

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council**

**March 22, 2022**

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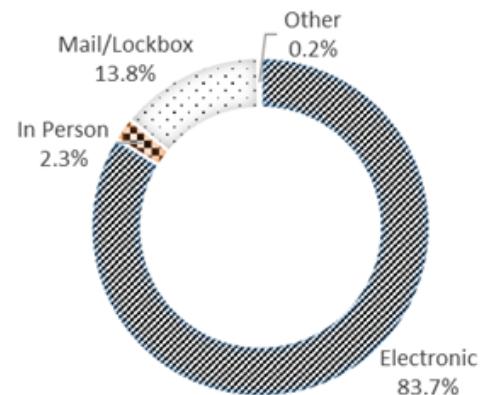
**SUBJECT: WATER BILL PAY OPTIONS AND ENHANCEMENTS**

Fort Worth Water provides water customers a number of options for billing and payment services, designed to meet changing customer preferences and expectations. Over the years new payment options have been added as new technologies became available, affordable and were adopted by the public. Electronic forms of payment were first offered in 1989 with automated bank draft and have grown to include online payments (2002), electronic bill pay (2006), pay by phone (2008), e-check and auto pay (2013). E-notification for billing statements was introduced in 2011, allowing customers to opt-out of a mailed paper billing statement.

In an effort to meet the needs of our diverse customer base, the utility also provides a variety of traditional payment options, including in person services at our downtown location and across Fort Worth through a contract with Fidelity Express, which was introduced in 2012. Fidelity Express accepts payments at over 300 locations at no cost to the City.

In FY2021 over 83% of payments were received through some electronic means. That is up from 56% ten years ago. In person transactions have declined from almost 14% to 2% during the same period. This change prompted the closure of three utility-operated satellite payment centers in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

**FY21 PAYMENT BY TYPE**



The utility remains focused on expanding payment options and promoting convenience for its customers, while also seeking the most cost-effective service delivery.

In 2020, the utility took the first step in upgrading its online payment system. The transition provided for faster, more secure, and cost-effective payment processing and began the process of launching new features and enhanced digital engagement tools for our customers.

Beginning this April, customers will be able to access all account and payment services through our new customer portal and mobile application. Customers will automatically be redirected and will not be asked re-enroll. Customers will be required to reset their password to ensure the protection of their payment information.

Enabled by the MyH2O program, the new customer portal will allow customers direct access to detailed interval water use data, offering multiple viewing options, including cost detail. Customers can enroll in Smart iQ Analytics that provide alerts to identify leaks, high use, and watering restrictions, as well as provide home water use reports. The portal will promote E-

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Notification for bill delivery and provide ready access to current and previous billing statements to limit the need for a mailed paper billing statement. This is expected to increase adoption rates.

The mobile app, available in the App Store and Google Play store by late April, will enable notifications, provide customers the ability to view account, billing and payment history as well as place on the go payments.

The ongoing execution of the utility's customer roadmap for 2022 will include the release of the enterprise portal for commercial and industrial customers and the next phase of the mass market residential portal, which will allow customers to request move in/out/transfer service, enable budget alerts, and enroll in conservation programs. Customers will also be able to compare their water use to usage of other customers by neighborhood or zip code.

The roadmap also includes an expansion of accepted payment methods including cash transfer applications including Venmo and PayPal as well as digital wallet platforms Apple Pay and Google Pay.

Improvements planned for 2023 include web chat, outage notifications, enhancements like due date flexibility, custom forms for reporting, and field service scheduling.

Promoting the launch of the portal is taking several avenues, including a postcard that will be mailed to every residential customer, a bill insert in May, and video and written communications on City News and utility websites. In addition, an extensive social media campaign will roll out with the launch and continue throughout the year.

Should you have any additional questions, please contact Chris Harder, P.E., Water Director at 817-392-8207 or Kara Shuror, Deputy Water Director at 817-392-8819.

**David Cooke**  
**City Manager**