



1211 South Pearl St. | Tacoma, WA 98465
253.272.2112 | www.masterbuilderspierce.com

January 13, 2026

Tacoma City Council Chambers
747 Market Street
Tacoma, WA 98402 United States

Dear Tacoma City Council Members,

On behalf of the Master Builders Association of Pierce County (MBAPC) Legislative Strategy Committee, I am writing to express concern regarding the proposed increases to Tacoma's Water System Development Charges (SDCs) scheduled for consideration this evening.

MBAPC represents more than 850 member companies across the residential building, remodeling, and construction sectors working to support the City of Tacoma's housing goals, including increased infill development, Missing Middle housing, and greater affordability across the market.

We acknowledge and support the City's interest in maintaining reliable water infrastructure and ensuring ratepayer equity. However, the scale and timing of the proposed increases raise significant concerns regarding housing feasibility and affordability. For example, a standard 5/8 inch residential meter would increase from \$809 to \$2,785 by 2030, which represents more than a 240 percent increase over current rates. These cost escalations do not occur in isolation and will compound with other municipal fees, permitting requirements, and market conditions that are already challenging the development of attainable and workforce housing.

Because builders privately finance the improvements required to make new housing possible, SDCs should reflect true system capacity needs and not rehabilitation and maintenance/operation costs. Furthermore, there is insufficient data included in the ordinance and supporting material to demonstrate the need for such dramatic increases as it relates to actual costs. When fees exceed those needs, new housing becomes financially infeasible to build, and prices increase for Tacoma residents.

Affordability is a core equity issue, and well-intentioned infrastructure policy can unintentionally undermine the City's housing objectives if feasibility and cumulative impacts are not considered. Council has invested substantial effort into supporting additional housing supply, reducing displacement, and expanding access to homeownership. Ensuring that SDC adjustments align with these goals is critical.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the Council postpone passage of the proposed SDC increases to allow for further analysis and discussion. Additional time will allow all stakeholders, including builders, staff, and the public, to better evaluate the cumulative impacts on housing affordability and ensure alignment with the City's stated housing goals and infrastructure needs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sam Kneel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sam" and the last name "Kneel" clearly distinguishable.

Legislative Strategy Committee Chair
Master Builders Association of Pierce County