



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 21, 2017

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Town of Avon Considering Stormwater Utility

Benefits include equitable rates, shorter maintenance cycles and improved customer service

AVON, Ind. – The Town of Avon has placed a high emphasis on preventing flooding and standing water caused by rain events. Flooding and standing water can cause a risk to life, lead to property damage and create public health issues such as mosquitos.

The Town currently spends about \$250,000 a year on stormwater projects, which only allows reactive maintenance such as sink hole and minor system repairs. No funding is available for capital improvements or proactive maintenance to prevent deterioration of the existing system.

To address this systematic deficiency, the Avon Town Council will introduce a measure to form an Avon-owned-and-operated stormwater utility during its next meeting on June 22. Avon has researched the issue for several years and worked closely with county officials to determine the best path forward.

The Town has experienced significant growth during the past 20 years, which is placing a higher demand on already limited resources. There is also an overlap of stormwater maintenance with the Hendricks County Surveyor that results in a duplication of services and inefficiencies.

Town officials believe there is a need to address capital needs, improve responsiveness, eliminate the duplication of services and improve management of the community's stormwater infrastructure.

Avon conducted a feasibility study in 2016 that identified several potential advantages, with the three most important benefits being:

- Fair and equitable stormwater rates
- Quicker project identification and completion
- Improved customer service

Avon Director of Public Works, Ryan Cannon, says the town's stormwater system has been unable to keep pace with growth, causing certain areas to flood often, even during minor rain events.

"The growth we've seen in Avon is tremendous," said Cannon. "Unfortunately, components of our stormwater infrastructure are in need of improvement to prevent flooding and standing water. Roughly \$3.3 million in capital stormwater needs have been identified and need addressed right now, with no funding mechanism to complete those projects. If left untouched, these capital improvements will only get more expensive to correct."

The feasibility study also recommended an equitable, research-based structure for potential customer rates. Potential rates were based upon the amount of impervious surface area on each property, a term used for how much property is covered by impenetrable materials (asphalt, concrete, roofs, etc.).

An average home's impervious area established the base billing unit, called the Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). Residential customers would be charged one ERU per billing cycle, which equated to approximately \$6 per month in the study. Non-residential customers would be charged multiple ERUs per billing cycle based on the property's total impervious area.

Most Avon residents currently pay around \$100 annually to the Hendricks County Surveyor's Office to maintain legal drains in their neighborhood. The payment is included with property taxes. That figure would decrease to approximately \$72 annually and would be paid to the new stormwater utility. Some residents currently pay less than the \$72 amount, but a majority of residents would see a decrease in payments coupled with an increase in maintenance and customer service.

Town Council President, Aaron Tevebaugh says creating the utility is in the best interest of Avon residents by enhancing property values and improving quality of life. The utility will also operate more efficiently, will be more responsive to citizen complaints and will eliminate the duplication of services.

"Several municipalities across Central Indiana have successfully formed their own stormwater utilities, including Plainfield, Brownsburg, Danville, Greenwood, Fishers and Beech Grove," said Tevebaugh. "Action must be taken eventually, and the Town Council strongly believes in addressing capital needs now versus down the road when the stormwater system is older and much more expensive to correct."

The Town Council will hold two readings on the enabling ordinance. If the ordinance is approved, the council would appoint a stormwater board. That board would then adopt initial utility policies and formally recommend a rate structure to the council for consideration.

Under the current schedule, town officials anticipate using the remainder of 2017 to establish administration and necessary vendors to manage and operate the utility. County-assessed legal drain fees would be replaced by town-assessed stormwater utility rates beginning Jan. 1, 2018.

Capital Needs Estimate

Project Area	Estimated Cost
Avon Heights Middle	\$465,000
Avon Heights South	\$450,000
Cobblestone	\$485,000
Dan Jones Road	\$185,000
Avon Woods	\$10,000
Pines of Avon and CR 100 S	\$350,000
Timber Bend	\$80,000
Oak Bend	\$90,000
Stratford of Avon	\$100,000
Austin Lakes Study and Maintenance	\$165,000
Austin Lakes Improvements	\$750,000
Raceway Road at CSX Underpass	\$60,000
CR 625 Culvert South of CR 91 N	\$125,000
Total	\$3,315,000