

## Mandatory Houston Drainage Fee

On March 30, 2011, the City of Houston City Council passed a new city ordinance as part of the "Renew Houston" plan. This plan establishes a dedicated drainage and street renewal fund to provide for the enhancement, improvement and ongoing renewal of Houston's drainage and city streets. All City of Houston property owners will be required to pay a drainage fee with some churches, schools and county properties being exempt.

The City of Houston will determine your amount of hard surface/impervious surface of your tract using aerial photos, infrared photos and other "available data". The City has defined this as all building slabs, decks, pools, walkways, driveways, parking areas, etc. this will be a complex calculation. The size of your property is not a factor, only the "hard surface/impervious surface" area square footage on your property. The City of Houston will then calculate your annual drainage fee for Multi-family/Commercial/Industrial/Residential properties by multiplying the "hard surface/impervious surface" area square footage x \$0.032. Note: You will be billed monthly, beginning July 2011.

The City of Houston will soon mail you a "Notification letter" which state the amount of drainage fee based on their calculations. Property owners will be allowed to request for "verification/correction" within 60 days of receiving their "Notification letter". This request can be made online or by mail using the appropriate City of Houston form. Documentation must be presented to the City in the form of a drawing with precise measurements along with a signed affidavit. If the property owner is still dissatisfied with the City of Houston's results, the property owner can appeal again within 15 days of the City of Houston's second "Notification letter".

Per the City of Houston, there are approximately 170,000 commercial properties and over 400,000 residential properties in the City. The demand for surveying services to have property accurately measured will be unprecedented. Consider having a certified dimensional drawing with calculated measurements based on actual data collected on your property to compare to the City's "determined" area.