ARLINGTON
VIRGINIA

Arlington County Stormwater Utility Fee Customer Handbook

April 2024

Version One

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INTRODUCTION

Arlington County has changed how its Stormwater Management Program is funded. From 2008 through 2023, the funding for the County's Stormwater Management Program came from a sanitary district tax based on a property's real estate assessment. Beginning in Calendar Year 2024, the County implemented a stormwater utility fee based on the amount of impervious area (IA) on a property. Impervious area includes hard surfaces like roofs and driveways that don't let rain runoff soak into the ground.

The County made this change, which creates a fairer funding model, amid planned investments in its stormwater system through the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), reflecting both the rise in severe flooding events as well as the increased requirements of the County's Municipal Separate Storm System (MS4) permit. The Stormwater Utility fee is a fairer way to allocate costs to property owners due to the weak correlation between a property's assessed value and its IA.

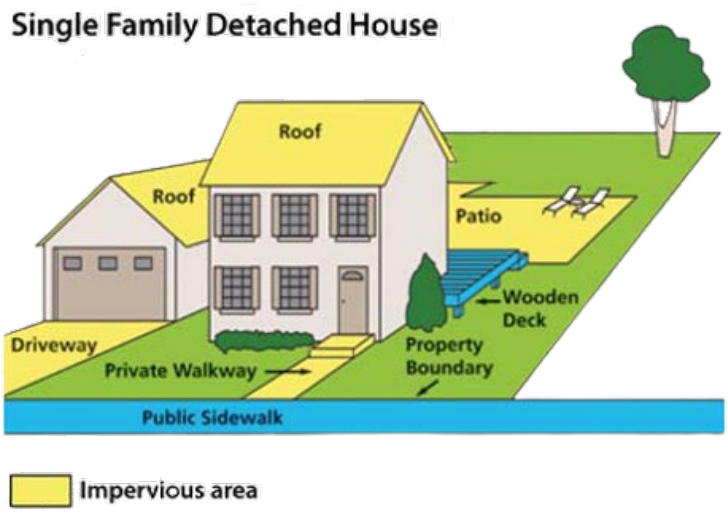
More history and the process for Arlington implementing the Stormwater Utility can be found here.

Stormwater Fee Calculation

Impervious Area (IA)

The Stormwater fee is based on a property's impervious area (IA). IA are hard surfaces that significantly prevent water from seeping into the soil. Those surfaces include roofs, buildings, streets, parking areas, driveways and any concrete, asphalt, or compacted gravel surface.

Geographic Information System (GIS)



Outlines of the IA of each property are developed from aerial imagery and geographic information system (GIS) data. A GIS technician manually reviews the imagery and outlines IA on each parcel as defined by County policies. County GIS staff perform regular maintenance of the IA based on annually updated aerial imagery, building permits and other sources.

Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU)

The Stormwater Utility billing unit is the Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). In Arlington, this is 2,400 square feet of IA, the median IA of Arlington County single family residential properties.

Calendar Year 2024's Adopted Rate = $258 per ERU

Customer Class

Each property is assigned to a customer class, then the fee is applied based on the rate structure, as demonstrated below. Fees for CY 2024 are listed below within the rate structure.

Rate Structure for Single-Family Residential (SF)

Single-Family Attached	Billing Unit	Fee
Includes Townhomes & Duplexes	0.60 ERU	$154.80

Single-Family Detached			
Tier	**Impervious Area Range**	**Billing Unit**	**Fee**
Tier 1	≤ 1600 SF	0.60 ERU	$154.80
Tier 2	> 1600 - ≤ 3600 SF	1.00 ERU	$258.00
Tier 3	> 3600 - ≤ 4800 SF	1.70 ERU	$438.60
Cap	> 4800 SF	Per ERU, like Non-Res (NR)	Varies

Rate Structure for Multi-Family (MF)

- Charged based on number of units per property

Multi-Family Residential	Billing Unit	Fee
Per Dwelling Unit	0.18 ERU	$46.44 per unit

Rate Structure for Non-Residential (NR)

- Charged based on impervious area (IA) of each property, per ERU

Single-Family Residential Attached (SFA) properties are those single-family residences which are attached to other structures, such as townhomes and side-by side duplexes.

Single-Family Residential Detached (SFD) properties contain a single-family home or a duplex with a single owner for both units.

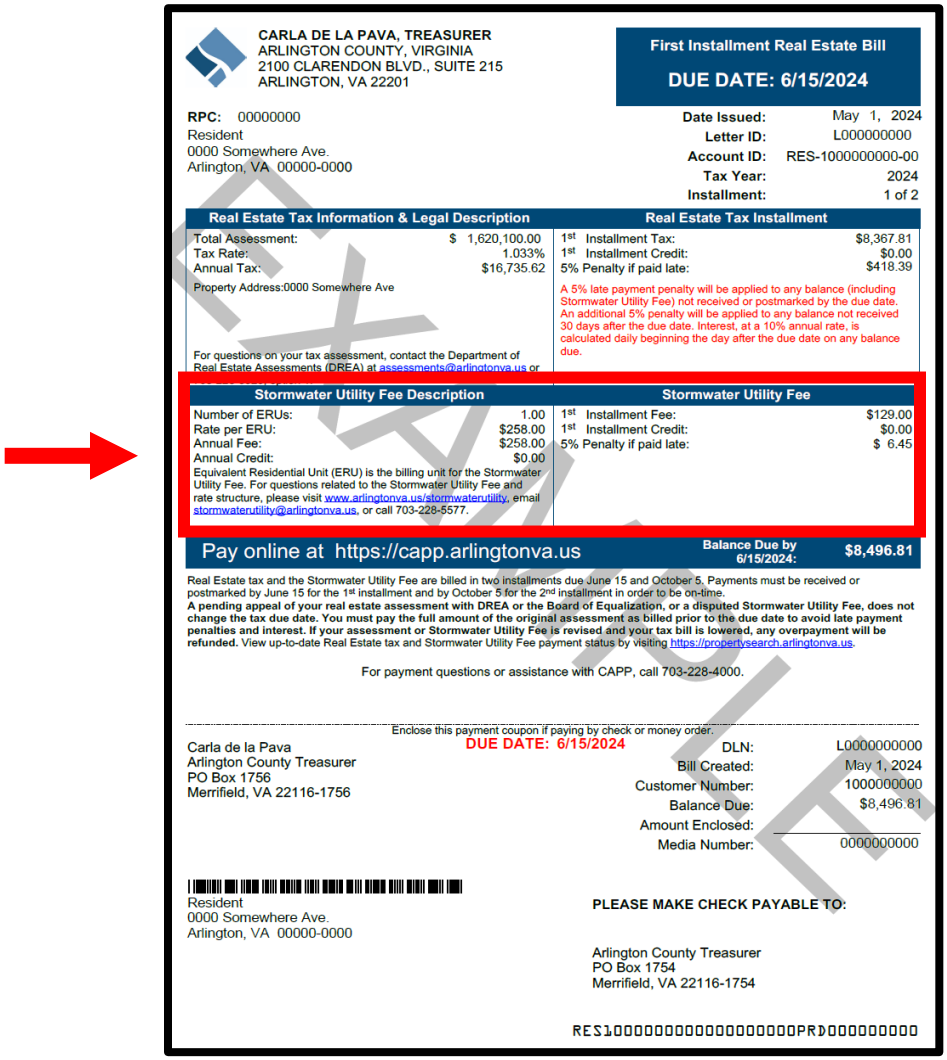
Multi-Family Residential (MF) are residential properties that are not SFA or SFD, such as condominiums and apartment buildings.

Non-Residential (NR) is any property not classified as SFA, SFD, or MF.

Understanding My Bill

The Stormwater Utility fee will be included on property owners' twice-annual real estate tax bill as a separate line item. The annual fee is charged in two equal installments on bills due June 15 and October 5 of each year. If property owners have a mortgage on their property, the real estate tax bill will continue to be sent to their mortgage company, which will pay the utility fee from the escrow account.

Real Property Tax Bill Sample



CARLA DE LA PAVA, TREASURER
ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA
2100 CLARENDON BLVD., SUITE 215
ARLINGTON, VA 22201

First Installment Real Estate Bill
DUE DATE: 6/15/2024

RPC: 00000000
Resident
0000 Somewhere Ave.
Arlington, VA 00000-0000

Date Issued:	May 1, 2024
Letter ID:	L000000000
Account ID:	RES-1000000000-00
Tax Year:	2024
Installment:	1 of 2

Real Estate Tax Information & Legal Description

Total Assessment:	$ 1,620,100.00
Tax Rate:	1.033%
Annual Tax:	$16,735.62

Property Address:0000 Somewhere Ave

For questions on your tax assessment, contact the Department of Real Estate Assessments (DREA) at assessments@arlingtonva.us or

Real Estate Tax Installment

1st Installment Tax:	$8,367.81
1st Installment Credit:	$0.00
5% Penalty if paid late:	$418.39

A 5% late payment penalty will be applied to any balance (including Stormwater Utility Fee) not received or postmarked by the due date. An additional 5% penalty will be applied to any balance not received 30 days after the due date. Interest, at a 10% annual rate, is calculated daily beginning the day after the due date on any balance due.

Stormwater Utility Fee Description

Number of ERUs:	1.00
Rate per ERU:	$258.00
Annual Fee:	$258.00
Annual Credit:	$0.00

Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) is the billing unit for the Stormwater Utility Fee. For questions related to the Stormwater Utility Fee and rate structure, please visit www.arlingtonva.us/stormwaterutility, email stormwaterutility@arlingtonva.us, or call 703-228-5577.

Stormwater Utility Fee

1st Installment Fee:	$129.00
1st Installment Credit:	$0.00
5% Penalty if paid late:	$ 6.45

Pay online at https://capp.arlingtonva.us — **Balance Due by 6/15/2024: $8,496.81**

Real Estate tax and the Stormwater Utility Fee are billed in two installments due June 15 and October 5. Payments must be received or postmarked by June 15 for the 1st installment and by October 5 for the 2nd installment in order to be on-time.
A pending appeal of your real estate assessment with DREA or the Board of Equalization, or a disputed Stormwater Utility Fee, does not change the tax due date. You must pay the full amount of the original assessment as billed prior to the due date to avoid late payment penalties and interest. If your assessment or Stormwater Utility Fee is revised and your tax bill is lowered, any overpayment will be refunded. View up-to-date Real Estate tax and Stormwater Utility Fee payment status by visiting https://propertysearch.arlingtonva.us.

For payment questions or assistance with CAPP, call 703-228-4000.

Enclose this payment coupon if paying by check or money order.

Carla de la Pava
Arlington County Treasurer
PO Box 1756
Merrifield, VA 22116-1756

DUE DATE: 6/15/2024

DLN:	L0000000000
Bill Created:	May 1, 2024
Customer Number:	1000000000
Balance Due:	$8,496.81
Amount Enclosed:	
Media Number:	0000000000

Resident
0000 Somewhere Ave.
Arlington, VA 00000-0000

PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:

Arlington County Treasurer
PO Box 1754
Merrifield, VA 22116-1754

RES1000000000000000000PRD000000000

EXAMPLE

When does the Utility rate change?

The County Board adopts the calendar year rate for the Stormwater Utility in April each year during the County's annual budget process. The rate is then effective for the entire calendar year. The Stormwater Utility rate is designed to recover sufficient revenue to fund all program expenses. This includes debt service payments for capital projects, operating and maintenance expenditures, as well as funding for the capital program.

Impervious Area (IA) FAQs

How can I view my property's Real Property Code (RPC) using the Real Property Search website?

The Real Property Search tool lets property owners view the RPC number for their property and more information pertaining to their Stormwater Utility fee.

Instructions on how to use the Real Property Search tool can be found in the Appendix.

What if areas shown as impervious on my property are permeable?

Learn more about the Stormwater Utility Credit Program, in which property owners can receive fee reductions for some types of permeable surfaces and actions taken to reduce runoff on their property.

What if I think the IA calculation for my property is incorrect?

A dispute process is available. Disputes may be filed for a 45-day period after billing, ending on June 30 and October 20, respectively.

How are decks treated under the Stormwater Utility?

Decks are treated as IA if they have a patio or other hard surface underneath. If there is no structure underneath, then the deck is considered pervious and not included in the IA for the property.

How are swimming pools treated under the Stormwater Utility?

A swimming pool is considered IA because it is a structure that does not allow water to seep through its walls. When it rains, the water will stay on pool's surface instead of seeping into the ground like it would with other pervious surfaces.

How are gravel driveways treated under the Stormwater Utility?

Gravel driveways are considered IA due to the compaction required for them to be usable. They also prevent infiltration, which results in stormwater flowing off these surfaces at a higher rate than pervious surfaces. The County is following a nationally accepted standard by classifying gravel as impervious. In addition, Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality published the Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook, which defines impervious as, "a surface composed of any material that significantly impedes or prevents natural infiltration of water into soil."

How are permeable driveways and patios treated under the Stormwater Utility?

Permeable and impermeable surfaces are not distinguishable on the GIS maps, so all paved surfaces are counted in the total IA for the property. Credits are available for permeable driveways/parking lots which meet certain requirements and standards.

Stormwater Utility Credit Program

Credit Program Overview

The County recognizes that certain stormwater management practices may reduce a property's impact on the County's stormwater infrastructure and waterways.

The County Board established a credit program that allows property owners who take actions to help water quality and reduce stormwater runoff receive a reduction in their Stormwater Utility fee, otherwise known as Stormwater Utility credit.

The credit program is not a bill assistance program, but rather a "thank you" to customers for doing beneficial actions for the environment.

Each year, from November 1 through January 31, all property owners in Arlington can apply for voluntary credits to offset up to 35% of their subsequent year's Stormwater Utility fee.

Review the Stormwater Credit Manual for more details, including application instructions, required documentation, and tips for a successful submission. Step-by-Step instructions for applying for voluntary credits can be found in the Stormwater Utility Voluntary Credit Application Handbook.

Maximum Credit = 35%	**Single-Family Home, Townhome, or Duplex**	**Multi-Family and Non-Residential**
Mandatory Structural *(Mandated by Statute)* Up to 15%	• Stormwater facilities (LDA)	• Stormwater facilities (LDA)
Voluntary Actions 5% each	• Conservation landscaping • Tree planting • Rainwater collection*	• Conservation landscaping • Tree planting • Stormwater education event • Storm drain marking
Voluntary Actions 10% each	• Rain garden* • Permeable driveway*	• Rain garden* • Permeable parking lot/driveway* • Adopt-a-Street • Stream clean-up
*** Existing actions are grandfathered in.**		
Maximum Credit = 35% **Existing actions are grandfathered in*		

Mandatory Structural Credits (All Property Types)

Mandatory Credit Based on Size and Year of Construction Projects

- Installed before 2014 or Streamlined permit (LDA): **5%**
- Installed after 2014:
  - Less than 1 acre = **10%**
  - Over 1 acre = **15%**
  - LDA 2.0 = **15%**

Mandatory structural credits are those stormwater management facilities installed as mitigation for development under a Land Disturbing Activity (LDA) permit. Virginia law requires a credit be offered for these facilities. Facility types may include permeable pavement, bioretention, cistern, manufactured devices, vegetated roof, infiltration trench, filter systems, dry wells, detention systems, and others.

The design standard has become more stringent since 2014; therefore, the credit amount is higher for facilities installed more recently.

No separate documentation or Stormwater Utility credit application is needed for mandatory credits. If property owners follow the established stormwater facility inspection and maintenance requirements, they will get automatic Stormwater Utility fee credits applied to their bills. For more information about stormwater management facility inspections, please visit: Stormwater Management Facility Inspections.

Property owners become first eligible for mandatory credits as follows:

The LDA project must be complete and the new mandatory stormwater facilities approved by the County by June 30 to be eligible for Stormwater Utility credit for the next calendar year (i.e., if approved after June 30, you will receive the mandatory credit in the year following the next calendar year).

Questions related to your inspection submissions or notification letters due by Nov. 30 of each year:
Email: stormwaterinspection@arlingtonva.us
Call: 703-228-4488

Voluntary Credits

Voluntary credits are available for property owners who take specific voluntary actions to mitigate stormwater runoff on their property.

For residential property owners, these voluntary actions include:

Voluntary Actions: 5% each	Voluntary Actions: 10% each
• Conservation Landscaping • Tree Planting • Rainwater Collection	• Rain Garden • Permeable Driveway

For Multi-Family or Non-Residential properties, these voluntary actions include:

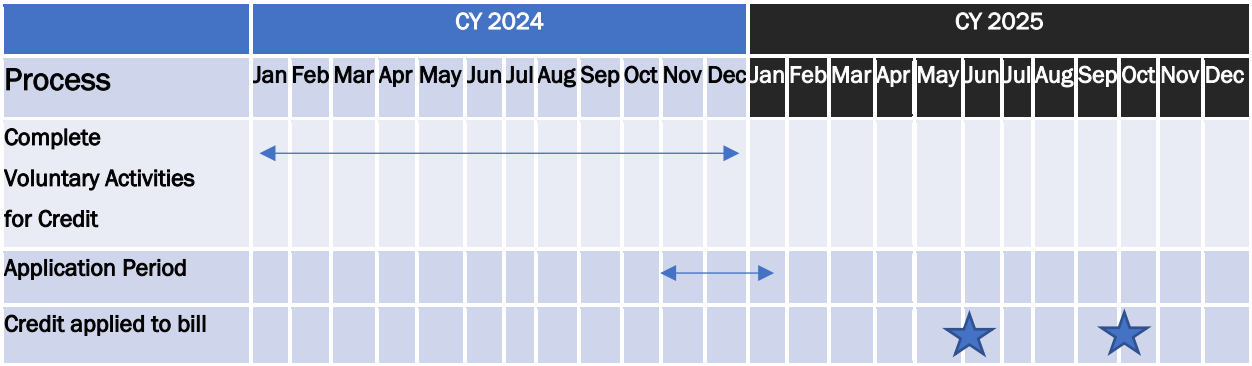
Voluntary Actions: 5% each	Voluntary Actions: 10% each
• Conservation Landscaping • Tree Planting • Stormwater Education Event • Storm Drain Marking	• Rain Garden • Permeable Parking Lot/Driveway • Adopt-A-Street • Stream Clean-up • Invasive Plant Clean-Up • Parking Lot/Private Street Sweeping

See the Stormwater Credit Manual for definitions, examples, requirements, and more information on how to qualify for voluntary credits.

Voluntary Credit Period

Voluntary credits are tracked on a calendar year basis. For voluntary credit activities that are completed during the calendar year, property owners can apply for credit during the credit application period, November 1 through January 31. Approved credits are applied to the bills for the following calendar year.

Example:



In the above table example, activities for credit would be completed during Calendar Year 2024 (January through December). During the credit application period of November 1, 2024, through January 31, 2025, the property owner would fill out the on-line form for each credit they qualify for, upload the appropriate documentation, and submit the form to the County. If the application is approved, the credits would reduce the stormwater fee equally on the two bills for Calendar Year 2025.

Credit Program FAQs

How do I apply for voluntary Stormwater Utility credit?

A Voluntary Credit Application must be filed through the Report-a-Problem tool on the County website. See the Appendix for more instructions. Additionally, there is a detailed instruction guide found in the Stormwater Utility Voluntary Credit Application Handbook.

Note: You do **NOT** need to apply for mandatory credit!

If my property has a mandatory stormwater facility, do I get an automatic credit?

You must submit a complete inspection report **and** complete all required maintenance by November 30 to the County. Practically, this means you should submit your inspection report early to allow time for staff review and for you to complete any follow-up actions that are necessary for compliance.

You will receive a notification letter annually in September; follow the instructions in the letter to receive credit. Please ensure your address is up to date with the County to receive your inspection notification letter. Update your address here.

View inspection and maintenance guidance for different types of facilities.

Disputes and Appeals

Any property owner subject to the Stormwater Utility fee may request an adjustment to their property's Stormwater Utility by submitting a dispute application. Disputes may only be submitted within 45 days of the bill issuance. The deadline is June 30 for the bill due on June 15, and October 20 for the bill due October 5.

Reasons for Dispute of the Stormwater Utility Fee

(1) An error was made regarding the square footage of IA

(2) An error was made regarding the number of units for Multi-Family (MF) property

(3) An error regarding customer class

(4) Fee for property should be waived based on Section 26-120 of County Code

(5) An approved credit was incorrectly applied.

How To Dispute Your Bill

Dispute submissions must be filed through the Report-a-Problem tool on the County website.

The property owner should submit any photos, aerial images, GIS imagery, or other appropriate documentation that supports their dispute. The County may require an inspection to aid in reaching a decision. Denial of access for such inspection may result in denial of the property owner's dispute. The Stormwater Utility Program Manager shall make a determination within 45-calendar days of receipt of a completed dispute submission (completed meaning all requested documentation has been submitted by the property owner). If the Stormwater Utility Program Manager finds that the application is deficient or incomplete, they will notify the property owner, who will have 10 calendar days to supply the missing information. The 45-calendar day timeline for a decision will begin once all requested information is provided. If that information is not provided within 10 calendar days of the original request, the dispute will be considered withdrawn.

A decision by the Stormwater Utility Program Manager on the dispute application is a final decision, with the exceptions in the appeals section below.

Appeals

Appeals must also be filed through the Report-a-Problem tool on the County website.

On dispute applications related to the IA calculation or the customer class, the property owner may appeal a dispute decision to the Department of Environmental Services Budget and Finance Division Chief for further determination. *See the Appendix for instructions.*

The decision on a Stormwater Bill appeal made by the Department of Environmental Services Budget and Finance Division Chief is a final staff decision, after which the property owner may appeal to the Circuit Court of Arlington, Virginia.

Submitting Online Application(s) FAQs

Where do I apply for voluntary credits, disputes, and/or appeals?

https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Report-Problem

Does the County accept paper applications?

Paper applications are not available.

Is it necessary to set up an account when I submit my credit application?

It is not required but it is highly recommended. With an account, you will receive updates on your application submission, and the Stormwater Utility Team can correspond with you to request additional information (if necessary). Additionally, you can submit any extra information back to the County to complete your application. You will also receive the decision letter related to your submission through your account.

What if I do not have access to a computer or the Internet?

To receive assistance on completing the online submission, call 703-228-5577.

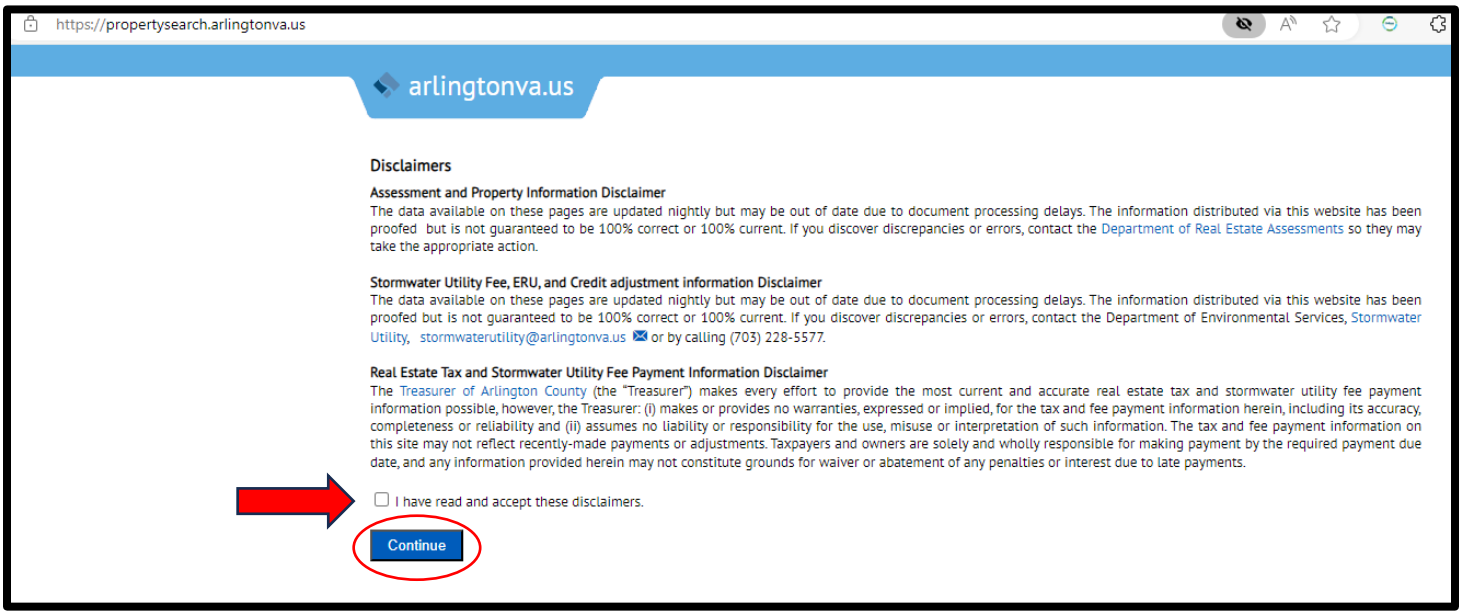
Appendix

Contact Information for Arlington County Agencies Associated with the Stormwater Utility

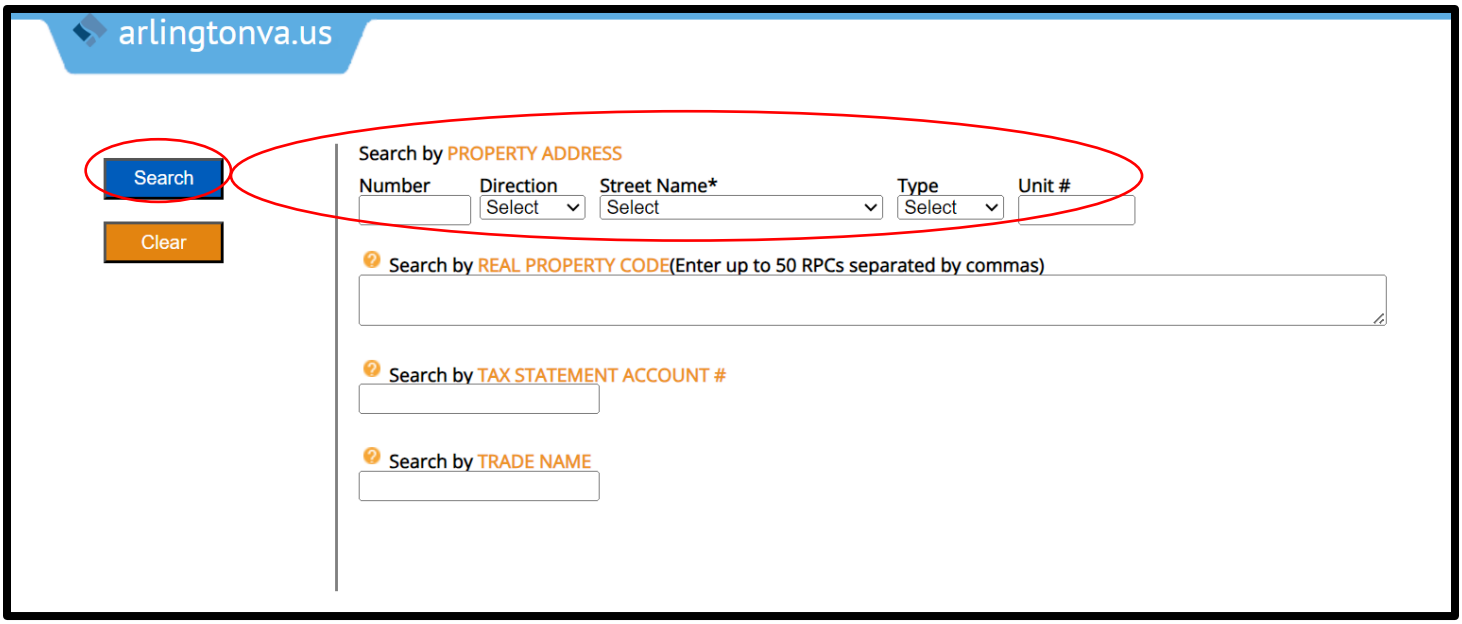
For questions related to your stormwater fee, impervious area calculation, voluntary credit applications:	
Stormwater Utility Administration	703-228-5577 | stormwaterutility@arlingtonva.us
For questions related to payments, payment plans, how to pay:	
Treasurer's Office	703-228-4000 | treasurer@arlingtonva.us
Treasury Pay by Phone	703-272-9829
For questions related to your real property taxable assessed value, appealing your proposed valuation, assessor information:	
Department of Real Estate Assessments	703-228-3920 | assessments@arlingtonva.us

How to Use the Real Property Search Tool

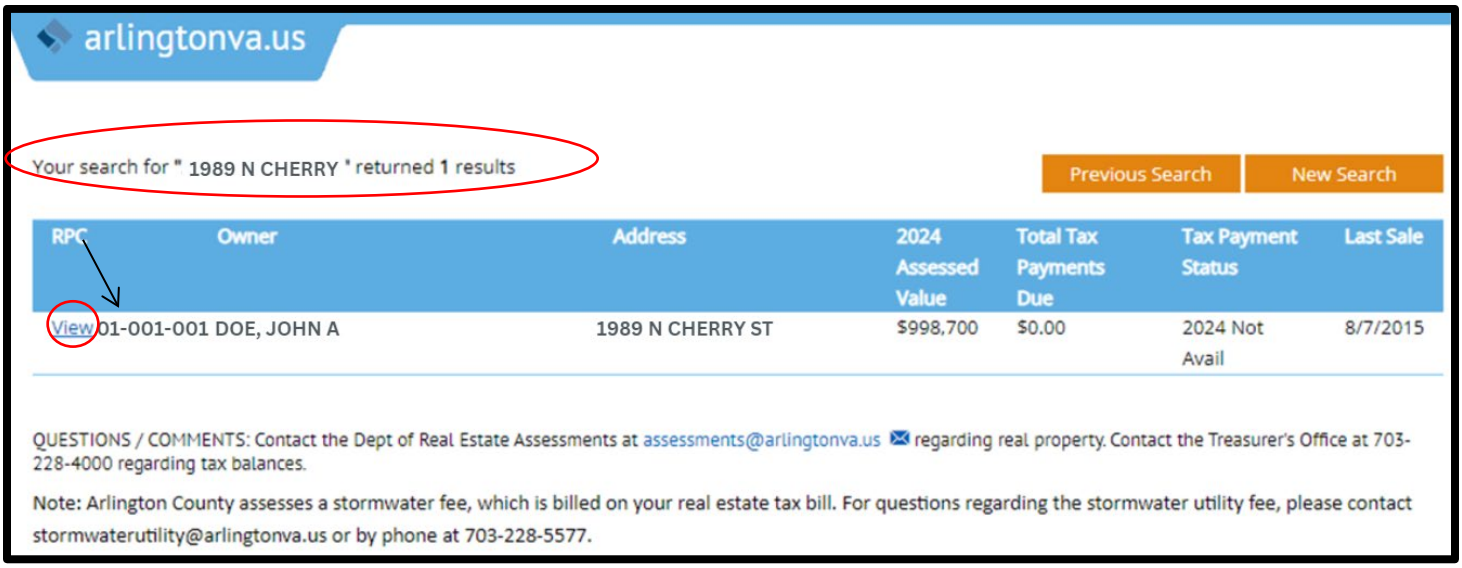
Step 1: Visit https://propertysearch.arlingtonva.us/. Check "I have read and accept these disclaimers" and click 'Continue.'



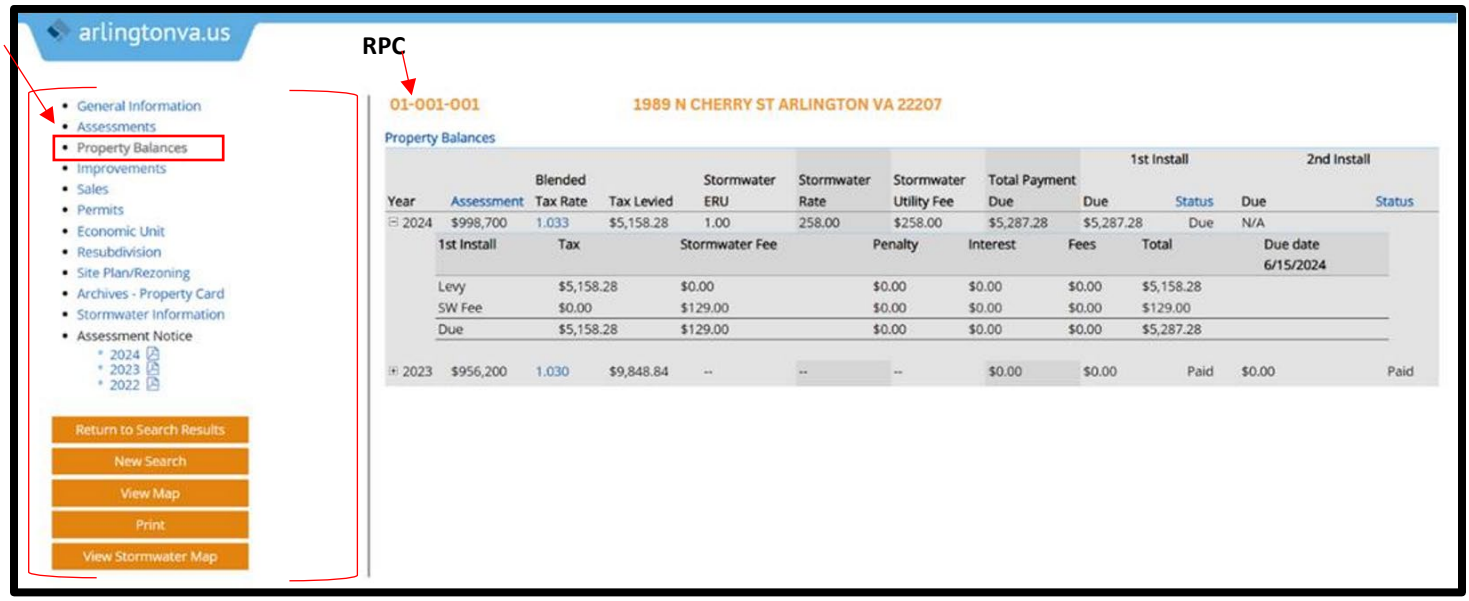
Step 2: If you do not know your Real Property Code (RPC), type in the property address and click 'Search.'



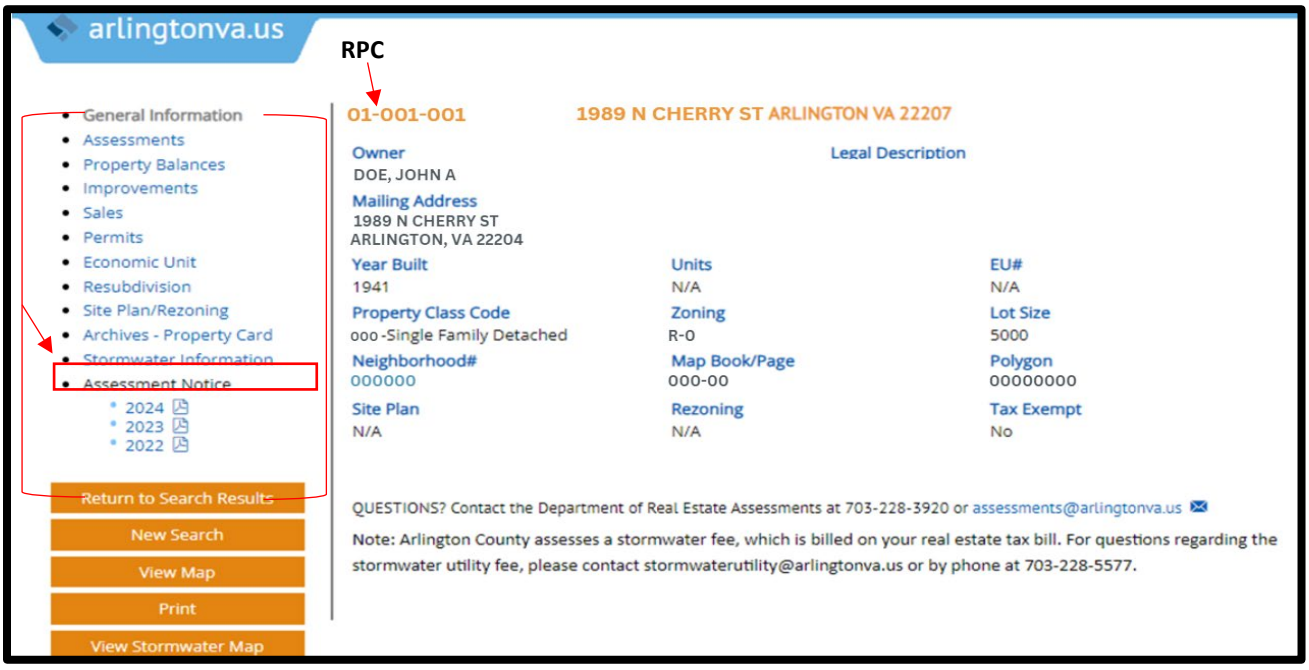
Step 3: You can find your RPC number on this page. Click “View” to find more specific information relating to your property.



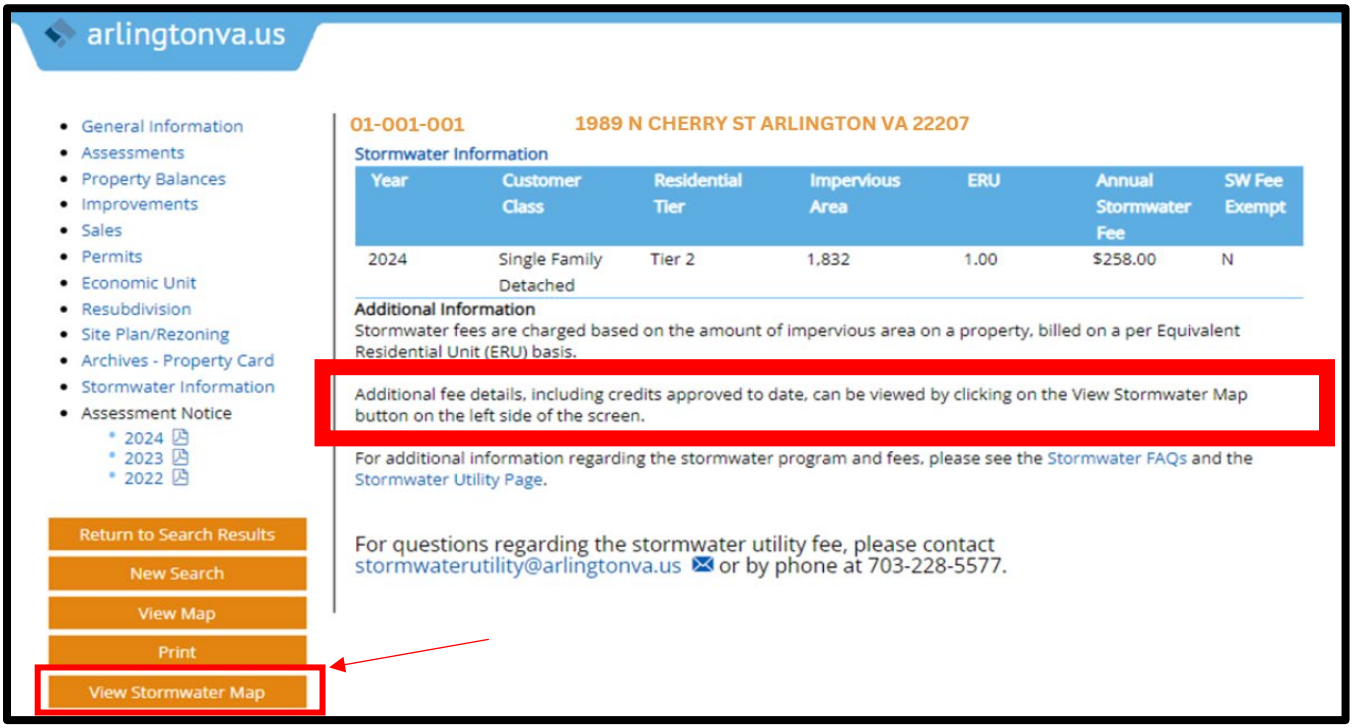
Step 4: Click ‘Property Balances’ to view how your Stormwater Utility fee is billed on your real property taxes, as well as your property’s number of ERUs, Real Property Tax Rate and the total due for your 1st installment.



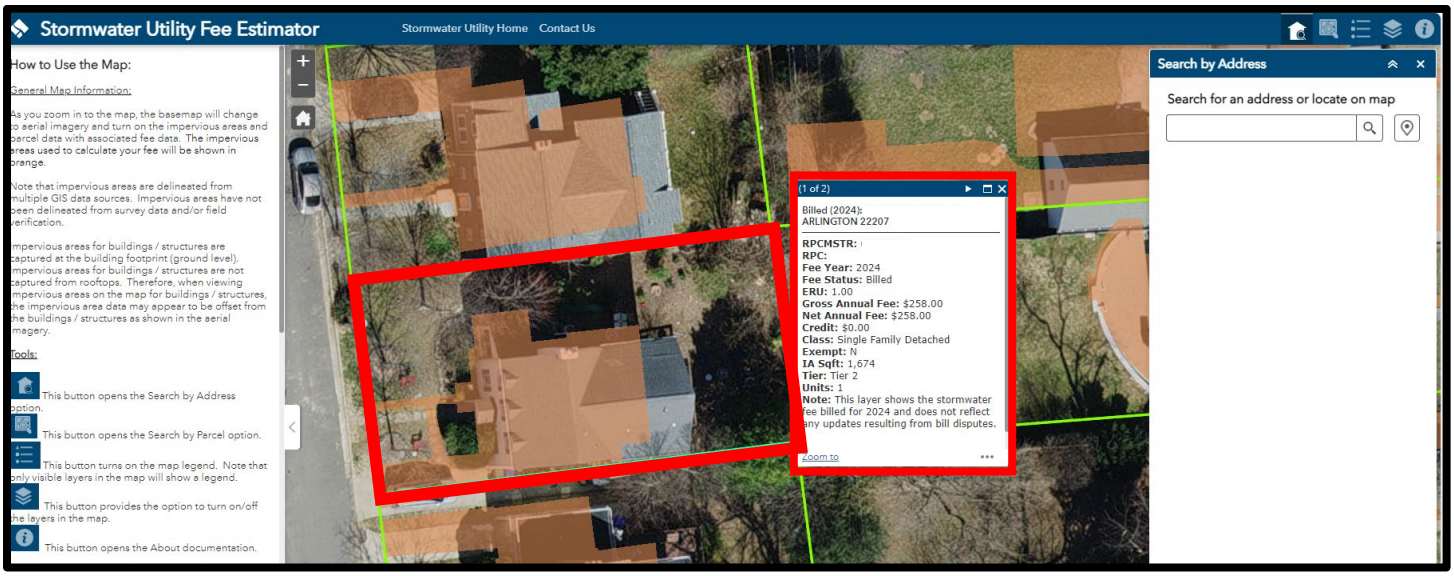
Step 5: Click 'Stormwater Information' to view Stormwater Utility specific information for your property (e.g., your Stormwater Utility fee).



Step 6: By clicking 'View Stormwater Map' you will be automatically linked to your property in the Fee Estimator tool. Note: Additional fee details, including credits approved to date, can be found using the Fee Estimator tool.



Step 7: In the Fee Estimator, you can see your property's IA, number of ERUs, and any approved Stormwater Utility credits applied. *See below section for how to use the Fee Estimator tool.*



How to Use the Fee Estimator Tool

The Fee Estimator is a tool that lets property owners see the IA, number of ERUs, and any approved Stormwater Utility credits applied for their property.

General Map Information:

As you zoom in to the map, the base map will change to aerial imagery and turn on the IA and parcel data with associated fee data. The IA used to calculate your fee will be shown in orange.

Note that IAs are delineated from multiple GIS data sources. IAs have not been delineated from survey data and/or field verification.

IA for buildings/structures are captured at the building footprint (ground level), not captured from rooftops. Therefore, when viewing the IA on the map for buildings/structures, the IA data may appear to be offset from the buildings/structures as depicted in the aerial imagery.

Tools

This button opens the Search by Address option.

This button opens the Search by Parcel option.

This button turns on the map legend. Note that only visible layers in the map will show a legend.

This button provides the option to turn on/off the layers in the map.

This button opens the About documentation.

Stormwater Utility Fee Search Options:

Search by Address:

- Enter an address. As an address is being entered, valid addresses will be suggested based on user input. Note that if there are no address suggestions, the input address may not be valid.
- Select an address to view associated stormwater fee information. If there is more than one record for the selected address, all associated records will be listed under the input address. The selected address will highlight the associated parcel and display the associated stormwater fee data.
- To clear the input address, click on the 'X' in the search bar.

Search by Parcel:

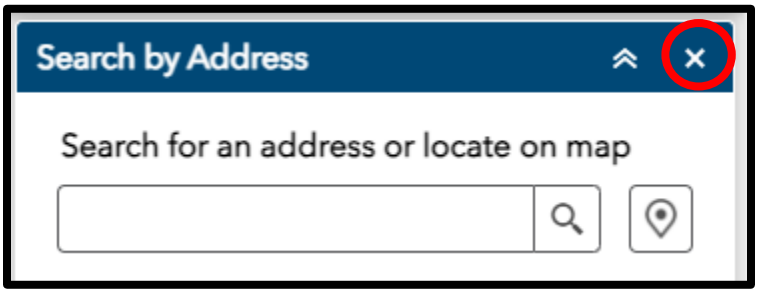
- Enter a Parcel ID (RPC or RPC Master) using this format: 00000000 (Do not use hyphens). As an RPC or RPC Master is being entered, valid values will be suggested based on user input.

Search on Map:

- To display stormwater fee data for a property on the map without searching an address, click on the map. The associated stormwater fee information will be displayed on the right side as Fee for the location.
- If there is more than one record for the location clicked on the map, all associated records will be listed. Select a record to display the associated stormwater fee data.

Display Fee Information in Pop-Up Box:

1. Users have the option to view stormwater fee data in map pop-up form instead of the “Search by Address” sidebar. To choose this option, close the Search by Address tool by clicking on the ‘X.’



2. Click on the map to view the stormwater fee data in a pop-up. The associated parcel will be highlighted on the map and the pop-up will display at the location clicked.
3. If there are more than one record for the location clicked on the map, the pop-up will display the number of associated records. Use the dropdown list to find your associated records.

Map Functions:

Zoom:

Zoom in on the map.

Zoom out on the map.

Resets the map to the countywide extent.

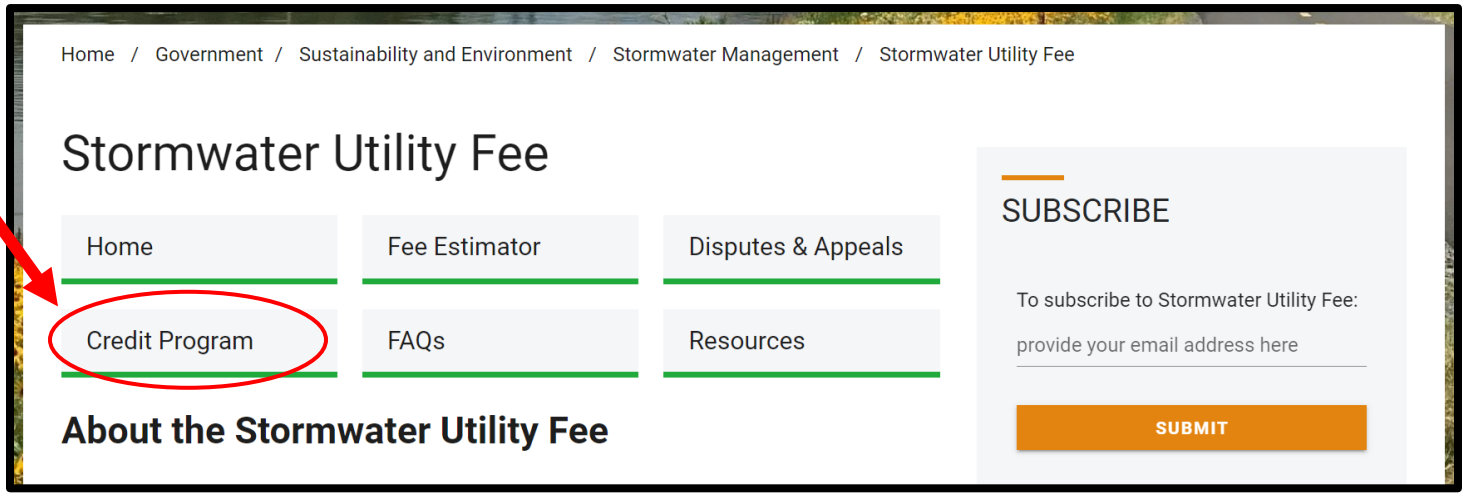
Pan: Click on the map with your cursor and slide the map in the desired direction.

How to Submit a Voluntary Credit Application, Disputes and Appeals

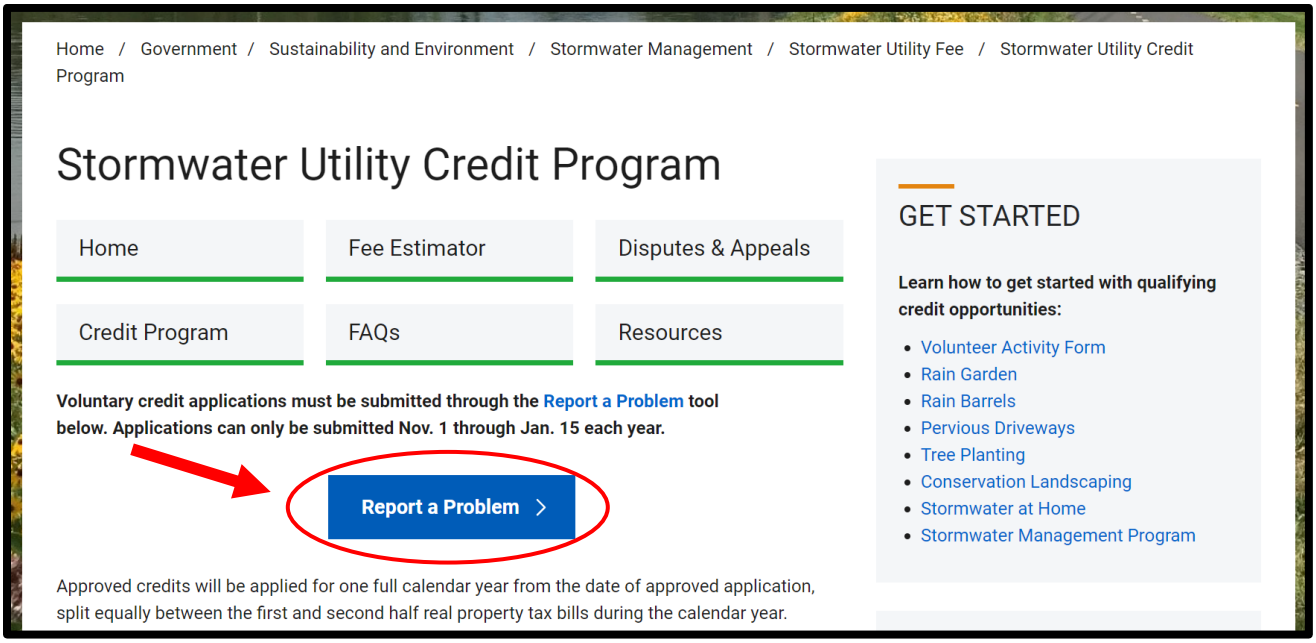
Voluntary Credit Application

For more detailed information, please refer to the Stormwater Utility Credit Application instruction manual.

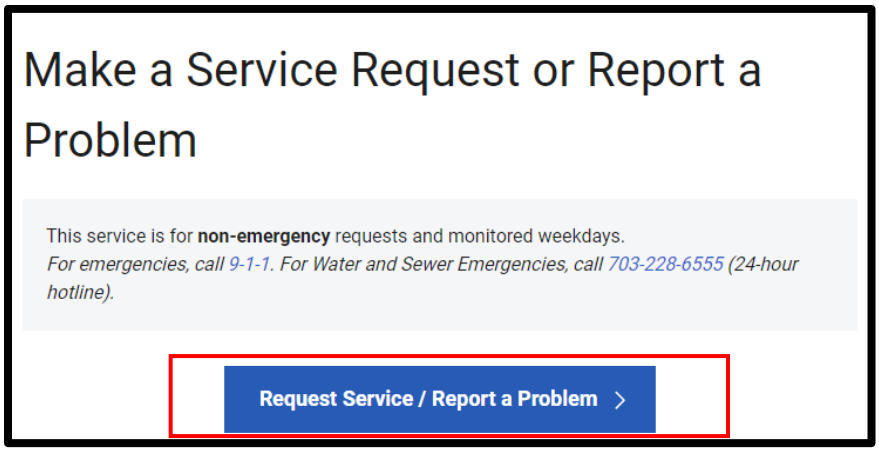
Step 1: On the Stormwater Utility Fee home page, click on 'Credit Program' in the upper tabs.



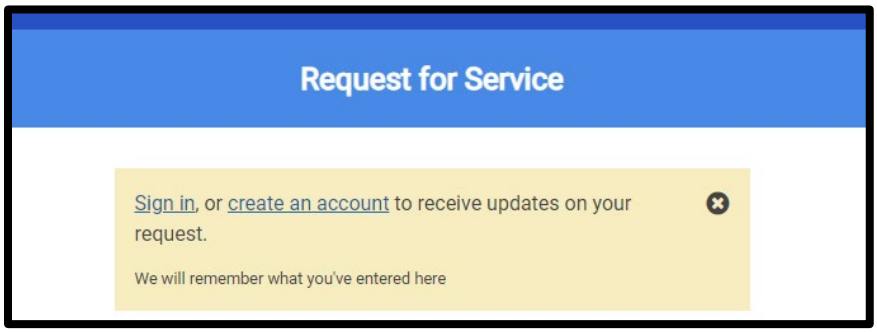
Step 2: On the Credit Program landing page, select the 'Report-a-Problem' button.



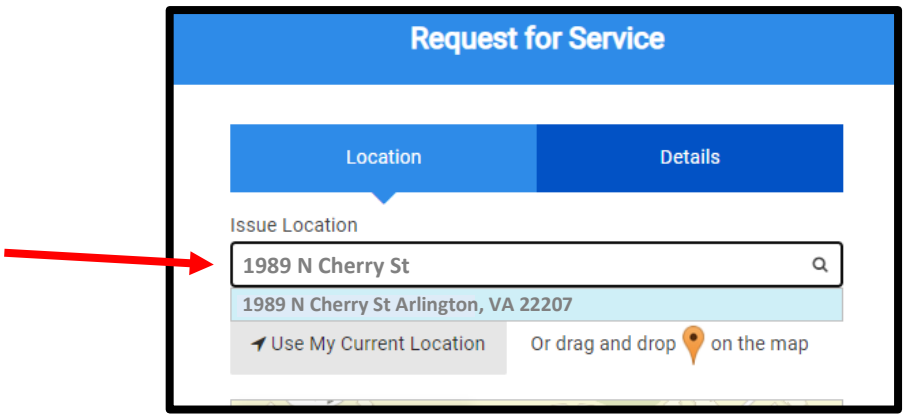
Step 3: On the 'Make a Service Request or Report a Problem' landing page, select 'Request Service/Report-a-Problem.'



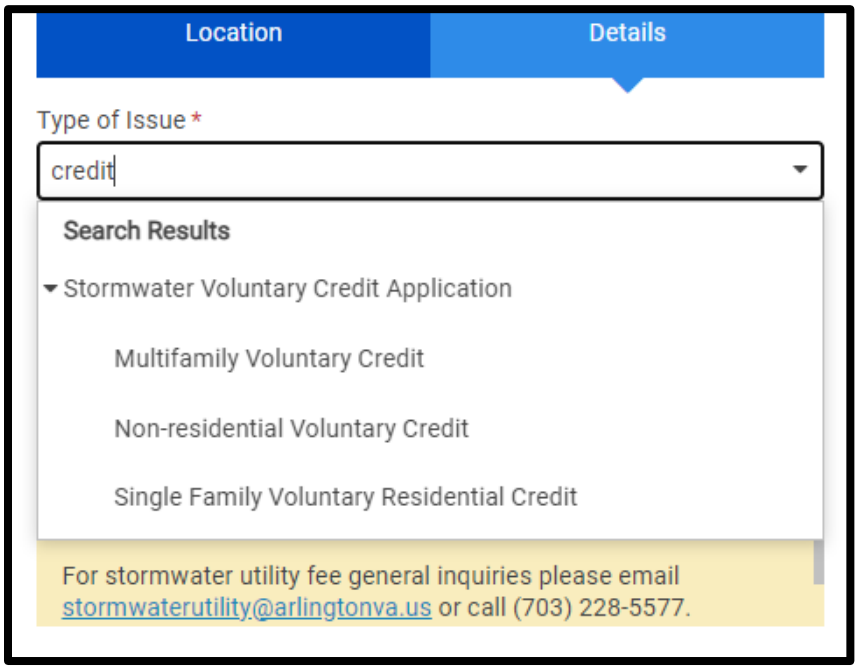
Step 4: Select "Sign In" or "Create an Account" to get started. If you wish to create an account, see the next section: 'How to Create an Account Using the Online Request for Service Application.'



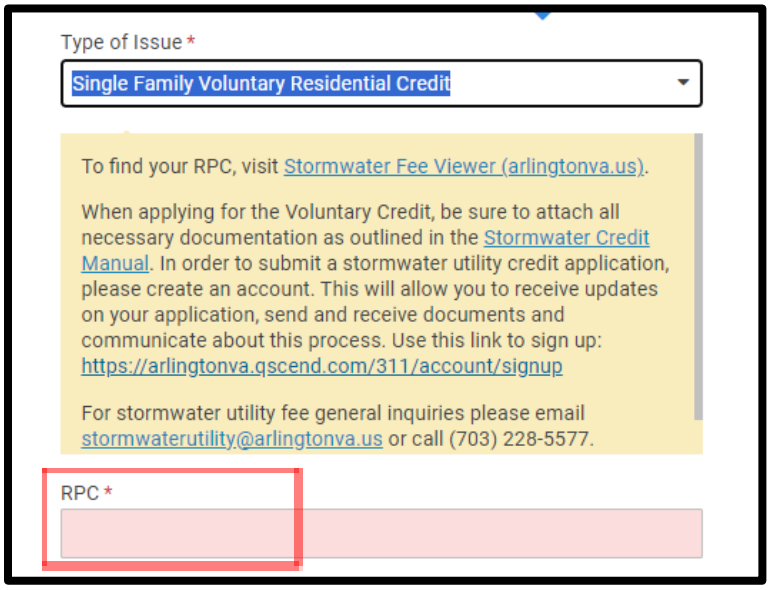
Step 5: Under "Location," enter the address of the property where you are applying for a Stormwater Utility credit. Select the best matching address from the dropdown menu and click "Next."



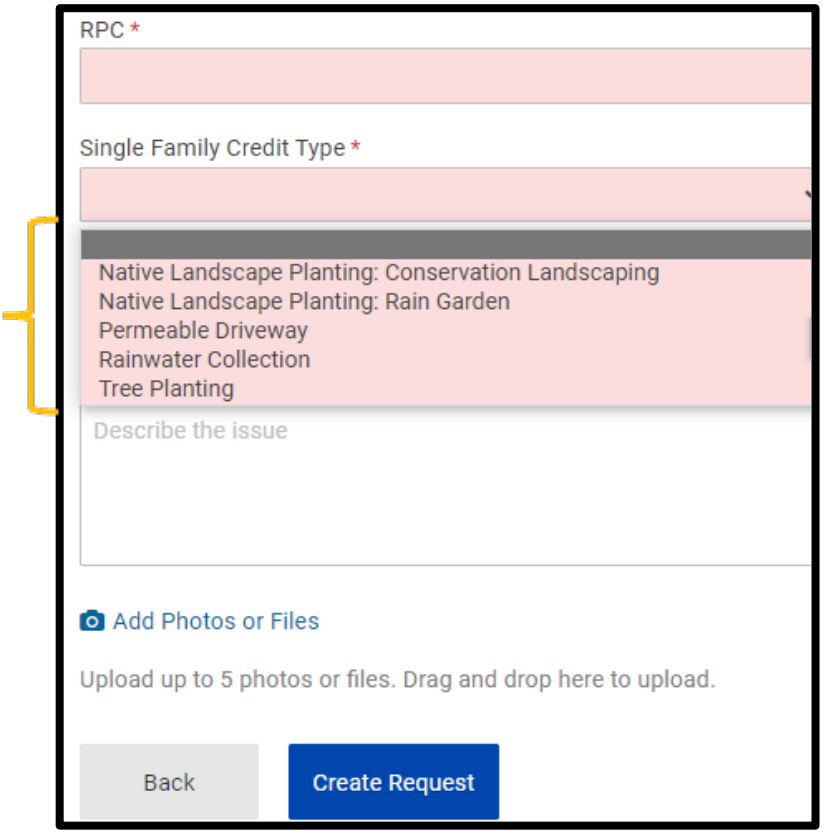
Step 6: On the “Details” tab, enter “Credit” in “Type of Issue” box to find the credit you are applying for.



Step 7: Enter your real property code (RPC) number. You can look up your RPC by entering your address in the real property tax search here or on your past real property tax bill.



Step 8: Select from the "Credit Type" dropdown.

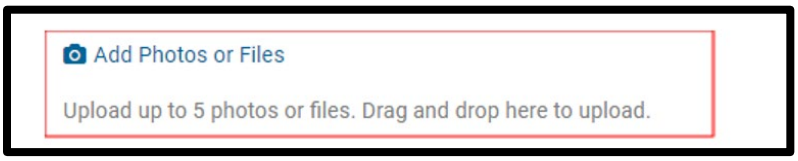


Step 8a: For Multi-Family and Non-Residential credits, **additional RPCs** must be reflected in the application. Residential Condominium applications for credits must be made by a condominium owners association or one owner on behalf of all association members. If a credit application is approved, the credit will be applied to each account holder listed as a member of the association as provided in the application.

Note: If your property includes multiple adjacent parcels (RPCs), you may have the voluntary credits for volunteer and education events applied to the RPCs associated with the property under the same owner. However, you must list all the RPCs on your credit application in the field below.

Step 9: Upload your photos/files (5 maximum). Photos must be date stamped in the digital properties.

Note: If you need to provide more than five files, you can log back in after submitting your application and attach up to five more documents.



Step 10: Press the dropdown to certify if all required documents are attached.

Step 11 (Optional): Add any comments to your application for the Stormwater Utility Team to consider while reviewing your application.

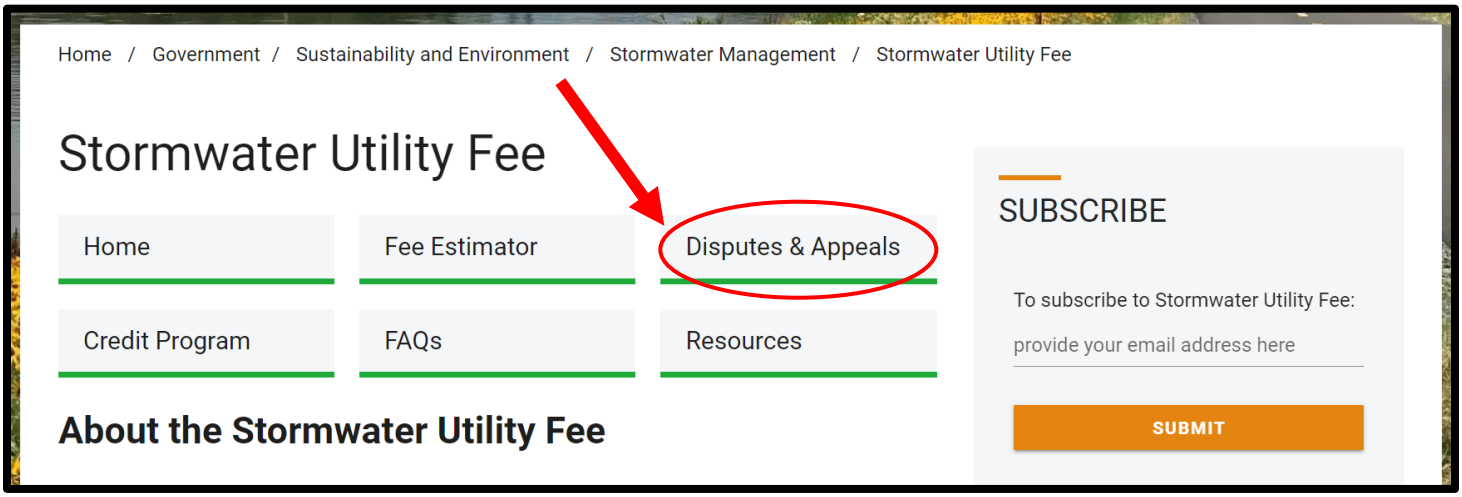
Step 12: Press the "Create Request" button to submit your application. You will receive a confirmation email or text message after your request has been submitted.

Disputes and Appeals

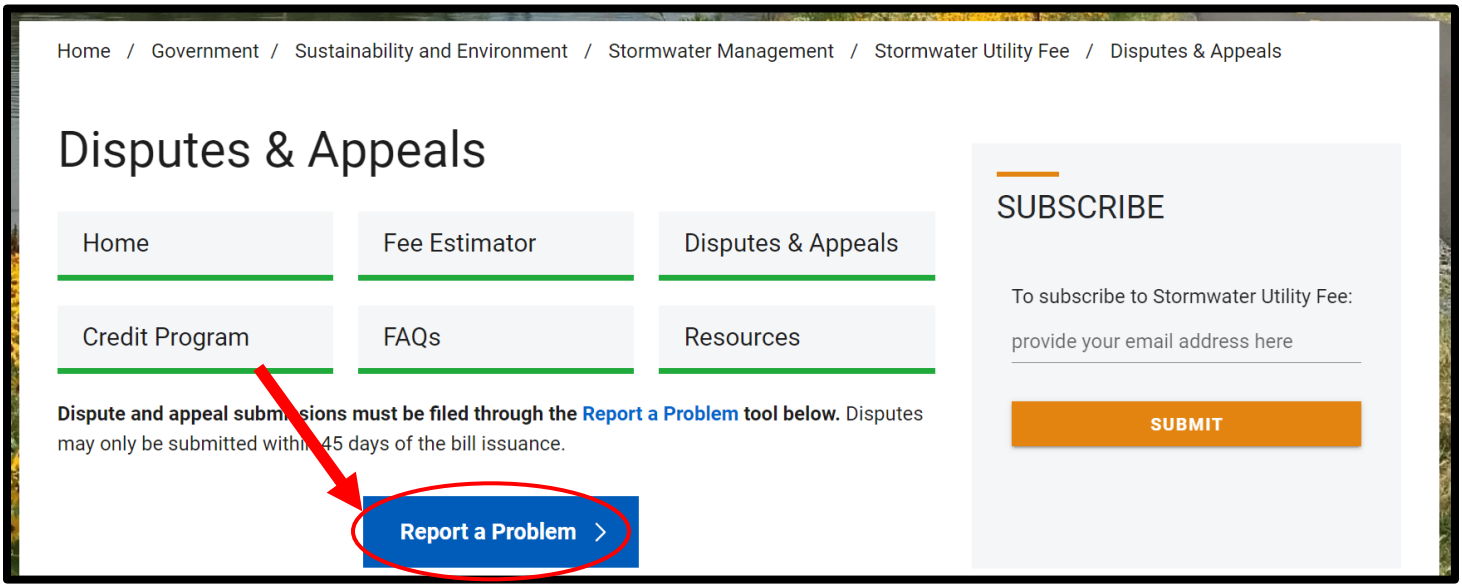
Disputes may only be submitted within 45 days of the bill issuance. The deadline is June 30 for the bill due on June 15, and October 20 for the bill due October 5.

You can file a dispute and/or appeal, using the "Report-a-Problem" tool.

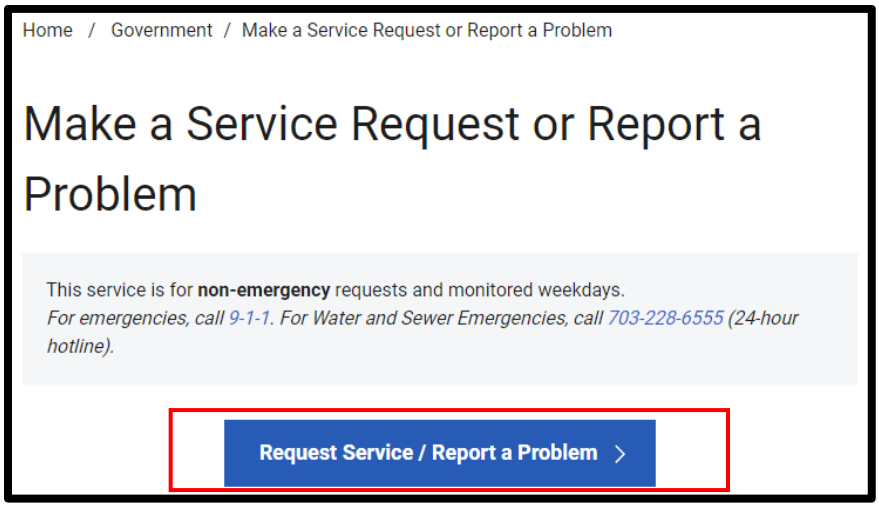
Step 1: On the Stormwater Utility Fee home page, click on 'Disputes & Appeals' in the upper tabs.



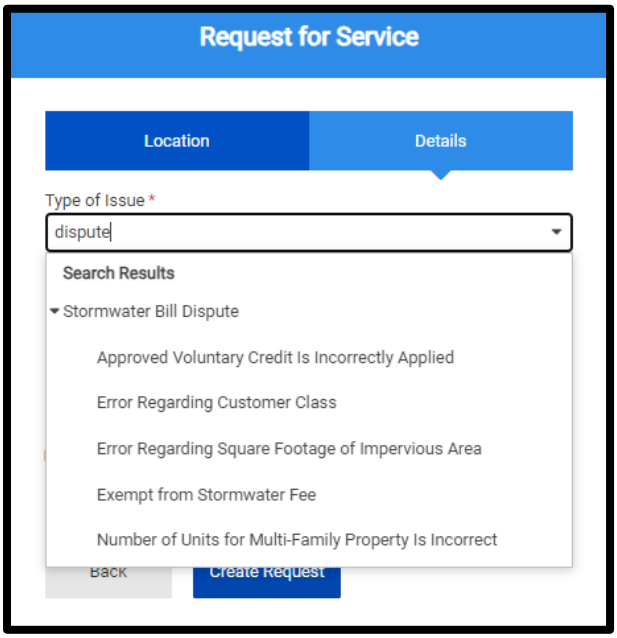
Step 2: On the Disputes & Appeals landing page, select the 'Report-a-Problem' button.



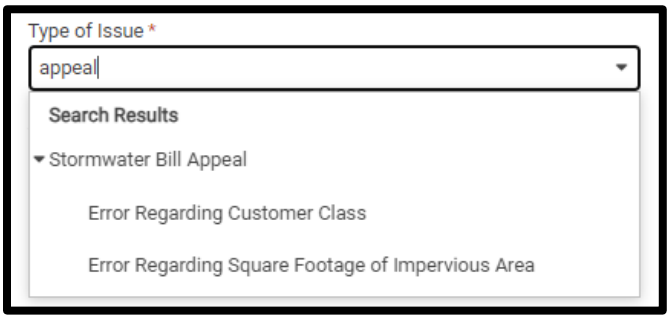
Step 3: On the 'Make a Service Request or Report a Problem' landing page, select 'Request Service/Report-a-Problem.'



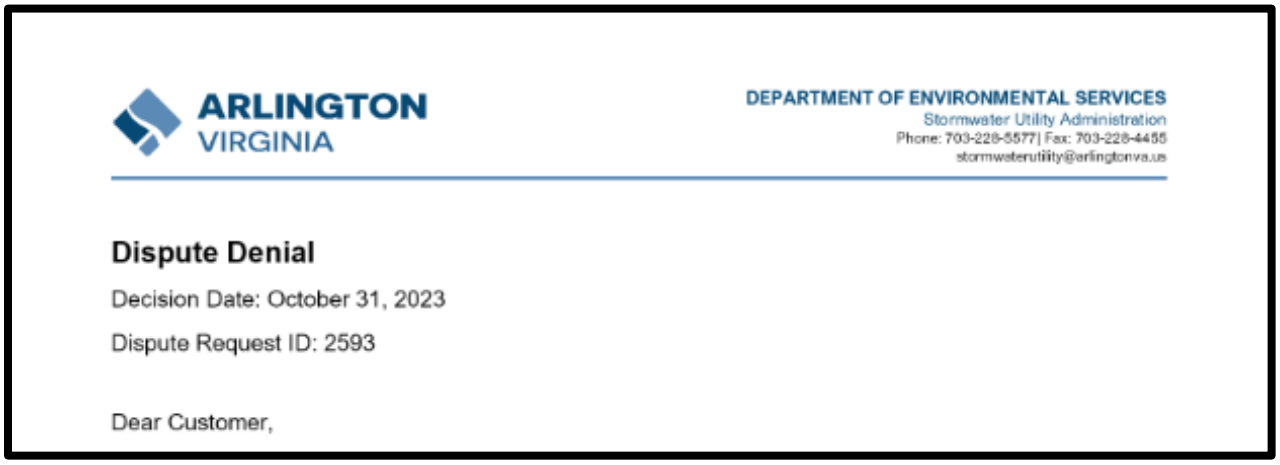
Step 4a: On the "Details" tab, enter "Dispute" in "Type of Issue" box to find the five dispute options.



Step 4b: For appeals, enter “Appeal” in the ‘Type of Issue’ box under the ‘Details’ tab to find the two appeal options.

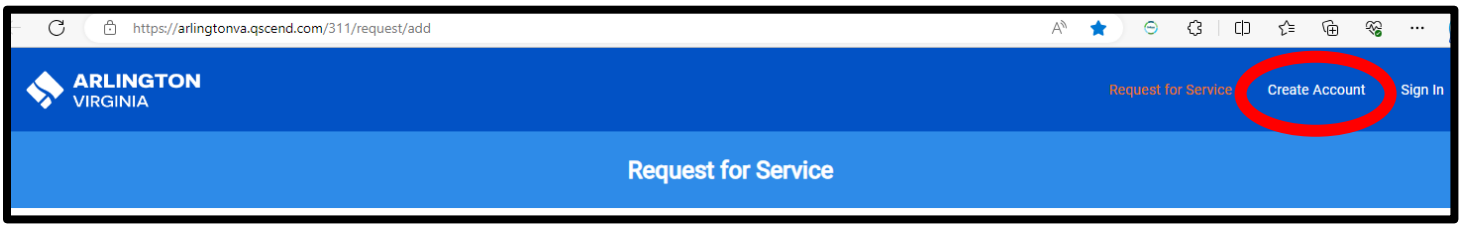


Note: You will need your dispute determination letter to file an appeal as the application will require the dispute ID number and date of the dispute decision letter.

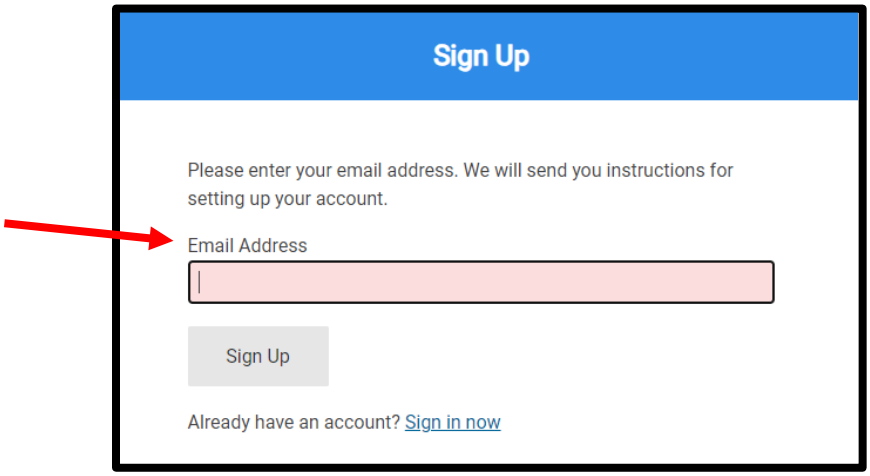


Steps to Create an Account for 'Report-a-Problem'

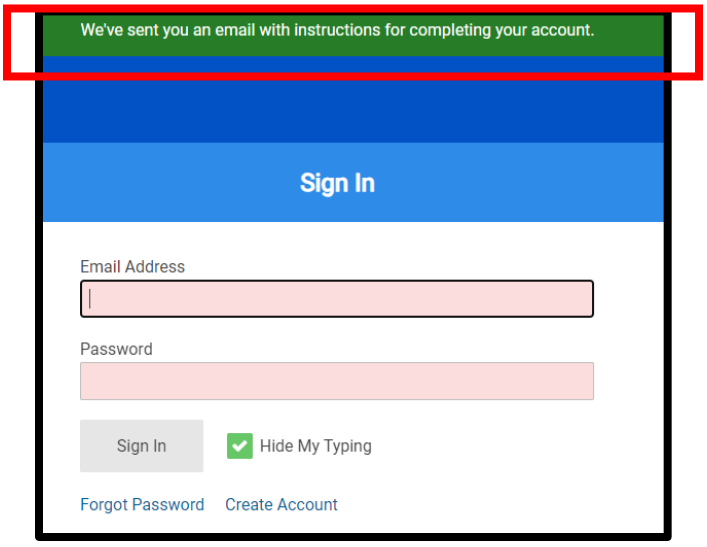
Step 1: Press "Create Account."



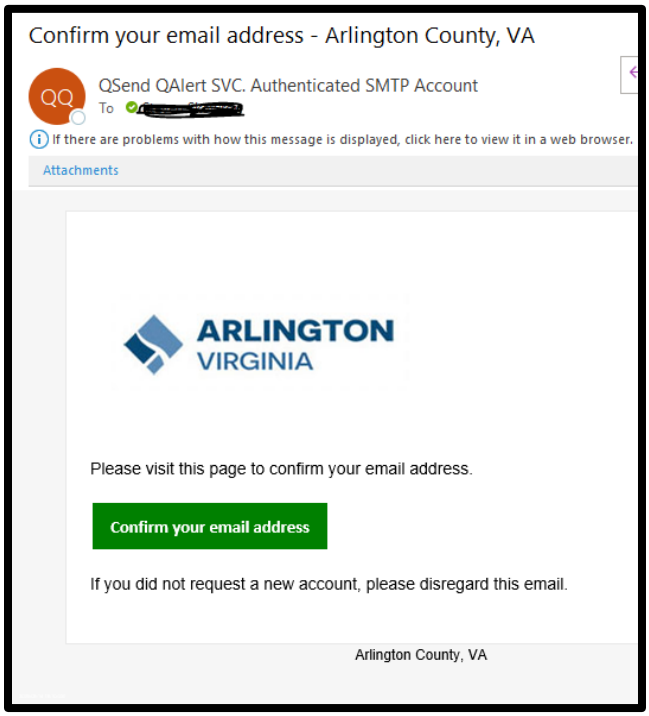
Step 2: Enter your email address.



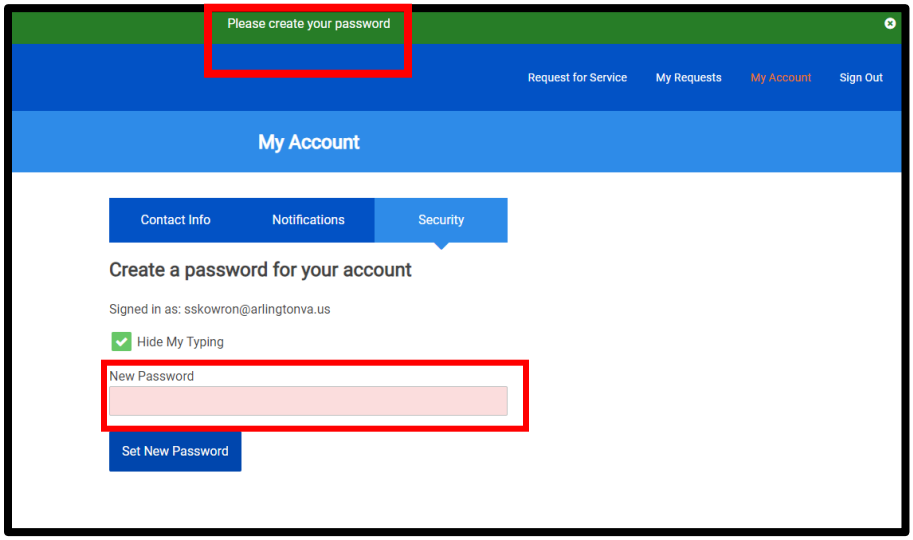
Step 3: Check your email for instructions received from this account service.



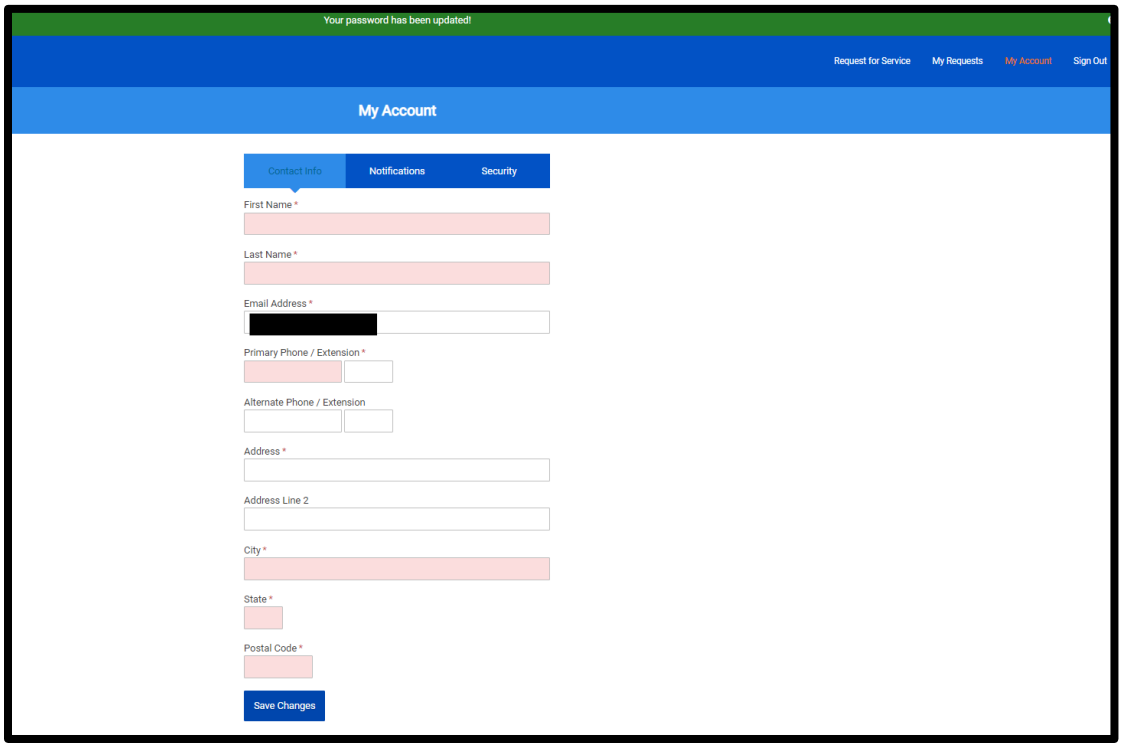
Step 4: Confirm the email address used to create your account.



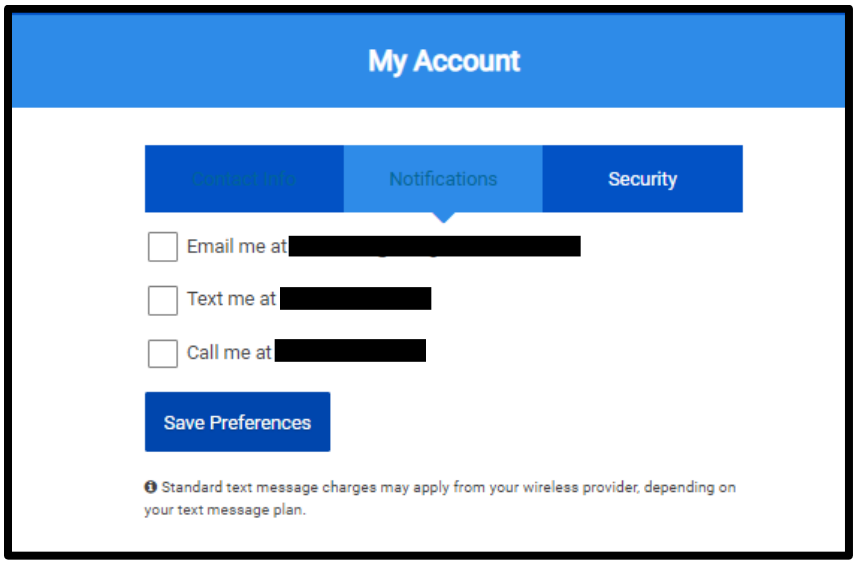
Step 5: Once you select "Confirm your email address," you will be taken back to the login page for the submission of the service request. Create a password.



Step 6: Set up your contact information.



Step 7: Select “Notifications” and select your preferences.



Your account is set up! You may now submit a service request through Report-a-Problem.

Once a service request is submitted you will see them under “My Requests” in the upper right.

To log back in, go to: https://arlingtonva.qscend.com/311/account/signin.

Additional Resources

Plant NOVA Natives is a joint marketing campaign of a coalition of non-profit, governmental, and private groups, all working to reverse the decline of native plants and wildlife in Northern Virginia. The coalition guide "Native Plants for Northern Virginia" is available for free online.

Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora contains the most comprehensive information available on the geographic distribution of vascular plants in the Commonwealth. It includes native and well-established non-native plants. is a great source for determining whether a plant is native to Virginia.

Qualified professionals must certify the proper functioning of condition of development stormwater facilities and green infrastructure BMPs on condominium and non-residential properties. Most engineering firms with civil or environmental professionals or architecture or landscape architecture firms should be able to provide these services.

Urban Nutrient Management The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation maintains a directory of private-sector certified planners who develop nutrient management plans for a variety of turf grass and landscape management situations.