

CITY OF PALM BAY STORMWATER ASSESSMENT PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



The City of Palm Bay is considering implementing an annual stormwater assessment fee for the geographic boundaries of the City of Palm Bay. If imposed the assessment will appear on your tax bill that you will receive in November under the non-ad valorem section and will replace the stormwater utility fee currently being collected on your utility bill.

The enclosed notice of your stormwater service assessment for Fiscal Year 2017-18 contains the legal information required by State law. The information in this Frequently Asked Questions has been prepared to clarify the information in the notice and to answer some of the questions you may have regarding the City's stormwater service assessment program.

We hope the following helps to increase awareness of the importance of fixing our flooding problems, repairing our infrastructure and protecting our creeks, ponds and rivers from stormwater pollution. For more information, please call (321) 952-3437 (option #5) or go to the City's website at www.palmbayflorida.org.

What is a stormwater assessment?

A stormwater assessment is a user fee for stormwater services.

Is this a new fee for the City?

No. The City of Palm Bay currently collects a stormwater utility fee on the utility bill for utility customer and by separate bill for non-utility customers. The stormwater assessment fee will replace the stormwater utility fee and be collected on the annual tax bill mailed by the Brevard County Tax Collector in November.

What is the difference between the stormwater utility fee currently being charged and the proposed stormwater service assessment?

The primary difference is that the stormwater service assessments will now be collected on your tax bill mailed by the Brevard County Tax Collector in November each year instead of on your monthly utility bill. The City is also considering an increase in the annual rate currently being charged. The proposed increase is \$123.49 per ERU per year (or from \$53.64 to \$177.13 per ERU per year).

What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is generated from the water that flows from a parcel based on the amount of pervious and impervious surfaces during rainstorms. In addition to being absorbed into the ground, it flows into ditches, culverts, drainage pipes and directly into our creeks, lakes, springs, and rivers, ultimately making its way to the drinking water aquifer.

What is "pervious surface"?

It is the area on a property that is not developed or covered by hard surface. It does not include submerged lands and/or wetlands.

What is "impervious surface"?

It is the area on a property which is covered by hard surface that does not absorb water and impedes the natural flow of water into the soil. In general, impervious surfaces include hard surfaces such as buildings, decks, driveways, walkways, parking lots, and other hard surfaces.

What kind of services does the City provide for stormwater management?

The City provides services to reduce flooding and improve water quality, to operate and maintain existing stormwater facilities (such as public ponds, ditches and culverts) and to monitor and restore the health of our water resources. We also provide outreach efforts to help educate the public about stormwater.

What benefits will the stormwater assessment program provide?

The stormwater assessment will enable the City to better manage the City's stormwater system, improve the condition of our infrastructure, study the impacts of stormwater on the natural environment, locate and eliminate illegal connections and discharges, and enforce stormwater codes more proactively.

How soon can I expect to see improvements for water quality and flooding issues in my area?

Because there are numerous areas in the City that have stormwater related water quality and drainage problems, you may not see improvements in your area immediately. Problem areas will be prioritized and a project schedule developed.

Why use special assessments to fund stormwater management services?

The use of special assessments requires the City to meet the Florida case law requirements for a valid special assessment including fair and reasonable apportionment. This means that unlike taxes, which can be used for any general purpose, the revenues collected through the stormwater special assessment can only be used to fund stormwater management services like ongoing maintenance of City-owned storm drainage infrastructure, as well as water quality monitoring, evaluation and improvements.

Why is a stormwater assessment more equitable than a tax?

A property's value does not affect runoff, so property taxes are not the most accurate way to pay for stormwater services. For example, a high-rise building and a shopping mall may have similar appraised values and pay similar property taxes. However, the shopping mall produces much more runoff because of the amount of parking and rooftops.

Do other governments have similar assessments or fees to fund stormwater services?

Yes. Approximately 185 Florida local governments have a stormwater assessment or fee. As a matter of fact, Brevard County and 11 of the 15 cities in Brevard County are currently collecting stormwater assessments or stormwater utility fees.

What is an “ERU” (Equivalent Residential Unit)?

An ERU is a billing unit for the amount of stormwater runoff generated by the average-sized residential parcel in the City. It is a measure that serves to compare runoff generated by different size and type of properties with different stormwater generation characteristics. In the City of Palm Bay, an ERU represents 4,693 square feet of effective impervious area that is found on the property.

What is Effective Impervious Area?

Effective Impervious area is the calculation of 100% of the impervious area, plus 15% of the pervious area on a property.

How much will single family residential properties pay each year?

The City has determined that the average single family residential parcel with 4,693 square feet of effective impervious area has a building footprint of 2,076 square feet. In order to avoid having to measure the impervious area for all single family residential parcels, a four-tier billing structure was developed to determine the cost assessed to each single-family home using the Property Appraiser records. The following are the tiers and costs developed for single family residential parcels:

Tier	Building Footprint Area in Square Feet	ERUs Assigned	Annual Charge
Small	100 - 1,500	0.70 ERUs	\$123.99
Medium	1,501 – 2,700	1.00 ERUs	\$177.13
Large	2,701 – 4,600	1.40 ERUs	\$247.98
Very Large	Over 4,600 sq. ft. is calculated separately to determine the actual amount of effective impervious area		

How much will condominium properties pay each year?

All condominium parcels will be charged based on the total effective impervious area for the entire condominium complex. The total effective impervious is then divided by 4,693 square feet to determine the total ERUs attributable to the complex. The complex ERUs is then divided by the number of residential condominium units and multiplied by the ERU rate of \$177.13 to determine the stormwater assessment charge attributable to each unit of the condominium complex.

How much will general properties pay each year?

All parcels that are not classified as single family residential or condominium parcels will be charged as a general parcel. All general parcels will be charged based on the effective impervious area associated with their property. The calculation will consider the total effective impervious area divided by 4,693 which will then be multiplied by \$177.13 per ERU.

Is there any relief for agricultural properties?

Agricultural Property meeting the requirements of Section 193.461, Florida Statutes, shall be exempt from the Stormwater Assessment if the property owner provides appropriate documentation to the City that it has an active National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, environmental resource permit, or works-of-the-district permit or implements best management practices adopted as rules under Chapter 120 by the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, or a water management district as part of a statewide or regional program.

What are mitigation credits?

Mitigation credits reflect the fact that a parcel is supporting a permitted on-site private stormwater treatment facilities to improve water quality or reduce stormwater runoff impacts on the stormwater utility system over which the City has maintenance responsibility.

How can I get additional information on the City of Palm Bay’s Mitigation Credit Policy?

Additional information on mitigation credits and how to apply for a mitigation credit is available at:

<http://www.palmbayflorida.org/government/departments/public-works/stormwater/stormwater-utility/stormwater-utility-credit>

or by contacting the Stormwater Customer Service at (321) 952-3437, option 5.

Why is the City using the tax bill to collect this fee?

The City is using the tax bill to collect the stormwater assessment because it saves on billing and other administrative costs, and it provides incentive to property owners who pay early or through the payment plan.

My property is tax exempt / I currently claim certain tax exemptions / I do not currently pay property taxes. Do I still have to pay?

All properties in the stormwater service area of the City of Palm Bay will have to pay the stormwater service assessment or stormwater service fee regardless of ownership or tax status.

I currently claim a deduction on my income taxes for my property tax. Can I claim this fee as a deduction?

This is a question for your tax advisor. However, in general, a residential property is not a valid income tax deduction for your personal taxes. Please contact your accountant or income tax preparer for advice.

FOR INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS CONTACT STORMWATER CUSTOMER SERVICE: (321) 952-3437, Option 5

Email: stormwater@pbfl.org