



13240 Griffin Dr.  
Fort Myers, FL 33913

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## **An Open Letter to the Residents Concerning Budget Development and Assessments for the Fiscal Year 2022**

**The Board of Supervisors approved a draft budget at their meeting of June 10. This version is referred to as a Top of Mark as the assessment may only be reduced from this date forward. It is the same budget you will see in the mailing from the CDD.**

**Your reaction will likely be “shock and awe” as the General Fund increase went from \$3,776,822 in 2021 to \$7,158,095 in 2022, or an increase of \$3,391,273, or 90%. The single-family home assessment for this budget would go from \$675.99 in 2021 to \$1,308.29 in 2022, or an increase of 93.73 % compared to the prior year increase of 4.4%. The multi-family unit assessment would increase from \$487.04 to \$928.40, or 90.62%. The commercial properties would see an increase in the assessment of 100.02%.**

**How did this happen? The Board asked staff to come forward with all the documented needs for repair and replacement of key components of the community. This list includes roadways and sidewalks, streetlights, the irrigation system and stormwater management pipes, and basins all installed in the late 1980's which are well past their useful life. These items are deteriorating and will have a negative impact on housing values and the quality of life in Gateway.**

**The Board is working to reduce the assessment to a more manageable level with reductions in some areas and taking out a loan for \$5,000,000 over a five-year period to pay for the replacement of key infrastructure in the community. Exposure and liability increase with broken sidewalks and roads, inadequate stormwater management, and streetlights and an irrigation system that are constantly under repair.**

**The budget is a work in progress between now and the Public Hearing scheduled for August 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 P.M at the District Office and via GoToMeeting. There will be additional seating at the Real Estate Office of Denny Grimes.**



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### Line-Item Increases

88.12% Increase in the single-family home assessment compared to 4.4 % last year

82.68% Increase in the multi-family assessment compared to 5.4 % last year

99.00 % Increase in commercial assessments

The percentage increase results from a proposed General Fund Budget of \$3.766 million dollars in FY2021 to the proposed \$6.970 million dollars in FY22.

#### Waterway Management

Stormwater System Repair and Maintenance from \$125,000 to \$1,000,000

Stormwater Pipe and catch basin cleaning from \$400,000 TO \$500,000

Stormwater Pond Bank Maintenance from \$77,000 TO \$225,000

Stormwater Pond Littoral Maintenance from \$0 TO \$125,00

#### Landscaping Services

Mulch in Community \$0 to \$50,000

Plant Replacement add \$45,000

Tree Replacement \$75,000

Tree Limb Removal \$30,000

#### Parks and Recreation

Soccer Park Maintenance and Repairs \$50,000

Parks and Pool Maintenance \$25,000

Resurface Basketball Court \$25,000

Pool Repair and Resurface \$250,000

Pool Filters \$40,000

#### Street Light Replacement

Light Pole Replacement increase from \$10,000 to \$200,000

Light Pole Wiring Replacement from \$0 to \$100,000

#### Roadway and Sidewalk

Repair Roadways from \$50,000 to \$200,000

Replace Sidewalks from \$0 to \$750,000

#### Capital Investment Project

Gateway Commons Recreation Master Plan \$250,000

Installation of Aerators for Stormwater Ponds \$100,000

Master Irrigation System Rebuild \$1,150,000



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### **Why the Large Ticket Items?**

Infrastructure installed in 1986 has been neglected and not properly maintained, repaired, or replaced. This infrastructure is at the end of its useful life, is crumbling and there are insufficient reserve funds to address the replacement needs.

### **Community Identity**

The Canopy Oak Trees present a wonderful, but expensive identity for the community. The mature oak roots break and buckle the roads, sidewalks, irrigation, and drainage systems. The Board wants to preserve the Oak Canopy but that will involve additional costs to trim the roots, install root barriers and pay for inspections by Licensed Arborists to determine the best course of action.

### **The Road Ahead**

The community is at a tipping point where the neglected and crumbling infrastructure will soon impact the quality of life and housing values.

It will take a concentrated effort by the Residents, Board of Supervisors, District staff and others to address these needs in an affordable, meaningful, and transparent way. It is time to move forward and address these difficult issues as a community. Please participate in the budget development process that directly impacts the assessment you pay and the community you live in. You may send your comments to the Board of Supervisors listed below or to [customercare@gatewaydistrict.org](mailto:customercare@gatewaydistrict.org). I encourage you to attend the Board meetings in person on GoToMeeting on August 5<sup>th</sup> and the Public Hearing on August 19. Links to these meetings can be found on our website and Facebook page.

**Chris Shoemaker**  
**District Manager**

### **Board of Supervisors**

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