



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER



## PRESS RELEASE

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### BOARD APPROVES 2022-23 PROPOSED BUDGET

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved a \$1.033 billion 2022-23 Proposed Budget, including a \$680.7 million general fund. The figure represents a \$5 million spending decrease from the prior year.

The 2022-23 Proposed Budget includes funding for a Unified Permit Center making it easier for residents to get building and other permits, funding to improve broadband access for disadvantaged families and to support women- and minority-owned childcare businesses, and a new apprenticeship program for those interested in public service. It also funds improvements at the new South County Service Center, a redesign of the Freedom Campus and parks improvements, among other priorities.

The budget also includes spending for public safety, including a 7 percent increase for the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, funds to reduce case backlogs in the District Attorney's Office and full implementation of a new Public Defender's Office.

"Despite the challenges of the last few years and the economic headwinds we now face, we are proud of the work we have done on behalf of the community to deliver high-quality, cost-effective services for our residents," County Administrative Officer Carlos Palacios said.

The County's many accomplishments over the past year include efforts to rescue Watsonville Community Hospital, setting a Summer 2023 target for opening the South County Service Center on Westridge Drive in Watsonville, the start of construction of a 100 percent affordable housing development in Live Oak, securing tens of millions in grants including multiple Project Homekey awards to address homelessness, and obtaining full funding for the Pajaro Valley Flood Risk Management Project.

Santa Cruz County collects just 13 cents out of every local property tax dollar, with the rest designated for other state and local services. If the County collected property taxes at the same rate as the state average, the County would see an additional \$128 million in general fund revenue annually. Furthermore, because the unincorporated area matches Capitola for the lowest sales tax rate in the County and lower sales volume overall, the County also takes in less per capita in sales taxes than any other local jurisdiction.

For residents interested in an online, interactive version of the 2022-23 Proposed Budget that include priorities and spending details, visit <https://www.santacruzcounty.us/VisionSantaCruz/Budget.aspx>.

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