

Arlington's Proposed Stormwater Utility

Forestry and Natural Resources Commission

Department of Environmental Services

December 16, 2022



What is a Stormwater Utility?

- The stormwater program is currently funded through the Sanitary District Tax, based on a property's assessed value (not correlated with SW impact).
- A Stormwater Utility would be an **alternate** way to pay for the County's Stormwater Management Program, based on the amount of hard surfaces, or impervious area (IA), on a property.
- Like electric, gas, or water utility bills, the stormwater utility would charge properties a user fee based on its use of and impact to the County's stormwater system
- A property's impervious cover is better correlated with how much stormwater runoff each property generates than the property assessment
- **Per State code, cannot offer exemptions for tax exempt organizations**



How did we get here?

Phase 1

Feasibility Study of a Stormwater Utility (Complete)

- [Interim Deliverable provided in May 2020](#)
 - Focused on policy considerations
- [Final Report](#) provided November 2020
 - Assessment recommends Utility User Fee model

Phase 2a

Feasibility Study and Rate Refinement (Complete)

- GIS mapping and measuring of County parcels
- Financial and ERU modelling
- Rate structure options to ease burden on middle- and low-income housing
- Benchmark other comparable utilities
- Recommend billing on Real Estate Tax Bill
- Legal review of changes imposed by VA law
- Credit program options

Phase 2b

Engagement and Implementation (Underway)

- [Project Page: \[bit.ly/ArlingtonStormwaterUtility\]\(https://bit.ly/ArlingtonStormwaterUtility\)](#)

County Board provided direction after Phase 2a to move forward with implementing a Stormwater Utility

We are here

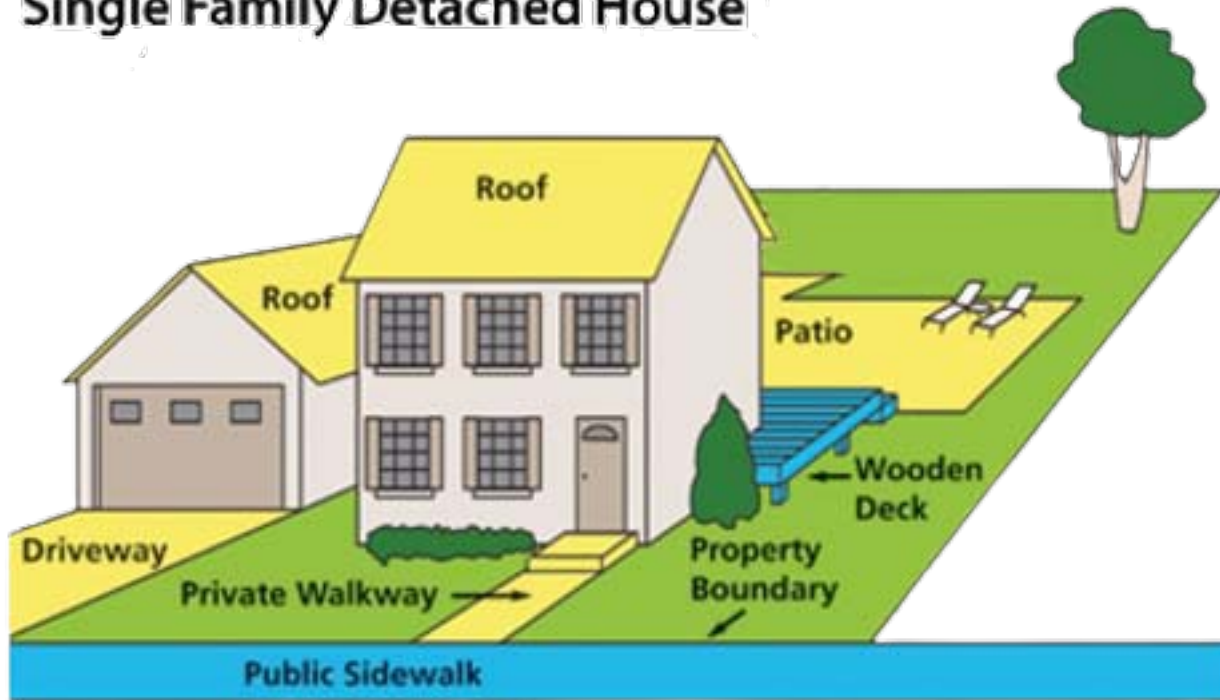


How are property owners billed for stormwater now?

- Sanitary District Tax
 - Included as part of real estate tax on bill (not listed separately on the statement)
 - \$0.017 per \$100 assessed value
 - Example - property with \$800,000 assessment is currently charged \$136/year

What is impervious area?

Single Family Detached House



 Impervious area

- **Impervious Area (IA)** is the portion of a property that is covered with hard surfaces that don't let rain runoff soak into the ground.
- Examples include patios, roofs, driveways and walkways.
- Properties with more hard surfaces contribute more stormwater runoff to the system and would therefore pay a higher rate under a stormwater utility.

Why Change to a Stormwater Utility?

- ✓ **Demand-Based Fees:** Utility fees are based on a property's "contribution" to the stormwater system
- ✓ **Fairer basis of funding:** The current funding mechanism (property assessment) has no correlation to amount of runoff generated on a property
- ✓ **Aligns with industry trend** of funding stormwater management programs with a user fee

Rate structure is not designed to be an incentive program, but as a cost recovery mechanism based on runoff contributed by each parcel. This results in an equitable way to distribute costs of stormwater management.

What will the Stormwater Utility Fund?

A Utility would fund the same Stormwater Programs funded by the Sanitary District now:

- Maintaining approximately 200 miles of storm sewer pipe
- Tens of thousands of culverts, inlets, outlets and other elements
- Upgrades to the infrastructure system and increased capacity
- FEMA floodplain management and Army Corps of Engineers' compliance
- Water quality and regulatory programs
- Green infrastructure and restoration projects
- Education and training

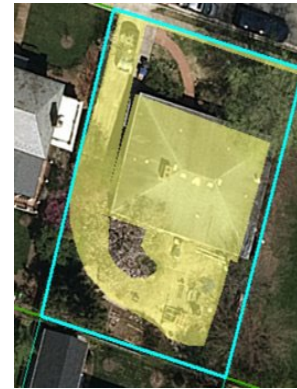


How Would a Utility Work?

- Impervious area is measured through GIS imagery and is used to calculate the square footage of the impervious area.
- Properties would be charged based on a unit of measurement called an ERU or **Equivalent Residential Unit**— the median amount of impervious square footage specific to Arlington County.

1 ERU = 2,400 sq. ft Impervious Area (IA)

Total ERUs x Fee = Annual Fee



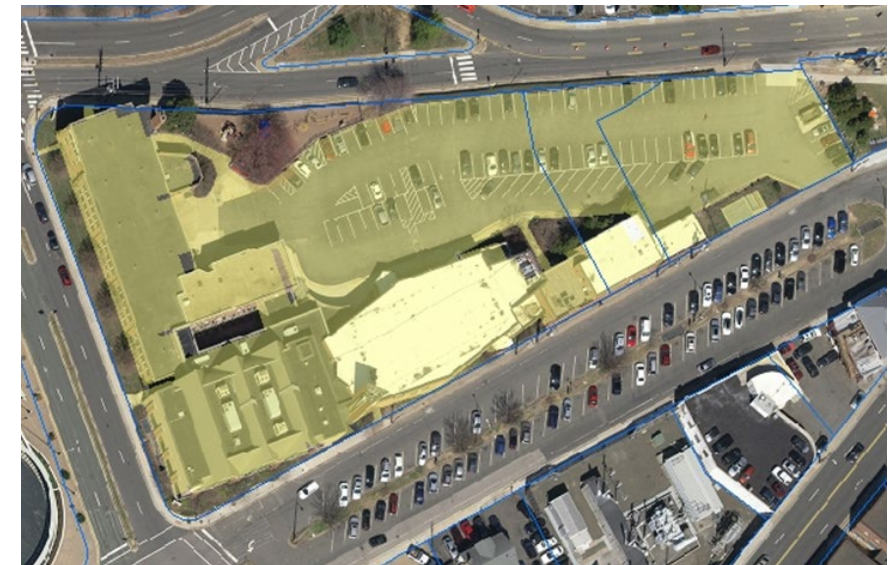
3,997 sq. ft.



1,465 sq. ft.



3,419 sq. ft.



88,198 sq. ft.

Fee Structure Recommendations for Property Types



Rate Structure for Single-Family Residential (SFR)

- Attached (townhomes & duplexes)
 - Properties charged 0.60 ERU
- Detached below:

Tier	Impervious Area Range	Billed
Tier 1	≤ 1600 SF	0.60 ERU
Tier 2	> 1600 - ≤ 3600 SF	1.00 ERU
Tier 3	> 3600 - ≤ 4800 SF	1.70 ERU
Cap	> 4800 SF	Per ERU, like Non-Res (NR)



Rate Structure for Multi-Family (MFR)

- Charged based on number of units per property
 - Properties charged 0.18 ERU/ unit



Rate Structure for Non-Residential (NR)

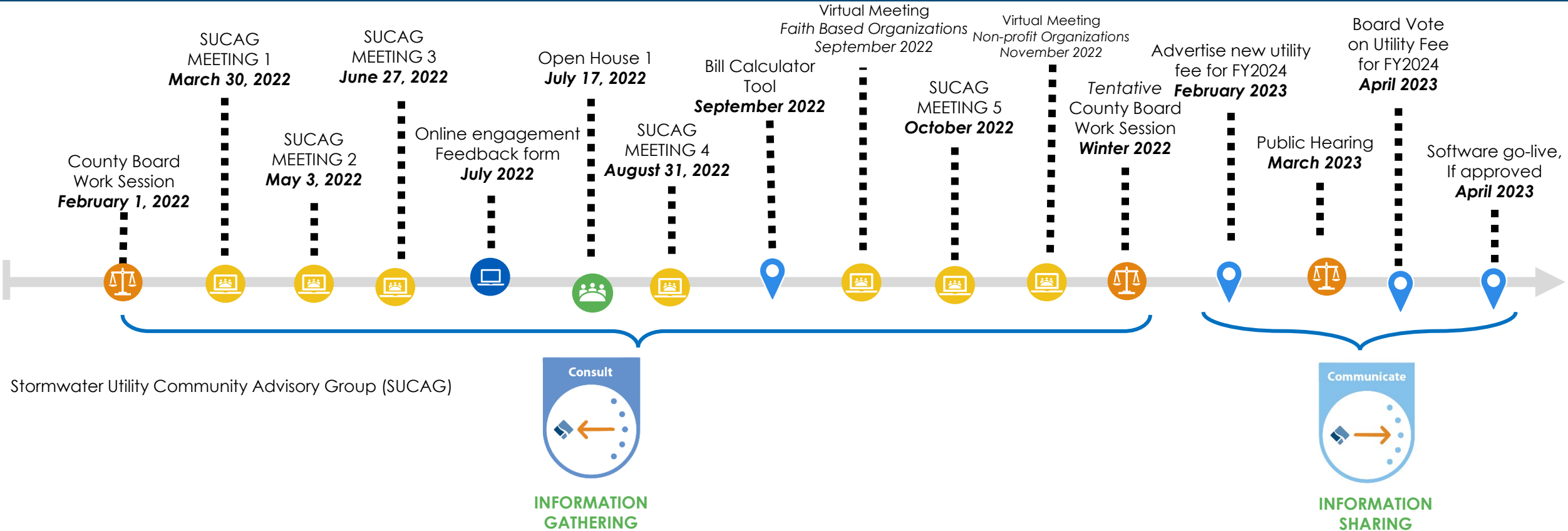
- Charged based on impervious area (IA) of each property, per ERU

Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) = 2,400 sq. Impervious Area (IA)
Estimated rate = \$230-\$250 per ERU

Stormwater Utility Fee – Public Engagement Timeline

Project Contact:
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Project Funding:
N/A



Stormwater Utility Community Advisory Group (SUCAG)



Online Feedback
(e.g. questionnaire, feedback form, etc.)

In-Person Engagement and Pop-Ups
(e.g. community meeting, roundtable, tabling, walking/bus tour, deliberative dialogue, etc.)

Virtual Meeting
(e.g., TEAMS, TEAMS live, Zoom, etc.)

County Board Engagement
(e.g. public hearing, Board work session, open door Monday, commission meeting etc.)

Key Milestone

A Stormwater Credit Program Aims To...



Support water quality



Promote private sector
awareness and voluntary
measures



Minimize administration



Acknowledge positive
behaviors

Credit Program Overview

Single-Family Residential: Attached & Detached

<p><u>Mandatory Structural Stormwater Facilities (LDA)</u></p> <p>Up to 15%</p>	<p><u>Voluntary Actions - 5% each</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Landscaping • Tree Planting • Rainwater Collection 	<p><u>Voluntary Actions - 10% each</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rain Garden • Permeable Driveway 	<p>MAX Credit of 35%</p>
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Multi-Family and Non-Residential

<p><u>Mandatory Structural Stormwater Facilities (LDA)</u></p> <p>Up to 15%</p>	<p><u>Voluntary Actions - 5% each</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Landscaping • Tree Planting • Stormwater Education Event • Storm Drain Marking 	<p><u>Voluntary Actions - 10% each</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rain Garden • Permeable Parking Lot / Driveway • Adopt A Street • Stream Clean-up • Invasive Plant Cleanup • Parking Lot / Private Street Sweeping 	<p>MAX Credit of 35%</p>
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Natural resource related credits

- Rain garden (with natives)
- Conservation landscaping (with natives)
- Rainwater collection
- Tree planting
- Stream cleanups
- Invasive plant removals



Fee Estimator

- The fee estimator is online
- It will allow property owners to look up the estimated ERUs for their property

ARLINGTON VIRGINIA Stormwater Utility Fee Estimator

3910 lorcom lane Sign in

Tools

Home

Arlington County, VA

Arlington's stormwater utility is still in development. The information reflected here is not final and is for illustrative and informational purposes only. Arlington County makes no guaranties or warranties regarding the accuracy and use of this information. Impervious surface area measurements are being fine-tuned and revised so they reflect the most accurate representation of impervious area for each property.

Arlington County Disclaimer

This web application is designed to allow Arlington County property owners to view the estimated number of billing units assigned to all County parcels eligible for billing under the proposed stormwater utility. This data is for informational purposes only.

Stormwater Utility Fee Estimates

Equivalent Residential Units or ERUs are the billing unit for Stormwater. For planning purposes only, Arlington County is estimating a fee range per billing unit of between \$230 to \$250. These estimates have been used to calculate a preliminary range of the potential annual stormwater utility fee for your property. The estimated annual fee was calculated by multiplying the estimated fee by the number of ERUs estimated for your parcel. Please note, this information is provided for planning purposes. The final rate will be adopted by the County Board and could differ from this estimated fee range.

State Code of Virginia

Pursuant to Section 54.1-402 of the Code of Virginia, any determination of topography or contours, or any depiction of physical improvements, property lines or boundaries is for general information only and shall not be used for the design, modification or construction of improvements to real property or for flood plain determination.

I want to...
☆ 5100 25th ST N
Address: 5100 25th ST N
RPCMaster: 02079011
RPC: 02079011
Class: Single Family Detached
ERU: 1
Estimated Annual Fee: \$230.00 - \$250.00
Note:
Fee Calculated by: ERU x 000 rate.
[Add to Results](#) [View Additional Details](#)

Basemap... WKID: 4326 Lat/Long ▲ Lat: 38.896453° N Lon: 77.136029° W 0 50 100ft

4:56 PM 9/13/2022

Next Steps

- Possible work session with the County Board in January. Staff will be sharing current recommendations and feedback from engagement process.
- February, 2023 – FY24 budget & fees advertised
- March, 2023 – Public Hearings on the budget & fees
- April, 2023 – Board vote on adopting a stormwater utility & fee

Thank you!

- Subscribe for updates on the Stormwater Utility web page
- Check out the fee estimator map
- Provide feedback to staff

bit.ly/ArlingtonStormwaterUtility

Aileen Winquist

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