

# City of Davis Stormwater Measure

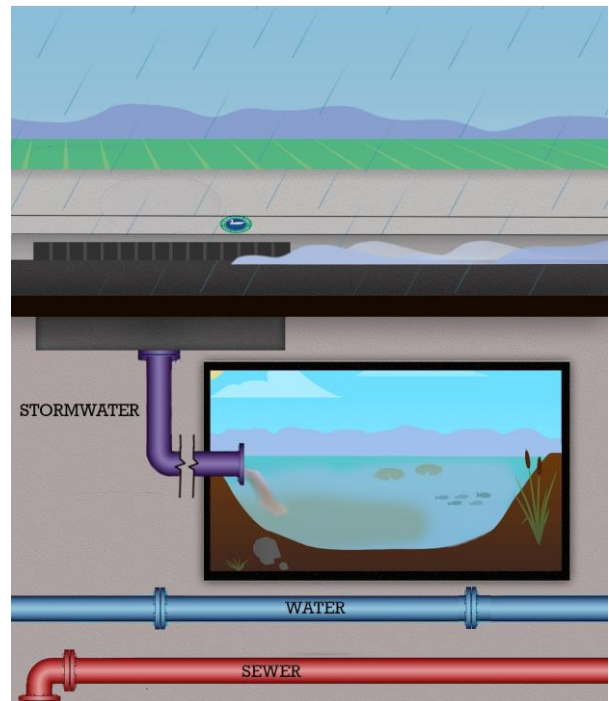
## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is Stormwater?

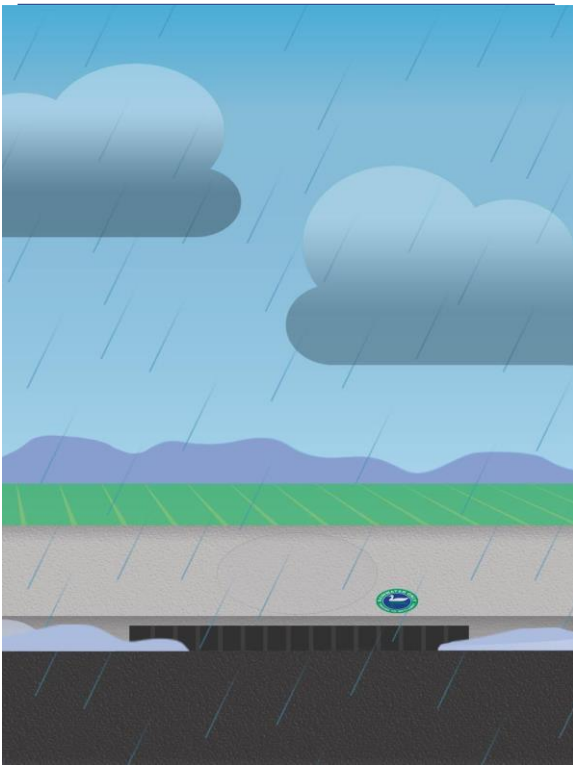
Stormwater is the water from precipitation that flows across the ground and pavement when it rains. Stormwater starts as just rainwater, but as it runs off roofs, yards, driveways, and any impervious surface, it can pick up pollutants, such as dirt, trash, animal waste, oil, gas, fertilizers, pesticides, metals, and other materials in its path. Stormwater in the City of Davis is not treated and flows directly to local water bodies. It does not go to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

### What is the Stormwater Program?

The stormwater program consists of over 5,300 maintenance holes, catch basins, inlets, and outfalls; as well as over 130 linear miles of gravity pipes, and 19 pump stations that the City owns, maintains, and operates to manage stormwater. Rainwater flows from buildings, parking lots, sidewalks, and other impervious surfaces onto our City streets and into catch basins, through pipes, and eventually into our creeks and wetlands. Various factors, such as pumps operating beyond their capacity or clogged catch basins or pipes that do not adequately convey standard rainwater flow, cause flooding in various areas throughout the City, making it difficult for pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles, cars, and emergency vehicles to navigate. This program performs operations and maintenance, both before and after storms, to keep the system running smoothly and to prevent local flooding.



In addition to operational maintenance, the stormwater program also oversees and ensures stormwater quality. Trash, such as plastics, cigarette butts, and other non-biodegradable products, can get swept into the drainage system with stormwater runoff, and drain directly into our local creeks and wetlands. Chemical and bacterial contaminants, such as fertilizer, pesticides, and animal waste are also spread through and pollute this untreated runoff. The City of Davis provides street sweeping services and performs regular trash surveys in order to minimize the amount of trash and pollutants flowing through our storm drainage system, thereby enhancing the cleanliness of the water in our local waterways. The City has a robust stormwater outreach program that aims to prevent stormwater pollution before it starts by educating residents, businesses, contractors, and industrial facilities about making choices to protect instead of pollute stormwater.



## Why is a new fee needed?

The current storm sewer and storm drainage fees were put into place decades ago. The storm sewer rate has remained the same since 2005, and although the storm drainage rate can be increased each year by 3%, the revenue generated by these two fees is not enough to pay for the necessary operations, maintenance, and new regulatory requirements that are very costly and were not anticipated to the extent of their costs at the time the previous fee was adopted, to proactively service the system and ensure that stormwater flowing to the creeks is clean. In addition, these fees do not provide enough funding for necessary capital improvements. For instance, the Richards Tunnel Pump Station #6 was built in 1924 when the City was much smaller, and the amount of water runoff pumped by this station was much less. South Davis Pump Station #5 is also very old and is subject to major flooding within the station. Both of these pump stations are overdue for replacement with new, more energy efficient and higher capacity equipment, but there are no funds available from the current fees to pay for these and other high priority capital improvement needs.

## Don't my property taxes already pay for this?

This may have been true in the past when the City's General Fund could cover the required minor maintenance activities not already paid for by the current fees. But in recent years, storm drainage has become the front line of environmental protection, and pollutants found in our creeks and wetlands can only be controlled through proper management of rain runoff from our urban areas. The City's General Fund cannot keep pace with these changes without threatening other vital City services, such as public safety and roads.

## Can the money from this fee be used to pay for other things (not Stormwater related)?

No. The proposed new fee, if approved, will be a dedicated source of funds that can only be used for the stormwater program, providing for clean water and flood protection throughout the City. This money cannot be taken by the County or the State, and the City cannot use these funds for any other purpose.

## Who gets to vote for this?

Owners of property in the City of Davis will get to vote on the proposed stormwater measure.

## Why did I get a notice for this measure, not a ballot?

State law requires a notice and public hearing before property owners can vote on this kind of measure. The public hearing is scheduled to occur at the City Council meeting on May 4, 2021 at 6:30pm in the City Council Chambers at 23 Russell Blvd. Property owners who do not approve of the proposed fee can mail their written protests, or they can bring them to the hearing. If the City receives written protests from more than 50% of property owners, the City cannot move forward with the proposed new fee, and property owners will not receive a ballot. If fewer than 50% protest, ballots are scheduled to be mailed to property owners later in May.

## What is the difference between the stormwater system and the sewer system?

The stormwater system manages rainwater runoff from streets, roofs, sidewalks, etc. This water is not treated before it flows into wetlands and waterways. The City's sewer system transports wastewater from indoor sources (toilets, sinks, baths, showers, industrial processes, etc.) to sewer facilities for treatment and final discharge. These are two separate and independent systems: one for water flowing from the outside of buildings and other property and the other for water flowing from the inside.

## When do we vote?

If the City Council votes to proceed with the measure on May 4, ballots are scheduled to be mailed on or around May 17, and property owners will have until June 25, 2021, at 5:00pm to mail or bring their ballot to the City Clerk. Please note that completed ballots must be **received** by this deadline to be counted. Post marks do not count.

## When will we know whether the measure passed?

After the close of the balloting period on June 25, the ballots will be tabulated and the results are tentatively scheduled to be announced at the City Council meeting on July 6.

## How much is the new proposed fee?

The new fee is based on the amount of impervious surface on your type of property. The fee for your property (or for each of your properties if you own more than one) will be printed on the ballot you receive through the mail in May. The proposed new fee for a single-family home on an average size lot will be \$13.10 per month and will replace both the Storm Sewer and Storm Drainage fees you currently pay on your City utility bill. See the chart below for the rates for all types of property.

## Why propose this new fee now?

The City has worked toward initiating this process over a number of years. As resources have allowed, assessments have been made on the stormwater equipment and structures, as well as program resources and staffing, to provide solid data on the needs for the program. Additional work has been done to understand the stormwater impact of the agricultural fields surrounding Davis and how changes in ag practices may have changed the City's stormwater infrastructure needs. While there is more work necessary to understand all of the impacts, work has been interrupted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The process of undertaking a majority approval vote requires a great deal of resources and staff time and is not a process the City takes lightly. Recent changes in stormwater regulations at the State level, changes in area weather patterns resulting in more strain on the aging infrastructure, and moderate flooding events have necessitated the initiation of rate adjustments.



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Land Use Category		Proposed Monthly Rate FY 2021-22		
<b>Residential*</b>				
Small	Under 0.14	<i>ac</i>	\$	10.23 per parcel
Medium	0.14 to 0.22	<i>ac</i>	\$	13.10 per parcel
Large	0.23 to 0.27	<i>ac</i>	\$	17.45 per parcel
Very Large	Over 0.27	<i>ac</i>	\$	19.47 per parcel
Condo – 1 Level			\$	8.52 per parcel
Condo – 2+ Levels			\$	3.95 per parcel
<b>Non-Residential**</b>				
Mobile Home Park			\$	98.20 per acre
Apartment			\$	104.08 per acre
Comm/Industrial/Retail			\$	137.86 per acre
Office			\$	113.63 per acre
Institutional			\$	98.20 per acre
Institutional w/Field			\$	68.89 per acre
Park			\$	8.22 per acre
Vacant (developed)			\$	8.22 per acre
Open Space/Agricultural				not charged
*Single-family Residential category also includes du-tri-and four-plex units				
**Non-SFR parcels size is calculated to a hundredth of an acre				

## Will this proposed new fee replace my current stormwater fees?

Yes. If the proposed new stormwater fee passes, it will replace both the Storm Sewer and Storm Drainage fees you currently pay on your City utility bill.

## Will the amount of the fee increase in the future?

Yes, the fee can be increased by the Consumer Price Index, but no more than 3% per year. This is to keep up with the cost of inflation, and will be reviewed annually by the Utilities Commission and the City Council to determine if an increase is deemed appropriate for that year.

## What is the City doing to ensure the money is spent wisely?

Transparency is important to the City Council. The funds from this new fee will be accounted for separately in an account dedicated to clean water and flood protection services. By law, the revenue from this fee cannot be taken by the County or State, and cannot be used by the City for any other purpose. The City strives continuously to find the most cost-effective ways to achieve the goals of this program. The expenditures and revenue for this program will be audited annually, and will be subject to an annual review by the City's Utilities Commission and City Council.



## What happens if the proposed stormwater fee does not pass?

The current fees cover only a portion of the clean water and flood protection operations and maintenance expenses in the City, and do not include funding for capital improvement needs. If the proposed fee does not pass, the level of service for operating and maintenance may be reduced, as costs continue to rise and this program will need to compete with other programs, such as public safety and roads, for money from the General Fund. The impacts of these reductions could include more frequent flooding on street corners and in intersections, failure of old outdated pump equipment, chronic flooding expanding to other parts of the city, more trash and pollutants in our creeks and the Bay, and slower response times for staff to clear blocked inlets, catch basins, and pipes.

## Is this a fee or a tax?

This proposed measure is a property-related fee rather than a tax as defined by Proposition 218, which was written by the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association and approved by voters in 1996. Because it is a property-related fee, it will be voted on *by property owners* rather than registered voters, and it requires a majority (over 50%) of the votes cast to pass. If approved, the fee will appear as a line item on the monthly utility bill for all affected properties.

