



Stormwater System Development Charges (SDCs)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Stormwater System Development Charge (SDC)?

A Stormwater SDC is a one-time fee assessed when a property adds new impervious surfaces (like buildings, driveways, or pavement). The fee helps pay for systemwide stormwater infrastructure needed to manage growth.

Why is Tacoma introducing stormwater SDCs?

Tacoma expects increased population and housing density under Home in Tacoma. New development increases stormwater system demand. SDCs provide a dedicated funding **source** for capital projects, so the costs of growth are paid by new development rather than all stormwater customers.

Who pays the SDC?

- Developers or property owners are responsible for paying the SDC at the time of permit issuance for projects that increase impervious surface.
- Existing stormwater customers do not pay SDCs unless they trigger a new connection or expansion.

How is the SDC calculated?

- Based on net new impervious surface area added to a property.
- Rate: \$0.53 per square foot (effective July 1, 2026).
- Revenue goes toward systemwide stormwater capacity projects or related debt service.

When does the new SDC take effect?

- July 1, 2026.

What about the Payment In-Lieu-of Construction program?

- The SDC program works alongside the In-Lieu program.
- In-Lieu fees pay for capacity in specific regional facilities.
- SDCs fund systemwide capacity, so some projects may pay both charges.

Are SDCs optional?

- SDCs are mandatory for projects adding impervious surface or expanding stormwater service.
- Payment plans are available for large projects (one acre or more) to spread the cost over up to 10 years.

Who benefits from the SDC program?



Environmental Services

- The entire community benefits from a stormwater system that can handle growth.
- Existing customers are protected from rate increases since new development covers the cost of additional capacity.

Can SDC costs be financed?

- Projects under one acre pay in full at assessment.
- Projects one acre or larger may pay in annual installments with interest.
- Unpaid balances become a lien on the property until fully paid.

How does Tacoma's SDC compare regionally?

- Many Puget Sound cities already assess stormwater or wastewater SDCs (e.g., Puyallup, Sumner, Federal Way, Pierce County, Everett, Bellingham).
- Tacoma's rates are generally lower than other jurisdictions.

How will revenue be used?

- Only for stormwater capital projects or debt service that expand system capacity.
- Revenue cannot be used for operations or maintenance.