



## **Your Storm Water Management Utility**

(Updated January 2010)

The Greenfield Common Council established a Storm Water Utility in 2009. Revenues from the Utility will allow the City to dedicate funds to maintain and improve the City's storm water management program.

### **The Benefits of Your Storm Water Program**

The issue of storm water management affects everyone in Greenfield, as we all contribute to the generation of storm water runoff in our community. Even if your property has never had a drainage problem, the storm water runoff that comes from your rooftop, driveway, or parking lot must be managed to prevent flooding and improve water quality in areas further downstream. Just as we all contribute to the storm water system, we all benefit from effective storm water management. Those benefits are many, including:

- Improved water quality
- Improved infrastructure, safety, and security
- Improved quality of life
- Smart, quality growth
- Federal and state permit compliance

Polluted, untreated storm water runoff that flows from parking lots, streets, driveways, yards, and rooftops ends up in our streams and Lake Michigan. This is why the motto of the Greenfield Storm Water Utility will be "All drains lead to our drinking water". The Greenfield Storm Water Management Program will help reduce the pollutants that enter our streams and Lake Michigan through storm water discharges.

### **Sharing Storm Water Management Costs**

The increased storm water services mandated by the federal and state governments require additional funding. Since this is an unfunded mandate, the City of Greenfield created a Storm Water Feasibility Group, comprised of citizens, business owners, and school district representatives. This group recommended that storm water services be funded through a storm water utility fee. Much like water or sewer fees, a storm water utility charges customers based on services provided.

The establishment of a utility allows the City to legally and fairly assess fees for storm water management services. A storm water utility only collects fees necessary to fund local storm water management needs. These dedicated funds will only be used for storm water related projects and nothing else.

Other funding options have been considered but were not found to be an equitable distribution of storm water costs. One option, raising the property tax rate, charges all taxed properties in the City a similar rate, regardless of on-site storm water controls or how the property is developed. Also, some contributors to storm water runoff, including schools, churches, and government buildings are tax-exempt and would not pay their fair share of storm water costs because they don't pay taxes. These tax-exempt properties will pay a storm water utility fee just as they also pay water and sewer utility fees.

As proven in communities all over the country, a utility is an equitable and reliable way to fund storm water programs and provide these necessary services.

### **Storm Water Fee Determination**

The storm water utility fee is based upon an equivalency charge. The equivalency charge (EC) is keyed to an Equivalent Runoff Unit or "ERU". It is used to estimate the relative cost of managing the impact of development on storm water quantity (flooding) and quality (pollution) and is based on the average impervious area of single-family homes within the City. Impervious areas include roofs, driveways, and other hard surfaces. In the City of Greenfield, one ERU is equal to 3,630 square feet. This component is applied to all parcels that have impervious surfaces. The quarterly EC is

\$12.45 per ERU. The EC for all residential single-family properties is based on 1.0 ERU. The EC for residential duplex properties is based on 1.1 ERUs to account for the slightly higher average impervious area. "Other developed" properties include residential parcels that are not single-family or duplex parcels, commercial, industrial, governmental, institutional, and other properties with impervious area. The EC for "other developed" properties and multi-building properties is based on the impervious area measured and the resulting number of ERUs calculated for each parcel. The table to the right shows examples of typical storm water utility fees.

### When Will the Utility be Started?

The Common Council adopted an ordinance to create the Storm Water Utility starting August 1, 2009. Storm Water Utility fees will begin to appear on your sewer utility bill mailed in January 2010. **This first Storm Water Utility fee is for five months, August through December 2009.** Future fees will be for three months (quarterly).

### Getting the Most for Your Storm Water Dollars

The question most will ask is, "What am I getting for my money?" The storm water utility fee will pay for the operations and maintenance costs of the storm water program. Some of the services that will be tied to the storm water program include:

- Improved water quality through watershed protection
- Maintenance of drainageways
- Street sweeping
- Education and outreach to improve public understanding
- Construction inspections to assure proper site management
- Project design and management
- Federal and state regulatory compliance
- Improved long-term storm water planning
- Increased oversight of new development
- Cleaning storm water retention/detention ponds
- Cleaning and maintaining storm water structures
- Construction of new water quality treatment facilities
- Flood management

### Rates

Type of Property	Total Impervious Square Footage	Total ERUs	Total Quarterly Charge
Residential Single-family (average)	3,630	1.0	\$12.45
Residential Duplex (average)	3,990	1.1	\$13.70
Other Developed:			
Sample Church	52,953	14.6	\$181.77
Sample Business	10,909	3.0	\$37.35
Sample Apartment building	39,495	10.9	\$135.71
Sample Restaurant	44,720	12.3	\$153.14
Multi-Building Developments			
Sample 6-building	120,000	33.1	\$412.10

### Federal Permit Compliance

Residents have laws they must abide by to have a safer, healthier community. Similarly, local governments have laws, or mandates, they must abide by as well. One of those is the Clean Water Act. The act was ratified "... to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters." This act ensures that residents can be confident that their local communities are working diligently to protect the waters in their area.

The Clean Water Act has been working to protect our nation's waters for more than thirty years and continues to evolve over time. In 2001, the City of Greenfield was designated as a Phase II Permitted community under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) rule of the Clean Water Act. This rule is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The DNR has in turn created NR 216 and NR 151 to address these storm water issues.

The designation as a Permitted community required the City of Greenfield to develop a storm water management program addressing six key areas:

1. Public education
2. Public involvement in the storm water program
3. Elimination of unlawful discharges
4. Controls on new construction
5. Post-construction management of storm water runoff
6. Implementation of good housekeeping activities for municipal operations

By working progressively, the City of Greenfield is taking the extra steps needed to guarantee that we are in compliance with these regulations and that the storm water problems of the City of Greenfield are not being left for future generations to fix.

### **Where Do I Go for More Information?**

Much of the information about the new utility is based on a report prepared for the City by a consultant named AECOM. This report is available for public review in the Engineering Division office, City Hall, Room 203. Information can also be found on the City web site at [www.greenfieldwi.us](http://www.greenfieldwi.us).

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