

Why a “Stormwater Utility”

The City of Sweet Home provides a valuable public service by providing Stormwater Drainage facilities for the collection and disposal of Stormwater discharged from properties and public right-of-ways within the City.

The utility exists for the benefit of any person within the City who wants to have the public Stormwater Drainage facilities available for the diversion, collection and/or disposal of Stormwater Drainage and other runoff water from the person’s property, directly or indirectly, and represents a municipal service in a developed urban environment which is essential to the public health, safety and welfare.

Who has to pay?

All developed property within the City will pay the Stormwater service fee. That includes houses, schools, public facilities, churches and businesses. The only exceptions are streets within the City. These areas are excluded because they are designed to collect and carry Stormwater runoff.

Where does the money go?

Fees reflect the cost of the management, maintenance, extension and construction of the public Stormwater Drainage facility as a public utility in the City. Some of the important components of this program include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- a) maintenance of the City’s Stormwater system within the public rights-of-way
- b) development of Stormwater design standards and regulations
- c) field inspection/enforcement of these standards
- d) public information and education
- e) construction of capital facilities
- f) Water quality regulatory compliance.

My home/business is not connected to the City’s drainage system. Therefore, why should I have to pay?

Your property may not be physically connected to the drainage system in the same manner as water or sewer but you and your property are still provided service. How? The City’s Stormwater program is intended to improve and maintain those upstream Stormwater facilities that protect your property; establish design criteria/regulate development that helps control off site Stormwater problems; the program will take steps to reduce Stormwater pollutants that affect the Santiam River and surrounding waterways. Every property and person in Sweet Home is served by these activities.

Additionally, you might not have a current problem, but the runoff generated from your property contributes to the overall problem. For instance, fertilizers from lawns add phosphates, a key pollutant carried in storm sewers. Eventually, everybody will share in the program through an improved environment, better access to public roads and rights-of-ways during storm events and reduced flooding during abnormal years.

How can I be sure this money won’t pay for other City projects?

All Stormwater fees collected go into an “enterprise” or special fund which will be used only to pay for the Stormwater program.