



Gladstone's New Stormwater Program

Introduction

Gladstone's elected leaders are committed to catch up on infrastructure needs. Water, sewer and stormwater systems are in poor condition due to long deferred maintenance and lack of timely replacement of failing infrastructure.

Recently, Gladstone took steps to address longstanding deficiencies in the City's stormwater infrastructure that result in chronic sewer overflows that put public health and the environment at risk.

During storms, the rainwater enters sewer pipes and mixes with untreated sewage. The combined sewage/stormwater then overflows onto local streets and into the Clackamas River and other local streams. Those events lead to regulatory violations which can result in stiff fines.



In heavy rain, stormwater mixes with untreated sewage and overflows on city streets (here, on Portland Avenue near Gladstone High School).

Stormwater Utility Provides Resources to Solve the Problem

Until recently, Gladstone was the only city in the region without a stormwater utility and fee. Without a stormwater fee, Gladstone could not comply with state and federal regulations to protect public health and the environment.

Creating a stormwater utility and enacting a stormwater fee and system development charge allows Gladstone to maintain, operate, and upgrade the stormwater system to prevent sewer overflows and avoid costly regulatory violations.

The new stormwater fee will be phased-in, starting below the level in peer communities – to begin, households will pay \$5 per month in the first year. Businesses will pay a proportionate amount depending on their impervious surface (the area covered by roofs, parking, and other hard surfaces that do not absorb water).

Keeping Services Affordable

The City is committed to maintaining and fixing the stormwater system and keeping it affordable for all customers. Other funding options being pursued are grants, partnerships, and low interest loans from the state.

To learn more on Gladstone's new stormwater utility and fee see answers to Frequently Asked Questions on back.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is stormwater?

When it rains, storm water runs off roof tops, parking lots, streets, yards, sidewalks and fields, carrying pollutants with it.

What's wrong with Gladstone's stormwater system?

Storm drains, catch basins, and stormwater pipes are designed to carry rainwater away from developed areas to prevent flooding. In Gladstone, some catch basins are directly connected to the sewer system.

During storm events the rainwater enters sewer pipes and mixes with untreated sewage. That combined sewage/stormwater then overflows onto local streets and into the Clackamas River and other local streams. Those events lead to regulatory violations.

How is the stormwater problem being solved?

In June 2017, the Gladstone City Council took action to become the final city in the region to initiate a stormwater utility and fee. This will enable Gladstone to proactively manage the quality and quantity of stormwater in our city.

The Council's action:

- Establishes a stormwater utility
- Enacts Gladstone's first stormwater fee for property owners
- Adopts a stormwater system development charge (SDC) to be paid by new development

How much is the stormwater fee?

The new stormwater fee will be phased-in, starting below the level in peer communities. To begin, households will pay \$5 per month in the first year. The charge will increase to \$10 per month on July 1, 2018.

How is the stormwater fee calculated?

The average single-family residence in Gladstone has about 3,000 square feet of impervious surface area, the hard area on a property that prevents water from going into the ground and therefore increases stormwater runoff.

3,000 square feet of impervious surface area represents an equivalent residential unit (ERU) which is charged at \$5 per month.

Commercial and other non-single family residential accounts are charged \$5 per ERU or 3,000 square feet of impervious area.

How will the City use the money?

The money will enable Gladstone to proactively manage the quality and quantity of stormwater in our city. The first step is to ensure stormwater is separated from the sewer systems to prevent sewage overflows.

Do other communities in Oregon charge for stormwater services? (How much?)

More than 40 other Oregon communities charge a separate stormwater fee. For a single family residential home owner, the service charges in the region range from \$26.59 in Portland to \$9.35 in Oregon City (2015 rates).

Here in Gladstone, residents who receive sewer services from Oak Lodge Water Services already pay a stormwater fee.

Will the stormwater bill come on the same bill as the sewer and water bill?

Customers will receive a single bill from the City for sewer, water, and stormwater charges.

When will customers receive their first stormwater bill?

The stormwater rate takes effect July 1, 2017 and the first bills with stormwater charges will arrive in early September.

What is a Stormwater System Development Charge?

Stormwater system development charges (SDCs) are fees that are collected from when new development occurs in the city. The funds are used for stormwater projects identified in Gladstone's Stormwater Master Plan.

Learn more:

Jim Whynot, Public Works Director
whynot@ci.gladstone.or.us / 503-656-7957