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A City Like Me: Santa Cruz

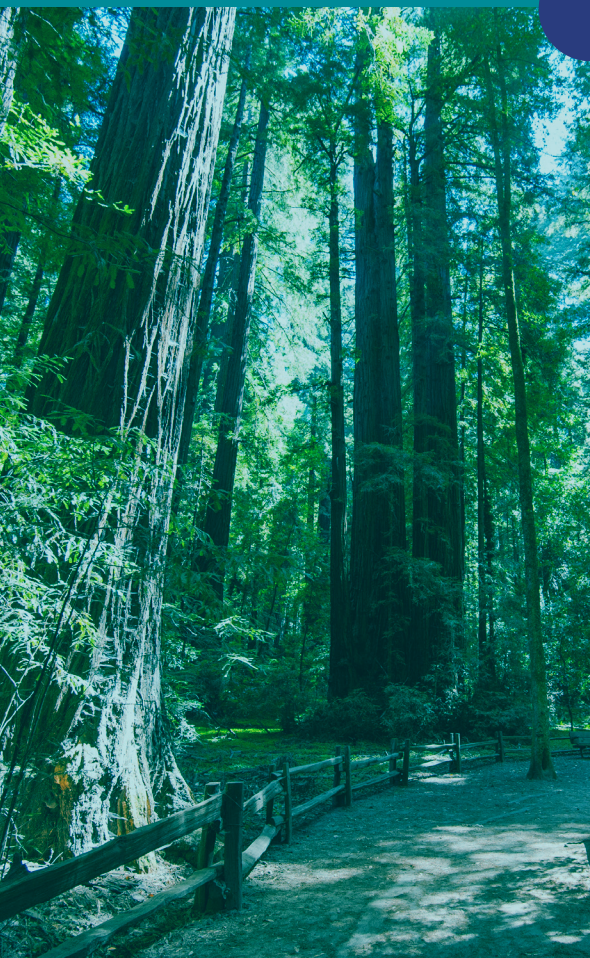
The Value of Representational Government



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Background	3
Methodology & Participants	4
Findings	5
Recommendations	7
Appreciation	8



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is made possible through a partnership between Ventures and the City of Santa Cruz. It expands and complements a similar effort, “A Santa Cruz Like Me,” undertaken in 2021 with the County of Santa Cruz. Both efforts aim to ensure that the diversity of our government reflects the diversity of our region.

Different lived experiences can help inform and shape policy and governance. “A City Like Me: Santa Cruz” paints a picture of the City of Santa Cruz’s elected and appointed representative bodies including City Council and twelve (12) Commissions and Committees. It is a start to explore and identify how we are doing as a city, with a goal of ensuring a resilient, prosperous and equitable future for all.

Key Findings

- 1. Critical Over Representation of Zip Code 95060** Survey results show a 22% over representation as compared to census data (69% vs 47%). This zip code represents 50% of high-income households (\$100K+) and college graduates in the City of Santa Cruz. Thus, making this specific zip code over representation impact all other aspects of lived experience and demographic representation at commission and board levels.
- 2. Critical Over Representation Based on Age, Education Level, and Income** Survey results show critical over representation as compared to census data. This includes zero representation of young adults (ages 18-24) or a 20% variance, a 38% variance in those who indicated having a 4-year college degree or higher (91% vs 53%), and a variance of 26% for households earning \$100K or higher (67% vs 41%). It is important to note that not all residents of zip code 95060 reported their household income, to which may indicate an under reporting of those living in households earning \$100K or higher.
- 3. Critical Under Representation of People of Color** Data shows a 34% under count of people of color, based on race and ethnicity indicators, in the make-up of boards and commissions. With the greatest variance (17%) showing up for Latino identified population based on the survey responses (5%) as compared to city population totals (23%). It is important to note that 43% of Latino identified city residents live in zip code 95060 and that the county also showed a 19% variance for Latinos on their boards and commissions. These findings point to the need for further analysis on Latino engagement and recruitment.
- 4. Critical Under Representation of Renters** Renters make up only 28% of board and commission membership, as compared to 54% of the general population. This was also seen at the County level where a similar 28% variance was found. Given the housing crisis, representation by tenants would provide needed perspectives to housing solutions.



BACKGROUND

“A City Like Me: Santa Cruz” was inspired by efforts within the City of Santa Cruz’ Health in All Policies work and Santa Cruz County’s “A Santa Cruz Like Me” report. The policies and decisions our local leaders form and vote on directly affect our communities. Underscoring the importance that our leaders reflect and understand the diversity of the region.

As an organization interested in building an equitable economy, Ventures recognizes the value of a representative government and how this can affect economic decisions. This data-driven effort also aligns with the City of Santa Cruz’s Strategic Plan goals to create a vibrant city that preserves the diversity and quality of its natural and built environment and creates a satisfying quality of life for its diverse population and workers.



METHODOLOGY

The survey was delivered in the Summer of 2022 to City of Santa Cruz’s commissions, committees, and City Council members to voluntarily disclose demographic and population descriptive indicators. The data collected was compared to American Community Survey (ACS) and U.S. Census population-level data using DataShare Santa Cruz, the central hub of information for Santa Cruz County. In addition, the team reviewed and compared overall population data from the County’s “A Santa Cruz Like Me” report. The report highlights indicators with variances of 5% or higher from the population, with special review of variances of 10% or higher.

PARTICIPATION

All commissions and boards participated in the survey, with 63% of all possible respondents completing the survey. It is important to note that some participants opted out of certain questions. City survey percentages reflect calculations based solely on data attained from respondents that completed the respective survey question.

	City Survey Data	City Data	City Variance	County Survey Data	County Variance
Zipcode					
95060	69%	47%	22%	22%	4%
95062	26%	36%	-10%	14%	0%
95063	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
95064	3%	9%	-6%	n/a	n/a
95065	2%	8%	-6%	7%	4%
Age					
Under 18	0%	15%	-15%	n/a	n/a
18-24	0%	20%	-20%	0%	-14%
25-64	65%	47%	18%	67%	18%
65-84	35%	16%	19%	35%	19%
85-up	0%	2%	-2%	0%	-2%
Gender					
Female	52%	49%	3%	61%	10%
Male	45%	51%	-6%	38%	-11%
Nonbinary	2%	n/a	n/a	1%	n/a
Transgender	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Disability Identity					
Yes	9%	9%	-0%	17%	-17%
No	91%	91%	-0%	77%	n/a



	City Survey Data	City Data	City Variance	County Survey Data	County Variance
Race and Ethnicity					
American Indian and Alaska Native	0%	1%	-1%	2%	2%
Asian (Non Hispanic or Latino)	2%	8%	-6%	2%	-6%
Black or African American	3%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Hispanic or Latino	5%	23%	-17%	16%	-19%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%	0.2%	-0.2%	n/a	n/a
White	85%	72%	13%	72%	-13%
Other (Non Hispanic or Latino)	0%	11%	-11%	n/a	n/a
Education					
High school diploma or equivalent	2%	18%	-16%	2%	-14%
Some college, no degree	5%	22%	-17%	7%	-15%
Associate degree	2%	7%	-5%	4%	-4%
Bachelor's degree	49%	30%	19%	33%	10%
Master's degree	33%	15%	18%	28%	17%
Doctorate	9%	4%	5%	11%	9%
Professional degree	0%	4%	-4%	6%	3%
Veteran Status					
Yes	7%	9%	-2%	92%	n/a
No	93%	91%	2%	8%	n/a
Housing Status					
Homeowner	71%	46%	24%	77%	26%
Renter	28%	54%	-26%	22%	28%
Other	2%	n/a	2%	1%	2%
Income					
Less than \$15,000	0%	10%	-10%	n/a	n/a
\$15,000 to \$24,999	2%	8%	-6%	n/a	n/a
\$25,000 to \$34,999	0%	6%	-6%	n/a	n/a
\$35,000 to \$49,999	2%	9%	-6%	n/a	n/a
\$50,000 to \$74,999	12%	14%	-2%	n/a	n/a
\$75,000 to \$99,999	16%	12%	4%	n/a	n/a
\$100,000 to \$124,999	21%	9%	12%	n/a	n/a
\$125,000 to \$149,999	7%	8%	-1%	n/a	n/a
\$150,000 to \$199,999	23%	9%	15%	n/a	n/a
\$200,000 and Over	16%	15%	1%	n/a	n/a

KEY FINDINGS

1 Critical Over Representation of Zip Code 95060.

Survey results show a 22% over representation as compared to census data (69% vs 47%). This zip code represents the area known as the Westside of Santa Cruz, which includes downtown and areas surrounding the University of California, Santa Cruz. It is important to note that based on the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 50% of high-income households (\$100K+) and college graduates in the city reside in this zip code. Thus, making this specific zip code over representation impact all other aspects of lived experience and demographic representation at commission and board levels.

2 Critical Over Representation Based on Age, Education Level, and Income.

Survey results show critical over representation as compared to census data based on age, education level, and income. This includes:

- 0% representation of young adults (ages 18-24), or a variance of 20%. This is reflected in part by an over representation in both working adults (ages 25-64) and retirees (ages 65+).
- 38% variance in those who indicated having a 4-year college degree or higher (91% vs 53%). This includes an 18% over representation of those with Master's degrees; and
- 26% variance for households earning \$100K or higher (67% vs 41%). It is important to note that not all residents of zip code 95060 reported their household income, to which may indicate an under reporting of those living in households earning \$100K or higher.

Given that higher education tends to correlate with higher income, this may impact the ability for inclusive workforce development and economic development policies adopted by the city.

3 Critical Under Representation of People of Color.

Data shows a 34% under count of people of color, based on race and ethnicity indicators, in the make-up of boards and commissions. With the greatest variance (17%) showing up for Latino identified population based on the survey responses (5%) as compared to city population totals (23%). It is important to note that 43% of Latino identified city residents live in zip code 95060 and that the county also showed a 19% variance for Latinos on their boards and commissions. These findings point to the need for further analysis on Latino engagement and recruitment. It is also important to note a variance (11%) in respondents that identified as "other."

4 Critical Under Representation of Renters.

Renters make up only 28% of board and commission membership, as compared to 54% of the general population. This was also seen at the County level where a similar 28% variance was found. Given the housing crisis, representation by tenants would provide needed perspectives to housing solutions.

While these findings are grouped by individual indicators, we recognize that they all can and do impact each other. For example, higher education tends to correlate with a higher income, which may impact residents' ability to afford home ownership.





RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create a Committee to Review Variances and Propose Solutions. In alignment with City of Santa Cruz’s vision to create a satisfying quality of life for its diverse population and workers, it is recommended that a committee be formed that includes community members from groups that are under represented to provide recommendations to address variances in the next 6 months. Committee members would be charged with exploring solutions to decrease existing variances and monitoring progress. The committee should report on their progress within one year of its creation.

2. Embed Collection of Demographic Information During Application and Onboarding. To capture a complete picture of who is applying and ultimately appointed, it is recommended that demographic information be collected during the application process for all board and commission positions. Elected officials should also receive a City demographic report during onboarding. This information should be reviewed on a timely basis to ensure outreach is reaching all members of the community.

3. Educate Applicants on the Demographic Information Collection as a Key Strategic. To support the engagement and data collection process, it is important that candidates for appointment understand the purpose and role of the data collection process. This includes the need for participants to answer all questions in the survey. Elected officials with appointment power should help inform candidates and staff of the value of the process in alignment with the city’s goals and strategy.

4. Include City Data Review as Part of the Onboarding Process. It is recommended that the onboarding process for appointees, including those with appointment power, include a review of the demographic makeup of the city and the data dashboards that are available. Furthermore, appointees and elected members should receive guidance and training on ensuring they consider experience of population or groups not currently represented, including providing language accessibility for non-English speakers.

5. Work with the County of Santa Cruz to Review Variances Within Both City and County. Given some populations were found to be under represented both at the city and county level, it is recommended these two jurisdictions work together to identify common causes, leverage approaches, and propose solutions.



APPRECIATION

About Ventures

Ventures partners with rural Latino working-class families in California's Central Coast to implement transformational programs that activate and strengthen their economic and political power. Together, we are working towards a shared and prosperous economic future where zip code, race, gender, or immigration status do not dictate income or wealth. sccvonline.org

About Health In All Policies Committee

Nestled between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Monterey Bay, the City of Santa Cruz' unrivalled environment creates a thriving and open culture that invites innovation, entrepreneurship, and an ethos of keeping it real. Known for its vibrant community and pristine natural environments, the City is home to 65,000 residents and welcomes tourists from across California and the world. The economy is anchored in tourism and technology and is home to world class arts, cultural and education institutions. Distinguished by residents with diverse ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds and life experiences, Santa Cruz offers an incredible quality of life. In 2017 Time Magazine was named the third Healthiest and Happiest City in the US. In 2018, the city was named one of the "Top 100 Best Places to Live" by livability.com and one of the "30 Best Small Cities in the U.S." by National Geographic's Traveler magazine. Through its Health in All Policies initiative initiated in 2019, the City has prioritized community well-being through a focus on equity, public health and sustainability in its policy making; Santa Cruz Like me is an outcome of the Health in All Policies initiative.