



## Public Works

### Stormwater Utility Fact Sheet

#### What Is a Stormwater Utility?

The City of Byron is facing federal and state requirements to reduce the amount of polluted stormwater runoff it discharges to waterways. This will require the City to increase its investment in stormwater infrastructure. While the City is required to incur these increased costs, it does have choices about how to fund the work.

The City currently funds stormwater infrastructure through its General Fund. One alternative for funding stormwater infrastructure is through a stormwater utility, which is based on user fees for the amount of hardened or impervious surface—such as parking lots, driveways and buildings—that cause stormwater runoff on each parcel. Like water and sewer fees, a stormwater utility allocates costs based on the amount of use, in this case, the amount of stormwater being generated.

#### Reasons to Consider a Stormwater Utility

Transparency: Fees generated for stormwater may be used only for stormwater, may be consolidated in one account, and may automatically roll over for future use if there was a surplus.

Accountability: Just as with water and sewer, the stormwater utility budget must be reviewed by the Utility Committee and approved by City Council annually.

Consistency: Fee-based revenues provide consistent funding for capital improvements and annual maintenance needs.

Credits: A stormwater utility encourages property owners to reduce impervious cover and/or include best management practices. Over time, this reduces pollution, flooding, and the City's cost.

#### What is Polluted Stormwater Runoff?

Developed areas like Byron include many parking lots, buildings, roadways and other hardened "impervious surfaces." When it rains, water runs off impervious surfaces and picks up pet waste, oil, sand, fertilizers, and other pollutants. It then flows into gutters and storm drains, which discharge it directly into the nearest waterway. Polluted stormwater runoff is the single largest source of pollution to Byron's waterways. Impervious surfaces are also a major factor in flooding problems. Everyone who owns or uses any impervious surfaces, contributes to the creation of stormwater runoff and everyone depends on Byron's stormwater system to prevent streets and homes from being flooded.

#### What Is Stormwater Infrastructure?

Byron's stormwater infrastructure collects runoff from all over the City through a network of roadside ditches, over 358 known storm drain inlets, miles of stormwater conveyance pipe, and 11

outfalls. The system discharges directly into local waterways, which are themselves a critical part of Byron's stormwater system.

### **How is Byron's Infrastructure Maintained?**

Byron must actively maintain its stormwater system through tasks such as: street sweeping, storm drain inlet cleaning, inspection and repair of pipes, manholes, and storm drain inlets, reviewing and issuing permits for stormwater discharges, and system maintenance.

### **Byron's Current Stormwater Budget**

The City currently funds the Public Works Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) through the General Fund. The fiscal year 2016-2017 budget for the SWMP is \$94,500.

### **How is Byron's Stormwater Regulated?**

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued Byron a permit to discharge stormwater as a small Phase II Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4). This permit monitors non-point source pollution discharges in Byron's waterways.

### **SWMP Capital Improvements (CIPs) Costs**

The City has identified 11 CIPs that address stormwater system inadequacies, flooding issues, and stormwater management facilities. The opinion of probable costs for these CIPs may be approximately \$3.9 million.

### **What Properties Would Be Covered?**

It must first be stated that the SWMP provides a service to the community to

improve, operate, and maintain the City's stormwater infrastructure. A user fee may be based upon the service provided by the City. It is not a tax.

The fee would apply to all parcels that have impervious cover except for public roadways. This would include residential and commercial properties as well as nonprofit and tax exempt properties and parcels owned by the City, federal, and state governments.

### **Has This Been Done in Other Places?**

Stormwater utilities are common across the country, with more than 1,400 in operation. Over 55 municipalities in Georgia have implemented stormwater utilities. Local stormwater utilities have been approved and operated in Americus, Warner Robins, and Perry.

### **How May the Fee Be Calculated?**

The basic "rate" for a stormwater fee may potentially be calculated based on an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). An ERU may be based upon the median amount of impervious area on a parcel.

Commercial users may incur the majority of the fee, since they are normally associated with large amounts of impervious area.

The City is currently in the process of evaluating fee calculations in a Stormwater Rate Study.

### **Who To Contact With Questions And Concerns?**

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Georgia Water & Environmental Services  
Burke Murph 478.235.0307