

New Proposed Sanitary Sewer Utility Customer Billing Class Commercial Kitchens & Restaurants *August 2014 / City of Madison Engineering*

The introduction of fats, oils, and greases (FOG) into the public sanitary sewer system contributes to increased maintenance requirements and is one of the leading factors in sewer backup calls. The State plumbing code requires that any commercial facility that discharges or has the potential to discharge food waste must route these plumbing systems through grease traps prior to discharge to the public sanitary. Additionally these discharges are higher strength wastes, costing more to treat. To more fairly shift the cost of treating the higher strength sewage that is produced by these sites and to encourage better maintenance of the grease trap systems a new sewer billing classification is being proposed.

The Sanitary Sewer Utility currently monitors and bills 31 of the approximately 1,100 licensed kitchen establishments in the City. For the most part, these customers were brought into the Sanitary Surcharge Billing program after tracing maintenance issues back to the customer. These sites are sampled and tested for their sewage strength and then billed a surcharge based on the test results, all in accordance with current Ordinance (Chapter 35). The test data for the sites that are currently monitored was analyzed and based upon the data, a two tiered billing classification is being proposed for the new customer class.

Customers in the new billing classification would automatically start at the lower of the 2 proposed rates, which is currently proposed at about 160% of the standard sewer rate. These customers would then be required to perform maintenance on their grease trap systems at least annually. Those that fail to complete the annual maintenance, document, and report this to the Sewer Utility would be moved to the higher billing rate for the class which is currently proposed at about 275% of the standard sewer rate. The higher rates would shift the costs of treating the higher strength sewage from these customers away from the standard sewer customer (increased revenue generation is not the goal for this program) and prompt and better maintenance of the privately owned grease traps. A customer that is moved to the higher rate can be moved back to the lower rate upon successful completion of the required maintenance, documentation, and reporting.

The Sewer Utility will continue to monitor these customers overall by random sampling and testing. This data will be used to update the rate structure to keep it as accurate as possible for changing technologies and practices. A customer will have the option to be a standard surcharge billing customer if they would so choose, but this may require the installation of monitoring access and costs for the sampling and testing.