

The City of Minneapolis setup the Stormwater Management program and fee to create a fair and equitable system and encourage folks to take steps to protect waterways/environment

- In the past, the City paid for stormwater management through its monthly sewer charge to property owners, which means that the stormwater fees were based on the amount of water that individual properties used, rather than the amount of a property's surface area that contributed to runoff.
- There is no connection between water use and stormwater, which is why the City sought to change this system. For example, a business that used very little water (perhaps the business only had an employee restroom), but had a large asphalt parking lot was being charged very little for stormwater services, yet was responsible for significant stormwater runoff.
- **Don't forget why Minneapolis has a stormwater management program.** As a community we all want to protect Minneapolis' natural waterways. One of the best ways to reduce pollution and litter in our lakes, creeks and rivers is through an effective stormwater management program. Stormwater is simply rainwater or melting snow, which runs off of buildings, parking lots, streets and sidewalks into our storm sewers and eventually drains into our lakes, creeks and the Mississippi. Stormwater causes flooding, pooling, erosion and pollution and is a threat to people's homes and properties and the environment. The City of Minneapolis stormwater management efforts are designed to help stop flooding and clean up stormwater before it reaches our waterways.
- One of the best things about the new **stormwater program** is a credit system, which **encourages property owners** to put in place some **environmentally-friendly systems**, which will lower property owners' stormwater fees and help protect our environment. You can learn more about the credit system and the City's overall stormwater management program at: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/stormwater. (Specific stormwater utility fee information can be found by clicking on the phrase "Stormwater Utility Fee" under the News heading.)

What the stormwater fee means to property owners

- The **majority of single family homes** are **expected to see virtually no change** in their **monthly utility fee**, since their stormwater fees will go up and their sewer rates will go down (about 75,000 of the city's 100,000 properties are single family homes). Households with four or more occupants are likely to see a drop in their overall bill. For the remaining 25 percent of properties, which are businesses and multifamily residential, there likely will be some increases to their monthly bills. For example, an average duplex would likely see an increase of less than \$20 per month. Again, that's because many of these structures were not paying their 'portion' of the stormwater services because they were being charged based on their water usage, not on the amount of stormwater that runs from their properties.

- Bottom line is that **if a customer's overall utility bill went up** because of the stormwater fee, then it is likely that **customer was not paying their fair share** of the stormwater management costs; **if a customer's bill went down**, it is likely that in the past **they were paying more than their fair share**.

The stormwater fee doesn't generate additional money for the City

- **The stormwater fee is revenue neutral** – it will not bring in new revenues for the City. The City's sewer and stormwater program cost about \$70 million. In the past sewer charges funded that combined program. Now the sewer charges will fund the portion (\$40 million) that is related to that program and the stormwater fee will fund the stormwater management program (\$30 million).

Minneapolis sought input along the way

- **Minneapolis formed a citizens advisory group** to help come up with a **fair and equitable system** for stormwater fees in the summer of 2004. The advisory group included Minneapolis residents, business representatives (Downtown Council, BOMA), as well as representatives from the environmental community, other governmental jurisdictions (including Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council) and the University of Minnesota.
- The City held **three public meetings** and a **public hearing to educate** the public about the proposed change and to **get feedback from folks in the community**.

The Stormwater fee now relates to how much a property contributes to stormwater runoff

- The stormwater fee was approved in late 2004 and beginning this year (March), the stormwater fee for Minneapolis property owners is listed separately from sewer usage on customers' utility bills. The stormwater fee is calculated based on a property's estimated "impervious" area, which are those surfaces where stormwater cannot naturally absorb into the ground (like parking lots, roofs, garages, concrete patios, gravel, etc.).
- The City determined a properties' impervious area using land use classifications established by the City assessor. City staff took a sampling of single family residential properties (the typical home) to create a three tier rate, High (properties with greater than 1,578 square feet of impervious area); Medium (1,485 to 1,578 square feet of impervious area); Low (less than 1,485 square feet of impervious area). For all other land uses we used site visits and national studies to estimate impervious area on properties according to land use. In the case of multi-family properties (duplex, triplex, condos, etc.) the City used these factors to establish multi-family properties at 75% impervious area (which would include the home, patio, driveway, garage, private walkways). A typical office complex would have a large foot print for the building, a parking lot for their employees, and a small grass buffer between the parking area

and the building or parking area and sidewalk. This land use category (office) has an estimate of 91 percent impervious area.

- Since Minneapolis is a dense urban environment (100,000 properties) it would be nearly impossible to individually inspect every property to determine its amount of impervious area, so it's necessary to use a method that examines a sampling of properties.

Cities and towns throughout Minnesota and the country have stormwater fee programs

- **At least 70 communities in the metro area** currently **have stormwater fee programs** and cities and towns through Minnesota also have stormwater fees. Many other cities have set up their stormwater fee program the same or similar to Minneapolis, including St. Louis; Norfolk, Va; Wichita; Ann Arbor; and Arlington, Texas.

We want to address any concerns

- If **you believe that your property's stormwater fee is incorrect** based on the estimated impervious area on your property, please **contact the Utility Billing** Office to get additional information on how this can be changed. **We want this system to be fair and accurate!**