

04/08/25

WASHINGTON COUNTY, FLORIDA

PRELIMINARY RATE RESOLUTION
FOR THE SUNNY HILLS/OAK HILL MUNICIPAL SERVICE BENEFIT UNIT
ASSESSMENTS

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-

ADOPTED April 17, 2025

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RESOLUTION NO. 2025-

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE PROVISION AND FUNDING OF ROAD MAINTENANCE SERVICES AND OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PROJECTS WITHIN THE SUNNY HILLS/OAK HILL MUNICIPAL SERVICE BENEFIT UNIT; ESTIMATING THE COST OF ROAD MAINTENANCE AND OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PROJECTS PROVIDED BY THE COUNTY; DETERMINING THAT CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY WILL BE BENEFITED THEREBY; ESTABLISHING THE METHOD OF CHARGING THE COST OF ROAD MAINTENANCE AND OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PROJECTS AGAINST THE REAL PROPERTY THAT WILL BE BENEFITED THEREBY; ESTABLISHING THE ESTIMATED ASSESSMENT RATE FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE AND OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PROJECTS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2025; DIRECTING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO PREPARE OR DIRECT THE PREPARATION OF AN UPDATED ASSESSMENT ROLL BASED UPON THE METHODOLOGY SET FORTH HEREIN; ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PROPOSED SERVICE ASSESSMENTS AND DIRECTING THE PROVISION OF NOTICE IN CONNECTION THEREWITH; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY. This resolution is adopted pursuant to the provisions of Article IV, Chapter 54 of the Washington County Code of Ordinances (hereinafter referred to as the "Ordinance"); Article VIII, Section 1, Florida Constitution; section 125.01, Florida Statutes; and other applicable provisions of law.

SECTION 2. PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS.

(A) This resolution constitutes the Preliminary Rate Resolution as defined in Section 54-151 of the Ordinance; it initiates the annual process for updating the Assessment Roll and directs the reimposition of Service Assessments for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2025.

(B) All capitalized words and terms not otherwise defined herein shall have the meanings set forth in Section 54-151 of the Ordinance. As used in this Resolution, the following terms shall have the following meanings unless the context hereof otherwise requires:

“Community Services” means those services provided by the County or any other public entity that provide a special benefit to the property located within the Benefit Unit. “Community Services” include, by way of example and not limitation, emergency fire protection services, road improvements, repair and maintenance of grounds, beautification of landscaped areas, signage and streetlights, and acquisition and improvements to common areas. In addition to the Road Maintenance Services, the County specifically authorizes by this Resolution to use the Service Assessments for maintenance and installation of street lighting, street signage, and entry fountain maintenance.

“Essential Services” means those services provided by the County or any other public entity that are necessary to preserve and maintain the public health, safety, and welfare and which require safe, convenient, and efficient property access to be effective. “Essential Services” include, by way of example and not limitation, fire protection, emergency medical services, solid waste collection, law enforcement, postal delivery, and transportation of students by the school board.

"Road Maintenance Assessment" means a Service Assessment imposed by the County to fund the Service Cost associated with the County's provision of Road Maintenance Services within the Benefit Unit in the unincorporated area of the County.

"Road Maintenance Services" means ongoing grading, clearing, mowing, paving, and other necessary maintenance and improvements of the public roadways and related drainage within the Benefit Unit in order to preserve and provide adequate ingress and egress within the Benefit Unit.

(C) Unless the context indicates otherwise, words importing the singular number include the plural number, and vice versa; the terms "hereof," "hereby," "herein," "hereto," "hereunder" and similar terms refer to this resolution; and the term "hereafter" means after, and the term "heretofore" means before, the effective date of this resolution. Words of any gender include the correlative words of the other genders, unless the sense indicates otherwise.

SECTION 3. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.

(A) The Board hereby finds and determines that the Service Assessments to be imposed in accordance with this Resolution provide an equitable method of funding the Community Services and Road Maintenance Services by fairly and reasonably allocating the cost to benefitted property.

(B) Upon the adoption of this Preliminary Rate Resolution determining the Service Cost for Community Services including the Road Maintenance Services and imposing Service Assessments, the legislative determinations ascertained and declared in Section 54-153 of the Ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed.

(C) Without the ongoing Road Maintenance Services, the property located within the Benefit Unit would lack adequate access to Assessed Property located

therein and for the provision of Essential Services and, therefore, requires the provision of Road Maintenance Services.

(D) Without the ongoing Service Assessments, the County would be unable to provide the Community Services for the properties located within the Benefit Unit and, therefore, requires the provision of the Service Assessments, inclusive of the Road Maintenance Assessment.

(E) The Community Services and the Road Maintenance Services described in this Resolution will provide a special benefit to all Assessed Property within the Benefit Unit because such services and improvements possesses a logical relationship to the use and enjoyment of property by: (1) increasing, establishing and preserving adequate ingress and egress to all properties within the Benefit Unit for property owners and invitees and for the provision of Essential Services; and (2) enhancing the use and enjoyment of property located within the Benefit Unit; and (3) protecting and enhancing the value and integrity of all property within the Benefit Unit through the provision of the services and improvements.

(F) The Service Assessments provide an equitable method of funding the Service Cost for the Community Services and the Road Maintenance Services provided to the Benefit Unit by fairly and reasonably allocating the Service Cost to specially benefited property based upon methodology established in Section 54-156 of the Ordinance.

(G) It is hereby ascertained, determined, and declared that each parcel of assessed property located within the Benefit Unit will be benefited by the County's provision of Community Services and Road Maintenance Services in an amount not less than the Service Assessment imposed against such parcel, computed in the

manner set forth in this Preliminary Rate Resolution.

SECTION 4. PROVISION AND FUNDING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ROAD MAINTENANCE SERVICES.

Upon the imposition of Service Assessments to fund the County's provision of Community Services and Road Maintenance Services in the Benefit Unit, the County shall provide Community Services and Road Maintenance Services to such properties. All or any portion of the Service Cost to provide such Community Services and Road Maintenance Services shall be funded from proceeds of the Service Assessments. The remaining cost required to provide Community Services and Road Maintenance Services shall be funded by legally available County revenues.

SECTION 5. IMPOSITION AND COMPUTATION OF SERVICE ASSESSMENTS.

(A) The estimated Service Cost for the provision of Community Services and Road Maintenance Services for the Fiscal Year beginning on October 1, 2025 is \$634,403.75.

(B) A Service Assessment shall be imposed against all Tax Parcels of Assessed Property within the Benefit Unit. The estimated Service Cost shall be assessed against all Tax Parcels of Assessed Property at a rate of assessment based upon the special benefit accruing to such property from the County's provision of Community Services and Road Maintenance Services, pursuant to the apportionment method established in Section 54-156 of the Ordinance, which is hereby ratified and confirmed and found to be a fair and reasonable method of calculating the Service Assessments. When imposed, the Service Assessments shall constitute a lien upon the Tax Parcels of Assessed Property pursuant to Section 54-169 of the Ordinance.

(C) For the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2025, the Service Assessment for each Tax Parcel of Assessed Property in the Benefit Unit shall be:

\$40.72 per Developed Residential Lot;

\$10.16 per acre for residential acreage;

\$10.16 per 1,000 square feet for Commercial or Institutional buildings; and

\$10.16 per acre for vacant commercial acreage or institutional acreage in use.

(D) The Maximum Service Assessment established by the County for any given parcel within the Benefit Unit shall not exceed \$400.00 per parcel.

(E) The maximum annual Service Assessment that can be imposed without further notice for future fiscal years for the property within the Benefit Unit is \$52.00 per Developed Residential Lot; \$13.00 per acre for residential acreage; \$13.00 per 1,000 square feet for Commercial or Institutional buildings; and \$13.00 per acre for vacant commercial acreage or institutional acreage in use.

SECTION 6. ANNUAL ASSESSMENT ROLL.

(A) The County Administrator is hereby directed to prepare, or direct the preparation of, the Assessment Roll for the Service Assessments in the manner provided in Section 54-163 of the Ordinance and in accordance with this Preliminary Rate Resolution.

(B) A copy of this Preliminary Rate Resolution and the updated Assessment Roll shall be maintained on file in the office of the County Administrator and open to public inspection. The foregoing shall not be construed to require that the Assessment Roll be in printed form if the amount of the Service Assessments for each Tax Parcel can be determined by use of an available computer terminal.

SECTION 7. METHOD OF COLLECTION. The Service Assessments shall be collected from all Assessed Property pursuant to the Uniform Assessment Collection Act as provided in Section 54-174 of the Ordinance.

SECTION 8. PUBLIC HEARING. There is hereby established a public hearing to be held at 9:00 AM CST on May 15, 2025, in the Commission Board Room of the Washington County Courthouse, 1331 South Boulevard, Chipley, Florida, to consider (A) continued imposition of the Service Assessments, and (B) collection of the Service Assessments pursuant to the Uniform Assessment Collection Act.

SECTION 9. NOTICE BY PUBLICATION. The County Administrator shall publish a notice of the public hearing authorized by Section 8 hereof in the manner and the time provided in Section 54-164 of the Ordinance. The notice shall be published no later than May 5, 2025, in substantially the form attached hereto as Appendix A.

SECTION 10. NOTICE BY MAIL.

(A) In the event the circumstances in Section 54-168 of the Ordinance so require, the County Administrator shall also provide notice of the public hearing authorized by Section 8 hereof by first class mail to the Owner of each Tax Parcel of Assessed Property in the manner and time provided in by Section 54-165 of the Ordinance. Such notices shall be mailed no later than May 5, 2025, in substantially the form attached hereto as Appendix B.

(B) For Tax Parcels with exempt “home addresses” pursuant to Section 119.071(4), Florida Statutes, the County Administrator shall work with the Property Appraiser and Tax Collector for provision of notice.

SECTION 11. APPLICATION OF ASSESSMENT PROCEEDS. Proceeds derived by the County from the Service Assessments shall be used to fund the costs

incurred in performing the Community Services and the Road Maintenance Services.

SECTION 12. EFFECTIVE DATE. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED THIS 17th DAY OF APRIL, 2025.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, FLORIDA**

By: _____
DAVID PETTIS, Chairman

ATTEST:

LORA C. BELL,
Washington County Clerk

APPROVED FOR FORM

County Attorney

APENDIX A

FORM OF NOTICE TO BE PUBLISHED

To Be Published by May 5, 2025

[insert map of the Benefit Unit]

NOTICE OF HEARING TO IMPOSE AND PROVIDE FOR COLLECTION OF SERVICE ASSESSMENTS IN THE SUNNY HILLS/OAK HILL MUNICIPAL SERVICE BENEFIT UNIT

Notice is hereby given that the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Florida will conduct a public hearing to consider the continued imposition of Service Assessments in Sunny Hills/Oak Hill Municipal Service Benefit Unit, as shown above, for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2025 to fund the provision of Community Services and Road Maintenance Services provided by the County.

The hearing will be held at 9:00 AM CST, or as soon thereafter as the item can be heard, on May 15, 2025 in the Commission Board Room of the Washington County Annex, 1331 South Boulevard, Chipley, Florida, for the purpose of receiving public comment on the imposition and collection of the assessments on the ad valorem tax bill. All affected property owners have a right to appear at the hearing and to file written objections with the County within 20 days of this notice. If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at the hearing, such person will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, including the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be made. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation or an interpreter to participate in this proceeding should contact the County Administrative Office at (850) 638-6200 to make a request. Requests must be received at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting in order for Washington County

to provide the requested service.

The Service Assessments will fund the County's cost to provide Community Services and Road Maintenance Services within the Benefit Unit. The Service Assessments are based upon number of developed residential lots, commercial or institutional square footage of improvements, and acreage for vacant lands. The annual Service Assessment rates for the upcoming Fiscal Year and future fiscal years will be:

\$40.72 per Developed Residential Lot;

\$10.16 per acre for residential acreage;

\$10.16 per 1,000 square feet for Commercial or Institutional buildings; and

\$10.16 per acre for vacant commercial acreage or institutional acreage in use.

The maximum annual Service Assessment for any given parcel shall not exceed \$400.00 per year.

The maximum annual Service Assessment that can be imposed without further notice for future fiscal years is \$52.00 per Developed Residential Lot; \$13.00 per acre for residential acreage; \$13.00 per 1,00 square feet for Commercial or Institutional buildings; and \$13.00 per acre for vacant commercial acreage or institutional acreage in use.

A more specific description of the Service Assessments is set forth in Article IV, Chapter 54 of the Washington County Code of Ordinances and the Preliminary Rate Resolution (Resolution No. 2025-____). Copies of these documents and the updated assessment roll are available for inspection at the Office of the County Administrator, 1331 South Boulevard, Chipley, Florida, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The Service Assessments will be collected by the Tax Collector of Washington

County, pursuant to Chapter 197, Florida Statutes, on the tax bill to be mailed in November 2025 and future fiscal years. Failure to pay the Service Assessment will cause a tax certificate to be issued against the assessed property, which may result in a loss of title to your property.

If you have any questions, please contact the office of the County Administrator at (850) 638-6200, Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

WASHINGTON COUNTY, FLORIDA

APPENDIX B
FORM OF NOTICE TO BE MAILED

APPENDIX B

FORM OF NOTICE TO BE MAILED

******* NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER *******

Washington County
1331 South Boulevard
Chipley, Florida _____

WASHINGTON COUNTY, FLORIDA
NOTICE OF HEARING TO IMPOSE AND PROVIDE FOR
COLLECTION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ROAD
MAINTENANCE SERVICE NON-AD VALOREM
ASSESSMENTS
NOTICE DATE: _____, 2025

Owner Name
Address
City, State Zip

Tax Parcel # _____
Legal Description: _____

As required by Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes, notice is given by Washington County that an annual non-ad valorem special assessment for Community Services inclusive of Road Maintenance Services using the tax bill collection method, may be levied on your property for the fiscal year October 1, 2025 - September 30, 2026 and future fiscal years. The purpose of this special assessment is to fund the provision of Community Services inclusive of Road Maintenance Services benefiting property located within the Sunny Hills/Oak Hill Municipal Service Benefit Unit (the "MSBU"). The total annual Service Assessment revenue to be collected by the County within the MSBU for fiscal year ending September 30, 2026 is estimated to be \$634,403.75. The annual Service Assessment is based on the classification of each parcel of property, the number of dwelling units for residential property, amount of building square footage for non-residential property, or amount of acreage for unimproved property.

The above parcel is classified as _____.

The total number and type of billing units on the above parcel is _____.

The maximum annual Service Assessment for the above parcel for fiscal year 2025-26 is \$ _____.

The maximum annual Service Assessment that can be imposed without further notice for future fiscal years for the above parcel is \$52.00 per Developed Residential Lot; \$13.00 per acre for residential acreage; \$13.00 per 1,00 square feet for Commercial or Institutional buildings; and \$13.00 per acre for vacant commercial acreage or institutional acreage in use.

The maximum annual Service Assessment for any given parcel shall not exceed \$400.00 per year.

A public hearing will be held at 9:00 AM CST on May 15, 2025, in the Commission Board Room of the Washington County Annex, 1331 South Boulevard, Chipley, Florida for the purpose of receiving public comment on the proposed special assessments. You and all other affected property owners have a right to appear at the hearing and to file written objections with the Board within 20 days of this notice. If you decide to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at the hearing, you will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, including the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be made. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation or an interpreter to participate in this proceeding should contact the County Administrative Office at (850) 638-6200, at least 48 hours prior to the date of the hearing.

Unless proper steps are initiated in a court of competent jurisdiction to secure relief within 20 days from the date of Board action at the above hearing (including the method of apportionment, the rate of assessment and the imposition of assessments), such action shall be the final adjudication of the issues presented.

Copies of the Ordinance and the Preliminary Rate Resolution, and the updated assessment roll for the Fiscal Year commencing October 1, 2025 are available for inspection at the Office of the County Administrator, 1331 South Boulevard, Chipley, Florida between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The assessments will be collected on the ad valorem tax bill to be mailed in November 2025, as authorized by section 197.3632, Florida Statutes. Failure to pay the assessments will cause a tax certificate to be issued against the property which may result in a loss of title.

If you have any questions regarding your Service Assessment, please contact the office of the County Administrator at (850) 638-6200, Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

***** THIS IS NOT A BILL *****