

## Jamestown Stormwater Utility

The City of Jamestown is planning to establish a stormwater utility in early 2017. The purpose of creating the new utility is to fund the operation, maintenance, and regulation of the City's stormwater management system. Currently, maintenance of the City's stormwater infrastructure is primarily being funded through the Jamestown Street Department., largely through property taxes. With the creation of a more equitable stormwater utility fee, where all properties benefiting from the use of our drainage infrastructure – including property tax exempt properties – will contribute to stormwater infrastructure maintenance through a monthly fee that will appear on City utility bills.

The stormwater utility rate is being designed for owners of developed properties in the City of Jamestown will assist in addressing stormwater management program costs. The utility fee is based on lot size as well as the amount of impervious (paved) area on each property. Properties with greater amounts of pavement or other impervious surfaces contribute larger amounts of stormwater runoff from rain or melting snow and pollutants to Jamestown's stormwater management system.

Based on the average residential lot size in Jamestown, the preliminary fee estimate is about \$2.00 per month. Larger commercial properties will be considered individually. In order to inform all property owners and verify property billing characteristics, the City of Jamestown intends to send stormwater utility fee estimates to each property owner during the first half of 2017.

## Jamestown Stormwater Utility FAQ

### What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is the water that flows off of roofs, driveways, parking lots, streets, and other hard surfaces during rain events and snowmelt. The water that flows off of grass surfaces and wooded areas that is not absorbed into the soil is also considered stormwater runoff. Rainwater and snowmelt that is not absorbed into the ground flows into ditches, culverts, and storm sewers and does not receive any treatment to remove pollutants before entering our rivers and streams.

### What is impervious area?

Impervious area is defined as “area covered by hard surfaces such as structures, paving, compacted gravel, concrete, or other man-made features that prevent, restrict, or impede the downward passage of stormwater into the underlying soil.”

### Why does Jamestown need to manage its stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff needs to be managed just as any other process in the city is managed, such as water, sewer, roadway, or solid waste systems. Management is essential to protect the quality of the waterways we use for drinking water supplies, recreational activities, and for the health of local wildlife. Stormwater also needs to be managed to ensure heavy rainfall or rapid snowmelt does not put public safety or private property at risk due to flooding or erosion.

### Why is a stormwater utility fee necessary?

The City of Jamestown will adopt a stormwater utility fee to fund the City's stormwater program. A stormwater utility fee is a "fee for service" based on total property area and the amount of impervious area on a property that prevents rainfall or snowmelt from soaking into the ground. The fee for each property is determined by the lot's size and the amount of impervious area that causes stormwater runoff.

### Why is Jamestown adopting a stormwater utility fee?

After completing a stormwater utility feasibility study in 2016, the City of Jamestown decided to adopt a stormwater utility fee to pay for stormwater infrastructure capital, operation, and maintenance. The primary benefit to instituting a utility fee is it fairly distributes the cost of the City's stormwater services across all eligible properties based on the parcel's contribution to stormwater runoff.

### How did Jamestown previously pay for its stormwater services before the utility was created?

Prior to the creation of Jamestown's stormwater utility fee, stormwater initiatives were mainly funded through the operating budgets of the Water, Sanitary Sewer, and Street Departments. Some properties are tax exempt, therefore charging a fee to all property owners is more equitable than funding stormwater maintenance with property taxes.

### How much funding will Jamestown's Stormwater Utility collect annually?

The stormwater utility fee will be structured to generate adequate revenue for the maintenance of the City's storm sewer system and additional funds for payments on bonds for projects to improve the stormwater infrastructure system.

### How many other North Dakota cities have stormwater utilities and charge residents a stormwater utility fee?

Eight communities in North Dakota currently have a stormwater utility fee. Average charges for residential properties vary from \$1.00 to \$9.00 per month.

### How does the City determine the Stormwater Utility Fee for my property?

The City uses parcel information and land use data to identify impervious areas on each property. Your property characteristics on file with the City will be provided for your review in advance of monthly fee implementation.

### I rent the property, who is responsible for the fee?

The stormwater utility fee will be charged to the property owner. The owner will be billed and is responsible for ensuring the fee is paid. Any agreement for payment of the fee by the renter or inclusion of the fee in the property's rental fee is at the discretion of such parties.