

# Drinking Water and Wastewater 2024 Information

## What is the Water and Wastewater Task Force?

The Township understands that affordability constraints are being faced by many residents due to the current water and wastewater rates. In early 2024, the Township formed a Water & Wastewater Task Force in order to provide information, recommendations, and advice to Council relating to operating and life-cycle costs of water and wastewater systems. The Task Force included the appointment of five Community Members and two members of Council.

Over the course of its mandate, the Task Force conducted a thorough evaluation of the Township's water and wastewater systems, focusing on their operational efficiency, financial sustainability, and long-term viability. The Task Force's focus was driven by the need to ensure that these essential services remain reliable, affordable, and capable of meeting the community's current and future needs.



The Task Force's mandate concluded with the publishing of the "Water and Wastewater Task Force – Final Report", dated September 2024. The report includes 45 recommendations that address water quality, wastewater system capacity, financial implications, and rate structure. You can access the final report by visiting the Township's Website or by scanning the QR code.

## Who do I contact if I have an issue or concern regarding water or wastewater?

If you are experiencing any problems with your water or wastewater services, please contact the Township immediately.

For emergencies during regular business hours (8:30 AM to 4:00 PM), please call the Township at 613-646-2282. For after-hours emergencies, contact the Township's After-Hours Emergency Line at 613-647-3333.

For non-emergency concerns, contact the Township 613-646-2282 during regular business hours or visit the Township's website and submit a report under Feedback and Inquiries at [www.whitewaterregion.ca/feedback](http://www.whitewaterregion.ca/feedback) and select "water and sewer" category.

## Why am I billed for drinking water and wastewater?

You are only billed if your home or property is connected to the municipal drinking water systems in Cobden, Beachburg and Haley Townsite, and the sewer/wastewater system in Cobden. If your home is serviced by a well or septic, you are not charged for municipal drinking water and sewer services as you do not access them.

### Who pays for the drinking water systems and sewer/wastewater systems?

Only the users of the systems pay for them. There are 1103 drinking water system users in Cobden, Beachburg and Haley Townsite. They include 990 single connections and 113 units in multi-residential buildings. A total of 530 users are connected to the sewer/wastewater system in Cobden, 451 of which are single connections with 79 multi-residential units.

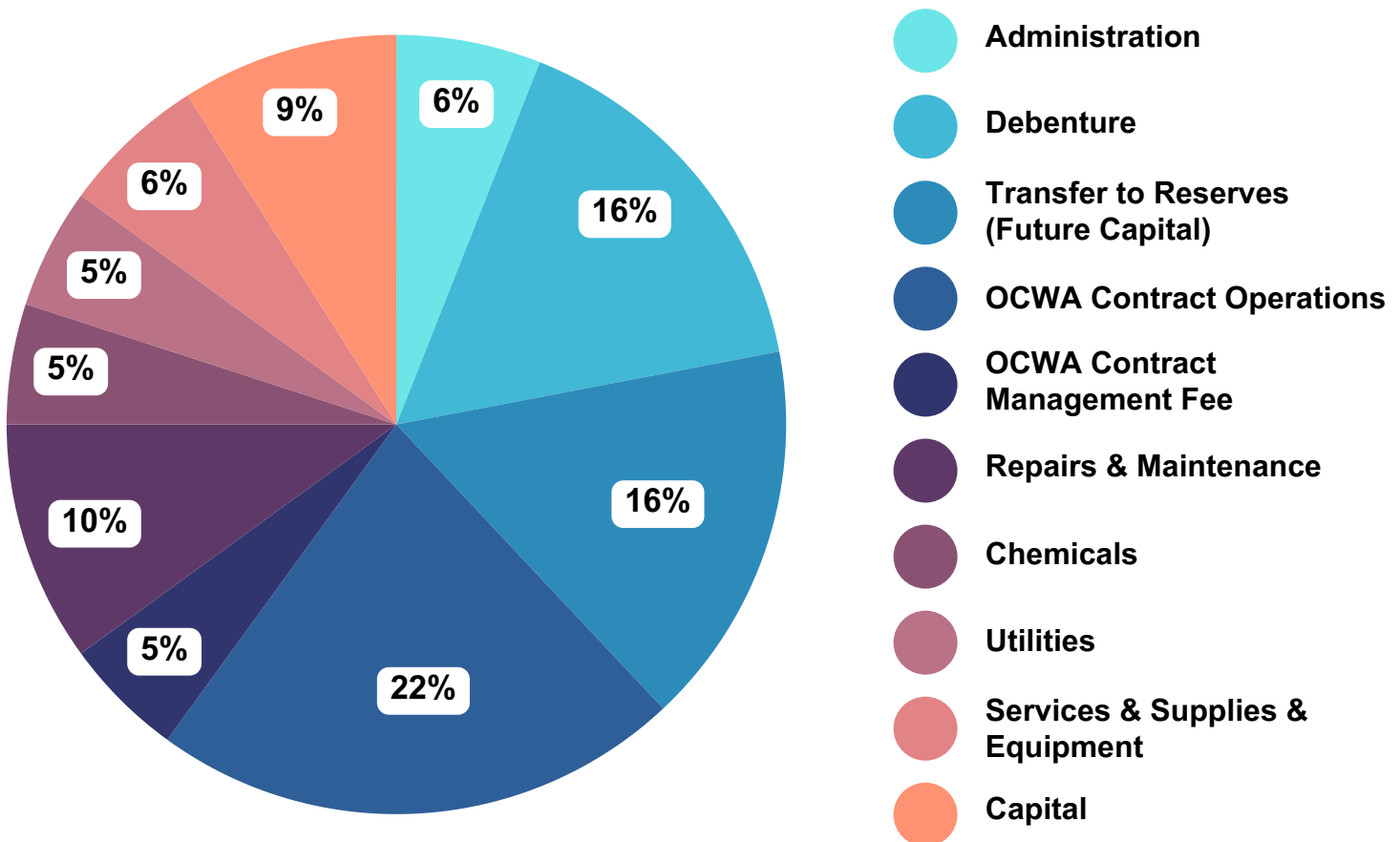
### When am I billed for water and sewer/wastewater services?

Billing occurs every other month with due dates on the last open business day of that month in March, May, July, September, November, and January. Pre-Authorized Payment Plans are encouraged and available.

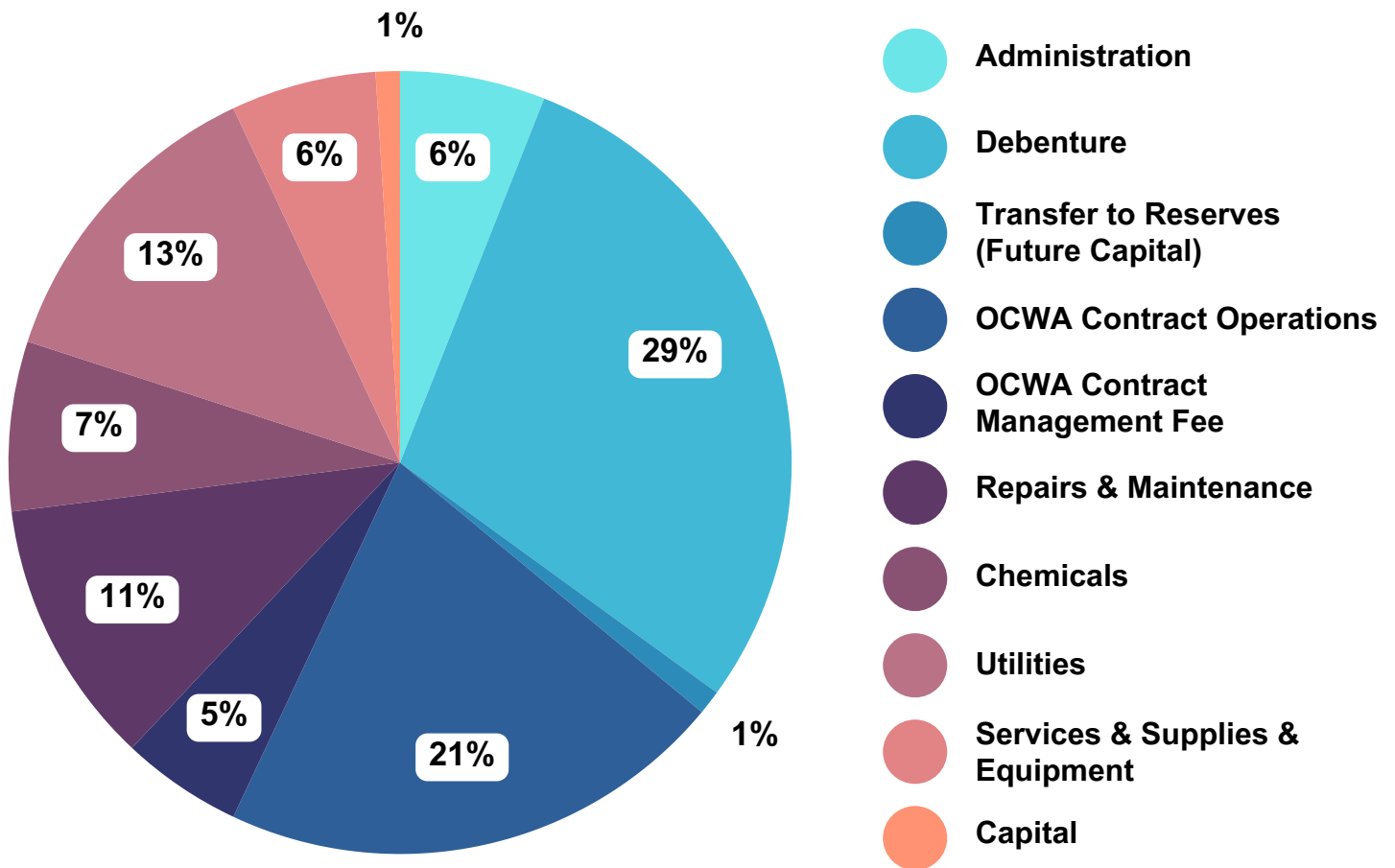
### What does my water and/or sewer bill pay for?

The funds collected pay for the operation, maintenance, and capital lifecycle costs of the water and wastewater systems. The Township contracts the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) to manage the operation of the water and wastewater treatment plants as well as the drinking water distribution systems and wastewater collection system. A breakdown of what the 2024 Residential Water and Wastewater Rates fund is shown below.

## 2024 Water Residential Flat Rate (\$1,173.33)



# 2024 Wastewater Residential Flat Rate (\$1,901.73)



## How are my charges calculated?

All costs to manage and operate the systems are paid for by the users of those systems.  
 (Total costs – Grants received) ÷ # of units = billing amount.

## Are these services regulated and safe?

These systems are highly regulated by Ontario’s Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks under a license. Ontario passed the Safe Drinking Water Act in 2002 following the Walkerton tragedy. The Township’s drinking water systems require a licence, known as a Municipal Drinking Water Licence. To become licensed, a municipality must satisfy five key requirements:

- Obtain a Drinking Water Works Permit
- Acceptance of the Systems Operational Plan based on the Drinking Water Quality Management Standard
- Accreditation of the Operating Authority
- Prepare and provide a Financial Plan
- Obtain Permit to Take Water

## **Does the Township have a plan to deal with these rates?**

The Township is mandated to complete a Financial Plan for its water systems every five years to renew the Municipal Drinking Water Licence. The current Financial Plan was finalized in 2019/2020, and the Township is now in the process of developing a new one.

The Financial Plan includes a 10-year forecast of all necessary work to maintain and operate the drinking water systems. In coordination with the Financial Plan, the Township is also undertaking a Water and Wastewater Rate study to:

- Determine the funds required to sustain the Townships water and wastewater infrastructure over the next 10 years, and
- Determine how to best recover those costs, including re-evaluating the fairness of the current rate structure and charges, as well as to identify other potential revenue sources.

The current 2019 Financial Plan and Water/Wastewater Rate Studies completed by Watson & Associates are available on the Townships Website under 'Drinking Water Systems' also accessible by scanning the QR code.



## **How are rates set?**

The 2024 rates are derived from the 2019 Water/Wastewater Rate Study completed by Watson & Associates and an evaluation of the current and future costs to operate and maintain the systems. The study called for a 10% increase in drinking water rates and a 3% increase in wastewater rates for this year. An increase of 8.5% for water and an increase of 12.55% in wastewater were approved. The Township is currently completing a new Water/Wastewater Rate Study to address rates as well recalculate for assets added since the 2019 completion. The residential rate for water was increased from \$180.24 to \$195.56 every two months. This is a yearly increase of \$91.92. The residential sewer/wastewater rate was increased from \$281.61 to \$316.96 every two months. This is a yearly increase of \$212.05.

## **Why did rates go up this year?**

The increase in water and wastewater rates are due to the increase in fixed operating expenses such as our contract with the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) (the organization that runs the water and sewer/wastewater systems) and debenture (debt) costs associated with capital infrastructure projects that have been undertaken on the system. Rates also fund capital and special projects identified in the 2024 budget required to properly operate the municipal drinking water system. Some of the funds collected are transferred to the Water or Wastewater Reserves in order to pay for future needed capital repairs and maintenance.

## **What is the total budget for the drinking water systems in Cobden, Beachburg and Haley Townsite and the sewer/wastewater system in Cobden?**

The 2024 budget approved \$1,338,00 in expenditures for the drinking water systems in Cobden, Beachburg and Haley Townsite, as well as \$1,095,200 in expenditures for the sewer/wastewater system in Cobden.

### How are large projects funded?

Large projects to rehabilitate water and wastewater plants or replace water mains and sewers can cost hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars. These initiatives are financed through reserves, debentures, or provincial and federal grants.

### Why are projects debentured?

A municipal debenture is a debt security issued by a municipality to finance public projects, such as for infrastructure improvements or the construction of public facilities. These debentures allow municipalities to borrow money from Ontario Infrastructure Loans Corporation, who receive interest and principal payments over a specified period.

Unlike traditional loans, municipal debentures can be issued without specific collateral, relying instead on the municipality's ability to generate revenue (like taxes or fees) to repay the debt. They often come with tax advantages, making them an attractive option for funding community projects. Debentures are used to spread the costs of projects over many years as these projects benefit future generations.

The following table summarizes the Townships current Water and Wastewater Debentures.

## WATER

Project	Debenture Amount	Term (years)	End Date	2024 Ending Balance
Haley Water Treatment Plant & Cobden Water Treatment Plant	\$ 1,321,747.98	30	6/1/2040	\$ 912,435.36
Haley Distribution System	\$ 189,104.04	30	12/2/2041	\$ 132,680.25
Beachburg Distribution - Morris St (Water)	\$ 120,090.98	20	12/1/2031	\$ 69,569.30
Truelove, John & Crawford (Water)	\$ 320,000.00	20	2/15/2039	\$ 252,218.98
Cameron St/Earl St/Vera Cres. (Water)	\$ 625,000.00	10	12/15/2033	\$ 574,282.05
			<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,941,185.94</b>

# WASTEWATER

Project	Debenture Amount	Term (years)	End Date	2024 Ending Balance
Truelove, John & Crawford (Sewer)	\$ 80,000.00	20	2/15/2039	\$ 63,054.75
Cobden Sewer (Highway 17)	\$ 280,751.58	20	12/1/2031	\$ 52,001.70
Cobden Wastewater Treatment Plant	\$ 6,000,000.00	30	10/15/2051	\$ 5,610,319.89
			<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,725,376.34</b>

**What are the current Water and Wastewater Reserve balances?**

As of 2024, the Township currently holds the following amounts in the Water and Wastewater Reserves:

System	Reserve Amount	Commitments
Water	\$995,544	\$550,000 committed to the Beachburg WTP Renewal Project
Wastewater	\$294,521	No specific commitments have been specified.