



City of Casselberry

Public Works Department

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ABOUT YOUR STORMWATER AND LAKE MANAGEMENT UTILITY FEE

What does the “STORMWATER” on my water bill mean?

This is the charge associated with the Stormwater and Lake Management Utility Fee (a.k.a. “Stormwater Utility Fee”), which the City of Casselberry includes in each monthly water bill for residential and non-residential properties within the City limits. It is used to fund the City’s Stormwater and Lakes Management Program.

How much is the fee and what is an ERU?

The current amount of the fee (through September 30, 2017) is \$7 per equivalent residential unit (ERU) per month. For the City of Casselberry, an ERU is calculated as 2,304 square feet of impervious area. An ERU is the average impervious area in square feet for all residential dwelling units in the City, and it serves as the basic unit for the computation of stormwater and lake management fees. The fee is scheduled for stepped increases beginning October 1, 2018. (See below question regarding increases.)

What is impervious area?

Impervious areas are surfaces that prevent water from seeping or infiltrating into the ground. Common impervious areas include, but are not limited to, roofs, sidewalks, walkways, patio areas, driveways, parking lots, concrete, asphalt, etc.

How are the number of ERU’s determined?

Individual residential properties are assigned 1 ERU and so are charged a flat rate of \$7 per month (based on the current fee schedule). Non-residential properties (e.g., commercial properties) are charged based on the total amount of impervious area on the site. The City uses this information to calculate the total number of ERU’s to be billed to the non-residential property, currently at a rate of \$7 per ERU per month. Both non-residential and residential properties that meet certain retention requirements may apply for a partial credit against the Stormwater Utility Fee.

What does the fee pay for?

The fee covers capital improvement projects, operations, maintenance, personnel, and programs related to stormwater and lakes management, as identified in the City’s adopted Stormwater and Lakes Management Master Plan.

The current Master Plan contains another 10 years worth of capital improvements, many of which are associated with water quality improvement. Florida (along with every state in the U.S.) is undergoing the process of complying with federal water quality standards related to stormwater and pollutant discharge. A significant burden is placed on local governments, such as the City of Casselberry, to meet these standards. Moreover, water quality improvement in urbanized areas such as Casselberry is expensive, as costly stormwater retrofit projects are often necessary to help meet standards.

The Stormwater Utility funds operational, compliance, and maintenance activities, including staff, equipment, vehicles, consultants, and contractors that monitor, maintain, and repair the City's stormwater conveyance systems and drainage infrastructure. Public street sweeping and lakes management, including lake water quality monitoring and aquatic plant management on several lakes, is also funded by the Stormwater Utility. Public education, which the City considers vitally important to addressing water quality, also receives some funding from the fee.

Significant operational/program enhancements were included in the latest Master Plan. The City has greatly expanded the number of lakes for which it provides aquatic plant management, and lake management activities will largely be brought in-house starting in late 2018, which should result in a higher level of service. The City will also be increasing the frequency of streetsweeping for certain months of the year starting in early 2019. (Streetsweeping is one of the most cost effective means of reducing pollutant loads to our lakes and streams.)

Will the fee be increased? If so, why?

The fee has been held constant since 2007. The 2017 Stormwater and Lakes Management Master Plan includes a schedule of planned fee increases. These increases have been determined to be necessary for a variety of reasons, including operational improvements as discussed previously, increasing operational costs, inflation, and major capital improvement projects. There will be an initial 20% increase starting October 1, 2018, followed by smaller 3% annual increases intended to help keep in step with inflation/increasing costs. It is hoped that these smaller 3% annual increases will help the City avoid major jumps in the fee amount in the future. Below is a table of the planned fee amount over time:

Fiscal Year	Rate per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU)	Effective Date
2017-2018	\$7.00	October 1, 2017
2018-2019	\$8.40	October 1, 2018
2019-2020	\$8.65	October 1, 2019
2020-2021	\$8.90	October 1, 2020
2021-2022	\$9.20	October 1, 2021
2022-2023	\$9.45	October 1, 2022
2023-2024	\$9.75	October 1, 2023
2024-2025	\$10.05	October 1, 2024
2025-2026	\$10.35	October 1, 2025
2026-2027	\$10.65	October 1, 2026

Do Other Municipalities Charge Similar Fees?

Yes. All seven cities within Seminole County have stormwater utility fee programs. The amount of the City of Casselberry's fee is on par with the Central Florida region. Based on an analysis of ten Cities in Seminole and Orange County reported in the City's

Stormwater and Lakes Management Master Plan, as of 2016, stormwater utility fees ranged from \$4.00 to \$11.56 per ERU.

Is there another way to pay for this? Why Does the City Use a Stormwater Utility Fee as the method for paying for stormwater related concerns? Is it legal?

There are other methods that could be implemented, such as ad valorem (property tax) increases and special assessments. However, the City has determined, along with many other municipalities throughout the state, that a stormwater utility fee is the fairest method to address Federal and State laws and clean up stormwater. Florida Statute 403.0893 states that in addition to other funding mechanisms legally available to local governments, a county or municipality may "...create one or more stormwater utilities and adopt stormwater utility fees sufficient to plan, construct, operate, and maintain stormwater management systems..."

It should be noted, however, that the City also seeks grant funding to help pay for stormwater-related improvements when it can. For example, the City recently received over \$800,000 in federal funding to assist with erosion improvements needed in Gee Creek as a result of Hurricane Matthew. The City is in the process of obtaining similar funding for impacts due to Hurricane Irma.

I live in a private subdivision with private streets and drainage infrastructure – why am I still charged the Stormwater Utility Fee?

Neighborhoods with privately maintained streets, stormwater conveyance, and retention or detention ponds still contribute runoff and pollution to the City's overall drainage system, including the lakes within the City's watershed. Moreover, all residents of the City benefit significantly from the City's drainage infrastructure, public streets, and public lakes. However, if a subdivision provides stormwater retention (usually in the form of dry ponds), it may be eligible for a partial fee credit. The maximum achievable credit is 50% of the assessed fee, and significant onsite retention is required in order to achieve this level of credit.

What if I believe there is an error in the ERU calculation for my property? What if I have a retention system and would like to apply for a credit?

The City can verify and re-analyze properties upon request. However, in some cases the results of such analyses may indicate the actual ERU's are higher, not lower, than originally billed. For retention credits, the City has forms available to apply for the credit. Detailed information and calculations are required for such submittals, and it is the burden of the applicant to provide such information. Contact the City Engineer at kbrock@casselberry.org or (407) 262-7725 ext 1235 to request an ERU re-analysis or to find out more about applying for retention credit.

What are some of the projects the Stormwater Utility funds?

Notable past projects that were funded with assistance from the Stormwater Utility include Lake Concord Park, Triplet Lake Drive Signature Street, North Oxford Road Complete Street Improvements, whole lake alum treatments for various lakes, various

erosion control improvements in the Gee Creek basin, and various Citywide storm pipe rehabilitation improvements.

Notable upcoming projects over the next few years that will be funded with assistance from the Stormwater Utility include Casselton Drive Improvements, Concord Drive Improvements, a new Public Works Compound Facility, and the Queens Mirror Nutrient Reduction Facility (“QMNuRF”). This latter project, the “QMNuRF”, is anticipated to be one of the most cost effective projects to help remove significant excess nutrients from stormwater runoff before it enters Queens Mirror Lake and the Triplet Chain of Lakes. More erosion control improvements, storm pipe rehabilitation, and other water quality improvement projects are also planned.

How can I find out more?

The 2017 Stormwater and Lakes Management Master Plan and many other resources are available online at www.casselberry.org/lakes. The Master Plan contains a full listing of proposed projects and programs over the next several years. Also, the City generally holds Lakes Management Advisory Board meetings quarterly. These meetings are open to the public and are conducted by volunteer board members who are residents of the City of Casselberry. Upcoming projects and activities related to stormwater and lakes management are discussed at these meetings.

Or, please contact the City Engineer at kbrock@caselberry.org or (407) 262-7725 ext 1235 with questions or for additional information.