



# City of Spartanburg

## Storm Water

### Frequently Asked Questions

On May 10, 2010, after multiple public meetings on the subject, City Council approved a revision to the Storm Water Management Ordinance establishing a Storm Water Utility Fee. The City will begin charging the fee on January 1, 2011. The following questions have been designed to give City customers information on the Storm Water Utility Fee.

#### ***What is storm water?***

Storm water is a term for what becomes of rain after it falls onto our rooftops, driveways, sidewalks and other impervious surfaces that prevent it from naturally soaking into the ground. Storm water runoff is a significant public concern because, if it is not properly controlled, it can cause serious damage to our properties and our environment. Therefore local governments maintain systems of ditches, pipes, tunnels, culverts and basins to enable storm water reach our creeks and streams without damaging homes, businesses, and other infrastructure.

#### ***What is a storm water utility fee?***

It is a yearly fee that goes toward the cost of maintaining and upgrading the City's storm water drainage infrastructure and operating a comprehensive Storm Water Management Program that fully complies with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandates.

#### ***Why is the City charging a storm water utility fee now?***

EPA recently issued new storm water permits that require communities to address water pollution caused by storm water runoff. In addition to meeting the City's current storm water needs, the new Storm Water Utility Fund will provide the City with necessary resources to fully address un-funded federal and state regulatory requirements.

Previously the City dealt with storm water management on a reactive as-needed basis. The age, size and condition of the City's storm water infrastructure demands a consistent proactive approach. To do that, the City must join all other major cities and counties in South Carolina in adopting a storm water utility fee. Spartanburg County adopted a storm water property tax charge in 2005 which will now be removed from the property tax bill for City properties.

#### ***What will the storm water fee pay for?***

The storm water utility fee will be used to pay for the following:

- Emergency repair of City owned storm water infrastructure.
- Maintenance of City-owned storm water management infrastructure.
- Construction site inspection for erosion control.
- Storm water management master planning.
- Storm water system mapping.
- Public education and outreach.
- Drainage capital improvement plan.
- Flood control improvements.

## ***How much will the residential customer pay?***

Single family residential properties are assessed a fee according of two size tiers. The annual charge on homes with a footprint of 1,640 sq. ft. or smaller will be \$30. The yearly fee on homes with a larger footprint will be \$42. That fee will be included on the annual Spartanburg County Property Tax Notice for residential properties.

## ***What will owners of non-residential properties pay?***

Owners of all properties not containing a single family residence will be charged an annual fee based on the amount of impervious area each property contains. Those properties are assessed a rate based on \$30.00 per 2,000 sq. ft of impervious area. The City will invoice non-residential property owners.

## ***What does impervious mean?***

Impervious is a term used to describe a surface that does not absorb runoff. Examples of impervious surfaces include roofs of buildings, asphalt or concrete. Governments typically use the amount of impervious surface on each property as the basis for the fee calculations because it is the most accurate readily available indicator of the impact each property has on the storm water system.

## ***How does the City know the amount of impervious surfaces on each parcel?***

The City employed qualified engineering consultants to compute all impervious surfaces for each non-residential property located in the City limits. The firm utilized Geographical Information System (GIS) analysis of aerial photography, along with other public records, to identify and measure the amount of impervious area for each parcel.

## ***What do I do if I think there is an error in my bill?***

A customer may provide additional information for their property, including a stamped survey or approved (stamped) site plan showing all impervious surfaces in addition to property boundary. An appeal form can be obtained by downloading the form from the city's website or by calling 864-596-2089. City staff will review the appeal (along with all supporting documentation) and respond to the appeal within thirty days.

## ***How long does the appeal process take?***

Appeals will be reviewed within 30 days of the receipt on the appeal form along with all supporting documents. Customers will be notified by mail of the outcome of the appeal.

## ***What is the City doing to minimize the impact of storm water?***

The City of Spartanburg has a number of programs that specifically target the problems associated with storm water.

**Inspection and Prevention** – City staff inspects and monitors construction sites to ensure proper controls are in place to minimize runoff.

**Planning & Engineering** – City Storm Water Manager reviews design and construction plans for the impact of storm water.

**Maintenance** – City Storm Water Manager & Public Works crews work together to design and maintain storm water infrastructure.

For additional information about storm water management, please contact the Storm Water Manager at [jsquires@cityofspartanburg](mailto:jsquires@cityofspartanburg) or call 864-596-2089 or for billing questions please call 864-562-4511.