



Water & Sewerage
Department

WORKING HARD FOR YOU.

SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT DETROIT DRAINAGE CHARGE

MYTH: ONLY DETROIT PAYS FOR DRAINAGE.

FACT: Communities across southeast Michigan pay for stormwater management (drainage) either through their water bill as part of the sewage charge or a separate charge, or through property taxes. It's assessed based on local stormwater system that meets permit requirements and the fee method the community uses. See examples on reverse side.

MYTH: RAIN WATER IS CLEAN.

FACT: When rain and snowmelt run off roofs, sidewalks, driveways, and streets, they mix with dirt, oil and debris and flows into the combined sewer system. When this run off is blended with sanitary waste, it must be treated before being released into the Detroit and Rouge rivers.

MYTH: ALL DETROIT PROPERTY OWNERS ARE NOT CHARGED FOR DRAINAGE.

FACT: All customers including government entities are charged for drainage, except properties with fewer than 0.02 impervious acres or properties that discharge to surface waters will be given a GSI green credit.

MYTH: THE CHARGE IS A MONEY GRAB.

FACT: The drainage charge is not new. It recovers the cost to capture, convey, pump, treat and safely return combined sewage back to the Detroit and Rouge rivers – including the \$1.5 billion invested in nine combined sewer overflow (CSO) facilities and other wet weather treatment system improvements. This equates to \$150 million in annual drainage costs.

MYTH: THE DRAINAGE CHARGE IS NEW.

FACT: The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) has been billing customers since the 1975 City Charter authorized charging for water, drainage and sewerage services. DWSD must comply with Michigan law regarding fees for services. The charge was embedded on bills in the sewerage category until the mid 2000s.

MYTH: THE RATE IS UNFAIR.

FACT: The rate is based on each parcel's impact on the sewer system. As of July 2018, all customers are billed for drainage based on impervious acreage, a rate model used by many municipalities that provide wet weather treatment.

MYTH: THE CHARGE SHOULD NOT BE MONTHLY BECAUSE IT DOESN'T RAIN OR SNOW EVERY MONTH.

FACT: DWSD bills for drainage based on annual wet weather treatment costs, determined by analyzing the volume of flow treated on dry days versus wet weather days. This equates to a simpler billing process.

Learn more at www.detroitmi.gov/drainage.

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SAMPLES OF OTHER MICHIGAN COMMUNITIES

Detroit has a combined sewer system, while some suburban communities have a separated sewer system. Each community manages stormwater (drainage) differently, so the costs vary based on the type of facilities constructed to meet permit obligations. Below is a sample of how other Michigan communities charge for stormwater management:

ANN ARBOR:

The rate is based on “usage of the storm water system, as represented by impervious area. Examples of impervious areas include roofs, pavement, sidewalks, patios, and gravel or crushed stone surfaces.” Nonresidential properties are billed \$929.77 per acre per quarter (plus customer charge), and residential are billed \$34.46 to \$180.90 per quarter depending on square footage.

HUNTINGTON WOODS:

“Based upon the costs of operation including rainfall, historical data and future projections of water use and weather, the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner sets sewage rates for a three-year period for communities in the Clinton River Watershed. This includes the cost to operate the George W. Kuhn Drain.” The wastewater rate of \$13.25 per 100 cubic feet per month includes the cost to manage storm runoff.

BIRMINGHAM:

“The Storm Water Utility Fee will be apportioned to all properties in the City that contribute storm water into the City’s sewer system, from both surface run off and underground footing drain inflow.” The Storm Water Utility Fee per Equivalent Storm Water Unit is \$62.00 for the Evergreen Farmington District and \$68.25 for the South Oakland District.

PLEASANT RIDGE:

“The stormwater flows into the sewers from the streets during rain events and mixes with sewage, and all of the run off must be treated before it flows out to the Red Run Drain, Clinton River and into the Great Lakes.” The stormwater runoff charge is \$47.51 per Equivalent Storm Water Unit per bill.



**CONNER CREEK CSO CONTROL
FACILITY IN DETROIT**



GEORGE W. KUHN DRAIN IN MADISON HEIGHTS

OTHER STORMWATER FACILITIES IN OAKLAND COUNTY

