satisfy those needs. The primary objective of this process is to ensure that the utility has the ability to obtain sufficient funds to develop, construct, operate, maintain, and manage its sewer system on a continuing basis, in full compliance with federal, state and local requirements.

DISCLAIMER

The recommendations contained in this rate analysis are based on financial information provided to RCAC by The City. Although every effort was made to ensure the reliability of this information, no warranty is expressed or implied as to the correctness, accuracy or completeness of the information contained herein.

PART III. FINANCIAL PLANNING

3.1 Objective of Financial Plan

The objective of developing a financial plan for water and wastewater systems is to determine cash needs, revenue requirements and anticipated timing of utility costs to ensure that adequate funds are available to meet operational and maintenance needs as they occur. Financial planning for a small wastewater system normally includes an examination of:

- Operating revenues,
- Operation and maintenance (O&M) expenses,
- Debt service (principal and interest payments) on borrowed funds, and
- Reserve requirements.
 - Debt Service Reserves
 - Emergency Reserves
 - Operating Reserves
 - Capital Improvement (Replacement) Reserves

The financial plan calculates the minimum revenues necessary to maintain a viable and self-sustaining enterprise.

- ### **3.2 Operating Revenues:**
- Revenues are the main sources of income to a utility and are typically thought of as operating and non-operating. Operating revenue is the stable and reliable income that comes from customer rates or user charges. Non-operating revenue such as interest on checking and reserve accounts, late payments, penalties and reconnection fees may also be considered operating revenue if they are stable and

dependable revenue sources. In reviewing financial statements, it was determined that most of the sewer enterprise's revenue is from charges for services. Therefore, for purposes of this analysis, the FY 2017/2018 rates and number of connections was used for operating revenue.

3.3 Operating Expenses: This is the first cost category that is considered when developing a financial plan. Operating and maintenance costs include the day-to-day expenses of providing wastewater disposal to customers. Expenses include labor, insurance, materials, electricity and chemicals. Historic actual costs and the approved budget for FY 2018-2019 were the sources for costs assumptions in this analysis. Assumed inflation rates of 3 – 5 percent were projected forward for a five year period.

3.4 Wastewater System Reserves: Reserves are an accepted way to stabilize and support utility financial management. Small systems usually fund the operating expenses but don't often consider putting money aside for a specific upcoming financial need or project, or for an amount that can be used to provide rate stabilization in years when revenues are unusually low or expenditures are unusually high. The rationale for maintaining adequate reserve levels is two-fold. First, it helps to ensure that the utility will have adequate funds available to meet its financial obligations in times of varying needs. Second, it provides a framework around which financial decisions can be made to determine when reserve balances are inadequate or excessive and what specific actions need to be taken to remedy the situation.

Utility reserve levels can be thought of as a savings account. Reserve balances are funds that are set aside for a specific cash flow requirement, financial need, project, task, or legal covenant. Common reserve balances are established around the following four areas: operating reserve, capital improvement and replacement reserve, emergency reserve, and debt service reserve. These balances are maintained in order to meet short-term cash flow requirements, and at the same time, minimize the risk associated with meeting financial obligations and continued operational needs under adverse conditions.

3.4.1 Debt Service Reserve: Wastewater utilities that have issued debt to pay for capital assets will often have required reserves that are specifically defined to meet the legal covenants of the debt. Normally, debt service reserve represents an amount equal to one full annual loan payment and can be accumulated to this level over a period of five to 10 years.

On August 10, 2004, , The City entered into a loan agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development Servs (USDA-RD) for a loan agreement for the improvement of its wastewater facilities. The maximum loan amount is \$6,889,000 to be repaid over 40 years at an interest rate of

4.125%. At June 30 2018, the loan balance was \$5,934,000. The City has fully funded the required debt reserves of approximately \$352,000.

- 3.4.2 Short Lived Asset Reserve:** Some lenders require an annual set aside for short-lived assets. Unlike the debt service reserve, the funds in this account may be utilized for those replacements, but they must be replenished to keep the balance at the required amount. The Administrative Services Director told RCAC that no short-lived asset reserve is required on the USDA-RD loan.
- 3.4.3 Operating Reserve:** Operating reserves are established to provide the utility with the ability to withstand short term cash-flow fluctuations. There can be a significant length of time between when a system provides a service and when a customer pays for that service. In addition, a system's cash flow can be affected by weather and seasonal demand patterns. A 45-day operating reserve is a frequently used industry norm. Because of potential delays in collecting payment many utilities attempt to keep an amount of cash equal to at least 45 days or one-eighth of their annual cash operating and maintenance (O&M) expenses in an operating reserve to mitigate potential cash flow problems. The calculations in this analysis assume funding a 12.5 percent operating reserve over a five year period.
- 3.4.4 Emergency Reserve:** In addition to operating reserves, emergency reserves are an important tool for financial sustainability. Emergency reserves are intended to help utilities deal with short-term emergencies which arise from time to time, such as main breaks or pump failures. The appropriate amount of emergency reserves will vary greatly with the size of the utilities and should depend on major infrastructure assets. An emergency reserve is intended to fund the immediate replacement or reconstruction of the system's single most critical asset; an asset whose failure will result in an immediate water outage or threat to public safety. The Administrative Services Director stated that the debt reserves also serve as emergency reserves. If it is utilized it must be replenished over time.
- 3.4.5 Capital Improvement Reserve (CIP):** A capital improvement reserve (also called a repair and replacement reserve) is intended to be used for replacing system assets that have become worn out or obsolete. Annual depreciation is frequently used to estimate the minimum level of funding for this capital reserve, but it is important to understand that depreciation expense is an accounting concept for estimating the decline in useful life of an asset and does not represent the current replacement cost of that asset. As an example, a brand new system with a construction cost of \$1 million and a service life of 100 years should (in

theory) be setting aside \$10,000 per year to fully capitalize the replacement cost of the infrastructure as it wears out. Many smaller systems find this to be impossible because of the effect on rates, which explains the large number of small systems that are falling into disrepair.

To initiate a capital improvement plan (CIP), a small sewer system will start with a list of assets that includes the remaining service life and theoretical replacement costs in today's dollars. It then calculates the monthly and annual reserve that must be collected from each customer to fully capitalize the replacement cost of each asset. In reality, the assets will fail and be replaced gradually, but the replacement cost of sewer system assets is often a shock to small systems that are struggling to keep rates reasonable.

One alternative method is to set-aside an annual amount equal to one-to-two percent of the total original cost asset value of the utility's property. Larger systems often have sufficient non-operating revenue to fund these reserve levels without affecting rates, but smaller systems often do not, leaving them to fund their CIP reserves from rates alone. The City periodically reviews and updates its reserve policy and budgeted reserve amounts to ensure that the Wastewater Enterprise has sufficient resources to adequately provide for capital projects and unforeseen emergencies. The equipment depreciation schedule indicates total purchase costs of \$13,890,379. Assuming a past inflation rate of 2% and future inflation rate of 3 percent and assuming 20 percent of the costs will be funded through grants, 60 percent funded with loans, the annual CIP contribution should be \$345,080. Due to the impact on the customers, an alternative budget was created assuming only \$200,000 annual contribution to CIP reserves.

PART IV: AFFORDABILITY INDEX

4.1 Median Household Income

The affordability index measures the burden of costs passed from the utility to the users against the median household income (MHI) for the area and is used by funding agencies to determine grant and low interest loan eligibility. Many funding organizations look for an affordability ratio of a minimum of 1.5 percent before approving grant money to low income communities. According to 2017 American Community Surveys (ACS), Willows had an estimated MHI of \$50,429. The City currently has a residential sewer service rate of \$40.19 monthly. This would put the current rate affordability index at 0.96 percent. The proposed rate adjustment will result in an affordability index by year five that remains under 1.5 percent.

Affordability Index = average annual residential bill for wastewater/annual MHI.

PART V: WASTEWATER RATE BASICS

5.1 Rate Structures

The following are types of rates structures common to wastewater systems:

- 5.1.1 Uniform Flat Rate:** All customers pay the same amount. This type of rate is easiest to administer; however, it may not be fair to those producing less waste.
- 5.1.2 Equivalent Unit (EU):** In this type of structure, customers are charged by the number of EUs determined by the type or size of the specific class of connection. An equivalent unit is established, usually based on a single family dwelling, such as one kitchen and one bathroom. The fee for one equivalent unit is determined. Each customer is charged based on the number of EU's that have been assigned to his or her connection. For example a single family residence may be assigned one EU while a laundromat may, by the nature of its business, be assigned four EU's.
- 5.1.3 Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD):** BOD is the amount of dissolved oxygen needed by aerobic biological organisms in a body of water to break down organic material present. In this type of rate structure the rate is based on waste strength commonly associated with a particular type of connection and the necessary effort to break down the waste.
- 5.1.4 Water Usage:** Wastewater rates are often based on water usage. The assumption in this case is that the more water that is used by a connection, the more wastewater that connection will produce. With this type of rate a base rate is established and a commodity rate is charged based on water usage.

5.2 Willows Rate Structure

The City's current rate structure is a flat fee for all residential services and flow charges for commercial services. The flow charges are based one hundred cubic feet (ccf) of water used with a per unit cost based on type of commercial account. Commercial connections are subject to a minimum charge. RCAC and The City discussed alternate rate structure methods and The City pointed out that other methods would require additional city personnel to maintain, consequently increasing costs.

5.3 Potential Growth

The City will not rely upon growth in the short-term and long-term future. Census information indicates Willows has experienced a slow decline in population over the past several years.

TABLE 1: Current Rate Structure

Current Rates	
Residential (\$/Mo.)	\$ 40.19
Commercial (\$/CCF)	
Motel/Hotel	\$ 3.22
Hospital/Rest Home	\$ 3.17
Restaurant/Bakery	\$ 4.18
Market/Morgue	\$ 3.94
Laundry	\$ 3.42
Car Wash	\$ 3.05
Jail	\$ 3.54
Other Commercial	\$ 3.01

Part VI: BUDGETED COSTS

6.1 2019/2020 Budget

The City's budgeted costs for the wastewater enterprise for fiscal year ended (FYE) June 30, 2020, was in the amount of \$2,010,880, including \$351,889 for debt service, \$35,585 for operating reserves and \$200,000 for CIP reserves. It is anticipated the CIP reserves will be expended on system improvements in the same year they are collected.

6.2 Significant Costs

Typically the highest costs for operating a wastewater facility are salaries, contract operators and utilities. The City's costs follow that convention.

6.2.1 Electricity

In an effort to save costs, The City negotiated a power purchase agreement with a solar company. The results of the agreement have been disappointing because solar panels have underperformed. The City continues to seek cost reductions in this area.

6.2.2 Salaries

Salaries for the enterprise are projected to increase by 3 percent annually. Wastewater staff include one supervisor, two maintenance staff, level 2 and one maintenance staff, level 1. Employee retirement and health benefits are projected to increase by 5% annually.

6.2.3 Debt

The Wastewater enterprise has one long term note with USDA-RD with a balance of \$5,934,000 at June 30, 2018. The annual payments total approximately \$352,000. The City has attempted to refinance the debt to more favorable terms but has been unable due the funder's concern regarding deficiency of current rates.

6.2.4 Contract Operator

The City maintains a contract with Severn Trent Services, Inc., for operation of the plant facility. The services include operations and maintenance of the wastewater system. Charges for the services were \$648,315 FYE 6/30/2018. The 2019/2020 budget projects costs of \$654,000 with annual 3% increases. The contract will expire and be up for re-negotiation on 6/30/2020.

**TABLE 2: BUDGETED COSTS FYE 6/30/2020 and PROJECTED COSTS
SUBSEQUENT YEARS**

Description	2019/2020 Fund	2020/2021 Fund	2021/2022 Fund	2022/2023 Fund	2023/2024 Fund
	Support Sewer				
	\$ 1,586,774	\$ 1,586,774	\$ 1,586,774	\$ 1,586,774	\$ 1,586,774
Salaries	\$ 178,386	\$ 183,738	\$ 189,250	\$ 194,927	\$ 200,775
Overtime	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,480	\$ 16,974	\$ 17,484	\$ 18,008
PERS	\$ 81,061	\$ 85,114	\$ 89,370	\$ 93,838	\$ 98,530
Health Insurance	\$ 90,308	\$ 94,823	\$ 99,565	\$ 104,543	\$ 109,770
FICA	\$ 16,335	\$ 17,152	\$ 18,009	\$ 18,910	\$ 19,855
Workers Compensation	\$ 11,530	\$ 11,876	\$ 12,232	\$ 12,599	\$ 12,977
Unemployment	\$ 400	\$ 412	\$ 424	\$ 437	\$ 450
Life Insurance	\$ 252	\$ 252	\$ 252	\$ 252	\$ 252
Office Expense	\$ 600	\$ 618	\$ 637	\$ 656	\$ 675
Special Departmental	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,635	\$ 4,774	\$ 4,917	\$ 5,065
Small Tools	\$ 600	\$ 618	\$ 637	\$ 656	\$ 675
Uniform Expense	\$ 2,800	\$ 2,884	\$ 2,971	\$ 3,060	\$ 3,151
Telephone	\$ 950	\$ 979	\$ 1,008	\$ 1,038	\$ 1,069
PG&E	\$ 170,000	\$ 175,100	\$ 180,353	\$ 185,764	\$ 191,336
Building Maintenance	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,575	\$ 2,652	\$ 2,732	\$ 2,814
Vehicle Maintenance	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,600	\$ 21,218	\$ 21,855	\$ 22,510
Vehicle - Tires	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,060	\$ 2,122	\$ 2,185	\$ 2,251
Vehicle - Fuel	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,420	\$ 14,853	\$ 15,298	\$ 15,757
Equipment Maintenance	\$ 21,000	\$ 21,630	\$ 22,279	\$ 22,947	\$ 23,636
Professional Services	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,600	\$ 21,218	\$ 21,855	\$ 22,510
Contractual Services	\$ 654,000	\$ 673,620	\$ 693,829	\$ 714,643	\$ 736,083
Insurance	\$ 25,600	\$ 26,368	\$ 27,159	\$ 27,974	\$ 28,813
Travel & Meetings	\$ 300	\$ 309	\$ 318	\$ 328	\$ 338
Dues & Memberships	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,060	\$ 2,122	\$ 2,185	\$ 2,251
Training	\$ 300	\$ 309	\$ 318	\$ 328	\$ 338
First Aid & Safety	\$ 250	\$ 258	\$ 265	\$ 273	\$ 281
Discharge Permit	\$ 10,500	\$ 10,815	\$ 11,139	\$ 11,474	\$ 11,818
General Administration	\$ 77,234	\$ 79,551	\$ 81,938	\$ 84,396	\$ 86,928
Total Operating Costs	\$ 1,423,406	\$ 1,469,855	\$ 1,517,885	\$ 1,567,552	\$ 1,618,917
Sewer Loan Repayment - 2007 Renovation	\$ 351,889	\$ 352,083	\$ 352,071	\$ 351,853	\$ 351,429
Debt Reserves (Assumes one Annual Payment is Fully Funded)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Operating Reserves (assumes funding 12.5% of annual budget over 5 years)	\$ 35,585	\$ 36,746	\$ 37,947	\$ 39,189	\$ 40,473
Emergency Reserves (assumes fully funding @ 6/30/2019)					
Capital Improvement Reserves	\$ 200,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 200,000
Total Costs	\$ 2,010,880	\$ 2,108,684	\$ 2,107,903	\$ 2,208,594	\$ 2,210,819

Part VII: RATE ANALYSIS

7.1 Current Rates

In reviewing the current rate against the projected costs, it is clear the rates will not cover the costs, even with the reduction in CIP reserve funding. Table 3, below, compares current rates to projected costs.

TABLE 3: CURRENT RATES AGAINST PROJECTED COSTS

Current Rates against Projected Costs	# Units Billed	Monthly Rate	Average Monthly Revenue	Average Annual Fee Revenue		
Residential - In City Limits	2,476	\$ 40.19	\$ 99,510.44	\$ 1,194,125		
Residential - Northeast Willows CSD	302	\$ 40.19	\$ 12,137.38	\$ 145,649		
Total Base Revenue	2,778		111,648	\$ 1,339,774		
Flow Charges	Rate Per CCF	Average Annual Usage	Billable Usage (100 CCFs)	Average Annual Flow Revenue		
Motel/Hotel	\$ 3.22		-	\$ -		
Hospital/Rest Home	\$ 3.17		-	\$ -		
Restaurant/Bakery	\$ 4.18		-	\$ -		
Market/Morgue	\$ 3.94		-	\$ -		
Laundry	\$ 3.42		-	\$ -		
Car Wash	\$ 3.05		-	\$ -		
Jail	\$ 3.54		-	\$ -		
Other Commercial	\$ 3.01		-	\$ -		
Total Flow Charges		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 260,000		
County Fees (Contra Revenue)				\$ (13,000)		
Budget Assuming 3% - 5% inflation per year	6/30/2020	6/30/2021	6/30/2022	6/30/2023	6/30/2024	5 Year Total
Total Monthly Required Reserves Fund	\$ 19,632	\$ 19,632	\$ 19,632	\$ 19,632	\$ 19,632	
Total yearly required reserve fund	\$ 235,585	\$ 286,746	\$ 237,947	\$ 289,189	\$ 240,473	\$ 1,289,940
Debt Service	\$ 351,889	\$ 352,083	\$ 352,071	\$ 351,853	\$ 351,429	\$ 1,759,325
Sewer Maintenance - Personnel	\$ 394,272	\$ 409,847	\$ 426,076	\$ 442,990	\$ 460,618	\$ 2,133,803
Sewer Maintenance - Operations	\$ 1,029,134	\$ 1,060,008	\$ 1,091,808	\$ 1,124,563	\$ 1,158,299	\$ 5,463,812
Total Operating Budget	\$ 2,010,880	\$ 2,108,684	\$ 2,107,903	\$ 2,208,594	\$ 2,210,819	\$ 10,646,881
Revenue:	1/31/2020	1/31/2021	1/31/2022	1/31/2023	1/31/2024	5 Year Total
Estimated Annual Revenue From Base Rate	\$ 1,339,774	\$ 1,339,774	\$ 1,339,774	\$ 1,339,774	\$ 1,339,774	\$ 6,698,869
Estimated Annual Revenue - Usage Charges	\$ 260,000	\$ 260,000	\$ 260,000	\$ 260,000	\$ 260,000	\$ 1,300,000
Estimated County Cost of Collection (Contra Revenue)	\$ (13,000)	\$ (13,000)	\$ (13,000)	\$ (13,000)	\$ (13,000)	\$ (65,000)
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 1,586,774	\$ 1,586,774	\$ 1,586,774	\$ 1,586,774	\$ 1,586,774	\$ 7,933,869
Net Operating Revenue/(Loss)	\$ (424,106)	\$ (521,910)	\$ (521,129)	\$ (621,821)	\$ (624,045)	\$ (2,713,011)
Non-Operating Revenue						
Interest Revenue	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 75,000
Sewer Connection	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 75,000
Interest on Sewer Connection Fees	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 17,500
Total Non-Operating Income	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 167,500
Net Revenue/(Loss)	\$ (390,606)	\$ (488,410)	\$ (487,629)	\$ (588,321)	\$ (590,545)	\$ (2,545,511)

7.2 Recommended Rate Adjustment

In analyzing the information, a number of alternatives and cost cutting measures were discussed with The City management. While it would normally be recommended that a much higher amount in CIP reserves be funded, the impact to the rates was prohibitive. Various rate alternatives with the reduced CIP reserve funding were explored. The City opted to spread the necessary increase over a five year period with a 9.5 percent increase in the first year followed by 9.3 percent annual increases in subsequent years. It is expected the first two years will be operated at a significant loss that will be recovered in the final three years of these projections. Table 4 illustrates this recommendation.

TABLE 4: RECOMMENDED RATE ADJUSTMENT

Adjusted Rates against Projected Costs	# Units Billed	Monthly Rate	Adjustment	Adjusted Rate	Average Monthly Revenue	Average Annual Fee Revenue
9.50%						
Residential - In City Limits	2,476	\$ 40.19	\$ 3.82	\$ 44.01	\$ 108,963.93	\$ 1,307,567
Residential - Northeast Willows CSD	302	\$ 40.19	\$ 3.82	\$ 44.01	\$ 13,290.43	\$ 159,485
Total Base Revenue	2,778				122,254	\$ 1,467,052
Flow Charges	Rate Per CCF	Adjustment	Adjusted Rate	Average Annual Usage	Billable Usage (100 CFs)	Average Annual Flow Revenue
9.50%						
Motel/Hotel	\$ 3.22	0.3059	\$ 3.53		-	\$ -
Hospital/Rest Home	\$ 3.17	0.30	\$ 3.47		-	\$ -
Restaurant/Bakery	\$ 4.18	0.40	\$ 4.58		-	\$ -
Market/Morgue	\$ 3.94	0.37	\$ 4.31		-	\$ -
Laundry	\$ 3.42	0.32	\$ 3.74		-	\$ -
Car Wash	\$ 3.05	0.29	\$ 3.34		-	\$ -
Jail	\$ 3.54	0.34	\$ 3.88		-	\$ -
Other Commercial	\$ 3.01	0.29	\$ 3.30		-	\$ -
Total Flow Charges				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 284,700
County Fees (Contra Revenue)						\$ (13,000)
Budget Assuming 3%- 5% Inflation per year	6/30/2020	6/30/2021	6/30/2022	6/30/2023	6/30/2024	Five Year Total
Total Monthly Required Reserves Fund	\$ 19,632	\$ 19,632	\$ 19,632	\$ 19,632	\$ 19,632	\$ -
Total yearly required reserve fund	\$ 235,585	\$ 286,746	\$ 237,947	\$ 289,189	\$ 240,473	\$ 1,289,940
Debt Service	\$ 351,889	\$ 352,083	\$ 352,071	\$ 351,853	\$ 351,429	\$ 1,759,325
Sewer Maintenance - Personnel	\$ 394,272	\$ 409,847	\$ 426,076	\$ 442,990	\$ 460,618	\$ 2,133,803
Sewer Maintenance - Operations	\$ 1,029,134	\$ 1,060,008	\$ 1,091,808	\$ 1,124,563	\$ 1,158,299	\$ 5,463,812
Total Operating Costs	\$ 2,010,880	\$ 2,108,684	\$ 2,107,903	\$ 2,208,594	\$ 2,210,819	\$ 10,646,881
	6/30/2020	6/30/2021 Assumes 9.3 % Annual Increase	6/30/2022 Assumes 9.3% Annual Increase	6/30/2023 Assumes 9.3% Annual Increase	6/30/2024 Assumes 9.3% Annual Increase	Five Year Total
Estimated Annual Revenue From Base Rate	\$ 1,467,052	\$ 1,603,488	\$ 1,752,613	\$ 1,915,606	\$ 2,093,757	\$ 8,832,516
Estimated Annual Revenue - Flow Charges	\$ 284,700	\$ 311,177	\$ 340,117	\$ 371,747	\$ 406,320	\$ 1,714,061
Estimated County Cost of Collection (Contra Revenue)	\$ (13,000)	\$ (13,000)	\$ (13,000)	\$ (13,000)	\$ (13,000)	\$ (65,000)
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 1,738,752	\$ 1,901,665	\$ 2,079,729	\$ 2,274,353	\$ 2,487,077	\$ 10,481,577
Net Operating Revenue/(Loss)	\$ (272,128)	\$ (207,019)	\$ (28,174)	\$ 65,759	\$ 276,258	\$ (165,304)
Non-Operating Revenue						
Interest Revenue	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 75,000
Sewer Connection	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 75,000
Interest on Sewer Connection Fees	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 17,500
Total Non-Operating Income	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 167,500
Net Revenue/(Loss)	\$ (238,628)	\$ (173,519)	\$ 5,326	\$ 99,259	\$ 309,758	\$ 2,196

TABLE 5: Five Year Rate Schedule

	Current Rate	July - June 2019 - 2020	July - June 2020 - 2021	July - June 2021 - 2022	July - June 2022 - 2023	July - June 2023 - 2024
Increase		9.5%	9.3%	9.3%	9.3%	9.3%
Affordability Index	0.96%	1.05%	1.14%	1.25%	1.37%	1.49%
Residential	\$ 40.19	\$ 44.01	\$ 48.10	\$ 52.57	\$ 57.46	\$ 62.81
Motel/Hotel	\$ 3.22	\$ 3.53	\$ 3.85	\$ 4.21	\$ 4.60	\$ 5.03
Hospital/Rest Home	\$ 3.17	\$ 3.47	\$ 3.79	\$ 4.15	\$ 4.53	\$ 4.95
Restaurant/Bakery	\$ 4.18	\$ 4.58	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.47	\$ 5.98	\$ 6.53
Market/Morgue	\$ 3.94	\$ 4.31	\$ 4.72	\$ 5.15	\$ 5.63	\$ 6.16
Laundry	\$ 3.42	\$ 3.74	\$ 4.09	\$ 4.47	\$ 4.89	\$ 5.34
Car Wash	\$ 3.05	\$ 3.34	\$ 3.65	\$ 3.99	\$ 4.36	\$ 4.77
Jail	\$ 3.54	\$ 3.88	\$ 4.24	\$ 4.63	\$ 5.06	\$ 5.53
Other Commercial	\$ 3.01	\$ 3.30	\$ 3.60	\$ 3.94	\$ 4.30	\$ 4.70

7.3 Impact of Delaying Rate Increases

Often a utility will avoid a rate increase because it is thought that the governing body is doing the community a service by keeping rates artificially low. In fact, it is a disservice to the community. Besides the inability to fund necessary repairs and replacements, the rates will ultimately be higher if they are delayed. Most customers will find it is easier accept small, incremental annual rate increases than a single large one resulting from delayed rate adjustments.

PART VIII: PROPOSITION 218

California approved Proposition 218 in 1996 requiring agencies to adopt property fees and charges in accordance with a defined public process found in article XIII D or by associated court decision. Water and wastewater rates are user fees under the definition and must meet the following requirements:

- Revenues derived from the fee or charge must not exceed the funds required to provide the property-related service.
- Revenue from the fee or charge must not be used for any purpose other than that for which the fee or charge is imposed.
- No fee or charge may be imposed for general governmental services, such as police, fire, ambulance, or libraries, where the service is available to the public in substantially the same manner as it is to property owners.
- The amount of a fee or charge imposed upon any parcel or person as an incident of property ownership must not exceed the proportional cost of the service attributable to the parcel.
- The fee or charge may not be imposed for service, unless the service is actually used by, or immediately available to, the owner of the property in question.

Written notice should be given to both the record owners and customers within the area subject to the fee or charge. The notice shall include the following:

- The formula or schedule of charges by which the property owner or customer can easily calculate their own potential charge.
- The basis upon which the amount of the proposed fee or charge is to be imposed on each parcel. An explanation of the costs that the proposed fee will cover and how the costs are allocated among property owners.
- Date, time and location of a public hearing on the rate adjustment. The public hearing must occur 45 or more days after the mailing of the notice.

California's Proposition 218 provides that a customer of the District or owner of record of a parcel or parcels subject to the proposed rate increases, you may submit a protest against any or all of the proposed rate increases by filing a written protest with the District at or before the time the public hearing has concluded. Only one protest per parcel is counted. If written protests are filed by a majority of the affected parcels, the proposed rate increases will not be imposed.

PART IX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1** Key points to remember with any rate adjustment:
- 9.1.1** Successful utilities are those that strive to be transparent. In day-to-day operations, The City should strive to promote its services (highlights and the low points), and continuously educate residents on why it is necessary to raise and adjust rates.
 - 9.1.2** The ability of the proposed rate structure to generate adequate revenue will depend on maintaining a vigorous collection and shut-off policy to keep delinquent accounts at a minimum.
 - 9.1.3** In order to achieve and maintain long-term viability, wastewater systems should review rates annually, or no less than a minimum of every two years.
 - 9.1.4** The City should raise rates as soon as possible after the Proposition 218 hearing to provide sufficient revenues for funding operations and adequately fund reserves.
 - 9.1.5** The City should establish policies for reserve accounts as recommended in this analysis and note the individual reserve accounts in the accounting records. While a separate bank account is not necessary for the individual reserves, they should be noted and tracked individually.



SEWER LEGEND	
SEWER & MANHOLE	8" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	12" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	18" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	24" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	30" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	36" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	42" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	48" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	54" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	60" DIA.
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SEWER & MANHOLE	90" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	96" DIA.
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SEWER & MANHOLE	138" DIA.
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SEWER & MANHOLE	276" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	282" DIA.
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SEWER & MANHOLE	300" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	306" DIA.
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SEWER & MANHOLE	474" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	480" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	486" DIA.
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SEWER & MANHOLE	498" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	504" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	510" DIA.
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SEWER & MANHOLE	546" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	552" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	558" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	564" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	570" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	576" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	582" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	588" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	594" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	600" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	606" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	612" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	618" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	624" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	630" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	636" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	642" DIA.
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SEWER & MANHOLE	660" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	666" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	672" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	678" DIA.
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SEWER & MANHOLE	690" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	696" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	702" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	708" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	714" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	720" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	726" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	732" DIA.
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SEWER & MANHOLE	750" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	756" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	762" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	768" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	774" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	780" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	786" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	792" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	798" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	804" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	810" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	816" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	822" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	828" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	834" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	840" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	846" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	852" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	858" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	864" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	870" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	876" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	882" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	888" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	894" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	900" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	906" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	912" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	918" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	924" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	930" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	936" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	942" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	948" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	954" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	960" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	966" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	972" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	978" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	984" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	990" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	996" DIA.
SEWER & MANHOLE	1002" DIA.





PROPOSITION 218 NOTIFICATION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
SEWER SERVICE RATE ADJUSTMENTS

HEARING DATE and TIME: Wednesday June 12, 6:00 pm
HEARING LOCATION: Willows City Hall Council Chambers
201 North Lassen Street
Willows, CA 95988

This letter is to advise you that the City of Willows is proposing a five-year sewer rate program adjustment for all residential and commercial customers. The proposal will be considered by the Willows City Council at a Public Hearing on Wednesday, June 12 at 6:00 pm. You are receiving this notice in compliance with California Proposition 218 requirements that all impacted property owners are mailed a notice of proposed rate changes at least 45 days prior to a public hearing.

If you have any questions in regard to this notice, please contact Tim Sailsbery, Administrative Services Director, at Willows City Hall, M-F 8:30-5:00 or tsailsbery@cityofwillows.org.

BASIS OF PROPOSED RATES

The City is required, by State Law, City standards and practices, and Enterprise Fund requirements, to collect revenues sufficient to fund current and future costs of operating, maintaining and administering the existing sewer facilities, fund current and future debt payments, and fund capital improvements and infrastructure replacement programs. These revenues allow the City to protect public health and safely and reliably collect, convey, and treat wastewater. By State law, the City may not collect more revenue than is necessary to recover the total costs of providing services. The proposed rates were developed through a comprehensive Wastewater Rate Study designed to meet all legal requirements and fairly and equitably recover the required revenue. The Wastewater Rate Study was prepared by Rural Communities Assistance Corporation (RCAC) and provides a detailed explanation of the projected inflationary impact on operating costs and is available for public review at Willows City Hall or www.cityofwillows.org.

WHY THE CITY OF WILLOWS SEWER RATES MUST BE ADJUSTED?

Customer sewer rates are the primary source of revenue to operate the City of Willows' sewer system. These rates generate the revenue to operate systems, meet debt requirements, and invest in necessary replacements and upgrades. To continue the City's long-standing tradition of providing reliable sewer service to our customers, rate increases are necessary to cover increasing operational costs and provide

for capital improvements and replacements. The City underwent a \$10 million upgrade of the wastewater treatment facility (completed in 2007) and, since then, has invested \$2.3 million in related collection and treatment replacements and upgrades. The City has reached the point, under the current rate structure, where operations and a portion (not all) of the debt service are covered, but the City must dig into depleting reserves to cover the balance of debt payments and fund any capital needs to the sewer system. While ongoing efforts are made to contain and control operating costs where possible, the ongoing increase cost of maintaining and operating the system (utilities, contract services, personnel, etc.) have outgrown current rates. In addition, reserves must be maintained for capital projects and improvements. The proposed rate adjustment was recommended by RCAC after extensive analysis and alternative adjustment considerations. It is the lowest adjustment that will meet the operating needs of the sewer system.

WHAT STEPS HAS THE CITY TAKEN TO CONTAIN COST BEFORE CONSIDERING INCREASING CUSTOMER RATES?

The City continues to analyze and review expenditures on a line by line basis, looking for opportunities to contain cost. Several specific measures that the City has taken include conversion of part of the utility cost to solar power through a power purchase agreement, review cost analysis of contracted treatment plant services vs. hiring in-house Grades 5 and 4 Wastewater Treatment Operators, and annual review of potential re-finance opportunities of existing debt. In addition, the City practices a "spend as needed" rather than "spend to budget" approach to all operations. The City has also reduced capital improvement/replacement activities due to current cash flow constraints.

The City has not raised rates to the community since 2007 (12 years of rate stability).

PROPOSITION 218 PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURE

All property owners and other interested persons are invited to attend the hearing and present written and/or oral comments. As a property owner or customer of record of a parcel subject to the imposition of the proposed rate adjustment, you may submit a written protest against the proposed rate changes. Council will become subject to reconsideration of the rate change if a majority of property owners subject to sewer service submit written protests. Only one written protest per identified parcel will be counted and considered.

Written protests must include-

- Original Signature and Date
- Your name typed or printed under the signature
- The address and Assessor Parcel Number of the property
- An affirmation that you are the owner (or sewer customer of record) of the property
- Notification that this is a letter of protest of the proposed sewer rate adjustment

Written protests will not be accepted by e-mail or fax. Verbal protests will not be counted. Protests must be received (not postmarked) prior to the close of the public hearing. Written protests may be submitted in person or by mail to:

City of Willows
 ATTN: City Clerk
 201 North Lassen Street
 Willows, CA 95988

The City Council may adopt the rates at the close of the public hearing, but reserves the right to adopt at subsequent meeting if circumstances arise.

PROPOSED RATE SCHEDULE

The proposed rate schedule is set forth below. The rates will be adjusted based on the percentage noted below effective July 1 of each year. The final adjustment under this resolution will be on July 1, 2023. Any subsequent adjustments will be subject to a Proposition 218 hearing.

**City of Willows
 Rate Schedule as Proposed in Resolution No. 08-2019**

Note: Residential rates are flat rates per dwelling unit. Commercial rates are per CCF of water used subject to the monthly minimum charge.

		9.50%	9.30%	9.30%	9.30%	9.30%
	Current	July to June 2019-2020	July to June 2020-2021	July to June 2021-2022	July to June 2022-2023	July to June 2023-2024
Residential and Minimum Commercial (Monthly)	\$ 40.19	\$ 44.01	\$ 48.10	\$ 52.57	\$ 57.46	\$ 62.81
Residential Annualized (Per Dwelling Unit)	\$ 482.28	\$ 528.10	\$ 577.21	\$ 630.89	\$ 689.56	\$ 753.69
Motel/Hotel	\$ 3.22	\$ 3.53	\$ 3.85	\$ 4.21	\$ 4.60	\$ 5.03
Hospital/Rest Home	\$ 3.17	\$ 3.47	\$ 3.79	\$ 4.15	\$ 4.53	\$ 4.95
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Other Commercial	\$ 3.01	\$ 3.30	\$ 3.60	\$ 3.94	\$ 4.30	\$ 4.70

NOTE FOR NORTHEAST WILLOWS COMMUNITY SERVICE DISTRICT CUSTOMERS ONLY- This is the proposed base sewer rate schedule and does not include any additional charges for debt service or other charges imposed by NEWCSD.