



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board

701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
MeasureQ@santacruzcountyca.gov
www.santacruzcountyca.gov/MeasureQ



MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, January 14th, 2026
5:30pm – 7:30pm
Special Meeting

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

Agenda documents (including updates, revisions and additional materials) are available for review in person at the Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062, and electronically on the County's website, Measure Q COAB Agendas and Minutes, at:

<https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov/MeasureQ/AgendaandMinutes.aspx>

Introductory Items

- 1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**
- 2. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**
- 3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Any person may address the Commission during its Oral Communication period. Speakers must not exceed two (2) minutes in length, or the time limit established by the Chair, and individuals may speak only once during Oral Communications. All Oral Communication must be directed to an item listed on today's Consent Agenda, Closed Session Agenda, yet to be heard on Regular Agenda, or a topic not on the agenda that is within the jurisdiction of the Commission. Commission members will not take actions or respond immediately to any Oral communication presented regarding topics not on the agenda but may choose to follow up later, either individually, or on a subsequent Commission Agenda. Oral communications will normally be received by the Commission for a period not to exceed thirty (30) minutes. If, at the end of this period, additional persons wish to address the Commission, the Oral Communication period may be continued to the last item on the agenda.

- 4. ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA (item 7)**

Regular Agenda

- 5. COUNTY STAFF REPORT**

Information Items

- 6. Review of Measure Q Grant Program.....** page 3.

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.

7. **Approve minutes from November 19th, 2025.....** page 17.

Written Correspondence Listing

I. None

Adjournment

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:30 PM Wednesday, February 18th, 2026

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms

979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

TRANSLATION SERVICES/SERVICIOS DE TRADUCCION

Spanish language translation is available on an as needed basis. Please make advance arrangements at the Parks, Open Spaces, & Cultural Services Department, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA; or by email at MeasureQ@santacruzcountyca.gov.

Las sesiones de la Junta Asesora de Supervisión Ciudadana (COAB) pueden ser traducidas del inglés al español y del español al inglés. Por favor haga arreglos anticipadamente con el Departamento de Parques, Espacios Abiertos y Servicios Culturales, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA; o por correo electrónico a MeasureQ@santacruzcountyca.gov.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. The Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms, located at 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA, is an accessible facility. If you are a person with a disability and wish to participate in the meeting and require special assistance in order to participate, please contact the Parks, Open Spaces, & Cultural Services Department at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format.



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board



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REVIEW OF PROPOSED MEASURE Q GRANT PROGRAM (FY 2025–2026)

Recommended Action

1. Receive and adopt updated grant framework for the inaugural Measure Q Grant Program.

Executive Summary

Staff have revised the Measure Q Grant Program framework for FY 2025–2026, based on feedback from the COAB on November 19th and Board of Supervisors on December 16th. The proposed grant structure, funding approach, grant tiers, scoring rubrics, and standardized agreement terms have been revised to reflect this feedback to the greatest extent possible. The goal of the program is to ensure transparent, equitable, and accountable investment of Measure Q resources. We expect lessons learned in the inaugural year to inform improvements and refinements to the grant program. Some elements are being intentionally paused till more experience is obtained.

Discussion

Program Structure & Timeline

The draft program identifies a proposed annual cycle including application release, review, award, reporting, and close-out timelines. The structure includes two primary grant types. Tier 1 “mini-grants” for smaller community-based projects has been titled the “Community Catalyst Grant Program.” Tier 2 grants or the “Community Impact Grant Program” is for larger capital or multi-benefit projects. We will proceed with a case-by-case basis to determine grant agreement timeline based on the scope and scale of the project. For the grant framework it is listed as 12-month term, with extensions up to 2 additional years or longer as needed.

Funding & Scoring Framework

The Community Catalyst Grant program will utilize a total of \$200,000 of the grant funds for individual grant awards up to \$50,000. The Community Impact Grant program will be for grants above \$50,000 and will access the remaining

\$1,000,000. The two geographic set asides will remain as conceived in the measure language with the San Vicente Redwoods apportionment of \$600,000 not being subject to amount or number restrictions, and the Pajaro Valley set-aside being used on up to 3 individual grants. The scoring framework for the first year is as follows:

Tier 1 – Community Catalyst Grants

Category	Points	Evaluation Focus
1. Alignment with Measure Q Vision Plan Priorities	40 pts	Project clearly supports priority actions, geographies, or outcomes identified in the Vision Plan.
2. Community Benefit	30 pts	Demonstrates meaningful community recreation and public access, ecological, watershed or wildfire-resilience benefits.
3. Feasibility	20 pts	Provides a realistic scope, achievable timeline, clear deliverables, and evidence of adequate staffing or partnerships. Funding or collaborative leveraging of resources will also be considered.
4. Innovation or Capacity	10 pts	Encourages new ideas, pilot approaches, or builds capacity for future Measure Q projects.
Bonus (+5 pts)	—	Strong partnerships, volunteer hours leverage, leveraged funds, or particularly efficient use of funds received.
Total	100 pts (+ bonus)	

Tier 2 – Community Impact Grants

Category	Points	Evaluation Focus
1. Alignment with Measure Q Vision Plan Priorities	25 pts	Strongly advances Vision Plan priorities such as watershed health, wildfire resilience, habitat restoration, climate adaptation, or community access.
2. Community Benefit	20 pts	Demonstrates meaningful community recreation and public access, ecological, watershed or wildfire-resilience benefits.
3. Wildlife & Environmental Benefit	15 pts	Improves water, habitat, or climate resilience.
4. Project Readiness & Feasibility	15 pts	Demonstrates technical soundness, clear methodology, permitting readiness (if applicable), qualified personnel, and achievable milestones.
5. Partnerships & Collaboration	10 pts	Strength of partnerships, leveraging, volunteer engagement, multi-agency scope.
6. Budget, Cost-Effectiveness & Leveraging Budget & Leveraging of Resources	10 pts	Budget is well-constructed, logical, and justified; leveraged funds strengthen competitiveness.
7. Long-Term Maintenance & Monitoring	5 pts	Plan for sustained benefits or data monitoring post-grant.
Bonus (+5 pts)	—	Visibility, Innovation & Scalability, Link to Regional Plans
Total	100 pts (+ bonus)	

Grant Program Elements

Based on feedback from the COAB and Board of Supervisors, the proposed grant program will have the following elements enacted in this first funding round:

- *Indirect Costs*: Allow up to 15% not including staff indirect costs to deliver the proposed project.
- *Consecutive Funding Limitations*: this will be considered in future funding rounds.
- *Advance payment of grant funds*: Smaller grants may receive advances of up to 25%; larger grants may receive up to 15% in advance but only on request and grant administration approval. Advances are only available for non-profit organizations per County procurement guidelines.

Standard Grant Guidelines

The attached draft grant guidelines further expand on details of the grant program. Some key elements raised by the COAB and Board of Supervisors were:

- **Evaluation Framework and Grant Award Process**

This element was discussed broadly at the COAB in November and more explicitly during the Board meeting in December. It is anticipated that the grant award process will follow the following steps:

1. Applications undergo internal review for completeness determination, once deemed complete all applications will be considered final.
 - a. Applicants may be asked for additional information to ensure completeness. The intent of this step is not to eliminate applications based on general missing information.
2. Grant application evaluation and scoring by external reviewer(s)
 - a. Initial review and scoring will be presented to the Measure Q Administrative Staff
3. Grant application evaluation and scoring by Measure Q Administrative Staff
4. Preliminary Grant Award Recommendations presented to the COAB

- a. All Grant application materials and all scoring will be provided to COAB at this time.
- 5. COAB Review and Grant Award Review and Recommendations
 - a. OR3 and Parks staff will integrate COAB feedback, recommendations into final recommendation.
- 6. Final Grant award Recommendations presented to and approved by COAB
- 7. Final Grant Awards determined and approved by County Board of Supervisors based on Staff and COAB recommendation.

- **Transparency and Accountability** – All grant applications, scoring and recommendations will be publicly accessible.

Additional conversation at the Board included allowing the purchase of equipment which will be allowed with some guardrails in place for accounting and asset tracking. Purchasing of land is also allowed and may be subject to additional accountability elements should the need arise.

Additional elements of the Measure Q Grant Program Guidelines are in the attached Draft document.

Financial Impact

No direct financial impact associated with COAB's review and adoption of grant program framework. The program will distribute its portion of annual Measure Q revenue—approximately 40% of the \$7.5 million generated each year—consistent with the Measure Q Vision Plan previously adopted by the Board.

Submitted By:

Rebecca Hurley, Deputy Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
David Reid, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience

Attachments

Measure Q Grant Program Guidelines Inaugural Cycle (FY 2025–2026)

Measure Q Grant Program Guidelines

Inaugural Cycle (FY 2025–2026)



**Administered jointly by the County of Santa Cruz
Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience (OR3)
and the Department of Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services (Parks)**

NOTE: This is the inaugural year of the Measure Q Grant Program. Program guidelines may be refined in future cycles based on community feedback, program evaluation findings, and County priorities.

1. Program Purpose & Authority

The Measure Q Grant Program is being established to advance the community's long-term resilience, environmental health, and access to parks and open space upon the successful passing of Measure Q in November of 2024 by the voters of Santa Cruz County. It supports projects and programs that contribute to improved water quality, strengthened wildfire resilience, enhanced habitat protection, and equitable access to parks and natural spaces throughout Santa Cruz County. In conjunction with these grant guidelines, a 5-year Vision Plan was generated after a steadfast process participated by County staff, non-profit and agency stakeholders and community members. The Vision Plan ([linked here](#)) is the guiding document for the Measure Q grant program and functions as the program's roadmap, translating the goals of the [Measure Q Act](#) into clear investment priorities for the next five years. It draws from existing County and State plans to identify where Measure Q funds can have the greatest impact, and all grant proposals must show how they support the Plan's priority actions and community-identified needs.

These guidelines outline the structure, requirements, and administrative procedures used to allocate 40% of the tax measure or approximately \$2.5 million annually in grant funds. All funded projects must align with the Measure Q Vision Plan and demonstrate benefits to residents, natural resources, or ecosystems within the County. As this is the inaugural cycle, the County anticipates refining and improving the program over time based on community engagement, implementation lessons, and evolving needs.

All grant applications, scoring, awards and reporting content will be publicly available and viewable upon request to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Measure Q grant program.

2. Program Structure & Funding Tiers

The Measure Q Grant Program consists of two tiers designed to support both emerging community-based initiatives and larger-scale projects with substantial countywide or regional impact.

Tier 1 - Community Catalyst Grants, ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 – This tier is intended to help organizations test new ideas, expand local stewardship efforts, deliver community education, or complete smaller project, restoration or planning activities.

Tier 2 - Community Impact Grants, ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 – This tier supports more complex, multi-benefit projects such as large habitat restoration, fuel reduction along critical wildfire interfaces, watershed enhancement work, or capital improvements that expand community access. While the County provides annual funding



targets, the specific funding distribution between Tier 1 and Tier 2 may adjust over time based on applicant demand and community need.

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants also incorporate two dedicated annual funding allocations established by the Measure Q Act:

- “At least \$600,000” for projects on the County’s largest conservation easement supporting forest health, fire resilience, natural habitat restoration, and public access, referred to as the “San Vicente Redwoods”.
- “At least \$600,000” for up to 3 grants benefitting residents in the Pajaro Valley, including areas within one mile of the Watsonville Slough system, Pinto Lake, and the Pajaro River and its tributaries.

These dedicated allocations ensure that Measure Q resources directly address the County’s highest-priority landscapes facing wildfire vulnerability, flooding risk, and water quality challenges.

The current inaugural Fiscal Year 2025-26 grant program is proposed for a 12-month funding cycle, meaning funding will be allocated annually. Further consideration following initial grant applications and potential awards for the inaugural year may shift this program to a 2-year funding cycle depending on grant application volume and Citizen Oversight Advisory Board consideration.

3. Eligibility Requirements

Eligible applicants are limited to the entities defined in the Measure Q Act:

- **Public Agencies,**
- **Nonprofit Organizations described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and**
- **Tribes.**

All applicants must propose projects that qualify as “Eligible Projects” under the Act, County Code Chapter 4.65 outlines the measure, and 4.65.040(B)(1) provides further detail ([HERE](#)) meaning activities that implement the goals of Measure Q through planning, feasibility, acquisition, construction, development, restoration, stewardship, maintenance, or related work. Projects must occur within Santa Cruz County or demonstrate clear public benefit to the County’s residents, watersheds, natural resources, or ecosystems. Applicants must also demonstrate the administrative and fiscal capacity to complete the proposed work, comply with grant agreement



requirements, and provide accurate reporting and documentation as required by the County.

Grant applications are not required to have permits associated with the proposed project obtained prior to application or award, however identifying permit process and requirements is part of the application.

4. Funding Policies: Advances, Reimbursements, Indirect Costs, and Match

Grant Fund Advancement:

Advance funding requests are only allowed towards organizations that are nonprofit, community-based organizations granted tax-exempt status under IRC Section 501. **Tier 1** grantees may request an advance of up to **25%** of the award to support project initiation, while **Tier 2** grantees **may request** an advance of **up to 15%** on a case-by-case basis. Recipients of advance payments in either Tier program are subject to other additional requirements per Section 300 (E) of the County's Board approved Policy and Procedure Manual ([linked here](#)).

Reimbursement:

Standard reimbursements are available for all grants and must be supported by documentation. Typical reimbursement will be a net 30 days upon receipt of request and documentation acceptance. Reimbursement requests may be submitted no more than monthly. Final invoice and repayment including 10% retainer may be allowed after grant term to ensure full accounting for closeout and program or project activities.

Indirect Costs:

Nonprofit organizations may include up to 15% of the award as indirect costs, while other entities may request indirect costs with justification. Indirect costs are organizational expenses not directly associated with grant project or program delivery. Staff overhead costs associated with project or program delivery are not included in this percentage.

Match:

Although no match is required, all applicants are encouraged to document financial or leveraged fund contributions such as volunteer hours, donated materials and services, or partner support to strengthen competitiveness.

5. Consecutive Funding Limitations

To support equitable access to Measure Q resources, the program may limit the number of consecutive award cycles for any single organization, project or program. Exceptions



may be granted for projects with countywide significance, critical environmental or infrastructure needs, or unique technical expertise that is not available elsewhere within the region.

6. Application Requirements

Applicants must submit a complete application online through the Measure Q website. Required components include a detailed project narrative, a comprehensive budget worksheet, a proposed timeline and work plan, project site map(s) or geographic descriptions, effectiveness metric (such as: acres treated, community engaged, miles/feet of trail), equity and accessibility explanations, and organizational information. CEQA documentation must be included when applicable.

The application format will follow the scoring rubric outlined in the following section. All application content will be made publicly available during award consideration after initial scoring and recommendations have been made.

Letters of support from partners, neighbors, or collaborating organizations are strongly encouraged. Applications must be complete and submitted by the stated deadline to be considered for funding.

7. Scoring Rubric (100 Points)

Applications will be evaluated using a 100-point scoring system. Tier 1 applications are assessed based on equity and access, project feasibility, alignment with the Measure Q Vision Plan, community benefit, and budget clarity. Tier 2 applications use the same categories with different weights to reflect increased project complexity and expected impact. Reviewers may also assign bonus points for proposals that demonstrate strong partnerships, clear multi-benefit outcomes, or efficient use of funds, such as Tier 2 projects proposing indirect costs below 10%.

Tier 1 – Community Catalyst Grant Program (Total: 100 Points)

Scoring Category	Description	Points Available
Alignment with Measure Q Vision Plan	Project clearly supports priority actions, geographies, or outcomes identified in the Vision Plan.	0-40
Community Benefit	Demonstrates meaningful community recreation and public access, ecological, watershed or wildfire-resilience	0-30



	benefits.	
Feasibility	Provides a realistic scope, achievable timeline, clear deliverables, and evidence of adequate staffing or partnerships. Funding or collaborative leveraging of resources will also be considered.	0-20
Innovation or Capacity	Encourages new ideas, pilot approaches, or builds capacity for future Measure Q projects.	0-10
Bonus Points (Optional)	Strong partnerships, volunteer hours leverage, leveraged funds, or particularly efficient use of funds received.	0-5

Tier 2 – Community Impact Grant Program (Total: 100 Points)

Scoring Category	Description	Points Available
Alignment with Measure Q Vision Plan	Strongly advances Vision Plan priorities such as watershed health, wildfire resilience, habitat restoration, climate adaptation, or community access.	0-25
Community Benefit	Demonstrates meaningful community recreation and public access, ecological, watershed or wildfire-resilience benefits.	0-20
Wildlife & Environmental Benefit	Improves water, habitat, or climate resilience	0-15
Project Feasibility & Readiness	Demonstrates technical soundness, clear methodology, permitting readiness (if applicable), qualified personnel, and achievable milestones.	0-15
Partnerships & Collaboration	Strength of partnerships, leveraging, volunteer engagement, multi-agency scope.	0-10
Budget, Cost-Effectiveness & Leveraging	Budget is well-constructed, logical, and justified; leveraged funds strengthen competitiveness.	0-10
Long-term Maintenance & Monitoring	Plan for sustained benefits or data monitoring post-grant	0-5
Bonus Points (Optional)	Exceptional readiness, regional significance, strong partnerships, high leverage, or long-term stewardship commitments.	0-5



8. Grant Term & Reporting Requirements

Initial grant terms are 12 months, with the option to extend up to an additional 24 months when justified by project scope, timing, or seasonal constraints. Larger or more complex projects may receive additional time with County approval. Tier 1 grantees are required to submit a final report at project completion, while Tier 2 grantees must provide progress reports no less than every 6 months, submit updates with each reimbursement request, and complete a final report within 60 days of project end. The County may withhold up to 10 percent of the award until all deliverables and reporting requirements are satisfied. Grantees must also provide an impact narrative summarizing benefits such as populations served, acres treated, environmental improvements achieved, equity outcomes, and any upstream or downstream benefits.

9. Allowable and Restricted Costs

Allowable expenses include organizational personnel and their overhead costs, contractors, consultants, supplies, equipment purchase or rentals, CEQA compliance, permitting, and direct project outreach and construction costs as it relates to eligible projects. This can include pre-project assistance and feasibility, planning, acquisition, construction, development, improvement, restoration, rehabilitation, maintenance, stewardship, or any combination thereof.

Costs must be reasonable, necessary, and directly tied to the approved project scope.

Equipment purchased with grant funds must be in direct support of the proposed “eligible project” (see [code section 4.65.010](#) (K) for eligible project definition). Specific equipment accountability requirements may be required contingent on grant amount and equipment costs.

Restricted costs include unapproved general administrative overhead, political or lobbying activities, fines or penalties, and any expenditure not aligned with the approved scope of work. All costs must comply with local, State, and Federal requirements and follow sound financial management practices.

10. Audit, Records, and Compliance

Grantees must maintain financial and project records for at least three years after final payment. The County, Citizens Oversight Advisory Board, or authorized auditors may review or reproduce project records at any reasonable time. Grantees must comply with all applicable laws, including prevailing wage requirements when triggered. The County reserves the right to withhold or recover funds for non-performance, misuse, or non-compliance with the grant agreement.



11. Recognition Requirements

All public-facing materials, signage, and communications must acknowledge Measure Q support using the required language: “Funded by the County of Santa Cruz Measure Q – Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Wildlife Protection Act” and use the Measure Q logo in the signage. Multi-year projects must submit annual impact reports in addition to periodic financial reporting.

12. Program Administration & Review Process

The Measure Q Grant Program is jointly administered by OR3 and the Department of Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services. The following process outlines the steps from Measure Q grant application to grant awards for all Tiers of grants. The geographic set aside for the San Vicente Redwoods apportionment will not be subject to this process.

1. Applications undergo internal review for completeness determination, once deemed complete all applications will be considered final.
 - a. Applicants may be asked for additional information to ensure completeness. The intent of this step is not to eliminate applications based on general missing information.
2. Grant application evaluation and scoring by external reviewer(s)
 - a. Initial review and scoring will be presented to the Measure Q Administrative Staff
3. Grant application evaluation and scoring by Measure Q Administrative Staff
4. Preliminary Grant Award Recommendations presented to the COAB
 - a. All Grant application materials and all scoring will be provided to COAB at this time.
5. COAB Review and Grant Award Review and Recommendations
 - a. OR3 and Parks staff will integrate COAB feedback, recommendations into final recommendation.
6. Final Grant award Recommendations presented to and approved by COAB
7. Final Grant Awards determined and approved by County Board of Supervisors.
 - a. This final grant award approval will be based on the staff recommendations and COAB approved grant award recommendations.

13. Appendices

Appendices included in the final version of these guidelines will provide templates and reference materials to support applicants. These include:

- Budget Worksheet Template
- Sample Project Timeline



- CEQA Documentation Guidance
- Project Site Map Requirements
- Organizational Information Template and Application Checklist
- Sample Measure Q Recognition Signage.

Templates may be updated or expanded in future cycles as program needs evolve.





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MEASURE Q COAB 11.19.2025 MEETING MINUTES

Recommended Action

1. Review and approve meeting minutes from November 19th, 2025.

Executive Summary

Minutes for every meeting are taken and prepared by the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) Staff Liaison. The Advisory Board is asked to review the minutes for accuracy and approve them for posting, in accordance with Bylaws and Santa Cruz County Code.

Discussion

Minutes are the official written record of what transpires during a meeting and serves as the permanent record of actions taken and gives future direction for staff, agencies, and the public. They include a brief summary of the discussion and comments made by the public.

In accordance with the Measure Q COAB Bylaws and SCC Code 2.38.160(B) "Official minutes recording the motions entertained and actions taken at each commission or committee meeting shall be prepared by the staff liaison or designee as authorized within the body's authorizing ordinance, submitted to the Board of Supervisors, and posted according to law." Upon approval by the Advisory Board, the meeting minutes will be posted to the Measure Q COAB website.

Submitted By:

Rebecca Hurley, Deputy Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
David Reid, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience

Attachments

- a. Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board Regular Meeting
November 19th, 2025 Minutes



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board

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MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 19th, 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 5:39 PM.

Present: Julie Howard (District 1), Dennis Webb (District 2), Sandy Brown (District 3), Julissa Espindola (District 4), Mark Correira (District 5), Scott Harway (City of Capitola), Rachel Dann (City of Santa Cruz), David Sanguinetti (City of Scotts Valley), Celeste DeWald (City of Watsonville)

Staff: Dave Reid (Director – OR3), Rebecca Hurley (Deputy Director – Parks), Juan Perez Alvarez (Administrative Services Manager – Parks), Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha (Admin Aide/COAB Liaison – Parks)

2. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS No modifications.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS No oral communications.

4. ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA (item 8)

Motion to approve the consent agenda: Webb/**2nd**: Dann/All in favor.

Regular Agenda

5. COUNTY STAFF REPORT

Director Dave Reid reported that recruitment for the Senior Analyst position is ongoing and has been narrowed to five candidates. Final interviews are anticipated in early December, pending completion of County backend processes. He also noted that OpenGov has been procured for the grant database and County staff is actively working to set up the system. Deputy Director Hurley shared that the Board of Supervisors approved County project allocations for fiscal year 2025–26. Allocations for fiscal year 2026–27 will be considered during budget hearings in June.

COAB Questions

Commissioner Correira requested additional information regarding the free green waste program mentioned during the Board of Supervisors meeting on October 21st, 2025.

- Director Reid explained that the Fifth District Supervisor used discretionary funds to pilot Free Green Waste Days in the San Lorenzo Valley. Due to the program's success, other Supervisors proposed using Measure Q funds to pilot the program in additional districts. County staff are exploring a countywide voucher-based program as an alternative.

Commissioner Howard asked if the approved projects would be on the website.

- Director Reid noted that the goal is to have the projects visible, but it would be good to have a landing page for them.

Information Items

6. Review of Proposed Measure Q Grant Program..... page 3.

Director Dave Reid introduced the item and invited feedback on the proposed conceptual framework for the Measure Q Grant Program. He outlined a tentative timeline to finalize the framework by January, present it to the Board of Supervisors, and launch the grant application process in mid-January. The application period is anticipated to remain open for approximately six weeks. Following the application period, staff anticipate approximately eight weeks for review and screening, depending on the volume of applications received. A recommended project list would be brought to the COAB in May, along with a preliminary funding proposal, and possibly followed by a final funding proposal at a later date. The timeline between April and May remains flexible. Depending on the grant type, execution of grant agreements is expected to begin shortly after funding approvals, with grantee reporting required one year after funds are awarded. Deputy Director Rebecca Hurley highlighted several policy items for COAB consideration, including allowable indirect cost reimbursement, limitations on consecutive funding, and the use of reimbursement versus advance payments.

Public Comments

- Three members of the public provided comments.

COAB Discussion

Commissioner Howard asked County Staff for clarity on when the Measure Q Grant Program would be presented to the Board of Supervisors. She emphasized that any draft grant guidelines presented to the Board should also be publicly posted, noting that while offline discussions are helpful, materials should be available for public review.

The COAB agreed to review the proposed framework slide by slide to provide detailed feedback on each section:

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

Commissioner Correira expressed support for starting with a one-year grant cycle, with the option to consider longer cycles in the future. He noted that the first year would help the County better understand program needs, workload, and potential shortcomings.

Commissioner Dewald supported an annual grant cycle, with one-year grant periods for Tier 1 projects and up to two-year grant periods for Tier 2 projects, noting that larger grants involve greater variability in implementation and factors outside the County's control.

- **Director Reid** clarified the distinction between the grant funding cycle and the grant performance period, noting that staff had considered a two-year funding cycle. He added that COAB discussion so far indicated a preference for annual funding, with flexibility to allow longer performance periods when appropriate.

Commissioner Howard asked about encumbrance and liquidation deadlines for funds.

- **Director Reid** responded that contract durations would align with grant performance periods and that internal accounting processes would allow funds to be carried across fiscal years, while remaining mindful of administrative burden. **Deputy Director Hurley** added that reporting timelines would be structured accordingly.

Commissioner Webb emphasized that Measure Q funds are intended to address environmental issues, which may arise quickly, and cautioned that a two-year application cycle could limit the County's ability to respond to urgent needs. He advocated for a shorter, annual grant cycle and noted that managing a high volume of projects would be a favorable challenge.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

Chair Dann raised concerns about staff capacity when considering an annual grant cycle.

Commissioner Webb expressed support for the overall framework and noted that, given the lack of competition in the San Vicente area, it would be appropriate to remove a lower funding limit for San Vicente projects and avoid pausing the San Vicente set-aside, while supporting a pause for other tiers if needed.

Commissioner Brown stated that the proposed framework appears to be a reasonable approach for the first grant round and appropriate to test during the initial year.

Commissioner Correira asked whether allocating funds on a percentage basis had been considered, noting that unspent funds could accumulate interest over time and potentially support larger projects or additional mini-grants.

PROPOSED SCORING RUBRIC

Commissioner DeWald noted that Tier 2 criteria do not explicitly include multi-benefit or countywide impact, despite being referenced in the program description, and suggested incorporating multi-benefit into the scoring rubric, potentially under community benefit. She also observed that innovation appears to be weighted more heavily in Tier 1 than Tier 2.

Commissioner Correira requested clarification on the availability of bonus points, how Measure Q language is incorporated into the scoring rubric, and how alignment with Vision Plan priorities is evaluated.

- **Deputy Director Hurley** clarified that bonus points are capped at five. She explained that Measure Q language is incorporated into the scoring rubric through the project prioritization principles adopted in the Vision Plan, including match funding, multi-benefit projects, and benefits to disadvantaged communities. She noted that these criteria are included in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 scoring rubrics. She also outlined a multi-step evaluation process, consisting of third-party initial scoring, staff review, and final recommendations to COAB.

Commissioner Howard recommended awarding additional points to Tier 2 maintenance projects to ensure long-term project value and emphasized the importance of transparent scoring criteria that can be clearly explained to applicants.

Vice-Chair Espindola asked about feasibility and delivery timelines for mini-grants within a 12-month period.

- **Director Reid** responded that while grant durations would remain relatively short to ensure timely distribution of funds, the County would consider some flexibility in Tier 1 mini-grants performance periods.

Commissioner Brown noted that some organizations may need additional time to secure matching funds and supported allowing flexibility to negotiate longer grant terms when appropriate.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commissioner Howard asked if administrative costs are included in indirect costs. She suggested working with grantees on advance payment amounts, using quarterly progress reports instead of semi-annual reports, and including impact metrics in applications. She noted that lower indirect costs could earn higher points in the scoring rubric and encouraged staff to clearly communicate how the public can be involved in the grant program review process.

- **Director Reid** clarified that indirect costs refer to other costs not directly associated with the project (utilities, insurance, etc.).

Commissioner DeWald supported a 10–15% cap on indirect costs and allowing unused amounts to be applied as match. She emphasized the importance of separating progress reports from reimbursement requests and ensuring that indirect costs do not consume a large portion of grant funds. She also cautioned against negotiating advance payment amounts to avoid the perception of favoritism among grantees.

Commissioner Webb supported 10–15% cap on indirect costs and suggested incorporating competition in scoring for lower indirect costs.

Commissioner Correira suggested a 10% cap on indirect costs to encourage competition. He expressed concern about advancing large amounts of funding, noting that projects could encounter issues. He also recommended requiring progress reports before additional reimbursements and asked what the County would do in the case that multiple applications were received from one agency.

- **Director Reid** stated that each application would need to be evaluated on its own merits. He noted that concerns regarding multiple applications from the same organization would be addressed if and when such a situation arises, emphasizing that this is a new process and the County will be learning and adjusting as the program is implemented.

Chair Dann appreciated the attention given to how the public will perceive grant spending. She supported lower advance amounts for larger grants and noted that the applicability of prevailing wage should be clearly indicated on the County's website. She agreed that progress reports are important but emphasized that the required reporting frequency should not place an undue burden on grantees. She also recommended consistent branding for completed projects and encouraged public outreach by both the County and grantees to ensure transparency in how tax dollars are being spent.

Summarized Feedback from COAB

- Support for allowing indirect costs up to 15 percent. Tier 1 would not get bonus points for lower indirect costs, but Tier 2 would be eligible.
- Agreement to pause further decisions regarding funding limitations and grant cycles until the first grant cycle is complete.
- Advance payments are limited to a maximum of 25 percent per County policy. Tier 1 grantees may request up to 25%, while Tier 2 grantees may request up to 15% with justification.

Action Items

7. **Discuss and approve a special meeting on January 14th, 2026**..... Page 6.

Motion to approve special meeting: Brown/2nd: Espindola/All in favor.

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.

8. **Approve minutes from October 8th, 2025**..... page 5.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. None

Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:30 PM Wednesday, February 18th, 2025

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms

979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062