

**AGENDA
CITY OF WATSONVILLE
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING**



Watsonville
CALIFORNIA

Working with our community to create positive impact through service with heart.

Values: Teamwork, Integrity, Honesty, Service and Respect

***Araseli Campos, District 1
Francisco Estrada District 2
Fabian Leonor, District 3
Jennifer Schacher, District 4
Celeste DeWald, District 5
Noe Ibarra, District 6
Emiko Stewart, District 7***

Location:

***City Council Chambers
275 Main Street, Top Floor
Watsonville, CA 95076***

Anyone addressing the Parks & Recreation Commission is asked to fill out a speaker card and return it to the clerk for recording purposes.

IF YOU CHALLENGE ANY ACTION APPEARING ON THIS AGENDA IN COURT, YOU MAY BE LIMITED TO RAISING ONLY THOSE ISSUES YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE RAISED AT THE PUBLIC MEETING DESCRIBED ON THIS AGENDA, OR IN WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE DELIVERED TO THE CITY CLERK PRIOR TO, OR AT, THE PUBLIC MEETING.

For information regarding this agenda, please call the Parks & Community Services Department at (831) 768-3240.

Americans with Disabilities Act



If you wish to attend a meeting and you will require assistance in order to attend and/or participate, please call the Parks & Community Services Department at least three (3) business days in advance of the meeting to make arrangements. The City of Watsonville TDD number is (831) 763-4075.



**AGENDA
CITY OF WATSONVILLE
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

City of Watsonville
City Council Chambers
275 Main Street, Top Floor
Watsonville, CA 95076

Thursday, April 16, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

Pages

1. ROLL CALL

Motion to excuse absent Parks & Recreation Commissioners (If any)

Pursuant to Charter Section 900, Paragraph 2.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PRESENTATIONS & ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

This time is set aside for members of the general public to address the Parks & Recreation Commission on any item not on the Agenda, which is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Parks & Recreation Commission. No action or discussion shall be taken on any item presented except that any Commissioner may respond to statements made or questions asked, or may ask questions for clarification. All matters of an administrative nature will be referred to staff. All matters relating to Parks & Recreation Commission will be noted in the minutes and may be scheduled for discussion at a future meeting or referred to staff for clarification and report. Any Commissioner may place matters brought up under Oral Communications on a future agenda. ALL SPEAKERS ARE ASKED TO ANNOUNCE THEIR NAME IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN ACCURATE RECORD FOR THE MINUTES.

3.a ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

3.b ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSIONERS

3.c DIRECTOR'S REPORT

4. CONSENT AGENDA

PUBLIC INPUT

All items appearing on the Consent Agenda are recommended actions which are considered to be routine and will be acted upon as one consensus motion. Any items removed will be considered immediately after the consensus motion. The Chair will allow public input prior to the approval of the Consent Agenda.

4.a MOTION APPROVING MINUTES OF JANUARY 22, 2026

5. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

6. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

- 6.a SENIOR CENTER UPDATES/AGE FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN** 7
Receive Report
- a) Staff Report
 - b) Commission Questions & Input
 - c) Public Input

7. WORKPLAN PROGRESS REPORTS

8. NEW BUSINESS

- 8.a CITY PLAZA STAGE DESIGN** 39
Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission approve the public art application for the mosaic stage design at the Watsonville City Plaza.
- a) Staff Report
 - b) Commission Questions & Input
 - c) Public Input
 - d) Appropriate Action

- 8.b RAMSAY PARK RESTROOM MURAL** 78
Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission approve the public art application submitted by Shared Adventures for the restroom at Ramsay Park
- a) Staff Report
 - b) Commission Questions & Input
 - c) Public Input
 - d) Appropriate Action

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10. ADJOURNMENT

The next Commission meeting will be held on May 07, 2026 at 6:30 pm.

Pursuant to Section 54954.2(a)(1) of the Government Code of the State of California, this agenda was posted at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting at a public place freely accessible to the public 24 hours a day and on the City of Watsonville website at <https://www.cityofwatsonville.org/191/Parks-Recreation-Commission>

Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Commission after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the Parks &

Recreation Commission Administrative Office (231 Union Street) during normal business hours.

Such documents are also available on the City of Watsonville website at:

<https://www.cityofwatsonville.org/191/Parks-Recreation-Commission> subject to staff's ability to post the document before the meeting.



MINUTES
CITY OF WATSONVILLE
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Location: Council Chambers
250 Main Street
Watsonville, CA 95076
Thursday, February 05, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Emiko Stewart
Commissioner Noe Ibarra
Commissioner Celeste DeWald
Commissioner Francisco Estrada
Commissioner Fabian Leonor
Commissioner Jennifer Schacher
Commissioner Araseli Campos

Youth Representative: Isabella Alvaro

Commissioners Absent:

Staff Present: Nick Calubaquib, Director, Parks & Community Services
Imelda Negrete, Asst Director, Parks & Community Services
Jessica Beebe, Recreation Coordinator, Parks & Comm Svcs
Elizabeth Shea, Impact and Comm Engagement Coordinator,
Parks & Comm Svcs
Jeremy Sanders, Asst Admin Analyst, Parks & Comm Svcs

1. ROLL CALL

Motion to excuse absent Parks & Recreation Commissioners

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Emiko Stewart
Commissioner Noe Ibarra
Commissioner Fabian Leonor
Commissioner Celeste DeWald
Commissioner Francisco Estrada
Commissioner Jennifer Schacher
Commissioner Araseli Campos

Youth Representative: Isabella Alvaro

Commissioners Absent:

Pursuant to Charter Section 900, Paragraph 2.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PRESENTATIONS & ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

3.a. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

3.b. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSIONERS

3.c. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Nick Calubaquib provided an update on the Parks Department upcoming events.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

4.a. MOTION APPROVING MINUTES OF JANUARY 22, 2026.

Motion: Motion: It was moved by Commissioner DeWald and seconded by Commissioner Leonor to approve the minutes of JANUARY 22, 2026.

AYES: Schacher, Campos, Ibarra Stewart, DeWald, Estrada, Leonor
NOES: None
ABSENT:

5. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

NONE

6. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

6.a. 2025 IMPACT REPORT

Report Only

- a) Staff Report: Elizabeth Shea Impact and Community Engagement Coordinator provided a report on the Parks Department accomplishments through the year 2025 highlighting activities and projects completed.
- b) Commission Questions & Input: Commissioners discussed the report. Commissioners agreed that there were many great things highlighted throughout the year.
- c) Public Input

6.b. 2026 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Report only

- a) Staff Report: Nick Claubaquib, Deputy City Manager and Parks Director provided the commission with an update on the 2026 Strategic Action Plan.
- b) Commission Questions & Input: Commissioners discussed the report.
- c) Public Input

7. WORKPLAN PROGRESS REPORTS

NONE

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm

The next Commission meeting will be held on April 16, 2026 at 6:30pm.



AGE-FRIENDLY WATSONVILLE

ACTION PLAN 2026-2031





A Senior Center member prepares to board the Lift Line bus. Door-to-door paratransit service helps our members stay engaged in community life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SENIOR ACTION COMMITTEE

- Anna Kammer
- Antonio Rivas
- Araseli Campos
- Christine Catanzaro
- Fabian C Leonor
- Gina Cole
- John Hunting

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

- Araseli Campos
- Francisco Estrada
- Fabian Leonor
- Jennifer Schacher
- Celeste DeWald, Vice Chair
- Noe Ibarra, Chair
- Emiko Stewart

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Kristal Salcido, Mayor
- Eduardo Montesino, Council Member
- Vanessa Quiroz-carter, Council Member
- Casey Clark, Council Member
- Jimmy Dutra, Council Member
- Ari Parker, Council Member
- Maria Orozco, Council Member

CITY ADMINISTRATION

- Tamara Vides, City Manager
- Nick Calubaquib, Deputy City Manager/Parks and Community Services Director
- Imelda Negrete, Assistant Parks and Community Services Director
- Katie Nunez, Older Adult Services Supervisor
- Alicia Lopez-Perez, Recreation Coordinator
- Elizabeth Shea, Recreation Coordinator

AGE WELL SURVEY PLANNING TEAM

- Alicia Morales, County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department
- Karina Aragon, County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department
- Elizabeth Byrd, County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department
- Seven Stafford, County of Santa Cruz
- Clay Kempf, Seniors Council
- Patty Talbott, Seniors Council
- Pam Arnsberger, Seniors Council



Grandmother and granddaughter creating together at our Arts and Crafts with Grandchildren program, fostering connection across generations.

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BACKGROUND

In 2007, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** released the Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide, identifying key aspects of community life that support adults age 55 and older. This work led to the creation of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in 2010, fostering collaboration among cities worldwide. As of 2025, there are now 1,000 communities in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly states and communities.

California has continued to expand its Age-Friendly initiatives, with over 60 cities participating. The **City of Watsonville** has joined this statewide and national movement to ensure the community is welcoming, inclusive, and supportive of residents of all ages.

The Age-Friendly process follows a five-year cycle that begins with community engagement to identify priorities, challenges, and a shared vision. This input informs the development of an action plan with clear, achievable goals. Progress is monitored by the City and community partners, and the cycle concludes with renewed community input to guide the next phase.

The City of Watsonville began the process of joining the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities in 2020, and its application was officially accepted in 2022. That same year, the City formed the **Senior Action Committee (SAC)**, made up of Watsonville residents age 50 and older, to advise City staff, gather community input, and help develop this Age-Friendly Action Plan. Guided by AARP's eight domains of livability—ranging from transportation and housing to social participation and access to services—Watsonville's Age-Friendly Action Plan serves as a living document to guide the City of Watsonville's work in improving the health, independence, and well-being of all residents.

AARP'S EIGHT DOMAINS OF LIVABILITY:



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

People need public places to gather - indoors and out. Green spaces, seating and accessible buildings (elevators, zero step entrances, staircases with railings) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.



Respect and Social Inclusion

Everyone wants to feel valued. Intergenerational gatherings and activities are a great way for young and older people to learn from one another, honor what each has to offer and, at the same time, feel good about themselves.



Transportation

Driving shouldn't be the only way to get around. Pedestrians need sidewalks and safe, crossable streets. Dedicated bicycle lanes benefit nondrivers and drivers alike. Public transit options can range from the large-scale (trains, buses, light rail) to the small (taxis, shuttles or ride share services).



Civic Participation and Employment

Why does work need to be an all or nothing experience? An age-friendly community encourages older people to be actively engaged in community life and has opportunities for residents to work for pay or volunteer their skills.



Housing

AARP surveys consistently find that the vast majority of older adults want to reside in their current home or community for as long as possible. Doing so is possible if a home is designed or modified for aging in place, or if a community has housing options that are suitable for differing incomes, ages and life stages.



Communication and Information

We now communicate in ways few could have imagined a decade ago. Age-friendly communities recognize that information needs to be shared through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet.



Social Participation

Regardless of a person's age, loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease. Sadness and isolation can be combated by having opportunities to socialize and the availability of accessible, affordable and fun social activities.



Community Support and Health Services

At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill or simply needs some help. While it's important that assistance and care be available nearby, it's essential that residents are able to access and afford the services required.

Source: AARP, *The 8 Domains of Livability*, AARP Livable Communities.

AGE WELL SURVEY

As part of our commitment to creating a more age-friendly community, the City of Watsonville partnered with the **County of Santa Cruz**, the **Seniors Council**, and other local jurisdictions to launch the Age Well Santa Cruz County survey in early 2024. This regional needs assessment gathered input from nearly three thousand residents aged 40 and older to better understand the priorities, challenges, and experiences of older adults and caregivers across the county.

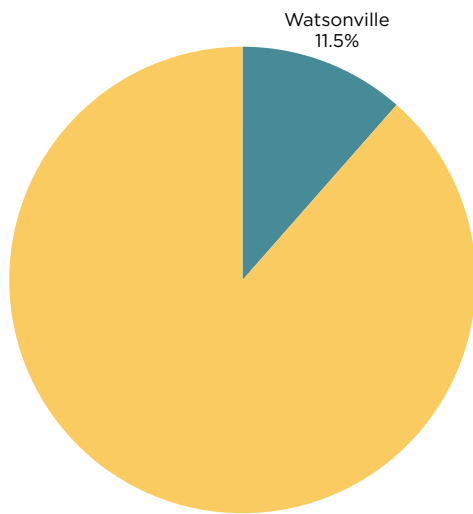
Watsonville played a key role in outreach and engagement, ensuring participation from underrepresented groups—including monolingual Spanish speakers, low-income households, and individuals with disabilities. The findings from this survey directly informed the development of the action items outlined in this plan, allowing us to address the specific needs and concerns raised by our community.



A Senior Center member enjoys crocheting as a creative outlet, connecting with others who share the same interest in our Crochet Club and building a strong sense of community.

DATA DEMOGRAPHICS

Watsonville Represents 11.5% of Age Well Survey Responses



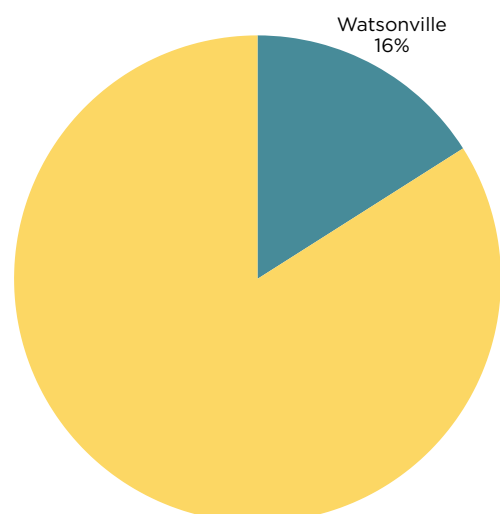
Surrounding Cities
88.5%

Watsonville
11.5%



Scan to view the County of Santa Cruz Master Plan for Aging Community Needs Assessment 2024

Watsonville Residents 40+ Represent 16% of the County



Surrounding Cities
84%

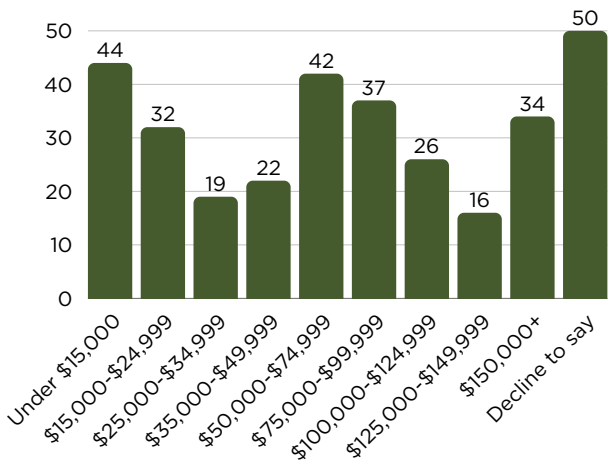
Watsonville
16%

Based on U.S. Census Bureau data (2020 Census and American Community Survey estimates).

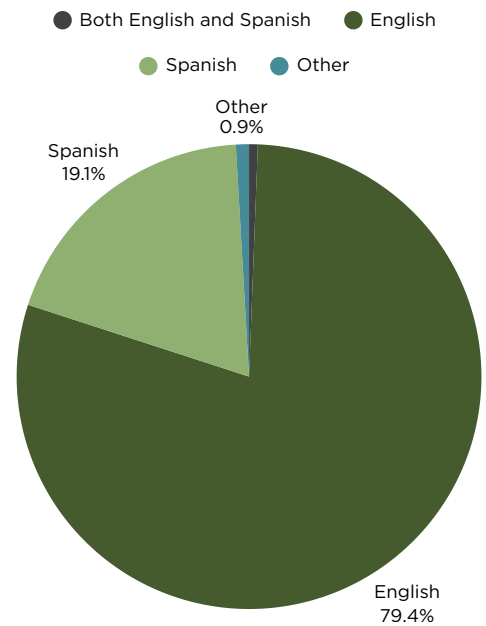
WATSONVILLE IN FOCUS

The charts below illustrate survey responses from **Watsonville** residents, with demographic breakdowns by income, primary language, age, and race/ethnicity.

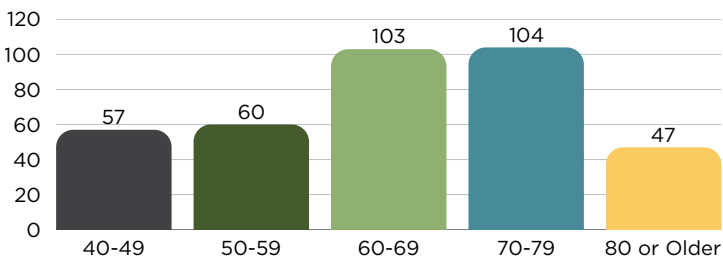
Household Income of Watsonville Survey Respondents



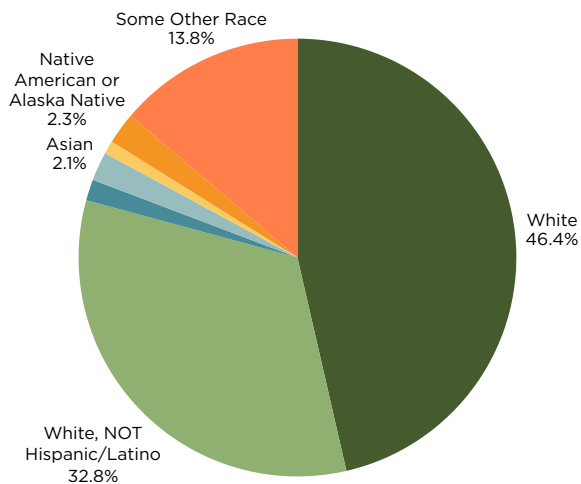
Primary Language of Watsonville Respondents



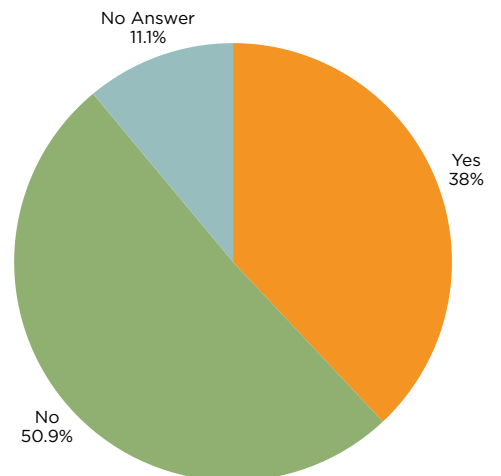
Age Group of Watsonville Respondents



Race of Watsonville Respondents



Watsonville Hispanic or Latino Respondents





OLDER ADULT SERVICES

Watsonville offers a wide range of services that support the health, independence, and quality of life of older adults. The City provides programs mainly through the **Watsonville Senior Center**, including congregate meals, wellness and fitness classes, educational workshops, social activities, and volunteer opportunities that help older adults remain active and connected to their community.

A strong network of nonprofit and community-based organizations also plays an essential role in serving Watsonville's older adults. **Community Bridges** is a key partner, offering multiple programs including **Elderday Adult Day Health Care**, which provides daytime care, health monitoring, and social engagement for older adults who need additional support. They also operate **Meals on Wheels**, which includes both home-delivered meals and congregate dining sites, and **Lift Line**, a transportation service for older adults and people with disabilities. **Grey Bears** is another important partner, providing Healthy Brown Bag food deliveries that help ensure seniors have consistent access to nutritious groceries.

Seniors Council of Santa Cruz County serves as the **Area Agency on Aging** and a key funder, oversight agency, and policy advocate for state and federal programs supporting older adults, including **Meals on Wheels** and **Senior Legal Services**. The organization has also played an important role in advancing Age-Friendly efforts countywide. In addition, they offer direct services such as **Project SCOUT**, as well as the **Foster Grandparent** and **Senior Companion** programs.

Additional transportation options include volunteer driver programs coordinated by the **Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County** and public transit provided by **Santa Cruz METRO**, helping older adults access medical appointments, groceries, and community activities.

Additional resources help older adults navigate complex systems and maintain stability. **Senior Network Services** provides assistance with Medicare counseling and care coordination, while **Senior Legal Services** offers legal support and advocacy for older adults.

In addition to these key partners, many other nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers, and community agencies offer services that support not only older adults but the broader Watsonville community. While it would be difficult to list them all, this collective network of organizations helps ensure that residents have access to vital resources that promote health, independence, and overall well-being.

WATSONVILLE IS AGING

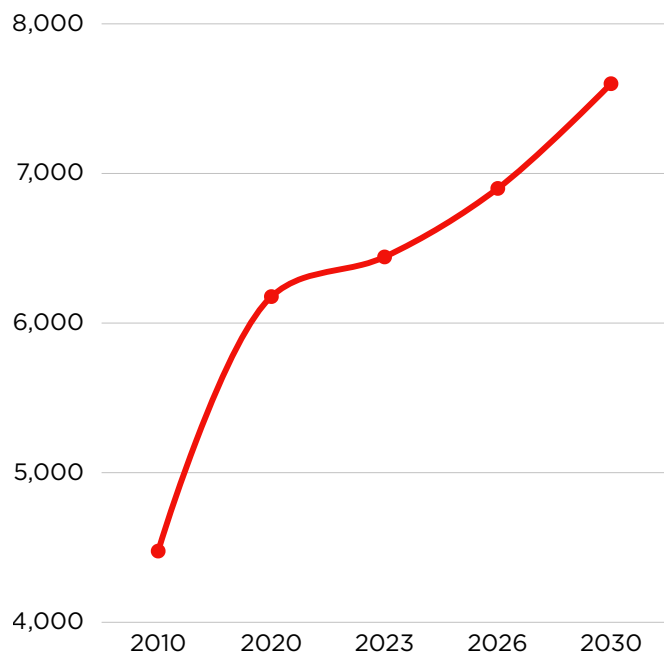
Between 2010 and 2020, Watsonville experienced a significant increase (45%) in its population ages 65 and over. While the city's total population grew only modestly during that time, the number of seniors rose from approximately 4,200 to more than 6,100 residents—reflecting a rapid demographic shift toward an older population.

This trend mirrors broader patterns seen across Santa Cruz County, which is currently recognized as the fastest-aging county in California.

At the same time, Watsonville remains the youngest city in the county, with a median age of just 33.1 years as of the 2020 Census. This unique dynamic places Watsonville at the intersection of two important trends: a youthful, family-oriented community that is also seeing a sharp rise in older adults.

These changes highlight the growing need for age-friendly planning to ensure that residents of all ages, particularly older adults, can thrive in place with dignity, health, and community support.

Population Growth Among Older Adults (65+) in Watsonville



2010 and 2020 data are from the U.S. Census, and 2023 data are American Community Survey estimates. Figures for 2026 and 2030 are projected estimates based on regional aging trends and are intended for planning purposes.





Participants and their pets gathered for a group photo during the Senior Center's annual 4th of July Pup Parade at Franich Park.

AGE-FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN

This **Age-Friendly Action Plan** will guide the **City of Watsonville's** decision-making and planning efforts over the next five years as City teammates work to make our community more age-friendly. The action items included in this plan were informed by data from the **Age Well Survey**, and responses from Watsonville residents were analyzed separately to ensure the strategies reflect the specific needs and priorities of our local community.

This plan serves as a practical tool for prioritizing actions, strengthening partnerships, and supporting ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for older adults in Watsonville. Implementation of the plan will be guided by available funding sources, including local investments such as **Measure R**, a voter-approved tax measure that supports recreation services, road repairs, and libraries. The City will also continue to pursue additional funding opportunities, and this plan will serve as a valuable resource when applying for grants and external funding.

Parks and Community Services teammates, particularly those working with Older Adults Services, will play a key role in leading and advancing many of the identified action items. Several strategies outlined in this plan align with and complement existing City efforts, including the **Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan**, **Vision Zero Plan** and the **Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan**, helping to ensure coordination and maximize impact across initiatives. This plan also reflects alignment with the **Master Plan on Aging Playbook** led by the **Seniors Council of Santa Cruz County**, incorporating shared priorities and strategies to promote regional consistency and strengthen collective impact.

Finally, this plan is intended to be a living document and may be updated as community needs evolve and new opportunities emerge.





OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS



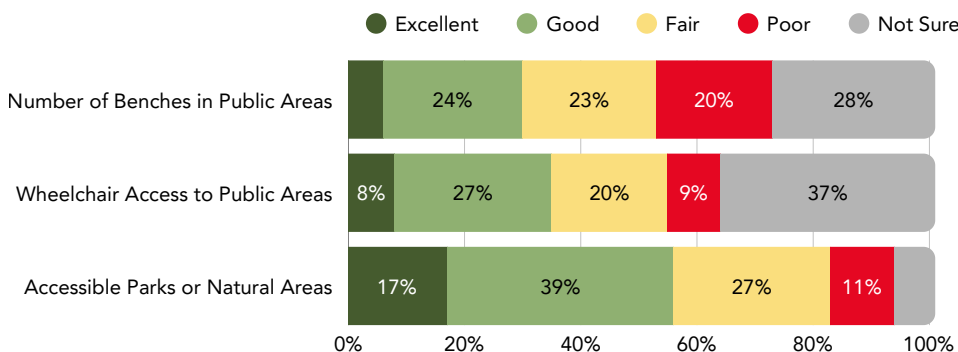
Current Status

Watsonville has a network of neighborhood parks and trails, but overall park access remains limited. With only about 2.25 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents—well below the recommended national average of 10 acres—many residents have fewer opportunities for outdoor recreation and social connection. The City is working to address this through park improvements, trail connections, joint use agreements with the **Pajaro Valley Unified School District** and long-term planning focused on equitable access.

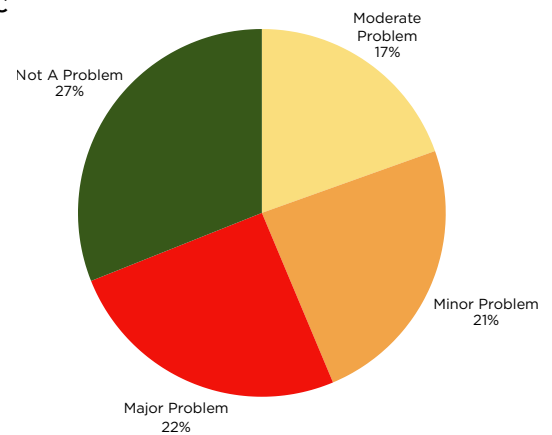
Pedestrian safety is also a concern, as rates of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities are higher than in much of Santa Cruz County. Lighting, high vehicle speeds, and the need for more multimodal infrastructure make it harder—especially for older adults—to travel safely. In response, the City has adopted a **Vision Zero Plan** and is implementing street safety improvements and traffic calming measures.

Together, limited park access and safety challenges limit residents’ ability to fully benefit from outdoor spaces. Community feedback highlights the need for well-lit streets, walkable paths, accessible restrooms, and mobility-friendly buildings—priorities that align with the City’s ongoing efforts to create safer, more age-friendly environments.

Resident Feedback on Accessibility and Public Amenities



Pedestrian Safety Ratings



OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS



Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 1-2	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Cross-Department Coordination for Age-Friendly Design	Create a cross-departmental City staff committee to coordinate planning related to outdoor spaces, pedestrian safety, and age-friendly building design, with regular updates shared with the Senior Action Committee.	Committee established; number of meetings and project updates shared.	Improved coordination and consistent integration of older adult input into City planning and projects.
Street Lighting & Visibility	Support the City’s ongoing street lighting improvement projects, prioritizing key pedestrian routes and areas near senior-serving facilities.	Number of lighting improvements completed.	Increased visibility, perceived safety, and walkability for older adults.
Age-Friendly Parks & Outdoor Spaces	Incorporate older adult input into new park projects and major renovations, prioritizing shaded seating, accessible pathways, restrooms, and low-impact activity areas.	Park projects with age-friendly features; engagement efforts documented.	More inclusive and accessible outdoor spaces that support health and social connection.

Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 3-5	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Long-Term Age-Friendly Design in Outdoor Spaces & Buildings	Prioritize age-friendly design standards in new and renovated outdoor spaces and public buildings to support mobility, safety, and independence.	Number of public projects incorporating age-friendly standards.	More accessible, safe, and supportive environments that enable older adults to remain active, independent, and engaged in the community.



TRANSPORTATION

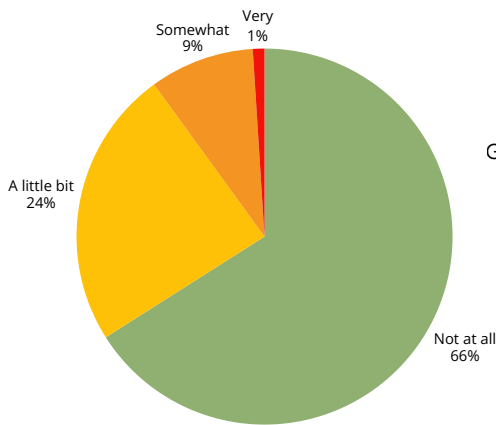


Current Status

Transportation is essential to independence, health, and community participation for older adults in Watsonville. While local and regional transit options exist, many older adults face barriers such as limited routes, infrequent service, and a reliance on personal vehicles—especially challenging for those who can no longer drive. Age Well Survey responses show that many essential services, including medical care and affordable shopping, are located outside of Watsonville, requiring out-of-town travel. For older adults with limited mobility, fixed incomes, or no car, this can lead to missed appointments, food insecurity, and increased social isolation.

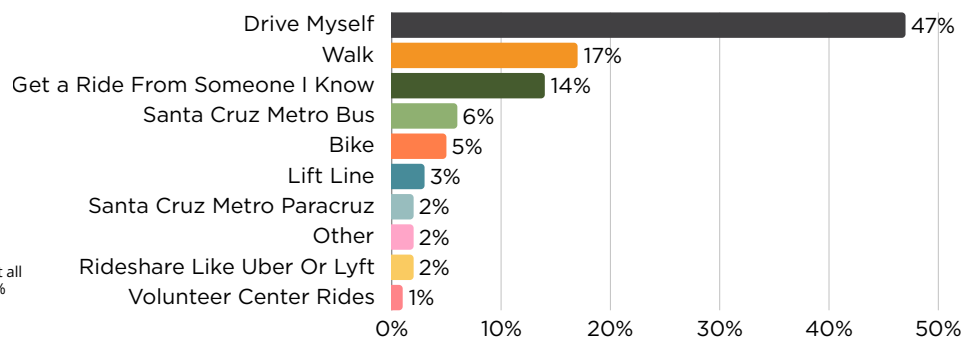
Community organizations like **Lift Line**, **ParaCruz**, and the **Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County** provide critical transportation support. A need for expanded options for flexible, everyday travel has been cited. At the same time, the City is making important strides to improve transportation safety and accessibility through its **Vision Zero** goals, which focus on reducing serious injuries and fatalities on local streets. Continued investment in safer streets, well-maintained sidewalks, and accessible crossings—alongside expanded transportation options—is essential to ensuring older adults can travel safely, stay connected, and maintain independence.

How difficult is it to get where you need to go?



Overall, respondents aged 60+ have little difficulty with transportation, however 10% of Watsonville respondents report that getting around is "somewhat" or "very" difficult for them.

Type of Transportation Used



TRANSPORTATION



Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 1-2	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Expand volunteer transportation for older adults	Partner with the Volunteer Center to recruit and retain volunteer drivers and increase ride capacity for older adults	Increase in number of active volunteers and completed rides.	Greater access to medical care, groceries, and essential services; reduced isolation among older adults
Advocate for expanded public transit service	Advocate with regional transit agencies for increased routes, frequency, and service coverage in Watsonville	Number of public transportation improvement engagements with transit agencies.	Improved transportation reliability and access to jobs, healthcare, and education
Advance Vision Zero and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety	Support implementation of Vision Zero goals through expanded pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements citywide.	Miles of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improved; Vision Zero projects implemented.	Reduced traffic-related injuries and safer streets for older adults and all residents.

Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 3-5	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Expand access to essential services locally	<p>Collaborate with economic development partners to retain and attract medical providers, clinics, grocery stores, and other essential services in Watsonville</p> <p>Build strategies to help current business grow and thrive</p> <p>Encourage creation of new retail, professional, and residential uses as well as personal services within the downtown.</p>	Number of business engagements; Number of new businesses opened	Reduced need for out-of-town travel; improved access to healthcare and daily necessities; greater independence for older adults



HOUSING

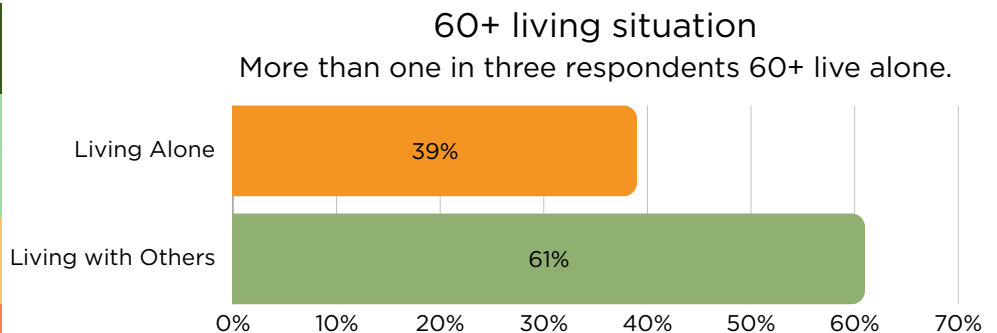
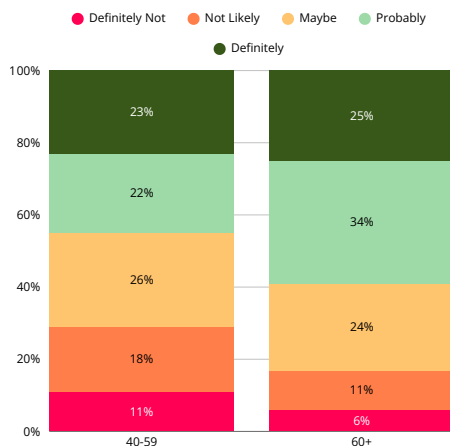


Current Status

Housing affordability and availability are among the most pressing concerns for older adults in Watsonville. Many struggle to find safe, accessible, and affordable housing, with high rents forcing some to spend a large share of their income on housing or consider leaving the city. Respondents also noted challenges maintaining their homes due to high repair and upkeep costs, which can threaten safety and independence. Emergency preparedness is another concern, including housing resilience to natural disasters and access to resources during extreme weather. Smaller, age-friendly homes are especially needed to help older adults remain connected to their community, services, and family.

Watsonville also faces broader affordability challenges within the regional housing market. Housing costs across Santa Cruz County remain among the highest in the country, contributing to a high overall cost of living for local residents. According to data from the City's **Homelessness Strategic Plan**, Watsonville's housing stock includes approximately 1,124 single-family homes owned by seniors and about 2,000 affordable rental homes. In addition, 2,423 **Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)** are issued to Watsonville households, representing 46% of all vouchers issued countywide. While these resources provide important housing support, demand continues to exceed supply.

Younger Adults Report Higher Uncertainty They Will Be Able to Age in Place



HOUSING



Current Status Continued..

The City has supported several affordable housing developments, including **Sparrow Terrace** (72 units), **Cienega Heights** (80 units), and smaller homeownership efforts with **Habitat for Humanity**. Although these projects provide critical housing, they fill quickly and often have long waitlists.

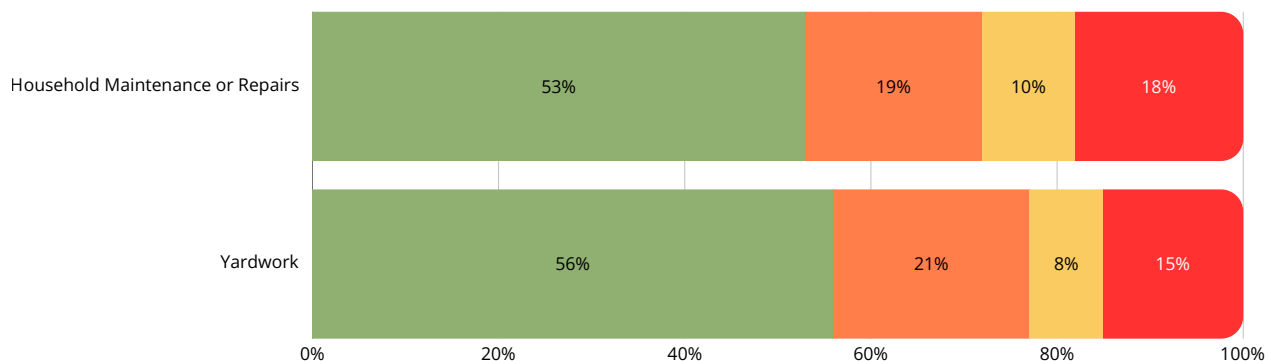
Survey responses also emphasized the need for accessible, safe housing near essential services. This reinforces the importance of coordinating housing strategies with transportation, walkable neighborhoods, local shopping, medical care and emergency planning. Ongoing efforts—such as infill development, zoning updates, and mixed-use projects like the planned **Watsonville Metro Project**—aim to expand affordable, age-friendly housing while helping older adults remain safely in their homes.



Unmet needs for Home Maintenance

Nearly 1 in 5 respondents (17.5%) need help with household maintenance or repairs but do not have it, and 14.6% report the same unmet need for yardwork.

- Does not need help with this
- Gets paid help
- Gets unpaid help with this
- Needs help but doesn't have it





HOUSING

Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 1-2	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Increase access to housing information and options for older adults	Host an annual community forum and conduct outreach to connect older adults with rental, roommate, and landlord resources	Number of forum participants and resource referrals provided	Improved awareness of housing options and increased housing stability for older adults.
Support safe home maintenance and repair assistance	Develop a handyman guide or partner with a nonprofit to connect older adults with trusted repair services	Guide completed or partnership established; number of adults served	Safe homes and increased ability for older adults to age in place
Enhance emergency preparedness for older adults	Offer workshops, planning resources, and community outreach to help older adults stay safe and resilient	Number of workshops held, toolkits distributed, preparedness plan completion rates	Increased emergency readiness, stronger resilience, lower risk during disasters
Prevent housing displacement among older adults	Support organizations that help older adults maintain their current housing arrangements and avoid displacement	Number of organizations supported; number of referrals or people served	Older adults are better able to remain in their current housing, reducing risk of displacement and housing instability

HOUSING



Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 3-5	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Encourage diverse housing options for older adults	Support development of all housing models such as ADU's, smaller accessible units, shared housing, and single family homes.	Number of housing units developed	Increased availability of housing options that better meet the needs of older adults
Improve housing access near transportation	Advocate for senior housing development near existing and planned transit corridors.	Number of housing developments located near transit	Older adults have improved mobility and access to services, transportation, and community resources
Expand affordable housing for older adults	Promote development of affordable, accessible housing units designed for older adults	Number of affordable units developed.	Increased supply of affordable and accessible housing that supports aging in the community.



SOCIAL PARTICIPATION



Current Status

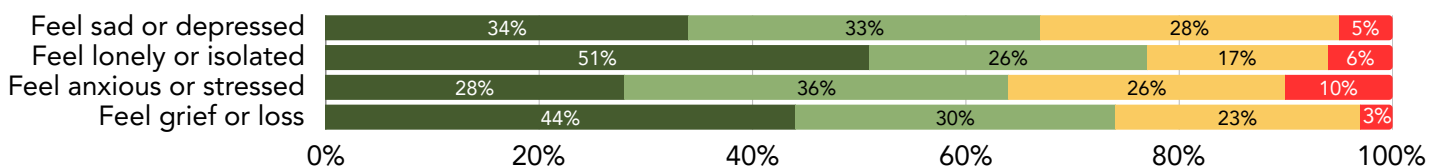
Data indicates that social participation opportunities in Watsonville are strongly anchored in formal settings, particularly the **Watsonville Senior Center** and affiliated community resource programs. Utilization of these spaces is consistently high, especially among seniors who may be more vulnerable, including Spanish-speaking older adults, individuals with lower incomes, and those living alone. These programs are serving as critical social lifelines and trusted points of connection.

At the same time, the data suggests that access to social connection is not evenly distributed. Seniors who are already connected to established programs tend to benefit the most, while others report difficulty navigating available resources or identifying where to go for social engagement. Informal or neighborhood-based social connectors appear less visible, and awareness of non-Senior Center opportunities is inconsistent.

Overall, Watsonville demonstrates a solid foundation for social participation, but current engagement relies heavily on a limited number of centralized programs. The data highlights a need to strengthen outreach, improve navigation of resources, and expand social connection opportunities beyond traditional settings to reach seniors who may be isolated, newly aging into services, or less familiar with existing systems.

Emotional Well-Being Indicators Among Participants

● None of the time ● A little of the time ● Some of the time
● Most of the time



SOCIAL PARTICIPATION



Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 1-2	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Develop a marketing and outreach plan to promote senior centers as welcoming community hubs	Create a marketing strategy and conduct outreach to older adults who may be isolated or unaware of services.	Outreach plan implemented; participants asked in surveys how they learned about programs; increased participation and new members.	Greater awareness of programs and increased social connection among older adults.
Expand and diversify social participation opportunities	Offer classes and events in multiple locations, promote culturally inclusive and multigenerational programming, and encourage volunteerism.	Number of programs offered; participation across diverse groups.	More opportunities for older adults to stay active and engaged in the community.
Increase Awareness of Technology Resources	Increase awareness of available technology tools, digital literacy programs, and internet access resources.	Number of outreach efforts, and workshops about technology and internet resources.	Older adults are more informed about available resources and feel more confident using technology.

Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 3-5	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Improve technology infrastructure	Support efforts to improve reliable cell phone reception and expand access to high-speed, affordable internet.	Number of projects that improve cell phone reception or access to high speed, affordable internet.	Older adults experience fewer barriers to communication and are better able to access online services.



RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

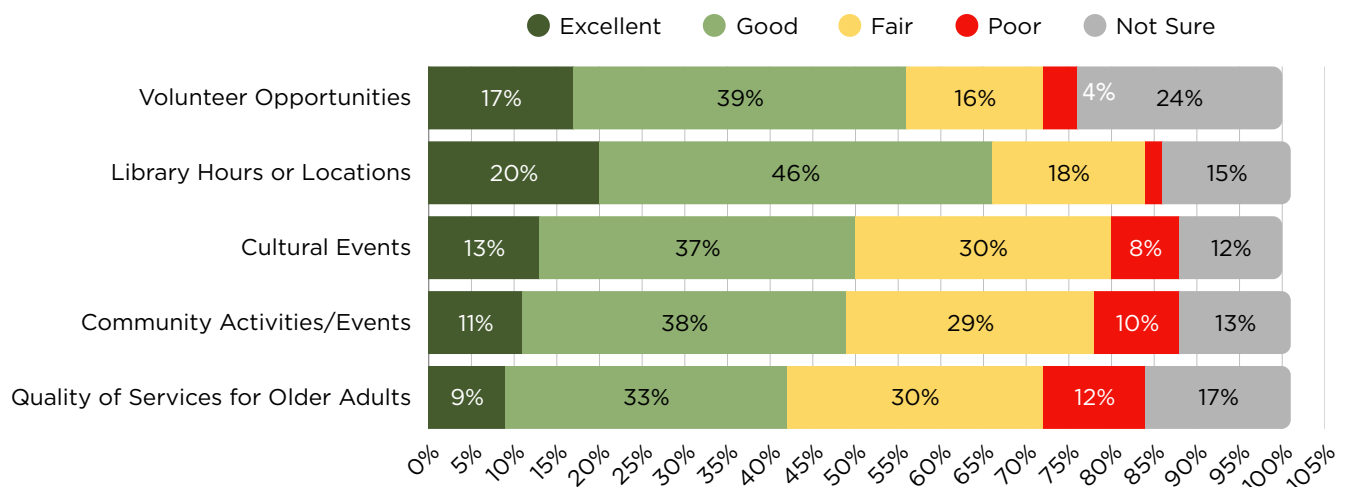


Current Status

Respect and Social Inclusion is an area of strength in Watsonville, with many older adults reporting that they feel welcomed, respected, and connected within their community. Survey feedback reflects a strong sense of belonging and appreciation for the city’s cultural diversity, intergenerational relationships, and community-centered values.

At the same time, respondents identified opportunities to improve how information about programs, services, and resources is shared with older adults. Strengthening communication and outreach efforts will help ensure that all seniors—especially those who are newer, more isolated, or from underserved communities—are aware of and able to access the support and opportunities available to them.

Community Feedback on Services, Programs, and Opportunities for Older Adults



RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION



Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 1-2	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Strengthen intergenerational connections in the community	Expand and promote intergenerational events and activities	Number of events held; participation levels; partnerships with community groups	Increased interaction and understanding between older adults and other age groups, strengthening community connections
Explore rebranding the Watsonville Senior Center to better reflect an inclusive community space.	Explore a new name and identity for the Watsonville Senior Center that reflects community values and cultural diversity	Community input gathered; branding options developed; rebranding progress	A more inclusive and welcoming identity that better reflects the center's role as a community space for older adults



CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

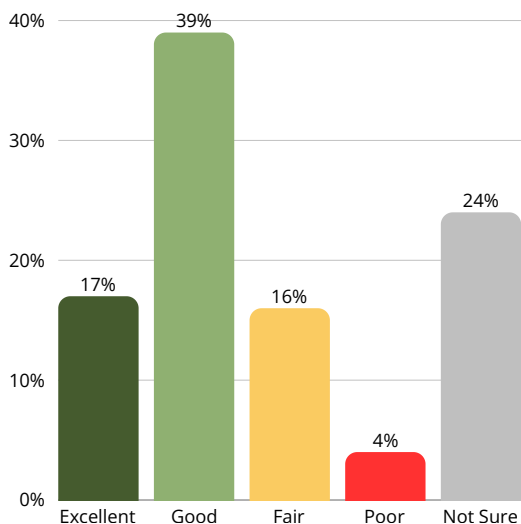


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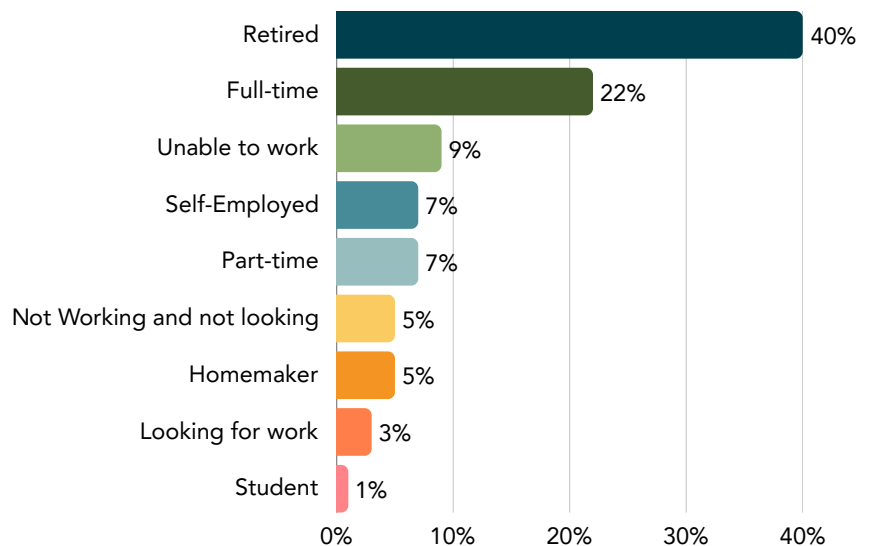
Survey responses indicate that many current and future older adults in Watsonville feel there are plenty of volunteer opportunities available and value having options to stay civically engaged. Volunteerism remains an important and accessible way for residents to stay connected to their community.

At the same time, feedback highlights interest in greater access to paid employment opportunities, particularly flexible or age-friendly jobs that support financial stability for those who wish or need to remain in the workforce. Together, these findings reflect a community where civic participation is strong, while also pointing to opportunities to better support economic participation as residents age.

Volunteer Opportunities



Employment Status



CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

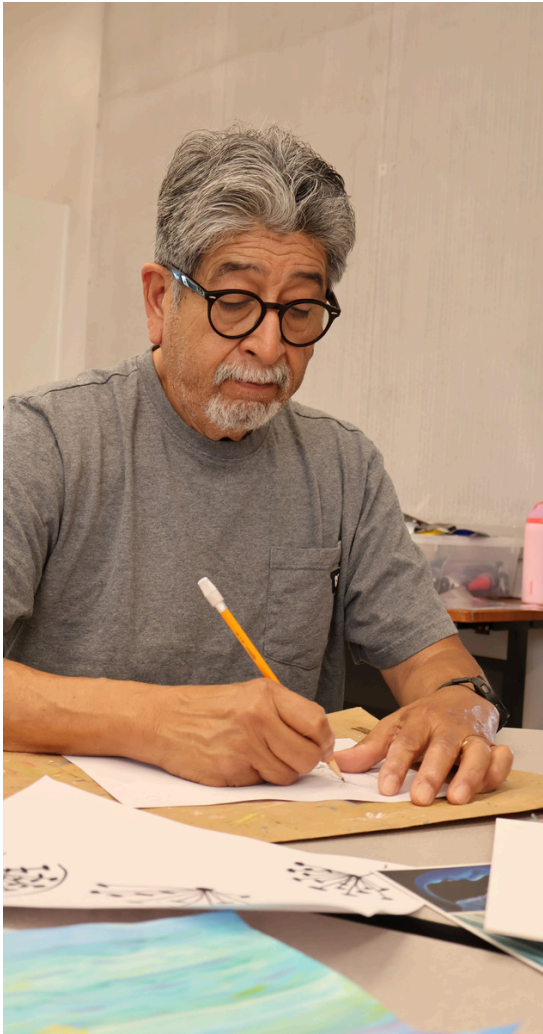


Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 1-2	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Promote civic education and engagements for older adults	Host an annual nonpartisan civic education event covering voting, local propositions, and the role of city council	Number of events held; number of participants; participant feedback	Older adults increase understanding of local government and voting processes and feel more confident engaging in civic life
Increase awareness of volunteer and employment opportunities	Share volunteer, civic engagement, and employment opportunities for older adults through existing communication channels	Number of opportunities shared	Older adults are more aware of opportunities to stay active through volunteering, civic participation, and employment

Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 3-5	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Support and recognize caregivers	Promote existing community resources that support both paid and unpaid caregivers	Number of resources promoted; outreach efforts; partner collaborations	Caregivers have greater awareness of available supports and are better able to remain engaged in the workforce and civic life



COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

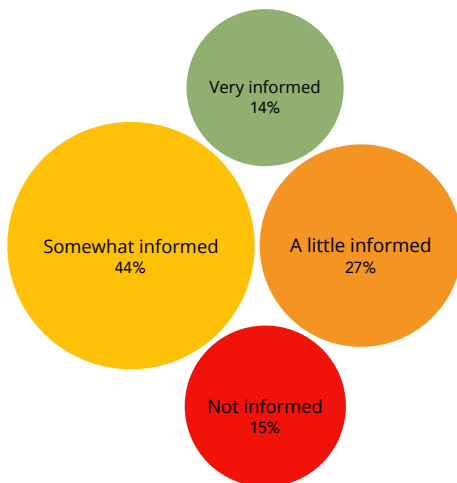


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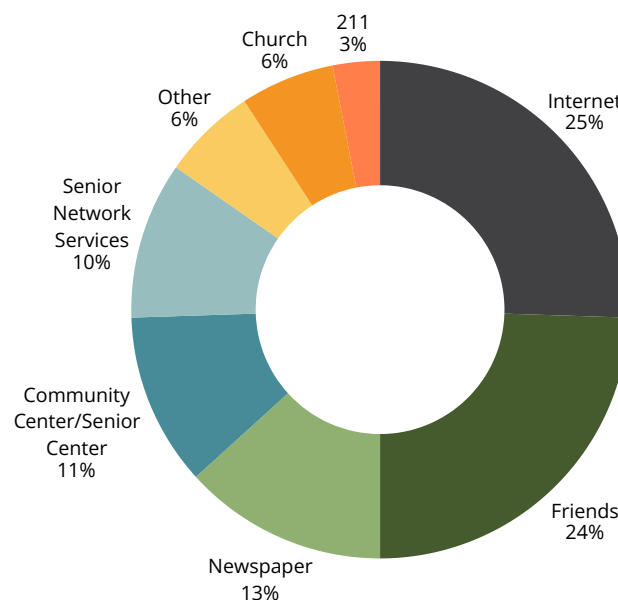
Access to clear, timely, and reliable information remains a challenge for many older adults in Watsonville. Survey results show that only 14% of respondents feel very well informed about services available to older adults, with most relying on informal sources such as friends, family, or internet searches to find information. This reliance on informal networks suggests gaps in coordinated outreach and accessible communication. These challenges are further shaped by language barriers, varying levels of digital literacy, and limited access to technology for some residents.

While Watsonville has a strong network of service providers and community programs, information about these services is often spread across multiple platforms, making it difficult for older adults and caregivers to easily identify and navigate available resources. Improving how information is shared—across both digital and in-person channels—will be key to increasing awareness, access, and equity for older adults in the community.

Even if you don't need these services, how informed do you feel about services for older adults?



Current Methods for Accessing Information for Older Adults



COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION



Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 1-2	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Raise awareness of Older Adult Services through a public campaign	Develop a PSA campaign.	Completion and distribution of PSA campaign materials	Increased awareness of Older Adult Services and engagement from older adults not currently connected to services
Partner with the City of Watsonville Library for literacy and digital literacy	Establish partnership and coordinate programs	Number of programs or workshops offered in partnership with the library	Improved literacy and digital literacy skills among older adults
Continue and expand the Senior Resource Fair	Plan and host the annual event in May, including additional services, organizations, and interactive activities	Number of participants and participating organization	Increased participation and access to resources, celebrating Older Americans Month and strengthening community connections



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES



Current Status

Many older adults in Watsonville rely on safety-net and community support services to meet their basic needs, yet affordability and access remain ongoing challenges. Survey results indicate that more than one in four older adults find it difficult to afford the services they need, underscoring concerns around financial stability and access to care. Use of food support programs, including free groceries and meals, is common—particularly among lower-income respondents and Watsonville residents—highlighting the continued importance of food security initiatives.

In addition, many older adults report difficulty navigating the health care system and accessing services locally, creating barriers to timely and appropriate care. While Watsonville benefits from a strong network of community-based providers, the demand for affordable services, coordinated support, and accessible health care continues to exceed available resources.

Feedback on Difficulty Navigating the Health Care System

● Not at all difficult ● A little difficult ● Somewhat difficult ● Very difficult



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES



Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 1-2	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Support continuation of the Companionship Program	Elevate program importance, assist with outreach, partnerships, and identify funding/resources	Program sustained and actively supported	Older adults experience reduced isolation and stronger social connections
Support existing social and health programs	Encourage participation, volunteerism, and engagement through events like senior health/resource fairs	Participation and volunteer numbers at programs and events	Greater community engagement and improved well-being for older adults
Strengthen pathways for service expansion	Connect programs, residents, and community partners to broaden access	Number of collaborations or partnerships developed	More older adults are able to access existing services and resources
Promote access to services and healthy living resources	Share information on nutritious foods, preventive care, and in-home inspections	Number of outreach efforts and resources shared	Older adults have increased awareness and use of health and wellness resources

Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 3-5	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Facilitate connections between care facilities and health educators	Coordinate partnerships to provide educational programs and services within facilities	Number of programs or partnerships implemented	Residents have improved access to health education and in-facility services
Encourage local solutions for unmet health and mobility needs	Advocate for low-cost wheelchair repair, broader health benefits, and Medicare dental coverage	Number of advocacy efforts supported through partnerships	Increased access to essential health and mobility resources for older adults

CONCLUSION

Creating a community that supports older adults is not just an investment in one population, it is an investment in everyone. The same features that make a city age-friendly—safe streets, accessible spaces, reliable transportation, and strong social connections—also make it more livable for families, children, and people of all abilities. From infrastructure that supports mobility to welcoming public spaces that foster connection, these improvements shape a community where everyone can participate and thrive.

At its core, this work is about building a city where people can remain connected to the places and people they love. Supporting older adults in aging in place strengthens neighborhoods, preserves cultural and community ties, and ensures that the wisdom and contributions of long-time residents continue to enrich Watsonville. A diverse, multigenerational community is not only more inclusive, it is more resilient, vibrant, and strong.

This plan reflects the City of Watsonville’s commitment to both the older adults of today and those of tomorrow. Each of us is on a shared path of aging, and the actions we take now will shape the experience of future generations. Today’s youth are tomorrow’s older adults, and the systems, spaces, and supports we build today will define how our community cares for them in the years ahead.

By working together across generations, organizations, and sectors—we are creating a Watsonville where everyone can age with dignity, stay engaged, and feel a true sense of belonging. In doing so, we are not only planning for the future, we are building a better community for all.



Members of Watsonville’s Senior Action Committee (left to right): Christine Catanzaro, Anna Kammer, John Hunting, and Fabian C. Leonor. Also serving on the committee: Antonio Rivas, Gina Cole, and Araceli Campos.



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Thursday, April 16, 2026

TO: PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: PROJECT MANAGER PERALTA

SUBJECT: APPROVE PUBLIC ART APPLICATION FOR MOSAIC STAGE DESIGN AT THE WATSONVILLE CITY PLAZA

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission approve the public art application for the mosaic stage design at the Watsonville City Plaza.

DISCUSSION:

In May 2024, the contract with Community Arts & Empowerment for the creation of artwork, as part of the City Plaza Revitalization Project, was amended to include the creation and installation of art on the skirt of the new stage. The contract included, as part of this process, a release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to recruit artists for the development of the stage art design (see Attachment A). Three artists would be awarded \$500 stipends for creating preliminary designs and one artist would be selected and awarded an additional \$3,000 stipend to design the final stage art design. The final design would be fabricated at the Muzzio Mosaic Arts Center.

An RFQ was published on October 31, 2025, with a closing date of November 16, 2025. This call for artists was advertised on social media, the City's website, and email distribution lists. The requirements included a letter of interest and seven to ten images of previous work. The themes for this project were outlined as:

- Watsonville is a diverse community
- The Plaza is a central Gathering Place
- Promote public education and awareness about the City's downtown designation as a Cultural Arts District

A total of forty-seven (47) submissions were received and reviewed by the selection committee. Each submittal was scored individually by each member of the selection committee with local artists receiving an additional point. The selection committee included the following individuals:

Celeste DeWald: City of Watsonville Parks and Recreation Commissioner
Emiko Stewart: City of Watsonville Parks and Recreation Commissioner
Hilda Peralta: Project Manager, City of Watsonville
Elizabeth Shea: Impact and Engagement Coordinator, City of Watsonville
Kathleen Crocetti: Artistic and Executive Director Community Arts & Empowerment
Dayanara Saucedo: Youth Intern, Community Arts & Empowerment

A total of four finalists (Three individuals and one team) were awarded a \$500 stipend to create preliminary designs as follows:

Team 1: Nessa Ledesma, Priscilla Martinez, Paul DeWorken, Mateo Gonzalez, Jessica Carrasco
Artist 2: Jasmine Rocha-Ortiz
Artist 3: Josefina Rocha
Artist 4: Jessica Soriano

Artists were given one month to develop a preliminary design. A community outreach campaign was kicked off from February 14th to March 6th and included a survey with all the semi-finalist designs (Attachment B) to solicit community input. Community outreach strategies to promote the survey included social media posts, newsletter announcements, newspaper, email distribution lists, and weekly farmer's market outreach. A community meeting was held on February 24th and each artist gave a presentation on their design.

A total of 796 community responses were received and tabulated. The selection committee convened to discuss the responses and evaluate the final designs based on the following criteria:

- Project theme
- Color & Vibrancy
- Mosaic Translatability
- Cultural Representation & Diversity
- Design Cohesion & Visual Flow
- Community Responses (positive, negative, strengths, concerns)

After careful review and discussion, the committee unanimously agreed to recommend the design "The Path We're On" from artist Jessica "Jess" Soriano for the selection of this project. The committee suggests a legend be installed near the final artwork to engage and educate the community about the symbols used in the design. Fabrication for this project is scheduled to take place from April to September 2026 with installation earmarked for Summer 2027 during Phase 2 of the City Plaza Revitalization Project.

Phase 1 of the City Plaza Revitalization Project is scheduled to begin in May 2026. During this time, the historic gazebo (bandstand) and fountain will be fully renovated.

Phase 2 of the City Plaza Revitalization Project will include the remaining scope of work such as the concrete stage, pavers, benches, picnic tables, new electrical system, and four art features. In early Fall 2026, this phase will go out to bid, and work is scheduled to begin in early 2027 for the duration of nine months.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

03-Infrastructure & Environment
05-Community Engagement & Well-Being

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funding is encumbered in Contract No. 2895 with Community Arts & Empowerment as follows:

PCS Admin Account Number 150-690-7361-00000.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

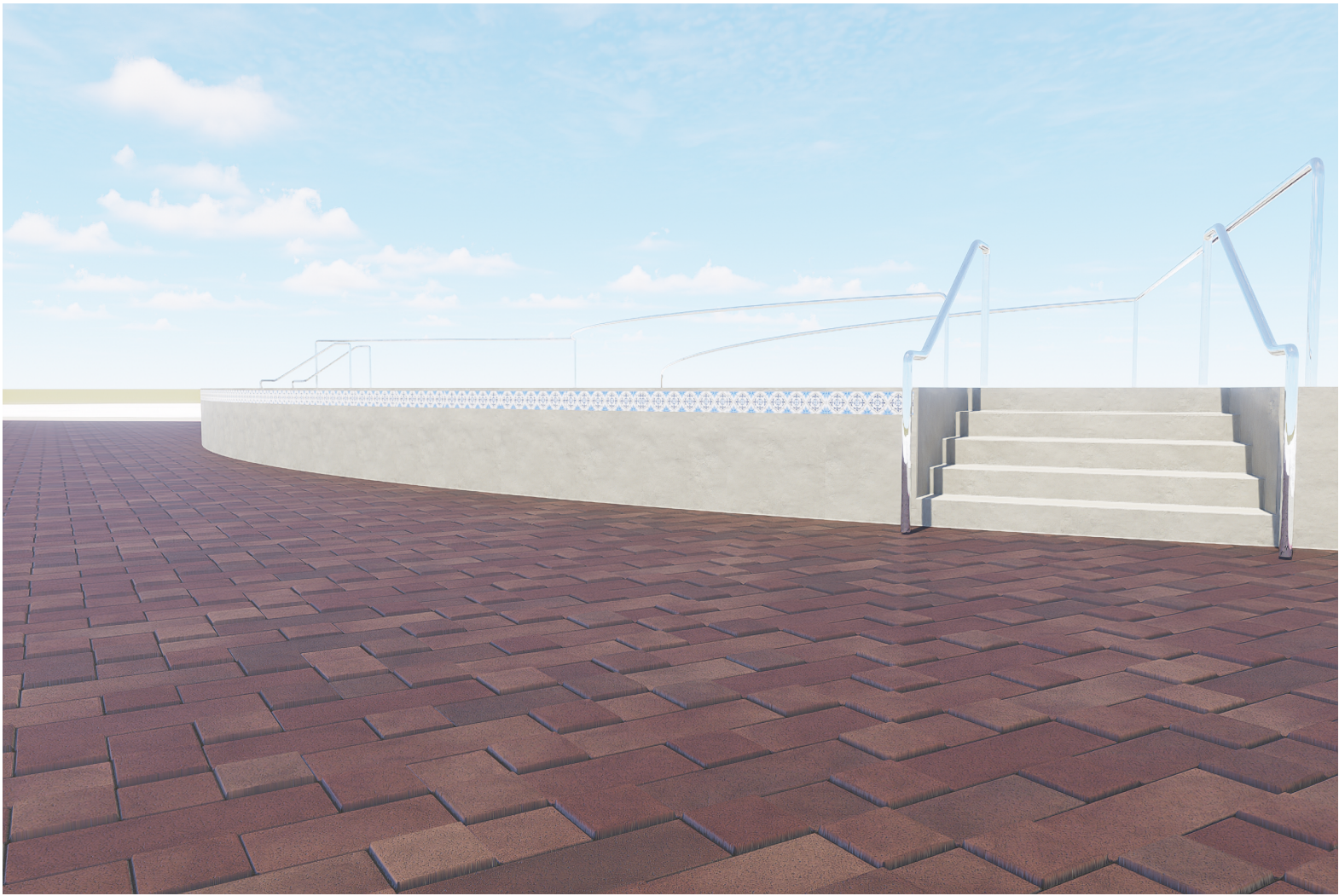
The Parks & Recreation Commission may choose to:

1. Approve the design (with changes)
2. Not approve the design

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

Attachment A: Stage Rendering

Attachment B: Submissions from Semi-Finalists



Plaza Skirt Submissions

February 2026

Nessa Ledesma

(Team Lead)

Team Members: Venessa (Nessa) Ledesma, Priscilla Martinez, Paul DeWorken,
Mateo (Primo) Gonzalez, Jessica Carrasco

Plaza Stage Skirt Proposal Narrative Watsonville Artists Team

This stage skirt design comprises four sections to create a continuous 62-foot composition at a height of 26 inches. Developed collaboratively by artists raised in Watsonville, the design celebrates the community's rich cultural heritage, artistic traditions, and shared history.

The first section centers Indigenous imagery, honoring the wisdom rooted in sacred traditions. It includes references to local danzante groups, whose ceremonial dances open and bless many community gatherings, symbolizing respect, continuity, and spiritual connection.

The second section transitions into vibrant Latino cultural imagery, highlighting the joy and energy of the culture, including folklórico dance and mariachi music—art forms that are deeply woven into Watsonville's community celebrations and cultural identity.

In the third section, the design reflects the historical bridge to European folk influences, acknowledging their combined contributions to the region's agricultural heritage and the labor, resilience, and creativity that have shaped the Pajaro Valley.

The fourth section honors the historic Filipino, Japanese, and Chinese presence in the Pajaro Valley, showcasing the beauty and craftsmanship of their traditional arts. This final section reinforces the theme of cultural interconnectedness and the enduring impact of these communities on the region's social and artistic landscape.

Throughout the design, flowers and plant imagery connected to each culture and the Pajaro Valley are integrated alongside visual references to cultural art forms, symbolizing growth, creativity, and the diversity of the community. A unifying decorative border inspired by local agriculture features imagery drawn from the crops and farming traditions that sustain Watsonville and connect its people to the land.

Together, these four sections form a unified visual narrative that reflects Watsonville's diversity, honors its history, and celebrates the living cultures—and fertile land—that continue to shape the community today.











Jasmine Rocha-Ortiz

“Watsonville is Love”

Created to represent the vibrancy and culture of our town, “Watsonville is love” tells a story. Our town is filled with talent that cannot be contained, often showcased at the historical downtown center for residents to enjoy and participate in. These shared experiences are memorable and allow us carry pieces of Watsonville everywhere we go, especially in our hearts. I chose to incorporate a bold color palette as we are nothing short of a bold and unique town. References to local dances, instruments, cultural groups, and the overall hometown energy can be seen throughout the design. I hope to spark a sense of belonging for viewers and assure them that Watsonville is a safe space for self-expression and creative freedom.











Josefina Rocha

I was recently asked, “What does being from Watsonville look like to you?” and I found myself taken aback. I couldn’t come up with a solid image because, to me, Watsonville has never been just one thing or the other. To me, it is more like a feeling. I took time to reflect, and the memory that prominently surfaced was this: driving into Watsonville from Riverside Dr at daybreak, when the sun’s first rays begin to peek out from behind the green hills. The windows are down, the air carries the scent of earth, and the fields stretch endlessly ahead. In that moment, I am aware of the land I am crossing through, land shaped by the hard work of our families, land that feeds our town. It is a feeling of belonging and pride. I am home. That moment, when the fields are bathed in soft morning light and carry the stories and cultural pride of countless communities, is my first thought of Watsonville.

This design draws from that memory. It centers on a field in Watsonville, surrounded by the abundant hills that hold us. Growing up here, I have always admired my surroundings, not only for their beauty, but for what they represent. The fields, the sloughs, the crops, and the fruits of our labor speak to Watsonville as an agricultural town, one built on resilience, care, and collective effort. The inclusion of fruit is also a nod to our weekly farmers market and the local businesses and workers who show up each Friday, sustaining both our economy and our sense of community.

At the base and throughout this piece are the people of Watsonville, those who live here, those we admire, and those we love. The design would be a warm welcome in the Plazita, as it is a shared and cherished space: a place where people may gather for lunch, meet friends, take walks, rest, and feel safe. It honors moments of camaraderie and quiet reflection, as well as the comfort of being in a place that feels like home.

Books at both ends of this design symbolize our stories, histories, and cultures, acknowledging the importance of recognizing, celebrating, and speaking up for them. They also represent education as power: education as resistance, as a tool for growth, self-development, and liberation. The pages transform into butterflies and hummingbirds, symbolizing resilience, hope, and our stories taking flight. Migration is also honored as a shared experience of beauty and trust woven into the soul of our community.

Native-inspired basket-weaving elements are included to acknowledge the Indigenous people of this land, with cempasúchil flowers to honor cultural traditions, memory, and reverence for ancestors. Advocacy for farmworkers and community rights is also shown in the piece, recognizing the labor and dignity of those who sustain Watsonville.

The sarape is prominently woven into the design as a powerful cultural and spiritual symbol, representing warmth, protection, joy, and belonging. Traditionally, sarapes are made of many threads woven together, much like our community, each individual essential to the whole. It reflects cultural pride, celebration, and the shared experience of living and thriving together in Watsonville. A strawberry also transforms, symbolizing growth, change, and the many phases we experience as individuals and as a community, especially the journey from childhood to adulthood. The cactus represents resilience and endurance, while its flowers remind us that love, beauty, and softness can exist despite hardship, that the soul blooms even in challenging conditions.

The hands are central to the composition, representing purpose, creation, and collective power. They hold the corazón eterno, a symbol of eternal love, unity, and spiritual continuity; love as an enduring force that transcends struggle and grounds us in compassion and connection. To me, love is the essence of Watsonville: to be heard, to be seen, to be celebrated, and to celebrate one another. Unity, creativity, and equity live here. And these hands are the hands of everyone.

The arts are deeply embedded in Watsonville and shown in the design because expression is an essential part of our lives, whether through visual art, words, music, or cultural tradition, etc. The arts nurture our internal growth and uplift our community, shaping who we are and how we connect to one another. As Watsonville embraces its role as a Cultural Arts District, this piece reflects my hope for a vibrant, creative future where all forms of expression are recognized and valued.

The sky is set at daybreak, as the sun lays its rays gently over the town. It felt fitting to name this piece *El Almanecer*. Daybreak represents renewal, opportunity, growth, and reset: new connections to make, local places to explore and support, neighbors to get to know, and creativity ready to be ignited. Newer and grander days ahead.

As someone who grew up in Watsonville, studied the arts in my higher education, and returned with the intention of inspiring others and creating access to creative opportunities, this design is personally near and dear to my heart. It is made with love, care, and respect for my neighbors and for the town many of us call home.











Jessica Soriano



Mosaic Artwork Proposal for the Watsonville Plaza Skirt in Watsonville "The Path We're On"



Inspired by Watsonville's rich history, "The Path We're On" is a piece dedicated to showing how this city came to be. With elements tied to the Ohlone (Costanoan) tribe as well as many other cultures from around the world, I created organic, natural elements to depict true diversity in the Watsonville community. We each walk our own paths in life, but as a collective, there is at least one path where we can all walk together. We all strive for connection, acceptance, and safety. This piece depicts the bold, vibrant, and distinct path the Watsonville community has taken to become what it is today. The lines and organic shapes are simply guides for the final mosaic, allowing artists to be creative and explore with various colors and shapes.

PANEL 1

We start the design on the left side. Pajaro is the unceded ancestral territory of the Mutsun-speaking Ohlone (Costanoan) people, specifically the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. I drew a woodland strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) to represent the native, edible, and medicinal plants of Watsonville. A bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) flies across the mountainous landscape of Watsonville, leading us on a journey about strength, connection, and growth.



Woodland Strawberry
Flower (*Fragaria vesca*)

Watsonville rolling hills /
mountainous landscape

Bald Eagle
(*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

Partial flower of a
Red Carnation
(*Dianthus caryophyllus*)

Dimensions: 7'3" x 26"

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PANEL 2

A red carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*) signifies the time when the Spanish settled in Watsonville around the mid-1500s. As the national flower of Spain, the red carnation symbolizes passion and deep admiration. The brown background signifies fertile ground, ready to grow and cultivate for the community. An orange marigold (*Tagetes erecta*) represents Mexico's settlement and its connection to faith, family, life, death, protection, and joy.



Partial flower of a
Red Carnation
(*Dianthus caryophyllus*)

Vast fertile
ground
Flower petals

Orange Marigold
(*Tagetes erecta*)

Rolling fields of grass, wheat,
and grain

Dimensions: 8' x 26"



PANEL 3

An influx of Europeans in the 1800s brought more cattle ranching, whaling, potato, wheat, fruit, and dairy farms to Watsonville. Grain, cows, and apple orchards are depicted on rolling, colorful hills to represent the vast landscape and opportunities they had to build their communities.



Rolling fields of grass,
wheat, and grain

Wind and other
natural elements

Apple trees in an
apple orchard

Cow resting under
an apple tree

Dimensions: 8' x 26"

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PANEL 4

Watsonville has vast rolling fields where fruit and veggies can grow, and sometimes between the farms, there are rushing rivers that host a diverse group of wildlife. A great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) opens its wings in preparation for a hunt. Schools of sacramento blackfish (*Orthodon microlepidotus*) swim in Watsonville's rivers.



Apple trees in an
apple orchard

Sacramento Blackfish
(*Orthodon microlepidotus*)

Great Blue Heron
(*Ardea herodias*)

Dimensions: 8' x 26"

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PANEL 5

Here we have the national flower of Croatia, the Croatian Iris (*Iris croatica*). It represents strength, wisdom, passion, and hope. In the late 1800s, Croatian immigrants dominated the apple industry in Pajaro Valley, and to this day, Watsonville is known for its apples. A bait ball of sardines pays homage to our Chinese and Italian fishermen. The fish swim towards a sampaguita / jasmine flower (*Jasminum sambac*), the national flower of the Philippines.



Croatian irises
(*Iris croatica*)

Bait ball of sardines
(*Sardina pilchardus*)

Partial sampaguita / jasmine
flower (*Jasminum sambac*)

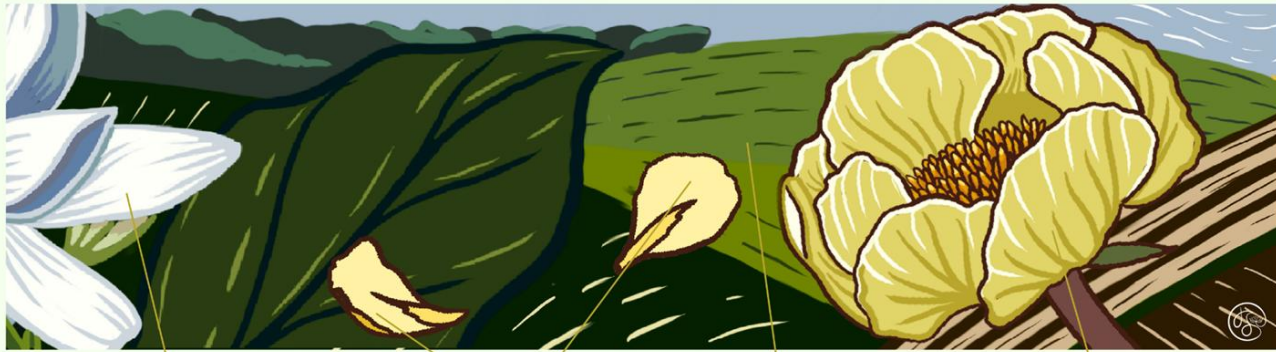
Dimensions: 8' x 26"

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PANEL 6

The sampaguita / jasmine flower represents love, simplicity, strength, and hope. It represents the resilience Filipinos had to persevere in a land unfamiliar and unwelcoming to them. Petals of a peony drift to and fro the jasmine flower to a full yellow peony. China is a very large and diverse country, so instead of having one national flower, they have multiple flowers that symbolize different values. I chose the Delavay's tree peony (*Paeonia delavayi* var. *lutea*) because it is endemic to China and represents honor, elegance, and prosperity.



Partial sampaguita / jasmine
flower (*Jasminum sambac*)

Peony petals

Abstract organic design
to represent rolling hills

Delavay's tree peony
(*Paeonia delavayi* var. *lutea*)

Dimensions: 8' x 26"



PANEL 7

As our eyes move along the fields and move past the peony, there are rolling fertile farms filled with sprouting seeds. They could be lettuce or any other leafy vegetable or fruit. That is up to interpretation :) The official state flower of California is the California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), and it reminds us of where we are and how special it is to live here.



Rolling fields and farms

Sprouting seeds

California poppy
(*Eschscholzia californica*)

Apple tree leaves

Dimensions: 8'6" x 26"



PANEL 8

The last panel is a culmination of everything we have just viewed and experienced. Watsonville is known for many things, especially vegetables, apples, berries, and cut flowers. The gerbera daisy (*Gerbera L.*) completes the design, honoring the Japanese-American flower growers who brought more color and vibrancy to communal and private spaces. Ready to pick fruit and the continuation of rolling hills offers us a glimpse of what we can do when we work hard, respect the land, and care for nature and our communities.



Apple and apple leaves

Strawberries

Abstract organic design
to represent rolling hills

Gerbera daisy
(*Gerbera L.*)

Dimensions: 6'9" x 26"

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Final Words

Where we began the design with a woodland strawberry flower, at the end, we see strawberries ready to be picked. This piece shows the cycles of life and death, exploration and settlement, and beginnings and endings. The color palette was intentionally made to create symmetry and balance. “The Path We’re On” honors where Watsonville has been, what the community has done, and how, as a collective, we can grow. By remembering our past, we can understand what makes Watsonville so unique. By learning from our past, we can come together, share stories with one another, and appreciate the beauty in diversity.



“The Path We’re On”

Thank you for your time and consideration!





Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Thursday, April 16, 2026

TO: PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: PROJECT MANAGER PERALTA

SUBJECT: APPROVE PUBLIC ART APPLICATION FOR RAMSAY PARK
RESTROOM SUBMITTED BY SHARED ADVENTURES

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission approve the public art application submitted by Shared Adventures for the restroom at Ramsay Park.

DISCUSSION:

On July 19, 2021, the Parks & Recreation Commission approved a public art application for the "Adventure is for Everyone" and "Wall of Fame" (Attachment A) murals for the restroom at Ramsay Park. This application was submitted by Shared Adventures, a Santa Cruz County non-profit organization, that provides recreational activities for the disabled community since 1992. The project consisted of aluminum sheet panels with vinyl printing led by artist Anastasia Torres-Gil. This project was funded by Shared Adventures and a grant from the Santa Cruz Art Council.

The murals have deteriorated and will be removed once construction on the restroom begins. Restroom improvements will include interior and exterior paint, replacement of restroom fixtures such as urinals, entry doors, partitions, and water closets. The restroom will also include replacement of a drinking fountain and a bottle filling station. However, restroom Improvements do not include artwork.

In Fall of 2025, Shared Adventures requested to resubmit an application to update the mural with new images in preparation for the grand opening of Ramsay Park. Mardeen Gordon, founder of SignAge & ArtWorks, was the selected artist to lead this project. Mardeen is a multidisciplinary artist and designer specializing in signage, large-scale public art, murals, and visual storytelling that celebrates community identity, accessibility, and inclusion.

The Project

This project consists of placing a mural on three of the restroom walls at Ramsay Park located at the base of the inclusive playground entrance. These moveable murals will feature inspiration

images of disabled individuals and athletes. They depict positive images of disabled individuals in our community.

The design for “Adventure is for Everyone” is made up of seven (7) panels, at 28’ long by 7’ high, of life-size images. The background color was the only detail changed in this design. The design for “Wall of Fame” is made up of two (2) panels with four (4) 4’ X 4’ images. This design includes only two new images (Attachment B) from the following community members:

Noe Tapia has been a high school history teacher at Watsonville High School for 5 years. He enjoys being active through sports, loves swimming and playing basketball. Noe is part of an accessible basketball camp during the summers and enjoys working with kids.

Ernestine Saldana lives in Live Oak and has worked extensively with the Central Coast Center for Independent Living (CCCIL), has served on the Commission on Disabilities (COD) for five years, and worked at the Pajaro Valley Shelter for four years. She spends a lot of her time in Watsonville visiting close friends and colleagues. Ernestine enjoys advocating to improve policies affecting people with disabilities.

Project and Facility Maintenance

City Staff will assist with mounting the panels to the existing hardware. Installation will begin a approximately one month before the grand opening of Ramsay Park. The panels will be 1/8” with two thin aluminum sheets bonded to a PVC core. Printed vinyl will be applied to the surface, with heavy-duty graffiti resistant laminate that will allow solvents to remove graffiti without damaging the image. Individual panels weigh approximately 10 pounds each. All images have received licensing approval from their owners.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

03-Infrastructure & Environment
05-Community Engagement & Well-Being

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The mural project is estimated to cost \$17,609.52. Shared Adventures will pay \$8,804.76 (50%). The Public Art Fund will be used to pay the remaining amount of \$8,804.76 (50%).

Public Art Fund – Account Number 928-7361 in the amount of \$8,804.76.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

The Parks & Recreation Commission may choose not to approve the designs, and the restroom at Ramsay Park will not include a mural installed.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

Attachment A: Original Mural Design
Attachment B: New Mural Design



#1. ADVENTURE IS FOR EVERYONE



Ramsay Park Watsonville Mural Project

#1. Wall of Fame



CLAUDIO MORALES - Adaptive Surfing League
World Champion, 2020



SEBASTIAN DEFRANCESCA - US Paralympics
Team Table Tennis, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000

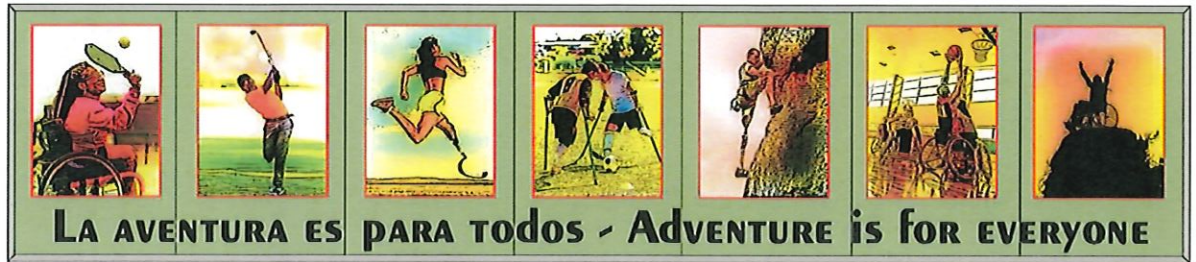


MONICA BASCIA - US Paralympics Team, Nordic
Skiing, 2006, 2010, 2014; Cycling, 2012







TROOPER JOHNSON - US Paralympic Basketball
Team 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004

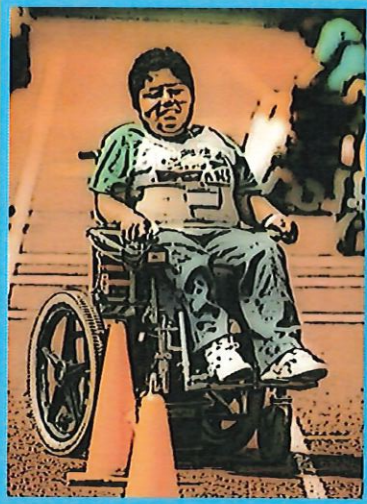
Mural 1 "Adventure is for everyone"



Mural 2 "Wall of Fame"

WALL OF FAME: SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ATHLETIC HEROES	
	
<p>Claudio Morales - Adaptive Surfing League, World Champion, 2020</p>	<p>Sebastian DeFrancesco - US Paralympics Team, Table Tennis, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000</p>
	
<p>Monica Bascio - US Paralympics Team, Nordic Skiing, 2006, 2010, 2014, Cycling, 2012</p>	<p>Trooper Johnson - US Paralympic Basketball Team, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004</p>

Mural 3 "We are all champions"



WE ARE ALL CHAMPIONS

Todos SOMOS CAMPEONES

