



# VILLAGE OF MUKWONAGO STORM WATER UTILITY

## Frequently Asked Questions

### WHAT IS A STORM WATER UTILITY?

A Storm Water Utility provides a separate source of funds that are used exclusively for storm water management.

### WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THESE FUNDS AS COMPARED TO THE GENERAL TAX FUND?

These separate funds are dedicated to the planning, maintenance and construction of storm water facilities, such as detention ponds, storm sewer maintenance/construction/reconstruction and erosion control. All properties within the Village, including nonprofit organizations such as schools and churches contribute to the fund based upon their impervious and pervious areas.



### WHAT ARE "IMPERVIOUS AND PERVIOUS AREAS"?

Impervious areas are those that do not absorb rainwater. Examples include the roof of a building, driveways, parking lots, paved playground areas, tennis courts or hard packed soil. Pervious areas are those that absorb rainwater and primarily consist of lawns and other grassy surface areas. While these areas do absorb rain water, pervious surface areas generate some runoff, primarily during heavy rain events.



### WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT STORM WATER RUNOFF?

The most obvious effect of storm water runoff occurs during heavy rainstorms, when flooding and basement backups become a problem. However, the pollution to local rivers, streams and lakes can be significant from even small amounts of runoff. Storm water discharge from 1 square mile of road or parking lots can yield 20,000 gallons of residual oil per year.

## ISN'T THIS JUST ANOTHER TAX - A "RAIN TAX?"

No. Because Storm Water Utilities are generally funded by a user fee, all properties that contribute to runoff are charged based on their impervious and pervious area. Residential properties generally pay less in a Storm Water Utility than they would through the general tax roll. This is because the fees are not based on property valuation but on the amount of storm water runoff. A commercial property or a church has far more storm water runoff than a home, and is charged accordingly.



## CAN I DEDUCT THIS FEE FROM MY TAXES?

No. These fees are not tax deductible, like your property tax. However, some residential homeowners pay less with this system - even taking into account the loss of a deduction for income tax purposes.

## HOW WILL I PAY THIS FEE?

The user charge will be included in your regular quarterly sewer/water bill.

## WHAT IF I OWN A VACANT LOT? WILL I BE REQUIRED TO PAY THE FEE?

Yes, vacant lots will be charged a user fee; however the fee will be less than a developed property with impervious surface area. In most cases, vacant residential lots will pay half the charge of a developed residential lot.

## HOW WERE FEES DETERMINED?

By using aerial photography, pervious and impervious surfaces were digitally outlined to determine the amount of pervious and impervious area. An average was determined for single family homes. Commercial, manufacturing and industrial properties will be charged based on the amount of pervious and impervious area compared to a single-family home.

## WHY DON'T WE JUST PAY FOR THIS THE WAY WE ALWAYS HAVE - THROUGH THE GENERAL FUND?

Separating these funds provides a stable source of revenue, and assures that long-term planning that saves dollars can occur. Storm water planning that anticipates problems can help to eliminate catastrophic flooding. The property loss, economic damage, public health threat and threat to human safety that is caused by flooding is very real. Charges are more fair because they are based on runoff, not property value.

## WILL THE VILLAGE HAVE TO HIRE MORE PEOPLE TO TAKE CARE OF THE STORM WATER UTILITY?

No. A Storm Water Utility does not add another layer of government. Because this fee will be added to your regular utility bill, there are no additional mailing costs.

## WHAT OBJECTIVES WERE IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMITTEE AS IMPORTANT FOR THE VILLAGE OF MUKWONAGO?

The proposed Utility and storm water management and user charges were recommended by a Committee with representatives from Village government, businesses, non-profits and residents. The Committee identified the following three goals for storm water management and funding:

- Allocate costs in a fair and equitable manner
- Generate adequate revenues for storm water management
- Improve accountability for storm water management funding

The following chart shows the anticipated charges, and how they compare to the current method of funding through property taxes.

### VILLAGE OF MUKWONAGO STORM WATER UTILITY COMPARISON OF PROPOSED USER CHARGES VS. PROPERTY TAXES

Parcel Type	Parcel Size (acres)	Impervious Area (sf)	ERU's	Equalized Value	Estimated Storm Water User Charge	Property Taxes (for Storm Water)
Vacant Residential Lot	0.25	0	0.5	\$90,000	\$25	\$26
Single-Family Residence	0.25	3,600	1.0	\$250,000	\$50	\$72
Large Commercial	10.00	200,000	41.0	\$4,000,000	\$2,050	\$1,145
Large Manufacturing	25.00	500,000	101.5	\$4,500,000	\$5,075	\$1,288
Large Institutional	10.00	150,000	32.5	\$0	\$1,625	\$0

\*Example parcels for demonstration purposes. The actual user charges for non-residential parcels would depend on the actual amount of impervious area on each parcel. More information, including the entire Storm Water Utility Feasibility Study, can be found on the Village's website at: [www.villageofmukwonago.com](http://www.villageofmukwonago.com)

