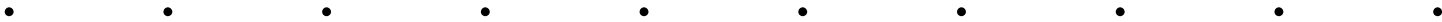




Suwanee Stormwater Utility

Residential Technical Credit Manual



Effective Date

July 1, 2022

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Definitions

Attached Residential (AR): An improved property that contains individually owned, attached dwelling units such as duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, or townhouses where one or more family groups commonly and normally reside or could reside.

Best Management Practice (BMP): Schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, general good housekeeping practices, pollution prevention and educational practices, maintenance procedures, and other management practices to prevent or reduce the discharge of pollutants directly or indirectly to stormwater, receiving waters, or stormwater conveyance systems. BMPs also include treatment practices, flood controls, operating procedures, and practices to control site runoff, spillage or leaks, sludge or water disposal, or drainage from raw materials storage.

Credit: A conditional reduction in the amount of a stormwater user fee charge to the owner of a particular property for the existence and use of privately owned, maintained and operated on-site or off-site stormwater systems or facilities, or continuing provision of services or activities that reduce or mitigate the City's cost of providing stormwater management services for that particular property.

Detached Single-Family Residential (DSFR): An improved property containing one residential structure, which is not attached to another dwelling, and which contains one or more bedrooms, with bathroom and kitchen facilities, designed for occupancy by one family. A DSFR property shall be classified as residential and shall not be commercial, industrial, institutional, educational, religious, municipal, or recreational. A DSFR property shall not include improved property containing structures used primarily for nonresidential purposes or multiple dwelling unit residential properties.

Detention Facility: A system that provides temporary storage of stormwater runoff with a designed release of the stored runoff over time to manage the discharge volume, rate, pollutant loading and/or velocity and mitigate the property's impact on the City stormwater management system.

Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (GSMM): A document governing stormwater management activities in Georgia. This document serves as a comprehensive technical handbook for stormwater management design, construction and long-term maintenance.

Impervious Surface: Those areas that prevent or impede the infiltration of rainfall or stormwater runoff into the soil in the manner in which it entered the soil, in natural conditions, prior to development.

Non-Single-Family Residential (NSFR): An improved property that contains multiple-dwelling residential unit properties, condominiums, apartments, commercial and office buildings, public buildings and structures, industrial and manufacturing buildings, storage buildings and storage areas, parking lots, parks, recreation properties, tennis courts, swimming pools, public and private schools and universities, research facilities and stations, hospitals and convalescent centers, airports, agricultural uses, water and wastewater treatment plants, and any other form of use not otherwise mentioned which is not a detached single-family residential (DSFR), or attached residential (AR) property.

Retention Facility: A system that provides storage of stormwater runoff, preventing release of a certain volume to a surface water body.

Runoff: Portion of stormwater, snow/ice melt, irrigation, and drainage that is collected in a stormwater management system that does not percolate into the ground.

Introduction

This manual outlines the methodology for residential customers of the Suwanee (City) Stormwater Utility to secure and maintain a potential Stormwater Utility rate credit(s) for their property. A Stormwater Utility rate credit, or stormwater credit, represents a reduction in the customer's Stormwater Utility fee. The credit is only applicable for instances where stormwater management best management practices (BMPs) are operated and maintained to reduce the impact of runoff from the subject property on the City's stormwater management systems or in recognition of activities undertaken by the customer to reduce the cost of operating the stormwater management program (SWMP).

Suwanee Stormwater Management Program Background

The City of Suwanee has traditionally operated a large Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) to capture and convey stormwater runoff primarily in and around City owned streets and roadways. As the City has continued to grow, the MS4 has grown significantly. The State of Georgia has also implemented regulatory requirements for cities that operate MS4s. Due to the growth of the City's MS4 and additional regulatory burdens imposed via the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase I Stormwater Permit, the City's SWMP has expanded significantly in both scope of service and cost.

In order to address the need for additional funding to operate the City's MS4 and its associated program costs, an increase in tax allocations to the SWMP was needed or an alternate source of revenue needed to be identified. After evaluating the various options for funding the SWMP, the City Council elected to implement a Stormwater Utility user fee system. The Stormwater Utility establishes a fee for operating the MS4 on all properties that discharge directly or indirectly to the MS4. Because the Stormwater Utility operates like any other utility service (such as water, sewer, sanitation, etc.), it is paramount that activities undertaken by the customer that reduce the demand on the MS4 / SWMP be recognized through an appropriate reduction in their bill.

Credits Available

At the time of publication of this manual, the City has divided the credit policies into two groups based on the type of customer that would apply for the credit. These groups consist of residential and non-residential customers.

- Residential customers consist of Stormwater Utility customers that have Residential (DSFR, AR, and Large DSFR) designations on their bill.
- Non-Residential customers consist of Stormwater Utility customers that have Non-Single-Family Residential (NSFR) designations on their bill.

Table 1 - Summary of Suwanee Potential Residential Stormwater Utility Credits

Credit	Term	Percent Reduction
Low Impact Parcel	5 years	25%
Greenspace Preservation	10 years	up to 20%
Direct Discharges	5 years	40%
Infiltration Basin	5 years	10%
Septic Tank Maintenance	5 years	10%
Sanitary Sewer System Connection	3 years	40%

General Policies

The following general policies apply when considering stormwater credits:

- Credits are only applied to eligible customers. Because the stormwater fee is being assessed on an individual customer basis, a group of customers cannot apply for a credit unless otherwise noted. An eligible customer shall be the legal owner of a property or operator which has the primary / legal responsibility for operation and maintenance of a qualifying stormwater BMP located on the same property or development.

If a group of properties are served by a BMP(s) then the credit will be applied to the eligible property owner / customer on whose property 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 for which the BMP(s) provides adequate treatment for the applicable credit, the City will apply 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 City that the MOA is no longer in effect or the term of the credit expires, whichever is 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) having its own properly designed, constructed, and maintained stormwater BMP(s) should contact the City Public Works Director to determine if a credit can be provided.
 - For the purposes of the credit, the BMP(s) must be located on a parcel that is platted within the subdivision and owned by the HOA (or a property owner in the HOA). BMPs located within City owned greenbelts or rights-of-way are not eligible. Additionally, BMPs that the City maintains through a dedicated maintenance easement or other legal agreement though lying within private property are also ineligible.
 - For the purposes of awarding the credit, the credit being applied for must be met for the entire development and must meet the credit conditions. For example, if a credit for infiltration basin is sought, the infiltration basin requirements must be met for the entire development.
 - Any resulting credit awarded will be applied to all customers within the subdivision to which the HOA applies.
- Applications for a stormwater credit for existing facilities may be submitted to Suwanee at any time. Approved credits will be applied to the customer’s next annual billing cycle. For those applications submitted and approved within 90 days of the first stormwater utility billing cycle (i.e. the first stormwater bill issued by the City), the credit shall be applied retroactively and reflected on the customer’s next Stormwater Utility bill. Stormwater Utility accounts must be current and paid in full for a credit application to be considered.
- Applications for a stormwater credit for new construction may be submitted once the BMP is in place or when the Stormwater Utility rate is applied, whichever is later.
- The City will, at its discretion, undertake periodic visual inspections of the BMPs being utilized to obtain a credit. Consequently, a Right-of-Entry or an access easement must be granted to the City for credits to be approved.
- The term of the credit varies based upon the type credit; see **Table 1** for credit terms. During the credit term, the City may conduct random inspections such that each credit could potentially be revoked. 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, the credit will be voided on the next annual billing cycle. Before a credit is re-instated, the property owner will have to reapply for the credit as outlined in this manual.
- The maximum credit that an account may receive is 50% of the applicable fee.

Basic Procedures

The credits in this manual require an application. The procedure for filing a credit application includes the following tasks:

- Obtain an application packet from the City.
- If required by the credit, retain a Georgia registered land surveyor to perform the survey.
- Submit the completed application with all sections appropriately answered, and all required information contained within or attached to the application.
- The City will review and rule on the eligibility of the credit application within 30 days of receipt of the completed Stormwater Utility credit application. Incomplete packages will not be considered by the City and will be returned to the customer for correction/revision. The decision of the City regarding credit eligibility is final.
- If the credit application is approved, the City will put the stormwater credit into effect with the next annual billing cycle.
- During the credit term, the City has the right to inspect the BMP facility to ensure it is functioning per the design documents and is being properly maintained.
- At the end of the credit term, the credit will automatically expire. It is the customer's responsibility to ensure reapplication is made prior to the credit expiring. Reapplication must be made to continue receiving a credit. A new credit application is required at the end of the credit term.

Design & Implementation

Any stormwater management system within the City must follow the recommendations and guidelines presented in the City's Land Development Ordinances, as well as the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (GSMM).

Stormwater Utility Credits

Low Impact Parcel

There are several areas in the City where residential parcels are relatively large and the amount of impervious area, in comparison to the total lot size, is relatively small. These parcels have a reduced impact; whereby, there is a reduction of runoff impacts since most of the parcel is in an undeveloped or low impact condition.

Stormwater Utility Credit Requirements for Low-Impact Parcels

Parameter	Requirement
Total Impervious Cover (%)	Must be less than 15% of total site area
Total Site Area (Acres)	Must be greater than 2 acres

In order for this credit to be applied to a property, the property must have a minimum lot size of 2-acres and the impervious surface area must be less than 15%. These conditions have been established to reflect general conditions for the water quality credit that is realized in residential subdivisions as outlined in the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual Volume 2 Section 1.4.4.7 (2001). If these conditions are met, then a 25% credit shall be applied to the customer's bill. The term of the credit shall be 5 years.

Stormwater Credit Application Procedures

The customer shall follow the procedures below when applying for a Low Impact Parcel credit:

1. Obtain a credit application from the City.
2. The customer shall provide a copy of the information where the property owner obtained total parcel area and total impervious area. Total impervious area shall be detailed to include which portion pertains to the structure, driveway, sidewalk, and other accessory areas. This information should be documented in the form of a sketch that will allow City personnel to verify the measurements, calculations and other pertinent information.
3. The customer shall submit the credit application, complete with the relevant documentation and calculations, and a Right of Entry Agreement to the City.
4. Upon receipt of the credit application, the City shall review the documentation and calculations. Upon verification, the stormwater credit will be applied, starting with the next annual billing cycle. If the City does not approve of the customer's application for a Stormwater Utility credit under the low impact criteria, the City will send a letter to the customer explaining why the credit application was not approved. The maximum credit amount available for the Low Impact Parcel credit is 25%.

Greenspace Preservation

The City of Suwanee will grant a credit for those customers who provide for greenspace preservation. In order for this credit to be applied to the customer, at least one acre of contiguous green space that meets the requirements of a conservation use assessment under OCGA Section 48-5-7.4 must be preserved. Generally, lands that qualify for conservation use assessments include but are not necessarily limited to:

- Lands utilized for subsistence or commercial farming
- Undeveloped land in its natural state
- Environmentally sensitive lands including:
 - Federally recognized Wetlands
 - Groundwater recharge areas identified by the Georgia DNR
 - Lands containing Federally Endangered Species
 - Undeveloped lands within stream buffers and/or floodplains
 - Constructed stormwater wetlands

If these conditions are met, the customer would be eligible to receive a 1% credit for every 1% of the total area of the property that is permanently protected, up to a maximum of 20%. The term of the credit shall be 10 years.

Stormwater Credit Application Procedures

The following requirements will apply for customers who qualify for a Greenspace Preservation credit:

1. It is the customer's responsibility to obtain a credit application from the City. The customer shall complete the application, attaching any required documents verifying compliance with the credit objectives. At a minimum, the documentation attached to the credit application shall include the following:
 - a. Credit Application document
 - b. Survey of the property prepared and signed by a Georgia Registered Land Surveyor showing the property lines and conservation areas
 - c. Evidence of a State of Georgia conservation easement
2. Once complete, the application shall be submitted to the City.
3. Upon approval, the credit will be applied at the next annual billing cycle following approval. The Greenspace Preservation credit shall be calculated by reducing the customer's bill by 1% for every 1% of the total area of the property that is permanently protected, up to a maximum of 20%.

Direct Discharges

Any property that does not contribute any stormwater runoff to the City's drainage facilities or Waters of the State either directly or indirectly shall be eligible for a Direct Discharges credit. These credits are typically available to those property owners who can demonstrate the stormwater runoff leaving their property will not immediately enter Waters of the State or City owned or maintained drainage systems and the runoff will not enter these facilities further downstream after traversing other properties. If these conditions are met, then a 40% credit shall be applied to the customer's bill. The term of the credit shall be 5 years.

Stormwater Credit Application Procedures

The following requirements will apply for customers who qualify for a Direct Discharges credit:

1. It is the customer's responsibility to obtain a credit application from the City. The customer shall complete the application, attaching any required documents verifying compliance with the credit objectives. At a minimum, the documentation attached to the credit application shall include the following:
 - a. Credit Application document
 - b. Site map of the property illustrating the drainage patterns of the property
 - c. Documentation that stormwater runoff will not enter Waters of the State or a City drainage system after leaving the property.
2. Once complete, the application shall be submitted to the City.
3. Upon approval, the credit will be applied at the next annual billing cycle following approval. The maximum credit amount available for the Direct Discharges credit is 40%.

Infiltration Basin

Infiltration basins are areas of low relief that temporarily store stormwater runoff and infiltrate the stored runoff into the ground. Infiltration basins are often called rain gardens or bio-retention areas. The City will grant a customer a 10% credit if an infiltration or series of infiltration basins have been constructed on the property such that an equivalent volume of stormwater runoff can be stored equaling the area of the property's impervious surface times the water quality runoff storm event (1.2 inches). The following shall apply to all infiltration basin designs:

- The infiltration basin(s) shall be located such that at least 25% of the property's impervious surfaces will flow into the infiltration basin(s).
- The contributing drainage area to each infiltration basin shall be large enough to generate enough stormwater runoff to fill the basin during a 1.2 inch storm event.
- For the purposes of this credit, the total required storage volume for a property shall be determined as follows:
 - Storage Volume = $1.2 \div 12 \times R_v \times A$
 - where $R_v = 0.05 + (0.009 \times I)$
 - where $I = TIA \div A \times 100$
 - Definitions:
 - Storage Volume = Minimum Runoff Volume for Storage in cubic feet (ft³)
 - R_v = Runoff Factor
 - A = Parcel Area in square feet (ft²)
 - I = Imperviousness as a Percentage of Total Parcel Area (e.g., 25.5%)
 - TIA = Total Impervious Area in square feet (ft²)
- Each infiltration basin should be located in soils of sufficient infiltration capacity to allow the facility to drain within 48 hours following the end of a rainfall event.

If these conditions are met, then a 10% credit shall be applied to the customer's bill. The term of the credit shall be 5 years.

Stormwater Credit Application Procedures

The following requirements will apply for customers who qualify for an Infiltration Basin credit:

1. It is the customer's responsibility to obtain a credit application from the City. The customer shall complete the application attaching a survey of the infiltrations documenting the volume available for storage and the calculations showing the basin has been appropriately located to perform as designed.
2. Once complete, the application shall be submitted to the City.
3. Upon approval, the credit will be applied at the next annual billing cycle following approval. The maximum credit amount available for the Infiltration Basin credit is 10%.

Septic Tank Maintenance

Customers are eligible for a stormwater credit if the customer conducts maintenance on existing septic systems located on the customer's property. Customers with septic systems can receive a credit by having their septic tanks pumped out on a regular basis, at a minimum of every five years. By submitting documentation in the form of a receipt from a hauler of septic wastes, customers are eligible for a 10% credit for the five years following septic tank pumping.

There shall only be one stormwater credit issued per property in which regular maintenance is conducted on the septic system. If a customer has more than one septic system on site, then all systems must be maintained for the credit to apply. It is the customer's responsibility to contact a licensed hauler of septic wastes and submit the proper documentation citing the maintenance conducted on the septic system.

Stormwater Credit Application Procedures

The following requirements will apply for customers who qualify for a Septic Tank Maintenance credit:

1. It is the customer's responsibility to obtain a credit application from the City. The customer shall complete the application attaching pertinent documentation from a licensed hauler of septic waste. For the purposes of this manual, a receipt from the hauler will be sufficient if the receipt contains the date the maintenance was performed (must be within 6 months of the date of the application for a credit), the address of the property matching the address on the Stormwater Utility bill and the name of the company performing the work.
2. Once complete, the application shall be submitted to the City.
3. Upon approval, the credit will be applied at the next annual billing cycle following approval. The maximum credit amount available for the Septic Tank Maintenance credit is 10%.

Sanitary Sewer System Connection

Septic tanks and septic tank maintenance are vital components of any Stormwater Management Program and can greatly impact water quality through contaminated runoff. The City of Suwanee has several stream segments listed by EPD for fecal coliform pollution and wishes to encourage citizens and businesses to help improve the water quality within the City through the use of this credit. The credit is presented as an option to help reduce polluted runoff from failing and improperly maintained septic tanks by disconnecting these older/failing systems and connecting to a sanitary sewer system for treatment.

Customers are eligible for a stormwater credit if the customer disconnects an existing septic system on their property and connects the plumbing system for sewage to the sanitary sewer system. By submitting documentation showing that the septic system has been disconnected and the sanitary sewer system has been connected to the property, the customer will be eligible for a 3-year, 40% credit on their stormwater bill.

Stormwater Credit Application Procedures

The following requirements will apply for customers who qualify for a Sanitary Sewer System Connection credit:

1. It is the customer's responsibility to obtain a credit application from the City. The customer shall complete the application including appropriate documentation demonstrating the property has been connected to the sanitary sewer system.
2. Once complete, the application shall be submitted to the City.
3. Upon approval, the credit will be applied at the next annual billing cycle following approval. The maximum credit amount available for the Sanitary Sewer System Connection credit is 40%.

Appendix A

Stormwater Utility Credit Application

SUWANEE

Residential Stormwater Utility Credit Application Form

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

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

City of Suwanee
Attn: Public Works Director
330 Town Center Avenue
Suwanee, GA 30024

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

Type Credit			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Low Impact Parcel	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenspace Preservation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct Discharges	<input type="checkbox"/>	Septic Tank Maintenance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Infiltration Basin	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sanitary Sewer System Connection

General Information:

Customer Name:	
Customer Mailing Address:	
Customer Mailing City/Zip:	
Contact Phone/Fax Number:	
Contact E-mail Address:	

Property Information:

Parcel Number:	
Parcel Address (number and street):	
Parcel Address (city, state and zip)	
Parcel Location/Development:	
Authorized Contact, if different than customer:	

SUWANEE
Residential Stormwater Utility Credit Application Form
(continued)

I hereby request Suwanee to review this application for a Stormwater Utility credit. I further authorize Suwanee to investigate the impervious area characteristics of the above identified parcel for the purpose of assessment for a stormwater service fee credit. I certify that I have authority to make such a request and grant such authority for this property. The attached information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. (The financially responsible person must sign this form if an individual, or if not an individual by an officer, director, partner, or registered agent with authority to execute instruments for the financially responsible person). I agree to provide corrected information should there be any change in the information provided herein.

Type or print name

Title or Authority

Signature

Date

Approval:

Suwanee Public Works Director

Date