

Your Water/Sewer Bill is Changing

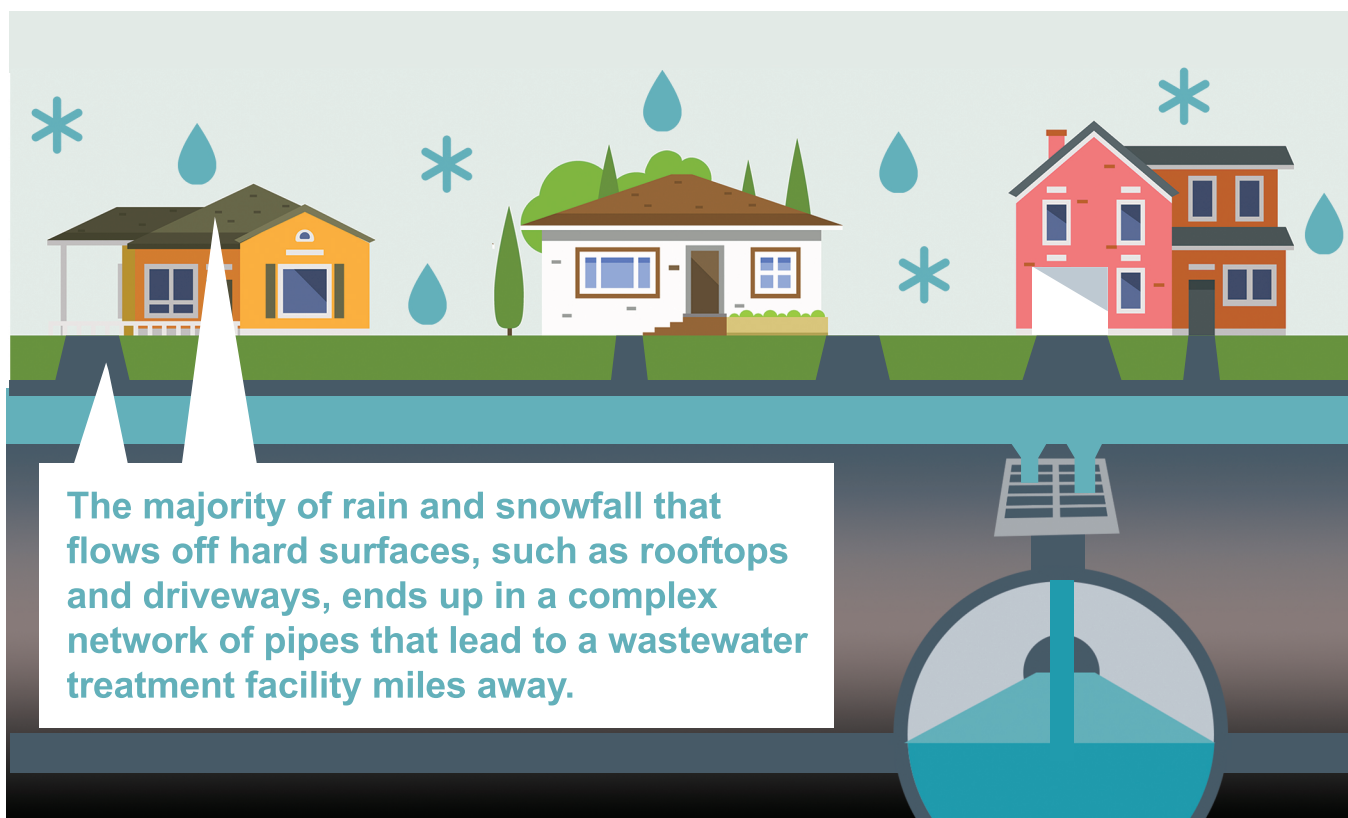
Royal Oak is planning to launch a stormwater utility

Royal Oak is a vibrant and growing community with record numbers of new housing starts and a steady stream of economic development. While our city evolves, so do the challenges of maintaining and improving our aging sewer infrastructure at a time when climate change is causing higher intensity storms.

In 2015, the city launched a Stormwater Task Force to address this matter to protect better your property and our environment. For four years the task force has been studying ways to improve our current stormwater management practices. Its main goals are to evaluate our current sewer system and city codes, encourage impactful stormwater management, and adequately fund our sewer system to keep it in good working order.

Following in the footsteps of many other communities, Royal Oak has determined that the current way stormwater is billed to water customers is inequitable. Royal Oak is pursuing the adoption of a stormwater utility that will replace the existing billing method and assign costs based primarily on a property's hard surfaces which are measurable land features that contribute towards runoff. Credit programs will also be instituted that incentivize significant reductions of runoff. New stormwater and reduced sanitary sewer rates have yet to be determined, however water customers should expect to see changes to how water/sewer bills are calculated in the future.

Why is stormwater so important?



The majority of rain and snowfall that flows off hard surfaces, such as rooftops and driveways, ends up in a complex network of pipes that lead to a wastewater treatment facility miles away.

Stormwater runoff comes from rain and melted snow that flows off our properties to the sewer system through more than 7,289 street catch basins. This runoff ultimately combines with wastewater (from toilets, washing machines, etc.) and needs to be treated at the Detroit Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility, which can be costly.

Maintaining the city's sewer system and installing green infrastructure are needed to reduce the city's stormwater treatment bills and to prevent basement backups by maintaining system capacities.

With the help of OHM Advisors, Royal Oak is evaluating how it will invest in stormwater management moving forward.



The cost of treating stormwater is related to water that flows to drains outside your house; NOT the drains inside your house.

As a water customer, you currently fund the treatment of stormwater based on how much water you consume.

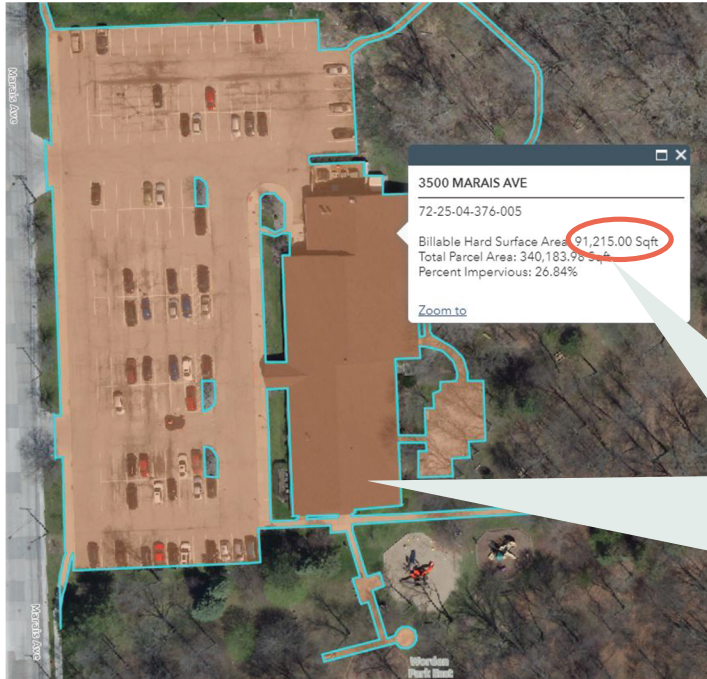
Royal Oak is considering a stormwater utility fee that would be based on how much runoff your property creates; not how much water you use.

How do we pay for stormwater?

Currently, Royal Oak property owners are billed quarterly for water consumption along with a combined charge for sanitary and stormwater sewer usage. The city's Stormwater Task Force is proposing separating sanitary sewer costs (water from toilets, showers, laundry etc.) from stormwater costs (rainfall and melted snow) in a method that is well recognized and equitable.

Under the new fee structure, owners will receive a charge for stormwater based on multiplying the measured area of hard surface on their property by a stormwater rate (yet to-be-determined).

Property owners should see a reduction in sanitary sewer charges on their water bills along with a new line item just for stormwater.



The stormwater utility fee is not a new charge.

It is an improved method of distributing sewer charges that are currently included in water rates.

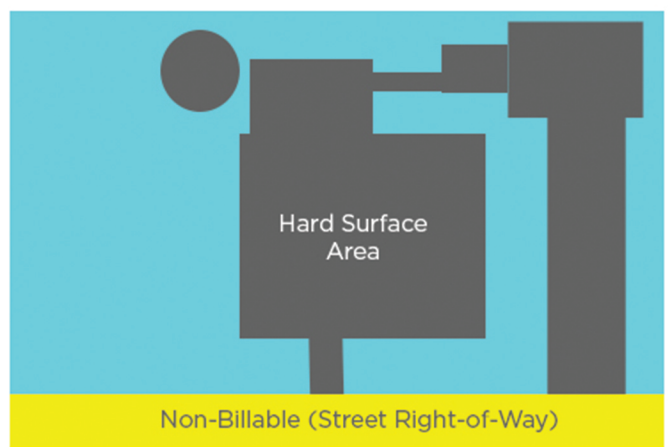
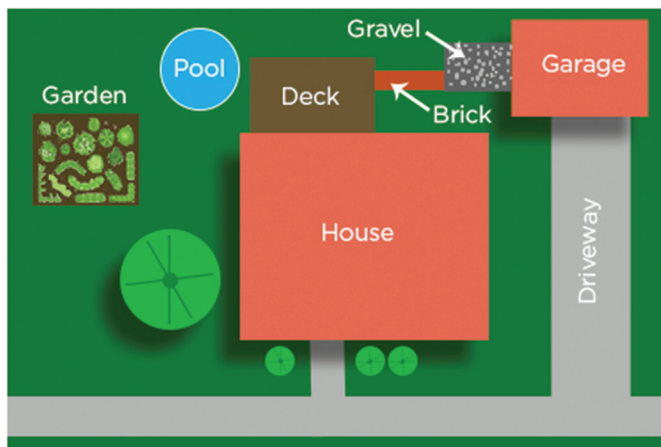
For billing purposes, hard surfaces of properties in Royal Oak have been measured using high-resolution aerial photography. You can view the measurement for your property at romi.gov/stormwater.

Please note that the map is a general depiction of hard surface area and not the means by which the square footage was calculated.

What is my hard surface area?

The example below shows a property with a house, garage, deck and areas of brick, gravel and concrete pavement. The diagram next to it shows the calculated hard surface areas of this property in gray.

Gardens, lawns, green roofs and landscaping, which absorb stormwater, are non-billable. Sidewalks and the street right-of-way (shown in yellow) are also NOT included in a property's stormwater measurement.



For more information, including a tool to look up your property's hard surface area, go to:
romi.gov/stormwater or call **248-246-3777**

