



# Public Input Summary

## Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Rate Study

Spring 2022  
Prepared by Neighborhood Services

### I. Background

The 2022 Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Rate Study is underway. Rate studies are guided by Tempe City Council Performance Measures and policy guidance. All residents and customers are encouraged to participate in this process by providing input and feedback. The city will share information and data with residents, customers and city leadership so that decisions are well-informed and made with confidence.

Based on the results of the rate study, changes may be proposed to the rate structure, which could impact water, wastewater and stormwater rates, fees and charges. As the rate study progresses, details of this process and any recommended changes will be provided during public meetings and City Council Work Study Sessions.

### II. Outreach

Two virtual public meetings were held for this first phase of outreach on April 13. The meetings were recorded and posted on the utility rate webpage [tempe.gov/UtilityRateStudy](https://tempe.gov/UtilityRateStudy). Methods used to inform the public about the meetings and related survey:

- Article in the *Tempe Today* utility bill newsletter
- Emails to 23,247 water customers via WaterSmart
- Emails to residents (95) that have participated in past studies and surveys
- Email to all neighborhood association and HOA contacts (350 in listserv)
- Reminder to comment to all Forum subscribers (4,531)
- Postcards (6,139) mailed to areas identified in the Community Satisfaction Survey as having a lower satisfaction rate with the availability of information on water, sewer, and solid waste rates than other areas of the city
- Social media posts (Facebook, Nextdoor)
- Posting by Town of Guadalupe on the town's Facebook page
- E-news distribution
- Meetings listed on the city's website calendar
- Presentation to Sustainability and Resilience Commission, Neighborhood Advisory Commission
- Signage at the April Zero Waste Day event directing people to website and survey
- Press release

### III. Social Media Results

#### Facebook

- April 5: Meeting notice; impressions: 707 | engagement: 6
- April 20: Reminder to comment: impressions 1,382; engagement 28

Twitter	Reminder to comment: 584 impressions   engagement 11
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Nextdoor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ April 5: Meeting notice: 1,277 impressions   engagement: 4</li> <li>▪ April 27: Reminder to comment: 654 impressions   engagement: 1</li> </ul>
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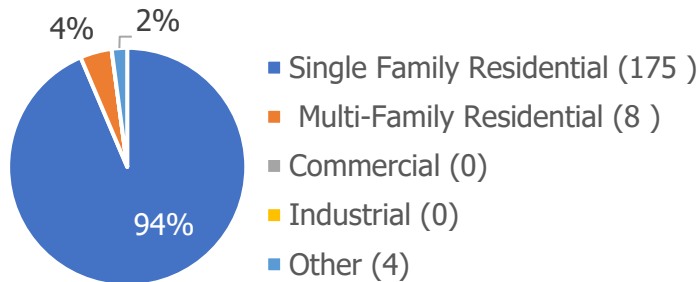
- April 5 – Email: Sent to 10,013 people – 76 clicks
  
- April 11 -- COVID Newsletter: sent to 7,600 people – 6



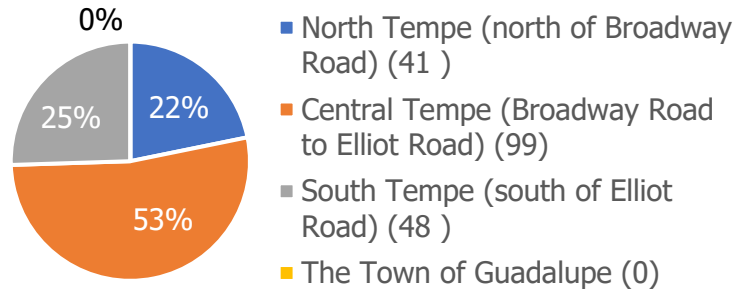
Emails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WaterSmart subscribers: 44,205 individuals (2 emails sent: meeting notice and reminder); average open rate 61%   average click rate 2%</li> <li>▪ Past current/participants in process: 95 individuals (2 emails sent: meeting notice &amp; reminder)</li> <li>▪ Neighborhood listserv subscribers: 350 subscribers (2 emails sent: meeting notice &amp; reminder)</li> </ul>
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**IV. Survey Results**

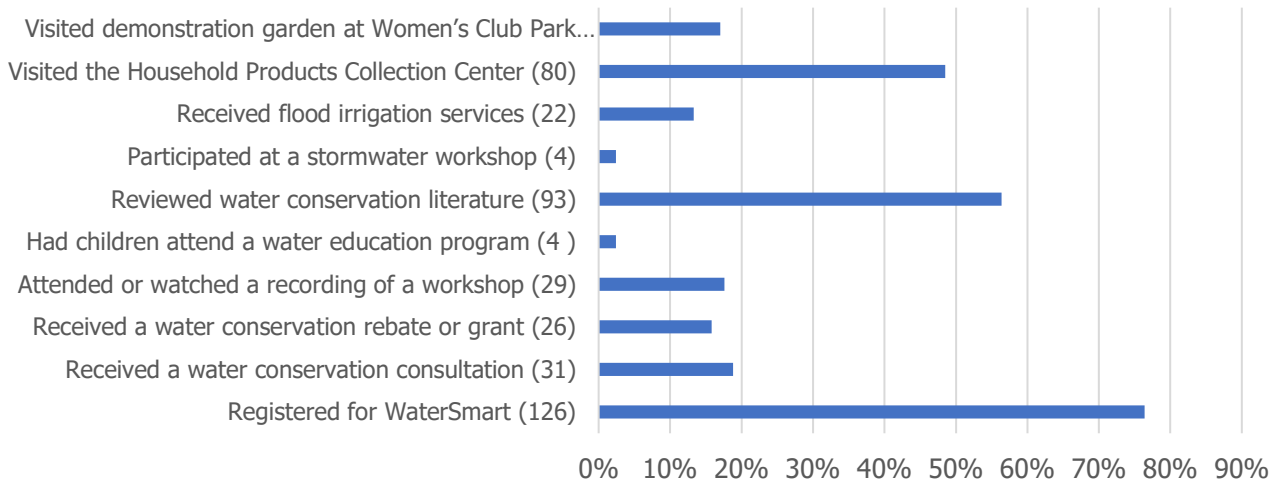
Question 1: *What type of customer class best describes you?*



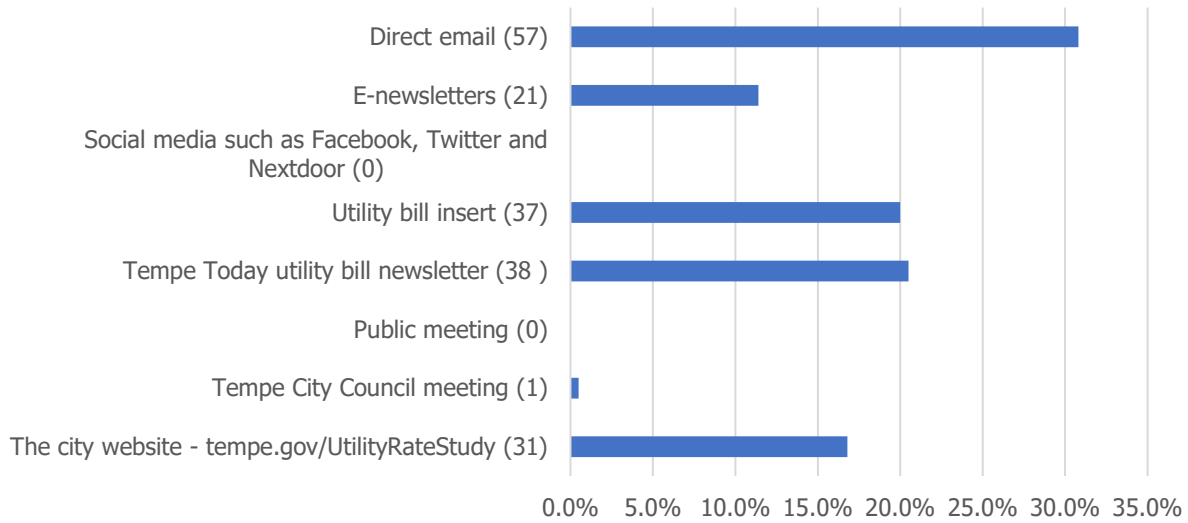
Question 2: *Where do you live?*



**Question 3: Have you (check all that apply):**



**Question 4: How would you prefer to get information about the rate study process and results?**



**V. Comments received**

One hundred and four respondents provided comments.

**Summary of comments received sorted by category and topic**

Category	Count	Topics included in each category								
affordability/equity	26	affordability	equity issue	don't increase rates	monthly service charge	development concerns	rising costs for HOAs	retirees, fixed income	senior citizens on fixed income	
rate design suggestions	17	pro water restrictions	increase rates to encourage water conservation	anti water restrictions	wastewater calculation	rate design	pool owners should pay more	pool tax or extra charge	pool draining fee	adjust landscape rate
water conservation program	15	rebates	WaterSmart (alerts)	water efficiency standards	water waste	building codes	conservation program development	draining pools into street		
rate study FAQ's	13	rate study outreach/education	drought							
other	10	reduce services	other	shut down flood irrigation	encourage urban gardens	stop emptying pool in street	solar panels over well sites	replace aging infrastructure	shut down TTL	support trees
tiered rate structure	6	pro tiered rate structure	tiered rate structure concern	large lot, tree concerns						
water restrictions	4	pro water restrictions	anti water restrictions	pool license						
water quality	4	improve water quality								
green infrastructure	4	stormwater	green infrastructure							
flood irrigation	3	continue flood irrigation	flood irrigation infrastructure	shut down flood irrigation	flood irrigation management					
general supportive	3	general supportive								

## Detailed breakdown of comments

Note that comments that cover multiple topics have been duplicated to capture additional categories.

Category	comments as of 5.2.22
affordability/equity	Please NO more rate increases. Tempe is becoming too expensive with the burden falling on home owners. It has the California syndrome. We see little in our forgotten neighborhoods with most of our taxes just going to shine up the ASU area that most living below the 60 never use.
affordability/equity	I am the board president of Park Premiere South II. We have been working with our landscaper & residents to get usage down however the current billing structure with very large meter fees and low usage fees do not make it worth it for us to remove grass. We faced an overall 15% increase in our water bills in 2021 while others with small meters(single family homes) had a reasonable increase of 3%. Recently we increased the dues in our neighborhood by 20% and every year before that they've gone up by 3% but the large increase in water for our sized meters in 2021 took a large chunk of the increase in dues making it more difficult to make improvements that make our area of Tempe a better safer place to live. Thank you,
affordability/equity	Even having a small yard, & a 2 person household, we are told our water use is above "average". We've had a usage review as well, & are told we are aren't out of line. Please keep in mind some of us on fixed income can't make big changes.
affordability/equity	Please keep in mind your retirees on fixed income are not able to absorb rate hikes.
affordability/equity	I care about water but moving from chandler I notice a BIG rate increase moving to Tempe and it's only increased since. With inflation it's a hard pill to swallow and my primary concern would be to keep cost down. So please don't increase rates. . . Again!
affordability/equity	The disconnect between city council and the residents of the city seems to be widening. We've spent the last year and a half giving out giplet tax breaks to any developer that asks for it , but you make repeated trips back to the citizens for more money. You raised the rates last year , then you asked Congress for infrastructure tax money , you're asking for Coyote arena money and now we're paying for their water as you ask for increased taxes and fees from the "workers " The corporations and developers that took over Tempe can now pay for it. Think civil rights via the tax code. It hasn't been happening in Tempe
affordability/equity	Please understand long-time residents should not bear the burden of water usage and infrastructure maintenance required for the recent and rampant overdevelopment and population growth in North Tempe. This growth occurred with the considerations of developers over those of current residents. Why should long-time residents bear the burden for water conservation when the City knowingly increased the burden on the water supply for the benefit of developers?
affordability/equity	Water is a precious resource and should be used very judiciously with responsibility for the whole of humanity. When you increase the rate setup incentive to conserve it like slab rate while keeping in mind for low income and retired fix income family.
affordability/equity	Tempe has increased the sold waste fees and the water rates so far this year. Tempe is spreading out the rate hikes over city services, so that it seems like each one is barely noticable. But when you add all the increases together, it is quite substantial. The city has to quit giving tax and services discounts to multimillion dollar corporations to build or locate here then pass the shortfalls onto families to make up the differences!
affordability/equity	stop putting the burden on home owners to pay for ASU

affordability/equity	Please take into consideration that senior citizens are on a fixed budget. Some of us have lived in our homes 40+ years with large lots. We should not be penalized with a higher rate because our land requires more water. Also, please offer more discounts and monetary incentives for using less water.
affordability/equity	Por favor no suban el precio del agua. Todo está subiendo y es difícil para mantenerse a flote. (Please do not raise the price of water. Everything is going up and it's hard to stay afloat.)
affordability/equity	The cost of everything has gone up way too high. It is urgent to be able to afford all utilities and everything else we need. Its important to hold back the higher cost during this crazy time.
affordability/equity	multiple family units Apartments and hotels should be held to a different standard than single family units. Higher usage than single family or a lower rate than single house usage.
affordability/equity	Cost of living is sky high already. Please don't hike rates. Please make accommodations for water based communities. Please incentivize water conservation products, through rebates/refunds.
affordability/equity	The city should strongly consider equity when setting water and stormwater rates. Industrial, commercial, and large single-family residences that use our water disproportionately should be bearing more of the cost for our infrastructure and to further incentivize water conservation. The city should also include a funding model within the rate for green stormwater infrastructure; this will kickstart the program and reinforce the city's goals for urban forestry and shade equity.
affordability/equity	Goals:  Keep cost low for residential use.  Reexamine cost structure for high commercial and Tempe gov excessive usage.  Use additional resources (ex. ASU and Federal) for assistance to greatly improve sustainable drinking water quality & recycling.  Consider building code changes to improve water & waste systems for future builds.  Reduce operational & overhead costs.
affordability/equity	We all know that water is a valuable commodity here in the desert and conservation is extremely important. Please keep in mind that senior citizens are on fixed income as rates continue to rise. With advances in technology, it would be great if the taste of the water could improve in the future.

affordability/equity	<p>The rate study is flawed as it does not take into consideration the size of a single family dwelling. A customer who lives in a 400 sq foot / one bathroom studio pays the same base rate as a customer who lives in a mansion with 6 bathrooms. The rate study is also flawed as it does not take into consideration those with pools, extensive landscape and gardens.</p> <p>Pools have evaporation rates that are consistently high in this desert climate. Rate payers with pools are paying for the water usage that does not discharge into the waste water system. Rate payers with pools and water features should have a tariff and rate review provision included for these features which do not impact water water systems. Along with pools there are those that have extensive landscape and/or gardens. Avid gardeners water in the winter AND the summer. Waste water rate reviews are based on water usage in the winter. The staff conducting the rate review use the logic that customers don't water in the winter. For desert dwellers this simply isn't true!!</p> <p>The lack of a rate review and a provision for gardens negatively impacts and punishes the most vulnerable customers.... those that depend on gardens as a food source. They are paying for waster water discharge that is water used in their gardens not sent to the sewer system. This is unconscionable.</p> <p>There needs to be additional tariffs built into the waste water rates to account for pools, water features, landscape and gardens. It could be as easy as installing a sub-meters for these features, or conducting a water audit. Currently the City of Tempe is tone deaf. They say there is no way to review customer accounts, no way to make any sort of allowance for water use that does not impact the waste water system. For those that are the most vulnerable every dollar counts. They are the ones paying the ultimate price for the City to be lazy.</p>
affordability/equity	Tempe as a city no longer honors the long time residents and owners and it is evident in all the decision making.
affordability/equity	I love the idea of conserving water we live in the desert. Bills are really expensive right now with inflation, housing is outrageous, but salaries aren't really going up for the average person. We can't afford any more rate hikes or higher bills.
affordability/equity	<p>Costs have gone up for water in the last number of billing cycles, the removal of the water line insurance has lead to bills not being lowered only that the insurance is now being paid extra to a private company yet another service the city is unable to provide anymore. Household consumers are stretched to the max currently and commercial/industrial appear to be paying very little.</p> <p>Expecting everyone to change habits when I'm sure many people already have is getting a bit much at this point. Do the city just not want people to shower, drink water etc. Expecting families to pay out of pocket large quantities of money to get different metering for landscaping etc. is just another way to cause financial hardship to families. We are becoming an unlivable city. The city does not seem to be putting funding into recourses such as water, roads, etc. correctly as Tempe is growing at a pace that the city leadership is unable to keep up with. New developments should be made pay a larger portion for future costs.</p>
affordability/equity	<p>we get our utility bill online -- but it means we never get the "Tempe Today" newsletter.</p> <p>Without that newsletter many city residents don't have access to information about city matters - including this rate increase study. It may not be within the scope of this study, but the city needs to widen its information sources. As seniors we are on a set income; more &amp; more price increases make it increasingly harder to feel financially safe, &amp; utility bills are just 1 small piece of increasing prices of food, gas, etc.</p>

affordability/equity	I feel like there is no consideration to south tempe at all (this or anything) and the focus in terms of positives, improvements, more grocery stores, clean, less bus stops just everything is all to north Tempe. While I am here even though off topic I have a chance to share two other things that will hopefully get attention and viewed even though not water related. 1. Tempe has one hospital and it's old and I am shocked with the growth, the money available etc. there isn't another hospital in Tempe. It makes no sense and is needed. We could never get to that one and only hospital in time if needed. Also every single employee I've ever talked to that works for the city of tempe are amazing! They go above and beyond and are so kind and excellent follow up and smart at what they do. I worked w/ two incredible employeee who helped me with the tree bate program and worked with one amazing employee in the forestry department who was brilliant and went above and beyond and 2 in code and compliance. Excellent staff. Some of the most amazing people I've ever dealt with.
affordability/equity	PLEASE DO NOT RAISE OUR RATES
affordability/equity	See letter section for redacted letter.
rate design suggestions	Water is precious and not properly funded. Increase rates by 2 to 3 times what they currently are.
rate design suggestions	Water conservation is at a critical point. It is important that our community learns to conserve water and be more alert to waste. One way to do this is through increasing the costs of water usage. This might encourage customers to start looking at ways to become more water efficient.
rate design suggestions	We have been in our Tempe home for almost 37 years. We have put desert landscape in our front yard (with a drip system), and tried to keep items in our backyard to mostly edible plants. We plan on putting in artificial grass when we can afford it in the limited lawn area. We also have low-flow devices in our home. Can it be made easier to tell the city how much water is used for gardens as opposed to in-house use? I believe that affects the waste water rates. Also, any grants or education or the like for putting in artificial grass or for a more water efficient means of gardening would always be useful.
rate design suggestions	Provide an alternative rate study that provides an even water rate for all water used for landscaping. Water use for single-family homes only consists of household and landscaping uses. Adjust the landscaping rate such that no single-family tier rate exceeds the landscaping water rate. The present rate structure for single-family homes unjustly penalizes residents with larger lots that are providing trees, bushes and other vegetation that help the environment by reducing the urban heat island effect. Single-family homes should not be subsidizing other water use classes by paying higher landscaping water rates.
rate design suggestions	I have lived in Tempe 50+ years and several homes in different neighborhoods.  Our last home in South Tempe - 1/3 acre, large pool, large grass lawn - had a 5/8 inch meter and used an average of 40,000 gallons of water in the summer months.  Our current Tempe home which much more efficient has 3/4 inch meter and uses 6000 gal per month.  Tempe charges graduated rates for both meter size and gallons delivered. Charging the graduated rate for the water is a good incentive water conservation. Meter size doesn't seem to matter for residential delivery (40k gal with a 5/8 meter?) Recommend charging the same rate for all meters up to 3/4 inches.



rate design suggestions	<p>Please stop hitting the highest users with the highest rate increases without taking property sizes into account. Large lots by their very nature will use more water. By tiering rates, but not taking into account use per square foot, those of us with larger lots wind up getting hit with larger increases in the water used on our properties, which isn't fair. If the city wants to maintain trees and other greenery which helps to control temperature increases caused by the urban heat island effect and by climate change, they need to allow larger properties to use more water than smaller properties without paying a higher rate. I know this is a complex issue, but keeping mature landscaping watered is important to the long-term health of the city and its residents. There needs to be a way to treat large lots more fairly so people aren't driven to remove trees and shift to heat-absorbing and heat radiating hard scapes in an effort to save money.</p> <p>Help people to not waste water. But don't punish people for using it to keep their landscapes green and cooler. Also, many of us with flood irrigation use more water outside in the months that are used to calculate the sewer bill because the canals are dry during part of that time so we have to water landscaping that normally would be watered via SRP flood irrigation. Is there a way to more accurately determine landscape vs interior (which goes to sewer) usage for more accurate sewer charges?</p> <p>Smart meters are a FANTASTIC addition. But the feedback is slow. You can have a leak for 24 hours, but not get a notice since the data is delayed. Is there any way to provide feedback more quickly when leaks are detected?</p>
rate design suggestions	it's unfair to charge households in South Tempe a higher rate for every gallon of water. It would be fair to have sliding scale charging more per gallon of water used above the average household.
rate design suggestions	Water is a precious resource and should be used very judiciously with responsibility for the whole of humanity. When you increase the rate setup incentive to conserve it like slab rate while keeping in mind for low income and retired fix income family.
rate design suggestions	People without pools should be charged a lower rate.
rate design suggestions	There is an urgent need for water conservation/consumption awareness in Arizona. People need to conserve and take care of water. Water needs to be more expensive in order for residents to really value and protect this resource, instead of taking it for granted and feel entitled. We need to pay the real price of water; we waste a lot of water while other parts of the region (including Mexico) do not have enough water for basic needs.
rate design suggestions	Water is fundamental. Those with pools should pay more than others due to H2O evaporation. Shut down Tempe Town Lake and use the water to replenish the aquifer.

rate design suggestions	<p>The rate study is flawed as it does not take into consideration the size of a single family dwelling. A customer who lives in a 400 sq foot / one bathroom studio pays the same base rate as a customer who lives in a mansion with 6 bathrooms. The rate study is also flawed as it does not take into consideration those with pools, extensive landscape and gardens.</p> <p>Pools have evaporation rates that are consistently high in this desert climate. Rate payers with pools are paying for the water usage that does not discharge into the waste water system. Rate payers with pools and water features should have a tariff and rate review provision included for these features which do not impact water water systems. Along with pools there are those that have extensive landscape and/or gardens. Avid gardeners water in the winter AND the summer. Waste water rate reviews are based on water usage in the winter. The staff conducting the rate review use the logic that customers don't water in the winter. For desert dwellers this simply isn't true!!</p> <p>The lack of a rate review and a provision for gardens negatively impacts and punishes the most vulnerable customers.... those that depend on gardens as a food source. They are paying for waster water discharge that is water used in their gardens not sent to the sewer system. This is unconscionable.</p> <p>There needs to be additional tariffs built into the waste water rates to account for pools, water features, landscape and gardens. It could be as easy as installing a sub-meters for these features, or conducting a water audit. Currently the City of Tempe is tone deaf. They say there is no way to review customer accounts, no way to make any sort of allowance for water use that does not impact the waste water system. For those that are the most vulnerable every dollar counts. They are the ones paying the ultimate price for the City to be lazy.</p>
rate design suggestions	<p>Increase the water rate and use that money to increase tree canopy coverage and create a fund to combat climate change in the city.</p>
rate design suggestions	<p>Numerous AirBnB (Hotels) throughout the neighborhood that use more resources than average because of the # of people occupying those houses. Are those properties charged a higher commercial rate for trash and water?</p>
rate design suggestions	<p>Consider higher water rates for households with pools to discourage people from installing new pools, and new construction to be without pools. Pools should be considered as a water wasting feature and assessed accordingly. Implement a no landscape water wasting policy and enforce it. Broken sprinkler heads, sprinklers spraying side walks or the street, standing water etc should not be tolerated. Increase water rates for households who are repeatedly cited for wasting water. Reward households with below average water use.</p>
rate design suggestions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tempe town lake. How much water is needed to stay at its level.</li> <li>2. Consider a moratorium for new private swimming pools.</li> <li>3. Hotel requirement to install low flow shower heads on all rooms.</li> <li>4. Have city canals covered to reduce evaporation.</li> </ol>
rate design suggestions	<p>See letter section for redacted letter.</p>

water conservation program	I just appreciate you reviewing this. I would love some support for easy and inexpensive way to convert my grey water (non-bathroom related) into outside irrigation/watering. I'd like to see some better rebates for xeroscaping and have really enjoyed doing the tree rebate and learning programs. We love Tempe so much. Thanx for all you do to keep it a wonderful place to live.
water conservation program	Even having a small yard, & a 2 person household, we are told our water use is above "average". We've had a usage review as well, & are told we are aren't out of line. Please keep in mind some of us on fixed income can't make big changes.
water conservation program	We have been in our Tempe home for almost 37 years. We have put desert landscape in our front yard (with a drip system), and tried to keep items in our backyard to mostly edible plants. We plan on putting in artificial grass when we can afford it in the limited lawn area. We also have low-flow devices in our home. Can it be made easier to tell the city how much water is used for gardens as opposed to in-house use? I believe that affects the waste water rates. Also, any grants or education or the like for putting in artificial grass or for a more water efficient means of gardening would always be useful.
water conservation program	<p>Please stop hitting the highest users with the highest rate increases without taking property sizes into account. Large lots by their very nature will use more water. By tiering rates, but not taking into account use per square foot, those of us with larger lots wind up getting hit with larger increases in the water used on our properties, which isn't fair. If the city wants to maintain trees and other greenery which helps to control temperature increases caused by the urban heat island effect and by climate change, they need to allow larger properties to use more water than smaller properties without paying a higher rate. I know this is a complex issue, but keeping mature landscaping watered is important to the long-term health of the city and its residents. There needs to be a way to treat large lots more fairly so people aren't driven to remove trees and shift to heat-absorbing and heat radiating hard scapes in an effort to save money.</p> <p>Help people to not waste water. But don't punish people for using it to keep their landscapes green and cooler. Also, many of us with flood irrigation use more water outside in the months that are used to calculate the sewer bill because the canals are dry during part of that time so we have to water landscaping that normally would be watered via SRP flood irrigation. Is there a way to more accurately determine landscape vs interior (which goes to sewer) usage for more accurate sewer charges?</p> <p>Smart meters are a FANTASTIC addition. But the feedback is slow. You can have a leak for 24 hours, but not get a notice since the data is delayed. Is there any way to provide feedback more quickly when leaks are detected?</p>
water conservation program	I really like receiving the texts with my daily water usage. It helps to know how much I am using and to look for ways to use less.
water conservation program	Lawns and pools should require licenses to have in AZ. Golf courses here should not be a thing, and if they are allowed they should not be able to use municipal or ground water. Less than a quarter of water used on golf courses is currently reclaimed. The only grass should be public parks accessible to everyone throughout the city. Curb cuts and graywater usage should be encouraged and incentivized like in Tucson. Corporations waste way more water that residents, focus on them.
water conservation program	We need to continue to focus efforts on conservation, including evaluating not just encouraging conservation but enforcement against those wasting water. The region is in a prolonged drought that is only getting worse, and people cannot be allowed to waste this precious and limited resource.
water conservation program	water from unmanaged irrigation running down the road and pools being pumped for Maintenance without utilizing the water

water conservation program	<p>Please take into consideration that senior citizens are on a fixed budget. Some of us have lived in our homes 40+ years with large lots. We should not be penalized with a higher rate because our land requires more water.</p> <p>Also, please offer more discounts and monetary incentives for using less water.</p>
water conservation program	<p>Goals:</p> <p>Keep cost low for residential use.</p> <p>Reexamine cost structure for high commercial and Tempe gov excessive usage.</p> <p>Use additional resources (ex. ASU and Federal) for assistance to greatly improve sustainable drinking water quality &amp; recycling.</p> <p>Consider building code changes to improve water &amp; waste systems for future builds.</p> <p>Reduce operational &amp; overhead costs.</p>
water conservation program	<p>I have a neighbor who is constantly watering his lawn. The City of Tempe should have some way to directly address some over use of water. I have stopped watering both front and back lawns altogether.</p>
water conservation program	<p>Saving water is important. The City of Tempe and its setting have many unique features, yet there seems to be a heavy reliance on "best practices" developed for other cities in different settings with features that differ in significant ways from what is found here. The Tempe Water Resources people are always willing to listen, but they seldom act on what they hear by looking for the practices that would make the best sense here; instead, they continually fall back on "best practices" from elsewhere. As one who lives in a neighborhood that once featured beautiful lawns, the rising rates are turning the neighborhood brown. Pretty soon we will look like Gila Bend.</p> <p>Tempe's water consumption, being reliant of the Lakes formed by dams on the Salt and Verde rivers, has virtually no impact on the Southwest's water shortage. I guess it feels good to imagine that by artificially increasing water rates above what are necessary, we, as a community, are doing our part. Of course a lack of green areas is contributing to global warming and the higher rates are adding to the very real problem of runaway inflation. The losers are the poorest among us, the aesthetic aspect of our neighborhoods, and the reduction of outdoor play areas for children. At least we feel good.</p>
water conservation program	<p>I am 71 and moved to Tempe when I was 8. I do like plants. I have installed rock borders around my yard. I water at night. I have large trees that need water. I live near the intersection of the 101 and the 60. I believe we should encourage people to to plant trees to cut down on the pollution rather than penalizing them for there plants especially near the freeways.. I cannot keep my windows clean because of the grease film on the outside of them. The study linking dementia and proximity to major roadways scares me. The article in the Republic about the potential reversal of climate change by the planting of trees was encouraging. Having grown up in Tempe, I have a hard time with the concept of turning Tempe into one big high rise jungle with a lake, The developers get rich, but pulling more and more people into Tempe and then having them lecture me on the over use of water is a little ironic. Most of my water is going back into the ground, and providing shade and pollution filters. I would like to know how much heat radiates off a high rise roof versus a grass yard.,</p>

water conservation program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tempe town lake. How much water is needed to stay at its level.</li> <li>2. Consider a moratorium for new private swimming pools.</li> <li>3. Hotel requirement to install low flow shower heads on all rooms.</li> <li>4. Have city canals covered to reduce evaporation.</li> </ol>
water conservation program	<p>Who actually regulates or even cares about all the water wasted when an apartment complex sprinkler breaks, and there's a veritable geyser of water spewing into the air all night and well into the next day? Reporting to the city by phone does no good. But oh yes, let's compensate by raising the rates of homeowners, uh-huh.</p> <p>And by all means, let's talk about the masterful job Tempe does with managing flood irrigation. Once a week, every week, a totally new (underpaid?) crew of irrigators tries to learn how to do it right, clearly without adequate training... and the resulting rivers of water flowing down the gutters all night testify to their effectiveness. If there's anything obvious in this world, it's that the City of Tempe clearly does not want to be in the irrigation business. And brother, does it show.</p>
rate study FAQ's	I wonder why we don't have specific days for watering lawns instead of being able to do it whenever we want
rate study FAQ's	I think putting the results out in as many media outlets as possible for best exposure to citizenry. Thank you
rate study FAQ's	Is it possible to adjust rates if we can work towards a city ordinance or regulation to outlaw ornamental grass? I live in a subdivision with plenty of this and it should honestly be removed and replaced with native plants, trees and rock. This would not only be a great step towards water conservation but I wonder with less water use could we also see an improvement in water rates as well.
	Make available statistics on Tempe Town Lake.
	Ditto flood irrigation in Tempe.
rate study FAQ's	Ditto quantities of water consumed by public landscapes such as plantings on sides of urban roads and highways. Educate/inform our public in regard to volumes used by residential versus industrial within Tempe.
rate study FAQ's	Why an enterprise fund and not taxes?
rate study FAQ's	I would love to see the percentage of \$ being used for different aspects of water - usage, cleaning, gray water, conservation activities, etc.
rate study FAQ's	I would like to understand if Tempe's water utility currently meets it's costs through user billing-I know that several years ago solid waste did not, so there were a few years of rate hikes to make that so. Is the same type of thing on the horizon for water rates?
rate study FAQ's	How is Tempe addressing the rising heat and on going drought
rate study FAQ's	I read the emails I get from Tempe.gov so that works for me - that is probably what I read the most though I skim the utility bill insert
rate study FAQ's	This is the first time I have heard about this study. Please keep me informed about informational meetings.

rate study FAQ's	<p>we get our utility bill online -- but it means we never get the "Tempe Today" newsletter.</p> <p>Without that newsletter many city residents don't have access to information about city matters - including this rate increase study. It may not be within the scope of this study, but the city needs to widen its information sources. As seniors we are on a set income; more &amp; more price increases make it increasingly harder to feel financially safe, &amp; utility bills are just 1 small piece of increasing prices of food, gas, etc.</p>
rate study FAQ's	<p>I try really hard to save water. I pay the HOA for water. I am interested in anything I can do to save water as it is becoming a precious resource in the Southwest.</p>
rate study FAQ's	<p>Hi Steve my name is [redacted] and I am a City of Tempe resident. I got your contact information from the City of Tempe water rate study. I was wondering if I might be able to talk to you about the cliff notes detailed of what is being proposed and going to be analyzed. One of my neighbors told me that larger lot size are going to be penalized at a higher rate. And so I am curious if that is the case and would like to know more details. Once again my name is [redacted] and my phone number is [redacted]. Thank you.</p>
other	<p>The city should look at the cost to search each of the areas of the city. If serving customers outside of COT is a net expense the city should discontinue serving the town of Guadalupe.</p>
other	<p>Not sure if it matters but after 13 years we just drained and filled out pool. I know it took a lot of water, we followed City website instructions for waiting for low chlorine/acid levels and carefully drained in to sewer line. Our use sage this month will certainly be noted as extreme. I appreciate notices about possible leakage, we own a number of rental homes in Tempe and it has helped our tenants alert us to potential concerns. We are in process of reducing grass at rental properties. Have been using low water plants for three decades.</p>
other	<p>We do not know enough about this to comment</p>
other	<p>Homeowners with gardens and fruit trees feel left out of this discussion. It seems like decisions on water usage is an attempt to nudge homeowners towards the ecologically smart decision of desert landscaping; green yards are a wasteful, especially when they are unused. Increasing water rates is a way to make some people rip out the grass and throw down some gravel. Mission accomplished?</p> <p>In my circles of friends, our primary water usage is for growing vegetables, herbs, and fruit. Likely, our water bill is higher than an average home in Phoenix. But the use of our water is environmentally sound. We have leafier properties, which reduce the heat island effect. Our trees literally are pulling carbon from the air to form trunks and branches. It's a small but real low-tech solution to the carbon problem. Finally, because we grow our own food, we spend less time driving to grocery stores. We do not stress the supply chain that moves a piece of fruit 1500 miles before they put it in Frys.</p> <p>Do not limit your definition of responsible stewardship and natural resources. If a grass-covered desert is the problem, desert landscaping is not the only solution. Imagine that there is another solution--homeowners who grow their own food. Resourceful civilizations have lived this way in the desert century after century. Surely it should be considered a path forward in the next century.</p>
other	<p>no more corporate ripoffs by council and mayor.</p>

other	Regarding garbage rates, I have alley collection container. Three households use one container, however we all are charged the highest monthly fee. It would be cheaper if I had an individual bin or the charge split between 3 households.
other	If rates are being studied, the quality of the water should be assessed for improvements as well. According to the CCR water quality report for City of Tempe in 2020, the water is very hard with an average hardness of 212 ppm. Hard water has a detrimental effect on pipes and fittings over time, causing breaks and leaks from the mainline system to household facets. Improving the water quality with a better filtration system will lower the hardness and remove contaminates, thus extending the life of the system and saving water caused by leaks and line breaks. As the drought conditions increase that we are facing as water users from the Colorado River via the CAP canal, we must rely more on local well water to supplement these shortfalls. As a civil engineer, I have spent the last 10 years working on projects improving water systems for irrigation districts in Arizona. Surface water is usually much cheaper than the electricity cost of running a well and as the aquifer is drawn down from surrounding cities and irrigation districts new deeper wells will have to be drilled to continue to pump the same volume of water. The city should look into investing in solar panels placed at the well sites and over the Tempe Canal and Western Canal to help offset the cost of operating these groundwater pumps. I live in the Petersen Park neighborhood which is nearly 60 years old. The pipes are very old and brittle, a few months ago I witnessed a water break caused by the water surge from the fire department shutting off a hydrant, and on another occasion the line to the fire hydrant was leaking and bubbling up in the street for several days. Replacing this aging infrastructure will also help reduce future line breaks and leaks, saving water.
other	In our area there is a lot of swimming pool dumping on the streets. It is funny how few people do not notice or do not care. Police do not write tickets so who cares? So now the council is considering "storm water run off". As I do not live in the flood plain I wonder what the next new charge will be? If did not see that there is any mention of street maintenance, pot holes and crumbling asphalt, that is damaging our cars or did I miss that?
other	Options to reduce weekly trash and recycle pickup. I assume that is a large and growing expense.
other	See letter section for redacted letter.
tiered rate structure	I have asked for years if the city wants to promote more tree plantings, why they don't consider the size of the lot with water rates. Clearly, you could have a very small lot and use a ton of water and still only fall in the first two water rate brackets. I've seen so many trees cut down in south Tempe over the past 25 years, because the larger lot owners, just don't want to pay the large water bills. Additionally, the top water rate brackets pricing has gone up much faster than the lower two brackets. That is not sustainable. Eventually, south Tempe will look like Apache Junction. As a resident of Tempe for over 45 years, it hurts to see what is happening to the southern part of our city. Rate policy has consequences, and unless it is equitable, the outcome will not be what most residents would like to see.
tiered rate structure	Provide an alternative rate study that provides an even water rate for all water used for landscaping. Water use for single-family homes only consists of household and landscaping uses. Adjust the landscaping rate such that no single-family tier rate exceeds the landscaping water rate. The present rate structure for single-family homes unjustly penalizes residents with larger lots that are providing trees, bushes and other vegetation that help the environment by reducing the urban heat island effect. Single-family homes should not be subsidizing other water use classes by paying higher landscaping water rates.

tiered rate structure	<p>I have lived in Tempe 50+ years and several homes in different neighborhoods. Our last home in South Tempe - 1/3 acre, large pool, large grass lawn - had a 5/8 inch meter and used an average of 40,000 gallons of water in the summer months.</p> <p>Our current Tempe home which much more efficient has 3/4 inch meter and uses 6000 gal per month. Tempe charges graduated rates for both meter size and gallons delivered. Charging the graduated rate for the water is a good incentive water conservation. Meter size doesn't seem to matter for residential delivery (40k gal with a 5/8 meter?) Recommend charging the same rate for all meters up to 3/4 inches.</p>
tiered rate structure	<p>Please stop hitting the highest users with the highest rate increases without taking property sizes into account. Large lots by their very nature will use more water. By tiering rates, but not taking into account use per square foot, those of us with larger lots wind up getting hit with larger increases in the water used on our properties, which isn't fair. If the city wants to maintain trees and other greenery which helps to control temperature increases caused by the urban heat island effect and by climate change, they need to allow larger properties to use more water than smaller properties without paying a higher rate. I know this is a complex issue, but keeping mature landscaping watered is important to the long-term health of the city and its residents. There needs to be a way to treat large lots more fairly so people aren't driven to remove trees and shift to heat-absorbing and heat radiating hard scapes in an effort to save money.</p> <p>Help people to not waste water. But don't punish people for using it to keep their landscapes green and cooler. Also, many of us with flood irrigation use more water outside in the months that are used to calculate the sewer bill because the canals are dry during part of that time so we have to water landscaping that normally would be watered via SRP flood irrigation. Is there a way to more accurately determine landscape vs interior (which goes to sewer) usage for more accurate sewer charges?</p> <p>Smart meters are a FANTASTIC addition. But the feedback is slow. You can have a leak for 24 hours, but not get a notice since the data is delayed. Is there any way to provide feedback more quickly when leaks are detected?</p>
tiered rate structure	it's unfair to charge households in South Tempe a higher rate for every gallon of water. It would be fair to have sliding scale charging more per gallon of water used above the average household.
tiered rate structure	Dislike tiered water rates because of course I use more water in summer to keep 40-50 trees alive. These trees not only reduce my electric usage per shade, but also help with carbon capture and dust control providing cleaner air for all.
water restrictions	I wonder why we don' have specific days for watering lawns instead of being able to do it whenever we want
water restrictions	Is it possible to adjust rates if we can work towards a city ordinance or regulation to outlaw ornamental grass? I live in a subdivision with plenty of this and it should honestly be removed and replaced with native plants, trees and rock. This would not only be a great step towards water conservation but I wonder with less water use could we also seen an improvement in water rates as well.
water restrictions	please don't make silly laws about when we can use water, for what, etc. opposed to a rate increase.
water restrictions	Lawns and pools should require licenses to have in AZ. Golf courses here should not be a thing, and if they are allowed they should not be able to use municipal or ground water. Less than a quarter of water used on golf courses is currently reclaimed. The only grass should be public parks accessible to everyone throughout the city. Curb cuts and graywater usage should be encouraged and incentivized like in Tucson. Corporations waste way more water that residents, focus on them.



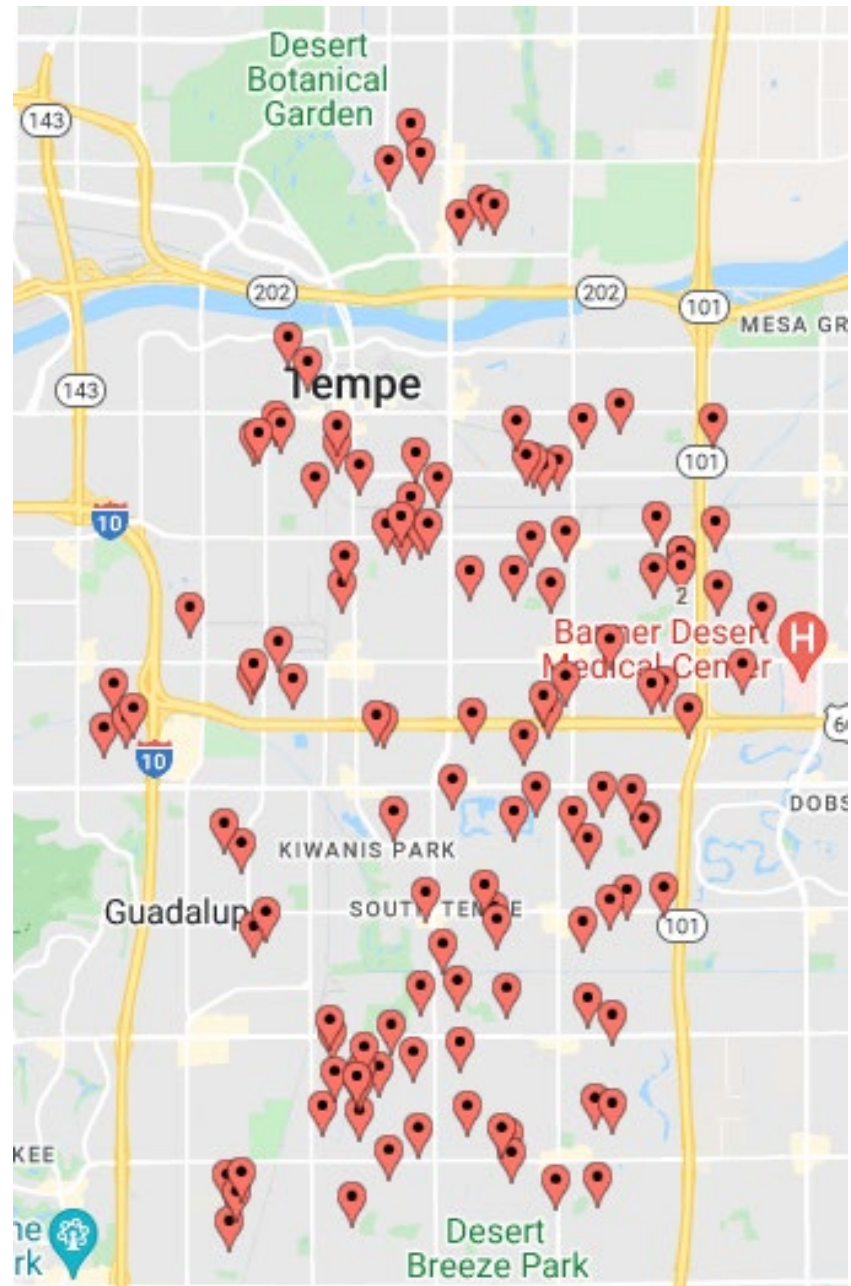
water quality	The water purification process for Tempe. How to improve the drinking water quality.
water quality	If rates are being studied, the quality of the water should be assessed for improvements as well. According to the CCR water quality report for City of Tempe in 2020, the water is very hard with an average hardness of 212 ppm. Hard water has a detrimental effect on pipes and fittings over time, causing breaks and leaks from the mainline system to household facets. Improving the water quality with a better filtration system will lower the hardness and remove contaminants, thus extending the life of the system and saving water caused by leaks and line breaks. As the drought conditions increase that we are facing as water users from the Colorado River via the CAP canal, we must rely more on local well water to supplement these shortfalls. As a civil engineer, I have spent the last 10 years working on projects improving water systems for irrigation districts in Arizona. Surface water is usually much cheaper than the electricity cost of running a well and as the aquifer is drawn down from surrounding cities and irrigation districts new deeper wells will have to be drilled to continue to pump the same volume of water. The city should look into investing in solar panels placed at the well sites and over the Tempe Canal and Western Canal to help offset the cost of operating these groundwater pumps. I live in the Petersen Park neighborhood which is nearly 60 years old. The pipes are very old and brittle, a few months ago I witnessed a water break caused by the water surge from the fire department shutting off a hydrant, and on another occasion the line to the fire hydrant was leaking and bubbling up in the street for several days. Replacing this aging infrastructure will also help reduce future line breaks and leaks, saving water.
water quality	I think my first priority would be that there is safe drinking water coming out of the tap. I am concerned about the water supply in the Southwest. I think that the rates are fair at this point, but realize that rates may need to be raised to reflect the availability as Tempe continues to grow its population.
water quality	We all know that water is a valuable commodity here in the desert and conservation is extremely important. Please keep in mind that senior citizens are on fixed income as rates continue to rise. With advances in technology, it would be great if the taste of the water could improve in the future.
green infrastructure	I would like to see more done to capture/reuse storm water and household water runoff from storm drains. Currently, the water in our area flows into a basin in a local park, where it sits for days, until being absorbed or evaporated. It would be nice if that water could be harvested and distributed in a useful way (perhaps to nourish the trees and turf in the park).
green infrastructure	Lawns and pools should require licenses to have in AZ. Golf courses here should not be a thing, and if they are allowed they should not be able to use municipal or ground water. Less than a quarter of water used on golf courses is currently reclaimed. The only grass should be public parks accessible to everyone throughout the city. Curb cuts and graywater usage should be encouraged and incentivized like in Tucson. Corporations waste way more water that residents, focus on them.
green infrastructure	The city should strongly consider equity when setting water and stormwater rates. Industrial, commercial, and large single-family residences that use our water disproportionately should be bearing more of the cost for our infrastructure and to further incentivize water conservation. The city should also include a funding model within the rate for green stormwater infrastructure; this will kickstart the program and reinforce the city's goals for urban forestry and shade equity.
green infrastructure	Please consider how storm water management could be addressed through green infrastructure such as streetside bioswales and basins with native trees. Please accelerate/prioritize investment in conservation, groundwater recharge and resilient supplies. Please consider how to charge off-project customers a fee or surcharge for increases in CAP costs.

flood irrigation	I live on Lemon Street in an area that receives flood irrigation. The water delivery pipe is 70 years old and keeps breaking. These breaks result in tremendous water loss. More and more folks are converting yards to desert and I am one of them. The city pays citizens to remove turf, but then delivers water for flood irrigation through an antiquated system that leaks. Why can't we shut this pipe down and save some water? It makes no sense to me to keep operating this system. Yes, I know I have water rights because I'm a land owner in SRP's area. Why can't the city work with SRP to shut down this length of pipe on Lemon Street. The city should come up with a plan to pay citizens to sign a document giving up their water rights. I'll sign it. We'll conserve water and the city will save a lot of money maintaining this very old idea. Flood irrigation may have benefits for watering city parks, etc., but it makes no sense to encourage people to reduce water consumption and, yet, deliver water through leaking infrastructure.
flood irrigation	Receiving flood irrigation service from the city is extremely helpful to me and very important to the trees. My neighborhood is established and the trees are deeply rooted. I continue to value this service.
flood irrigation	Who actually regulates or even cares about all the water wasted when an apartment complex sprinkler breaks, and there's a veritable geyser of water spewing into the air all night and well into the next day? Reporting to the city by phone does no good. But oh yes, let's compensate by raising the rates of homeowners, uh-huh. And by all means, let's talk about the masterful job Tempe does with managing flood irrigation. Once a week, every week, a totally new (underpaid?) crew of irrigators tries to learn how to do it right, clearly without adequate training... and the resulting rivers of water flowing down the gutters all night testify to their effectiveness. If there's anything obvious in this world, it's that the City of Tempe clearly does not want to be in the irrigation business. And brother, does it show.
general supportive	complements on a good job!
general supportive	The water wise programs that Tempe Runs are amazing your staff is wonderful and should be commended!! Great job water nerds you rock!!!!
general supportive	Tempe does a much better job then Gilbert every did

The city has updated the Frequently Asked Questions section of the [tempe.gov/UtilityRateStudy](https://www.tempe.gov/UtilityRateStudy) webpage to respond to many of the recurring comments received to date.

## Map of survey respondents

124 individuals provided an address



## VI. Emails, letters received

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 15, 2022 11:33 PM  
**To:** White, Stephen <[Stephen.White@tempe.gov](mailto:Stephen.White@tempe.gov)>  
**Subject:** Ratr Study Forum

I missed the live presentation of the forums due to previously scheduled medical activities. BTW - don't get cancer - it is a major time suck. I did watch the presentations via recordings on the City website. I have a few concerns and did not want you to think everyone was like the commenters that did respond at the forum.

I am wearing two hats for this posting - 1) I am the Board President of my HOA. We have two turf areas, plus some linier landscaping. Our C&Rs requires trees. We have backed off on this requirement due to the Covid restrictions, but like to push trees again to reduce the heat-island effect. And 2) I am one of those evil large single resident water users. I have a pie shaped yard, front all nicely xeriscaped, but the large back yard is a lush oasis. I have a pair of evil pecan trees protecting the southern flank, with support from from lime and avocado trees. A good percentage of my yard is covered with an overhead canopy of grapes, tons of grapes. Lots of other plants, plus a few stupid plams (I hate palm trees). I have created a micro-climate of about 10 degrees cooler temps in the covered area. Been working on it for over 20 years. The biggest water waster is the pool (medium small) that will evaporate a little over 6-feet per, well, baseball season (spring training thru the World Series). Yes, I did measure the evaporation daily for about two years.

So, the forum commenters were all about water conservation and screw the large water users. I do water conservation wherever I can, but I am not going to give-up my cool micro-climate. I want to have the HOA members to plant more trees and greenery to help cool the area. Sydney Australia has a major campaign going on to reduce the heat-island effect with trees and it is working (look it up).

I grew up in the Valley. Back in the 60' and 70's, there was much less heat island effect and it cooled off at night. Now we have nights where the temps Don't drop below 90 degrees. We can do things to change that. The easiest is to change the color of the asphalt pavement. Asphalt can be any color you want. It would be nice if it was some light reflective color, but no, here in the Valley, it must be midnight at the bottom of a coal mine black. This will not change, but the next item on the list is trees. The Council has a goal (performance measure 4.11) of 25% at coverage at City facilities and ROW. The City even offers a \$75 rebate for planting a desert tree in their yard. It would be a shame if the water rates were going to discourage people planting trees

SRP water is not the same as CAP water. Besides CAP water is expensive, hard to treat and needs to be blended so as not to mess with the Langelier Index, causing our very own Flint Michigan circus. SRP should not get lumped in the histaria with the water of the Colorado River.

Well, that is all the ranting I am going to do today. Please feel free to contact me. I can even give you a tour of my evil green back yard. A tour is best late May or June when the grapes start to come in quantity. Starting June 21st though, I will be in daily radiation treatment for several weeks. Just don't tell Tara about me (she hated my guts for years).

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Thursday, April 28, 2022 7:50 AM  
To: White, Stephen <[Stephen.White@tempe.gov](mailto:Stephen.White@tempe.gov)>  
Subject: Water in Tempe

Hello my name is [REDACTED]. A resident of Arizona since 1997. A resident in Tempe since 2019.

I am amazed that no one addresses  
Swimming pools as a concern for our precious water concerns 🙄

I am a former competitive swimmer, and to this day love to swim laps for exercise. ( at La Fitness) I have never wanted a pool nor do I, especially when there are so many city pools and gym pools.

Evaporation of water from swimming pools is huge. Family's with pools should have a pool tax or an extra charge on water bill for more water usage then a family without a pool.

I am also amazed, an example on my street, as to how often one drains their pool and then how do they fill the pool back up ( city water) ?

When we lived in Desert Hills, if you live on a property with a well, you would get fined for refilling your pool with the well water( if caught) You were supposed to pay for a water hauling company to refill your pool.

I'm sure no one is concerned about this one issue out of many other subjects on water conservation, especially since soo many people have pools. ( I am sure I am stepping on many toes) . But honestly, people only use their pools for about 2-3 or maybe 4 months out of the year. The wealthy might heat it or not. What happens to all that water the other 6-7 months of the year?

Thank you for you time!

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

ACCT# [REDACTED]

Tempe, AZ. 85282  
4-21-22

City of Tempe Water Department:  
My name is Ed Douglas. I'm 91. I have lived in Tempe since 1953. - When Broadway was the south boundary of Tempe!

My wife, Virginia & I live on a large cul de sac lot on the east boundary of Tempe, backed up to the Canal. - Friendship Village area.

I love to garden but my water bills exceed my electric bills by hundreds of dollars!

I'm an Arizona Veteran, drafted in Tucson in 1951. Served in Korea (1952-53) & helped build the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. We stopped Communism!

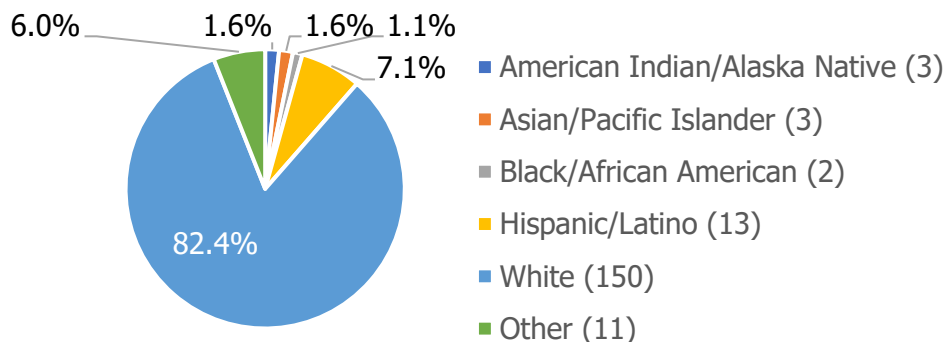
- (1) Do you have any veteran privileges?
- (2) Is our land on land that is grandfathered?
- (3) Is there a water grant?
- (4) Is there any way I can get a better rate without stopping gardening?

Tempe First

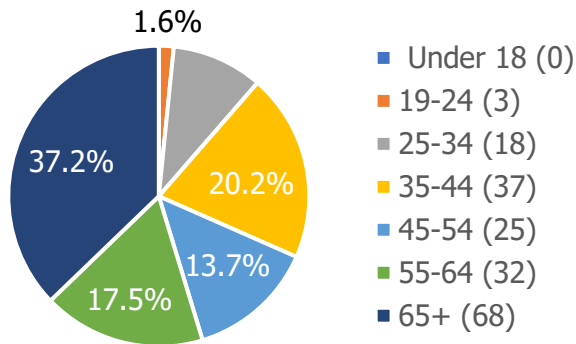


## VII. Demographics of Respondents

Race/ethnicity of respondents (182 responses)



Age (183 responses)



## VIII. Summary of Public Meetings and Commission Meetings

Minutes of the 2022 Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Rate Study public meetings held virtually through Zoom on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at noon and at 5:30 p.m.

### Presenters for each public meeting:

Tom Duensing, Interim Deputy City Manager - Chief Financial Officer  
Tara Ford, Interim Municipal Utilities Director  
Mark Weber, Interim Water Utilities Division Deputy Director  
Steve White, Municipal Utilities Business Manager  
Kyle Stephens, Consultant with Stantec  
Laura Kajfez, Neighborhood Services Specialist

### Noon public meeting summary

#### [Meeting YouTube Video \(noon\)](#)

Laura Kajfez welcomes all to the public meeting. Stephen White introduces the remaining presenters and Stantec, as well as provides an introduction to the rate study purpose and goal. Stephen White highlights Tempe's unique access to AMI data and detailed water demand characteristics. Kyle Stephens provides an overview of the rate study process, including revenue sufficiency, cost of service, justifiable allocation methods, rate design and current rate structure building blocks, stormwater rate considerations, and public outreach/timeline.

The team sought questions and comments from attendees:

Chair Kendon Jung asked why the 40,000+ gallons tier is only 50 cents more than the previous tier.

Kyle Stephens responded that the single family residential rate structure tier pricing are carefully structured based on demand characteristics. The tier rates are mathematically tied to the cost of service, measured by the system sizing needed to meet average demand, maximum day and peak hour.

Chair Kendon Jung followed up to state that the environmental burden and environmental impacts of high water use is not accounted for in the current rate structure.

Kyle Stephens responds that the seasonal changes are reflected in the later tiers. He explains that the traditional way that rates are set is to base them on the internal cost to run and operate the system.

Chair Kendon Jung notes that the conservation goals the city has set is not being reflected in the pricing structure. Jung asks how can that be adjusted in the future to continue to advance water conservation goals.

Kyle Stephens responds that the current rate structure charges more for water the more water that is used by single family water users. He notes that there is also a water conservation program that addresses the water conservation goals.

Chair Kendon Jung states that he would like to see water conservation reflected in the rates and references an article about coyote gulch.

Chair Kendon Jung types into the chat: "Article referenced: <https://coyotegulch.blog/2022/04/13/reclamations-letter-to-tom-buschatzke-describing-potential-2022-releases-from-glen-canyon-dam-lake-powell-coloradoriver-7-0-maf-coriver-aridification/>"

Michael Tallino submitted through the chat (read aloud by Laura Kajfez): "Hopefully I didn't miss this (was a couple minutes late) - can you talk about the situation with currently how water cost is balancing vs. revenue (are we balancing now?) and projections for cost for the coming years? Do we have any projection on what kind of percentage cost for supply we're looking at?"

Stephen White responded that the rate study will identify projections through the data that is collected and that we will return in August with these projections.

Michael Tallino asks if we expect the Colorado River shortage to increase our cost of purchasing water.

Stephen White states that yes, the purchase to purchase raw Colorado River water will increase, and it will depend on the severity of the shortage. He also shares that Tempe's water portfolio has a small amount of water of CAP and about 90% is SRP water, so the increased costs will not have as much of an impact on Tempe as for surrounding municipalities.

Matt Smith asks what is Tempe's goal with water. He points out that equitable rates seems to be the focus and not conservation. He asks if the high water users are getting away with using more water for cheaper.

Kyle Stephens responds that the price per gallon is higher for the highest water users.

Matt Smith states that he would like to see Tempe encourage high water users to use less water, and one of the ways to do that is to increase the fees for the highest water users.

Tara Ford states that Tempe has a robust water conservation program, water conservation plan and drought preparedness and resiliency plan. She states that we are also building our water resources portfolio to be proactive in planning if there were a drought. She states that rates are focused on recovering of costs, while the conservation programs to assist all customer classes wherever we can. She states that these are two separate programs that work together to address both topics.

Philip Joslin submits through the chat: "Will there be a way to account for water used in gardens and other such uses in a single family unit that can be subtracted from the waste water calculations? I believe there may already be such a process, but it may not be known widely by the public."

Kyle Stephens responds that Tempe has three mechanisms to determine wastewater: winter averaging, return flow billing and capping the total that can be build at 12,000 gallons per month.

Stephen White responds that there use to be a form that can be filled out to report outdoor



water usage, but that form went away when we implemented the 12,000 gallons per month cap.

Chair Kendon Jung submitted in chat: "Tara - there is a drought ....

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/08/18/what-do-about-colorado-rivers-megadrought-code-red/>" and verbally followed up to state that we need to be doing significantly more and significantly faster.

Chair Kendon Jung submitted in chat and read aloud himself: "If outdoor water use is the largest water use for general house holds, why is landscaping water rate less than residential for volume charges?"

Kyle Stephens states that the rates are structured based on the seasonal demand of each customer class and its impact on the system.

Chair Kendon Jung submitted in chat (read aloud by Laura Kajfez): "Last question. How can storm water fee have more of a holistic approach, like tackling Climate Action through shade/cooling and water conservation? I would like to see this fee go towards these intersectional projects."

Kyle Stephens states that we are just getting started with the first step with this fee, identifying how we're providing services and the cost. Then Council will be presented with options for how this cost should be recovered. If Council chooses to recover the costs with a stormwater fee, then as the fees mature, other elements can address additional elements, such as green infrastructure, once the fees are established.

Chair Kendon Jung states that this work needs to be accelerated and that the environment needs to be included as a stakeholder. He also submits in the chat: "I would like to note in Matts statement that equity does not include the environment as a stakeholders"

Philip Joslin submits in the chat (read aloud by Laura Kajfez):

I would like to see financial incentives for implementing rainwater collection/storage on single family units that could be used on the unit's landscape and edible plants (gardens)."

Michael Tallino submits in the chat (read aloud by Laura Kajfez): "As a follow up to that question - it sounds like the Tier 5 rate of \$0.50/tgal higher was added in the most recent study. Did the city of Tempe see a decrease in water usage in the tier 4-tier 5 as a result of that increase? If not - what is the amount of higher cost for high-usage customers that would actually cause a behavior change."

Matt Smith submits through chat: "Great questions Michael!"

Kyle Stephens responds that we will be able to re-evaluate the impact of Tier 5 this year because we have multiple years of Tier 5 data to examine. He also responds that the way people respond to rate increases differ; some households are rate sensitive, while others are not. It is very individualized.

Matt Smith submitted in chat and then verbally followed up: "I have an additional 2 additional questions." He then states, how is the landscaping customer class policed? Is that policed based on permits or how is the price per gallon accessed?

Stephen White states that the landscape meter is unique because all the water usage is outdoors. You will see multi family customers or commercial customers have this type of meter. There is no return flow.

Kyle Stephens adds that the landscape meter is physically installed in a certain way and then determined to be a landscape meter to be able to be in that class.

Matt Smith asks if a single family residential customer install a landscape meter?

Stephen White says yes, but the cost will be prohibitive.

Matt Smith asks how does the 40,000 customer use water? Can they get a landscape meter on top of their existing meter and pay an extra landscape fee?

Stephen White responds that the use of the water depends on the customer.

Kyle Stephens clarifies that the landscape meter is on a separate line that goes only to the landscape.

Matt Smith thanks the presenters.

Michael Tallino submits through the chat: “Just wanted to say thank you and ask if we would like to advocate for using the rates to push conservational goals, where is the best place to give that feedback?”

Laura Kajfez thanks all for attending.

### **5:30 p.m. public meeting summary**

[Meeting YouTube Video \(5:30 p.m.\)](#)

Laura Kajfez welcomes all to the public meeting. Stephen White introduces the remaining presenters and Stantec, as well as provides an introduction to the rate study purpose and goal. Stephen highlights Tempe’s unique access to AMI data and detailed water demand characteristics. Kyle Stephens provides an overview of the rate study process, including revenue sufficiency, cost of service, common basis for stormwater, justifiable allocation methods, rate design and current rates, and public outreach/timeline. Stephen White states that if we had a meeting earlier in the day at noon and that video will be posted on our website if you would like to view the questions and responses.

The team sought questions and comments from attendees:

Bryce Witcher submits through the chat (read aloud by Laura Kajfez): “It sounds like you’re justifying rate hikes. Why now and not the years in the past when we had record rainfalls?”

Kyle Stephens responds that it is about taking a deep investigation to anticipate cost changes over time to ensure that rates are sustaining the operations that are life essential to the community.

Nancy asks how it is that Tempe’s rate is very cheap in comparison to the other cities? Have we not been responsive to the actual costs?

Kyle Stephens states that peer comparisons are hard because the systems are very different in density and age. Tempe has a very robust supply portfolio and gets its differently than other communities, which is a key cost driver. Most of the water comes from the Salt River Project, and there are differences in the rate structure.

Theresa Gude submits through the chat: “Very clear, understandable presentation. Thank you!”

Mark Penman asks about the “Water Data Drives Key Insights” slide and if the single family line includes all single family or just one?

Kyle Stephens explains that each line represents all customers within each customer class and that this graph shows the peak demand versus average demand ratio.

Mark Penman asks how can serving the single family customer more costly than serving the industrial customer the same amount of water?

Bryce Witcher submits through the chat: "Great question Mark."

Kyle Stephens explains the tiered rate structure for single family residential customers and how the homogeneity of the usage and the data available allows us to portion out the costs according to different uses of water. He states that the industrial class is a different class of water user.

Mark Penman states that the load on the system from these two different customers should be the same if they are using the same amount of water.

Kyle Stephens responds that the industrial user uses roughly the same amount of water throughout the year and their rate reflects that consistency of use, whereas the single family customer class only uses the peak demand uses a couple times per year. He

Mark Penman states that a drop off in usage would be less wear and tear on the system than a consistent water usage throughout the year.

Kyle Stephens responds that utilities are unique in that many of the costs are fixed. The pipes and treatment systems needed to meet peak demand still cost even if they are empty.

Mark Penman states that there are multiple municipalities (including in California) that have lawsuits regarding their tiered rate structure. He states that the single family residential customers should not be paying more for water than the industrial user.

Kyle Stephens states that Tempe's rate study process uses the highest standard.

Mark Penman states that in California five different municipalities lost lawsuits and their rate structure was declared unconstitutional.

Kyle Stephens states that there are different ways to set tiers, and in this case in Tempe the rates are tied directly to costs.

Mark Penman states that he does not believe that an industrial use of 50,000 gallons is two-thirds less expensive than a residential use of 50,000 gallons.

Laura Kajfez thanks Mark for his comments.

Bryce Witcher asked "Are you finding new inadequacies in stormwater diversion capacities and will those new construction projects be paid for in any new rates?"

Stephen White responds that we do have a capital program for our stormwater infrastructure. A few of the projects were moved up in this budget cycle to address north Tempe neighborhoods who lack the infrastructure to prevent flooding of yards during certain rain events. We are included those costs in this rate study. They will be bonded and the debt service will be part of the costs associated with stormwater costs and this study.

Mark Penman submits through the chat (read aloud by Laura Kajfez): "Is there any consideration for storm water to be used for irrigation (non pottable water)?"

Stephen White responds that the city is pursuing a green infrastructure master plan and the results of that study could be a building block for the efforts in this rate study.

Laura Kajfez reminds all to complete the survey at [tempe.gov/forum](http://tempe.gov/forum).

Kelly Felch submits through the chat (read aloud by Laura Kajfez): "It would be interesting to offer credits to those growing things like a pecan farm, green areas, etc."

Tara Ford states that we do appreciate any comments and suggestions that you have. We consider all input and the feedback that we get. If we can incorporate into the rate study, we'll have an answer. If we cannot incorporate, we'll let you know why it was not able to be incorporated. Keep the comments coming. We appreciate it during the rate study process.

Kelly Felch submits through the chat: "Thank you!"

Mark Penman submits through the chat: "Thanks you"

## **IX. Summary of Commission Meeting Presentations**

### **Neighborhood Advisory Commission Meeting**

Minutes of the 2022 Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Rate Study Presentation held at the Wednesday, April 6, 2022 City of Tempe Neighborhood Advisory Commission Meeting, in the Tempe Transportation Center, Don Cassano Community Room, 200 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona, and virtually through Microsoft Teams.

#### **Presenters:**

Tom Duensing, Interim Deputy City Manager - Chief Financial Officer  
Tara Ford, Interim Municipal Utilities Director  
Mark Weber, Interim Water Utilities Division Deputy Director  
Steve White, Municipal Utilities Business Manager  
Kyle Stephens, Consultant with Stantec

#### **Commissioners:**

Members include Maureen Eastty, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Daniel Schugurensky, Melanie Larimer, Hannah Moulton Belec, Mark Rude, Joel Stern, Nicholas Weller, Brandon Abrahams, Annette Fields, Jana Lynn Granillo, Linda J. Knutson and Nancy Puffer.

#### **Staff Liaison:**

Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Manager

#### **Meeting summary:**

Tom Duensing, Interim Deputy City Manager - Chief Financial Officer introduces the presentation for the 2022 Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Rate Study. Kyle Stephens, Consultant with Stantec, presented the slides, including reviewing Council Priorities and Performance Measures, Rate Study Process, Stormwater, Benchmarking Utility Rates and Rate Study and Public Outreach Timeline.

The team sought questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Daniel Schugurensky asked if the Water Utility had looked at solar panels on canals to generate energy, saves land for other uses and reduce water evaporation. He mentioned many places are doing this, including California.

Tom Duensing stated that we get our water from canals managed by CAP and SRP, so we do not have anything to do with how water gets to our plants.

A Commissioner who could not be here (unnamed) emailed a question about water shortages in the southwest and the potential for water restrictions.

Stephen White stated that we have a water resources manager and drought resiliency plan, and in the near term there will be no restrictions on water use. We have a well-rounded portfolio of water. We have to have 100 years of water supplies to meet standards.

Tara Ford mentioned that the Colorado River has shortages, but most of the water that Tempe uses is from the Salt River Project. Tempe is in a unique situation in the Valley.

Commissioner Nancy Puffer asked if the expectation that water rates will rise in Tempe?

Stephen White stated that the last rate study projected a 5.5% rate increase for water every year moving forward. We continually look at our water rates every year (financial model update annually and water rate study every two years) to update projections.

Tara Ford stated in response to a chat question about the age of our data that the data Tempe has available is very accurate data and estimates are not needed.

Kyle Stephens stated that Tempe is in an industry-leading position where we have implemented Advanced Metering Infrastructure, so we can gather data at the hourly level and ensure we have the best allocation of costs possible to the users based on how they are using the water.

Commissioner Melanie Larimer clarified her question about the lack of data was related to a different presentation.

## **Sustainability and Resilience Commission Meeting**

Minutes of the 2022 Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Rate Study Presentation held at the Monday, April 11, 2022, Sustainability and Resiliency Commission Meeting, held virtually through Microsoft Teams.

### **Presenters:**

Tom Duensing, Interim Deputy City Manager - Chief Financial Officer

Tara Ford, Interim Municipal Utilities Director

Mark Weber, Interim Water Utilities Division Deputy Director

Steve White, Municipal Utilities Business Manager

Kyle Stephens, Consultant with Stantec

### **Commissioners:**

Members include Barbie Burke, Natalie Mendoza, Stephanie Milam-Edwards, Ryan Mores, Joyce H. Vesper, Katja Brundiers, Meaghan Coon, Kendon Jung, Jake Ryan Swanson and Shawn Swisher.

### **Staff Liaison:**

Braden Kay, Sustainability and Resilience Office Director

### **Meeting Summary:**

Tom Duensing, Interim Deputy City Manager - Chief Financial Officer introduces the presentation for the 2022 Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Rate Study. Kyle Stephens, Consultant with Stantec, presented the slides, including reviewing Council Priorities and Performance Measures, Rate Study Process, Stormwater, Benchmarking Utility Rates and Rate Study and Public Outreach Timeline.

The team sought comment from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Natalie Mendoza asked: Does the rate design also consider how these rates will impact low-income and minority groups?

Kyle Stephens states that the rate study looks at the cost to run the system and connecting that to how customers use it. Customers do have a lot of control over the bill. The more water and wastewater they use, the higher the bill. Outside of rates, there are often programs that can

assist.

Chair Kendon Jung ask how is it that the high water user are paying a premium on water use.

Kyle Stephens respond that there are five tiers for single family customers, and that these rates are tied exactly to the utility's cost to provide peak demand services. There is a strong incentive built into the rates that associates with higher water usage.

Stephen White responds that Tempe is the only municipality among our peers that caps wastewater at 12,000 gallons. If we were only singling out water, it would be a much higher ratio than what you are seeing.

Chair Jung said the commission is a champion of water conservation and they are excited to see these changes.

Chair Kendon Jung states that the Commission would like to support efforts to grow a green stormwater infrastructure program in Tempe. What opportunities are there for the Commission to help engage and connect to other sustainability goals within this initiative?

Tom Duensing states that it is best to work through Braden Kay and Brianne Fischer and the Sustainability Office to formulate recommendations and questions. We'll do our best to take all this information to our Council and provide that feedback. This is the first time we're bringing this to Council. There will be lots of education.

Chair Kendon Jung asked if there is an opportunity to include urban cooling into the stormwater infrastructure plan.

Braden Kay states that we're working closely with Municipal Utilities to differentiate what falls under the rate study and what falls under the Resilient Tempe Master Plan, which is a longer-term initiative. This first step is about getting stormwater considered. The rate will not fund everything we want at first.

Tara Ford states that we will be working closely with Braden and Brianne with the rate study and their master plan. We've collaborated with other city departments on both elements as well.

Commissioner Katja Brundiers submitted a question but states it was already answered in the above discussion: How does the rate study/rate design account for increasing temperatures and their impact on stormwater and infrastructures more broadly?

Commissioner Matt Smith asks but states that it was already answered: How are Tempe's water conservation goals integrated into the study? Is that a reactive process or a proactive process?

Commissioner Jake Swanson is interested in the public outreach campaign and what it looks like and how the input has been utilized in the past and will be utilized.

Chair Kendon Jung responds that the rate study is done every two years and there are public meetings that are held and then there are recommendations that are adopted or not.

Commissioner Shawn Swisher asks verbally: How does the rate study can account for the long-term resiliency of the utility when the most recent rate study does not mention the terms sustainability or resiliency? He states that having a more long-term perspective would be more appropriate. If the rate includes stormwater infrastructure then he thinks it would be appropriate that green stormwater be a key part of that. He said that the water rate study should consider equity and how water usage effects Tempe residents. He said that the input from public meetings and how it is incorporated should be readily available.

Chair Kendon Jung states that it would be good to know how the rate study is considering low-income residents, stormwater and our city's livability from an equity standpoint. It would be good

to do a low-income focus group.

Commissioner Shawn Swisher states that the input from the past rate studies, the input received from public meetings does not appear to be readily available. I am looking for those key words that we're looking at how this effects the long-term but also how we're putting input into the rate study itself.

Additional chat submissions:

Commissioner Natalie Mendoza submitted (but it was not answered): You mentioned incentives for water conservation. Are there any disincentives - actions to discourage high water use?

Commissioner Shawn Swisher submitted (and was discussed verbally): How does the rate study account for long-term resiliency for both the infrastructure and the water resource itself?

Commissioner Shawn Swisher submitted (and was discussed verbally): If the rate is to include funding for stormwater infrastructure, then the rate study should consider how to deploy green stormwater infrastructure in collaboration with Streets/Transportation and not be considered a separate budget line item.

Commissioner Katja Brundiers submitted (and was alluded to in discussion): Just a thought, this study could include the heat equity maps that the city has produced.

Commissioner Jake Swanson submitted: I echo the interest in that. I think that was more what my question regarding the collected input. Making sure the input that is being gathered is diverse in perspective.

Chair Jung submitted: I am excited about the opportunity to discuss urban cooling and Stormwater opportunity in focus groups with residents

Chair Jung submitted (and was discussed verbally): And I love Natalie's note about low income. I remember a low income focus group for the last rate Study. Can we do a focus group on equity and the rates again?