

# *News from the City!*

## *Let's Talk about Stormwater Standards*

*by City Manager Rachelle Rickard*

Somewhat counter-intuitively to most of us, as there's no rain in sight and the entire state is currently in drought status, the State of California is requiring the implementation of two actions related to stormwater. Both of these actions were reviewed at the January 14, 2014 City Council meeting.

First, we must adopt new "Post Construction Stormwater Requirements" ("PCR's") in the form of revised storm drainage standards. The PCR's apply to all new and redevelopment projects that have not received project approvals prior to March 6, 2013. These requirements expand the existing drainage design requirements to also include onsite retention, peak matching (peak storm runoff from a site after development must meet the historical peak runoff as it was before development occurred), and stormwater quality treatment; they also require the City to adopt revised Design Standards. The State requires all cities and counties to take these actions. These new PCR's will change the way drainage is designed and managed in all areas of Atascadero. According to the State, the new PCR's are needed for the protection, preservation and improvement of the State's stormwater quality. City staff has formatted the requirements so that they are user friendly and easy to understand, and will continue to ensure that implementation is as smooth as possible with as little economic impact as necessary on both public and private projects. But make no mistake, these requirements will unfortunately increase the design and construction costs on most projects in Atascadero.

Second, we must adopt an "Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Ordinance" ("Stormwater Ordinance"). The Stormwater Ordinance is required to provide legal authority to the City in order to stop illegal discharges of pollutants to the City's storm drainage system, inspect facilities for stormwater pollution sources, require pollutant and spill cleanup, recover costs when compliance is not obtained in a reasonable amount of time, and provide an appeals process for disputes. We do not currently have a specific ordinance that addresses illicit discharges (i.e., dumping of oil, contaminated water, etc.) into the storm drain system or creeks. City staff has developed this proposed new ordinance to comply with the State's minimum requirements for Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems and to address certain issues that we've encountered here in the past. We believe that the proposed ordinance provides the City with the minimum authority required to address the stormwater pollution issues as required by State order.

The implementation of both of these new State requirements will have an impact on staff time, and compliance costs could be substantial depending on the level of response from the responsible party. The City does not currently have a budget for compliance with these requirements. Additional information regarding these complex issues can be found on the City's website and in the January 14, 2014 City Council agenda packet also posted online.

If you would like more information about this or another City government related topic, please contact me at [rrickard@atascadero.org](mailto:rrickard@atascadero.org), or 470-3400.