

Broadwater Infrastructure Improvements and Rising Utility Rates

Submitted by Phil Creter, Block Captain, 42nd Ave. S

Over the past year, some \$70 million dollars in repairs and resiliency-building work has taken place in our city's



sewage system with more than \$250 million already earmarked for future water and sewer projects over the next three years. In Broadwater, the west end of 42nd Ave. S has benefited from some of these repairs which included the addition of two new major storm drains. Consequently, there was no sighting of any sanitary overflows or flooding in 2017 similar to the past event at 42nd Ave. S at 41st St. S in 2016. However there were two major floods in 2017 at the 42nd Ave. at 37th St. S intersection. Recently, Carlos Frey, Public Works Design Engineering Manager, updated progress on the engineering study of this intersection. At this time,



the project design calls for the separation of the 34th Street stormwater runoff from the 37th Street runoff allowing two independent operating systems resulting in estimated construction costs currently at \$2.0 million and will require budgeting for full implementation. Also, according to Carlos, other infrastructure improvements like the renewed Layne Inliner pipe relining efforts in our neighborhood will continue to completion. However, Broadwater and other city residents will have to pay the price for these city projects and will also see a significant increase in their 2018 city utility rates. (see **MORE Infrastructure: link***)

| 2017 | | | 2018 | | | Dollar | Percent |
|---|---------|-----------------|----------------------|---------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Utility | Gallons | Total | Utility | Gallons | Total | Increase | Increase |
| Water Base \$11.01 | | \$11.01 | Water Base \$12.03 | | \$12.03 | \$1.02 | 9.26% |
| \$1.67@1000 | 4000 | \$6.68 | \$2.08@1000 | 4000 | \$8.32 | \$1.64 | 24.55% |
| TBW \$2.31@1000 | 4000 | \$9.24 | TBW \$2.27@1000 | 4000 | \$9.08 | -\$0.16 | -1.73% |
| Total Water | | \$26.93 | Total Water | | \$29.43 | \$2.50 | 9.28% |
| Sewer Base \$13.66 | | \$13.66 | Sewer Base \$16.63 | | \$16.63 | \$2.97 | 21.74% |
| \$5.24@1000 | 4000 | \$20.96 | \$6.38@1000 | 4000 | \$25.52 | \$4.56 | 21.76% |
| Total Sewer | | \$34.62 | Total Sewer | | \$42.15 | \$7.53 | 21.75% |
| Garbage | | \$25.28 | Garbage | | \$25.28 | \$0.00 | 0.00% |
| Reclaim | | \$21.29 | Reclaim | | \$26.72 | \$5.43 | 25.50% |
| Stormwater | | \$9.00 | Stormwater | | \$10.00 | \$1.00 | 11.11% |
| The utility rate changes do not include the 10% utility tax | | | | | | | |
| Overall Total | | \$117.12 | Overall Total | | \$133.58 | \$16.46 | 14.05% |

A recent enclosure in our Utility monthly bill and stpete.org/utilityrates announced alarming rate increases scheduled for Jan. and Feb.: Stormwater: 11.1%, Water: 9.25%, Wastewater: 21.75% and Reclaimed Water: 25.50% (Garbage rates did not increase). The enclosure predicted a typical increase of \$16.45 for a full service customer (two adults using 4000 gallons a month and reclaim water). See Table left. The bottom line indicates a double digit increase from 2017 to 2018 after years of moderate single digit increases. This is significant since the implication is that this double-digit trend will continue or get even higher in the future. NOTE: All of the above rates are subject to an additional 10% utility taxes within City limits.

The "tiered rate" structure has been in effect since 1985 and imposes higher rates as water consumption goes up but does so in rather steep

jumps. For example, in 2018, **if usage increases above 5600 gallons a month, the rate jumps from \$2.08 to \$3.19 (53% higher) for the next 2,400 gallons.** This means monthly utility bills are prone to go up sharply when pressure washing roofs and pool repairs are required especially for atypical homes with more than two adults.

If there are questions, call (727) 893-7341 to speak with Customer Service representatives in the Utility Customer Call Center or email utility.bill@stpete.org. The city website (www.stpete.org/billing_and_collections/utility_billing/faq.php) has helpful hints on how to mitigate some of these extra expenses. For example:

- Your utility statement is an accurate indication of your monthly water consumption. It should be reviewed each month for any unexpected increases in water use on private property.
- If a water increase is abnormal, check your water meter leak detector (small rotating triangle located directly on the face of the meter at the street). If there is movement on the triangle leak detector when you believe **no** water is being used, you have a leak somewhere that needs to be investigated.
- If a plumber is involved in stopping a leak, you may qualify for a leak adjustment on your last few abnormal water bills by first contacting Customer Service to ensure all paper work is submitted (typically requires forwarding a copy of the plumber's repair bill to: Customer Service, P.O. Box 33037, St. Petersburg, FL 33733 – 8037).
- Once a year, you may qualify for a pool filling adjustment for a new pool, or repairs on an existing pool.

Note: MORE and links* refer you to the full article on Infrastructure and tips to save on utility costs by Chris Claus at www.broadwaterfl.org under the appropriate "Useful Links" tab.

Article Contributors: Tom Ando, Chris Claus, Carlos Frey, John Palenchar, Lindsay Denzer (and special thanks to my copy editor and proofreader, Edie Creter).

MORE on Infrastructure

Recent Infrastructure Improvements on 42nd Ave South



New Storm Drain at 42nd Ave and 39th St.



New Interconnection between New and Old Drain



Road Closure at West End of 42nd Ave for Interconnecting New Storm Drain on Left with Old Drain on Right (next to Canizares Estate)



Close-up of Stormwater crew working on interconnection across 42nd Ave (Main canal can be seen in far background)

MORE on Tips to Save on Utility Costs

Christine A. Claus
Water Conservation Coordinator
Water Resources Department
Website: www.stpete.org/WaterConservation

1. For those residents that live alone and produce low amounts of trash, the Sanitation Dept. provides the opportunity to switch to once a week pickup, at a reduced monthly cost. There are eligibility requirements; more info is found here: www.stpete.org/sanitation/residential/current_rates.php

2. As for reducing water use, bathroom use is typically the highest water-use area inside a home. Toilets use the most water, especially when they are leaking. A leaky toilet, usually caused by a warped or poor fitting flapper, can waste up to 200 gallons of water each day- that's 6,000 gallons a month, placing a customer into a higher utility rate bracket where they will use more per 1,000 gallons! The simple way to avoid or minimize this waste is to perform simple toilet leak detection at least twice a year. Instructions and many other water-conserving tips are found here:

Indoor Water Conservation Kits

The St. Petersburg Water Resources Department is providing indoor conservation kits to water customers. Each kit includes a low-flow showerhead, toilet leak detection dye tabs, and faucet aerators for the kitchen and bathroom. To

receive a FREE kit, St. Petersburg water customers should bring a utility bill to the Water Resources Department at 1650 Third Avenue North, Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Every resident and business in St. Petersburg can play a role in helping to conserve our precious water resources. St. Petersburg and its partners are assisting customers with their water conservation efforts by providing publications, rebates, and giveaway items. Funding is limited for all programs. Items are available on a first come, first-served basis unless otherwise stated; a waiting list is unavailable.