



COUNTY CURRENTS

Santa Cruz County

www.santacruzcounty.us

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Rail Trail Funded to Aptos

Santa Cruz County received more than \$103 million to build nearly seven miles of the **Coastal Rail Trail** through the heart of Santa Cruz County.

The announcement means the trail, parts of which have already been built, is fully funded between **Davenport and State Park Drive** in Aptos. Once completed, the trail will run between the San Mateo and Monterey county lines, and will pass within a mile of 44 schools and 92 parks.

Santa Cruz County's local **Measure D** (2016) sales tax provided a match to leverage the State Active Transportation Program funding. Two newly funded segments are in the unincorporated area of the County – Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10&11 project is being delivered by the County of Santa Cruz and received \$67.6 million – **the largest state Active Transportation Planning grant ever awarded** – and provides a bicycle and pedestrian trail from 17th Avenue in Live Oak to State Park Drive in the Seacliff neighborhood. Final design expected to begin in 2024, with construction to follow.

In December, the **Board of Supervisors** honored **Watsonville Community Hospital** with a proclamation commemorating local efforts to save the hospital from bankruptcy and return it to public ownership.



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REVIEW OF POLICING POLICIES HONORED

The Santa Cruz County Criminal Justice Council (CJC) is pleased to announce it has received a 2022 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) in recognition of a regional effort examining cross-jurisdictional policing practices throughout the county.

Each year, NACo recognizes innovation in county government programs throughout the U.S. The award recognized a groundbreaking open and transparent review of local policing practices, led by the CJC, examining critical issues such as use of force, technology, implicit bias training, addressing behavioral health issues and more. The independent review was conducted by Applied Survey Research and examined policing practices in five local jurisdictions.

"These are national issues that inform ongoing debates about interactions between public safety personnel and the communities they serve," Supervisor Zach Friend said. "Here in Santa Cruz County, we approached these

topics with a willingness to look in the mirror and see where we are succeeding and where we might need improvement, and we are grateful NACo recognized this unique approach."

"This award is a testament to our community's leadership and commitment to working collaboratively with local government and law enforcement to address community concerns to increase trust, accountability, and transparency," Santa Cruz City Councilmember Justin Cummings said.

The CJC is comprised of local elected officials, the head of each local police agency, the District Attorney and Chief Probation Officer, the Public Defender, the County Superintendent of Schools, the President of Cabrillo College, the Superior Court, the County Behavioral Health Director and local non-profit leaders. A 2022 CJC report will examine frontline law enforcement and behavioral health services including policies, procedures, training and calls. For more, visit <https://santacruzsjc.org>.

COUNTY CLIMATE PLAN RELEASED

The County of Santa Cruz has released the [2022 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan](#) ("CAAP"), which includes a sector-based inventory of local greenhouse gas emissions and recommends goals and strategies to help decarbonize Santa Cruz County and meet State-mandated greenhouse gas reduction targets.

The CAAP integrates prior County climate adaptation efforts and is designed to synthesize with efforts in other jurisdictions, including supporting a regional approach to climate adaptation planning. The CAAP includes seven broad goal areas and 29 specific strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, divided into the areas of energy, transportation, water, waste, the natural environment, wildfire prevention and mitigation, and government operations.

The CAAP builds on the County's prior leadership in protecting the environment, from becoming one of the first communities in the U.S. to establish curbside recycling to more recent efforts such as leading the formation of Central Coast Community Energy (CCCE), coordinating sustainable groundwater management among local water purveyors, limiting the introduction of plastics into the environment by banning single-use plastics and Styrofoam, and more.

In keeping with other County planning efforts, the CAAP focuses on equity and includes Equity Guardrails to help consider how climate change and mitigation measures may disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged members of the community, including creating undue burdens on populations that do not have the means to bear them.

Until we meet again ...



Congratulations to outgoing supervisors Greg Caput and Ryan Coonerty! Twenty years of combined service on the Board of Supervisors have served the community well.

Bivalent boosters available for children 5 and up

Following recent approval by the FDA and CDC, the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup also recommends a bivalent booster be given 2 months after the primary series or the last booster dose, or 3 months after COVID-19 infection, for children ages 5 years and up. The Pfizer bivalent vaccine is authorized for use as a single booster dose in individuals 5 years of age and older and the Moderna bivalent booster is authorized for use as a single booster dose in individuals 6 years of age and older. The bivalent vaccines provide superior, up to date, protection against the original strain of SARS-CoV-2 and the current circulating omicron variants BA.4 and BA.5.

Those wanting their children to receive the updated COVID-19 booster vaccine should contact their healthcare provider. For a list of healthcare providers giving COVID-19 vaccine and walk-in clinics in Santa Cruz County visit www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirusvaccine.

Staying up to date on vaccination with the recommended boosters remains the best way to prevent hospitalization and death from COVID-19, including for young children.

For local information go to www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus or call (831) 454-4242 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.



Crop report shows healthy growth in local production

The 2021 Santa Cruz County Crop Report shows a 3.4 percent increase in overall crop production values over the previous year. As in past years, strawberries remain the top crop in Santa Cruz County, with an estimated value of \$211,062,000 – nearly one-third of the overall estimated crop value of \$657,370,000.

All berries, including strawberries, raspberries and blackberries, represent 60 percent of the total gross productions value for Santa Cruz County. Nursery stock, including cut flowers and cut greens, bounced back from the COVID-19 pandemic with an overall increase of 14 percent in gross value, to \$136,730,000.

Excellent conditions also made 2021 a banner year for wine grapes, with high yields leading to a gross value increase of 65 percent, to \$7,926,000.

This report shows signs that the local agricultural industry began to return

to normal in 2021. Vegetable production was also up, with an overall value of \$95,848,000, a 7.1 percent increase from 2020.

Organic farming saw declines in 2021 in total acreage and in value, with an estimated gross value of \$110,310,000 representing an 18.7 percent decline from the previous year. Organic acreage and value can change from year to year and some of this change can be attributed to crop rotations and types of commodities grown.

The mission of the Santa Cruz County Department of Agriculture is to serve the public's interest by ensuring equity in the marketplace, promoting and protecting agriculture, assuring environmental quality, and protecting the health, safety and welfare of Santa Cruz County's residents.

The full report is available in English and Spanish at www.agdept.com.

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County



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Board enacts more affordability protections for mobile homes

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors voted to bolster affordability protections for residents of mobile home parks.

Mobile homes are a critical component of Santa Cruz County's housing stock, particularly for lower-income residents, the elderly and others on fixed incomes. General and social rent adjustments are governed by Sec. 13.31 of Santa Cruz County Code. New rules adopted this week help residents be enacting additional limits for any rent increases and add protections for residents by providing for a neutral third-party to help encourage settlement of any disputes over special rent increases.

The item was brought forward by

Supervisors Zach Friend and Manu Koenig.

"Access to affordable housing impacts everyone in our community, including families, seniors and vulnerable populations," Friend said. "By enacting these reasonable changes, we can protect both residents and mobile home park operators from costly disputes while keeping the cost of housing from spiraling out of control."

Specifically, the ordinance ties future rent increases to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rather than allowing annual 10 percent increases as currently allowed under County Code. Historically, the CPI has been well under 10 percent.

While existing code does allow special rent increases above those allowed by statute under certain conditions, the new rules implement several steps to help avoid a costly court dispute, including an option for both sides to accept the analysis of a third-party expert and the use of a hearing officer to help facilitate settlement.

The independent third-party expert must be someone with no financial interest in the matter and the cost of the expert is split evenly between the park owner and the space fee fund, an annual rate set by the Board and paid by mobile home owners for costs associated with the Rent Adjustment Ordinance.

COUNTY NABS TWO STATEWIDE AWARDS

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce it has been awarded two Challenge Awards by the California State Association of Counties, the organization's highest honor.

The County was honored for its interactive budget website and a county-wide, cross-jurisdictional effort to examine local criminal justice policies and practices. The awards were chosen from 370 entries across the State, while Santa Cruz County was one of 14 counties to be honored and one of four to receive multiple awards.

"These awards are an endorsement of the work we are doing on behalf of residents," County Administrative Officer Carlos Palacios said. "It is gratifying to see our efforts to create positive change for local residents recognized on a statewide level."

One award was for a first-of-its-kind policy review of local criminal justice policies led by the Criminal Justice Council (CJC). The independent review was conducted by Applied Survey Research and examined policies in five

local law enforcement agencies such as use of force, body cam footage disclosure, implicit bias and de-escalation training, use of restraints and more. The effort was led by CJC Chair and Santa Cruz County Supervisor Zach Friend and newly elected Supervisor Justin Cummings.

"When done well, law enforcement policies can build transparency and trust within the communities they serve," Supervisor Friend said. "We believe we have created a national model for looking at how use-of-force and transparency policies and hope that other jurisdictions follow our blueprint for their communities."

Another award was for the County's online, interactive budget website, allowing residents to intuitively follow county budgeting in depth and see how it connects to strategic and oper-



ational objectives. The website is available at this link.

"A budget is a statement of values, but most budget documents are difficult to follow for residents. By providing it as an interactive site within our Strategic Plan, we made our budget decisions more accessible, either on your phone or computer, and showed our community how it supports our values," County Budget Manager Marcus Pimentel said.

Board Unanimously Adopts Sustainability Update

First County general plan update in nearly three decades

In December, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved a new General Plan/Local Coastal Program, the first update in nearly 30 years.

The Sustainability Policy and Regulatory Update (“Sustainability Update”) will guide land use in the unincorporated area, which includes approximately half the County’s population. The Sustainability Update incorporates updated State laws and includes a modernization of the County Code, new Design Guidelines, and policies on housing production, transportation, agriculture and resource conservation, commercial development, community services, sustainable communities and environmental justice.

“To meet the challenges ahead of us, the County must prepare for the future,” County Administrative Officer Carlos Palacios said. “The Sustainability Update will be our guiding document as we move forward together to create a Santa Cruz County that is healthier and more inclusive for all residents, while increasing the quality of life for everyone.”

The Sustainability Update outreach included 22 public meetings and a community survey, and incorporates several prior public planning efforts. To view the Sustainability Update, read project documents including fact sheets, or watch prior outreach meetings, go to <https://www.sccoplanning.com/sustainabilityupdate>.

The purpose of the Sustainabil-



ity Update is to create a more sustainable community in keeping with the County’s Strategic Plan, including healthy, walkable neighborhoods, a vibrant economy, enhanced transportation options and a better quality of life while reducing greenhouse gas emission, protecting the environment and fostering justice and equity.

The plan incorporates “green building” features such as solar, rainwater harvesting, the use of recycled building materials and conserving energy and water. It also aims to create integrated, walkable neighborhoods through mixed-use developments and compact housing options located near activity centers, while protecting open

space and agricultural uses.

New Design Guidelines will help assure new infill developments are compatible with existing neighborhoods, while the Sustainability Update implements community-friendly rules such as requiring new trees for all residential developments.

The plan also accommodates strategic local job growth so that fewer residents are commuting out-of-county, which increases greenhouse gas emissions. A new “Workplace Flex” zoning designation will allow a range of commercial uses with flexibly-designed spaces for multiple business types while repurposing underutilized parcels and buildings along transportation corri-

dors.

It allows agricultural businesses greater flexibility, including options to promote agritourism within the county and giving farmers and ranchers more options to store equipment and conduct research.

The plan also incorporates SB 1000, which requires local general plans to incorporate environmental justice elements, including reducing pollution exposures, promoting public facilities near disadvantaged communities and assuring they have access to healthy food and recreational activity options, among other environmental justice policies.

Meet Your Supervisor

[Manu Koenig](#)

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.



[Justin Cummings](#)

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



[Felipe Hernandez](#)

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.

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.

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

STORMS BATTER COAST, COUNTY

