

## SJ 8: Special District Overview

REVENUE INTERIM COMMITTEE  
MEGAN MOORE – AUGUST 2025

### WHAT IS A SPECIAL DISTRICT?

A special district is a unit of local government authorized by law to perform a single or limited number of functions. The special district levies a fee or tax on property owners to fund the district's purpose. A levy for a special district is distinct from a special purpose levy, which is a voted levy requested by a local government for a specific purpose.

State law authorizes nearly 50 types of special districts, many with unique statutes governing their creation and financing mechanisms. Common special district purposes include street maintenance, sewers, and lighting.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS							
Description	Code	1st Half	2nd Half	Description	Code	1st Half	2nd Half
STREET MAINT #1	0001	103.08	103.08	OPEN-SPACE LANDS	2518	10.51	10.50
SOLID WASTE	0003	109.05	109.05	WATER QUALITY INSIDE CITY	8000	4.40	4.40
STORM WATER UTL	0008	23.08	23.08	<b>TOTAL SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS</b>		<b>316.68</b>	<b>316.66</b>
LANDFILL MONITORING	0016	3.62	3.61				
URBAN FOREST MGMT	0061	19.50	19.50				
OPEN SPACE MAINT	0070	10.00	10.00				
LIGHT DISTRICT #306	0306	27.19	27.19				
FORESTVALE CEM	2121	6.25	6.25				

### DISTRICTS FORMED BY GOVERNING BODY OR PETITION

A special district is created through a resolution, either directly by a city or county or upon request of property owners through a petition. The resolution requires a public hearing, and many district statutes include objection provisions and thresholds of property owners who can prevent creation of the special district. A city or county can also order a referendum on whether to create the special district.

Once formed, a special district may be governed by the city or county or by an elected or appointed board.

### SPECIAL DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS VARY CONSIDERABLY

Special districts may assess an equal fee for each parcel, levy mills on the taxable value of property in the district or base the assessment on other factors. Example factors include a property's size or lineal front footage, vehicle trips to the property, or number of residential or commercial units.

### MANY TYPES OF SPECIAL DISTRICTS WITH DISTINCT LAWS

#### UNIFORM ACT STANDARDIZES LAWS FOR SOME SPECIAL DISTRICTS IN 2009

[Senate Bill 57](#) (SB 57), or the Uniform Act, established uniform laws for certain special districts in 2009. The legislation resulted from a 2007 interim study that aimed to standardize special district laws on creation, governance, protest, and financing.

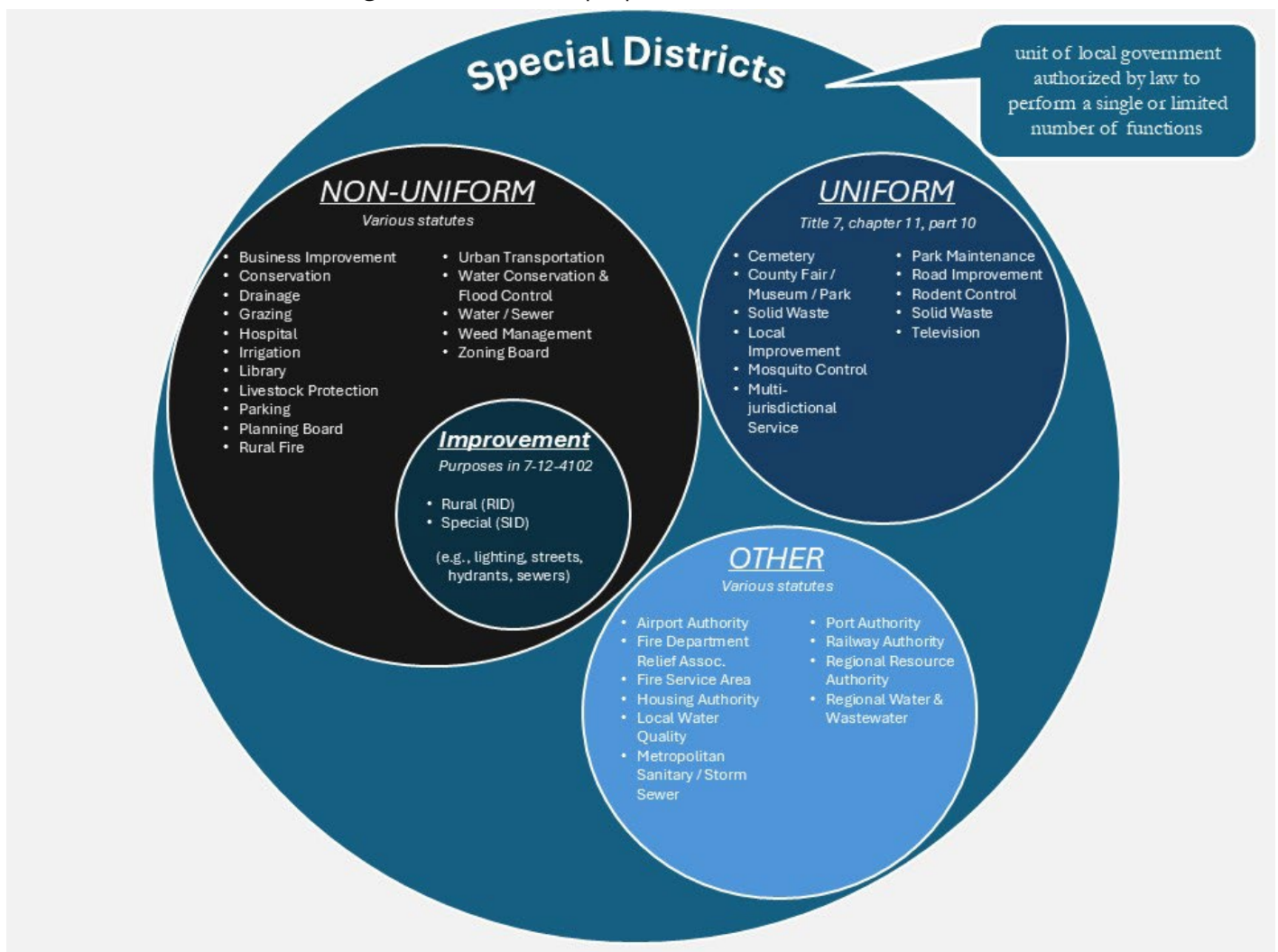
Under SB 57, districts that existed on July 1, 2009, were subject to the Uniform Act if the district altered its boundaries or changed the amount or method of assessment. However, the 2019 Legislature enacted [House Bill](#)

[259](#) (HB 259) to revise SB 57 and provide that a district in existence on July 1, 2009, could continue to operate under the laws in place when the district was created. HB 259 addressed concerns about the legal status of districts, particularly for bonding purposes.<sup>1</sup>

## MANY SPECIAL DISTRICTS EXCLUDED FROM UNIFORM ACT

The Uniform Act applied to special districts listed in [7-11-1002](#)(3)(b) and specifically excluded other districts in subsection (3)(c). There are still other special districts that are not mentioned in 7-11-1002 as included or excluded. These districts and the ones specifically excluded from the Uniform Act are subject to separate laws that vary from district to district.

Two common types of districts excluded from the Uniform Act are special improvement districts and rural improvement districts. These districts may be used for construction or maintenance of infrastructure such as water and sewer, roads, sidewalks, and lights. The allowable purposes are listed in [7-12-4102](#).



<sup>1</sup> Background information on special districts from "[Special Districts: Statutory Authority](#)," Toni Henneman, Sept. 2021.