More information on the Panama City Beach Front Beach Road CRA (Community Redevelopment Area)

The City Council of Panama City Beach created the Panama City Beach Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) on Nov. 30, 2000. Subsequently, on June 21, 2001, the Council adopted a resolution and created the Front Beach Road (FBR) Community Redevelopment Area. The first redevelopment area to be designated was Pier Park.

The focus of the 2001 FBR CRA plan involves correcting and improving transportation, parking, beach access and safety issues on the Front Beach Road and designated connecting roads. It is a 30-year redevelopment plan that will change the appearance of Front Beach Road and which benefits all areas of the City and County.

Since its inceptions, funding for road improvements, lighting, burying utilities, adding trolley and bike lanes and sidewalks, landscaping, etc., has come from Tax Increment Financing (TIF) within the designated Front Beach Road CRA. This financing is ideal for the CRA because the increase in real estate assessed values (and the associated tax revenues collected in this area), are the results of the public and private investments and should be reinvested in the targeted redevelopment area.

The County receives the ad valorem taxes collected in the CRA – the City has no ad valorem tax – and also receives taxes collected through the increase in property values, which is given back to the City’s Redevelopment Trust Fund over the course of the CRA. This redevelopment funding statutorily divert from the County property tax receipts does end in the next 10 years or so.

Smart long-term action is now needed to supplement the funding of operating, maintaining and administering services to this area to better sustain existing and upcoming redevelopment commitments. Additional funding by way of an assessment is needed for maintenance of the existing CRA improvements for roadways, paint striping, landscaping and lighting. When the CRA was created, it established, in addition to TIF funding, a provision for funding through assessments. Even though the CRA is nearing its twentieth year, past City Councils have not addressed maintenance and future funding through an assessment. These assessments will satisfy funding needs.

On June 27, 2019, the Panama City Beach City Council discussed the need to establish a fair and reliable payment strategy for the long-term, annual administration, operation and maintenance costs of the Front Beach Road CRA. Two months later, on Aug. 22, 2019, the City of Panama City Beach held its first reading of Ordinance 1498 toward adoption of an annual special assessment for fiscal year 2019-2020 for the Front Beach Road CRA which passed by a 5-0 vote. A second reading and public hearing on this assessment is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019 in the City Council Chambers in the City Hall Annex. Public comment is welcome.

The assessment will only apply to those parcels inside the Front Beach Road CRA district which receive benefits through increased property values based on property location within the CRA.

If approved, the adoption of an actual right of way assessment for fiscal year 2019-2020 which begins Oct. 1, 2019, will be made in a separate Annual Assessment Resolution by the Panama City Beach City Council during the same Sept. 12, 2019 meeting. The proposed special assessment for each parcel of property in the CRA is determined by an apportionment methodology based upon a fair and reasonable apportionment. A roll shall be established with all assessments listed by parcel, owner and address.
The special assessment is part of an overall good stewardship approach to long-term funding of an improved transportation system within the CRA which includes burying all utilities as a protection against the loss of power during storms, widening lanes and providing a bike and trolley lane and sidewalks for enhanced traffic flow and public safety and additional lighting and landscaping to improve safety and enhance overall appearance.

Here is a map showing the area of the Front Beach Road CRA:

An assessment will provide for the continued funding of the FBR CRA, which benefits all of the City and County, but particularly property owners within the CRA through increased property values.

Special assessments are proposed for 12,561 parcels in the FBR CRA for fiscal year 2019-2020 and are expected to total $703,094.50. For the first year, in the fall of 2019, payment will be collected by the City via U.S. Mail. Future collection will become part of the annual tax billing made by the Bay County Property Appraiser.

Those properties within the CRA will be assessed as follows:

1. Each tax parcel will share the administrative and ministerial activities costs, which will be $33.89 per parcel. This generates approximately $425,000 annually.

2. Each parcel will share the cost of continued maintenance, upkeep and capital equipment, based upon three factors available from the property tax appraiser:
   A. The heated/air-conditioned square footage, which shall be $0.008 per square foot.
   B. The improvement value for each parcel (which does not include land value), which shall be $0.03 per $1,000 of improved value.
   C. The land value of each parcel, which shall be $0.05 per $1,000 of land value.

Each assessment invoice will also include a $5 fee to defray costs of publicizing, mailing, billing and other administrative costs.

To see individual property assessments, go to this quick search: http://quicksearch.ennead-data.com/pcbfbrcra/ intended to show the maximum rates the City might impose for a Front Beach Road CRA assessment the coming fiscal year, exclusive of the $5 fee mentioned above.

For further information or to file an objection, email the City Clerk at fbr-cra@pcbgov.com.