

FAQs

What can you tell us about the City's existing sewer system?

The City of Placentia provides wastewater collection service to the majority of parcels within the 6.6 square mile City limits through approximately 84 miles of gravity sanitary sewer pipelines. The City's wastewater collection system conveys untreated wastewater to Orange County Sanitation District's (OCSD) trunk sewer system via 35 separate connections. Our sewer system is between 50 and 100 years old! Age and insufficient maintenance have caused severe damage to the sewer pipes, more than routine maintenance and repair can handle.

What is the sewer maintenance fee?

The sewer maintenance fee is a fee that is set aside in a separate Sewer Enterprise fund for the repair and upkeep of the sewer lines.

How are current Sewer Enterprise Fund revenues used and why is more needed?

Sewer Enterprise Fund revenues are generated from a surcharge on water bills. Currently, funds are used to perform routine inspection and cleaning of sewer mains citywide. With on-going capital improvement needs and increasing construction costs, existing sewer enterprise funds don't come close to covering all critical repair needs.

What happens if the repairs are not made?

Without repair, untreated sewage can leak into the ground from holes, fractures or offset joints. Obstructions can cause overflows into the street.

Holes in sewer pipes also allow groundwater to seep into the sewer system.

If the repairs are not made, the ability of the City of Placentia to provide a usable sewer system will be greatly impaired. It is also critical for residents and business owners to know the repairs are mandated through the Waste Discharge Requirements of the State Regional Water Quality Control Board and regulations established by the Federal Clean Water Act and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Do I already pay for sewer service on my property tax bill?

No. The charge you see on your property tax bill is from the Orange County Sanitation District, and is for treating the sewage collected by Placentia's system. None of that revenue goes to the City.

How can I find out more about the sewer fee?

We will be consistently updating the City’s website as new information becomes available. Of course, you can always call us with questions—just call (714) 993-8131 and ask to speak with a member of the Public Works staff.

Is there anything else residents and businesses should know about the sewer service fee?

It’s needed and it’s the law. It’s also an investment in Placentia’s future and it’s designed to be fair and appropriate for all residents and businesses. Revenue generated by the Fund can only be used for sewer programs and for no other purpose. These additional funds ensure we can handle maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement now, as required by law. Finally, and most important, we can better protect the public health and safety of the residents of Placentia as well as protect the environment, now and well into the future.

What is the actual cost of the sewer service fee?

Fees will vary based on individual water usage and user types (single-family, multi-family, etc.) The proposed sewer fee for single family users will be \$0.55 per 100 cubic feet of water consumed, or about 748 gallons. A CIP flat fee will also be included to provide a reliable revenue source for necessary improvements. The monthly bill will be about \$18.80 per month for the average single family residential customer. Remember, though, this varies based on average water use, which can fluctuate based on time of year and other factors.

What makes the sewers so expensive to maintain and repair?

A sewer system is one of the most expensive utilities a city operates. There are several reasons; one of the major factors is the depth of sewer pipes. To protect drinking water supplies, sewer pipes are buried deeper than water supply lines. A typical water line may be five to seven feet underground, while a sewer line may be between 10 and 25 feet deep. Excavating to that depth is much more expensive because trenches have to be supported and more protective measures need to be in place. Another reason is that while repairs are being made, the sewer lines must be bypassed with auxiliary pipes so sewage won’t back up in the system. The bypass system must be leak-proof and requires round-the-clock monitoring.

What are the costs involved in effectively repairing Placentia’s sewer lines?

Over the next 6 years, the cost to rehabilitate and repair the current damage will be approximately \$19,000,000, which includes all recommended repairs identified in the 2018

Sewer Master Plan. Past revenues did not address short or long-term capital repair needs. In fact, until now sewer capital improvement have never been fully funded.

How does this fee compare to other cities?

Before 2005, Placentia residents and business did not pay a sewer service fee to support ongoing maintenance and repair of sewer lines, like most cities in Orange County. The proposed monthly sewer service fee sits comfortably in the middle of neighboring cities. For comparison, single family users in Orange and Fullerton pay about \$27/month and \$23 per month respectively while users in La Habra and Brea pay about \$13 per month and \$14.50/month. Statewide the average monthly sewer rate fee is \$26.08 per month.