

STAFF REPORT

Date: March 22, 2023

To: Mayor and City Council

Thru: Doug Thornley, City Manager

Subject: Staff Report (For Possible Action): Ordinance Introduction – Bill No. _____ Ordinance amending Reno Municipal Code Title 12 entitled "Public Works and Utilities, Chapter 12.16. Sewer Service, Section 12.16.150, Weighted Fixture Unit Schedule, to adjust the fixture unit schedule per the 2018 Uniform Plumbing Code, Section 12.16.280, Connection Fee, as to timing of payment, and Section 12.16.290, Dwelling Unit or Residential Unit, to refer to Section 12.16.150 as to the Weighted Fixture Unit Schedule; together with matters which pertain to or are necessarily connected thereto.

From: John Flansberg, Regional Infrastructure Administrator

Department: Regional Infrastructure

Summary:

The staff report and presentation is based upon the direction from Council at the January 25, 2023 meeting where Council adopted RMC 12.16.290 and 12.16.300 ordinance amendments related to sewer connection fees, but directed staff to work with community stakeholders and partners regarding the standard fixture count for a single family home and the timing of payment for sewer connection fees.

Based upon staff gathering further information and working with community stakeholders, staff reviewed the sewer fixture unit weights and requests that Council adopt the sewer fixture unit counts to align with the 2018 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC). The 2018 UPC reduced many of the sewer fixture unit weights that were previously being used. For instance a water closet went from four fixture units to three, and a residential laundry machine went from eight fixture units to three.

Staff used the commercial fixture unit weights that were previously outlined in RMC12.16.150 to calculate the fixture count in a standard home at 31. Staff previously defined the standard home size as a 2.5 bathroom home. After gathering data from the Washoe County Assessor's

Office, staff found that 90.3 percent of all homes built in the City of Reno since 1980 have three bathrooms or less. The prior recommendation of a standard home having 2.5 bathrooms only included 75.8 percent of homes built since 1980. It was not the intent of staff to exclude 25 percent of homes from the standard criteria. The revised ordinance leaves the fixture count in a standard home at 31 sewer fixture units using the 2018 UPC fixture weights. Based on discussions with the building/development community, they are in agreement with the standard home containing 31 fixture units using the updated sewer fixture unit weights.

This revision to the ordinance also proposes to eliminate the one year limit on deferral of payment of sewer connection fees and allows for payment any time between building permit application and the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

Infrastructure, Climate Change, and Environmental Sustainability

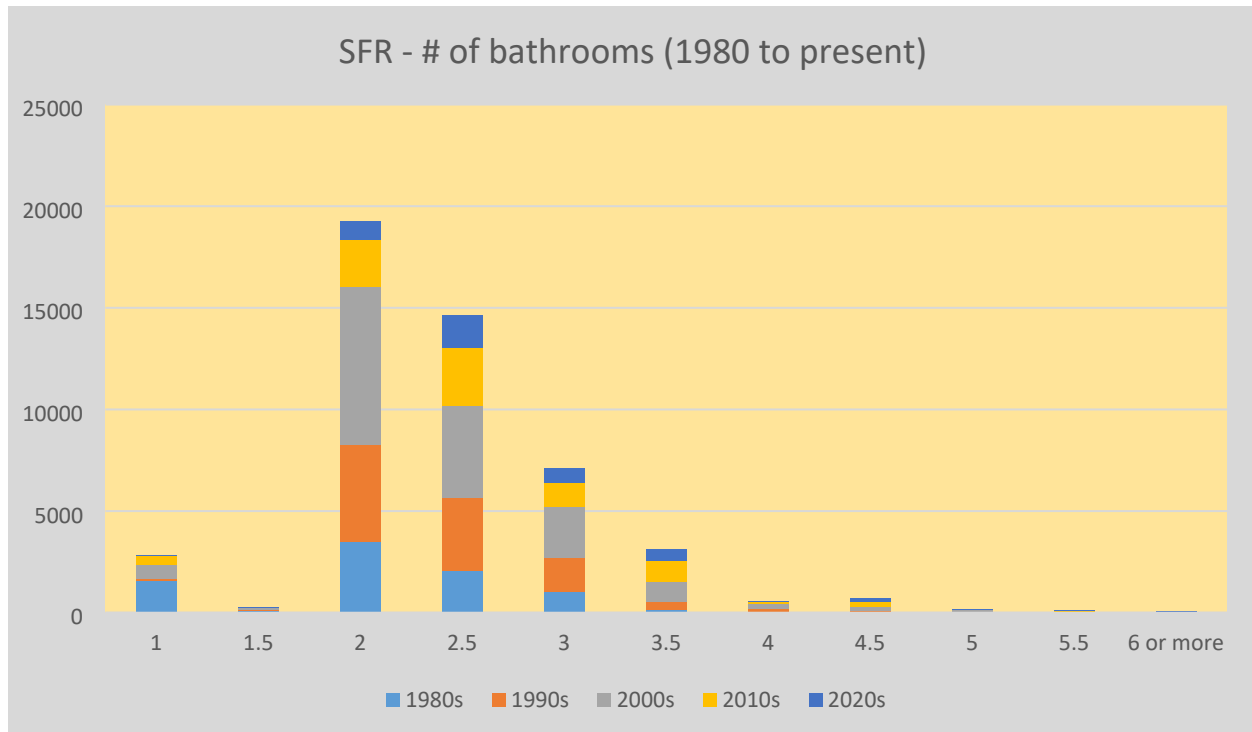
Previous Council Action:

January 25, 2023 – Unanimous ordinance adoption amending RMC 12.16 Sewer Service, Section 12.16.290 dwelling unit or residential unit and Section 12.16.300, industrial/commercial connection fee to revise the connection fee rates for both residential and industrial/commercial, to establish fees by service area, and to provide for an annual increase per the consumer price index.

Discussion:

Based upon the request from the building/development community and the direction from Council to work with stakeholders to discuss the standard home fixture count, staff reviewed data from the Washoe County Assessor's Office regarding the number of bathrooms in homes built in the City of Reno since 1980 (see below table/graph). Based upon the data, staff found that 90.3 percent of all homes built since 1980 have three bathrooms or less. Thus the ordinance adopts the standard single family home size using a three bathroom calculation.

	Number of Bathrooms per WC Assessor by Decade Class										
Decade Built	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6 or more
1980s	1576	123	3505	2058	1049	159	73	28	10	7	12
1990s	91	8	4740	3584	1653	374	148	59	60	6	7
2000s	706	114	7797	4557	2497	972	207	196	65	33	26
2010s	419	16	2318	2823	1195	1026	104	233	25	15	4
2020s	44	22	899	1611	694	582	46	190	32	47	2
Total	2836	283	19259	14633	7088	3113	578	706	192	108	51
% Cumulative	5.81%	6.39%	45.81%	75.77%	90.28%	96.65%	97.84%	99.28%	99.67%	99.90%	100.00%



Staff reviewed multiple standards for sewer fixture unit weights and recommends that Council adopt the 2018 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) as the standard for sewer fixture unit weights. The change in fixture unit weights will allow the building and development community more fixtures in a home than were previously allowed even though the total number of fixture units is remaining at 31, see table below for an example of a standard home fixture unit calculation. The new fixture unit weight standards and the 31 fixture units per home will meet the requests of the builders/developers for their standard home product.

Example of standard home sewer fixture unit count – 3 full bathrooms + laundry sink

Fixture Description	Fixture Count	Number in home	Total
Water Closet	3	3	9
Lavatory sink	1	5	5
Bath/shower combo	2	3	6
Separate bath or shower	2	1	2
Laundry Machine	3	1	3
Laundry Sink	2	1	2
Dishwasher – domestic	2	1	2
Kitchen Sink – domestic	2	1	2
Grand Total			31

The table in RMC 12.16.150 has been updated with the fixture counts as outlined and available in the 2018 UPC table 702.1 – Drainage Fixture Unit Values (see attachment) to allow

Development Services to calculate the total drainage fixture units when someone applies for a building permit.

Based on community input and Council direction, staff recommends the following change to 12.16.280:

- (c) The connection fee for new connections to city facilities or change of occupancy may be deferred until prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy. ~~[If the applicant chooses to defer the connection fee pursuant to this subsection, the maximum number of years payment can be deferred is one year and n]~~ No certificate of occupancy will be issued until such time as the connection fees are paid in full.

The amended ordinance removes the deferral from application business process and reduces staff administration required for that program. The ordinance also eliminates the one year maximum time limit to pay sewer connection fees. The outstanding balance of sewer connection fees will be tracked by Development Services through Accela and Finance through New World. Staff will be able to run reports on the total amount of sewer connection fees outstanding. A certificate of occupancy simply cannot be issued until such time as the connection fees are paid in full. All other connection fees that do not require a certificate of occupancy are due at the time of building permit.

Financial Implications:

Removing the one year maximum limit to defer connection fees may cause a delay in cash flow. A delay in cash flow can cause a delay of capital improvement projects for growth and possibly require the City to bond for additional funds for sewer capacity projects.

Legal Implications:

The amendments to Chapter 12.16.150, 12.16.280 and 12.16.290 address the fixture unit count changes and the timing of the payment of connections fees.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends Council refer Bill No. _____ for a second reading and adoption.

Proposed Motion:

I move to refer Bill No. _____ for a second reading and adoption.

Attachments:

Ordinance Amendments

2018 Uniform Plumbing Code Table 702.1 – Drainage Fixture Units