



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

BOARD APPROVES PURCHASE OF NEW COUNTY FACILITY

The county of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce a major step forward in improving the delivery of critical services for South County residents.

On Tuesday, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors approved a purchase agreement to proceed with the acquisition of 500 Westridge Drive in Watsonville. At 121,000 square feet, the Westridge building is large enough to foster the consolidation of existing South County services into one location, as well as support the addition of new services necessary to support the well-being of South County residents.

“Once fully operational, this new facility will serve as a one-stop center for South County residents accessing County services,” Supervisor Greg Caput said. “Not only will we be able to make existing services more accessible, but we will also be able to bring additional critical services to residents of the Fourth District.”

Current County services in the Watsonville area are spread across five buildings. The County’s Long-Range Facilities Plan calls for the consolidation and co-location of services to improve customer experience and provide a more efficient service delivery model. The purchase will also reduce the County’s annual long-term lease payments, which are currently \$2.8 million.

“This purchase meets the county’s Strategic Plan objectives by making it easier for residents to access essential services, while assuring that those services are equitably distributed between North and South County,” County Administrative Office Carlos Palacios said. “It also assures we are providing our own workforce with an improved and updated work environment, while saving taxpayer dollars in the long run.”

Repurposing of the 500 Westridge building will involve an extensive transition period, with existing County leases expected to be maintained through 2023. Medical and behavioral health services are expected to remain at their current location inside the Freedom Boulevard campus.