



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board

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Approved 5/27/2026
Citizens Oversight Advisory Board



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MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 6th, 2026
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 5:32 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), Clare Peabody (Senior Analyst – OR3), Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha (Admin Aide/COAB Liaison – Parks)

2. **AGENDA MODIFICATIONS** No modifications.
3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** 3 members of the public.
4. **ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA** (item 8)

Approved consent agenda – Motion/Second: Correira/Harway

AYES: 9
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 0

Regular Agenda

5. **COUNTY STAFF REPORT**

Action Items

6. **Elect Chair and Vice-Chair for Calendar Year 2026**..... page 3.

Elect Rachel Dann as Chair and Mark Correira as Vice-Chair – Motion/Second: Brown/Webb

AYES: 9
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 0

7. **Preliminary grant funding recommendations for the FY 25-26 Measure Q Grant Program**..... page 4.

Clare Peabody presented and discussed the grant application review process and the development of the three recommended funding scenarios. She also provided an overview of

Measure Q funding, the Vision Plan, and how applications aligned thematically with program goals. Additionally, she highlighted common themes identified by evaluators during the scoring process and noted that County staff plan to return in August with a more comprehensive after-action review.

COAB Questions and Discussion

Commissioner Webb asked about the accessibility of scoring rubric materials.

- County Staff responded that the rubric was included in the grant guidelines and reflected in the application structure.

Vice-Chair Correia asked how highly scored projects reflected the core intentions of Measure Q funding and how evaluators considered the specific merits of each project.

- County Staff explained that evaluator comments helped contextualize scoring and acknowledged the challenge of applying a consistent rubric across different project types. They noted that evaluator comments serve as an important check in the process, particularly because park-related projects can be subject to varying interpretations. County Staff also emphasized the importance of ensuring the scoring rubric remains responsive to different project types in future funding cycles.

Vice-Chair Correia asked how highly scored projects reflected the core intentions of Measure Q funding, how evaluators considered the specific merits of each project, and whether consideration was given to the total amount of funding allocated through the South County carve-out.

- County Staff explained that evaluator comments helped contextualize scoring and served as an important check in the process, particularly given the challenge of the varying interpretations that park-related projects can involve. County Staff noted that applications were initially evaluated independently and scored on their own merits before broader portfolio-wide discussions occurred. Once scoring results were finalized, County Staff used those outcomes to develop funding scenarios while working to keep the process as objective as possible.

Vice-Chair Correia also asked whether there was a way to ensure Measure Q funds were not supplanting existing project funding and whether there would be an opportunity to provide feedback on the process.

- County Staff explained that leverage and matching funds were included as competitive scoring components and that agreements could potentially include administrative and/or contractual mechanisms to prevent supplantation. They acknowledged the challenge of balancing protections against supplantation while also rewarding projects that demonstrate leverage and matching investments. County Staff further noted that there are plans to provide an after-action report at the August meeting and welcomes feedback from applicants and the public.

Commissioner Espindola asked whether discussions were intended to shape this year's awards or future funding structures and whether the intent was to adopt the same funding scenario for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects.

- County Staff indicated the focus was on this year's cycle, though broader program structure discussions could occur in August.

Commissioner DeWald noted that the total amount listed under Scenario C was incorrect on the materials provided.

Public Comments

- 7 members of the public.

COAB Deliberation

Commissioner DeWald questioned why one project scoring 79 points was selected over another project with the same score and expressed concern that, although Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects were evaluated independently, the funding scenarios ultimately combined them into a single package.

- County Staff explained that scores were used primarily for ranking projects within each tier, as Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects were not directly competing against one another. They noted that, when evaluating projects with similar scores, additional considerations such as geographic diversity were considered in developing funding scenarios. In the case discussed, County Staff explained that selecting the Tier 1 project scoring 79 points over the Tier 2 project with the same score would have resulted in greater geographic diversity within the scenario.

Commissioner DeWald also noted that the Pajaro Valley (PV) set-aside differed significantly from the San Vicente Redwoods (SVR) set-aside and reiterated concerns previously raised prior to the close of the grant cycle. She requested additional analysis showing how funding recommendations might differ if the PV set-aside were structured similarly to the SVR set-aside.

Chair Dann agreed that the two set asides were being treated differently despite appearing similar and stated that the issue deserved further exploration in future discussions.

Commissioner Howard requested a map showing the geographic locations of recommended projects, including County and City projects, stating that a visual representation would be helpful. She also suggested that future grant guidelines include language clarifying that recommendations for funding may consider factors beyond score alone, including program fit, funding availability, geographic distribution, and equity considerations.

Vice-Chair Correia agreed that it would be helpful to get more information about what the Measure Q direct allocations are being used for. He also raised the question of whether future discussions should include consideration of funding ceilings for South County projects or specific agencies, noting that approximately \$2.4 million (more than half of the grant funding) was proposed for South County projects. Correia emphasized the importance of balancing geographic diversity with fairness and equity across the County.

Commissioner DeWald emphasized that equity discussions must acknowledge the historical lack of investment in South County and noted the importance of considering where the greatest access gaps and needs exist.

Commissioner Webb stated that the strong showing of Pajaro Valley projects was not surprising given the needs identified in the Measure Q text, Vision Plan, and prior COAB discussions. He expressed support for Scenario A because it most closely aligned with the process outlined in the published grant guidelines. While appreciating staff's work in developing alternative scenarios, he emphasized the importance of maintaining fidelity to the established process.

Commissioner Sanguinetti stated that geographic balance alone does not address the varying levels of need throughout the County and expressed greater support for Scenario C due to its emphasis on scale of impact and equity considerations for underserved areas.

Commissioner Brown thanked staff for their work throughout the process and for preparing materials that supported transparency and informed discussion. She emphasized the importance of equity in distributing funds to projects that would have the greatest impact on underserved communities throughout the County and expressed concern about the overrepresentation of public agencies in the funding scenarios. Commissioner Brown noted the potential benefit of placing greater emphasis on geographic balance, particularly during the first year of funding, and stated that relying strictly on ordinal scoring left out other important considerations. She expressed interest in a more holistic set of recommendations that could incorporate elements of both Scenarios B and C. She suggested that additional adjustments could help ensure high-scoring projects are funded while remaining aligned with the overall vision and intent of Measure Q.

- County Staff noted that organizations potentially receiving partial funding have already been contacted to confirm their willingness to accept reduced awards.

Commissioner Espindola stated that she was torn between the different scenarios, acknowledging that while Scenario A disproportionately benefited South County, South County has historically received less investment overall. She also noted that North County stakeholders may now be experiencing what it feels like receiving a smaller share of funding, contributing to the difficulty of the COAB's deliberations.

Vice-Chair Correia stated a preference for Scenarios B or C because they provided greater flexibility and demonstrated that both staff and the COAB carefully considered how Measure Q funding should be distributed Countywide.

Commissioner Howard shared feedback received from constituents who expected Measure Q funding to prioritize urgent hazard reduction and community protection projects.

Chair Dann stated that she expected South County to receive funding well above the minimum threshold because that intent was clearly reflected in the Measure Q language. She also noted that, given the number of direct allocations set aside, it would be helpful to understand where those projects are geographically located.

- County Staff clarified that the PV set-aside remained a competitive funding pool with more applications than available funding and noted that some applicants submitted projects under both the PV set-aside and Tier 2 categories.

Commissioner DeWald commented that the SVR set-aside projects were not being considered as part of the geographic distribution discussion. She requested a comparison showing how the remaining funding pool would look if the PV set-aside were separated and treated similarly to the SVR set-aside. DeWald stated that reviewing the totality of scores under that framework may result in greater prioritization of Tier 1 projects and could improve the geographic distribution of funds. She also noted that limiting multiple grant awards to the same organization could further diversify the geographic distribution of funding.

Commissioner Webb cautioned that excluding agencies receiving direct allocations may not be advisable, as those agencies often have the greatest capacity to successfully complete projects and implement funding.

Chair Dann summarized the COAB's feedback and requested County Staff provide additional information for discussion at the next COAB meeting, including:

- * A geographic distribution map of proposed projects;
- * Information regarding direct allocation funding recipients and project locations;
- * Comparisons showing funding recommendations with the \$600,000 Pajaro Valley set-aside removed; and
- * Data comparing the applicant pool to recommended funding amounts.

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 March 18th, 2026**..... page 22.

LATE Written Correspondence Listing

9. [Email from Celine Kuklowsky – CAB Written Comments](#)
10. [Email from Jared Childress – Measure Q Additions](#)

Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Wednesday, May 27th, 2026
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