



# Proposed Stormwater Utility Background and Frequently Asked Questions



## **Background**

The Dunes Community Development District (DCDD) was established in 1985. The DCDD provides transportation services, stormwater management, wastewater treatment and collection, water treatment and distribution and reclaimed water service to the residents of the DCDD. Currently the DCDD maintains three funds to maintain these services. These funds are the Water and Sewer Fund, the Bridge Fund and the General Fund. Up to this point, funding sources for stormwater expenditures have come from the DCDD's General Fund, which is supplemented by the Bridge Fund and the Water and Sewer Fund. Expenses for the Stormwater system are expected to increase due to the age of the system. Therefore, supplemental funding by the other funds for the Stormwater system is not sustainable and obscures the true cost of this system.

The DCDD is considering the implementation of a stormwater utility funding program to address long-term maintenance, repair and replacement of the storm drainage infrastructure system that benefits local residents and businesses such as the golf courses. Funds generated by the utility will be used to inspect, assess and repair/replace as needed failing infrastructure (i.e. pipes, manholes and catch basins) and to implement projects to reduce incidents of flooding throughout our community. Many local governments in Florida, including Palm Coast, St. Augustine, Jacksonville, Cape Canaveral, Cocoa Beach and more, have already implemented similar fee programs. Establishment of a Stormwater Utility Fund, paid for by stormwater user fees, will provide a more equitable and sustainable means of funding stormwater system expenditure requirements long-term.

## **Why is the DCDD considering implementation of a separate user fee for stormwater management?**

Current funding is insufficient to address the DCDD's long-term stormwater management needs, which are anticipated to grow as the stormwater system ages. By establishing a dedicated funding source through stormwater user fees, the DCDD can ensure that the revenue required to manage and to maintain this important system is available. The funds raised through the stormwater user fee will allow the DCDD to provide an increased level of system maintenance and repair that most closely aligns with industry standards and your expectations.

## **What is our stormwater system, what does it do and why should I care?**

The Storm Water Management System consists of approximately 179 acres of created lakes, over 19 miles of pipes and over 2,500 structures (catch basins, inlets, outfalls and water control features). The primary functions of the System are removal of excess stormwater from residential and recreation areas, retention of surface water runoff, recharge of groundwater, control of saltwater intrusion, water quality monitoring and System maintenance. During periods of high rainfall, excess water from the lakes is ultimately discharged into the Intracoastal Waterway via two outfall conduits. Due to Federal and State regulatory requirements, the DCDD's stormwater management program is responsible to regulate, maintain, and manage stormwater runoff within the DCDD. If not maintained properly, system failures can occur which may cause flooding in homes or significant damage to local roadways.

## **What is stormwater runoff?**

Stormwater runoff is the water that flows off roofs, driveways, parking lots, streets and other hard surfaces during rain storms. The runoff that is not absorbed into the ground pours into ditches, culverts, catch basins and storm sewers. It does not receive any treatment before entering the streams, lakes and ocean.

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## **Why is stormwater runoff a problem?**

As precipitation falls on undeveloped areas, it is primarily absorbed into the ground or slowly runs off into streams, rivers or other water bodies. However, development resulting in rooftops and paved areas prevent water from being absorbed and create a faster rate and greater volume of runoff. We must have a functioning drainage system capable of safely directing this water away from properties to prevent damage and to ensure public safety.

## **What is the basis for the fee that is charged?**

The stormwater utility fee is based on the square footage of impervious surface area (i.e. hard surfaces that generate stormwater runoff) on your lot. In essence, customers pay a fee related to the amount of runoff generated from their site, which is related to the amount of impervious surface on the site.

## **What will it cost me?**

Most residential dwelling units (single family homes, condos, etc.) will be charged a rate of \$15 each month. Properties that do not currently receive direct stormwater services (such as Island Estates), but benefit from the community-wide program, will be charged a management/administrative fee of \$5 each month. Yacht Harbor will not be included in the stormwater utility as it does not receive any stormwater service from the DCDD.

## **How are non-residential property fees determined and billed?**

All non-residential properties will be billed at a rate based on their impervious area. To determine the monthly fee, divide the total impervious area of your property by 3,320 square feet (or one Equivalent Residential Unit) to obtain the number of ERUs and multiply by the base residential rate (\$15 per month per ERU).

## **When will I have to pay this fee?**

Assuming the first Stormwater Utility resolution is passed by the Board of Supervisors, the DCDD anticipates sending out the stormwater fee bills with the January 2022 Water and Sewer Utility bills.

## **What are the initial goals of the Stormwater Utility?**

A major initial goal for the Stormwater Utility will be the completion of a system-wide assessment of stormwater infrastructure to determine the remaining service life and to prioritize system elements for repair. The stormwater utility fund will support the repair and/or replacement of failing stormwater system elements over time, a process which has been shown to reduce long term cost to customers and lessens the risk of a system failure that may cause a public safety hazard.

**The DCDD will be holding a Stormwater Workshop on August 16, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. at the Utility Office at 101 Jungle Hut Road, Palm Coast, FL 32137 to answer further questions and gain resident input.**