



SAINT CHARLES
MISSOURI

Frequently Asked Questions

Stormwater Management

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is water moving on the ground surface from rain or melting snow.

What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is water from rain or snowmelt that travels across land rather than seeping into the soil. This can occur when precipitation falls onto frozen or saturated ground or impervious surfaces such as paved roads, driveways, parking lots or rooftops.

What is polluted stormwater runoff?

Precipitation that does not seep into the ground runs off to lower areas. As the water travels across driveways, streets, saturated lawns, parking lots and other impermeable surfaces, it picks up debris, chemicals and other pollutants like: oil, trash, silt, pet waste, pesticides and fertilizer. Since stormwater is not cleaned, this water and all the pollutants it has picked up, are deposited into area creeks, streams, rivers and lakes.

Why is stormwater pollution a problem?

Some think stormwater runoff travels to a treatment plant before being released into our area creeks, rivers, ponds and lakes. What actually occurs in most urban areas, including the City of St. Charles, is the runoff discharges directly into these bodies of water without any treatment whatsoever. This results in any pollutants that stormwater run-off picks up, being deposited directly into our area creeks, streams, rivers, ponds and lakes. These are the same bodies of water we enjoy in nature, use for cleaning, drinking, recreation and irrigation of crops, gardens and lawns.

How does the City currently manage stormwater issues?

The City of St. Charles' stormwater system includes ditches, detention basins, just over 175 miles of stormwater pipes with over 5,200 curb inlets, 2,108 storm manholes, 1,210 storm outlets, 54 culverts, 11 bridges, and multiple codes meant to control the impact of development on stormwater runoff. This system is maintained by the City and designed to help control urban flooding events by directing stormwater runoff into detention basins, local creeks and streams. Open channels such as ditches and creeks are primarily left to function naturally, but urbanization has impacted the quality, capacity and stability of these natural waterways.

My neighborhood and property are not impacted by stormwater. Why should I be concerned?

Stormwater impacts all St. Charles residents. Pollution effects the waterways everyone enjoys for recreation and supplies drinking water. Injuries and loss of life can result from urban flooding and stormwater runoff. Flooding results in public and private funds being spent on emergency services,

clean-up and repairs. Erosion causes the loss of yards and can threaten residential structures. The negative financial impacts of these events affect all regional property owners for years through loss of land, increased insurance rates and lowered property values.

Why is the City placing this measure before voters?

Federal laws require the City to control our stormwater quality to keep water clean and prevent pollution. The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program was established under the Clean Water Act and Phase II of the program extends permit coverage to smaller (less than 100,000 pop.) communities and public entities that own or operate a separate stormwater system. The City of St. Charles is a Phase II municipality. By properly managing our stormwater systems and investing in new pollution prevention improvements, the City of St. Charles can minimize or avoid costly federal penalties.

How do I know these funds will be used to address stormwater issues?

Missouri law allows voters to consider enacting a sales tax to pay for parks and stormwater control projects. The Mayor and City Council approved a proposition in May which allows the voters to decide if a sales tax should be imposed to pay for these projects. The sales tax would be collected for a limited 15 year period and is expressly stated to be used only for the parks and stormwater control projects. The City and Public Works have identified projects which include flood reduction, new storm sewers, regional detention basins, creek bank stabilization and stormwater quality improvements where these funds would be allocated.