



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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NEWS RELEASE



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COUNTY BOARD TO CONSIDER SIGNIFICANT SHELTER FUNDING EXPANSION

The County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors on Tuesday will consider approving in concept a considerable expansion of funding to support a year-round service-enriched shelter bed system to help reduce homelessness in the community.

With the approval of Measure K by Santa Cruz County voters, the Board will consider a model that uses additional County general fund dollars to sustain a planned expansion of the County's growing shelter network. This investment would provide funding to help sustain the County and partners' ongoing efforts to establish three low-barrier, service-enriched shelters countywide.

Under the plan to be considered by the Board on Tuesday and in keeping with Board commitments on the use of Measure K funds, the County would invest \$1 million annually in Measure K revenues toward an expanded shelter system. The Board is also being asked to direct staff to return with options for using a portion of funding available through the Collective of Results and Evidence-based (CORE) Investments funding process to invest in shelter beds and help reduce the impacts of homelessness on individuals and the community. Local investments are needed to help sustain programs started with one-time, unstable state funding sources.

The Board will also consider an update to the Housing for Health Partnership's Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Strategic Framework. While the most recent Santa Cruz County Point-In-Time Count showed a 22 percent reduction in homelessness in the community under the prior Strategic Framework, important goals for temporary shelter remain unmet. The new proposed Strategic Framework includes broad action steps based on community input during meetings held in February 2024, including increasing the availability of low-barrier, service-enriched, shelter.

Forthcoming new shelter projects include a 34-unit bridge housing site in Live Oak, a 34-bed South County facility in partnership with the city of Watsonville and County of Monterey, and plans for a 100-bed facility at the Coral Street campus in partnership with the city of Santa Cruz, Housing Matters and Santa Cruz County Health Services. Once fully funded, these efforts would expand local shelter capacity by more than 150 beds.