PRESS RELEASE

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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT OF DIRECTOR MATT MACHADO, INTERIM DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS

Nov. 20, 2026 – Santa Cruz County, CA — The County of Santa Cruz announces the retirement of Matt Machado, Deputy County Executive Officer and Director of Community Development and Infrastructure, effective Wednesday, December 30, 2026, following more than eight years of dedicated service since joining the department in June 2018.

During his tenure, Machado oversaw the department's Planning and Public Works branches. His leadership helped guide the department through complex challenges while balancing infrastructure needs, community priorities and the County's long-term development goals.

"Matt's proactive leadership has aided the department in navigating complex challenges and responding effectively to winter storm events and emergencies, all while addressing the evolving needs of our communities," said Nicole Coburn, Santa Cruz County Executive Officer. "We are grateful for his dedication and wish him all the best in retirement."

Reflecting on his retirement, Machado expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve the community and work alongside dedicated staff.

"It has been a privilege to serve the residents of Santa Cruz County for the last eight and a half years," said Matt Machado, Deputy County Executive Officer and Director of Community Development and Infrastructure. "I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished together and grateful for the partnerships we've built along the

way. I leave knowing the department is in capable hands and will continue making a positive impact on the communities we serve."

The County will appoint Carolyn Burke to serve as Interim Director of Public Works and County Roads Commissioner, effective Saturday, December 19, 2026. Burke currently serves as Assistant Director of Public Works with responsibility over sanitation, recycling and solid waste, stormwater and flood control, and construction management. With nearly 25 years of County experience, Burke has a comprehensive understanding of Public Works operations and priorities as she assumes interim leadership.

Additionally, the County will appoint Stephanie Hansen to serve as Interim Director of Planning, effective Saturday, December 19, 2026. Hansen currently serves as Assistant Director of Planning with responsibility over fiscal/administration, code compliance, policy and housing. Hansen has 8.5 years of County experience, including leading major work such as the Sustainability Update and new Housing Element.

"Both Carolyn and Stephanie are accomplished professionals in their fields, and I look forward to working with them in their interim roles. I am confident they will ensure continuity of services and maintain progress on Board-approved projects and priorities," said Nicole Coburn.

The County anticipates launching a formal recruitment to formalize department leadership in 2027.

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