Frequently Asked Questions

STORMWATER UTILITY

View an aerial photo of city!

An aerial photo of the city is available on our website. You can actually view aerial photos of any City parcel. This was one of the tools used in measuring the impervious areas on City parcels.

Phone: (715) 623-3633
Fax: (715) 627-7099
E-mail: water.sewer@antigo-city.org
Website: www.antigo-city.org

Where can I get more information?

You can also visit our website!

www.antigo-city.org

The City of Antigo is implementing a stormwater utility to provide a dedicated funding mechanism for the City to improve, operate and maintain the stormwater management system. Currently, expenditures for stormwater management have come from the City's general fund (i.e. property taxes) and/or from special assessments. The utility will reduce or eliminate the need to levy taxes for these projects and will instead apply the charges proportionally to those people who contribute to stormwater runoff and receive the benefit of stormwater management. Therefore, tax exempt properties that contribute to the stormwater system, will be charged accordingly.

What is a Stormwater Utility?

A stormwater utility is responsible for funding the operation, construction, and maintenance of the City's stormwater infrastructure, and for stormwater system planning. A stormwater utility generates its revenue through user fees very much like a wastewater utility funds the City's sanitary sewer and wastewater treatment systems. In general, the more runoff a parcel contributes, the greater the fee. The utility works to solve current drainage problems, and preventing future problems. It is also intended to repair, maintain, and enhance those facilities that are already constructed.

Is a stormwater utility really necessary?

The needs that the stormwater utility will address are very real. Property owners in the City of Antigo will all benefit from the utility. A better maintained storm sewer system is definitely necessary. Due to more adequate funding, flood control projects can be addressed. It is also needed to protect the health and safety of the public by preventing costly deterioration of the existing storm sewer system.

Why is a stormwater utility the best solution?

A stormwater utility is the most equitable method to generate the necessary revenue needed to operate and maintain the City's stormwater system, meet the requirements of the federal water quality permit, and add capital improvements to mitigate existing flooding, erosion and sedimentation problems.

For billing questions, please contact the Water & Sewer Utility Office at (715) 623-3633 ext. 106
water.sewer@antigo-city.org

For more information on the City of Antigo's Stormwater Utility, contact the Public Works Department at (715) 623-3633 ext. 132
cbrinkmeier@antigo-city.org

What is an ERU?

One ERU (equivalent residential unit) is equal to 3069 square feet of horizontal impervious area. This amount was calculated as the average impervious size for single-family residential parcels in the City of Antigo.

Are we being charged for rain?

No. The stormwater fee is in place to fund the ongoing maintenance and capital improvements to the entire public storm drainage infrastructure, as well as other water quality improvements and flood hazard mitigation programs. This fee is in no way related to the amount of rain that falls.

Why do I have to pay if my roof drains onto the lawn?

Even if all of the runoff from your property is directed to pervious surfaces (such as grass), it is highly unlikely that during some rain events, all of the runoff can be absorbed without discharging any to adjacent driveways, sidewalks, or streets. During such event, even the grassy areas will contribute to runoff. It will then not be effective in absorbing runoff from impervious areas.

Impervious Area

What is impervious area?

Impervious area refers to surfaces that do not allow rain or snowmelt to infiltrate (or soak in) at the same rate as natural surfaces like grass or forested areas. Impervious areas include, but are not limited to, all areas covered by structures, roofs, patios, decks, porches, driveways, loading docks, parking lots, sidewalks, and gravel and compacted clay, which are used as driveways and parking lots.

How is impervious area determined?

The impervious surfaces on a property are determined from aerial photographs and field inspections by highly qualified engineers. You can also view aerial photographs of the city or any specific parcel on our website.

Why are gravel driveways and parking lots considered impervious area?

Gravel and compacted clay driveways and parking lots do not allow rain to soak into the ground at the same rate as in undeveloped areas.

Stormwater Management

Why does the City of Antigo need stormwater management?

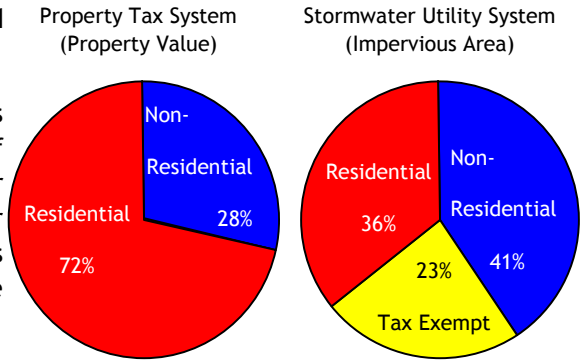
Failure to adequately manage the City's stormwater system increases the risk of flooding, affects the operation of other utilities, most notable the sanitary sewer system, increases soil erosion, and threatens the quality of surface waters and the environment.

Additionally, recent federal and state water quality regulations now require that cities construct and maintain infrastructure that improves the quality of runoff, and that they conduct municipal operations so as to minimize the contact between pollutants and runoff.

How did the City decide to create a stormwater utility?

The City Council, with the advice of MSA Professional Services, evaluated the stormwater system along with several funding options. It was found to be advantageous to form a stormwater utility to manage the stormwater system and programs. There were several meetings on this issue in addition to the public hearings and articles in the Antigo Daily Journal.

REALLOCATION OF CHARGES



Why is it being implemented now?

The City has been aware of the need to address drainage, flooding, and erosion repair projects for many years, and the problems are incerasing as the existing storm infrastructure ages. Additionally, it will cost the City of Antigo substantial capital costs over the next several years to comply with state and federal water quality regulations, plus additional annual operation costs.

Due to the state revenue caps, the City is not able to raise taxes to pay for these increased stormwater program costs. Thus, these additional expenses would result in cuts to existing City services in the absence of a stormwater utility.

Fee vs. Tax

Is this just another tax?

No. The fee is similar to the monthly water, sewer and fire protection service fees paid by all contributing customers. This fee, by incorporating tax-exempt properties, actually reduces the overall cost to taxpayers. The stormwater fee is based on the percentage of impervious area, not tax value, and applies to both taxable and tax-exempt properties.

How is a fee different from a tax?

A fee is a charge for the purpose of defraying the cost of a particular service, such as the management of stormwater runoff. The revenue from a fee can only be spent on that particular service. A tax is imposed on property, acts, events, or occurrences to provide revenue to pay any of the general expenses of government. Tax revenue can by used to pay for any number of government activities, such as police, fire, zoning, streets, etc.

Why is this no longer levied on the taxes?

The utility was created to reduce or eliminate the need to levy taxes for these projects and will instead apply the charges proportionally to those people who contribute to stormwater runoff and receive the benefit of stormwater management. Therefore, tax exempt properties that contribute to the stormwater system, will be charged accordingly.

Can these charges be transferred as a lien the property?

Yes. All balances in arrears will be transferred as a lien on the property taxes and shall be transferred to the property taxes in November of each year.

Exemptions

Why are tax-exempt properties not exempt from the fee?

All developed properties contribute to the problems and costs associated with stormwater management. The fee, based on the amount of impervious surface area on a property, is the most equitable method of distributing the cost. Tax-exempt properties are not exempt from paying for other utility services such as electricity, water, and sewer.

Are there any exemptions?

No. There are no exemptions for developed properties. The fee must be paid by all customer classifications.

These include residential, multi-family residential, commercial, industrial, non-profit, and governmental agencies that own developed parcels. Undeveloped parcels with no impervious surface area will not be charged.

Thus, these additional expenses would result in cuts to existing City services in the absence of a stormwater

What are the some of the main benefits of a fee vs. a tax?

1. A fee provides a dedicated source of revenue that can only be used on stormwater management.
2. Fees are charged based on impacts or costs of managing the stormwater system and water quality. Taxes are assessed based on property value, which is not directly related to managing stormwater runoff.
3. A fee is charged to every stormwater contributor based on their amount of stormwater contribution to the system. This means that tax-exempt properties are included in sharing the cost for the amount of stormwater runoff that they contribute.
4. As a fee, stormwater management projects are not funded through the City's general fund (i.e. property taxes) and/or from special assessments. Due to the state revenue caps, the City is not able to raise taxes to pay for these increased stormwater program costs.

Who is eligible for credits?

Nonresidential customers are eligible for receiving a stormwater credit, provided they meet all of the regulations in the Stormwater Credit and Adjustment Handbook.

How does our monthly fee compare to other Wisconsin stormwater utilities?

WI Statewide average for single-family residential customers:

$4.42 per month ($53 per year)

City of Antigo's fee for single-family residential customers:

$3.52 per month ($42.24 per year)

Approximately $10.76 per year less than the WI average!

When are the charges effective?

The stormwater charges were implemented in April 2010, and are included on the Water & Sewer utility bill. For parcels that do not have water or sewer services, a utility account was created for this service.

Credits and Adjustments

What is a stormwater credit?

Stormwater Credits are available to nonresidential customers who demonstrate that they can reduce the City's cost of providing the stormwater management services to their property. The credit percentage, not to exceed 50% of their stormwater charges, may be granted by the City to these customers. The number of ERUs assigned to a parcel will not change with a credit. The rate, however, will be multiplied by the approved credit percentage, decreasing the stormwater charge accordingly.

What is a stormwater adjustment?

Stormwater Adjustments refer to changing the number of ERUs assigned to a parcel. Adjustments are made based on the availability of more accurate or up-to-date measurements of the impervious surface area on a parcel. A change in the number of ERUs assigned to a parcel will result in a change in the stormwater charge on a parcel.

How do I apply for a stormwater credit or adjustment?

The Stormwater Credit and Adjustment Handbook, which includes all necessary applications, is available at City Hall or our website at www.antigo-city.org.

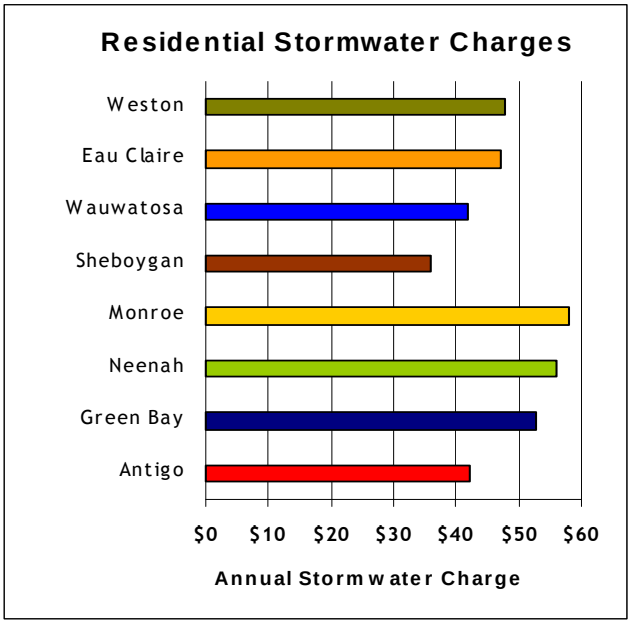
Completed applications for credits and adjustments must be approved by the City of Antigo prior to implementation of such system.

Monthly Fees

How much will this cost me?

The City of Antigo's monthly stormwater charge for all single-family residential customers is $3.52 per parcel (equal to $42.24 annually). The statewide monthly average for single-family residential customers in Wisconsin is approximately $53 per year (an average of $10.76 more each year).

The monthly stormwater charge for nonresidential customers is based on the amount of measured impervious area on each parcel. Specifically, their stormwater utility charge is $3.52 per equivalent residential unit (ERU), which is equal to 3069 square feet of measured impervious area.

Can this monthly fee be reduced?

The City of Antigo has adopted a policy for granting credits to nonresidential parcels that install and maintain devices for stormwater management (such as detention ponds), that reduce the City's cost of providing stormwater service. The credit may be up to 50% of the parcel's total stormwater utility fee.