

# BATTLE GROUND UTILITIES

PO BOX 303, BATTLE GROUND IN 47920 765-567-2603

To: Property Owners in Battle Ground

RE: Information concerning Battle Ground Storm Water Utility

The Federal Government established the Clean Water Act (1972) as a series of sweeping amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948. Over time, this legislation spawned regulations that passed through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and down to the state level through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). From IDEM, the changes eventually spread to the county, city, and town level.

The Town of Battle Ground joined the Tippecanoe County Partnership for Water Quality (<http://www.tcpwq.org/>) soon after it was formed to guide local jurisdictions through the process of enforcing stormwater and drainage regulations. The partnership focuses on six minimum control measures (MCMs):

1. Public Education and Outreach
2. Public Involvement and Participation
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Runoff Control
5. Post-Construction Storm Water Management
6. Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping at Municipal Operations

We are all enjoying cleaner waterways as a result of efforts that began many years ago.

Stormwater Operations and Maintenance (O&M) expenses cost the Town approximately \$50,000 per year ("Battle Ground (Indiana) Municipal Stormwater Utility Pro Forma Financial Information", Umbaugh and Associates, December 5, 2016).

This amount does not include funds for capital improvements. Until now, the O&M expense has been funded through the Battle Ground Wastewater Utility – your sewage service.

Unfortunately, this method doesn't capture stormwater funds in a manner proportional with impact; some of the largest contributors to stormwater and drainage issues are relatively small sewage customers.

The Town of Battle Ground has started the process to create a Stormwater Utility which will collect revenues suitable to cover these stormwater and compliance expenses. As part of the process, properties are divided into three major categories:

- 1) Residential (homes, duplex or apartments)
- 2) Non-residential (commercial, not-for-profit, religious, government)
- 3) Non-developed property (vacant lots, agriculture acres)

All residential parcels will be billed at the same rate: \$6 per month beginning January 1, 2018. This new charge will appear on your utility bill and will increase \$1 per month per year, reaching \$11 per month by 2023.

The process for starting a utility includes opportunity for those involved to participate in a public hearing. This informational meeting will be held Tuesday, August 22, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. at the Battle Ground Bible Church, 2430 E CR 600N, West Lafayette, Indiana.

This hearing is for all property owners, however there will be other dates to address specific concerns and questions of property owners who have "Non-residential" or commercial properties and "Non-developed" vacant lots or agriculture use land.

Please read the list of Frequently Asked Questions, which may answer some of your concerns prior to the meeting. The full text of the utility ordinance will be available on the website [www.battleground.in.gov](http://www.battleground.in.gov). You may also send questions to [treasurer@battleground.in.gov](mailto:treasurer@battleground.in.gov).

The question of starting a utility was carefully considered for several years as the expenses of education, reporting and compliance steadily increased. This step is the most appropriate way to expense those activities and fund needed repairs to catch basins and ditches. We must provide adequate escape for rainwater and snow melt that will not create hazards for vehicles on the roads or damage homes and streets. Your local government is responding to needs and with your help will implement plans to improve our town.

Sincerely,

Battle Ground Sewage Utility Board and Town Council

## **What is this public hearing about?**

The Town of Battle Ground proposes the creation of a Stormwater Utility.

## **Is this a new thing?**

It is new for Battle Ground, but certainly not unique. Lafayette, West Lafayette, Dayton, Mulberry, and at least 83 other communities throughout Indiana have Stormwater Utilities (“Comparative Rate Study”, Umbaugh, 2016).

## **Who is involved?**

Properties within the Battle Ground corporate limits will be charged a user fee for this new utility. Residential parcels will be charged \$6 per month. Non-residential parcels will be charged according to their non-permeable area at a rate of \$6 per ERU (an Equivalent Residential Unit or ERU is equal to 3,200 square feet). Non-residential parcels which are not developed will be billed on per acre basis.

Note that the new user fee affects ALL properties. Schools, churches, and even the Town will pay fees to the stormwater utility.

## **Why is this utility being considered?**

Federal and State stormwater regulations have created a new and unavoidable expense for the Town. For several years, the Town has covered these expenses with Wastewater revenues but this is not an equitable source of funding; the largest stormwater contributors are not the largest Wastewater customers.

## **I don't receive a water/sewage bill. Can I pay quarterly (semi-annually, annually)?**

You may pre-pay your stormwater charges to avoid monthly billing.

## **With these new revenues, will the Town begin to replace stormwater infrastructure?**

The Town has a number of projects under consideration, but initial revenues will not be large enough to begin any major projects. Having this utility in place will guarantee a revenue stream and allow bonding for large stormwater projects in the future. Engineers at Butler, Fairman & Seufert have evaluated several stormwater issues around town; the estimate to repair all of them is over three million dollars.

The stormwater utility will also provide a method for the Town to administer subdivision-wide drainage projects and recover the expenses through special assessments.

## **How much will I pay and when?**

If the utility is created, the Town plans to begin billing in January, 2018. The fee for residential users will be \$6 per month. Non-residential fees will vary depending upon non-permeable area. The new charge will appear on your water/sewer bill – or a new bill for customers who don't currently have a water/sewer account.