

# Water rates can vary all across the Valley

But making those costs more equal is viewed as unlikely to happen.

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The Republic • azcentral.com

Nancy Lopez takes short showers and will let her lawn go brown in the summer at her home in Surprise's Original Town Site.

Less than a quarter-mile away in a newer master-planned community, Stacy Anderson tries to conserve, but she uses enough water to keep her lawn green and indulges in the occasional long bath.

Although Lopez used 11 percent more water than Anderson in March, Lopez paid more than double what Anderson did.

Lopez said she paid \$82 for 11,000 gallons. Anderson paid \$37 for about 9,900 gallons.

The two women live in the same city, but Lopez gets her water from El Mirage while Anderson gets hers from Surprise.

City boundaries don't necessarily determine which entity provides water for residents. Instead, different water-service providers throughout the Valley have secured the rights to serve specific areas.

That means water rates can vary wildly depending on the city or water company providing the service. Residents have no say where they get their water.

So, some residents pay more — a lot more. Lopez, for example, pays double what her neighbors pay just a few blocks southwest.

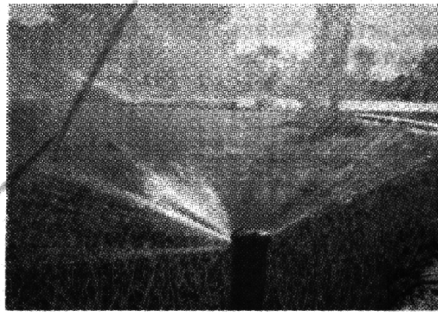
"It doesn't seem fair," Lopez said. "The city needs to do something about it."

Despite what Lopez wants, making rates equal for all water users is unlikely, according to officials and a water expert.

## Providers' rates different

In Surprise alone, 13 water companies have staked claims on swatches of land. Many of the companies are smaller ones serving areas that have no customers. The Surprise, El Mirage and Epcor water-service providers have the most users in Surprise, and their rates vary.

Surprise charges customers \$33.79 for 9,000 gallons of water a month,



City boundaries don't necessarily determine which entity provides water for residents. MARK HENLE/REPUBLIC

## RATE COMPARISON

Water rates throughout the Valley based on 9,000 gallons used per month.

El Mirage	\$66.57
Epcor	\$53.23
Mesa	\$44.13
Buckeye	\$36.73
Scottsdale	\$35.31
Peoria	\$33.79
Surprise	\$33.79
Glendale	\$33.18
Tempe	\$32.68
Phoenix	\$30.99
Goodyear	\$26.84
Chandler	\$24.51
Gilbert	\$24.35
Avondale	\$23.51

Source: Surprise and Republic research

while El Mirage charges \$66.57, and Epcor charges \$53.23, according to a Surprise study.

An average water user in metro Phoenix uses about 9,000 gallons a month, according to the study.

Compared with the rest of the Valley, El Mirage and Epcor have some of the highest rates.

Avondale has the lowest rates, with customers paying \$23.51 per 9,000 gallons.

University of Arizona law professor Robert Glennon, a water expert, said the rates vary simply because the cost to provide the water varies.