



## **PAYING ASSESSMENTS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **PAYING ASSESSMENT UP FRONT**

#### **Can I pay my assessment up front?**

- Yes. If paid within 30 days of the date the assessment roll is adopted by City Council, you can pay cash, write a check to the City of White Bear Lake or pay online with credit card. Payment can be made in any amount, with the remaining balance being placed on your property taxes for 20 years for apartments and commercial properties.
- Anytime after 30 days, payments must be made to the Ramsey County Assessor.
- If paying with credit card, a 3.61% service fee is applied.

#### **What is the benefit of paying my assessment up front?**

- No interest will be charged if the entire assessment is paid within 30 days from adoption of the assessment roll.

### **APPLYING ASSESSMENT TO PROPERTY TAXES**

#### **What do I need to do if I want to have the assessment put on my property taxes?**

- Nothing. The assessment will be certified to Ramsey County 30 days after the assessment roll is adopted by the City Council and added to your property taxes at that time.

#### **How many years will I be paying for this assessment?**

- Your assessment will be payable in annual installments extending over a period of 20 years for apartments and commercial properties. Ramsey County will add the appropriate amount to your property tax statement each year, with interest accruing on the unpaid balance.

#### **When do I begin paying?**

- The first installment will be payable with your first half property taxes in 2019.
- If your property taxes are escrowed by your mortgage company, do not pay them individually. If you are not sure, contact your mortgage company directly.

## **How much interest will be charged on my assessment?**

- The assessment will bear an interest rate of 5.25% per annum from the date of the adoption of the final assessment roll.
- Interest will continue to accrue annually at 5.25% on the outstanding balance.
- Since the assessment is levied in September, there will be 3 months of interest applied in 2018, plus 12 months in 2019—so the first annual payment has 15 months of interest applied to it. Thereafter, interest will be charged in 12 month periods.
- Ramsey County also adds a \$2.50 annual processing fee.

## **PAYING OFF ASSESSMENT EARLY (before 20 years is up)**

### **How do I pay off my assessment early?**

- Payment can be made to the Ramsey County Auditor at any time, with interest accrued to December 31st of the year in which such payment is made. Contact the Ramsey County Assessor's Office to find out the payoff amount.

### **Are there penalties if I pay off my assessment early?**

- No.

### **If I want to pay off my assessment early, when is the best time?**

- This is up to you, but interest for the entire forthcoming 12-month period is applied beginning January 1st of each year. Payment must be made before November 15th or interest will be charged through December 31st of the succeeding year.

## **SALE OF PROPERTY**

### **Do I need to pay off the assessment before selling my property?**

- A person selling a property may prepay outstanding assessments. This is usually negotiated between the buyer and seller, or often required by the buyer's loan agreement. However, payment is not *required* at the time of sale. Assessments left unpaid will continue to be carried on the property taxes of the new owner for the remaining term of the assessment.

## **DEFERMENT IF UNABLE TO PAY**

- The City's Assessment Policy allows deferred payment of special assessments for any homestead property owned by a person 65 years or older or retired due to a permanent and total disability or for whom it would be a hardship to make the payments.
- A deferment does not reduce or do away with the amount owed, rather it postpones the payment. During the deferment, interest will accrue on the unpaid principal amount deferred at the annual interest rate of 5.25% per annum.
- If you are interested in deferment, please contact the Engineering Department prior to the Assessment Hearing.