



# COUNTY CURRENTS

Santa Cruz County

[www.santacruzcounty.us](http://www.santacruzcounty.us)

Winter 2020

A publication of the County Administrative Office Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrator



## Rediscovered Treasure



*A forgotten mural was recently uncovered in the County Building at 701 Ocean St. Do you know the story behind the artwork? [Email us](#) and let us know!*



In November, the Board of Supervisors voted to require retailers to charge 25 cents for **disposable to-go cups**. The groundbreaking law goes into effect in summer 2020. Santa Cruz County has been a leader in policies that protect the environment and **fight climate change**.



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## County nabs \$1M youth reentry grant

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce a \$1 million grant to support youth reentry back into the community and strengthen support networks to avoid future involvement with the justice system.

Ranked as the top proposal statewide by the Board of State and Community Corrections, the Santa Cruz County Probation Department grant will provide \$350,000 annually for three years for the Stable Transitions After Reentry program, providing in-custody, reentry, and aftercare services to justice-involved youth that build on the County's leadership role on youth justice issues.

"The County is committed to understanding and responding to the factors that contribute to youth involvement in our justice system, and the result has been a long-term decline in youth crime rates," Probation Chief Fernando Giraldo said. "This grant will allow us to expand on that work and continue making Santa Cruz County a better and safer place for all our residents."

In addition to youth services for those up to age 26 confined for both long and short periods of time, the proposal includes parent/teen mediation and a parenting program for parents and other caregivers. Eligible participants include those at Juvenile Hall, Juvenile Ranch, Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs, and Department of Juvenile Justice facilities, as well as youth who have been taken into custody but released within 72 hours of being detained.

Grant funding is provided through the Title II Grant Program of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, administered by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention by awarding grants to states to support delinquency prevention and juvenile justice system improvement. The Board of State and Community Corrections administers California's Title II awards.

# Donors mean new skate park for Seacliff Village Park

On Dec. 17th, the County and several partners, including prominent local philanthropists, broke ground on a new skateable feature at Seacliff Village Neighborhood Park, which will include a reference to Aptos' famed "cement ship."

Made possible by generous donations from Richard Novak and Rowland Rebele, the new, accessible skateable art feature will soon be added to the popular park, which opened in 2015 and overlooks Monterey Bay. The skateable feature includes a scale version of the S.S. Palo Alto, and is expected to be completed in early 2020.

"Since opening four years ago, Seacliff Village Park has become a destination for children and families from across Santa Cruz County," Supervisor Zach Friend said. "I'm pleased to be able to work the community to bring this project here."

Novak and Rebele are providing fund-

ing for the new feature, which is also the result of the dedicated work of Tricia Proctor and Marie Martorella, local residents who have worked tirelessly to identify a safe site where youth can skateboard and focus on the positivity of the sport.

A lifelong Capitola resident, Richard Novak founded iconic skateboard company NHS Inc. in 1972, which now employs more than 150 people locally. Richard is dedicated to empowering local youth through school scholarships, local non-profit organizations, and encouraging outdoor recreational activities.

A longtime Aptos resident, Rowland Rebele and his wife have given back to the community in numerous ways, including the Rebele Family Shelter, UCSC's Institute of Arts and Sciences and, most recently, funding a youth coordinator role at Episcopal Church of St. John in Aptos.



Rowland Rebele, left, and Richard Novak, right, helped make a new skate park possible.

 COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ DEPARTMENT OF  
**PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND CULTURAL SERVICES**



**2019-20 PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES**

Looking for something to do? Whether you're 8 or 85, the '19-'20 Parks Department's Activity Guide is a great place to start. [Check it out!](#)

## ***Pajaro River project hits high-water mark***

The County of Santa Cruz has announced a major milestone in efforts to protect the people of the Pajaro Valley from catastrophic flooding.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed an analysis of the project demonstrating a positive cost-benefit ratio, which is key to funding and eventually breaking ground on the project. The analysis included in a Director's Report on the Pajaro Valley Flood Risk Reduction Project frees up state funding for the project and pivots the \$394 million proposal from the planning to the design phase.

"The most vulnerable populations in both counties rely on this levee and we won't stop fighting until this project is fully built," Supervisor Zach Friend said.

"After decades of engaging the Corps of Engineers and trying to meet their requirements, I want to congratulate the County for getting to this significant step in seeing the Pajaro River flood control project become reality," Assemblymember Mark Stone said.

The analysis was presented at a meeting of the regional Pajaro River Watershed Flood Prevention Authority held Friday, Dec. 13. U.S. Rep. Jimmy Panetta, who has been instrumental in moving the project forward, attended the meeting, as did representatives of jurisdictions impacted by flood protection. The goal of the project is to increase flood protection by rebuilding existing levees, or adding new setback levees or floodwalls in such a way to allow for much larger flood flows.



## ***A commitment to South County behavioral health services***

On Dec. 6, many partners came together to celebrate the County's new South County behavioral health facility, which helps fulfill the County's strategic objectives of promoting a safe and healthy community for and increasing access to integrated mental health, substance use disorder and health care services.

The new facility is dedicated to serving all populations, including adults and children, families, young adults and more, and will serve as a base for a variety of County behavioral health services and programs, including

the County's first-ever mobile mental health unit designed to address the needs of children.

Thank you to everyone who came out, including the Health Improvement Partnership, Mental Health Advisory Board, Watsonville dignitaries and many more.



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*County*



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## Vibrant, affordable housing community project approved

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Nov. 8 unanimously approved a mixed-use development near 17th Avenue and Capitola Road that will include community-serving medical and dental clinics, a public plaza, and 57 units of affordable rental homes.

Located on property owned by the County's former redevelopment agency, the 3.7-acre site was the subject of numerous community meetings and earned widespread approval as a model mixed-use development that addresses the housing crisis, health care gaps and community open space needs. The development is being led by MidPen Housing, which developed, owns and manages 13 affordable housing communities throughout Santa Cruz County.

"This represents an unprecedented opportunity to provide community services and address the needs of the Live Oak community," Supervisor John Leopold said. "I would like to thank the hundreds of community members who came together to help shape this future community. It is great that there will be a special preference for people who live and work in Santa Cruz County and Live Oak."

The 57 affordable rental apartments will

be developed, owned and operated by MidPen Housing, and include a community room with a kitchen and computers, a manager's apartment, space for an academically-based After School Program for children, a laundry room, a property management office, a garden and a secure bicycle storage room. The Board also directed that the development be energy self-sufficient.

"I am beyond excited to reach this stage," said Betsy Wilson, Director of Special Projects for MidPen Housing. "We understand the dire need for quality, affordable housing throughout Santa Cruz County, and we are thrilled to once again be part of the solution."

The 11,000-square-foot dental clinic will be operated by Dientes Community Dental, which has provided oral health care to low-income children, adults and seniors



for more than 25 years. The 18,000-square-foot medical clinic will be operated by Santa Cruz Community Health Centers, which has offered affordable, comprehensive services to Santa Cruz County for 45 years. The proposed public plaza including a sunken green space, seating, sculptures and an interpretive historical installation honoring Robert Merriman and the history of the site. Merriman, who once lived on the site, fought fascism in Spain as commander of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and was the inspiration for the fictional character Robert Jordan in Ernest Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls."



In November, the Animal Shelter's Benefit Shop on Felt Street celebrated the debut of a new mural by artist Janice Serilla. The colorful, whimsical mural portrays the many different species that SCCAS serves as the County's only open-admission, full-service animal shelter. For more, go to [www.scanimalshelter.org](http://www.scanimalshelter.org).



### THE 2020 CENSUS IS HIRING

If you or anyone you know is looking to supplement income or for temporary employment, Census-taker positions are available for \$21/hr. Candidates must meet minimum eligibility requirements, including being a U.S. citizen who is at least 18 years old, possessing a valid Social Security number, and being able to pass a criminal background check. Most jobs also require a valid driver's license. To APPLY and for a full list of requirements, go to [www.2020census.gov/jobs](http://www.2020census.gov/jobs).

# 21st annual Homeless Memorial recognizes 58

On Thursday, Dec. 19th, about 100 community members gathered to remember to lives of 58 homeless persons who died while living on the streets of Santa Cruz County in 2019.

This marked the 21st year for the annual Homeless Memorial ceremony. For more than two decades, the event has honored community members — many of whom have deep roots in Santa Cruz County — who have passed over the last year, and is held in conjunction with Homeless Persons Memorial Day, an nationwide event held annually across the U.S.

Housing Matters, the Santa Cruz County Homeless Persons Health Project and Encompass Community Services' River Street Shelter are key partners in the ceremony, which included homeless persons, advocates and local government representatives. Several people, including retiring Santa Cruz Police Department Deputy Chief Rick Martinez, volunteered to read the names of each homeless person who passed.

Friends and family of those who have passed were invited to speak at the event, which was followed by a walk to the site of a permanent homeless memorial in historic Evergreen Cemetery. The 58 homeless persons who died on the streets of Santa Cruz County represent more than one death per week. People experiencing homelessness have much shorter life expectancies and are more likely to suffer violence, chronic disease and behavioral health issues.

In Santa Cruz County, 1 one in 37 homeless persons died in 2019, nearly five times the rate of the housed population. Life expectancy for homeless men and women is more than 20 years shorter than for their housed counterparts.

According to the 2019 Point-in-Time Count report, there are 2,167 homeless persons living in Santa Cruz County. Nearly one-third are currently employed, and three-quarters were previously housed in Santa Cruz County before becoming homeless. Thirty-nine percent reported a disabling condition impacting their ability to live independently; approximately 30 percent reported suffering post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorder, and/or other psychiatric or emotional conditions; and loss of employment was the leading cause of homelessness.

The Homeless Action Partnership is a collaboration of the County and each city within Santa Cruz County, along with local homelessness service providers. It acts as the federally-designated continuum of care for Santa Cruz County and helps allocate State and federal funding to address homelessness. The County of Santa Cruz serves as lead agency for the HAP.

For a video of the names of the deceased being read aloud, go to <https://youtu.be/X8ML4iMz8ZQ>.



About 100 gathered at Harvey West Park's clubhouse to recognize 58 homeless people who died in 2019.

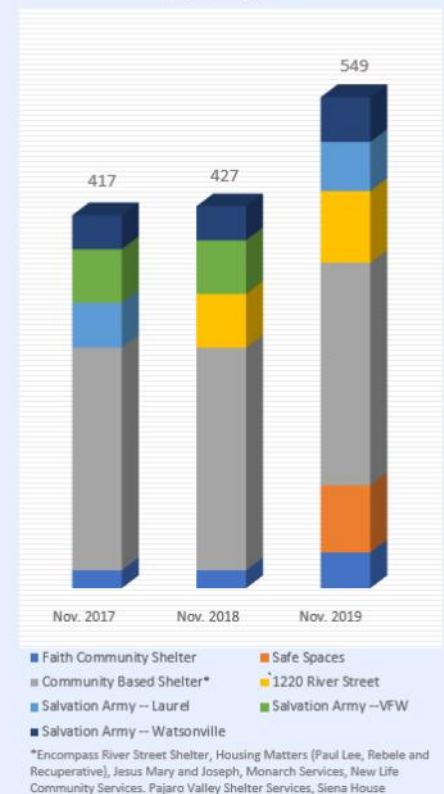
## Shelter capacity up 30%

The Homeless Action Partnership increased overall local shelter capacity by 30 percent in time for the winter season, serving a variety of homeless populations.

The \$7 million plan includes emergency shelter at three sites operated by Salvation Army Santa Cruz Corps, a new Safe Spaces parking program, increased funding for Monarch Services' domestic violence shelter, funding for Housing Matters' Paul Lee Loft and increased capacity for the Association of Faith Communities' rotating shelter program, funding to divert hundreds of residents from becoming homeless and incentives for landlords to offer permanent housing to homeless individuals.

The contracts formalize an expansion in shelter capacity to 549 spaces while building out programming needed to prevent homelessness and assist in the transition from shelter to permanent housing. In partnership with the County and partner cities, the Homeless Action Partnership is studying ways to further address the crisis of homelessness.

Santa Cruz Street County Shelter Capacity 2017-2019



"This represents an important step forward, from a triage system that offered temporary solutions and toward a system of shelter and services capable of addressing our homelessness crisis by offering meaningful solutions for homeless individuals and our community," said Rayne Perez, Santa Cruz County's Homeless Services Coordinator.

## Meet Your Supervisor

### [John Leopold](#)

District 1 includes Live Oak, Summit Road Soquel and parts of Capitola and Santa Cruz.



### [Zach Friend](#)

District 2 includes Aptos, Corralitos, part of Capitola and the South County coast.



### [Ryan Coonerty](#)

District 3 includes much of Santa Cruz and the North Coast.



### [Greg Caput](#)

District 4 includes most of Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley.



### [Bruce McPherson](#)

District 5 includes the San Lorenzo Valley, Scotts Valley and parts of Santa Cruz.



*Click on each supervisor to learn more about them and their responsibilities, including how to reach them during constituent office hours.*

# Board approves County's first enhanced density project

On Dec. 10th, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a 33-unit mixed-use development that meets the County's strategic objectives of increasing access to housing and jobs while supporting development that reduces environmental impacts.

Located along Portola Drive between 40th and 38th avenues, the two- and three-story project is the first approved under the County's new enhanced density bonus law, and includes four affordable rental units available to very low-income households. Enhancing density reduces urban sprawl, helps protect water resources, enhances the walkability of the neighborhood and encourages use of bicycles and public transit.



*Development proposal at 40th Avenue and Portola Drive.*

The project also extends the pedestrian-friendly development along 41st avenue onto Portola Drive. Ground-floor commercial and restaurant tenant spaces have been designed to be open and inviting, with high ceilings and extensive storefront windows that will open directly onto an extended sidewalk with landscaping and tree planting. All parking will be located behind and under the building where it will be screened from public view.

The project included public input and is consistent with the Pleasure Point Commercial Corridor planning process. Several measures to protect the surrounding neighborhood have been included in the project design, including tree plantings along the site perimeter and concrete sound walls.

In December 2018, the Board of Supervisors approved an enhanced density bonus

ordinance in accordance with state law allowing developments to increase residential density up to 50 percent for qualified mixed-income projects, and up to 75 percent for housing projects that are 100 percent affordable.

Density bonuses are widely recognized as a way to increase housing access without public subsidies, including housing affordable to low- and very low-income residents.

## Quick Guide

Citizens rely on county government for many needed services. Use this handy guide to find who to call, or come find us on the web at: [www.santacruzcounty.us](http://www.santacruzcounty.us).

**Main Number**  
(831) 454-2000

**Board of Supervisors**  
(831) 454-2200

**Agricultural Commissioner**  
(831) 763-8080

**Animal Services**  
(831) 454-7303

**Assessor's Office**  
(831) 454-2002

**Benefits**  
(888) 421-8080

**County Clerk/Elections**  
(831) 454-2060

**Economic Development**  
(831) 454-2728

**Environmental Health**  
(831) 454-2022

**Health Services Agency**  
(831) 454-4800

**Parks and Recreation**  
(831) 454-7900

**Planning Department**  
(831) 454-2580

**Public Works**  
(831) 454-2160

**Recycling Information**  
(831) 454-2333

**Sheriff/Coroner**  
(831) 471-1121  
(call 911 if emergency)

**Superior Court**  
(831) 763-8060

**Tax Collections**  
(831) 454-2510