

# Municipal Stormwater Utility

## Downers Grove, Illinois

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GIS Specialist



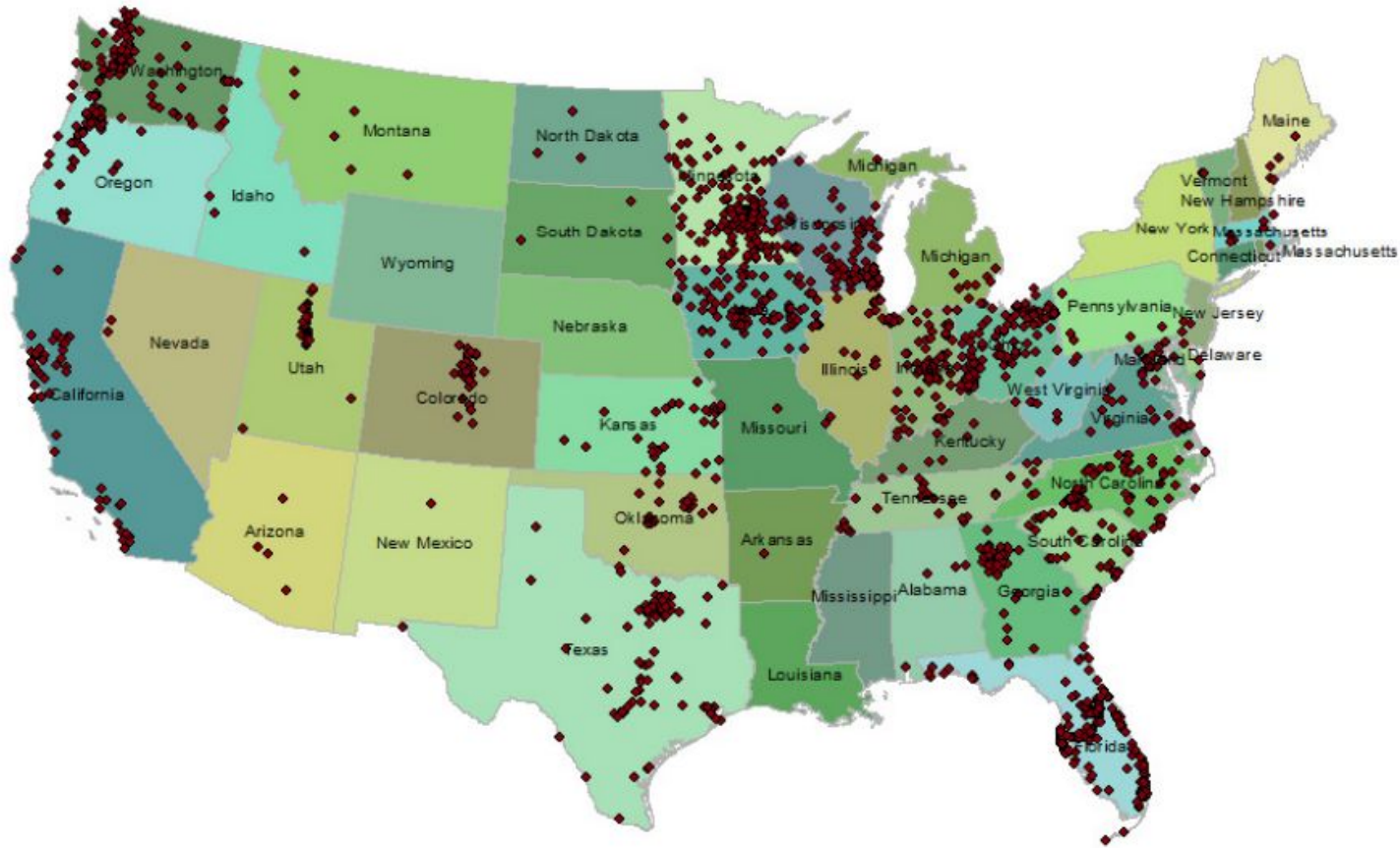
# Stormwater Utility - What is it?

- Provide a service & collect fees
- Operations, Planning, Maintenance and Infrastructure
- Fee is proportional to the runoff
- Enterprise fund
- NOT A TAX

# Terms

- SWU (Stormwater Utility)
- Impervious Area
- ERU (**E**quivalent **R**unoff **U**nit)  
(alternately **E**quivalent **R**esidential **U**nit)
- Permeable Pavement

## Stormwater Utilities 2016



Campbell, C. Warren (2016). "The Western Kentucky University Stormwater Utility Survey 2016,"  
<https://www.wku.edu/engineering/civil/fpm/swsurvey/swsurvey-2016draft11-7-2016hq.pdf>, Bowling Green, Kentucky.



# 2016 Stormwater Utilities in the Chicagoland area



Tiers

Downers Grove  
Hoffman Estates



ERU

Highland Park  
Rolling Meadows  
Winetka



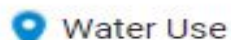
Fixed

Aurora  
Palatine



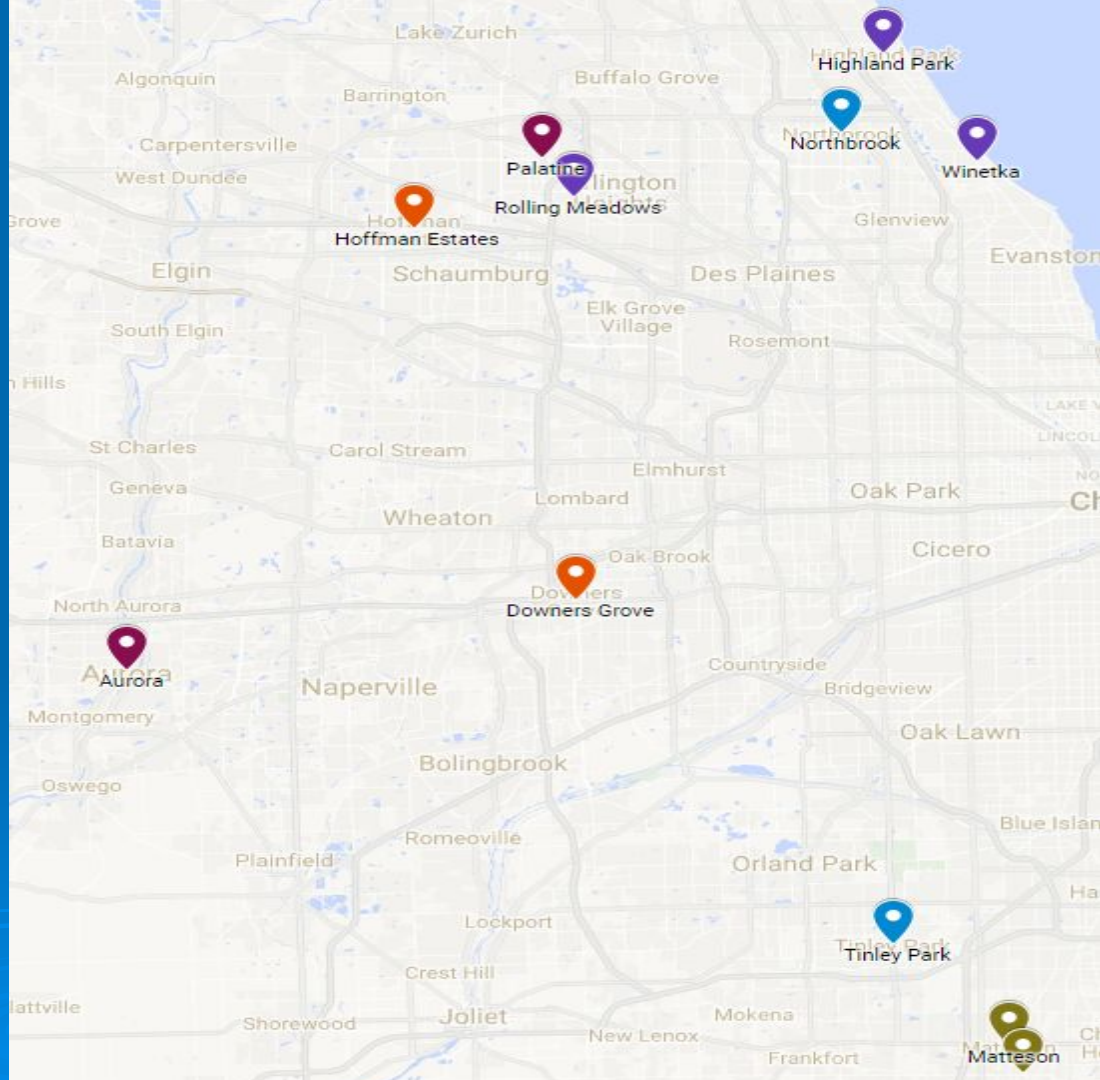
Res/Comm

Matteson  
Richton Park



Water Use

Northbrook  
Tinley Park



# Why Fund Stormwater?

- Maintaining Infrastructure
- Creek Systems



# VDG Stormwater System

- Three major watersheds
  - 11 miles of streams



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- 2/3 of the Village is drained by storm sewers
  - 130 miles of storm sewers
  - 7,000 drainage structures



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  - 11 miles of streams
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  - 130 miles of storm sewers
  - 7,000 drainage structures
- 1/3 of the Village is drained by ditches
  - 140 miles of ditches
  - 47,000 feet of culverts



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- 2/3 of the Village is drained by
  - 130 miles of storm sewers
  - 7,000 drainage structures
- 1/3 of the Village is drained by
  - 140 miles of ditches
  - 47,000 feet of culverts
- 315 stormwater storage facilities (most private)



# Why Fund Stormwater?

- Maintaining Infrastructure
- Creek Systems
- Stormwater Master Plan (DG 2006)
- Watershed Infrastructure Improvement Plan (DG 2007)



# Why Fund it with a Utility?

- Assistance in meeting NPDES permit requirements
- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Participation / Involvement
- Illicit Discharge Detection / Elimination
- Construction Site Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Runoff Control
- Pollution Prevention / Good Housekeeping

# DG SWU History

10 Years in the Making...

- 2003 – SWU Exploratory Committee/Leadership
- 2006 – Stormwater Master Plan
- 2007 – Watershed Infrastructure Improvement Plan
- 2010 – Long Range Financial Plan
- 2011 – RFP for SWU Study
- 2012 – Study Completed
- 2012 – Council authorization to proceed > > > > >

# SWU Actions ... 2012 & 2013

- Public Engagement
- 7 Village Council Meetings
- Informational Videos
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Public Meetings
- E-mail Questions/Comments
- Questions / Comments Posted
- Specific Impact on Each Parcel

Social Media  
Village Website  
E-News  
Channel 6  
Hometown Times  
Community Wide Notification  
System  
Direct Mailings  
Meetings with Key Customers  
Displays at Public Buildings  
Interactive E-mails



**Keep The Wreaths Red!**  
See Page 6

# Hometown TIMES



**Recycling Extravaganza**  
**Page 4**

# Hometown TIMES

*"Downers Grove Preserves the Balance Between Tradition and Progress"*

## Stormwater Utility Bills Arrive in January

In January 2013, the Village will implement a monthly stormwater fee that will be charged to all property owners in Downers Grove. Revenues generated by the fee will be allocated to the maintenance and operating costs of the stormwater infrastructure system, which consists of:

- Approximately 7,000 drainage structures
- 315 stormwater detention facilities
- 130 miles of storm sewer pipes
- 12 miles of streams
- 140 miles of roadway ditches
- 47,000 feet of culverts

Operating costs for the stormwater system are currently funded primarily through property taxes. Shifting the source of funding to a utility/fee based system will result in a reduction in the property tax levy by approximately \$2.48 million, beginning with the 2012 levy (collected in 2013).

The monthly stormwater fee will appear on the same bi-monthly utility bill currently used for water charges. Stormwater fees will be reflected on utility bills beginning in January 2013.

- Properties on the south side of the Village will receive their first stormwater charges on January 2.
- Properties on the north side of the Village will receive their first stormwater charges on February 1.

### How much will I be charged and how is the fee calculated?

- Stormwater fees are charged PER PARCEL.** If your property consists of more than one parcel number, EACH will be listed separately with the corresponding fee. **(NOTE: UNINCORPORATED parcels will NOT be assessed a Stormwater Utility Fee.)**
- The unit of measure used to determine a parcel's stormwater fee is an ERU or Equivalent Runoff Unit. **One ERU is equal to 3,300 square feet of impervious area.**

(Continued on page 5)



www.downers.us

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**Major Construction Complete**  
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**Fire Safety Tips**  
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**Combating Drunk Drivers**  
Page 7

## Stormwater Utility Launches in January

The Village will implement a monthly stormwater fee, effective January 2013, that will be charged to all property owners. The fee will appear on the same bi-monthly utility bill used for water charges.

Operating costs for the stormwater system are currently funded primarily through property taxes. Shifting the source of funding to a utility/fee based system will result in a reduction in the property tax levy by approximately \$2.48 million, beginning with the 2012 levy (collected in 2013).

The Village invests significant capital to construct and maintain the stormwater system. Revenues generated by the fee will be solely allocated to the maintenance and operating costs of the stormwater infrastructure system, which consists of:

- Approximately 7,000 drainage structures
- 315 stormwater detention facilities
- 30 miles of storm sewer pipes
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- 140 miles of roadway ditches
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### Benefits of the Utility

The utility model represents an equitable method to collect revenue from those properties that place a demand on the system. Revenue is generated by charging all property owners a monthly stormwater fee, based on the property's impact to the stormwater system.

There are multiple benefits to implementing a fee based system:

- All properties in the Village share in the cost of operating and maintaining the stormwater system.
- Fees provide a predictable and sustainable funding source.
- A heightened sense of awareness of the stormwater management system is created.
- Property owners are encouraged to reduce the amount of run-off from their property by installing rain barrels, rain gardens, and detention basins, and may be eligible for a credit to their stormwater fee.

**WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOUR FEE AND/OR TAX REDUCTION WILL BE?**

Email your address to: [swutility@downers.us](mailto:swutility@downers.us).

Look for more information about the Stormwater Utility in the December issue of Hometown Times and on the Village website, [www.downers.us](http://www.downers.us).

Issue 3 2012

*All water is not the same.*

• **Tap water** comes from a faucet and is used for drinking, bathing, cooking, and household purposes. **Customers receive a bill for their use from the Village.**

• **Wastewater** is that which has been used, as for washing clothes or flushing the toilet. **Customers receive a bill for their use from the Downers Grove Sanitary District.**

• **Stormwater** originates from rain or melting snow, or other activities involving outdoor water use such as car washing. Water that does not soak into the ground becomes run-off. Every property generates run-off and benefits from the Village infrastructure system that manages stormwater.

**How do you pay for use of the stormwater system?**

# Benefits



## ➤ Improved Equity

- Property value rate irrelevant
- Contribute based on impact

**X** Tax-exempt contribution **\*\* removed  
11/11/2014**

## ➤ Fiscally accountable

- Fees are driven by level of service and needs
- Fees are exclusively used for stormwater needs

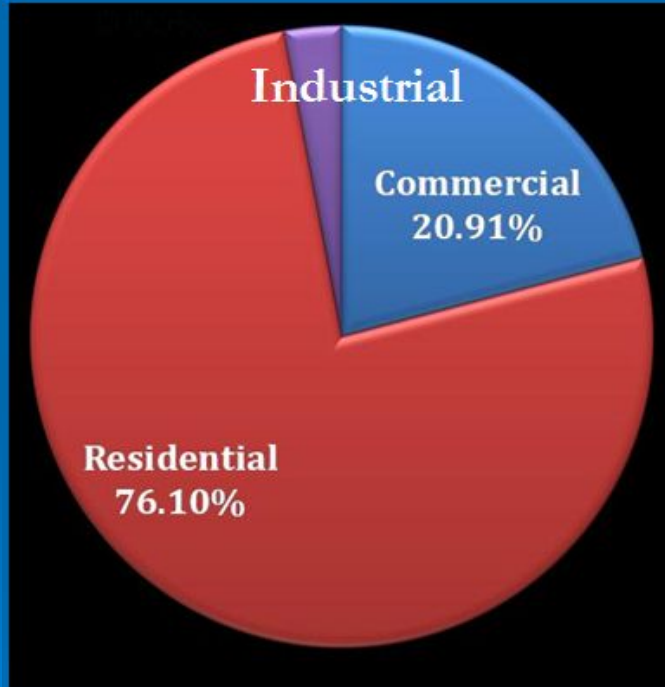
## ➤ Highlights stormwater as a vital Village service

- Fee gets public's attention
- Opportunity for education
- Motivates on-site stormwater management

## ➤ Dependable revenue stream

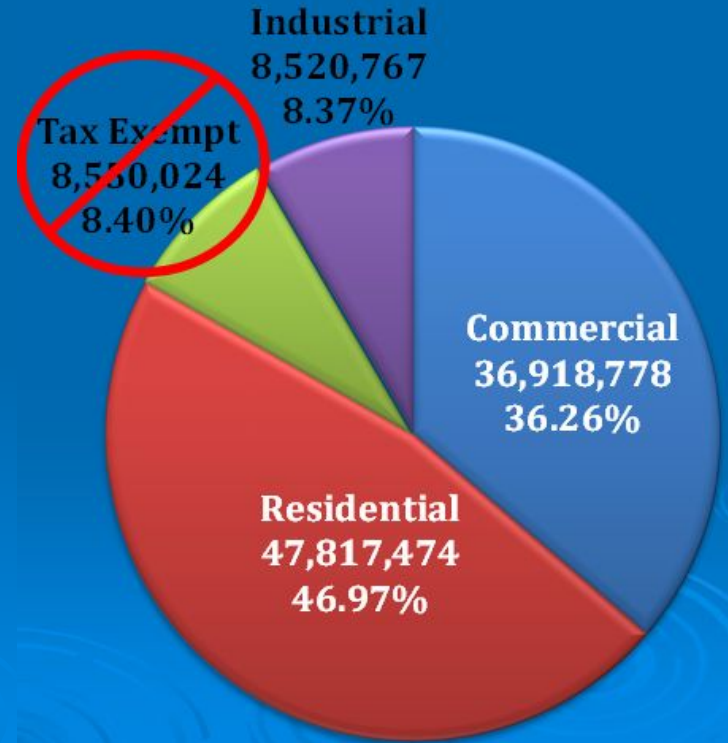


# Improved Equity



Property Tax Breakdown

Impervious Area Breakdown




# Dependable Revenue Stream

- Removed SW funding from Tax Bill
- Village Reduced 2013 Property Tax Levy by \$2.48 Million (19%)

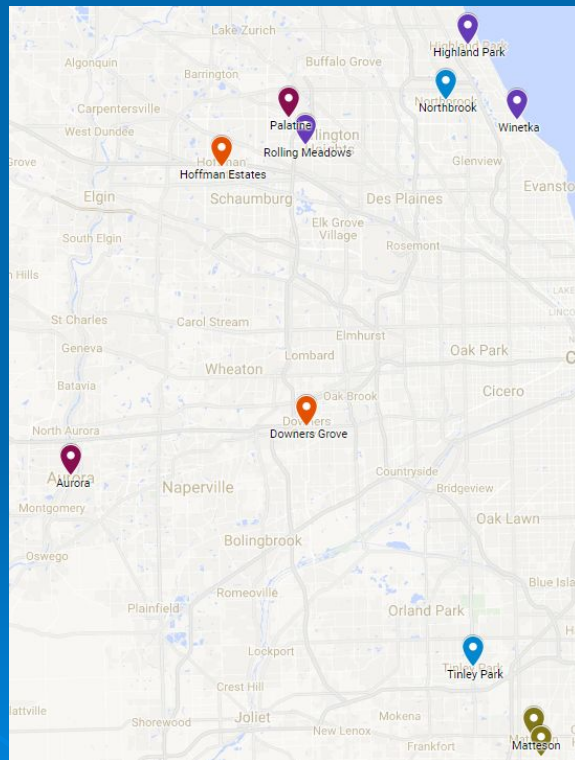
# Implementation Steps

## Program Consistent with Council Policy Direction

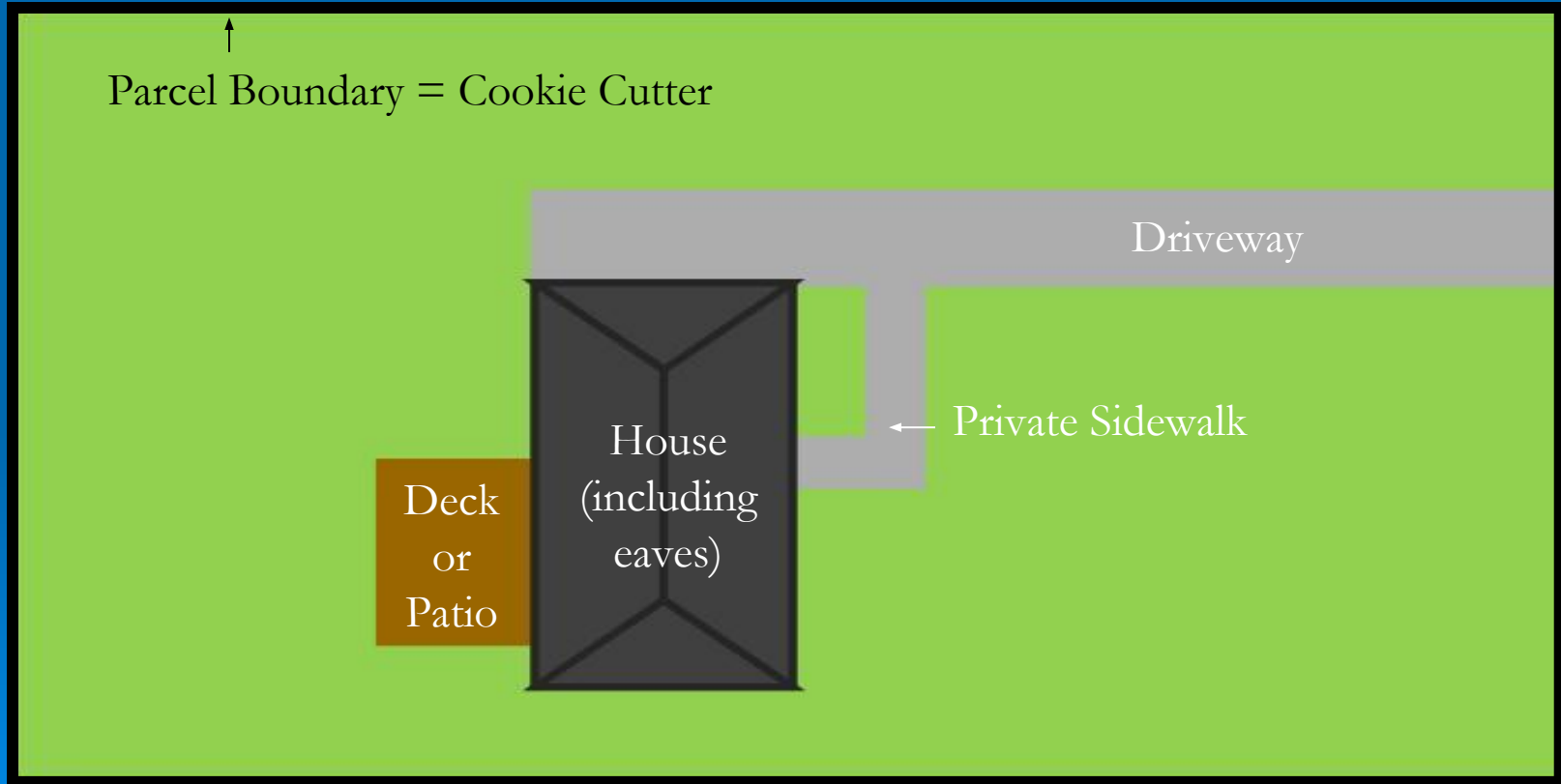
- Detailed Information Analyzed
  - Billing System Created
  - Database & GIS Updated
  - Ordinance Drafted
  - Credit & Incentive Manual
  - Program Administration Finalized
  - Public Engagement Plan
- 

# Fee Structure

- Flat Fee
- Gross Area
- Impervious Area
- ERU Based
- Drinking Water Usage
- Residential Equivalent Factor (REF) (MN)



# Impervious Area



# Monthly Billing Process

- Performed monthly (*billed bi-monthly*)
- Multistep Process

GIS and Finance software

# Credit & Incentive Program

| <u>Control Activity</u> | <u>Credit/Reduction</u> | <u>Incentives</u><br><b>(One-Time Fee Reduction)</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| ➤ Site Runoff Rate      | Up to 20%               | ➤ Rain Barrels \$25                                  |
| ➤ Volume Reduction      | Up to 20%               | ➤ Rain Gardens \$250                                 |
| ➤ Water Quality         | Up to 10%               | ➤ Permeable Pavement Systems \$300                   |
| ➤ Direct Discharge      | Up to 50%               | ➤ Green Roofs, Cisterns, Other \$300                 |
| ➤ Education             | Up to 100%              |  |
| ➤ Partnership           | Up to 100%              |  |

**Tax Exempt Parcels 100% off**

**Passed 11/11/2014**





# Lessons Learned

- Bring all to the table
- Layout timeline early
- Regular Meetings
- Credit & Incentive Manual  
... Critical
- Be prepared for large time investment
- Share consistent message
- Dedicated email for questions
- Define data needs
- Define reporting needs
- Bill configuration
- \*Pay SWU first
- Know GIS data
- Research other SWUs
- Track imp. changes
- Need political advocate
- Communication

# Municipal Stormwater Utility

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