



**Youth
Commission**
CITY OF SAN JOSE

2025-2026 Annual Report

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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MESSAGE **FROM THE CHAIR**

The San José Youth Commission serves as the official advisory body to the Mayor and City Council, representing the perspectives and priorities of approximately 248,000 youth under nineteen across the city. Through this role, commissioners work to increase civic engagement, connect with their communities, and ensure that youth voices are reflected in local decision-making.

This year's Commission approached that responsibility with a strong focus on growth and follow-through. With eight new commissioners stepping in to replace last year's seniors, we began the year still figuring out how we would operate as a group.

Over time, however, commissioners developed their skills, built confidence, and learned how to effectively engage with their districts, city departments, and council offices. What started as a relatively inexperienced group became a more cohesive and capable Commission.

This year, we continued to focus our work on the Youth Budget Priorities Survey and Summit. Through this process, we gathered over 653 responses from youth across San José, allowing us to better understand their needs and concerns. The survey results helped guide discussions involving 57 youth participants on key issues and ultimately informed the budget priorities we presented.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Our Annual Youth Budget Priorities Summit continued to be a strong reflection of youths' increased willingness to be involved in city affairs and garnered significant support. There is a growing awareness among youth of how local government impacts their lives and how they can take part in it.

In addition to this work, commissioners collaborated through ad hoc committees and Youth Advisory Councils to focus on specific projects and initiatives. These smaller groups allowed members to take ownership of their work, develop ideas more fully, and contribute in a more direct way.

We also introduced a new approach to our work plan this year: creating two broad categories that encapsulated the different areas commissioners wanted to address. The first continued our focus on educational resources and equity for San José youth. The second responded to the current state of our city and nation, combining immigration rights with community placemaking, cultural expression, and belonging. This shift allowed greater flexibility for commissioners to address priorities in ways that best suited their districts' needs. Whether through outreach, event planning, or policy creation, commissioners demonstrated their ability to take on a structure like this and turn it into meaningful impact.

Looking at the Commission as a whole, I am proud of how much each member has grown. Everyone came in with different strengths, backgrounds, and levels of experience, but over time, each person found their role and contributed in their own way.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Each commissioner worked hard to develop their own style. I am pleased with every one of them: for the progress they have made and the initiatives they have led. That individual growth is what strengthened the Commission as a whole and made our work more effective as the fiscal year progressed.

Moving forward, I am confident in the Commission's success in the years ahead. Commissioners such as Edwin, Fiona, and Anushka will play an important role in guiding the next term, as many commissioners finish their term this year. They have shown initiative, consistency, and a strong ability to support others. These qualities will be essential in continuing the progress made by the Commission this year.

Serving as Chair this year gave me a new perspective on what it means to lead. It pushed me to listen more, to adapt, and to support others in finding their place within the Commission. More than anything, it showed me that leadership is built on a willingness to grow alongside the people you work with. I am so thankful for the chance I've had to lead and for the people who made it meaningful.

As this year comes to a close, I am excited to see how the Commission continues to evolve. Our Commission's foundation is there, and the next group of leaders is ready to build on it. I have no doubt that youth in San José will continue to step up by taking part in San José Youth Commission activities and will play a larger role in shaping the future of their city.

Yours faithfully,

MARIAN KUCHARAWSKI
CHAIR, YOUTH COMMISSION
CITY OF SAN JOSÉ

*“...leadership is built on
a willingness to grow
alongside the people
you work with.”*

YOUTH COMMISSION

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



Anushka Deshmukh

Communications Officer | District 1

- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Junior at Lynbrook High School
- Participated in the Education ad hoc committee



Neyha Pradeepkumar

Vice Chair | District 2

- 3rd year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Presentation High School
- Participated in the Community and Education ad hoc committees
- Will be attending the University of Pittsburgh, majoring in Public Health



Edwin Sanchez

Commissioner | District 3

- 2nd year on the Youth Commission
- Junior at Hillbrook High School
- Participated in the Community and Immigration ad hoc committees



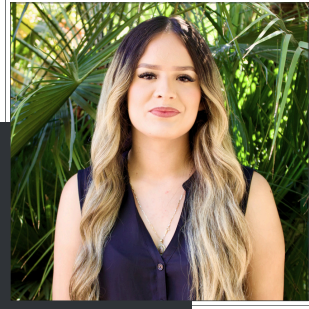
Akshadha Babu Chakravarthi

Commissioner | District 4

- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Piedmont Hills High School
- Participated in the Immigration ad hoc committee

YOUTH COMMISSION

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



Dali Guerrero Fernandez

Commissioner | District 5

- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Sophomore at De Anza College
- Participated in the Education and Immigration ad hoc committees



Fiona Canfield

Commissioner | District 6

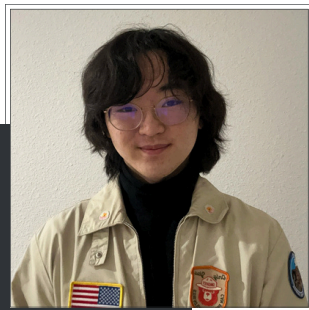
- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Sophomore at Notre Dame San José High School
- Participated in the Community ad hoc committee



David Huynh

Outreach Officer | District 7

- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Willow Glen High School
- Participated in the Community and Education ad hoc committees
- Will be attending Princeton University, majoring in History



Micah Chung

Commissioner | District 8

- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Evergreen Valley High School
- Participated in the Immigration ad hoc committee
- Will be attending Stanford University, majoring in Public Policy

YOUTH COMMISSION

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



Jingru (Ruby) Yu

Commissioner | District 9

- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Presentation High School
- Participated in the Immigration ad hoc committee
- Will be attending the University of California, Davis, majoring in Political Science



Jinyoung (Kyle) Park

Commissioner | District 10

- 1st year on the Youth Commission
- Junior at Pioneer High School
- Participated in the Community ad hoc committee



Marian Kucharweski

Chair | Citywide

- 2nd year on the Youth Commission
- Senior at Valley Christian High School
- Participated in the Education and Immigration ad hoc committees

STAFF

Emily Terada

Youth Commission
Librarian

Megan Maloy

Senior Librarian

Dziem Nguyen

Administrative Assistant

Vidya Kilambi

Division Manager

Karla Alvarez

Chief of Staff

ADOPTED **WORK PLAN**

The San José Youth Commission developed a Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, and the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee approved it on December 11, 2025.

EVALUATE AND ADVISE ON COLLEGE, CAREER, AND LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES IN SAN JOSÉ

- Conduct youth participatory action research and a citywide youth survey to gather insight and input from youth on City budget and educational priorities
- Explore and uplift community partnerships with local education agencies

CELEBRATE SAN JOSÉ'S DIVERSITY AND CULTURE THROUGH EXPLORING COMMUNITY BUILDING AND PLACEMAKING

- Fostering the youth voice through culture and art through Beautify initiatives, community art, events, and fairs
- Conduct outreach and promote existing local resources and events in partnership with the City of San José and other community-based organizations
- Advocate for immigrant youth and families by promoting support resources



OUTREACH PLAN

The San José Youth Commission developed and accepted an Outreach Plan for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 at their meeting on September 22, 2025.

PROMOTE YOUTH COMMISSION AND YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL EVENTS

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

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

Outcome	Strategies	Success Metrics
<p>Host community-based organizations and city departments as presenters at Youth Commission meetings.</p>	<p>Identify organizations, departments, groups, and activities that align with the Youth Commission work plan.</p>	<p>Number of presentations at Youth Commission meetings and the Youth Commission work plan objectives.</p>
<p>Increase the number of survey responses and the diversity of demographic data.</p>	<p>Share the Citywide Youth Priorities Survey with other youth-led clubs and organizations.</p>	<p>Survey questions pertaining to respondents' affiliations and demographics, and the increase in responses.</p>

OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

FOSTER AND MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE CITY OF SAN JOSÉ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Outcome	Strategies	Success Metrics
Deepen partnerships between Commissioners and District Council offices.	<p>Consistent communication with Council Offices and staff to share on social media and in District newsletters.</p> <p>Attend community events held by Councilmembers.</p>	Increased engagement in City Council events and with District offices.
Increase youth engagement through library activities and initiatives.	<p>Update libraries regarding Youth Commission activities and events.</p> <p>Share SJPL initiatives and programs with YACs.</p>	Increased youth participation in both YAC events and library initiatives.

OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

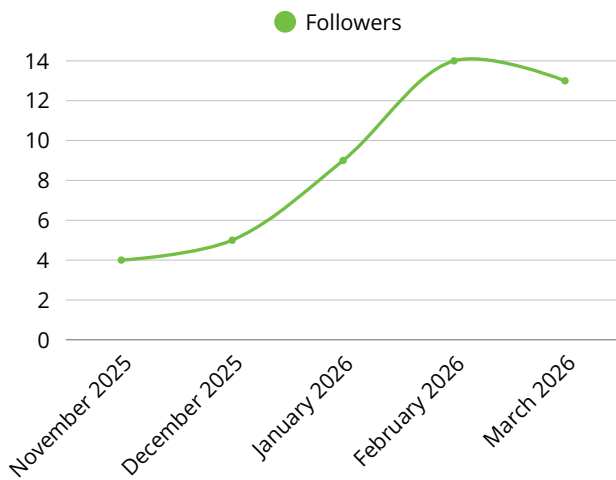
BY ANUSHKA DESHMUKH & DAVID HUYNH

This year, as Outreach Officer, District 7 Commissioner David Huynh developed the Youth Commission Fiscal Year 2025–2026 Outreach Plan to guide outreach and recruitment efforts. In tandem with these efforts, as Communications Officer, District 1 Commissioner Anushka Deshmukh strengthened the Commission’s digital presence by managing its social media platforms to better connect with youth across San José.

Following the release of the Annual Youth Priorities Survey, targeted outreach and communications strategies worked hand in hand. A Youth Herald blog post invited youth participation, while direct email outreach to school counselors, teachers, and principals significantly expanded engagement. These combined efforts resulted in 653 participants, with an 82% completion rate. Notably, 510 completed responses came directly from email outreach, demonstrating the success of efforts to grow partnerships with local schools. Continued outreach also supported strong and diverse youth participation in the Annual Youth Priorities Budget Summit.

OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWER GROWTH



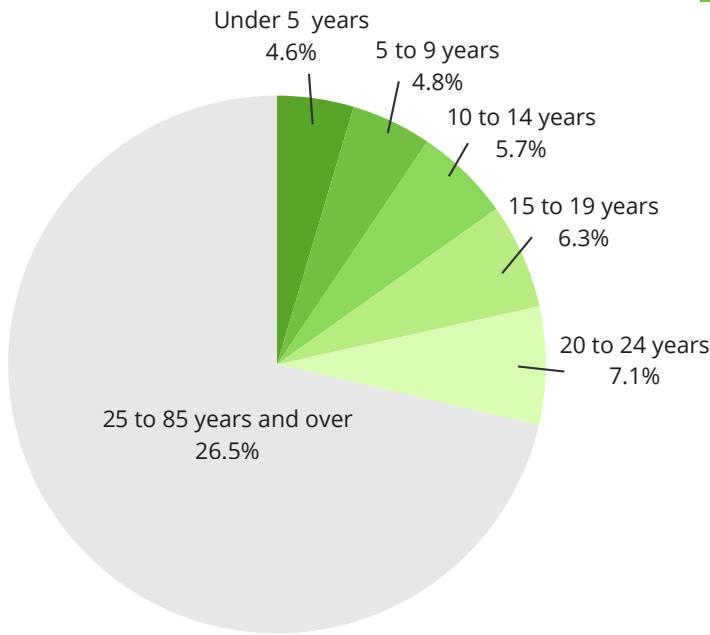
On the communications side, social media initiatives focused on accessibility, transparency, and engagement. Regular posts informed youth about Youth Commission meeting dates and provided clear instructions on how to attend both in person and online. Event recap posts highlighted the Commission’s work throughout the year, while interactive tools such as polls gathered real-time feedback from youth and encouraged ongoing participation.

These expanded communications efforts yielded measurable growth. Since January, the Youth Commission’s Instagram has generated 33,010 views across posts and videos, with 90.7% of viewers being non-followers, indicating a significant expansion beyond the existing audience. Since November, the account has gained 44 new followers, with March showing the highest growth, signaling increased visibility and engagement.

Together, the coordinated outreach and communications strategies strengthened connections with schools, broadened youth engagement, and amplified the visibility of the Youth Commission’s work. As the year concludes, both officers look forward to continuing to celebrate and document the Commission’s accomplishments while building a strong foundation for future initiatives. ■

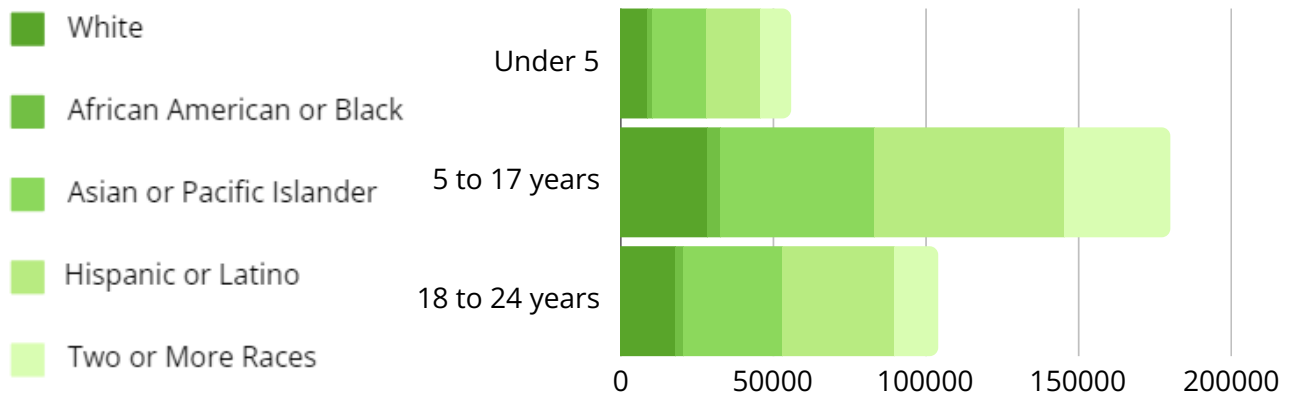


YOUTH IN SAN JOSÉ



CHILD, YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT POPULATIONS

San José is the most populous city in Santa Clara County, with children, youth, and young adults under age 24 accounting for 28.6% of its 997,395 residents. Of these, 39.5% are Asian, 30.8% are Hispanic/Latino, 22.3% are White, 2.9% have Black/African ancestry, and 4.5% identify as another race or ethnicity. Approximately 42% of residents are foreign-born, and 50% speak a language other than English.



YOUTH AND POVERTY LEVELS

While San José is one of the wealthiest cities in the country, many families in the region are struggling financially. 7.8% of San José residents under 18 are below the federal poverty level, compared with 8.1% of the city's overall population. For families with children under the age of 18, 7.5% live below the poverty level. ■

	Total Population	Below Poverty Level
Under 5	45,000	5.4% (2,410)
5 to 17	141,265	8.5% (12,053)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

SURVEY RESPONSE DEMOGRAPHICS

The Youth Commission creates and distributes an annual survey to youth throughout San José that serves as a tool for gauging youth priorities and sentiments towards various issues and Commission activities. This year, the survey collected **653 responses** with an **82% completion rate** and was a foundation for our work plan and budget advocacy efforts. The diverse representation of respondents ensures that the priorities identified truly reflect the needs of San José youth across various communities.

Our Annual Youth Priorities Survey ran from November 24, 2025 to January 20, 2026, featuring 37 thoughtfully designed questions.



- 63% identify as a woman (+9%)
- 28% identify as a man (-11%)
- 13% consider themselves low-income (+4%)
- **14% struggle with their mental health**



- 47% identify as Asian or Pacific Islander, including Vietnamese (-4%)
- 26% identify as Hispanic or Latino (-2%)
- 16% identify as White (+6%)



- 9% identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community (-2%)
- 4% identify as non-binary or transgender (+1%)



- 72% are in high school (+16%)
- 12% are in middle school (-9%)
- **82% attend public schools**
- 33% attend school in ESUHSD



- 55% speak English at home
- 15% speak Spanish at home (+1%)
- 10% speak Indian languages at home (+1%)
- 7% speak Vietnamese at home
- 7% speak Mandarin or Cantonese at home



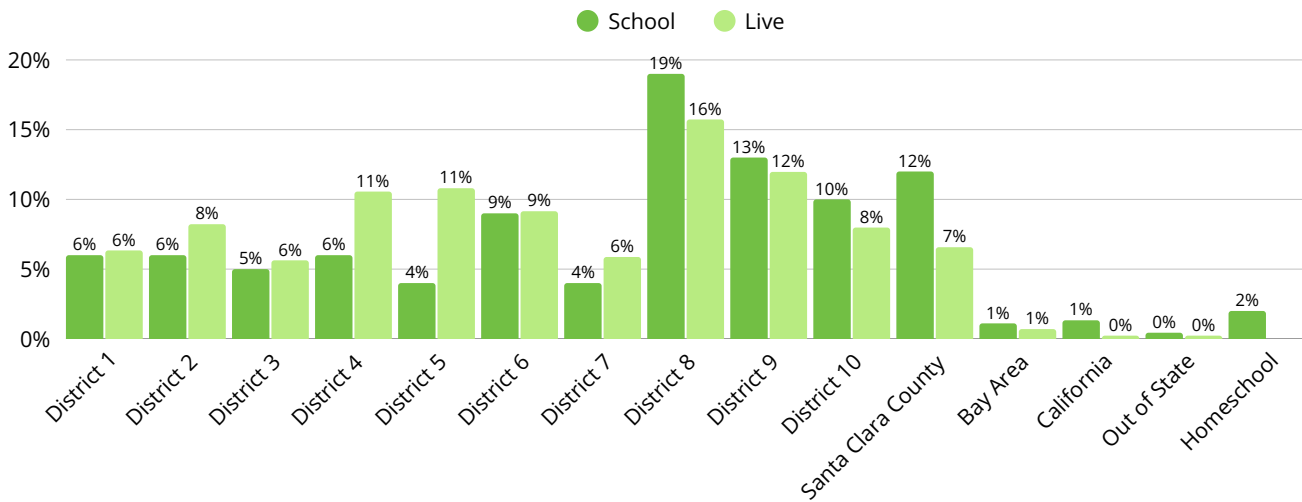
- **23% are part of the first generation in the US (+2%)**
- 7% were born outside of the US (+1%)
- 10% would be the first in their family to go to college (+1%)

None of the questions required responses, allowing participants to share what they felt comfortable with. Our outreach was successful across multiple channels, with 31 responses from flyers, 12 from social media, and 565 from email. We incentivized participation with drawings for Apple AirPods, achieving an impressive completion rate.

Our survey captured a diverse cross-section of San José youth: 72% high school students and 12% middle school students; 47% Asian or Pacific Islander, 24% Hispanic/Latino, and 16% White; with 55% speaking English at home and 15% Spanish. Key demographics included 63% women, 14% reporting mental health challenges, 9% LGBTQIA+ community members, 23% first-generation Americans, and 10% potential first-generation college students.

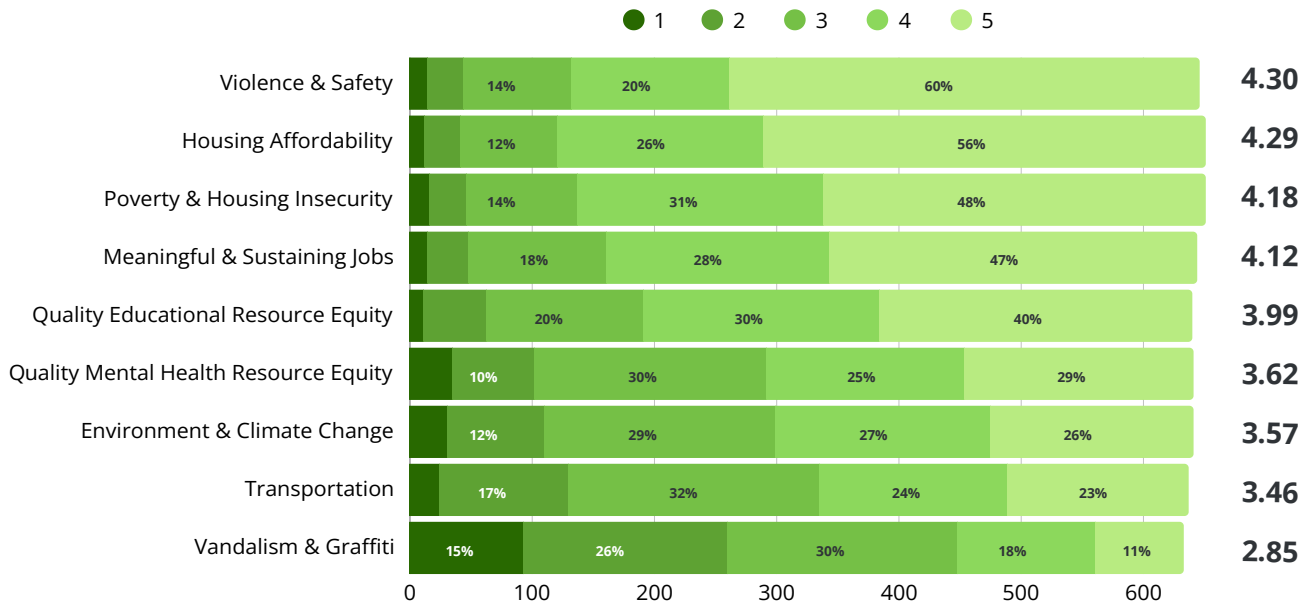
YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY GO TO SCHOOL AND LIVE?



Looking at where our youth live and attend school, District 8 shows the highest school attendance at 19%, which we attribute to a spike in responses from Evergreen Valley High School. District 8 also has the highest residence rate at 16%. We see good representation across all districts. Some respondents come from other parts of Santa Clara County, showing our broader regional impact.

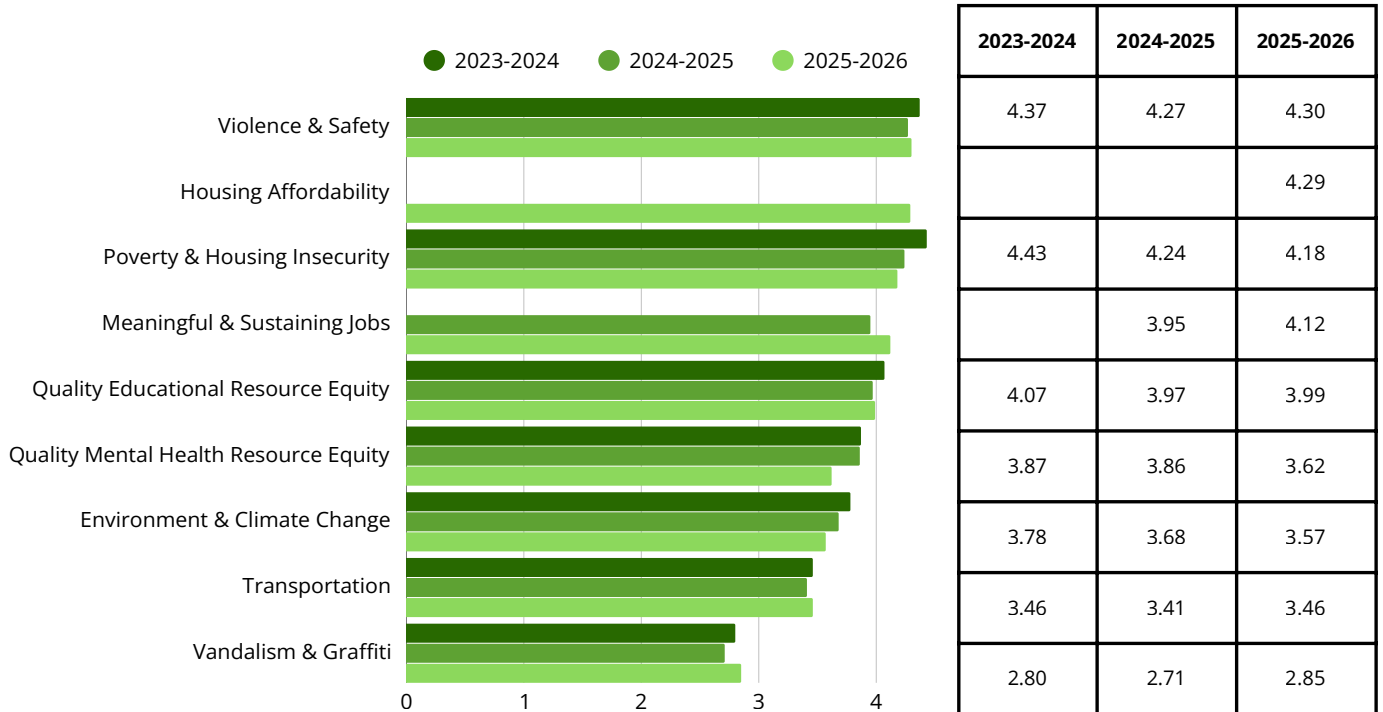
IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES ON A SCALE OF 1 (LOWEST PRIORITY) TO 5 (HIGHEST PRIORITY)



Our survey identified several critical priorities for San José youth. Our youth ranked various issues on a scale of 1 to 5. The top 5 priorities are: Violence & Safety (4.3/5), Housing Affordability (4.29/5), Poverty & Housing Insecurity (4.18/5), Meaningful & Sustaining Jobs (4.12/5), and Quality Educational Resource Equity (3.99/5). This shows that our youth are deeply concerned about fundamental safety and stability issues in our community, as well as about equitable access to their futures.

YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

AVERAGE COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS



Compared to results from previous years, we see increased concern about violence and safety. While Housing Affordability was new, Housing and Poverty remain top priorities, and Educational Resources consistently rank high. A notable addition is that Meaningful and Sustaining Jobs has grown as a key concern. Our youth provided thoughtful suggestions for addressing these issues: mental health resources in schools; mentorship and internship opportunities for underserved areas; an integrated approach to homeless services; environmental initiatives; community engagement through workshops and panels; and expanded transportation options.

“I think for youth to be able to focus on education and work they need to have a safe and comfortable place to live and access to meals regularly.”

“I believe the availability of school-related resources—such as volunteering and internship opportunities—needs greater attention, as these experiences provide valuable real-world learning and help students build a strong foundation for college. They also play an important role in strengthening college applications.”

“I want to feel safe at school, at home.”

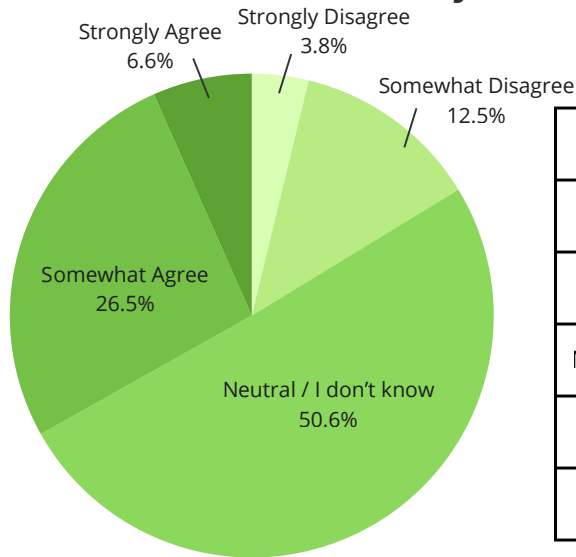
“I feel that the access to mental health resources is one of my top priorities especially as a teen as I find that it’s very difficult to find places to reach out or communities to join when facing hardship.”

“Meaningful and sustaining job opportunities are the most important. When everyone has money and the opportunity to make it, then all of the other problems automatically get better.”

YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

Do you agree with the following statement:

THE LOCAL CITY OF SAN JOSÉ GOVERNMENT REFLECTS YOUTH PRIORITIES.



Comparison With Last Year's Responses

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Δ
Strongly Agree	4.9%	7.5%	6.6%	-0.9%
Somewhat Agree	25.1%	29.8%	26.5%	-3.3%
Neutral / I don't know	51.5%	46.1%	50.6%	+4.5%
Somewhat Disagree	12.2%	12.5%	12.5%	0%
Strongly Disagree	6.4%	4.2%	3.8%	-0.4%

When asked how youth feel about local government and whether they agree with the statement "The local City of San José government reflects youth priorities," 33.1% say it does (combining "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree"). In comparison, 50.6% are neutral or unsure. Compared to last year, the neutral category has grown by 4.5% this year. Strongly disagree has actually decreased slightly, so this is not growing cynicism, it is growing disconnection. Youth are less informed, not more disillusioned. The growing neutral category indicates we need to do more to help youth understand and see the impact of their engagement. Direct quotes from our youth show a desire for more engagement with city leadership, recognition of existing youth programs, concerns about implementing youth suggestions, appreciation for current youth-focused initiatives, and a lack of awareness about how to learn more about local news and information.

"Believe that tech is more prioritized than incentives for home insecurity"

"There is a demonstrated interest in supporting youth, however, actual youth oriented policies and events can be sparse and limited by issues such as funding."

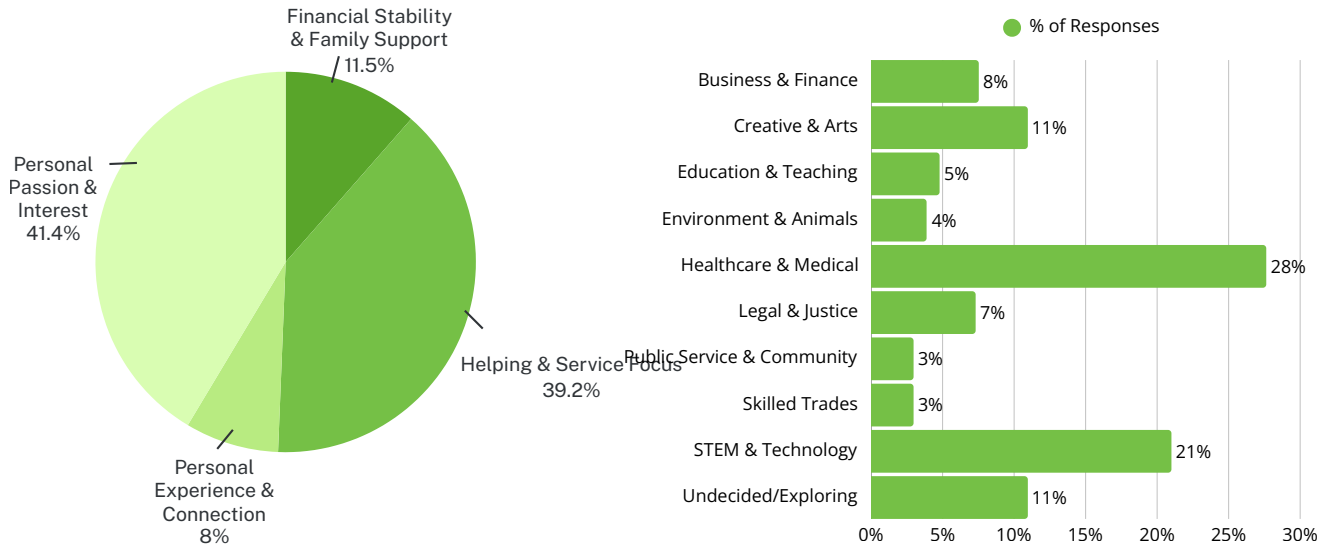
"Somewhat agree with this statement because I do see the City of San José making efforts to include young people through programs, schools, and community resources. There are opportunities for youth involvement and support, which shows that our voices do matter to some extent. However, I don't fully agree because many youth priorities, like mental health support, safe spaces to hang out, and better access to career and college preparation, still don't feel fully addressed. It sometimes feels like youth are listened to, but not always fully represented in decisions that directly affect us."

"The YACs - youth voices are really heard."

"I'm not fully up to date with city politics. I keep up with state, country, and world politics but I'm not sure where I would begin to get my city politics/news information."

YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

IF YOU HAVE A DREAM JOB, WHAT IS IT, AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU?



Regarding future careers, 28% aspire to healthcare and medical fields, and 21% want to pursue STEM and technology. When asked why these careers matter, 80% cited passion (41.4%) or a desire to help others (39.2%), rather than financial gain. Young people are gravitating toward careers that require human connection, empathy, and complex judgment, such as healthcare, education, social work, the creative arts, and skilled trades. This has implications for career development initiatives, which should support diverse pathways, not just technology careers. Youth shared inspiring reasons for their career choices, citing specific goals rooted in lived experience, and were clear about their desired impact.

"My dream job is to enter the field of government and public policy. It is important for me because I currently see a lack of diversity in the field and also major power imbalances that allow much of the community to be subjugated, which is something that I want to change."

"My dream job is to become a firefighter; it is important for me because I want to give back to my community and meet new people."

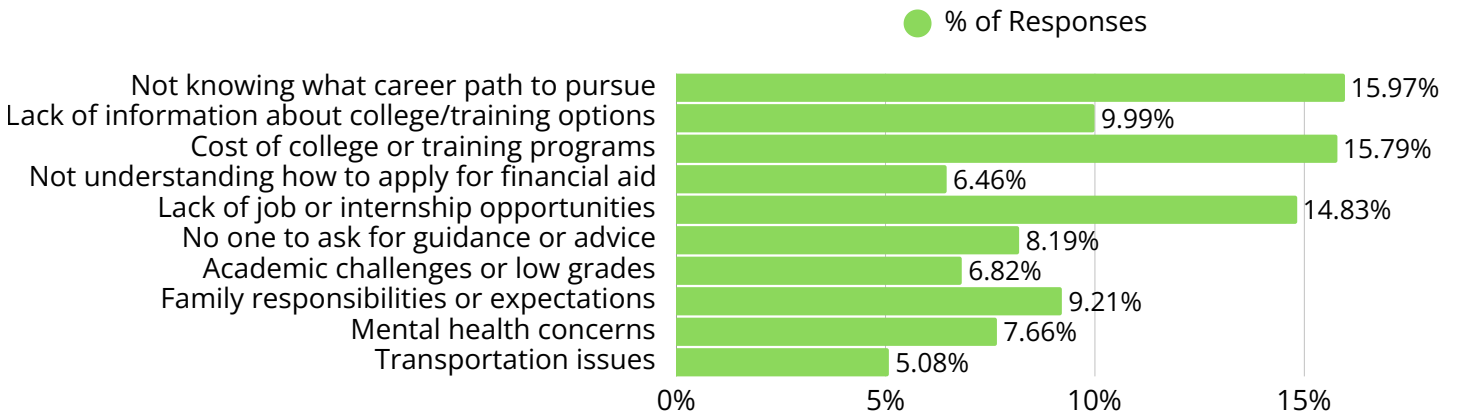
"I want to be a criminal lawyer, specifically regarding the youth. Based on my personal experiences, I've seen how much of a scar childhood trauma can leave on a person, and how it impacts their day-to-day life. I want to be someone who can support them legally and emotionally. I want to make sure no other kid has to worry about going home or to school, or whether they'll even get to go to school."

"Mechanical engineer my uncle like cars he got me into cars and I like how machines work"

"My dream job is nursing because helping people has always been important to me. I like being there for others when they are sick, scared, or in pain, and knowing I could make even a small difference in how they feel means a lot to me."

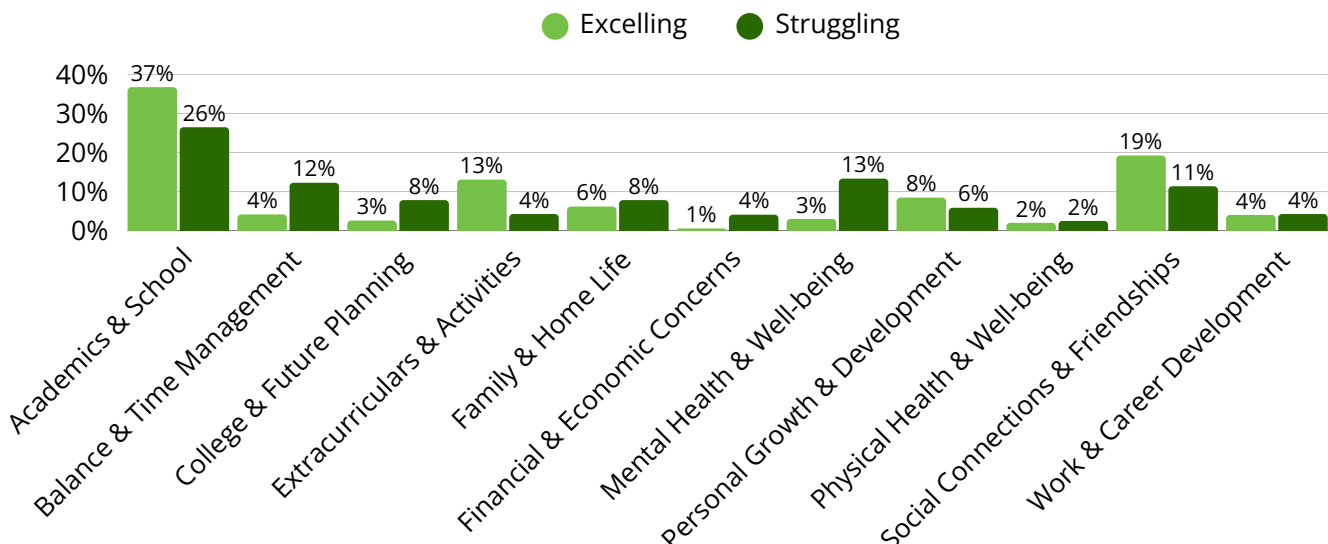
YOUTH PRIORITIES SURVEY REPORT

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST BARRIERS OR CHALLENGES THAT IMPACT FEELING PREPARED FOR YOUR FUTURE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?



The top barriers young people face are career uncertainty (16%), college costs (16%), and lack of job or internship opportunities (15%). In a context of tech layoffs, AI disruption, and rising housing costs, career uncertainty reads less as indecision and more as a rational response to an unstable landscape. In college and future planning specifically, struggling outpaces excelling three to one (12% vs. 4%), reinforcing everything else we see in this data. More than 1 in 4 are struggling academically, and 13% are actively dealing with mental health challenges. Yet Mental Health Resource Equity dropped as an overall priority (from 3.86 to 3.62), suggesting it has become something young people manage in a crisis rather than advocate for. Notably, even those who are excelling report disproportionate struggles with mental health, balance & time management, pointing to burnout underneath the surface. These challenges compound one another, and effective responses need to treat them accordingly. ■

WHAT ARE YOU EXCELLING OR STRUGGLING WITH THIS YEAR?





WORK PLAN **OBJECTIVE**

COLLEGE, CAREER & LITERACY

The San José Youth Commission recognized the need to evaluate and advise on college, career, and literacy opportunities and resources in San José, while also supporting the City's educational and budget priorities. The Commission works to strengthen community partnerships, including collaborations with local school districts, and conducts youth participatory action research and citywide surveys to gather input from young people across San José.

This year, the Commission appointed District 2 Vice Chair Pradeepkumar, District 1 Commissioner Deshmukh, Chair Kucharewski, District 5 Commissioner Guerrero Fernandez, and District 7 Commissioner Huynh. Together, commissioners worked collaboratively to carry out projects and initiatives that expanded beyond the original scope of the workplan.

Budget Summit & Youth Priorities

The San José Youth Commission represents approximately 248,000 youth under 19 in San José and advocates for policies that promote equitable access to resources, particularly for historically underserved communities.

COLLEGE, CAREER & LITERACY

This past year, the Commission conducted its annual Youth and Young Adult Priorities Survey, gathering input from 653 youth across the city. In addition, 57 youth participated in the Youth Budget Priorities Summit held in February 2026. Together, these efforts helped identify the most pressing concerns facing young people in San José.

Education Initiatives by District

District 7 – Creative Futures Fair & College and Career Pathways

District 7 focuses on expanding access to creative and career exploration opportunities for youth. The Youth Advisory Council is organizing the third annual Creative Futures Fair in partnership with Culture Fest (Districts 1, 2, and 9 YACs), scheduled for May 16, 2026, at the Vietnamese American Cultural Center. The district is also supporting AIM (Advise, Inspire, Motivate), a College and Career Pathways event scheduled for May 30, 2026, at the MLK Jr. Library, highlighting vocational and trade school pathways.

District 6 – Arts Access and Youth Expression

District 6 focuses on increasing access to arts education and creative expression. Current initiatives in development include an art-supplies drive for students and families, as well as art-therapy workshops to support youth well-being.

District 5 – Youth Outreach and Engagement

District 5 focuses on youth civic engagement. Throughout the year, commissioners conducted outreach at East Side Union School District high schools to increase awareness of the Youth Advisory Council and encourage youth participation. These efforts are ongoing.

District 2 – School Beautification Project

District 2 focuses on improving school environments through community beautification. The district completed a daffodil planting at Stipe Elementary School in partnership with the Neighborhood Leadership Council, resulting in the planting of over 500 flowers with the support of more than 50 volunteers. ■



WORK PLAN **OBJECTIVE**

COMMUNITY & PLACEMAKING

With rising concerns surrounding immigration and belonging among the young people of San José, the Youth Commission recognizes the importance of celebrating San José’s diversity and culture through exploring community building and placemaking. In the pilot year of the Community ad hoc, we convened with three objectives:

1. Fostering the youth voice through culture and art, including but not limited to:
 - a. Beautify initiatives
 - b. Community art
 - c. Events and fairs
2. Conduct outreach and promotion of existing local resources and events with the City of San José and other community-based organizations
3. Advocate for immigrant youth and families by promoting support resources, including but not limited to:
 - a. Workshops
 - b. Language accessibility
 - c. Safety

COMMUNITY & PLACEMAKING

Analyzing Community Needs

When first convening in September of 2025, the Community ad hoc identified the importance of expressing and enhancing the youth voice through art and culture. Additionally, with the increased presence of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in San José and a shift in the federal government's approach to immigration, the Youth Commission recognizes that ensuring the safety of our vast immigrant community is a high priority of the government of San José. This year, the Immigration ad hoc, within the Youth Commission's first workplan objective, worked on several initiatives with many projects in progress.

Spearheaded by Commissioner Micah Chung (District 8), the Youth Commission sent a letter to City Council, urging termination of the City's contract with Flock Safety. This letter was a response to recent events where ICE was found accessing Flock's databases to track down immigration targets. Additionally, the letter highlighted that many California police departments, including the San José Police Department, have access to Flock camera data, which is a cause for concern, as some of these departments are known to collaborate with ICE.

On April 18th, 2026, the Youth Commission hosted a college-readiness workshop in collaboration with the Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN). This workshop aims to teach participants about the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) application process, college pathways for immigrants, and financial aid planning. Through this workshop, participants will learn about updates to the DACA process and key resources to consider when seeking financial aid for college.

Currently, Commissioner Akshadha Babu (District 4) and Commissioner Ruby Yu (District 9) are working on a proposal to promote and support library branch Citizenship Corners, which provide vital immigration resources to the local community. Resources such as free consultations with lawyers and materials to study for the citizenship test are vital to the immigration process, and it is important that all people know they have access to these free resources.

COMMUNITY & PLACEMAKING

Community Partnerships and Events

The ad hoc connected with city departments and council offices, including PRNS (Parks/Rec and Neighborhood Services) and the District 2 Council office. Through these partnerships, the ad hoc committee worked to strengthen communication between youth and local government, ensuring that youth perspectives are represented in city-led initiatives. By collaborating with PRNS, the ad hoc committee explored opportunities to support community-based programming, including public space activation and youth engagement efforts by planning community art initiatives.

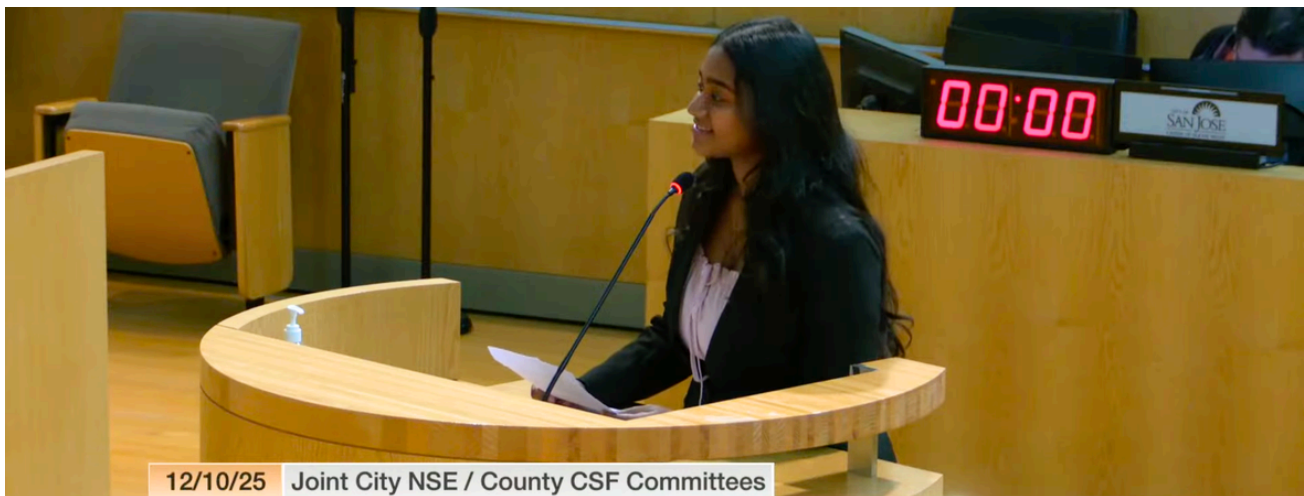


Understanding and Interacting with City-level Decisions

On various occasions, members of the Community and Placemaking ad hoc presented public comments at events, including the City-County Joint Meeting Featuring the Children and Youth Services Master Plan and the Latino Health Assessment.

Through participation in these meetings, Youth Commissioners engaged directly with city and county leadership, ensuring that youth perspectives are included in broader policy discussions. Providing public comment allowed commissioners to advocate for the needs and priorities of young people.

COMMUNITY & PLACEMAKING



Engagement with initiatives such as the Children and Youth Services Masterplan and the Latino Health Assessment also helped commissioners better understand how city-level decisions are made and how policies impact different communities. This experience strengthened the Youth Commission’s role as a bridge between youth and local government.

Events and Next Steps

The commissioners from Districts 1, 2, and 9 will be hosting Culture Fest: San José, featuring multiple school affinity groups and cultural performance teams. This event aims to celebrate the diversity of San José by creating a space where young people can share their cultural identities through performance, art, and community engagement. By bringing together affinity groups and performance teams, Culture Fest highlights the richness of the city’s multicultural communities while fostering a sense of belonging among youth.

In addition to performances, the event serves as an opportunity for outreach, allowing community members to connect with local organizations, learn about available resources, and engage with the Youth Commission’s work.

The ad hoc will continue exploring avenues to foster youth voice through creative expression, including expanding access to art-based initiatives, supporting youth-led projects, and identifying new opportunities for community engagement. These efforts will further strengthen the connection between youth, culture, and community spaces in San José. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 1

BY ANUSHKA DESHMUKH

The District 1 Youth Advisory Council (YAC) began the year by dividing the 25 members into four key groups. Each group focused on a different aspect of the Youth Commission workplan, including the environment, education, culture, and immigration. The students spent October and November brainstorming event ideas and working on their project proposals.

In the Environmental group, they focused on collaborating with various local organizations and city departments to raise awareness of city programs and beautification efforts. In November, the District 1 commissioner and vice president participated in the District 1 Adopt-a-Storm-Drain demonstration, where they learned about the program and began brainstorming ways to involve YAC members in the initiative. In January, they planned the “Daffodil Day” event in collaboration with the District 1 Leadership Group, during which they planted daffodil bulbs at Murdock Park in District 1. After meeting with the Adopt-a-Storm-Drain team in February, the students plan to help bring awareness of the program to youth in San José.



DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 1

In the Education team, the District 1 YAC is collaborating with the District 4 YAC to organize the AIM event, which will include several student- and expert-led workshops focused on resume advice and career exploration, as well as expert panels featuring professionals from various careers.

The Culture team is collaborating with District YACs 2 and 9 to plan CultureFest in May. The event will feature booths hosted by various cultural organizations and performances from cultures in San José.

The Immigration team will be partnering with SIREN Immigration Rights and the District 8 YAC to host an information session on immigrant rights for youth on April 18th.



I've had a wonderful year working with my YAC and my fellow Youth Commissioners. As this was my first year as a Youth Commissioner, I'm prepared to apply the knowledge and experience I gained to larger projects during my second year on the commission. These months have helped me connect more with my community and hopefully make an impact on the youth in San José. I'm so excited for what comes next. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 2

BY NEYHA PRADEEPKUMAR

The District 2 Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is composed of fifteen dedicated individuals committed to creating meaningful change within the South San José community. This year's work plan focused on four key objectives: enhancing and uplifting the youth voice through creative expression and art; strengthening relationships with the District 2 Council Office; attending community events; engaging with neighborhood associations; and exploring community-based organizations with objectives related to sex education and youth violence prevention.

A significant initiative the District 2 YAC undertook this year was to explore sex education resources available to youth and to develop a central hub for accessing this information. As part of this research, the YAC wrote a letter to the City Council urging that sex education resources be included on the City of San José website. This project, led by the executive team (Ruby Yu, Emma Zhou, Tanisha Bhugra, Chithruby Jambunathan, and Andrea Chen), is set to be finalized by May 2026. While this project is a continuation from the previous year, the District 2 YAC is proud to report its continued collaboration with the District 2 Council Office.

Another significant achievement of the District 2 YAC is the planning and execution of a daffodil planting at Stipe Elementary School. This initiative was in partnership with leaders among the District 2 Neighborhood Leadership Council and concluded with the planting of over 500 flowers at the Elementary School. We were excited to have over 50 volunteers from the Stipe Elementary Boys and Girls Club help carry this initiative forward.

The District 2 YAC is currently working on a Culture Fest in collaboration with YACs from Council Districts 1 and 9. The intended Culture Fest aligns with our objective of uplifting youth voices through creative expression by showcasing student-led affinity and performance groups from diverse cultural backgrounds.

DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 2

Vice-Chair Neyha Pradeepkumar was honored to receive the District 2 Community Hero Award, presented by the Mayor and City Council at the March 2026 State of the City. She dedicated the award to her hardworking YAC members who have worked to make the youth voice of District 2 present in local government and heard by officials



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

We were proud to run a month-long campaign for National Health Literacy Month in October 2025, which resulted in the account garnering hundreds of visits from different district YACs and city youth commissions.

The YAC also had the privilege of regularly connecting with Councilmember Pamela Campos, including at the Youth Commission Annual Budget Priorities Summit and during several YAC meetings. These interactions allowed the YAC to align its goals with those of the District 2 Office, laying the foundation for future partnerships and initiatives in the coming fiscal years. The 2025-2026 term was an immensely valuable and productive year for the District 2 YAC. As it is Commissioner Neyha Pradeepkumar's last year on the Youth Commission, she is very proud of the growth the YAC has had over the past three years, starting from a small team of 5 youth to 15 individuals. She is excited and looking forward to seeing the future of the District 2 YAC. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 3

BY EDWIN SANCHEZ

During my second year as the District 3 Youth Commissioner, I've been dedicated to building a better community environment and amplifying youth voices across my district. Since stepping into this role in August of 2024, I quickly established monthly neighborhood cleanups that consistently attracted over 70 participants. This year was the last one in the Guadalupe Washington neighborhood association. With the help of my community members, we did our best to promote environmental stewardship. We are planning to start a brand-new monthly clean-up day in the local downtown park, Saint James Park. These regular events not only improved our district's appearance but also fostered a stronger sense of community, which we look forward to building on with the local members of downtown San José.



I participated in critical policy discussions throughout the year, including the San José Budget Summit, where I advocated for education and careers. I have been part of discussions about ICE and how we can help the local community of San José feel less threatened, and help them know the best steps to take to care for their family and friends. We are in talks to place red cards at more local businesses and make them aware of what they should do if immigration law enforcement were to come into their establishment. This being my second year, I successfully brought my community together and showed what we can do with not just our voices but our actions to move forward. I attended meetings of our local neighborhood associations to create valuable opportunities for residents and advise them on the Youth Commission's work in positive settings. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 4

BY AKSHADHA BABU CHAKRAVARTHI

This year, District 4's Youth Advisory Council (D4YAC) comprised a dedicated group of 24 youth residing in District 4 of San José, all working to create a better future for their peers by hosting events, engaging with the community, advocating, and writing policy. The D4YAC is divided into four sub-committees: Social & Racial Equity, Climate Change & Environment, Homelessness & Poverty, and Transportation & Safety. The committees worked to bring awareness and meaningful change within their respective focus areas.



D4YAC members remained actively engaged both within the district and across the broader region. They met bi-weekly on Saturdays at various libraries across District 4. The meetings were led by D4 Chair/Commissioner Akshadha Babu and supported by Vice Chair Ethan Effendi, Outreach Coordinator Evelyn Wang, and Secretary Amy Jeong. Members attended a Youth Advisory Council social alongside other Northern California youth commissions, where they exchanged ideas and gained insight into youth priorities in neighboring communities, which included Burlingame and Palo Alto. The council also met with Councilmember David Cohen of District 4 to debrief on ongoing initiatives and better understand his priorities for youth, allowing members to align their work with city goals and increase their impact.

In addition, the Youth Commissioner collaborated with the Immigration subcommittee on policy efforts to make immigration-related information more accessible to residents. As a council, D4YAC also participated in the annual Budget Summit in February, advocating for youth-centered funding priorities. Their commitment to service was further demonstrated through community efforts such as park cleanups at Penitencia Creek Park, where members removed over 6 gallons of weeds and collected 3 bags of trash by hand, helping maintain a cleaner, more sustainable environment.

DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 4

D4YAC SOCIAL & RACIAL EQUITY TEAM

Led by Olivia Rodrigues and Aditi Jain, and supported by Amy Jeong, Siyuan Huang, and Jayda Davis.

This year, the Social & Racial Equity Team focused on fostering awareness and understanding of identity and inclusion within the District 4 community. The team hosted an “Identifying Identities” event on March 28th, featuring a guest speaker from the Santa Clara County Office of Education, Tara Sreekrishnan, and an Ethnic Studies professor at Foothill College, Ulysses Acevedo. Through interactive activities and open dialogue, the event encouraged participants to reflect on their identities and engage in meaningful conversations surrounding equity and representation.

In addition to their event, the team worked on a policy initiative to increase access to immigration resources by advocating for the placement of informational flyers in community centers and public libraries. This effort seeks to ensure that residents, particularly those from immigrant communities, have access to critical information and support services.

D4YAC CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENT TEAM

Led by Ceci Goyette and Mahi Mekala, and supported by Evelyn Wang, Charlotte Fan, Deeksha Bharadwaj, Navika Deepak, and Paakhi Manglik.

The Climate Change & Environment Team focused on promoting sustainability and environmental awareness through both educational and community-based initiatives. In January, the team hosted an online Environmental Careers Webinar, providing students with exposure to career pathways in the environmental field.

This was followed by an Eco-Swap event in April at the Berryessa Branch Library, encouraging sustainable consumption by allowing community members to exchange gently used clothing. Additionally, the team worked on drafting a policy proposal to implement urban heat-relief mechanisms throughout San José, aiming to address the growing impacts of climate change and protect vulnerable populations.

DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 4



D4YAC HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY TEAM

Led by Baohan Trinh and Joyce Gao, and supported by Amy Nguyen, Ash Singh, Aarthi Deepak, and Nhu Le.

This year, the Homelessness & Poverty Team focused on increasing accessibility to essential resources for underserved communities. In collaboration with the Climate Change & Environment Team, they supported the planning and execution of the Eco-Swap event in April, promoting both sustainability and community support.

In addition, the team worked on a proposal to promote access to homelessness resources through informational materials in public libraries. This initiative aims to connect individuals and families in need with critical services and support systems available throughout San José.

D4YAC TRANSPORTATION & SAFETY TEAM

Led by Nithilraj Jayavel

As a solo-member team, the Transportation & Safety Team worked to improve accessibility and awareness of transportation options for youth across San José. The team is organizing a VTA informational event scheduled for May to educate students on available transit services and how to use them effectively.

In addition, the team has been creating short-form digital content to promote public transportation and increase awareness of transit resources for students in San José and beyond. Through these efforts, the team aims to make transportation more equitable and accessible for all.

District 4 sincerely hopes that future commissioners and members continue to implement policies, host events, and engage with constituents in ways that uplift every voice and inspire the next generation to lead for change. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 5

BY DALI GUERRERO FERNANDEZ

As a newly appointed District 5 Youth Commissioner, I have dedicated my first year to expanding youth engagement and strengthening opportunities for young people across East San José. Since stepping into this role, my primary goals have been to grow my connection with the East San José Youth and to increase civic engagement opportunities for youth in my community.

Throughout the year, I focused on outreach and recruitment efforts. I visited local high schools across East San José, speaking with students about the importance of youth voice in local government and encouraging them to get involved. These efforts helped raise awareness of the Youth Advisory Council and increase membership and participation.



DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 5

In addition to school outreach, I also engaged with the community through Red Card outreach across East San José neighborhoods. This work was focused on sharing important immigration resources and information with residents. In a community like East San José, where many families are directly impacted by immigration issues, providing these resources is extremely important. This outreach allowed me to connect with community members on meaningful issues while also building awareness around civic engagement.

Over the past several months, I have also worked closely with the District 5 Council Office, learning how local government operates behind the scenes. This partnership has been extremely crucial in helping me better understand how to advocate effectively for youth and bring their concerns into meaningful conversations and decision-making spaces.

As this is my first year in this role, I have learned a lot about leadership, communication, and public service. Each experience has helped me grow more confident in my ability to represent and uplift the voices of youth in District 5.

Youth opportunities in East San José are extremely important. Many young people in our district face barriers to access and representation, which makes it even more important to create spaces where they can feel represented and develop leadership skills.

This first year has shown me how important outreach and youth engagement are for my East San José community. As I look ahead, I am committed to continuing to grow the Youth Advisory Council, expand civic opportunities, and advocate for the needs of youth in District 5. I am also excited to continue growing and working alongside the other Youth Commissioners! ■



DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 6

BY FIONA CANFIELD

This year was an amazing start to my first term as the District 6 Youth Commissioner. I built District 6's Youth Advisory Council from scratch with new members, and now we are a collaborative group of 30 members strong. We meet regularly and collaborate on research and ideas. I am excited to keep growing our impact and find even more ways for District 6 youth to have a real voice in local government.

The 2026 Budget Summit was a great opportunity to connect with civically engaged youth and strengthen the collaboration that makes our commission what it is. Also, my participation in the Community Ad Hoc Committee has kept me invested in uplifting the culture of San José.



As a YAC, we developed some initiatives and projects. First, we reported on the current state of 20 VTA bus stops in our area, finding gaps in safety and accessibility, and we are currently continuing to explore what support we can bring. Next was an art supplies community drive, which is currently in development, where we are working on getting creative supplies into the hands of students and families. The third initiative is art therapy workshops at local schools, which teach how creative expression is important in youth well-being.

We have lots of momentum building across all these projects, so I am more motivated than ever for the next year. I can't wait to see the impact we will make! ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

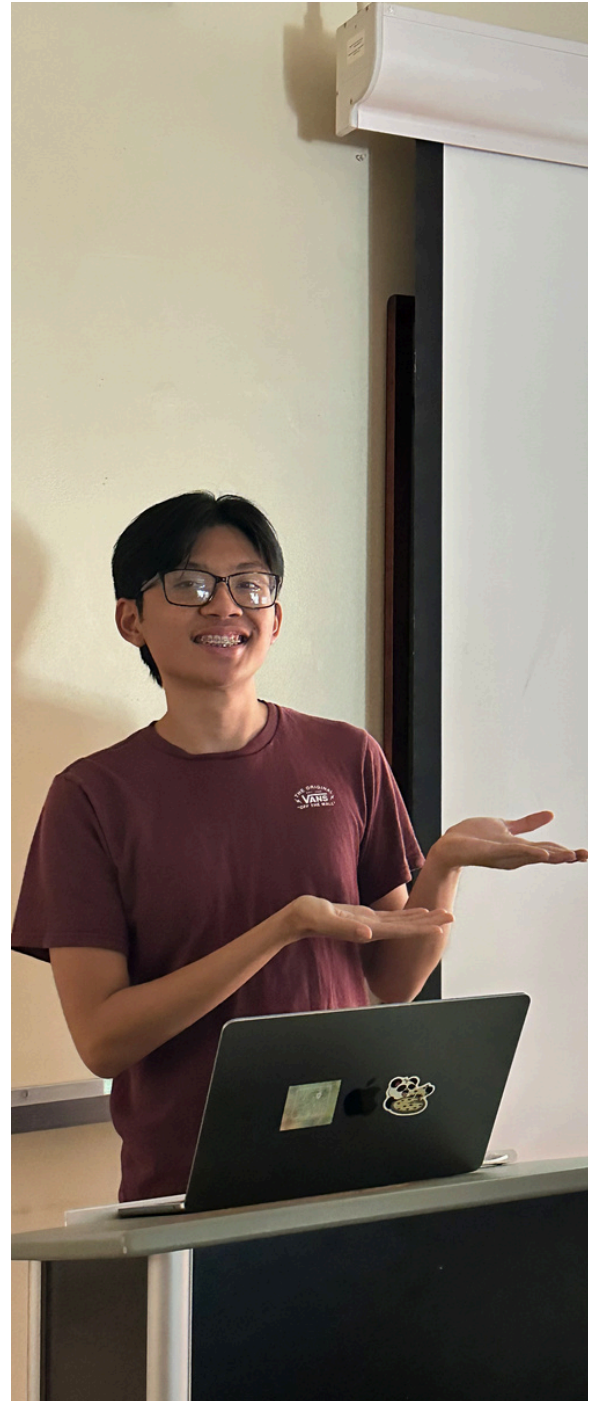
DISTRICT 7

BY DAVID HUYNH

The District 7 Youth Advisory Council (D7 YAC) is led by Commissioner David Huynh and Vice Chairs Olive Luong and Lena Nguyen, with the support of the Office of Council Member Bien Doan. This school year, we focused on building a capable and diverse group of students from across San José that will lead the charge on several community-centered projects.

Throughout the year, the Vice Chairs and I met with each new member to discuss their interests in joining the YAC. Many expressed enthusiasm for highlighting youth artistry through the Creative Futures Fair, while others sought opportunities to advocate for and serve their communities. It was exciting to meet students from different geographic locations, schools, cultures, and experiences. Ever since, we have maintained rolling applications so that every youth in San José can have the opportunity to participate in the Youth Commission.

The YAC has shown strong participation year-round. We showed up and showed out for Viva CalleSJ to conduct Youth Commission outreach, the annual Budget Summit to vocalize our youth priorities, and other Youth Commission-related events to support our peer YACs.



DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 7

Since late September, the YAC has held over fifteen meetings in two formats: hybrid (in-person with a virtual component) and fully virtual. Our membership includes over 30 members, 11 of whom are on the Core Cabinet leadership team. In alignment with the Youth Commission's fiscal year work plan, we identified two priorities to pursue throughout the year: college and career pathways, and civic engagement and advocacy. These focuses have culminated in the following events.

Civic Engagement and Advocacy

In collaboration with the District 1 Youth Advisory Council and District 8 Youth Council Committee, we are developing a workshop with SIREN Immigration Rights to engage students in educational experiences and resources relating to immigrants, ESL, and Know Your Rights. This event was held on Saturday, April 18th, from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm at the West Valley Branch Library.

Creative Futures Fair

We are organizing a third rendition of the Creative Futures Fair as a shared space with Culture Fest (hosted by the Youth Advisory Councils of Districts 1, 2, & 9) to share the cultural and entrepreneurial beauty of San José. This event will be held on Saturday, May 16th, from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm at the Vietnamese American Cultural Center, with the support of the Yerba Buena High School Key Club.

College and Career Pathways

We hope to bring exposure to non-traditional pathways after high school graduation, with a focus on vocational/trade schools, at AIM (Advise, Inspire, Motivate). This event will be held on Saturday, May 30th, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.

As my term comes to an end, I am excited to pass my torch on to the succeeding Commissioner and Youth Advisory Council. It is my hope that the fire we have nurtured throughout these past years will continue to illuminate the spirit of San José—whether through community service, event planning, or policy drafting. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 8

BY MICAH CHUNG

My experience with the Youth Commission began on the 18th of December, when I was officially sworn in as an interim Commissioner to fill the last few months of my predecessor's term.

During that time, I pursued multiple initiatives as one of the most legislatively productive members of the Commission. My two top priorities were advocating for city affordability and combatting prejudice against our Black, Hispanic, and Asian communities. I proposed and wrote an official Youth Commission letter to express our opposition to community surveillance and breaches of public trust perpetrated by Flock Safety, in defense of our immigrant community. Similarly, I worked with other city districts to help stage workshops for immigrants to spread knowledge of Constitutional rights. In support of the city's budget planning process, I strongly promoted the Commission's Youth Priorities Survey, which led to District 8 receiving the most responses among the city's districts. In the last few months, I have been working on a proposal to form a centralized, citywide Youth Labor Corps to help coordinate youth volunteers under the Commission.



As part of the city's budget process, I've put forth recommendations to fund the planting of public fruit trees and wildflowers, alongside other proposals to expand the number of Community Service Officers (CSOs), improve affordability, and combat food insecurity. I requested that affordability be made a priority of the Youth Commission to combat the higher cost of living in San José, in response to viewing widespread food insecurity—including amongst my close friends—in my District.

DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 8

I personally helped feed families in support of the Welch Park Neighborhood Association through multiple-month food drives, keeping thousands fed. I similarly supported recycling efforts and appreciation of public parks in my District, and supported other neighborhood associations, such as those at Brigadoon and in the Evergreen neighborhood.



District 8's Youth Council Committee (YCC), under the leadership of Aastha Bhagat, Laya Krishnan, Ariana Corbu, Yash Omprakash, and me, expanded in its scope and diversity this year. Participation expanded to include not only the immediate Evergreen area but also expansion into Silver Creek and its surrounding areas. Planned expansion for next year will include efforts to specifically target the areas around Overfelt for recruitment and an emphasis on establishing a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds. YCC aggressively pursued the expansion of services for District 8's homeless/unhoused youth in schools, including washer/dryer access and food banking initiatives. YCC has also supported community events, such as the 4th of July celebration at Lake Cunningham, and participated in park cleanups, canvassing, and more. As part of a community outreach program, the YCC helped propose legislation to the East Side Union High School District and invested countless volunteer hours in the local community. This will mark the second year of District 8's YCC's operation, and as a founding member who has had the privilege of watching it grow, I have great hope for the future of civic participation within District 8.

Being a commissioner at this time, in this moment, was of great significance to me as a transgender American; I hope that, in my time, I have done my part to make the diverse tapestry of our city's experiences shine a little brighter. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my Councilmember, Domingo Candelas, as well as my fondest appreciation for the people, staff, and fellow Commissioners of this fine City. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 9

BY RUBY YU

This year, the District 9 Youth Advisory Council (D9 YAC) consisted of 11 dedicated members, representing a diverse range of public and private schools in the area. Under the leadership of D9 Commissioner/Chair Ruby Yu and Vice-Chair Emily Guo, the D9 YAC's work plan focused on increasing widespread community access to immigration resources. In addition, the YAC sought to uplift and celebrate the rich cultural and ethnic diversity that defines San José.

In collaboration with District 4, the D9 YAC is actively researching and working on a policy proposal that would require all San José Public Library branches to have citizenship corners. These citizenship corners will provide easily accessible immigration resources to the local community. Many of the D9 YAC's meetings have been focused on conducting in-depth research into current issues with access to immigration resources and changes to the immigration system made by the current administration. This research will be included in our policy proposal, which will be completed this fiscal year but is likely to be approved next fiscal year.

In collaboration with Districts 1 and 2, the D9 YAC is also planning a Culture Fest to celebrate the diversity of San José and foster a greater sense of inclusion, awareness, and pride within the community. This event will host many high school clubs and cultural groups, giving them a platform to share their unique cultures with others. Through the Culture Fest, members of different communities can interact with each other, creating opportunities for cross-cultural exchange.

As my time on the Youth Commission comes to an end, I can say that I'm very proud of everything the D9 YAC and I have accomplished. Being on the Youth Commission was invaluable, and I hope the next District 9 Commissioner will have the same enriching experience! ■



DISTRICT **REPORTS**

DISTRICT 10

BY KYLE PARK

During my 2025-26 tenure as a D10 Youth Commissioner, I prioritized political literacy among youth in San José. Every second Monday of the month, my YAC and I volunteered to run community meetings at the Almaden Valley Community Association. We set up the tables, chairs, and tech for these meetings, allowing neighborhood residents to voice their concerns to local authorities and connect with resources. Guest speakers included Congressman Jimmy Panetta, Councilmember George Casey, Mayor Matt Mahan, as well as representatives from PG&E and the San José Police Department.

On the theme of encouraging political literacy among youth, my YAC and I organized Youth Connect, an event that hosted Councilmember George Casey at Pioneer High School. Youth are disconnected from city politics, even though it affects their lives more than the state or federal government does. By partnering with Pioneer's very own Equity Club, the event was a success, with a turnout of more than 90 high schoolers who listened to Councilmember Casey and asked him questions about local government over pizza and drinks. We hope to continue this event in the coming years as the Youth Commission and its council branches commit to youth civic engagement.



DISTRICT REPORTS: DISTRICT 10

In line with the council's financial literacy commitments, my YAC hosted a financial literacy workshop in partnership with Wells Fargo and the District 10 Office. The event brought together youth from District 10 and taught basic financial responsibility skills that could be applied in everyday life. The D10 YAC plans to host another financial literacy workshop in partnership with "Teens Who Invest" before the fiscal year ends.



Pivoting to the topic of community involvement and environmental advocacy, the D10 YAC has worked tirelessly within the community to ensure our duty as citizens and civic representatives was fulfilled. The D10 YAC sent a delegate to a District 10 Leadership Coalition meeting in March to present the initiatives underway within the YAC. Additionally, the D10 YAC continued to support the adoption of Almaden Lake Park and worked to organize cleanups. We are continuing to work on this project to complete at least one cleanup before the end of the Youth Commission timeline. ■

DISTRICT REPORTS

CITYWIDE

BY MARIAN KUCHARIEWSKI



As I wrap up my final year on the Commission and my term as Chair, I want to thank everyone who has been part of this journey with me. From the senior commissioners who mentored me and taught me the basics in my first year, to the junior commissioners who gave me the opportunity to lead, to Ms. Emily, Megan, and Dziem, who kept me on track throughout my term—I am truly grateful.

Although it requires a lot of work, serving on the San José Youth Commission is an incredibly valuable experience for young people. Commissioners learn to operate professionally at the city level while also taking responsibility for representing youth and using their voices to create meaningful change. If any youth in San José are truly taken seriously by the local government, it's the Youth Commissioners. That is why this role must be treated with commitment and taken seriously.

I began my time on the Commission concerned about this responsibility. As Citywide commissioner, I felt I couldn't fully represent every young person in San José. There are many individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds, cultures, and lived experiences that I didn't feel I could speak for. Over time, I learned from senior commissioners that authentic representation requires a willingness to listen and understand diverse perspectives. This comes from engaging directly with the community and learning from their experiences. Without engaging with the community, I wouldn't have been able to approach my work with the perspective of a representative of San José youth.

DISTRICT REPORTS: CITYWIDE

While I focused on building and collaborating with my YAC last year, this year I shifted my attention to my role as Chair. I supported commissioners by providing feedback and helping them advance their policy and event proposals. Above all, I enjoyed facilitating discussions during meetings: organizing our budget survey process, presenting our annual survey results, discussing ad hoc assignments, talking about how to implement our work plan, or leading the Education Ad Hoc meetings. My favorite experience was guiding the discussion to develop our budget priorities letter to the Mayor. Commissioners contributed thoughtful ideas on what the letter should include, from key survey insights to many potential solutions addressing community concerns.

During the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the Citywide YAC met multiple times to work on projects and explore how volunteering can benefit youth in San José. While many initiatives are still in progress, we are planning to continue the commission's tradition with a tree-planting in a local park, supporting District 7's Creative Futures Fair, and tabling at this year's Cinco de Mayo celebration. As lead for the Education Ad Hoc, I had the privilege of working with David, Anushka, Dali, and Neyha to design our survey methods, develop questions, organize results, prepare for the event, brief new commissioners for their speeches, and lead the event, as well as analyze the results while drafting our official budget statement.

Most recently, Vice Chair Pradeepkumar and I have been preparing to transition our roles to next year's executive committee. We discussed what guidance or suggestions to leave behind and whether a clear operations outline would benefit future leaders.

In my free time, I continue to support my Councilmember and the Mayor by attending cleanups and assisting at community events. After stepping down, I hope to remain involved by attending Youth Commission events, participating in PRNS park cleanups, and staying engaged in local governance.

Thank you all for this incredible experience, and best of luck to next year's Commission! ■



VOLUNTEER **STATISTICS**

740

Total number of volunteer service hours from Youth Commission and Youth Advisory Council members from July 2025 to March 2026.

8

The average number of hours spent by 45 Youth Advisory Council members across San José was spent on activities such as attending YAC meetings, supporting district events, and doing policy research.

35

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



YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

Youth Advisory Councils (YAC) are a core group of approximately 223 volunteer youth throughout San José that support the Youth Commission’s mission and vision. These councils provide valuable input and insights into policies and programs that directly impact young people. Through participation, they gain a voice in shaping the future of their communities and ensuring that policies and initiatives are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the younger generation.

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

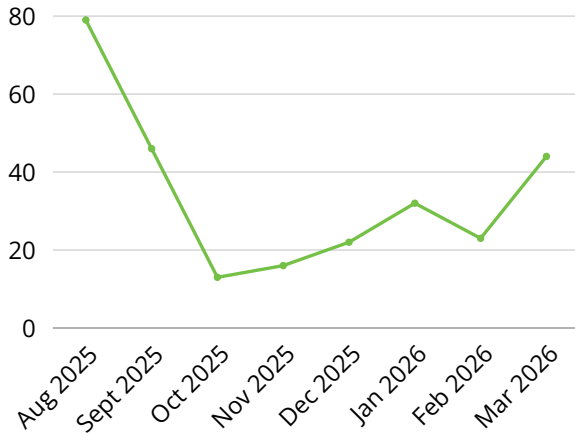
To date, the application form has received 275 submissions, a 17.2% increase from last year, demonstrating its effectiveness in reaching potential youth volunteers.

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

Participation in this survey is optional, and its reach depends upon the Commissioner distributing it at their regular meetings, which is why some District participation is underreported. Overall, the survey captured 290 responses from YAC participants through March 2026.

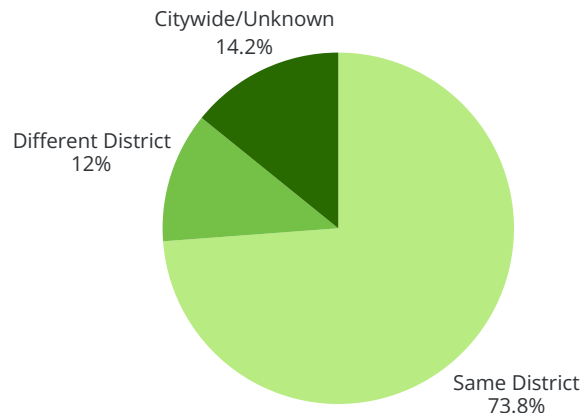
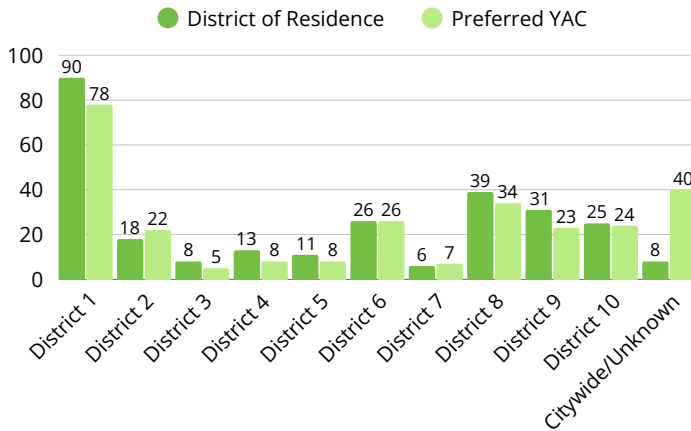
YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

YAC APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY MONTH



We saw the highest application volume in August and September 2025, with 79 submissions (45.5%). This peak likely aligns with back-to-school outreach efforts, when students are more connected to school-based announcements. The second-highest volume occurred in March 2026, with 43 applications (15.6%), possibly reflecting end-of-cycle recruitment pushes. These trends highlight the impact of strategic timing in engaging youth and ensuring awareness of opportunities.

YAC APPLICANT DISTRICT PREFERENCE



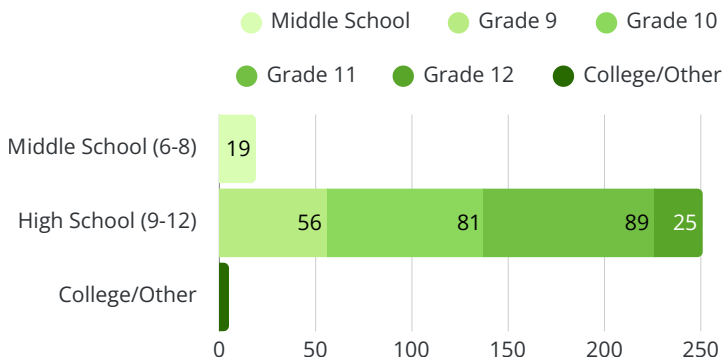
Applicant distribution varies significantly across San José’s districts, with District 1 leading at 90 applicants (32.7%), followed by District 8 with 39 (14.2%). District 9 was right behind with 31 applicants (11.3%), and Districts 2, 6, and 10 had moderate representation (18-26 applicants). Participation was lowest in Districts 3, 4, 5, and 7, with 6 to 13 applicants each. Eight applicants selected 'Other' as their district.

Council preferences largely align with residence patterns. District 1 was the most requested (78 applicants, 28.4%), closely followed by District 8 (34 applicants, 12.4%). The Citywide option drew 19 applicants (6.9%), while 21 applicants (7.6%) selected 'I Don't Know.'

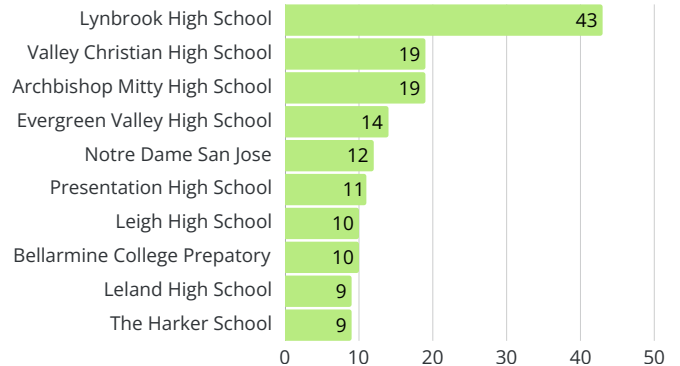
A strong majority (73.8%) applied to serve in their home districts, highlighting deep community ties. However, 12% applied outside their district, likely due to their school location or specific interest in another area’s initiatives. The remaining 14.2% opted for the Citywide option or were unsure, signaling an openness to broader service. These patterns underscore the importance of both local engagement and flexible opportunities for cross-district participation.

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

YAC APPLICANT GRADE LEVEL

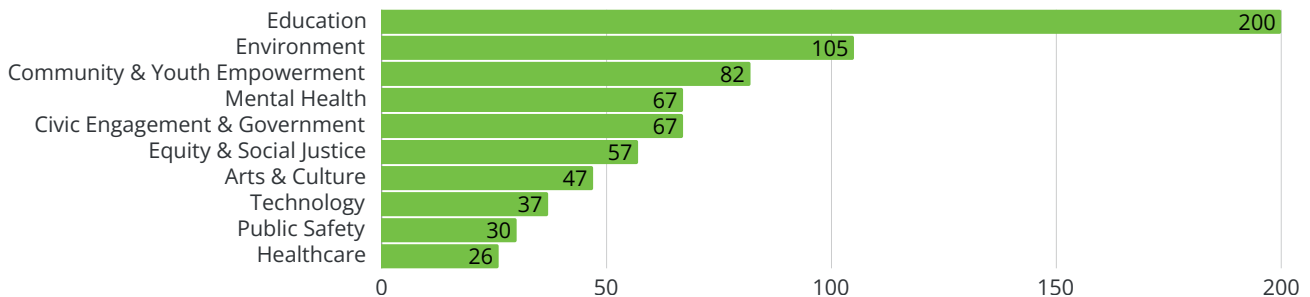


YAC APPLICANT TOP 10 SCHOOLS



High school students dominate the applicant pool, with grades 9-11 accounting for 82.2% of applications. Grade 11 leads with 89 applicants (32.4%), followed closely by grade 10 with 81 (29.5%) and grade 9 with 56 (20.4%). Grade 12 participation drops significantly to 25 applicants (9.1%). Middle school students (6.9%) and college students (1.8%) represent small minorities. Lynbrook High School dominates with 43 applicants (15.6%), followed by Valley Christian and Archbishop Mitty High Schools, each with 19 applicants (6.9%). The top ten schools account for 56.7% of all applications, while over 50 other unique schools make up the remainder, 23 of which had only 1 applicant, highlighting both concentrated interest at certain institutions and opportunities to diversify recruitment efforts.

YAC APPLICANT TOP 10 INTERESTS

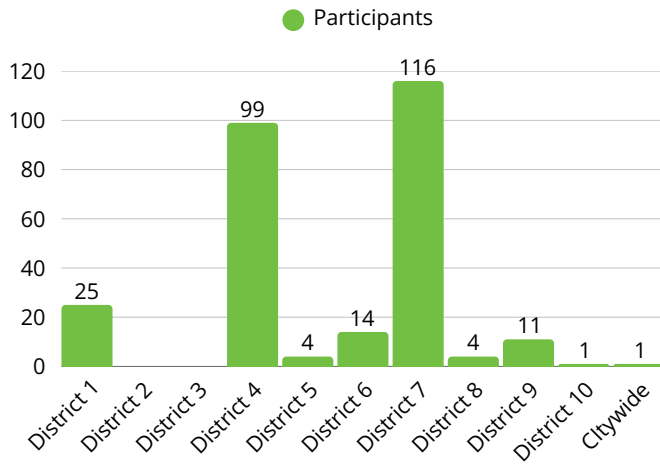


Similar to last year, YAC applicants' interests overwhelmingly center on education (200 mentions, 25.5%) and the environment (105 mentions, 13.4%), followed by community & youth empowerment (82 mentions, 10.5%), and mental health and civic engagement with 67 mentions (8.5%) each. Equity & social justice received 57 mentions (7.3%), and arts & culture (47 mentions, 6%) and technology (35 mentions, 4.5%) were included in the top interests this year.

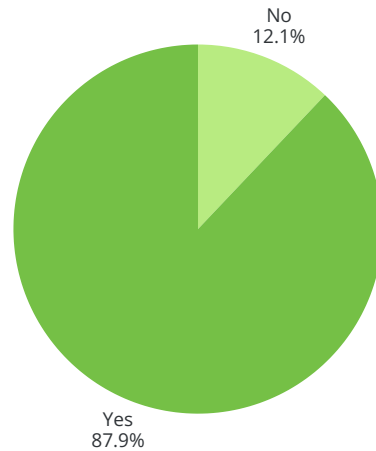
These interests connect closely with the Youth Commission's work plan objectives and the top issue areas among youth, as identified in the Youth Priorities Survey. This natural alignment suggests incoming Advisory Council members will effectively support established initiatives while contributing fresh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

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

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

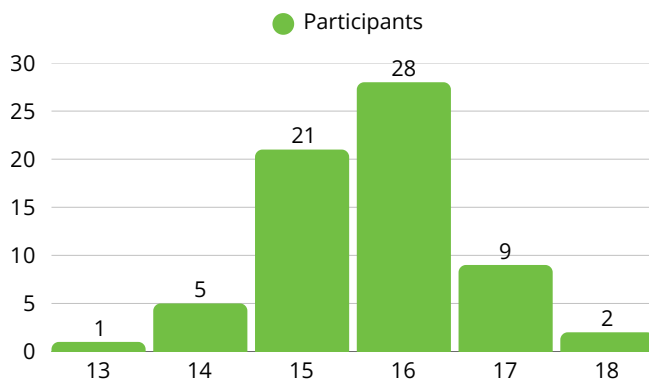


HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN THE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL THIS YEAR?

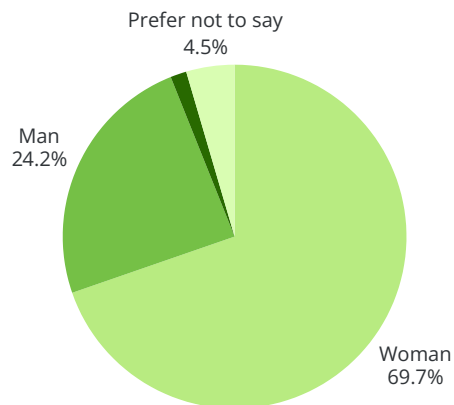


While this distribution does not reflect all YAC participation, District 7 leads with 116 members (42.2% of total engagement), followed by Districts 4 and 1, with 99 and 25 members, respectively. Districts 6 and 9 show moderate participation (14 and 11 members), while Districts 5, 8, 10, and Citywide have smaller representations. Notably, YAC maintains a strong 87.9% active participation rate (233 youth), highlighting that once young people join, they remain engaged and committed.

YAC PARTICIPANT AGE



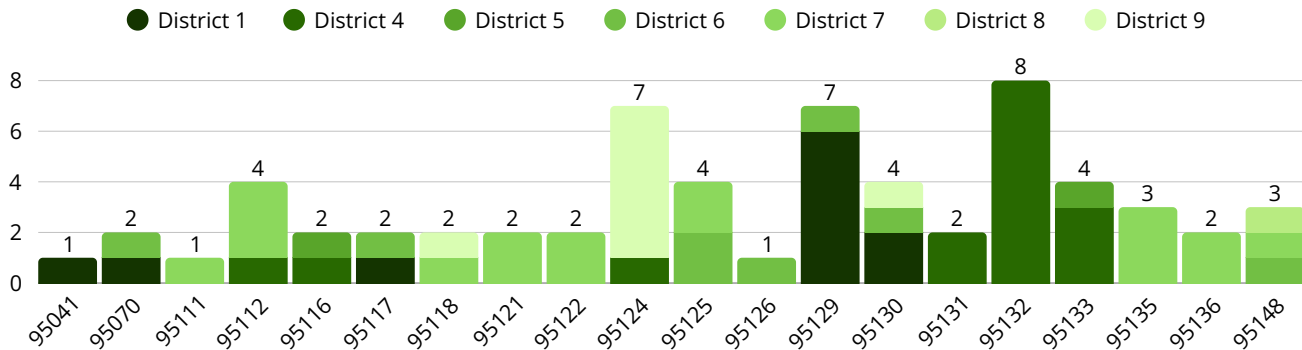
YAC PARTICIPANT GENDER



YACs primarily engage high school students aged 15-16, who make up the majority of participants (74.2%), while younger teens (ages 13-14) have limited representation (9.1%), and participation among older teens (ages 17-18) is growing (16.7%). Gender distribution reveals a significant imbalance, with women outnumbering men nearly three-to-one (46 women to 16 men). Notably, YACs also include gender non-binary/genderqueer and transgender participants, reflecting a commitment to inclusion across the gender spectrum.

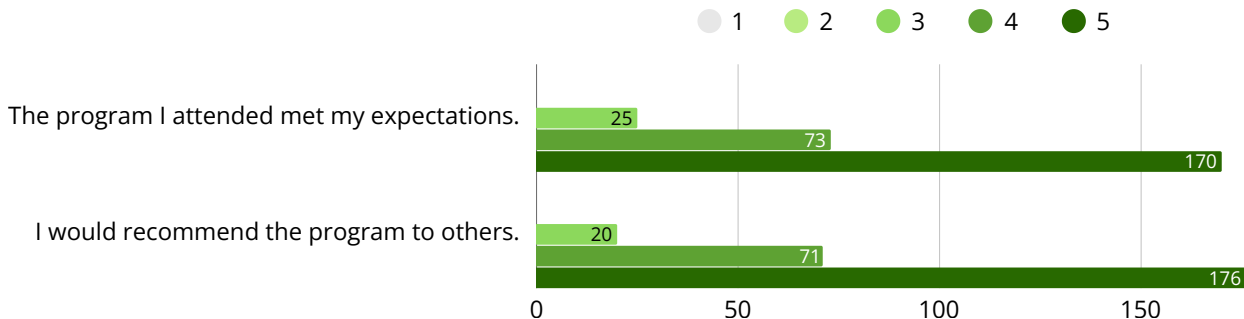
YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

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



Youth Advisory Councils span 20 zip codes, with the highest participation concentrated in North San José/Berryessa (95132: 8 participants), the Cambrian area (95124: 7 participants), and West San José (95129: 7 participants). District 7 has the broadest reach, engaging youth from nine zip codes, followed by District 6, which engages youth from seven zip codes. Some areas show concentrated engagement (95132 sends all eight participants to one district), while others are more dispersed (95129 participants span three programs). This distribution highlights strong representation in western areas while pointing to opportunities for expanded outreach in East San José neighborhoods.

YAC PROGRAM SATISFACTION



Participant satisfaction is exceptionally high, with 92% rating the program 4 or 5 out of 5. A majority (170 participants) gave the highest rating, while 73 rated it 4. No one rated their satisfaction lower than 3. Feedback highlights three key strengths: collaborative teamwork, efficient organization, and open communication. Participants appreciated collaboration and group culture, well-structured and productive meetings, and valued the guest speakers and opportunities for community building.

While most respondents had no suggestions for improvement, recommendations focused on a centralized communication structure, more in-person meetings and events, cross-district collaboration, and more interactive and engaging activities to draw people in. Overall, the feedback affirms a strong program that meets youth needs and expectations, requiring only minor adjustments rather than major changes. ■

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



SAN JOSÉ CITY DEPARTMENTS

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

SAN JOSÉ CITY STAFF

- Council Liaison: Councilmember Campos
- Councilmember Kamei
- Councilmember Cohen
- Councilmember Mulcahy
- Councilmember Doan
- Councilmember Candelas
- Councilmember Casey
- Jill Bourne, City Librarian
- Lauren Box
- Israel Canjura
- Mayra Cerda
- Ann Grabowski
- Cassie Hunter
- Ofelia Medina
- Anthony Montes
- Lizzie Nolan
- Amanda Otte
- Willow Glen Library Staff

ORGANIZATIONS

- SIREN
- Valley Transport Authority
- Vietnamese American Roundtable
- YWCA

PARTNERS

- San José Library and Education Commission
- San José Youth Empowerment Alliance
- Santa Clara County Youth Task Force



THANK YOU

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



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