

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 5, 2020

To: Max Royle, City Manager

From: William Tredik, P.E., Public Works Director

Subject: Non-Ad Valorem Assessment Fee to Pay Costs Related to Stormwater Management within the City

BACKGROUND

As a coastal city in Florida, St. Augustine Beach has many stormwater needs. Several areas of the City have aging or insufficient stormwater infrastructure; are low-lying; and are particularly vulnerable to flooding due to severe rainfall events. Other areas, though newer, require significant maintenance to continue functioning at a level necessary to prevent flooding. Flooding is sometimes compounded by storm surge and extreme high tides, causing water levels to stage higher than normal and delay recovery after the rainfall event.

Steps are currently being taken to mitigate flooding and better protect the City from stormwater and storm surge; most notably the rebuilding and upgrading the Mizell Road Stormwater Facility. The City has, however, many stormwater needs beyond the Mizell Pond refit. These needs range from improved maintenance to the implementation of new projects to reduce localized flooding.

A key step in understanding and addressing the City's stormwater needs is the current Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan (the Study). The Study will identify the City's vulnerabilities and determine what actions must be taken now – and in the coming years – to mitigate sea level rise and reduce the threat from coastal flooding due to storm surge and extreme tides. The Study will provide a blueprint to develop capital improvement projects necessary to make the City more resistant to tidal flooding impacts.

On the heels of the Study, the City should conduct an update to the 2004 Stormwater Master Plan. The Updated Stormwater Master Plan would incorporate elements from the Study while also providing a more detailed analysis of areas within the City which are vulnerable to flooding due to inadequate or aging stormwater infrastructure. A high-level analysis of some areas of potential stormwater concern is shown in Figure 1. These identified areas all have unique needs and concerns, ranging from inadequate conveyance to risk from tidal inundation. Each of these areas – and most likely others not shown – will be explored in more detail during the future Master Drainage Plan Update. Some of these areas will require development of costly stormwater improvement projects in future fiscal years.

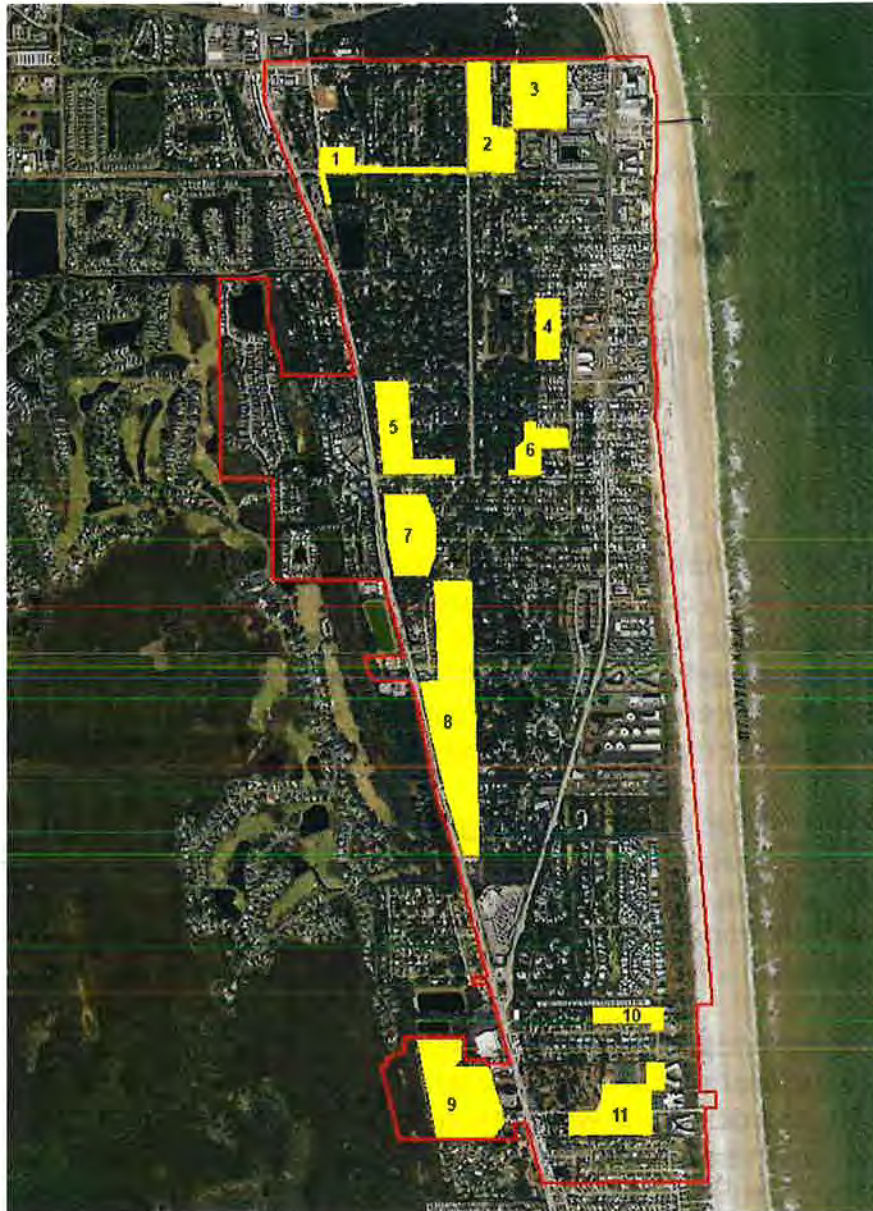


Figure 1 - Areas of Stormwater Concern

A summary of the locations in Figure 1 includes:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Lake Sienna Area | Potential Direct connection to Lakeside Park Pond |
| 2. Ocean Walk | Subdivision Drainage improvements |
| 3. Seaside Villas | Potential redirection to City Stormwater Master System |
| 4. 7 th , 8 th & 9 th Street | Unconstructed improvements in 2004 Master Plan |
| 5. Ocean Oaks | Subdivision Drainage Improvements |
| 6. Sea Oaks/2 nd Street | Unconstructed improvements in 2004 Master Plan |
| 7. Mariposa/Poinsettia St. | Drainage improvements |
| 8. Mag Oaks, Ewing, AOC | Drainage Imps. to Mag. Oaks Ewing St, Atlantic Oaks Cir. |
| 9. Ocean Trace Subdivision | Tidal Flood Protection |
| 10. Oceanside Circle | Drainage improvements / positive outfall |
| 11. Ocean Trace Road | Drainage improvements / positive outfall |

DISCUSSION

The cost of developing plans and implementing solutions for areas in need of stormwater improvements will likely be in the millions of dollars and require a long-term commitment by the City. Limited general fund revenues – combined with competing priorities – will make the funding of stormwater projects challenging without an alternative dedicated funding mechanism. In order to solve current flooding problems and mitigate future flooding alternative revenue sources must be explored.

Stormwater Utility Fees

Cities and counties across Florida have established stormwater utility fees to help maintain existing – as well as develop improved – stormwater infrastructure. Some examples of stormwater fees per equivalent single family (SFU) include:

- St. Augustine \$ 7.50 per month (\$90/year)
- Palm Coast \$18.91 per month (\$227/year)
- Ormond Beach \$ 7.00 per month (\$84/year)
- City of Flagler Beach \$ 8.83 per month (\$106/year)
- Daytona Beach \$10.07 per month (\$121/year)
- Jacksonville Beach \$ 5.00 per month (\$50/year)
- New Smyrna Beach \$ 7.67 per month (\$92/year)
- Cocoa Beach \$ 6.75 per month (\$81/year)
- Green Cove Springs \$10.42 per month (\$125/year)

This is just a small sampling of Stormwater Utility Rates in the vicinity of St. Augustine Beach. Fees statewide are similar in amount. Establishment of a stormwater utility fee such as that of Flagler Beach would likely generate as much as \$500,000 in annual revenue. Fees would be deposited into a dedicated stormwater management fund and could be used only for stormwater improvements or to fund the portion of staff salaries dedicated to stormwater management. Utilizing a stormwater utility fee to fund a portion of staff salaries would reduce the City's dependence upon ad-valorem taxes for staff salaries. By providing a dependable funding mechanism, it will also help the City in securing future matching grants and/or loans to construct stormwater improvements.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff requests direction from the city Commission whether to pursue the development of a Stormwater Utility Fee for the City of St. Augustine Beach to help fund stormwater maintenance and future stormwater capital improvement projects.