



SANTA CLARA COUNTY

SPECIAL DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

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

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.