



Spring/Summer 2021

## Stormwater Fee Being Considered for 2022

Managing stormwater, combatting flooding, protecting and improving water quality, and meeting ever-increasing state and federal regulations with respect to this vital natural resource is a large expense for municipalities across the nation. As pre-pandemic municipal budgets were strapped to manage the cost of providing essential services to their constituents, many municipalities across the nation are looking into a fee dedicated to the cost of managing stormwater and improving water quality.

Cheltenham embarked on a fee feasibility study with Arcadis, a design and consulting firm that has guided many municipalities across Pennsylvania and the nation in determining whether a fee would be appropriate for them.

Since the summer of 2020, Arcadis has been working with Cheltenham Township staff, elected officials and a Stormwater Advisory Committee consisting of local stakeholder residents, institutions and businesses to gather data about impervious coverage in the Township and current and projected costs associated with the Township's stormwater program to help determine a method for billing a stormwater fee and an appropriate fee to cover the costs of the Township's stormwater program.



At the time of this writing, the recommended stormwater program is estimated to cost the Township \$3.37 million in 2022. These costs include the operation and maintenance of the stormwater conveyance system, street sweeping, leaf collection, new capital projects, legacy debt and administration.

Pulling these costs out of the Township's general and capital funds and placing them in a separate fund with a separate income stream, will help ensure that the Township can continue to meet its regulatory responsibilities and a well as its responsibilities to the community with respect to managing stormwater.

Based on the 2020 Financial Management report completed by PFM, Cheltenham Township needs to make strategic financial decisions to ensure that it will be able to meet its obligations. Rather than raising taxes to pay for the increasing stormwater costs, this fee will capture revenue from property owners who do not currently pay taxes.

While decisions have not been made on the structure of the fee and program, Arcadis' analysis has determined that a rate based on the amount of impervious coverage on a property is most equitable. Arcadis has determined that the average residential property

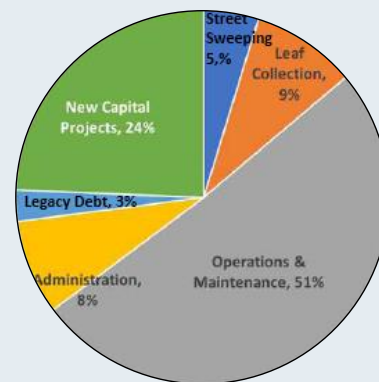
in Cheltenham Township contains 3,508 square feet of impervious coverage (buildings, driveways, sidewalks, patios, etc.), which has been determined as the Township's Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU).

The Stormwater Advisory Committee and Board of Commissioners have reviewed the options of billing all single family residences one flat rate, or creating tiers based on parcel size. At the time of this writing, preliminary discussions are leading toward a three-tiered billing approach for single family residential properties, based on properties of less than 0.1 acre paying one-half an ERU, properties 0.1 to 0.5 acres paying one ERU, and properties over 0.5 acres paying 2 ERUs. Multifamily properties and nonresidential properties would be billed based on the number of ERUs they have.

At the time of this writing, preliminary discussions are also leaning toward a \$220 per ERU fee that would be included on the annual tax bill. A policy to provide credits to property owners who install stormwater mitigation measures on their property is also being considered.

Final decisions have not been made on the implementation of a stormwater fee. It is anticipated that the Board of Commissioners will consider the recommendations of this study sometime this summer. More information about the fee and study process can be found on the Township's website. Questions can be emailed to [stormwater@cheltenham-township.org](mailto:stormwater@cheltenham-township.org).

Cost of the Township's Stormwater Program



## What's Inside...

3	..... Township Directory	7	..... Cheltenham EAC's 2nd Annual Nature-Friendly Yards Contest
3-4	..... From the Desks of Your Township Commissioners	7	..... Spotted Lanternfly
5	..... Department Spotlight: Planning & Zoning	8	..... Senior Security in the Digital Age
5	..... Meet the Director of Fiscal Affairs	8	..... Cheltenham Township Police Hub Program Preventative Intervention Group
6	..... Police Department	9	..... Volunteer Spotlight: Friends of Curtis Arboretum
6	..... Cheltenham Emergency Medical Services Rises to the COVID-19 Challenge	10	..... Public Works: Spring Cleaning
6	..... Emergency Management Agency: A Powerhouse Working for Your Safety	11-13	..... Spring & Summer Fun