

Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 510, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
P: (831) 454-2772 F: (831) 454-2411 TTY/TDD 711
commissions@santacruzcounty.us
www.sccseniors.org

Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission 2020 - 2021 Biennial Report

1. THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION

The Seniors Commission is an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors on issues affecting seniors in Santa Cruz County. The Commission was established to:

- Advise the Board of Supervisors on all matters affecting senior citizens and make recommendations to the County Administrative Officer and the Board of Supervisors on any senior citizens program proposal to be considered by the Board of Supervisors;
- Review the needs of senior citizens in the County, and develop a set of comprehensive goals and objectives for effectively meeting those needs;
- Monitor the various services made available to senior citizens by public and private agencies in this County to ensure efficient delivery of those services; and
- Communicate with Federal and State agencies and commissions serving senior citizens, and assist in the preparation, implementation and review of any regional plan or program designed to serve senior citizens. [Ord. 3464 § 1, 1983; Ord. 2119, 1975; prior code § 3.25.020].

2. MEETINGS DATES, TIME, AND LOCATION

Seniors Commission meetings are scheduled for the third Tuesday of every other month (February, April, June, August, October and December), from 12:30 until 2:30 PM at the United Way of Santa Cruz County office (4450 Capitola Rd, Suite 106, Capitola, CA 95010). Because of the pandemic, all meetings but one were held remotely during the reporting period.

In 2020, one regularly scheduled meeting was canceled for lack of a quorum.

In 2021, one regularly scheduled meeting was canceled for lack of a quorum.

3. COMMISSION STRUCTURE

The Seniors Commission is composed of ten voting members; two appointed by each of the five County Supervisors to represent their districts. Elections for Commission Chair and Vice Chair are held each year during the April regular meeting.

On December 31, 2021, the Seniors Commission membership was as follows:

District	Commissioners
1 st District	Tom Haid, Dena Taylor
2 nd District	Antonio Rivas (Vice Chair) , Mark Johannessen
3 rd District	Lois Sones, Enda Brennan
4 th District	Patricia Heath Fohrman, Seat Vacant
5 th District	Carol Childers (Chair) , Lynn McKibbin

Commissioners who completed their terms, resigned, vacated their seats under the provisions of SCCC Chapter 2.38.200(A)(1) or were replaced during the reporting period were Michael Lewis, Lynne Simpson and Louis J. Tuosto. Commissioners who were appointed during the reporting period were

Tom Haid and Dena Taylor. Commissioners Carol Childers, Mark Johannessen, Lynn McKibbin, and Antonio Rivas were reappointed.

4. COMMISSION STAFF

Kaite McGrew (*Commissions Manager*) staffed the Commission for the entirety of the reporting period.

Between Commissions meetings, County Staff was available by phone, email, or in-person for information and referrals. The County EEO Commissions Office is located in the County Government Center (701 Ocean Street, Room 510, Santa Cruz, CA 95060).

5. ATTENDANCE

Please see attached *Seniors Commission 2020-2021 Attendance Report*.

6. COMMISSION OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The Commission's priorities and subsequent activities are determined by the Commission's mandate and emerging needs as expressed by the community and identified by the Commissioners.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Conduct outreach and advocacy to elected officials on behalf of Santa Cruz County Seniors

During the reporting period, Commissioners monitored the following government-related activities and advocated with the following elected officials and government representatives:

- Individually communicated Commission activities and priorities to appointing District Supervisors
- Advocated individually with District Supervisors for additional seniors program funding
- Advocated individually with District Supervisors for the provision of County-wide WIFI
- Advocated for District Attorney Jeff Rossell to support education and funding for the prevention of elder abuse and the provision of resources to address it
- Advocated with Representative Jimmy Panetta to support education and funding for the prevention of elder abuse and the provision of resources to address it
- Reviewed, discussed and promoted community support for California Senior Legislature's top legislative priorities
- Monitored local efforts to attain *AARP Age-Friendly Community* designation
- Monitored Governor Newsom's *Master Plan on Aging Stakeholder Advisory Committee* activities
- Monitored County Board of Supervisor activities related to the status of the e-bikes contracts
- Monitored California Senior Legislature activities
- Monitored Measure D Oversight Committee activities
- Monitored Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities activities
- Monitored Santa Cruz County Mobile and Manufactured Home Commission activities
- Monitored Santa Cruz County redistricting efforts
- Monitored Santa Cruz County Strategic and Operational Plans
- Monitored Watsonville City Council activities

OBJECTIVE 2:

Promote the interests of Santa Cruz County seniors through community outreach, advocacy and the provision of resources

During the reporting period, Commissioners conducted the following outreach, advocacy and provision of the following resources to the community:

- Promoted awareness of the State's Housing and Community Development (HCD) mobile home registration workshop to assist the many Santa Cruz County seniors living in mobile home parks
- Promoted awareness of the Santa Cruz County Parks' *Senior Center without Limits* Program
- Promoted Santa Cruz County voter registration, education and participation in the 2020 elections

- Promoted senior participation in the 2020 Census, particularly with difficult-to-count members of the senior community
- Promoted awareness of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transportation District (SCMTD) fare waivers for seniors with vision impairment and mobility training for seniors who use wheelchairs
- Promoted awareness of the Boulder Creek veteran outreach program
- Promoted awareness of the County District Attorney's Office Senior Scam Prevention Programs
- Promoted awareness of Village Santa Cruz activities

OBJECTIVE 3:

Monitor and assess local services, resources, programs and agencies to advocate for effective service delivery to Santa Cruz County Seniors

During the reporting period, Commissioners monitored the following services, resources, programs and agencies:

- Area Agency on Aging Senior Social Isolation Roundtable
- Ben Lomond Senior Center
- Community Based Adult Services (CBAS)
- Community Bridges Meals-on-Wheels Program
- Community Bridges Services and Programs
- Elderday Adult Day Healthcare Services
- Live Oak Senior Center
- Multi-Service Senior Programs (MSSP)
- Scotts Valley Senior Care Packages Program
- Seniors Council/Area Agency on Aging
- Volunteer Center "Get Ready" Emergency Preparedness Program
- Watsonville Senior Center

OBJECTIVE 4:

Monitor and assess issues impacting Santa Cruz County seniors and advocate on their behalf

During the reporting period, Commissioners monitored and/or took action on the following issues impacting Santa Cruz County seniors:

- Immediate and lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Santa Cruz County senior community, particularly in long-term care facilities
- Availability of and access to COVID-19 vaccines for Santa Cruz County seniors
- County and community efforts to address the immediate and lasting impact increased social isolation had on Santa Cruz County seniors during the pandemic, particularly in rural areas
- County and community efforts to address the immediate and lasting impact of the CZU Lightning Complex Wildfires on Santa Cruz County seniors in affected areas
- Availability of emergency preparedness resources for seniors and persons with disabilities appropriate for both shelter-in-place and evacuation order situations
- County and community efforts to attain *AARP Age-Friendly Community* designation
- County and community efforts to prevent elder abuse
- Santa Cruz County Grand Jury Report results addressing the digital divide and access to broadband for seniors, particularly those in rural areas and/or those who are financially vulnerable
- Scams and frauds targeting seniors
- Scarcity of care providers for seniors and persons with disabilities and County Human Services Department IHSS recruitment activities
- Senior food insecurity and State and local funding for senior nutrition programs

7. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

During the reporting period, Commissioners served as members of or were affiliated with the following commissions, organizations, and community partners:

- Area Agency on Aging
- California Senior Legislature
- Elderday Adult Day Health Care
- Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Commission (E&D TAC)
- Grey Bears
- Homeless Garden Project
- IHSS Advisory Commission
- Meals on Wheels - Community Bridges
- Mid-Valley Democratic Club
- Retired Public Employees Associate Board
- San Lorenzo Valley Highlands Senior Center
- Santa Cruz County Bar Association
- Santa Cruz County Superior Court
- Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office
- Santa Cruz Hostel Society
- Seniors Council
- Valley Women's Club

8. COMMISSION SUBCOMMITTEES

During the reporting period, the Commission did not convene or hear reports from any ad hoc subcommittees.

9. COMMISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

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

- Letter to the District Attorney Jeff Rossell advocating for his support of *H.R. 2719 Stamp Out Elder Abuse Act* to raise awareness of and combat elder abuse and to fund elder justice activities
- Letter to Representative Jimmy Panetta advocating for his support of *H.R. 2719 Stamp Out Elder Abuse Act* to raise awareness of and combat elder abuse and to fund elder justice activities
- Letter congratulating Commission on Disabilities Commissioner John Daugherty on his retirement from the Santa Cruz County METRO Transit District and to commend him for his excellent service on behalf of seniors and people with disabilities in Santa Cruz County as METRO's *Accessible Services Coordinator*
- Letter Advocating with the Santa Cruz METRO Transit District Board of Directors to maintain a full-time *Accessible Services Coordinator* position and to prioritize recruitment efforts after Mr. Daugherty's retirement

During the reporting period, the Commission participated in no special projects

Because the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted County seniors (particularly those in vulnerable communities), throughout the reporting period, special projects were postponed to allow the Commission to focus on programs, services and community efforts to protect the senior community. The impact of increased social isolation combined with the disproportionate vulnerability of seniors to COVID-19 cannot be overstated. Further compounding the pandemic's impact on local seniors was the sudden scarcity of volunteers that many support programs relied upon. Senior volunteers sheltered-in-place and support programs struggled to find substitute volunteers when their services were most needed. The CZU

Lightning Complex Wildfires exacerbated the situation in affected areas, further straining the availability of resources for vulnerable seniors.

Because of the complexity and scope of these intersecting crises, the Commission focused the majority of its resources, time and efforts on monitoring the situation, sharing information and resources where appropriate, and providing a platform for the community to offer feedback on the most pressing issues facing seniors during this difficult time.

10. FUTURE GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2022-2023, the Seniors Commission will continue to:

- Monitor and support COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts for Santa Cruz County seniors
- Monitor and support CZU Lightning Complex Wildfire recovery efforts (including possible evacuation efforts in burn scar areas because of potential debris flow) for Santa Cruz County seniors
- Monitor and support County efforts to attain *AARP Age-Friendly Community* designation
- Monitor and participate in activities that promote accessible, affordable housing for seniors, particularly those that support age-in-place opportunities
- Monitor and advocate for the availability of accessible, affordable transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities
- Monitor and support County and community *Master Plan on Aging* implementation efforts
- Monitor and advocate for County resources to expand access to broadband in rural areas and address the digital divide for financially vulnerable seniors
- Monitor funding, availability, and access to community services and programs that support vulnerable seniors, particularly the status of the Live Oak Senior Center
- Promote awareness of the Commission by attending and supporting local events aligned with the Commission's scope and purpose

In 2022-2023, the Seniors Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors take the following actions:

- Provide policy leadership and funding to legislation, programs and policy supporting COVID-19 pandemic recovery for Santa Cruz County seniors
- Provide policy leadership and funding to legislation, programs and policy supporting wildfire recovery (including possible evacuation efforts in burn scar areas because of potential debris flow) for Santa Cruz County seniors
- Continue to provide policy leadership and funding support to agencies tasked with leading County efforts to attain *AARP Age-Friendly Community* designation.
- Provide policy leadership and funding to legislation, programs and policy promoting accessible, affordable housing for the senior community, particularly those that support age-in-place opportunities
- Provide policy leadership and funding to legislation, programs and policy to increase the availability of accessible, affordable transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities
- Provide policy leadership and funding to support to local *Master Plan on Aging* implementation efforts
- Provide policy leadership and funding to support to community services and programs that support vulnerable seniors, particularly the status of the Live Oak Senior Center
- Provide policy leadership and funding to support to expand access to broadband in rural areas and address the digital divide for financially vulnerable seniors

Approved by the Seniors Commission at the December 21, 2021 regular meeting.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the *Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission*,



Carol Childers, *Commission Chair*

December 21, 2021
Date



Antonio Rivas, *Commission Vice Chair*

December 21, 2021
Date

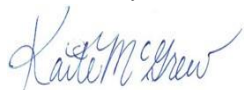
SENIORS COMMISSION 2020-2021 ATTENDANCE REPORT

District/ Supervisor	Commissioner	Feb 2020	April 2020	June 2020	Aug 2020	Oct 2020	Dec 2020
1st District Supervisor John Leopold	Michael Lewis	P	MEETING CANCELED FOR LACK OF QUORUM	P	P	E	E
	Lynne Simpson	P		A	P	P	P
2nd District Supervisor Zach Friend	Antonio Rivas Vice Chair	P		P	P	P	A
	Mark Johannessen	P		P	P	P	P
3rd District Supervisor Ryan Coonerty	Lois Sones	P		P	P	P	P
	Enda Brennan	E		P	P	P	P
4th District Supervisor Greg Caput	Louis J. Tuosto	A		A	P	E	A
	Patricia Heath Fohrman	P		P	P	E	P
5th District Supervisor Bruce McPherson	Lynn McKibbin	P		P	P	P	P
	Carol Childers Chair	P		P	P	P	P
Ex Officio Non-Voting Member California Senior Legislature	Charles Molnar	E	E	E	E	E	

Attendance: P=Present A=Absent E=Excused (-) = Not Seated

District/ Supervisor	Commissioner	Feb 2021	April 2021	June 2021	Aug 2021	Oct 2021	Dec 2021
1st District Supervisor John Leopold	Michael Lewis	P	-	-	-	MEETING CANCELED FOR LACK OF QUORUM	-
	Lynne Simpson	P	-	-	-		-
1st District Supervisor Manu Koenig	Tom Haid	-	P	P	E		A
	Dena Taylor	-	-	-	P		P
2nd District Supervisor Zach Friend	Antonio Rivas Vice Chair	P	P	P	P		P
	Mark Johannessen	P	P	P	P		P
3rd District Supervisor Ryan Coonerty	Lois Sones	P	P	P	P		E
	Enda Brennan	P	P	A	P		P
4th District Supervisor Greg Caput	Louis J. Tuosto	A	A	-	-		-
	Patricia Heath Fohrman	P	P	P	A		P
5th District Supervisor Bruce McPherson	Lynn McKibbin	P	P	P	P	P	
	Carol Childers Chair	E	P	E	P	P	
Ex Officio Non-Voting Member California Senior Legislature	Charles Molnar	E	E	E	E	E	

Submitted by:



Kaite McGrew
Commissions Manager

December 21, 2021

Date