

Frequently Asked Questions

	Question	Answer
1	What is stormwater management?	Stormwater management is effectively managing the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff within and leaving the City. Stormwater is surface flow (runoff) that occurs from rain or snow melt. Runoff within the City flows over land or streets to a municipal collection system consisting of storm sewer pipes, ditches, swales, and detention facilities, ultimately discharging to the Fox River, Pewaukee Lake, Pewaukee River, Sussex Creek, or their tributaries. The City performs a wide variety of services to carry out storm water management activities.
2	Why is it important to manage stormwater?	Pewaukee, like other communities, needs to manage stormwater to protect people's homes and properties, the environment, lakes, streams, and rivers. If this is not done, stormwater will cause flooding, pooling, erosion, and pollution. Heavy rains that flood streets and yards can result in property damage as many residents have experienced since 2008 and prior years. Stormwater runoff also picks up pollutants and debris from streets, parking lots, and yards transporting them into our streams, rivers, and lakes.
3	What services does the City provide to carry out stormwater management?	<p>The City services are broken into three main categories - Maintenance, Water Quality Practices, and Planning & Engineering.</p> <p>A) Maintenance activities include: a) cleaning, repairing, and replacing storm sewer manholes, inlets and pipes; b) constructing new storm sewer projects; c) mowing ditches and greenways; and d) cleaning brush or debris from drainageways where allowed.</p> <p>B) Water Quality activities include a) street sweeping; b) offering a collection site for yard wastes, leaves, oil, etc. at City Hall; c) deicing and snow removal operations; d) inspecting and enforcing construction site erosion control standards; and e) maintaining stormwater detention basins.</p> <p>C) Planning and Engineering activities include a) engineering studies to determine the size and type of structures that must be used to improve the drainage system and reduce risk of flooding; b) reviewing and approving land development stormwater management practices; c) water quality studies to determine the areas where pollution reduction practices must be utilized along with other state requirements to meet Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) permit goals.</p>

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4	Why have a Stormwater Management Fee?	A Stormwater Management Fee provides a fair and equitable way of collecting revenue for stormwater management system improvements under which property owners are charged a user fee based on the amount of stormwater "produced" on their property. All property owners pay their fair share of stormwater management costs, similar to a water or electric utility. Currently, stormwater costs are paid through the property tax roll, placing a majority of the burden on paying for stormwater management on the residential sector. A stormwater management fee would reallocate the cost of stormwater management to the properties that drive the service costs, such as commercial, industrial, and other properties with large impervious surfaces. The Fee would also charge tax exempt properties, which currently do not contribute to stormwater management via taxes, but are typically associated with generating significant runoff such as government property, schools, churches, and utilities.
5	Why not include stormwater management costs as part of the General Operations Budget?	Currently, the costs of expansion, operation, and maintenance of the City's stormwater management system are paid for by property taxes through the General Fund. The current budget allocation is very limited and increasing this funding would likely result in a reduction of other City services. Increasing pressures on the General Operations Budget caused by rising municipal costs and reduced revenues from the State of Wisconsin have made the General Fund a less reliable source for stormwater management funding. The City of Pewaukee was also recently issued its second generation Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination Permit (WPDES) for stormwater discharges to waters of the State of Wisconsin that increases the previously mandated requirements levels and adds some new areas of compliance. If the stormwater management fee was added to General Tax, it would likely cause an increase of approximately 13% to the tax levy which exceeds the levy limit caps that State of Wisconsin has placed on municipalities.
6	Who has the authority to approve the Stormwater Management Budget?	The City Common Council has ultimate authority over the budget and policies. It has appointed the Public Works Commission Board as the appeal board for the policies related to the implementation of the Stormwater Management Fee.

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7	Have other cities created stormwater user fees?	As of 2010, more than 71 utilities have been established in Wisconsin communities to fund their stormwater management programs. The Village of Pewaukee, City of New Berlin, City of Delafield, Village of Elm Grove, Town of Lisbon, and Village of Sussex are a few communities that have adopted a stormwater utility. The City of Waukesha is currently studying the adoption of a stormwater utility.
8	How is my Stormwater Management Fee determined?	Stormwater fees are based on the amount of impervious surface on each property. Therefore, properties with a greater amount of impervious area generate a greater amount of stormwater runoff resulting in a higher impact on the stormwater drainage system. Impervious surfaces include roofs, private sidewalks, private streets, driveways, patios, and parking lots. The impervious area for all nonresidential parcels (commercial, institutional, etc.) and multifamily parcels have been measured and a sample of the single family residential parcels have been measured from aerial photos and supplemented using site plans. The sample of single family residential have an average impervious area of 5,339 square feet. Therefore, an Equivalent Runoff Unit (ERU) is determined to be 5,339 square feet for the City's Stormwater Management Fee structure. The annual charge per ERU has been adopted at \$120.
9	How is a residential property charged for stormwater?	The average single family residential property has approximately 5,339 square feet of impervious area based upon the sampling of residential properties measured. It was also noted that there is a strong correlation between impervious area on a property and their zoning classification. The City adopted a residential tiering fee structure based upon this correlation. Three tiers have been established as part of the fee. The first tier is equivalent to 1.3 ERUs and include residential zoning classes of Rs-1, Rs-2, and Rs-3. The second tier is equivalent to 1.1 ERUs and include residential zoning classes of Rs-4, Rs-5, and Duplexes. The third tier is equivalent to 0.75 ERUs and include residential zoning classes of Rs-6 and Rs-7.
10	What is a nonresidential property?	The nonresidential classification includes properties such as commercial, institutional, and manufacturing. Nonresidential also includes tax-exempt properties, mobile home parks, condominiums, government buildings, and multifamily dwellings with three or more units.

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11	How is a nonresidential property charged for stormwater?	An ERU is considered to be the average impervious area present on a single family residential parcel based on measurement of a random sampling of residential parcels within the service area. ERUs are assigned to nonresidential parcels based on dividing the actual measured impervious area by the average impervious area for a typical single family residential parcel. For example, in the City of Pewaukee one ERU is based on an average residential impervious area of 5,339 square feet, therefore a nonresidential parcel with 53,390 square feet of measured impervious area would be assigned 10 ERUs (53,390 square feet divided by 5,339 square feet = 10 ERUs). In this way, a nonresidential parcel having ten times the amount of impervious area of a typical single family residential parcel will pay ten times the average residential charge for stormwater management.
12	Would I be able to reduce my fee by controlling runoff from my property?	A potential system of credits and rebates for rate-payers has been outlined in Resolution 10-09-27. Further guidance is available on the Stormwater Management Page on the City of Pewaukee website (www.cityofpewaukee.us/stormwater-utility.php).
13	Would the credit and rebate policy reduce my fee to zero?	No. Credits and rebates typically are applied to only a portion of the fee. A base component of the fee includes the annual administrative and management costs, water quality costs, and other miscellaneous costs. Costs associated with the WDNR requirements are included in the base component.
14	None of my runoff goes into the municipal collection system. Why do I have to pay this fee?	Eventually all runoff drains to the Fox River, Pewaukee Lake, Pewaukee River, Sussex Creek, or their tributaries. Your property is also likely to generate runoff in a larger rain event, even if the ground absorbs it during "normal" events. In addition, you will benefit from adequate, properly-functioning drainage and flood control systems which decrease the likelihood of flooding, erosion, and unlimited pollutants from surface and stormwater runoff. In addition, you benefit from the regulation and monitoring of the properties above and around you. Finally, efforts to monitor and protect the water bodies provide benefits to everyone.
15	How will I be billed for this?	The Stormwater Management Fee will be billed to each parcel one time per year. In 2010, the bills will be mailed in early October. Beginning in 2011, the bills will be mailed in summer. All bills are due by November 1st of the year billed. If the bill is not paid by November 1st, the outstanding balance will be added to your property tax bill as a special charge. Tax exempt properties will also be issued a property tax bill for the outstanding balance.

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16	Shouldn't developers pay for their storm sewer systems?	Parties that develop within the City of Pewaukee are required to pay for their stormwater improvements for their development. These improvements include stormwater ponds, inlets, and storm sewer pipes. This practice of requiring developers to pay for new infrastructure will continue. Once land is developed, the owner of the parcel will be subject to the Stormwater Management Fee.
17	Will I still have to pay an assessment for stormwater projects?	No. Since the projects will be funded from this fee, the City will not assess parcels an additional assessment for the projects. All costs associated with the stormwater management will be covered by the fee you pay. Please note that this does not affect assessments for roads, some curb and gutters, sanitary sewer, or water mains.
18	Will the fees be used for other City projects like trails, new buildings, or other non-stormwater needs?	No. The Stormwater Management Fee funds are dedicated only for stormwater management program activities specified by the Stormwater Utility Ordinance 10-09 (Chapter 26). Accounting systems will be used to track the amount of money generated through the Utility and how the money is spent.
19	How do I resolve a complaint about the amount of Stormwater Management Fee on my bill?	A customer having a complaint about a bill should file a written notice with the City Public Works Department. If it determined the bill is in error, an adjustment will be determined by the Public Works Director based upon such evidence as he deems appropriate. If this does not resolve your conflict, you may file a petition to be heard at the Public Works Commission to appeal the Director's decision.
20	Who do I call if I have additional questions?	For more information about the Stormwater Management Fee and Policies, review the additional information on the website, submit a question on the Citizen Portal, send an email to publicworks@pewaukee.wi.us , or call the City of Pewaukee Public Works Department at 262-691-0804.