



CITY OF VERO BEACH STORMWATER ASSESSMENT PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The City of Vero Beach is considering implementing an annual stormwater assessment fee. If imposed, the assessment will appear under the non-ad valorem section on the tax bill that you will receive in November.

The City Council of the City of Vero Beach will hold a public hearing at 9:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the item can be heard, on July 19, 2022, in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 1053 20th Place, Vero Beach, Florida. At this public hearing, comments will be received on the proposed Stormwater Service Assessments, including their collection on the ad valorem tax bill. You are invited to attend and participate in the hearing.

The information in this Frequently Asked Questions has been prepared 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 ocean and the Indian River lagoon from stormwater pollution. For more information, please call 772-978-4850.

What is a stormwater assessment?

A stormwater assessment is a user fee for stormwater services. It is similar to the fee for availability of water or sewer service at your home or business.

What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is the water that flows off of roofs, parking lots, and other hard surfaces during rainstorms. In addition to being absorbed into the ground, it flows into ditches, culverts, drainage pipes and directly into our ocean and the Indian River lagoon.

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 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, and study the impacts of stormwater on the natural environment.

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 stormwater program engineering and ongoing maintenance of City-owned storm drainage infrastructure.

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, an oceanfront residence and a small shopping center may have similar appraised values and pay similar property taxes. However, the shopping center produces much more runoff because of the amount of parking and rooftops.

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

Yes. Approximately 185 Florida local governments have a stormwater assessment.

My property drains into the ground or to a waterbody. Do I still need to pay?

Yes. The City of Vero Beach Stormwater Assessment covers stormwater management services within all of the incorporated City of Vero Beach. This includes maintenance of City stormwater infrastructure which receives flow from stormwater ditches and drainage pipes and runoff from adjacent parcels.

What is “impervious surface”?

It is the area on a property which is covered by a 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, garages, driveways, parking lots, and other hard surfaces.

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

An ERU is a billing unit for the amount of stormwater runoff from the impervious area of the average-sized residential parcel. 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 Vero Beach, an ERU represents 3,972 square feet of impervious surface that is found on the property.

How much will single family residential properties pay each year?

The City has determined that the average single family residential building footprint is 2,213 square feet in size. Adding the average accessory improvements such as driveways brings the total impervious area to 3,972 square feet as the base ERU. 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 - 1,300	0.40 ERUs	\$30.07
Medium	1,301 - 3,400	1.00 ERUs	\$75.17
Large	3,401 – 6,500	1.80 ERUs	\$135.31
Very Large	Over 6,500 sq. ft. is calculated separately to determine the actual amount of impervious area		

How much will condominium properties pay each year?

All condominium parcels will be charged based on a portion of the total impervious area for the entire condominium complex. The total impervious area is then divided by 3,972 square feet to determine the total ERUs attributable to the complex. The condominium complex ERU value is then divided by the number of residential condominium units and multiplied by the ERU rate of \$75.17 to determine the charge attributable to each residential unit in the condominium complex.

How much will non-residential properties pay each year?

All developed parcels (parcels with impervious areas greater than or equal to 100 square feet) that are not single family residential or condominium (i.e. commercial, industrial, institutional, etc.) will be charged based on the impervious area associated with their property. The calculation will consider the total amount of impervious surfaces (building footprint, parking lot, sidewalks and other paved surfaces) divided by the billing unit value of 3,972 which then will be multiplied by the rate of \$75.17 per ERU.

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 property owners within the City of Vero Beach that have impervious surfaces must pay regardless of ownership or tax status because they generate runoff that the City has to manage.