



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: JULY 15, 2025**

FROM: FINANCE DEPARTMENT **WARD: 2**

SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING – RESOLUTION CONFIRMING DIAGRAM AND ASSESSMENT FOR LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE DISTRICT 88-1 (SYCAMORE HIGHLANDS) AND LEVYING ASSESSMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2025/26

ISSUE:

Conduct a Public Hearing for the purpose of receiving comments relative to the FY 2025/26 Landscape Maintenance District No. 88-1 assessments and adopt a resolution authorizing the City of Riverside to confirm the diagram and assessments for Landscape Maintenance District No. 88-1 (Sycamore Highlands) and levy assessments on all assessable lots and parcels of land therein for the FY 2025/26.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Conduct a Public Hearing for the purpose of receiving comments relative to FY 2025/26 Landscape Maintenance District No. 88-1 assessments; and
2. Adopt a resolution authorizing the City of Riverside to confirm the diagram and assessments for Landscape Maintenance District No. 88-1 (Sycamore Highlands) and levy assessments on all assessable lots and parcels of land therein for the FY 2025/26.

BACKGROUND:

In September 1988 Landscape Maintenance District 88-1 was formed under the provisions of the Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972. The District was originally formed in conjunction with a Development Agreement for the Lusk-Highlander project. Pursuant to the requirements established by Proposition 218, Landscape Maintenance District 88-1 was then confirmed by property owner ballot in July 1997. The original construction of the improvements was funded by the Highlander Community Facilities District 90-1. The Landscape Maintenance District 88-1 was formed to assess property owners for the ongoing maintenance costs associated with those improvements within the district areas.

On March 4th, 2025, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 24226, ordering the preparation of the Preliminary Annual Engineer's Report for Landscape Maintenance District 88-1 (Sycamore Highlands). The attached report outlines the estimated cost of maintaining the landscaping and administration of the District for FY 2025/26 as well as the method of apportioning those costs to the property owners within the District. The City assesses all parcels within the District annually, regardless of development status.

On May 20th, 2025, the City Council adopted Resolution 24266 approving the Preliminary Annual Engineer's Report for Landscape Maintenance District No. 88-1 (Sycamore Highlands) and setting a public hearing for July 15th, 2025 to approve the Final Annual Engineer's Report for Landscape Maintenance District No. 88-1 and authorizing the levy of special assessments within the District.

DISCUSSION:

The procedures of the Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972 require the City Council to hold a Public Hearing prior to the adoption of a resolution confirming the Annual Engineer's Report and establishing the FY 2025/26 annual assessments for Landscape Maintenance District No 88-1 (Sycamore Highlands).

The District formation process set an annual assessment increase based on the cumulative percentage increase, if any, in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban consumers (CPI-U) for the Los Angeles -Riverside-Orange County, California Standard Metropolitan Statistical area as published by the US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics ("the Bureau"). In December 2017, the Bureau discontinued the original index, and replaced it with two new indexes (Riverside -San Bernardino-Ontario and Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim). Starting in FY 2019/20, the City began using the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario Index, as it most closely mirrors local assessed valuation changes.

Using the prior index, the adjustment was calculated based upon a combination of the cumulative increases in the original index as it was in December of each year over the base index in December 1996 of 158.3. The original index ended with a cumulative increase of 63.75% over the base year. To use the new index, which publishes every other month, the escalation period was changed to January and began at a scale of 100 for FY 2018/19. Adding the cumulative percentage increase of the new Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario Index of 33.99% to the ending cumulative increase of the original index of 63.75% results in a cumulative percentage change total for both indexes of 97.74%. Using this methodology, the maximum allowed assessment for FY 2025/26 is \$114.69 (\$58.00 base year increased by a cumulative factor of 97.74%).

At the end of each fiscal year staff review actual expenditures against collected assessments and any unspent balance remains with the District to cover expenditures in the following year. The estimated landscape maintenance costs for FY 2025/26 for the District are \$141,201. There is an existing agreement between the City and Castlerock Apartment Homes (formerly Riverside Sycamore Apartments) which allows for the property owner to maintain a section of landscaping, receiving a proportional credit to the property. That credit for FY 2025/26 is estimated to be \$9,060.34. The annual assessment for the 2025/2026 fiscal year is \$114.69 per residential parcel or equivalent dwelling unit (EDU), which is the maximum allowed assessment. This, minus the Castlerock credit, equals a total proposed annual assessment of \$111,361.90. The difference between estimated costs and estimated revenue (due to the credit) indicates a contribution of \$29,839.10 to be covered by the General Fund and any remaining funds from FY 2024/25.

The District is scheduled to expire in FY 2026–27. As the expiration date approaches, staff will coordinate with the Finance Department and City Management to evaluate available options moving forward. Additional information will be provided at a later date.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 5 – High Performing Government** and **Goal 5.3 – Enhance communication and collaboration with community members, to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.**

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The preparation of an annual engineer’s report and levy process complies with the Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972, under which the Landscape Maintenance District No. 88-1 was formed. This process provides transparency for community members upon whom the assessments are levied each year.
2. **Equity** – In order to maintain the improvements within the Landscape Maintenance District No. 88-1, the annual maintenance cost is funded through an annual levy calculated based on the special benefit shared by each parcel within the district.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Assessments are levied annually to pay the costs associated with maintaining enhanced improvements within the district. This ensures the additional cost of maintaining enhanced landscape improvements is borne primarily by the property owners that benefit from them.
4. **Innovation** – Utilizing Landscape Maintenance Districts is an innovative way to offset the cost of maintaining certain improvements within a specified area of the City and which benefit a select group of property owners.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The formation of a Landscape Maintenance District provides a transparent and equitable way to fund and report on maintenance improvements that provide a special benefit to a select group of property owners. The annual engineer’s report and levy process helps to ensure transparent reporting to members of the community, and within the district.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total fiscal impact for the estimated landscape maintenance costs within the District for FY 2025/26 is \$141,201; the assessment per EDU will be \$114.69. Landscape maintenance costs were included in the FY 2025/26 Budget adopted in June 2025. Although the maximum allowable Sycamore Highlands LMD assessment is proposed, the credit due to the Castlerock Apartment Agreement and additional city obligations in the amount of \$29,839 will be paid out of budgeted General Fund contributions. The FY 2025/26 Budget approved by City Council in June 2025 included \$2,300 of General Fund contributions in the Sycamore Highland Landscape Maintenance District Budget. The remaining funds will come from a rebalancing of General Fund Contribution from the Street Lighting Assessment District which has a surplus. No additional General Fund contribution is needed for this action.

Prepared by: Meline Carranza, Debt and Treasury Manager
Approved by: Sergio Aguilar, Deputy Finance Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by: Edward Enriquez, Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City
Treasurer
Approved as to form: Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Preliminary 2025-2026 Sycamore Highlands Landscape Maintenance District Engineer's Report
3. Resolution No. 24266 declaring intent to levy and collect assessments for FY 25-26
4. Presentation