



# CITY OF TAMPA

Stormwater Utility Funding  
Frequently Asked Questions  
2021

**Q. What types of Stormwater Assessments are there?**

A. There are two types of Stormwater Assessments a Service Assessment and an Improvement Assessment.

**Q. What is the Stormwater Service Assessment?**

A. Annual Non-Ad Valorem assessment that pays for operations and maintenance of the existing stormwater system. Services include street sweeping, pond maintenance, pipeline system cleaning, outfall cleaning, ditch maintenance and miscellaneous micro-projects ancillary to maintenance activities.



**Q. What is the Stormwater Improvement Assessment?**

A. An Annual Non-Ad Valorem assessment pays for capital improvements associated with the stormwater system in the Central and Lower Improvement Area. Improvements include system capacity increases, treatment facilities such as ponds, ditches and baffle boxes, new pipelines and box culverts, pump stations, backflow valves, inlets, curb and gutter systems, as well as roadway regrading to improve flow patterns.

**Q. Will the revenue go into the City's general fund?**

A. No. Revenue from the Stormwater Service Assessment funds the Stormwater Services and Operations program. Revenue from the Stormwater Improvement Assessment will go into a separate fund that may only be used to finance Stormwater improvements in the Central and Lower Basin Improvement Area.

**Q. How much money does the City expect to collect from the stormwater charges?**

A. It is estimated that \$14.9M will be collected annually with the Service Assessment. The City intends to collect the Improvement Assessment for thirty (30) years, the first of which was included on the ad valorem tax bill mailed in November 2016. The estimated amount collected by the City is \$14,995,304 in FY 2022 increasing to an estimated amount of \$15,988,950 annually in 2030 through 2045. These funds will be used for projects only within the Central and Lower Basin Improvement Area.

**Q. What are the Classifications of Tax Parcels?**

A. Classifications are adopted by the City of Tampa Resolutions 2003-937 and 2016-567, Article III. This assigns the classifications of each tax parcel located within the

Stormwater Service Areas to be assigned to one of the following classifications: Small Single Family Parcels, Medium Single Family Parcels, Large Single Family Parcels, Very Large Single Family Parcels, Condominium Residential Unit Parcels, Condominium Non-Residential Unit Parcels Condominium Common Area Parcels, Mixed-Use Condominium Parcels, Small Multi-Family Parcels, Medium Multi-Family Parcels, Large Multi-Family Parcels or General Parcels.

**Q. What is an 'ESU'? (Equivalent Stormwater Unit)**

A. The ESU, also referred to as an "ESFIA" or (equivalent square footage of impervious area), is a billing unit. It is the standard unit used to express the Stormwater burden expected to be generated by each parcel of property. In Tampa, each ESU represents 3,310 square feet of impervious surface. The Average Median Single Family dwelling contains a footprint of 1,667 square feet and 1,643 other impervious area equaling 3,310 square feet. General parcels are assigned 1 ESU for every 3,310 square feet of impervious surface or a portion thereof.

**Q. How was the number of ESUs for Single Family Parcel determined?**

A. The residential properties were classified in samples of first floor footprints and total square footage of the City's single family parcels. Dwellings were reviewed and the parcels were then grouped into four classes based on similarity of the dwelling size. From these, samples of varied sizes were extracted; the impervious area on each parcel was digitized by the Hillsborough County GIS group. The impervious area was totaled for each Tier and then divided by the number in the sample to establish the average square footage of impervious area for their Tier. The single family home parcels are charged based on the footprint of their residence within a tier. The tiers' footprint ranges are as follows:

Small = Building footprint >100 and <1,300 sq. ft.	Avg. building footprint is 1,023sf assigned .61 ESU
Medium = Building footprint >1,301 and <2,200 sq. ft.	Avg. building footprint is 1,667sf assigned 1.00 ESU
Large = Building footprint >2,201 and <4,000 sq. ft.	Avg. building footprint is 2,762sf assigned 1.66 ESU
Very Large = Building footprint >4,000 sq. ft.	Avg. building footprint is 4,701sf assigned 2.82 ESU

The tiers all pay some portion or multiple of an ESU based on the average amount of impervious for that tier.

**Q. What is "impervious surface"?**

A. Municode 21-141: Impervious surface means a surface that has been compacted or covered with a layer of material so that it is highly resistant or prevents infiltration by stormwater. It includes roofed areas and surfaces such as compacted sand, limerock, or clay, as well as conventionally surfaced streets, sidewalks, parking lots, and other similar surfaces.

**Q. How are the properties charged?**

A. There are roughly 80,000 single family parcels in the City. Since it would be impractical to measure each one exactly each year, a method was established which would allow the residential properties to be placed in one of a series of Tiers. Single Family Residential and Multi-Family Parcels (defined as developed property to which the Property Appraiser has assigned DOR code of 08 and which contains no more than two buildings with no more than 4 dwelling units per building) are assessed based on the tiered ESU assignment. All other classifications are 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 impervious surfaces) divided by the billing unit value of 3,310 this provides the number of ESUs. Then the number of ESUs is multiplied by the rate providing the charge. All developed parcels (parcels with impervious areas greater than or equal to 100 sq. ft.) are charged.

**Q. Will all parcels pay both assessments?**

A. No. All developed parcels within the City that use the City's Stormwater System are charged the Service Assessment and only those parcels located in the Central and Lower Basin Improvement Area will be charged the Improvement Assessment. If a parcel meets the requirements for a mitigation credit, then it would receive a mitigation credit applied to both assessments.

**Q. What are the rates?**

A. The Stormwater Service Assessment rate is \$82.00 per ESU. The Stormwater Improvement Assessment rate is \$89.55 per ESU annually for 30 years. The City scaled the rate up to that maximum amount over a six year period beginning in 2016-17 and this Improvement Assessment is scheduled to end in 2045.

**Q. What is mitigation credit?**

A. Mitigation credits apply to both Stormwater Service Assessment and the Stormwater Improvement Assessment for a Developed Property in consideration of a properly functioning and permitted stormwater system, or the parcel owner contributes to the maintenance of a private system which provides stormwater treatment and attenuation for runoff from public right-of-way.

**Q. Who is eligible for a mitigation credit?**

A. Parcels subject to a Stormwater charge may be granted a mitigation credit based on one of the following factors:

1. Parcels with no Offsite Discharge of Stormwater to City System. The credit for such parcels will be 100% since the City bears no expense in managing the offsite discharge of the sites flow.



2. A credit of 40% is granted if the Owner of parcel operates and maintains a stormwater facility that provides attenuation and treatment equal to that necessary for the 50-year storm event.
3. A credit of no less than 10% is granted Owner of parcel contributes monetarily to a Community Development District, Civic Association (Homeowners Association or Property Owners Association), or Special District which provides maintenance to non-City owned stormwater management facilities which accept drainage from City right-of-way.
4. A credit of no less than 10% is granted if a Parcel has a properly maintained and functional onsite stormwater management system which treats and/or attenuates stormwater prior to discharge to the City right-of-way or stormwater system. Proof of proper operation and maintenance may be required on a periodic basis.

**Q. How can I get additional information on the City's Mitigation Credit Policy?**

A. You can access information on Mitigation Credits at the City of Tampa Website: [www.tampa.gov/tss-stormwater/programs/assessment/mitigation](http://www.tampa.gov/tss-stormwater/programs/assessment/mitigation) . Or it may be requested by contacting the City's Mobility Department by calling (813) 274 -3101.

**Q. I think my parcel should receive a stormwater mitigation credit. How can I have it reviewed?**

A. You can visit our Website: [www.tampa.gov/tss-stormwater/programs/assessment/mitigation](http://www.tampa.gov/tss-stormwater/programs/assessment/mitigation) for an application or contact the City by telephone at (813) 274-3101 and provide your name, address, phone number, and the best time for someone to reach you. Most importantly include the Folio or Parcel Identification number. When contacted you need to be prepared to provide the documentation such as drainage plans, demolition & cleared site records, topographic elevation survey, or other credentials deemed to be sufficient by the City's mitigation policy and how you qualify for the mitigation credit.

**Q. What period of time do the stormwater charges cover and when will the stormwater charges be payable?**

A. Both assessments cover the City of Tampa's fiscal year of October 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>. The Stormwater Service Assessment is re-imposed annually, and the Improvement Assessment is imposed annually for a period of 30 years. Both are payable, as part of your tax bill, each year between November 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>. While the Stormwater Service Assessment has been collected since 2003 the Stormwater Improvement Assessment began in 2016.

**Q. Why is the City using the tax bill collection method to collect the stormwater charge?**



A. "Piggy-backing" the collection method on the annual property tax bill saves money for everyone by reducing the administrative costs of the program. As well as it results in a stable revenue source to fund Stormwater Services and Improvements.

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

A. Yes. Stormwater charges are a non-ad valorem assessment and collected on the tax bill even though the owner or property may be tax exempt. The Stormwater Assessment applies to all developed property regardless of exemptions.



**Q. What if I am concerned that I cannot pay the full stormwater charge at one time?**

A. If you make monthly mortgage payments, it is likely that your mortgage holder will escrow the stormwater charge amounts, much like property taxes, and your monthly payment will include the stormwater charges. You may wish to advise them of any increase so they can adjust your monthly payment. Alternatively, if you would like to make installment payments, you will need to contact the Hillsborough County Tax

Collector's Office at (813) 635-5200 to arrange to participate in the quarterly installment program for the payment of taxes and stormwater charges.

**Q. What if I'm elderly and on a fixed income or disabled and I can't pay the additional Improvement Fee? Is there any assistance program?**

A. The City of Tampa has a Hardship Program for the Improvement Assessment. The City's program targets the elderly, disabled and disabled Veteran homeowners who reside on their homesteaded property. The City sponsored program would pay the annual Improvement Fee Assessment for those properties and owners that qualify.

You may access more information at the following website:

[https://www.tampa.gov/tss-stormwater/programs/assessment/hardship\\_program](https://www.tampa.gov/tss-stormwater/programs/assessment/hardship_program) .

Or you may contact the City's Housing and Community Development Division by telephone at (813) 274-7957.

**Q. I received a discount for early payment of my taxes. Will I receive the same discount for my stormwater charges?**

A. Yes. The same discounts apply to ad valorem taxes will also apply to the stormwater charges collected on the tax bill.

**Q. I have a tenant in my house. Should the tenant pay the stormwater charges or will I have to pay it as the property owner?**

A. Like property taxes, stormwater charges are billed to property owners only; each property owner or landlord will have to determine if or how a tenant should share in the stormwater charge costs.

**Q. What if I am billed incorrectly on the tax bill in November, how do I get it corrected?**

A. If information on your tax bill is incorrect, contact Hillsborough County Property Appraiser at (813) 272-6100.

**Q. Where can I report flooding or drainage issues?**

A. City of Tampa Mobility Department at (813) 274- 3101.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR STORMWATER UTILITY ASSESSMENT WEBPAGE:**  
[www.tampagov.net/tss-stormwater/programs/assessment](http://www.tampagov.net/tss-stormwater/programs/assessment).