



STORMWATER IMPACT FEE IMPLEMENTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is stormwater?

Stormwater is any precipitation that falls from the sky in the form of rain, hail, sleet, or snow.

2. What is the storm sewer system?

The storm sewer system is a combination of the City's gutters, storm drain piping, canals and creeks that carries stormwater away from your house and leads straight to the local creeks and streams. The storm sewer system is separate from the sanitary sewer system, that handle wastewater from your sinks, tubs and toilets. *Stormwater, unlike wastewater, is not treated at a sewage treatment plant.*

3. Why are we being charged for stormwater (rain)?

Several drainage ways cross the City and all are in need of improvements. These improvements would reduce the threats to people, structures and real estate by reducing street flooding, and stabilizing drainage channels to reduce erosion. Approximately \$2.7 million dollars worth of construction is needed over the next 5 years that is currently not funded. The fees received will be used to fund these projects to the extent that the fees generated can do so.

Currently, the City spends about \$20,000 annually on stormwater issues. These funds are used for minor construction projects designed to eliminate localized flooding problems and for public educational programs. Right now, the City's current stormwater program is limited to dealing with or handling emergencies and specific complaints. As the facilities continue to deteriorate over time, they become less effective in conveying stormwater.

Additionally, in March of 2003, the City was required by federal law to obtain a stormwater permit from the State of Colorado. The intent of this permit is to reduce the potential for pollution to enter our streams and creeks, and to begin improving the water quality in those water bodies. Many of the existing programs will be expanded and additional maintenance of the existing stormwater infrastructure system will be needed. It is anticipated that in the stormwater quality program alone, expenses will increase to \$100,000 annually.

4. Why is the Stormwater Fee the best solution?

Several funding alternatives were considered to make the necessary improvements and maintain the stormwater system. General Fund revenues have historically been used to fund stormwater operations. However, this source of revenue is used to fund many other city programs and has been inadequate to meet the capital needs for stormwater. Since the General Fund is limited in the amount of revenue it receives each year, increasing the stormwater funding would result in less funding for other programs. Therefore, the needed improvements and maintenance for the stormwater system will be delayed due to a lack of available funds.

Another option considered was to use the existing Water and Sewer Utility Funds. These funds receive revenue through the supply of potable water and treatment of wastewater. They are used to fund the water and sewer systems and are earmarked only for the water and sewer systems. However, neither the amount of potable water used nor the amount of sewage produced by a property correlates to the amount of stormwater generated. Therefore, the use of the water or wastewater rate structures to fund stormwater needs would not be equitable or fair.

A separate stormwater impact fee is considered the fairest method to operate and maintain the City's stormwater system, provide for the required water quality programs and expand work on existing flooding problems. Nineteen other Colorado front-range municipalities are using Stormwater utilities; some have been in existence for more than 20 years. Most fees are based on impervious (hard surfaced) area, where the amount each property owner pays is based upon the amount of impervious area on their property. Ours will currently be based on the size of the property.

5. Will all properties have to pay?

All developed properties will be charged a stormwater fee. Undeveloped lots or properties without impervious surfaces will be excluded since the amount of runoff is very small. Properties paying the fee will include privately owned parcels, non-profit organizations, commercial, industrial, office, government and residential property.

6. Will a fee be assessed against the street system?

No, the street system acts as a part of the stormwater conveyance system just as storm sewers and streams do. Without the streets, the City's stormwater system would not function.

Why do I have to pay if....

7. ...I live on high ground?

Every property in Northglenn has stormwater runoff that contributes to existing water quantity and quality problems, and to the need to operate and maintain the storm sewer system. Driveways, parking areas and rooftops in every part of the City contribute to the amount of water that must be managed. It is most equitable to have all developed properties pay a fee for the water that runs off of each property.

8. ...My area of town is built out and has an adequate storm sewer system.

All properties in the city contribute stormwater to the system, so all should contribute to the cost of operating the system. A portion of the utility's revenues will be used to maintain and to make water quality improvements to the existing system, including the one in your neighborhood. As the facilities in your part of town age, they require a higher level of maintenance and eventual replacement. There is also a need to begin water quality work and public education efforts that will help to improve the quality of the water in your local streams, lakes and creeks.

The remaining revenue will be used for capital improvement projects that will reduce flooding threats to life and property that currently exist. While the stormwater system in your area may be adequate to protect your neighborhood, the storm flows may contribute to problems downstream.

9. ...I already pay property tax to the Urban Drainage & Flood Control District for stormwater?

The property tax you pay to the Urban Drainage & Flood Control District is used for both local and regional stormwater infrastructure needs. The District's boundaries cover a six-county area along the front-range. Local governments like Northglenn receive a portion of the District's funding for replacement and new improvements to their stormwater systems if and when the City has sufficient matching funds to construct the projects. However this funding source is insufficient to meet all of the stormwater needs of Northglenn. The Stormwater Fee funds can be used with the District funds to help resolve some of Northglenn's stormwater problems. However, the funding from the District cannot be used to pay for the EPA mandated Stormwater Permit requirements.

10. ...We paid a connection fee to the storm sewer when the house was built?

All properties in Northglenn are charged a connection fee for domestic water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer connections when they are first built. All properties then continue to pay a monthly fee based on the amount of water used and sewage produced. These fees help maintain the delivery system and the cost of producing the water or processing the waste water.

The storm sewer system also requires maintenance to safely and effectively transport storm water and prevent flooding. Until now there was no specific funding mechanism to pay for basic maintenance or improvements to the storm sewer system. Also, the EPA is now requiring that cities develop and implement programs aimed specifically at protecting and enhancing the quality of stormwater discharges from our storm sewer system. This Stormwater Impact Fee will pay for citywide improvements to the storm sewer system and funds the federally mandated Stormwater Permit programs.

11. ...We have a stormwater detention pond?

It is important to note that the stormwater fee pays for citywide improvements to the storm sewer system and funds the federally mandated Stormwater Permit. Because your property is within Northglenn's city limits, a stormwater fee based on the size of the property will be charged to fund these storm sewer system improvements and the Stormwater Permit programs.

12. ...We treat stormwater prior to discharging it from the property?

Several factors were considered that could potentially affect the stormwater run-off from a property, such as the slope of the property, distance to natural or man-made surface water channels, remoteness, potential for contaminants in the run-off, effectiveness of detention basins, and whether treatment is applied to run-

off prior to it leaving the property. Although all of these factors are important to the amount and quality of stormwater run-off generated by a property, it would be very expensive to implement a billing program that considers all these factors, and there could be a high degree of objectivity in the individual decisions.

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13. But I do not contribute to stormwater in Northglenn!

Everyone contributes in the form of runoff from the property. It is important to note that the stormwater fee pays for citywide improvements to the storm sewer system and funds the federally mandated Stormwater Permit. Because your property is within Northglenn's city limits, a stormwater fee based on property size will be charged to fund these storm sewer system improvements and the Stormwater Permit programs.

14. How can the City charge an additional fee without an election?

The Stormwater Impact fee is not a tax, but a fee for service, similar to your water and wastewater utilities. Citizens and businesses benefit from the Stormwater fee through a better-maintained storm sewer system, increased flood control, and improved surface water quality. We are just one of many cities in the front range that have implemented a stormwater fee to fund flood control projects and satisfy the new Stormwater Permit requirements. City ordinance §16-13-2 (1979) allows for the development of reasonable fees based on the use of the City's stormwater collection system.

15. Do other Cities have stormwater fees?

Yes. The following table includes other Colorado cities that have stormwater utilities and their single-family residential fees.

Communities	Average Monthly Single Family Bill	Year Utility Initiated
Fort Collins	\$12.96	1981
Loveland	\$8.30	1987
Boulder	\$6.05	1989
Longmont	\$5.04	1984
Parker	\$5.00	1999
Aurora	\$3.83	1969
Greeley	\$3.75	2002
Arvada	\$3.51	2001
Denver	\$3.46	1981
Erie	\$3.25	1999
Golden	\$3.20	1997
Berthoud	\$3.00	1989
Windsor	\$2.30	1991
Castle Rock	\$2.00	
Littleton	\$2.00	1986
Northglenn	\$2.00	2004
Woodland Park	\$2.00	1995
Lakewood	\$1.98	1998
Westminster	\$1.50	2001
Englewood	\$1.39	

16. Is this fee a way for developers to avoid their responsibilities for managing stormwater?

No, all new development and re-development will still be required to follow existing city ordinances. Existing regulations require the developers to build, at their expense, storm sewer systems and stormwater detention facilities to manage the runoff generated by their developments. Once a lot is developed, that lot will be subject to the same stormwater fee as all the existing lots.

17. How can you do this? It's a rip-off!

The needs the Stormwater Fee will address are very real. Citizens in Northglenn are getting something for their money. First, there will be a better-maintained storm sewer system than in the past. Flood control projects will be completed instead of being delayed because funds have not been available. Further, the City will avoid up to \$25,000 per day in fines that could be assessed by the EPA or the State for not applying for or abiding by the required Stormwater Permit.

18. How much money will the Stormwater Fee raise?

The proposed annual budget is approximately \$430,000, and is broken down as follows:

\$100,000	Stormwater Permit Programs
\$330,000	Capital Improvements Projects (CIPs)

19. How much will I have to pay?

The average single-family home will be charged \$2.00 per month. For all other properties in Northglenn, including commercial, the fee will be proportional to the size of each property. Each commercial property, which includes all churches, schools, non-profit, industrial, office, state, or Federal properties, will be assessed \$20.00 per acre per month. The amount is calculated to the nearest tenth acre, based on Adams County assessor property records. The minimum charge will be \$2.00 per month.

20. How will the fee be billed to me?

The fee will be added to the monthly water and sewer utility bills as a separate line item. In the event a property does not receive water and/or sewer services from the City, then a separate stormwater utility bill will be sent every month.

21. When will I receive my first bill?

Billing will start in April 2004. The fee will be added to your water and wastewater monthly billing. If the City of Northglenn does not provide water or wastewater services to you, then you will receive a separate bill near the end of April.

22. Will the fee change in the future?

25. The parcel boundaries are incorrect.

Parcel boundaries were obtained from the plats filed for your subdivision from the Adams County Assessors Office. If there is a problem with the parcel boundary of your lot, then additional research must be conducted. You may call 303-450-8792 to discuss the size of your property. Or you may provide the outline of your property and your estimate either by fax at 303-254-7607, or postal mail at:

City of Northglenn
Department of Community Resources
Stormwater Program
11701 Community Center Drive
Northglenn, CO 80233-8061

26. I share my lot with others who should share in paying the bill.

When only one water or wastewater billing account for a property is used, that address also receives the stormwater billing for the entire parcel. In some cases, an agreement must be made between the party receiving the bill and all who may contribute to stormwater on the property. This agreement would be the responsibility of the party receiving the billing, not the City.

27. I disagree; I want to appeal the charge!

If the issue is the size of the property, call 303-450-8792 to discuss. If after talking about the size of the property there is still disagreement, then the property owner needs to discuss the area figures with the Adams County Assessors office.

28. Who can I contact for more information?

The City's Web site: www.northglenn.org

Or

Call Pam Acre, City of Northglenn Stormwater Coordinator at 303-450-8792