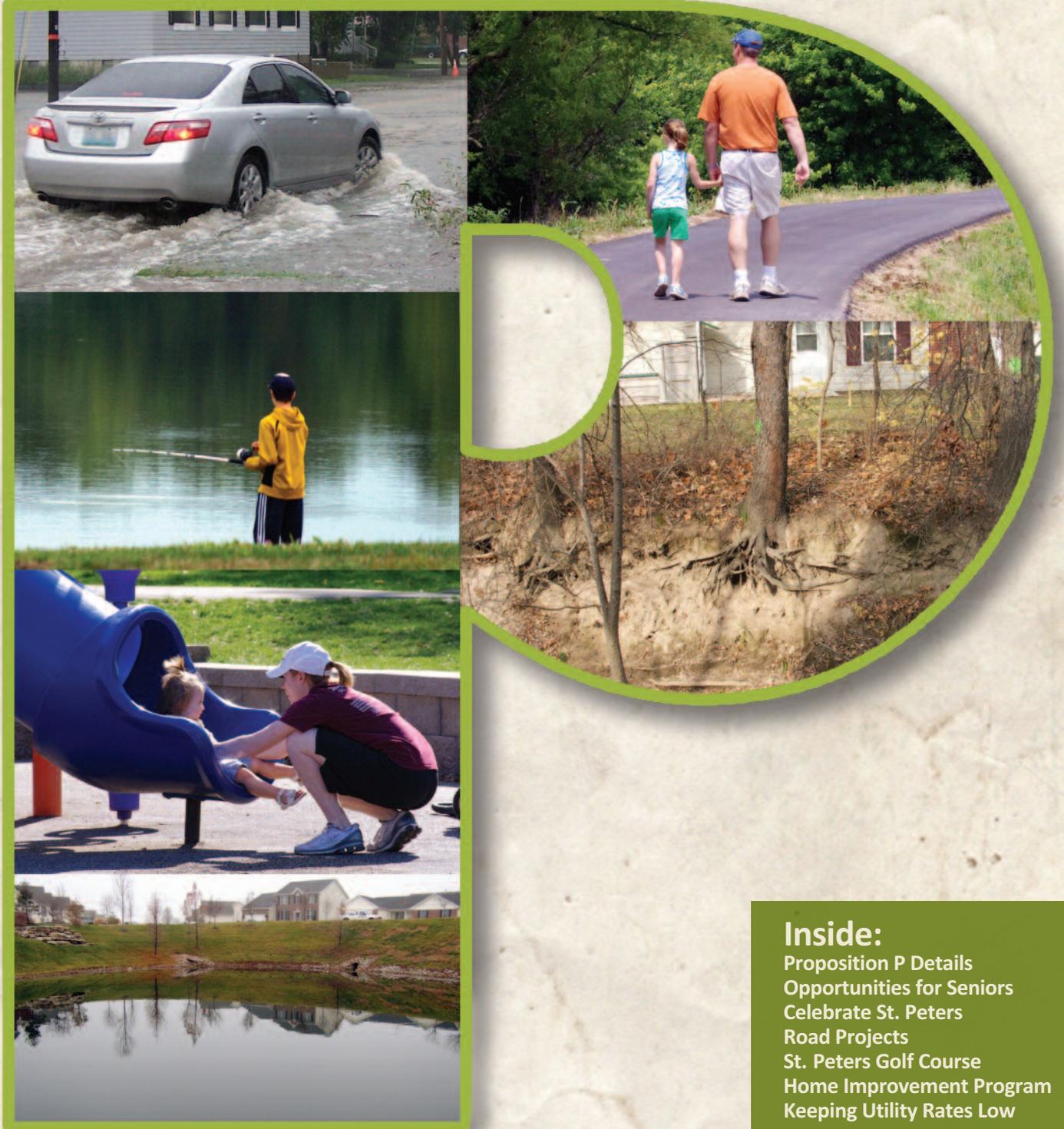


# My Hometown



August 2012  
[www.stpetersmo.net](http://www.stpetersmo.net)

## WHAT IS PROPOSITION P?



**Inside:**  
Proposition P Details  
Opportunities for Seniors  
Celebrate St. Peters  
Road Projects  
St. Peters Golf Course  
Home Improvement Program  
Keeping Utility Rates Low



Eroding stream banks threaten waterways  
and people's property.

# Weathering a Storm

## How to Tackle \$120 Million in Stormwater Projects to Meet Federal Requirements

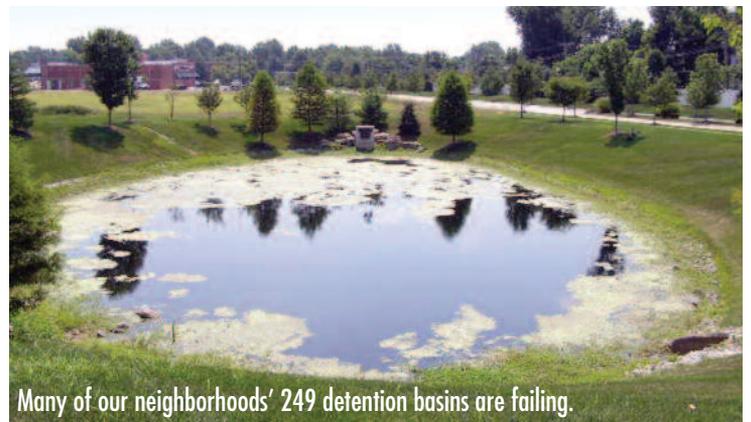
You may not realize it, but neighborhoods around St. Peters are facing a massive, expensive challenge that will cost many millions of dollars.

Many privately owned stormwater detention basins are in poor condition. Most of the streams in our community need to be restored. The challenge: How do we save our waterways from erosion and pollution, reduce the chances of neighborhood flooding, and meet federal Clean Water Act regulations that will force us to tackle stormwater issues no matter what?

The City of St. Peters wants to help lead the way. In all, we've identified more than 100 projects at an estimated cost of nearly \$120 million in order to fix stormwater issues and meet federal guidelines. Most of those projects are located on private property owned by subdivisions and neighborhood associations. These neighborhoods are facing the responsibility of fixing these problems on their own.

Proposition P on the Aug. 7, 2012, ballot would give the City of St. Peters the funding we need to tackle these critical stormwater projects together through a four-tenths of a cent sales tax. If passed, Proposition P would pay to fix stormwater detention basins, address creek erosion, clean our waterways and meet stricter federal guidelines. In addition, Proposition P would help repair and maintain our aging parks and trail system. (Learn more about Proposition P on pages 4 and 5.)

If Proposition P does not pass, instead of the City taking ownership and responsibility for fixing the stormwater issues, many neighborhoods will



Many of our neighborhoods' 249 detention basins are failing.

face the challenge of paying for these millions of dollars of stormwater management projects to comply with federal regulations. Right now, the City's stormwater budget is \$600,000 a year. We need \$3.9 million per year to pay for stormwater projects. Homeowners simply do not have the money to tackle this issue on their own.

"Stormwater" is rainwater that runs off structures, streets and other surfaces, and cuts through our neighborhoods on the way to nearby streams, ponds and lakes. Our responsibility as a community is to get →

this stormwater from Point A (our neighborhoods) to Point B (nearby waterways) without causing erosion, flooding and pollution. We are required by federal law to maintain our stormwater quality so that by the time it empties into our waterways, it is both “fishable and swimmable.”

St. Peters has 249 stormwater detention basins and 47 miles of creeks and streams. Stormwater detention basins—which can look like a pond or lake, or appear more like a ditch—help control the flow of water until it reaches the waterways.

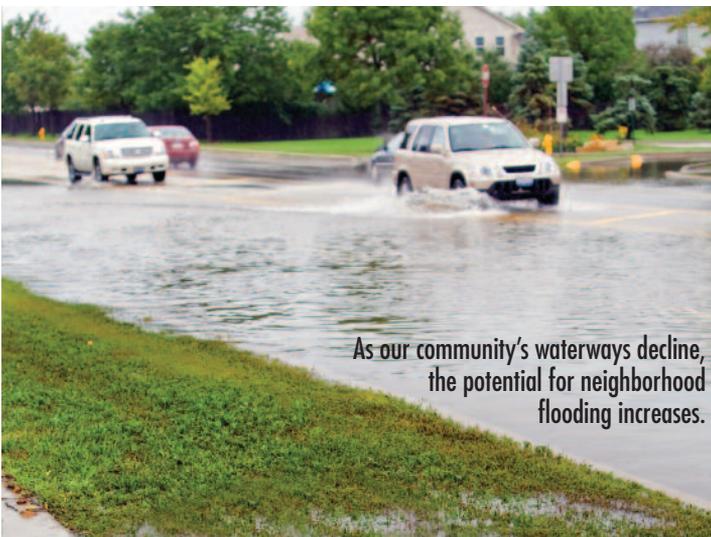
Unfortunately, we’ve found that many streams and stormwater detention basins are in poor condition. Many of our neighborhoods’ detention basins aren’t performing the way they should during storms, which means they’re not able to allow water to soak into the ground, filter the stormwater, or release it slowly to area streams. And, about three out of every four miles of streams in St. Peters need to be restored.



These problems have gotten worse over time, and won’t get better on their own. Many detention basins were built decades ago to serve neighborhoods, but they also need constant maintenance that can be costly and challenging to neighborhood associations trying to manage the basins on their own. Stormwater also can erode our creeks that collect stormwater from our neighborhoods. Fallen trees and vegetation caused by erosion combined with junk in our streams can plug up streams, make flooding more likely and cause streams to erode even more quickly. Sometimes, these creeks erode away private property and threaten homes.

Homeowners don’t have the money to pay for these expensive fixes. A study of our community’s “green” stormwater systems such as water detention basins and waterways show that we need to spend about:

- \$88 million to stabilize stream banks so that they don’t erode further.
- \$21 million-plus to repair detention basins.
- Another \$9.5 million to address specific flooding issues.



If Proposition P passes, the City has immediate plans to tackle 13 repair projects that directly serve more than 9,000 residents and also impact our entire stormwater management system. (See the project list in the following Proposition P story.)

The City of St. Peters has a professional staff that would continually oversee maintenance of neighborhood water detention basins if Proposition P passes. This would save residents from having to pay the double expense of first repairing and then maintaining their subdivision’s detention basins.

These stormwater issues are everyone’s problem, because everyone lives in a watershed that drains to a detention basin or stream. Stormwater doesn’t care—it just backs up ... maybe into your yard or basement.

The question isn’t IF we need to address storm water issues. It’s WHEN.

New federal regulations will require us to fix problems, and if we wait until we’re forced to fix these problems, they would be much more expensive to all of us. In fact, Dardenne Creek is already on the federal government’s impaired list—it needs to be cleaned up.

You may remember a \$40 million bond issue passed in 2010 to pay for stormwater management projects to deal with this challenge. A few things have happened since that ballot issue:

- 1) We’ve studied the stormwater problems closer, and we realize that the price tag for our community to meet federal regulations is much more expensive. In fact, consultants walked all 47 miles of our waterways after that bond issue. They found that some streams are in good shape, but nearly 36 miles of streams need help, including 10 miles that are in poor condition. Even the streams in good shape need preservation projects so that they don’t get worse.
- 2) Our property values have dipped more and more in the last few years, and that means \$2 million less revenue from property taxes since 2007. Today, we simply do not have the stream of revenue to support borrowing more money for these critical stormwater projects. We can’t issue bonds without a tax increase.



**Prop P would pay for repair projects like this one. 3 out of 4 miles of streams in St. Peters need restoration, but we face a \$3.3 million annual budget shortfall.**

The City of St. Peters has faced the challenge of decreasing revenue and increased expenses head on. We’ve cut personnel, paid less for employee benefits, delayed repairs in our parks, and waited longer to replace City equipment, including police cars.

None of those cutbacks help us comply with federal water quality laws. We cannot meet our community’s stormwater requirements without more funding resources. Proposition P would make it possible to fix and maintain our stormwater systems through a long-term effort and contributions from everyone. With the right planning, good management, and the money to get the job done, we can meet this challenge together.

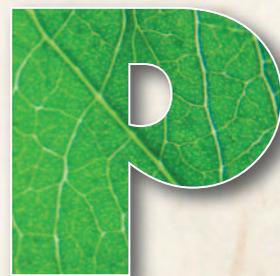


for PARKS ...



and for STORMWATER

# Proposition



**As a resident of St. Peters, you have an important decision to make on Tuesday, Aug. 7. That's when voters will decide whether to pass Proposition P.**

This ballot issue asks you to consider a four-tenths of a cent sales tax that would pay for stormwater, parks and trails. Our community is facing two major issues:

- Nearly \$120 million are needed to fix stormwater issues in our community to reduce flooding and pollution in our streams in order to meet federal guidelines. (See story on page 2.)
- Many of our 25 parks and 20 miles of trails are showing signs of age. As maintenance costs rise, and revenues from property taxes decrease, the money isn't there like before to repair our parks and add new features.

Proposition P would provide the money needed to pay for crucial stormwater projects as well as community parks and trails. Right now, that revenue is simply not there, and there's no way to avoid federal regulations. By law, we will be required to make stormwater improvements one way or the other.

For St. Peters resident Chris Winslow, the main issue at hand is whether or not St. Peters goes down the same road as MSD customers in St. Louis County. He notes that residents across the river are facing large rate hikes to fix stormwater quality issues that have lingered for years. You can easily find many news stories explaining just how expensive that will be for MSD customers.

"We need to handle stormwater issues in a proactive manner rather than a reactive manner like they're doing in St. Louis County," Chris says. "By law, we have to make the water both swimmable and fishable. We need to do that."

Chris is chairing the Citizens for a Better St. Peters committee that's supporting Proposition P. He says that a four-tenths of a cent sales tax is a better option than the other two alternatives that City leaders have considered: raising property taxes or assessing a utility tax fee.

An increase in property tax rates would be particularly tough on seniors, Chris noted. And, it still wouldn't raise enough money to completely solve the stormwater problem.

A stormwater utility tax fee could be assessed on properties based on their amount of impervious surfaces, such as structures, parking lots and driveways. Chris noted that this type of utility fee would be very difficult to swallow for certain businesses and organizations, including churches.

"The sales tax allows us to spread it over a larger group of people, not just the people who live here, but anyone who shops here," he said.

Revenues have declined in recent years, as the cost of serving our community has increased. Since 2007, there's been an 11% decline in our property values. The City of St. Peters has absorbed the loss of more than \$2 million in property tax revenue, even as the costs for things like electricity, fuel, insurance and equipment maintenance and replacement have gone up.

The City of St. Peters has tackled budgetary issues head on, making →

# A New Promise For the Future of St. Peters

cuts to personnel and employee benefits, and delaying the replacement of equipment and repairs to our parks. We've even held off replacing police cars by extending their replacement cycle. And, we've done this while continuing to provide top-notch services with the lowest fees in the county (see story on page 19).

The four-tenths of a cent sales tax proposed by Proposition P would be dedicated only to stormwater, parks and trails. "That's the only thing we can spend the money on. It can't go in the general fund, and it can't be used for any other purposes," Chris said.

Without Proposition P, our stormwater budget is \$600,000 per year. It's nowhere near enough. We need an average of \$3.9 million a year to address our stormwater problems. And, the costs to fix the problem will only get more expensive if it's not tackled soon.

In all, the City of St. Peters has identified a need for more than 100 stormwater projects. Here is the first round of stormwater repair projects that the City would complete with funding from the four-tenths of a cent sales tax:

- McClay Valley retention basin (\$1.6 million)
- Country Creek retention basin (\$160,000)
- Canyon Creek detention basin (\$183,000)
- Pegasus Farms stream stability & detention basins (\$260,000)
- Crown Colony detention basin (\$173,000)
- Henry Street storm sewer (\$450,000)
- Enwood detention basin (\$10,000)
- Applewood detention basin (\$97,000)
- Country Crossing & Country Crossing Estates stream stability & riparian renovation (\$388,000)



Stream Stability

- Englewood stream stability & riparian renovation (\$661,000)
- Crescent Hills & Springwood stream stability & riparian renovation (\$811,000)
- Misty Valley, Orchard Hills, Spencer Creek East, & Carrington Estates stream stability & riparian renovation, culvert replacement (\$3.2 million)
- Highlands & Highland Estates stream stability & riparian renovation, detention basins (\$1.7 million)

Parks and trails are popular with the community, but also expensive to maintain. Just one safe, accessible playground costs about \$200,000. If Proposition P passes on Aug. 7, we will use funding for maintenance of existing facilities as well as a number of other improvements, including:

- \$800,000 for new playgrounds at Shady Springs Park, Brown Road Park, Laurel Park and Community Park.
- More than \$265,000 for ball field improvements.
- \$150,000 for improvements to the aging Sports Center facility.
- \$200,000 for Rec-Plex natatorium and ice rink improvements.
- \$50,000 for Senior Center improvements.
- \$35,000 for an archery range at 370 Lakeside Park.

Proposition P also would allow us to consider many more park projects in the coming years, including building out our new 370 Lakeside Park with pavilions, playgrounds, a dog park, amphitheater, restrooms, and more.



Detention Basin Repair



New Playgrounds



Ballfield Improvements



370 Lakeside Park

# MESSAGES FROM OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The comments contained in this section reflect only the writers' opinions.



**Len Pagano**  
Mayor

## PROPOSITION "P"

On Aug. 7, the voters of St. Peters will decide Proposition P. This is an important ballot issue for many reasons. You can read all about Proposition P in this issue of *My Hometown*, but as Mayor, I can sum up my view in a few points:

- The stormwater projects we need to complete will not go away, and we'll be forced by federal regulations to deal with them eventually. Plus, we want to be able to take our grandchildren fishing in our local streams and make sure we have clean, safe drinking water.
- The cost for these stormwater projects could reach \$120 million. There is no easy fix. I would rather pay for this with a four-tenths of cent sales tax than consider high increases in property taxes and utility taxes that burden seniors and other people on fixed incomes. This sales tax increase spreads the costs to non-residents and lowers our burden. That's why we've put Proposition P on the ballot.
- If we can't afford to pay for stormwater improvements, we certainly won't be able to keep up with the maintenance on our beautiful parks system that we've built up over the decades. In fact, we could face deep cuts in services to you.

The simple truth is that we are required by federal law to maintain the quality of our stormwater so that by the time it empties into our waterways, it is both fishable and swimmable. I've seen parts of Dardenne Creek, and I understand why it's on a federal impaired streams list. It's going to be expensive to fix, but that's one of the tasks in front of us.

Closer to your home, it's likely that your neighborhood association owns a detention basin. These basins are supposed to allow water to soak into the ground, filter the stormwater, and release it into area waterways. The fact is that many of them don't work correctly, and it would cost you a lot of money to fix them and continue to maintain them.

Our Promise with Proposition P is that the City of St. Peters will fix all of these stormwater issues. Our professional staff will take over, fix and maintain the detention basins. And, this might even save you some money in neighborhood association dues.

The funds from Proposition P also can help us maintain and even build on our parks and trails. You can see the great potential of 370 Lakeside Park. We just need the funding to continue to develop it.

I've been asked why we couldn't just cut our budget. The truth is that we've already made cuts, namely to personnel, personnel benefits and equipment. We had to make these cuts because we are facing revenue shortages. With the decline of the housing market, property values decreased, and so did our property taxes: to the tune of 11%, or more than \$2 million.

When property values go down, we as a local government have the option to increase property tax rates so that our

government doesn't lose revenue. Your elected officials have decided not to increase property tax rates, and instead we've absorbed a \$2 million loss in property tax revenue in recent years.

In essence, you've received a tax break on your property, and we've received less revenue and responded with budget cuts. More cuts will only lead to fewer services. We need professional staff to take care of our stormwater issues, our parks and trails, our streets, our public safety, our water and wastewater, our trash collection, our code enforcement, and more.

Proposition P won't pay for all of those things—the truth is that we're running lean in all of those areas. Where we have no control is the projects that need to be done for stormwater control and parks and trails maintenance. We're no longer a young community, and we have to decide what type of future we want.

Please know that we didn't take anything lightly when we decided to place Proposition P on the ballot. Please vote on Aug. 7.



**Rocky Reitmeyer**  
Ward 1  
Board  
President

## GREAT GOLF CLOSE TO HOME

Ahhh, summertime! What a great time to get out on the links and have some fun and exercise with your friends.

Have you been to our St. Peters Golf Course? Well, if you haven't been lately, you really should give it a try. A few years ago, the golf course went under management of our fantastic City staff, and as in everything the City of St. Peters does, this golf course is first class. Lots of work has been done on the fairways and also putting in new cart

paths. Read the story on page 18 about how it's in better condition than ever. If you have any suggestions, please let Dan or Eric know in the clubhouse. This is our Golf Course!

The 18-hole, Par 70 course covers more than 6,000 yards. A 13-acre lake makes for a scenic backdrop and challenging obstacle on a few of the holes.

The low rates make sure an outing on this course won't break your bank account. Even better, St. Peters residents and all active and retired military members can get a 10% discount on greens and cart fees. And, seniors can enjoy low rates seven days a week! Please give Dan or Eric a call to make your special outing possible. From Golf Tournaments to Wedding Receptions, the St. Peters Golf Course is a wonderful place to have your event.

To find out more about the golf course or check out current greens fees, call Dan or Eric at 636.397.2227 or visit [www.stpetersmo.net/golf](http://www.stpetersmo.net/golf).

If you haven't heard, St. Peters Golf Course and our Rec-Plex teamed up to offer a bundle membership. Rec-Plex annual members get 10% off course rates, and Rec-Plex GOLD PLUS memberships get an even bigger discount. As a Rec-Plex GOLD PLUS member, you not only receive full access to →

