



SANTA CLARA COUNTY SPECIAL DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

5770 Almaden Expressway • San Jose, California 95118 • (408) 265-2600

Meeting Agenda

Santa Clara County Special Districts Association

Monday, March 2, 2026

12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://valleywater.zoom.us/j/9747509355>

Meeting ID: 974 750 9355

Join by Phone:

1 (669) 900-9128, 9747509355#

1. Call to Order

Welcome and Introductions

2. Public Comment

Opportunity for members of the public to make comments (3 minutes/speaker)

3. State Legislative Office Updates

Opportunity to hear updates and ask questions of attending legislative staff

4. Business

- a. Discussion and Possible Action on 2026 SCCSDA Officers
- b. Discussion and Possible Action on December 1, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- c. Discussion and Possible Action on 2026 Meeting Schedule
- d. Discussion and Possible Action on Financial Report
- e. Discussion and Possible Action on 2026 Budget
- f. Discussion and Possible Action on Draft Travel & Expense Reimbursement Policy

5. Partner Agency Reports

- a. Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Clara County (LAFCO)
 - Neelima Palacherla, Executive Officer
 - Yoriko Kishimoto, Special District Representative on LAFCO
- b. California Special Districts Association (CSDA)
 - Colleen Haley, Public Affairs Field Coordinator, CSDA

6. Santa Clara County Special District Association Member Reports

7. Review of Action Items and Adjournment

- a. Action Item Review
 - b. Adjourn
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Meeting Minutes

Santa Clara County Special Districts Association
December 2, 2025
12:00 p.m. -1:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order

SCCSDA President Helen Chapman called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Members:

Helen Chapman, Director, Santa Clara Valley Open Space District (President)
Brandon Kwan, Director, Rancho Rinconada Recreation and Park District (Vice President)
Jim Beall, Director, Santa Clara Valley Water District (Treasurer)
Sue Fitzpatrick, Trustee, Saratoga Cemetery District
Frank Maitski, President, North Santa Clara Resource Conservation District
Bill Bosworth, Director, Cupertino Sanitary District
Mark Shumate, Deputy Chief, Santa Clara County Fire Department
Jo Anne "J" Logan, General Manager, Los Altos Hills County Fire District
Jon Cowan, Executive Director of Government Relations & Community Partnerships, El Camino Healthcare District
Kent Edler, Director of Engineering and Operations, West Valley Sanitation District

Attendees (Non-Voting):

Shiloh Ballard, Director, Santa Clara Valley Water District
Yoriko Kishimoto, Director, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Neelima Palacherla, Executive Officer, Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Clara County (LAFCO)
Colleen Haley, Public Affairs Field Coordinator, California Special Districts Association
Caroline Hernandez, Clerk of the Board, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
Lena Eyen, Conservation Policy Specialist, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority

SCCSDA Support Staff:

Roseryn Bhudsabourg, Supervising Program Administrator, Valley Water
Genevieve Yip, Senior Management Analyst, Valley Water
Heather Hamp, Staff Analyst, Valley Water

2. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

3. Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority Presentation on Recent Milestones and Upcoming Opportunities

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (OSA) Clerk of the Board Caroline Hernandez and Conservation Policy Specialist Lena Eyen provided an overview of OSA's mission, governance structure, funding, and recent accomplishments. They stated that OSA was established in 1993 to conserve the natural environment, support agriculture, and connect people to nature. OSA is governed by a seven-member elected Board and advised by a 15-member Citizens Advisory Committee. Staff reported that OSA operates with an annual budget of approximately \$12 million. Revenue is generated through a \$12 per year parcel-



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based benefit assessment in District 1, a \$24 per year parcel tax approved by voters through Measure T in 2020, and state, local, federal, and private grant funding, with more than \$90 million secured to date.

Since its inception, OSA has protected over 30,000 acres through fee title acquisitions, land donations, and conservation and agricultural easements. Staff reported that OSA continues to invest in nature-based climate resilience strategies and operates four public preserves offering more than 33 miles of multi-use trails for hiking, biking, and equestrian use.

Staff also reported on Coyote Valley conservation efforts, including the AB 948 designation recognizing the area as a landscape of statewide significance, the permanent protection of 937 acres in North Coyote Valley, and more than \$130 million invested in conservation and climate resilience initiatives. They noted the development of the Coyote Valley Conservation Areas Master Plan, implementation of restoration projects such as wetland enhancement and beaver dam analogs, and recent grant awards totaling \$14.8 million for agricultural land protection and \$240,000 for wildfire resilience equipment.

4. State Legislative Office Updates

No updates were received.

5. Business

a. Discussion and Action on September 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Director Beall, seconded by Director Cowan, and unanimously carried, that the Board approve the September 15, 2025 meeting minutes.

b. Discussion and Approval of Financial Report

The Board reviewed the financial report. It was moved by Vice President Kwan, seconded by Director Beall, and unanimously carried, that the Board approve the quarterly financial report ending on November 26, 2025.

c. Discussion and Possible Action on Draft Travel & Expense Reimbursement Policy

President Chapman went over the draft Travel & Expense Reimbursement Policy. Valley Water Senior Management Analyst Genevieve Yip reported the draft policy was developed to reflect best practices, align with municipal standards, and emphasize the ethical use of public funds. In preparing the draft policy, staff benchmarked policies from the County of Santa Clara, Valley Water, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Rancho Rinconada Recreation and Park District, Saratoga Fire Protection District, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, West Valley Sanitation District, North Santa Clara Resource Conservation District, and the Cities of San Jose and Santa Clara.

The Board reviewed the draft policy and key discussion points included whether to limit travel to California locations, encouraging the use of lowest-cost transportation options, clarifying lodging distance standards, and limiting conference attendance to one representative. Staff noted that historically only one representative has attended conferences. Considering current budget levels, the Board expressed support for formalizing a one-person conference attendance standard.



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It was moved by Director Fitzpatrick, seconded by Vice President Kwan, and unanimously carried that the Board direct staff to incorporate Board feedback and return a revised draft policy in March for formal adoption.

6. Partner Agency Reports

a. Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Clara County (LAFCO)

LAFCO Executive Officer Neelima Palacherla provided an update on the initiation of a countywide Water and Wastewater Service Review. She reported that a draft Request for Proposals has been prepared and is pending Commission approval. A Technical Advisory Committee will be formed, including representatives from cities, districts, and associations. The project is anticipated to take approximately one year to complete, with public engagement opportunities provided throughout the process.

b. California Special Districts Association (CSDA)

CSDA Public Affairs Field Coordinator Colleen Haley shared the CSDA YEAR End Legislative Report in lieu of a verbal report to a meeting conflict.

7. Santa Clara County Special District Association Member Reports

Director Logan reported that Los Altos Hills County Fire District's vegetation mitigation planning is underway along the I-280 corridor from Cupertino to Palo Alto and the project timing was being coordinated around major regional events. She also noted that a feasibility study is underway for a potential new fire facility. Vice President Kwan reported that negotiations are underway for Rancho Rinconada Recreation and Park District's pool deck renovation bid approval. He also reported that the District is investigating ownership of a parcel intended for use as a public pathway and is exploring potential acquisition or an easement to improve facility access.

8. Review of Action Items and Adjournment

a. Action Item Review

Valley Water staff will incorporate the Board's feedback to the draft Travel & Expense Reimbursement Policy and bring back a revised draft policy in March for formal adoption.

b. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:02 p.m.



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Item 5C. 2026 Meeting Schedule

The SCCSDA Board meets quarterly at 12:00 p.m. on the first Monday of March, June, September*, and December.

March 2, 2026

June 1, 2026

September 14, 2026

December 7, 2026

**The September meeting is rescheduled due to the observance of Labor Day.*



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Item 5D. Financial Report

Balance on hand as of 11/26/2025	\$3,302.61
Deposits	+900.00
Withdrawals	
<i>Banking Service Fee (December)</i>	<i>-\$16.00</i>
<i>Banking Service Fee (January)</i>	<i>-\$16.00</i>
Remaining Balance as of 2/27/2026	\$4,170.61

Item 5E: 2026 SCCSDA Budget

Santa Clara County Special Districts Association Projected 2026 Budget

Starting Date: 1/1/2026

	Beginning	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Total	
1	Cash on hand (Beginning of Month)	3,286.61	3,286.61	3,270.61	4,154.61	3,675.21	3,659.21	3,643.21	3,267.21	3,251.21	3,235.21	2,859.21	2,843.21	2,827.21	
2															
3	CASH RECEIPTS														
4	Dues Received As of 2/27/2026			900											900
5	TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS			900	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	900
6	Total cash available	3,286.61	3,286.61	4,170.61	4,154.61	3,675.21	3,659.21	3,643.21	3,267.21	3,251.21	3,235.21	2,859.21	2,843.21	2,827.21	
7															
8	CASH PAID OUT														
9	Lunches for Meetings							360			360			360	1,080
10	Go Daddy Domain Name												75		75
11	Constant Contact (annual)				463.40										463.40
12	Conference & Event Fees <small>2026 CSDA Annual Conference August 24-27, 2026 - Palm Desert, CA ~\$2,440 Estimate to Send One Representative: ~\$990/Registration ~\$250/Night (3 Nights Total) ~\$300 for Meal Reimbursement ~\$400 for Travel to Palm Springs</small>														
13	Mileage and Travel Reimbursement														0
14	Banking Expenses		16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	192
15															0
16	Miscellaneous														0
17	SUBTOTAL		16	16	479.40	16	16	376	16	16	376	16	16	451	
18															0
19															0
20															0
21															0
22															0
23	TOTAL CASH PAID OUT		16	16	479.40	16	16	376	16	16	376	16	16	451	1810.4
24	Cash on hand (End of Month)	\$3,286.61	\$3,270.61	\$4,154.61	\$3,675.21	\$3,659.21	\$3,643.21	\$3,267.21	\$3,251.21	\$3,235.21	\$2,859.21	\$2,843.21	\$2,827.21	\$2,376.21	



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Item 5F. Discussion and Possible Action on Revised Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy

BACKGROUND

At the Board's direction during the September 15, 2025 SCCSDA meeting, staff prepared a draft Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy in coordination with President Helen Chapman and Director Sue Fitzpatrick. The purpose of the policy is to establish clear standards that reflect best practices, align with municipal norms, and ensure the prudent, ethical, and transparent use of public funds.

To inform development of the draft policy, staff conducted a survey of regional public agencies to review comparable travel and reimbursement policies and benchmark prevailing standards. Agencies reviewed included the County of Santa Clara, Valley Water, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Rancho Rinconada Recreation and Park District, Saratoga Fire Protection District, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, West Valley Sanitation District, North Santa Clara Resource Conservation District, and the Cities of San Jose and Santa Clara.

The Board reviewed the draft policy at its December 2, 2025 meeting, provided direction regarding potential revisions, and unanimously voted to direct staff to return with a revised draft policy incorporating Board feedback.

DISCUSSION

Staff has incorporated the Board's feedback and revised the draft policy accordingly. Key revisions include:

1. Establishing a general limitation that reimbursable travel be confined to locations within the State of California.
2. Strengthening policy language, requiring the use of the lowest-cost reasonable transportation options, including economy airfare and preference for cost-effective ground transportation alternatives.
3. Clarifying lodging eligibility criteria by defining reasonable commuting distance standards and specifying conditions under which overnight accommodations may be reimbursed.
4. Formalizing a policy standard limiting conference attendance to one authorized representative.
5. Incorporating language to preserve flexibility for legislative advocacy travel when expressly authorized by the Board.

These revisions provide greater clarity, promote fiscal responsibility, and formalize practices consistent with best practices observed among comparable public agencies, reinforcing SCCSDA's commitment to prudent, ethical, and transparent use of public funds.

RECOMMENDATION

Review and consider action on the revised Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Revised SCCSDA Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy

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TRAVEL & EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

DRAFT

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to establish clear and uniform standards for reimbursing travel and business-related expenses incurred while conducting official business on behalf of the Santa Clara County Special Districts Association (“SCCSDA” or “Association”).
- 1.2. As a public agency, SCCSDA must ensure that all expenditures of public funds:
 - 1.2.1. Directly support a legitimate public purpose;
 - 1.2.2. Represent the most economical and responsible use of public resources; and
 - 1.2.3. Avoid any appearance of personal benefit, misuse, or excessive spending.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. Authorized Representative: Any Member Representative, or individual formally authorized to represent SCCSDA in official business.
- 2.2. Official Business: Activities explicitly approved by SCCSDA, including conferences, trainings, workshops, intergovernmental meetings, and stakeholder or collaborative efforts directly related to SCCSDA’s purpose as defined in the Chapter’s bylaws.
- 2.3. Economical Option: The lowest reasonable cost alternative that meets the requirements of the business purpose, including use of government or group rates whenever available.
- 2.4. Reimbursable Expense: An expenditure incurred by an Authorized Representative that meets all eligibility requirements in this policy.
- 2.5. Non-Reimbursable Expense: Any expenditure that does not meet eligibility criteria, is primarily personal in nature, or is excessive or unrelated to Official Business.

3. Ethical Standards & Public Funds Requirements

- 3.1. All expenditures must comply with:
 - 3.1.1. California Government Code §§ 53232–53232.3 (AB 1234);
 - 3.1.2. California Government Code § 8314 (Misuse of Public Resources);

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3.1.3. California Government Code § 1090 and the Political Reform Act; and

3.1.4. Applicable FPPC regulations.

3.2. Reimbursable expenses shall:

3.2.1. Be necessary, reasonable, and solely related to official business;

3.2.2. Be the most cost-effective option available;

3.2.3. Never include personal, extravagant, or recreational costs; and

3.2.4. Be appropriate for review by the public, media, or auditors.

3.3. Expenditures shall not include:

3.3.1. Personal entertainment, recreation, or amenities unrelated to official business;

3.3.2. Alcohol;

3.3.3. Excessive or luxury accommodations or travel upgrades.

3.4. Ineligible Participation in Conferences and Training

Authorized Representatives shall not attend educational conferences, seminars, workshops, courses, or professional meetings if:

3.4.1. The event offers no significant or demonstrable benefit to SCCSDA;

3.4.2. The opportunity occurs after the individual has announced their resignation; or

3.4.3. The event has not received preauthorization by the SCCSDA Board.

3.5. Travel or training that primarily provides personal enjoyment or networking without a clear official business benefit is not eligible for reimbursement.

3.6. Junkets (e.g., travel or events primarily for personal pleasure at public expense) are strictly prohibited.

4. Eligible Activities

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4.1. Reimbursement is allowed only for official business, including:

4.1.1. Conferences, trainings, workshops, or continuing education directly related to SCCSDA's purpose;

4.1.2. Intergovernmental, regional, or legislative meetings where SCCSDA representation is required or directed;

4.1.3. Panels, speaking engagements, or collaborative efforts where SCCSDA has a formal role.

4.2. Not Eligible

4.2.1. Attendance at SCCSDA quarterly business meetings;

4.2.2. Routine internal meetings or events that are part of normal governance functions;

4.2.3. Any activity that does not provide clear benefit to SCCSDA.

4.3. Geographic Location

4.3.1. Reimbursable travel shall generally be limited to events, meetings, or activities located within the State of California.

4.4. Conference Attendance Limitation

4.4.1. Attendance at conferences, trainings, or similar events shall be limited to one Authorized Representative per event, unless the Board determines that additional representation is necessary to advance SCCSDA's official interests.

5. Pre-Authorization

5.1. All reimbursable travel or expenses must receive advance approval from the SCCSDA Board.

5.2. Requests must include:

5.2.1. The official business purpose;

5.2.2. Estimated costs;

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5.2.3. Confirmation that the most economical options were considered;

5.2.4. Additional supporting documentation,

5.3. Expenses incurred without prior authorization will not be reimbursed.

6. Reimbursable Expenses

6.1. Transportation

6.1.1. Transportation shall utilize the lowest-cost reasonable option that meets the official business need, taking into consideration efficiency, safety, and total public cost.

6.1.2. Personal Vehicle: Reimbursed at the IRS standard mileage rate; most direct route required; travel to quarterly meetings is not reimbursable.

6.1.3. Air Travel: Economy/coach class only; no upgrades, early boarding, or priority seating; government or group rates must be used when available. Flights should be selected based on the lowest logical fare consistent with reasonable scheduling needs.

6.1.4. Ground Transportation: Public transit or hotel shuttles preferred; taxis/rideshare only when more efficient; rental cars limited to standard or smaller class and only when necessary.

6.2. Lodging

6.2.1. Standard room accommodations only; luxury lodging is prohibited.

6.2.2. Lodging will not be reimbursed for events located within 50 miles of the Authorized Representative's primary residence or principal place of business, unless the Board determines that attendance at a multi-day conference or event requires an overnight stay to fully participate in official sessions.

6.2.3. Government or conference rates must be used when available.

6.2.4. Itemized receipts are required for reimbursement.

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6.2.5. Lodging for the night before or after a conference or event will not generally be reimbursed. Lodging the night prior to the start of an event may be approved in certain circumstances. If the attendee can depart at or after 6:00 a.m. on the first day of the event and arrive on time, lodging the night prior will not be reimbursed.

6.3. Meals

6.3.1. Actual costs will be reimbursed up based on per diem established by the General Services Administration (GSA).

6.3.2. Alcohol is not reimbursable.

6.3.3. Tips must be reasonable and consistent with public agency standards.

6.3.4. Meals provided as part of a conference, event, or meeting registration (including group meals or catered events) will not be reimbursed separately. Attendees are expected to utilize provided meals when available.

6.4. Eligible Business Expenses

6.4.1. Conference or registration fees;

6.4.2. Required internet or business communication services;

6.4.3. Modest parking fees;

6.4.4. Necessary program materials.

6.5. Non-Reimbursable Expenses

6.5.1. Alcohol;

6.5.2. Entertainment, recreation, movies, tours, or personal excursions;

6.5.3. Room service or minibar items;

6.5.4. Expenses for spouses, partners, or guests;

6.5.5. Laundry for trips under 5 days;

6.5.6. Gifts, souvenirs, toiletries, or clothing;

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6.5.7. Travel that includes personal vacation elements;

6.5.8. Costs exceeding reasonable government or group rates.

7. Documentation & Submittal Requirements

7.1. All reimbursement requests must:

7.1.1. Be submitted within 30 days of the expense;

7.1.2. Use the SCCSDA Reimbursement Form;

7.1.3. Include itemized receipts for expenses of \$25 or more;

7.1.4. Identify any personal travel portion, which is not reimbursable;

7.1.5. Demonstrate that the expense reflected the most economical option;

7.1.6. Be reviewed by the Treasurer and approved by the Executive Committee.

7.1.7. Individuals receiving reimbursement must be prepared to provide a brief report summarizing the value and relevance of any conference or meeting attended at SCCSDA expense.

8. Travel Advances

8.1. No travel advances will be issued.

8.2. All reimbursable expenses must be incurred first and submitted for reimbursement after completion of the travel or event.

9. Violations

9.1. Improper claims, misuse of public funds, or failure to follow this policy may result in:

9.1.1. Denial of reimbursement;

9.1.2. Repayment obligations;

9.1.3. Loss of future reimbursement privileges;

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9.1.4. Referral to appropriate authorities if warranted

Adopted: March X, 2026 [TO BE UPDATED]