



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board



701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
MeasureQ@santacruzcountyca.gov
www.santacruzcountyca.gov/MeasureQ

MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, July 30th, 2025
5:30pm – 7:30pm
Regular Meeting

Simpkins Family Swim Center
Community Rooms
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Introductory Items

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

2. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Any person may address the Commission during its Oral Communication period. Speakers must not exceed two (2) minutes in length, or the time limit established by the Chair, and individuals may speak only once during Oral Communications. All Oral Communication must be directed to an item listed on today's Consent Agenda, Closed Session Agenda, yet to be heard on Regular Agenda, or a topic not on the agenda that is within the jurisdiction of the Commission. Commission members will not take actions or respond immediately to any Oral communication presented regarding topics not on the agenda but may choose to follow up later, either individually, or on a subsequent Commission Agenda. Oral communications will normally be received by the Commission for a period not to exceed thirty (30) minutes. If, at the end of this period, additional persons wish to address the Commission, the Oral Communication period may be continued to the last item on the agenda.

4. ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA (item 10)

Regular Agenda

5. COUNTY STAFF REPORT

Information Items

- 6. Roles and Responsibilities of Measure Q COAB..... page 3.**
- 7. Vision Plan Project Team Update on Stakeholder Engagement..... page 4.**
- 8. County Update on Community Engagement..... page 55.**
- 9. Measure Q Five-Year Vision Plan Status Update..... page 75.**

Consent Agenda

Consent items include routine business that does not call for discussion. One roll call vote is taken for all items. Only a Board Member may pull items from Consent to Regular Agenda.

Members of the public must request that a Board Member pull an item from the Consent Agenda prior to the start of the meeting.

10. **Approve minutes from June 18th, 2025.....** page 96.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. None

Adjournment

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:30 PM Wednesday, September 3rd, 2025

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms

979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

TRANSLATION SERVICES/SERVICIOS DE TRADUCCION

Spanish language translation is available on an as needed basis. Please make advance arrangements at the Parks, Open Spaces, & Cultural Services Department, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA; or by email at MeasureQ@santacruzcountyca.gov.

Las sesiones de la Junta Asesora de Supervisión Ciudadana (COAB) pueden ser traducidas del inglés al español y del español al inglés. Por favor haga arreglos anticipadamente con el Departamento de Parques, Espacios Abiertos y Servicios Culturales, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA; o por correo electrónico a MeasureQ@santacruzcountyca.gov.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. The Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms, located at 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA, is an accessible facility. If you are a person with a disability and wish to participate in the meeting and require special assistance in order to participate, please contact the Parks, Open Spaces, & Cultural Services Department at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format.



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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEASURE Q CITIZENS OVERSIGHT ADVISORY BOARD (COAB)

Recommended Action

1. Review of the roles and responsibilities of the Measure Q COAB.

Executive Summary

This staff presentation will provide a review of the roles and responsibilities of the Measure Q COAB, as established in Santa Cruz County Code Section 4.65.060(A)(3) and the Measure Q COAB Bylaws.

Discussion

The Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) serves a vital function in promoting transparency, accountability, and strategic alignment in the use of Measure Q funds. In accordance with Santa Cruz County Code Section 4.65.060(A)(3) and the Measure Q COAB Bylaws, the COAB is responsible for:

- Conducting public hearings on proposed funding allocations;
- Receiving and reviewing annual reports from implementing entities;
- Preparing and submitting an annual report to the Board of Supervisors detailing project and program outcomes that were funded through the Act and the leveraging of additional public and private funds;
- Approving a five-year Vision Plan that supports grant criteria and awards; and
- Selecting the land stewardship implementation partner.

This presentation will provide the necessary context and information to support informed participation and deliberation as the Board reviews and considers approval of the proposed Vision Plan.

Submitted By:

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
David Reid, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience



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MEASURE Q STAKEHOLDER SURVEY SYNTHESIS SUMMARY

Recommended Action

1. Receive and file the preliminary synthesis of the Measure Q Stakeholder Survey conducted to inform the Vision Plan.

Executive Summary

Between April 29 and May 15, 2025, Santa Cruz County, with support from PlaceWorks and Matt Freeman Consulting, conducted a Stakeholder Survey to inform the Measure Q Vision Plan. The survey was distributed to over 120 key stakeholders representing nonprofit organizations, public agencies, special districts, and community-based groups across the six Measure Q theme areas. Over 60 individuals completed the survey. Respondents provided input on priority project types, community needs, and opportunities for equitable and multi-benefit investments. The preliminary results will help shape the Vision Plan priorities, geographies and project types and grant program design.

Discussion

The Stakeholder Survey was developed to collect input on project priorities, geographic and thematic areas of concern, and existing capacity for matching funding from local, state, and federal sources. Participants represented diverse organizational types, including local governments, non-profits, community-based organizations, and public agencies.

Key highlights from the preliminary survey results include:

- **Geographic Reach:** Stakeholders reported serving all parts of the county, including areas facing heightened climate risks such as the San Lorenzo Valley, South County, the wildland-urban interface, flood-prone

zones, and communities with limited park access or environmental health burdens.

- **Priority Themes:** The highest-ranked Measure Q themes were:
 - Water Resources Management
 - Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health
 - Wildlife and Habitat Protection
 - Parks, Recreation and Public Access Equity

- **Top-Ranked Project Types:** The most frequently selected project types included:
 - Enhancing watershed health and improving water quality
 - Wildfire fuel reduction in the wildland-urban interface
 - Coastal access and protection
 - Public access improvements on public lands
 - Habitat and biodiversity restoration
 - Equity and Resilience: Many responses emphasized the importance of serving historically underinvested communities, particularly in South County, with increased access to climate resilience projects and parks. Respondents also expressed strong interest in supporting multi-benefit projects and conservation corps partnerships.

- **Grant Readiness:** Several organizations reported prior or current experience with funding programs such as Proposition 1 (Water), Forest Health and Fire Prevention Grants (CalFIRE), Restoration Grant Programs (CDFW), and the Statewide Park Program (DPR), indicating potential alignment with external funding sources.

- **Next Steps:** A full analysis and synthesis of stakeholder engagement, integrating stakeholder survey results will be completed after the second round of stakeholder meetings (held the week of July 22, 2025). This analysis will inform Vision Plan priorities, project types and geographies and the development of the Measure Q grant program, which will direct approximately 40% of overall funds.

The survey results reflect a strong foundation of local knowledge and stakeholder interest in advancing the goals of Measure Q. Additional engagement will further refine the strategies and priorities included in the Vision Plan.

Submitted By:

David Reid, Director, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience

Jeff Gaffney, Director, Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services

Attachments

- a. Preliminary Stakeholder Survey Summary – July 22, 2025

Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan Stakeholder Survey Summary

July 22, 2025

Introduction

In the months of April and May 2025, PlaceWorks and Matt Freeman Consulting assisted Santa Cruz County staff in developing, publicizing, and conducting an in-depth Survey for Measure Q Stakeholders. The survey ran from April 29th to May 15th and was sent to a list of approximately 120 stakeholders. The survey collected responses from more than 60 participants, who represent a diverse range of organizations and public agencies. This introduction briefly contextualizes the survey's development and high-level findings that emerged from the responses.

Invited stakeholders were a diverse set of non-profit organizations, educational institutions, local government agencies, state and federal government agencies, special districts, and community based organizations with expertise and experience in one or more of the stakeholder theme areas, listed below:

- Coastal Protection and Adaptation
- Water Resources Management
- Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health
- Parks, Recreation and Public Access & Equity
- Wildlife and Habitat Protection
- Agricultural and Working Lands Protection

What emerged was a list of over 120 individuals representing dozens of groups actively working across the Measure Q theme areas across different geographies in Santa Cruz County. These geographies included communities in high-hazard areas (e.g. flood-prone or low lying areas, wildland-urban interface, or fire-prone areas, etc.) as well as the county's major cities and population centers (e.g. Santa Cruz, Watsonville, etc.).

Once stakeholders were identified, multiple emails were sent to the stakeholders soliciting their responses to the survey. It was communicated to stakeholders that the part 1 of the survey was estimated to take approximately 10-15 mins to complete and the optional part 2 of the survey was estimated to take 15-20 minutes to complete. In addition to notifications via email, the Project Team organized a Virtual Kickoff Meeting on Friday, May 9th, 2025 that, among other things, further promoted the survey.

Summary of Stakeholder Survey

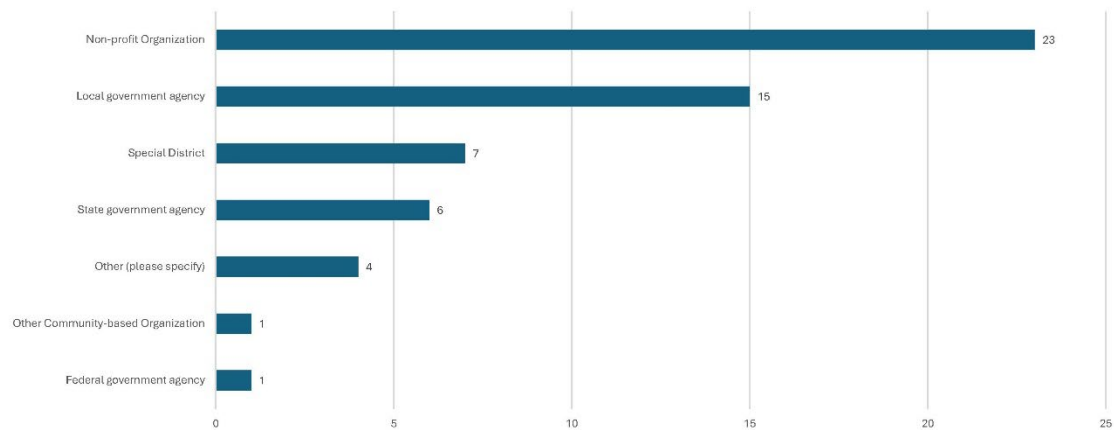
More than 60 participants completed at least Part 1 of the Stakeholder Survey. A high-level summary of the survey results are provided by multiple figures across the following pages. Figures 1-3 summarize information about the stakeholders and their focus areas, including information on the type of organization the stakeholder represents, the sectors or industries the stakeholder's organization is typically engages in, the communities stakeholder's organizations typically serve. Figure 4-6 summarize feedback and preferences related to the development and scope of the Measure Q Vision Plan. These figures illustrate stakeholder preferences and rankings of different project types and theme areas identified in Measure Q (Figures 4 & 5) as well as key takeaways from the initial stakeholder kickoff on May 9th, 2025 relating to content of the Vision Plan and the direction of stakeholder engagement.

Note on Stakeholder Survey Results

Attached to this memo is a PDF of the full survey responses. A more comprehensive synthesis of the survey results will be conducted after the completion of the second round of Stakeholder meetings (taking place the week of July 21, 2025). This is to ensure that insights from the survey can be contextualized and synthesized with findings from the two rounds of stakeholder meetings to arrive at a complete set of meaningful and holistic insights across all stakeholder engagement activities.

Figure 1: Stakeholder Organization Types

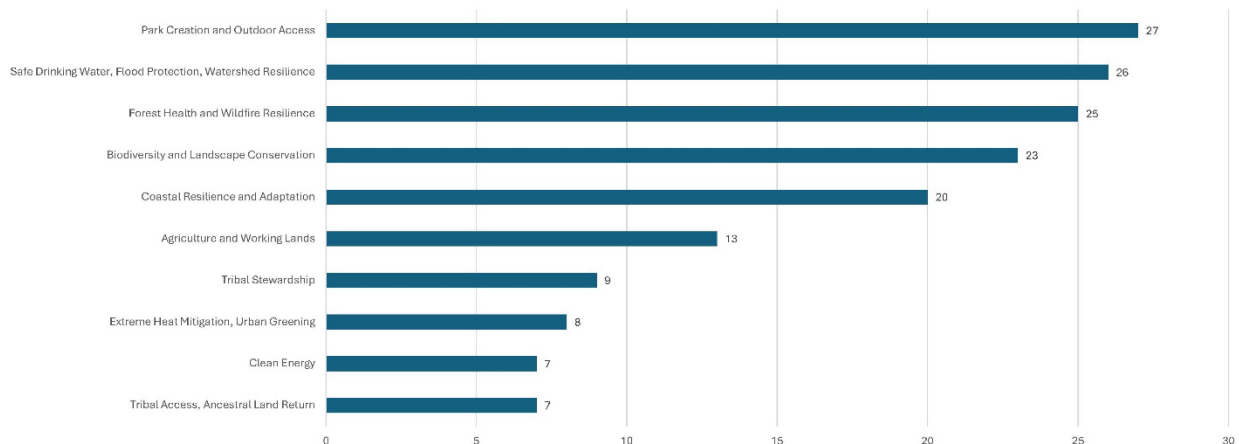
Please select which Organization Type describes your organization best:



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Figure 2: Stakeholder Organization Project Sector

Which sector(s) describes the type of work/projects your organization typically engages in and/or implements? (Check all that apply)



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Figure 3: Communities Served by Stakeholder Organization

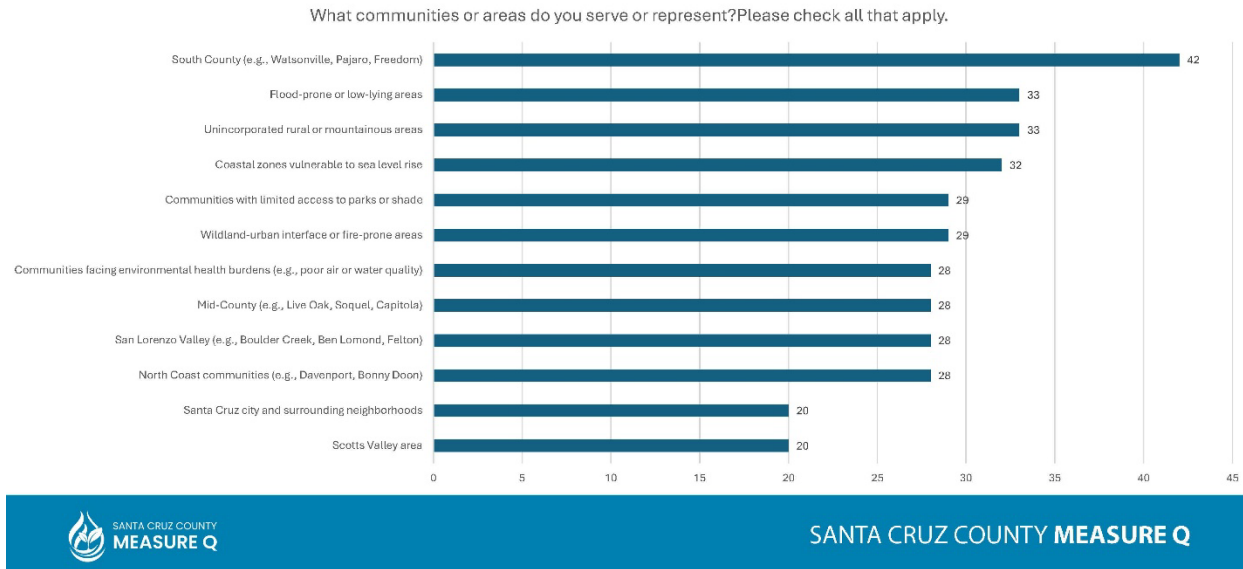


Figure 4: Most Selected and Least Selected Project Types

From the Stakeholder Survey

Project Types: Many different project types are represented in the stakeholder's top 5 project types.

The most selected project types were:

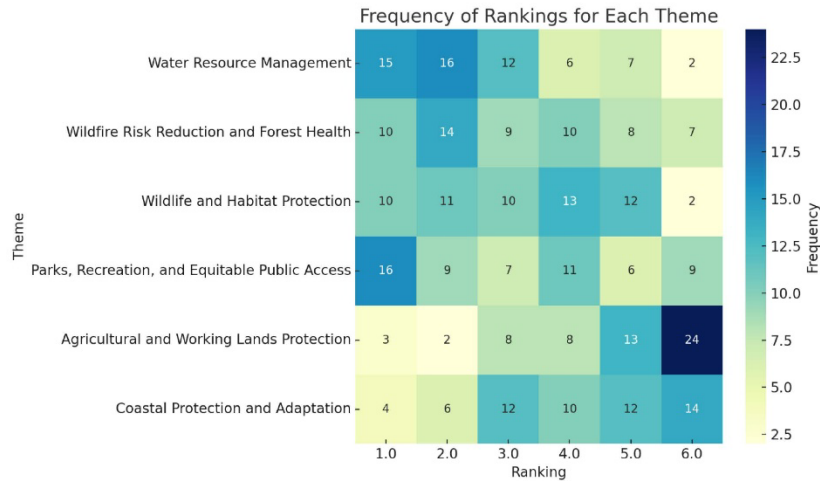
- **Wildfire Risk Reduction (Forested Areas):** In the top 5 for **40%** of stakeholders
- **Wildfire Risk Reduction (Wildland-Urban Interface):** In the top 5 for **32%** of Stakeholders
- **Enhancing Watershed Health (Protecting Water Resources):** In the top 5 for **32%** of Stakeholders

The least selected projected types were:

- **Pollution Reduction (Litter Removal):** In the top 5 for **7%** of Stakeholders
- **Conservation Corps (Support):** In the top 5 for **4%** of Stakeholders
- **Private Lands Stewardship (Assistance and Support):** In the top 5 for **2%** of Stakeholders

Figure 5: Frequency of Rankings for Measure Q Themes

To help inform the Vision Plan's first five years of implementation, please rank the following themes from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important) from your organization's perspective.



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Figure 6: Narrative Summary of Key Takeaways From Stakeholder Kickoff Meeting

- **What success looks like for stakeholders/organizations:** Beyond funding, stakeholders want clear, trackable goals, the ability to articulate collective/system-wide efforts (metrics on acres treated, miles maintained), and a plan that is a useful tool accelerating their work and facilitating funding.
- **Community Benefit vs. Tourism:** Prioritization of projects directly benefiting local residents over those solely focused on attracting tourism for economic gain.
- **Permitting/Green Tape:** Desire to outline the permit process within the plan and identify strategies/fund projects that streamline permitting or get projects closer to "shovel ready."
- **Cross-cutting questions to ask across all meetings:** How to define and address disadvantaged communities beyond census data (concentrations and dispersed vulnerable residents). Identify how this will inform project prioritization and grant guidelines.



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Q1 Name

Answered: 57 Skipped: 4

Q2 Title

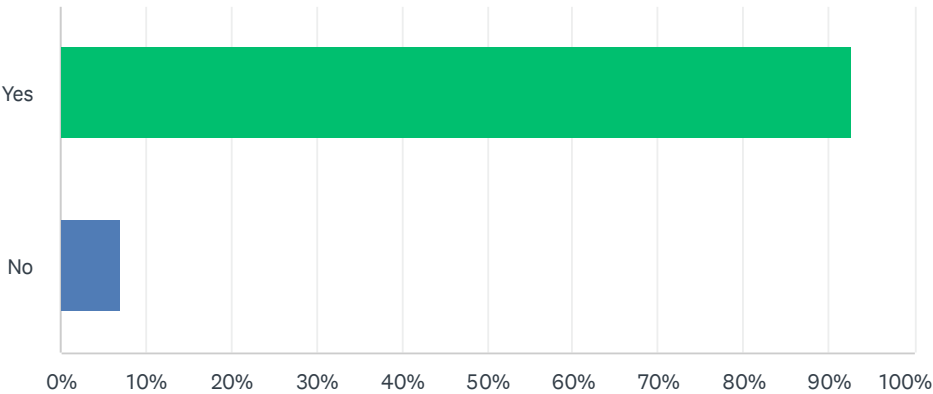
Answered: 54 Skipped: 7

Q3 Email

Answered: 56 Skipped: 5

Q4 I would like to receive email updates about this project.

Answered: 56 Skipped: 5



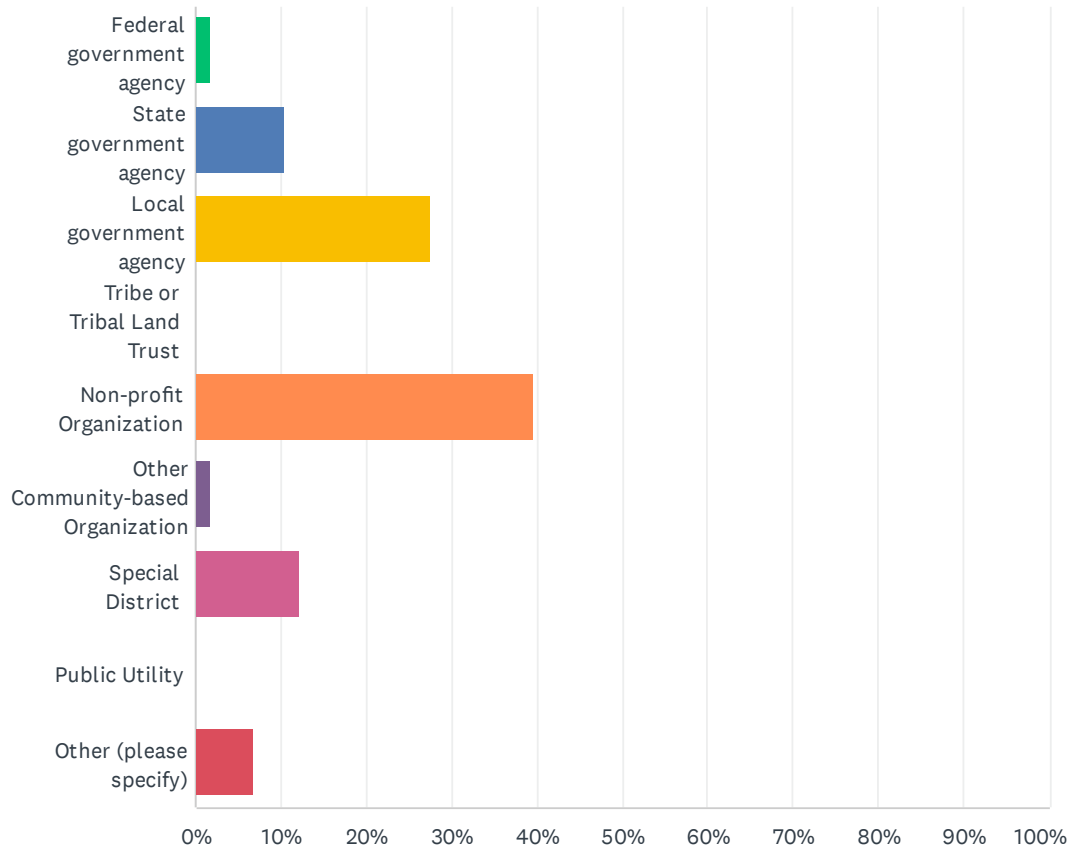
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	92.86%	52
No	7.14%	4
Total Respondents: 56		

Q5 Organization's Name

Answered: 55 Skipped: 6

Q6 Please select which Organization Type describes your organization best:

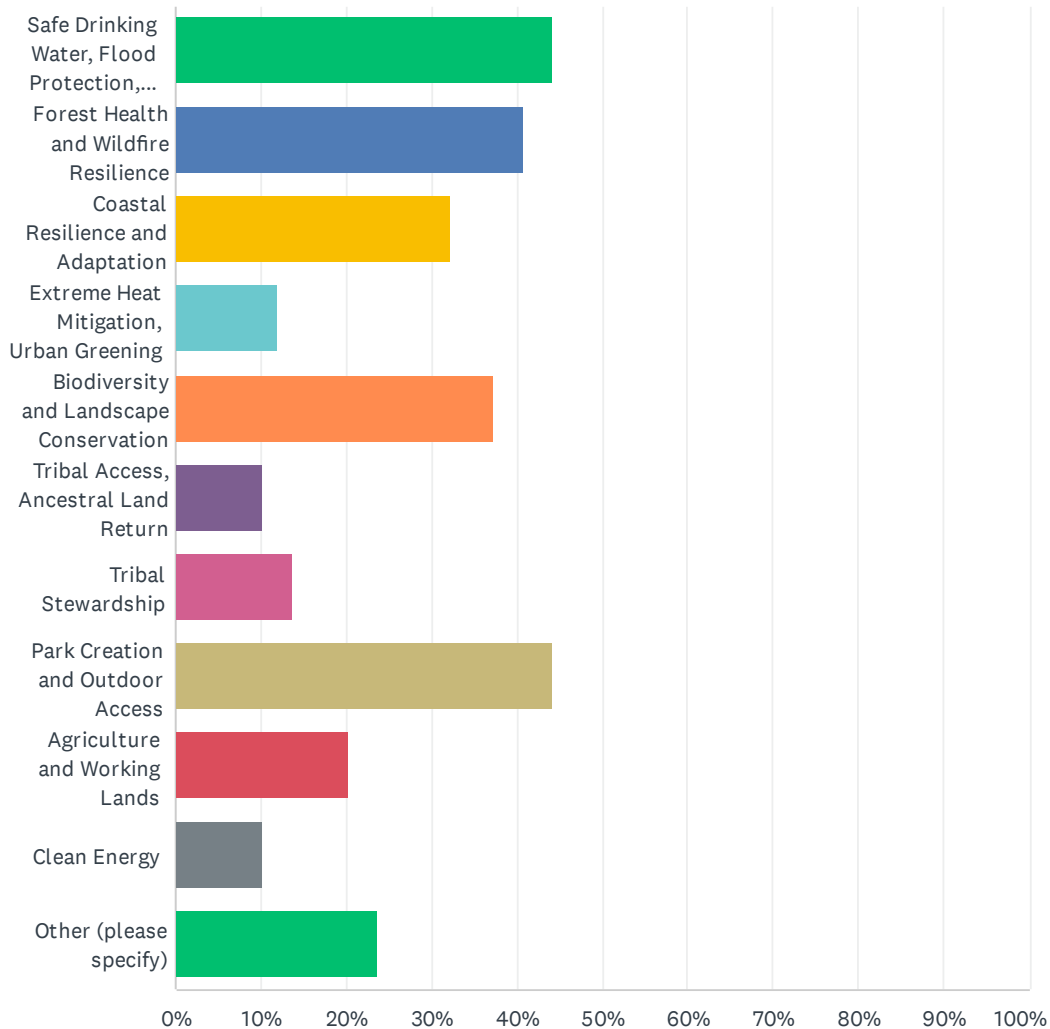
Answered: 58 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Federal government agency	1.72%	1
State government agency	10.34%	6
Local government agency	27.59%	16
Tribe or Tribal Land Trust	0.00%	0
Non-profit Organization	39.66%	23
Other Community-based Organization	1.72%	1
Special District	12.07%	7
Public Utility	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	6.90%	4
TOTAL		58

Q7 Which sector(s) describes the type of work/projects your organization typically engages in and/or implements? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 59 Skipped: 2

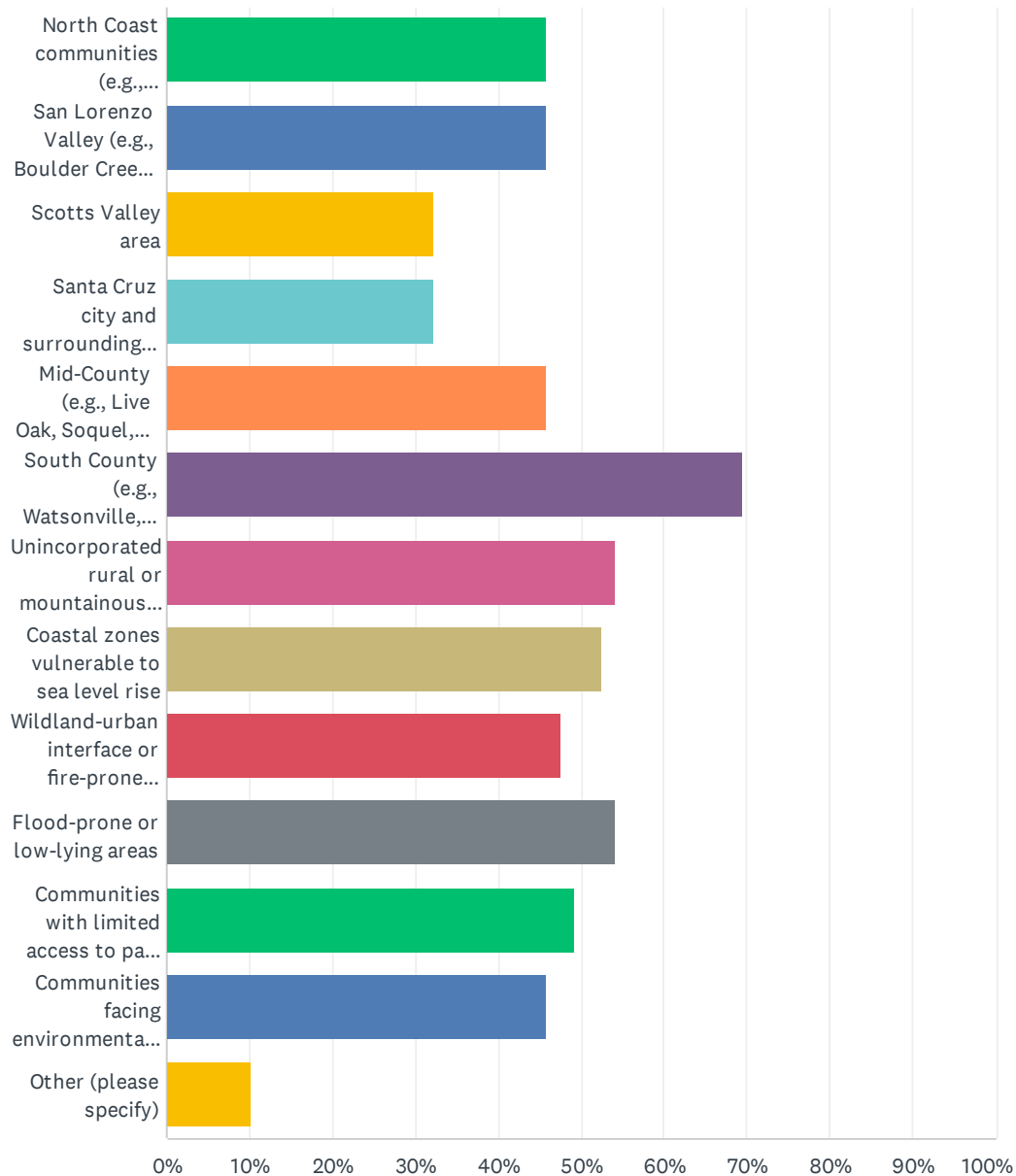


Measure Q - Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and
Wildfire Protection Initiative: Vision Plan Development Stakeholder Survey **Item 7**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Safe Drinking Water, Flood Protection, Watershed Resilience	44.07%	26
Forest Health and Wildfire Resilience	40.68%	24
Coastal Resilience and Adaptation	32.20%	19
Extreme Heat Mitigation, Urban Greening	11.86%	7
Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation	37.29%	22
Tribal Access, Ancestral Land Return	10.17%	6
Tribal Stewardship	13.56%	8
Park Creation and Outdoor Access	44.07%	26
Agriculture and Working Lands	20.34%	12
Clean Energy	10.17%	6
Other (please specify)	23.73%	14
Total Respondents: 59		

Q8 What communities or areas do you serve or represent? Please check all that apply. This helps us ensure climate adaptation efforts equitably reach all parts of Santa Cruz County, especially areas facing higher risks or historical underinvestment.

Answered: 59 Skipped: 2

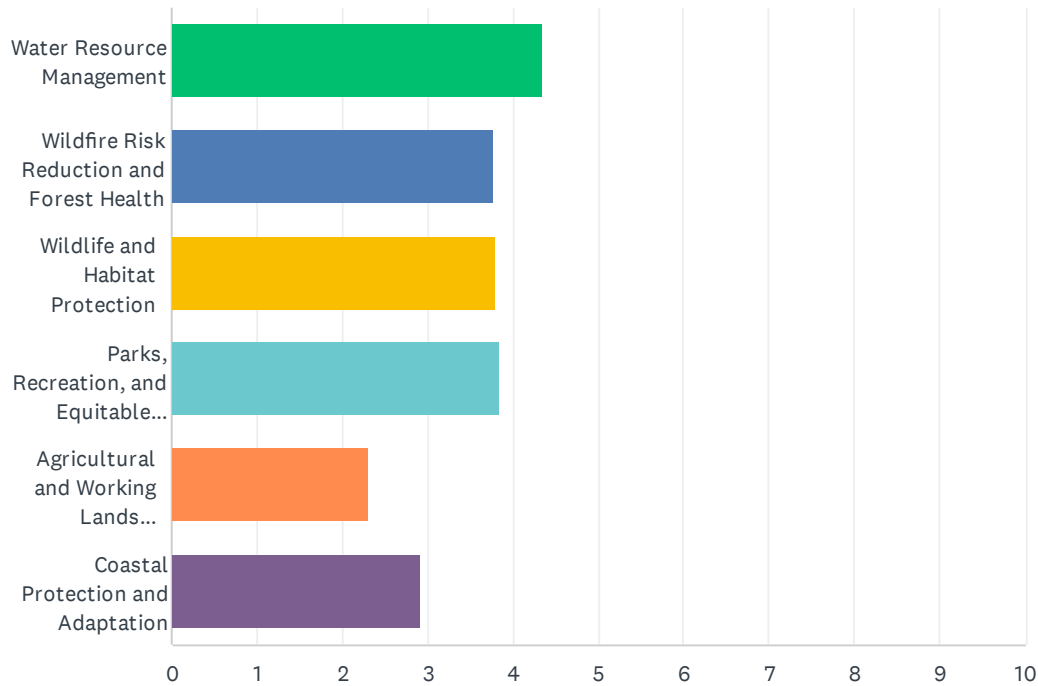


Measure Q - Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
North Coast communities (e.g., Davenport, Bonny Doon)	45.76%	27
San Lorenzo Valley (e.g., Boulder Creek, Ben Lomond, Felton)	45.76%	27
Scotts Valley area	32.20%	19
Santa Cruz city and surrounding neighborhoods	32.20%	19
Mid-County (e.g., Live Oak, Soquel, Capitola)	45.76%	27
South County (e.g., Watsonville, Pajaro, Freedom)	69.49%	41
Unincorporated rural or mountainous areas	54.24%	32
Coastal zones vulnerable to sea level rise	52.54%	31
Wildland-urban interface or fire-prone areas	47.46%	28
Flood-prone or low-lying areas	54.24%	32
Communities with limited access to parks or shade	49.15%	29
Communities facing environmental health burdens (e.g., poor air or water quality)	45.76%	27
Other (please specify)	10.17%	6
Total Respondents: 59		

Q9 To help inform the Vision Plan's first five years of implementation, please rank the following themes from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important) from your organization's perspective.

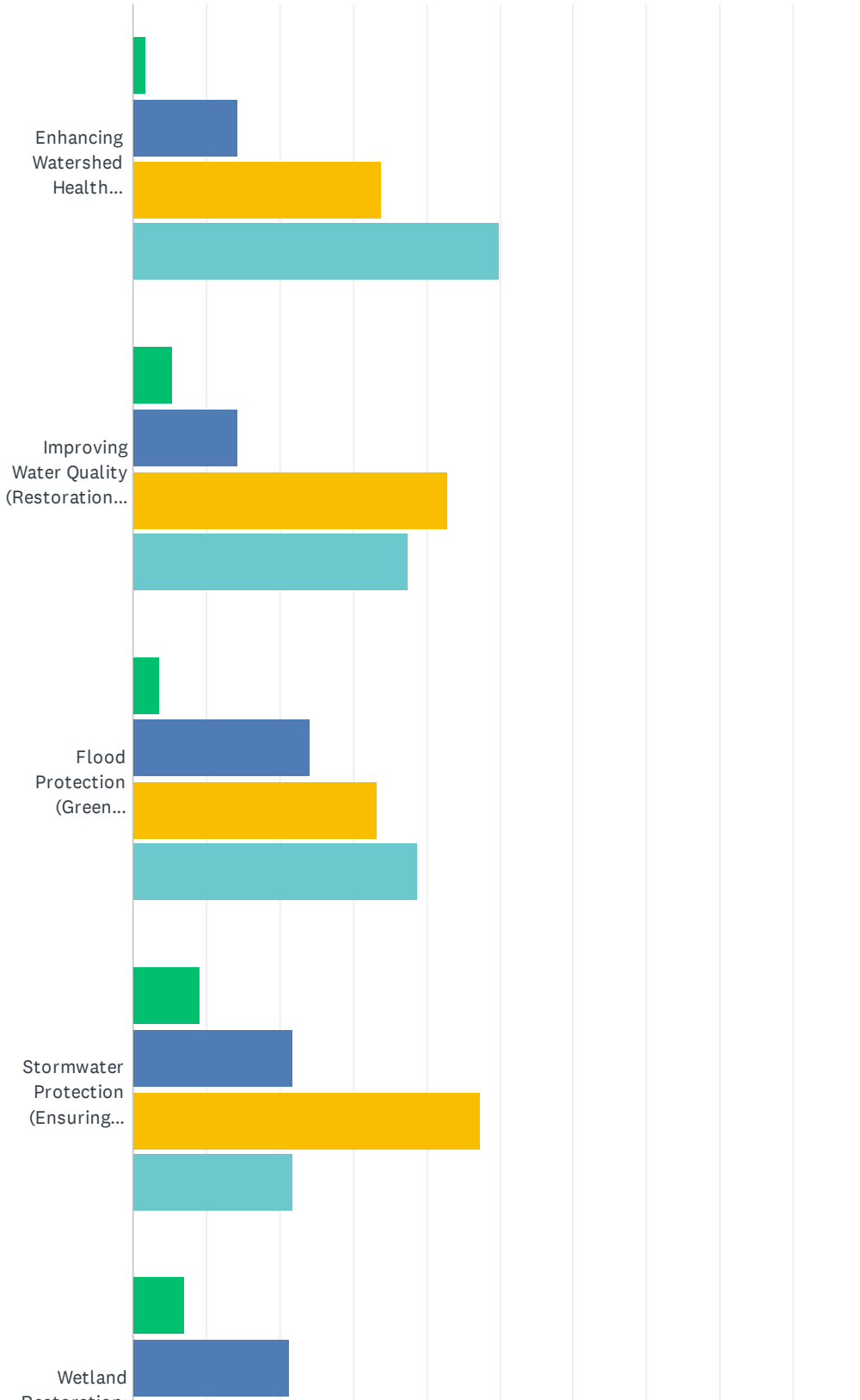
Answered: 58 Skipped: 3



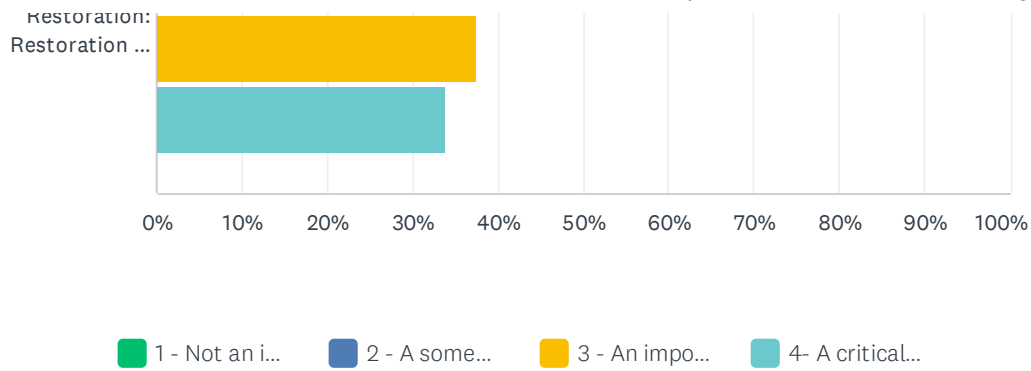
	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
Water Resource Management	25.86% 15	27.59% 16	20.69% 12	10.34% 6	12.07% 7	3.45% 2	58	4.34
Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health	17.24% 10	24.14% 14	15.52% 9	17.24% 10	13.79% 8	12.07% 7	58	3.78
Wildlife and Habitat Protection	17.24% 10	18.97% 11	17.24% 10	22.41% 13	20.69% 12	3.45% 2	58	3.79
Parks, Recreation, and Equitable Public Access	27.59% 16	15.52% 9	12.07% 7	18.97% 11	10.34% 6	15.52% 9	58	3.84
Agricultural and Working Lands Protection	5.17% 3	3.45% 2	13.79% 8	13.79% 8	22.41% 13	41.38% 24	58	2.31
Coastal Protection and Adaptation	6.90% 4	10.34% 6	20.69% 12	17.24% 10	20.69% 12	24.14% 14	58	2.93

Q10 Please rank the Water Resources project types on a scale of 1 to 4 from the perspective of your organization.

Answered: 56 Skipped: 5



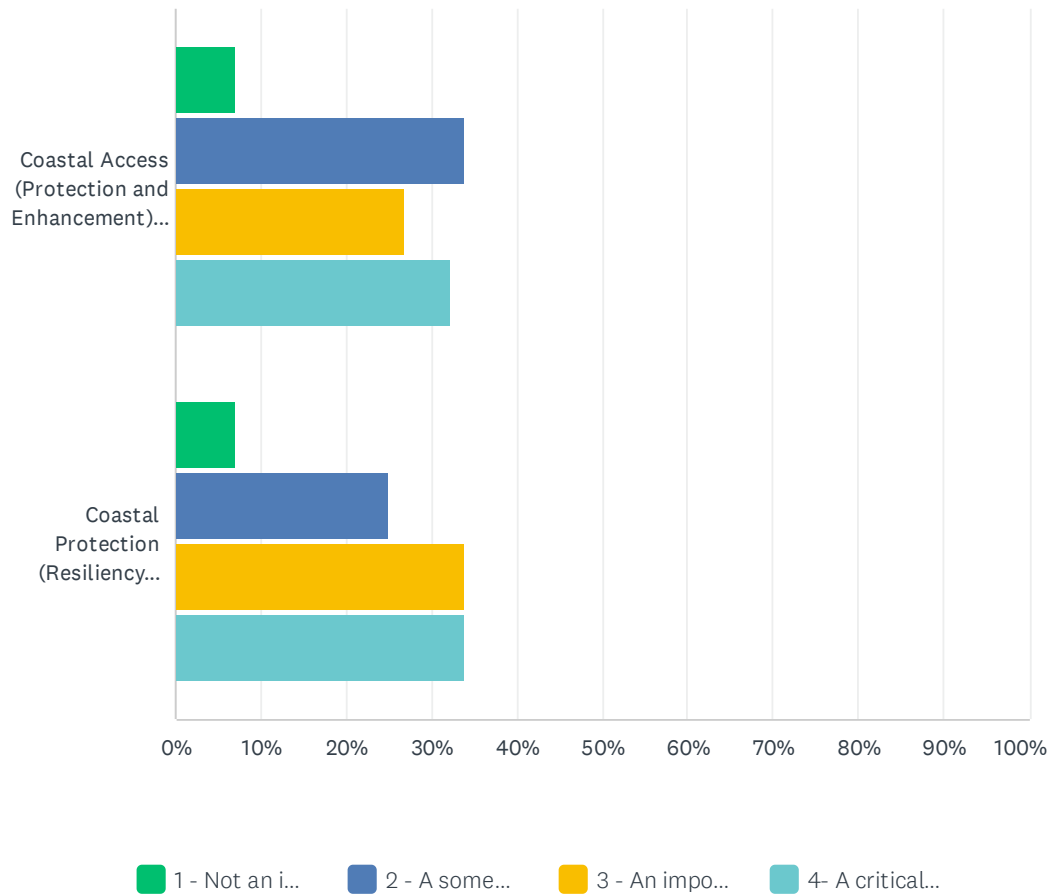
Measure Q - Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildfire Protection Initiative: Vision Plan Development Stakeholder Survey **Item 7**



	1 - NOT AN IMPORTANT PRIORITY FOR MEASURE Q FUNDING	2 - A SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT PRIORITY FOR MEASURE Q FUNDING	3 - AN IMPORTANT PRIORITY FOR MEASURE Q FUNDING	4- A CRITICALLY IMPORTANT PRIORITY FOR MEASURE Q FUNDING	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Enhancing Watershed Health (Protecting Water Resources): Projects that support the conservation of water supplies and groundwater recharge by enhancing watershed health, improved land management, and protecting land adjacent to County and city water sources.	1.79% 1	14.29% 8	33.93% 19	50.00% 28	56	3.32
Improving Water Quality (Restoration and Repairs): Projects that improve water quality through the control of soil erosion by restoring and repairing trails, culverts, drainage, water courses, floodplains, wetlands, and riparian areas.	5.36% 3	14.29% 8	42.86% 24	37.50% 21	56	3.13
Flood Protection (Green Infrastructure): Projects that implement natural or nature-based flood protection and restoration projects, including green infrastructure to reduce neighborhood flooding.	3.70% 2	24.07% 13	33.33% 18	38.89% 21	54	3.07
Stormwater Protection (Ensuring Resiliency of Major Evacuation Routes): Projects that reduce flood and stormwater impacts by repairing stormwater culverts on major evacuation routes.	9.09% 5	21.82% 12	47.27% 26	21.82% 12	55	2.82
Wetland Restoration: Restoration of wetlands and the recovery of anadromous fish species.	7.14% 4	21.43% 12	37.50% 21	33.93% 19	56	2.98

Q11 Please rank the Coastal Resilience project types on a scale of 1 to 4 from the perspective of your organization.

Answered: 56 Skipped: 5

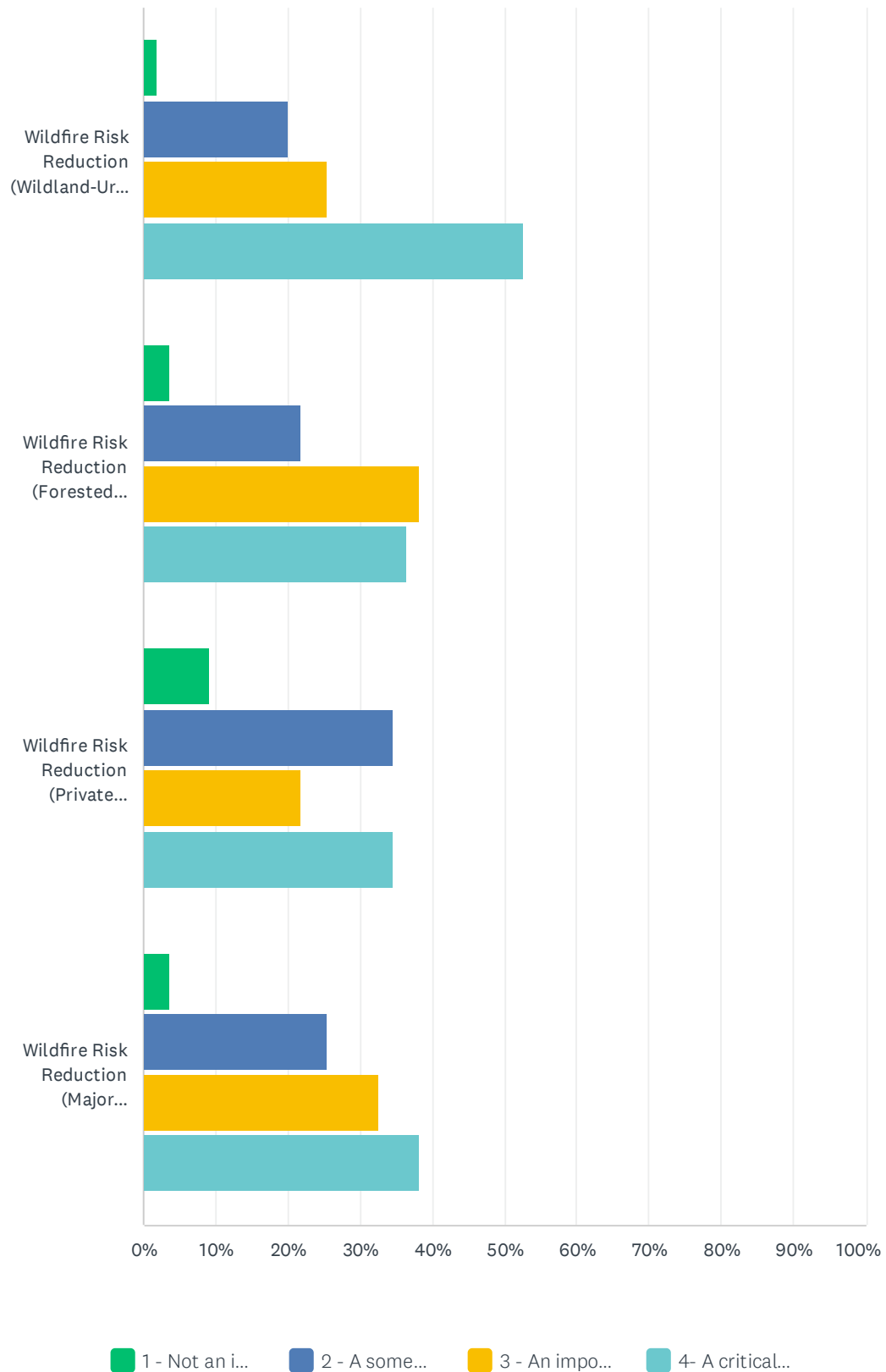


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Coastal Access (Protection and Enhancement): Projects that support the protection of public access to local beaches and enhancement of visitor experiences by ensuring that public beaches are safe, clean, and accessible.	7.14% 4	33.93% 19	26.79% 15	32.14% 18	56	2.84
Coastal Protection (Resiliency Against Erosion and Sea-Level Rise): Projects that support the development and implementation of green infrastructure solutions that protect coastal areas and estuaries from erosion and the impacts of sea level rise.	7.14% 4	25.00% 14	33.93% 19	33.93% 19	56	2.95

**Q12 Please rank the Forest & Wildfire project types on a scale of 1 to 4
from the perspective of your organization.**

Answered: 55 Skipped: 6

Measure Q - Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and
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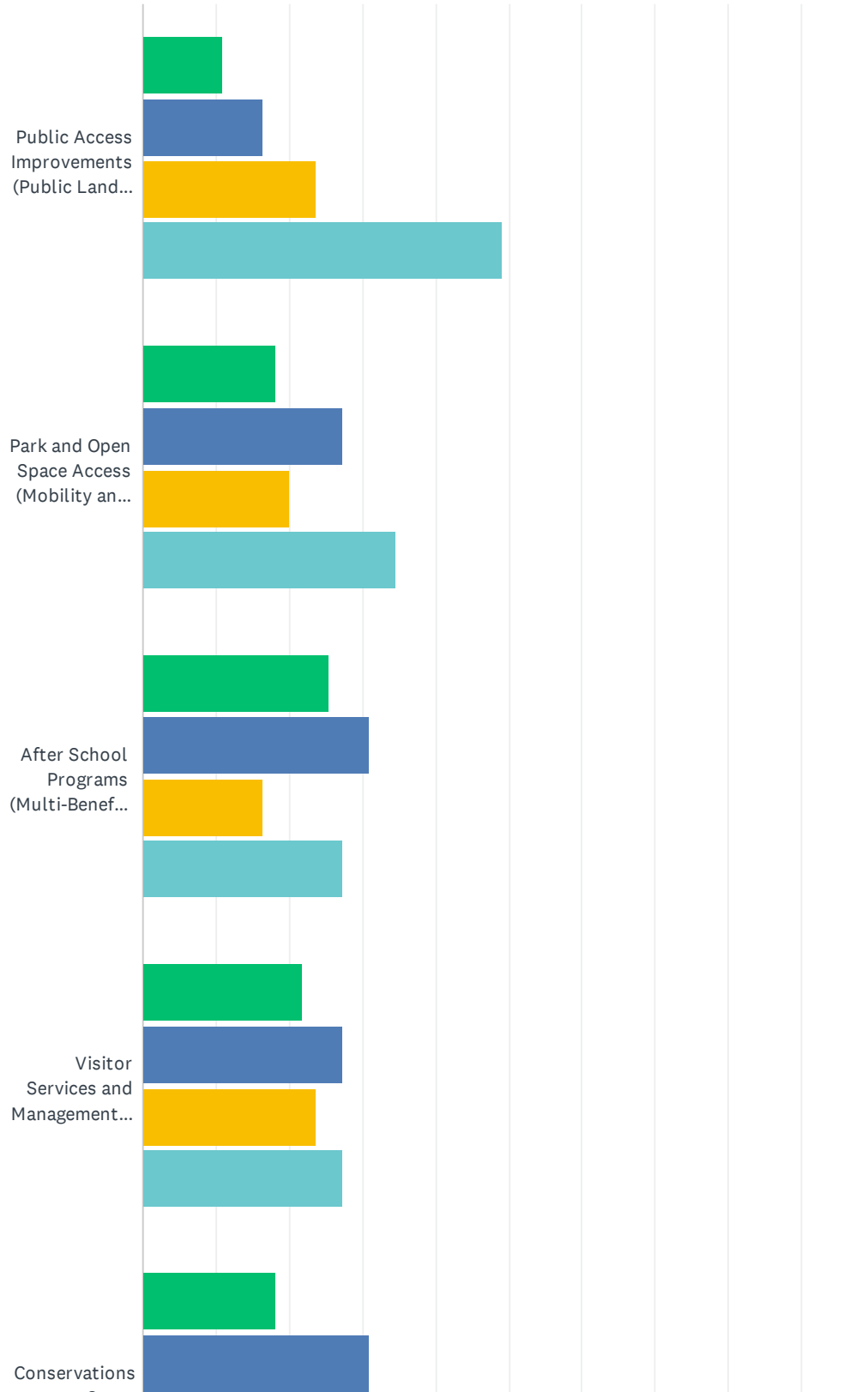


Measure Q - Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and
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Wildfire Risk Reduction (Wildland-Urban Interface): Projects that develop shaded fuel breaks, defensible spaces, or the reduction of hazardous fuels to prevent catastrophic wildfire, especially along roadways and trails.	1.82% 1	20.00% 11	25.45% 14	52.73% 29	55	3.29
Wildfire Risk Reduction (Forested Areas): Projects that lower dangerous fuel loads in forests and mitigate conditions that could lead to catastrophic wildfires.	3.64% 2	21.82% 12	38.18% 21	36.36% 20	55	3.07
Wildfire Risk Reduction (Private Lands): Projects that empower Firewise and Fire Safe Council communities with neighborhood scale risk reduction support efforts.	9.09% 5	34.55% 19	21.82% 12	34.55% 19	55	2.82
Wildfire Risk Reduction (Major Evacuation Routes): Projects that develop shaded fuel breaks and fuel reduction along major rural evacuation route corridors.	3.64% 2	25.45% 14	32.73% 18	38.18% 21	55	3.05

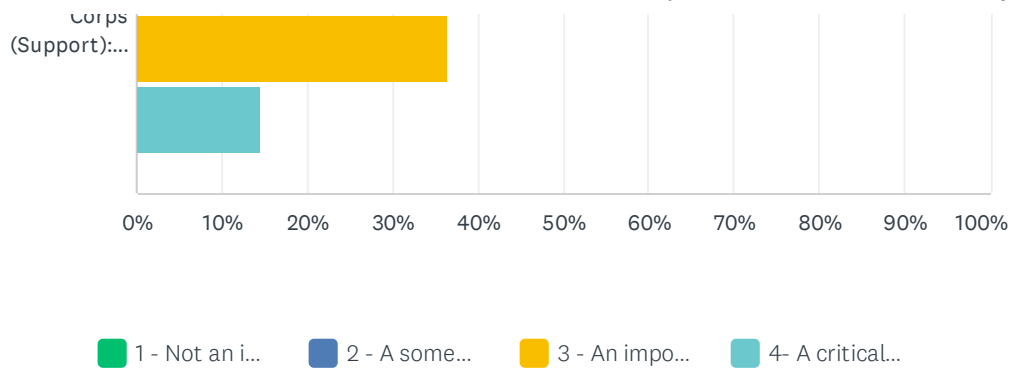
Q13 Please rank the Parks & Recreation project types on a scale of 1 to 4 from the perspective of your organization.

Answered: 55 Skipped: 6



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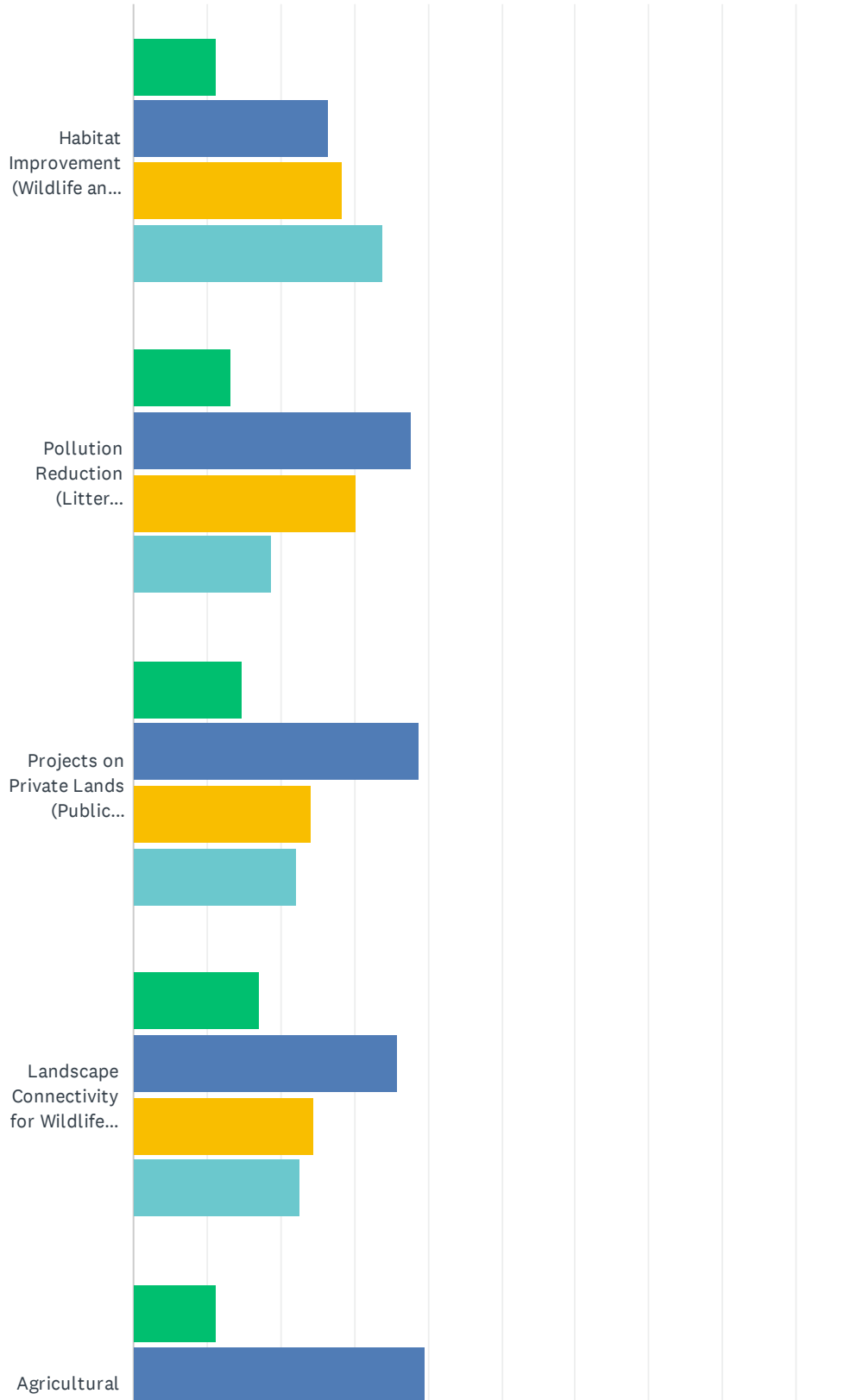
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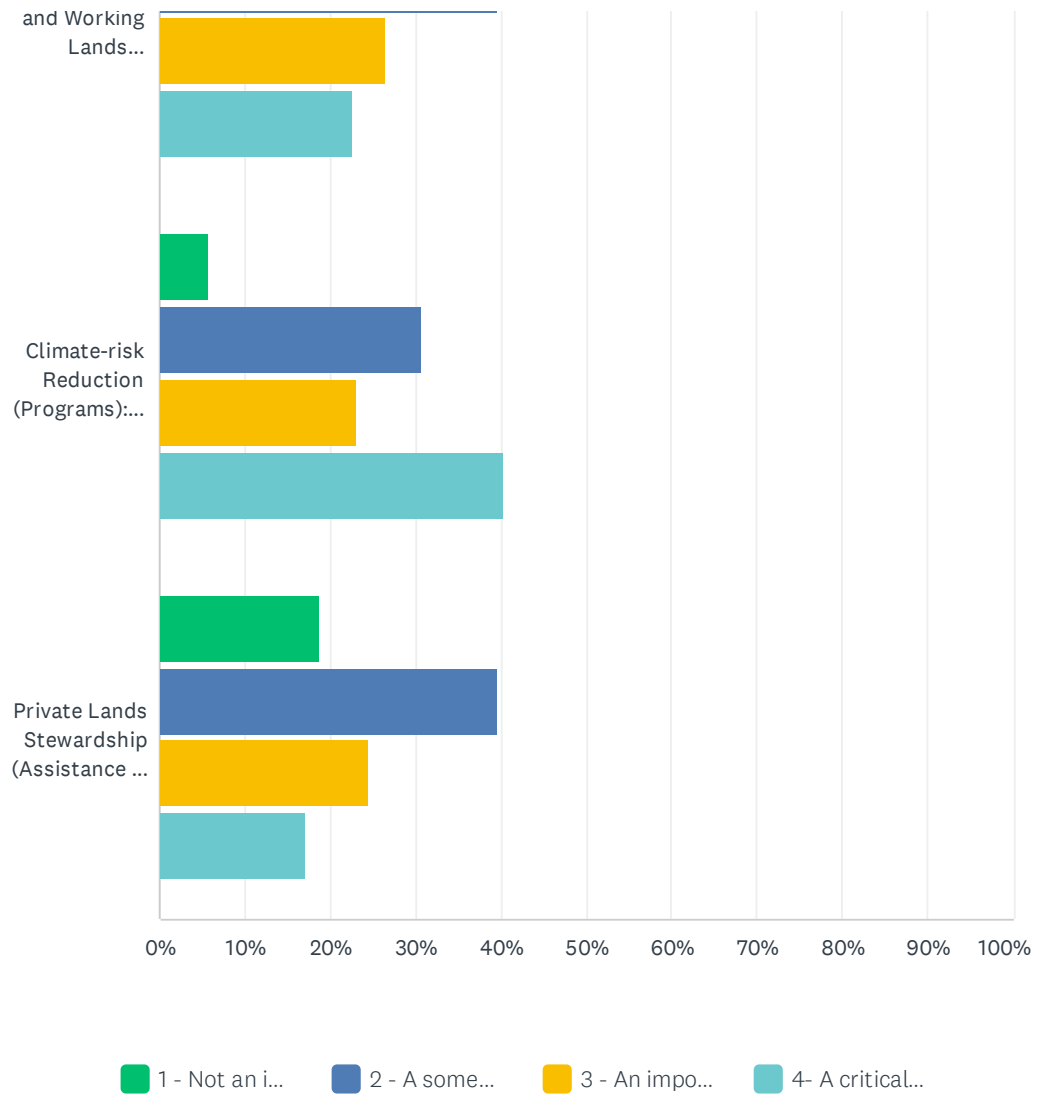
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Public Access Improvements (Public Lands): Projects that establish, repair, construction, or maintenance of safe and clean parks, staging areas, picnic areas, river parkways, trails, restrooms, and other access facilities on lands open to the public, including beautification and litter removal.	10.91% 6	16.36% 9	23.64% 13	49.09% 27	55	3.11
Park and Open Space Access (Mobility and Public Transportation): Ensuring equitable access to nature through increased mobility and public transportation services to local parks.	18.18% 10	27.27% 15	20.00% 11	34.55% 19	55	2.71
After School Programs (Multi-Benefit Education and Recreation): Projects that fund sports and aquatic facilities, senior citizens programs, and high-quality environmental education and cultural programs	25.45% 14	30.91% 17	16.36% 9	27.27% 15	55	2.45
Visitor Services and Management (Public Programs): Projects that create or support programs for parks and open space preserves to protect natural resources, enhance visitor safety and enjoyment, support volunteerism and environmental education.	21.82% 12	27.27% 15	23.64% 13	27.27% 15	55	2.56
Conservations Corps (Support): Projects that support the activities conducted by a community conservation corps as certified pursuant to Public Resources Code section 14507.5.	18.18% 10	30.91% 17	36.36% 20	14.55% 8	55	2.47

Q14 Please rank the Biodiversity & Agricultural and Working Lands project types on a scale of 1 to 4 from the perspective of your organization.

Answered: 54 Skipped: 7



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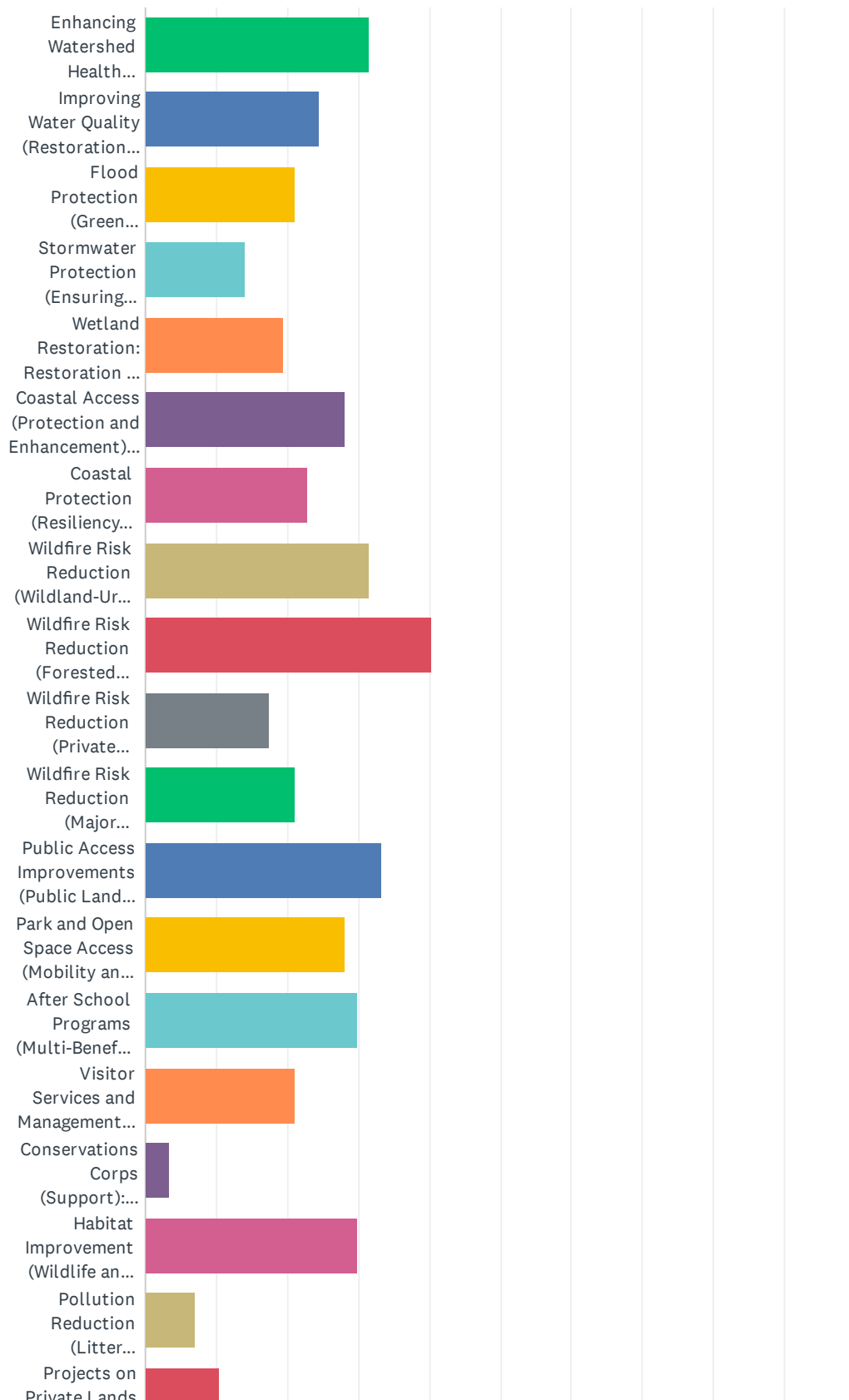


Measure Q - Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and
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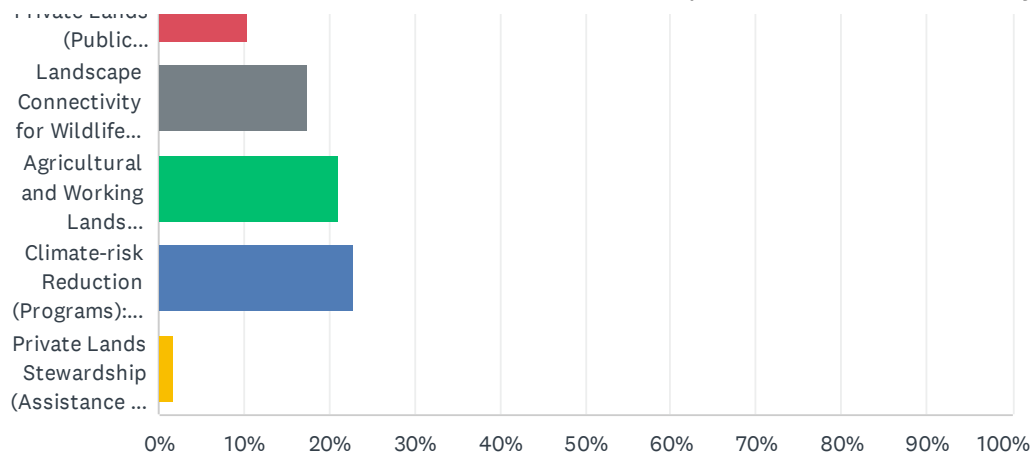
	1 - NOT AN IMPORTANT PRIORITY FOR MEASURE Q FUNDING	2 - A SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT PRIORITY FOR MEASURE Q FUNDING	3 - AN IMPORTANT PRIORITY FOR MEASURE Q FUNDING	4- A CRITICALLY IMPORTANT PRIORITY FOR MEASURE Q FUNDING	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Habitat Improvement (Wildlife and Marine-life): Projects that encourage wildlife and marine-life protection, and conservation of native biodiversity by reducing invasive species and protecting or restoring critical habitats.	11.32% 6	26.42% 14	28.30% 15	33.96% 18	53	2.85
Pollution Reduction (Litter Removal): Pollution reduction projects, such as litter removal or urban forestry to reduce air pollution.	13.21% 7	37.74% 20	30.19% 16	18.87% 10	53	2.55
Projects on Private Lands (Public Benefit): Stewardship of private lands in the public benefit for fire resiliency, water quality, erosion control, or other ecosystem services.	14.81% 8	38.89% 21	24.07% 13	22.22% 12	54	2.54
Landscape Connectivity for Wildlife (Wildlife Corridors): Creation of wildlife bridges, culverts, directional fencing, or other wildlife-friendly infrastructure that support wildlife corridors.	16.98% 9	35.85% 19	24.53% 13	22.64% 12	53	2.53
Agricultural and Working Lands Conservation (Protection and Enhancement): Agricultural protection and enhancement of ecosystem function, soil health, water quality, drought, or flood resilience on Working Lands.	11.32% 6	39.62% 21	26.42% 14	22.64% 12	53	2.60
Climate-risk Reduction (Programs): Implementation of climate-risk reduction and resilience stewardship programs.	5.77% 3	30.77% 16	23.08% 12	40.38% 21	52	2.98
Private Lands Stewardship (Assistance and Support): Technical assistance, education, and outreach for natural resources planning, stewardship, and restoration on private lands, including Working Lands and agricultural, rural residential, forest, and undeveloped land.	18.87% 10	39.62% 21	24.53% 13	16.98% 9	53	2.40

Q15 Please select your top 5 project types (in no particular order).

Answered: 57 Skipped: 4



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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Enhancing Watershed Health (Protecting Water Resources): Projects that support the conservation of water supplies and groundwater recharge by enhancing watershed health, improved land management, and protecting land adjacent to County and city water sources.	31.58%	18
Improving Water Quality (Restoration and Repairs): Projects that improve water quality through the control of soil erosion by restoring and repairing trails, culverts, drainage, water courses, floodplains, wetlands, and riparian areas.	24.56%	14
Flood Protection (Green Infrastructure): Projects that implement natural or nature-based flood protection and restoration projects, including green infrastructure to reduce neighborhood flooding.	21.05%	12
Stormwater Protection (Ensuring Resiliency of Major Evacuation Routes): Projects that reduce flood and stormwater impacts by repairing stormwater culverts on major evacuation routes.	14.04%	8
Wetland Restoration: Restoration of wetlands and the recovery of anadromous fish species.	19.30%	11
Coastal Access (Protection and Enhancement): Projects that support the protection of public access to local beaches and enhancement of visitor experiences by ensuring that public beaches are safe, clean, and accessible.	28.07%	16
Coastal Protection (Resiliency Against Erosion and Sea-Level Rise): Projects that support the development and implementation of green infrastructure solutions that protect coastal areas and estuaries from erosion and the impacts of sea level rise.	22.81%	13
Wildfire Risk Reduction (Wildland-Urban Interface): Projects that develop shaded fuel breaks, defensible spaces, or the reduction of hazardous fuels to prevent catastrophic wildfire, especially along roadways and trails.	31.58%	18
Wildfire Risk Reduction (Forested Areas): Projects that lower dangerous fuel loads in forests and mitigate conditions that could lead to catastrophic wildfires.	40.35%	23
Wildfire Risk Reduction (Private Lands): Projects that empower Firewise and Fire Safe Council communities with neighborhood scale risk reduction support efforts.	17.54%	10
Wildfire Risk Reduction (Major Evacuation Routes): Projects that develop shaded fuel breaks and fuel reduction along major rural evacuation route corridors.	21.05%	12
Public Access Improvements (Public Lands): Projects that establish, repair, construction, or maintenance of safe and clean parks, staging areas, picnic areas, river parkways, trails, restrooms, and other access facilities on lands open to the public, including beautification and litter removal.	33.33%	19
Park and Open Space Access (Mobility and Public Transportation): Ensuring equitable access to nature through increased mobility and public transportation services to local parks.	28.07%	16
After School Programs (Multi-Benefit Education and Recreation): Projects that fund sports and aquatic facilities, senior citizens programs, and high-quality environmental education and cultural programs	29.82%	17
Visitor Services and Management (Public Programs): Projects that create or support programs for parks and open space preserves to protect natural resources, enhance visitor safety and enjoyment, support volunteerism and environmental education.	21.05%	12
Conservations Corps (Support): Projects that support the activities conducted by a community conservation corps as certified pursuant to Public Resources Code section 14507.5.	3.51%	2
Habitat Improvement (Wildlife and Marine-life): Projects that encourage wildlife and marine-life protection, and conservation of native biodiversity by reducing invasive species and protecting or restoring critical habitats.	29.82%	17
Pollution Reduction (Litter Removal): Pollution reduction projects, such as litter removal or urban forestry to reduce air pollution.	7.02%	4
Projects on Private Lands (Public Benefit): Stewardship of private lands in the public benefit for fire resiliency, water quality, erosion control, or other ecosystem services.	10.53%	6
Landscape Connectivity for Wildlife (Wildlife Corridors): Creation of wildlife bridges, culverts, directional fencing, or other wildlife-friendly infrastructure that support wildlife corridors.	17.54%	10
Agricultural and Working Lands Conservation (Protection and Enhancement): Agricultural protection and enhancement	21.05%	12

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of ecosystem function, soil health, water quality, drought, or flood resilience on Working Lands.

Climate-risk Reduction (Programs): Implementation of climate-risk reduction and resilience stewardship programs.	22.81%	13
Private Lands Stewardship (Assistance and Support): Technical assistance, education, and outreach for natural resources planning, stewardship, and restoration on private lands, including Working Lands and agricultural, rural residential, forest, and undeveloped land.	1.75%	1
Total Respondents: 57		

Q16 Supporting All Communities. Are there communities facing historical disinvestment that would benefit from investments in parks, urban greening, or other climate-resilience activities? Please describe any needs or opportunities.

Answered: 30 Skipped: 31

Q17 Multi-Benefit Projects. Measure Q is designed to support projects that provide multiple environmental and community benefits. For example, a restoration project might improve habitat and climate resilience while also creating new opportunities for public access or community engagement). Are there any existing or potential multi-benefit conservation projects or partnerships that Measure Q should consider funding? Please briefly describe the project type and locations.

Answered: 32 Skipped: 29

Q18 Please upload any documents relevant to existing or multi-benefit conservation projects or partnerships described above.

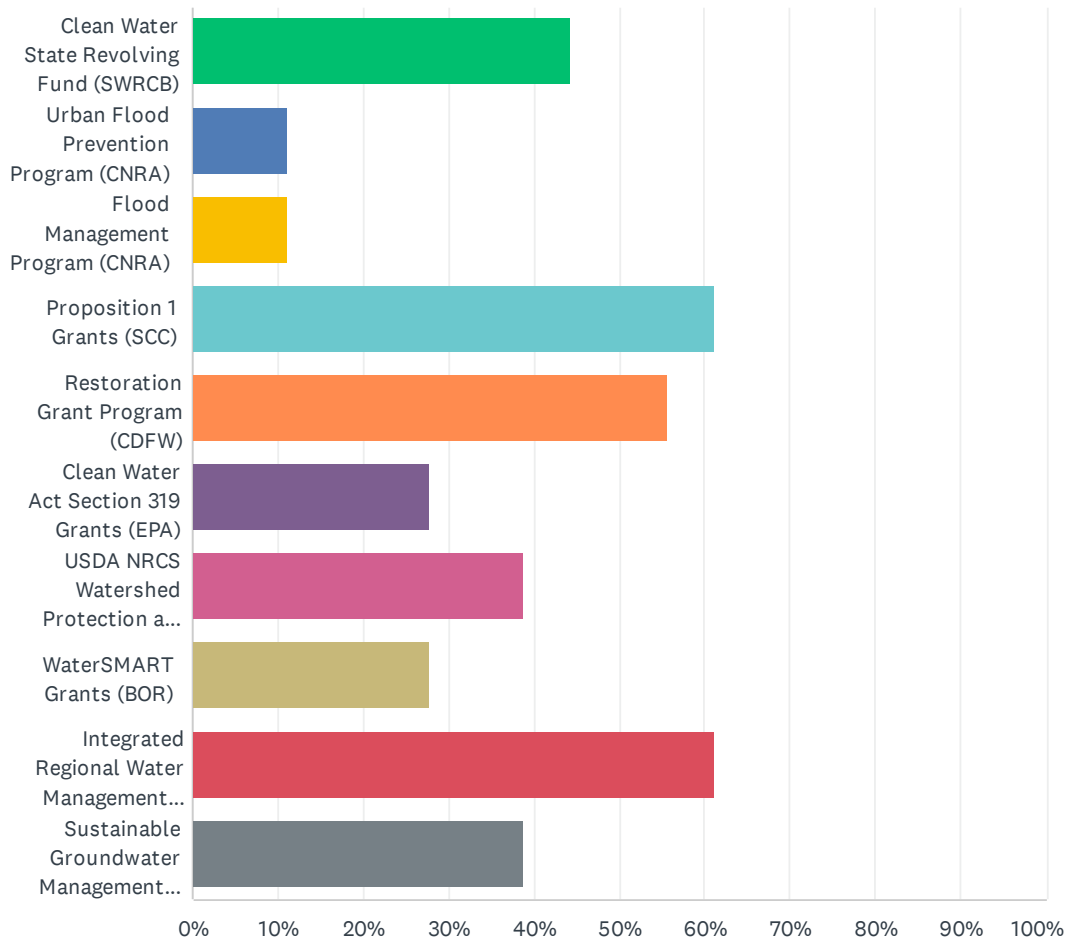
Answered: 3 Skipped: 58

Q19 Threats and Challenges. Are there specific threats or challenges in Santa Cruz County that you hope Measure Q can address? (write-in)

Answered: 32 Skipped: 29

Q20 Please select any of the following state and federal grant programs related to Water Resources that your organization is familiar with or has accessed to match local investments.

Answered: 18 Skipped: 43

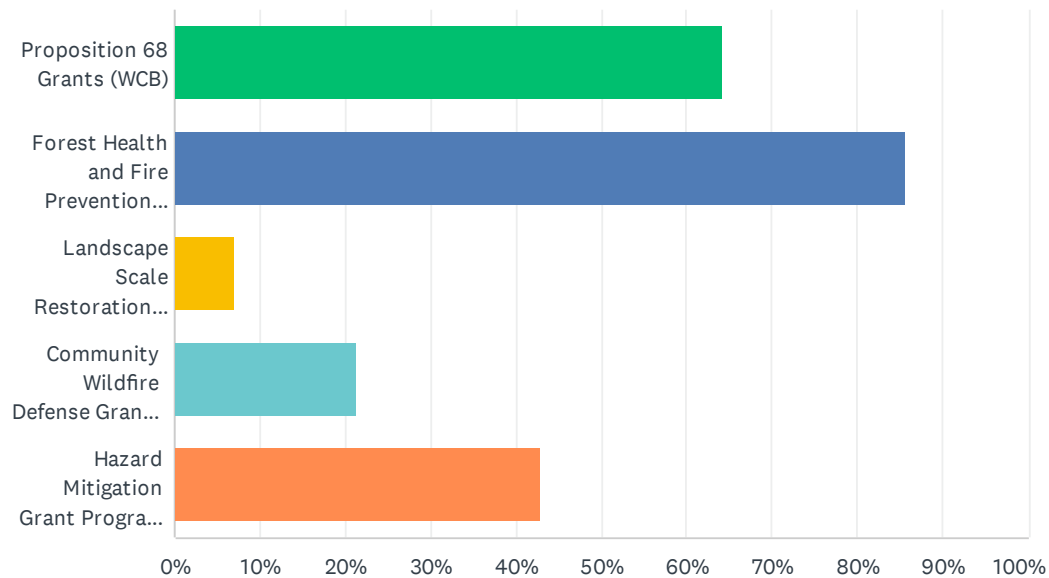


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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SWRCB)	44.44%	8
Urban Flood Prevention Program (CNRA)	11.11%	2
Flood Management Program (CNRA)	11.11%	2
Proposition 1 Grants (SCC)	61.11%	11
Restoration Grant Program (CDFW)	55.56%	10
Clean Water Act Section 319 Grants (EPA)	27.78%	5
USDA NRCS Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (NRCS)	38.89%	7
WaterSMART Grants (BOR)	27.78%	5
Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program (DWR)	61.11%	11
Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program (DWR)	38.89%	7
Total Respondents: 18		

Q21 Please select any of the following state and federal grant programs related to Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health that your organization is familiar with or has accessed to match local investments.

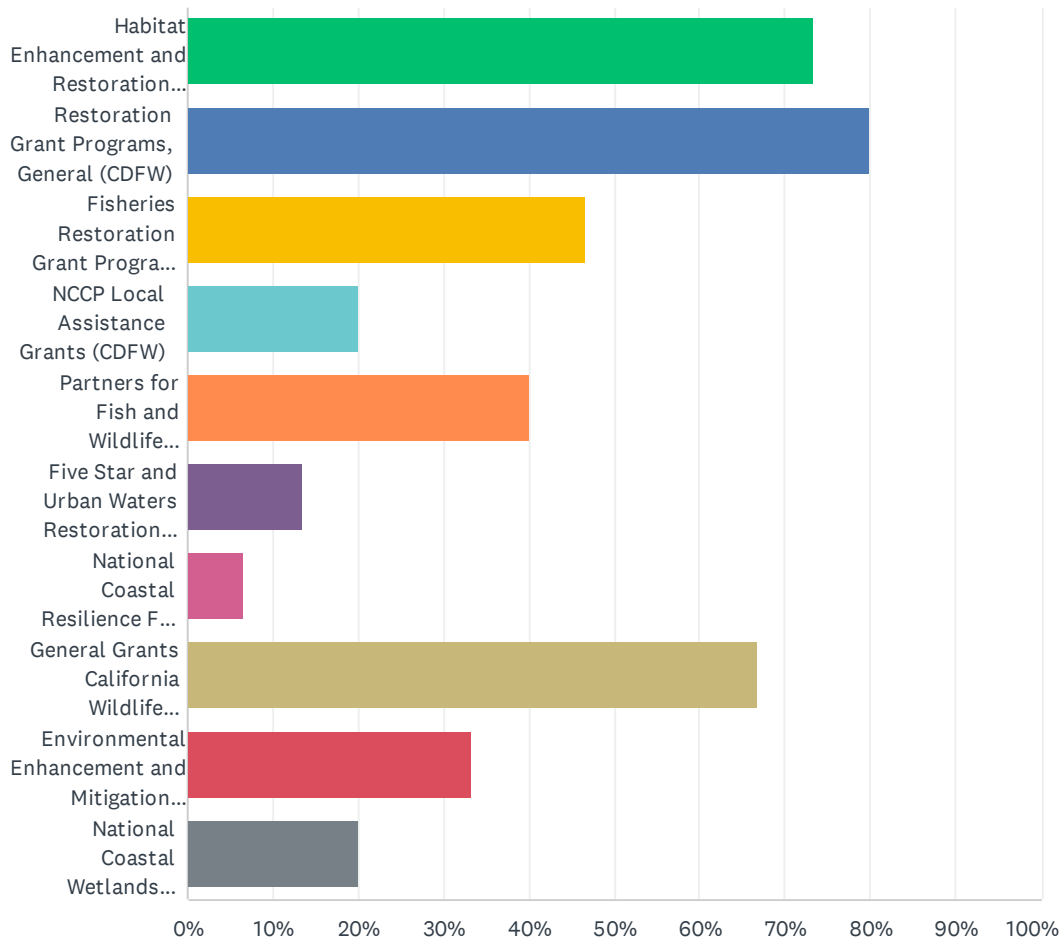
Answered: 14 Skipped: 47



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Proposition 68 Grants (WCB)	64.29%	9
Forest Health and Fire Prevention Grants (CalFIRE)	85.71%	12
Landscape Scale Restoration Grants (USFS)	7.14%	1
Community Wildfire Defense Grant (USFS)	21.43%	3
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (FEMA)	42.86%	6
Total Respondents: 14		

Q22 Please select any of the following state and federal grant programs related to Wildlife & Habitat Protection that your organization is familiar with or has accessed to match local investments.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 46

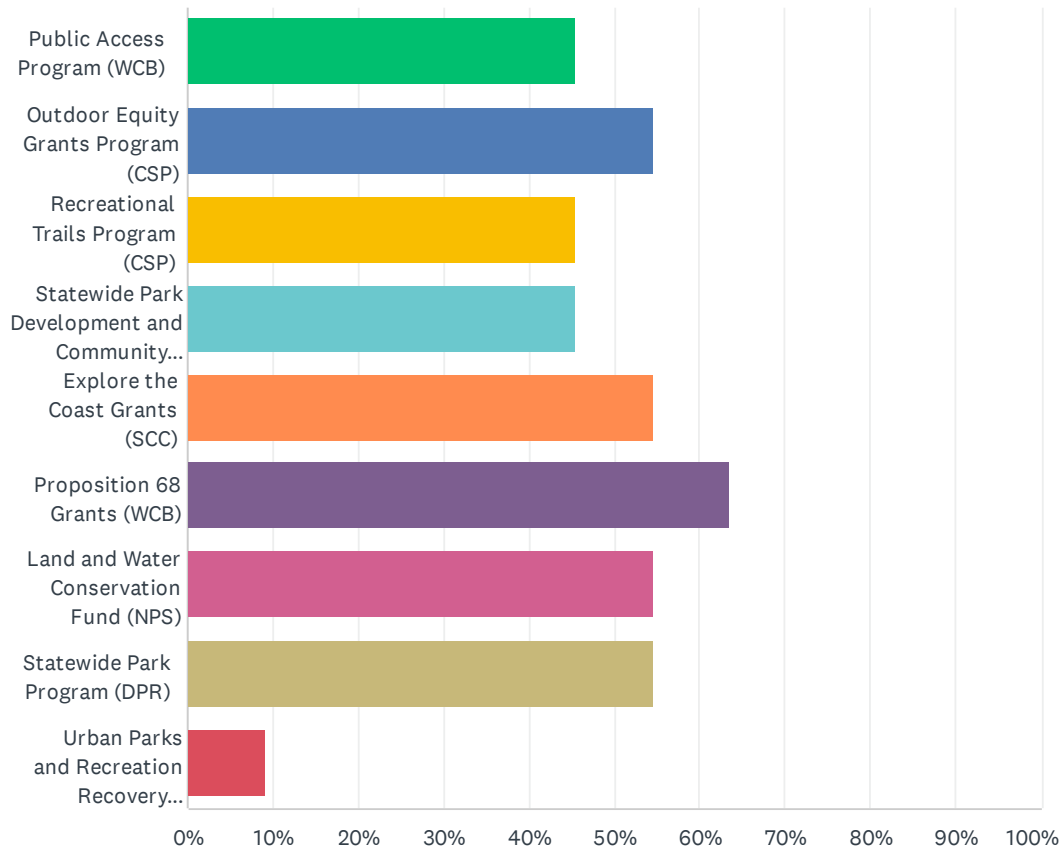


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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program (WCB)	73.33%	11
Restoration Grant Programs, General (CDFW)	80.00%	12
Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (CDFW)	46.67%	7
NCCP Local Assistance Grants (CDFW)	20.00%	3
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (USFWS)	40.00%	6
Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program (NFWF)	13.33%	2
National Coastal Resilience Fund (NFWF)	6.67%	1
General Grants California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)	66.67%	10
Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (CalTrans)	33.33%	5
National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant (USFWS)	20.00%	3
Total Respondents: 15		

Q23 Please select any of the following state and federal grant programs related to Parks, Recreation & Equitable Public Access that your organization is familiar with or has accessed to match local investments.

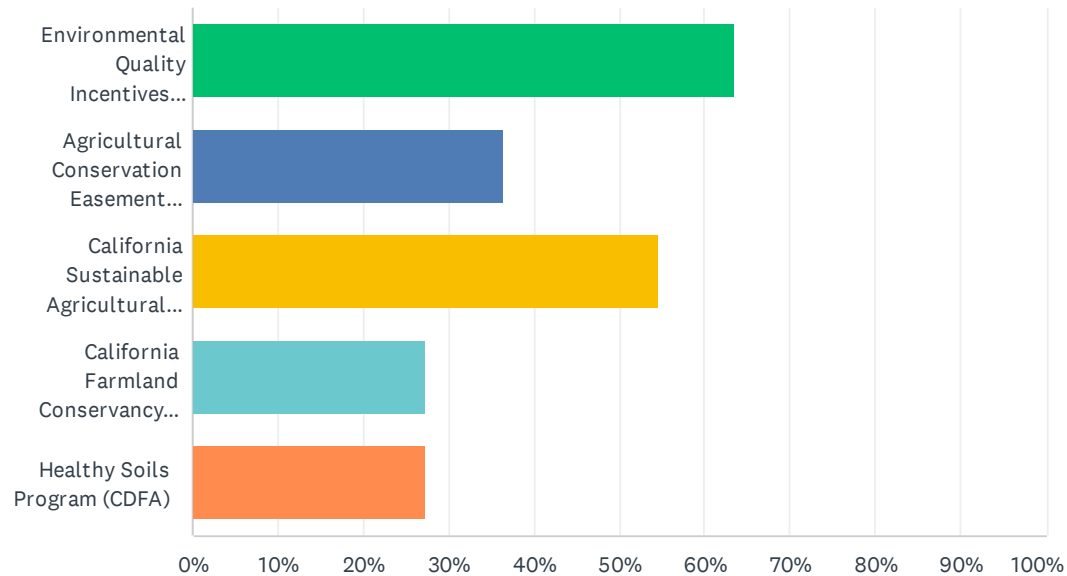
Answered: 11 Skipped: 50



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Public Access Program (WCB)	45.45%	5
Outdoor Equity Grants Program (CSP)	54.55%	6
Recreational Trails Program (CSP)	45.45%	5
Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program (CSP)	45.45%	5
Explore the Coast Grants (SCC)	54.55%	6
Proposition 68 Grants (WCB)	63.64%	7
Land and Water Conservation Fund (NPS)	54.55%	6
Statewide Park Program (DPR)	54.55%	6
Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (NPS)	9.09%	1
Total Respondents: 11		

Q24 Please select any of the following state and federal grant programs related to Agricultural & Working Lands Protection that your organization is familiar with or has accessed to match local investments.

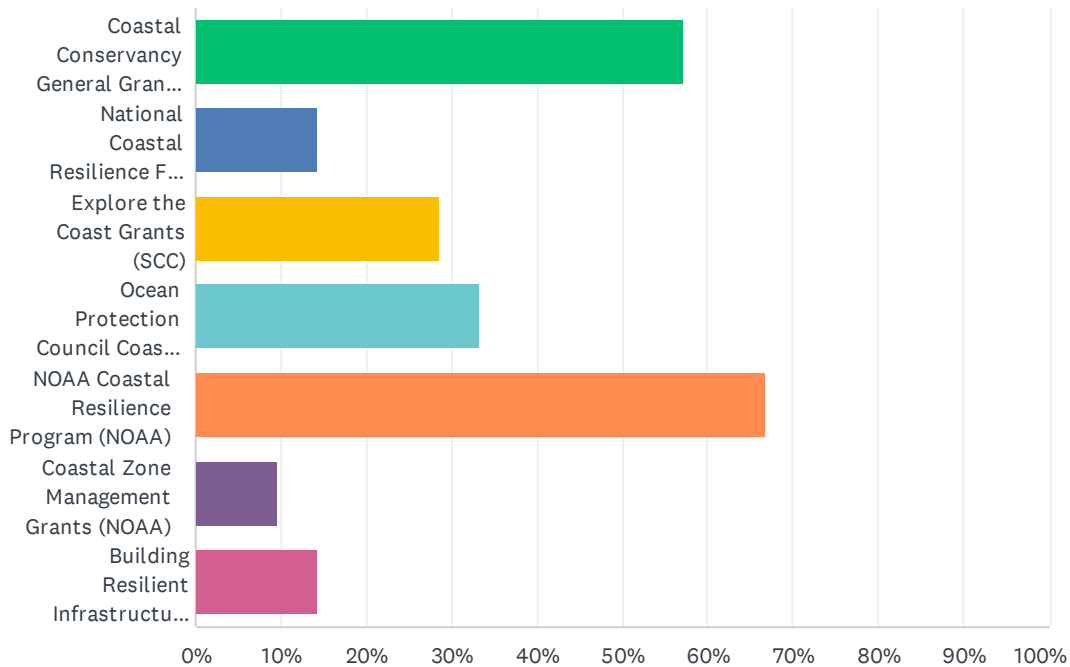
Answered: 11 Skipped: 50



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (NRCS)	63.64%	7
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (NRCS)	36.36%	4
California Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (DOC)	54.55%	6
California Farmland Conservancy Program (DOC)	27.27%	3
Healthy Soils Program (CDFA)	27.27%	3
Total Respondents: 11		

Q25 Please select any of the following state and federal grant programs related to Coastal Protection & Adaptation that your organization is familiar with or has accessed to match local investments.

Answered: 21 Skipped: 40



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Coastal Conservancy General Grants (SCC)	57.14%	12
National Coastal Resilience Fund (NFWF)	14.29%	3
Explore the Coast Grants (SCC)	28.57%	6
Ocean Protection Council Coastal Resilience Grants (OPC)	33.33%	7
NOAA Coastal Resilience Program (NOAA)	66.67%	14
Coastal Zone Management Grants (NOAA)	9.52%	2
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (FEMA)	14.29%	3
Total Respondents: 21		

Q26 Please list any other potential grant programs or other substantial sources of external funding that can advance potential priority Vision Plan projects or use the space below to call out specific grant programs listed above that should be prioritized.

Answered: 13 Skipped: 48

Q27 Additional Criteria. Besides activities that benefit disadvantaged communities, support multi-benefit projects, and where matching funds are available, are there other criteria that should be considered to identify priority project types and locations?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 38

Q28 Stakeholder Meeting Outcomes. What outcomes would you like to see from the stakeholder engagement process, and are there specific topics or information you'd like us to include in the stakeholder meeting agendas?

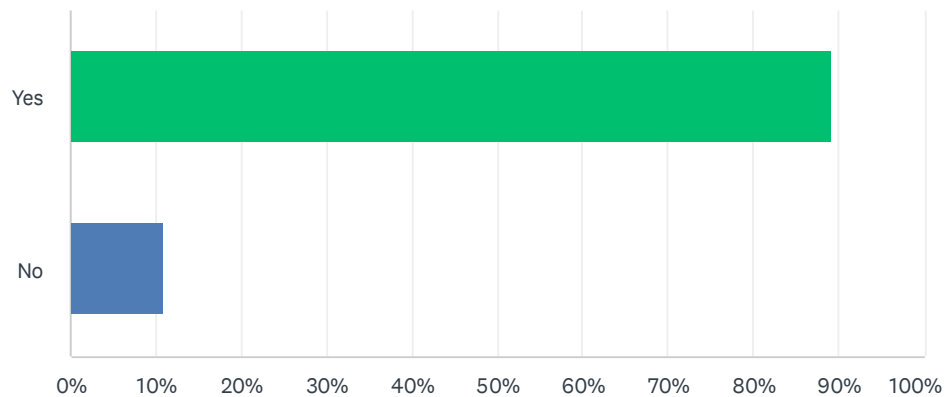
Answered: 24 Skipped: 37

Q29 Community Engagement. Do you have suggestions for engagement approaches that will help the County better serve disadvantaged communities in the Vision Plan process? Are there specific community-based organizations, non-profits, or other groups we should partner with to help identify and prioritize investments?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 37

Q30 Developing the Measure Q Grant Program. Approximately 40% of Measure Q funds will be distributed by the County through a new grant program to fund priority activities outlined in the Vision Plan. Would you like to participate in a future survey or roundtable discussion to provide feedback on development of the grant program?

Answered: 37 Skipped: 24



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
Yes		89.19% 33
No		10.81% 4
TOTAL		37

Q31 Additional Comments. Please share any other feedback to help inform development of the Vision Plan or how to support a transparent and inclusive engagement process.

Answered: 21 Skipped: 40



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board



701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
MeasureQ@santacruzcountyca.gov
www.santacruzcountyca.gov/MeasureQ

MEASURE Q COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS SUMMARY

Recommended Action

1. Receive and file the Community Engagement Synthesis for the Measure Q Vision Plan.

Executive Summary

From May through July 2025, Santa Cruz County Parks and the Office of Response, Recovery, and Resilience conducted community engagement to inform the Measure Q Vision Plan. Engagement included four in-person meetings, one virtual meeting, and an online survey that collected 944 responses. Participants prioritized Water Resource Management and Wildfire Risk Reduction as top themes. The analysis revealed regional variations in priority themes and emphasized the need for multi-benefit projects. While participation was broad, lower-income, Latino, and South County communities were underrepresented. Findings highlight opportunities to strengthen equity-centered engagement and inform future funding strategies.

Discussion

The community engagement strategy included: four in-person open house meetings, one virtual meeting, and an online survey available in English and Spanish. Meetings were hosted in Watsonville, Ben Lomond, Bonny Doon, and Live Oak. Despite significant efforts, participation skewed toward English-speaking, higher-income, and North and Mid-County residents. Participation in the in-person and virtual meetings never exceeded 12 residents in attendance and ranged from 3-12 with the virtual meeting having the lowest attendance.

Participants ranked the Measure Q's six theme areas from most important (1) to lowest importance (6) in order of priority:

1. Water Resource Management
2. Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health
3. Wildlife and Habitat Protection
4. Parks, Recreation, and Equitable Access
5. Agriculture and Working Lands Protection
6. Coastal Protection and Adaptation

Regional variations in priorities emerged:

- Santa Cruz Mountains prioritized Wildfire, Habitat, and Water.
- Mid-County prioritized Coastal Protection and Parks.
- South County prioritized Agriculture, Water, and Parks.

This regional theme variation demonstrates how unique the needs and desires are for Measure Q funding priorities based on your relative geographic residential environment. It may also correlate to risk/hazard vulnerabilities.

When asked in the survey and in person meetings about long-term Measure Q investment goals, respondents ranked the following from most important (1) to lowest importance (6):

1. Public health and safety
2. Habitat and wildlife protection
3. Long-term climate resilience
4. Support for disaster-impacted communities
5. Local agriculture protection
6. Equity in park access

Geographic preferences of project theme areas generally aligned with where people live, suggesting the importance of local context in shaping funding priorities. This also highlights the need to ensure geographic distribution of grant funds outside of the designated Cities, and geographic carve out areas of the San Vicente Redwoods and Pajaro Valley.

In the open-ended questions, wildfire, water, environmental protection, and park access were the most common themes expressed for prioritization.

A demographic analysis of the survey results revealed some important themes around the data collected and the context it should be reviewed in.

- While over 900 responses is good engagement by most outreach standards for the County, it represents less than 1% of the total population of the County.
- Only 9% of responses came from households earning under \$50,000.
- Only 5 responses were submitted in Spanish.
- South County, particularly Watsonville, was underrepresented by 12.5% relative to its population share.

Implications for Measure Q implementation include the need for stronger partnerships with trusted South County messengers and culturally relevant engagement methods. The analysis recommends prioritizing inclusive outreach and representation in future grantmaking, especially during project proposal phases. This will be particularly important when it comes time to solicit grant applications for the South County carve out funds as well as the larger grant program funds.

Next Steps

Parks, OR3 and the consultant team will be working on integrating the stakeholder and community engagement efforts into the DRAFT of the Vision Plan. We expect to be providing a preliminary draft for COAB review at the September 3 meeting.

Submitted By:

David Reid, Director, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience
Jeff Gaffney, Director, Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services

Attachments

- a. Measure Q Community Engagement Synthesis – July 2025

Measure Q - Community Engagement Synthesis

1. Executive Summary & Synthesis

Santa Cruz County Parks and the Office of Response, Resiliency, and Recovery conducted the community engagement portion of the Measure Q Vision Plan development from May to July 2025. The engagement took the form of four in-person community meetings, and one virtual meeting, as well as an online survey, which was open to all residents of Santa Cruz County for over a month. A total of 944 unique responses were gathered through the various engagement formats. This represents less than 1% of the County's total population. As such, the results should be interpreted with that level of representation in mind. The first part of the survey asked several questions to help identify the community's priority geographies and thematic areas for investment of Measure Q. Residents ranked the six thematic areas associated with Measure Q in the following order:

1. Water Resource Management
2. Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health
3. Wildlife and Habitat Protection
4. Parks, Recreation, and Equitable Public Access
5. Agriculture and Working Lands Protection
6. Coastal Protection and Adaptation

This ranking of Measure Q thematic areas was relatively consistent across most categories analyzed, including low-income respondents (annual incomes less than \$50,000), non-white respondents, and across geographic areas.

Respondents ranked the long-term funding priorities of Measure Q in the following order:

1. Public health and safety including wildfire risk reduction and flood risk reduction
2. Habitat and wildlife protection
3. Long-term climate resilience
4. Supporting areas most impacted by disasters
5. Protection of local agriculture and working lands
6. Equity and park access for all communities

The third question in the survey asked respondents to identify up to three priority locations for implementing Measure Q funded projects in each of the six thematic areas.

In the Santa Cruz Mountains communities, Wildfire and Forest Health consistently ranked as the highest priority, with Wildlife and Habitat second, and Water Resources third.

In the urban areas of mid-county, Coastal Protection ranked first, Parks and Access second, and Water Resources third.

In South County, Agriculture and Working Lands ranked first, Water Resources second, and Parks and Access third.

The final question was open-ended and asked respondents to identify threats and challenges that they hoped Measure Q could address. Responses to this question were widely varied, but most responses focused on wildfire and emergency preparedness, water quality and supply, environmental protection, and parks and open space.

An analysis of responses showed that residents consistently voted to prioritize locations near to where they live, for example, residents in the Santa Cruz Mountains identified locations in the Santa Cruz Mountains as high priority for wildfire and forest health and habitat and wildlife, and residents in the Pajaro Valley or South County identified locations around Watsonville as priorities for all themes.

Similarly, identification of geographic priorities for each of the six Measure Q areas tended to align with basic land cover and geographic characteristics of each community. For example, coastal protection and adaptation was prioritized in coastal communities, whereas wildfire and forest health was prioritized for forested areas in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Urban areas were prioritized for parks and public access, and South County was prioritized for agriculture and working lands protection.

These results show that there is a consistent desire across the community for early investment in projects that prioritize water resource management and wildfire risk reduction and forest health.

However, the breadth of responses provided in the threats and challenges section, and the number of locations identified as priority for all Measure Q themes indicate that there is a wide variety of needs to be addressed with Measure Q, and suggests that projects that address multiple benefits and can address multiple thematic areas should be prioritized for early investment.

2. Methodology

Community engagement was conducted via three methods: in-person community meetings, a virtual community meeting, and an online survey. The In-person community meetings were held for 90 minutes in the evenings at four locations spread across the county to ensure equitable geographic access (South County, Mid-County, San Lorenzo Valley, and North County). The meetings were open-house format, so that people could

drop in at any point during the meeting duration. The date, location, and number of attendees of the in-person meetings are noted below:

- June 9th, Watsonville, Civic Plaza Community Room. 12 attendees
- June 10th, Ben Lomond, Highlands County Park. 10 attendees.
- June 16th, Bonny Doon, Bonny Doon Elementary. 9 attendees
- June 17th, Live Oak, Live Oak Community Center. 8 attendees

The virtual meeting was held on the evening of June 26th via Zoom with six people in attendance.

An online survey was also created to mirror the content and feedback opportunities provided via the in-person and virtual community meetings and aligned with similar stakeholder feedback survey content. The virtual survey was open from May 30 to July 3. The survey was available in both English and Spanish. 903 people took the survey in English. 5 people took the survey in Spanish. Approximately 96% of responses came from the online survey. Of the online survey responses, 99% were in English.

Community engagement opportunities including the survey, virtual, and in-person community meetings were advertised widely via social media, press releases, notifications to local news publications, and via the Measure Q website. In addition, notifications were sent to all Measure Q stakeholders to help advertise the events through their communication channels. This included non-profits, the four incorporated cities, community-based organizations, and other land-managing agencies.

To promote equitable participation in Measure Q planning, the County conducted targeted outreach to South County communities, particularly Watsonville, where climate change vulnerability is high but past investments and engagement opportunities have been limited. This effort aligns with County goals for inclusive governance and climate justice. Outreach was conducted through the County's Climate Resilience Contact List, South County-focused networks like the South County Triage Group and the Monterey Bay Area Climate Justice Collaborative, and local media including *The Pajaronian*. These channels were chosen to engage trusted messengers and multilingual, community-rooted organizations. Because of the Measure Q geographic south county regional focus ensuring Watsonville and south county unincorporated communities, with many Spanish-speaking and middle-class families, were included is vital to achieving Measure Q's equity and climate resilience objectives.

3. Results – Measure Q Priorities

Participants in the engagement efforts were asked four questions related to Measure Q priorities. In the first question, participants were asked to rank the six thematic areas of Measure Q (water, wildfire, wildlife, parks, farms, coastal) in order of importance. The second question asked participants to rank six potential long-term priorities for Measure Q investment based on their importance. In the third question, participants were asked to identify up to three communities that should be a priority for investment for each Measure Q theme (water, wildfire, wildlife, parks, farms, coastal). The fourth question asked participants to write in specific threats or challenges in Santa Cruz County that they hope Measure Q can address.

944 people provided feedback via the different engagement methods. While this is a good turnout for any kind of project-related engagement, respondents represent less than 1% of the County’s population (262,000), so these results must be understood in that context.

Who Took the Survey: Demographic and Equity Analysis

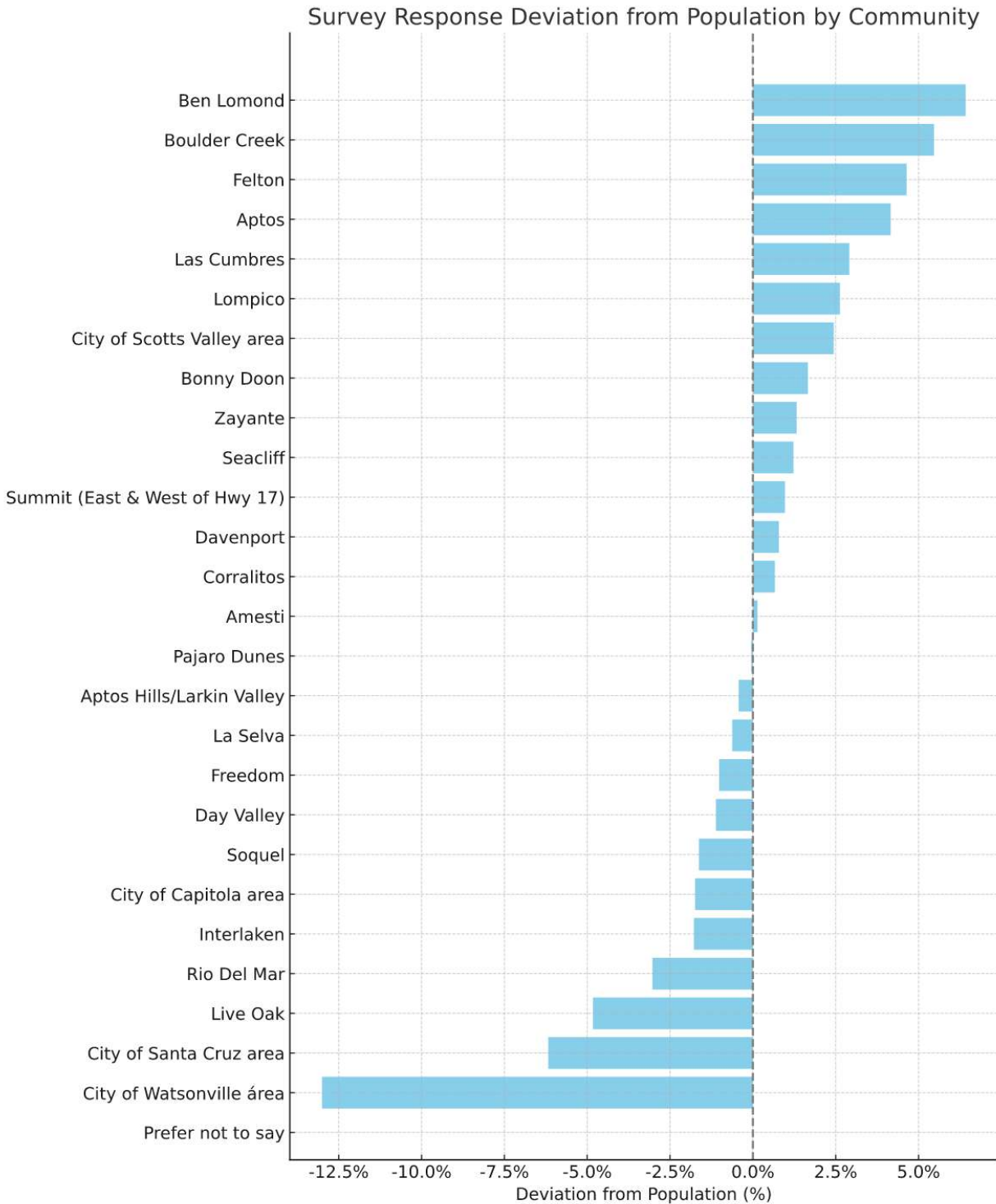
To evaluate the equity and representativeness of the Measure Q community engagement process, participants were invited to voluntarily share demographic information through the online survey. This included community of residence and ZIP code, race/ethnicity, income level, age, and primary language spoken at home. An additional Spanish-language version of the survey was provided and collected five total responses. The following analysis provides a summary of who participated and identifies key gaps to inform future outreach and funding decisions.

Geographic Representation

Survey responses came from a wide range of ZIP codes across Santa Cruz County, with particularly high relative participation from Santa Cruz mountain communities. The ZIP codes with the highest number of absolute responses were:

- 95060 & 95062 (Santa Cruz & Live Oak) 123 & 86 responses
- 95076 (Watsonville and surrounding South County) – 96 responses
- 95003 (Aptos) – 80 responses
- 95018 (Felton) – 80 responses
- 95005 (Ben Lomond) – 74 responses
- 95006 (Boulder Creek) – 52 responses
- 95066 (Scotts Valley) 49 responses

When adjusted for population size, the geographic distribution of responses does not reflect actual population distribution across the county. The graph below shows the survey results deviation from population numbers for respondents who identified the community in which they lived. Areas to the left of the center line are underrepresented in the survey data, whereas areas to the right of the center line are overrepresented.



In general, communities in the Santa Cruz Mountains were overrepresented in the survey, whereas communities in South County and the urban areas of mid-county were underrepresented. Notably, the City of Watsonville was the most underrepresented at -12.5%, the City of Santa Cruz was next at -6%, followed by Live Oak at -4.8%.

Because residents were asked to prioritize project types and geographic investment areas, the uneven geographic distribution of responses likely influenced the outcomes.

Communities with higher response rates—particularly in the Santa Cruz Mountains—are more heavily reflected in the priority rankings. Conversely, communities with fewer responses, particularly in South County and urban areas of mid-county, may be underrepresented in the aggregate results. These patterns should be considered when interpreting community-identified investment priorities and developing implementation strategies.

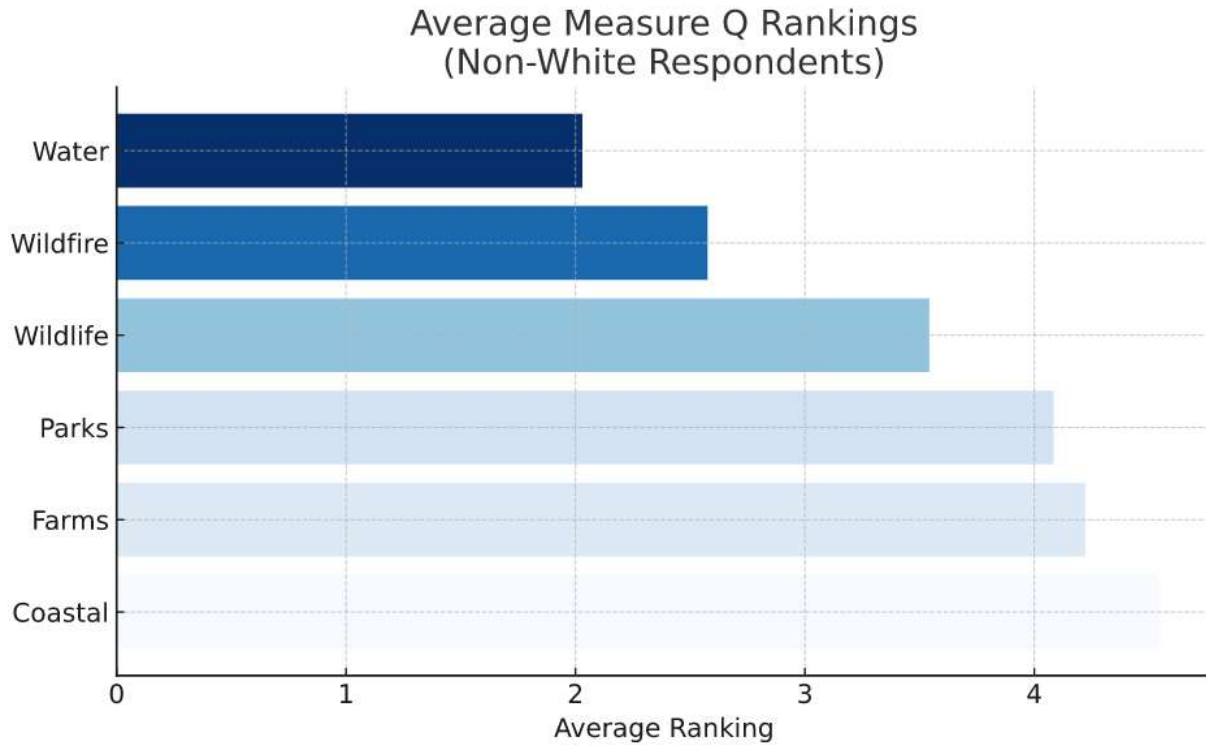
Language and Race

Only **five respondents completed the Spanish-language survey**, despite Measure Q's strong relevance to Spanish-speaking communities, particularly in South County. Of those five:

- Three respondents identified as **Latino/a/x**.
- Three indicated **Spanish** as their primary home language.
- All respondents from the Spanish-language survey expressed interest in improved **park access, beach transportation, and safety for South County residents**, including one respondent who named inequitable beach access as a form of environmental racism.

Among respondents to the English survey, self-identified racial and ethnic identities skewed heavily white. While detailed data on racial breakdowns is limited, the absence of high participation from communities of color—especially in South County ZIPs—suggests a need for deeper investment in culturally grounded engagement strategies moving forward.

An analysis of respondents who identified as non-white showed similar ranking of the six Measure Q thematic areas compared to the population as a whole.



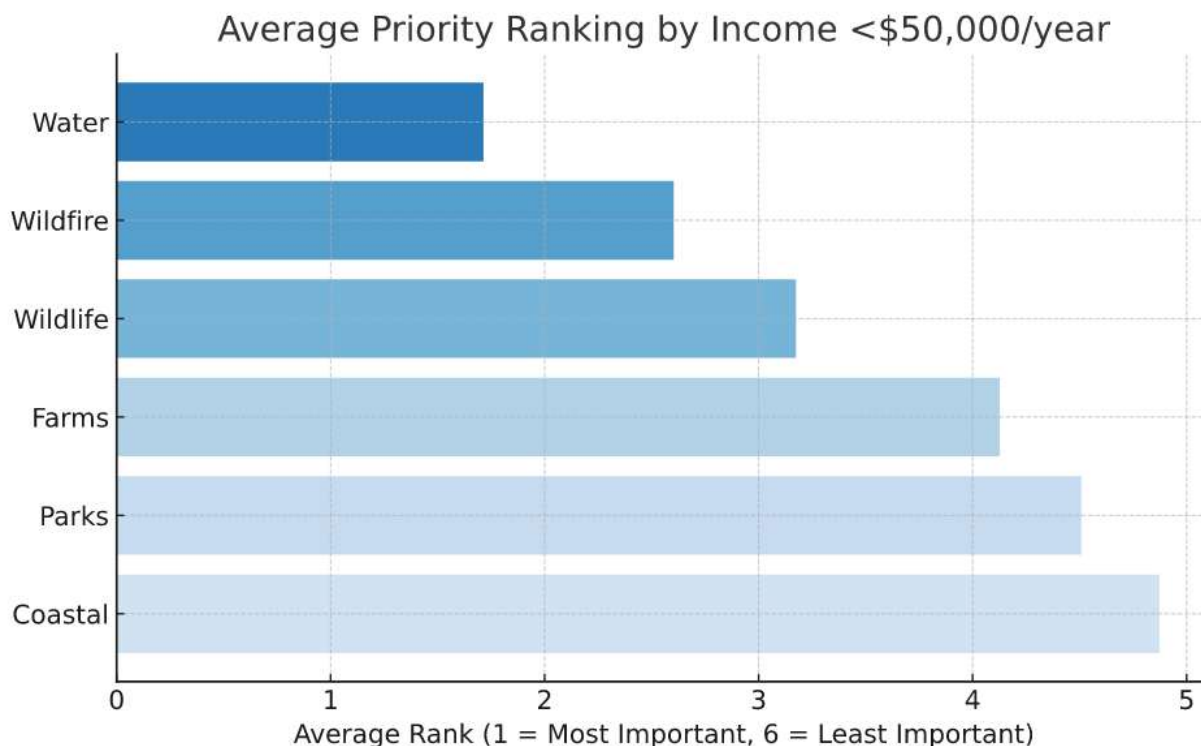
Income

Income data from survey respondents shows a pronounced skew toward middle- and upper-income households:

- 65% of respondents reported **household incomes above \$100,000**.
- Only 9% reported incomes **below \$50,000**, despite over a third of County households falling into this income bracket.

Low-income households were underrepresented in the survey data, especially when compared to the County's income distribution and Measure Q's stated intent to prioritize disadvantaged communities.

An analysis of respondents with incomes under \$50,000 showed similar ranking of the six Measure Q thematic areas compared with the population as whole.



Implications for Measure Q Grant Program Planning

While participation in the Measure Q survey and meetings was relatively strong as compared to other outreach efforts, the demographic data reveals important limitations in representativeness. In particular:

- **Lower-income, Latino, and Spanish-speaking communities in South County were significantly underrepresented.**
- **Survey participation skewed toward higher-income, white residents in mountain and mid-county areas.**
- **Despite translation, Spanish-language engagement yielded only five responses, pointing to a gap in trust, access, or culturally appropriate outreach.**

For Measure Q Grant Program implementation these findings suggest the following:

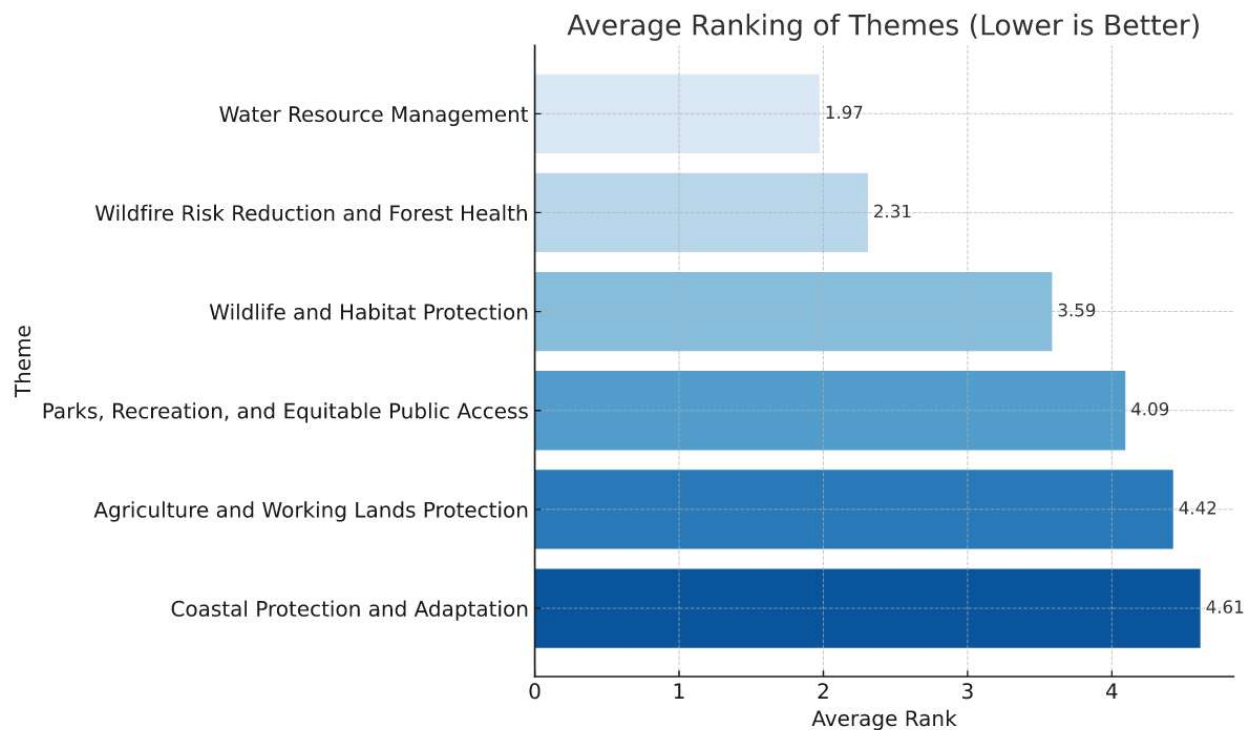
- **For the South County funding allocation project selection should account for the disproportionate lack of representation from South County communities, particularly Watsonville, Freedom, and Interlaken.**

- **Future outreach should build stronger, sustained relationships with trusted South County leaders and organizations**, including those with cultural and linguistic competency **such as youth ambassadors, or promotoras to ensure inclusive participation**, especially during project proposal phases.

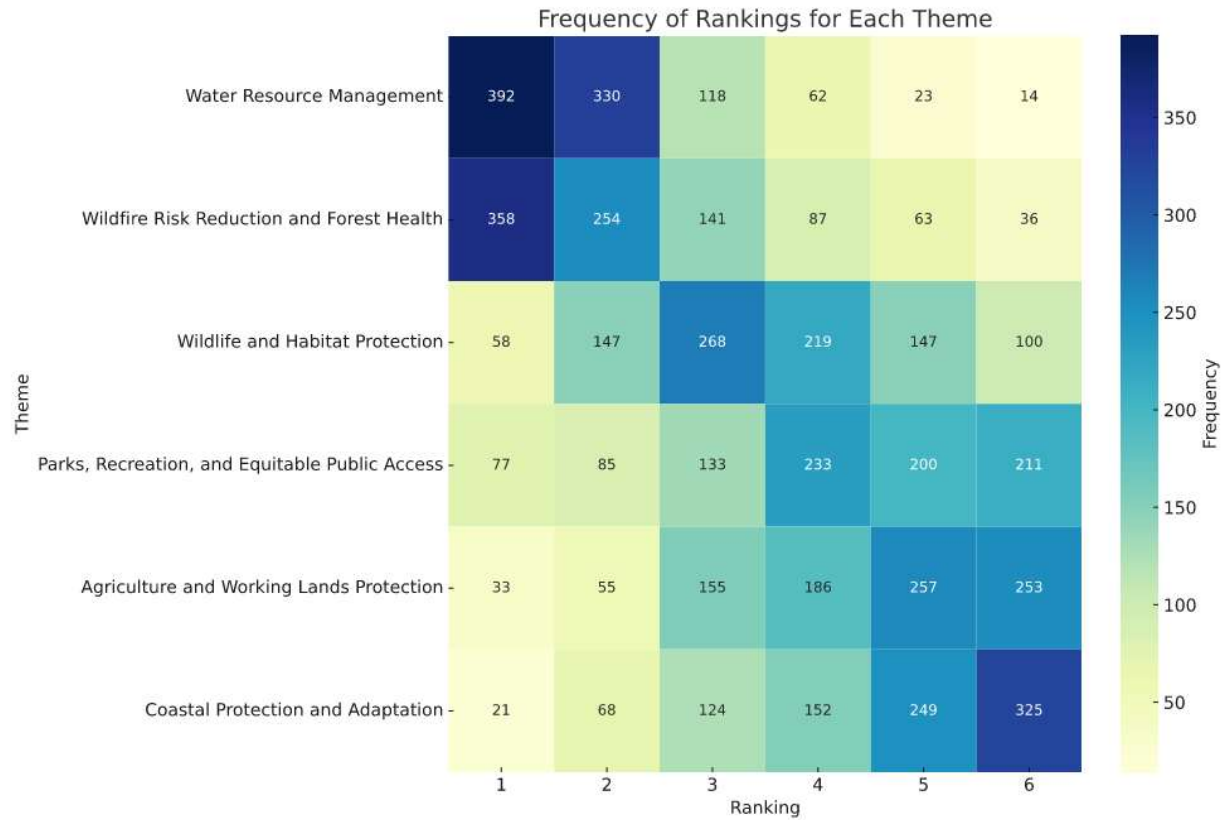
This analysis reinforces the need for **ongoing equity-centered engagement** throughout Measure Q's lifecycle, ensuring that the targeted South County funding allocation responds to the needs of those historically excluded from environmental planning processes.

Question 1 Results: Respondents ranked the Measure Q thematic areas as follows:

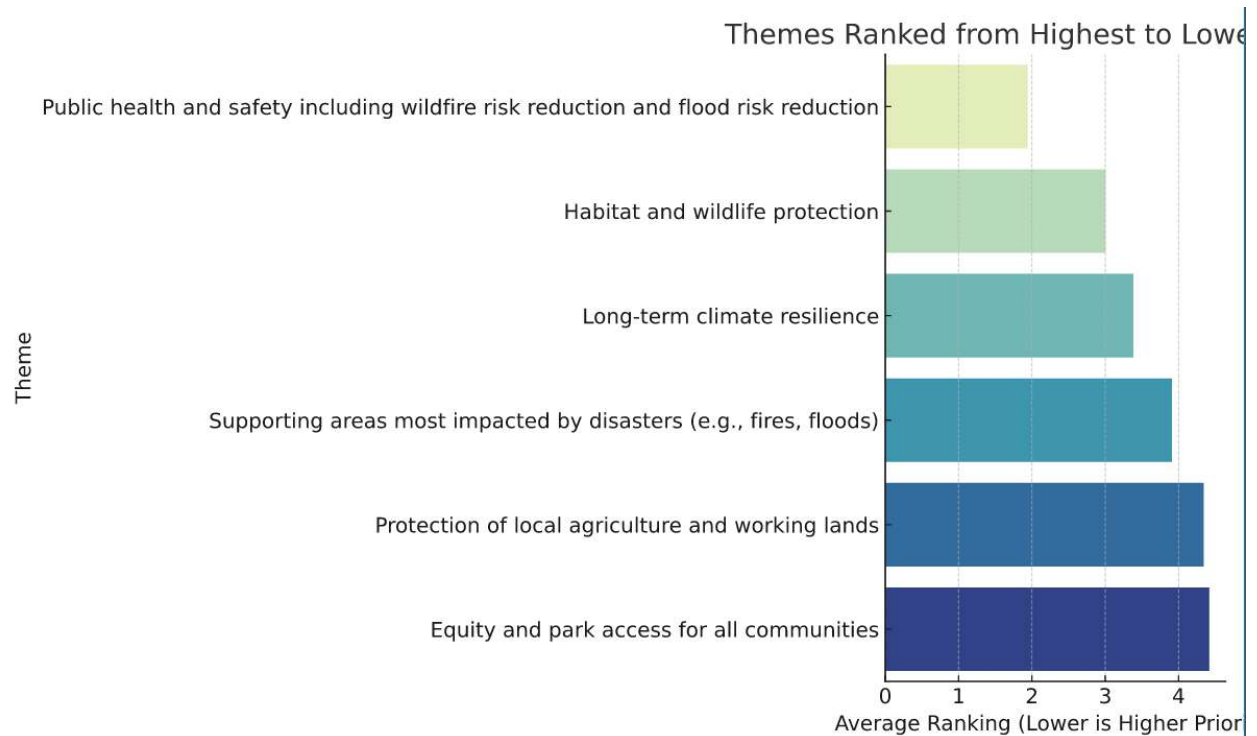
1) Water, 2) Wildfire, 3) Wildlife, 4) Parks, 5) Farms, and 6) Coastal, as shown below in the bar chart.



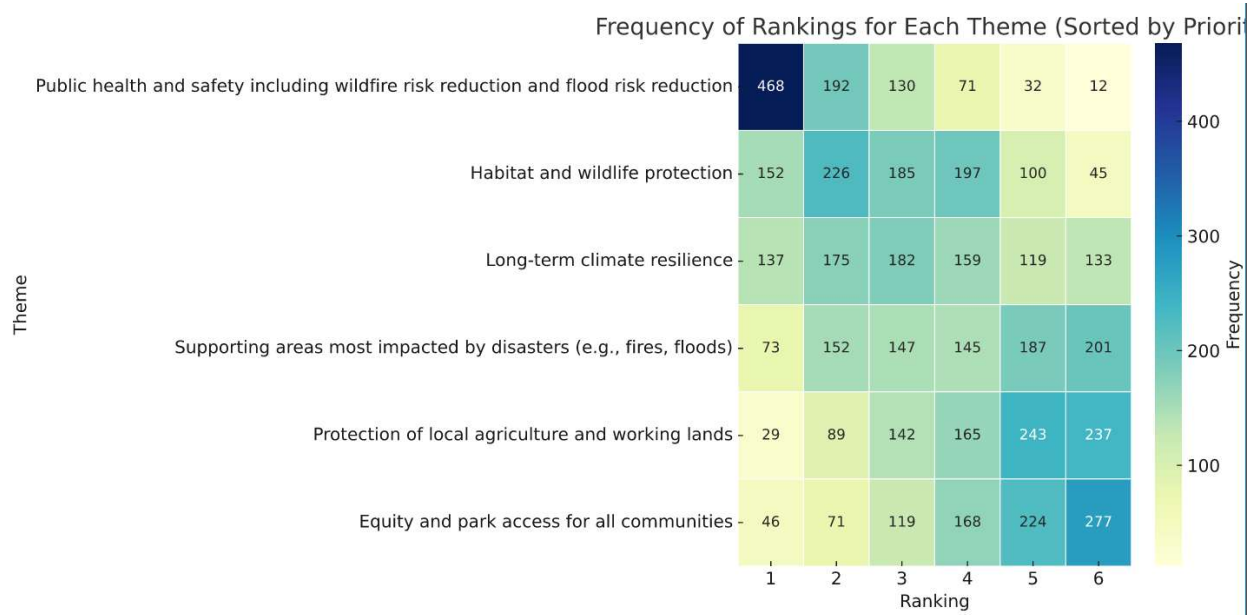
A Heatmap of the rankings provides more detail into how respondents ranked each theme. The heatmap shows thematic areas in the Y-axis and the ranking of each thematic area in the X-axis. The number in each cell is the frequency of votes received.



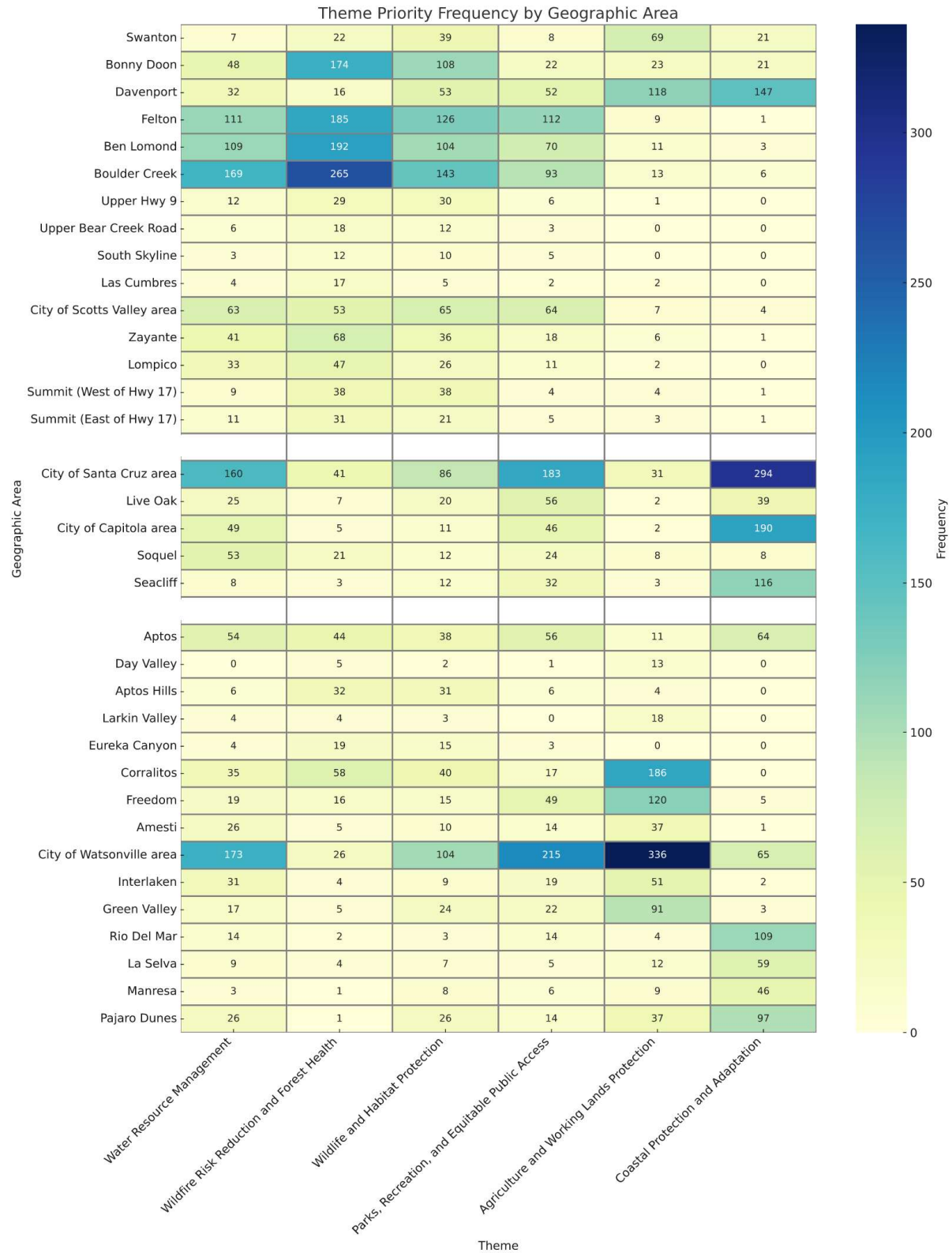
Question 2 Results: Respondents ranked the long-term priority area for Measure Q investment as follows:



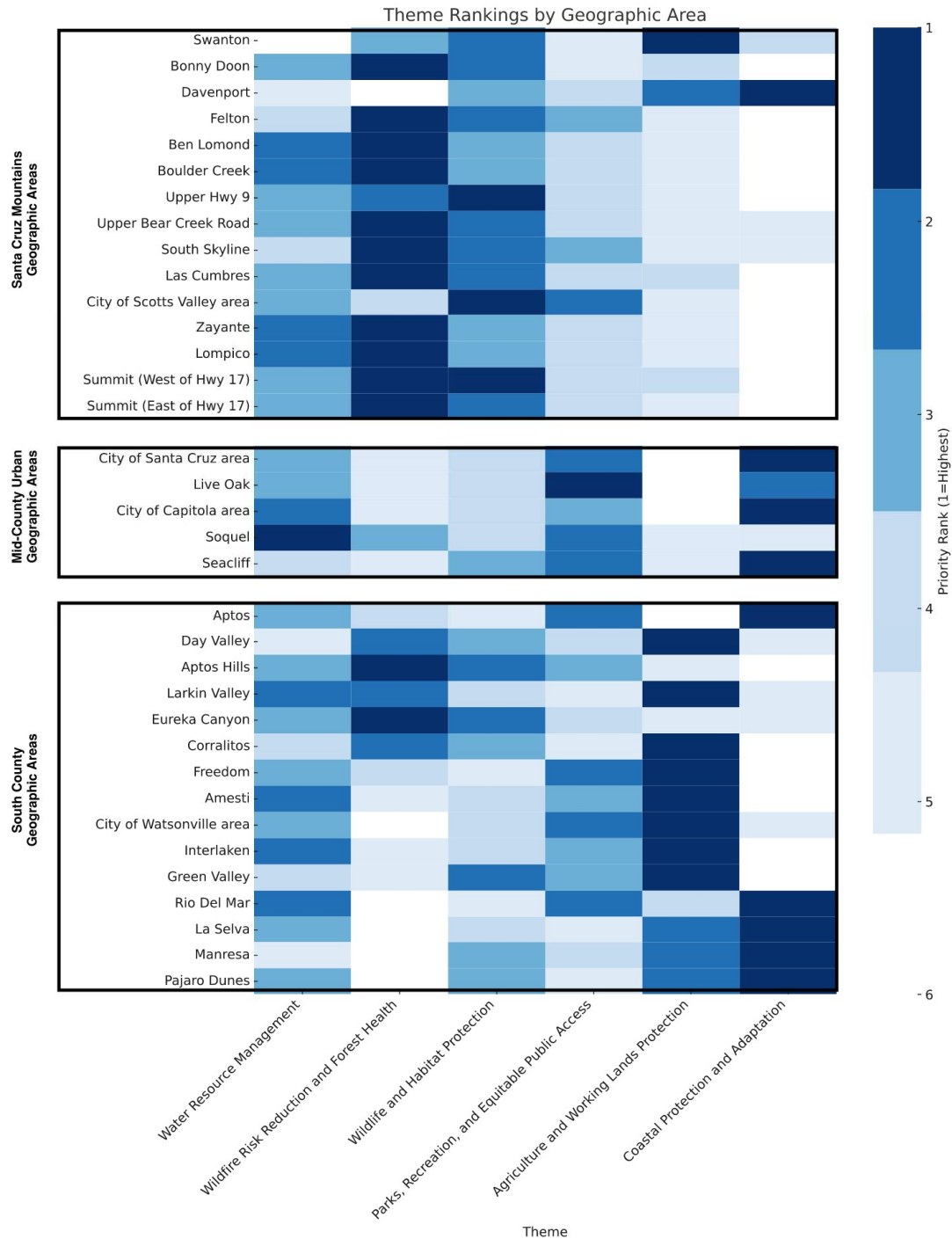
A Heatmap of the rankings provides more detail into how respondents ranked each theme:



Question 3 Results: Respondents selected up to three priority locations for investment in Measure Q funding for each of the six thematic areas. The heatmap below shows the frequency of locations respondents identified for each theme. Geographic areas are shown roughly from north to south, and broken into 3 categories (Santa Cruz Mountains, Mid-County Urban Areas, and South County), which helps to illustrate patterns in the data between geographically similar areas.



From this data, it is possible to determine which themes were prioritized for each geographic area. The heatmap displaying this data is below. Note that this data does not represent a ranking of theme priorities for each geographic area per se, since respondents were not asked that question. Rather, it represents a relative comparison between themes by extrapolating frequency data. For each thematic area, the highest priority themes are shown in dark blue, and the lowest priority themes in white or light blue. Geographic areas are shown roughly from north to south, and broken into 3 categories (Santa Cruz Mountains, Mid-County Urban Areas, and South County), which helps to illustrate patterns in the data between geographically similar areas.



Analysis of the geographic prioritization results revealed that respondents tended to prioritize areas close to where they live. For example, respondents from 95005 (Ben Lomond area) consistently ranked Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek as top priorities for habitat and wildfire thematic areas. Respondents from 95062 (Eastside of Santa Cruz City and Live Oak) ranked Santa Cruz and Live Oak as top priorities for coastal protection and

parks access. Similarly, residents of 95076 (South County) emphasized Freedom, Interlaken, and the City of Watsonville area across all themes.

In the Santa Cruz Mountains communities, Wildfire and Forest Health consistently ranked as the highest priority, with Wildlife and Habitat second, Water Resources third, Parks and Access fourth, Agriculture and Working Lands fifth, and Coastal Protection sixth.

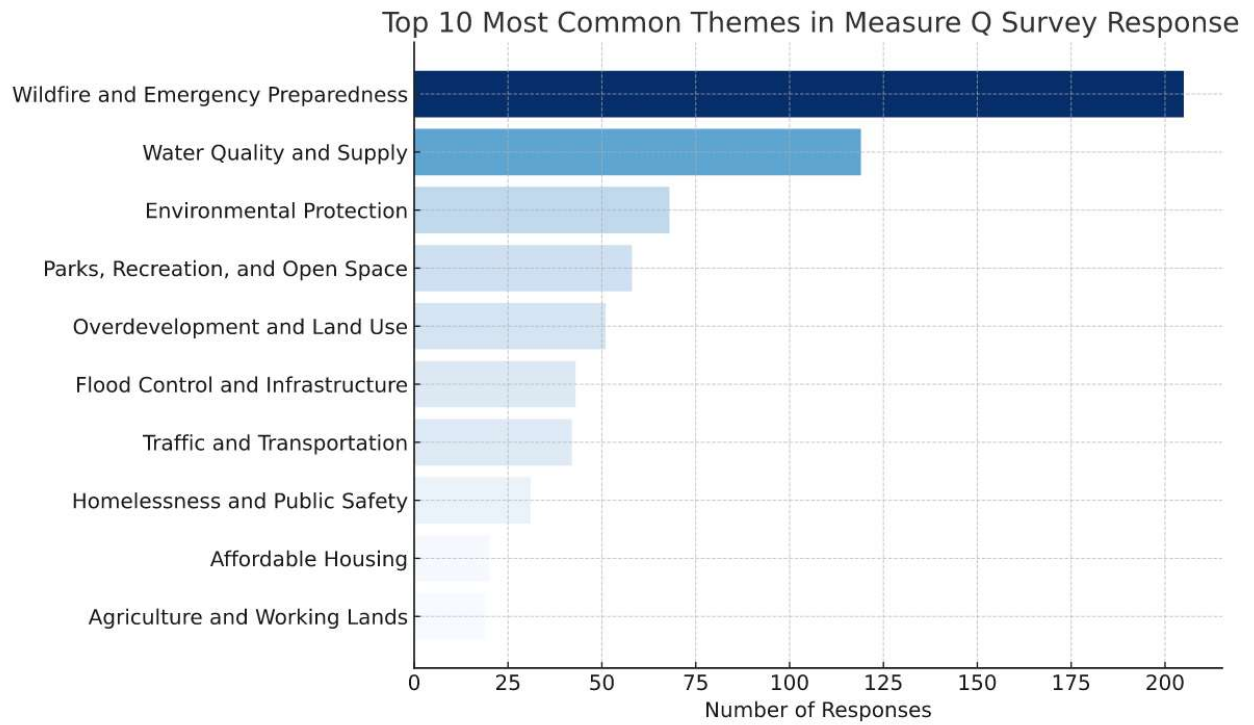
In the urban areas of mid-county, Coastal Protection ranked first, Parks and Access second, Water Resources third, Wildlife and Habitat fourth, Wildfire and Forest Health fifth, and Agriculture and Working Land sixth.

In South County, Agriculture and Working Lands ranked first, Water Resources second, Parks and Access third, Wildlife and Habitat fourth, Coastal Protection fifth, and Wildfire and Forest Health sixth.

For each thematic area, the following areas were ranked high priority most often by respondents. Note that because most respondents prioritized areas near where they live, the proportionally unrepresentative geographic participation across areas of the County likely influenced some of this prioritization, skewing results toward communities in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

- Water Resources: City of Watsonville area, City of Santa Cruz area, Boulder Creek, Felton, and Ben Lomond
- Wildfire and Forest Health: Boulder Creek, Ben Lomond, Felton, Bonny Doon
- Wildlife and Habitat: Boulder Creek, Felton, Bonny Doon, Ben Lomond
- Parks and Access: City of Watsonville area, City of Santa Cruz area, Felton, Boulder Creek
- Agriculture and Working Lands: City of Watsonville area, Corralitos, Freedom, Davenport
- Coastal Protection: City of Santa Cruz area, City of Capitola area, Davenport, Seacliff, Rio Del Mar

Question 4 Results: responses to this open-ended question, “Are there specific threats or challenges in Santa Cruz County that you hope Measure Q can address?”, were wide-ranging. Some responses were short and specific, while others were broader or multifaceted. The top ten most common themes identified by respondents to this question are shown by the chart below.





Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board



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MEASURE Q VISION PLAN DETAILED OUTLINE

Recommended Action

1. Receive and file the Draft Detailed Outline of the Measure Q Vision Plan.

Executive Summary

The Measure Q Vision Plan will provide a strategic, non-regulatory framework to guide future program and grant funding and ideally support thematic project implementation decisions. Grounded in stakeholder and community input, gathered over the last few months the goal of the Vision Plan is to set out core criteria for prioritizing projects, identify opportunities for geographic equity and multi-benefit outcomes, and to align with existing plans, thematic based complimentary efforts and state and federal funding sources. This draft outline (attachment) presents prioritization concepts and recommended approaches by thematic area, including Water Resources, Wildfire Risk Reduction, Habitat Protection, Parks and Access, Working Lands, and Coastal Protection.

Discussion

The Vision Plan's purpose is to guide this first 5 years of investments in Santa Cruz County's natural resources, public lands, and climate resilience infrastructure and resource protections.

The Vision Plan detailed outline is drawing from past planning (AI supported literature review), stakeholder engagement and surveys, community engagement and surveys, and regional expertise. The detailed Vision Plan Outline begins to develop the key Vision Plan sections and thematic layout of the document. Changes in structure or format may occur during more detailed plan drafting.

The Vision Plan will provide guidance on how agency partner projects and grant program funds supported by Measure Q should be prioritized. Current Vision Plan and grant program prioritization considerations are framing projects based on readiness, financial leveraging opportunities, equity impacts, multi-benefit design, climate resilience, public benefit, and alignment with adopted plans. Any thematic prioritization efforts within the Measure Q Vision Plan will not exclude grant project opportunities in “lower” priority theme areas. Prioritization will serve as an initial evaluative tool to ensure impactful project selection and reflection of community and stakeholder input. Multi-benefit projects will likely stand out on their own merits and beneficial impacts regardless of the thematic area they fall in.

To ensure geographic equity and to respond to local needs, the tax measure developed the North Coast and South County targeted investment grant program areas to address some targeted geographies. What stakeholder and community feedback has also highlighted is the needs of the historically underserved South County communities, and in other hazard prone or resource constrained parts of the County. Theme based priority geographies will be described in the theme areas.

Each Measure Q theme area is supported by an outline of context, key challenges, recommended investments, priority project types and priority geographies.

Notable strategies include:

- Water: Watershed restoration, recharge projects, and infrastructure upgrades.
- Wildfire: Fuel breaks, neighborhood scale hazard risk reduction, cultural burning, defensible space, and resilience hubs.
- Wildlife: Habitat corridors, sensitive species protection, and community-led stewardship.
- Parks: Urban greening, beach access, equity-based planning, and joint-use spaces.

- Working Lands: Soil health, regenerative practices, conservation easements.
- Coastal: Living shorelines, infrastructure adaptation, and equitable access to coastal zones.

Some support for early-phase project planning and investing in capacity building for small and community-based organizations MAY be considered but likely not prioritized in this 5-year cycle.

The Vision Plan will also present possible metrics to evaluate various project benefits such as habitat restoration acreage, water quality improvements, and increased access to nature.

Next Steps

The County and Consultant team will be integrating stakeholder and community feedback into Vision Plan drafting, revising and refinement in August, and will provide a DRAFT for COAB review ahead of the September 3rd COAB meeting.

Submitted By:

David Reid, Director, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience
 Jeff Gaffney, Director, Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services

Attachments

- a. Measure Q Vision Plan – Detailed Draft Outline (July 2025)

Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan

Detailed Outline – July 22, 2025

Introduction and Context

- Overview of Santa Cruz County's natural resources and environmental challenges.
- Purpose and intent of Measure Q as a long-term funding mechanism for climate resilience, access, and conservation.
- Summary of eligible project categories and implementing partners (County, Cities, RCD, Land Trust).
- Role of the Vision Plan in guiding Measure Q's implementation and grant program.
- Planning process based on existing plans, community engagement, and stakeholder input.

The Vision Plan is not a binding allocation tool or regulatory document. Instead, it serves as a guiding framework to inform future Measure Q grant program implementation, partner funding opportunities, promote transparency and accountability, and ensure that investments reflect the values of equity, climate resilience, and geographic balance.

Measure Q was passed by voters in recognition of the growing impacts of climate change, longstanding underinvestment in vulnerable communities, and the urgent need to protect Santa Cruz County's natural resources and public spaces. This Vision Plan helps realize that mandate.

Vision Plan Prioritization

Criteria for Prioritizing Projects

Projects considered for Measure Q funding will be evaluated based on a core set of criteria to ensure investments deliver high public value and align with the goals of the Measure Q Vision Plan. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate:

- **Readiness:** Projects that are shovel-ready or have completed key pre-development steps.
- **Multi-benefit outcomes:** Projects that deliver ecological, social, and economic benefits across multiple categories.
- **Equity impact:** Projects that directly benefit underserved or disadvantaged communities, or reduce historic disparities in access or environmental health.
- **Climate resilience value:** Projects that address wildfire, flooding, sea level rise, or other climate risks through nature-based or adaptive solutions.
- **Public benefit:** Projects that enhance public access, outdoor recreation, community engagement, or environmental education.

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- **Strategic alignment:** Projects that align with adopted regional, local, or state plans and demonstrate coordination among jurisdictions or partners.
- **Community-led design and governance:** Projects that are co-designed or co-implemented by community-based organizations and local residents, especially those historically excluded from decision-making processes..

Use of Project Benefit Metrics

The following list of benefits will guide grantmaking and serve as a framework for evaluating and prioritizing proposed projects. These benefits are aligned with the language and intent of the Measure Q.

- Reduces risk of wildfire to communities and ecosystems
- Reduces risk of flooding through nature-based solutions
- Reduces risk from sea level rise and coastal erosion
- Improves adaptive capacity of ecosystems to climate change
- Reduces urban heat island effect
- Supports carbon sequestration through land conservation and restoration
- Protects critical infrastructure from natural hazards
- Improves water quality in rivers, streams, or coastal waters
- Protects or improves drinking water sources
- Increases groundwater recharge or storage
- Reduces erosion and sedimentation
- Improves stormwater capture or management
- Supports baseflows and aquatic ecosystem health
- Restores degraded habitat for native or sensitive species
- Protects existing habitat from conversion or degradation
- Improves habitat connectivity across fragmented landscapes
- Increases native species diversity or abundance
- Reduces threats to wildlife from development or human use
- Increases public access to nature or open space
- Expands or connects trail networks
- Improves accessibility for people with disabilities
- Improves user safety or comfort in outdoor spaces
- Provides new or enhanced outdoor recreation opportunities
- Encourages outdoor physical activity and wellness
- Increases access to nature or clean water in underserved communities
- Reduces barriers to park or trail use for underrepresented populations
- Reflects or protects cultural or tribal values or resources
- Engages local residents in stewardship or programming
- Builds environmental literacy or awareness in youth

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- Supports workforce development or green job training
- Permanently protects agricultural or working lands
- Implements regenerative or sustainable land management practices
- Improves water efficiency or drought resilience on agricultural lands
- Enhances soil health on working lands
- Restores coastal habitat or shoreline ecosystems
- Improves resilience of coastal communities or infrastructure
- Leverages funding from non-Measure Q sources
- Aligns with adopted regional or local plans
- Demonstrates multi-benefit outcomes across categories
- Supports coordination across agencies, jurisdictions, or partners
- Enhances long-term sustainability of managed lands or facilities

Geographic Equity and Support for Disadvantaged Communities

To address historic underinvestment and ensure Measure Q benefits are shared equitably, the Vision Plan will emphasize:

- Geographic balance across subregions of Santa Cruz County.
- Prioritization of projects in communities identified as disadvantaged or climate-vulnerable.
 - This may include communities such as Beach Flats, Lower San Lorenzo, and South Watsonville, (incorporated areas) which may not be identified on statewide Disadvantaged Community (DAC) maps but have been validated locally as underserved and vulnerable to climate impacts. These areas will be prioritized alongside communities identified through CalEnviroScreen and other tools.
 - South County Geographies are currently included in the current geography based allocation for the Pajaro River Watershed, tributaries, City of Watsonville, and water bodies.
- Culturally appropriate projects developed in collaboration with residents and community-based organizations.
- Funding mechanisms that support smaller applicants and reduce barriers to participation.

Strategic Alignment

Projects that align with and advance the objectives of existing regional and state planning frameworks will be prioritized, including:

- Santa Cruz County Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
- Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS)
- Pathways to 30x30 California

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- Local parks, water, wildfire, habitat, and agricultural plans
- Federal and state resilience and equity initiatives

PROJECT THEMES

Water Resources Management

Background and context, what's at stake, issues and opportunities

- Santa Cruz County relies heavily on local streams and groundwater for drinking water, which are vulnerable to overdraft, pollution, erosion, and saltwater intrusion.
- Increasing climate variability exacerbates drought risk, flood vulnerability, and aquatic ecosystem degradation.
- Key issues include insufficient groundwater recharge, non-point source pollution, degraded riparian corridors, and aging stormwater infrastructure.
- Opportunities exist to scale nature-based solutions, integrate watershed planning, and coordinate across jurisdictions for regional resilience.

Recommendations for Measure Q investment

- Invest in watershed restoration and stormwater management projects that address both water supply and habitat needs.
- Prioritize funding for managed aquifer recharge, riparian corridor enhancement, and projects that restore natural hydrology.
- Support pre-implementation activities (planning, design, permitting) to build a strong project pipeline.
- Fund collaborative projects that engage landowners and span multiple jurisdictions.

Prioritization matrix or list of priority project types, activities, programs

- Groundwater recharge and stormwater infiltration (e.g., recharge basins, rain gardens).
- Watershed health and riparian restoration.
- Water quality improvements (e.g., bioswales, vegetated buffers, septic upgrades).
- Drinking water supply resilience (e.g., source protection, interties).
- Green infrastructure retrofits in urban and agricultural settings.

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- Pre-project technical assistance and CEQA/permitting support.
- Projects that incorporate community-led monitoring, stewardship, and local engagement will be prioritized to ensure long-term success and ownership. These efforts should also reflect the cultural and economic contexts of local communities.

Examples of critical existing projects, programs, activities

- Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency's aquifer recharge programs.
- Pinto Lake Water Quality project (development phase)
- Harkins Slough Recharge Facility.
- Watsonville Slough stormwater capture and reuse projects.
- Integrated Watershed Restoration Program (IWRP).
- San Lorenzo River Watershed Management Plan implementation.

Examples of new or anticipated project types and activities

- Expansion of College Lake runoff capture and recharge.
- Floodplain restoration and managed retreat in Pajaro River and Watsonville areas.
- Green infrastructure retrofits on school campuses and public facilities.
- Stormwater management in underserved communities to reduce localized flooding.

Important geographic locations for this work

- San Lorenzo River watershed.
- Pajaro River watershed.
- Watsonville Slough and surrounding lowlands.
- Pinto and College Lakes.
- Santa Cruz Mountains water supply lands (e.g., City of Santa Cruz, San Lorenzo Valley Water District holdings).

Opportunities for San Vicente Redwoods or the Pajaro River Watershed

- **San Vicente Redwoods:** potential for integrated forest health and water quality projects, particularly post-fire erosion control and fuel reduction to protect water supply lands.
- **Pajaro River Watershed:** significant potential for recharge, floodplain restoration, and water quality enhancement through the Multi-Benefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Program. Surface water bodies in south County impacted by water quality issues.

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Opportunities for disadvantaged communities, climate resilience, multi-benefit projects

- Support projects in the Lower San Lorenzo, Beach Flats, and South County areas not captured in state DAC maps but identified locally as underserved.
- Prioritize investments that combine water quality, access to green space, and flood protection in Watsonville and surrounding communities.
- Implement educational and community stewardship programs alongside capital projects.

Implementation strategy and key sources of external funding

- Position Measure Q funds for strategic leverage of IRWM, Prop 1, Prop 68, and FEMA BRIC funding.
- Establish a grant process that supports early-phase planning and stakeholder coordination.
- Encourage alignment with existing programs like IWRP and regional conservation strategies.

Reference to significant guiding plans and documents for more detail

- 2014 & 2019 Integrated Regional Water Management Plans.
- 2021 Santa Cruz County Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.
- Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS).
- California Water Plan Update 2023.
- California Adaptation Planning Guide.

Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health

Background and context, what's at stake, issues and opportunities

- Santa Cruz County faces high wildfire risk, intensified by climate change, past fire suppression, and increased development in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).
- The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire underscored regional vulnerability, causing ecological damage, community displacement, and water quality concerns.
- Vegetation buildup, permitting bottlenecks, and fragmented land ownership limit proactive fire management and long-term ecological stewardship.

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- There is growing momentum for cross-jurisdictional collaboration, integration of Indigenous fire stewardship, and sustained landscape-level treatment strategies.

Recommendations for Measure Q investment

- Fund strategic fuel management projects that reduce wildfire risk while supporting ecosystem health.
- Prioritize support for long-term maintenance of treatment areas and vegetation management infrastructure.
- Invest in culturally appropriate workforce development and Indigenous-led stewardship programs. Projects should be co-designed with Indigenous partners whenever possible, honoring traditional ecological knowledge and ensuring that stewardship extends beyond cultural burns to include planning, monitoring, and ongoing landscape care.
- Support planning, permitting, and coordination efforts that enable large-scale and community-centered fire resilience work.

Prioritization matrix or list of priority project types, activities, programs

- Fuel reduction treatments (e.g., shaded fuel breaks, mechanical thinning, prescribed burns).
- Defensible space and structure hardening for homes in the WUI.
- Private Property/Community Risk Reduction – i.e. Neighborhood Chipping Programs
- Cultural burning programs led by Tribal partners.
- Community resilience hubs
- Fuel reduction along evacuation routes.
- Fire risk mapping, adaptive management planning, and monitoring.
- Post-fire recovery efforts and erosion control.

Examples of critical existing projects, programs, activities

- Ongoing fuel break maintenance and fire resilience planning in the Empire Grade corridor.
- Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) implementation.
- Chipping services and defensible space programs led by Fire Safe Councils.
- Home Ignition Zone assessments and Firewise community support.

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Examples of new or anticipated project types and activities

- Expansion of prescribed fire programs and burn boss training in San Vicente Redwoods.
- Biomass utilization pilots (e.g., air curtain burners).
- Fire-safe infrastructure retrofits near critical public services (e.g., water treatment plants, 911 dispatch centers).
- Storytelling, education, and documentation of successful community fire resilience efforts.

Important geographic locations for this work

- Empire Grade and Highway 9 corridors.
- Las Cumbres, Zayante/Lompico, and Day Valley areas.
- South County and Pajaro Valley, particularly underserved rural communities.
- Wilder Ranch to Henry Cowell corridor.
- Upper Nisene Marks watershed.
- Wildland-urban interface near Santa Cruz city limits.

Opportunities for San Vicente Redwoods or the Pajaro River Watershed

- San Vicente Redwoods: a priority site for ecological forest management, cultural burning, workforce training, and biomass utilization innovation.
- Pajaro Valley: an area of increasing concern for fire resilience planning in rural, low-income areas that are historically underfunded.

Opportunities for disadvantaged communities, climate resilience, multi-benefit projects

- Support wildfire mitigation in underserved WUI areas including rural agricultural zones and farmworker housing communities.
- Prioritize projects that integrate Indigenous stewardship and benefit communities with limited fire insurance access or recovery resources.
- Fund public education and outreach programs that empower residents to participate in Firewise and emergency preparedness programs.
- Wildfire resilience efforts that create green job opportunities for youth and underrepresented communities.

Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan

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Implementation strategy and key sources of external funding

- Use Measure Q to fund “green tape” streamlining pilots and permitting assistance for fuel reduction projects.
- Support collaborative planning efforts across Fire Safe Councils, Prescribed Burn Associations, and Tribal partners.
- Leverage CalFire, FEMA BRIC, and Forest Health grants by providing planning match, staffing, and project readiness.
- Create grant tracks for both shovel-ready projects and capacity-building efforts, including equipment, training, and coordination support.

Reference to significant guiding plans and documents for more detail

- 2021 Santa Cruz County San Mateo County CWPP.
- Santa Cruz County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Regional Priority Plan for Forest Health.
- California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan.
- Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy.
- Pathways to 30x30 California.

Wildlife and Habitat Protection

Background and context, what’s at stake, issues and opportunities

- Santa Cruz County is home to globally significant biodiversity, including rare and endemic species.
- Development, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and altered fire regimes threaten ecosystem integrity and species viability.
- Climate change is reshaping habitats and species distributions, requiring adaptive and connected landscapes.
- Many critical habitats lack long-term protection or stewardship funding, particularly in high-biodiversity and culturally significant areas.

Recommendations for Measure Q investment

- Prioritize land protection, habitat restoration, and long-term stewardship across sensitive and fragmented ecosystems.
- Invest in projects that enhance habitat connectivity, manage fire-adapted systems, and reduce human-wildlife conflicts.
- Support ongoing maintenance and community-based stewardship to ensure ecological outcomes are sustained.

Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan

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- Align Measure Q investments with local Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs), RCIS, and state biodiversity goals.

Prioritization matrix or list of priority project types, activities, programs

- Habitat restoration and enhancement (e.g., wetlands, oak woodlands, grasslands).
- Wildlife corridor creation and protection.
- Sensitive species habitat management.
- Climate-adaptive vegetation management (e.g., thermal refugia, climate-resilient native plantings).
- Urban greening and biodiversity initiatives.
- Wildlife-friendly infrastructure (e.g., crossing structures, fencing retrofits).

Examples of critical existing projects, programs, activities

- RCIS priority actions for riparian and coastal terrace prairie restoration.
- Slough system enhancement in Pajaro Valley for amphibians and migratory birds.
- Fish passage improvements in coastal creeks (e.g., San Vicente, Scott, and Laguna Creeks).
- UCSC and Land Trust-led restoration of sandhill and oak woodland habitats.

Examples of new or anticipated project types and activities

- Wetland restoration in lower Pajaro River Reach 1 to align with land repurposing programs.
- Habitat restoration integrated with wildfire fuel breaks in sandhills and maritime chaparral.
- Urban canopy expansion in Watsonville neighborhoods with low tree cover.
- Wildlife crossings and connectivity restoration near Highway 1 and mountain corridors.

Important geographic locations for this work

- Santa Cruz Mountains (e.g., San Vicente Redwoods, Zayante, and Bonny Doon areas).
- Lower Pajaro River and Struve Slough.
- Sandhill habitats (e.g., Quail Hollow area).
- Oak woodland and grassland corridors along the north coast.
- Urban areas like Watsonville in need of biodiversity and tree canopy enhancement.

Opportunities for San Vicente Redwoods or the Pajaro River Watershed

- San Vicente Redwoods: opportunities for oak woodland restoration, sensitive species protection, and corridor connectivity to adjacent lands.
- Pajaro River Watershed: wetland and floodplain restoration to enhance fish and bird habitat, reduce flood risk, and support multi-benefit land repurposing.

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Opportunities for disadvantaged / justice communities, climate resilience, multi-benefit projects

- Fund urban biodiversity and tree canopy programs in underserved neighborhoods to improve public health and habitat quality.
- Integrate restoration and stewardship programs with education and workforce training (e.g., youth corps, community science).
- Support long-term maintenance of habitats near communities vulnerable to climate change and environmental hazards.
- Urban greening and habitat projects that prioritize neighborhoods with low tree canopy and limited access to nature, particularly in Watsonville and other underserved areas. These projects should include educational, recreational, and workforce components wherever possible.

Implementation strategy and key sources of external funding

- Leverage state and federal biodiversity funding (e.g., Wildlife Conservation Board, Prop 1, Pathways to 30x30).
- Align with RCIS and local conservation strategies to streamline permitting and access matching funds.
- Provide Measure Q support for long-term stewardship and monitoring often not covered by capital-focused grants.
- Build partnerships with land trusts, Tribes, CBOs, and academic institutions for habitat management and adaptive planning.

Reference to significant guiding plans and documents for more detail

- Santa Cruz County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS).
- Habitat Conservation Plans and Natural Community Conservation Plans (HCPs/NCCPs).
- Pathways to 30x30 California.
- California Wildlife Action Plan.
- Local watershed and parks plans integrating habitat protection goals.

Parks, Recreation, and Public Access & Equity

Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan

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Background and context, what's at stake, issues and opportunities

- Many Santa Cruz County residents, particularly in Watsonville and South County, lack access to quality parks, beaches, and open spaces.
- Park acreage and urban tree canopy are significantly lower in disadvantaged communities compared to North County.
- Deferred maintenance, aging infrastructure, and lack of funding have limited the ability to upgrade or expand recreational opportunities equitably.
- There is strong community interest in improved trails, beach access, green infrastructure, and culturally relevant programming.

Recommendations for Measure Q investment

- Prioritize equitable investment in underserved communities, particularly in South County and unincorporated areas like Live Oak and Freedom.
- Fund both capital improvements (e.g., trails, parks, facilities) and programmatic support (e.g., youth programs, stewardship, community gardening).
- Improve access to beaches and open space by addressing transportation, safety, and cultural barriers.
- Support joint-use partnerships with school districts to expand access to green space.

Prioritization matrix or list of priority project types, activities, programs

- Park development and infrastructure enhancements.
- Trail and beach access improvements, including ADA upgrades.
- Equitable access initiatives (e.g., transit access, culturally relevant amenities).
- Urban greening and community gardens.
- Environmental education, youth engagement, and community stewardship programs.
- Deferred maintenance and safety improvements.

Examples of critical existing projects, programs, activities

- Watsonville Urban Greening Plan and Slough Trails Master Plan.
- Pinto Lake recreation and green infrastructure upgrades.
- Park access improvements near schools and dense residential areas.
- Beach access improvements at West Beach Road and Palm Beach.

Examples of new or anticipated project types and activities

- New or renovated parks in park-deficient areas of Watsonville and unincorporated South County.
- Levee-top multi-use trail connecting Watsonville to the coast.
- Joint-use schoolyard conversions into community green spaces.
- Interpretive programming and volunteer-based stewardship initiatives.

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Important geographic locations for this work

- Watsonville, particularly West Beach, Pinto Lake, and school-based sites.
- Unincorporated communities: Live Oak, Freedom, Corralitos.
- Pajaro Valley greenbelt and trail corridors.
- Beach corridors lacking safe pedestrian/bike access.

Opportunities for San Vicente Redwoods or the Pajaro River Watershed

- San Vicente Redwoods: potential for interpretive trail development, nature-based education, and access projects integrating cultural stewardship.
- Pajaro River Watershed: levee trail connections, beach access, and community-centered green infrastructure along the lower watershed.

Opportunities for disadvantaged / justice communities, climate resilience, multi-benefit projects

- Expand parks and recreation access in areas with low park acreage and high environmental burden scores (e.g., CalEnviroScreen).
- Use community gardens and green schoolyards to promote food security, community resilience, and educational outcomes.
- Ensure Measure Q grant criteria support non-profit and CBO-led efforts that include stewardship and equity-focused programming.

Implementation strategy and key sources of external funding

- Align projects with state priorities under the Outdoors for All Initiative, Urban Greening Program, and Active Transportation Program.
- Support shovel-ready projects and pre-development planning that will increase competitiveness for state and federal grants.
- Offer flexible funding options for smaller organizations and programs, not just large capital projects.
- Leverage local plans (e.g., Pajaro Valley Park Equity Assessment) to guide equitable and high-impact investments.

Reference to significant guiding plans and documents for more detail

- Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Plan (2018) and Update (2023).
- Watsonville Urban Greening Plan.
- Pajaro Valley Park Equity Assessment.
- Santa Cruz County Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.
- California Outdoors for All Strategy.
- Pathways to 30x30 California.

Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan

Detailed Outline – July 22, 2025

Agricultural and Working Lands Protection

Background and context, what's at stake, issues and opportunities

- Santa Cruz County's agricultural lands support local economies, food systems, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration.
- Threats include urban encroachment, unsustainable practices, water scarcity, and a lack of technical or financial support for producers.
- Agricultural lands can also serve as key locations for multi-benefit projects that support water conservation, habitat connectivity, and fire resilience.
- The region is rich in innovation around regenerative agriculture, and there is momentum for aligning stewardship practices with climate and habitat goals.

Recommendations for Measure Q investment

- Support farmland preservation through conservation easements, zoning policies, and urban growth boundaries.
- Promote regenerative agriculture practices that improve soil health, water retention, and carbon storage.
- Fund technical assistance, outreach, and incentive programs that help landowners implement sustainable practices.
- Encourage integration of habitat features on working lands to support biodiversity and pollinators.

Prioritization matrix or list of priority project types, activities, programs

- Farmland preservation and land use planning.
- Soil health and regenerative agriculture (e.g., composting, cover crops).
- Habitat enhancement on working lands (e.g., hedgerows, riparian buffers).
- Technical assistance and incentive programs for producers.
- Agritourism and economic diversification (e.g., farm stays, on-farm events).

Examples of critical existing projects, programs, activities

- Agricultural conservation easements held by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.
- Compost application programs and regenerative agriculture pilots in Watsonville.
- Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency's ag water conservation programs.
- RCD-led technical assistance and training for producers.

Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan

Detailed Outline – July 22, 2025

Examples of new or anticipated project types and activities

- Incentive programs for carbon farming and native habitat restoration on ranch lands.
- Managed aquifer recharge pilot projects on agricultural land.
- Farm-based education and cultural programming (e.g., Native plant cultivation).
- Strategic acquisitions to prevent farmland conversion in high-risk areas.
- Land justice initiatives, such as cooperative stewardship models, traditional cultivation techniques, or community land trusts, may also be eligible for support when aligned with conservation and climate goals.

Important geographic locations for this work

- Pajaro Valley, including Watsonville and surrounding areas.
- Corralitos and San Andreas agricultural zones.
- Agricultural lands along the lower Pajaro River floodplain.
- Areas adjacent to critical habitat zones where habitat integration is possible.

Opportunities for San Vicente Redwoods or the Pajaro River Watershed

- Pajaro River Watershed: farmland repurposing and restoration projects under the Pajaro Valley Multi-Benefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Program.
- San Vicente Redwoods: potential collaboration zones at the interface of rangeland and conservation land.

Opportunities for disadvantaged / justice communities, climate resilience, multi-benefit projects

- Prioritize technical assistance and funding access for small and socially disadvantaged farmers, including immigrant and Indigenous producers.
- Support land stewardship models that promote food sovereignty, workforce development, and culturally relevant practices.
- Fund pilot programs that blend conservation, economic resilience, and equity (e.g., culturally rooted agritourism or traditional agricultural techniques).

Implementation strategy and key sources of external funding

- Leverage Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funding, DOC Sustainable Ag Lands Conservation Program, and CDFA Healthy Soils Program.
- Support outreach and partnership-building to align Measure Q with state incentives and voluntary carbon markets.
- Provide funding for baseline data collection, monitoring, and voluntary stewardship agreements.
- Enable nonprofit and CBO participation through flexible match and capacity-building support.

Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan

Detailed Outline – July 22, 2025

- Technical assistance providers should be culturally appropriate and community-trusted to ensure that socially disadvantaged farmers—including immigrant, Indigenous, and limited-English-proficient producers—can fully participate in Measure Q programs.

Reference to significant guiding plans and documents for more detail

- Santa Cruz County Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.
- Santa Cruz County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS).
- Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency plans.
- Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy.
- California Healthy Soils and SALC Programs.
- Pathways to 30x30 California.

Coastal Protection and Adaptation

Background and context, what's at stake, issues and opportunities

- Santa Cruz County's coastline is experiencing accelerated erosion, flooding, and infrastructure threats due to rising seas and more intense storms.
- Coastal ecosystems and public access points are at risk, particularly in South County, where dunes and levees provide limited protection.
- Key transportation corridors, wastewater infrastructure, and residential communities are vulnerable to climate impacts.
- There is a growing need for nature-based adaptation solutions and integration of climate resilience into land use and infrastructure planning.

Recommendations for Measure Q investment

- Support nature-based shoreline protection strategies (e.g., dune restoration, living shorelines, floodplain reconnection).
- Fund coastal infrastructure adaptation projects that enhance resilience and protect critical access and ecological functions.
- Invest in planning and implementation of multi-benefit projects that address sea-level rise and storm surge impacts.
- Provide equitable access to resilient coastal spaces and support relocation, retreat, or reimagining of vulnerable infrastructure where needed.

Prioritization matrix or list of priority project types, activities, programs

- Nature-based shoreline protection and dune restoration.
- Coastal infrastructure adaptation and flood resilience (e.g., wastewater, levees, roads).

Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan

Detailed Outline – July 22, 2025

- Sea-level rise and storm surge adaptation planning.
- Water quality and stormwater pollution prevention.
- Coastal access equity and safety improvements.
- Managed retreat and land repurposing strategies.

Examples of critical existing projects, programs, activities

- Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project.
- Dune restoration and coastal access upgrades at Palm Beach and Sunset State Beach.
- City of Santa Cruz Climate Resilience and Adaptation Planning.
- Watsonville Slough restoration and water quality improvements.

Examples of new or anticipated project types and activities

- Managed retreat feasibility studies and pilot projects for infrastructure and development.
- Restoration of coastal wetlands to absorb floodwaters and support wildlife.
- Relocation of recreation and access infrastructure from vulnerable dunes and cliffs.
- Implementation of living shoreline projects in estuarine areas.

Important geographic locations for this work

- Pajaro River floodplain and estuary.
- Sunset and Palm Beach coastal areas.
- Lower Watsonville Slough and wetland complex.
- West Cliff Drive and adjacent coastal infrastructure.
- North coast beach access points with erosion and safety concerns.

Opportunities for San Vicente Redwoods or the Pajaro River Watershed

- Pajaro River Watershed: key site for coordinated floodplain restoration, managed retreat, and multi-benefit agricultural land repurposing.
- San Vicente Redwoods: upstream contributions to watershed resilience and water quality benefits for downstream coastal areas.

Opportunities for disadvantaged / justice communities, climate resilience, multi-benefit projects

- Prioritize flood and sea-level rise resilience investments in vulnerable communities, including Pajaro and South Watsonville.
- Integrate climate resilience with public health, housing, and access goals through participatory planning and investment.
- Fund green infrastructure, stormwater treatment, and resilient access in historically underserved beach and coastal neighborhoods.

Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan

Detailed Outline – July 22, 2025

- Planning and implementation should be participatory, including renters, frontline workers, and other climate-vulnerable residents in coastal areas. Special consideration should be given to culturally responsive relocation, green infrastructure, and resilient access design.

Implementation strategy and key sources of external funding

- Align with Coastal Commission’s adaptation guidelines and local sea-level rise plans.
- Leverage FEMA, NOAA, Coastal Conservancy, and Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) funds.
- Support planning and implementation partnerships that bridge ecological restoration and infrastructure adaptation.
- Build local capacity for community-based coastal adaptation and technical support for project design and permitting.

Reference to significant guiding plans and documents for more detail

- Santa Cruz County Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.
- Pajaro River Flood Risk Reduction Project documents.
- Coastal Resilience Project and Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessments.
- California Climate Adaptation Strategy.
- State Coastal Conservancy Strategic Plan.

Vision Plan Implementation

- Opportunities to align with matching funds such as Prop 4.
- Recommendations for annual COAB review and evaluation using success metrics.
- Strategies to build capacity among nonprofit and community-based partners.
- Next steps for grant program rollout and technical assistance support.



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board

Item 10



701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
MeasureQ@santacruzcountyca.gov
www.santacruzcountyca.gov/MeasureQ

MEASURE Q COAB 06.18.2025 MEETING MINUTES

Recommended Action

1. Review and approve meeting minutes from June 18th, 2025.

Executive Summary

Minutes for every meeting are taken and prepared by the Measure Q Staff Liaison. The Advisory Board is asked to review the minutes for accuracy and approve them for posting, in accordance with Bylaws and Santa Cruz County Code.

Discussion

Minutes are the official written record of what transpires during a meeting and serves as the permanent record of actions taken and gives future direction for staff, agencies, and the public. They include a brief summary of the discussion and comments made by the public.

In accordance with the Measure Q COAB Bylaws and SCC Code 2.38.160(B) "Official minutes recording the motions entertained and actions taken at each commission or committee meeting shall be prepared by the staff liaison or designee as authorized within the body's authorizing ordinance, submitted to the Board of Supervisors, and posted according to law." Upon approval by the Advisory Board, the meeting minutes will be posted to the Measure Q COAB website.

Submitted By:

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
David Reid, Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience

Attachments

- a. Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board Regular Meeting June 18th, 2025 Minutes



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board

Item 10



701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
MeasureQ@santacruzcountyca.gov
www.santacruzcountyca.gov/MeasureQ

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 18th, 2025
5:30pm – 7:30pm
Regular Meeting

Simpkins Family Swim Center
Community Rooms
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Introductory Items

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL Meeting called to order at 5:32 PM

Present: Julie Howard (District 1), Dennis Webb (District 2), Julissa Espindola (District 4), Mark Correia (District 5), Scott Harway (City of Capitola), Rachel Dann (City of Santa Cruz), David Sanguinetti (City of Scotts Valley), Celeste DeWald (City of Watsonville)

Absent: Sandy Brown (District 3)

Staff: Dave Reid (Director – OR3), Elissa Benson (Assistant Executive County Officer), Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha (Admin Aide/COAB Liaison – Parks), Juan Perez Alvarez (Administrative Services Manager – Parks)

2. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS No modifications.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS 2 members of the public.

4. ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA (item 7)

Motion to approve the consent agenda: Correia/2nd: DeWald/All in favor.

Regular Agenda

Information Items

5. Water Resources 101 – Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Program Manager..... page 3.

Sierra Ryan presented information about local water resources, risks and data that is being collected by Santa Cruz County's Environmental Health Division. Background on local water resources.

- **Commissioner Harway:** *How many different areas are tested per week?* It depends per week on the season. Some areas are monitored more throughout the summer. About 50 sites they go to at various durations throughout the year. Depends on the risk and what is being monitored.
- **Commissioner Howard:** *What would you say are the top reasons water usage has gone down since the 1980s?* Usage has gone down primarily due to conservation efforts – both mandatory and voluntary. Also, there has been a change in lifestyle due to droughts and the changes in water rate structures to a usage charge.

- **Vice-Chair Espindola:** *Do you have graphs showing City wide usage and habits? Is farmland considered in City usage?* The farmland is usually on wells and not reliant on municipal water. Most wells are metered, so there is data on how water usage has changed. However, there are no graphs readily available, but could be created to show changes in usage over time in agricultural areas.
- **Commissioner Sanguinetti** asked for information regarding chemical pollutants in the Scotts Valley community along Carbonera Creek where there were many plumes. There is a Hazardous Materials and Site Mitigation Program within Environmental Health that is responsible for chemical contaminant plumes. These plumes are being monitored and tracked as part of the State-led CUPA Program. *Is there a source people can go to if they want to track where the plumes are located?* Yes, GeoTracker.
- **Commissioner Howard:** *Can you elaborate on ways Measure Q can contribute to bettering water issues?* Measure Q is not going to be a water supply fund but might be able to do rebates or rain barrels, etc., to support low water use. From a water quality perspective, lots can be done – robust treatment systems, low impact development support projects on public lands, restoration and nature-based solutions.

6. Consultant Intro & Vision Plan Development Presentation – Matt Freeman, Matt Freeman Consulting.

Matt Freeman and Logan Woodruff, from the Vision Plan Consultant Team, presented an update on the development of the Measure Q 5-Year Vision Plan. Freeman reviewed completed work—including stakeholder meetings, community meetings, and a literature review—as well as the feedback received so far. He also outlined the remaining tasks and the COAB's role in the process.

- **Vice-Chair Espindola** asked if the COAB could see the public response distribution up to this point to see if it needs to be shared more within their respective areas. If the data can be analyzed at this point, Staff will pull the information and share the geographic distribution of responses so far.
- **Chair Dann:** *Is the next meeting where the COAB will be looking at a draft Vision Plan or what's on deck for the July 30th meeting?* Director Reid informed the Board that a substantive draft would likely not be available until August. However, the annotated outline should be available for the next meeting. *Can the COAB receive that ahead of the next meeting to be able to review and provide feedback?* Following the outreach meetings, County staff will be reviewing the timeline with the consultant team to ensure materials are available ahead of conversations requesting feedback.
- **Chair Dann** recommended clarifying the COAB's role, noting that while various responsibilities have been discussed, the Measure Q language is unclear about the Board's authority. She asked how the ballot language aligns with the Vision Plan and which takes precedence. Freeman responded that both should work in support of each other. CEO Benson noted that the Measure outlines eligible uses but doesn't set priorities, and supported defining the COAB's role after the Vision Plan is finalized. Director Reid added that the Measure language is intentionally broad, with the Vision Plan intended to guide implementation across the County and cities.
- **Commissioner Howard** voiced another point for clarification – according to the Measure language, is the grant program the only one required to follow the Vision Plan? CEO Benson noted that this is an ambiguity within the initiative. The County has been

talking about what they hope the Vision Plan will accomplish and how to create a document that benefits all parties involved.

- **Commissioner DeWald:** *How much weight do you put on something based on feedback received? If you start to see trends that are conflicting between one another, how are you going to bring that together?* Freeman acknowledged that identifying discrepancies and finding common ground could be challenging. However, the Vision Plan team hopes the second round of stakeholder meetings will serve as an opportunity to prioritize and identify projects that address multiple themes simultaneously.
- **Commissioner Howard** *added to the discussion of conflicting priorities and provided feedback, suggesting that the Vision Plan could consider unique characteristics of the cities and County areas in which certain themes are more relevant and suggest projects that relate to those specific themes, rather than prioritizing specific projects. She also suggested being general about external funding sources to avoid issues of projects potentially not qualifying for those funds.* Freeman thanked Commissioner Howard for her comments and noted that they hoped stakeholders and community members would suggest projects specific to their areas in their feedback that could be used to help guide the development of the Vision Plan.
- **CEO Benson** *addressed concerns for potential conflicting themes and priorities.* Commissioner DeWald asked for transparency, from the Project Team, regarding conflicting themes that arise during the outreach process. Director Reid explained that some issues may be addressed through the structure of the upcoming grant program. Ongoing stakeholder conversations will help begin aligning the Vision Plan with the grant program.

Consent Agenda

Consent items include routine business that does not call for discussion. One roll call vote is taken for all items. Only a Board Member may pull items from Consent to Regular Agenda. Members of the public must request that a Board Member pull an item from the Consent Agenda prior to the start of the meeting.

7. **Approve minutes from May 21st, 2025.....** page 5.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. None

Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 6:58PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:30 PM Wednesday, July 30th, 2025

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms

979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062