

City of Waupun Stormwater Utility Fact Sheet Commonly Asked Questions

1. What does the City do for stormwater management?

Stormwater management is effectively managing the amount (quantity) and cleanliness (quality) of stormwater runoff within the city. "Stormwater runoff" includes all the surface flow from property that occurs from rain or snow melt events. This runoff flows overland to a municipal collection (conveyance) system consisting of pipes, ditches, culverts, swales, detention facilities, and drainage ways until the runoff reaches the Rock River or other water body. The city's jurisdiction and responsibility for stormwater ends when the runoff reaches one of these water bodies. The city conducts a wide variety of services to carry out this responsibility. Some of these services are explained below.

Maintenance of the Conveyance System

The city's stormwater management services include maintaining the conveyance system. Maintenance of the conveyance system consists of:

- a) Cleaning, repairing, and replacing storm sewer manholes, inlets, and pipes;
- b) Constructing new storm sewer projects;
- c) Mowing ditches;
- d) Stabilizing creek stream banks;
- f) Dredging and/or cleaning out the creeks and other drainage ways; and
- g) Reviewing and approving of new land development stormwater management practices.

Stormwater Pollution Control

The city's stormwater management services also include stormwater pollution reduction practices. Water quality practices are used to reduce the amount of runoff pollution going to the Rock River, and eventually Horicon Marsh. These practices include, but are not limited to:

- a) Sweeping streets;
- b) Proper application, handling and storage of lawn chemicals, paints, fuel etc;
- c) Inspecting and enforcing construction site erosion control standards; and
- d) Reviewing new development for compliance with the city's stormwater ordinance.

Planning and Engineering

The city's stormwater management services also include planning and engineering. In addition to the regular engineering and planning duties the city carries out, certain areas within the city are in need of flood relief. Before the system can be modified to give the needed flood relief during large rain events, engineering studies determine the size and type of structures that must be used. New regulations for water quality are also on the horizon. The city has already conducted a water quality study to determine the areas where pollution reduction practices must be utilized, along with the other state requirements.

2. Why have a stormwater utility?

A stormwater utility is a fairer and more equitable way to distribute the cost of stormwater services the city provides. Currently stormwater services are paid for through property taxes. *Using property taxes, residential properties in Waupun pay 76% of the city's stormwater services.* A stormwater utility charges the customer for the stormwater management services that are actually used. *With a stormwater utility, residential properties pay for 46% of the city's stormwater services.* The cost of stormwater management is shifted to the properties that drive the cost of service, such as commercial, industrial, tax exempt and other properties with large impervious surfaces. In Waupun, the state facilities do not pay property tax, however these facilities will pay a stormwater fee under the utility system. All properties within the utility jurisdiction, including government, schools, and churches would pay a stormwater fee.

3. Who has approval authority for the stormwater utility budget?

All policy and budget decisions must be reviewed and approved by the elected officials on the City Council.

Stormwater Utility Commonly Asked Questions

4. How was the total annual stormwater budget determined?

To determine the total annual stormwater management budget, the City of Waupun's annual budgets were studied. Stormwater management related costs from all departments were identified. Except for the new state-required regulatory program, the costs in the *stormwater utility budget are services that are already provided by the city*. Each year the stormwater budget will be updated and revised to reflect the current year's stormwater management budget.

5. How do you determine how much I am charged for stormwater?

Stormwater fees are based on the amount of impervious surface each property has. Impervious surfaces include roofs, private sidewalks, private streets, driveways, patios, and parking lots. The greater the impervious area of a property, the greater the amount of stormwater runoff will be. The impervious area for each property was measured from an aerial photo and using site plans.

An "ERU", or Equivalent Runoff Unit, is the unit of measurement for impervious areas. An ERU is defined as the average impervious area of a single-family home. The average impervious area of a single-family home in Waupun is calculated to be 3,204 square feet. This measurement includes the home's roof, garage roof, driveway, private sidewalks, patio, and other hard surfaces on the property.

Single-family homes will be charged for 1 ERU. All other properties will be charged a fraction of, or a multiple of an ERU based on their actual impervious area measurement.

6. Are gravel areas considered impervious?

Gravel areas that are used for parking, hauling, or equipment storage are considered impervious. Gravel areas used for these purposes have been shown to display drainage characteristics similar to asphalt or concrete. Other gravel areas that are not compacted, such as under power substations, are not considered impervious.

7. Are public streets included in the total number of ERUs for the city?

Public streets are not included in the total number of ERUs for the city. Public streets are part of the municipal stormwater conveyance system. Just as storm sewers are designed to carry stormwater during the small rain events, city streets are designed to carry stormwater during the large rain events.

8. What increased costs are anticipated from implementing a stormwater utility?

The only additional cost caused directly by the implementation of a stormwater utility would be administrative cost for the handling of billing information. The billing will be managed by Waupun Utilities. *There are no new employees or equipment purchases anticipated as a result of creating a stormwater utility.*

9. Is there a stormwater fee credit policy?

The city, with the help of a Stormwater Utility Task Force, developed a stormwater utility credit policy. The Task Force included members of city staff, elected officials, and private sector representatives. This credit policy describes which properties are eligible for credits and the procedure to apply for a credit. At this time two situations are identified as being eligible for a credit: 1) properties that have installed a private runoff flow control management measure; and 2) properties that are adjacent to, and drain directly into the Rock River. A document explaining the credit policy is available from the Public Works Department and from the city's web site after the City Council has approved it.

Follow-up questions can be directed to:

Jeff Daane
(920) 324-7918