Hazen and Sawyer
150 E Campus View Blvd, #133
Columbus, OH 43235 • 614.781.9655

City of Mount Vernon Stormwater Utility Funding Report

Final Report
Stormwater Utility
50155-000
June 12, 2020

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Appendices

List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Definition
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CIPs	Capital Improvement Projects
City	City of Mount Vernon
ERU	Equivalent Residential Unit
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
GIS	Geographic Information System
HOA	Home Owners' Association
LOS	Level of Service
M	Million
MCMs	Minimum Control Measures
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Program
ODOT	Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio EPA	Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
sqft	Square Feet
SWAC	Stormwater Advisory Committee
SWMP	Stormwater Management Program
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers

Executive Summary

The City of Mount Vernon needs funding to meet stormwater regulatory requirements and provide needed drainage and flooding mitigation improvements to provide better service to the citizens of Mount Vernon.

Working with a Stormwater Advisory Committee, the City will developed a proposal for City Council to consider that included an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) rate of $6 per month to generate funding needed to meet permit requirements and perform necessary capital projects. It was recommended that credits will be limited to 50% of the total bill and will include education, retention/detention, and maintenance related activities. Tiered rates will be an option within the stormwater utility structure to address areas where maintenance or even capital improvements may be required.

A stormwater utility will provide dedicated funding so that the City's stormwater issues are addressed, and permit compliance is achieved.

Mount Vernon City Council approved a stormwater utility at a rate of $4 per ERU starting July 1, 2020, and increasing to $5 per ERU in 2021, and $6 per ERU in 2022. Credits for retention/detention were included, education and maintenance credits were not included in the ordinance.

1. Program Background

The City of Mount Vernon (City) owns, operates, and maintains the municipal stormwater system which provides stormwater management services throughout the incorporated limits of the City. System elements include stormwater pipes, catch basins, culverts, swales, ditches, outfalls as well as control structures such as ponds and stormwater Best Management Practices, or BMPs. Municipal stormwater systems are typically operated to maintain adequate drainage and to limit of the discharge of pollutants to local waterways. Drainage maintenance is required for public safety and economic viability. The control of pollutant runoff is a requirement of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Program (NPDES) as specified by the City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit, issued by Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA). The MS4 seeks to achieve compliance with the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251), and the Ohio Water Pollution Control Act (ORC Chapter 6111).

The City experiences frequent calls for flood mitigation and drainage improvements, often related to the City's aging stormwater infrastructure. The calls for improvements and maintenance exceed stormwater program funding which has historically been provided through various City funding sources (Table 2-1). Additionally, the compliance requirements associated with the MS4 permit exceed the municipal program budget. Over the past few years, the City has had to pass up regional, state, and federal funding due to a lack of program-required cost sharing. As a result, the City initiated this stormwater utility study to evaluate options for establishing adequate funding and to meet both the regulatory compliance requirements as well as the increasing system maintenance and improvement needs.

2. Existing and Future Stormwater Needs

Over the past decade, the City's stormwater system program has primarily focused on responding to priority problems, providing emergency repairs as needed. System maintenance and improvement planning has been limited, in keeping with available funding. As a result, there is a significant backlog of areas needing rehabilitation, replacement, and extension. Compliance requirements including system maintenance and inspection are also not being met with current funding.

The City has received numerous complaints from nearly all sectors of the City. Complaints include standing water, flooding, sink holes, clogged or overflowing catch basins, and culvert issues. Figure 2-1 illustrates the 114 documented complaints the City received from 2014 through 2018.

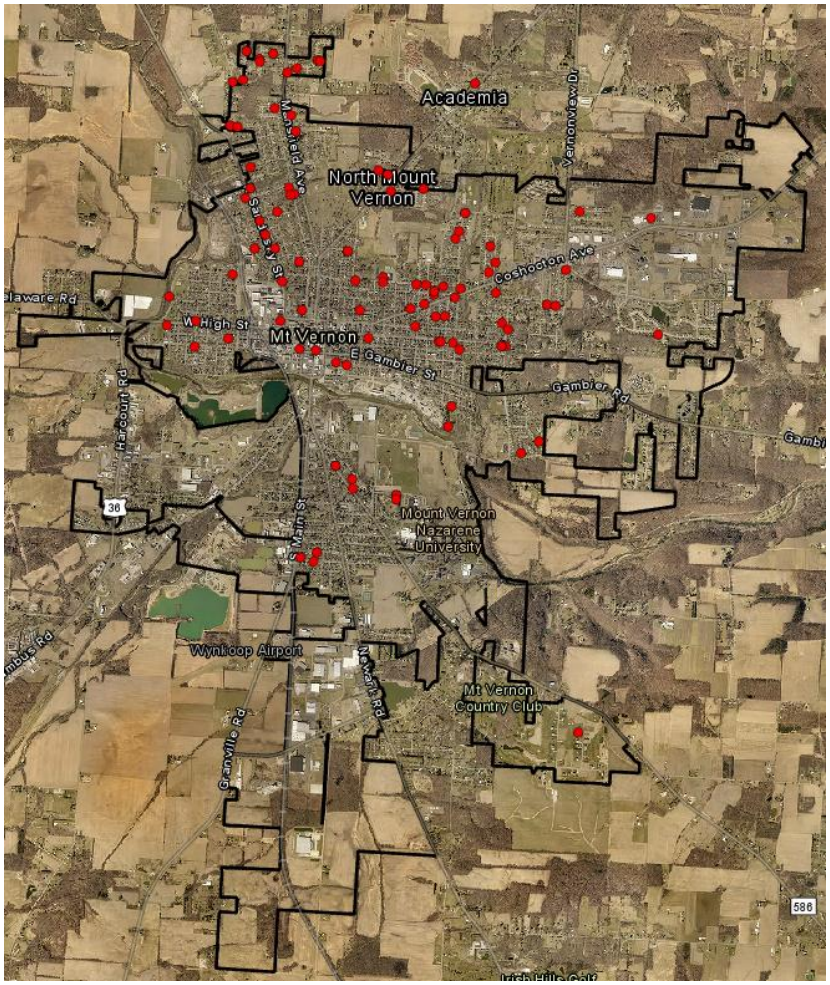


Figure 2-1: Stormwater Related Complaints 2014 to 2018.

2.1 Existing Funding

Stormwater related activities are currently funded through various City funding sources (Table 2-1). The stormwater budget varies annually, with appropriations designated for stormwater services under the

Street Department budget, among others. The total annual Street Department budget is approximately $1M, with stormwater related costs representing approximately 40% of the budget, not including equipment repairs or purchases. The Engineering Department performs storm system inspections, compiles MS4 records for annual reporting and maintains GIS data on the stormwater system, which are not included in these costs. There are currently 6 funds available for stormwater related work, a stormwater utility would provide a dedicated source, as needed to maintain the City's compliance and improvement program. Table 2-1 outlines the funding sources, and what they can be used to fund.

Table 2-1: Stormwater Funding Sources and Permissive Use

Fund	Funding Source	Fund Use
101: General Fund Engineering	City General Fund	Capital Projects and Labor
201: Street Operations Fund	Gas, Permissive License, and City Income Taxes	Street Department Operations and Labor
202: State Highway Fund	Gas and Permissive License Taxes	Materials for State Routes
203: Street Resurfacing	Permissive Tax, projects approved by Knox County	Annual Street Resurfacing
211: Permissive Tax on Licenses	Permissive License Tax	Material for City Streets and Alleys
405: Roads and Bridges Fund	City Income Tax	Capital Road, Bridges, Stormwater Projects
710: Stormwater Utility	**Stormwater Utility Fees**	**Regulatory Compliance, Planning, Design, Construction, and Labor for Stormwater**

As reflected in Table 2-2, the City recently purchased several catch basins in 2016 and 2017 and installed those catch basins in 2017 and 2018. These were primarily installed where roadway projects were being performed. The new catch basins improve drainage and help to preserve the roadway. The majority of the money invested in stormwater system improvements has been in conjunction with roadway projects.

Table 2-2: Annual Street Department Stormwater Expenses

Year	Materials and Supplies (Catch Basin and Tile Repair)	Labor (Catch Basin and Tile Repairs)	Street Sweeping (Includes Labor)	Leaf Collection (Includes Labor)	Total*
2016	$28,109	$148,960	$29,484	$99,113	$305,666
2017	$28,847	$243,360	$30,086	$101,136	$403,429
2018	$23,934	$236,800	$30,700	$103,200	$394,634

* Does not include equipment repairs and purchases or an estimated $15,000 annually for flood control levee spraying and mowing.

With the current level of funding, the City has only been able to address situations in failure through reactive maintenance and repair. It is estimated that about 90% of the repairs completed by the City were due to failure. The existing level of funding is also not sufficient to maintain compliance or perform stormwater-specific capital projects. As the system continues to age an increased need for repairs and improvements, as well as emergency repairs, should be anticipated.

2.2 Regulatory Compliance

The City of Mount Vernon, in accordance with the NPDES MS4 Phase II program, is required to comply with all elements of their MS4 Permit to fulfill the requirements put forth in the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251), and the Ohio Water Pollution Control Act (ORC Chapter 6111). Non-compliance with the permit may result in a Notice of Violation and fines. Lack of funding is not an acceptable reason to Ohio EPA for non-compliance of the MS4 permit. The City has not been able to provide the labor and materials necessary to achieve compliance over the past 5-year permit period. There are several areas where the City needs to improve, as discussed below.

2.2.1 Compliance Requirements

As a Phase II MS4 community, the City must develop a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) that addresses the six Minimum Control Measures (MCMs) as reflected in Table 2-3. Each of the MCMs contain a specific list of requirements that need to be met for permit compliance. The City's annual reports must be submitted to the Ohio EPA, documenting the progress made on the SWMP for each of the MCMs.

The City recently received a Notice of Violation from the Ohio EPA regarding the frequency of construction inspection performed by City staff. The MS4 permit also requires that Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as stormwater ponds and dry detention basins (both public and private), be inspected by City staff annually. Currently only one pond is inspected each year. The City is working on mapping and cataloging BMPs that require inspection. This information will be used to develop and fund a compliant inspection program. Additional permit requirements include collection of dry-weather flow samples checking for potential cross connections at 7 locations and ultimately the elimination of such discharges.

Additionally, the City's inspection and monitoring efforts of the storm system do not meet the requirements of the MS4 Permit. Over the past 5-year permit cycle, only a small percentage of catch basins have been inspected on an annual basis. The catch basins inspected typically required replacement or repair, resulting in additional work. The City has been conducting these repairs in conjunction with the inspections, thereby decreasing the number of inspections completed each year.

Table 2-3: Minimum Control Measures

Minimum Control Measure	Performance Standard	Annual Report
Public Education	Include more than one method and target at least five different stormwater themes over the 5-year permit cycle. At minimum one theme shall target the development community. The program must reach 50% of the population over the 5-year permit cycle.	Identify mechanism used, the stormwater theme, audience targeted, and how many people were reached.
Public Involvement	Include at minimum five public involvement activities over the 5-year permit term.	Identify each involvement/participation activity, describe the activity, and how many people participated.
Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination	Initial dry weather screening of all stormwater outfalls over the 5-year permit term. Establish long-term system wide surveillance and targeted investigations. Perform any needed stormwater system mapping updates.	Identify outfalls dry-weather screened, where there was dry-weather flow, any illicit connections (and whether eliminated or not), and summary of map updates
Construction Stormwater Management	Perform pre-construction stormwater pollution prevention plan review of all projects with greater than 1 acre of disturbance. Include an initial inspection and follow up monthly inspections.	Report the number of construction sites, number of pre-construction plan reviews, number and frequency of inspections, number of violations issued, number of enforcement actions taken, and number of complaints received and responded
Post Construction Stormwater Management	Perform pre-construction stormwater pollution prevention plan review of all projects with greater than 1 acre of disturbance to ensure there are proper controls. Inspect that controls are installed per requirements and ensure long-term operation and maintenance plans are developed and agreements are in place.	Report the number of applicable sites requiring post-construction controls, the number of pre-construction plan reviews, number of inspections performed to ensure structures are built to requirements, and number of long-term operation and maintenance plans are developed, and agreements are in place.
Municipal Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping	Annual employee training and maintaining a documented operation and maintenance program for procedures, controls, maintenance schedules, and recordkeeping.	Document summary of employee training programs and the number of employees trained, and a summary of activities and procedures implemented from the operation and maintenance program.

2.3 Future Stormwater Needs

The City currently has limited information on the stormwater system, as needed to develop a long-term plan for system maintenance and improvement. The engineering staff perform inspections and repairs of catch basins at a rate of about 100 catch basins per year. With approximately 1,600 catch basins in the

City, they have inspected less than 30% of these structures. The storm sewers have not been inspected, and they are likely full of debris and in need of cleaning. The City has historically addressed stormwater problems only when a storm sewer or catch basin fails. However, in response to citizen complaints, stormwater capital improvement projects have been identified to alleviate known problems.

Additional stormwater system improvements are needed throughout the City. There are specific developments where the catch basins are failing due to poor construction methods. On the west end of the City, there is no curb and gutter to provide adequate drainage from the roadway. Consequently, the storm sewers are clogged and in need of cleaning. On the north side of the City, the storm sewers are undersized and collapsing. There is no storm sewer system present in the south quadrant of the City and while the east end has a limited storm sewer system, the ditch system is prone to flooding.

Given the widespread need for storm system maintenance and improvement, it would be prudent for the City to conduct a master planning study to identify and quantify storm system needs and develop a risk-based prioritized plan for scheduling improvements. This planning document will help the City understand the true cost for the storm system management as needed to maintain both system function in flood control and pollutant load reduction.

2.3.1 Future Operations and Maintenance Needs

The future Stormwater Master Plan should include a proactive operations and maintenance program. The future operation and maintenance program must also address compliance inspection requirements. The City has estimated that the filling of three existing vacant full-time positions would be necessary to help meet construction inspection requirements, inspect catch basins annually, and follow up on illicit discharges to meet the MS4 permit requirements.

As previously mentioned, over the past two years, catch basins were repaired in conjunction with roadway projects. The City recently improved their catch basin inspection procedures, which has resulted in an increase in repairs as the inspections were more thorough. The City maintains a GIS layer indicating the location of the catch basins that are the City's responsibility. A separate database contains information documenting whether the catch basin was inspected, cleaned, repaired, or rebuilt. **In the future, it is recommended that the City merge these databases and develop a prioritized plan to inspect and repair catch basins**.

Street sweeping is performed on curbed streets only. The program begins in March and runs through fall each year, until the leaves fall. Disposal of street sweepings is costly as they must be sent to a landfill, which includes hauling and additional environmental charges. **Future considerations for street sweeping include analysis of the remaining useful life of the street sweeping equipment**, and continued monitoring of disposal costs.

Leaf pickup is a month-long process that requires crews to pick up fallen leaves on all City streets approximately three times within the pickup window. There is a lot of community interaction during this season and the Street Department tries to provide residents with 3-days warning of when they may have their leaves picked up in front of their house. **Equipment evaluation should be performed and opportunities to aid in MS4 compliance through public education should be explored through the leaf collection process**.

The City needs to dedicate adequate funding for both staff and equipment to perform the compliance-required cleaning and inspection of the storm sewer system and BMPs.

2.3.2 Future Capital Needs

A Stormwater Master Plan is needed to assess overall system needs and to develop a prioritized plan for compliance and system improvement. This effort should quantify maintenance and operations needs as well as needs for future improvements.

Currently, the City's only planned stormwater related capital expenditures are associated with roadway projects. The amount of capital work that is completed each year is determined by the budget available. Once the budget is allocated, unfunded projects typically get moved to the following year. Table 2-4 summarizes the planned capital projects and the estimated cost associated with stormwater. These planned capital costs for stormwater are well over $1M for the next couple of years. However, due to the lack of funding, it is likely that some of these projects will be either non-performed, reduced in scope, or pushed to the next year.

The City attempts to leverage as much outside grant funding for stormwater as possible. However, grants typically require a match. The City recently had to turn down a $135,000 grant because they could not provide the $160,000 needed for the project match. Consequently, the City has reduced the number of applications for grants they submit due to the need for this funding match.

Table 2-4: Draft Stormwater Portion of Planned Capital Projects

Project	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
ODOT Paving SR229		$ 70,800						
ODOT Paving SR3			$ 50,000					
Mount Vernon Ave Bridge Replacement	$ 394,523							
Main Street Bike Trail Underpass		$ 25,000						
Sandusky Street (South) Phase III			$ 60,000	$ 800,000				
Sandusky Street (North) Safety Project (At Belmont and Tilden) Environmental and Design		$ 282,858						
Delano Sanitary Sewer Flood Damage	$ 45,000							
Brick Street Project (maintenance only)	$ 45,000	$ 45,000	$ 45,000	$ 45,000	$ 45,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000
OAK and Catherine Street 2019-2021			$ 200,000					
Hamtramck Street 2021 -2023			$ 300,000	$ 1,500,000	$ 1,500,000	$ 1,500,000		
Burgess Street 2024 -2026							$ 1,600,000	$ 1,600,000
Resurfacing Program	$ 70,048	$ 40,000	$ 100,000	$ 40,000	$ 40,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000
Main Street and Chestnut Street Intersection Improvements			$ 20,000					
Yellow Jacket Drive	$ 10,000	$ 20,000						
Mulberry and Belmont Street Storm and Sidewalk	$ 39,000	$ 520,000						
Commercial Alley Paving	$ 126,885	$ 102,769	$ 200,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000
Newark Rd and Dixie Drive Waterline	$ 35,584							
AFP Kokosing River Work (OEPA Grant match)	$ 50,000	$ 150,000	$ 150,000					
Upper Gilchrist, New Gambier, Eastern Star Roadway - Preliminary Plans				$ 45,000	$ 600,000			
Newark Road Sidewalk	$ 225,952							
Storm Water Phase II Program (Ohio EPA Compliance)	$ 8,000	$ 18,000	$ 30,000	$ 19,000	$ 19,000	$ 19,000	$ 20,000	$ 20,000
Storm Water Utility Feasibility Study	$ 140,000							
Coshocton Ave, Yauger Rd, Vernonview Dr, Intersection Improvements						$ 4,500	$ 60,000	
Edgewood Road Traffic Calming				$ 28,275	$ 377,000			
State Route 13 Realignment to South Main Street			$ 506,890					
Mansfield Ave. Bike Path						$ 3,023	$ 40,300	
Beech Street to Belmont Extension						$ 113,800	$ 113,800	$ 113,800
Clinton Road to SR13 Extension								$ 10,277
PID KNO-786, 36 Paving (Q4 2018)	$ 117,449							
PID KNO-13 (South) Paving (Sale in 2019)	$ 300							
Alley Work (Annual)	$ 20,536	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 100,000	$ 100,000	$ 100,000	$ 100,000	$ 100,000
North End: Grange, Fern, Clinton, Pearl			$ 400,000	$ 400,000	$ 400,000	$ 400,000		
North End: Decatur, Northgate		$ 40,000		$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 400,000	$ 400,000	$ 400,000
Levee Restoration	$ 4,000	$ 4,000	$ 40,000	$ 40,000	$ 40,000	$ 60,000	$ 40,000	$ 170,000
Street and Engineering Departments for O+M	$ 440,775	$ 683,635	$ 698,131	$ 712,792	$ 727,621	$ 742,623	$ 757,799	$ 773,154
TOTAL	**$ 1,773,052**	**$ 2,052,062**	**$2,850,021**	**$ 3,830,067**	**$ 3,948,621**	**$3,492,946**	**$3,281,899**	**$3,337,231**

3. Stormwater Utility Funding

Municipalities throughout Ohio and across the nation have established stormwater utilities in order to equitably fund increasing costs for stormwater management requirements. Over 130 communities in Ohio currently have an established stormwater utility. The stormwater fee charged by the utilities is not a tax but rather a fee for services provided, similar to electric, water, and wastewater utilities. Properties that generate more stormwater runoff, pay more for this service. The benefits associated with stormwater utility development include equitability as well as the creation of a dedicated funding source which can be used to fund long-range planning and needed capital improvements. Municipalities with dedicated funding are better able to develop proactive improvement plans, position for grant funding, and generate bonding capacity.

There are a few ways to establish the rate structure for a stormwater utility. The most common approach and the approach proposed by the City of Mount Vernon is the Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) basis. This approach analyzes the properties in the community, focusing on residential and nonresidential categories. All residential properties are charged a base rate, associated with the average impervious area. All nonresidential properties are then billed according to the number of ERUs, based on their lot-specific impervious area (IA). The rate development process is described below.

3.1 Residential Properties

The ERU for the City was calculated based on the average impervious area from a set of parcels selected at random. The number of parcels required to make up a statistically significant sample size was calculated using a precision-based sample size formula,

$$n = \left(\frac{z\sigma}{E}\right)^2$$

where n is the sample size, $z = 1.96$ is a constant corresponding to a 95% confidence level, σ is the standard deviation of impervious area for residential parcels, and $E = 5\%$ which is the sampling error.

From the equation above, the number of parcels needed for a statistically significant sample size for the City was determined to be 147 parcels. An additional 50 parcels were added to total 197 parcels due to the chance of a flawed parcel being selected (e.g., no house or impervious area, parcel misclassified as residential, etc.).

The sample size calculated from the equation was verified using the following z-test,

$$z = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu_o}{\sigma/\sqrt{n}}$$

Where z is the distance from the mean in relation to the standard deviation of the mean, $\bar{x}$ is the average impervious area of the random sample, μ_o is the average impervious area for all residential parcels, σ is the standard deviation of impervious area for residential parcels, and n is the sample size.

To keep the random selection, the absolute value of z should be less than 1.96. The value of z from our random selection is 0.08, verifying a good random sample.

Figure 3-1 shows the location of the residential parcels selected at random. Each parcel was visually analyzed utilizing aerial orthophotography and split into two primary land-use categories:

- Impervious (e.g., house, driveway, sidewalks, garages, etc.)
- Pervious areas (e.g., lawn, gardens, etc.).

If a parcel extended into a street the street and right of way were excluded from the impervious area calculations. Figure 3-2 is an example of a delineated parcel land use partition.

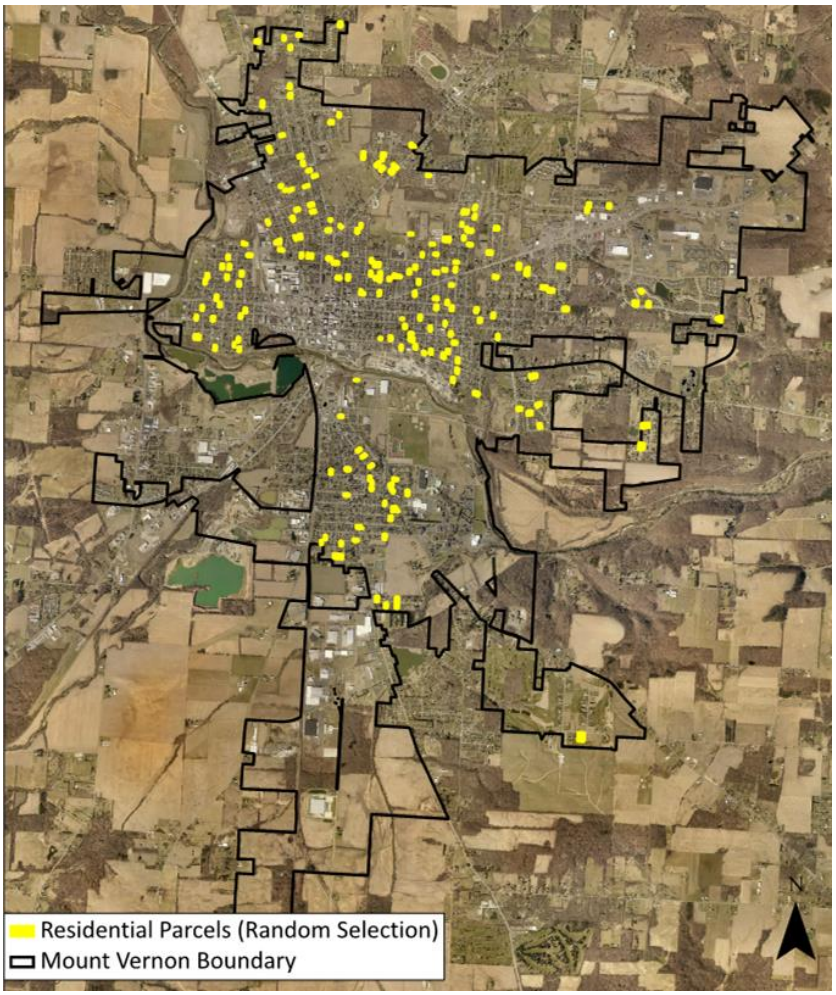


Figure 3-1: Randomly Selected Residential Parcels for ERU Calculation

Figure 3-2: Example of Impervious/Pervious Area Partition

Based on the sample of residential properties, the distribution of impervious area was calculated for the random, representative sample. It was determined that the average impervious area for this sample set was 2,878 square feet, which was rounded up to 2,900 square feet per ERU. Figure 3-3 shows the histogram of impervious area calculated for the random, representative sample of residential properties in the City.

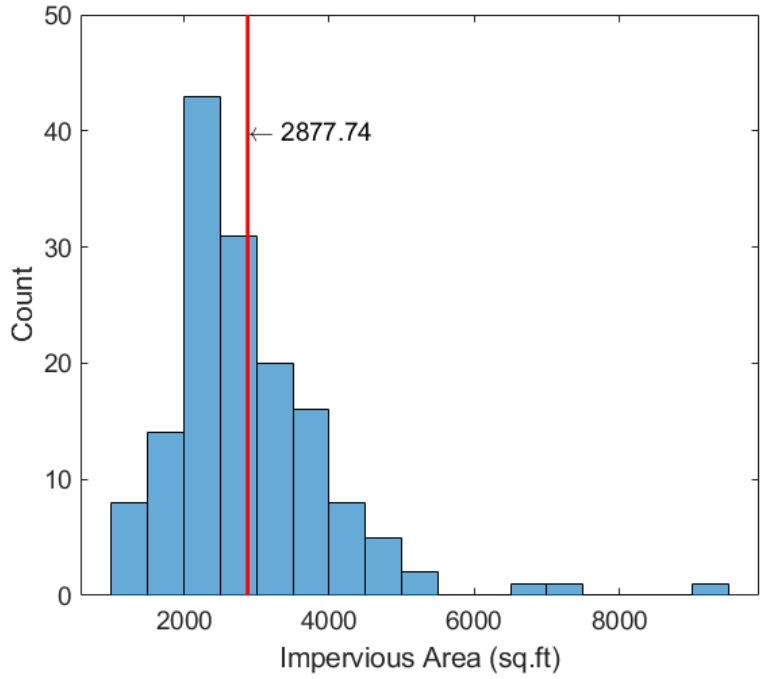


Figure 3-3: Histogram of Random Residential Impervious Area for ERU.

3.2 Non-Residential Properties

All other remaining parcels not zoned as residential were partitioned using aerial orthophotography and site-specific GIS delineations into impervious and pervious areas. As parcels were being partitioned, zone class assignments were checked for consistency. Where a parcel was misclassified (based on existing zoning information), a new zone class assignment was made to improve consistency with ERU estimates. Figure 3-4 shows an overview of the parcel zone classifications.

A total of 9 zone classes were developed:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Religious (Churches)
- HOA (Home Owners' Association)
- Mobile Home Park
- Multiple Family
- Public/Semi-Public
- Education

Table 3-1 outlines the number of ERUs for each category. In the City of Mount Vernon there are over 17,000 ERUs.

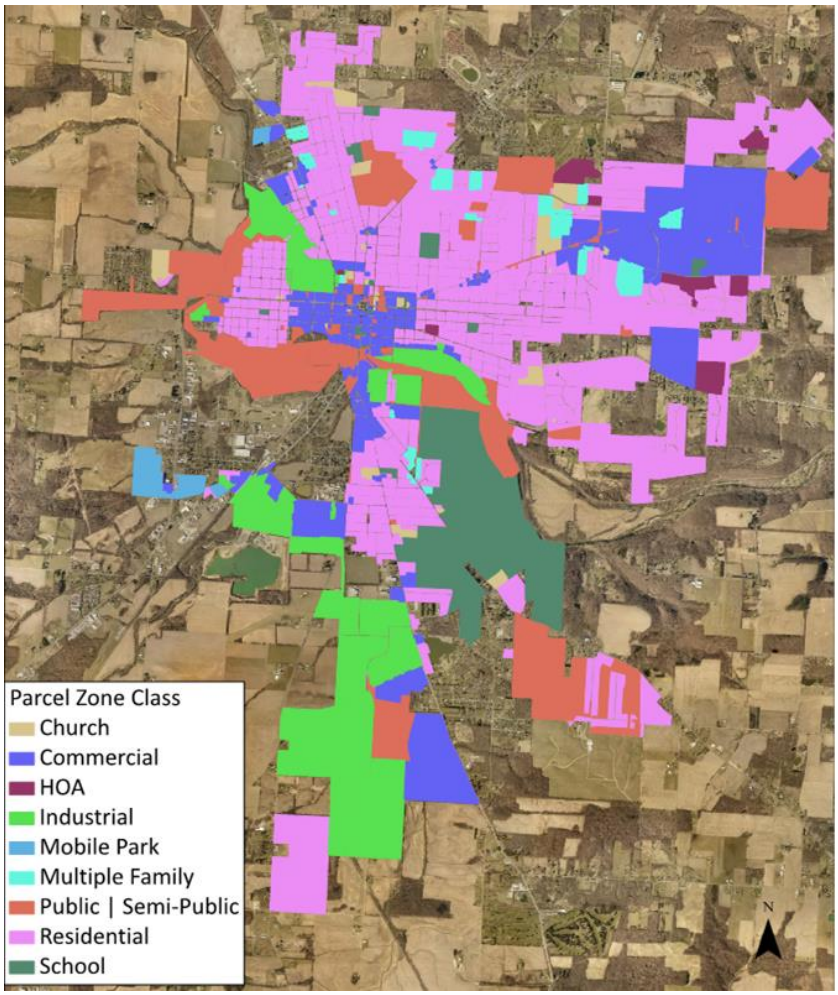


Figure 3-4: Overview of Parcel Zone Classification.

Table 3-1: Preliminary Equivalent Residential Units by Zone Classification

Zone Classification	Total Equivalent Residential Units
Residential	4862
Commercial	5429
Industrial	3462
Religious	357
HOA	316
Mobile Home Park	154
Multiple Family	579
Public/Semi-Public	567
Education	1492

4. Stormwater Utility Rate Analysis

The City convened a Stormwater Advisory Committee (SWAC) of community members including representatives from neighborhoods, local businesses, schools, universities, and religious institutions to discuss the needs, understand the funding possibilities, and help the City evaluate alternative rates and other utility options. Appendix A contains a summary of SWAC member feedback relevant to the stormwater utility.

4.1 Levels of Service

A Level of Service (LOS) is a commitment to deliver services with a specific quality and reliability. Currently, the City is unable to provide the community with a LOS that meets Ohio EPA permit requirements or provides needed maintenance and capital improvements. This existing level of service is LOS 0, the base level associated with existing funding. In order to investigate funding received under the stormwater utility, two LOS levels were created, LOS 1 and LOS 2.

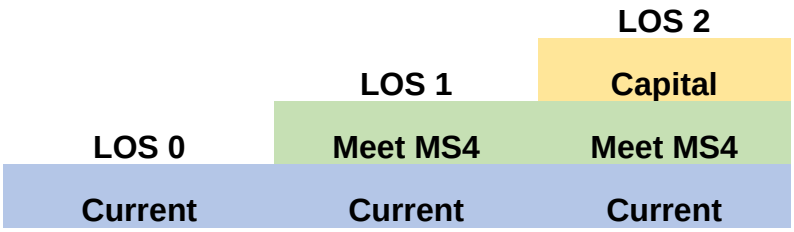


Figure 4-1: Analyzed Levels of Service.

LOS 1 would require additional funding to provide three full-time staff members to the City's stormwater team. This team would be responsible for conducting inspections, performing repairs, and assisting in meeting MS4 compliance. Additional money would also be needed intermittently to perform larger inspections or maintenance activities. Table 4-1 outlines the estimated additional cost of LOS 1.

Table 4-1: Level of Service 1 Estimated Additional Costs

Work	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Stormwater Basin Inspections and Compliance Required Sampling		$20,000		$30,000		$40,000		$50,000
Staff to Meet MS4 Inspection Requirements	$255,840	$262,080	$268,320	$274,560	$280,800	$287,040	$293,280	$299,520

LOS 2 would fund MS4 compliance, like LOS 1, but would also provide additional funding for capital projects. Because there are so many unknowns regarding the stormwater system, specific projects are not currently identified. The preliminary list of projects included in Table 4-2 are primarily related to roadway projects. One of the first efforts with this LOS would be the development of a Stormwater Master Plan to better define and prioritize stormwater projects, culvert repairs, and anticipated levee improvements (a USACE report should be released shortly to assist in defining the work needed). The Stormwater Master Plan effort will help the City develop a risk-based approach to project prioritization.

In addition, it should be noted that the City does not expect that the stormwater utility will fully fund the capital program. It is assumed that grants and other funding sources will be leveraged as much as possible to augment the program.

Table 4-2: Level of Service 2 Estimated Additional Costs

Work	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Raingardens (SWIF Grant)		$18,750	$250,000					
Green Alley Projects	$200,000	$20,000	$200,000	$20,000	$200,000	$20,000	$200,000	$20,000
Storm Sewer Projects	$170,000	$170,000	$205,000	$205,000	$205,000	$205,000	$240,000	$240,000
Levee Immediate Needs		$100,000						
Levee Short Term Needs					$200,000	$200,000		
Levee Long Term Needs								$200,000
Neighborhood Assessment			$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000
Culvert Maintenance Program					$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000
Stormwater Master Plan and GIS		$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000		

The SWAC members recommended proceeding with LOS 2, funding both permit compliance as well as stormwater infrastructure improvements in the City.

4.2 Rate Analysis

In determining a reasonable rate to charge per ERU, research was completed to determine comparable rate for similar cities. Table 4-3 illustrates that for the surrounding area, Mount Vernon's ERU is well within the expected range. The table also illustrates an average monthly rate near $5. The outlier is Groveport, where there are numerous warehouses which generate large amounts of runoff and provide significant utility funding capacity with a low base rate.

Table 4-3: Central Ohio Area Stormwater Utility Charges per ERU

City	Population	ERU (sqft)	Monthly Rate
Canal Winchester	7,900	3,001	$3.00
Groveport	5,500	2,760	$2.00
Gahanna	35,000	- -	$4.33
Newark	49,100	2,600	$6.95
Wooster	27,000	3,050	$5.75
Lancaster	40,000	2,600	$7.64
Pickerington	20,500	- -	$4.50
Marysville	23,500	- -	$4.50
Zanesville	25,500	2,300	$5.00
Mount Vernon	16,600	2,900	

Table 4-4 shows the anticipated funding that could be received based on the ERUs present within the City's jurisdiction, based on Table 3-1. This calculation assumes that no credits are given, and that everyone pays their bill. Note that the current spending by the City is approximately $1M annually, about half of which is for operations and maintenance activities, the other half funding stormwater portions of roadway projects.

Table 4-4: Mount Vernon Potential Annual Funding

Zone Classification	$4 Monthly ERU Rate	$6 Monthly ERU Rate	$8 Monthly ERU Rate
Residential	$233,376	$350,064	$466,752
Commercial	$260,592	$390,888	$521,184
Industrial	$166,176	$249,264	$332,352
Religious	$17,136	$25,704	$34,272
HOA	$15,168	$22,752	$30,336
Mobile Home Park	$7,392	$11,088	$14,784
Multiple Family	$27,792	$41,688	$55,584
Public/Semi-Public	$27,216	$40,824	$54,432
Education	$71,616	$107,424	$143,232
TOTAL	**$826,464**	**$1,239,696**	**$1,652,928**

The following figures illustrate the estimated income (dark blue bars) from the considered ERU rates and the operating (light blue bars) and capital costs (green bars). Calculations anticipate a 2% increase in the ERU rate following the initiation of the rate in 2020. Figures for each of the ERU rates in Table 4-4 are shown below.

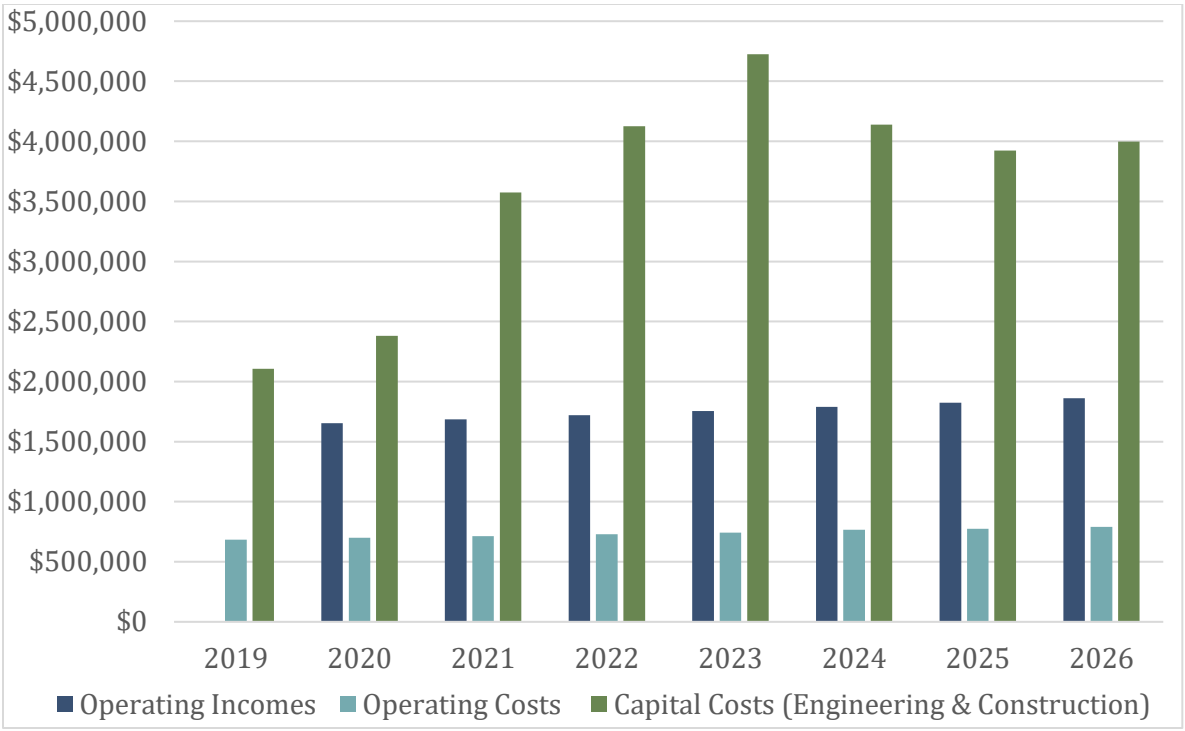


Figure 4-2: Estimated Income and Expenses, $4 ERU with LOS 2.

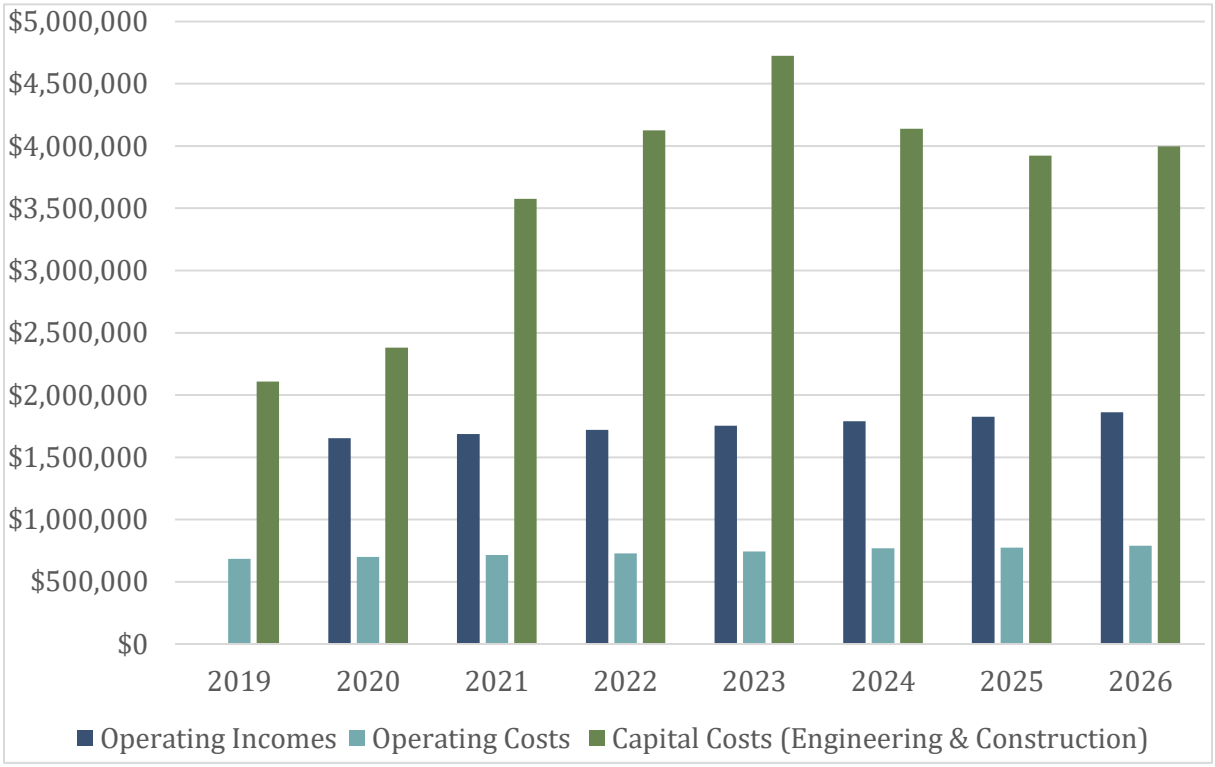


Figure 4-3: Estimated Income and Expenses, $6 ERU with LOS 2.

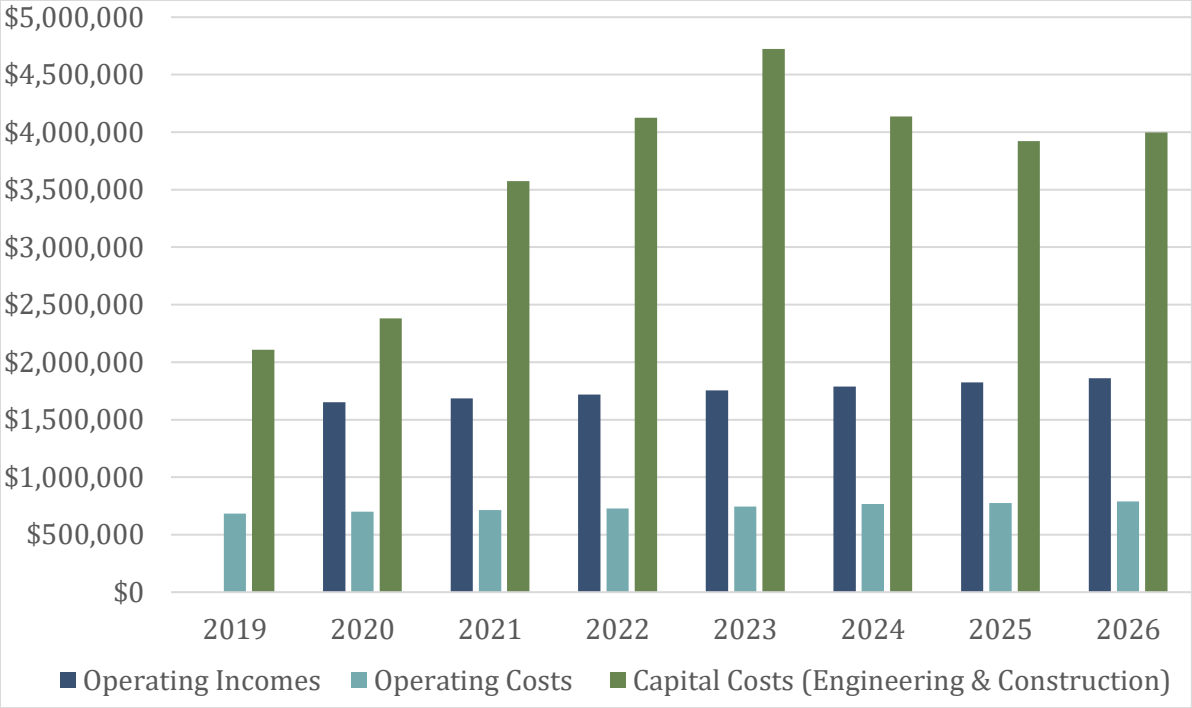


Figure 4-4: Estimated Income and Expenses, $8 ERU with LOS 2.

The SWAC recommended an ERU rate of $6. This would provide the funding to cover the operations and maintenance efforts, meet MS4 requirements, and to provide some funding for capital expenditures, especially neighborhood assessments and improvements. This rate would not fully meet the funding requirements for LOS2. However, it is important to note that not all capital expenditures will be covered.

When City Council approved the stormwater utility, a two-year phase in for the $6 per ERU rate was agreed upon. The phase in would proceed with a $4 per ERU rate beginning July 1, 2020, then a $5 per ERU rate in 2021, and achieving the $6 per ERU in 2022. Credits would not be available until 2022.

4.3 Credits

Credits are commonly used by stormwater utilities to incentivize nonresidential property owners to assist in stormwater management services. The common credit categories include education, retention or detention, and maintenance.

Education credits align with the Public Outreach and Public Involvement MCM portion of the MS4 permit. This credit seeks the aid of schools in the education of the citizens and meet the MS4 requirement of reaching 50% of the population in the 5-year permit cycle. The schools would have to document and inform the City of the education plans and be approved by the City to receive the credit. Schools from preschool to college would be eligible for the credit.

Retention or detention credits would be open to all nonresidential property owners. This credit aims to reduce quantity and improve quality of stormwater flows from private properties. Customers seeking this

credit would have to document the improvement and provide the City documentation to receive credit approval.

Maintenance credits would be open to nonresidential customers. This credit targets the public involvement and participation MCM. Customers would receive credits for documented activities including participating in Adopt-a-Road/Stream/Park programs, providing litter collection, or participating in a cleanup program.

Credits are typically applied as a percentage off the total stormwater bill. For nonresidential customers with large impervious areas, participation in a credit program would be helpful in reducing their bill. This also encourages the community to assist the City in meeting MS4 requirements.

The SWAC recommended a maximum credit of 50%. Some members approved greater credits for schools, others were against credits all together. The committee did not want credits to shift the burden from business owners to the residential customers. **The SWAC was in favor of educational, retention and detention, and maintenance credits.**

4.4 Tiers

An option for the stormwater utility is to include a tiered rate structure. The tiers would be utilized for addressing areas where additional stormwater management services are needed.

One proposed tier would be a maintenance tier, which would include customers in areas of town where the City provides maintenance to privately owned stormwater features. The maintenance activities currently include contracted mowing. The contract is currently administered by the City. With the tiered structure, the annual maintenance expense for this mowing would be passed directly on to the customers in these areas on their stormwater utility bill. Figure 4-5 shows an example of one of the possible maintenance areas in the City. The stormwater features being maintained were required to be installed for the homes to be built, therefore the homes that were able to be built because of the stormwater control feature are responsible for paying for that maintenance. These structures exist on private and/or public property.

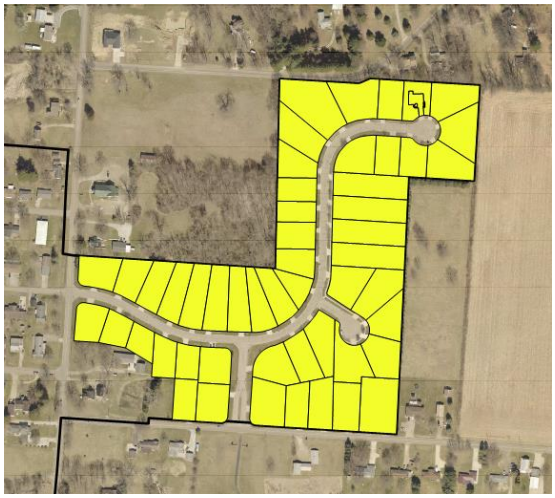


Figure 4-5: Example Possible Maintenance Tier Area.

Another potential tier is for capital projects which would include customers in areas of town where the City could aid in administering a capital project for private citizens. There are currently no such projects active in the City. However, the Knox Cattle Pond, a long-standing structure, was utilized as a stormwater pond for the development of neighborhoods that currently do not have a functioning HOA to provide capital or maintenance funding for the stormwater structures. The tier could be utilized to directly bill the residents in the development or watershed area to acquire funding to pay for the project, located on private property.

The SWAC overall favored a tiered rate structure. The SWAC supported the use of tiers for billing customers who receive additional City services. However, the SWAC was not in favor of the use of tiers to incentivize the City to address private problems. The maintenance tier was viewed as a better use of City services. The capital tier would only be instituted for a limited time, to pay off specifically challenging projects thereby not using public funding to fix problems on private property. If public funds are expended the subdivision owners would be required under City Code section 920.21 to completely reimburse the City for all expenses.

5. Billing and Collection

In order to collect fees associated with the proposed stormwater utility the City would have to bill customers, based on their calculated ERU. The City has recently been upgrading their billing system and will be getting a new system in the near future. It is anticipated that stormwater billing will occur monthly and will be included as a part of the water and wastewater bill. Some billing considerations include:

- Ensuring that the current water/wastewater customer is billed properly for their ERUs. There could be instances when a single property owner has water/wastewater services to a single lot, while other, adjacent lots owned by the same individual may not receive a bill. These lots not receiving a bill may have impervious area that contributes to the stormwater system. **Associating the specific Parcel IDs with the customer in the billing system will be a critical step in the process**.
- Customers that currently do not get a water/wastewater bill may still own lots with impervious area that contributes to the stormwater system. **New customers will need to be added to the billing system and notified of the upcoming charges**.
- During the first several months of implementing the stormwater utility fee, the City should expect a higher customer service call volume and have prepared answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ) regarding the utility. FAQs and bill inserts are provided in Appendix B.
- Nonresidential customers may be curious how their property's impervious areas were delineated. The Engineering Department should be prepared to address those questions and provide the necessary information to the customers.

It is anticipated that after 6 to 12 months most of the billing and collections questions and concerns will have been addressed.

In order to support the credit program, clear, concise documentation needs to be developed that incorporates all the information needed by the City's Engineering Department for MS4 compliance, and the Billing Department so that credits can be properly applied to customer accounts. The City will generate Rules and Regulations to accompany City Ordinance. The Stormwater Master Plan effort can also assist additional documentation needs by providing examples of credit manuals used by nearby utilities.

6. Recommendation

The implementation of a stormwater utility within the City of Mount Vernon will generate the much-needed funding required to meet both regulatory compliance requirements as well as provide vitally needed drainage and flood mitigation improvements. The collected funds will also allow the City to begin proactive system planning, moving beyond emergency repairs. Based on input from the SWAC and the available information provided by the City regarding system function, it is recommended that the stormwater utility include the following:

- An initial ERU rate of $6, to work to achieve LOS 2, where MS4 permit requirements are met and there is funding available to develop a stormwater master plan, perform stormwater focused capital projects, especially neighborhood assessments and improvements.
- Credits for schools and other nonresidential properties for education, retention and detention, and maintenance activities. Total credits on the bill would not be able to exceed 50% of the total bill.

The creation and implementation of a stormwater utility will allow the City to address stormwater needs and meet Ohio EPA MS4 permit requirements. The SWAC concluded in June 2019 with development of a proposal to City Council outlining the recommendations for a stormwater utility, rate, and structure.

Mount Vernon City Council responded by approving a Stormwater Utility. Meeting summaries of the City Council discussions on the stormwater utility are available on the City's webpage.

Appendix A: Stormwater Advisory Committee

Hazen and Sawyer
150 East Campus View Blvd, #133
Columbus, OH 43235 • 614-781-9655

City of Mount Vernon Stormwater Utility SWAC Survey Summary

Draft SWAC Survey Summary
Hazen No. 50155-000
June 18, 2019

List of Definitions

Term	Definition
Capital Project	A project that helps maintain, improve, or create City infrastructure.
Credits	Incentives to help reduce stormwater utility burden on non-residential customers while the City can benefit through assistance in meeting stormwater permit requirements.
Credits, Education	Assist the City in meeting Public Outreach and Public Participation requirements by educating the Citizens on stormwater related topics and providing documentation.
Credits, Maintenance	Assist the City in meeting Public Participation requirements for helping to collect litter that would make it to storm sewers, streams and rivers and providing documentation.
Credits, Retention/Detention	Assist the City by reducing stormwater runoff from impervious areas on private property by installing structures to reduce quantity and improve quality of stormwater and provide the City documentation on the improvements.
ERU	Equivalent Residential Unit, units commonly used in a stormwater utility to charge customers according to the amount of impervious area that they have on their private property.
LOS	Level of Service, a commitment to perform certain actions
LOS 0	Current level of service provided by the City which focuses on emergency repairs and does not meet all regulatory compliance requirements. Capital projects are completed only as limited funding allows.
LOS 1	A level of service where the City meets regulatory requirements but has no additional funds to invest in capital projects.
LOS 2	A level of service where the City meets regulatory requirements and is also able to invest in capital projects.
Ohio EPA	The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the regulating agency that requires the City to meet stormwater regulations.
Phased Approach	A small administrative fee would be charged to customers while the City completes a Stormwater Master Plan to create a prioritized list of improvements before capital improvements or regulatory compliance efforts could begin.
Stormwater Utility	A fee for the municipal services provided related to drainage maintenance, water quality control and flood mitigation. The fee is related directly to the required municipal management of the volume of stormwater runoff from each property.
Survey Monkey	A website survey tool that can be used to poll respondents electronically.
SWAC	Stormwater Advisory Committee, a committee of community members assembled to learn about the City's stormwater system, understand funding options, and provide recommendations and feedback for stormwater funding.
Tier	A rate structure within the stormwater utility where specified customers who require additional services, beyond the City's standard level of service, will receive a higher rate based on the cost of services provided.
Tier, Capital	A tier that could be used by the City, following a mutually approved agreement with the affected property owners. The City must develop a standard protocol for capital tier engagement prior to utilizing this tier for capital projects on **private property**.
Tier, Maintenance	A rate structure that would allow the City to receive reimbursement from specified customers whose stormwater features are being maintained (mowed) by the City.

1. Introduction

The City of Mount Vernon is investigating implementation of a stormwater utility to fund permit compliance, mitigate flooding and to facilitate proactive system management. As part of the investigations a Stormwater Advisory Committee (SWAC) was convened by the Mayor in order to obtain feedback and recommendations for the stormwater utility. The SWAC met four times to discuss stormwater issues in Mount Vernon, regulatory requirements, current and projected costs, and funding options for the City. Members of the SWAC are listed in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: Stormwater Advisory Committee Members

Name	Representing
Clint Bailey	Park National Bank
Karen Oehl	Pastor
Teresa Bemiller	Knox County Commissioner
Gary Koester	Resident
Ron Stull	Knox Community Hospital
Rick Shaffer	Mount Vernon City Schools
Doug Brenneman	Resident
Bruce Malek	Resident
Brenda Crowl	Resident
Julia Warga	Resident
Bill Tepe	Resident
Keith Burley	Ariel Corporation
Cloyd Yough	Resident
Nancy Vail	Council Member
Rob Clendening	Knox Soil Water Conservation District
Tony Edwards	Mount Vernon Nazarene University
Jeffrey Gottke	Area Development Foundation

The SWAC provided feedback on stormwater utility development details in the form of various surveys, conducted on three separate occasions. The first two surveys were conducted during SWAC meetings (the third and fourth meetings). Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any uncertainties before writing down their vote and to add any relevant comments that they had for each question asked. The third survey was administered electronically via Survey Monkey shortly after the fourth SWAC meeting. Participants answered multiple choice questions and had the opportunity to leave comments as well. All three surveys focused on the same fundamental topics related to development of the stormwater utility, although the questions were not worded identically.

2. Survey Topics

The following is a summarization of the results of all the questions for each survey, sorted based on question topic. Six topics were broken out including: Favorability of Stormwater Utility, ERU (Equivalent Residential Unit) Rates, Level of Service, Tiers, Credits, and Phased Approach.

Table 1-1: Surveys Taken

Survey Name	Survey Date(s) Taken
Survey #1	SWAC Meeting #3 April 16, 2019
Survey #2	SWAC Meeting #4 May 20, 2019
Survey #3	Survey Monkey (Electronic) June 5 – June 17, 2019

SWAC members were able to cast their votes anonymously, and they also had the option not to participate. In the descriptions below the number of participants for each of the survey questions is given. The raw data for each survey follows in the appendices following this section.

2.1 Favorability of Stormwater Utility

SWAC is in favor of the creation of a Stormwater Utility.

- Survey #2: Are you in favor of the Utility?
  - Yes- 8 votes out of 10 participants
- Survey #3: Do you support the development of a stormwater utility with a dedicated stormwater enterprise fund that can be used exclusively for stormwater projects? Establishment of a dedicated funding source will enable the City to plan for capital improvements, and to be eligible for grant funding and project bonding.
  - Yes- 11 votes out of 12 participants

2.2 Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) Rates

SWAC is in favor of a $6 ERU rate.

- Survey #1: What ERU rate is reasonable?
  - $6/month- 4 votes out of 10 respondents
  - $5-6/month- 2 votes out of 10 respondents
- Survey #2: What ERU rate?
  - $6/month- 8 votes out of 10 participants

- Survey #3: Do you support a utility fee that would provide just the MINIMUM to fund employees needed to meet Ohio EPA compliance requirements ($4/month)?
    - No- 8 votes out of 12 participants
- Survey #3: Do you feel that the City should enact the stormwater utility with a fee that can fund the personnel for Ohio EPA compliance and development of a capital improvement program ($6/month)?
    - Yes- 10 votes out of 12 participants

2.3 Level of Service

SWAC is in favor of a stormwater level of service that allows the City to meet regulatory requirements and invest in capital projects.

- Survey #1: What level of service do you think is appropriate?
    - LOS 2- 8 votes out of 11 participants
- Survey #3: At the beginning of the committee meetings, someone asked the cost of doing nothing. With the current level of funding, the City can expect increased incidence of cave-ins related to failing infrastructure. The City is also under notice of violation from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), the next step in enforcement would likely be a complete audit with fines attached. Are you comfortable with the City continuing with the current level of funding through the general fund?
    - No- 11 votes out of 12 participants

Note that LOS 2 indicates a level of service where the City meets regulatory requirements and is also able to invest in capital improvements.

2.4 Tiers

SWAC is in favor of maintenance and capital tiers within the stormwater utility.

- Survey #1: Do you think a tiered rate structure is a good idea?
    - Yes- 7 votes out of 11 participants
- Survey #2: Do you like the use of tiers?
    - Yes- 10 votes out of 10 participants
- Survey #3: Are you in favor of the City establishing a tiered structure within the stormwater utility for maintenance services? Properties within the maintenance tier will have an added fee to reimburse the City for maintenance on their private stormwater property (mowing).
    - Yes- 12 votes out of 12 participants
- Survey #3: Are you in favor of the creation of a tier where the City could administer capital projects on private property based on structured agreements with the owner? The

City will establish a guidance manual identifying agreement requirements between the owner and the City with regards to project budget and timeline for reimbursement from parcels directly benefiting from the project.
    - Yes- 11 votes out of 12 participants

2.5 Credits

SWAC is in favor of utilizing credits within the utility, with a maximum credit around 50%, and eligible credits for maintenance, education and retention/detention activities.

- Survey #1: What credits do you support?
    - 7 people out of 10 respondents mentioned credits for education/schools
    - 1 person out of 10 respondents mentioned they were not in favor of any credits
- Survey #1: What is the maximum credit that should be allowed?
    - 50%- 3 votes out of 9 total respondents
    - 50-60%- 1 vote out of 9 total respondents
- Survey #2: What types of credits do you approve?
    - Maintenance, Education, Retention/Detention- 5 votes out of 10 participants
    - Education, Retention/Detention- 2 votes out of 10 participants
- Survey #3: Credits help in reducing the stormwater utility burden on customers while benefiting the City through assistance in meeting permit requirements. Do you support credits?
    - Yes- 11 votes out of 12 participants
- Survey #3: What types of credits do you approve?
    - Maintenance, Education, Retention/Detention- 10 votes out of 12 participants
- Survey #3: What maximum credit level do you support?
    - 50%- 6 votes out of 12 participants
    - 40%- 3 votes out of 12 participants

2.6 Phased Approach

SWAC is not in favor of a phased approach.

- Survey #2: Would you prefer a phased approach?
    - No- 9 votes out of 10 participants
- Survey #3: A phased approach to the utility was revisited during out last meeting. With a phased approach the utility would begin with the first phase, only funding the development of a Stormwater Master Plan. During this period, system needs will be evaluated based on inspection and CCTV and a prioritized list of projects will be created. Then, once the total system improvements needs are understood, a fee would be established to fund the program. With this phased approach, the City would not be raising

funds to meet compliance requirements or to fund anticipated capital improvements. Would you prefer a phased approach, funding just the stormwater plan for the first few years?

- No- 8 votes out of 12 participants

Appendix A: SWAC Survey #1 Feedback

Mount Vernon Stormwater Utility Committee Meeting
4/16/19
Committee Feedback, Utility Option Questions

1. **What ERU rate is reasonable?**
    - $2/month – 1
    - $4/month – 2
        - Provides $1M of funding and is still a 50% increase in funding
    - **$5-6/month – 2**
    - **$6/month – 4**
        - No more than $6
        - $6 would be ideal, especially with current scheduled projects
            - For people to receive, $5 would be better
    - $7/month – 1
        - Because for many it would only be one ERU

2. **What level of service do you think is appropriate?**
    - LOS 0 – None
    - LOS 1 – 3 responses
        - Comment – especially initially, when this will be a shock. Still much better than current funding.
    - **LOS 2 – 8 responses**
        - One response for 2 or 3
    - LOS 3 – One response, counted above for LOS 2 or 3

3. **Do you think a tiered rate structure is a good idea?**
    - No – 4 (comments below for No)
        - Curbs and gutters in right of way need to be City expenses NOT property owners
        - Knox Cattle Pond is recipient of New Gambier Road Water and more water from the East *(both comments appear to be same person)*
    - Yes – 7 (comments below for Yes)
        - Good idea
        - For additional City Services
        - Yes, as long as don't incentivize public having to pay for private problems
        - Yes for maintenance tier – better use of city services
            - Capital tier only limited time frame. But not REALLY in favor
    - General comments
        - Stay off of private property issue
        - No tier credits except no more than 50% for public schools)

4. What credits do you support?

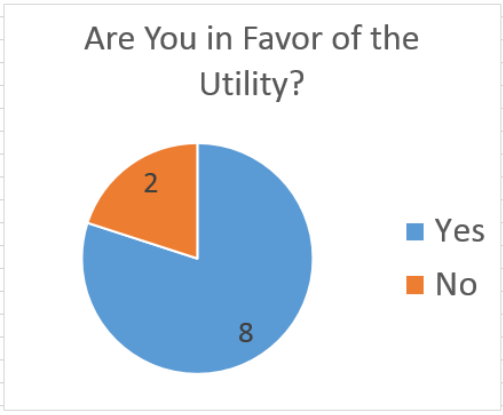
- None: 2 *(same person)*
  - I do not support credits. Non-profits and schools and County do not pay taxes now. The whole reasons behind a utility is to have them contribute as runoff ???? and conveyed.
  - I do not support credits. Schools teach to their standards. They do not need more things piled on them.
- Education (Schools Only): 1
- Schools and churches – 1
- Schools, commercial/non-residential – 1
- Government, schools, churches, non-profits – 1
- Education up to 50%; Retention/detention zero discharge only; Maintenance and clean-up credits
- Education, Retention/detention; pond maintenance; Adopt-a-road/park
- Increased detention/retention; water quality improvement; reduction in rate of discharge (increased retention/detention); Education
- General Comments:
  - In favor of credits as a way to incentivize positive action – work to be done
    - Question, will this require additional personnel to review and sign of on credits?
    - Let's help businesses save money to aid in economic development. Mount Vernon should be as competitive as possible.

5. What is the maximum credit that should be allowed?

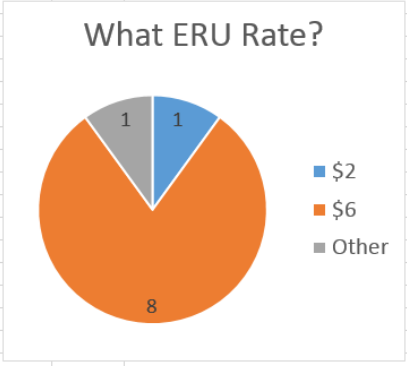
- 20% - 1
- **50% - 3**
- **50-60% - 1**
- 75% - 1
- 80% -1
- Comments
  - Credits cannot exceed 40% (except schools, which can be up to 80%)
    - Reason – since credits are available to non-residential only. Burden would shift too much to residential
  - I agree with the above.

Appendix B: SWAC Survey #2 Feedback

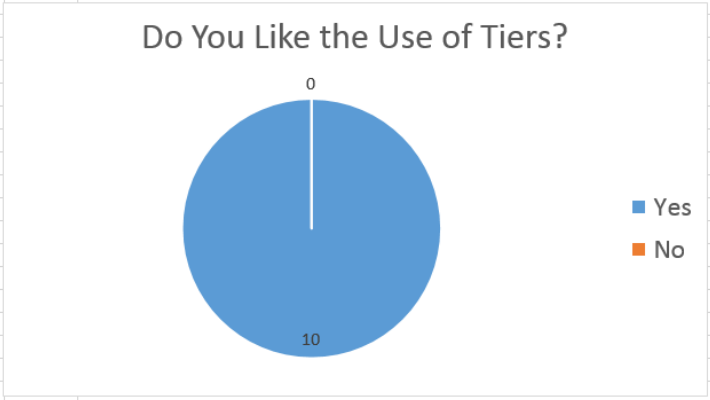
Are you in favor of the utility?		
Yes	No	Comments
1		
	1	I favor a dedicated tax like the police/fire tax
1		
	1	
1		
1		
1		
1		
1		
1		I understand the need. I am concerned at some point the city will feel the SWU should be self funded, hence this is really a $1.4M "tax hike"
TOTALS	8	2



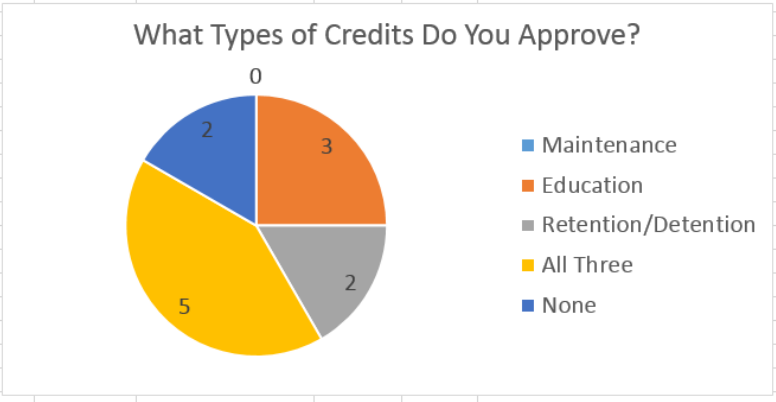
What ERU Rate?			
$2	$6	Other	Comments
1			
	1		
	1		
	1		
	1		
	1		
	1		
	1		
		1	$2-$4-$6 phased in over 3 years
	1		
TOTALS	1	8	1



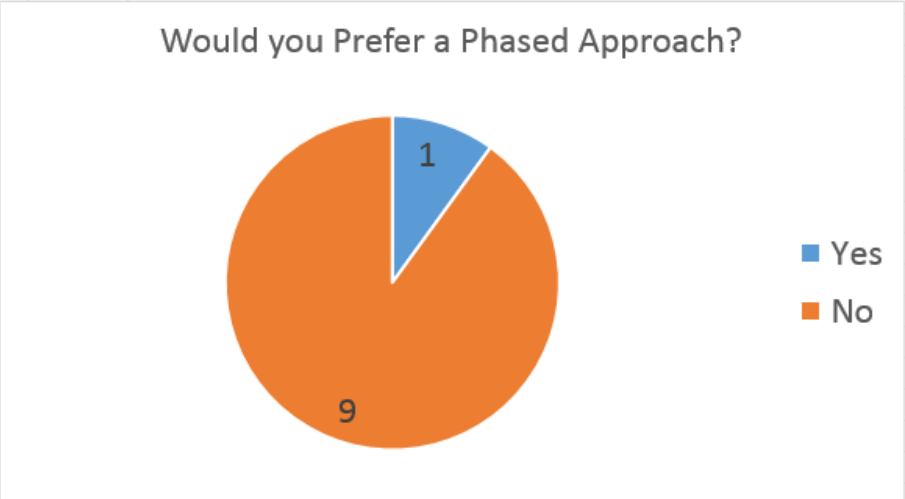
Do you like the use of tiers? (maintenane and capital)		
Yes	No	Comments
1		
1		
1		maintenance and capital
1		maintenance and capital
1		
1		
1		
1		implement tier structure with the ordinance and work on an implementation plan during 2020
1		maintenance and capital
1		for public schools (not more than 50% max) also for large employers
TOTALS	10	0



What types of credits do you approve?					
Maintenance	Education	Retention/Detention	All Three	None	Comments
	1	1			Maintenance-No, already the responsibility of the land owner; Education-not really in support but would agree to a 50% credit for City schools (no others); R/D-would have to exceed design standards and 50% max
	1				30% educational; max 40% all other non-residential reduced by 10% a year and phased out at the end of 4 years
			1		
			1		
			1		
				1	
			1		
				1	
			1		
	1	1			retention/detention (primary)
TOTALS	0	3	2	5	2



	Would you prefer a phased approach? (just fund master plan for stormwater, then set rate)		
	Yes	No	Comments
	1		
		1	number 5 is circled?
		1	
		1	
		1	
		1	
		1	
		1	do it all at once
		1	Master Plan and already identified projects knowing they change based on more urgent needs
		1	
TOTALS	1	9	



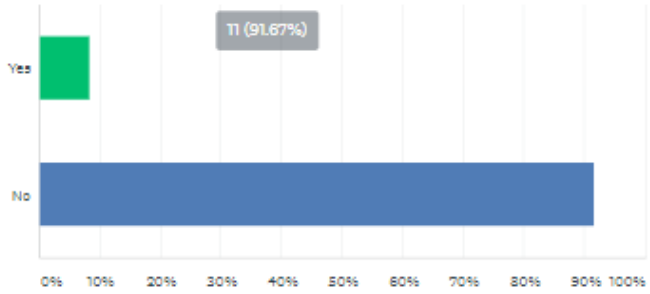
Appendix C: SWAC Survey #3 Feedback

Q1

Customize | Save as

At the beginning of the committee meetings, someone asked the cost of doing nothing. With the current level of funding, the City can expect increased incidence of cave-ins related to failing infrastructure. The City is also under notice of violation from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), the next step in enforcement would likely be a complete audit with fines attached. Are you comfortable with the City continuing with the current level of funding through the general fund?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	8.33%	1
No	91.67%	11
TOTAL		12

Comments (2)

RESPONSES (2) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0) Sentiments: OFF

Add tags Filter by tag Search responses

Showing 2 responses

Part of my job duties for the last 30 years have been to properly manage and correct deferred maintenance as required. The important thing I have learned is, always better to stay ahead of enforcement, audits, and resulting fines. It's far more beneficial for involved parties to write the script than to have it written for you. To sum it up; it's important to proactively address the much needed work stormwater deficiencies before forced to. Much needed repair work funding is inevitable, charging for stormwater ERU (in line with, and comparable to other communities) is inevitable, why wait until stormwater infrastructure further damaged resulting in even higher capital cost to the community.

6/13/2019 1:51 PM View respondent's answers Add tags

My "No" vote is to the level of funding only, not the source of those funds. Based on information presented at the stormwater meetings, it is my understanding the City is currently spending approximately $1,000,000 on the stormwater system and, at that level of funding, is not able to maintain the system. Based on those representations, additional funding is apparently needed. Total funding, however, should come from the general fund or from a dedicated tax increase passed by a vote of the people. Stormwater management affects and is the responsibility of everyone, not just landowners. The City recently passed a 5.5 million dollar income tax increase effective 2018. No monies generated or made available by passage of the increase were specifically appropriated for stormwater operations. Why? Additionally, real estate developers should pay a significant stormwater impact fee as part of their permit process. In conjunction with these steps, the City should adopt new and stricter stormwater legislation to substantially reduce stormwater runoff and wear and tear on our stormwater infrastructure.

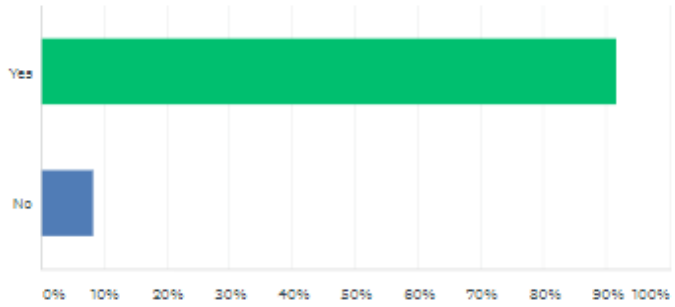
6/12/2019 1:48 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Q2

Customize | Save as

Do you support development of a stormwater utility with a dedicated stormwater enterprise fund that can be used exclusively for stormwater projects? Establishment of a dedicated funding source will enable the City to plan for capital improvements, and to be eligible for grant funding and project bonding.

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.67%	11
No	8.33%	1
TOTAL		12

Comments (3)

RESPONSES (3) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0)

Sentiments: OFF

Add tags Filter by tag

Search responses

Showing 3 responses

Recognizing the value of planning for capital improvements, grant funding and project bonding, I support a dedicated stormwater fund, but one that is created through appropriations by city council from the general fund and or a dedicated tax increase voted on by the people. I do not support the development of a stormwater utility which amounts to a tax increase on an identified group of citizens who are not the only "users" or "contributors" to stormwater runoff without the opportunity to vote on that issue. Additionally, as I understood the City Engineer to say during the final stormwater committee meeting, funds raised by the utility will be used to replace funds currently being spent from the general fund (Street Dept.) on stormwater maintenance/repairs/improvements, not increase that spending in any significant way. In that case, the utility fee is simply a vehicle to permit funds currently being spent on stormwater to be returned to the general fund/Street Dept. It seems we are not fixing the stormwater problem, we are simply increasing City revenues.

6/12/2019 1:48 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Careful management of the fund will be necessary so that it can be demonstrated to the public that the additional dollars generated are in fact being utilized to provide for storm water management and related infrastructure and not simply being used to offset some other unrelated general fund expense.

6/10/2019 3:28 PM View respondent's answers Add tags

Yes, only after an evaluation of the city's comprehensive stormwater plan that needs to be developed and reviewed before funds are considered.

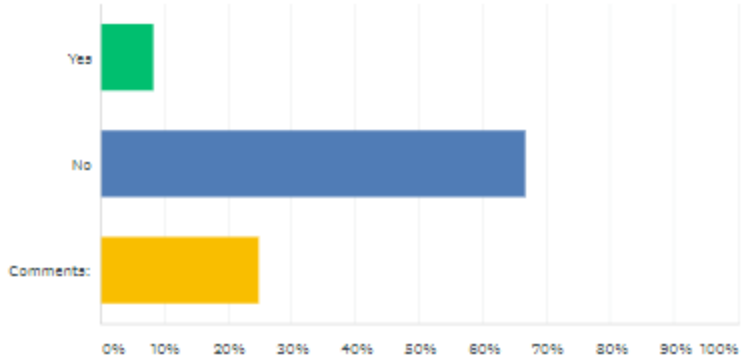
6/8/2019 7:49 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Q3

Customize | Save as

Do you support a utility fee that would provide just the MINIMUM to fund employees needed to meet Ohio EPA compliance requirements ($4/month)?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		8.33%	1
No		66.67%	8
Comments:	Responses	25.00%	3

RESPONSES (3) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0)

Sentiments: OFF

Add tags | Filter by tag

Search responses

Showing 3 responses

I do not support a utility fee. My response does not constitute a vote against a $4/month utility fee or a vote in favor of a higher fee. The question appears to assume an unsubstantiated premise. Despite committee member requests for such information, to my knowledge, I have neither seen projections, nor been told by the City or Hazen and Sawyer, that $4/month "would provide just the MINIMUM to fund employees needed to meet Ohio EPA compliance requirements." In fact, in my opinion, there has been very little feedback to the committee relative to the number of additional employees needed or anticipated to be hired with increased funding. The graphs provided in the Meeting 3 materials do not appear to correspond directly to that question.

6/12/2019 1:48 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

No - if you are not going to address infrastructure maintenance and improvements, don't bother.

6/10/2019 3:28 PM View respondent's answers Add tags

I support the higher amount below.

6/5/2019 11:58 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

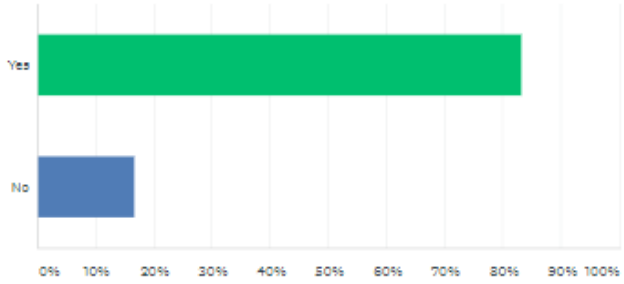
TOTAL	12

Q4

Customize | Save as

Do you feel that the City should enact the stormwater utility with a fee that can fund the personnel for Ohio EPA compliance and development of a capital improvement program ($6/month)?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	83.33%	10
No	16.67%	2
TOTAL		12

Comments (4)

RESPONSES (4) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0) Sentiments: OFF

Add tags Filter by tag Search responses

Showing 4 responses

I do wonder if $6/month is the appropriate amount in the beginning. Would it be possible to do a phase in the utility fee? For example, for the first year, charge $5/month, and then in the second year increase the amount to $6/month.

6/13/2019 11:24 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

I do not support a utility fee. My response does not constitute a vote against a $6/month utility fee or a vote in favor of a different fee. The question appears to assume an unsubstantiated premise. Despite committee member requests for such information, to my knowledge, I have neither seen projections, nor been told by the City or Hazen and Sawyer, that $6/month would "fund the personnel for Ohio EPA compliance and development of a capital improvement program." In my opinion, there has been very little feedback to the committee relative to the number of additional employees needed or anticipated to be hired with increased funding and little detail relative to the cost of developing a capital improvement program, much less the anticipated cost of the improvements once identified. I do understand the difficulty of estimating the cost of repairs, replacement and maintenance of the stormwater system when we do not know what needs to be done which underscores the need for the development of a capital improvement program or "Master Plan". That raises the question of what should come first, the funding or identifying the extent of the need? I believe identifying the extent of the need. The graphs provided in the Meeting 3 materials do not appear to correspond directly to the question.

6/12/2019 1:48 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

See above!

After a comprehensive stormwater plan is in place.

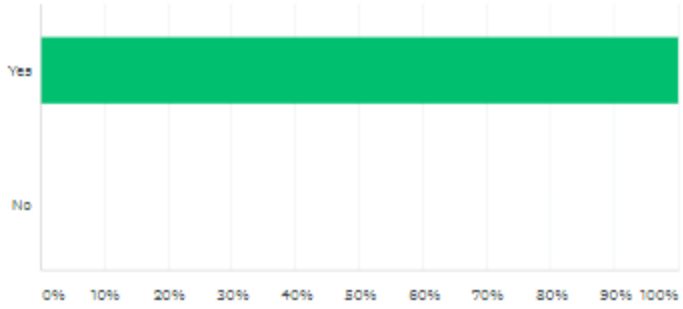
6/8/2019 7:49 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Q5

Customize Save as

Are you in favor of the City establishing a tiered structure within the stormwater utility for maintenance services? Properties within the maintenance tier will have an added fee to reimburse the City for maintenance on their private stormwater property (mowing).

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	12
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		12

Comments (2)

RESPONSES (2) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0) Sentiments: OFF

Add tags Filter by tag Search responses

Showing 2 responses

I do not support a stormwater utility, however, if one is established, I conditionally support a tiered structure within that utility depending on what services would result in an additional fee. From responses to questions at the fourth meeting, I understand that it would not apply to the extension, maintenance or repair of stormwater lines or other related services customarily provided by the City.

6/12/2019 1:48 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Good idea. The storm water utility is essentially a tax, just spelled differently. A public "assessment" of this nature should not be used to absolve private property owners of their responsibilities at the cost of the rest of the public. they should have to reimburse the fund for the work that the City may do for them.

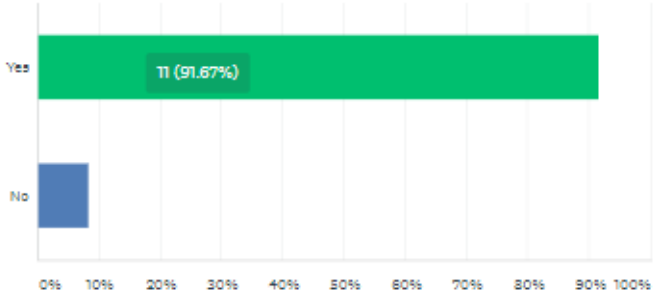
6/10/2019 3:28 PM View respondent's answers Add tags

Q6

Customize | Save as

Are you in favor of the creation of a tier where the City could administer capital projects on private property based on structured agreements with the owner? The City will establish a guidance manual identifying agreement requirements between the owner and the City with regards to project budget and timeline for reimbursement from parcels directly benefiting from the project.

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.67%	11
No	8.33%	1
TOTAL		12

Comments (3)

RESPONSES (3) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0) Sentiments: OFF

Add tags Filter by tag Search responses

Showing 3 responses

I do not support a stormwater utility, however, if one is established, I conditionally support such a tier assuming, based on comments made by the City and Hazen and Sawyer at the fourth meeting, that it would not apply to or include the extension, maintenance or repair of stormwater lines or other related services customarily provided by the City; and such project costs would not be assessed against parcels that do or might benefit from the project, but are owned by individuals who are not owners of the private property upon which the capital project is carried out.

6/12/2019 1:48 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

MAYBE! On a similar note with the previous question, the program must be structured so that other property owners throughout the City are not left "holding the bag" for capital projects that are clearly not part of the "community/public" water management infrastructure. A "least cost" approach should probably be incorporated and provisions must be made for addressing long-term maintenance issues.

6/10/2019 3:28 PM View respondent's answers Add tags

The Landings, Mallard Point & Crown Hill HOAs dispute ownership of the Knox County Cattle Lake & Dam. The City should take the lead in resolving this. If clear ownership cannot be established, the City should consider assuming responsibility for the property. Whether or not this occurs, the City should assist in appealing the Dam classification. If it reverts to Class II, I assume the cost to upgrade it to meet code is significantly less than $2M.

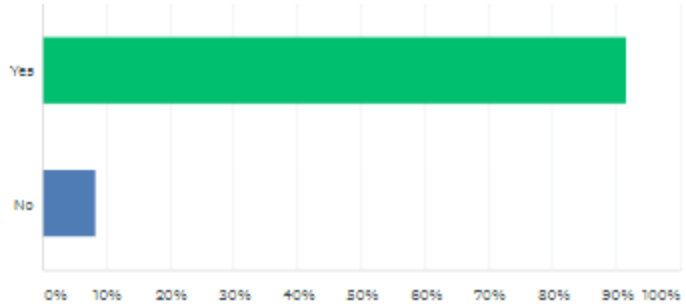
6/5/2019 10:22 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Q7

Customize Save as

Credits help in reducing the stormwater utility burden on customers while benefiting the City through assistance in meeting permit requirements. Do you support credits?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.67%	11
No	8.33%	1
TOTAL		12

Comments (1)

RESPONSES (1) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0) Sentiments: OFF

Add tags Filter by tag Search responses

Showing 1 response

I would only support credits on a very limited basis. Additionally, if a credit is given for reduced/zero run off to a non-residential customer, an equal credit would need to be given to a residential customer that is not served by a stormwater line and, similar to the non-residential customer, does not add runoff into the system.

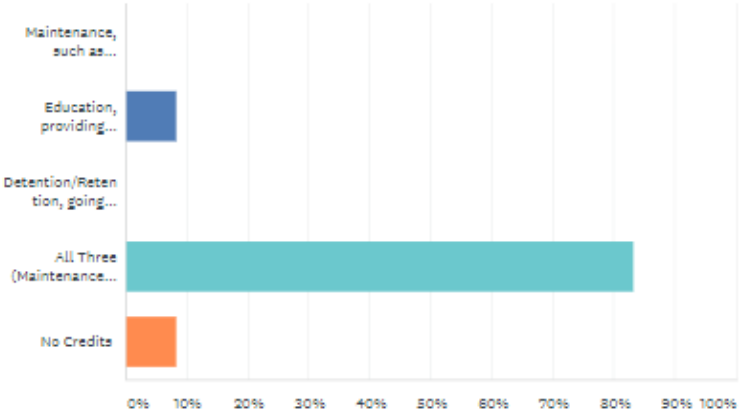
6/12/2019 1:48 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Q8

Customize | Save as

What types of credits do you approve?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Maintenance, such as participation in litter cleanups and Adopt-a-Catch Basin/Road program	0.00%	0
Education, providing stormwater related education to Mount Vernon citizens, only open to educational institutions	8.33%	1
Detention/Retention, going above and beyond requirements and providing additional detention or retention of stormwater on the property	0.00%	0
All Three (Maintenance, Education, and Detention/Retention)	83.33%	10
No Credits	8.33%	1
TOTAL		12

Comments (3)

RESPONSES (3) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0) Sentiments: OFF

Add tags Filter by tag Search responses

Showing 3 responses

Education: On a very limited basis in terms of an amount. I would also favor, on a limited basis in terms of amount and time, a reducing credit for Detention/Retention improvements exceeding updated and effective City requirements. Legislation should require that once placed on a property, stormwater detention/retention improvements must be functionally maintained, at least for a specified period of time, absent permission obtained through a process whereby the property owner shows specified conditions as determined by the City exist for abandonment of the improvement. Maintenance should only be considered for a credit if it is available to non-residential and residential properties alike. Hazen and Sawyer note the universal fairness and benefits of a utility as referenced in FAQ Hazen No. 50155-000, #2 and #25. Recognizing that, everyone should contribute their fair share, which is why I favor funding through the general fund and or a dedicated tax.

6/12/2019 1:48 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Credits for maintenance and detention/retention should be given more weight than simple education credits. Maintenance/Retention/Detention credits should be based on measurable impacts with a primary focus on overall discharge reduction and a secondary focus on water quality.

6/10/2019 3:28 PM View respondent's answers Add tags

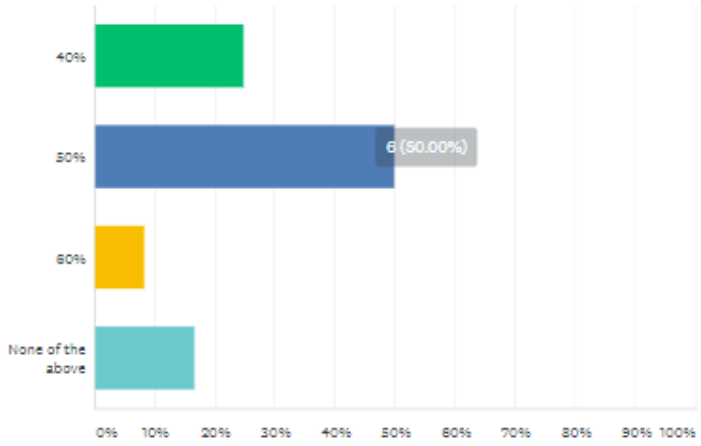
Credits should be tiered based on value. For example, education might be 20%, maintenance 35% and detention/retention 50%.

Q9

Customize | Save as

What maximum credit level do you support?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
40%	25.00%	3
50%	50.00%	6
60%	8.33%	1
None of the above	16.67%	2
TOTAL		12

Comments (3)

RESPONSES (3) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0)

Sentiments: OFF

Add tags | Filter by tag | Search responses

Showing 3 responses

Education: 25% renewable annually. Detention/Retention: An appropriate % (not to exceed 50%) based on the calculated value of the "detention/retention improvements" (as defined in Question #8) factoring in the cost, extent and effectiveness of improvements exceeding updated (expanded and more strict) City legislation. The credit should reduce by a specified % each year for a specified period of time, again based on the value of the improvement, until it reaches zero. All calculations related to the credit would be in accordance with a guidance manual established by the City. Legislation should require that once placed on a property, stormwater detention/retention improvements must be functionally maintained, at least for a specified period of time, absent permission obtained through a process whereby the property owner shows specified conditions as determined by the City exist for abandonment of the improvement. No credit should be given for complying with City codes, laws and regulations. Reducing the cost of enforcement does not justify a credit. Rather, as in virtually all other instances, penalties (which would reflect enforcement costs) should be imposed for failing to comply.

6/12/2019 1:48 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Maximum credit should not exceed 20%

6/8/2019 7:49 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

I would be in favor of some types of property, such as schools, having a higher maximum credit.

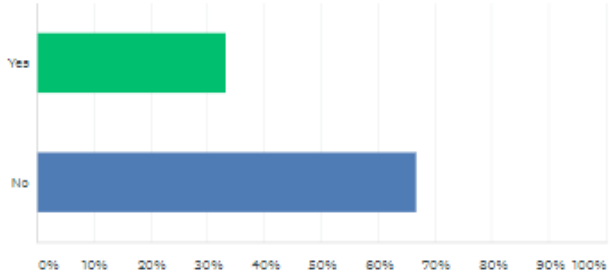
6/5/2019 11:58 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Q10

Customize | Save as

A phased approach to the utility was revisited during our last meeting. With a phased approach the utility would begin with the first phase, only funding development of a Stormwater Master Plan. During this period, system needs will be evaluated based on inspection and CCTV and a prioritized list of projects will be created. Then, once the total system improvements needs are understood, a fee would be established to fund the program. With this phased approach, the City would not be raising funds to meet compliance requirements or to fund anticipated capital improvements. Would you prefer a phased approach, funding just the stormwater plan for the first few years?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	33.33%	4
No	66.67%	8
TOTAL		12

Comments (6)

RESPONSES (6) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0)

Add tags Filter by tag

Showing 6 responses

We are so far behind why not build the plan as we make repairs.
6/13/2019 8:24 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

This question is biased and intended to evoke a negative response. As worded, an affirmative response would support continued EPA non-compliance because the question states an arbitrary limit on what can be done in the first phase. The question does not state the cost of a Stormwater Master Plan. Further, it fails to consider an ERU fee, with or without credits, for a specified period of time, that would generate sufficient funds in addition to current stormwater funding to allow the City to continue current levels of stormwater spending, create a master plan, bring the City into EPA compliance (or at least work toward that end) and possibly provide for, at least at a minimum, partial capital improvements.
6/12/2019 1:48 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

You KNOW you have a shortfall in funding for infrastructure maintenance and improvements as it is. A phased approach simply delays the inevitable. While you're drafting the master plan your aging storm water infrastructure continues to degrade. The cost saved by instituting the phased approach likely does not offset the inflation costs for the work that will HAVE to be done anyway.
6/10/2019 3:28 PM View respondent's answers Add tags

A comprehensive stormwater plan needs to be in place and submitted as soon as possible.
6/8/2019 7:49 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

We are already out of compliance and a convincing argument has shown that degradation has already begun.
6/5/2019 11:58 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Some needs are known now. It's better to start working on things that obviously need to be done while the City develops the master plan.
6/5/2019 10:22 AM View respondent's answers Add tags

Appendix B: Stormwater Utility Frequently Asked Questions and Bill Inserts

City of Mount Vernon: Stormwater Utility

Frequently Asked Questions: Residential

1 What is stormwater?

Stormwater is rainwater that runs off streets, lawns, and other surfaces making its way through curbs, ditches and storm pipes to local streams and ultimately to our Kokosing River.

2 What is an impervious surface?

Impervious surfaces are surfaces where rainwater runs off without absorption into the ground. Examples of impervious surfaces include roofs, driveways, and parking lots.

3 What is an ERU?

ERU stands for Equivalent Residential Unit. When creating the stormwater utility, residential parcels (single family homes) were analyzed to determine the average impervious area present on each parcel. For Mount Vernon, the average residence includes 2,900 square feet of impervious area.

4 Why do I have to pay for stormwater?

Stormwater funds support drainage improvements in the City which are needed to promote public safety, economic and municipal function. The City also has to meet requirements set forth by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to help protect streams and wildlife and reduce flooding.

5 Will my rate be the same each month?

City Council approved a $4 per ERU rate beginning July 1, 2020 continuing for one year. On January 1, 2021, the rate will increase to $5 per ERU. On January 1, 2022, the rate will increase to $6 per ERU and will remain at that rate unless there is further City Council action.

Mount Vernon has established a stormwater utility to provide dedicated funding to protect the public and the environment.

6 Do other cities have to pay too?

Yes, there are over 130 stormwater utilities across Ohio including Newark, Lancaster, and Wooster. This is a City-wide fee, similar to the Muskingum Watershed fee

7 What will the money be used for?

Funds collected for the utility can only be spent on maintenance or improvements to our public stormwater system. This can include system maintenance and equipment for leaf collection and the design of new infrastructure including pipes, inlets, and curb and gutter.

8 Does everyone pay the same rate?

Everyone pays the same rate; however non-residential entities pay for each ERU (every 2,900 square feet of impervious area on their property).

9 Are adjustments or appeals possible?

If you believe your bill needs adjustment, contact the City Engineer and fill out an Adjustment Request Form. If you do not like the results an appeal can be made to the Utility Commission. .

Starting in August 2020 stormwater charges will be added to your water and wastewater bill.

For more information visit: **http://mountvernonohio.org/stormwater-utility/**

City of Mount Vernon: Stormwater Utility

Frequently Asked Questions: Non-Residential

A **What is the difference between a residential and non-residential bill?**

A residential bill is based on a flat rate of one ERU, a non-residential bill is based on the total impervious area on the property divided by 2,900 square feet (the ERU, a measurement of impervious area of the average Mount Vernon residence).

B **How did you determine my non-residential specific impervious area?**

For each non-residential property, an aerial photo was used to measure impervious areas (roofs, parking lots) and pervious areas (grass).

C **How can I verify my impervious area?**

If you would like to verify your impervious area, please contact the City Engineer's office.

D **Are fees for stormwater tax-deductible?**

No, the Internal Revenue Service does not recognize fees as being tax deductible.

E **How can I reduce my stormwater fee?**

Non-residential property owners can reduce the fee by reducing the impervious area on your property. This can be tracked through building permits, and for applying for adjustments through the City Engineer's office.

Mount Vernon has established a stormwater utility to provide dedicated funding to protect the public and the environment.

Starting in August 2020 stormwater charges will be added to your water and wastewater bill.

F **What is the process for getting an adjustment?**

If you believe your bill needs adjustment, contact the City Engineer and fill out an Adjustment Request Form. If you do not like the results an appeal can be made to the Utility Commission.

G **Are credits available?**

Credits are available only for non-residential customers and are provided for reductions in quantity of stormwater runoff and/or improved stormwater quality through detention. The City's Rules and Regulations, available online, defines the necessary steps to obtain credits.

H **I have a detention pond; can I get a fee reduction?**

If your facility can provide written documentation that all stormwater standards are met, then you could be eligible for a credit. Please refer to the City's online Rules and Regulations.

I **I live in a duplex. Who pays the bill?**

Properties zoned as multiple family will be billed to the owner of the property.

J **I live in a mobile home park or apartment complex. Who receives the bill?**

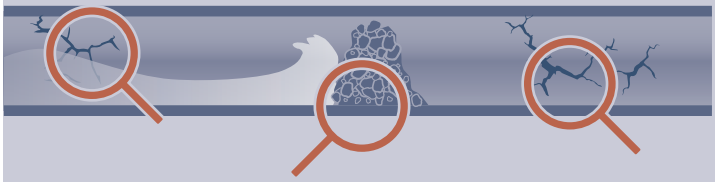
The mobile home park or apartment complex owner will receive the bill.

For more information visit: **http://mountvernonohio.org/stormwater-utility/**

City of Mount Vernon: Stormwater Utility

Most of the rain that falls on the City is carried, untreated, to rivers and streams through the stormwater system.

Mount Vernon's stormwater system is aging and in need of repair. Collapsed pipes can close streets, and pipes full of debris can cause street or property flooding.



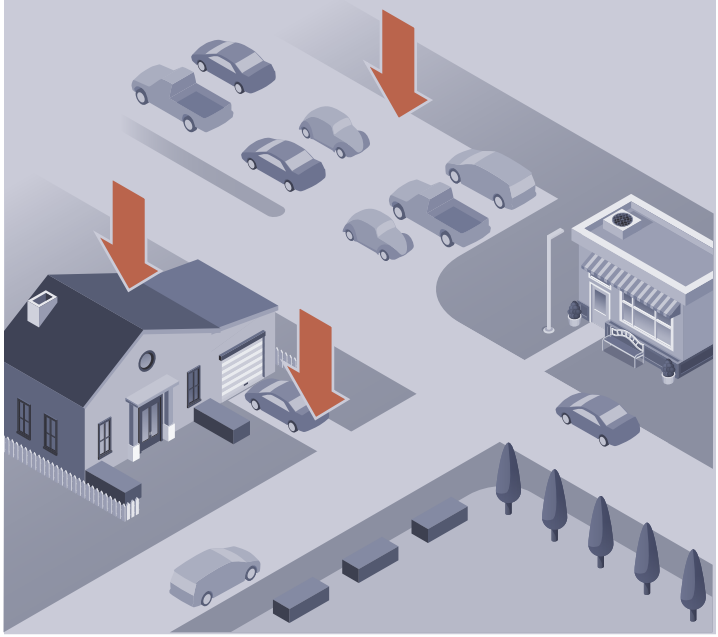
Mount Vernon has established a stormwater utility to provide dedicated funding to protect the public and the environment.

Aug.

Starting in August 2020 stormwater charges will be added to your water and wastewater bill.

Utility charges are based on impervious area (roofs, driveways, parking lots).

All residential properties receive the same bill.

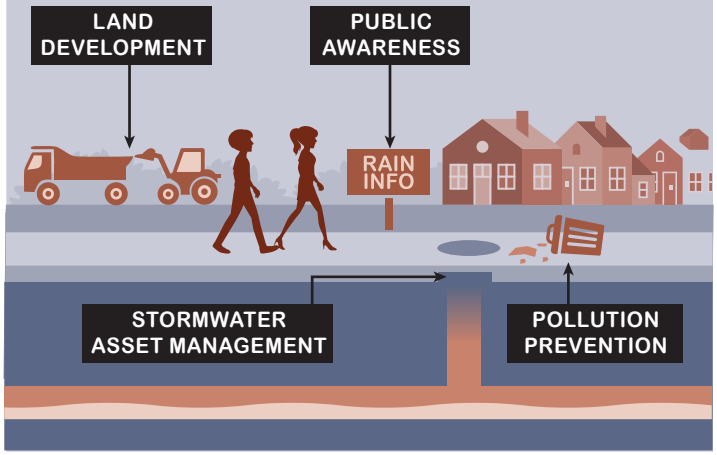


Many neighboring municipalities have stormwater utilities, most were developed several years ago.

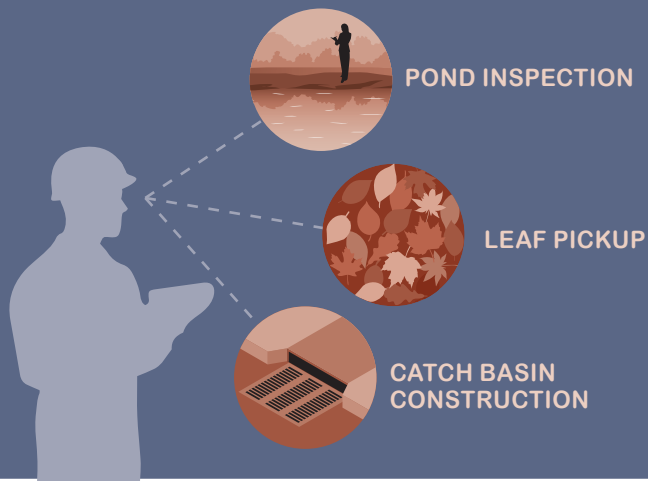
For more information visit: **http://mountvernonohio.org/stormwater-utility/**

City of Mount Vernon: Stormwater Utility

Mount Vernon's stormwater system must meet regulatory requirements set by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



Mount Vernon's Street Department spends nearly 50% of it's time and budget addressing stormwater system maintenance, inspection and construction.



Mount Vernon has established a stormwater utility to provide dedicated funding to protect the public and the environment.

Aug.

Starting in August 2020 stormwater charges will be added to your water and wastewater bill.

Residential utility rates will be $4 per month, increasing by $1 per year to $6 per month in 2022. The initial goal is to meet all Ohio EPA compliance requirements.

Initial residential monthly rate of $4

Meet regulatory compliance requirements

Mount Vernon will develop a proactive plan to address problems before emergency repairs are needed.

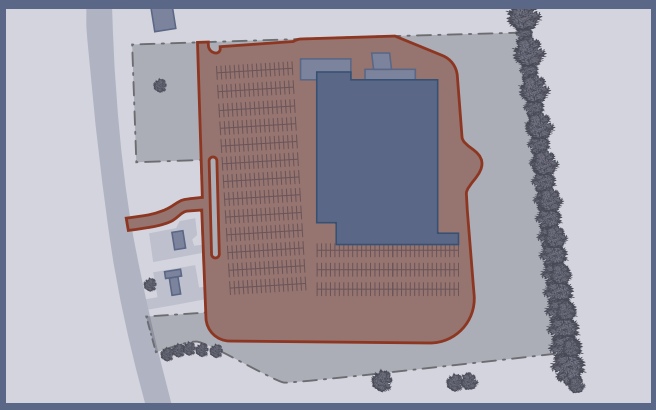
Provide needed drainage and flood mitigation improvements

Begin proactive system planning moving beyond emergency repairs

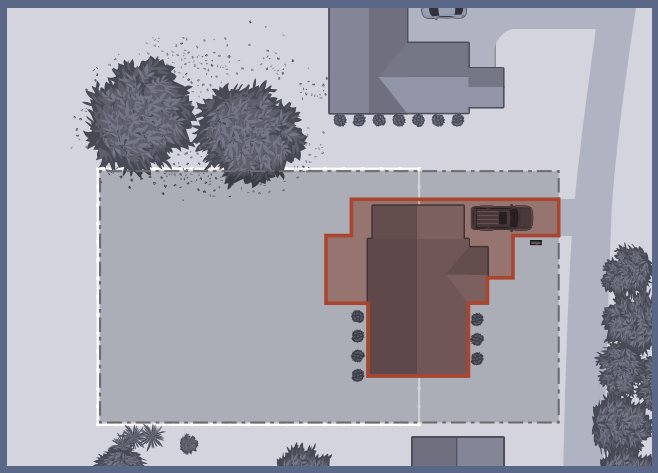
For more information visit: **http://mountvernonohio.org/stormwater-utility/**

City of Mount Vernon: Stormwater Utility

Impervious Areas, such as parking lots and roofs carry water and pollutants quickly to streams. Commercial and Industrial areas have more impervious area than residential lots.



Through detailed analysis it was determined that a typical Mount Vernon residence has 2,900 square feet of impervious area.

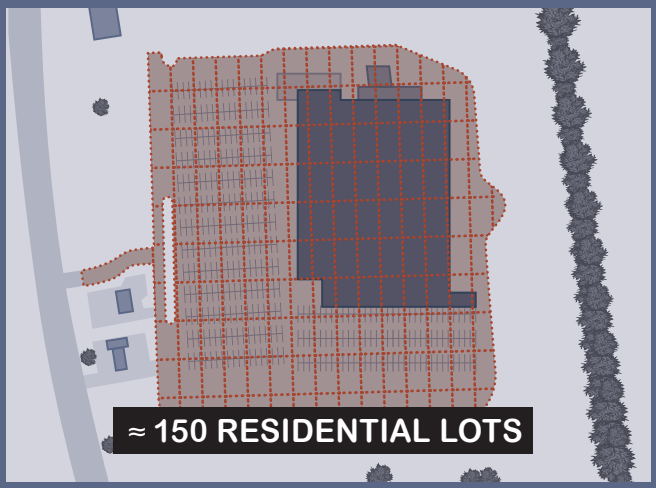


Mount Vernon has established a stormwater utility to provide dedicated funding to protect the public and the environment.

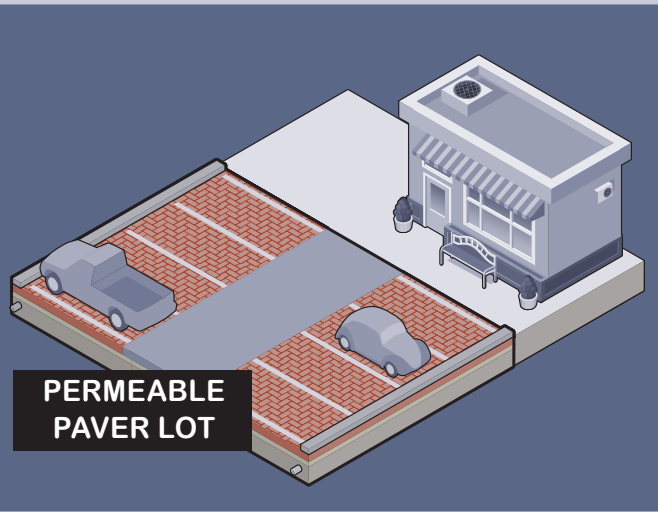
Aug.

Starting in August 2020 stormwater charges will be added to your water and wastewater bill.

Commercial and industrial facilities, churches and schools are charged based on how many households worth of impervious area they have.



Non-residential customers can get credits if they choose to complete projects that detain more water onsite, slowing water that gets to streams and rivers.



For more information visit: **http://mountvernonohio.org/stormwater-utility/**