

# CITY OF LAFAYETTE

## W E T W E A T H E R P R O G R A M

### Stormwater Capital Improvement Program and User Fee

**Q: What is stormwater quality and why is it important to our community?**

A: When rain or snow falls in Lafayette, the precipitation runs off impervious surfaces such as roofs, driveways, streets and parking lots into the stormwater drainage system. The stormwater, which may be polluted with chemicals, litter, and sediment, flows from the storm sewer directly into local streams and rivers. With little or no treatment, polluted stormwater creates unhealthy conditions for human and aquatic life.



**Q: What state and federal regulations promote clean water?**

A: Stormwater entering and exiting the city's storm sewers is regulated by the federal Clean Water Act and the Indiana's General Storm Water Permit Rule (Rule 13). In 1999 under Rule 13, Lafayette was issued a joint National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit as a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The NPDES permit exists to establish a program for stormwater quality so that public health, existing water uses and aquatic life are protected. The city shares its permit with Dayton, Battle Ground, Ivy Tech College, Purdue University, West Lafayette and Tippecanoe County.

### Stormwater Quality Impacts Humans and Aquatic Life




**Q: How are the NPDES requirements funded?**

A: Prior to a user fee being approved, the city operated a stormwater program, but a dedicated funding source was not in place. In the past, permit mandates as well as ongoing operational and maintenance activities of the storm sewer system were funded by the Department of Water Pollution Control. Sanitary sewer users bared the burden for stormwater system improvements, which benefit all properties in the community, whether they were served by the storm sewer or not.

In 2010 and forward, 100 percent of Water Pollution Control revenue will be required

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to fund the city's mandated \$179 million Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) to reduce raw sewage overflows into the Wabash River and other local waterways and ongoing operations and maintenance needs. The department does not have adequate funds to finance both the LTCP and stormwater programs.

## Capital Program to Benefit Entire City

### **Q: What is the city's plan to fund the stormwater program?**

A: To meet NPDES Permit requirements, avoid costly fines, and complete drainage improvements the City of Lafayette established a dedicated stormwater revenue source, effective July 1, 2010. Stormwater runoff from properties—residential and non-residential—enters the city's storm sewers. A user fee will allow the city to fund drainage and stormwater quality improvements throughout the community.

### **Q: What stormwater needs does the user fee address?**

A: In addition to funding NPDES permit requirements, the stormwater user fee will address necessary stormwater system improvements, expansion and drainage improvements. The user fee will fund the following high priority projects identified in the Stormwater Capital Program:

- Valley Street Drainage Improvements
- Elliott Ditch Stream Bank Restoration
- Southside/30th Street Drainage Improvements
- Rain Gardens & Rain Barrel Program
- Armstrong Park Detention Basin Retrofit
- Durkees Run East Improvements
- Vinton Woods Detention Pond Rehabilitation
- Orchard Heights Drainage Improvements
- Outfall Repairs

## User Fee to Fund Improvements

### **Q: Who does the user fee affect? How much will it cost?**

A: Approved October 5, 2009, and amended May 3, 2010, by the Lafayette Common Council, developed residential and non-residential property owners are assessed a user fee.

- Residential User Fee: Residential property owners are assessed a flat \$4 monthly user fee based on the average impervious surface for the average residential parcel size, or an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). One ERU equals 3,200 square feet. The minimum bill will be one ERU or \$4. In January 2011, the fee will increase to \$5 monthly.
- Non-Residential User Fee: For non-residential property owners, the city calculates user fees based on actual measured impervious surface for a parcel. The minimum bill will be one ERU or \$4. In January 2011, the fee will increase to \$5 monthly.

The stormwater program is a service that benefits all properties contributing stormwater to the sewer conveyance system, so all property owners, tax exempt or not, are assessed a fee. An appeals process exists for those questioning the city's user fee calculations.

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## Community Members Provided Input

### **Q: How is the user fee collected?**

A: The Stormwater Utility functions as part of the Water Pollution Control Department. Statements and accounts are processed by the city Utility Billing Office. Property owners will receive their first stormwater user fee statements in July 2010. Customers that have water service will be billed monthly for the stormwater user fee on their existing water utility statement. Those property owners without water service will be billed semi-annually—or twice per year—and will have the option to pay the user fee monthly.

### **Q: What members of the public helped to develop the user fee?**

A: In March 2009, 17 community members were invited by Mayor Roswarski to participate on the city's Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee. Members represent Lafayette neighborhoods, industry and commercial business, property development, religious groups and local government. The committee discussed the city's progress and offered input on stormwater user fee development and the capital improvement program. Members, ultimately, assisted in formulating a user fee recommendation for consideration by the Lafayette Common Council.

## How You Can Help

### **Q: How can a resident or business get more information about the stormwater user fee?**

A: Information including the user fee calculations and capital project information is available at [www.lafayette.in.gov](http://www.lafayette.in.gov) in the Wet Weather Program section of the Engineering page.

### **Q: How can a resident or business play a part in improving stormwater quality?**

A: Follow these simple tips to keep local waterways clean:

- Healthy lawns only need one inch of water per week. Water as needed during the cool times of the day, and prevent water from flowing into a storm drain.
- Use insecticides, herbicides and fertilizers appropriately. Review the instructions for proper use before applying these chemicals to your lawn or garden.
- Reduce impervious surfaces, or paved areas, on your property, and increase the amount of vegetated area in your yard.
- Clean up your pet's waste. It can end up in our waterways.
- Wash your car or truck at a car wash instead of cleaning it in your driveway.
- Consider innovative approaches to stormwater management, such as using rain barrels, planting rain gardens or installing green roofs.
- Clear trash and debris from storm drains and driveway pipes to prevent clogs, and dispose of the trash properly.
- Dispose of paint, motor oil and cleaning products properly. Contact the Lafayette Sanitation Department at 765-807-1411 or visit the sanitation page of [www.lafayette.in.gov](http://www.lafayette.in.gov) for more information.
- Report drainage problems and illegal dumping to the City of Lafayette Action Center; call 765-807-1000.
- Learn more about stormwater programs and permitting by visiting the Indiana Department of Environmental Management Web site, [www.in.gov/idem](http://www.in.gov/idem).

