

Frequently Asked Questions - Proposed FY25 Stormwater Utility Fee Increase

1. Why is Stormwater Management requesting a fee increase and what will the fee increase be used for?

The mission of the Stormwater Management program is to “Protect People and Property from Harmful Stormwater Runoff.” The Stormwater utility fee pays for MAINTAINING the existing system of drainage pipes and channels, so that they function as originally designed, IMPROVING the drainage system through construction of projects to reduce flooding and channel erosion hazards, WARNING the community of flooding and erosion hazards that cannot be addressed in the short term, and REVIEWING development for compliance with City stormwater standards.

The purpose of the proposed stormwater utility fee increase is to accelerate the proactive rehabilitation of high-risk storm drain infrastructure throughout the city to keep residents safe from the impact of failure and the formation of sinkholes.

It is estimated that 59 miles of City drainage pipe main lines are at a high risk of failure. Delayed rehabilitation of those main lines increases the risk of sinkholes. Drainage pipe failure can restrict stormwater conveyance and can increase the risk of flooding, the formation of sinkholes, and can have dangerous impacts to structures, roads, and vehicles. Proactive drainage pipe rehabilitation increases public safety, reduces emergency response, and provides an opportunity to partner to leverage resources and provide more complete projects for the community.

The additional revenue the proposed increase could bring in would provide the capacity to sell an estimated \$11 million in bonds to more aggressively tackle prioritized rehabilitation of high-risk drainage pipes.

2. How much is the proposed fee increase?

A 5% increase to the Stormwater Utility fee is proposed. The proposed Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) fee increase would provide a partial annual revenue increase of \$2.14 million for FY25 since it would not take effect until January 1, 2025. The increased fee would bring a full annual increase of \$2.9 million during the fiscal year of 2026.

3. How are Stormwater fees calculated for residential property, and how does the proposed fee increase impact the rates for residential property?

Low Occupancy residential property, such as one-family or two-family properties, are calculated based on the total estimated impervious area determined by residential square footage. The Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) is used to determine the number of billing units for residential property. The median single-family residential parcel in Fort Worth has been determined to have approximately 2,600 square feet of impervious area or hard surface or one (1) ERU. Low Occupancy residential properties are placed in one of four tiers depending on square footage.

The current fees for Low Occupancy residential properties range from \$3.31 per month for small homes to \$13.23 per month for large homes. The proposed 5% increase would adjust residential rates to \$3.48 per month for small homes to \$13.89 per month for large homes. See the table below for more information.

Low Occupancy Billing Tier (Single Family Residential)	Billing Unit Equivalent Residential Units (ERU)	Billing Basis	Current Monthly Rate	Proposed Monthly Increase (5%)	Proposed Monthly Rate, Effective January 1, 2025
Tier 1	0.5 ERU	Up to 1,300 square feet	\$3.31	\$0.17	\$3.48
Tier 2	1.0 ERU	1,300 to 2,475 square feet	\$6.61	\$0.33	\$6.94
Tier 3	1.5 ERU	2,476 3,394 square feet	\$9.92	\$0.50	\$10.42
Tier 4	2.0 ERU	3,394+ square feet	\$13.23	\$0.66	\$13.89

4. How are Stormwater fees calculated for High Occupancy Residential/Non-Residential Property such as commercial and industrial properties and apartments, and what is the impact of the proposed fee increase?

High Occupancy Residential/Non-Residential Property such as commercial and industrial properties and apartment fees are based on the amount of actual impervious surface area on the property determined through a review of site plans and aerial photography. Impervious surfaces are hard surface areas such as rooftops on buildings, sidewalks, driveways and parking lots. Impervious surface area is divided by the standard Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) of 2,600 square feet to determine the number of billing units on the property. The number of billing units is multiplied by the standard ERU rate, currently at \$6.61, proposed at \$6.94.

For example, the fee for a small commercial property with a total hard surface area of 1 acre or 43,560 square feet is currently \$112.37 monthly and is proposed to change to \$117.98 per month, effective January 1, 2025, calculated as follows:

43,560 square feet ÷ 2,600 square feet/ERU = 16.75 billing units, rounded up to 17

17 billing units x \$6.94 per month/ERU = \$117.98 per month

Examples of High Occupancy Residential/Non-Residential Property	Billing Unit Equivalent Residential Units (ERU)	Billing Basis	Current Monthly Rate	Proposed Monthly Increase (5%)	Proposed Monthly Rate, Effective January 1, 2025
Small Commercial Land use	17 ERU	1 acre hard surface (43,560 square feet)	\$112.37	\$5.61	\$117.98
Medium Commercial Land use	167 ERU	10 acres hard surface (435,600 square feet)	\$1,103.87	\$55.11	\$1,158.98
Industrial Land use	1508 ERU	90 acres hard surface (3,920,000 square feet)	\$9,967.88	\$497.64	\$10,465.52

5. How are Stormwater utility fees collected?

Stormwater utility fees are collected through the monthly City of Fort Worth Water bill. On the billing statement, there is a separate line item indicating the Stormwater monthly fee. The Stormwater utility fees are paid directly into the Stormwater Fund, which is a completely separate fund from the city’s general budget that is used exclusively for the purpose of fulfilling the Stormwater Program’s mission.

6. If adopted by City Council, when would the fee increase take effect?

The fee increase would take effect on January 1, 2025 and would appear on the January water bill.

7. What is the timeline for City Council to vote on and adopt the proposed fee increase?

A public hearing on the budget, which includes the proposed fee increase, will take place on September 10, 2024. City Council will vote to adopt the operating budget and 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which includes the proposed fee increase, on September 17, 2024. A separate public hearing will be held later this year for Council to adopt the associated Stormwater Utility Fee increased rates.

8. How can I provide my feedback on the proposed Stormwater fee increase?

You may provide feedback online at FWConnection@FortWorthTexas.gov.