

# Water Bill Adjustment Pilot Program Update

Regional Council Presentation  
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# Problem Statement

## Unexpected high-water bills



- Intentional high-water use (e.g., irrigation system)
- Unintentional high-water use (e.g., leaks, running tap)

- Customer complaints for unusually high-water bills
- No bill adjustment program in place
- Not aligned with industry practice

# Water Bill Adjustment Pilot Program

## Aligned with industry best practice

- ✓ Eligible for **single-unit residential accounts**
- ✓ Covers **theft and leaks** (customer side of the meter)
- ✓ Covers **50% of overage**
- ✓ Maximum of **\$2,500**, once every **10 years**
- ✓ Require proof of repair
- ✓ Monitor usage return to average

# Participation and Cost

- Complaints ~ 2,300 per year
- Bill adjustments ~ 1,000 per year

Not currently tracking cause of high-water use  
Potentially more customers once a program is in place

- Bill adjustments ~ \$ 700,000 per year
- Staff (1.0 FTE) \$ 100,000 per year

Funded through Utility Rate Stabilization reserves

# One-time Retroactive Adjustment

- Eligibility period
- Based on available information

**Jan 2021 – May 2022**

Cause of high-water use not tracked

Use of consumption criteria from pilot

**Applies only to customers on payment plan**

- All eligible customers
- Bill adjustments

~ **122**

~ **\$ 80,000**

Funded through Utility Rate Stabilization reserves

# Updated Information

Water bill adjustment pilot program was presented to Regional Council on May 12, 2022 and was referred to Staff for additional clarification and changes.

- **Any single-unit residential home**, regardless of whether there is a basement tenant, will be eligible for the pilot program. Eligibility applies to the customer account holder on file.
- Eligible reasons will include **water theft**, in addition to water leaks on the customer side of the meter
- **Expanding the timeframe** for the retroactive bill adjustment from January 2019 – May 2022, who meet the eligibility criteria and are on a payment plan, will apply to approximately 585 customers at an estimated cost of \$350,000.

# Next Steps: Long-Term Options

## 1. Evaluate pilot program (2 years)

- Based on submissions, customer satisfaction, and cost

## 2. Evaluate long-term options

- Metering technologies
- Leak insurance

**Recommendation to Council 2024**

# Thank you



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