

Storm Water Improvement District No. 563
Frequently Asked Question

1. Why am I included in this assessment district? Who determines what improvements need to be made and which properties will benefit?

Your property is located within a watershed where regional stormwater improvements provide the necessary stormwater management. Regional storm water improvements are facilities that have been master planned based on the drainage of the entire watershed upon full watershed build out. The master plan has been prepared by hydrologic and hydraulic engineers who are able to determine the most cost-effective way to manage the storm water of the watershed while meeting the goals of the city's storm water permit held by the state of North Dakota. The engineers may determine that it is more cost effective and efficient to manage the stormwater further upstream than downstream or vice versa. The watershed-wide management of storm water at any point in the watershed will benefit the watershed as a whole. Therefore, all properties within the watershed receive a benefit and are included in the assessment district whether their property directly drains to the improvement or not.

2. How is my assessment determined? Storm water assessments are determined based on the parcel's square footage. Additionally, the land use of the property is factored in, e.g. residential or commercial.

3. I've already paid for a storm water special assessment, why am I included in this one?

Storm water improvements are typically constructed as development occurs and the added storm water runoff of previous and new developments requires that it be managed. Therefore, it is possible to receive several storm water assessments until full build out of the watershed has occurred. The goal with the regional storm water approach is that everyone within the watershed will ultimately pay the same square foot cost for regional storm water improvements.

4. Are properties that are not annexed into the City of Bismarck but are part of the watershed paying their share of the improvements? All properties within the watershed are included in the district boundary. However, since the City does not have the jurisdiction to assess properties outside of the City, the assessment costs for these un-annexed properties are held-in-abeyance. The City's Storm Water Utility Fund will cover the held-in-abeyance cost until those un-annexed parcels are annexed into the City. At the time of annexation, they will be assessed for all previous storm water improvements that were held-in-abeyance for that property.

5. How does the City select the contractor for improvement projects? Is there a public bidding process? Yes, there is a public bidding process that determines how a project is awarded to a contractor. The general steps of this process are as follows: Proposed improvements are identified and designed (the project), the project is advertised publicly, the City receives bids from qualified contractors, the bids are reviewed and the lowest qualified bidder is awarded the project.

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6. Why are the improvements paid by special assessments instead of using property taxes?

If property taxes would be used, the cost of the improvement would be shared with all tax paying property owners in Bismarck, whether they receive a benefit or not. Conversely, it would mean that you and other property owners would be funding storm water improvements in other watersheds which would not benefit your property. Since all tax paying property owners in Bismarck would fund all storm water projects in the City, property taxes would ultimately increase.

7. Are special assessments based on the value of my property? No, the amount of your special assessment is based on the total project cost which is allocated to the benefitting properties. The allocation is based on parcel square footage.