

Consideration to increase road work fees momentarily on hold

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / May 27, 2022

The results are in, but the decision to see whether County Service Area property owners are interested in paying more money for additional road work has been postponed.

Calaveras County has five County Service Areas or districts where parcel fees are charged to property owners to fund road improvements.

The public works staff at the direction of the Board of Supervisors earlier this year sent surveys to property owners within the CSAs to gauge their interest in paying higher fees to fund more improvements and maintenance.

Rancho Calaveras is one of five such County Service Areas or districts in the county. It is also the largest of the CSAs encompassing 47 miles of maintained roads and is located in Supervisor District 5. The other CSAs are Bar XX, Diamond XX, Spring Hills and Golden Hills.

Rancho residents currently have annual assessments to the road improvement fund ranging from \$19 to \$38. In all, the Rancho CSA collects nearly \$250,000 annually and had a fund balance of \$495,729 at the end of 2021.

The board on Tuesday learned only 4.59 percent of property owners responded to the survey and only one CSA, No. 2 in the Bar XX subdivision, voted in favor of higher assessments.

Of Bar XX's eligible property owners, 19.23 percent responded and 86.67 percent of them voted in favor of higher charges.

Rancho had a 3.19 percent response rate and 67.54 percent voted against higher fees.

Despite those findings, District 5 Supervisor Benjamin Stopper, whose district includes Rancho, voiced his desire to push the matter forward with a preliminary engineer's report to solidify what those fee increases would be and go for a vote.

He cited the low response of eligible parcel owners in his reasoning.

"I see the need," Stopper said. "I'm willing to put my neck on the line saying that they need a vote."

CSA 1 residents responded favorably to the resumption of road work done last year in the Rancho area, Stopper said, but in reality that CSA has only about 30 percent of the funds needed to complete the improvements that should be done.

"If they really want their roads fixed they have to say 'yes we're willing to pay for it,'" he added.

But the decision to move forward with the preliminary work leading to a vote was postponed after District Supervisor Amanda Folendorf said she would like to see feedback from a July 2 community meeting among CSA 4, Diamond XX property owners.

"I want to tread carefully and then re-look at it after that date," Folendorf said.

The board will revisit whether to pursue increases in the CSA fees at the end of July.