



# City of Santa Cruz Logo and Website Refresh Survey Results and Research Report.



# → Executive Summary

The City of Santa Cruz, renowned for its unique blend of natural beauty, cultural vibrancy, and community spirit, embarked on a pivotal journey to align its communications strategy with the evolving needs and aspirations of its residents. Recognizing the importance of this endeavor, Setsail Marketing Inc. was selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process commissioned to conduct extensive market research, capturing the voices of 687 diverse residents, City staff and business owners to forge a future where every individual feels valued and engaged. This project isn't about creating a different or new City identity. We want to showcase the natural beauty and love for outdoor recreation opportunities and all the things that make Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz!



This report, commissioned as part of this initiative, captures community insights that will guide the strategic renewal of the City's visual identity. The extensive survey detailed herein reflects broad participation from diverse City stakeholders and uncovers key findings about areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. These insights will directly inform and shape the communications strategy, ensuring that the new visual identity authentically represents Santa Cruz and resonates across the community.

## Survey Insights: A Community's Voice

The research illuminated the deep-seated appreciation residents hold for Santa Cruz's environmental stewardship, the desire for enhanced community engagement, and urgent calls to address challenges such as affordable housing and infrastructure development. The survey underscored the community's commitment to shaping a future that reflects shared values and collective aspirations.

## Key Themes


The research has highlighted several prominent themes that are central to our understanding:


- ✓ **Outdoor Recreation:** Redwood Trees, Biking, Conservation, Wildlife
- ✓ **Landmarks & Icons:** Lighthouse, Beach, Surf, Ocean, West Cliff Drive, Pacific Ave
- ✓ **Culture:** Community Events, Farmers Markets, Artists, Boardwalk


## Key Findings

- 👥 **Community Insights:** Over half of the respondents express a high level of satisfaction with living in Santa Cruz, highlighting the City's successful efforts in creating a livable environment. Yet, concerns regarding public safety and the need for inclusive community development strategies emerged as areas requiring attention.
- 👁️ **Brand Awareness and Perception:** The survey revealed a strong foundation of brand awareness among residents, with iconic attractions and environmental values resonating deeply. However, challenges in addressing outdated stereotypes and ensuring the visual elements accurately reflects Santa Cruz's diversity were identified.





 **Services Research:** Analysis of City services uncovered a well-informed community that values transparent and timely communication. Opportunities for improvement were noted in enhancing digital communication platforms and ensuring accessibility of information.

 **Advertising and Marketing Research:** Findings suggest a general awareness of City communications, with suggestions for leveraging social media and traditional marketing channels to deepen engagement and enhance clarity and relevance of content.

## Recommendations and Action Plan

To address these insights from the community, we recommend targeted outreach programs to foster deeper community engagement, strategies to refine Santa Cruz's brand identity, and initiatives to optimize digital presence and communication effectiveness.

Our action plan outlines immediate steps and prepares for a transformative re-imagining exercise, aiming to elevate Santa Cruz's image, branding and communications in alignment with its vibrant community spirit.

## Looking Forward

As we chart a course towards a future that mirrors the dynamism, resilience, and boundless potential of Santa Cruz, this research report stands as a testament to the power of community collaboration. It offers a blueprint for a branding and communication strategy that not only speaks to the residents of Santa Cruz but also embodies the very essence of what it means to be part of this extraordinary community.



# Table of Contents



Executive Summary  
→



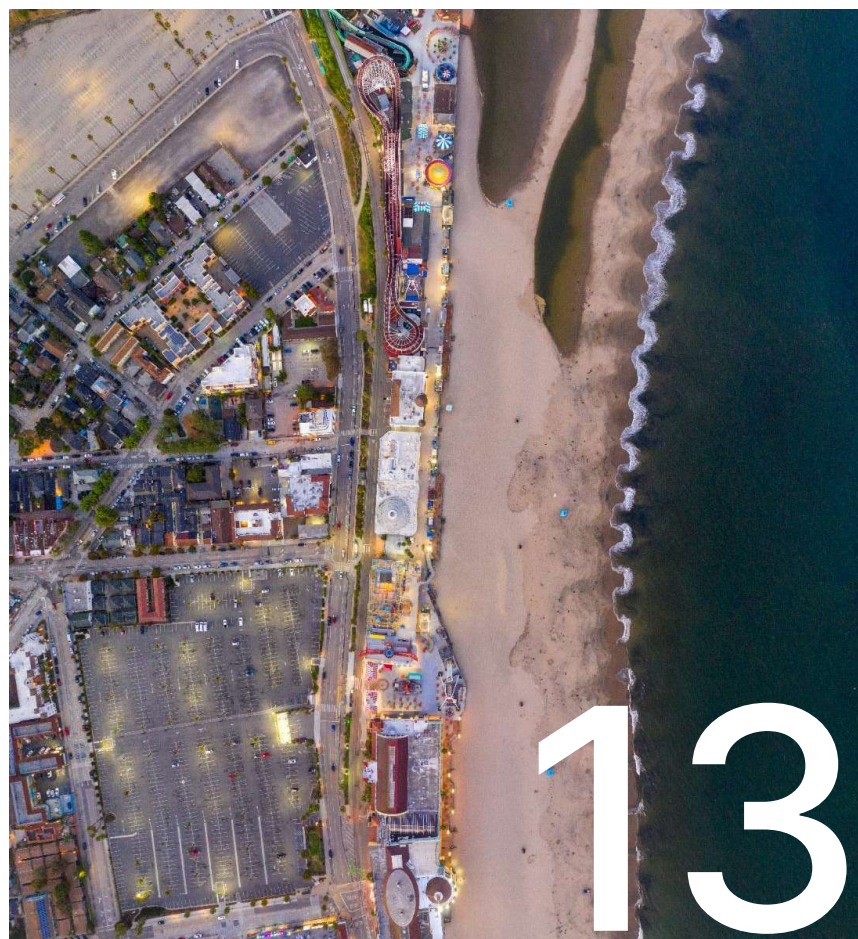
Introduction  
→



Research Plan  
→



Methodology  
→



Market Analysis  
→



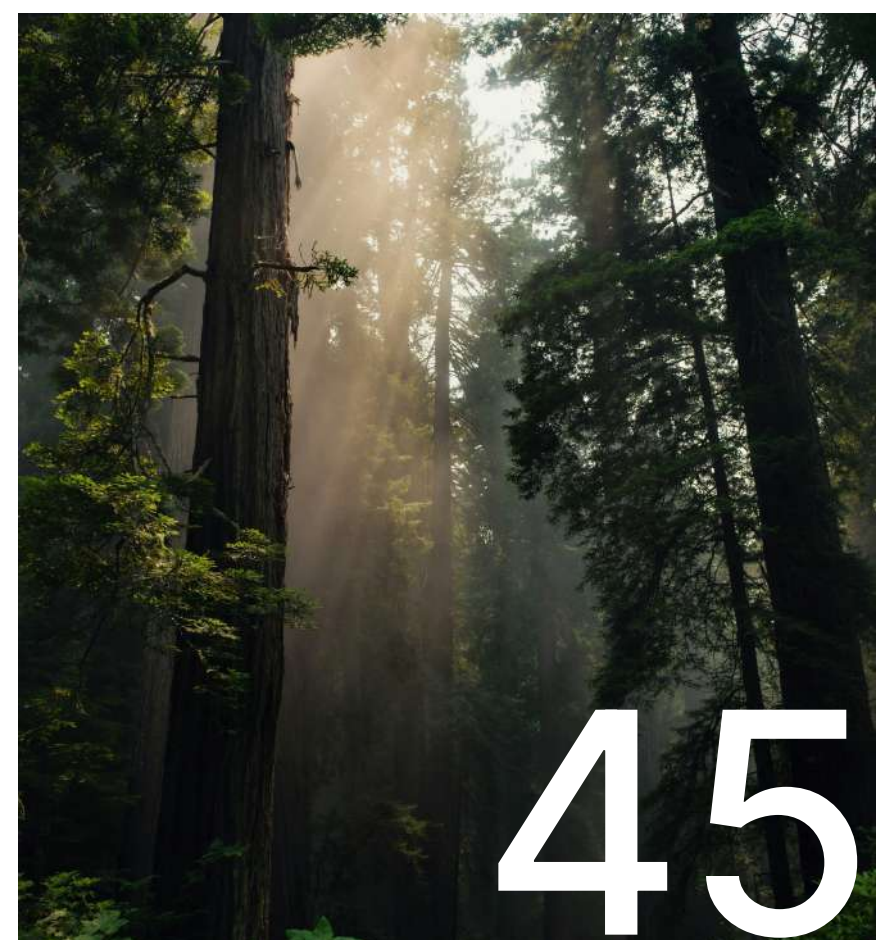
Findings  
→



Recommendations  
→



Action Plan  
→



Appendices  
→





# → Introduction

In the vibrant heart of Santa Cruz, where the lush expanse of Northern California's natural beauty meets the pulsating rhythms of a community deeply engaged in innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability, there lies an ongoing narrative of advancements, resilience, and a trailblazing community spirit. This report embarks on an exploratory journey to delve deep into the fabric of the City's community - to listen, understand, and articulate the collective voice of its residents and stakeholders.

The City has recognized the imperative need to revisit and rejuvenate its visual identity and communications strategy. This necessity is not born out of a request for mere aesthetic refreshment but from a profound commitment to ensuring that the City's identity and messaging authentically reflect the values, aspirations, and diversity of its community. Because of this, a comprehensive market research initiative was launched, aimed at harvesting insights directly from the lifeblood of the City – its people.

The foundation of this endeavor is rooted in a series of meticulously designed tasks, as outlined in the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Communications and Rebranding Services. Market Research serves as the cornerstone of our mission, guiding us to identify key target audiences, understand their behaviors and preferences, and develop resonant messaging and strategies that align with the heartbeat of Santa Cruz.



## Survey Insights as a Beacon

Through the lens of the 619 residents, business owners and City staff who participated in this survey, a narrative unfolds - one that highlights that:

- The City's natural scenery and history dominates the current brand perception.
- There is general alignment between residents and business owners on existing themes and current affairs of the City.
- Most residents are satisfied with living in Santa Cruz.
- The City has been going through a perception and stereotype change, enhanced by several pressing challenges, such as homelessness and affordable housing.
- There is an importance on the environment and sustainability of the City and the region.

## Embarking on a Strategic Voyage

Armed with data, insights, and the collective aspirations of the City's community, this report is not just a document; it is a strategic map designed to navigate the complex terrain of Citywide communications efforts. The deliverables - a comprehensive research report, market analysis, community insights, brand awareness and perception research, services research, advertising and marketing research, and an actionable plan - are the compass points that will guide the City of Santa Cruz in charting a course towards a future where every resident feels seen, heard, and valued.

In the pages that follow, we will dive into the research methodology, dissect the findings, and unveil the recommendations that emerged from the journey into the heart of Santa Cruz.

From the shores of the beloved beaches to the bustling streets of downtown, this report aims to capture the essence of Santa Cruz, offering a blueprint for a communication strategy that mirrors the City's dynamism, resilience, and boundless potential.

## A Collaborative Future

As we present this report, we extend our gratitude to every individual who contributed their voice to this vital conversation. Your insights are the foundation upon which Santa Cruz will build its path forward - a path characterized by inclusivity, sustainability, and an unwavering commitment to the well-being of the community. Together, let us envision and cultivate a future for Santa Cruz that is as diverse, vibrant, and thriving as the community it serves.





# → Research Plan

In embarking upon a transformative journey to redefine and elevate the City of Santa Cruz's brand and communications strategy, it becomes imperative to anchor our efforts in a solid foundation of strategic intent and comprehensive market research. This plan serves as the bedrock of our initiative, outlining a structured approach to unraveling the intricacies of the community's perceptions, behaviors, and aspirations. Our aim is to ensure that the evolution of Santa Cruz's brand is reflective of its rich heritage, dynamic present, and promising future, resonating deeply with both the hearts of the residents and the spirit of the City.



## Strategic Objectives

- **Illuminate Diverse Audience Segments:** To identify and understand the varied segments within the Santa Cruz community, including residents, business owners, City staff, to ensure the City's brand resonates across this spectrum of voices.
- **Decode Community Behaviors and Preferences:** To delve into the lifestyles, values, and priorities of the community, seeking to align the City's image with the authentic lived experiences of its people.
- **Forge Resonant Narratives:** To synthesize insights into compelling narratives and visual identities that mirror the essence of Santa Cruz.

## Scope of Research

Our research spans the breadth of Santa Cruz's community, engaging with diverse groups through a multi-faceted approach that includes both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This endeavor will not only capture a snapshot of current brand perceptions but also uncover the latent potentials within the City's identity, guiding the strategy towards avenues that hold the most promise for meaningful engagement.

## Research Deliverables

- **Comprehensive Research Report:** Summarizing findings and insights derived from our market research efforts, including analysis of community and City staff perceptions, behaviors, and brand interactions.
- **Market and Community Analysis:** Offering a detailed examination of market trends, competitive landscapes, and community demographics to inform our strategic decisions.
- **Strategic Recommendations:** Providing actionable recommendations for messaging, and communication strategies based on research findings, aimed at enhancing the City's unique visual identity and community engagement.

In conclusion, this research is not just a roadmap for collecting data; it's a commitment to engaging with the community in a dialogue about what Santa Cruz represents and aspires to be. It's about building a brand that doesn't just speak to the City's community but speaks for it, encapsulating the diversity, vibrancy, and resilience that define Santa Cruz.

Through this report, we set forth on a mission to not only gather insights but to transform those insights into a beacon that guides Santa Cruz towards a future where its Citywide communications are as dynamic, inclusive, and captivating as the City itself.

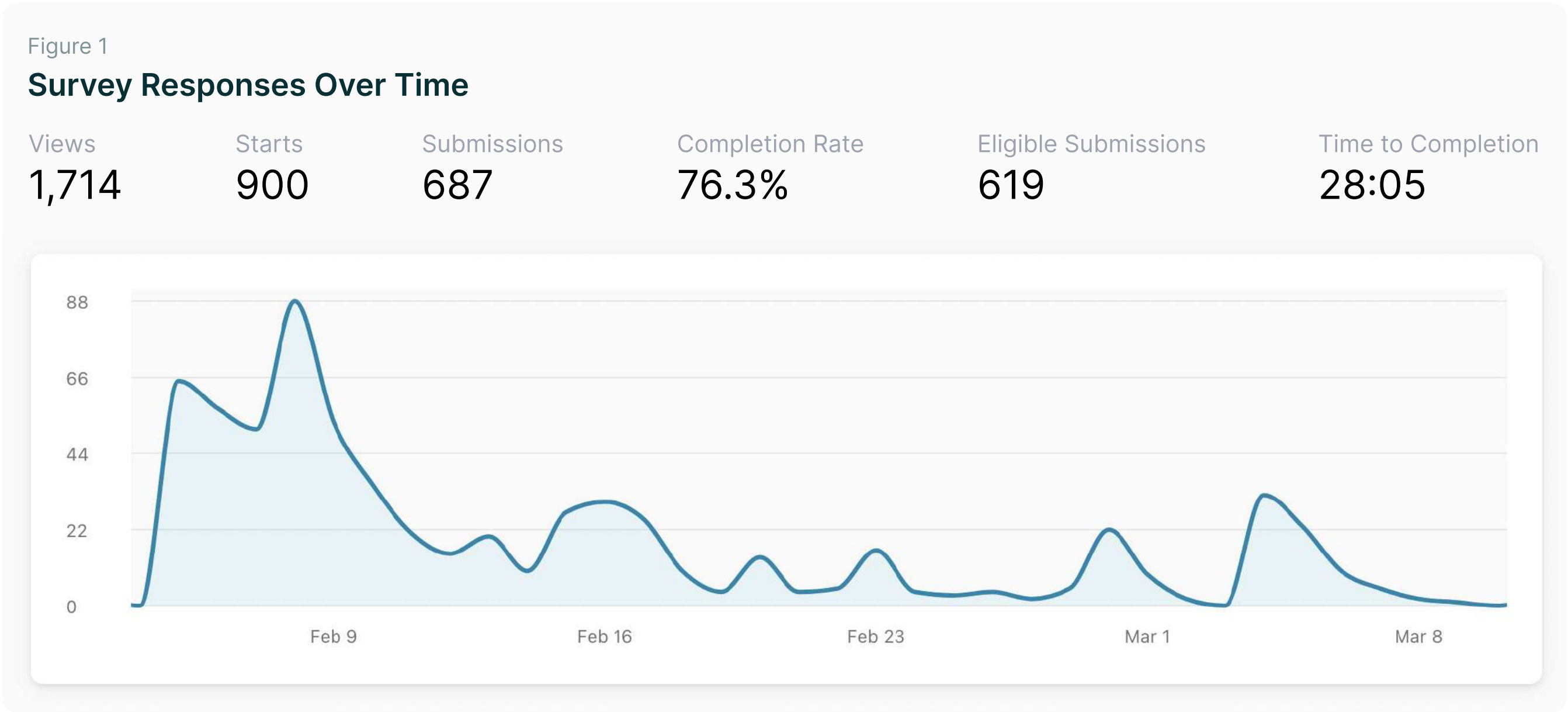


# → Methodology



This report encapsulates the perspectives and insights of a representative sample of 619 residents of the City of Santa Cruz, meticulously gathered over a period extending from February 9 to March 4, 2024. This includes a sampling of 342 responses from residents, 185 from City employees and 92 from business owners.

Notably, the average time to complete the survey was 28 minutes and 5 seconds despite the automated survey estimate suggesting a completion time of 7 minutes. In our endeavor to accurately capture the diverse voices within the community, the survey was conducted with a calculated margin of error of  $\pm 5.0\%$  for all respondents. Achieving a response rate of 619 residents for the survey underscores the engaged and participatory nature of Santa Cruz’s community.



To ensure that the survey results offer a true reflection of Santa Cruz's adult population, we employed weighting techniques and removed any survey results from those that don’t live or work within the City limits<sup>1</sup>. This approach adjusted the demographic profile of the respondents to align with the latest demographic data available for Santa Cruz adults, encompassing age, gender, race/ethnicity, and other pertinent demographic factors. The process of weighting is instrumental in correcting for any disparities between our sample and the overall population, thereby guaranteeing that our findings are both representative and robust.

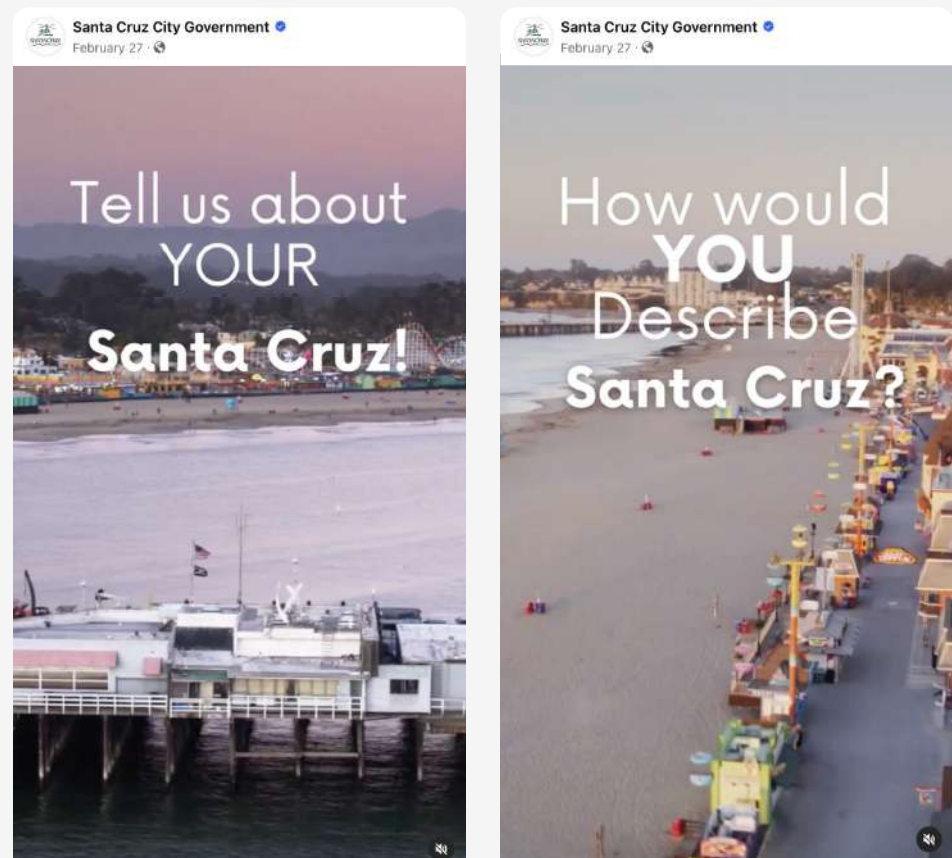
1. Survey respondents were required to provide their ZIP code, and responses from ZIP codes outside the town were automatically rejected in the analysis phase.



## Data Collection Process

### Facebook & Instagram Posts

Posted by the City



Online survey invitations were distributed across multiple channels, with the majority of our efforts focusing primarily on City of Santa Cruz social media platforms and mailing lists, to cast a wide net and encourage broad participation across the community. This included the use of paid advertisements on the Facebook/Meta platform. Available to Santa Cruz residents in both English and Spanish, our comprehensive outreach efforts were designed to capture the diverse socio-economic segments of the City of Santa Cruz, ensuring an inclusive and diverse pool of respondents. An outline of the demographics reached for our survey can be found on page 24.

The team also communicated directly with certain businesses in the tourism, arts/creative/design, technology, retail/food & beverage, sports/outdoor recreation and real estate sectors to ensure a wide array of business owners took part in the survey.

## Analysis and Reporting

Upon the closure of the data collection phase, Setsail embarked on a rigorous analysis process. We delved into the collected data and responses, applying both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to unearth the underlying patterns, preferences, and perceptions held by Santa Cruz residents. The analytical phase was meticulously structured to distill actionable insights while maintaining the highest standards of data integrity and accuracy.

### Survey Landing Page

#### City of Santa Cruz Rebrand: Community Insights Survey

As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering a vibrant, healthy, and resilient Santa Cruz, we are embarking on a journey to deepen our understanding of our City through your eyes – the eyes of those who live, work, and shape our community. This survey represents a crucial step in this journey, a collaborative effort to capture the diverse voices and experiences that define our City.

Our goal is to gather insights that will not only reflect the current sentiment of our residents but also guide us in crafting a future that

Takes 7+ minutes

[Start Survey](#)

press Enter ↵





## Ethical Considerations

Throughout the survey process, we adhered strictly to ethical research practices. Participants were informed of the survey's purpose, their rights as respondents, and the confidential nature of their responses. Consent was obtained from all participants, and anonymity was assured to foster an environment of trust and openness, encouraging honest and thoughtful responses.

The methodology adopted for this survey reflects our commitment to capturing a detailed and nuanced portrait of Santa Cruz's community sentiment. The combination of a representative sample, careful weighting to ensure demographic representation, and a robust analysis framework positions this report as a critical tool for informing future City planning, policy-making, and strategic initiatives. Through this research, we have laid the groundwork for a collaborative dialogue between the City of Santa Cruz and its residents, aimed at fostering a thriving, inclusive, and dynamic community.

## A Collaborative Approach

In addition to the comprehensive survey and data analysis undertaken, the methodology employed for this study was further enriched by Setsail Marketing's proactive engagement with the Santa Cruz community at its core. Recognizing the importance of grounding our research in authentic, local insights, our team embarked on a series of immersive visits to Santa Cruz and online meetings with the City of Santa Cruz project team. These engagements provided us with invaluable firsthand experiences and perspectives, facilitating in-depth discussions with City staff, Council members, and key leaders including the Mayor and Vice-Mayor. These conversations were instrumental in capturing the essence of the community's spirit and understanding the nuanced dynamics at play within Santa Cruz.

Leveraging the insights gained from these meetings, we meticulously crafted the survey questions over several weeks, ensuring that each question was reflective of the community's priorities, concerns, and aspirations. This collaborative process involved continuous feedback and iterative approvals from City staff, ensuring that the survey instrument was not only comprehensive but also resonant with the values and identity of Santa Cruz. This synergistic approach between Setsail Marketing and the City of Santa Cruz staff was pivotal in developing a survey that truly encapsulated the voice of the community, laying a solid foundation for the research insights that would follow.



# → Market Analysis

The essence of Santa Cruz lies in understanding the multifaceted layers that compose its market landscape. This market analysis endeavors to dissect these layers, providing a granular look at the economic, demographic, and social fabrics that define the City of Santa Cruz. Through an exhaustive examination of data and trends, this section aims to uncover the forces shaping Santa Cruz's present and future, offering stakeholders a roadmap to informed decision-making and strategic planning.



This report draws on diverse data sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Santa Cruz County Economic Development, and academic research, ensuring a robust foundation for our insights. This analysis is not only a reflection of where Santa Cruz stands today but also a vision of its trajectory, influenced by global trends, regional shifts, and local initiatives.

## Economic Overview

### Context and Current Landscape

Santa Cruz's economy, enriched by education, technology, and tourism demonstrates a unique fusion of tradition and innovation. The City boasts a diverse economic base, highlighted by the significant role of The University of California, Santa Cruz. This institution not only advances education but also substantially impacts the local economy, underpinning Santa Cruz's vibrant economic ecosystem. The City's adaptability and growth are further evidenced by its attraction of tech startups and its established tourism sector, anchored by renowned attractions. For a detailed exploration of Santa Cruz's economic and demographic data, the Santa Cruz Economic Development website provides a wealth of information.<sup>2</sup>

### Employment and Industry Trends

Employment and industry trends in Santa Cruz have been dynamic in recent years. According to the latest data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate in Santa Cruz for February 2024 was 7.4%, with a noted fluctuation over the preceding months from a low of 4.7% in September 2023 to this peak.<sup>3</sup> This local unemployment trend is critical when considering the broader economic contexts at both state and national levels.

Key industries shaping Santa Cruz's employment landscape include education, professional, scientific & technical services, and healthcare & social assistance. Educational services, for example, employed approximately 6,904 individuals, underscoring its significant role in the local economy.<sup>4</sup> The technology sector, often highlighted for its rapid growth, fosters an environment ripe for tech startups and innovation. However, specific employment numbers or growth rates in this sector at the City level were not directly available in the data reviewed.

Tourism remains an element of Santa Cruz's economy, bolstered by attractions such as the Santa Cruz Boardwalk and beautiful coastal landscape. While the exact economic impact of tourism is complex and influenced by various factors, including seasonal fluctuations, it consistently contributes to the City's economic vitality.

In the broader state context, California saw a 2.75% year-over-year employment growth as of February 2023, indicating a post-pandemic job market statewide.<sup>4</sup> While this provides a positive backdrop, it's essential to consider that local conditions in Santa Cruz can vary significantly from statewide trends.

---

2. Santa Cruz Economic Development. (n.d.). Data | Santa Cruz Economic Development. <https://www.choosesantacruz.com/data>

3. Economy at a Glance | Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA (n.d.). U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. [https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.ca\\_santacruz\\_msa.htm](https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.ca_santacruz_msa.htm)

4. Santa Cruz, CA | Data USA. (n.d.). Data USA. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/santa-cruz-ca/>



## Housing Market Dynamics

The housing market in Santa Cruz is characterized by high demand and limited supply, significantly affecting median home prices. Factors like Santa Cruz's desirable location, its geographical constraints, and the overall appeal of living in a vibrant community contribute to the housing market dynamics. These conditions mirror broader trends in California's real estate market but are more pronounced in Santa Cruz due to its unique attributes. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition 2023 “Out of Reach” Report, Santa Cruz County is now the most expensive housing market for renters in the United States.<sup>5</sup> For the most recent and detailed housing market data in Santa Cruz, please refer to the Santa Cruz Economic Development website.<sup>6</sup>



Housing affordability and availability emerged as prevalent themes in the survey responses. Notably, when asked about areas for improvement in Santa Cruz, affordable housing was ranked as the top concern. See page 28.

## Challenges and Opportunities

While Santa Cruz's economy is dynamic, featuring sectors like technology and tourism, it also confronts challenges such as affordability, income inequality, and infrastructure needs. These issues necessitate a comprehensive strategy that combines public policy efforts and private sector initiatives to enhance economic resilience and inclusivity. For detailed insights and strategic directions, refer to resources like the Santa Cruz Economic Development Strategy Report available on the Santa Cruz Economic Development website.

## Looking Forward

The future of Santa Cruz's economy is poised for growth through strategic investments in education, workforce development, and sustainability. Emphasizing green technology, digital innovation, and creative industries aligns with the City's values and aspirations, offering pathways to navigate the complexities of the modern economy. This approach aims to secure prosperity and well-being for residents and businesses, fostering a resilient and inclusive economic environment. For a comprehensive vision, the Santa Cruz Economic Development Strategy Report on the Santa Cruz Economic Development website would provide valuable insights.<sup>6</sup>

---

5. Out of reach. (n.d.). National Low Income Housing Coalition. <https://nlihc.org/oor>

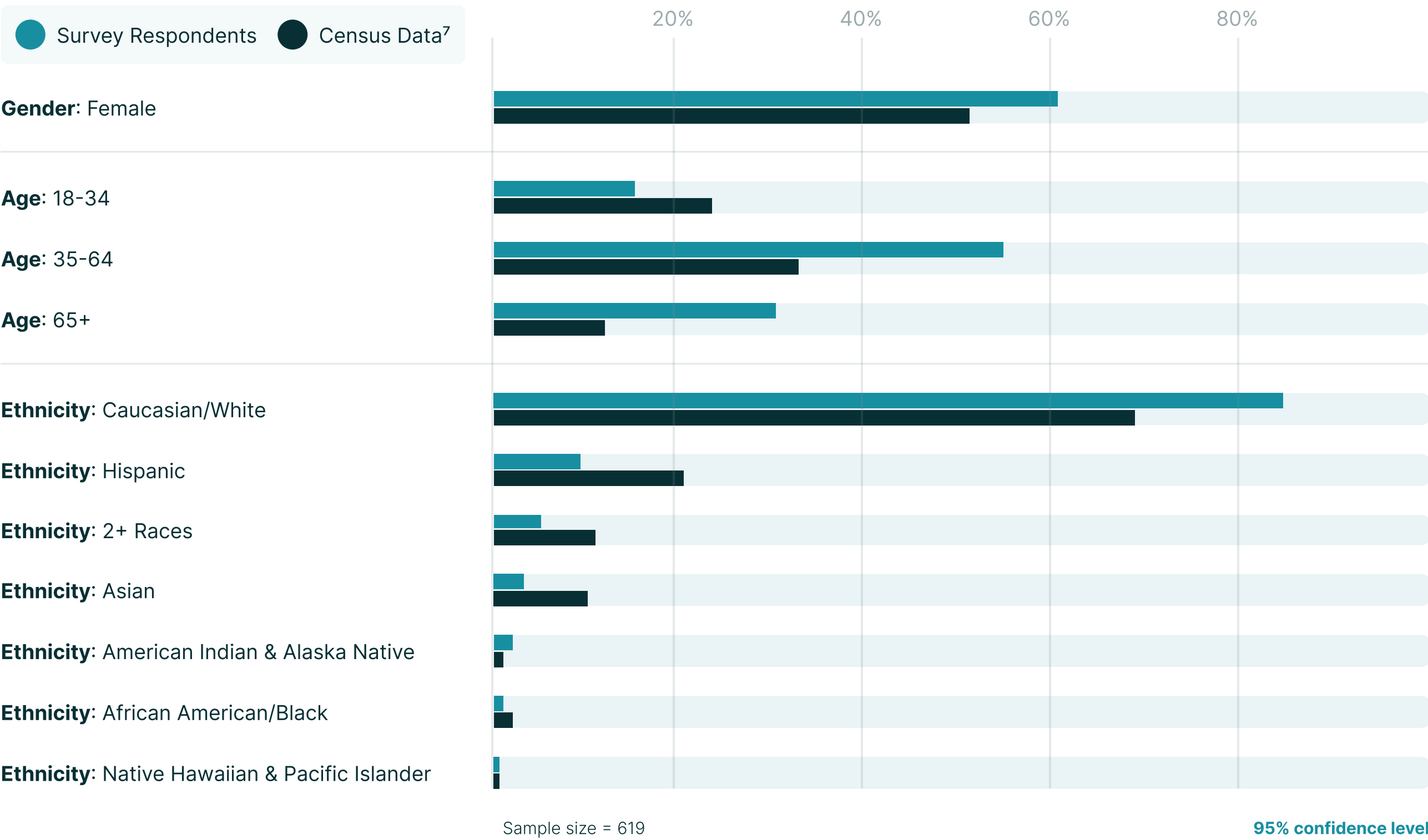
6. Santa Cruz Economic Development. (n.d.-b). Data | Santa Cruz Economic Development. <https://www.choosesantacruz.com/data>



# Demographic Composition

Santa Cruz is home to a population of 61,800 as of July 1, 2022, showing a slight decrease of 1.9% from the April 2020 Census count of 62,956.<sup>7</sup> According to the United States Census Bureau, the demographic makeup of Santa Cruz includes 67.7% White, 21.2% Hispanic or Latino, 10.1% Asian, and smaller percentages of African American, Native American, Pacific Islander, and two or more races. While the City's demographic diversity may not be extensive, Santa Cruz is characterized by a distinctive community ethos and strong local culture. These attributes contribute significantly to the City's vibrancy and appeal as a place to live and work, fostering a sense of unity and shared identity among its residents.

Figure 2  
Table Showing Survey Respondents and Census Data



## Age Distribution and Trends

About 12.4% of the population is under 18, while 12.7% is 65 and over, indicating a diverse, multi-generational community.<sup>7</sup>

## Ethnic and Racial Diversity

The population is primarily White (67.7%), with significant Hispanic or Latino (21.2%), Asian (10.1%), and other groups contributing to the City's multicultural fabric.<sup>7</sup> This diversity is celebrated through cultural festivals, educational programs, and events, enriching community life and promoting mutual respect.

7. Quick Facts | Santa Cruz City, California. (July, 2022) U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/santacruzcitycalifornia/PST045222>



## Household Composition and Living Arrangements

In Santa Cruz, 47% of housing units are owner-occupied, reflecting a community that supports both independent living and family life.<sup>8</sup> This statistic underlines the City's varied household dynamics, from traditional families to individuals living alone, showcasing the range of housing options available to accommodate diverse needs and preferences.

## Educational Attainment and Workforce Participation

Santa Cruz stands out for its educational attainment, with 57.1% of residents aged 25 and over holding a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>8</sup> This educational foundation contributes to a skilled workforce that supports diverse sectors including technology and the arts, reflecting the economic engagement of the community.

## Income Levels and Economic Disparities

Santa Cruz's median household income is \$105,491, yet 18.7% of its population lives below the poverty line, highlighting economic disparities within the community.<sup>8</sup> Addressing these disparities is crucial, requiring social programs and policies aimed at equitable growth.

## Migration Patterns and Population Growth

Santa Cruz has witnessed demographic shifts, influenced by both internal and international migration, drawn by its economic opportunities, educational institutions, and natural beauty. Yet, challenges like housing affordability impact these trends. The City's demographic makeup—a blend of ages, ethnicities, and socio-economic statuses—contributes to its distinct character, as highlighted in our research. As Santa Cruz evolves, balancing demographic strengths with challenges is crucial for an inclusive, vibrant future.



## Social and Cultural Landscape

This section delves into the rich tapestry of social dynamics, cultural institutions, and the community ethos that define the City. Santa Cruz's reputation as a hub of creativity, diversity, and social activism is not accidental but the result of concerted efforts by its residents to nurture an environment that values artistic expression, community engagement, and cultural inclusivity.

---

8. Quick Facts | Santa Cruz City, California. (July, 2022) U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/santacruzcitycalifornia/PST045222>



## Community Engagement and Civic Participation

Santa Cruz is renowned for its community engagement, with a significant portion of residents actively participating in various civic activities, including volunteering and attending City council meetings. This level of involvement reflects a community deeply committed to influencing the City's direction and upholding inclusive, democratic values. This can be highlighted in the level of detail that respondents put into the survey and the level of responses.

## Cultural Institutions and Arts Scene

Santa Cruz's identity is deeply intertwined with its cultural institutions and arts scene, featuring venues like the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History and events such as the Santa Cruz Film Festival. These platforms support local artists and draw cultural tourism, enhancing the City's economic landscape. The presence of vibrant street art, live music, and community theaters highlight Santa Cruz's dedication to creating an environment where arts and culture thrive, showcasing the City's broad artistic diversity and commitment to cultural engagement.

## Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

Santa Cruz demonstrates its commitment to diversity and inclusion through community programs and policies supporting underrepresented groups, as elaborated by community members including City Council members. Initiatives promoting racial equity, LGBTQ+ rights, and accessibility for individuals with disabilities showcase the City's ethos of acceptance and mutual respect. These efforts are reflected in both City policies and the activities of local nonprofits, illustrating a community-wide dedication to fostering an environment of equality and support for all residents.

## Educational Institutions and Lifelong Learning

The presence of The University of California, Santa Cruz, among other educational institutions outside of the City limits like Cabrillo College, establishes the City as a center for academic excellence and lifelong learning. These institutions bolster the local economy and enrich cultural and intellectual life through public events like lectures and art exhibitions. Education in Santa Cruz transcends formal settings, with various workshops and classes, like those offered through the City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department, reflecting a community-wide emphasis on continual learning and personal development.

## Environmental Awareness and Sustainability Practices



34% percent of the community identifies environmental sustainability as a prominent attribute evident within Santa Cruz, reflecting the City's broader commitment to green initiatives. See more on page 31.

Santa Cruz places a strong emphasis on environmental stewardship, reflecting the community's profound connection with nature. This commitment is evident in numerous sustainability practices and conservation efforts, aimed at reducing carbon emissions and preserving natural habitats. The annual Santa Cruz Earth Day Festival is a testament to the City's dedication to environmental activism and education, celebrating and promoting a sustainable lifestyle among residents.



## Challenges and Opportunities

While Santa Cruz's social and cultural landscape is rich and dynamic, it faces challenges such as maintaining affordability and accessibility for all residents amidst rising living costs. Ensuring that the City's cultural and social fabric remains inclusive and vibrant requires ongoing effort and investment.

The social and cultural landscape of Santa Cruz is a testament to the City's dynamic community spirit, characterized by active civic participation, a flourishing arts scene, steadfast commitment to diversity and inclusion, and a collective dedication to environmental sustainability. As Santa Cruz looks to the future, nurturing and preserving these social and cultural assets will be pivotal in sustaining the City's unique identity and quality of life.

## Infrastructure and Services

Santa Cruz, with its unique geographical setting and vibrant community, faces distinct challenges and opportunities in developing and maintaining infrastructure that meets the needs of its citizens while preserving the City's natural beauty and cultural heritage. This section explores the current state of Santa Cruz's infrastructure, including transportation, utilities, digital connectivity, and public services, offering insights into the City's commitment to community well-being.

## Transportation and Mobility

Santa Cruz is actively enhancing its transportation network to promote mobility and sustainability, emphasizing biking, public transit, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. Initiatives include expanding bike paths and upgrading public transit systems to ease congestion and reduce environmental impact. The City faces challenges like traffic congestion, especially during peak tourism times, and the ongoing need for road and bridge maintenance. Efforts to mitigate these issues focus on projects designed to improve transportation efficiency and sustainability, reflecting Santa Cruz's commitment to accessible and eco-friendly mobility options.



The survey respondents mention traffic and transportation infrastructure as one of the most pressing challenges the City of Santa Cruz faces today. See more on page 28.

## Water and Utilities

Santa Cruz's water management focuses on sustainability and resilience, addressing California's drought challenges through diversified water sources and conservation efforts. The City utilizes surface and groundwater, with strategies for long-term security including groundwater recharge and exploring recycled water. Initiatives extend to renewable energy and waste reduction, reflecting a commitment to environmental stewardship. For a detailed overview of water and utility services in Santa Cruz, including conservation programs and infrastructure projects, the City of Santa Cruz Water Department<sup>9</sup> offers comprehensive information.

---

9. Water Department (n.d.). City of Santa Cruz. <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/water>



## Digital Connectivity and Smart City Initiatives

In the digital age, Santa Cruz is advancing its digital connectivity and smart City capabilities, focusing on expanding broadband access, implementing public Wi-Fi initiatives, and integrating smart technologies. These efforts are designed to enhance digital access across the community and improve City services and citizen engagement through advanced technology solutions.

## Public Services and Community Facilities

In Santa Cruz, public services and community facilities are foundational to the City's vibrancy and well-being. The local schools and healthcare facilities are known for their quality, while police and fire services ensure safety and responsiveness. The City's parks, libraries, and recreational facilities have seen significant investments, making them inclusive spaces for learning, recreation, and community building. These efforts reflect Santa Cruz's commitment to enhancing public services and facilities for all residents.

## Challenges and Future Directions

Santa Cruz is tackling challenges like housing affordability and utility resilience while planning to expand public services. Future directions include infrastructure investments, and community engagement strategies to address these issues, ensuring the City's future is sustainable and inclusive.

The infrastructure and services of Santa Cruz reflect the City's values of sustainability, inclusivity, and community well-being. As Santa Cruz looks ahead, continuing to invest in resilient, forward-thinking infrastructure and responsive public services will be key to supporting its dynamic community and preserving its unique character. Embracing innovation and fostering partnerships across public, private, and civic sectors will ensure that Santa Cruz remains a thriving City for generations to come.



## Environmental Sustainability in Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz stands at the forefront of environmental sustainability, embodying a deep commitment to preserving its natural beauty and fostering a resilient, eco-conscious community. This section explores the City's comprehensive efforts to combat climate change, promote renewable energy, protect water, and ensure the well-being of its natural habitats and biodiversity. Through the lens of the City of Santa Cruz's Climate Action Program<sup>10</sup>, we highlight key initiatives, achievements, and future directions in the City's journey toward sustainability.

---

10. Climate Action Program. (n.d.). City of Santa Cruz. <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/city-manager/climate-action-program>



## Climate Action and Carbon Neutrality Goals

Santa Cruz aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 (compared to 1990 levels) and reach carbon neutrality by 2035. This ambitious goal is part of the City's Climate Action Program, which includes initiatives in energy, transportation, waste management, and urban planning. For specifics on the plan and progress, please refer to the City of Santa Cruz's official Climate Action Program page.<sup>11</sup>

## Renewable Energy Initiatives

Central to Santa Cruz's sustainability efforts is the transition towards renewable energy sources, a commitment that reflects the City's dedication to combating climate change and promoting environmental stewardship. In a significant move towards reducing dependency on fossil fuels, Santa Cruz has embarked on a groundbreaking initiative to decrease natural gas usage within the City.

A pivotal component of this initiative is the adoption of policies that encourage new constructions to be built with all-electric infrastructure, aiming to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These efforts are part of a broader City-wide strategy to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035, highlighting Santa Cruz's proactive approach to environmental conservation and energy sustainability.

These efforts are supplemented by incentives for residents and businesses to adopt cleaner, renewable energy sources for heating, cooking, and other needs. The City's proactive approach not only underscores its commitment to a sustainable future but also positions Santa Cruz as a leader in environmental conservation and energy innovation. By prioritizing renewable energy, Santa Cruz is taking concrete steps to protect its natural environment and ensure the well-being of its community for generations to come.

## Water Management

Santa Cruz is experiencing the effects of climate change firsthand. Severe wildfires, prolonged droughts, and erratic rainfall patterns are becoming increasingly common occurrences, posing significant challenges to our drinking water supply and the system that delivers water to residents, businesses, and visitors.

The Santa Cruz Water Department relies entirely on local water supplies such as the San Lorenzo River, creeks on the north coast, water stored in Loch Lomond Reservoir, and a small amount of groundwater from wells in Live Oak. As climate change continues to impact the frequency and intensity of storms and drought, our Water Department is actively working on a plan to upgrade the system and secure a reliable water supply. Initiatives such as water transfers with neighboring agencies, the pilot program for Aquifer Storage and Recovery, and in-depth studies on recycled water opportunities and desalination underscore our commitment to a secure water future and maintaining our way of life in Santa Cruz.

For detailed insights into Santa Cruz's water conservation efforts and planning, including the specific measures and recommendations developed to ensure a reliable water supply and enhance sustainability, you can explore more through the City of Santa Cruz Water Department and Water Supply Planning pages.<sup>12</sup>

---

11. Climate Action Program. (n.d.). City of Santa Cruz. <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/city-manager/climate-action-program>

12. Water Department (n.d.). City of Santa Cruz. <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/water>



## Waste Reduction, Recycling and Biodiversity Conservation

Santa Cruz has implemented comprehensive waste management policies aimed at minimizing landfill waste and promoting a circular economy. These include recycling and waste reduction programs, household hazardous waste management, and food scrap diversion, reflecting the City's commitment to environmental stewardship.

Santa Cruz's waste management strategies are designed to reduce landfill waste and foster a circular economy, with efforts spanning recycling, household hazardous waste handling, and food scrap diversion. These measures demonstrate the City's dedication to environmental preservation. Further details on these initiatives can be found on the City of Santa Cruz's official recycling and waste reduction page.<sup>13</sup>

## Community Engagement and Education

Santa Cruz actively engages its community in environmental sustainability through various educational initiatives. The City offers workshops, school programs, and public awareness campaigns to cultivate a culture of environmental stewardship among residents. These efforts encourage individuals to adopt sustainable practices in their daily lives, contributing to the City's environmental goals. For more detailed information on these community engagement and education efforts, you can visit the City of Santa Cruz's official website or specific sections of their Climate Action Program.

Santa Cruz's dedication to environmental sustainability is a beacon for cities worldwide, illustrating that through innovative policies, community involvement, and a steadfast commitment to the planet, meaningful progress is achievable. As Santa Cruz continues to evolve its sustainability practices, it remains focused on creating a legacy of resilience, health, and harmony with nature for future generations.

### Market Analysis Conclusion:

Our detailed market research has captured essential insights from Santa Cruz's diverse community, laying the groundwork for informed decision-making. As we pivot to the Findings section, we will unpack these insights further, highlighting their direct implications for the rebranding initiative. This crucial transition points us towards strategic actions designed to align and refresh the City's visual identity, ensuring it authentically reflects the values and aspirations of its residents.

---

13. Recycling and waste reduction. (n.d.). City of Santa Cruz. <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/public-works/resource-recovery-garbage-recycling-sweeping/recycling-and-waste-reduction>





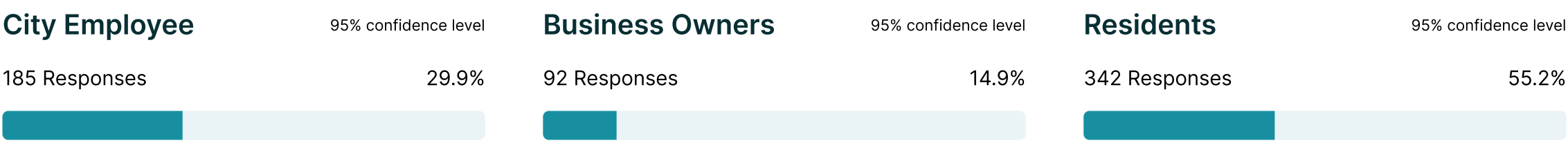
# → Findings



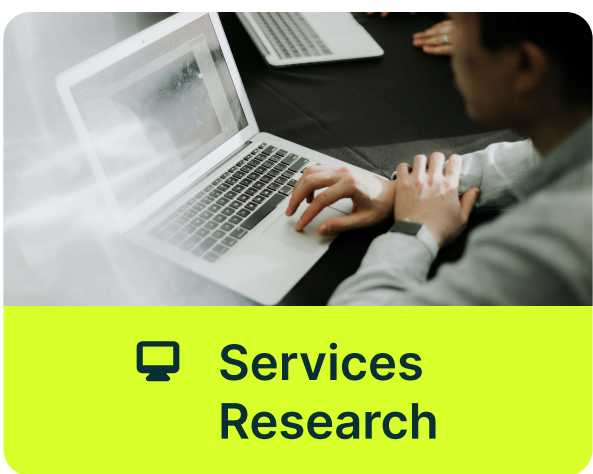
This section of the report presents the key findings from our comprehensive market research study conducted to explore various facets of the City of Santa Cruz.

Through an extensive survey that received 687 responses, we reached 619 eligible residents, after excluding 68 responses due to respondents living outside City limits or not being employed by, or owning a business within, Santa Cruz. Along with a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews, this survey has provided invaluable insights into the community's perceptions, behaviors, and expectations.

Figure 3  
**Eligible Respondent Split**



## Our Findings Are Categorized Into Four Main Areas



Each category sheds light on different aspects of the relationship between the City and its residents, offering a nuanced understanding essential for informed decision-making and strategic planning.

## Demographic Representation

Figure 4  
**Respondent Gender Selection**

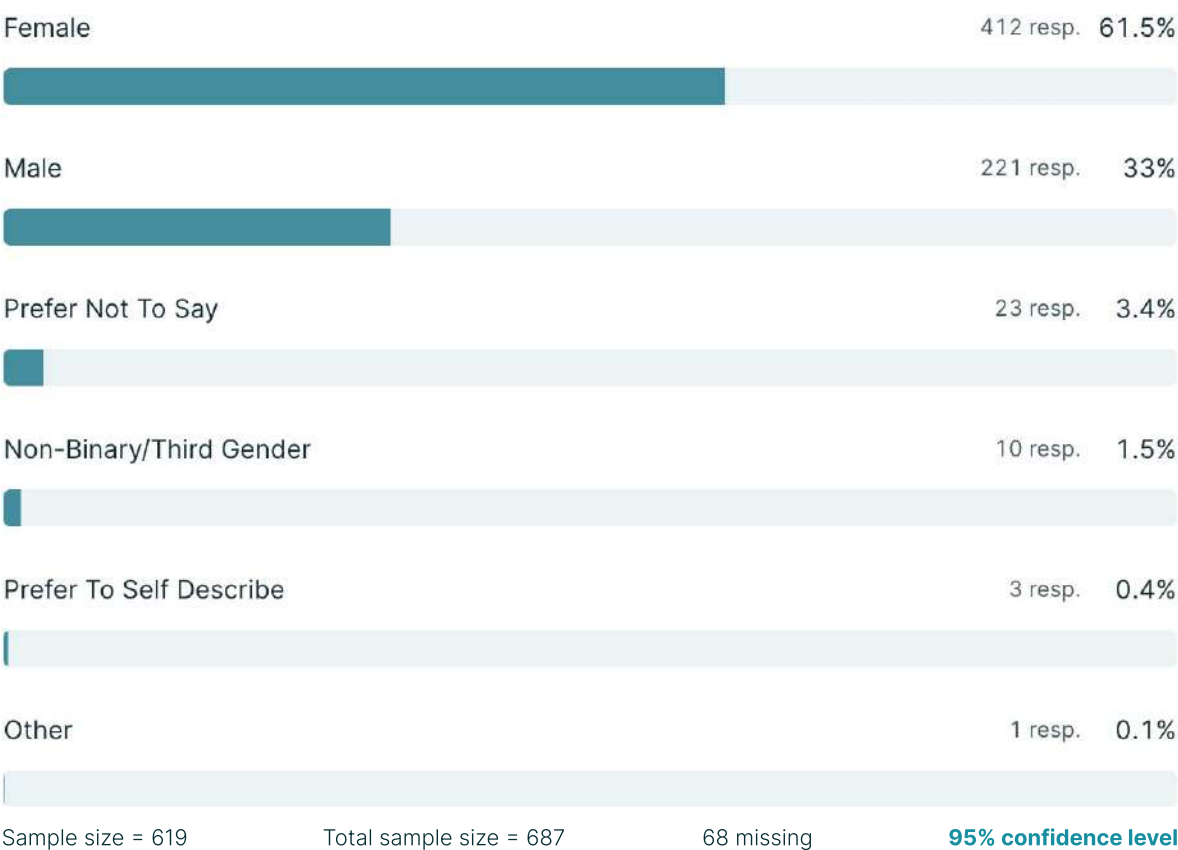


Figure 5  
**Census Data: Gender<sup>14</sup>**



61.5% of respondents (412) were female. This is in comparison to 50.8% of the census data which as of 2023 is reported as 50.8% female (Census.gov QuickFacts).<sup>14</sup>

14. Quick Facts | Santa Cruz City, California. (July, 2022) U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/santacruzcitycalifornia/PST045222>



Figure 6

### Respondent Age Selection

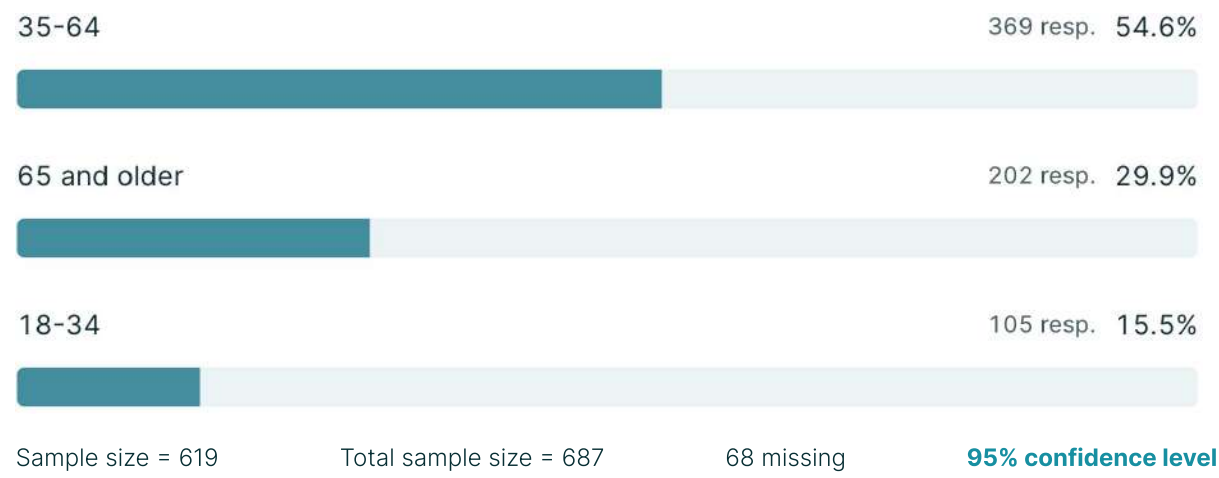
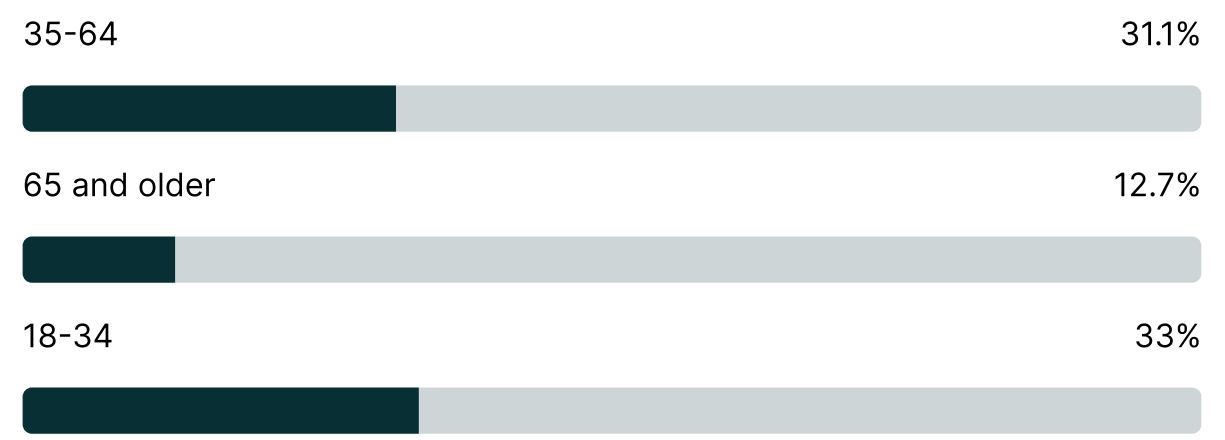


Figure 7

### Census Data: Age<sup>15</sup>



### Main Takeaway:

54.6% of respondents (369) were between the ages of 35-64, 29.9% of respondents were aged 65 and older (2020), while only 15.5% of respondents were between the ages of 18-34. These figures fall out of line with the latest census data which as of 2023 is reported as 31.1% ages 35-64, 12.7% aged 65 and older and 33% ages 18-34 (Census.gov QuickFacts).<sup>15</sup>

Figure 8

### Respondent Ethnicity Selection

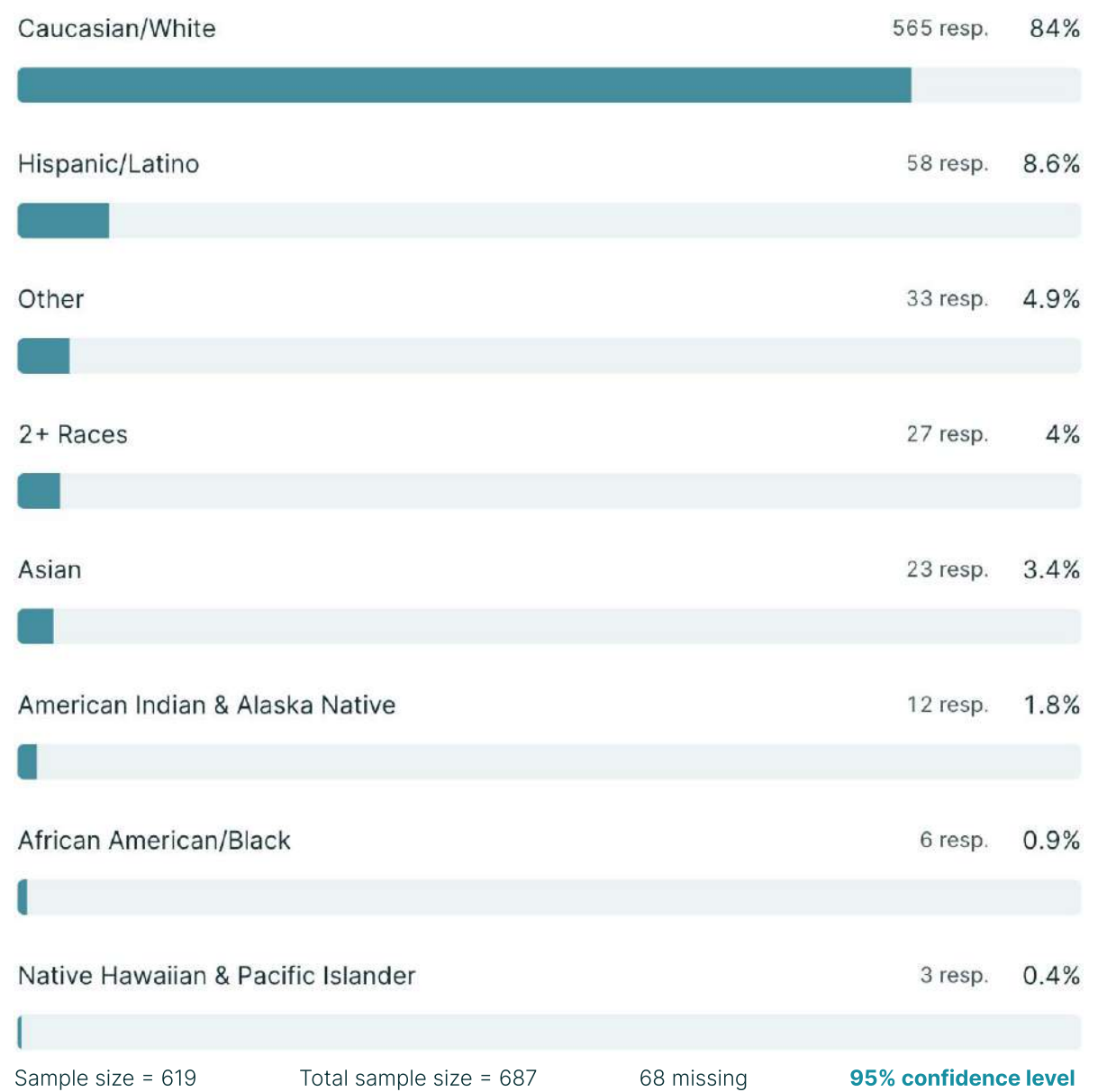
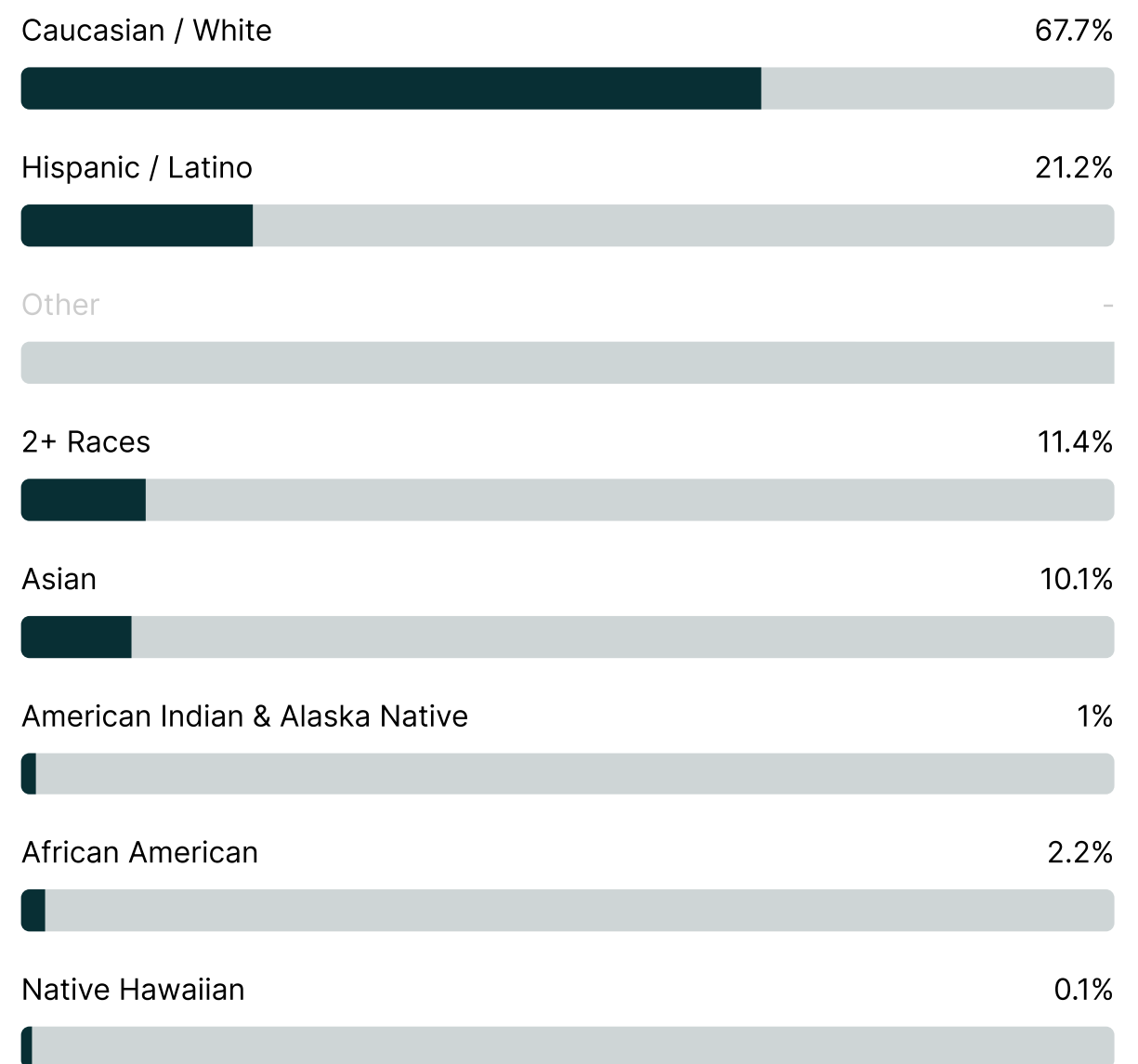


Figure 9

### Census Data: Ethnicity<sup>15</sup>



### Main Takeaway:

84% of respondents identified themselves as 'Caucasian/White' and 8.5% identified themselves as 'Hispanic/Latino'. These were also the highest identified races among Santa Cruz residents in the latest census data (Census.gov QuickFacts).<sup>15</sup>

15. Quick Facts | Santa Cruz City, California. (July, 2022) U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/santacruzcitycalifornia/PST045222>



## Community Insights

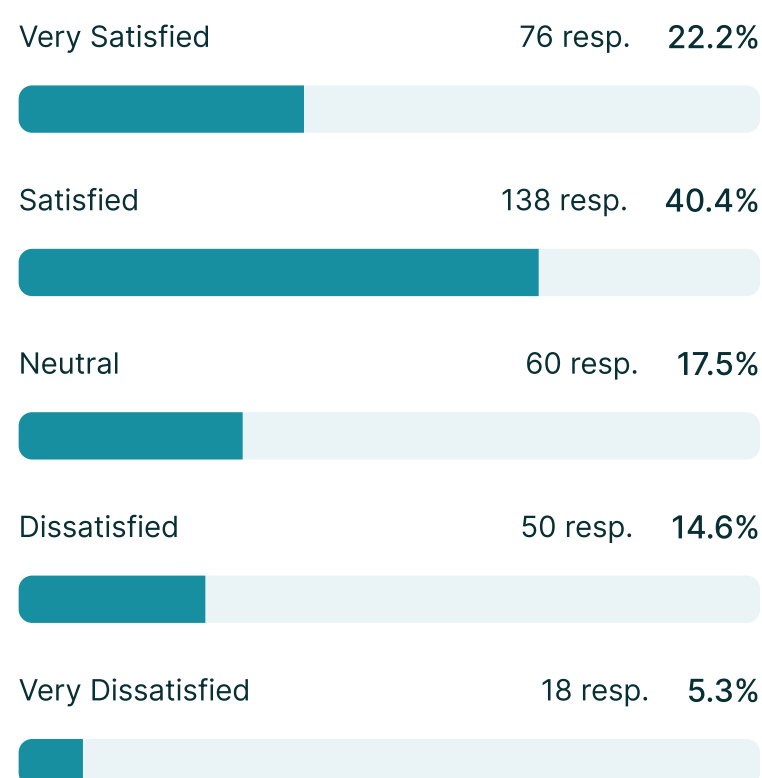
"Community Insights" delves into the residents' sentiments, lifestyle preferences, and engagement within the City of Santa Cruz. This section reveals how the community interacts with the City's services, events, and initiatives, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for further enhancement.

### Key Findings

#### 1. High overall level of satisfaction of living in the City of Santa Cruz

Figure 10

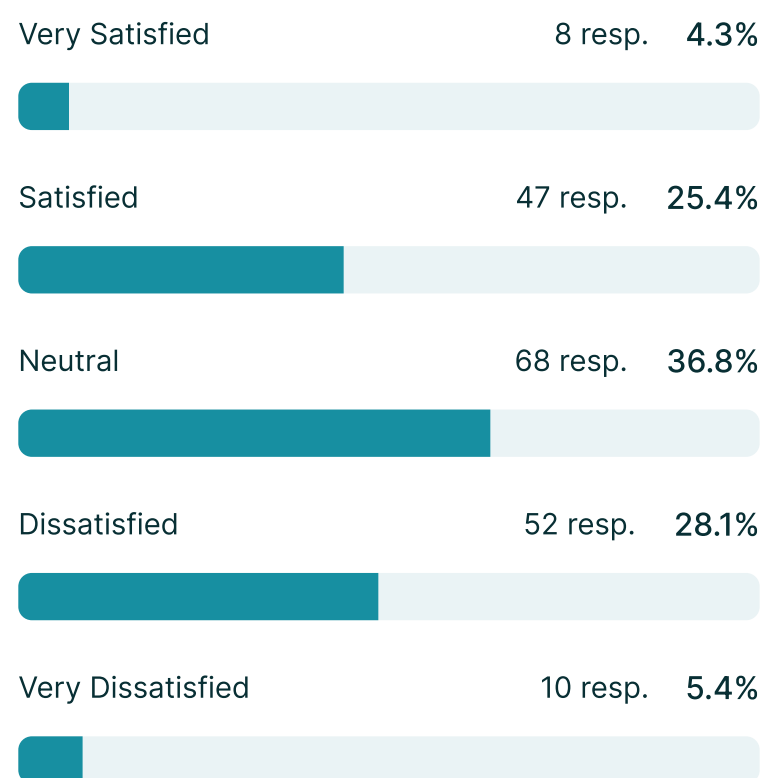
##### Residents: How Satisfied Are you Living in Santa Cruz



Sample size = 342 Total sample size = 619 277 missing  
95% confidence level

Figure 11

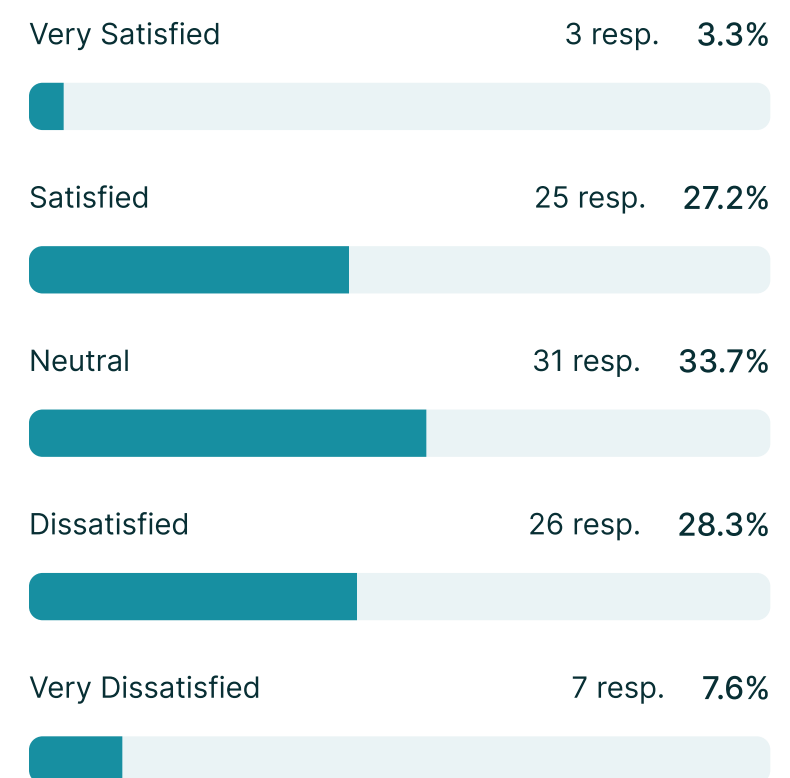
##### City Staff: Rate your Perception of Overall Community Satisfaction in Santa Cruz



Sample size = 185 Total sample size = 619 434 missing  
95% confidence level

Figure 12

##### Business Owners: Rate the Overall Community Satisfaction in Santa Cruz from a Business Perspective



Sample size = 185 Total sample size = 619 434 missing  
95% confidence level

#### Main Takeaway:

Over 50% of respondents (residents and staff) noted a satisfied or very satisfied level of living in Santa Cruz.

#### 2. Mixed level of satisfaction of living in the City of Santa Cruz from Business Owners

#### Main Takeaway:

Business owners in Santa Cruz were mixed in their overall community satisfaction rating with 33.7% rating satisfaction as 'Neutral' with a near split rating satisfaction as 'Dissatisfied' and 'Satisfied' as the next highest rating respectively.

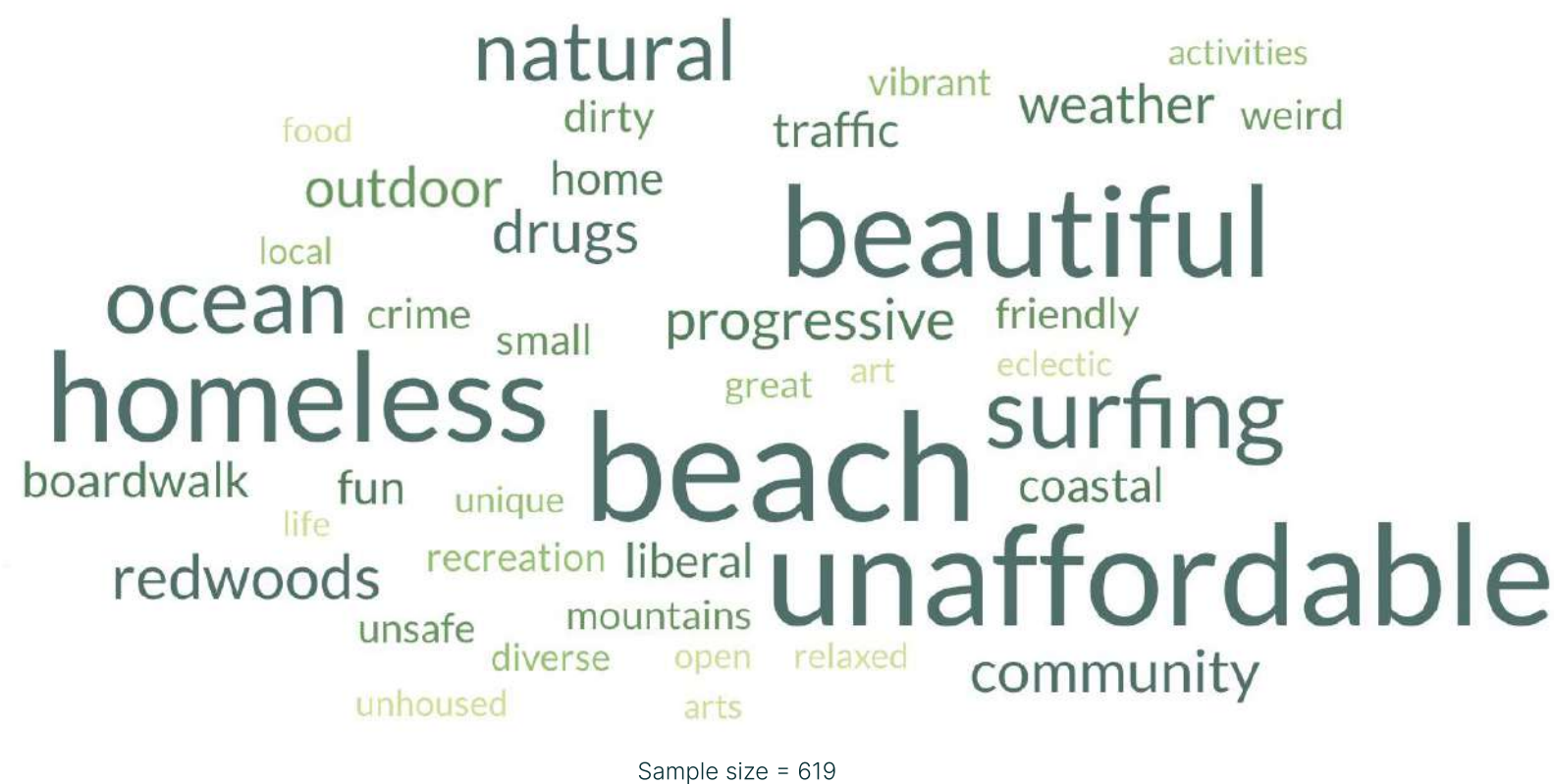
(Cover Photo by Kimson Doan on Unsplash)



### 3. Lifestyle and Engagement:

Figure 13

List Three Words or Phrases that Best Describe Santa Cruz to You



Residents place a high value on outdoor activities and the natural beauty of their surroundings. This is reflected in the language they use; six of the top ten words mentioned when describing Santa Cruz are related to nature or recreation.<sup>16</sup>

### 4. Environmental and Sustainability Practices

A significant portion of the community, 34%, identifies environmental sustainability as a key factor in their lifestyle choices, reflecting the City's broader commitment to green initiatives.<sup>17</sup> See Figure 18 for reference.

### 5. Safety and Well-being:

**44% of respondents noted that their perception of Santa Cruz has materially changed for the worse since the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Key themes that emerged for those that responded to this question as 'yes' included public safety concerns especially in certain areas of the City, affordability challenges especially in housing and exasperated by the migration of transplants from the Silicon Valley region, a sizeable increase in the unhoused population, cleanliness issues in public spaces including parks.<sup>18</sup>

Despite these concerns, 51% of respondents rate their overall quality of life in Santa Cruz as "high," highlighting the City's successful efforts in creating a livable environment.<sup>19</sup>

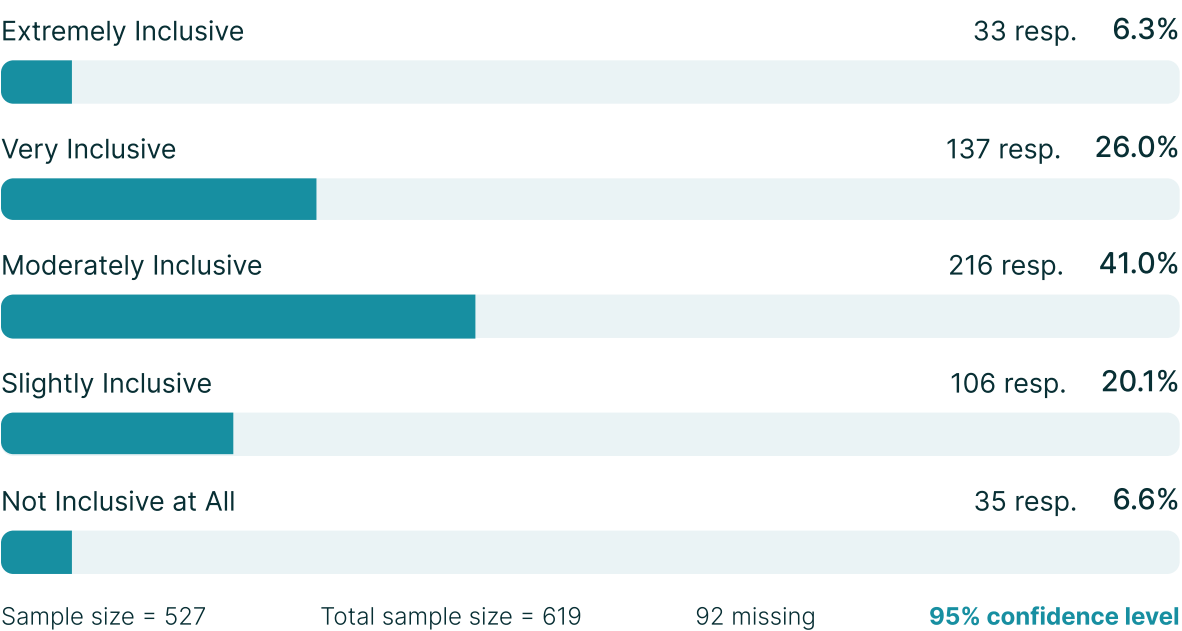
16. Survey Question: List three words or phrases that best describe Santa Cruz to you.  
17. Survey Question: What three attributes best represent Santa Cruz from your perspective? 178 responses selected "Environmental Consciousness" in their top 3.  
18. Survey Question: Has your perception of Santa Cruz changed in the last three years, since the COVID-19 pandemic? 232 "Yes" out of 527 responses.  
19. Survey Question: How satisfied are you with living in Santa Cruz? 185 "Very Satisfied" and 84 "Satisfied" responses.



## 6. Diversity and Inclusion

Figure 14

### How Inclusive Do You Find Santa Cruz?



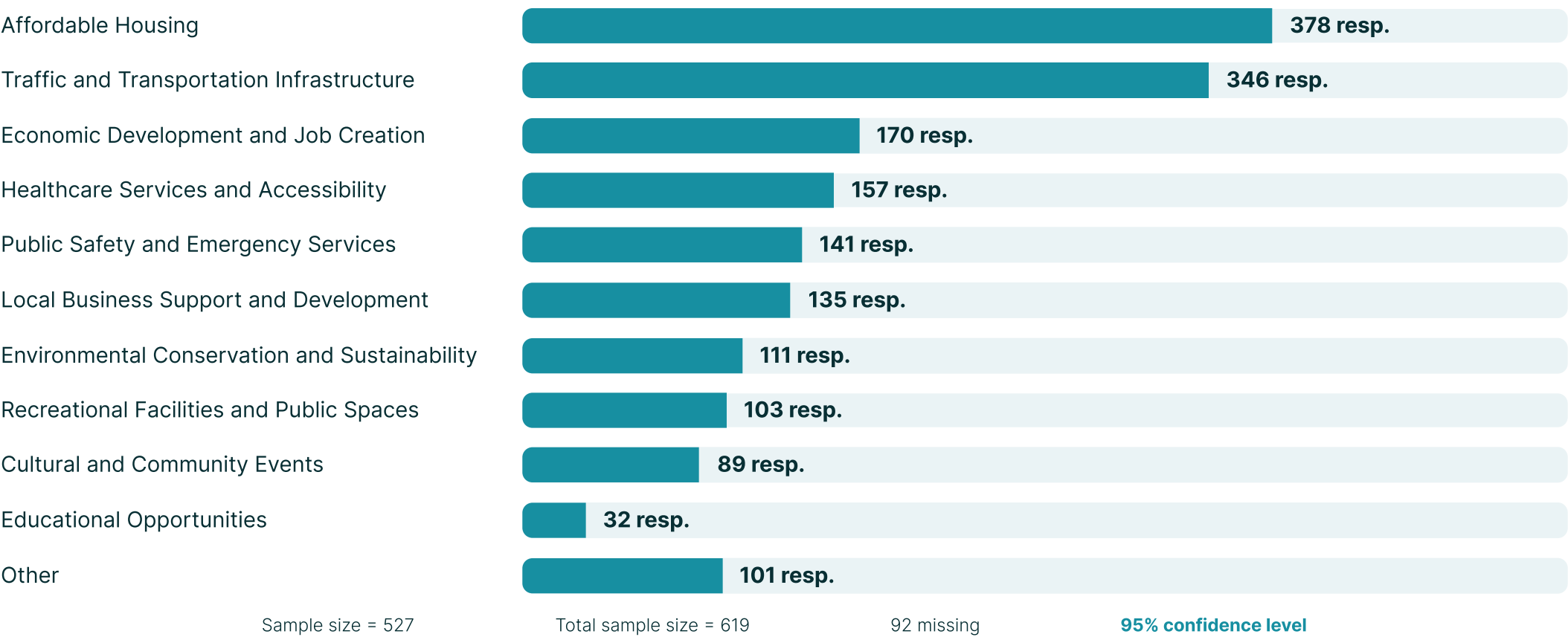
Santa Cruz's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion are recognized by survey respondents, with 93% feeling that the City is at least slightly inclusive or more<sup>20</sup>.

## 7. Community Challenges

The most pressing challenges as identified by residents include affordable housing, traffic congestion, and access to healthcare, with a smaller percentage of respondents highlighting the need for strategic interventions in these areas.

Figure 15

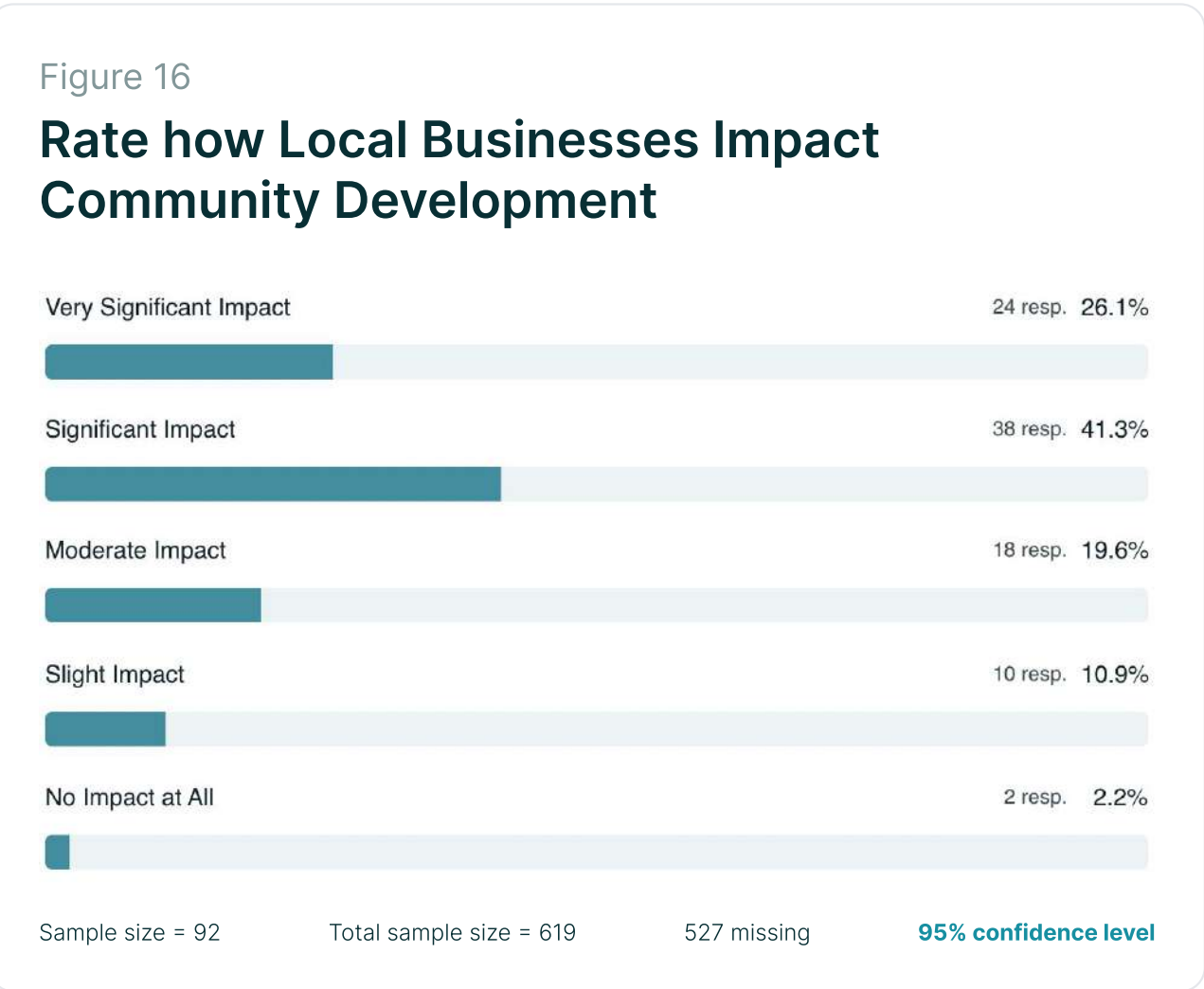
### What Areas Could Be Improved in Santa Cruz? (Residents & City Staff)



20. Survey Question: How inclusive do you find Santa Cruz? 492 "Slightly Inclusive" or better responses.



## 8. Local Business Impact on Community



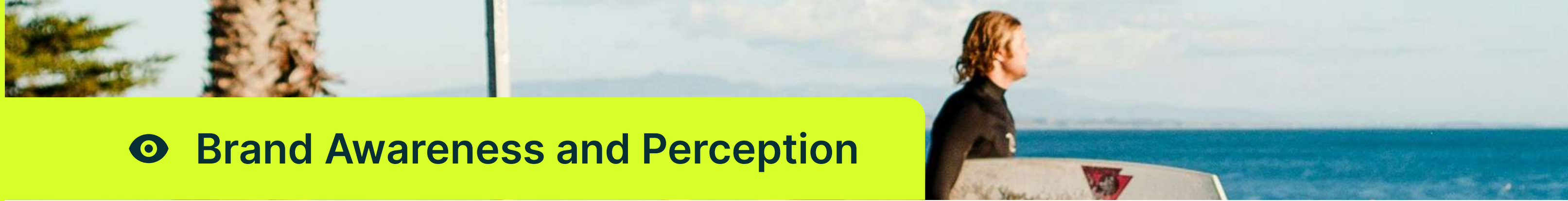
- Business owners overwhelmingly noted that local businesses have a 'Significant Impact' on community development (41.3%) with another 26.1% noting the impact as 'Very Significant'.<sup>21</sup>

### Community Insights Conclusion:

The "Community Insights" findings paint a picture of a vibrant, engaged community that is deeply connected to Santa Cruz's unique lifestyle and values. While there is a strong sense of satisfaction with the quality of life and community engagement, areas such as safety, diversity, and citywide challenges present opportunities for further dialogue and action. These insights are instrumental in guiding the City's efforts to enhance the living experience and ensure that Santa Cruz continues to thrive as a cohesive, inclusive, and dynamic community.

21. Survey Question: Rate how Local Businesses Impact Community Development. 38 respondents selected “Significant Impact”, 24 respondents selected “Very Significant Impact”.





# 👁 Brand Awareness and Perception

This segment of our findings focuses on the community's awareness and perception of the City of Santa Cruz as a brand. Understanding how residents view their City's identity, values, and image provides critical insights for aligning communication efforts, and community initiatives with the public's expectations and sentiments.

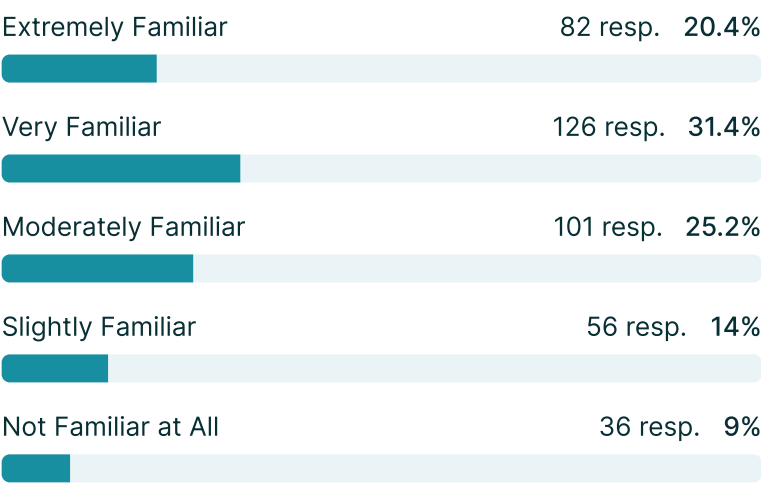
## Key Findings

### 1. Majority of residents have at least some familiarity with the City of Santa Cruz as a brand

Figure 17  
Residents



How familiar do you think residents are with the City of Santa Cruz as a brand?

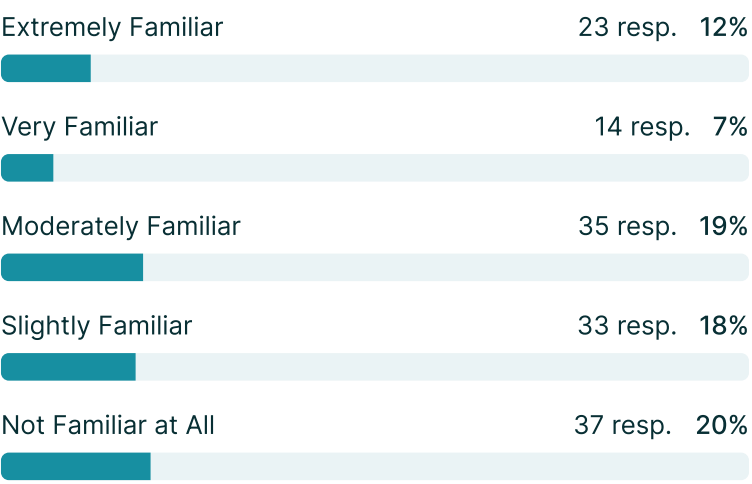


Sample size = 400      219 missing  
Total sample size = 619      **95% confidence level**

Figure 18  
City Employees



How familiar do you think residents are with the City of Santa Cruz as a brand?

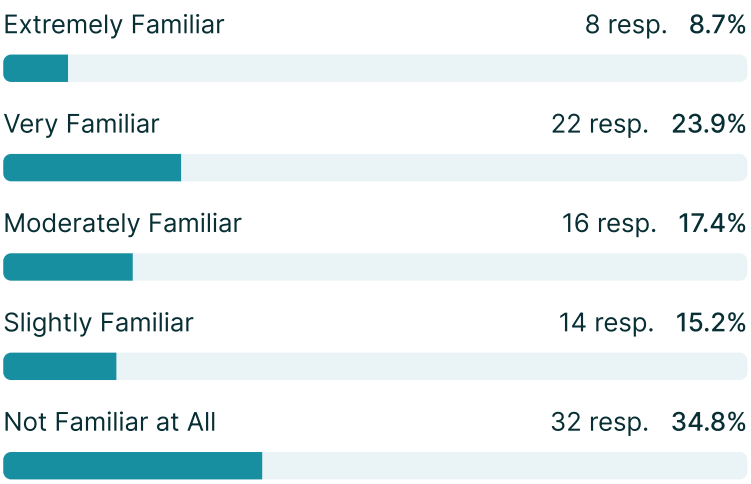


Sample size = 185      434 missing  
Total sample size = 619      **95% confidence level**

Figure 19  
Business Owners



How familiar are your customers with the City of Santa Cruz brand?



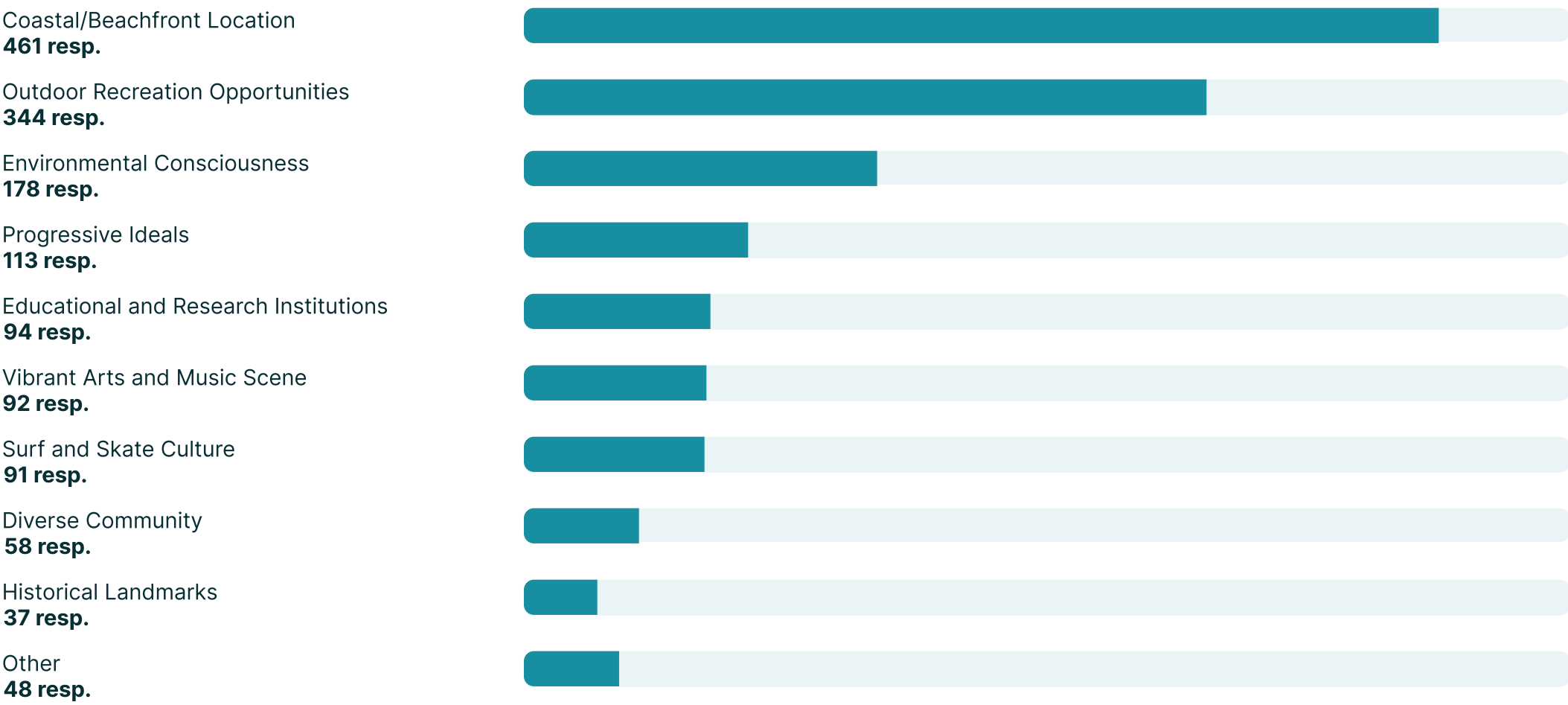
Sample size = 92      527 missing  
Total sample size = 619      **95% confidence level**

(Cover Photo by Hamish Duncan on Unsplash)



## 2. Many Concurrent Attributes of Santa Cruz are evident to Residents and Staff:

Figure 20  
**What attributes best represent the City of Santa Cruz's brand? (Residents & Staff)**



Sample size = 527      Total sample size = 619      92 missing      95% confidence level

- The City's commitment to values such as outdoor recreation opportunities, environmental sustainability, and its progressive ideals resonates strongly with the community, with 88.4% of respondents feeling that at least one of these values accurately reflect the spirit of Santa Cruz<sup>22</sup>.
- Please see below for an amalgamated top five term for those that wished to submit under “Other”.

### Top Five Remarks in the “Other” Response:

1. High cost of living / housing (9 times)
2. Homeless (7 times)
3. No longer progressive (4 times)
4. Family oriented / family entertainment (4 times)
5. Boardwalk (4 times)

22. Survey Question: What three attributes best represent Santa Cruz from your perspective? 466 responses selected “Outdoor Recreation Opportunities”, “Environmental Consciousness”, or “Progressive Ideals”.



### 3. No Big Surprises for Landmarks that Best Represent Santa Cruz

Figure 21  
What attractions or landmarks represent Santa Cruz? (City Staff & Residents)



Sample size = 619

Santa Cruz's iconic attractions including the Boardwalk, Lighthouse, and Redwoods are overwhelmingly what residents and staff see as the most appropriate representation of the City.

### 4. Key Neighborhoods Appear Absent in Current Branding

Figure 22  
Are specific neighborhoods or communities in Santa Cruz underrepresented in City branding? (City Staff & Residents)



Sample size = 619

Neighborhoods absent in current branding that were mentioned by the majority of respondents including the Beach Flats, Live Oak, Downtown, Westside, Lower Ocean, and Seabright among others.



## 5. Many Outdated Stereotypes Still Exist

Figure 23

What stereotypes about Santa Cruz are no longer accurate?



Sample size = 619

Respondents identified several outdated stereotypes that are still used when identifying Santa Cruz as a brand. The majority of these include the ‘Hippy’ stereotype, Santa Cruz’s previous image as ‘weird’, as well as ideals of Santa Cruz as a ‘progressive’ town.

## 6. Opportunities for Brand Development

Significant opportunities to elevate the Santa Cruz brand arise from highlighting landmarks like the Boardwalk, beach, and redwoods, with "Boardwalk" being mentioned by 63% of respondents as a defining landmark for Santa Cruz. Conversely, imagery or references to a hippie lifestyle do not align with the City's present-day ethos.<sup>23</sup>

### Brand Awareness and Perception Conclusion

The "Brand Awareness and Perception" findings highlight the critical role of Santa Cruz's brand in shaping community engagement, resident satisfaction, and the City's overall image. While there is a strong foundation of brand awareness and positive perception, areas for enhancement have been identified. The current logo and website design have been in use for an extended period, and it's time for an update to enhance how the City of Santa Cruz communicates about City services. The current logo and visual components are how the public gets information about City services and learn how to get involved. They are the first thing you see when you are looking up the City website to navigate the City. We want to help refresh this look and feel for the City, ultimately making accessing the services easier.

23. Survey Question: What attractions or landmarks represent Santa Cruz? 332 responses mention “Boardwalk”.  
Survey Question: What stereotypes about Santa Cruz are no longer accurate? The word “hippie” is mentioned 148 times.

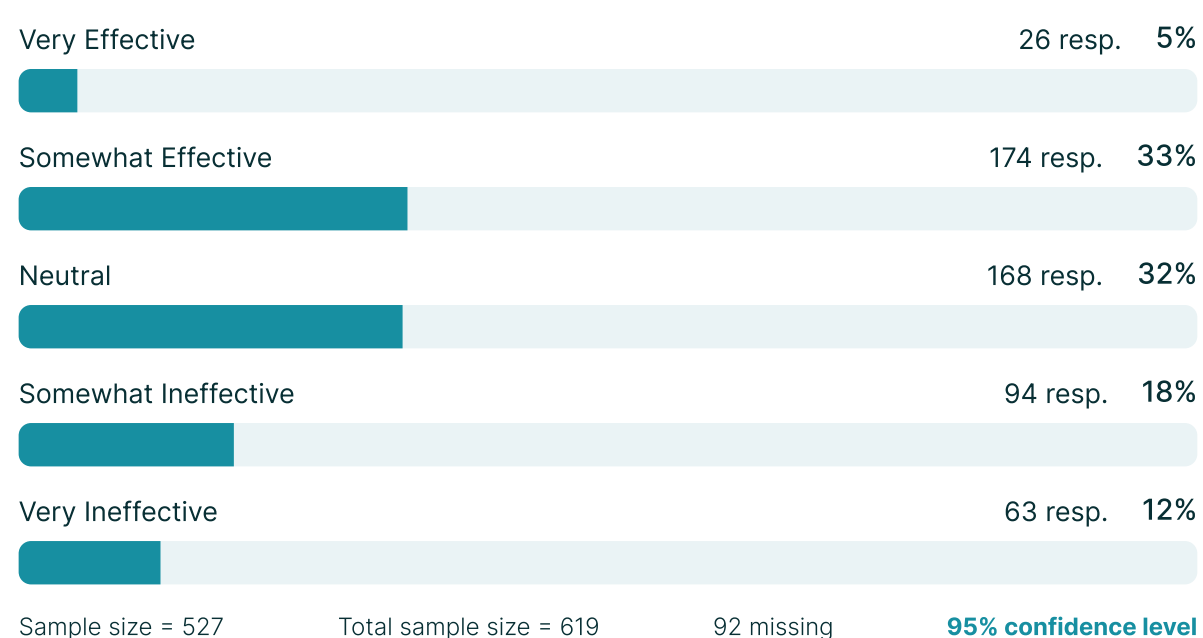


In our quest to understand the Santa Cruz community's perceptions and satisfaction levels regarding City services, this section of the report meticulously examines responses related to the City's communications efforts with residents. Gathering insights from 185 City employees, we aimed to capture a comprehensive view of how City communications meet the needs and expectations of the populace, laying the groundwork for enhancements that align with resident priorities.

## Key Findings

Figure 24

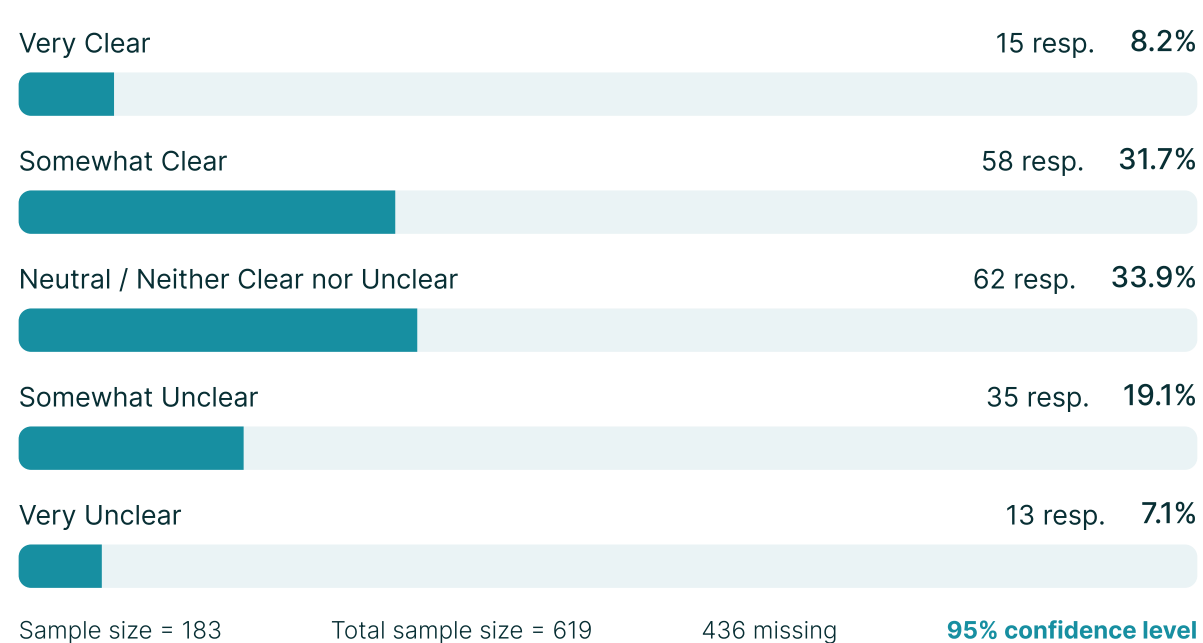
### Residents: Rate the effectiveness of City communication.



- The effectiveness of current City communications varied widely among respondents with 33% asserting communications as 'somewhat effective' while another 32% deemed it 'neutral'.
- Tailoring content to meet the diverse interests and needs of Santa Cruz's population could further enhance the effectiveness of these communications.

Figure 25

### City Staff: How clearly do you find the City's communication with the public?



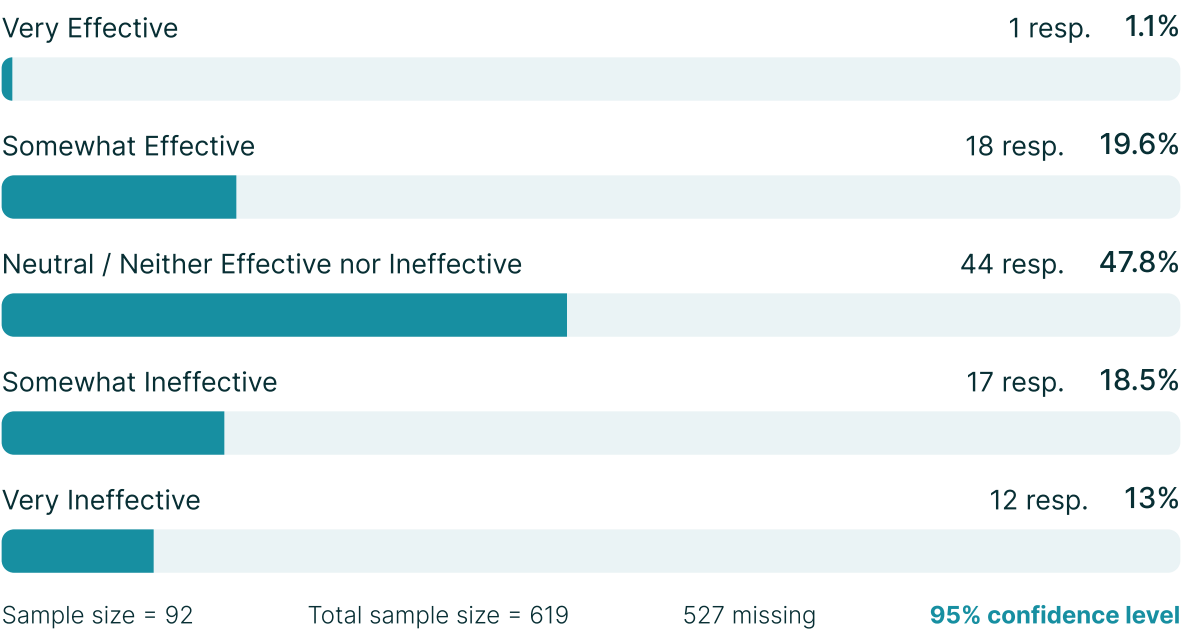
- Similarly, more than a third of respondents deemed City communications with the public to be 'neutral' while 31.7% found current communications to be 'somewhat clear'.

(Cover Photo by Priscilla Du Preez on Unsplash)



Figure 26

**Business Owners: Rate the Effectiveness of the City’s Communication with Local Businesses**



- 47.8% of business owner respondents rated the effectiveness of City communications with local businesses as 'Neutral' with an equal portion of respondents claiming communications is 'Somewhat Effective' and 'Somewhat Ineffective'.

Figure 27

**Business Owners: What Resources Do you Frequently Use for your Business Operations in Santa Cruz**



- Networking and Community Events was noted as the top business operations resource business owners frequent the most (47.8%). This highlights the importance of City sanctioned and supported networking and community events to overall business growth and operations.
- The ‘Other’ responses mentioned the community and the support received from other local businesses and residents.

**Services Conclusion**

In our quest to understand the Santa Cruz community's perceptions and satisfaction levels regarding City services, this section of the report meticulously examines responses related to the City’s communications efforts with residents. Gathering insights from 512 residents, we aimed to capture a comprehensive view of how City communications meet the needs and expectations of the populace, laying the groundwork for enhancements that align with resident priorities.



# Advertising and Marketing Research

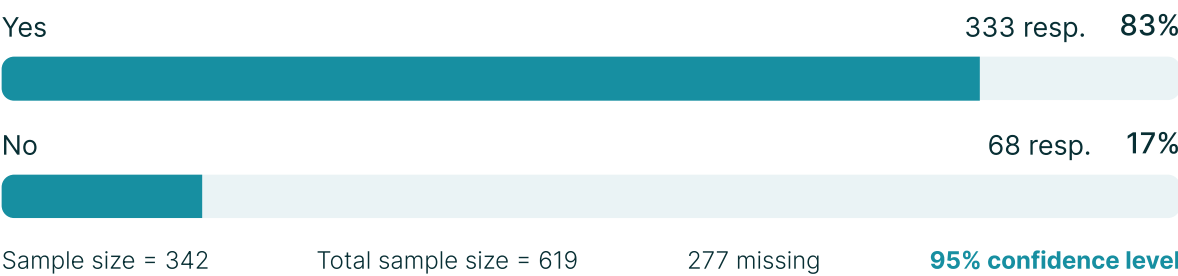
Advertising and marketing for the City of Santa Cruz isn't aimed at tourism or attracting people to come to Santa Cruz. This section evaluates how residents are receiving City communications to give a better understanding of areas for improvement to make sure residents are informed. With the aim of fostering a connected and well-informed community, the City's strategies to promote events, initiatives, and services are vital. Analyzing feedback from 619 residential survey respondents, we evaluate the reach, clarity, and impact of these efforts, offering insights into how the City can better engage with its populace through targeted and resonant marketing strategies.

## Key Findings

### 1. City Communication and Customer Service

Figure 28

**Are you aware of Santa Cruz's communication channels e.g. Social media, website, City news and newsletters?**



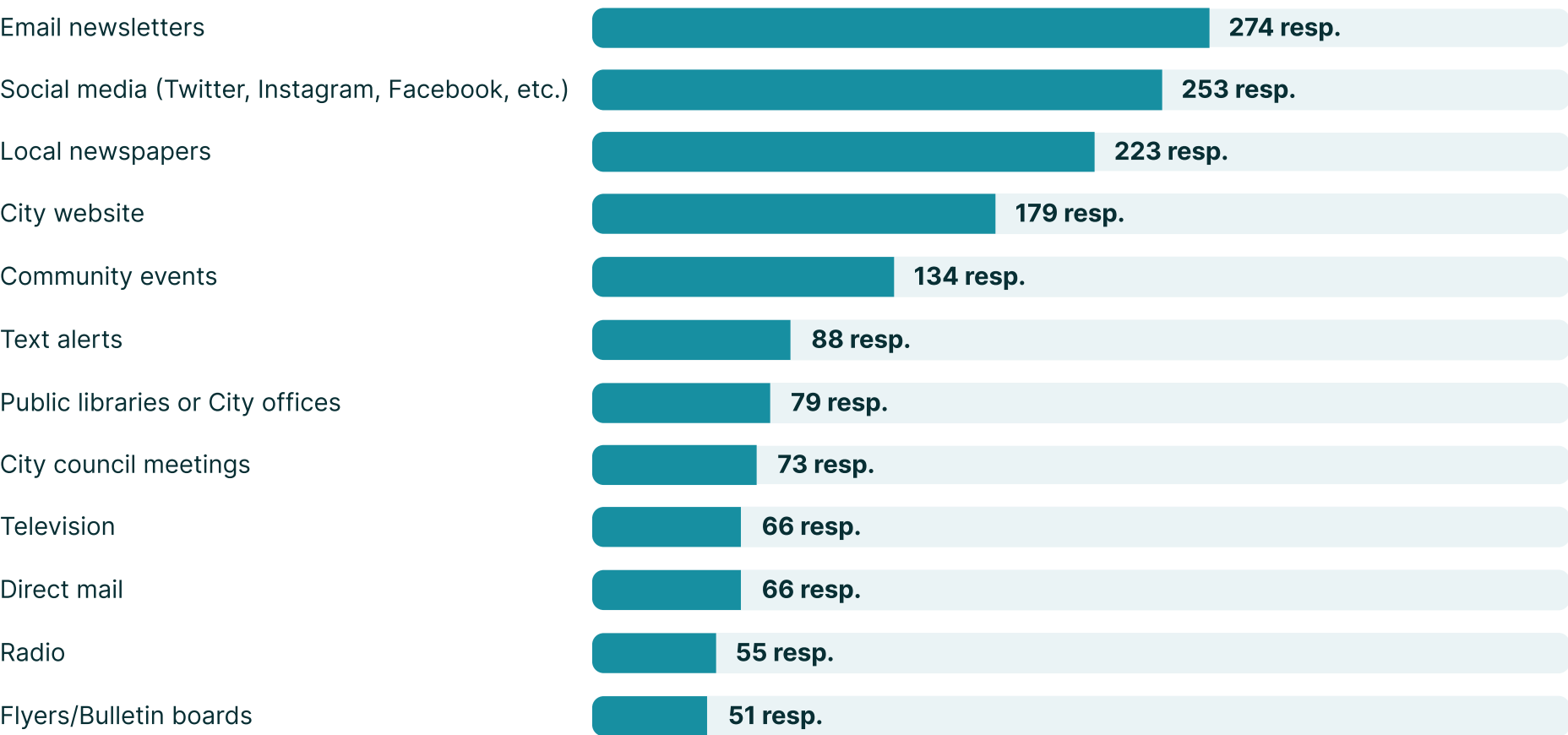
Approximately 83% of respondents reported general awareness of the City's communications materials. This exposure primarily comes through social media, City website, email newsletters.

### 2. Communication Channel Preference

The channel preferences for receiving City updates varied substantially with respondents favoring both analog (newspaper, community meetings and radio) in addition to digital (social media, website, email newsletters).

Figure 29

**What are your preferred channels for City updates?**



(Cover Photo by Sourajit Karmakar on Unsplash)

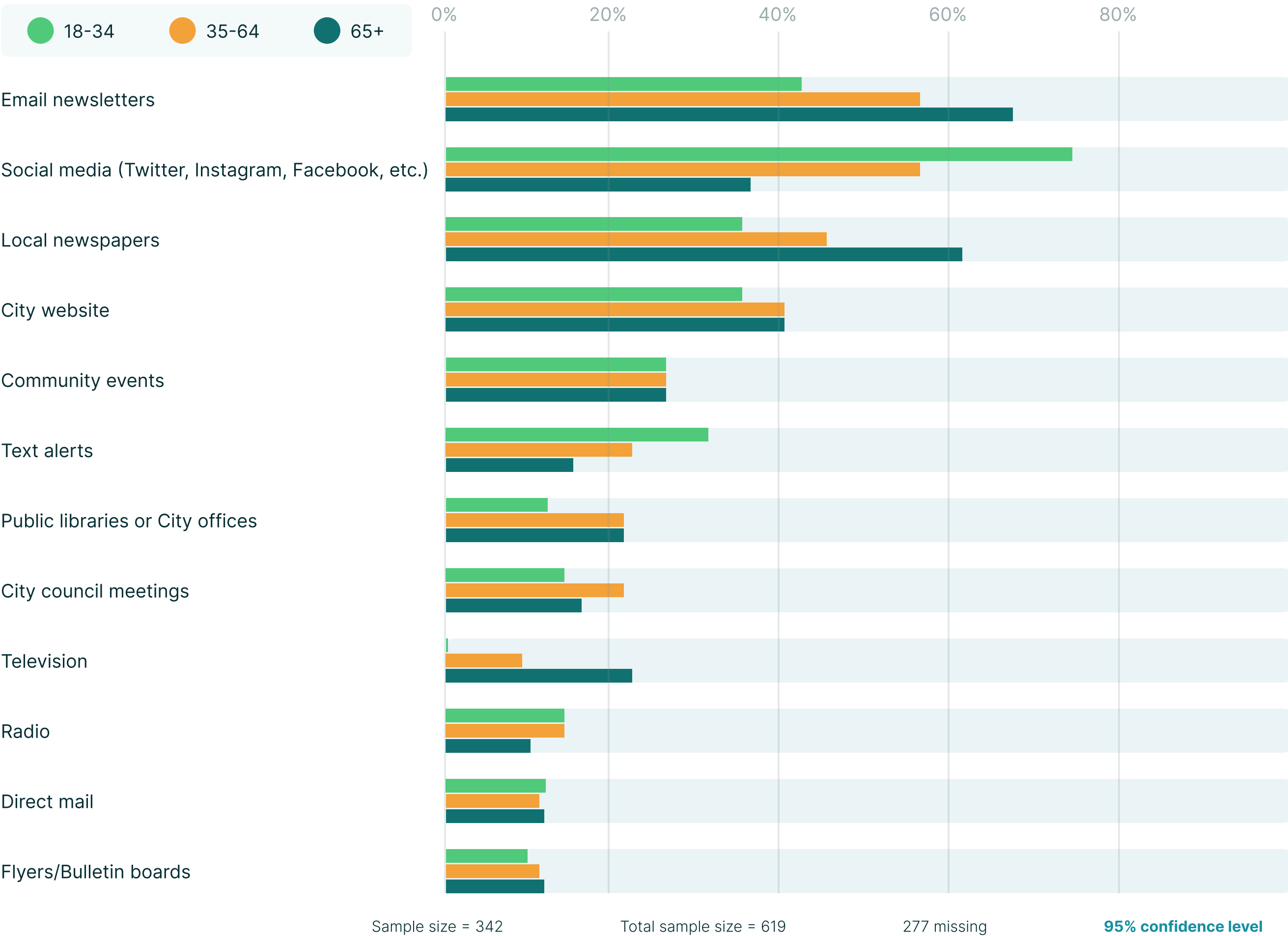


### 3. Digital Marketing and Social Media Presence

- Santa Cruz's digital marketing efforts, particularly through social media, play a crucial role in engaging younger demographics. 73.8% of respondents aged 18-34 prefer to receive City updates on social media.<sup>24</sup>
- Enhancing the City's digital presence with more interactive content as suggested by several survey respondents including live Q&A sessions, behind-the-scenes looks at City projects to boost engagement and information sharing.

Figure 30

#### What Are your Preferred Channels for City Updates? (By Age)

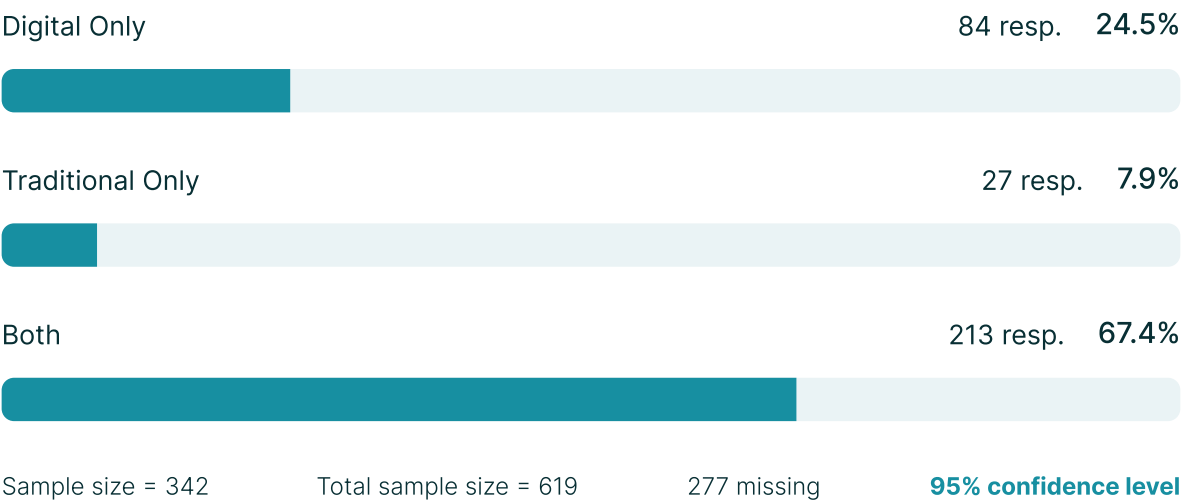


24. Survey Question: What are your preferred channels for City updates? 31 out of 42 respondents aged 18-34 selected "Social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc.)" as a preferred communication channel.



## 4. Traditional Marketing Channels

Figure 31  
Graph Showing the Preference of Digital or Traditional Communications



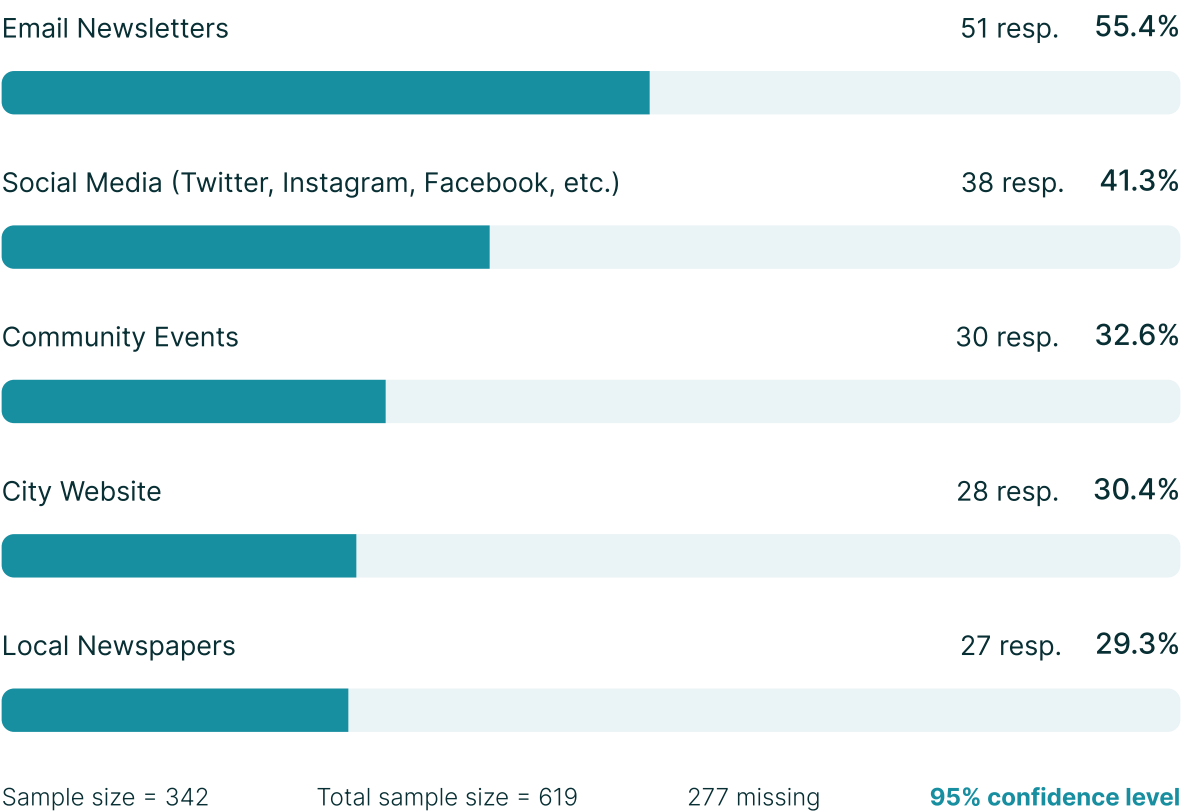
**Main takeaway:**

75.3% of survey participants indicated that they value these traditional forms of communication and would like to see them maintained or enhanced.

While digital platforms are increasingly prominent, traditional marketing channels such as local newspapers, community bulletin boards, direct mail and local radio remain important. Especially for reaching older residents or those without regular internet access.

## 5. Business Owner Communication Preferences

Figure 32  
Top Five Channels Business Owners Prefer for Business Related Communication



**Main takeaway:**

The majority of respondents (over 55%) noted that their preferred method of receiving City communications is via email newsletter. The next highest preferred method was social media (41.3%) which was the preferred choice among both residents and City staff.

### Advertising and Marketing Conclusion

The insights from our advertising and marketing research reveal a community that is generally aware of and appreciative of Santa Cruz's efforts to communicate and engage through various channels. However, the findings also underscore opportunities to deepen engagement, enhance clarity and relevance, and embrace a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to digital and traditional marketing. By addressing these areas, Santa Cruz can strengthen its connection with residents, ensuring that all community members feel informed, involved, and represented in the City's narrative.



# → Recommendations



Based on the comprehensive analysis of community insights, brand awareness, brand perception, services research, and advertising and marketing research conducted through our survey, we present a series of recommendations designed to address the key findings and support the City of Santa Cruz. These recommendations are crafted to enhance the City's strengths and address areas for improvement.

## Enhancing Community Engagement and Participation

- **Implement targeted outreach programs:** To increase engagement among residents who feel disconnected from civic processes, develop targeted outreach programs that focus on inclusivity and accessibility. Use a strategic combination of both analog and digital channels to reach underrepresented groups.
- **Expand digital and traditional communication channels:** Strengthen the City's communication strategy by enhancing digital platforms like social media and the City's website and maintaining traditional channels like print materials.

## Optimizing Brand Awareness and City Services Awareness

- **Refine City branding efforts:** Develop a more inclusive branding strategy that accurately reflects the diversity and vibrancy of Santa Cruz. Engage with community members to ensure the brand resonates with diverse groups.
- **Increase transparency and information sharing:** Enhance the clarity and relevance of information in City materials. Utilize official City social media channels and website to provide detailed updates on City initiatives and opportunities for community involvement.
- **Leverage social media and digital marketing:** Expand the City's digital presence, particularly on social media, to engage younger demographics. Incorporate interactive elements to foster a dynamic and two-way communication flow.

The recommendations provided are rooted in the insights and feedback from Santa Cruz residents, reflecting a deep understanding of the community's values, needs, and aspirations. By implementing these strategies, the City of Santa Cruz can strengthen its connection with residents, enhance the quality of services provided, and cultivate a more engaged, informed, and satisfied community. Moving forward, it will be crucial to monitor the impact of these initiatives, remaining flexible and responsive to the evolving needs of Santa Cruz's dynamic population.

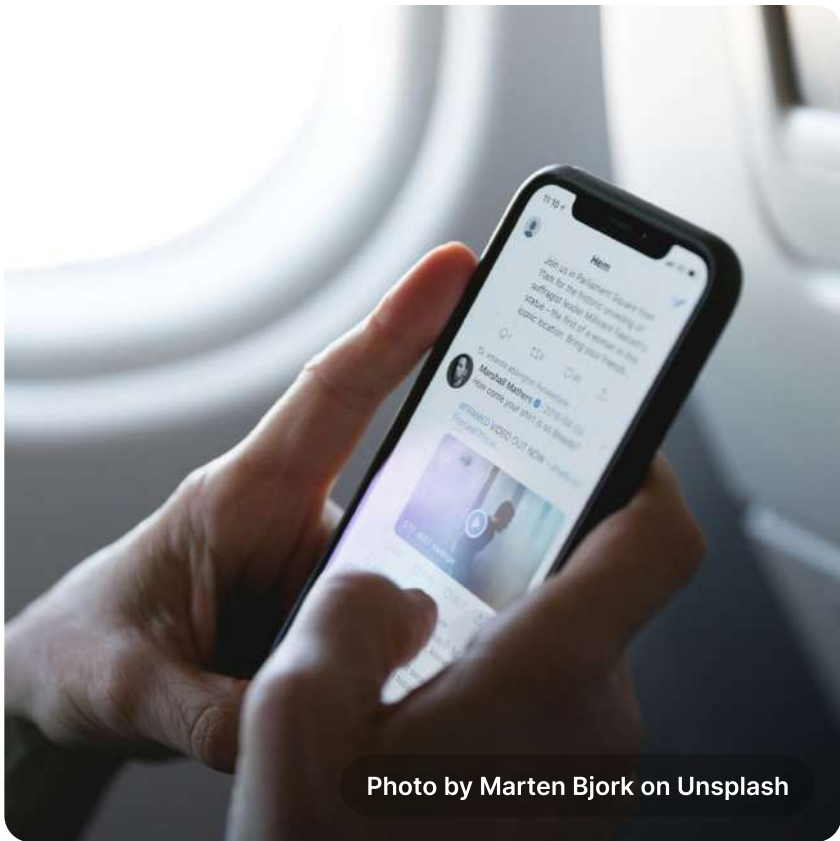


# → Action Plan



Building on the strategic recommendations outlined in the previous section, this action plan provides a detailed roadmap for the City of Santa Cruz to enhance community engagement, service quality, and marketing effectiveness. Additionally, this plan serves as a precursor to the extensive branding exercise in phase 2, aiming to further elevate Santa Cruz's image and identity in alignment with the community's vision and values.

## Implementing Recommendations: Immediate Actions



### Marketing and Digital Presence Optimization

- **Action item:** Revamp the City's social media strategy to include more interactive content, starting in Q3 2024.
- **Metrics for success:** Grow social media engagement rates by 20% within one year.
- **Responsible parties:** Citywide Communications Team.

## Preparing for Phase 2: Rebranding Exercise



### Preliminary Research and Community Consultation

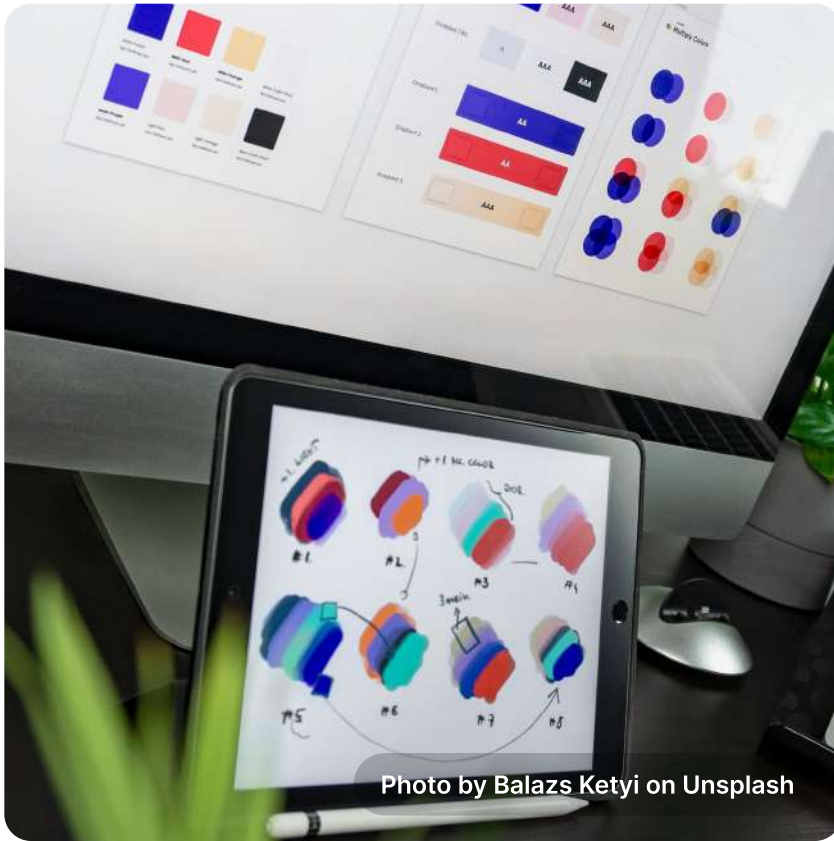
- **Action item:** Conduct community workshops and consultations by April 23rd to gather input on Santa Cruz's visual identity and values.
- **Metrics for success:** Engage with residents and stakeholders across diverse community segments.
- **Responsible parties:** Citywide Communications team, Setsail Marketing.



### Brand Strategy Development

- **Action item:** Develop a comprehensive brand strategy document that incorporates insights from this report and community consultation outcomes by the end of July.
- **Metrics for success:** Approval of the brand strategy by the City Manager's Office.
- **Responsible parties:** Citywide Communications team and Setsail Marketing.





## Implementation Roadmap for Rebranding

- **Action item:** Create a detailed implementation plan for the branding and logo refresh exercise, including timelines, budget estimates, and communication plans by the end of September.
- **Metrics for Success:** Launch of the refreshed logo and other visual elements.
- **Responsible Parties:** Citywide Communications Team and Setsail Marketing.

This action plan sets in motion a series of targeted initiatives designed to address immediate community needs and lay a solid foundation for the transformative branding exercise ahead. By taking these steps, Santa Cruz will not only improve its service delivery and communications in the short term but also embark on a strategic journey to redefine and enrich its visual and brand identity, reflecting the collective aspirations and spirit of its residents.



## Contact

If you have any questions regarding the survey or require further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to the City Manager's Office. The team is here to provide support and answer any inquiries you might have.

We look forward to assisting you!



**Contact:** Erika Smart, Communications Manager

**Email:** [esmart@cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:esmart@cityofsantacruz.com)

**Phone:** (831) 420-5016