



## **County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors**

### **Agenda Item Submittal**

**From:** Community Development and Infrastructure

**Subject:** Housing Advisory Commission Code Update

**Meeting Date:** August 19, 2025

**Formal Title:** Consider approving in concept “An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz Amending Chapter 2.94 of the Santa Cruz County Code,” and take related actions

### **Recommended Actions**

- 1) Consider approving in concept “An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz Amending Chapter 2.94 of the Santa Cruz County Code”;
- 2) Schedule the ordinance for a second reading and final adoption on September 9, 2025; and
- 3) Direct the Clerk of the Board to publish the Notice of Proposed Ordinance Summary in a newspaper of general circulation at least five days prior to the scheduled second reading and final adoption, no later than September 4, 2025, pursuant to Government Code Section 25124.

### **Executive Summary**

The County of Santa Cruz Housing Advisory Commission (HAC) serves as an advisory body to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors. The proposed ordinance would amend Santa Cruz County Code (SCCC) Chapter 2.94 to implement recent Board direction related to the commission restructuring effort that began in 2023.

### **Discussion**

The County’s commission restructuring effort resulted from the “A Santa Cruz County Like Me” (ASCCLM) initiative that began in 2021.<sup>1</sup> In 2022 and 2023, the County Executive Office (CEO) worked closely with Ventures, the ASCCLM committee, and community leaders and residents to align knowledge and expertise on the issue of underrepresentation in local government, and to review current data, gather new insights, and propose innovative and strategic methods for ensuring representational and responsive advisory bodies. In January 2024, the Board approved recommendations related to restructuring some of the more than 40 County advisory boards and commissions to ensure they were still serving their intended purpose and structured to meet current needs.<sup>2</sup> A status report in August 2024 provided further updates and recommendations related to specific commissions, including the HAC.<sup>3</sup>

The HAC advises the Board on housing policy matters, as described in the current version of SCCC Chapter 2.94. One primary responsibility of this commission is to review and evaluate updates to the Housing Element of the General Plan which occurs every eight years. Historically, the HAC has also reviewed and made recommendations to the Board on significant amendments to SCCC Chapter 17.10, the County’s inclusionary ordinance, and its implementing guidelines, the Affordable Housing

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<sup>1</sup> [https://santacruzcountyca.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail\\_Legifile.aspx?ID=13387](https://santacruzcountyca.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail_Legifile.aspx?ID=13387)

<sup>2</sup> [https://santacruzcountyca.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail\\_Legifile.aspx?ID=15596](https://santacruzcountyca.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail_Legifile.aspx?ID=15596)

<sup>3</sup> [https://santacruzcountyca.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail\\_Legifile.aspx?ID=16428](https://santacruzcountyca.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail_Legifile.aspx?ID=16428)

Guidelines; and considered public comments and made recommendations to the Board on proposed applications to the State for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

Staff presented the ASCCLM initiative and commission restructuring materials to the HAC at its March 2024 and March 2025 meetings, minutes of which are attached. Among those commissioners who attended each meeting, there was not a clear consensus on which of the options presented by staff were preferred. Commissioners provided individual comments on the topic, but no formal recommendation was made. Overall, there was a divide between those who preferred the commission remain largely as is (mostly long-standing HAC members) and those who were more receptive to the overall approach of the ASCCLM initiative and restructuring options presented by staff (mostly newer HAC members). Since the HAC did not have a clear consensus, staff worked closely with the CEO to develop the recommendations herein.

The attached ordinance proposes to amend SCCC Chapter 2.94 to change the composition of the HAC as follows:

- Reduce the number of seats to be appointed by each Supervisor from the current two seats per district to one commissioner and one alternate per district (similar to the Planning Commission's alternates).
- Add four or six at-large seats to be appointed by the full Board, representing the following stakeholder types:
  - ✓ Affordable Housing Advocates and/or Non-Profit Affordable Housing Developer
  - ✓ Farmworkers and lower-income renters (or representative of a non-profit organization that serves them)
  - ✓ Lower-income seniors, disabled person, homeless and/or at-risk person (or representative of a non-profit organization that serves them)
  - ✓ Market-Rate Developer or Real Estate industry representative
  - ✓ Representative of a local public agency, such as: Housing Authority, Housing for Health Partnership (CoC), Workforce Development Board, or of a major local employer (e.g., school district, local health care network)
- Require at least one HAC member (either district or at-large appointee) be a young adult between 18 and 25 years of age.
- Require at least three HAC members be renters (either district or at-large appointees, or a combination of both).

Staff recommend an even number of at-large seats (either four or six) so that, when added to the five district seats, the commission will have an odd number of commissioners to avoid tie votes.

Once the newly created at-large HAC seats and any vacant district seats are filled, the reconstituted HAC will consider updates to its bylaws at an initial meeting, and the HAC will be added to the County's Conflict of Interest Code. Following approval by the HAC and County Counsel, those documents will be brought to the Board for approval.

In addition to the proposed code amendments described above, the proposal also included modifying the planned number of meetings per year to "at least two and no more than six regular meetings". There is no longer any code language establishing a certain number of annual meetings, so that proposed change can be implemented through adoption of the new HAC bylaws.

**Financial Impact**

This action will not have a financial impact on the General Fund.

**Strategic Initiatives**

Attainable Housing, Operational Excellence

**Submitted By:**

Matt Machado, Deputy CEO / Director of Community Development and Infrastructure

**Recommended By:**

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

**Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.