



CITY OF GOLETA

TRAVEL POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Staff, Councilmembers, other appointed City officials, and Commissioners are encouraged to attend meetings and conferences of professional organizations and associations to increase knowledge of and to identify resources for effective municipal management. Attendance at such conferences and meetings shall depend upon availability of fiscal resources as allocated in the City's budget.

Only travel/attendance which serves a municipal purpose and is deemed necessary and/or advantageous to the City of Goleta shall be approved. Travel shall be by the most economical means. It is expected that sound judgment will be exercised in the expenditure of all public funds.

For the purposes of this policy, "travel" is used to indicate the movement, by normal modes of transportation, of an individual(s) from their customary place of business to another place of business as required and authorized to attend conferences and meetings. "Travel" includes local and non-local movements as follows:

- **Local Travel** - Official travel performed within a distance of 100 miles from the City of Goleta or the traveler's residence and accomplished within one day.
- **Non-Local Travel** - Official travel requiring at least one overnight absence from the traveler's residence or the City of Goleta and to a location more than 100 miles distance from the City of Goleta or the traveler's residence.

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for: 1) the approval of business travel; and, 2) the reimbursement of reasonable expenses which are incurred while conducting official City business.

POLICY PROCEDURES

A. Authorization

1. The City Manager or Department Directors must authorize attendance, travel and reimbursement of all normal and necessary expenses incurred by employees in the conduct of official City business prior to departure.
2. City Manager authorization is not required for travel undertaken by City Councilmembers or the City Attorney, or for any reimbursement of associated expenses. However, reimbursements are limited to budget allocations for each Councilmember.
3. Planning Commissioners must coordinate all travel requests through the Administrative Assistant in the Planning Department. All travel and/or expense reimbursement requests by Commissioners must be approved by the Planning Director.
4. Employees must obtain authorization by submitting a **Travel Authorization Form** (Attachment 1) to their Department Director (or City Manager when appropriate) prior to traveling. On this form employees must indicate the travel destination, purpose of the trip, the date/time of their departure and return, estimated costs for registration, lodging, transportation and mileage, as well as the account number (s) to be charged for travel expenses.
5. The approved Travel Authorization Form must then be submitted to the Finance Department prior to travel.
6. Travel must be pre-approved in order for employees to be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket travel expenses or mileage reimbursement.
7. In areas not specifically covered by these guidelines, the City Manager's decision shall govern.

B. Types of Authorized Travel Expenses

1. **Registration** - Registration fees charged for any authorized convention, conference, seminar or meeting. A receipt or some other proof of the fee amount, such as a copy of the conference program setting forth the fee rate, shall be provided with any reimbursement request.
2. **Transportation** - All travel will be by the mode most economical to the City. In arriving at the most economical mode, practical factors such as time, work schedule, distance traveled and cost of type of transportation mode must be considered.

- a. **Air and Rail** - Round-trip fare for coach class or by the method least costly to the City are required. Special efforts shall be made to take advantage of discounts and special fares when such fares and discounts produce "real savings" to the City. If other travel arrangements are made, or are made in conjunction with approved personal leave, reimbursement shall be computed at the coach rate, using the shortest and most direct route to and from the location of the City business.
- b. **City Vehicles** - Departmentally assigned or pool vehicles may be used for travel, when scheduling permits, to and from designated places outside the local area. No allowance or reimbursement for transportation is authorized when a City-owned vehicle is used. All City Vehicles have a gasoline credit card located in the glove box. *However, any out-of-pocket expenses incurred in operating the vehicle shall be reimbursed only if receipts are provided.*
- c. **Personal Vehicles** - Unless authorized by the City Manager or Department Director, no employee shall be reimbursed for the use of a privately-owned vehicle for travel, if a suitable City owned vehicle **or bicycle** is available for such use. City Councilmembers may request mileage reimbursement for the use of personal vehicles without authorization by the City Manager subject to availability of budget allocation.

Mileage for the use of a private vehicle shall be reimbursed at the current rate set by the *Internal Revenue Service*. Personnel receiving automobile allowances or **unless otherwise covered by contract** will not be entitled to mileage reimbursement in addition to the monthly allowance except for non-local travel. In all cases, **reimbursement for** travel mileage shall be determined by the most direct route from point of departure or City Hall to point of return or City Hall with mileage calculated from the shortest distance.

- d. **Pool Travel** - Whenever the use of privately-owned motor vehicles occurs, every effort shall be made to pool travel. The traveler(s) accompanying the owner of a privately owned motor vehicle in which the official travel is performed, shall not be entitled to any reimbursement for mileage.
- e. **License and Insurance** - Employees, City Councilmembers or other City officials operating city-owned vehicles or using privately-owned vehicles traveling on City business must possess a valid California Driver's License as well as automobile insurance coverage with limits of not less than

those required by State law.

California Insurance Code §11580.9 states that where two or more policies affording valid and collectible liability insurance apply to the same motor vehicle in an occurrence out of which a liability loss shall arise, it shall be conclusively presumed that the insurance afforded by that policy in which the motor vehicle is described or rated as an owned vehicle is primary and the insurance afforded by any other policy shall be excess.

If an accident occurs while an employee, City Councilmember or other City official is operating a City-owned vehicle in the course of conducting City business, the City's insurance will be the primary insurance as per the requirements of California Insurance Code §11580.9. If an accident occurs while an employee, City Councilmember or other City official is operating a privately-owned vehicle while conducting City business, that individual's insurance will be the primary insurance as per the requirements of California Insurance Code §11580.9.

- f. **General Aviation** - Travel by General Aviation as opposed to Commercial Aviation is allowed if it is the most economical mode of transportation.
 - g. **Taxi, Car Rental, Bus Fare** – Expenses may be reimbursed where use of such conveyances is reasonable and necessary in the conduct of City business. Receipts must be provided. The use of rental vehicles will be permitted when alternate transportation would be more expensive or impractical. Economy vehicles and corporate rates shall be requested for vehicle rentals. Whenever possible, travelers should utilize hotel courtesy buses or local shuttle services. Taxi service should be used only when no other convenient, less costly transportation is available.
 - h. **Garage and Parking Expense** - Charges for parking and storage for private or City vehicles are reimbursable. Valet parking is not reimbursable unless self-parking is not offered at the location. Receipts must be submitted with requests for reimbursement.
3. **Accommodations** - Actual lodging expenses for single accommodations at out-of-town conferences or meetings are reimbursable. Lodging shall be obtained at the most economical rate available for safe, clean and quality accommodations. Lavish or oversized accommodations are not allowed. Whenever possible, single rooms at corporate/government rates are to be secured. Receipts for accommodation charges must be provided after travel.

Special efforts shall be made to obtain accommodations at or near the facility where official City business is to take place to reduce the costs of transportation between meetings and conference sites. Employee's lodging charges for conferences occurring within one hundred (100) miles of City Hall will not be paid for by the City, except when authorized by the City Manager.

4. **Meal Allowance, Non-Local Travel (Per Diem)** - Employees, City Councilmembers and City officials will receive a Per Diem allowance as set by the State of California for the County of Santa Barbara to cover the cost of meals while conducting non-local travel.

- a. The City's Finance Department will calculate current Per Diem allowance rates for each travel request. If an advance for a Per Diem meal allowance is submitted, payment will be made by check to the individual traveling (see section D below).
- b. In the event that the individual is not on City business for the entire day, the Per Diem allowance will be prorated according to the following formula:

Breakfast - 20% of the Per Diem allowance if traveling one (1) hour prior to the normal travel time on a regular workday.

Lunch - 30% of the Per Diem allowance if departing or arriving more than 1 hour before or after their normal lunch break.

Dinner - 50% of the Per Diem allowance if traveling 1 hour after the end of normal workday hours.

- c. Per Diem shall be issued for days actually spent on City business. For conferences, Per Diem shall be computed for the days of the conference attended and for travel days not to exceed one day before and after the conference.
- d. The Per Diem meal allowance will be adjusted for those meals included in the cost of the conferences and seminars. It is not the intent for the City to pay twice for the same meal. In the case of employee travel, it will be the Department Director's responsibility to monitor the time of departure and arrival to ensure proper payment of meal allowances.

5. **Meal Allowance, Local Travel** - Employees, City Councilmembers and City officials may request a meal allowance for meals relating to local travel for City business purposes. The meal allowance will be determined according to the following formula:

Breakfast - Actual costs not to exceed 20% of the Per Diem allowance if traveling one (1) hour prior to the normal travel time on a regular workday.

Lunch - Actual costs not to exceed 30% of the Per Diem allowance if departing or arriving more than 1 hour before or after their normal lunch break.

Dinner - Actual costs not to exceed 50% of the Per Diem allowance if traveling 1 hour after the end of normal workday hours.

6. **Reimbursement of Other Meal Expenses** – Employees, City Councilmembers and City officials who, during the normal course of performing their duties, must provide for meals for representatives of governmental agencies or other non-City officials or non-City employees doing business with or for the City in order to most effectively execute their responsibilities, may, be reimbursed for expenses associated with such meals. City employees who wish to receive reimbursement for such expenses must first obtain authorization from the appropriate Department Director or City Manager if applicable. No reimbursement will be allowed for alcoholic beverages. Tips not to exceed 20% will be allowed. When requesting reimbursement, documentation must be provided which includes: copy of receipt(s) with description of purchased items; statement of the purpose of meal; a listing identifying all persons partaking of the meals indicating organizations and title.

Expenses submitted for reimbursement by City employees for other meals such as awards luncheons and dinners, retirement luncheons and dinners and meals associated with service club meetings shall not be authorized for reimbursement unless specifically approved by the City Manager.

7. **Telephone, Fax and Internet Access** – Telephone, fax and Internet Access expenses may be reimbursed only for the conduct of official business.

C. Claims for Reimbursement

In order to be reimbursed for the allowable travel expenses described above, employees, City Councilmembers and other City officials must submit an approved **Travel Reimbursement Claim Form** (Attachment 2) to the City's Finance Department. The Department Directors (or City Manager if applicable) shall review and approve all claims for the reimbursement to employees prior to submittal to the Finance Department. Supporting receipts and invoices, including those for prepaid expenses, must be attached to the reimbursement claim form. The Finance Director at his/her sole discretion may accept other documentation to support expenditures in lieu of receipts, when receipts are not available. Reimbursement of costs shall be based on the minimum number of days and hours required to transact City business.

D. Advances

Employees, City Councilmembers and other City officials may secure a travel advance based upon estimated travel costs or Per Diem meal rates. Travel advances will include Per Diem for meals, lodging and conference registration charges only. In order to accommodate timely issuance of an advance, the request must be included on the Travel Authorization Form and must be submitted to Finance in a normal Accounts Payable Cycle prior to travel. It is therefore a good rule of thumb to submit requests at least two weeks prior to travel. Special checks for travel advances will not be issued. The actual cash advance will be available on the last business day before departure.

Travel advances are authorized so that personnel do not have to use their own money while on City business. However, all expenses paid from advanced funds (with the exception of the meal Per Diem) must be properly documented by receipts, or other evidence of expenditure, upon completion of the travel.

E. Credit Cards

A City credit card is available through the Finance Department for reservation or advanced payment of acceptable charges related to employee travel. Cards are not to be removed from City Hall. Receipts for all charges on the cards must be submitted to the Finance Department with the reimbursement claim form. The cards may only be used for transactions covered under this policy. Personal use of these cards is strictly prohibited.

Pursuant to the City's Credit Card Policy, City Councilmembers may use credit cards issued to them for reservation or advanced payment of travel expenses, as well as payment of expenses while traveling. Receipts for all charges on the cards must be submitted to the Finance Department with the reimbursement claim form.

Planning Commissioners must work with the Planning Department's Administrative Assistant in order to make travel reservations or advanced payments using a City credit card.

F. Reconciliation

Upon submission of the reimbursement claim form, the estimated and actual expenses incurred must be reconciled on the Travel Reimbursement Claim Form. If actual costs are greater than the amount advanced, the difference will be paid to the traveler. If the actual costs are less than the amount advanced, the difference must be reimbursed to the City.

The reimbursement claim form shall be submitted to the Finance Department (accompanied by receipts and remittance or requisition) within ten (10) working days after returning to work. In no case shall claims for reimbursement be submitted more

than 30 days after travel is completed or in a different fiscal year than the travel occurred.

Furthermore, no new or additional claims for reimbursement shall be paid to an employee until all prior claims have been reconciled.

G. Non-Eligible Travel Expenses

Personal expenses, meaning those not directly related to official City business, are not eligible for reimbursement.

If City-related travel is preceded by or extended because of personal travel, only the portion of a trip that pertains to official City business will be considered an eligible travel expense.

Participation of spouses at appropriate official functions is encouraged by the City; however no reimbursement for spouse's expenses will be made by the City.

No reimbursement to any individual will be provided for travel that does not take place. In the case of pre-booked travel which does not occur, individuals are encouraged to seek credits or reimbursement from the entity with which travel is booked and to do so in a timely manner.

H. Compatibility with Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program

While travelling for the purpose of conducting City business employees will not be eligible to receive the per-diem cash benefit (as defined in the City's TDM Program) for days that they receive mileage reimbursement or have transportation expenses, including, but not limited to, airfare, bus fare, or taxi fare, paid by the City, unless they can demonstrate that they used an approved alternative mode of transportation to travel between their residence and the workplace on that day.

I. Exceptions

Exception to this policy can be made only when authorized by the City Manager for employees or authorized by the City Council for non-employees.

Effective Date: March 10, 2008	Date Revised: February 21, 2012
Date Ratified by City Council: February 21, 2012	
Approved By:	
DANIEL SINGER, CITY MANAGER	

TRAVEL POLICY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I have received and read the Travel Policy and understand and will abide by its provisions. I further understand that when I sign this acknowledgement form it will be placed in my personnel file.

Name

Signature

Date