ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON CITIES

Tax & User Fee SURVEY 2020

2020 Tax and User Fee Survey

Introduction

The Association of Washington Cities (AWC) conducts the Tax and User Fee Survey (TUFS) every two years and provides survey results to our member cities and towns and associate members to help as they develop and set tax rates, fees, and charges. In 2020, we invited all 281 cities and towns to participate in the voluntary survey. We collected survey data in three parts:

- Municipal taxes and fees
- Planning and development fees
- Utility rates and fees

This publication provides a summary of survey results. Analysis primarily focuses on city tax rates, fees, and charges. Visit wacities.org to access interactive dashboards and more detailed information by entity.

In this publication the word "cities" refers to all 281 cities and towns.

AWC's mission is to serve our members through advocacy, education, and services.

Contents

Survey methodology

Data for the Tax and User Fee Survey are collected in three separate surveys: municipal taxes and fees, planning and development fees, and utility rates and fees. Each survey was sent to all 281 cities in Washington state. The surveys were conducted from late June through early August 2020. Surveys were distributed to city clerks, department directors, and in some cases mayors (depending on population).

Response rates

208 cities (74%) responded to the municipal taxes and fees TUFS. These cities represent 68% of the state's incorporated population and 68% of the cities with a population of 10,000 or more.

179 cities (64%) responded to the planning and development fees TUFS. These cities represent 63% of the state's incorporated population and 63% of the cities with a population of 10,000 or more.

188 cities (67%) responded to the utility rates and fees TUFS. These cities represent 59% of the state's incorporated population and 56% of the cities with a population of 10,000 or more. **219 cities** own and/or operate their own utilities, representing approximately 78% of all cities. Roughly 86% of all cities owning/operating their own utilities responded to this year's utility rates and fees TUFS. Utility rates and fees for approximately 30 of those cities were not captured in this year's survey data.

TUFS 2020 response rates	Municipal taxes & fees		Planning & development fees		Utility rates & fees	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
By city	208	74%	179	64%	188	67%
By population*	3,293,712	68%	3,056,751	63%	2,849,772	59%

**Based on 2018 Census data for individuals living within the 281 member cities. Figure excludes unincorporated areas.*

Data analysis

Cities that use TUFS data find it most helpful for budget discussions, rate setting, and data-informed policy decisions. Cities primarily use the data to show comparisons among peer cities (similar in population, assessed value, industry, and sales tax growth).

Cluster analysis

In order to enhance city comparisons and data analysis, AWC partnered with Cheryl King and Daniel Brittain of The Athena Group and The Evergreen State College to conduct a statistical analysis referred to as "cluster analysis." This approach allows cities to be sorted into mutually exclusive groups such that groups are more or less homogenous. Following the initial analysis, AWC staff then identified cities that could move between clusters into better fitting groups.

Cluster descriptions

The clusters are first described by metro/nonmetro status. Cities in a "metro" cluster are cities within a county that have an urban center with a population greater than 50,000[1]. Clusters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are described as "metro" clusters. As such, cities in a "nonmetro" cluster are cities within a county that does not meet the "metro" criteria. Clusters 1, 2, 3, and 4 are described as nonmetro clusters.

Clusters were then sorted based on five variables: population, five-year population growth, five-year sales tax growth, assessed value per capita as of 2018, and five-year assessed value growth. Other variables, such as median age of population, geographical location, or percentage of nonwhite population, did not have a significant impact on the makeup of city clusters.

Cluster	Description	Cities
1	Large nonmetro cities	Aberdeen, Centralia, Ellensburg, Moses Lake, Oak Harbor, Port Angeles, Pullman, Quincy
2	Small nonmetro cities – low population growth	Albion, Almira, Brewster, Cathlamet, Chehalis, Chewelah, Colfax, Colton, Colville, Cosmopolis, Coulee City, Coulee Dam, Creston, Cusick, Davenport, Dayton, Electric City, Endicott, Ephrata, Farmington, Forks, Garfield, George, Goldendale, Grand Coulee, Harrington, Hartline, Hatton, Hoquiam, Ione, Kettle Falls, Kittitas, Krupp, LaCrosse, Lamont, Lind, Malden, Marcus, McCleary, Metaline, Metaline Falls, Montesano, Morton, Mossyrock, Nespelem, Newport, North Bonneville, Northport, Oakesdale, Oakville, Odessa, Okanogan, Omak, Oroville, Palouse, Pateros, Pe Ell, Pomeroy, Raymond, Rearden, Republic, Ritzville, Riverside, Rosalia, Roslyn, Royal City, Shelton, Soap Lake, South Bend, South Cle Elum, Sprague, St. John, Starbuck, Tekoa, Toledo, Twisp, Uniontown, Vader, Warden, Washtucna, Wilbur, Wilson Creek, Winlock
3	Small nonmetro cities – high population growth	Elma, Elmer City, Mattawa, Napavine, Othello, Springdale, Tonasket
4	Nonmetro tourism hubs	Bingen, Cle Elum, Conconully, Coupeville, Friday Harbor, Ilwaco, Langley, Long Beach, Ocean Shores, Port Townsend, Sequim, Stevenson, Westport, White Salmon, Winthrop
5	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/ assessed value per capita	Bainbridge Island, Battle Ground, Black Diamond, Bonney Lake, Bothell, Brier, Buckley, Burien, Burlington, Camas, Carnation, Covington, Des Moines, DuPont, Duvall, Edgewood, Edmonds, Gig Harbor, Issaquah, Kenmore, La Center, Lake Forest Park, Lake Stevens, Lynnwood, Maple Valley, Marysville, Mercer Island, Mill Creek, Monroe, Mountlake Terrace, Mukilteo, Newcastle, Normandy Park, North Bend, Orting, Redmond, Ridgefield, Sammamish, SeaTac, Shoreline, Snoqualmie, Sultan, Sumner, Tukwila, Washougal, Woodinville
6	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/assessed value per capita	Airway Heights, Algona, Anacortes, Arlington, Bremerton, Cheney, College Place, East Wenatchee, Enumclaw, Ferndale, Fife, Fircrest, Kelso, Kennewick, Lacey, Lakewood, Liberty Lake, Longview, Lynden, Milton, Mount Vernon, Olympia, Pacific, Pasco, Port Orchard, Poulsbo, Puyallup, Richland, Sedro-Woolley, Snohomish, Stanwood, Steilacoom, Sunnyside, Tumwater, Union Gap, University Place, Walla Walla, Wenatchee, West Richland, Woodland, Yelm
7	Metro tourism hubs	Blaine, Chelan, Concrete, Hamilton, Index, La Conner, Leavenworth, Ruston, Skykomish, Woodway
8	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	Asotin, Benton City, Bridgeport, Bucoda, Carbonado, Cashmere, Castle Rock, Clarkston, Connell, Darrington, Deer Park, Eatonville, Entiat, Everson, Fairfield, Gold Bar, Grandview, Granger, Granite Falls, Harrah, Kahlotus, Kalama, Latah, Lyman, Mabton, Mansfield, Medical Lake, Mesa, Millwood, Moxee, Naches, Nooksack, Prescott, Prosser, Rainier, Rock Island, Rockford, Roy, Selah, South Prairie, Spangle, Sumas, Tenino, Tieton, Toppenish, Waitsburg, Wapato, Waterville, Waverly, Wilkeson, Yacolt, Zillah
9	Large cities	Auburn, Bellevue, Bellingham, Everett, Federal Way, Kent, Kirkland, Renton, Seattle, Spokane, Spokane Valley, Tacoma, Vancouver, Yakima
10	High-income residential	Beaux Arts Village, Clyde Hill, Hunts Point, Medina, Yarrow Point

Tax and fee structures vary greatly between jurisdictions. In many cases, survey results do not show the details of each tax, charge, or fee. In some instances, they may only represent a range or part of the rate or fee. Therefore, this data is intended to provide a "snapshot" of the tax and user fee universe. Results from this survey can help identify overall trends and ranges but should not be used to quote an individual jurisdiction's rates.

While precautions have been taken to provide information that is as accurate as possible, it is not practical to verify all of the information provided. AWC assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions that may be contained in the survey results.

Unless otherwise noted, the analysis provided in this overview uses data collected from the Tax and User Fee Survey. It represents only the taxes and fees for cities responding to the survey. Participants vary from year to year.

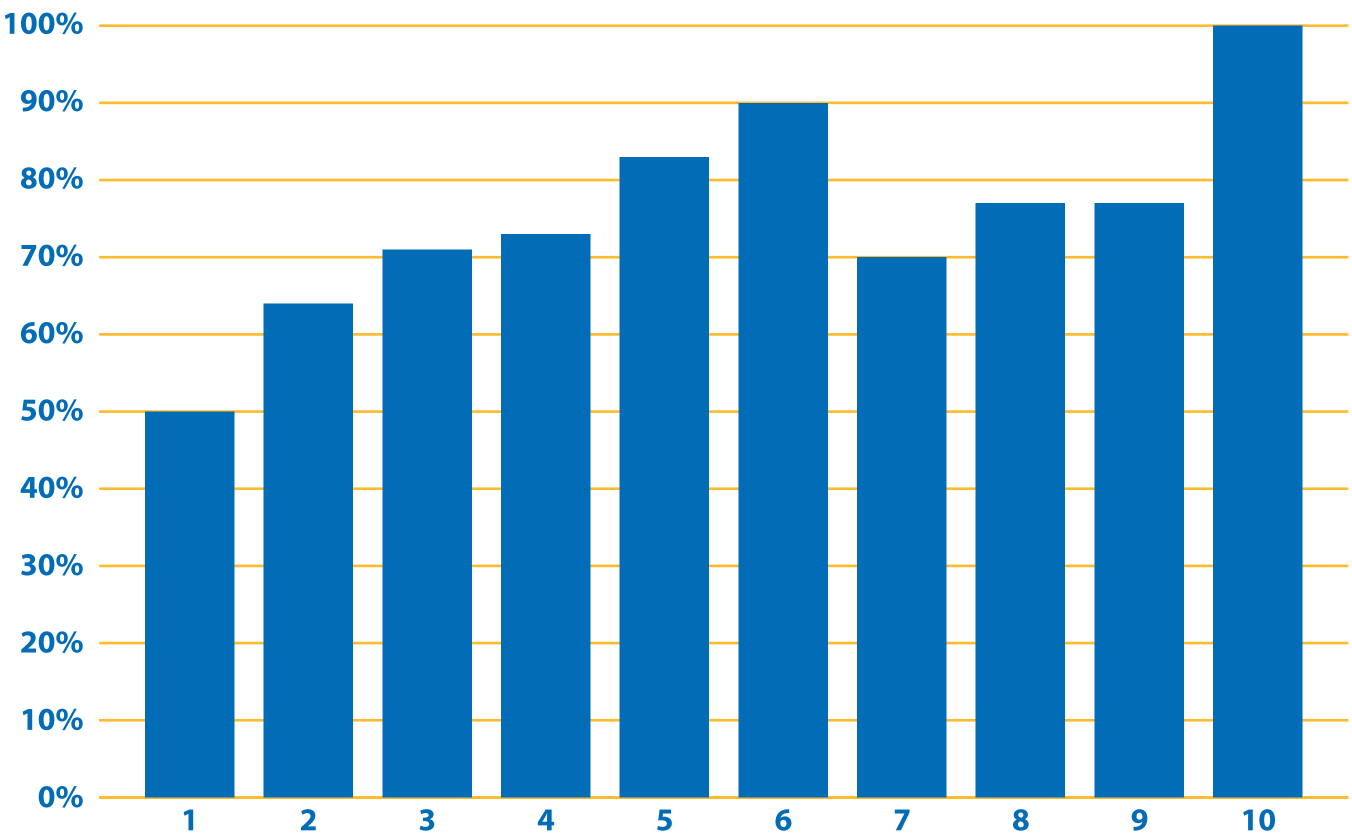
[1] Office of Management and Budget. "2010 Standards for Delineating Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas; Notice." *Federal Register* 75.123. 28, June 2010.

2 Municipal taxes and fees

Who responded?

208 cities (74%) responded to the survey on municipal tax rates and fees. These cities represent 68% of the state's incorporated population and 68% of the cities with a population of 10,000 or more. The majority of data presented in this summary is an analysis of survey results and therefore only represents tax rates and fees for responding cities.

Percentage of cities that completed the municipal taxes and fees survey by cluster



There are a number of differences between the 2020 TUFS report and previous TUFS iterations. Namely, AWC no longer gathers information regarding municipal lodging taxes, sales and use taxes, or gambling taxes. As of 2013, local governments annually report lodging tax expenditures to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC)[2]. Additionally, the Department of Revenue hosts all local sales and use tax data, including tax rate information, change notices, annexations, and quarterly tax revenue[3]. For more information regarding city gambling tax authority, visit Municipal Research and Services Center's (MRSC) "Gambling in Washington State" resource[4].

[2] RCW 67.28.1816

[3] Washington State Department of Revenue. "Local sales and use tax." Accessed 1 October, 2020. dor.wa.gov/taxes-rates/sales-and-use-tax-rates/local-sales-and-use-tax

[4] Municipal Research and Services Center. "Gambling in Washington State." Accessed 5 October 2020. mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Legal/Regulation/Gambling-in-Washington-State.aspx

Property tax

Cities are limited to 1% annual increases in property taxes, excluding voter-approved levies, new construction, state-assessed utilities, and annexations. 177 cities (85% of total respondents) reported raising property taxes by 1% or more in 2020. Cities may increase taxes by greater than 1% with a voter-approved levy lid lift or through banked capacity (where a city levies less than the maximum amount allowed for one year and "banks" the difference to use in the future).

Utility taxes

A utility tax is a tax levied on the gross operating revenues of a utility within the boundaries of a city and the city's own utilities. Cities may levy a utility tax up to 6% on electric, natural gas, steam energy, and telephone utilities, unless voters approve a higher rate. There is no limit on other utilities.

189 cities (91% of total respondents) report imposing a utility tax. Eight cities (4% of total respondents) impose a voter-approved utility tax above the statutory limit of 6% on electric, natural gas, and/or telephone. These cities have used the additional revenue from the voter-approved utility tax to fund transportation infrastructure and other infrastructure operation and maintenance projects.

As of June 11, 2020, a city that operates its own water, sewer or wastewater, or stormwater utility and imposes utility taxes must disclose the tax or fee to its utility customers[7].

Percentage of cities exercising utility tax authority by utility type

Metro Status	Cluster definition	Natural gas	Electricity	Telephone	Cable TV	Garbage	Water	Sewer	Stormwater
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	75%	100%	100%	75%	100%	75%	75%	50%
Nonmetro	Small rural cities – low population growth	23%	60%	67%	42%	65%	77%	73%	10%
Nonmetro	Small rural cities – high population growth	40%	100%	100%	80%	40%	80%	80%	0%
Nonmetro	Rural tourism hubs	45%	73%	73%	55%	73%	64%	73%	18%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/assessed value per capita	79%	82%	84%	71%	63%	55%	47%	47%
Metro	Metro tourism hubs	14%	71%	71%	43%	57%	43%	57%	29%
Metro	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	50%	73%	75%	58%	65%	80%	63%	10%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/assessed value per capita	89%	86%	86%	75%	78%	72%	81%	67%
Metro	Largest cities	91%	91%	100%	91%	91%	82%	82%	82%
Metro	High-income residential	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	60%	60%	0%
Overall responses in category		**57%**	**76%**	**79%**	**62%**	**69%**	**71%**	**68%**	**32%**

[7] RCW 35.92.460: Cities may disclose this information on regular billing statements (either electronic or paper), on their website, or through an insert, mailer, or other communication provided to utility customers. Cities must disclose this information either annually, or within 30 days of the effective date of any tax rate change.

Franchise fees

148 cities (71% of total respondents) collect franchise fees for cable, garbage, water, or sewer. Most franchise fees are based on a percentage of gross domestic receipts. 38 cities (18% of total respondents) impose a flat fee or other arrangement for garbage. Franchise fees on cable are limited to 5%.

Percentage of cities exercising franchise fee authority by franchise

Metro status	Cluster definition	Cable TV	Garbage	Water	Sewer	N/A
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	75%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Small rural cities – low population growth	42%	8%	2%	0%	40%
	Small rural cities – high population growth	100%	20%	0%	0%	0%
	Rural tourism hubs	73%	9%	0%	0%	18%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/assessed value per capita	87%	45%	21%	18%	3%
	Metro tourism hubs	86%	14%	0%	0%	14%
	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	55%	8%	3%	0%	33%
	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/assessed value per capita	86%	22%	8%	6%	8%
	Largest cities	100%	9%	27%	27%	0%
	High-income residential	40%	40%	60%	60%	40%
Overall responses by category		**68%**	**18%**	**9%**	**7%**	**21%**

Business licenses

Of the 208 cities reporting, 167 (80% of total respondents) require businesses to obtain a standard business license for a fee. 119 cities (57% of total respondents) require businesses to register with or without a fee.

Cities can charge either a flat fee, a fee based on type of business, per employee, number of employees, square footage, or any combination of the options. The average flat or initial business license fee is $48.77.

Percentage of cities assessing business licenses by fee type

Metro status	Cluster definition	Flat fee	Type of business	Per employee	Number of employees (range)	Square feet (range)
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	100%	75%	0%	25%	0%
	Small rural cities – low population growth	38%	2%	2%	8%	0%
	Small rural cities – high population growth	80%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Rural tourism hubs	82%	0%	9%	0%	0%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/assessed value per capita	79%	13%	11%	13%	5%
	Metro tourism hubs	86%	14%	0%	43%	14%
	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	73%	8%	3%	8%	0%
	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/ assessed value per capita	72%	11%	11%	22%	0%
	Largest cities	80%	40%	20%	20%	0%
	High-income residential	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Overall adoption in category		**66%**	**10%**	**6%**	**13%**	**1%**

As of January 2019, all cities with business license ordinances are required to implement new business license requirements. Cities may use the state's Business Licensing Service (BLS) or FileLocal as a platform for businesses to obtain city business licenses. Cities are required to partner with FileLocal or BLS by December 31, 2022[8].

Business and occupation taxes

As of September 2020, 47 cities impose a local business and occupation tax, otherwise known as the local B&O tax. Five cities (Aberdeen, Bellingham, Seattle, Tacoma, and Westport) have rates higher than the statutory limit of 0.002 (0.2%) that were voter-approved or were in place before the rate was capped on January 1, 1982. Some cities tax business categories other than the traditional manufacturing, retail, services, and wholesale categories.

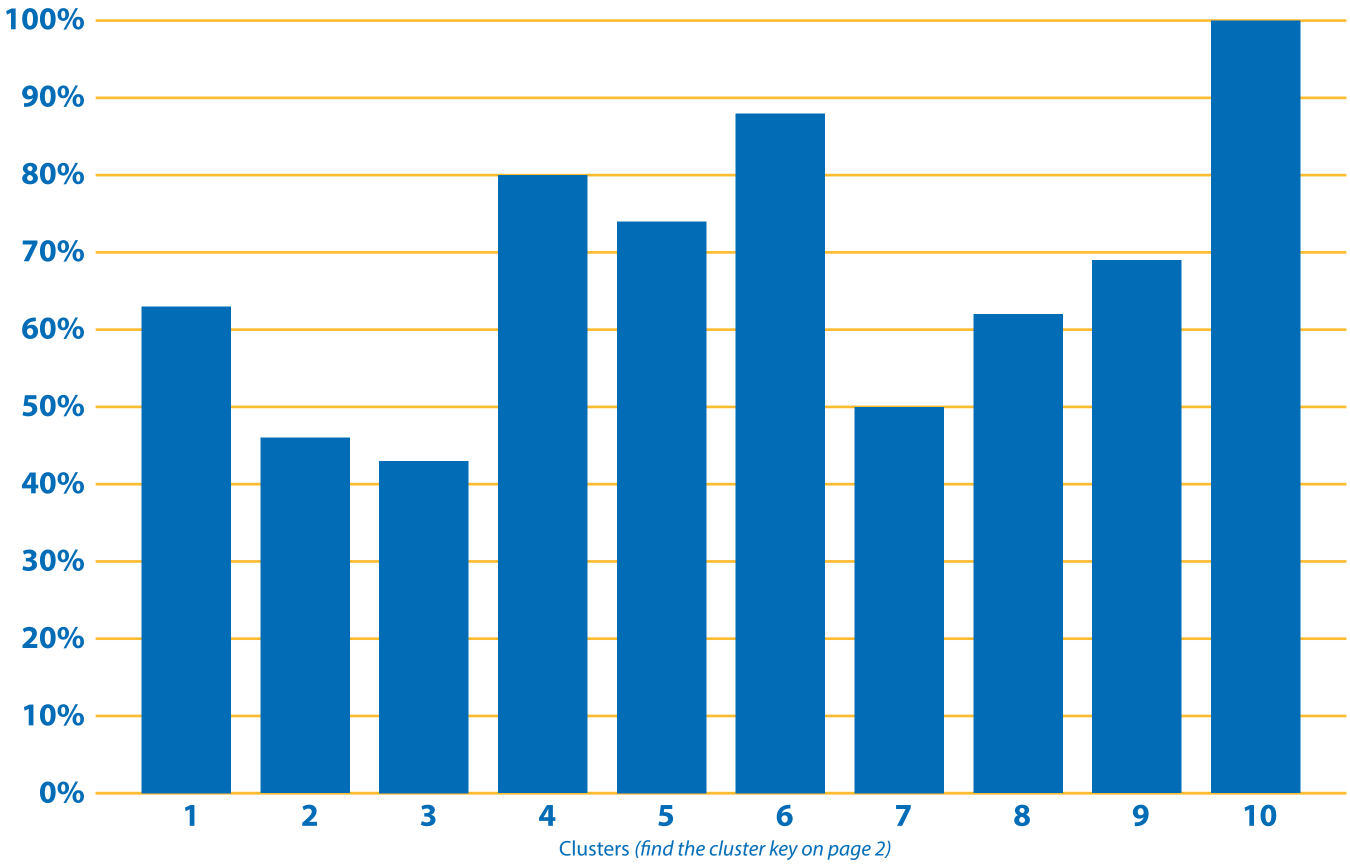
Legislation adopted during the 2003 legislative session required cities with a local B&O tax to adopt a city B&O tax model ordinance[9]. To incorporate changes required by two bills passed during the 2019 legislative session[10, 11], the model ordinance was updated to include mandatory changes to service apportionment, definitions, and technical changes including updated references to statutes[12].

[8] RCW 35.90
[9] RCW 35.102
[10] **HB 1403**, "Simplifying the administration of municipal business and occupation tax apportionment." 2019-20 Legislative Session.
[11] **HB 1059**, "Extending the business and occupation tax return filing date for annual filers." 2019-20 Legislative Session.
[12] Association of Washington Cities. "2019 Model Ordinance." Accessed 1 October 2020. wacities.org/docs/default-source/resources/bando-taxes/2019modelordinance.pdf?sfvrsn=c35f5f4f_0.

3 Planning and development fees

179 cities responded to the survey for planning and development. These cities represent 63% of Washington's incorporated population and 63% of cities with a population of 10,000 or more. Planning and development fee analysis represents only cities responding to the survey. Information is included about building, land use application, and impact fees as well as zoning and building permits.

Percentage of cities that completed the planning and development fees survey by cluster



Building fees, valuations, and permit fees

The building fees portion of the survey encompasses multiple types of data. The first is valuation per square foot for residential single-family and multifamily housing based on the five types of construction outlined in the International Building Code (IBC). Valuation per square foot is classified by the five types of construction (I-V) and two types of fire protection (A or B) in the IBC. For a more detailed breakdown of valuations and valuation categories, visit wacities.org.

The second is building permit fees for five valuations ranging from $500 to $1,000,000. Data are also provided on fees for mechanical, plumbing, and electrical permits as well as residential and commercial plan checks. Building permit fees were collected for 12 valuation categories (ranging from $1-$500 to $1,000,000). The percentage of cities that collect or do not collect mechanical, plumbing, and electrical permitting fees is provided in the chart below.

Percentage of cities charging permitting fees by type

Metro status	Cluster definition	Mechanical permitting fees	Plumbing permitting fees	Electrical permitting fees
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	100%	100%	20%
	Small rural cities – low population growth	44%	46%	12%
	Small rural cities – high population growth	67%	67%	0%
	Rural tourism hubs	83%	83%	8%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/assessed value per capita	97%	97%	36%
	Metro tourism hubs	67%	67%	0%
	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	78%	78%	25%
	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/assessed value per capita	89%	86%	17%
	Largest cities	89%	89%	56%
	High-income residential	80%	60%	0%
Overall responses in category		**77%**	**76%**	**21%**

Comprehensive land use fees

Comprehensive land use fees are those charged for short plats, preliminary and final subdivisions, binding site plans, conditional uses, SEPA/environmental checklists, rezones, annexation petitions, and more.

Cities use widely differing formulas to assess these fees. For example, some base the fees on several lots while others use a base fee plus an additional fee per hour of staff time. Because of this variation, the data collected does not lend itself to summarization.

Growth Management Act impact fees

Of the 181 cities in counties required to plan under the Growth Management Act (GMA), 117 (65%) responded to the survey. Among those cities, 46 (25% of total respondents) provided GMA impact fee information for one or more of the following impact fee types: fire protection, parks, schools, and transportation facilities.

For residential development, some cities assess GMA impact fees for fire protection per square foot while others assess the fees per dwelling unit.

Percentage of cities required to plan under GMA & impact fees varying by location

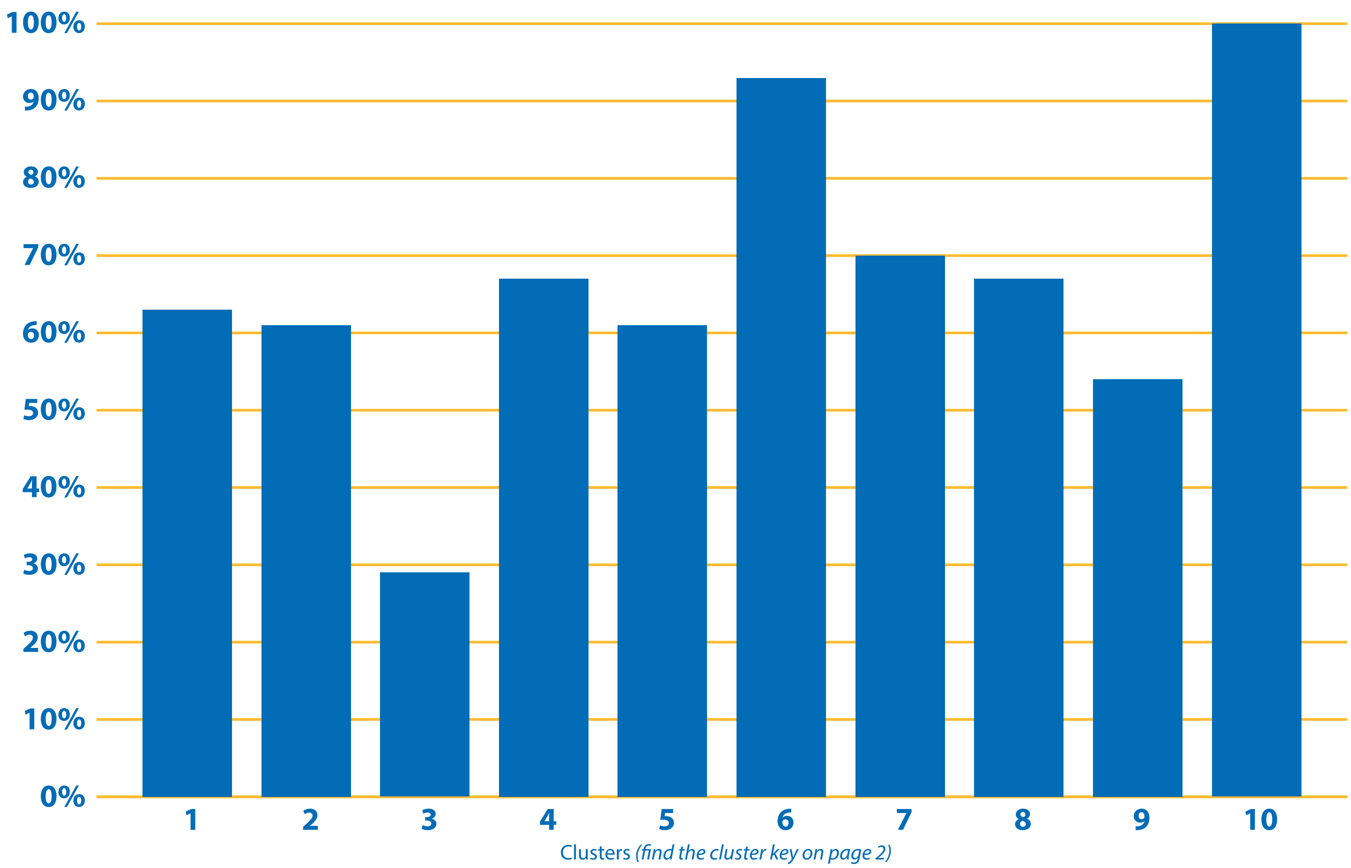
Metro status	Cluster definition	Required to plan	Fire protection	Parks/open space	Schools	Transportation
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Small rural cities – low population growth	49%	0%	5%	0%	0%
	Small rural cities – high population growth	67%	50%	50%	0%	50%
	Rural tourism hubs	42%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/assessed value per capita	94%	13%	35%	32%	45%
	Metro tourism hubs	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	84%	7%	11%	4%	15%
	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/assessed value per capita	83%	17%	40%	30%	50%
	Largest cities	100%	22%	11%	44%	56%
	High-income residential	80%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Overall responses in category		**75%**	**10%**	**21%**	**18%**	**29%**

4 Utility rates and fees

188 cities responded to the survey on utility rates and fees. The 188 responding cities represent 59% of Washington's incorporated population and 56% of cities with a population of 10,000 or more. Some of the cities responding do not provide water, sewer, and/or stormwater services.

This summary provides an analysis of city utility rates and fees. It is a representation of survey data and therefore only reflects the rates of those cities responding to the survey.

Percentage of cities that completed the utility rates and fees survey by cluster



Water system

All rates reported in this summary are monthly charges for a single-family residence based on the use of 1,000 cubic feet (cf) of water. Slightly less than 55% of city respondents offer rate discounts to senior and/or other low-income customers for drinking water services.

Aging infrastructure is one of the most critical, costly, and complex issues facing Washington cities. As the state's incorporated population continues to grow, cities struggle to keep pace with growing infrastructure needs–whether that's new construction, basic operation, or increased maintenance.

Age of drinking water system by type - Production & storage

Metro status	Cluster definition	0-10 years old	11-25 years old	26-50 years old	51-75 years old	More than 75 years old	Don't know	No response
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	0%	0%	60%	20%	0%	0%	20%
	Small rural cities – low population growth	8%	12%	41%	10%	6%	12%	12%
	Small rural cities – high population growth	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Rural tourism hubs	0%	20%	50%	10%	0%	0%	20%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/assessed value per capita	0%	11%	21%	0%	0%	7%	61%
	Metro tourism hubs	0%	0%	29%	29%	0%	0%	43%
	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	9%	34%	37%	3%	3%	6%	9%
	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/assessed value per capita	3%	17%	42%	6%	3%	3%	28%
	Largest cities	0%	0%	50%	25%	0%	0%	25%
	High-income residential	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%
Overall responses in category		**5%**	**16%**	**37%**	**7%**	**3%**	**6%**	**26%**

Age of drinking water system by type - Treatment facilities

Metro status	Cluster definition	0-10 years old	11-25 years old	26-50 years old	51-75 years old	More than 75 years old	Don't know	No response
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	20%	20%	20%	20%	0%	0%	20%
	Small rural cities – low population growth	8%	18%	27%	2%	0%	18%	27%
	Small rural cities – high population growth	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Rural tourism hubs	20%	20%	50%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/assessed value per capita	4%	14%	14%	0%	0%	7%	61%
	Metro tourism hubs	14%	0%	14%	14%	0%	0%	57%
	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	11%	29%	26%	0%	0%	14%	20%
	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/assessed value per capita	3%	28%	28%	6%	3%	6%	28%
	Largest cities	13%	0%	38%	0%	0%	0%	50%
	High-income residential	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Overall responses in category		**9%**	**19%**	**26%**	**3%**	**1%**	**10%**	**33%**

Age of drinking water system by type - Distribution infrastructure

Metro status	Cluster definition	0-10 years old	11-25 years old	26-50 years old	51-75 years old	More than 75 years old	Don't know	No response
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	0%	0%	40%	20%	0%	20%	20%
	Small rural cities – low population growth	2%	6%	47%	12%	6%	12%	16%
	Small rural cities – high population growth	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%
	Rural tourism hubs	0%	20%	30%	20%	10%	0%	20%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/assessed value per capita	0%	7%	21%	0%	4%	7%	61%
	Metro tourism hubs	0%	14%	29%	29%	0%	0%	29%
	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	11%	20%	34%	14%	6%	6%	9%
	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/assessed value per capita	0%	14%	33%	19%	3%	3%	28%
	Largest cities	0%	0%	38%	38%	0%	0%	25%
	High-income residential	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%
Overall responses in category		**3%**	**11%**	**34%**	**14%**	**4%**	**7%**	**26%**

Water rate structures

Cities use three primary types of water rate structures:

- **Flat rate:** One charge regardless of the amount of water used;
- **Uniform block rate:** A base charge plus a fixed rate per unit of water used above the allowed base; and
- **Inclining rate:** A base charge plus a variable rate per unit of water used above the allowed base.

Base water rates inside the corporate boundary range from $9.90 to $95, while base water rates outside the corporate boundary range from $9.90 to $118.75.

Percentage of cities with drinking water rate structures

Metro status	Cluster definition	Declining	Flat charge	Inclining	Seasonal	Uniform block	No response
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	0%	0%	60%	0%	20%	20%
	Small rural cities – low population growth	4%	29%	35%	4%	8%	20%
	Small rural cities – high population growth	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%
	Rural tourism hubs	10%	10%	40%	0%	30%	10%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/ assessed value per capita	0%	7%	29%	0%	7%	57%
	Metro tourism hubs	0%	57%	14%	0%	0%	29%
	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	9%	23%	37%	0%	17%	14%
	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/assessed value per capita	0%	14%	36%	0%	19%	31%
	Largest cities	0%	0%	63%	13%	0%	25%
	High-income residential	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Overall responses in category		**3%**	**19%**	**35%**	**2%**	**13%**	**28%**

Sewer system

All rates are monthly charges for a single-family residence. The majority of providers charge a flat fee for residential customers. Base sewer rates inside the corporate boundary range from $4.52 to $163, while base sewer rates outside the corporate boundary range from $6.50 to $184. The rates for providers that use a volume basis for sewer charges are based on the use of 1,000 cf of water. Many cities are experiencing increased maintenance and operation costs associated with managing deteriorating sewer system infrastructure.

Percentage of cities with sewer rate structures

Metro status	Cluster definition	Flat charge	Volume-based with actual water use	Volume-based with adjusted water use	No response
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	80%	0%	0%	20%
	Small rural cities – low population growth	67%	6%	8%	20%
	Small rural cities – high population growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
	Rural tourism hubs	80%	0%	10%	10%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/assessed value per capita	29%	7%	11%	54%
	Metro tourism hubs	57%	14%	0%	29%
	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	54%	17%	6%	23%
	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/ assessed value per capita	53%	6%	17%	25%
	Largest cities	38%	13%	25%	25%
	High-income residential	0%	0%	0%	100%
Overall responses in category		**54%**	**8%**	**10%**	**28%**

Age of sewer system by type - Collections infrastructure

Metro status	Cluster definition	0-10 years old	11-25 years old	26-50 years old	More than 50 years old	Don't know	No response
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	0%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
	Small rural cities – low population growth	4%	12%	33%	12%	16%	24%
	Small rural cities – high population growth	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
	Rural tourism hubs	0%	20%	50%	10%	10%	10%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/ assessed value per capita	0%	4%	36%	0%	0%	61%
	Metro tourism hubs	0%	14%	29%	14%	0%	43%
	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	9%	23%	20%	14%	9%	26%
	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/ assessed value per capita	3%	11%	36%	17%	3%	31%
	Largest cities	0%	13%	25%	38%	0%	25%
	High-income residential	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Overall responses in category		**3%**	**13%**	**32%**	**12%**	**7%**	**33%**

Age of sewer system by type - Treatment systems

Metro status	Cluster definition	0-10 years old	11-25 years old	26-50 years old	More than 50 years old	Don't know	No response
Nonmetro	Largest rural cities	20%	0%	40%	20%	0%	20%
	Small rural cities – low population growth	10%	24%	20%	6%	14%	27%
	Small rural cities – high population growth	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
	Rural tourism hubs	10%	40%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Metro	Midsize metro cities – high population growth/ assessed value per capita	0%	7%	21%	0%	0%	71%
	Metro tourism hubs	0%	29%	14%	14%	0%	43%
	Small metro cities (urban outskirts)	17%	34%	11%	3%	6%	29%
	Midsize metro cities – moderate population growth/ assessed value per capita	3%	19%	22%	8%	11%	36%
	Largest cities	0%	13%	25%	13%	0%	50%
	High-income residential	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Overall responses in category		**7%**	**21%**	**21%**	**5%**	**7%**	**37%**

Stormwater system

95 cities (51% of total respondents) indicated they operate a stormwater utility and provided their stormwater rate information. Stormwater rates are based upon one ERU (equivalent residential unit) or ESU (equivalent service unit). The number of square feet of impervious area included in an ERU or ESU varies by jurisdiction.

Conclusion

AWC's Tax and User Fee Survey is the state's premier source for information on municipal taxes, rates, and fees. This comprehensive data source serves as an integral comparative tool for municipal budget cycles and a resource for city policy.

For the TUFS data collection in 2022, AWC will utilize a streamlined reporting tool similar to the one used for the 2020 Salary and Benefit Survey. This reporting tool will allow users to examine results by population, county, and other variables.

We would like to extend a special thanks to the cities and towns that completed our surveys. This year has been full of many challenging and unusual circumstances and we are deeply appreciative of the time, resources, and staff our members allocated to completing TUFS.

Visit wacities.org for more information and to access interactive dashboards.

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