



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board



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MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 30th, 2025
5:30pm – 7:30pm
Regular Meeting

Simpkins Family Swim Center
Community Rooms
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Introductory Items

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL** Meeting called to order at 5:33 PM.

Present: Julie Howard (District 1), Dennis Webb (District 2), Sandy Brown (District 3), Julissa Espindola (District 4), Mark Correia (District 5), Rachel Dann (City of Santa Cruz), Celeste DeWald (City of Watsonville)

Absent: Scott Harway (City of Capitola) & David Sanguinetti (City of Scotts Valley)

Staff: Dave Reid (Director – OR3), Jeff Gaffney (Director – Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services), Juan Perez Alvarez (Administrative Services Manager – Parks)

2. **AGENDA MODIFICATIONS** No modifications.
3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** No oral communications.
4. **ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA** (item 10)

Motion to approve the consent agenda: Correia/2nd: DeWald/All in favor.

Regular Agenda

5. COUNTY STAFF REPORT

Director Dave Reid updated the Board on the Senior Administrative Analyst recruitment and encouraged they share with their networks. The second round of stakeholder engagement was completed and provided rich and informative feedback.

- *What department will the Analyst position be in?* It will be in OR3, but continue to work closely with the Parks Department.

Information Items

6. Roles and Responsibilities of Measure Q COAB – Jeff Gaffney (Director POSCS)

Director Jeff Gaffney reviewed statutory requirements and language outlining the COAB's responsibilities, including: conducting public hearings, receiving and reviewing annual reports, submitting reports to the Board of Supervisors, developing a five-year vision plan, supporting grant criteria, and selecting the land stewardship implementation partner. The intent of the oversight body is to ensure funds are spent as intended and maintain accountability to voters. It

was noted that similar oversight structures exist in other counties, often established alongside tax measures.

Commissioners asked questions which were answered by County staff:

- *What is the vision for the COAB's involvement in the grant selection process?* The legislation does not require the Board's approval. However, the County would like to collaborate with the COAB in the grant process.
- *How would the annual reports work?* We are looking for productive input and there will be a contractual agreement with the grantee for updates. The program is still being developed, so input is welcome throughout the process. The County would also like to recognize that this is statutory language but there is grey area to work through and fully develop the COAB's involvement throughout the grant process.
- *Is the Board of Supervisors (BOS) the final approval for the grants?* Yes, they are the fiscal agent responsible, so they approve the final grant awards. OR3 and Parks recommends the funding proposal and the BOS approves.
- *Since the Vision Plan is going to drive these grants, before it goes to the Board of Supervisors, will the list of recommended grantees come before the COAB to review and support the recommendation?* There is interest in having the COAB be a part of the program and support the recommendations. As the County gets closer to rolling out the program, there will be more conversations about the involvement of the COAB.
- *Can you provide clarification on what the COAB will be approving (Vision Plan, grant program, etc.)?* The COAB approved the Five-Year Vision Plan which will guide the grant program and priority projects.

Commissioner Webb advocated transparency in discussing the alignment between the grant program and vision plan. **Chair Dann** suggested the COAB continue to consider what they would envision their involvement in the grant program be and discuss it in a later meeting in further depth.

7. Vision Plan Project Team Update on Stakeholder Engagement – David Reid (Director OR3)

Director David Reid provided an overview of the data collected throughout the stakeholder engagement process.

- **Commissioner Correia:** *Did I read it right that there were around 640-650 responses to the survey?* The community responses had around 900 responses. There were around 125 stakeholders involved in the process.
- **Commissioner Howard:** *Did you try to pull more people in and include potential missing voices (ex. Tribes, clean energy or climate change experts)?* There is one tribe that works in that geography in the area. We tried hard to get Amah Mutsun to come out and participate. There was recognition among the stakeholders about engaging the tribes early and often. Stakeholders considered their local communities and supported projects outside of their scope that could contribute to equity in project prioritization throughout the County.
- **Commissioner Brown:** *How did potential applicants with projects that are not necessarily "shovel-ready" present in the outreach process? How was it addressed?* The County is trying to be thoughtful to the measure language and the broad language

surrounding eligible projects. The idea that people are supportive of “shovel-ready” projects came up during stakeholder meetings because it demonstrates an immediate impact to the communities, build trust, and have the advantage of securing matching funds. Another idea that came up was supporting pre-planning projects during the grant process to help get projects to a “shovel-ready” point.

- **Commissioner DeWald:** *Does Figure 5 listed in order of priority?* No. The heat marks show how survey respondents responded to the question.

8. County Update on Community Engagement

County staff conducted four community meetings and one virtual with limited attendance (8–12 participants in person; 3 virtual). While meeting participation was low, the survey generated over 900 responses—strong compared to similar efforts, though less than 1% of county residents. Survey results showed demographic and geographic variations, with respondents generally prioritizing issues most relevant to their own communities.

- **Commissioner Correia** *expressed concern that the community meetings may sway results but is happy to see that the community engagement as a whole, was not influenced by one group.*
- **Chair Dann** *congratulated the County on their efforts and the amount of survey results received.*
- **Commissioner Brown** *suggested that it may be helpful for longer term engagement to find trusted leaders in the community and not just institutional partners that could encourage participation.* In terms of measuring success in future outreach, the hope is that grantees will create another network to show the work and successes of Measure Q.
- **Vice-Chair Espindola** addressed the importance of multi-benefit opportunities. Rather than waiting for people to find Measure Q, go to places throughout the various County communities and seek voices and opinions that may otherwise be forgotten.

9. Measure Q Five-Year Vision Plan Status Update - David Reid (Director OR3)

Director David Reid presented a detailed draft outline for the Measure Q Vision Plan, highlighting strategies and proposed structural elements. The focus is on organizing information at a thematic level (project types and geographies) to guide prioritization without excluding multi-benefit “unicorn” projects that may not align with top priorities. A draft schedule was discussed as follows:

- **Aug. 18** – Consultant develops first draft
- **Aug. 27** – Draft shared with Oversight Board
- **Sept. 3** – Board discussion and deeper dive
- **Sept. 10** – Deadline for Board feedback
- **Sept. 23** – Consultant delivers revised draft
- **Oct. 1** – Final draft distributed
- **Oct. 8** – Final draft considered for adoption

Feedback was requested to shape thematic priorities and project focus areas in advance of the consultant’s draft.

- **Vice-Chair Espindola** asked for clarification on the Vision Plan review by the COAB. The Advisory Board will review a draft at the next meeting and a proposed final version at the following meeting.
- **Commissioner Correia** noted that the statutory language gives the vision plan stronger authority than described and raised concern about dispersing funds too broadly, emphasizing that the grant program should drive outcomes. County Staff plans to engage stakeholders, including surveys, to inform the grant structure. Confirmed that statutory requirements will be addressed thematically (by geography and project types), with existing plans guiding funding priorities. *How do we address specific policies that the County has already adopted?* The County is about to embark on a strategic plan update. The plans guiding this Vision Plan have already been identified. The County's policies will be guiding the County's spending, but the Vision Plan will be guiding the grant program. The idea is that the investment will be generally consistent with those policies. If inconsistent, then there will be a conversation and opportunity for the COAB to daylight if COAB agrees with that alignment.
- **Commissioner Brown:** *How were newer, anticipated projects brought up and added to the list?* The list is stakeholder and community synthesis. One of the challenges throughout the process was getting specific projects from stakeholders and managing their inclusion in the plan development process.
- **Commissioner DeWald** asked for clarification on the feedback that the County is looking for. The County is open to any feedback, but from a high-level standpoint want to consider the structure and how the plan is laid out. *Looking at it structurally, the use of project benefit metrics is overwhelming. It seems like something that would be better suited for grant guidelines instead of the vision plan. She also expressed uneasiness regarding the "Geographic Equity and Support for Disadvantaged Communities" section, the message and takeaway seemed unclear.* The County has identified the importance of measuring success. While possible metrics are not listed, the County plans to have some sort of metric which will demonstrate the return on investment.
- **Commissioner Webb** addressed that statutorily the vision plan is supposed to draw from existing plans and a couple statewide plans were mentioned multiple times. He would like to see more focus on local plans because the problems and solutions articulated in the statewide plans are not the same problems and solutions that we experience in Santa Cruz County. *If we are trying to find alignment and draw information from the existing plans, we should use the local plans that people have put a lot of effort into defining local problems and envisioning solutions.*
- **Director Reid** noted an action item for the County to spend more time inside the thematic areas and identify which critical plans inform the geography and project types. The Stakeholders were also asked to review the list of the plans, identify any that were missing and provide feedback by August 13th.
- **Commissioner Howard:** *Is it worth addressing that priorities may shift during the five-year period, considering natural disasters can occur at any time?* In theory, the Advisory Board and/or the Board of Supervisors may propose opening up the Vision Plan to realign support for the natural disasters during the five-year period if something were to occur.

Consent Agenda

Consent items include routine business that does not call for discussion. One roll call vote is taken for all items. Only a Board Member may pull items from Consent to Regular Agenda. Members of the public must request that a Board Member pull an item from the Consent Agenda prior to the start of the meeting.

10. **Approve minutes from June 18th, 2025.....** page 96.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. None

Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 7:19 PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:30 PM Wednesday, September 3rd, 2025
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