

# GEORGIA STORMWATER FEE 2025 REPORT

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UNIVERSITY OF  
GEORGIA  
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Prepared by



## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report summarizes information collected on stormwater utility fees and program characteristics across the state of Georgia. The project was funded by the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA), with data collection and analysis conducted by the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG). The purpose of this effort is to improve transparency and understanding of how stormwater services are funded and administered statewide.

In addition to this report, the collected data are available through an online, interactive dashboard that allows users to explore and compare stormwater utilities based on geographic location, system attributes, customer demographics, and select financial metrics.

Accompanying the dashboard is a standardized stormwater fee sheet for each participating utility, all housed within a centralized rates portal on [georgiawaterrates.org](http://georgiawaterrates.org), the state's resource for water and wastewater rate information.



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## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS REPORT

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# INTRODUCTION

Stormwater systems play an important role in protecting local waterways and communities across Georgia. To better understand how these systems are funded and managed, a statewide effort was undertaken to collect and organize information on stormwater fees and related program features.



Between April 2025 and April 2026, stormwater fee and program data were collected from 63 stormwater utilities across Georgia. This effort gathered information not only on stormwater fees, but also on how often customers are billed, how fees are collected, whether utilities offer credit or incentive programs, the type of Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit held by each utility, and other key characteristics.

All collected data were compiled and standardized and are now available through [georgiawaterrates.org](https://georgiawaterrates.org), a public website that already serves as Georgia’s central resource for water and wastewater rate information.



The site now includes new interactive dashboards and standardized stormwater fee sheets, making it easier for utility staff, local officials, residents, and other stakeholders to explore and compare stormwater programs across the state. This resource promotes transparency and helps support informed conversations about stormwater funding and management in Georgia.

## DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

### **Stormwater:**

Rain or snowmelt that flows over land, rooftops, roads, and other surfaces instead of soaking into the ground. If not properly managed, it can carry pollutants into streams, rivers, and lakes.

### **Stormwater Utility:**

A dedicated, fee-funded program established by a local government or authority to manage stormwater infrastructure, compliance, water quality, and flood control services.

### **Impervious Areas:**

Surfaces that do not allow water to infiltrate into the soil. Examples include pavement, rooftops, driveways, and compacted gravel. Impervious areas are a major factor in calculating stormwater fees because it increases runoff volume.

### **Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU):**

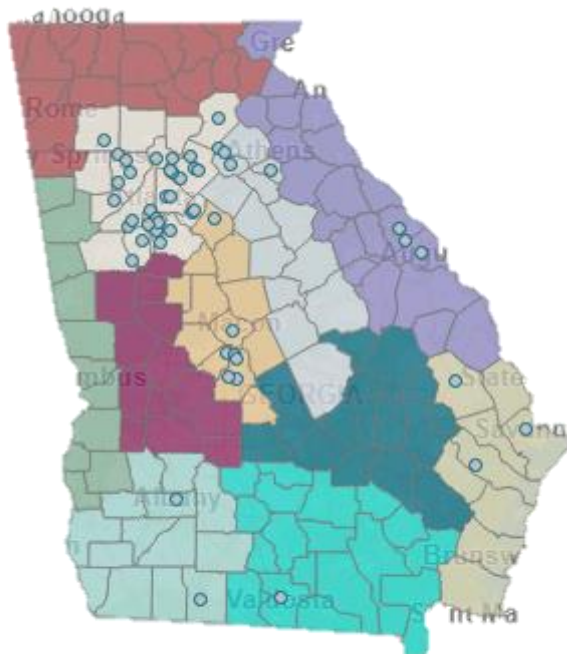
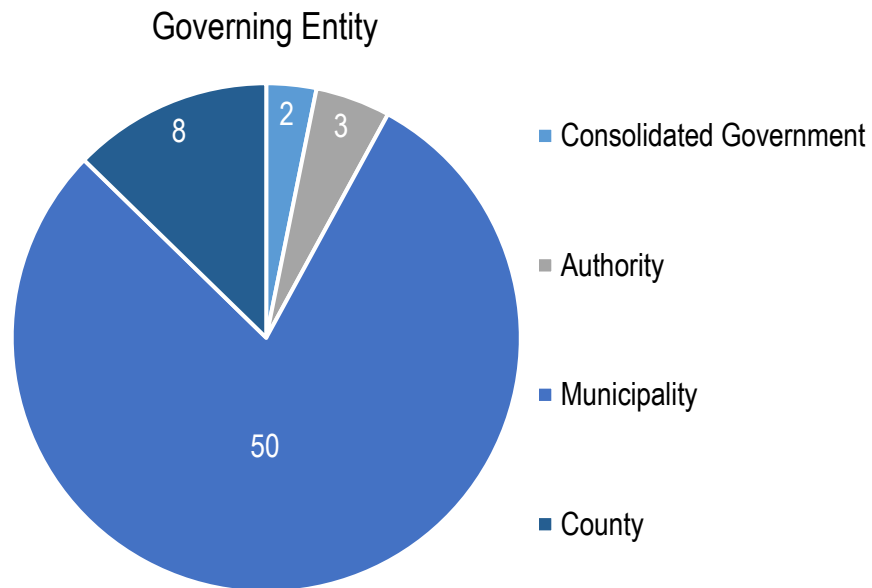
A standard measurement of impervious area used to normalize stormwater billing. One ERU represents the average impervious area of a typical single-family home in a community. Nonresidential properties are often billed based on how many ERUs they contain.

More definitions on [georgiawaterrates.org](http://georgiawaterrates.org) under “Glossary”

## BY THE NUMBERS

**63** cities, counties, and authorities  
in Georgia are collecting a stormwater fee

This pie chart shows the proportion of different types of governing entities collecting stormwater fees. Fifty municipalities (representing 79% of entities reporting) charge a stormwater fee. Other entities charging a stormwater fee include counties (8), consolidated governments (2), and authorities (3) serving larger populations.



The map of Georgia highlights the 11 water planning regions and the stormwater utilities in each county. Each dot represents a stormwater utility.

# WHAT DO FEE STRUCTURES LOOK LIKE

## Types of Fee Structures

Stormwater fees in Georgia are assessed using a variety of approaches. Based on the fees collected for this study, three common stormwater fee structures were identified: uniform, tiered, and flat fees.

### Uniform Fee Structure

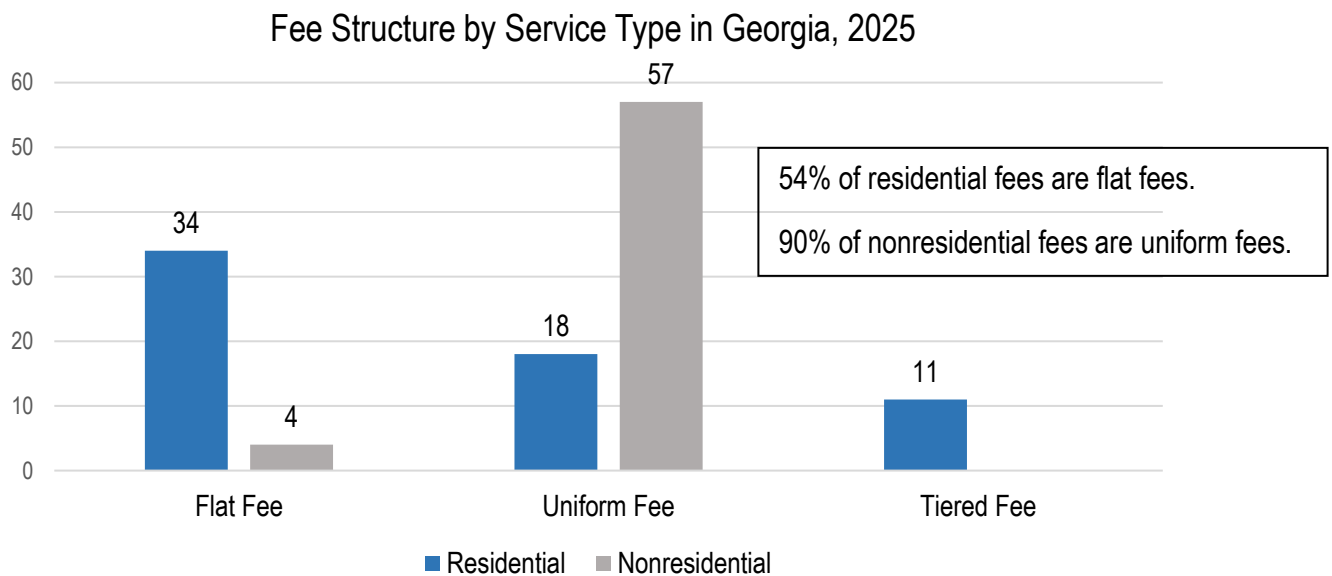
A uniform fee structure charges properties based on the amount of impervious surface they contain. Fees increase proportionally as impervious area increases. In many cases (especially nonresidential), this structure is referred to as a per-ERU system, where customers are charged based on the number of ERUs associated with their property.

### Tiered Fee Structure

A tiered fee structure groups properties into categories, or tiers, based on ranges of impervious area, parcel size, or other defined criteria. Each tier is assigned a specific stormwater fee.

### Flat Fee Structure

A flat fee structure applies the same stormwater charge to every parcel or customer, regardless of property size, land use, or the amount of impervious surface. Under this approach, all customers pay an identical fee.



# WHAT ARE UTILITIES CHARGING:

## RESIDENTIAL

### Georgia's Average Residential Monthly Bill

Based on 3,000 Square Feet

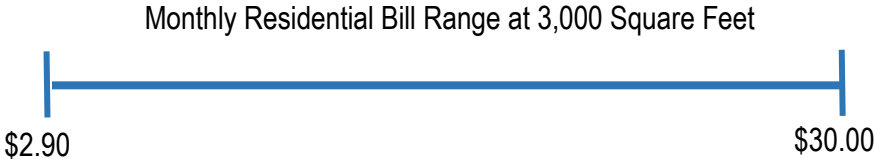
\$6.63

### Georgia's Average Residential Yearly Bill

Based on 3,000 Square Feet

\$79.56

These averages are based on residential properties assessed a stormwater fee using a standardized area of 3,000 square feet.



\*\*Based on 60 utilities that use square footage as their billing basis.

# WHAT ARE UTILITIES CHARGING:

## NONRESIDENTIAL

### Georgia's Average Nonresidential Monthly Bill

Based on 3,000 Square Feet

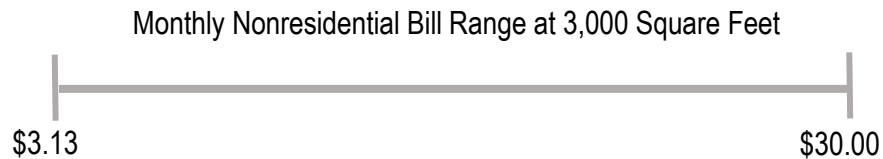
\$8.65

### Georgia's Average Nonresidential Yearly Bill

Based on 3,000 Square Feet

\$103.80

These averages are based on nonresidential properties assessed a stormwater fee using a standardized area of 3,000 square feet.

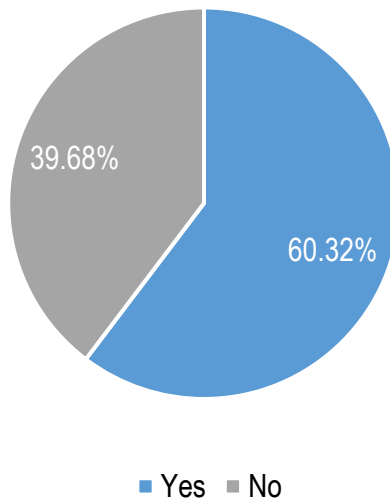


\*\*Based on 60 utilities that use square footage as their billing basis.

## CREDIT PROGRAMS

One of the metrics included in our data collection focuses on the presence and structure of stormwater utility credit programs. At the dashboard level, this metric captures whether a utility offers any form of stormwater credit program, allowing for high-level comparison across jurisdictions. For users seeking deeper insight, more detailed information is available on each utility's page within the Current Rate Reports section of the Stormwater Original File, where individual credit program characteristics are documented.

Does the utility have a credit program?



Stormwater credit programs are designed to incentivize on-site stormwater management by creating a pathway for property owners to reduce their stormwater utility fees when they implement qualifying practices. These practices typically aim to reduce the volume, rate, or pollutant load of runoff entering the stormwater system and may include rain gardens and bioretention systems, retention or detention ponds, green roofs, cisterns, permeable or porous pavement, and other green or gray infrastructure. Some programs also award credits for maintaining existing stormwater facilities in proper working conditions, recognizing the long-term benefits of ongoing maintenance and sustained performance. Credit programs help the stormwater utility fee to be defensible, in that a customer has some control over reducing their stormwater burden on the larger system and paying less for the service in return.

# BILLING INCLUSION

Another metric we collected relates to billing frequency and billing type. Specifically, we identified which bill the stormwater fee appears on and how often the fee is billed. Across utilities, we observed three primary billing types—utility bills, stand-alone bills, and property tax bills—with billing frequencies occurring monthly, semiannually, or annually.

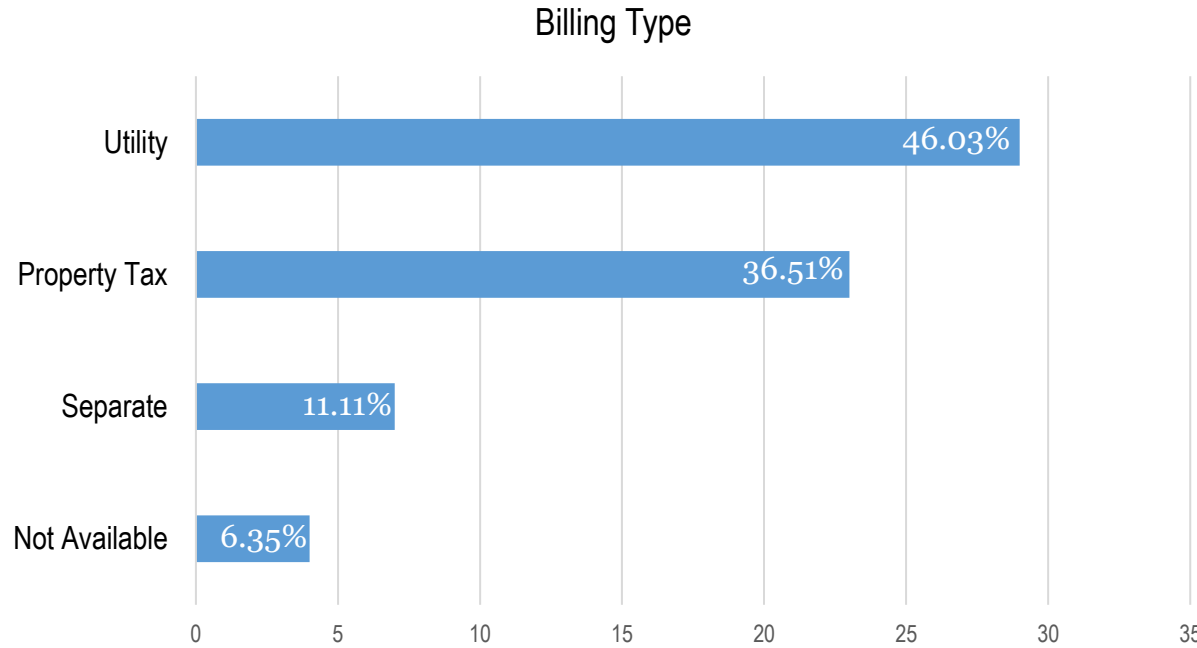
## Types of Bills:

**Utility Bill:** Stormwater fees are combined with other municipal services—such as water, sewer, trash, or electric—and appear as a line item on a single utility statement.

**Separate (or Stand-Alone) Bill:** Stormwater services are billed separately through a dedicated invoice and are not combined with other utilities or taxes.

**Property Tax Bill:** Stormwater fees are assessed as a line item or special assessment on annual property tax statements.

**Not Available:** Information was not received from the utility during this collection cycle.



# PERMIT TYPES

As part of this project, we examined stormwater permit types to better understand the regulatory framework for municipal stormwater management, with a focus on Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

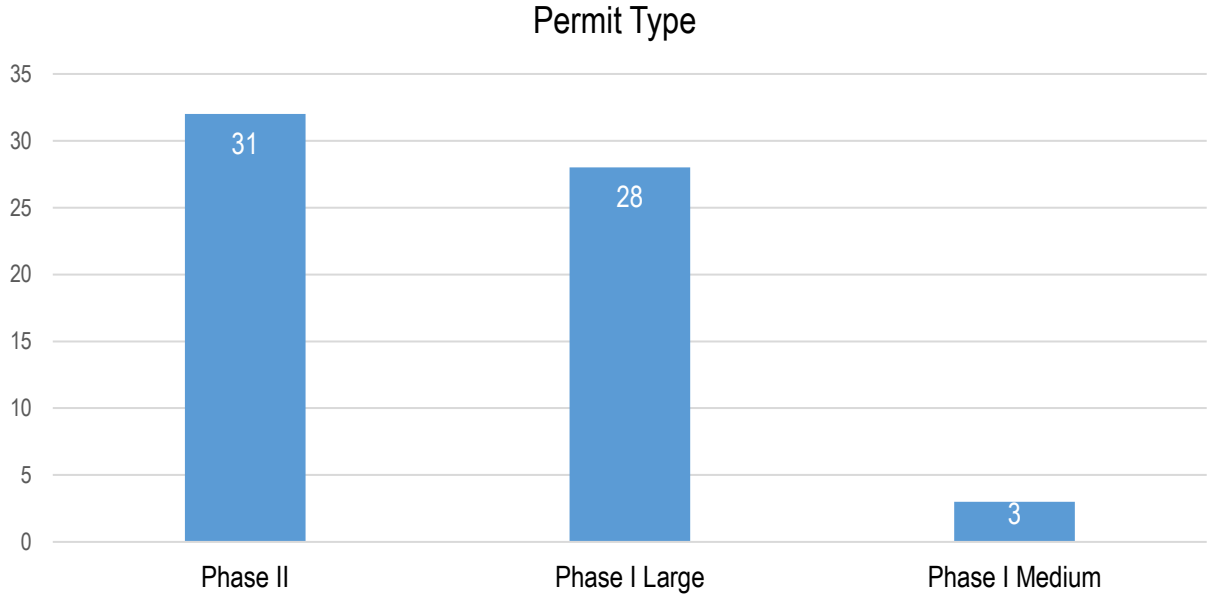
An MS4 is a publicly-owned system—such as storm drains, ditches, and pipes—that conveys stormwater runoff but not wastewater. MS4 operators must obtain NPDES permit coverage and implement a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) to reduce pollutant discharges to receiving waters in compliance with the Clean Water Act.

## Types of MS4 Permits

MS4 permits are classified into Phase I and Phase II categories by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), primarily based on population size and system characteristics.

Phase I permits generally apply to large and medium MS4s serving populations of 100,000 or more, while Phase II permits apply to smaller MS4s located in Census-defined urbanized areas with populations of 50,000 or more, as well as certain non-traditional MS4s such as universities, transportation agencies, prisons, and hospitals.

Collecting permit type information helps distinguish regulatory requirements across utilities and provides context for differences in program scope, staffing, and stormwater management practices. Nearly all utilities that charge a stormwater fee also hold an MS4 permit.



# NEW DASHBOARD AND PORTAL SITE

After collecting stormwater fee information from utilities across Georgia, we developed a set of stormwater dashboards hosted on [georgiawaterates.org](http://georgiawaterates.org), an existing platform for water and wastewater rate data.

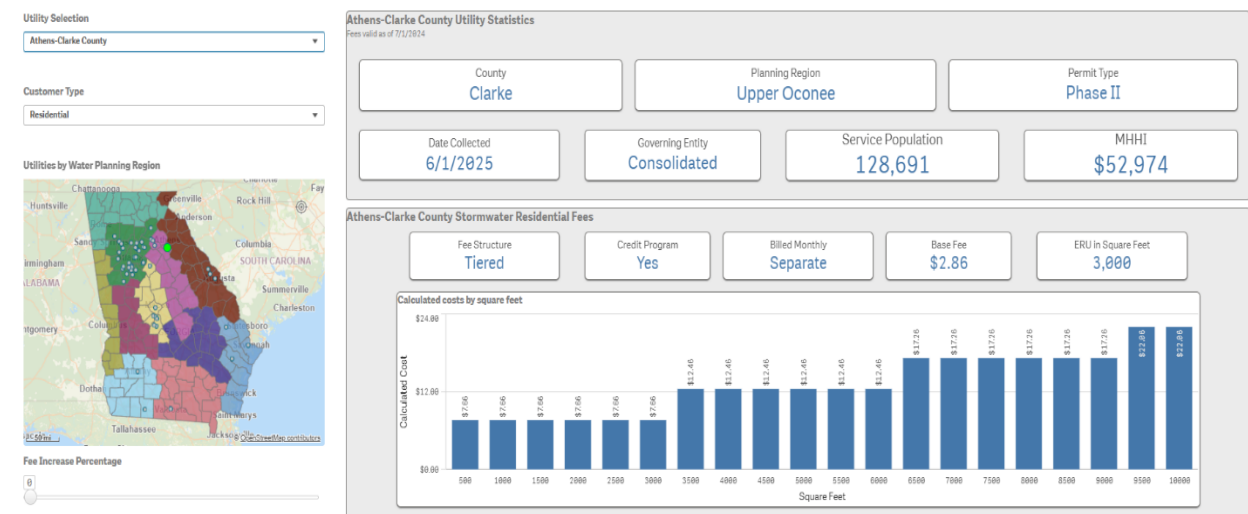
The site is designed to help utility managers, local officials, and residents benchmark residential and nonresidential stormwater fees against a variety of factors, including utility finances, system characteristics, customer composition, socioeconomic conditions, and geographic context.

The **Current Rate Reports** section allows users to easily view, verify, and compare stormwater rates for individual utilities. Each utility's report is accompanied by a Stormwater Original File, which provides additional detail on specific features such as credit programs and other unique aspects of the fee structure. If questions arise while reviewing a rate report, users can consult the original file for further context. For additional assistance, Contact Us buttons located throughout the site allow users to reach the project team directly with questions or requests for clarification.

The **Dashboards** section provides a suite of interactive visual tools that allow users to explore stormwater fee data across the state. These dashboards support comparisons by billing structure, permit type, rate level, and other utility characteristics, enabling users to examine patterns and differences across communities and regulatory contexts.

Together, these tools offer an accessible way to analyze stormwater fee structures and better understand how they vary across Georgia.

## Stormwater Utility Overview by Sq ft

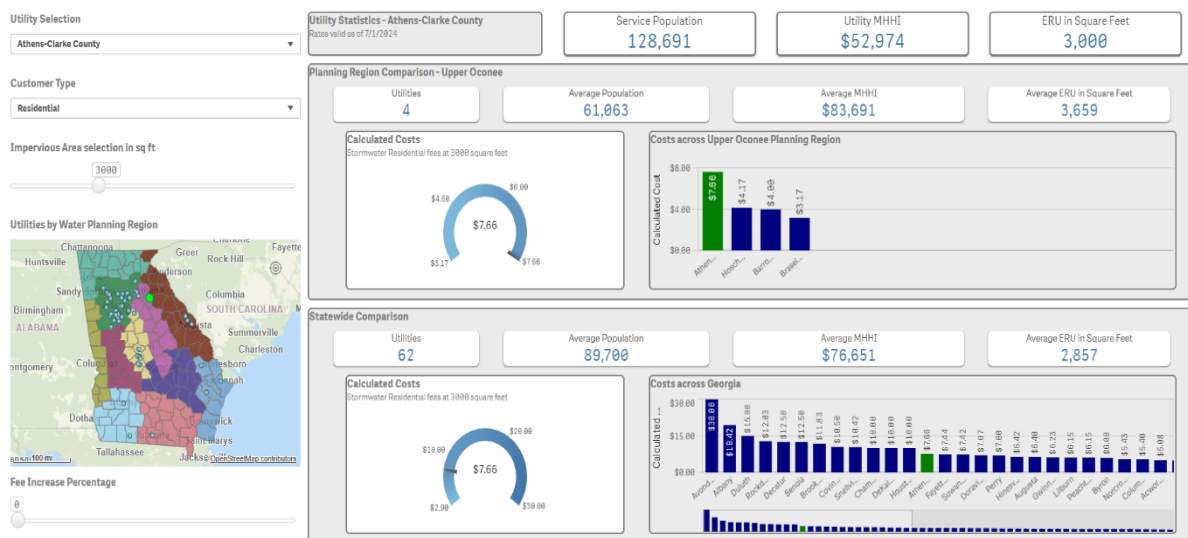


# NEW DASHBOARD AND PORTAL SITE

## Descriptions of Stormwater Dashboards:

Dashboard Name	Summary
Stormwater Utility Overview - by Square Feet	Provides key utility characteristics and stormwater fee information for utilities that base fees on impervious areas measured in square feet.
Stormwater Utility Overview - by Parcels	Summarizes stormwater fees and utility attributes for systems that charge a flat rate per parcel.
Stormwater Utility Overview - by Acres	Displays stormwater fee and system information for utilities that calculate charges based on acreage.
Stormwater Utility Costs (Sq ft)	Enables benchmarking of stormwater fees per square foot of impervious area against peer utilities regionally and statewide.
Stormwater Expanded Comparison (Sq ft)	Allows users to define custom peer groups and compare stormwater fees per square foot using summary statistics and visual ranges.
Stormwater Data Tables	View fee information for utilities using square feet in table format and charts for bill type, bill frequency, and existence of credit programs. Additional information about credit programs can be found within the specific utility rate report.

### Stormwater Utility Costs (Sq ft)



## OUTREACH EFFORTS

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government is working in collaboration with GEFA to introduce the dashboard to communities through presentations at conferences, webinars, and other outreach events aimed at utility managers, local officials, and community stakeholders.



For more information about the site and its dashboards, users can contact the project team by emailing [waterrates@uga.edu](mailto:waterrates@uga.edu) or by using the Contact Us buttons located throughout the site.



## CONCLUSION

This report represents a statewide effort to improve transparency and understanding of how stormwater services are funded and administered across Georgia. By collecting and centralizing stormwater fees and program information from 63 utilities, the CVIOP and the GEFA have created a comprehensive resource that captures the diversity of stormwater utility structures, billing practices, and regulatory obligations across the state.

The findings highlight the wide range of approaches Georgia communities use to fund stormwater services, including varying fee structures, billing methods, credit programs, and MS4 permit types. These differences reflect local needs, regulatory requirements, system characteristics, and community priorities. By documenting these variations and presenting them in a centrally accessible format, this project supports more informed conversations about stormwater programs in Georgia.



Equally important, the integration of this data into [georgiawaterrates.org](https://georgiawaterrates.org) ensures that the information remains accessible, transparent, and useful to a broad audience. The Current Rate Reports and interactive dashboards allow utility staff, local officials, and residents to explore stormwater fees in context, compare utilities with peer systems, and better understand how stormwater programs operate in the state.

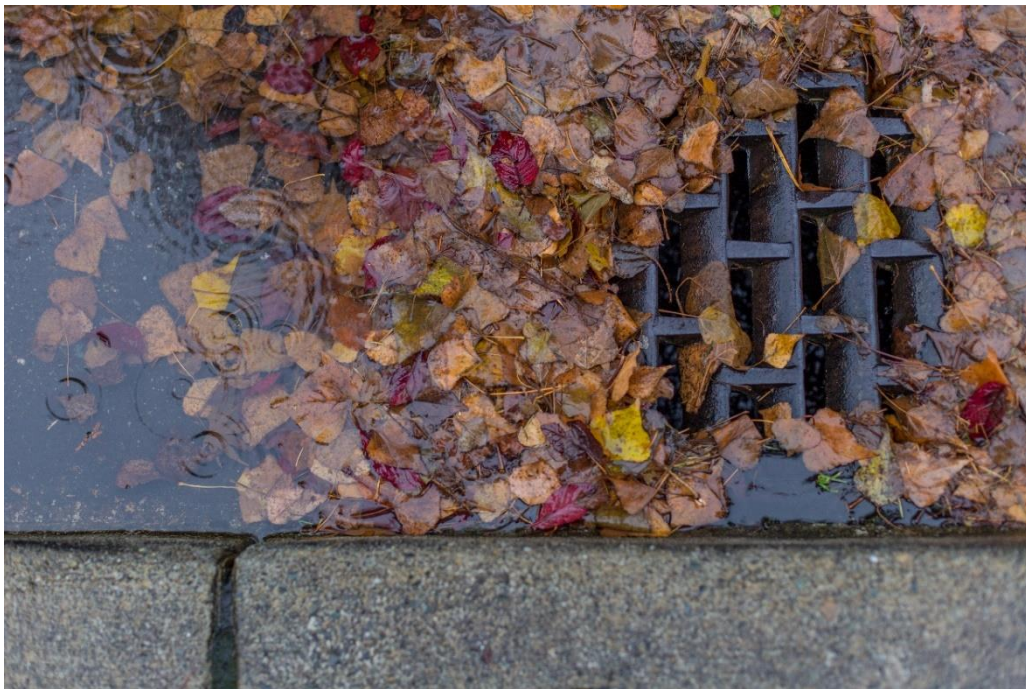
Together, this report and the accompanying dashboards serve as a foundational tool for benchmarking, planning, and collaboration, helping Georgia communities make data-informed decisions about stormwater management now and into the future.

## NEXT STEPS

While this project establishes a strong baseline of stormwater fees and program information, it also creates opportunities for future improvements and expansion. Next steps for this effort include continuing outreach and training to ensure communities are aware of and able to effectively use the stormwater dashboards and rate reports. Presentations at conferences, webinars, and targeted engagement with utility managers and local officials will remain a key part of this work.

Future updates to the platform may include expanding participation to additional stormwater utilities, refining and updating fee data on a regular cycle, including fee collection rates, and enhancing dashboard functionality based on user feedback.

Finally, this resource is intended to evolve alongside Georgia's stormwater programs. By maintaining open channels for feedback and updates through [georgiawaterrates.org](https://georgiawaterrates.org) and direct contact with the project team, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government and GEFA aim to ensure that this tool continues to reflect current practices and serves as a trusted resource for stormwater decision-making across the state.



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