Santa Cruz County Strategic Planning Initiative

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County Administrative Officer

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Assistant County Administrative Officer

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The Strategic Plan Steering Committee would also like to thank the County departments, hundreds of employees, partner municipalities and community-based organizations, and thousands of residents who contributed to the development of this plan and its success.

Cover Photo Credits: Arts Council of Santa Cruz County, Crystal Birns, Jason Hoppin, Bry Stewart, Gretchen Bronstein, Shawna Hatch, Mary Chavez, Bryan Rich
I am pleased to present the Santa Cruz County Strategic Plan for 2018-2024. Over the past year, we have been inspired by the thousands of residents and employees who have shared their vision for the County. We share this passion and dedicate ourselves through this Strategic Plan to delivering a healthy, safe and more affordable community.

The Strategic Plan, for the first time, establishes a vision, mission, values, focus areas and goals for the County of Santa Cruz. Over 3,000 people participated through online surveys, employee mixers, community meetings, focus groups, and emails to inform the Strategic Plan. The plan is a reflection of those voices, their hopes and fears, their creativity and empathy.

As we embark on implementing the Strategic Plan, I especially want to thank County staff for their service as we strive to build a culture of excellence that enriches the lives of people in our community. Through our continuous process improvement and performance measurement efforts, we aim to empower County staff and release their potential to create positive change.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the Board of Supervisors for taking the bold step to initiate this process, and the work of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee under the leadership of Assistant CAO Nicole Coburn for delivering a plan that is a reflection of the community and a guide for the next six years.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carlos J. Palacios
County Administrative Officer

June 2018
VISION, MISSION, & VALUES

**OUR VISION**
Santa Cruz County is a healthy, safe and more affordable community that is culturally diverse, economically inclusive and environmentally vibrant.

**OUR MISSION**
An open and responsive government, the County of Santa Cruz delivers quality, data-driven services that strengthen our community and enhance opportunity.

**OUR VALUES**
The County of Santa Cruz provides services and supports partnerships built on:

- Accountability
- Effectiveness
- Support
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Transparency
- Compassion
- Respect
- Trust

**FOCUS AREAS**

- Comprehensive Health & Safety
- Attainable Housing
- Reliable Transportation
- Sustainable Environment
- Dynamic Economy
- County Operational Excellence
## COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH & SAFETY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Equity</th>
<th>Community Support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote a safe and healthy community that nurtures body and mind across all ages and social conditions.</td>
<td>Provide access to food and basic support through integrated health care and social services.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Justice</th>
<th>Behavioral Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase public safety through practices, partnerships and transformative opportunities that respect victims and reduce recidivism.</td>
<td>Support residents through reduced stigma and increased access to integrated mental health, substance use disorder and health care services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ATTAINABLE HOUSING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affordable Housing</th>
<th>Community Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner to develop affordable housing, lower barriers to housing solutions, and access new funding sources.</td>
<td>Sustain and rejuvenate communities by integrating places to live, work and play.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Inventory</th>
<th>Homelessness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase and diversify housing options through smart growth programs, adaptive reuse and innovation.</td>
<td>Expand services to reduce homelessness and increase housing stability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Mobility</th>
<th>Community Mobility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve road infrastructure and intra-county connectivity, and enhance commuting solutions.</td>
<td>Grow alternative transportation networks, and lower barriers to mobility.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Roads</th>
<th>Public Transit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upgrade pavement conditions and road safety for everyone.</td>
<td>Work to enhance functionality and promote use of public transit.</td>
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</table>

## SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdoor Experience</th>
<th>Natural Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure access to and enhance experience in parks, open spaces, water areas and outdoor activities.</td>
<td>Protect and restore natural resources, including water, air, forests, coastline and agricultural lands.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Conservation</th>
<th>Climate Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support and strengthen efforts for clean air and water, conservation, renewable energy, recycling and reuse.</td>
<td>Increase resilience to climate change impacts, including sea-level rise and changing weather patterns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## GOALS

### DYNAMIC ECONOMY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Workforce</th>
<th>Community Vitality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create opportunities to develop a quality workforce and increase family-wage jobs in support of the regional economy.</td>
<td>Stimulate vibrant and inclusive economies offering robust shopping, dining and gathering spaces.</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Businesses</th>
<th>Educational Opportunity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen and retain small businesses and key sectors through innovation, flexibility and technology.</td>
<td>Support partnerships that promote early learning, higher education, and vocational and lifelong studies.</td>
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</table>

### COUNTY OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Experience</th>
<th>County Workforce</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide our customers with equitable access to efficient, effective and culturally responsive services.</td>
<td>Attract, grow and retain a diverse, engaged and high-performing County workforce that reflects our community.</td>
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<tr>
<th>County Infrastructure</th>
<th>Continuous Improvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximize and responsibly maintain County assets in support of community goals.</td>
<td>Embrace innovation and continuous improvement to optimize County operations and maintain fiscal stability.</td>
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Established in 1850, the County of Santa Cruz is one of California’s original 27 counties. The County provides a broad spectrum of services, paid for with a combination of local taxes, user fees, and State and federal funding. The County is governed with local representation from five districts on the Board of Supervisors. Over 2,400 employees work at offices throughout the region, providing services that impact all 276,603 community members.

**BUILDING THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

- **July 2017**: County Administrative Officer establishes Strategic Plan
  - Steering Committee

- **Aug**: Department Head Retreat
  - Board of Supervisors Study Session

- **Sep**: 1st Community Survey
  - 2,200+ participants

- **Oct**: Employee Mixers
  - 200+ participants

- **Nov**: Community Forums
  - 200+ participants

- **Dec**: Steering Committee uses input to draft vision, mission, values and focus areas
  - 1st Community Survey
  - 2,200+ participants

- **Jan**: Steering Committee uses input to draft goals

- **Feb**: Steering Committee uses input to draft goals

- **Mar**: Employee Focus Groups
  - 30 participants

- **Apr**: 2nd Community Survey
  - 800+ participants

- **May**: Board of Supervisors adopts Strategic Plan

- **June 2018**: Board of Supervisors adopts Strategic Plan
In developing the Strategic Plan, the County engaged the voices of thousands of community members, partners and staff to develop the plan elements. Below are some of the key findings that informed the work of the Steering Committee.

Top 5 Vision Words

- Safe: 1000
- Affordable: 750
- Sustainable: 500
- Accountable: 250
- Environment: 500

Top 5 Values

- Integrity: 1000
- Transparent: 750
- Respect: 500
- Safety: 250
- Collaborate: 500

Top Countywide Trends

- Housing
- Transportation
- Safety & Health
- Economy
- Environment

Top Trends North and South County

- Housing: North County
- Transportation: South County
- Safety & Health: North County
- Economy: South County
- Environment: North County

North County

- Housing: 60%
- Transportation: 45%
- Safety & Health: 15%
- Economy: 5%
- Environment: 0%

South County

- Housing: 45%
- Transportation: 30%
- Safety & Health: 15%
- Economy: 10%
- Environment: 5%
The Strategic Plan will be implemented across all County departments through a 2-Year Operational Plan and Budget, and supported through targeted efforts to develop the County workforce and improve service to County residents. The first Operational Plan will cover years 2019-2021, and include Objectives and Tactics.

- **Objectives** will provide specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely (SMART) actions that work towards our Goals.
- **Tactics** represent activities and steps necessary to achieve each Objective.

Targeted efforts to achieve the County’s vision are divided into three areas:

The **County Leadership Academy** is an initiative to train the workforce and encourage participation in implementing all the elements of the Strategic Plan, including Performance Measurement and Continuous Process Improvement. The program will help develop a common language, culture and approach across departments.
Key program elements include:

- Courses delivered by the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Institute for Excellence in County Government.
- Train the Trainer program to create a learning organization.

**Performance Measurement** is an effort to quantify impact, support data-driven decision making, and inform the budget and policy-making process. In the second Operational Plan (2021-23), the County will incorporate Performance Measurement to enable the public to assess the Strategic Plan’s effectiveness and the County to evaluate and manage department performance.

**Continuous Process Improvement (CPI)** focuses on involving the County workforce in enhancing the delivery of County services by improving systems, processes, and customer service. CPI is a process that will empower staff to develop actions and tactics that support County Objectives and Goals.
Our Vision

Santa Cruz County is a healthy, safe and more affordable community that is culturally diverse, economically inclusive and environmentally vibrant.