

SULTAN CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

ITEM NO: Public Hearing
DATE: January 24, 2008
SUBJECT: Public Hearing to Establishing a Stormwater Utility
CONTACT PERSON: Public Works Director Dunn 

ISSUE:

The issue before the City Council is to receive comments on establishing a stormwater utility for developed residential and commercial properties in Sultan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council take comment on establishing the stormwater utility for developed residential and commercial properties in Sultan. Directing staff what steps the Council would like to see at February Council Meetings.

BACKGROUND:

January 17, 2008, during Council Committee meeting the following issues were shared with the committee:

- Is gravel pervious or impervious?
- Should the Council reduce the budget and reduce the utility fee?
- Is the cost of the stormwater rate – too high?
- The proposed fee is an economic hardship on commercial customers.
- Should the discount the business base fee to encourage economic development?
- Pros and cons of postponing implementation until 2012
- What would be the consequence of not applying for the NPDES in 2012

The City has endeavored to keep the community informed and involved in the discussion to establish a stormwater utility.

The City established a Small Work Group comprised of a city resident, business owner and Planning Board member to review alternatives and make a recommendation to the Planning Board and City Council.

- The Small Work Group met on February 20th, March 6th, April 17th and May 1st.

- The City held an open house on March 13, 2007. The Open House included information on the proposed Stormwater Utility. Notice of the Open House was mailed to all residents and businesses within the Sultan zip code including residents outside the City limits.
- On March 20, 2007, the Planning Board received an update from the Small Work Group – the Board reviewed the need to form a stormwater utility and the survey of stormwater utilities across the state.
- On April 12, 2007, the City Council received an update from the Small Work Group – the Council reviewed the need to form a stormwater utility and the survey of stormwater utilities across the state and key policy questions.
- A second Open House was held on May 15, 2007.
- On May 1, 2007, the Planning Board reviewed the calculations for the ERU, draft Stormwater Utility Report and budget and directed staff to areas of concern.
- On May 17, 2007, the City Council subcommittee received a similar update.
- Notice of the proposed formation of the Stormwater Utility was included in the June and July utility billing statements.
- On May 24, 2007, the full Council reviewed the calculations for the ERU, draft Stormwater Utility Report and budget.
- On June 26, 2007, the Planning Board discussed credits for private facilities, public schools, non-profit organizations and senior citizens and low-income residents. The Board also reviewed the draft ordinance and credit manual and directed staff to set the Public Hearing for July 17, 2007.
- July 17, 2007 a Public Hearing was held with the Planning Board.
- On July 23, 2007, a meeting with the Sultan School Board was held to discuss the proposed utility, calculation of equivalent residential units and grass as a pervious/impervious surface.
- August 9, 2007, the Council conducted a Public Hearing.

The schedule to review and adopt a Stormwater Utility is as follows:

- Planning Board public hearing and recommendation to Council – July 17, 2007 (complete)
- Final Draft Report and recommendation to Council – July 26, 2007 (complete)
- City Council conducted a Public Hearing on August 9, 2007 (complete)
- January 10, 2008 Council to set Public Hearing for January 24, 2008 @ 6:00 pm to receive comments on the Stormwater Utility.
- City Council action to adopt ordinance for fees – February 2008
- Public outreach and implementation – December 2007 through February 2008
- December 7, 2007 Letters were sent to Business Owners
- City Council to conduct a Public Hearing on January 24, 2008
- Implementation – April 1, 2008

SUMMARY:

Attachment D is a summary for the August 9 Public Hearing describing:

- Need
- The three components of the Stormwater Utility
- Equivalent Residential Units
- The Stormwater Fee
- Annual Budget
- Adopting the Stormwater Utility

Faced with Federal and State Stormwater Requirements the City of Sultan is preparing, as many cities statewide to address the Discharge Permit requirements.

The Storm Water Utility will address:

- Water quality
- Fish habitat
- Flood management

FISCAL IMPACT:Cost to Adopt a Surface Water Utility

The cost to adopt a surface water utility include the fee analysis work currently contracted with Shockey Brent. This work is budgeted at approximately \$18,500.

The proposed public education/awareness program consists of press releases, community workshop(s), flyers, discussions with interested citizen groups, and public hearings. The estimate for education/awareness is approximately \$1,500.

The cost of establishing a billing system is estimated between \$2,500 to use the City's existing billing system to \$20,000 for a separate system. These costs will be refined throughout the year and will be included in the overall cost of running the utility.

The stormwater utility will be established as an enterprise fund and will reduce expenditures in the General Fund as a result of moving stormwater maintenance functions such as street sweeping, vactoring and staff time to maintain the stormwater system from the General Fund.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive comments during the Public Hearing and direct staff how the Council would like to proceed.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Proposed Stormwater Utility Budget

Attachment B – Complete summary from the August 9, 2007 Public Hearing

Attachment C – Letter to Business Committee

Attachment D – Frequently Asked Questions

**STORMWATER UTILITY
PROPOSED 6-YEAR BUDGET**

Attachment 4

Surfacewater Fund	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
# of employees	3	3	3	3	3	3
Salaries and Wages	\$ 209,300	\$ 216,626	\$ 224,207	\$ 232,055	\$ 240,177	\$ 248,583
Benefits	\$ 52,325	\$ 54,156	\$ 56,052	\$ 58,014	\$ 60,044	\$ 62,146
Operating Supplies	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,240	\$ 12,485	\$ 12,734	\$ 12,989	\$ 13,444
Other Services/charges	\$ 115,000	\$ 40,750	\$ 16,538	\$ 17,364	\$ 18,233	\$ 19,144
Intergovernment Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
Capital Outlay	\$ 62,000	\$ 21,000	\$ 21,000	\$ 21,000	\$ 21,000	\$ 23,000
Debt Service Payment w/ Interest	\$ 29,631	\$ 29,631	\$ 29,631	\$ 29,631	\$ 29,631	\$ 29,631
Operating Transfer Out to Capital Improvement	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
Total Surface Water Fund	\$ 530,256	\$ 344,772	\$ 330,282	\$ 341,167	\$ 352,442	\$ 366,316

Utility Fee/Month \$ 19.72 \$ 12.82 \$ 12.28 \$ 12.69 \$ 13.11 \$ 13.62 \$ 14.04

budget increase \$ (185,484) \$ (14,490) \$ 10,886 \$ 11,275 \$ 13,874
ERU's ADDED (1,159.28) (90.56) 68.04 70.47 86.71

Employees	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Public Works Director	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33
Administrative Assistant	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17
Stormwater Engineer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Inspector	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Utility Worker	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	3	3	3	3	3	3

Other Services/Charges

Surface Water Comp Plan	100000	25000	0	0	0	0
Professional Services	15000	15750	16538	17364	18233	19144
Total Other Svc/Charges	115000	40750	16538	17364	18233	19144

Capital Outlay

Truck	40000	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000
Computer	2000	0	0	0	0	2000
Inspection Equipment	5000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Minor Repairs (<\$5k)	15000	15000	15000	15000	15000	15000
Total	62000	21000	21000	21000	21000	23000

Debt Service Payments

Vactor	14000	14000	14000	14000	14000	14000
Sweeper	7000	7000	7000	7000	7000	7000
2002 Water Quality Report	8631	8631	8631	8631	8631	8631
Total	29631	29631	29631	29631	29631	29631

5/14/2007

ATTACHMENT A

CITY OF SULTAN PROPOSED STORM WATER UTILITY

BACKGROUND:

Statutory Authority

A surface water utility is essentially a special assessment district set up to generate funding specifically for surface water management. Users within the district pay a surface water fee, and the revenue generated directly supports maintenance and upgrade of existing storm drain systems; development of drainage plans, flood control measures, and water-quality programs; administrative costs; and sometimes construction of major capital improvements. Unlike a surface water program that draws on the general tax fund or uses property taxes for revenue, the people who benefit are the only ones who pay.

Surface water management within the City is governed by federal, state, regional, county and city laws including the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, the Growth Management Act, Shoreline Management Act, State Environmental Policy Act, Stormwater Management Performance Standards, and Puget Sound Water Quality Action Plan.

There are a number of state statutes that pertain either directly or indirectly to the City's authority to form a surface water utility. One of the more broad based statutes pertains to municipal utilities in general and states that a code city may provide utility service within and outside its city limits and this includes the exercise of all powers to the extent authorized by law (RCW 35A.80.010).

SUMMARY:

Establishing the Need

Under normal circumstances stormwater flow impounds in wetlands, depressions, ponds and puddles and soaks into the water table slowly. This process allows toxins and pollutants in the water to filter out in the soil, lessening the impact of the stormwater on our aquatic resources and our private well systems. This process also slows the volume of water that goes into our streams during a rain event, reducing flooding.

Increased development and impervious (paved) surfaces in populated areas causes stormwater to flow rapidly from the impervious surfaces into streams, lakes and marine waterways. The stormwater carries pollutants and causes long-term damage to salmon and other aquatic life. Rapid stormwater flows increases the water volume in streams to the point of flooding.

As the population of Sultan grows, so do its impervious surfaces and the need for stormwater infrastructure improvements to handle the additional runoff.

In the future, when Sultan's population reaches a certain level, the State will require the City to comply with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program, which dictates that cities and counties develop stormwater quality management programs.

For More Information Contact Public Works Director, Connie Dunn
360-793-2231 or connie.dunn@ci.sultan.wa.us

CITY OF SULTAN PROPOSED STORM WATER UTILITY

The City of Sultan is considering the establishment of a Surface Water Utility based on the recommendations in the 2002 *Surface Water Quality Management Plan*. The Plan consists of a review of the existing conditions that affect surface water flow and quality within the City to establish a basis for surface water quality management within the City.

The Plan was incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan in February 2006 by Ordinance No. 913-06 (Attachment A). Attachment B contains portions of the Plan as background information for this report. Copies of the Plan are available upon request.

The Plan recommended forming a Surface Water Utility to:

- o Provide a stable source of funding to adequately operate and maintain the City's existing surface water facilities.
- o Create a source of funding that could be set aside in reserve for capital expansion, including upgrading the existing surface water facilities and constructing new surface water facilities which are identified as solutions to the surface water quality and quantity problems in the City.

Surface water facilities consist of catch basins, culverts, ditches, pipelines, retention/detention ponds and underground vaults. Most surface water is carried to the Skykomish and Sultan Rivers. Some of the water is conveyed through the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Presently, the operation and maintenance of the City's existing surface water facilities is one of many functions of the Sultan Public Works Department. Currently, surface water management is financed through the Street Fund, which receives the majority of its funding (\$231,893) from property taxes, motor vehicle excise taxes, and business and occupation taxes on electric utilities, and the Sewer Fund which funded the Water Quality Management Plan. The Street Fund is also used to support other public works functions such as street maintenance and repair.

The limited amount of funding that is allocated to the Sultan Public Works Department goes primarily toward street maintenance and leaves very little funding and staff resources to operate and maintain the City's surface water facilities. The 2002 Plan notes that previous budgeting activities have been "inadequate to meet the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Plan guidelines."

Adopting the proposed Surface Water Utility fee would make additional funds available for other necessary city activities.

Stormwater Utility

The stormwater utility is made up of three components:

1. Calculation of Equivalent Residential Units (ERU)
2. Annual budget needed to accomplish stormwater functions within the City (e.g. maintenance, operations, capital improvements, public outreach, etc.)
3. Stormwater fee charged to for each ERU

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**CITY OF SULTAN
PROPOSED STORM WATER UTILITY**

Equivalent Residential Units

The Equivalent Residential Unit is the most prevalent method for calculating a stormwater rate. ERU's are used for the purpose of calculating the stormwater user's rate. An ERU represents the average square footage of impervious surface of a detached single-family residential property and is applied to commercial properties to calculate the commercial rate. The ERU is established by reviewing a representative sample of recorded data, maps, surveys or field measurement to obtain the average impervious area for a single-family lot. Non-residential properties are converted into ERUS based on the amount of impervious area on the property.

Each single family residential customer = 1 ERU

Each non-residential customer = n ERUs

When n = the property's impervious area divided by the average single-family parcel impervious area (x square feet)

For the City of Sultan, the calculated ERU is 4,519 square feet. Of the 14 jurisdictions examined in the phone survey for the study, Sultan's ERU was the second highest. This is largely due to the rural nature of residential properties and the number of barns and outbuildings.

The Stormwater Utility Rate Study (available at City Hall upon Request) includes a section Appendix B to the Study titled "Equivalent Residential Unit – City of Sultan Stormwater Utility". This section provides the detail on how the ERU was calculated for the City. Appendix C to the Study details the impervious surface calculation for each commercial property.

All residential properties will be charged the rate for one (1) ERU

All multi-plex 2-4 unit dwellings will be charged the rate for 1.75 ERUs

All non residential properties and multi-plex properties will be charged for the square footage of impervious surfaces on their property divided by the number of ERUs and multiplied by the base rate per ERU.

Stormwater Fee

The total number of ERUs in the City are:

Multifamily Residential 1-4 plexes	75
Commercial Properties	920
Residential Properties	1,246
Schools	<u>398</u>
Total	2,639

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**CITY OF SULTAN
PROPOSED STORM WATER UTILITY**

The annual cost for operations, maintenance, and capital improvements divided by the number of ERUs yields the total annual amount that must be charged per ERU to satisfy the needs of the utility. The required rate per ERU per month would be approximately \$12.35. The fee determination must take into account the increase in ERUs that happens every year due to development and annexations.

Annual Budget

Costs to operate a stormwater utility are broken down into two categories:

1. On-going costs or costs of conducting Operations and Maintenance, and for associated administrative costs for the stormwater system
2. One-time costs or capital improvements

The City currently maintains 3 detention ponds, 15 infiltration trenches, 592 inlets and 5 outlets. The proposed six-year budget is as follows.

Surfacewater Fund

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
# of full-time Equivelent employees	3	3	3	3	3	3
Salaries and Benefits	\$261,625	\$270,782	\$280,259	\$290,069	\$300,221	\$310,729
Operating and Services/Charges	\$127,000	\$52,990	\$29,023	\$30,098	\$31,222	\$32,588
Intergovernment Services						
Capital Outlay and Improvement	\$62,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$23,000
Debt Service Payment with Interest	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000
Operating Transfer Out to Capital Improvement	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Total Surface Water Fund	\$521,625	\$344,772	\$330,282	\$341,167	\$352,442	\$366,316

The first year (2008) budget includes start up capital equipment costs such as a utility pick-up, computer, inspection equipment. Debt service payments are for a vactor truck and street sweeper.

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360-793-2231 or connie.dunn@ci.sultan.wa.us

*ATTACHMENT
B-4*

CITY OF SULTAN PROPOSED STORM WATER UTILITY

Adopting the Stormwater Utility

City staff recommended forming the City of Sultan's Surface Water Utility through a phased process:

- o Phase I - The adoption of the *Surface Water Quality Management Plan*. This is complete.
- o Phase II (January 2007-March 2007) - An assessment of revenue sources for the major surface water utility functions centering around operations, maintenance and capital expansion. Some of this work was done in the 2002 Plan but must be updated for an analysis of current costs. The principal source of revenue will be user fees and this will entail a detailed analysis to determine an appropriate and equitable rate structure. This work has just started and should be complete by March.
- o Phase III (February 2007-September 2007) - Public outreach including a public awareness/education program and public hearings. This work should begin in late January and early February, following Council direction, and continue until the Storm Water Utility is adopted and fees are established.
- o Phase IV (September 2007-December 2007) - The formation of the utility which would be codified through the passage of the Surface Water Utility formation ordinance. This work would begin in April and should be complete by mid-summer.

This phase would be predicated upon the outcome of the previous phases. The City will need to have been successful in both making the public aware that there is a surface water need as well as successfully building support for the formation of a utility as the most optimal means to correct the surface water problems that currently exist and proactively address future problems.

Public hearings will be used to address any concerns that might not have been fully addressed during the awareness/education program, or to make any corrections to the cost of service and rate study.

- o Phase V (January 2008-March 2008) - Establishing and initiating a surface water utility billing system. There are at least three potential billing systems: including the surface water utility charge with the annual property tax, using the City's existing utility billing system or creating a new billing system with software and hardware specifically for surface water with billings sent out on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. This work would start June and be complete by September.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The City has endeavored to keep the community informed and involved in the discussion to establish a stormwater utility.

The City established a Small Work Group comprised of a city resident, business owner, and Planning Board member to review alternatives and make a recommendation to the Planning Board.

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CITY OF SULTAN PROPOSED STORM WATER UTILITY

- The Small Work Group met on February 20, March 6, April 17, and May 1.
- The City held an open house on March 13, 2007. The Open House included information on the proposed Stormwater Utility. Notice of the Open House was mailed to all residents and businesses within the Sultan zip code, including residents outside the City limits.
- On March 20, 2007 the Planning Board received an update from the Small Work Group – the Board reviewed the need to form a stormwater utility and the survey of stormwater utilities across the state.
- On April 12, 2007 the City Council received an update from the Small Work Group – the Council reviewed the need to form a stormwater utility and the survey of stormwater utilities across the state, and key policy questions.
- A second Open House was held on May 15, 2007.
- On May 1, 2007 the Planning Board reviewed the calculations for the ERU, draft Stormwater Utility Report, and budget, and directed staff to areas of concern.
- On May 17, the City Council subcommittee received a similar update.
- On May 24, the full Council reviewed the calculations for the ERU, draft Stormwater Utility Report, and budget.
- On June 26, the Planning Board discussed credits for private facilities, public schools, non-profit organizations, and senior citizens and low-income residents. The Board also reviewed the draft ordinance and credit manual, and directed staff to set the Public Hearing for July 17, 2007.
- Notice of the proposed formation of the Storm water Utility was included in the June and July utility billing statements.
- The Planning Board held a Public Hearing to take comment on establishing a storm water utility on July 17, 2007.
- City Council held a Public Hearing to take comment on establishing a storm water utility on August 9, 2007.
- September 2007– November 2007 the City contracted with a consultant to calculate the impervious surface area for multi-family, commercial and industrial properties in Sultan to calculate monthly storm water fees.

Additional Opportunities to Comment

- December 2007-January 2008 public education and outreach.
- On November 30, 2007, the City issued a SEPA determination of non-significance on the City's proposed Storm Water Utility. Comments on the proposed Storm Water Utility are due to Community Development Director, Rick Cisar by December 14, 2007 at 5:00pm.
- Proposed public hearing on January 24, 2008. Final adoption of the ordinance to establish the utility will occur in February. Business owners are invited to attend any meeting and provide comment regarding this issue.

For More Information Contact Public Works Director, Connie Dunn
360-793-2231 or connie.dunn@ci.sultan.wa.us



City of Sultan

Public Works Department

December 7, 2007

RE: Stormwater Utility Charges

DEAR CITY OF SULTAN BUSINESS OWNER:

On November 30, 2007, the City issued a SEPA determination of non-significance on the City's proposed Stormwater Utility. Rick Cisar, Community Development Director will receive comments until December 14, 2007 at 5:00pm.

Residents and business owners within the City will pay a stormwater utility fee. A Stormwater Utility:

- Is a special assessment district.
- Generates funding specifically for stormwater management.
- Includes a credit program for commercial properties that detain their storm water on-site.

January 24, 2008:

- City Council will hold a second public hearing to consider implementing a stormwater utility.
- The stormwater utility fee will be approximately \$12.35 per month per single-family home (one ERU).
- Business owners will be charged \$12.35 per month per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU).
- One ERU is equivalent to 4,519 square feet of impervious surface. Impervious surfaces include hard surface areas such as rooftops, driveways, parking lots, and gravel roads.

◆ Attached to this letter are a fact sheet and details on the proposed Stormwater Utility.

Feel free to contact me at 360.793.2231 or connie.dunn@ci.sultan.wa.us if you have questions or concerns regarding your property's impervious surface calculation or eligibility for the proposed credit program.

Direct your comments in response to the SEPA determination of non-significance to Community Development Director, Rick Cisar at 360-793-2231 or rick.cisar@ci.sultan.wa.us.

Sincerely,

Connie Dunn
Public Works Director

STORM WATER UTILITY FACT SHEET

HOW IS MY STORMWATER FEE DETERMINED?

The calculation the City used to determine the amount payable to the Stormwater Utility is the square footage of a property's impervious surface divided by 4,519 sq. ft. (average square footage of a residential property in Sultan) For example:

18,000 sq. ft of impervious surface divided by 4,519 sq ft = 4 ERU's multiplied by \$12.35
= \$49.40 per month multiplied by 12 mo/yr. = \$592.80 per year.

IS THERE A WAY TO REDUCE MY FEE?

Included in the Stormwater Utility is a proposed annual credit program for properties with self-contained and maintained systems with minimal impact on the City Stormwater System:

- 25% credit for private facilities with existing and maintained stormwater control
- 70% credit for fully-contained private facilities that do no impact the City's system

WHY DOES THE CITY NEED TO CREATE A STORMWATER UTILITY?

The City of Sultan is seeking to create a Stormwater Utility to provide a stable source of funding to operate and maintain the City's existing stormwater facilities such as catch basins, culvers, and ditches, pipelines and detention ponds.

A portion of the funding from the utility will be set aside to fix existing flooding and water quality problems and build new facilities to meet State and Federal requirements under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program.

The City established a small work group comprised of a city resident, business owner and Planning Board member to review alternatives and make recommendations. The Planning Board and City Council considered the Stormwater Utility almost monthly between February 2007 and September 2007. The City held Open Houses on March 13, 2007 and May 15, 2007 to share information and take public comments. Please refer to the attached detail sheets for the Public Hearing dates.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

A summary of the City's efforts to-date to establish a Stormwater Utility is included with this letter. Electronic copies of materials presented to the Planning Board and City Council are available on the City's website or upon request to Public Works Director Connie Dunn at 360.793.2231.

The City Council recognizes the impact of the Stormwater Utility on your business and seeks your feedback on the proposed program.

**City of Sultan
Municipal Stormwater Utility (2007)**

Frequently Asked Questions

Under normal circumstances stormwater flow impounds in wetlands, depressions, ponds and puddles and soaks into the water table slowly. This process allows toxins and pollutants in the water to filter out in the soil, lessening the impact of the stormwater on our aquatic resources and our private well systems. This process also slows the volume of water that goes into our streams during a rain event, reducing flooding.

Increased development and impervious (paved) surfaces in populated areas causes stormwater to flow rapidly from the impervious surfaces into streams, lakes and marine waterways. The stormwater carries pollutants and causes long-term damage to our salmon and other aquatic life. Rapid stormwater flows increases the water volume in streams to the point of flooding.

As the population of Sultan grows, so do its impervious surfaces and the need for stormwater infrastructure improvements to handle the additional run off.

In 2012, the State will require the city to comply with the NPDES¹ permit program, which dictates that cities and counties develop stormwater quality management programs.

EPA regulation (40CFR 122.34) requires permitted cities at a minimum to develop, implement, and enforce a stormwater program designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants from the city to the maximum extent practicable. The stormwater management program must include these six minimum control measures:

1. Public education and outreach on stormwater impacts
2. Public involvement/participation
3. Illicit discharge detection and elimination
4. Construction site stormwater runoff control
5. Post-construction stormwater management in new development and redevelopment
6. Pollution prevention/good housekeeping for municipal operations

As a proactive approach to the state requirement Sultan is establishing a stormwater utility to manage stormwater infrastructure now, lessening the cost of compliance and the costs of flooding and poor water quality in the future!

1. What is a stormwater utility?

A stormwater utility is an enterprise fund that provides stable funding for stormwater operations and capital projects within a jurisdiction. The existence of a stormwater utility will allow the City of Sultan to charge a stormwater utility fee and use that money exclusively for stormwater management, including maintenance and improvements.

¹ National Pollution Discharge Elimination System

**City of Sultan
Municipal Stormwater Utility (2007)**

Frequently Asked Questions

2. What are the benefits of proper stormwater management?

Managing stormwater properly reduces flooding on your property, reduces water pollution and reduces road erosion due to improper drainage.

3. What is a stormwater utility fee?

A stormwater utility fee is used to finance stormwater utility operations, maintenance and capital improvements. It is a fee customers pay to convey stormwater from their properties. It is very much like a water or sewer fee. The stormwater fee is user based and dependent on the contribution to the stormwater system of a property.

The proposed fee is \$12.35 per single family residence (house) per month. The fee for duplexes through four-plexes will be 1.75 X \$12.35/month. Multi-family and commercial properties will be based on the amount of impervious surface. You can contact Public Works Director, Connie Dunn with specific questions about the impervious surface calculation for your property.

Credits between 25% and 75% on the monthly fee may be available to homeowners associations, multi-family residences, and commercial properties that maintain approved stormwater systems and reduce impacts to city facilities.

4. Who will pay the city's stormwater utility fee?

Every parcel owner in the City of Sultan is responsible for paying a stormwater utility fee including the City of Sultan. Some properties such as state and federal government parcels, public institutions, undeveloped parcels, parcels returned to their natural state, and Washington State Department of Transportation roads may be exempt from the fee.

5. Is there anything I can do to reduce my stormwater bill?

Yes, a credit system exists for qualified, properly designed, installed and maintained water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs).

This credit is only available to non-residential properties. Residential properties are not eligible for fee reductions because they typically only have a small amount of impervious surface, they pay only a small fee when compared to non-residential properties.

**City of Sultan
Municipal Stormwater Utility (2007)**

Frequently Asked Questions

6. What will my stormwater utility fee be used for?

Your stormwater fee will be used to maintain existing stormwater infrastructure, build new infrastructure in areas that experience frequent flooding and to fund educational outreach programs and any future state required water quality studies.

7. If I live in an area that does not have any drainage problems, or live on the edge of the City and water drains on my property away from streets and the public drainage structure, or live at the bottom of a hill and my property is not the cause of increased flooding from uphill, why would I have to pay for stormwater services?

Impervious surface on your parcel places a certain demand on the stormwater system. Stormwater runoff generated by any property must be controlled and conveyed once it leaves the property so that it does not create problems for others. While certain projects funded by the program would address drainage problems on private properties, all property owners would receive indirect benefits from a properly maintained and city operated stormwater system.

Stormwater management activities have broad benefits including keeping the public streets drained and cleared, making necessary stormwater infrastructure upgrades, reducing erosion and other pollutants that enter streams and lakes, protecting and restoring streams and other aquatic habitat areas and collecting and conveying stormwater safely through all parts of the City. A portion of the fee also provides for compliance with federal, state, and local regulations for water quality improvements; administration of the City's land use ordinances through development review; public involvement and educational programs; and responding to public health and safety issues that benefit all property owners.

8. Doesn't rainwater dilute polluted wastewater? And isn't it diluted further by the water in its final destination point?

Yes, it's diluted, but there are several reasons why this is still undesirable. We have laws to prevent even diluted wastewater from being discharged into our surface waters because it poses an immediate threat to public health. Although concentrations may be diluted, the overall load of disease causing microorganisms and other chemical pollutants (such as nutrients, sediments, organic matter and toxic contaminants) is enormous.

**City of Sultan
Municipal Stormwater Utility (2007)**

Frequently Asked Questions

9. How does the volume of rainwater runoff affect the streams?

It is not only the quality of stormwater runoff that can degrade streams but also the amount of water. In an undeveloped watershed with entirely natural vegetative cover, most rainfall and snowmelt can soak into the soil before entering the streams. When this happens the increase in flow is much more gradual than in a watershed with lots of hard, impervious surfaces such as roofs, roads and pavement. When water gets into the streams too quickly, the water volume increases rapidly, which results in higher stream velocities. High stream velocities lead to stream bank erosion and the potential for flooding.

10. What about if I live on a large piece of land; doesn't the water just filter into the ground?

The answer depends on many things. It depends on what has been done to the land, how your lawn and buildings are situated on the land, and where the runoff from those developed areas goes. Lawn allows very little rainwater to infiltrate, compared to the natural landscape. If most of your land is grass, there is more water running off those areas. Recently logged areas (less than 10 years ago) produce more runoff. Impervious surfaces result in major increases in runoff. If water from these areas can be directed through natural areas such as forested areas, meadows, or rain gardens, much of it will likely soak into the ground before reaching a stream and causing problems. Even then, during large storm events when erosion problems are worst, any reduction in infiltration anywhere in the watershed can cause harmful increases in runoff to your local stream.

11. Why should I pay the Stormwater Service Charge if flooding still occurs in my neighborhood?

Unfortunately, it is not feasible to fix all of the problems with the public drainage system all at one time. It may be necessary to complete downstream drainage system improvements before it is feasible to address upstream concerns. Spreading out the cost of system improvements in a particular area to all users in the city keeps the cost as low as possible. Even if a project doesn't provide direct benefits to your neighborhood, you will likely derive indirect benefits from the project, including improved water quality, improved salmon habitat and better road conditions.

For more information contact Connie Dunn, Public Works Director at 360-793-2231.