



*City of Greenville, Ohio  
Stormwater Management Program  
Frequently Asked Questions*

---



**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Stormwater Utility**

**City of Greenville, Ohio**

**Prepared by:**

**Environmental Rate Consultants, Inc.**

**December 2007**



*City of Greenville, Ohio*  
*Stormwater Management Program*  
*Frequently Asked Questions*

---

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**



---

## City of Greenville Stormwater Utility Frequently Asked Questions

### General Questions

**Q: What is impervious area?**

A: Impervious area is any hard surface including gravel that does not allow stormwater to be absorbed into the ground. Impervious areas include rooftops, parking lots, driveways and sidewalks.

**Q: How did you measure the impervious area for my property?**

A: The impervious areas for all non-residential properties (all properties except single-family and duplex residential properties) and for a random sample of single-family residential properties were measured using aerial photography through use of a computer mapping software program.

**Q: What can I do to measure the impervious area myself?**

A: The easiest and most cost effective method would be to first determine the total square footage of your property using the property dimensions. Then, estimate the amount of impervious area on the property (1/4, 1/2 etc.). Multiply your estimate by the total square footage to arrive at an estimated measurement. The most accurate and costly method would of course be to hire a surveyor to measure the impervious area for you.

**Q: I am not satisfied with the impervious area measurement for my property. What can I do?**

A: We can have one of our engineering technicians verify the accuracy of the measurement for your property. This may take a few days to complete, and I will call you back once the technician completes the verification. Or, I can print a copy of the aerial photography that shows the surfaces that we included in your impervious area measurement and mail that to you to review. Which method would you prefer?

**Q: What is a stormwater utility?**

A: Just as residents and businesses currently pay a fee for the amount of water they use, and the amount of wastewater they discharge (sanitary sewer bill), property owners in Greenville are being charged a **user fee** based on the amount of contribution they make to stormwater runoff. That funding will be used for the maintenance, repair and upgrade of Greenville's stormwater system, and for complying with the EPA's (Environmental Protection Agency's) NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Phase II permit requirements which are part of the 1976 Clean Water Act.

**Q: Why does the City of Greenville need a stormwater utility?**

A: Much of the original infrastructure is either breaking down, too small, or just simply no longer effective. The City of Greenville currently has no dedicated funding source for stormwater construction, maintenance and repair. The current budget only allows for system repairs and minimal system upgrades. It does not provide funds for preventative maintenance, major improvements or for enforcement of the EPA NPDES Phase II stormwater regulations, which are part of the 1976 Clean Water Act.



*City of Greenville, Ohio  
Stormwater Management Program  
Frequently Asked Questions*

---

A comprehensive program is needed to:

- Improve the water quality of local rivers and streams
- Reduce flooding
- Improve stormwater drainage
- Ensure that the city is in compliance with tough, new regulations required by the U.S. EPA.

**Q: Why does the City need more money to fix the stormwater system?**

A: The City of Greenville currently does not have a source of dedicated funding for stormwater construction, maintenance and repair. The current budget only allows for emergency repairs. It does not provide funds for preventative maintenance, major improvements or for enforcement of the EPA NPDES Phase II stormwater regulations, which are part of the 1976 Clean Water Act.

**Q: Isn't flooding in Greenville just a problem in certain areas of the City?**

A: No. Stormwater-related flooding of basements and streets can occur throughout all parts of the City.

**Q: When will we begin paying?**

A: We anticipate that the first bills will go out in April 2008.

**Q: Will I get a separate bill for stormwater?**

A: The current utility user at all single-family residences and owners of duplex properties with only one water meter will receive the stormwater charge along with the water/wastewater bill. Owners of duplexes or apartments having more than one water meter will receive a bill for stormwater charges only, even though they don't currently pay a water/wastewater bill for the property. All business owners will be billed in the same manner, with the stormwater charges being added to tenant occupied properties with one water meter and one water/wastewater bill. A bill for only the stormwater charges will be sent to owners of commercial properties not currently receiving water/wastewater bills and having more than one water meter at the building or group of buildings.

**Q: Will tax-exempt, non-profit organizations like schools, churches and hospitals be charged for stormwater?**

A: Yes. Much like these organizations now pay for water and sanitary sewer services, they will pay a user fee based on their contribution to the stormwater system.

**Q: Why can't we just use existing sewer money to cover stormwater costs?**

A: The money currently collected for providing sanitary sewer service is needed to meet those service needs. In addition, under state law, money collected for sanitary sewer service can only be used for maintenance, repair and replacement of the sanitary sewer system.



## Residential

**Q: How much will it cost?**

A: All residential property owners will be charged a monthly rate of \$2.95 per month. These rates are based upon an average amount of “hard surface areas” such as driveways and roofs, found on residential properties in Greenville. The average residential property in Greenville has 2,800 square feet of hard or “impervious” surface area.

**Q: I live in an apartment. Will I have to pay?**

A: The owner of the apartment building or complex will receive the stormwater bill for their entire property. The property-owner could however pass part of that cost along to you depending on the terms of your rental or lease agreement.

**Q: When will rates go up?**

A: City Council approved a rate schedule through the year 2012. Rates will be reviewed again beginning in 2011.

## Non-Residential

**Q: How much will business property owners pay? How will their rate be determined?**

A: Non-residential property owners will pay based on the amount of hard surface or impervious area on their properties. The impervious area for all non-residential properties in the City was measured using aerial photography and a computer mapping software program.

The residential rate will be used in the calculation for non-residential properties. In the calculation, the flat residential rate equals one “equivalent residential unit” or ERU. One ERU=2,800 sq. feet of hard surface (impervious) area.

Non-residential property owners will be charged based on the number of ERUs of hard surface on their property. For example, if a commercial property has three times as much hard surface area as the average residence (8,400 sq. feet or 3 ERUs), its stormwater charge would be three times the residential rate per month. The rate per ERU that has been approved by City Council is: \$2.95 per month per ERU.

**Q: Why is the amount of hard surface area used to calculate the rates?**

A: Hard surface areas are used because they prevent water from being absorbed into the ground. Hard surfaces create more runoff and increase the rate at which stormwater drains from an area.

**Q: Is there anything that non-residential property owners can do to reduce their bill?**

A: The City has developed a credits program for non-residential property owners that independently implement measures that decrease stormwater runoff or that has a positive affect on water quality. Application packages are available from the Engineering



*City of Greenville, Ohio  
Stormwater Management Program  
Frequently Asked Questions*

Department (548-4930), on the City's website, or I can have a package mailed to you. I will need your name and mailing address in order to mail a copy to you.

**Q: How do I apply for credits?**

Upon request, we can mail you a credits application package, or you may contact the City of Greenville's Engineering Department at 548-4930 and request a credits application package.

**Q: When will I know how much my bill will be?**

A: I can give you the number of ERUs for your property; all I need is your current utility billing account number or property address. Your quarterly charge will be shown on your first bill this summer. However, you can estimate your bill by multiplying the number of ERUs by the ERU rate of \$2.95 per ERU per month.

**Q: What if I don't agree with the City's calculation of the amount of hard surface area I have on my property?**

A: You can contact the Safety/Service Director at 548-1819. There is a process in place to review that data with you and make any necessary adjustments.

**Q: When will rates go up?**

A: City Council approved a rate schedule through the year 2012. Rates will be reviewed again beginning in 2011.

**Q: Isn't this just another tax?**

A: No, it is a user fee based on the amount of stormwater runoff a property contributes to the system.

**Q: I don't remember voting on this tax. How can the city do this without a vote?**

A: This is not a tax. This is a user fee just like your water and sewer user fee. Under State Law, cities are allowed to set up a user fee for water, sanitary sewer and/or stormwater by a vote of City Council. A referendum or vote of the people is not required under this law.

**Q: How can we be sure that the money raised will be used for stormwater improvements and not diverted to other projects by the city?**

A: All of the funds raised by the utility will go into a stormwater "Enterprise Fund." Under state law, money in enterprise funds can only be used for their intended purposes. The City currently has an enterprise fund for its sanitary sewer utility.

**Q: Won't this utility create a whole new government bureaucracy?**

A: The stormwater utility will be operated within the City's current Departments. Only a small portion of the funds will be used for administration. The funds will be used for operations; maintenance of the current system; and capital improvement projects – the actual construction of stormwater infrastructure. The remainder will be used for engineering, planning, public education, and regulation/enforcement expenses.



## **Use of Funds & Results**

**Q: How much money does the city expect the stormwater utility to collect?**

A: The utility will generate approximately \$600K per year.

**Q: How will the money collected for the stormwater utility be used?**

A: Over half of the funds will be used for operations and maintenance of the current system. Remember, very little preventative maintenance is currently being done. A quarter of the funds will be available for capital improvement projects – the actual construction of stormwater infrastructure. The remainder would go for engineering, planning, public education, and regulation/enforcement expenses.

**Q: How soon can we expect to see results like reduced flooding?**

A: Faced with an aging stormwater system, the stormwater utility is clearly not a quick fix. It is, however, a first step in solving a long-neglected problem. Residents will see gradual improvements over time.

**Q: What issues will be addressed first when the stormwater utility is implemented?**

A: The City will first work to ensure that it is in compliance with the new, strict EPA regulations. Crews will then begin tackling the backlog of maintenance needs on the system. Finally, system improvements will begin.

## **Environmental**

**Q: How does stormwater affect the environment?**

A: One of the reasons the city is implementing the stormwater utility is to meet tough, new U.S. EPA regulations. In addition to flooding, poor storm drainage also causes water pollution. Uncontrolled run-off contributes to erosion, which causes sediment build-up in our streams and rivers.

Stormwater also picks up a lot of things on its way to area streams and rivers – litter, road salt, lawn and garden chemicals and more. Backyard mechanics that drain oil, antifreeze or gas into the storm sewer pose a threat to the environment.

**Q: How will the new utility help the environment?**

A: The stormwater utility will provide funding for public education to help reduce pollution. The new utility will also fund testing and strict enforcement of current regulations on erosion and pollution control measures.

**Q: What happens if the City fails to meet the new requirements and regulations of the EPA?**

A: The city could face fines of up to \$35,500 per day per for each violation.