Community Vitality Project: Residential Survey Report

Residential Survey Report

Overview

This report has been created by CoMission for the City of Sebastopol to outline the results of the Residential Survey and offer potential actions to identified challenges. Throughout the report, notable trends emerge that reflect the residential community's sentiments and collective thoughts. In some cases, questions and answers provide meaningful insight on the impacts of the pandemic both in terms of pre and post intervention (pandemic related challenges) as well as direct responses toward potential paradigm shifts. Using both qualitative and quantitative measurements the resulting data will be useful in continuing to address the needs and desires of Sebastopol's residential community while driving at longer-term consensus-based recommendations.

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Background

The CoMission Mission

CoMission is a community-oriented organization dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals and improving the quality of life for communities. CoMission creates webs of local resiliency to become a stronger and happier community while fostering and thriving together.

Sebastopol Community Vitality Project

CoMission has engaged with the City of Sebastopol on the "Community Vitality Project" as outlined in the 2019 city plans, however since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, CoMission has, at the direction of the City Manager, swiftly shifted their focus and priorities to address the new challenges and face the resiliency demands of the community not only as they were prior to COVID-19, but especially in the wake of the pandemic. CoMission will continue to reach out to the Sebastopol community comprehensively using outreach and engagement tactics ranging from community meetings to public surveys, proactively eliciting participation from our local business, nonprofit, and government stakeholders. CoMission's work is intentionally performed in an inclusive and collaborative way. The comprehensive community engagement portion of the program began on May 5, 2020 allowing CoMission to rapidly engage with stakeholders and effectively assess and respond to the needs of the community.

Goals of the Residential Survey

1. Gather quantitative data on the economic impact of the pandemic on the Sebastopol community
2. Gather qualitative insights into unique individual challenges and experiences to better understand and help these residents and population groups directly
3. Gather anecdotal insights into community perspective and behavior patterns to project post-pandemic phenomena that Sebastopol City may need to adjust for

The Survey

The survey was designed to solicit feedback from the residential community as a snapshot of the state of the individuals who make up that community as well as sub-groups and populations at-large in the wake of the pandemic. While the questions and resulting data are indeed valuable for numerous purposes, the resulting data is not an exact representative sample of the entire residential community. The respondent

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populations to the survey were not weighted nor does the survey claim to provide any statistical significance beyond a snapshot in time by those residents willing and able to participate.

Methods

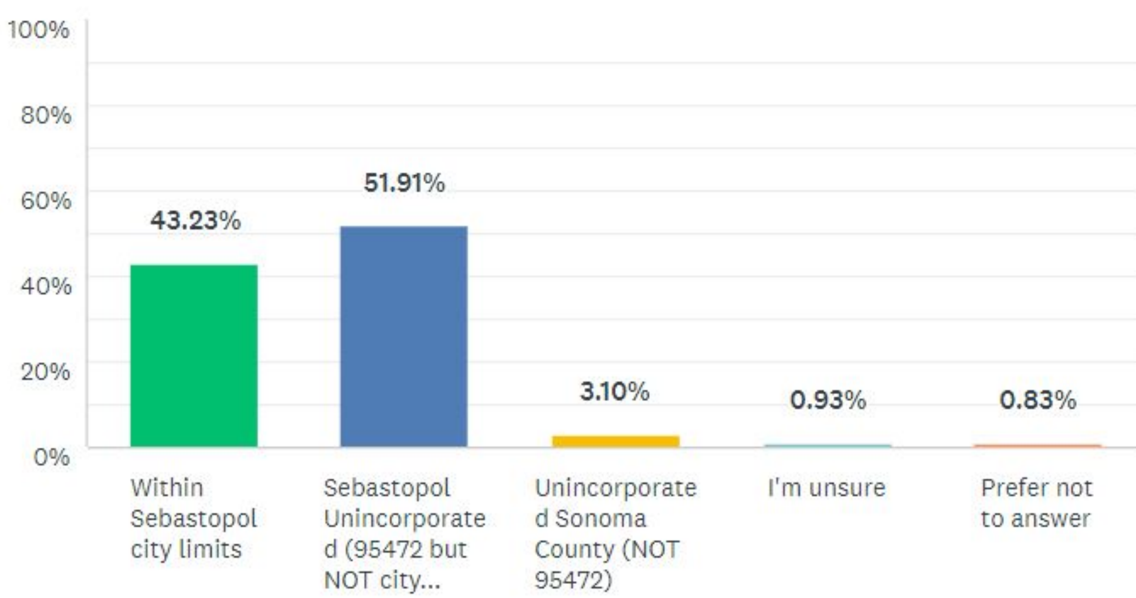
Given the obvious limitations on door to door canvassing of residences during the pandemic, CoMission's methods of distributing the survey were and remain primarily through online digital marketing methods. This solicitation method, although demanded through the limitation of the pandemic, may result in less participation by the broader community due to access limitation. Nonetheless, CoMission procured an email list of 36,000 registered voters from the Sonoma County Registrar's Office. Using this email list CoMission digitally solicited participation from registered voters in Sebastopol and surrounding areas. CoMission also emailed known local businesses and community leaders on three separate occasions soliciting their participation.

As has been discussed frequently in Sebastopol civic matters, the City of Sebastopol is a cultural and commercial hub for 95472, and the decision to include the adjacent residents was decided in conjunction with the City Manager and support from various community leaders and stakeholders.

Survey Population & Demographics

The purpose of this section is to describe the breakdown of survey participants in order to identify whether the responses reflect the diversity of the Sebastopol community. The survey was taken by a broad spectrum of individuals with over 1,179 total participants. A population breakdown is provided below which includes the participants residential location, age, ethnic heritage, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, household size, income level, and whether the respondent rents or owns their home. Each of the categories of demographics are demonstrated below.

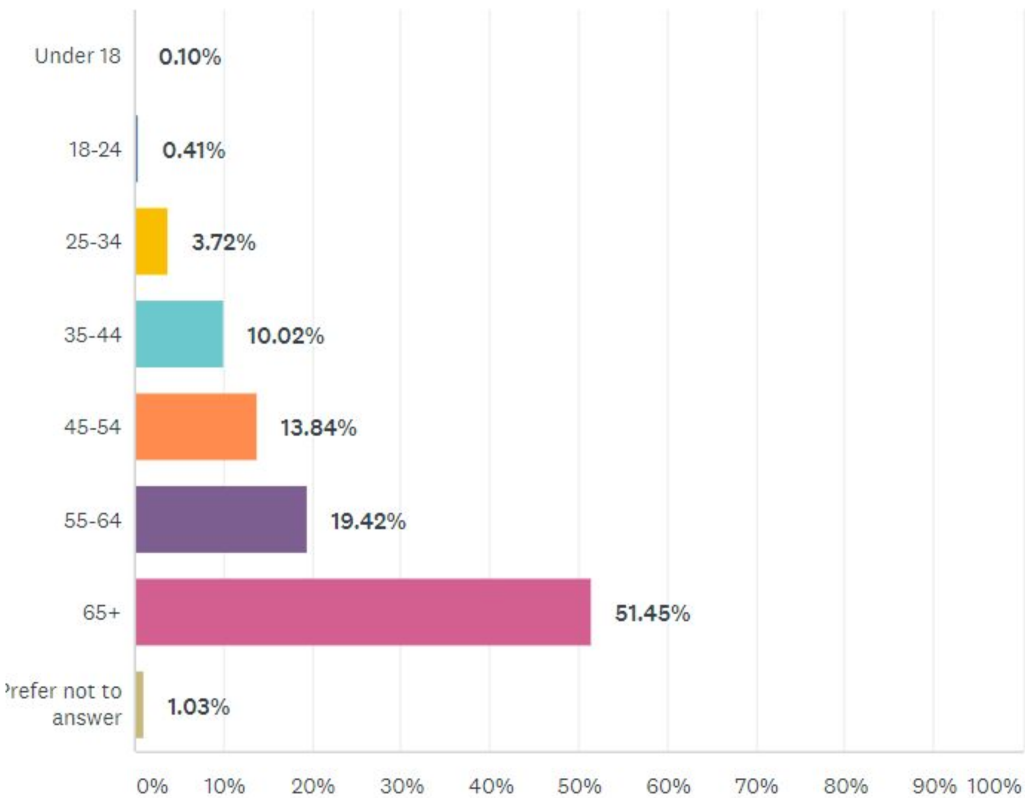
Location



The survey was also taken by a geographically diverse spectrum as well with just over 43% of respondents located within Sebastopol City limits, representing 510 individuals or about 7% of the total population living within city limits.

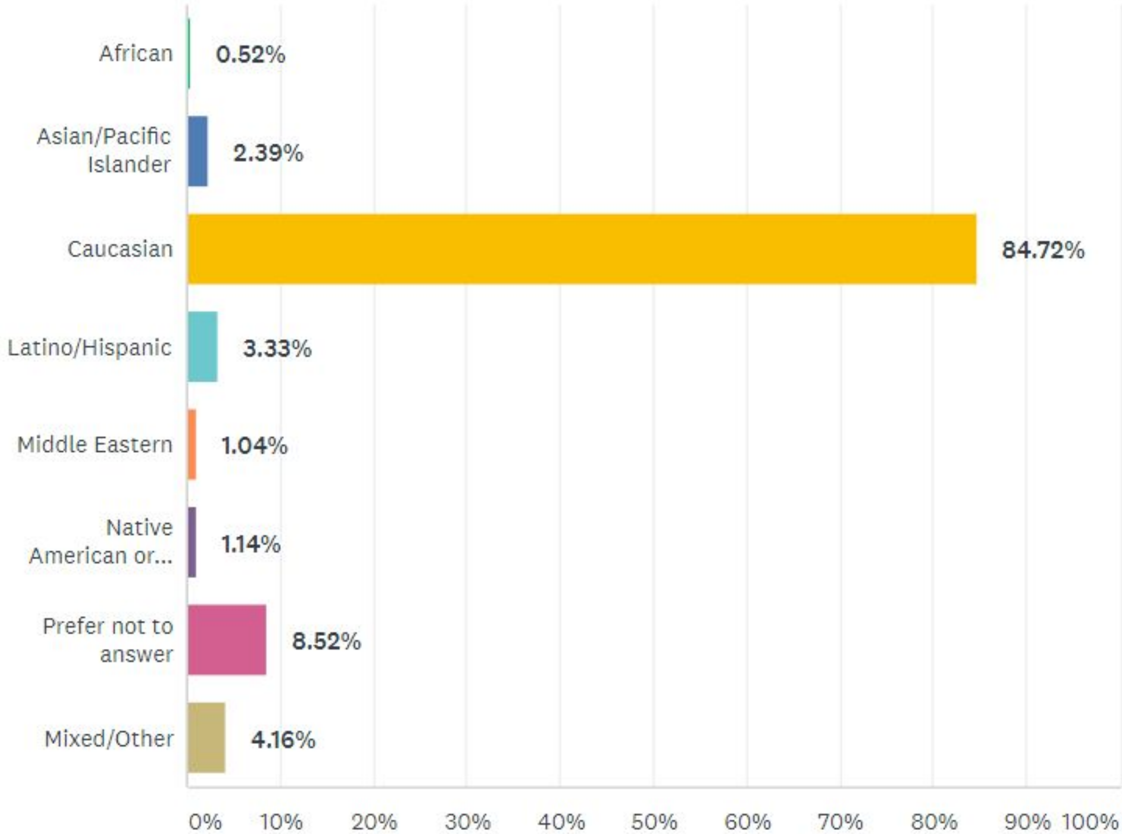
Approximately 52% of respondents reported being located in “Sebastopol Unincorporated” (95472 but not city limits), representing 612 individuals or about 2.5% of all non-Sebastopol residents of this zip code. The remaining regions each comprised a very small and near equal portion of the remaining areas.

Age



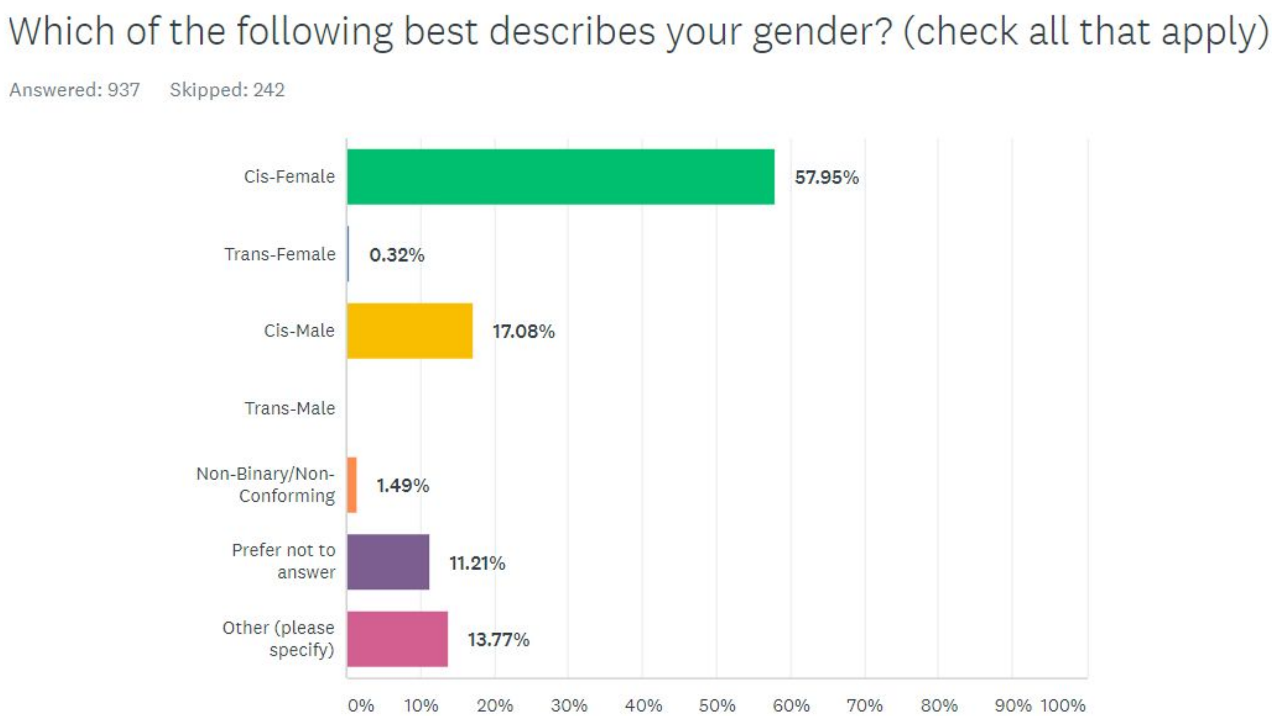
The responses to the survey also reflect a diverse age group, with just over 50% of respondents at 65 years or older, the remaining 50% is shared on a cascading scale from oldest to youngest. This indicates that the survey was completed by a larger percentage of older respondents than is represented in the population of both the City of Sebastopol and the 95472 area as a whole, with median ages of 47.6 and 51.5, respectively.

Ethnic Heritage



The responses to the survey reflects a less than diverse ethnic makeup of the Sebastopol community, with just over 80% of responses from "Caucasian" participants, the bulk of the remaining participants comprise of those who "prefer not to answer" and "Mixed/Other." This indicates that the racial distribution of respondents is approximately similar to that of the region being surveyed, the greatest discrepancy being a low representation of Latino/Hispanic, with 3.33% surveyed compared to the 10.4% actual population representation. This may be a result of using the voter registration list as the primary outreach tool. When conducting future surveys, it should be evaluated how to better reach the Latino population.

Gender



Of the survey respondents over half of the participants identify themselves as "Cis-Female," which makes up the largest single gender group of the paticipants. The remaining 43% of responses are nearly equal between "Prefer not to answer," "Cis-Male," and "Other." Among those "other" respones, a majority of responses identifed as "Cis-Female." Overall the suvery includes a diverse makeup of genders with the bulk of responses coming from "Cis-Females." While this may indicate a disproportionate participation by cis-female respondatns, Sebastopol's population does in fact skew female-identified, as the 2010 census results returned 55.5% female, though at the time trans and non-binary gender identities were not acknowledged in demographic data gathering.

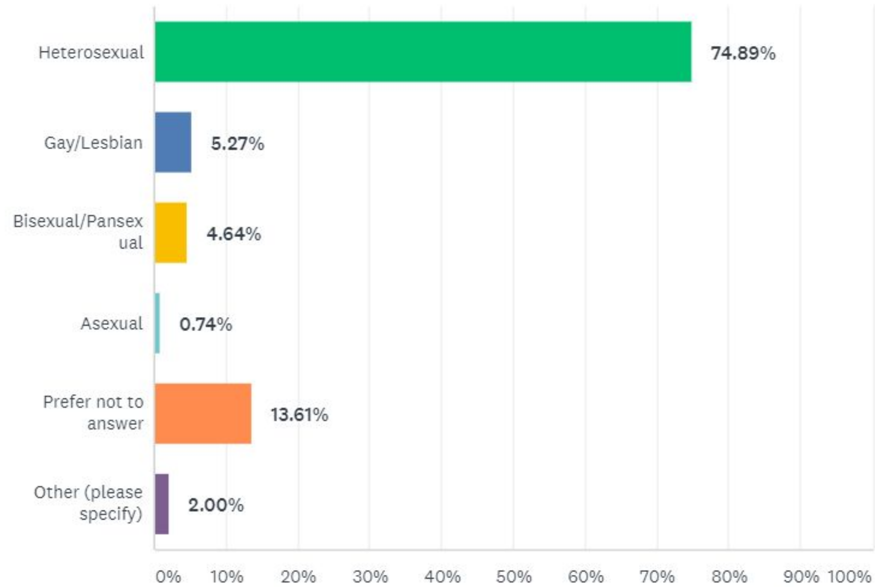
It is important to note that there were 97 write in comments asking what cis- means, as well as a considerable amount of derogatory remarks about nontraditional gender identity. While this represents about 10% of the total responses, many of them had also selected a Cis-Female or Cis-Male response to the question. Manually incorporating these write-in gender identifications did not significantly change the results, though this does indicate there is notable presence of transphobia in Sebastopol and the surrounding community that may warrant some educational programming.

In future surveys, gender definitions will be provided as part of this question. For those who have not encountered this terminology, cisgender is a term for people whose gender identity matches the sex assigned to them at birth, as opposed to transgender which refers to a person whose gender identity is different from that which was assigned to them at birth. For example, someone who identifies as a woman and was assigned female at birth is a cisgender woman. A person who identifies as a woman but was assigned male at birth is a transgender woman.

Sexual Orientation

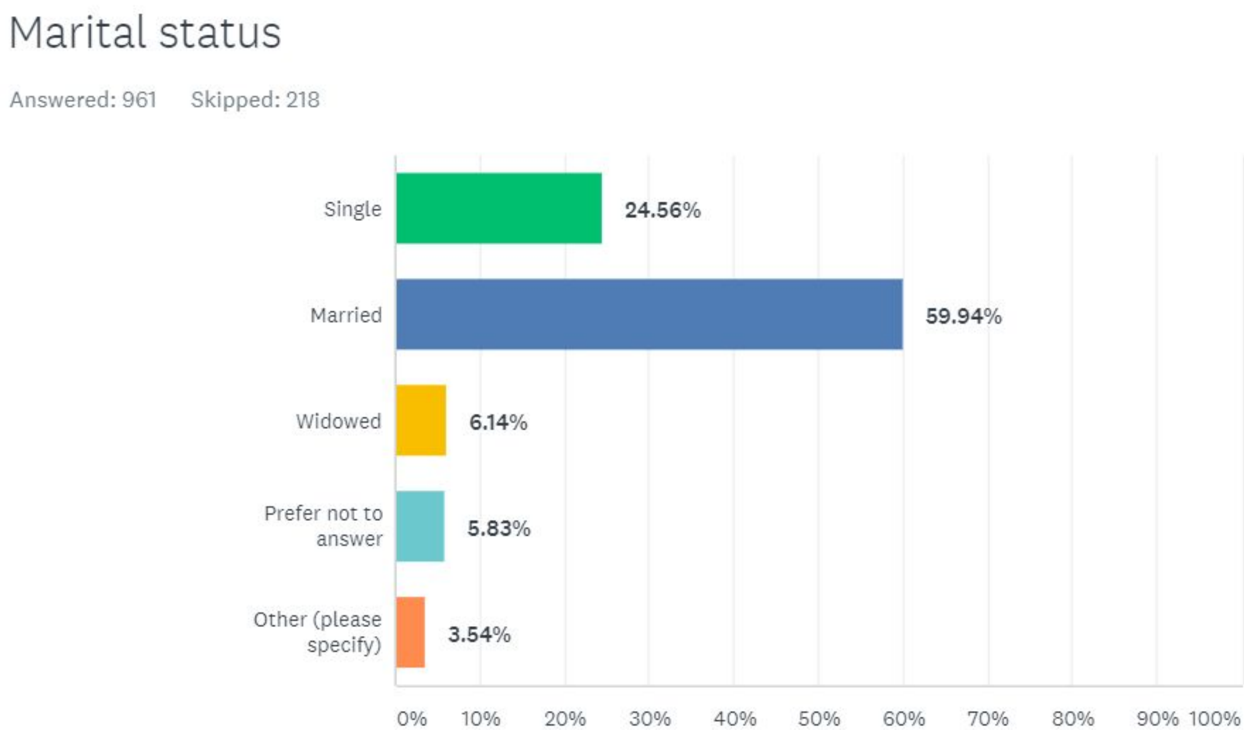
Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation? (check all that apply)

Answered: 948 Skipped: 231



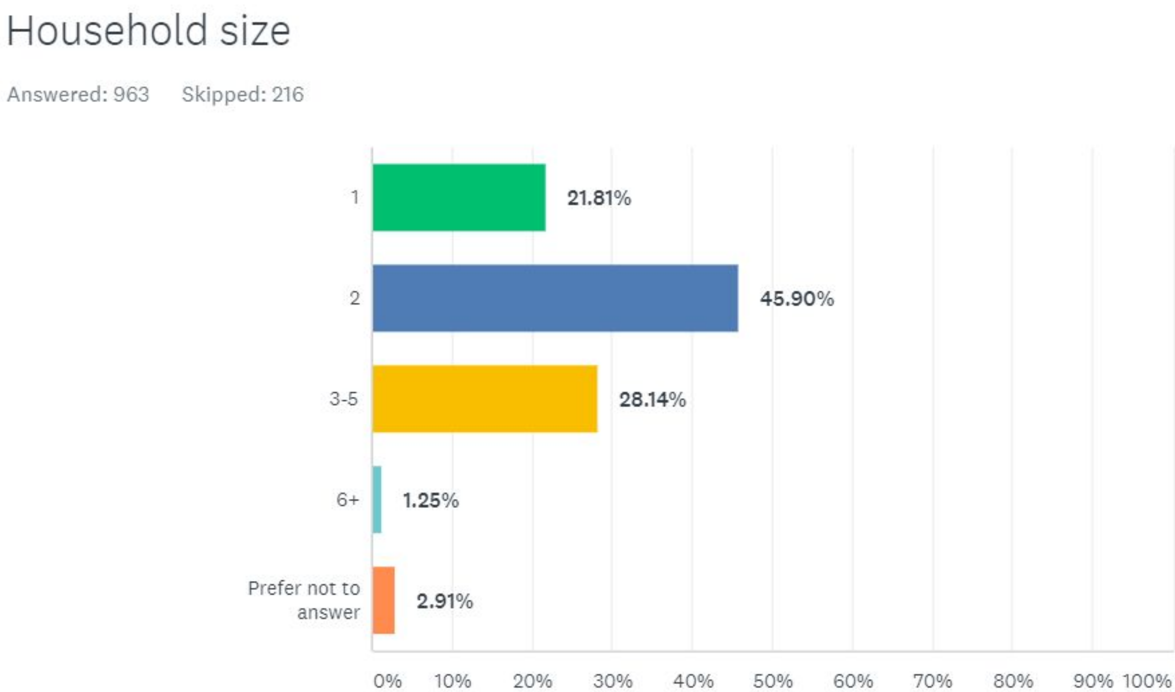
The survey was also taken a diverse makeup of sexual oreintation with the largest group idenfiying as “heterosexual” at nearly 75%. The remaining makeup of respondants sexual orientation is comprised of nearly 5% “Gay/Lesbian” and 5% “Bisexual/Pansexual.” A significant number of responses indicated “prefer not to answer” at over 13%. This data is difficult to correlate to established demographics because sexual orientation has not been well recorded in the past. It does, however, indicate that perspectives from different orientations were accounted for in this dataset to at least some measurable degree.

Marital Status



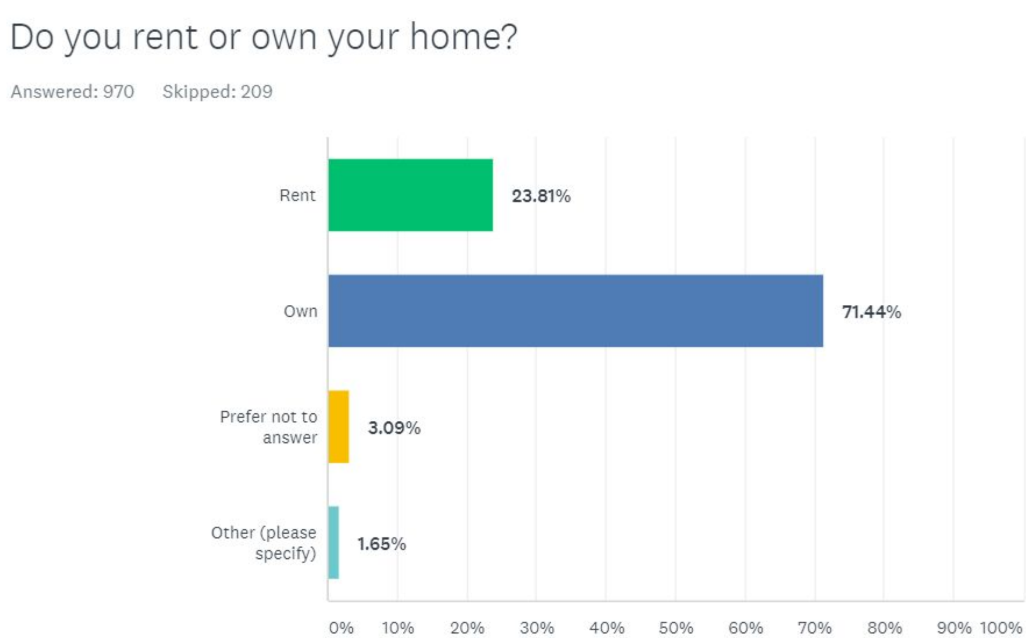
Respondents to this question identified themselves at nearly 60% married, and the second largest group at 25% single. While this is not data that is correlatable to recorded regional demographics, it does signal that married households will make up a dominant voice in the results collected. It is to be noted, however, that the legal designation of marriage does not include domestic partnerships, non-officialized long term relationships, or nontraditional family structures.

Household Size



Nearly 50% of respondents noted a household size of 2 persons, with the second largest response at 28% of 3-5 persons, and the third largest response at 22% of a household size of 1 person. This gives us the insight that at least 74% of respondents represent the experience of collective households.

Rent Vs Own



Nearly three-quarters of respondents noted they own their home with the remaining quarter identifying as renters. This is a much higher representation than the estimated 60.9% of owner-occupied homes in Sonoma County.

Household Income

Moving beyond simple demographics the question poses an intervention measurement whereby we can not only determine the household income of survey participants for demographic purposes, but also their expectations of that income in light of the pandemic (intervention).

The first question asks: **"What was your annual household income in 2019, prior to the pandemic?"** Where the second question asks **"What do you estimate will be your annual household income in 2020?"** Responses listed below demonstrate a shift in household income whereby respondents estimate they will be making less money than they did prior to the pandemic. The largest shift demonstrates a loss of expected income by those making over $150,000 annually by 2.38% of respondents (23 people). The second largest shift in income demonstrates that an additional 1.78% of respondents, 5% overall, expect to make less than $15,000 in 2020.

What was your annual household income in 2019, prior to the pandemic?		**What do you estimate will be your annual household income in 2020?**		
ANSWER CHOICES–	RESPONSES–	ANSWER CHOICES–	RESPONSES–	DIFFERENCE
–Under $15,000	3.23%	–Under $15,000	5.01%	1.78%
–Between $15,000 and $29,999	7.92%	–Between $15,000 and $29,999	8.56%	0.64%
–Between $30,000 and $49,999	11.04%	–Between $30,000 and $49,999	10.54%	-0.50%
–Between $50,000 and $74,999	12.29%	–Between $50,000 and $74,999	13.99%	1.70%
–Between $75,000 and $99,999	12.92%	–Between $75,000 and $99,999	12.32%	-0.60%
–Between $100,000 and $150,000	15.73%	–Between $100,000 and $150,000	14.51%	-1.22%
–Over $150,000	13.44%	–Over $150,000	11.06%	-2.38%

The insights in this segment are better revealed by looking at the shift in expected income among different demographic groups, which will be explored more during the *Pandemic Impacts* section later in this report.

Survey Questions

For the purpose of this survey, CoMission provided questions in a number of ways, soliciting both quantifiable and anecdotal insights providing for not only measurable data but real life accounts of what is happening in our community today. Together, the answers to these questions will help to build the narrative of what is guiding our community behaviors in the wake of the pandemic.

Qualitative

The purpose of the qualitative questions are to gather insights into unique community challenges and experiences in order to better understand and assist our City and the community directly. Additionally, collecting anecdotal insights into residential perspectives and behavior patterns may provide for awareness of post-pandemic phenomena that our community and City may need to adjust for. These results are expressed as pie charts of key themes and trends identified from the multitude of responses.

Quantitative

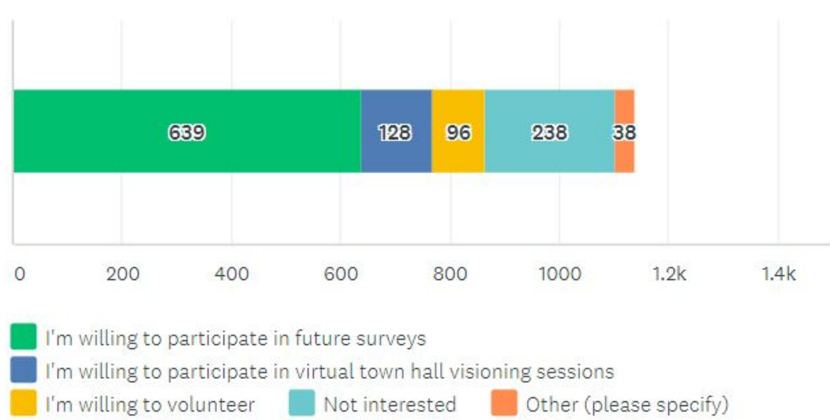
The quantitative questions listed in this survey are intended to gather information on the pandemic impacts, local economic conditions, and public access information. The questions also solicit answers that, in addition to serving as a snapshot in time (amid the estimated peak of the pandemic), should be measured over time as to statistically determine whether this data changes post-pandemic.

Using quantifiable Likert scales allows for additional utilization of incoming data in the form of assessing the current status (snapshot) compared to statuses over time through measuring statistically significant changes in survey responses. While this survey provides for a snapshot of the current state of the residential community, a future survey should examine the same questions in order to observe and quantify changes in those statuses over time. This is valuable in assessing whether patterns or significant changes emerge as a result of intervention, government programs, or alternative impacts. These questions can provide a myriad of useful answers.

Feedback on Survey

CoMission is aware that city staff and potentially other organizations are gathering information related to the impacts of the pandemic on our communities as well. In an effort to synergize efforts where possible, CoMission solicited the feedback of City staff on multiple occasions inviting additional questions and feedback on the survey itself. As a result of this outreach, questions were added and alterations were made to the survey where appropriate. A number of community members gave us feedback afterwards that it was a little lengthy, though the average time it took to complete the survey was only 9 minutes. CoMission will work with the City to identify the appropriate length of future surveys.

How would you like to participate in the Sebastopol Community Vitality Project? (Check all that apply).

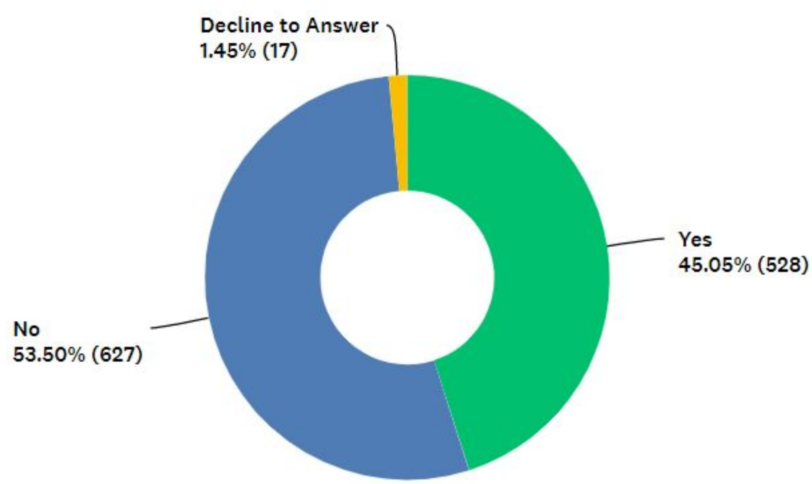


In this survey we included a question on how and whether respondents would like to participate in future surveys. The responses were quite impressive. Of those who responded to the question, “How would you like to participate in the Sebastopol Community Vitality Project” nearly 70% indicated that they would be willing to participate in future surveys, 172 of which were identified within City Limits and another 169 identified as living in Unincorporated Sebastopol. 14% indicated that they would like to participate in virtual town hall visioning sessions, and another 10% indicated their willingness to volunteer with the project. The vast majority of the “other” responses indicated a lack of interest in participating due to distance from Sebastopol or concerns about the pandemic.

Survey Results

Pandemic Impacts

In an attempt to understand the depth and breadth of the impacts of the pandemic on the Sebastopol community, we first consider the impacts to the employment of residents. Employment has a reverberating effect on local economies, increased employee earnings leads to a higher rate of consumer spending, which benefits other businesses who depend on consumer sales to stay open and pay vendors, and so on. Therefore the first question posed is, “**Have you or anyone else in your household experienced an interruption or decrease in employment or income due to the pandemic?**” The results illustrate that nearly half of the respondents have indeed experienced interruption or decrease in employment. It can be anticipated that a large segment of the responding population would have experienced this shift, however what does the shift in employment mean for these individuals and families?



To explore how employment and income shifts impacted the community, answers to the household income questions can be cross referenced with the demographic data. To begin with, the anticipated shift in income can be looked at by income group. The results below only draw upon responses where all applicable data was collected, so any responses with a question skipped or selected “prefer not to answer” in at least one of the cross referenced data points were not included in the analysis instance for that demographic group.

Household Income	Reported 2019	% Est Decrease	% Est Increase	Anticipated 2020
–Under $15,000	4.2%	0.0%	9.7%	6.6%
–Between $15,000 and $29,999	10.3%	19.7%	7.9%	11.3%
–Between $30,000 and $49,999	14.4%	21.7%	4.7%	13.9%
–Between $50,000 and $74,999	16.1%	19.5%	2.5%	18.4%
–Between $75,000 and $99,999	16.9%	24.2%	3.2%	16.2%
–Between $100,000 and $150,000	20.5%	18.5%	3.3%	19.1%
–Over $150,000	17.6%	20.2%	0.0%	14.6%
TOTAL	**100.0%**	**19.7%**	**3.5%**	**100.0%**

This indicates nearly one in five of respondents anticipate experiencing a substantial loss of income between 2019 and 2020, a significant sentiment of financial insecurity in our community. The most highly insecure of these groups was those who reported between $75,000 and $99,999 in 2019, with over 24% anticipating a drop of at least one income category.

The anticipated change in household incomes shows a troubling and significant shift downwards, with up to 2.4% being at risk of falling below the 2019 federal poverty line (ranging from $12,760 for a single person household to $44,120 for a household of 8). It is well documented that the federal definition of poverty is not practically relevant in California, where cost of living is much higher than other parts of the country. In Sonoma County, where the median annual income had been previously recorded at $84,100, Low Income categories are defined as follows:

Persons in Household	Extremely Low Income	Very Low Income 50% AMI**	Low Income 80% AMI	Median Income 100% AMI
1	$23,900	$39,800	$63,650	$71,900
2	$27,300	$45,450	$72,750	$82,150
3	$30,700	$51,150	$81,850	$92,450
4	$34,100	$56,800	$90,900	$102,700
5	$36,850	$61,350	$98,200	$110,900
6	$39,600	$62,650	$105,450	$119,150
7	$42,300	$70,450	$112,750	$127,350
8	$45,050	$75,000	$120,000	$135,550

This data set can provide insight into the quality of life and financial security of community members by comparing the reported household sizes with the reported and anticipated incomes. The data collected in this survey was not designed to match the poverty level indicators, so the corresponding highlights below are approximate, indicating where households MAY be experiencing Low and Extremely Low Income based on the Sonoma County AMI (Area Median Income).

Anticipated 2020 Household Income by Household Size

Household Size	Under $15k	$15-29k	$30-49k	$50-74k	$75-99k	$100k+
1	13.7%	28.0%	22.3%	15.4%	12.6%	8.0%
2	3.9%	7.5%	12.0%	21.8%	19.2%	35.7%
3-5	4.4%	4.0%	11.0%	15.9%	15.0%	49.8%
6+	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	18.2%	18.2%	54.5%

Further insights can be gained by looking at the anticipated shift between low income categories by household size.

Household Size	Extremely Low in 2019	Low Income 2019	Anticipate Extremely Low 2020	Anticipate Low 2020	Change Extremely Low	Change Low
1	11.0%	25.4%	13.7%	28.0%	2.7%	2.6%
2	4.2%	15.4%	11.4%	33.8%	7.2%	18.4%
3-5	5.7%	37.3%	8.4%	41.9%	2.7%	4.6%
6+	0.0%	36.4%	9.1%	36.4%	9.1%	0.0%
TOTAL	**5.7%**	**22.2%**	**11.0%**	**35.0%**	**5.3%**	**12.8%**

This analysis shows that the hardest hit group is the two-person household, which represents households of couples with no children as well as single parents with one child, with an anticipated 18.4% increase in Low Income designation and 7.2% increase in Extremely Low Income designation. It is important to keep in mind that these are self-reported anticipations of income changes, not actual recorded incomes. This data could predict a realized income loss, but is more specifically analyzed here as a manifestation of income insecurity.

To further explore this income insecurity, the following charts express anticipated income changes across different demographic groups

Ethnic Heritage	% Est Decrease	% Est Increase
African	20.0%	20.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	21.7%	0.0%
Caucasian	14.6%	2.8%
Latino/Hispanic	21.9%	3.1%
Middle Eastern	20.0%	0.0%
Native American or Alaskan	36.4%	27.3%
Mixed/Other	15.0%	5.0%

Age	% Est Decrease	% Est Increase
18-24	25.0%	0.0%
25-34	16.7%	13.9%
35-44	24.7%	5.2%
45-54	18.7%	4.5%
55-64	20.7%	1.1%
65+	9.8%	1.6%

Gender	% Est Decrease	% Est Increase
Cis-Female	14.5%	3.2%
Cis-Male	13.7%	2.5%
Trans-Female	0.0%	0.0%
Non-Binary	35.7%	14.3%

Sexual Orientation	% Est Decrease	% Est Increase
Heterosexual	14.2%	2.8%
Non-Heterosexual	17.1%	2.3%

Household	% Est Decrease	% Est Increase
Married	13.7%	2.1%
Single	17.4%	3.8%
Widowed	16.9%	3.4%

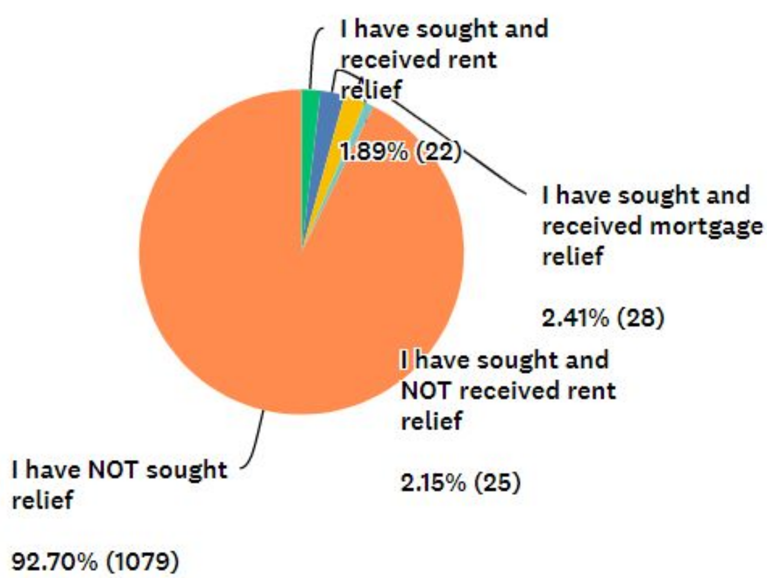
These cross references reveal a number of insights. First, while Native American/Alaskan respondents expressed the most financial insecurity, Caucasians expressed significantly LESS financial insecurity than any other group by a margin of at least 5%, with the exception of those identifying as Mixed/Other. When aggregated, 20.7% all respondents who did not identify as Caucasian reported an anticipated decrease in income, compared to 14.6% of Caucasians.

The age groups reporting the most financial insecurity were 18-24 and 35-44, both right around 25% anticipating a decreased income, with the most secure group being 65 and older. The two age groups identified as most at risk are separated by an age group with a much different income projection. Possibly explanations for this is that the two age groups face different challenges, the 18-24 group commonly holding entry level positions and being subject to “last in first out” layoff selection processes. Workers in the 35-44 age group tend to be entering a specialist career phase, which in many industry sectors have been areas of significant slow down as consumers and businesses both shifted into frugal spending habits that focus primarily on essentials only.

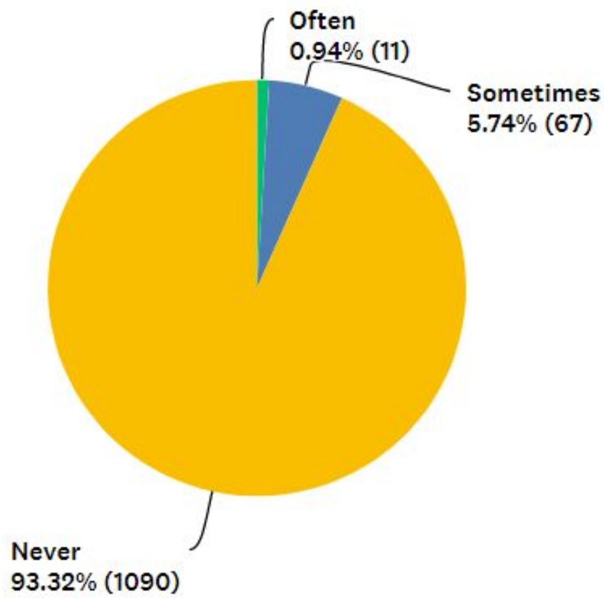
Both Cis-Female and Cis-Male reported approximately similar trends in financial security, while Non-Binary/Gender Non-Conforming respondents expressed significantly greater financial insecurity at over 35% anticipating decreased income. Sexual orientation and marriage status did not appear to play a major factor in financial security with a maximum variation among these demographic groups of less than 4%.

To explore these financial insecurities and the depth of the potential impact we asked a series of questions that would reveal safety and security around access to essentials like housing and food.

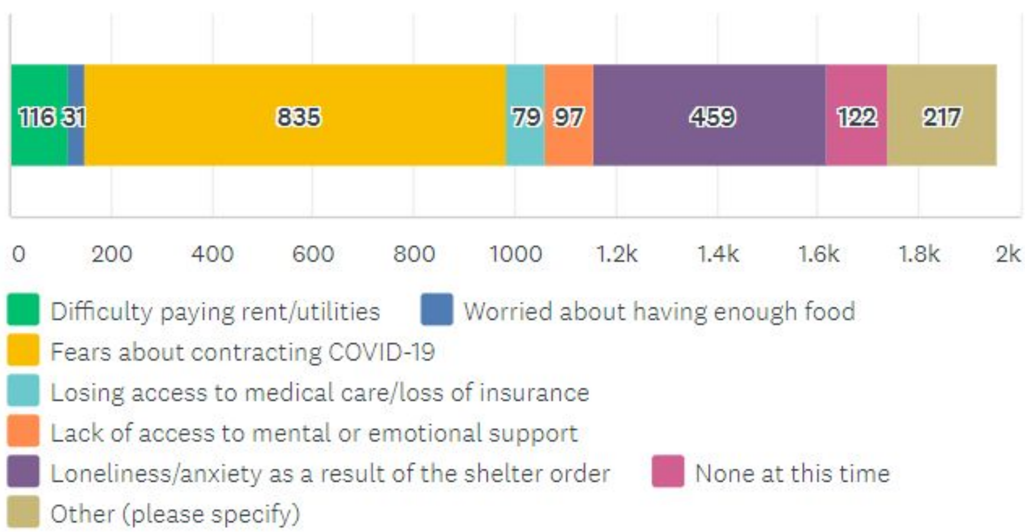
In the first question, “**Have you sought and received relief from your rent or mortgage payment amid the pandemic?**” 90% of respondents indicated they have not sought relief, where a combined 6% sought relief, and combined 4% actually received that relief.



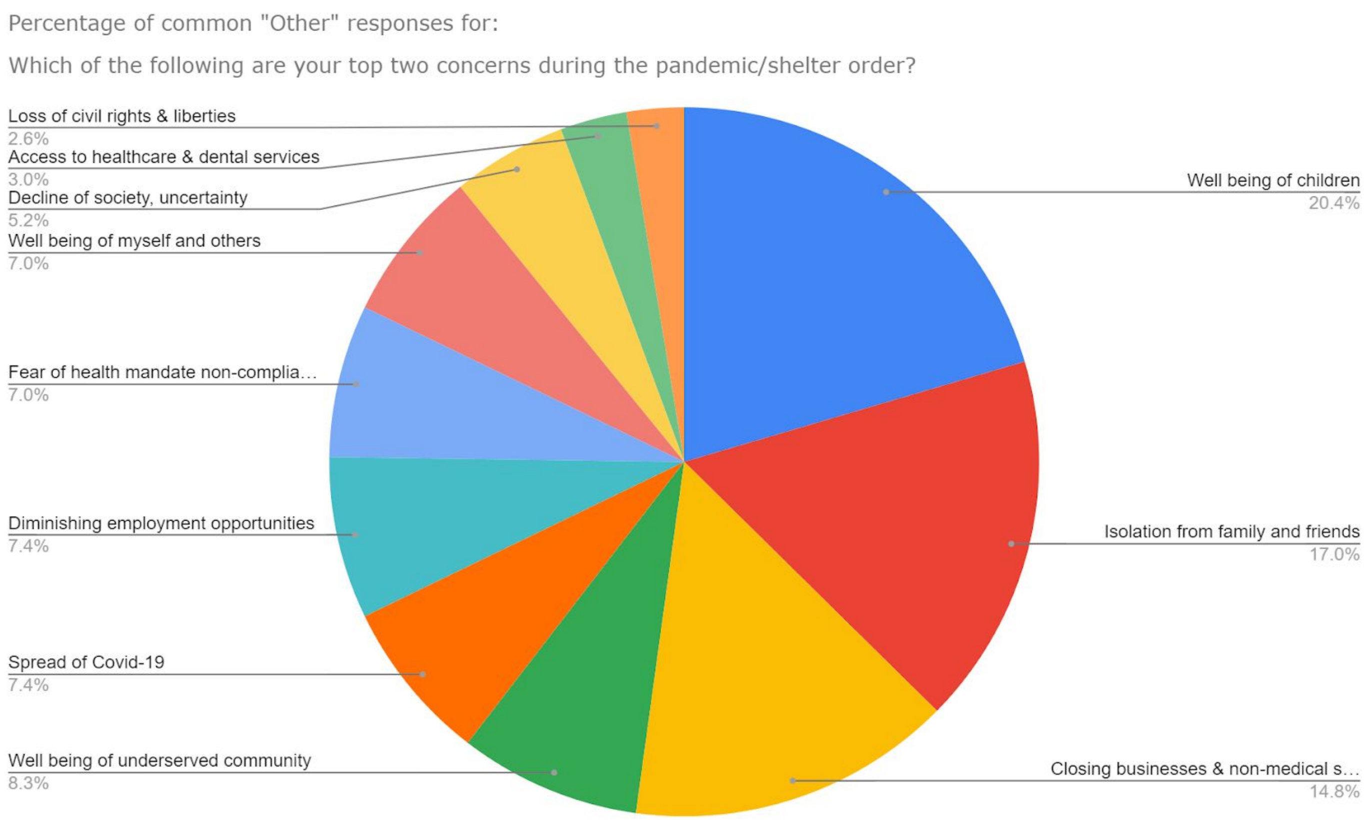
To further explore the impact of employment shifts on food security we pose the question, “**We worried whether our food would run out before we could afford to buy more. Was that often true, sometimes true or never true for your household in the last 12 months**?” Fortunately the results demonstrate that for the vast majority of respondents that statement has not been true in the last 12 months. Although, over 5% indicated that the statement is “sometimes” been true, and 1% indicated that it has been “often true.” For those interested, the survey offers, “If you would like to receive information on food assistance programs please provide an email address here” to which 51 respondents left their email address. CoMission staff are preparing a directory of local food assistance programs to share with these respondents shortly after this report has been submitted.



The final question posed in the Pandemic Impact section of the survey solicits information on what the respondents themselves find to be their largest concerns with the pandemic. The question is asked, “**Which of the following are your top two concerns during the pandemic/shelter order**?” While a significant amount of financial insecurity was revealed in the income questions, the most common concerns identified here were “Fears of contracting COVID-19,” representing over 80% of respondents, and “Loneliness/anxiety as a result of the shelter order,” representing approximately half of the respondents.



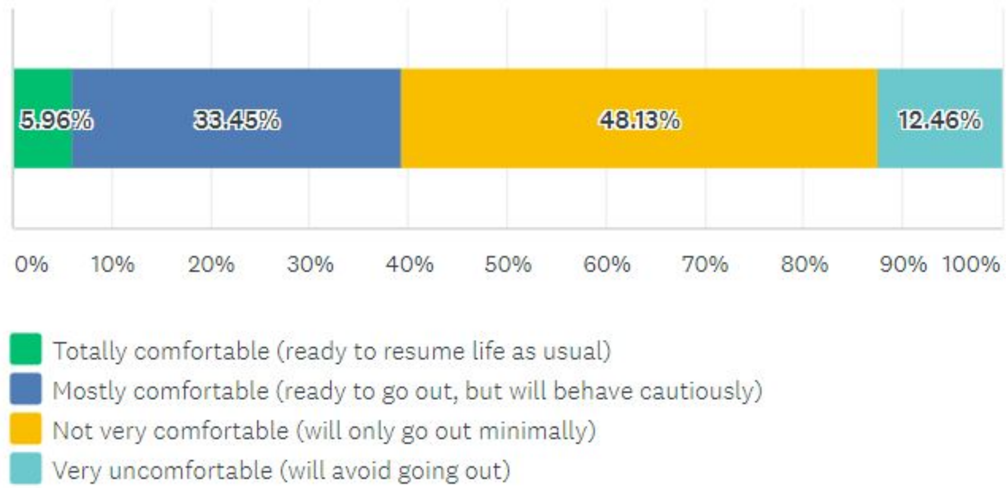
In addition to the data illustrated here, the third most common response at nearly 18% indicated “other.” Sentiments of each of the 217 individual responses to “other” have been categorized in an attempt to illustrate what “other” concerns respondents listed. The pie chart below illustrates the most prevalent themes expressed in “other” responses:



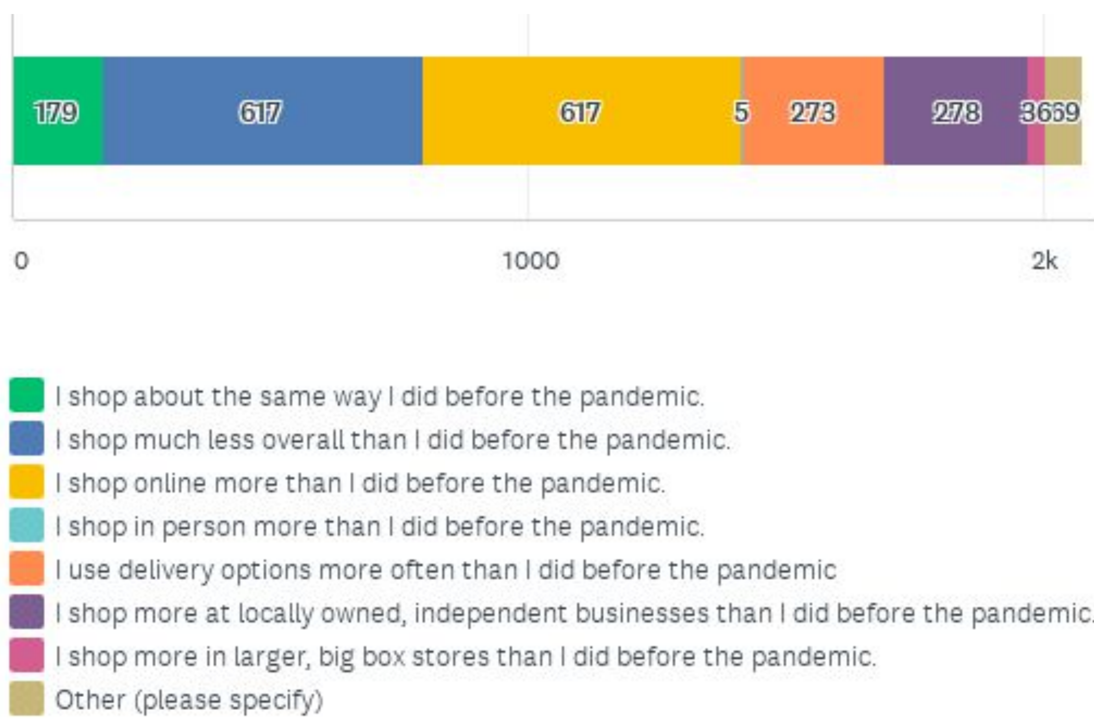
Local Economy

In this section the survey poses several questions in order to assess the general understanding of the current local economy through the perspective of responding residents. As a common economic indicator, consumer confidence measures the degree of optimism that consumers feel about the overall state of the economy and their personal financial situation. When consumer confidence is high, consumers make more purchases. When confidence is low, consumers tend to save more and spend less.

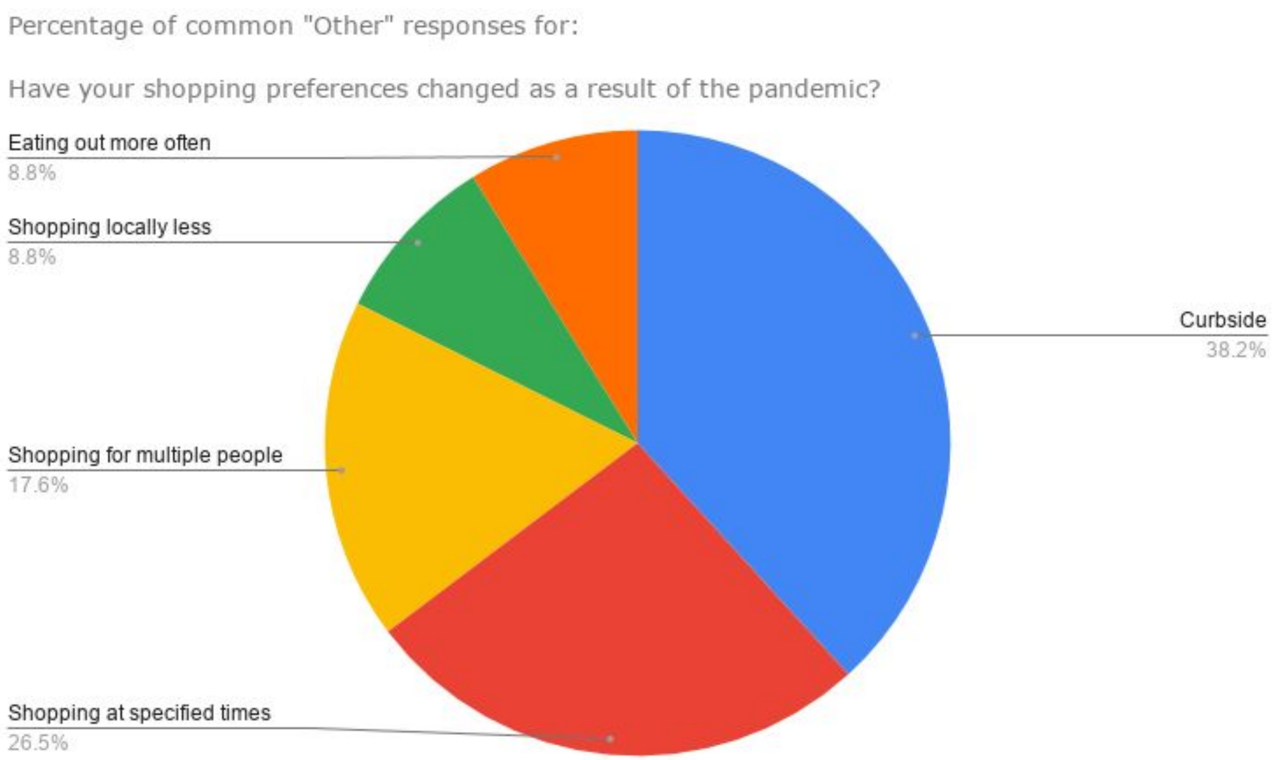
Therefore the first question posed asks, “**How comfortable have you been in returning to public spaces as businesses alter between reopening and reclosing?**” As predictable, the most common response at nearly 50% indicated that they’re “Not very comfortable (will go out minimally). Combined with the 12% that indicate they’re “Very uncomfortable (will avoid going out),” approximately 60% of respondents indicate uncomfortability where a combined 38% indicate a higher comfort level.



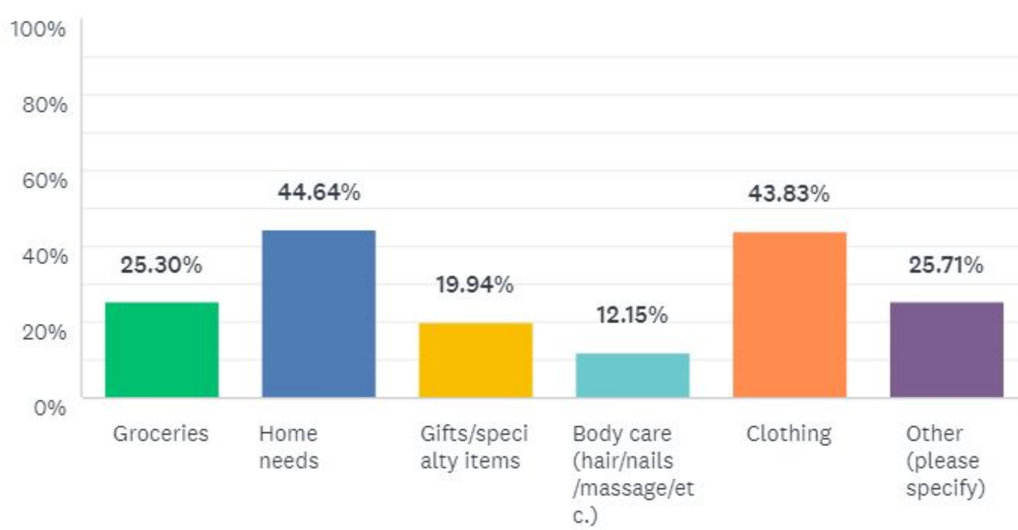
With the changes in comfortability in returning to public spaces, the question is posed, "**Have your shopping preferences changed as a result of the pandemic? (check all that apply)**"



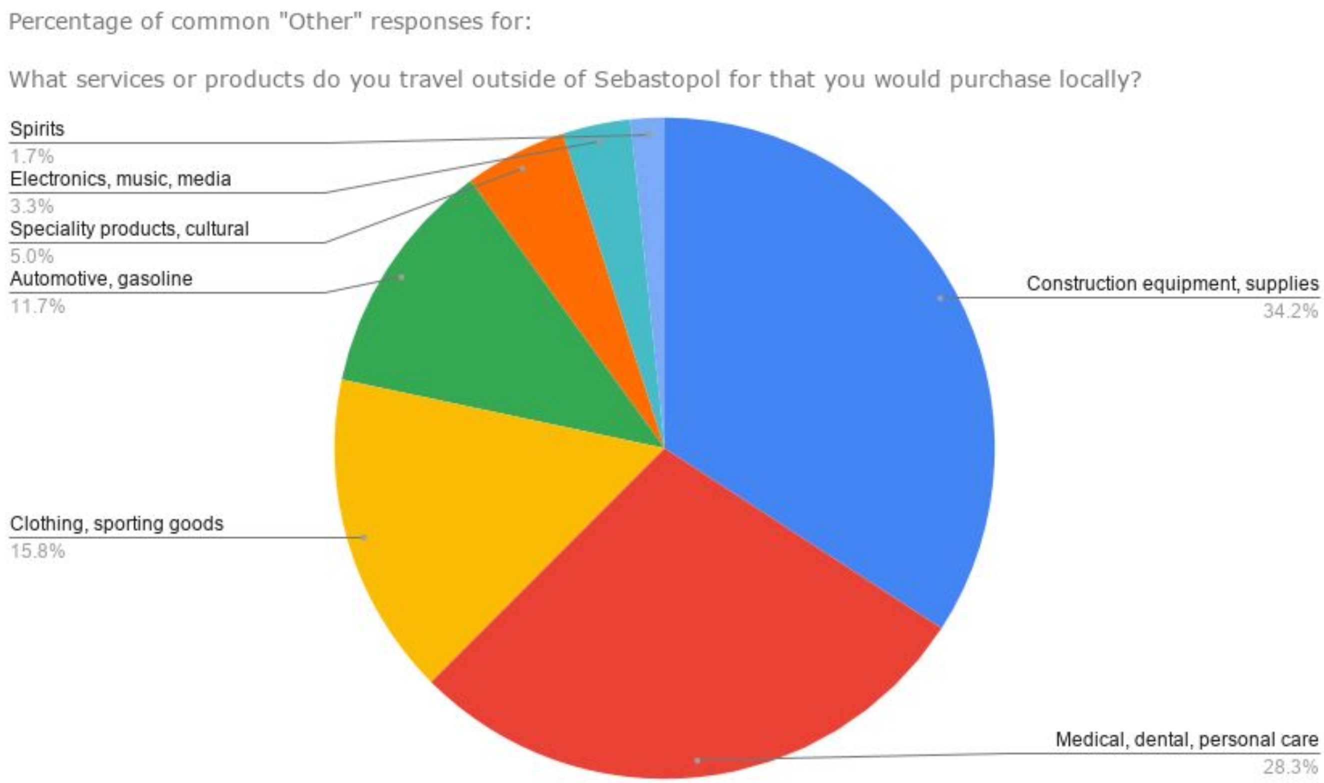
The results indicate a diverse range of responses, however the most common response is tied, both with 55% of the responses, "I shop much less overall than I did before the pandemic," and "I shop online more than I did before the pandemic." The second most common response was also tied, both at 25%, which listed "I use delivery options more often than I did before the pandemic" and "I shop more at locally owned, independent businesses than I did before the pandemic." The remaining 25% is split with the bulk indicating that they "shop about the same way I did before the pandemic" as well as 6% who responded with "other." Common themes of the "other" category are illustrated in the below:



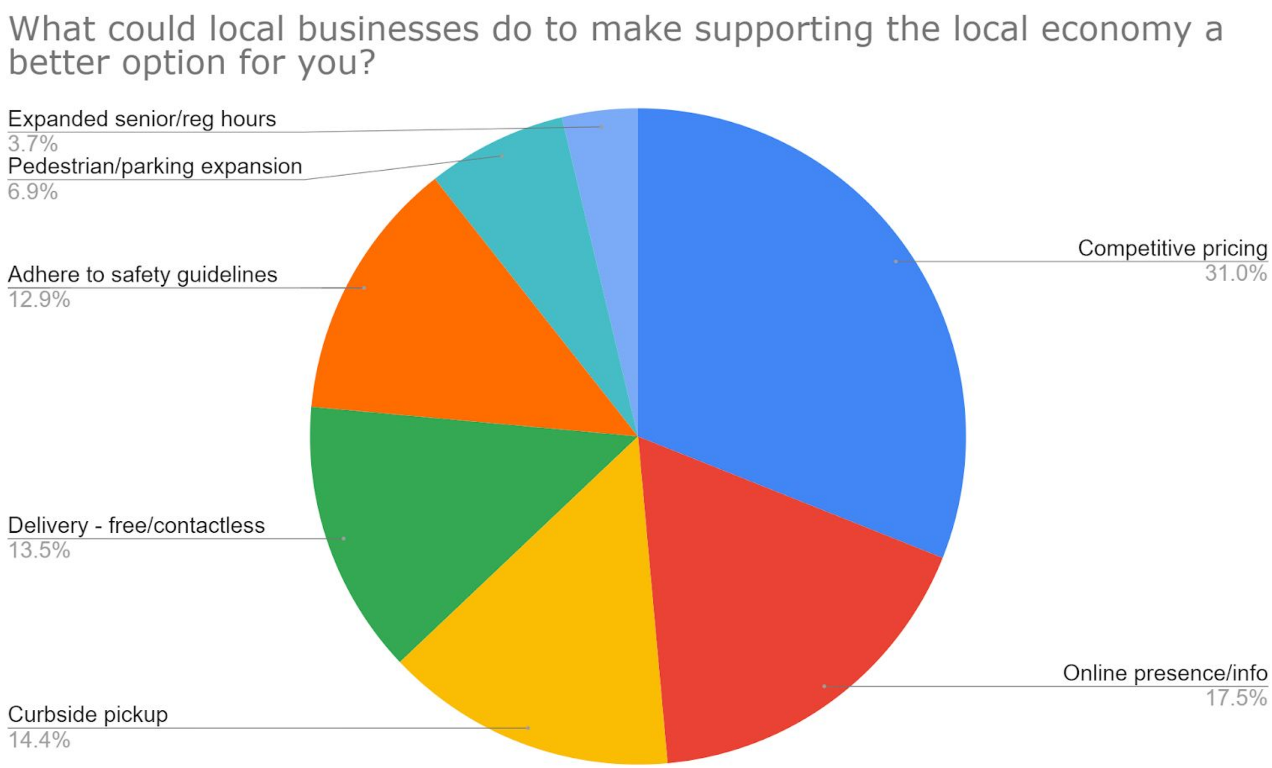
In an effort to further understand the impact of new shopping preference to the local economy and what the local economy may offer in the future, the question is posed, "**What services or products do you travel outside of Sebastopol for that you would purchase locally if conditions/availability were more to your liking? (check all that apply)**"



Unlike other questions, there was little consensus and a diverse pool of responses. The single most common response was "Home Needs," followed closely by "Clothing," both of which were selected by nearly half of the respondents. A quarter of respondents indicated that “groceries” were desired, which seems an area that would benefit from deeper exploration, since Sebastopol has several options for groceries. The responses of those 25% that indicated “other” are illustrated through the pie chart provided below.

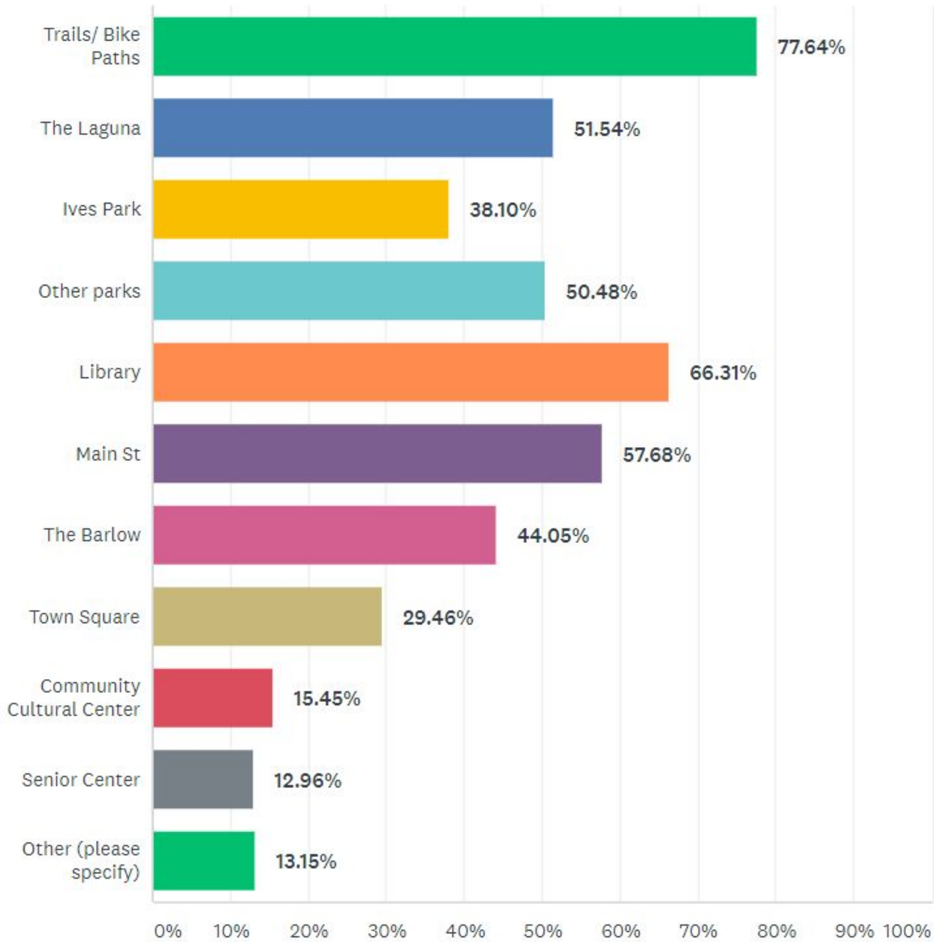


In a direct approach, we posed the open-ended question, "**What could local businesses do to make supporting the local economy a better option for you**?" These open ended answers provided an enormous amount of information, which is summarized in the chart below, and will be shared in full with the Business Council to extract further insights and strategies outside of the work of this report. The chart below demonstrates 568 individual and unique responses categorized into common themes:



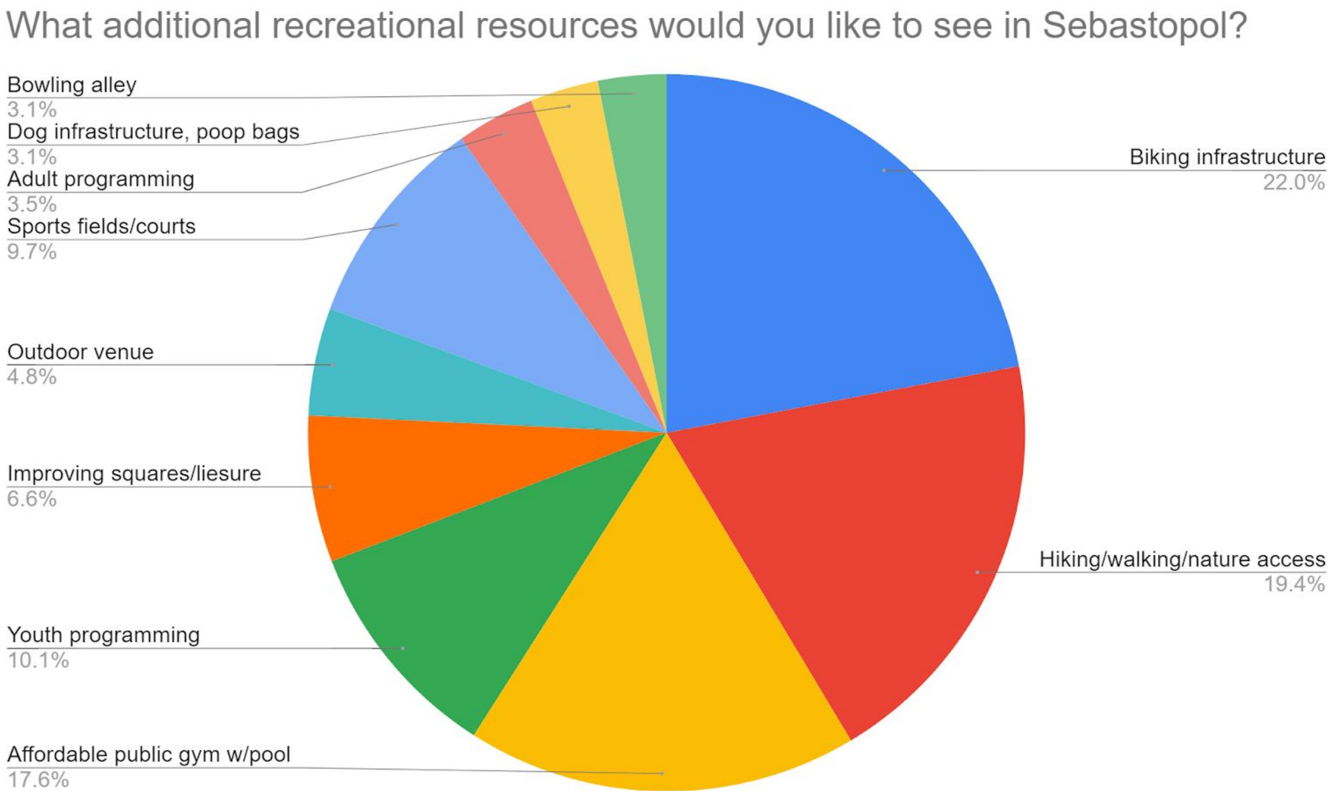
Public Access

In this section the survey poses a series of questions surrounding public access for residents to determine what, how, and why public resources are used (or not used) in order to identify common challenges and potential solutions. In order to establish a baseline of understanding of those public resources used by the Sebastopol community the first question asks, "**Which of the following public resources in Sebastopol do you prefer to access? (Check all that apply)**."



The responses demonstrate Sebastopol's community preferences as to which resource they prefer to access. "Trails/Bike Paths" received the most common preference at over 77%, followed by "Library," at 66%. Other popular selections include "Main St" at 57%, as well as the "Laguna" and "other parks" at near 50%. Recognizing that there are numerous public resources available and with limited selection ability, CoMission allowed for the option of "other" as an additional selection. Among the 13% who selected "other," those preferences have been categorized and the most common responses included: "Ragle Park," "Art Center," "Ives Pool," and "Farmer's Market."

The second question in the Public Access section is aimed to permit respondents with an opportunity to voice their opinion on "**What additional recreational resources would you like to see in Sebastopol?**" As this is an intentional open-ended question the results are vast in diversity and range of topic. Among all the responses, the most common word used is "parks." When combining similar responses, such as "outdoor facilities," "trails," and "open space" the most common response can easily be attributed to a desire for more outdoor recreation. Themes that appeared frequently in these open ended responses are categorized below:

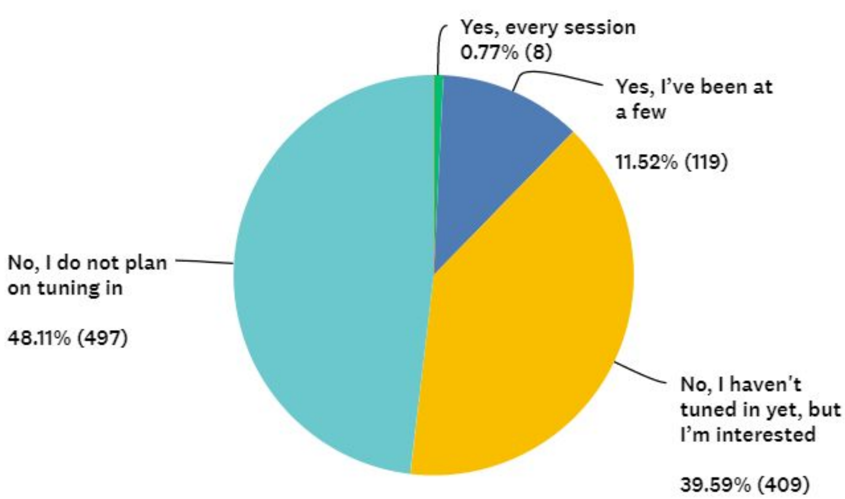


Additionally, the question was asked, "**If you would like to receive periodic information on local nonprofits as well as volunteer opportunities, please list your email here:**" to which 245 respondents provided their email address. This data will be shared with the Community Benefit Council for outreach and organization as appropriate.

In order to assess further those public access and resources utilized by the Sebastopol community, the question posed is, "**How familiar are you with how to contact the City, which departments would be best to help you with specific needs, and where to find that information?**"

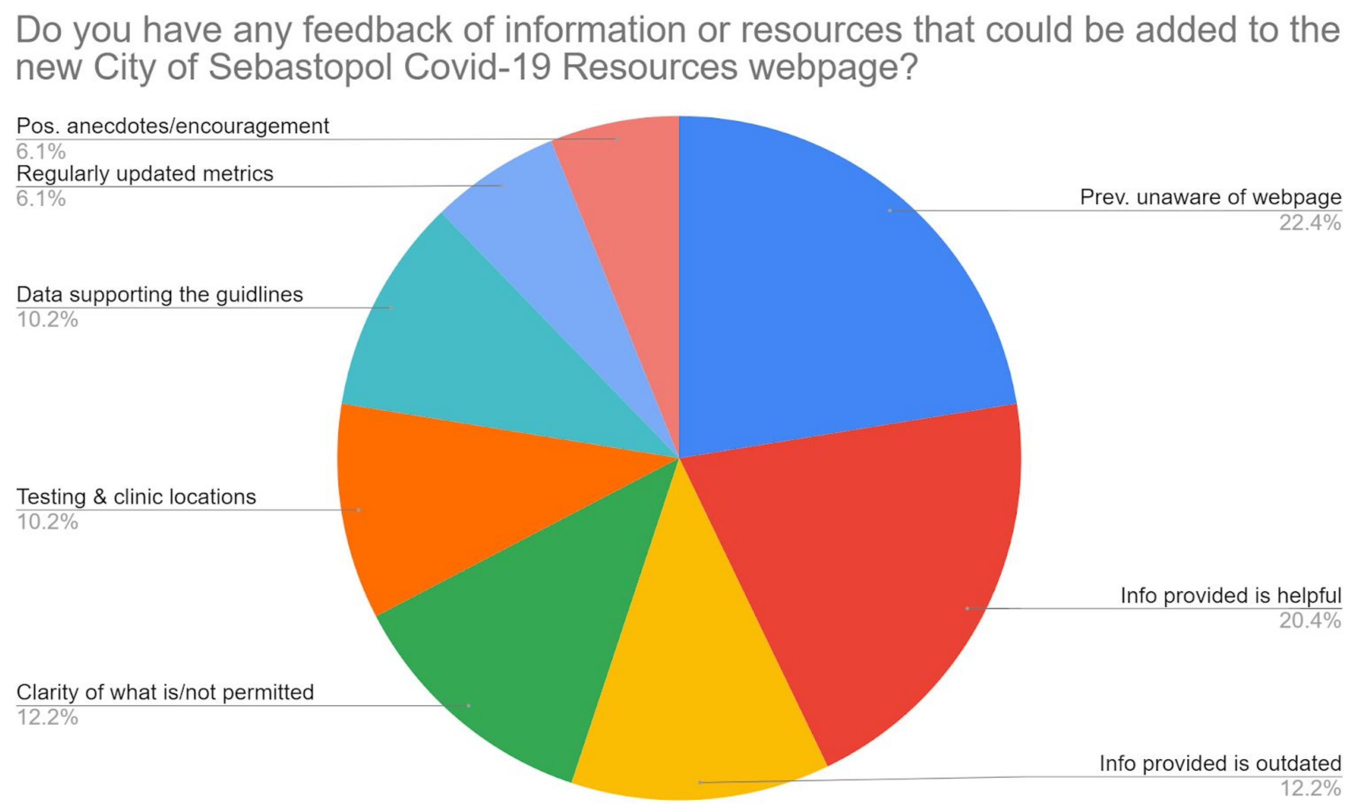
Fortunately a vast majority of 70% of respondents selected either "quite familiar" or "fairly familiar" to whether they're familiar with how to contact the city. On the other hand nearly 27% indicated they're either "not very familiar" or "not familiar at all."

In order to assist in furthering the City's goal of establishing a wide reach for City communications, the question was asked, "**If you would like to receive the City's weekly email of upcoming meetings and resources please provide an email address here**" to which 270 respondents provided their email address. These email addresses will be provided to City Staff for subscription to the weekly newsletter.

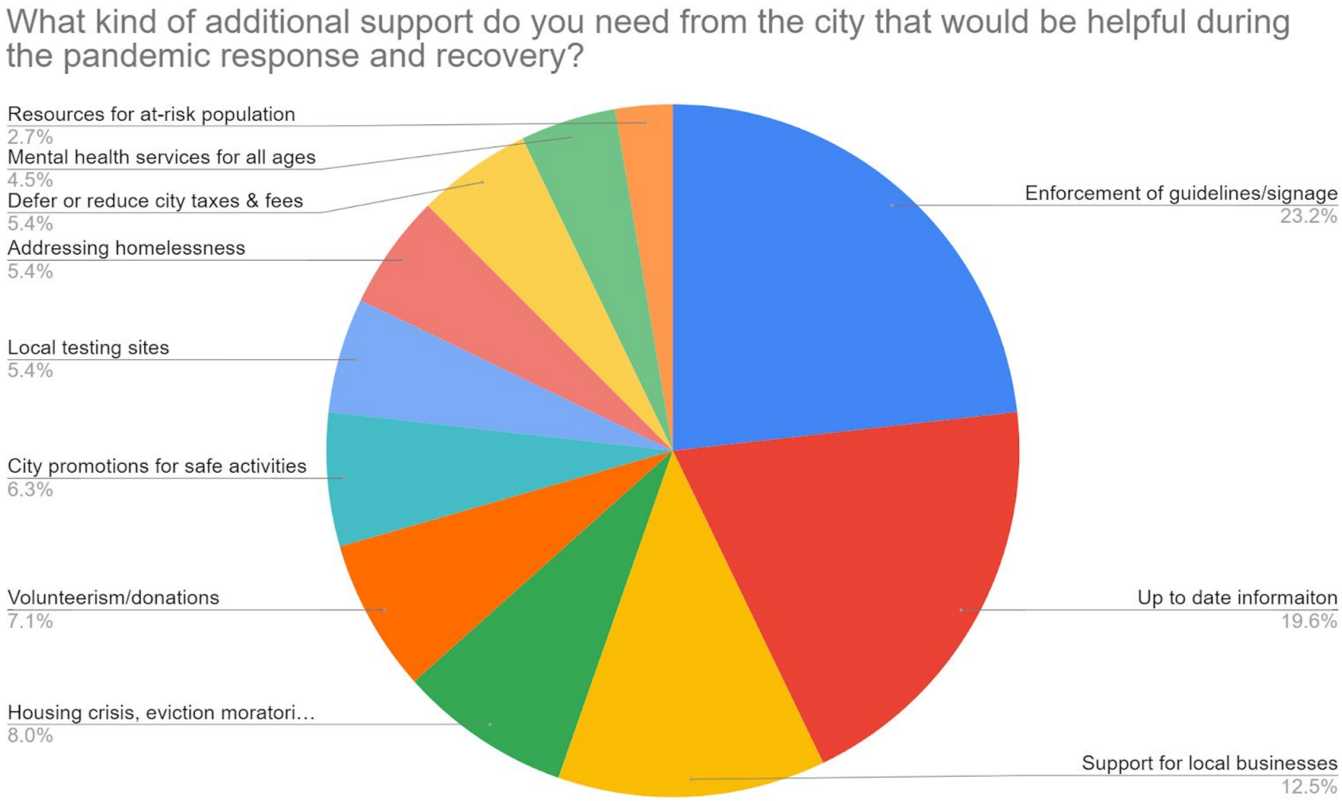


To further our understanding of the accessibility of public resources the question is posed, "**Have you attended Sebastopol City Council meetings since they are now conducted in an online format?**" To which answers suggest that a vast majority of respondents either "haven't turned in yet," or "do not plan on tuning in." A mere 0.77% of respondents, or 8 total respondents, noted that they tune in to every session with approximately 11% of respondents selecting they've "been to a few."

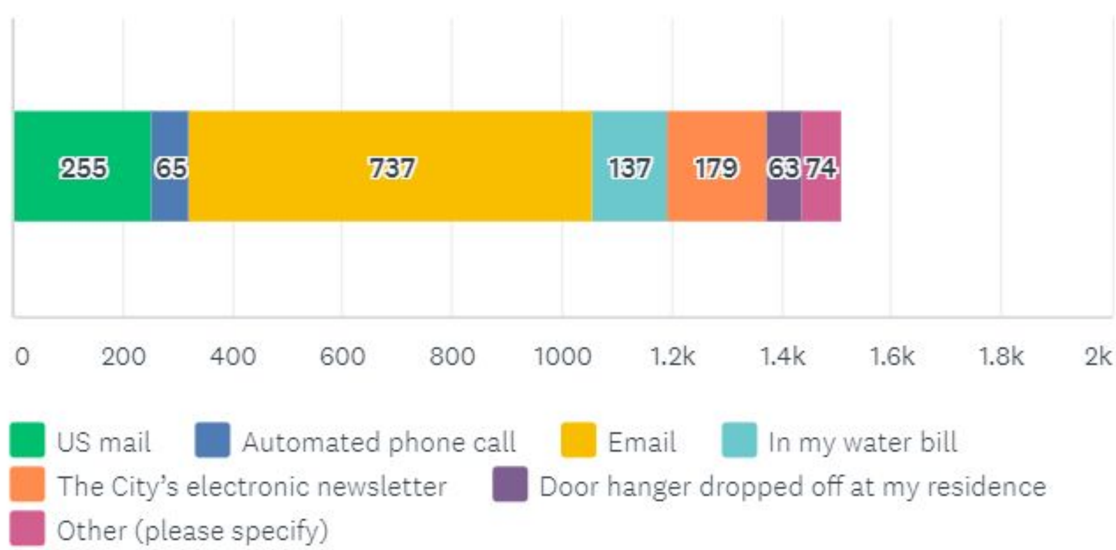
In order to solicit feedback on access to public information as it relates to the pandemic in Sebastopol, the question is posed, "**Do you have any feedback of information or resources that could be added to the new City of Sebastopol Covid-19 Resources webpage? https://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/City-Government/Departments-Services/Fire/Novel-Coronavirus-(COVID-19)-New**" Reponses, as predicted, range in diversity however provide some common threads with which we can glean a better understanding of the respondent's feedback on what resources could be added to the City of Sebastopol Covid-19 resources webpage. The complete response set from this question will be shared in full with City Staff for further analysis if desired. The most common themes identified in these responses are as follows:



Finally, in an effort to provide respondents with an opportunity to voice what desires they have concerning public resources made available to the Sebastopol community, the question is posed, **"What kind of additional support do you need from the city that would be helpful during the pandemic response and recovery?"** As an open ended question, we received an enormous amount of feedback. To understand the most common responses to this question, the pie chart below categorizes the most common themes across these responses.

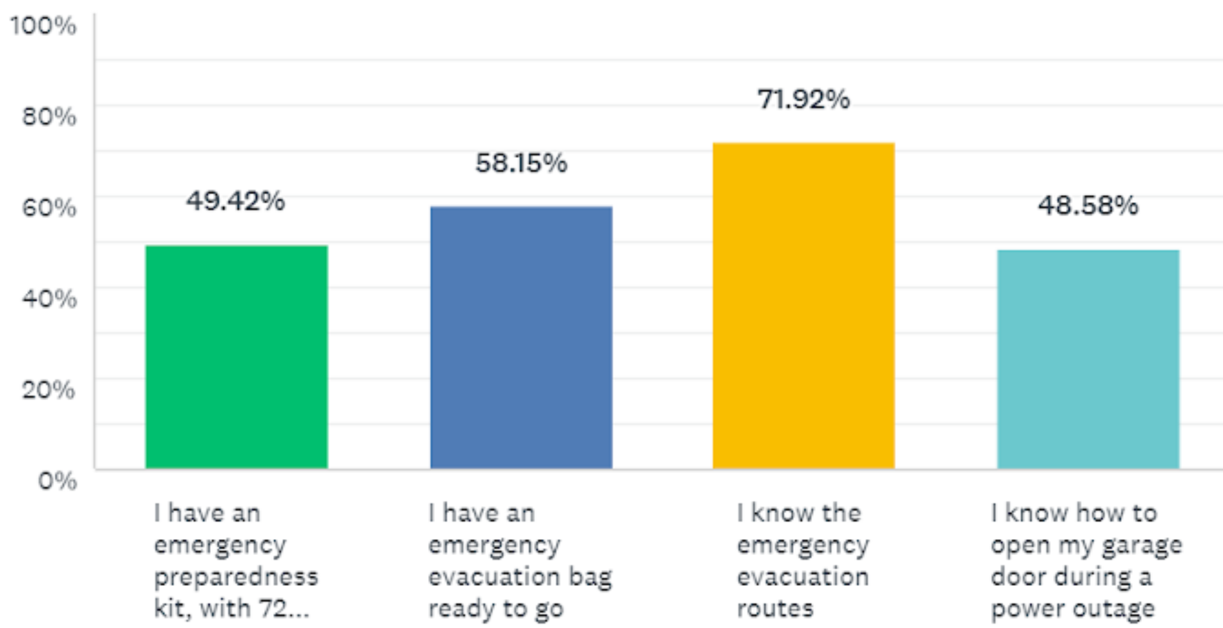


In an effort to determine the best ways to communicate with the Sebastian community regarding public resources the question is posed, "**What are the best ways for the City to communicate with you about local resources, information, and health order updates? (check all that apply)**" Responses demonstrate that a vast majority selected that "email" is the best way for the City to communicate, followed by "US Mail," then closely followed by "the City's electronic newsletter." 270 respondents provided their email addresses to be added to the City newsletter list, which will be shared with City staff in a separate document.



Emergency Preparedness

In an effort to understand the current state and advance the emergency preparedness of the Sebastopol community, the following section aims to solicit whether and how residents feel they're prepared for an emergency. For that purpose, we first ask **"How are you prepared for an emergency? (Check all that apply)"** Among the available responses the most common response selected was that at nearly 72% "know the emergency evacuation routes from their home," however nearly half did not indicate any of the remaining selections. Where this question allows the responder to select "all the appy" we can see that there is work to do when it comes to the most common needs for emergency preparedness. Less than half of respondents indicated that they "have an emergency preparedness kit, with 72 hours of food and water." Furthermore slightly more than half indicated that they have "an emergency evacuation bag ready to go." even less than half know how to open their garage door in the event of a power outage. These are common preparedness needs that were deliberately asked in order that we may assess our community preparedness.



Knowing that undoubtedly there would be respondents who are not prepared for an emergency, as well as for those who wish to learn more, we pose the question, "**If you would like more information on the Cities Emergency Response planning or if you're willing to organize neighbors and our community for emergency preparedness please provide your email here:**" As a result, 91 individuals responding listing their email and hope to receive emergency preparedness information. CoMission's hope is that his question may prompt those participants into action and request additional information, or at least consider what preparedness they're not taking when considering the answer options.

Conclusions & Recommended Actions

The results of this survey revealed many opportunities for public support, categorized below by the four sections of the survey. The City Council and City Staff may consider the included possible actions to address them, by way of regular City resources or through the Community Vitality Project, as is deemed most efficient and effective.

Address Poverty Shift

This section revealed that nearly half of all respondent households experienced some form of interruption or decrease in employment or income as a result of the pandemic. As a result, a significant number of households are projected to fall into Low and even Extremely Low Income classification measured against Sonoma County's Area Median Income. By these measurements the portion of the community considered Low Income or below will jump from about one third of the population to almost one half.

This shift will likely disproportionately affect 2-person households, which includes couples and single parents of one child, as well as non-Caucasians, and those between the ages of 18-24 and 35-44. While both cisgendered men and women did not report a significant difference in financial insecurity, Non-Binary individuals reported financial insecurity at a rate of more than double cisgender groups.

Fortunately, the community expressed resilience, in terms of insecurity around food and rent. Just over 2% of respondents sought rental relief but were denied, and just under 1% reported "often" worrying about running out of food while just under 6% said they worried about food "sometimes." About 10% of the respondents cited difficulty paying rent and utilities as a major concern, which is a large portion of the population to carry such a fundamental anxiety, and this number may increase as the projected income losses are realized more and more over the final and indeterminate stretch of the pandemic.

Possible actions the City can take to address this growing financial insecurity include:

- Gather and promote hardship resources such as poverty services and food access such as local and regional governmental assistance, Food for Thought, Redwood Food Bank, and the various housing and financial stability programs offered by Community Action Partnership, including tax support services to make sure community members maximize their 2020 returns
- Work in conjunction with the local business community to support safe rehiring and growth as a top priority, offering assistance and incentives to job expansion in the early parts of 2021, including job training programs for the 18-24 age group coming out of high school and college during this economic downturn
- Collaborate with local restaurants to create food waste diversion programs a la "Food Not Bombs"
- Explore the potential for local nonprofits to establish community support groups to create a venue to express and process the anxiety and shame that often accompanies poverty conditions

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Activate Local Commerce

The Poverty Shift explored above also acts as a reciprocally compounding factor contributing to the struggles of local business. If local residents have less disposable income, they spend less at local businesses, which includes both decreased spending behaviors as well as compromising “go local” preferences by shopping with cheaper megacorporations like Amazon and WalMart. This phenomenon has been explored from the perspective of local businesses in previous surveys, but this survey presents the opportunity to address needs and desires of the consumers.

First order is to address consumer confidence, or the level of comfort of consumers in physically entering public spaces for their shopping needs. Well over half of respondents expressed discomfort with entering the public space, that their overall shopping has reduced since the pandemic began, and that they began shopping online more, pointing to the urgent need to establish and further develop delivery and pickup options with local businesses. Thankfully, about 23% indicated making local owned and independent business a priority during this time.

As has been acknowledged by the business community in the past, it has been difficult to compete with clothing and home needs outside of the City, as cited by over 40% of respondents. What was surprising was that despite having several quite diverse options inside City limits, over a quarter of respondents cited groceries as something they travel out of the City to purchase. 568 respondents gave input on what local businesses could do to keep their business in the City, with common themes appearing around competitive pricing, online presence, delivery/pickup options, and better adherence to safety guidelines.

Possible actions the City can take to help activate locally-focused consumerism include:

- Collaborate with the local business operators to increase delivery/pickup options
- Support the Chamber of Commerce in supporting local businesses to establish and improve robust online presences by way of webinars, networking, and even potentially supplemented digital development costs
- Conduct a follow up survey to assess the nature of the concern that COVID safety guidelines are not being implemented effectively on the local level
- Implement a local focus campaign to kick off 2021, similar to the successful Sip, Shop, Savor campaign from July 2020, implementing lessons learned and drawing more upon grassroots involvement
- Include small educational bites about the impact of locally spent dollars in City newsletters

Plan for Long Term Public Access Development

An important aspect of Community Vitality that must be held in focus despite the challenges of the pandemic is the evaluation and development of community leisure activities and civic engagement. This section Served to provide an initial, surface level view of community interest. Not surprisingly, respondents expressed greatest interest in nature and intellectual pursuits, citing trails/bike paths and the library as the current resources they currently access, followed by commerce/social spaces. Top requested future resources include biking infrastructure, more nature access, and a significant interest expressed in sports and fitness facilities, including a public indoor recreation center/gym and various outdoor sports fields and courts.

On the topic of civic engagement, the majority expressed comfort and familiarity with reaching out to the City, while just under 30% expressed difficulty or confusion. About half expressed interest in participating in City Council meetings, though only about 13% have actually attended. Respondents also provided a great variety of feedback for preferred methods of communicating and disseminating information, the City's COVID-19 webpage, and ways the City could provide support during this difficult time. This feedback provides great opportunity for City staff to self-evaluate and refine operational methods to increase effectiveness and value over time.

Possible actions the City can take to evaluate and advance civic and social engagement include:

- Evaluate methods of communication against the preferred methods expressed here, which includes the addition of the 270 newsletter subscribers from this survey
- Evaluate and implement feedback on the COVID-19 web page as appropriate
- Evaluate the list of suggested City support ideas and entertain a discussion at the staff or City Council level to identify priorities for further exploration and implementation
- Evaluate and further explore the concerns that safety guidelines are not being effectively implemented locally, as identified both here and in the Local Economy section
- Include questions in a future survey on ways to make civic engagement more accessible
- Host a discussion or virtual town hall to explore future public resource development opportunities

Improve Emergency Preparedness

While it can be difficult to see past the imminent and continuous disaster that is the pandemic, the fourth section of this survey addressed general emergency preparedness. While in many survey responses an answer over 50% is considered significant, the goal for emergency preparedness would ideally be 100%. While over two thirds of the community reported knowing emergency evacuation routes, just around half or less indicated they have an emergency kit, keep an evacuation bag ready, or know how to open their garage door in the event of a power outage. The remaining half could be at great risk of injury or death during a wildfire or flood, indicating a great need for local emergency education.

Possible actions the City can take to help improve emergency preparedness include:

- Evaluate current programming against these responses and identify gaps
- Share instructions on opening garage doors in the city newsletter and social media several times each year, centered around disaster seasons
- Consider the development of "light touch" emergency preparedness webinars or classes
- Work with local businesses to assemble and sell affordable emergency kits with printed information on emergency routes and garage door opening included within

Community Vitality Project Next Steps

CoMission has identified the following priority actions for the Community Vitality Project:

- Continue further data analysis and cross referencing of these survey results as requested by City Council and City Staff
- Share emails and full open ended responses with City staff and the appropriate community leadership groups such as the Business Council and the Community Benefit Organization Council
- Facilitate and follow through with the above recommended discussions as requested:
    - Residential pandemic support opportunities
    - Concerns surrounding safety guideline implementation
    - Long term public access investments
    - Emergency preparedness gaps
- Conduct follow up surveys
    - Quarterly residential check ins
    - Focused microsurveys as appropriate
- Continue to support and develop the programming of the Chamber of Commerce
- Continue to facilitate existing leadership councils and responding to the information gained in this survey
- Develop and launch new leadership councils to organize even more collaboration and participation, which can help coordinate volunteer-driven efforts for community wellness and stability
- Host or coordinate webinars and virtual town halls as deemed priority by the City

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References

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