

# CHARLOTTESVILLE'S WATER RESOURCES PROTECTION PROGRAM



Underneath the streets of our beautiful city, our water infrastructure is in serious disrepair. The century-year-old clay and metal pipes that we rely on to collect and transport our stormwater runoff are disintegrating, contributing to pollution and flooding issues that have a direct, negative impact on Charlottesville's health and safety.

While we can't see the drainage pipes that support the most basic functioning of our city, we all rely on them to carry the overflow of stormwater that rushes from our streets, parking lots, yards and farms during storms. And we all need to pitch in to make sure they're kept in good, working condition.

Across Virginia and throughout the country, stormwater runoff is a serious pollution problem that the federal (and state) government is making sure communities, including ours, address. To ignore the problem will mean an increase in the pollution in our rivers and lakes, contaminated drinking water, flooding, and sewage overflows—all of which have costly consequences to our health and homes and diminish the livability of what we call our "World Class City."



Modern green infrastructure and engineering design techniques can absorb runoff and filter pollutants out of stormwater, providing protection to our streams in a cost-effective way.

**Stormwater runoff pollution is a straightforward issue with an equally straightforward solution:**

1. Repair and replace the century-year old pipes and underground infrastructure.
2. Support homeowners, churches, farmers and businesses in managing polluted runoff.



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## WHAT HAPPENS BELOW MATTERS ABOVE

### How to pay for these necessary services is the question.

After years of study and analysis, the Charlottesville City Council is considering the fairest way to distribute the cost of these improvements and will be taking public comment on a proposal to create a stormwater utility.

On Tuesday, January 22, the City Council performed the first reading of a new ordinance that proposes a utility rate of roughly \$3.25 per month per 1,000 square feet of impervious surface on a property. Revenue raised through the user fee would be specifically dedicated to a defined stormwater program of services. It is proposed that the stormwater utility would be established as of January 1, 2014.

A utility is a fee that's paid by all property-owners (not renters) based on the amount of stormwater runoff their property generates. Revenue raised through the user fee would be specifically dedicated to important infrastructure repairs and improvements that will help address our City's stormwater pollution problem.

Nobody likes new fees, but the cost of ignoring stormwater pollution will be much higher for our community—and far less equitable or predictable. Stormwater flooding in basements is a costly health hazard, and streets flooded with untreated water put all of us at risk. As one of our founding fathers once said, 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.'

### What will we get for our money?

Right now, our city council is looking at not only how to repair our stormwater drainage system, but also how to make the behind-the-scenes infrastructure of Charlottesville be as world-class as its restaurants, cafes and art galleries that line our streets. Advanced engineering makes fixing this system more efficient, effective and far-reaching than ever before.

### How much will I pay?

Charlottesville officials have been working hard to make this utility as fair, equitable and transparent as possible. For the average homeowner, the annual cost will be between \$55-\$78/year—less than the cost of a few cups of coffee

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a month. And that cost can be reduced by making improvements to your property that cut down on the amount of stormwater it generates. To aid the public in determining the amount that each home or building owner would pay, the city has created a web tool, <http://gisweb.charlottesville.org/GISViewer>. You can learn more about the program, and estimate your potential fee by entering your address at the city's site here: [www.charlottesville.org/stormwater](http://www.charlottesville.org/stormwater).

### Why now?

Flooding and pollution in our waterways is on the rise and causes serious damage to our homes, farms, businesses, churches and schools. The clay and metal pipes beneath our feet that we rely on to carry our stormwater are disintegrating and must be replaced for our city to remain as livable and as beautiful as it is. We've put off the decision on what to do for decades, and since fixing the stormwater problem has been mandated by the federal government, we have no choice but to act now. The Water Resources Protection Program ensures that the fees are fair, and will be directed immediately towards fixing the problem.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Contact City Council with your comments and attend the second reading of the ordinance on **February 4 at 7:00pm** City of Charlottesville's Council Chambers  
605 E. Main St., Charlottesville, VA  
Phone (434) 970-3333

For more information, visit the city's site here: [www.charlottesville.org/stormwater](http://www.charlottesville.org/stormwater).