

A STORMWATER UTILITY FOR THE VILLAGE OF WESTON

WHAT IS STORMWATER?

Stormwater is the water that runs off property when it rains. Stormwater flows into streets, storm sewers, and ditches and is carried directly into the nearby lakes and/or rivers.



POLLUTION

When stormwater flows across driveways, parking lots, lawns, streets, and other surfaces, it can pick up pollutants along the way. The pollution comes from several sources: oil that leaks from vehicles, tire and brake lining wear, pesticides on lawns, leaves, etc. When this pollution reaches the lakes and rivers, it can hurt the fish and plants that live there. It can also cause algae to grow, making boating, swimming, or fishing in these water bodies less desirable.

More recently, the “quality” aspect of stormwater management has become increasingly important. Pollution from stormwater is recognized as a major reason for impairment to rivers and lakes in Wisconsin.



FLOODING

“Imperviousness” results when houses or buildings are built on a lot that was previously vegetated. An impervious surface does not allow water to soak into the ground. For example, driveways, rooftops, parking lots, and streets are considered to be impervious surfaces.



Increased areas of impervious surface result in more water running off the land and can lead to increased flooding.

Federal and state governments have initiated regulatory programs for stormwater pollution control. In this age of heightened awareness of the problems of stormwater management, many local governments are facing the dilemma of how to finance the necessary programs and improvements. The Village of Weston recently lost approximately \$200,000 annually due to reductions in state shared revenue spending. Aging infrastructure, development, and new regulations are expected to increase expenditures used for stormwater improvements in the near future. These programs must be carried out by the local units of government. This new emphasis on stormwater management strives to protect and improve our valuable water resources. However, it also means that communities must spend more money on stormwater management than they had in the past.

Examples of Estimated Utility Fees for Different Property Types				
Type of Property	Sq. Ft. of Impervious Area	ERUs	Quarterly Charge	Annual Charge
Single Family	3,338	1.0	\$11.95	\$47.78
Fast Food Restaurant	35,186	10.5	\$125.91	503.65
Church	85,000	25.5	\$304.17	\$1,216.69
Apartment Complex	133,009	39.8	\$475.97	\$1,903.89
Large Discount Retail	438,794	131.5	\$1,570.22	\$6,280.88

WHAT IS A STORMWATER UTILITY?

A stormwater utility is a way to fund the cost of municipal stormwater management services. The stormwater utility will operate similarly to an electric, water, or wastewater utility. Properties within the village will pay for stormwater management services based on the amount of runoff generated from each property. Citizens and businesses will be charged a utility fee for the services provided based on the amount of impervious surface on their property.



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

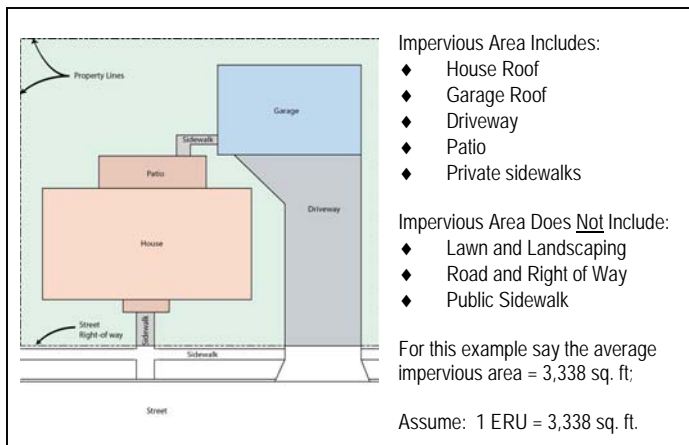
In the past, stormwater management focused only on handling the “quantity” of water from precipitation and the resulting flooding issues. Storm sewers and ditches were built to quickly carry stormwater away from homes and buildings so that it would not back up and flood adjoining properties.

WHAT WILL I GET FROM A STORMWATER UTILITY?

A stormwater utility assures that there will be funding for the village to pay for the stormwater services it provides. Some of these services include street sweeping, storm sewer maintenance and repair, new storm sewer construction, leaf collection, ditch maintenance, and the administrative costs associated with stormwater management. The stormwater utility fees will also pay for practices to help improve water quality and reduce flooding.



Currently, the funding for these services is generated from property taxes. Paying stormwater management service costs with property taxes puts the burden of cost on the value of the property. This method does not account for the amount of runoff generated from the property. Currently in Weston, residential property generates about 32 percent of the stormwater runoff in the village; however, they pay for 68 percent of the costs. With the creation of a stormwater utility, property owners will pay in proportion to the amount of runoff their property creates. Weston's residential properties would pay about 32 percent of the costs with the stormwater utility.



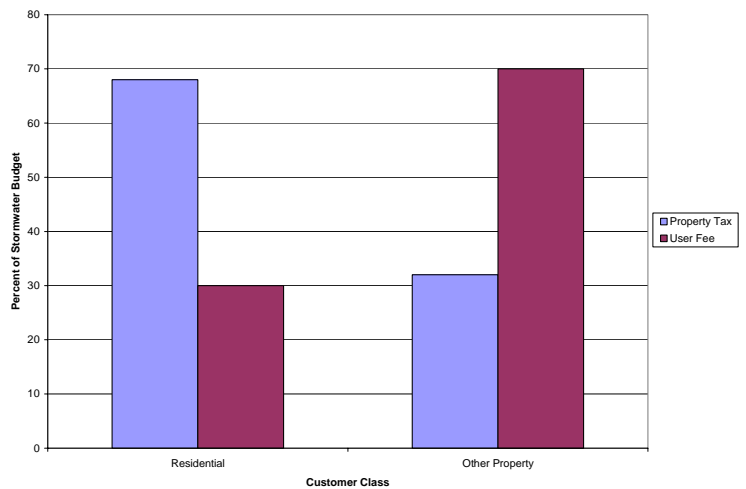
HOW DO YOU DETERMINE HOW MUCH I WILL PAY?

A stormwater utility fee is based on two factors: 1) the cost of the municipal stormwater management program, and 2) the amount of impervious surface on a property.

To determine the amount of runoff that will be generated (as measured by impervious surfaces) an "ERU" (Equivalent Runoff Unit) is calculated. The ERU is equal to the **average** impervious area of all the single-family homes in Weston.

In the Village of Weston, an ERU was calculated to equal 3,338 square feet. This was calculated by using aerial photographs and sampling a statistically significant number of homes. Each single-family homeowner will pay the cost for one ERU. All other types of properties will pay for multiple ERUs based upon the amount of their actual impervious area. Undeveloped property (with no impervious surfaces) will pay no stormwater utility fee.

The stormwater utility fee will be added as a separate line item on the quarterly utility bill each property already receives for sanitary sewer and drinking water services. Rural property owners who do not receive sewer or water service will now receive a bill from the stormwater utility.



A BETTER FUTURE

The Village of Weston is striving to protect its infrastructure, businesses, and homes from damage due to flooding. It is also working toward improving the water quality of its nearby lakes and rivers so that its citizens may boat, fish, and swim in cleaner water. A stormwater utility is a more equitable and fair system to support stormwater management services.

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