

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE October 6, 2017

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Additional Information on DWU Billing and Payments**

This memo is to expand on the discussion regarding Item #4 on the September 27, 2017 City Council agenda, particularly the use of paperless billing and online payment options.

DWU offers online payment and paperless billing options as a convenient service for our customers. As a reminder, paperless billing customers choose to receive their invoices online, while any customer, paper or paperless, may choose to pay online. We believe this provides the best customer experience and positively impacts the City's relationship with residents.

We are always looking for ways to be more cost-effective, which is why the new annual contract cost is \$530,000, as compared to the current annual cost of \$920,000, for paper, envelopes, inserts, document composition and printing, maintenance of equipment and labor (postage costs remain the same). In addition to these services, the new contract will include online quality control, envelope tracking, multi-colored printing, and a secure hosted web portal to manage ad-hoc letter/forms and messages, all for a lower cost of \$0.55 per invoice/notice under the new contract, as compared to the current cost of \$0.67 per invoice/notice.

Please note all retail customers, including paperless customers, pay the costs associated with the total billing process. These costs include printing, mailing, inserts, notifications, postage, bank fees and credit card fees.

Since 2013, when Dallas Water Utilities (DWU) launched the "Go Green. Go Paperless." initiative, the paperless adoption rate has increased an average of 10% annually. DWU advertises the initiative through bill inserts and invoices and by passing out "green" shopping bags at City events and community meetings. Customer service representatives also promote paperless adoption over the phone during their interactions with customers. Throughout the next few months, DWU also plans to work with the Public Information Office to promote paperless billing through social media and contact WRR to discuss radio spots advertising the initiative.

Regarding the question about a single consolidated billing statement for multiple accounts, this would require an automated meter reading infrastructure where the meter reading date is the same for all meters associated with one customer, regardless of location. Under our current manual meter reading option, DWU staff read meters in

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different areas every business day and invoices are generated and sent to the customer on that date. We cannot hold invoices, then combine them once all properties are read.

DWU has approximately 7,000 meters on fixed network (collectors receive information from meters in an area) and 16,000 meters on mobile (drive-by) network and is looking to expand the fixed network citywide. We continue to work with customers with multiple accounts to set up paperless billing and online payments, providing them with faster access to invoices and reducing processing time.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.



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Assistant City Manager

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Larry Casto, City Attorney
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor
Billerae Johnson, City Secretary (Interim)
Daniel F. Solis, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizar Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
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