

# STORMWATER: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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## 1. What's happening?

Starting in 2017, residents and businesses will pay for City stormwater services through Guelph Hydro bills.

## 2. Why is there a new fee?

- Stormwater management provides a critical service: protecting our community from flooding and pollution.
- Guelph's stormwater system is aging and is in need of repairs and upgrades.
- The City also needs to prepare for the impacts of changing weather—more severe storms, increased rainfall and quick snow melts.
- Like many municipalities, Guelph's stormwater system has been underfunded for many years.
- A stormwater service fee provides dedicated and stable funding that is more transparent for everyone.

## 3. Who will pay the fee?

- The stormwater service fee will be charged to every property in Guelph with the exception of publically-funded school board properties.
- The stormwater service fee will be billed by Guelph Hydro on behalf of the City.
- Tenants who pay for their own water/wastewater use will see the stormwater service fee on their monthly bill; in cases where a landlord pays for water/wastewater use, the landlord will be billed for the stormwater service fee.

## 4. I'm not affected by flooding. Do I still have to pay the fee?

Yes. Every property and many shared assets—such as roads and sidewalks— contribute to stormwater runoff. Everyone in Guelph benefits from effective stormwater services.

## 5. How much is the new fee?

- The residential fee is \$4/month. This fee is applied to every house, townhouse, apartment and condominium in Guelph. This flat fee is the best balance between fairness and administrative costs to the City.
- Industrial, commercial and institutional properties will be assessed and pay a monthly fee that reflects the impervious (hard) surfaces on their property such as larger rooftops, parking lots, and concrete surfaces.

## 6. Have stormwater service fees been removed from property taxes?

Yes, funding for stormwater services has been removed from the City's tax-supported budget, as of 2017. This is the budget that determines the municipal portion of property taxes. The other factors that determine property taxes are assessed property value and provincial taxes.

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## **7. Doesn't our wastewater rate already cover stormwater?**

No. The stormwater management system functions independently of the wastewater (sanitary sewer) system. Stormwater runoff from rain and snow flows overland and through sewer pipes to our local rivers. Wastewater rates cover the 24-hour business of treating household, business and industrial wastewater, a provincially regulated service. Wastewater includes all the water and other materials that go down sink and tub drains, and are flushed down toilets.

The City's stormwater system consists of about 477 km of sewer pipes, 11,900 catch basins or drains, 120 stormwater management facilities such as ponds, and 143 oil-grit separators—all valued at over \$572 million.

## **8. How is this funding going to be used?**

The stormwater service fee will exclusively cover the cost to operate, maintain, upgrade and build stormwater service infrastructure as Guelph continues to grow.

## **9. When was this decided?**

Guelph City Council approved a staff recommendation for a dedicated stormwater service fee by a vote of 11 to 2 at the Council meeting on March 21, 2016. The recommendation was made following more than two years of research and community consultation.

## **10. Is there a credit program?**

The City is exploring options for a credit program. The City will engage the community as part of its research. Visit [\*\*guelph.ca/stormwater\*\*](http://guelph.ca/stormwater) to learn about how you can get involved.

## **11. Where can I go for more information?**

Visit [\*\*guelph.ca/stormwater\*\*](http://guelph.ca/stormwater) for more information about the service fee including facts, background research and reports.

You can also email [stormwater@guelph.ca](mailto:stormwater@guelph.ca) or call 519-837-5604 with your questions.