

Historical Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Utility Rate Increases for the City of Boulder from 1991 to 2011

The following table shows actual [Utility rate](#) increases for the water, wastewater and stormwater rates from 1991 to 2011:

REVENUE INCREASES (%)			
YEAR	WATER	WASTEWATER	STORMWATER
2011	3	3	0
2010	0	0	0
2009	8	5	3
2008	4	3	3
2007	4	6	3
2006	3	20	3
2005	3	20	3
2004	0	6	3
2003	3	12	6
2002	9	12	8
2001	10	6	4
TOTAL	47	93	36
AVE.	4.27	8.45	3.27

2000	3	3	3
1999	5	4	6
1998	8	9	0
1997	13	4	5
1996	6	6	6
1995	5	10	0
1994	0	12	9
1993	13.6	11.9	0
1992	11.3	13.8	0
1991	0	0	0
TOTAL	64.9	73.7	29
AVE.	6.49	7.37	2.9

Utility rates have increased every year except for 1991 and 2009. In 1991, the annual utility bill for a single-family home was \$276.33. In 2011, the same bill will be approximately \$715.32. This represents 159% increase over a 20-year period or a 56% increase over a 20-year period when adjusted for inflation.

In January 2007, the Utilities Division switched billing calculation systems to [water budgets](#) in order to allow more flexibility to water customers during times of mild to moderate drought, and to encourage water conservation efforts. Prior to 2007, the city used an increasing block-rate structure to encourage water conservation by customers. Since moving to the water budget system, the city has seen a general decrease in the total amount of water used by city customers. The water budget system rewards those customers that use less water than they are “budgeted” by charging them a reduced rate if they use between zero and sixty percent of their monthly budget. So while water rates

may have gone up, water revenues received by the city have gone down because many Boulder water customers are staying within their budgeted water amount.

In comparison to other cities in the Front Range, Boulder’s 2011 total annual utility bill is in the mid-range.

2011 Comparisons of Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Bills in Front Range Communities (sorted by Total Annual Bill)

Community	Water	Wastewater	Stormwater	Annually
Erie	728.55	530.88	60.00	1,319.43
Colorado Springs	671.84	383.18	61.20	1,116.22
Aurora	779.31	207.48	97.92	1,084.71
Fort Collins	437.81	349.68	155.20	942.69
Greeley	520.80	250.20	58.80	829.80
Westminster	509.70	251.40	36.00	797.10
Boulder	382.92	247.20	85.20	715.32
Arvada	415.23	239.64	51.48	706.35
Northglenn	474.22	198.60	24.00	696.82
Longmont	335.76	250.92	85.56	672.24
Thornton	444.48	215.40	0.00	659.88
Denver	426.27	128.16	88.56	622.99
Broomfield	440.88	196.80	0.00	637.68
Lafayette	380.32	151.32	51.24	582.88
Louisville	328.29	180.72	39.00	548.01

These figures are based on a survey of water, wastewater, and stormwater rates of Front Range communities conducted in February 2011. They represent annual bills for a typical single-family, inside-city, residential customer with an average winter consumption of 5,000 gallons, total annual water consumption of 120,000 gallons and an irrigable area of 5,200 square feet. Stormwater charges represent a typical single-family account with 3,000 square feet of impervious area.

Boulder also compares favorably to regional utilities for both water and wastewater bills (from the [2010 City of Boulder Utilities Annual Report](#) “*Benchmark*” section).

Utility rate increases are set by the City Council each year after considering recommendations from the public, staff and the [Water Resources Advisory Board \(WRAB\)](#). The revenues received from Utility bills are used to pay for the maintenance and management of the water treatment, distribution and reclamation systems and all other expenses incurred by the Utilities Division.