

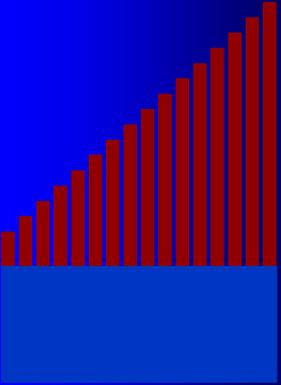
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Storm Water Utilities: Lessons Learned

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Waukesha County Storm Water Workshop
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Introduction

- Our focus is planning, economic/fiscal analysis and public administration issues
- Have worked with R/M engineers to set up a number of utilities
- Also work assist our clients with ongoing administration – rate updates, credits, budgeting



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Our overall perspective on this topic

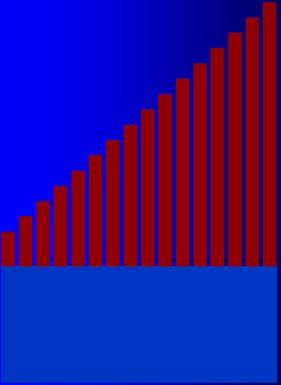
1. You can design and construct storm water management facilities without a SWU
2. Even if you create a SWU, it doesn't have to fund 100% of the costs
3. SWU creation is really an exercise in public administration and funding
4. Setting up the SWU to function well over the long term is at least as important as determining the initial charge
5. SWU creation needs to be a joint effort between engineering/public works and administration/finance

Lessons Learned: Utility Structure

1. There are many options for Utility structure
 - City, Village or Town-wide
 - Utility district
 - Joint commission by intergovernmental agreement
2. If you decide to set up a joint storm water commission, choose the commission structure carefully

Lessons Learned: the Political Process

1. Keep elected officials involved and well-informed– they are the ones who ultimately have to explain this to their constituents
2. Its important to have a compelling reason for the SWU
3. SWU creation can be more difficult in communities with significant amounts of rural /undeveloped land or vacant lots



Lessons Learned: Public Education and Input

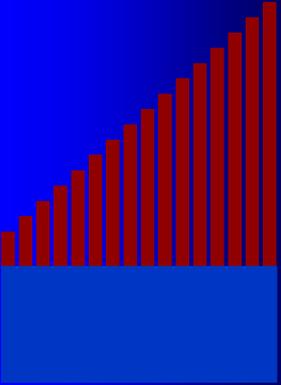
1. Including non-elected citizen representatives on an advisory committee can be a positive
 - Churches, large businesses, schools, residents
2. Open house format often works better than the public hearing format
3. Keep the message simple
4. Be clear and straightforward about the reasons for the SWU – don't promise something you can't deliver

Lessons Learned: Public Education and Input

Visual examples can be helpful:

Impervious Areas





Lessons Learned: Public Education and Input

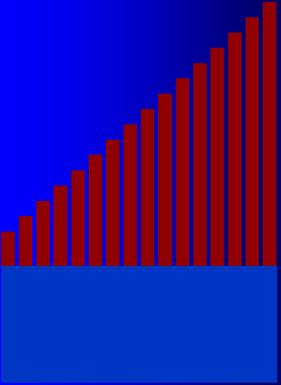
1. Common perceptions / misperceptions:
 - Another layer of government / bureaucracy
 - Just another tax
 - It's a rain tax
 - Charges imposed on churches and schools will all be paid by the residents of the community
 - The DNR is making us set up a storm water utility
 - My subdivision has a storm water pond so why should I pay?

Lessons Learned: Utility Administration

1. It is better to have a separate fund and budget for the Storm Water Utility
2. Make sure you designate who is in charge of overseeing the Storm Water Utility

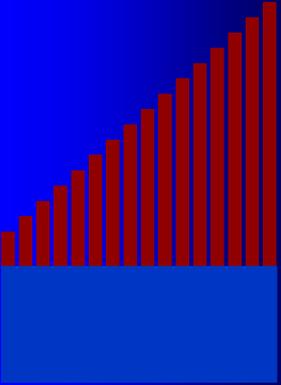
Lessons Learned: User Fee Structure

1. User charges should be equitable, but remember that the standard is *reasonable*, not *exact*
2. Usually (but not always) better to keep it simple
3. Don't get hung up on the size of the SWU budget



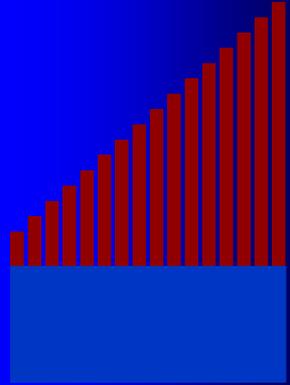
Lessons Learned: Credits

1. Credits should be related to the user charge structure
2. Think about the practical aspects of administration
 - Look to sanitary sewer and water utilities for examples
3. One of the hardest issues is how to account for changes over time in requirements for on-site storm water management



Lessons Learned: Billing

1. Talk to billing clerks to find out what your billing software can handle
2. The parcel information/ERU database won't correspond neatly to utility billing accounts
 - Multi-tenant buildings / condominium outlots
 - Parking lots
 - Airport hangars
3. It's a good idea to have a written procedure for updating accounts



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Questions?