

Code Modification Summary:

Overview

The City of Columbus Department of Public Utilities recently announced that they are recommending in the 2026 budget to raise Sanitary Sewer Rates by 8% and Water Rates by 18% for all its customers. Also, the Low-income discount program eligibility will change from 25% to 30%.

Over the next few years, it's projected that sanitary sewer increases will peak at 7% by 2030 and remain around a 7% annual increase beyond 2030, and water increases will peak around 15% by 2030. These rate increases are a result of many factors - increased prices of materials/chemicals, meeting EPA requirements, and an increase in debt repayment for capital projects. In the early 2000s, the EPA issued a Consent Decree to Columbus, along with many other communities around the Nation. Unlike many of the other communities, Columbus immediately went into action to address the EPA's orders, which allowed them to take gradual debt to make the required improvements. As a result, their rates are increasing to \$4.39 per ERU, whereas many other communities throughout the State and Nation now have significantly higher rates that include double-digit rate increases.

No rate increase for refuse service is recommended. A rate increase for 2027 is anticipated.

To cover the City of Columbus rate increases (Water, Sanitary and CCO), refuse services, stormwater, operational expenses and to minimize future rate spikes for enhanced capital expenses (infrastructure projects), we are proposing a 6.14% overall rate increase.

This rate increase equates to a \$7.46 increase per month based on average consumption (4,000 gallons per month). Even with this proposed increase, Gahanna's 2026 rates will remain competitive and will fall mid-range compared to our surrounding communities.

Below is a summary of the related proposed code changes.

TITLE THREE – PUBLIC UTILITIES

Section 921.04 Sewerage System Capacity Charge

- No changes

Section 921.05 Sewer Footage Fees

- No changes

Section 921.11 Sewer Rental Rates

- Sanitary Sewer Operational Rate: **\$10.90/1,000 gal** (was \$10.28/1,000 gal in 2025)
 - The City of Columbus continues to offer a pass-thru 30% low-income discount.
- Sanitary Sewer Capital Improvement Rate: **\$1.59/1,000 gal** (was \$1.53/1,000 gal in 2025)
- Columbus Consent Order (CCO): The City of Columbus is under a consent order with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to separate their combined storm and sanitary sewers. Because the satellite communities utilize Columbus' sewer system, we are all responsible for contributing to these projects. The revenue that we collect for this consent order is passed through to Columbus, and Gahanna does not keep any of this money. CCO Rate: **\$ 4 . 3 9 /ERU/month** (was \$3.73/ERU/month in 2025)

Section 927.17 Classification of Property and ERU Assignment and Rate

- Sanitary Sewer Equivalent Residential Unit Rate: **\$5.20 per ERU** (was \$5.14 per ERU 2025)

Section 929.02 Permit Required; Multiple Use Connections Prohibited

- No changes

Section 929.03 Water Tap Charge

- No changes

Section 929.08 Meter Service Fee

- No changes

Section 929.12 Water Rates

- Water Operational Rate: **\$10.62/1,000 gal** (was \$9.65/1,000 gal in 2025)
 - The City of Columbus continues to offer a pass-thru (increase) 25% low-income discount.
- Water Capital Improvement Rate: **\$1.12/1,000 gal** (was \$1.08/1,000 gal in 2025)
- Water quantities over three million gallons rate: **\$6.47/1,000 gal** (was \$5.89 in 2025)

Section 929.14 System Capacity Charge

- No changes

Section 929.15 Private Fire Protection Service

- No Changes

Section 929.17 Special Charges

- No Changes

Section 941.15 Pickup and Disposal Fees

- No changes