

New Stormwater Utility Fees FAQs

The Town of Milliken is considering the adoption of a Stormwater Utility fee effective for July 1, 2016. This fee will be used to improve stormwater infrastructure that will in turn protect people and property, provide resilience to future floods, and protect property values. The State of Colorado requires a stormwater utility fee to be implemented due to previous flooding events within the Town.

What Is A Stormwater Utility And Why Should We Care?

Like all utility services, the Town operates and maintains a system of pipes, channels and storm drains that protect our homes and businesses from flooding. This system is costly to operate and maintain, and is facing increasing regulatory requirements from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Stormwater is runoff produced by precipitation. As rain falls to earth in agricultural and undeveloped areas, it is either absorbed or it slowly runs off and dissipates. Rooftops and paved areas not only prevent the water from being absorbed, but cause an increase in runoff. As a result, runoff can accumulate, causing nuisance flooding, large scale flooding and possible threats to public health and safety. Our current infrastructure system needs repair

and replacement due to age as well as improvements that expand its capacity. Fixing drainage problems is only a part of the problem.

As the rain falls onto our streets and runs off, it carries pollutants such as gasoline, oil, and heavy metals, pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. With the passage of time, these pollutants build up in our waterways and underground drainage systems, damaging our streams, rivers and lakes.

What Is A Stormwater Utility Fee?

The fee is a mechanism for the Town to recover costs for services it must provide to address public demands, meet stormwater regulations and construct improvements to infrastructure outlined in the Stormwater Master Plan. The stormwater user fee is structured to recover costs fairly and equitably.

Are We The Only Community With A Stormwater Utility Fee?

No. Stormwater user fees are being used in many neighboring towns and cities across Colorado. Nearby communities that have a stormwater user fee include Johnstown, Gillcrest, La Salle, Greeley and Windsor.

Why Do We Need A Stormwater Utility Fee?

Unlike water and sewer services, there is no dedicated funding for the stormwater system. A stormwater user fee provides revenue to maintain existing stormwater infrastructure as well as to be in compliance with State and Federal regulations. The fee allows the town to improve stormwater services thereby:

1. Protect people and property.
2. Provide resilience to future flooding.
3. Protect property values.



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What Is Impervious Surface?

Impervious surfaces are hardened surface areas that either prevent or limit the natural entry of water into the soil. Rooftops, buildings, streets, parking lots, sidewalks, asphalt, concrete, other paving, driveways, decks, patios, and artificial turf are all examples of impervious surfaces. These improvements reduce natural infiltration into the soil, which increases runoff.

How Is The Impervious Surface Measured?

The Town used a mapping database called a Geographical Information System (GIS) that includes digitized aerial photographs to measure the total square footage of the impervious surface on a parcel of property.

How Are Fees Determined?

Single Family

Single family properties will be billed a flat monthly fee.

Non-Single Family

The Town's approach involved measuring impervious surface areas on individual properties. The fee is determined by multiplying the total square footage of impervious area times a rate per square foot.

Who Has To Pay?

All properties within the Town's limits will pay the stormwater user fee. Properties that will pay the fee include houses, businesses, industries, schools, public facilities, and churches. The Town made a special effort to ensure fairness and

equity. This has led to a policy that everybody pays, even government buildings. Everyone contributes to and benefits from the stormwater sewer system.

Why Are Churches And Schools Being Billed?

Because this is a user fee and not a tax. The user fee, just like electric, drinking water, and sanitary sewer fees, is based upon the cost of services provided. Because this is not a tax, it is collected from all customers who receive service. Churches and schools, like other properties, contribute runoff to the Town. Because of the size and amount of parking lots and roofs on these properties, the runoff from these properties is significant. Exempting properties that potentially generate large amounts of runoff would shift the burden of financing the operation and maintenance of the stormwater system to homes and businesses that do not qualify for property exemptions and unfairly result in a higher bill for the non-exempt properties. For this reason, churches and schools will be treated like all other customers under the user fee rate structure.

Why Should I Have To Pay? I Live On A Hill And Don't Have A Drainage Problem.

You may not have a problem, but the runoff generated from your property is contributing to flooding problems downstream. The approach being taken through this

program recognizes that everyone contributes to the runoff and everyone will share in the results—reduced flooding, and unimpaired access to roads, etc.

It Hasn't Rained In A While. Do I Still Have To Pay The Stormwater Fee?

Stormwater infrastructure including pipes, channels, etc. must be maintained no matter how much flow is running through it at any given moment. Stormwater infrastructure must be maintained so that the next storm does not result in flooding and cause damage to roads and other infrastructure.

For more information, contact the
Town of Milliken at 970.587.4331

