

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Supervisor Don Horsley Appointed President of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

Redwood City – Supervisor Don Horsley, selected unanimously today to serve as president of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, laid out his priorities for the upcoming year: carry through strategies to eliminate homelessness; advance equity; and improving community safety.

Horsley, representing the County’s [Third District](#), called the past two years “wild and challenging” due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He pledged equity – just and fair inclusion into a society where all can participate, prosper and reach their full potential – will guide the county’s path to recovery.

“I’m optimistic that in 2022 we’ll be able to come back to a semblance of what we used to think of as normal life,” he said. “But I know that things will continue to be challenging in the next few weeks and months. It is not over.”

The Board also named [District One](#) Supervisor Dave Pine as vice president.

Goals for 2022

Homelessness: Horsley announced plans for a countywide summit this spring on strategies to end homelessness with a focus on the mentally ill who refuse services and treatment. He plans to build the case for state and federal funding to provide emergency housing and services for gravely disabled individuals, due to illness, substance abuse or any other factors.

“The challenge of ending homelessness is ongoing, but this year we have additional resources that will be invaluable, from the [purchase of hotels](#) to the creation of a state-of-the-art [navigation center](#) providing even more safe housing for the unhoused,” Horsley said. “I look forward to this Board tackling this social dilemma as a top priority this year.”

Equity: Building on the hiring of the County’s first chief equity officer, Shireen Malekafzali, in 2021, Horsley said the County is committed to ensuring policies and funding for housing, transportation, job training and other services reach the most vulnerable residents. Malekafzali will provide monthly presentations during Board meetings on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Community Safety: Horsley’s focus is on whether red flag laws, which empower law enforcement to remove firearms from individuals who have made credible threats of violence, are being used effectively. Horsley, who served three terms as County Sheriff, plans to bring together stakeholders including the Giffords Law Center, led by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, to study whether current laws should be adjusted.

In keeping with tradition, Horsley presented the outgoing Board president, David J. Canepa with a gift: a custom desk-top globe, symbolizing Canepa’s interests in world affairs. Horsley also plans to present young Piero, the son of David and his wife, Ana, with a toy fire engine, “symbolizing yet another challenge the Board of Supervisors faced in 2021 – wildfire.”

In his remarks, Canepa said, “As I conclude my year as Board President during this sobering pandemic, I couldn’t be prouder of our County staff for its round-the-clock effort for nearly two years to provide care and relief whenever and wherever needed.”

“Most especially, however, I want to thank our 765,000 residents for making San Mateo County a leader in the nation in battling COVID by following common-sense health guidelines and by getting vaccinated. Our residents have showed that public health is the highest priority and they have saved lives. But the Omicron virus continues to surge and we must all remain vigilant. Thank you to supervisors [Carole] Groom, [Warren] Slocum, [Dave] Pine and Vice President Horsley for your continued support. I look forward to supporting you all as Horsley takes over the presidency for 2022.”

Horsley is in the final year of his third term as a member of the Board of Supervisors. He is not eligible to run again due to term limits. This is his third time as Board president.

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