

# WATER & SEWER INFORMATION SESSION AND PUBLIC HEARING

MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE

MAY 29, 2024

**Demetrios G. Vidalis P.E., SHEP**  
Director of Water & Sewer  
Water & Sewer Department



# AGENDA

6 to 6:30 PM

- Meter Replacement Project Update
- Presentation of Rate Proposal

6:30 to 8 PM

- Public Hearing
  - Accepting public testimony for the record



# UPDATE ON CITY-WIDE METER REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

- 90% of the City's meters have been replaced.
- Less than 6% of ratepayers have seen a significant increase due to catch-up reads from low estimates.
- The Water & Sewer Department is currently reviewing adjusting some bills by recalculating charges to align with previous lower rates.



# SIGN UP TODAY!

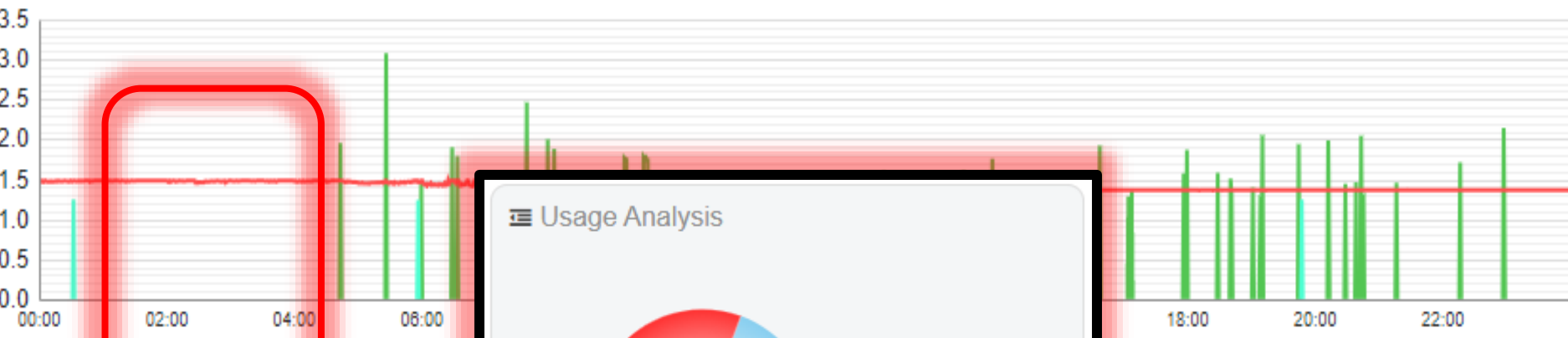


Please sign up for WaterScope to receive real-time information and alerts on your water/sewer usage. Contact Mass Installation, Inc. at 1-800-933-1360 or email [customerservice@massinstallation.com](mailto:customerservice@massinstallation.com) with the subject: WaterScope Opt-In

Also, please, keep your property's contact information up to date to ensure you receive updates and information from the Water and Sewer Department

# Daily Usage

Flow Rate(GPM)



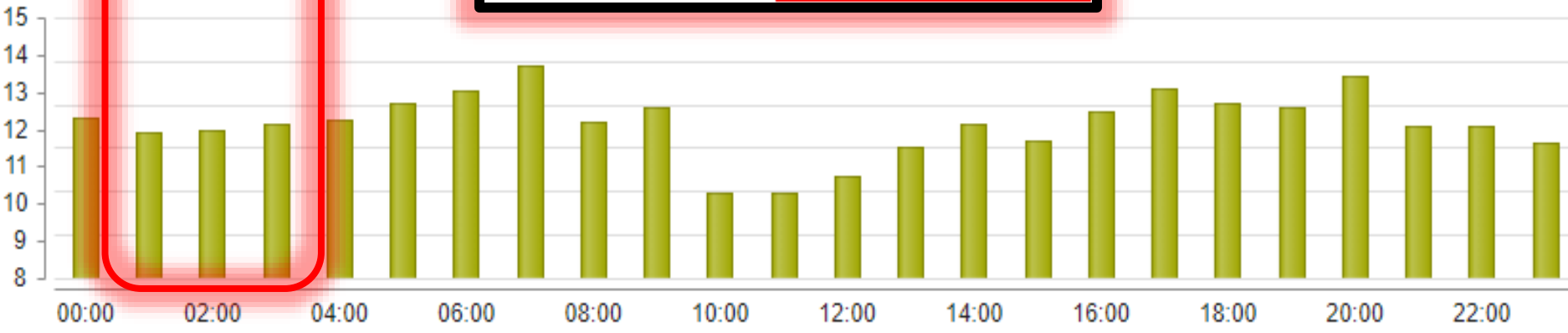
### Usage Analysis

- Residential
- Irrigation
- Leak

Leak: 264.52 FT3; 90.70%

# Consumption History

Consumption(Ft3)







# WATER & SEWER SERVICES

## **Public Health**

- Clean water to your home or business
- Sanitary sewer and stormwater service for all Somerville properties

## **Fire Suppression**

- Sufficient water pressure and volume for fire suppression and firefighting.

## **Administration**

- Customer Service
- Account Management
- Billing



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**116 miles of water mains**

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**183 miles of sewer mains**

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**29,000+** water & sewer connections

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**4,800+** manholes

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**1,600+** fire hydrants

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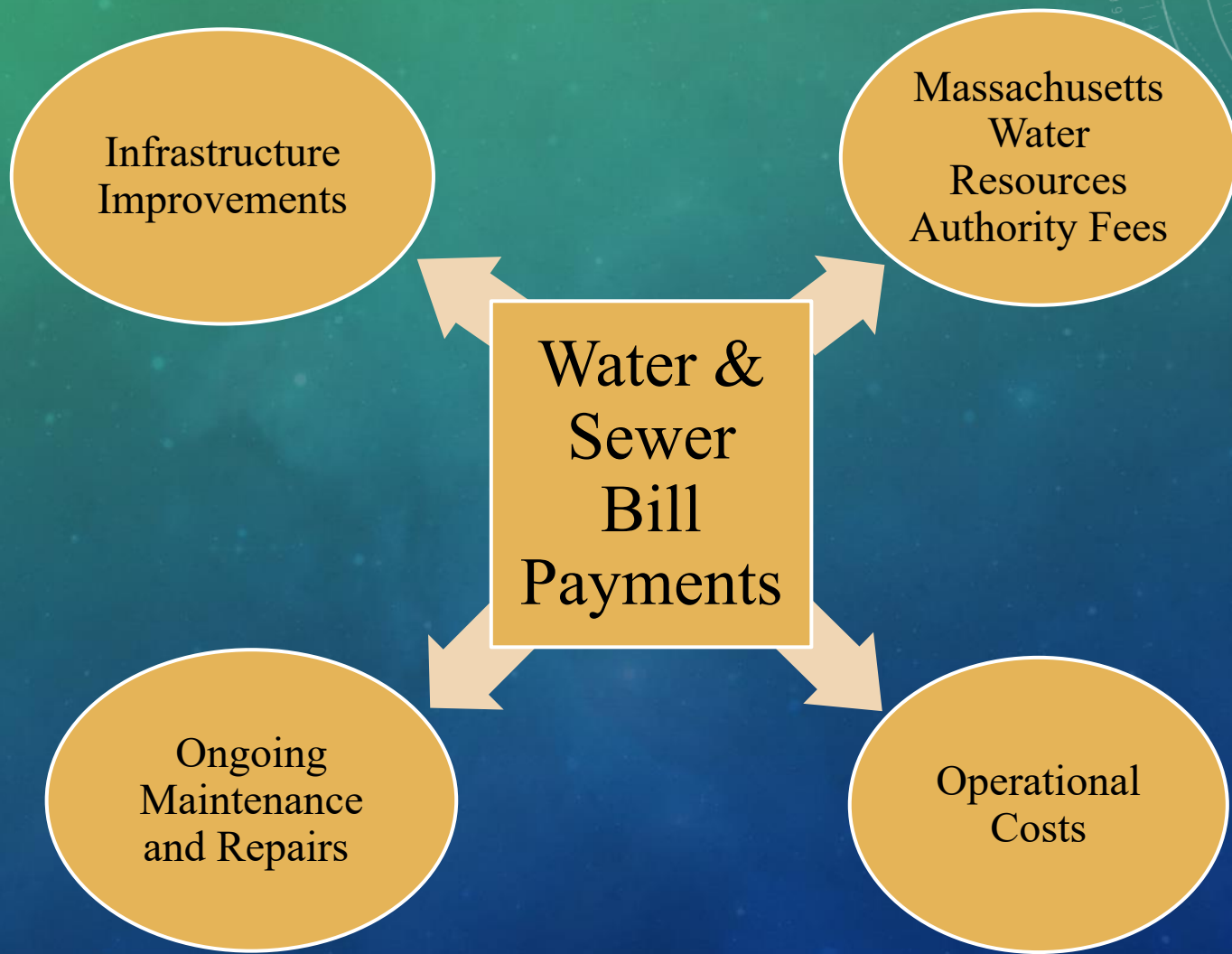
**3,600+** catch basins

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# WATER & SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE



# WHERE DO YOUR PAYMENTS GO?





# COST FACTORS TO FY25 RATE RECOMMENDATION



INCREASE IN  
MWRA FEES



\$500M FOR NEEDED  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
UPGRADE AND  
REPLACEMENT



INFLATION AND  
HIGHER  
INTEREST  
RATES



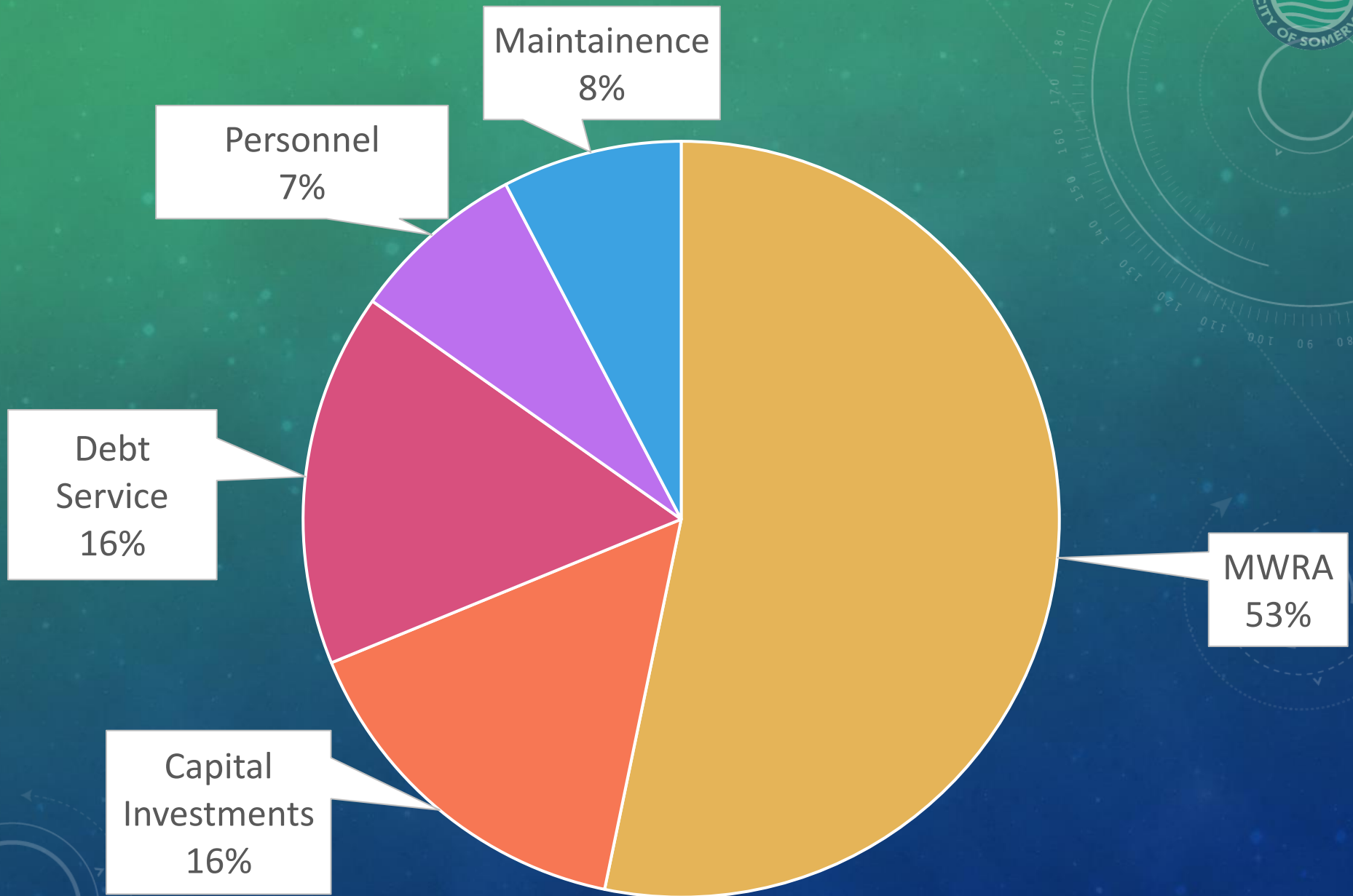
REGULATORY  
REQUIREMENTS  
AND ONGOING  
MAINTENANCE

**+13%** MWRA Water  
Assessment Cost FY25

**-2%** MWRA Sewer Assessment  
Cost for FY25



# WATER & SEWER DEPT FY25 BUDGET



■ MWRA ■ Capital Investments ■ Debt Service ■ Personnel ■ Maintenance



# HOW MUCH WILL THE CITY PAY THE MWRA?

WATER

50%

Cost of **water** supply from  
MWRA:

\$10.7M

SEWER

55%

Cost of **wastewater**  
treatment by MWRA:

\$17.7M



# IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FY25

<b>Water Projects</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Project Status</b>
Lead Service Line Replacement	\$200K	Annual Program
Spring Hill	\$200K	Near Completion
City Wide Meter Replacement	\$200K	Near Completion
Water Improvements	\$7.3M	Annual Program

<b>Sewer Projects</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Project Status</b>
Spring Hill Sewer Separation	\$1.5M	Near Completion
Sewer System Evaluation Study	\$1.5M	Annual Program
Poplar St Pump Station	\$110M	In Construction
Morrison Ave Flood Relief	TBD	In Design
Mystic River Outfall and Sewer Separation	\$2.7M	In Design
Sewer Improvements	\$5M	Annual Program



# AGING INFRASTRUCTURE





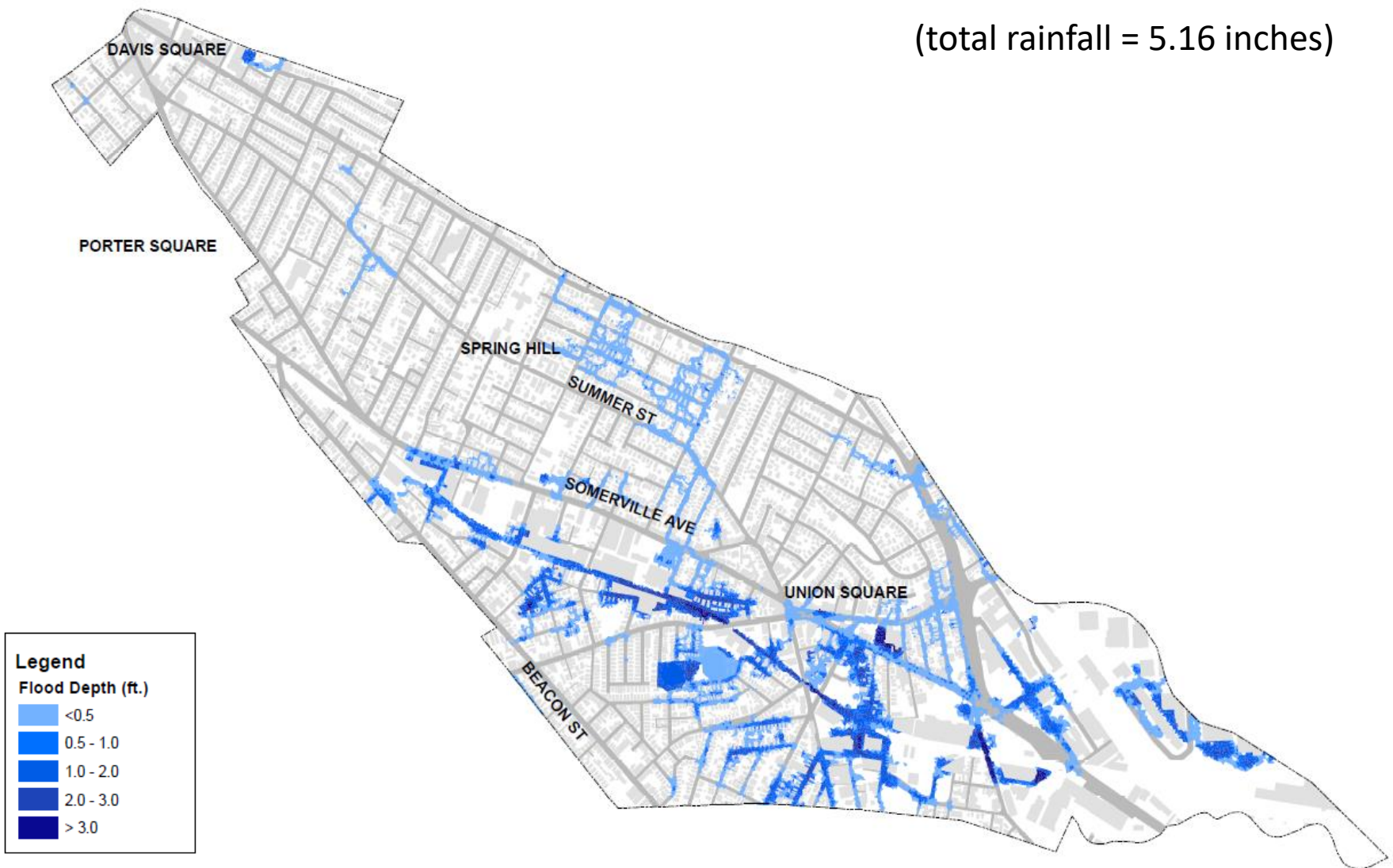
# WHAT ARE WE WORKING TO PREVENT?








# FLOODING BEFORE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION



10-year, 24-hour storm event  
(total rainfall = 5.16 inches)

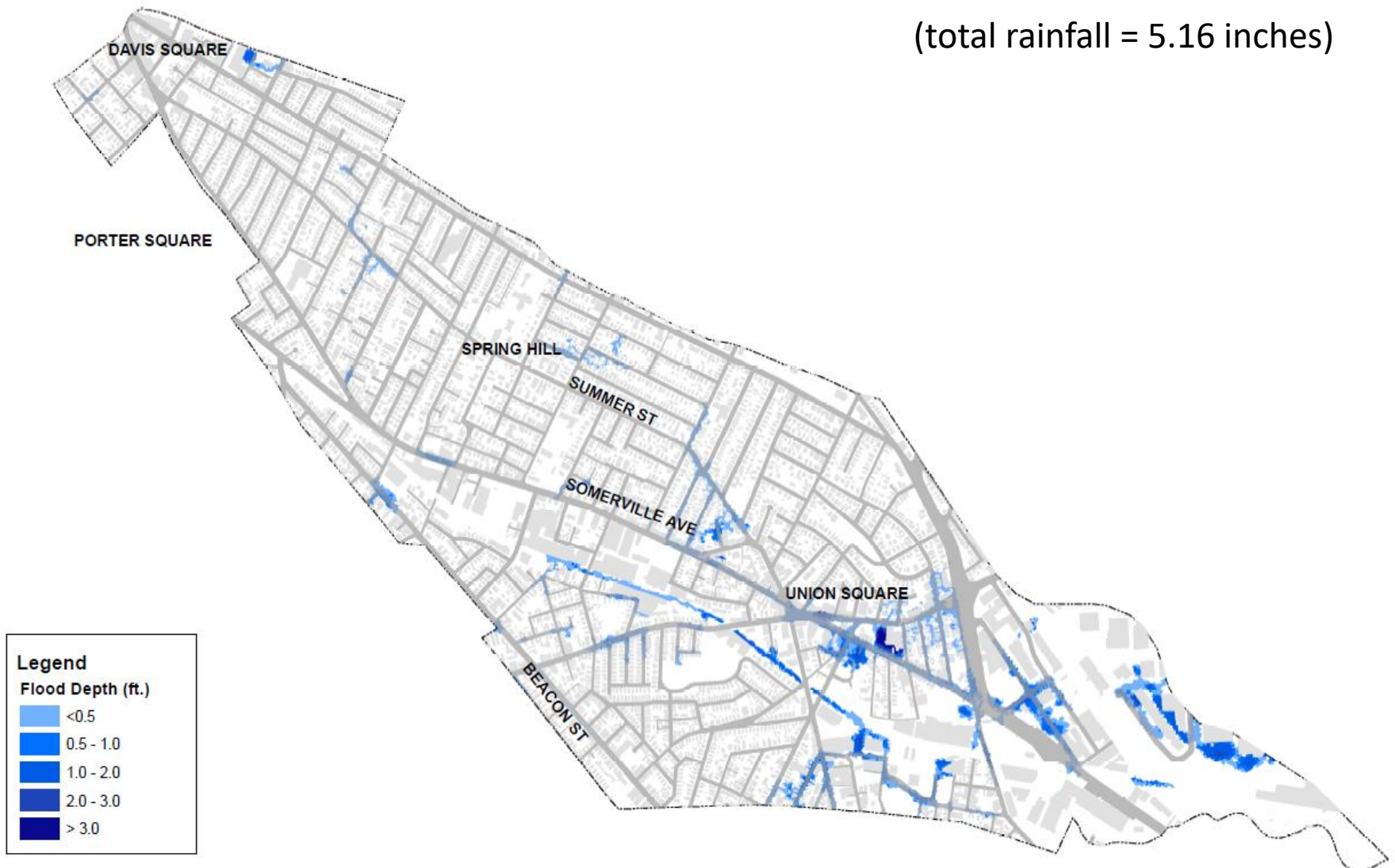


Legend	
Flood Depth (ft.)	
	<0.5
	0.5 - 1.0
	1.0 - 2.0
	2.0 - 3.0
	> 3.0

# FLOODING AFTER PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION



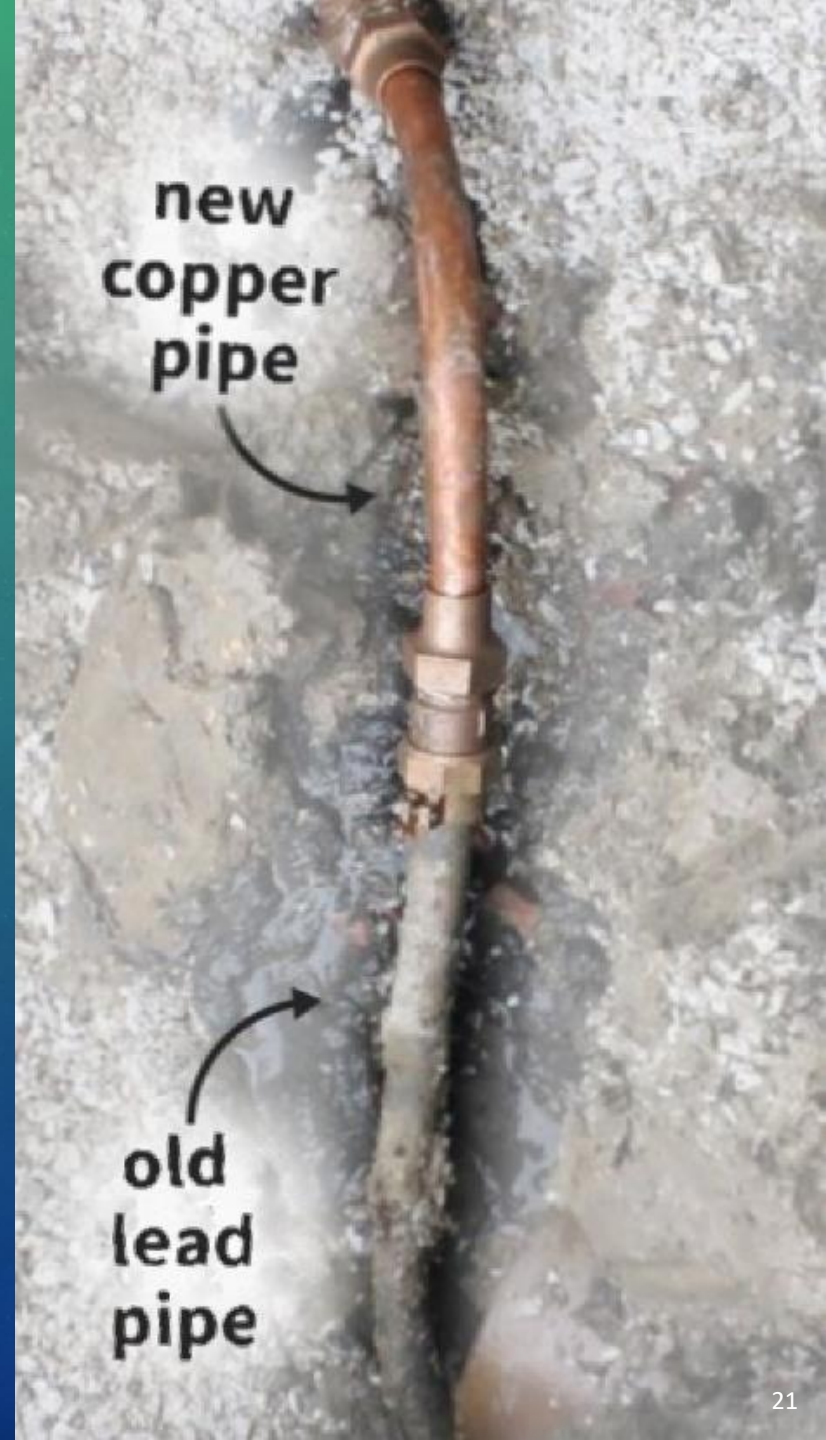
10-year, 24-hour storm event  
(total rainfall = 5.16 inches)





# LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT

- We have been hard at work to identify and replace lead lines from the over 15,500 services in the city.
- Since 2019, we have replaced 267 lead service lines, exceeding our annual goal of 44 replacements per year.
- We are ahead of industry standard for our region.
- For more information, you can check [www.somervillema.gov/leadservice](http://www.somervillema.gov/leadservice).





# PROPOSED RATE ADJUSTMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

Base  
Charges

No  
Change

Water  
Rates

9.5%  
Increase

Sewer  
Rates

5%  
Increase

Average Increase

6%





# PROPOSED RATE INCREASE IMPACTS

## Total Change in Annual Costs for Various Billing Units (including base & volumetric charges)

Total Units per Bill (in CCF)	FY 2024 Annually	FY 2025 Annually	\$ Change/Year (FY25 – FY24)	Annual \$ Change/ Household	% Change
15 (average condo unit)	\$1,012	\$1,067	\$54	\$54	5%
18 (average 1-family home)	\$1,236	\$1,305	\$69	\$69	6%
30 (average 2-family home)	\$2,131	\$2,259	\$128	\$64	6%
42 (average 3-family home)	\$3,025	\$3,212	\$187	\$62	6%
110 (average 8-unit building)	\$8,249	\$8,782	\$532	\$66	6%



# FY25 WATER AND SEWER PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL RATES

FY25 Residential Volumetric Charges (\$/Billing Unit)				
Tier	Tier Range (per CCF)	Water	Sewer	Combined
Discount Rate	0-8	\$6.06	\$11.82	\$17.88
Tier 1	9-13	\$6.76	\$13.15	\$19.91
Tier 2	14-67	\$9.72	\$16.77	\$26.49
Tier 3	68-133	\$10.18	\$17.59	\$27.77
Tier 4	Over 133	\$10.59	\$18.21	\$28.80



# FY25 WATER AND SEWER PROPOSED COMMERCIAL RATES

FY25 Commercial Volumetric Charges (\$/Billing Unit)				
Tier	Tier Range (per CCF)	Water	Sewer	Combined
Tier 1	0-13	\$6.76	\$13.15	\$19.91
Tier 2	14-67	\$9.72	\$16.77	\$26.49
Tier 3	68-133	\$10.18	\$17.59	\$27.77
Tier 4	Over 133	\$10.59	\$18.21	\$28.80

# RETAIL VS TAP: 1 GALLON BOTTLE

1 Gallon

46 Gallons



# RETAIL VS TAP: 16 OUNCE BOTTLE

## 1 Gallon



368 Gallons





# FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR RESIDENTS

- Continuation of policy of no water shut-offs for non-payment
- Exemptions for seniors and others (e.g., clauses 17D and 41C)
  - *Visit the Assessor's office page on the City Website <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/finance/assessing>*
- We are also currently working with a consultant on additional affordability options and policies that can help our ratepayers starting as soon as Jan, 2025



## PUBLIC HEARING

- **In person:** Please write your name on the sign-up form
- **Online:** Please write your name in the Q&A box
- Those in person will testify first, followed by those online
- Please say your name and address before providing testimony
- **2 Minutes per testimony**