

Stormwater Utility Fact Sheet

What is a Stormwater Utility?

A storm water utility is similar to a water or sewer utility, being a mechanism to provide a dependable financial resource for funding continued operation, maintenance, reconstruction (when necessary) and new construction of a municipality's stormwater-related infrastructure, such as storm drains, pipes, catch basins, ditches, curbs, gutters and detention ponds. Moreover, a storm water utility can be used as a fund to pay for costs a municipality must bear for stormwater management programs. Please see more discussion below.

Why is it needed?

To stay effective, storm water infrastructure needs maintained and updated the same as the City's roads, water lines and sanitary sewer lines. It is the City's desire to develop a strong storm water program that will aid in protecting properties and creating a safe, healthy environment for the residents of Groveport. Additionally, state and federal regulations now require more stringent comprehensive approach to storm water management. The storm water utility will aid the City to meet federal requirements regarding storm water quality and to meet the City's federally mandated but unfunded responsibilities to manage the storm water drainage system more closely, study the contents of storm water runoff, seek out and eliminate illicit discharges and illegal dumping, and educate the public on being good stewards of the land and of critical water resources such as streams and rivers. For Groveport to be successful in meeting storm water management demands, a dedicated funding source is needed, which will direct funds directly to this cause.

The fund established by the storm water utility will be used to offset cost to the City for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) compliance activities including the additional required operation, maintenance and inspection activities as well as to fund additional storm water quality control facilities now required for all capital improvements within the City. As a part of the Clean Water Act of 1972, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established storm water management rules that affect hundreds of municipalities across the U.S., including Groveport.

Due to the increasing costs that the NPDES program has placed on the City and the potential added burden on the general fund, the City has proceeded to establish the storm water utility.

What is the status of the Stormwater Utility?

The City adopted the storm water utility program in 2008, the utility fund, established through ordinance 2008-025, acts like the water and wastewater utility funds, with all income being dedicated to storm water projects and NPDES compliance activities.

The storm water utility charges all properties a rate, based upon the impervious area of that property. Impervious area is any hard surface that does not allow storm water to be absorbed into the ground. Impervious surfaces include rooftops, parking lots, driveways and sidewalks. Just as residences and businesses currently pay a fee for the amount of water they use, and the amount of wastewater they discharge, the storm water service fee will charge property owners based on the amount of storm water runoff generated on their property.

Under this fee structure, all residences would be charged an equivalent rate. All residential properties would be charged a constant rate, known as an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU), that is based on the typical amount of impervious area in square feet, on a residential property in the City of Groveport. All non-residential property owners would also be charged a fee based on the amount of impervious area on their property, expressed as the number of ERU's on their non-residential

property. An Impervious Area Study that was conducted by the City determined that the typical residential property within the City has 2760 square feet of impervious area. This is referred to as the Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). The impervious area for all non-residential properties was also measured as part of the Impervious Area Study. Under the proposed fee structure, these non-residential properties would be billed based upon the number of ERUs of impervious area on their property. For example, if a commercial property had three times the impervious area as the average residence (8280 square feet or 3 ERUs), its stormwater charge would be three times the residential rate per month.

The service fee established by Council is based on a five-year capital improvement plan. The goal of the City is to establish a rate that will cover all anticipated costs throughout that five year period. It is anticipated that the City will review the established rate after the five year period.

How will the City collect this fee?

The storm water utility fee will be collected semi-annually, and will first appear on statements for the 2nd quarter which will be mailed at the end of June 2012. For Groveport residents who receive their water from the City of Columbus, a separate bill will be issued for this fee.

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