



**City of Greensboro  
Utility Extension  
Policy for  
Areas Outside of the  
City Limits**



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## 1. Purpose

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- A. The City of Greensboro [Water Resources Department](#) was created to provide water, sewer, and stormwater services, and their operations and maintenance, to the residents and businesses in Greensboro so they may continue to enjoy good public health in an urban environment.
- B. The Greensboro Utility Extension Policy for Areas Outside of the City Limits (“Policy”) was created to provide clear guidance for utility extension and connection requests to the City of Greensboro’s public utilities for land not in Greensboro’s corporate limits.
- C. This Policy is intended to:
  - i. Provide a method to consistently, fairly, and equitably review utility extension requests and procedures for processing such requests.
  - ii. Help support healthy, orderly development and a coordinated utility system that provides for sustainable growth in a manner that is conducive to positive public health and welfare for City residents and businesses.
  - iii. Provide for strategic utility extensions that are coordinated for efficient and effective delivery of other City services.
  - iv. Help ensure utility provision that is necessary for development is in alignment with the goals identified in the [GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan](#), including as a tool to evaluate annexation and City growth.
  - v. Provide City staff with the authority to approve utility extensions and connections within the parameters of this Policy, while maintaining City Council approval for all other utility extension requests.

## 2. Overview and Intent

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There are many considerations for the City of Greensboro (“City”) to provide water and sewer service outside of the City’s corporate limits, including the following:

- A. The City desires to remain good stewards of the City’s finite water resources and ensure Greensboro has adequate water and sewer capacity for future generations.
- B. The City understands that utility provision is necessary for urban growth and desires to manage and direct growth in accordance with the goals and policies of the [GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan](#), small area plans, corridor studies, and other City Council adopted plans.
- C. The City desires to provide certainty and clarity in how utility extension requests will be considered and where connections and extensions are feasible outside of the corporate limits.
- D. The City wishes to use utility extensions as a tool to help meet other City goals.
- E. The City is interested in ensuring the future City limits and provision of utility services align as much as possible, where applicable, to allow for logical future expansions of the corporate limits.
- F. The City wants a policy that can act as tool to help evaluate [Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\)](#) project opportunities to increase service delivery efficiency.
- G. The City has a strong desire to ensure its utility enterprise funds remain fiscally sound. These funds can allow for increased opportunities to serve historically underserved communities or provide much-needed maintenance to existing infrastructure in order to maximize the uninterrupted provision of utility service.

- H. The City is interested in aligning this Policy with its Vision to be known as a “community with endless economic opportunities and an exceptional quality of life,” informed by its mission to “shape an inclusive future for equitable economic opportunity and sustainable, safe neighborhoods through resident focused services and programs.” This policy is intended to reflect Greensboro’s values of respect, inclusiveness, safety, innovation and sustainability, and its philosophy as a “purpose driven, data informed and people centered” organization.
- I. The City is and plans to remain a major regional partner for mutually beneficial economic development in the Piedmont-Triad region, together with other providers, including for the provision of water and sewer services.

### 3. History

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- A. The City of Greensboro has a long history of being a regional partner for water and sewer service. Beginning in 1968 and lasting for several decades, the City and Guilford County worked together to provide City water and sewer utilities outside of Greensboro corporate limits and into unincorporated areas of Guilford County. This agreement established the Water and Sewer Service Area (WSSA), which was referenced in previous policies and documents. The following is an abridged version of major modifications to the City/County Agreement over the years:
  - a. In May 1968, a Consolidated Water and Sewer Line agreement was authorized between the City and Guilford County, providing guidance and a process for Greensboro to provide water and sewer services into unincorporated areas of the County.
  - b. Between 1968 and 2007, there were 17 amendments made to the Agreement.
  - c. In 2007, the City and Guilford County jointly approved an update to the Agreement, creating the Revised City and County Water and Sewer Line Agreement.
  - d. In August 2012, the City and Guilford County jointly agreed to terminate the Revised City and County Water and Sewer Line Agreement, complete pending projects, and disburse the remaining funds in the Water and Sewer Trust Fund.
- B. In the late 1990’s and early 2000’s, due to a prolonged drought, the City was threatened with a water supply capacity issue and created additional partnerships and interconnections to ensure Greensboro had access to ample water supply.
- C. In addition to this additional capacity guarantee and the creation of a more resilient system, the City’s economy also shifted away from heavier water uses (such as large textile manufacturing) and newer, more water efficient plumbing fixtures and appliances became commonplace.
- D. A strategic partnership with the Piedmont Triad Regional Water Authority resulted in the completion of the Randleman Dam project in 2004 followed by completion of the water treatment plant in 2010. These projects benefited Greensboro’s long-term consistent water supply to support existing customers, as well as future growth.
- E. Starting in 2018, Federal and State regulatory changes and an increased focus on sustainability have occurred to deal with emerging contaminants and nutrient levels affecting the natural environment. For example, Greensboro has limitations on discharges from its reclamation facility, as well as other requirements to follow, which impact system operations and capacity.
- F. The City periodically performs water and sewer master planning to evaluate current and future growth demands. City staff also evaluate consumption and supply data on a yearly basis through Local Water Supply Planning. In addition, the City has a Capacity Assurance Program to monitor

usage and future demand requests on the water and sewer collection systems and overall plant capacities. These programs work holistically to monitor and evaluate the City's water and sewer infrastructure capacities.

## 4. General

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- A. When it is deemed to be in the best interest of the community, the City Council is vested with the authority to approve exceptions to this Policy at their discretion.
- B. All utility infrastructure and connections shall be installed in accordance with the City's specifications and design standards.
- C. All utility infrastructure that is eligible to be a part of the public system, easements, and rights-of-way shall be dedicated to and accepted by the City, in accordance with its established processes and procedures, to become the property of the City of Greensboro.
- D. All applications referenced in this Policy shall include applicable materials and application fees in accordance with the current City fee schedule.
- E. This policy recognizes and enforces by reference the terms and conditions within the Master Agreement, as amended from time to time, between the City of Greensboro, Randolph County, Toyota Battery Manufacturing, Inc., and other parties (the "Greensboro Randolph Master Agreement" or "GRMA"), including the Enhanced Area identified therein (the "GRMA Enhanced Area"). Water and/or sewer service connections within the GRMA Enhanced Area are permitted only to serve intense industrial manufacturing use as provided by GRMA's terms and conditions.

## 5. Application Process

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The following process shall be followed when considering a connection or extension of utility services into areas outside of the City's corporate limits:

- A. The applicant requesting an extension or connection shall work with the [Planning Department](#) and [Water Resources Department](#) to determine whether a specific request requires annexation in conjunction with obtaining water or sewer service and how the request aligns with this Policy.
- B. The [Water Resources Department](#) performs feasibilities and capacity assurance analysis for the requested extension. If the [Water Resources Department](#) determines upgrades to the existing system are needed, the applicant is responsible for bearing all costs associated with those upgrades.
- C. Once the applicant has this information, if they desire to continue with a request, the following steps will be necessary to move the application forward:
  - i. Submit request for utility extension to the [Water Resources Department](#), including any required forms and documents, and, if necessary, [Annexation Petition](#) and [Original Zoning Request](#) to the [Planning Department](#).
  - ii. The applicant will work with the City's [Planning Department](#) and [Water Resources Department](#) to provide any necessary information and attend any required meetings.
  - iii. The [Water Resources Department](#) will review the utility extension application to verify the feasibility of serving the project or property.

- iv. The [Planning Department](#) will coordinate the required public meetings for necessary applications at the City Council and, if an [Original Zoning Request](#) application is submitted in conjunction with the request, the Planning and Zoning Commission.
  - v. The Utility extension request will be considered concurrently with all other necessary applications.
  - vi. If a project request includes an oversizing reimbursement, the [Water Resources Department](#) will collaborate with the associated parties to determine eligible funding. Reimbursement Agreements will be executed based on City Council adopted policies.
- D. Appeals Process
- i. Policy: The [Water Resources Department](#) Director is responsible for carrying out this Policy with guidance from economic development, planning, and other City staff as necessary for specific elements contained in the policy. Appeals to a decision made by the [Water Resources Department](#) regarding the interpretation of this Policy shall be heard by the City Manager designated staff member.
  - ii. [Growth Tier Map](#) Interpretation: The Planning Director makes the ultimate decision on the boundaries and extents of the [Growth Tier Map](#). Any appeals to the Planning Director's interpretation of the [Growth Tier Map](#) regarding this policy shall follow the procedures outlined in the City's [Land Development Ordinance](#) for appeals and be heard by the Board of Adjustment.

## 6. Procedures

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The following procedures shall be followed when considering extension of utility services into areas outside of the City's corporate limits:

- A. While there are many factors the City Council considers as part of the determination for approving annexations and extending the City's corporate boundary, the standards of this Policy should be one factor used in making those determinations.
- B. This Policy relies on the [Growth Tier Map](#) that was adopted as part of the [GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan](#); however, it is understood that the [Growth Tier Map](#) provides general guidance and that upon more detailed examination some properties may exist in the City's Tier 1 that are unable to be served with public utilities in a reasonable manner and that some properties may exist outside of Tier 1 that are able to be served with public utilities with relative ease. Regardless of Tier level, City staff will consider the ability and cost to provide service when approving a request.
- C. If property is located outside of Tier 1 but in an area that has existing utility infrastructure and would allow the [Water Resources Department](#) to resolve a system or operational issue, such as adding a strategic water user on a dead-end line to eliminate the need for water flushing, City staff may review the property in the same manner as a Tier 1 property.
- D. If a property is located within Tier 2, Tier 3, or outside of a Growth Tier area, utility service availability is unlikely or cost-prohibitive to provide service in the near-term. Extending utility service in these areas is discouraged, as these areas not only provide implications for the utility system but also the provision of other critical City services. As the City's utility system continues to grow and other City investments occur, these properties may become designated as Tier 1 in

the future. Extensions and connections into these areas are at the discretion of the City Council, unless specifically identified otherwise in this Policy.

- E. When applicants request to have utilities extended, the [Water Resources Department](#) will review to determine if oversizing of infrastructure is desired by the City to align with the water and sewer master plan or based on future needs determined by the capacity assurance process. If the [Water Resources Department](#) determines utility oversizing is necessary (including lines and pump stations), which increases size/capacity beyond what is required to serve the needs of a specific project, the City may enter an agreement with the applicant to reimburse the proportionate cost of the oversizing based on available budget, cost estimates, and [Water Resources Department](#) assessments. Financial participation by the City shall be based on the priority of the project in the Capital Improvements Program and availability of funds may require City Council approval.
- i. The applicant shall coordinate with the [Water Resources Department](#) on reimbursement agreement procedures. Oversizing reimbursement requests must be made in writing to the [Water Resources Department](#) as early as possible in the design process.
  - ii. Oversizing of water and sewer lines shall be based on pipe diameter that exceeds the City's minimum requirement. No oversizing reimbursement shall be made for any pipe diameters less than or equal to 8-inches for water or sewer.
  - iii. Oversizing of sewer pump stations shall be based on a percentage of capacity usage. For instance, if a proposed development only needs a peak capacity of 500 gallons per minute, but the pump station can accommodate 1,000 gallons per minute, the City's participation cost may be 50%.
  - iv. The Engineer's estimate for the utility construction shall be submitted to the [Water Resources Department](#) for the permitted drawing set. The [Water Resources Department](#) will review and approve the estimates prior to the City entering into an agreement for reimbursement of the oversizing amount per this Policy.
  - v. City funding participation may trigger public bidding and procurement procedures as identified in State Statutes, as well as compliance with all City procurement requirements and the City's Minority/Women Business Enterprise Program requirements.
- F. There are several specific types of requests that the City Council foresees may warrant consideration for exemption to this Policy on a case-by-case basis. These requests may receive approval by the City Council for water or sewer extensions or connections without needing to be located within Growth Tier 1 or needing to submit an [Annexation Petition](#). Any such extension would be to serve the specific project only and would not allow additional connections along the route between the City's corporate limits and project location unless those additional connections were specifically evaluated and approved by City Council. The specific types of requests are:
- i. Public K-12 schools and institutions of higher education;
  - ii. Properties within the Airport Exemption Area;
  - iii. Properties owned by Federal or State governmental agencies;
  - iv. Economic development projects that are verified by the City's [Economic Development Office](#) to meet the City's criteria for a potential economic development incentive due to



- primary job creation, non-residential use, amount of investment, or other specific economic benefits to the community; and
- v. Mixed-use development that follows the City's [Land Development Ordinance](#) definition and aligns with the future land uses and development patterns identified in the [GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan](#), Highway 421 Corridor Plan, small area plans, corridor studies, and other adopted plans, policies, and studies, as determined by the City [Planning Department](#).

## 7. Annexation

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- A. All annexation decisions are made by the City Council in accordance with N.C.G.S. §160A Article 4A and any other applicable State Statutes regarding corporate limit expansion.
- B. For any property that is eligible for immediate annexation, an [Annexation Petition](#) is required to be submitted in conjunction with the utility extension or connection request in accordance with the City's adopted annexation process. The Greensboro [Planning Department](#) manages the annexation process.
- C. For any property that is not eligible for immediate annexation, a [Utility and Development Agreement](#) and [Petition for Annexation](#), or an Interlocal Agreement as appropriate, shall be submitted in conjunction with the utility extension or connection request. Among other items, in this agreement, the applicant agrees to be annexed by the City of Greensboro at the City's discretion, not to submit an annexation petition to another municipality, not to attempt to withdraw the annexation petition filed with Greensboro, and to develop under the policies of the [GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan](#) and standards identified in the City's [Land Development Ordinance](#), as applicable to the property.
- D. For requests that include an annexation, the [Planning Department](#) will request feedback from other City departments to obtain input on City service capacity and ability to serve the property for all City services, including, but not limited to the Greensboro Fire, Solid Waste, Water Resources, and Police departments.
- E. All [Annexation Petitions](#) shall be accompanied by an [Original Zoning Request](#) application, as well as all appropriate fees and related application materials.

## 8. Utility Extensions

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- A. Applicants may request a utility extension to serve properties outside of locations where utility lines are not available and require extending a public utility main that can serve multiple properties.
- B. All utility extensions should align with growth areas identified in the [GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan](#), small area plans, corridor studies, and other adopted plans, policies, and studies, as determined by the City [Planning Department](#).
- C. When applicants request major extensions or significant capacity dedication, a determination shall be made by the [Water Resources Department](#) prior to approval to verify overall capacity is available to adequately serve the extension; however, capacity is not guaranteed or set aside for development prior to development plan approval.

- D. If service to an entire area or neighborhood is desired, the applicant shall be responsible for contacting property owners and interested parties to determine interest in participating in the extension with the understanding it will eventually result in annexation into the City for those requesting service.
- E. If the applicant installs all infrastructure associated with the extension, no frontage fee will be assessed for the extension. The applicant shall be responsible for paying all other applicable fees and following all processes in place at the time-of-service request.
- F. If the City is the applicant and publicly funds the utility extension, frontage fees will be assessed for properties along the extension in accordance with this Policy and applicable City ordinances.

## 9. Utility Connections

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- A. Emergency connections may be permitted for properties or areas where the County Public Health Director has declared a public health hazard due to contaminated wells or failing septic systems for existing residential uses. Documentation from the County Health Department shall be included with the request.
- B. A single-family residential lot or non-residential principal building existing as of January 1, 2011, that directly abuts an existing water or sewer line may be permitted to make one connection. This connection to serve the property shall not exceed a 1-inch water line and 4-inch sewer lateral. Relocation and replacement of existing lines is permitted if the replacement line does not exceed the size limitations listed in this section.
- C. All utility connections, methods, and designs shall be approved by the [Water Resources Department](#).

## 10. Private Property Impacts

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- A. Well and Septic Systems
  - i. To the maximum extent practicable, all water and sewer lines shall be designed and installed to avoid impacts to existing well and septic systems and shall follow all separation distance from wells and sewer systems in accordance with County Health Department requirements, County or State standards, and any other City regulation, if those systems will continue to be used.
  - ii. If impacts to an existing system are unavoidable, the applicant (including Greensboro, if the City is initiating the extension) shall be responsible for all costs from impacting well or septic systems, including, but not limited to repairs, installing a new well or septic system, or abandonment of the damaged system and connecting the property to the public water or sewer system, as applicable.
  - iii. The applicant must provide proof of coordination between themselves, property owners, and County Health Department with respect to well and septic assessments and impacts.
  - iv. If impacts to an existing system are discovered after the extension has been made, the applicant shall be responsible for resolving the issue to County Health Department standards.

- B. Private Property
  - i. When crossing private property is unavoidable, the applicant shall obtain all necessary easements and be granted all necessary permissions prior to beginning any work, including negotiating and payment for these rights. These documents shall be reviewed by City staff to ensure they meet the minimum requirements for installation and maintenance of utility lines and the legal right-of-way/easement shall be recorded by the applicant prior to utility installation.

## 11. Interlocal Government Agreements and Extensions Into Other Incorporated Areas

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- A. The City Council is empowered to enter into interlocal government agreements (ILA) pursuant to N.C.G.S. §160A Article 20.
- B. Prior to beginning negotiations and in-depth conversations with other municipalities, the City Manager or designee will obtain City Council authorization to begin the formal process for ILA drafting.
- C. The [Water Resources Department](#) shall ensure adequate water and wastewater capacity is available to meet the service requests authorized under the ILA, or that the ILA provides specific means to ensure adequacy through necessary capital improvements.
- D. As it is recognized that each ILA is different and unique, City Council authorization takes into account adequate consideration for flexibility to include various provisions applicable to the specific situation and request.
- E. While flexibility is necessary for ILA provisions, ILAs generally:
  - i. Must be demonstrably beneficial to the City financially and not constitute a financial drain on City resources or service capacity for utility provision and other City services, as applicable. To achieve this, land use changes by the benefitting jurisdiction may be warranted. Likewise, the jurisdiction requesting services may be required to pay a minimum billing amount, as shown in Appendix A.
  - ii. Ensure equitable treatment of all communities, customer classes (residential, nonresidential, inside, outside), and areas that may be served.
  - iii. Include clearly documented roles and responsibilities, including up-front investment, costs, ownership, and maintenance responsibilities. It is the City's preference to own and maintain utility infrastructure; however, some instances of bulk utility sales may be appropriate.
  - iv. Limit direct upfront capital costs to City.
  - v. Include necessary maintenance and dormancy requirements to provide clarity for all parties.
  - vi. Create economic development project support through potential revenue sharing agreements, recognizing that utility extension often results in more intensive development.
  - vii. Include non-assignment clause that prevents allocation to be passed to another entity.
  - viii. Include easement and public infrastructure dedication process, which follows normal City process.

- ix. Consider proactive planning efforts such as small area or corridor planning that help define well-organized future growth.

## 12. Funding, Fees, and Costs

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- A. Extensions are at the applicant's sole expense unless oversizing participation from the City has been agreed upon in accordance with this Policy. Payment for all fees shall be made prior to or in conjunction with utility extension applications and subject to any other City policies or procedures (including payment timing). These fees shall include the following, when applicable:
  - i. Water and Sewer Frontage Fees (for City-funded utility extensions)
  - ii. System Development Fees
  - iii. Water Meter Fees
  - iv. Recording Fees
- B. All connection, application, administrative, tap, meter, system development, and other applicable fees shall be assessed in accordance with the current adopted City fee schedule and adopted ordinances.

## 13. Definitions, Rules of Measurement, and Frontage Fees

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### Definitions:

- A. Applicant: The property owner, person, contractor, or developer requesting the utility extension under this Policy.
- B. Capacity determination: evaluation done by the [Water Resources Department](#) to determine if sufficient water or sewer, as applicable, is available to serve a project or property.
- C. Economic development: an existing industry expansion or new investment made that helps stimulate the economy through either primary job creation or significant financial investment that increases the tax base and is eligible for an economic development incentive from the City. The [Economic Development Incentive Program](#) (Financial Assistance Guidelines) does not apply to residential uses or small commercial businesses, such as but not limited to apartments, single-family homes, gas stations, convenience stores, restaurants, or small-scale retail operations.
- D. Front Footage Charge: fee based on linear footage of property frontage on a public street in accordance with the adopted City fee rate for frontage fees.
- E. [GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan](#): the adopted Comprehensive Plan for the City of Greensboro.
- F. [Growth Tier Map](#): map included in the [GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan](#) that indicates service provision capabilities and timing of growth outside of the City's corporate limits. As the [Growth Tier Map](#) is dependent on existing built condition and City service capacity, the Tier limits may change on a regular basis and should be evaluated annually or as needed when major changes occur.
- G. ILA: joint interlocal agreement between governmental entities for the provision of services.
- H. Mixed-Use: A mixture of residential and permitted office and/or commercial and/or personal services uses in certain zoning districts, as defined by the City's [Land Development Ordinance](#).

- I. Septic System: includes all aspects of a private onsite wastewater system, such as distribution box, septic tank, drain lines, and repair area, as defined by the County Health Department.
- J. Street: any street, drive, boulevard, thoroughfare, highway, interstate, or other roadway designed to accommodate vehicular traffic.
- K. Utility extension: extending the public utility system beyond the current alignment.
- L. Utility connection: connecting to the existing public utility system without extending the main lines.
- M. Well: private water system that pulls water directly from the ground, as defined by the County Health Department.

**Rules of Measurement and Frontage Fees:**

- A. In general, the frontage abutting on the installed water or sewer lines, as applicable, will be the basis for linear footage charges for any City-funded utility extension projects.
- B. An owner on a cul-de-sac turnaround will be charged for the arc distance along the turnaround right-of-way line.
- C. An owner will be charged for the full length of frontage even though the sewer or water line abuts only a part of the distance alongside their property, provided that the owner can be served by the water or sewer line.
- D. Outfall lines or main trunk lines running cross-country on undeveloped property and not abutting a street will be charged an abutting linear footage charge when service is provided based on the property's road frontage.
- E. In cases where a line runs along a street which abuts the City's corporate limits, the property lying within the City's corporate limits shall be assessed at the regular inside rates and the property lying outside the City's corporate limits shall be based on the frontage charge in accordance with this Policy.
- F. A through lot abutting front and rear streets in which service is provided, but not on a corner, shall pay the full frontage charge on both streets.
- G. A property owner shall pay the footage charge for each side of a line when the street bisects their property.
- H. If a property is considered a corner lot, pursuant to the City's [Land Development Ordinance](#) definitions, front footage fees for the side street will be reduced by the following:
  - i. Residential: up to 150 feet
  - ii. Mixed-Use: up to 150 feet
  - iii. Commercial: up to 100 feet
  - iv. Industrial: up to 100 feet
- I. Front footage charge fees shall not be charged on projects utilizing HOME, CDBG, or LIHTC or other Federal housing funding.

## Appendix A – Minimum Billing and Depreciated Net Revenue for Improvements

The following methodology is provided to recognize extension of the utility system is accompanied by assumptions regarding new customer performance as well as necessary operations and maintenance, both of which are considered in rate structures. Should an extension take place, but the customers not connect (or connect with substantially less demand), this can result in the City of Greensboro ratepayers subsidizing the cost of extension to the requesting jurisdiction. A minimum billing approach is needed to avoid this result.

**For a defined period of time, to be negotiated, a minimum bill (paid for annually) will be required and paid for by the jurisdiction requesting services, calculated as follows:**

Upon completion of the installation and operational availability of the new or expansion of existing water and sewer infrastructure, the jurisdiction requesting services will pay the City of Greensboro an amount equal to a percentage of the depreciated book value of the installed water and sewer infrastructure until revenues exceed the annual depreciated value using generally accepted accounting practices.

*Example:*

For illustrative purposes only: Assume \$15M of Infrastructure Installed with a useful life of 75 years. Annual depreciated values are  $(\$15,000,000/75 \text{ years}) = \$200,000/\text{yr}$ . Minimum Bill Calculation could be determined as follows:

Period	25% of Annual Depreciation Value	50% of Annual Depreciation Value	75% of Annual Depreciation Value	100% of Annual Depreciation Value
0-24 months	\$50,000			
25-36 months		\$100,000		
37-48 months			\$150,000	
49 months and beyond				\$200,000
<i>The above serves as the basis for Minimum Billing Calculations</i>				
<b>A. Total Annual Minimum Bill</b>	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$200,000
<b>B. Amount of Water &amp; Sewer Revenues from Customers Served by Extension</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>C. Amount Owed to City of Greensboro (A.-B.)</b>	?	?	?	?
<i>If B. is greater than A., then the amount of depreciated book value owed to the City of Greensboro is \$0</i>				