

CONCORD STORMWATER ENTERPRISE FUND

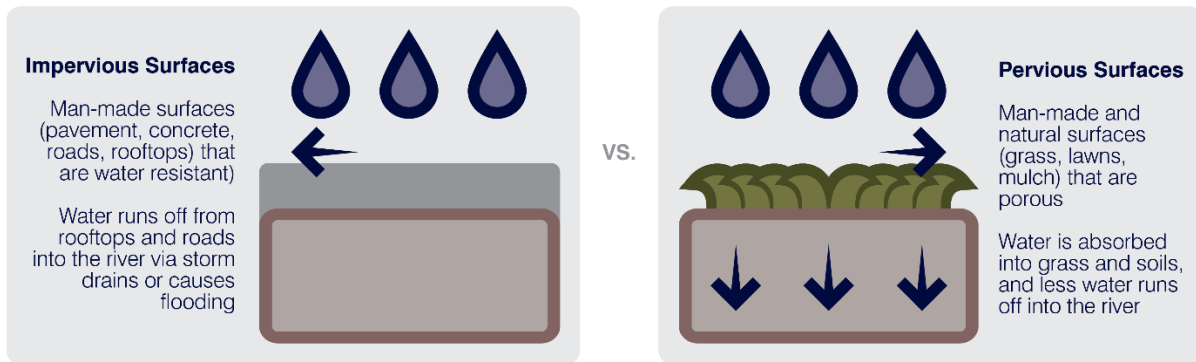
KEY TERMS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Concord Public Works is exploring the feasibility of implementing a Stormwater Enterprise Fund. Below are some key terms and frequently asked questions to ensure our community is informed about stormwater financing in Concord.

KEY TERMS



Impervious Surface: Materials or compact surfaces that do not allow stormwater to infiltrate or seep into the ground.



Stormwater: Runoff from precipitation or other sources that drains into the Town's drainage systems (such as catch basins, pipes, and culverts) and ultimately ends up in groundwater, ponds, streams and/or wetland resource areas. Areas with large amounts of impervious surface lead to greater amounts of stormwater runoff conveyed into the drainage system rather than seeping into the ground.



Stormwater Pollution: Pollutants (such as oils, fertilizer, sand, and trash) in stormwater runoff, which can contaminate drinking water supplies, fish and wildlife habitat.



Stormwater Flooding: Flooding of streets and sidewalks from overwhelmed stormwater drainage systems. Note, the total average annual precipitation has increased by approximately 10 percent in the last fifty years across the Northeast. In addition, greater amounts of total impervious surface across towns and cities have led to higher amounts of stormwater runoff. In areas where stormwater infrastructure has not been updated to accommodate greater runoff rates, minor but disruptive flooding events can occur more frequently.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



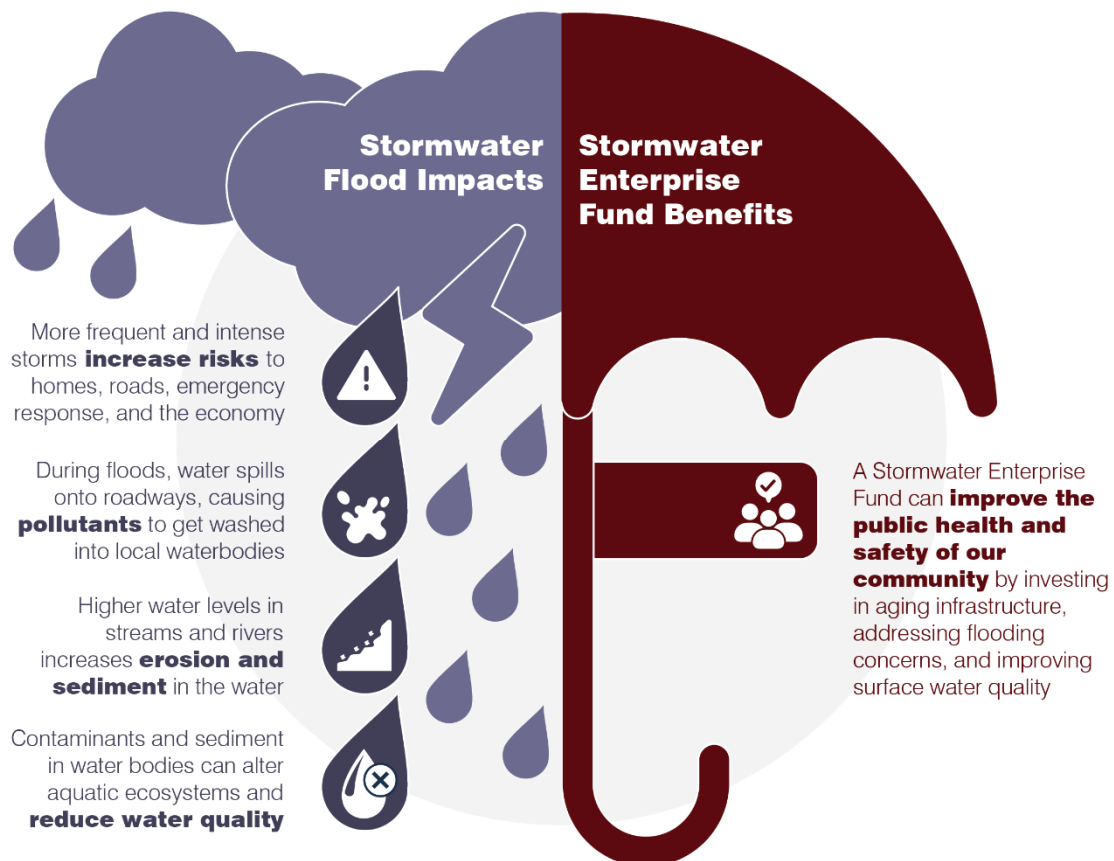
What is a stormwater fee and enterprise fund?

A stormwater fee is a payment for stormwater management, operation, and maintenance (including regulatory compliance), which is provided by the town. Stormwater fees are collected from property owners based on a property's impact to the storm drain system in addition to assumed usage of roadways and sidewalks providing a more equitable framework for funding stormwater needs. Generally, the impact to the storm drain is assessed based upon a property's amount of impervious surface. An enterprise fund is an account with a specific purpose. A stormwater enterprise fund would receive all revenue from a stormwater fee and would only be used for the purposes of stormwater management.



What are the benefits?

Adopting a stormwater enterprise fund benefits all municipal departments. By creating a stormwater enterprise and assigning user fees, additional funding will be made available for other priorities, such as roadway paving and reconstruction, sidewalks, and schools. It also reduces reactionary spending by allowing the Town to better plan and budget for future stormwater needs.





How does Concord manage stormwater?

Concord Public Works oversees the Town's stormwater management program, which consists of operation and maintenance activities such as street sweeping and catch basin cleaning, public education around stormwater, drainage system mapping, water quality testing, performing condition assessments and upgrading aging infrastructure, and installing new infrastructure.



How do properties in Concord contribute to stormwater?

Areas with widespread impervious surfaces can channel large amounts of stormwater to the drainage system, which can become overwhelmed during intense periods of rainfall. Parcels with greater impervious area, and without stormwater controls onsite, discharge greater amounts of stormwater. Even properties that do not discharge into the municipal storm drain system benefit from the Town's stormwater infrastructure when commuting to and from their property using Town roads.



How has Concord funded its stormwater management program in the past?

The Town's existing stormwater program is currently funded through the General Fund, which is financed through property taxes. Approved budgets through the General Fund have historically been variable and insufficient. Certain stormwater system improvements have been financed through other external funding mechanisms such as grants; however, these are not guaranteed long-term funding sources.



How is Concord's stormwater regulated?

Concord's Stormwater Regulations were adopted in 2011 to protect Concord's surface water, groundwater, and wetlands resources by managing stormwater during construction and post-construction activities, as well as regulating discharges to the storm drain system. Additionally, the Concord Public Works Design and Construction Standards and Details, adopted by the Public Works Commission in 2016, provide construction standards for the physical aspects of infrastructure system improvements within Concord. Concord Public Works is continuously working to reduce stormwater pollution, improve surface water quality, and to fulfill the requirements of the EPA's NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit. In 2016, a new MS4 Permit was issued with more extensive requirements to foster improvement of surface water quality. Complying with this permit has substantially increased the Town's stormwater costs, and will continue to do so going forward. **Complying with this permit will be a significant ongoing level of effort for the Town for the foreseeable future. EPA expects to release a new MS4 Permit for public comment in the summer of 2024.**



How will Concord fund compliance with the new requirements under the updated MS4 Permit?

Compliance with the MS4 permit requires additional funding, which would limit funding for other departments, like schools and transportation (streets and sidewalks). The Town has considered multiple options including higher property taxes, grant opportunities, or setting up a stormwater enterprise fund.



How is the stormwater enterprise fund being assessed and developed for the Town of Concord?

The Town of Concord has researched other Massachusetts communities with stormwater enterprise funds for best practices. The steps of setting up a stormwater enterprise fund include:

1. Project future stormwater budget needs.
2. Assess impervious surface amounts by land use type.
3. Assess rate structures in relation to average impervious surfaces, land use types, and projected stormwater budget.
4. Meet with municipal departments, boards, commissions, and the general public to review findings, assess feasibility, and determine best way to move forward.
5. Pass enabling legislation at Town Meeting for the establishment of a stormwater enterprise fund.



What are the proposed stormwater fees and how will they be assessed?

The proposed stormwater fees were chosen from several options based on other Massachusetts communities, fairness, cost of implementation and ability to meet the Town's stormwater budgetary needs. Stormwater fees are generally structured as flat fees based on land use type or as user fees based on impervious area.

- **A flat fee** refers to a universal rate or charge (e.g., \$100 per user) and in Massachusetts is most often applied to smaller residential parcels.
- **A user fee** is generally calculated based on the amount of impervious surface area on a parcel.

A rate is assigned to the "equivalent residential unit", usually the average impervious area on a single-family parcel. To calculate the user fee, each property would be assigned an ERU based on the amount of impervious surface on the parcel. The Equivalent Residential Unit in Concord is 5,570 square feet, which is the average amount of impervious area on a single-family residential property. A tiered user fee involves a stepped rate assigned to groups with specific impervious area amounts.



What happens if a stormwater enterprise fund is not implemented?

The funds needed to comply with the MS4 Permit and meet necessary costs will be drawn from the General Fund, taking away from other needs such as public safety and education. If the Town chooses not to act at all, the USEPA will impose fines.



What are other communities doing to fund and comply with the 2016 MS4 Permit?

There are 25 other communities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts who have implemented stormwater enterprise funds and many more have started the evaluation process. Some of the communities that have implemented stormwater enterprise funds include Chelmsford, Dedham, Newton, Reading, Wellesley, and Westford. Other communities are funding the MS4 Permit requirements through the General Tax Fund, or through other revenue sources.



What are Concord's next steps toward implementing a stormwater enterprise fund?

The Town has introduced the concept of a stormwater enterprise and has sought public feedback at recent public meetings. The Town will be seeking additional feedback from community stakeholders through additional forums in the coming months to be held in conjunction with various boards and committees. A Stormwater Fund Article will be included in a Town Meeting. This Article sets up the framework to move forward with the implementation of a stormwater enterprise by asking the public to adopt the state's enabling legislation. If the Article is approved, the Public Works Commission will engage with the public to select a stormwater fee structure, set the rates, and establish a stormwater budget for funding by the enterprise that will inform the rates. The stormwater budget would then be put forth at Town Meeting for the public's acceptance.