



Corporate *NO: R072*

Report *COUNCIL DATE: April 9, 2001*

REGULAR COUNCIL			
TO:	Mayor & Council	DATE:	April 2, 2001
FROM:	General Manager, Engineering	FILE:	1218-006
SUBJECT:	Water Metering – Strata-Titled Properties		

RECOMMENDATION

1. That existing unmetered strata-titled and multi-unit properties be metered at the property line with no provision for metering individual units by the City.
2. That existing unmetered strata-titled and multi-unit properties share the cost of retrofit meter installation under the voluntary metering program by supplying and installing the necessary meter setter to enable the City to install the meter.

INTENT

To establish a Corporate position on metering protocols for multi-unit properties and how multi-family properties fit into the voluntary metering program.

Metering Strata-Titled Properties

The City has no documented procedure for the installation of meters (retrofit or new construction) on strata-titled residential, commercial and industrial properties. The current practice is to provide a single meter on the water connection to the property. The water bill is sent to the Strata Corporation who apportions the bill. Accounts in arrears are divided among the strata units and added to their tax bills.

Occasionally, a multi-unit property will request individual meters for each unit, or an individual unit will request their own meter. As the profile of metering rises, the City is receiving more of these requests. Provided there is no common water use, individual units could potentially be billed based on consumption and the strata corporation need not be involved collecting water rates in their strata fees.

While this is advantageous to the strata corporation, metering individual strata-titled units presents some

challenges and additional costs for the City. If there is common water use such as irrigation, a meter is required to the property as well as to the individual units. The City must then calculate the common water use and somehow apportion it. Bills may then need to be sent to the individual units as well as the strata corporation.

To bill all of the strata units in the City, we would require about an additional 30,000 meters. At the end of the universal metering program, the City will have a meter population of over 70,000 meters. The 30,000 meters for multi-unit properties would increase that meter population to 100,000 to be read, maintained and eventually replaced. The cost of all these additional meters, including reading and billing would far exceed any savings from the marginal water use reduction generated by the extra 30,000 meters.

It is consequently recommended that the City limit its operation and maintenance cost of the metering system by having only one meter per strata-titled property.

Should a multi-unit property wish to apportion their bills based on water consumption, they have the option of sub-metering the individual units themselves.

Cost-Sharing For Voluntary Metering – Multi-Unit Properties

Since introducing the voluntary metering program, a few multi-family properties have requested meters. The voluntary metering program primarily targets single-family properties and properties with secondary suites. The installation of meters on these properties is relatively straightforward and inexpensive when compared to multi-unit properties.

Water connections to multi-unit residential properties are larger than single family. This means they need a larger, more expensive meter. The installation cost of a large meter, including the necessary meter setter in the mechanical room or new meter pit, can vary from \$5,000 to \$50,000 depending on the size and location of the meter. Of this cost, the cost of the actual meter can range from \$2,000 to \$8,000, with the balance of the cost being to set up the plumbing ready to fit the meter.

A recent installation at Gateway Tower cost \$8,000 with the cost being approximately half for the meter and half to make ready for the meter in the mechanical room.

There are approximately 1,000 non-metered multi-family properties in the City.

Multi-unit residential properties can gain significantly from conversion from flat rate to metered billing, as per-capita water use in multi-family development is typically lower than single-family.

There are a number of options available to the City:

- We could supply and install the meter, including all associated works such as meter setter in mechanical room or meter pit.
- We could require the strata corporation supply and install the meter.
- We could require the strata corporation install a meter setter in their mechanical room or in a new meter pit. The City could supply and fit in the meter.

Since multi-family properties stand to gain financially from having a meter, it is recommended that they share in the cost of the meter installation. It is recommended that the multi-family properties would be required to

install the meter setter in their mechanical room or new meter pit as necessary. The City would then supply the meter and have it fitted into the meter setter provided.

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