

STORMWATER UTILITY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Now that the Town Council has approved the Stormwater Management Utility Fee Ordinance, citizens will most likely have questions. The Town and its Consultant, Wiley & Wilson has put together this list of “Frequently Asked Questions” with responses that will help with this issue. These questions and responses are as follows:

What is a Stormwater Utility Fee?

A Stormwater Utility Fee is a “fee for service” based on the cost to manage stormwater that runs off roofs and parking areas. All money collected by the fee can only be used for stormwater management activities.

What does the Stormwater Utility Fee pay for?

Regulatory compliance for increasing unfunded state and federal requirements for Stormwater system maintenance such as cleaning inlets, pipes, and ditches and replacing older, failing pipes, capital projects, including the following:

- Mandated pollution reductions
- Projects to reduce local flooding

How much does the fee cost?

Developed Single Family Residential properties will fall into one of 3 rate tiers based on the total impervious area of the property. The tiers are:

- Tier 1 – 400 sqft to 1,299 sqft - \$5.55 per month
- Tier 2 – 1,300 to 4,499 sqft - \$6.94 per month
- Tier 3 – 4,500 sqft and up - \$17.37 per month

Non-Residential fees are based on the overall impervious area of a parcel divided by the Equivalent Residential Unit of 2,200 square feet then multiplied by \$5.55 per month

How is the Stormwater Utility Fee determined for a property?

The fees are all based on the measurement of solid surfaces on a property that will not allow rain water to seep into the ground (i.e. buildings and parking areas). This area was measured on aerial photography using computer mapping software.

How are the fees billed?

The fees are collected twice per year, with one bill due in June and one due in December.

When will the first bills be due?

The Town will send out bills in December of 2020 and June of 2021, however these bills are for informational purposes only. The first bill that will require payment will be December of 2021.

What if I think the Stormwater Utility Fee for my property is not correct?

The Town policy is to review any bill in question. Town staff will address simple mathematical or measurement errors as quickly as possible. Property owners will need to demonstrate the measurement was done incorrectly in cases where there is not an obvious error. A Petition for Adjustment Form is being developed and will be available on the website. Additionally, the impervious area for each parcel in the Town is updated regularly on the GIS Mapping section of the Town’s website.

My property has a stormwater facility on-site. Will the fee still apply?

Yes. The fee will still apply to impervious area on the property but a credit may be available.

Is there anything I can do to reduce my bill?

Yes. The adopted ordinance establishes that a credit will be available for property owners with a stormwater facility on their parcel. The credit system is being developed and will be available on the Town’s website.

Was there a public input process for considering the Stormwater Utility Fee?

Yes. A Community Advisory Committee was developed in the fall of 2019 to provide Town Council with the original recommendation for a fair stormwater funding system. Town staff analyzed historical costs and developed future budget expenses to provide Council with information on the amount of revenues necessary to sustain regulatory compliance and maintain our drainage system. Past Council agendas and meeting minutes are available on the Town’s website.

I already pay taxes – is this fee really necessary?

Warrenton is one of 28 localities in Virginia with a stormwater utility fee. The Town faces increasing unfunded mandates to monitor and maintain the stormwater system. Also, the infrastructure in the community is aging, and the costs for operating and maintaining the public stormwater system are growing. A properly operating stormwater system is critical to protecting public health and safety, minimizing flooding, and meeting water quality protection requirements. The Stormwater Utility Fee allows the Town to have a dedicated, stable fund to support needed investment in the public stormwater management system.