



Proposed Revisions to Board Travel Reimbursement Policy

April 25, 2024



Purpose and Goals

- **Review Board Travel Reimbursement Policy**
 - Legal Requirements
 - Overview of Current Board Travel Reimbursement Policy
 - Comparable Agencies Policies
 - Review Highlights of Proposed Changes
- **Refer revised policy to a regular board meeting for approval**

Legal Requirements

California Government Code - §53232.2

(b) If a local agency reimburses members of a legislative body for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of official duties, then the governing body shall adopt a written policy, in a public meeting, specifying the types of occurrences that qualify a member of the legislative body to receive reimbursement of expenses relating to travel, meals, lodging, and other actual and necessary expenses.

Board Travel Reimbursement

- Board Policy No. 41 – Travel Authorization & Reimbursement of Travel Expenses for Elected or Appointed Officials, approved in 2006
- Purpose – Establish a consistent policy for authorizing attendance, travel and reimbursement of expenses for District Directors attending conferences, training, meetings, and other official business



Current Board Policy No. 41 authorizes reimbursement for:

- **Travel and expense reimbursement for conference, meetings and other functions from which the District derives a specific benefit through attendance**
- **Allowed travel and reimbursement expenses include:**
 - Coach/economy airfare
 - Mileage reimbursement or ground transportation (taxi) costs
 - Meal Allowance (IRS limits; not to exceed \$52 per day total)
 - Breakfast \$12, Lunch \$15, Dinner \$25
 - Time of departure and return further restrict reimbursement
 - Lodging at a rate determined by the District to be reasonable for the location and nature of event
 - 70+ miles from District or elected official's home
 - Bay Area- only if early morning or late night attendance requirements
 - Telephone Charges
 - Necessary District business related long distance calls
 - Long distance calls for 10 minutes per night to home

Current Board Policy No. 41 prohibits reimbursement for:

- Upgraded airfares
- Alcoholic beverages
- Items of a personal nature, examples include:
 - Movies
 - Entertainment
 - Dry cleaning
 - Spas
 - Fines or traffic violations
 - Excess baggage costs
 - Spouse or guest accommodations
 - Conference tours, banquets, activities offered at conferences but not related to professional advancement

Current Board Policy No. 41 Reimbursement Procedures

- Within 10 days of travel, the Director submits an expense statement
- Must include receipts for all expenses over \$10
- Finance Division processes and reviews for compliance with Policy
- The GM is required to review and approve the expense statements

Comparable Agencies – Travel Reimbursement

- **Alameda County WD** - Reasonable expenses reimbursed for District business with prior Board approved travel
- **Contra Costa WD** – Over \$300 requires prior Board approval, reimbursed per state/federal law with receipts
- **Eastern Municipal WD** – For District business not to exceed \$500 per day, excluding conference fees or airfare
- **North Marin WD** – With prior Board approval, consistent with IRS Pub. 463
- **Western Municipal WD** - With prior Board approval, any reasonable expenses consistent with IRS Accounting Plan
- **West Basin WD** – For necessary District business, reasonable reimbursement

Proposed Revisions – Travel Reimbursement Policy

- **Continues to Authorize Reimbursement for Travel related to District business**
 - *“limited to conferences, meetings and other functions from which the District derives a specific benefit through attendance. Only travel and attendance that is directly related to District business and is deemed necessary and/or advantageous to the District will be eligible for reimbursement consistent with this policy”*
- **Adds that travel outside of North America would require prior Board approval**

Proposed Revisions – Travel Reimbursement Policy

- **Further Clarifications to Airfare Reimbursements**
 - Maintains coach/economy airfare limitation
 - If layovers selected, Director still limited to coach/economy airfare for direct route(s)
 - If upgrades or layovers selected, Directors responsible for providing costs of direct route coach/economy fare at time of booking
- **Public Transit or Carpooling**
 - Updated to reflect ridesharing (Uber/ Lyft)
- **Airport Parking**
 - Adds requirement that long-term parking be used for travel exceeding 24 hours

Proposed Revisions – Travel Reimbursement Policy

- **Meal Allowance**

- If Director eats meal provided by conference or meeting, do not include that meal on reimbursement request.
- Eliminate rigid departure/ return arrival time restrictions on meal allowances (i.e., depart after 8 a.m. no breakfast).
- Aligns meal allowance with Federal General Services Administration’s per diem rates (based on locality, regularly updated)
 - For travel outside of U.S., but within North America, would utilize U.S. Department of State per diem rates (will clarify in current draft policy)

Primary Destination	County	Continental Breakfast/Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Monterey	Monterey	\$17	\$18	\$34
Oakland	Alameda	\$17	\$18	\$34
Palm Springs	Riverside	\$16	\$17	\$31
Point Arena / Gualala	Mendocino	\$18	\$20	\$36
Sacramento	Sacramento	\$16	\$17	\$31
San Diego	San Diego	\$17	\$18	\$34
San Francisco	San Francisco	\$18	\$20	\$36

Note- Current policy- Breakfast \$12, Lunch \$15, Dinner \$25 (not updated since 2006)

Proposed Revisions – Travel Reimbursement Policy

- **Lodging**
 - Requires utilization of group rate when possible
 - Permits reasonable alternative if group rate is unavailable
- **Eliminate Long-Distance Telephone Charge Reimbursements**
 - Cell phones have largely made this provision obsolete
- **Requires that Director(s) Report Out at Board Meeting Following Attendance at District Expense**
 - Board Handbook (p. 13)- report out during the Directors' and General Manager's Announcements portion of agenda

Proposed Revisions – Travel Reimbursement Policy

- **Approval of Requests and Expenditures**

- Requires receipts for reimbursements of \$10 or more, unless based on per diem rates (discussed previously)
- Requires Finance Division to Review for Compliance
- If reimbursement requests exceed the limits in the policy, the Board shall review and approve such reimbursement requests during a public meeting.

Travel Reimbursement Policy

- **Recommend that Committee refer revised policy to future regularly scheduled Board meeting for approval**