



# HOUSING

## SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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## October 2022 Newsletter

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### ***A Message From Our New Executive Director:***

**Dear Santa Cruz County Community,**

I am excited to announce that I have joined Housing Santa Cruz County as the new Executive Director. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself.

I'm originally from the Bronx in New York City, and I've been a resident and community leader in Santa Cruz County for 21 years. From an early age, community, collaboration

and making a difference in my community led me to do the work that I do. I'm passionate about advocating for affordable housing, creating positive change in this community, wanting the playing field to be leveled for everyone to have a seat at the table, and for there to be no limits regardless of race or background. I believe there is nothing one cannot do if they are given the space, time, and support (financial and emotional) to do it. I hold a bachelor's degree in political science, a juris doctorate from Monterey College of Law, and am a certified mediator. My professional experience includes serving on several nonprofit boards and county commissions, fundraising, community engagement, financial management, campaign management, the law, donor management, community relations, and more.

I want to thank the Housing Santa Cruz County Board of Directors for trusting in me to lead the organization. I also want to thank them for their support as I transition into this position. The mission of Housing Santa Cruz County which I stand by is to ensure Santa Cruz County is an inclusive, thriving, just, diverse, culturally rich, and sustainable community by promoting affordable, safe, stable homes for local residents and workers. As the Executive Director, my responsibility is to make sure the organization aligns in this way with everything that we do.

We all agree that we need to increase affordable housing inventory and equitable access. To accomplish this, we need to align contributions across multiple stakeholders and be inclusive to those in need of affordable housing, including the most vulnerable. Housing Santa Cruz County's role is to advocate and bring a cross-section of partners and stakeholders together to act on strategies that result in housing those in need. We will continue to do this work with our partners, community, local and state officials, and more. My goal is to collaborate closely with you to carry on our mission and expand our impact.

A reception to meet the Executive Director will be held in November. The date and location are to be determined. I look forward to the opportunity to meet you — our donors, subscribers, community partners, and friends — and in the meantime, please feel free to connect with me at [director@housingsantacruzcounty.com](mailto:director@housingsantacruzcounty.com) or (831) 266-5983.

Thank you for your continued support of the work that we do. It truly takes a village.  
Warm Regards,

**Elaine Johnson**  
Executive Director

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## ***Housing is on the Ballot Event Recaps***

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HSCC co-hosted a ballot measure forum in Watsonville on October 19 and heard from representatives of two competing measures – Measure Q and Measure S. There are significant similarities between the measures in that they both would sustain the current urban growth boundaries of the City of

Watsonville. The main difference is that Measure S is more permissive in allowing some modification of the boundary under certain circumstances.

The primary takeaway from this discussion was very heartening to those of us who are continuing to seek more affordable housing across our county. That takeaway: both teams very much support higher-density infill housing in downtown Watsonville and in other under-used commercial areas within the current city limits. This is the housing we need—and it represents truly sustainable development that protects open space and reduces transportation impacts. We'll be working with both teams in the years ahead.

HSCC also co-hosted a Candidates forum in collaboration with the UC Santa Cruz Division of Student Affairs & Success, Graduate Division, Sociology Department, UCSC Graduate Student Association, Student Union Assembly, The Student Housing Coalition, Monterey Bay Economic Partnership, and the UCSC College Democrats.

The forum included County Supervisor candidates Justin Cummings and Shebreh Kalantari Johnson, Santa Cruz Mayoral candidates Fred Keeley and Joy Schendledecker, and City Council District 4 candidates Gregory Hyver, Hector Marin, and Scott Newsome. The forum was very informational for both UC Santa Cruz students and the general public. We are working on acquiring the recording of this event and hope to share it asap!



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## ***Rise Together, a truly special coalition***

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I am pleased to announce that, as I am one of the 2022-23 cohorts of the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County's "Rise Together" program, HSCC was awarded \$18,000 to: "build capacity to promote and advocate for affordable housing while staying focused on maintaining the priority of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion throughout Santa Cruz County."

I'd like to thank the Community Foundation and the generous funders who continue to support the



work of Rise Together, and thanks to all who came out to celebrate with us!

-Elaine Johnson



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## ***HSCC Doing the Work at all Levels!***

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Our Executive Director Elaine Johnson had the opportunity to hear **State Controller Betty Yee** at the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce Luncheon in September, and afterward, had the pleasure to speak with her at length about affordable housing.

State Controller Yee is very supportive of the work HSCC is doing in Santa Cruz County and encouraged us to keep forging ahead.



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## ***Quick Links - SC County Affordable Housing News***

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[What Measure O Means for the Future of Downtown](#)

[Downtown farmers market signs MOU with City of Santa Cruz to establish permanent home](#)

[Vote yes on N if you care about our community: It's our ticket to affordable housing in Santa Cruz](#)

[Can Measures K and L Save Santa Cruz City Schools?](#)

[Santa Cruz supportive housing project awarded \\$18M](#)

[Senior housing project approved in Santa Cruz](#)

[Construction Begins at Park Haven Plaza in Soquel](#)

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## **Join Housing Santa Cruz County Today!**

**Housing Santa Cruz County** is working every day to keep affordable housing development top of mind amongst policymakers and community leaders.

Your tax-deductible donation will help us maintain a steady presence and pressure at the local and State level to enact and support meaningful affordable housing policy and projects throughout Santa Cruz County. Please consider becoming a recurring contributor to our work, if you aren't already!



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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Contribute Today!

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