

BALLOT PROCEDURES

1. Persons Entitled to Ballot.

a. Record Owners. The record owner of each parcel is as set forth on the Assessor's current master property record on the date the mailing list for the assessment is generated. In accordance with Article XIID, notice, including the ballot, in these proceedings shall be mailed to the record owner of each parcel as shown on the Assessor's master property record.

b. Tenants. A tenant who holds a tenancy of real property and whose lease or other rental agreement expressly requires that the tenant directly pay assessments, such as the proposed assessment, may submit a ballot for the parcel. When the authority of a tenant is established, the ballot of the tenant shall be counted in place of any ballot submitted by the owner. There is, however, no duty to seek out or give special notice to tenants.

2. One Ballot per Parcel. Only one ballot shall be counted for each parcel, even if there are co-owners or co-tenants. If more than one co-owner or co-tenant, respectively, should submit a ballot and the ballots are in agreement after considering withdrawals, then one ballot shall be counted for the parcel. If more than one co-owner or co-tenant, respectively, should submit a ballot and the ballots are in conflict after considering withdrawals, then no ballot shall be counted for that parcel.

PROTESTS

1. In addition to the ballots in favor of or in opposition to the proposed assessment, the Board of Supervisors will also consider any other protests to the proposed assessments at the public hearing. Any protest pertaining to the validity of the assessment or the regularity or sufficiency of the proceedings shall be in writing and shall clearly and specifically set forth the alleged irregularity or defect. Any grounds of protest not stated in a written protest filed prior to the close of the public hearing shall be deemed waived.

2. The Board of Supervisors retains authority otherwise conferred by law to make changes in the boundaries of the proposed assessment area, in the extent of the services to be provided, and in the amount of the assessment (including the amounts of any individual assessments) provided, however the assessment area shall not be expanded nor any assessment increased beyond that specified by this notice without new notice and proceedings in compliance with all laws.

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The County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Questions regarding accommodation under the ADA should be directed to the Clerk of the Board at (831) 454-2323.

A copy of the proposed Resolution, the Engineer's Report, and the Balloting Rules are available at the Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, 701 Ocean Street, Room 520, Santa Cruz, California.

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ



**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING, BALLOT PROCEDURE, AND BALLOT FOR
AN INCREASED ASSESSMENT TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR
ROAD MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION SERVICES
WITHIN COUNTY SERVICE AREA NO. 17, EMPIRE ACRES**

IMPORTANT NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors has scheduled a public hearing for Tuesday, April 8, 2025, **which begins at 9:00 a.m. or thereafter** in the Board Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, Room 525, Santa Cruz, California, to consider the adoption of a pro- posed resolution authorizing and levying an increased assessment in compliance with Proposition 218 ("The Taxpayers Right to Vote Initiative") for the purpose of providing funding for road maintenance and operation services within County Service Area No. 17, Empire Acres.

Proposition 218, which was approved by the voters at the November 1996 general election, includes provisions that a new or increased benefit assessment to provide road maintenance and operation services can only be charged under Proposition 218 if it is approved by at least half of the votes cast by the property owners (or tenants who are directly liable for paying the proposed assessments) with the votes weighted according to the amount of the proposed assessment of each parcel.

Enclosed is your Official Mailed Assessment Ballot for you to vote on whether to approve the proposed increased assessment to provide funding for road maintenance and operation services in County Service Area No. 17, Empire Acres.

Note: The public may attend the public hearing and/or comment on this matter via phone. See virtual meeting participation instructions on the meeting agenda posted at

<http://santacruzcountyca.iqm2.com/citizens/default.aspx> Or call (831) 454-2323 (TTY call 711).

Please see "Assessment Ballot Instructions" printed on the next page.

ASSESSMENT BALLOT INSTRUCTIONS

HOW TO VOTE YOUR ASSESSMENT BALLOT

The enclosed ballot is to be used to express support for or opposition to the proposed assessment for road maintenance and operation services. In order to be counted, the Ballot Declaration must be completed and signed by the property owner or by a tenant whose lease or other rental agreement expressly requires that the tenant directly pay assessments, and the Ballot returned in accordance with these instructions.

- 1. Use a pen to mark an "X" next to "Yes" or "No" to cast your vote.
- 2. Complete and sign the ballot declaration.
- 3. Ballots that are not properly signed and dated shall be disqualified.

RETURNING YOUR ASSESSMENT BALLOT

- 1. Place the ballot in the ballot return envelope, and seal the envelope.
- 2. Deliver the ballot return envelope either by mail or in person as follows:

Mail Delivery: A return envelope has been provided. If you mail in any other envelope, write "CSA 17 – Ballot Do Not Open" on the envelope and mail with the required postage stamp no later than March 24th, 2025. Mailing later than this deadline creates the risk that the ballot may not be received in time to be counted.

Personal Delivery: If in person, deliver to the Public Works Division of Community Development and Infrastructure at any time up to 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, California, Room 410, or at the hearing itself at 9:00 a.m. on that date at 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, California, Board Chambers.

Regardless of which method of delivery is used, the ballot must be **received** in a sealed envelope prior to the close of the public hearing on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, to be counted.

If you wrongly stamp, tear, or deface this ballot, write "spoiled" across the face of the ballot, and return it to the Santa Cruz County Public Works Department, 701 Ocean Street, Room 410, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, and another ballot will be issued to you. If you have any questions, please contact Public Works County Service Area Administration at (831) 454-2160 and ask for Program Administration.

The following pages contain additional information regarding the proposed increased assessment, assessment procedures, and protests.

CSA17 Shall the County of Santa Cruz be authorized to levy assessments of

\$200 per parcel

to provide road maintenance and operation services within County Service Area No. 17 Empire Acres, an annual assessment, with consumer price index increases (if necessary to pay approved expenditures) or decreases?

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

1. Total Assessments within Service Area. The total amount of the proposed assessments for road maintenance and operation services within County Service Area No. 17, Empire Acres, for the 2025/2026 fiscal year is \$10,200.

2. Amount of Assessment on Parcel. The amount of the proposed assessment on your parcel for the 2025/2026 fiscal year is charged based on a fee per parcel as stated on the enclosed Assessment Ballot.

3. Duration of Assessment. The proposed assessment is an annual fee and will continue indefinitely. The fee is being set for road maintenance and operation services within CSA 17, Empire Acres.

4. Reason for Assessment. The express purpose for which this benefit assessment is levied is to provide a source of funding for County Service Area 17, Empire Acres. Pursuant to Proposition 218, an assessment can be used to pay for special benefits conferred on real property by governmental facilities and services. However, a new or increased assessment is only permitted under Proposition 218 if ballots are mailed to all record owners subject to the proposed assessment and, prior to the close of the public hearing set for the assessment, at least as many ballots are submitted in favor of the proposed assessment as are submitted in opposition to the proposed assessment.

Ballots are weighted according to the amount of the proposed assessment on each parcel. If the ballots submitted in opposition to the proposed assessment exceed the ballots submitted in favor of the proposed assessment, a "majority protest" exists, and the proposed increased assessment cannot be charged.

5. Basis for Assessment. The following rates are based on the special benefit received based on parcel type and, where applicable, the number of units within each parcel. The assessment is proportional to the special benefit derived by each identified parcel in relationship to the entirety of the cost of the property-related service being pro-vided. The assessment rate schedule is proposed to be

\$200 per parcel.

Common areas, parcels that have been determined to be unbuildable by the Planning Department or Environmental Health regulations, and parcels with an assessed valuation of \$5,000 or less, will not be charged.

b. For each fiscal year after 2025/2026 the assessment rate may be increased by a percentage which does not exceed the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers for the San Francisco- Oakland-Hayward Area, as published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, (or in any price index which replaces that index in the future) for the prior calendar year. The assessment rate will be increased only when necessary to meet approved expenses and would not increase automatically each year. If in any year the assessment rate is not increased or is increased by an amount less than the increase in the Consumer Price Index, the difference between the rate of the increase in the assessment rate and the rate of increase in the Consumer Price Index will remain available for use in future years to raise the assessment rate as necessary to meet approved expenses.

Ballot for County Service Area No. 17, Empire Acres
Road Maintenance and Operation Services Assessment
2025-26

APN:

ASSESSEE NAME:

ASSESSEE MAILING ADDRESS:

ASSESSMENT AMOUNT: \$200

Ballot Question:

Shall the County of Santa Cruz be authorized to levy assessments in the amount \$200 to provide road maintenance and operation services within County Service Area No. 17, Empire Acres, by an annual assessment with consumer price index increases (if necessary to pay approved expenditures) or decrease?

Yes _____ No _____

If election should fail, assessments would revert back to the flat fee of \$125 per parcel as previously approved.

Ballot Declaration:

I, the undersigned, declare that I am authorized to cast the vote on the assessment for the parcel identified by the Tax Parcel Number set forth above as (1) sole owner, (2) an owner acting on behalf of a spouse who holds a community property interest, all joint tenants, or all tenants in common, (3) a general partner or legal representative of a corporate general partner, (4) a legal representative of a corporate landowner, trust, estate, or public agency, or (5) as a tenant of the parcel whose lease or other rental agreement expressly requires that the tenant directly pay assessments, such as the proposed assessment.

I declare under penalty of perjury that this declaration

made this _____ day of _____, 2025,
(date) (month)

at _____, California, is true and correct.
(location)

Signature

Name (Printed)