

CITY OF PLANTATION
STORMWATER UTILITY
NON AD VALOREM ASSESSMENT
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the problems with Stormwater?

Pollution: Every time it rains, the rainwater that is not absorbed into the ground or evaporated (called runoff) carries contaminants from lawns, streets, buildings and parking lots and deposits them directly into our lakes, canals or roadways. This rainwater, referred to as 'stormwater runoff' or 'runoff', carries with it sediments, nutrients, such as phosphorous and nitrogen, and contaminants that have been demonstrated to have a negative affect on vegetation, wildlife and the ground water supply used to provide our drinking water. Improperly directing the runoff can increase how fast the runoff moves, which can result in the runoff picking up and carrying with it more unwanted sediments, etc., ultimately depositing them into our lakes and canals.

Improperly managed stormwater runoff may increase the occurrence of flooding, which endangers property and human welfare. The City has experienced higher costs to maintain its stormwater management program due to the negative affects of uncontrolled or improperly managed stormwater runoff into the waters of the Plantation ecosystem.

Funding: Stormwater Management has been funded in the past through property taxes and other general fund revenues. Many needed projects have been postponed to pay for other critical operations such as police and fire. The City has made a decision to resolve past funding deficiencies through a recently adopted Stormwater Utility.

2. What is a Stormwater Utility?

A Stormwater Utility is to stormwater what a sewer utility is to sewage, and a water utility is to drinking water. It is an independent service unit within the City of Plantation government, which generates funds through a user fee charged to property owners for the delivery of stormwater management program services. Funds from a stormwater utility pay for the construction, operation and maintenance of the City stormwater management system, stormwater system planning and management, and for required compliance with federal, state or county stormwater regulations. The funds generated by the stormwater user fee are kept separate from any other City funding source and may only be used for City stormwater program purposes.

3. How much is the fee?

Starting with the 2013 tax roll, developed residential property will be charged a uniform annual Stormwater Utility Fee of \$30.00. Developed non-residential property will be charged an annual fee based upon the total amount of developed land within the property that reduces the property's original, natural ability to manage stormwater runoff. Government entities, schools and houses of worship will be exempt from the payment of the Stormwater Utility Fee.

4. What is a developed Property?

"Developed Property" or "Property" means a parcel of real property which is located within the City limits of Plantation and not located within the boundary of the Plantation Acres Improvement district (PAID), and which has been altered from its original state by the addition of any improvements, such as a building, structure, or other form of impervious surface which exceeds four hundred fifty (450) square feet.

5. What is an Impervious Surface or Impervious Area?

Impervious Surface or Impervious Area is a measure of land that has been altered in such a way that stormwater runoff is prevented from draining into the natural ground and forced to run off in other directions. Examples of impervious surface or impervious area are buildings, parking lots, driveways, walkways, pools and pool decks.

6. How is the fee calculated?

For purposes of calculating the Stormwater Utility Fee, the City has established an Equivalent Residential Unit, or ERU. A base ERU for the City is equal to 4,489 square feet of developed property, or impervious area. In other words, 1.0 ERU = 4,489 square feet of impervious area.

1.0 ERU is applied to residential property such as single family homes, townhome units and condominium units. For non-residential property, the City determines the number of ERUs by calculating the total amount of impervious area within the property and divides that number by the base ERU (4,489 square feet). For example, a non-residential property with 10,000 square feet of impervious area is assigned $10,000 \text{ sf} / 4,489 \text{ sf} = 2.3 \text{ ERU}$, rounding up to the nearest tenth.

The City has established an initial ERU Rate of \$2.50 per month for one (1) ERU. Multiplying the number of ERUs by the ERU Rate, then multiplied by 12 months, results in the annual Stormwater Utility fee. The residential Stormwater Utility Fee is:

Residential Property: 1.0 ERU x \$2.50 per ERU per month x 12 months = \$30.00 annually

Using the non-residential example above, the Stormwater Utility fee would be:

2.3 ERU x \$2.50 per ERU per month x 12 months = \$69.00 annually

7. How is residential stormwater utility customer defined?

A Residential stormwater utility customer means the property owner of a dwelling unit such as a single family home, townhome or condominium unit. A residential stormwater utility customer does not include the place where a corporation or other enterprise conducts and is authorized to conduct business.

8. How is non-residential utility customer defined?

Non-residential utility customer means all customers not classified as residential utility customers.

9. What is a Florida Department of Revenue Land Use Type?

The Florida Department of Revenue land use is classified and described as follows:

0000	- Vacant Residential Parcels
0100	- Single Family
0200	- Mobile Homes
0300	- Multi Family 10+
0400	- Condominium
0500	- Cooperatives
0600	- Retirement Homes
0700	- Miscellaneous Residential
0800	- Multi Family 10-
1000	- Vacant Commercial
1000 - 3900	- Improved Commercial
4000	- Vacant Industrial
4100 - 4900	- Improved Industrial
5000	- Improved Agricultural
7000	- Institutional Vacant
7100 - 7900	- Institutional

Property owners can find their parcel land use classifications by doing a property search on the Broward County Property Appraiser website at www.bpca.net. The classification is listed as property type.

10. What if the information regarding my parcel type is incorrect and therefore I am billed incorrectly in the tax bill in November? How do I get it corrected?

The parcel information is obtained from the Property Appraiser and is based on the last certified tax roll. Should you find any discrepancies in the parcel information used for the stormwater utility billing and fee, please contact the City of Plantation Engineering Department at 954-797-2282 for assistance.

11. How will the Stormwater Utility Fee be billed? The Stormwater Utility Fee is a user fee, not a tax. In an effort to reduce administrative costs, the Stormwater Utility Fee will be charged annually through the property tax bill as a non-ad valorem assessment and collected by the tax collector.

12. How much money will the City collect from the Stormwater Utility Fee?

The Stormwater Utility Fee will generate an estimated 1.3 million dollars annually based upon the current established ERU Rate.

13. What period of time does the Stormwater Utility Fee cover and when will the Fee be payable?

The Stormwater Utility Fee is charged once annually and is payable, as a non ad valorem assessment in your tax bill, each year between November 1 and March 31.

14. I don't pay taxes now due to homestead exemption. Will I have to pay the stormwater charge?

Yes. Stormwater Utility fees are different than ad valorem taxes and the Stormwater Utility Fee applies to developed property uses regardless of homestead exemption. See above for Exemptions.

15. I received a discount for early payment of my taxes. Will I receive the same discount for my Stormwater Utility Fee?

Yes. The same discounts and penalties applicable to ad valorem taxes will also apply to the Stormwater Utility Fee non ad valorem assessment collected on the tax bill.

16. I currently claim a deduction for property taxes on my income tax return each year; can I claim a deduction for the Stormwater Utility Fee?

Generally, a Stormwater Utility Fee is not a valid income tax deduction for residential property. However, if you own rental property or a business, the Stormwater Utility Fee may be deductible when computing your income taxes. Please contact your accountant or income tax preparer for information regarding your specific situation.

17. I have a tenant in my house. Should the tenant pay the Stormwater Utility Fee or will I have to pay it as the property owner? Like property taxes, stormwater fees are billed to property owners only. Each property owner or landlord will be responsible for determining if and how to pass on the cost of the Stormwater Utility Fee to tenant(s).

18. My property or neighborhood has not experienced flooding, so why am I being charged the Stormwater Utility Fee? All Plantation property owners charged the Stormwater Utility Fee benefit from the City's administration of its Stormwater Management Program. While there may not have been a flooding problem on your property or in your neighborhood, the runoff from your property and the neighborhood contributes proportionately to the City's Stormwater Management Program.

19. How will problems such as street flooding be solved? City staff is developing a Capital Improvement Plan, which will identify needed projects and programs for the reduction of pollutants, sediments and debris in stormwater runoff, and to better manage the volume of runoff to reduce flooding. City staff has documented various locations in the City with stormwater issues needing attention. However, funding is not readily available at this time to implement solutions. The Stormwater Utility Fee will generate funding to implement solutions.

20. Does growth and new development contribute to the stormwater issues faced by the City?

Yes. Construction requiring the alteration of natural topography and removal of vegetation tends to increase erosion. Siltation of water bodies resulting from increased erosion, congestion of water bodies with natural or non-natural debris or invasive aquatic weeds, decreases the capacity of water bodies to hold and transport water, interferes with flood prevention and control, and harms indigenous flora and fauna. Impervious surfaces increase the volume and rate of stormwater runoff and prevent stormwater from percolating into the soil, decreasing groundwater recharge.

21. Where can I get more information? If you have a question regarding the Stormwater Utility Fee, you may contact the City Engineering Department at (954) 797-2282, Monday - Friday between 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.