

Goals of Delegation

- To present petition “Stop Storm Water Fee Gouge by Town of Cobourg”
- To show the inequity of the current stormwater fee formula that is based solely on property size
- To demonstrate that larger rural and agricultural properties are part of green stormwater management
- To provide examples from other municipalities with more equitable distribution of stormwater fees;
- To show that \$200/yr for larger homes is in alignment with other municipalities (based on hard surface area)
- **To request a correction to the current stormwater fee calculation**

Introduction: 8817 DANFORTH RD E 2.6 ACRES

- Not connected to water or sewer services, etc. from the Town of Cobourg (septic, well, no streetlights), but have already received a property tax hike
- Much of property has natural ground cover (grass, 18 gardens, woods, Midtown Creek, floodplain/environmentally sensitive; **OUR PROPERTY REDUCES STORM WATER MANAGEMENT FOR TOWN OF COBOURG**
- We live and work in Cobourg; have owned this property for 15 years
- We have raised our children here, and our parents live in and own Cobourg properties
- Property is happily shared with native plants and animals; Nickerson Woods is a Flicker migration zone; we have planted over 500 native trees purchased from GRCA;
- Limited ability to develop this land for additional housing
- Our roots in Cobourg are deep, and we hope our contribution to the Town is acknowledged

Introduction: The WOODWARD PROPERTY

- Parcel of agricultural/ natural land south east of Greer/Danforth
- 93 acres, 60 acres farmed, other acreage covered in cedars, flood plain, and with a creek
- owned by successive generations of a local family for decades
- farmed for decades, currently by a tenant farmer
- no drainage into the town's storm sewer, and in fact contributes to the management of stormwater
- projected yearly charge (according to the current formula) is over \$15,000, apparently for stormwater management, and where **the property has no SWM and needs no such management.**



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Stop Storm Water Fee Gouge by Town of Cobourg

214	
Regulatory	\$6.54
Subtotal - Electricity Charges	\$173.88
Storm Water	\$318.52
HST #86512 5231 RT0001 **	\$22.60
Ontario Electricity Rebate	\$20.34 CR
Current Charges	\$494.66

We the undersigned citizens of Cobourg, call upon the Town of Cobourg Council to amend the existing Stormwater Fee Bylaw to immediately establish a cap of \$200/yr for larger residential and rural properties for 2023 and 2024.

Note: This cap may be unnecessary if the stormwater funding model is adjusted during the billing pause.

Moving forward, we call upon Cobourg Town Council to consider the following to create an accurate and sustainable Stormwater Management budget:

1. Send out individual and transparent notice of assessments for future fees.
2. **Consult with other municipalities that have more equitable billing formulas**
3. **Stop using only property size to calculate fees. Instead, use accurate technologies to calculate the run-off coefficient of individual properties.**
4. **Incentivize stormwater management practices for all properties in Cobourg.**
5. Revisit this Bylaw after the Province of Ontario completes its audit of how the Ontario Government's Build More Homes Faster legislation is impacting municipalities.
6. **Remember that times are already financially hard for people!**

Results of Petition:

- Total of 500 digital signatures
- 246 digital signatures from Cobourg residents and property owners
- 13 handwritten signatures from Cobourg residents and property owners
- 34 digital signatures from other Northumberland County residents

Sample of SW Fee Range adversely affecting larger residential and rural/agricultural property owners

Address	Nov/Dec	Yearly
Corner of Danforth and Greer Rd (MPAC #14 21 000260 02300)	\$5000	\$15,000
Nagle Rd	\$1,800	unknown
986 Elgin St E	\$968.98	unknown
1032 Elgin St E	n/a	\$2,000
995 Elgin St E	\$638.26	unknown
8943 Danforth Rd	\$615	unknown
256 Burnham St	\$390 (Nov), \$310 (Dec)	unknown
9138 Danforth Rd	\$333	\$1,000
1859 Workman Rd	\$321.32	unknown
8817 Danforth Rd	\$318	\$954

Sample of Stormwater Fees of “average” properties

Location	Nov/Dec Bill
214 Perry St	\$40
Ontario St S	\$20
Ashland Dr	\$11

Previous steps taken to address SW fee gouge:

1. Submitted request for reassessment to MPAC
2. Attempted to contact Laurie Wills, Director of Public Works by phone and email - no response
3. Contacted LUSI directly to obtain stormwater fee totals, in absence of notice of assessment
4. Emailed a letter to Mayor and Council to address high fee issue
5. Addressed Mayor Cleveland at “Year in Review”; successfully encouraged other adversely affected property owners to speak
6. Spoke directly with Councillors Mutton, Burchart, Barber and Bureau
7. Had email exchange with Councillor Barber
8. Had meeting with Mayor Cleveland
9. Circulated petition to “Stop Storm Water Fee Gouge”
10. Directly visited homes of my neighbours; heard stories of stress and upset over excessive fees

We agree that using property size and type may be part of the calculation method, but believe other factors should be included to be fair and equitable.

For example:

- Use hard surfaces to calculate runoff coefficient for all properties
- Recognize that larger properties have a low runoff coefficient, and reduce the town's cost for stormwater management

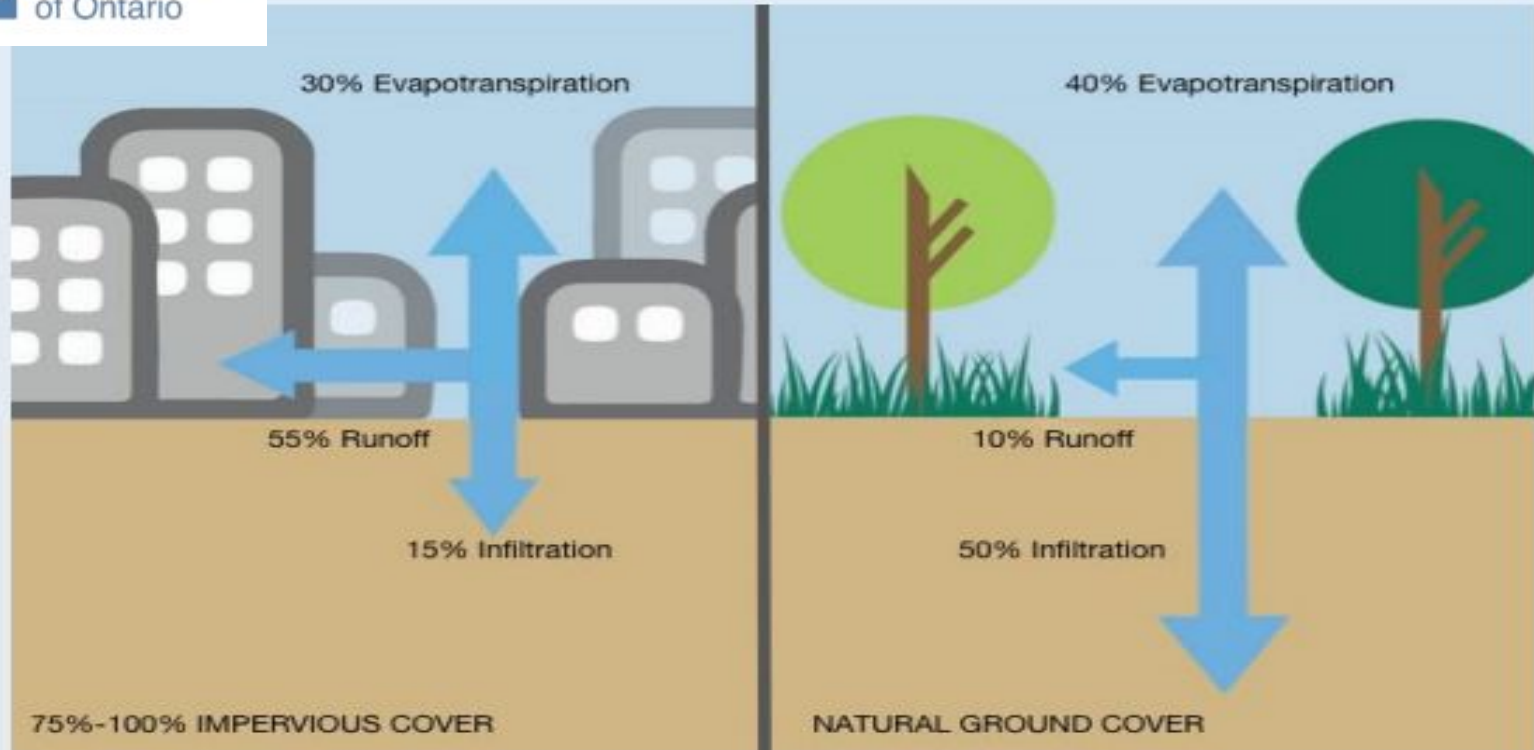


Figure 1: Natural and urban water cycles (Source: Kawartha Conservation).

Grey vs. Green

“...green infrastructure and low impact development practices aim to keep and treat stormwater at its source as a valuable resource. Examples of green infrastructure include **urban forests and wetlands**. Low impact development practices include **rain gardens, rain barrels and permeable pavement**.

More recently, green infrastructure and low impact development have been recognized as powerful tools to manage stormwater with reduced costs, increased climate resilience, greater biodiversity and other benefits, including:

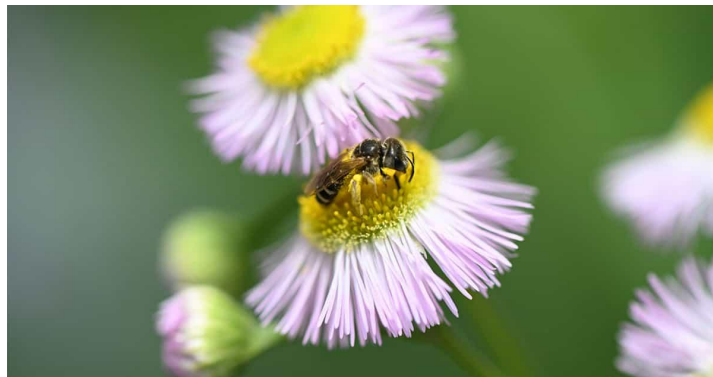
- Reducing combined sewer overflows;
- Lowering pollutant loads;
- Mitigating flood risk;
- Recharging groundwater;
- Providing adequate water for local trees and other vegetation;
 - Reducing water consumption (e.g., rainwater harvesting);
 - Reducing the heat island effect;
- Reducing ozone and particulate pollution levels;
- Improving aquatic and terrestrial habitat;
- Improving habitat connectivity;
- Restoring and enhancing public recreational spaces (e.g., parks);
- Increasing property values.”

Cobourg’s larger properties should be recognized for their contribution to stormwater management

<https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/reporttopics/envreports/env16/Urban-Stormwater-Fees.pdf>

Incentivize green stormwater management practices for all properties in Cobourg

Everyone benefits!



How are other municipalities
equitably distributing
Stormwater Management Fees?

Ottawa

To achieve an **equitable distribution**, the stormwater rates are based on the total estimated hard surface area between residential properties and industrial, commercial and institutional properties...

<https://ottawa.ca/en/living-ottawa/water-utility-bills/understand-your-water-utility-bill#section-c9857f4e-50f6-4f2f-8f60-187868f06c3b>

Urban Stormwater

Property Type (Residential)	Service	Rate
Single & Semi Detached	Connected	\$187.42
Townhome & Apartment	Connected	\$ 93.71
Single & Semi Detached	Non-Connected	\$ 131.19
Townhome & Apartment	Non-Connected	\$ 65.60

Rural Stormwater

Property Type (Residential)	Service	Rate
Single & Semi Detached	Connected	\$187.42
Townhome & Apartment	Connected	\$ 93.71
Single & Semi Detached	Non-Connected	\$ 93.71
Townhome & Apartment	Non-Connected	\$ 46.85

Guelph

Residential stormwater fees are calculated by measuring the hard surfaces that cause rain and melted snow to runoff into the City's storm sewer system – roofs, driveways, and parking lots etc.

The average amount of hard surfaces on residential properties in Guelph is 188 square metres. We call that Guelph's Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) and we use it to calculate monthly stormwater fees for all properties.

All residential property owners and tenants who pay electricity, water, and wastewater bills pay the same monthly stormwater fee.

Industrial, commercial and institutional stormwater fees are based on the size of the hard surfaces on their property, divided by Guelph's Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) of 188 square metres, and then multiplied by the monthly stormwater rate.

Guelph Residential Fees:

Water/wastewater/stormwater charges effective March 1, 2023

Charges	2022	2023	Change
water volume – \$/cubic metre (m3)	\$1.87	\$1.95	\$0.08
water basic – \$/day	\$0.26	\$0.26	\$0.00
wastewater volume – \$/cubic metre (m3)	\$1.99	\$2.05	\$0.06
wastewater basic – \$/day	\$0.32	\$0.32	\$0.00
stormwater service fee – \$/month	\$7.00	\$7.60	\$0.60

Mississauga

Each property falls into one of five tiers based on the rooftop area, which is used as a predictor of the total hard surface area on the residential property.

Estimated annual fees proposed for 2023

Size tier	Property type	Rooftop area in square meters	2022 Estimated fees per year	2023 Estimated fees per year	2023 Increase
Smallest	Freehold townhomes and row houses	26.7 to 99	\$56.70	\$58.40	\$1.70
Small	Semi-detached homes, linked homes, small single detached homes	99.1 to 151	\$79.38	\$81.76	\$2.38
Medium	Medium single detached homes	151.1 to 194	\$113.40	\$116.80	\$3.40
Large	Large single detached homes	194.1 to 242	\$136.08	\$140.16	\$4.08
Largest	Very large single detached homes	242.1 and above	\$192.78	\$198.56	\$5.78

Why rooftop area is used to calculate hard surface

The City completed an extensive study measuring all the hard surfaces on a sample of residential properties: rooftops, driveways, patios, and any other hard surfaces.

The study found that rooftop area is a reliable predictor of the total hard surface area on a residential property.

<https://www.mississauga.ca/services-and-programs/home-and-yard/stormwater/stormwater-charge/>

Brampton

Note: Aerial photography used to calculate roof areas

Has differential rates for agriculture, conservation areas and some institutions

Single-family residential properties are placed into one of five tiers based on measurements of roof areas. A flat rate payable in each tier is as follows.

Residential Property Category (Tier)	Stormwater Charges per year
Extra Small	\$ 44.50
Small	\$ 62.30
Medium	\$ 89.00
Large	\$ 115.70
Extra Large	\$ 160.20
Multi-family residential/non-residential properties	Stormwater Charges per year
Multi-family residential/non-residential properties	\$ 89.00 for every 234 m2 of hard surface

<https://www1.brampton.ca/EN/residents/Stormwater/Pages/Stormwater-Charge.aspx>

<https://pub-brampton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=53941#:~:text=In%20accordance%20with%20the%20Stormwater,all%20working%20farms%20in%20Brampton>

Property Type	Criteria	2021 Charge	2022 Charge	2023 Charge
Non-residential (small)	Less than 1 acre	\$48.15	\$50.44	\$53.16
Non-residential (medium)	1 to 10 acres	\$1,244.11	\$1,303.49	\$1,373.66
Non-residential (large)	More than 10 acres	\$19,001.37	\$19,908.32	\$20,980.04
Agricultural/vacant		\$669.07	\$699.48	\$736.78
Residential (low density)		\$53.46	\$55.76	\$58.63
Residential (medium density)		\$34.58	\$35.93	\$37.63
Residential (high density)		\$210.41	\$219.96	\$231.62

Many Canadian municipalities to study

Community	Province	Type of Stormwater Fee
Halifax	Nova Scotia	Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU)
London	Ontario	Fee based on Property Size
Aurora	Ontario	Flat Rate (per unit)
St. Thomas	Ontario	Flat Rate
Kitchener	Ontario	Single Family Residential Unit (SFRU)
Markham	Ontario	Residential / Non-residential flat rate*
Mississauga	Ontario	Single Family Residential Unit (SFRU)
Newmarket	Ontario	Development Intensity & Property Size
Waterloo	Ontario	Tiered Flat Rate
Richmond Hill	Ontario	Tiered Flat Rate
Guelph	Ontario	Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU)
Regina	Saskatchewan	Flat Rate (based on property size)
Saskatoon	Saskatchewan	Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU)
Calgary	Alberta	Flat Rate
Edmonton	Alberta	Intensity Factor & Runoff Coefficient
Saint Albert	Alberta	Flat Rate
Strathcona County	Alberta	Flat Rate
Langley	British Columbia	Stormwater Levy*
Pitt Meadows	British Columbia	Flat Rate
Richmond	British Columbia	Flat Rate
Surrey	British Columbia	Flat Rate
Victoria	British Columbia	Impervious Area
West Vancouver	British Columbia	Tiered Flat Rate
White Rock	British Columbia	Runoff Factor & Annual Flat Rate

<https://institute.smartprosperity.ca/canadian-stormwater-user-fees>

FROM THE COBOURG TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION:

We suggest returning to including stormwater management costs in property taxes. It eliminates the cost of billing, errors, and inequitable billings to customers like cemeteries and large property owners. If Premier Doug Ford can revert his decision on Greenbelt Development, Council can do the same.

<https://cobourgtaxpayers.ca/2023/12/20/storm-water-fees-again/>

CALL FOR ACTION:

Correct the current stormwater fee calculation by:

- Creating rates that reflect actual usage of Cobourg stormwater management structure (consult other municipalities)
- Recognizing that larger properties reduce stormwater management for the Town
- Incentivizing green stormwater management practices
- Equitably distributing fees between Cobourg taxpayers to mitigate disproportionate financial harm

Thank you to those Town Council Members who have taken the time to listen, express empathy, and provide explanations for and potential solutions to the Stormwater Fee problem.

Resources (in order of presentation)

1. [Stop Storm Water Fee Gouge by Town of Cobourg Petition](#)
2. <https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/reporttopics/envreports/env16/Urban-Stormwater-Fees.pdf>
3. <https://ottawa.ca/en/living-ottawa/water-utility-bills/understand-your-water-utility-bill#section-c9857f4e-50f6-4f2f-8f60-187868f06c3b>
4. <https://guelph.ca/living/environment/water/water-rates/>
5. <https://www.mississauga.ca/services-and-programs/home-and-yard/stormwater/stormwater-charge/>
6. <https://www1.brampton.ca/EN/residents/Stormwater/Pages/Stormwater-Charge.aspx>
7. <https://pub-brampton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=53941#:~:text=In%20accordance%20with%20the%20Stormwater,all%20working%20farms%20in%20Brampton>
8. <https://www.vaughan.ca/residential/water-wastewater-and-stormwater/water-services/water-rates-and-billing-information>
9. [Smart Prosperity Institute](#)
10. <https://cobourgtaxpayers.ca/2023/12/20/storm-water-fees-again/>