

# City of Davis Stormwater Initiative

## RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

### Community Meeting No. 3

**Provide the backup information and documentation on the costs associated with the replacement of facilities (Capital Improvement Projects), and differentiate between one-time costs and ongoing costs.**

The projects discussed included:

- Storm Drain Pump Station #6 Replacement (Richards Blvd. Underpass) Study and Construction
- Storm Drain Pump Station #3 Upgrade (H St.)
- Storm Drain Pump Station #5 Upgrade (Yolo Bypass)
- Widening Covell Channel/Lake & Covell Improvements

Each of the major capital improvement projects are one-time costs. Details related to project costs are included in the Stormwater Fee Report, on Page 9, and in the Lift Station Assessment and Inventory, conducted in 2016. Ongoing costs related to the operations and maintenance of the stormwater utility are also detailed in the fee report.

**Additional information on Capital Improvement Projects:**

- [Stormwater Fee Report](#)
- [Lift Station Assessment and Inventory](#)
- [Capital Improvement Projects Staff Report](#) from the September 16, 2020 Utilities Commission Meeting

**Why are larger parcels charged larger fees?**

The fees are calculated based on an assessment of impervious surfaces of properties grouped by land use categories. Details regarding the methodology of the fee calculations are included in the Fee Report, starting on page 15.

Briefly, the unit of cost used to develop the fee (the SFE, or Single-Family Equivalent, discussed on page 15 of the report) is calculated per acre. The calculation is based on the total acreage of the land use category, multiplied by the %IA (the percentage of impervious area) as found in the assessment, and divided by the amount of impervious surface area in one SFE (our unit of measure). The resulting SFE per acre is used to establish the base rate for the land use category, which is then multiplied by the number of acres for the property within the category for the resulting per month fee.

Larger properties will typically have larger areas of impervious surfaces, and have more stormwater drainage off of the property.

**Additional information on the included capital improvement projects:**

- [Stormwater Fee Report](#) (starts on page 15 of the Report)

## **How does the reduction in on-street yard material pile collection (and increased material in the gutters) relate to the cost of the necessary improvements to the stormwater infrastructure? Could costs be offset with more frequent on-street yard material pile collection?**

Normal maintenance procedures and cleaning procedures of pump stations and drainage inlets do account for cleaning material both above and below ground in the system. Plans within the Fee Report and included in the proposed fees include removing material from the street in a more timely manner through enhanced services, such as street sweeping. In addition, from the regulatory perspective, the Trash Amendments to the City's stormwater permit require that materials must be removed prior to discharging into area waterways, necessitating that the City plan for more proactive measures to keep materials out of the system.

Reviewing the frequency of collection to remove material above ground rather than flushing out of the system is something that the City would be able to review.

## **With the prevalence of ecologically-minded residents in the community, will there be opportunities to lower stormwater fees if the properties can demonstrate effective stormwater capture?**

Rainwater capture can be a great tool for aiding in irrigation of landscapes and other uses. Single-family properties, however, do not have a rate credit applicable within the study. For certain categories of properties, specifically commercial developments, current State regulations mandate Low Impact Development (LID) techniques that would reduce the stormwater impact, and treat stormwater on site. With these LID features, those properties could apply for a small credit for stormwater rates.

Staff indicated that consideration of a rate credit for single-family properties could be considered in the future, but it is not included as part of the currently proposed fees.

### **Additional information on the Low Impact Development Credits:**

- [Stormwater Fee Report](#) (on page 19)

## **The fee increase is high and will be difficult for some to afford. Will there be ways to offset those fees?**

The fee has been more or less flat for a number of years, and the fee has unfortunately not been able to keep pace with the capital costs to improve infrastructure or the costs associated with the operations and maintenance of the system. The challenges with funding the utility resulted in staff having to take a number of years to develop the information necessary to produce the study and the Fee Report. The one-time initial increase, with modest increases annually (if approved by Council) ensures that the utility is on a fiscally responsible path moving forward.

Staff have reiterated that the City always looks for grant opportunities and ways to minimize rate impacts to rate payers. Should the City achieve grant funding for some of these projects, future adjustments to the stormwater utility can be reduced.

**(Response continued on next page)**

Proposition 218 (the utility rate setting regulations set by the State) require that all fees charged for utility services are based on the fair share of each rate payer, and do not permit any fees to be subsidized, or any customer to pay more than their fair share to offset the cost of another customer. Because of this, the City cannot use utility fee revenue to fund programs to subsidize rates. The City does offer a credit for the monthly utility bill, for households that qualify, paid partially from fees that result from late payments on utility bills.

## How can I find out my property’s parcel size?

Property owners can contact the City of Davis Finance Department via email at [financeweb@cityofdavis.org](mailto:financeweb@cityofdavis.org), to determine the size of their parcel. In addition, City staff can provide the proposed fee for individual properties with an email to [pwweb@cityofdavis.org](mailto:pwweb@cityofdavis.org). Property owners can also search the Yolo County GIS maps by address to view parcel size. Generally, the search can be done by address or Assessor Parcel Number (APN).

## Is delayed capital maintenance the main driver for the fee increase?

The increase is related to capital investment that has not been accomplished over the years, where it may not be delays, there certainly there has been some deferred maintenance based on revenue shortfalls, and the lack of information to develop the fee study.

### Additional information on Capital Improvement Projects:

- [Stormwater Fee Report](#)
- [Lift Station Assessment and Inventory](#)
- [Capital Improvement Projects Staff Report](#) from the September 16, 2020 Utilities Commission Meeting


## Was there a consideration of soil type when calculating the amount of stormwater runoff?

The soil type would not be a consideration in the calculation, as the calculation is based on impervious services such as driveways, patios, walkways etc. The assumption is that the soil, regardless of type in the areas of the property that are pervious, would capture the stormwater and prevent it from running off the property.

## Where is the Fee Report on the website?

The Fee Report is posted on the City’s webpage dedicated to the Stormwater Rate Initiative, [Stormwater Rates and Rate Studies | City of Davis, CA](#). The Report is under the Cost of Service/Rate Study Materials section. Based on the feedback from the Community Meeting, the Fee Report was also posted above the proposed fee chart higher up on the webpage.

Proposed Fee Chart

 Below, please find the proposed fees for each land use category. Greater detail on the fees, including how they were calculated, can be found in the [Fee Report](#).

Land Use Category	Proposed Monthly Rate FY 2021-22	
<b>Residential*</b>		
Small	Under 0.14	ac \$ 10.23 per parcel
Medium	0.14 to 0.22	ac \$ 13.10 per parcel
Large	0.23 to 0.27	ac \$ 17.45 per parcel
Very Large	Over 0.27	ac \$ 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

[Link to the Fee Report](#)

## Why are the rates based on parcel size? This would mean that properties of the same parcel size would be charged the same, even if the size of the homes on the property was different.

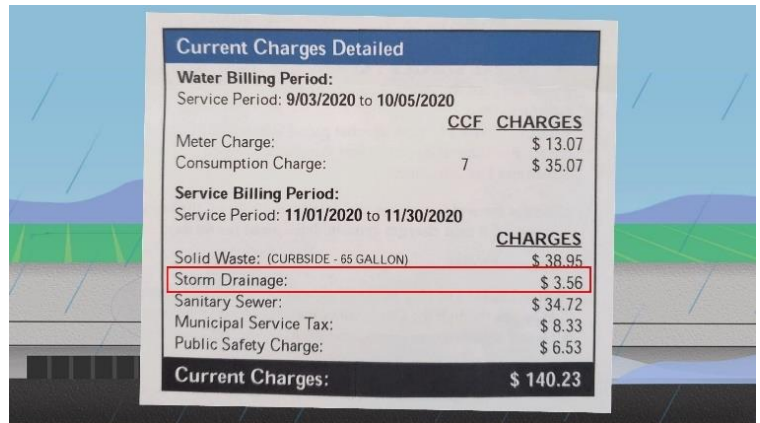
The way that the rates were set is based on percent impervious surface. Houses have an average amount of impervious surface, as to other land uses (a parking lot, for example, would have a significantly larger area of impervious surface, whereas schools, or businesses would have different characteristics). The study established the average amount of impervious surface based on the land use type. The calculation is done based on averages as it's not practical to assess each property individually (in addition, improvements or changes to properties can impact the percentage of impervious surface at any given time), so a statistical measurement of properties within each land use category were assessed to determine the average impervious area for each land use category.

### Additional information on the proposed fee and land use type calculations:

- [Stormwater Fee Report](#) (starts on page 15 of the Report)

## Where on the City services bill is the storm sewer fee?

Stormwater rates are currently charged on the City's monthly utility bill as one charge, as Storm Drainage. The Storm Drainage fee is a combination of the Storm Sewer Fee and the Storm Drainage Fee, which are currently charged by property type, as a flat rate charged per square foot of the parcel.



Current Charges Detailed	
<b>Water Billing Period:</b> Service Period: 9/03/2020 to 10/05/2020	
	<b>CCF CHARGES</b>
Meter Charge:	\$ 13.07
Consumption Charge: 7	\$ 35.07
<b>Service Billing Period:</b> Service Period: 11/01/2020 to 11/30/2020	
	<b>CHARGES</b>
Solid Waste: (CURBSIDE - 65 GALLON)	\$ 38.95
Storm Drainage:	\$ 3.56
Sanitary Sewer:	\$ 34.72
Municipal Service Tax:	\$ 8.33
Public Safety Charge:	\$ 6.53
<b>Current Charges:</b>	<b>\$ 140.23</b>

### One comment was received at the meeting:

- A resident stated that they did not believe the greater charges for larger properties are fair, especially if the property is filtering stormwater into the ground and the property has stormwater capture devices onsite. This comment was noted by staff

