



# Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities

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## Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities 2017 - 2018 Biennial Report

### 1. The Role of the Commission

The Commission on Disabilities is an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors on issues affecting persons with disabilities in Santa Cruz County. The Commission was established to:

- a. Review existing County policies that affect persons with disabilities and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding proposed changes;
- b. Review Sections 503 and 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulations and advise the Board of Supervisors on any actions necessary to bring the County into compliance with the Federal requirements and to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities;
- c. Review the provision of access for persons with disabilities to public places within the County and recommend improvements where needed;
- d. Review the County's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan and policies and recommend to the Board of Supervisors and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission any revisions which may be necessary to eliminate employment discrimination against persons with disabilities;
- e. Review the County's Personnel rules and job descriptions and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and to the Civil Service Commission, as necessary, to assure that any unnecessary barriers to the employment of persons with disabilities are removed;
- f. Advise the Board of Supervisors on any other appropriate programs and actions which would increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- g. Evaluate services provided to persons with disabilities in the County and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors based on their conclusions;
- h. Review requests by persons with disabilities or organizations for County assistance and advise the Board of Supervisors on appropriate actions;
- i. Investigate citizen complaints related to concerns of persons with disabilities and recommend appropriate actions to the Board of Supervisors;
- j. Review Federal and State legislation of interest to persons with disabilities and advise the Board of Supervisors of their recommendations; and
- k. Exercise other responsibilities related to the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities in the County.

### 2. Meetings Dates, Time, and Location

Commission on Disabilities meetings are scheduled for the second Thursday of every month except July and December, from 12:30 until 2:00 PM at the Regional Transportation Commission offices

(1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz) or the County Government Center (701 Ocean Street, Fifth Floor Coastlines Conference Room, Santa Cruz).

In 2017, three regularly scheduled meetings were canceled as follows: the February meeting was canceled due to inclement weather, the May meeting was canceled to accommodate a Commission retreat, and the November meeting was canceled for lack of a quorum.

On May 13, 2017, the Commissioners attended a retreat at the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust (85 Nielson Street, Watsonville). Topics included Subcommittee structure, project prioritization, potential collaboration with other County Commissions, part-time office hours for the Commissions office in alternate locations, Bylaws review and a historical overview of the Commission and its activities.

In 2018, one regularly scheduled meeting was canceled for lack of quorum.

### 3. Commission Structure

The Commission on Disabilities is composed of ten voting members; two appointed by each of the five County Supervisors. New officers are elected each year during the May regular meeting. On December 31, 2018, the Commission on Disabilities membership was as follows:

District	Commissioners
1 <sup>st</sup> District	John Daugherty (Co-Chair), Vacancy
2 <sup>nd</sup> District	Felipa de Leon (Co-Chair), Janet Crosse
3 <sup>rd</sup> District	Becky Taylor, Vacancy
4 <sup>th</sup> District	Brenda Gutierrez Baeza, Vacancy
5 <sup>th</sup> District	Lynn Stipes, Dr. David Molina

The Commissioner(s) who completed their terms, resigned, or were replaced during the reporting period were Michael Bush, Sylvia Luna, and Ernestina Saldaña.

### 4. Commission Staff

The role of *Commissions Coordinator* experienced some turnover during the reporting period. Aimee Mangan filled the position through November 2017, at which time Britt Harmssen, EEO Officer, temporarily staffed the Commission until the position could be filled. In July of 2018, Kaite McGrew was hired as *Commissions Coordinator* and staffed the Commission for the remainder of the year.

### 5. Attendance

Please see attached *Commission on Disabilities 2017-2018 Attendance Report*

### 6. Goals, Activities and Accomplishments

The Commission’s activities and priorities are determined by the Commission’s mandate, mission statement, and emerging needs as expressed by the community and identified by the Commissioners.

#### Mission Statement

The Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities is a proactive advisory board that serves to ensure that children and adults with disabilities have opportunities to reach their maximum potential in independence, human development, productivity, and self-sufficiency, as well as to insure equity and access within the community.

## Commission Objectives

### Objective 1:

***To provide an accessible, inclusive forum for persons with disabilities to express community concerns.***

All Commission meetings during the reporting period were accessible, open to the public, and publicly noticed in accordance with Brown Act requirements. Guests included Daniel Dobrilovic (Monterey County Commission on Disabilities), Maria Magaña (Central Coast Center for Independent Living), Supervisor Ryan Coonerty and Supervisor Bruce McPherson among others.

### Objective 2:

***To identify and address visible and invisible barriers for persons with disabilities that disrupt their ability to exercise their right to live full and productive lives.***

During the reporting period, Commissioners participated in the following community meetings and events related to issues affecting persons with disabilities:

- Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Planning meeting to advocate for accessibility
- Annual Disability Capitol Action Day in Sacramento
- Live Oak Worker Cooperative event
- 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Day on the Beach
- The One Day Ride fundraiser for LEO's Haven
- Santa Cruz Metro Transit Board meeting
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Meeting
- ACLU Awards Ceremony (Commissioner Saldaña was being honored)
- Open House meeting for the Sidewalk Repair Program
- 5<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Breakfast
- Human Race Santa Cruz
- Twin Lakes Church Adaptive Egg Hunts
- Classroom presentation to Mar Vista Elementary School
- LEO's Haven Inclusive Playground meetings and groundbreaking ceremony
- Volunteer with Costanoa Commons' Farming Program for people with disabilities

During the reporting period, the Commission heard reports from the following community agencies, County programs, and other interested entities:

- April Warnock (SCMTD) on Metro services for persons with disabilities, the new Paracruz Eligibility Office in Watsonville, and the status of the METRO Paracruz fleet
- Maria Magaña (Central Coast Center for Independent Living (CCIL)) on CCIL's legislative advocacy and a new group for local teens with disabilities
- Supervisor Ryan Coonerty on the Twin Lakes Beachfront Improvement Project and local housing efforts, including ADUs and Habitat for Humanity projects
- Mike McConnell, County Adult and Long-Term Care Division Director, on the IHSS Public Authority and Program
- Maria Magaña (CCIL) on "Train the Trainer" trainings for advocacy, awareness and accessibility in the school system

- Maria Magaña (CCIL) on Assembly Bill 1884 to reduce the use of plastic straws and its potential impact on persons with disabilities

During the reporting period, the Commission addressed the following issues:

- Monitored progress of crosswalk safety improvements to Freedom Blvd
- Monitored changes in health insurance as it relates to persons with disabilities
- Monitored local media related to ADA issues
- Monitored Medicaid funding for special education including aides
- Monitored IHSS funding and caregiver wages
- Worked with CSUMB intern, Angelica Victoria, to evaluate needs and barriers for local Hispanic families navigating the Individual Educational Program (IEP) and prepare a report and recommendations, (*Ven, Vamos a Platucar Report*).
- Created and distributed an informational brochure on wound care
- Strategized on solutions to reduce isolation for persons with disabilities
- Assisted Santa Cruz Metro in their Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) bus operator trainings
- Monitored rent control and housing issues as related to persons with disabilities
- Advocated for resolution of service deficiency issues with Santa Cruz Metro Transit
- Monitored the impact of State Budget changes on persons with disabilities
- Monitored Santa Cruz County voter accessibility efforts
- Monitored litigation against a local assisted living facility for ADA violations
- Advocated for the implementation of a swimming program for children with developmental disabilities at the Simpkins Family Swim Center
- Monitored proposed closure of Second Story Respite
- Monitored proposed PG&E planned blackouts and emergency protocols

### **Objective 3:**

*To encourage community action through education, referral, collaboration, and integration of resource utilization to remove barriers that disrupt the ability of persons with disabilities to live full and productive lives.*

During the reporting period, Commissioners served as members and/or liaisons to the following commissions or organizations:

- RTC - Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC) - Daugherty
- E&D TAC Pedestrian Safety Work Group - Daugherty
- Economic Justice Alliance - Saldaña
- In Home Support Services Advisory Commission - Luna, Saldaña, Taylor
- Shared Adventures - De Leon
- Affordable Housing Network - Saldaña
- LEO's Haven Core Volunteer Team - Crosse, Gutierrez Baeza, Taylor
- Metro Advisory Committee (MAC) - Taylor
- Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee – Crosse, Stipes

During the reporting period, the Commission participated in the following special projects:

- **2017 Kudos Awards**

The Commission hosted the *2017 KUDOs Awards* with Senator Bill Monning serving as Master of Ceremonies. Awardees included: Day Worker Center Volunteers, Mario Garcia (Cabrillo College), Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (Cabrillo College), Lyn Glick (Adapted Physical Education Specialist), Santa Cruz Metro Bus Drivers, Steve Miller (Shared Adventures) and Lifetime Achievement Awardee Margaret Keith. The *2018 Kudos Awards* were rescheduled to allow for greater public participation in 2019.

- **Community Outreach Tabling**

The Commission hosted information tables at Accessibility Awareness events and other community gatherings including, but not limited to, the Santa Cruz, Watsonville and Felton Farmers Markets, *Fiesta Patrias*, and UCSC events.

- **Story Time**

Commissioners participated in Story Time with local children at Watsonville, Capitola and Santa Cruz public libraries to challenge youth preconceptions of persons with disabilities.

- **Commission History**

The Commission began the process of compiling a Commission history which may be exhibited at the County Government Center in future.

During the reporting period, the Commission created the following subcommittees:

- **Social Media Subcommittee:** to create and maintain a social media presence and share information and resources
- **Resource Directory Subcommittee:** to collect, curate and publish information about local resources for persons with disabilities
- **Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee:** to address emergency preparedness concerns specific to persons with disabilities

Between Commissions meetings, County Staff was available by phone, email, or in person for information and referrals. The County Commissions Office is located in the County Government Center (701 Ocean Street, Room 510, Santa Cruz).

**Objective 4:**

*To influence public policy by advising and working with the Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors and the County to support local, State and Federal legislation that seeks to optimize the functional potential of persons with disabilities in Santa Cruz County.*

During the reporting period, the Commission engaged with and/or impacted public policy in the following ways:

- Worked with the County related to undocumented persons with disabilities and the Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- Attended Watsonville City Council meetings to report on accessibility issues in public transportation, schools and markets
- Advocated in opposition to the ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017 and its potential impact on children living with disabilities
- Monitored legislation impacting Medicare beneficiaries

- Advocated to the Board of Supervisors in support of the LEO's Haven Inclusive Playground Project

## 7. Future Goals and Recommendations

In the coming year, the Commission on Disabilities hopes to accomplish the following:

- Host the 2019 KUDOS Awards to recognize local individuals and organizations that improve access for persons with disabilities in Santa Cruz County
- Continue education efforts and outreach to the community through hosting and attending events and sharing resources
- Explore and share emergency preparedness solutions and resources for persons with disabilities
- Make recommendations as necessary on public policy regarding the needs of persons with disabilities in Santa Cruz County
- Participate in a half-day joint retreat with the Seniors Commission and the IHSS Advisory Commission to share resources and coordinate efforts on issues that affect all three constituencies
- Collaborate with the UCSC Disability Resource Center to host a Commission meeting on the UCSC campus for Global Accessibility Day
- Review the *2009 Report on Services to County Residents with Disabilities* to identify potential future updates
- Review intern Angelica Victoria's report, *Ven, Vamos a Platicar*, to identify potential actionable items and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors as appropriate
- Advocate for the development of a swimming program for children with disabilities
- Review Commission goals for appropriate internship projects

Approved by the Commission on Disabilities on January 10, 2019 at their regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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John Daugherty  
Chair, Commission on Disabilities

January 30, 2019  
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Date

