

FACTSHEET:

PAYING FOR RAIN? MUNICIPAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FEES

Rain and melted snow results in stormwater runoff from properties into storm drains. This water flows through a network of pipes and waterways ending up in a water body such as a lake or river. Stormwater drainage systems reduce the risk of flooding, property damage and adverse effects on the environment. Cities are starting to implement a fee for the use of their piping networks that drain the stormwater from your property. The fees are used to:

- ✓ Off-set the costs of upgrading, operating and maintaining the infrastructure used to convey and treat stormwater run-off;
- ✓ Incent the public to reduce stormwater runoff as means to mitigate further capital expenditure for additional infrastructure; and
- ✓ Encourage designs in new developments to minimize stormwater runoff.

The City of Toronto's recently completed "Future Weather and Climate Drive Study" predicts a doubling of maximum rainfall rates by 2049. Cities need to prepare for managing increased stormwater rates in a sustainable manner. As stormwater infrastructure ages and land is developed, alternative funding sources to the traditional fees and property taxes are needed.

Many cities across Canada, and elsewhere, are addressing the requirement by establishing stormwater utilities or implementing stormwater charges to generate the required funds.

In Ontario, Kitchener/Waterloo, London, Aurora, Richmond Hill, Markham and Hamilton have already implemented stormwater management fees and in 2016, Mississauga will start their program. Toronto has adjusted their water rate to fund stormwater initiatives. Toronto is looking to implement their formal stormwater fee system in 2018.

Programs and charges vary between jurisdictions and most are based on the hard surface of the property discharging stormwater. Hard surface is any area of a property where water cannot penetrate such as roofs, driveways, walkways, patios, etc.

Mississauga's stormwater charges

are calculated by determining how a given property's hard surfaces compare to the average Mississauga resident and then multiplying by \$100/unit. Kitchener uses a scale based on property classification and established cost for a range of hard surface values. London bases their charges on the area of property and has no correlation to hard surface area. The table below illustrates the differences stormwater fees for a given property size in Mississauga, Kitchener and London, Ontario. Annual stormwater charges for a small shopping mall having a hard surface area of about 6,300 m² will be \$2,350 in Mississauga, \$1,685 in Kitchener and \$906 in London.

Property (Hard Surface Area)	Mississauga	Kitchener	London
Retail Property (6,300 m ²)	\$2,350	\$1,685	\$906
Office Property (36,400 m ²)	\$13,620	\$11,923	\$5,261
Industrial Property (72,000 m ²)	\$27,040	\$25,596	\$10,446

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REDUCING STORMWATER CHARGES

Some cities incent property owners to reduce their stormwater charges by offering credits or stormwater charge reductions. Credit programs are jurisdiction specific; however, the key types of credits are listed below.

Peak Flow Reduction

Allowing the water to drain slowly from the property during and after precipitation may reduce annual charges significantly. This can take the form of roof top or parking lot rainwater storage and wet or dry ponds.

Water Quality Treatment

Treating stormwater prior to discharge can also reduce annual charges and some facilities may already have stormwater interceptors. Regardless of the type of water quality treatment system in place, most require regular maintenance to ensure proper operation, and cities may require proof of this maintenance. For instance, interceptor clean out and disposal invoices might need to be submitted to the city in order to obtain the credit.



Runoff Volume Reduction

This technology is ideal for sites that have yet to be developed and can yield significant credits. It involves capturing a specific volume of rain at the beginning of any rainfall and re-using that water. This water could be used for green space irrigation or for non-potable uses within the property building. This is a capital intensive option but can yield significant savings for larger properties yet to be developed.

Pollution Prevention

Implementing pollution prevention practices will also yield some reduction in charges and will be the easiest credit for property owners to take advantage of. Parking lot sweeping and proper salt application during the winter months can significantly reduce the level of contaminants leaving the property. For industrial sites, suitable chemical management and spill plans are a must. Documentation illustrating pollution prevention activities may have to be submitted to the city to obtain the credit.

Property owners should review the programs and incentives in their jurisdiction before applying for any available credits. When considering the implementation of stormwater control measures for larger properties, qualified consultants should be engaged to review proposed measures and existing building design to prevent water infiltration issues in buildings. For those properties that have yet to be developed, it is advantageous to ensure the property contains features that maximize stormwater credits. If an undeveloped site is located in a jurisdiction without a stormwater charge and credit program, designing the site to minimize runoff is beneficial to the environment and may yield future savings.

