STORMWATER USER FEES FAQ’s

**What is the Stormwater User Fee?**

*Stormwater User Fees* are fees assessed to every City of Johnson City property within city limits for the purposes of maintaining and upgrading the city’s storm sewer network, as well paying for capital improvement projects and helping defray the costs of complying with State and Federal mandates.

**Who pays the Stormwater User fee?**

All developed properties are charged the fee. Properties paying the fee include, but are not limited to, residential properties, commercial and industrial properties, non-profit organizations, schools, colleges/universities, state and federal owned properties and parking lots.

**When did the Stormwater User Fee take effect?**

The Stormwater User Fee took effect on July 1st, 2007 at a rate of $1.50 per SFU per month. It has since increased to $2.25 as of July 1st 2008 and again to $3.00 as of July 1st 2009 with no further scheduled increases.

**Why is there a Stormwater User Fee instead of a tax?**

A property's value does not affect runoff, so property taxes are not the most equitable way to pay for stormwater services. For example, a high-rise building and a shopping mall may have similar value and pay similar property taxes. However, the shopping center produces more runoff because of the amount of parking and rooftops. The fee system ensures the shopping center pays a higher stormwater fee than the high rise.

Also, unlike a tax, the Stormwater User Fee can only be used to pay for stormwater projects and programs such as erosion control, sediment control, flooding areas, pollution control and public education. This includes repairing old pipes, maintaining the system and capital improvements.
What is a Single Family Unit (SFU)?
A SFU is the average square footage of the impervious surface area (measured in square feet) of all residential properties in the City. That amount is 3,315 square feet. The SFU was determined by performing detailed measurements of impervious surfaces contained on a sample of residential properties selected at random across all areas of the City. The resulting data was analyzed and the average impervious surface value for the data set determined the SFU value.

Are tax-exempt properties also exempt from the fee?
No, because it is a fee—not a tax. Taxes are based on the value of the property. The stormwater user fee is assessed based on the amount of impervious surface on the property (i.e. hard surfaces such as roofs, driveways and parking lots), which is directly related to the amount of runoff the property produces.

The runoff generated by these impervious surfaces contributes to pollution and flooding problems and, therefore, all property owners should pay their share of the costs.

How do I apply for a credit or adjustment?
Call for more information and for a copy of the City's Stormwater Management Utility Adjustment and Credit Manual.

Can I do any stormwater-related work on my single-family home property to receive a discount?
No. Only larger non-residential properties are eligible for credits on their monthly bills.

Will homes that are located in a subdivision that have a detention/retention pond be eligible for a credit?
No. Only property contained in the commons area of the subdivision could possibly receive a credit if they are currently a water customer (for pools, tennis courts, clubhouse). Please call our office for further information.