



Town of Mooresville Stormwater Utility and Fee Structure

The Environmental Protection Agency requires all municipalities over a certain size in the United States to provide a program to improve the quality of stormwater runoff. The Town of Mooresville now meets the population requirements and received what is known as a Phase II National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit in December of 2011.

In 2012, the Town of Mooresville formed a Stormwater Advisory Committee to review different options for a potential stormwater program. Made up of approximately 20 members ranging from school and church representatives to homeowners and local business owners, the committee provided recommendations to the Town Board of Commissioners in March of 2013. The recommendations included creating a new Stormwater Utility funded through fees calculated based on the amount of **impervious surface** on a property. They went on to recommend that the fee cover not only minimum permit compliance, but other activities such as additional capital improvements and increased street sweeping.

What is Impervious Surface?

An impervious surface does not allow water or other liquids to pass through it. Things like buildings, parking lots, sidewalks, etc. are impervious surfaces because rainwater cannot be absorbed into them. In contrast, grassy or wooded areas are **pervious**, because water can and is absorbed. Impervious surfaces cause more runoff – rainwater that must flow across those surfaces, generally in a much higher quantity than if the surfaces were pervious. This is why urban areas often have localized flooding issues during bad storms and urban streams are often polluted.

One acre of area that is fully wooded creates no runoff during a 1" rain event – all of the rainwater is absorbed into the ground.

If that same one acre is paved, it creates over 27,000 gallons of runoff during a 1" rain event.



Why not pay for these activities through taxes?

In general, taxes are assessed based on a property's value and fees are assessed based on the need for service. As shown in the example above, the amount of runoff during a rain storm is directly related to the amount of impervious surface on the property. Therefore a property with a very low taxable value could have a very high stormwater impact if it is completely covered in buildings or asphalt. In addition, a fee can be applied to tax-exempt properties that have impervious area. In short, a fee is a fairer and more equitable means to distribute the cost of a new utility.

Who will be responsible for paying this fee?

Since this is a fee and not a tax, it is billed similar to water and sewer fees. That is, it is a charge for service. In this case, the service is the quantitative effect the property has on the stormwater system based on how much impervious area is present. All properties within the Town’s municipal limits with an impervious area greater than 400 square feet will pay their proportionate fee. This includes residences, businesses, HOA common areas, churches and schools.

What will I get in return for paying this fee?

In addition to the various programs required by permit, fees will allow for increased proactive maintenance and capital improvements to the Town’s public storm drainage system. Many storm drain systems in Mooresville are over 50 years old and need rehabilitation or replacement. Many discharge directly to a stream or property line. Over time, this causes land erosion and stream pollution. Historic maintenance has been very reactive, and providing a funding source through a fee will allow the Town to fund master planning and capital improvements to protect public and private investments in the future.

How would this fee be assessed?

In the summer of 2013, the Town measured 50% of all single family residential properties and 100% of all commercial properties to determine the amount of impervious surface on each. Using that information, an average residential impervious surface area of 2,700 square feet was calculated. This is used to define the Town’s Equivalent Residential Unit, or ERU.

A Utility Rate Study determined the projected expenses related to stormwater for at least the next 5 years. From that came the proposed rate of \$3.40/ERU.

All single family residential properties are assessed at one ERU or \$3.40/month.

Commercial (all non-single family) rate: \$3.40 for each ERU (2,700 square feet of impervious surface) per month.

For example:

Mooresville Town Hall has 75,114.64 sf impervious surface. $75,114.64 \text{ sf} / 2,700 \text{ sf/ERU} = 27.82$ (rounded to 28 ERU) $28 \text{ ERU} \times \$3.40/\text{ERU} = \$95.20/\text{month}$

Therefore, Town Hall would pay \$95.20/month based on the size and quantity of building area, parking lot, sidewalk and other hard surfaces present on the property.



When and how will this fee be charged?

The stormwater utility and associated fee were approved as part of the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget, which began July 1 2014. Fees began January 2015 and are included on utility bills. Note that some commercial properties have multiple utility accounts. There are approximately 5 distinct metering strategies, each having their own protocol for billing stormwater. Questions can be directed to Rylee Hernandez, Stormwater Program Specialist, 704-799-4068 to obtain information on how a specific commercial property will be billed.

How does this proposed fee compare with other towns?

The cost for a 2,700 ERU is lower in Mooresville than other surrounding areas. See the chart below comparing Mooresville to other area municipalities.

Rate Comparison

