

Proposition “P”

St. Peters has come a long way with planning, perseverance and professional management. **We make promises** about what we're going to do and **we keep them**.

Our elected officials and City employees have always been dedicated to bringing our residents top quality services at the lowest possible cost, that's why *Money Magazine* named our City one of “America's Top 100 Best Places to Live.”



Now, St. Peters voters are being asked to consider **Proposition “P”** on August 7, 2012. It's a **new Promise** for the future of St. Peters. Voters will be asked to approve a four-tenths of a cent sales tax increase for parks, trails and storm water management projects. The money will pay for taking care of our parks and trails and replacing and adding needed equipment. The storm water projects are designed to reduce flooding and pollution in our streams.

St. Peters has a wonderful quality of life with: 25 beautiful parks; 20 miles of paved trails for hiking, biking and running; a beautiful public golf course; pools, ponds and athletic fields. Nine out of ten St. Peters residents live within one mile of a trail or park. Our newest park, 370 Lakeside Park, is the biggest municipal park in St. Charles County. Our St. Peters Rec-Plex is one of the finest recreation and sports facilities in the entire Midwest—and this and many of our favorite amenities are starting to show the wear and tear of 20 years of use.

The costs to maintain and repair our trails, playground equipment and facilities are going up, while some of our revenue sources are going down.

Less than two years ago, St. Peters voters approved a no-tax-increase bond issue that authorized the City to borrow \$40 million for storm water management. These projects would take care of big problems like flooding, erosion, pollution and new federal requirements regarding water quality. When that bond issue passed, we had enough tax revenue coming in to be able to borrow that money to pay for these projects.

But then, we began feeling the impact of the housing crisis. Since 2007, there's been an **11% decline in our property values**. The City of St. Peters has absorbed the loss of more than two million dollars in property tax revenue, while the costs for things like electricity, gasoline, insurance and equipment maintenance and replacement have gone up.

We did not take this lightly. For the past four years we've reduced personnel, employees contribute more for their benefits, we've delayed replacing equipment and repairs for our parks. We even held off replacing police cars by extending their replacement cycle. We've continued to make tough choices and we are still charging the lowest fees, and have one of the **lowest tax rates** of any City in St. Charles County.

We are required by federal law to maintain our storm water quality so that by the time it empties into our waterways, it is both fishable and swimmable. Dardenne Creek is already on a federal impaired streams list—it needs to be cleaned up. Many neighborhoods have detention basins that need to be repaired now. Your subdivision associations are responsible for these detention basins—your annual dues are supposed to pay for these costs. But, many neighborhoods don't have enough money to fix their basins.



The City of St. Peters wants to help. We have to solve these problems. If we don't fix them, we'll be facing federal fines and big legal costs. We're already facing problems like increased erosion in the streams and flooding in streets and neighborhoods during storms.

The City of St. Peters has identified more than 100 storm water projects that need to be fixed. It's going to cost \$119 million dollars to fix them. Right now, our storm water budget is \$600,000 a year — nowhere near enough. We need an average of \$3.9 million dollars a year to fix these storm water problems.



That \$3.9 million per year doesn't include the costs to maintain our parks, trails and the Rec-Plex, let alone make improvements. We have to decide whether we're going to pay for what needs to be done or whether the City of St. Peters will be forced to cut services.

City officials have considered three options:

- Increasing property taxes
- Charging a storm water utility fee (this could double or triple your utility bill)
- Increasing the parks and storm water sales tax by four tenths of a cent

Increasing property taxes isn't a good option. It would hurt everyone, especially those on fixed incomes. And, increasing property taxes doesn't provide enough money to completely fix the problem.

Charging a special storm water utility fee would be very expensive for homeowners and businesses. (Check out the [newspaper headlines](#) about M.S.D. in St. Louis County to learn more about how expensive this could get.)

We believe the best option for St. Peters residents is to plan effectively and protect our residents and businesses from facing mandates and huge fee increases.

Voters are being asked to consider the four tenths of a cent sales tax increase because it spreads the costs to non-St. Peters residents who shop in St. Peters. It's the lowest cost option for residents and other property owners compared to a property tax increase or utility fee.

Funding from **Proposition "P"** would provide the money to:

- Remove the burden of paying for fixing and maintaining detention basins from neighborhood associations
- Pay for projects that prevent pollution of our streams and erosion of our creek banks into private property
- Repair and maintain our aging parks and trails
- Pay for park improvements
 - o Continue to develop 370 Lakeside Park with pavilions, playgrounds and recreational uses.
 - o Safe, accessible playgrounds in parks throughout our community (new playgrounds cost an average of \$200,000 each)

St. Peters voters will be asked to consider **Proposition "P"** on the August 7, 2012 ballot. If voters approve this four tenths of a cent sales tax for parks and storm water, St. Peters' sales taxes would still be lower or at the same rate of other St. Charles County communities.

