



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER



## PRESS RELEASE

Date: December 6, 2022

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### BOARD APPROVES SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

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 Sustainability 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



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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 corridors.

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.