

## **Street Improvement District SI 544 Frequently Asked Questions**

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### **1. Why is the City installing street lights?**

Once an area or new development has 50% of the lots occupied or constructed upon, the City will offer street lighting to the property owners in those areas by creating a street lighting district. In some extreme cases, where traffic safety is a concern, the City may opt to offer street lighting before the 50% is achieved; however, this is rare.

### **2. Who determines where the street lights are to be placed?**

The City of Bismarck's Engineering Department determines the location of the street lights based on recommendations from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) which is the industry standard for street lighting. The actual spacing of the street lights is dependent on the type of light fixture, the height of the pole and the width of the roadway. Whenever possible, the City tries to place the street light on a property line. However, in order to obtain the necessary lighting levels as recommended by AASHTO, it is frequently necessary to place the street lights between property lines.

### **3. Who determines what type of street light will be installed in my neighborhood?**

The City has several types of light fixtures that are permitted. Our goal is to make the neighborhood appear as cohesive as possible aesthetically. If there is already a light fixture in adjoining areas of the development, we would likely choose that light fixture. In areas where there is more than one type of light fixture or there is no current lighting in the adjoining areas, we would have the developer provide input on the type.

### **4. If a light is installed in front of my property, would the City be able to move the light if I need it moved in the future? Who pays the cost of moving the light?**

Since the quality of the lighting on the roadway is based on the spacing of the lights, we are limited to how much we can move a light. Because of this, each case is evaluated separately and a determination made on whether or not it may be moved. If it can be moved, typically it may only be moved 5 or 10 feet. The cost associated with moving the light would be paid by the property owner making the request. Work must be done by a City approved electrical contractor, who is licensed and equipped to work on street lighting.

### **5. How does the City select the contractor for an improvement project? Is there a public bidding process?**

Yes, there is a public bidding process that determines which contractor is awarded each project. The general steps of that process are as follows: create the project, advertise, receive bids, review and award to the lowest qualified bidder.

### **6. Are property owners paying for all of the project cost?**

Yes, the installation costs are paid by the benefitting property owners, however your assessment is based only on the actual cost of the street light installation in your unit. The cost for street lights are allocated to all the properties within the project boundaries that benefit.

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**7. Why are the improvements paid by special assessments instead of using property taxes?**



Special assessments are used to fund street improvement projects so that the benefitting properties pay for the cost of the improvements. If property taxes would be used, the cost of the improvement would be shared with all property owners in Bismarck. All property owners in Bismarck would fund not just this year's projects, but every street improvement project thereafter throughout the city. This would increase your property taxes.

**8. Are special assessments based on the value of my property?**

No, the amount of your special assessment is based on the total project cost within your unit which is allocated to the benefitting properties. The allocation for street lighting districts for residential properties is per each residential parcel. For commercial properties, the allocation is based on parcel square footage.

**9. Currently, on my water bill there is a charge for street lighting, but I don't have street lights? Why? Would this charge increase or stay the same once street lights are installed on my street?** The street light charge that is currently on your water bill is the base fee that covers the cost to maintain and operate traffic signals and street lighting on the arterial roadways in the City. All property owners in the City contribute to this base fee. Once a property has street lighting installed within 150 feet of the property, an additional fee is added to cover the cost to maintain and operate the new street lighting system.

# SI 544 - Unit 1

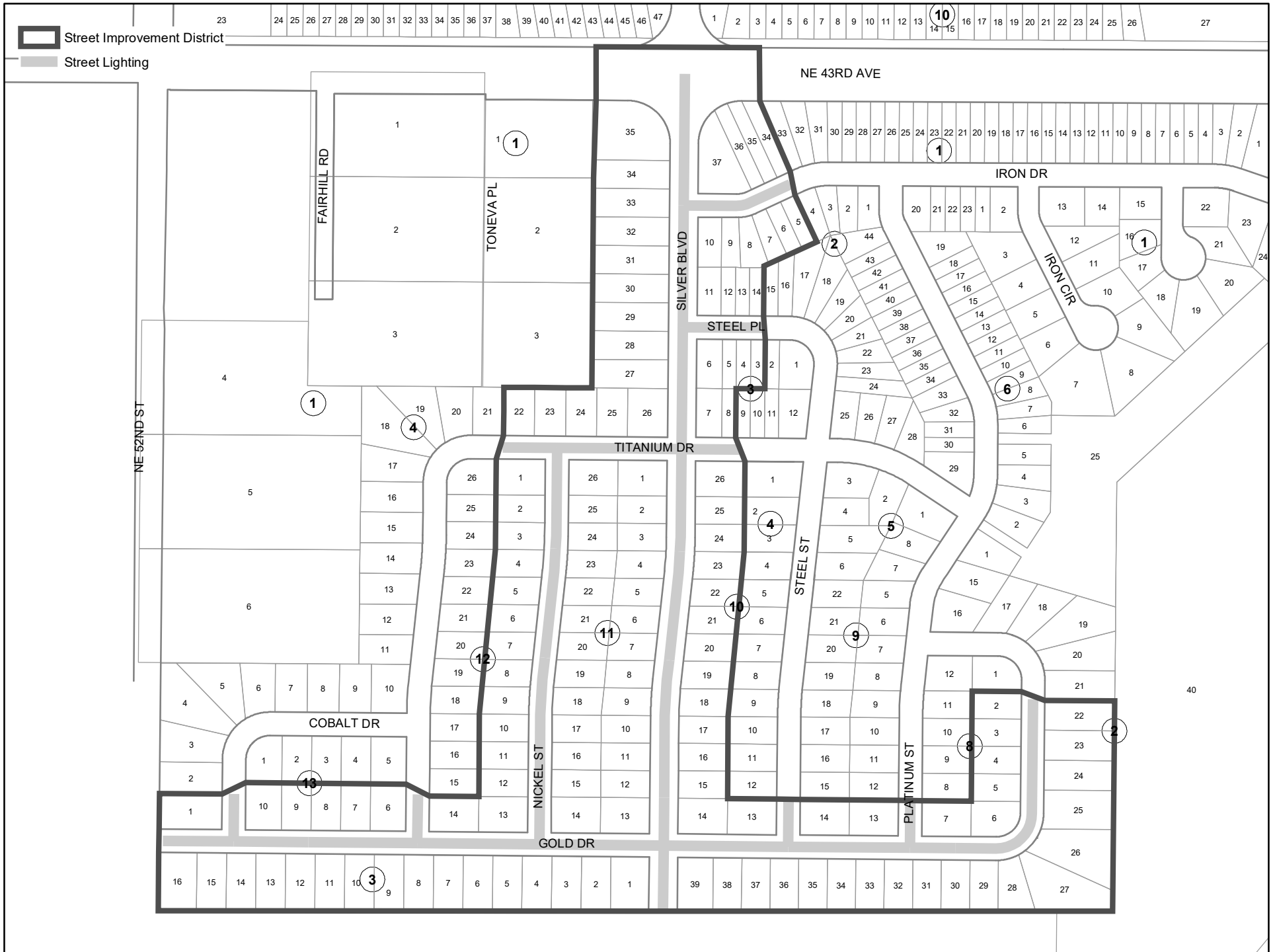
-  Street Improvement District
-  Street Lighting





# SI 544 - Unit 2

Street Improvement District

Street Lighting



# SI 544 - Unit 3

-  Street Improvement District
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YUKON DR

NE 57TH AVE

CALVERT DR

NIAGARA DR

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CALVERT DR

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NIAGARA DR

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SI 544 - Unit 4

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