



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Jason Hoppin
831-454-3401

COUNTY RELEASES FIRST TWO-YEAR PROPOSED BUDGET *Two-Year Operational Plan also released, includes 172 objectives*

Santa Cruz County is pleased to release its \$1.6 billion 2019-21 Proposed Budget, which maintains fiscal responsibility while investing in critical public services.

The Proposed Budget is the first two-year budget in County history, and establishes a longer financial horizon in order to better identify and plan for challenges ahead, including slowing revenue growth and increasing demands on public services. The Proposed Budget is accompanied by the release of the County's first-ever two-year Operational Plan, which activates the County's strategic plan, Vision Santa Cruz County.

"While there are challenges ahead, Measure G and the voters of Santa Cruz County have placed the County on sound financial footing as we work together to bring residents quality, cost-effective services that address our community's most critical needs," County Administrative Officer Carlos J. Palacios said. "I would like to thank County staff for leading the way on improving how the County does business, resulting in our first two-year Operational Plan and other key initiatives that will position us well for the future."

Overall spending will decrease by 12 percent, primarily due to the completion of large capital projects, while general fund spending is projected to increase by 5 percent. County fiscal reserves are maintained at 10 percent of revenues.

Measure G, approved by two-thirds of County voters in the 2018 general election, provides funding for several key projects, including ongoing construction at LEO's Haven at Chanticleer Park and the Focused Intervention Team pilot program. The Proposed Budget also includes several measures to address public safety, including improved security and mental health services at County detention facilities, adding DNA analysis to the County's Forensic Services Laboratory, a new Probation Service Center and a new Aptos Public Safety Center.



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The Proposed Budget also includes funding for improved maintenance and management of County facilities, and a study of possible reinvigoration of County campuses to meet community needs, including affordable housing.

The Proposed Budget and Operational Plan, as well as an online budget dashboard, can be found at santacruzcounty.us/Government/BudgetandFinancialReports.aspx. (The interactive budget dashboard may be accessed directly at www.sccbudget.com.)

Guided by six cross-departmental committees organized around each of Vision Santa Cruz County's focus areas, the 2019-21 Operational Plan includes 172 objectives that are focused, attainable and work collectively to provide equitable improvements for the lives of all Santa Cruz County residents.

Among the objectives are plans to eliminate medical clinic wait times, establish progress on the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail, study neighborhood courts, review the County's model of public defender services, make traffic improvements and resurface 25 miles of local roads, create a new recreation camp for County youth, expand the County's Thrive by Three program, expand voter access, provide a sustainability update to the General Plan, and expand housing opportunities including for farm workers.

The Proposed Budget also includes information on how local tax dollars are allocated, as well as information on the County's expansive efforts at strategic and operational planning, including the implementation of continuous process improvement and performance measurement.