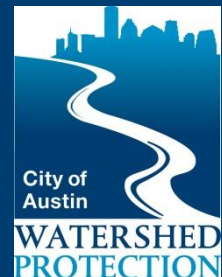


Proposed Drainage Charge Structure and Billing Methodology for City of Austin

April 15, 2015



Storm Water Drainage Charge

- In the “**Drainage Service**” section of each **City of Austin** utility bill.
- **Adjacent**
this logo:
- **Not to be confused with either**
“Water Service” or “Wastewater Service”



**WATERSHED
PROTECTION**

Recent Court Challenge

- **Poole v. City of Austin, July 2014 – District Judge ruled:**
 - The drainage charge is a flat rate for all dwelling units, and is **not based on** the cost of service to **the benefited property**.
 - Rates charged to multi-family residential users are **not equitable and reasonable**.
 - Basis for the fee charged to multi-family users is **not “directly related to drainage.”**
 - City appeal was filed October 2, 2014.
 - The appeal is currently stayed pending the proposed changes to how the drainage utility fee is charged.

Drainage Charge Revision

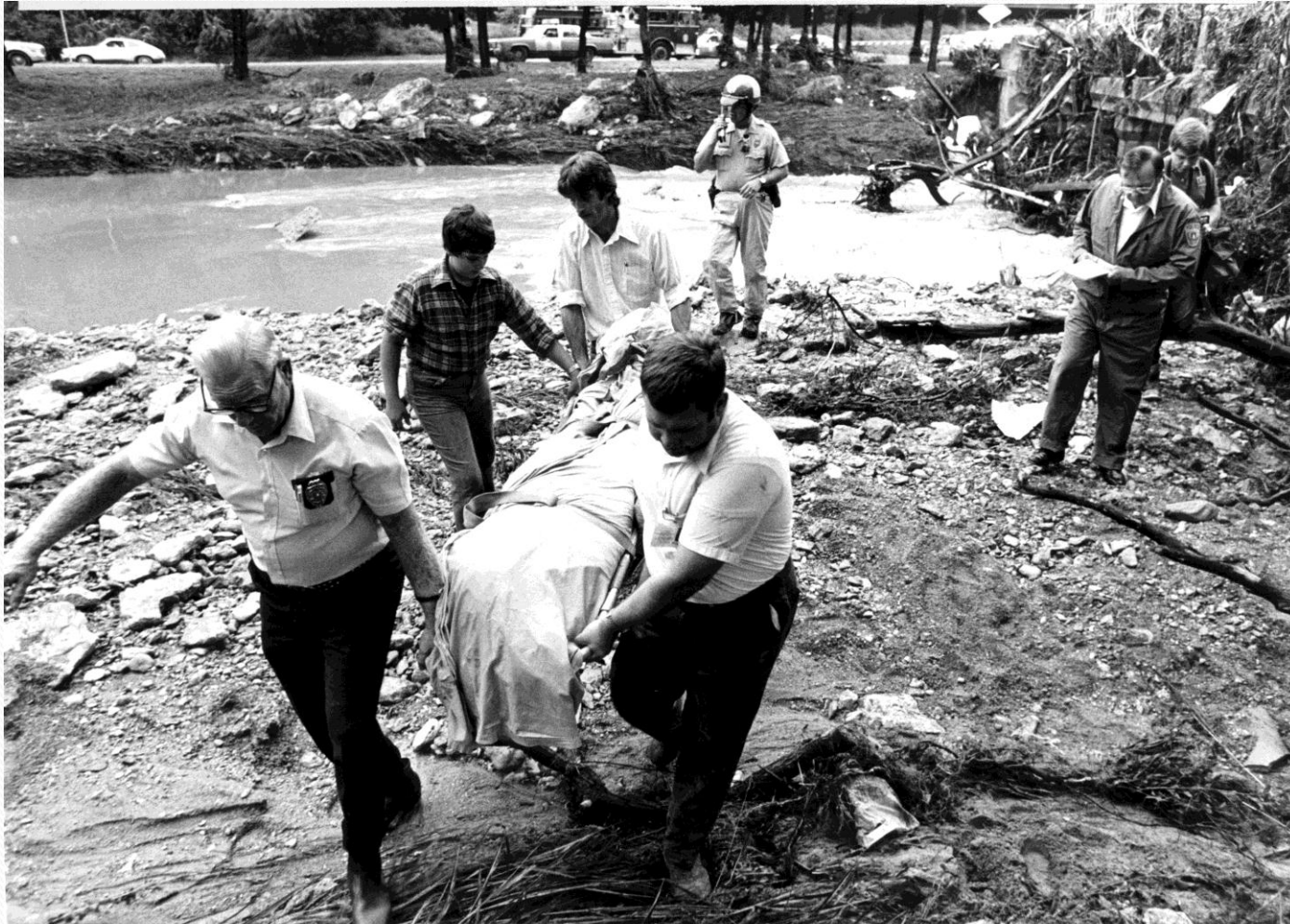
- New rate structure is to be in effect by the beginning of the next fiscal year: October 1, 2015
- The ordinance that sets the new rate structure is scheduled for public hearing May 21, 2015

1981 Memorial Day Flood



PICA 29471, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

1981 Memorial Day Flood



PICA 29466, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

Municipal Drainage Utility

Mission: protect lives, property and the environment by reducing impacts of flooding, erosion & water pollution

- Flood early warning system
- Storm water flood control
- Detention & treatment
- Federal Flood Insurance Program
- Land Purchases



Municipal Drainage Utility

Mission: protect lives, property and the environment by reducing impacts of flooding, erosion & water pollution

Planning,
Designing,
Constructing,
Maintaining,
Operating &
Managing the
City's drainage
systems in the
public domain.
More than 1,000
miles of storm
drainage system.



Municipal Drainage Utility

Mission: protect lives, property and the environment by reducing impacts of flooding, erosion & water pollution

- 29,000+ inlets
- 705 creek crossings
- 393 miles of creek segment erosion control
- 868 ponds
- 245 dams & flood walls



Current Drainage Charge

- Uses the Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) as a standard measure of impact
- Single Family and most Multi-family (MF) residential units pay the same charge of \$9.80 per month (for one ERU)
- High-rise MF (7 stories +) pay \$4.90/mo. (for one-half ERU)

Current Drainage Charge

- ERU fee (\$9.80) assumes 1,763 sq. ft. of impervious area – the average for all residential units in Austin
- This is high for Multi-family
- And low for Single Family

Current Drainage Charge

- Charge for non-residential development is based on amount of impervious area on the property

Impervious Area

Any surface that prevents the infiltration of rain water into the ground, including rooftops, driveways, parking areas, patios, concrete, and other surfaces that do not absorb rainfall

Drainage Charge Revision Goals:

Maintain Strong Consistency with State Law

(Equitable & Reasonable; directly related to drainage)

- Charge will apply to real property, not to units on the property.
- Charge will be calculated the same way for all property; no distinction between uses.
- Charge will be proportional to the impact of each specific property on the storm water drainage system.

Best Science for Calculating the Drainage Charge

Two critical hydrologic parameters determine the drainage charge:

- Amount of impervious area
- Percentage of impervious area

Enhanced Data & Capabilities

Aerial photography, planimetric maps, & Geographic Information System (GIS), now provide ability to:

- Measure impervious area, lot size, and percentage of impervious area for individual lots
- Tailor charge to specifics of each lot

Proposed Method of Calculation

Monthly charge =
monthly base rate x
sq. ft. of impervious area x
an adjustment factor for the
percentage impervious area

The Base Rate

- The annual base rate is calculated for each fiscal year
- Determined by the revenue requirements for the fiscal year
- Placeholder monthly base rate = \$0.005 per sq. ft. Impervious Area

The Adjustment Factor

The city-wide weighted average % impervious area = 52.9%

- If lot % impervious area = 52.9%, then the adjustment factor = 1.0 and effect is neutral
- If lot % impervious area > 52.9%, then the adjustment factor will increase the charge (as much as 76%)
- If lot % impervious area < 52.9%, then adjustment factor will decrease the charge (possibly more than 80%)

Example: Single Family

- Potential monthly fee varies by amount and percent of impervious area

Medium-sized Parcel Large Dwelling & Driveway

- Parcel Area = 8,240 sq. ft.
- Impervious Area (IA) = 2,970 sq. ft.
- Percent IA = 36%
- Current Monthly Charge = **\$9.80**
- Potential Impact:

Approx. Comparison: **\$10.80**



Varying % Impervious Area

<u>Lot IA</u>	<u>Lot Size</u>	<u>% IA</u>	<u>Drainage Charge</u>
3,000	3,000	100%	\$26.40
3,000	5,671	52.9%	\$15.00
3,000	6,667	45%	\$13.08
3,000	8,571	35%	\$10.66
3,000	12,000	25%	\$ 8.23
3,000	half acre	13.8%	\$ 5.51
3,000	one acre	6.9%	\$ 3.85

Example: Multi-Family

Medium Density

<7 story Apartment Bldgs

- Parcel Area = 356,953 sq. ft.
- Impervious Area (IA) = 171,340 sq. ft.
- Percent IA = 48%
- Dwelling Units = 197
- IA/unit = 868 sq. ft.
- Current Mo. Charge = \$9.80 per unit
- Total Property = **\$1,931**
- Potential Impact:
Approx. Comparison: **\$789**
(\$4.00/unit)



Tenant Occupied Properties

Both Commercial & MF Residential

- Most tenants will no longer see the drainage charge in their utility bills
- The drainage charge is calculated for the property, not for the units
- The owner, owner's agent or home owners association will receive the bill

Proposed Billing Approach for Residential Properties

- Single Family (majority of bills) – same billing method as existing, although charges will vary by specific site

Example: Commercial

Commercial “Big Box” Retail

- Parcel Area = 372,199 sq. ft. (~8.5 ac)
- Impervious Area (IA) = 346,150 sq. ft.
- Percent IA = 93%
- Current Monthly Charge = **\$1,916**
- Potential Impact:
Approximate Comparison: **\$2,851**



Example: Large Industrial Complex

Large Campus Complex

- Parcel Area = 7,817,510 sq. ft. (~180 ac)
- Impervious Area (IA) = 4,300,000 sq. ft.
- Percent IA = 55%
- Current Month Charge = **\$23,863**
- Potential Impact:

Approx. Comparison: **\$22,218**






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austintexas.gov
the official website of the City of Austin

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Watershed Protection Department

DRAINAGE CHARGE REVISION

Austin is revising its stormwater drainage charge to make it more reasonable and equitable. The charge is assessed on utility bills and pays for solutions to flooding, erosion and water pollution.

About the Revision

Currently the residential charge is a flat rate, and the commercial charge is based on the amount of impervious area. To ensure the new drainage charge is fair, it will:

- Be calculated the same way for all properties and eliminate the distinction between commercial, residential and high-rise residential properties.
- Be calculated for each property based on the amount and percentage of impervious area. Impervious area includes rooftops, patios, driveways, parking lots and other surfaces that do not absorb rainfall.
- Take into account the impact of each property on the City's stormwater drainage system. The drainage system includes more than 900 miles of creeks, channels, ditches, pipes, dams and stormwater ponds.

The new charge will be based on the amount and percentage of impervious area because both contribute to stormwater runoff and problems such as erosion, flooding and water pollution. To find out more, watch the video below.

[View a list of frequently asked questions.](#)

Video: Pervious vs. Impervious Cover

Pervious vs Impervious Cover

TOP CONTENT

- ★ [Grow Green](#)
- ★ [Floodplain Management and Regulations](#)
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- ★ [Watershed Ordinance History](#)
- ★ [Scoop the Poop](#)

CONTACT INFO

Phone: 512-974-6397

[Email](#)

Drainage Charge Revision



More Information

Estimator Tool

Drainage Charge Estimator

The Drainage Charge Estimator can provide a rough estimate of your future drainage charge. The actual proposed drainage charges for individual properties will be available when the base rate and the GIS data review are completed in late summer 2015. View our [frequently asked questions](#) for more information about how the charge will be calculated.

Enter the amount of impervious area in square feet.

(You can estimate by measuring buildings, driveways, garages, decks, walkways, etc. The City will use aerial photography and GIS as data sources. This information will be publicly available in late summer 2015.)

Enter the size of the property in square feet.

(You can estimate by measuring property boundaries or by getting information online from the [Travis Central Appraisal District](#), [Hays Central Appraisal District](#) or the [Williamson Central Appraisal District](#). The City will use the appraisal districts and GIS as data sources.)

Calculate

Reset

Percentage of impervious area: 25%

Adjustment Factor: 0.54893

Estimated Monthly Charge: **\$8.23**

Disclaimer: The monthly charge generated by this calculator is an estimate. The actual proposed charge may differ significantly. In general, the more accurate the information you entered into the calculator, the more accurate the estimate is likely to be.

Proposed Mapping Tool

DRAINAGE CHARGE REVISION MAP



500 Battle Bend Blvd

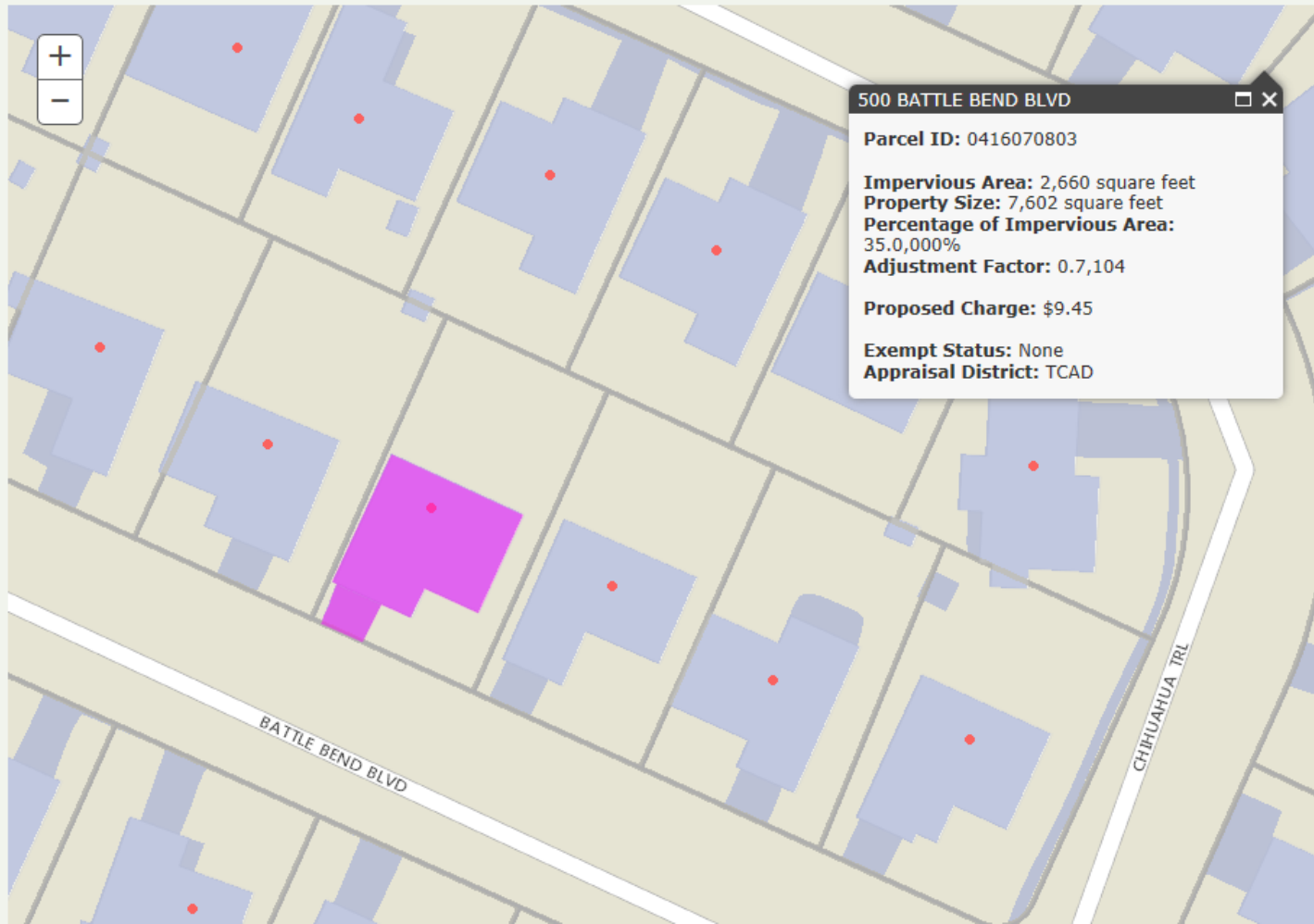


To Use:

- Enter an address or select a property by clicking on the map.
- The impervious area on that property will be highlighted (derived from aerial photography flown in 2012).
- A window will pop up to display the impervious and total areas of this property.

Disclaimer:

- This webmap is a work in progress and specific property information will not be available until the summer of 2015. For now, a sample area is provided for illustration purposes only. This webmap should be used as an example of how the site will work once it is fully populated with data.



Reduced Charges

- Retain existing charge reduction based on need (Customer Assistance Program) – Residential Properties

But...

- Eliminate the reduced charge (discount) for maintained ponds – Commercial Properties

Chapter 15-2 Code Revision Draft Timeline

April – May 2015

**Code
Adoption
Phase**

15-2 Code Amendment +
Emergency Rule
**Effective Date Oct.
2015**

June – Sept 2015

**Fee Adoption
Phase**

Fee Schedule as part
of FY 16 Budget
Approval
**Effective Date Oct
2015**

Oct 2015 – April 2016

**Rule
Adoption
Phase**

Administrative Rule
Revisions (Q1 FY
2016)

Challenges

- Getting data as accurate as possible
- Data compatibility: TCAD with City
- Interfacing with the City's billing system
- Maintenance of data & billing
- Process for adjustments/appeals
- Public awareness



Questions / Comments?