# **VARIABLE RATE ASSESSMENT - FOR ONGOING SERVICES**

## LAKE & OTHER NATURAL WATERBODY **SERVICES**

Seminole County Government offers a variety of assessment-funded services that focus on protecting or enhancing the environmental



qualities, recreational usage, and stormwater management aspects of natural waterbodies. These services are provided by the Public Works Department and may involve one-time provisions (such as Restoration) and ongoing activities (such as Aguatic Weed Control). Aguatic weed control includes processes by which exotic, nuisance, and noxious aquatic vegetation that threatens or impedes a waterbody is eliminated or controlled. Both capital assessment and variable rate assessments formats may be used to fund these services. Assessment boundaries include waterfront property and property with right of use to the waterbody. Variable rate assessments are collected in advance on a fiscal year basis.

#### STREET LIGHTING

Street lighting provides an essential benefit by improving nighttime visibility along roadways and pedestrian areas. In unincorporated



Seminole County, a community choosing to have streetlights may participate in an MSBU for funding the cost of installing and operating streetlights. The offered equipment is owned, operated and maintained by public utility companies. The assessment for street lighting varies based on the equipment selected and the number of benefiting properties. MSBUs are organized by geographic boundaries, and often by subdivision. The assessment may vary annually based on changes in utility charges and other budgeted operating costs. The assessment includes funding for the streetlight fixtures, poles, utilities and financial administration. These assessments are collected in advance on a fiscal year basis.

To report a streetlight outage or repair request, please contact the electric utility company servicing the grea:

**Duke Energy** (800) 228-8485 Florida Power & Light (800) 226-3545

Interested in MSBU Program online services and information?

Visit: www.seminolecountyfl.gov/msbu

For assessment information specific to your property, visit www.seminolecountyfl.gov/MSBUNAVA

## RESIDENTIAL SOLID WASTE **MANAGEMENT**

Responsible management of residential solid waste (such as household garbage, recyclables, yard waste, white goods, and household hazardous waste) is critical to every community and the long-term quality of the environment. Each year,



residential property in unincorporated Seminole County is assessed an equitable amount for funding the routine collection and disposal of residential solid waste and administration of the Solid Waste Management MSBU.

The assessment is levied on a per dwelling basis and is collected in advance on a calendar year basis. The assessment is levied without regard to occupancy. The amount may vary annually based on contracted service costs, disposal trends and other operating costs. Recycling activities are mandated by the State of Florida and are included in assessment calculations.

As the management of residential solid waste is an on-going public responsibility, there are no provisions for residential property to opt out from participation in the MSBU. Detailed information about the full range of available services, contact information, and the assessment rates for various service options is available online or by calling the MSBU Program.

For assistance with routine collection or disposal services, please call the Solid Waste **Management Division customer service** at 407-665-2260.

#### **RELATED TERMINOLOGY**

Assessment District - group of properties assigned a pro-rata amount to fund an essential public service offering special benefit to those properties

Benefit - direct or indirect assistance or advantage

Benefit Unit - equitable base or measure used for allocating cost; such as parcel, acreage, or dwelling

Capital Assessment - amount levied for a public service for which the amount is levied once but may be repaid in annual installments over a period of years

Liaison - applicant or person that voluntarily serves as a spokesperson for the community during the various phases of the MSBU process

Lien - a legal claim upon property to secure the payment of a debt or obligation

Municipal Service - public assistance or improvement provided by a government to serve a public purpose

Municipal Services Benefit Unit [MSBU] - an assessment district created to fund a public service

Non-Ad Valorem Assessment [NAVA] - amount levied on a property by criteria other than property value; allocated by units of benefit

Ordinance - an authoritative order or legislation enacted by a municipal authority such as the Seminole County BCC

Petition [MSBU] - document prepared by the MSBU Program and used to determine level of community support for creating an MSBU

Pro-rata - a proportionate allocation

Public Hearing - meeting which allows the public to comment on proposed plans before final decision is made by government

Public Purpose - essential to public health, safety or welfare; may be provided by government and funded by taxes, fees or

Public Service - essential service provided by a government

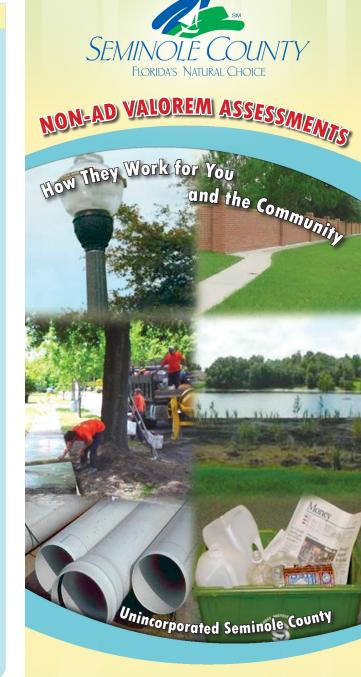
Service Provider - the designated County entity responsible for providing and managing a public service

Survey of Interest - informal pre-application tool used to confirm general level of interest prior to acceptance of application

Unincorporated area - a region of land outside the taxing boundary of a city; governed by the County

Variable Rate Assessment - an amount levied annually to fund an ongoing service for which the service cost may change each year

For additional information, contact: MSBU Program msbuprogram@seminolecountyfl.gov 1101 East First Street • Sanford, FL 32771 (407) 665-7178 or visit: www.seminolecountyfl.gov/msbu



**Municipal Services Benefit Unit Program** 

**Seminole County Government** Department of Resource Management July 2021

## Non-Ad Valorem Assessments [NAVA] are managed by the MSBU Program

The Municipal Services Benefit Unit [MSBU] Program serves as the central entity through which MSBUs are financially managed and assessments are levied for assessment-funded public services in unincorporated Seminole County. The MSBU Program assists with application processing, MSBU creation, and the ongoing financial management of assessment-funded services.

### **NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENT**

Non-ad valorem assessment is a funding alternative that provides for essential public services on a localized cost-benefit basis. A non-ad valorem assessment represents a property's cost share for the service offering special benefit to that property. These assessments are calculated on an equitable basis called a "benefit unit". A benefit unit may be a parcel, dwelling, linear foot, or other equitable unit. Assessments are collected via the annual property tax bill.

#### **ASSESSMENT DISTRICT**

An "MSBU" (Municipal Services Benefit Unit) is a non-ad valorem assessment district created to fund all or part of an authorized public service. The properties listed in the assessment boundary of the MSBU share in the benefit and the cost of the service provided. The assessment assigned to the benefited properties is based on the cost to provide the service, the number of assessed properties, and the number of benefit units allocated to each property. The unit of benefit is defined when the MSBU is established.

## ASSESSMENT FUNDING

Assessment funding may be used for ongoing public services or constructed improvements benefiting property in unincorporated Seminole County. Ongoing services, such as street lighting, are funded by variable rate assessment levied annually. Constructed improvements, such as central water utility service line extensions, are funded by a one-time levied capital assessment.

Most Seminole County MSBUs are established at the request of property owners.

To learn more... visit the MSBU Program website or contact the program by phone or email.

#### **VARIABLE RATE ASSESSMENT**







A variable rate assessment is levied annually when an MSBU is created to fund an ongoing public service. The assessment rate (amount) is determined with preparation of the annual budget. The rate may vary due to changes in conditions that impact the cost to provide continued service – costs such as utility rates, contracted services, and/or service scope or frequency. Assessment rates are communicated to the owners of assessed property via the annual mailing of a Notice of Proposed Assessment.

## **CAPITAL ASSESSMENT**



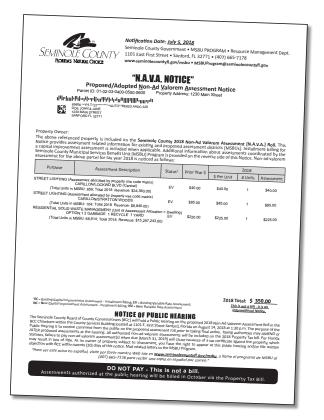




When an MSBU is created to fund a capital improvement, the assessment is levied once based on project cost. Financing of a capital assessment is offered, and owners may choose to pay the assessment in installments billed via the property tax bill. The installment payment terms (years & amount) are estimated when the MSBU is established, and finalized based on actual project cost after the project is complete. Installment schedules are posted on the MSBU Program website. A capital assessment may be paid in full without penalty at any time after the project is complete. When early payment is planned, contact the MSBU Program to obtain a current payoff balance.

#### **ASSESSMENT ROLL & PUBLIC HEARING**

A non-ad valorem assessment roll is generated annually in preparation for the forthcoming property tax bill. The roll includes all assessments and installment billings administered by the MSBU Program. The roll provides a listing by parcel number stating assessment rate, benefit units and installment billing for the current tax year. The roll is presented to the Board of County Commissioners for review and approval at a public hearing. Property owners have a right to attend the hearing and to address the Board. The hearing is conducted in August.



## **NAVA NOTICE**

A Non-Ad Valorem Assessment [NAVA] Notice is mailed annually in July to owners of assessed property because property owners have a right to receive this information in advance of the property tax bill. The Notice is property specific and includes details about the assigned assessments, installment billing and the related public hearing.

#### **COLLECTED VIA PROPERTY TAX BILL**

Annually, after receiving Board approval, a Non-Ad Valorem assessment roll is submitted to the Tax Collector for billing and collection. Assessments must be paid when the property tax bill is paid. Assessments are eligible for standard early payment discounts. Payment deadline is March 31. Failure to pay an assessment when due may result in a tax certification being issued by the Tax Collector.

## **LIENS & SATISFACTION OF LIENS**

An initial assessment roll is approved when an MSBU is established and a lien in the amount of the assessment is filed in land records. The lien is considered satisfied when the assessment has been paid in full. For variable rate assessments, a paid status of a property tax bill serves as confirmation of lien satisfaction. For capital assessment, a satisfaction of lien document is issued after the assessment has been paid in full.

#### **SALE OF PROPERTY**

With the exception of delinquent taxes, Seminole County does not require full payment of a capital assessment prior to the sale of property. In many sale situations, the payment of an outstanding assessment is a negotiable settlement factor resolved between the seller and the buyer. The repayment schedule is posted on the MSBU Program website and the balance on any outstanding capital assessment is available from the MSBU Program.

For additional information about creating an MSBU for an assessment-funded service or about an assessment assigned to a property, please visit www.seminolecountyfl.gov/msbu or call the MSBU Program at (407) 665-7178.