



First Stormwater Utility Bill Issued this Month

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — The City of Victoria has introduced a new stormwater utility. This month, property owners will receive the first annual stormwater utility bill. In the past, all stormwater charges were included within the property tax bill and were determined by the assessed property value. The new stormwater utility is a user-pay system, connecting the impact a property has on the stormwater system directly to the bill. This billing method is a shift from charging through property taxes, and does not pose any increase in overall revenue to the City.

Charges are based on each property's characteristics, including the area of hard surfaces such as a roof and driveway, property use and length of street frontage. These measurements were determined using geographic information systems (GIS) technology, aerial photography and building plans. Victoria is one of several Canadian municipalities that has adopted a billing method based on a property's direct impact on the system.

Stormwater is rain that lands on hard surfaces and then flows into drains and pipes. Victoria's stormwater system is made up of over 250 kilometres of stormwater pipes, 5,700 catch basins, and three rehabilitation units that reduce contaminants in stormwater.

The stormwater system helps to manage the rain and runoff in Victoria, reducing flooding by moving excess stormwater away from properties. It also separates some of the oil, metals, sand and soil that would otherwise flow into our waterways and ocean.

In addition to being more equitable, the new billing method allows the City to offer incentives for managing rainwater more sustainably, through the Rainwater Rewards program. Property owners who are considering improvements can introduce methods such as rain gardens, cisterns, green roofs, permeable paving and other approved rainwater management methods for on-going credits to reduce their bill. Property owners are encouraged to learn more about eligible rainwater management methods and apply for both existing and planned activities.

By managing stormwater more sustainably, rain is captured for reuse in landscaping or slowed, cleaned and released back into the natural water table. It also increases the system's ability to deal with a changing climate and rainfall patterns.

This change in how properties will be billed is revenue neutral. The City's stormwater budget remains the same through the change from a property tax system to a utility system.

For more information please visit: www.victoria.ca/stormwater.

ATTACHMENT: Infographic summary of stormwater utility charges

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For More Information:

Rebecca Penz

Citizen Engagement Advisor

City of Victoria

Office: 250.361.0263 Cellular: 250.661.0085