Communication in Stormwater Utilities Across Michigan

By: Hailey Olson
Outline

1. Introduction
   I. Why does a Stormwater Utility Matter?
   II. What is a Stormwater Utility?
   III. Why do Municipalities Need SWUs?
   IV. Research Questions

2. Case Histories
   I. Case Study Sites
   II. Cases
   III. Comparison
   IV. Methods and Approaches

3. Implications and Conclusion
   I. Can Kalamazoo, Michigan have a Sustainable SWU?
   II. Conclusion
   III. Closing Thought
1. Introduction

I. Why does a Stormwater Utility Matter?

II. What is a Stormwater Utility?

III. Why do Municipalities Need SWUs?

IV. Research Questions
Why does a Stormwater Utility (SWU) Matter?

Source: Kathryn Mersmann/NASA. Retrieved From:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-world-needs-rational-
american-leadership-on-climate-change/2019/02/07/1b1e7014-2a4b-11e9-
b011-d850044d98_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.84cdd019f911

Source: Click On Detroit. Retrieved From:

Source: Pure Michigan. Retrieved From:
What is a Stormwater Utility?

Fee paid by property owners that funds stormwater infrastructure, management, and planning to ensure effective management of stormwater runoff and drainage.¹


Why do Municipalities Need a SWU?
Research Questions

- How did Jackson, MI and Ann Arbor, MI frame the ordinance to city property owners?

- More specifically, how did the two cities communicate the financing mechanisms to residents and relevant agencies?

- What lessons can other municipalities in Michigan derive from the experiences of Ann Arbor and Jackson (e.g., is there potential for an expansion of SWU ordinances to address stormwater runoff and increased frequency and intensity of urban flooding?)
2. Case Histories

- I. Case Study Sites
- II. Establishing Scale
- IV. Cases
- VI. Comparison
- VII. Methods and Approaches
Where are the Cases Located?

What is Limiting Michigan from establishing SWU ordinances?

- Bolt V. City of Lansing
- Three criteria for a user fee
  - Serve a regulatory purpose
  - Proportionate to the necessary cost of service
  - Voluntary - must be able to be reduced or refused by property owners.

### What are the Cities Demographics?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cities</th>
<th>Jackson, MI&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Ann Arbor, MI&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>33,124</td>
<td>121,477</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Income</td>
<td>$31,118</td>
<td>$61,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Bachelors Degrees</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “QuickFacts, Jackson city, Michigan”, (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2010-2018)

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “QuickFacts, Ann Arbor, Michigan”, (U.S. Department of Commerce 2010-2018)
Jackson, Michigan

- Passed utility in 2011
- Sued by County of Jackson and two businesses
- Deactivated by 2013


5 Keith Roberts, “Two Business Owners are Latest to Sue over City of Jackson over Stormwater Fee”, MLive (Jackson, MI) Dec. 28, 2011.
Ann Arbor, Michigan

- Updated SWU\(^7\)
- Communication tactics
  - Website interface
  - A face of the SWU\(^8\)
  - Marketing A20\(^9\)


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8 Jennifer Lawson, “City of Ann Arbor Stormwater Utility Basics” (presentation, Stormwater Seminar, Lansing, Michigan, June 14th, 2018)
9 Ibid
What is a Holistic Communication Framework?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tactics</th>
<th>Jackson, MI</th>
<th>Ann Arbor, MI</th>
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<td>Control of Story</td>
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<td>Coalition Building</td>
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<td>Transparency</td>
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</table>
How did I do my Research?

- Case study approach
- Content analysis
- Local Sources
3. Implications and Conclusion

- I. Can Kalamazoo, Michigan have a Successful SWU?
- II. Conclusion
- III. Closing Thought
Should Kalamazoo have a SWU Ordinance?

- Recent Floods

- Ongoing development
  - Lack of SW infrastructure

- Toxic past

### Does Kalamazoo have a Future in SWU Ordinances?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Communication tactics</th>
<th>Jackson, MI</th>
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<th>Kalamazoo, MI</th>
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What can we learn?

- Respecting your community
- Communicating effectively
- Michigan’s potential in SWU

Source: Hailey Olson
“You have to have an outcome that the community will embrace and support”

– Jennifer Lawson

Ann Arbor City Water Quality Manager
Bibliography

- Roberts, Keith. “Two Business Owners are Latest to Sue over City of Jackson over Stormwater Fee.” MLive (Jackson, Michigan), December 28th, 2011.