
CITY OF COCOA, FLORIDA

**FIRE PROTECTON ASSESSMENT
PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT RESOLUTION**

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-071

ADOPTED AUGUST 13, 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

ARTICLE I INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1.01. AUTHORITY	1
SECTION 1.02. DEFINITIONS	1
SECTION 1.03. INTERPRETATION.....	3
SECTION 1.04. FINDINGS.....	4

ARTICLE II NOTICE AND PUBLIC HEARING

SECTION 2.01. ESTIMATED FIRE PROTECTION ASSESSED COST	16
SECTION 2.01. ASSESSMENT ROLL.....	17
SECTION 2.03. PUBLIC HEARING.....	17
SECTION 2.04. NOTICE BY PUBLICATION.....	18
SECTION 2.05. NOTICE BY MAIL	18

ARTICLE III ASSESSMENTS

SECTION 3.01. ASSESSMENTS TO BE IMPOSED THROUGHOUT CITY.....	18
SECTION 3.02. IMPOSITION OF ASSESSMENTS.....	19
SECTION 3.03. APPORTIONMENT	19
SECTION 3.04. APPLICATION OF ASSESSMENT PROCEEDS.....	20
SECTION 3.05. COLLECTION OF ASSESSMENTS.....	21
SECTION 3.06. EXEMPTION	21

ARTICLE IV GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 4.01. CONFLICTS.....	23
SECTION 4.02. SEVERABILITY.....	23
SECTION 4.03. EFFECTIVE DATE	24

APPENDIX A	FORM OF PUBLISHED NOTICE
APPENDIX B	FORM OF MAILED NOTICE

RESOLUTION No. 2024-071

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF COCOA, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE DELIVERY AND FUNDING OF FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES AND FACILITIES WITHIN THE CITY; PROVIDING FOR THE IMPOSITION OF NON-AD VALOREM SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE 20-2006 WITHIN THE ENTIRE AREA OF THE CITY TO FUND FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES AND FACILITIES; ESTABLISHING FIRE ASSESSMENT RATES FOR CITY FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025; DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO PREPARE A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT ROLL; ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER IMPOSITION OF THE PROPOSED SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS; DIRECTING THE PROVISION OF NOTICE IN CONNECTION THEREWITH; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COCOA, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

ARTICLE I

INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1.01. AUTHORITY. This Resolution of the City of Cocoa, Florida is adopted pursuant to City Ordinance No. 20-2006, Sections 166.021, 166.041 and 197.3632, Florida Statutes, and other applicable provisions of law.

SECTION 1.02. DEFINITIONS. This Resolution constitutes the Preliminary Rate Resolution as defined in the Assessment Ordinance. All capitalized words and terms not otherwise defined herein shall have the meaning set forth in the Assessment Ordinance. As used in this Resolution, the following terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context hereof otherwise requires.

“Assessed Property” means all Parcels of land included on the Assessment Roll that receive a special benefit from the delivery of the fire protection services, programs or facilities identified or contemplated in this Resolution and included in the Assessment Roll.

“Assessment Study” means the City of Cocoa FY 2016 Fire Protection Assessment Study, dated August 5, 2015, as updated by the FY 2017 Fire Protection Assessment Study, dated July 25, 2016, prepared by Burton & Associates, as updated by the Technical Memorandums prepared by Stantec, dated August 4, 2017, August 9, 2018, August 6, 2019, August 18, 2020, July 27, 2021, July 26, 2022, July 12, 2023 and July 11, 2024 as may be further amended in writing.

“Assessment Ordinance” means City Ordinance No. 20-2006, as may be amended from time to time, or its successor in function.

“City” means the City of Cocoa, Florida.

“City Clerk” means the clerk of the City Council.

“City Manager” means the chief administrative officer of the City, designated by the City Council to be responsible for coordinating Fire Protection Assessments or such person’s designee.

“City Council” means the governing body of the City of Cocoa, Florida.

“Fiscal Year” means the period commencing on October 1 of each year and continuing through the next succeeding September 30, or such other period as may be prescribed by law as the fiscal year for the City.

“Tax Parcel” or “Parcel” means a parcel of property to which the Brevard County Property Appraiser has assigned a distinct ad valorem property tax identification number.

“Tax Roll” means the real property ad valorem tax roll maintained by the Property Appraiser for the purpose of the levy and collection of ad valorem taxes.

“Uniform Assessment Collection Act” means Sections 197.3632 and 197.3635, Florida Statutes, or any successor statutes authorizing the collection of non-ad valorem assessments on the same bill as ad valorem taxes, and any applicable regulations promulgated thereunder.

SECTION 1.03. INTERPRETATION. 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 gender, unless the sense indicates otherwise.

SECTION 1.04. FINDINGS. In addition, and supplemental to the findings adopted by the City Council in Ordinance No. 20-2006, it is hereby ascertained, determined and declared as follows:

(A) The constant preparedness to provide fire protection services, facilities and programs possesses a logical relationship to the use and enjoyment of real property by:

- (1) preserving and/or enhancing property values, marketability and ability to develop for all parcels;
- (2) protecting the value of the improvements and structures through the continual availability of fire control and provision of fire protection and associated rescue services;
- (3) protecting the life and safety of intended occupants in the use and enjoyment of real property;
- (4) lowering the cost of fire insurance by the presence of a professional and comprehensive fire protection and associated rescue program within the City;
- (5) providing protection for uninsured or underinsured property and property owners; and
- (6) containing the spread of fire incidents, sometimes occurring on unimproved property, with the potential to spread and endanger the value, structures and occupants of nearby property, thereby limiting liability.

(B) The City Council has carefully considered the Assessment Study which describes an apportionment methodology based upon the benefit conveyed by readiness-to-serve availability of fire protection service provided by the City to all parcels (improved and unimproved), and an additional benefit that this availability of service provides to improved property by the protection from the loss of the structures on

improved parcels through the ability to obtain insurance at attractive rates and the ability of the City to respond to and suppress a fire, and has considered the recent decision of the Florida Supreme Court, Morris v. City of Cape Coral, 163 So. 3d 1174 (Fla. 2015), which upheld a similar methodological approach recommended by Burton & Associates that apportioned costs based on the general availability of fire protection services to all property owners in tier 1, and in tier 2, provided the additional benefit to improved property owners of protecting structures from damage.

(C) Readiness to serve apportionment is based upon the premise that real property receives a substantial benefit from the mere presence and availability of on-call fire protection services and facilities. Such benefit is independent of, and enjoyed even in the absence of, a call or need for actual service. A given Tax Parcel is benefited over time by that availability alone, even when that Tax Parcel does not generate a call for service, through increased value and marketability, development potential, heightened use and enjoyment of the property, and reduced insurance premiums.

(D) The City expends substantial and measurable resources each year in maintaining a constant state of availability, readiness and preparedness which is the primary function of the Fire Department. Preparedness costs are generally those incurred in providing the personnel, operations and facilities necessary for continual, around-the-clock readiness to serve fire protection. Aside from annual inflationary adjustments and atypical expenditures necessitated in a given budget cycle, such costs remain relatively

static and unchanged from year to year and are therefore predictable with accuracy across consecutive budget cycles. Preparedness costs are not determined by the nature of an actual fire event or the whether a Tax Parcel is improved or un-improved and are incurred even when the department remains on standby.

(E) Preparedness costs associated with readiness to serve will be incurred without regard to the nature, extent or duration of actual deployments, or the improved or un-improved status of an individual Tax Parcel, and logically apply to every Tax Parcel (or parcel equivalent for un-improved parcels) of real property in the City. However, in the City's current fire assessment rate structure, residential properties are assessed an equal amount per dwelling unit and it was determined to maintain that same feature in the proposed assessment rate structure. Therefore, it was determined that residential dwelling units share in the preparedness costs equally per dwelling unit. Un-improved parcels are converted to parcel equivalents, or parcel equivalent benefit units (parcel EBUs) by dividing the subject parcel's acreage by the average size of improved parcels of the same property class. Preparedness costs are logically related to the number of Tax Parcels/Dwelling Units/parcel EBUs) which, in the aggregate, define the geography of the City and establish the basic service area within which the City must ensure preparedness and readiness to serve. Such preparedness costs are equitably and reasonably shared by all Tax Parcels/Dwelling Units /parcel EBUs on an equal basis since each Tax

Parcel/Dwelling Unit /parcel EBU benefits in a substantially similar degree from the readiness to serve aspect of such costs.

(F) All Tax Parcels/Dwelling Units/parcel EBUs within the City receive a substantially similar special benefit from the availability of fire protection services and facilities provided by the City, because the fire protection resources are maintained throughout the City at the same state of response readiness and availability to all Tax Parcels/Dwelling Units/parcel EBUs.

(G) The City maintains its fire protection resources at a level that provides a response readiness condition to respond to calls for service throughout the City at relatively equal levels of service. When needed, responses are made to calls for service without discrimination as to the property type, location within the City, or any other factors specific to the property requiring the service.

(H) Therefore, all properties, improved and unimproved, receive a special benefit from the very availability of the City's fire protection services and facilities, and improved Tax Parcels also receive an additional special benefit in the protection from the loss of structures on the property afforded by 1) the ability to obtain fire insurance at attractive rates, and 2) the availability of the fire protection services provided by the City to actually suppress a fire and protect the structure(s) on the property from damage and/or loss. The special benefits provided to all Tax Parcels/Dwelling Units/parcel EBUs,

improved and unimproved, by the availability of fire protection services and facilities provided by the City include but are not limited to:

- (1) Availability of immediate response to fire,
- (2) First responder medical aid to protect the life and safety of occupants,
- (3) Containment of liability for emergency incidents on the subject Tax Parcels and the spread of fires to other property,
- (4) Enhanced property value, and
- (5) Enhanced marketability of and/or ability to develop property.

(I) In addition to the above special benefits that are conferred upon all Tax Parcels/Dwelling Units/parcel EBUs in the City, additional benefits are conferred upon improved Tax Parcels including protection from the loss of structures on the property due to fire by virtue of:

- (1) The ability to obtain fire insurance and to obtain that insurance at attractive rates because of the availability of fire protection service, and
- (2) Protection of loss of structures provided by the availability of fire suppression service provided by the City.

(J) Accordingly, the apportionment methodology described in the Assessment Study recognizes two tiers of benefit: Tier 1, the simple availability of fire protection service which is available equally without discrimination to all Tax Parcels/Dwelling

Units/parcel EBU's of all types within the City by virtue of the continued state of readiness to provide fire protection service that is maintained by the City, and Tier 2, the protection from the loss of structures on the property provided by the availability of fire protection service by the ability to obtain fire insurance, and the continued state of readiness maintained by the City so that when actual calls for service are received the City can provide fire suppression service to protect property owners from the loss of structures on their property. As with the Tier 1 readiness costs, the Tier 2 costs for the structure value on all improved residential parcels is allocated equally per dwelling unit to all dwelling units on those parcels; thus, the combined Tier 1 costs per dwelling unit plus the Tier 2 costs per dwelling unit result in a uniform, equal assessment rate per dwelling unit for all dwelling units on improved residential parcels.

(K) The fixed, non-discretionary costs of the Fire Department comprising Tier 1 are generally the personnel costs that must be incurred independent of the number of calls for service (which are total personnel costs less the portion of personnel costs involved in actually responding to calls for service) plus lease payments and capital expenses. The Assessment Study has determined that such Tier 1 costs represent approximately 60% of total fire protection costs.

(L) Tier 2 costs associated with protection from loss of structures on property include all other costs that are not included in Tier 1. Such Tier 2 costs include the portion of personnel costs involved in actually responding to calls for service, plus other costs

that are incurred relative to variable drivers such as fuel, equipment maintenance, and other operating costs. The Assessment Study has determined that such Tier 2 costs represent approximately 40% of total fire protection costs.

(M) Improved properties benefit from the protection from loss of the structures on the Tax Parcels. The protection from the loss of the structures due to fire is best represented by the protection from the loss of the investment in the structure(s) or the avoidance of the cost of replacing the structure(s) on the property. This protection from loss is conferred on such Tax Parcels by the availability of the fire protection services provided by the City either through the ability to obtain fire insurance or by the ability of the City to provide actual fire suppression services, whether or not a request for service is ever received.

(N) The actual investment or replacement cost of the structure(s) on the Tax Parcels in the City is not readily available and would require inordinate resources to determine and maintain over time. However, the structure values on tax parcels analyzed annually pursuant to state law and kept in the County Property Appraiser's database are readily available and are the best data reasonably available as a surrogate representation of the relative investment or replacement cost of structures on each Tax Parcel in the City as compared to the investment or replacement cost of structures on all Tax Parcels in the City. Therefore, it is appropriate to apportion the costs associated with

Tier 2 based upon the relative value of structures on improved Tax Parcels as contained in the Property Appraiser's database.

(O) Apportionment associated with Tier 2 based upon structure value inherently addresses the higher and proportionate benefit accruing to properties facing potentially greater financial loss in the event of fire incident and is a direct and logical means to allocate the costs and benefits of fire protection services and facilities associated with Tier 2.

(P) Besides cost and efficiency advantages associated with relying upon a publicly maintained database for apportionment metrics, a methodology utilizing structure value is advantageous because it is uniform across all Tax Parcels in its application of value as a proxy for measuring and allocating the relative benefit conveyed to each improved Tax Parcel. Tax Parcels with similar structure value are assessed with proportionate fairness, and the methodology provides an internal system of controls which is self-correcting in that valuation may change over time according to improvements, redevelopment and other factors and such changes in value will be addressed automatically each subsequent year in accordance with the latest structure value determined by the Property Appraiser. In Morris v. City of Cape Coral, 163 So. 3d 1174, 1179 (Fla. 2015), the Florida Supreme Court found that the "use of property appraiser's structure value is reasonable because the property appraiser is statutorily required to use replacement cost to determine this value."

(Q) Utilizing improvement value as one factor among several considered in a given methodology is fair, reasonable and equitable since the resulting assessments form a logical valuation base against which the special benefits and costs may be multiplied or determined.

(R) In the City's current fire assessment rate structure, residential properties are assessed an equal amount per dwelling unit. It was determined to maintain that same feature in the proposed assessment rate structure. Therefore, the assessment rate per residential dwelling unit was calculated as the sum of the Tier 1 costs for all improved residential parcels plus the Tier 2 costs for all residential parcels divided by the total number of dwelling units on all improved residential parcels to derive the average assessment per dwelling unit.

(S) The two-tiered apportionment methodology relies upon the property database maintained by the Property Appraiser in the normal course of performing his or her constitutional responsibilities. The database indicates the number of Tax Parcels within the City, each Tax Parcel's status as improved or unimproved, and the structure or improvement value associated with each. The number of Tax Parcels and structure value are updated by the Property Appraiser as properties within the City develop or combine, split or subdivide. Therefore, the fire assessments will be essentially self-correcting as the assessment roll is updated each year and unimproved Tax Parcels upon which structures have been constructed are reclassified as improved Tax Parcels and their

assessments are adjusted accordingly. Furthermore, this database can be accessed from year to year without extraordinary effort or cost to the City and provides a stable, reliable, reasonably accurate and cost-effective basis for annual administration and updating of the assessment program.

(T) Use of such publicly maintained data avoids duplication of efforts and the ongoing expenses associated with the City developing and maintaining apportionment metrics on its own, thereby resulting in cost-efficient administration and use of public resources. The City avoids expending substantial resources in determining the factors upon which the methodology is based and administered over time because it relies upon the database developed, compiled and maintained by the Property Appraiser each year during the course of performing his or her constitutional responsibilities, at no additional cost to the Property Appraiser or the taxpayers of the City.

(U) Furthermore, if the owner of Assessed Property owner felt in any given year that the benefit to their Tax Parcel was inequitable, there is an appeal process already in place and administered by the countywide value adjustment board by which to seek remedy. If the value adjustment board or Property Appraiser, through existing statutory procedures, reduces the structure valuation associated with a given Tax Parcel, the fire assessment would likewise be reduced, automatically, as the annual assessment roll is updated with no further effort required by the property owner - an additional example of the self-correcting, equitable and cost-efficient nature of the methodology.

Additionally, the City has also established an administrative appeal process to hear inequitable claims made by an owner of vacant Assessed Property pursuant to Resolution No. 2013-143.

(V) The City is not required to fully fund any given essential service or improvement cost through a special assessment. So long as the application of funds is for a public purpose and funds are legally available, the City may determine to fund all or a portion of an essential service or improvement, such as fire protection services and facilities, with general fund or other legally available revenues. The determination as to whether to contribute such other legally available revenues, and how much to contribute, lies solely in the discretion of the City Council.

(W) Stated in the alternative, there is no requirement that the City impose an assessment for the maximum amount of the budget which can be funded by special assessments. The City Council may annually determine as a matter of public policy and tax equity to impose Fire Protection Assessments at a rate less than necessary to fund all or any specific portion of the Fire Protection Assessed Costs. Costs incurred in providing fire protection services and facilities not otherwise funded through Fire Service Assessments may be paid with general fund or other legally available revenues. Such legally available revenues as a matter of policy may be applied exclusively to any tier or class of budget allocation or expense otherwise funded by a special assessment, in part to one tier or class of any budget allocation or expense, or in any combination thereof, and maintain the

validity of the apportionment. The flexibility is implemented through a policy and legislative determination employed through careful adherence to case law, statutory law, and the State Constitution, as well as the exercise of annual budget responsibility, discretion and equity vested in the City Council. However, in no event shall any annual rate of Fire Protection Assessment exceed the maximum assessment rate previously noticed to the affected land owners without further notice and public hearing pursuant to the Assessment Ordinance.

(X) The findings and legislative determinations contained herein are premised upon information, input, analysis and review from City staff, officials and experts, and public comment, as well as careful consideration by the City Council. A combination of the foregoing yields a reasoned apportionment methodology premised upon the two distinct tiers or classes of apportionment allocation described herein. The two tiers, when used together, provide a legal, flexible and equitable means for the City to fairly and reasonably allocate assessable benefits and costs among Assessed Property in the City.

(Y) The apportionment among Tax Parcels of a portion of the City's annual budget for fire protection services, facilities and programs necessary for providing the continual readiness to provide fire protection is hereby determined to be a fair and reasonable means to annually allocate and share the benefits and costs associated therewith.

(Z) The benefits derived from the continual readiness to provide fire protection services, facilities and programs as to each Tax Parcel subject to the Fire Service Assessments

equal or exceed the amount of the special assessments levied and imposed hereunder. The Assessment for any Tax Parcel within the City in employing such an approach also does not exceed the proportional benefits that such Tax Parcel will receive compared to any other Tax Parcel so assessed within the City.

(AA) The City Council hereby finds and determines that the Fire Protection Assessments to be imposed in accordance with this Resolution provide a proper and equitable method of funding fire protection services and facilities by fairly and reasonably allocating a portion of the costs associated therewith among specially benefited property.

(BB) The City Council also recognizes and finds that the City of Cocoa's fire assessment was recently validated on August 18, 2016 by the Circuit Court of the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit in and for Brevard County, Florida in case No. 05-2016-CA-025719 for purposes of securing funding for the construction of three new fire stations, and the City Council continues to rely on said validation for purposes of levying the Fire Protection Assessments to be imposed in accordance with this Resolution.

ARTICLE II

NOTICE AND PUBLIC HEARING

SECTION 2.01. ESTIMATED FIRE PROTECTION ASSESSED COST.

(A) The estimated Fire Protection Assessed Cost to be recovered through Fire Protection Assessments for the Fiscal Year commencing October 1, 2024, is approximately

\$3.48 million. The Fire Protection Assessed Cost will be funded through the imposition of Fire Protection Assessments, as provided herein.

(B) The City Manager shall utilize the assessment rates associated with Tier 1 and Tier 2 of the Fire Protection Assessments as described in this Preliminary Assessment Resolution in the preparation of the preliminary Assessment Roll as provided in Section 2.02 of this Preliminary Assessment Resolution.

SECTION 2.02. ASSESSMENT ROLL. The City Manager is hereby directed to prepare, or cause to be prepared, a preliminary Assessment Roll for Fire Protection Assessments for the Fiscal Year commencing October 1, 2024, in the manner provided in Section 2.03 of the Assessment Ordinance. The Assessment Roll shall include all Tax Parcels within the City which are not otherwise exempted from payment of the Fire Protection Assessments hereunder. The City Manager shall apportion the estimated Fire Protection Assessed Cost to be recovered through Fire Protection Assessments in the manner set forth in this Preliminary Assessment Resolution. A copy of this Preliminary Assessment Resolution, the Assessment Study which summarizes information and analysis related to the estimated amount of the Fire Protection Assessed Cost to be recovered through the imposition of Fire Protection Assessments, and the preliminary Assessment Roll shall be maintained on file in the office of the City Clerk and open to public inspection. The foregoing shall not be construed to require that the preliminary Assessment Roll be in printed form if the amount of the Fire Protection Assessment for

each parcel of property can be determined by the use of a computer terminal or internet access available to the public.

SECTION 2.03. PUBLIC HEARING. There is hereby established a public hearing to be held at 6:00 p.m. or soon thereafter on August 27, 2024 in City Council Chambers of City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL 32922, at which time the City Council will receive and consider any comments on the Fire Protection Assessments from the public and affected property owners and consider imposing Fire Protection Assessments and authorizing an alternative manner of collection.

SECTION 2.04. NOTICE BY PUBLICATION. The City Manager shall direct the publication of notice of the public hearing authorized by Section 2.03 hereof in the manner and time provided by the Assessment Ordinance. The notice shall be published no later than twenty days before the hearing which is on or about August 7, 2024 in substantially the form attached hereto as Appendix A. The City Council acknowledges that this notice was published by the City Manager prior to the adoption of this Resolution.

SECTION 2.05. NOTICE BY MAIL, IF NECESSARY. To the extent that the City Manager determines that the mailing of notice of the public hearing authorized by Section 2.03 is required for certain Assessed Property, in the manner and time provided by the Assessment Ordinance, the notice shall be mailed no later than twenty days

(August 7, 2024) before the hearing, in substantially the form previously approved by the City Council as Appendix B to the 2015 Preliminary Resolution.

ARTICLE III
ASSESSMENTS

SECTION 3.01. FIRE PROTECTION ASSESSMENTS TO BE IMPOSED THROUGHOUT CITY. Fire Protection Assessments are to be imposed throughout the entire area contained within the boundaries of the City in accordance with the Assessment Ordinance and the Final Assessment Resolution.

SECTION 3.02. IMPOSITION OF ASSESSMENTS. Fire Protection Assessments shall be imposed against property located within the City, the annual amount of which shall be computed for each Tax Parcel in accordance with this Article III. When imposed, the Fire Service Assessment for each Fiscal Year shall constitute a lien upon Assessed Property equal in rank and dignity with the liens of all state, county, district or municipal taxes and other non-ad valorem assessments until paid, as provided in the Assessment Ordinance and in accordance with Florida law.

SECTION 3.03. APPORTIONMENT.

(A) The Assessment Study is hereby ratified and incorporated herein in its entirety. The apportionment method set forth therein is hereby ratified as the apportionment method for the Fire Protection Assessments authorized by this

Resolution. The City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to prepare a preliminary Assessment Roll for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 based on the following rate schedule:

Benefit Tier	Equivalent Benefit Unit (EBU)	Applicable to	Rate per EBU	Maximum Rate per EBU
Residential total assessment	Per Dwelling Unit	Improved non-exempt residential parcels	\$249.97	\$306.12
Non-residential: Response Readiness Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Property - Per parcel • Un-improved Property - Per parcel or parcel equivalent (Parcel EBU)* 	All improved and un-improved non-exempt parcels	\$176.74	\$216.45
Protection from Loss of Structures	Per \$5,000 of structure value (Structure EBU) rounded down to the nearest \$5,000.	Improved non-exempt parcels	\$11.07	\$13.55

* The minimum size per parcel equivalent was determined to be 5 acres based upon an evaluation of the range of size of developed parcels. Thus, it was determined that un-improved properties will be converted to EBU by rounding down the acreage of the parcel to the nearest 5 acres and dividing by 5 acres/EBU to determine the number of EBUs for the parcel.

(B) The Maximum Assessment Rate for the residential and non-residential assessment set forth in the rate schedule were previously approved by the City Council by Resolution No. 2015-057 and are hereby being restated and shall continue to be the maximum rate for this next and all subsequent City fiscal years until otherwise modified by the City Council.

(C) Based upon the projections concerning net revenue requirements set forth in the Assessment Study, the Assessment Roll for subsequent Fiscal Years may reflect increases in the assessment rates up to and including the maximum rates presented in the rate schedule in Section 3.03.(A).

(D) The amount of the annual Fire Protection Assessment imposed against Assessed Property may include a pro rata share of the costs and expenses associated with collection and administration of the Fire Protection Assessments each year.

(E) It is hereby ascertained, determined, and declared that the method of determining the Fire Protection Assessments as set forth in this Preliminary Assessment Resolution is a fair and reasonable method of apportioning the Fire Protection Assessed Cost among Assessed Property.

SECTION 3.04. APPLICATION OF ASSESSMENT PROCEEDS. Proceeds derived by the City from the Fire Protection Assessments shall be utilized for the provision of fire protection services and facilities. In the event there is any fund balance remaining at the end of the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year, such balance shall be carried forward and thereafter used only to fund fire protection related services, facilities, improvements and programs.

SECTION 3.05. COLLECTION OF ASSESSMENTS. Fire Protection Assessments for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year shall be collected pursuant to the direct billing method provided for in the Assessment Ordinance, and each year thereafter pursuant to the Uniform Assessment Collection Act as provided for in the Assessment Ordinance, unless otherwise determined by the City Council.

SECTION 3.06. EXEMPTION.

(A) Tax Parcels assigned the following Florida Department of Revenue property use codes (DOR codes) by the Property Appraiser are not subject to the Fire Protection Assessment contemplated hereunder; provided, however, that the costs associated with the exemption of such Tax Parcels shall be funded through other legally available revenues of the City and not through Fire Protection Assessments imposed hereunder.

DOR Code	DOR Description	Parcel Count
465	CONDOMINIUM - MISCELLANEOUS (NOT COVERED	59
499	NON-TAXABLE CONDOMINIUM COMMON AREA	60
8010	SCHOOL (PUBLICLY OWNED) - VACANT	1
8020	COUNTY OWNED LAND - VACANT (THAT DOES	5
8040	HOUSING AUTHORITY - VACANT	13
8060	STATE OWNED LAND - VACANT (THAT DOES NOT	15
8080	MUNICIPALLY OWNED LAND - VACANT (THAT	78
8300	SCHOOL (PUBLICLY OWNED) - IMPROVED	7
8400	COLLEGE	1
8610	COUNTY OWNED LAND - IMPROVED (THAT DOES	6
8640	BREVARD COUNTY-OWNED (AGENCY OTHER THAN	1
8660	HOUSING AUTHORITY - IMPROVED	37
8710	STATE OWNED LAND - IMPROVED (THAT DOES	4
8810	FEDERALLY OWNED LAND - IMPROVED (THAT	1
8910	MUNICIPALLY OWNED LAND - IMPROVED (THAT	33
9105	LOCALLY-ASSESSED RAILROAD PROPERTY	14
9170	WATER & SEWER SERVICE	3
9400	RIGHT OF WAY STREET, ROAD, ETC - PUBLIC	-
9410	RIGHT OF WAY STREET, ROAD, ETC - PRIVATE	1
9499	ASSESSMENT ARREARS	-
9500	RIVERS AND LAKES	1
9510	SUBMERGED LANDS	2

In addition, the following are exempt from the fire protection assessments: (i) cemeteries; and (ii) and vacant (un-improved) parcels that contain jurisdictional wetlands, but only

for the portion of the parcels that are jurisdictional wetlands as those portions do not receive material benefit from fire protection service.

(B) Tax Parcel classifications indicative of special designations used by the Property Appraiser for recordkeeping purposes which do not represent actual or assessable Tax Parcels are not subject to the Fire Protection Assessments contemplated hereunder (e.g. header records).

(C) Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, the City Council reserves the right and ability in the future to impose Fire Protection Assessments against Tax Parcels determined to be exempt hereunder to the extent permitted by law or otherwise in the event required or directed to do so by a court of competent jurisdiction.

ARTICLE IV

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 4.01. CONFLICTS. All resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict. However, nothing herein is intended to repeal or modify the administrative appeal process for vacant (unimproved) land which is set forth in Resolution No. 2013-143. Upon adoption of the 2024/2025 Final Assessment Resolution, Resolution No. 2013-143 shall be deemed supplemental to the 2024/2025 Final Assessment Resolution subject to severability as set forth in Section 3(b) of Resolution No. 2013-143.

SECTION 4.02. SEVERABILITY. If any provision of this Resolution or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Resolution that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Resolution are declared to be severable.

SECTION 4.03. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its passage and adoption.

PASSED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 13th day of August, 2024.

**CITY COUNCIL OF
COCOA, FLORIDA**

By: _____
Michael C. Blake, Mayor

Attest:

By: _____
Monica Arsenault, City Clerk

To Be Published on or before August 7,2024

NOTICE OF HEARING TO ADOPT NON-AD VALOREM FIRE PROTECTION

ASSESSMENT RATES

Notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Cocoa, Florida, will conduct a public hearing to consider adopting updated Fire Protection Assessment non-ad valorem assessment rates to continue funding the provision of Fire Protection Services to properties within the City pursuant to Ordinance 20-2006 previously adopted by the City Council in 2006. The proposed updated rates will not exceed the maximum rate per EBU previously adopted by the City Council. The City Council may continue hearings on the matter and the date and time for continuance shall be announced at the public hearing without further written notice of the continued hearing to the public. The decision on whether to impose the assessment will be made either at this public hearing at the time and date listed below or at a continuance of the public hearing to be held, if necessary. Note: The proposed assessment, if adopted, will replace the current Fire Protection Assessment and will not be in addition to the current Fire Protection Assessment. Additionally, the City's Fire Protection Assessment was previously validated and held to be lawful by the Circuit Court of the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit, Florida, in Case No. 05-2016-CA-025719.

The public hearing will be held on August 27, 2024, at 6:00 PM or soon thereafter, at the Council Chambers, 65 Stone St., Cocoa, FL 32922, for the purpose of considering approval of the Final Assessment Resolution and receiving public comment on the proposed assessment. All affected property owners have a right to attend and speak at the hearing and to file written objections and/or comments with the City Council within 20 days of this notice. If a person decides

to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation or an interpreter to participate in this proceeding should contact the City Clerk's Office at (321) 433-8488 at least two days prior to the date of the hearing.

The non-ad valorem assessment will fund a portion of the cost of the provision of essential services relating to fire protection service within the City. A more specific description of the services is set forth in the Preliminary and Final Assessment Resolutions being considered for adoption by the City Council pursuant to Ordinance 20-2006. Copies of the above-referenced Ordinance, Resolutions, and the non-ad valorem assessment roll are on file with and may be viewed during normal business hours at the Office of the City Manager or at the Office of the City Clerk, both located at 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL 32922.

Upon authorization of the non-ad valorem Fire Protection Assessment for fiscal year 2024/2025 and thereafter, the fire protection non-ad valorem assessment will be billed by and collected by the Brevard County Tax Collector on the ad valorem tax bill to be mailed in November. In accordance with the tax bill collection method authorized by Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes, failure to pay this or any non-ad valorem assessment will cause a tax certificate to be issued against the property which may result in a loss of title to real property that is subject to the non-ad valorem assessment.

For the purpose of this non-ad valorem assessment, benefited parcels are all parcels within the City limits of the City of Cocoa except for Brevard County public schools, governmental

parcels, rivers, lakes, rights-of-way/buffers and other properties exempted by law, agreement, or other lawful action of the City Council. In addition, parcels, or portions thereof, that are jurisdictional wetlands are exempt from the assessment. For the purposes of this assessment, the assessment for benefited parcels shall be determined based upon the availability of fire/rescue service to all parcels and the protection from loss of structures on improved parcels and the rate schedule is as follows:

Benefit Tier	Equivalent Benefit Unit (EBU)	Applicable to	Rate per EBU (1)	Maximum Rate per EBU
Residential total assessment	Per Dwelling Unit	Improved non-exempt residential parcels	\$249.97	\$306.12
Non-residential: Response Readiness Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Property - Per parcel • Un-improved Property - Per parcel or parcel equivalent (Parcel EBU) 	All improved and un-improved non-exempt parcels	\$176.74	\$216.45
Protection from Loss of Structures	Per \$5,000 of structure value, rounded down to nearest \$5,000. (Structure EBU)	Improved non-exempt parcels	\$11.07	\$13.55

(1) Parcel EBU is the Tier 1 equivalent benefit unit representing a parcel for improved parcels and a parcel equivalent (EBU) for un-improved parcels. Un-improved parcel EBUs are determined by rounding down the acreage of the parcel to the nearest 5 acres and dividing by 5 acres to determine the number of EBUs for the parcel.

In addition, annual adjustments to this assessment, including increases, may be implemented and the maximum assessment rates presented above are authorized to provide sufficient future revenues (in addition to other legally available funds) to provide fire/rescue services at appropriate levels of service including, but not limited to, providing continued availability of fire insurance at favorable rates, protection from loss of property due to fire, and

preservation of property values by virtue of the availability of fire/rescue services provided by the City of Cocoa. The total amount of revenue to be collected by the City of Cocoa in FY 2024/2025 under the non-ad valorem assessment program is estimated to be approximately \$3.49 million.

If you have any questions, please contact Lora Howell, Deputy Finance Director, at (321) 433-8611, Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

[INSERT MAP OF THE CITY OF COCOA]

**CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF COCOA, FLORIDA**

APPENDIX B

FORM OF NOTICE TO BE MAILED

(date)

(City

(property owner’s name/address – Col B)
(property owner’s name/address – Col C)
(property owner’s name/address – Col D)
(property owner’s name/address – Col E)
(property owner’s name/address – Col F)
(property owner’s name/address – Col G)

Fire Protection Assessment Hearing Notice

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS NOT A BILL

RE: PARCEL NO.: (parcel number - Col A) (parcel address – Col H)

Dear Property Owner:

This is a notice to inform you that the Cocoa City Council will conduct a public hearing to consider adopting updated Fire Protection Assessment rates to continue funding the provision of Fire Protection Services to properties within the City pursuant to Ordinance 20-2006 previously adopted by the City Council in 2006.

BACKGROUND: The City of Cocoa has funded fire protection and first response medical services (“rescue”) for its citizens through a non-ad valorem assessment since 2006. The City updated its assessment methodology and altered the non-ad valorem assessment rates based on a study prepared by the City’s consultant, Burton & Associates (“Study”), which methodology and rates were adopted by Resolution 2015-057 on September 8, 2015. Updated annual studies have also been prepared by the consultant and approved by the City Council (“Updated Studies”). The Updated Studies do not modify the assessment methodology or maximum assessment rate previously approved by the City Council pursuant to Resolution 2015-057. Additionally, the City Fire Protection Assessment was previously validated and held to be lawful by the Circuit Court of the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit, Florida in Case No. 5-2016-CA-025719.

HEARING: You are hereby notified that the City Council of the City of Cocoa, Florida will conduct a public hearing to adopt an updated non-ad valorem assessment. The City Council may continue hearings on the matter and the date and time for continuance shall be announced at the public hearing without further written notice of the continued hearing to the public. The decision on whether to impose the assessment will be made either at this public hearing at the time and date listed below or at a continuance of the public hearing to be held, if necessary.

Note: The proposed assessment, if adopted, will replace the current Fire Protection Assessment and will not be in addition to the current Fire Protection Assessment.

The public hearing will be held on August 27, 2024 at 6:00 PM or soon thereafter at the Council Chambers, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL 32922. All affected property owners have a right to attend and speak at the hearing. You may also file written objections and/or comments with the City Council within twenty (20) days of the date of this notice. If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

PURPOSE: The non-ad valorem assessment will continue to fund a portion of the cost of the provision of essential services relating to fire protection service within the City. A more specific description of the services is set forth in the Preliminary and Final Assessment Resolutions being considered for adoption by the City Council pursuant to Ordinance 20-2006 and the aforementioned Study. Copies of the above-referenced Ordinance, Resolutions, Study,

Updated Studies, the Circuit Court Validation, and the non-ad valorem assessment roll are on file with and may be viewed during normal business hours at the Office of the City Clerk, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL 32922.

Upon authorization of the non-ad valorem Fire Protection Assessment for fiscal year 2024/2025 and thereafter, in accordance with the tax bill collection method authorized by Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes, failure to pay this or any non-ad valorem assessment will cause a tax certificate to be issued against the property which may result in a loss of title to your real property that is subject to the non-ad valorem assessment.

APPORTIONMENT METHOD AND RATES: For the purpose of this non-ad valorem assessment, benefited parcels are all parcels within the City limits of the City of Cocoa except for Brevard County public schools, governmental parcels, rivers, lakes, right-of-way/buffers and other properties exempted by law, agreement or other lawful action of the City Council. In addition, parcels, or portions thereof, that are jurisdictional wetlands are exempt from the assessment. For the purposes of this assessment, the assessment for benefited parcels shall be determined based upon the availability of fire/rescue service to all parcels and the protection from loss of structures on improved parcels and the rate schedule is as follows:

Benefit Tier	Equivalent Benefit Unit (EBU)	Applicable to	Rate per EBU ⁽¹⁾	Maximum Rate per EBU
Residential total assessment	Per Dwelling Unit	Improved non-exempt residential parcels	\$249.97	\$306.12
Non-residential: Response Readiness Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Property - Per parcel • Un-improved Property - Per parcel or parcel equivalent (Parcel EBU)* 	All improved and un-improved non-exempt parcels	\$176.74	\$216.45
Protection from Loss of Structures	Per \$5,000 of structure value (Structure EBU) rounded down to the nearest \$5,000.	Improved non-exempt parcels	\$11.07	\$13.55

(1) Parcel EBU is the Tier 1 equivalent benefit unit representing a parcel for improved parcels and a parcel equivalent (EBU) for un-improved parcels. Un-improved parcel EBUs are determined by rounding down the acreage of the parcel to the nearest 5 acres and dividing by 5 acres to determine the number of EBUs for the parcel.

The total non-ad valorem assessment proposed to be levied against your benefited parcel for FY 2024/2025 will be \$(amount – Col I) for (number - Col J) Dwelling Units, or for (number – Col K) Parcel EBUs and (number – Col L) Structure EBUs. In addition, annual adjustments to this assessment, including increases, may be implemented and the maximum assessment rates presented above are authorized to provide sufficient future revenues (in addition to other legally available funds) to provide fire/rescue services at appropriate levels of service including, but not limited to, providing continued availability of fire insurance at favorable rates, protection from loss of property due to fire, and preservation of property values by virtue of the availability of fire/rescue services provided by the City of Cocoa. No further first class mail notice is required unless the assessment rates are adjusted to levels higher than the maximum rates above or as otherwise provided by law. The total amount of revenue to be collected by the City of Cocoa in FY 2024/2025 under the non-ad valorem assessment program is estimated to be approximately \$3.49 million.

If you have any questions, please contact Lora Howell, Deputy Finance Director, (321) 433-8611.