



Stormwater Funding Frequently Asked Questions

www.fallschurchva.gov/StormwaterFund

What is the Stormwater Enterprise Fund?

A new stormwater utility fee and stormwater enterprise fund was included as part of the adopted FY 2014 Budget Plan in order to provide a stable, dedicated funding for the City's stormwater management program. The revenue generated by the utility fee cannot be used for purposes beyond those identified for the stormwater management program – both operating and capital project budget. Creating an enterprise fund for stormwater eliminates annual competition for funds within the budget and aids long-range planning for funding of major stormwater improvements.

How much is a stormwater utility fee going to cost me?

The utility fee is based on the amount of impervious surface (e.g. roof, driveway, walkway, and patio) your site has. For each 200 square feet of impervious surface the cost is \$18.00. The average impervious surface for a residential property in the City is 2,755 square feet; therefore the average cost is approximately \$252 annually.

What is the effective date of the stormwater utility fee? When will the first bill go out?

The stormwater utility fee went into effect July 1, 2013. Yet, the first bill will not be mailed until June 2014 as a part of the real estate tax bill. The City was able to delay the first bill by providing \$900,000 of seed money from the General Fund.

What is the annual cost of the City's stormwater management program?

The stormwater utility fee is expected to yield \$1.643M annually.

How is the stormwater management program currently funded and what is its annual budget?

The stormwater management program has been funded by the general fund. The FY2013 stormwater operating budget is \$471,285 while the capital budget included \$1,200,000.

What will the Stormwater Enterprise Fund pay for?

Revenue collected by the utility fee will only fund the City's stormwater management program, both operating and capital budgets. This includes:

- City staff (e.g. engineers, inspectors, maintenance crew, and supervisor)
 - Clean and repair 27 miles of stormwater pipes, 1.5 miles of open stream, 70 miles of curb and gutter, 1400 inlets and manholes,
 - Design and oversee the construction of capital projects,
 - Manage the City's stormwater permit, Erosion and Sediment Control Program, and floodplain program.
- Construction materials for repairs and new infrastructure
- Construction equipment, vehicles, and associated fuel and maintenance costs
- Contracted services – specialized cleaning and inspection, street sweeping, deep excavation, engineering consultant, surveying, utility location, geotechnical
- Office supplies and equipment
- State stormwater permit fees

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Who has to pay the fee?

Every parcel that is located in the City of Falls Church that has a minimum of 200 square feet of impervious surface will be required to pay the fee. Properties that are not subject to property taxes will also pay the stormwater utility fee because it is a fee for service.

Do other Virginia jurisdictions have a Stormwater Enterprise Fund?

Arlington County and Fairfax County utilizes a service district to fund portions of their stormwater program. Prince William County and the cities of Richmond, Hampton, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk and Newport News have established stormwater utility fees to fund all or portions of their stormwater management programs.

What is the Watershed Management Plan?

In February 2012 City Council adopted the Watershed Management Plan, which is a planning document that establishes a roadmap for the City to restore and maintain a healthy, sustainable aquatic ecosystem in the Tripp's Run and Four Mile Run watersheds while providing adequate flood control and the safe management of stormwater runoff. The plan offers the most complete and detailed information concerning the City's stormwater needs.

What is the condition of the City's stormwater system?

Much of the City's stormwater system was installed by developers as the city grew during the 1930s through the 1960s, which was prior to any flood and stormwater regulations. As Falls Church increased in density, the stormwater infrastructure became overwhelmed with additional runoff from impervious surfaces. Furthermore, many of these stormwater pipes are beyond their expected life span and in some locations have failed or are near failing. As we see with some regularity, flooding occurs in areas due to undersized or broken stormwater pipes. City staff estimates roughly \$20 million will be needed in the next 10 years to solve drainage problems and replace aging stormwater infrastructure.

What is going on with the Chesapeake Bay and how does that impact the city?

Falls Church, like every jurisdiction in Virginia, is now facing a new state/federal mandate aimed at restoring the Chesapeake Bay called the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). A TMDL is also commonly referred to as a pollution diet. In this case, the Chesapeake Bay TMDL sets a limit on the amount of phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment (measured in pounds) that enters our streams on an annual basis. In 2012, the City was given numerical targets it must achieve by 2025 with specific milestones along the way.

In order to comply with the Chesapeake Bay TMDL the City will need to build new water quality facilities, such as rain gardens, infiltration trenches, and underground storage with filters. Redevelopment of private property will assist in reaching our goals, however, City staff estimates those efforts will constitute no more than 5% of the pollution that must be removed. The remaining 95% will need to be removed by the City on public property. The Department of Public Works will look for ways to save in construction costs by combining stormwater capacity projects with quality facilities where feasible. City staff estimates compliance with the Chesapeake Bay TMDL will require \$15 million in expenditures by 2025 for stormwater quality specific construction projects.

Isn't stormwater already cleaned at the sewage treatment plant?

The stormwater runoff that comes from parking lots, streets, roofs and yards flows directly into storm pipes and streams and ultimately to the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. In Falls Church the stormwater system is separate from the sanitary sewer system. Wastewater, or sewage, is collected and transmitted through this separate pipe system and is delivered to one of the regional sewage treatment plants for treatment.

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