



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, May 27th, 2026
5:30pm – 7:30pm
Regular Meeting

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

Teams Platform & Call-in Function

Join: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/225914057787503?p=ybwbOfj0TJJSzqWLbx>

Meeting ID: 225 914 057 787 503 | **Passcode:** qq2XT2uL

Dial in by phone: +1 831 454 2222 | **Phone conference ID:** 780 787 80#

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 Citizens Oversight Advisory Board Meeting Agendas & Minutes, at:

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

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.

PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC COMMENT DURING THE MEETING

To address the Advisory Board in person during the Oral Communications period, please form a line down the center of the room and approach the podium when instructed by the Chair.

To address the Board telephonically, click on the link provided to access a Microsoft Teams-based meeting, or call the telephone number provided on the agenda and follow the instructions below for either method. When called, please limit your remarks to the time limit allotted.

Participating Online via Microsoft Teams:

You may join the meeting by downloading the Microsoft Teams application or by connecting through your web browser. Please note that Teams meetings are not currently supported in mobile web browsers. If you are joining from a phone or tablet, please install and use the Microsoft Teams mobile app. If you're having trouble joining a Teams meeting, try these tips: [I can't join a Teams meeting](#).

You will be asked to enter a name. Please identify yourself however you wish; this appears online and is how we will notify you when it is your turn to speak.

When the Chair calls for the item on which you wish to speak, click on "raise hand." The Staff Liaison will activate and unmute speakers in turn. Speakers will be notified shortly before they are called to speak.

Participating by Phone:

To join via phone, dial the telephone number provided and you will be prompted to enter the meeting ID number. After that, you will be able to listen to the meeting and speak when called upon. The Staff Liaison will identify call-in users by the last four digits of their phone number.

The following commands can be entered via DTMF tones using your phone's dial pad while in a Microsoft Teams meeting:

*5 - Raise or lower your hand.

*6 - Mute or unmute your microphone.

Introductory Items

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

2. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Any person may address the Advisory Board 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 or matters within the Board's jurisdiction. Public comment on Regular Agenda items should be made when the item is called. Board 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 Advisory Board for a period not to exceed thirty (30) minutes. If, at the end of this period, additional persons wish to address the Advisory Board, 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**

Action Items

6. **FY 25-26 Measure Q Grant Program Final Funding Recommendations** | page 4.

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 meeting minutes from May 6th, 2026** | page 25.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. None.

Adjournment

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:30 PM Wednesday, August 19th, 2026
Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms
979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board



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

FINAL GRANT FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FY 25-26 MEASURE Q GRANT PROGRAM

Recommended Action

1. Approve final staff grant funding recommendations for the FY 2025–26 Measure Q Grant Program as presented in this report; and
2. Direct staff to transmit final funding recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for approval at the June 9, 2026 Board meeting.

Executive Summary

This report presents final staff grant funding recommendations for the FY 2025–26 Measure Q Grant Program, incorporating feedback provided by the COAB at the May 6 preliminary review meeting. Staff developed a balanced portfolio drawing from the top 10 scoring applications across each tier, applying portfolio-level values identified through COAB deliberation at the May 6, 2026 meeting, including geographic balance, scale of community impact, institutional diversity, and balance of thematic priorities to align with the overall intent of the Measure Q Vision Plan.

The recommended portfolio funds 17 projects totaling \$2,740,000 across Tier 1, Community Catalyst, and Tier 2, Community Impact, categories. Seven Tier 1 grants are recommended for funding for a total of \$266,897. Five projects in the general Tier 2 grant pool are recommended for funding at a total of \$1,248,103. Two projects were selected to meet the statutory set-aside minimum of \$600,000 for projects serving the Pajaro Valley for a total of \$625,000. Lastly, 3 projects were submitted and are recommended for funding for the San Vicente Redwoods set-aside for a total of \$600,000.

Four Tier 2 projects are recommended for partial awards, 3 out of the general grant pool and 1 in the Pajaro Valley set-aside, to maximize the number of funded projects within the available grant budget.

Upon COAB approval, staff will transmit the final recommendation to the County Board of Supervisors for their approval on June 9, 2026.

Discussion

1. Measure Q Grant Program Review

The Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildlife Protection Act was passed by Santa Cruz County Voters in November 2024 and generates approximately \$7 million annually through an \$87 annual special parcel tax. The Measure Q Grant Program allocates 40% of tax measure revenue, through a competitive grant program supporting community projects advancing water quality, wildfire resilience, habitat protection, and equitable parks access in Santa Cruz County. In the program's inaugural cycle, accumulated interest and administrative cost savings have increased the total available grant program budget to approximately \$2,740,000, highlighting an ongoing opportunity to increase program reach through responsible fiscal management.

Table 1 summarizes key milestones in the evaluation process from application close through final Board of Supervisors approval of award recommendations.

Table 1 – FY25-26 Grant Cycle Milestones

Milestone	Date	Status / Notes
Application close	March 13	Complete. 54 applications received.
Initial completeness review by County staff; request for information (RFI) process	March 15 – March 22	Complete. 1 application deemed incomplete.
Project scoring by internal and external evaluators	March 15 – April 14	Complete. 53 applications scored, 1 internal and 1 external review per application.
Synthesis of scoring results; development of alternative funding scenarios	April 14 – April 22	Complete. Top 10 scoring projects in each tier considered.
Publication of preliminary funding recommendations / May 6 COAB staff report	April 24	Complete.
May COAB Meeting # 1 – Preliminary funding recommendations	May 6	Complete.
Incorporation of May 6 feedback; revision of funding recommendations	May 6 – May 22	Complete.

Milestone	Date	Status / Notes
Publication of final funding recommendations / May 22 COAB staff report	May 22	Complete.
May COAB Meeting #2 – Approve final funding recommendations	May 27	Today.
Board of Supervisors – Approval of grant funding recommendations	June 9	Pending.

The inaugural grant cycle was heavily subscribed, with 29 Tier 1 applications (Community Catalyst, \$5K–\$50K) requesting \$1,137,484, and 24 Tier 2 applications (Community Impact, \$50K–\$500K) requesting \$7,754,593, for a combined total of \$8,892,077 and a demand ratio of approximately 3.3 to 1 in the inaugural grant cycle.

From March 15 – April 14, County staff led an evaluation process guided by the grant scoring rubric previously approved by the COAB and Board of Supervisors (Table 2). The evaluation team consisted of 2 internal County staff reviewers and 2 external evaluators. One internal and one external score was assigned to each Tier 1 and Tier 2 application. Final grant evaluation scores are an average of the two reviewers scores.

Table 2 – FY25-26 Grant Scoring Rubric

Tier	Scoring Criteria
Tier 1 – Community Catalyst (100 points)	Alignment with Measure Q Vision Plan – 40 pts Community Benefit – 30 pts Feasibility – 20 pts Innovation or Capacity – 10 pts Bonus (optional) – up to 5 pts
Tier 2 – Community Impact (100 points)	Alignment with Measure Q Vision Plan – 25 pts Community Benefit – 20 pts Wildlife and Environmental Benefit – 15 pts Project Feasibility and Readiness – 15 pts Partnerships and Collaboration – 10 pts Budget, Cost-Effectiveness and Leveraging – 10 pts Long-term Maintenance and Monitoring – 5 pts Bonus (optional) – up to 5 pts

Following scoring, County staff ranked applications within each tier by averaged score and reviewed the resulting pool against the broader program values and priorities identified in the Measure Q Vision Plan. Because the

scoring rubrics are not aligned it is not appropriate to rank all scores against each other, this is why ranking was only performed within each Tier. Drawing from the top 10 ranked projects in each tier, staff developed 3 alternative funding scenarios for COAB consideration at the May 6 meeting (Table 3): one scenario based entirely on scores (Scenario A), and two scenarios which apply a specific organizing value to select from the top 10 ranked projects in order to achieve greater geographic balance (Scenario B) and measurable impact (Scenario C) across the recommended funding portfolio. The original 3 funding scenarios were published on May 22 alongside complete application content and evaluator scores and comments. These materials are available on the Measure Q website.

Table 3 – Description of Funding Scenarios Presented at 5/6/26 COAB Meeting

Scenario	Organizing Value
A – Score-Driven	Fund projects in strict rank order by average score .
B – Geographic Balance	Adjusted selection from the top 10 scoring projects across Tier 1 and Tier 2 to achieve greater countywide geographic distribution of impact
C – Scale of Impact	Adjusted selection from the top 10 scoring projects across Tier 1 and Tier 2 to prioritize projects with the largest measurable outcomes

At the May 6 meeting, the COAB received preliminary funding proposals using the three alternative funding scenarios for consideration and feedback. COAB, participating applicants, and public discussion organized around three main themes:

1. Portfolio-level values to inform the final investment decision
2. Additional context and data needed to evaluate those values
3. Opportunities to return in August with a formal after-action review and proposed refinements to program guidelines.

Theme 1: Portfolio – Level Values to Inform Final Funding Recommendations

COAB members engaged substantively on how portfolio-wide values should shape final award decisions beyond strict rank order. Key themes included:

- **Geographic balance and equity** – funding projects strictly by rank order (Scenario A) results in an award portfolio heavily concentrated in the Pajaro Valley. COAB members discussed the differences between geographic vs. needs-based equity and the importance of

demonstrating broad county-wide impact in Measure Q's inaugural grant cycle, which was partially addressed by Scenario B, but not completely to the COABs preference. At the same time, South County projects do map favorably onto multiple Vision Plan priorities and grant rubric scoring criteria that were included specifically to address historic underinvestment in this part of the county.

- **Scale of impact and measurable outcomes** – Several COAB members expressed support for Scenario C on the basis that visible, high-impact projects could provide a more objective basis for departures from rank order.
- **Fidelity to published process** – one COAB member expressed preference for a straightforward rank scoring approach (Scenario A) which aligns most closely with grant guidelines and scoring criteria made available to applicants during the solicitation period.
- **Institutional balance** – COAB members and organizations who delivered public comment noted that public agencies are structurally advantaged in competitive grant process; commissioners asked whether direct allocation recipients should be viewed differently in the competitive process.
- **Thematic balance** – COAB members sought to ensure all Vision Plan priority themes (wildfire risk reduction and forest health, water resources, parks/access/equity) were meaningfully represented in the first grant cycle. Additional comments reflected the importance that wildfire risk reduction and forest health projects are reflected in the final portfolio.

Theme 2: Additional Context & Data

COAB members requested the following visualizations, data and analysis to accompany the May 27 final award recommendations:

- Geographic maps of all recommended projects and direct allocation recipient projects or programs.
- A summary of Measure Q direct allocations and identification of any overlap with competitive grant applicants.

- Comparing geographic and thematic composition of final award recommendation with the composition of the underlying applicant pool.
- Clear labeling of set-aside vs. competitive awards in portfolio analysis – one COAB member noted that presenting statutory set-aside dollars alongside competitive awards in the geographic breakdown misrepresents the actual concentration of discretionary funding in the Pajaro Valley, since set-aside minimums are fixed by the Measure Q Act and do not reflect competitive judgment.

Theme 3: “After Action Review” – Program Improvement and Refinement

Several issues raised during deliberation were acknowledged as questions for the program’s long-term design rather than decisions for this grant award cycle. Staff will return to the COAB in August with a comprehensive after-action review (AAR) of the inaugural cycle and potential program guideline revisions for COAB consideration ahead of the next grant cycle which will be in early 2027.

Topics for this conversation raised at the May 6 COAB meeting include:

- **Post-scoring decision process** – sticking to scoring criteria provides most transparency to applicants; future grant guidelines could explicitly state the role of factors that will inform portfolio-level recommendations post-scoring
- **Geographic balance guardrails** – considering “ceilings” of investment in any one geographic area or any one applicant
- **Recurring eligibility limits** – setting clear limits around successive award eligibility could ensure that funds are used to support discrete projects or capacity building, rather than baseline program/operations support
- **Protecting nonprofit and tribe accessibility** – monitor application trends over time and consider how grant program guidelines can support accessibility for tribes and nonprofits and build long-term capacity.

- **Pro-active / targeted outreach** - assess opportunities for outreach, fiscal sponsorship, and proactive project scoping in thematic or geographic areas under-represented in this grant cycle
- **Projects versus Programs** – ensuring resilience projects with visible and measurable impacts are supported

2. Final Funding Recommendations

Recommended Portfolio

Staff recommends the following final grant portfolio for COAB approval. The recommended portfolio funds 17 projects and is grounded in competitive scoring results, with adjustments to reflect additional priorities consistent with COAB direction. Total recommended awards reflect current grant program Measure Q bucket revenues of \$2,740,000.

Table 4 shows recommended award amounts out of the top 10 scoring projects in each Tier. Additional narrative following Table 4 provides explanation and context for the final staff recommendation based on feedback received at the May 6 COAB meeting. Project summaries and complete application content can be accessed on the Measure Q website.

Table 4 – Final Staff Funding Recommendation

Rank	Project	Organization	Avg. Score	Asked	Recommended Award
Tier 1 - Community Catalyst (7)				TOTAL:	\$266,897
1	River Stewards	Coastal Watershed Council	97	\$50,000	\$50,000
2	Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring	Santa Cruz County Parks	92	\$48,000	\$48,000
3	Truck Trail Emergency Response Navigation	Santa Cruz County Fire Dept.	86.5	\$6,000	—
4	Kids2Parks	Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks	85	\$14,915	\$14,915
5	Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness	Santa Cruz County Fire Dept.	81.5	\$43,982	\$43,982
6	Strategic Water Supply Enhancements	Santa Cruz County Fire Dept.	79.5	\$29,158	—
7	Accessible Park Experiences — Blind & Visually Impaired	Vista Center	79	\$50,000	\$50,000
8	Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety & Surf Education	Black Surf Santa Cruz	78.5	\$50,000	\$50,000
9	Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative	Boys & Girls Clubs of SC County	76.5	\$50,000	—
10	Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project	South Skyline Firesafe Council	76	\$10,000	\$10,000
Tier 2 — Community Impact (10)				TOTAL:	\$2,473,103
<i>(Subtotal – PV Set-Aside)(2)</i>					<i>(\$625,000)</i>
<i>(Subtotal – other)(53)</i>					<i>(\$1,248,103)</i>
<i>(Subtotal – SVR Set-Aside) (3)</i>					<i>(\$600,000)</i>
1	Pajaro Valley Watershed Stewardship PV	Watsonville Wetlands Watch	94	\$350,000	\$350,000
3	Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization PV	City of Watsonville	82	\$600,000	\$275,000*
<hr/>					
2	Rural Lands Assistance Program Pilot	RCD Santa Cruz County	85.5	\$342,140	\$320,337*
4	Mesa Village Park Phase 1 PV	Friends of SC County Parks	81	\$279,500	\$279,500
4	PVUSD Rolling Hills Track & Field PV	Pajaro Valley Unified School District	81	\$500,000	—
6	Pajaro River Bridge to Bay & College Lake PV	Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency	79	\$390,000	\$150,000*
7	Sol Y Tierra: Climate Justice Learning & Adaptation	Community Action Board	77	\$509,000	—
8	San Lorenzo Flood Control — Debris Boom	City of Santa Cruz	76	\$300,000	\$100,000*
9	Resilience-Ready SCC: Zone-0 Equity & Workforce	Long Term Recovery Group	74.5	\$398,266	\$398,266
10	Wildfire & Ecology Resilience via Beneficial Fire	Central Coast Prescribed Burn Assoc.	73	\$399,360	—
<hr/>					
-	SVR — Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs SVR	Peninsula Open Space Trust	—	\$425,000	\$425,000
-	SVR — Botanical Resource Management SVR	Peninsula Open Space Trust	—	\$75,000	\$75,000
-	SVR — Public Access Improvement SVR	Peninsula Open Space Trust	—	\$100,000	\$100,000
Total award (max: \$2,740,000) (17 Projects)				TOTAL:	\$2,740,000

* Indicates proposed award reduction relative to requested amount.

Final Funding Recommendation

The final award recommendation represents a synthesis of the 3 funding scenarios presented at the May 6 meeting, incorporating portfolio-level values deliberated by the COAB.

Tier 1 Recommendations

Non-profits were most heavily represented in the Tier 1 application pool, and the top-ranking projects included a high number of educational programs designed to provide equitable stewardship and recreational access opportunities to countywide populations.

The primary considerations in selecting Tier 1 awards out of top 10 scoring projects were institutional equity, scale of impact, and representation of Vision Plan thematic priorities, when choosing between similar types of projects.

Santa Cruz County Fire Department was limited to a single award with the broadest impact, Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness, which will install proactive emergency signage along two heavily trafficked road corridors in Felton (Graham Hill) and Corralitos (Freedom Blvd.).

Among recreational programs, "River Stewards", "Kids to Parks", "Accessible Park Experiences", and "Expanding coastal access" were recommended for funding in this category with the highest countywide impact metrics (number of individuals served).

Finally, thematic balance was considered to ensure that no one Vision Plan thematic area (wildfire risk reduction, parks, recreation, access & equity, water resource management) dominated the Tier 1 portfolio. River Stewards (Coastal Watershed Council) and Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring (Santa Cruz County Parks) performed well against multi-benefit scoring criteria, and the Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project represents a pilot small-scale implementation project that addresses wildfire risk reduction in a rural summit community.

Tier 2 Recommendations

Among Tier 2 top ranking projects, public agencies were well positioned to make larger scale investments in the first year of the grant program.

Geographic balance, scale of impact, and thematic balance were primary themes emerging from the May 6 COAB meeting and inform final award

recommendations. Additional context regarding year 1 direct allocation investments further informed strategic reductions to public agency projects included in the final award recommendations.

Most notably, three of the top five ranked projects which performed well against the Tier 2 scoring criteria singularly addressed parks as a thematic priority, and all served the greater Pajaro Valley area (City Plaza, Mesa Village Nature Play, and Rolling Hills Middle School Track Access). The City Plaza award is reduced from the requested amount to expand resource distribution and address direct allocation recipient balance. Mesa Village was recommended due to its inclusion of environmentally beneficial design features which provide a nexus to Vision Plan priorities. While projects serving the Pajaro Valley still represent approximately 40% of the Tier 2 portfolio, this brought it down to less than 35% when excluding both set-asides from this total.

Award reductions for the Watsonville City Plaza, Rural Lands Assistance program (RCD), Pajaro River Bridge to Bay project (Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency) and the San Lorenzo Debris Boom (City of Santa Cruz) reflect a deliberate effort to right-size public agency or direct recipient awards and preserve budget capacity for nonprofit participation in the Tier 2 portfolio.

It worth noting that two recommended Tier 2 projects which dedicate significant funding resources to staff capacity – the RCD’s Rural Land Assistance Program and Long Term Recovery Group’s Resilience Ready SCC – direct resources toward staff capacity and program infrastructure to address wildfire and climate resilience efforts. Both are designed and well positioned to leverage outside state and federal funding and private cost-share, meaning the initial Measure Q investment is envisioned to catalyze larger follow-on resources rather than sustain ongoing program delivery.

Summary of Award Recommendation and Applicant Pool

At the May 6 meeting, COAB members requested staff compare thematic and geographic composition of the final award recommendation relative to the underlying applicant pool. Figures 1 and 2, and Tables 5 and 6, compare the proportional geographic and thematic composition of the grant application pool with top-scoring projects and the final staff recommendation.

The final award recommendation closely tracks the thematic composition of the underlying full applicant pool, with no significant departures introduced

by funding portfolio-level adjustments. Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity is the most represented theme across both tiers at every stage of selection, which is more a reflection of what the grant program attracted in its inaugural funding request cycle than a scoring artifact. This is a useful data point for the August AAR conversation about how program guidelines and outreach shape grant submissions upstream of scoring. Water Resource Management and Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health are both represented in the awarded portfolio, with wildfire having 2 of 10 projects, 20%, in Tier 2 and 2 of 7, 29% in Tier 1 and Water Resource Management having 3 of 10, 30%, in Tier 2 and 3 of 7, 43%, in Tier 1. (see Figure 1 & Table 5)

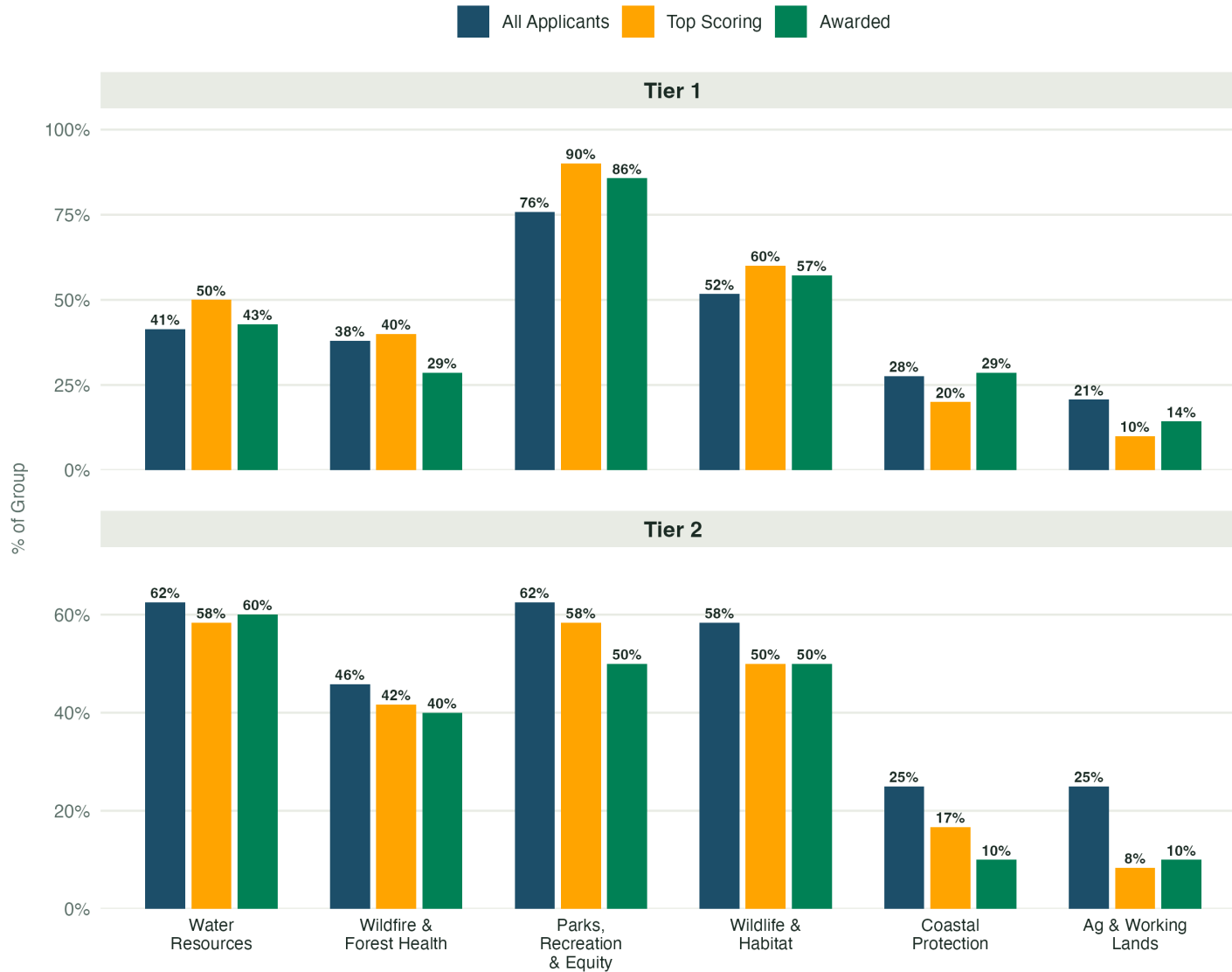
Geographically, the Tier 1 portfolio is broadly distributed with no single geography exceeding 24% of awarded dollars. Tier 2 requires more careful reading; of the \$2,473,103 in total Tier 2 awards, \$1,225,000 or nearly half is pre-committed through the two statutory set-aside minimums, leaving \$1,248,103 where competitive scoring and portfolio-level values drove decisions. The Pajaro Valley's 43% share of total Tier 2 dollars reflects that structure: \$625,000 of awards (Watsonville Wetlands Watch and City Plaza) satisfy set-aside requirements, and the remaining \$429,500 represents 17% of remaining Tier 2 dollars, and 34% of competitive award dollars (excluding both set-asides),

Countywide projects represent 29% of total Tier 2 awarded dollars and extend the geographic impact of Tier 2 investment towards programs that serve WUI residents countywide. Within the Tier 2 allocation Countywide projects represent 58% of the eligible funding outside the two geographic set asides. (see Figure 2 & Table 6)

Figure 1 – Project Thematic Distribution Across Application Pool, Top Scoring and Award Recommendation

Project Themes by Applicant Group

% of projects in each group touching each theme | Measure Q FY 2025–26



Based on theme flag columns. Projects may touch multiple themes; values may exceed 100%.
Denominator = total projects in that group x tier.

Figure 2 – Project Geographic Distribution Across Application Pool, Top Scoring and Award Recommendation

Geographic Distribution of Dollars by Applicant Group

% of group's total dollars + dollar amount | Measure Q FY 2025–26



All Applicants and Top Scoring use amount requested. Awarded uses amount awarded.
Denominator = total dollars in that group × tier.

Table 5 – Thematic Composition by Applicant Group and Tier

n (% of projects in group). Values may exceed 100% as projects may address multiple themes

Theme	Tier 1 – All (n=29)	Tier 1 – Top Scoring (n=10)	Tier 1 – Rec. Award (n=7)	Tier 2 – All (n=24)	Tier 2 – Top Scoring (n=12)	Tier 2 – Rec. Award (n=10)
Water Resources	12 (41%)	5 (50%)	3 (43%)	15 (62%)	7 (58%)	6 (60%)
Wildfire & Forest Health	11 (38%)	4 (40%)	2 (29%)	11 (46%)	5 (42%)	4 (40%)
Parks, Recreation & Equity	22 (76%)	9 (90%)	6 (86%)	15 (62%)	7 (58%)	5 (50%)
Wildlife & Habitat	15 (52%)	6 (60%)	4 (57%)	14 (58%)	6 (50%)	5 (50%)
Coastal Protection	8 (28%)	2 (20%)	2 (29%)	6 (25%)	2 (17%)	1 (10%)
Ag & Working Lands	6 (21%)	1 (10%)	1 (14%)	6 (25%)	1 (8%)	1 (10%)

Table 6 – Thematic Composition by Applicant Group and Tier

(% of project dollars directed towards geography in group).

Theme	Tier 1 – All (\$1,137,484)	Tier 1 – Top Scoring (\$352,055)	Tier 1 – Rec. Award (\$266,897)	Tier 2 – All (\$7,754,593)	Tier 2 – Top Scoring (\$4,268,906)	Tier 2 – Rec. Award (\$2,473,103)
Pajaro Valley	\$288,309 (25%)	\$48,000 (14%)	\$48,000 (18%)	\$3,148,728 (41%)	\$2,119,500 (50%)	\$1,054,500 (43%)
<i>Pajaro Valley (set aside)</i>	–	–	–	–	–	<i>(\$625,000 / 25%)</i>
<i>Pajaro Valley (remaining)</i>	–	–	–	–	–	<i>(\$429,500 / 17%)</i>
San Vicente Redwoods (set-aside)	–	–	–	\$600,000 (8%)	\$600,000 (14%)	\$600,000 (24%)
Countywide (Broad Impact)	\$216,799 (19%)	\$70,915 (20%)	\$64,915 (24%)	\$963,863 (12%)	\$740,406 (17%)	\$718,603 (29%)
Countywide (Multi-Site)	\$123,140 (11%)	\$123,140 (35%)	\$43,982 (16%)	\$908,360 (12%)	\$509,000 (12%)	–
Countywide (Coast)	\$142,550 (13%)	\$50,000 (14%)	\$50,000 (19%)	–	–	–
City of Santa Cruz	\$146,230 (13%)	\$50,000 (14%)	\$50,000 (19%)	\$673,642 (9%)	\$300,000 (7%)	\$100,000 (4%)
San Lorenzo Valley	–	–	–	\$1,000,000 (13%)	–	–
Summit Communities	\$106,500 (9%)	\$10,000 (3%)	\$10,000 (4%)	–	–	–
North Coast	–	–	–	\$135,000 (2%)	–	–
City of Capitola	–	–	–	\$325,000 (4%)	–	–
Live Oak / Other	\$79,800 (7%)	–	–	–	–	–
Bonny Doon	\$34,156 (3%)	–	–	–	–	–

3. FY25-26 Direct Allocation Preliminary Report

At the May 6 COAB meeting, COAB members also requested additional context regarding projects funded through Measure Q's direct allocation program to better contextualize grant awards. Outside of the competitive grant program, sixty percent of Measure Q grant revenue is distributed through direct allocation to the following entities:

- 20% of measure revenue / approximately \$1.4M annually to the County of Santa Cruz for projects serving the unincorporated county
- 20% of measure revenue / approximately \$1.4M to the four cities, distributed on the basis of population size
- 10% of measure revenue / approximately \$700k annually to the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County
- 10% of measure revenue / approximately \$700k annually to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

Unexpended funds may be accrued for expenditure in future years to enable sufficient funding for larger or long-term projects.

The information provided in this section was collected by County staff following additional COAB direction at the May 6 meeting and is intended to provide additional context for final grant award recommendations, as opposed to satisfying annual Measure Q direct allocation reporting requirements established by SCCC § 4.65.060. Additional details will be provided by agencies in subsequent reports to the COAB.

County of Santa Cruz

\$1,402,370 allocated / \$1,092,767 committed

The County's allocation is distributed across seven projects spanning multiple Supervisorial districts, anchored by a major multi-year lake restoration effort in the Pajaro Valley. The \$309,603 uncommitted balance reflects unallocated district discretionary funds that remain available for expenditure within the fiscal year.

Project	Status	Q Funds	Geography	Themes	Outside Match
Freedom Lake Restoration	In Progress	\$720,000	Greater Watsonville	Water Resources, Parks & Access, Wildlife & Habitat	—
Evacuation Route Fuels Reduction	In Progress	\$80,000	Countywide (52 road miles)	Wildfire & Forest Health	\$1,239,762 (FEMA, Measure K)
Corralitos Creek Hydrologic Forecasting Model	In Progress	\$75,000	Corralitos Creek Watershed	Water Resources	—
Mesa Village Youth Soccer Field (D4)	In Progress	\$12,000	Greater Watsonville	Parks & Access	—
Valle del Pajaro Master Plan Outreach (D4)	In Progress	\$5,767	Greater Watsonville	Parks & Access	—
Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring (D2)	In Progress	\$40,000	Greater Watsonville	Water Resources, Parks & Access, Wildlife & Habitat	\$1,050,000 (EPA 319h pending)
South County Aquatics Feasibility Study (D2)	In Progress	\$60,000	Greater Watsonville	Parks & Access	—
Winkle Ave Park (D1)	In Progress	\$100,000	Live Oak	Parks & Access	-

Resource Conservation District

\$700,000 allocated / fully committed

The RCD's allocation funds a broad countywide conservation services platform organized across six program areas. Rather than discrete projects, the RCD model delivers technical assistance, grant leveraging, and program development on private and public lands across all Vision Plan themes, with specific implementation activities identified within each program area.

Program	Status	Q Funds	Geography	Themes	Outside Match
Watershed Restoration (incl. AJC Park Conservation Plan)	In Progress	\$179,000	Countywide / Soquel	Water Resources, Wildlife & Habitat, Ag & Working Lands	County Parks (in-kind)
Forest Health (Oak Woodland Restoration, cost-share program)	In Progress	\$73,000	Countywide / Larkin Valley	Wildfire & Forest Health, Wildlife & Habitat	DOC/Coastal Conservancy, USDA NRCS (pending)
Stewardship in Agriculture (Cover Crop, Irrigation Mgmt)	In Progress	\$79,000	Pajaro Valley, North Coast	Water Resources, Wildlife & Habitat, Ag & Working Lands	PVWMA, CDFA, USDA (pending)
Community Engagement & Resilience (chipping, outreach)	In Progress	\$173,000	Countywide / WUI communities	Wildfire & Forest Health, Water Resources	USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grant (pending)
Impact Evaluation and Administration	In Progress	\$96,000	Countywide	All themes	—
Contingency and Disaster Response	Planned	\$100,000	Countywide	All themes	—

Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

\$700,000 allocated / fully committed

The Land Trust's allocation funds four programs across its network of preserves and conservation properties, with active work in the San Lorenzo Valley, Scotts Valley, Bonny Doon, and Watsonville. The Land Trust is leveraging \$543,158 in donations and other non-public funds alongside its Measure Q investment.

Project	Status	Q Funds	Geography	Themes	Outside Match
Recreational Trail Establishment and Maintenance	In Progress	\$62,811	Countywide (Glenwood, San Vicente, multiple preserves)	Parks & Access	\$211,097 (donations, City of Scotts Valley)
Endangered Species Recovery and Habitat Stewardship	In Progress	\$84,657	Soquel Creek watershed, Scotts Valley	Wildlife & Habitat	\$192,062 (donations, developer mitigation)
Expanding Public Access at Watsonville Slough Farm	In Progress	\$87,436	North Watsonville / Pajaro Valley	Parks & Access	\$75,056 (donations)
Vegetation Management and Fire Risk Reduction	In Progress	\$104,280	Bonny Doon, Ben Lomond, Felton, Scotts Valley (sandhills)	Wildfire & Forest Health	\$64,943 (donations, rental income)

City of Santa Cruz

\$544,567 allocated / fully committed

The City's allocation focuses on building long-term open space operations capacity through two new staff positions and investing in wildfire resiliency planning across its major open space areas. The City has secured \$475,819 in CalFire grants directly catalyzed by its Measure Q wildfire planning investment.

Project	Status	Q Funds	Geography	Themes	Outside Match
Brookwood Drive Roadway, Drainage & Fire Road Improvements	In Progress	\$209,020	DeLaveaga Park	Water Resources, Parks & Access, Wildlife & Habitat	—
Assistant Urban Forester (new position)	In Progress	\$142,773	Citywide	Wildfire & Forest Health, Water Resources, Parks &	—

Project	Status	Q Funds	Geography	Themes	Outside Match
				Access, Wildlife & Habitat	
Park Maintenance Worker – Open Space Operations (new position)	In Progress	\$142,774	Pogonip, DeLaveaga, Moore Creek	Wildfire & Forest Health, Water Resources, Parks & Access	–
Wildfire Resiliency and Forest Health Grant Planning	In Progress	\$50,000	Pogonip, DeLaveaga, Moore Creek	Wildfire & Forest Health	\$475,819 (CalFire)

City of Watsonville

\$461,458 allocated / uncommitted

The City of Watsonville has not approved an expenditure plan, citing concern about the Local Taxpayer Protection Act ballot measure that has qualified for the November 2026 statewide ballot. Three projects have been identified as intended uses but all remain in planned status with nominal budget entries pending formal Council authorization.

Intended Project	Status	Q Funds	Geography	Themes	Outside Match
Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring (match)	Planned	\$0*	Pinto Lake	Water Resources, Parks & Access, Wildlife & Habitat	–
Ramsay Park Renaissance completion	Planned	\$0*	Downtown Watsonville	Parks & Access	–
City Plaza gap funding	Planned	\$0*	Downtown Watsonville	Parks & Access	–

City of Capitola

\$200,000 allocated / fully committed

The City's allocation addresses a longstanding parks staffing gap, funding the first additions to the parks maintenance crew in over 20 years alongside general parks and open space maintenance activities serving the Capitola community.

Project	Status	Q Funds	Geography	Themes	Outside Match
Two new parks maintenance workers	In Progress	\$150,000	City of Capitola	Parks & Access	—
Parks and open space maintenance	In Progress	\$50,000	City of Capitola	Parks & Access	—

City of Scotts Valley

\$200,000 allocated / partially committed

The City's allocation funds four parks maintenance and infrastructure projects across Scotts Valley's park system, two of which are already complete. Work ranges from routine building and grounds upkeep to drainage and retaining wall repairs that address both park access and water management.

Project	Status	Q Funds	Geography	Themes	Outside Match
Parks Related Support (maintenance, safety, accessibility)	In Progress	\$80,000	Scotts Valley parks	Parks & Access	—
Siltanen Gazebo repairs	Complete	\$40,063	Siltanen Park	Parks & Access	—
Parks Buildings Roofing at Skypark	In Progress	\$27,300	Scotts Valley	Parks & Access	—

Project	Status	Q Funds	Geography	Themes	Outside Match
Glenwood Retaining Wall Culvert repair	Complete	\$34,300	Siltanen Park / Glenwood East Preserve	Water Resources, Parks & Access	—

Financial Impact

Staff identified savings in administrative costs which, along with interest earned to date, has resulted in \$2,740,000 currently available for grant awards. No additional direct financial impact is associated with COAB's approval of final grant program funding recommendations. The program will distribute its portion of annual Measure Q revenue consistent with the Measure Q Vision Plan previously adopted by the Board.

Submitted By:

Clare Peabody, Senior Analyst, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience

Rebecca Hurley, Deputy Director, Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services

David Reid, Director, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Claude Sonnet 4.6, an Artificial Intelligence (AI), was used to draft components of this report and associated materials.



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board



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

MEASURE Q COAB 05.06.2026 MEETING MINUTES

Recommended Action

1. Review and approve meeting minutes from May 6th, 2026.

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 public participation, discussion and actions taken by the Advisory Board.

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 May 6, 2026 Minutes



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board



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

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