

# CLEAN WATER equals CLEAN GROWTH

## Fact Sheet

### Portland is investing from the ground up to remain one of America's most livable cities.

In order to keep our city livable, while supporting economic growth, Portland is launching a Clean Water, Clean Growth Plan to improve its sewer and stormwater infrastructure. The Plan will:

- Protect Casco Bay and other water bodies
- Make funding system improvements equitable
- Improve sewer and stormwater infrastructure
- Promote economic growth

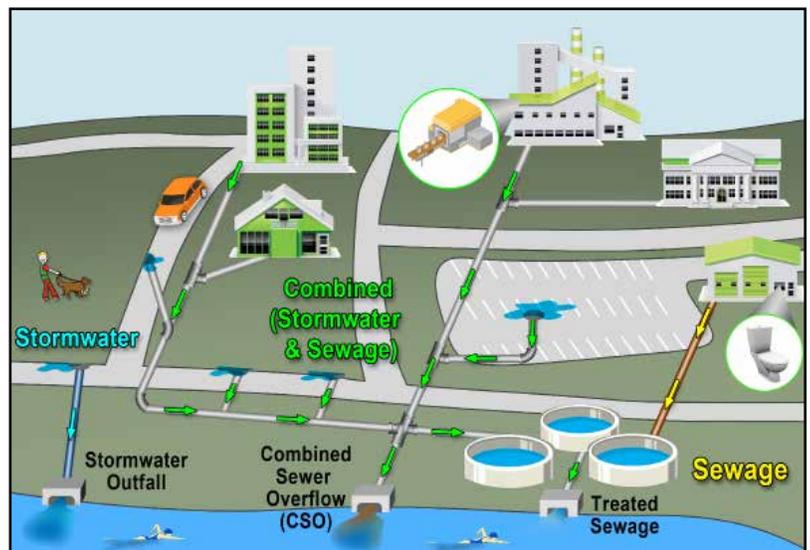
You may be asked about the challenges Portland is facing, the Plan to address them and the proposed means to pay for them. This Fact Sheet provides information to help answer these questions.

#### What challenges are we facing?

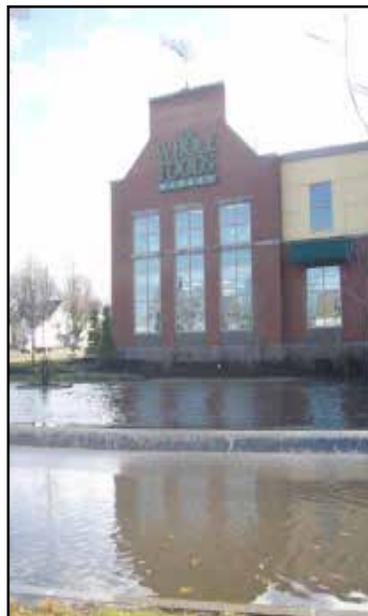
Much of Portland's sewer and stormwater infrastructure is deteriorating and in need of repair or replacement. The systems are designed to handle three kinds of pollution - stormwater runoff, sewage, and a combination of the two. Portions of the systems convey sewage and stormwater via a single pipe; when it rains, the combined system is overwhelmed and pollutants dump directly into local water bodies. Even in dry weather, the deteriorating infrastructure releases pollutants. Without reliable infrastructure, the City cannot promote development.

#### Do we have to do this?

Portland is required by federal law to reduce pollution to Casco Bay and other water bodies. Pollution reaches water bodies through deteriorating sewer pipes, combined sewer and stormwater pipes, and direct stormwater runoff. Improving the City's infrastructure to reduce these pollution sources is required.



Portland's wastewater infrastructure contains sanitary sewer, stormwater and combined systems.



Rain events, such as this one in December 2009, overwhelm the city's sewer and stormwater systems. This, in turn, can result in compromised public safety due to impassable roads, damage caused to streets and businesses, and pollutants being dumped into Casco Bay and other water bodies.

## What improvements will be made?



*The Back Cove Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) conduit will create a storage system for sewer and stormwater runoff during rain events. This and other types of projects will reduce pollution discharges to local water bodies. (Photo courtesy of Contech® Engineered Solutions.)*

## What impact will improvements have?

*The City's Combined Sewer Overflow abatement projects reduce sickness causing bacteria and other harmful pollutants from entering local water bodies.*



*Before CSO Improvements*



*After CSO Improvements*

## How will these changes impact Portland?

A new sewer and stormwater billing structure that is more equitable is proposed. The new structure will split the current wastewater charge into two parts – a wastewater charge to pay for the sewage system based on water use, and a separate charge to pay for stormwater management based on the amount of impervious surface (roof, parking, etc) you own. The new billing structure will apply to all property owners, including businesses, non-profits, residents and City government.

## Will my wastewater bill increase?

Since wastewater bills will be split into a stormwater charge and a wastewater charge, many people will see their wastewater bill decrease. The new stormwater charge will be approximately equal to the decrease in the wastewater bill for most single-family residents. Non-residential and multi-family property owners may see their total bill increase, decrease or stay about the same depending on the amount of impervious surface on their property and their current wastewater charge.

## What is the proposed timeline for implementing the new billing structure?

The plan is for the sewer and stormwater charge bill to come out in early 2016.

## How can we be sure the new stormwater service fee will be used appropriately?

Stormwater fee revenue will be placed in a dedicated Enterprise Fund which can only be used for stormwater management costs.

## How can I reduce my stormwater service fee?

Everyone will have an opportunity to lower their stormwater service fee by reducing runoff from their property. People can always use less water to reduce their wastewater bill. Stormwater credits are also available.

## Where can I get more information?

Visit our website at:

[www.portlandmaine.gov/water-resources](http://www.portlandmaine.gov/water-resources)

or call 207-874-8462.

For more information, visit

[www.portlandmaine.gov/water-resources](http://www.portlandmaine.gov/water-resources)