



## Stormwater Utility Program

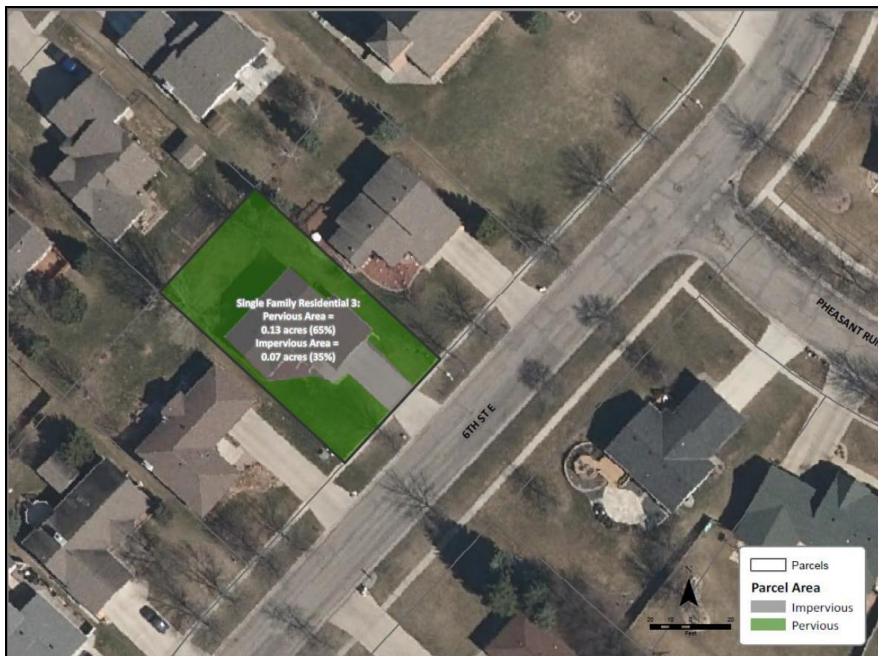
### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 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 driveways, buildings, roofs, pavement, compacted gravel, concrete, or other man-made features that prevent, restrict, or impede the downward passage of stormwater into the underlying soil.



This figure illustrates both the impervious area of a residential property (house, driveway, path) and the pervious area (the grassy area).

*Figure 1 - Impervious Area Example*

#### 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 treatment, sanitary sewer, roads, 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 environment. 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 is adopting a Stormwater Utility Fee to fund the City's Stormwater Program. A Stormwater Utility Fee is a fee for service based on the 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 size of the property and the amount of impervious area that causes stormwater to run off rather than soaking into the ground.

## **Why is Jamestown adopting a Stormwater Utility Fee?**

The primary benefit to implementing a Stormwater Utility Fee is to fairly distribute the cost of the community's stormwater services across all eligible properties based on the property's contribution to stormwater runoff. These services include everything from cleaning city-owned stormwater, to street sweeping, plowing, and infrastructure management.

## **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 community's storm sewer system and eventually help fund payments on bonds for projects to improve the stormwater infrastructure system. It is anticipated that the new utility will generate approximately \$500,000 per year.

## **Do other North Dakota cities have stormwater utilities and charge 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 did the City determine the Stormwater Utility fee for my property?**

The City used parcel information and land use data to calculate impervious areas for residential and commercial properties.

## **Who is responsible for the fee?**

The Stormwater Utility fee will be charged on the utility bill. Vacant properties will be billed for stormwater though the property owner may not currently receive a utility bill. Like all city utilities (water, sanitary sewer, garbage), the property owner is ultimately responsible to ensure the utility fees are paid.