



# 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

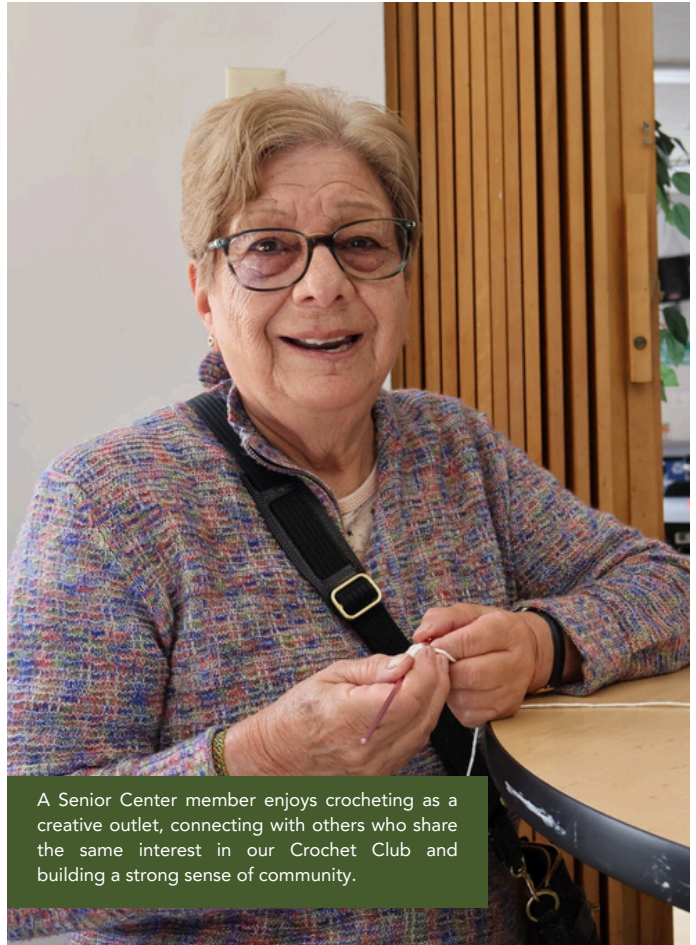
At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill or simply needs some help. While it's important that assistance and care be available nearby, it's essential that residents are able to access and afford the services required.

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.

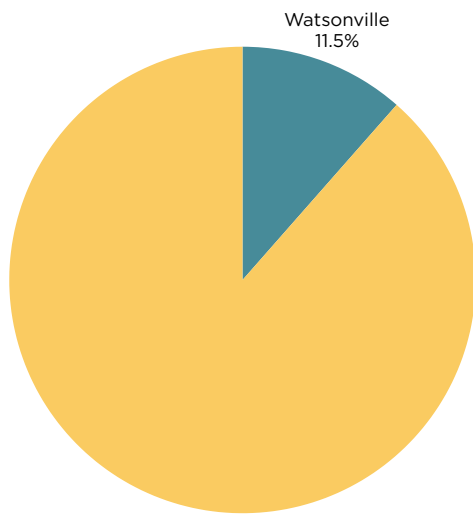
Watsonville played a key role in outreach and engagement, ensuring participation from underrepresented groups—including monolingual Spanish speakers, low-income households, and individuals with disabilities. The findings from this survey directly informed the development of the action items outlined 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



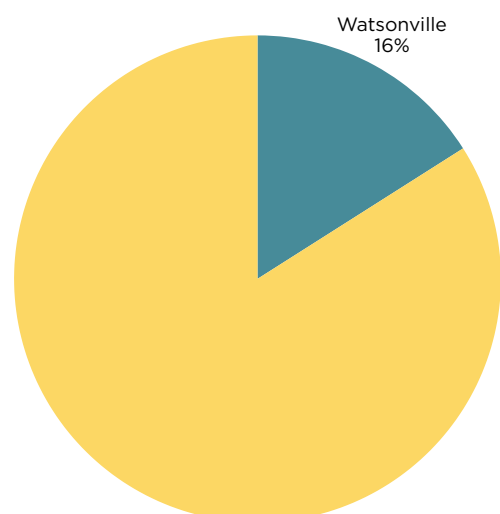
Surrounding Cities  
88.5%

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%

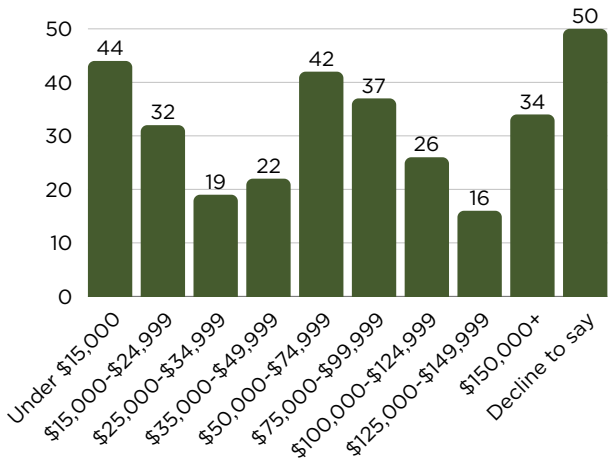
Watsonville  
16%

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

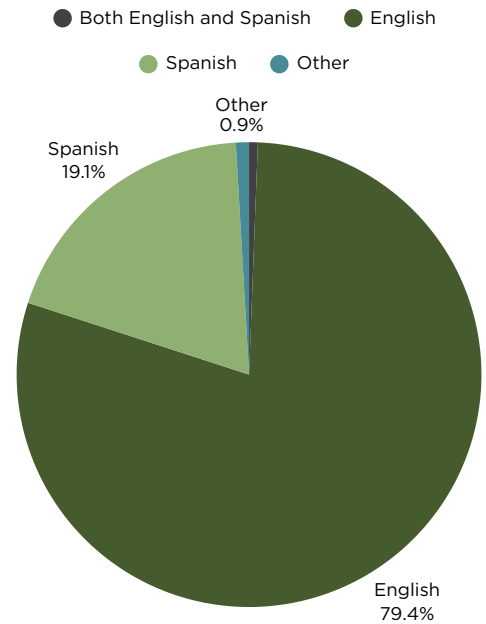
# WATSONVILLE IN FOCUS

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

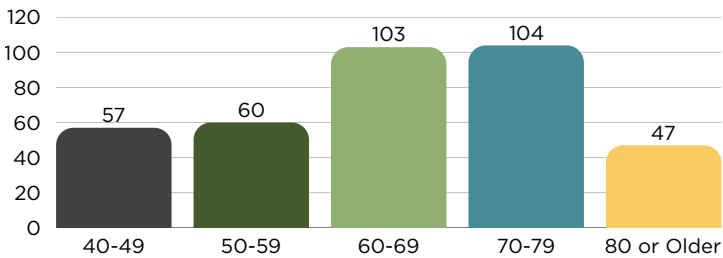
### Household Income of Watsonville Survey Respondents



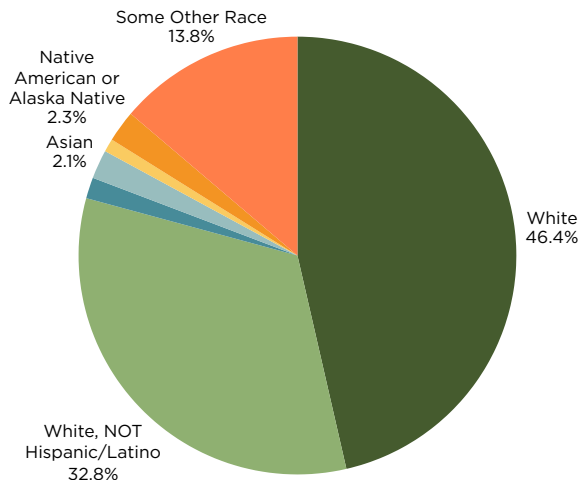
### Primary Language of Watsonville Respondents



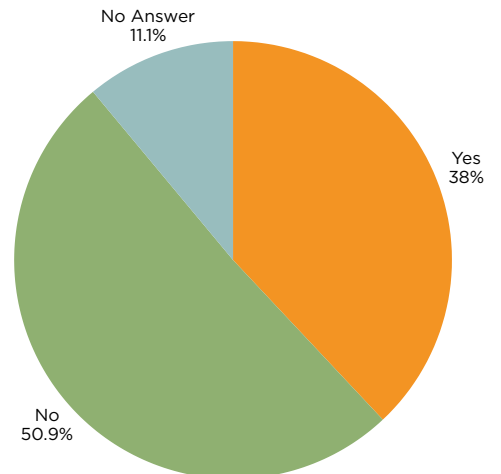
### Age Group of Watsonville Respondents



### 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.

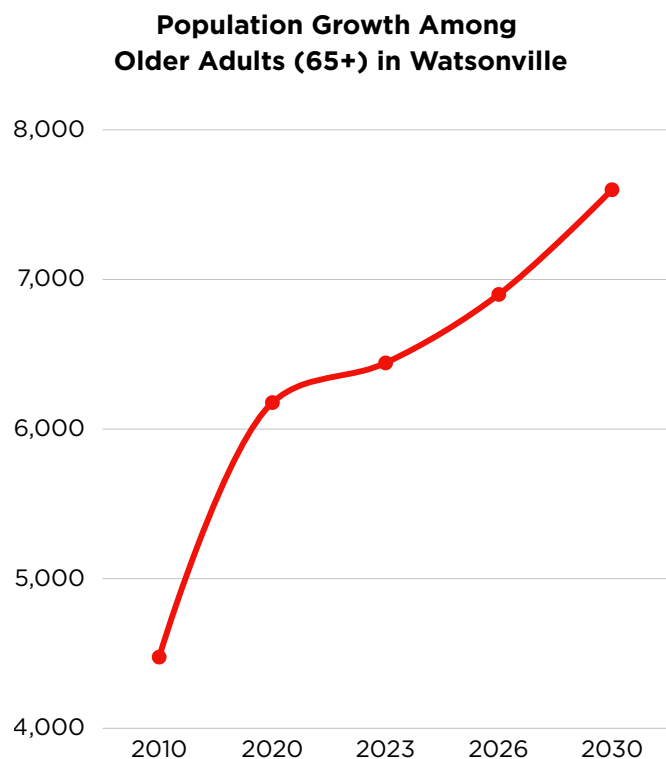
# WATSONVILLE IS AGING

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.



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



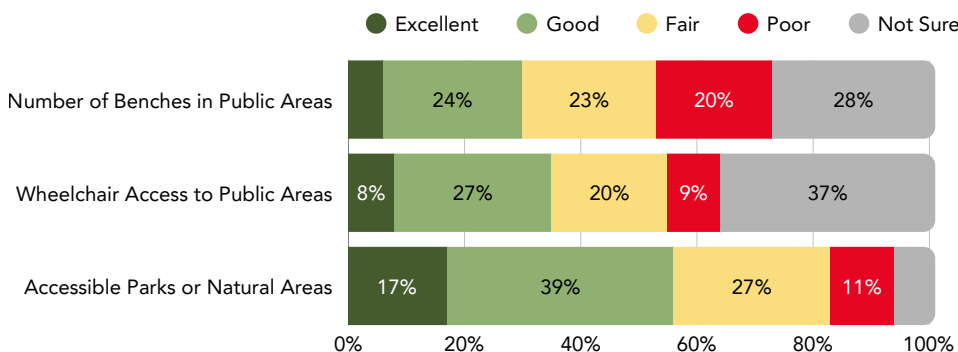
## Current Status

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.

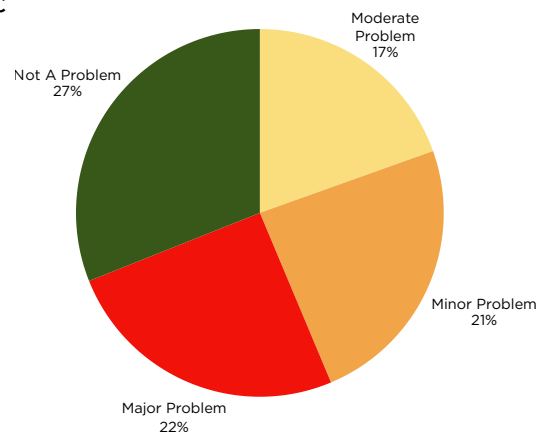
Pedestrian safety is also a concern, as rates of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities are higher than in much of Santa Cruz County. Lighting, high vehicle speeds, and the need for more multimodal infrastructure make it harder—especially for older adults—to travel safely. In response, the 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

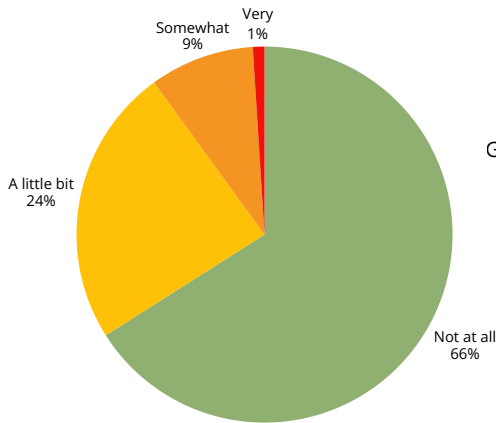


## Current Status

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.

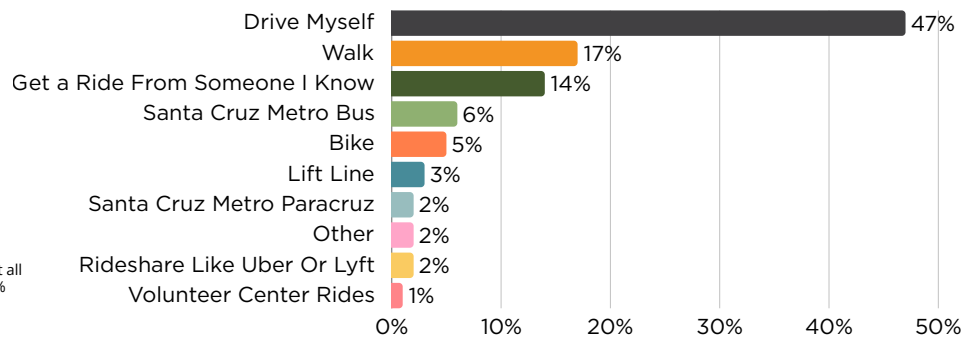
Community organizations like **Lift Line**, **ParaCruz**, and the **Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County** provide critical transportation support. A need for expanded options for flexible, everyday travel has been cited. At the same time, the City is making important strides to improve transportation 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

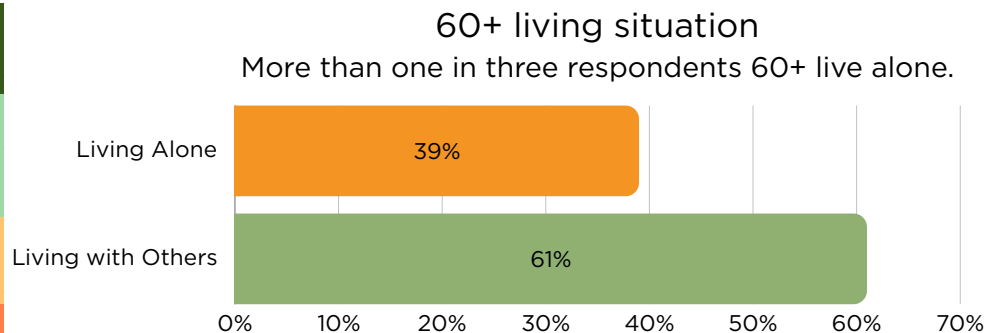
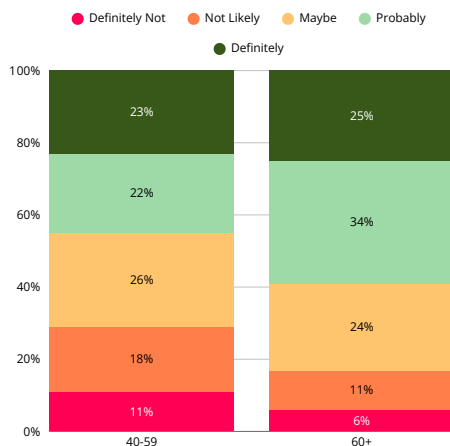


## Current Status

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.

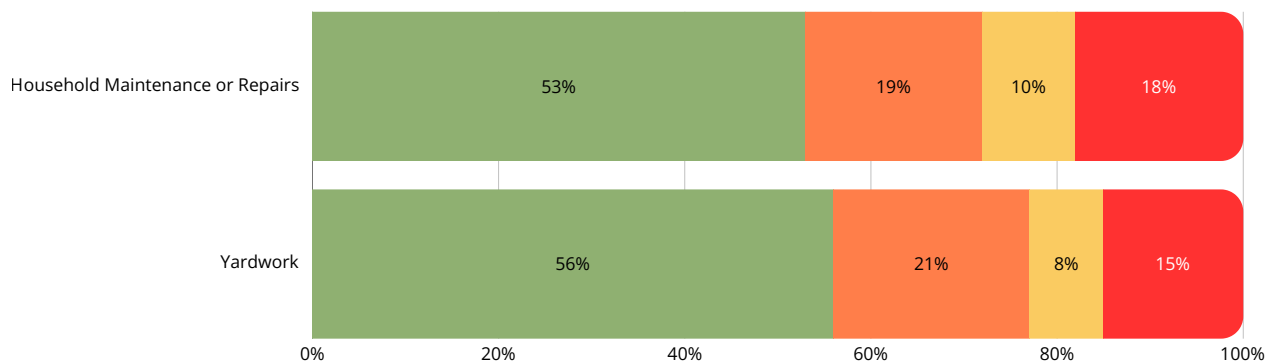
Survey responses also emphasized the need for accessible, safe housing near essential services. This reinforces the importance of coordinating housing strategies with transportation, walkable neighborhoods, local shopping, medical care and emergency planning. Ongoing efforts—such as infill development, 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

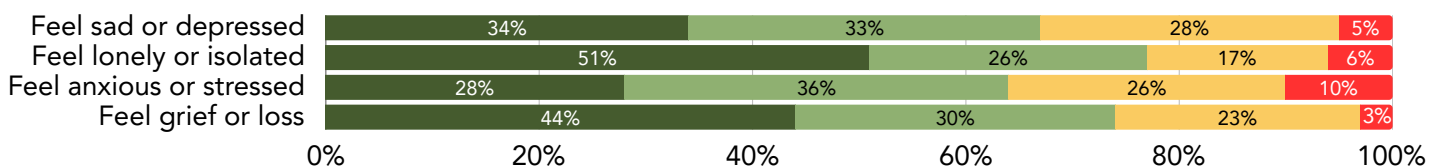
Data indicates that social participation opportunities in Watsonville are strongly anchored in formal settings, particularly the **Watsonville Senior Center** and affiliated community resource programs. Utilization of these spaces is consistently high, especially among seniors who may be more vulnerable, 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

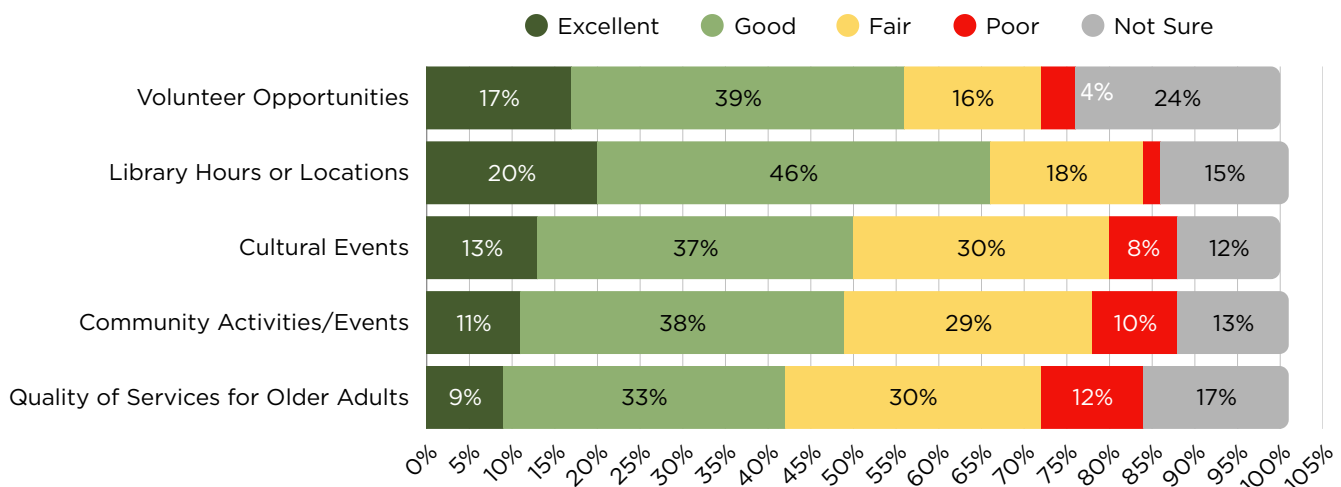


## Current Status

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

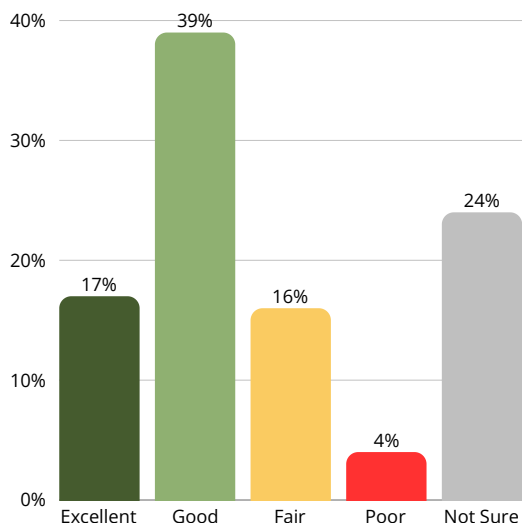


## Current Status

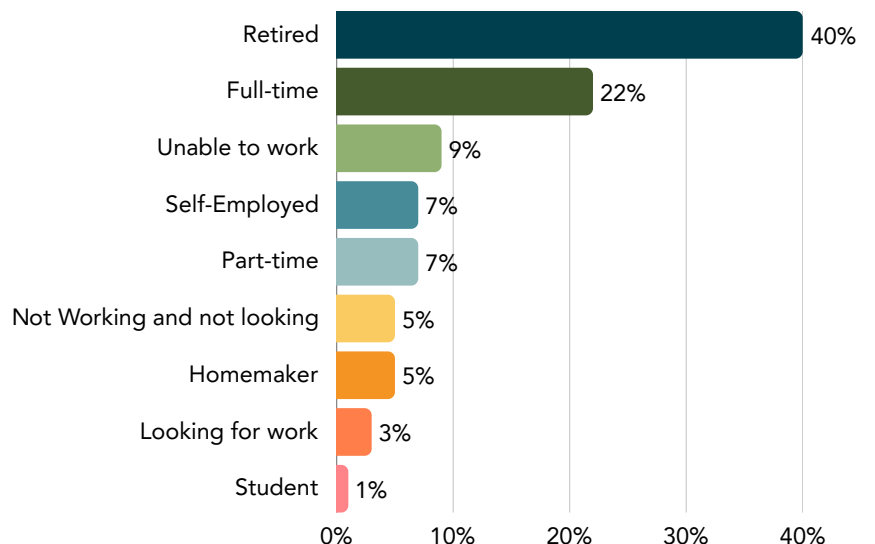
Survey responses indicate that many current and future older adults in Watsonville feel there are plenty of volunteer opportunities available and value having options to stay civically engaged. Volunteerism remains an important and accessible way for residents to stay connected to their community.

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

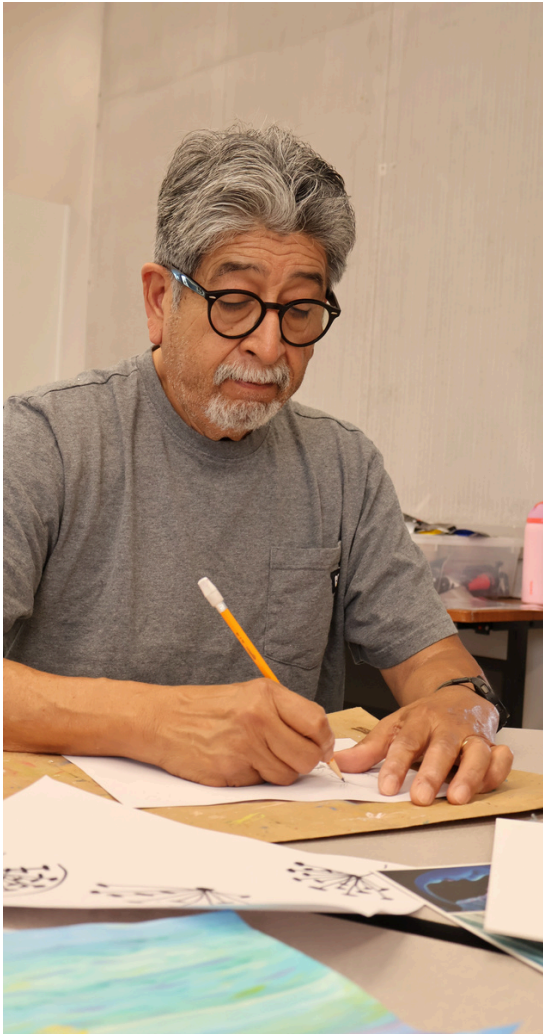


Strategic Action	Key Actions Year 1-2	Measure	Expected Outcomes
Promote civic education and engagements for older adults	Host an annual nonpartisan civic education event covering voting, local propositions, and the role of city council	Number of events held; number of participants; participant feedback	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

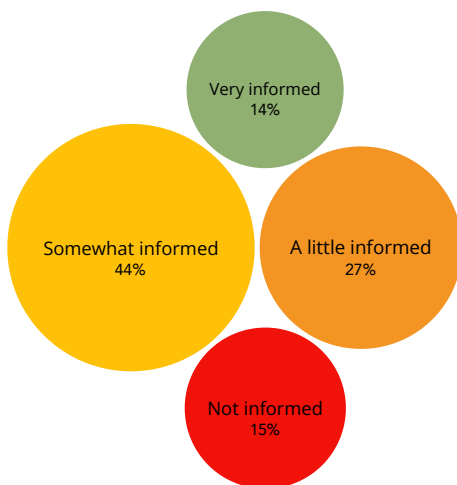


## Current Status

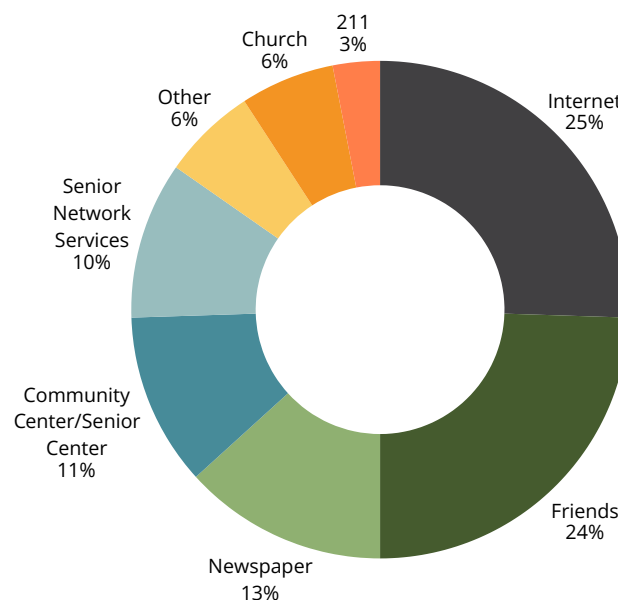
Access to clear, timely, and reliable information remains a challenge for many older adults in Watsonville. Survey results show that only 14% of respondents feel very well informed about services available to older adults, with most relying on informal sources such as friends, family, or internet searches 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



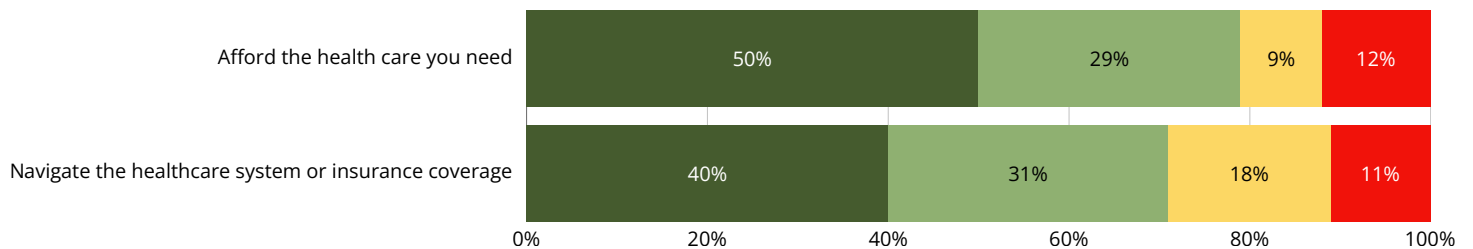
## Current Status

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.