



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Calistoga Community Conversation

November 2021

Executive Summary

The Napa County Health and Human Services Agency partnered with UpValley Family Centers, the Calistoga Joint Unified School District, and the City of Calistoga to host a Community Conversation on November 18, 2021. In small groups and Zoom breakout rooms, community members discussed their experiences living and working in Calistoga since the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants recorded their responses to discussion questions on color-coded sticky notes and shared highlights of their conversation with the whole group.

Community members had the opportunity to provide additional feedback through a survey about general affordability, housing affordability, language barriers, and entertainment options; these four topics were identified as barriers to feeling included in Calistoga in the previous Community Conversation in November 2019. Spanish-English interpretation was provided to participants, in-person and on Zoom, throughout the meeting. Findings from the facilitated discussion and the survey are included in this report and key results summarized below.

Small Group Discussions

Approximately **55** people attended the Community Conversation.

Positive Changes in Calistoga since the COVID-19 Pandemic: Community members said personal connections grew among fellow neighbors and community members. Improved access to community services and programs, as well as changes in schools were mentioned as areas of positive change.

Challenges in Calistoga since the COVID-19 Pandemic: The top three challenges were affordability, particularly with housing and increased cost of living, feeling isolated, and mental health concerns.

Personal Actions to Make Positive Changes in Calistoga: Community members are committed to more involvement and support of existing community organizations, as well advocating for large community projects, such as an athletic turf field or improvement of existing facilities and parks.

Community Survey

Participants were asked to complete a four-question survey to reflect on the changes in four areas of importance from the 2019 Community Conversation. Forty-two surveys were collected.

General Affordability: Cost of living continues to be a concern for Calistoga community members, with 69% of responses stating general affordability has **worsened** since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Housing Affordability: A majority of community members surveyed (76%) said that housing affordability, which encompasses home ownership and rentals, has **worsened** in Calistoga since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Language Barriers: 45% of community members said that language barriers **improved** and 50% of community member said language barriers had stayed the same since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Entertainment Options: 57% of responses said entertainment options have **worsened** and 36% of responses said entertainment options have stayed the same since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

In November 2021, UpValley Family Centers, the Calistoga Joint Unified School District, and Napa County Health and Human Services Agency hosted a Community Conversation to discuss the community's vision of a healthy Calistoga, and barriers to this vision. Community Conversations are community events held annually and provide an opportunity to collect qualitative data on the lived experiences of Calistoga community members. Since the last Community Conversation in November 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 fires have had major impacts on the Calistoga community.

The purpose of this most recent Community Conversation was to reflect on how community priorities and concerns have - or have not - changed over the past two years. Spanish-English interpretation was provided throughout the Community Conversation, in-person and through Zoom. Factsheets about the 2019 Community Conversation and the Community Survey were provided in English and Spanish (see Appendix.)

Methods

Data Collection

Community members attending in-person convened in small discussion groups and recorded their responses to discussion questions on color-coded sticky notes. The discussion questions posed to the participants were as follows:

- *What positive changes have occurred in the Calistoga community since late 2019/before the start of the pandemic?*
- *What challenges in the community still exist or have increased since late 2019?*
- *What do you personally want to do to create positive change in Calistoga?*

Community members wrote one thought per sticky note. Those who participated via Zoom utilized the 'chat' feature to provide their responses to the small group discussions; a facilitator transposed their comments to a sticky note.

Sticky notes were collected, grouped by theme, and placed on a large board where all participants could review them. Community surveys were given to participants to fill out and return; Zoom participants responded via the 'poll' feature on Zoom.

Analysis

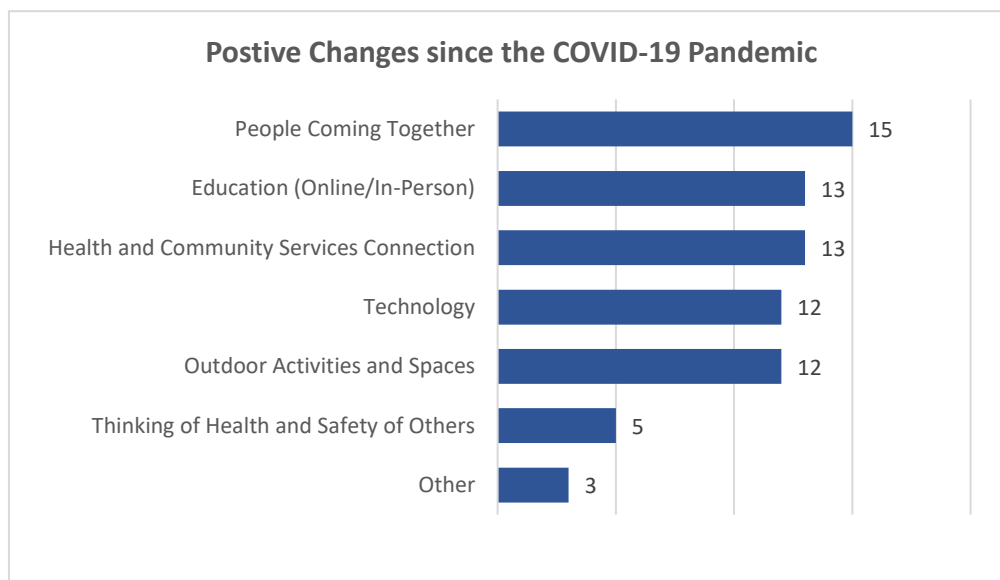
Responses to the small group discussion were collected and copied into an Excel sheet. Spanish responses were translated into English. Napa County Health and Human Services Agency convened a small group of four key staff to review and categorize responses into relevant themes. Responses to the small group discussion were broken into 7-12 categories, depending on each question. Responses to the community survey were collected and copied into an Excel sheet. Excel was used to create charts for the most common responses of both the small group discussion questions and community survey.

Results

Approximately 55 people attended the Community Conversation and participated in the small group discussions; 40 people attended in-person and 15 people attended via Zoom. Responses are quoted in this report to provide a sampling of the most common themes. Participants were asked to complete a four-question survey to reflect on the changes in four areas of importance from the 2019 Community Conversation. A total of 42 surveys were collected and each questions had 3 different responses options: **Worsened**, **Stayed the Same**, and **Improved**.

Discussion Question 1: Positive Changes in Calistoga

Community Conversation participants filled out 73 sticky notes in response to the question, ***“What positive changes have occurred in the Calistoga community since late 2019/before the start of the pandemic?”***. Participants said they felt more connected as a community, had better access to health and community services in Calistoga, and reflected on the dynamic changes that occurred with schools.



Participants mentioned a sense of a unity that formed in their community. With many sheltering in place, especially during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, community members were able to meet and interact more with their neighbors.

“Met a lot more people because more people were home and walking.”

“Nos conocimos más nuestros vecinos y nuestra familias. [We got to know our neighbors and our families more.]”

“Culturalmente conectomas y socializa[mos] mas. [We connected culturally and socialized more.]”

“Nos [h]emos unido más como comunidad. [We have united a community.]”

Community members said connections between themselves, and health and community services have improved, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Responses varied in terms how community members perceived these improvements; several participants cited better collaboration across non-profits, community resources, family resources centers and the County.

“Collaboration between government and non-profit orgs [organizations].”

“Una relación más estrecha e[n]tre la escuela, la comunidad y los recursos disponibles para las familias. [A closer relationship between the school, community resources and families.]”

“Logística para las vacunas [;] trabajo en equipo con las organizaciones locales. [Logistics for the vaccines [;] teamwork with local organizations.]”

“Varias organizaciones se reunieron [en] fin que fue en mejoría de la comunidad. [Various organizations have come together with the goal of meeting community need.]

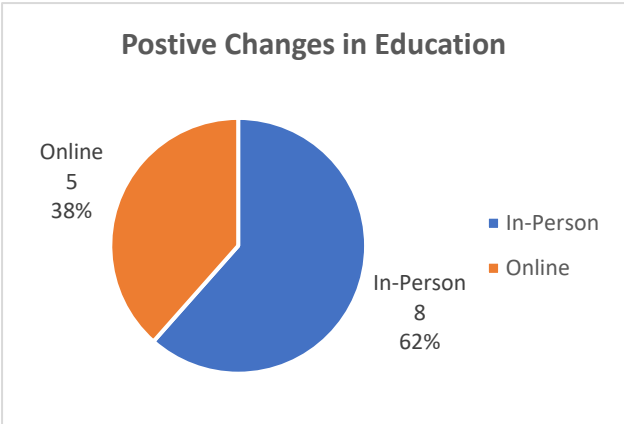
Out of 13 responses in this area, four participants specifically spoke to the improved access they had to services and support, the increased number of services, and programs available and accessible within the city of Calistoga.

“The willingness of service providers from Napa to come up here [Calistoga]!”

“Better awareness of community support and communal events.”

“Prestaron más servicios a la comunidad. [Provided more services to the community.]”

Community members also named education as an area of improvement. Given the shift to distance learning at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent transition to in-person learning in 2021, responses fell into two pools; five of the 13 responses viewed the shift to distance learning as a positive change, while eight of the 13 responses said in-person learning was a positive change.



Community members who viewed online learning positively mentioned school was easier, shorter and that there was improved connectivity between students and service providers.

“School was easier and shorter during the [COVID-19] pandemic because it was online.”

“Cooperating with each other and school [;] Zoom was good and well supported.”

“Service providers [were] able to see/connect with more students because it was not limited to in-person.”

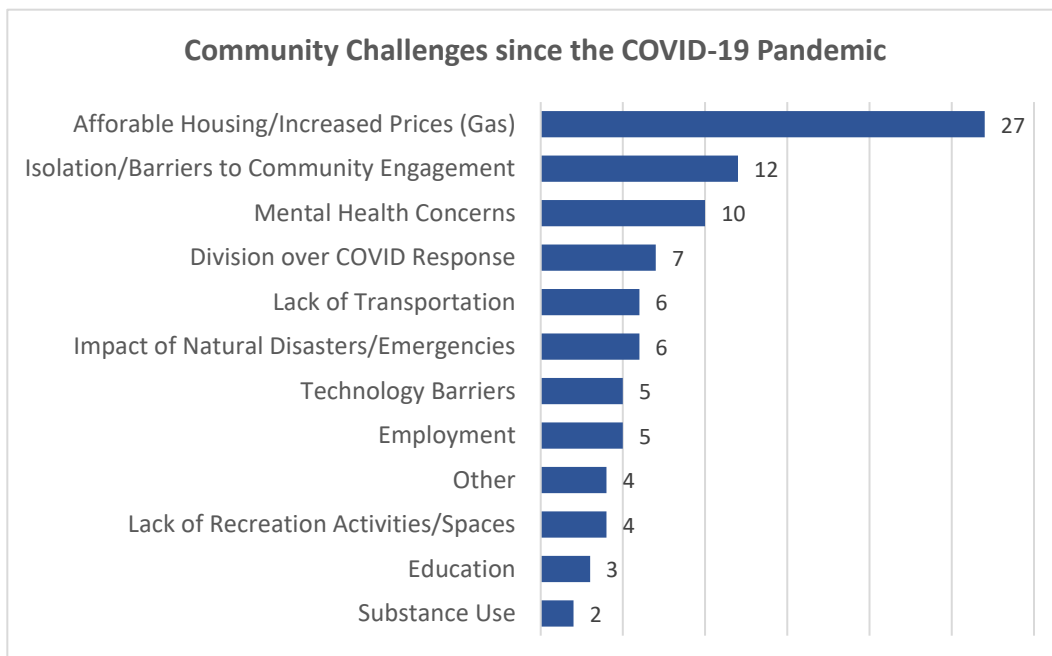
Eight of 13 responses in this area said the return to in-person learning was a positive change since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents said that the return to in-person instruction gave students a chance to be excited for school, interact with other students and receive more support from their teachers.

“After the return to school, I think [it] has motivated students to be more active in school.”

“La cosa positiva es poder jugar deportes y poder venir a la escuela. [The positive thing is being able to play sports and being able to go to school.]”

Discussion Question 2: Community Challenges

Community Conversation participants filled out 91 blue sticky notes in response to the question, **“What challenges in the community still exist or have increased since late 2019?”**. Lack of affordable housing /increased prices was the most cited barrier, with 27 responses. Access to affordable housing and rental units continues to be a concern and was mentioned in nine out of 27 responses in this category. While housing affordability has been a concern for Calistoga for many years, 14 of the 27 responses mentioned increasing prices as a challenge for the community. Community members expressed being impacted by the increasing cost of food and gas.



“Que las cosas de la tienda están muy cara(s). [Items from the stores are too expensive.]”

“The prices in gas and food at the supermarket have increased.”

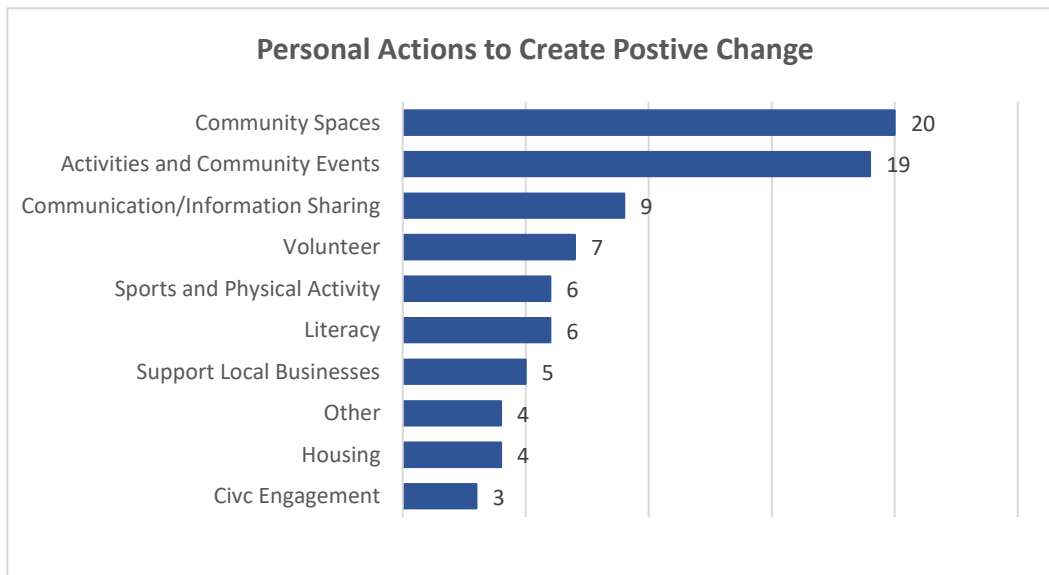
“The gas has gone up a lot ever since the start of the [COVID-19] pandemic.”

Isolation/barriers to social inclusion was the second most common theme. Several community members mentioned isolation or barriers to social inclusion, most likely a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A portion of the COVID-19 pandemic was characterized by shelter in place orders and social distancing mandates, creating a unique physical divide between Calistoga community members. Community members mentioned that, at the time of the survey, “there remains anxiety about casual socializing” along with the physical isolation of seniors and community members with healthcare issues. As one community member captures, “The [COVID-19] pandemic further created a chasm [;] this [is the] missing piece of our communication as a city”.

Participants identified mental health concerns 10 times as a challenge, specifically their personal mental health and the mental health of those around them, since the COVID-19 pandemic. Some participants expressed the fatigue of technology use, the anxiety brought on “cada vez que destornudas o toces [every time you sneeze or cough]”, and the challenge of informing children of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussion Question 3: Personal Actions to Create Positive Changes in the Community

Eighty-three responses were collected in response to the question, “**What do you personally want to do to create positive change in Calistoga?**”. The most mentioned topic was the desire to improve community spaces, in particular the addition of an athletic turf field, mentioned a total of 15 times. Participants emphasized the need for more community activities and events for Calistoga youth, specifically teens and young adults, ages of 15-21. Community members expressed the need to keep Calistoga residents informed through sharing information. Many responses expressed individual commitments to volunteer more time and resources to local organizations. Responses reflected a commitment to increase patronization for local businesses and participating in civic processes, as well supporting projects that improve the quality of life for the community of Calistoga.



Community Spaces

“Si sueño es [a] mirar que podamos tener un estadio para los deportes y todos los niños de la comunidad puedan usar[lo] para distinto deportes. [If I were to dream it is to see that we can have a sports stadium and all the children in the community can use for different sports.]”

“Lo que quiero ver es tener un campo mejor para poder distraerse y poder practicar deporte[s] porque hay un buen futuro en deportes. [What I want to see is a better field to be able to enjoy and be able to practice sports because there is a good future in sports.]”

“Work to make the dream of an all-weather field and stadium possible for the Calistoga.”

Activities and Community Events

“More free programs for children especially programs for 18-21 and 15-17.”

“Crear más eventos para los jóvenes. [Create more events for youth.]”

“More community events such as Logvy movies, parades, or like more art gallery type of things.”

Communication and Information Sharing

“I want to bring our [Calistoga] community together, keeping the community informed is a big part of that [coming together].”

“Traer más información segura y confianza. [Bring more reliable information and trust.]”

“Integrarse y compartir información. [Integrate and share information.]”

Volunteer

“I would like to continue supporting the mental health services in Calistoga to ensure students and families have affordable and available access to services.”

“I want to work more with families/parents to start the conversation and how to be inclusive and accepting our LGBTQ community in Calistoga.”

Support Local Business

“And I know our local newspapers are struggling. I would like to find ways to support our local papers.”

“Supporting local businesses and restaurants.”

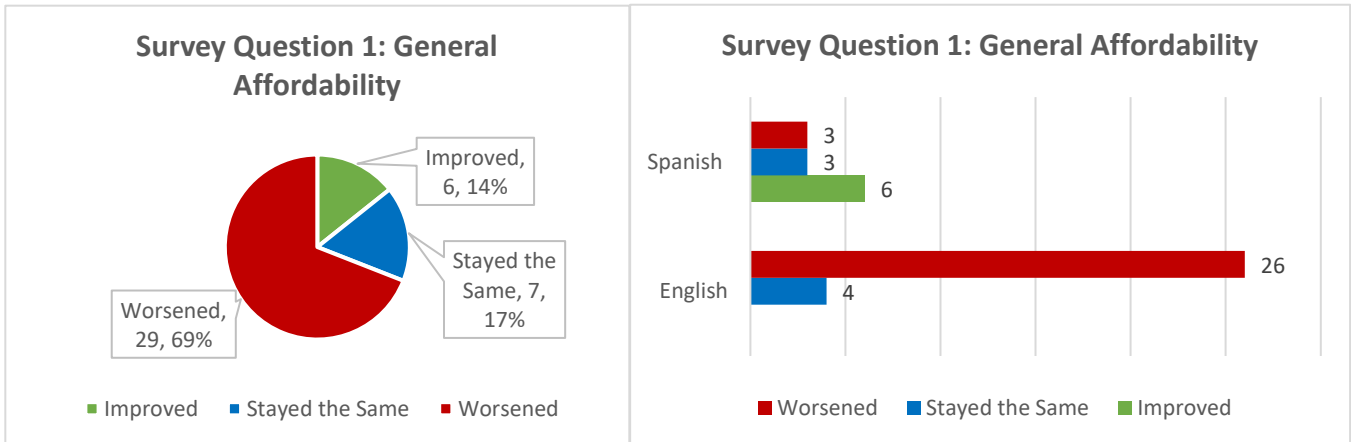
Other

“A Laundromat in our community is a must.”

“Necesitamos una lavandería que trabaje bien en nuestro pueblito. Por favor. [We need a laundromat that works well for our small town. Please.]”

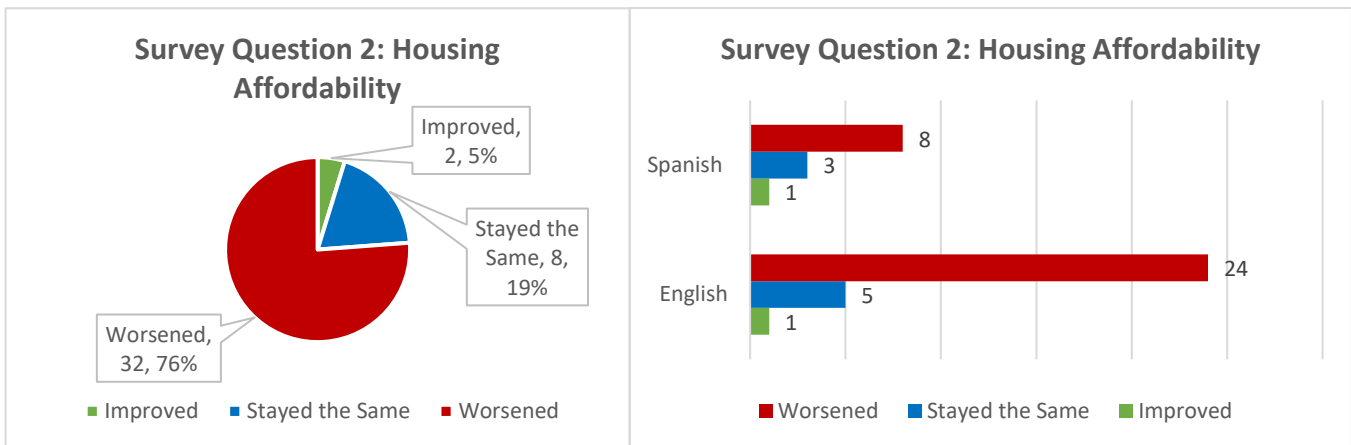
Survey Question 1: General Affordability

Question 1 asked participants, **“Since the pandemic began, has general affordability In Calistoga: Improved, Stayed the Same, or Worsened?”**; general affordability refers to cost of living in Calistoga, excluding housing. Sixty-nine percent of respondents said that general affordability in Calistoga has worsened since the 2019 Community Conversation. In comparing the responses in English and Spanish, most of the English language responses said that general affordability had worsened, while the Spanish language responses reflect more varied responses, with six out of 12 surveys stating that affordability in Calistoga has improved.



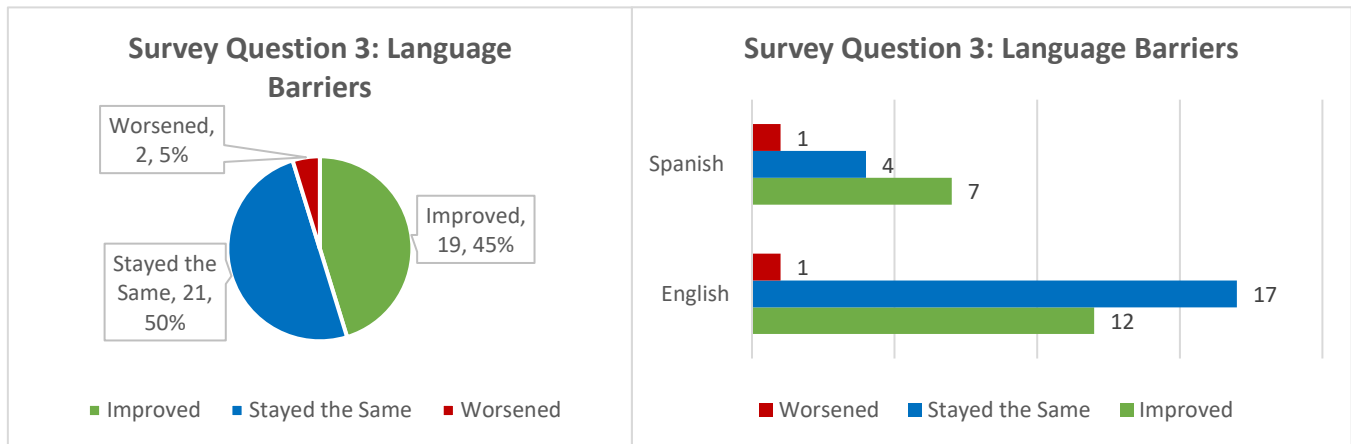
Survey Question 2: Housing Affordability

When asked **“Since the pandemic began, has housing affordability in Calistoga: Improved, Stayed the Same, or Worsened?”**, Seventy-six percent of respondents said it improved, 19% said it stayed the same, and 5% said it worsened. The response distribution across both languages parallels one another, with a majority stating housing affordability has worsened since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic.



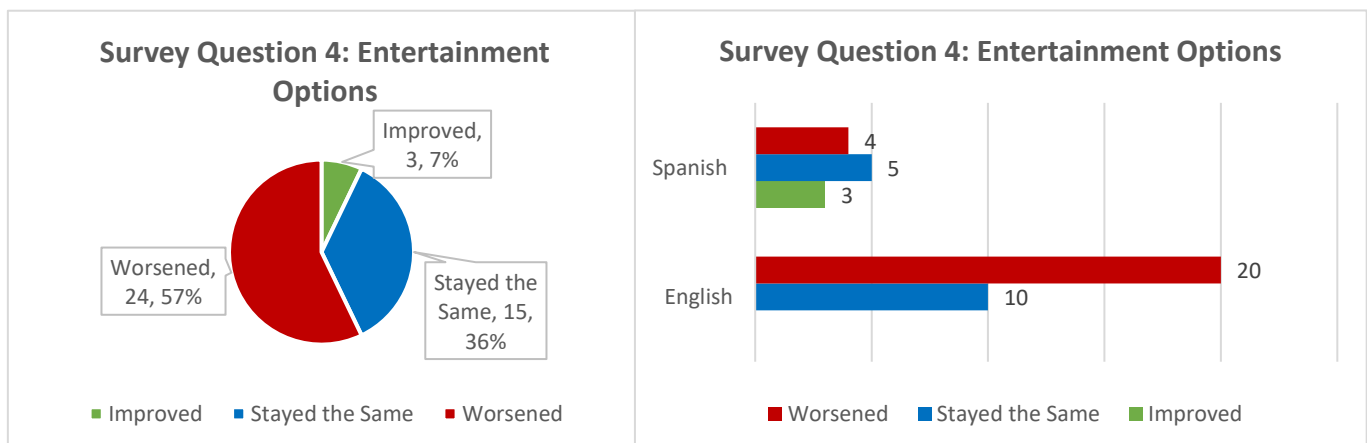
Survey Question 3: Language Barriers

When asked the question, “**Since the pandemic began, have language barriers in Calistoga: Improved, Stayed the Same, or Worsened?**” most participants said that language barriers had either improved or stayed the same since beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of 42 responses, 50% said language barriers had stayed the same, 45% said language barriers had improved and 5% said language barriers had worsened. Seventeen of 30 English surveys responses indicated that language barriers have improved, followed by twelve out of 30 who said language barriers had stayed the same. In contrast, out of the 12 responses in Spanish, seven participants said that language barriers had improved, followed by four participants who said language barriers have stayed the same.



Survey Question 4: Entertainment Options

Forty-two responses were analyzed in response to the question, “**Since the pandemic began, have entertainment options in Calistoga: Improved, Stayed the Same, or Worsened?**”. Fifty-seven percent of respondents said that entertainment options have worsened since the COVID-19 pandemic, 36% said entertainment options had stayed the same, and 5% said entertainment options had improved. Of the 30 total responses in English, 20 participants stated entertainment options had worsened, and the remaining 10 participants stated entertainment options have remained the same. In contrast, the Spanish survey responses were varied. Five of 12 Spanish survey responses said that entertainment options have remained the same, four of 12 survey responses said entertainment options had worsened and three of 12 responses said entertainment options had improved.



Conclusion

The 2021 Community Conversation provided community members the opportunity to reflect on their experiences living and working in Calistoga. Calistoga community members shared their feedback on changes that occurred over the two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, both positive and negative, and provided a current assessment of the community challenges that were identified during the 2019 Calistoga Town Hall.

Community members expressed feeling united with other community members. Particularly in the earlier part of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many sheltering in place, participants stated that meeting and connecting with neighbors and families was easier. Community members also expressed appreciation for improved collaboration between non-profit organizations and government entities, mentioning improved accessibility to health and community services in Calistoga.

Affordability remains a concern for Calistoga community members, with a lack of affordable housing and rental units accessible to them. Additionally, community members said the cost of food and gas have increased since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Community members mentioned these two factors are barriers to starting and raising families in Calistoga. Finally, community members mentioned mental health concerns, such as isolation and being anxious to be around others, in association with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Calistoga community members remain committed to supporting their community through volunteering, supporting local businesses, and improving information sharing in the community. Community members wish to advocate and support larger projects such as the creation of an athletic turf field and creation of community events and activities, particularly for youth and young adults.

Calistogans identified few improvements in the four areas they identified as barriers to feeling like part of the community in the 2019 Community Conversation. General affordability, housing affordability and entertainment options remain barriers that stayed the same or worsened since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic. The exception to this were language barriers, which a majority of participants expressed had either improved or stayed the same since the start of COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall, Community Conversation participants emphasized the commitment to improve their community for all people who live and work in Calistoga.

Appendix

Calistoga 2019 Town Hall Results – English Version



Calistoga Neighborhood Town Hall Results

November 21, 2019

Community Discussion Results: What are the things you do or experience that help you feel like you are part of our community?



1. Parks & Recreation, Physical Activity
2. Volunteering
3. School Involvement
4. Patronizing Local Businesses

Community Discussion Results: What are barriers to feeling like you are part of our community?



1. Lack of affordability
2. Lack of affordable housing
3. Language barriers
4. Limited options for entertainment

Calistoga 2019 Town Hall Results – Spanish Version



Resultados de la Conversación Comunitaria en Calistoga 21 de noviembre del 2019

Resultados de la discusión: ¿Qué tipo de actividades o experiencias ha tenido que lo hacen sentir que forma parte de nuestra comunidad?



1. Parques y recreacion, actividad fisica
2. Trabajo voluntario
3. Participación en las escuelas
4. Apoyo a negocios locales

Resultados de la discusión: ¿Qué tipo de barreras ha experimentado que lo han hecho sentir que no forma parte de nuestra comunidad?



1. Costo alto en general
2. Costo alto de vivienda
3. Barrera del lenguaje
4. Opciones limitadas de entretenimiento

Calistoga Community Survey - English and Spanish Versions

At the Calistoga Community Conversation in 2019, community members were asked to name barriers to feeling like they were a part of the community. The questions below represent the top responses. Please let us know if these issues have improved, worsened, or stayed the same since the pandemic began.

1. Since the pandemic began, has general affordability in Calistoga

- Improved
- Worsened
- Stayed the same

3. Since the pandemic began, have language barriers in Calistoga

- Improved
- Worsened
- Stayed the same

2. Since the pandemic began, has housing affordability in Calistoga

- Improved
- Worsened
- Stayed the same

4. Since the pandemic began, have entertainment options in Calistoga

- Improved
- Worsened
- Stayed the same

En la Conversación Comunitaria de Calistoga en 2019, se les pidió a los miembros de la comunidad que nombraran las barreras para sentirse parte de la comunidad. Las preguntas siguientes representan las principales respuestas. Háganos saber si estos problemas han mejoraron, empeoraron o se mantuvieron igual desde que comenzó la pandemia.

1. Desde que comenzó la pandemia, ha la asequibilidad/accesibilidad general en Calistoga

- mejorado
- empeorado
- se mantuvo igual

3. Desde que comenzó la pandemia, han las barreras del idioma en Calistoga

- mejorado
- empeorado
- se mantuvo igual

2. Desde que comenzó la pandemia, ha asequibilidad de la vivienda en Calistoga

- mejorado
- empeorado
- se mantuvo igual

4. Desde que comenzó la pandemia, han las opciones de entretenimiento en Calistoga

- mejorado
- empeorado
- se mantuvo igual