

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JENNIFER BURKE, DIRECTOR, SANTA ROSA WATER
SUBJECT: PLACEMENT OF ANNUAL STORM WATER ENTERPRISE
CHARGES ON THE SONOMA COUNTY PROPERTY TAX ROLL

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

The Board of Public Utilities and Santa Rosa Water recommend that the Council, by resolution and following a public hearing, adopt by a two-thirds vote the Storm Water Enterprise Charge Report and approve placement of the Storm Water Enterprise charges on the Sonoma County Property Tax Roll for collection by the Sonoma County Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector. Parcels with charges below the County's \$10 minimum or with known incorrect owner contact information would be excluded from the tax roll. This item has no impact on the current fiscal year budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this resolution is to adopt the Storm Water Enterprise Charge Report and approve placement of the Storm Water Enterprise charges on the Sonoma County Property Tax Roll, to be collected by the Sonoma County Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector at the same time and in the same manner as Sonoma County property taxes are collected. The annual charge for the Storm Water Enterprise for fiscal year 2026-27 was set at \$43.52 per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) by City Council Resolution No. RES-2026-078 adopted by the Santa Rosa City Council on June 16, 2026. This action only considers the manner in which the annual charges will be collected and not the amount of the ERU charge.

GOAL

This item relates to Council Strategic Priority #1 – Achieve and Maintain Fiscal Sustainability and Budgeting Excellence by providing an efficient and cost-effective method for collecting established Storm Water Enterprise charges, and Strategic Priority #2 – Invest in the Development and Maintenance of the City's Infrastructure by supporting the operation and maintenance of the City's storm water system.

BACKGROUND/PRIOR COUNCIL REVIEW

The City of Santa Rosa is required under the federal Clean Water Act to obtain and comply with a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit and

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Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (Storm Water Permit). To comply with permit requirements and to control and reduce flooding, property damage, erosion, and storm water quality degradation in the City, the Council, in 1996, added Title 16 to the City Code, which created a Storm Water Enterprise and Utility ("Storm Water Enterprise") as an agency of the City. Under Title 16, the City Council is authorized to prescribe and collect charges (special assessments) for the services and facilities of the Enterprise. The Council's intention to collect the Storm Water Enterprise charges on the Sonoma County Property Tax Roll was stated in Resolution 22880, adopted in 1996, which levied the annual charges.

The City Council has passed resolutions adopting the Storm Water Enterprise Charge Report and approving placement of the established charges in the Report on the Sonoma County Property Tax Roll for collection each year since they were established in September 1996.

ANALYSIS

The City's Storm Water Enterprise utilizes procedures that require an annual noticed public hearing for placing the annual charges on the Sonoma County Property Tax Roll. A notice of the public hearing to be held August 18, 2026, was published on July 31, 2026, and August 7, 2026. The Storm Water Enterprise Charge Report (Report) showing the amount of the Storm Water and Drainage charges on each parcel of property within the City limits for fiscal year 2026-27 was prepared and filed with the City Clerk.

The annual Storm Water Enterprise charge for Fiscal Year 2026-27 was set at \$43.52 per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) by City Council Resolution No. RES-2026-078, adopted on June 16, 2026. Applicable credits are calculated in accordance with the established program requirements. Consistent with the formula established by Resolution No. 22880 in 1996, the annual ERU charge reflects the 2.49% change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the San Francisco–Oakland–San Jose area (CPI-U) during the applicable 12-month period ending in August.

The purpose of this public hearing is to adopt the Storm Water Enterprise Charge Report and approve placing the established charges in the Report on the Sonoma County Property Tax Roll for collection. The charges in the Report are based on the ERU calculated amount previously approved by the Council in June of this year. Property owners may protest the placement of the Storm Water Enterprise charges on the Sonoma County Property Tax Roll by either speaking at the public hearing or submitting a written protest. Letters received in protest of placing charges on the tax roll will be provided to the City Council at the Council meeting.

If the Council finds that a majority of the affected parcel owners have protested, the Report shall not be adopted, and the charges shall be collected separately from the tax roll.

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Pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 5473, an entity may elect to collect charges on the property tax roll by adopting an ordinance or resolution approved by a two-thirds vote of its legislative body. Accordingly, approval by a two-thirds vote of the City Council is required.

To simplify the payment process for property owners and to reduce collection expenses, the City proposes to collect the charges on the Sonoma County Property Tax Roll. The charges have been collected annually on the tax roll since they were established in September 1996.

Parcels with charges below the County's \$10 billing minimum or with known incorrect owner contact information would not be separately billed by the City because the administrative cost of separate billing would exceed the anticipated revenue. Charges not collected from these parcels would not affect the charges imposed on other parcels.

FISCAL IMPACT

Storm Water is an Enterprise Fund, and approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on it or the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, the recommended action is not a "project" subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because adopting the Storm Water Enterprise Charge Report and placing previously established charges on the Sonoma County Property Tax Roll are administrative and fiscal activities that do not have the potential to result in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. In the alternative, the recommended action is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the recommended action may have a significant effect on the environment.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Council approves this item annually. The Board of Public Utilities has reviewed and recommended approval each year since the City Charter was amended to place the Storm Water system within the Board's purview.

NOTIFICATION

Notices of the public hearing were published in the Press Democrat on July 31, 2026, and August 7, 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – [Storm Water Enterprise Charge Report](#)
- Resolution

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PRESENTER

Nick Lynn, Research and Program Coordinator