



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, April 16th, 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**
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.

Regular Agenda

4. **County Staff and Board Member introductions.....** page 3.
5. **Consider and approve the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) Bylaws for submission and final approval by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors.....** pages 4-12.
6. **Elect Chair and Vice-Chair.....** page 13.
7. **Consider and Approve Measure Q COAB Meeting Schedule through April 2026.....** pages 14-15.
8. **Roles and responsibilities of the Measure Q COAB.....** page 16.
9. **Review application and select the Land Stewardship Implementation Partner.....** pages 17-24.
 - a. Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

Adjournment

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:30 PM Wednesday, April 30th, 2025

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms.

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, are 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.



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COUNTY STAFF AND BOARD MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

Recommended Actions

1. Introduce County of Santa Cruz staff to Advisory Board; and
2. Introduce Advisory Board members to one another, County Staff, and the public.

Executive Summary

With this being the first meeting of the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB), it is important that the Board Members get to know one another and the County Staff that will be overseeing the implementation of Measure Q.

Discussion

This body of nine (9) members will be working together to advise the County of Santa Cruz on the implementation and use of Measure Q funds. In order to build strong team camaraderie as well as trust with the public, County Staff recognize the importance of having each Board Member introduce themselves to one another and the public. Each individual will have a few minutes to provide a brief background of themselves, including their professional experience in their area of expertise.

Submitted By:

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
David Reid, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience



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MEASURE Q COAB BYLAWS

Recommended Actions

1. Review the proposed bylaws of the Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board; and
2. Approve the proposed bylaws for submission to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors; and
3. Direct County Staff to submit a Staff Report on behalf of the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board asking the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors to ratify the bylaws.

Executive Summary

This item requests that the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) consider and approve its draft bylaws, which outline the procedures for conducting official business. In accordance with Santa Cruz County Code Section 2.38.140, all County commissions and committees must adopt bylaws not otherwise covered in their authorizing ordinance or resolution and submit them to the Board of Supervisors for final approval.

Discussion

The proposed bylaws establish foundational procedures for the COAB, including meeting structure, officer roles, voting requirements, quorum, and other rules of order necessary for the board to carry out its responsibilities under Measure Q. These bylaws are designed to support transparency, consistency, and effective governance as the board conducts public meetings, reviews funding reports, and develops its five-year vision plan.

Once approved by the COAB, County Staff will draft a Staff Report to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors for final consideration and adoption. These

bylaws will only become effective after ratification by the Board of Supervisors.

Submitted By:

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services

David Reid, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience

Attachments

- a. Bylaws of the Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board

BYLAWS OF THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
MEASURE Q CITIZENS OVERSIGHT ADVISORY BOARD

ARTICLE I: NAME

This organization shall be called the “Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board” (hereafter, “Advisory Board”) existing by virtue of Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 143-2024 attached hereto as Exhibit “A” and made a part hereof.

ARTICLE II: DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these bylaws:

“Act” shall be defined as ...Measure Q

“Advisory Board” shall be defined as the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB).

“Board” shall be defined as the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors.

“Chair” shall be defined as the chairman or chairwoman of the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board.

“Department” means the Santa Cruz County Department of Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Services.

“Excused”, as in “excused absence”, shall be defined as an absence caused by sickness or vacation, with notice given to the Director prior to the anticipated absence.

“Office” means the Santa Cruz County Office of Response, Recovery, and Resilience.

“Ordinance” shall be defined through Chapter 4.65 of Santa Cruz County Code (SCCC)

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Advisory Board is to review, on an annual fiscal year basis, the expenditure of tax revenue generated by Santa Cruz County Code 4.65.020 an ordinance imposing a Special Parcel Tax in the amount of \$87 per parcel per year. The Ordinance was passed as a ballot measure (Measure Q) by Santa Cruz County voters on November 5, 2024, and took effect 10 days after the election on which it was adopted and certified by the Santa Cruz County Clerk (Elections Department) and reported to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors.

ARTICLE IV: POWERS AND DUTIES

1. Powers and Duties

1.1 The Advisory Board's powers and duties are as identified in Exhibit 1, SCCC 4.65.060 Oversight and Accountability section of the Ordinance, and restated as follows:

- (a) Conduct hearings and receive public input on allocations related to this Act.
- (b) Receive reports annually from the County on projects funded pursuant to subsections (1) and (3) of subdivision (B) of section 4.65.040.
- (c) Receive reports annually from each of the incorporated cities on projects funded pursuant to subsection (2) of subdivision (B) of section 4.65.040.
- (d) Receive reports annually from the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County and the land stewardship implementation partner on projects funded pursuant to subsection (4) of subdivision (B) of section 4.65.040.
- (e) The Advisory Board shall submit an annual report to the Board of Supervisors in compliance with SCCC 2.38.170(A). The report shall include: outcomes of the projects and programs funded through the Act as well as how the Act was used to leverage other public and private funds. Annual reports by the Advisory Board may also provide suggested direction on the types of projects to prioritize in the coming year.
- (f) Approve a five-year vision plan to support grant criteria and awards.
 - (i) The vision plan will be updated every five years.
 - (ii) The Advisory Board may provide recommendations on the development of the plan by the Office and the Department. The Office and the Department shall also consult the incorporated cities, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, and the land stewardship implementation partner in the development of the plan.
 - (iii) The vision plan shall identify the activities and geographies prioritized for investment throughout the County in a concise format primarily based on content derived from existing plans, such as, but not limited to, the Santa Cruz County Regional Conservation Investment Local ballot measure: Q Strategy, Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Plan, Santa Cruz County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, California Water Plan, California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, California Outdoors for All Strategy, California Pathways to 30x30 Strategy, California Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, Santa Cruz County Climate

Action and Adaptation Plan, city climate adaptation plans, city parks and open space plans, or similar County, State, or local plans.

(g) Select the land stewardship implementation partner every five years, who shall serve in this role for a period of five years. After this initial period, the Advisory Board shall renew the land stewardship implementation partner or select another partner.

(h) Utilize the following criteria for selecting the land stewardship implementation partner:

(i) The land stewardship implementation partner shall have a mission generally consistent with the purposes of the Act and the capacity and expertise to implement projects in the public benefit related to land, habitat, ecosystem, and natural resources management and protection.

(ii) The land stewardship implementation partner shall be a Nonprofit Organization as defined in subdivision (M) of section 4.65.010 that owns and stewards private lands on which Eligible Projects in the public benefit can be implemented.

(iii) The land stewardship implementation partner must be headquartered in Santa Cruz County with at least 10 years of experience working primarily in Santa Cruz County.

(iv) The land stewardship implementation partner must be able to submit annual reports to the Advisory Board and contribute to the development of the five-year vision plan.

2. Advisory Role

2.1 The Advisory Board's role is to advise the Board and staff of the Department and the Office on these matters. The Advisory Board shall report to, and advise the Board through, the Office and the Department or their designees.

3. Annual Report

3.1 Report to the Board annually on the outcomes of the projects and programs funded through the Act as well as how the Act was used to leverage other public and private funds. Annual reports by the Advisory Board may also provide suggested direction on the types of projects to prioritize in the coming year.

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

1. General

1.1 The Advisory Board shall be composed of nine (9) members, five (5) appointed by the Board with one selection from each of the five (5) Board supervisorial districts, and four (4) appointed with one selection from each incorporated city. The Advisory Board members shall not hold any elected office and shall have demonstrated expertise in the following areas:

- (a) Water quality, water supply, or flood protection management.
- (b) Wildfire or forest management.
- (c) Wildlife, parks, or natural resources stewardship.
- (d) Working Lands or agricultural expertise.
- (e) Environmental justice, park equity, or public health.
- (f) Knowledge and expertise in evaluating financial transactions or program cost-effectiveness.

2. Conflict of Interest

2.1 Each member shall comply with the conflict-of-interest requirements of State law and SCCC 2.38.270 including a requirement that each Advisory Board member to file a Statement of Economic Interest financial disclosure (Form 700).

2.2 Members shall comply with SCCC 2.38.270(D). Any member that determines that they have a conflict of interest on an item under consideration shall recuse themselves from discussion and voting on the item.

ARTICLE VI: TERM OF OFFICE

1. Term of Appointment

1.1 Members of the Advisory Board shall serve a term of four years at the pleasure of the Board or appointing city, with terms commencing on April 1 of the year in which the nominating Supervisor begins a full term, in compliance with SCCC 2.38.100(A)(1). No member may serve more than two consecutive four-year terms. The Board, or appointing city, may, by order, extend this length of service or waive this limit for individuals that they appointed. A member's position shall become vacant upon their death, resignation, or removal by the Board or appointing city. In the case of such a vacancy, the Board or appointing city shall appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term.

2. Resignation

2.1 Resignations shall be in writing and filed with the Clerk of the Board with a copy to the Director.

3. Termination of Membership

3.1 In the event that a member of the Advisory Board ceases to meet the membership requirements in Article V, Section 1 of these bylaws, or fails to participate in any regular meeting without an excused absence, their membership shall automatically terminate, and a successor shall be appointed by the Board. In addition, a member of the Advisory Board may be removed from office by a four-fifths vote of the Board. Additionally, each Supervisor may remove their district appointee at any time, in compliance with SCCC 2.38.100(C).

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

1. General

1.1 All meetings of the Advisory Board shall be open to the public and the public shall be notified of all meetings of the Advisory Board in accordance with the provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code Section 54950 et seq.), as required under SCCC 2.38.110(A). Translation services and other accommodations shall be provided upon request to ensure accessibility for non-English speakers and individuals with disabilities. Meeting agendas, minutes, and reports shall be publicly posted online no later than five (5) business days after each meeting.

2. Meeting Frequency

2.1 The Advisory Board shall meet no less than quarterly.

3. Meeting Time and Place

3.1 Regular meetings shall be held on the third Wednesday of the month and no less than quarterly, in person at an identified County facility.

4. Special Meetings

4.1 Special meetings of the Advisory Board, or special meeting times, may be called by the order of the Advisory Board chair or by order of a majority of the Advisory Board.

5. Quorum

5.1 A majority of the full membership of the Advisory Board (5 members) shall constitute a quorum, and no act of the Advisory Board shall be valid unless at least a majority of those members constituting a quorum concur therein, in

compliance with SCCC 2.38.150(A). A lesser number of the quorum shall adjourn a meeting.

6. Conduct of Meetings

6.1 Proceedings of all meetings generally shall be guided by the current edition of *Rosenberg's Rules of Order*. *Rosenberg's Rules of Order* shall be the parliamentary guide for all matters of procedure for this Advisory Board not specifically covered in these by-laws.

7. Voting

7.1 An affirmative vote of the majority of all members of the Advisory Board present at the time shall be necessary to approve any action item before the Advisory Board. If requested by any member present, a roll call vote must be held.

ARTICLE VIII: OFFICERS

1. Officers of the Advisory Board

1.1 The officers of the Advisory Board shall be elected at the March meeting of the Advisory Board, and shall be as follows: Chair and Vice-Chair.

2. Duties of Officers

2.1 Chair: The Chair shall preside at all meetings, appoint ad hoc Advisory Boards, authorize calls for any special meetings, and generally perform the duties and functions of the presiding officer. The Chair shall be an ex-officio member of ad hoc Advisory Boards.

2.2 Vice-Chair: The Vice-Chair, in the event of the absence or disability of the Chair, or a vacancy in the office of the Chair, shall assume and perform the duties of the presiding officer.

3. Officers: Term of Office

3.1 Officers shall serve for one (1) year or until their successors are elected. No officer shall serve for more than two (2) consecutive one-year terms. The term of office shall begin with the meeting at which they are elected.

ARTICLE IX: AD HOC COMMITTEES

1. Membership

1.1 Ad-hoc committees may be established as needed to assist the Advisory Board in its duties. The composition of the ad hoc committees shall be determined by the Advisory Board. Ad hoc committees shall not contain a quorum of Advisory Board members.

2. Purpose and Duration

2.1 Ad hoc committees shall be established for a specified period of time and purpose.

ARTICLE X: BYLAWS

1. Enactment

1.1 These bylaws shall become effective upon ratification by the Board of Supervisors and shall comply with Santa Cruz County Code Section 2.38.140(A), requiring final Board approval for all commission bylaws.

2. Amendment

2.1 These bylaws may be recommended for amendment by a 7/9ths vote of all Advisory Board members, and then final approval by the Board.

3. Notice

3.1 Written notice of any proposed amendment shall be e-mailed to all members at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the meeting at which such action is proposed to be taken.

4. Effective Date of Amendment

4.1 No amendment to these bylaws shall take effect or be binding until said amendment(s) are reviewed by County Counsel and approved by the Board.

ARTICLE XI: DISSOLUTION

The Board shall dissolve the Advisory Board if the special parcel tax is ended by voters pursuant to SCCC 4.65.080, after all tax revenue collected pursuant to the Ordinance is expended and a final report is submitted.



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ELECT CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR COAB

Recommended Actions

1. Elect a chair and vice-chair for the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB).

Executive Summary

Board members will discuss and vote on two individuals to be appointed as the COAB Chair and Vice-Chair.

Discussion

Section 2.38.120 of the Santa Cruz County Code states "Commission officers shall be elected during the commission's first meeting after the commission is established at which a majority of the members are present." Board members will have the opportunity to nominate themselves or another member for an Officer role. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the COAB. In the event of an absence or vacancy of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall assume and perform the duties of the presiding officer. Nominations will be considered and voted on following a motion by one member of the Board and second by another member of the Board.

Submitted By:

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
David Reid, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience



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COAB APRIL 2025–FEBRUARY 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

Recommended Actions

1. Review and approve the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board Meeting schedule through February 2026.

Executive Summary

In compliance with Santa Cruz County Code 2.38.130, the Advisory Board shall review and approve this year's meeting schedule.

Discussion

The Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) will meet no less than quarterly on the third Wednesday of the month, in accordance with the bylaws. The Chair or the majority of the Board may call for a special meeting, or special meeting times, to conduct timely business.

During the development of the five-year plan, the COAB will meet more frequently to work in partnership with PlaceWorks and the Land Stewardship Implementation Partner. Meeting dates and times are listed in the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board Meeting Schedule. COAB meetings will be held at the Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062. If the location changes, it will be posted on the meeting agendas and Measure Q website.

Submitted By:

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
David Reid, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience

Attachment

- a. Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board Meeting Schedule



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board



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MEASURE Q CITIZENS OVERSIGHT ADVISORY BOARD (COAB) MEETING SCHEDULE

The Measure Q COAB shall meet no less than quarterly on the third Wednesday of the month. The Board may meet at an alternate County location specified in the public notice. During the development period of the five-year vision plan, the Measure Q COAB will hold *special public meetings** in order to conduct timely business.

Meetings are held in person at **Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms**, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062. Please check the meeting agenda to confirm the location. For questions, please contact MeasureQ@SantaCruzCountyCA.gov.

2025 Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, April 16th at 5:30 PM

*Wednesday, April 30th at 5:30 PM**

Wednesday, May 21st at 5:30 PM

*Wednesday, July 30th at 5:30 PM**

*Wednesday, September 3rd at 5:30 PM**

Wednesday, October 15th at 5:30 PM

Wednesday, November 19th at 5:30 PM

2026 Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, February 18th at 5:30 PM



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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEASURE Q CITIZENS OVERSIGHT ADVISORY BOARD (COAB)

Recommended Actions

1. Presentation on the roles and responsibilities of the Measure Q COAB

Executive Summary

This item provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Measure Q COAB, as established in Santa Cruz County Code Section 4.65.060(A)(3). This staff presentation will introduce members to their key functions.

Discussion

The COAB plays a central role in ensuring that Measure Q funding is used transparently and effectively to protect and enhance the County's natural resources. Responsibilities include conducting public hearings on funding allocations, receiving annual reports from implementing entities, and preparing an annual report to the Board of Supervisors on project outcomes and leveraging of additional funding. The COAB is also charged with approving a five-year vision plan to guide funding priorities and selecting the land stewardship implementation partner. This presentation will serve as an orientation to support informed participation and decision-making as the board begins its work.

Submitted By:

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
David Reid, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience



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LAND STEWARDSHIP IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER APPLICATION PROCESS

Recommended Actions

1. Review application and select the Land Stewardship Implementation Partner.

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the application process for selecting a Land Stewardship Implementation Partner (LSIP) to support the implementation of Measure Q-funded projects.

Following a review process, staff recommend proceeding with the only qualified applicant, Land Trust of Santa Cruz, for designation as the Land Stewardship Implementation Partner.

Discussion

To support implementation of Measure Q, the County issued a call for applications for a Land Stewardship Implementation Partner. The application was publicly available on the Measure Q website from February 7 through March 31, 2025, and was promoted via direct outreach to 18 local and regional conservation organizations. Outreach language encouraged recipients to apply and to share the opportunity with other potentially qualified organizations.

Staff conducted a review based on the criteria outlined in SCCC 4.65.060(A)(3)(h), which states that the LSIP must utilize the following criteria for selecting the land stewardship implementation partner:

- (i) The land stewardship implementation partner shall have a mission generally consistent with the purposes of the Act and the capacity and expertise to implement projects in the public benefit related to land, habitat, ecosystem, and natural resources management and protection.
- (ii) The land stewardship implementation partner shall be a nonprofit organization as defined in SCCC 4.65.010(M) that owns and stewards private lands on which eligible projects in the public benefit can be implemented.
- (iii) The land stewardship implementation partner must be headquartered in Santa Cruz County with at least 10 years of experience working primarily in Santa Cruz County.

(iv) The land stewardship implementation partner must be able to submit annual reports to the Advisory Board and contribute to the development of the five-year vision plan.

One eligible organization submitted an application, they met all the requirements, there were no other eligible organizations. As a result, staff recommend confirming the qualified organization, Land Trust of Santa Cruz, as the County's designated Land Stewardship Implementation Partner under Measure Q.

Financial Impact

There is no immediate financial impact associated with this report. Funding allocated to the Land Stewardship Implementation Partner will be administered under SCCC 4.65.010(D) Projects funded pursuant to SCCC [4.65.040\(B\)\(4\)](#) shall be implemented by the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County and a land stewardship implementation partner. Funds shall be allocated evenly between the two entities. If deemed appropriate and in furtherance of the public benefits of the Act, the land stewardship implementation partner may elect to work with a special district to administer their allocation of funds.

Strategic Initiatives

Equity Framework – County Facilities & Infrastructure, Plans, Policies & Budgets
Operational Plan – Comprehensive Health & Safety, Sustainable Environment Climate
Action – Water, Natural & Working Lands, Wildfire Prevention

Submitted By:

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
David Reid, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience

Attachments

- a. Land Trust of Santa Cruz County Application for the Land Steward Implementation Partner

Measure Q Land Stewardship Implementation Partner Application

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Land Stewardship Implementation Partner under Measure Q. Please complete the following application to demonstrate your organization's qualifications, capacity, and alignment with Measure Q goals.

Application Instructions

- Submit all required materials by Monday, March 31 by 5pm.
- Incomplete applications may not be considered.
- Email supporting documents listed in Section 5 to MeasureQ@santacruzcountycalifornia.gov
- More information on Measure Q can be found at www.santacruzcountycalifornia.gov/MeasureQ

* Required

Organization Information

1. Organization Name: *

Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

2. Organization Address: *

617 Water Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (until May 1, 2025, after this date our address will change to 911 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060)

3. Organization Contact Person: Name, Title, Email and Phone Number *

Eric Lombardo, External Affairs Director, eric.lombardo@landtrustsantacruz.org, (831) 818-0139

4. Is your organization a Nonprofit Organization as defined in subdivision (M) of section 4.65.010 that owns and stewards private lands on which Eligible Projects in the public benefit can be implemented? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other

5. Is your organization headquartered in Santa Cruz County with at least 10 years of experience working primarily in Santa Cruz County? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

6. **Mission Statement:** provide a brief description of your organization's mission and goals. *

The mission of the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (Land Trust) is to protect, care for, and connect all people to the vibrant natural and working lands that are essential for our community and nature to thrive together for generations to come.

The vision of the Land Trust is to realize a future in which the amazing diversity of lands that define and connect us to the Santa Cruz County region — the wild and working forests, the globally unique wildlife habitats, the coastal landscape, and our rich farming and ranching heritage — are cared for and preserved forever.

The Land Trust's current goals are outlined in the organization's Board-adopted 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. The plan addresses three core organizational pillars: protect habitat for biodiversity, preserve farms and working lands, and create access to nature for all. A fourth goal speaks to the need for increased public investment in land management and conservation. Each goal has several strategic initiatives that describe measurable outcomes. Examples of measurable outcomes include conserving more than 400 unprotected acres for endangered species habitat in the Santa Cruz sandhills and other priority habitat areas and restoring at least 40 acres of marginal agricultural land to wetlands as a nature-based solution to reduce flooding of prime farmland and infrastructure. An executive summary of the strategic plan is enclosed as a supporting document.

Qualifications & Experience

7. **Describe your organization's experience in land stewardship projects.**

Include examples of previous work in areas such as natural resource conservation, habitat restoration, or climate resilience. *

The Land Trust has a nearly 50-year track record of conserving and managing lands in Santa Cruz County and is a leader in land stewardship in the region. As the owner and/or manager of over 14,000 acres of conservation lands in the County, the Land Trust has decades of experience in nearly every ecological and community context from Davenport to Watsonville.

For organizations and large landowners with land holdings as vast and diverse as the Land Trust, a constant challenge for stewardship is the endless number of potential restoration and land management projects. The Land Trust takes an evidence-based approach to land stewardship to identify the areas of highest need and selects projects based on potential benefits to ecological function, public access, and community risk reduction.

A notable property that demonstrates the Land Trust's commitment to land stewardship is the Land Trust's Byrne-Milliron Forest encompassing 402 acres in Corralitos. Nearly all of the Land Trust's sustainable land management practices are at work on this property. In past years, we have removed eucalyptus trees and other invasive species from the property, reducing the risk of future high-intensity wildfire and restoring native habitat function. We conduct periodic, selective timber harvests on the property to create a mixed-age and healthy redwood forest ecosystem while simultaneously generating revenue for ongoing stewardship and restoration. Unlike most sustainable forestry properties, the Byrne-Milliron Forest also has 10 miles of trails open to the community at no cost for hiking year-round (when not closed for a harvest). This property demonstrates the Land Trust's commitment to balancing habitat conservation, working lands, and public access for the benefit of people and nature.

In addition to its projects in the Santa Cruz Mountains, the Land Trust also focuses on coastal and agricultural projects that deliver climate resilience and adaptation benefits to human infrastructure and natural habitats. At the mouth of the Pajaro River, the Land Trust is working to plan and design a restoration project that will serve as a nature-based solution to reestablish estuarine wetlands that serve as a "sponge" to reduce flooding. This project is centered around a collaborative partnership with farmers who will continue to grow healthy organic produce on the property. Without a conservation partner like the Land Trust, there are limited incentives for private landowners to implement strategic climate adaptation projects that are good for the community, the environment, and the economy.

These projects are two of many that represent the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County's deep commitment to proactive land management and stewardship in our region from the ridgelines to the valley floor to the coast.

8. List key personnel and their qualifications.

Include relevant expertise and roles they will play in Measure Q projects. *

Sarah Newkirk: Sarah has served as the Executive Director of the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County since 2021. She is an energetic conservation strategist with a passion for bringing nature into communities by calling attention to the myriad values that the land has for people. With her guidance, the Land Trust has matured into a regional conservation leader, with more than 25 full-time staff. Prior to joining the Land Trust, Sarah was a leader in advancing climate change resilience at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for 16 years. As the Director of Disaster Resilience for TNC in California, she led a team focused on protecting natural areas around communities as a strategy for insulating them from natural disasters. In this role, Sarah initiated a first-of-its-kind strategic partnership between TNC and FEMA with the goal of mobilizing new federal investment in conservation through hazard mitigation grant programs. Sarah's background as a scientist, lawyer, and executive leader will directly support the Land Trust's ability to invest public funds raised through Measure Q for the public benefit. If selected, Sarah will provide executive leadership to Measure Q Land Stewardship Implementation Partner project selection, implementation, management, and reporting.

Bryan Largay: Bryan has worked in habitat restoration and conservation science for 25 years. Since 2012, he has overseen land stewardship and conservation strategy for the Land Trust. This work emphasizes biodiversity conservation, wetland and watershed restoration, sustainable production on working lands, and public access planning across the more than 14,000 acres we own and help manage. Bryan focuses on listening to points of view to find practical and technically robust solutions that benefit both environment and community. Prior to joining the Land Trust, Bryan ran the Tidal Wetland Project at the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, was the principal of a small consulting firm, and worked at the Resource Conservation Districts of Santa Cruz and Monterey counties. He received his MS in Hydrologic Sciences at UC Davis, and his bachelors in English at Princeton. Bryan's background as a hydrologist, deep history as a conservation strategist in the Santa Cruz County region, and practical experience leading and delivering conservation projects will directly support Bryan's anticipated role leading planning for use of Measure Q funds if selected as Land Stewardship Implementation Partner. Bryan manages two conservation managers and planning staff who are expected to support the decision-making process for use of Measure Q funds.

Matthew Timmer: Matt is the Land Trust's Director of Land Stewardship, a role dedicated to the management decisions and day-to-day stewardship of over 14,000 acres of land. Matt comes to this work with deep appreciation for nature, stemming from spending time outdoors exploring and catching critters in the woodlots, creeks, and ponds of Michigan during his childhood and early adulthood. He has been exploring Santa Cruz County's rich biodiversity since he moved to Scotts Valley to teach environmental science to middle school students in 2003. Prior to joining the Land Trust, Matt earned a M.S. in Biology from San Jose State University and has conducted biological research on bird and small mammal communities for the United States Forest Service. Matt's expertise of the Land Trust's diverse land holdings and ability to balance and determine the best use of staff and financial capacity will benefit the Land Trust's ability to prioritize projects as Land Stewardship Implementation Partner with a focus on public benefits. Matt manages a staff of 10 professionals who plan, manage, coordinate, and implement stewardship projects and activities on properties under their care. The stewardship staff have a wide array of subject matter expertise, plus the licenses, certifications and competencies that can support Measure Q projects in the public benefit.

9. Provide evidence of your organization's capacity to implement large-scale projects.

Examples may include past project budgets, timelines, and outcomes. *

The Land Trust has a track record of delivering complex, multi-partner restoration, land protection, and public access projects. A few examples include:

Glenwood Open Space Preserve Public Access and Endangered Species Recovery: The Land Trust delivered new public access while supporting endangered species recovery at the Glenwood Open Space Preserve in Scotts Valley. The City of Scotts Valley acquired the property in 2001 with funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board, averting sprawl development that would degrade habitat and be at high risk of wildfire. Since the conservation of the property, the Land Trust formed a partnership with the city and used private donations and public grants from Caltrans and other agencies to design, permit, and construct over seven miles of trails that allow hiking, biking, equestrian access, and dog walking. Concurrently, the Land Trust manages the preserve to protect rare and endangered species such as the endangered Ohlone tiger beetle. Innovative conservation grazing practices are employed to maintain habitats conducive to these species. Providing public access while supporting endangered species recovery is a complex task that took many years of coordination with state and federal agencies. The Land Trust team was committed to a multi-benefit outcome for recreation and restoration.

Watsonville Slough Farm Bryant-Habert Restoration and future public access: The Land Trust owns and manages the Watsonville Slough Farm, a 490-acre property split between organic agriculture and natural habitats and wetlands adjacent to the City of Watsonville. The property produces healthy organic produce while the Land Trust strategically implements habitat restoration, such as the completed Bryant-Habert Restoration project. At the Bryant-Habert site, restoration efforts retired 55 acres of marginal farmland and reintroduced wetlands. This project reduced water usage by 30-40%, improved soil health and groundwater recharge, and enhanced biodiversity, benefiting both the environment and regional agricultural viability. In addition to habitat restoration, the Land Trust is currently developing the Community Harvest public access project to provide educational and recreational opportunities for the local community. This initiative includes plans for U-pick orchards, picnic areas, trails, and several boardwalks and wildlife observation platforms. South County community input has been integral to the project's development, with extensive bilingual outreach informing the design to address local needs for accessible open space and nature experiences. Through Bryant-Habert and Community Harvest, the Land Trust demonstrates its ability to plan and implement major projects that benefit agriculture, biodiversity, and public access all on the same property.

Laurel Curve Highway 17 Wildlife Undercrossing: The Land Trust, in close partnership with Caltrans and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, spearheaded the creation of a wildlife undercrossing at Laurel Curve on Highway 17 to provide safe passage for wildlife. The Land Trust began conserving lands around the known wildlife connectivity chokepoint at Laurel Curve in 2014, eventually protecting nearly 800 acres of habitat adjacent to the highway right-of-way and in the broader connectivity area. Collaborating with many stakeholders, the Land Trust and Caltrans facilitated the design and construction of a large box culvert under the highway, utilizing the natural drainage at Laurel Curve. Several mountain lions have crossed Highway 17 using the undercrossing since it opened in December 2022. In addition, over 1,000 deer have crossed safely through the undercrossing, reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions to near-zero in the project area. Santa Cruz County residents and visitors are experiencing fewer dangerous collisions and frustrating traffic delays on Highway 17 by reducing wildlife collisions, benefitting people and nature.

10. **Please provide the geographic locations and zip codes of your existing work experience within the County of Santa Cruz.** *

The Land Trust owns or holds conservation easements on more than 50 properties, many containing numerous parcels. Small properties less than 10 acres and properties in other counties are not listed here. The Land Trust would only conduct work within Santa Cruz County using Land Stewardship Implementation Partner funds.

Zip code 95005

- Hihn Road (Easement, 25 acres): 7407 Hihn Road, Ben Lomond, 95005
- Newell Creek (Fee title, 22 acres): No situs, Newell Creek Road, Ben Lomond, CA 95005

Zip code 95017

- Davenport Bluffs (Easement, 6 acres, included due to public access): No situs, Davenport, CA 95017

Zip code 95018

- Bias Sandhills (Fee title, 10 acres): No situs, Lilac Drive, Ben Lomond, CA 95018
- Randall Morgan Sandhills Preserve (Fee title, 188 acres): No situs, Geyer Road, Scotts Valley, CA 95018

Zip code 95033

- Adams Ranch (Easement, 78 acres): 25786 Adams Road, Los Gatos, CA 95033
- Lions Gate (Easement, 277 acres): 25250 Santa Cruz Highways, Los Gatos, CA 95033
- Mansion (Easement, 10 acres): 25000 Santa Cruz Highway, Los Gatos, CA 95033

Zip code 95060

- Antonelli Pond (Fee title, 18 acres): No situs, Delaware Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
- San Vicente Redwoods (Public access manager, not landowner, 8,532 acres): 12001 Empire Grade, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (most acreage in 95017)

Zip code 95066

- Bean Creek Sandhills Preserve (Fee title, 17 acres): No situs, Bean Creek Road, Scotts Valley, CA 95066
- Dowd Sandhills (Easement, 37 acres): 400 Green Valley Road, Scotts Valley, CA 95066
- Glenwood Open Space Preserve (Easement, 162 acres): No situs, Glenwood Drive, Scotts Valley, 95066
- Marywood (Easement, 170 acres): 3900 Glenwood Drive, Scott's Valley, CA 95066
- Suhr (Easement, 256 acres): 100 Marinara Lane, Scott's Valley CA 95066

Zip code 95076

- Amesti Orchard (Easement, 123 acres): 267 Amesti Road, Watsonville, CA 95076
- Beach Ranch (Fee Title, 247 acres): 2593 Beach Road, Watsonville, CA 95076
- Borina-Butier Ranch (Easement, 62 acres): 1144 Riverside Drive, Watsonville, CA 95076
- Borina-Home Ranch (Easement, 128 acres): 212 Riverside Drive, Watsonville, 95076
- Borina-Kane Ranch (Easement, 72 acres): 1335 Riverside Road, Watsonville, 95076
- Borina-North Wiley Ranch (Easement, 29 acres): 2 Lakeview Road, Watsonville, 95076
- Borina-South Wiley Ranch (Easement, 37 acres): 1335 Riverside Drive, Watsonville, 95076
- Byrne-Milliron Forest (Fee title, 402 acres): 809 Browns Valley Road, Corralitos, CA 95076
- Circle P Ranch (Easement, 684 acres): 300 Thompson Road, Watsonville, 95076
- Cooley-Connell Ranch (Easement, 73 acres, partially in Monterey County): No situs, San Juan Road, Watsonville, 95076
- Cooley-Crown Ranch (Easement, 206 acres, partially in Monterey County): 115 Crown Road, Watsonville, 95076
- Cooley-Garooley Ranch (Easement, 40 acres): 286 Thompson Road, Watsonville, 95076
- Cooley-Home Ranch (Easement, 46 acres): 140 Peckham Road, Watsonville, 95076
- Duckworth and Richardson Ranch (Easement, 48 acres): No situs, Freedom, CA 95076
- Estrada Ranch (Easement, 1,205 acres): 140 Hazel Dell Road, Watsonville, CA 95076
- Johns Canyon (Easement, 60 acres): 488 Hazel Dell Road, Watsonville, CA 95076
- Lakeview Ranch (Easement, 91 acres): 260 Lakeview Road, Watsonville, CA 95076
- Little Glen Preserve (Fee title, 14 acres): No situs, Larkin Valley Road, Watsonville, CA 95076
- Mount Madonna (Easement, 41 acres): 595 Summit Road, Watsonville, CA 95076
- Pista Farmlands (Easement, 75 acres): 345 Amesti Road, Watsonville, CA 95076
- Silliman Ranch (Easement, 170 acres): No situs, Riverside Road, Watsonville, CA 95076
- Star Creek Ranch (Fee title, 1,195 acres, partially in Santa Clara County): No situs, Riverside Road, Watsonville, CA 95076
- Tynan Ranch (Easement, 178 acres): No situs, Coward Road, Interlaken, CA 95076
- Watsonville Slough Farm (Fee title, 480 acres): 275 Lee Road, Watsonville, CA 95076
- weelili onyenmak Preserve (Fee title, 144 acres): 240 Via Pontos Way, Watsonville, CA 95076

Alignment with Measure Q Goals

11. Explain how your organization's work aligns with the priorities of Measure Q.

Refer to goals such as conserving natural resources, improving watershed health, reducing wildfire or flooding risks, and supporting disadvantaged communities. *

The Land Trust team believes strongly in the value of working in partnership with organizations, government agencies, private landowners, and the public. Each overall goal of Measure Q is also a priority for the Land Trust.

Natural resources, habitat, and biodiversity: The Land Trust is committed to the long-term protection and stewardship of our County's natural resources. With over 14,000 acres under active management or protection, the organization uses science-driven strategies to prioritize restoration projects that protect our community's natural resources, improve natural habitats, and sustain the unique biodiversity of Santa Cruz County. Examples of this approach at work are mentioned in previous responses at the Glenwood Preserve in North County and Watsonville Slough Farm in South County. Through partnerships with experts and organizations like the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, the Land Trust ensures that our natural resources are safeguarded in perpetuity.

Improving watershed health and water resources: The Land Trust integrates watershed restoration across many of its projects, recognizing the essential role that healthy water systems play in sustaining both ecological and human communities. Projects like the upcoming restoration of the Pajaro River Estuary at Beach Ranch reestablish wetland function, improve groundwater recharge, and sustain agricultural viability in our community. Projects in other geographic contexts, such as erosion control and prevention of stream incision at the Glenwood Preserve, reduce ecological degradation and improve watershed health. The stewardship model practiced by the Land Trust incorporates hydrologic science and collaboration with neighbors, farmers, and other stakeholders to improve soil health, reduce erosion, and enhance watershed function. Holistically, the Land Trust seeks to protect our County's water quality, natural drinking water sources, and enhance ecological function of riparian and wetland habitats.

Reducing wildfire risk: Climate adaptation and wildfire risk reduction are major focuses for the Land Trust. Using funding from CAL FIRE and a partnership with the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, the Land Trust recently conducted fuel reduction projects using prescribed fire and burned over 170 debris and underbrush piles at two properties in the San Lorenzo Valley and Ben Lomond area, benefitting sandhills habitat and reducing the risk of a catastrophic fire affecting these communities. There are several more projects permitted and in the project pipeline, but funding is not yet delivered to continue to realize these positive community benefits.

Improving public access to nature: Providing equitable access to nature is a core goal of the Land Trust's mission and strategic plan. Many of the Land Trust's public access spaces are cherished parts of the community, such as Byrne-Milliron Forest for Corralitos and Antonelli Pond adjacent to Natural Bridges State Beach. Not all land trusts nationally invest in public access, but the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County team believes that opening conserved lands for responsible public use builds bridges to the broader community, provides opportunities for youth education, and creates a culture of environmental stewardship.

Supporting under-resourced communities: The Land Trust's current strategic plan identifies a need to increase investment in conservation and resilience projects in South County communities that are home to many under-resourced and historically marginalized residents. The planned Community Harvest project is an example of this commitment: designed with direct input from community members. Projects like these reflect the Land Trust's intentional efforts to break down barriers to nature, deliver public health benefits of spending time outdoors, and ensure that all communities in Santa Cruz County share in the promise of Measure Q investments.

12. Describe your ability to deliver public benefits through stewardship projects.

Include details about improving access, recreation, or other community outcomes. *

The Land Trust team understands that Measure Q funds will be sourced from local taxpayers and community members, including many of the staff and board members of the Land Trust who themselves will be taxpayers funding Measure Q projects. It is critical that projects conducted by the Land Stewardship Implementation Partner not only have a public-benefit nexus, but that those public benefits are visible, easy to understand, and accessible to the community.

Three examples of anticipated public benefit projects include improvements to existing trails and building new trails, conducting treatments to reduce brush in high wildfire risk areas, and returning unproductive farmland to wetland habitat.

Trails and public access: As described in previous responses, the Land Trust manages public access free to the community in Santa Cruz (Antonelli Pond), Scotts Valley (Glenwood Open Space Preserve), Davenport (Davenport Bluffs), Corralitos (Byrne-Milliron Forest), Watsonville (Watsonville Slough Farm Community Harvest, under development and adjacent to the city), and in the unincorporated parts of the County (San Vicente Redwoods). The Land Trust team anticipates using Measure Q funds, if selected as the Land Stewardship Implementation Partner, for improvement of existing trail systems and expansion or creation of new public access.

Wildfire risk reduction: There are many permitted and unfunded wildfire risk reduction projects the Land Trust is ready to implement and deliver public benefits to the community, specifically those living in high-risk wildfire areas such as the San Lorenzo Valley. Many of the sandhills properties managed by the Land Trust are in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) adjacent to many homes. In these areas, prescribed fire or similar treatments can ecologically benefit the sandhills and provide community protections by reducing understory brush and creating "parkland" habitat where fire is less able to move up the canopy or across the landscape.

Wetland restoration for resilience and water resources: Prior responses described the Land Trust's completed wetland restoration at Bryant-Habert (Watsonville Slough Farm) and the planned estuarine wetland restoration at the mouth of the Pajaro River (Beach Ranch). These projects deliver public benefits ranging from reduced demand on water, improved groundwater recharge function, and flood risk reduction.

Proposed Role and Approach

13. Outline your organization's proposed role as a Land Stewardship Implementation Partner.

- How will your organization support the implementation of Measure Q priorities?
- What specific expertise or resources do you bring to the partnership?

*

The Land Trust has a unique role in the community as one of the largest private landowners and a presence in or near nearly every community in the County. The organization has specific skills, described below. The Land Trust team also believes it is important not to get ahead of the process: the Citizen's Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) needs to develop and adopt a five-year Vision Plan. As the potential Land Stewardship Implementation Partner, the Land Trust wishes to better understand the COAB's goals and priorities for Measure Q funding and intends to be a collaborative partner to ensure that the goals in the Vision Plan can be actualized using Measure Q funding. In addition to this consideration, the Land Trust can bring:

Expertise on staff: As one of the largest nonprofit organizations focused on land stewardship based in Santa Cruz County, the Land Trust has skillsets on-staff that can be useful to the COAB, County staff, and the overall Measure Q process. The Land Trust has full-time staff and Board members with backgrounds in botany, ornithology, wildlife connectivity, hydrology, finance, grant administration, fundraising, and many more capacities. Staff can support planning and provide input where appropriate to benefit the Measure Q implementation process.

Connection to partners: The Land Trust team starts every project by identifying partners for funding, implementation, education, and more. From San Vicente Redwoods to Watsonville Slough Farm, the Land Trust has active partnerships with nonprofit groups, community leaders, businesses, farmers, government agencies, and everything in-between. The Measure Q process will benefit from investing in partnership for multi-benefit projects, which is a foundational value for the Land Trust.

Resources (described below) for leverage: Land stewardship projects are expensive. Access to private capital and grant resources to match to local Measure Q funding will be critical for maximum impacts for these valuable local tax dollars. This approach is described in more detail in response to the next question.

14. Describe your approach to leveraging Measure Q funds.

Explain how you will use these funds to secure additional resources or enhance project impacts. *

State and federal funding: As Proposition 4 funds become available, the Land Trust expects to apply for funds from core funding partners such as the California Wildlife Conservation Board and the State Coastal Conservancy. The Beach Ranch acquisition, for example, leveraged nearly \$14 million in public state funds from these two agencies and the California Department of Conservation Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program. If selected, the Land Trust expects to allocate a chunk of the Land Stewardship Implementation Partner funds to serve as match for state Proposition 4 grant applications.

Land protection and stewardship need: One of the Land Trust's core competencies is land acquisition. These real estate projects have access to many sources of capital at the private, state, and federal level. If selected as the Land Stewardship Implementation Partner, the Land Trust does not expect to invest significant Measure Q funding into acquisition projects. However, few sources exist to fund stewardship of these newly conserved lands. Frequently, the Land Trust takes ownership of new properties that have significant backlogs of maintenance needs ranging from fencing in disrepair to build-up of underbrush and invasive species causing wildfire risk and threatening ecological integrity. Local funding from Measure Q can be immediately deployed to address these issues, ensuring that risk reduction and stewardship activities can begin immediately on newly acquired properties, rather than waiting months or years for the right grant funding opportunity.

Supporting Documents

Please email the following documents to MeasureQ@santacruzcountycal.gov:

- IRS determination letter for nonprofit applicants
- Recent financial statements or audit reports.
- Resumes or CVs of key personnel.
- Letters of support (optional but encouraged).
- Examples of previous projects or case studies (if applicable).

15. I agree to email the supporting documents mentioned above to MeasureQ@santacruzcountycal.gov by the application deadline:

☒ Yes

☐ No