

PROPOSED STREET LIGHT ASSESSMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document has been created in an ongoing effort to keep property owners informed and up-to-date on this important issue that may affect them. The information in this document has been prepared to clarify and answer some of the questions property owners may have regarding the City's proposed street light assessment program.

Q. What is a special assessment?

A. A special assessment is a charge placed on a property because that property receives a special benefit from the services or facilities that are funded by the special assessment. A street light special benefit is based on the provision that street lights specially benefit all of the improved parcels, whether residential or commercial, by protecting and enhancing their value, use and enjoyment. The provision of street lights provides better identification and recognition and can enhance safety and access to property. A special assessment is not a tax and is not based on the value of your property.

Q. How much will the street light assessment be for residential properties?

A. The proposed Non-Commercial assessment per residential unit is \$37.60 per year (\$3.13/month).

Q. How much will the street light assessment be for commercial properties?

A. For Commercial properties located along the US 17-92 & SR 436 corridors, the proposed assessment per equivalent residential (ERU) unit is \$36.50 per year (\$3.04/month). Each improved commercial parcel will be assigned an ERU value based on its land area divided by the average residential lot size within the City, which is 0.25 acres. Note that the Commercial assessment is slightly lower than the Non-Commercial assessment because the Florida Department of Transportation pays for a portion of the street lights along the US 17-92 & SR 436 corridors.

Q. How will the street light assessment be billed?

A. Assessments will be reinstated in the fall of 2010 and will appear as a line item on your property tax bill. If you make monthly mortgage payments, it is likely that this amount will be escrowed by your mortgage and your monthly mortgage payment will include this assessment.

Q. How are street light services paid for now?

A. September 2010 will serve as the completion date for the first successful year of the street lighting services being funded by the Street Light Assessment. Part of the Assessment also included the installation of 25 new street lights which will be installed along Lake Howell road and Belle Avenue in August.

Previously street light services were paid by a gas tax revenue called the Local Option Gas Tax (LOGT). As less gas was purchased, the fund continued to decline to the point where it could only cover debt service (repayment) of previous transportation projects (i.e., new roadways, turn lanes, traffic signals, sidewalks, etc.).

Additionally, LOGT funds are allocated to municipalities based on the proportional share of transportation expenditures made by each municipality. Although street light expenditures are an allowable expense from LOGT funds, when these funds are used for street lights, the City's share

of LOGT is diminished.

By utilizing the street light assessment funding source, the ongoing costs of street lights can be covered and, at the same time, the City's LOGT proportional share can be maximized.

Q. How are other cities funding street lights?

A. The majority of municipalities fund their street lighting cost from their General Fund, Local Option Gas Tax (LOGT), or through special assessments. However, special assessments are becoming more common as they are seen as a more equitable way to pay for the service. Seminole & Orange Counties utilize special assessments.

It is also quite common for areas in cities and counties to pay for their street lighting through private homeowners associations.

Examples of street light cost paid per unit/lot in private communities within the City are as follows:

Legacy Park.....	\$93.72 per year
Southport Condominium Association.....	\$32.00 per year
Lake Griffin Estates.....	\$84.48 per year
Park Maitland Villas.....	\$91.00 per year
Lost Lake Estates.....	\$142.86 per year
Field Club.....	\$208.56 per year

Examples of street light costs per unit/lot assessed through the County (unincorporated Seminole County only) MSBU program are as follows:

Bear Gully Forest.....	\$105.00 per year
Deer Run – Fairway Oaks.....	\$50.00 per year
Deer Run – Sterling Park Phases 1-3.....	\$25.00 per year
Forest Brook	\$30.00 per year
Indian Hills Subdivision – (Unincorporated Seminole County Only).....	\$30.00 per year
Stonehurst.....	\$255.00 per year

The City proposed residential rate is \$37.60 per year (\$3.13/month)

Q. What if I pay for street lights through my homeowners' association or other contractual agreement with Progress Energy?

A. Property owners, who already pay a street light fee to Progress Energy through their homeowners' association or through another arrangement, would not have to pay this assessment. Only those residential and business property owners that are currently not paying for street lights would be subject to the street light assessment.

Q. What will the assessment fund?

A. The assessment will fund the costs of street light services for developed residential and commercial properties within the City of Casselberry. Besides the associated operation and maintenance costs for street lights, the assessment includes capital costs for adding 25 standard street lights per year for areas that are found by staff to have deficient street lighting. The

assessment will help to preserve and enhance the value, use and enjoyment of the affected parcels within the service areas.

Q. Can existing street lights be replaced with energy-efficient-lights?

A. As technology continues to improve and the capital cost of energy-efficient-lights improves, it is the intent to use LED lights or any available energy-efficient-lights in any new street light installations. Currently, the City and Progress Energy have partnered on two pilot projects with LED street lights within the City. Energy efficient alternatives will continue to be pursued as they become available.

Q. Can decorative street lights be installed in my neighborhood?

A. The street light assessment budget includes existing street lights and a limited amount of new street lights to cover deficient areas. However, the street light assessment does provide the mechanism to create special districts with different fees for areas where the majority of residents would like to select an enhanced or decorative fixture.

Q. Can the assessments be spent for any other purpose?

A. No. Special assessments can only be used for the services or facilities for which they have been imposed.

Q. Can the assessments be raised in the future?

A. Yes. However, as required by law, the assessment implementation documentation requires that assessments cannot be increased without first conducting a public hearing on the matter in front of the City Commission.

Q. Are there other special assessment programs within the City of Casselberry?

A. Yes. Over the years, there have been special assessments for subdivision walls, paving of dirt roads, and sidewalks, etc. The most common uses of special assessments are to fund or improve sidewalks, streets and alleys, and solid waste services.

Q. Do I have to pay the assessment if I do not have a street light in my street or neighborhood?

A. Yes. There are a few areas within the City that have deficient street lighting. However, the street light assessment includes a small capital component to fund the installation of street lights in these deficient areas. Staff is proactively identifying these areas and will arrange for the installation of street lights.

Q. When will this matter be discussed and can I comment on the proposed assessment?

A. On Monday, July 12, 2010, at 7:00PM, at City Hall, the Casselberry City Commission reviewed the Preliminary Rate Resolution regarding the proposed street light assessment fee. The Commission has approved the Preliminary Rate Resolution, and a Final Resolution could be adopted at the August 23, 2010 City Commission meeting. On this date a public hearing will also be held during the Commission meeting for an opportunity for residents to voice their concerns. City Commission meetings are held at City Hall, 95 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry. The City Commission has the ultimate decision making authority on this matter.

Q. Where can I obtain more information?

A. If you have a question regarding the proposed street lighting assessment, you may contact the City of Casselberry at (407) 262-7725, extension 1239, Monday – Friday between 8:00am – 5:00pm or e-mail streetlights@casselberry.org. You can also review the presentation made to the

Commission on the City's web site at www.casselberry.org. The City's web site will be updated with additional information as it becomes available. Every effort will be made to keep you updated, informed and advised of the proposed street light assessment.