

ARTICLE V. STORMWATER SERVICE CHARGES

Sec. 24-80. Purpose; Stormwater Service.

Stormwater services assist the city in meeting the regulatory obligations imposed by national pollutant discharge elimination system (NPDES) permits or other court orders or regulations promulgated from the act by reducing pollution and improving water quality within the city.

Stormwater services assist the city in protecting the public health, safety and welfare and the environment and providing stormwater services and regulation of the use thereof renders and/or results in both service and benefit to individual properties, property owners, business, citizens, and residents of the city and to all properties, property owners, businesses, citizens, and residents of the city concurrently and for the environment.

The area of impervious surface on each property is the most important factor influencing the cost of providing stormwater services by the city or to be provided by the city in the future, and the area of impervious surfaces on each property is therefore the most appropriate parameter for calculating a periodic stormwater service charge.

The City of Portland presently owns and operates storm sewers, combined sewers, and the stormwater drainage system, which have been developed over many years. The future usefulness of those existing services owned and operated by the city, and of additions and improvements thereto, rests on the ability of the city to effectively manage, protect, control, regulate, use, and enhance stormwater services in the city with the management of other water resources in the city. In order to do so, the city must have adequate and stable funding for its stormwater service operating needs and capital program.

Stormwater services are needed throughout the city because many of those areas are developed. While specific service and facility demands may differ from area to area at any given point in time, a stormwater service area encompassing all lands and water bodies within the city is consistent with the present and future needs of the community.

The provision of stormwater services in the city promotes an essential regulatory purpose by influencing where stormwater runoff flows and how it is managed, thereby reducing flooding, erosion and water pollution caused by stormwater runoff.

By mitigating the impact of stormwater runoff from developed properties, stormwater services provided by the city help minimize damage that would subject a parcel owner to civil liability.

The city council is responsible for the protection and preservation of the public health, safety, and welfare of the community, and the environment and finds that it is in the best interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the city and the community at large and the environment to provide stormwater services accounted for in the city budget as a separate enterprise fund dedicated solely to the provision of stormwater services and to institute funding methods associated therewith.

In order to fully recover the cost of providing stormwater services a stormwater service charge is the most fair and reasonable means of apportioning the cost among developed land throughout the city.

Sec. 24-81. Definitions.

Unless the context specifically provides otherwise, the meanings of terms used in this article shall be as follows:

Credit shall mean a conditional reduction in the amount of a stormwater service charge to developed land based on the provision and continuing presence of an effectively maintained and operational approved on-site stormwater system or facility or other service or activity that reduces the cost of providing service.

Developed land shall mean property altered from its natural state by construction or installation of more than 400 square feet of impervious surfaces as defined in this chapter.

Exemption shall mean not applying to, or removing the application of the stormwater service charge from, a property.

No permanent exemption shall be granted based on taxable or non-taxable status or economic status of the property owner.

Impervious surfaces are those areas that prevent or impede the infiltration of stormwater into the soil as it entered in natural conditions prior to development. Impervious surfaces include, but are not limited to, rooftops, sidewalks, walkways, patio areas, driveways, parking lots, storage areas, compacted gravel surfaces, awnings and other fabric or plastic coverings, and other surfaces that prevent or impede the natural infiltration of stormwater runoff which existed prior to development.

Undeveloped land shall mean land in its unaltered natural state or which has been modified to such minimal degree as to have a hydrologic response comparable to land in an unaltered natural state shall be deemed undeveloped. Undeveloped land shall have less than or equal to 400 square feet of impervious surfaces as defined in this chapter consisting of limited pavement, asphalt, or compacted dirt or gravel surfaces or structures which create an impervious surface that would prevent infiltration of stormwater or cause stormwater to collect, concentrate, or flow in a manner materially different than that which would occur naturally.

Sec. 24-82. Authority and Establishment of the Stormwater Fund.

(a) Under the authority of the Maine Constitution, Article VIII, and Title 30-A M.R.S.~~A.~~ § 3001, the city hereby establishes the stormwater service charge to fund stormwater services within the city. Such stormwater charges shall be maintained and accounted for separately in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles as determined by the city's finance director.

(b) Charges made under this article shall be used for the following purposes:

To defray the current expenses of stormwater services and a portion of the current expenses of the combined sewer system attributable to providing stormwater service;

To pay the interest and repay the principal on any

outstanding or future indebtedness of the city for construction of the storm drainage system and a portion of the combined sewer systems heretofore or hereafter constructed within the city similarly attributable to providing stormwater service;

To reimburse the city for the cost of computation, billing, and enforcement of such charges.

(c) The city manager will designate appropriate ~~public works authority~~Department of Public Services management and other personnel, including support as needed of personnel from other city departments such as finance, to provide stormwater services and to collect and account for the stormwater service charge imposed hereunder.

Sec. 24-83. Exemptions.

Exemptions from stormwater charges established under this article are not allowed, except as provided in this section. Exemptions shall be allowed for:

(a) All roads owned or maintained by the State of Maine, including the Maine Turnpike; and all accepted City roads and all roads maintained by the City; all private roads and ways serving more than two dwelling or structures, but not driveways; all public pedestrian walkways. However, parking lots, buildings, or other developed land within the right-of-ways shall not be exempt from storm water service charges;

(b) Undeveloped land;

(c) Railroad rights-of-way (tracks). However, railroad stations, maintenance buildings, or other developed land used for railroad purposes shall not be exempt from storm water service charges;

(d) Airport runways, taxiways and aprons upon which public and private aircraft operate;

(e) With the exception of Peaks Island all islands are exempted from the fee due to the limited services provided to the islands.

Sec. 24-84. Stormwater Service Charge.

(a) There is levied upon all developed land stormwater service charges for the cost of providing stormwater services. All developed land shall be charged \$6.00 per month per one thousand two hundred (1,200) square feet of impervious surface area, rounded to the nearest one thousand two hundred (1,200) square feet of impervious surface area.

(b) The basis for this charge is the measured amount of impervious surface area on the developed land as determined by the city. This measured area may be updated from time to time at the discretion of the ~~public works authority~~Department of Public Services upon evidence of impervious surface area change or the availability of updated or more accurate information.

(c) Fees collected hereunder to fund stormwater services can also be supplemented by other revenues available to the city, including but not limited to state, federal, general and special city funds, and private grants and loans.

Sec. 24-85. Credits

(a) Owners of developed land may apply for and receive a voluntary stormwater service charge credit for approved stormwater credit systems or facilities. The director of the ~~public works authority~~Department of Public Services or his/her designee shall determine such approved stormwater systems and facilities and stormwater service charge credit amounts based on the technical requirements, design and performance standards contained in the city's stormwater credits manual, to be adopted by the director of the ~~public works authority~~Department of Public Services pursuant to this ordinance, as it may be updated or amended from time to time.

(b) It is the responsibility of the record owner to initiate and apply in writing for stormwater service charge credits, and to provide all necessary information with a letter requesting the credit. The department of public services is not responsible for initiating a credit application, performing engineering calculations, or otherwise assisting in the preparation of a request for a credit. Credits will only be applied if the requirements outlined in the city's stormwater

credit manual are met including but not limited to completion of on-going maintenance, guaranteed right-of-entry for inspection, and submittal of annual self-certification reports or other required reports as required per ordinance and rule.

(c) Credits will be applied to the stormwater service charge while stormwater facilities or management practices are functioning as approved by the city. If the approved practice or facility is not functioning as approved, or is terminated, the credit will be cancelled. Once the credit has been cancelled, the customer must reapply for the credit.

(d) The department of public services will only review complete credit requests. If approved, the credit will be applied to the first bill issued 30 days after the approval. Credits may be made retroactive, one calendar year from the date of the first billing period of the charge.

(e) A credit of up to one hundred percent (100%) of the stormwater service charge may be approved.

Sec. 24-86. Billing.

(a) All charges under this article shall be sent to the record owner of a given property. The record owner may request, subject to the approval of the director of the ~~public works authority~~Department of Public Services, that the full charge be billed to the owner's designated tenant. The director may direct billing to the tenant of the property if the tenant is currently billed for water and sanitary sewer charges. The record owner shall be liable for payment even if the stormwater service charges are billed to the tenant of the property.

(b) Condominiums shall have the full charge for the developed land equally divided among all condominium owners of developed land. The condominium owners may appeal the director in writing to adjust the fraction of the charge applied to each condominium owner. The director will require signed confirmation from each condominium owner of developed land that they approve the adjustment to the fraction of the charge applied.

(c) Bills shall contain an amount for stormwater service user charges, and if delinquent, as provided in section 1-16 of this Code, shall include charges for interest to be computed in

the same manner as provided for real estate taxes and such delinquency may be collected by a civil action against the owner and/or may result in a lien being placed on the property as specified in section 24-88.

Sec. 24-87. Right of appeal and adjustments.

(a) A record owner may request review of the amount of the stormwater service charge imposed on such owner by written request to the director of the ~~public works authority~~Department of Public Services within 30 calendar days of the date the customer receives the service charge bill.

(b) The owner must demonstrate the impervious surface area is less than the amount used in calculating the developed land's stormwater service charge. Factors that will be considered include the impervious surface area of the property.

(c) An owner must comply with all rules and procedures adopted by the director when submitting a request for appeal or adjustment of the stormwater service charge and must provide all necessary information to make a determination.

(d) The director of the ~~public works authority~~Department of Public Services or his/her designee shall review the service fee and issue a determination, in writing, within 30 calendar days.

(e) With a finding that the impervious surface area is less than the amount used to calculate the developed land's stormwater service charge, the sole remedy to the owner shall be re-calculation of the stormwater service charge based on the corrected impervious surface area. A finding that the impervious surface area is not less than the amount used to calculate the developed land's stormwater service charge shall be conclusive with respect to that property and shall remain effective unless the owner changes the impervious surface area of the property.

(f) An owner may appeal the director of the ~~public works authority~~Department of Public Services decision to the city manager or his/her designee within 30 days of the date of the decision. An owner may appeal a decision of the manager to a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to the applicable Rules

of Civil Procedure.

Sec. 24-88. Right of enforcement and violations.

(a) The director of the ~~public works authority~~Department of Public Services or his/her designee is the enforcement authority who shall administer, implement, and enforce the provisions of this article.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any person to violate or to fail to comply with the requirements of this article or its fees. Whenever the enforcement authority believes that a person has violated this article, the enforcement authority may enforce this article in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. § 4452.

(c) Any person who violates this article may also be subject to fines, penalties and orders for injunctive relief and shall be responsible for the city's attorneys' fees and costs, all in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. § 4452. Each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate violation. Moreover, any person who violates this article also shall be responsible for any and all fines, penalties, damages and costs, including, but not limited to attorneys' fees and costs, incurred by the city for violation of federal and state environmental laws and regulations caused by or related to that person's violation of this section; this responsibility shall be in addition to any penalties, fines or injunctive relief imposed under this section.

(d) Without limiting the foregoing, failure to comply with this article may also be enforced as a nuisance and be subject to an abatement action, in addition to, or alternatively to, the enforcement actions described above.

(e) Consent agreement. The enforcement authority, with the approval of corporation counsel and the city manager, may enter into a written consent agreement with the violator to address timely abatement of the violation(s) of this article for the purposes of eliminating violations of this article and of recovering fines, costs and fees without court action.

(f) Delinquent fees. Any owner that fails to pay the stormwater service charge when due shall be responsible for the amount of the unpaid service charge, interest on the unpaid

amount, and attorneys' fees and other costs of collection. To the extent permitted by law, the fee, when overdue, including interest and penalties, is a lien on real property and may be collected in the same manner as a sewer user lien pursuant to state law. Delinquent amounts may also be collected by a civil action against the person.

Sec. 24-89. Limitation of liability.

This article shall not be interpreted to mean that property subject to the charges established herein will always (or at any time) be free from stormwater flooding or flood damage, or that stormwater drainage systems capable of handling all storm events can be cost-effectively constructed, operated or maintained. Therefore the following limitations on liability, in addition to any other limitations or immunities existing in law, are set forth:

(1) It is the express intent of the city that this article will protect the public health, safety and welfare of properties and persons in general. However, this ordinance does not create any special duty or relationship with any individual person or specific property either within or outside the service area.

(2) The city shall not be held liable for flood damage or assessing and removing pollution sources, and reserves the right to assert all available immunities and defenses in any action seeking monetary compensation from the city, or its officers, agents or employees for alleged damages arising from alleged failure or breach of duties or relationship as may now exist or hereafter be created.

(3) The issuance of any permit, plan approval or inspection shall not constitute a warranty, express or implied, nor shall it afford the basis for any action seeking the imposition of monetary damages against the city or its officers, employees or agents.

(4) Operation of stormwater drainage systems located on private property or public property not owned by the city and for which there has been no public dedication of such systems and facilities for operation, maintenance and/or improvements of the system, shall be the legal

responsibility of the property owner, except as may be affected by the laws of the State of Maine and the United States of America.

Sec. 24-90. Severability.

Each section of this ordinance is severable from all other sections. If any part of this ordinance is deemed invalid by a court or competent jurisdiction, remaining portions of the ordinance shall not be affected and shall continue in full force. Whenever this ordinance conflicts with any other ordinance of the city, State of Maine, or federal government, the stricter standard shall apply, except as limited by state or federal law.

Sec. 24-91. Reserved.

Sec. 24-92. Reserved.

Sec. 24-93. Reserved.

Sec. 24-94. Reserved.

2. *That Chapter 24 of the Portland City Code as hereby amended shall have an Effective Date of January 1, 2016.*