

# Arlington's Proposed Stormwater Utility

## Nonprofit Organizations

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Department of Environmental Services

November 2, 2022



# How to Participate

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- Please participate actively and respectfully
- Please mute when not speaking
- Click "raise hand" icon to enter the discussion queue; click again to lower your hand after speaking
- You can also share comments and questions using the chat feature

*This meeting will be recorded for future reference and be posted to the project webpage*

# Agenda

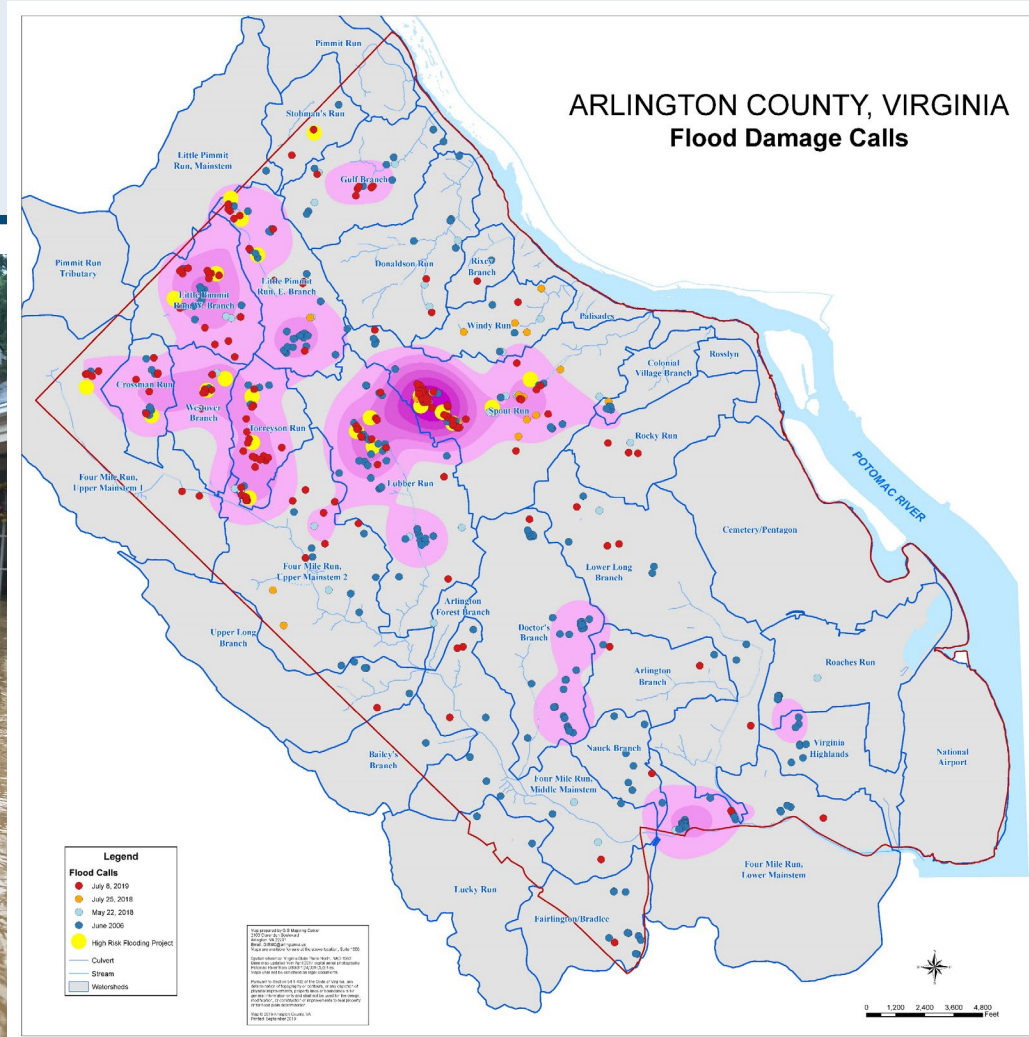
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- Flood Resilient Arlington
- What is a Stormwater Utility?
- What does the utility fund?
- How would a utility work?
- Draft credit program
- Discussion

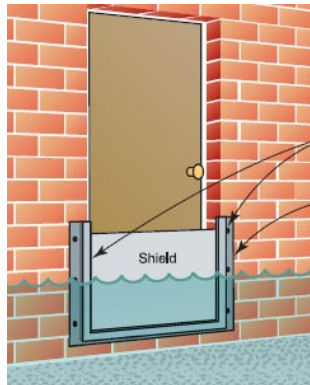
# A Flood Resilient Arlington

Story Map: Challenges and the Path Forward

Arlington County, VA



# Key Elements of Flood Resilient Arlington



Analytics and Data Assessment

New Types and Locations for Capacity Projects

Increased Stormwater Requirements

Storm System Improvements

Floodproofing Outreach

# How did we get here?



## 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

## 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

## Engagement and Implementation (Underway)

- [Project Page:](#)  
[www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Sustainability-and-Environment/Stormwater/Stormwater-Utility-Feasibility-Study](http://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Sustainability-and-Environment/Stormwater/Stormwater-Utility-Feasibility-Study)

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

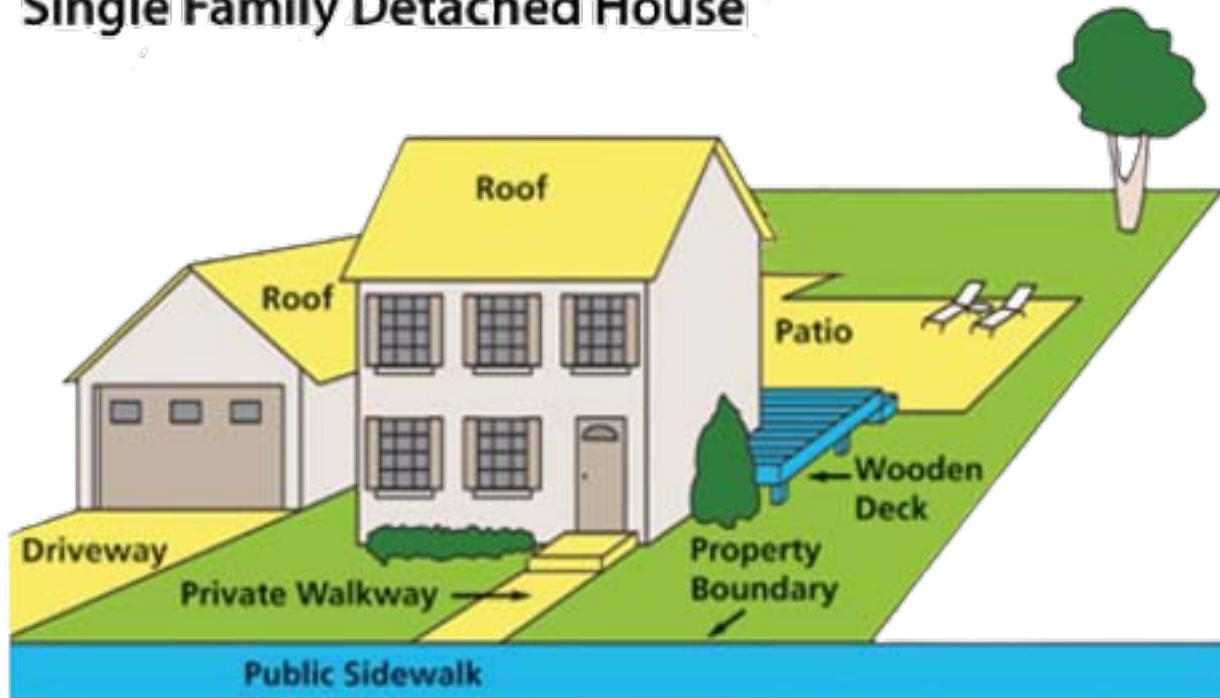
# What is a Stormwater Utility?

- The stormwater program is currently funded through the Sanitary District Tax, based on a property's assessed value (delinked from actual 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 (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**



# 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

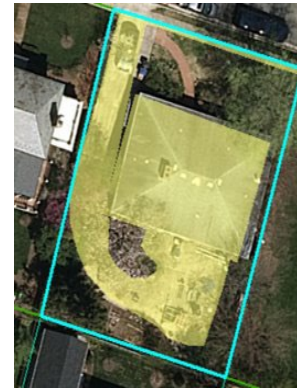


# How Would a Utility Work?

- 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**



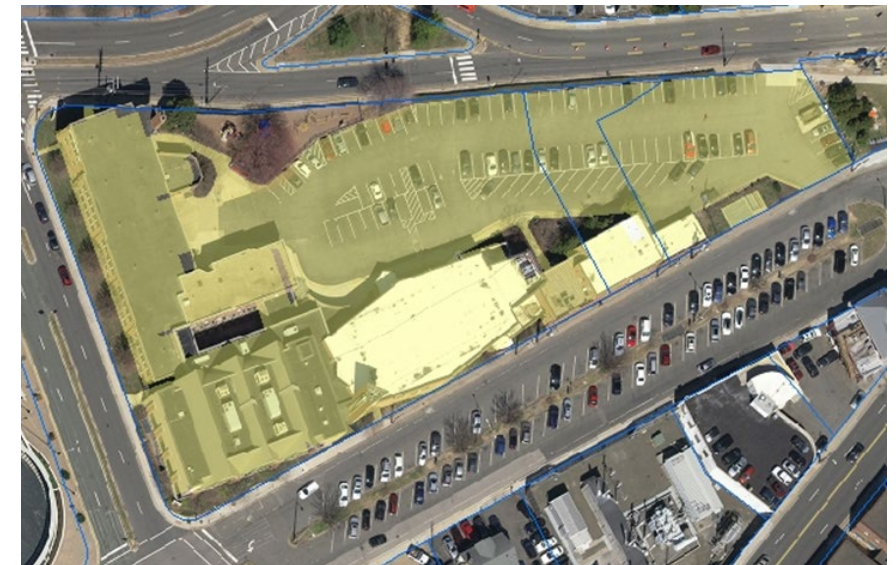
3,997 sq. ft.



1,465 sq. ft.



3,419 sq. ft.

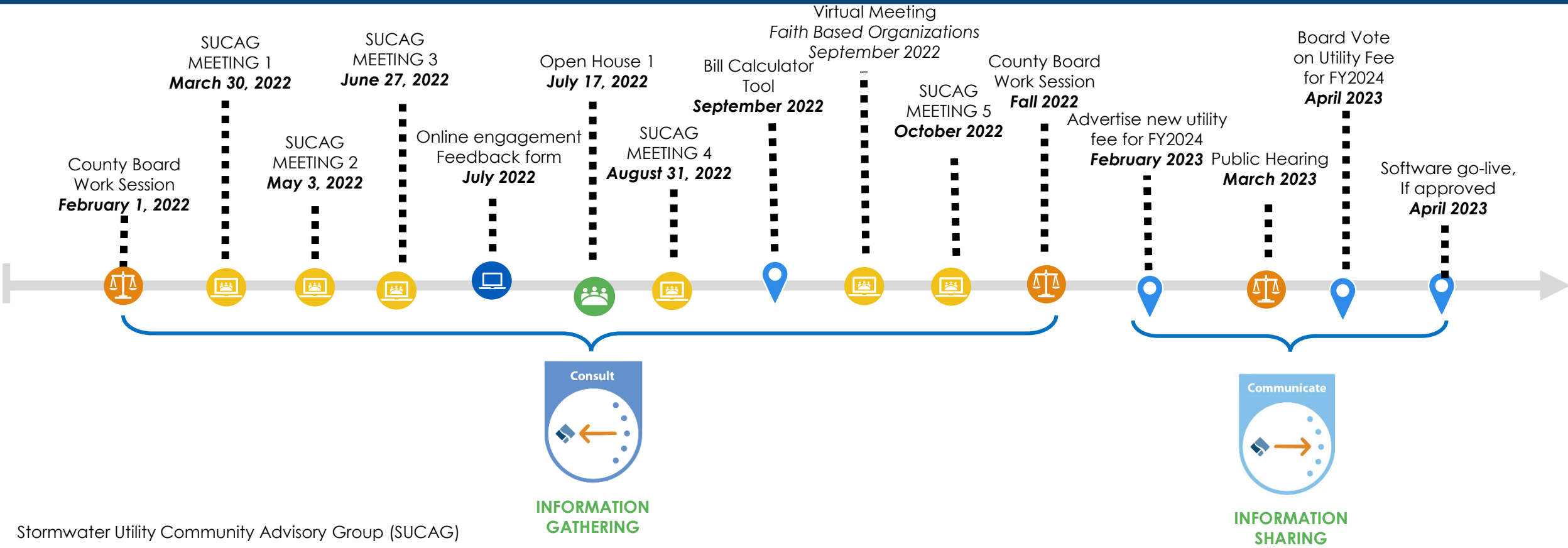


88,198 sq. ft.

# Stormwater Utility Fee – Public Engagement Timeline

**Project Contact:**  
Aileen Winqvist  
Awinquist@arlingtonva.us

**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.)

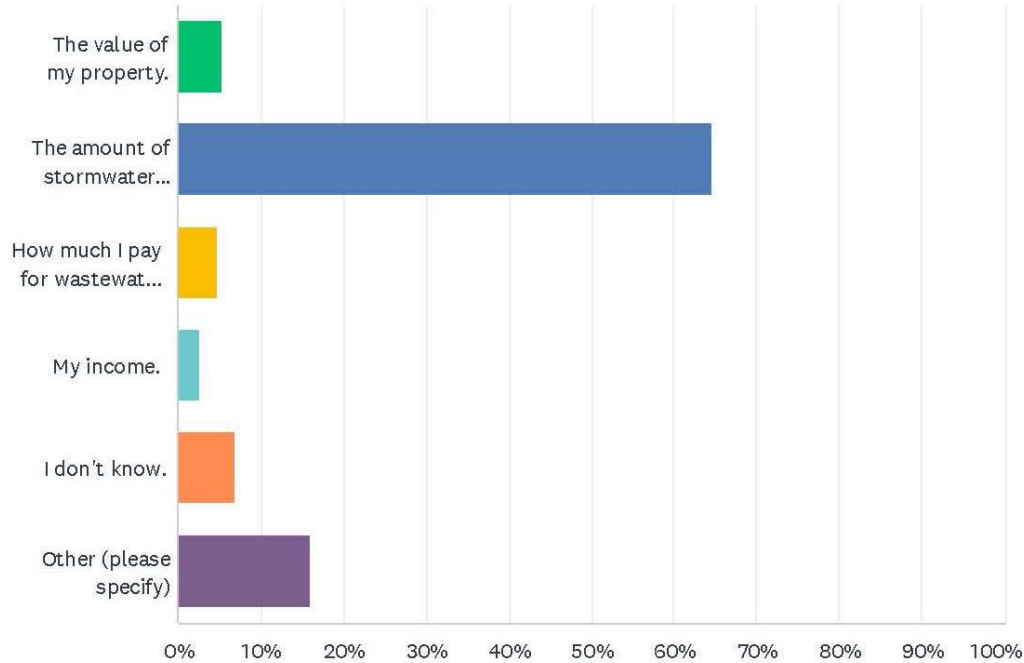
**Virtual Meeting**  
(e.g., TEAMS, TEAMS live, Zoom, etc.)

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

**Key Milestone**

# Q: What I Pay for Stormwater Should Be Based On:

Answered: 607 Skipped: 2



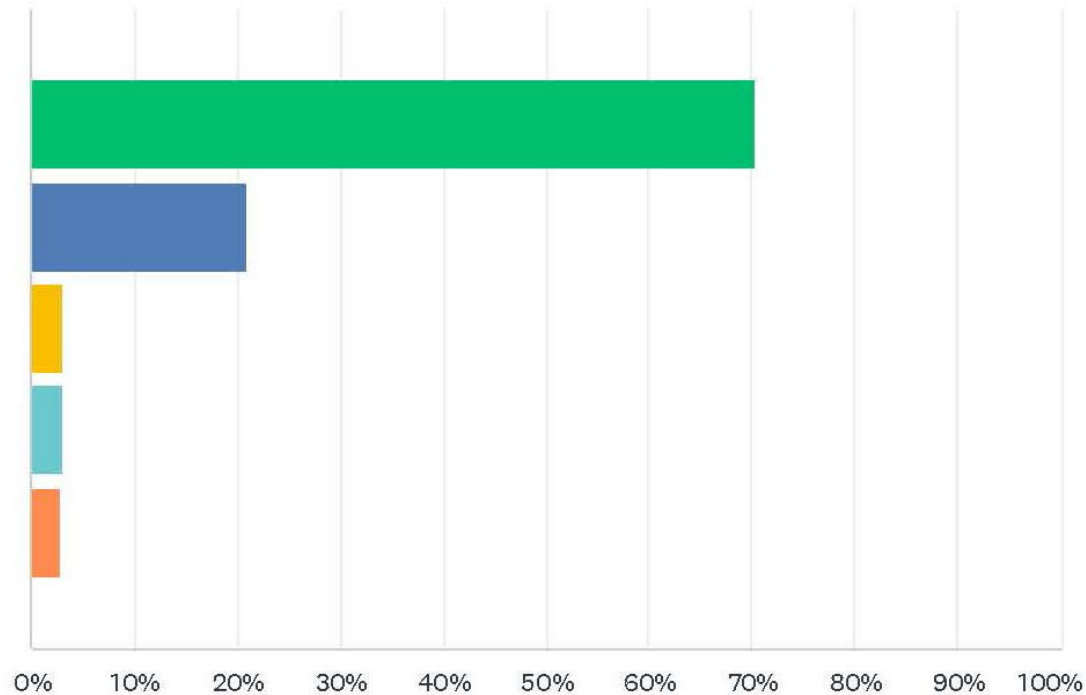
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The value of my property.	5.27%	32
The amount of stormwater runoff my property contributes to the County's stormwater system.	64.58%	392
How much I pay for wastewater service.	4.78%	29
My income.	2.47%	15
I don't know.	6.92%	42
Other (please specify)	15.98%	97
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>607</b>

61% agree it makes sense to bill for stormwater as a utility

Over 64% feel stormwater fees should be based on the amount of runoff generated by a property

## Q: Rate how important it is that the County maintain and/or upgrade its infrastructure to minimize flooding.

Answered: 603 Skipped: 6



Over 90% feel its very important or somewhat important to maintain and upgrade infrastructure to reduce flood risk.

VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NEITHER IMPORTANT NOR UNIMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT UNIMPORTANT	VERY UNIMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
70.32%	20.90%	2.99%	2.99%	2.82%	603	1.47
424	126	18	18	17		

# A Stormwater Credit Program Aims To...



Support water quality



Promote private sector  
awareness and voluntary  
measures



Minimize administration



Acknowledge positive  
behaviors

# Draft Credit Program

- The credit program will include both mandatory and voluntary actions
- Up to 35% credit available for all customers
- VA law requires that localities provide a credit for qualifying stormwater facilities, even mandatory ones installed as part of a development project



04/18/2014 10



# Credit Program Overview

## Single-Family Residential: Attached & Detached

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

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



- Stormwater education event (Once per year, 30 attendees)
- Volunteer activity (30 volunteer hours)
  - Adopt-a-Street
  - Storm Drain Marking
  - Stream Cleanup
  - Invasive Plant removal
- Parking Lot Sweeping (6 times per year)
- Permeable Parking
- Tree Planting
- Rain Garden
- Conservation Landscaping

**DRAFT**

# 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 XXX rate.  
[Add to Results](#) [View Additional Details](#)

Basemap... WKID: 4326 Lat/Long ▲ Lat: 38.898453° N Lon: 77.136029° W 0 50 100ft

4:56 PM 9/13/2022

# Feedback from Faith Organizations

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- **The new fee could affect their ability to deliver community services,** especially considering the budget challenges brought on by the pandemic, such as lower service attendance, increased demand for services, and overall rising costs
- **Most have already started budget planning for 2023 and have not accounted for this increased cost** – a deferred timeline and/or a hybrid implementation of the fee over several years would help
- **They would apply to a credit program** to help offset costs and would like to receive credits for previous stormwater improvements on their properties and relevant volunteer activities (e.g., stream clean-ups)

# Next Steps

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- Work session with the County Board in December. Staff will be sharing feedback from engagement process.
- February, 2023 – FY24 budget will be advertised
- March, 2023 – Public Hearing on the budget
- April, 2023 – Board vote on adopting a stormwater utility fee

# Thank you!

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

[bit.ly/ArlingtonStormwaterUtility](https://bit.ly/ArlingtonStormwaterUtility)

Aileen Winquist

[awinquist@arlingtonva.us](mailto:awinquist@arlingtonva.us)