



TITLE: Elected Official Travel and Expense Policy

POLICY NUMBER: 2-03

EFFECTIVE DATE: 4/6/2021

PAGES: 1 of 12

ENABLING ACTIONS:

REVISED DATES:

APPROVED:

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines for the authorization and administration of use of public funds for travel expenses and reimbursements for official Town business as they apply to elected Town officials, including the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members.

This Policy satisfies the requirements of Government Code Sections 53232.2 and 53232.3 and supplements the definition of actual and necessary expenses for purposes of state laws relating to permissible uses of public resources.

In addition to the distinct elements of this Policy, it is understood that all purchases made with a Town procurement card are subject to the Town Procurement Card Procedure.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Travel by elected officials must only be used for authorized Town business. Travel will be authorized only when the cost and purpose result in a benefit to the Town. Elected officials should ensure that all expenses incurred are reasonable and are a prudent use of public funds. Only the authorized elected Town official is eligible for reimbursement (spouses or friends are not eligible for reimbursement).

SCOPE

This policy applies to Town of Los Gatos elected officials when travelling on Town business. Travel categories include:

- Day Trip – travel in California with no overnight stay
- In-State – travel in California with overnight stay
- Out-of-State – travel outside California
- International – travel to destinations outside of the United States

Expenses incurred in connection with the following types of activities generally constitute authorized expenses, as long as the other requirements of this policy are met:

- a. Communicating with representatives of regional, state and national governments on Town adopted policy positions;
- b. Attending educational seminars designed to improve officials' skill and information levels;
- c. Participating in special events held by local, regional, state and national organizations whose activities affect the Town's interests. These organizations include, but are not limited to, professional organizations for government (i.e., League of California Cities; National League of Cities, US Conference of Mayors), service clubs/non-profits (i.e., Kiwanis, Rotary, Friends of the Library, Los Gatos Community Foundation), business-related organizations (i.e., Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce, Joint Venture Silicon Valley), and other events or organizations which provide services to Town residents, the region or otherwise further the stated goals of the Town Council;
- d. Attending Town, county, regional and interagency events; and/or
- e. Implementing a Town-approved strategy for attracting or retaining businesses to the Town through activities that will typically involve at least one staff member.

PROCEDURES

A. Authorized Travel

Authorized travel means travel by elected Town officials, including the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members, traveling at the Town's expense for the purposes of attending conferences, seminars, educational classes, training and other business activities related to the administration of municipal government.

As a general procedure, elected officials should attempt to attend conferences or meetings within a reasonable proximity to Los Gatos. If a particular session or conference is offered throughout the year at various locations, the venue closest to Los Gatos should be selected and scheduled accordingly.

At times, elected officials may want to attend conferences or other events associated with the other agencies for which they serve as a Board member as appointed by the Town Council (e.g., Silicon Valley Clean Energy Authority). For those activities, the non-Town agency would be responsible for paying those expenses as they are related to its function. The Town will not cover such expenses for other agencies.

TITLE: Elected Official Travel and Expense Policy	PAGE: 3 of 12	POLICY NUMBER: 2-03
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B. Approvals

All travel by elected Town officials in compliance with this Policy may be approved by the Mayor and Town Manager as long as funds are available in the Town Council's program budget.

Any expenditures not expressly authorized by this Policy require prior approval by Town Council. Any expenses which exceed the annual limits which may be established from time to time for individual categories of travel or reimbursement through the Town's annual budget process require prior approval by Town Council.

Proposals requiring Town Council approval will include anticipated costs and a funding source. The following guidelines should be used by the Council when reviewing travel requests:

1. Travel is consistent with current adopted budget and/or legislative priorities, or
2. Clear monetary benefit is evident, or
3. Revenue enhancement opportunity is clearly attainable, or
4. Travel is related to the elected official's roles or duties (i.e., standing committee assignment, liaison assignment, task force assignment, economic development, etc.).

For overnight and out-of-state travel, the fewest number of elected officials as necessary to represent the Town should be selected to attend conferences or events as is reasonable and cost effective. The representative(s) shall report back to the rest of the Council after the trip.

Travel by Town Board, Commission, and Committee members and temporary, probationary, part-time and full-time Town employees shall be governed by the Town Travel and Expense Procedure.

C. Procurement Card Use Policy

The Town does not issue procurement cards to individual elected officials but does have an agency procurement card for selected Town expenses. The elected official may contact the Town Manager's Office staff for access to the procurement card. Town elected officials may use the Town's procurement card for such purposes as airline tickets and hotel reservations. Itemized receipts (not credit card receipts) documenting expenses incurred on the Town procurement card and in compliance with this Policy must be submitted within five days of use to the Town Manager's Office staff member who provided access to the procurement card. The staff member will include the itemized receipts with their monthly Expense Report. Town procurement cards may not be used for elected officials' personal expenses, even if the elected official plans to reimburse the Town. All rules and

regulations put forth in the Town Procurement Card Procedure apply to procurement card purchases.

D. Registration/Tuition Fees

Registration/tuition fees may be paid with a Town procurement card or a Town-issued check. When a credit card fee is charged, a Town-issued check is the preferred method of payment. Elected officials should work with the Town Manager's Office staff for payment of registration/tuition fees. To request a check, a Request for Payment/Check/Per Diem Allowance Form with all required details must be submitted to the Finance Department with the payment deadline clearly marked on the face of the form to assure timely payment.

Any discounts offered for early registration or attendance by additional persons should be obtained whenever possible.

E. Lodging

A hotel stay should be booked when the commute time to/from the conference, seminar, or training would be unreasonable. For a hotel stay at a destination less than 75 miles away from the elected official's home or work location (whichever is closer to the travel destination), the approval of the Mayor and Town Manager is required. Hotel stays over 75 miles from the elected official's home or work location (whichever is closer to the travel destination) do not require separate approval as long as funds are available in the Town Council's budget.

Whenever possible, standard non-deluxe rooms at conference rates should be reserved. If the elected official wishes to reserve other accommodations, only the standard non-deluxe conference room rate is to be charged to the Town. When choosing lodging, Town elected officials should consider the convenience of the location, along with other best rates available. Any hotel upgrades will be at the elected official's expense.

If applicable, lodging costs should not exceed the maximum group rate published by the conference or activity sponsor, provided that lodging at the group rate is available to the elected official at the time of booking. If the group rate is not available, the elected official shall use comparable lodging.

F. Food and Beverage

Food and Beverage for One-Day Trips

Meal expenses for trips that are a single day will not be reimbursed unless the elected official is assigned to conduct work during the meal (Per Diem Allowance is not applicable).

Food and Beverage for Overnight Trips

Per Diem Allowance can be located per the table below:

For Travel to:	Lodging and Meal Rates Established by:	Rate Tables Can be Found:
The continental US	US General Services Administration (GSA)	http://www.gsa.gov/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Includes 48 Continental States and District of Columbia high cost locations ▪ To look up per diem rates, go to https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/per-diem-rates-lookup, search for the location of travel, and check the numbers in the “M&IE Total” and “First and Last Day of Travel” columns. ▪ If neither the city nor county is listed, use standard CONUS rates.
The non-contiguous US or US territories	US Department of Defense (DOD)	http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/perdiemCalc.cfm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Includes Alaska, Hawaii and other US territories ▪ Meal breakdown is 25% for breakfast, 30% for lunch and 45% for dinner of total daily meal amount. ▪ Town will only pay actual incidental expenses to the GSA limit
Foreign destinations	US Department of State	http://aoprals.state.gov/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listed in US Dollars ▪ Meal breakdown is 25% for breakfast, 30% for lunch and 45% for dinner of total daily meal rate ▪ Town will only pay actual incidental expenses up to GSA limit

1. Food and beverages for overnight trips will be paid to the elected official via a Per Diem Allowance based on the amounts obtained using the websites found in the table above. The Meals and incidentals (M&IE) breakdown is the full amount received for a single calendar day of travel when that day is neither the first nor last day of travel. The amount received on the first and last day of travel equals 75% of the total M&IE.

2. Elected officials should work with the Town Manager's Office staff to obtain a Per Diem Allowance from the Finance Department. The Per Diem Allowance must be obtained either within 30 days before the trip using a Payment/Check/Per Diem Allowance Request Form or within 30 days after the trip using a Claim for Reimbursement Form. Per Diem Allowance requests must include the travel dates, a training/event flyer, and Council approval to travel, if applicable.
3. Food and beverage purchases while on an overnight trip may not be made with a Town procurement card and are not reimbursable. A Per Diem Allowance for meals must be obtained for food and beverage purchases within either 30 days before or after the trip.
4. If a meal is provided as part of the business event, the Per Diem Allowance will be reduced accordingly, using the numbers obtained from the websites in the table above. For example, if breakfast or lunch is included in the registration fee for a conference, the Per Diem Allowance for that day will not include the allowance for that meal or meals. Continental breakfasts provided as part of lodging will not be counted as a pre-paid meal and elected officials may be reimbursed for regular breakfasts. If the elected official has special dietary needs, efforts should be made to see if the event provider can accommodate them. If the conference is unable to accommodate the elected official's dietary needs, an additional meal purchase for a meal to replace the one provided by the conference may be provided if there are sufficient budgetary funds available.
5. Dining tips are included in the Per Diem Allowance.
6. The Per Diem Allowance includes "incidental" purchase, described by the GSA as fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and staff on ships.

G. Personal Charges

Personal charges (i.e., movie charges, spousal/guest expenses, golf or fitness charges etc.) are the responsibility of the traveling elected official.

H. Use of Personal Vehicle – Mileage Reimbursement

All mileage reimbursements shall be based on the current IRS applicable rate (see www.irs.gov). When using a personal vehicle for a trip which originates from the elected official's home, the mileage reported for the reimbursement should be from the home or the Town Civic Center (110 E. Main Street, Los Gatos CA 95030), whichever is less. Elected officials should work with the Town Manager's Office staff to submit a Mileage Reimbursement Form to the Finance Department.

Mileage reimbursements should be submitted within 30 days of return from the trip. A training/event flyer and schedule should be attached as well as driving directions from Google Maps, Mapquest or other website showing the distance travelled.

I. Transportation

The most economical method and type of transportation reasonably consistent with the scheduling need must be used, using a direct and time-efficient route. The cost of a rental vehicle, parking and fuel shall be compared to the combined cost and time of other such forms of transportation and the most cost-efficient method shall be used. Only the amount for the most cost-efficient, reasonable method of transportation is reimbursable, even if that method is not used (i.e., elected official will pay the difference if they choose to take a more expensive method of travel).

In the event of an automobile accident while traveling on Town business, a Vehicle Accident Reporting Form must be filled out and submitted to the Town Manager within 24 hours of the vehicle accident, if possible.

Airfare

1. Airline transportation costs to and from the authorized destination will not exceed advance-purchase economy-class airfare unless such fare is not available.
2. Transportation to and from airports will be reimbursed for either actual mileage if personal vehicle is used, or for reasonable taxi fare, rideshare, airport van, or other public transportation. Reimbursable mileage includes travel to the airport from the home or Town Civic Center, whichever is closer.
3. The charge for the first piece of personal baggage for the elected official may be reimbursed.
4. If a personal vehicle is parked at the airport for more than one day, the cost of parking will be reimbursed at the long-term parking rate. Parking will not be reimbursed for more than one day at the short-term rate.
5. Any additional airline fees will not be reimbursed (i.e. for early check-in or seating upgrades).

Vehicle Rentals

1. Rental vehicles are only allowed when needed for business purposes and when there are budget funds available. When renting a vehicle, elected officials should use standard or economy models. Larger vehicles are allowed if there is no additional cost to the Town, or if special circumstances exist such as medical needs, disabilities, weather conditions, multiple elected officials who will occupy the vehicle, etc.

2. When a rental vehicle is needed for travel, it can either be booked using the elected official's personal credit card and later submitted for reimbursement with itemized receipts, or it can be booked using the "Rental Car Purchasing Card" from the Finance Department. The elected official should work with the Town Manager's Office staff for this process. If using the Rental Car Purchasing Card, the vehicle shall be rented from one of the companies the Town has a business rewards account with: Budget or Avis. The most cost-efficient option for the trip should be selected. The discount number and billing PIN to be used for the appropriate rental company can be obtained from the Finance Department and the Town Manager's Office staff can assist the elected official with this information.
3. It is the rental vehicle driver's responsibility to ensure that vehicle rental costs are kept to a minimum. This includes returning the vehicle to the same location, retuning the vehicle with a full tank of gas, declining GPS and pre-paid gas options, etc.
4. For rental vehicles booked using an elected official's personal credit card, elected officials should purchase the Collision/Loss Damage Waiver insurance when travelling domestically. Elected officials shall waive any other additional vehicle insurance options provided that the elected official has their own vehicle insurance coverage. Elected officials should contact their auto insurance company beforehand to confirm coverage. Any questions about coverages should be addressed ahead of time with Town staff. When travelling internationally, additional insurance should be accepted if the elected official lacks other similar coverage.
5. For rental vehicles booked using the Rental Car Purchasing Card, elected officials should decline the rental company's Collision/Loss Damage Waiver insurance as they are covered by the Auto Rental Collision Damage Waiver Program through the Purchasing Card.
6. Rental vehicles should not be taken across the US Border unless prior approval is received from the Town Council. The Town is not responsible for any border fees if no prior approval was given and the elected official must reimburse the Town for these fees if applicable.
7. The Town is not responsible for the fees associated with paid "express" lanes, where drivers must pay a toll in order to use a separate, less congested lane. The elected official must reimburse the Town for this expense if applicable.
8. The Town will reimburse all bridge and road tolls, except for redundant toll roads that parallel state or federal highways (e.g. Highway 73 in Orange County, California).
9. The elected official is liable for any "damages" to the rental car during the course of rental. The Town Rental Car Purchasing Card on file will only be used for the cost of the rental vehicle booked up front. If the elected official damages the vehicle, upon return of the vehicle, they will need to provide an alternate form of payment for any of these "incidental" expenses.

10. In case of any event, incident or accident related to the rental vehicle, the elected official must notify the Town Manager as soon as possible. A Vehicle Accident Reporting Form must be filled out and submitted within 24 hours of a vehicle accident, if possible.
11. Elected officials may only use the Town's business rewards program discount number for authorized Town travel. The Town's business rewards program discount number may not be used for leisure travel.

Ground Transportation

1. Ground transportation (i.e., taxis, rideshares, bikeshares, scootershares, buses, and/or shuttles) will be reimbursed when incurred in overnight or away from home travel.
2. Taxi or rideshare (i.e., Uber/Lyft) or bikeshare/scootershare costs may be reimbursed for one-day or multiple-day travel, keeping in mind that the most cost-effective mode of transportation should be taken.

Public Transportation

1. Bus, train or other methods of public travel are authorized when such modes are more appropriate and economical.

J. Miscellaneous Expenses

Examples of miscellaneous expenses include, but are not limited to: taxi, rideshare, shuttle fares, tips, internet charges, and parking.

1. Taxi/rideshare/bikeshare/scootershare, bridge tolls, and ferry fares associated with official business will be reimbursed when supported by itemized receipts.
2. Actual costs for parking will be reimbursed when supported by itemized receipts. In a situation where no receipt is given (i.e., parking meters), a Missing Receipt Form must be submitted.
3. Hotel internet or Wi-Fi charges for work purposes will be reimbursed when supported by itemized receipts.
4. Town business meal purchases, where Town business is discussed and a mealtime meeting is unavoidable due to scheduling restrictions, are reimbursable expenses. The statement reconciliation should list each person in attendance as well as a description of the Town business discussed. If the elected official dines with another person and is unable to split the check, the receipt should be clearly marked as to the items purchased for the elected official. Alcohol is not reimbursable. Business meal purchases do not apply to overnight travel meals where a Per Diem Allowance is applicable.
5. A Per Diem Allowance includes "incidental" purchases, described by the GSA as fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and staff on ships.

K. Town Checks

Town checks for registration will be made payable only to the organization officially conducting the meeting. If the elected official is in need of a check for registration, one will be issued upon notification to the Finance Department. The Town Manager's Office staff can assist the elected official with this process. The notification to the Finance Department should include a Request for Payment/Check/Per Diem Allowance Form, the training/conference flyer, registration deadline, and Council approval if applicable.

The Town will issue approved reimbursement checks directly to the elected official.

L. Mileage Reimbursement and Claim for Reimbursement**1. Required Documentation**

A Mileage Reimbursement Form and Claim for Reimbursement Form must be completed to document travel/mileage/activity/purchases or process requests for travel reimbursement. These forms must include the following documentation:

- a. Documentation that describes the nature of travel (i.e., a copy of the conference flyer and schedule).
- b. Copies of receipt(s) that itemize purchases, including date of purchase and location.
- c. Authorization to travel, if applicable.
- d. Mileage Reimbursements should include driving directions from Google Maps, Mapquest or other website showing the distance travelled.
- e. If the elected official does not have an itemized receipt, a Missing Receipt Form must be filled out. Missing Receipt Form Purchases will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may not be reimbursed. If more than three Missing Receipt Forms are submitted for purchases made with a Town procurement card within a twelve-month period, the elected official's privilege to use the Town procurement card may be reviewed and/or revoked.
- f. No individual food or beverage purchases will be reimbursed for an overnight trip. The elected official must request a Per Diem Allowance for the trip.

2. Deadline to Submit Mileage Reimbursement/Claim for Reimbursement Form

The Mileage Reimbursement Form and Claim for Reimbursement Form should be submitted within 30 days of travel meeting/date. Claims for reimbursements that are not turned in within the requested timeframe may not be honored, resulting in a cost to the elected official.

3. Signatures on Reimbursements

Travel expenses such as Mileage Reimbursements and Claims for Reimbursements submitted by Council Members must be signed by the Mayor and the Town Manager. Reimbursements for the Mayor must be signed by the Town Manager and Finance Director.

M. Limitations on Reimbursements

All reimbursements shall be consistent with those allowed under state and federal law which shall prevail over interpretation of this Policy, express or implied.

Any questions regarding the propriety of a particular expense should be resolved before the expense is incurred.

Reimbursement is expressly conditioned upon sufficient funds being budgeted as part of the annual Town budget.

N. Non-Reimbursable Expense

The following personal expenses are not allowable for reimbursement:

- a. Traffic, toll, and parking violations
- b. Fees to drive in a paid "express" lane or parallel paid freeway (e.g., Highway 73 in Orange County, California)
- c. Mileage for regular commute (such as to the Town Civic Center for Town Council meetings)
- d. Emergency repairs on personal vehicles
- e. Alcohol/tobacco
- f. Individual food and beverage purchases while on overnight travel (Per Diem Allowance must be requested)
- g. Medicinal remedies, health supplies, cosmetics, toiletries
- h. Personal entertainment such as in-room movies, fees for exercise room, sports event, personal reading materials, personal grooming, optional tours, souvenirs
- i. Childcare fees
- j. Kennel/boarding fees (except for Town-owned animals)
- k. Expenses related to an elected official's family member or friend
- l. Political or charitable contributions or events
- m. Short term airport parking exceeding one day
- n. Any additional airline fees (i.e., for early check-in or seating upgrades)

- o. Other incidental expenses that are determined to be of a personal nature, extravagant, or might be considered unreasonable or unnecessary

O. Audits of Expense Reports

All expenses are subject to verification that they comply with this policy.

P. Reports to Governing Boards

At the next public governing body meeting following the travel and/or expenditure, each elected official shall briefly report on meetings, conferences, or seminars attended at the Town's expense. If multiple elected officials attended, a joint report may be made. The report may be made orally or in writing.

Q. Compliance with Laws

Elected Town officials should keep in mind that some expenditure may be subject to reporting under the Political Reform Act and other laws. All Town expenditures are public records subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act and other laws.

R. Violations of this Policy

Under state law, misuse of public resources or falsifying documents in violation of this Policy may result in any or all of the following: (1) loss of reimbursement privileges, (2) a demand for restitution to the Town, (3) the Town reporting the expenses as income to the elected official to state and federal tax authorities, (4) civil penalties of up to \$1,000 per day and three times the value of the resources used, and (5) prosecution for misuse of public resources.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Robert Schultz, Town Attorney