

Stormwater Utilities Services

We are a leading stormwater management program development firm

AMEC has extensive experience in the development of stormwater utilities and supporting the programmatic, financial, data management, and public relations elements that are part of implementing a utility. Here is a brief summary of key aspects of successful utility development in which AMEC excels.

Program Development

AMEC is one of the premier stormwater management program development firms in the country. Our staff have evaluated stormwater management programs in over 100 communities. We have assisted those communities in the development of programs to achieve local goals and objectives whether they are related to flood control, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permit compliance, infrastructure management, or the technical aspects of stormwater management. Key components of the program development stage of a stormwater utility are related to the administration, planning, engineering, operations, and enforcement aspects of the program, and both the geographic extent and level of service that should be provided to the community.

Cost of Service/Rate Studies

One of the fundamental principles in the development of a user fee-based funding program for stormwater management is that the program must drive the rate. As the stormwater program is being developed, the cost of the services to be provided is evaluated. AMEC has assisted communities in thinking through the implementation of stormwater management programs and the resources that will be needed in order to be successful. Parallel to the development of the cost of service, assistance with policy decisions includes:

- Evaluation of Multiple Funding Methods
- Application of Funding Methods to Rate Base

- Maximization of Equity in Overall Rate Package



Once an initial rate has been developed and the cash flow analysis has been completed, the stormwater utility rate ordinance is developed.

Billing/Master Account Files

AMEC staff are experienced in assisting cities in both the oversight and creation of billing systems. Starting with the specification of billing system features needed to successfully accommodate the selected rate methodology through the delivery of the first bill, AMEC staff have overseen the final implementation steps of stormwater utility development. AMEC staff specialize in:

- Development of Billing Databases
- Programming of Master Accounting System
- Customer Service Programs
- Billing Implementation Plans

GIS/Database

AMEC has made GIS and database development a core support service for our water resources business unit over the last ten years with over 15 full-time GIS and database professionals on staff in the eastern U.S.

For our stormwater utility clients, AMEC is experienced in updating data from older mapping systems, aerial photography, ground surveys, and other databases, including tax assessment information for such tasks as:

- Calculating Impervious Areas
- Determining the Number of Billing Units or Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs)
- Matching Addresses for Billing
- Determination of Service Charge Amounts for Customers

Public Relations

Planning provides the first part of the implementation process. This stage results in a need for public awareness and buy-in. A strong public awareness component of implementation supports a competent and detailed plan to provide customer service to the many ratepayers who will not know what the fee is all about, or believe their rate is incorrectly calculated. AMEC tries to scope a strong implementation assistance component to all our utility work. We see it as vitally important that “on the fly” policies are made within the overall context of the original policy decisions already established and with as much input from those with wide experience as possible. This is often done with a staff-consultant team meeting.

Assistance in Achieving Consensus

Achieving a consensus among local political leaders, stakeholders, and the general public is a key element in the implementation of most stormwater utilities. AMEC staff have facilitated citizen groups and public meetings in the achievement of consensus for over 25 groups in a variety of settings and in attainment of diverse stormwater related goals.

In Columbus, Ohio, AMEC was called upon to facilitate meetings to establish a crediting mechanism when there was great public pressure to find relief for a stormwater utility rate that had previously generated excess fees. Similar efforts by AMEC in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, were

hailed in a lead story in *Consensus Magazine* as “the” way to achieve consensus in technically based discussions. Here AMEC implemented a policy paper process combined with a project “roadmap” to bring a diverse group of citizens in Philadelphia, who had not made significant progress in over a year of meetings, to consensus in the establishment of a rate methodology and related policies. After the first meeting, one committee member was quoted saying, “we made more progress tonight than in the last ten meetings combined.”



Workshops and Presentations

AMEC staff have conducted literally hundreds of workshops and presentations related to storm water utility development. For each of the storm water utilities AMEC has implemented, a public meeting and/or council workshop has been included in the implementation process. AMEC staff have authored numerous papers for professional publications and speak regularly on how stormwater financing applies to municipal (stormwater) management programs. Our staff currently provide workshops on municipal stormwater financing through a variety of professional organizations, including ASCE. Short course reviews have consistently stated that complex technical material has been explained in a clear and understandable manner.

For a list of office locations, company contacts and other services refer to:
www.amec.com