



SPRING 2021

AMADOR WATER AGENCY

AmadorWater.org 209.223.3018 12800 Ridge Road, Sutter Creek, CA 95685



Master Plan Study Finds Significant Needs Throughout Amador



Burst water mains, a 6-foot service line with multiple repairs, and rusting, corroded pipes and valves illustrate the need for addressing aging water infrastructure in the county.

AWA's first comprehensive Water Master Plan Study, evaluating all AWA water systems and water treatment plants throughout Amador County, was completed early this year.

A year and half of engineering studies and hydraulic modeling by a specialized engineering firm and AWA staff assessed the condition of the county's public water systems and provides recommended improvements needed to accommodate 20 years of Amador County population growth.

The Master Plan Study documents significant deficiencies throughout AWA's dozens of service areas – systems that are decades old with portions that date to the Gold Rush era.

- 98 recommended improvement projects, are listed by priority;
- 28 highest priority projects address health and safety, and reliable service to current customers;
- Cost for most urgent repairs and improvements: \$33 million;
- Priority needs affect water service in all areas of the county;
- Projects triggered by future growth are assigned a lower priority.

Information in the Master Plan Study will also provide input for the Agency's 2021 Water Rates Study currently underway (*see reverse for*

information) and future financial planning for AWA. Information in the study will be reevaluated periodically.

AWA is not a land-use planning agency but is tasked with being prepared to serve the needs of Amador County communities. A similar Master Plan Study on AWA's wastewater systems will be completed in 2022.

[Click here to view the the extensive Water Master Plan Study document, available on the Home page at AmadorWater.org](#)

Aging Systems, Challenging Geography, Small Customer Base ...

AWA faces a number of operational and funding challenges — some familiar to many small utilities and some unique to Amador County — that have contributed to the need for infrastructure investment today.

- Amador County is home to some of California's oldest towns. Some of our water systems have been in place for a hundred years or more, with most water systems dating back to 1960 – 1970s. Pipes and equipment throughout the county are many years beyond their life expectancy, resulting in repeated line breaks, leaks and failures.
- Many of Amador County's patchwork of water systems were originally put in by developers and operated by homeowner groups -- their age and condition is often unknown.
- Since the year 2000, economic fluctuations, drought, and population changes, accompanied by a 30 percent reduction in AWA staff, have strained the Agency's ability to keep pace with maintenance and replacement.
- AWA systems range from near the Sacramento County line to high in the mountains above Pioneer, covering a huge service area over demanding terrain, and relatively few customers to share the cost of operation and maintenance.

Balancing Cost of Service and Revenue

Every few years the Amador Water Agency Board must carefully review rates and fees to ensure the Agency is financially healthy enough to support needed operations and infrastructure investment. In fact, we're conducting one of those rate studies right now and are listening to input from our customers and stakeholders.

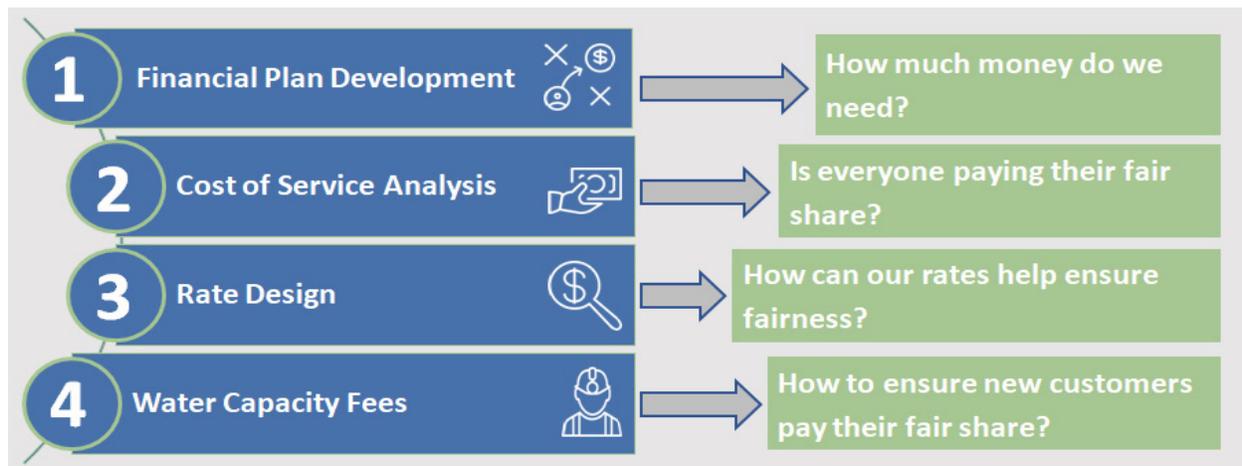
Rate studies are conducted according to industry standards to ensure that a utility's financial health is maintained, that the Agency is setting a course toward meeting future financial obligations, and that we're complying with state law. The industry standard is to perform comprehensive rate studies every three to five years; AWA's last study was in 2017.

UTILITY RATE STUDIES TYPICALLY:

- Perform a financial analysis on the Agency's cash flow
- Analyze outstanding debt and related requirements
- Incorporate current and future system improvement projects and maintenance needs
- Identify the cost of providing service for each customer type and group
- Recommend appropriate rates and charges for service

By state law our water and wastewater rates *cannot exceed* the cost of service, including investments that will create a reliable, sustainable water system. Remember, the water bill you pay is an investment in your future, to ensure we can continue to provide you — and generations to come — with water service at least as good as you receive today.

AWA Rate Study Plans for a Reliable Water Future ...



AWA Directors are meeting now with community organizations to share information on the rate study. Public meetings will also be held where you can ask questions and provide feedback. Meeting notices are posted on AmadorWater.org or contact the Clerk of the Board: info@AmadorWater.org or 209-223-3018.

Are AWA offices still closed to customers?

Yes. For safety, our offices remain closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Protecting AWA staff from a COVID-19 outbreak is critical to providing essential water and wastewater service to the community. But we're still here to help! First, check out AmadorWater.org. Chances are you can get what you need done there. You also can email customerservice@AmadorWater.org or call us at 209.223.3018. We're here in person, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday.

