

Storm Water Utility

What is a Storm Water Utility?

Simply put, a storm water utility is a program that funds and manages rain water, snow melt, and run off. The purpose of the storm water utility is to reduce:

- The amount of sediments and pollutants that run into the Fox River
- The chance of storm water getting into the sanitary sewer system
- The erosion of land
- The possibility of water damage to our homes and businesses

The Storm Water Utility is a municipal utility district that operates in the same fashion as a sanitary sewer or water utility. Charges collected by the Storm Water Utility are used for the administration, planning, construction, and maintenance of the municipality's existing and future storm water management systems. These systems include all natural and manmade storm water conveyance facilities operated and maintained by the municipality including retention/detention ponds, ditches, storm sewers, roads, and waterways.

Why do Municipalities Create A Storm Water Utility?

The federal government through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) **require** all local governments in urban areas to improve the quality of the storm water that goes into our lakes, rivers, and streams.

This requirement has significant costs associated with it. The Storm Water Utility is a mechanism to raise the revenue needed to plan for and comply with these regulations. As opposed to property taxes, the Storm Water Utility bases its charges on the amount of hard surface (impervious) area located on the property. Some municipalities decide to use the Storm Water Utility based on the fact that this system more equitably distributes costs than property taxes.

How are Storm Water Utility charges calculated?

Storm water utility charges are based on "Equivalent Runoffs Units" or ERU"s. An ERU is the average impervious area of a single family home.

Impervious area refers to any surface that does not allow the natural infiltration of water into the soil (examples include roofs, patios, driveways, sidewalks, and pavement). A "Storm Water Utility Fee" is assessed for each "ERU" that a property has.