

Q.1 What is a landscape maintenance district?

A landscape maintenance district is a special financing district created to pay for the costs to provide the ongoing maintenance of public improvements (e.g. landscaping) which provides special benefits to the parcels in given areas of the City. The district provides services solely for the benefit of those parcels located within each district. There is over 1.8 million square feet of landscaping within the City’s 36 LMDs that directly benefits residents in these districts.

Q.2 Which landscape maintenance district does my property fall within?

Please review the attached Special Districts map to determine which district your property falls within. You can also visit the Special Districts webpage for more information. <https://www.oxnard.org/city-department/finance/special-assessment-districts/>

Q.3 How is a landscape maintenance district funded?

Property owners in a landscape maintenance district pay for these maintenance services. Each property owner is annually assessed a portion of the improvements annual maintenance costs of their district. The charges are established on a “district-by-district” basis and are paid by the property owner through a special assessment on the County’s property tax bill.

Q.4 How are the rates determined and set?

Each year the City evaluates the anticipated costs of providing the services for the upcoming fiscal year. This evaluation takes any increases in costs as well as cost savings into consideration. Examples of these costs include: routine maintenance contracts, equipment repair (e.g. electric pedestals, irrigation pumps, etc.), irrigation parts and controllers, weed abatement, tree pruning, radios and electronic devices, water, electricity, fertilizer, vehicles and vehicle maintenance, and other administrative costs to operate the district.

An annual budget is developed using those costs. The total costs are divided among the parcels in each area based on the proportionate share of benefit received from the improvements as described in the Engineer’s Report. The proposed charges are then reviewed and approved each year by the City Council during a public hearing process.

Q.5 Does the City’s General Fund contribute any funding to the landscape maintenance districts?

Yes. The City is required to provide a contribution for maintenance of the improvements for the General Benefit value the community receives for the improvements. For fiscal year 22-23, the City’s General Fund contributed nearly \$110,000, collectively for General Benefit. This includes costs for the overall community benefit and maintenance of areas that do not have a special benefit to the property owners, which cannot be assessed to other properties.

Q.6 Isn’t an annual adjustment a blank check to the City?

When formed, LMDs can, but are not required to, include an annual inflator to the maximum assessment rate. Prior to determining each year’s annual assessment and whether or not to apply an inflationary adjustment to the special assessment rate, the City evaluates projected expenses for the upcoming year. The City can only levy the amount necessary to fund the anticipated expenses for the upcoming year and cannot exceed the maximum amount authorized by the voters.

Q.7 What does the assessment revenue fund?

The assessment revenue pays for the maintenance, repair, and replacement costs of the authorized services and improvements (“ASIs”) for the district. For example, these ASIs can include trees, shrubs, fencing, playground amenities. In addition, the district has administrative costs which include: costs for contract procurement and management; landscape inspectors; annual assessment reporting; customer service; and other indirect costs (e.g. insurance, computer and telecommunication expenses, accounting staff, human resource support, etc.).

Q.8 Can revenue from the assessment be used in other parts of the City or for services other than maintenance of the public landscaping?

No. Assessments paid by a specific district’s property owners must be used for the maintenance and administration of the improvements within that specific district. The funds are restricted and cannot be used elsewhere nor can funds from other special financing districts be used within that specific district.

Q.9 Are the parks in my neighborhood covered under the landscape maintenance district?

It depends. Some districts (LMD-39; LMD-51 for example) have park amenities as an authorized service and improvement. Maintenance of these park amenities is funded through the special assessments collected for those districts. Non-Special District park facilities are provided through other funding sources, such as the General Fund.

Q.10 Why are there different levels of maintenance throughout the City’s landscape maintenance districts?

The City strives to maintain a uniform level of maintenance throughout its public landscaped areas. Under the laws established for LMDs, the City can only use funds collected from property owners within a district for costs associated directly with and specifically for that area. In some areas, revenue from the assessments has not been sufficient to pay for basic maintenance costs, making those areas “underfunded”. This occurs when costs to provide the service increase without additional revenue to offset those costs. These costs can include replacement of dying plants and trees, water rates, replacement or repair of vandalized equipment and aging irrigation systems, petroleum rates (i.e. plastic irrigation products), and labor rates. There are five levels of service within the landscape maintenance districts, ranging from “A” level of service which includes one (1) service visit per week to “F” level of service which includes one (1) service visit per quarter. A copy of the City of Oxnard Landscape Maintenance Service Levels and Frequency of Operations document is attached.

Q.11 How does the assessment for the landscape maintenance districts compare?

The following chart shows the cost per unit to maintain the landscaping in each of the LMDs.

LMD	Service Level	SqFt Maintained	Number of Units	Cost Per Unit
3	B	53,366	516	\$ 103.42
10	B	5,085	153	\$ 33.24
11	F	32,354	83	\$ 389.81
12	B	4,720	255	\$ 18.51
13	F	26,297	160	\$ 164.36
14	F	81,410	212	\$ 384.01
16	F	57,410	265	\$ 216.64
23	F	11,567	61	\$ 189.62
24	F	22,819	100	\$ 228.19
25	C	25,374	216	\$ 117.47
27	F	28,169	50	\$ 563.38
28	B	56,047	355	\$ 157.88
30	B	68,756	89	\$ 774.98
31	D	78,924	233	\$ 338.73
32	B	1,020	27	\$ 37.78
33	B	33,752	190	\$ 177.64
34	B	50,461	273	\$ 184.84
36	B	218,011	330	\$ 660.64
37	B	15,355	119	\$ 129.03
38	B	65,303	294	\$ 222.12
39	B	155,957	244	\$ 639.17
40	B	43,408	113	\$ 384.14
41	B	10,615	120	\$ 88.46
42	B	162,767	197	\$ 826.23
43	B	188,189	204	\$ 920.96
46	B	115,927	262	\$ 442.47
47	B	28,033	111	\$ 252.55
49	F	24,685	35	\$ 705.29
50	D	14,124	60	\$ 235.40
51	B	60,627	219	\$ 276.84
52	B	4,884	199	\$ 24.54
53	F	7,854	8	\$ 981.75
54	B	5,365	50	\$ 107.30
55	B	31,585	41	\$ 770.37
58	B	31,659	156	\$ 202.94
60	B	19,369	100	\$ 193.69

Q.12 How can we increase the frequency of landscape maintenance services?

If the property owners want to increase the frequency of service, a Proposition 218 mail ballot proceeding needs to be completed wherein a majority of the returned ballots do not protest an increase in the assessment.

Q.13 What is Proposition 218?

Passed by voters in November 1996, Proposition 218 requires voter approval for new or increases to property assessments that exceed the maximum assessment. In the event costs to provide the service exceed the maximum assessment, a mail ballot proceeding may be conducted to provide

property owners within the district the opportunity to raise the maximum assessment to cover the district’s needs.

Q.14 When was the last time property owners voted on an assessment increase and what were the results?

The property owners have not previously voted to increase the maximum assessment rate.

Q.15 How much would the annual assessment need to be to raise the frequency of service to weekly (“A” Level of Service)?

If enough interest exists to support a mail ballot proceeding, the City will calculate the necessary budget and assessment to increase the frequency of service.

Q.16 How do the property owners initiate a ballot process?

A petition with property owner signatures (1 signature per single-family residential property owner or non-single-family residential property owner weighted based on acreage) indicating there’s an interest in a ballot. After the City receives a petition with the required valid signatures, a new ballot process can be initiated.

Q.17 If the required petition signatures are collected, what is the voting requirement of the ballot process?

The ballot will pass absent a majority protest of the returned ballots. A majority protest exists if the number of weighted ballots submitted in opposition to the assessment exceeds the number of weighted ballots submitted in favor of the assessment.

Q.18 If an assessment is approved by the voters, when would the frequency of service increase?

The balloting process takes at least 5-6 months from the time the property owners have indicated an interest in a mail ballot proceeding. This includes time to prepare an Assessment Engineer’s Report, conduct the Intent meeting, prepare and mail the ballot documents, and to allow 45-days for the property owners to review the ballot and notice prior to a Public Hearing. The ballots will be counted at the conclusion of the Public Hearing. Thereafter, arrangements will need to be coordinated with the contractor to increase the frequency of service.

If the ballot initiative is successful, the new assessment amount will be reflected on the following year’s property tax roll. The frequency of services will increase after this process is completed.