The Valley Center City Council has established a Stormwater Utility, similar to the water and wastewater utilities already in place. The information below will help you understand the Stormwater Utility and stormwater utility fees established by Council.

**How much is the Stormwater Fee?** The Storm Water Management Fee was established and set by Resolution No. 548-08 of the Governing Body of the City of Valley Center. (See table below for fee structure)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Class</th>
<th>Property Type</th>
<th>Impervious Surface Square Footage</th>
<th>Monthly management service fee structure</th>
<th>Total yearly management service fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>2,000 for all properties</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>All Non-Residential Properties</td>
<td>≤ 1,000</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>All Non-Residential Properties</td>
<td>1,001 - 5,000</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>$180.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 4</td>
<td>All Non-Residential Properties</td>
<td>5,001 - 100,000</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
<td>$360.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 5</td>
<td>All Non-Residential Properties</td>
<td>100,001 above</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
<td>$720.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*All Non-Residential Properties include multi-unit residential properties with a parking lot and one single meter per building.*)

**What is a Stormwater Utility fee?** A stormwater utility fee is a user charge for stormwater services provided by the City. It is similar to fees for water or sewer service at your house or business.

**What kind of stormwater services does the City provide?** The City maintains existing stormwater facilities (such as storm sewers, catch basins, underground pipes, curbs, gutters, open channels, culverts, etc.), sweeps the streets, cleans out storm drains, builds new stormwater facilities to reduce flooding, and reviews new development to confirm that it complies with City drainage standards. The program also ensures that stormwater discharged to our rivers will meet state water quality standards and the requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**Why did Valley Center create a Stormwater Utility?** The City has been managing stormwater for many years; however, most of the cost has been carried by the Streets Department. The City is pursuing a policy of funding programs through specific user fee charges to better direct dollars to the services they provide. A Stormwater Utility allows the City to fund stormwater management as a separate service, and provides citizens a clear accounting of stormwater expenditures and needs.

**Will the revenues from the fee go to the General Fund?** No, the revenues will be placed in a separate fund that can only be spent for stormwater approximately 10-20% of the utility fee charges will be needed to meet future EPA permit requirements.

One of the major advantages of this fee – revenue from the fee can only be used for stormwater management.

**How did the City Council establish the Stormwater Utility?** City Council established the Stormwater Utility a few years ago and voted to fund it in November of 2008 by passing an “Enabling Ordinance” which created the Stormwater Utility as an Enterprise Fund within the City. The City Council held two readings of Ordinance No. 1167-08 at regular City Council meetings in October 2008. Once the “Enabling Ordinance” was passed, it authorized City Council to set annual stormwater fees by Resolution. The fee-setting Resolution was passed by Council in November.

**MANAGING STORMWATER**

**What is stormwater runoff?** Stormwater runoff is the water that flows off roofs, driveways, parking lots, streets, and other hard surfaces during rain storms. Rather than being absorbed into the ground, it flows into ditches, culverts, catch basins and storm drains. For the most part, it does not receive any treatment before entering the streams and lakes. Stormwater does not go from street drains to the wastewater treatment plant.

**Why is stormwater runoff a problem?** Stormwater can cause flooding, erode topsoil and stream banks, carry harmful pollutants, and destroy aquatic habitats. Road flooding significantly reduces road surface life.

**Hasn’t the City always had storm drains? Why am I now going to be charged when I haven’t been in the past?** In the past, the City has managed its stormwater system using general funds allocated to the Street Department. City Council identified storm drainage as a priority service requiring improvement throughout the City. This new fee allows the City to generate funds specifically collected for and allocated to stormwater management.

**All my stormwater stays on my lot. Why should I have to pay more money now?** The fee will go towards fixing, building, and maintaining the stormwater system that benefits the whole City. Just like streets or the wastewater system, it’s part of what we pay for as a community. We want to ensure that stormwater discharged to the rivers and creeks from the City meets water quality standards to maintain the fish and wildlife we value.

**How much of the new fee is the result of recent actions from EPA?** EPA’s stormwater regulations require a comprehensive stormwater management plan to meet state water quality standards. The plan will necessitate that the City take a more active role in managing stormwater. The stormwater utility fee will enable the City to meet its future responsibilities to manage the storm drain system more closely, study the contents of stormwater, seek out and eliminate illicit connections and illegal discharges and enforce codes more strictly.
Where does water pollution come from? Water pollution comes from many diverse sources, it is often hard to control. Examples of common pollutants include fertilizers, pesticides, pet wastes, sediments, oils, salts, trace metals and litter. They come from throughout the City: yards, roofs, parking lots, construction sites, automobiles, and streets.

What are some examples of drainage problems? Drainage problems may include roadway or structural flooding, clogged or failing underground pipes and culverts, stream bank erosion and pollution affecting a stream.

What is the purpose of storm drains? Storm drains are devices that capture stormwater and prevent flooding by transporting water away from urban areas and into the creeks, rivers and reservoirs.

What’s the difference between a storm drain and a sewer drain? The sanitary sewer system takes all household wastewater and routes it through a plumbing system into wastewater treatment plant. The stormwater drainage system routes rainwater off the streets, roofs and parking lots into the storm drains which usually empty into the creeks and rivers without being treated.

Why will tax-exempt properties be required to pay? Everyone who receives the service should pay. All properties within Valley Center, including Federal, State, County, and non-profit-owned, will pay regardless of ownership or tax status because they all generate runoff and utilize the City’s stormwater services.

**BENEFITS**

What am I going to get out of this fee? Once fully funded, the revenues from this fee will be used to reduce the occurrence of flooding, maintain the stormwater system, storm system repair, and reduce water pollution. The fee will free up about $50,000 in the Streets Program, so City streets will benefit. Over 20 years, the fee will pay for a long list of capital improvements that should significantly reduce flooding around the City.

Does the City have specific plans for stormwater system improvements? Yes. The City has a list of prioritized stormwater projects. The list includes storm sewer extension at 5th to 6th along Meridian; building, rebuilding or fixing stormwater systems in areas of the City that flood during storms; building detention ponds and other facilities to reduce pollutants in stormwater; The cost to complete the prioritized list of capital development projects is approximately $500,000, in 2009 dollars.

**STORMWATER FEE RATE STRUCTURE**

What is the stormwater fee rate structure? Every property in the City as identified in the County property parcel dataset is evaluated for stormwater fees. Parcels are classed as either residential or non-residential based on the County system.

How are residential property fees calculated? All residential properties are assumed to contribute more or less the same amount of stormwater runoff to the system. The average residential property in Valley Center has around 2,000 square feet of impervious surface. Some have more, and some have less, of course, but each residential property is billed for one unit.

How are non-residential property fees calculated? Non-residential property fees are assessed based on the area of impervious surface on each property. The City has measured the impervious area of all non-residential properties. Non-residential properties are classified based upon the amount of impervious surface they have.

What is impervious surface? An impervious surface is any hard surface that does not readily absorb water and impedes the natural flow of water into the soil. In general, impervious surfaces include building roofs, sidewalks, patios, parking lots, gravel areas, basketball or tennis courts, etc. The City digitized the impervious surface areas using Geographic Information System (GIS) computer technology. Impervious surfaces for each parcel were interpreted from high resolution color aerial photographs available for the whole City.

**BILLING**

How will the rate on my bill be established? For 2009, single-family residential parcels will be charged a rate of $1.00 per month. Other properties will be charged by the property class established based on the square footage of impervious surface.

How will I be billed? For residential and non-residential properties connected to city utilities, Stormwater Utility fees will be billed through the City’s utility fee billing system. Residential and non-residential properties not connected to city utilities will receive an annual bill mailed to the property owner. Every property from the County property data base will be charged a stormwater service fee except 1) properties paying City of Wichita Storm Water Utility fees prior to January 1, 2009, and 2) agricultural parcels.

What happens if I don’t pay my bill? The process will be the same as if you don’t pay your water or sewer bill. You risk being assessed late fees and having a lien placed on your property. Of course, the City would rather not do this so they will work with you to get the fee paid.

**FUNDING**

How will the stormwater fee affect the City’s General Fund revenues? The stormwater utility revenues will not affect the City’s General Fund revenues. However, using the stormwater utility revenues to pay for all stormwater management costs will allow about $50,000 per year in the Transportation Fund that is currently being used to pay stormwater costs to be used for streets.

Is the stormwater fee fair? Each customer will be charged based on the impervious surface of their property, their load to the system, and a proportionate cost for maintaining the public system. A stormwater fee based on impervious surface as a measure of services provided is commonly used around the state and country.

Do other cities have a stormwater fee? Yes. Wichita has had a stormwater utility in place for several years. Haysville, Andover, and many cities in Kansas have them. A recent survey showed over 600 stormwater utilities in communities around the country.

**REDUCING MY FEE**

How can I reduce my fee? For 2009, No, fee reductions are allowed in 2009. Some fee reduction procedures may be available in future years, but that has not yet been determined.

What do I do if there is a mistake on my bill? As with other City utilities, the Stormwater Utility there are methods to address mistakes. The customer will need to bring the alleged mistake to the attention of Stormwater Program Clerk to evaluate whether or not a mistake has been made. If warranted, the City staff will correct your bill. If the City staff does not agree that the correction is warranted, and you still disagree, you may appeal their decision to the City Administrator.

If you need further information, or want to discuss your bill, you may contact the Stormwater Program Clerk at stormwater@valleycenertsks.org or by phone at 755-7310.