



OUR FUTURE IN EVERY DRÖP

Water Meter Upgrade Project – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why is the City upgrading 53,000 water meters?

We are upgrading water meters across Santa Rosa to provide near real-time water usage data. Just like your old water meter, your upgraded water meter will record your water use for billing. Santa Rosa will provide the same reliable service with these new meters but with even more benefits.

What are the benefits of upgrading our water meters?

- **Enhancing Customer Service:** The upgraded meters will allow you to view and track your daily water usage, detect leaks faster, provide consistent billing dates, and expedite service starts.
- **Improving Water Savings:** A new online customer portal will identify water saving opportunities with personalized recommendations, tracking, and alerts.
- **Providing Near Real-time Water Usage Data:** The ability to access near real-time data not only allows you to track and manage your usage, but has the added benefit of providing critical data to Water Department staff responsible for assessing infrastructure replacement needs for water mains, pipes, and meters.
- **Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** The capability to transmit water use data wirelessly eliminates the need for vehicular travel to read water meters. In addition, faster leak detection means water and energy savings.

How is my water meter currently read?

Depending on your current meter type, your water meter is either read manually or is equipped for a drive-by wireless read. Drive-by customers will not require a visit to upgrade the meters as this can be done remotely.



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How will my meter be upgraded?

Santa Rosa Water employees and our licensed contractor, Utility Partners of America (UPA), will either fully replace your meter or install a remote-reading device on your existing meter. This will allow your meter to transmit water use information to an antenna. The antenna will then send the data via a secure communication network to Santa Rosa Water.

When will my water meter be upgraded?

We began upgrading meters in April 2017 and work is expected to continue through July 2021. You will receive a notice in the mail in advance of your scheduled upgrade if a visit is required.

Who will be upgrading my meter?

A City of Santa Rosa employee or our licensed contractor, Utility Partners of America (UPA), will be performing your meter upgrade. All installers will be dressed in uniform and can present identification to you. The company logo will also be displayed on the vehicle.

How will I know when my meter has been upgraded?

Your installer will leave a door hanger with details on the status of your meter upgrade. If an appointment is required, please call the number provided on the door hanger.

Will I lose water service during the upgrade?

If you are a customer that needs to have your meter fully replaced, there will be a short interruption in service of approximately 30 minutes or less. The meter installer will attempt to contact you before beginning work by knocking on your door.

When will the new customer service web portal be available?

To enhance customer service, the City will provide a new customer portal with near real-time water usage information. However, the new web portal will not be immediately available. We appreciate your patience as we are looking forward to providing this new tool. Please check back for more information.



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Will my information be kept private?

Your information is secure. A private and protected network is utilized to transmit meter data only. Customer specific information such as customer name, address, and account number is not sent over the network.

What is the process the City has followed for implementing this project?

We identified that many of the City's meters and reading equipment were aging and in need of replacement. In 2013, the City conducted a feasibility study and determined that upgrading to an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) would benefit our customers by enhancing customer service and creating operational efficiencies.

After thorough review by staff, the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) reviewed the project over nine public meetings. Included in the project preparation was a mitigated negative declaration through the California Environmental Quality Act process. The BPU approved the mitigated negative declaration and project implementation on July 21, 2016. Contract negotiations followed and project planning began, which included software installation and testing of equipment.

What are the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for this project?

The City has prepared an Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) which describes the project in more detail and evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the project. The IS/MND is available for review on the City's website at: srcity.org/meterupgrade

With incorporation of recommended mitigation measures, the IS/MND did not identify any potential significant environmental impacts. All public comments from the comment period were addressed and the Board of Public Utilities adopted the IS/MND on July 21, 2016.

What is the cost of this project? Are my rates going to go up?

The project will not require a rate increase. With careful planning the City has created a funding plan over several years. The meter upgrade project is budgeted at \$14 million and expected to have a positive rate of return after 15 years.



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Will radio frequency be used to transmit data?

Radio frequency (RF) is the method of transferring data wirelessly to and from various devices. In the case of Santa Rosa's meter upgrade project, the water meter unit transmits the water use readings to the antennas through RF. The water meter units read the meters once an hour. Once every 6 hours the data is transmitted to an antenna in the City through a secure connection. In addition to water use data, the device can send alerts, such as no use, leak detection, high use, or tampering.

Water meters are located on the frontage of properties, typically in cement boxes and covered. Water meters are not installed directly near buildings or homes. The location of the water meters and the placement inside the meter box significantly reduces exposure to RF.