
To: Athens-Clarke County Public Works From: Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.
Re: Stormwater Fee Review Phase II Date: May 1, 2019

The purpose of this technical memorandum is to present an overview of the results and findings of the second phase of the stormwater fee review study conducted for the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACCGOV) by Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. (Stantec) and Ecological Planning Group (EPG).

1.0 BACKGROUND

In March of 2003, the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County came under the regulations of the NPDES Phase II permit which regulates the discharges from the ACCGOV stormwater system into local water bodies. To ensure compliance with the permit, the Mayor and Commission (M&C) approved a Stormwater Management Program (SMP) to identify tasks that ACCGOV would undertake over a five-year period. To assist with the funding aspects of the implementation of the SMP, the M&C authorized ACCGOV staff to create a Stormwater Advisory Committee (SAC) consisting of interested citizens and relevant staff members. Over the course of several months, the SAC worked with ACCGOV staff to review the activities the Stormwater Management Program would include, the level of resources necessary to complete these stormwater management activities, and the funding options available within the community to fund the activities. Based on the input from the SAC, the M&C designated three primary funding sources for the SMP including, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), additional developer fees, and a Stormwater Enterprise Fund (Stormwater Utility). On July 1, 2005, ACCGOV completed the full implementation of the Stormwater Utility.

Over the past thirteen years, ACCGOV has continued to fund the management of the stormwater system from SPLOST, developer fees, and the Stormwater Utility. In March of 2017, ACCGOV staff recommended engaging a consultant to conduct an assessment of the continued equity and effectiveness of stormwater user charges to address development changes within ACCGOV, evolving stormwater regulations, and property owner issues and impacts. As a result of a competitive procurement process, ACCGOV engaged Stantec Consulting Services and the Ecological Planning Group to complete an assessment of the Stormwater Utility in December of 2017.

The Stormwater Utility Fee Review Study consists of two phases:

- Phase I – Stormwater Costs and Funding Strategy
- Phase II – Stormwater Fee Rate and Credit Review

Phase I of the study was completed in the fall of 2018 with the results of the analysis documented in a technical memorandum delivered to ACCGOV in October of 2018. The Phase I analysis included a detailed

review of the current level of stormwater service provided by ACCGOV, potential enhancements to the level of service, and resulting funding needs within the service area. Community engagement was facilitated during the first phase with several communication vehicles including a community-wide survey and public open houses. The feedback received from the community was recognized and incorporated into the analysis as part of the refinement and closure of Phase I.

At the conclusion of Phase I, Stantec recommended that ACCGOV implement a level of service and funding strategy that would include increased funding for select operational enhancements, (a camera truck/tv crew and a vacuum cleaning truck), as well as Priority I and II stormwater pipes. The Priority I and II pipes are stormwater conveyance pipes which have been classified as currently failing or identified as being in need of repair due to the potential for failure. The recommendation was provided in concert with the guidance that ACCGOV continue to fund other stormwater capital projects through the SPLOST. The Phase I recommendations were presented to the M&C on December 4th, 2018 for consideration and approval. The M&C accepted the recommendations and requested that the second phase of the study be accompanied with a robust public engagement effort.

The scope of services for the second phase of the study includes an examination and analysis of the current stormwater fee structure and a review and evaluation of the credit program. This Technical Memorandum documents Phase II of the study.

2.0 STORMWATER FEE REVIEW

The following section of this technical memorandum outlines Stantec's analysis and review of the ACCGOV stormwater fee structure.

2.1 OVERVIEW OF CURRENT FEE STRUCTURE

The ACCGOV stormwater fee structure was developed during the initial establishment of the utility in 2004 and 2005. ACCGOV staff and the SAC considered a range of fee structure options and ultimately recommended a structure that remains in place today. The fee structure was designed to reflect the relative services received by each parcel and the impact of the stormwater contribution from each parcel. The current structure includes three primary components:

- Base Charge - Recovers fixed stormwater management expenditures
- Quantity Charge - Recovers stormwater quantity related expenditures
- Quality Charge - Recovers water quality related expenditures

The components of the fee structure are applied to each of the parcels within the ACCGOV service area based on the amount of impervious area on each parcel and the estimated water quality generated on the parcel. The impervious area is measured in Equivalent Runoff Units (ERUs) and water quality is based on

water quality Intensity of Development (ID) factors associated with land use classifications. The ERU determinations for non-residential parcels are based on the actual measurements of impervious area, while residential parcels (single-family and mobile homes) are placed into tiers. The tiers are based on ranges of impervious area. The current ERU definitions for each class of customer are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - ERU Definitions by Customer Class

Customer Class	ERU Definition
Single Family / Mobile Home - Small	0.6 ERU
Single Family / Mobile Home - Medium	1.0 ERU
Single Family / Mobile Home - Large	1.8 ERU
Duplex / Triplex	1.0 ERU
Non-Residential and Multi-Family	Measured Impervious
Undeveloped	No Charge

The current ERU is defined as 2,628 square feet of impervious surface. This value was determined as part of the original structure design based on the average impervious surface on a single family home in 2003 and is discussed in more detail later in this technical memorandum. The water quality component was also developed during 2004 and was based on estimated annual sediment loads from different land use categories. The estimates were developed using a nonpoint source pollutant loading model (SLAMM model - Source Loading and Management Model)¹. The factors are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 - Water Quality ID Factors

Land Use Classification	Intensity of Development Factor
Low Density Residential	0.5
Agriculture	1.0
Medium Density Residential	1.0
High Density Residential / Institutional / Public	1.3
Commercial / Industrial Development	1.9
Undeveloped	0.0

¹ Stormwater Utility Development and Implementation Report, May 2004

Ultimately the monthly stormwater bill for each parcel within the ACCGOV service area is determined by applying the three charges to the specific attributes of the parcel. An example bill calculation is shown in Table 3 for a typical single family home.

Table 3 - Monthly Bill Calculation

Charge Type	Bill Calculation	Example Bill 1 ERU
Base Charge	$\$2.07 \times \text{ERU}$	$\$2.07 \times 1.0 = \2.07
Quantity Charge	$\$0.86 \times \text{ERU}$	$\$0.86 \times 1.0 = \0.86
Quality Charge	$\$0.57 \times \text{ERU} \times \text{Quality Factor}$	$\$0.57 \times 1.0 \times 1.0 = \0.57
Total Stormwater Bill		$\$3.50$

The current stormwater fee structure maintained by ACCGOV is more complex than fee structures most commonly adopted by communities in Georgia and around the United States. The primary source of the complexity arises from the segmentation of the fee into three components and the application of a water quality factor. It is fairly common for communities to simply have a single charge which is applied to the ERUs associated with a parcel to recover all costs of stormwater management. ACCGOV's three component charge does result in a more accurate proportion of costs, and therefore provides a more equitable fee structure. Our full assessment of the current structure and recommended changes are discussed in the following sections of this technical memorandum.

2.2 COST OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

To facilitate our review of the current fee structure, it was necessary to complete a cost of service analysis. The cost components of the current stormwater fee structure are based on the functional split of stormwater management costs between base, quantity, and quality. The current proportional split of costs was established in 2004. Over the past fifteen years, it was expected that spending patterns would deviate to some degree among each of these cost categories.

To complete the cost of service analysis, the current FY 2019 budget was allocated on a budgetary line item level between the three cost components. Costs allocated to the base component include services that would not be changed by on-site stormwater practices and would be incurred by ACCGOV regardless of actual stormwater contributions. Stormwater quantity costs include stormwater management expenditures related to the conveyance system which directly correlate to the quantity of stormwater generated on a parcel. Water quality costs were identified as those costs related to meeting the ACCGOV's NPDES stormwater permit and other items related to the management of water quality within the service area.

Given the relatively large magnitude of the funding for Priority I & II pipe replacements, our analysis provides the allocation of costs with and without the funding for these projects. To allocate the pipe replacement projects, Stantec assumed a 50/50 split between base and quantity. This split recognizes that while the pipe

replacements are necessary for conveyance of stormwater, the replacements need to be made regardless of individual stormwater contributions and that they benefit all parcel owners in the ACCGOV service area. The detailed cost of service allocations are presented in the Appendix of this memorandum.

Table 4 presents the current fee structure allocations between the cost components and the cost of service results developed during the study.

Table 4 – Cost of Service Results

Cost Component	Current	Cost of Service w/o Pipe Replacement	Cost of Service with Pipe Replacement
Funding Level	\$4.2 million	\$4.2 million	\$6.5 million
Base Costs	59.1%	58.8%	55.7%
Quantity Costs	24.6%	18.2%	29.4%
Quality Costs	16.3%	23.0%	14.9%

Based on the results of the cost of service analysis, the current allocation of costs between the cost components are slightly out of alignment with the current costs incurred by ACCGOV in providing stormwater management. This result is not surprising given that the allocations within the structure were developed fifteen years ago. Stantec recommends that when ACCGOV adopts updated stormwater fees, the cost of service allocations between the cost components presented in Table 4 be utilized to bring the stormwater fees in line with the cost of providing service.

2.3 STORMWATER FEE STRUCTURE

While the cost of service analysis provides the basis for the allocation of costs among the charge components, the specific bill for each parcel is based on the attributes of the parcel including the impervious area reflected in the number of ERUs and the land use category. These two key components of the fee structure are discussed separately, below.

2.3.1 Impervious Area and Equivalent Runoff Units

The vast majority of stormwater utilities around the United States and all of the communities with utilities in Georgia utilize impervious surface as a means of measuring stormwater contribution from developed properties. Impervious surfaces have been shown to be the single greatest factor contributing to the volume and rate of stormwater generation on a parcel. To develop a unit of measure for impervious area, an equivalent runoff unit (ERU) was established in 2003. The ERU was defined as the median impervious area on all single-family homes in the ACCGOV service area, which, at the time, equated to 2,628 square feet. All non-residential and multi-family properties are charge based on the measured amount of impervious area on the parcel as multiples of the ERU (i.e. $30,000 / 2,628 = 11.4$ ERUs).

Given the relatively homogenous impervious area on single family residential parcels and to minimize the administrative burden associated with changes in impervious area, the current stormwater fee structure for single family residential properties incorporates tiers of impervious area with assigned ERUs (see Table 1).

Based on our review of the ACCGOV service area and our industry experience, Stantec agrees with the basic stormwater fee structure currently employed by ACCGOV. We believe that a parcel by parcel measurement of impervious area for non-residential and multi-family parcels is appropriate and that some form of a tiered structure is appropriate for single family residential.

While the structure is sound, the dataset used to establish the fee structure needs to be updated. The impervious area data that was initially used to establish the stormwater fee structure and the ERU definition was developed during 2003. The impervious area data set included most of the impervious area features, with the exception of some of the residential driveways. This dataset was used to establish the ERU definition of 2,628 and establish the residential tiers. In 2016, ACCGOV completed an audit of the stormwater billing which included an update to the impervious area measurements based on 2013 aerial imagery. The audit captured all the residential driveways and changes to impervious area that had occurred since the dataset was developed in 2004. The audit identified a significant increase in the amount of impervious area resulting from the capture of all of the residential driveways. Following the audit, updated stormwater bills were determined for all parcels within the current stormwater fee structure. The definition of an ERU was not updated, nor were the single-family residential tiers updated.

To facilitate our review of the current fee structure, ACCGOV provided the current impervious area dataset (established in 2013) and utility billing data which serves as the basis for current stormwater billing. Stantec utilized the impervious area dataset to examine the distribution of impervious area on single-family residential parcels in the service area. This includes the definition of an ERU and the alignment of the current residential tiers with the actual single family residential impervious area distribution. Based on the data, Stantec determined that the median impervious area on single family residential parcels is currently 3,277 square feet as compared to the existing ERU definition of 2,628. This result is consistent with the fact that the 2013 data incorporates residential driveways, which logically resulted in an increase the median impervious area for residential parcels.

To evaluate the current single-family residential tiers, Stantec examined the distribution of single family impervious area by parcel in concert with the current tier break points. Figure 1 presents the distribution of single family impervious area and the existing stormwater fee tier breakpoints.

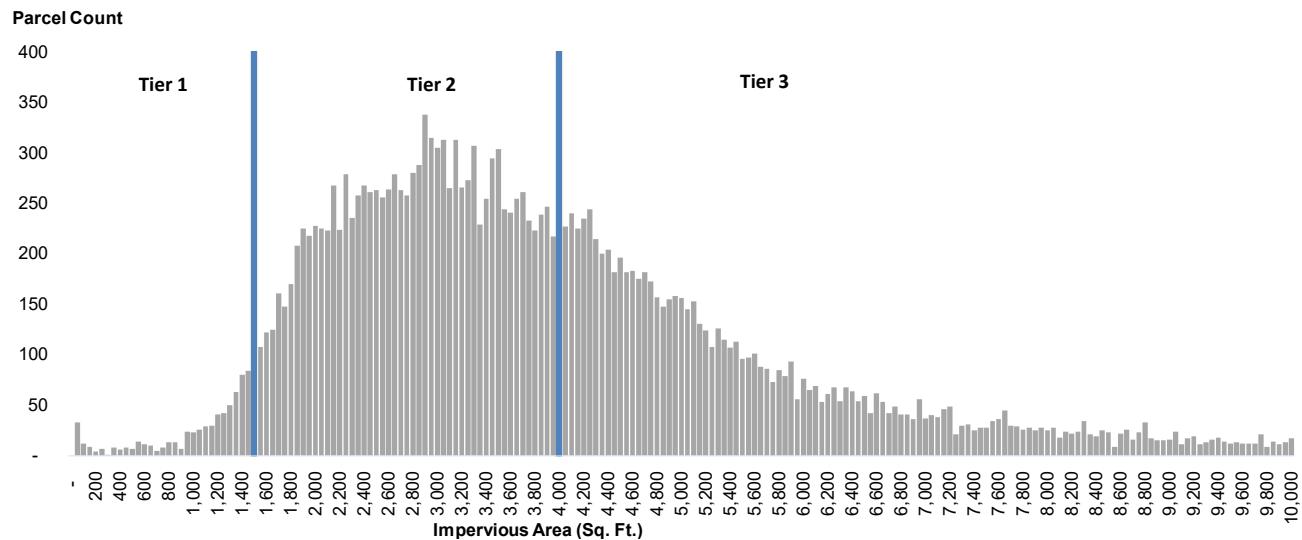


Figure 1 - Single Family Impervious Area Distribution and Current Tiers

The figure demonstrates a typical bell-shaped distribution of impervious area on residential parcels. However as shown in the figure, the current tier breakpoints are not perfectly aligned with the current distribution. A limited number residential properties fall into the first tier and a significant number fall into the second and third tiers. Stormwater tiers are typically developed based on a statistical analysis with a normal distribution around the median. Figure 2 illustrates alternative tier breakpoints designed to result in more consistent customer counts within each tier. The reflect the statistical midpoint of impervious area for each tier in relation to the median impervious area and are illustrated by the different colors in the bar chart.

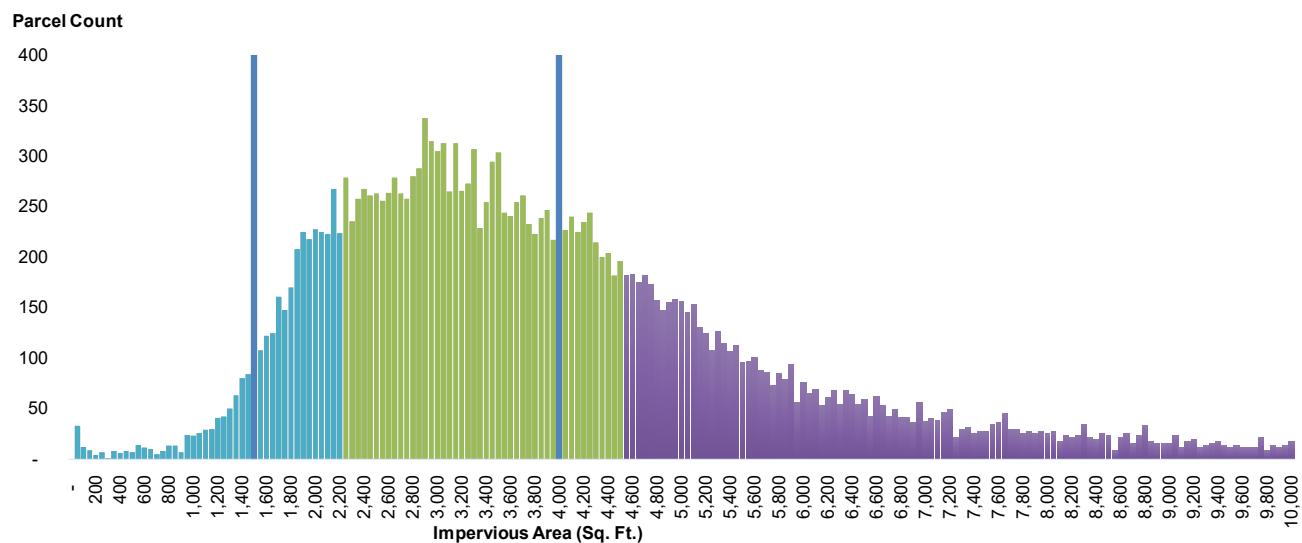


Figure 2 - Single Family Impervious Area Distribution and Potential Updated Tier Groupings

The shading in Figure 2 demonstrates the calculated tiers and shows a shifting to the right from the current tiers. Similar to calculation of the updated ERU, the calculated tiers in Figure 2 are consistent with and reflect

the addition of impervious surface area to the dataset in 2013. Table 5 presents a comparison of the current tiers and those based on the current statistical distribution.

Table 5 – Single Family Residential Tier Comparison

Current Tiers	Number of Parcels	Calculated Tiers	Number of Parcels
Tier 1: 0 to 1,500	768	Tier 1: 0 to 2,200	3,421
Tier 2: 1,500 - 4,000	8,221	Tier 2: 2,200 - 4,500	11,810
Tier 3: Over 4,000	13,477	Tier 3: Over 4,500	7,235

Table 5 and Figure 2 demonstrate a more traditional distribution of parcels within the three tiers and it would be appropriate for ACCGOV to consider updating the fee structure to align it with the results presented in this analysis. Additionally, examination of Figure 2 reveals that there is a relatively long “tail” of impervious area represented by single family parcels with impervious area up two or three times the median. For this reason, Stantec recommends that ACCGOV consider the addition of a fourth tier. Based on the current impervious area dataset, a fourth tier set at over 7,200 square feet of impervious would be an appropriate breakpoint for consideration to recognize these unusual parcels.

However, it is important to note that the current impervious area dataset was developed based on aerial photography that was taken in 2013 and therefore the data is over five years old. Given the age of the data, Stantec recommends that prior to adjusting the stormwater fee structure, a new impervious area dataset be developed and analyzed. Once the dataset has been analyzed, the residential tiers should be aligned with the updated results and an additional tier should be evaluated. We also recommend that going forward ACCGOV maintain a policy of updating the impervious area layer on a periodic basis (e.g. every five years).

2.2.2 Water Quality Factors

To reflect the variation in stormwater loadings from different types of land use, the current stormwater fee quality charge is modified by a water quality factor as shown in Table 2. The higher the potential loadings generated from a specific type of land use the higher the water quality factor. Based on Stantec’s review of the current water quality factors, no adjustments to these factors are recommended as the relative loading contributions by land use category are assumed to remain relatively static.

2.4 STORMWATER FEE COMMUNICATION / BILLING

Billing for stormwater services requires effective communication. The magnitude and nature of the costs of effective stormwater management are not easily understood by the general public, and the rationale for stormwater billing can be even more difficult to grasp. The current three-part stormwater fee structure maintained by ACCGOV is complex and may be contributing to communication challenges.

As a result, we reviewed the existing rate structure to consider the potential benefits of simplification. Our conclusion is that the level of equity provided by the existing three-part structure out weights the complexity concerns. We are of the opinion that changes to the structure, (outside of the alignment to the tiers and potentially the addition of a tier as discussed in this document), would result in reductions in the inherent fairness of the current structure. In fact, while many communities utilize less complex structures, there is a trend within the industry towards providing increased equity and recognition of the necessary linkage between quantity and quality impacts on the stormwater management system.

While we don't recommend simplifying the three-part structure, we do believe that the way in which the stormwater bill is communicated to the community could be simplified. Figure 3 presents a sample of a typical stormwater bill for a residential parcel.

Account Number	000000-000000			
Service Period	11/30/2007 - 02/29/2008			
Customer Name				
Bill Due Date	04/01/08			
Service Address	ERUs	1.0000	Jurisdiction	A
	Class	MED SINGLE FAMILY		
Service			Charges	
BASE CHG ACC MSF	Balance Forward			0.00
QUALITY CHG ACC MSF				6.21
QUANTITY CHG ACC MSF				1.71
				2.58
Total Amount Due				10.50

Figure 3 - Typical Stormwater Bill

The quarterly stormwater bill includes the detail of each of the three components of the stormwater charge (base, quality and quantity). While these three components are valuable and necessary to determine the bill, we recommend that ACCGOV consider modifying the bill to simply show the stormwater charge as a single line. The community is most likely confused by the three separate stormwater charge components for the one service and it is not necessary to include this level of detail to retain the equity gained by the three-part system.

To further improve communication, we also recommend that ACCGOV explore the possibility of adding different details or messages to stormwater bills. A key opportunity could be to include a line item that demonstrates the credits that are received by the property owner. Credits are currently netted out of the charges, and as a result it is not apparent to the customer if they are receiving credits. Under this approach the bill would consist of gross stormwater charge less credits resulting in the net stormwater bill. Other messages regarding the availability of credits, chances to enhance “green” behaviors, or the benefits of ACCGOV’s stormwater management practices could also be added periodically. Finally, we believe that the current naming convention for the single family tiers is problematic. The use of the terms small, medium and large single family homes can cause confusion as it is possible to have a small home (actual dwelling structure) with impervious area features (driveway, patio, etc.) that place the property in the large tier. We recommend that ACCGOV consider changing the naming convention to Tier 1, 2 and 3.

3.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement is one of the key components of the Stormwater Fee Review Study. The engagement efforts for the second phase of the study were designed to gain an understanding of the level of service expectations within the community, as well as provide information regarding the study as it moves forward. As part of the second phase of the study several key activities were completed to facilitate public engagement including public open houses, water bill inserts, and opportunities for the public to provide comments directly to Public Works.

3.1 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

Five scheduled public open-house functions, and one follow up meeting were held at various locations within ACCGOV’s service area during January and February:

- ACC Library - Thursday, January 24, 6:30PM – 8:00PM, 38 attendees
- J. J. Harris Elementary School - Tuesday, January 29, 6:30PM – 8:00PM, 18 attendees
- Barnett Shoals Elementary School - Wednesday, February 6, 6:30PM – 8:00PM, 21 attendees
- Timothy Road Elementary School - Monday, February 11, 6:30PM – 8:00PM, 27 attendees
- Winterville Depot - Thursday, February 21, 6:30PM – 8:00PM, 19 attendees
- Follow up meeting at Winterville Depot (because of typo on original postcard) - Tuesday, February 26, 6:30PM – 8:00PM, 7 attendees

During the open houses, individual stations were made available where individuals could identify known flooding issues within the system, ask questions regarding their stormwater bill, learn more about the credit options available, and voice general concerns. As result of the open houses, ACCGOV staff received valuable input from members of the community regarding their expectations for stormwater management.

3.2 WATER BILL STUFFER

The second component of the public engagement effort was to develop and distribute a water bill stuffer and postcard. The stuffer went out with January water bills, and the postcard was mailed to all stormwater only customers in January. ACCGOV mailed out approximately 25,000 postcards.

The bill stuffer and postcard mailer are provided on the following pages.



Athens-Clarke County Stormwater Utility Fee Updates

120 W. Dougherty Street • Athens, GA 30601
706-613-3440 • accgov.com/stormwater



The Stormwater Management Program and Stormwater Utility Fee are a function of the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Department of Transportation and Public Works. Any questions regarding this letter or the Stormwater Utility Fee should be directed to ACC Stormwater at 706-613-3440 or stormwater@accgov.com.

Why am I getting this letter?

This letter is to inform the public about ACC's Stormwater Management Program and provide additional information about the ongoing Stormwater Utility Fee review. The purpose of the fee review is to make the stormwater program more responsive to the desires of ratepayers while increasing the equity of the fee structure. Furthermore, one recurring stormwater challenge is addressing aging infrastructure.

Over the past two years, funds generated by the Stormwater Utility Fee have been used for emergency stormwater pipe repairs. Corrugated metal pipe was commonly used to convey stormwater runoff, and many of these pipes have become corroded and are at the end of their life spans. Annual stormwater fee revenue is unfortunately insufficient to address this aging infrastructure. Therefore, a Stormwater Utility Fee increase is being considered.

This information is being mailed along with water utility bills but the stormwater fee does not affect water rates. In fact, if you are currently a tenant renting a residence, you probably never see a stormwater bill. Property owners typically pay the stormwater fee associated with their property. It is anticipated that a separate notification will be mailed to stormwater fee customers with dates and times of upcoming public information meetings. More information will also be posted on our website at accgov.com/stormwater.

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is exactly what it sounds like; the water that falls during a storm. In terms of pollution and management, stormwater is both the water that falls from the sky as well as the water that runs off hard surfaces, commonly called stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff flows over our rooftops, driveways, sidewalks, and roads into a system of ditches, storm drains, and stormwater pipes. Stormwater runoff in Athens-Clarke County is carried directly into our local streams, rivers, and ponds without first passing through a treatment plant. This is called a municipal separate storm sewer system, or MS4, because it is separate from the sanitary sewer system. We are designated by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division as a MS4 community based on our population density. This means ACC is required to comply with the Clean Water Act and meet the requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II MS4 Permit.

Why should we care about stormwater?

Stormwater runoff picks up various chemicals and pollutants that can contaminate our local waterways, which are the source of our drinking water. These pollutants include everything from grass clippings and pet waste to sediment, pesticides, fertilizers, oil, pathogens, and toxic chemicals. Although it may seem like rainwater completely absorbs into the ground on our individual properties, if it rains enough, stormwater will flow off everyone's property and into our drainage system, whether we notice this runoff or not.

Uncontrolled stormwater can have detrimental effects on the environmental and financial health of a community. For one, stormwater pollution can make our local waters unsafe for fishing, swimming, and boating. Also, improperly managed stormwater can lead to the erosion of our riverbanks and flooding of our streets. The Clean Water Act requires MS4 communities to manage stormwater through a comprehensive stormwater management program. This act ensures that residents can be confident their local communities are working diligently to protect the waters in their area.

What is the Stormwater Utility Fee?

While it is completely separate from water fees or electricity fees, the ACC Stormwater Utility is just like other utilities that serve the community in that users pay a fee for services rendered. The user-based Stormwater Utility Fee ensures customers pay their fair share, and no one subsidizes non-ratepayers. This method also presents our community with an alternative to a property tax increase, which would exempt some of the largest service users in the community (UGA, government buildings, churches, etc.). The purpose of the stormwater fee is to raise revenues needed to fund our Clean Water Act requirements as well as the necessary maintenance of our stormwater infrastructure. This infrastructure includes metal pipes – many of which have become badly rusted. Services to ratepayers include (but are not limited to) water quality sampling, investigation of illegal discharges, cleaning of storm drains, curbs, and pipes, flood reduction projects, construction site erosion prevention, street sweeping, educational programs, and maintenance of infrastructure that ensures our roads don't flood when it rains.

How is the fee currently calculated?

There are a number of factors that influence the amount and quality of water flowing off of a property. To approximate demand on the stormwater system, the amount of hard surface area, such as rooftops and driveways, is the main factor used to estimate stormwater runoff. Everyone who has land with hard surfaces (often called impervious surfaces) that prevents rain from soaking into the ground pays the stormwater fee, regardless of whether that property is subject to property taxes. This distributes the fee more equitably than taxes. A recent survey of ACC residents showed that the overwhelming majority of respondents support tax-exempt properties contributing to the Stormwater Utility Fee. This approach also provides an incentive for property owners to minimize the amount of impervious surfaces constructed on their property thereby reducing stormwater impacts.

Why do I have to pay the Stormwater Utility Fee?

The stormwater fee pays for public benefits such as street drainage and clean water in streams. These activities ensure safe and effective conveyance of public stormwater while maintaining safe access to all developed property. Much like water and sewer fees, the stormwater fee supports only the public stormwater system, and it is unable to address private drainage problems. If stormwater fee revenue was used to fix all of the drainage problems in private property owners' yards, the fee would be much higher than it is now. Everyone benefits from a safe and effective public stormwater system, so all property owners with impervious surface contribute. When it comes to safe roads and clean water, we are all in this together.

Can you tell me more about the current Stormwater Utility Fee review?

Athens-Clarke County is currently working with Stantec Consulting to conduct a comprehensive review of the Stormwater Utility Fee. This review consists of two phases. The first phase, which was completed in December 2018, looked at the existing level and extent of stormwater services, as well as a funding strategy for fixing failing stormwater pipes.

The second phase, which will take place from January to March 2019, will examine the current rate structure and credit system. Credits allow stormwater customers to reduce their fees. We are looking for additional ways to give people credit for practices that reduce stormwater runoff and/or reduce the cost burden to ACC for implementation of the Stormwater Management Program. This improves the fairness of our fee system.

How can I get involved?

To stay updated on the fee review, please visit our webpage at accgov.com/stormwater and click on the "2018-2019 Stormwater Utility Fee Review" link found on the menu on the left side of the page. You may also sign-up for text or email updates on that page. There will be several opportunities for you to provide feedback during the next phase, including regional open house meetings and an online comment form. If you would like a member of the Stormwater Team to come speak with your neighborhood, business, or civic group about stormwater issues or the Utility Fee, please contact us at 706-613-3440 or by emailing stormwater@accgov.com. You can also find more information on the Stormwater Management Program, the Stormwater Utility, the fee review, as well as tips on how to prevent stormwater pollution at accgov.com/stormwater.

Figure 4 - Water Bill Stuffer

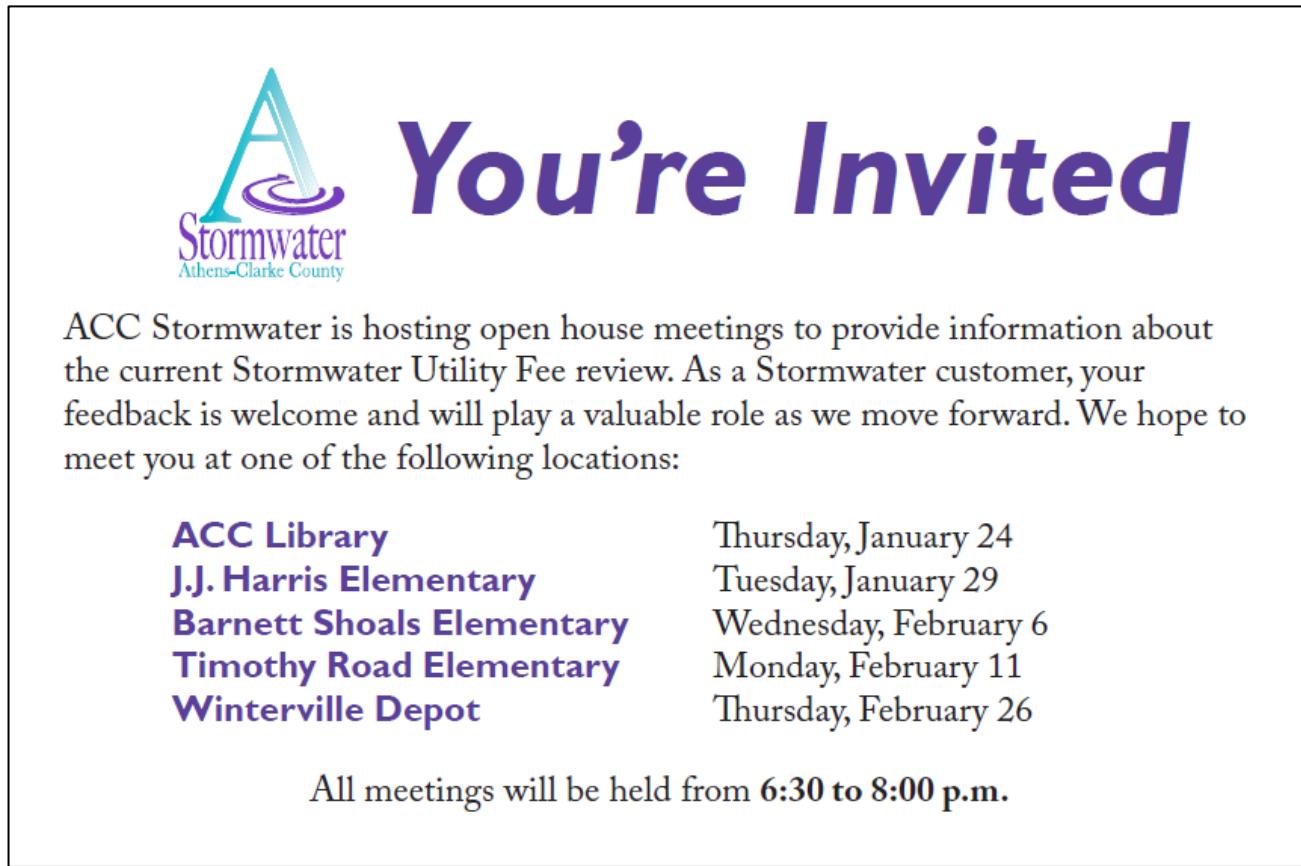


Figure 5 - Open House Postcard

3.3 PUBLIC COMMENTS

The third component of the public engagement effort include the solicitation of comments, both online and in paper form during the open house meetings. ACCGOV has received 15 online comments and several paper comments. The comments were compiled and summarized, and were reviewed for relevance during the analytical process. Comments regarding the credit program are discussed in the next section of this memorandum. The online comment form included one question that solicited feedback regarding the current single family tier structure. The results collected from the online comment form for this question are shown in Figure 5.

Should the current single family residential fee structure be changed?

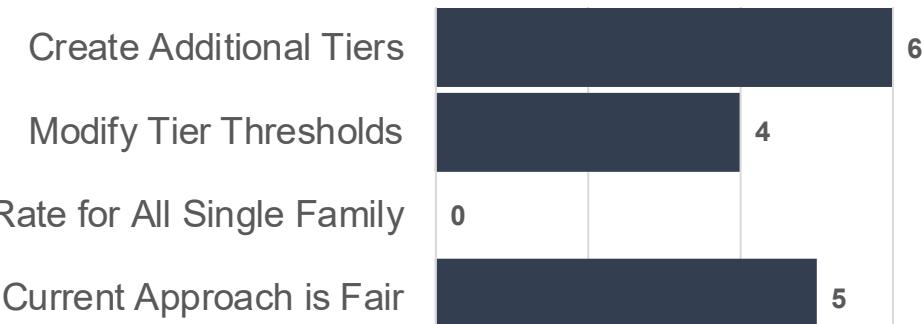


Figure 5 - Stormwater Fee Structure Comments

4.0 STORMWATER CREDITS

This section of the technical memorandum outlines our review of the ACCGOV existing credit program and recommended program enhancements. A well-utilized credit program can promote implementation of desirable stormwater best management practices, public involvement in watershed activities and educational programs, and public acceptance of the user fee rate structure. The following section summarizes our evaluation of the type of credits offered by ACCGOV, and the process for procuring/awarding the credits. Based on our discussions with staff over the course of this project, we understand that the current credit program is seen by staff as being underutilized within the community, and that ACCGOV wishes to encourage participation in this program. We have examined the credit process to attempt to identify opportunities to encourage additional participation through process changes, additional credits, and improved communication to the public.

4.1 OVERVIEW OF CURRENT CREDIT PROGRAM

ACCGOV's current credit program was developed as part of the initial Stormwater Utility and is detailed in the updated Stormwater Utility Procedural Manual, dated June 28, 2011. This manual describes the credit policy as, "an essential component of the rate structure of a stormwater utility. The credit reflects a customer's decision to reduce their use of the services being provided by the installation and maintenance of properly design stormwater management facilities called Best Management Practices (BMPs)." ACCGOV currently offers the following stormwater user fee credits to eligible customers:

- Riparian Area Credit - Customers with property that drains into designated waters without entering the ACCGOV stormwater system automatically receive up to 100% credit on the quantity portion of

their stormwater fee. Designated waters include the North Oconee River, Middle Oconee River, McNutt Creek and the lower portions of Shoal Creek and Cedar Creek.

- Education Credit - Public and private schools are eligible for a credit of 5% to 20% on their total user fee bill for teaching an approved environmental science curriculum.
- Stormwater Facility / Detention Pond Credit - Parcels served by on-site stormwater management and treatment facilities (e.g. detention ponds) that are designed to properly manage stormwater runoff are eligible for up to a 100% credit on the water quality and quantity charge.
- Agricultural BMP Plan Credit – A property that is in active agriculture and also has an approved Farm Plan from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is eligible for a 100% credit on the water quality charge.

Credits are currently awarded by ACCGOV through different methods, depending on the credit. The Riparian Area Credit is automatically awarded by staff to properties that drain into designated waterways. Staff determine eligibility for this credit through a topographic analysis in GIS and automatically credit customer's stormwater user fee customer accounts. The other three credits, the Educational Credit, the Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond Credit, and the Agricultural Plan Credit require that customers submit an application with supporting documentation in order to qualify for those credits. ACCGOV staff then review applications and award the credits as applicable. There is a formal application that can be found online; however, there is no publicly available guide or policy manual to accompany the application. The application itself is not particularly user friendly, and without guidance materials it may be difficult for the average stormwater utility customer to take advantage of credits for which their property may qualify.

There is also concern that stormwater utility customers who are receiving credits may not be aware that they are getting a credit. The current format of the stormwater user fee bill only displays the net stormwater user fee and does not show a "credited" amount or indicate if a credit has been applied. Because ACCGOV automatically applies the Riparian Credit, and customers do not have to submit an application to receive it, they are unlikely to know that they are benefiting from a significant credit. This was confirmed through discussion with the public at the Open Houses. This appears to be a missed opportunity for ACCGOV to educate the public and improve customer satisfaction with the stormwater utility.

4.2 RECOMMENDED CREDIT POLICY ENHANCEMENTS

Based on our review of ACC's existing credit program, discussions with staff, and feedback received at the Open Houses, we recommend that ACCGOV expand its credit policy to include additional credit opportunities. These new credits should reflect additional practices and programs that customers can participate in or implement to reduce their demand on ACC's stormwater drainage system or stormwater management program.

The Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP) recently published *A Guide to Creating Equitable Stormwater Utility Credit Programs (Credit Guide)*. The guide promotes credits, stating "Credit programs are a means to promote equity for unique conditions within a given stormwater utility's rate structure, and

stormwater utilities should be set up in a manner that reflects the needs, values, and priorities of a community with regard to their water resources.” An expanded credit program could better recognize the array of stormwater programs and best management practices that can have a positive impact on ACC’s watersheds, and provides more opportunity for customers to receive credits on their stormwater user fee.

Our Project Team has experience with stormwater utility credit policies throughout Georgia and across the US, and we believe that ACCGOV should consider the following expanded credit program summarized in Table 6. This table includes both the credits already offered by ACCGOV and suggested new credit opportunities. A full description of these credits, and the recommended value for each credit can be found in the Stormwater User Fee Credit Manual included in Appendix B.

Table 6 – Enhanced Credit Program

Credit Name	Credit Description
Riparian Service Area	For properties that drain directly into a creek or river, without passing through an ACCGOV drainage system.
Watershed Stewardship	For groups of people who have volunteered with watershed events like Rivers Alive or Adopt-A-Stream.
Septic Tank Maintenance	For properties with septic tanks that have been regularly pumped or otherwise serviced.
Green Infrastructure/ Low Impact Development	For properties with stormwater practices on site that successfully infiltrate the first 1.0” of rainfall, or for residential properties that have installed a rain garden or rain barrel.
Natural Area Preservation	For properties that have a minimum of 5 acres of contiguous green space protected in a conservation easement.
Environmental Education Program	For educational institutions that are conducting environmental education as part of their day-to-day curriculum.
Tree Canopy	For properties with significant tree coverage that exceeds ACC’s requirements.
Low Density	For properties where 90% or more of the total parcel is covered with a natural, pervious surface like grass or forest.
Gravel driveways	For residential properties that have partially-pervious, gravel driveways.
Industrial Stormwater Permit	For commercial properties who have complied with their NPDES Industrial Stormwater Permit and are in good standing with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.

Credit Name	Credit Description
Agricultural	For properties in compliance with their approved Farm Plan, on file with the National Resource Conservation Service.
Stormwater Facility / Detention Pond	For properties that have a detention pond on site that was built prior to 2008 and does not meet Georgia Stormwater Management Manual standards but has been maintained and is functioning as designed.
GSMM Stormwater Facility / Detention Pond	For commercial properties with on-site stormwater management and treatment facilities, designed in accordance with the GSMM, which have been maintained and are functioning in accordance with GSMM standards.

As stated above, ACCGOV held six public open houses to gather feedback from stormwater utility customers on recommended program changes. At these meetings, a flyer detailing the existing credit program was distributed and attendees were asked to participate in an activity to gauge public interest in additional credits that could be offered by the ACCGOV Stormwater Utility. Of the potential future credits options that are described above, the most popular additions to the credit policy included the Septic Tank Credit, Low Density Credit, and Tree Canopy Credit, although all additional credits were generally well received. Many attendees were pleased that the more “rural” properties would be able to qualify for credits that recognized their potentially reduced impact on the drainage system. Customers were also very interested in ACC’s plan to promote the new credit policy once it is finalized.

GAWP recommends in their Credit Guide that, “All Georgia stormwater utility operators are strongly encouraged to have both a credit program and guidance that clearly describes the means and methods to the ratepayers of obtaining credits. At minimum, this guidance should describe the following:

- Credit policies
- Credit Terms
- Duration and renewal
- Eligibility
- Proof of compliance documentation
- Application procedures
- Maximum allowable credit for each activity
- Maximum credit available per property

Activities that result in credits benefit both the utility operator and the ratepayer. Georgia stormwater utility operators are encouraged to educate their ratepayers about their stormwater credit program.”

Our experience has shown us that the most successful credit programs typically have a detailed Credit Policy Manual that addresses the topics recommended by GAWP. Accordingly, we have drafted an ACCGOV Stormwater User Fee Credit Policy manual for the ACC Board of Commissioner's consideration. This document provides a detailed description of each credit opportunity, a clear outline of the application process, and application forms for use by customers. Once this document is approved by ACCGOV, we recommend that the stormwater utility staff engage in an outreach campaign to inform the utility customer base about these new credit opportunities and the application process.

Lastly it is essential that customers receiving credits understand that their user fee has been reduced. ACCGOV staff are in the process of working with the billing vendor to update the user fee bill format to include credits when awarded. Upon completion, this will allow customers to understand what their full stormwater use fee charge would have been, and the discount they are receiving. This should improve stormwater utility customer satisfaction with the credit program and their understanding of the equity in the stormwater user fee rate structure.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

As a result of the analysis conducted in Phase II, Stantec recommends that ACCGOV move forward with the development of an updated impervious area dataset for all parcels. The updated dataset will provide an accurate basis for stormwater billing. Once the dataset is updated, the definition of a the ERU should be updated based on the median impervious area on single family residential parcels. The dataset should also be used to update the residential tiers based on a statistical analysis to ensure the appropriate sizing of the tiers. At the same time, it would be appropriate to evaluate the addition of a forth tier with the potential to better recognize the wide distribution of impervious area on residential parcels.

Once the new fee structure has been established, Stantec recommends that ACCGOV update the structure of the stormwater bill. The bill should be simplified to show the gross stormwater bill, credits received and net stormwater bill.

Stantec recommends that ACCGOV move forward with the adoption of the enhanced credit program outlined in this technical memorandum and established in the credit manual (Appendix B).

Appendix A

Cost of Service Allocations

Test Year Expense Allocation to Functions

Operating Expenses	Test Year Expenses	Allocation Basis	Base	Quantity		Base	Quantity		Quality
				% Allocation	\$ Allocation				
Fees - Legal	50,000	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50,000	-	-	-
Fees - Bank & Investment Services	5,000	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5,000	-	-	-
Services - Postage	25,000	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25,000	-	-	-
Services - Printing	14,000	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14,000	-	-	-
Indirect - Copier	1,098	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1,098	-	-	-
Indirect - Postage	4,000	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4,000	-	-	-
Indirect - Printing	600	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	600	-	-	-
Indirect - Telephone System Base Charge	1,080	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1,080	-	-	-
Indirect - Radio Charges	4,758	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4,758	-	-	-
General Pay Adjustment	59,600	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	59,600	-	-	-
Insurance - Life	3,000	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3,000	-	-	-
Self Funded Insurance - General Liab	45,300	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	45,300	-	-	-
Overhead Expenses	99,231	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	99,231	-	-	-
Transfers to General Fund	349,971	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	349,971	-	-	-
Services - Janitorial	7,500	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7,500	-	-	-
Services - Solid Waste Collection	800	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	800	-	-	-
Landfill Fees	30,000	Quality	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	-	-	-	30,000
Electricity	6,600	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6,600	-	-	-
Heating Fuels	2,600	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2,600	-	-	-
Water & Sewer Utility Fees	850	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	850	-	-	-
Supplies - Shop tools	500	Quantity	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	-	-	-	500
Supplies - Drainage Constr Materials	30,000	Quantity	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	-	-	-	30,000
Supplies - Pipe/Asphalt/Stone/Concrete	85,000	Quantity	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	-	-	-	85,000
Supplies - Right of Way Maintenance	40,000	Quality	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	-	-	-	40,000
Indirect - Vehicle Corrective Maint	72,800	Quality/Quantity Split	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	-	-	-	36,400
Indirect - Tires & Tubes	20,000	Quality/Quantity Split	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	-	-	-	10,000
Indirect - Fuel Allocations/Unleaded	15,300	Quality/Quantity Split	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	-	-	-	7,650
Indirect - Fuel Allocations/Diesel	54,076	Quality/Quantity Split	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	-	-	-	27,038
Indirect - Vehicle Preventative Maint	30,659	Quality/Quantity Split	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	-	-	-	15,330
Indirect - Vehicle Insurance Charges	25,425	Quality/Quantity Split	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	-	-	-	12,713
Indirect - Vehicle Replacement Charges	160,252	Quality/Quantity Split	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	-	-	-	80,126
Rental/Lease - Other	150	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	150	-	-	-
Repair & Maint - Other Equipment	300	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	300	-	-	-
Repair & Maint - Micro Software	1,500	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1,500	-	-	-
Travel & Lodging	2,100	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2,100	-	-	-
Conferences & Schools	5,000	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5,000	-	-	-
Dues & Memberships	1,000	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1,000	-	-	-
Supplies - Clothing/Employee Uniform	1,500	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1,500	-	-	-
Supplies - Clothing/Protective & Equip	600	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	600	-	-	-
Supplies - Small tools	1,500	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1,500	-	-	-
Op Equip - Data Processing	700	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	700	-	-	-
Op Equip - Office Equipment	900	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	900	-	-	-
Op Equip - Other	50	Base	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50	-	-	-
Travel - Allowance	2,160	Base/Quality/Quantity Split	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	1,296	432	432	432
Travel - Mileage	100	Base/Quality/Quantity Split	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	60	20	20	20
Compensation - Fulltime Regular	1,100,983	Base/Quality/Quantity Split	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	660,590	220,197	220,197	220,197
Social Security (FICA)	84,225	Base/Quality/Quantity Split	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	50,535	16,845	16,845	16,845
Employer 401(A) Contribution	7,122	Base/Quality/Quantity Split	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	4,273	1,424	1,424	1,424
Other Employee Benefit Charges	32,558	Base/Quality/Quantity Split	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	19,535	6,512	6,512	6,512
Supplies - Clothing/Employee Uniform	9,400	Base/Quality/Quantity Split	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	5,640	1,880	1,880	1,880

Stormwater Cost Allocations

2 of 2

Operating Expenses	Test Year Expenses	Allocation Basis	Base	Quantity		Base	Quantity	Quality
				% Allocation	\$ Allocation			
Insurance - Group Health - Employees	179,088	Base/Quality/Quantity Split	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	107,453	35,818	35,818
Compensation - Fulltime Regular	401,776	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	281,243	-	120,533
Compensation - Parttime No Benefits	10,400	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	7,280	-	3,120
Compensation - Overtime	10,000	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	7,000	-	3,000
Social Security (FICA)	32,737	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	22,916	-	9,821
Retirement Plan - Other Contribution	5,857	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	4,100	-	1,757
Employer 401(A) Contribution	2,347	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	1,643	-	704
Insurance - Group Health - Employees	50,848	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	35,594	-	15,254
Other Employee Benefit Charges	6,581	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	4,607	-	1,974
Fees - Professional Services	27,743	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	19,420	-	8,323
Services - Wireless Phones	6,900	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	4,830	-	2,070
Repair & Maint - Other Equipment	300	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	210	-	90
Repair & Maint - Micro Software	3,000	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	2,100	-	900
Travel & Lodging	5,000	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	3,500	-	1,500
Conferences & Schools	5,000	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	3,500	-	1,500
Dues & Memberships	1,000	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	700	-	300
Supplies - Office	5,500	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	3,850	-	1,650
Supplies - Printing	25,000	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	17,500	-	7,500
Supplies - Medical	250	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	175	-	75
Supplies - Clothing/Employee Uniform	1,100	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	770	-	330
Supplies - Clothing/Protective & Equip	800	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	560	-	240
Supplies - Small tools	1,500	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	1,050	-	450
Supplies - Laboratory	1,000	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	700	-	300
Op Equip - Data Processing	500	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	350	-	150
Op Equip - Office Equipment	700	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	490	-	210
Op Equip - Other	400	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	280	-	120
Travel - Allowance	3,600	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	2,520	-	1,080
Travel - Mileage	100	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70	-	30
Compensation - Fulltime Regular	343,415	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	240,391	-	103,025
Compensation - Overtime	26,271	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	18,390	-	7,881
Social Security (FICA)	1,753	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	1,227	-	526
Insurance - Group Health - Employees	42,214	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	29,550	-	12,664
Other Employee Benefit Charges	8,775	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	6,143	-	2,633
Incremental LOS	-	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	-	-	-
LOS B1 - Contract Maintenance	-	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	-	-	-
LOS B2 - Camera Truck / Televising Crew	145,000	Base/Quantity Split	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	72,500	72,500	-
LOS B3 - 2 Vac Trucks	120,000	Quality/Quantity Split	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	-	60,000	60,000
LOS B4 - Expanded Street Sweeping	-	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	-	-	-
LOS C - Private Easement Group	-	Base/Quality Split	70.00%	0.00%	30.00%	-	-	-
Contribution to Reserves	237,195	Base/Quality Split	57.09%	18.45%	24.47%	135,413	43,751	58,031
Operating Expenses Subtotal	\$ 4,210,498					\$ 2,476,239	\$ 764,134	\$ 970,125
Capital Projects								
Cash Funded Capital	2,300,000	Base/Quantity Split	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	1,150,000	1,150,000	-
Capital Projects Subtotal	\$ 2,300,000					\$ 1,150,000	\$ 1,150,000	\$ -
	\$ 6,510,498					\$ 3,626,239	\$ 1,914,134	\$ 970,125

Appendix B

Stormwater Credit Manual Template

Athens-Clarke County Stormwater Utility

Stormwater User Fee Credit Manual

TEMPLATE - MAY 2019

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SECTION 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

Stormwater Utility (SW Utility) user fee credits are made available to private and public entities that undertake specific stormwater management activities to reduce their impact/demand on the Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) and the associated costs that would otherwise be expended by the ACC SWMP. If a customer enacts a specific credit activity that is approved by the ACC, then the customer will receive a credit on their monthly stormwater user fee bill. Credits will be periodically reviewed by ACC for compliance with the applicable standards in the ACC SW Utility Credit Manual (the Manual). Credits are given for both structural and non-structural stormwater management activities.

The Manual outlines the criteria and procedures for the ACC SW Utility customers to secure and maintain a stormwater user fee credit(s) for their property/customer account. An approved SW Utility user fee credit will result in a reduction of the customer's monthly stormwater user fee charge. Implementation of the credit activities by the customer should reduce the impact of stormwater runoff from the subject property on the ACC's stormwater management system, and corresponding cost to the ACC to provide SWMP services to that customer. The credit is only applicable for ACC approved stormwater BMPs, activities and/or programs that are properly designed, constructed (or implemented) and maintained in accordance with this Manual.

Definitions

The definitions included in the SW Utility Ordinance will be adopted herein by reference.

Agriculture means a developed property other than a single-family property that is zoned AR and has ten percent or less impervious area on the parcel. If a property is not zoned AR, but the property's primary use is agriculture, the owner may make application for the agriculture customer designation, provided that the agricultural operation has an approved farm plan from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

Base charge means a charge to all developed property based on the annual administrative and management costs of the stormwater utility. The base charge recognizes that all developed property in Athens-Clarke County contributes to the stormwater discharge that Athens-Clarke County must manage and that all developed property in Athens-Clarke County receives services from the stormwater management activities that Athens-Clarke County provides.

Credit means a reduction in the amount of a stormwater service charge to the owner of a particular parcel for the existence and use of significantly owner maintained and operated on-site or off-site stormwater systems or facilities, or continuing provision of services or activities that reduce or mitigate the Athens-Clarke County stormwater

utility's cost of providing stormwater management services, systems and facilities for that particular parcel.

Equivalent runoff unit (ERU) means the statistical average horizontal impervious area of a single-family property between 1,500 and 4,000 square feet of impervious area within Athens-Clarke County as of the date of adoption of this article. The horizontal impervious area includes, but is not limited to, all areas covered by structures, roof extensions, patios, porches, driveways and sidewalks. The average square footage of horizontal impervious surface for a single-family property is determined to be 2,628 square feet.

Green Infrastructure (GI): shall refer to the concept whereby sustainable water resources management practices are implemented for land development (and re-development) projects in an effort to protect, restore, or mimic the natural water cycle. GI typically involves the use of landscape features to store, infiltrate and/or evaporate stormwater runoff. GI works in concert with Low Impact Development (LID) and the concept is commonly referred to as GI/LID.

Impervious area means those areas which prevent or impede the infiltration of stormwater into the soil in the manner in which it entered the soil, in natural conditions, prior to development.

Low Impact Development (LID): shall refer to an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible to preserve, maintain and/or restore a watershed's hydrologic and ecological functions. LID can be characterized as a sustainable storm water practice that employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that manages stormwater as a resource. Typical GI/LID practices include bioretention facilities, rain gardens, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels, and permeable pavements.

Quantity charge means a charge that may be imposed on all developed property in Athens-Clarke County based on the impervious area and/or other factors that Athens-Clarke County determines reasonably reflect services provided to manage and/or mitigate the effect of the volume and rate of stormwater runoff.

Quality charge means a charge that may be imposed on all developed property in Athens-Clarke County to reasonably reflect services provided to treat or compensate for the difference in pollutants from properties of different land use.

Single-family property means a parcel containing a detached residential dwelling unit functioning as the only residential unit and designed for and occupied by one family only. A residential unit may include a house, manufactured or mobile home.

Stormwater Management Manual means the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual Volume II (Technical handbook), dated August 2001, promulgated by the Atlanta

Regional Commission, as officially revised and amended by the Atlanta Regional Commission from time to time (hereinafter referred to as the "Georgia Stormwater Management Manual").

Stormwater management systems and facilities means those natural and manmade channels, swales, ditches, rivers, streams, creeks, branches, reservoirs, ponds, drainageways, inlets, catch basins, pipes, head walls, storm sewers, lakes and other physical works, properties and improvements which transfer, control, convey or otherwise influence the movement of stormwater runoff, which are owned by Athens-Clarke County or through which Athens-Clarke County has an easement or other legally binding right of use for stormwater drainage, and for which Athens-Clarke County has the obligation of maintenance for stormwater drainage purposes.

Tier 1 single-family means a single-family property with less than 1,500 square feet of impervious area.

Tier 2 single-family means a single-family property with at least 1,500 square feet but less than 4,000 square feet of impervious area.

Tier 3 single-family means a single-family property with more than 4,000 square feet of impervious area.

Water quality factor means a statistically generated modifier to the base charge developed to represent the relative differences in the level of pollutants in stormwater from general categories of land use on an average annual basis. The average annual pollutant loads from the general land use categories were estimated using the Source Loading and Management Model (SLAMM) developed by PV & Associates.

User Fee Charge Calculation

Calculation of charges. The monthly stormwater utility charges imposed to recover the cost of the stormwater utility program are as follows:

Base Charge	\$ 2.07 × ERU
Quantity Charge	\$ 0.86 × ERU
Quality Charge	\$ 0.57 × ERU × Water Quality Factor

Base charges and quantity charges

1. The basis of the stormwater utility fee for the base and quantity charges shall be the equivalent runoff unit (ERU).
2. An ERU will represent 2,628 square feet of impervious area.

3. The director shall be responsible for determining the impervious area and other required information for each developed property in Athens-Clarke County based on the best available information, including, but not limited to, data supplied by the county board of assessors, aerial photography, the property owner, developer or other method as may be required. The number of ERUs that will form the basis of the base charge and quantity charge shall be established in the following manner:
 - Small single-family —The charges shall be equal to 0.6 ERUs.
 - Medium single-family —The charges shall be equal to 1.0 ERU.
 - Large single-family —The charges shall be equal to 1.8 ERUs.
 - Agriculture —The base and quantity charges shall be equal to 2.0 ERUs. The quality charge ERUs shall be equal to the total impervious area of the property divided by the square footage of an ERU.
 - Duplex and triplex —The charges shall be equal to 1.0 ERU.
 - Other developed property ("other") —The charges shall be equal to the total impervious area of the property divided by the square footage of an ERU.
 - Undeveloped —The charges shall be equal to 0 ERUs and will not receive a stormwater utility bill.

Quality charge

1. The director shall assign all parcels within Athens-Clarke County one of the following water quality land use classifications based upon the Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan, as amended:
 - Low density residential
 - Agriculture
 - Medium density residential
 - High density residential/institutional/public
 - Commercial/industrial development
 - Undeveloped.
2. The water quality factors for each of the water quality land use classifications are as follows:

Low density residential	0.5
Agriculture	1.0
Medium density residential	1.0
High density residential/institutional/public	1.3
Commercial/industrial development	1.9
Undeveloped	0.0

Summary of Stormwater User Fee Credits

Table 1 summarizes the user fee credits available to the SW Utility customers. Please refer to the ensuing sections of this document for further details on the various credits, policies, procedures, etc.

Table 1: Stormwater User Fee Credit Summary				
Credit Description	User Fee Charge Eligibility	Potential Stormwater User Fee Credit Customer Types and Amount		
		Water Quantity Credit	Water Quality Credit	Base Charge Credit
User Fee Credits				
Riparian Service Area	Water Quantity	100%	-	-
Watershed Stewardship	Base Charge and Water Quality	10%		10%
Septic Tank Maintenance	Water Quality	-	50%	-
Low Impact Parcel	Water Quantity	50%	-	-
Residential GI/LID	Water Quality and Quantity	10%	10%	-
Non SFR GI/LID	Water Quality and Quantity	Up to 33.3%	Up to 100%	-
Tree Canopy	Water Quality and Quantity	Up to 20%	Up to 20%	-
Natural Area Preservation	Water Quality and Quantity	Up to 100%	Up to 100%	-
NPDES MS4 or Industrial Stormwater Permit	Water Quality	-	50%	-
Environmental Educational Program	Water Quality, Water Quality and Base	5 – 20%	5 – 20%	5 – 20%
Agricultural (NCRS-approved Farm Plan)	Water Quality	-	100%	-
<i>Stormwater Facility (i.e. Detention Pond, Retention Pond)^{1,2}</i>				
Non-GSMM Stormwater Facility	Water Quantity	20 – 25%	-	-
GSMM Stormwater Facility				
Stream Channel Protection	Water Quantity	33.3%	-	-
Plus: Overbank Flood Protection	Water Quantity	33.3%	-	-
Plus: Extreme Flood Protection	Water Quantity	33.4%	-	-

Table 1: Stormwater User Fee Credit Summary				
Credit Description	User Fee Charge Eligibility	Potential Stormwater User Fee Credit Customer Types and Amount		
		Water Quantity Credit	Water Quality Credit	Base Charge Credit
40% TSS Removal	Water Quality	-	20%	-
65% TSS Removal	Water Quality	-	60%	-
80% TSS Removal	Water Quality	-	100%	-

¹ Residential customers that are part of a larger common development (or subdivision) can collectively apply for credits related to the detention pond credit with approval from the SW Utility Manager.

² Stormwater facilities must be properly maintained and operating in accordance with their original design for a facility to be eligible for a credit.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Policies

ACC has established the following general policies regarding consideration and approval of stormwater user fee credits. Please refer to applicable sections of ACC's SW Utility Ordinance for additional guidance and requirements pertaining to the stormwater user fee credits.

- Applications for a stormwater user fee credit for existing facilities may be submitted to the ACC at any time, either in hard copy or through the on-line application included at the following web address:

<http://acc.org....>
- Approved credits will be applied to the customer's next stormwater user fee bill following approval.
- Applications for a stormwater user fee credit associated with new development (or redevelopment) sites may be submitted with the as-builts and will be approved upon approval of the as-built. Credit applications may also be submitted any time after the as-built has been approved or after the creditable activity has been implemented. The user fee charge credit will be applied once the BMP has been inspected (or program approved) by representatives of the ACC and the stormwater user fee charge is scheduled for billing.
 - If the most recent hydrology report for a site is less than two (2) years old, and no changes have been made on site in the previous two (2) years, then the applicant can request that ACC provide the hydrology report that is on file. Hydrology reports older than 2 years old must be revised and resubmitted by the application.

- Credits are only approved for (and applied to) eligible customers that meet applicable criteria as set forth in the Manual. The stormwater user fee is being assessed on an individual customer account basis as outlined in the ACC SW Utility Ordinance. Therefore, credit applications must be made by the entity that is responsible for payment of the utility account. If the responsible entity for payment of SW Utility user fee changes, the new customer must re-apply for the credit with the ACC regardless if the term has expired or is still active. The new customer may be able to rely on some (or all) of the information from a previous credit application package, but it will be the responsibility of the applicant to verify the information within the submitted credit application package.
- A group of customers cannot apply for a credit, except as stipulated below. An eligible customer is defined as a property or site that contributes stormwater runoff to the qualifying stormwater control and/or BMP located on the same property/site via natural and/or manmade conveyance systems.
 - If a group of properties/sites are served by a single BMP or systems of BMPs, then the credit can be applied to the customer on whose property/site which the BMP resides. This applicant will be referred to as the primary applicant. If the primary applicant provides a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the primary applicant and another customer(s) for which the BMP(s) provides adequate treatment for the applicable credit, ACC will consider application of the credit to all customers named in the MOA. The credit shall be applied to all applicants until such time as the primary applicant notifies the ACC that the MOA is no longer in effect or the term of the credit expires, whichever occurs sooner. If the MOA is revoked by the primary applicant, the credit shall only apply to the primary applicant.
 - A residential homeowner's association (HOA), or a common development such as a multi-family apartment complex, which has its own properly designed, constructed, and maintained stormwater BMP(s) should contact the ACC SW Utility Manager to determine if the HOA members, or common development customers, are eligible for a credit. BMPs located on ACC owned property are not eligible. Additionally, BMPs that the ACC maintains through a dedicated maintenance easement or other legal agreement though lying within private property cannot be used by the customer for credit purposes. Please refer to the ACC's SW Utility Ordinances for further clarification regarding the ACC's extent of service policy and its scope of responsibility.
 - For the purposes of the credit, the BMP(s) must be located on a parcel that is platted within the common development and owned by the HOA (or a single property owner within the subdivision or common development).

- For the purposes of awarding the credit, the credit being applied for must be met for the entire common development and must meet the Manual criteria.
 - Any resulting credit awarded will be divided among eligible customers within the HOA or the common development.
- ACC may, at its discretion, undertake periodic visual inspections of the BMPs and/or programs being utilized for stormwater user fee credits by customers to ensure compliance with the Manual. If the BMP facility is found to be functional and being properly maintained, the credit will remain in effect. Likewise, if the BMP facility is not functional or is not being maintained, ACC has the authority to void the credit on the next billing cycle. Before a credit is re-instated, the customer will have to reapply for the credit as outlined in this manual.
- The term of the credit is five years. Credits will expire at the end of the calendar year in which their five-year anniversary occurs, regardless of the month and day they were approved.
- The ACC will utilize a certification process for customer accounts that have received a credit to ensure that the existing credit is still in place at the end of its five-year term. This certification process will require the customer to demonstrate that their property is still eligible for a credit and continues to meet the criteria outlined in the Credit Manual. Failure of the customer to certify his/her credit as required by the ACC policy could result in credit revocation. The ACC will develop the certification procedure and make it available to customers via the ACC website and other methods as deemed appropriate. However, it will be the responsibility of the customer to ensure compliance with the certification requirement.

Stormwater Utility User Fee Credit Application Procedures

The following is an overview of the stormwater user fee credit application procedures that a customer should follow to obtain and maintain credits. All of the credits in this Manual require an application, and some of the credit applications require engineering analysis to demonstrate and verify credit eligibility. The credits associated with engineering analysis are identified in the Manual along with the credit application forms. ACC requires that these calculations be performed, signed, and sealed in accordance with the appropriate Georgia professional certification provisions outlined herein (i.e. engineer, surveyor, landscape architect, etc). The procedure for submitting a credit application generally includes the following tasks:

1. Submit the completed credit application with all sections appropriately filled out and attach all the required supporting documentation.
2. The City will review complete application packages and notify the customer if the request is approved or denied within 45 days of receipt of the application.

3. Upon receipt of a complete credit application, ACC shall review the documentation within 45 days. If the credit is approved, the stormwater user fee credit will be applied, starting with the next customer billing cycle. If the ACC representative does not approve of the customer's application, the ACC will send a letter to the customer explaining why the credit application was not approved. Incomplete application packages will not be considered by the City and will be returned to the customer for completion and/or revision.
4. ACC may elect to perform an inspection of the customer's site and proposed activity, or to review the non-structural practice being implemented, to ensure conformance to the Manual criteria. As such, the customer must grant the ACC a Right-of-Entry or access easement as part of the application and approval process. The ACC may elect to conduct follow up or periodic inspections of the site and credit activities to ensure continued compliance with applicable requirements.

SECTION 2 – CREDIT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This section explains the procedures involved in applying for a stormwater user fee credit. The procedures include step-by-step instructions and eligibility requirements for obtaining the SW Utility user fee credit.

Listed below are the stormwater user fee credits that SW Utility customers are eligible to apply for and secure. Customers should follow the credit application procedures outlined herein for each credit they desire to secure.

- Riparian Service Area
- Watershed Stewardship
- Septic Tank Maintenance
- Low Impact Development Parcel
- Single Family Residential GI/LID
- Non-Single Family Residential GI/LID
- Tree Planting
- Natural Area Preservation
- NPDES MS4 or Industrial Stormwater Permit
- Water Resources Education Program
- Environmental Educational Program
- Agricultural (NCRS-approved Farm Plan)
- Pre-GSMM Stormwater Facility Detention Pond
- GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond

Riparian Service Area

Eligible Customer Classes: All Properties

Credit Description

The Riparian Stormwater Service Area shall be comprised of parcels that drain directly into the hereinafter designated riparian waters or a portion of parcels that drain directly into designated waters without entering ACC's stormwater system. Designated waters include: North Oconee River, Middle Oconee River, McNutt Creek and the lower portions of Shoal Creek and Cedar Creek. The director shall be responsible for designating the properties in the Riparian Stormwater Service Area based on the best available information, including, but not limited to, data supplied by the County board of assessors, aerial photography, the property owner, developer or other method as may be required. The director shall designate said properties and provide a map of designated properties in the Department of Public Works and Transportation office. A parcel owner that wishes to challenge the inclusion or exclusion of a property in the riparian stormwater service area can file an appeal as provided in section 1-5-1 of the Athens-Clarke County Code.

Eligible Credit

A credit of up to 100% off quantity charge and quality charge is available for Riparian Service Area for an indefinite period. The total credit may be reduced if only a portion of the site drains to the ACC's public drainage system. For example, if half the customer's property discharges to ACC's drainage system and the other half is in the riparian service area, that customer would be eligible for a 50% credit off their quantity and quality charges.

Stormwater Credit Application Supporting Documents

1. The customer shall provide ACC the necessary information pertaining to the drainage conveyance from their property to the appropriate downstream points. This information should be documented in the form of a topographical based drainage map prepared by a Georgia Professional Engineer, Land Surveyor, or Landscape Architect, unless otherwise approved by the SW Utility Manager.

Watershed Stewardship

Eligible Customer Classes: All qualifying properties

Credit Description

SW Utility customers are eligible for a stormwater user fee credit if the customer participates in an ACC-approved local watershed stewardship event. Eligible events are set up, organized, and executed through a partnership with ACC. Participation by an individual cannot be credited to two different stormwater utility customer accounts. Non-single family residential customers seeking this credit will have to demonstrate that at least 10 individuals or 10% of their staff or attendees (whichever is less) participated in this event to receive a credit.

In general, eligible watershed stewardship activities may include community programs such as Adopt-A-Stream, Rivers Alive or Great American Cleanup Day (or other ACC-approved stream clean up events), Storm Drain Marking, etc. Other eligible credit programs may be added in the future, but customers should verify activity eligibility with the ACC SW Utility Manager in advance.

Eligible Credit

A 10% credit off the water quality and base charge is available for the Watershed Stewardship Credit for a period of one year.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documents

1. The customer shall secure the appropriate certificate for the Watershed Stewardship Program event. This information must certify the number of participants and provide the total number of staff, attendees, students, or congregants. Participation in events not sponsored by ACC may be transferable to the ACC's stormwater user fee credit program, if approved by the SW Utility Manager.
 - a. If an individual is seeking credit for their residential property, then they must be able to provide documentation that they personally participated in a watershed stewardship event. This documentation could include a certificate of participation issued by the event organizer, or a copy of the sign in sheet for the event that is being credited.

Septic Tank Maintenance

Eligible Customer Classes: All qualifying properties

Credit Description

Residential and non-residential customers are eligible for a stormwater user fee credit if the customer conducts approved maintenance activities on existing septic systems located on the customer's property. SW Utility customers with septic systems can receive a credit by having their septic tanks pumped out on a regular basis (minimum of once every five years). Customers are eligible to receive the credit for the period of five years after the septic tank was pumped out. The customer must submit documentation to ACC in the form of a receipt from a properly licensed hauler of septic wastes. It is the customer's responsibility to confirm that the hauler has secured the required State and/or Local permits and license to haul and dispose of septic wastes. Customers may re-apply for this credit at the end of every five-year term.

There shall only be one stormwater user fee credit issued per customer account in which regular maintenance is conducted on the septic system and it shall only be good for a period of five years. It is the customer's responsibility to contact a licensed hauler of septic wastes and submit the necessary documentation that the septic system maintenance has been conducted. The customer shall continue to conduct maintenance on the septic system at a minimum of every five years in order to qualify and receive the stormwater user fee credit on a continual basis. Renewal of the stormwater user fee credit shall be in accordance with the criteria outlined in this Manual.

Eligible Credit

A maximum credit of 50% off the quality charge is available for five years for approved septic tank maintenance activities.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documents

1. The customer shall secure the pertinent documentation from a licensed hauler of septic waste. For the purposes of securing a credit, a receipt from the hauler will be sufficient if the receipt contains the date the maintenance was performed, the address of the property matching the address on the stormwater user fee credit bill, and the name of the company performing the work.

Low Impact Parcel

Eligible Customer Classes: All qualifying properties

Credit Description

This credit is available to qualifying properties in ACC where the total impervious area footprint is relatively small as compared to the gross parcel area. The ratio of impervious surface to gross parcel area can result in reduced stormwater runoff impacts since a majority of the parcel is undeveloped and allows for infiltration of stormwater runoff. A credit can apply to customers who can prove that their parcel meets the following “low-impact” development criteria:

- Total Impervious Area must be less than 10% of total site area.
- Total Site Area (Acres) must be greater than 10 acres.

The requirements were derived from applicable research materials including The Watershed Vulnerability Analysis Report, Center for Watershed Protection and the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (GSMM).

Eligible Credit

A credit of 50% off the quantity charge is available for five years for qualifying properties.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documents

The customer shall provide ACC the necessary information pertaining to the total gross parcel area and the total impervious surface area. Total impervious surface area shall be detailed to include which portion pertains to the structure, driveway, sidewalk, and other accessory areas that do not allow for infiltration of rainfall and runoff. This information should be documented in the form of a plan and aerial image that will allow ACC personnel to verify the measurements, calculations and other pertinent information.

Residential GI/LID Practices**Eligible Customer Classes: Single Family Residential***Credit Description*

Residential SW Utility customers are eligible for a stormwater user fee credit if the customer implements an eligible Residential GI/LID practice on a single residential lot. These GI/LID practices may include, but are not necessarily limited to, practices such as rain barrels, cisterns, rain gardens, bio-retention cells, pervious pavements, etc. ACC wishes to encourage the installation of these types of stormwater management GI/LID practices to promote and encourage more environmentally responsible and sustainable residential development within the City. ACC will be using the GSMM standards and criteria to evaluate the proposed GI/LID facility and its eligibility for securing a user fee credit.

Eligible Credit

A credit of 10% off the quality and quantity charge is available for five years for qualifying properties.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documentation

The customer shall identify the GI/LID practice or BMP to be utilized and ensure it is designed, maintained, and operated in accordance with general stormwater management requirements outlined in the GSMM and this Manual. The customer shall provide a photograph of the installed practice on their property. ACC staff reserves the right to inspect the property to ensure that the practice is properly installed prior to issuing a credit.

Non Single Family Residential GI/LID

Eligible Customer Classes: Non-Single Family Residential

Credit Description

Customers are eligible for the full GI/LID stormwater user fee credit, if the customer can demonstrate that the on-site GI/LID stormwater management practices can successfully infiltrate the first 1.0" of rainfall in accordance with the GSMM Infiltration standards. Customers may be able to qualify for a partial credit if they can demonstrate that the GI/LID practice infiltrates less than the first 1.0" of stormwater runoff.

The infiltration associated with GI/LID practices must be appropriately documented through technical analysis by a qualified professional (i.e. engineer, surveyor, landscape architect), and must meet the standards of the GSMM and ACC's Post Construction Stormwater Runoff Management Ordinance.

The customer shall continue to conduct maintenance as per the maintenance plan provided with the original application. The customer may reapply for the credit every five years. If a customer is reapplying for a GI/LID Infiltration credit and site conditions have not changed since the original application, the application only needs to include a copy of the original hydrological study and certification that all maintenance has been performed per the maintenance plan for re-issuance of the credit. If site improvements or changes have been made to the property, then the hydrology study will need to be updated to document compliance with the Manual criteria.

Eligible Credit

A credit of up to 100% off the quality charge and 33.3% off the quantity charge is available for GI/LID for a period of five years. The total credit may be reduced if part of the site does not infiltrate stormwater to the standards outlined above. For example, if half the customer's property is infiltrated at the rate described above, or if the entire site infiltrated only the first 0.5" of rainfall, then that customer would be eligible for a 50% (or half of 100%) credit off the quality charge and 16.6% off the quantity charge.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documents

1. The customer shall provide a hydrology report prepared by and sealed by a Georgia Professional Engineer or Registered Land Surveyor or Registered Landscape Architect demonstrating compliance with the requirements and criteria outlined herein:
 - Pre-Development runoff rates and volumes leaving the property prior to development.

- Post-Development runoff rates and volumes leaving their property in its current, developed condition.
- Documentation regarding site groundwater table conditions and the impacts (if any) those conditions have on surface water infiltration.
- Description of the methods and calculations utilized to develop the predictions of pre-development and post-development flow rates and volumes.
- Description of the stormwater controls and other site improvements that have been implemented to reduce the post-development runoff rates and volumes.
- Description of the stormwater controls and GI/LID practices utilized along with supporting data demonstrating that the site conforms to the infiltration and water quality standards for an individual site development as outlined in the GSMM.
- Maintenance plan for those site features necessary to maintain the reduction in stormwater runoff discharge rates and volumes to pre-development runoff conditions or less.

Tree Canopy Cover

Eligible Customer Classes: SFR and NSFR

Credit Description

ACC desires to promote and encourage an expansive and healthy tree canopy throughout the County, which has many benefits including decreased energy costs, reduced stormwater runoff, improved water quality and better air quality. Trees intercept large amounts of rain on their surface areas (leaves, branches, and trunks) and absorb rainfall through their root systems that mitigates the impacts of stormwater runoff quantity and quality.

For new development/redevelopment sites, a SW Utility customer can achieve credits by exceeding the requirements for tree canopy outlined in Section Sec. 8-7-15. - Tree canopy cover, Table 1. Tree Canopy Cover Requirements by Zoning District. In general, the criteria to secure this credit is demonstrate that the percentage of tree canopy on the applicant's property exceeds the minimum requirements for that particular zoning district. A property that exceeds the minimum standard will be eligible for a credit of the percentage that exceeds the standards, up to 20%.

For example, a residential property zoned RS-40 is required to have a total tree canopy cover, conserved and planted, of 60%, of which 40% must be conserved on lots greater 12,500. If an applicant can demonstrate that the total tree canopy cover on their lot is 70%, then their property exceeds the minimum standards by 10%. The customer would then be eligible to receive a 10% credit on the water quality and quantity components of their stormwater user fee.

The applicant should work with ACC staff to determine the total credit percentage for their site/account based on: (1) the minimum tree canopy requirements; (2) the proposed or existing exceedance of the minimum requirements; and (3) the calculations associated with the applicable requirements. The applicant must follow the requirements for caliper size and species as specified in the ACC Community Tree Management ordinance. An applicant desiring to go this route should consult with ACC prior to initiating any tree planting for an existing site. The applicant must have their tree planting plan approved by ACC prior to installation of any trees or before credit is awarded.

Please note that trees planted or located within the ACC Street Right of Way or other ACC-owned property do not qualify for a user fee credit. Trees must be planted and preserved properly and be maintained in good, healthy condition to continue to receive a user fee credit.

Eligible Credit

A credit of up to 20% off the quality and quantity charge is available for tree canopy that exceeds the minimum requirements for a period of five years. For new development, a proposed tree plan that exceeds the minimum standards will be eligible for a credit for the percentage that exceeds the minimum up to 20%.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documents

1. The applicant must provide the following documentation, as applicable, to establish eligibility for a tree planting credit:
 - a. For new development or redevelopment projects, a proposed tree plan must be submitted that illustrates the percentage of tree canopy, shows the minimum percentage, and shows the percentage by which it exceeded the minimum standard.
 - b. In the case of existing development, the applicant must provide an aerial photo of the site, that shows the parcel lines and the canopy coverage. If the applicant is proposing to plant additional trees, a plan must be provided identify the locations of existing tree and proposed trees. The species, caliper and location of proposed trees must be provided. Once the plan is approved by ACC, the applicant must implement the plan, i.e. plant the trees, and provide documentation that the work was completed within one year of receiving plan approval.
 - c. The applicant may utilize aerial photography or any other means to assess existing tree canopy on existing lots or to assess the historical tree canopy for a site.

Natural Area Preservation

Eligible Customer Classes: SFR and NSFR

Credit Description

The ACC will grant a stormwater user fee credit for those customers that provide for Natural Area Preservation in accordance with the criteria outlined in this Manual. In order for a customer to be eligible for this credit, the customer must demonstrate that at least five (5) acres of contiguous green space will be permanently preserved. In general, lands that would likely qualify for natural area preservation credit meet the following criteria:

- Undeveloped land in its natural state.
- Environmentally sensitive lands including: (1) Federally recognized wetlands; (2) State of Georgia designated Groundwater Recharge Areas; (3) Lands containing Federally Endangered Species; (4) Undeveloped lands within stream buffers and/or floodplains;(5) other approved site conditions as set forth by the ACC.

In order for a SW Utility customer to qualify for this credit, the natural area must be permanently protected through a conservation easement or other deed restriction, or the land set aside and permanently protected as part of a conservation subdivision development.

Eligible Credit

The customer would be eligible to receive a 1% credit on the quantity and quality charges for every 1% of the total area of the property that is permanently protected. The customer could receive a maximum of up to a 100% credit for Natural Area Preservation for an unlimited period of time.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documentation

1. This protected area should be documented in the form of a site plan and map, which is prepared and sealed by a Georgia Professional Engineer or Land Surveyor, unless otherwise approved by the SW Utility Manager. A copy of the conservation easement agreement or deed restriction that creates the permanent protection must also be included. The necessary paperwork documenting that a properly prepared and executed conservation easement exists on the property/site must also be included.

Water Resources Education Program

Eligible Customer Classes: Public & Private Education Institutions

Credit Description

The Water Resources Education Program credit shall be made available to all public or private educational institutions that meet the criteria set forth herein and that conduct approved educational activities as part of their day-to-day curriculum. In order to be eligible for this credit, the education program taught must be consistent with ACC's stormwater management program and must also be pre-approved by ACC SW Utility Manager. The amount of credit ultimately given shall be as determined as noted below and will be based on the number of contact hours and the curriculum being taught. The educational credit may be taken in addition to any other credit available under this section. The credits shall apply only to the properties and facilities where the educational courses are taught, and other requirements are specifically met.

Primary and Secondary Education

The owner of a property which is used as a site for a public or private school and which agrees to participate in the Athens-Clarke County Green School Program, which includes water protection measures at the primary or secondary level, may receive a credit against the stormwater service charge of five percent. If the specific property agrees to participate in the Athens-Clarke County Green School Program and then successfully achieves Green School Status, as defined by the Athens-Clarke County Green School Committee, the amount of the credit against stormwater service charges which may be received may be increased up to an additional 15 percent of the service charge applicable to the property for a total of a 20 percent educational credit, beginning on the date that Green School Status was achieved. The amount of credits given shall be determined by the Stormwater Administrator, in conjunction with the Athens-Clarke County Green School Committee. The educational credit may be taken in addition to any other credit available within this manual.

Prior to **October 1** of each year, individual schools must enroll in the Green School Program following directions set forth by the Green School Committee. For purposes of this educational credit a public school shall be any school operated by the Clarke County School District and a private school shall be a school operated by a private entity teaching some or all of the grades K through 12 at which are taught subjects commonly taught in the public schools operated by the Clarke County School District

Public or Private Post-Secondary Education

The owner of a public or private university which agrees to teach an environmental stewardship program that includes stormwater management to all incoming undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff may receive a credit against the stormwater service charge applicable to the property of five percent of the service charge applicable to the property. If a specific watershed protection program(s) approved by the Director is agreed to be taught in addition to normal course curriculum requirements, which will result in benefits to Athens-Clarke County as a result of teaching such program(s) the amount of the credit against stormwater service charges which may be received may be increased up to an additional 15 percent of the service charge applicable to the property for a total of a 20 percent total educational credit. The amount of credits given shall be as determined by Director based on the number of contact hours and the curriculum being taught for the program. A total of 8 contact hours per student per university is required for the watershed program to receive the additional 15% credit. The educational credit may be taken in addition to any other credit available under this section. Prior to July 1 of each year, the president of the university of his designee, shall certify to Director, the environmental stewardship and/or watershed program(s) curriculum being taught at the University along with the number of contact hours per program, along with student enrollment, and staff/faculty employment.

Eligible Credit

The owner of property, which is used as a site for a public or private educational institution and which meets the standards listed above, may receive a credit against the stormwater service charge applicable to the property of five percent (5%) – twenty percent (20%) of the service charge applicable to the property, inclusive of the base, quantity and quality charge.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documentation

1. The following information shall be provided to ACC in order to receive approval of the Water Resources Education Program credit:
 - The person responsible for the customer account shall certify to the ACC SW Utility Manager that the requirements above are being met, and which facilities/properties are being including in the credit application.
 - Approximate number, age and grade level of participants that will be taught the approved curriculum, and the total number of contact hours.

NPDES Industrial Permit Compliance

Eligible Customer Classes: Industrial NPDES Permittees

Credit Description

Customers can receive a stormwater user fee credit by complying with applicable NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit requirements for industrial facilities requirements for qualifying facilities. Implementation of the applicable compliance requirements assists ACC in addressing water quality impairment issues at the source, prior to discharge into the ACC's publicly-owned drainage system and/or State Waters. If the customer has properly secured coverage under the applicable NPDES Permit, and is in compliance with all applicable requirements, i.e. development and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWP3), a credit application may be filed with the ACC to secure a credit.

Eligible Credit

A maximum credit of 50% off the quality charge is available for five years for demonstrated NPDES permit compliance.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documentation

1. Customers that operate a facility that must secure coverage per its Standard Industry Code (SIC) under the NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit must include the required documents that verify compliance with the NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit. At a minimum, the documentation attached to the credit application shall include the following items below:
 - Customer address and facility point of contact
 - Copy of the current NPDES Industrial Stormwater Permit Notice of Intent (NOI)
 - Copy of the annual report of compliance
 - Copy of the SWP3
 - Certification by the responsible party/permit holder that the NOI is current and the SWP3 is being implemented
2. In order to maintain the credit, the customer shall send a copy of an annual report to the ACC SW Utility Manager each year. Failure to make the required submittals could result in forfeiture of the stormwater user fee credit.

Agricultural BMP PlanEligible Customer Classes: Active Agricultural Property*Credit Description*

Properties classified as agricultural customers that have an approved Farm Plan from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and that can demonstrate compliance with said plan, will be eligible for a credit on the water quality charge. These farm plans require implementation of best farm practices including, but not limited to:

Crop Management	Channel Management	Nutrient Management
Contour Plowing	Stream/Channel Stabilization	Manure Management
No Till	Vegetated Buffers	Stream Fencing
Strip Cropping	Grassed Waterways	Barnyard Runoff Control

Eligible Credit

A maximum credit of 100% off the quality charge is available for five years for demonstrated compliance with an approved Farm Plan.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documentation

1. An NRCS Approved Farm Plan
2. Documentation of compliance with Farm Plan

Pre-GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond Credit

Eligible Customer Classes: All Qualifying Properties

Credit Description

**Note: SFR customers that are part of a larger common development (or subdivision) that has a privately maintained storm water control that was designed and constructed under the then current storm water design regulations can collectively apply for the credits related to the Pre- GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond Credit, after consultation with the SW Utility Manager to establish eligibility.*

The Pre-GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond Credit has been designed for older detention ponds that were approved and constructed under the then current design standards and regulations that existed prior to the adoption of the GSMM.

The overall goal of ACC is to give a credit to eligible customers that are reducing the impact of stormwater generated by their property. By reducing the peak discharge of stormwater from their property, the property owners/customer reduces the burden they impose on the ACC drainage system and the downstream receiving waterway. The credit shall only be applied to that portion of the property served by the detention basin.

Eligible Credit

Credits are available for a five (5) year period under the following general conditions and criteria:

- A maximum of 15% credit on the water quantity charge is available for customers that can demonstrate that their facility is in good working order and that routine maintenance of the facility has been and will continue to be conducted in accordance with professional standards.
- A maximum of 20% credit on the water quantity charge is available to customers that can demonstrate that the peak stormwater discharge rate for the 10-year storm from their stormwater retention/detention facility for a post developed site condition (Qpost) is no more than the peak stormwater discharge rate before development (Qpre) (i.e. Qpost = Qpre).
- A maximum of 25% credit on the water quantity charge is available to customers that can demonstrate that the peak stormwater discharge rate for the 10-year storm from their stormwater retention/detention facility for a post developed site condition (Qpost) is at least 10% less than the peak stormwater discharge rate before development (Qpre) (i.e. a Qpost is 10% less than Qpre).
- ACC reserves the right to establish the applicable credit for situations that may fall between the various criteria outlined above.
- This credit is not available for any portion of a parcel within the Riparian Zone.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documentation

1. The customer shall provide a hydrology report (or comparable document) prepared by and sealed by a Georgia Professional Engineer or Georgia Registered Land Surveyor or Registered Landscape Architect demonstrating compliance with the requirements and criteria outlined herein. If site conditions have not changed since the original hydrology report was completed, the application only needs to include a copy of the original design information and certification that all the necessary maintenance has been performed. If significant changes to the site layout and/or site stormwater controls has occurred since the original application, then ACC may request that the design information be updated to document compliance with the Manual criteria.
2. A Stormwater Facility Maintenance Agreement, and documentation that the facility/detention pond has been and will be properly maintained.

GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond

Eligible Customer Classes: All Qualifying Properties*

**SFR customers that are part of a larger common development (or subdivision) that has a privately maintained storm water control that was designed and constructed in accordance with the GSMM can collectively apply for the credits related to the GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond Credit, after consultation with the SW Utility Manager to establish eligibility.*

Credit Description

Parcels with on-site stormwater management and treatment facilities and parcels serviced by such facilities that are designed to properly manage the stormwater runoff from impervious surface areas in accordance with the stormwater quality criteria described by the Georgia Stormwater Manual as may be updated or amended from time to time, may be eligible to receive a credit for a portion of the quality and quantity charges.

Credits are available under the following general conditions and criteria:

- This credit is not available for any portion of a parcel in the Riparian Zone unless otherwise approved by the SW Utility Manager.
- The stormwater facility must be in good working order and the customer must demonstrate that routine maintenance of the facility has been and will continue to be conducted in accordance with professional standards.
- The credit shall only be applied to that portion of the property served by the storm water facility.
- In order to receive this credit, an approved maintenance plan must be on file with ACC and the customer must be in compliance with it.

Eligible Credit

Credits available for GSMM stormwater facilities are described below and summarized in Table 3.

- Facilities designed to meet the channel protection standard in accordance with the Athens-Clarke County Code and the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual, each as may be updated or amended from time to time will be eligible for one-third (33.3%) reduction in the quantity charge for the property.
- Facilities designed to meet the channel protection and the over bank standard in accordance with the Athens-Clarke County Code and the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual, each as may be updated or amended from time to time, will be eligible for two-thirds (66.6%) reduction in the quantity charge for the property.

- Facilities designed to meet the channel protection, over bank and flood protection standard in accordance with the Athens-Clarke County Code and the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual, each as may be updated or amended from time to time, will be eligible for a 100% credit on the quantity charge for the property.
- Facilities designed to remove no less than 40% of the average annual sediment load from stormwater runoff from the site may be eligible for a 20% reduction in the quality charge for the property.
- Facilities designed to remove no less than 65% of the average annual sediment load from stormwater runoff from the site may be eligible for a 60% reduction in the quality charge for the property.
- Facilities designed to remove no less than 80% of the average annual sediment load from stormwater runoff from the site will be eligible for 100% credit on the quality charge for the property

Table 3: CSS/GSMM Unified Stormwater Sizing Criteria		
Treatment Level/ Criteria	Maximum Available Credit	Criteria Description
1. Water Quality Volume	100%	Attempt to infiltrate up to the first 1.2 inches of rainfall for the site. The purpose of this criteria is to reduce the volume of stormwater runoff by infiltrating it prior to collection, treatment, detention, and discharge.
		Capture and treat the first 1.2 inches of runoff, or the remaining amount of runoff that is not infiltrated. This equates to providing water quality treatment for the runoff associated with 85% of annual storm events with a goal reducing average annual post-development TSS loadings by 80% .
		Same as above but reduce TSS loading by 65%
		Same as above but reduce TSS loading by 40%
2. Stream Channel Protection	33.3%	Provide extended detention of the 1-year storm event released over a period of 24 hours to reduce bankfull flows and protect downstream channels and aquatic resources from erosive velocities and unstable flow conditions.
3. Plus Overbank Flood Protection	66.6%	Provide peak discharge control of the 25-year storm event such that the post-development peak rate does not exceed the predevelopment rate to reduce overbank flooding.
4. Plus Extreme Flood Protection	100%	Evaluate the effects of the 100-year storm on the stormwater management system, adjacent property, and downstream facilities and property. Manage the impacts of the extreme storm event through detention controls and/or floodplain management.

Note: The criteria description for each stormwater runoff treatment level is in general accordance with information published in the GSMM.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Procedures

1. The customer shall provide a hydrology report (or comparable document) prepared by and sealed by a Georgia Professional Engineer or Georgia Registered Land Surveyor or Registered Landscape Architect demonstrating compliance with the requirements and criteria outlined herein. If site conditions have not changed since the original hydrology report was completed, the application only needs to include a copy of the original design information and certification that all the necessary maintenance has been performed. If significant changes to the site layout and/or site stormwater controls has occurred since the original application, then ACC may request that the design information be updated to document compliance with the Manual criteria.
2. A Stormwater Facility Maintenance Agreement, and documentation that the facility/detention pond has been and will be properly maintained.

Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Forms & Other Miscellaneous Forms

Stormwater user fee credit applications are required to secure approval of all credits offered in this Manual. The forms and documents attached to the appendices are summarized below.

- Appendix A includes the credit application forms for the residential (or SFR) stormwater user fee credits described in this Manual.
- Appendix B includes the credit application forms for the non-residential (or NSFR) stormwater user fee credits described in this Manual.
- Appendix C includes miscellaneous forms required as part of the stormwater user fee credit application process, including a Right-of-Entry Agreement.

APPENDIX A

- **SFR Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Forms**

APPENDIX A***Athens-Clarke County (ACC) SW Utility SFR Customer Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Form*****Instructions:**

Fill out this form completely. One application must be submitted for each customer account. Follow the steps outlined in the applicable section of this Manual. Attach all appropriate documentation to support this request, as outlined herein.

Fill out and attach appropriate documentation. Mail completed form (with attachments) to:

Director of Transportation and Public Works
Athens-Clarke County
Attn: Stormwater Utility Engineer
120 Dougherty Street
Athens, GA 30603

I hereby request ACC to review this application for a stormwater user fee credit(s). I further authorize the ACC to investigate the site characteristics of the above identified parcel for the purpose of evaluation for a stormwater user fee credit(s). I certify that I have authority to make such a request and grant such authority for the ACC staff (or their designee) to evaluate this property for the purposes of approval or denial of the user fee credit. The attached information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to provide corrected information should there be any change in the information provided herein.

Type or print name

Property Owner

SW Utility Account No.

Signature

Date

This form must be signed by an individual person who is responsible for the site operations and/or payment of the monthly utility bill. If the responsible person is not an individual person then the form must be signed by an officer, director, partner, or registered agent with authority to execute instruments for the customer account.

Approval:

SW Utility Engineer

Date

SW Utility Account No.

APPENDIX A

SFR Customer Stormwater User Fee Credit Application/Renewal Form

Place a check next to the credit being applied for with this application:

	Credit Description
	Riparian Service Area
	Watershed Stewardship
	Septic Tank Maintenance
	GI/LID
	Natural Area Preservation
	NPDES Permit Compliance
	Water Resources Education Program
	Environmental Educational Program
	Agricultural (NCRS-approved Farm Plan)
	Pre-GSMM Stormwater Facility Detention Pond
	GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond

General Customer Information:

Customer Name:	
Stormwater Utility Account Number:	
Mailing Address:	
Mailing ACC/Zip:	
Contact Phone/Fax Number:	
Contact E-mail Address:	

Property Information:

Parcel/Property Address (number and street):	
Parcel/Property Address (ACC and state and zip):	
Parcel Identification Number:	
Parcel/Property Location/Development:	
Authorized Contact, if different than Customer:	

APPENDIX B

- **NSFR Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Forms**

APPENDIX B***Athens-Clarke County (ACC) SW Utility NSFR Customer Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Form*****Instructions:**

Fill out this form completely. One application must be submitted for each separate customer account. Multiple stormwater controls/credit requests may be included in the application for a single customer location/account. Please ensure all stormwater management facilities have properly designed, constructed, and continue to be properly maintained. Attach all the necessary documentation to support the user fee credit request. Documentation shall include, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. Facility site plan with stormwater facilities/controls with delineated drainage areas.
2. Description of stormwater control facilities.
3. Appropriate pages from the GSMM (latest version) identifying design requirements for each on-site stormwater control.
4. Documentation that the stormwater control facilities meet one or more criteria for the stormwater user fee credit(s).
5. Appropriate professional certification(s), if required per this Manual.
6. Pertinent regulatory compliance documentation, if applicable.
7. Completed Right-of-Entry Agreement (if applicable) and/or a maintenance plan (if applicable) per the requirements of this Manual.
8. Other pertinent information to support the user fee credit request.

Mail completed the completed form as well as the necessary attachments and supporting documentation to:

Director of Transportation and Public Works
Athens-Clarke County
Attn: Stormwater Utility Engineer
120 Dougherty Street
Athens, GA 30603

I hereby request ACC to review this application for a stormwater user fee credit(s). I further authorize the ACC to investigate the site characteristics of the above identified parcel for the purpose of evaluation for a stormwater user fee credit(s). I certify that I have authority to make such a request and grant such authority for the ACC staff (or their designee) to evaluate this property for the purposes of approval or denial of the user fee credit. The attached information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to provide corrected information should there be any change in the information provided herein.

Type or print name

Owner

SW Utility Account No.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B*Athens-Clarke County (ACC) SW Utility Non-Single Family Residential Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Form (continued)*

This form must be signed by an individual person who is responsible for the site operations and/or payment of the monthly utility bill. If the responsible person is not an individual person then the form must be signed by an officer, director, partner, or registered agent with authority to execute instruments for the customer account.

Approval:

SW Utility Engineer

Date

SW Utility Account No.

APPENDIX B

NSFR Customer Stormwater User Fee Credit Application/Renewal Form

Place a check next to the credit being applied for with this application:

	Credit Description
	Riparian Service Area
	Watershed Stewardship
	Septic Tank Maintenance
	GI/LID
	Natural Area Preservation
	Water Resources Education Program
	Environmental Educational Program
	Agricultural (NCRS-approved Farm Plan)
	Pre-GSMM Stormwater Facility Detention Pond
	GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond

General Customer Information:

Customer Name:	
SW Utility Account Number:	
Mailing Address:	
Mailing ACC/Zip:	
Contact Phone/Fax Number:	
Contact E-mail Address:	

Property Information:

Parcel Address (number and street):	
Parcel Address (ACC, State and Zip):	
Parcel Identification Number:	
Parcel Location/Name of Development:	
Authorized Property Owner Contact (if different than Customer Name above):	

APPENDIX C

- **Right of Entry Form**

APPENDIX C***Right of Entry Agreement – Stormwater User Fee Credit(s) Evaluation***

STATE OF GEORGIA, ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY (ACC)

I/We _____, the owner and/or tenant (circle which one or both) of the property commonly identified as _____, Athens-Clarke County, State of Georgia, do hereby grant and give freely and without coercion, the right of access and entry to said property to Athens-Clarke County, its agents, contractors, and subcontractors thereof, for the purpose of performing necessary evaluations of onsite stormwater facilities, controls and site activities related to stormwater runoff management on the _____ (hereinafter "facility") located on Land Lot _____ in Athens-Clarke County, Georgia.

The undersigned agrees and warrants to waive and hold harmless ACC, its agents, employees, contractors, and subcontractors, for damage of any type, or any claim or action, either legal or equitable that might arise out of any activities on the above described property that are conducted by ACC, its agents, employees, contractors and subcontractors, pursuant to this Agreement.

In consideration of this Right of Entry Agreement and the rights granted to ACC herein, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, Athens-Clarke County agrees, to perform only visual evaluations, and review pertinent facility records and information, necessary to verify stormwater user fee credit eligibility. I/We, will not/have not receive(d) any compensation for this Right of Entry Agreement.

For the considerations and purposes set forth herein, I set my hand this _____ day of _____ 20____.

Operator or Owner (identify which one)

Witness

Address

Notary

Address

My Commission Expires

ACC Acknowledgement:

ACC SW Utility Engineer

Date