



Information Item

Date: September 17, 2010

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Dean Kubani, Director of the Office of Sustainability and the Environment
Subject: Additional Information about the Urban Runoff Pollution Control Ordinance

Introduction

This Information Item is to provide the City Council with general Best Management Practice (BMP) construction cost information in response to a Council concern about financial burdens being imposed upon small property owners who have to comply with the Urban Runoff Pollution Control Ordinance (Ordinance) by constructing a post-construction runoff mitigation structure.

Background

At the [July 13, 2010](#) Council meeting, during a discussion of the first reading for revisions to SMMC 7.10 Urban Runoff Pollution Control Ordinance, concern was expressed that small property owners who have to comply with the Ordinance may experience a financial burden, specifically proportionally higher costs to comply with the 2,500 ft² threshold for New and Re-Development projects. The Ordinance requires any construction project that creates, adds, or replaces at least 2,500 ft² of impervious surfaces to install a post-construction mitigation structure to mitigate a certain volume of runoff from these impermeable surfaces.

Discussion

The 2,500 ft² threshold in the Ordinance is intended to primarily address commercial and other non-residential projects which deal only with impermeable areas (such as parking lot projects). For the small residential property owner, this threshold will not

likely ever be triggered. The 2,500 ft² threshold applies only to a property's impermeable area, not the entire parcel area. The cost of a post-construction mitigation structure necessary to comply with the Ordinance is proportional to the parcel's impermeable surface area. A larger impermeable area corresponds to a higher runoff mitigation volume and will result in higher construction costs. The required mitigation is generally unrelated to parcel size.

The average cost of a post-construction, low impact development BMP for a single-family parcel is approximately \$6,000, or about 1% of the total project cost, based upon ten years of project cost data on the most common residential BMP, a sub-surface infiltration pit. For smaller projects, the cost will be proportionally less because the required mitigation volume will be less.

Less expensive alternatives than the example above, such as creation of depressed surface landscaped areas and rainwater harvesting and re-use, are frequently used to meet the Ordinance requirements. The average cost to install depressed surface landscaped areas is \$2,700. The rainwater harvesting and re-use option works well on small properties with limited space for infiltration, which can impact foundations. And the captured water can be used for low-flow, drip irrigation. The average installation cost for this BMP strategy is \$2,100, including both rain barrels and larger cisterns.

Staff does not anticipate that the 2,500 ft² threshold will impose a disproportionate financial burden on owners of small residential properties because this threshold will not likely ever be triggered on a small residential parcel and because low cost compliance options are readily available in the unlikely event that it is. With the revisions in the Ordinance, staff does not expect higher costs to comply with the Ordinance. If anything, a lower cost impact can result due to the lower in lieu fee (\$7.61 per gallon) in the Ordinance versus the past ordinance (\$18 per gallon).

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