



Bellevue Utilities Services and Programs

Bellevue Utilities Department
Director: Nav Ota

Bellevue Utilities mission is to actively support public health and safety, neighborhood livability, a healthy and sustainable economy, and the environment by effectively managing drinking water, wastewater, storm and surface water, and solid waste. Following is a summary of these services and programs.

Drinking Water

Bellevue's drinking water comes from the Tolt and Cedar River Watersheds in the Cascade Mountains. Bellevue purchases water from Cascade Water Alliance, an organization that purchases water from Seattle and provides it to Bellevue and six other cities and water districts in the Puget Sound region. Bellevue Utilities operates and maintains all water pipes, valves, pumps, and reservoirs to ensure safe and reliable drinking water to our customers. The water is also monitored daily to make sure it meets or exceeds local and federal drinking water quality standards. Bellevue's drinking water service area covers over 37 square miles, including Clyde Hill, Hunts Point, Medina, Yarrow Point, and sections of the cities of Issaquah and Kirkland.

Bellevue's drinking water system serves over 37,000 customers and includes:



- 40,000 water meters
- 5,800 fire hydrants
- 620 miles of water main pipes
- 25 water reservoirs that store 42.5 million gallons
- 22 pump stations
- 63 pressure zones

Bellevue's wastewater system serves over 37,000 customers and includes:



- 13,000+ manholes
- 520 miles of mainline pipes
- 46 pump and flush stations
- 34 major connections to King County wastewater system
- 19 miles of lake lines

Wastewater

All wastewater that flows from a Bellevue home or business travels through city-owned wastewater pipes and pump stations, is treated at King County's Renton or Brightwater treatment plant. Utilities operates and maintains all wastewater pipes and pump stations to ensure reliable service and prevent overflows into streams, lakes, and onto private property. Bellevue's wastewater service area covers over 37 square miles, including Beaux Arts, Clyde Hill, Hunts Point, Medina, Yarrow Point, and sections of the City of Issaquah.

Storm and Surface Water

Bellevue's storm and surface water utility, one of the first established in the nation in 1974, provides for maintenance and repair of the piped drainage system, flood control, and water quality facilities throughout the city. These systems work in concert with private drainage systems, as well as robust capital program, to provide flood control and water quality protection for streams, lakes, and wetlands. When stormwater flows off streets and sidewalks, it enters storm drains and eventually reaches a stream, lake, or wetland. Programs like Stream Team remind residents that only rain should go down the storm drain.

Bellevue's storm and surface water system serves over 32,000 customers and includes:



- 26 drainage basins
- Over 80 miles of open streams, home to sockeye, chinook, coho, and kokanee salmon
- 800+ acres of wetlands
- 11 city-owned regional detention facilities for runoff control and water quality
- Over 19,000 public storm drains
- 400 miles of stormwater pipes

Solid Waste

The city contracts with Republic Services to provide solid waste services to all properties within Bellevue. Republic provides garbage, recycling, and organics collection services to single-family, multifamily, and commercial customers, along with citywide litter control and customer service/billing services. Along with managing the solid waste contract, Utilities provides outreach, education, and technical assistance to residents and businesses aimed at promoting waste prevention, recycling, and proper disposal of hazardous and moderate risk wastes.

Republic Services serves over 29,000 single-family residential, 340 multifamily, and 1,500 commercial customer accounts, and collected in 2014:



- 115,282 tons of solid waste
- 62,541 tons of garbage hauled to the landfill
- 27,474 tons of recyclable materials recovered
- 25,267 tons of organics hauled to compost facility
- Bellevue's single-family recycling rate is 67.3%

Key Messages

Aging Infrastructure and Asset Management

- Utilities infrastructure is aging and most systems are well past their mid-life; systems are experiencing more failures at increased costs.
- Utilities asset management program identifies and optimizes resource needs to cost-effectively provide desired customer service levels.
- Utilities has a strategic asset management plan in place, including a 75-year financial plan and rate model, to minimize system failures and mitigate future rate spikes.
- Each utility is at a different stage of system renewal and replacement.

Growth-related Utility Issues

- Planning for growth is coordinated throughout the city and is critical to ensure adequate utilities capacity is in place to support development.
- Additional system capacity is needed to ensure service for anticipated population growth.
- Utilities capacity improvements needed for growth, while initially rate-funded, are ultimately paid for by the benefited properties.

Mandates

- Utilities monitors potential future mandates and works to proactively influence their outcome when appropriate.
- Utilities uses resources effectively and efficiently to comply with current mandates.
- As Utilities faces new and stricter mandates, additional resources may be required to remain in compliance.
- State and federal mandates to protect drinking water and surface water quality are becoming more strict (e.g. SDWA and NPDES).

Financial Status & Planning

- Utilities is a financially self-supporting enterprise operating within the city structure.
- Council's investments, financial policies and consistent commitment have placed Bellevue Utilities in a solid financial position.
- As a result, utility rates are competitive with neighboring communities and should be even more competitive in the future.
- Utilities has an Aa1 bond rating, the highest bond rating possible for a utility our size.
- In 1995, City Council created the renewal and replacement (R&R) account to accumulate funds necessary to replace the Utilities infrastructure as it ages. This financial strategy allows Utilities to:
 - Accumulate funds in advance of major pending liabilities over a long time span, while maintaining current service levels.
 - Keep rate increases gradual and uniform.
 - Maintain equity – each generation should pay its fair share.
- Utilities financial planning horizon includes the two-year biennial budget, the seven-year capital improvement program, 20-year comprehensive plans, and a 75- to 100-year renewal and replacement plan.
- Future capital investments will focus primarily on renewing and replacing aging system infrastructure, investments to accommodate growth and to meet legal mandates.
- Utilities financial planning process is closely adhered to by staff and scrutinized by the Environmental Services Commission and Council as part of every budget process.