

Camilla Stormwater Utility

Customer Information Sheet

At its December 13, 2010 meeting, the City Council adopted an ordinance that formally established the Camilla Stormwater Utility and user fee system. The purpose of the Stormwater Utility and user fee system revenue will be to fund the City's future Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) beginning January 2011. Following the heavy rains that flooded parts of the City in 2009, the City initiated work to identify the key drainage issues that needed to be addressed. The City has concluded that it needs to repair damaged pipes and drainage structures, replace small pipes with larger ones, and improve the flow of water in the City's numerous ditch systems. The total cost of these projects is over \$1 million. In addition to building new projects, the City will also clean pipes and ditches on a more regular basis to help the flow of water and to reduce the possibility of mosquito breeding in the standing water.

Stormwater runoff is water that comes off impervious surfaces (i.e. rooftops, driveways, sidewalks and roads) when it rains and all developed properties generate and contribute runoff to the drainage system. The amount of impervious surface on a particular property is directly related to the amount of stormwater runoff that the property contributes to the downstream drainage system. In addition to flooding problems, stormwater runoff from impervious surface also washes pollutants into local creeks and streams. In order to address the City's flooding and water pollution issues, a Stormwater Utility has been established and a user fee charge will be billed to each City customer (i.e. residences, businesses, churches and government facilities) on the monthly utility bill. A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is provided below to help our customers better understand the Stormwater Utility and user fee charge.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is a stormwater user fee charge? The stormwater user fee is a charge for stormwater services. The user fee charge will be billed to customers as a separate line item on your monthly utility bill. The money that is collected from this fee will only be spent on stormwater management related activities and drainage system improvements.

How has the user fee charge been determined? The fee is being based on the amount of impervious surface on a parcel. Impervious surfaces are areas that cannot absorb rainfall including rooftops, driveways, sidewalks, etc. Impervious surfaces reduce the natural infiltration of stormwater, which increases runoff. The basic theory behind the user fee charge is that the greater the amount of impervious area – the greater the amount of runoff – the larger the user fee amount for the customer.

How much will I pay for my property? The typical residential parcel/customer will pay a flat rate user fee amount of \$4.00 per month. Duplexes and other small residential customers may pay less in certain situations. Non-residential customers will pay \$4.00 per month per 3,360 square increment of impervious surface. For example, a non-residential parcel (such as a fast food restaurant) with 26,000 square feet of impervious surface would pay \$30.95 per month and a large shopping center with 300,000 square feet of impervious surface would pay \$357.14 per month.

How can I reduce my user fee charge? A customer can reduce their user fee charge by securing a credit. Credits are granted to individual customers/properties that undertake certain actions that: (1) reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff being discharged from their property, or (2) reduce the cost of providing stormwater services to that property. A copy of the Credit Manual can be obtained from the City.

How is the impervious surface area measured? The City has utilized aerial photography and computerized maps to measure the total square footage of impervious surface on a parcel. In some cases, the City has performed measurements in the field.

Isn't this just another tax? No. Although the user fee is an additional cost to customers, it is not based on the taxable or assessed value of the property. Instead, the user fee is based on the amount of impervious surface and the runoff amount that flows off the property. As such, the user fee approach is the fairest way to charge a customer for stormwater management services because the user fee charge is related to the amount of runoff discharged from the property – not its assessed value.

Who do I call if I have additional questions? The City of Camilla Stormwater Utility is managed by the Public Works Department. Questions about the Stormwater Utility and user fee charge should be directed to the Customer Service Department at City Hall (229) 336-2220.