

Santa Clara Climate Resilience Fund

Strategic Business Plan Overview

June 2026



SANTA CLARA
**Climate
Resilience
Fund**



Resilience Fund Purpose

Officially established in 2023, the Santa Clara County Climate Collaborative (SC4) serves as a regional hub advancing coordinated, culturally responsive and equitable climate solutions. It brings together public agencies, academia, nonprofits, community-based organizations (CBOs), and community leaders to support strategic planning, capacity building, and joint funding opportunities. With 56 official partners and another 40+ stakeholder organizational collaborators, SC4 strengthens coordination and collaboration across jurisdictions, hazards, and geographic regions within Santa Clara County and neighboring regions.

The Santa Clara Climate Resilience Fund (Resilience Fund) is an implementation goal of the SC4's 2024 – 2026 Strategic Plan. Through several focus groups conducted by Coastal Quest and Climate Resilient Communities across SC4 members in 2025, three primary needs were identified to help support organizations in financing climate resilience (or furthering the ability of Santa Clara County to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate change), namely: 1) capacity building services to understand the landscape of funding opportunities; 2) technical assistance (TA) to secure funding for climate resilience projects; and 3) direct access to accessible and flexible grant funding.

The Resilience Fund is designed to advance the mission of the SC4 by providing funding and capacity building support across the four Impact Areas from the SC4 Strategic Plan (2024-2026 and upcoming 2027-2029):

- 1) Empower Communities to Build Resilience to Climate Change**
- 2) Achieve Net Zero Emissions**
- 3) Prepare Communities for Extreme Heat and Impaired Air Quality**
- 4) Eliminate Risk from Flooding and Rising Seas**

The Resilience Fund addresses critical funding and organizational capacity gaps that limit the implementation of high-impact projects. Through capacity building, TA, project coordination and grant-making services, the Resilience Fund advances SC4's goals and priorities through supporting multi-sector and multi-hazard climate initiatives that promote equity and community resilience.

Resilience Fund Goals and Measures of Success

The Resilience Fund is designed to ensure long-term impact and strengthen regional coordination.

Goal 1: Provide sustainable financing for critical climate resilience projects

The Resilience Fund aims to coordinate and amplify funding opportunities and acquire long-term sustainable financing to support critical climate resilience projects across Santa Clara County in perpetuity. The Resilience Fund will provide accessible and community-specific funding that might not otherwise be available or easily accessed through traditional State and Federal funding opportunities (e.g. project planning funding).

Measures of success may include, but are not limited to:

- Amount of direct project funding captured through Resilience Fund TA, e.g. Proposition 4 (Climate Bond) funding
- Amount of grant funding captured through corporate funding, philanthropic funding and public grants (e.g. public agencies, local cities, and Special Districts) for Resilience Fund services and interest in Resilience Fund return on investment (ROI)



Image Courtesy of Santa Clara County Parks Department

Goal 2: Deliver strategic, on-the-ground results

Funding will be directed towards projects that provide tangible community benefits in climate resilience, with a strategic focus on addressing urgent climate risk, advancing equity and building cross-jurisdictional coordination and multi-benefit solutions.

Measures of success are outlined for each SC4 Impact Area and include, but are not limited to:

Impact Area 1: Empower Communities to Build Resilience to Climate Change

- # of projects designed by jurisdictions and CBOs successfully implemented
- # of cross jurisdictional projects
- % of funding generated for underserved neighborhoods and frontline communities
- % of funded projects with CBOs serving as project partners
- % of Equity in Community Work Group CBOs featured on the Fund Advisory Committee

Impact Area 2: Achieve Net Zero Emissions

- # of grid resilience initiatives [particularly for disadvantaged communities (LIDAC) and underserved neighborhoods] and associated emissions reductions
- # of pilot carbon sequestration projects and associated GHG emissions reductions
- # of building electrification projects advanced benefiting underserved neighborhoods and associated emissions reductions

Impact Area 3: Prepare Communities for Extreme Heat and Impaired Air Quality

- # of critical assets protected from heat-related hazards
- # of people benefiting from Resilience Hubs to escape extreme heat and impaired air quality
- Increased community education concerning climate issues
- # of nature-based projects funded and associated impacts, such as trees planted and associated heat island temperature reductions.
- # of underserved populations (e.g., vehicularly housed, unhoused, and farm worker populations) benefitting from projects promoting resilience to heat and air quality issues

Impact Area 4: Eliminate Risk from Flooding and Rising Seas

- # of critical assets protected from flood-related hazards and #nature-based solutions.
- # of people, including underserved populations, benefiting from flood and resilience projects
- Increased community education concerning flood-related hazards

Goal 3: Build capacity among SC4 members

A core objective of the Resilience Fund is to enhance the ability of SC4 members to develop and implement impactful projects through TA, capacity building resources, and support from SC4 work groups and convenings.

Measures of success include, but are not limited to:

- SC4 members and work groups report increased time spent on core activities given funding/financing and capacity support from the Resilience Fund
- Reported/proven skills improvement for SC4 related to writing grant proposals
- Increased human and financial resources to SC4 members to respond to climate impacts
- Research partnerships to support SC4 member and work groups in project ideation, development, implementation and monitoring

Goal 4: Support Resilience Fund and SC4 operation

The Resilience Fund will support operational costs of the Fund itself and the SC4 to facilitate participant collaboration, resource sharing and joint project development.

Measures of success for 2026-2028 include, but are not limited to:

- Amount of corporate funding, philanthropic funding, and public grant funding secured for Resilience Fund activities and SC4 operations



Achieving Goals

Capacity building, TA, and grantmaking services provided through the Resilience Fund will be designed to address equity gaps while strengthening the coordination, competitiveness, and overall success of SC4 member grant applications. As the funding landscape and SC4 priorities evolve, services will remain adaptive, continuously aligning with resources with emerging opportunities, and local community needs.

Capacity Building

The Resilience Fund will provide capacity building resources to address gaps in funding knowledge, grant-writing skills, and equity in accessing opportunities. Capacity building activities include:

- **Sharing Funding Opportunities:** Regularly disseminate information on forthcoming and announced funding opportunities including but not limited to prospective Resilience Fund grants
- **Providing Workshops and Training:** Offer funding, capacity building and grant-writing workshops, webinar, trainings, and other learning resources to SC4 members
- **Supporting CBO Engagement:** Strengthen the ability of Equity in Community Work Group members to actively participate in proposal development and other grant-related activities through stipends



Technical Assistance (TA)



The Resilience Fund will provide TA to SC4 members to strengthen grant applications across a wide range of grant funding opportunities. TA services will be provided periodically or year-round, depending on project needs and available grant opportunities. Projects led by community-based organizations, under-resourced jurisdictions and organizations will receive the highest priority for TA support.

TA services will include the following:

- **Project Ideation and Development:** Support project concept, design, and implementation strategies
- **Grant Matchmaking:** Provide guidance to help projects identify and pursue the most appropriate funding opportunities
- **Donor Matchmaking:** Connect high potential projects with appropriate philanthropic and private donors and funding opportunities
- **Grant Writing and Budgeting:** Assist project in preparing high-quality proposals and financial plans to maximize their chances of securing funding
- **Project Partnership Building:** Identify and cultivate strategic project partners to enhance project credibility, expand resources, and advance equitable outcomes in communities
- **Project Coordination:** Promote coordination, alignment, and strategic resource sharing across multiple partners and jurisdictions
- **Grant Management:** Support organizations by managing public grant funds and grant compliance on their behalf, minimizing administrative and operational overhead

Grant Making

The Resilience Fund will also offer direct project support through accessible, transparent, and impact-driven grantmaking for SC4-led projects. Grant opportunities will be designed with clear, streamlined application requirements, defined scoring criteria and allow for flexible use of funds. Information on previously awarded grants will be made publicly available, and upcoming funding opportunities will be delivered with ample notice to support transparency and promote broad participation in grant opportunities.

During 2026–2028, a Pilot Grant Making Program will be initiated, contingent upon the receipt of funding. As the Fund secures larger revenue streams for regranting, its grant-making capacity will expand accordingly with the long-term goal of supporting consistent, multi-million-dollar grant-making annually.

Fundraising Strategy

During 2026–2028, the Fund aims to secure revenue from private sector businesses and generate revenue through sponsorship, private sector membership dues, and/or direct priority project funding that align with private sector businesses and portfolios. It will also generate support from Foundations, Donor Advised Funds, and other philanthropic donors, while seeking other sources such as State and local earmarks and public agency funding. These funds will be leveraged to provide capacity building and TA services that help SC4 member projects secure public funding and explore potential long-term public funding mechanisms for the Fund.

Structure, Housing, and Staffing

In 2026–2028, the fiscal agent, Coastal Quest (a 501c3 non-profit that provides fiscal sponsorship and services), will staff the Resilience Fund and be supported by the SC4 Implementation Team (Climate Resilient Communities and Farallon Strategies). Starting in 2029 there may be a need to change the housing and structure of the Resilience Fund to accommodate new revenue streams.

Governance

The Fund Advisory Committee (FAC) will serve as the lead decision-making body for the Fund. The FAC will guide decisions related to funding acquisition, TA, grant-making, and operations of the Resilience Fund, including oversight of the Resilience Fund's fiscal agent and staff.

The 11-15 serving members of the FAC (elected for 2-year terms) will be comprised of representatives from the public sector, nonprofit organizations, CBOs, universities, and greater civil society. Committee members are invited as individuals with key expertise, not representatives of their institutions or their institutional priorities and interests. The FAC reserves designated seats for Equity in Community Work Group members to ensure decision-making reflects the needs of disadvantaged and underserved communities. In the event of conflicts of interest, FAC members must recuse themselves from related decision-making. Consensus decision making will be sought; however, decision making will default to majority.

Composition will ensure representation across sectors as follows:

- 2 seats for representatives from academia
- 3-5 seats for representatives from nonprofit organizations and the public sector
- 1 – 2 seats for Santa Clara County residents
- Up to 8 seats for representatives from community-based organizations from the SC4 Equity in Community Work Group

The SC4 Leadership Advisory Team (LAT) will provide additional strategic guidance to ensure alignment with the SC4's missions and Goals. Optional Academic/Scientific Technical Committee(s) and Private Sector Committee may also be convened as needed.



Image Courtesy of Our City Forest

About the Resilience Fund Strategic Business Planning Process

The Resilience Fund Strategic Business Plan (Plan) was finalized in December 2025 following a year-long research and design process. The Plan is informed by online surveys, multi-sector stakeholder interviews, participation in SC4 convenings and discussions and research into public revenue streams, and comparable funding and operational models. The following parties provided input on planning activities and associated deliverables: the Fund Advisory Committee (FAC), SC4 Leadership Advisory Team (LAT) and Equity in Community Workgroup (EiCWG), and SC4 Implementation Partners (County of Santa Clara Office of Sustainability and Resilience, Climate Resilient Communities, and Farallon Strategies). Final approval of the Plan was granted by the Fund Advisory Committee. Altogether, the Plan defines the Resilience Fund's goals, activities to achieve outcomes, funding strategy, housing structure, staffing, governance and next steps for Phase 1 (2026 – 2028) while exploring possible components of Phase 2 (2029 and beyond).

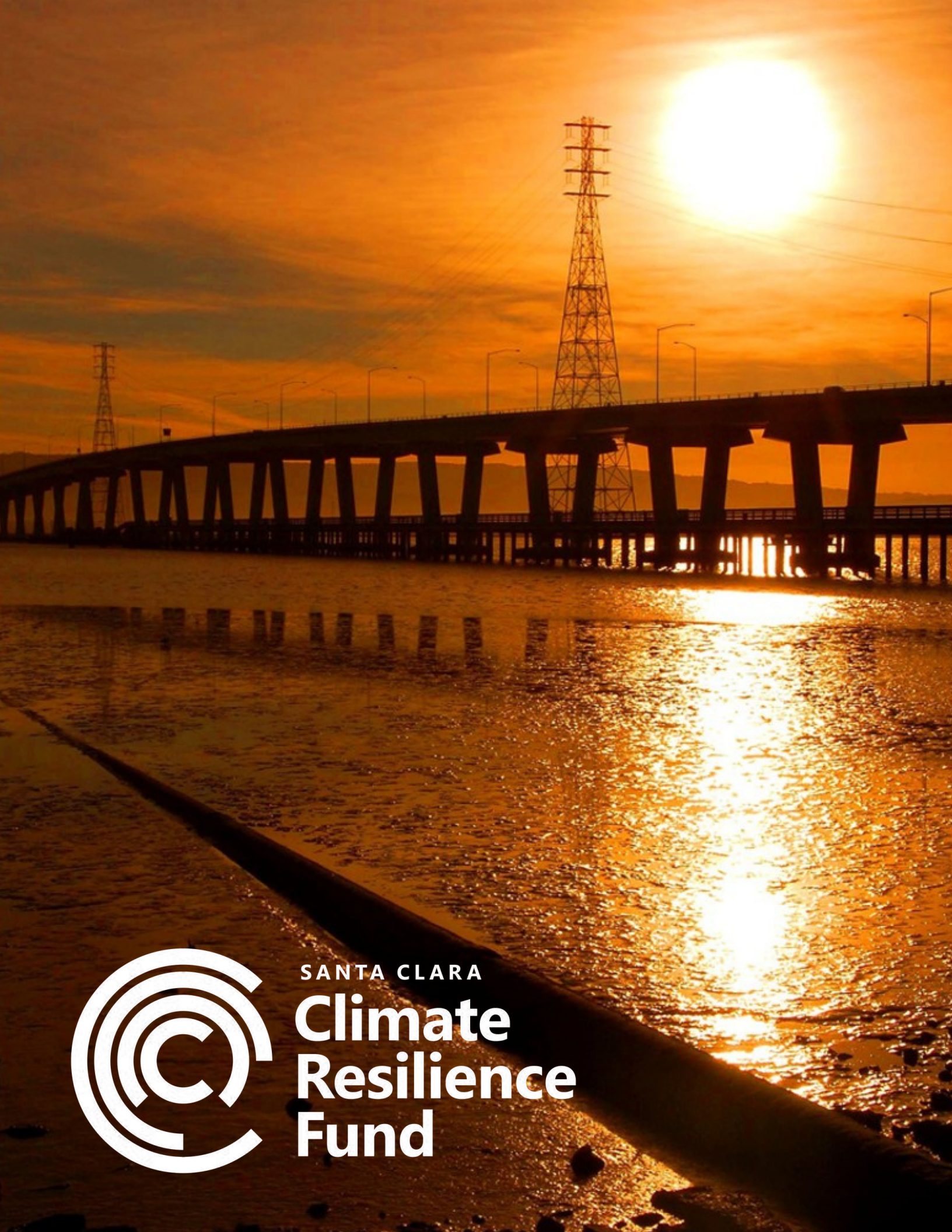
Next Steps:

Through the implementation of this Strategic Business Plan, the Santa Clara Climate Resilience Fund is uniquely positioned to advance the SC4 mission by providing critical resources and funding to ensure Santa Clara County communities are resilient to climate change and can adapt and recover to environmental disasters. The Resilience Fund will draw upon strategic partnerships and target priority organizations to support its expansion, increase its impact, and work collectively towards its goals and outcomes to create lasting solutions.



Developed by Resilience Fund, June 2026





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