



CITY OF SAN MATEO

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Agenda Report

Agenda Number: 2

Section Name: {{section.name}}

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TO: City Council
FROM: Drew Corbett, City Manager
PREPARED BY: City Manager's Office
MEETING DATE: March 07, 2022
SUBJECT:
2022 Community Survey Results

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive an informational report about the results of the City's Community Survey, conducted between late January and early February 2022 by True North Research.

BACKGROUND:

In the City's ongoing efforts to engage the public and be responsive to the community's interests, the City hired True North Research to conduct its second statistically-reliable survey about community opinions on a variety of topics. An interdepartmental team of staff worked with True North Research to develop a comprehensive survey on resident opinions about satisfaction with city services, quality of life, and communication. The survey also included General Plan Update-related questions regarding preferences for planning for future growth and circulation improvements.

True North Research was hired in 2020 to conduct the City's first survey and was again selected as the consultant for this work through a competitive request for proposal process. Staff selected True North based on their years of experience conducting surveys for California municipalities, proposed methodology, and high success rate in predicting ballot measure outcomes. True North Research President Dr. Timothy McLarney led the project and will present the findings of his independent research during the Council meeting. True North Research authored a robust report analyzing the survey results, which is included as [Attachment 1](#).

This survey was issued between January 21 and February 2, 2022 in English and Spanish, with 775 residents participating via phone and online. The study employed a methodology that would provide statistically-reliable results by surveying a random sample of residents who represent San Mateo's demographics. The survey has an estimated maximum statistical margin of error of +/- 3.5% at the 95% confidence level. As with any survey, this one provides a snapshot of participants' opinions at the time it was issued.

Purpose of the Community Survey

The City regularly hears from members of the public about their individual feedback regarding the City's performance and policies. For the most part, the City's outreach mechanisms rely on residents who are motivated to participate in the feedback process. Residents willing to initiate feedback tend to be those who are either very pleased or very displeased with a particular service or policy. Often, this results in a self-selection bias and feedback that's not necessarily representative of the City's resident population as a whole.

Similar to many other cities, San Mateo sought to conduct a survey that would avoid the self-selection bias and provide a statistically-reliable understanding of residents' satisfaction, priorities and concerns, as they relate to City services, quality of life and policies. It is the City's intent to conduct statistically-reliable surveys every two years to benchmark community

sentiment on City services and quality of life, while incorporating timely policy-related questions. This information can be used to make strategic decisions in a variety of areas including service improvements, tracking internal performance, budgeting and community outreach.

In addition to gauging opinions about municipal services and quality of life, the Council has also expressed an interest in including questions that could help inform the General Plan Update process. The General Plan 2040 Update is a long-range planning process, and the timing of this survey aligned with the alternatives analysis phase. The survey results can be used to help inform decisions on the preferred land use and circulation scenarios for the General Plan Update, and the policies and programs in the draft Housing Element, which will be considered by the City Council in the coming months.

This survey covered a broad variety of topics and it was important to keep it at a reasonable length to encourage completion by selected participants. It is important to note that this survey was just one of many opportunities to collect community feedback on the General Plan 2040 update. The City has also hosted numerous community workshops, formal public meetings and an online survey that provided opportunities to go into greater depth on the alternatives phase. This statistical survey is meant to provide decision makers insights into the community's general priorities when planning for the future. It is not meant to be used as the sole factor when evaluating preferred land use and circulation alternatives. Along with other forms of input, the results of this statistically-significant Community Survey will be incorporated into the alternatives evaluation, which will be considered during the March 22nd Planning Commission meeting and the April 18th City Council meeting.

BUDGET IMPACT:

The Community Survey cost \$27,900 to complete and was paid for by current budget allocations within the Community Development Department.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

This informational report regarding the 2022 Community Survey is not a project subject to CEQA, because the City Council is not taking action at this time. (Public Resources Code Section 21065.)

NOTICE PROVIDED

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

ATTACHMENTS

Att 1 - 2022 Community Survey Opinion Report

STAFF CONTACT

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