

Village of Palmyra – Stormwater Utility

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What exactly is the Stormwater Utility?

A: The Stormwater Utility is a service directly geared toward providing facilities to collect, control and transport storm and surface waters to areas that are proper for drainage. The costs to operate the Utility are charged against every platted parcel in the Village.

Q: Isn't this the same thing as a tax, why the fancy name?

A: Taxes are typically based on property values throughout a community. If your property has a higher value than your neighbor, you pay more taxes than your neighbor. With the Utility, fees are based on the amount of runoff each property generates or its Equivalent Runoff Unit (ERU), and is then charged according to their contribution. This makes it more equitable for all users because customers pay for what they generate.

Q: Why is the same amount on my bill if it hasn't rained much?

A: Bills are generated incorporating the user fees (quarterly charge) associated with each parcel. The user fees are collected to offset three key areas of expense for the Utility:

- Management and Administration – include billing, auditing, planning and engineering.
- Operation and Maintenance – include the maintenance and repair of culverts, ditches, detention ponds, storm sewers, storm inlets and street sweeping.
- Debt Service and Capital Investment – include past costs associated with improvements to Utility infrastructure for which money was borrowed and also for future project costs.

These costs will not vary with the amount of annual precipitation we receive and thus will not affect the revenues that are required to be collected.

Q: I don't think I should have to pay this because my property doesn't create runoff. Who do I get to help me?

A: All developed properties in the Village are required to pay a stormwater charge to offset portions of the costs of the Utility. Properties discharge directly to the Scuppernon River or any other area without passing through any stormwater conveyance operated by the Village may be eligible for a credit. It is possible to file an application for a rate credit if you feel your property does not create stormwater that the Village manages. Applications are available at the Village Hall.

Q: I have a sump pump in my house that I want to discharge directly into the stormwater inlet near my house, can I?

A: Yes. Village Ordinance actually requires that sump pump discharges be directed to any existing ditch or stormwater structure, as long as it does not cause harm to surrounding properties. We will require that you coordinate the installation with staff if you plan to alter any Stormwater Utility structures and that you fill out a Road Right of Way Permit for work you will be doing in the road right of way.

Q: I am installing a sump pump and there's no stormwater flow lines nearby, can I just plumb it into my sanitary sewer line?

A: No. Village Ordinance prohibits this and it could be one small piece to a much larger issue. Sump pump discharges risk backups in sanitary sewer mains during large rain events. It also will take up space at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and costs the Sewer Utility money to pump and treat this clear water does not need to be. Sump pumps need to be plumbed outside without causing issues to surrounding properties.

Q: What can I do to help?

A: The possibilities are almost endless!

Unlike some large communities the Village's stormwater does not go to our wastewater treatment plant, it is ultimately directed toward existing waterways and wetlands. You can become a community steward by keeping these flow lines and inlets as clean as possible.

- Responsible maintenance of lawns and planting areas will help keep over applied pesticides and fertilizers out of our wetlands and waterways.
- One of the most time consuming things we do is clearing inlets and culverts before, during and after rain events. By not mowing your lawn into streets and ditches during the summer or raking you leaves into streets and ditches during the fall, you can help keep the time necessary for these maintenance tasks to a minimum and also avoid being issued a citation.
- During the winter months, monitoring culvert ends to keep them clear helps as snow and ice melts in the spring time.