Rate Setting Objectives

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Session Objectives

- Understand common types of rate setting objectives

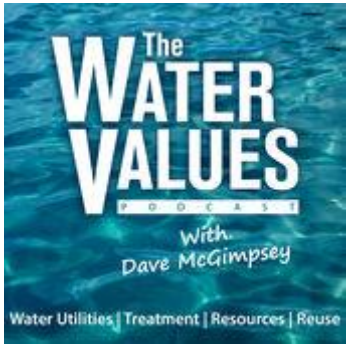
- Learn how to match rate structure elements with rate setting objectives

What is a key financial challenge as water systems?

Let’s hear from an expert...

Let's hear from an expert

Dave McGimpsey interviews George Hawkins, former CEO of DC Water, on the Water Values Podcast (Change Leadership episode)

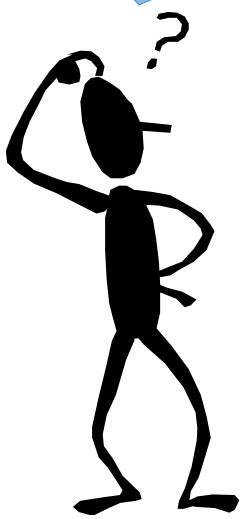


http://www.podcasts.com/the-water-values-podcast-44/episode/change-leadership-with-dc-water-ceo-george-hawkins

Rate structures are the primary way that we as water systems “communicate” with our customers

Here’s a question we hear often...

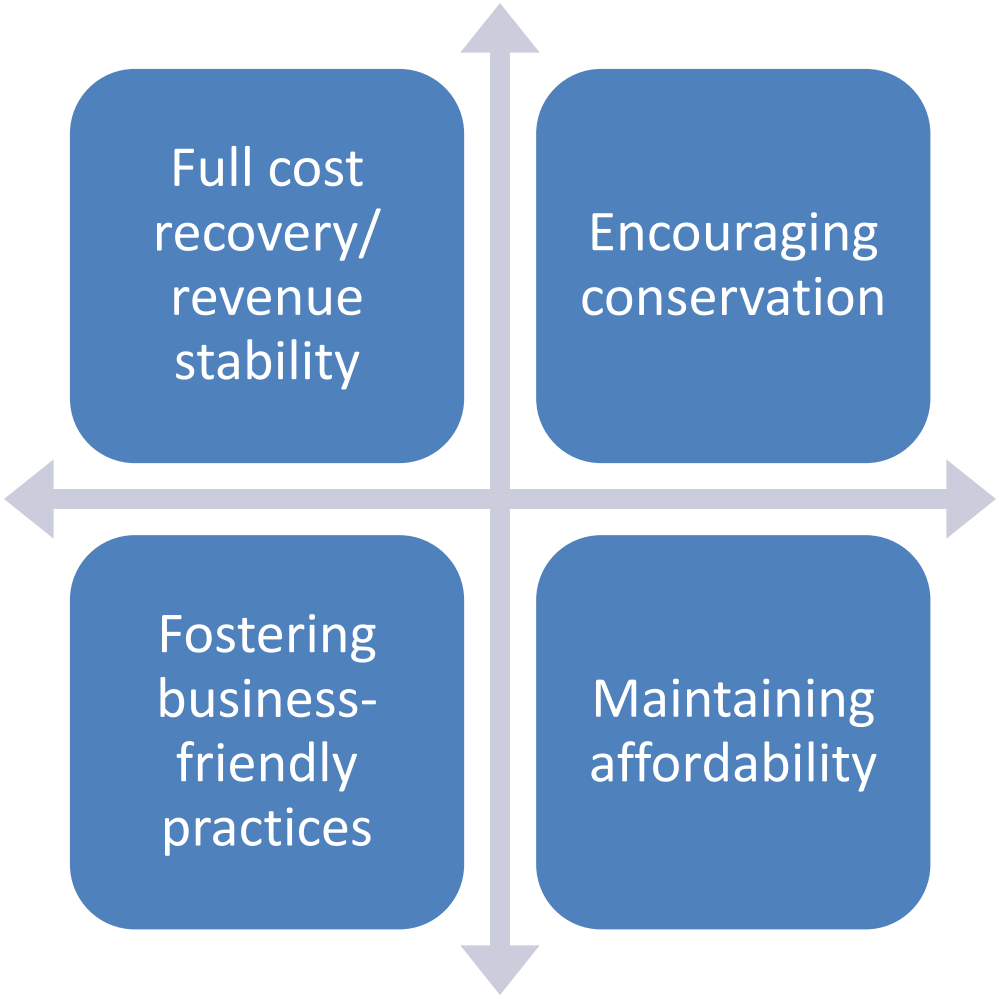
Are our rates right?

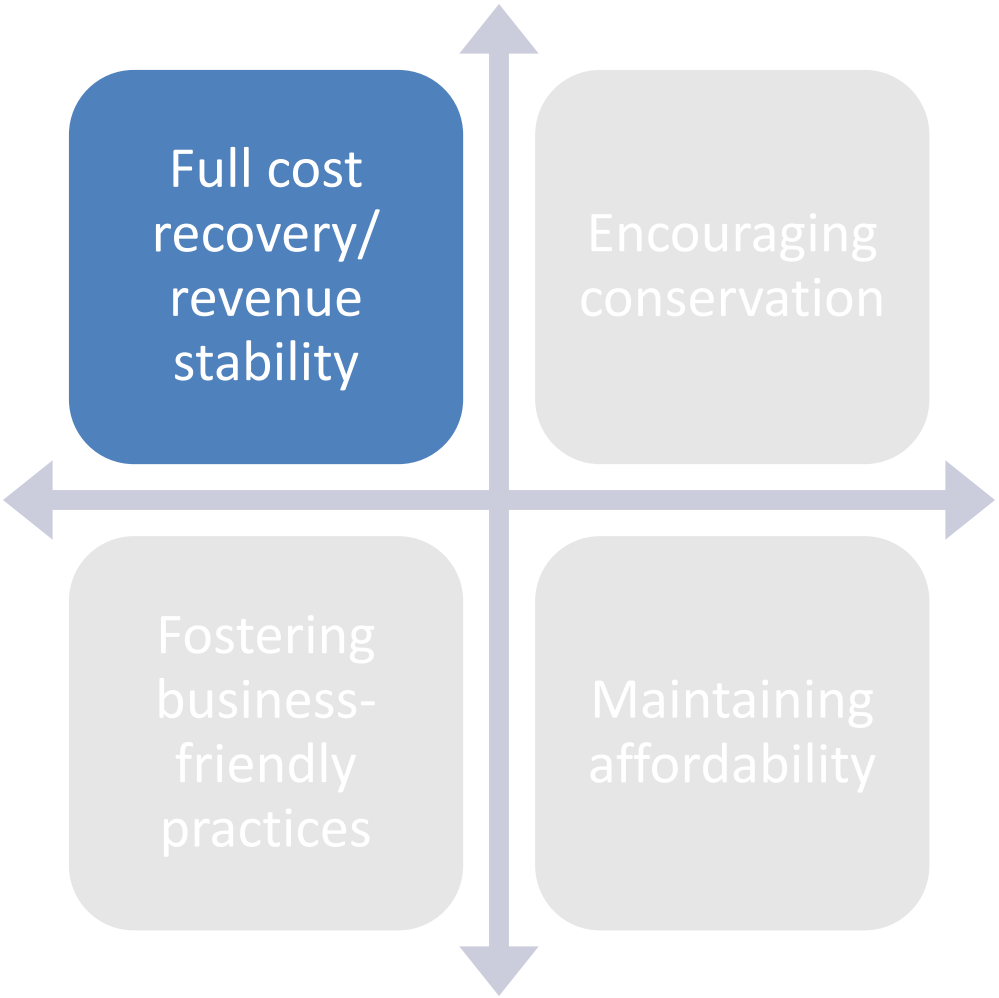


It depends...

EFCN
environmental finance center network

Water System Objectives

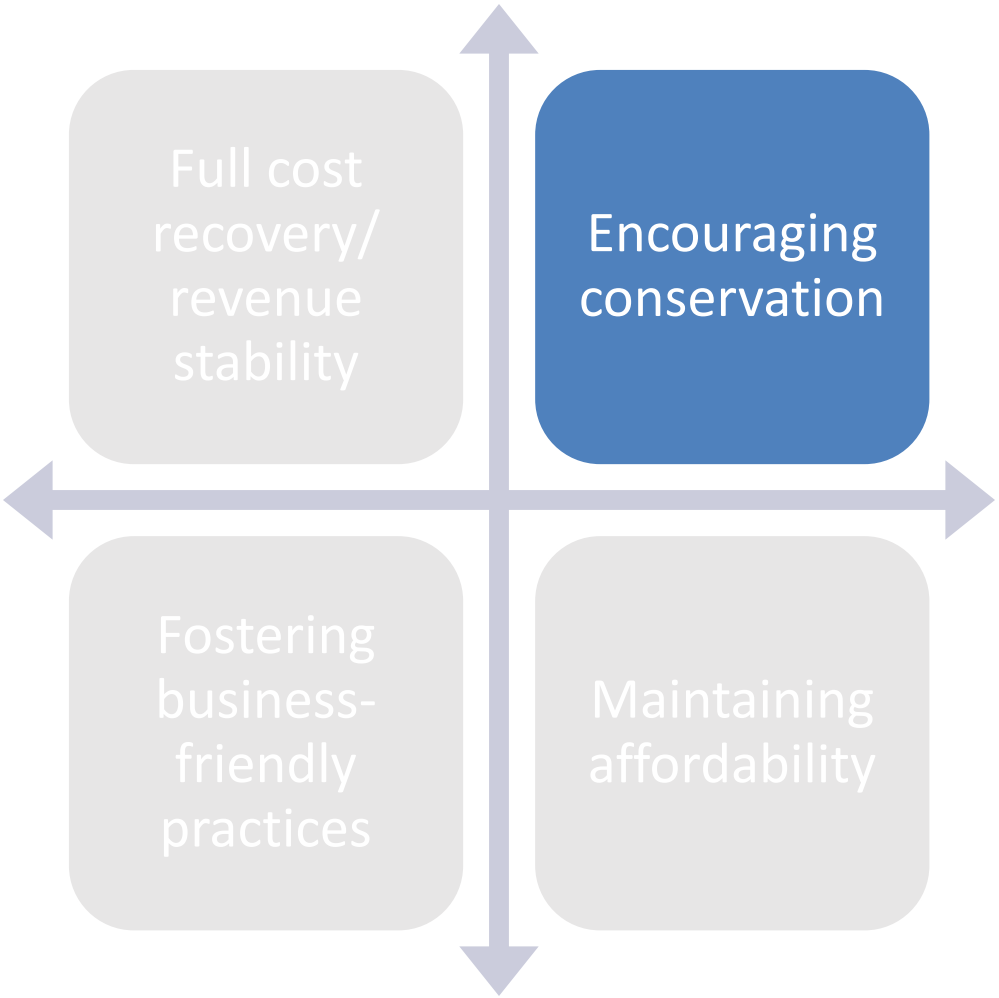




Bring in enough revenue to cover the full cost of running the water system:

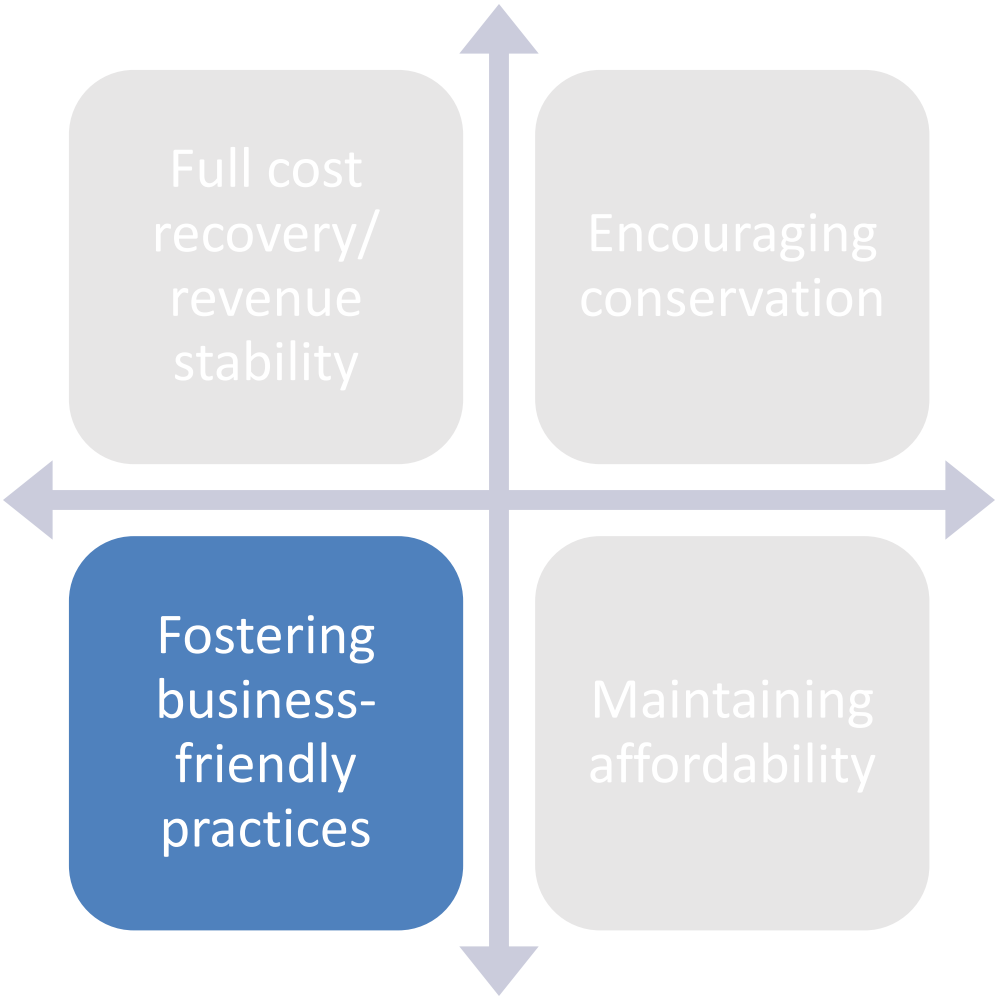
- O&M
- Capital needs
- Debt service

Why do this?



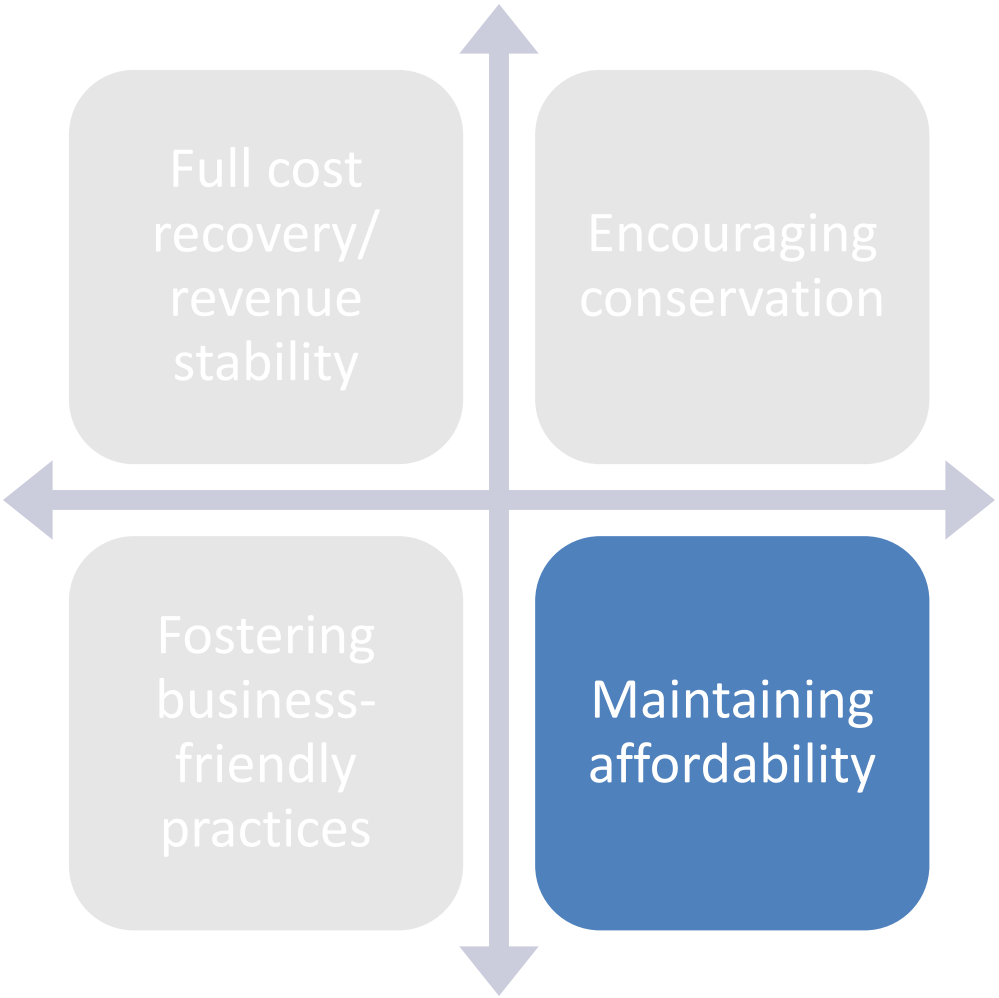
Use pricing to encourage customers to reduce their water consumption

Why do this?



Use pricing to encourage businesses and agriculture to locate to your community or stay in your community

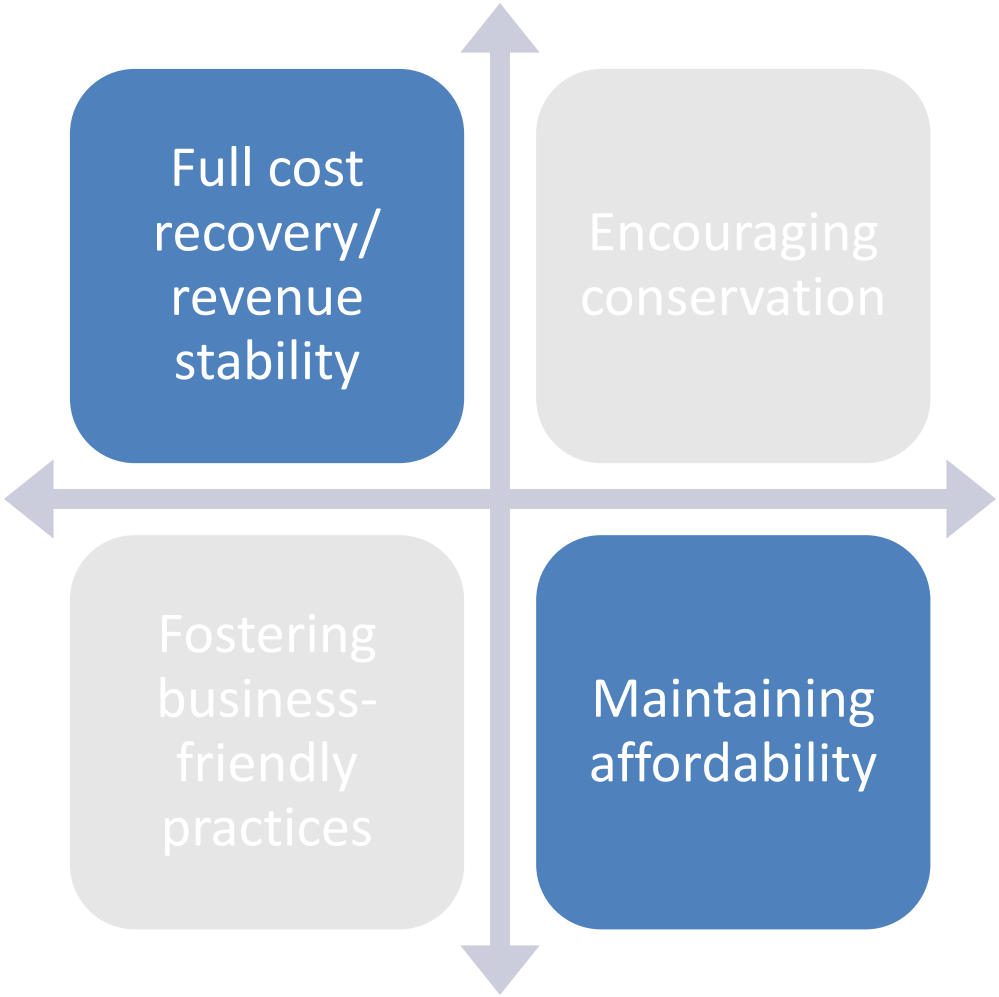
Why do this?



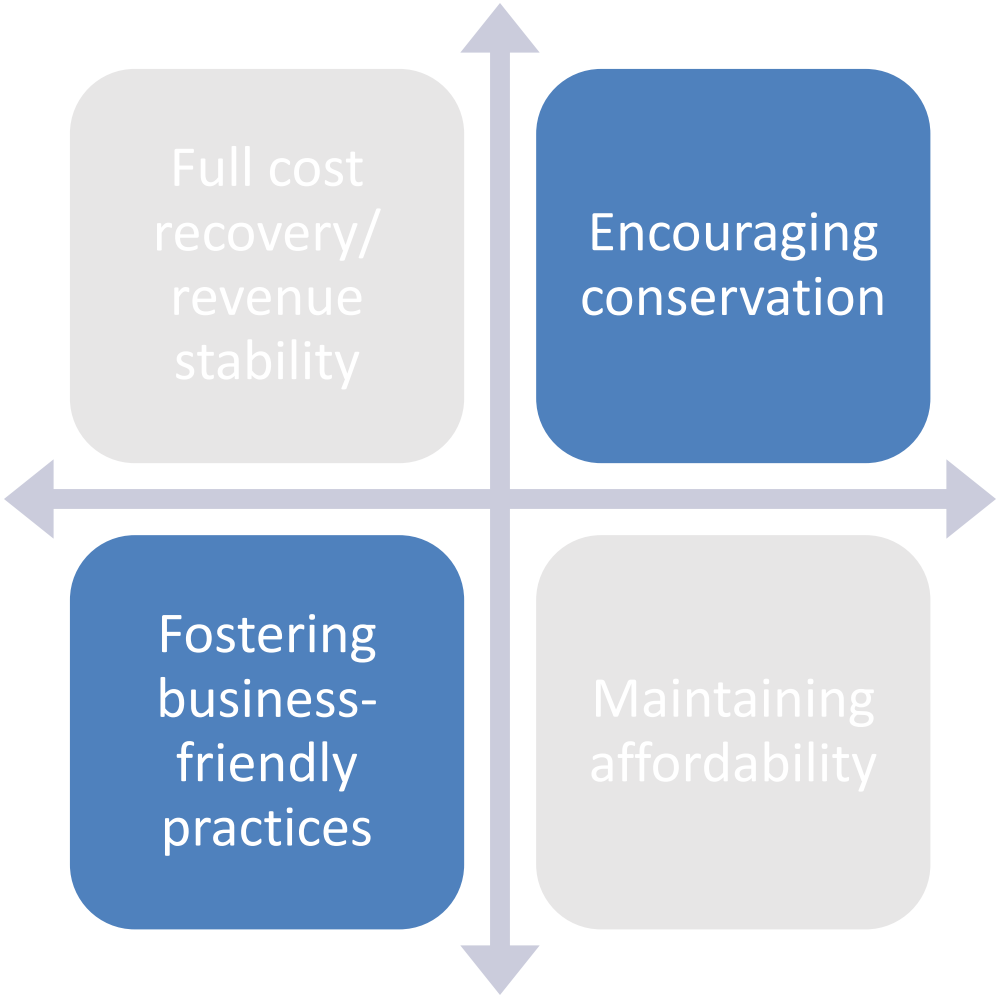
Ensure that all customers in your water system are able to afford enough water to live on

Why do this?

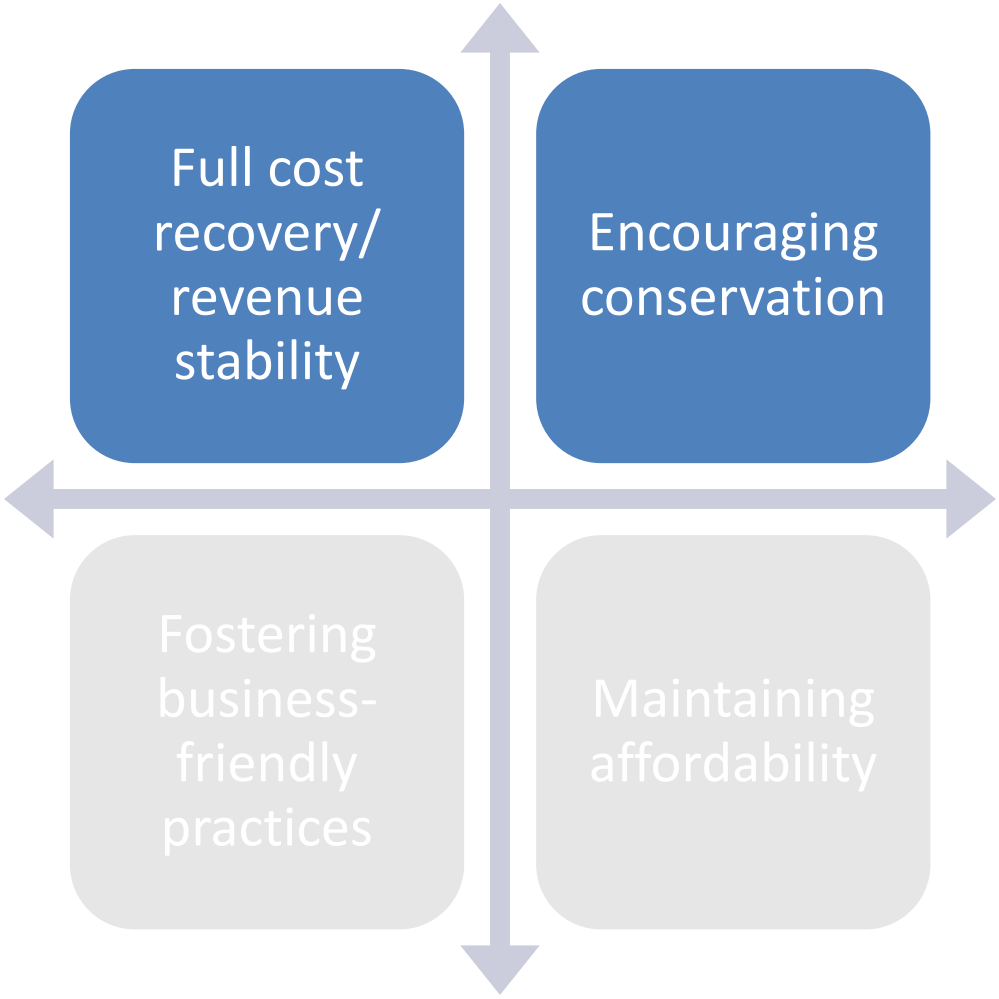
Competing Objectives



Competing Objectives



Competing Objectives

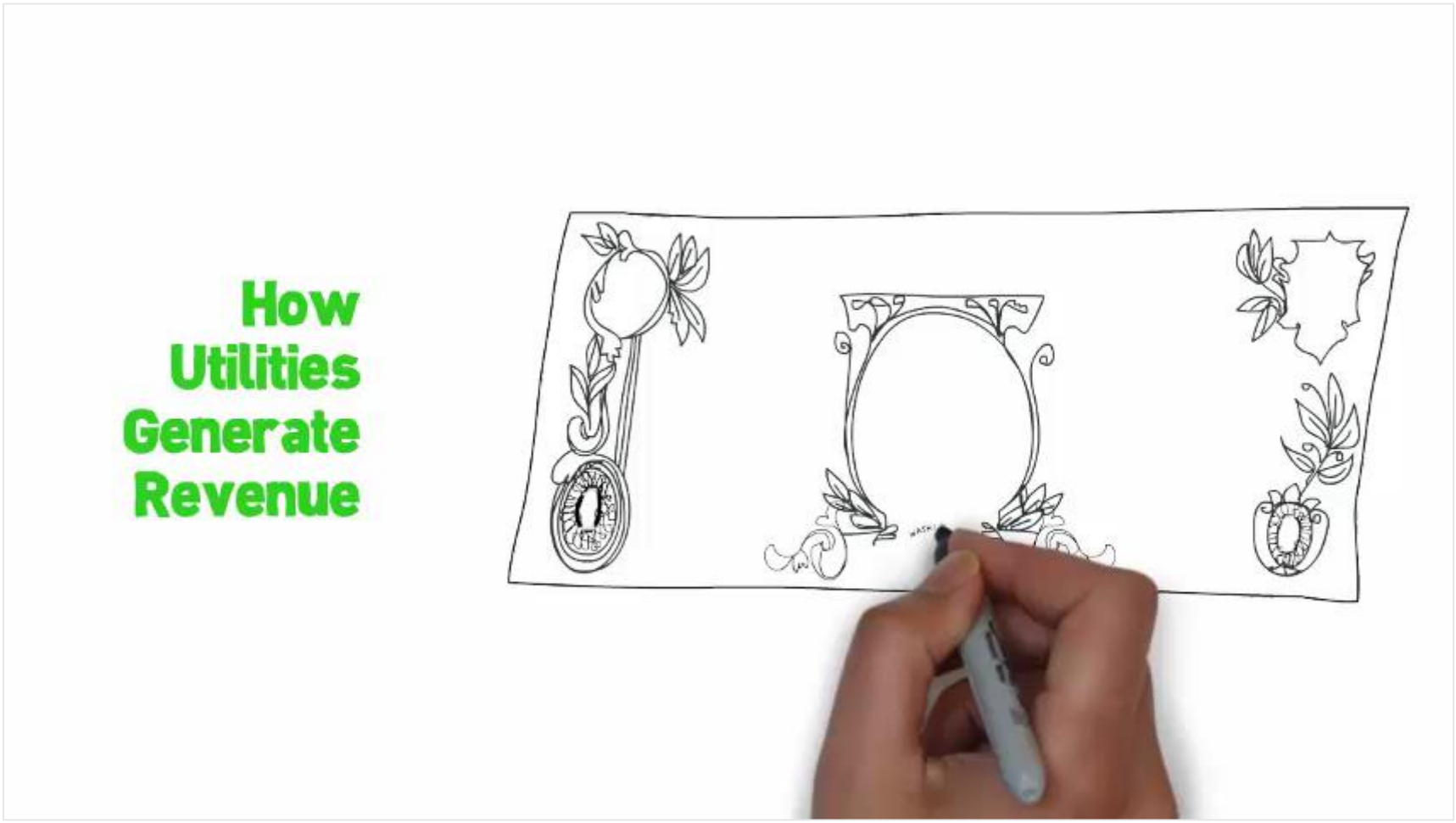


Rate Setting Objectives

Your rate structure is a tool to help you meet your rate setting objectives

- Frequency of billing
- Base charges and allowances
- Volumetric charges

Understanding Water Revenues



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jf83mE0Lyk

Full Cost Pricing

- The goal of full cost pricing is to have the charges for water cover the entire cost of running the water system today and into the future

- Of course, there are many ways in which you can get to the right dollar figure. Some of it comes down to your rate setting philosophy

Rate Setting Philosophies

- Payment for access vs. payment for volume of product received
- Fixed charges for fixed costs and variable charges for variable costs
- Some mix of the above ideas

Exercise

Let’s figure out some rates for Irvindale that cover the full cost of providing water service

Non-Rate Revenues

	Account	Budget
1	30-329-00 W/S INTEREST EARNED DEPOS	$0.00
2	30-334-00 CONTRIBUTIONS/DONATIONS	$0.00
3	30-335-00 W/S MISC. REVENUE	$700.00
4	30-336-00 FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED	$9,187.87
7	30-345-01 SALES TAX REFUND	$0.00
9	30-371-01 W/S CHARGES	$344,445.00
10	30-371-02 W/S ADJUSTMENTS	$0.00
11	30-373-00 TAP CONNECTIONS	$1,500.00
13	30-373-02 SERVICE CHARGES/CUT OFFS	$12,500.00
14	30-373-04 IMPACT FEES	$1,000.00
15	30-373-05 CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS	$0.00
16	30-374-00 Online W/S Payment Fee	$1,600.00
17	30-375-80 Contributed Capital - G.R.S.P.	$0.00
18	30-375-81 Contributed Capital Fund	$0.00
19	30-377-00 RBEG - Pump Station	$0.00
20	30-378-00 I&I Study Grant - Commerce	$12,000.00
22	30-385-00 SALE OF ASSETS	$0.00
23	30-386-00 TRANSFER FROM OTHER FUND	$0.00
		$382,932.87

For the Exercise

Total Revenues:
$382,932.87

Revenues from Rates:
$344,445.00

Payment for Access

- In its pure form, everyone in the water system pays the same amount for access to the system, regardless of how much water they use

Payment for Access

We charge a flat rate of $ 15.00 monthly

P.O - Box 133
Jacksonville

We are a small town we do not have sewage

Jacksonville, GA

Payment for Access

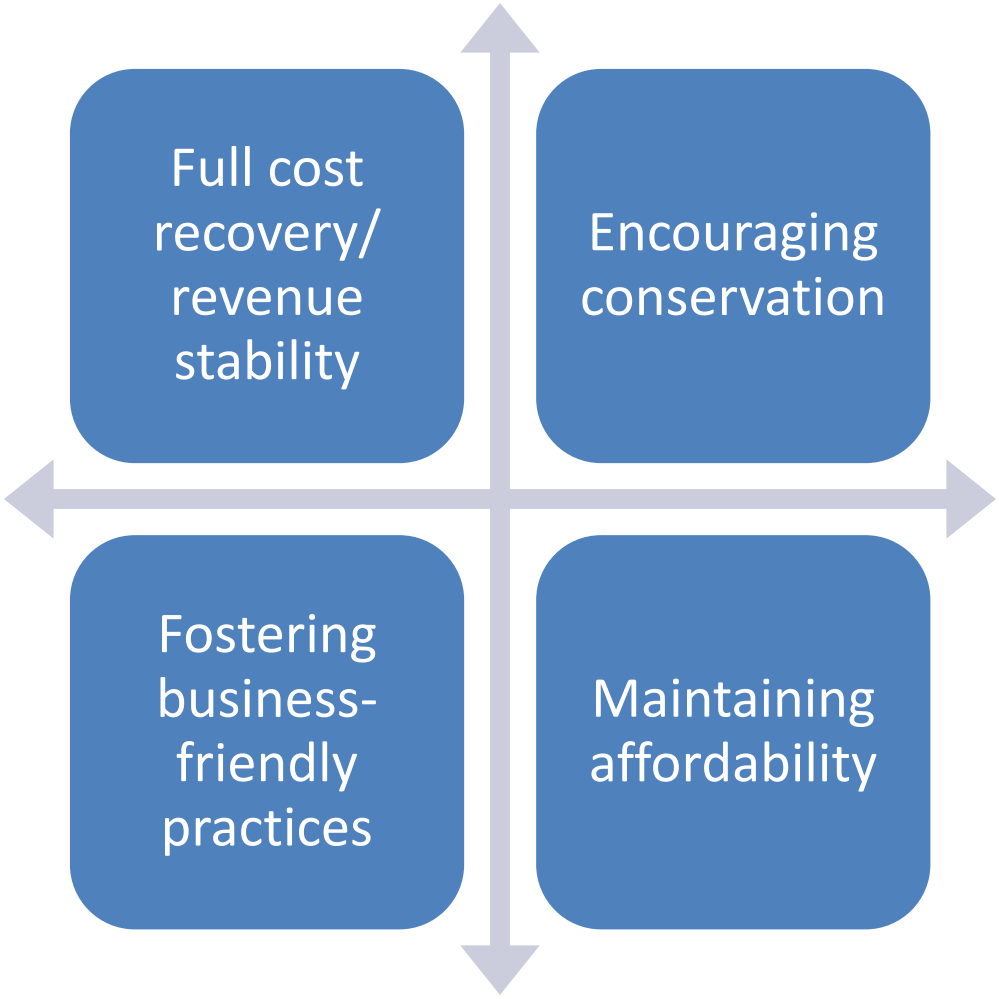
- What information do we need to make this calculation?

- Total revenue needed from rates
- Total number of accounts

Payment for Access

$$\frac{\$344{,}445 \text{ (Total Needed Revenue)}}{450 \text{ (Total Accounts)}} = \$765.43 \text{ (Total Annual Bill)} \div 12 = \$63.79 \text{ (Monthly Bill)}$$

Which Water System Objectives?



Payment for volume of product received

- In its pure form, everyone in the water system pays for the volume of water received and only for the volume of water received

Payment for volume of product received

WATER & SEWER RATES

In Town	
Water	$ 7.72 per 1000 gallons
Sewer	$ 10.73 per 1000 gallons
Out of Town	
Water	$ 15.44 per 1000 gallons
Sewer	$ 21.46 per 1000 gallons

Troutman, NC

Payment for volume of product received

- What information do we need to make this calculation?

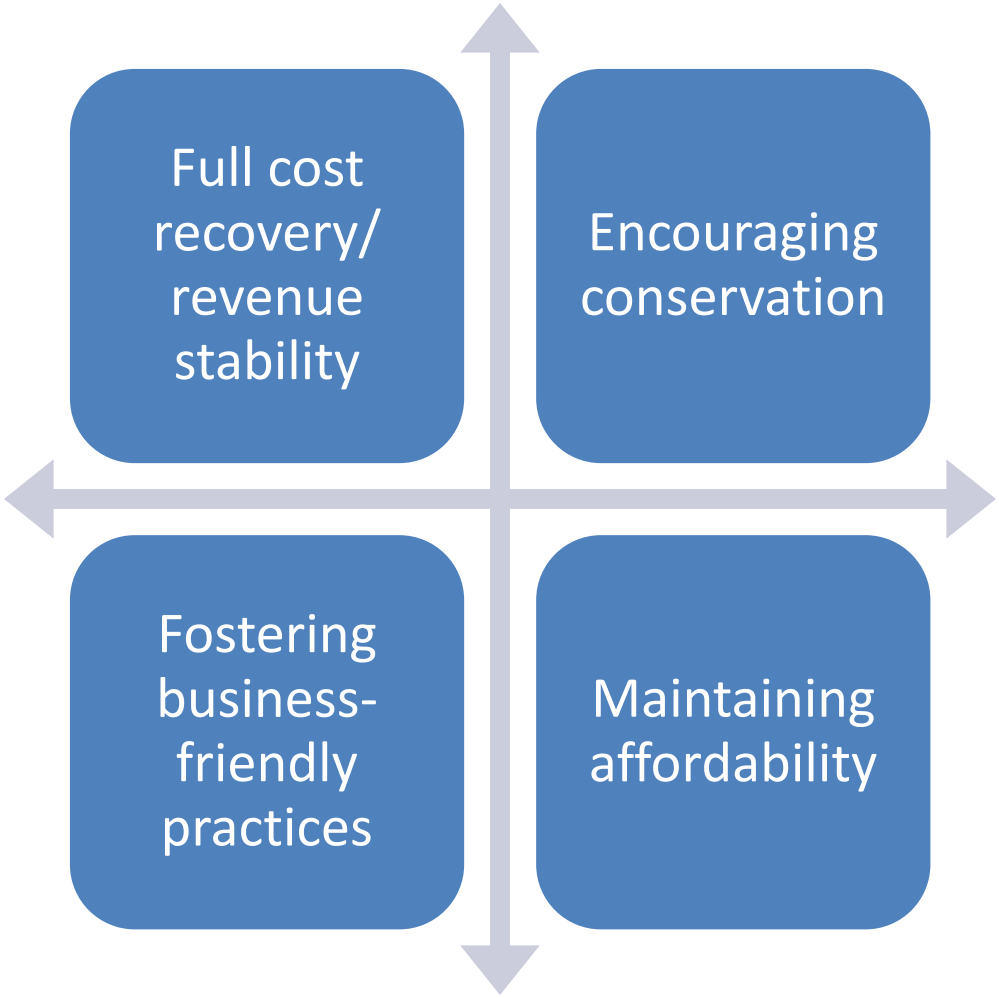
- Total revenue needed from rates
- Total gallons sold

Payment for volume of product received

$$\frac{\$344,445}{32,877,590} \times 1{,}000 = \$10.48$$

Total Needed Revenue / *Total Gallons Sold* = *Price per 1,000 Gallons*

Which Water System Objectives?



Base Charge for Fixed Costs; Volumetric Charge for Variable Costs

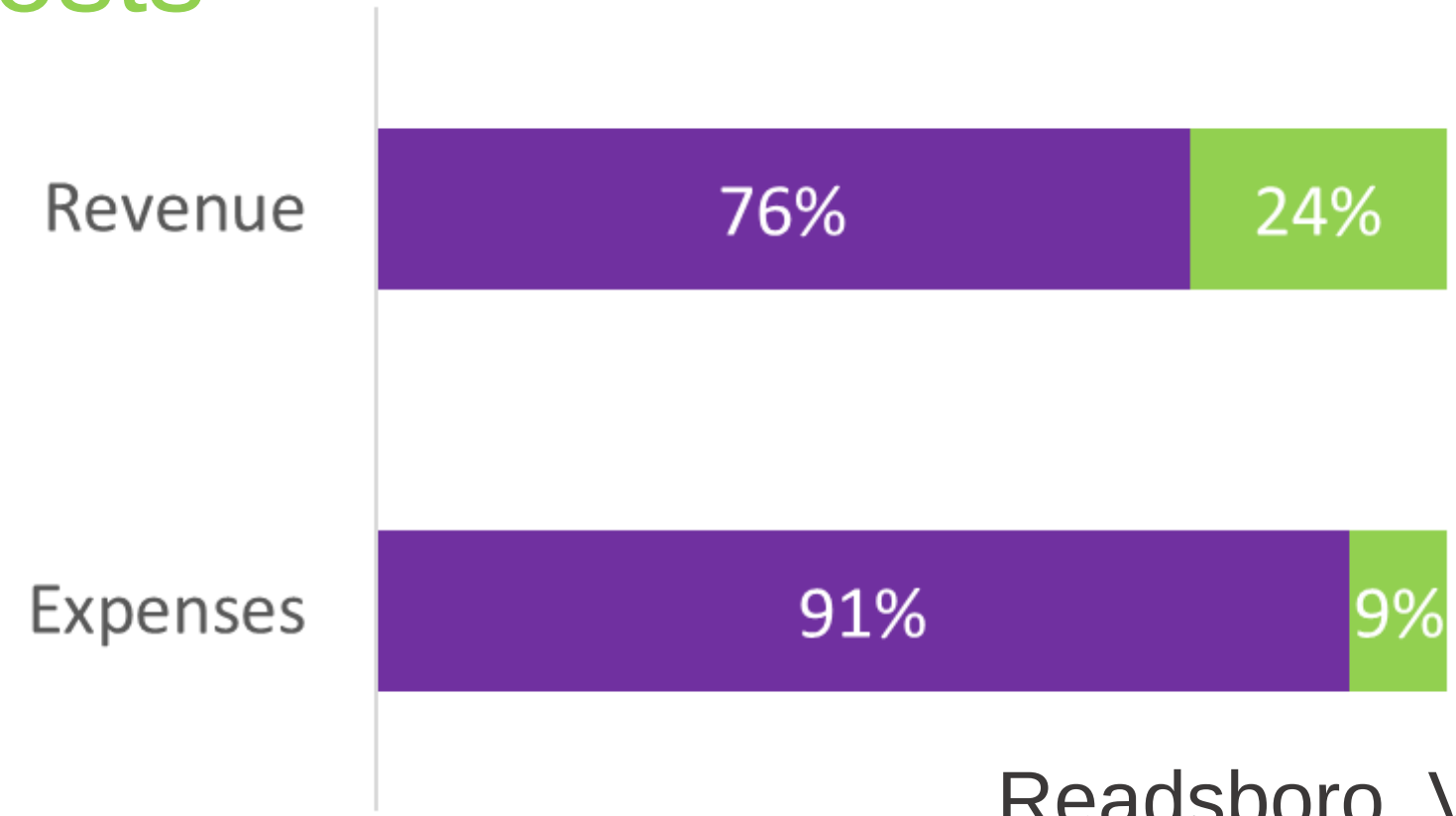
- In its pure form, all of the fixed costs of the water system would be covered by the base charge, and all of the variable costs would be covered by the volumetric rate

Base Charge for Fixed Costs; Volumetric Charge for Variable Costs

Base Chrg	Lower Bound	Rate
38.00	0	0.000000
	4	9.500000

Readsboro, VT

Base Charge for Fixed Costs; Volumetric Charge for Variable Costs



Readsboro, VT

Base Charge for Fixed Costs; Volumetric Charge for Variable Costs

- What information do we need to make this calculation?

- Total revenue needed to cover fixed costs
- Total Accounts
- Total revenue needed to cover variable costs
- Total gallons sold

For the Exercise

Revenues from Rates:

$344,445

Everything else

W/S Utilities
Chemicals & Salt
Purchase Water Bill

$292,045

Fixed Cost

$52,400

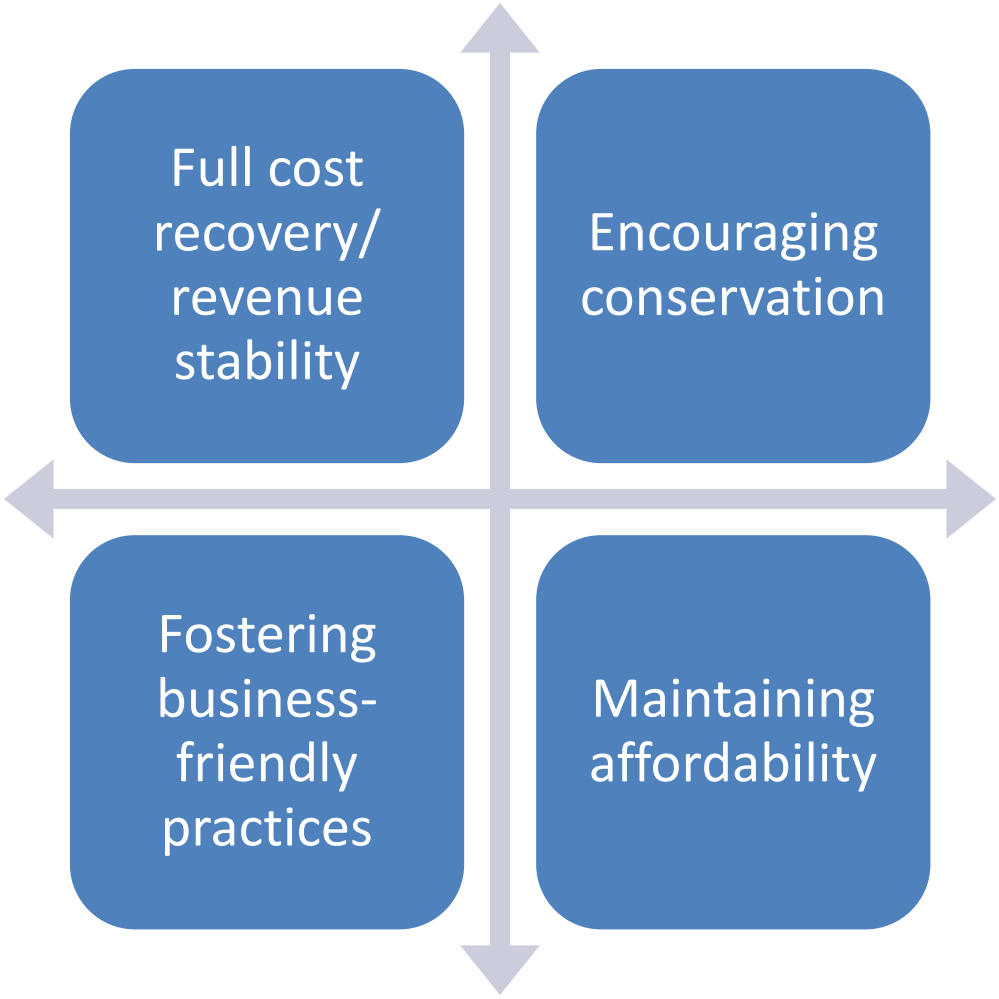
Variable Cost

Base Charge for Fixed Costs; Volumetric Charge for Variable Costs

$$\frac{\text{\$292,045 — Fixed Annual Costs}}{\text{450 — Total Accounts}} = \frac{\text{\$648.99 — Total Annual Bill}}{12} = \text{\$54.08 — Monthly Base Bill}$$

$$\frac{\text{\$52,400 — Variable Annual Costs}}{\text{32,877,590 — Total Gallons Sold}} \times 1{,}000 = \text{\$1.59 — Price per 1,000 Gallons}$$

Which Water System Objectives?



$25 Base Charge; Rest from Volumetric Rates

- Pick a base charge and see what the volumetric charge would need to be

$25 Base Charge; Rest from Volumetric Rates

WATER & SEWER RATES AND FEE SCHEDULE EFFE

	IN TOWN
WATER MINIMUM (1000 GALLONS)	$25.00
SEWER MINIMUM (1000 GALLONS)	$25.00
DISPOSAL FEE	$ 5.00
ADDITIONAL WATER PER 1000 GALLONS	$ 6.15

Denton, NC

$25 Base Charge; Rest from Volumetric Rates

- What information do we need to make this calculation?

- Total Accounts
- Total Revenue Needed
- Total Gallons

$25 Base Charge; Rest from Volumetric Rates

12 *Months* X $25 *Monthly Base Bill* X 450 *Total Accounts* = $135,000 *Total from Base Bill*

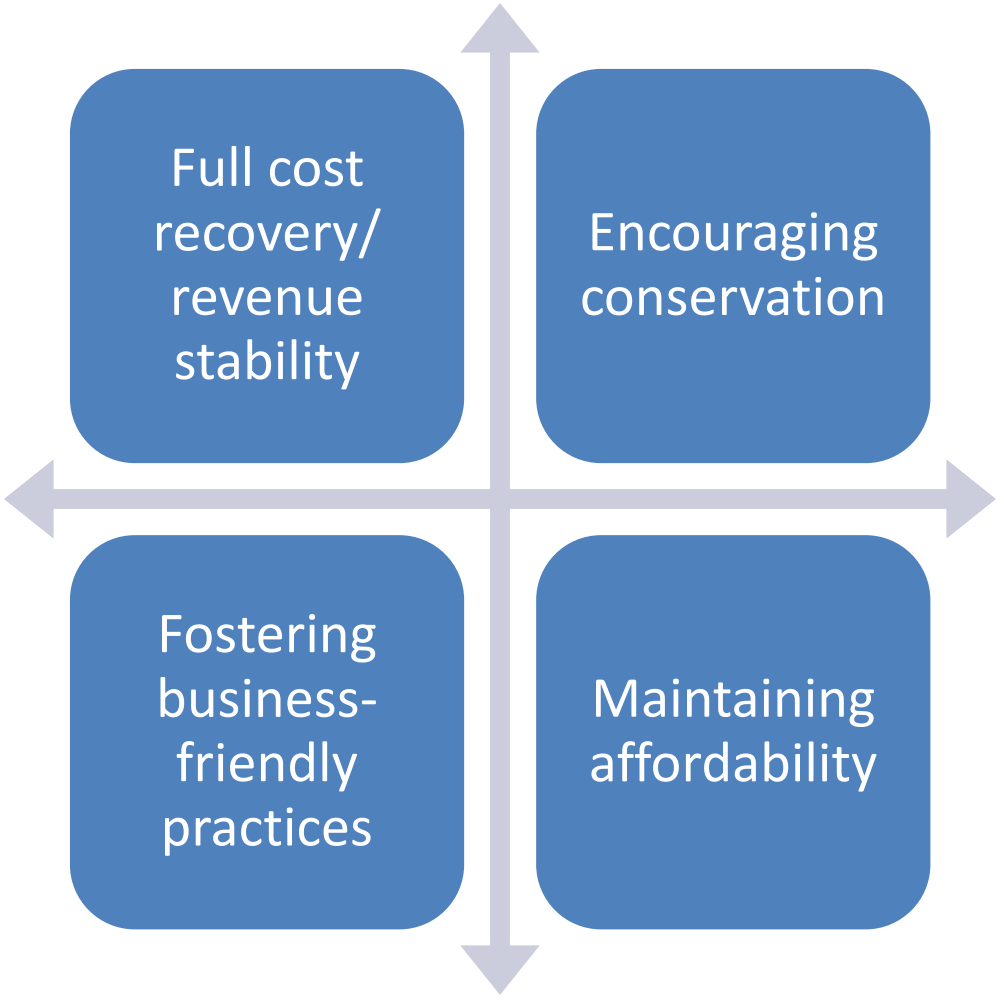
$344,445 *Total Revenue Needed*

— $135,000 *Total from Base Bill*

$209,445 *Total Needed from Volumetric*

$209,445 *Total Needed from Volumetric* / 32,877,590 *Total Gallons Sold* x 1,000 = $6.37 *Price per 1,000 Gallons*

Which Water System Objectives?



How This Impacts Customers

- All four rate structures get us to the same total revenue

- But how does each approach impact different types of customers?

How This Impacts Customers

1,000 gallons/month

4,000 gallons/month

12,000 gallons/month

34,000 gallons/month

Exercise

How much will water service cost per month for different customers under each rate structure?

A. $63.79 base

B. $10.49 per 1,000 gallons

C. $54.08 base
   $1.59 per 1,000 gallons

D. $25.00 base
   $6.37 per 1,000 gallons

Payment for Access

$63.79	$63.79	$63.79	$63.79

Payment for Volume of Product Received

$10.48	$41.92	$125.76	$356.32

Base Charge for Fixed Costs; Volumetric Charge for Variable Costs

$55.67	$60.44	$73.16	$108.14

$25 Base Charge; Volumetric Charge for Rest

$31.37	$50.48	$101.44	$241.58

	 1,000 gallons/month	 4,000 gallons/month	 12,000 gallons/month	 34,000 gallons/month
Payment for Access (Fixed Monthly Bill)	$63.79	$63.79	$63.79	$63.79
Payment for Volume of Product Received	$10.48	$41.92	$125.76	$356.32
Base Charge for Fixed Costs; Volumetric Charge for Variable Costs	$55.67	$60.44	$73.16	$108.14
$25 Base Charge; Volumetric Charge for Rest	$31.37	$50.48	$101.44	$241.58

So where do you think the $25 per month base charge came from?

These numbers are based on Irvindale's budget

Does

Maybe, but probably not

What causes variation?

Rate Changes

As rates go up, usage goes down

As a rule of thumb, typically usage goes down 3-4% for every 10% increase in rates

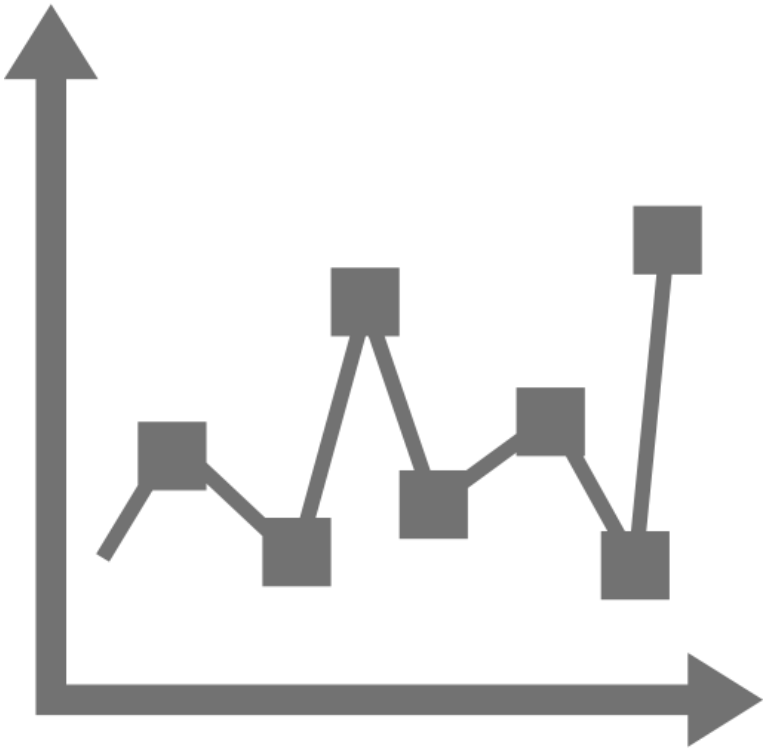
Population Change

Customers could be coming into your system or leaving your system

Loss of a Big Customer

Some customers use significantly more water than others. Losing a single big user can have a disproportionate impact on revenues

Economic Conditions

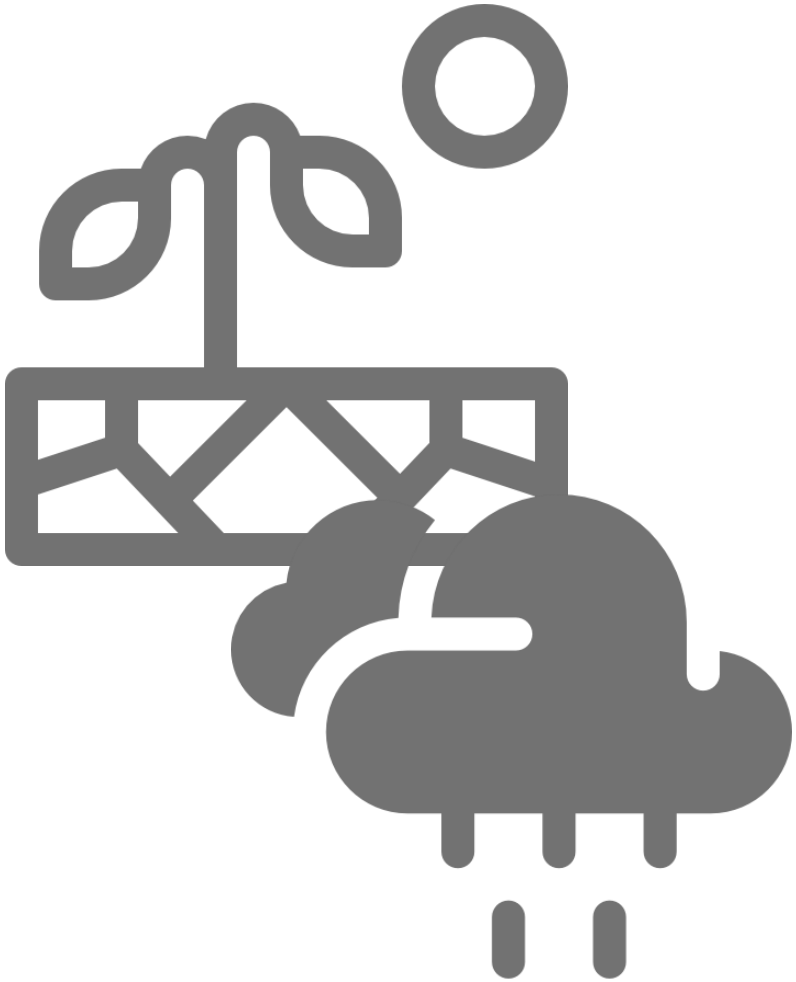


Economic downturns can cause customers to cut back on water use. Conversely, periods of economic growth can lead to higher water consumption

Changes in Collection Rates

Even if the number of customers doesn’t change, how often they are paying you may be changing

Weather

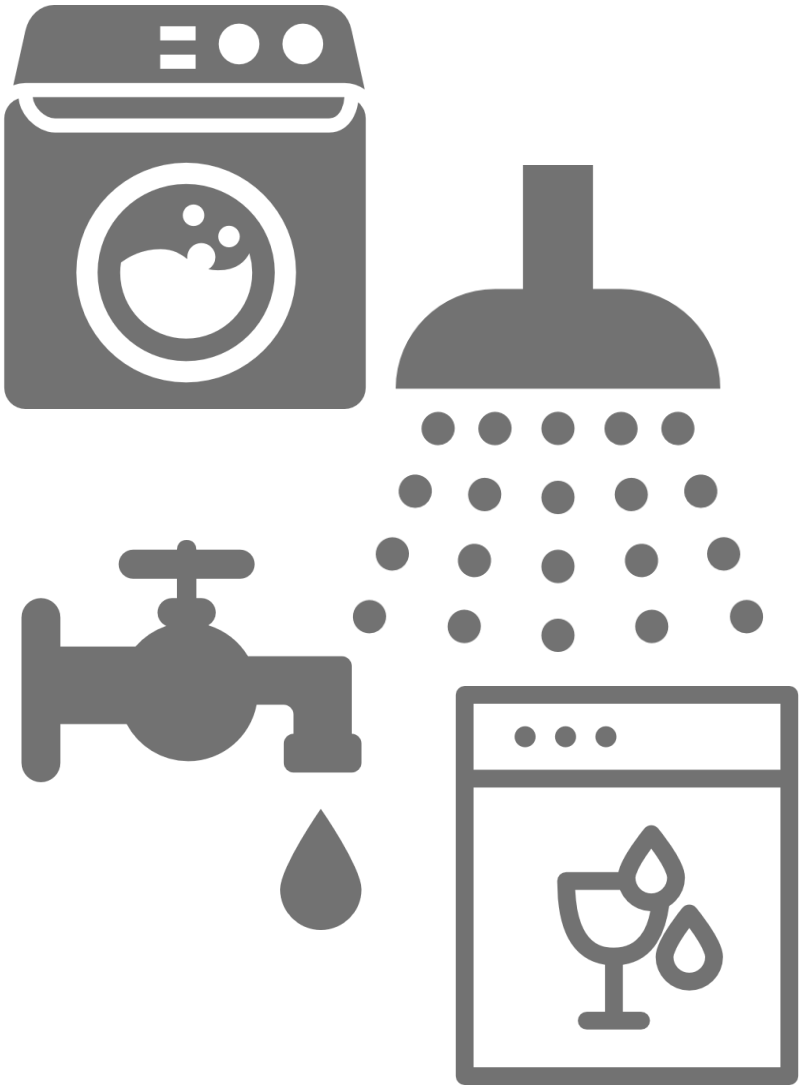


Rainy conditions or dry/drought conditions can impact how much water customers use for outside irrigation

Water Use Restrictions

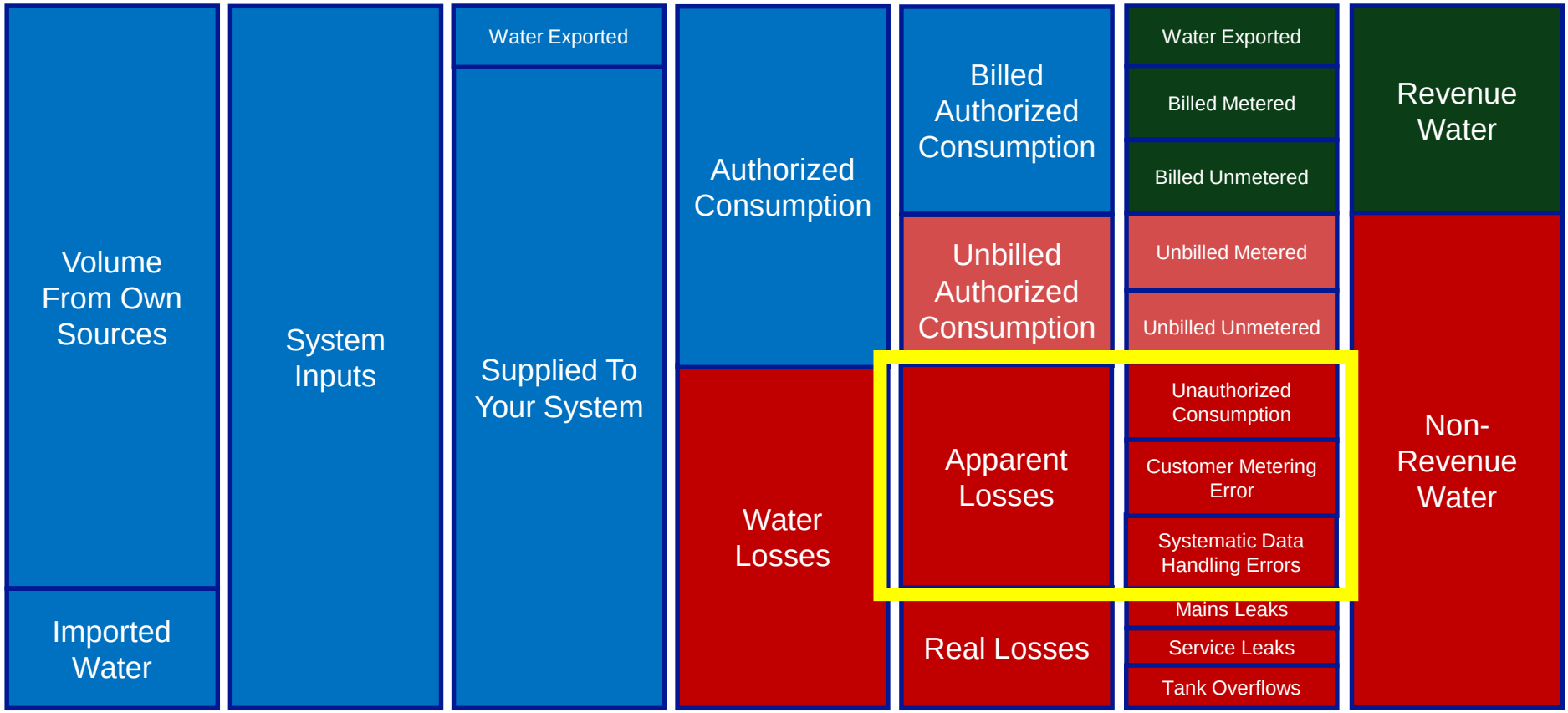
Whether due to water supply shortages or drought conditions, restricting water use will obviously impact revenues

Technology



Fixtures use less water today than in the past, and overall per capita water demand is decreasing across the country

Bill Correctly



What to do?

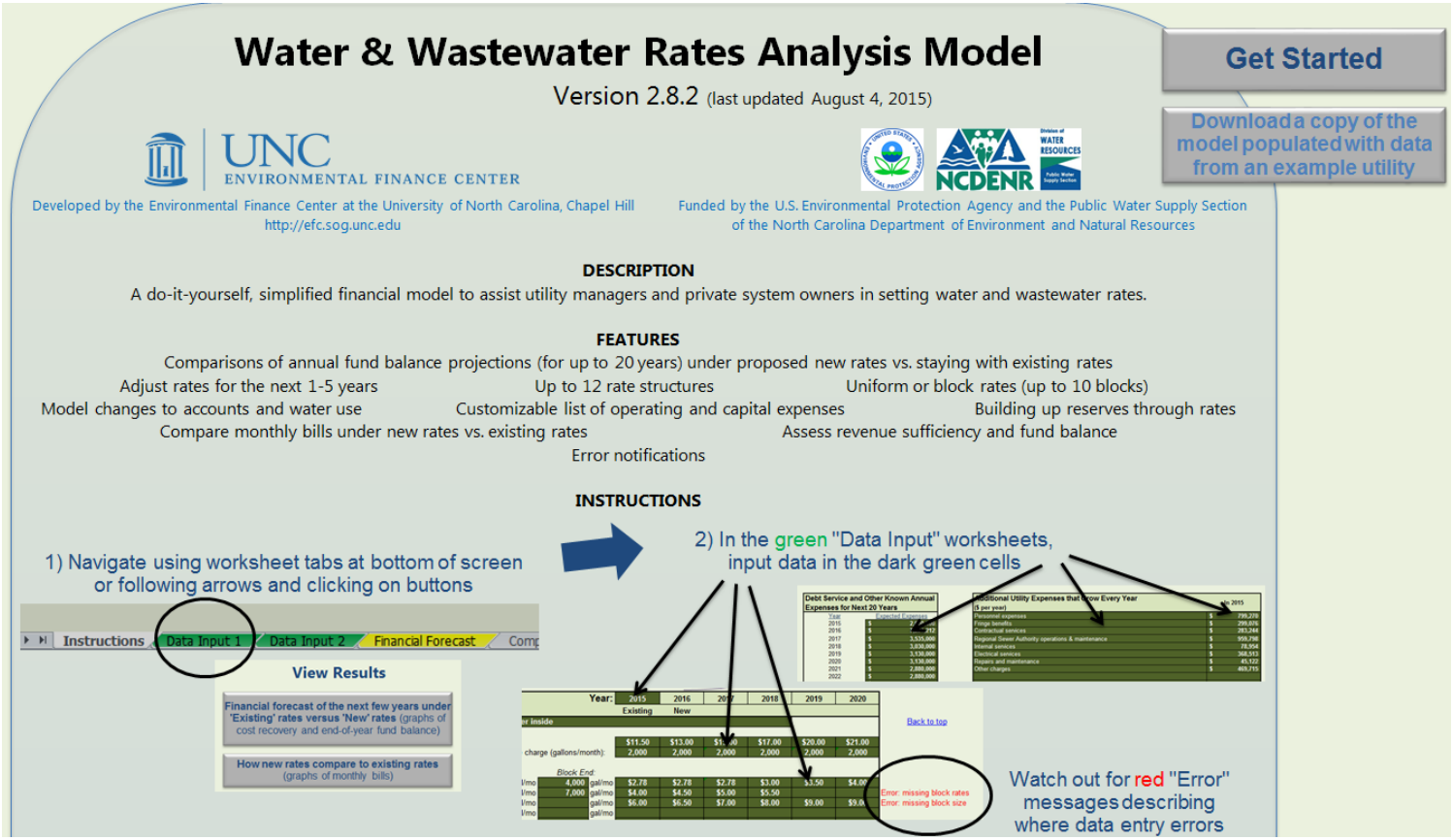
- Multiple forecasts based on different assumptions

- Ideally, be conservative
- Don’t forget price elasticity
- Use tools to stress test projections
- Give board options

Water and Wastewater Rates Analysis Model

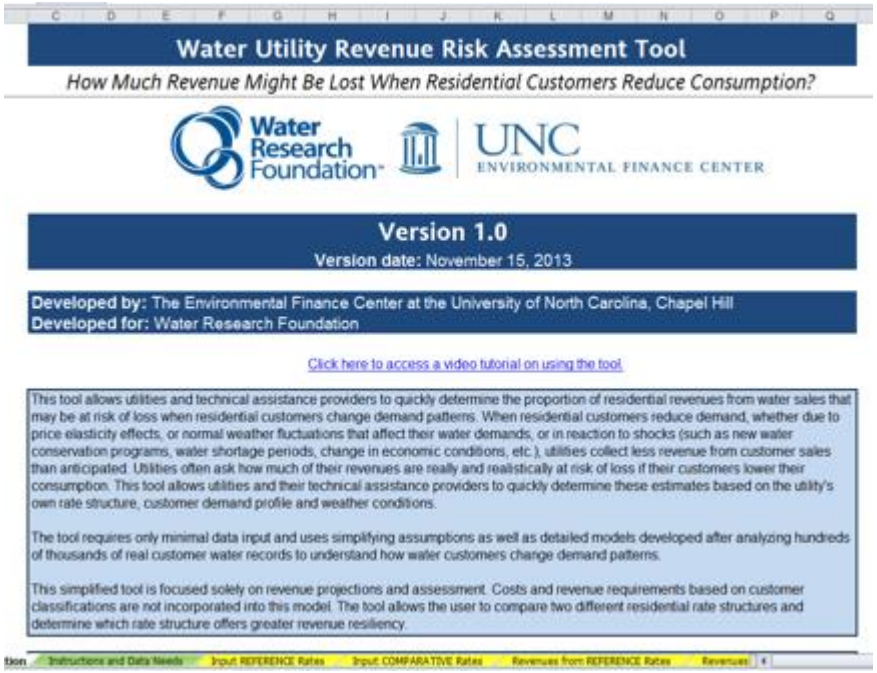
http://efc.sog.unc.edu or http://efcnetwork.org

Find the most up-to-date version in Resources / Tools



Created by the Environmental Finance Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Funded by the U.S. E.P.A. and the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Water Utility Revenue Risk Assessment Tool



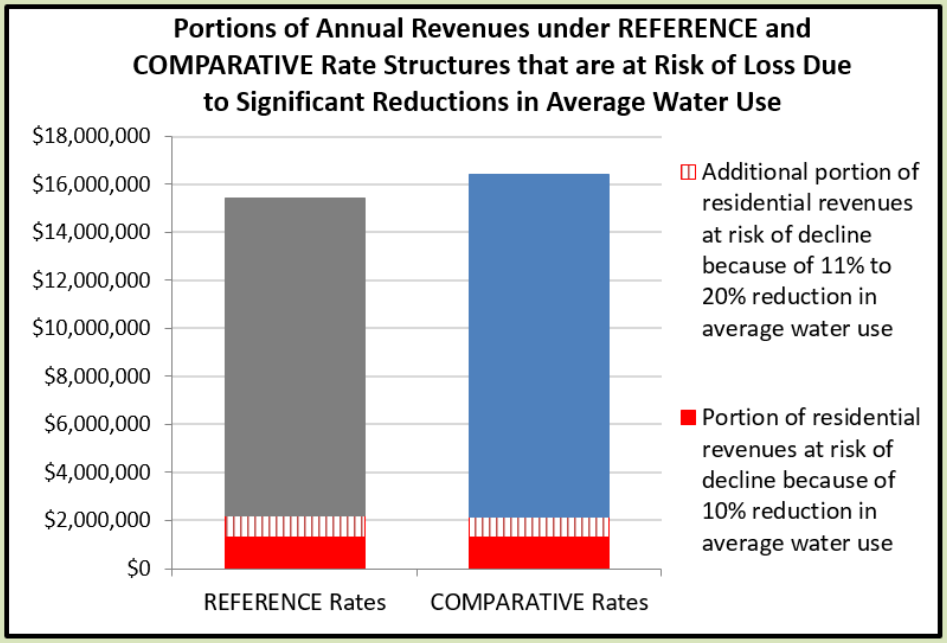
- Excel tool (simplified)
- Focus on residential revenues
- Utility inputs own:
  - Rate structure details
  - Residential customer water use profile
  - Weather patterns
  - Assumptions on price elasticity
- Tool estimates the <u>proportion of revenues that may be lost</u> due to changes in water use patterns due to:
  - Rate increase, alone or plus:
  - Normal weather pattern changes, or
  - One-time, significant and sudden conservation effort

Free to download and use at
www.waterrf.org
www.efc.sog.unc.edu

Water Utility Revenue Risk Assessment Tool

Comparing Revenues After a Significant Decline in Water Use

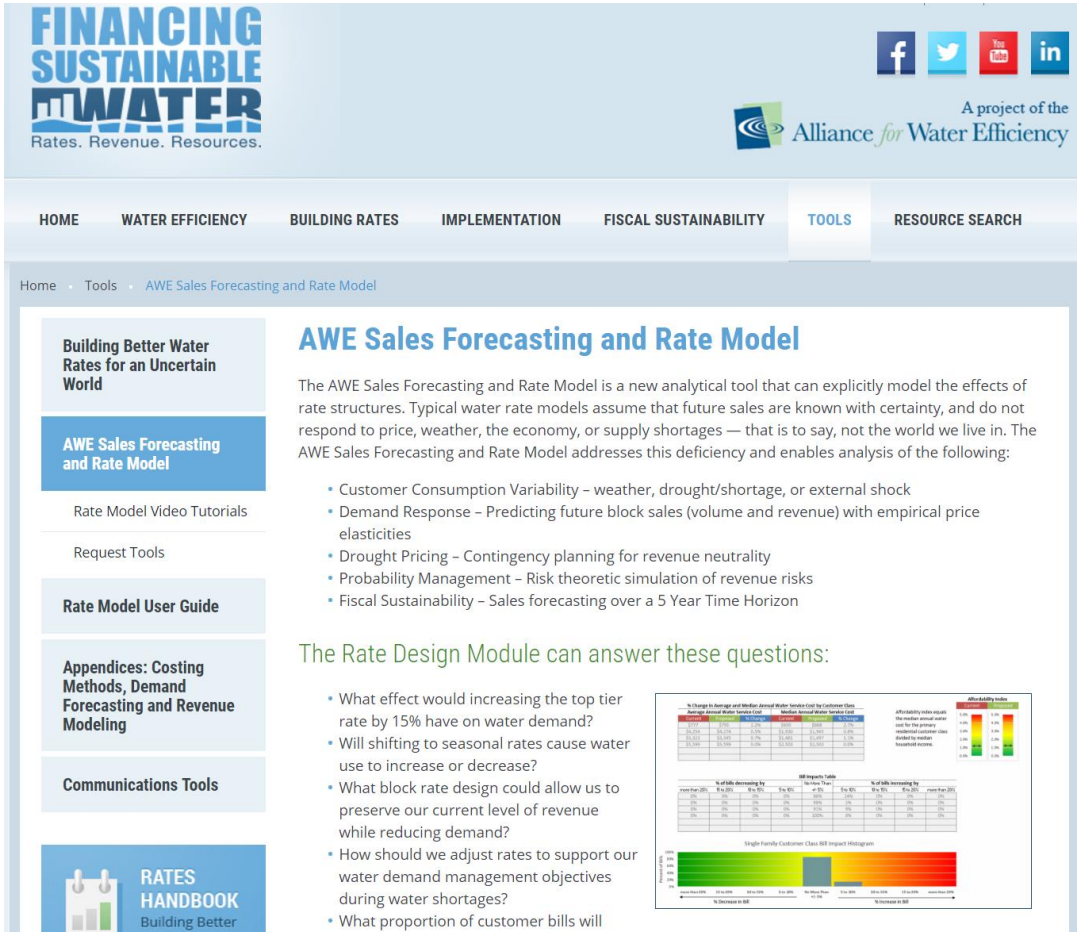
How do the total revenues compare under both rate structures if there is a reduction of 10% - 20% in average water use and subsequent demand distribution shifts?



Decline in Total Annual Revenues for a:	REFERENCE Rates	COMPARATIVE Rates
10% reduction in avg use	$1,311,000	$1,319,000
20% reduction in avg use	$2,181,000	$2,167,000
10% reduction in avg use	8.5%	8.0%
20% reduction in avg use	14.2%	13.2%

The comparative rate structure generates revenues that are MORE resilient to sudden and significant declines in residential water use than the revenues generated by the reference rate structure. Revenues under the comparative rate structure are projected to drop 8% - 13.2% for a 10% - 20% reduction in average water use, and their related shifts in demand distribution. These declines occur after including the effect of price elasticity when adjusting rates from the reference rate structure to the comparative rate structure. By comparison, revenues under the reference rate structure are projected to drop 8.5% - 14.2% for the same declines in residential water use.

AWE Sales Forecasting and Rate Model



Available for Alliance for Water Efficiency members:

http://www.financingsustainablewater.org/

Pricing Water to Achieve Full Cost Recovery

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