



Four Lakes Task Force Assessment Methodology Frequently Asked Questions January 2022

Q: Why did the assessment methodology change?

We received a significant amount of feedback from property owners within the Four Lakes Special Assessment District after publishing the initial draft methodology. Based on this input, we made changes to address numerous concerns and factors related to apportioning benefits as provided in Part 307 (Inland Lake Levels). The changes made clearly acknowledge that the Four Lakes Special Assessment District contains many parcels with unique circumstances. The revised assessment methodology is more sensitive and accounts for these circumstances when apportioning benefits to individual parcels and is less geared towards a one size fits all approach.

Over the past few months, our engineers collected a significant amount of data to develop more customized benefit factors that consider your water view, your water frontage, your water depth, and several other factors to calculate an overall benefit factor for each parcel based on its unique and special circumstances.

Q: Why aren't property owners with two or more parcels (properties) assessed as one?

With the initial draft methodology, which was developed before the dam failure, the factors considered the following:

- If you owned property that included two adjacent waterfront parcels, with only parcel developed and the other not, the undeveloped lot had a value of 0
- An owner with a waterfront lot and a backlot that was in the same subdivision was only assigned the front lot assessment
- The base frontage factor started at 300 ft., so all parcels under 300 ft. were factored equally

The average waterfront parcel is about one-third of that size, being 90 ft., therefore, a single lot with 50 ft. of frontage was assessed nearly the same as a double lot with 300 ft. of frontage. Also, if you sold the second lot, the new owner would not have an assessment for the dam improvements.

With the currently proposed methodology:

- All parcels have a benefit factor
- Benefit factors are more sensitive to the individual parcel, for example a parcel with 300 ft. of frontage has more benefit than a parcel with 50 ft. of frontage, given the same view and water depth
- There are a variety of benefit factors that consider frontage, view, depth, access, ability to develop and more. Please see the FLTF website, where you can look up your property on an interactive map to review your benefit factors
- If a property owner wants to combine a parcel with another parcel he/she owns, or split a parcel, the owner may work with the township to do so, if legally allowed



The revised proposed methodology addresses a wider diversity of parcel benefits. Ultimately, the assessment of the benefit (body of water) applies to the parcel, not the property owner. Given the long-term nature of lake assessments and development opportunities, it is the responsibility of the owner to take action to combine parcels and property owners have ample time to do so before the assessment roll is established as well as review your benefit factors online and voice any questions or concerns you have.

Q: If I am a property owner in the Four Lakes Special Assessment District, and there will be an at-large assessment to the county and township as well, will I have to pay three times? Isn't this "double taxation"?

No, this is not double taxation. The assessment on real property for the dam improvements and lake level maintenance is a special benefit, while an "at-large" assessment against a municipality represents the general benefit to the community. Without an at-large assessment to the counties and townships, 100% of the costs would be spread in the form of a special assessment. Thus, determining the general benefit and apportioning that to the counties and townships reduces the level of the special assessment to properties in the SAD.

Q: I own property that's not in the Four Lakes SAD. Why am I assessed for the lakes through an at-large assessment?

As stated above, the special assessment on real property in the SAD is for a special benefit to that property; while an at-large assessment against the counties and township is an assessment related to the general benefit derived to the community. The greater percentage (that is, apportionment) to the counties and townships, reduces the amount that is derived through special assessments. The proposed at-large assessment will be to Gladwin and Midland counties, the Village of Sanford, and nine townships. It is proposed that 30% of the apportioned costs represent a general benefit to the counties, village and townships.

Just as a private parcel benefits from a body of water, the counties/village/townships benefit from the bodies of water as well because of the economic benefits and recreational activities the water brings. This in turn, benefits all residents whether they use the lakes for recreation or not.

Q: How can I see my assessment amount?

Go to the [FLTF website map](https://bit.ly/SAD-map) (<https://bit.ly/SAD-map>) and insert your address. This will provide an estimated assessment amount for the Operations assessment.

Q: What are the preliminary days of review?

These will be days where property owners can talk to engineers about their benefit factors and discuss the rationale for their properties. These will occur before the formal hearings so that FLTF can work out any issues in advance.



Q: How can I appeal or dispute my assessment?

If you think the benefit factors for your parcel are incorrect, please fill out the form on [this page](https://www.four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com/sad-dispute.html) (<https://www.four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com/sad-dispute.html>) and an engineer will look into it.

If you want to appeal the assessment there will be opportunities to do so from June-August 2022.

Q: Will the same methodology apply to the capital improvement assessment?

Yes, we'll use the same methodology if there is a capital improvement assessment. The size of this assessment, if there is one, is highly dependent on the current legislation moving through the Michigan Senate and House.

Q: Why does my parcel have the wrong name on it?

Property owner information is updated to the GIS system periodically, so if you sell a parcel, split a parcel or combine a parcel, it may take time to see that updated on the county GIS system. Please contact us if the name on your parcel is incorrect and we will coordinate with County and Township staff to update.

Q: Are the property lines on the GIS map accurate?

The property boundaries shown on the GIS layers were drafted from the property descriptions of the tax records and or deeds. The location your property line as shown on the GIS is not a surveyed depiction of the exact location of your property boundary. It would require a substantial effort on behalf of the counties to construct and maintain a county wide GIS system that meets boundary survey accuracy requirements for every property boundary in the county. The county GIS was developed to assist with administering the property information records for tax and governance purposes. It is not suitable for property boundary disputes. You should contact a professional surveyor for more detailed property boundary information.