



## County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors Agenda Item Submittal

**From:** County Administrative Office  
(831) 454-2100

**Meeting Date:** February 27, 2018

### **Recommended Action(s):**

1. Accept and file report on the draft vision, mission, values and focus areas for the Santa Cruz County Strategic Plan.
2. Direct staff to return with an update on the strategic planning process on or before April 10, 2018.

### **Executive Summary**

The County Administrative Officer initiated a countywide strategic planning effort in 2017-18. County staff spent the fall engaging with internal and external stakeholders and used the input gathered to identify common themes and develop the draft vision, mission, values, and focus areas presented in this memo. Beginning in March 2018, staff will convene a series of goal setting events, including focus groups with employees and community members.

### **Background**

The purpose of strategic planning is to establish a long-term vision for the County and set a course of action through (1) overarching focus areas and (2) specific goals and objectives. This requires assessing the current landscape and trends, engaging internal and external stakeholders, and drafting and adopting a multi-year strategic plan and a shorter-term operational plan, which will inform County budget development.

Staff prepared for this process by comparing existing models and formats in other counties and cities, reviewing department and subject-area plans, and receiving input on strategic plan development. This work led to the identification of five key strategic plan elements:

- **Vision** - reflects the collective understanding of the ideal situation
- **Mission** - identifies the County's role in pursuing the community's vision
- **Values** - provide the foundation on which the strategic plan is constructed
- **Focus areas** - represent strategic initiatives, which organize the goals of an organization into a limited number of categories or themes
- **Goals** - provide generalized statements of what the community wants to achieve consistent with its vision

The Strategic Plan Steering Committee (SPSC) met weekly for several months to finalize the strategic planning process that has led to the development of these

elements. This process has included internal and external engagement of the County’s numerous stakeholders through a variety of in-person, electronic and other methods. Engagement efforts began with employees in September and the community in November, which resulted in feedback from hundreds of staff and residents. Additional information on these efforts was provided to the Board on December 12, 2017 and January 23, 2018.

## Analysis

### **Community and Employee Outreach Drove the Strategic Planning Process**

Engagement efforts included employee mixers, community forums and a community survey. Attached is a summary of the strategic planning methodology used in this process.

Outreach	Number of Events	Number of Participants
Department Head Retreat / LEAP Program	2	70
Employee Mixers	4	200+
Community Forums	5	200+
Community Survey	1	2,200+

### **September: Employees Brainstormed Vision and Mission Words**

The Department Head retreat and Learn, Engage, Apply and Perform (LEAP) Program participants laid the groundwork for the ‘vision’ and ‘mission’ words that sparked dialogues at subsequent outreach events. Exhibits 1 and 2 show the words that were identified by employees.

**Exhibit 1 - Vision Cloud**



**Exhibit 2 - Mission Cloud**



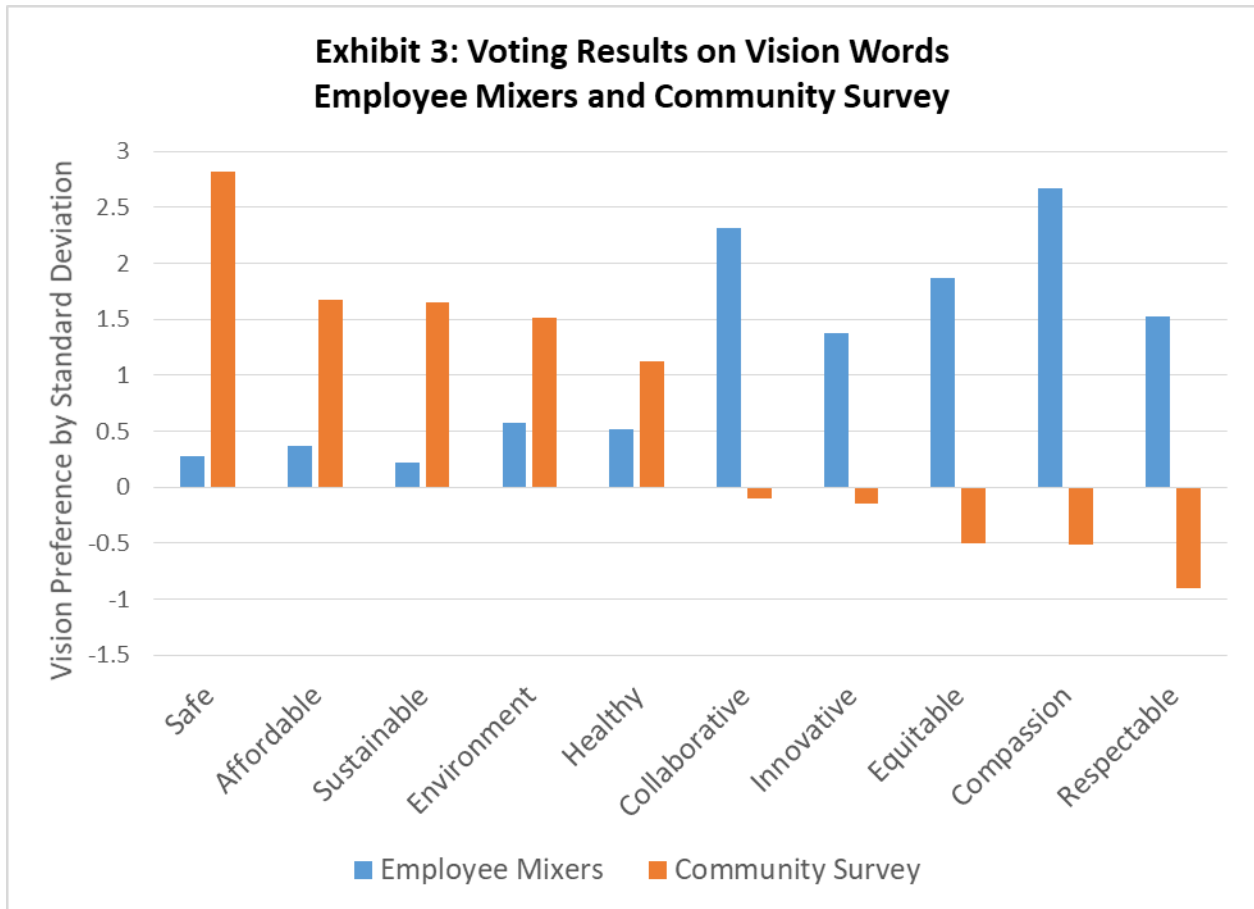
### **October – December: Employee and Community Meetings; Online Survey**

Four employee mixers and five community forums were held in the fall. Guided by the ‘vision’ and ‘mission’ words identified, as well as ‘values’ from existing community and department plans, employees were asked to select words in each category. Similarly, community members voted on ‘vision’ words for the County.

The community survey dove even deeper and asked seven questions. The first two questions asked respondents to select five ‘vision’ and five ‘values’ words. Additional questions asked respondents to consider recent trends impacting Santa Cruz County,

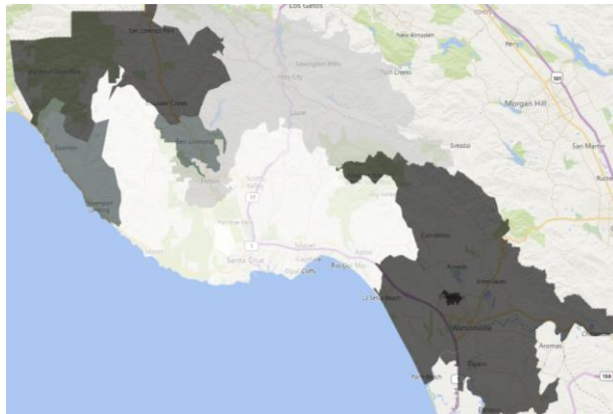
or qualities individuals felt should be maintained or preserved. The survey also asked them to identify County government’s strengths and weaknesses, and gave them an open-ended question asking what Santa Cruz County needs in order to become a better place to live, work or play.

Important perspectives were uncovered by the outreach, including between employees and the community, as well as between north and south county residents. Exhibit 3 demonstrates that a community vision for Santa Cruz County is for a safe, healthy and affordable community, while employees envisioned a collaborative, compassionate and equitable community.

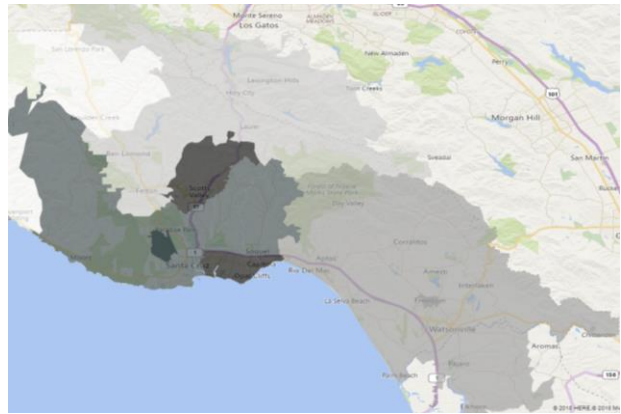


Although north and south county prioritized different vision words, they share a common vision overall. South county envisions a more inclusive, diverse and affordable community, while north county residents envision a safer, healthier and more sustainable community. Exhibits 4 and 5 show the most frequent ‘vision’ words by zip code.

**Exhibit 4 – #1 Vision Word by Zip Code**

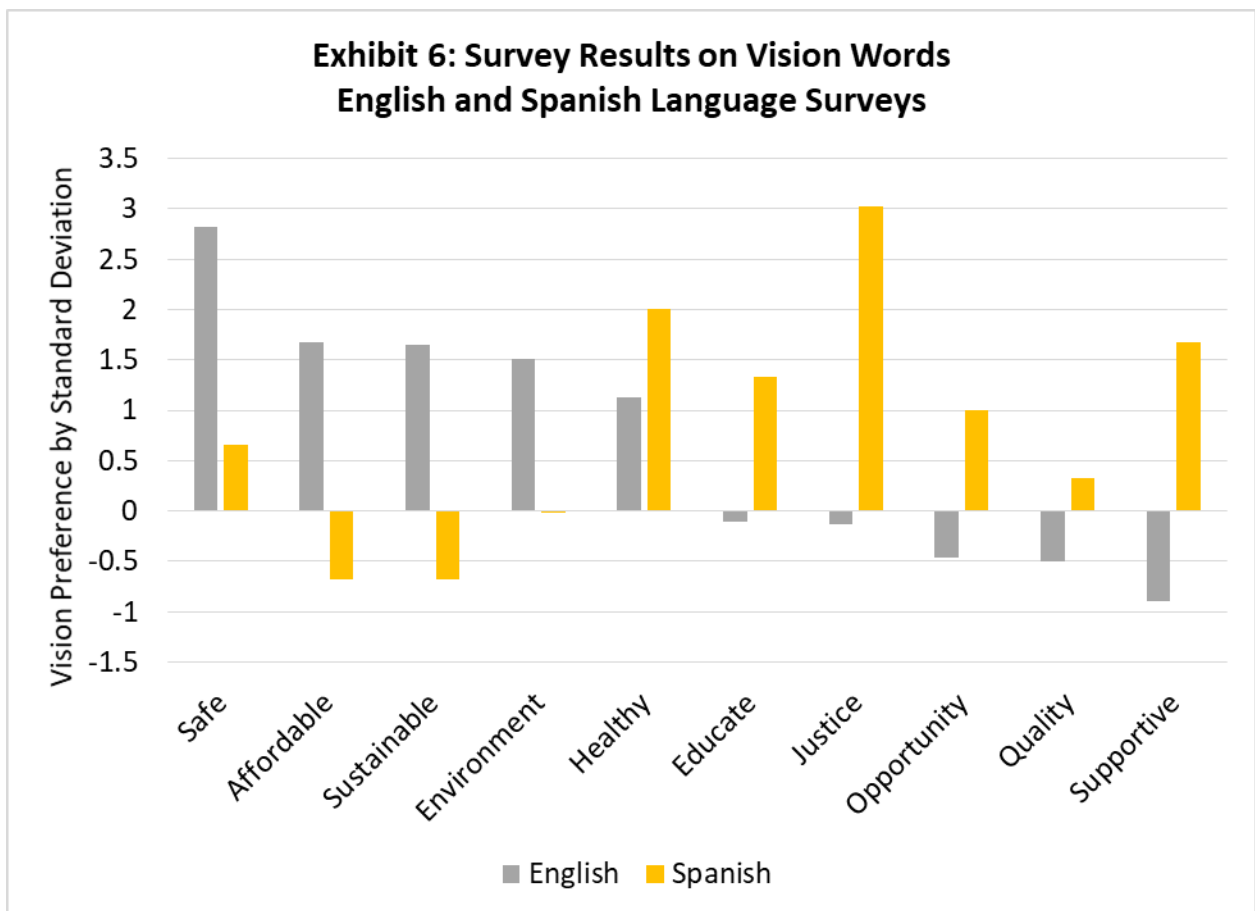


**Exhibit 5 – #2 Vision Word by Zip Code**



Key:  Accountability,  Affordable,  Safe,  Sustainable,  Environment,

Exhibit 6 compares the results of the English language and Spanish language surveys, which posed the same questions. The vision of a just, healthy and educated community were major drivers for respondents to the Spanish language survey.



The survey revealed a high level of alignment between the community and employees on the County’s values, with integrity, transparency, respect and trust ranking at the top. As indicated through the vision, collaboration also ranked high among employees, while

the community valued accountability.

Lastly, the survey helped identify trends, or issues, in the community. Trends were open-ended questions where residents could identify unprompted the major issues facing the community. The overwhelming trend identified by residents was housing, with over 54% citing it as the top issue facing Santa Cruz County. Approximately 59% of women, who represented two-thirds of the respondents, cited housing as the number one trend. While housing also ranked first for men, roads and traffic were a bigger concern for them than for women. Other top trends included public safety, the economy, health and the environment.

***January – February: Steering Committee Considered Responses***

The SPSC took the data generated over the past six months and distilled it into the draft vision, mission, values, and focus areas presented below and attached.

**Vision:** Santa Cruz County: A healthy, safe and affordable community that is economically and environmentally vibrant for all.

**Mission:** An open and caring government, the County of Santa Cruz delivers quality, results-driven, fiscally responsible services that strengthen our community and enhance opportunity.

**Values:** Our service is: Accountable, Innovative, Transparent  
Our partnerships are: Collaborative, Respectful, Trustworthy

**Focus Areas:** Health and Safety; Housing; Economy; Transportation; Environment; County Operations

***March – May: Focus Group Goal Setting; Document Preparation***

The next step in the strategic planning process is to arrange a series of goal setting events, including focus groups with employees and community members. Participants will be selected from those that indicated interest and will be reflective of our diverse staff and community. These events will provide the opportunity to validate the vision and mission, to assist in defining the values, and to consider goals in each focus area. This information will then be used to prepare the complete strategic plan document. Staff will return in April 2018 with the next update on the strategic planning process.

**Financial Impact**

None.

**Submitted by:**

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

**Recommended by:**

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

**Attachments:**

- a** Strategic Plan Methodology
- b** Strategic Plan Draft Elements