



Downtown Santa Maria Character Survey Summary

Overview

The City of Santa Maria is working on Downtown Multimodal Streetscape Plan. As part of this process, the Santa Maria Downtown Character Survey was created to provide members of the community who live, work, and visit the City an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas for the future of downtown. The survey was open from December 1, 2017 through January 25, 2018 and publicized through an email list, the City of Santa Maria's website, local events, and on the City's social media accounts. A total of 781 respondents completed the survey, however not every respondent answered every question. The unique number of respondents is considered for each question analysis. The survey was created, administered, and analyzed by Raimi + Associates in collaboration with SERA Design and City of Santa Maria staff.

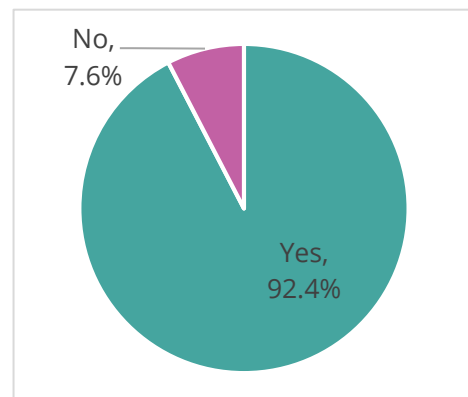
Survey Design and Methodology

The survey was available online in English and Spanish using www.SurveyMonkey.com. The survey included 10 questions, including five demographic questions. This survey used a "convenience sample", which means whoever wanted to answer it could. While it is not a statistically significant sample, we received enough responses to analyze whether different demographic groups answered questions differently. Respondents could skip questions, so the number of responses included for each question below as (N=#).

Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 included an "other" option where respondents could type in a detailed answer. We reviewed all "other" answers and recategorized any responses that matched the existing multiple-choice options. We present the common themes shared in the "other" option as part of each question summary. The results of the questions, including open-ended comments, will be used to inform and support other community input collected as part of the Downtown Streetscape Plan.

Question 1. Would you visit Downtown Santa Maria more often if the streets were safer, more comfortable, and attractive? (N=775)

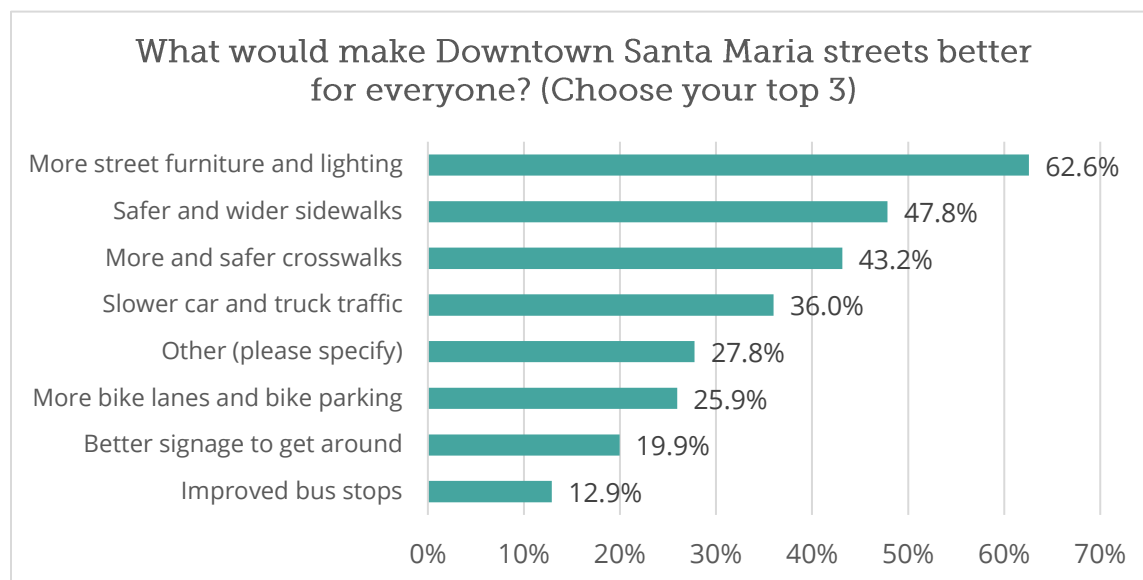
Most respondents (92.4%) identified that they **would visit Downtown Santa Maria if the streets were safer**, more comfortable, and attractive.



Question 2. What would make Downtown Santa Maria streets better for everyone? (Choose your top 3) (N=767)

From the list of multiple choice options, **over half of respondents rated “more street furniture and lighting” (62.71%) as a top priority.** In the “other” responses, participants explicitly identified wanting better lighting at night, including string lights and creative bright lighting. **Other top choices included “safer and wider sidewalks” (47.85%) and “more and safer crosswalks” (43.16%).** Many of the improvements identified by respondents in the “other” responses referenced safe walking paths and zones, a walkable environment, and pedestrian friendly accessibility to downtown destinations.

While not a top response, many “other” responses also identified **various forms of beautifying downtown**, such as painting and power washing walls and improving outdoor spaces and aesthetics.

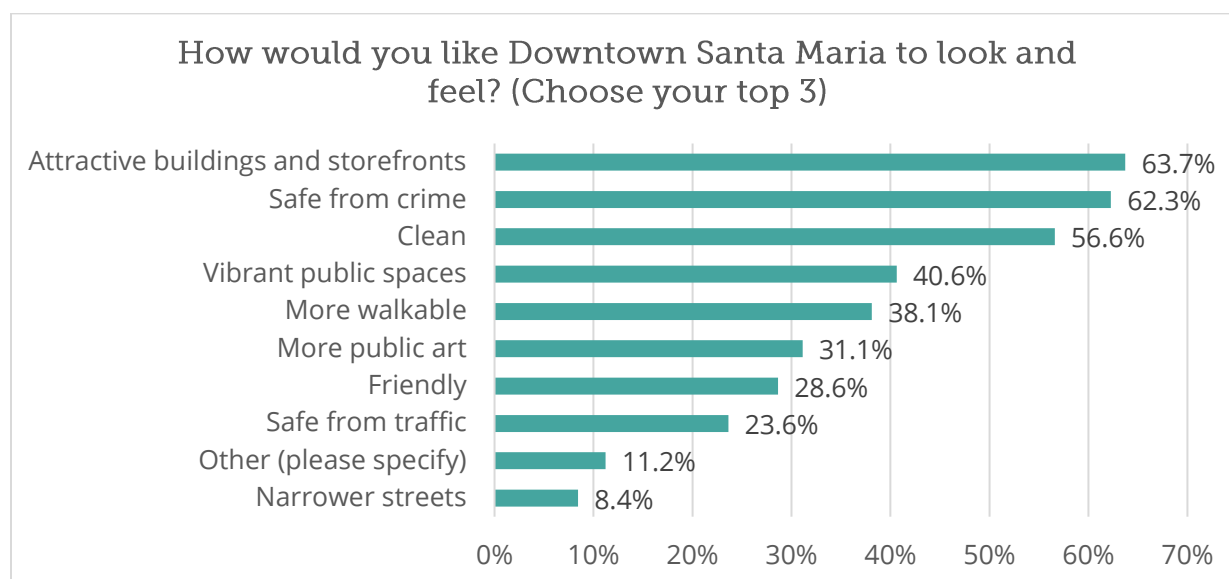


When looking at the data by respondent place of residence, **downtown residents list “more and safer crosswalks” as their number one priority** and include slower car and truck traffic as number three.

Priority	Live Downtown	Live Elsewhere in Santa Maria	Live Outside of Santa Maria
#1	More and safer crosswalks	More street furniture and lighting	More street furniture and lighting
#2	More street furniture and lighting	Safer and wider sidewalks	Safer and wider sidewalks
#3	Slower car and truck traffic	More and safer crosswalks	More and safer crosswalks

Question 3. How would you like Downtown Santa Maria to look and feel? (Choose your top 3) (N=758)

Respondents rated “attractive buildings and storefronts” (63.7%) as the top priority. In “other” responses, many participants identified specific types of businesses they would like to see, including a greater variety of shopping, entertainment, restaurants, and more attractive storefronts. The second priority for downtown Santa Maria was “safe from crime” (62.3%) and third was “clean” (56.6%). In the “other” responses, there were various examples of other downtowns provided, including: a revamped Old Orcutt, Burlingame, San Luis Obispo, Claremont, Visalia, and Oxbow Public Market in Napa and the Public Market in Emeryville. Some other comments also mentioned a concern for the large homeless population downtown.

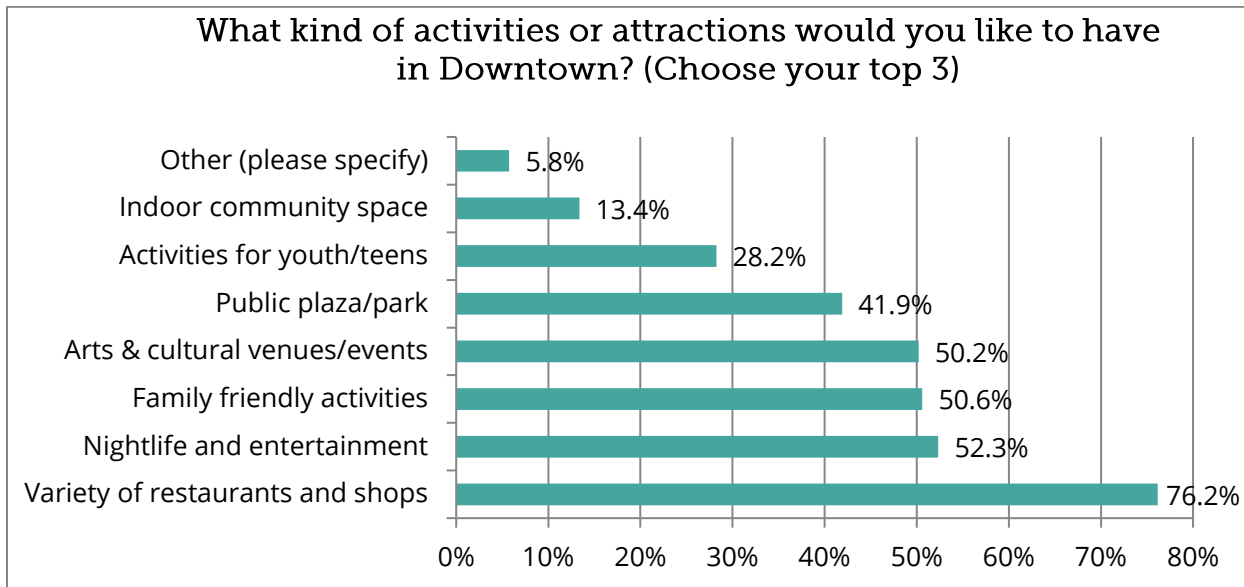


Fifty-three percent of Downtown respondents prioritized “safe from crime” as a top concern, compared to 63% of respondents living outside of Downtown. This implies that perceived safety is probably an issue, in addition to actual safety and crime. Another difference is that 34% of **Downtown respondents prioritized “safe from traffic”**, compared to 21% of respondents living elsewhere. Downtown respondents likely spend more time walking in the area, and thus feel more threatened by truck and car traffic. Finally, **significantly more Downtown residents (38%) called out more public art as a priority compared to 29% of non-Downtown residents.**

Question 4. What kind of activities or attractions would you like to have in Downtown? (Choose your top 3) (N=747)

Nearly two-thirds of respondents rated “variety of restaurants and shops” (76.2%) as a top priority. Generally, people were interested in seeing a variety of small businesses, coffee shops, wineries and microbreweries, and restaurants with outdoor dining. Other top choices included “nightlife and entertainment” (52.3%), family friendly activities (50.6%), and arts and

cultural venues/events (50.2%). Potential arts and cultural venues that respondents suggested in “other” included a multi-cultural center and music/concert space.

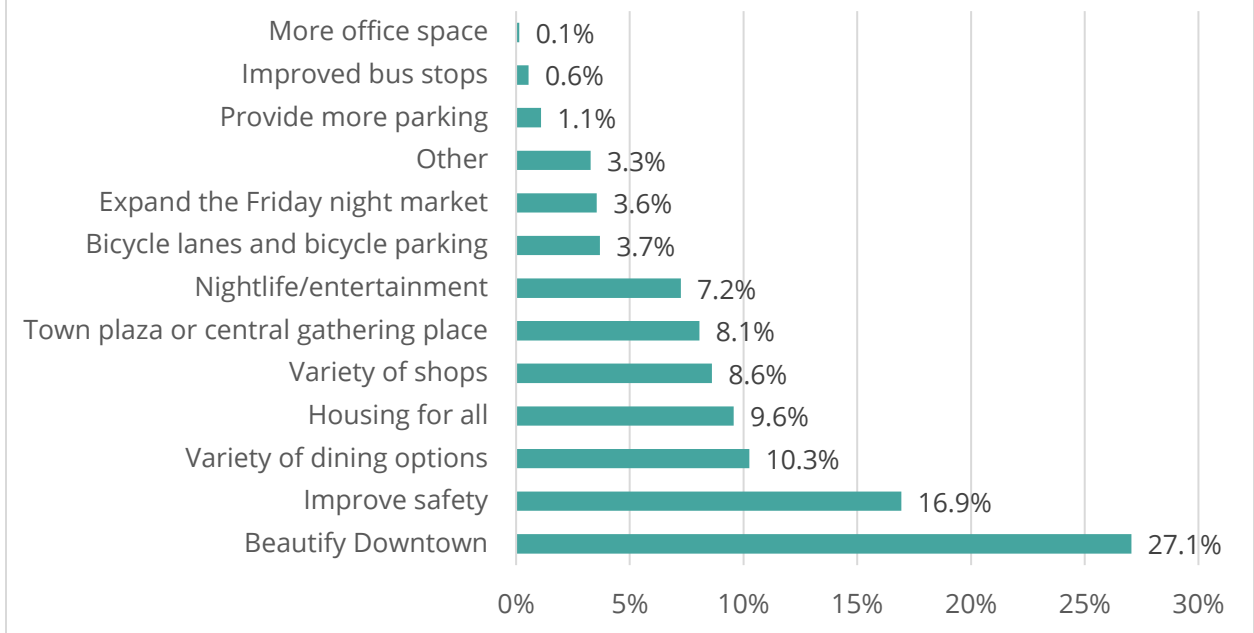


There were no major differences in results when looking at answers by place of residence, however **Downtown residents rated things like “Family friendly activities”, “Activities for youth”, “public plaza/park”, and “indoor community space” higher than residents who live outside of Santa Maria.**

Question 5. In the short term (3-5 years), what do you think should be the City's #1 priority in Downtown? (N=732)

Respondents rated “beautify downtown” (27.5%) as a top priority. In the “other comments” respondents expanded on the beautification priority by referencing the **need to clean downtown, including buildings, alleys, parking lots, signage, and removing litter.** Respondents provided other beautification strategies such as improving the streetscape, including a better use for the existing park, trees, mixed-use development, and public art. Other top priorities included “improve safety” (16.9%), adding a “variety of dining options” (10.3%), and “housing for all” (9.6%). Generally, people also expressed interest in improving the homelessness issue.

In the short term (3-5 years), what do you think should be the City's #1 priority in Downtown?

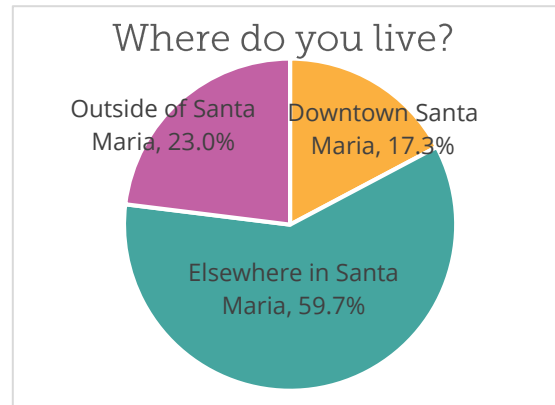


While all respondents were most likely to select “Beautify Downtown” as their top priority, **Downtown residents listed “Housing for all income levels, ages, and household types as their next most common top priority.** All respondents agreed that improved safety (from traffic) was a top priority, but only respondents who live outside of the area though variety of dining options should be a top city priority.

Priority	Live Downtown	Live Elsewhere in Santa Maria	Live Outside of Santa Maria
#1	Beautify Downtown	Beautify Downtown	Beautify Downtown
#2	Housing for all Income levels, ages, and household types	Improve safety (slower traffic, safer crossings, lighting, etc.)	Variety of dining options
#3	Improve safety (slower traffic, safer crossings, lighting, etc.)	Variety of dining options	Improve safety (slower traffic, safer crossings, lighting, etc.)

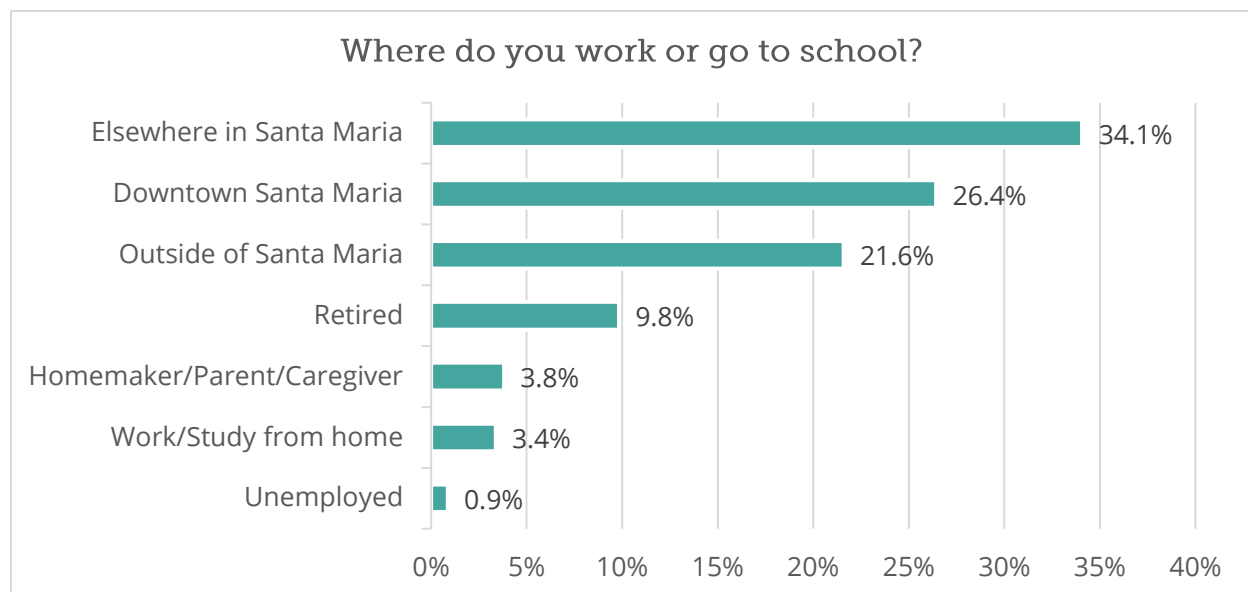
Question 6. Where do you live? (N=690)

More than half of respondents (59.7%) indicated that they live in Santa Maria; 17.2% of all respondents live Downtown. Twenty-three percent of respondents live outside of Santa Maria, but visit to Santa Maria for work, school, and/or leisure.



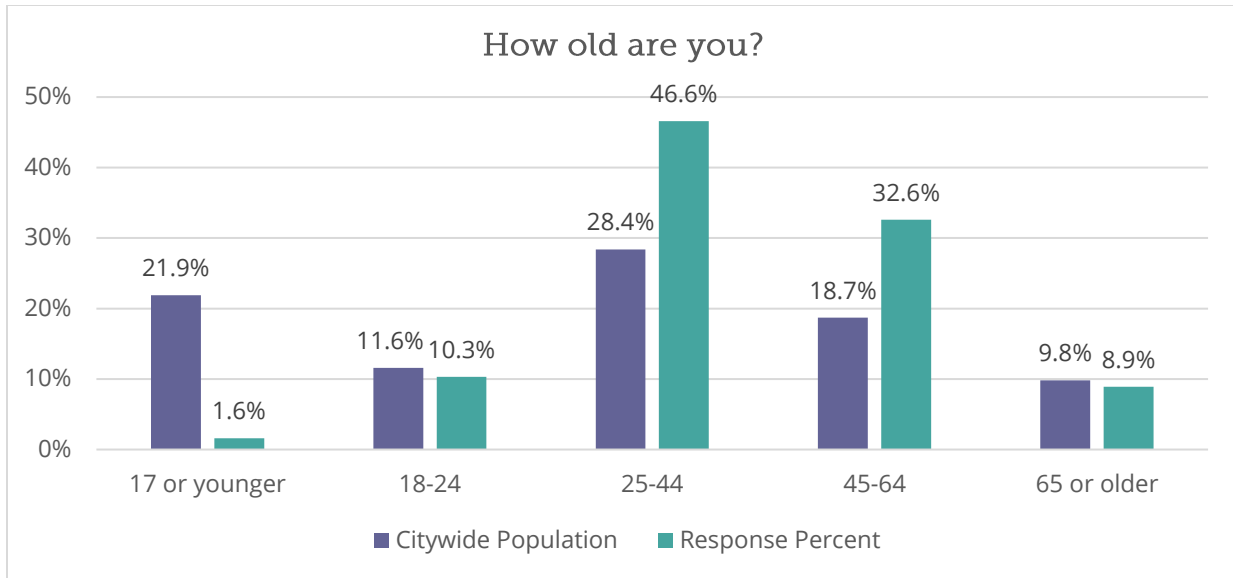
Question 7. Where do you work or go to school? (N=681)

Most respondents (60.5%) work or go to school in Santa Maria; either Downtown (26.4%) or elsewhere in the city (34.1%). About one in five respondents (21.6%) work or study outside of Santa Maria. A smaller percentage of respondents are retired (9.8%), homemaker/parent/caregiver (3.8%), work/study from home (3.4%), or are unemployed (0.9%).



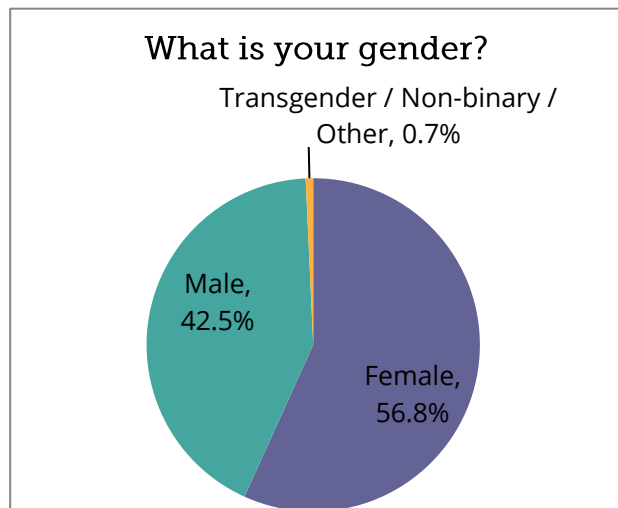
Question 8. How old are you? (N=682)

Almost half of respondents (46.6%) are in the aged 25 to 44 age group and another third (32.6%) are aged 45 to 64. The survey outreach did not target youth, therefore only 1.6% of respondents are aged 17 and under. Survey respondents aged 25-44 and 45-64 made up a higher proportion of the total respondents than their proportion in the general population. This is a common trend among surveys nationwide.



Question 9. What is your gender? (N=687)

When asked about gender identity, **42.5% of respondents identified as male, 56.8% identified as female, and 0.7% identified as transgender/non-binary.** Females were slightly over represented in the survey compared to males. There is no existing data in the American Community Survey (2016) to compare participation rate for respondents identifying as transgender/non-binary, however a study from the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law estimates that 0.76% of Californian adults identify as transgender (including non-binary/gender non-conforming).¹



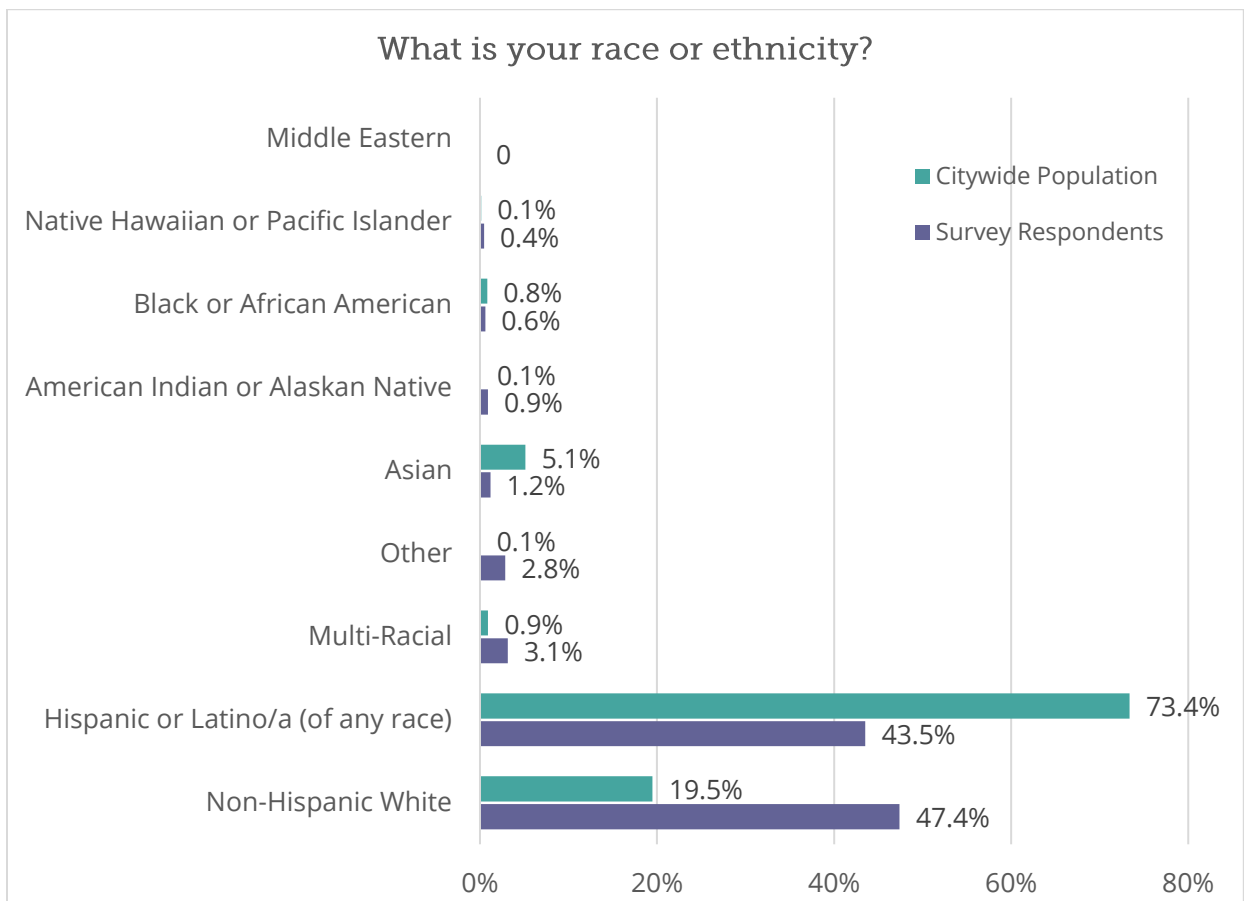
Question 10. What is your race or ethnicity? (N=669)

In this question, respondents could mark any/all races or ethnicities that are part of their identities, in addition to writing an answer in the “Other (please specify)” option. To summarize this data, we first recategorized any “Other (please specify)” comments into the appropriate race/ethnicity categories including an “Other” and “Multi-Racial” category. We used the U.S. Census methodology and categorized all respondents who marked “Hispanic or Latino/a” as

¹ “How Many Adults Identify as Transgender in the United States?” (June 2016). <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/How-Many-Adults-Identify-as-Transgender-in-the-United-States.pdf>

“Hispanic or Latino/a (of any race)” even if they chose one or more other races. We categorized all other respondents who selected two or more race ethnicity categories as “Multi-Racial”.

Almost half of respondents (47.4%) identified as “Non-Hispanic White” and 43.5% identified as Hispanic or Latino/a (of any race). Santa Maria’s actual population demographics from the Census American Community Survey 2015 5-year estimates are 19.5% Non-Hispanic White and 73.4% Hispanic or Latino/a (or any race). Three percent of respondents identified as “Multi-Racial”, 2.8% as “Other”, 1.2% as “Asian”, 0.9% as “American Indian or Alaskan Native”, 0.6% as Black or African American, 0.4% as “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander”, and 0% as “Middle Eastern”. It is important to note that a few respondents categorized themselves as Mixtec or Indigenous Hispanic. One respondent identified as Latino and Middle Eastern, but was categorized as Middle Eastern. Please note that there is no Middle Eastern citywide population statistic because the U.S. Census counts Middle Eastern as White.



Appendix: Data Tables

Question 1. Would you visit Downtown Santa Maria more often if the streets were safer, more comfortable, and attractive? (N=775)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	92.4%	716
No	7.6%	59
	<i>answered question</i>	767
	<i>skipped question</i>	14

Question 2. What would make Downtown Santa Maria streets better for everyone? (Choose your top 3) (N=767)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More street furniture and lighting	62.6%	480
Safer and wider sidewalks	47.9%	367
More and safer crosswalks	43.2%	331
Slower car and truck traffic	36.0%	276
Other	27.8%	213
More bike lanes and parking	25.9%	199
Better signage to get around	19.9%	153
Improved bus stops	12.9%	99
	<i>answered question</i>	767
	<i>skipped question</i>	14

Question 3. How would you like Downtown Santa Maria to look and feel? (Choose your top 3) (N=758)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Attractive buildings and storefronts	63.7%	483
Safe from crime	62.3%	472
Clean	56.6%	429
Vibrant public places	40.6%	308
More walkable	38.1%	289
More public art	31.1%	236
Friendly	28.6%	217
Safe from traffic	23.6%	179
Other	11.2%	85
Narrower streets	8.4%	64
	<i>answered question</i>	758
	<i>skipped question</i>	23

Question 4. What kind of activities or attractions would you like to have in Downtown? (Choose your top 3) (N=747)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Variety of restaurants and shops	76.2%	569
Nightlife and entertainment	52.3%	391
Family friendly activities	50.6%	378
Arts and cultural venues/events	50.2%	375
Public plaza/park	41.9%	313
Activities for youth/teens	28.2%	211
Indoor community space	13.4%	100
Other	5.8%	43
	<i>answered question</i>	747
	<i>skipped question</i>	34

Question 5. In the short term (3-5 years), what do you think should be the City's #1 priority in Downtown? (N=732)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Beautify Downtown	27.1%	198
Improve safety	16.9%	124
Variety of dining options	10.3%	75
Housing for all	9.6%	70
Variety of shops	8.6%	63
Town plaza or central gathering place	8.1%	59
Nightlife/entertainment	7.2%	53
Bicycle lanes and bicycle parking	3.7%	27
Expand the Friday night market	3.6%	26
Other	3.3%	24
Provide more parking	1.1%	8
Improved bus stops	0.6%	4
More office space	0.1%	1
	<i>answered question</i>	732
	<i>skipped question</i>	49

Question 6. Where do you live? (N=690)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Downtown Santa Maria	17.3%	119
Elsewhere in Santa Maria	59.7%	412
Outside of Santa Maria	23.0%	159
	<i>answered question</i>	690
	<i>skipped question</i>	91

Question 7. Where do you work or go to school? (N=681)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Downtown Santa Maria	26.4%	180
Elsewhere in Santa Maria	34.1%	232
Outside of Santa Maria	21.6%	147
Work/Study from home	3.4%	23
Retired	9.8%	67
Unemployed	0.9%	6
Homemaker/Parent/Caregiver	3.8%	26
	<i>answered question</i>	681
	<i>skipped question</i>	100

Question 8. How old are you? (N=682)

Answer Options	Citywide Population	Response Percent	Response Count
17 or younger	21.9%	1.6%	11
18-24	11.6%	10.3%	70
25-44	28.4%	46.6%	318
45-64	18.7%	32.6%	222
65 or older	9.8%	8.9%	61
		<i>answered question</i>	682
		<i>skipped question</i>	99

Question 9. What is your gender? (N=687)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Female	56.8%	390
Male	42.5%	292
Transgender / Non-binary / Other	0.7%	5
<i>answered question</i>		687
<i>skipped question</i>		94

Question 10. What is your race or ethnicity? (N=669)

Answer Options	City Demographics	Response Percent	Response Count
Non-Hispanic White	19.5%	47.4%	317
Hispanic or Latino/a (of any race)	73.4%	43.5%	291
Multi-Racial	0.9%	3.1%	21
Other	0.1%	2.8%	19
Asian	5.1%	1.2%	8
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.1%	0.9%	6
Black or African American	0.8%	0.6%	4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.4%	3
Middle Eastern	N/A	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>			669
<i>skipped question</i>			112