



## TOWN OF WESTFORD STORMWATER BILL ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

### **Introduction**

Beginning in FY2021, the Town of Westford will issue a stormwater utility fee bill to support the Town's stormwater management program. The revenue requirements for funding this program will be recovered from more than 7,300 properties within the Town, based on the amount of impervious surface area on each property. Common impervious surfaces include roofs, sheds, decks, driveways, walkways, patios, parking lots, as well as other types of artificial surfaces that limit the infiltration of precipitation into the soil. Impervious surface areas are calculated using data available from the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS). This data is maintained by the GIS Department and is frequently updated using the most current high-resolution aerial photographs available as well as other Town records.

### **Purpose**

The adjustment process is intended to be used for corrections to bill information that would affect the bill total. The reasons for adjustments are likely to fall into the following categories:

- Location: the impervious surface is not within legal property boundaries.
- Existence: the impervious surface does not exist or was incorrectly identified.
- Area: the impervious surface or structure is different in size than measured.
- Construction: an impervious surface identified on the bill is actually a pervious material.

### **Adjustment Process**

Property owners may contact the Westford Engineering Department to discuss the correctness of their bill. The Town has implemented the following adjustment process to quickly and efficiently address property owners' concerns.

1. The Engineering Department is responsible for reviewing Stormwater Adjustment Applications.
2. Stormwater bills must be in good standing for an adjustment application to be considered. If an approved adjustment results in a credit balance, a refund will be issued to the property owner within 45 days of approval.
3. Stormwater Adjustment Application forms are available at [www.westfordma.gov/stormwater](http://www.westfordma.gov/stormwater), in hard copy at the Tax Collector's Office and in the Engineering Department.
4. Property owners will have 45 days from receipt of their bill to submit the adjustment application to the Engineering Department online at [www.westfordma.gov/stormwater](http://www.westfordma.gov/stormwater) or by mail to:

Westford Engineering Department  
Stormwater Adjustment Processing  
28 North Street  
Westford, MA 01886

Once the application deadline has expired, the customer will have to wait until the next billing period to re-apply.

5. The Engineering Department will date stamp incoming applications upon receipt and will have 30 days to respond.
6. If necessary, the Engineering Department will make a visit to the property to field verify information included in the application form. The Town will provide the property owner at least 48 hours' notice before the visit.
7. The Engineering Department shall notify the property owner and the Collector's office in writing of their decision. Should the property owner's application be granted, the Town will adjust the current year's stormwater bill, and the adjusted bill amount will be provided in the written response. Adjustments cannot be applied to prior years.
8. Should the property owner's application be denied, the written response shall provide the reason(s) for denial.
9. The property owner may appeal the Engineering Department's decision on his or her application to the Stormwater Fee Appeals Panel comprised of one representative from the Select Board, Planning Board, and Board of Water Commissioners. Requests for appeals should be made by email to [StormwaterPanel@westfordma.gov](mailto:StormwaterPanel@westfordma.gov) or by mail to:

Stormwater Fee Appeals Panel  
28 North Street  
Westford, MA 01886

10. The property owner will have 30 days from receipt of the Engineering Department's decision to submit an appeal.
11. The Stormwater Fee Appeals Panel will have 45 days from the date an appeal is received to respond to the appeal. The Engineering Department will submit their field verification documentation and any other relevant information to the Stormwater Fee Appeals Panel during the appeal period.
12. The Stormwater Fee Appeals Panel will notify the property owner, the Engineering Department and the Collector's office of their decision in writing. Should the property owner's appeal be granted, the Town will adjust the stormwater bill and the adjusted bill amount will be provided in the written response.

### **Additional Information**

Additional information on the Town of Westford's Stormwater Management Utility Fee can be found at: [www.westfordma.gov/stormwater](http://www.westfordma.gov/stormwater). Questions on the bill adjustment process should be directed to the Engineering Department at (978) 399-2716 or via email at [stormwater@westfordma.gov](mailto:stormwater@westfordma.gov).