



Stormwater Management Program FAQ

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is water from rain, hail, sleet, and snow that doesn't soak into the ground. It flows off streets, parking lots, construction sites, and neighborhoods, where it is channeled into the City's stormwater collection system until it reaches a body of water such as a stream, lake, creek, or river. On its way, it collects trash, sediment, and chemicals (like motor oil and fertilizer) that pollute local waterways.

Why should we manage stormwater?

We need to manage stormwater effectively to protect people and property from flooding and to protect the health of our local waters. We've been making progress on both, but we must be more to protect property values and comply with the regulations that protect our waters. To maintain the health of local streams and rivers, we must minimize the pollution reaching them. Stormwater runoff typically moves quickly to our waterways and carries pollutants like fertilizer and motor oil. Slowing the flow of stormwater minimizes pollutants in our water, resulting in a cleaner Manor.

What is Manor's stormwater program?

Manor residents share a strong value for clean, healthy waterways. The City is committed to programs and services that enhance the beauty of our community and positively influence property values. The City's Department of Public Works manages, maintains, and repairs approximately 62 miles of storm drain pipes and various stormwater collection structures throughout the City. In addition to the structural components of the stormwater system, the City also regulates and protects the floodplain throughout the City.

Why do we need to invest in the Manor stormwater program?

Stormwater management has become an increasingly urgent priority for the City with greater frequency and severity of storms. Today, severe storm events occur more often and intensely than when much of Manor's infrastructure was built decades ago. This means we need a larger system to manage flood water during significant storms.

Did you know that one inch of rain falling on 3,000 square feet of pavement generates more than 1,000 gallons of runoff? Managing stormwater isn't about managing where it comes from; it's about how it's handled on a property and where it flows from there.

How is the current stormwater program funded?

The City's stormwater program is currently funded by property taxes into the General Fund, which supports program expenses such as administrative and personnel costs, overhead, materials, and equipment.

Why isn't the current funding enough?

The City has been spending about \$25,000 annually on infrastructure maintenance, municipal stormwater permit compliance, and environmental and drainage improvement projects, but it doesn't fund a sufficient program. City leadership worked with Public Works staff and funding consultants in late 2022 to assess near-term and future service costs for the City's stormwater infrastructure. Together, we evaluated how well the amount of property taxes is covering the program's costs and learned it's not enough and the amount is very unpredictable.

In addition, stormwater costs are expected to rise over the next five years, from approximately \$500,000 to \$1.6 million, as the City implements a more robust and effective program. Costs include the City's continued compliance with state regulations; preventative and proactive maintenance; and repair of the City's aging stormwater infrastructure. These maintenance and improvement activities will allow the City to create a safer environment for current residents and for anticipated future development. A dedicated stormwater fee will help transition the City toward a sufficient and stable revenue source to effectively address the City's drainage issues and meet the state's regulatory requirements and the community's needs.

What will the stormwater fee pay for?

The stormwater fee will fund our continued compliance with state regulations; preventative and proactive maintenance; and repair of the City's aging stormwater infrastructure. This includes:

- Approximately 62 miles of storm pipes, open channels, and other critical infrastructure
- Operating and maintaining the system
- Expanding the stormwater system's capacity to manage flooding on public property and prevent pollution from leaking into our waterways
- Stormwater master planning and capital planning
- Street sweeping program to meet environmental permitting requirements
- Surface drainage and maintenance of all public culverts and ditches, which requires four crew members and equipment purchases of a dump truck, excavator, and trailer
- Capital projects, such as street regrading to prevent flooding and adding storm drains

What is the stormwater fee for *single-family residential* properties, and how is it determined?

All properties generate stormwater runoff, but the amount varies significantly—especially depending on how much impervious (hard) surface area a property has. For example, consider a typical commercial property with a large parking lot and roof as compared to a typical single-family residential property. Much more water runs off a large parking lot than from single-family residential lot.

The current amount a property owner contributes to our stormwater program is dependent on the value of the property. It isn't correlated with the amount of stormwater the property generates. The new fee is determined by the amount of hard (impervious) surfaces on a property. This is directly related to each property's impact on the City's stormwater infrastructure so therefore it is a more equitable way to charge each property owner.

The City's proposed rate structure includes a flat rate of \$6.50 per month for single-family residential properties. It will be charged as a line item on the water and sewer bill.

The flat fee of \$6.50 was determined by first identifying the average amount of impervious surface of a random sample of 350 single-family properties within the City limits. Impervious surface includes the area of the home, accessory structures, driveway, and other hard surfaces. The average impervious cover for a single-family property was 2,730 square feet. This size became the City's measure of one Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). The City's analysis estimated there are over 9,200 ERUs within the City limits. To fund the program, the minimum monthly rate of \$6.50/per ERU was established.

How is the stormwater fee determined for *non-single family residential and commercial* properties?

All properties generate stormwater runoff, but the amount varies significantly—especially depending on how much impervious (hard) surface area a property has. For example, consider a typical commercial property with a large parking lot and roof as compared to a typical single-family residential property. Much more water runs off a large parking lot than from a single-family residential lot.

The new fee will be determined by the amount of hard (impervious) surfaces on a property. The impervious surface-based fee is a more equitable way to recover stormwater management costs since it's directly related to each property's impact on the City's stormwater infrastructure.

To determine the fee for each property, the City used Geographic Information System (GIS) data and aerial imagery to determine the amount of impervious surface on parcels within the City. This method is an industry best practice.

The City's proposed billing unit (an equivalent residential unit or ERU) equals 2,730 square feet of impervious surface, so every 2,730 square feet of impervious cover equals one ERU. The proposed fee per ERU is \$6.50 per month.

As an example, if a shopping center has a rooftop, parking lot, and walkways that equal 30,000 sq. ft. of impervious cover, you would calculate the number of billing units like this:

- $30,000 \text{ sq.ft.} \div 2,730 \text{ sq.ft.} = 10.9$, then round up to the nearest whole number = 11 ERUs.
- The proposed fee per ERU is \$6.50 per month, so for the example above, the monthly stormwater fee (which will appear on the water and sewer bill) would be 11 ERUs multiplied by \$6.50 = \$71.50.

How does the new stormwater fee compare to other cities?

For comparison, this stormwater fee is at about the middle of our peers: less than Austin (\$9.80/ERU) and San Marcos (\$14.90/ERU) but higher than New Braunfels (\$4.59/ERU) and Round Rock (\$4.75/ERU).

When will the stormwater fee go into effect?

If approved by City Council, the stormwater fee will go into effect on July 1, 2024. The new fee will be billed monthly with water and sewer.

Can I get a discount on my fee?

A credit program is being considered to give property owners a chance to receive financial credit for taking actions on their property that reduce the demand on the stormwater system. Once developed, the City will post credit information on its website and notify property owners.

How does the stormwater program affect future planning?

The funding provided by this new fee will enable the City to make the investments needed to ensure our properties are protected against major weather events, and that we do our best to protect our local waterways.

This fee will fund projects that will ease impervious surfaces' impacts on the City's stormwater infrastructure. Projects will be identified and prioritized through a master planning effort anticipated in 2025. These projects will have direct benefits to City residents because they will protect properties from flooding, reduce traffic delays during storms, enhance safety for cars and pedestrians, and restore streams and the walking trails along them.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Contact Scott Dunlop at 512-215-8262 or sdunlop@manortx.gov. Also, visit cityofmanor.org for more information and the latest updates.

Where can I read the Draft Stormwater Ordinance?

The ordinance will be published in the *Manor Journal* on April 12, April 19, and April 26, 2024. You can also find it on our website at cityofmanor.org.

How can I learn more?

The City Council will hold a public hearing in the Council Chambers at Manor City Hall, 105 East Eggleston Street, Manor, Texas, on Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. to receive public comments on the proposed Stormwater Drainage Utility Ordinance. The Stormwater Drainage Utility Ordinance will establish stormwater drainage as a public utility, and stormwater drainage fees will be enacted to fund the Stormwater Drainage Utility.

The City will also hold two Open Houses, one on Tuesday, June 4, 2024 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and one on Saturday, June 15, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Manor City Hall, 105 East Eggleston Street, Manor, Texas.