



# 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

Date: November 19, 2021

Contact: Jason Hoppin

831-454-3401

### CJC REPORT FIRST TO LOOK AT REGIONAL POLICING PRACTICES

The Santa Cruz County Criminal Justice Council has released what is likely the first-ever open and transparent regional review of policing practices in the United States, finding substantial alignment on critical policing issues such as use of force, technology, and other issues that guide officer decision-making and build community trust.

The independent review was conducted by Applied Survey Research and examined policies in five local law enforcement agencies – the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, Santa Cruz Police Department, Watsonville Police Department, Scotts Valley Police Department and Capitola Police Department. The effort was led by CJC Chair and Santa Cruz County Supervisor Zach Friend and Santa Cruz City Councilmember Justin Cummings.

"There is a national imperative to be having these conversations and from them doing something actionable. Good law enforcement policies build transparency and trust within the communities the agencies serve. Taking this regional look – the first region in the nation to do so – can serve as a model for others to build on," Friend said.

"I want to thank Supervisor Zach Friend for chairing this committee and commend the local law enforcement chiefs for their participation in this report. This report demonstrates that the four police departments and the Sheriff's Office all align on critical issues around policing. Consistent law enforcement policy and practices throughout the County will serve our community members well and assure that all people are treated fairly and equally," Sheriff Jim Hart said.

"I'm proud of the SCPD leadership team for our early and ongoing commitment in the implementation of changes that advance public safety policy," said interim Santa Cruz Chief of Police Bernie Escalante. "The policy alignment across law enforcement agencies countywide is imperative to fundamental reform which strengthens accountability, preserves public trust, and builds overall community's faith in policing."



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

All agencies release body camera footage to the public and undergo implicit bias training. Currently, no department uses predictive policing or facial recognition technologies. All agencies currently require officers deploy de-escalation techniques prior to use of force, ban controversial restraints such as choke-holds, and no agency uses no-knock warrants.

Overall, all agencies were found to have updated policies regarding use of force, technological deployment and release of information to the public. Furthermore, all either use or favor the use of behavioral health professionals to address individuals in a behavioral health crisis.

The report also found substantial alignment among local law enforcement agencies on critical issues. Moreover, two local jurisdictions –Santa Cruz County and the City of Santa Cruz – have laws prohibiting the public from making discriminatory reports based on a protected status, including race, color, ancestry, ethnicity, national origin, place of birth, sex, age, religion, creed, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, weight or height.

The CJC includes 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.

Every jurisdiction is expected to take up the report further discussion. For more on the Criminal Justice Council, go to <https://santacruzjc.org>.