

DOWNTOWN SANTA CRUZ | ONLINE SURVEY SUMMARY

An online survey was developed as part of a strategic planning process led by the Downtown Association of Santa Cruz (DTA), the Downtown Management Corporation (DMC), and the City of Santa Cruz Economic Development Office to identify priorities and improvements for Downtown over the next 5 years. The survey ran from October 6th, 2019 to November 18th, 2019, and collected a total of **3,178 responses**. The survey was also translated into Spanish.

KEY FINDINGS

Downtown Santa Cruz Today

The first series of questions asked respondents about their perception of Downtown Santa Cruz today, particularly is it relates to the fundamentals of cleanliness and safety.

- The majority (56%) of respondents said safety in Downtown has gotten “much worse” or “slightly worse” over the past three years. Just 16% of respondents said safety was “slightly better” or “much better”.
- Based on a 1-to-5 scale, with 1 being “very unsafe” and 5 being “very safe”, the **average rating of safety in Downtown Santa Cruz today is a 2.7**.
- When asked why respondents gave the rating they did, many mentioned unpredictable, and sometimes aggressive, behaviors from individuals under the influence of drugs or individuals with mental health issues. Respondents also differentiated between feeling safer during the day and less safe during the evening and early morning hours.
- In terms of cleanliness, close to the majority (46%) of respondents said it had gotten “much worse” or “slightly worse” over the past three years. 24% of respondents said cleanliness was either “much better” or “slightly better”.
- Based on a 1-to-5 scale, with 1 being “very dirty” and 5 being “very clean”, the **average rating of cleanliness in Downtown Santa Cruz today is a 2.6**.
- When asked why respondents gave the rating they did, responses frequently involved the mention of Downtown’s population experiencing homelessness and issues of cleanliness relating to trash and the sight and smell of urine and feces. Additionally, a number of respondents cited dirt and grim on Downtown sidewalks.

Downtown Santa Cruz in the Future

The second series of questions asked respondents what would improve Downtown Santa Cruz in the future.

- The majority of respondents said the following enhanced services were “Very Important” for Downtown Santa Cruz:
 - Enhanced Safety and Hospitality (e.g. safety escorts, address disruptive street behaviors, friendly engagement with Downtown visitors) – 66%

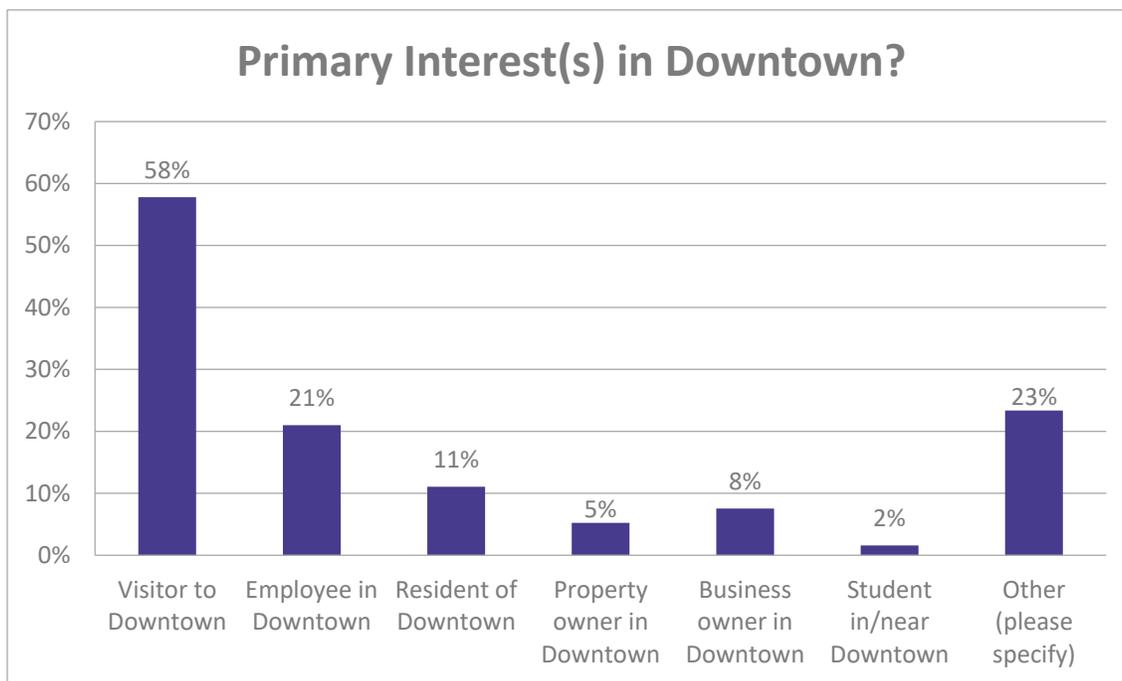
- Outreach Services (e.g. additional support for populations experiencing homelessness and those with mental health issues) – 65%
- Enhanced Maintenance (e.g. scrub sidewalks, pick up trash, maintain landscape) – 60%
- Economic Vitality (e.g. support local businesses; incubate new businesses; expand vitality to side streets) – 57%
- Public Place Activation (e.g. enliven spaces like parks, plazas, the riverfront) – 51%
- When asked to select the one MOST important enhanced service, the top response was Enhanced Safety and Hospitality. Three of the five top responses relate to enhancing clean and safe services in Downtown.
 - **Enhanced Safety and Hospitality - 39%**
 - Outreach Services - 16%
 - Economic Vitality - 12%
 - Enhanced Maintenance - 10%
 - Public Place Activation - 6%

SURVEY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The information below provides an overview of who took the survey. The robust number of responses allows for cross tabulation by a number of factors to see if or how responses differ based on respondent characteristics. Cross tabulations can be found at the end of this document.

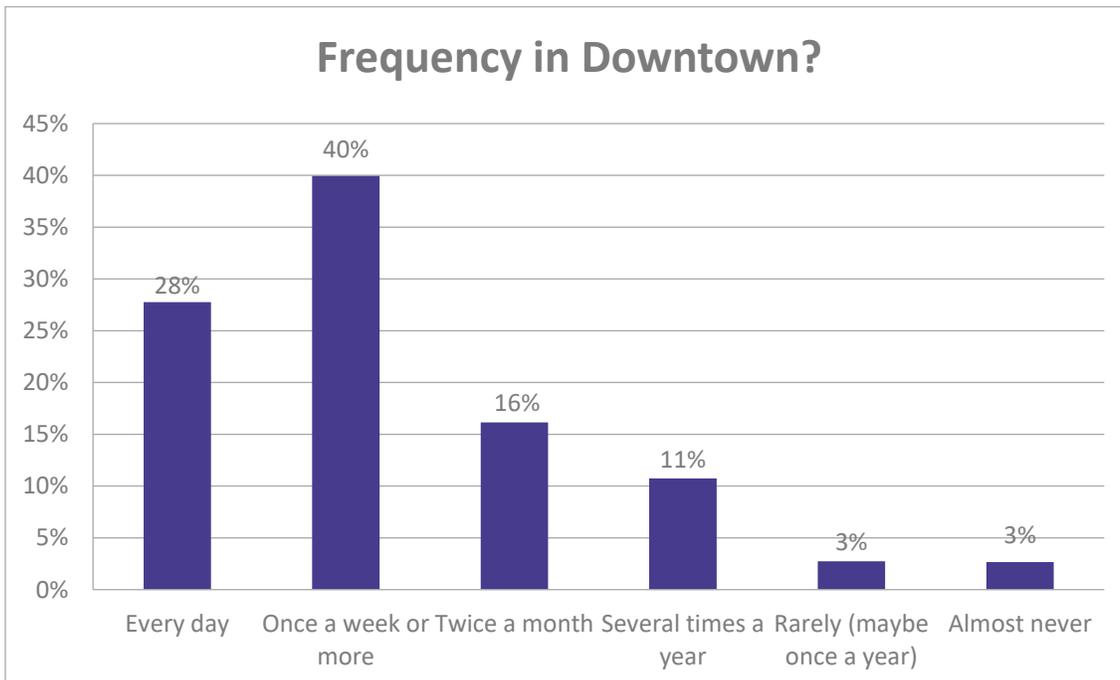
Which of the following BEST characterizes your primary interest(s) in Downtown Santa Cruz? (Choose all that apply)

Over half of survey respondents identified being a visitor to Downtown. The other half represent a variety of other interests in Downtown, including employees, residents, property and business owners. The survey did not capture a large response from students. "Other" interests include residents who live near Downtown.



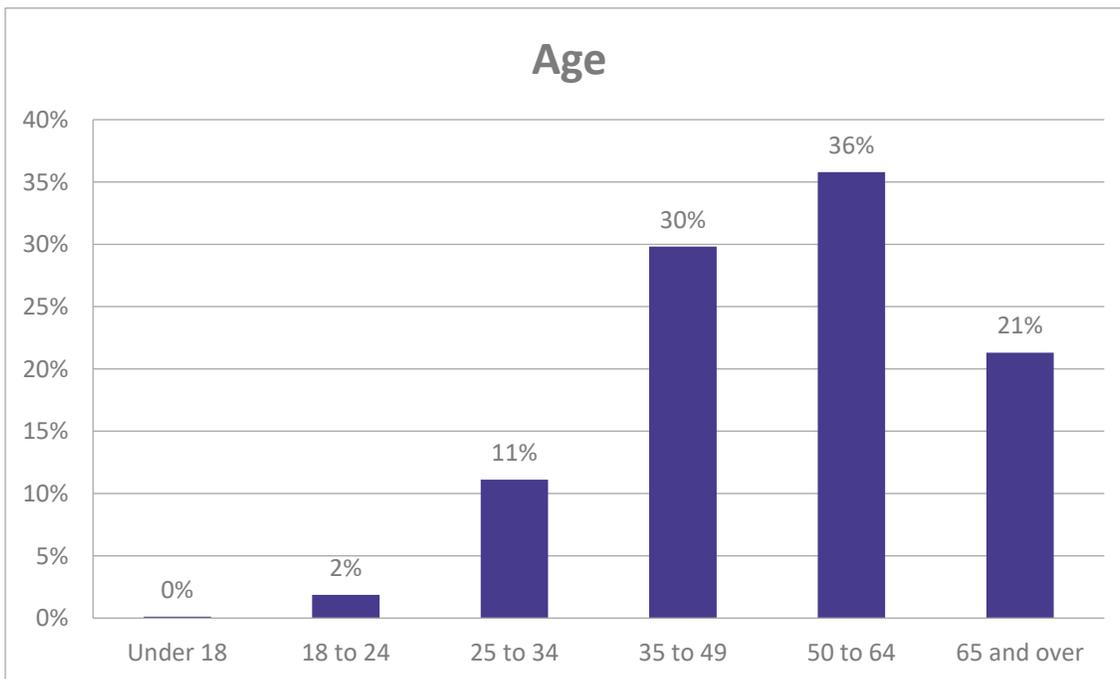
Approximately how often are you in Downtown Santa Cruz?

The survey reached people who are frequently in Downtown. Nearly 70% of respondents said they are in Downtown “every day” or “once a week or more.”

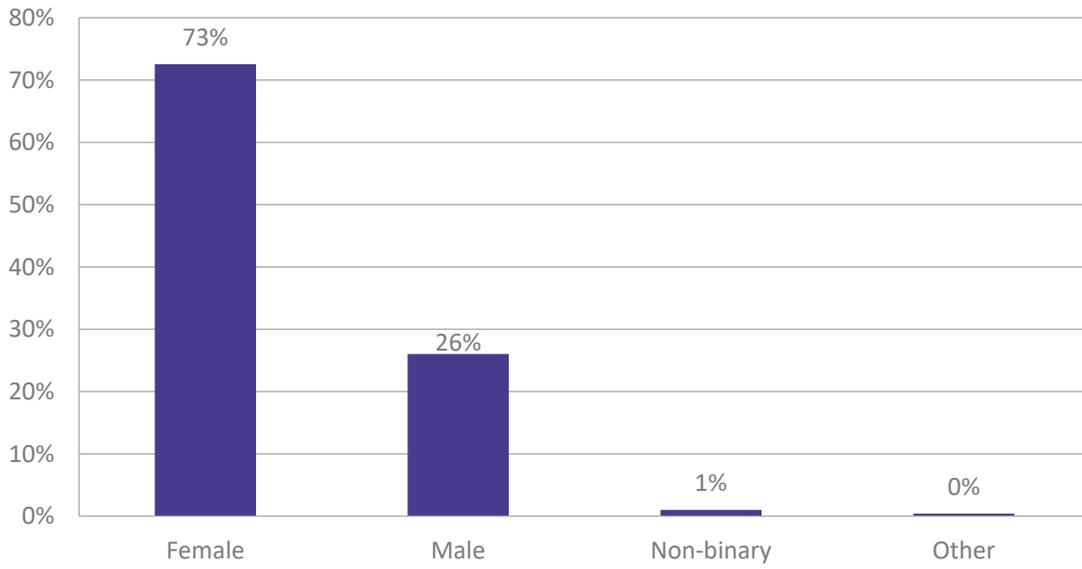


Demographics (Optional)

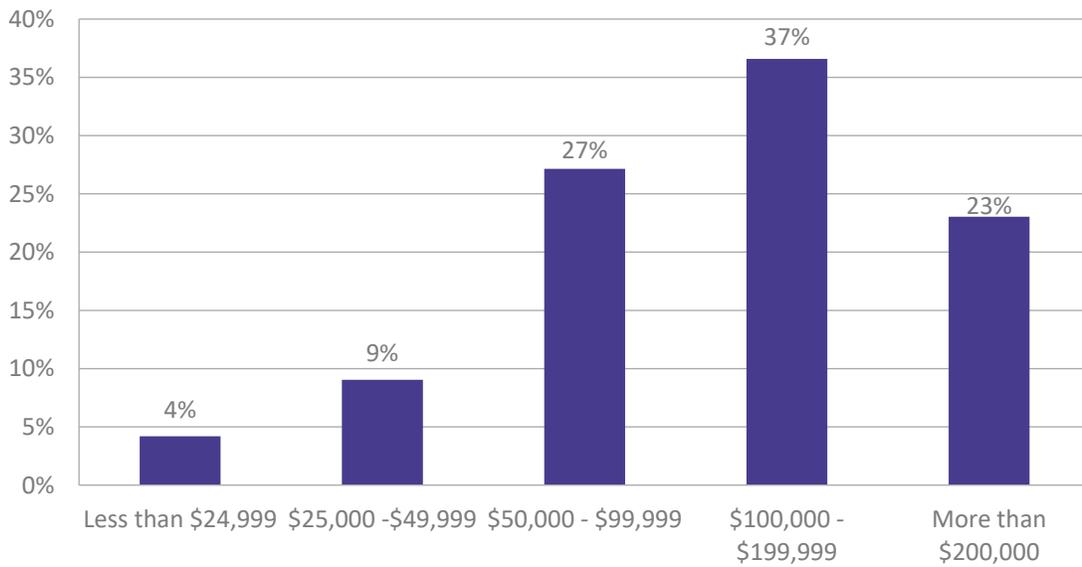
Compared to Census data for the City of Santa Cruz, survey respondents skewed toward older, higher income households. The majority of survey respondents were females and white.



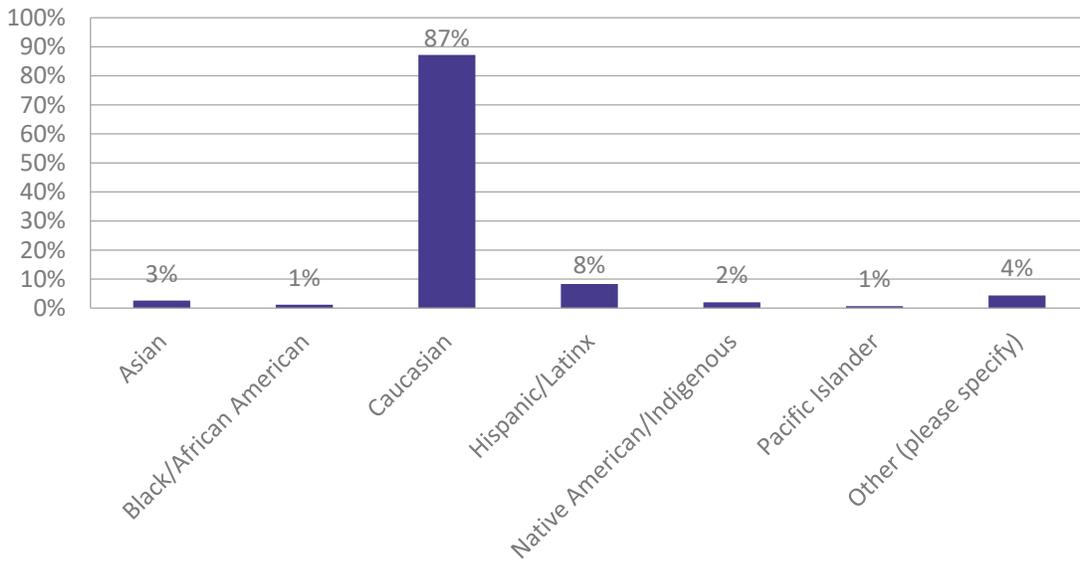
Gender



Annual Household Income



I identify my ethnicity as: (Choose all that apply)



What is your home zip code?

Approximately half of all respondents who provided their zip code were from the Santa Cruz zip code 95060. The next most common zip codes were 95062 (21%), 95003 (6%), 95065 (4%) and 95066 (3%), as depicted in the map below.

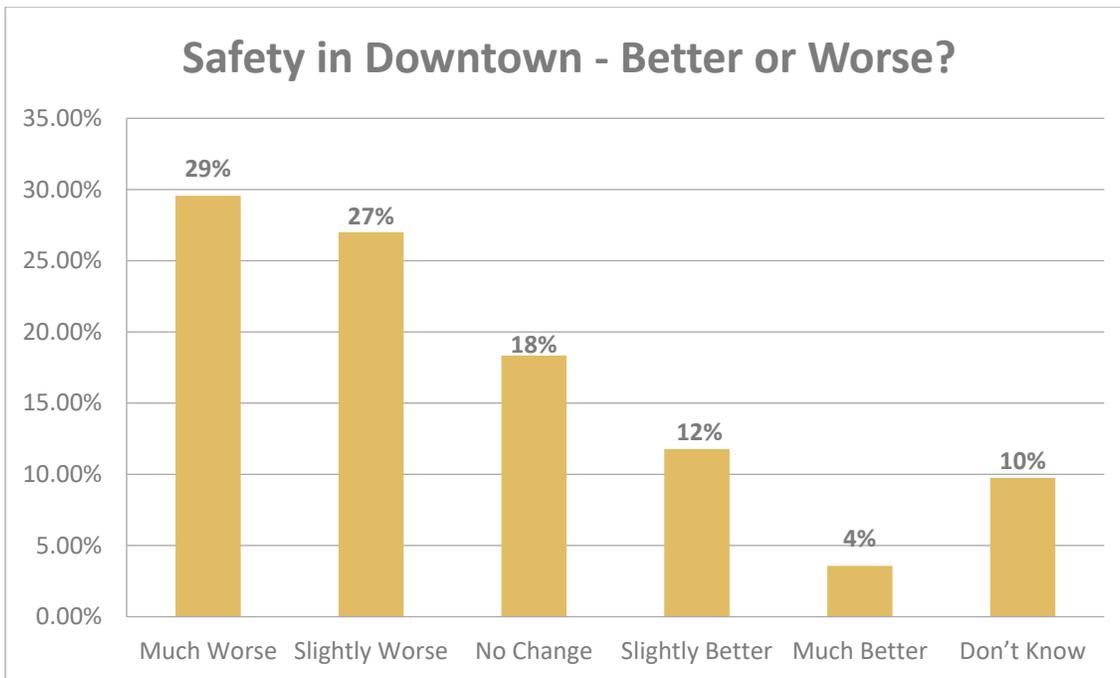


DOWNTOWN SANTA CRUZ TODAY

Safety in Downtown

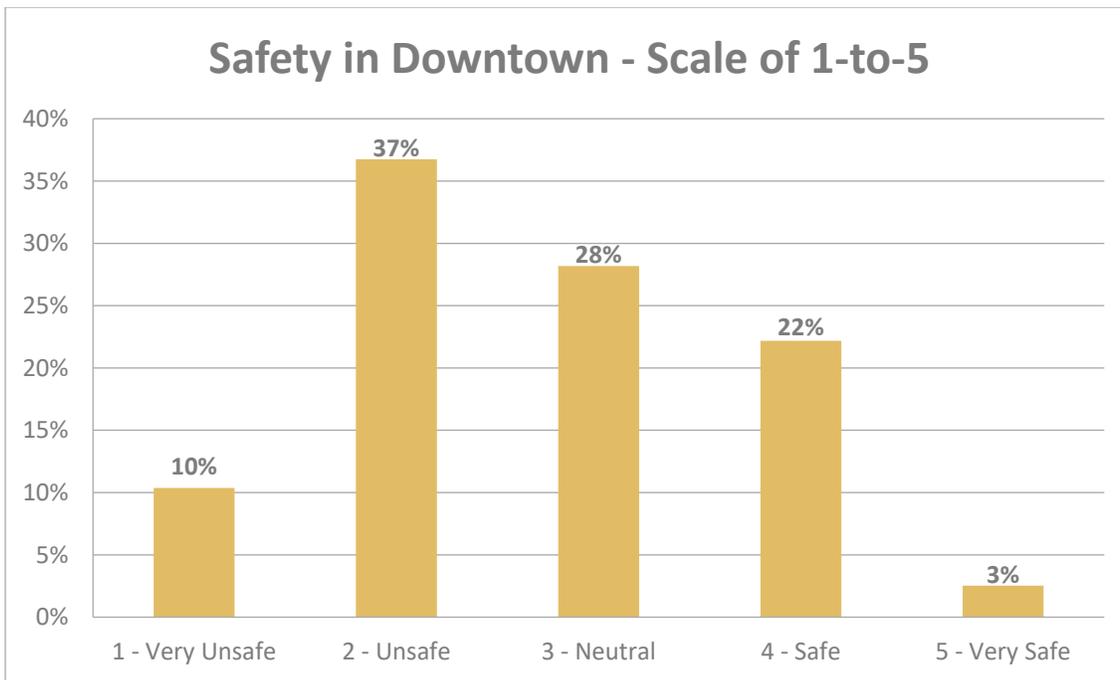
Has safety in Downtown Santa Cruz improved or worsened over the past three years? (Choose one)

Responses to this question weighed more heavily toward safety getting worse over the past three years. Approximately 56% of respondents said safety has gotten “much worse” or “slightly worse”; 16% said it has gotten “slightly better” or “much better”.



On a scale of 1-to-5, how would you rate safety in Downtown today? (Choose one)

Based on a 1-to-5 scale, with 1 being “very unsafe” and 5 being “very safe”, the **average rating of safety in Downtown Santa Cruz today is a 2.7**, indicating that, on average, survey respondents perceive Downtown as “unsafe”.



Respondents were asked *why* they selected the response they did. Common themes were:

“Very Unsafe” and “Unsafe”

- Unpredictable, and sometimes aggressive, behaviors from people with mental health issues
- Visible drug use and sales
- Theft
- Increasing number of people experiencing homelessness
- Many respondents noted a difference in their feeling of safety depending on the time of day and whether or not they were alone. Respondents were less comfortable at the night and during early morning hours.

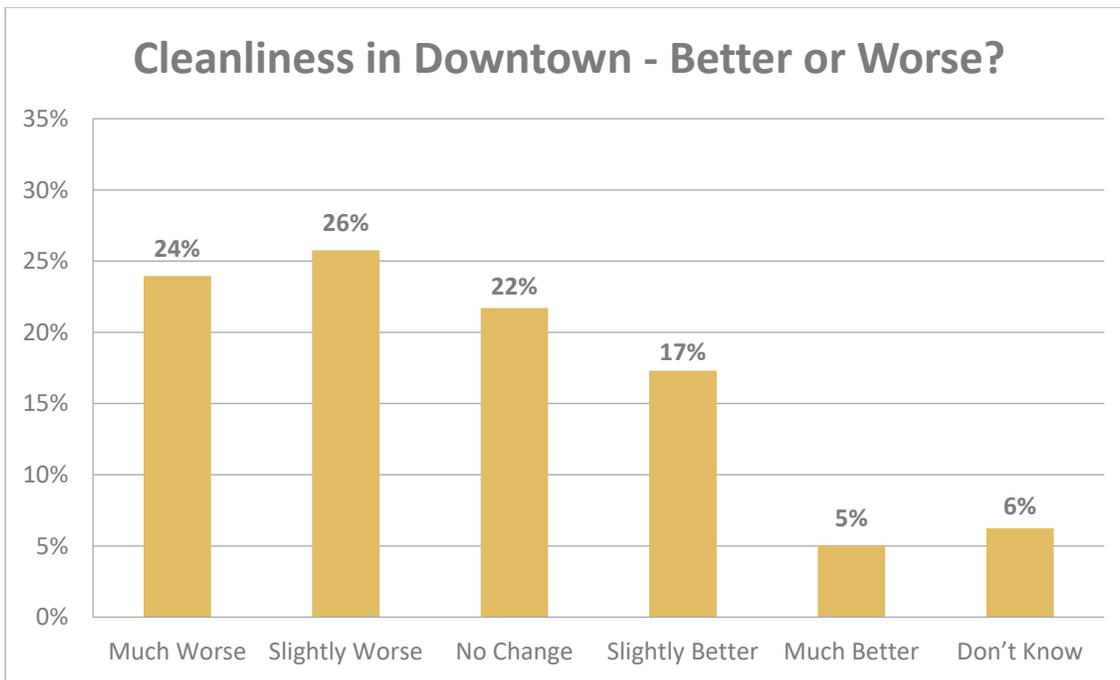
“Very Safe” and “Safe”

- Feel completely safe in Downtown
- Feel safe personally but have heard of incidents happening to other people, which makes them more vigilant

Cleanliness in Downtown

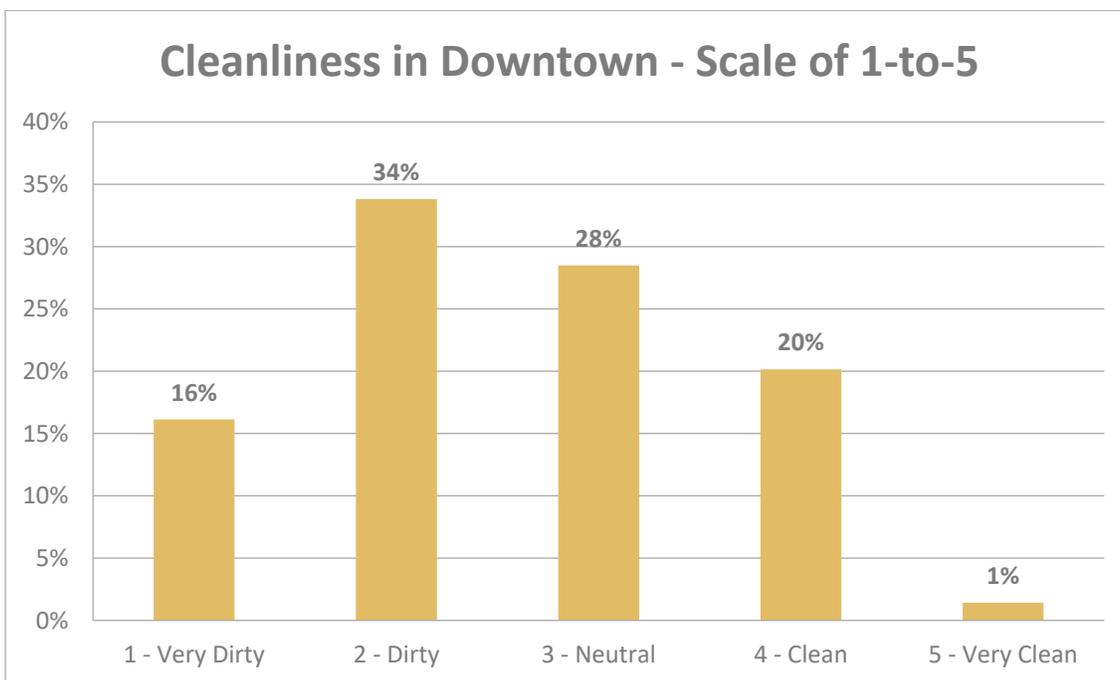
Has cleanliness in Downtown Santa Cruz improved or worsened over the past three years? (Choose one)

Responses to this question weighed more heavily toward cleanliness getting worse over the past three years. Approximately 50% of respondents said cleanliness was “much worse” or “slightly worse”; 22% said it has gotten “slightly better” or “much better”.



On a scale of 1-to-5, how would you rate cleanliness in Downtown today? (Choose one)

Based on a 1-to-5 scale, with 1 being “very dirty” and 5 being “very clean”, the **average rating of cleanliness in Downtown Santa Cruz today is a 2.6**, indicating a perception among survey respondents that Downtown is “dirty”.



Respondents were asked *why* they selected the response they did. Common themes were:

“Very Dirty” and “Dirty”

- Trash on streets and sidewalks
- Dirt/grime on sidewalks

How important are the following enhanced services for Downtown Santa Cruz?

Respondents were provided a list of enhanced services, above and beyond what the City of Santa Cruz provides, and asked to identify the importance of the service as either: “Very Important”, “Important”, “Somewhat Important”, “Not Important” or “Don’t Know”. The chart below is sorted by actions considered “Very Important”. There were five actions that were considered “Very Important” by the majority of respondents, including enhanced safety and hospitality (66%), outreach services (65%), enhanced maintenance (60%); economic vitality (57%), and public place activation (51%).

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Enhanced Safety and Hospitality (e.g. safety escorts, address disruptive street behaviors, friendly engagement with Downtown visitors)	66%	21%	9%	4%	1%
Outreach Services (e.g. additional support for populations experiencing homelessness and those with mental health issues)	65%	20%	8%	5%	2%
Enhanced Maintenance (e.g. scrub sidewalks, pick up trash, maintain landscape)	60%	30%	9%	1%	0%
Economic Vitality (e.g. support local businesses; incubate new businesses; expand vitality to side streets)	57%	30%	10%	2%	1%
Public Place Activation (e.g. enliven spaces like parks, plazas, the riverfront)	51%	31%	13%	3%	1%
Long Term Planning (e.g. big picture ideas and vision for Downtown)	42%	34%	17%	4%	1%
Mobility Enhancements (e.g. bike parking; employee transit incentives; other strategies to encourage alternatives to driving)	34%	29%	24%	11%	2%
Special Events (e.g. events that appeal to Downtown residents; family-friendly events to bring people Downtown)	34%	38%	21%	5%	1%
Advocacy and Education for issues impacting Downtown (e.g. need for housing at a variety of price points)	33%	30%	23%	10%	4%
Capital Improvements (e.g. play areas for children; public art; street furniture)	28%	34%	27%	9%	1%
Parking Management (e.g. signage and pricing to efficiently use parking resources, improve circulation through Downtown)	27%	31%	27%	12%	2%
Marketing and Image (e.g. pro-actively share positive information; improve perceptions of Downtown)	22%	30%	27%	18%	3%
Cosmetic Improvements (e.g. murals; decorative lighting; plantings)	22%	36%	31%	10%	1%
District Identity (e.g. gateways; banners; signage; connection to the beach)	11%	22%	33%	30%	4%

Respondents could also select “Other” to provide another suggestion. Commonly cited “Other” enhanced services included:

- Support for local businesses to help keep rents affordable
- Make Pacific Ave pedestrian only

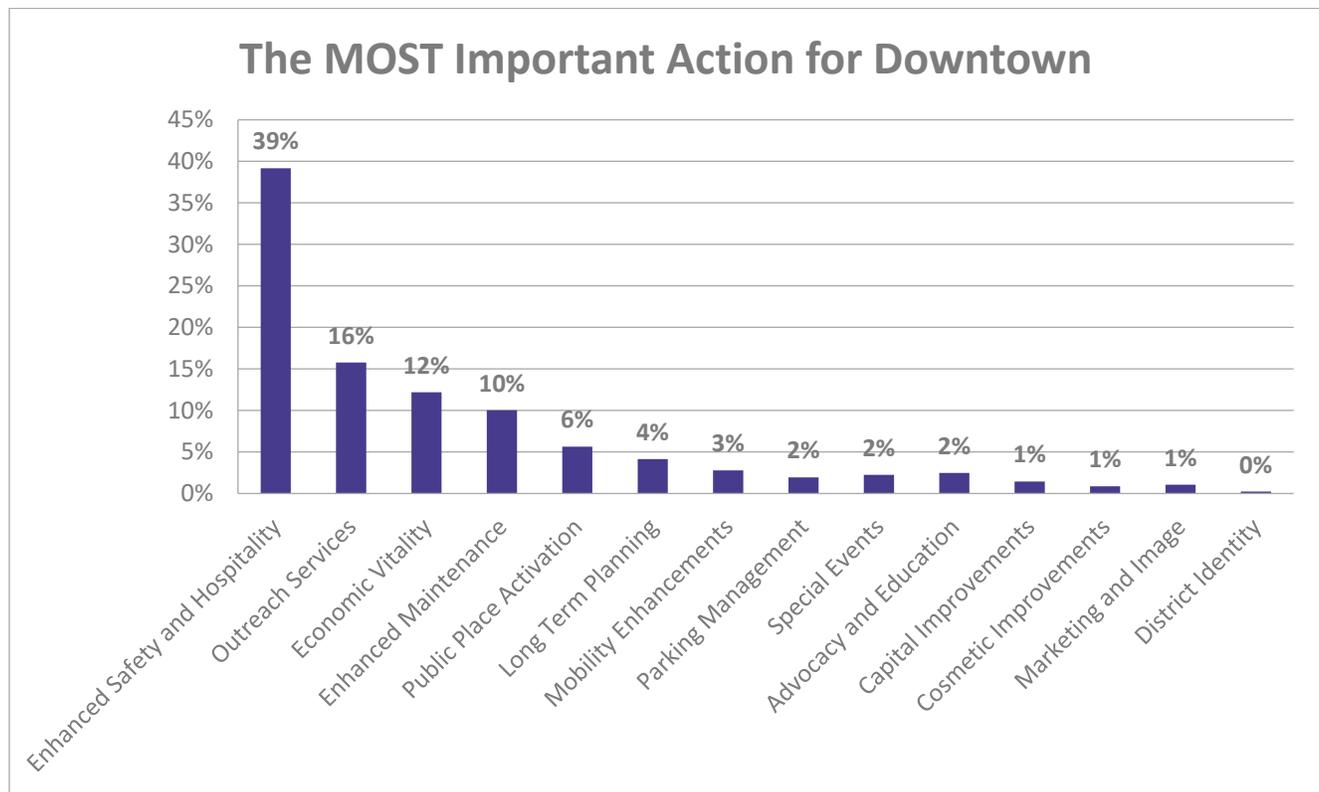
- Add more, clean, public restrooms

From the enhanced services in the question above, which ONE service is the most important for Downtown?

To assist in priority setting, respondents were asked to select just ONE action from the preceding question’s answer choices. The enhanced services respondents selected as most important were:

- **Enhanced Safety and Hospitality (39%)**
- Outreach Services (16%)
- Economic Vitality (12%)
- Enhanced Maintenance (10%)
- Public Place Activation (6%)

By far the greatest number of people (39%) selected enhanced safety and hospitality, indicating that as a strong priority.



If you could suggest one specific improvement to enhance Downtown Santa Cruz, not listed above, what would it be?

The word cloud below represents the words respondents suggested to enhance Downtown Santa Cruz when asked an open-ended question. The size of the word indicates how frequently it was used, with the largest words being those used most often.

Employee	2.7	2.6
Resident	2.8	2.6
Student	2.9	2.8
Visitor	2.7	2.6

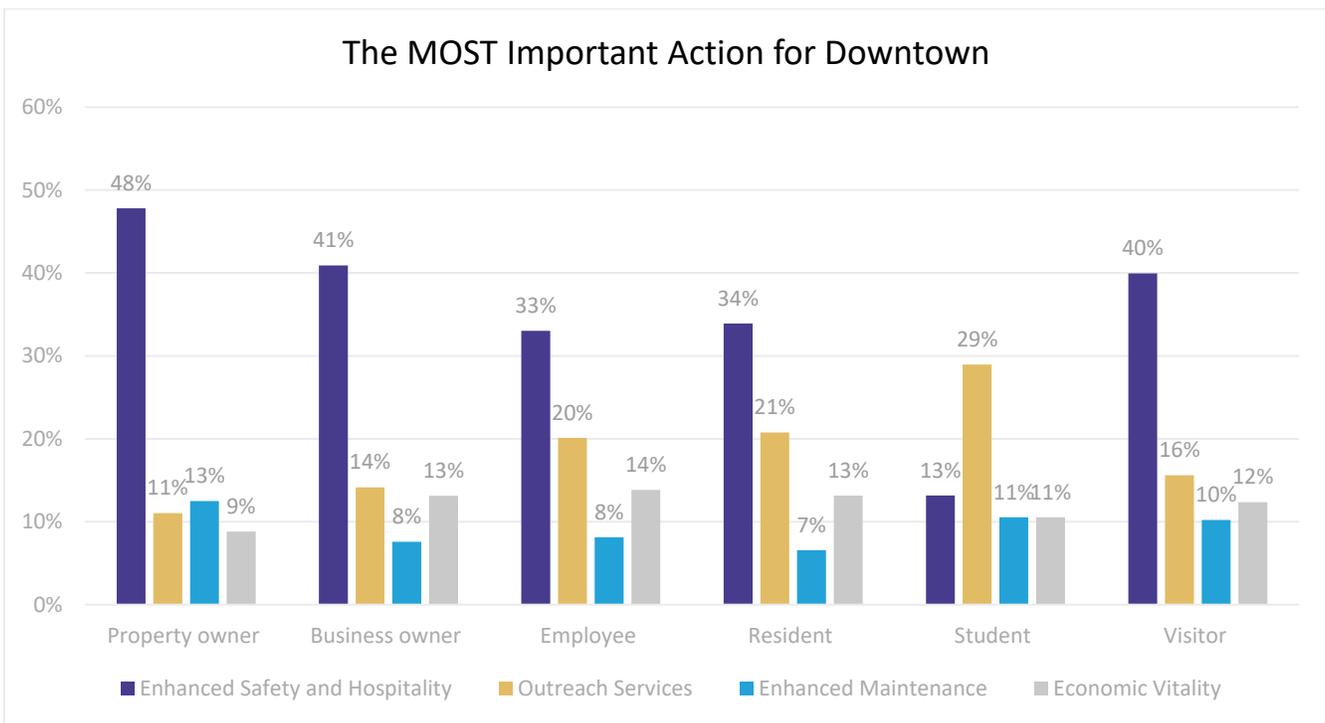
Downtown Santa Cruz in the Future

The chart below shows the percentage of respondents who selected an action as “Very Important”, according to respondents’ interest in Downtown. Property owners, business owners, and visitors were the most likely to say Enhanced Safety and Hospitality is Very Important. Employees, residents and students were more likely to say Outreach services were Very Important. Property owners were the most likely group to say Enhanced Maintenance was Very Important and Business Owners were the group most keen on Economic Vitality.

Actions	“Very Important”					
	Property Owner	Business Owner	Employee	Resident	Student	Visitor
Enhanced Safety and Hospitality (e.g. safety escorts, address disruptive street behaviors, friendly engagement with Downtown visitors)	75%	74%	62%	58%	56%	66%
Outreach Services (e.g. additional support for populations experiencing homelessness and those with mental health issues)	66%	67%	67%	64%	90%	65%
Enhanced Maintenance (e.g. scrub sidewalks, pick up trash, maintain landscape)	69%	62%	55%	52%	56%	59%
Economic Vitality (e.g. support local businesses; incubate new businesses; expand vitality to side streets)	58%	70%	57%	53%	41%	58%
Public Place Activation (e.g. enliven spaces like parks, plazas, the riverfront)	48%	50%	50%	50%	53%	51%
Long Term Planning (e.g. big picture ideas and vision for Downtown)	41%	50%	44%	40%	38%	40%
Mobility Enhancements (e.g. bike parking; employee transit incentives; other strategies to encourage alternatives to driving)	31%	30%	40%	39%	62%	32%
Special Events (e.g. events that appeal to Downtown residents; family-friendly events to bring people Downtown)	33%	29%	31%	32%	36%	35%
Advocacy and Education for issues impacting Downtown (e.g. need for housing at a variety of price points)	29%	31%	41%	43%	62%	32%
Capital Improvements (e.g. play areas for children; public art; street furniture)	28%	28%	32%	27%	33%	28%
Parking Management (e.g. signage and pricing to efficiently use parking resources, improve circulation through Downtown)	31%	26%	29%	23%	28%	26%
Marketing and Image (e.g. pro-actively share positive information; improve perceptions of Downtown)	32%	35%	21%	19%	13%	20%

Cosmetic Improvements (e.g. murals; decorative lighting; plantings)	23%	21%	21%	18%	13%	21%
District Identity (e.g. gateways; banners; signage; connection to the beach)	15%	15%	12%	9%	8%	10%

Respondents, regardless of their interest in Downtown, had similar actions considered the MOST important. Each group had the same top four responses, although the exact order of priorities differed somewhat based on the group – as seen in the chart below. All groups, except students, selected Enhanced Safety and Hospitality as their MOST important action by a fairly significant margin. While four of the top five priorities were the same, the fifth priority had some variation. With employees and visitors, it was Public Place Activation (with 6% each), residents selected Advocacy and Education (6% and 11% respectively); business owners chose Marketing and Image (7%) and property owners selected Long Term Planning (4%).



CROSS TABULATION BY AGE

The survey results were cross tabulated by age to see if responses differed based on the age of the respondent. The results were cross tabulated by ages 18-to-24, 25-to-34, 35-to-49, 50-to-64, and 65 and over. There were not enough respondents under the age of 18 to be included in the analysis.

Downtown Santa Cruz Today

On average, younger and older respondents gave a slightly more favorable rating for safety and cleanliness in Downtown than those ages 35 to 64. However, all respondents were in the range of "Dirty" to "Neutral".

Age	Rating of Safety (1-to-5) 1=Very Unsafe; 5=Very Safe	Rating of Cleanliness (1-to-5) 1=Very Dirty; 5=Very Clean
18 to 24	2.9	2.9
25 to 34	2.8	2.8
35 to 49	2.6	2.5
50 to 64	2.6	2.5
65 and Over	3.0	2.8

Downtown Santa Cruz in the Future

The chart below shows the percentage of respondents who selected an action as “Very Important”, according to respondents’ age. Younger respondents (under 35) and older respondents (over 65) were the most likely to say Outreach Services are Very Important. Respondents ages 35 to 64 were more likely to say Enhanced Safety and Hospitality were Very Important.

Actions	“Very Important”				
	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65 +
Enhanced Safety and Hospitality (e.g. safety escorts, address disruptive street behaviors, friendly engagement with Downtown visitors)	49%	54%	66%	71%	64%
Outreach Services (e.g. additional support for populations experiencing homelessness and those with mental health issues)	77%	71%	64%	63%	68%
Enhanced Maintenance (e.g. scrub sidewalks, pick up trash, maintain landscape)	55%	42%	58%	65%	62%
Economic Vitality (e.g. support local businesses; incubate new businesses; expand vitality to side streets)	47%	54%	58%	60%	54%
Public Place Activation (e.g. enliven spaces like parks, plazas, the riverfront)	51%	46%	55%	52%	45%
Long Term Planning (e.g. big picture ideas and vision for Downtown)	47%	35%	41%	44%	46%
Mobility Enhancements (e.g. bike parking; employee transit incentives; other strategies to encourage alternatives to driving)	51%	40%	32%	35%	34%
Special Events (e.g. events that appeal to Downtown residents; family-friendly events to bring people Downtown)	43%	32%	37%	35%	30%
Advocacy and Education for issues impacting Downtown (e.g. need for housing at a variety of price points)	62%	45%	31%	31%	33%
Capital Improvements (e.g. play areas for children; public art; street furniture)	34%	31%	33%	26%	26%
Parking Management (e.g. signage and pricing to efficiently use parking resources, improve circulation through Downtown)	34%	23%	22%	28%	35%

Marketing and Image (e.g. pro-actively share positive information; improve perceptions of Downtown)	11%	14%	20%	24%	26%
Cosmetic Improvements (e.g. murals; decorative lighting; plantings)	20%	19%	20%	23%	22%
District Identity (e.g. gateways; banners; signage; connection to the beach)	19%	11%	8%	12%	12%

Respondents of all ages had the same top three MOST important actions for Downtown. With the exception of respondents under 24, all ages were most likely to select Enhanced Safety and Hospitality as their most important action. Outreach Services skewed in priority towards a younger demographic. Additional top priorities included Mobility and Advocacy (9%) for respondents 18 to 24; Public Place Activation (8%) for respondents 25 to 34; and Enhanced Maintenance (10%, 9%, and 14% respectively) for respondents 35 to 49, 50 to 64 and 65 and over.

