

**WEST VILLAGES IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT  
C/O Special District Services, Inc.  
19503 S. West Villages Parkway #A3  
Venice, Florida 34293**

**September 20, 2023**

**Statement on behalf of the West Villages Improvement District re: Population Threshold  
Calculations for Resident-Elected Board Seat**

The West Villages Improvement District (WVID) is statutorily required to prepare population estimates to determine the timely transition of seats on the WVID Board of Supervisors from a one-acre, one-vote landowner election to a general election of qualified electors. This report is conducted annually using criteria outlined in Florida Statutes for defining urban areas.

The transition of seats occurs when urban areas reach certain population thresholds. Urban areas are determined by calculating the acreage of the developed and inhabited residential properties within the district. Currently, if an urban area constitutes 25% or less of the District, one member of the Board of Supervisors is elected by qualified electors, while the remaining members of the Board of Supervisors are elected through a one-acre, one-vote landowners' election. A second resident seat transitions when the urban area constitutes 26% to 50% of the District.

The WVID began transitioning board seats in 2014, when the 26% threshold was significantly far from being met. As such, in order to prudently utilize staff resources the WVID used a generalized method of determining population, which included all property within a platted urban area, rather than focusing solely on inhabited areas. This method resulted in an over-calculation of the urban area.

With development heavily underway, the WVID updated its model to create a more precise urban area map in 2022. This model used the number of single-family residential lots with a certificate of occupancy (CO) to determine urbanization. At that time, 6.58% of the District was in an urban area.

In 2023, the map was updated to show that 1,017 acres, or 8.17% of the District, was in the urban areas. It's worthwhile to note that this percentage is in line with the current district population versus the anticipated total district population at build-out, which is approximately 9.6%.

The District also engaged Dewberry, the District's engineers, to develop an alternative map, which included all developed areas, not just inhabited areas, as a comparison. Using this more liberal approach which is more expansive than the statutes require, the District estimated 2,540 acres, or 20.41%, is in the urban area.

Both methodologies, along with a separate, independent analysis by Sarasota County Engineer which found substantially the same amount of urbanization utilizing substantially the same process that WVID followed for its more liberal calculation, show the percentage of urban area is below the 26% threshold for turnover of a second resident seat on the Board of Supervisors. This report was prepared in conjunction with the Sarasota County planning and legal departments.

It's important to note: The WVID is one of the only improvement or stewardship districts in the State of Florida that uses this antiquated methodology for turning over seats to residents. Understanding the importance of a timely turnover and in a desire to use a more transparent and objective turnover process utilized by nearly all improvement and stewardship districts established in the past 20 years, the WVID

Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 on Sept. 14 to authorize staff to seek a legislative change to WVID's enabling documents to clearly define specific population triggers for each seat's transition to ensure clarity and transparency for all involved. This change will provide clarity to community members and will put the WVID transition rules in line with others across the state.