



# Municipality of Monroeville

## Storm Water Management Program and Fee

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(Please do not direct questions to the municipal sewage and water authority)



#### **The Pollution Control and Flood Reduction Program (PC&FR)**

The Pollution Control and Flood Reduction Program was enacted by Monroeville Council under Ordinance No. 2689 on October 9, 2018. The new ordinance establishes a Stormwater Management Program and User Fee to provide a dedicated funding source to more adequately maintain and reinvest in the Municipality's aging stormwater infrastructure. The ordinance establishes an annual fee for every parcel in the Municipality, regardless of taxable status, to defray the cost of the Municipality's PC&FR Program.

#### **What is stormwater, and why is it a problem in Monroeville?**

Stormwater commonly refers to runoff from rain and snow/ice melt. In natural settings, stormwater is able to slowly soak into the surface or flow overland into adjacent streams and rivers. This process relies on an abundance of pervious surfaces such as grasslands, pastures, meadows, forests, lawns, and other natural landscapes. In urbanized areas, such as cities and towns like Monroeville, these natural surfaces are often replaced with hard or impervious surfaces such as houses, streets, sidewalks, parking lots, patios, and other similar structures. The result of this development is a reduced amount of natural area available to absorb stormwater. This means that a larger amount of stormwater ends up flowing, at a faster pace, over the hard surfaces where it tends to collect chemicals and debris along the way. When not properly controlled, stormwater can overwhelm streams, cause flooding, soil erosion and surface water pollution.

As is common in an urbanized area, Monroeville has established a stormwater management system which consists of gutters, channels, catch basins, pipes, detention ponds, and other structures to manage the movement of stormwater. With time, this system has aged and requires systematic repair and replacement, and in some cases, enlargement to account for development activities that have occurred over the Municipality's history. Currently, the maintenance of the system is paid for from the Municipality's general fund, which is mostly funded through real estate taxes. This means that tax-exempt property owners are not contributing to the system, and also funding availability is directly impacted by competition for other spending priorities. The result is that funding for system upkeep has been inadequate, unstable and unable to keep pace with the growing need for system management, maintenance, and expansion. To help resolve this problem, the Municipality has instituted a stormwater fee for property owners within the Municipality.

#### **What is the purpose of the stormwater fee?**

Many communities across the county and Commonwealth are establishing a dedicated fee to provide the funds to properly maintain and upgrade stormwater infrastructure so that it functions as intended. The stormwater fee will provide dedicated revenue and enable the Municipality to provide enhanced maintenance, planned system replacement of existing infrastructure, purchase a new street sweeper and vacuum truck, meet the requirements of more stringent, federal and state regulations for stormwater management.

## **How is a stormwater fee different from a tax?**

Taxes are collected from parcel owners based on the assessed value of their property to cover costs for a number of general government services. A fee is charged to support a specific service, such as gas, electric, water or garbage collection. The stormwater fee provides an equitable way to distribute the cost of the Pollution Control and Flood Reduction Program, by ensuring that every parcel owner using and placing a burden on the system is paying. All users of the stormwater system will pay a fee based on their estimated share of publicly provided stormwater services.

## **How is my bill calculated?**

The average residential property owner in the Municipality of Monroeville has 2,385 square feet of impervious surface. This amount of impervious area is considered one (1) Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU), (i.e. residential lots with a detached house, driveway, accessory structures, etc.). Each residential property will be billed \$120 per year, equal to \$10.00 per month. All Non-Single Family Detached (NSFD) parcels such as businesses, houses of worship, apartment buildings, government buildings, factories, parks and other open spaces with hard surfaces will be billed a multiplier of the ERU value based on the actual square footage of impervious surface on the property. The billing rate per ERU is determined by the number of ERUs in the Municipality and the annual budget for the program.

## **How often will I be charged?**

The Municipality will issue bills to parcel owners through the Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments (TCVCOG), the billing entity. Bills will be issued by the TCVCOG in January of 2019. The payment will be due by March 31, 2019. If the fee is paid in full by the due date, property owners will receive a 2% discount. A LATE FEE WILL NOT BE ASSESSED FOR 2019, BUT SHALL BE STARTED IN 2020. Although, a reminder letter to pay before the end of 2019 will be sent November 1, 2019 to those residents and businesses who have not paid their bill. A \$10 ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGE WILL BE ADDED FOR THE PROCESSING OF THE LETTER.

## **Why base the fee on impervious surface?**

In general, the more impervious area a property has, the more runoff flows from the property, placing a certain demand on the storm sewer system and/or the stormwater services provided by the Municipality. Billing based on impervious surface is a more equitable way to determine the fee than using property value and is a widely accepted method in stormwater management programs across the country.

## **How is impervious surface area calculated?**

The Municipality used aerial imagery to identify impervious surfaces. The area of the impervious surfaces has been calculated using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer software.

## **If I have a question or disagree with my charges who should I contact?**

If you have a question about your bill, or if you think your bill was calculated incorrectly, you can contact the Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments, the billing agency, by either calling, emailing or mailing your questions to:

Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments  
Pollution Control and Flood Reduction Program  
2700 Monroeville Blvd.  
Monroeville, PA 15146  
412-858-5115  
Email: [Utility@TCVCOG.com](mailto:Utility@TCVCOG.com)  
Web site: [www.TCVCOG.com](http://www.TCVCOG.com)

In addition, you may pay your bill online at: [TCVCOG.authoritypay.com](http://TCVCOG.authoritypay.com)

## **If I have a question about the impervious area of my property or the size of my property?**

These types of technical questions will be answered by the Municipality, and not the billing entity, Turtle Creek Valley COG. If you have a question about how your impervious area of your property was calculated or even the ownership of property contact the Municipality at 412-856-3330 or email at [swpollution@monroeville.pa.us](mailto:swpollution@monroeville.pa.us) The vast majority of these types of questions will pertain to commercial, nonprofit, or other properties NOT residential. Reason being, all Municipal residential properties are calculated the same. They are all calculated as an average sized residential property in the Municipality (2,385 square feet). Some residential properties may be bigger, some smaller, but they all will be assessed as one ERU at 2,385 square feet of impervious area. Most of these types of questions will be quickly answered; but on some occasions in which more complex cases may be heard, the Municipality has set-up an Appeals Board. Information on the Appeals Board will be furnished on the Municipality's web site in 2019.