

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ's: City Manager

- As more people move into Celina will my water/sewer costs go up, or are there ways to keep costs down?
- *The cost of water and wastewater goes up for many reasons, not all of which are related to growth. To the contrary, properly managed growth can mean that water costs will be less than they otherwise would be. This is because as growth occurs, and more accounts are added, this means more monthly charges and more revenues. It is a concept known as “Economies of scale” and it means that the more accounts there are, the less it costs to service each account.*

That being said, it does not mean rates will go down. Water rates are not going down for any utility in the USA. Properly managed growth and economies of scale mean that costs will not go up as much as they otherwise would have. Higher water costs are a challenge which impacts all cities in the area but the City is managing its growth to keep these increases as minimal as possible.

FAQ's: City Manager

- How do Celina's water costs compare to nearby cities?
- *Celina's water costs are roughly average in comparison to other similarly-sized cities in North Texas (Prosper, Murphy, Little Elm, McKinney) and are lower than private water companies like Mustang Utility District.*

But the average water and wastewater cost is going up 5-6% per year, and all cities in the Collin-Denton county corridor are increasing. Further, 30-40% of cities in the U.S. charge rates that are below their costs, and subsidize water rates from the General Fund. Celina does not do this.

FAQ's: City Manager

- How do Celina's water costs compare to nearby cities? (continued)

However, it is not always fair or reasonable to compare Celina's water rates to other, larger cities such as McKinney and Plano. Both of these cities are significantly larger than Celina, and have much greater commercial usage. This enables both cities to capture economies of scale and the impact of water cost increases on residential customers.

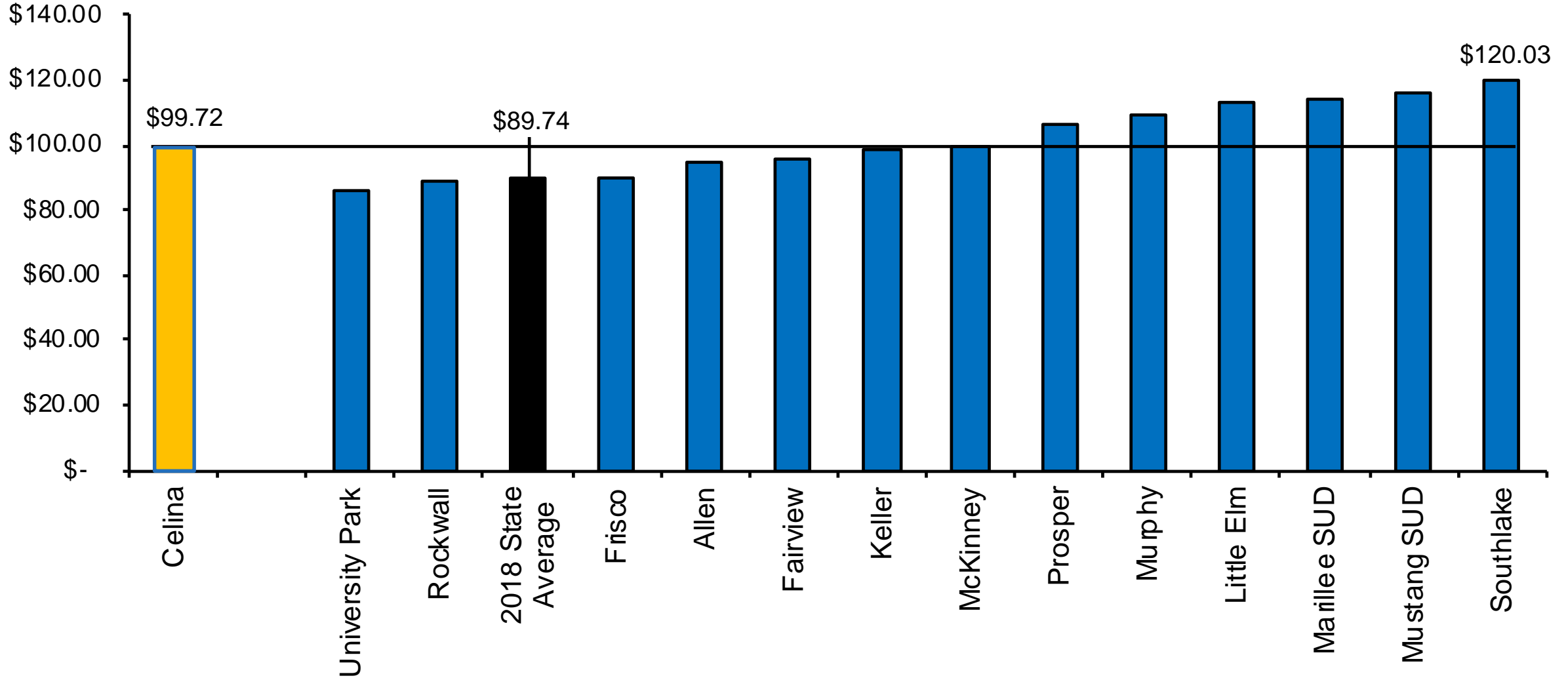
Further, Celina like these other cities as an Inverted Block conservation rate structure. The idea is to have a financial disincentive for higher levels of water use, particularly in the summer months. Water is a finite resource, and conservation rate structures are necessary to ensure that water is not wasted or used inefficiently.

FAQ's: City Manager

- How do Celina's water costs compare to nearby cities? (continued)

Also, Plano in particular has adopted a policy of charging a very low water for low volume residential customers, because they have a large number of low income and fixed income customers. They make up the difference in two ways - they charge a very high rate for high volume residential customers, and they have a higher commercial rate and a very high level of commercial usage. So it is not always fair or reasonable for a City the size of Celina to compare its water rates to a larger city such as Plano, which has a population of 250,000 and an enormous commercial base.

Monthly Residential Charge Comparison: 10,000 Gallons



FAQ's: City Manager

- How does Celina calculate winter wastewater rates? Celina does not use winter averaging, which many cities use.
- *Celina currently caps wastewater usage for residential customers at 14,000 gallons per month. Under the plan adopted by the Council, this will decrease by 1,000 gallons per year for each of the next 3 years. This is a common means of charging for wastewater service, especially for smaller cities.*

Remember, there is no “ideal” means of charging for wastewater service. Usage caps are common, and are easy to understand and implement. However, winter averages are not always effective in warm climates like North Texas. If a resident waters his or her lawn in the winter months, they pay sewer charges even under a winter average system. So no wastewater charge system is perfect.

FAQ's: City Manager

- How does Celina calculate winter wastewater rates? Celina does not use winter averaging, which many cities use (continued).
- *In future years Celina may consider the adoption of a winter average rate. To do so now, however, would result in substantial increases to low volume customers. This is because there are fewer billing units charged under a winter average system, so the per 1,000 gallon charge must be higher. As Celina gradually reduces the cap, the City will approach a point in the future where the adoption of a winter average will not result in as significant an increase in the lower volume customers. The Council may consider a winter average at that time.*

FAQ's: City Manager

How are decisions made regarding City expansion and infrastructure growth?

In capital projects, the City works closely with other organizations at the city, county and state levels to create cost-sharing partnerships that benefit all citizens, while sharing the cost burden.

FAQ's: City Manager

- Are we neglecting the older core of the City in favor of new development?
- *Celina's Downtown is near and dear to both residents and visitors. City Council and City staff are working to bring significant infrastructure improvements to the Downtown, as well as remodeling City Hall, Council Chambers and the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and Main Street buildings to lead the way in Downtown's revitalization.*

FAQ's: City Manager

- Are the Fire Station expansions tax revenue justified?
- *The City of Celina makes every effort to run an efficient organization, including in its Public Safety departments, which is why the City applied for and received a \$2.4 million federal Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response “SAFER” grant to help expand Fire Department staffing needed to expand services and shorten response time for emergency calls.*

FAQ's: City Manager

- What is going on with taxes and the MUD that is Light Farms?
- *The Light Farms community pays for Public Safety and for Water/Sewer utilities.*

FAQ's: City Manager

- What are the plans for the Downtown area, including Founders Station Park? Can I see a map?
- *The Downtown Plan as a whole is currently underway, as staff works to capture Celina's charming rural feel while strengthening its local economic base through local restaurants, shops and events. Included in the Plan is a "refresh" of Founders Station Park, which will include a playground that reflects the rural heritage of the City and its reliance on rail, as well as more accessible parking spaces.*
- *City staff hopes to make visual representations of the Downtown available in the near future.*

FAQ's: City Manager

- There don't seem to be many options for parks in Celina. Are there plans to expand parks in the City?
- *As part of the overall Comprehensive Plan for the City, staff has begun the Parks Master Plan, which will include the expansion of Old Celina Park.*

FAQ's: City Manager

- Will Celina pass a Senior Tax value freeze? Several other cities have a similar freeze.
- *City Council heard the concerns of our Seniors, and this year enacted a Senior Tax Value freeze as of 2018. Appraised taxable home value for Seniors is now frozen, starting the year that a Senior Citizen turns 65 years of age.*

FAQ's: City Manager

- Celina is experiencing rapid growth, while annexing developed properties. Shouldn't these annexations be producing revenues to provide improvements in sidewalks, the Library, storm drains, mosquito control, etc.? We have no Senior Center; can new revenues support creating one?
- *Celina continues to expand and add properties to the City boundaries. A significant challenge for cities in providing services is that properties don't provide revenue to the City for up to 18 months after joining the tax rolls. In the meantime, however, the City is providing services (Fire, Police, Code, etc) to these new residents.*

The Celina Senior Citizen's center is open and very active! Please contact the Parks and Recreation for more details. Additionally, the City includes annual funding for mosquito control efforts.

FAQ's: City Manager

- Meetings are held in the Former Methodist Church, which is not handicap accessible. Why is this not accessible for our seniors and disabled?
- *Celina takes accessibility very seriously. While the current Council Chambers (Formerly the First Methodist Church) does have a small elevator, improvements to the City buildings scheduled for the upcoming year will provide much greater accessibility for the handicapped and elderly, per ADA requirements. Improvements will include ramps, a commercial grade elevator, accessible hearing devices and more.*
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FAQ's: Gigabit

- Could you update me on the Gigabit project in the City? Where are fiber data lines going in?

Current status of AT&T: AT&T will have established a gigabit fiber connection to more than 3500 homes by year end.

Currently operational Fiber Neighborhoods include: Downtown, DC Ranch, Park Side, Mustang Lakes, Lilyana, Bluewood, Creeks of Legacy, Sutton Fields, and Glen Crossing.

Neighborhoods to be operational by end of the year include: Preston Hills, Carter Ranch, Heritage, and Light Farms.

FAQ's: Police

- Is there an opportunity for youth to do a Jr. Police Academy type program, who might be interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement?
- *The Celina Police Department operates from the overarching philosophy of community policing. Programs that enhance our engagement with the community are a top priority. The department currently is planning to implement a Citizens Police Academy and an Explorer Scout program in the future. Additional police staff is needed to properly implement and maintain these programs. Currently, the department has three citizen volunteer programs that involve training and engagement with the police department: Celina Citizens Police Volunteer, Celina Police Junior Volunteer, and the Celina Clergy Group. The Junior Citizen volunteers are provided the opportunity to bond with police officers, develop an understanding of police practices, and develop life skills in serving their community. Information and applications pertaining to the Citizens Volunteer Groups is available on the police department's website.*

FAQ's: Police/Development

- Can individuals hunt coyotes on private land? There seems to be a significant presence in town.
- *Although the City is not involved in whether or not individual landowners allow hunting on their properties, as development continues in Celina, coyotes will continue to migrate outside of town for suitable habitation.*
- *Additionally, the City contracts with Collin County to provide animal services, so Collin County Animal Control should be contacted with any animal related questions or issues. It is also possible that Collin County Animal Control may offer trapping services.*
- *Regarding hunting, however, laws pertaining to the hunting of any animal in Celina or Celina's ETJ must be considered. Texas Government Code (TGC) Sec. 229.003 provides specific requirements pertaining to the discharge of a firearm within certain municipalities; acreage, type of firearm, and location of certain adjacent facilities are all addressed in the statute. Celina City Ordinance Sec. 8.03.003 prohibits the discharge of any firearm within the city's corporate limits. Exceptions to the ordinance are outlined in TGC 229. In addition, the Texas Department of Wildlife has specific requirements for the hunting of any animal within the state and they should be consulted for specifics.*

FAQ's: Development

- There are vehicles have been parked in yards in my neighborhood for a significant period of time; some of this seems to be caused by home-based businesses in the neighborhood. What can be done?

Parking vehicles on an unimproved surface, such as grass, is a violation of City ordinance.

Additionally, as with most cities, Celina has Home Occupation regulations to protect the integrity of residential neighborhoods. It is important to note that the regulations do not prohibit home based businesses, but they are designed to mitigate potential inconveniences associated with the pursuit of home based businesses in a neighborhood setting. Generally, the guidelines do not allow for the alteration of the residential character of the primary house, for traffic to be generated in excess of reasonable patterns, and for any associated signage. Please contact Code Enforcement with any complaints, and we will follow-up on the complaint in a timely manner.

FAQ's: Engineering

- Could you please provide the official plan between Celina and Prosper and a timeline for Frontier Parkway between the DNT and the railroad tracks?

The maintenance of Frontier Parkway is shared; the south side is maintained by the Town of Prosper, the north side by the City of Celina. Celina City staff monitors Frontier on a weekly basis to ensure pavement failures are addressed expeditiously; however, due to the proposed construction of the new, 4-lane concrete road in 2019, staff will continue to patch and/or repair Frontier Road as necessary to ensure safe travel.

Regarding long term plans: the expedited Final Design submittal is tentatively scheduled to be submitted Mid-March, 2019. The Franchise relocation is tentatively scheduled to be completed by March 2020 and construction on Frontier is tentatively scheduled to begin April 2020. The construction is expected to take approximately two years and will include a grade separation at the BNSF railroad crossing.

FAQ's: Engineering

- Is it possible to make Celina a quiet zone for the trains coming through mostly during the night?
- *City staff has met with representatives from BNSF. BNSF has specific infrastructure requirements including quad gates and raised curbs. The estimated cost is about \$100K per crossing and the Town has six crossings: Malone, Beech, Pecan, Walnut, Elm and Ash. BNSF requires a minimum of 2 miles of continuous track; therefore, all crossings will be become quiet zones simultaneously.*

FAQ's: Engineering

- I recently completed a survey on trails. What are the plans for multi-use trails in Celina?
- *The City has completed several surveys for trails. Most recently, the City is developing a Master Trail Plan with Norris Design Group that will enable the City to apply for grants to begin construction on a continuous trail system. All new master planned communities will have a trail system incorporated into the development.*

FAQ's: Engineering

- Please tell us about expansion of FM 1385.
- *The City of Celina is working with an inter-agency coalition including the Towns of Prosper and Little Elm, the Cities of Aubrey and Celina and two utility districts (Sandbrock Ranch and District 10 which includes the Savannah subdivision. All departments have presented a resolution to TxDOT requesting their assistance in developing a schematic design and beginning the environmental clearance process.*

FAQ's: Engineering

- When will the City install 4-way stop at N. Arizona and W. Pecan Streets? Residents have offered to pay for it.
- *State law requires cities to commission a “warrant” study when placing new stop signs. Warrant studies weigh the factors of traffic load, speed, as well as accidents in recommending whether or not to place stop signs at an intersection.*
- *A multiway stop control warrant study was conducted and the report dated November 6th, 2018 stated that “based on the low existing volumes, lack of reported accidents, and the Texas MUTCD allowances for other criteria, a multiway stop is not recommended at this intersection at this time.”*

FAQ's: Engineering

- What needs to happen to get TxDOT to add better lighting, more traffic signals and other safety improvements when they do the next expansion to US 380?
- *Although US 380 is not in the City, Council and staff support any and all efforts to improve the safety of the road. At the present, however, TxDOT is evaluating multiple options for the proposed 380 bypass. One previous iteration showed the bypass going through the southeast section of town. This option has been removed and the 380 bypass is not expected to impact our residents.*

FAQ's: Finance

- Is it possible to auto pay water bills without additional fees?
- *Current auto pay customers pay a small convenience pay to use a credit card and the online payment system, which is a similar practice in other cities. However, Celina staff are working to implement a new platform which will help to reduce the convenience fee.*

FAQ's: Development

- When should residents stop watering grass?
- *Grass should not be watered between 10am and 6pm.*
- *Please visit www.watermyyard.org for more resources on water conservation.*

FAQ's: Public Works

- When will the Bluewood water tower be operational?
- *Anticipated completion is November 2019.*

FAQ's: City Manager

- What criteria would have to be in place for the City to install wastewater service in areas that are currently on septic?
- *New wastewater infrastructure projects are reviewed on a case by case basis, and depend on weighing many considerations, including current infrastructure, total costs, etc.*

FAQ's: City Manager

- Does the City have a 5-year plan for new public buildings?
- *City staff are currently working on renovations of City Hall, Council Chambers and the EDC, which are scheduled to be complete before January of 2020.*
- *Additionally, design on the first phase of two new fire stations is in progress at this time. Estimated completion date for the first is early 2020, and the second should be complete a few months after the first.*
- *Staff is currently reviewing purchasing property for a new Police station, and design will start soon on the new station.*

FAQ's: City Manager

- What is the City's annexation plan? Will it support an efficient development of the City's infrastructure?
- *The City has worked to have ultimate boundaries with other cities, and annexation plans take place within the confines of the law. Development within City limits is always preferred when possible. City staff is working daily with developers and landowners on proposed projects inside as well as outside the City. Each method has its own challenges.*
- *Ultimately, development should pay for development, which minimizes costs to the taxpayer.*

FAQ's: City Manager

- Will the City publish monthly activity reports on finances, development, Public Safety updates, Capital projects, etc?
- *The City works continuously to increase transparency and accessibility to citizens and customers. Our Marketing and Communications Department maintains a significant presence online on social media and a robust website, which both include updates on Development, Council agendas, Capital projects, road closures and other public notifications, adopted budgets and financial reports. We monitor traffic on webpages to determine the subjects that the public is interest in.*

FAQ's: City Manager/Finance

- How many staff were added to Celina's payroll last year and this year?
- *Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget included 24 new staff members, and current fiscal year adds 42 new staff. Of this year's new employees, the vast majority are for Public Safety. The City budgeted for 6 new police officers, and 24 new firefighters. The majority of the funding for 18 of the new firefighter positions came from a Federal Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) grant.*