



# FAQs: Drainage Charge Overview

## Starting this October, DWSD will Charge all City Parcels for Drainage, Reduce Impervious Rate and Launch Drainage Charge Credits

### What is an impervious surface?

Impervious surfaces are concrete, asphalt, rooftops and other hard surfaces that do not allow rain and snowmelt to soak into the ground.

### How does the drainage charge impact Detroit's residential customers?

Most residential customers have been paying a drainage fee to the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) since 1975. Currently the average Detroit resident pays \$20.36 per month for drainage and won't see much if any impact. Most residential customers will be phased into the new impervious acreage rate beginning in October 2017. Parcels which have never been billed for drainage will receive a DWSD bill in October 2016. Properties with 0.02 impervious acres or less will not be charged for drainage and homeowners who purchased vacant side lots will likely not be charged an additional drainage fee unless property improvements (such as an added driveway or garage) increase impervious acreage area.

### Why does DWSD charge for drainage?

Each year, DWSD incurs more than \$125 million annually to store and transport billions of gallons of storm water runoff flowing from roofs, parking lots and similar hard, impervious surfaces into the City's combined sewer system. This drainage which is contaminated with dirt and debris, is collected in the same pipe as wastewater and must be treated at the wastewater treatment plant before it can be released back into the environment.

### How is DWSD reducing Detroit's drainage fees?

There are more than 22,000 parcels, (including parking lots and other commercial parcels) that send water runoff into Detroit's combined sewer system but who have never paid for drainage because they were not billed. By billing these parcels their fair and equitable share, DWSD can collect up to \$10 million in revenue that will be used to help all customers pay less for drainage every month. Starting in October, DWSD will launch Drainage Charge Credits, credits which customers can earn to reduce their drainage fee.

### Why are some non-residential customers paying more?

Some customers are charged based on the size of the meter while other customers are charged based on the amount of impervious acreage on their parcel. That disparity means that some customers are paying thousands of dollars every month for drainage while others were paying significantly less. By 2018, all DWSD customers will pay the same rate for impervious acreage. By billing all city parcels and charging everyone equally, DWSD can drive down drainage rates for all customers.



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## How DWSD can help?

To help customers reduce their monthly drainage charge, DWSD is providing drainage charge credits up to 80 percent for installing green infrastructure measures. Customers should visit [www.detroitmi.gov/drainage](http://www.detroitmi.gov/drainage) to learn more. Those 22,000 parcel owners who recently received a letter should call 313-267-8000 to make sure their parcel and account data is correct, explore eligible credits and payment options.