

## **About the West Villages Improvement District 2023/2024 Proposed Budget**

The West Villages Improvement District is the governmental agency responsible for the design and implementation of public infrastructure in Wellen Park. The District levies an assessment against all properties each year, which represents a share of the cost of public infrastructure financed by the District and a share of the cost to administer and maintain the District.

The fiscal 2023-24 budget goes into effect Oct. 1, 2023. The WVID Board of Supervisors will hold a meeting at 11 a.m. on Sept. 14, 2023, at the City of North Port Commission Chambers, 4970 City Hall Blvd. to receive public comment and approve the budget.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **How much is my assessment?**

The annual assessment varies by neighborhood and is tied to the benefits you receive, not the value of your home. All District property owners within the City of North Port, including the owners of undeveloped land, are responsible for paying a Unit 1 assessment. This unit supports, among other things, the construction and maintenance of Preto Boulevard from U.S. 41 to Playmore Road; and maintenance of Preto Boulevard from Playmore Road through Manasota Beach Road, Playmore Road, West Villages Parkway from U.S. 41 to the Braves stadium, West Villages Parkway from the Braves stadium through Manasota Beach Road and Manasota Beach Road between West Villages Parkway and Preto Boulevard.

Unit 6 includes all properties, except for IslandWalk, located within the District. This unit facilitates WVID's irrigation program, and all developed, non-District owned properties are required to connect to the system and purchase water from the District. These charges are considered a fee, rather than an assessment, and vary based on water consumption.

Irrigation fees are charged to the property owners' association or condominium association and are included in each individual community's budget.

#### **Why is my Unit 1 assessment increasing?**

The total Unit 1 budget is anticipated to increase to \$5,929,046 in fiscal year 2023-24, up 31% from the current year's budget. This breaks down to approximately \$127 more per unit than the current year.

The increase is necessary to support growing maintenance needs throughout the entirety of the District, including lake maintenance, landscaping and the extensions of West Villages Parkway, Preto Boulevard, Manasota Beach Road, Merlot Avenue, Mezzo Drive and Playmore Road.

It's important to note the increase does not include the maintenance of the Grand Lake or Downtown Wellen, which is paid for in full by Wellen Park as part of a 20-year maintenance agreement between the developer and the WVID.

#### **Why am I being charged an assessment in Unit 6?**

All properties located in Unit 6 will be required to pay a special assessment in fiscal year 2023-24 related to legal costs associated with a lawsuit filed by the Gran Paradiso Property Owners Association. In November 2022, the Property Owners Association filed suit against the WVID after the District notified the association of its intent to suspend irrigation water services due to nonpayment of its irrigation fees.

The WVID is anticipated to incur approximately \$350,000 in expenses as a result of the litigation through the end of fiscal year 2023, including legal, consulting, and engineering fees. With costs anticipated to continue through at least the summer of 2024, it is reasonable to anticipate an additional \$400,000 will be incurred for the successful defense of this lawsuit. Rather than increase irrigation water utility fees, the Board of Supervisors voted to levy a special assessment to pay for the increased costs.

Property owners throughout the District will be required to pay approximately a one-time, \$196 in fiscal year 2023-24 as part of the special assessment.

**Why do all property owners have to pay this assessment?**

The WVID Board of Supervisors, at the advice of legal counsel, voted to assess all property owners in Unit 6 for all expenses related to the Gran Paradiso litigation, including legal, engineering and consulting fees. Since the litigation specifically deals with the irrigation system, the Board of Supervisors felt it was necessary to assess all users at this time and avoid future litigation.

At the conclusion of the litigation, the WVID Board of Supervisors will review whether Unit 6 is the most appropriate unit for these expenses.

**What happens if the District doesn't use all, or a portion, of the assessed Unit 6 funds?**

The WVID Board of Supervisors will explore all options, including a refund or credit, in the event that funds collected as part of the assessment are no longer needed.

**How much will my total assessment be?**

Annual assessments vary neighborhood-by-neighborhood and are tied to the benefits you receive, not the value of your property. However, all neighborhoods are expected to see an increase in assessments in fiscal year 2023-24.

**Where can I get more information about the different District units?**

An informational Unit Guide is available online at [www.WestVillagesID.org/unitguide](http://www.WestVillagesID.org/unitguide). The District currently has nine separate units of development. Properties can be part of multiple units. When that occurs, landowners are responsible for paying the assessments in each of those units, as well as a district-wide assessment, which pays for general and administrative services in the District.

**How do I pay the assessment?**

The assessment appears on your property tax bill sent in November each year and is paid annually through the Sarasota County Tax Collector Office. The WVID assessment will appear under the non-ad valorem section on your bill.

You will not receive a separate bill from the WVID for these assessments.

**What's the difference between ad valorem and non-ad valorem?**

An ad valorem tax is based on the assessed value of your property, not the service provided. These are typically thought of as property taxes, such as those paid to the City of North Port and Sarasota County.

A non-ad valorem tax is typically an assessment, which is tied to a service or benefit you receive.

**Where can I learn more about the budget?**

A copy of the proposed budget, proposed assessment roll and agenda for the Sept. 14 budget meeting can be found by visiting [www.WestVillagesID.org](http://www.WestVillagesID.org) or by contacting the District Manager's Office at 561-630-4922 or [wcrosley@sdsinc.org](mailto:wcrosley@sdsinc.org).