



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### BOARD VOTES TO WAIVE FEES FOR SMALL ADUs

Continuing to address the local housing affordability crisis, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday took the unprecedented step of waiving County fees for small accessory dwelling units under a three-year pilot program.

Accessory dwelling units can be an effective and innovative way to increase local housing inventories, one of the goals under the County's first-ever Strategic Plan. Voting unanimously, the Board directed County Administrative Officer Carlos Palacios to bring forward a resolution enacting a three-year waiver program for ADUs that are 640 square feet or smaller.

"The Board has taken a number of steps to address the housing crisis, including making it easier to build ADUs through a step-by-step toolkit for homeowners and creating a fund to underwrite the construction of deed-restricted, affordable units," said Board Chair Zach Friend, who brought the proposal forward. "Fees can also be a barrier to new housing. By eliminating County fees for these affordable-by-design units, we can make a real difference in addressing a crisis that impacts every resident, from seniors to young families."

By many measures, Santa Cruz County is one of the least affordable places to live in the world, making it difficult for families to pay bills and stay together, creating barriers for employers trying to recruit and retain employees and affecting health outcomes for disadvantaged communities, among other impacts. When cost-of-living is factored in, 23.8 percent of Santa Cruz County's residents live in poverty – the second-highest rate in California, behind Los Angeles.

Recent changes have stimulated interest in ADU construction. Through the County's online toolkit, property owners can quickly determine if they are eligible to build an ADU, research financing and even work through cost estimates using a fee calculator. More information is available at <http://www.sccoplanning.com/ADU.aspx>.

The proposal would save an estimated \$7,300 for a 640-square-foot unit. The proposal was backed by a number of community groups and officials.