



Santa Clara Valley Water District Board Audit Committee

HQ. Bldg. Boardroom, 5700 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, California
Join Zoom Meeting: <https://valleywater.zoom.us/j/91608079873>

REGULAR MEETINGS AGENDA

**Wednesday, May 20, 2026
1:00 PM**

District Mission: Provide Silicon Valley safe, clean water for a healthy life, environment and economy.

BOARD AUDIT COMMITTEE
Jim Beall, Chairperson - District 4
Shiloh Ballard, Vice Chairperson -
District 2
Tony Estremera - District 6

All public records relating to an open session item on this agenda, which are not exempt from disclosure pursuant to the California Public Records Act, that are distributed to a majority of the legislative body, will be available to the public through the legislative body agenda web page at the same time that the public records are distributed or made available to the legislative body. Santa Clara Valley Water District will make reasonable efforts to accommodate persons with disabilities wishing to participate in the legislative body's meeting. Please advise the Clerk of the Board Office of any special needs by calling (408) 630-2277.

DARIN TAYLOR
Committee Liaison

NICOLE MERRITT
Deputy Clerk (Committee
Meetings)
Office/Clerk of the Board
(408) 630-3262
nmerritt@valleywater.org

Note: The finalized Board Agenda, exception items and supplemental items will be posted prior to the meeting in accordance with the Brown Act.

**Santa Clara Valley Water District
Board Audit Committee
REGULAR MEETINGS
AGENDA**

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

1:00 PM

HQ. Bldg. Boardroom, 5700 Almaden
Expressway, San Jose, California

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://valleywater.zoom.us/j/91608079873>

IMPORTANT NOTICES AND PARTICIPATION INSTRUCTIONS

Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) Board of Directors/Board Committee meetings are held as a “hybrid” meetings, conducted in-person as well as by telecommunication, and is compliant with the provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

To maximize public safety while still maintaining transparency and public access, members of the public have an option to participate by teleconference/video conference or attend in-person. To observe and participate in the meeting by teleconference/video conference, please see the meeting link located at the top of the agenda. If attending in-person, you are required to comply with Ordinance 22-03 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT SPECIFYING RULES OF DECORUM FOR PARTICIPATION IN BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS located at <https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/valleywater.org.if-us-west-2/f2-live/s3fs-public/Ord.pdf>

In accordance with the requirements of Gov. Code Section 54954.3(a), members of the public wishing to address the Board/Committee during public comment or on any item listed on the agenda, may do so by filling out a Speaker Card and submitting it to the Clerk or using the “Raise Hand” tool located in the Zoom meeting application to identify yourself in order to speak, at the time the item is called. Speakers will be acknowledged by the Board/Committee Chair in the order requests are received and granted speaking access to address the Board.

- Members of the Public may test their connection to Zoom Meetings at: <https://zoom.us/test>
- Members of the Public are encouraged to review our overview on joining Valley Water Board Meetings at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TojJpYCxXm0>

Valley Water, in complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), requests individuals who require special accommodations to access and/or participate in Valley Water Board of Directors/Board Committee meetings to please contact the Clerk of the Board’s office at (408) 630-2711, at least 3 business days before the scheduled meeting to ensure that Valley Water may assist you.

This agenda has been prepared as required by the applicable laws of the State of California, including but not limited to, Government Code Sections 54950 et. seq. and has

not been prepared with a view to informing an investment decision in any of Valley Water's bonds, notes or other obligations. Any projections, plans or other forward-looking statements included in the information in this agenda are subject to a variety of uncertainties that could cause any actual plans or results to differ materially from any such statement. The information herein is not intended to be used by investors or potential investors in considering the purchase or sale of Valley Water's bonds, notes or other obligations and investors and potential investors should rely only on information filed by Valley Water on the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board's Electronic Municipal Market Access System for municipal securities disclosures and Valley Water's Investor Relations website, maintained on the World Wide Web at <https://emma.msrb.org/> and <https://www.valleywater.org/how-we-operate/financebudget/investor-relations>, respectively.

Under the Brown Act, members of the public are not required to provide identifying information in order to attend public meetings. Through the link below, the Zoom webinar program requests entry of a name and email address, and Valley Water is unable to modify this requirement. Members of the public not wishing to provide such identifying information are encouraged to enter "Anonymous" or some other reference under name and to enter a fictional email address (e.g., attendee@valleywater.org) in lieu of their actual address. Inputting such values will not impact your ability to access the meeting through Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://valleywater.zoom.us/j/91608079873>

Meeting ID: 916 0807 9873

Join by Phone:

1 (669) 900-9128, 91608079873#

1. CALL TO ORDER:

1.1. Roll Call.

2. TIME OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA.

Notice to the public: Members of the public who wish to address the Board/Committee on matters not listed on the agenda may do so by completing a Speaker Card and submitting it to the Clerk, or by using the "Raise Hand" feature within the Zoom meeting application to request recognition. Speakers will be acknowledged by the Board/Committee Chair in the order requests are received and, when recognized, will be granted speaking access to address the Board/Committee.

Public comments shall be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker, or such other time as determined by the Chair. State law does not permit the Board/Committee to take action on, or engage in extended discussion of, any item not appearing on the posted agenda, except as otherwise authorized under applicable law. If Board/Committee action is requested, the matter may be scheduled for consideration at a future meeting.

All public comments requiring a response will be referred to staff for a written reply. The Board/Committee may take action on any item of business appearing on the posted agenda.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- 3.1. Approval of April 15, 2026, Board Audit Committee Minutes. [26-0494](#)
- Recommendation: Approve the minutes.
- Manager: Wendy Ho, 408-630-3874
- Attachments: [Attachment 1: 04152026 BAC Minutes](#)

4. REGULAR AGENDA:

- 4.1. Receive Permitting Best Practices Audit Status Update. [26-0342](#)
- Recommendation: Receive an update on the status of the Permitting Best Practices audit recommendation implementation.
- Manager: Lisa Bankosh, 408-630-2618
- Attachments: [Attachment 1: Audit Final Report](#)
[Attachment 2: Management Response](#)
[Attachment 3: Implementation Status](#)
[Attachment 4: PowerPoint](#)
- 4.2. Receive the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Third Quarter Financial Status Update as of March 31, 2026. [26-0377](#)
- Recommendation: Receive the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 third quarter financial status update as of March 31, 2026.
- Manager: Darin Taylor, 408-630-3068
- Attachments: [Attachment 1: PowerPoint](#)
- 4.3. Discuss 2026 Annual Audit Plan (Risk Assessment, Asset Management, Pacheco Reservoir Project, and Investigations Process), Receive Status of Open Board-Directed Audit Engagements, and Provide Feedback as Needed. [26-0381](#)
- Recommendation: A. Discuss 2026 annual audit plan (Risk Assessment, Asset Management, Pacheco Reservoir Project, and Investigations Process),
B. Receive status of open Board-directed audit engagements, and
C. Provide feedback as needed.
- Manager: Darin Taylor, 408-630-3068
- 4.4. Review and Discuss 2026 Board Audit Committee (BAC) Work Plan. [26-0382](#)
- Recommendation: Review and discuss topics of interest raised at prior BAC meetings and approve any necessary adjustments to the 2026 BAC Work Plan.
- Manager: Wendy Ho, 408-630-3874

Attachments: [Attachment 1: 2026 BAC Work Plan](#)

5. CLERK REVIEW AND CLARIFICATION OF COMMITTEE REQUESTS.

This is an opportunity for the Clerk to review and obtain clarification on any formally moved, seconded, and approved requests and recommendations made by the Committee during the meeting.

6. ADJOURN:

6.1. Adjourn. The Next Regular Meeting is Scheduled at 1:00 p.m., on June 17, 2026.



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 26-0494

Agenda Date: 5/20/2026
Item No.: 3.1.

COMMITTEE AGENDA MEMORANDUM Board Audit Committee

Government Code § 84308 Applies: Yes No
(If "YES" Complete Attachment A - Gov. Code § 84308)

SUBJECT:

Approval of April 15, 2026, Board Audit Committee Minutes.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the minutes.

SUMMARY:

In accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, a summary of Committee discussions, and details of all actions taken by the Board Audit Committee, during all open and public Committee meetings, is transcribed and submitted to the Committee for review and approval.

Upon Committee approval, minutes transcripts are finalized and entered into the Committee's historical records archives and serve as historical records of the Committee's meetings.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPACT:

The approval of minutes is not subject to environmental justice analysis.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: 04152026 BAC Minutes

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

Wendy Ho, 408-630-3874



BOARD AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026
1:00 PM

(Paragraph numbers coincide with agenda item numbers)

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) Board Audit Committee (Committee) was called to order in the Valley Water Headquarters Building Boardroom at 5700 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, California, and by Zoom teleconference, at 1:00 p.m.

1.1 Roll Call.

Committee members in attendance were: District 2 Director and Vice Chairperson Shiloh Ballard, and District 4 Director Jim Beall, Chairperson presiding, constituting a quorum of the Committee.

District 6 Director Tony Estremera was not present.

Staff members in attendance were: Emmanuel Aryee, Chris Cannard, Jessica Collins, Brian Dean, Enrique De Anda, Rachael Gibson, Walter Gonzalez, Mark Greene, Wendy Ho, Cecil Lawson, Anna Lee, Linda Mason, Patrice McElroy, Anthony Mendiola, Nicole Merritt, Tony Ndah, Carlos Orellana, Luz Penilla, Don Rocha, Manpreet Sra, Darin Taylor, and Tina Yoke.

Public in attendance was: George Skiles (Sjoberg Evashenk Consulting).

2. TIME OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Chairperson Beall declared time open for public comment on any item not on the agenda. There was no one present who wished to speak.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

3.1. Approval of March 18, 2026, Board Audit Committee Meeting Minutes.

Recommendation: Approve the minutes.

The Committee considered the attached minutes of March 18, 2026 Committee meeting.

Public Comments:
None.

It was moved by Vice Chairperson Ballard and seconded by Chairperson Beall and was unanimously carried that the minutes be approved.

4. REGULAR AGENDA:

4.1. Receive Update on the Implementation of the Management Response to the 2024 Human Resources (HR) Process Performance Audit.

Recommendation: Receive the status update on the implementation of the Management Response to the 2024 HR Performance Audit.

Patrice McElroy reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and corresponding presentation materials contained in Attachment 1 were reviewed as follows: Patrice McElroy reviewed Slides 1-4, and 5-10, and Anna Lee reviewed Slide 4.

Patrice McElroy, Anna Lee, and George Skiles were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and noted the following:

- The Committee discussed challenges encountered during the implementation process related to confidentiality and the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) tool.
- The Committee discussed the in-person harassment prevention and Supervisor Core trainings, collaboration with Employee Resource Groups, and noted that Work Force Development is considering retaining a consultant to assist with gender and bias awareness training.
- The Committee expressed support for staff's progress and noted the BAC will review if a follow-up audit is needed to verify the implementation efforts once completed.
- The Committee expressed support for following up on the best practices related to gender awareness, an annual review process with metrics for the Board to evaluate Board Appointed Officers (BAOs), and methods for assessing employee survey feedback.

4.2. Discuss the Results of the Board Audit Committee's (BAC) Annual Self-Evaluation for Calendar Year (CY) 2025.

Recommendation: Discuss the results of the BAC's Annual Self-Evaluation for CY 2025.

George Skiles reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo.

George Skiles was available to answer questions.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee discussed the information, took no formal action, and noted the following:

- The Committee expressed support for audits as a collaborative tool to identify opportunities for improvement, establish next steps, and compare practices with other agencies.
- The Committee expressed support for follow up on the auditing process after BAO transitions and noted consideration of further amendments to the BAC Charter would be more effective next year to avoid overburdening staff.

4.3. Discuss 2026 Annual Audit Plan (Risk Assessment, Asset Management, Pacheco Reservoir Project, and Investigations Process), and Provide Feedback as Needed.

Recommendation: A. Discuss 2026 Annual Audit Plan,
B. Provide feedback as needed.

Darin Taylor and George Skiles reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo.

Darin Taylor and George Skiles were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and without further discussion confirmed the audits are currently on schedule and noted the update for the 2026 Annual Audit Plan.

4.4. Review and Discuss 2026 Board Audit Committee (BAC) Work Plan.

Recommendation: Review and discuss topics of interest raised at prior BAC meetings and approve any necessary adjustments to the 2026 BAC Work Plan.

Darin Taylor reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and per the information contained in Attachment 1.

Darin Taylor was available to answer questions.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and without further discussion, noted the update on the 2026 BAC Work Plan.

5. CLERK REVIEW AND CLARIFICATION OF COMMITTEE REQUESTS:

This is an opportunity for the Clerk to review and obtain clarification on any formally moved, seconded, and approved requests and recommendations made by the Committee during the meeting.

Nicole Merritt confirmed the Committee received and noted the update on the implementation of the Management Response to the 2024 HR Process Performance Audit and expressed support for staff's progress and for follow up on best practices and trainings for gender awareness and measurements to evaluate the BAOs under Item 4.1; discussed the BAC Annual Self-Evaluation for CY 2025 and took no action for BAC Charter amendments under Item 4.2; noted update to 2026 Annual Audit Plan under Item 4.3; and update for the 2026 BAC Work Plan under Item 4.4.

6. CLOSED SESSION:

6.1. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - THREAT TO PUBLIC SERVICES OR FACILITIES

(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(a))

Consultation with Information Technology: Interim Chief Executive Officer, Melanie Richardson; Chief Operating Officer, Tina Yoke; Deputy Administrative Officer, Cecil Lawson; Information Technology Manager, Chris Cannard; District Counsel, Carlos Orellana; and Senior Assistant District Counsel, Linda Mason.

6.2. District Counsel Report on Closed Session.

Linda Mason reported that in regard to Item 6.1., the Committee met in Closed Session with all Committee members participating except Director Estremera and took no reportable action.

7. ADJOURN:

7.1. Adjourn. The Next Regular Meeting is Scheduled at 1:00 p.m. on May 20, 2026.

Chairperson Beall adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m. The next regular meeting was scheduled to occur at 1:00 p.m. on May 20, 2026.

Nicole Merritt,
Deputy Clerk (Committee Meetings)

Date approved:



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 26-0342

Agenda Date: 5/20/2026

Item No.: 4.1.

COMMITTEE AGENDA MEMORANDUM Board Audit Committee

Government Code § 84308 Applies: Yes No
(If "YES" Complete Attachment A - Gov. Code § 84308)

SUBJECT:

Receive Permitting Best Practices Audit Status Update.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive an update on the status of the Permitting Best Practices audit recommendation implementation.

SUMMARY:

On October 13, 2020, the Board approved an update to the Annual Audit Work Plan as recommended by the Board Audit Committee (BAC) for the Permitting Best Practices Audit to be the next audit undertaken by TAP International, Inc. (TAP).

The Permitting Best Practices Audit Final Report was formally issued to the Community Projects Review Unit in April 2021 (Attachment 1). The Management Response was provided to TAP the following month (Attachment 2). A summary of the audit recommendations, management response, the June 17, 2025 BAC update, and the current implementation status is included as Attachment 3.

Staff will provide a progress report on the implementation of audit recommendations and will be prepared to address any questions the BAC may have regarding the individual recommendations and their implementation.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPACT:

The Permitting Best Practices Audit Status Update is not subject to environmental justice analysis.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Audit Final Report

Attachment 2: Management Response

File No.: 26-0342

Agenda Date: 5/20/2026
Item No.: 4.1.

Attachment 3: Implementation Status
Attachment 4: PowerPoint

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:
Lisa Bankosh, 408-630-2618



TAPInternational

Final Report

**Community Projects Review
Unit: Opportunities to
Improve Permit Processing**

May 2021

**Final Report by the Independent
Auditor to the Santa Clara Valley Water
District Board of Directors**



Date: May 20, 2021

Memorandum For: Board of Directors – Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water)

From: Independent Auditor, TAP International, Inc.

Subject: Transmittal of TAP International Performance Audit Report

Attached for your information is our final report, *Community Projects Review Unit: Opportunities to Improve Permit Processing*. The audit objectives were to assess how alternative permit processing activities could benefit Valley Water and to compare Valley Water’s permitting process with other local water agencies.

The audit found Valley Water’s permitting process is not meeting customers’ or its own expectations for timelines and communication, which can be addressed with the use of better tools, restructuring and collaboration. Various other local agencies have adopted alternative strategies and tools that could benefit Valley Water, including creating online portals to facilitate the submission of permit applications and the communication of the review status. To better publicize their services, some local agencies send letters to neighboring property owners to remind owners of the agency’s property rights and how to access its services. In other areas of Community Projects Review Unit (CPRU) operations, the permit fee schedule needs updating and the establishment of a robust framework of financial management internal controls for invoicing and collection of payments.

The report contains 14 recommendations that will help the CPRU to streamline the permit process, improve communication with applicants, update its fee schedule for permit processing activities, and ensure the timely invoicing and recording the payment of invoices. Management generally agreed with these recommendations. Appendix D of this report contains management’s response in detail.

TAP International, Inc.

Table of Contents

Section 1: Audit Highlights 3

 Why the Audit Was Conducted 4

 How the Audit Was Conducted 4

 What the Audit Found 5

 Recommendations 6

Section 2: Background and Methodology 9

 Background 10

 Methodology 11

Section 3: Key Findings 14

 Finding 1: CPRU Provides Many Services to Protect Valley Water’s Assets and Interests, Beyond Issuing Encroachment Permits; Some Overlap the Role of Other Valley Water Units 15

 Finding 2: CPRU’s Permit Process Could be Better at Meeting Customer and its Own Expectations for Timeliness and Communication..... 17

 Finding 3: Timeliness Concerns Attributed to Multiple Factors 20

 Finding 4: Local Agencies’ Strategies Could Benefit Valley Water..... 25

 Finding 5: Update Needed for Fee Schedule and Cost Recovery Strategy 27

 Finding 6: Robust Internal Control Framework Needed to Ensure Accurate and Timely Invoicing and Collection of Fee Payments 33

Section 4: Acknowledgments 35

Appendices 37

 APPENDIX A: Anonymized Survey Responses..... 38

 APPENDIX B: Detailed Description of Valley Water’s Permit Process..... 42

 APPENDIX C: Permits & Valley Water’s Water Resource Protection Ordinance 44

 APPENDIX D: Management Response..... 45



Section 1: Audit Highlights

Why the Audit Was Conducted

The mission of the CPRU, located within Valley Water’s Watershed Design & Construction Division, is to protect Valley Water’s Watersheds and Water Utility assets and interests from external activities and threats as defined by Valley Water’s Resources Protection Ordinance¹. Other units within the Watershed Design & Construction Division, in addition to CPRU, include the Land Surveying & Mapping Unit and the Real Estate Services Unit (RESU).

A performance audit evaluates the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of programs, services, and operations. This performance audit was conducted because encroachment permit processing was identified as a higher risk area for potential improvement opportunities based on a 2018 risk assessment performed by the Independent Auditor.

This audit is important to the Board of Directors for the following reasons:

1. There are opportunities to reduce or offset costs to issue permits applications through streamlining of the permit process.
2. There are opportunities to reduce the overlap of services provided by CPRU and other Valley Water Units.
3. There are opportunities to enhance revenue collection through improved financial management.

How the Audit Was Conducted

The objectives of the audit were to:

1. Determine if alternate permit processing activities benefit Valley Water; and,
2. Assess how Valley Water’s permitting process compares with other local agencies.

The audit work included: (1) interviews with CPRU staff and the CPRU Manager, who has been delegated the authority to issue encroachment permits, (2) an online survey of encroachment permit holders to whom CPRU issued a permit in fiscal year (FY) 2020, (3) analysis of financial data (financial audit, permits fees, invoices, salary tables), CPRU policies and procedures, organizational chart and other documentation related to the CPRU’s operations, and (4) research into other California local agencies’ approach to issuing encroachment permits and their current practices. Valley Water’s ongoing effort to develop a new program to license or permit existing encroachments by residential property owners was not included in the scope of this audit; an audit of this program is included in the Annual Audit Work Plan of the Independent Auditor.

¹ Appendix C provides more information about Valley Water’s Water Protection Ordinance.

What the Audit Found

This audit report discusses six key points:

- Demand for CPRU’s variety of services has remained steady over the past decade and increased notably during the first three-quarters of FY2021. In addition to issuing encroachment permits, these services include flood plain information and analysis, technical assistance to other local agencies, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance reviews, agreements for public recreational use like trails, negotiation of real property transactions and more. Some of CPRU’s activities related to real estate, CEQA, and flood plain analysis overlap with the role of other Valley Water units. Utilizing services already offered by other Valley Water units could provide staff more time for permit processing.
- Valley Water permit process could be better at meeting customers’ or its own expectations for timelines and communication, even though many reported overall satisfaction. Respondents to a voluntary, online survey of those issued permits in FY2020 said Valley Water did not meet about half of applicants’ expectations for timeliness (55 percent) and communication (48 percent) but met or exceeded most (65 percent) survey respondents’ expectations for professionalism.
 - ✓ The audit found that CPRU processed six out of every 10 permit applications within the stated goal of eight weeks during FY2018 to FY2020. Overall, the average time required to issue a permit was about 13 weeks in FY2018 to FY2020.
- Timeliness issues stem from multiple factors including staff turnover, inexperienced staff, manual processes, reported applicant difficulties meeting Valley Water’s insurance requirements and, more notably, bottlenecks in the review and approval process. To better meet expectations for timeliness and communication, alternative strategies for permit processing can benefit Valley Water by improving the operational structure of CPRU’s permit process and by adopting better tools designed to:
 - ✓ Ensure timely entry of applications into the CPRU database;
 - ✓ Assist staff and address bottlenecks through the standardization and documentation of policies and procedures;
 - ✓ Expedite automation of the permit process and improve records management;
 - ✓ Renew collaboration with neighboring public agencies to plan for large projects;
 - ✓ Support communications with regular customer service training for staff; and
 - ✓ Enhance tools to facilitate applicant compliance with Valley Water insurance requirements.
- Local agencies have adopted alternative strategies that could also benefit Valley Water, including creating online portals to facilitate the submission of permit applications, communicating the review status of permits, and using a project coordinator to manage the process allowing the engineer to focus on the technical review. To better publicize their services, some local agencies send letters to neighboring property owners annually

or when properties are sold to remind owners of the agency's property rights and how to access its services.

- Valley Water can benefit from an updated fee schedule, based on a fee study, to identify opportunities to close any gaps between permit fees collected and the cost to issue a permit.
- The establishment of a robust framework of financial management internal controls is needed to ensure accurate and timely invoicing and collection of payments for permit fees.

Recommendations

This audit report includes 14 recommendations for Valley Water to consider. These recommendations are designed to streamline CPRU services, address customer expectations for timely permit processing and communication, strengthen workflows and permit tracking, and add controls to CPRU financial management activities.

1. The Watersheds' Chief Operating Officer should consolidate overlapping functions between CPRU and other Valley Water units (such as real estate transactions to RESU and CEQA reviews to the Environmental Planner) to reduce CPRU staff workloads and allow CPRU staff to focus on the provision of permit services.
2. The CPRU Manager should complete standardization of permit review policies, practices, roles, and responsibilities.
3. The CPRU Manager should develop and implement a training program that includes various courses on:
 - a. Permit processing for new and inexperienced staff, which will reduce time spent on final review and approval of draft permits.
 - b. Customer service, building on the training experience of some CPRU staff completed earlier this year.
 - c. Risk management, through coordination with the Valley Water Risk Manager, on Valley Water's insurance requirements.
4. The CPRU Manager should establish criteria for the order in which permit applications will be reviewed, who has the authority to authorize exemptions from that process and under what special circumstances authority could be delegated to issue a permit.
5. The CPRU Manager should assign customer liaison responsibilities (to one or two individuals) to ensure consistent and timely communication on permit applications to help meet customer expectations.

6. The CPRU Manager, in collaboration with Valley Water Information Technology Unit, should continue efforts to identify and implement the solutions for desired functionality needed to strengthen permit processing, which include:
 - a. Electronic submission of permit applications and supporting documents that automatically creates an electronic permit review file.
 - b. Expanded search function for researching past projects and permits.
 - c. Customizable dashboards and/or reports that facilitate management oversight of permit processing timeliness, invoice aging, and other measures of performance.
 - d. Tools, such as a request form or ticketing system, to help CPRU track requests for services in addition to permit reviews received from internal and external stakeholders.
 - e. Ability for customers to self-check the status of their applications and other service requests through interface of the new customer resource management system with the new document management system.
 - f. Minimize the administrative burden of tracking and reporting time spent on permit review and other asset protection services by CPRU and other Valley Water units.

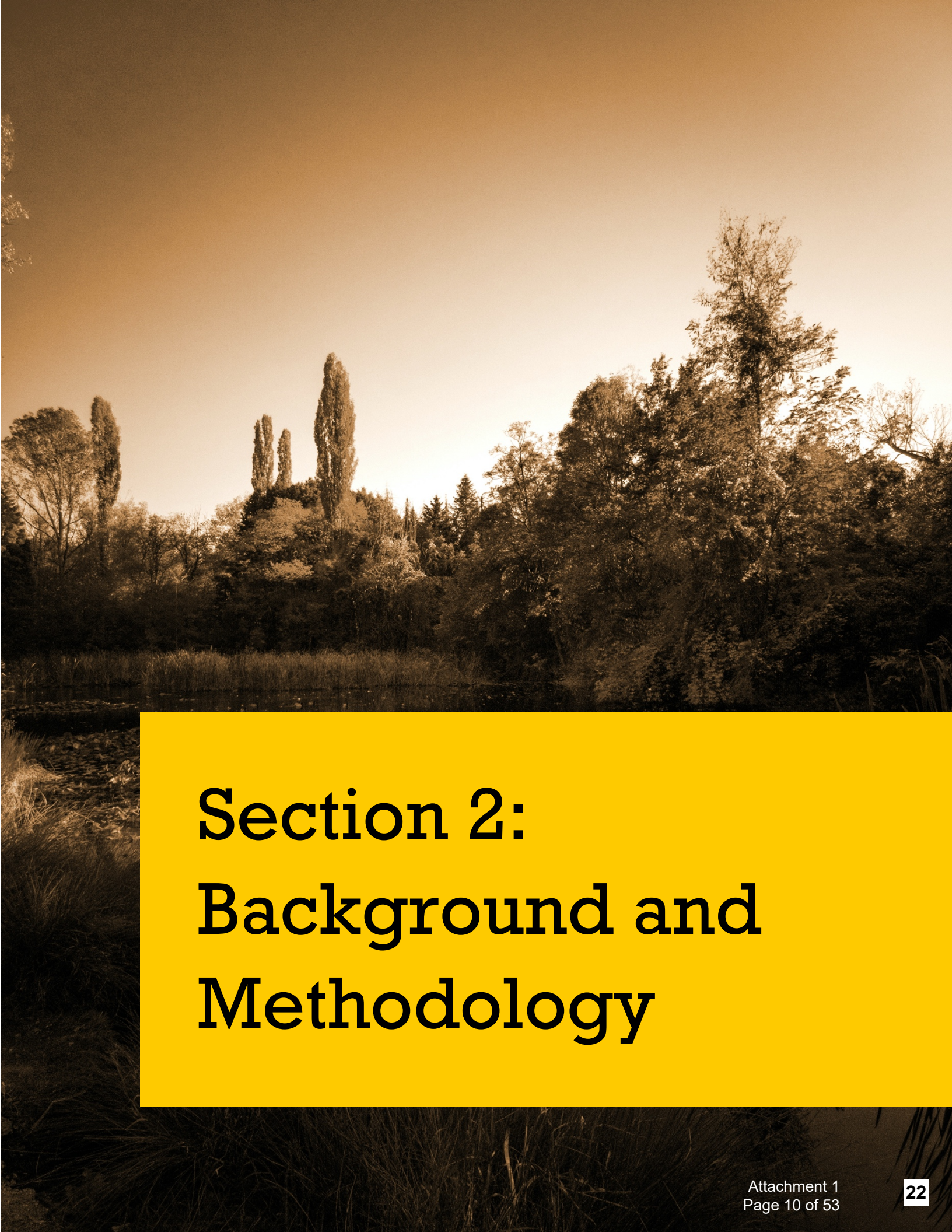
7. The CPRU Manager should renew regular consultations with other member agencies of the Water Resources Protection Collaborative to allow CPRU to plan for upcoming large land review development requests and to establish a process for monitoring the status of existing agreements.

8. The CPRU Manager, in coordination with the Valley Water Risk Management Unit Manager, should develop communication strategies, such as instructional videos, screen shots, and/or brochures to make it easier for applicants and insurance brokers to understand Valley Water's insurance requirements.

9. The CPRU Manager, with the assistance of the Watershed's Chief Operating Officer, should explore the feasibility of adopting strategies of other local agencies to promote their permit services, such as:
 - a. Change the name of CPRU to a name that better describes its functions.
 - b. Adopt a new model for the allocation of work among staff to minimize delays due to heavy demand, such as separating the roles of project coordination from technical review.
 - c. Conduct regular outreach by letter or other communication to neighboring property owners (and to new buyers of neighboring property) describing Valley Water's permit services, the reason for the permit process, and how to access the services.

10. Valley Water's CEO, with approval of the Board, should consider setting a goal for cost recovery from fees charged for permit services.

11. The CPRU Manager, in coordination with the Valley Water Chief Financial Officer, should update the current fee schedule based on the results of a fee study. The study should evaluate charging an hourly rate for inspections completed versus the current flat inspection fee.
12. The CPRU Manager should adopt a risk-based permit review strategy to reduce processing time for low-risk, repetitive types of permit applications. Clarify in the strategy how time spent on the review of permit applications and other processing tasks should be tracked and invoiced.
13. The CPRU Manager and the Chief Financial Officer should seek to identify an IT solution to ensure timely and accurate recording of invoices, payments and deposits. One option to consider is to use Valley Water's core financial management information system.
14. The CPRU Manager, in coordination with the Chief Financial Officer, should establish processes for invoicing and collection of payments that includes a robust framework of financial management internal controls, in particular the segregation of duties for billing and collections; cash management; monitoring of aging receivables; and reconciliation.



Section 2: Background and Methodology

Background

What is an Encroachment Permit?

An encroachment permit is permission from Valley Water for another party to enter, modify or use a Valley Water facility, its property or right-of-way. Examples of permitted activities include accessing Valley Water property to install a fiber optic line or pipelines that cross Valley Water facilities, collect fish for biological testing, erect a fence, cleanup litter and debris, construct and maintain a telecommunications tower or build a bridge over a local waterway.

To protect Valley Water Watersheds and Utility assets and interests from external activities and threats, the Water Resources Protection Ordinance² requires that Valley Water determine – through the permit review process – that the proposed activity meets nine requirements based on “substantial evidence” that the activity:

1. Will not impede, restrict, retard, pollute, change direction of the flow of water, catch or collect debris carried by such water;
2. Is located where natural flow of the storm and flood waters will not damage or carry any structure or any part there of downstream;
3. Will not damage, weaken, erode, cause siltation, or reduce the effectiveness of the banks to withhold storm and flood waters;
4. Will be constructed to resist erosion and siltation and entry of pollutants and contaminants;
5. Will not interfere with maintenance responsibilities or structures placed or erected for flood protection, water conservation or distribution;
6. Conforms to the requirements of the District Water Resources Protection Manual; and
7. Meets the purpose and intent of the District Act.
8. Issuance of the Encroachment Permit is in the public interest; and
9. Issuance of the Encroachment Permit will not result in conflict with or detriment to existing of planned District facilities.

² Appendix C provides more information about Valley Water’s Water Protection Ordinance.

Methodology

Scope of Work

The CPRU's delivery of encroachment permit services from FY2018 through FY2020 are the focus of this audit. Valley Water's ongoing effort to develop a new program to license or permit existing encroachments by residential property owners was not included in the scope of this audit; a separate audit of this program is included in the Annual Audit Work Plan of the Independent Auditor.

Project Approach

To determine if alternate permit processing activities could benefit Valley Water and to assess how Valley Water's permitting process compares with other local agencies, the Auditor performed activities using six methods described below.

- Review and analysis of the following policies, procedures, and documentation of the CPRU:
 - Position descriptions of CPRU and current responsibilities/duties.
 - CPRU policies and procedures related to encroachment permit processing, invoicing, inspections and other CPRU operations.
 - Valley Water's Water Resources Protection Ordinance, Manual, and Guidelines & Standards for Land Use Near Streams.
 - Valley Water's Encroachment Permit Application/Request for Real Estate Services, amendment application, and fence cost share application.
 - Valley Water website for encroachment permits.
 - Valley Water organizational charts.
- Interviews with CPRU staff responsible for processing encroachment permit applications and inspecting permitted projects, include:
 - CPRU Manager
 - Staff Analyst
 - Associate Engineers
 - Assistance Engineers
 - Resident Construction Inspector
 - Supervising Engineering Technician
 - Supervising Program Administrator
- Implementation of an online survey of encroachment permit holders to whom CPRU issued a permit in FY2020. The survey used CPRU-provided email addresses of permit

holders with a response rate of 30 percent (29 of 96 permit holders). The survey instrument and results can be found in Appendix A.

- Analysis of financial data including:
 - FY2021 Adopted Budget
 - Annual financial audit for FY2019
 - Data extracted from the CPRU database by CPRU staff showing the total dollar amount of fees for each permit issued in FY2018 to FY2020
 - Report showing the total dollar amount for each invoice from FY2018 to FY2020 (detailed fee data was not readily available)
 - Outstanding unpaid invoices and amounts as of January 2021
 - Valley Water salary tables
 - Data extracted from the CPRU database by Valley Water IT staff showing the number of hours billed for reviews conducted in FY20
- Analysis of permit data including:
 - QMR for FY2018 to FY2020 for measures owned by CPRU.
 - Data for permits issued in FY2018 to FY2020 extracted from the CPRU database by CPRU staff, including:
 - Pre-application content and disposition
 - Permit application content
 - Time to process the pre-application, application
 - Disposition of the permit application
 - Modifications to the application
- Research into eight local agencies' permitting practices, including three cities and counties in the Bay Area and five water agencies in California. Information on the types of permits issued, permit application requirements and submission methods, was collected from the City of San Jose, City of Santa Rosa, and Santa Clara County. Additional information on permit and inspection fees, communication practices with customers, insurance requirements, and methods for publicizing the agency's permit services were collected from five California water agencies: San Diego County Water Authority, Santa Margarita Water District, Metropolitan Water District, Imperial Irrigation District, and the Coachella Valley Water District. The water agencies were selected based on the following criteria:
 - Issues encroachment permits
 - Located in California
 - District boundaries include suburban areas
 - Website includes permit application

This performance audit used qualitative evidence, documentary evidence, and other performance information to assess the CPRU efficiency of the encroachment permit process. The

Auditor took additional steps to corroborate and substantiate qualitative information described in the report per generally accepted government auditing standards.

Assessment of the Reliability of Data

Section 9.2 of generally accepted government auditing standards require auditors to describe limitations or uncertainties with the reliability or validity of evidence if: (1) the evidence is significant to the findings and conclusions within the context of the audit objectives; and (2) such disclosure is necessary to avoid misleading the report users about the findings and conclusions.

Auditors were unable to assess the integrity of the data extracted by staff from the CPRU database because electronic access to the CPRU's information system was not available.

Assessment of Internal Controls

Section 9.20 of generally accepted government auditing standards require auditors to assess the adequacy of internal controls if they are significant to the audit's objectives. The objectives of this performance audit did not require an internal control assessment, but policies and procedures and other controls were reviewed to identify potential improvements.

Audit Statement

The Auditor conducted this performance audit per generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that the audit be planned and performed to obtain sufficient evidence to provide a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. The Auditor believes that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. A draft report was provided to the CPRU Manager. Comments were incorporated as applicable throughout the report.



Section 3: Key Findings

Finding 1: CPRU Provides Many Services to Protect Valley Water's Assets and Interests, Beyond Issuing Encroachment Permits; Some Overlap the Role of Other Valley Water Units

Demand for CPRU's services has fluctuated over the past ten years and at the time of the audit, demand was high. For FY2021 to-date, the number of submittals is on track to exceed 1,000 requests, a level last recorded in FY2011. Over the first three quarters of FY2021, CPRU reported already having received 845 requests for its services, including encroachment permits. CPRU staff attribute the increased demand to an increase in construction projects during the COVID pandemic.

In addition to processing permit applications, CPRU staff provide other services to protect Valley Water's watersheds and utility assets and interests. These services include:

- Performing flood plain analysis;
- Conducting CEQA compliance reviews;
- Providing technical assistance to local agencies in reviewing hydraulic analysis and other issues affecting local water ways;
- Managing and negotiate Joint Use Agreements with cities and the County for recreational use of Valley Water property;
- Communicating and serving as an intermediary with State and Federal agencies for designated projects/permittees;
- Providing preliminary project reviews to determine if a permit is required;
- Negotiating and preparing licenses, cost share agreements, and land rights transfers for non-capital projects;
- Operating the USA (Underground Service Alert) Desk;
- Maintaining Valley Water GIS showing Valley Water property rights; location of all CPRU files, suspected and verified un-permitted encroachments, Adopt-a-Creek information (available locations, un-adoptable areas and adopted areas) and locations of Joint Use Agreements;
- Archiving record drawings and update drawing database;
- Maintaining and correcting the DEED database;
- Annual updating of Valley Water land rights on assessor maps; and,
- Responding to public records requests, access Valley Water requests, and public inquiries related to flooding information, land rights, land use restrictions, and use of Valley Water right of way.

CPRU staff perform at least three services – performing real estate transactions, conducting CEQA reviews and performing flood analysis – that are consistent with the role of other Valley Water

Units within the Watersheds Department. First, CPRU will process most aspects of a real estate transaction, including negating the terms, if the transaction is needed to issue an encroachment permit, while others will request these services from the RESU depending on the expertise of the individual. In addition, CPRU is responsible for performing other RESU-related activities, such as negotiating and preparing licenses, cost share agreements, and land rights transfers for non-capital projects, including the preparation of Board agenda memos on real estate related activities, although individual staff involved said they will request the RESU's assistance to obtain appraisals and close escrow. Staff explained that CPRU traditionally leads the real estate estimate transaction if an encroachment permit is involved or if the customer wants to dedicated property to Valley Water rather than having RESU accept responsibility.³

Second, qualified CPRU staff reported performing CEQA compliance reviews, a service that staff explained can also be provided and is sometimes referred to the Environmental Planner. Similarly, some CPRU staff perform flood analysis – if they have the qualifications – while other CPRU staff refer the analysis to the Hydrology, Hydraulics and Geomorphology Unit. By having other Valley Water units perform these time-sensitive functions, which CPRU staff described as having delayed their reviews of other less time-sensitive permit applications, the workloads for CPRU could be reduced and focused on permit review and disruptions further minimized.

³ In a prior audit examining Valley water's real estate services, the audit presented to the Board a matter for consideration; to assess the feasibility of consolidating the delivery of Valley Water real estate services and permitting services by combining the RESU and CPRU into a single unit to leverage opportunities. RESU did not agree with the consolidation.

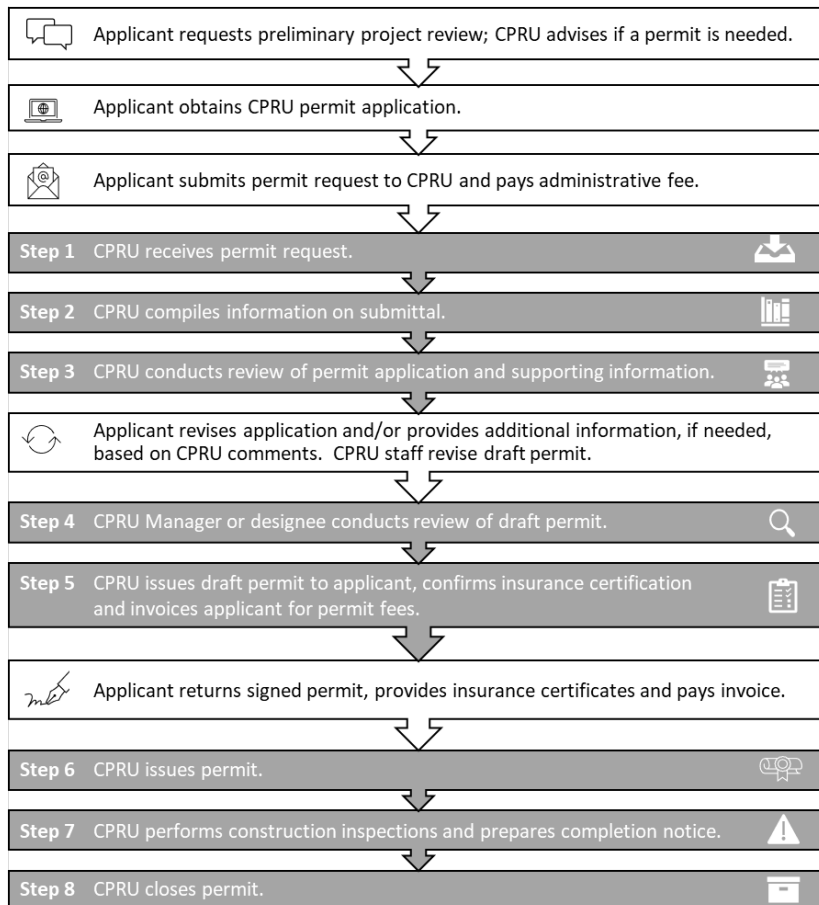
Finding 2: CPRU’s Permit Process Could be Better at Meeting Customer and its Own Expectations for Timeliness and Communication

Permittees Want Faster Permit Processing and Better Communication with Applicants

Valley Water’s permit process, shown in Figure 1, requires CPRU staff to collect, and share information from a variety of sources, including the applicant, Valley Water records, and

with other Valley Water units. Appendix B includes a more detailed description of the permit process, based on CPRU’s policies and procedures for permit processing.

Figure 1. Overview of the CPRU Permit Process⁴



To assess customer satisfaction with Valley Water’s encroachment permit process, the Independent Auditor surveyed applicants to whom CPRU issued encroachment permits in FY2018

⁴ Source: Independent Auditor analysis of CPRU policy and procedure “Review of Community Projects” effective date 6/11/2019 and interviews with CPRU staff.

to FY2020. Survey results show that almost two-thirds (62 percent) of 29 survey respondents reported overall satisfaction with Valley Water’s encroachment permit process, as shown in Figure 2 below.⁵ More than one-third (38 percent) of respondents reported their experience with the Valley Water Permit process was unsatisfactory. Staff reported that when CPRU receives complaints from applicants either directly by the customer or by communication from Valley Water Board members, the person receiving the complaint will attempt to address the applicants’ concerns.

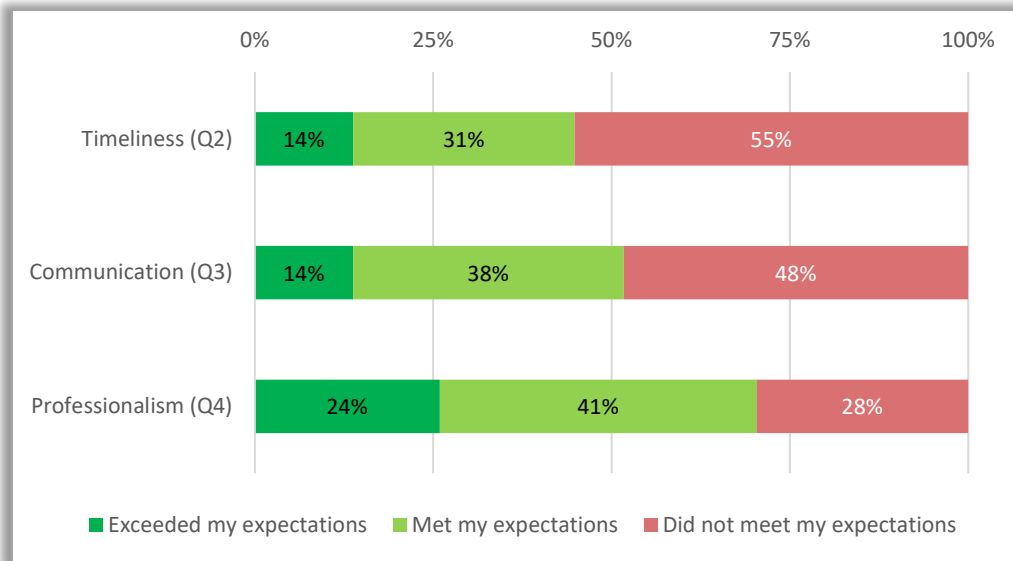
Figure 2. Customer Satisfaction with Valley Water’s Encroachment Permit Process (Q1)



Source: Independent Auditor survey of Valley Water customers issued permits in FY2020.

Survey results also show that CPRU did not meet about half of applicants’ expectations for timeliness (55 percent) and communication (48 percent), shown in Figure 3 below. However, most (65 percent) survey respondents said that Valley Water met or exceeded their expectations for professionalism, by providing courteous, clear, and complete answers to their questions regarding their permit application or the permit process.

Figure 3. Customer Satisfaction with Timeliness, Communication, and Professionalism of CPRU



Source: Independent Auditor survey of Valley Water customers issued permits in FY2020.

Survey respondents also offered their own suggestions for how Valley Water could improve its permit process. Eleven respondents asked for a faster review process and eight respondents asked for improved communication when permits are received and there are changes in the

⁵ Twenty-nine (29) of the 96 permit holders (30%) completed the voluntary survey, sent to the email address provided by the applicant. Appendix A contains the complete survey results. A survey was conducted because CPRU does not track customer complaints or collect other customer satisfaction data.

processing status. A respondent commented, “Everyone I have worked with at the Valley Water have been knowledgeable and helpful. Permit turnaround time has been measured in months instead of weeks for minor permits. There is not a process to let you know of the status of the permit.” And three respondents complimented CPRU, with one stating: “The CPRU office was great, they did an excellent job with processing my permit application.”

CPRU Has Mixed Success in Meetings Its Goals for Timely Permit Processing

CPRU has set the goal to review and issue an encroachment permit within six to eight weeks.⁶ Analysis of CPRU’s processing times for permits issued in FY2018 to FY2020 found that CPRU met the goal about half of the time,

when measured from the date of application submission. Although most applicants (84 percent) submitted a final project plan with their application, staff said that they must wait for this information to begin their review. When measured from the date the applicant had submitted the final project plan, CPRU met the goal for 61 percent of permits issued during FY2018 to FY2020, as shown in Figure 4. CPRU, overall, averaged a little over 13 weeks in FY2018 to FY2020 to issue a permit.

Figure 4. Timeliness of CPRU Permit Issuance

Processing Time	Submission of Final Plans to Permit Issuance		
	Number of Permits	% of Total Permits	Cumulative %
Less than 4 weeks	160	35%	
4-6 weeks	55	12%	
6-8 weeks	65	14%	61%
8-12 weeks	63	14%	
12-16 weeks	42	9%	84%
16-20 weeks	15	3%	
20-24 weeks	12	3%	90%
More than 6 months	49	11%	100%
Total	461	100%	

Source: Independent Auditor analysis of CPRU staff extraction of data from the CPRU database. Permits were excluded from the analysis if data was missing for key processing dates.

Note: The analysis includes all permit applications for all types of projects submitted. Data provided to the Auditor by CPRU did not identify the complexity or size of the project, nor differentiate between those types of requests that would be expected to require minimal, if any, revisions to the initial request and those that would be expected to have re-submissions as the projects develops.

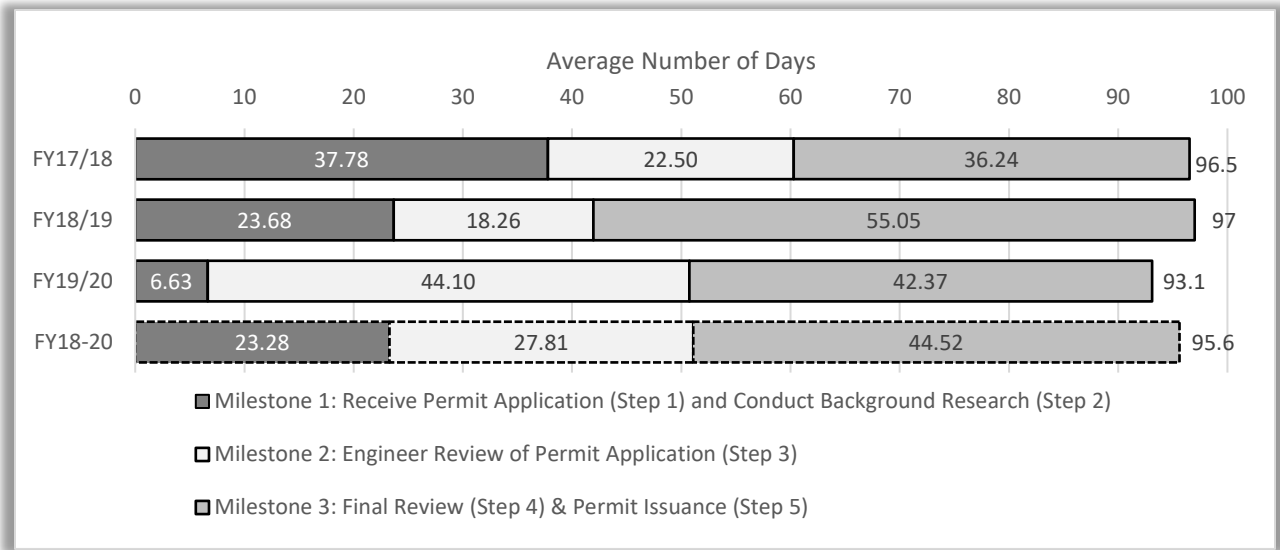
⁶ CPRU staff explained that review times will vary depending on the size and complexity of the project and available Valley Water staff resources. Large, complex projects are often submitted to CPRU during the project’s planning phase, staff reported, and it is assumed that applicants would not expect to receive a permit within the six-to-eight weeks of submission because the project is still in a planning phase.

Finding 3: Timeliness Concerns Attributed to Multiple Factors

Engineers Spend More Time Reviewing Permits

While the time to complete the first two steps of the permit process declined by almost a month (a change of 31.15 days) as shown in Figure 5, the engineer review time increased by three weeks (a change of 21.6 days), which can be partially attributed to recent turnover and vacancies in the positions responsible for the initial steps in the permit process. The resulting vacancies led to the temporary shifting of some responsibility for compiling background information in step 2 to the engineers conducting the permit review in step 3. Similarly, three of the eight engineers responsible for these activities had a year or less experience at the time of the audit.

Figure 5. Days to Complete Steps of CPRU Permit Processing, from Receipt to Issuance, FY2018 to FY2020



Source: Independent Auditor analysis of CPRU staff extraction of data from the CPRU database. Permits were excluded from the analysis if data was missing for key processing dates.

Bottlenecks Occur at the End of the Permit Review Process

The final review and permit issuance activities were generally the longest part of the permit process and revealed a bottleneck in the process. As shown in Figure 5 above, the amount of time CPRU spent on the final steps in the permit issuance process (Steps 4 and 5) averaged about six weeks (44.52 days) over the three fiscal years. Staff attributed the “bottleneck” to the CPRU Manager having many other responsibilities in addition to being the sole person with the authority to sign the permits. Staff estimated it can take up to a week for

the Manager to review to the draft permit and then additional time for staff to make any desired changes or corrections, which the CPRU Manager again reviews. Staff said this process can be repeated if the draft permit is also reviewed by an Associate Engineer. To help address this bottleneck, the CPRU Manager reported that Valley Water management has recently authorized the conversion of a vacant Associate Engineer position into a new Senior Engineer position to assist the CPRU Manager with the review of drafts permits and correspondence.

Permit Applicants Experience Challenges in Meeting Insurance Requirements

Another factor attributed to longer processing times is the time required for applicants to obtain proper insurance documentation from their providers and submit that documentation to CPRU for

subsequent approval. An applicant must submit the required insurance documentation along with any fees, before CPRU issues the final permit.⁷ Valley Water staff reported that applicants frequently struggle to provide the correct insurance documentation on the first attempt and often must contact their brokers for additional endorsements, delaying the issuance of the permit. Data was not available to assess the frequency or length of the delays to permit issuance caused by applicant struggles with the insurance requirement; CPRU does not track the number of permits that were delayed by applicants' efforts to meet the insurance requirements.

To prevent delays related to the submittal of required insurance documentation, CPRU staff said they take several actions. Staff will provide applicants with examples of the types of insurance documentation needed from insurance brokers during the review process; request applicants obtain the insurance documentation early in the application review process; and the CPRU Manager has plans to ask Risk Management to provide CPRU staff training on the insurance requirements.⁸

Some Permit Applications Are Not Recorded on a Timely Basis

Entry of permit applications into the CPRU Database is a key first step to timely processing & effective communication. Applicants can submit a permit application to CPRU using three different methods: (1) submitted via USPS mail to the CPRU;

(2) emailed or mailed directly to an Associate or Assistant Engineer known to the applicant; or (3) submitted by email to the CPRU dropbox. Having three different methods for submitting applications creates challenges in their recording and tracking. Staff explained that historically,

⁷ The encroachment permit application states: "Insurance: A certificate of insurance and additional insured endorsement acceptable to Valley Water must be provided prior to issuance of a Valley Water encroachment permit. Valley Water, its directors, officers, agents, employees, and volunteers must be named as additional insureds in the general, automobile liability, and worker's compensation insurance policies. Valley Water and the other foregoing individuals must remain as additional insureds until the later of: (i) the expiration for the Valley Water encroachment permit; or (ii) the completion of all of Applicant's activities on the Valley Water right-of-way. Specific requirements are shown on the Insurance Requirements information sheet (WF75113)."

⁸ The annual audit work plan of the Independent Auditor includes a separate review of Valley Water's insurance function and requirements.

they enter an application into the CPRU database within 24 hours of receipt and distribute the applications with supporting information to the engineers up to one week of receipt, which the Independent Auditor verified through an analysis of the permit data for FY2020.⁹

Nonetheless, CPRU staff acknowledged that some permits are not entered on a timely basis into the CPRU database. This issue occurs when (1) an applicant emails their application directly to an engineer for review and does not also submit the application to the CPRU dropbox for entry into the CPRU database, or (2) the engineer begins the review process without forwarding the application for data entry into the system. CPRU staff explained that applicants will send their applications directly to them, with the hope of reducing the permit process review time. Staff have admittedly overlooked applications because they were not entered into the CPRU database, delaying its review and processing. To prevent unrecorded applications, the CPRU Manager has instructed staff to forward all applications to the CPRU dropbox and for staff to request that all applicants use the CPRU email address to ensure the application is sent to the CPRU dropbox.

Permit Review Activities Need Better Standardization and Clarity

CPRU needs to standardize and document current application review practices. Heavy workloads (as well as the challenges that come with working from home due to the pandemic and fires), staff explained, has made it difficult

to set aside time for less experienced staff to be trained on the permit process, limiting their ability to work independently, and resulting in more time spent on revising the work performed during the final review process. While CPRU has created templates for completing Adopt-a-Creek, fence cost shares, license/permits, and utility crossing permits, development of review checklists for use by newer staff can ensure consistency and completeness of the work. The CPRU Manager acknowledged the importance of updating the Unit's remaining policies and procedures but has not found the time for the update.

CPRU has not established criteria for the order in which applications will be reviewed, if exemptions to that criteria are allowed and under what special circumstances authority could be delegated from the CPRU Manager to issue a permit. Without criteria, staff reported interrupting their review of an application to work on another application designated as a "higher" priority, extending the review process for the now lower priority application. Finally, the lack of formal and documented processes for time-intensive activities, such as obtaining input from other Valley Water units, adds time to this portion of the review process. While some Valley Water units are very responsive to CPRU requests for input into the permit review process, other units do not have designated points of contact, causing staff to spend additional time identifying the correct person to provide input. Staff reported waiting several weeks to months for these units to provide their input because of the absence of agreements on expected completion dates. The policies and procedures provided also do not address under what special circumstances – such

⁹ While more than three weeks were needed to complete the first two steps in the permit process in FY2018, this declined to about 6 days in FY2020.

as absences or large workloads – that may require delegation of the authority from the CPRU Manager to issue permits.¹⁰

Further definition and standardization of the roles and responsibilities of each CPRU staff person in the permit review process could also reduce review times. Traditionally, CPRU divided the District into regions and assigned staff to be experts in that region of the District and responsibility for reviewing all permit applications, requests for technical assistance, joint use agreements, and other public inquires impact that region. Staff turnover and the high volume of requests for assistance has forced CPRU to move away from this model for assigning workloads. An option for an updated model would be to dedicate staff to the review of certain types of “straightforward” permits – as is already the practice for the Technical Support team to draft fence cost sharing and adopt-a-creek permits – to reduce review times for these permit types.

Permit Processing is Primarily a Manual Process

The current permit process is manual; a paper file is created and CPRU’s permit review and approval is based on the hard copy documentation. Manual processes are prone to processing errors and require extensive effort to manage manual record keeping systems. Staff further

spend time printing emails, maps and other documents that are submitted electronically by applicants to create and maintain a paper file for each permit application.

In addition, limitations of the current permitting database have necessitated manual processing. For example, paper files must be created because the database only allows one PDF document to be uploaded for each file, requiring staff to consolidate all the supporting documentation into that single PDF for storage in the application. Accessing that uploaded documentation is difficult, staff said, because they cannot search the database. The database also does not support an electronic workflow of the permit process. For example, staff cannot use the database to send messages to applicants on the status of their application, on which staff reported dedicating, on average, half an hour or more each day sending emails or retuning phone calls to update applicants on their applications’ status.

Many of CPRU’s records are also stored only in physical files. Despite a recently completed effort by staff to create an electronic inventory of the boxes of the physical files, staff described their continuing efforts to search through file boxes to locate the desired permit file and then search again to find additional files of oversized as-built drawings and plans.

Valley Water has initiated efforts to replace the current CPRU database with an enhanced document storage and management system; the replacement of the CPRU database is one of two pilot projects planned before implementing the system agencywide. Desired features of a new system, in addition to those identified by CPRU staff above, include an information technology (IT) solution to automate applicant submission and entry of the application into the

¹⁰ The Water Resources Protection Ordinance defines the Permit Authority as, “District employee designated by the CEO to make decisions regarding the issuance of encroachment permits.”

CPRU database or its replacement and allowing applicants to self-check the status of their applications reducing time spent preparing correspondence.

Valley Water’s IT management said the replacement system will be implemented during the summer of 2021 and can be configured to address some but not all CPRU desired features.¹¹ The new system is a cloud-based document management system (ECM) that will be configured to automate the workflow of Valley Water’s permit process. The new system can also provide workflow management for documents, analytics dashboards and time tracking but does not have an invoicing function, a feature of the current CPRU database. IT management also plans to implement a new Customer Resources Management (CRM) system, as a tool for all Valley Water units, to use to communicate with external customers. IT management said further research is needed to determine if and how the systems can send notifications to permit applicants during the review process. Until the new ECM and CRM systems interface, CPRU may need to record information on a permit’s status into both systems because the new document management system cannot be used on its own to send communications to customers.

CPRU Does Not Consistently Plan for Large Reviews

Renewal of regular consultations with Water Resources Protection Collaborative members could help CPRU plan ahead and minimize any disruption or delays to other permit applications from larger, tight-deadline or time-intensive

development projects. CPRU could conduct outreach with cities and other owners of properties adjacent to the District to identify upcoming large projects and pre-plan for the permits and other agreements, such as real estate transactions, to ensure these proposed projects will meet the requirements of the Water Resources Protection Ordinance. This type of advanced planning was the intent of the Collaborative that developed the *Guidelines* and Water Resources Protection Ordinance in 2005-2007, but a decade later and turnover of the Collaborative participants has led to a need for Valley Water to renew its efforts. Also, CPRU does not have a system in place to manage and monitor the status of its joint use agreements of Valley Water property. For example, Valley Water allowed an agreement with the City of San Jose to expire in FY2019 despite a QMS performance standard to monitor that “agreements with responsible partner agencies are in place for appropriate public access to District facilities.”

¹¹ CPRU is one of two Valley Water units being used to pilot the new document management system, which IT plans to eventually implement throughout Valley Water.

Finding 4: Local Agencies’ Strategies Could Benefit Valley Water

Some Agencies Utilize Online Customer Service Portals to Upload Permit Application and to Check Permit Status

Information was collected from eight local agencies on their permit processes and tools. Three cities have created online portals that allow applicants to submit a permit application and/or upload supporting documentation and

for applicants to obtain information about the status of their applications. These three localities estimated a two-to-four-week time frame for the initial review, after all supporting documentation is submitted, although the localities qualified that additional review time may be needed for complex projects. By automating the submission process, the online portal or a similar tool helps to reduce the chance of an application being overlooked.

As shown in Figure 6 below, the five water agencies we contacted issue encroachment permits and all report using similar methods as Valley Water for applications submission; like Valley Water, none used an online portal. Reported times for permit processing varied across the five agencies, with Valley Water’s estimate falling in the middle. An official at one agency said they typically process permits within two weeks of submission, while another agency informs applicants that a minimum of four months is needed to complete the permit process for a “straightforward” permit such as day use of agency property. Agency staff explained that additional time is needed to process permits for land uses that require real estate transactions, review of construction plans for facilities such as solar farms or the development of housing. Most agencies said that the COVID pandemic had increased their processing times.

Figure 6. Estimated Permit Processing Times from Other California Water Agencies

Agency	Estimated Permit Processing Time
Valley Water	6-8 weeks
Other Water Agencies	4-12 weeks
	2 weeks
	4-6 months
	3-4 weeks
	4 weeks (30 days)

Source: Independent Auditor interviews with staff from water agencies.

One Agency Uses a Project Coordinator to Facilitate Communication and Timely Processing

One agencies used a slightly different model for communicating with the permittee in comparison to Valley Water. The agency assigns an Engineering Technician to serve in the role of project coordinator. The Engineering Technician coordinates the Engineer’s review of the

technical aspects of the proposed activity, real estate services, input from other departments, manages the records, and serves as the point of contact for the applicant, and is responsible for all communication with the applicant to allow the Engineers more time to work on the technical reviews. At Valley Water, the Engineers assigned to review the application also serves as the project coordinator, because CPRU only has one Engineering Technician position, reducing the amount of time an Engineer has to work on their technical reviews.

Other Agencies Identify Themselves Differently; Renaming CPRU May Avoid Confusion

Some CPRU staff, when discussing the challenges they face in coordinating the permit review process with other Valley Water units and applicants, said the name CPRU – Community Projects Review Unit – hindered rather than helped explain what the Unit does,

creating confusing within Valley Water and among applicants who try to find the correct Valley Water unit responsible for permit processing.

As shown In Figure 7 below, four of the five units within other agencies have property, real estate, or right-of-way in their name because the two functions – issuing encroachment permits and executing real estate transactions – both require an assessment of the impact of the proposed activity on the District’s property rights and authorized uses of the District’s property.

Figure 7. Comparison of Unit Names Responsible for Permit Processing

Agency	Unit Names Responsible for Permit Processing
Valley Water	Community Projects Review Unit
Other Water Agencies	Property Management Group
	Engineering
	Secondary Land Use, Real Property Group
	Real Estate Section, Operational Resources
	Right-of-Way Division

Other Agencies Outreach Annually to Publicize Agency’s Permit Services

To publicize their services, two water agencies we contacted proactively contact owners of property adjacent to the District using two different methods to publicize their permitting services and prevent unintentional violations.

When ownership of adjacent property is transferred, one agency said they send a letter to the buyer and real estate agent explaining any restrictions and easements on the subject property. This agency said that although their property interest is on the title report, buyers often do not understand the implications. Another agency said, on an annual basis, they send a general letter to adjacent property owners to remind owners to seek permission for a variety of common uses of District property. CPRU does not conduct this type of outreach.

Finding 5: Update Needed for Fee Schedule and Cost Recovery Strategy

Valley Water Recovers Only a Small Percentage of CPRU's Operating Costs from Permit Fees and Other Services

Many local water agencies, like Valley Water, own a large amount of property adjacent to the waterways and facilities that provide and deliver water to their customers. Prior to authorizing the use of their property for other activities, Valley

Water's Water Resources Protection Ordinance requires the agency to assess the impact of the proposed use and make certain findings, prior to using an encroachment permit for the use of its lands.¹² Water agencies may charge for the cost of processing the encroachment permit application, as well as the use of its lands for permitted activities.

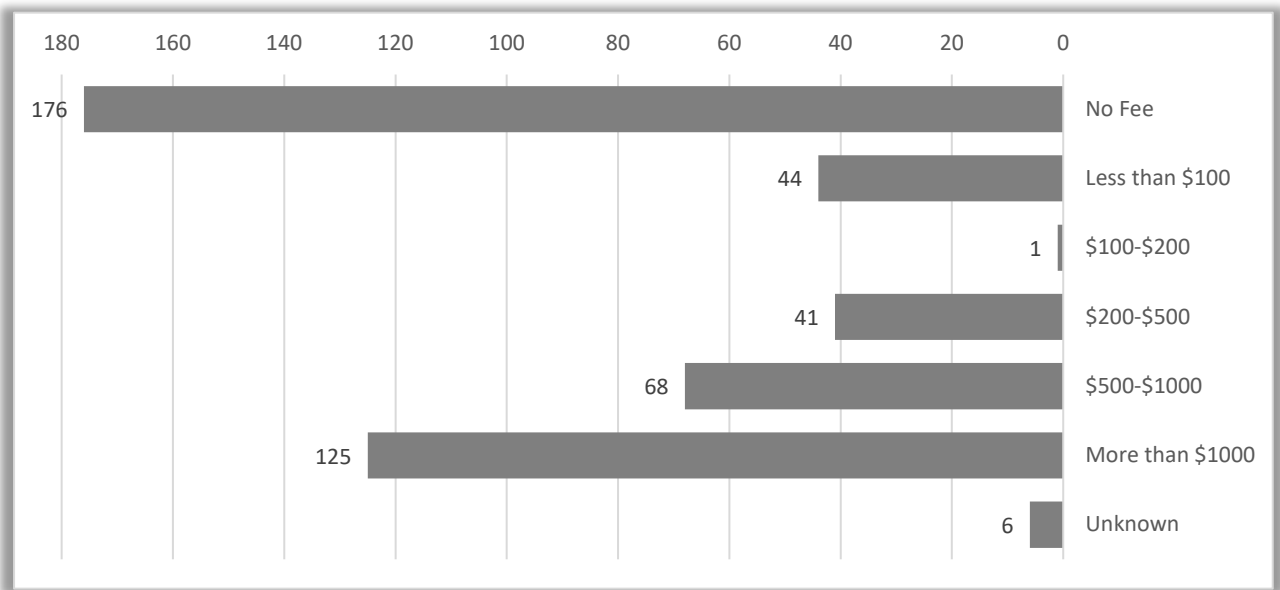
Water agencies generally do not recover their total costs from the activities they permit on their lands because they typically grant exemptions from the payment of fees to other public agencies and for certain permitted activities on its lands. For example, Valley Water exempts the following activities from payment of fees, including the cost of processing an encroachment permit:

- Adopt-a-Creek permits.
- Fence cost sharing permits.
- Temporary pedestrian access for environmental studies, sampling, surveying, and organized events.
- Activities covered by agreements with other public agencies where there is already an exchange of benefits such as public access for recreational purposes allowed through joint use agreements.
- Preliminary reviews by CPRU staff to determine if a permit is required for the proposed activity.
- Public safety (such as fire and police) emergency or investigatory access involving crime or public safety (excluding training exercises).

As shown in Figure 8 below, over the three-year period FY2018 to FY2020, Valley Water did not charge a fee for 38 percent of 461 permits issued by CPRU. About 27 percent of the permit issued had more than \$1,000 paid in permit fees, including 10 permits that had fees of more than \$10,000.

¹² In accordance with the Water Resources Protection Ordinance and Resolution No. 10-86, the District may recover certain costs to administer permit and other real property transactions. All services provided by District staff must be tracked by pay period for each billable project. All billable hours tracked on this form will be billed to the customer.

Figure 8. Amount of Fees Paid for Permits Issued FY2018 to FY2020.



Source: Independent Auditor analysis of permit data extracted by CPRU staff from the CPRU database.

While Valley Water recovers only a small percentage of the CPRU budget from its permit fees and other invoiced services, there could be opportunities to close the revenue and expense gaps. When compared to its budget, payments for CPRU invoiced fees ranged from 7.2 to 11.5 percent of CPRU’s budget for salaries and benefits. When compared to the CPRU’s total budget, the total payments from CPRU invoices represent about 4.5 to 6.8 percent. As shown Figure 9, \$106,000 to over \$195,500 represent the majority of invoiced fees (except in FY2018). Of the total amount invoiced by CPRU for its services, in FY2020, about 78 percent were fees for issued permits. The remaining invoiced fees were from floodplain analyses or right-of-way transactions.

Figure 9. Fees Comprise a Small Percent of CPRU’s Budget

	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020
CPRU Budget			
CPRU Budget	\$4,309,258.00	\$5,201,835.00	\$5,572,103.00
CPRU Salaries & Benefits	\$2,579,041.00	\$3,145,541.00	\$3,462,948.00
Revenue from Permit Fees & Invoices for All Services			
Total Permit Fees for Issued Permits	\$106,043.14	\$159,414.75	\$195,527.21
Total Payments from CPRU Invoices for All Services (includes Permits, Floodplain analyses, Right of way transactions)	\$292,673.12	\$197,579.03	\$249,450.18
Permit fees as a percent of all invoiced fees	36.2%	80.7%	78.4%
Fee Payments as a Percentage of CPRU Budget			
Total Payments/CPRU Budget	6.8%	3.8%	4.5%
Total Payments/CPRU Salaries & Benefits	11.4%	6.3%	7.2%

Source: Independent auditor analysis of CPRU Invoices, Permit Fees, and Valley Water Budgets.

Updating Valley Water's Fee Schedule, Based on a Fee Study, Could Help Ensure Appropriate Cost Recovery

Local agencies rely on fee schedules to help establish various charges for service. To ensure the public agencies receive adequate compensation, these fee schedules are periodically updated to reflect changes in the costs of services. Local agencies typically

review and update their fee schedules on a regular basis, including their fees for permit services. Despite increases in regional property values and administrative costs, Valley Water's permit fee schedule was last updated a decade ago, in 2011, and Valley Water has not established a mechanism to ensure it is periodically reviewed and updated.¹³ The CPRU Manager plans to work with Valley Water Financial Management and Planning Services to initiate the process to update the standard fee schedule.

Presently, Valley Water's current filing fee for an encroachment permit is \$250.¹⁴ The fees of other local water agencies are \$100, \$250, \$300, \$320, and \$500. Compared to other local water agencies, Valley Water's administrative processing fee for permit applications is the same as another local water agency but \$50-\$250 less than three other water agencies and about \$150 more than a much smaller water agency.

A key cost of processing permits is the salary costs of the staff providing the services. While not a comprehensive fee study, an analysis of Valley Water's salary costs for CPRU staff to perform the administrative activities required to process an encroachment permit found that \$250 may not be sufficient for these costs given that CPRU staff generally spent more time than the minimum estimated on these activities¹⁵. As shown in Figure 10 below, CPRU staff spend an estimated three to eight hours on the administrative activities. Using the salary ranges for the CPRU staff that currently perform these activities, the cost of the administrative activities is estimated to range from about \$195 to more than \$1,022 depending on the staff that perform the activities. This estimate does not include the cost to Valley Water for the equipment and other supplies that also add to the cost to conduct these administrative activities.

¹³ An audit of Valley Water's real estate services recommended, to enhance Valley Water's fiscal performance and asset management strategy, that the CEO should (a) conduct an annual review of the fee schedules maintained by Valley Water to ensure that the fees cover the costs to lease, license, and permit the use of its, and (b) shorten the duration and establish regular fee adjustments on future longer term lease agreements.

¹⁴ Water Resources Protection Ordinance section 2.3.1 states "All applications must be accompanied by a filing fee in an amount established by the Board."

¹⁵ Fee studies are conducted to help public agencies determine appropriate rates; a fee study examines the full costs of providing a service and identifies which costs are eligible for recovery through fees.

Figure 10. Estimate of Valley Water’s Administrative Costs to Process a Permit Application

Steps in Permit Process Related to Administrative Activities		Hourly rate		Staff Estimate of Hours Spent on Task		Estimated Salary Cost of Administrative Activities (Range)	
		Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
Step 1	Receive Permit Application (Engineering Technician)	\$37.21	\$47.63	1	2	\$37.21	\$95.26
Step 2	Compile Background Information (Sup. Engineering Technician & Engineering Technician)	\$37.21	\$65.68	2	10	\$74.42	\$656.80
Step 4	Conduct Final Review of Draft Permit (Engineering Manager)	\$79.05	\$100.94	0.5	1	\$39.53	\$100.94
Step 5	Issue Permit and Update Records (Staff Analyst)	\$44.25	\$56.61	0.5	1	\$44.25	\$169.83
TOTAL Administrative activities				4	14	\$195.41	\$1,022.83

Source: Analysis of Valley Water salary tables and interviews with CPRU staff.

Updated Guidance for Billing for Staff Time Spent Reviewing Permits is Needed

In addition to the application filing fee, CPRU charges applicants for time spent to review the activity proposed in the permit application. Neither the Water Resources Protection Ordinance and Manual, nor the

CPRU policies and procedures, provide guidance for the billing for staff review time. Generally, the time invoiced is about two hours even when time incurred could be more.

Analysis of time tracking records from FY2020 generally supports the CPRU staff’s assessment of their practices to invoices a standard set of hours.¹⁶ CPRU recorded two hours or less time for most reviews, regardless of whether the time was recorded as billable (83%) or non-billable (76%), as shown in Figure 11 below. Of the 32 reviews where CPRU staff recorded both billable and non-billable hours, eight of the 32 records (25 percent) had more than two hours of billable time entered.

Figure 11. Distribution of the Number of Billable and Non-Billable Hours per Review, FY2020

Number of Hours Per Record	Billable Hours Only	Non-Billable Hours Only	Both Billable and Non-Billable Hours
2 hours or less	132 (83%)	125 (76%)	24 (75%)
2 to 10 hours	23 (14%)	33 (20%)	7 (22%)
10 or more hours	4 (3%)	6 (4%)	1 (3%)
Total	159	164	32

Source: Independent Auditor’s analysis of data provided by CPRU, which was extracted by IT from the CPRU database.

¹⁶ The number of records with no time recorded was not provided.

Staff reasoned that permit applicants should not be charged for the extra administrative time it takes to locate the historical files needed for the review due to its ineffective records management, as discussed in previously in this report. While CPRU has begun to digitize and organize these historical files, progress has been slow because CPRU has chosen to review each file before it is scanned. Valley Water IT management said the implementation of a new document management system during the summer of 2021 should address the limitations of the current CPRU database and physical files. Other reasons staff do not charge for their actual time spent on permit processing include:

- Less experienced staff are not expected to charge applicants for the additional time it takes for them to become familiar with the history of the Valley Water location, facilities, and prior permitted activities.
- CPRU's policies and procedures do not incorporate risk management principles in its permit review. Every permit application has the same level of review, regardless of risk proposed by the activity.
- The administrative burden of having to enter their time in two systems, staff explained, did not justify the entering small amounts of review time for billing.
- Staff has tried to simplify time tracking and reporting for other Valley Water units that participate in the permit review process, but these efforts have not been successful in collecting the time spent by other units for billing purposes. Data was not available to assess the frequency with which other Valley Water units submitted their time spent on permit reviews and for which CPRU staff then invoiced the applicant.
- Individual CPRU staff expressed concern that if they were to invoice for the actual time they spend on each review, applicants would not be willing to pay the additional costs beyond the filing fee and would complain to the Board.

Rather than billing for a set amount of time for each permit review, an alternative approach would be to establish risk-based criteria for the minimum information required to complete a permit review, especially for low-risk activities or repeat types of permit requests. For example, staff said many permit applications from utility companies request similar types of access and present the same types of risk although the locations differ. The repetitive nature of these permit applications could be used to establish the minimum information needed for a permit review for this type of permit, potentially reducing processing times and processing costs.

An alternative to using the new system planned to replace the current CPRU database for invoicing, would be to record in the financial system the gross fees for all time charged and associated costs for the services provided, and then adjusts the fees for invoicing purposes. Although the invoice sent to the customer shows the net fees due only, using the financial system could provide Valley Water better information for revenue and cost recovery analysis.

Other Local Water Agencies Charge Hourly Rate Instead of Flat Fee for Inspections

Once a permit has been issued, depending on the type of permitted activity, Valley Water will schedule inspections at the location of the permitted activity to ensure compliance with the terms of the permit, guided by the Water

Resources Protection Ordinance and Manual. Staff reported that two inspections – typically a preliminary, pre-activity inspection and a second, post-activity inspection – are scheduled and conducted by one full-time inspector. The permittee is generally charged a flat fee for up to two inspections although some larger projects require additional inspections.¹⁷

CPRU staff explained that their flat fee of \$125 per inspection may not cover the actual cost of inspecting a permitted project because the amount of time spent on each inspection varies by the type, complexity, and location of the project. For example, staff described complex projects that required several hours and more than two inspections to review the plans, property, and completion of the paperwork. As shown in Figure 12 below, if the inspector spends more than two hours on an inspection, Valley Water has not recovered its salary costs (nor other materials costs) of the inspection.

Figure 12. Salary Cost for Inspections

Cost to Inspect Permitted Activities		Salary Cost (Hourly rate)		Staff Estimate Hours Spent on Task		Estimated Cost of Performing Inspection (Range)	
		Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
Step 6	Inspection (Resident Construction Inspector)	\$50.06	\$64.07	2	10	\$100.12	\$640.70

Source: Independent Auditor’s analysis of data provided by CPRU.

None of the local water agencies researched for this audit charged for inspections using a flat fee. To account for the differences in inspection requirements among permitted activities, other local water agencies reported that they charge an hourly rate for inspections instead of a flat fee. When the agency issues the permit, the agency collects a deposit based on the inspector’s estimate of the types of inspections and time needed to perform the inspections. If the estimated cost exceeds the actual cost of the inspection, the agency returns the unused funds to the permit holder after the last inspection.

¹⁷ CPRU staff explained that the CPRU database does not track the number of inspections and a manual count of inspection forms would be required to determine the number performed per project.

Finding 6: Robust Internal Control Framework Needed to Ensure Accurate and Timely Invoicing and Collection of Fee Payments

Internal controls provide reasonable assurance that the objective of a business process, like invoicing for a service provided, will be consistently and properly performed. The audit found that CPRU does not have an automated billing and collection function nor strong internal controls.¹⁸ The issues identified include:

- Manual preparation of invoices for some public agencies.
- Incomplete tracking of all time spent on a permit.
- Absence of documented invoicing and revenue collection policies and procedures.
- Absence of controls to ensure that eligible permits have been invoiced and issued to the agency.
- Improper segregation of duties. Typically, the responsibility for the billing and collection of payments are assigned to multiple staff persons to ensure the proper execution and handling of invoices and payments. Within CPRU, the Staff Analyst is responsible for all financial management functions including the billing, collection and recording of the payments for invoiced services. Similarly, the Staff Analyst is responsible for the handling all aspects of the key deposits, which are required when CPRU gives a permit holder a key to gain access to Valley Water property to perform an activity. Proper segregation of duty would have one staff person accept and record the deposit and another process the return of the key and the permit holder's deposit.
- Absence of system and financial reconciliation. Reconciliation is another internal control used to ensure that payments have been properly collected and recorded, in particular when the permit system and Valley water financial system do not interface and automatically detect errors or other discrepancies. Staff reported that they had not been instructed to reconcile the payments records in the CPRU permit system with the records of the Valley Water financial system.

The absence of strong financial management controls has led to absence of recording and payment of invoices for two public transportation agencies that obtained permits from Valley Water. An undetermined number of invoices were not entered in the CPRU database; and some were never mailed and paid, resulting in a lost revenue opportunity although the magnitude of the financial loss is unknown. The CPRU Manager explained that the retirement of the CPRU staff

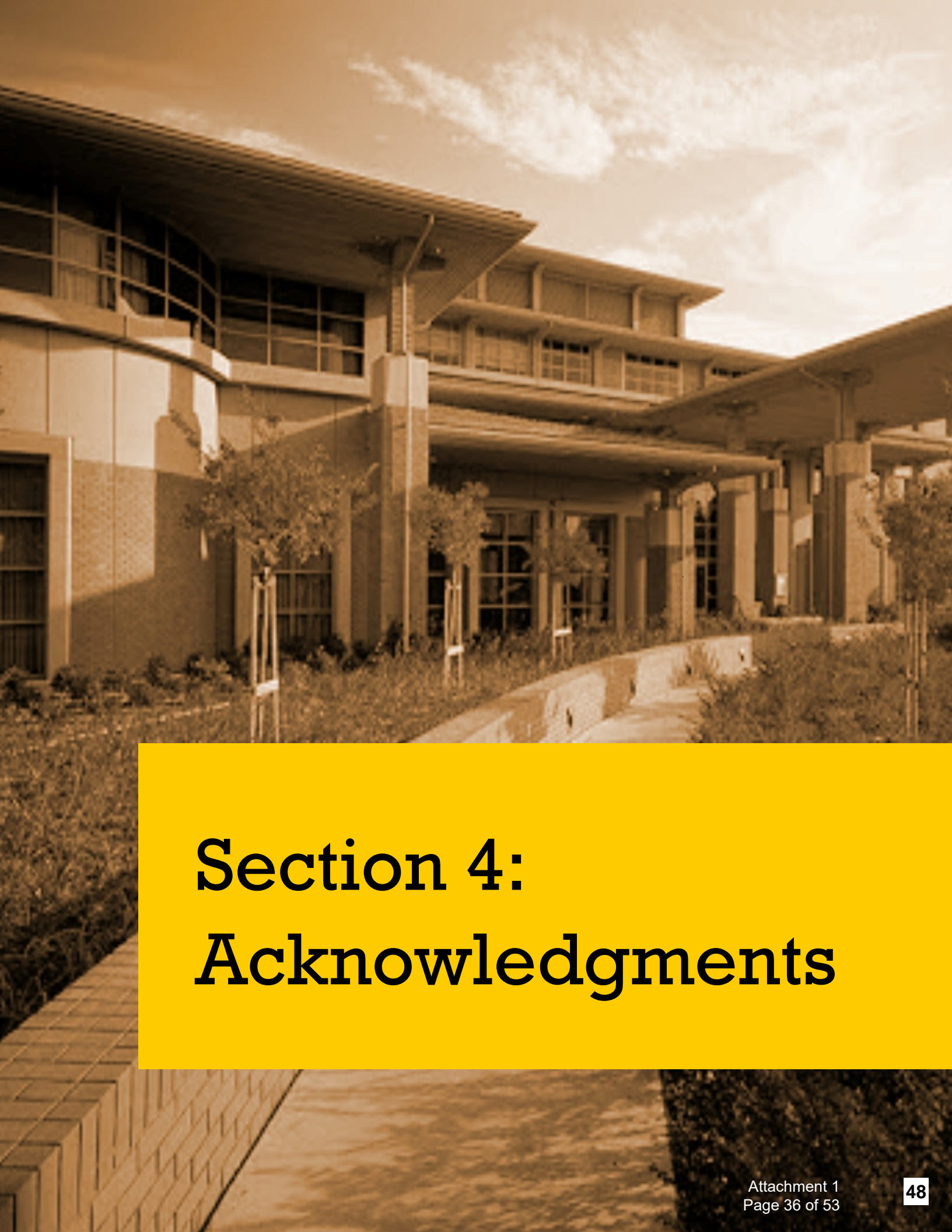
¹⁸ Staff explained that they use the CPRU permit system to input data, create an electronic invoice, and maintain a file record of those invoices, but they manually complete other activities, such as tracking the data used to generate the invoice, invoice approval, recording the receipt of invoice payments, and monitoring unpaid invoices.

responsible for managing the invoices, and the assignment of other staff to critical tasks, led to the oversight of these invoices.¹⁹

At the time of our review, CPRU implemented immediate action to initiate a process to reconcile the paper-based invoices with the CPRU database and seek payment for the outstanding invoices according to Valley Water agreements with the agencies. In addition, the Chief Financial Officer initiated efforts to work with CPRU to help strengthen internal controls to ensure accurate and timely invoicing and fee payments.

Valley Water's IT management said that the new document management system that will replace the CPRU's database will not have an invoicing function although time can be tracked. The new document management system will not be configured to interface with Valley Water's new financial management (ERP) system to allow CPRU to generate invoices. Potential use of Valley Water's new core financial management system to generate invoices and track and record payments (including key deposits) will help CPRU in its efforts to establish a robust internal controls framework and improve its financial reporting.

¹⁹ CPRU did not provide information on the number of invoices that were not entered in the CPRU database. For invoices that were entered into the CPRU database, at the end of December 2020, CPRU reported there were 15 unpaid invoices totaling \$13,831. Staff reported that for invoices recorded in the CPRU database, the system can generate a list of unpaid invoices and provides an automated alert to staff when an invoice is unpaid. However, staff must manually create and send via email a separate reminder to the customer if an invoice is not paid.



Section 4: Acknowledgments

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TAP International wishes to thank the Valley Water management and staff who participated in this audit from the following divisions and units:

- Community Projects Review Unit
- The Board of Directors
- Staff from other local agencies



Appendices

APPENDIX A: Anonymized Survey Responses

**Valley Water
Customer Satisfaction Survey
Community Projects Resources Unit**

****CONFIDENTIAL SURVEY****

Please help us improve Valley Water’s permit services by completing this 60-second survey about your experience by **January 15, 2021**. You received this survey because Valley Water identified you as having recently requested a permit to perform work or initiate activity on property owned by the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

Valley Water has contracted with TAP International to conduct this survey. To learn more about TAP International, go to <https://tapinternational.org/>. If you would like to speak to us directly, please contact Denise Callahan or Kate Kousser of TAP International at 916.549.0831.

All responses will be kept confidential and identifying information removed.

OK

1. How would you rate your overall experience with the Valley Water permit process?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Does not apply

Answer Choices	Percent of Responses	Number of Responses
Excellent	21%	6
Very Good	17%	5
Satisfactory	24%	7
Unsatisfactory	38%	11
Does not apply	0%	0
Total	100%	29

2. Did Valley Water process your permit application within a reasonable amount of time?

Exceeded my expectations
 Met my expectations
 Did not meet my expectations
 Does not apply

Answer Choices	Percent of Responses	Number of Responses
Exceeded my expectations	13.79%	4
Met my expectations	31.03%	9
Did not meet my expectations	55.17%	16
Does not apply	0.00%	0
Total	100%	29

3. Did Valley Water staff keep you adequately and consistently informed of the status of your permit application?

Exceeded my expectations
 Met my expectations
 Did not meet my expectations
 Does not apply


Answer Choices	Percent of Responses	Number of Responses
Exceeded my expectations	13.79%	4
Met my expectations	37.93%	11
Did not meet my expectations	48.28%	14
Does not apply	0.00%	0
Total	100%	29

4. Did you receive courteous, clear, and complete answers to your questions regarding your permit application or the permit process?

Exceeded my expectations
 Met my expectations
 Did not meet my expectations
 Does not apply

Answer Choices	Percent of Responses	Number of Responses
Exceeded my expectations	24.14%	7
Met my expectations	41.38%	12
Did not meet my expectations	27.59%	8
Does not apply	6.90%	2
Total	100%	29

5. How could Valley Water improve the permit process?

Powered by

See how easy it is to create a survey.

Answers to Question 5:

- The permit process is straight forward. What needs improvement is the way important information about field conditions and related observations are brought into the greater understanding of environmental conditions, their impact on the community, and methods for bringing to compliance issues that compromise the public safety and security.
- In my experience the permit took a very long time to get.

- I think staff did a good job on processing the encroachment application. The only reason I marked them down on #3 is that it would be nice if the system would confirm receipt of the application so I know it is being worked on. Otherwise, great job!
- Faster reviews, more timely responses.
- Everyone I have worked with at the Valley Water have been knowledgeable and helpful. Permit turn around time has been measured in months instead of weeks for minor permits. There is not a process to let you know of the status of the permit.
- Permit review process takes too long of time and feels unorganized.
- The application was applied for in June 2020 and was issued on Sept. 2020. Invoices and photos were submitted for reimbursement in Oct. 2020 and the District contact person was notified with a phone call on the same day. As of January 2021 still awaiting reimbursement. The only individual who has been helpful in this process, [omitted] who after being contacted for the second time on the timing of the reimbursement contacted me to advise me of the status and timing of when a check might be issued. COVID is no excuse for the lack of response and delays that were encountered. A timely response to the application and reimbursement, to at a minimum meet the District's own published timeline would be a start to improving the process.
- Provide an online status of permits, increasing staff to address projects in a timely manner, etc.
- Assigned permit engineer did not communicate at all for a very routine request after repeated follow-ups, application stated 2 weeks, yet it took nearly 3 months after escalating to supervisor.
- The CPRU office was great, they did an excellent job with processing my permit application.
- speed up the process...have all comments back at the same time. Took almost a year to get permit.
- Clear explanations of fees, reasonable fees (their automatically escalating annual fee in public ROW is outrageous), permit issuance in a timeframe similar to surrounding agencies.
- Speed up the approval/review process. The process took about 6 months to complete and did not get a proper response time from the technician after numerous calls and emails
- Speed it up. I did not receive my permit in time for work prior to start of rains - which were way late this year.
- Expedite it. Return phone calls.

APPENDIX B: Detailed Description of Valley Water's Permit Process

Before the formal permit process begins, a prospective applicant must determine if their planned project or activity will adversely affect Valley Water facilities, property, or right-of way by requesting a preliminary review by CPRU to assess whether the proposed project or activity is feasible and will require a permit. If a permit is required, the applicant must submit project related documentation, such as engineering plans, federal or state environmental permits obtained from other agencies, biological assessments, and as-builts drawings. The permit application states that an application is not considered complete until the applicant has submitted, "all the information, drawings, reports, and other documents required by Valley Water" that show "that the proposed work will not adversely impact Valley Water's interests, including without limitation, the hydraulics, hydrology, structural integrity, maintenance, and property rights of Valley Water's right-of-way."

Permit processing then proceeds with three steps: Step 1 - record receipt of the application and Step 2 - compile all pertinent background information about the affected CPRU property and update the District's GIS layers to show the application. For Step 2, CPRU Technical Support staff compile information from multiple sources: CPRU's records about the affected property, current assessor's parcel maps, registered well information, and District GIS layers. The CPRU Manager or designated Associate Engineers assign projects (permit application and the project plans) to CPRU's Asset Protection Support staff. For Step 3, the Asset Protection Support staff – comprised of Engineers – conducts additional research, coordinates the review of the proposed work by other Valley Water units, and reviews the application and file to ensure that the permit will meet Valley Water's conditions, land rights, CEQA compliance, and insurance requirements. If the permit requires a real estate transaction, the Engineer will negotiate and prepare licenses, cost share agreements, and land rights transfers for non-capital projects, and may also review the HSLA, plats and description, deed language, appraisals, title reports, and preparation of CEO approval Board agenda memo. Applicants then revise the permit application, if needed, based on the comments from Valley Water reviewers.

The Engineer's review of the permit may require extra steps to gather more information from applicants regarding the project, or to obtain input from other Valley Water units to assess the impact of the planned project on Valley Water facilities, property, or right-of-way. Once the Engineer has completed their review, the Engineer updates the CPRU database, prepares a draft permit and invoice, and submits the package to the CPRU Manager for review. If an assistant Engineer prepared the draft permit, an Associate Engineer may first review the draft and return to the Assistant for further revisions. Step 4 includes the review and approval of the draft permit by the CPRU Manager, and then in Step 5, the Staff Analyst sends the draft permit to the applicant for signature with the invoice for payment and submission of the insurance requirements. During the COVID pandemic's work-from-home orders, CPRU adopted the use of DocuSign to allow electronic signature of documents. The CPRU Manager signs the draft permit, making it effective,

after the applicant has returned the signed permit, payment for the invoice, and insurance certificates. In Step 6, CPRU's Resident Construction Inspector performs the inspections as required by the permit. Finally, under Step 7 and upon completion of the permitted work the Staff Analyst under Step 7 obtains and files as-built plans of any permitted work and updates the CPRU database with the status of the permitted work. A separate unit within CPRU is responsible for enforcement of unpermitted activities, which were outside the scope of this audit.

APPENDIX C: Permits & Valley Water's Water Resource Protection Ordinance

Representatives from Valley Water, 15 cities, Santa Clara County, business, agriculture, streamside property owner and environmental interests formed the Water Resources Protection Collaborative in 2002 to clarify and streamline local permitting for streamside activities. In 2005, the Collaborative developed (and Valley Water later adopted) the *Guidelines & Standards for Land Use Near Streams* to guide permitting activities by public agency members of the Collaborative. The *Guidelines* describe 11 permitting tools for Valley Water and other Collaborative members to follow when issuing encroachment or streamside construction permits, including highlighting steps for coordination between the applicant, permit authority (such as Valley Water, the County or one of the 15 member cities) with Valley Water and each other regarding the water resources impact of the proposed activity. Other permitting tools in the *Guidelines* include exempted land uses, definitions of a stream and bank, questions to illicit information to be provided by the applicant about the project and on plans submitted to the permit authority. The Collaborative last updated the *Guidelines* in July 2006.

In 2007, Valley Water adopted the Water Resources Protection Ordinance, so that a Valley Water permit is only required when a person enters, modifies, or otherwise uses a Valley Water facility, property, or right-of-way. Prior to the Ordinance, for construction and activities near streams, applicants were required to obtain a permit from Valley Water regardless of whether the planned construction or activity would impact District facilities or land rights. If the construction or activity does not affect Valley Water's facilities or land rights, then the applicant is only required to obtain a permit from a local land use agency (either a city or the county, if unincorporated). Local land use agencies, staff explained, will often consult with CPRU when the agency receives permit applicants that could affect local waterways.

APPENDIX D: Management’s Response

<p>RECOMMENDATION 1 - The Watersheds’ Chief Operating Officer should consolidate overlapping functions between CPRU and other Valley Water units (such as real estate transactions to RESU and CEQA reviews to the Environmental Planner) to reduce CPRU staff workloads and allow CPRU staff to focus on the provision of permit services.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with the recommendation.</p> <p>CPRU’s critical function is to protect Valley Water assets where community and land development activities overlap. In doing so, staff collaborates with a wide variety of Valley Water staff. CPRU will brainstorm with RESU and Environmental Planning Unit ways to engage SMEs in these units to streamline workflow processes. In addition, Valley Water will be hiring an environmental planner which will help to reduce the overlap of this function.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: March 2022</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally satisfies the recommendation.</p> <p>This recommendation is closely related to the Independent Auditor’s recommendations to the Watersheds’ Chief Operating Office to evaluate the feasibility of consolidating the CPRU and RESU to better streamline activities implemented by each unit, as described in a prior performance audit of the Real Estate Services Unit (<i>Real Estate Services can be a More Effective Resource for Valley Water</i>).</p> <p>A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 2 - The CPRU Manager should complete standardization of permit review policies, practices, roles, and responsibilities.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with the recommendation.</p> <p>CPRU will update and complete the existing permit review policies, practices, and instruction guidance for various types of transactions to bring consistency in the review of projects.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: June 2022</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

RECOMMENDATION 3 - The CPRU Manager should develop and implement a training program that includes various courses on:

- a. Permit processing for new and inexperienced staff, which will reduce time spent on final review and approval of draft permits.
- b. Customer service, building on the training experience of some CPRU staff completed earlier this year.
- c. Risk management, through coordination with the Valley Water Risk Manager, on Valley Water’s insurance requirements.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with the recommendation.

- a) CPRU Manager and experienced staff will share their knowledge on permit processing and hold training sessions on permit review and processing, and guidance instructions for staff.
- b) CPRU Manager will incorporate customer service protocol into staff training sessions and look for training opportunities in the area of customer service and encourage staff to take the training.
- c) CPRU Manager and experienced staff will coordinate with Valley Water Risk Manager to develop and implement a training program to educate new staff on a regular basis and develop a guide sheet for customers.

Target Implementation Date: March 2022

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:
 Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.

RECOMMENDATION 4 - The CPRU Manager should establish criteria for the order in which permit applications will be reviewed, who has the authority to authorize exemptions from that process and under what special circumstances authority could be delegated to issue a permit.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with the recommendation.

CPRU Manager will establish criteria for the order in which permit applications will be reviewed. Typically, the projects submittals are reviewed in the order they are received. The criteria will provide guidance for exceptions, which may be made on a case-by-case basis or as directed by the Permit Authority (CPRU Manager is designated as the Permit Authority). Prior to the planned absence of Permit Authority or other special circumstance, Permit Authority will designate an acting staff member authorized to issue a permit.

Target Implementation Date: March 2022

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:
 Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.

RECOMMENDATION 5 - The CPRU Manager should assign customer liaison responsibilities (to one or two individuals) to ensure consistent and timely communication on permit applications to help meet customer expectations.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:
Management partially agrees with the recommendation.

In general, the assignment of liaison responsibilities will increase confusion and will take more time of the staff reviewing the permit to provide and explain the details of customer’s request to the liaison. CPRU Manager will explore the role of a liaison where this may increase efficiency and coordinate with IT to explore other tools to integrate with the database (See response to Recommendation 6).

CPRU Manager will request additional resources from Management. Use of additional technicians to assist in background research for projects and review of routine, low-risk tasks will free up time to allow engineers to ensure consistent and timely communication on permit applications.

Target Implementation Date: October 2022

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:

Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. The use of additional resources – either a liaison or technician(s) – to perform provide customer service, would allow engineers more time to perform the technical reviews of permit applications and help to reduce review times. These additional resources may be critical to meeting customer’s expectations while Valley Water’s planned implementation of a new information systems for customer resource management (CRM) is undertaken that will also interface with another new information system that is planned to replace the current CPRU database. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.

RECOMMENDATION 6 - The CPRU Manager, in collaboration with Valley Water Information Technology Unit, should continue efforts to identify and implement the solutions for desired functionality needed to strengthen permit processing, which include:

- a. Electronic submission of permit applications and supporting documents that automatically creates an electronic permit review file.
- b. Expanded search function for researching past projects and permits.
- c. Customizable dashboards and/or reports that facilitate management oversight of permit processing timeliness, invoice aging, and other measures of performance.
- d. Tools, such as a request form or ticketing system, to help CPRU track requests for services in addition to permit reviews received from internal and external stakeholders.
- e. Ability for customers to self-check the status of their applications and other service requests through interface of the new customer resource management system with the new document management system.
- f. Minimize the administrative burden of tracking and reporting time spent on permit review and other asset protection services by CPRU and other Valley Water units.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees and will approach the implementation of this recommendation in phases:

1. Modernize processes, support submission of permit applications, track requests, complete reviews, facilitate online reporting for customers and reduce administrative burden of tracking and reporting through the selection and implementation of a new CPRU online portal. Management will consider options to include this functionality within other active projects such as the Wells Management System Upgrade and Access Valley Water. (6a, d, e, f)
2. Expand search/research functions and reduce administrative burden via the implementation of the Data Consolidation Capital Project Proof of Concept currently underway and scheduled for completion in October 2022. (6b, f)
3. Create Dashboards and reports via the implementation of the Data Consolidation Capital Project Proof of Concept currently underway and scheduled for completion in October 2022, the ERP Capital Project currently underway. (6c)”

Target Implementation Date: Varies

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:

Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A target date to complete all activities should be established and a follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.

<p>RECOMMENDATION 7 - The CPRU Manager should renew regular consultations with other member agencies of the Water Resources Protection Collaborative to allow CPRU to plan for upcoming large land review development requests and to establish a process for monitoring the status of existing agreements.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>CPRU Manager will contact the cities within Santa Clara County to establish a process or set up regular coordination meetings to plan for upcoming large land development projects.</p> <p>CPRU Manager will explore tools with IT that allow staff to set a trigger and inform of the status of existing agreements several months before the expiration to allow sufficient time for renewal or renegotiation. CPRU staff will also establish a periodic check in with each city to review responsibilities under these agreements.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: June 2022</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 8 - The CPRU Manager, in coordination with the Valley Water Risk Management Unit Manager, should develop communication strategies, such as instructional videos, screen shots, and/or brochures to make it easier for applicants and insurance brokers to understand Valley Water’s insurance requirements.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>CPRU Manager and staff will coordinate with Risk Management Unit Manager to develop communication strategies and re-evaluate the existing insurance requirements to align with the most up-to-date standards in the insurance practices, to make it easier for applicants and insurance brokers.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: March 2022.</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

RECOMMENDATION 9 - The CPRU Manager, with the assistance of the Watershed’s Chief Operating Officer, should explore the feasibility of adopting strategies of other local agencies to promote their permit services, such as:

- a. Change the name of CPRU to a name that better describes its functions.
- b. Adopt a new model for the allocation of work among staff to minimize delays due to heavy demand, such as separating the roles of project coordination from technical review.
- c. Conduct regular outreach by letter or other communication to neighboring property owners (and to new buyers of neighboring property) describing Valley Water’s permit services, the reason for the permit process, and how to access the services.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with this recommendation.

- a. CPRU Manager will explore and brainstorm with staff and stakeholders to consider change of unit’s name. (Target Date: March 2022)
- b. CPRU Manager will ascertain a new model to consider separation of project coordination from technical review for low-risk, repetitive permit applications and will request additional resources to pursue implementation of the new model. (Target Date: October 2022)
- c. CPRU Manager and staff will work with Communication Unit to conduct outreach to neighboring property owners, engineering consulting firms, and city staff describing Valley Water’s permit process, and how to access the services. (Target Date: June 2022)

Target Implementation Date: Varies

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:
 Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.

RECOMMENDATION 10 - Valley Water’s CEO, with approval of the Board, should consider setting a goal for cost recovery from fees charged for permit services.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees and will engage a consultant to assist with updating the fee schedule for Board approval, which incorporates an analysis of a target cost recovery goal.

Target Implementation Date: August 2022

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:
 Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.

RECOMMENDATION 11 - The CPRU Manager, in coordination with the Valley Water Chief Financial Officer, should update the current fee schedule based on the results of a fee study. The study should evaluate charging an hourly rate for inspections completed versus the current flat inspection fee.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees and will engage a consultant to assist with updating the fee schedule for Board approval, which incorporates an analysis of a target cost recovery goal.

Target Implementation Date: August 2022

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE: Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.

RECOMMENDATION 12 - The CPRU Manager should adopt a risk-based permit review strategy to reduce processing time for low-risk, repetitive types of permit applications. Clarify in the strategy how time spent on the review of permit applications and other processing tasks should be tracked and invoiced.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with this recommendation.
CPRU Manger will consider strategies to reduce processing time for low-risk, repetitive types of permit applications. CPRU Manager and experienced staff, through permit guidance instructions will add further clarity for new and less experienced staff and reduce ambiguity in the process. (Target Date: June 2022)

Implementation of Recommendation 6 via the implementation of the Data Consolidation Capital Project Proof of Concept and the ERP Capital Project and the results of the fee study with the implementation of Recommendation 11, and results from Recommendation 13 will provide better information and insight to strategize the tracking and invoicing of permit applications and other processing tasks. (Target Date: June 2023 depending on the research outcome in Recommendation 13)

Target Implementation Date: Varies

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE: Management’s response generally satisfies the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.

<p>RECOMMENDATION 13 - The CPRU Manager and the Chief Financial Officer should seek to identify an IT solution to ensure timely and accurate recording of invoices, payments, and deposits. One option to consider is to use Valley Water’s core financial management information system.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees and will engage in the research, specification, selection, procurement, and implementation of a comprehensive tool capable of ensuring accurate recording of invoices, payments, and deposits.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: June 2023 depending on research outcome.</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE: Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 14 - The CPRU Manager, in coordination with the Chief Financial Officer, should establish processes for invoicing and collection of payments that includes a robust framework of financial management internal controls, in particular the segregation of duties for billing and collections; cash management; monitoring of aging receivables; and reconciliation.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees and will approach the implementation of this recommendation in phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement the suggested financial management internal controls under the current CPRU data base system, (Target date – July 2021). 2. Engage a consultant to assist in the development of a billing and revenue collection policy that incorporates best practices (Target date – March 2022). 3. Implement an IT solution for invoicing that is linked to Valley Water’s core financial system and aligns with Valley Water’s billing and revenue collection policy (Target date – June 2023 depending on the research outcome (R13)) <p>Target Implementation Date: Varies.</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE: Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

APPENDIX D: Management’s Response

<p>RECOMMENDATION 1 - The Watersheds’ Chief Operating Officer should consolidate overlapping functions between CPRU and other Valley Water units (such as real estate transactions to RESU and CEQA reviews to the Environmental Planner) to reduce CPRU staff workloads and allow CPRU staff to focus on the provision of permit services.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with the recommendation.</p> <p>CPRU’s critical function is to protect Valley Water assets where community and land development activities overlap. In doing so, staff collaborates with a wide variety of Valley Water staff. CPRU will brainstorm with RESU and Environmental Planning Unit ways to engage SMEs in these units to streamline workflow processes. In addition, Valley Water will be hiring an environmental planner which will help to reduce the overlap of this function.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: March 2022</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally satisfies the recommendation.</p> <p>This recommendation is closely related to the Independent Auditor’s recommendations to the Watersheds’ Chief Operating Office to evaluate the feasibility of consolidating the CPRU and RESU to better streamline activities implemented by each unit, as described in a prior performance audit of the Real Estate Services Unit (<i>Real Estate Services can be a More Effective Resource for Valley Water</i>).</p> <p>A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 2 - The CPRU Manager should complete standardization of permit review policies, practices, roles, and responsibilities.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with the recommendation.</p> <p>CPRU will update and complete the existing permit review policies, practices, and instruction guidance for various types of transactions to bring consistency in the review of projects.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: June 2022</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 3 - The CPRU Manager should develop and implement a training program that includes various courses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Permit processing for new and inexperienced staff, which will reduce time spent on final review and approval of draft permits. b. Customer service, building on the training experience of some CPRU staff completed earlier this year. c. Risk management, through coordination with the Valley Water Risk Manager, on Valley Water’s insurance requirements. 	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with the recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) CPRU Manager and experienced staff will share their knowledge on permit processing and hold training sessions on permit review and processing, and guidance instructions for staff. b) CPRU Manager will incorporate customer service protocol into staff training sessions and look for training opportunities in the area of customer service and encourage staff to take the training. c) CPRU Manager and experienced staff will coordinate with Valley Water Risk Manager to develop and implement a training program to educate new staff on a regular basis and develop a guide sheet for customers. <p>Target Implementation Date: March 2022</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 4 - The CPRU Manager should establish criteria for the order in which permit applications will be reviewed, who has the authority to authorize exemptions from that process and under what special circumstances authority could be delegated to issue a permit.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with the recommendation.</p> <p>CPRU Manager will establish criteria for the order in which permit applications will be reviewed. Typically, the projects submittals are reviewed in the order they are received. The criteria will provide guidance for exceptions, which may be made on a case-by-case basis or as directed by the Permit Authority (CPRU Manager is designated as the Permit Authority). Prior to the planned absence of Permit Authority or other special circumstance, Permit Authority will designate an acting staff member authorized to issue a permit.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: March 2022</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

RECOMMENDATION 5 - The CPRU Manager should assign customer liaison responsibilities (to one or two individuals) to ensure consistent and timely communication on permit applications to help meet customer expectations.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:

Management partially agrees with the recommendation.

In general, the assignment of liaison responsibilities will increase confusion and will take more time of the staff reviewing the permit to provide and explain the details of customer’s request to the liaison. CPRU Manager will explore the role of a liaison where this may increase efficiency and coordinate with IT to explore other tools to integrate with the database (See response to Recommendation 6).

CPRU Manager will request additional resources from Management. Use of additional technicians to assist in background research for projects and review of routine, low-risk tasks will free up time to allow engineers to ensure consistent and timely communication on permit applications.

Target Implementation Date: October 2022

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:

Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. The use of additional resources – either a liaison or technician(s) – to perform customer service, would allow engineers more time to perform the technical reviews of permit applications and help to reduce review times. These additional resources may be critical to meeting customer’s expectations while Valley Water’s planned implementation of a new information systems for customer resource management (CRM) is undertaken that will also interface with another new information system that is planned to replace the current CPRU database. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.

RECOMMENDATION 6 - The CPRU Manager, in collaboration with Valley Water Information Technology Unit, should continue efforts to identify and implement the solutions for desired functionality needed to strengthen permit processing, which include:

- a. Electronic submission of permit applications and supporting documents that automatically creates an electronic permit review file.
- b. Expanded search function for researching past projects and permits.
- c. Customizable dashboards and/or reports that facilitate management oversight of permit processing timeliness, invoice aging, and other measures of performance.
- d. Tools, such as a request form or ticketing system, to help CPRU track requests for services in addition to permit reviews received from internal and external stakeholders.
- e. Ability for customers to self-check the status of their applications and other service requests through interface of the new customer resource management system with the new document management system.
- f. Minimize the administrative burden of tracking and reporting time spent on permit review and other asset protection services by CPRU and other Valley Water units.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees and will approach the implementation of this recommendation in phases:

- 1. Modernize processes, support submission of permit applications, track requests, complete reviews, facilitate online reporting for customers and reduce administrative burden of tracking and reporting through the selection and implementation of a new CPRU online portal. Management will consider options to include this functionality within other active projects such as the Wells Management System Upgrade and Access Valley Water. (6a, d, e, f)
- 2. Expand search/research functions and reduce administrative burden via the implementation of the Data Consolidation Capital Project Proof of Concept currently underway and scheduled for completion in October 2022. (6b, f)
- 3. Create Dashboards and reports via the implementation of the Data Consolidation Capital Project Proof of Concept currently underway and scheduled for completion in October 2022, the ERP Capital Project currently underway. (6c)”

Target Implementation Date: Varies

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:

Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A target date to complete all activities should be established and a follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.

<p>RECOMMENDATION 7 - The CPRU Manager should renew regular consultations with other member agencies of the Water Resources Protection Collaborative to allow CPRU to plan for upcoming large land review development requests and to establish a process for monitoring the status of existing agreements.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>CPRU Manager will contact the cities within Santa Clara County to establish a process or set up regular coordination meetings to plan for upcoming large land development projects.</p> <p>CPRU Manager will explore tools with IT that allow staff to set a trigger and inform of the status of existing agreements several months before the expiration to allow sufficient time for renewal or renegotiation. CPRU staff will also establish a periodic check in with each city to review responsibilities under these agreements.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: June 2022</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 8 - The CPRU Manager, in coordination with the Valley Water Risk Management Unit Manager, should develop communication strategies, such as instructional videos, screen shots, and/or brochures to make it easier for applicants and insurance brokers to understand Valley Water’s insurance requirements.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>CPRU Manager and staff will coordinate with Risk Management Unit Manager to develop communication strategies and re-evaluate the existing insurance requirements to align with the most up-to-date standards in the insurance practices, to make it easier for applicants and insurance brokers.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: March 2022.</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 9 - The CPRU Manager, with the assistance of the Watershed’s Chief Operating Officer, should explore the feasibility of adopting strategies of other local agencies to promote their permit services, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Change the name of CPRU to a name that better describes its functions. b. Adopt a new model for the allocation of work among staff to minimize delays due to heavy demand, such as separating the roles of project coordination from technical review. c. Conduct regular outreach by letter or other communication to neighboring property owners (and to new buyers of neighboring property) describing Valley Water’s permit services, the reason for the permit process, and how to access the services. 	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with this recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CPRU Manager will explore and brainstorm with staff and stakeholders to consider change of unit’s name. (Target Date: March 2022) b. CPRU Manager will ascertain a new model to consider separation of project coordination from technical review for low-risk, repetitive permit applications and will request additional resources to pursue implementation of the new model. (Target Date: October 2022) c. CPRU Manager and staff will work with Communication Unit to conduct outreach to neighboring property owners, engineering consulting firms, and city staff describing Valley Water’s permit process, and how to access the services. (Target Date: June 2022) <p>Target Implementation Date: Varies</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 10 - Valley Water’s CEO, with approval of the Board, should consider setting a goal for cost recovery from fees charged for permit services.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees and will engage a consultant to assist with updating the fee schedule for Board approval, which incorporates an analysis of a target cost recovery goal.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: August 2022</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE:</p> <p>Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 11 - The CPRU Manager, in coordination with the Valley Water Chief Financial Officer, should update the current fee schedule based on the results of a fee study. The study should evaluate charging an hourly rate for inspections completed versus the current flat inspection fee.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees and will engage a consultant to assist with updating the fee schedule for Board approval, which incorporates an analysis of a target cost recovery goal.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: August 2022</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE: Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 12 - The CPRU Manager should adopt a risk-based permit review strategy to reduce processing time for low-risk, repetitive types of permit applications. Clarify in the strategy how time spent on the review of permit applications and other processing tasks should be tracked and invoiced.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees with this recommendation. CPRU Manger will consider strategies to reduce processing time for low-risk, repetitive types of permit applications. CPRU Manager and experienced staff, through permit guidance instructions will add further clarity for new and less experienced staff and reduce ambiguity in the process. (Target Date: June 2022)</p> <p>Implementation of Recommendation 6 via the implementation of the Data Consolidation Capital Project Proof of Concept and the ERP Capital Project and the results of the fee study with the implementation of Recommendation 11, and results from Recommendation 13 will provide better information and insight to strategize the tracking and invoicing of permit applications and other processing tasks. (Target Date: June 2023 depending on the research outcome in Recommendation 13)</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: Varies</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE: Management’s response generally satisfies the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 13 - The CPRU Manager and the Chief Financial Officer should seek to identify an IT solution to ensure timely and accurate recording of invoices, payments, and deposits. One option to consider is to use Valley Water’s core financial management information system.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees and will engage in the research, specification, selection, procurement, and implementation of a comprehensive tool capable of ensuring accurate recording of invoices, payments, and deposits.</p> <p>Target Implementation Date: June 2023 depending on research outcome.</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE: Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 14 - The CPRU Manager, in coordination with the Chief Financial Officer, should establish processes for invoicing and collection of payments that includes a robust framework of financial management internal controls, in particular the segregation of duties for billing and collections; cash management; monitoring of aging receivables; and reconciliation.</p>	
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: Management agrees and will approach the implementation of this recommendation in phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement the suggested financial management internal controls under the current CPRU data base system, (Target date – July 2021). 2. Engage a consultant to assist in the development of a billing and revenue collection policy that incorporates best practices (Target date – March 2022). 3. Implement an IT solution for invoicing that is linked to Valley Water’s core financial system and aligns with Valley Water’s billing and revenue collection policy (Target date – June 2023 depending on the research outcome (R13)) <p>Target Implementation Date: Varies.</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT AUDITOR RESPONSE: Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p>

2021 PERMITTING BEST PRACTICES AUDIT

Action Item Owner	Ref #	Summary of Recommendation	Updates/Notes
Community Projects Review Unit (CPRU)	2	The CPRU Manager should complete standardization of permit review policies, practices, roles, and responsibilities.	<p><u>Management Response:</u> Management agrees with the recommendation. CPRU will update and complete the existing permit review policies, practices, and instruction guidance for various types of transactions to bring consistency in the review of projects. Target Implementation Date: June 2022</p> <p><u>Auditor Response:</u> Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CPRU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p> <p>Status 05/2025: Ongoing On April 14, 2025, the Board Policy and Monitoring Committee (BPMC) approved the staff recommendation to bring the updated Fee Rate Schedule to the full Board for consideration. The BPMC also considered the proposed changes to the Water Resources Protection Ordinance (WRPO) on April 14, 2025, but the BPMC recommended that the item be brought back to the BPMC when all three members are present to discuss. Updates to the Water Resources Protection Manual (WRPM) are underway with the assistance of contract staff. For IT-based improvements, see Recommendation 6.</p> <p>Status update 05/2026: Ongoing The Board approved the new Fee Rate Schedule on June 24, 2025 and the new WRPO on August 12, 2025. The Water Resources Protection Manual update is not anticipated to be completed until December 2026.</p> <p>Revised Target Implementation Date: December 2026</p>
Community Projects Review Unit (CPRU)	5	The CPRU Manager should assign customer liaison responsibilities (to one or two individuals) to ensure consistent and timely communication on permit applications to help meet customer expectations.	<p><u>Management Response:</u> Management partially agrees with the recommendation. In general, the assignment of liaison responsibilities will increase confusion and will take more time of the staff reviewing the permit to provide and explain the details of customer’s request to the liaison. CPRU Manager will explore the role of a liaison where this may increase efficiency and coordinate with IT to explore other tools to integrate with the database (See response to Recommendation 6). CPRU Manager will request additional resources from Management. Use of additional technicians to assist in background research for projects and review of routine, low-risk tasks will free up time to allow engineers to ensure consistent and timely communication on permit applications. Target Implementation Date: October 2022</p> <p><u>Auditor Response:</u> Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. The use of additional resources – either a liaison or technician(s) – to perform provide customer service, would allow engineers more time to perform the technical reviews of permit applications and help to reduce review times. These additional resources may be critical to meeting customer’s expectations while Valley Water’s planned implementation of a new information systems for customer resource management (CRM) is undertaken that will also interface with another new information system that is planned to replace the current CPRU database. A follow-up audit to assess CPRU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p> <p>Status 05/2025: Ongoing. Since April 2024, VW executed an agreement with Timmons Group for implementation services for the Cityworks Software. CPRU and IT have been working with the Timmons Group on the design requirements for Cityworks as a replacement for the current CPRU database. For IT-based improvements, see Recommendation 6.</p> <p>Status update 05/2026: Ongoing CPRU, IT and the Timmons Group are still undertaking discovery and feedback of CPRU work processes, obtaining necessary procurement and agreements to implement IT integrations for plan review (DigEplan), document storage (OnBase) and Cityworks upgrade to Unity. The current estimated Go Live for Cityworks is December 2026.</p> <p>Revised Target Implementation Date: Recommendation 6--December 2026</p>

2021 PERMITTING BEST PRACTICES AUDIT

Action Item Owner	Ref #	Summary of Recommendation	Updates/Notes
Community Projects Review Unit (CPRU)	6	<p>The CPRU Manager, in collaboration with Valley Water Information Technology Unit, should continue efforts to identify and implement the solutions for desired functionality needed to strengthen permit processing, which include:</p> <p>a. Electronic submission of permit applications and supporting documents that automatically creates an electronic permit review file.</p> <p>b. Expanded search function for researching past projects and permits.</p> <p>c. Customizable dashboards and/or reports that facilitate management oversight of permit processing timeliness, invoice aging, and other measures of performance.</p> <p>d. Tools, such as a request form or ticketing system, to help CPRU track requests for services in addition to permit reviews received from internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>e. Ability for customers to self-check the status of their applications and other service requests through interface of the new customer resource management system with the new document management system.</p> <p>f. Minimize the administrative burden of tracking and reporting time spent on permit review and other asset protection services by CPRU and other Valley Water units.</p>	<p><u>Management Response:</u> Management agrees and will approach the implementation of this recommendation in phases: 1. Modernize processes, support submission of permit applications, track requests, complete reviews, facilitate online reporting for customers and reduce administrative burden of tracking and reporting through the selection and implementation of a new CPRU online portal. Management will consider options to include this functionality within other active projects such as the Wells Management System Upgrade and Access Valley Water. (6a, d, e, f) 2. Expand search/research functions and reduce administrative burden via the implementation of the Data Consolidation Capital Project Proof of Concept currently underway and scheduled for completion in October 2022. (6b, f) 3. Create Dashboards and reports via the implementation of the Data Consolidation Capital Project Proof of Concept currently underway and scheduled for completion in October 2022, the ERP Capital Project currently underway. (6c) Target Implementation Date: Varies</p> <p><u>Auditor Response:</u> Management's response generally addresses the recommendation. A target date to complete all activities should be established and a follow-up audit to assess CPRU's efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p> <p>Status 05/2025: Ongoing. 1. Ongoing. Work with the Timmons Group to implement Cityworks is underway. Timmons currently estimates that the new online portal will take approximately 1 year to implement. Cityworks will include all the functionality recommended by the audit items a thru e. Cityworks will reduce staff labor answering questions from customers on project status, allow for automated customer guidance on how to submit a complete application, and allow for dashboards to monitor and track customer submittals and timelines which the current database cannot do. 2. Ongoing. CPRU has specified that its online customer service portal must have expanded and agile search capabilities. 3. Ongoing. CPRU has specified that its online customer service portal must have configurable dashboards for management.</p> <p>Status update 05/2026: Ongoing. 1. Ongoing. Work with the Timmons Group to implement Cityworks is underway. Timmons currently estimates that the new online portal will Go Live by December 2026. Cityworks will include all the functionality recommended by the audit items a thru e. Cityworks will reduce staff labor answering questions from customers on project status, allow for automated customer guidance on how to submit a complete application, and allow for dashboards to monitor and track customer submittals and timelines which the current database cannot do. 2. Ongoing. CPRU has specified that its online customer service portal must have expanded and agile search capabilities. 3. Ongoing. CPRU has specified that its online customer service portal must have configurable dashboards for management.</p>
Community Projects Review Unit (CPRU)	10	<p>Valley Water's CEO, with approval of the Board, should consider setting a goal for cost recovery from fees charged for permit services.</p>	<p><u>Management Response:</u> Management agrees and will engage a consultant to assist with updating the fee schedule for Board approval, which incorporates an analysis of a target cost recovery goal. Target Implementation Date: August 2022</p> <p><u>Auditor Response:</u> Management's response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CPRU's efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p> <p>Status 05/2025: Ongoing On April 14, 2025, the Board Policy and Monitoring Committee (BPMC) approved the staff recommendation to bring the updated Fee Rate Schedule to the full Board for consideration.</p> <p>Status update 05/2026: Complete. The Board adopted the updated Fee Rate Schedule on June 24, 2025.</p>

2021 PERMITTING BEST PRACTICES AUDIT			
Action Item Owner	Ref #	Summary of Recommendation	Updates/Notes
Community Projects Review Unit (CPRU)	11	The CPRU Manager, in coordination with the Valley Water Chief Financial Officer, should update the current fee schedule based on the results of a fee study. The study should evaluate charging an hourly rate for inspections completed versus the current flat inspection fee.	<p><u>Management Response:</u> Management agrees and will engage a consultant to assist with updating the fee schedule for Board approval, which incorporates an analysis of a target cost recovery goal. Target Implementation Date: August 2022</p> <p><u>Auditor Response:</u> Management's response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU's efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p> <p>Status 05/2025: Ongoing On April 14, 2025, the Board Policy and Monitoring Committee (BPMC) approved the staff recommendation to bring the updated Fee Rate Schedule to the full Board for consideration.</p> <p>Status update 05/2026: Complete. The Board adopted the updated Fee Rate Schedule on June 24, 2025.</p>
Community Projects Review Unit (CPRU)	12	The CPRU Manager should adopt a risk-based permit review strategy to reduce processing time for low-risk, repetitive types of permit applications. Clarify in the strategy how time spent on the review of permit applications and other processing tasks should be tracked and invoiced.	<p><u>Management Response:</u> Management agrees with this recommendation. a. CPRU Manger will consider strategies to reduce processing time for low-risk, repetitive types of permit applications. CPRU Manager and experienced staff, through permit guidance instructions will add further clarity for new and less experienced staff and reduce ambiguity in the process. (Target Date: June 2022) b. Implementation of Recommendation 6 via the implementation of the Data Consolidation Capital Project Proof of Concept and the ERP Capital Project and the results of the fee study with the implementation of Recommendation 11, and results from Recommendation 13 will provide better information and insight to strategize the tracking and invoicing of permit applications and other processing tasks. (Target Date: June 2023 depending on the research outcome in Recommendation 13) Target Implementation Date: Varies</p> <p><u>Auditor Response:</u> Management's response generally satisfies the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU's efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p> <p>Status 05/2025: a. Complete b. Ongoing. See Recommendations 6, 10, and 11.</p> <p>Status update 05/2026: a. Complete b. Ongoing. See Recommendation 6.</p> <p>Revised Target Implementation Date: Recommendation 6—December 2026.</p>
Community Projects Review Unit (CPRU)	13	The CPRU Manager and the Chief Financial Officer should seek to identify an IT solution to ensure timely and accurate recording of invoices, payments, and deposits. One option to consider is to use Valley Water's core financial management information system.	<p><u>Management Response:</u> Management agrees and will engage in the research, specification, selection, procurement, and implementation of a comprehensive tool capable of ensuring accurate recording of invoices, payments, and deposits. Target Implementation Date: June 2023 depending on research outcome.</p> <p><u>Auditor Response:</u> Management's response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CRPU's efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p> <p>Status 05/2025: Ongoing. See Recommendation 6 for IT upgrade status. CPRU has specified that its online customer service portal must have an ability to integrate invoicing.</p> <p>Status update 05/2026: Ongoing See Recommendation 6 for IT upgrade status. CPRU has specified that its online customer service portal must have an ability to integrate invoicing.</p> <p>Revised Target Implementation Date: Recommendation 6—December 2026</p>

2021 PERMITTING BEST PRACTICES AUDIT

Action Item Owner	Ref #	Summary of Recommendation	Updates/Notes
Community Projects Review Unit (CPRU)	14	The CPRU Manager, in coordination with the Chief Financial Officer, should establish processes for invoicing and collection of payments that includes a robust framework of financial management internal controls, in particular the segregation of duties for billing and collections; cash management; monitoring of aging receivables; and reconciliation.	<p><u>Management Response:</u> Management agrees and will approach the implementation of this recommendation in phases: a. Implement the suggested financial management internal controls under the current CPRU data base system, (Target date – July 2021). b. Engage a consultant to assist in the development of a billing and revenue collection policy that incorporates best practices (Target date – March 2022). c. Implement an IT solution for invoicing that is linked to Valley Water’s core financial system and aligns with Valley Water’s billing and revenue collection policy (Target date – June 2023 depending on the research outcome (R13) Target Implementation Date: Varies.</p> <p><u>Auditor Response:</u> Management’s response generally addresses the recommendation. A follow-up audit to assess CPRU’s efforts to implement this recommendation should be included in the annual audit work plan for 2023.</p> <p>Status 5/2025: a. Complete. b. Complete. c. Ongoing. See Recommendation 6 for IT upgrade status. CPRU has specified that its online customer service portal must have an ability to integrate invoicing. Currently CPRU has to create invoices in Oracle and MuniBilling which created additional work to address the recommendation in the interim.</p> <p>Status update 5/2026: a. Complete. b. Complete. c. Ongoing. See Recommendation 6 for IT upgrade status. CPRU has specified that its online customer service portal must have an ability to integrate invoicing. Currently CPRU has to create invoices in Oracle and MuniBilling which created additional work to address the recommendation in the interim.</p> <p>Revised Target Implementation Date: Recommendation 6--December 2026</p>



Valley Water

Clean Water • Healthy Environment • Flood Protection



Permitting Best Practices: Community Projects Review Unit (CPRU) Performance Audit Progress Report

Board Audit Committee

May 20, 2026

Attachment 1
Page 2 of 19

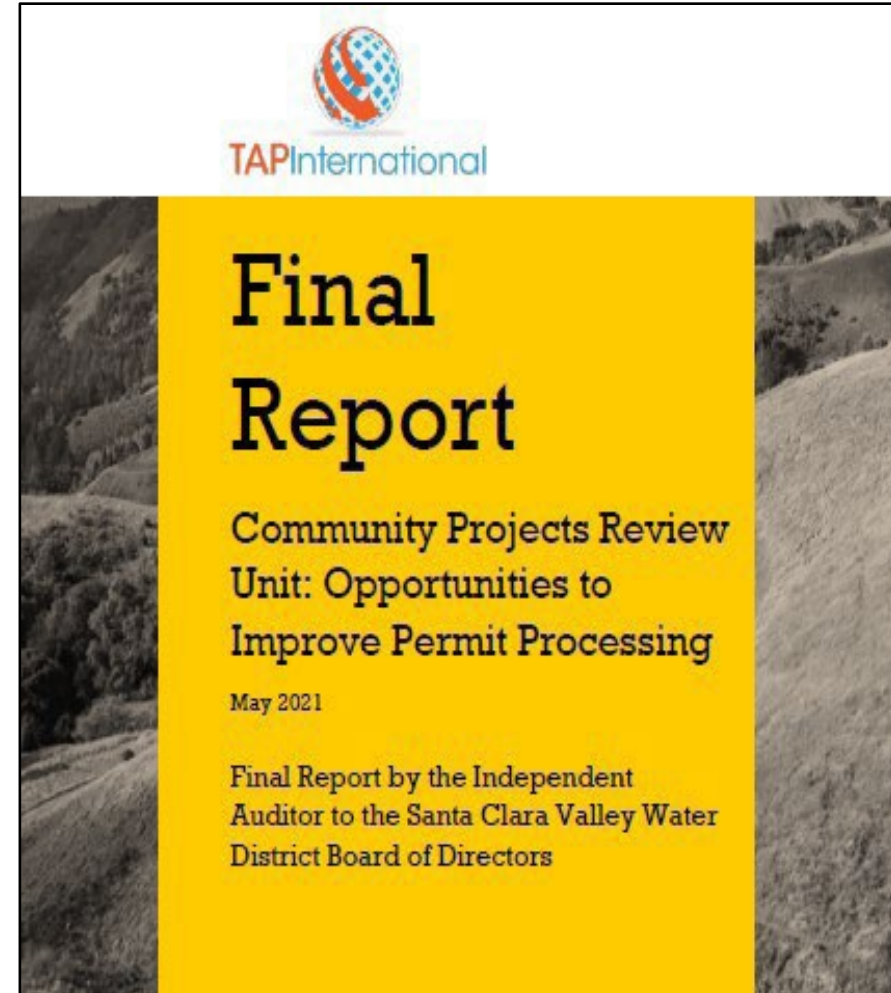
CPRU Audit: Opportunities to Improve Permit Processing

Objective: Assess alternate permit processes and peer agency comparison

Scope:

- Interview staff
- Online survey of permit holders
- Financial analysis
- Research permit practices of other agencies

Result: 14 Multi-part Recommendations



CPRU Audit: Recommendation Areas and Status Update

- Standardize and streamline permit processes, clarify roles (#1, 2, 3, 4)
- Modernize the customer request portal and tracking database (#6)
- Increase communication externally (#7, 8, 9)
- Improve financial controls and cost recovery (#10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

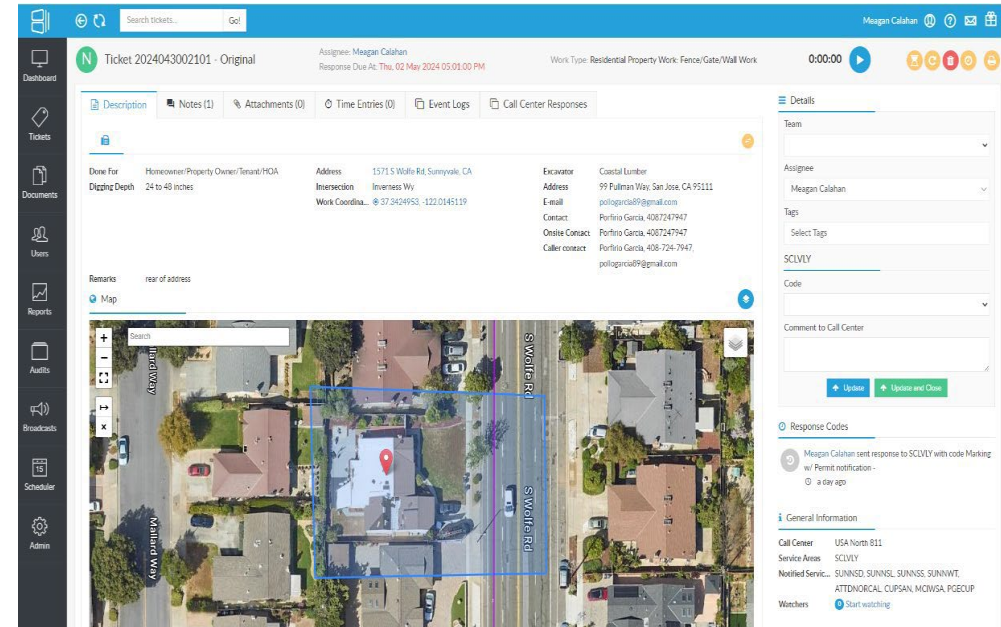
Ongoing Recommendations

1. Recommendation 2 (partial): Revise Water Resources Protection Manual
2. Recommendations 6, 11-14: Complete IT Upgrade Project and Financial Integration

Recommendation 2 Confirm Core Functions and Standardize Processes

Status: Ongoing

- Updated Fee Schedule
- Updated WRPO
- Clarified duties
- Expanded GIS use
- Implemented staff training
- Update Water Resources Protection Manual



Revision of Water Resources Protection Manual

Status: Ongoing

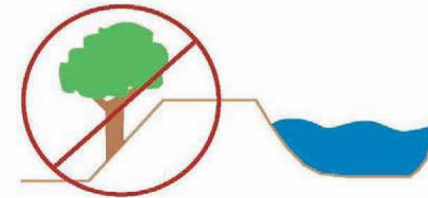
The Water Resources Protection Manual is a “how-to guide” for land development in Santa Clara County.

Major revisions will provide clear requirements for encroachment/use of Valley Water land and facilities.

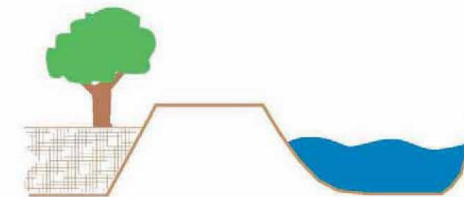
Revisions to be completed in 2026.

DESIGN GUIDE 6

PLACEMENT OF FILL AND PLANTING OF TREES BY LEVEES



Plants with large root systems (trees and large shrubs) should not be placed on existing levees.



Trees may be planted on a levee if additional fill is placed on the levee.



The placement of fill on/next to the out board slope of the levee will reduce the height of the levee for aesthetics and improves the safety of the levee system. The height of the fill may vary. Geotechnical analyses may be needed to determine the impacts of the fill to the levee slope.

Status: Ongoing

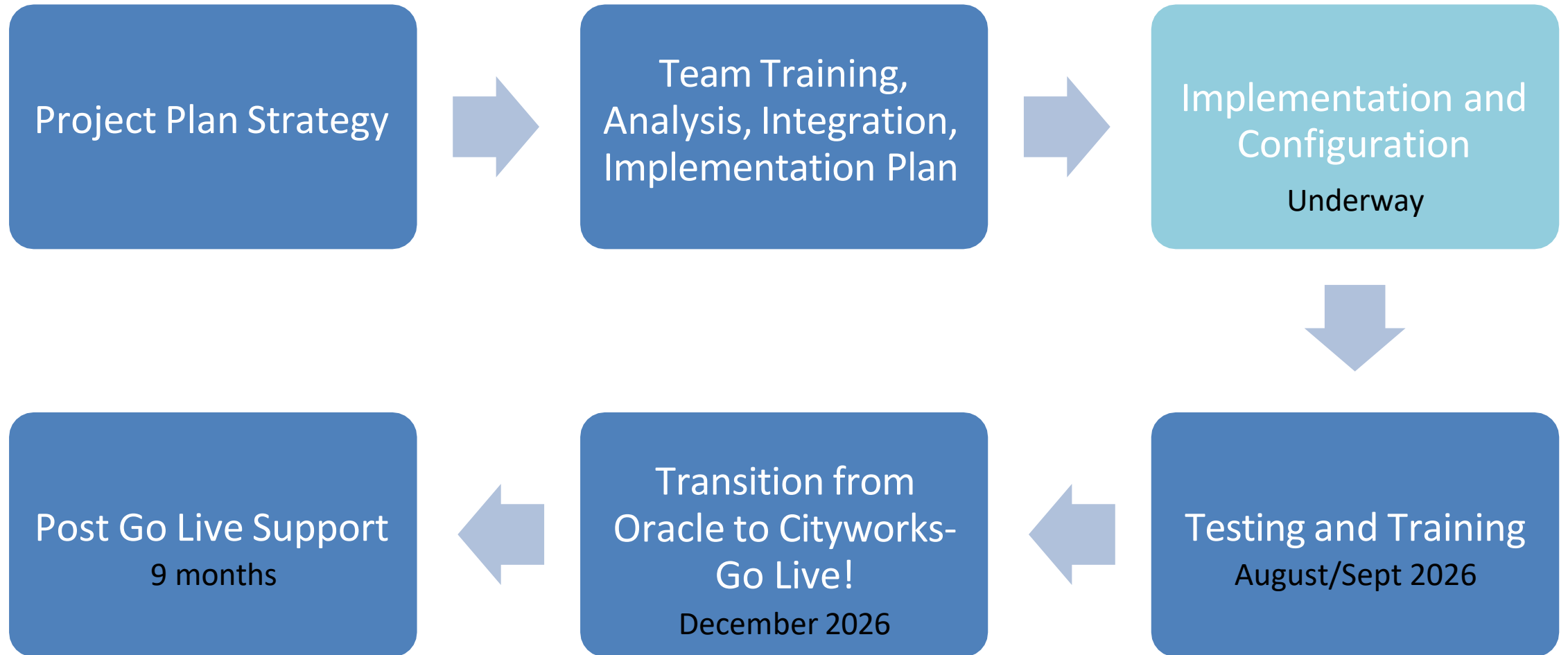
- Manage customer relationship with online portal and dashboards
- Improve data management through integrating GIS and file storage
- Improve internal workflow by tracking review status and online plan review
- Integrate invoicing, monitoring of aging receivables

The screenshot displays the Cityworks Respond dashboard for 'Adopt-a-Creek Permit Dashboard'. The interface includes several key sections:

- New Permit Applications:** A table listing permit cases with columns for Case Number, Case Type Description, Case Name, and Location. Cases include AAC25-00111, AAC25-00110, AAC25-00109, AAC25-00108, and AAC25-00073.
- Permit Applications - Resubmittal Required:** A table showing cases requiring resubmittal, such as AAC25-00038.
- Site Visits to Complete:** A section indicating 'No records found' with options to 'Open Task(s)' or 'Show Task(s) on Map'.
- Permit Applications Under Review:** A table listing cases under review, including AAC25-00070.
- Permits Pending Issuance:** A section indicating 'No records found'.

The dashboard also features a map view for site visits, showing a world map with markers for North America, Europe, and Africa. The interface includes navigation icons, a search bar, and a user profile icon.

Cityworks Implementation Schedule



Key Next Steps

- WRPM Revision: FY27 Q2
- Cityworks implementation project Go Live: FY27 Q2
- **Audit recommendations fully implemented: FY27 Q2**

QUESTIONS



All remaining slides from this point on are back-up slides.

The Community Project Review Unit receives, reviews, and responds to external land development projects, studies, and plans to protect Valley Water assets and minimize impacts to water supply, flood protection, and environmental stewardship through implementation of the Water Resources Protection Ordinance.

Seven Core Processes

Information Request

Early Consult

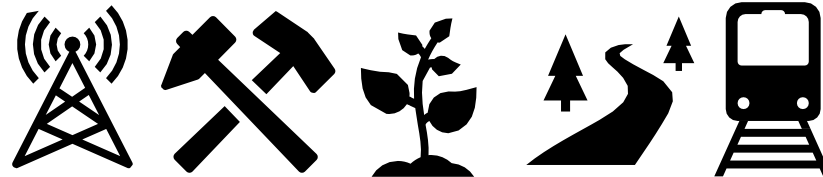
Technical Peer Review

Encroachment Permits

Violations

Agreements*

Land Rights Transactions**



* Lands Management

** Real Estate Services

Implementation Progress

FY 2023

- Streamlined standard permits and associated CEQA review.
- Completed workflow mapping for seven core processes, identified IT upgrade requirements (Cityworks).
- Launched Cityworks Implementer procurement process
- Created a Billing Process and Policy to address financial controls.
- Updated permit forms and increased webpage visibility.

Implementation Progress

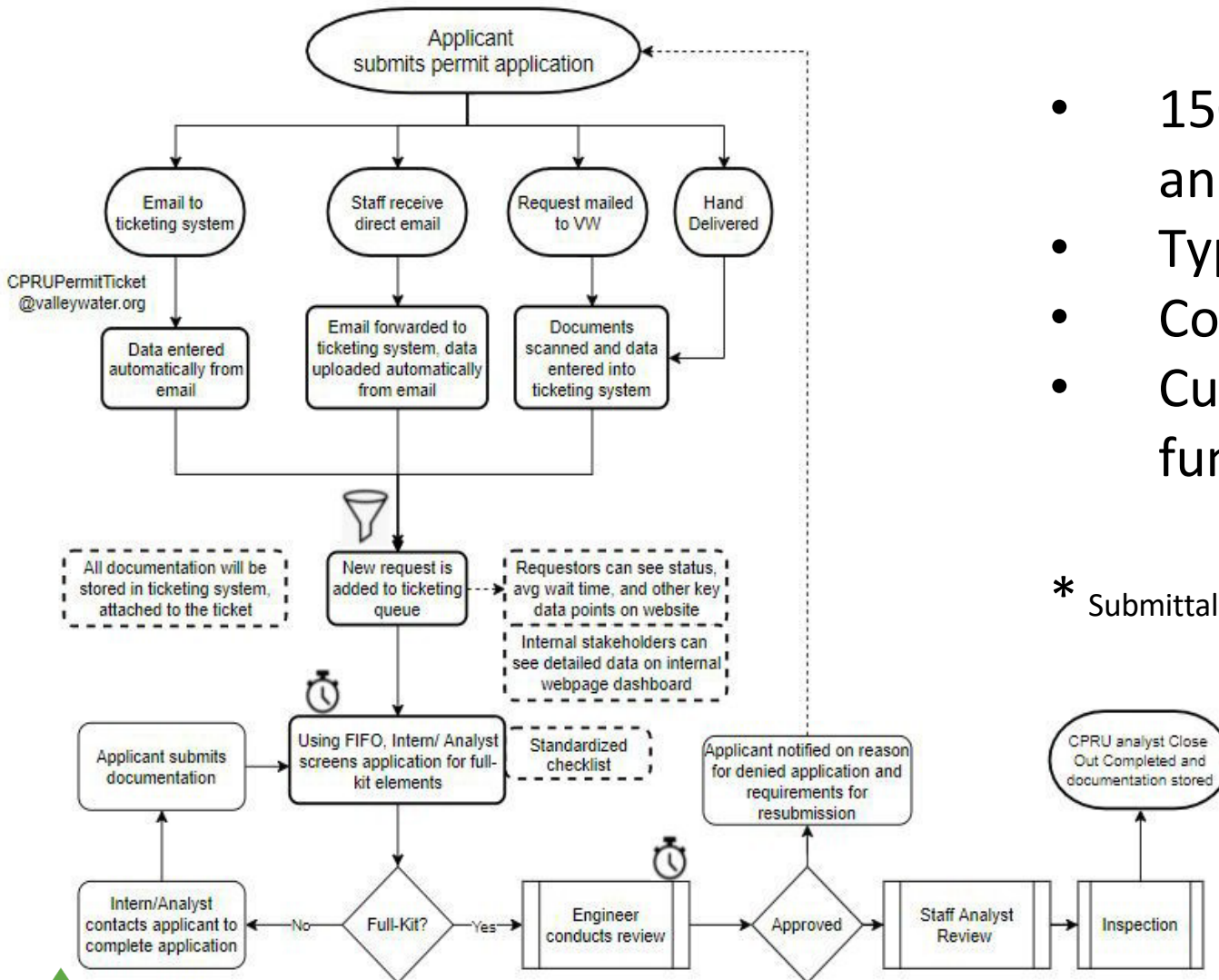
FY 2024

- Realignment with Real Estate and Land Management Functions
- Finalized Cityworks Implementation contract, project kick-off

FY 2025

- Significant progress on Cityworks implementation – on schedule
- Updated fees
- Revised Water Resources Protection Ordinance

Need for IT Upgrades



- 150 encroachment permits issued annually (1600 submittals *)
- Typical processing time = 12 wks
- Complex projects = more than 1 yr
- Current database has limited functionality

* Submittals includes permit resubmittals and non-permit requests

Need for IT Upgrades

Major Development Projects

- Lengthy negotiations to minimize impact to Valley Water
- Public/private partnerships
- Complex land rights transactions
- Require CEO/Board approval

Examples

- Google West Channel Enhancement Project
- Caltrain Bridge over Guadalupe Reach 6



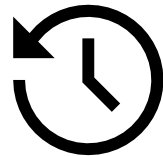
Cityworks PLL

The leading GIS-centric solution for permitting, licensing and land management—designed to simplify workflows for customers and staff.



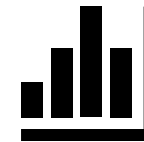
Customer Convenience

Let residents, contractors and others submit and track applications online with a user-friendly portal.



Increased Productivity

Configure templates and inboxes to help predict daily tasks and simplify processes.



Data-Driven Decisions

Use dashboards, analytics and maps to visualize data, get insights and create accurate reports.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 26-0377

Agenda Date: 5/20/2026

Item No.: 4.2.

COMMITTEE AGENDA MEMORANDUM Board Audit Committee

Government Code § 84308 Applies: Yes No
(If "YES" Complete Attachment A - Gov. Code § 84308)

SUBJECT:

Receive the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Third Quarter Financial Status Update as of March 31, 2026.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 third quarter financial status update as of March 31, 2026.

SUMMARY:

Valley Water's Fiscal Year 2025-26 Third Quarter closed on March 31, 2026. The third quarter financial status update presentation (Attachment 1) summarizes cash and investment balances, the debt portfolio and includes a detailed comparison, and analysis, of the budget to actual status of revenues and expenditures for all funds as of March 31, 2026.

These financial statements have been prepared by Valley Water for informational purposes only and have not been audited by the external auditor. No party is authorized to disseminate these unaudited financial statements to the State Comptroller or any nationally recognized rating agency, nor are they authorized to post these financial statements on the Electronic Municipal Market Access (EMMA) or any similar financial reporting outlets or redistribute the information without the express written authorization of the Chief Financial Officer of Valley Water. The information herein is not intended to be used by investors or potential investors in considering the purchase or sale of Valley Water bonds, notes or other obligations; and investors, and potential investors, should rely only on information filed by Valley Water on the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board's Electronic Municipal Market Access System for municipal securities disclosures, maintained on the World Wide Web at <https://emma.msrb.org/>.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPACT:

There are no environmental justice impacts associated with this item.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: PowerPoint

File No.: 26-0377

Agenda Date: 5/20/2026
Item No.: 4.2.

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:
Darin Taylor, 408-630-3068

Q3 FY2025-26 Financial Status Update

Board Audit Committee – May 20, 2026

The FY 2025-26 unaudited financial statements contained herein have been prepared by Valley Water for information only and have not been audited by the external auditor. These financial statements remain subject to change by Valley Water and remain subject to review by external auditor. Changes made by the external auditor, including changes in response to the external auditor's review, could be material. No party is authorized to disseminate these unaudited financial statements to the State Comptroller or any nationally recognized rating agency nor post these statements on the Electronic Municipal Market Access (EMMA) or any similar financial reporting outlets or redistribute the information without the express written authorization of the Chief Financial Officer of Valley Water. The information herein is not intended to be used by investors or potential investors in considering the purchase or sale Valley Water bonds, notes or other obligations; and investors, and potential investors, should rely on information filed by Valley Water on the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board's Electronic Municipal Market Access System for municipal securities disclosures, maintained on the World Wide Web at <https://emma.msrb.org/>.

Agenda

- **Financial Status**
 - **Cash and Investments**
 - **Debt Portfolio**
- **Q3 FY26 Financial Status Update**
 - **Revenue**
 - **Operating and Capital Expenditures**
 - **Reserves**

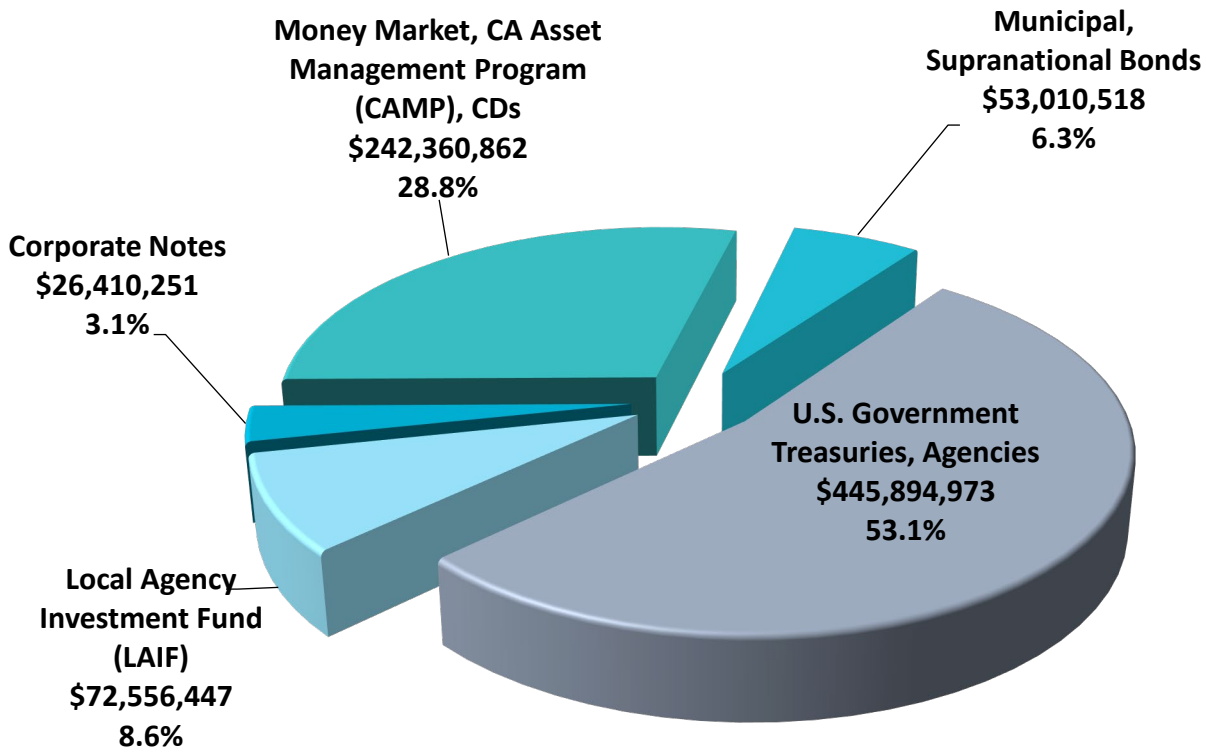
Financial Status Update – Cash & Investments

\$315 million (37%) of portfolio very liquid (money market, LAIF, CAMP deposits)

Fiscal year-to-date Interest Earnings through March 31, 2026: \$22 million (3.71% yield)

3

SCVWD Investment Portfolio Composition

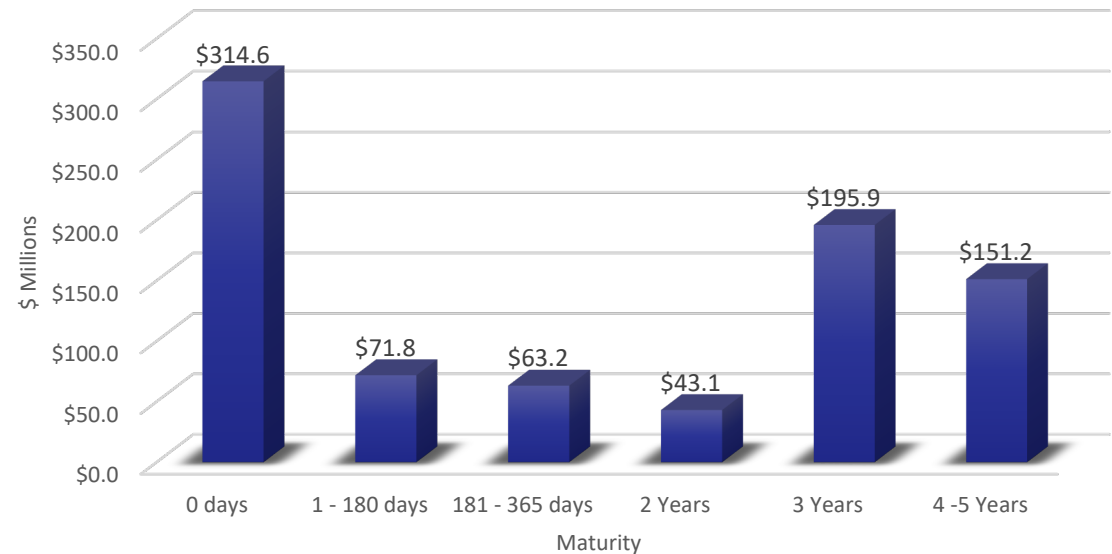


SCVWD Portfolio Book Value as of March 31, 2026: \$840,233,051

Valley Water Portfolio Aging Report

March 31, 2026

Portfolio Book Value: \$840 Million

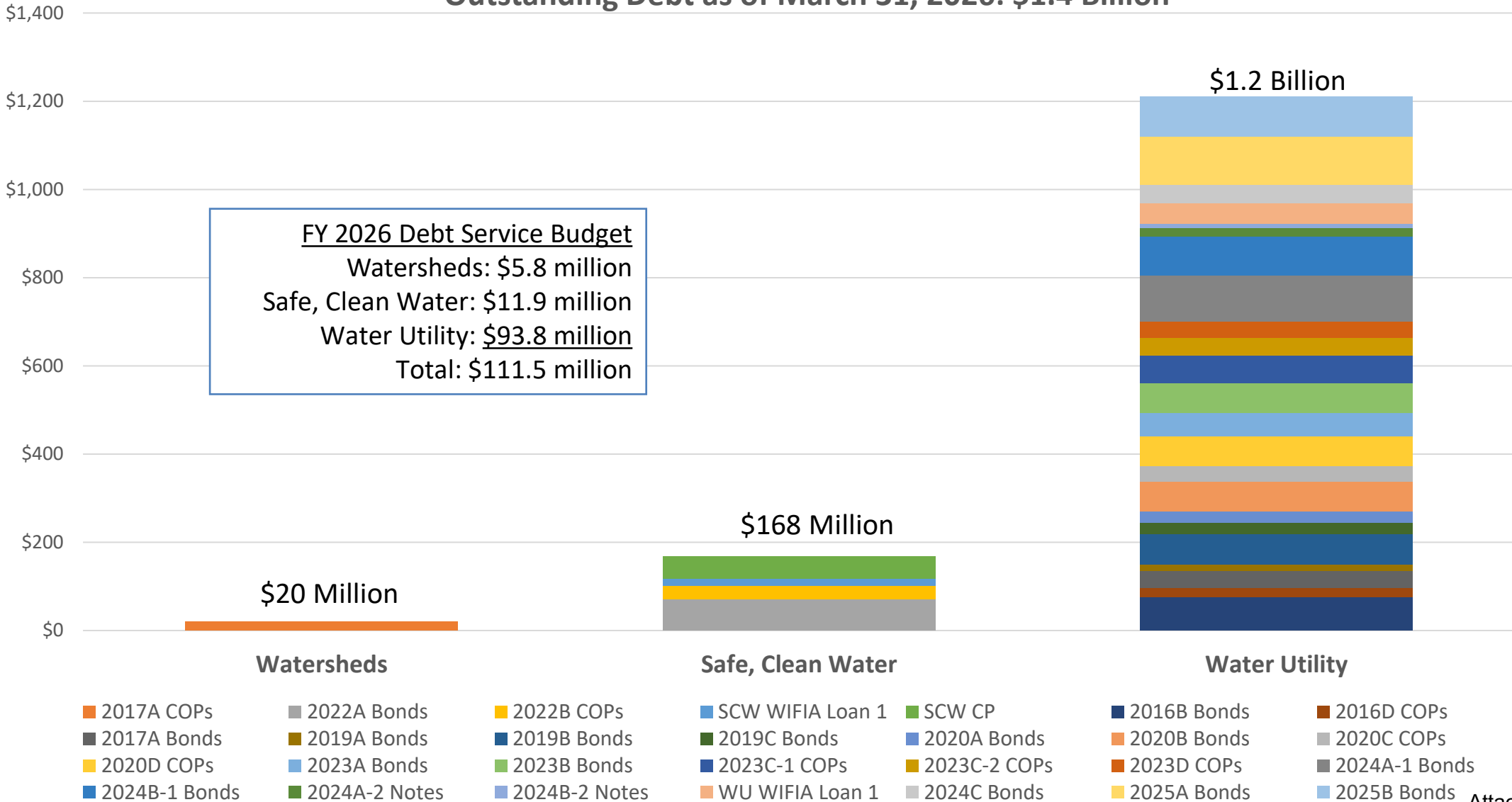


valleywater.org

Financial Status Update – Outstanding Debt

\$ Millions

Outstanding Debt as of March 31, 2026: \$1.4 Billion



Financial Status Update – Debt Portfolio

\$450 million Short-term Debt Program

- \$250 million commercial paper program supported by Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) letter of credit
- \$200 million revolving line of credit with U.S. Bank

FY 2026 Financing Activity

- Water Utility Refunding Bonds 2025AB - \$200 million (September 10, 2025)
 - Refunded short-term debt, and 2016AC debt for \$14 million in debt service savings
- Draws on WIFIA loans: \$46 million (ADSRP) / \$10 million (CCFPP, Sunnyvale E-W Channels)
- Short-term debt issuances planned for spring 2026
 - WU: \$225 million (construction funds) / \$102 million (refunding of 2023C-1/D interim notes)
 - SCW: \$30 million (construction funds)

FY 2027 Financing Plan

- Refund short-term debt issued in spring 2026, refund long-term debt for savings, and issue \$100 million short-term note to fund initial construction costs for Anderson Dam Seismic Retrofit
 - Board authorizations: Issuance - May 2026 / Bond Disclosure - August 2026
- Issue short-term debt to fund Water Utility and Safe, Clean Water capital costs

Q3 FY26 - Revenues

Lower treated water revenue anticipated due to West Pipeline project

6

(\$ in millions)	FY26 Adj Budget	Q3 FY26 Actuals	Q3 FY26 % Rec'd	Q3 FY25 Actuals	Q3 FY25 % Rec'd*
Groundwater Production Charges	\$ 200.3	\$ 157.8	79%	\$117.4	64%
Treated Water Revenue	220.4	133.9	61%	149.7	71%
Surface/Recycled Water Revenue	2.6	1.6	64%	1.4	35%
1% Ad-valorem Property Tax	157.6	100.3	64%	97.6	66%
Safe Clean Water Special Parcel Tax	55.1	30.9	56%	30.0	56%
Benefit Assessment	6.9	3.9	56%	3.9	55%
State Water Project Tax	28.0	15.9	57%	16.2	58%
Capital Reimbursements	56.3	25.5	45%	12.5	29%
Interest Income & Other	18.6	49.1	264%	41.5	269%
Total Revenue	\$ 745.9	\$ 518.8	70%	\$470.2	68%

*Q3 FY26 % received based Q3 YTD Actuals divided by FY26 Adjusted Budget

(\$ in millions)	FY26 Adj Budget	Q3 FY26 Actuals	Q3 FY26 % Rec'd	Q3 FY25 Actuals	Q3 FY25 % Rec'd*
General Fund	\$ 13.5	\$ 11.5	85%	\$ 9.1	73%
Watershed Stream Stewardship Fund	141.8	93.3	66%	96.3	68%
Safe Clean Water Fund	108.9	58.8	54%	39.2	45%
Water Utility Enterprise Fund	474.2	349.3	74%	320.4	72%
Service Funds	0.7	2.0	304%	1.3	217%
Benefit Assessment Funds	6.9	3.9	56%	3.9	55%
Total Revenue	\$ 745.9	\$ 518.8	70%	\$470.2	68%

*Q3 FY26 % received based Q3 YTD Actuals divided by FY26 Adjusted Budget

Observations

- Q3 FY26 revenue was \$518.8M or 70% of FY26 Budget
- SCW Special Parcel, Benefit Assessment and State Water Project Tax revenues will be received in fourth quarter of the fiscal year
- Groundwater production charges are \$157.8M (79% of budget), while treated water revenue is \$133.9M (61%), reflecting a shift to groundwater due to the West Pipeline project. Combined year-end revenue for both sources is estimated to be ~\$10M below budget due to slightly lower-than-anticipated demand
- Capital reimbursements of \$25.5M, primarily due to the Natural Resources Conservation Service grant for Llagas Creek (\$21.1M)
- Interest Income and Other \$49.1M, or 264% of budget, due to higher interest income (\$8.8M) and income on bond proceeds (\$4.6M), Advanced Water Treatment Facility payment (\$8.2M), and water sales from the Central Valley Project (\$2.0M) and the State Water Project (\$4.8M)

valleywater.org

Q3 FY26 - Operating and Capital Outlays

Capital expenditures improvement versus prior fiscal year

7

(\$ in millions)	FY26 Adj	Q3 FY26	Q3 FY26	Q3 FY25	Q3 FY25
	Budget	Actuals	% Rec'd	Actuals	% Rec'd*
General Fund	\$ 91.1	\$ 57.2	63%	\$ 55.8	62%
Watershed Stream Stewardship Fund	94.8	65.4	69%	58.3	62%
Safe Clean Water Fund	47.5	28.2	59%	22.6	59%
Water Utility Enterprise Fund	391.9	199.5	51%	223.6	57%
Service Funds	51.7	29.8	58%	30.4	62%
Benefit Assessment Funds	5.8	5.8	100%	5.8	100%
Total Operating Outlays	\$ 682.7	\$ 385.9	57%	\$396.5	59%

Note 1: Operating Adjusted Budget includes Adopted Budget and current year budget adjustments
 Note 2: Budgetary Basis Actuals includes actuals and encumbrances as of 03/31/26
 Note 3: % Spent is Q3 YTD Actuals divided by Adjusted Budget

(\$ in millions)	FY26 Adj	Q3 FY26	Q3 FY26	Q3 FY25	Q3 FY25
	Budget	Actuals	% Rec'd	Actuals	% Rec'd*
General Fund	\$ 20.4	\$ 3.1	15%	\$ 5.8	35%
Watershed Stream Stewardship Fund	47.0	20.7	44%	9.4	24%
Safe Clean Water Fund	138.8	90.3	65%	70.8	45%
Water Utility Enterprise Fund	403.7	251.7	62%	218.0	62%
Service Funds	6.3	2.5	40%	3.1	29%
Total Capital Outlays	\$ 616.1	\$ 368.3	60%	\$307.2	53%

Note 1: Capital Project Adjusted Budget includes Adopted Budget and prior year capital carryforward budget
 Note 2: Budgetary Basis Actuals includes actuals and encumbrances as of 03/31/26
 Note 3: % Spent is Q3 YTD Actuals divided by Adjusted Budget

Observations

- Q3 FY26 Operating Expenditures of \$385.9M or 57% of Adjusted Budget
- SCW Fund below target due to F9 Grants Partnership project and lower debt related expense (commercial paper)
- WUE Fund below target due to debt expense, expected in Q4, and San Felipe Division Deliveries project
- Service Funds, Risk Fund specifically, expenditures expected in Q4

- Q3 FY26 Capital Expenditures of \$368.3M or 60% of Adjusted Budget; trending higher than last fiscal year
- GF 15% spent due to timing of the HQ Bldg., Small Caps / Facility Mgmt., and Security Upgrades & Enhancements projects
- WSS Fund 44% spent primarily due to the timing of the Watersheds Asset Rehab, Lower Guadalupe River Restoration and SF Bay Shoreline projects
- Service Funds 40% spent primarily due to IT and Fleet capital expenditures primarily taking place in Q4

valleywater.org



Reserve Balances

- FY26 projected year-end reserve balances decreasing primarily due to Safe Clean Water Fund reserve decrease

(\$ in millions)	FY26 Adopted Budget	FY26 Projected Year-end	FY26 Projected vs Adopted
Restricted Reserves			
Safe Clean Water Fund	\$ 177.8	\$ 107.1	\$ (70.7)
Water Utility Enterprise Fund	65.5	75.5	10.0
Restricted Reserves Subtotal	243.4	182.7	(60.7)
Committed Reserves			
General Fund	19.7	27.1	7.4
Watershed & Stream Stewardship Fund	161.1	204.9	43.8
Water Utility Enterprise Fund	92.8	83.3	(9.6)
Service Funds	23.4	29.6	6.2
Committed Reserves Subtotal	297.1	345.0	47.9
Total Reserves	\$ 540.5	\$ 527.6	\$ (12.8)

Q3 FY26 Financial Update Summary

- Revenues expected to meet budget except for capital reimbursements (timing issue) and water charges (~\$10M shortfall expected) due to slightly lower than anticipated demand
- Operating expenditures estimated to end FY within budgeted levels
- Q3 YTD capital expenditures trending lower than expected but better than last fiscal year
- In August, Staff will bring to the Board recommended central budget adjustments to ensure that funding is carried over from the current fiscal year to the next to complete critical operating projects

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 26-0381

Agenda Date: 5/20/2026

Item No.: 4.3.

COMMITTEE AGENDA MEMORANDUM Board Audit Committee

Government Code § 84308 Applies: Yes No
(If "YES" Complete Attachment A - Gov. Code § 84308)

SUBJECT:

Discuss 2026 Annual Audit Plan (Risk Assessment, Asset Management, Pacheco Reservoir Project, and Investigations Process), Receive Status of Open Board-Directed Audit Engagements, and Provide Feedback as Needed.

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Discuss 2026 annual audit plan (Risk Assessment, Asset Management, Pacheco Reservoir Project, and Investigations Process),
- B. Receive status of open Board-directed audit engagements, and
- C. Provide feedback as needed.

SUMMARY:

The Board Audit Committee (BAC) has directed the initiation of eight audit engagements that remain open as of May 2026.

- The **Board Policy Compliance Audit** is in the reporting phase and the draft report has been provided to management for initial review.
- The **Water Usage and Demand Forecasting** audit is concluding the fieldwork stage and is initiating the draft report which is currently expected for review in May 2026.
- The **Contracting Practices** audit is in the reporting phase; management has been briefed on the audit findings and the draft report will be submitted to management for review in May 2026.
- The **Capital Project Delivery** audit commenced later than anticipated and remains in the fieldwork stage, with completion projected for late Q2 2026.
- The **Asset Management** audit commenced in February 2026 and the draft report is expected to be submitted to management for initial review in Q3 of Calendar Year 2026.
- The **Investigations Process** audit commenced in April 2026 with an initial planning and scoping phase, and the draft report is expected to be submitted to management for initial review in Q4 of Calendar Year 2026.

- The **Pacheco Reservoir Project** audit is anticipated to commence in Q3 of Calendar Year 2026.
- The **Districtwide Risk Assessment** is anticipated to commence in Q3 or Q4 of Calendar Year 2026, upon notice to proceed by the BAC.

The purpose of this agenda item is to discuss the 2026 Annual Audit Plan, provide status of other open audit engagements, and receive any feedback the Board deems appropriate.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPACT:

There are no Environmental Justice impacts associated with this item. The Annual Audit Workplan serves as a tool for communicating audit priorities as determined by the BAC and the Board of Directors.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

Darin Taylor, 408-630-3068



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 26-0382

Agenda Date: 5/20/2026

Item No.: 4.4.

COMMITTEE AGENDA MEMORANDUM Board Audit Committee

Government Code § 84308 Applies: Yes No
(If "YES" Complete Attachment A - Gov. Code § 84308)

SUBJECT:

Review and Discuss 2026 Board Audit Committee (BAC) Work Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and discuss topics of interest raised at prior BAC meetings and approve any necessary adjustments to the 2026 BAC Work Plan.

SUMMARY:

Per the BAC's Charter, Article III, Paragraph 6.2, "The Committee shall, in coordination with Valley Water's Clerk of the Board, develop a proposed Annual Work Plan. Items shall be included in the Annual Work Plan based upon a majority vote of the Committee."

Under direction of the Clerk, Work Plans are used by all Board Committees to increase Committee efficiency, provide increased public notice of intended Committee discussions, and enable improved follow-up by staff. Work Plans are dynamic documents managed by Committee Chairs and are subject to change.

The 2026 BAC work plan (Attachment 1) identifies planned discussion topics for the upcoming year and when those topics may appear before the committee.

Looking forward, the topics of discussion identified for June 17, 2026, BAC Meeting can be summarized as follows:

1. Receive Annual Audit Training
2. Review of JPA Audits
3. Discuss Financial Audit for upcoming Fiscal Year
4. 2026 Annual Audit Plan
5. 2026 BAC Work Plan

Upon review, the BAC may make changes to be incorporated into the work plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPACT:

The BAC Work Plan is not subject to environmental justice analysis. The BAC Work Plan serves as a tool utilized by the BAC to identify topics to be discussed during the public meeting and when that topic may be presented.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: 2026 BAC Work Plan

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

Wendy Ho, 408-630-3874

BOARD AUDIT COMMITTEE 2026 WORKPLAN

January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026

		DATE:	Jan-21	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-15	May-20	Jun-17	Jul-15	Aug-19	Sep-16	Oct-21	Nov-18	Dec-16
No. of Topics:		8	5	6	5	4	5	2	4	7	6	3	3	
# Board Audit Committee Management														
1	Discuss and Conduct Annual Self-Evaluation		•			•								
2	Request and Discuss CAE Activity Report to Evaluate Performance		•		•									
3	Discuss Board Audit Committee Audit Charter				•									
4	Discuss Scope of Annual Audit Training				•									
5	Receive Annual Audit Training							•						
6	Review and Update BAC Work Plan		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
7	Provide Draft BAC Work Plan for Upcoming Year													•
Board Audit Committee Special Requests														
8	Review of Joint Powers Authority (JPA) audits							•						
9	Discuss Initiating Chief Audit Executive RFP		•	•										
10	Discuss Plante Moran Contract (expires 07/05/26)		•											
Board-directed Audits														
11	2021 Permitting Best Practices						•							
12	2023 CIP Performance										•			
13	2024 Human Resources Audit					•								
14	2024 Information Technology Audit (Closed-Session)					•								
15	2024 Board Policies and Compliance Audit													
16	2025 Water Conservation Audit		•											
17	2025 Centralized and Decentralized Contracting Practices													
18	2025 Capital Project Delivery Audit													
19	2025 Water Usage and Demand Forecasting Audit													
20	2026 Audit - TBD													
Other Audits														
21	2024 SCW Program Performance Audit											•		
CAE Standing Topics														
22	Review and Update Annual Audit Plan		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
23	Discuss next Annual Audit Plan									•	•			
24	Discuss Draft 2027 Annual Audit Plan											•		
25	Discuss Proposed 2027 Annual Audit Plan, Assign Audit Firms, and Recommend Proposed 2027 Annual Audit Plan with assignments for Board Approval												•	
Miscellaneous 3rd-Party Financial Audits														
26	Financial Status - Periodic Updates			•			•				•			
27	Discuss Financial Audit for upcoming Fiscal Year (presented by Vasquez)							•						
28											•			
29	Audited Financial Statements											•		
30	Single Audit Report				•									
Staff Standing Topics														
31	Audit Recommendations Implementation Status			•						•				
32	Receive Audit Analysis Report from CAE		•									•		
Committee Clerk Action Items (not included in count shown in Row 3 above)														
33	Provide BAC Summary Report to full Board		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
34	Election of BAC Chair and Vice Chair		•											
BAC Topics for Future Work Plan														
35	Provide Report on Tri-annual Risk Assessment (Target CY 2026)										•			

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK