

Focus groups seek feedback on approach to storm water fee

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Penticton – Landlords, strata councils and homeowners, along with commercial, industrial and agricultural property owners, are invited to help shape the structure of the new fee for the City's storm water system. The City is hosting two focus groups to discuss the approach to the storm water fee and wants to hear from the people affected.

"Funding for our storm water system is currently provided by the City's general fund which means it competes with other priorities for dollars every year," says Mitch Moroziuk, General Manager of Infrastructure. "With a dedicated fund, we can ensure we are taking care of the system that is essential to drainage and flood management efforts in the city."

The creation of a dedicated fund for the storm water system was approved as part of this year's budget. The City is proposing to phase-in the storm water fee over the next seven years to provide the \$2.5 million per year needed to fund operations and maintenance of the system as well as creek restoration. Property owners will see a portion of their property taxes reassigned to the new storm water fee on their upcoming 2018 property tax notice. Still to be determined is how the fee will be distributed amongst property owners.

The two options being considered include a flat fee that would be assigned equally amongst property owners regardless of property type and a tiered fee that would assign a higher fee to commercial and industrial properties and a lower fee for smaller residential units such as condos or duplexes. In both scenarios, the proposed fee for a single family home remains the same.

The City is hosting two focus groups to inform property owners about the new storm water fund and to seek feedback on how to structure the fees. The focus groups will be held on Feb. 7 and Feb. 8 between 5 pm and 7 pm at 249 Westminster Avenue. These sessions will include a structured presentation and discussion. For more information, visit shapeyourcitypenticton.ca. Feedback from the community along with a recommendation from staff will be shared with Council at a meeting in March.

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