



# Annual Report:

## Fiscal Year 22-23





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# MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE DIRECTOR

As the Director of the County of Santa Cruz's Department of Community Development & Infrastructure (CDI), it is with great pleasure that I present our inaugural annual report. As we embark on a new chapter, this annual report marks a significant milestone in our journey towards greater transparency, accountability, and community engagement.

The year 2023 was undoubtedly challenging for the Santa Cruz County community and our department after a series of atmospheric river storms damaged various segments of road infrastructure and flooded homes throughout the region. These storms not only tested our department's resiliency but strengthened our commitment to act promptly in the face of an emergency. Following the storms, our road maintenance team quickly mobilized to commence repairs on segments of heavily impacted roads. These actions were evidence of our ongoing and continuous commitment to safeguard our community.

In our commitment to serving the community, we will persist in identifying financial opportunities to repair and maintain 600 miles of county-maintained roads, improve our level of efficiency for planning and permitting, and continue to grow our department with staff that serve Santa Cruz County residents.

Moreover, we will always strategize and plan for the building of affordable housing units, expand our permitting process under the new Unified Permit Center, and facilitate bilingual outreach efforts with the goal of informing community members and giving them agency to share their feedback on long-term projects that directly impact them.

The release of this annual report will allow us to provide a comprehensive overview of our department's activities, achievements, and future plans. This report reflects our commitment to transparency and open communication with the community we serve.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the community, elected officials, and stakeholders to create a sustainable and thriving environment for all. Here's to the continued collaboration and success of our department as we work together to build a vibrant and resilient community!

Thank you for your ongoing support.



**Matt Machado**

Deputy County Administrative Officer

Director, County of Santa Cruz County, Department of Community Development & Infrastructure





# EXECUTIVE STAFF



**Matt Machado**

Deputy County  
Administrative Officer,  
Director of CDI



**Blanca Martinez**

Executive Secretary



**Steve Wiesner**

Assistant Director of  
Transportation



**Kent Edler**

Assistant Director of  
Special Services



**Damon Adlao**

Director of Capital  
Projects



**Stephanie Hansen**

Assistant Director of  
Policy, Housing & Code  
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**Jocelyn Drake**

Assistant Director of  
Permit Center



**Kim Moore**

Assistant Director of  
Administration Services



**Carrie Barnett**

Senior Personnel  
Analyst



**Tiffany Martinez**

Departmental  
Communications  
Officer



# REFLECTING ON THE 2022/2023 ATMOSPHERIC RIVER STORMS

The atmospheric river storms that swept through Santa Cruz County in December 2022 and again in March 2023 had a profound impact on our local community and presented significant challenges for the Department of Community Development & Infrastructure (CDI). The consecutive impacts of these intense weather events resulted in extensive damage to the region's infrastructure, with roads bearing the brunt of the atmospheric onslaught. The torrential rainfall and subsequent flooding caused widespread road damage, including road washouts. The most notable of which was on Main Street in Soquel when the water swelled up over the road as a result of logs and debris, blocking the culvert on Bates Creek.

CDI played a crucial role in responding to the crisis, facing the monumental task of repairing and restoring the damaged roads. The storms strained the department's resources as our road crew worked tirelessly to assess the extent of the damage and prioritize repairs. The magnitude of the destruction posed unprecedented challenges, requiring efficient responses to ensure the safety and well-being of the community. As roadways became impassable and transportation networks were compromised, CDI faced the daunting task of not only fixing the immediate issues but also the increase to the backlog of roadwork

dating back to the 2016/2017 storms. This further strained the department's overall budget.

Beyond the direct impact on roads, the storms also inflicted widespread damage on other critical infrastructure. Bridges and drainage systems were compromised, people experienced flooding in their homes, and rebuilding efforts have increased the number of permit applications. The community, too, felt the repercussions, with disruptions to essential services and a heightened awareness of the vulnerability of the region to extreme weather events. The storms of 2022 and 2023 served as a reminder of the importance of proactive infrastructure planning and investment to mitigate the impacts of climate-related challenges in Santa Cruz County.

Months following the storm, the Aptos Chamber of Commerce honored CDI with a Community Hero award for the department's response to the atmospheric river storms, acknowledging our effort and commitment to restoring normalcy in the face of unprecedented challenges. This recognition not only highlighted the dedication of our team, but also underscored the collaborative spirit of the community.



# ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

## Public Works Division

The Division of Public Works' Roads and Transportation is a pivotal component to our County's infrastructure. It assumes a multifaceted role, encompassing the planning, design, engineering, maintenance, and repair of the County's extensive 600-mile roadway system. This jurisdiction extends beyond road management, embracing specialized responsibilities such as overseeing special districts, signalization, and bikeway projects.

This area is divided into four organizational units:



### Traffic, Surveyor and Development Review

The Traffic, Surveyor and Development Review unit includes checking and recording parcel maps, subdivision maps, records of survey, and County surveys. Responsibilities also encompass maintaining a public index of survey filings, determining County-owned property boundaries, authorizing retracement surveys, and collaborating with agencies in land development, providing expertise for public benefit.



### Road Design Engineering

The Road Design Engineering unit oversees design aspects for County transportation capital projects, storm damage road repairs, and bridge rehabilitation. A team of engineers and technicians develops construction plans and specifications, contributes to the annual Capital Improvement Program, and manages state and federal grants for roadway rehabilitation and reconstruction initiatives.



### Road Operations Engineering and Encroachments

The Road Operations Engineering unit focuses on maintaining the County road system, managing pavement projects, emergency repairs, and public inquiries. The Encroachments group issues permits for activities within the County road right of way, conducting plan reviews, inspections, and addressing unpermitted encroachments. Their duties also include permits for special uses like events or transportation.



### Road and Drainage Maintenance

The Road and Drainage Maintenance unit oversees the upkeep of all County roads, spanning 600 miles, equipment, and material yards. Responsibilities encompass pavement maintenance, bridge repair, maintenance, cribbing, concrete work, bike lane upkeep, median landscaping, tree trimming, and specific storm drain activities.

This organizational structure underscores the division's commitment to precision and efficiency, ensuring that every facet of Santa Cruz County's transportation system is addressed and managed.



## WINTER STORM DAMAGE

Our Roads and Transportation team was actively involved in a range of projects dedicated to road maintenance, storm response and recovery efforts triggered by atmospheric river storms, and upgrades to enhance transportation safety and efficiency.

In early 2023, Santa Cruz County faced unprecedented challenges as a series of intense atmospheric river storms hit the region, causing widespread flooding, landslides, and infrastructure disruptions. Over a span of nearly three months, the County experienced an extraordinary deluge of precipitation, surpassing historical records and leading to significant damage. Low-lying coastal areas were particularly vulnerable, with surging tides compounding the impact of swollen rivers, resulting in dramatic coastal damage, including the pier at Seacliff State Beach. The steep terrain of the Santa Cruz Mountains added to the crisis, contributing to the landslides and road blockages. This created substantial challenges for emergency response and repair crews.

Despite the immense damage, the road crew exhibited commendable dedication, swiftly mobilizing to address the impact on the County’s road infrastructure. They worked tirelessly to clear debris, fallen trees, and landslides, ensuring the safety of residents and emergency personnel. Public Works Engineering Assessment teams documented the extensive damage, estimating repair costs close to \$90 million. The collaborative efforts of transportation staff, local engineers, and contractors, supported by federal disaster declarations, have already resulted in repairs on many high-priority sites, although the majority will require several years for restoration. We salute the heroes of the Transportation, Roads, and Drainage Section for their unwavering commitment to protecting the health and safety of the affected communities during these challenging times.



Out of \$140 Million  
to recovery

120 repairs			220 damaged sites

ROAD AND DRAINAGE CREW RESPONSE METRICS FOR JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2023 STORMS:	
Service requests	2,497
County crew regular hours worked for storm response or clean up	18,217
County crew over-time hours worked for storm response or clean up	5,040
Approximate road closures	298
Cubic yards of slide and tree debris cleared off roads and drainage channels	99,913
Approximate number of sandbags delivered to the community	45,000
Tons of sand used in sandbags	900
Potholes patched	4,060
Approximate clean-up costs	\$10,376,854







*STATISTICS FOR ROAD AND TRANSPORTATION CREW 2023*

PROGRAM	NORTH	MID	SOUTH	TOTAL
Ditch Cleaning (miles)	110.52	64.77	35.74	211.03
Mowing (miles)	217.32	132.7	96.78	446.8
Paving (tons)	1689.6	2280.7	2419.33	6,389.63
Striping (miles)				102.52
Prismatic Markers (miles)				0
Potholes	Spc. Crew		Drainage	10,672
Sweeping (miles)	920.82		999.66	1,920.48
Guardrail (miles)				388
Culvert (ft)				1,531
Storm Debris Removal (yards)	36,112.11	7,383.15	1,840.5	45,335.76
Illegal Dump (cubic ft)				190,345.30
Curb Painting (ft)				1,690
CCTV (ft)				2,158.85

## Glenwood Drive Sinkhole December 2022/January 2023

As a result of storm damage in December 2022/January 2023, a sinkhole appeared on Glenwood Drive at mile post 2.91. The 300-foot culvert conveying Bean Creek experienced a failure, requiring immediate attention.

The damaged section, an 8 ft x 8 ft concrete arch under the road, was excavated and replaced with an 8 ft x 8 ft reinforced concrete box culvert. Additional repairs addressed cracking in the upstream portion, ensuring overall stability. The road, drainage, guardrails, and erosion control were meticulously restored. This successful rehabilitation demonstrates our commitment to resilient infrastructure and swift recovery in the face of unforeseen challenges.

**Project cost: ~ \$2.6 million**

## Main Street in Soquel March 2023

In the aftermath of winter storms that caused the Main Street road washout, trapping 450 residents dependent on this route for neighborhood access, on-site crews swiftly responded.

Within 24 hours, crews constructed temporary access through the road. Subsequently, efforts shifted to repairing the road and reconstructing the collapsed culvert beneath it, which gave way after a surge of water swept through and over Main Street.

**Project cost: \$3 million**



Scan to view news report

## Soquel Drive Buffered Bike Lane and Traffic Mitigation Project July 2023

The Division of Public Works kicked off its biggest project in multimodal transportation in Santa Cruz County — the Soquel Drive Buffered Bike Lane and Traffic Mitigation Project. Spanning 5.6 miles from La Fonda Avenue to State Park Drive, this project aims to address traffic challenges on Soquel Drive by creating a more walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly corridor.

Project improvements include:

- 5+ miles of pavement resurfacing
- 0.5 miles of sidewalk gaps replaced with continuous new sidewalks
- 10+ miles of continuous protected or buffered bike lanes
- 10 midblock crossing beacons
- 17 improved driveway and side street connections
- 22 improved intersections with adaptive traffic signals and transit signal priority
- 96 crosswalk upgrades
- 100 updates to ADA accessible ramps

With funding from various sources, including the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, the initiative is a collaborative effort led by the Division of Public Works.

**Project cost: \$25.9 million**



Scan to view project website





## Spring Valley Road Raise October 2023

Road maintenance recently completed a vital road raise project on Spring Valley Road in South County. This project specifically addressed the section between Water Tank Road and San Andreas Road. This road has a history of frequent flooding during rain events, trapping vehicles and residents as there's no secondary exit. The flooding issue is rooted in an unmaintained drainage channel parallel to the road that, due to environmental restrictions, can't be dredged. The lack of channel maintenance has led to sediment buildup progressively worsening flooding.

In response, a collaborative effort between the Special Projects Crew and South County Crew successfully raised an 800 foot stretch of the road by varying heights, mitigating the flooding problem. Completed in eight days in October, the project alleviated the longstanding flooding issue and provided relief to the community.

**Project cost: \$220,000**

## Local Road Safety Plan Ongoing

To improve safety on County-maintained roads, our Public Works Division's Roads and Transportation crew embarked on a Local Road Safety Plan (LSRP). The LSRP, provides a framework for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing roadway safety improvements on local County-maintained roads. This plan will enhance traffic safety for all modes of transportation for all ages, modes of transportation and abilities.

To develop a successful LSRP, our team analyzed historic collision databases and disseminated a survey to the public so they can share report areas of concern.

For more information and updates on this project, please visit: [www.santacruzcountysafestreets.com](http://www.santacruzcountysafestreets.com).

**Project cost: \$100,000**



Scan to view project website

## Safe Streets for All Vision Zero Action Plan (Ongoing)

On Aug. 23, 2022, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted the goal of Vision Zero to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries on streets within the unincorporated county by 2035. This is done by acknowledging that traffic deaths and severe injuries are preventable and setting the goal of eliminating both in a set time frame, with clear, measurable strategies. To address this complex problem, Vision Zero uses a multidisciplinary safe system approach, as outlined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The Board also authorized CDI Division of Public Works (DPW) to submit a grant application to the SS4A grant program for funding to create a comprehensive safety action plan. The SS4A grant program encouraged multi-jurisdictional applications. DPW reached out to the other agencies within the Santa Cruz County region to partner and submit an application that would be more competitive. Subsequently, the County, the City of Watsonville, and the City of Scotts Valley were awarded an SS4A grant for the development of a comprehensive safety action plan with the County as the lead applicant.

Public Works contracted with FHWA in late 2023 to create the Vision Zero Action, which is estimated to take approximately two years to complete.

**Project cost: \$1 million**



# SPECIAL SERVICES

## Public Works Division

The Division of Public Works Special Services is responsible for four units:

- Sanitation
- Recycling & Solid Waste
- Flood Control & Storm Water
- Construction Management

Last year, we coordinated a wide range of outreach efforts and collaborated with various municipalities and environmental agencies, to advance our mission for a healthy and sustainable community.



## SANITATION

The Sanitation Unit is responsible for environmental compliance and collection of wastewater within three sanitation districts: Santa Cruz County Sanitation District, Freedom County Sanitation District, and the Davenport County Sanitation District. It is also responsible for the five county service areas: CSA 2 (Place de Mer), CSA 5 (Sand Dollar), CSA 7 (Boulder Creek), CSA 10 (Rolling Woods), and CSA 20 (Trestle Beach). Our department does not provide service to residents living in Santa Cruz City limits, Watsonville City limits, and Scotts Valley City limits.

### SANITATION DISTRICTS:

#### Santa Cruz Sanitation District

The District oversees the pipelines that convey waste from its jurisdiction to the City of Santa Cruz Wastewater Treatment Facility situated at Neary Lagoon.

**Service areas:** Live Oak, City of Capitola, and sections of Aptos and Soquel

**Funding source:** Primary revenue sources include sewer service charges from residents, businesses, and schools connected to the sanitary sewer system, as well as connection fees, bonds, and loans

Average daily amount of wastewater sent to the City of Santa Cruz's Wastewater Treatment Plant

**3,431,017.58**  
Gallons

Total wastewater sent to the Wastewater Treatment Plant in 2023

**1,317,859,000**  
Gallons

FY 2023-24 Budget

**\$95,044,340**





### Freedom County Sanitation District

This District transports wastewater to the treatment plant on Beach Street, which is owned and operated by the City of Watsonville.

**Service area:** Freedom

**Funding source:** Primary revenue sources include sewer service charges from residents, businesses, and schools connected to the sanitary sewer system, as well as connection fees, grants, and loans

FY 2023-24 Budget **\$7,864,021**

### Davenport County Sanitation District

The District delivers treated drinking water and manages wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services. This District transports wastewater to the treatment plant owned and operated by the District. The District also operates and maintains a recycled water facility. The District sells recycled water to various customers.

**Service area:** Davenport

**Funding source:** Grants, sale of recycled water, residents, and businesses connected to either waterworks or the sanitary sewer system

Average amount of wastewater treated daily **26,940**  
Gallons

Amount of wastewater treated in 2023 **9,833,270**  
Gallons

Average amount of drinking water supplied daily **42,058**  
Gallons

Amount of drinking water supplied in 2023 **15,351,00**  
Gallons

Amount of recycled water sold **360,400**  
Gallons

Fiscal Year 2023-24 Sewer Budget **\$335,337**



Scan to view the Sanitation CSA / District Map



## OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS

In 2023, we engaged in various outreach campaigns dedicated to averting sewer spills and mitigating pipe blockages. This outreach sought to safeguard the environment, as well as spare residents and businesses from the substantial expenses associated with repairing broken sewer laterals or wastewater backups.

### Fight F.O.G.

Santa Cruz County's Fats, Oils & Grease (F.O.G.) campaign strives to minimize the disposal of F.O.G down drains. After approximately 20 years, we updated our holiday F.O.G ad video with a new targeted campaign that ran on KSBW and over-the-top online streaming services from November 2023 through December 2023. This ad targeted specific zip codes found to have excessive F.O.G.



Scan to view F.O.G Ad



### Think Before You Flush

The Think Before You Flush bilingual initiative aims to inform residents about the deceptive labeling of wipes as "disposable" and "flushable." In 2023, informational mailers were updated and distributed to residents within the Santa Cruz County Sanitation District and Freedom County Sanitation District. The materials provide guidance on preventing sewer spills and pipe blockages by discouraging the flushing of wipes labeled as "disposable" or "flushable."

## THIS IS NOT A TRASH CAN.™

Keeping our community safe from sewage spills and keeping maintenance costs down are important. You can help by remembering this simple phrase: **'Think Before You Flush.'** Put trash where it belongs... in the trash.



Flushable does not mean flushable! Flushable wipes clog sewer pipes. Wipes do not dissolve; even if you flush just one, wipes collect in pumps and valves causing clogs.



**THINK BEFORE YOU FLUSH™**

Scan to learn more



**Santa Cruz County  
Sanitation District**  
831-477-3907

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## ESTO NO ES UN CESTO DE BASURA.™

Mantener a nuestra comunidad segura ante los derrames de aguas residuales y mantener bajos los costos de mantenimiento son aspectos claves. Usted puede ayudar recordando esta sencilla frase: **"Piense antes de jalar la cadena."** Deposite la basura donde debe estar: en el cesto de basura. ¡Que un producto indique que se puede desechar por el



inodoro no significa que esto sea lo más adecuado! Las toallitas desechables en el inodoro obstruyen las tuberías de aguas residuales. Las toallitas no se disuelven. Incluso si tira solo una al inodoro, las toallitas se acumulan en las bombas y válvulas, lo que causa obstrucciones.



**PIENSE ANTES DE JALAR LA CADENA**

Escanea para saber más



**Distrito de Saneamiento  
del Condado de Santa Cruz**  
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## PROJECT

### East Cliff Drive Sewer Replacement Project

The East Cliff Drive Sewer Replacement Project covers East Cliff Drive, Portola Drive, and segments of 13th Avenue and Corcoran Avenue, focusing on the repair and replacement of current public sewer lines. Collaboratively undertaken by the Sanitation District and Roads & Transportation sector, this initiative addresses the need to upgrade aging sewer infrastructure. In the year 2023, significant progress was achieved in this project to upgrade sewer pipes and improve the quality of pavement in the region. Individuals with driveways impacted by the project received door hanger notifications and personal visits by our project team. These interactions accomplished three things: provided details about the projects, shared the timeline with individuals, and apprised them of any road closures affecting their access.

## \$9 MIL

Total project cost to date

## FUNDING

Sanitation District's green infrastructure bonds for sewer related work and 2016 Measure D



Scan to view project website



## RECYCLING AND SOLID WASTE

The Recycling and Solid Waste services plays a crucial role in promoting environmental sustainability and waste reduction within our community. Responsible for overseeing the proper disposal and recycling of materials, we ensure residents have access to efficient waste collection services, while emphasizing the importance of diverting recyclables from landfills. We collaborate with GreenWaste (the County of Santa Cruz's waste hauler) in all outreach materials and outreach events.

## PROGRAMS



### Green Business Program

In 2023, we were proud to announce the Green Business Program reached its 20th year anniversary. Since 2003, the Green Business Program has been an incentives-based certification program designed to encourage businesses to meet and exceed environmental standards, while conserving natural resources. It is a multi-media (soil, water, air, greenhouse gases) pollution prevention effort intended to create a positive relationship between government, the public, and the business community. This year, we honored businesses across the County who achieved Green Business Certification during the Dec. 5, 2023, Board of Supervisors meeting.

# 62

**Green Business  
Certifications awarded**

### Green Schools Program

The Green Schools Program (GSP) enhances the knowledge of students, teachers, and staff on environmental subjects, such as resource conservation, stormwater runoff, water quality and conservation, energy conservation, recycling, and waste reduction. Under this program, we assisted schools in becoming "Green Schools" by exemplifying prudent resource usage, minimizing waste, mitigating non-point source pollution, and educating students on conserving scarce resources like energy and water. The program provides in-class and school-wide presentations, educational assemblies, and technical assistance to member schools. All schools in the unincorporated area of the County of Santa Cruz are invited to participate in the GSP.



## Recycling and Disposal Facilities

### Buena Vista Landfill

1231 Buena Vista Drive, Watsonville, CA

**350**

Tons of refuse  
processed daily

### Ben Lomond Transfer Station

9835 Newell Creek Road, Ben Lomond, CA

**100**

Tons of refuse  
processed daily

## LOGO REFRESH

In 2023, our Recycling & Solid Waste staff embarked on a logo refresh for our Santa Cruz County Recycles logo. Staying true to the original logo's design, this refresh effort was aimed at creating a modern version of the previous beloved outdated one.



OLD



NEW

## FLOOD CONTROL AND STORM WATER

The Flood Control and Storm Water Unit manages stormwater. Its role is crucial due to stormwater as a major source of pollution in surface waters, transporting pollutants like oils, chemicals, fertilizers, and litter. Improper management can lead to water quantity issues such as flooding and erosion, as well as water quality problems.

In 2023, the responsibilities of maintaining the Pajaro River, Salsipuedes Creek, and portions of Corralitos Creek transferred from Zone 7 to the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA). PRFMA assumed this role on Nov. 14. Prior to this transfer our crews were focusing on winter storm preparation along the Pajaro River Levee, including a critical pipe deformation that emerged at the Kelly Thompson dual culvert system. With two significant deformations

hindering 80% of water flow, prompt intervention was crucial to avert a potential levee failure. Internally, our team meticulously outlined project goals, scope, timeline, and objectives. Engaging a consulting engineer for design and technical oversight, our CDI resource planner ensured compliance with emergency permitting and environmental requirements. Swift mobilization of equipment and materials, facilitated by our managers, expedited the 3-4 week project, underscoring our commitment to proactive winter storm preparation and infrastructure resilience.

Lastly, a review of building permits and development applications transferred from the Stormwater Management unit to a newly created unit in the Planning Division called Permit Engineering.







## CONSTRUCTION

The Construction Management Unit oversees capital improvement project construction, primarily for Roads and Sanitation. This group also oversees emergency projects that arise over the course of the year. Additionally, the Construction Management group inspects commercial projects for storm water compliance and oversees sub-division improvements. 2023 was a particularly busy year for both capital improvement projects and emergency projects:

# of emergency projects on roads, sanitation, and levee in construction during 2023

**193**  
at approx. \$71 mil

# of sanitation capital improvement projects under construction

**120**  
at approx. \$61 mil

# of sanitation projects

**3**  
at \$8 mil

# of Zone 6 and 7 projects

**7**  
at \$2.6 mil

# of road projects

**110**  
at \$57.6 mil

Road crews oversight projects

**63**  
at approx. \$9.3 mil

Road crews oversight # of road projects

**59**

Road crews oversight # of Levee/Pajaro storm drain maintenance district projects

**4**

Sanitation Operations oversight projects

**10**  
at approx. \$0.5 mil

# of contractors assigned to projects

**30+**



# CAPITAL PROJECTS

## Public Works Division

In the dynamic built and natural environments of Santa Cruz County, where the beauty of nature harmoniously coexists with the demands of a growing community, the Division of Public Works' Capital Project Unit stands as a beacon of innovation and progress to meet the needs of our growing community.

We have helped shape the community through strategic planning, diligent execution, and a steadfast dedication to enhancing the quality of life for residents through the projects we lead.

Over the past year, we have navigated many challenges, delivering myriad capital projects that not only address immediate needs, but also lay the foundation for a sustainable and resilient future. From progress on the Aptos Library to the upcoming Children's Crisis Center, all of our

projects reflect a commitment to fostering a thriving and supported community.

This section of the 2023 Annual Report provides an insight into the strategic endeavors undertaken by the Capital Project Division, showcasing our efforts to build, modernize, and sustain essential public assets.

Starting July 2024, Capital Projects will move to the County's General Services department. While CDI will still have a close working relationship with the Capital Projects team, this annual report marks the first and last reporting of their projects within our department.

Below are a few of the division's achievements, initiatives, and contributions throughout the past year.

## PROJECTS



### Aptos Library – 7695 Soquel Drive

The Aptos Branch Library project demolished and rebuilt the existing library into a 21st century facility. The branch was increased in size by 50% and now has space to accommodate the library's many programs. This revitalized space will serve as a modern hub for the community, providing residents with enhanced opportunities for reading, studying, participating in community events, and more. The redesigned library features community rooms, study areas, and outdoor spaces, offering a fresh and inviting environment for the residents of Aptos and beyond to enjoy.







## Children's Crisis Center – 5300 Soquel Avenue

The Children's Crisis Center is a critical project that addresses the mental health requirements of children and adolescents. Located at the southeast corner of Soquel Avenue and Chanticleer Avenue, on the Sheriff's Public Safety Center campus, an existing 30,220-square-foot commercial building will undergo a redesign and renovation to house the Children's Crisis Stabilization Program and the Children's Crisis Residential Program. The primary objective of this project is to establish a specialized facility, providing crisis intervention and stabilization services for young individuals confronting acute mental health challenges. This center will offer a nurturing and therapeutic environment, staffed by qualified professionals, and equipped with resources tailored to the unique needs of children in crisis. With an emphasis on early intervention, the project seeks to alleviate the impact of mental health crises on children and their families.





## South County Government Center – 500 Westridge Drive

The South County Government Center is a major tenant improvement project of roughly 100,000 square feet of office space for County departments including Human Services, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office, County Clerk's Office, and Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office. The project consolidates client services and staff from four leased properties into one County-owned facility and increases client service offerings in Watsonville.





# HOUSING

## Planning Division

The housing section in the Planning Division serves a crucial role for addressing the housing crisis in Santa Cruz County, focusing on both immediate needs for low- and moderate-income households and supporting new housing development with available County funds and other grant funding.

We are primarily focused on addressing the housing crisis and improving housing conditions in the region through:

- **Meeting Housing Needs:** Partnering with nonprofit housing organizations on housing projects, particularly focusing on low- and moderate-income households.
- **Managing Affordable Housing Programs:** Managing the sale and rental of affordable housing units to ensure consistency with the County's adopted Measure J Program (below-market rate units).
- **Technical Assistance:** Providing technical assistance to housing developers and homeowners, including homeowners wishing to develop accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
- **Resource and Information Provision:** Providing resources and information on housing-related topics, such as availability of affordable units, obtaining housing choice vouchers, and ADUs.
- **Housing Advisory Commission:** Staffing the Housing Advisory Commission, a group of 10 residents who advise the County Board of Supervisors on housing equity, supply, and affordability.



## Housing Funding

The section manages funds from several state grant programs and source in order to support, highlighting existing programs like the Home Investment Partnership Program and CalHome, as well as other grant-funded programs (e.g., Building Equity and Growth in Neighborhoods Program, Community Development Block Grant Program).

# POLICY

## Planning Division

The policy section in the Planning Division primarily focuses on developing and implementing land use policies and regulations. This encompasses a broad range of areas such as transportation, recreation, and commercial and residential standards. Our responsibilities also include tracking and meeting state law requirements and ensuring that local developments and land uses align with state-level mandates and guidelines. The division plays a key role in shaping the County's land use planning to address various community needs and environmental considerations.

Key functions of the policy section include:

### Policy Development

Crafting General Plan, Local Coastal Program, and administrative policies related to land use, urban development, transportation, and environmental sustainability. These policies aim to guide growth and development in a way that aligns with the community's goals.

### Land Use Planning

Developing and updating comprehensive plans that outline the long-term vision for land use within the County, including town and area plans.

### Environmental Sustainability

Addressing environmental concerns by incorporating sustainable practices into land use policies and ensuring compliance with environmental regulations.

### Zoning Ordinances

Creating and maintaining zoning ordinances that specify land uses regulations (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) and development standards within zoning districts to ensure consistency with the general plan and community vision.

Comprised of ten members from different

districts, advises the Board on housing policy. They meet regularly, generally on the first Wednesday of each odd-numbered month. The HAC's role includes providing input on housing matters and they are supported by the Housing Division of the Planning Department.

Aside from overseeing the implementation of adopted policies and monitoring their effectiveness, we often collaborate with other departments and divisions, such as Public Works and Environmental Planning to ensure a holistic and integrated approach to planning development.

## The Housing Element

In 2023, the Housing Element, a required part of the County's General Plan, underwent an update for the 2023–2031 planning period and was adopted by the Board of Supervisors at their Nov. 14, 2023, meeting. The Housing and Policy sections collaborated over the past year to draft the latest Housing Element.

This update involved assessing housing needs and ensuring adequately zoned land to accommodate housing supply for all income levels, focusing particularly on low- and moderate-income households. The State's Regional Housing Needs Allocation mandates that the County plan for 4,634 additional housing units in the unincorporated county during the current eight-year cycle. The process included robust community engagement and environmental impact review.





# PERMITS

## Planning Division

The Planning Permits Division, which includes the development review (discretionary permit), building, environmental planning, and permit engineering sections, is responsible for issuing the various types of permits required to develop your property or commercial building. This division is integral to ensuring safety, environmental protection, and community coherence. This division is one of several permitting divisions, including Public Works and Environmental Health, that comprises the Unified Permit Center. One of the primary objectives in creating the Unified Permit Center is to consolidate all permit-related activity in a centralized location to provide an efficient permitting process for residents in Santa Cruz County.

This section is responsible for issuing:

### Over The Counter (OTC) Permits

These permits are designed for quicker processing, often within a day or even instantly, and are applicable to several types of home improvements. This expedited process is particularly useful for simpler projects that don't require extensive review.

# 3,044

Number of OTC Permits issued in 2023

### Building Permits

Ensuring that all construction projects meet safety and environmental standards. This includes new constructions, renovations, and certain types of home improvements.

# 3,327

Number of Building Permits issued in 2023

### Grading Permits

Overseeing the grading of land for construction, ensuring that it is done safely and in compliance with environmental and safety regulations.

# 34

Number of Grading Permits issued in 2023

### Discretionary Permits

Necessitates the use of judgment by a decision-maker who relies on documented justifications for their decision. Certain discretionary permits mandate public notification (informing neighbors and publication in the newspaper) or a public hearing. Variances, coastal permits, and subdivisions are instances of discretionary permits. Completion of discretionary permits is a prerequisite for the issuance of a building permit, with various levels corresponding to the type of project.

# 151

Number of Discretionary Permits issued in 2023

### Vacation Rental and Hosted Rentals Permits

Permits will be issued on a first-applied, first-issued system for vacation and hosted rental permits.

# 230

Number of Vacation Rental and Hosted Rental Permits issued in 2023



The Planning Division is also responsible for:

- **Regulating and Controlling Erosion and Sediment:** Implementing measures to control soil erosion and manage sediment in construction and development projects to protect natural resources and maintain environmental quality.
- **Noise Control:** Implementing and enforcing regulations to manage and control noise levels resulting from construction and other activities.
- **Environmental Planning:** Ensuring that all development projects consider and minimize their impact on the environment, including aspects like paleontology, riparian corridors, and sensitive habitats.
- **Compliance with Local and State Regulations:** Ensuring that all activities requiring permits comply with relevant local and state laws and regulations, including zoning requirements, building codes, and environmental regulations.





# ADMINISTRATION

The Administration section is responsible for efficiently overseeing and improving vital administrative functions critical to the success of our department. With a dedication to excellence, we act as the department's backbone, ensuring seamless operations and providing support for projects, outreach, hiring, budget management, and administrative tasks.

The Administration section oversees our department's administrative staff and manages:

## Finance

Managing the division's budget, securing optimal resource allocation for all budgets.

## Personnel

Cultivates a dedicated, inclusive workforce, ensuring the well-being and professional development of our employees. Through strategic recruitment, Personnel plays a role in fostering a workplace culture that aligns with our mission of administrative excellence and sustainable community development.



### FISCAL YEAR 22/23 DIVISION EXPENSES

# \$66,904,608

Public Works Division - Roads and Transportation

# \$48,976,313

Public Works Division - Special Services

# \$16,926,462

Planning Division

# \$11,284,628

Public Works Division - Administrative Services

For more information on our allocated budget and expenses visit:



### TOTAL HIRES AND PROMOTIONS FOR 2023

# 45

Promotions

# 40

New Hires

4 Extra Help  
3 Student  
Workers

33 New Hires





# COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

## Administration

In 2023, CDI saw significant growth in fulfilling our mission to enhance our communication, foster community engagement, and increase transparency.

As part of our ongoing efforts, our department hired a Departmental Communications Officer. This role aims to advance our outreach goals, ensuring inclusivity, and facilitating effective communication between our department, local policymakers, and the public.

With this position, we can complete our objectives which include:

### Enhanced Public Awareness

- Develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy to increase public awareness of our ongoing projects.
- Regularly update the communication through various channels, including newsletters, social media, and community meetings.

### Spanish-language Outreach

- Recognizing the cultural diversity in Santa Cruz County, our communications officer will lead efforts to provide comprehensive translation and communication strategies aimed at effectively reaching this audience.
- Establish and strengthen relationships with diverse community groups, ensuring representation from all.
- Conduct targeted outreach to underrepresented communities to ensure their voices are heard and needs are addressed.

## Social Media

Our department increased the methods of communication by introducing a newsletter platform for community members, local fire/dispatch, and County employees. Our outreach efforts extend beyond social media with the revamping of our Holiday Fats, Oils, & Grease advertising video and soon will involve implementing communication and outreach strategies for upcoming projects in 2024.

By embracing diversity and enhancing our communication strategy, we aim to create a vibrant, engaged, and empowered Santa Cruz County.

### Facebook

We have more than 2,300 people who follow us on Facebook. In 2023, our Facebook following grew by 103.4% and continues to grow as we use the platform to share project information, resources, community events recruitment, hiring, and more.

### Instagram

Our Instagram is a hub for our nearly 1,000 followers to gain visual information and insights into what our department is doing. Like Facebook, our accounts have also grown over 200%. This platform is used to share project information, resources, community events, recruitment, hiring, and more!

### X

This platform is used to share information on important time-sensitive updates about road closures, emergency information, evacuation warnings, and more. Our 161 followers are often engaged in our content leading to several thousand impressions on our posts per month.

### Nextdoor

Our biggest reach comes down to our Nextdoor platform, where our service areas are separated into neighborhoods. Comprising of 119,206 members, 68,107 claimed households and 234 neighborhoods, we share pertinent information on our projects, emergency resources, and evacuation notices. Most of our posts are targeted to the specifically affected neighborhoods.

### Press Releases

Distributing press releases about our big projects to the media is one way we reach out to Santa Cruz County residents. We frequently send out press releases to provide information to the public via the media. The information highlights departmental milestones, big projects, and projects that have a significant impact to the greater Santa Cruz County area or more.



***"TO GIVE REAL SERVICE YOU MUST ADD SOMETHING WHICH CANNOT BE BOUGHT OR MEASURED WITH MONEY, AND THAT IS SINCERITY AND INTEGRITY."*** – Douglas Adams, Author

## Community Development & Infrastructure

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