

The City's Infrastructure

Approximately two-thirds of the city of Richmond is served by a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4).

This mixture of underground storm sewer systems and open channels are separate from the sanitary sewer system.

The central portion of the city, which encompasses the other one-third, is served by a Combined Sewer System (CSS). The Department of Public Utilities operates and maintains the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) system.

The drainage system includes man-made components (ditches, pipes, inlets, catch basins, and ponds) and natural components (streams, flood plains, wetlands) that control the quantity of flow and enhance the quality of stormwater.

There are approximately 22,000 catch basins, 600 miles of ditches and 180 miles of separate storm drainage pipe in the city. Annual maintenance includes cleaning catch basins and ditches and repairing storm drains.



Stormwater Utility Goals

- Protect people and property from flood hazards
- Prevent water-related infrastructure failures caused by stormwater runoff
- Improve water quality by reducing pollution from industrial and sewage plants
- Prevent stream bank erosion
- Collect, transport and treat stormwater runoff in the combined sewer system



FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Stormwater Utility welcomes calls from the public notifying us of problem storm drains and encourages residents to help by keeping storm drains near their homes and businesses clear of debris.

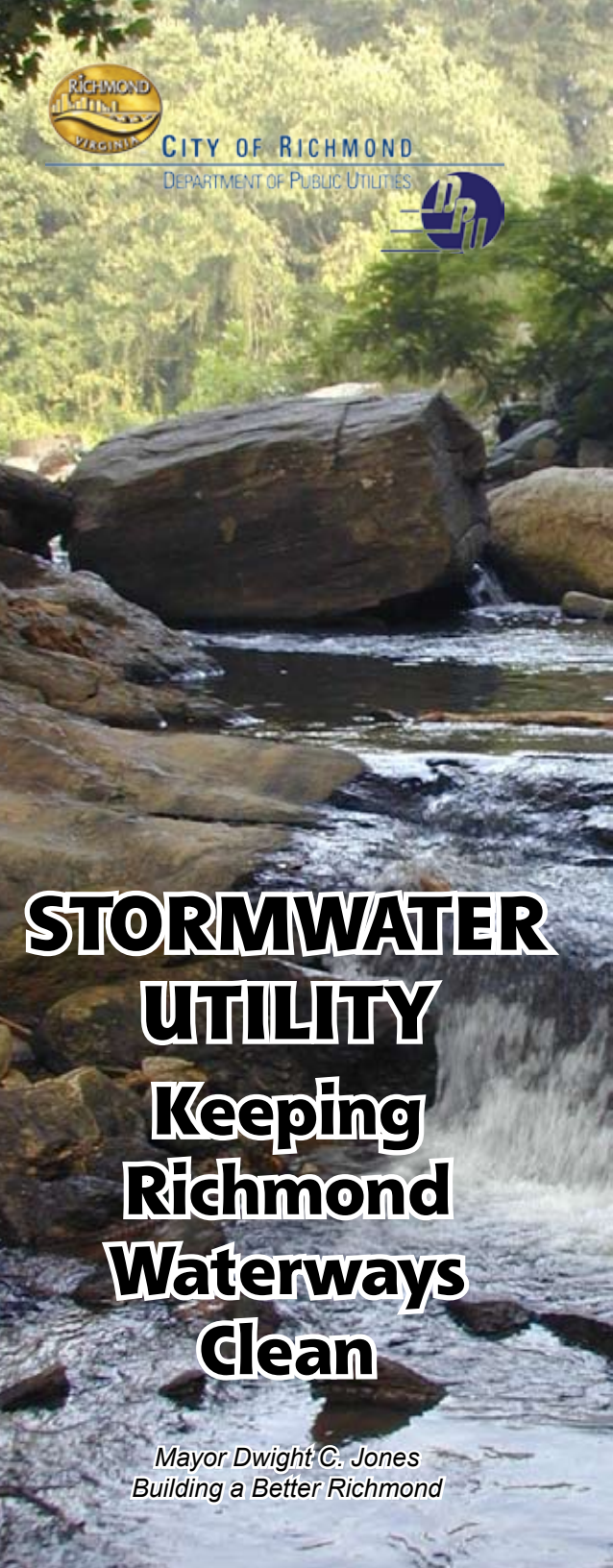
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*Mayor Dwight C. Jones
Building a Better Richmond*



CITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES



**STORMWATER
UTILITY
Keeping
Richmond
Waterways
Clean**

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Building a Better Richmond*

The City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities Stormwater Utility

The city of Richmond Department of Public Utilities established a Stormwater Utility in July 2009 to manage the stormwater that runs off the properties of city residents and business owners. These funds are used to implement and maintain a comprehensive stormwater quality management plan as required by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Although these national and state agencies establish and enforce stormwater regulations, funding is not provided and localities must fund their own stormwater programs. The city is responsible for collecting stormwater utility fees to provide this service.

There are approximately 400 stormwater utilities nationwide and several in Virginia including the cities of Portsmouth, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Hampton, Chesapeake, and Newport News.



What is Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater runoff is precipitation from rain or snow that does not soak into the ground. This stormwater runs over hard surfaces, picking up, as it goes, pollutants such as oil, pesticides, pet waste and debris, and carries it into city drains. Impervious surfaces are areas such as driveways, parking lots, roads, sidewalks, streets and roofs that prevent stormwater runoff from naturally soaking into the ground. Urban stormwater runoff is the number one source of surface water pollution in the United States, causing public safety hazards, health risks and environmental threats.

Stormwater Issues:

- **Flooding** – Stormwater runoff from intense rainfall can at times exceed the carrying capacity of the stormwater piping system, creating a backup in the system, which can lead to the flooding of roads, yards and basements.
- **Pollution** – When rain falls, stormwater flows across impervious surfaces such as sidewalks, driveways, parking lots and rooftops. It mobilizes contaminants and animal waste, picks up chemicals such as oil, pesticides, trash and sediment and transports it all to bodies of water.
- **Water Quality** – Stormwater runoff is a leading cause of nutrient contamination, leading to algae blooms and low oxygen levels, which can result in fish kills.
- **Soil Erosion** – Uncontrolled stormwater rapidly increases the amount of water flowing into a stream, which, over time, can wash away stream banks.

Benefits of a Stormwater Utility

- Improved public health and safety
- Improved customer service and a reduced backlog of customer complaints
- Reduction of long-term capital costs through proactive maintenance
- Protection of property values
- Resources to help mitigate flooding
- Cleaner and safer streets, which helps to improve the business climate
- Availability of more property to develop, resulting in increased tax revenue
- Resources to meet existing and future regulatory requirements
- Cooperation with the Combined Sewer Overflow program
- Improvement of water quality by reducing *non-point source pollution (NPS)*
- Prevention of stream bank erosion
- Healthier habitats for the James River and associated tributaries
- Cleaner waterfront and park areas
- Reduces chance of sewer back-ups
- Reduces threat of West Nile Virus

Stormwater Utility - A Fee for Service

All owners of developed properties that contribute to stormwater runoff and pollution will be charged a fee for service much like utility fees for natural gas, water, sewage and other utilities.

Richmond's fee is set up as a three-tiered rate structure for single family residential (SFR) parcels based on the amount of impervious surface area that a parcel contains:

<u>Rates per SFR parcel</u>	<u>Annual Fee</u>
1. Up to 1,000 sq. ft	\$25 per yr
2. Between 1,001 – 2,399 sq. ft	\$45 per yr
3. Greater than 2,400 sq. ft.	\$70 per yr

Rates for non-residential parcels are calculated per ERU (Equivalent Residential Unit) 1 ERU = 1,425 sq. ft. An ERU represents the median impervious area value for all single family residential parcels within the city of Richmond.

<u>Rates per ERU Non-Residential properties</u>	
Multi-Family, Commercial/Industrial, non-profits/churches	\$45 per ERU

Example:
If you are a non-residential organization with 14,250 sq. ft. of impervious area, your annual stormwater fee would be \$450 per year.

$$14,250 \text{ sq. ft.} / 1,425 \text{ sq. ft.} = 10 \text{ ERUs, } 10 \text{ ERUs} \times \$45 = \$450$$

- Exemptions and Credits
- Non-residential properties are eligible for partial credits that meet defined criteria.
 - Residential properties are able to apply for partial credits in December 2010.
 - State law does not provide adjustments based on income levels.
 - Undeveloped properties are exempt.