

Town of Cobourg to Amend Stormwater Billing Structure

Staff report coming back to Council in the fall detailing updated rates and implementation plan

Cobourg, ON (July 29, 2024) – The Town of Cobourg would like to inform residents of an upcoming amendment to stormwater management billing.

At the June 26, 2024, Regular Council Meeting, Council directed staff to finalize an alternative rate structure for stormwater management. Following a review of the Town of Cobourg stormwater rate structure, Council received a presentation from consultants at Watson & Associates detailing three alternative rate structures for their consideration. Council has selected rate structure B as presented by the consultants, which will introduce a flat fee for properties up to one acre in size. Additional charges of \$2,060.11 per hectare will apply for all commercial, institutional and industrial properties above one acre/0.40469 hectares. There are no additional charges for residential, agricultural or vacant land that are above one acre in size.

Additional changes to be applied to the stormwater management rate structure include the re-classification of cemeteries. At the June 26 meeting, Council moved to re-classify cemeteries as Vacant Land, therefore, reducing the fees applied to these properties.

Staff are currently working with consultants at Watson & Associates to update the amended stormwater rate structure as per Council's recommendations. Staff will also work with Lakefront Utility Services Inc. to find solutions for rectifying 2023 and current 2024 bills, based on the new 2024 rates. A staff report will be coming back to Council in the fall outlining the new rate structure, timelines for implementation as well as an updated financial model and forecasted rates for 2025 and beyond. Following Council's final approval, staff will issue out an updated notice and educational materials to advise the community.

About Stormwater:

Stormwater is a form of wastewater whereby rainwater and snowmelt run off properties and often makes its way through the storm sewer system and/or a stormwater pond before discharging to the environment. Even if water does not directly flow from your property into our stormwater system, all the lands and roads in Cobourg are serviced by stormwater infrastructure. The purpose of stormwater management is to maintain the health of streams, lakes and aquatic life by mitigating the effects of urban development.

The Town of Cobourg stormwater management system is valued at approximately \$70.2 million. Stormwater assets include:

- Over 70km of storm sewers
- 3,474 manholes and catch basins
- 6 stormwater ponds
- 3 pump stations
- 65 outlets points
- 4 oil/grit separators

About dedicated Stormwater billing:

Past practice in the Town of Cobourg was to fund stormwater infrastructure through property taxes. Through asset management planning it was noted that that Stormwater Management was under funded and an additional 1.2 million annually was required to properly fund the Town's stormwater infrastructure.

In June 2022, Cobourg Council adopted a Stormwater Asset Management Plan and approved the implementation of a dedicated funding source for stormwater management, similar to the full cost recovery system that is in place for water and wastewater assets in Cobourg. Stormwater fees are based on the type and size of the property. With this system, more impermeable properties, such as commercial and industrial lands pay a heavier percentage of the costs than low-density residential lands. Therefore, lessening the burden on residential property owners.

2024 Rate Assessment

Upon roll out of Stormwater Management service charges in 2023, resident inquiries to Staff and Council were substantial and included several delegations at the January 10, 2024, Planning and Public Works Standing Committee as well as the January 31, 2024, Regular Council meeting. Council directed Staff to conduct a review of the stormwater rate structure and report back with considerations for improvement.

-30-

Media Contacts

Kara Euale
Manager, Communications
Town of Cobourg
p: 905-372-4301 x 4105
e: keuale@cobourg.ca

About The Town of Cobourg

The Town of Cobourg is a lakeside community (population 20,500) located on the north shore of Lake Ontario halfway between Toronto and Kingston and has been recognized multiple times by MoneySense Magazine as "One of Canada's Best Places to Live" in populations under 25,000.

Founded in 1798, Cobourg is rich in heritage offering a vibrant downtown, sophisticated small-town atmosphere and renowned waterfront that serves as a popular getaway destination. As the largest town in Northumberland County, Cobourg is personified by historic Victoria Hall, hosts a 143,000 sq. ft. multiple purpose community centre, an educated and skilled labour force, flourishing commercial sector and supportive municipal government. Cobourg has received the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Sustainable Communities Award, accolades from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance, and multiple heritage, environmental, and event awards.