



# UTILITY SERVICES UPDATE

City Council Workshop  
January 2019

# UTILITY BILLING & COLLECTIONS UPDATE

- Status Update – KPMG Recommendations
  - Completed by KPMG
  - Final Report presented to Council on 10/12/2017
- Billing and Collections Update

## Scope

- Comprehensive Assessment of Utility Billing and Collections
- Provide recommendations for improvements based on industry best practices

## 24 Recommendations, 5 Key Areas

- Administration
- Account Setup & Customer Service
- Meter Reading
- Billing
- Collections



## 2018 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**14 recommendations implemented in 2018**

### Highlights include:

- Formalized training program for new hires
- Enhanced internal training and communications
- High water bill customer communication protocol in place
- Two new meter reader positions created and filled
- Communications position for outreach & education created and filled
- Webpages reorganized and updated

# WEBPAGE UPDATE

Report specifically noted our website lacked:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Utility News
- Online Customer Feedback Portal

The screenshot shows the Savannah, Georgia website's utility services page. At the top, the Savannah logo and navigation links are visible. A search bar asks "How can we help...". A left sidebar lists various utility services. The main content area is titled "Utility Services" and includes sections for "Duties" and "Contact Customer Service". A video thumbnail for "Reading Your Water Meter Accuracy" is at the bottom.

**SAVANNAH**  
savannahga.gov

Resources for Residents Tools for Business Tips for Visitors Meet Your Government

How can we help...

Meet Your Government > Chief Operating Officer > Financial Services > Revenue > Utility Services > [DRAFT] Utility Services

**Utility Services**

**Duties**  
The Utility Services Division, although funded through the water fund, is an operating division in the Revenue Department. Utility Services bills and collects fees for water, sewer, and refuse collection. The service area includes the City and the urban areas of unincorporated Chatham County.

**Contact Customer Service**  
To start or change utility services at a residence or business, contact the Utility Services Customer Service at (912) 651-6460 or visit our office location in the Broughton Municipal Building on the first floor, 132 E. Broughton Street, Savannah, GA 31401. A deposit may be required when requesting service. Personal identifying information may be requested to establish service or to make changes to an existing account.

You may submit a request to stop service by calling Customer Service at (912) 651-6460 Monday - Friday 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Visit the links below for additional details:

- [How to Set Up Service](#)
- [How to Transfer or Discontinue Service](#)
- [How to Read Your Water Bill](#)
- [Water Conservation](#)
- [Water Saving Toilets](#)
- [Pay Your Utility Bill Online](#)
- [Local Resources for Utility Assistance](#)

Reading Your Water Meter Accuracy

# WEBPAGE UPDATE

- New site structure: reorganized and grouped related pages to simplify navigation
- Added homepage buttons to most popular/important pages or services
- Developed FAQs
- Created electronic mailing list & online Customer Service contact form

The screenshot displays the Savannah, Georgia website homepage. At the top, the Savannah logo and navigation links are visible. A search bar is prominently featured. The main content area is divided into several sections: a dark blue sidebar with navigation links, a central 'Utility Services' section with buttons for 'Start Service', 'Stop or Transfer Service', 'Pay Utility Bill Online', 'Avoid Service Shut-Off', 'Frequently Asked Questions', and 'Contact Us', a 'Helpful Links' section with various utility-related links, a 'Contact Customer Service' section with contact information and hours, and a 'Duties' section. On the right side, there is a 'Contact Us' section with customer service details and a 'Connect with Us' section with an email sign-up button. The page number '5' is located at the bottom right.

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How can we help...

Meet Your Government » Chief Operating Officer » Financial Services » Revenue » Utility Services

**Utility Services**

Pay Utility Bill Online  
Account Services  
Customer Care  
Education & Outreach  
Contact Us

**Start Service** **Stop or Transfer Service** **Pay Utility Bill Online**  
**Avoid Service Shut-Off** **Frequently Asked Questions** **Contact Us**

**Helpful Links**

- [How to Read Your Bill & Water Meter](#)
- [Local Resources for Utility Assistance \(PDF\)](#)
- [Water and/or Sewer Leak Adjustment Request Form](#)
- [Sanitation Department \(Trash & Recycling Services\)](#)
- [Join our Email List](#)

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**Duties**

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**Contact Us**

**Utility Services Customer Service**  
Ph: (912) 651-6460  
[Customer Service Contact Form](#)

Broughton Municipal Building  
132 E. Broughton Street  
Savannah, GA 31401

**Connect with Us**  
SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAIL LIST

**FAQs**

- [I have excellent credit. Why do I need to pay a deposit?](#)
- [When do I get my deposit back?](#)
- [Can I pay my bill online?](#)
- [I have a balance on my account but I am moving. Do I need to pay this balance?](#)
- [I need help paying my water bill. Where can I find assistance?](#)
- [What is my due date?](#)
- [Why can't I receive my bill on the same day every other month?](#)
- [I haven't gotten a bill, why is that?](#)
- [Where is my bar code on my bill and will this number remain the same?](#)
- [When will my trash be picked up?](#)

5

In  
Progress

## 2019 PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

**6 recommendations to implement in 2019**

### Highlights include:

- Develop improved online customer portal (launch 2020)
- Contract outside collections agency
- Create formal debt tracking system
- Undertake thorough software environment review with IT
- Desk audit of Utility Billing functions
- Legal review of opportunities for rental properties

# LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

Category	Recommendation	Key Date
Account Set-up & Customer Service	5.1 Utility Billing & IT should consider online application submission, with functionality to attach documentation and down payments when applicable	Target implementation: 2020
Account Set-up & Customer Service	5.5 Utility Billing should consider charging an application fee for new account set-up, service transfer, & service reconnection.	Research underway, determination to be made in 2020
Account Set-up & Customer Service	5.4(b) System to monitor & manage calls, interface with existing software, & identify root causes and trends.	Determination to be made in 2020

# REQUIRE FURTHER REVIEW

Category	Recommendation
Administration	4.1(a) Utility Services should consider operating with a single leader over Utility Billing and Water Distribution



# SUMMARY: 24 RECOMMENDATIONS

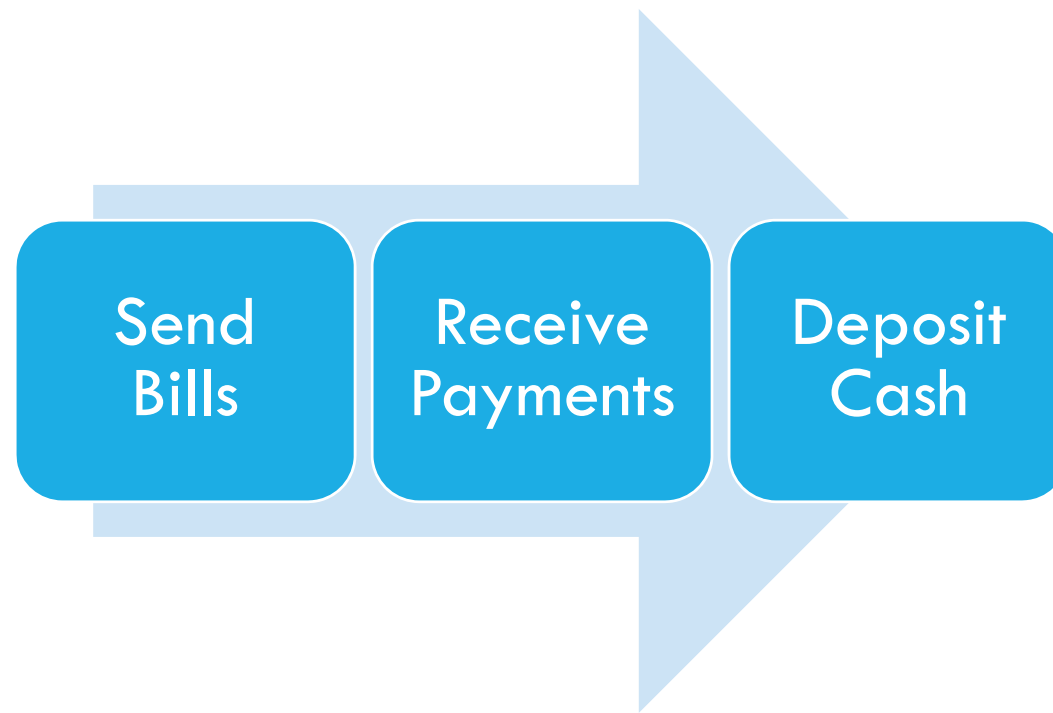
**14** Completed

**6** Priority Objectives for 2019

**3** Long-Term Objectives

**1** Require Further Review By Staff

# UTILITY BILLING CYCLE



# UTILITY BILLING ANALYSIS — YEAR END 2018

YEAR	BILLED
2016	\$ 81,765,758.93
2017	\$ 79,659,469.28
2018	\$ 84,189,616.99

# UTILITY BILLING ANALYSIS — YEAR END 2018

YEAR	BILLED	COLLECTED
2016	\$ 81,765,758.93	\$ (77,573,190.55)
2017	\$ 79,659,469.28	\$ (73,539,144.40)
2018	\$ 84,189,616.99	\$ (69,989,845.15)

# UTILITY BILLING ANALYSIS — YEAR END 2018

YEAR	BILLED	COLLECTED	UNCOLLECTED	COLLECTION RATE
2016	\$ 81,765,758.93	\$ (77,573,190.55)	\$ 4,192,568.38	94.87%
2017	\$ 79,659,469.28	\$ (73,539,144.40)	\$ 6,120,324.88	92.32%
2018	\$ 84,189,616.99	\$ (69,989,845.15)	\$ 14,199,771.84	83.13%

# UTILITY BILLING ANALYSIS — YEAR END 2018

YEAR	BILLED	COLLECTED	UNCOLLECTED	COLLECTION RATE (12/31/18)	COLLECTION RATE (11/1/18)
2016	\$ 81,765,758.93	\$ (77,573,190.55)	\$ 4,192,568.38	94.87%	94.69%
2017	\$ 79,659,469.28	\$ (73,539,144.40)	\$ 6,120,324.88	92.32%	91.51%
2018	\$ 84,189,616.99	\$ (69,989,845.15)	\$ 14,199,771.84	83.13%	75.90%

**THANK YOU**

Next Update to Council: 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2019

Questions?