

Subject **Potential changes to Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program**
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Valley Water to hold a public hearing on proposed changes to the voter-approved Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program

Dear Neighbor,

The Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program, a countywide special parcel tax that voters approved in 2012 and renewed in 2020, funds 32 projects across Santa Clara County. It provides approximately \$52.3 million annually for local projects that deliver safe, clean water, natural flood protection and environmental stewardship.

While renewing the Safe, Clean Water Program in 2020, Valley Water gathered community feedback to help create six priorities for the renewed [community-preferred program report](#). In the past few years, infrastructure construction projects within the renewed Safe, Clean Water Program have experienced significant cost increases, resulting in funding shortfalls for some projects.

To adapt to these cost increases, Valley Water staff recommends re-allocating \$10 million in funding designated for the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project to other Safe, Clean Water Program projects. Staff also recommends a handful of other Safe, Clean Water Program changes.

The Valley Board of Directors will hold a public hearing on April 9, 2024, at 1 p.m. to discuss and consider the proposed Safe, Clean Water program changes.

Members of the public can attend in person at Valley Water headquarters, located at 5700 Almaden Expressway in San Jose, or via Zoom

valleywater.zoom.us/j/84454515597

Here is a brief overview of the proposed changes.

The Safe, Clean Water Program provides \$10 million to the Pacheco Project, which represents less than half a percent of its total cost. Staff recommends shifting the \$10 million in funding from the Pacheco Project to the Sunnyvale East and West Channels Flood Protection Project and the Good Neighbor Program: Encampment Cleanups. To date, the Safe, Clean Water Program has provided zero dollars to the Pacheco project.

Valley Water is scheduled to begin construction of phase 1 of the Sunnyvale East and West project in 2025. However, construction for Phase 2 is delayed because of a funding shortfall. Valley Water could build both phases without delay by shifting funds from Pacheco to the Sunnyvale East and West project. Valley Water is strengthening its efforts to clean up encampment-generated trash, debris, and hazardous pollutants along waterways. In August 2023, Valley Water installed portable toilets and wash stations at critical locations along local creeks. Our agency is also developing a program to provide debit cards to unsheltered residents who maintain camp areas free of trash and debris. The reallocated funding from the Pacheco project will help pay for these added services.

The Board of Directors will also consider these Safe, Clean Water Program changes.

Project E8: Upper Guadalupe River Flood Protection - Staff recommends modifying the locally funded only key performance indicator (KPI) of this project. Currently, the KPI states the project will “provide gravel augmentation along approximately 800 linear feet of the Upper Guadalupe River in San José, from approximately the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge to West Virginia Street Bridge to improve aquatic habitat for migrating steelhead and channel stability.” The improvements targeted to improve habitat for protected steelhead will benefit all native fish species. Staff recommends that the Board modify KPI #2 to include all native fish species.

Project F9: The Grants and Partnerships for Safe, Clean Water, Flood

Protection and Environmental Stewardship provides grants and partnerships for agencies, organizations, and individuals for water conservation, pollution prevention, creek cleanups and education, wildlife habitat restoration and wildlife corridors and crossings, and access to trails and open space. This project's fourth key performance index is restricted to partnerships with "small municipalities (defined as under 50,000 people in the most recent census available) or special districts with boundaries substantially within the footprint of small cities."

Staff recommends that KPI #4 be expanded beyond small cities and districts and include individuals through a new rebate program offering assistance with implementing watershed activities that provide community benefits, such as bank repair, sediment removal, and downed tree management.

You can read the entire proposal of changes at

<https://scvwd.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6582250&GUID=34565883-C664-4F96-8D09-EBD88BCF0FD5>

Valley Water | valleywater.org



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