



# Changes to Your Water and Sewer Bill Effective July 1, 2020

[www.oakparkmi.gov/stormwater.php](http://www.oakparkmi.gov/stormwater.php)

## **What has changed?**

As of July 1, 2020, stormwater treatment cost will be displayed as an individual line item on all customers' water bills going forward.

## **How will the water bill look different?**

In the past, water bills have included line item charges for the meter, water consumption, sewer usage and garbage & rubbish. Until now, stormwater charges were included in the sewer usage charge. The new bill will separate the stormwater runoff charge into its own line item.

## **Why the change?**

The City of Oak Park recently settled a class-action lawsuit filed by Royal Oak-based law firm Kickham Hanley P.L.L.C. on behalf of Oak Park water customers. The lawsuit challenged the City's approach to how the cost of stormwater treatment is distributed to customers. As a result of the settlement, water bills will now reflect each property's unique contribution to stormwater runoff into the sewer system.

## **What does this mean for customers?**

Most Oak Park residential customers will notice an overall bill decrease due to a reduction in the sewer charge, while others may experience a slight increase depending on property size and configuration. Most property owners of businesses will experience a bill increase.

## **What is the basis of the stormwater rate?**

Stormwater originates from rainfall and melting snow and ice. Stormwater that does not evaporate can either soak into the ground, accumulate on land surfaces (which can cause flooding), or run off into the sewer system. Water and sewage charges cover sanitary use from inside the structure, e.g., water that leaves your home or building through sink drains and toilets, while stormwater charges are based on the amount of water the property owner's land discharges into the sewer system.

The stormwater rate depends on property size and how much of that property is occupied by pervious and impervious surfaces. Pervious surfaces, such as grass and dirt, allow rainwater to seep into the soil, while rainwater on impervious surfaces – such as cement or asphalt driveways, parking lots, and rooftops – runs off into the sewer system.



## **What is the City's position on the mandated changes?**

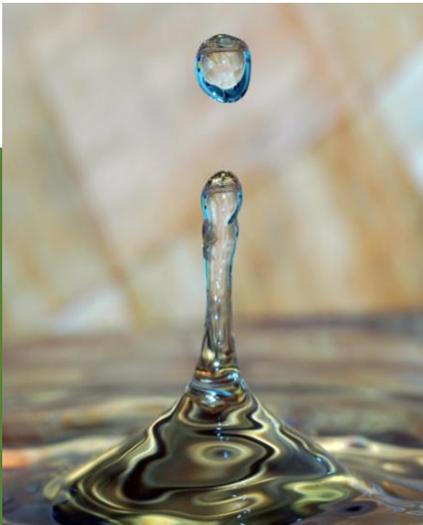
The City of Oak Park consistently strives to provide residents with the highest quality of services in a fair and efficient manner. The terms of the complaint settlement are designed to ensure equitable distribution of resource costs. All revenue collected from customers for water, sewer, and stormwater charges sustain an *Enterprise Fund*, which designates the funds only for use on direct costs related to the water and sewer system. The change in water billing methodology will not result in increased revenue for the City of Oak Park.

## **Who will be most impacted by the change in billing methodology?**

The City of Oak Park currently occupies the most land in the city, which includes public parks, administrative buildings, and vacant properties from tax foreclosures, and will experience the heaviest increase in stormwater charges. The City's three school districts – Oak Park, Ferndale, and Berkley – will also experience significant increases, along with several larger business entities.

## **How will the City's stormwater charges be paid?**

The City's portion will be paid out of the City's General Fund with no additional cost to water customers. This new contribution from the General Fund to the Water and Sewer Fund will result in overall lower costs to all the other City's customers.



### **Where should billing questions be directed?**

For immediate questions related to stormwater utility fees, please contact the City of Oak Park's Finance Department at (248) 691-7470 or [kvandewalle@oakparkmi.gov](mailto:kvandewalle@oakparkmi.gov).

### **For additional information, visit:**

[www.oakparkmi.gov/stormwater.php](http://www.oakparkmi.gov/stormwater.php)

### **How can customers learn more about the settlement?**

The water rate lawsuit filed against the City of Oak Park is currently closed. Those interested in learning more about the settlement terms can contact Angeion Group, 1650 Arch Street, Suite 2210, Philadelphia, PA 19103; 866-780-5352; or [info@OakParkSettlement.com](mailto:info@OakParkSettlement.com).