

## **Stormwater Capital Improvement Program and Service Charge Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q: What is stormwater quality and why is it important to our community?**

A: When rain or snow falls in West Lafayette, the precipitation runs off impervious surfaces such as roofs, driveways, streets and parking lots into the stormwater drainage system. The stormwater, which may be polluted with chemicals, litter, and sediment, flows from the storm sewer directly into local streams and rivers. With little or no treatment, polluted stormwater creates unhealthy conditions for human and aquatic life.

### **Q: What state and federal regulations promote clean water?**

A: Stormwater entering and exiting the city's storm sewers is regulated by the federal Clean Water Act and the Indiana's General Storm Water Permit Rule (Rule 13). In 1999 under Rule 13, West Lafayette was issued a joint National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit as a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The NPDES permit exists to establish a program for stormwater quality so that public health, existing water uses and aquatic life are protected. The city shares its permit with Dayton, Battle Ground, Ivy Tech College, Purdue University, Lafayette and Tippecanoe County.

### **Q: How are the NPDES requirements currently funded?**

A: While the city currently operates a stormwater program, a dedicated funding source does not exist. In the past, permit mandates as well as ongoing operational and maintenance activities of the storm sewer system are currently funded by the Sanitary Department. Sanitary sewer users only shared the burden for stormwater system improvements, which benefit all properties in the community, whether they are served by the storm sewer or not.

### **Q: What is the city's plan to fund the stormwater program?**

A: To meet NPDES Permit requirements, avoid costly fines, and complete drainage improvements the City of West Lafayette proposes establishing a dedicated stormwater revenue source in 2014. Stormwater runoff from properties—residential and non-residential—enters the city's storm sewers. A service charge would allow the city to fund drainage and stormwater quality improvements throughout the community.

### **Q: What stormwater needs will the proposed service charge address?**

A: In addition to NPDES permit requirements, the stormwater service charge will address necessary stormwater system improvements, expansion and drainage improvements. The service charge would fund the following high priority projects identified in the Stormwater Capital Program:

- Blackbird Pond Stormwater Improvements
- Celery Bog Nature Center Drainage Improvements
- Downtown/Waterfront Drainage Improvements
- Happy Hollow Park Erosion Control
- "The Island" Green Infrastructure Improvements
- Plaza Parks/Cumberland Park Drainage Improvements
- University Farms Drainage Improvements

**Q: Who will the proposed service charge affect? How much will it cost?**

A: If approved by the West Lafayette Common Council, the city would implement a stormwater service charge for developed residential and non-residential property owners.

- Proposed Residential Service Charge: Developed residential property owners would be assessed a flat \$8 monthly service charge based on the average impervious surface for the average residential parcel size, or an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). One ERU equals 3,200 square feet.
- Proposed Non-Residential Service Charge: For developed non-residential property owners, the city would calculate service charges based on the total measured impervious surface area for the property.

The stormwater program is a service that benefits all properties contributing stormwater to the sewer system, so all property owners, tax exempt or not, will be assessed a fee. An appeals process exists for those questioning the city's service charge calculations.

**Q: How will the proposed service charge be collected?**

A: The Stormwater activities will function as part of the Wastewater Utility Department, and the city proposes sending stormwater user fee statements in 2014. Statements and accounts will be processed by the city's Wastewater Billing Office at City Hall. . Statements are planned to be issued monthly unless owners request another billing frequency.

**Q: What members of the public helped to develop the proposed service charge?**

A: In September 2009, 48 community members were invited by Mayor Dennis to participate on the City's Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee. Members represent West Lafayette neighborhoods, industry and commercial business, property development, religious groups and local government. The committee on an as needed basis to discuss the city's progress and offer input on stormwater service charge development and the capital improvement program. Member comments, ultimately, assisted in formulating a service charge recommendation for consideration by the West Lafayette Common Council.

**Q: How can a resident or business play a part in improving stormwater quality?**

A: Follow these simple tips to keep local waterways clean:

- Healthy lawns only need one inch of water per week. Water as needed during the cool times of the day, and prevent water from flowing into a storm drain.
- Reduce impervious surfaces, or paved areas, on your property, and increase the amount of vegetated area in your yard.
- Clean up your pet's waste. It can end up in our waterways.
- Wash your car at a car wash instead of cleaning it in your driveway.
- Consider innovative approaches to stormwater management, such as using rain barrels, planting rain gardens or installing green roofs.
- Clear trash and debris from storm drains and driveway pipes to prevent clogs, and dispose of the trash properly.
- Dispose of paint, motor oil and cleaning products properly. Contact the West Lafayette Sanitation Department at 765-775-5242 or visit the sanitation page of <http://www.westlafayette.in.gov/> for more information.
- Report drainage problems and illegal dumping to the City of West Lafayette; call 765-775-5242.
- Learn more about stormwater programs and permitting by visiting the Indiana Department of Environmental Management Web site, [www.in.gov/idem](http://www.in.gov/idem).