



July 24, 2023

## NOTICE OF WATER AND SEWER RATE INCREASE

Dear Utility Customer,

We are writing to inform you about an upcoming change that will affect your water bill. As of July 15, 2023, there will be an increase in the cost of water and sewer services for all customers of the City of Mason. We want to assure you that we made this decision after careful consideration, and it is necessary to maintain the quality and reliability of your water and sewer services.

### Background

Over the past several years, the City of Mason has faced numerous challenges in meeting the growing demands of our community with an aging infrastructure and the impacts of large storm events. This has resulted in the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) exceeding plant operating capability and bypassing into the creek. The State and the City are committed to addressing the problem and upgrading the plant. We have spent the last few years evaluating options, securing funding, and designing the plant upgrades on the existing site.

### Planned Upgrades:

Most of the major equipment at the City of Mason's WWTP dates to the mid 1970's and some to the late 1950's. While the City has been diligent in maintaining this equipment as long as possible, the majority is well beyond its useful life and has become unsafe for our staff to maintain.

Upgrades include, but are not limited to:

- Increase peak capacity from 2.5-3 million gallons of wastewater per day (MGD) to 6-7 MGD.
- New oxidation equipment that can adapt to future growth.
- Two new clarifiers to replace the current outdated clarifiers (no parts are available for repair).
- Updated pump station to house equipment and new filters to meet federal regulations.
- UV disinfection will eliminate the use of chlorine gas and sodium bisulfate resulting in less chemicals in the stream.

The upgraded WWTP will provide an efficient, safe, and reliable plant to serve Mason residents for the next 40-50 years. Please note that this does not mean the city will never bypass again, but it does mean we will meet the States requirements to handle a 25 year/24-hour (3.9 inches of rain) storm event, limiting bypassing to extreme events.

### Financial Impact and Reason for Rate Increase

The total project cost, including cost of financing, is approximately \$44,000,000. The City has worked hard to obtain financial support from other entities including our Federal, State, and County partners and has successfully secured support sufficient to significantly reduce the cost of the project to users. Approximately **36% of the project's cost** must be paid for by the users of the system and this is the reason for the rate increase.

### Addressing Concerns and Questions:

We understand that you may have questions or concerns regarding this rate increase. We have included a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document with responses to some commonly asked questions.

**Support and Assistance:**

Some customers may face financial difficulties due to the rate increase. If this is the case, we encourage you to reach out and call 211, Capital Area Community Services at 517-676-1065, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services at 517-241-3740 or online: <http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs>, or our customer service team at 517-676-9155 or [info@mason.mi.us](mailto:info@mason.mi.us). We are committed to working with you to explore available assistance programs.

**Looking Ahead:**

We believe in transparency and want to keep you informed about future changes. In addition to expected increasing costs to operate the system over time, this project also requires the relocation of the Department of Public Works Facility that may require additional rate increases. While we can't predict the exact timing of future rate adjustments, we can assure you that we will continue to invest in your water and sewer infrastructure prudently and with an eye to minimizing costs and will provide regular updates regarding any future changes. These upgrades are always focused on providing you with a water and sewer system that meets or exceeds all quality standards. To achieve this, we must continue to invest in our systems.

While we know that no one likes rate increases, we appreciate your understanding as we invest in the future of Mason. We remain committed to delivering high-quality water and sewer services and maintaining the trust you have placed in us.

If you have any other questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our customer service team at 517-676-9155 or [info@mason.mi.us](mailto:info@mason.mi.us).

Sincerely,



Deborah Stuart  
City Manager