

FAQs

What is an MSBU?

A Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU) is a mechanism for property owners within unincorporated areas of the County to receive services for which they currently do not have. Examples of these are Street Lights and Paved Roads.

What is a MSTU?

A Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) is a funding mechanism for community members to create, through approval of the Board of County Commissioners, a special taxing district to make improvements to their neighborhood and/or community area.

What's the difference between a MSBU and MSTU?

An MSBU is a special assessment on a one-time benefit for improvements within an established district without ongoing maintenance requirements. An MSTU is a tax based on the assessed property value and addresses capital improvements that typically require continued maintenance obligations.

What are we able to use a MSBU for?

The MSBU may be created for: road paving, drainage, street lighting, speed humps, and fire protection, etc.

How is an MSBU funds collected?

County municipal service benefit units MSBU's establish, monitor, maintain and manually adjust non-ad valorem assessments which may be collected by the Tax Collector on the ad valorem tax bill, through their inclusion on the billing of either municipal or Okaloosa County Water and Sewer utility billing or such other methods as approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

If a streetlight is out in my neighborhood, how can I report a street light out?

Street light outages can be reported directly to the local power company. For Florida Power & Light residents outages are submitted online at <https://www.fpl.com/northwest/my-account/streetlight-outage#streetLightSearch> For emergencies, please call 1-800-225-5797.

For CHELCO streetlight outages, CHELCO requests you call them at (850)892-2111 and speak with a member services representative. Please include the pole number located on the pole.

Do I need to have everyone in the neighborhood agree to the improvements?

The minimum percentage required for the petition is as follows:

1. 66% of the property owners representing 66% of the property for a capital improvement MSBU.
2. 51% of the property owners representing 51% of the property for a service or street lighting MSBU.

Where can I find my parcel ID for my address?

You can find your parcel ID either on your annual tax bill or through the Okaloosa County Property Appraiser website, <https://county-taxes.net/okaloosa/property-tax> You can then search your address and use the property appraiser section to obtain the exact parcel ID.

What are the steps to create/make a MSBU?

The information below is only a summary of the steps, please see our MSBU Policy for detailed instructions.

Unit Initiation:

- The process begins with a request to solve an infrastructure problem or improve services, usually initiated by residents or community leaders.
- Contact the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and submit a Unit application with specific details including scope of service, proposed boundaries, contact information, and a non-refundable application fee of \$250.

Application Review and Deadlines:

- OMB reviews the application for completeness and schedules it for further review by relevant departments.
- Applications must be submitted by May 1st annually to align with statutory and budgetary timelines.

Preliminary Engineering Report and Cost Estimates:

- A preliminary engineering report is prepared to outline project details and costs, including assessments.
- If required, external engineering assistance may be sought for complex projects exceeding \$25,000.

Pre-Petition Submittal Meeting (Optional):

- A meeting may be held with property owners before starting the petition process to discuss project details.

Unit Petition Creation and Signature Collection:

- The Board of County Commissioners has determined that a petition serves as an indicator of the amount of community interest for a proposed project.
- At least 66% (or 51% for Street Lighting Units) of property owners within the Unit must sign the petition for consideration.

Unit Petition Acceptance:

- If the petition meets requirements, a public hearing is scheduled for the Board of County Commissioners to consider an ordinance.

Board of County Commissioner Public Hearing and Ordinance Approval/Denial:

- Legal notices are published, and property owners are notified by mail.
- The Board considers feedback and may approve, deny, or modify the ordinance.

Implementation:

- Once approved, County staff implement assessments and oversee project execution.
- If costs exceed 20% of initial estimates, a public hearing is held to decide project continuation.