

Understanding Your Utilities Expansion Project

MSBU Assessments and Connection Fees

MSBU Assessment

This annual, non-ad valorem assessment appears on your property tax bill and funds the installation of the community infrastructure, such as major collection lines, lift stations and valves, necessary to bring wastewater collection service (and water facilities, if applicable) to your neighborhood. **This annual assessment does not include standard Utilities connection fees, which are due and payable at the time service is requested.** Connection fees vary depending on the type of property, services requested and timing of connection, but will represent several thousand dollars at a minimum.

The County establishes the boundaries for a Utilities MSBU based on which properties will benefit from the extension of utility services. It is then determined how many equivalent residential units (ERUs) are contained within these boundaries. The method for determining the number of ERUs is defined in the Resolution for each MSBU. Generally speaking, one ERU equals one single-family residential home. Properties zoned for multi-family or commercial use, as well as homes spanning two or more lots, may be assessed multiple ERUs.

To establish the assessment amount, the County commissions a preliminary engineering study to determine the estimated total cost of installing community utilities infrastructure. This estimate, including contingency and interest, is divided by the number of ERUs to determine the cost per ERU, which is then divided into 20 annual assessments.

Each fiscal year throughout the project, financial staff reviews the initial estimated costs as compared to actual expenditures and adjusts the assessment rate accordingly. Monies collected for a specific MSBU must be spent only on that specific project. The annual assessment rate can always be lowered but cannot be raised without the approval of the Board of County Commissioners, including a public hearing process.

Connection Fees

Once the community utilities infrastructure has been installed and certified for use by the Department of Environmental Protection, developed properties with homes, commercial buildings or other occupied structures will receive a mandatory connection notice via certified mail. Following notification, the owner has 385 days to pay the connection fees and request connection, as directed by County Ordinance #2001-034. At that time, all standard Utilities Connection Fees will apply, and will be due and payable, as defined in the then-current, BCC-approved Rate Resolution. Based on the current Utilities Rate Resolution, #2006-170, these fees include:

- **Plant Capacity and Transmission Capacity Charges:** These charges fund the growth-related capital costs of construction of wastewater treatment facilities and collection systems (and water treatment facilities and distribution systems, if applicable) to provide service to new connections.
- **Low Pressure Sewer Install:** This covers the cost of CCU installing an individual low pressure sewer system to serve your home or business. (Note: New construction does not pay this fee to CCU; the builder will arrange for the installation).
- **Accrued Guaranteed Revenue Fees (AGRF):** Accrued Guaranteed Revenue is the repayment of the prior costs of utility facilities built or acquired in excess of those needed to serve current customers and to meet the needs of future customers.

Additionally, existing home and business owners will need to contract a licensed, private electrician to install a control panel on their home. This cost will be paid directly to the electrician, not to CCU.

If hookup is not requested within 385 days of the Mandatory Connection Notice, a lien will be placed on the property and a monthly Base Facility Charge will be charged to the property owner. This covers the monthly fixed capital costs of having the system in place and prepared to serve the customer. Vacant properties will be required to connect to the wastewater collection system at the time they are developed.

