

VI. OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

A. GREENWAY O & M FEES

On December 19, 2005, the Grand Forks City Council passed a new ordinance regarding storm sewer and flood protection/greenway service charges. These fees are included as a separate item in the utility bill. For several years the City of Grand Forks has charged a fee for storm sewer service, but now charges the flood protection/greenway operation and maintenance (O/M) expenses as utility fee charges. The storm sewer and flood protection/greenway O/M expenses are listed separately on the billing to account for the expense allocation of the two separate services.

Storm sewer O/M expenses include maintaining the storm sewer pipelines, storm sewer pumping stations, drainage basins and structures, and the south end drainway. Residential customers, including single family, apartments, condominiums, town homes, and mobile home parks, are charged based on the number of residential units. Residential customers are charged on a per unit basis like refuse and mosquito services.

Nonresidential storm sewer fees are charged based on the number of taxable square feet, drainage coefficient, and runoff unit. Some nonresidential properties, such as governmental and undeveloped properties, were not charged previously for storm sewer service, but are charged as part of the new ordinance.

The flood protection/greenway O/M expenses include the flood protection levee and floodwalls, flood pumping stations, English Coulee Diversion Channel and associated pump station, closure and drainage structures, and greenway amenities. Previously a significant portion of the local share of the flood protection/greenway project, including O/M, was paid for through the special assessment process. The estimated annual cost to maintain the flood protection/greenway project is \$634,995. The residential fee for flood protection/greenway O/M is \$1.15 per unit per month* and the nonresidential fee is \$0.10 per 1,000 taxable square feet.

Funds raised from the flood protection/greenway service charges are used for the administration, mowing, trail maintenance, signage, boat ramp maintenance, snow removal, tree maintenance, repairs and replacement of recreational features, trash removal, minor debris clean up, parking lot and street maintenance, and other expenses associated with the operations and management of the greenway.

B. OVERVIEW OF O & M RESPONSIBILITIES

The maintenance of the Greenway is a substantial undertaking for city staff. Meetings with the Public Works Department, Office of Urban Development and Grand Forks Park District were held in early 2007. Maintenance issues were identified and assigned to the appropriate managing agency. (Appendix 11)

At this time it is planned that the Storm Water Department will be responsible for maintaining the integrity of the flood protection system (floodwalls, earthen levees, pump stations and a diversion) and the Streets Department will maintain the recreational features of the greenway not already covered by agreements with other agencies.

The project relies on the consultation of a variety of outside agencies regarding items such as forestry, recreation management, special events and riparian restoration. These partnerships provide a beneficial network of expertise in a wide variety of areas pertaining to the maintenance and development of the Greenway.

Some of the agencies involved include: Grand Forks Park District, North Dakota Game & Fish, Red River Basin Commission, North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Greenway on the Red and Riverkeepers.

OPERATIONS MANUALS

Operations manuals for the components of the project have been supplied by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These manuals contain information on warranties, maintenance and replacement of equipment in the facility. A copy of the manual was given to the Storm Water Department.

C. MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

Private contractors provide many of the services necessary to properly maintain the greenway for most areas managed by the city of Grand Forks. The Grand Forks Park District and the Office of Urban Development provide these services for areas under their management. To date, those contracts have been managed by the Engineering Department.

i. GOPHER AND OTHER PEST CONTROL

Gophers and other pose a danger to the integrity of the flood protection project. Routine surveillance by the mowing contractor and city personnel has allowed for early detection of gopher activity. A request for vendors interested in providing gopher eradication services is printed in the Grand

Forks Herald each spring. (Appendix 12) A list of vendors is placed in the file for use when gopher control is needed.

ii. MOWING

Mowing of the areas not managed by the Grand Forks Park District and the Office of Urban Development are handled through a contract with the winner of the bidding process done early in the year.

iii. POST HIGH WATER CLEAN UP

The aftermath of a high water event is debris being left behind when the waters recede. To date, the policy for debris clean up along the river has been to allow small amounts of debris caused by small increases in water elevation to remain in place unless there is a concern for public safety. Debris left behind from larger high water events is removed through a contract with the winner of a bid request done after the first of the year.

iv. TREE MAINTENANCE

Two methods are used for tree maintenance throughout the project. The Grand Forks Park District provides expertise on tree care and maintenance and is also available for some assistance on small trimming and removal projects. Larger projects are handled by hiring contractors through the Grand Forks District.

D. FLOOD EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

The Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Greenway is part of a permanent flood protection system designed to protect residents of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks from flooding from the Red and Red Lake Rivers. The Greenway is designed to allow high water to flow through the flood protection system of the two communities with few restrictions.

The many recreational facilities of the greenway are primarily located on the wet side of the flood protection system. From time to time high water may require the closing of the flood protection system to prevent flooding into the community. Short term closing of trails may be required in low-lying areas. (Appendix 13) The trail will close between two access points based on river levels.