



City of Canby

Sewer & Street Maintenance Fee Frequently Asked Questions

I have always paid my sewer bill through Canby Utility. Why is the City of Canby now billing me for my sewer charges?

For many years the City paid Canby Utility to bill and collect the City's sewer charges. On January 16, 2008, the City Council passed Ordinance 1262 (street maintenance program and fee). As a result of the ordinance being passed, and to be more cost effective, the City took back the responsibility for billing sewer charges, along with the new Street Maintenance Fee (SMF).

The new street maintenance fee feels like a tax to me. Why wasn't this new charge put before the voters?

It is not a tax, it is a fee. A fee can be passed to property owners and residents by a majority vote of the Canby City Council.

What is the City's street improvement plan and how will the street maintenance fees be used? When will street improvements begin?

The Public Works Director will inventory the street conditions and will then prioritize the projects in the order of greatest need, based on condition. Money being collected now until July 1, 2009, will be used for those projects. Projects will begin in the new fiscal year beginning July 1, 2009.

Why am I mailing my sewer payment to Portland?

The payments are mailed to US Bank in Portland. They will open, process and deposit the funds into a City of Canby account. The City of Canby researched several alternatives and found this method to be the most efficient and least expensive method.

I have questions about my sewer bill. Who do I call?

Staff will be happy to assist you with your billing questions and can be reached at 503.266.4021 ext. 275 during normal business hours.

There is no customer service phone number on my bill. Can you include contact information on the billing statements?

The customer service information is located on the back of your billing statement.

I want to save a stamp. Can I drop my payment off and if so, where are those locations?

You can take your payment to the Cutsforth's Thriftway payment drop box during their normal business hours. You may also drop your payment off at the City of Canby Planning & Building Department, located at 170 NW 2nd Avenue, between 8 am and 5 pm Monday through Friday (excluding major holidays).

I am a landlord, why am I now responsible for the sewer charges and street maintenance fees of my tenants?

The City is billing **owners** of property for the sewer charges and street maintenance fees for that property because there is no practical way for the City to know who the current occupants are. Landlords can collect the charges directly from tenants, or adjust rental rates to cover the charges.

Why did I receive a street maintenance fee bill for a vacant lot that I own?

Billings are based on tax lots and you **should not** be billed for undeveloped property. Please contact City staff at 503.266.4021 ext. 252 and they will remove that billing from your account.

What will my bill be each month? What is the amount of my sewer charge?

The amount you have previously been charged per month for sewer fees by Canby Utility will now appear on your City of Canby bill, along with the new street maintenance fee.

We travel out of state for extended periods of time. Can I prepay my sewer and street maintenance fee for the time I am going to be gone?

Yes, you can pay ahead. The additional amount you pay will appear as a credit on future statements.

I would like to pay my bill electronically. How do I accomplish that?

The City of Canby recognizes the importance and convenience of having funds electronically withdrawn from your account to pay for your sewer and street maintenance fees. The City's goal is to have the ability to pay electronically within the next 2-3 billing cycles. In the meantime, you may drop your payment off at Cutsforth's Thriftway or City Hall. You can also work with your bank to have them issue and mail a check through their "bill pay" program.

I have a septic system so I do not pay a sewer fee. I received a bill for \$5.00 for a street maintenance fee. Can I pay this every six months (\$5.00 X 6 months = \$30.00) instead of writing a check for \$5 each month. I do not want to pay ahead, but would like to pay after the six months has expired.

The fees must be paid as they are due. You can always pay in advance; in which case you will continue to receive your monthly statement but the amount due will show as a credit.

What is the length of time that the street maintenance fee will be charged to homeowners?

The fee will continue until Ordinance 1262 is revoked or amended by the Canby City Council.

How was the street maintenance fee structured?

The trend in many cities in the last few years has been to have a street maintenance fee structure that reflects the impact of different land uses on the number of vehicle trips per day over city streets. Information on trips per day comes from the Institute of Traffic Engineers manual entitled Trip Generation. Over the course of two years, a task force appointed by the City Council consisting of citizens, business people, City staff and elected representatives worked in open public meetings to develop the street maintenance fee and fuel tax program. Upon completion of their studies, program development and subsequent recommendation to the Council, the City Council held an open hearing in January 2008, to receive citizen input in addition to the input from the task force. Citizens were notified of this hearing by over 15,000 postcards that were sent to every address in Canby. Four citizens and one lobbyist for a statewide association provided input. Ordinance 1262 (street maintenance program and fee) was passed on January 16, 2008 by a 4-2 vote.

How many new employees have been hired or will be hired to process this fee?

Currently there is one utility billing technician whose salary is charged one-half to sewer and one-half to streets. The City was paying close to \$100,000 per year to Canby Utility to bill the sewer charges. The cost to the City for billing both the sewer charges and street maintenance fees (salary and benefits, printing and mailing costs, and additional banking costs) will be close to \$100,000.