



2024-2025 Annual Report

MAY 8, 2025

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & EDUCATION COMMITTEE



COMMISSIONER KUCHAREWSKI

Citywide



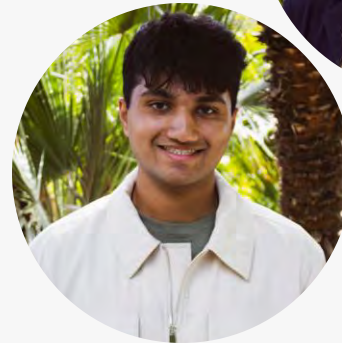
COMMISSIONER MISHRA

District 1



**COMMISSIONER
MASCARENHAS**

District 10, Chair



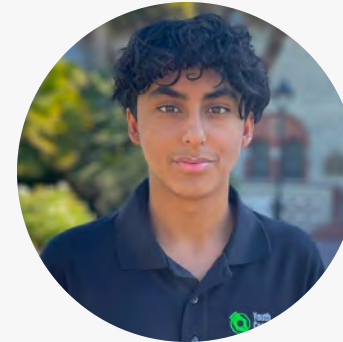
**COMMISSIONER
PRADEEPKUMAR**

District 2, Outreach



COMMISSIONER SINGH

District 9



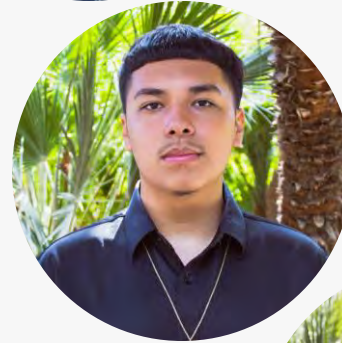
COMMISSIONER SANCHEZ

District 3, Chair



**COMMISSIONER
GONZALES-MUÑIZ**

District 8



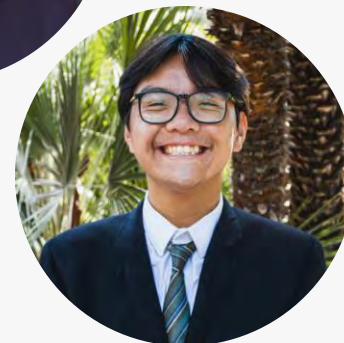
COMMISSIONER ARROYO

District 4



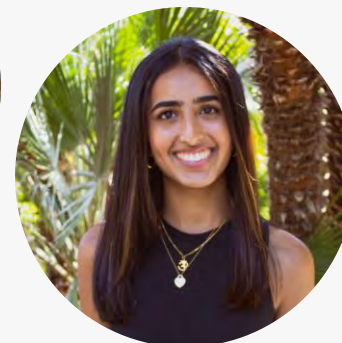
COMMISSIONER VU

District 7



COMMISSIONER LIEU

District 5, Vice Chair



COMMISSIONER BANSAL

District 6, Communications

**Youth
Commission**
CITY OF SAN JOSE

OUTREACH PLAN

Promote Youth Commission and Youth Advisory Council (YAC) events, connect with community-based organizations, and develop partnerships to support the Youth Commission work plan.



Objectives

Increase the number of youths who know about the Youth Commission and participate in YACs.

Strategies

Promote via social media, develop flyers, and share information with schools and youth organizations.

Channels

Youth Commission social media, school distribution lists, local libraries, community centers, Councilmember newsletters, attending community events, and hosting town halls and summits.

Metrics for Success

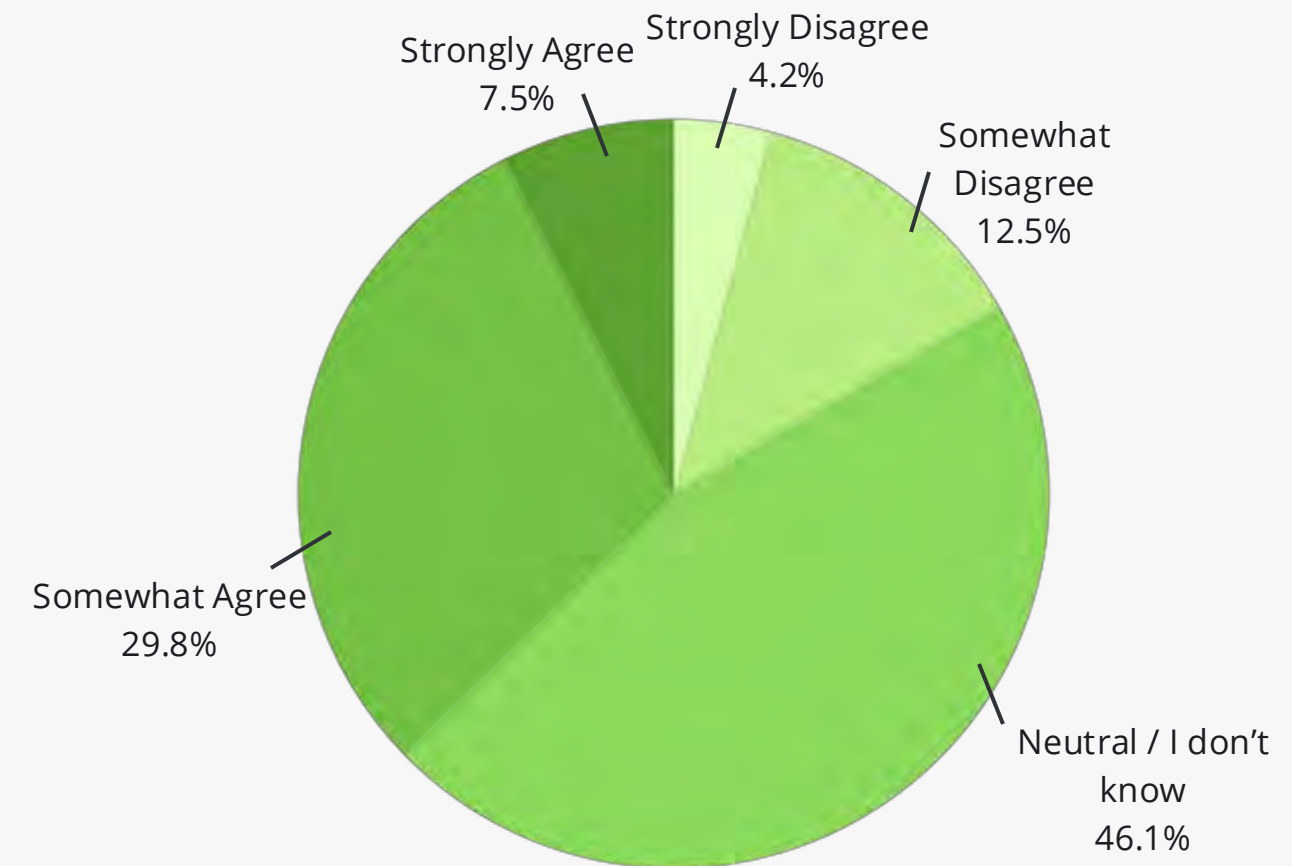
Engagement across social media, youth participation in District YACs and Youth Commission events, District YAC and Youth Commission applications, and YAC Participation Survey.

YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY

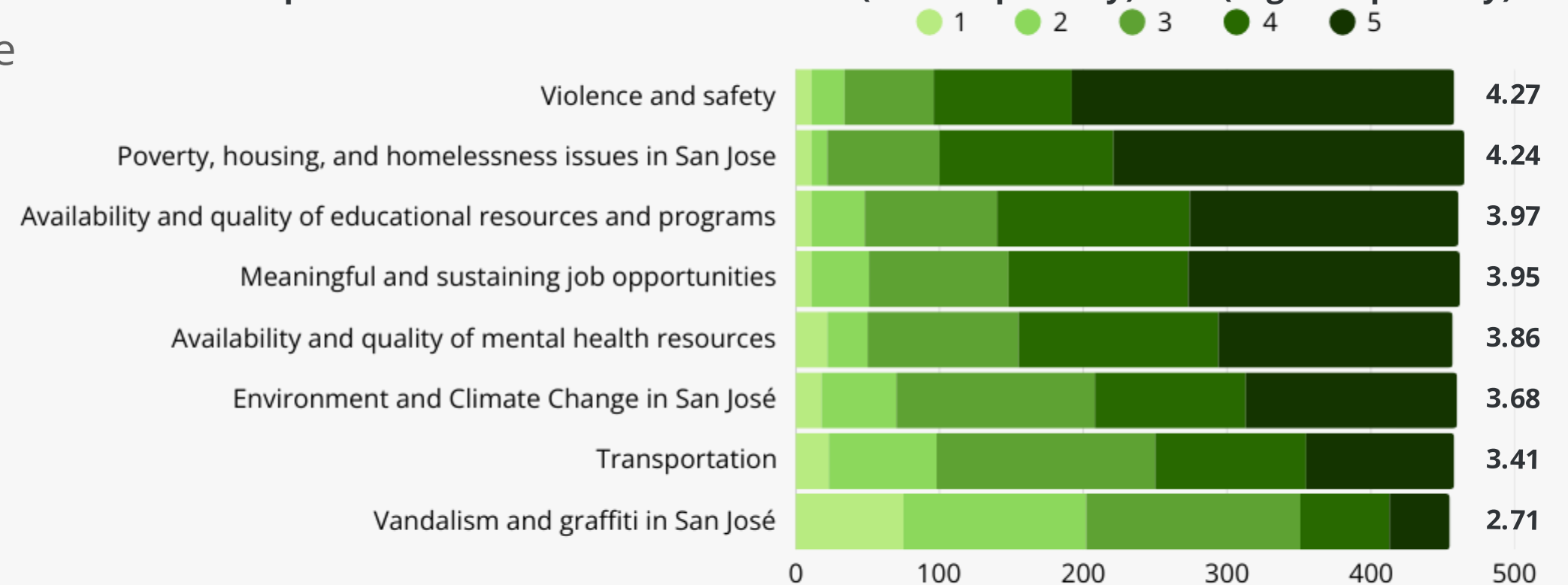
The Youth Commission creates and distributes an annual survey to youth throughout San José. The survey serves as a tool for gauging youth priorities and sentiments toward various issues and Commission activities. This year, the survey collected **463** responses.

These responses illustrate opportunities for outreach around program and resource awareness. The Youth Commission's work plan supports increasing youth engagement in the design and implementation of community programs and overall participation in local government.

Do you agree with the following statement:
The local City of San José government reflects youth priorities.



Importance of Issues on a scale of 1 (lowest priority) to 5 (highest priority)



EXPLORE AND UNDERSTAND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RESOURCES & SERVICES

- Collaborate with local organizations and city departments to conduct research and support a youth-led awareness campaign addressing sexual harassment, assault/domestic violence, and healthy relationships.
- Host an event featuring community partners and organizations that provide support services and resources for mental health, safety, and drug awareness education.



FOSTER ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY AND YOUTH STEWARDSHIP TO CREATE A MORE SUSTAINABLE SAN JOSÉ

- Collaborate with local organizations and city departments to launch a youth-led awareness campaign demonstrating the impact of environmental issues like invasive plant species, microplastics, and recycling and composting practices.
- Collaborate with BeautifySJ and Youth Empowerment Alliance to participate in litter pick-ups, dumpster days, etc.



EVALUATE AND STUDY COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS AND LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES IN SAN JOSÉ

- Receive reports on College and Career Pathways programs and initiatives, including the Resilience Corps Learning Pathway, San José Works Youth Jobs Initiative, and teen programs.
- Conduct a Youth Budget Priority Session and citywide youth survey to gather insight and input from youth on budget priorities.



ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT THE SAN JOSÉ YOUTH COMMISSION INNOVATION COMMITTEE

- Establish a committee structure, develop a comprehensive engagement strategy, and provide regular Youth Commission updates.
- Encourage innovative approaches to identify community issues relating to homelessness, creek clean-up, and pedestrian safety.



YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS (YAC)

These councils provide valuable input and insights on policies and programs directly impacting young people.

From June 2024 to April 2025, Youth Commission and Youth Advisory Council members volunteered a combined **1,085** service hours in dedication to Youth Commission activities and events.



13

The average number of hours spent by 41 Youth Advisory Council members across San José was spent on activities such as attending YAC meetings, supporting district events, and doing policy research.

51

The average number of hours spent by the 11 Youth Commissioners on activities such as attending general meetings, coordinating YAC meetings, conducting community outreach, and crafting policy recommendations.

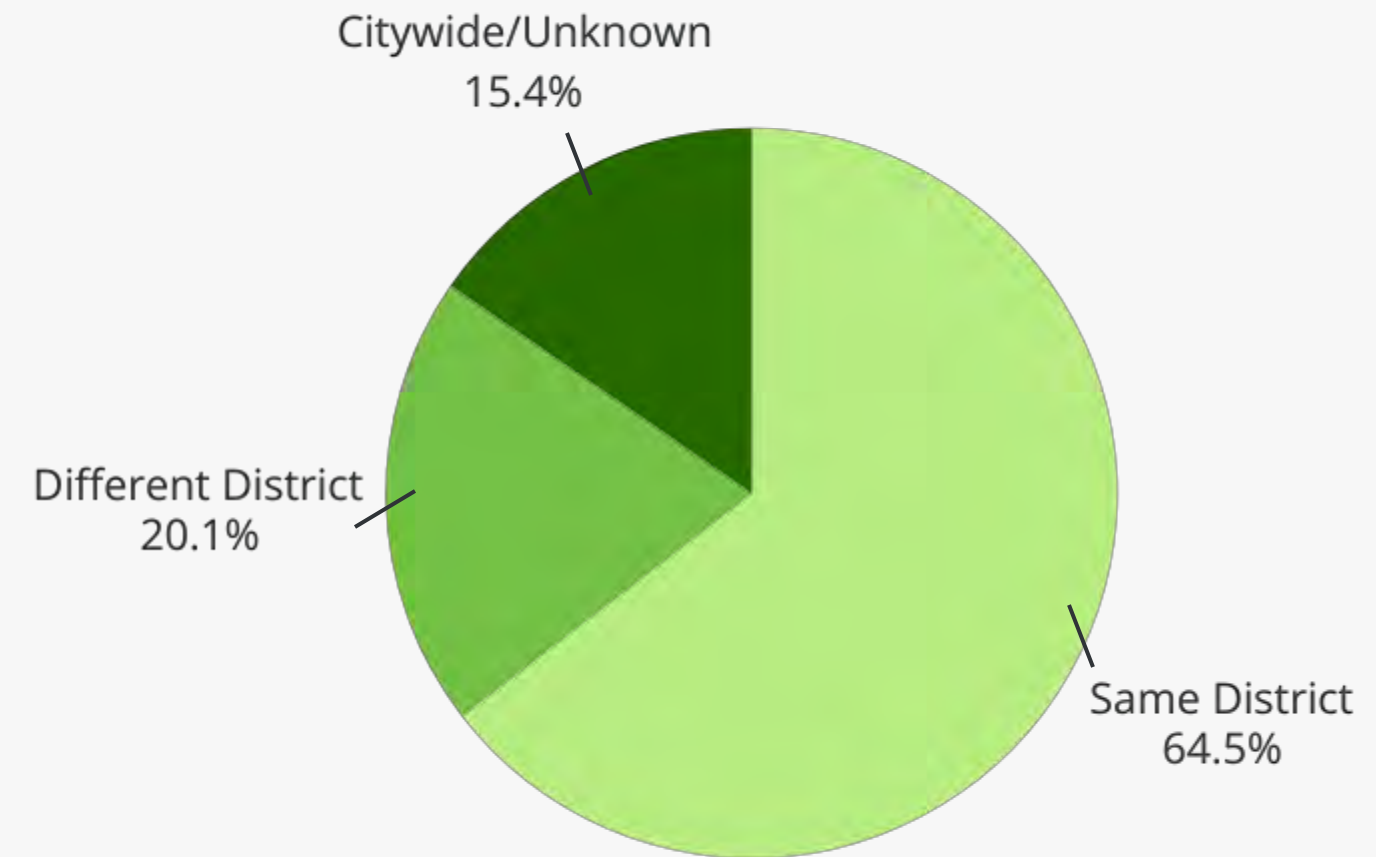


YAC PARTICIPATION

This year, the Youth Commission established an online application to encourage participation and boost YAC recruitment efforts citywide. This digital approach has helped streamline the YAC recruitment process and increase accessibility for interested youth, receiving over 235 applications since August 2024.

Additionally, the Youth Commission established a participation survey for youth volunteers who participated in individual District YAC meetings or Youth Commission events to better understand who is participating and gather program feedback.

Is District YAC Preference Different from the District the Applicant Resides



YAC Program Satisfaction from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)



YOUTH IN ACTION

In addition to the work plan, the Youth Commission has:

- Participated in a joint special meeting with the Library and Education Commission, receiving an update on the Children and Youth Services Master Plan,
- And hosted multiple youth-focused community events, including the Creative Futures Fair.



Joint Commission Meeting

Joined the Library and Education Commission for a Joint Special Meeting on March 19, 2024, to review and discuss the Children and Youth Services Master Plan update.

Creative Futures Fair

The Creative Futures Fair brought together 34 youth-led businesses, 30 student musicians, and 60 high school volunteers to create a powerful platform for young entrepreneurs that attracted nearly 300 community members and featured inspiring speeches from Councilmembers Doan and Campos. This event is in its second year.

Community Events

Organized diverse community events including the Youth Budget Summit, park cleanups, an Eco-Swap, a Gender-Based Violence awareness event, the A.I.M. career conference, tree planting initiatives, clothing and food drives, a Youth Voter Summit, and various cultural celebrations and educational workshops.

WEBSITE

www.sjpl.org/YouthCommission

EMAIL ADDRESS

YouthCommission@sanjoseca.gov

Thank you!



**Youth
Commission**
CITY OF SAN JOSE



**Youth
Commission**
CITY OF SAN JOSE

2024-2025 Annual Report

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The San José Youth Commission is a group of advocates and leaders in their community. As the official advisory group to the Mayor and City Council relaying youth priorities, we take pride in increasing civic engagement and inclusion amongst youth in the city. This year's commission worked tirelessly to engage with youth in their district, relayed priorities to city departments, and engaged with their council members to ensure that the approximately 23,000 youth they represent are reflected in decision-making processes and the city's development. I couldn't be more honored to have led this group of dedicated community leaders.

This year, commissioners utilized the growing awareness, influence, and understanding that the Youth Commission has cultivated in the city over the past couple of years. Having expanded the municipal code to enhance youth participation in local government a year prior and with the passage of the Children and Youth Services Masterplan, the commission built on the momentum it had created in the past couple of years. With the overarching goal of bridging the gap between youth and participation in their local government, commissioners worked collaboratively in ad hoc committees to target specific, actionable items.

One of these objectives included our annual Youth Budget Priorities Survey, which garnered over 500 responses from youth across the city. Among many findings, we are proud to report that we saw an increase in the percentage of youth who could identify ways in which their city government benefited them. We also continued our environmental advocacy and gender-based violence objectives from the previous commission, fostering civic duty, and environmental literacy, and empowering women.





MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Beyond our role as commissioners, leading our Youth Advisory Councils (YACs), and advocating for youth, the Youth Commission has allowed us to develop into more empathetic individuals. I have formed life-long friendships, learned from invaluable mentors, and gained skills that I will carry forward into my future career. It has become a second home, and I found a community I never knew I so firmly belonged to that has taught me invaluable lessons.

The Youth Commission is a space meant for all. It is a space where those with diverse lived experiences, various needs, and varying opinions can voice their concerns and ideas toward building a brighter future.

“...I found a community I never knew I so firmly belonged to that has taught me invaluable lessons.”

Though I wish I could stay on the commission longer, I am excited for a new group of commissioners to continue building equitable and inclusive communities where every young person can thrive and pursue opportunities that are meaningful to them. I look forward to an even greater representation and integration of youth in their local government in the coming years.

With gratitude,

NOLAN MASCARENHAS
CHAIR, YOUTH COMMISSION
CITY OF SAN JOSÉ

YOUTH COMMISSION

The Youth Commission is the official advisory group to the Mayor and City Council. It empowers and encourages youth civic engagement through local and citywide events and initiatives.



Aanya Mishra

Commissioner | District 1

- 2nd year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Lynbrook High School
- Participated on the Gender-Based Violence and Innovation ad hoc committees



Neyha Pradeepkumar

Outreach Officer | District 2

- 2nd year on the Youth Commission
- Junior at Presentation High School
- Participated on the Gender-Based Violence and College and Career ad hoc committees



Edwin Sanchez

Commissioner | District 3

- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Sophomore at Hillbrook High School
- Participated on the Environmental Advocacy ad hoc committee



Genesis Arroyo

Commissioner | District 4

- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Independence High School
- Participated on the Environmental Advocacy and College and Career ad hoc committees

YOUTH COMMISSION

Youth Commissioners develop policy recommendations concerning youth and support youth who serve their community through civic engagement and participation.



Andrew Lieu

Vice Chair | District 5

- 4th year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at William C. Overfelt High School
- Participated on the Gender-Based Violence and College and Career ad hoc committees



Amiya Bansal

Communications Officer | District 6

- 3rd year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Notre Dame
- Participated on the Gender-Based Violence ad hoc committee



Peter Vu

Commissioner | District 7

- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Yerba Buena High School
- Participated on the College and Career ad hoc committee



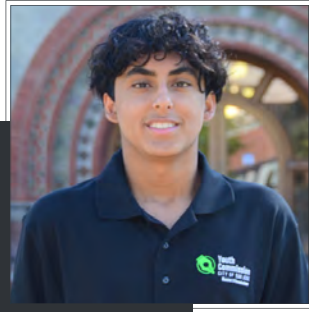
Aldojoell Gonzalez-Muñiz

Commissioner | District 8

- 3rd year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at William C. Overfelt High School
- Participated on the Environmental Advocacy ad hoc committee

YOUTH COMMISSION

The Youth Commission promotes resources and opportunities available to youth and provides equitable access and support to marginalized youth communities.



Agam Singh

Commissioner | District 9

- 4th year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Leigh High School
- Participated on the Environmental Advocacy ad hoc committee



Nolan Mascarenhas

Chair | District 10

- 2nd year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Branham High School
- Participated on the Gender-Based Violence and Environmental Advocacy ad hoc committee
- Intern for the District 10 Council Office



Marian Kucharweski

Commissioner | Citywide

- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Junior at Valley Christian High School
- Participated on the College and Career and Innovation ad hoc committees

STAFF

Emily Terada

Youth Commission
Librarian

Megan Maloy

Senior Librarian

Dziem Nguyen

Administrative Assistant

Vidya Kilambi

Division Manager

Karla Alvarez

Chief of Staff

ADOPTED **WORK PLAN**

The San José Youth Commission developed a Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 and presented it to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee on September 12, 2024.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND SAFETY

- Collaborate with local organizations and city departments to conduct research and support a youth-led awareness campaign addressing sexual harassment, assault/domestic violence, and healthy relationships.
- Host an event featuring community partners and organizations that provide support services and resources for mental health, safety, and drug awareness education.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

- Collaborate with local organizations and city departments to launch a youth-led awareness campaign demonstrating the impact of environmental issues like invasive plant species, microplastics, and recycling and composting practices.
- Collaborate with BeautifySJ and Youth Empowerment Alliance to participate in litter pick-ups, dumpster days, etc.

COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS

- Receive reports on College and Career Pathways programs and initiatives, including the Resilience Corps Learning Pathway, San José Works Youth Jobs Initiative, and teen programs.
- Conduct a Youth Budget Priority Session and citywide youth survey to gather insight and input from youth on budget priorities.

YOUTH COMMISSION INNOVATION COMMITTEE

- Establish a committee structure and develop a comprehensive engagement strategy and provide regular Youth Commission updates.
- Encourage innovative approaches to identify community issues relating to homelessness, creek clean-up, and pedestrian safety.

OUTREACH PLAN

The San José Youth Commission developed and accepted an Outreach Plan for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 at their meeting on September 23, 2024.

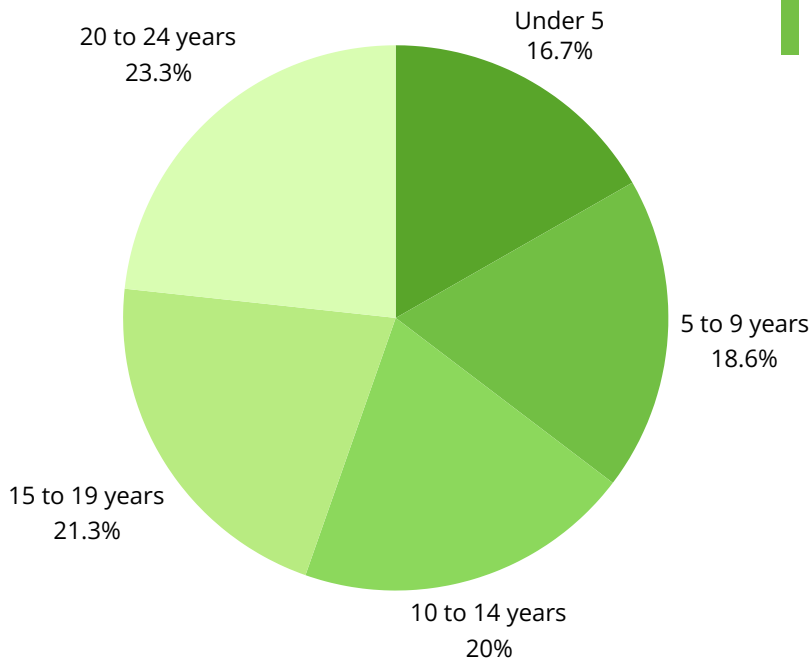
PROMOTE YOUTH COMMISSION AND YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL EVENTS

Outcome	Strategies	Success Metrics
Have engaged YAC members and youth who participate in work plan initiatives.	Implement a multi-channel recruitment strategy for YACs and Youth Commission through library communications, school outreach, social media, and council member networks.	Engagement across social media, the number of youths who know about the Youth Commission, and the number of Youth Commission applications.
Increased YAC and Youth Commission participation from SJPL library communities.		Number of youths who participate in Youth Advisory Councils.

CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT THE YOUTH COMMISSION WORK PLAN

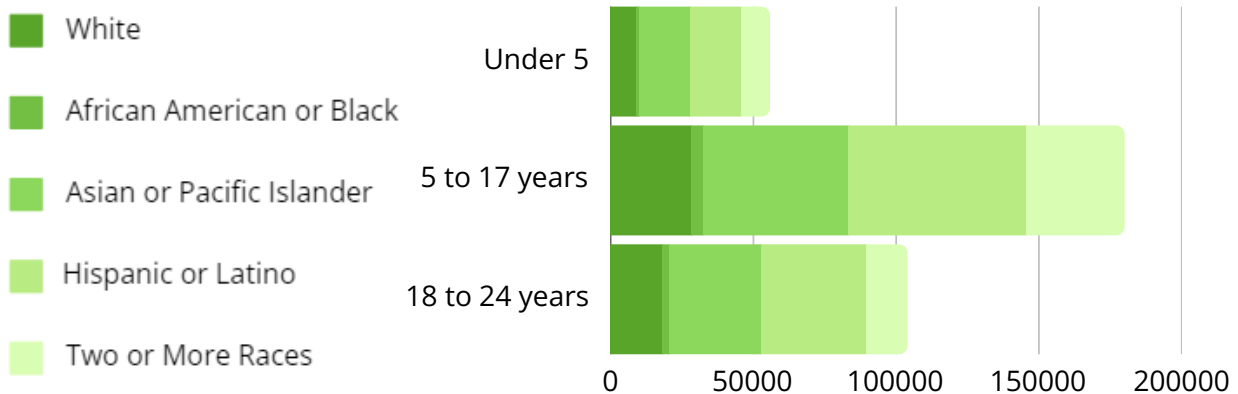
Outcome	Strategies	Success Metrics
Host community based organizations and city departments as presenters at Youth Commission meetings.	Identify organizations, departments, groups, and activities that align with the Youth Commission work plan.	Number of presentations at Youth Commission meetings and the Youth Commission work plan objectives.

YOUTH IN SAN JOSÉ



CHILD, YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT POPULATIONS

San José is the most populous city in Santa Clara County, with children, youth, and young adults under age 24 accounting for nearly 30% of its almost one million residents. Of these, 37.5% are Asian, 31% are Latino/x, 24.4% are White, 3% have Black/African ancestry, and 4.1% identify as another race or ethnicity. Approximately 40% of residents are foreign-born, and 50% speak a language other than English.



YOUTH AND POVERTY LEVELS

While San José is one of the wealthiest cities in the country, many families are struggling financially in the region. 8.2% of San José residents under the age of 18 are below the federal poverty level, compared to 7.4% of the overall population of the city. For families with children under the age of 18, 6.5% live below the poverty level.

	Total Population	Below Poverty Level
Under 5	47,067	10.4% (4,915)
5 to 17	146,563	8% (11,723)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

SURVEY RESPONSE DEMOGRAPHICS

The Youth Commission creates and distributes an annual survey to youth throughout San José that serves as a tool for gauging youth priorities and sentiments towards various issues and Commission activities. This year, the survey collected **463 responses** with an **82% completion rate** and was a foundation for our work plan and budget advocacy efforts. The diverse representation of respondents ensures that the priorities identified truly reflect the needs of San José youth across various communities.

Our Annual Youth Priorities Survey ran from October 28 to December 9, 2024, featuring 32 thoughtfully designed questions.



- 54% identify as a woman
- 39% identify as a man
- 9% consider themselves low-income
- **14% have struggled with their mental health**



- 51% identify as Asian or Pacific Islander, including Vietnamese
- 26% identify as Hispanic or Latino
- 10% identify as White



- 11% identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community
- 3% identify as non-binary or transgender



- 56% are in high school
- 23% are in middle school
- **93% agree that education is important to achieve future goals**



- 55% speak English at home
- 14% speak Spanish at home
- 9% speak Indian languages at home
- 7% speak Vietnamese at home
- 7% speak Mandarin or Cantonese at home



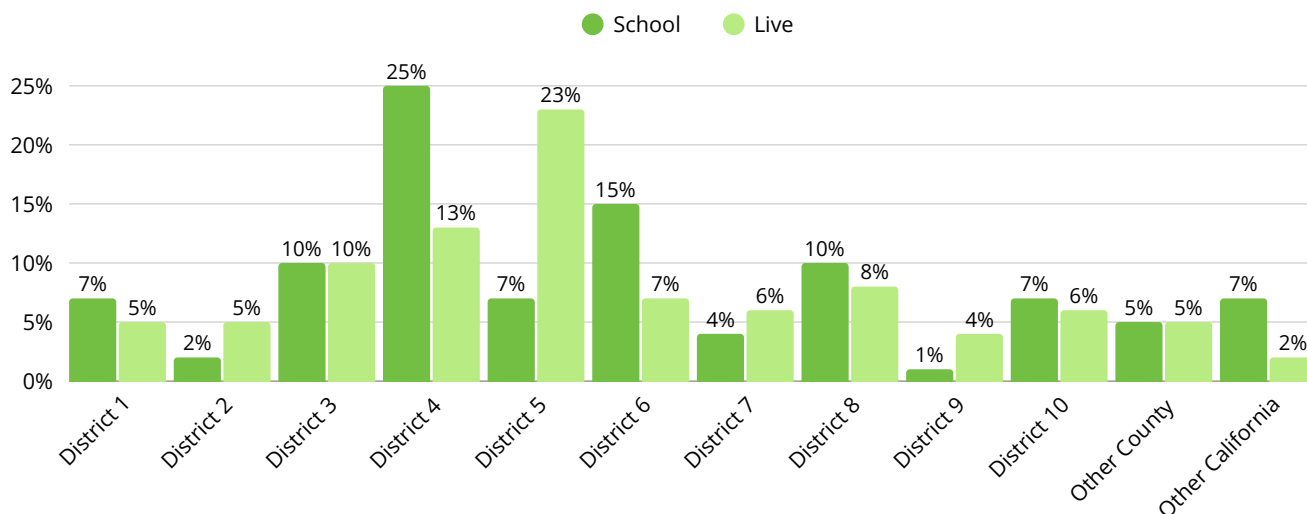
- **21% are part of the first generation in the US**
- 6% were born outside of the US
- 9% would be the first in their family to go to college

None of the questions required responses, allowing participants to share what they felt comfortable with. Our outreach was successful across multiple channels, with 209 responses through flyers, 182 through social media, and 72 through email. We incentivized participation with Apple AirPods drawings, achieving our impressive completion rate.

Our survey captured a diverse cross-section of San José youth: 56% high school students and 23% middle school students; 51% Asian or Pacific Islander, 26% Hispanic/Latino, and 10% White; with 55% speaking English at home and 14% Spanish. Key demographics included 54% women, 14% reporting mental health challenges, 11% LGBTQIA+ community members, 21% first-generation Americans, and 9% potential first-generation college students.

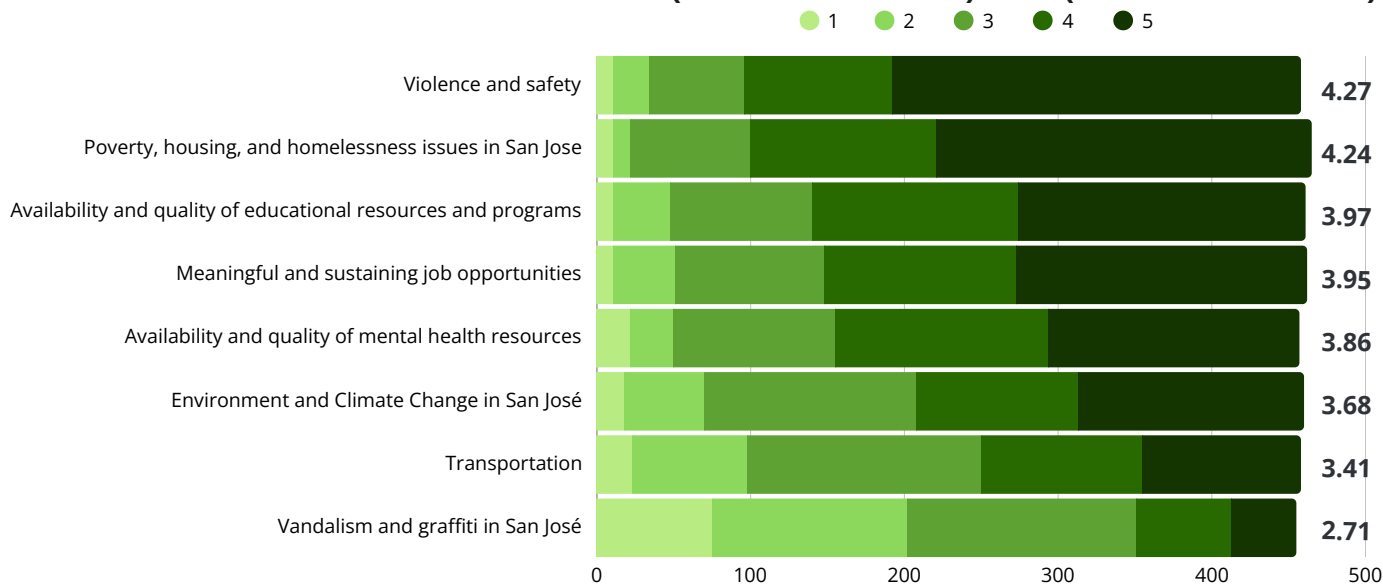
YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY GO TO SCHOOL AND LIVE?



Looking at where our youth live and attend school, District 4 shows the highest school attendance at 25%, which we attribute to a spike in responses from Piedmont Middle School. District 5 has the highest residence rate at 23%. We see good representation across all districts. Some respondents come from other parts of Santa Clara County, showing our broader regional impact.

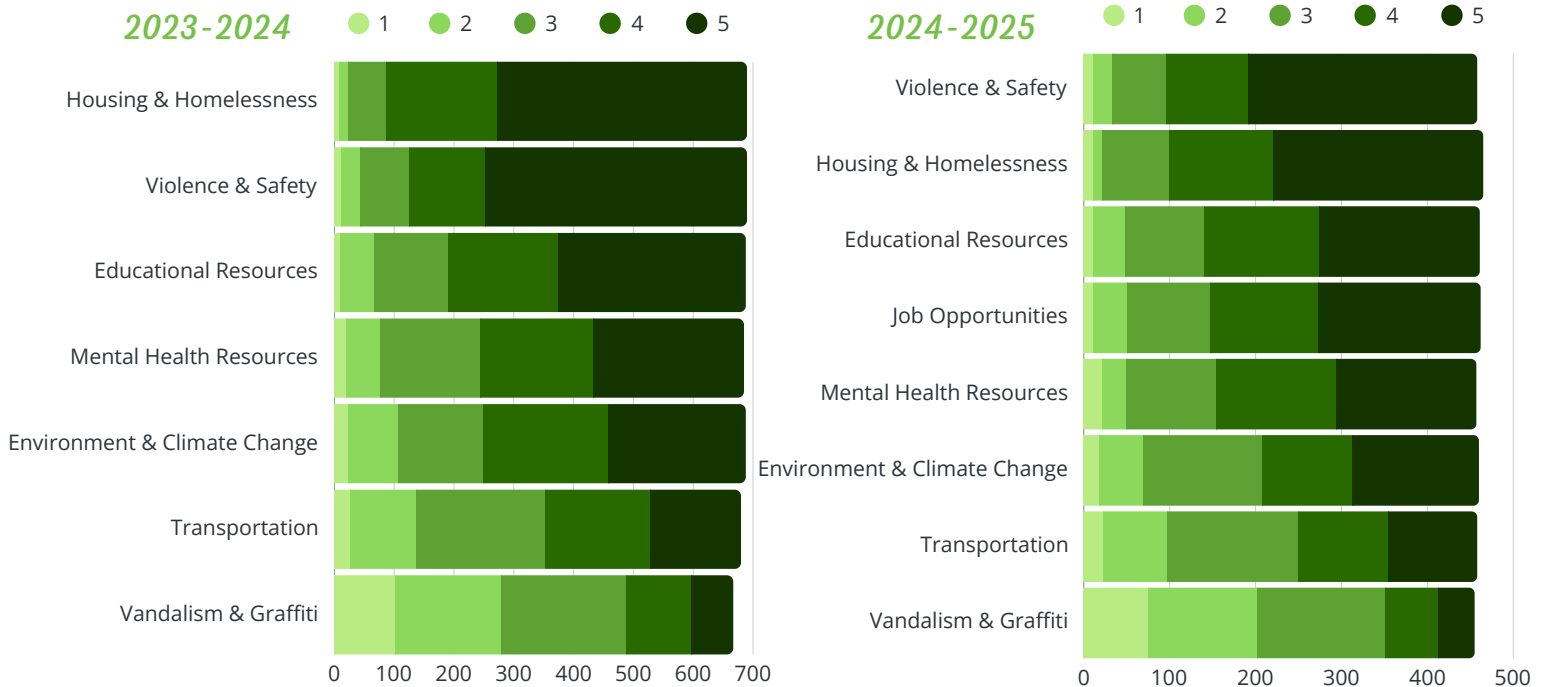
IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES ON A SCALE OF 1 (LOWEST PRIORITY) TO 5 (HIGHEST PRIORITY)



Our survey identified several critical priorities for San José youth. Our youth ranked various issues on a scale of 1 to 5. The top priorities are: Violence and safety (4.27/5), Poverty, housing, and homelessness (4.24/5), Educational resources and programs (3.97/5), Job opportunities (3.95/5), and Mental health resources (3.86/5). This shows our youth are deeply concerned about fundamental safety and stability issues in our community.

YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

COMPARISON TO LAST YEAR



Compared to last year's results, we see increased concern about violence and safety. Housing and homelessness remain top priorities, and educational resources consistently rank high. A notable addition is that job opportunities are emerging as a key concern. Our youth provided thoughtful suggestions for addressing these issues: mental health resources in schools, better bike lanes and street lighting, integrated approach to homeless services, environmental initiatives, community engagement through workshops and panels, and expanded transportation options.

"Creating more programs like sjcccs, proper harm reduction education, more funding for schools and arts programs ending the war on drugs."

"Installing mental health resources in schools across San José and highlighting their abilities and availability to students could be helpful."

"First, understanding our community is crucial when addressing these issues. The need to bring communities together and be more involved whether it be through workshops and panels would be beneficial to get our input about these issues. After this we can work with the community and ask what they want to see get done."

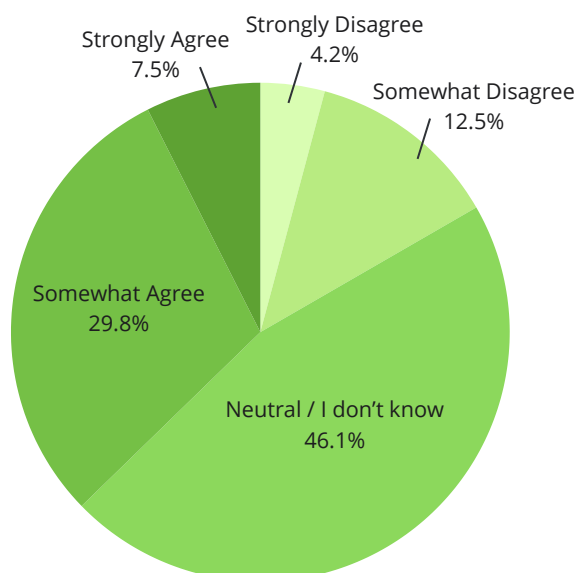
"Advocate for better bike lanes, street lighting, and safer crosswalks."

"Third spaces and other problems that require more creation of physical spaces will need to have budget allocated to it, meaning San José needs to raise more money and/or reallocate funds..."

YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

Do you agree with the following statement:

THE LOCAL CITY OF SAN JOSÉ GOVERNMENT REFLECTS YOUTH PRIORITIES.



Comparison With Last Year's Responses

	2023-2024	2024-2025	% Change
Strongly Agree	4.9%	7.5%	+2.6%
Somewhat Agree	25.1%	29.8%	+4.7%
Neutral / I don't know	51.5%	46.1%	-5%
Somewhat Disagree	12.2%	12.5%	+0.3%
Strongly Disagree	6.4%	4.2%	-2.2%

When asked how youth feel about local government and how they agree with the statement "The local City of San José government reflects youth priorities," 37.3% feel the city government reflects youth priorities (which combines "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree"), while 46.1% are neutral or unsure. Compared to last year, "Strongly agree" increased by 2.6%, and "Somewhat agree" increased by 4.7%. The neutral response decreased by 5%, suggesting more youth are forming opinions about local government as well as engaging more. We're seeing a positive trend, but there is still room for improvement. Direct quotes from our youth show a desire for more engagement with city leadership, recognition of existing youth programs, concerns about implementing youth suggestions, appreciation for current initiatives, and calls for more direct communication.

"I think it does in some ways, but it fails to connect with what the local youth are facing in today's society"

"I do not know much about my community reflecting youth priorities, but I do like the many volunteer options for teens available at my library :D"

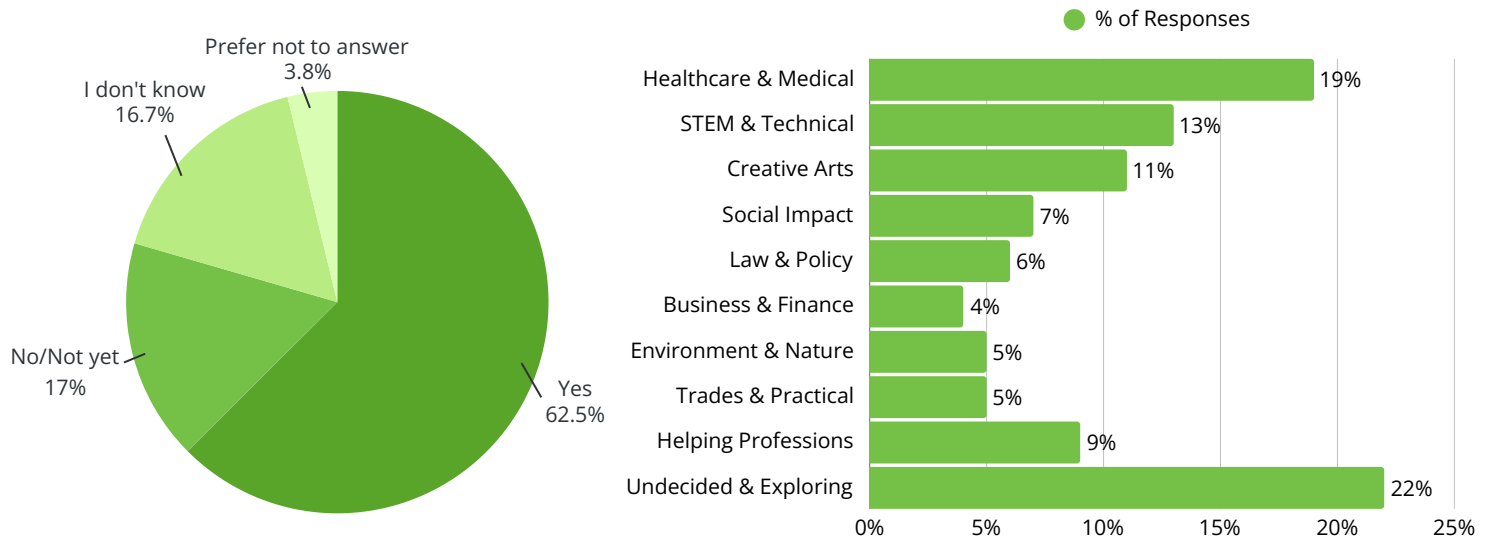
"I do think the City is responsive to some youth concerns, but I remain pessimistic about the ability of youth to get much done in regards of actually swaying policymakers' opinions. Simply put, youth don't have votes and as such they don't have a voice. I'm sure that of the many valid suggestions that are filtered through YACs and policy inquiries only a select few are implemented, and mainly politically expedient ones. Unless voting infrastructure is made more accessible to young people youth will continue to lack any political capital besides a small ability to push for or against certain policy here and there."

"I know many youth climate groups who constantly reach out to the city but never even get a response"

"I don't think I know enough to answer this, but when I look up at graffiti being regularly covered up on the highway bridges and then I look down and see homeless tents I feel like their priorities are off. But then again one is more of a long term fixing process than the other."

YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

DO YOU HAVE A DREAM JOB OR CAREER YOU'D LIKE TO PURSUE? IF YOU HAVE A DREAM JOB, WHAT IS IT, AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU?



Regarding future careers, 62.5% have identified dream careers, 17% are still exploring, and 16.7% are unsure. Popular career interests include healthcare and medical fields, leading at 19%, strong interest in STEM fields at 13%, creative arts at 11%, social impact roles (7%), and policy & law (6%). Youth shared inspiring reasons for their career choices, including the desire to help others, interest in solving community problems, family influences, creative expression, and environmental concerns.

"At first thought, I've always believed my career should benefit others, and the first way I thought of was becoming a doctor. And currently, I'm really interested into science, so I pursue becoming an anesthesiologist."

"Another ideal job would be a job in community forestry as a arborist. This is important to me because I have noticed the lack of canopy cover in my community, East Side San José. With better canopy cover we can reduce the heat island effect and make our neighborhoods better spaces to recreate."

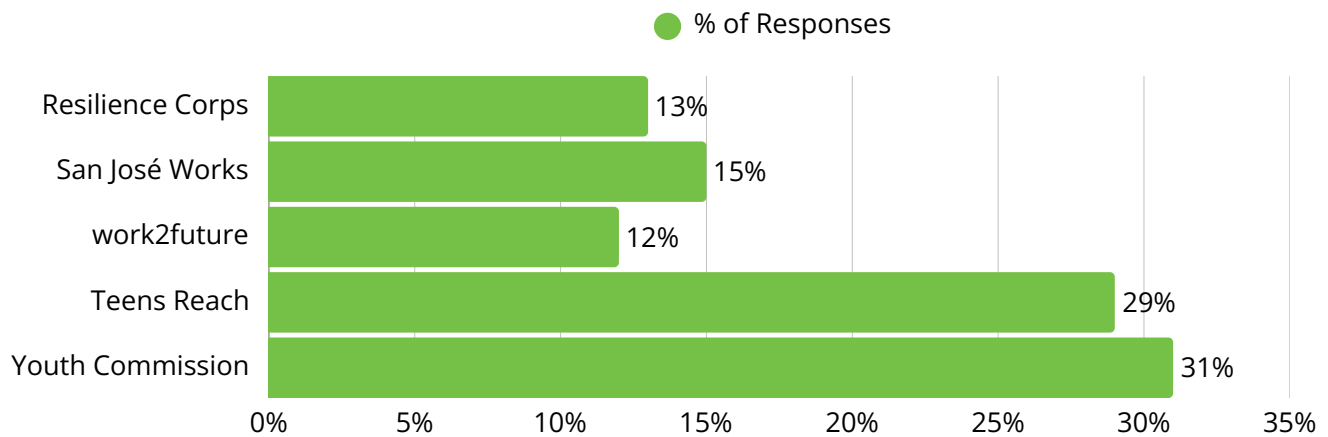
"Journalism. Right now, the media is very polarized, just like the country. People are spitting out facts that aren't backed up, videos that are cut out important context and make our world leaders look incompetent or frail. This is not the type of journalism I want to see. I want to see journalism that lays down all the facts, that gives people insight into a subject, and that isn't purposely distorting someone because they don't agree with them."

"I want to be a nurse and it's important to me because I get to help others"

"My dream job is an engineer. I haven't decided what kind of engineer but I'm thinking about mechanical engineer. It's important to me because it's what my dad's job is and he does a lot of work to get the money we need to live our normal lives."

YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

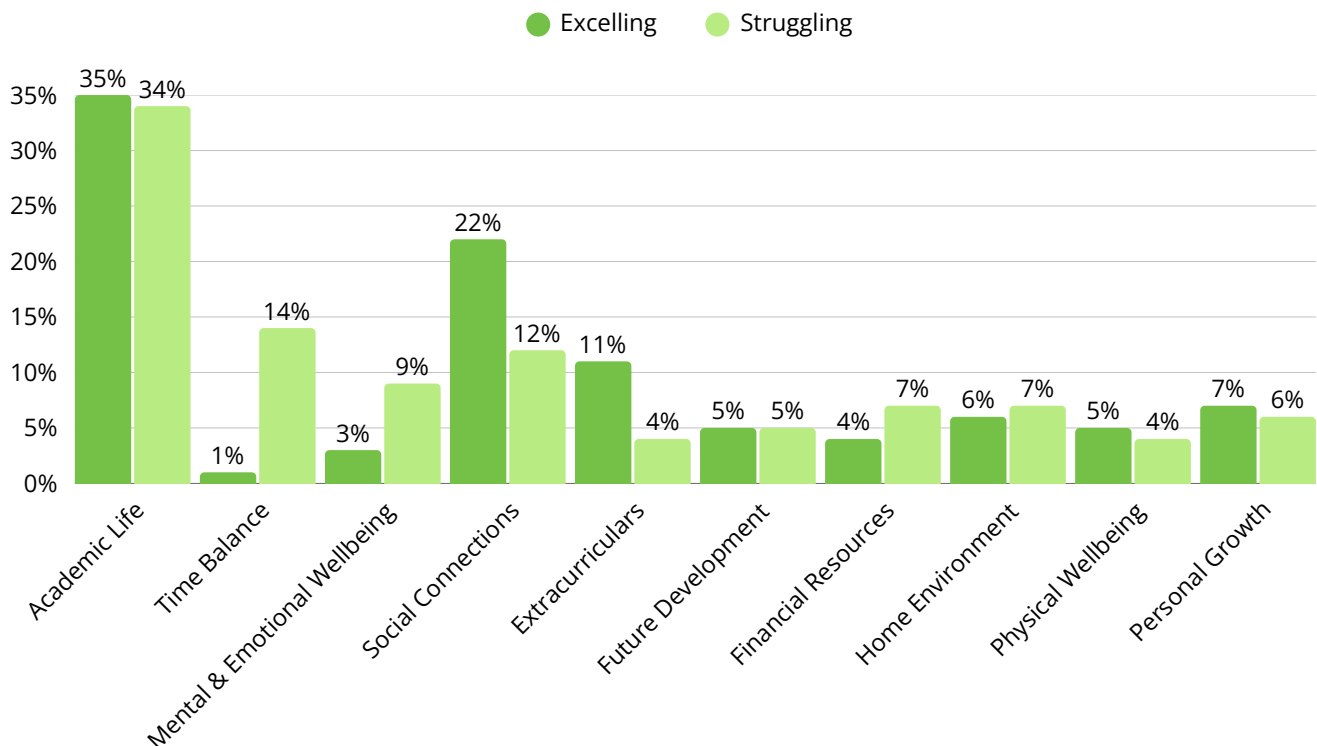
ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING SAN JOSÉ PROGRAMS?



Familiarity with San José programs shows the Youth Commission has the highest recognition at 31%, with Teens Reach following at 29%. There's room to improve awareness of other valuable programs like San José Works and work2future (12%).

Key findings about what students are experiencing indicate that academic life shows mixed results: 35% excelling and 34% struggling, as if they are two sides of the same coin. Time management is a significant challenge; mental and emotional well-being needs attention, and strong social connections are reported among many students.

WHAT ARE YOU EXCELLING OR STRUGGLING WITH THIS YEAR?





WORK PLAN **OBJECTIVE**

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE & SAFETY

Comprising of District 1 Commissioner Aanya Mishra, District 2 Commissioner Neyha Pradeepkumar, District 6 Commissioner Amiya Bansal, District 5 Commissioner and Vice-Chair Andrew Lieu, and District 10 Commissioner and Chair Nolan Mascarenhas, the Gender-Based Violence Ad Hoc Committee first convened in September of 2024.

The ad hoc committee focused its work on the following:

1. Collaborate with local organizations and city departments to conduct research and support an awareness campaign on youth-related issues, including but not limited to: sexual harassment, assault/domestic violence, or healthy relationships
2. Host events featuring community partners and organizations, such as resource fairs, town halls, and workshops, to provide support and education on topics including: mental health, safety, and drug awareness education

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE & SAFETY

As an ad hoc, we did this by:

1. Gathering youth input through our annual Budget Priorities Survey.
2. Researching different community-based organizations specific to the City of San José that work towards promoting anti-gender-based violence initiatives.
3. Implementing an event in partnership with community organizations such as the YWCA to promote healthy relationships and support women's empowerment in our local community.

Gathering Community Input

Understanding the priorities of the youth and population of the San José community is imperative to taking the first steps to combat gender-based violence and recognizing the community's needs. A large part of this initiative was gathering input through our annual Youth Budget Priorities Survey. Notably, Violence and Safety ranked first on a list of issues the youth of San José found important.

Furthermore, the ad hoc gathered input from the personal experiences of the committee's commissioners, which included witnesses of instances regarding gender-based violence, social media discussions, and reflections on the ad hoc's past year's outcomes.



Researching Community Resources

A significant part of our planning process for the community event involved researching and identifying community-based organizations (CBOs) that actively promote anti-gender-based violence initiatives. CBOs play a crucial role in addressing social issues at the grassroots level by offering specialized resources, direct support, and educational programs tailored to the community's needs.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE & SAFETY

Their work is vital in bridging the gap between local government efforts and those who need these services the most.

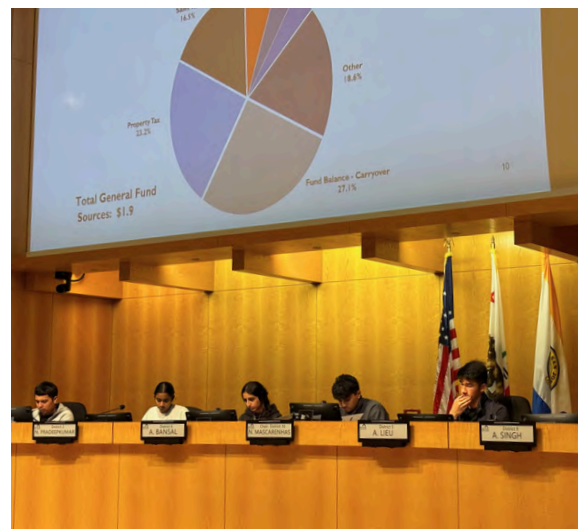
One of the key partnerships we developed was with YWCA Silicon Valley, an organization dedicated to empowering survivors of domestic violence, promoting gender equity, and providing essential support services. Recognizing their extensive experience in advocacy and prevention education, Youth Commissioners met with YWCA representatives in February to formally request their participation in our leadership event.

During this meeting, commissioners emphasized the importance of equipping youth with the knowledge and tools to address gender-based violence in their communities. As a result of this collaboration, YWCA agreed to host a workshop at the event, soon to be providing attendees with expert-led discussions on topics such as healthy relationships.

Community Partnership Event

To advance our objective of hosting educational and support-driven events, the ad hoc committee will organize a gender-based violence (GBV) awareness event featuring the YWCA's workshop on healthy relationships and a keynote speaker. This event will provide resources, interactive discussions, and advocacy tools on key issues such as safety and healthy relationships to empower attendees and promote meaningful change.

Through this initiative, we aim to educate, equip, and inspire attendees to take action against GBV, fostering a stronger, more informed community. ■





WORK PLAN **OBJECTIVE**

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

The San José Youth Commission recognizes the need to alleviate climate change stress among youth. In its August Retreat, the Commission agreed to implement community-wide solutions, awareness campaigns, and youth advocacy.

With that vision in mind, the Commission announced the formation of an Environmental Advocacy ad hoc committee composed of District 3

Commissioner Edwin Sanchez, District 4 Commissioner Genesis Arroyo, District 8 Commissioner Aldo Gonzalez-Muñiz, District 9 Commissioner Agam Singh, and District 10 Commissioner and Chair Nolan Mascarenhas.

The Committee focused on upscaling environmental awareness around native plant rehabilitation, food waste, and litter pickups, all areas of importance detailed in the Commission's 2024-25 Work Plan. The following report presents the work done to achieve the Commission's environmental objectives.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

Basking Ridge Park Tree Planting Project

On May 10th, in collaboration with the Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services (PRNS) department and the Mayor's Fund, the Commission will successfully led the planting of ten new trees at Basking Ridge Park. This initiative aimed to enhance urban green spaces, improve air quality, and contribute to local climate resilience. The tree species were selected for their drought tolerance, shade provision, and ability to support native wildlife. Volunteers, including Youth Advisory Council members and community members, will participate in the planting process, underscoring the importance of urban forestry in San José's environmental efforts.

District 1 Adopt-a-Storm Drain Event

As part of the Commission's commitment to stormwater management and pollution reduction, the Commission supported the efforts of the District 1 Council Office to launch an Adopt-a-Storm Drain event in April 2025 at Rainbow Drive.



ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

Volunteers will gather to clean, mark, and officially adopt a storm drain, reinforcing community stewardship in preventing urban runoff pollution. This initiative complements broader citywide efforts to maintain cleaner waterways and mitigate flooding risks through proactive stormwater infrastructure maintenance.

Community Cleanup Initiatives

The Commission prioritized neighborhood and park cleanups as a key component of its environmental advocacy work. Commissioners Arroyo, Sanchez, Gonzalez-Muñiz, and Mascarenhas organized multiple cleanup efforts, partnered with local neighborhood associations to remove litter, improved public spaces, and fostered a culture of civic responsibility. In a long-term commitment to park maintenance, Commissioner Mascarenhas formally adopted Almaden Lake Park, ensuring ongoing beautification and environmental care through scheduled cleanups and community engagement; Commissioner Sanchez is also looking into adopting a local park in the future.

Blight Reduction Report

In response to growing concerns about urban blight, the Commission reviewed the City's ongoing efforts to eliminate blight and enhance neighborhood aesthetics. The report detailed existing eradication strategies, including abandoned property interventions, graffiti removal programs, and waste reduction campaigns. Recommendations were made to strengthen partnerships between city departments and community groups, emphasizing sustainable solutions that prevent recurring blight issues.



ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CARP)

Recognizing the need for a forward-thinking approach to climate-related risks, the City of San José has been developing the Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CARP). This initiative focuses on identifying policies and foundational measures to minimize climate vulnerability. Complementing Climate Smart San José, which targets emissions reductions, CARP aims to safeguard residents and infrastructure from climate hazards. To date, the Commission has supported the plan by reviewing existing policies, analyzing hazard-prone areas, and assessing climate impacts on local communities. Moving forward, this will remain a crucial area of engagement as the City works to strengthen long-term climate resilience.

Eco-Swap Event

Did you know that enough new clothing has been produced to clothe the next six generations? One of the most significant contributing factors to overconsumption was the rise of inexpensive clothing, better known as “fast fashion,” and the District 4 and 7 Youth Advisory Council came together to do something about it.

In April 2025, an Eco-Swap was held at the Berryessa Branch, encouraging residents of District 4 and San José to bring in clothes they no longer use, and swap them for new ones that others had brought in. The event encouraged the sustainability of second-hand items and allowed citizens to get new clothing items without purchasing them brand new. The remaining items were donated to a community organization that assists the unhoused. ■





WORK PLAN **OBJECTIVE**

COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS

The San José Youth Commission recognized the need to study and evaluate career and education pathways, programs, and initiatives to ensure that these resources were addressing the needs of our most vulnerable communities and to ensure equitable access to higher education/technical opportunities to ensure that youth are living meaningful and productive lives as outlined in the Children and Youth Services Master Plan.

Thus, the Commission appointed Citywide Commissioner Marian Kurcharewski, District 2 Commissioner Neyha Pradeepkumar, District 4 Commissioner Genesis Arroyo, District 7 Commissioner Peter Vo, and District 5 Commissioner and Vice-Chair Andrew Lieu to further explore these objectives in the Career and Higher Education Ad Hoc Committee. As the committee pursued our outlined objectives, the committee also investigated programs, projects, and initiatives beyond the scope of our initial objectives.

COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS

Received reports on College and Career Pathways

Throughout the fiscal year, Amanda Otte, the College and Career Pathways Coordinator, presented a series of crucial demographic data points, accompanied by insightful analyses and detailed breakdowns for programs including but not limited to Career Online High School, Resilience Corps Learning Pathways, and San José Works. Commissioners were partially interested in understanding the impact and reach of these programs to ensure equitable access for all children and youth in San José.



Furthermore, the committee engaged in robust discussions around college and university affordability. As higher education becomes increasingly financially inaccessible for many students and families in San José and

across the Bay Area, there is an increasing demand for additional resources to support students and families in completing the recently updated Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

However, the committee also recognized the need to support students and families transitioning into non-traditional higher education pathways such as career and technical education. Programs such as Work2Future provide those opportunities for many youth, particularly those from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. Thus, the committee explored potential opportunities to use the Carnegie Grant Funding to focus on creating human-centered and youth-led design of city programs and workshops to ensure effectiveness in preparing youth to engage in sustained, meaningful, and productive lives.

Received reports on the City-School Library Partnerships

The committee received reports from Elizabeth Nolan, Senior Librarian of Expanded Learning, on the School District Partnership on Library Cards. This collaboration supports students' academic and career achievement goals by

COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS

allowing them unique opportunities to engage with San José Public Library materials, such as using all San José Public Library electronic resources.

The committee recognizes the value of the San José Public Library student card, as it reaches students from various school districts across San José, including but not limited to Alum Rock Union School District, Alpha Public Schools, and Oak Grove School District. The committee saw it as a valuable opportunity to support students during school consolidation and closures. With this understanding, the committee looked to expand this particular resource by merging high school and city library resources.

Investigated Merging High School and City Library Resources

The committee recognized the San José State University and San José Public Library partnership at Dr. Martin Luther King Library as a unique strength that enables residents and students to access the combined collection of books, movies, and music offered by both institutions. This partnership provides a wide

range of resources for both academic and community users.



In light of this, the committee proposed merging the East Side Union High School District library catalog with the San José Public Library to enhance access to educational resources and facilities. The committee sought to examine the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood Library to explore this model further. As a lease on the Mount Pleasant Elementary School District property, its unique position provides valuable insights into our vision. The committee convened a roundtable of city, school, and community leaders to delve into the factors underpinning the partnership and explore potential avenues for scaling it up to high schools. While we remained optimistic about our vision for libraries, the committee concluded that the current fiscal and political climate posed significant challenges and precluded further actions. ■



WORK PLAN **OBJECTIVE**

SAN JOSÉ YOUTH COMMISSION INNOVATION COMMITTEE

The San José Youth Commission created the Innovation Committee to give young people a platform to tackle civic challenges like homelessness, environmental sustainability, and pedestrian safety. The committee is still being developed, with work underway to build a strong foundation for long-term impact.

The committee's primary goals are:

1. Involving youth in city decision-making.
2. Building partnerships with schools, city departments, and industry stakeholders.
3. Hosting an Innovations pitch conference to showcase youth-led ideas for city improvements.

So far, the committee has focused on engaging stakeholders, developing plans to reach out to potential partners, and structuring its operations. A big part of this work is forming connections with schools, nonprofits, and businesses to boost participation and awareness.

SAN JOSÉ YOUTH COMMISSION INNOVATION COMMITTEE



The committee is also planning to work with technology companies and nonprofits to provide mentorship, funding, and resources for young innovators. To ensure strong leadership and organization, an experienced advisor will be brought in to help guide the committee.

Insights with AI Learning Commons

In January, Commissioner Kucharewski attended the Women in AI Summit hosted by the Mayor's Office in collaboration with SJSU. While there, she gained insights

into how the Mayor's Office is pursuing AI-related events and how the Youth Commission can structure its initiatives in the future. She noted that the event was most impactful for networking opportunities and its influential speakers, who discussed AI's practical applications in the real world.

Next Steps

Next year, the committee will hold regular monthly meetings, strengthen partnerships, and finalize the conference plans to ensure youth-led ideas become real solutions. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 1

BY AANYA MISHRA

In September 2024, I established the District 1 Youth Advisory Council (D1 YAC), a team of 21 civically engaged high school students dedicated to fostering positive change in our community. Along with the San José Youth Commission, our primary goals are to provide policy recommendations to the Mayor and City Council, address youth concerns, organize impactful events, and advocate for our district residents.

The D1 YAC Vice Chair, Yuvraj Gill, and I met with San José State University Professor Richard Kos from the Department of Urban & Regional Planning to discuss a transportation memorandum we drafted last year, advocating for implementing a comprehensive road safety plan on school campuses. As a result of that conversation, we joined Professor Kos's Urban Planning Research team for Envision SJ 2040, an initiative that transforms underutilized areas in Saratoga into higher-density urban districts that promote transit use and walkability.

We collected data on roadway conditions in various Saratoga neighborhoods and investigated how implementing urban villages could improve transportation efficiency and address residents' safety concerns.

This year, the D1 YAC was divided into four focus groups: Civic Engagement, Career Pathways, Mental Health and Environment.



DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 1

Civic Engagement Team

(Anushka Deshmukh, Leon Le, Sylvia Dong, Anika Khanna, Renfei Xu, David Zhu, Aditi Sabari)

The Civic Engagement team is organizing an event in May 2025 to educate youth on how to get involved in community betterment and civic engagement. The event includes a hands-on activity where attendees create posters highlighting local issues that matter to them and a discussion panel featuring keynote speakers, including Greg Zieman (Santa Clara County Child Abuse Prevention Council) and Rhizome (a grassroots voting education organization).



Career Pathways Team

(Anshika Gupta, Michelle Yang, Chander Lolayekar, Shashwath Dinesh, Aditi Satish, Mahi Shah)

The Career Exploration team is focused on co-hosting A.I.M. in June 2025, a citywide initiative designed to support students with college and career planning. The team will organize a workshop on navigating the UC application process and providing guidance on completing and strengthening applications.

Mental Health Team

(Jingjing Liang Members: Ameyaa Rajan, Sanshray Jaiswal, Erika Wang)

Explored innovation professions with potential neurodiverse-friendly workspaces and investigated different opportunities and resources to support neurodivergent youth in San José.

Environment Team

(Evan Liu, Kateryna Voloshyna)

Researched into teaching a sustainability workshop for young children with an interactive activity where they build catapults using sustainable materials to launch

DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 1



recyclables into designated bins to introduce ideas of waste management and environmental responsibility.

In addition to our primary initiatives, the D1 YAC partnered with the NorCal Chapter of Rhizome, a grassroots organization, to host the Youth Voter Summit in October 2024. This event introduced local youth to the election process, emphasized the importance of civic engagement, and featured California High School Democrats Chair George Balan as a guest speaker.

In April 2025, we plan on hosting District 1 Councilmember Rosemary Kamei at our Youth Advisory Council (D1 YAC) meeting. There, we plan on introducing the D1 YAC's structure and officer team, presenting the details of each group's project proposals, and gaining direct feedback from Ms. Kamei to enhance the reach and impact of our initiatives. In the end, we hope to allow D1 YAC members to ask Councilmember Kamei questions and gain insight into her work in District 1. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 2

BY NEYHA PRADEEPKUMAR

The District 2 Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is composed of fifteen dedicated individuals committed to creating meaningful change within the South San José community. Under the leadership of Youth Commissioner Neyha Pradeepkumar, Chair Ruby Yu, and Vice Chair Emma Zhou, the YAC convened in October 2024 to reflect on the past year and develop a strategic work plan for the upcoming term.

This year's work plan focused on four key objectives: promoting mental health awareness, including campaigns dedicated to eating disorder education, providing accessible sex education resources for youth in public spaces, strengthening relationships with the District 2 Council Office, attending community events, engaging with neighborhood associations and city officials, and increasing youth involvement in local government, expanding social media presence through the introduction of a Communications and Outreach Officer to enhance engagement and visibility.



A significant initiative the District 2 YAC undertook this year was exploring sex education resources available to youth and developing a central hub to access this information. This project, led by the executive team (Ruby Yu, Emma Zhou, Tanisha Bhugra, Chithruby Jambunathan, and Andrea Chen), is set to be finalized by March 2025. In collaboration with Planned Parenthood, the YAC leveraged the expertise of community-based organizations with extensive experience in the sex education field to enhance this resource's impact.

DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 2

On the communications and outreach front, under the leadership of Tanisha Bhugra, the YAC significantly expanded its reach, gaining over fifty new followers on Instagram. Additionally, multiple government officials engaged with the YAC's content, following and reposting key initiatives, further amplifying our work.

The YAC also had the privilege of meeting Councilmember Pamela Campos on multiple occasions, including at the Youth Commission Annual Budget Priorities Summit and during a regular council meeting.

These interactions allowed the YAC to align its goals with those of the District 2 Office, laying the foundation for future partnerships and initiatives in the coming fiscal years.

The 2024-2025 term was an immensely valuable and productive year for the District 2 YAC, fostering growth, collaboration, and new opportunities. As we move forward, we look forward to welcoming new members, expanding our initiatives, and continuing to make a meaningful impact in South San José. ■



DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 3

BY EDWIN SANCHEZ

As the newly appointed District 3 Youth Commissioner, I've dedicated my first year of service to strengthening community engagement and amplifying youth voices across San José. Since stepping into this role in August, I quickly established monthly neighborhood cleanups that consistently attracted over 70 participants, with Youth Advisory Council members helping me promote environmental stewardship. These regular events not only improved our district's appearance but also fostered a stronger sense of community responsibility.

I participated in critical policy discussions throughout my inaugural year, including the San José Budget Summit, where I advocated for youth-centered spending priorities. When our district faced the selection of an interim council member, I spoke at public forums to ensure candidates would understand and address the unique needs of District 3 residents, particularly our young people.



Despite being new to the position, I successfully organized several community-building initiatives this year. I led our district's National Night Out event, creating valuable opportunities for residents to connect with law enforcement in positive settings.

DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 3



Our Earth Day Cleanup represented our largest environmental initiative, mobilizing residents across neighborhoods to participate in beautification efforts that made a visible difference throughout the district.

Working alongside schools, nonprofits, and city departments, I've helped shape local policies affecting District 3 youth. By encouraging young people to participate in civic initiatives, I've ensured their perspectives are incorporated into community planning and decision-making. Under my new leadership, the Youth Advisory Council has grown in both impact and influence, with members actively contributing to meaningful district conversations.

This first year of service has demonstrated the power of youth engagement in addressing community challenges. As I look toward the future, the foundation we've built through consistent neighborhood cleanups, policy advocacy, and youth empowerment initiatives will continue to strengthen District 3 for years to come. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 4

BY GENESIS ARROYO

This year, District 4's Youth Advisory Council (D4YAC) comprised 31 members residing in the District 4 area of San José, all working to create a better future for their peers through holding events, drives, awareness campaigns, volunteering, and writing policy. Divided into four teams: Homelessness & Poverty, Environment, Social & Racial Equity, and Mental Health & Accessibility, they worked to create awareness and change within their respective groups.

D4YAC met bi-weekly on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. at the Berryessa Branch Library. District 4 Commissioner Genesis Arroyo led the meetings, which were supported by Vice Chair Chloe Truong and Secretary Katie Hion. These three individuals were also responsible for organizing the annual A.I.M. (Advise, Inspire, Motivate): Pathways to Our Future Conference, held in June, dedicated to college and career pathways for San José Youth.

The Advisory Council was also

present at the Youth Commission's annual Budget Summit, a Holiday Potluck with Councilmember David Cohen, the 20th anniversary of their Berryessa Branch, and, most likely, the most memorable to the members, a Billie Eilish concert, courtesy of the District 4 Council office. They also volunteered at several District 4 events, such as the annually held and loved Berryessa Art Festival and city Dumpster Days, residing in the District.



DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 4



D4YAC Homelessness & Poverty Team

Led by Ojas Gandhi and Vienna Thai and staffed by Thierry Dao, Amy Ly, Nhu Le, Advhik Krishna, and Emmy Brewer, and overseen by Chloe Truong.

This year, the Homelessness & Poverty Team hosted its annual clothing drive in collaboration with Independence High School's canned food drive. In addition, the team volunteered at the Second Harvest Food Drive to directly help feed families in need. Finally, the group completed a memo pushing for the Implementation of Financial Literacy in Schools to foster a better understanding of finance among San José youth. The team hopes to make this memo part of the city's budget for the following year.

D4YAC Climate Change & Environment Team

Led by Evelyn Wang and Vihan Bhattacharjee and staffed by Diya Arun Kumar, Paakhi Manglik, Navika Deeptak, Ceci Goyette, Amber Trinh and overseen by Katie Hion.

With the help of BeautifySJ, the D4YAC Environment Team successfully hosted a park clean-up in February at one of District 4's busiest parks, Penitencia Creek. Gathering on a Saturday morning, the Advisory Council picked up nearly 6 bags of trash within 2 hours. This event would be followed by an Eco-Swap in late April 2025 at the Berryessa Branch with TeensReach and D7YAC, where residents in the District could bring in used clothing that they no longer wear to exchange it with another person's used clothing. This encouraged the use of second-hand clothing as opposed to overconsuming new clothing. The team also worked to draft a memo on providing all SJPL branches with E-Waste Disposal Bins to lessen electronic waste.

DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 4

D4YAC Racial & Social Equity Team
Led by Akshadha Chakravarthi and Olivia Rodrigues, and staffed by Aditi Jain, Kalie Huynh, Mahi Mekala, and Abigail Guereca.

This team was focused on educating their residents on the importance of acknowledging and combating racial bigotry in everyday life. Inspired by the book by Ibram X. Kendi, they hosted a “How to be Anti-Racist” event in early May,



including interactive activities, a presentation about how to approach such topics proactively, and a keynote speaker.

D4YAC Mental Health & Awareness Team

Led by Sunny Tuazon and Amy Nguyen, and staffed by Nidhi Yellamraju, Manushri Pitale, Ethan Huang, and Katie Chan.

The Mental Health & Awareness team was heavily focused on providing resources for the mental health of all District 4 residents, targeting youth who are most vulnerable at ages 11-13. With the help of the Berryessa Union School District, the team created graphic designs proving misconceptions about mental health wrong, as well as infographics on anxiety and ADHD, and posted them at all three middle school campuses in the district in the month of March. These flyers all contained QR codes that led to resource pages created by the team for those in need of assistance if they are struggling. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 5

BY ANDREW LIEU

The District 5 Youth Commission has made significant contributions to shaping the development of the Children and Youth Services Masterplan and the City's Blue Zones Policy Strategy. These strategies aimed to enhance the quality of life for our young East Side residents by providing them with an equitable opportunity to live productive, meaningful, and sustainable lives.

Furthermore, we've continued our partnership with Councilmember Peter Ortiz's Office to host our second annual "Culture Fest," which celebrates the diverse cultures of the community. Additionally, we have authored memorandums including to ensure cash acceptance at brick-and-mortar stores and letters calling on the Mayor and City Council to protect our immigrant community and maintain Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs and initiatives.

Throughout the year, the District 5 Youth Commission has actively participated in various committees, including the Career and Education

Ad Hoc Committee and the Gender-Based Violence Ad Hoc Committee.

The District 5 Youth Commission has continued to engage with numerous community and non-profit organizations at unprecedented levels. In March 2024, Vice-Chair Lieu was appointed by the President of the National League of Cities to represent the San José Youth Commission as Youth Delegate to the National League of Cities. This unique appointment has allowed the Youth Commission to engage on the national stage with thousands of cities, towns, and villages across the nation, exchanging ideas and best practices in working to improve their communities. ■



DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 6

BY AMIYA BANSAL



Serving as the District 6 Youth Commissioner and Communications Director has been an incredibly rewarding experience.

One of the highlights this year was a successful collaboration with the Citywide Youth Commissioner as we prepared for the annual Budget Summit.

Together, we focused on violence and safety and ultimately secured the highest amount of mock funding after our presentation! The summit itself drew a strong turnout and helped us connect with other civically engaged youth across the city. It also created opportunities to grow our Youth Advisory Councils (YACs) and strengthen D6's partnerships with fellow commissioners.

District 6 has made great strides in expanding our YAC and continues to welcome new applicants. We host regular Zoom meetings that focus on research, drafting policy ideas, and planning events. I've also proudly served on the Gender-Based Violence Ad Hoc Committee for a second year, and we are currently planning our luncheon!

Although my term on the commission is coming to a close, I am immensely grateful for the experiences, the growth, and the chance to make a difference. I wish the next District 6 Commissioner all the best in their term! ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 7

BY PETER VU

The District 7 Youth Advisory Council (D7 YAC) represents a dynamic collective of young advocates dedicated to transforming community potential through passionate leadership and strategic engagement. Comprised of twenty-two dynamic individuals, the YAC serves as a critical bridge between youth perspectives and local civic development, creating meaningful pathways for community impact and innovative problem-solving.

Creative Futures Fair

The D7 YAC demonstrated its exceptional event planning and community support capabilities by hosting the Creative Futures Fair two years in a row. By meticulously coordinating with local high schools and Key Clubs, the D7 YAC transformed an ambitious vision into a vibrant celebration of youth entrepreneurship and creativity at Yerba Buena High School. The event showcased 34 dynamic youth-led businesses representing diverse entrepreneurs from across San José and featured performances by 30 talented



student musicians who represented the city's rich musical landscape. The fair's success relied on 60 dedicated high school volunteers from multiple schools who worked tirelessly to create a memorable experience, attracting nearly 300 community members. Adding gravitas to the occasion, Councilmember Doan and Councilmember Campos delivered inspiring speeches, highlighting the importance of youth leadership and entrepreneurship in San José's ongoing development. More than just a fair, the event served as a powerful platform for young innovators to display their talents, network with community leaders, and demonstrate the remarkable potential of San José's next generation of business and creative professionals.

DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 7



Environmental Stewardship and Commitment

D7 YAC members also demonstrated much interest in supporting the Environmental Ad Hoc Committee, having demonstrated a profound commitment to ecological sustainability. Their active participation in tree-planting initiatives across San José in Partnership with Yerba Buena High School National Honor Society reflects a holistic approach to community development that extends beyond traditional civic engagement. By volunteering for green space expansion projects, these young advocates have shown their understanding of

environmental conservation as a critical component of community well-being.

Community Engagement

The YAC's partnership with the Vietnamese American Roundtable exemplifies their dedication to cultural understanding and community cohesion. Their volunteer work at the Lunar New Year event at Grand Century Mall in District 7 went far beyond simple event assistance. These young leaders actively supported cultural preservation efforts, engaged with community elders, and created welcoming, inclusive atmospheres that celebrate the rich cultural diversity of their community. ■

DISTRICT **REPORTS**

DISTRICT 8

BY ALDOJOELL GONZALEZ-MUNIZ

As the District 8 Youth Commissioner this year, I worked alongside the District 8 Youth Council Committee to develop an action strategy outlining their vision for community engagement and cross-organizational partnerships. We joined forces with the Welch Park Neighborhood Association, actively participating in their regular litter collection initiatives, community clean-up days, and monthly food distribution events in collaboration with Second Harvest. These efforts helped enhance our neighborhood's cleanliness, safety, and overall well-being.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time serving on the Youth Commission, finding deep fulfillment in having my voice represent the diverse needs and perspectives of my community and making friends along the way. The opportunity to advocate for and implement positive change alongside my peers has been an invaluable experience that reinforced my commitment to public service. ■



DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 9

BY AGAM SINGH

This year, the District 9 Youth Advisory Council (YAC) focused on strengthening our presence in District 9 and building connections with Leigh High School students. We created flyers and conducted outreach to identify strong commissioner candidates while maintaining regular communication with our councilmember through bi-annual emails. Our partnership with Leigh's Environment Club for tree planting initiatives demonstrates our commitment to environmental sustainability.

Throughout the year, we held productive sessions developing policy recommendations, including a prioritized list of budget proposals for upcoming fiscal planning. To increase youth engagement, we've initiated the paperwork to establish a YAC club at school and continue to expand our outreach through social media, ensuring the next District 9 Youth Commissioner can build on our environmental policy work and start with strong momentum.

As my time on the Youth Commission comes to an end after spending my entire high school career in this role, I look back with gratitude for this enriching experience and look forward with high hopes for the next Commissioner who will fill my seat and continue our important work. ■



DISTRICT **REPORTS**

DISTRICT 10

BY NOLAN MASCARENHAS

During my tenure as Chair for the Youth Commission, I led the Commission, supported its members in their respective roles, and served as the primary representative and spokesperson. I represented the Commission at NSE and LEC reports, ensuring that youth perspectives were included in key discussions. Additionally, I worked to strengthen collaboration between the Commission and local leaders, community organizations, and city departments.



A key part of my role involved researching the availability and quality of educational and career resources in preparation for the budget summit. I compiled data and information to support discussions on youth priorities, ensuring that these issues were considered during budget planning. Additionally, I drafted the Youth Commission's budget letter to City Council, outlining key funding priorities and advocating for resources that directly impact young people in San José.

I also contributed to the Commission's environmental efforts, supporting the planting of 10 trees to promote sustainability and green spaces in the community. In addition, I worked closely with the Almaden Valley Community Association as a Youth Board Member to host sessions on civic engagement. These events included School Board and City Council candidate forums, which provided community members with an opportunity to engage with local candidates and learn more about their platforms.

DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 10

To further support community involvement, I led monthly park cleanups with my Youth Advisory Council (YAC) at Almaden Lake Park. These cleanups ensured that public spaces remained well-maintained and accessible to residents. Additionally, I invited Councilmember Panetta to discuss youth priorities at Vineland Library, facilitating a direct conversation between local government officials and youth advocates.

Beyond my work with the Youth Commission, I interned for the San José District 10 Council Office until December 2024. In this role, I assisted with local government initiatives and helped address community concerns, ensuring that youth representation remained a priority in city discussions.

I'm proud of the work I have done with the Commission this year and look forward to the new incoming District 10 Commissioner building off of what we have accomplished this year! ■



DISTRICT **REPORTS**

CITYWIDE

BY MARIAN KUCHARAWSKI



During my first year serving as the Citywide Youth Commissioner, I continued the newly established Citywide YAC with the intention to integrate youth voices. Throughout this fiscal year, my focus remained steadfast on building a robust foundation that would ensure the YAC's continued operation and success in the years to come.

My leadership responsibilities included spearheading the creation and management of our Instagram presence, which proved instrumental in recruiting members and raising awareness of commission events. I navigated the complexities of establishing the council from scratch, setting clear expectations, developing operational norms, implementing recruitment strategies, and structuring our leadership framework. Through dedicated outreach, we successfully

cultivated and maintained an active membership exceeding 20 youth representatives. Under my guidance, we conducted more than seven council meetings and planned three youth-centered events that resonated with our peers across San José.

A significant portion of my work centered on researching critical issues affecting San José's youth population. I directed our council's exploration of various topics, including the state of public transit and its accessibility challenges for young people. Our investigations extended to the nightlife and social landscape, with particular emphasis on artistic expression and the need for creative spaces. I also facilitated sessions on resume building, career development, and policy writing during our YAC meetings, equipping members with practical skills. Beyond our research initiatives, I coordinated our participation in three park cleanups in collaboration with the Mayor's Office, demonstrating our commitment to community service.

DISTRICT REPORTS: CITYWIDE

Looking ahead to the coming year, I've outlined a strategic vision to continue expanding our membership and fostering leadership development among our members.

I plan to organize additional youth-centered events and initiatives based on the successes and learnings from our inaugural year. A key priority will be strengthening our partnerships with schools, city departments, and community organizations to

amplify our collective impact. I'm particularly focused on enhancing our research efforts by transforming our ideas into tangible events and policy proposals that can effect meaningful change for San José's youth.

I'm deeply proud of what we've accomplished during this foundational year and remain committed to advancing the voices and interests of young people throughout San José. ■





VOLUNTEER **STATISTICS**

1,085

Total number of volunteer service hours from Youth Commission and Youth Advisory Council members from June 2024 to April 2025.

13

The average number of hours spent by 41 Youth Advisory Council members across San José was spent on activities such as attending YAC meetings, supporting district events, and doing policy research.

51

The average number of hours spent by the 11 Youth Commissioners on activities such as attending general meetings, coordinating YAC meetings, conducting community outreach, and crafting policy recommendations.



YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

Youth Advisory Councils (YAC) are a core group of approximately 135 volunteer youth throughout San José that support the Youth Commission's mission and vision. These councils provide valuable input and insights on policies and programs directly impacting young people. Through participation, they gain a voice in shaping the future of their communities and ensuring that policies and initiatives are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the younger generation.

This year, the Youth Commission established an online application to encourage participation and boost YAC recruitment efforts citywide. This digital approach has helped streamline the YAC recruitment process and increase accessibility for interested youth.

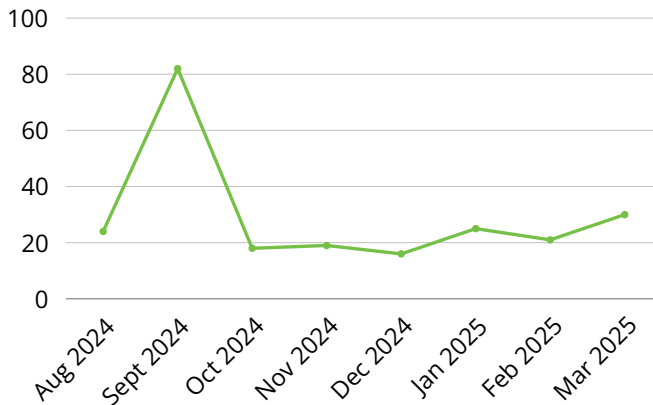
To date, the application form has received 235 submissions, demonstrating its effectiveness in reaching potential youth volunteers.

Additionally, the Youth Commission established a participation survey for youth volunteers who participated in individual District YAC meetings or Youth Commission events to better understand who is participating and gather program feedback.

Participation in this survey is optional, and its reach depends upon the Commissioner distributing it at their regular meetings, which is why some District participation is underreported. Overall, the survey captured 139 YAC participant responses.

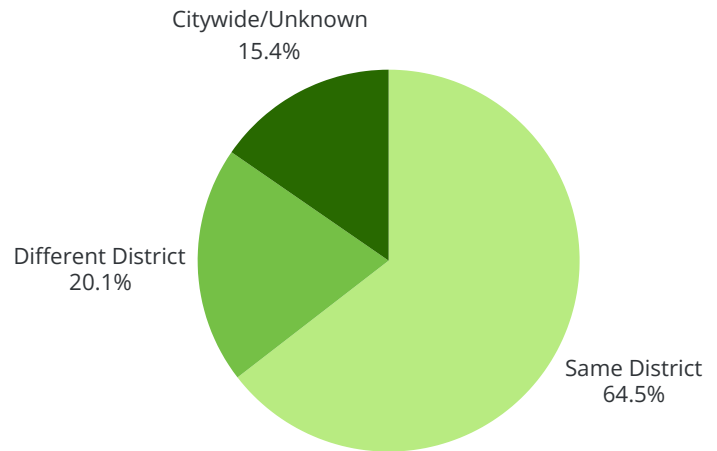
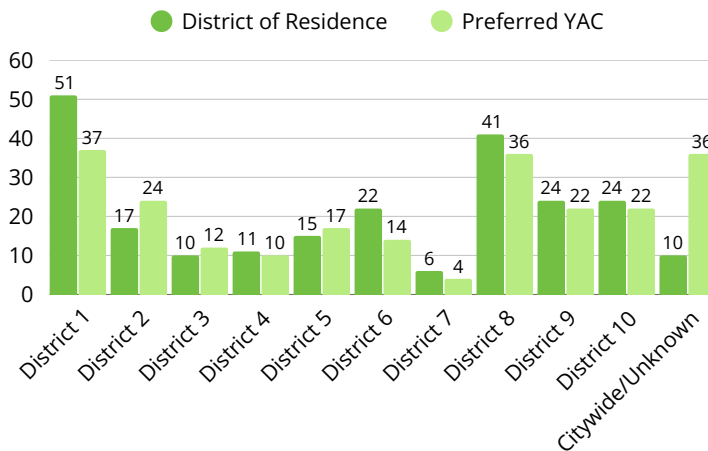
YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

YAC APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY MONTH



We saw the highest application volume in September 2024, with 82 submissions (34.9%). This peak likely aligns with back-to-school outreach efforts, when students are more connected to school-based announcements. The second highest volume occurred in March 2025, with 30 applications (12.8%), which may reflect end-of-cycle recruitment pushes. These trends highlight the impact of strategic timing in engaging youth and ensuring awareness of opportunities.

YAC APPLICANT DISTRICT PREFERENCE



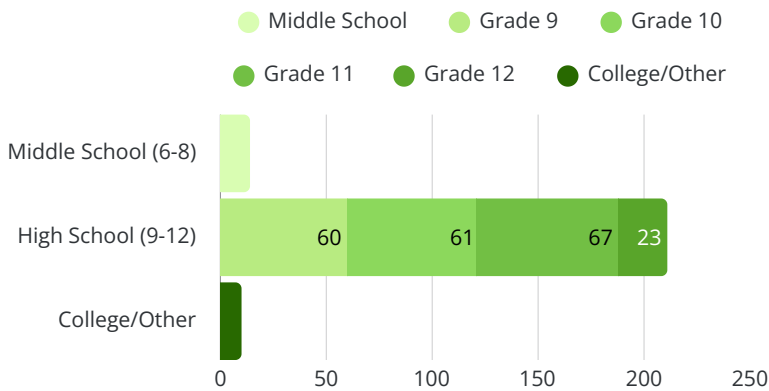
Applicant distribution varies significantly across San José's districts, with District 1 leading at 51 applicants (21.7%), followed by District 8 with 41 (17.4%). Districts 9 and 10 each saw 24 applicants (10.2%), while Districts 2, 5, and 6 had moderate representation (15-22 applicants). Participation was lowest in Districts 3, 4, and 7, with 9-11 applicants each. Ten applicants selected 'Other' as their district.

Council preferences largely align with residence patterns. District 1 was the most requested (37 applicants, 15.7%), closely followed by District 8 (36 applicants, 15.3%). The Citywide option drew 21 applicants (8.9%), while 15 applicants (6.4%) selected 'I Don't Know.'

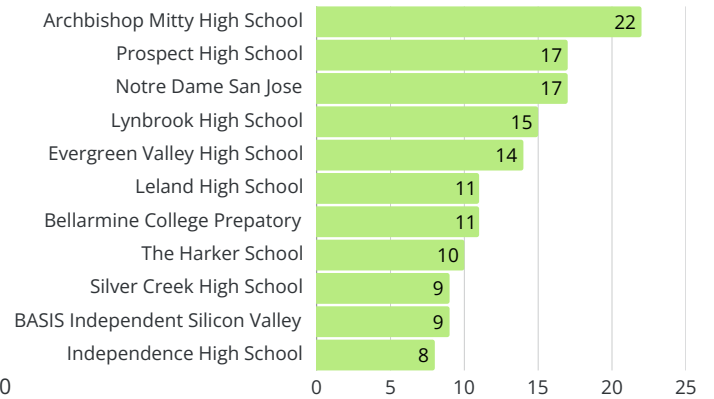
A strong majority (64.5%) applied to serve in their home districts, highlighting deep community ties. However, 20.1% applied outside their district, likely due to school location or specific interest in another area's initiatives. The remaining 15.4% opted for the Citywide option or were unsure, signaling an openness to broader service. These patterns underscore the importance of both local engagement and flexible opportunities for cross-district participation.

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

YAC APPLICANT GRADE LEVEL

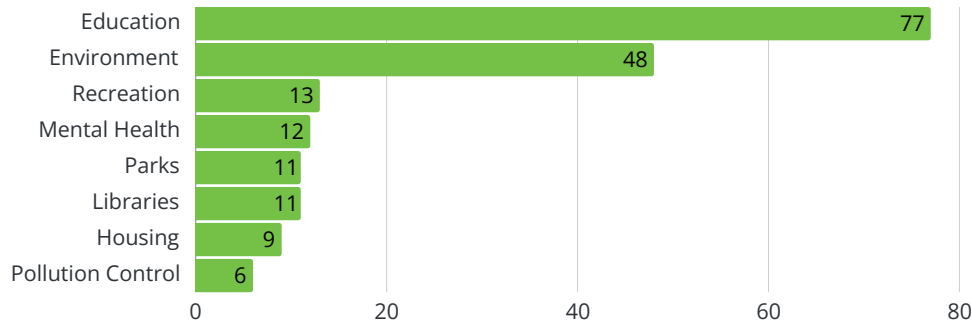


YAC APPLICANT TOP SCHOOLS



High school students dominate the applicant pool, with grades 9-11 accounting for 80% of applications. Grade 11 leads with 67 applicants (28.5%), followed by grade 10 with 61 (26%) and grade 9 with 60 (25.5%). Grade 12 participation drops significantly to 23 applicants (9.8%). Middle school students (5.1%) and college students (3.4%) represent small minorities. Archbishop Mitty High School leads with 21 applicants (8.9%), followed by Evergreen Valley (14 applicants, 6%) and Lynbrook (13 applicants, 5.5%). The top ten schools contribute 45.5% of all applications, while over 60 other schools across San José account for the remainder, highlighting both concentrated interest at certain institutions and opportunities to diversify recruitment efforts.

YAC APPLICANT INTERESTS

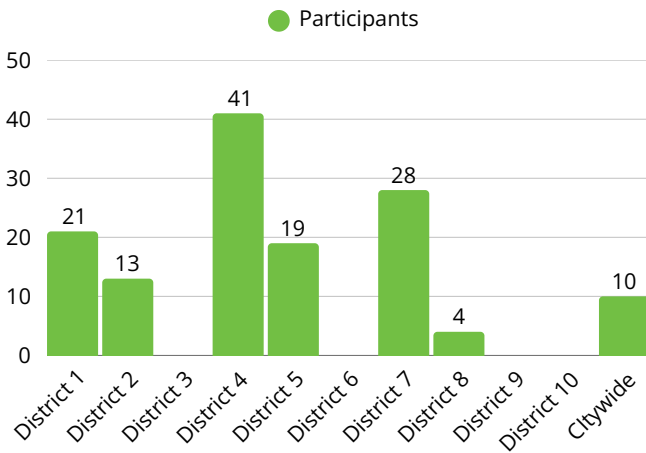


YAC applicant interests center primarily on education (77 mentions, 32.8%) and environment (48 mentions, 20.4%), followed by recreation (13 mentions), mental health (12 mentions), parks (11 mentions), and libraries (11 mentions). Social justice concerns include housing (9 mentions), pollution control (6 mentions), and initiatives serving vulnerable populations (6 mentions each).

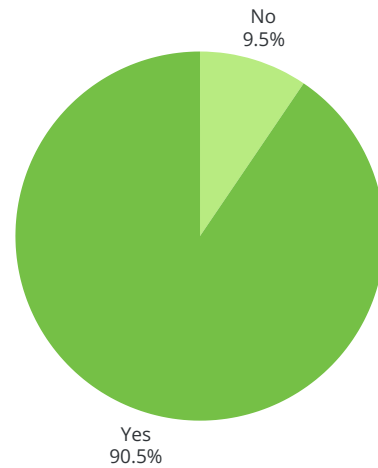
These interests connect closely with the Youth Commission's work plan objectives and the top issue areas among youth, as identified in the Youth Priorities Survey. This natural alignment suggests incoming Advisory Council members will effectively support established initiatives while contributing fresh perspectives on San José's most pressing youth concerns.

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

WHICH YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (YAC) ARE YOU PARTICIPATING IN?

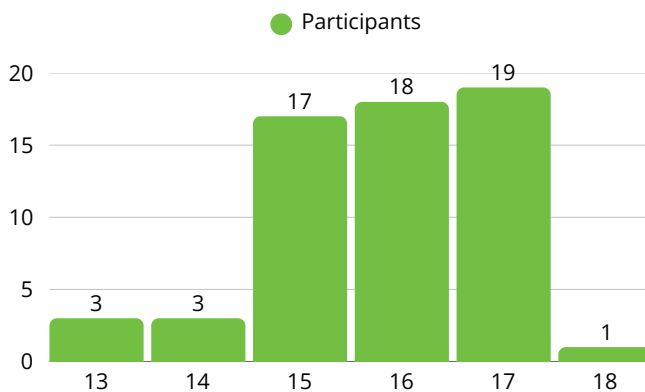


HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN THE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL THIS YEAR?

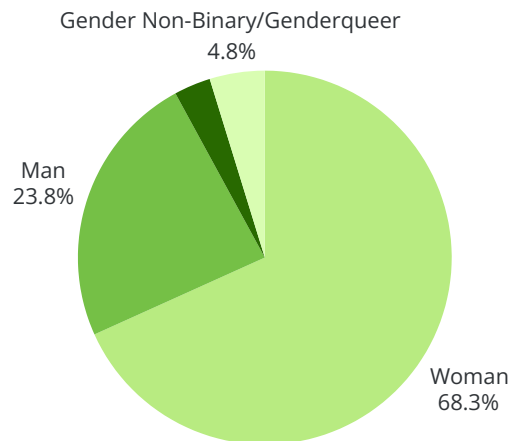


While this distribution does not reflect all YAC participation, District 4 leads with 41 members (30% of total engagement), followed by Districts 7 and 1, with 28 and 21 members, respectively. Districts 5 and 2 show moderate participation (19 and 13 members), while the Citywide YAC and District 8 have smaller representations (10 and 4 members). Notably, YAC maintains a strong 90.5% active participation rate (124 youth), highlighting that once young people join, they remain engaged and committed.

YAC PARTICIPANT AGE



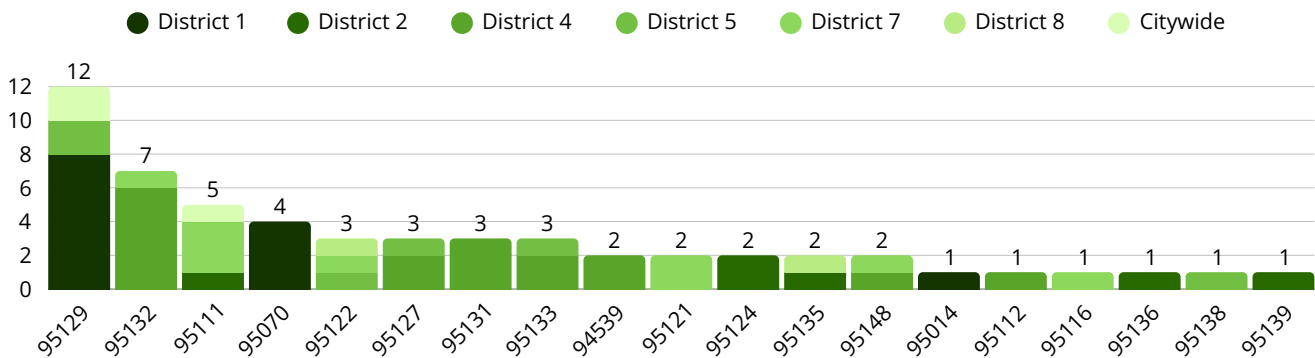
YAC PARTICIPANT GENDER



YACs primarily engage high school students aged 15-17, who make up the majority of participants (54 total), while younger teens (ages 13-14) have limited representation (5 participants), and only one participant is 18. Gender distribution reveals a significant imbalance, with women outnumbering men nearly three-to-one (43 women to 15 men). Notably, YACs also include gender non-binary/genderqueer (3) and transgender (2) participants, reflecting a commitment to inclusion across the gender spectrum.

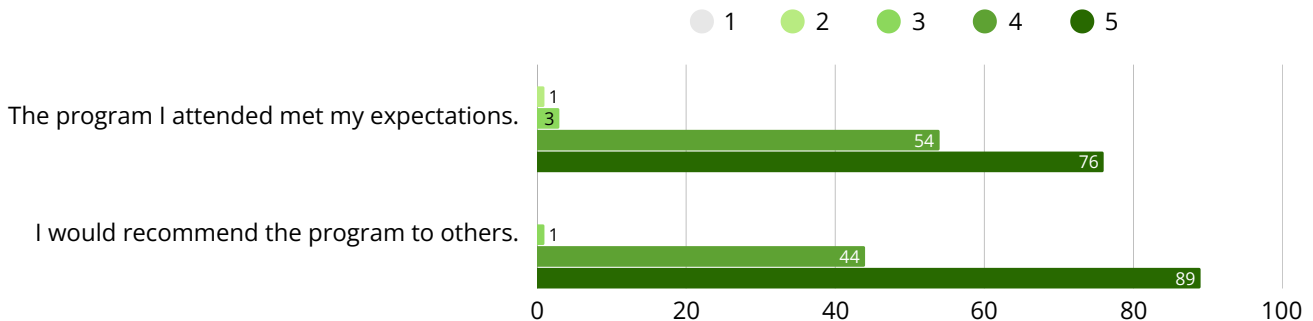
YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

WHICH YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (YAC) ARE YOU PARTICIPATING IN?



Youth Advisory Councils span 19 zip codes, with the highest participation concentrated in West San José (95129: 12 participants) and North San José/Berryessa (95132: 7 participants). District 4 has the broadest reach, engaging youth from seven zip codes, followed by District 7 with six. Some areas show concentrated engagement (95070 sends all four participants to one district), while others are more dispersed (95129 participants span three programs). This distribution highlights strong representation in western areas while pointing to opportunities for expanded outreach in East San José neighborhoods.

YAC PROGRAM SATISFACTION



Participant satisfaction is exceptionally high, with 97% rating the program 4 or 5 out of 5. A majority (76 participants) gave the highest rating, while 54 rated it 4, and only four expressed lower satisfaction. Feedback highlights three key strengths: collaborative teamwork, efficient organization, and open communication. Participants appreciated productive discussions, well-structured meetings, and successful event execution, including performances and vendor participation.

While most respondents had no suggestions for improvement, recommendations focused on refining meeting structure, improving time management, expanding community outreach, and incorporating more interactive activities. Some noted inconsistent attendance and suggested covering multiple topics rather than focusing on just one. Overall, the feedback affirms a strong program that meets youth needs and expectations, requiring only minor adjustments rather than major changes. ■

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



SAN JOSÉ CITY DEPARTMENTS

- The Mayor and City Council Offices
- The City Manager's Office
- San José Public Library
- Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services
- Environmental Services Department
- Budget Office
- Clerk's Office

SAN JOSÉ CITY STAFF

- Council Liaison: Councilmember Campos
- Councilmember Kamei
- Councilmember Cohen
- Councilmember Doan
- Jill Bourne, City Librarian
- Laura Buzo
- Mayra Cerda
- Alexander Dersh
- Ann Grabowski
- Lauren Hawkins
- Cassie Hunter
- Ofelia Medina
- Lizzie Nolan
- Amanda Otte
- Lucas Ramirez
- Kallie Schloemann
- Willow Glen Library Staff

ORGANIZATIONS

- YWCA
- Bill Wilson Center
- Vietnamese American Roundtable

PARTNERS

- Congressman Panetta (CA-19 Office)
- San José Library and Education Commission
- San José Youth Empowerment Alliance
- Santa Clara County Youth Task Force



THANK YOU

The San José Youth Commission extends heartfelt appreciation to all who have contributed to our endeavors. We thank city officials, staff, and department heads for their support. We warmly thank our community partners for enriching our programs and events benefiting San José's youth. We're grateful for the energy and ideas of our young participants and for the generosity and enthusiasm of our Youth Advisory Council volunteers. Thanks to the families of our Commissioners and Youth Advisory Council members for their support. We also acknowledge the contributions of educational institutions, sponsors, donors, and residents of San José. Finally, we sincerely appreciate our dedicated staff and advisors driving our mission forward.



YouthCommission@sanjoseca.gov



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