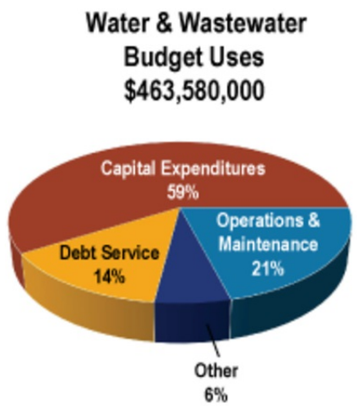
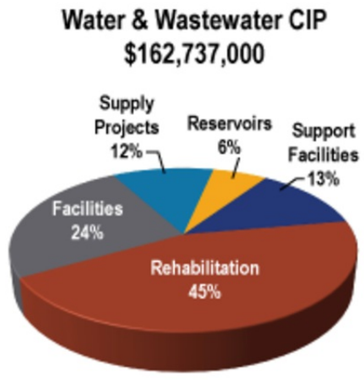
November 2016 | **A Message from John Balliew, P.E., President/CEO**

## Planning for the Future Requires Investment

In Public Service Board hearings earlier this month, El Paso Water recommended proposed budgets and rate increases for our next fiscal year, which begins in March. The proposed water, wastewater, reclaimed water and stormwater budgets include rate and fee increases that – when combined – translate into an additional $4.25 on the typical residential monthly bill. In the proposals, our leadership team has placed a priority on improving public safety, expanding water supplies and rehabilitating aging infrastructure.




***Public Safety:*** We prioritized projects that would improve public safety by reducing flooding in high-traffic areas and have the potential to save lives and protect private property. While major projects have been completed to reduce I-10 flooding, more needs to be done. We are proposing to shift our focus in the coming year to other parts of the city that have flooding problems, including the Mission Valley, northeast and northwest areas.

***Water Supplies:*** We propose to continue progress on water supply projects to guarantee El Paso's water future for generations to come. Plans include increasing the capacity of our desalination plant, beginning the design of an advanced water purification facility, and acquiring additional land and rights-of-way to pave the way for importation.

***Aging Infrastructure:*** Like much of the country, we are also grappling with aging infrastructure. More than 700 miles of El Paso's water lines are 40 years or older. We're allocating 45 percent of the construction funds to infrastructure rehabilitation. Accelerating these projects will improve system reliability, which will reduce service disruptions and prevent emergency repairs.

When comparing our rates and fees with other large Texas cities, El Paso continues to be among the lowest in the state.

While rates and fees will rise, we also propose to increase the number of customers who see a discount in months when water use is low. Currently, our city's lowest water users – those who use less than 3 ccfs (2,244 gallons) – receive a waiver of the Water Supply Replacement Charge. Now that waiver will apply when customers use less than 4 ccfs (2,992 gallons). That translates into a possible savings of about $10 per month, or $120 per year.

The Public Service Board is scheduled to consider and vote on budgets and rate/fee increases at its Jan. 11 meeting.

On the Water Front is a publication of El Paso Water.
Contact Christina Montoya at **915.594.5596** or **cmontoya@epwu.org** with any comments or questions.

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