

Augusta's Proposed Stormwater User Fee for Non-Single Family Residential Properties

Augusta has real, growing, and unresolved stormwater problems. Every year local flooding damages homes and businesses. Insufficient funding exists to upgrade or even maintain stormwater infrastructure. Currently 75% of Augusta's stormwater program is funded by SPLOST funds and subject to economic fluctuations and voter referendum. The Augusta Engineering Department (AED) maximizes limited stormwater funding and is effective in the short term; however, more stable funding is needed to repair and replace degraded and undersized infrastructure in order to reduce flooding, maintain property values, and improve water quality. Some of the specific challenges are highlighted on page 2.

AED has developed a plan to address these challenges. The plan is moderate, not extravagant, and strikes a balance between minimizing stormwater damage and the stormwater program cost. The plan emphasizes sustainable stormwater asset management; protecting the health, safety, and well being of the community; and supporting the realization of the Garden City.

A Stormwater Utility is a fair and equitable funding source. The proposed stormwater fee is based on the amount of impervious surface on each developed parcel. Impervious area generates runoff that is collected by the pipes and ditches that AED maintains. The greater the impervious area on a property, the greater the impact from stormwater runoff, and the higher the assessed fee.

All properties with more than 400 square feet of impervious area are considered developed and subject to the fee. The rates are described in terms of an ERU, or equivalent residential unit, which in Augusta equates to 2,200 square feet of impervious area. Rates will be assessed monthly on the water and sewer bill. The proposed fee is \$6.40 per month per ERU. For Non-Single Family Residential (NSFR) properties the measured impervious area is divided by the ERU (2,200 square feet) and rounded to the nearest whole ERU. This fee is deemed sufficient to address the problems over time. An example NSFR fee calculation is provided below.

Credits will be available. Credits, or reductions in the stormwater fee, will be available for NSFR properties that provide and maintain stormwater controls that provide beneficial peak flow reductions and/or water quality treatment. The specific credits may be offered for stormwater controls such as detention ponds or features to protect water quality. The credits will be outlined in the credit manual, which is currently under development.

A credit application will be required to certify that the stormwater controls were designed and maintained in accordance to design guidelines. Credits are cumulative, so a NSFR property could receive up to a 60% credit.

Example NSFR Property. The NSFR property is fully developed and has 42,800 square feet of impervious area or 51 times the amount of the average home ($42,800 / 2,200$ square feet = 19.4 which rounds to 19 ERU). The monthly base fee would be 19 ERU x \$6.40/month = \$121.60/month. The example property has and maintains a detention pond and therefore is eligible for a 40% credit, reducing the fee to \$72.96/month.



Priority Projects

1. Downtown Street and Drainage Improvements
2. East Augusta Roadway and Drainage Improvements (8 phases)
3. Hyde Park Street and Drainage Improvements and Wilkerson Gardens
4. Old Savannah Road and Street and Drainage Improvements
5. Forest Hill Drainage Improvements and Flood Reduction
6. Heirs Pond, Lake Aumond Dredging and Restoration
7. Walton Farms Subdivision Drainage
8. Rocky Creek Flood Hazard Mitigation
9. Milledgeville Road Widening (North Leg to Barton Chapel Road)
10. Dover-Lyman Street and Drainage Improvements
11. Dennis Road Widening and Drainage Improvements
12. National Hill Area Streets and Drainage Improvements
13. Old Waynesboro and Goshen Drainage

