

Member Alert: Lancaster Assessment Ballots Require Your Attention

Dear GAVAR Members,

The City of Lancaster has mailed official notices and ballots to property owners regarding proposed updates to several local assessment and service areas. These may include the Landscape Maintenance District, Lighting Maintenance District, Drainage Benefit Assessment District, and the Lancaster Sewer service charge, depending on the property. This is a local civic process that directly affects property owners, neighborhoods, infrastructure maintenance, and long-term property values.

Members are strongly encouraged to review actual ballots showing the proposed fees available on the GAVAR website, read any mailed materials carefully, and make sure clients, colleagues, and property owners understand that participation matters.

Why This Matters

Under the Proposition 218 process, property owners have the opportunity to vote on or protest proposed assessment updates for services that may benefit their properties. The City has indicated that not every property is included in every district; some parcels may receive one ballot, multiple ballots, or none at all.

These assessments are intended to support services such as street lighting, landscaped public areas, stormwater drainage infrastructure, and sewer service. ***Because these issues affect property ownership***, maintenance costs, neighborhood conditions, and public infrastructure, ***real estate professionals should be informed and should encourage property owners to participate.***

Important Ballot Information

- The City may have mailed up to four separate ballots to a property owner, depending on which districts or service areas apply to the property.
- The ballots are mail-in ballots only, so ***property owners should not wait*** until the last minute to review, complete, sign, and return them.
- Assessment ballots generally require majority support based on the applicable ballot process in order to pass.
- For the Lancaster Sewer service charge, the process is different: ***if at least 51% of eligible voters do not submit protests against the increase, the fee may automatically be approved.***
- Unsigned, incomplete, late, or improperly submitted ballots may not be counted, so property owners should follow the instructions included with each ballot carefully.

Key Dates and Public Participation

The City has announced informational community open houses for property owners and interested community members, as well as a public hearing where ballots, written comments, and protests may be considered. The public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. at Lancaster City Hall Council Chambers, 44933 Fern Avenue.

Members should encourage property owners to confirm which districts apply to their parcels, review the City's information and return any ballot or protest materials in accordance with the instructions provided.

Suggested Message to Clients and Property Owners

If you own property in the City of Lancaster, please check your mail carefully for assessment ballots or notices from the City. You may receive more than one ballot depending on your property. These ballots relate to local services such as landscaping, lighting, drainage, and sewer service charges. ***This is a mail-in process, and your response may affect whether these assessments or charges are approved. Please review the materials, follow the ballot instructions, and return your ballot or protest before the applicable deadline.***

Call to Action

As real estate professionals, we have an important role in helping property owners stay informed and engaged. Please review actual ballots and assessment forms on the GAVAR website, share this information with your clients and contacts, and encourage timely participation in this local civic process.