

Santa Cruz, CA

The National Community Survey

Report of Results
2024

Report by:



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National Research Center at Polco is a charter member of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative, providing clear disclosure of our sound and ethical survey research practices.

About The NCS™

The National Community Survey™ (The NCS™) report is about the “livability” of Santa Cruz. A livable community is a place that is not simply habitable, but that is desirable. It is not only where people do live, but where they want to live. The survey was developed by the experts from National Research Center at Polco.

Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions considering ten central facets of a community:

- Economy
- Mobility
- Community Design
- Utilities
- Safety
- Natural Environment
- Parks and Recreation
- Health and Wellness
- Education, Arts, and Culture
- Inclusivity and Engagement



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The report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 443 residents of the City of Santa Cruz collected from April 17th, 2024 to May 29th, 2024. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4.7% for all respondents and the response rate for the 2024 survey was 15%. Survey results were weighted so that the demographic profile of respondents was representative of the demographic profile of adults in Santa Cruz.



How the results are reported

For the most part, the percentages presented in the following tabs represent the “percent positive.” Most commonly, the percent positive is the combination of the top two most positive response options (i.e., excellent/good, very safe/somewhat safe, etc.). On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer “don’t know.” The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in the tab “Complete data.” However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in most of the tabs. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

Comparisons to benchmarks

NRC's database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in surveys from over 500 communities whose residents evaluated the same kinds of topics on The National Community Survey. The comparison evaluations are from the most recent survey completed in each community in the last five years. NRC adds the latest results quickly upon survey completion, keeping the benchmark data fresh and relevant. The communities in the database represent a wide geographic and population range. In each tab, Santa Cruz's results are noted as being "higher" than the benchmark, "lower" than the benchmark, or "similar" to the benchmark, meaning that the average rating given by Santa Cruz residents is statistically similar to or different (greater or lesser) than the benchmark. Being rated as "higher" or "lower" than the benchmark means that Santa Cruz's average rating for a particular item was more than 10 points different than the benchmark. If a rating was "much higher" or "much lower," then Santa Cruz's average rating was more than 20 points different when compared to the benchmark.

Trends over time

Trend data for Santa Cruz represent important comparison data and should be examined for improvements or declines.¹ Deviations from stable trends over time represent opportunities for understanding how local policies, programs, or public information may have affected residents' opinions. Changes between survey years have been noted with an arrow and the percent difference. If the difference is greater than or equal to six percentage points between the 2021 and 2024 surveys, the change is statistically significant.

1. In 2020, The NCS survey was updated to include new and refreshed items. Consequently, some of the trends may be impacted due to wording modifications that could have potentially altered the meaning of the item for the respondent.

Methods

Selecting survey recipients

All households within the City of Santa Cruz were eligible to participate in the survey. A list of all households within the zip codes serving Santa Cruz was purchased from Polco's mailing vendor, Go-Dog Direct, based on updated listings from the United States Postal Service. Since some of the zip codes that serve the City of Santa Cruz households may also serve addresses that lie outside of the community, the exact geographic location of each housing unit was compared to community boundaries using the most current municipal boundary file. Addresses located outside of the City of Santa Cruz boundaries were removed from the list of potential households to survey. From that list, addresses were randomly selected as survey recipients, with multi-family housing units (defined as those with a unit number) sampled at a rate of 5:3 compared to single family housing units.

An individual within each household was randomly selected using the "birthday method". The birthday method selects a person within the household by asking the "person who most recently had a birthday" to complete the questionnaire. The underlying assumption in this method is that day of birth has no relationship to the way people respond to surveys. This instruction was contained in the introduction of the survey.

Conducting the survey

The 3,000 randomly selected households received mailings beginning on April 17th, 2024 and data collection for the survey remained open for 6 weeks. The first mailing was a postcard inviting the household to participate in the survey. The next mailing contained a cover letter with instructions, the survey questionnaire, and a postage-paid return envelope. All mailings included a web link to give residents the opportunity to respond to the survey online, as well as QR codes to further encourage participation. All follow-up mailings asked those who had not completed the survey to do so, and those who had already done so to refrain from completing the survey again.

The survey was available in English and Spanish. All mailings contained paragraphs in both languages instructing participants on how to complete the survey in their preferred language.

About 3% of the 3,000 mailed invitations or surveys were returned because the household address was vacant or the postal service was unable to deliver the survey as addressed. Of the remaining 2,915 households that received the invitations to participate, 443 completed the survey, providing an overall response rate of 15%. The response rate was calculated using AAPOR's response rate #2 for mailed surveys of unnamed persons.²

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a "level of confidence" and accompanying "confidence interval" (or margin of error). A traditional level of confidence, and the one used here, is 95%. The 95% confidence interval can be any size and quantifies the sampling error or imprecision of the survey results because some residents' opinions are relied on to estimate all residents' opinions. The margin of error for the City of Santa Cruz survey is no greater than plus or minus 4.7 percentage points around any given percent reported for all respondents (443 completed surveys).

In addition to the randomly selected "probability sample" of households, a link to an online open-participation survey was publicized by the City of Santa Cruz. The open-participation survey was identical to the random sample survey, with two small updates; it asked a question to confirm the respondent was a resident of Santa Cruz and also a question about where they heard about the survey. The open-participation survey was open to all city residents and became available on May 14th, 2024. The survey remained open for 2 weeks. The data presented in the following tabs exclude the open participation survey data, but a tab at the end provides the complete frequency of responses to questions by the open-participation respondents.

Analyzing the data

Responses from mailed surveys were entered into an electronic dataset using a “key and verify” method, where all responses are entered twice and compared to each other. Any discrepancies were resolved in comparison to the original survey form. Range checks as well as other forms of quality control were also performed. Responses from surveys completed on Polco were downloaded and merged with the mailed survey responses.

The demographics of the survey respondents were compared to those found in the 2020 Census and 2022 American Community Survey estimates for adults in the City of Santa Cruz. The primary objective of weighting survey data is to make the survey respondents reflective of the larger population of the community. The characteristics used for weighting were age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, housing type, housing tenure, and area. No adjustments were made for design effects. Weights were calculated using an iterative, multiplicative raking model known as the ANES Weighting Algorithm.³ The results of the weighting scheme for the probability sample are presented in the following table.

NRC aligns demographic labels with those used by the U.S. Census for reporting purposes, when possible. Some categories (e.g., age, race/Hispanic origin, housing type, and length of residency) are combined into smaller subgroups.

		Unweighted	Weighted	Target ⁴
Age	18-34	10%	43%	50%
	35-54	23%	27%	24%
	55+	67%	29%	26%
Hispanic origin	No, not of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish origin	91%	80%	80%
	Yes, I consider myself to be of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish origin	9%	20%	20%
Housing tenure	Own	71%	47%	47%
	Rent	29%	53%	53%
Housing type	Attached	31%	45%	45%
	Detached	69%	55%	55%
Race & Hispanic origin	Not white alone	20%	38%	37%
	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	80%	62%	63%
Sex	Man	39%	42%	49%
	Woman	61%	58%	51%
Sex/age	Man 18-34	3%	14%	25%
	Man 35-54	8%	14%	12%
	Man 55+	28%	14%	12%

Woman 18-34	7%	29%	25%
Woman 35-54	15%	14%	12%
Woman 55+	39%	16%	14%

The survey datasets were analyzed using all or some of a combination of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), R, Python and Tableau. For the most part, the percentages presented in the reports represent the “percent positive.” The percent positive is the combination of the top two most positive response options (i.e., excellent/good, very safe/somewhat safe, essential/very important, etc.), or, in the case of resident behaviors/participation, the percent positive represents the proportion of respondents indicating “yes” or participating in an activity at least once a month.

On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer “don’t know.” The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in the tab “Complete data”. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the reports. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

Contact

The City of Santa Cruz funded this research. Please contact Erika Smart of the City of Santa Cruz at esmart@santacruzca.gov if you have any questions about the survey.

Study Limitations

All public opinion research is subject to unmeasured error. While the methodologies employed for this survey were designed to minimize this error as much as possible, these other sources of potential error should be acknowledged. **Non-response error** arises when those who were selected to participate in the survey did not do so, and may have different opinions or experiences than those who did respond. **Coverage error** refers to the possibility that some respondents that should have been included in the surveyed population were not (e.g., for a general resident survey, USPS mailing lists may exclude certain types of housing units, such as multi-family buildings where mail is delivered to a common area rather than to a specific unit (though this is rare), or where mail is received at a PO box instead of the at household's physical location. Finally, **recall bias** occurs when respondents may not perfectly remember their experiences in the past year (such as participation in social or civic events), and **social desirability bias** may cause respondents to answer in ways they think cast their responses in a more favorable light.

Survey Validity

See the Polco Knowledge Base article on survey validity at <https://info.polco.us/knowledge/statistical-validity>

2. See AAPOR's Standard Definitions for more information at <https://aapor.org/standards-and-ethics/standard-definitions/>.

Key Findings

Highest-performing areas:

- Ratings for Santa Cruz's natural environment generally remained high, with the overall quality of natural environment, water resources, and air quality scoring above national benchmark comparisons.
- Although some inclusivity and engagement items scored lower than national benchmarks, statistically significant increases were seen in assessments of the community making all residents feel welcome and respondents' sense of civic/community pride.
- Residents appreciate the fitness and recreational opportunities in Santa Cruz, with both items receiving higher reviews than benchmark comparison communities.
- Around three-quarters of respondents positively evaluated Santa Cruz as a place to live, and nearly 9 in 10 praised the city as a place to visit.

Lowest-performing areas:

- Affordability within Santa Cruz continues to be a concern for residents, as low ratings were seen across several aspects of livability, including:
 - o Cost of living (3% excellent or good)
 - o Availability of affordable quality housing (3%)
 - o Availability of affordable quality health care (29%)
 - o Availability of affordable quality mental health care (17%)
 - o Availability of affordable quality childcare/preschool (15%)
- A few items related to community design—including well-planned residential growth, well-planned commercial growth, and land use, planning and zoning—scored lower than comparison communities.
- The overall quality of the transportation system in Santa Cruz saw a statistically significant decline from 2021, with traffic flow on major streets and ease of travel by car coming in much lower than both national and custom benchmarks.

Areas of greatest change since 2021:

Of the 123 evaluative questions included on both the 2021 and current survey iterations, 84 were statistically similar to previous results. Upward trends were seen in 5 items, while 34 ratings decreased since 2021. Changes are considered statistically significant if the 2024 rating was +/- 6% from the previous survey effort. The most significant of those trends are listed below.

Increases:

- Sense of civic/community pride (+8%)
- [Feeling safe] from fire, flood, or other natural disaster (+7%)
- Yard waste pick-up (+7%)
- Residents' overall health (+7%)
- [The community] making all residents feel welcome (+6%)

Decreases:

- Availability of affordable quality childcare/preschool (-25%)
- Utility billing (-22%)
- Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.) (-17%)
- Availability of preventive health services (-16%)
- Affordable high-speed internet access (-15%)

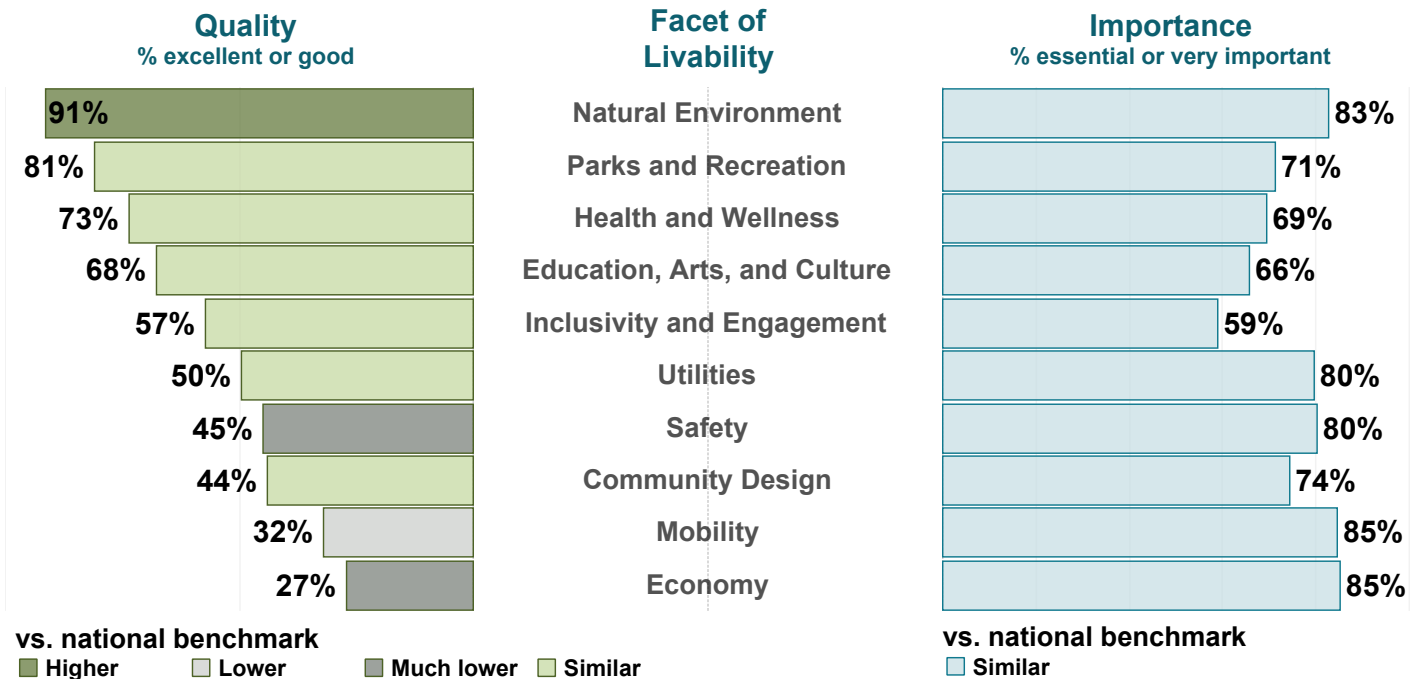
Facets of livability



Every jurisdiction must balance limited resources while meeting resident needs and striving to optimize community livability. To this end, it is helpful to know what aspects of the community are most important to residents and which they perceive as being of higher or lower quality. It is especially helpful to know when a facet of livability is considered of high importance but rated as lower quality, as this should be a top priority to address.

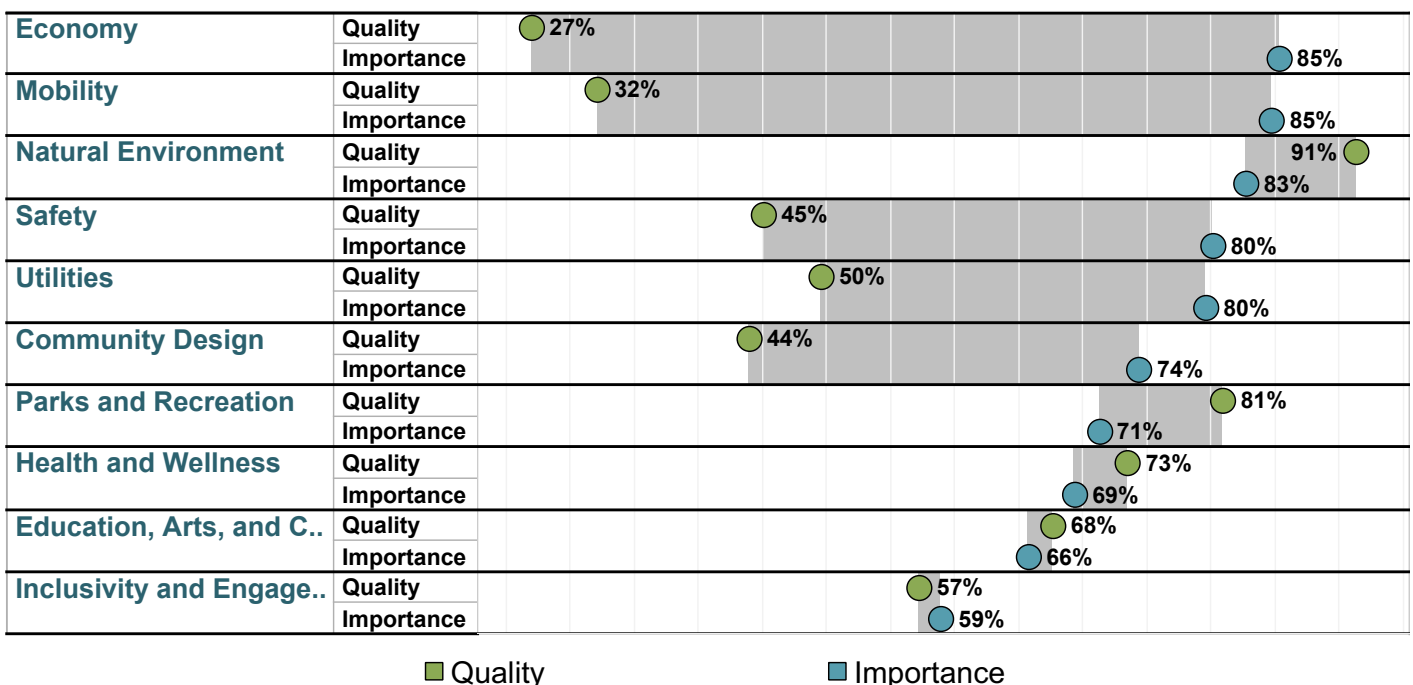
Quality and Importance by the Numbers

The table below shows the proportion of residents who rated the community facets positively for quality and the priority (importance) placed on each. Also displayed is whether local quality ratings were lower, similar, or higher than communities across the country (the national benchmark).



Quality/Importance Gap Analysis

The gap analysis chart below shows the same data as above; however, this chart more clearly illustrates the comparative differences in quality and importance ratings for each facet, as well as the absolute ratings for each.



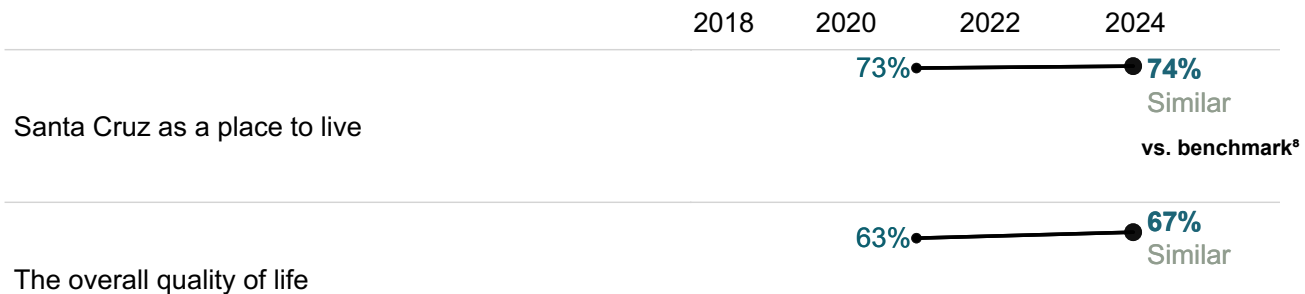
Quality of Life

Measuring community livability starts with assessing the quality of life of those who live there, and ensuring that the community is attractive, accessible, and welcoming to all.



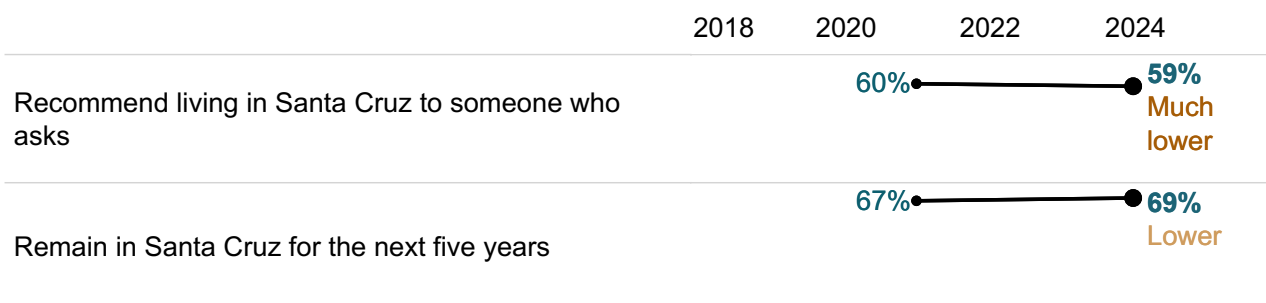
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Santa Cruz.

(% excellent or good)



Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following.

(% very or somewhat likely)



Please rate each of the following in the Santa Cruz community.

(% excellent or good)

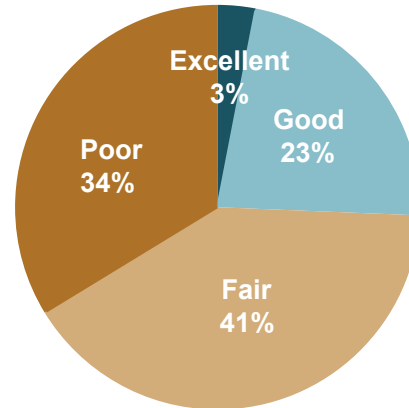


⁸. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

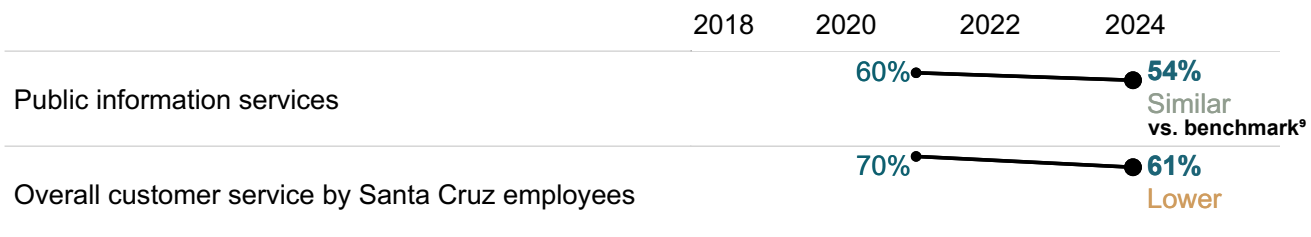
Governance

Strong local governments produce results that meet the needs of residents while making the best use of available resources, and are responsive to the present and future needs of the community as a whole.

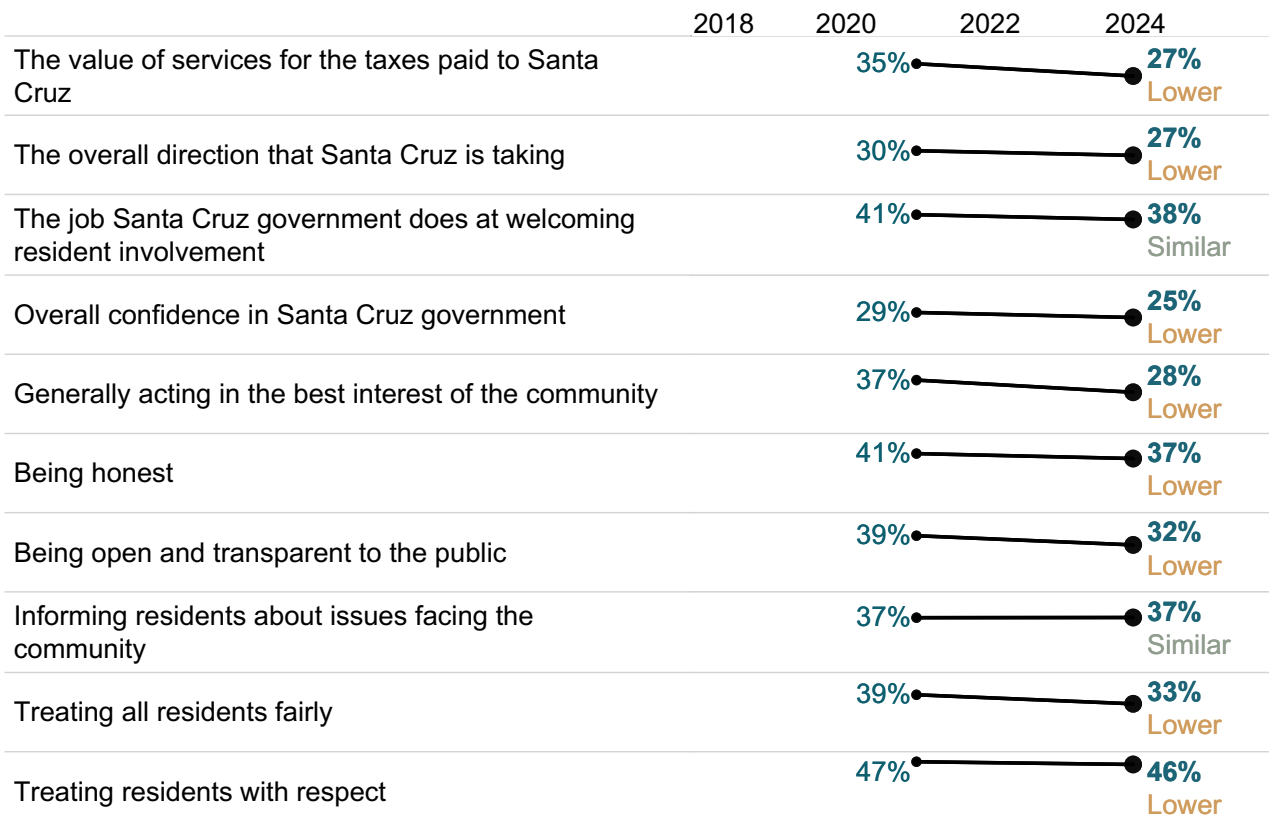
Overall confidence in Santa Cruz government, 2024



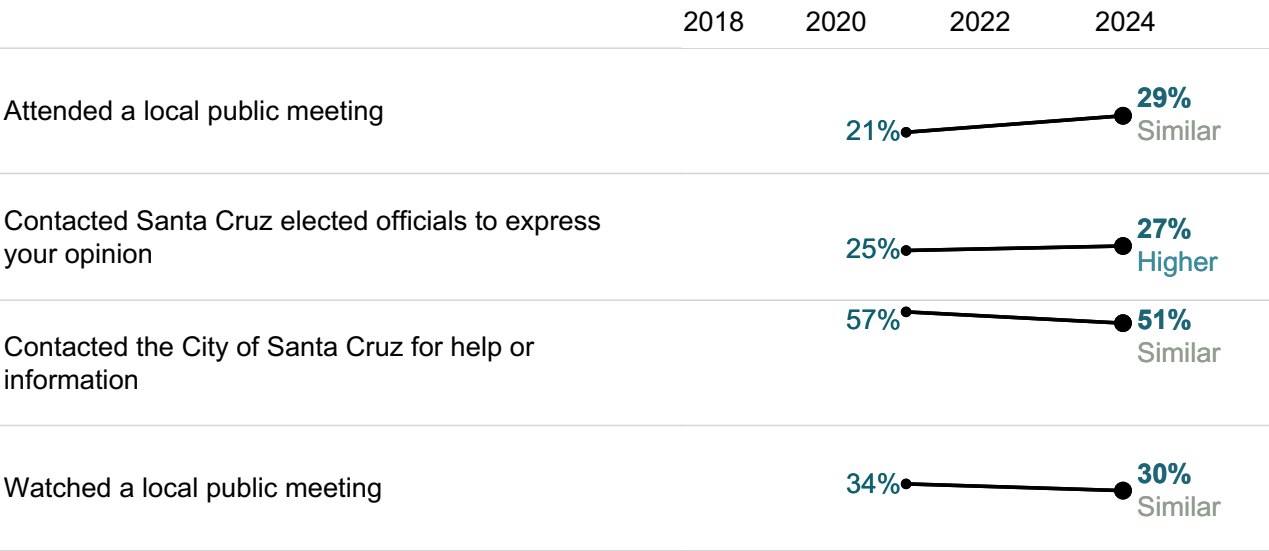
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Santa Cruz.
(% excellent or good)



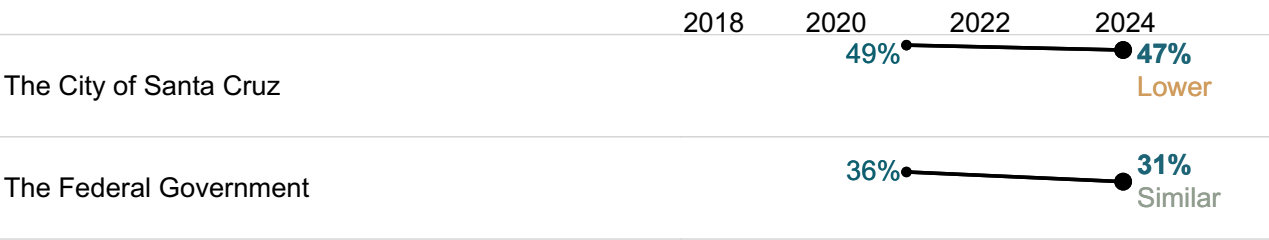
Please rate the following categories of Santa Cruz government performance.
(% excellent or good)



Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.
(% excellent or good)



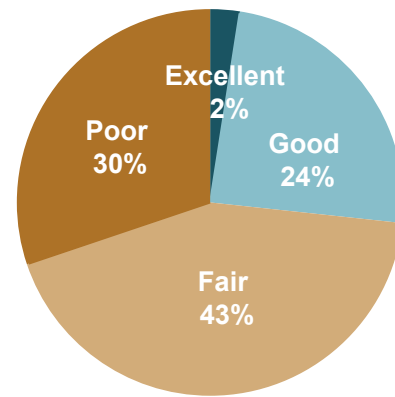
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?
(% excellent or good)



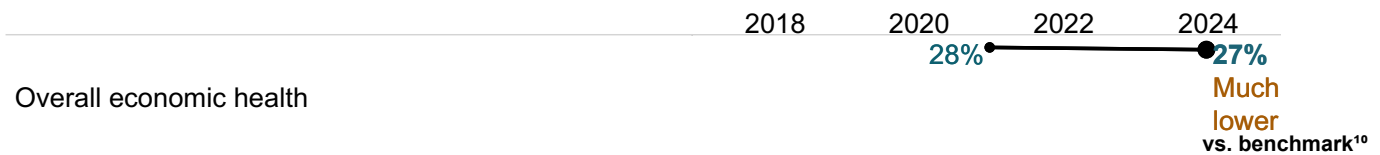
9. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

Local governments work together with private and nonprofit businesses, and with the community at large, to foster sustainable growth, create jobs, and promote a thriving local economy.

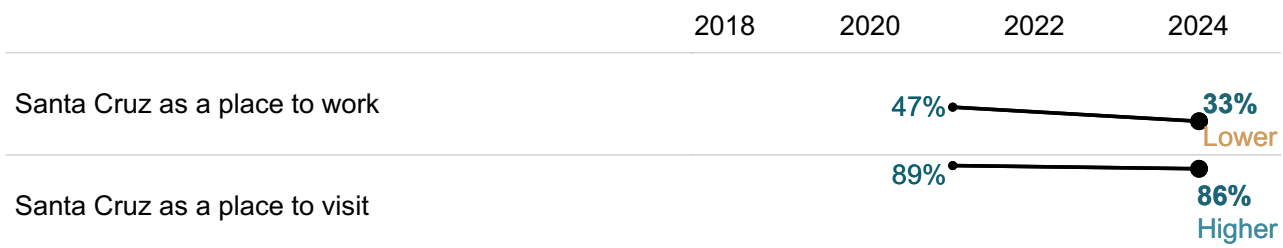
Overall economic health of Santa Cruz, 2024



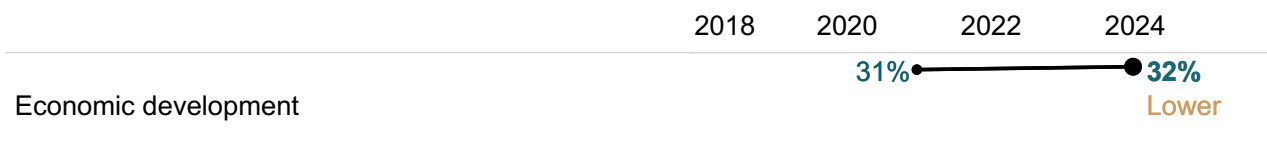
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Santa Cruz as a whole.
 (% excellent or good)



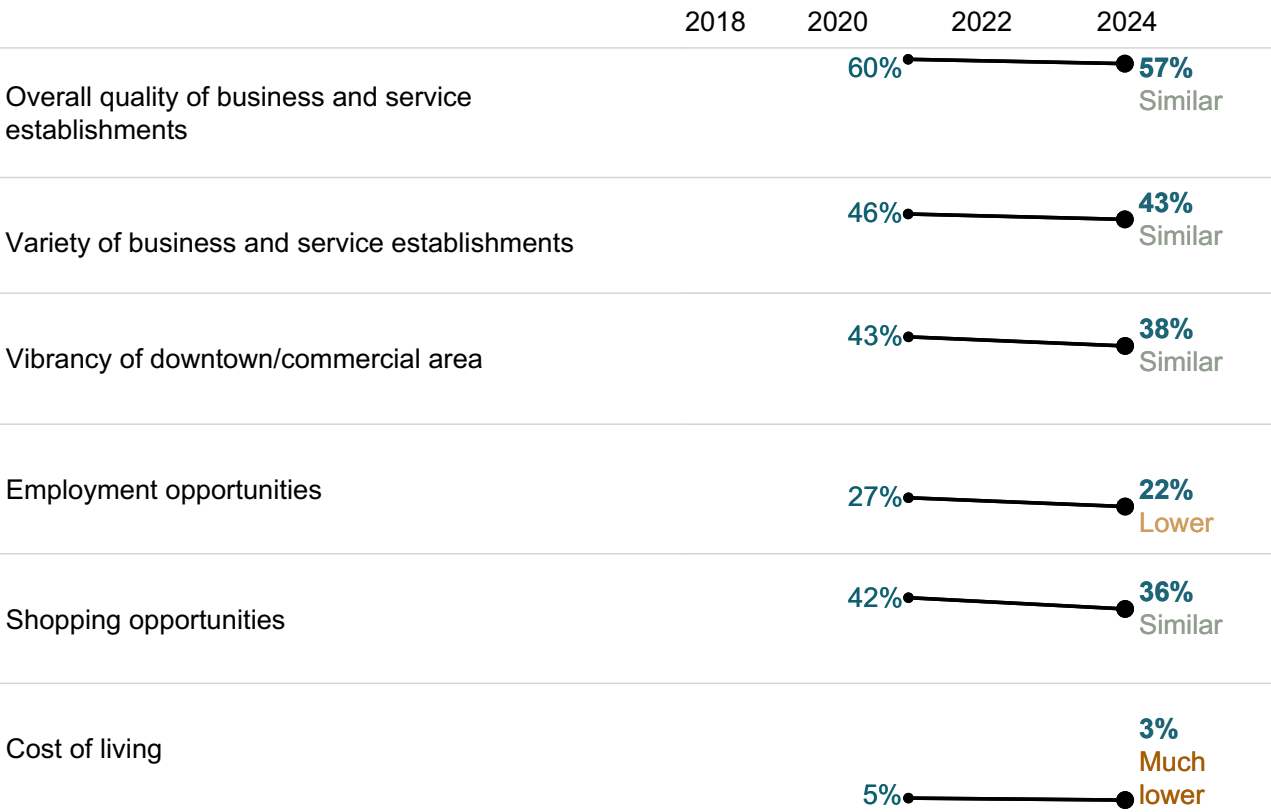
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Santa Cruz.
 (% excellent or good)



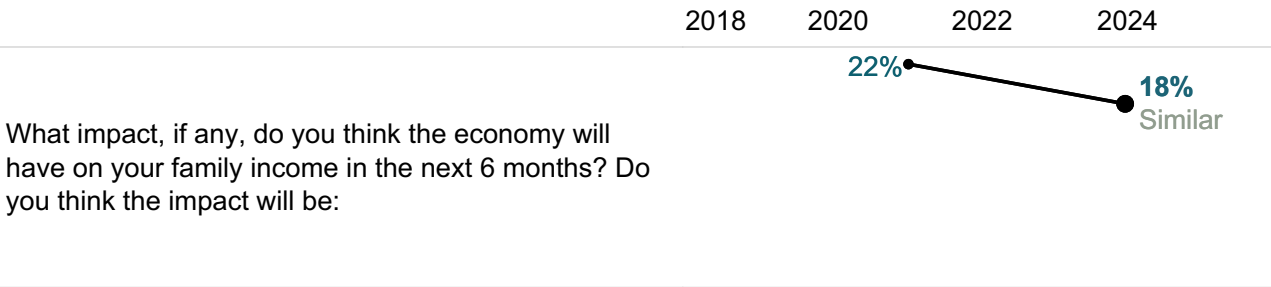
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Santa Cruz.
 (% excellent or good)



Please rate each of the following in the Santa Cruz community.
(% excellent or good)



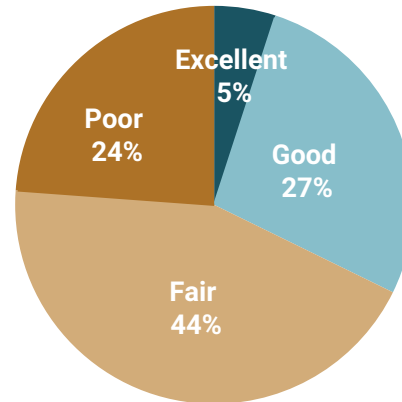
What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:
(% very or somewhat positive)



Overall quality of the transportation system in Santa Cruz, 2024

Mobility

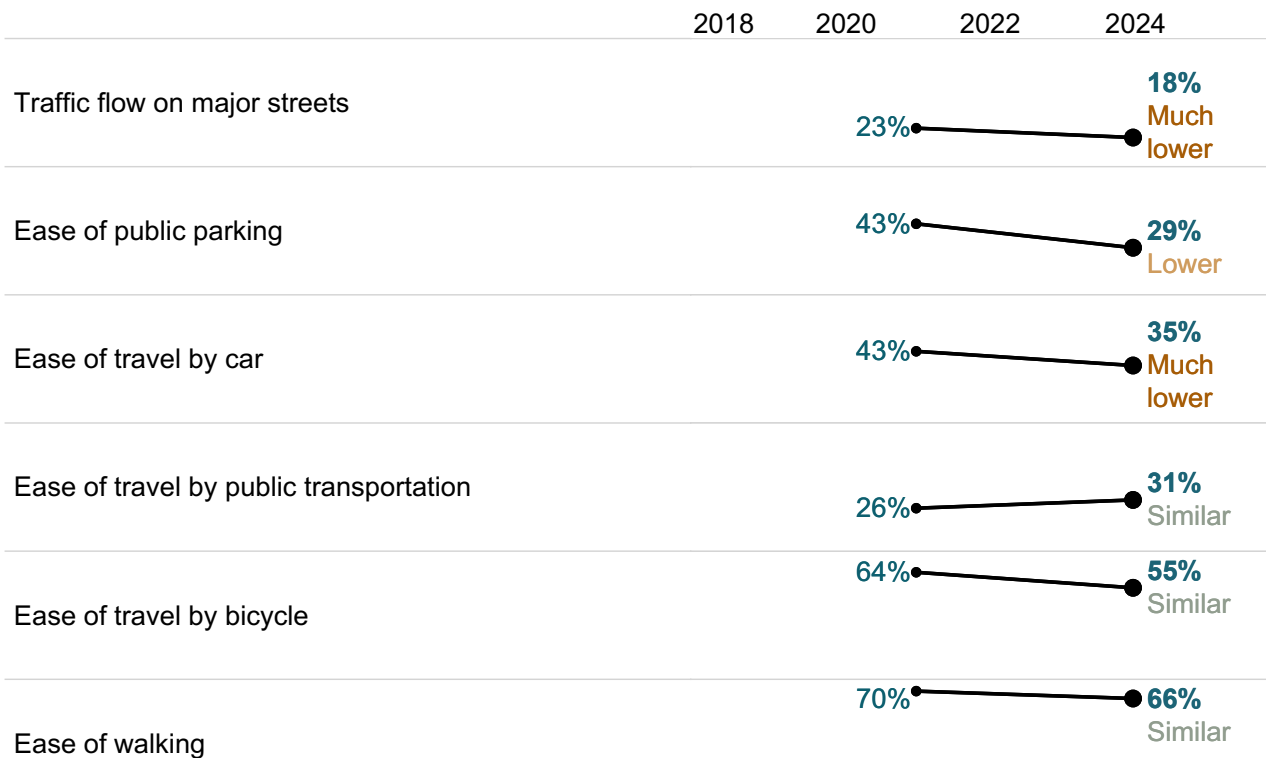
The ease with which residents can move about their communities, whether for commuting, leisure, or recreation, plays a major role in the quality of life for all who live, work, and play in the community.



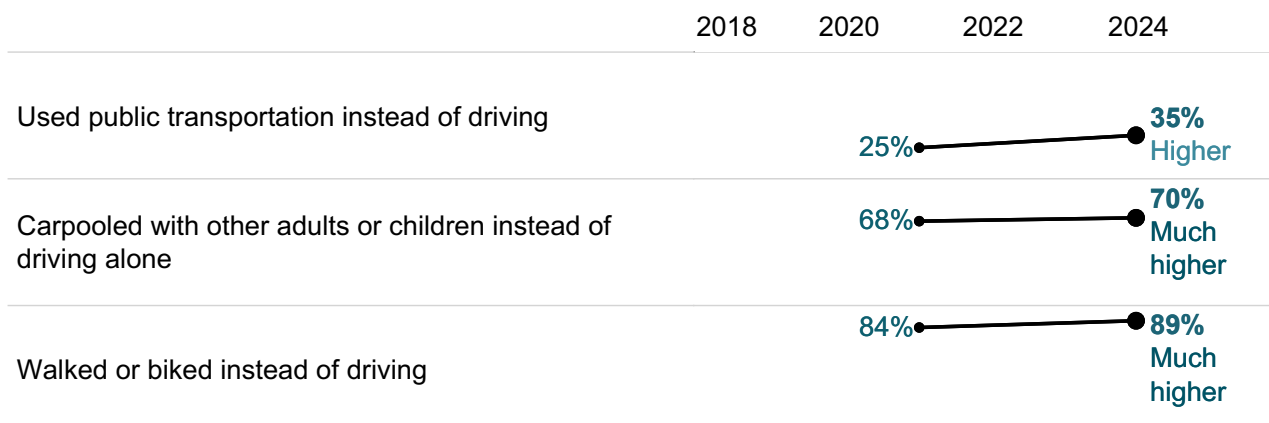
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Santa Cruz as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



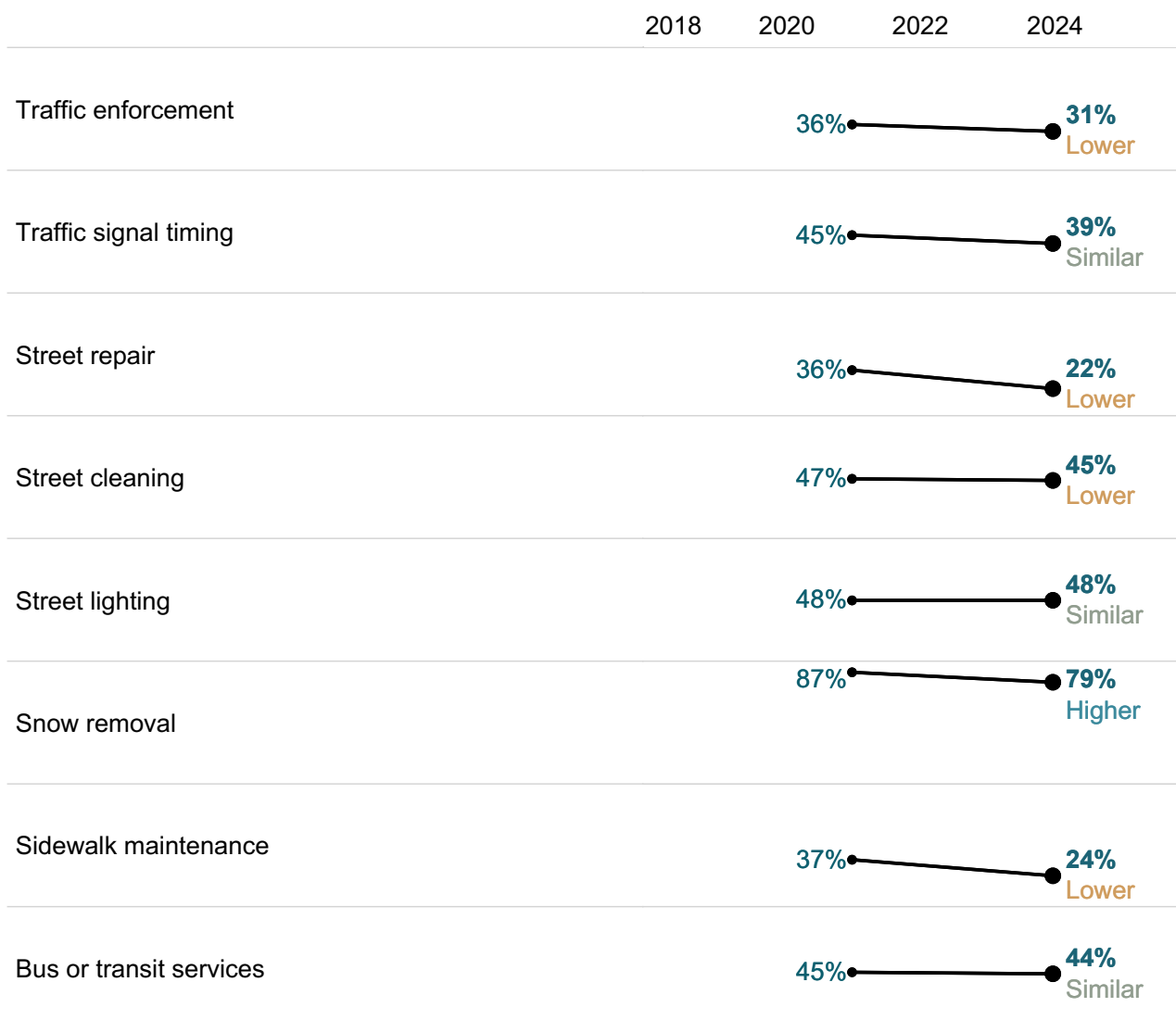
Please also rate each of the following in the Santa Cruz community.
(% excellent or good)



Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.
 (% yes)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Santa Cruz.
 (% excellent or good)

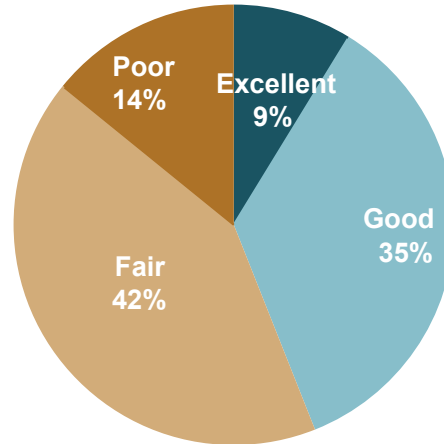


11. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

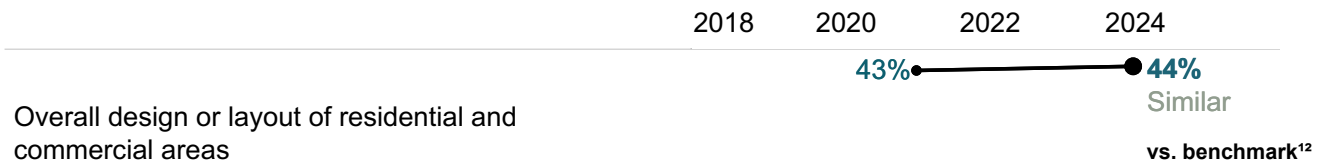
Overall design or layout of Santa Cruz's residential and commercial areas, 2024

Community Design

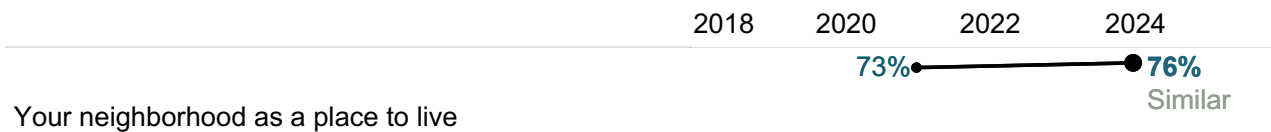
A well-designed community enhances the quality of life for its residents by encouraging smart land use and zoning, ensuring that affordable housing is accessible to all, and providing access to parks and other green spaces.



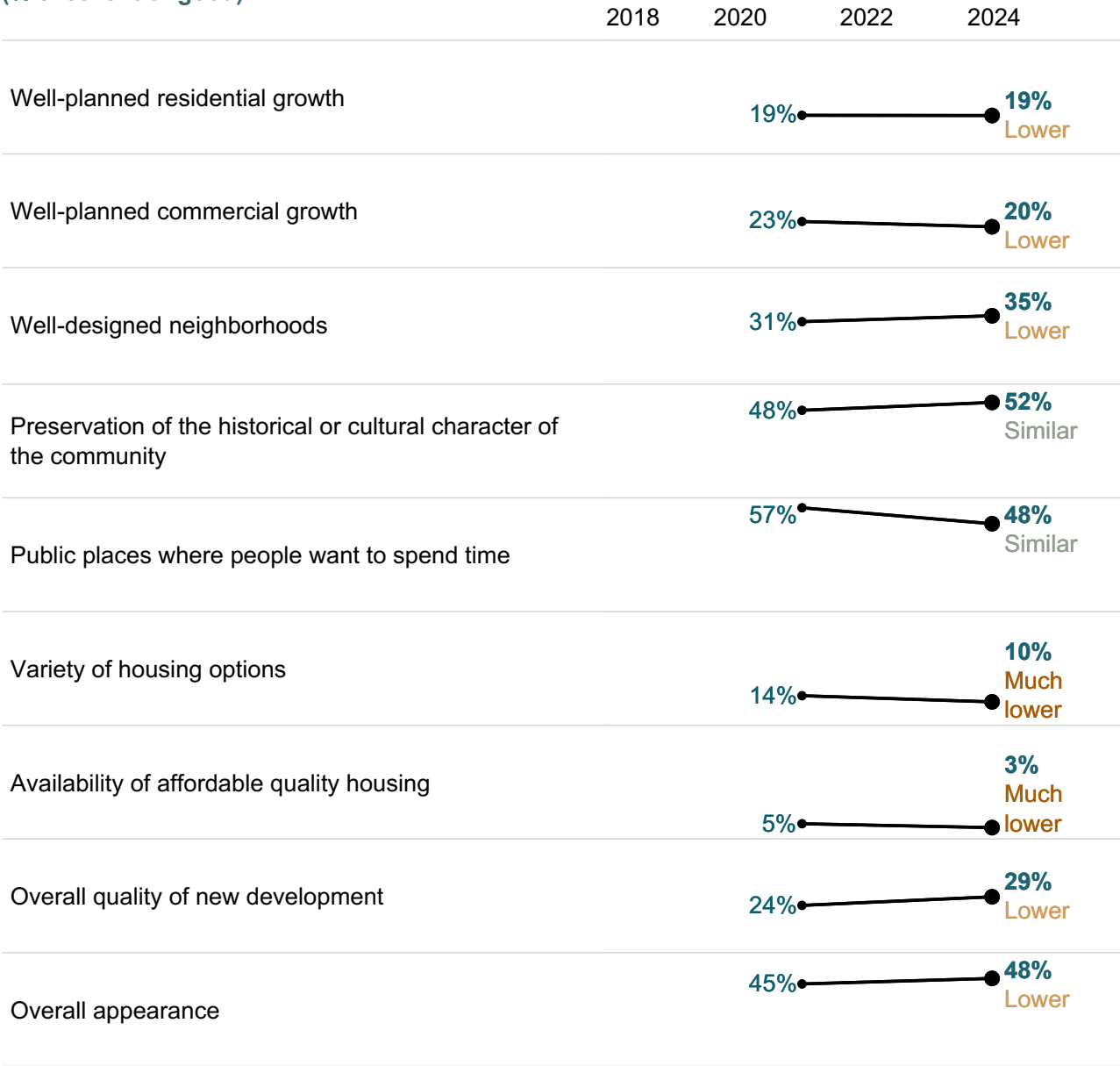
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Santa Cruz as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



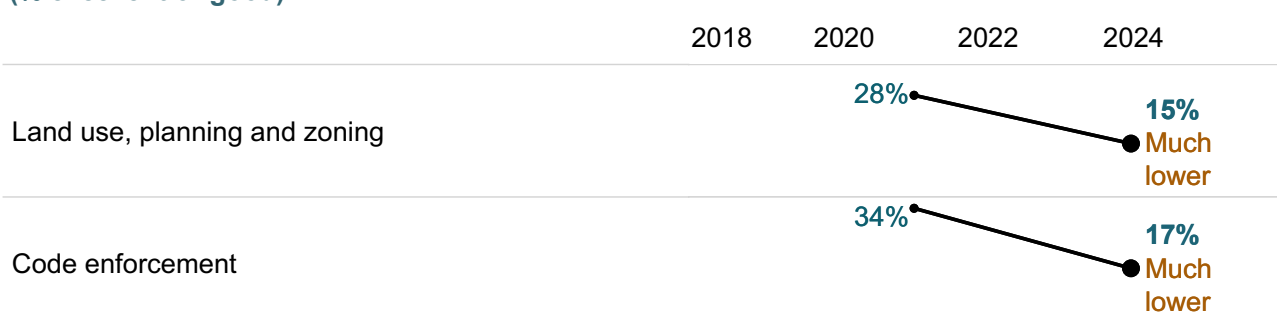
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Santa Cruz.
(% excellent or good)



Please also rate each of the following in the Santa Cruz community.
 (% excellent or good)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Santa Cruz.
 (% excellent or good)



12. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

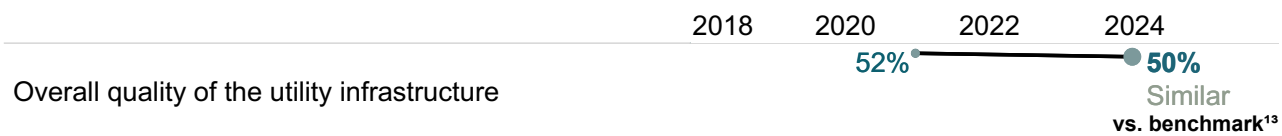
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in Santa Cruz, 2024

Utilities

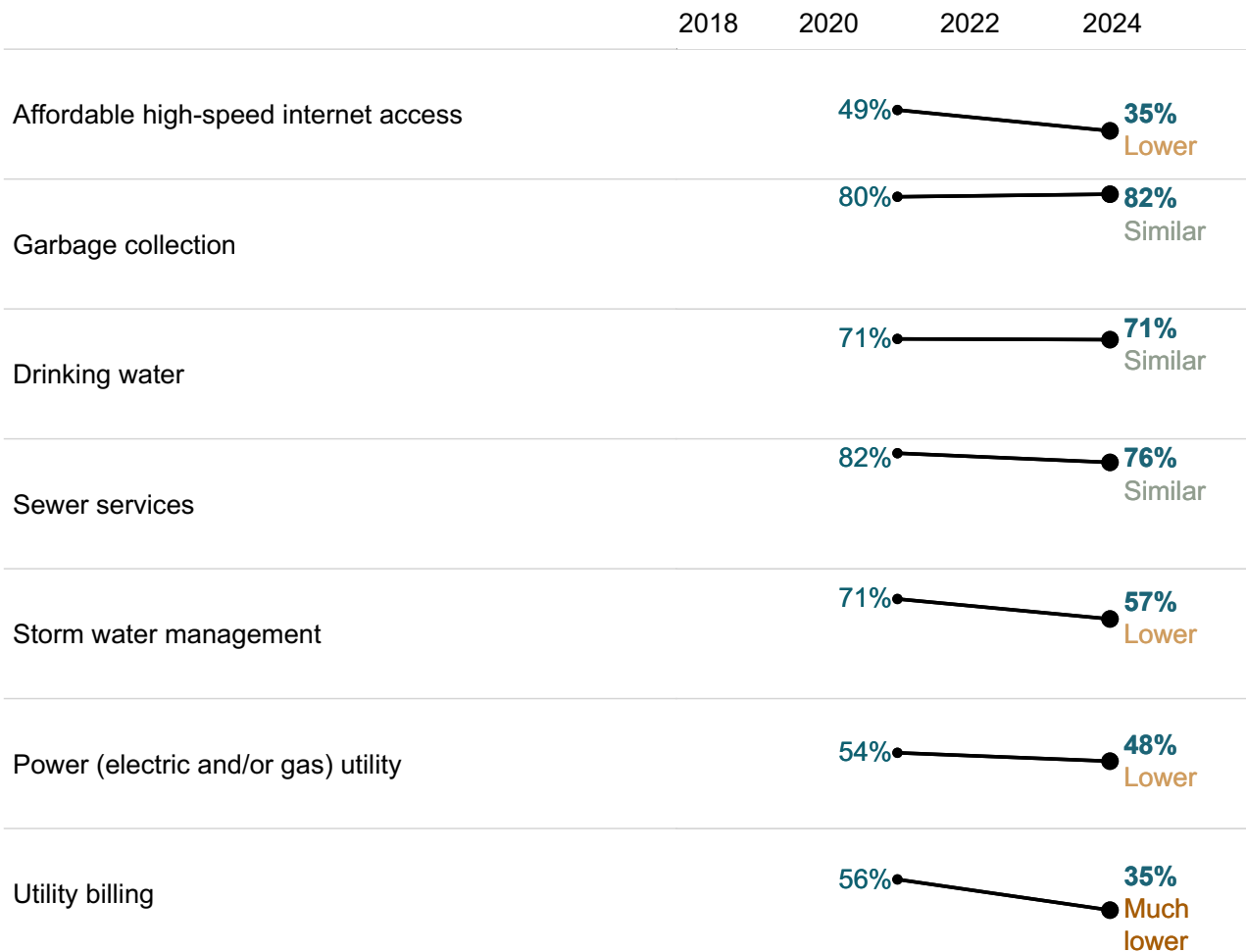
Services such as water, gas, electricity, and internet access play a vital role in ensuring the physical and economic health and well-being of the communities they serve.



Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Santa Cruz as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Santa Cruz.
(% excellent or good)

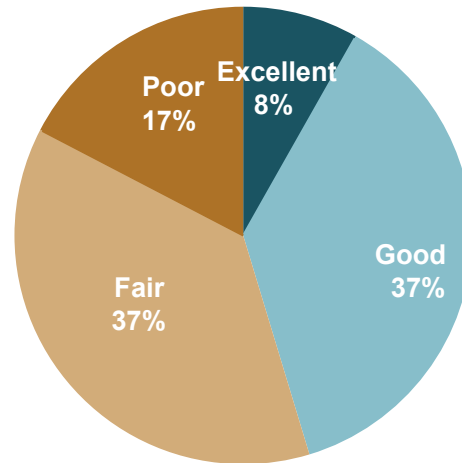


13. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

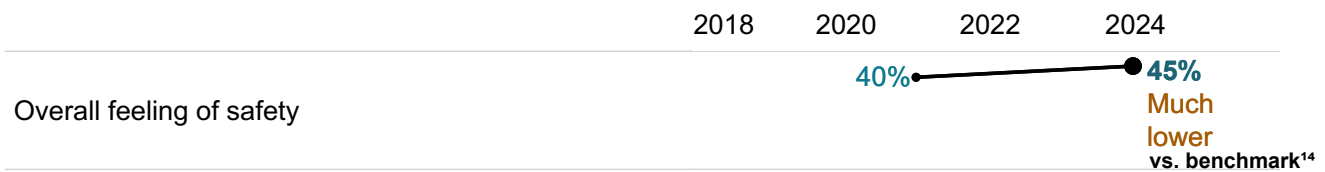
Overall feeling of safety in Santa Cruz, 2024

Safety

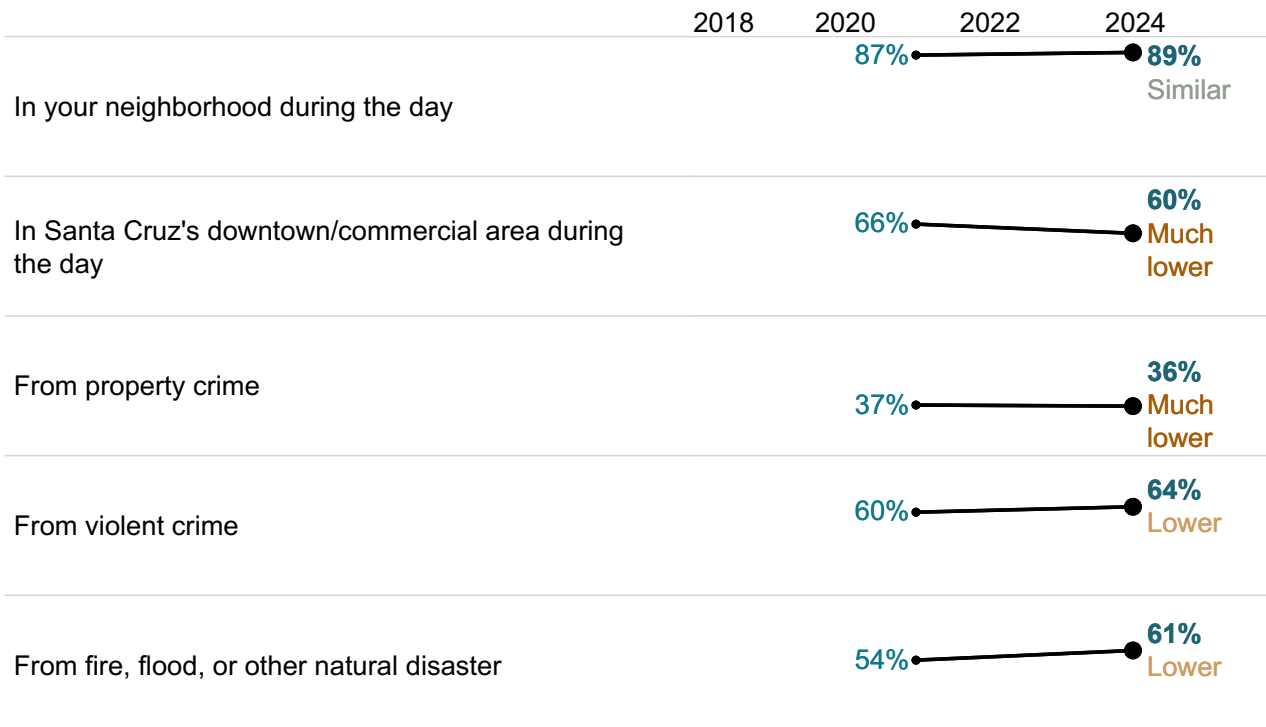
Public safety is often the most important task facing local governments. All residents should feel safe and secure in their neighborhoods and in the greater community, and providing robust safety-related services is essential to residents' quality of life.



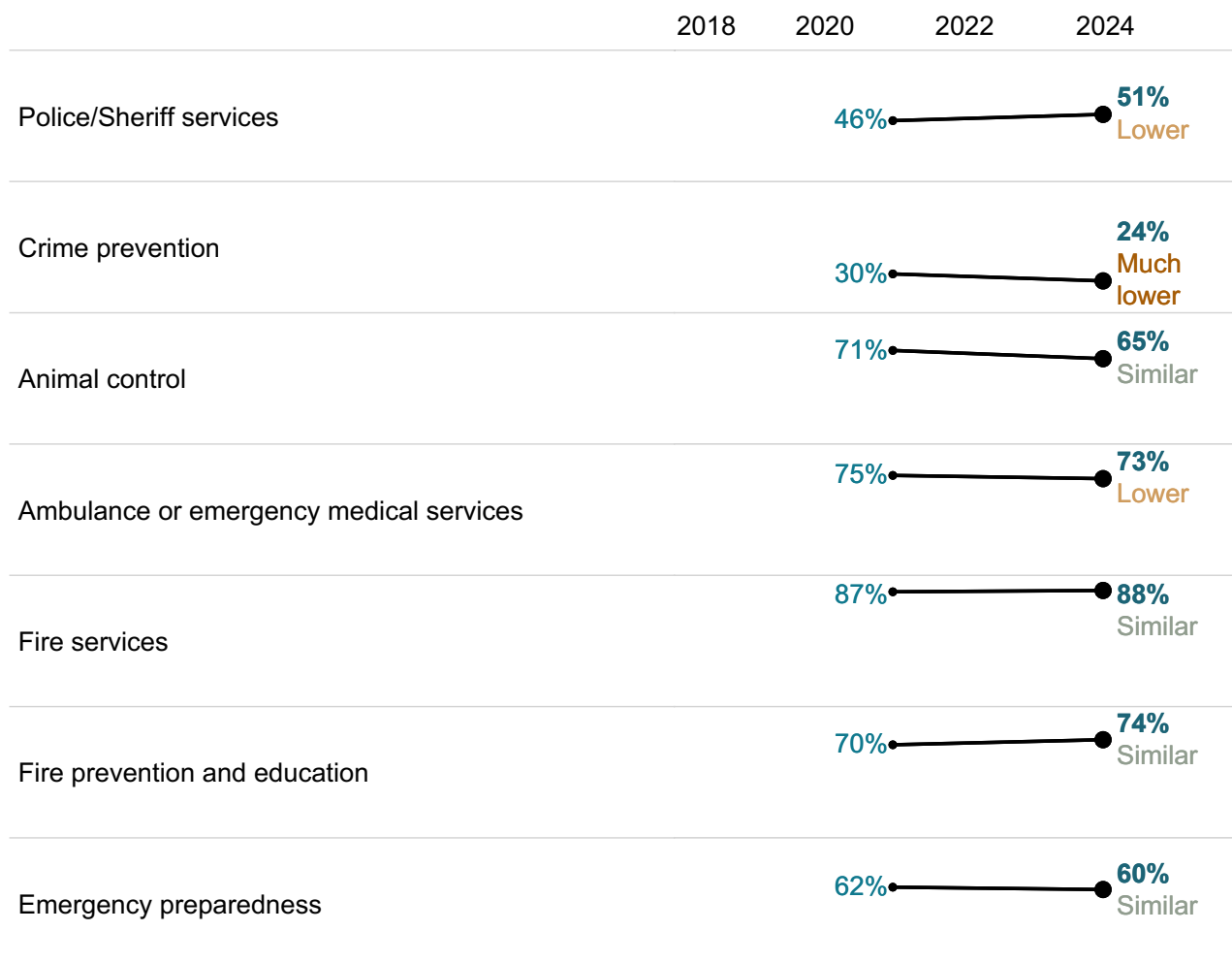
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Santa Cruz as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:
(% very or somewhat safe)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Santa Cruz.
 (% excellent or good)

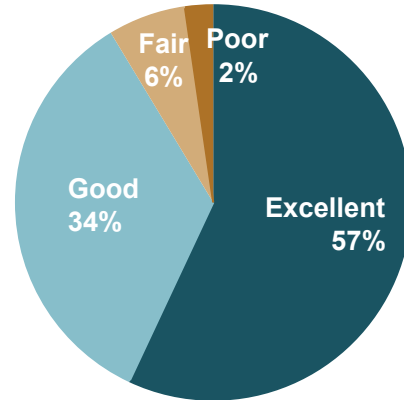


14. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

Overall quality of natural environment in Santa Cruz, 2024

Natural Environment

The natural environment plays a vital role in the health and well-being of residents. The natural spaces in which residents live and experience their communities has a direct and profound effect on quality of life.



Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Santa Cruz as a whole.

(% excellent or good)



Please also rate each of the following in the Santa Cruz community.

(% excellent or good)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Santa Cruz.

(% excellent or good)



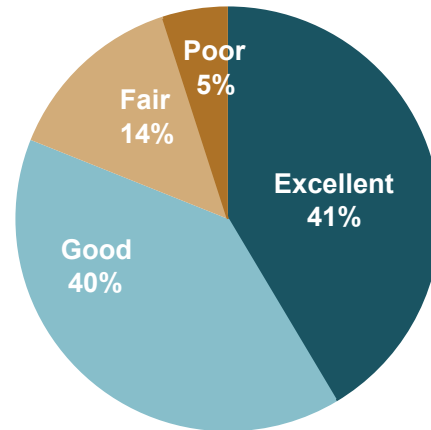
¹⁵ Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities, 2024

Parks and Recreation

"There are no communities that pride themselves on their quality of life, promote themselves as a desirable location for businesses to relocate, or maintain that they are environmental stewards of their natural resources, without such communities having a robust, active system of parks and recreation programs for public use and enjoyment."

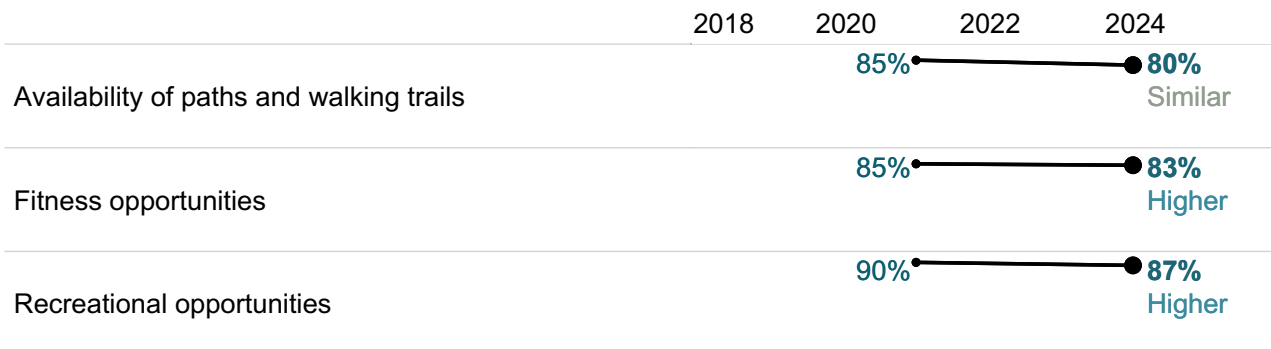
- National Recreation and Park Association



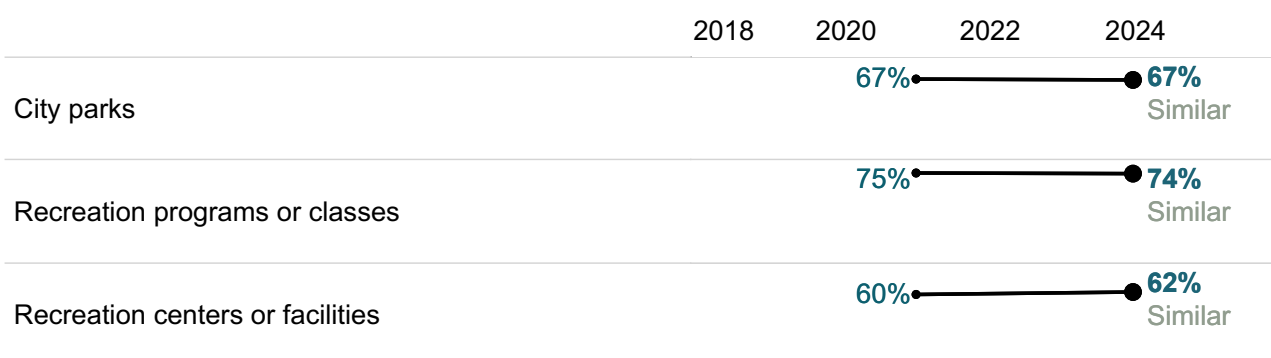
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Santa Cruz as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



Please also rate each of the following in the Santa Cruz community.
(% excellent or good)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Santa Cruz.
(% excellent or good)

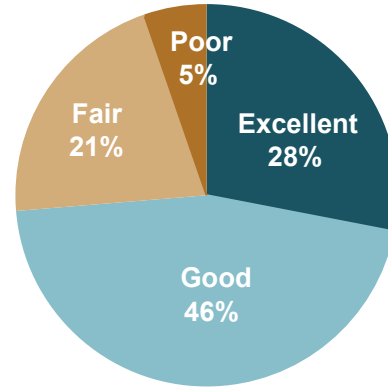


¹⁶. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

Overall health and wellness opportunities in Santa Cruz, 2024

Health and Wellness

The characteristics of and amenities available in the communities in which people live has a direct impact on the health and wellness of residents, and thus, on their quality of life overall.



Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Santa Cruz as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



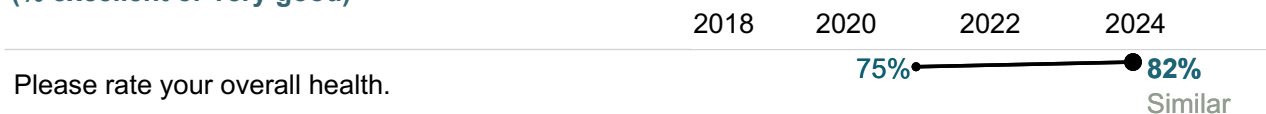
Please also rate each of the following in the Santa Cruz community.
(% excellent or good)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Santa Cruz.
(% excellent or good)



Please rate your overall health.
(% excellent or very good)

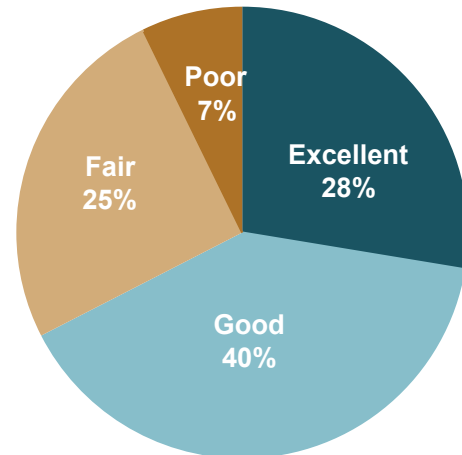


¹⁷. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

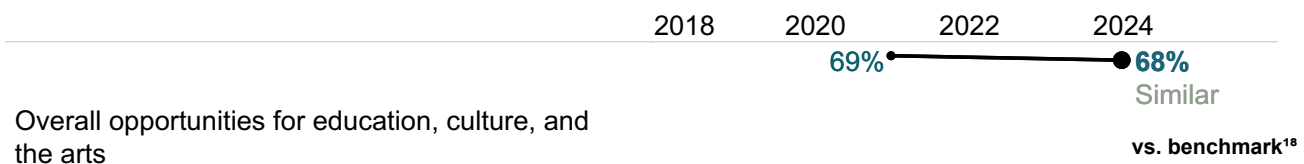
Education, Arts, and Culture

Participation in the arts, in educational opportunities, and in cultural activities is linked to increased civic engagement, greater social tolerance, and enhanced enjoyment of the local community.

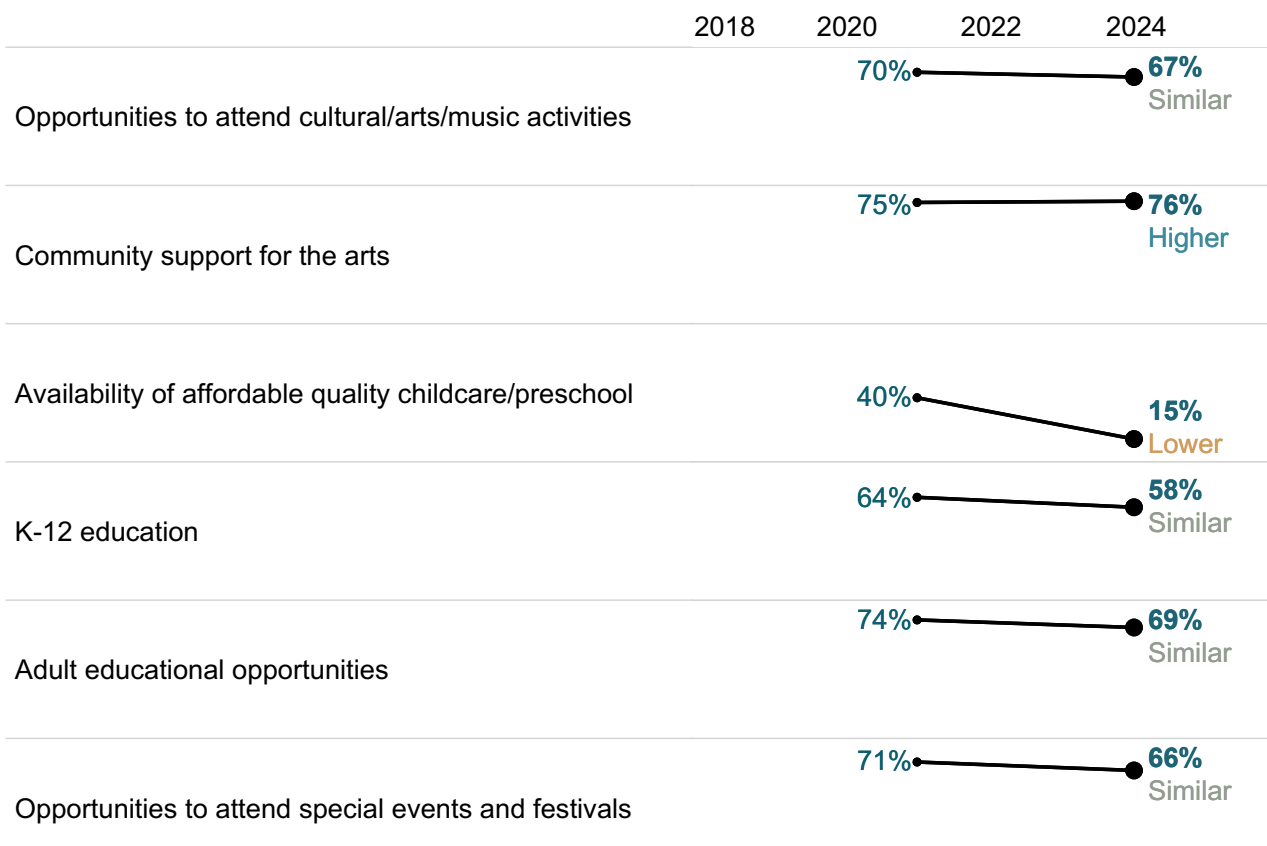
Overall opportunities for education, culture and the arts, 2024



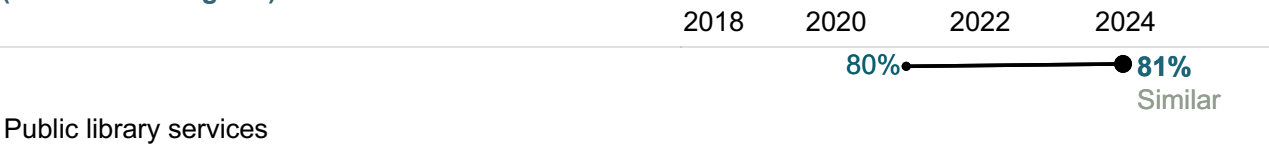
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Santa Cruz as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



Please also rate each of the following in the Santa Cruz community.
(% excellent or good)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Santa Cruz.
(% excellent or good)

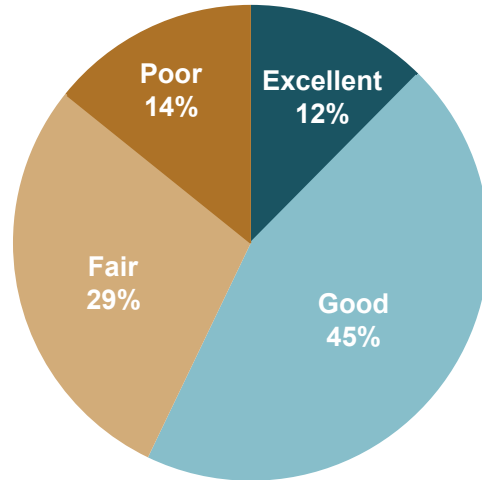


18. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

Residents' connection and engagement with their community, 2024

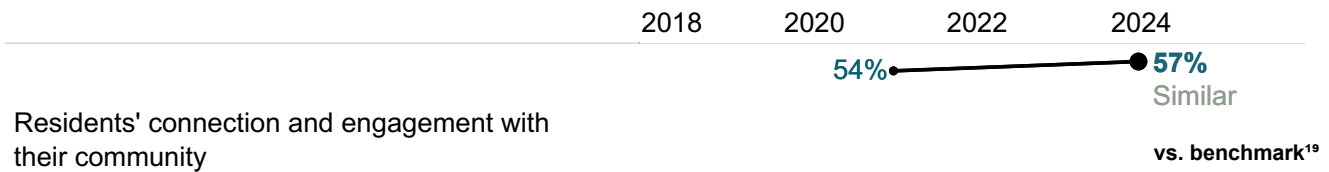
Inclusivity and Engagement

Inclusivity refers to a cultural and environmental feeling of belonging; residents who feel invited to participate within their communities feel more included, involved, and engaged than those who do not.



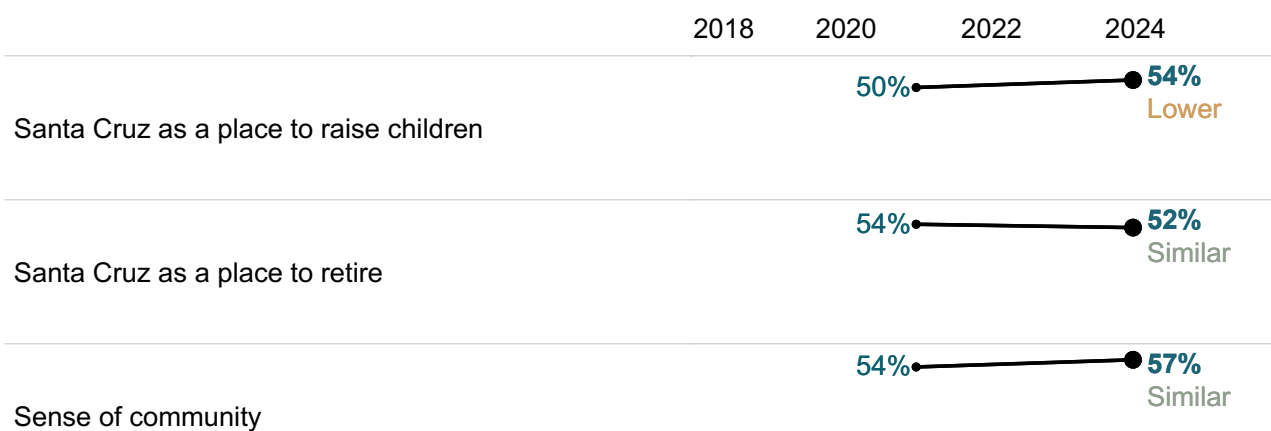
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Santa Cruz as a whole.

(% excellent or good)

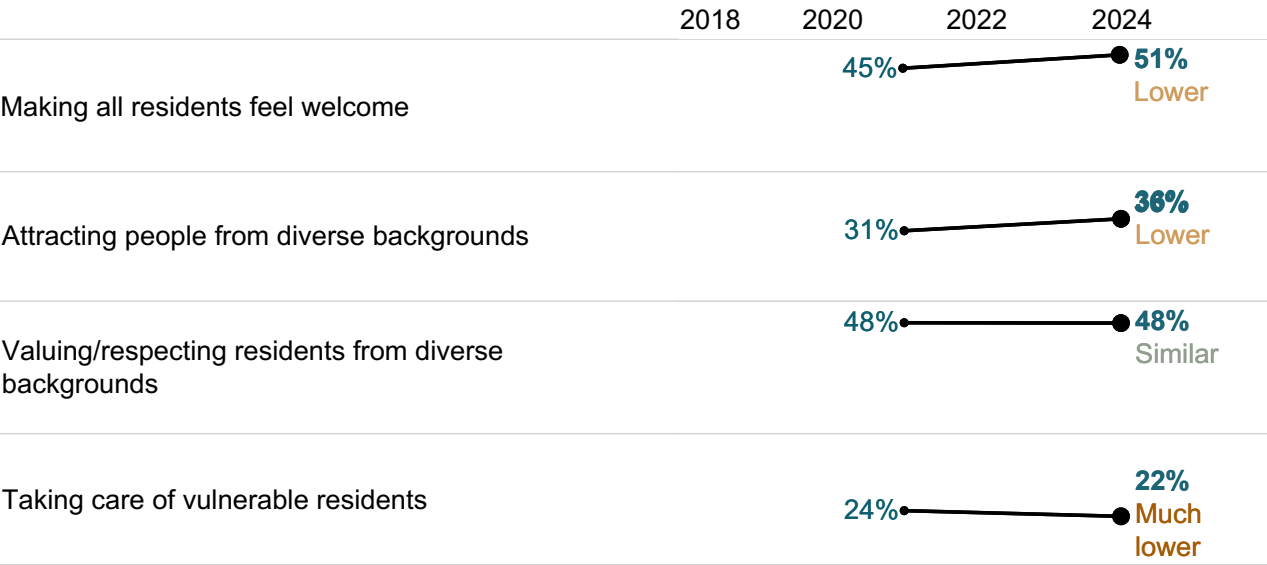


Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Santa Cruz.

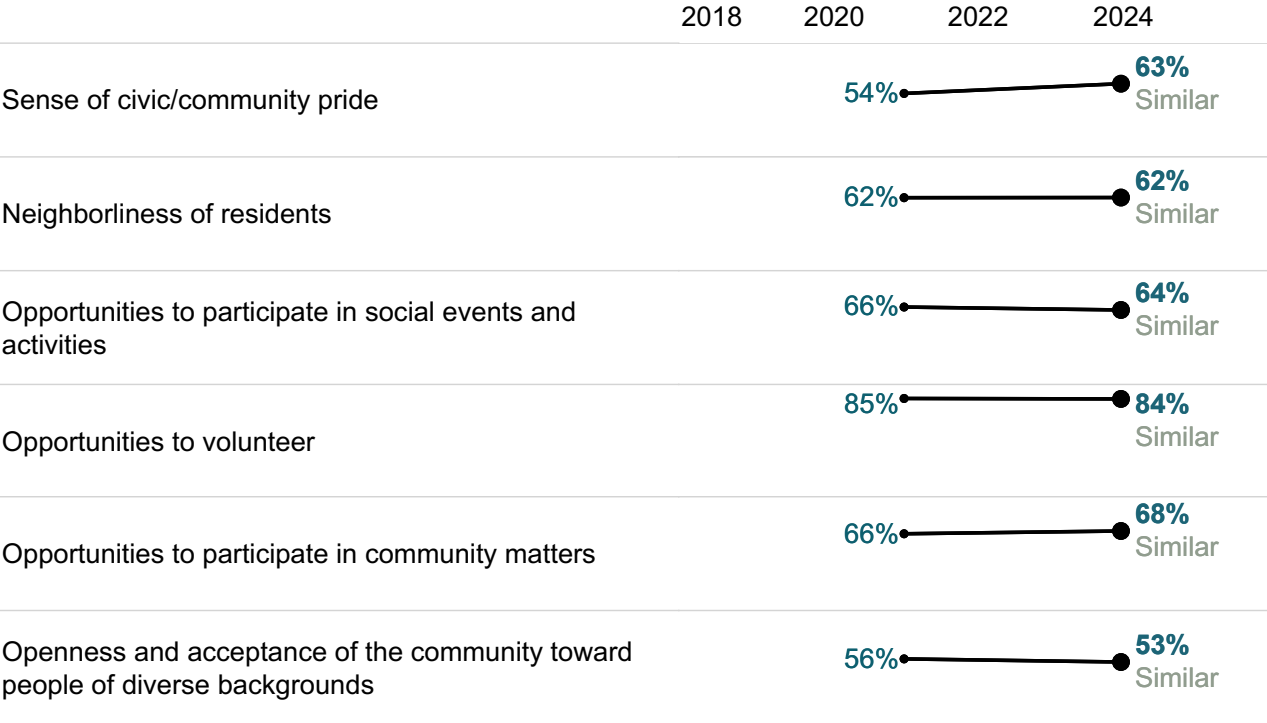
(% excellent or good)



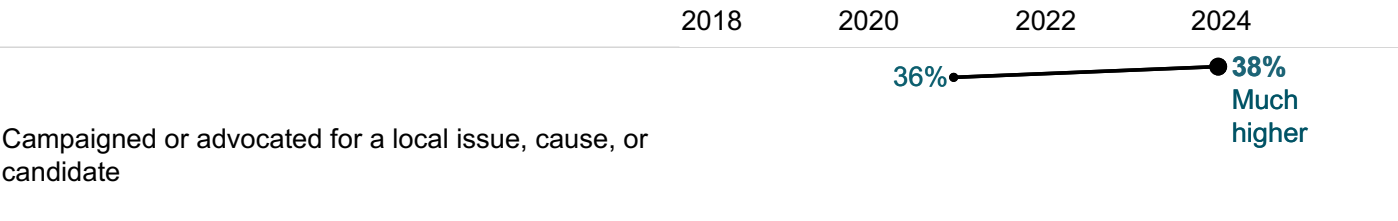
Please rate the job you feel the Santa Cruz community does at each of the following.
(% excellent or good)



Please also rate each of the following in the Santa Cruz community.
(% excellent or good)



Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.
(% excellent or good)

























































19. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

















Custom questions

Below are the complete set of responses to each custom question on the survey. By default, “don’t know” responses are excluded, but may be added to the table using the response filter below.

			Include "don't know"
			No
Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose the City funding each of the following items, even if it involved raising taxes or fees?	Addressing the impacts of climate change	Strongly support	49%
		Somewhat support	38%
		Somewhat oppose	4%
		Strongly oppose	9%
	Increasing the City's assured water supply	Strongly support	61%
		Somewhat support	35%
		Somewhat oppose	3%
		Strongly oppose	2%
	Reliable services for the unhoused, such as hygiene services, storage, clean-up, and other services	Strongly support	56%
		Somewhat support	26%
		Somewhat oppose	9%
		Strongly oppose	9%
	Outreach and case management services for the unhoused	Strongly support	51%
		Somewhat support	30%
		Somewhat oppose	10%
		Strongly oppose	9%
	Developing affordable housing for low and moderate income households	Strongly support	67%
		Somewhat support	22%
		Somewhat oppose	6%
		Strongly oppose	6%
	Mitigating the risk of wildfires in our open space and natural areas	Strongly support	66%
		Somewhat support	31%
		Somewhat oppose	2%

	Strongly oppose		1%
Maintaining the City's streets, roads, sidewalks and other public facilities	Strongly support		57%
	Somewhat support		38%
	Somewhat oppose		5%
Maintaining our parks, open spaces and recreational facilities	Strongly support		56%
	Somewhat support		39%
	Somewhat oppose		5%
	Strongly oppose		0%
Funding for arts programs	Strongly support		32%
	Somewhat support		45%
	Somewhat oppose		18%
	Strongly oppose		5%
Mental health crisis response services	Strongly support		62%
	Somewhat support		30%
	Somewhat oppose		7%
	Strongly oppose		2%
Ensuring the City's financial stability during downturns	Strongly support		41%
	Somewhat support		42%
	Somewhat oppose		13%
	Strongly oppose		4%
Recruiting businesses and jobs to Santa Cruz	Strongly support		47%
	Somewhat support		36%
	Somewhat oppose		12%
	Strongly oppose		5%
Improving Downtown Santa Cruz	Strongly support		48%
	Somewhat support		36%
	Somewhat oppose		13%
	Strongly oppose		3%

Please rate how important, if at all, each of the following are for the City of Santa Cruz to focus on to help address the impacts of and assist people experiencing homelessness:	Increasing police resources to control crime	Strongly support		43%
		Somewhat support		29%
		Somewhat oppose		13%
		Strongly oppose		16%
	Increasing sustainable transportation options (e.g., bus, bikeshare)	Strongly support		49%
		Somewhat support		38%
		Somewhat oppose		9%
		Strongly oppose		3%
	Job training programs	Strongly support		34%
		Somewhat support		49%
		Somewhat oppose		14%
		Strongly oppose		3%
	Support for local businesses	Strongly support		48%
		Somewhat support		41%
		Somewhat oppose		9%
		Strongly oppose		2%
	Improving communication and community engagement	Strongly support		36%
		Somewhat support		51%
		Somewhat oppose		11%
		Strongly oppose		2%
	Create affordable housing opportunities	Essential		54%
		Very important		19%
		Somewhat important		18%
		Not at all important		9%
	Provide emergency shelter	Essential		39%
		Very important		32%
		Somewhat important		24%
		Not at all important		5%

Offer outreach and case management services	Essential		36%
	Very important		37%
	Somewhat important		17%
	Not at all important		10%
Provide access to hygiene services, storage, clean-up, and other services	Essential		37%
	Very important		38%
	Somewhat important		17%
	Not at all important		8%
Partner with Santa Cruz County, non-profits, and health care providers that provide services to people experienci..	Essential		42%
	Very important		36%
	Somewhat important		12%
	Not at all important		9%
Increase enforcement of time, place, and manner laws for camping	Essential		46%
	Very important		17%
	Somewhat important		22%
	Not at all important		16%

The City of Santa Cruz 2024 Community Survey

Please complete this survey if you are the adult (age 18 or older) in the household who most recently had a birthday (the year of birth does not matter). Your responses are confidential and no identifying information will be shared.

1. Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Santa Cruz.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Santa Cruz as a place to live.....	1	2	3	4	5
Your neighborhood as a place to live	1	2	3	4	5
Santa Cruz as a place to raise children	1	2	3	4	5
Santa Cruz as a place to work.....	1	2	3	4	5
Santa Cruz as a place to visit.....	1	2	3	4	5
Santa Cruz as a place to retire	1	2	3	4	5
The overall quality of life in Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of community.....	1	2	3	4	5

2. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Santa Cruz as a whole.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Overall economic health of Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus) in Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall design or layout of Santa Cruz's residential and commercial areas (e.g., homes, buildings, streets, parks, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in Santa Cruz (water, sewer, storm water, electric/gas, broadband).....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall feeling of safety in Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of natural environment in Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall health and wellness opportunities in Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts.....	1	2	3	4	5
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	1	2	3	4	5

3. Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following.

	<u>Very likely</u>	<u>Somewhat likely</u>	<u>Somewhat unlikely</u>	<u>Very unlikely</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Recommend living in Santa Cruz to someone who asks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Remain in Santa Cruz for the next five years.....	1	2	3	4	5

4. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

	<u>Very safe</u>	<u>Somewhat safe</u>	<u>Neither safe nor unsafe</u>	<u>Somewhat unsafe</u>	<u>Very unsafe</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
In your neighborhood during the day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Santa Cruz's downtown/commercial area during the day	1	2	3	4	5	6
From property crime.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
From violent crime.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
From fire, flood, or other natural disaster	1	2	3	4	5	6

5. Please rate the job you feel the Santa Cruz community does at each of the following.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Making all residents feel welcome	1	2	3	4	5
Attracting people from diverse backgrounds.....	1	2	3	4	5
Valuing/respecting residents from diverse backgrounds.....	1	2	3	4	5
Taking care of vulnerable residents (elderly, disabled, homeless, etc.).....	1	2	3	4	5

6. Please rate each of the following in the Santa Cruz community.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of business and service establishments in Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5
Vibrancy of downtown/commercial area	1	2	3	4	5
Employment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Cost of living in Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image or reputation of Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5

7. Please also rate each of the following in the Santa Cruz community.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Traffic flow on major streets.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of public parking.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of travel by car in Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of travel by public transportation in Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of travel by bicycle in Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of walking in Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5
Well-planned residential growth.....	1	2	3	4	5
Well-planned commercial growth.....	1	2	3	4	5
Well-designed neighborhoods	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of the historical or cultural character of the community	1	2	3	4	5
Public places where people want to spend time	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of housing options.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality housing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of new development in Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4	5
Overall appearance of Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness of Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5
Water resources (beaches, lakes, ponds, riverways, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Air quality.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of paths and walking trails.....	1	2	3	4	5
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.) ...	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality food	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality health care.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of preventive health services	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality mental health care	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	1	2	3	4	5
Community support for the arts.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality childcare/preschool.....	1	2	3	4	5
K-12 education.....	1	2	3	4	5
Adult educational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of civic/community pride.....	1	2	3	4	5
Neighborliness of residents in Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend special events and festivals.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to volunteer	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in community matters	1	2	3	4	5
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds.....	1	2	3	4	5

8. Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.

	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Contacted the City of Santa Cruz (in-person, phone, email, or web) for help or information	1	2
Contacted Santa Cruz elected officials (in-person, phone, email, or web) to express your opinion.....	1	2
Attended a local public meeting (of local elected officials like City Council or County Commissioners, advisory boards, town halls, HOA, neighborhood watch, etc.)	1	2
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting.....	1	2
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Santa Cruz.....	1	2
Campaigned or advocated for a local issue, cause, or candidate.....	1	2
Voted in your most recent local election	1	2
Used bus, rail, subway, or other public transportation instead of driving.....	1	2
Carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone.....	1	2
Walked or biked instead of driving	1	2

The City of Santa Cruz 2024 Community Survey

9. Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Santa Cruz.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Public information services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Economic development.....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic enforcement	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic signal timing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street repair.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street cleaning.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street lighting.....	1	2	3	4	5
Snow removal.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sidewalk maintenance.....	1	2	3	4	5
Bus or transit services	1	2	3	4	5
Land use, planning, and zoning.....	1	2	3	4	5
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Affordable high-speed internet access	1	2	3	4	5
Garbage collection	1	2	3	4	5
Drinking water.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sewer services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Storm water management (storm drainage, dams, levees, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Power (electric and/or gas) utility.....	1	2	3	4	5
Utility billing	1	2	3	4	5
Police/Sheriff services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Crime prevention	1	2	3	4	5
Animal control.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ambulance or emergency medical services	1	2	3	4	5
Fire services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire prevention and education.....	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of natural areas (open space, farmlands, and greenbelts)	1	2	3	4	5
Santa Cruz open space.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recycling.....	1	2	3	4	5
Yard waste pick-up.....	1	2	3	4	5
City parks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation programs or classes	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation centers or facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Health services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Public library services	1	2	3	4	5
Overall customer service by Santa Cruz employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

10. Please rate the following categories of Santa Cruz government performance.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
The value of services for the taxes paid to Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall direction that Santa Cruz is taking.....	1	2	3	4	5
The job Santa Cruz government does at welcoming resident involvement.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall confidence in Santa Cruz government	1	2	3	4	5
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	1	2	3	4	5
Being honest.....	1	2	3	4	5
Being open and transparent to the public.....	1	2	3	4	5
Informing residents about issues facing the community.....	1	2	3	4	5
Treating all residents fairly	1	2	3	4	5
Treating residents with respect	1	2	3	4	5

11. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
The City of Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4	5
The Federal Government.....	1	2	3	4	5

12. Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the Santa Cruz community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years.

	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>
Overall economic health of Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4
Overall quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus) in Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4
Overall design or layout of Santa Cruz's residential and commercial areas (e.g., homes, buildings, streets, parks, etc.).....	1	2	3	4
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in Santa Cruz (water, sewer, storm water, electric/gas, broadband).....	1	2	3	4
Overall feeling of safety in Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4
Overall quality of natural environment in Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities.....	1	2	3	4
Overall health and wellness opportunities in Santa Cruz.....	1	2	3	4
Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts.....	1	2	3	4
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	1	2	3	4

13. Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose the City funding each of the following items, even if it involved raising taxes or fees?

	<u>Strongly support</u>	<u>Somewhat support</u>	<u>Somewhat oppose</u>	<u>Strongly oppose</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Addressing the impacts of climate change.....	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing the City's assured water supply.....	1	2	3	4	5
Reliable services for the unhoused, such as hygiene services, storage, clean-up, and other services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Outreach and case management services for the unhoused.....	1	2	3	4	5
Developing affordable housing for low and moderate income households	1	2	3	4	5
Mitigating the risk of wildfires in our open space and natural areas.....	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining the City's streets, roads, sidewalks and other public facilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining our parks, open spaces and recreational facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Funding for arts programs.....	1	2	3	4	5
Mental health crisis response services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ensuring the City's financial stability during downturns.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recruiting businesses and jobs to Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4	5
Improving Downtown Santa Cruz	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing police resources to control crime.....	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing sustainable transportation options (e.g., bus, bikeshare).....	1	2	3	4	5
Job training programs.....	1	2	3	4	5
Support for local businesses	1	2	3	4	5
Improving communication and community engagement	1	2	3	4	5

14. Please rate how important, if at all, each of the following are for the City of Santa Cruz to focus on to help address the impacts of and assist people experiencing homelessness:

	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>
Create affordable housing opportunities.....	1	2	3	4
Provide emergency shelter.....	1	2	3	4
Offer outreach and case management services.....	1	2	3	4
Provide access to hygiene services, storage, clean-up, and other services.....	1	2	3	4
Partner with Santa Cruz County, non-profits, and health care providers that provide services to people experiencing homelessness.....	1	2	3	4
Increase enforcement of time, place, and manner laws for camping.....	1	2	3	4

The City of Santa Cruz 2024 Community Survey

Our last questions are about you and your household.
Again, all of your responses to this survey are confidential and no identifying information will be shared.

D1. In general, how many times do you:

	Several times a day	Once a day	A few times a week	Every few weeks	Less often or never	Don't know
Access the internet from your home using a computer, laptop, or tablet computer	1	2	3	4	5	6
Access the internet from your cell phone	1	2	3	4	5	6
Visit social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Use or check email	1	2	3	4	5	6
Share your opinions online	1	2	3	4	5	6
Shop online	1	2	3	4	5	6

- D2. Please rate your overall health.
☐ Excellent ☐ Very good ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor
- D3. What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months?
Do you think the impact will be:
☐ Very positive ☐ Somewhat positive ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat negative ☐ Very negative
- D4. How many years have you lived in Santa Cruz?
☐ Less than 2 years
☐ 2-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ 11-20 years
☐ More than 20 years
- D5. Which best describes the building you live in?
☐ Single-family detached home
☐ Townhouse or duplex (may share walls but no units above or below you)
☐ Condominium or apartment (have units above or below you)
☐ Mobile home
☐ Other
- D6. Do you rent or own your home?
☐ Rent
☐ Own
- D7. About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance, and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?
☐ Less than \$300 ☐ \$2,500 to \$3,999
☐ \$300 to \$599 ☐ \$4,000 to \$6,999
☐ \$600 to \$999 ☐ \$7,000 to \$9,999
☐ \$1,000 to \$1,499 ☐ \$10,000 or more
☐ \$1,500 to \$2,499
- D8. Do any children 17 or under live in your household?
☐ No ☐ Yes
- D9. Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?
☐ No ☐ Yes
- D10. How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)
☐ Less than \$25,000 ☐ \$100,000 to \$149,999
☐ \$25,000 to \$49,999 ☐ \$150,000 to \$199,999
☐ \$50,000 to \$74,999 ☐ \$200,000 to \$299,999
☐ \$75,000 to \$99,999 ☐ \$300,000 or more
- D11. Are you of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish origin?
☐ No ☐ Yes
- D12. What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be.)
☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
☐ Asian
☐ Black or African American
☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐ White
☐ A race not listed
- D13. In which category is your age?
☐ 18-24 years ☐ 55-64 years
☐ 25-34 years ☐ 65-74 years
☐ 35-44 years ☐ 75 years or older
☐ 45-54 years
- D14. What is your gender?
☐ Woman
☐ Man
☐ Identify in another way → go to D14a
- D14a. If you identify in another way, how would you describe your gender?
☐ Agender/I don't identify with any gender
☐ Genderqueer/gender fluid
☐ Non-binary
☐ Transgender man
☐ Transgender woman
☐ Two-spirit
☐ Identify in another way

Thank you! Please return the completed survey in the postage-paid envelope to:
National Research Center, Inc., PO Box 549, Belle Mead, NJ 08502