Proposed Drainage Charge Discount Program

Public Meeting

Oct 13, 2016

City of Austin
WATERSHED PROTECTION

Presentation Outline

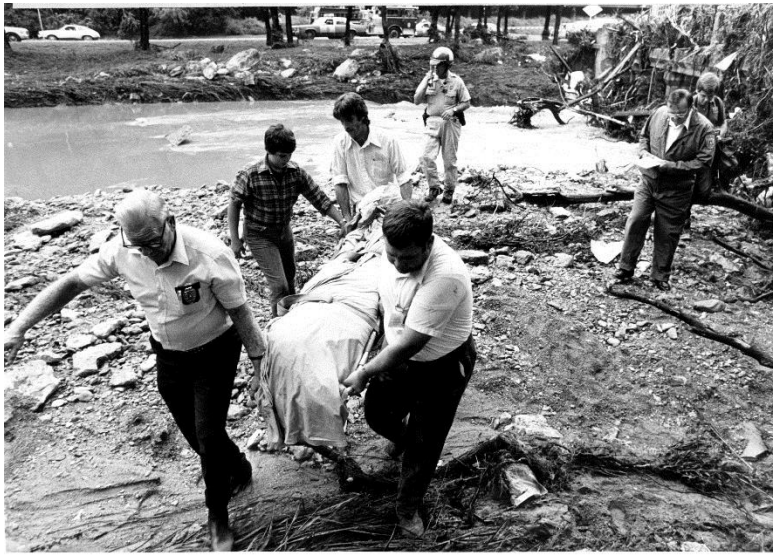
1. Background
2. Proposed Rules
3. Policy & Guidance (under development)
4. Schedule
5. Q &A

Rain Garden at One Texas Center

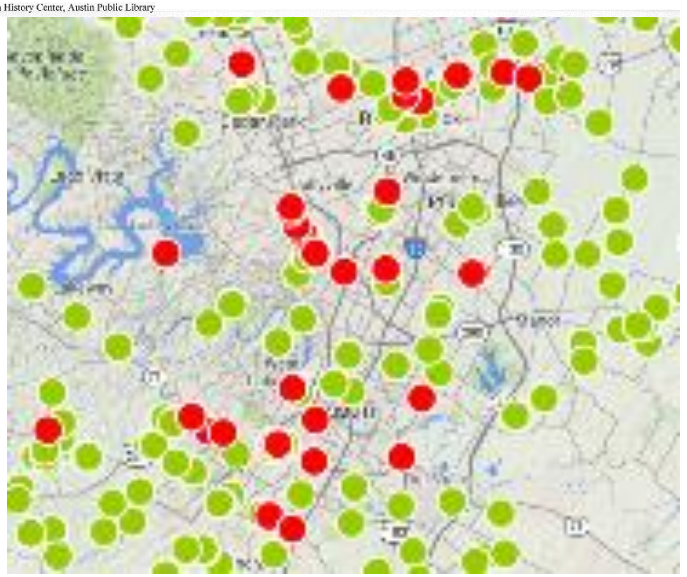
Rain Barrels connected to gutters

Background - Purpose

- **Drainage Charge begins 1982**
  - Response to 1981 Memorial Day flood
    - 13 lives lost
    - 35.5 million dollars in damage
- **Purpose of Drainage Charge**
  - Dedicated source of funding to address flooding, erosion, and water pollution
- **What is funded by the Drainage Charge**
  - Drainage charge is ~95% of the Watershed Protection Department (WPD) funding.
  - FY17 WPD Budget of ~$93M
  - Operate and Maintain
    - ~900 miles of storm sewer
    - ~1,000 ponds
    - ~6,000 ponds (inspect)
    - ~400 miles of creeks/waterways
    - Flood Warning – ATXfloods

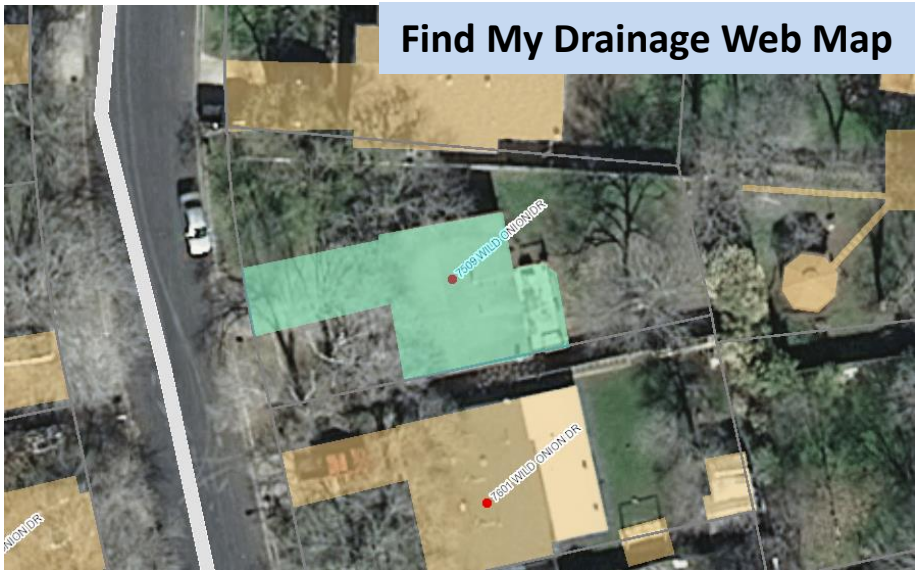


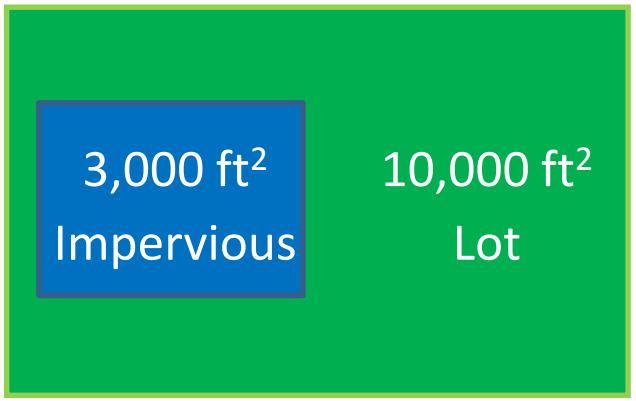
PICA 29466, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



Background – Charge Revision

- **Goals of 2015 Drainage Charge Revision**
  - Apply to entire property, not units on property
  - Calculated same way for all properties
  - Charge proportional to impact of each property
- **Drainage Charge Methodology**
  - Charge = Base Rate x Impervious Cover (IC) x Adjustment Factor based on percent IC





Background – Why propose a discount?

- **Recognize reduction in drainage impact**
  - Storing stormwater on your property can reduce the impact of impervious cover
- **Provide a way to reduce your bill**
  - Customers have options to reduce their other utility bills, why not drainage?
- **Reduce damaging effect of stormwater**
  - While impact reduction per property may be relatively small, it can have a large cumulative effect

Background – AWU

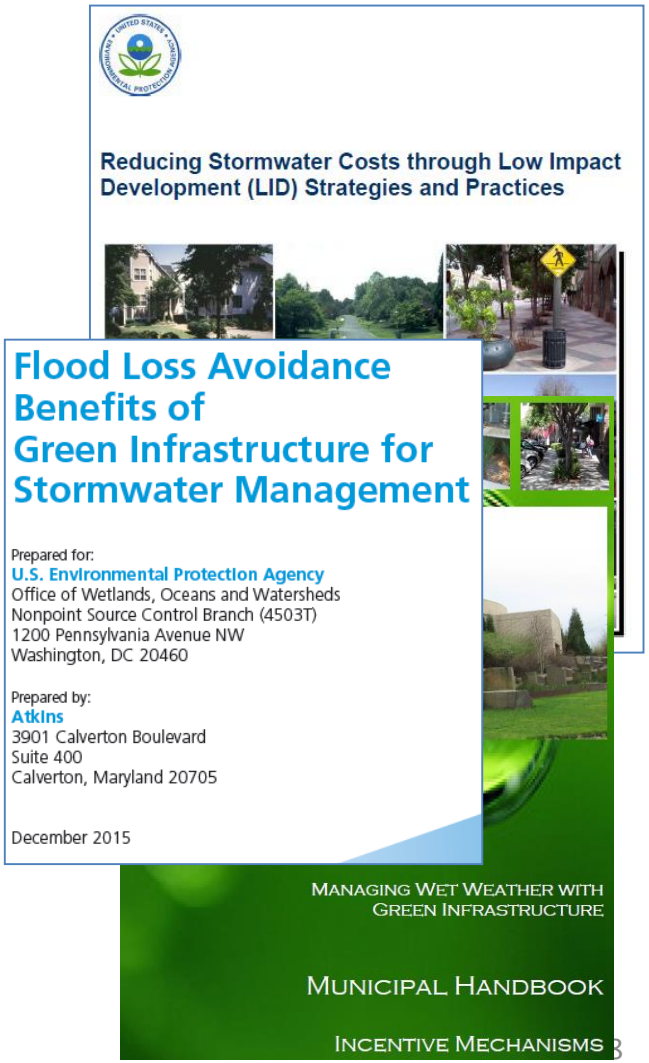
- **Currently, AWU offers a rainwater harvesting system rebate**
  - $0.50/gallon for non-pressurized system (rain barrels)
  - $1.00/gallon for pressurized system (cisterns with pumps)
  - $5,000 maximum
- **And, a WaterWise rainscape rebate**
  - $0.30/sq.ft., 100 sq.ft. minimum
  - $500 maximum
- **More info at: http://www.austintexas.gov/department/water-conservation-rebates**

Background – Discount Research

- **Benchmarking**
  - Of 48 communities benchmarked, about 2/3 have credits, 1/3 have rebates
  - Two TX Cities with recent Drainage charge changes
    - Houston – By volume, $0.10/barrel/month
    - San Antonio – By water quality volume, up to 30% of charge, commercial only

Background – Discount Research

- **Equity and Cost of Service Assessment**
  - EPA found limited flood benefits from Green Infrastructure
  - Austin-area studies showed on-site controls had relatively small flood control benefits and high costs
  - On-site controls generally accepted to have water quality benefits, but little flood control benefits
    - Capacity may not be available in back-to-back storms
    - Cost of Service benefit to Drainage Utility expected to be very small
  - Some properties store more stormwater than legal requirements
- **Proposal**
  - Allow credits based on stormwater controls that exceed legal requirements, allowing up to 50% reduction of impervious cover.



Background – Code Changes

- **Council passed Code Changes Aug 4, 2016**

15-2-7-MONTHY DRAINAGE CHARGE

(C) The director may credit the monthly drainage charge based on voluntary installation of on-site stormwater control measures that exceed the applicable requirements of City Code, state law, or a development agreement with the City. A credit under this subsection:

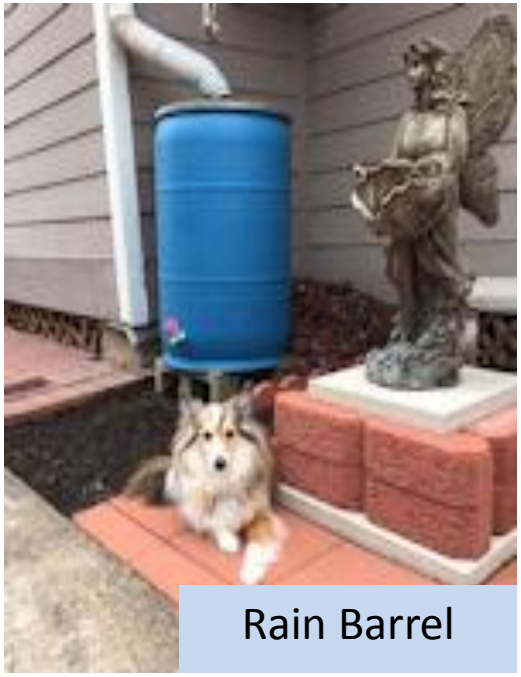
(i) may not exceed an amount equivalent to a 50% reduction in the square feet of impervious cover under the formula established in Subsection (B) of this section; and

(ii) must be based on criteria, established by administrative rule, that tie the amount of the credit to the overall value of voluntary stormwater control measures in reducing runoff from the benefited property.

Proposed Rules

- **Applicability / Eligibility**
  - Applicants must be a current drainage utility customer or a tenant of the benefitted property.
  - If any permit or approval for SCM is required, applicant must show evidence of approval.

Rain Garden



Rain Barrel

Proposed Rules

- **Types of Controls**
  - Only SCMs currently in Drainage Criteria Manual and Environmental Criteria Manual are eligible
    - Rain Barrels and Cisterns
    - Rain Gardens
    - Detention and Water Quality Ponds
    - Retention/Irrigation Systems

Rain Garden

Rain Barrel

Proposed Rules

Cistern

Detention Pond

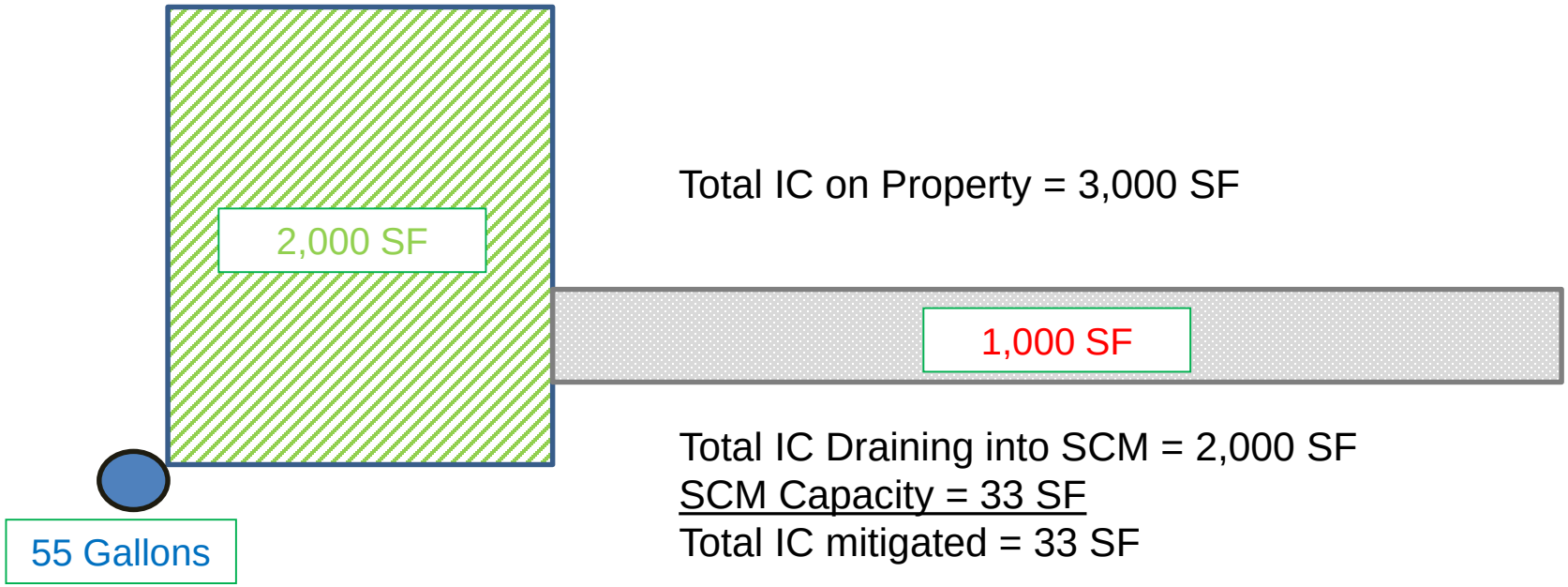
Retention/Irrigation Pond

Water Quality Pond

Proposed Rules

- **Calculation**
  - The amount of the discount will be limited to the impervious surface area that is mitigated by the SCM.

Example: SCM too small to capture all the IC that drains to it

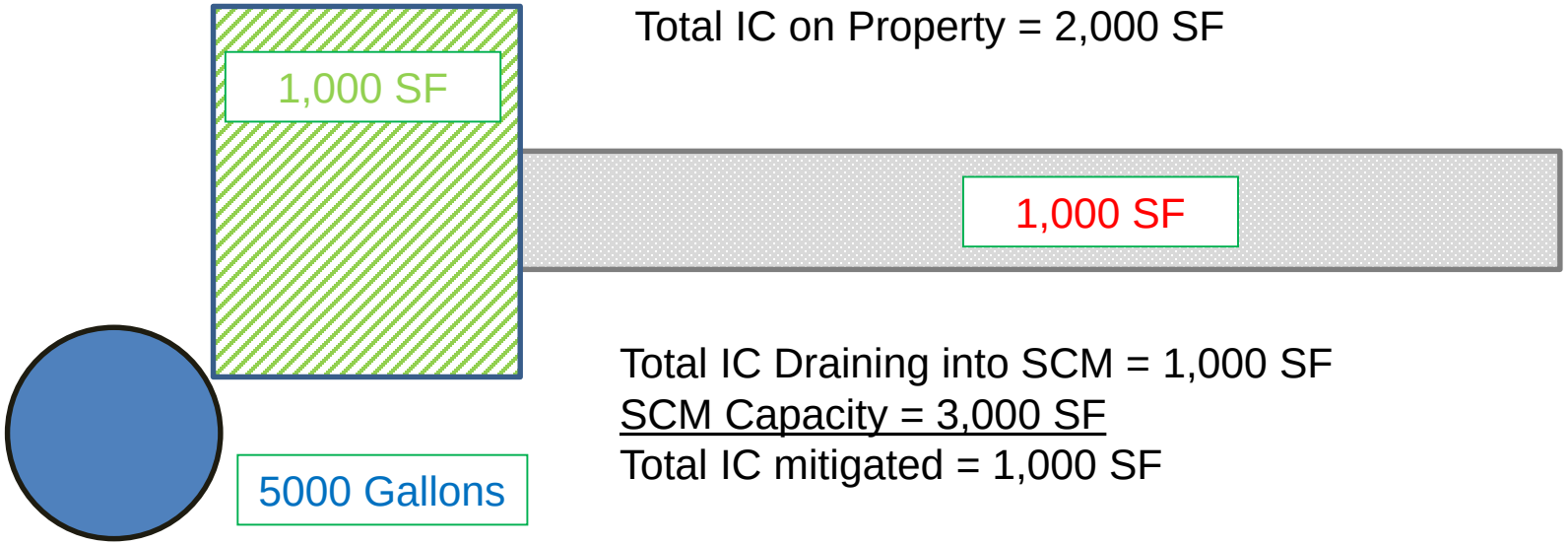


Total IC on Property = 3,000 SF

Total IC Draining into SCM = 2,000 SF
SCM Capacity = 33 SF
Total IC mitigated = 33 SF

Proposed Rules

Example: SCM has more capacity than the IC draining to it



Total IC on Property = 2,000 SF

Total IC Draining into SCM = 1,000 SF
SCM Capacity = 3,000 SF
Total IC mitigated = 1,000 SF

Proposed Rules

- **Inspection and Maintenance**
  - Customers receiving discount must service and maintain SCM in order to retain discount.
  - Information found to be inaccurate may result in loss of discount or back debit.
- **Timeline**
  - Discount is valid for two years starting on date of approval. To renew discount, customer must complete renewal process.

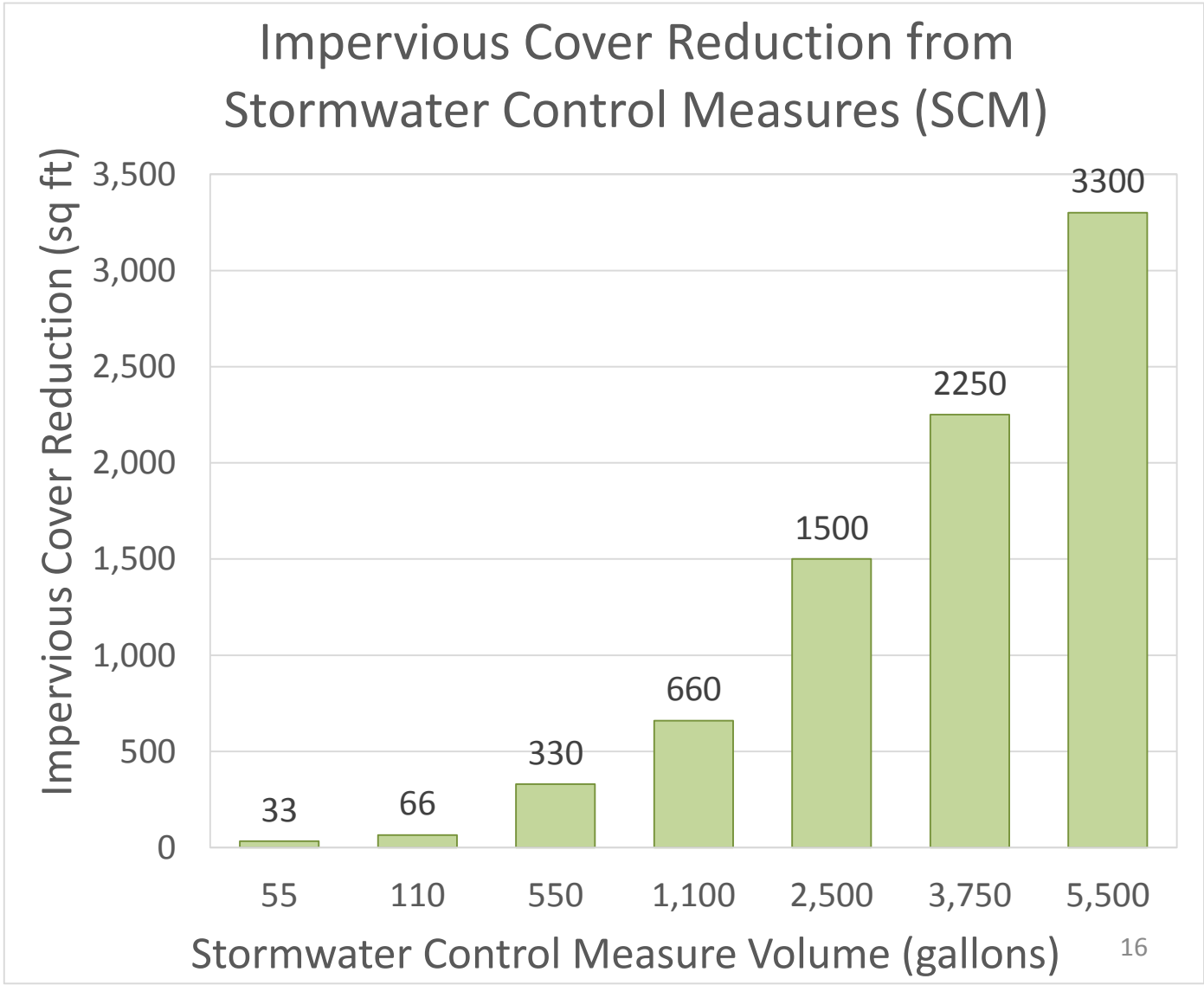
Clogged Rain Barrel

Debris in Pond

Sediment in Rain Garden

Policy & Guidance – How much discount?

- Credit based on capture volume offsetting runoff from Impervious Cover (IC)
- 0.6 sqft of IC / gallon of SCM
- Available to all land uses

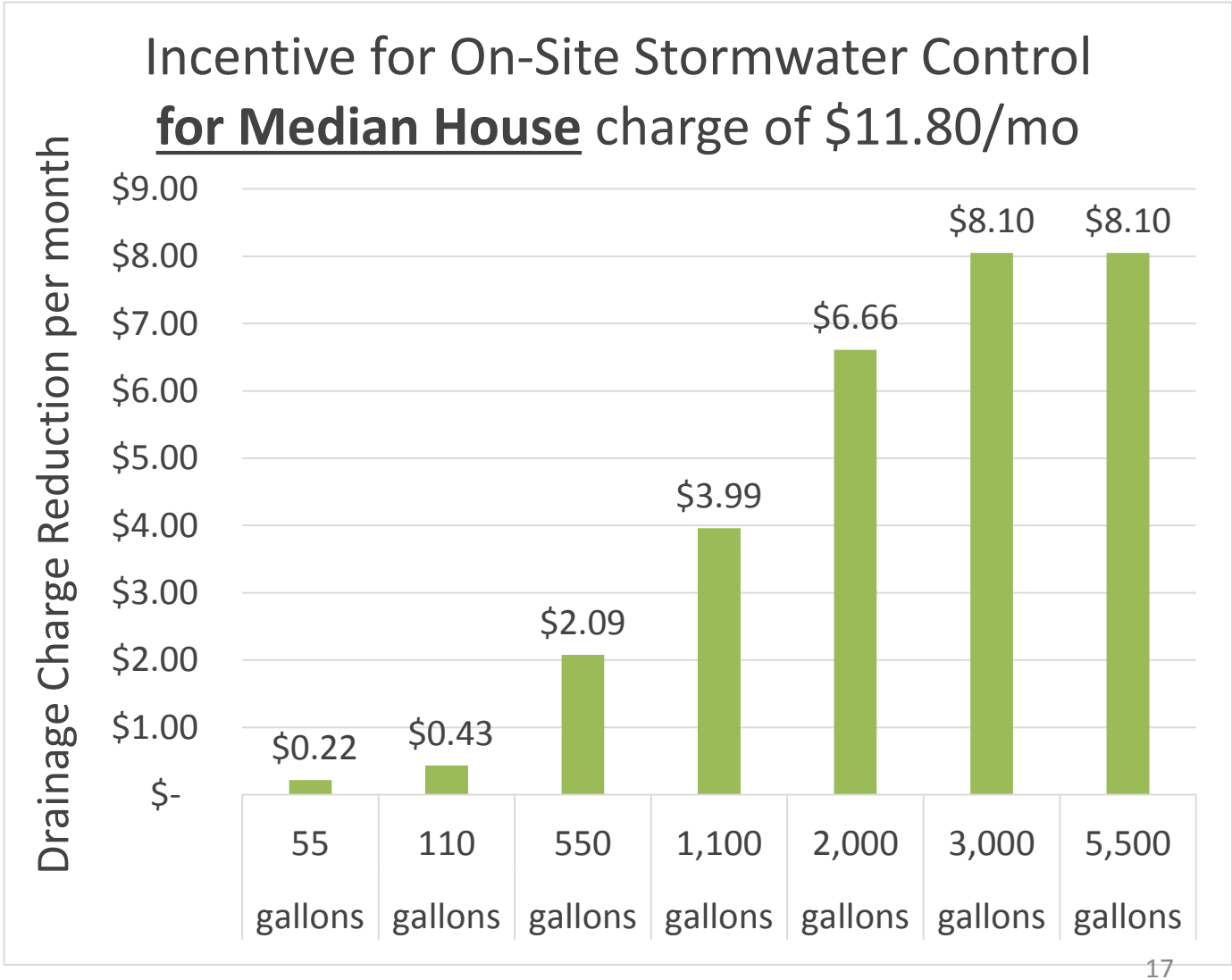


Policy & Guidance – How much discount?

Median House Examples

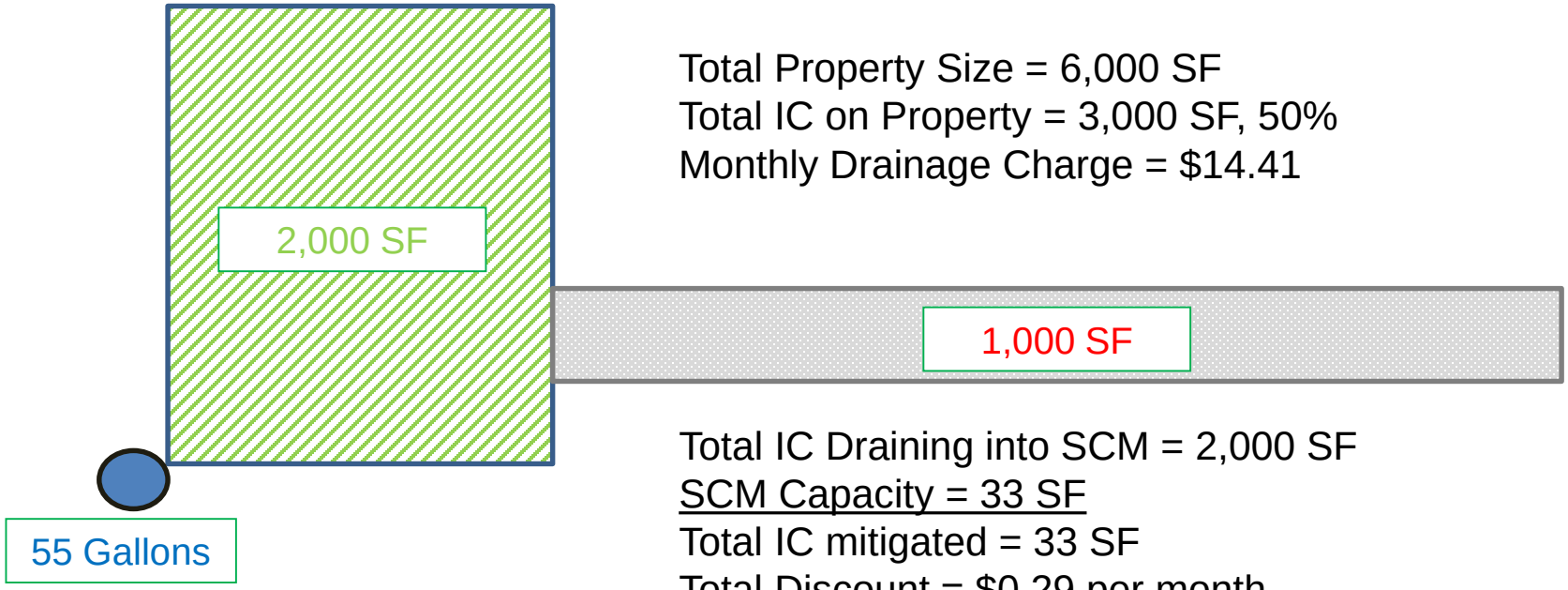
(3,100 sqft IC, 37% IC)

- Volume of one standard 55 gal Rain Barrel translates to $0.22 per month savings
- 3,000 gal cistern could negate up to half the IC, thus 69% of the charge, though installation cost ~$3,500



Policy & Guidance – How much discount?

Example: SCM too small to capture all the IC that drains to it

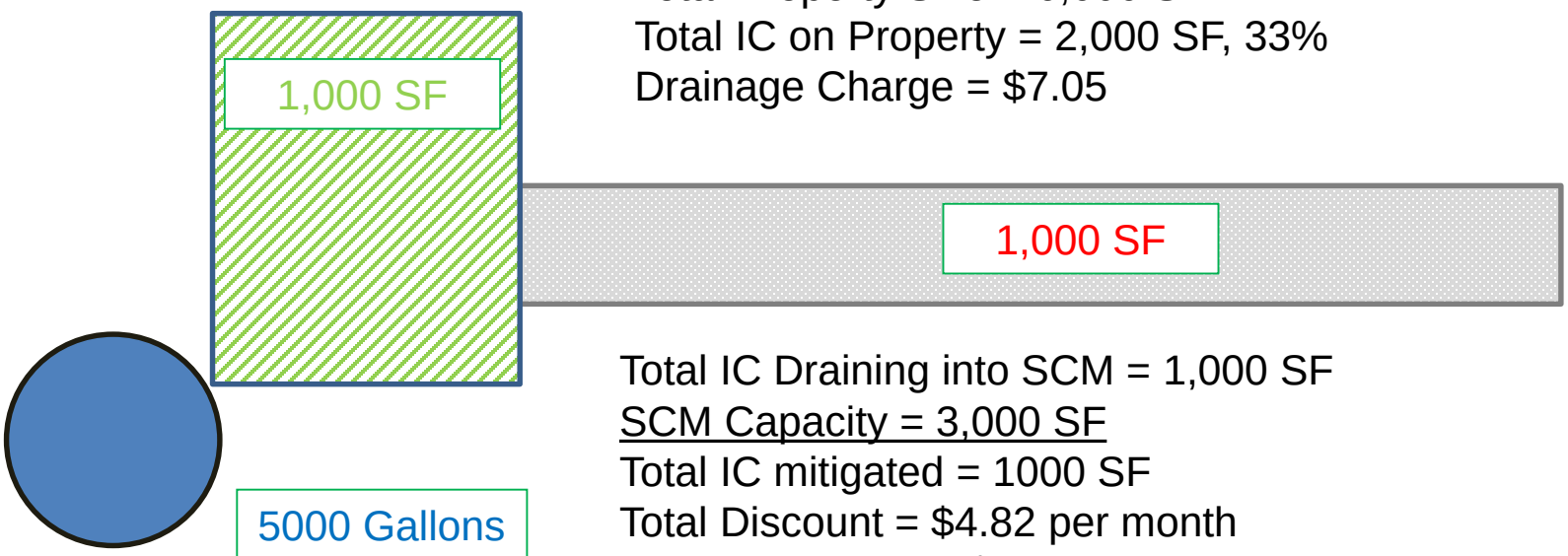


Total Property Size = 6,000 SF
Total IC on Property = 3,000 SF, 50%
Monthly Drainage Charge = $14.41

Total IC Draining into SCM = 2,000 SF
SCM Capacity = 33 SF
Total IC mitigated = 33 SF
Total Discount = $0.29 per month
Revised Charge = $14.12

Policy & Guidance – How much discount?

Example: SCM not mitigating to capacity

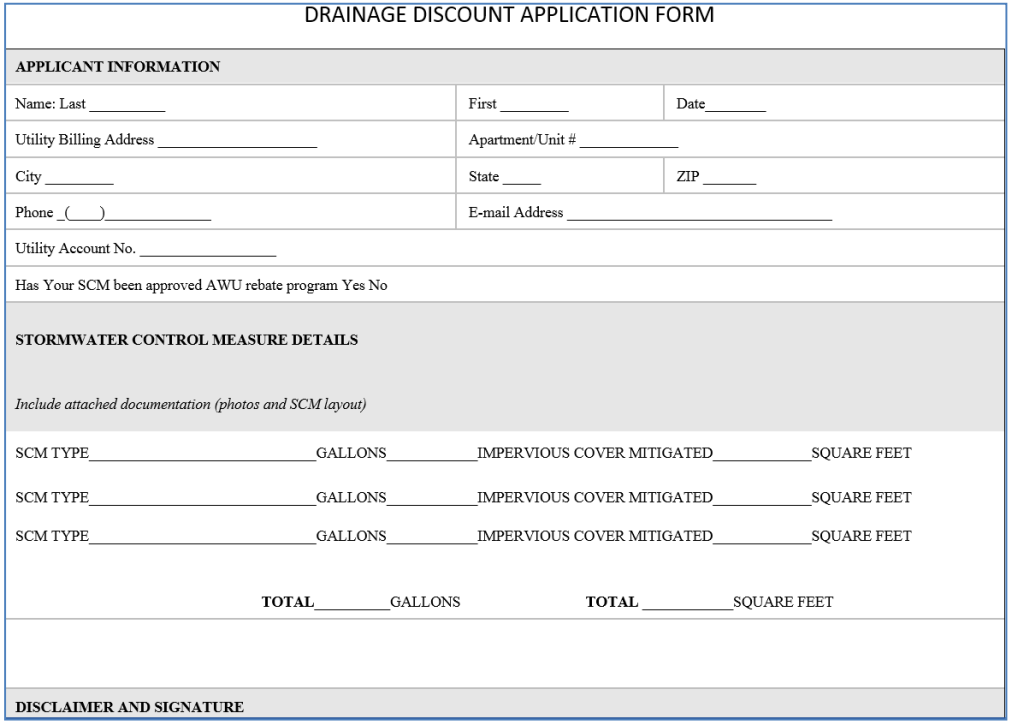


Total Property Size = 6,000 SF
Total IC on Property = 2,000 SF, 33%
Drainage Charge = $7.05

Total IC Draining into SCM = 1,000 SF
SCM Capacity = 3,000 SF
Total IC mitigated = 1000 SF
Total Discount = $4.82 per month
Revised Charge = $2.23

Policy & Guidance - How To Apply

- **Applications can be submitted online or mailed and should include:**
  - Customer Information
  - Type of SCM
  - Volume of SCM
  - Area that feeds SCM
  - Image of SCM



DRAINAGE DISCOUNT APPLICATION FORM

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: Last _____	First _____	Date_____
Utility Billing Address _____	Apartment/Unit # _____	
City _____	State ____	ZIP _____
Phone _(___)_____	E-mail Address _____	
Utility Account No. _____		
Has Your SCM been approved AWU rebate program Yes No		

STORMWATER CONTROL MEASURE DETAILS

Include attached documentation (photos and SCM layout)

SCM TYPE_____GALLONS_____IMPERVIOUS COVER MITIGATED_____SQUARE FEET

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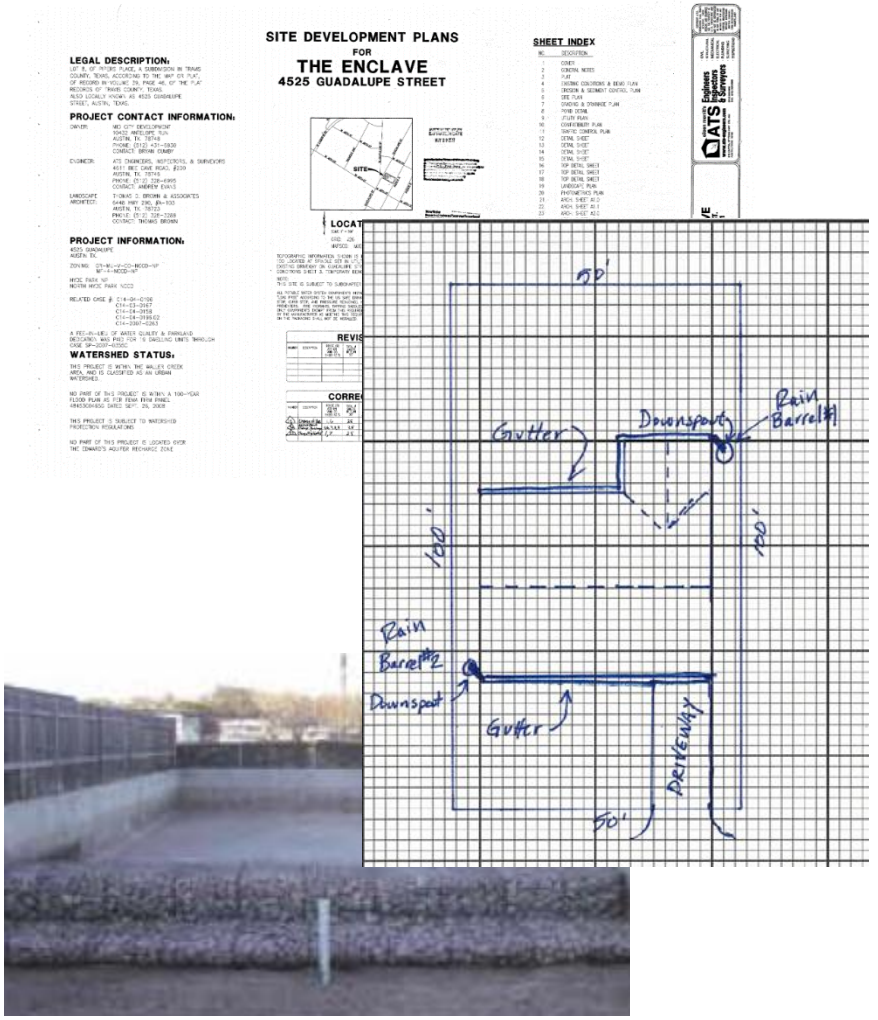
SCM TYPE_____GALLONS_____IMPERVIOUS COVER MITIGATED_____SQUARE FEET

TOTAL_____GALLONS **TOTAL** _____SQUARE FEET

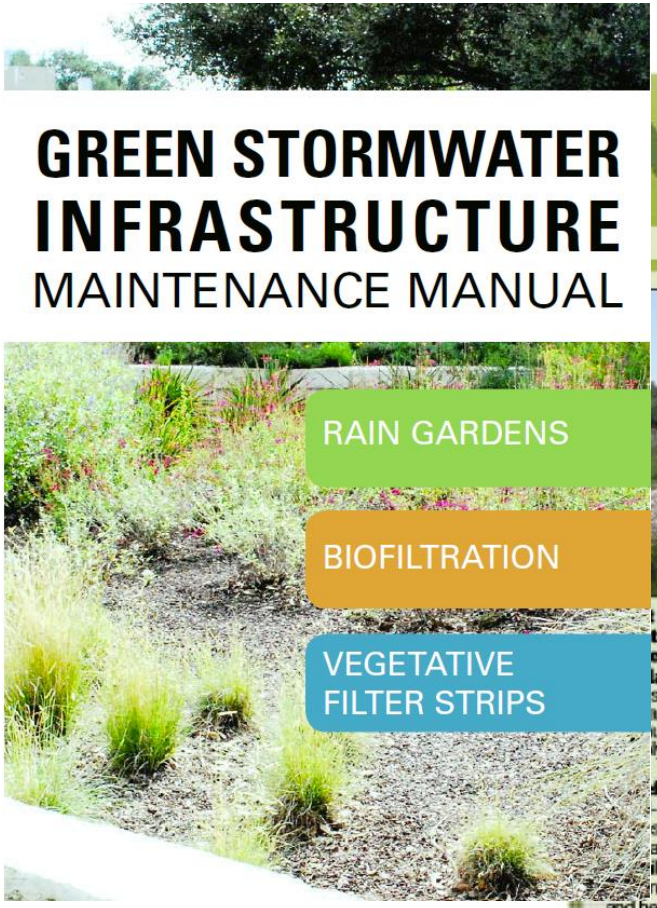
DISCLAIMER AND SIGNATURE

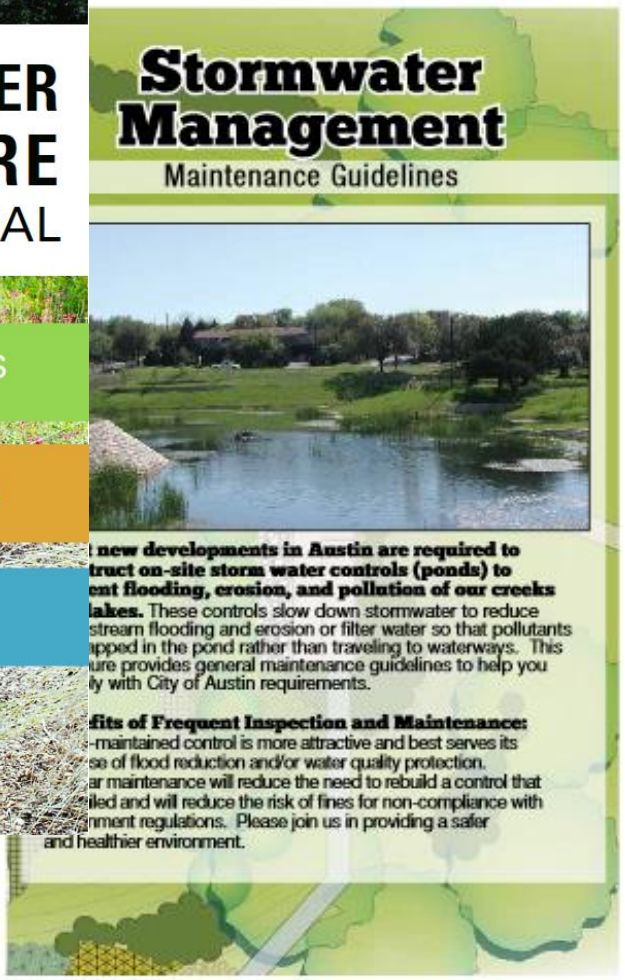
Policy & Guidance - How To Apply

- **Applications may also include:**
  - Proof that the SCM exceeds legal requirements for property
    - Typically for detention/WQ ponds
  - If required, evidence of permit approval
  - Sketch or plan of SCM layout may be required based on amount applied for



Policy & Guidance - Maintenance





Timeline / Next Steps

- **August 2016**
  - Aug 4 - Council Mtg – Conduct Public Hearing on Ordinance
- **September 2016**
  - Initial Draft of Rules for Stormwater Control Credit Program
- **October 2016**
  - Stakeholder Meeting – Oct 13
  - Public Comments due – Oct 27
- **November 2016**
  - Intra-City Staff Review – Nov 2
- **January 2017**
  - Post Rules & Guidance for Public Comment – Jan 4
- **February 2017**
  - Public Comments due – Feb 4
  - Planned start of Drainage Charge Discount Program

Questions?

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City of Austin WATERSHED PROTECTION

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