



OLD MILL ESTATES

TAYLORS, SC
REQUEST FOR MILLAGE RATE ADJUSTMENT

1. Statement of Need

The Old Mill Estates Special Tax District respectfully requests an adjustment to the district millage rate from the current **6.7 mills to 10 mills**. This change is necessary to ensure sufficient and stable funding to support routine operating expenses, address aging community infrastructure, and establish a modest reserve fund for emergency situations.

The current millage rate has remained unchanged since **1995**. During that time, the cost of utilities, maintenance services, and materials has increased substantially while district revenues have remained largely static. As a result, the existing millage rate no longer provides adequate funding to maintain the level of services expected by the community.

2. Background

The Old Mill Estates Special Tax District serves a residential community consisting of approximately **60 households**, along with several undeveloped lots. The district's primary source of revenue is property tax millage assessed within the district, supplemented by limited fees paid by motor carriers and utility companies.

These funds are used exclusively to support services and improvements that benefit the Old Mill Estates community, including neighborhood lighting, landscape maintenance of common areas, and maintenance of community signage and entrance features.

3. Current Financial Conditions

Since **2023**, district income has declined slightly while operating expenses have steadily increased.

The district's largest recurring expense is **electric service from Duke Energy**, which powers **13 security and streetlights** throughout the neighborhood. These lights are an important safety feature for residents. Duke Energy billing has increased approximately **16% between 2023 and 2025**, and the company has requested an additional **9.9% rate increase**, which must be accounted for in future budgeting.

The second largest recurring expense is **landscape maintenance of common areas**. In an effort to control costs, landscape services have already been reduced to **twice-monthly mowing during the spring and summer months and leaf blowing during the fall and winter**. While these reductions have helped limit expenses, they have also resulted in a somewhat diminished appearance of common areas and concerns from residents regarding neighborhood upkeep.

4. Fiscal Responsibility

The Old Mill Estates Special Tax District Commission has made consistent efforts to manage financial resources responsibly and avoid unnecessary increases in costs to residents.

Over time, the Commission has reduced service levels where possible, delayed non-essential improvements, and extended the life of existing infrastructure through routine maintenance. For example, the neighborhood signage installed in **2002** has been maintained for more than two decades in order to defer replacement costs.

Despite these cost-control efforts, continued increases in utility costs, service expenses, and infrastructure needs have created financial pressures that can no longer be addressed through reductions alone.

5. Special Expenses and Infrastructure Needs

The district must now address several necessary maintenance and infrastructure improvements.

The neighborhood signage, installed in **2002**, has reached the end of its useful life. Although maintenance has been performed over the years, deterioration from age and weather exposure has significantly affected its condition. **Hurricane Helene accelerated this deterioration**, making replacement necessary in the near future.

The estimated cost for replacement signage, installation, and wall repair is approximately **\$8,000 - \$12,000**.

6. Emergency Reserve

Recent severe weather events have highlighted the importance of maintaining a modest financial reserve. **Hurricane Helene demonstrated the district's vulnerability to unexpected costs**, particularly those related to storm damage.

While the community was fortunate that no large trees fell within common areas during the storm, the district currently does **not maintain a reserve fund** to cover expenses such as tree removal, storm damage repair, or other unforeseen maintenance needs.

Establishing a modest "**rainy day**" **reserve fund** would allow the district to respond responsibly to emergency situations without requiring emergency assessments or immediate service reductions.

7. Community Impact

Maintaining the appearance, safety, and infrastructure of Old Mill Estates benefits all residents and helps protect neighborhood property values. Adequate street lighting, well-maintained entrances, and properly maintained common areas contribute to a safe and welcoming environment for residents and visitors.

The proposed millage adjustment represents a modest increase that will allow the district to continue providing these essential services while addressing deferred maintenance needs and preparing responsibly for unforeseen expenses.

8. Cost to the Average Homeowner

Under South Carolina property tax law, owner-occupied homes are assessed at 4% of their market value. Because millage is applied to the assessed value rather than the full market value, the actual cost to homeowners is significantly lower than it may appear.

For example, a home with an estimated market value of \$300,000 has an assessed value of approximately \$12,000. Under the current 6.7 mill rate, the annual cost is approximately \$80 per year. Under the proposed 10-mill rate, the annual cost would be approximately \$120 per year.

This represents an increase of roughly \$40 per year, or about \$3.30 per month, for a typical owner-occupied home in the district.

9. Conclusion



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NOTICE TO RESIDENTS OF OLD MILL ESTATES

The Old Mill Estates Special Tax District Commission is proposing an adjustment to the current millage rate from 6.7 mills to a projected 10 mills, with an anticipated effective date of January 2027.

A public meeting will be held on **April 8** at the **Taylor's Library, 316 W. Main Street, Taylors, SC at 7pm**. Residents are strongly encouraged to attend, learn more about the proposal, and share their thoughts.

Over the past several years, the district has worked carefully to manage expenses and keep costs to residents as low as possible. However, the financial reality facing the district has changed. Between the end of 2024 and the end of 2025, Old Mill Estates experienced approximately a 10% decrease in income, while expenses increased by about 9.5%.

The district's income comes from only 62 households, along with a small number of undeveloped lots and limited fees paid by motor carriers and utilities for use of our roads and rights-of-way. Even with these revenues, the average amount paid per household in HOA-related costs in 2025 was just \$64.36, which is very modest compared with many communities. At the same time, essential operating costs continue to rise.

Our largest expense is electricity from Duke Energy, which powers the 13 security and streetlights throughout the neighborhood and the front entrance lighting. Duke Energy billing has already increased approximately 16% between 2023 and 2025, and the company has requested an additional 9.9% rate increase, which must be accounted for in future budgeting.

Another ongoing cost is landscaping for the neighborhood's common areas. In order to control expenses, services have already been reduced to twice-monthly mowing during spring and summer and seasonal leaf blowing during fall and winter. We have been fortunate to maintain the current rate of \$200 per month for several years, but it is very likely that this cost could increase beginning in January 2027, if not earlier.

In addition to routine operating costs, the community is also facing important maintenance and infrastructure needs. The neighborhood signage, which was installed in 2002, is now over two decades old. Despite maintenance over the years, the materials are deteriorating due to age. Hurricane Helene accelerated this damage, making replacement necessary sooner rather than later. Preliminary expectations place the cost of replacement signage and installation in the range of \$8,000 to \$12,000.

The front entrance wall will also require repair or possible replacement, which will require additional funding. Finally, Hurricane Helene highlighted an important financial vulnerability for the district. While the storm fortunately caused no major damage to trees in the common areas, the district currently does not have a reserve fund to cover unexpected emergencies such as fallen tree removal, storm damage, or urgent repairs. Establishing a modest "rainy day" reserve is a responsible step toward protecting the neighborhood from future unforeseen costs.

The proposed millage adjustment is intended to ensure that Old Mill Estates can:

- Maintain safe and well-lit streets
- Preserve the appearance of neighborhood entrances and common areas
- Address aging infrastructure such as signage and entrance features
- Prepare responsibly for unexpected storm damage or emergency expenses
- Protect the long-term stability and appearance of the community

The Commission understands that any increase deserves careful consideration. This proposal is being presented openly so residents can review the financial realities facing the district and participate in the discussion. Your attendance and

The Old Mill Estates Special Tax District Commission has worked diligently to manage resources responsibly and keep costs to residents as low as possible. However, after decades without a change in the millage rate, the current funding level no longer reflects the true cost of maintaining basic neighborhood services and infrastructure.

The requested adjustment to **10 mills** represents a prudent and measured step that will allow the district to maintain essential services, address aging community assets, and establish a modest reserve for emergencies. This action will help ensure the continued safety, appearance, and long-term stability of the Old Mill Estates community.

input at the public meeting are important and appreciated as we work together to maintain the safety, appearance, and long-term health of the Old Mill Estates community.

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2023		2025	2026	2027	2028	
Actual	2024 Actual	Actual	Projected	Projected	Projected	

Revenue							
Income	4,348.47	4,895.53	4,408.12	4,768.23	7,116.00	7,116.00	2027 & 2028 Assume 10 mill approval based on 2025 assessed value
Expenses							
Landscaping		2,400.00	2,400.00	1,200.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	2026 Service suspended April through September
Special Landscaping					0.00		New signage & overall update beginning 2020
Duke Energy		2,590.11	2,835.56	3,119.12	3,215.00	3,350.00	Assumes a 10% increase in 2026; 3% inflation subsequent
Other		23.76	0.00	75.00	100.00	100.00	Stamps/Mailings/Fees
Reserve					600.00	600.00	
Total		5,013.87	5,235.56	4,394.12	6,915.00	7,050.00	
Net		(118.34)	(827.44)	374.11	201.00	66.00	
Ending Balance							

