

# City of Madison Storm Water Utility

The City of Madison Storm Water Utility is responsible for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the City's storm water drainage and conveyance system. This system has been designed to improve our water quality while minimizing the potential for flooding.

The Storm Water Utility has implemented a number of Best Management Practices (BMP) to reduce non-point source pollution to area lakes and streams. These BMPs include more than 1,500 acres of land which make up an extensive system of greenways, detention ponds and retention ponds.

More information about the Madison Storm Water Utility and its initiative is available by visiting our website at [www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/stormwater](http://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/stormwater)

**RE: YOUR CITY OF MADISON PROPERTY LOCATED AT « ParcelAddress»  
RENTAL PROPERTY OWNERS:  
PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR TENANTS.**

City of Madison  
Department of Public Works  
Engineering Division  
Storm Water Utility  
1600 Emil St.  
Madison, WI 53713

«OwnerName\_1» «OwnerName\_2»  
«MailingAddress»  
«OwnerCity», «OwnerState» «OwnerZip»

## City of Madison Department of Public Works Engineering Division Storm Water Utility

*Protecting you from flooding and improving our water quality.*

### A Resident's Guide to City-owned Greenways, Retention and Detention Ponds



## Living Next to a City-Owned Greenway

Your property abuts a City-owned greenway, detention pond and/or retention pond area. As such we want you to understand its function, how we maintain it in order to ensure it continues to function as designed, and how you can use this area.

As watersheds are urbanized, much of the vegetation is replaced by impervious surfaces, reducing the area where infiltration to ground water can occur. Thus, more storm water runoff occurs - runoff that must be collected by the City's drainage system.



Madison's storm water system is designed to provide storm water drainage and conveyance that improves our water quality while minimizing the potential for flooding. The greenway that abuts your property plays a critical role in achieving this goal.

This greenway is part of a 1,500 plus acre system of greenways and detention/retention ponds designed to slow the velocity of storm water flow and promote infiltration of storm water into the ground. These areas also provide a buffer that captures a significant amount of sediment, nutrients and pollutants before they reach lakes and rivers.

The City's maintenance and your use of this area greatly impacts its ability to function as designed.

## Greenway Mowing

Mowing reduces the height of growth and is used to prevent woody plants from becoming established. Woody plants can quickly overtake a prairie area and crowd out lower height vegetation resulting in erosion and pools of standing water that promote mosquito breeding. Additionally, mowing helps control noxious weeds and the spread of invasive vegetation.

The City's standard mowing policy provides for mowing each greenway and pond area 2 times per year. The first mowing cycle occurs between April 15<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup> and leaves a 10' to 15' un-mowed buffer around retention ponds. This buffer is to make them less attractive to Canada Geese. Engineering consults with Parks Conservation to determine which greenways/ponds provide suitable song-bird nesting habitat and does not mow these areas between May 15<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>.

The second cycle begins in mid-October and continues until completed, weather permitting. During this cycle ponds are mowed as close to the water's edge as is safely possible.

Areas that have been specifically identified as prairie restoration areas (i.e. Greentree Landfill, Quann Park, etc.) are only mowed once each year - in the very late fall or early spring.



## Private Use of Public Greenways

The private use of City-owned greenways is regulated by ordinance. Generally speaking the private use of public greenways is limited to "temporary" uses - i.e. walking, playing Frisbee or catch, etc. City-owned greenways are not intended to be an extension of abutting private property owners' yards.

### Prohibited uses include, but are not limited to:

- **Structures** (i.e. fences, retaining walls, outbuilding sites, dog runs, play equipment, etc.)
- **Gardens and plantings** (i.e. trees, shrubs, bushes, etc.)
- **Storage of personal property** (i.e. trailers, piers, boat hoists, building materials, etc.)
- **Mowing of grass when posted for no mowing**
- **Disposal of any type of waste** - (i.e. grass clippings, yard waste, brush, compost, etc.)
- **Chemical application** (i.e. fertilizers, herbicides and/or pesticides)

These types of uses are not compatible with the purpose for which these lands are dedicated. Furthermore, they make maintenance more difficult and can pose a safety hazard for our employees.

## Removal of Encroachments

While performing greenway maintenance activities staff document and photograph potential encroachments onto the City-owned greenway parcel. Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment is then used to accurately locate the potential encroachment. If the encroachment is determined to be in the greenway, the private property owner will be ordered to remove the encroachment. Non-compliance and/or repeat violations subject violators to monetary forfeitures.

## Questions?

Contact us at 608-266-4430 or [engineer@cityofmadison.com](mailto:engineer@cityofmadison.com)