

# FUNDING NEWPORT'S UTILITIES

## Now and for the Future

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### Public Workshop

November 20, 2025



**Jacobs**



# AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Where We Are Today
3. Why the Rate Study? Why Now?
4. Exploring a Stormwater Utility
5. Next Steps

# WELCOME

*Our goal is to provide clear information about how wastewater and stormwater services are funded today and to explain options for a fair and modern approach to these essential services.*



# TONIGHT'S GOALS

## **Where We Are Today**

- › Explain the condition of Newport's water, wastewater, and stormwater systems

## **Why A Rate Study? Why Now?**

- › Clarify why the City is reviewing how we pay for these services
- › Break down what shows up on the current utility bill

## **Exploring a Stormwater Utility**

- › Introduce the stormwater utility concept and how it aligns cost with property impact
- › Describe how this approach can support fairness across all properties

## **Next Steps**

- › Invite community feedback before any decisions are made

# Where We Are Today

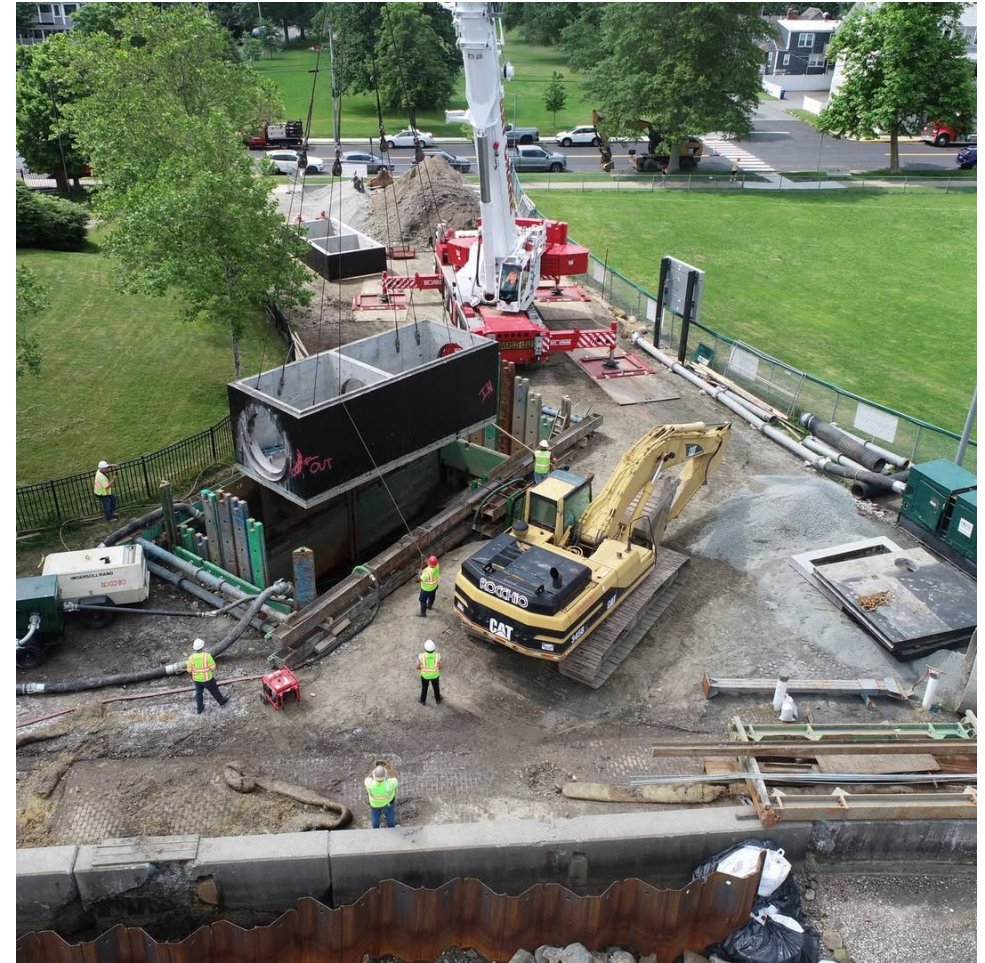


# **NEWPORT'S PROGRESS:**

## **Measurable and Dramatic**

- Big storms that once caused sewage to reach the bay now do not
- Streets and neighborhoods that flooded during sunshine now stay dry
- Rebuilt pipes, drains, and pump stations have reduced backups across the system
- Wellington Avenue has overflowed only once in nearly ten years

# Wellington Ave Tide Gate



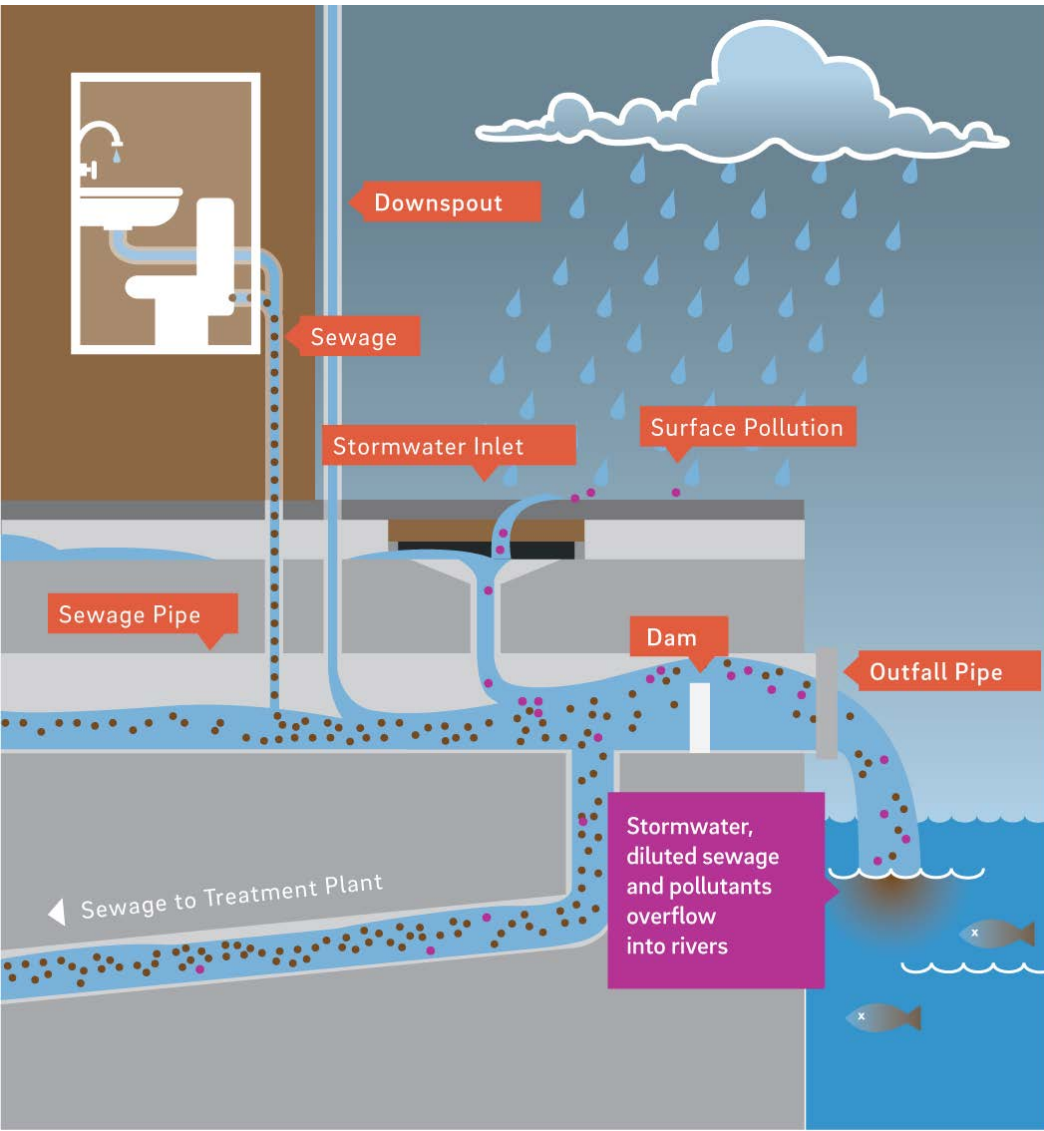
# Long Wharf Pump Station



# Why A Rate Study? Why Now?



# Wastewater and Stormwater History



- Newport once had one set of pipes that carried both sewage and rainwater
- The City has been separating these systems to protect water quality and reduce overflows
- A single charge made sense when both systems were combined
- Today, the systems work more independently, so the funding structure should reflect that reality

# What's in Your Bill

- Today, wastewater and stormwater are paid through one Water Pollution Control (wastewater) charge
- Most of the charge changes with water use
- Part of the charge (CSO Fee) is a flat fee based on water meter size
- The water service charge is separate and is not part of this discussion

# Rate Study Goals

The Department hired Raftelis and Jacobs to take a deep dive.

The goals of the study:

- › Identify the future needs for wastewater and stormwater systems
- › Review how we pay for these services today
- › Explore transparent and fairer ways to share the costs
- › Gather community input before any options are considered for approval

# Cost Recovery Changes

- Separate stormwater costs from the current WPC (wastewater) charge
- Update wastewater charges so they better match the real world
- Make the overall billing approach clearer and easier to understand

# Exploring a Stormwater Utility



# Funding Methods & Equity Considerations

## Wastewater Fee

- Based on metered water usage
- Doesn't relate to property's demand on drainage system
- Seasonal residents don't contribute year-round

## Tax Funding

- Based on property value
- Doesn't relate to property's demand on drainage system
- Tax-exempt properties doesn't contribute – others must cover the gap

## Stormwater Fee

- Based on property characteristics related to property's demand on drainage system
- Impervious area doesn't vary monthly – seasonal residents would be contributing year-round

# STORMWATER CYCLE

## 1 PROPERTY RUNOFF FROM IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

RUNOFF PICKS UP:

- PET WASTE
- FERTILIZERS
- MOTOR OIL
- DETERGENTS
- CHEMICALS
- LITTER

ROOF  
RUNOFF

GUTTER  
RUNOFF

EVAPORATION

## 2 RUNOFF COLLECTION

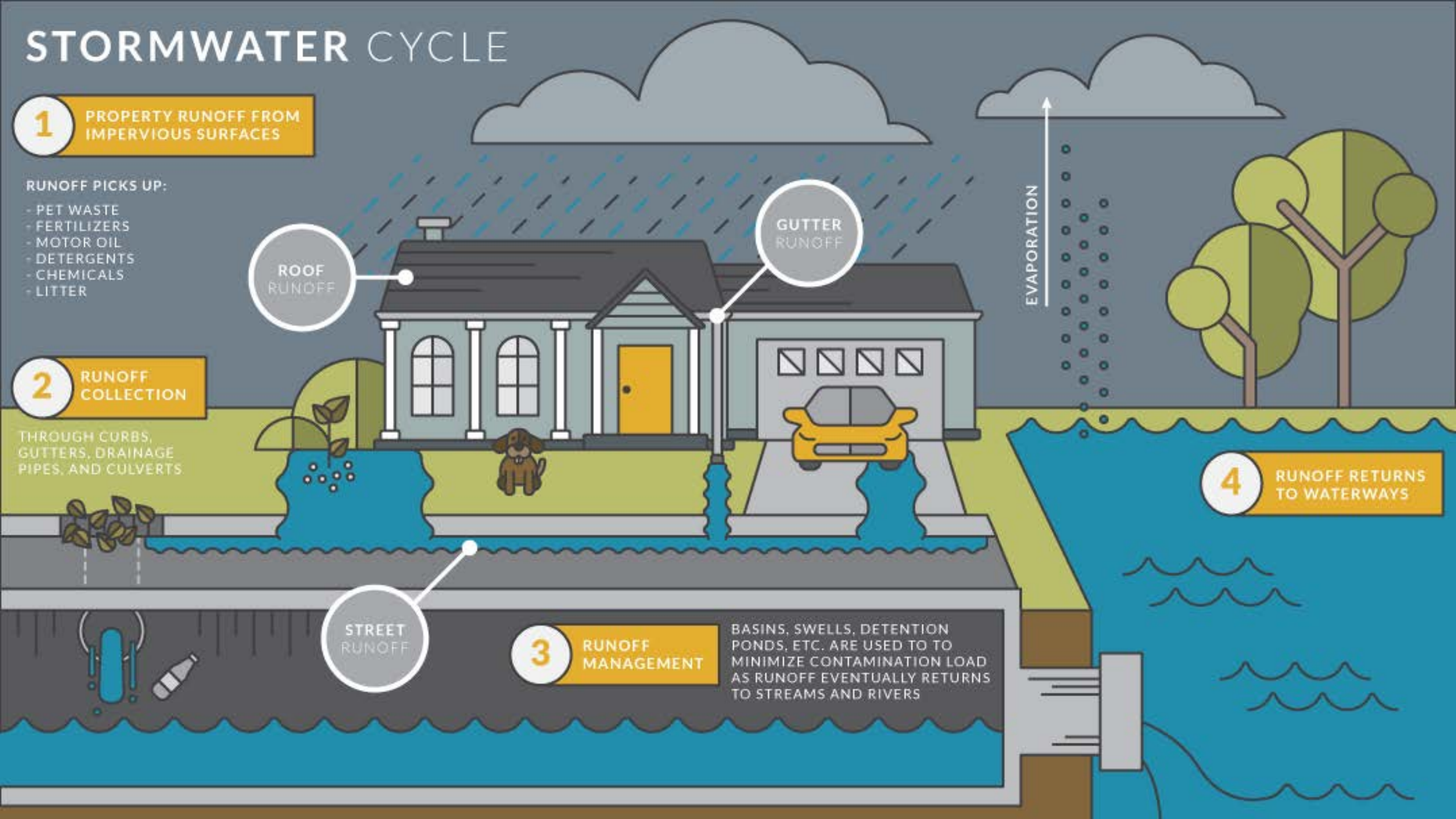
THROUGH CURBS,  
GUTTERS, DRAINAGE  
PIPES, AND CULVERTS

STREET  
RUNOFF

## 3 RUNOFF MANAGEMENT

BASINS, SWELLS, DETENTION PONDS, ETC. ARE USED TO TO MINIMIZE CONTAMINATION LOAD AS RUNOFF EVENTUALLY RETURNS TO STREAMS AND RIVERS

## 4 RUNOFF RETURNS TO WATERWAYS

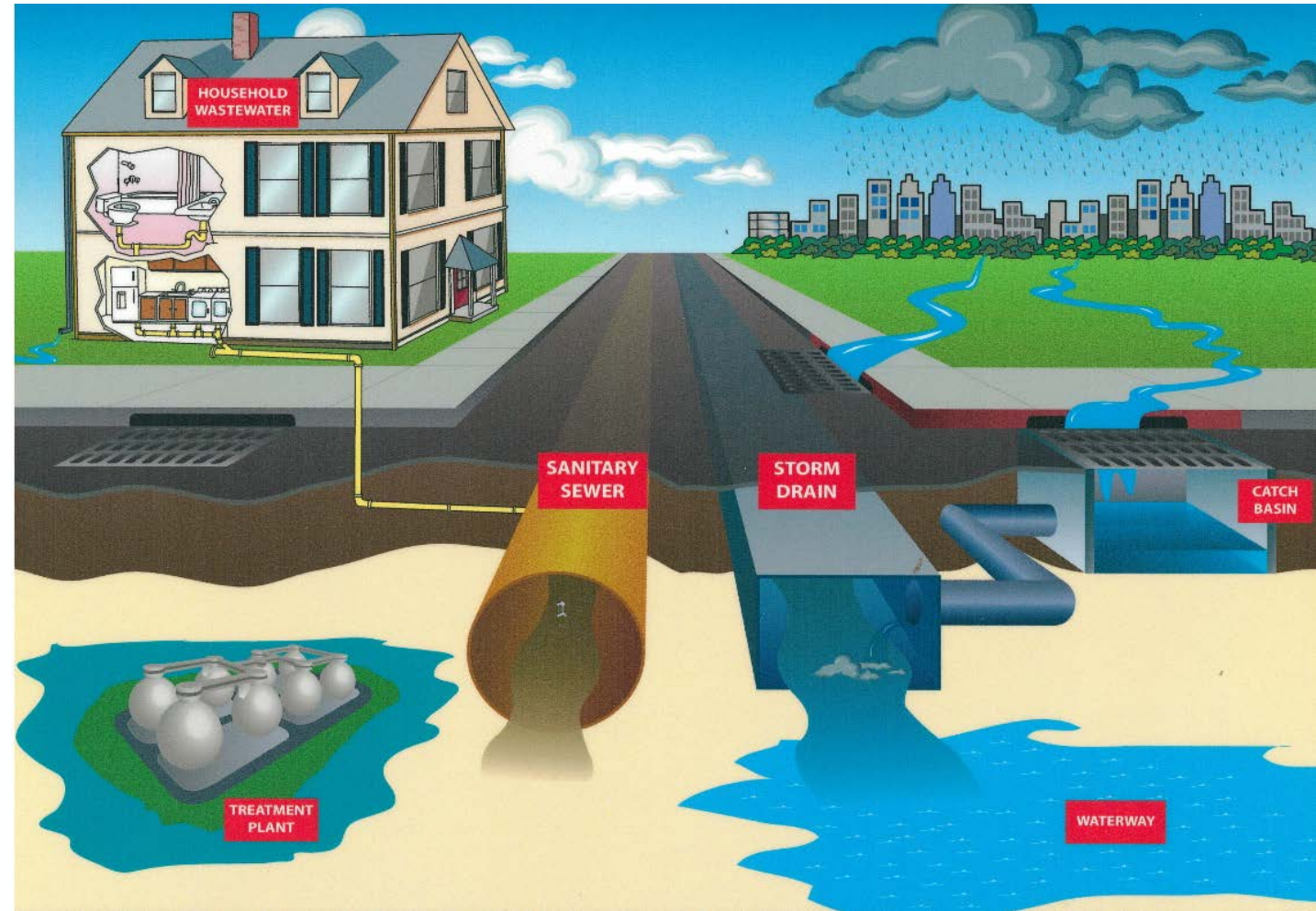


# Future Funding

- Continuing to fund stormwater through WPC rates is not sustainable and **does not accurately reflect the demand for service** that properties place on the City's stormwater system.
- A separate stormwater fee is being considered to more equitably fund stormwater projects and operations moving forward.

# Stormwater Utility?

- Dedicated funding is often generated through fees based on property characteristics
- Defined services
- Organizational structure to support stormwater activities





# Benefits of Stormwater Utility



A fair, equitable, and stable way to collect revenue



Sustainable funding and policy strategy that promotes long-term financial planning, partnerships, and funding for shared infrastructure



Align the rate structure and credit and grant programs with goals of the stormwater program



Increasingly common in Northeast and nationwide

# BASIS FOR FEES



# Next Steps



# Opportunities for Feedback

- Public feedback on this study is important
- Open house next – **we'd love to hear what you think!**
- Future public sessions
  - › Next: Early Year
- How to provide feedback after today:
  - › Email [ratestudy@newportri.gov](mailto:ratestudy@newportri.gov)
  - › Take our **survey** today or after the meeting
  - › Visit project website – coming soon!

*Scan QR code to access survey:*





# Study Next Steps



Gather feedback from the public



Incorporate public input into the study



Obtain guidance from Council

# Thank you!

Questions and Comments: [ratestudy@newportri.gov](mailto:ratestudy@newportri.gov)



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