General Plan Vision Statement Survey: Summary of Results

April 2022

Survey Overview

The City of Ventura is in the process of updating its General Plan, a long-term vision and policy document that will guide citywide development and growth over the next 25-30 years. A key component of the General Plan is the **Vision**, which is comprised of three parts: a forward-looking Vision Statement that describes what the community aspires to be in 2050; eleven core values that define the City's culture and priorities; and a set of strategies to help implement the General Plan.

Over the past year, the General Plan Team has engaged with the community and the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) through online surveys, public workshops, pop-up workshops, and GPAC meetings to discuss visioning. Based on the collaboration and feedback from the myriad of engagement efforts that have taken place, the General Plan Team prepared a draft Vision that was released for public review on March 4, 2022.

From March 4, 2022 through March 21, 2022, the City of Ventura hosted its fourth online survey for the General Plan Update to gauge whether there is general agreement from the community on the draft Vision. The survey was made available in both English and Spanish on the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey. In total, 341 unique responses were recorded (note that not every respondent answered every question). This document summarizes the combined responses of both English- and Spanish-language participants.

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Participants were asked several demographic questions during the survey. These questions are intended to help City staff ascertain whether survey respondents generally matched the profile of Ventura and/or whether any groups were over- or underrepresented. Key takeaways are summarized below:

- About half of all survey respondents were familiar with the General Plan Update process and/or had previously engaged with the development of the Vision.
- Almost all respondents (92%) are residents of the City of Ventura.
- Of all residents who responded, over half (52%) have lived in Ventura for 21 years or more.
- People aged 60 and above comprised almost half (46%) of all respondents (compared to a citywide average of 24%).[1]
- Homeowners were overrepresented in the survey, making up 80% of all respondents (compared to the citywide average of 54%). Renters were underrepresented, comprising 18% of the responses (compared to the citywide average of 46%).[2]
- Non-Hispanic White or Caucasian were overrepresented in the survey, making up two-thirds of all survey respondents (compared to the citywide average of 55%). Hispanic and Latino individuals were the second highest represented group, although they were still underrepresented in the survey (11% compared to the citywide average of 36%).[3]

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[1] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2015-19
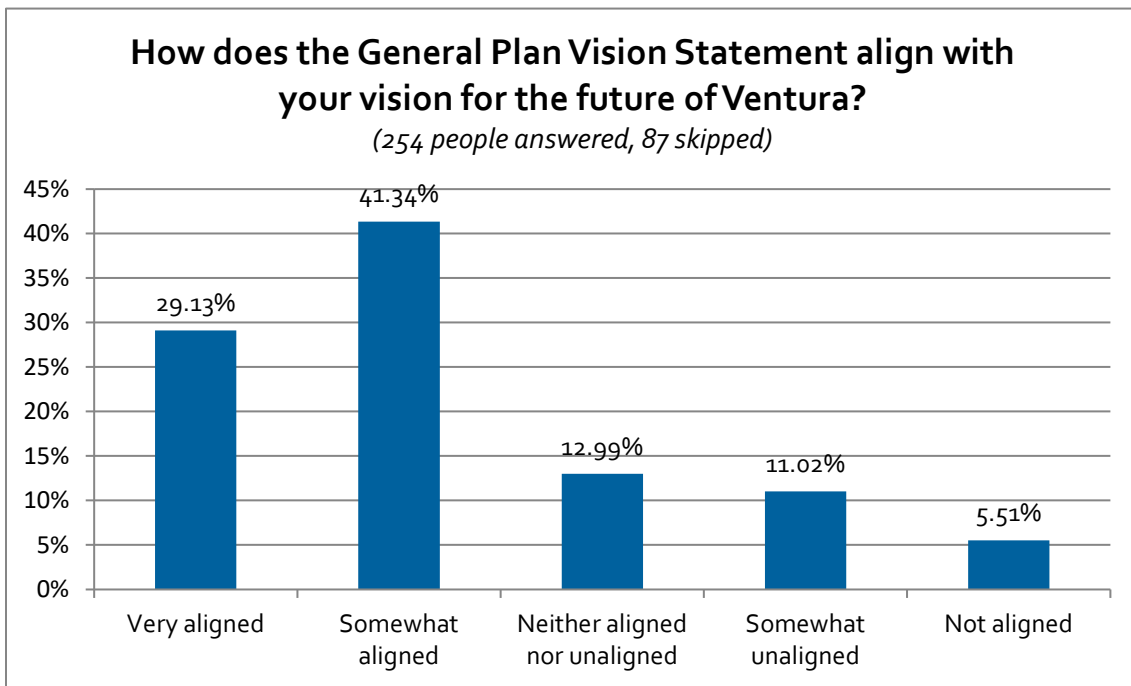[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

Survey Results

Survey participants were asked to rate how well each component of the draft Vision aligned with their aspirations for the future of Ventura. They were also invited to provide written comments and suggestions to improve the Vision Statement, Core Values, and Strategies. Overall, the majority of respondents supported all three components of the draft Vision. Below, the responses to each survey question are discussed.

Vision Statement

Survey participants rated how well the Vision Statement aligned with their vision for the future of Ventura. Over two-thirds of respondents felt that the Vision Statement was either "very aligned" or "somewhat aligned" with their vision for Ventura (70%), while a small percentage was neutral (13%). Only 17% of respondents felt the Vision Statement was either "somewhat unaligned" or "not aligned" with their vision for Ventura.

How does the General Plan Vision Statement align with your vision for the future of Ventura?
(254 people answered, 87 skipped)

- Very aligned: 29.13%
- Somewhat aligned: 41.34%
- Neither aligned nor unaligned: 12.99%
- Somewhat unaligned: 11.02%
- Not aligned: 5.51%
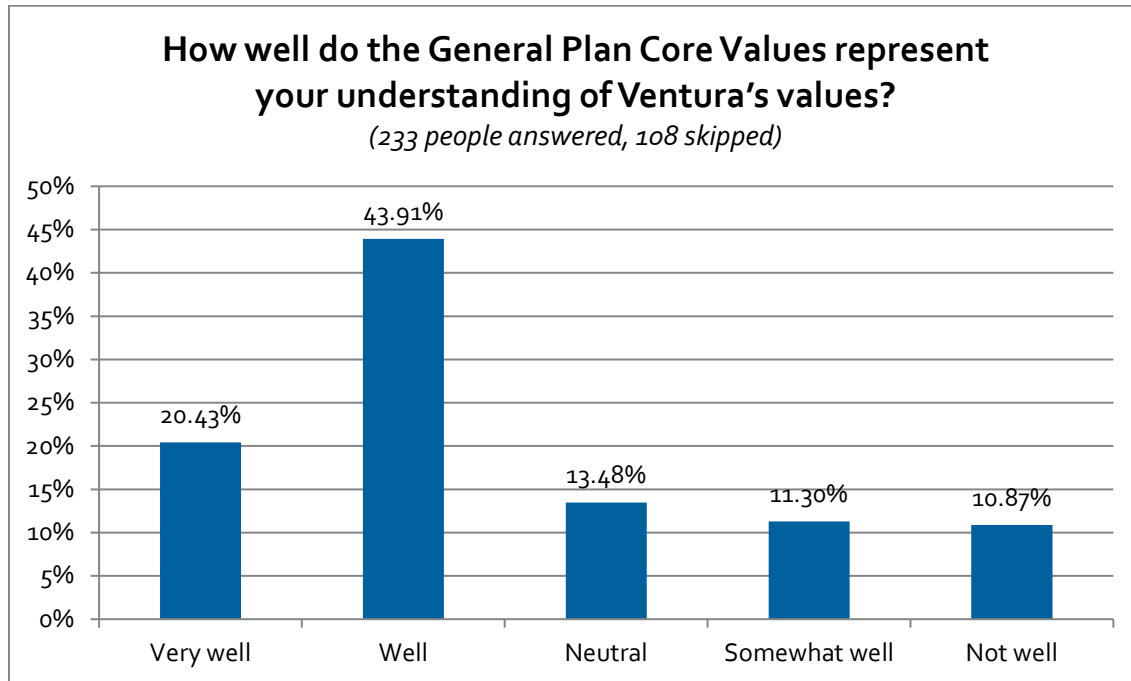
Figure 1: Vision Statement Feedback

Survey participants were then asked if they had any suggestions to improve the Vision Statement. Recurring themes from the comments are summarized below.

- Language of Vision Statement seems vague and not action-oriented enough
- A significant community challenge not mentioned in the Vision Statement is water conservation/drought and maintaining a sustainable long-term water supply
- Acknowledge that the evolution of the city's physical form requires adequate infrastructure to support development (water, roads, transit services, etc.) and mitigation of impacts (i.e., light/noise pollution)
- Take a firmer stance against overbuilding and high-density development

- Prioritize making the City a leader in addressing climate change and protecting natural spaces and native ecosystems/wildlife
- Have more emphasis on public safety/maintaining a safe community
- Be more explicit about addressing homelessness and preventing gentrification and displacement
- Be more explicit in prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists and decreasing reliance on cars
- Uplift the needs of families, children, seniors, and those who are disabled
- Call out and preserve the City's heritage as an agricultural town

Core Values

Next, survey participants were asked to rate how well the Core Values captured their understanding of Ventura's values. Nearly two-thirds of respondents felt that the Core Values represented their understanding of Ventura's values either "very well" or "well" (64%), while 13% felt neutral. Less than a quarter of respondents felt that the Core Values represented their understanding of Ventura's values either "somewhat well" or "not well" (22%).

How well do the General Plan Core Values represent your understanding of Ventura's values?
(233 people answered, 108 skipped)

- Very well: 20.43%
- Well: 43.91%
- Neutral: 13.48%
- Somewhat well: 11.30%
- Not well: 10.87%

Figure 2: Core Values Feedback

Survey participants were then asked if there were any Core Values they would add, remove, or modify. Recurring themes from the comments are summarized below.

- Indicate a level of prioritization for each core value and move higher priority values to the top of the list
- Certain core values could be consolidated (i.e., "Quality of Life" could be combined with "Safety and Health")
- Add "Sustainability and Resilient Community" as a core value and address climate impacts more explicitly

3

- Address density and type of desired development under "Balanced Growth"
- Address food security under "Safety and Health"

Strategies

Finally, survey participants were asked to rate how well the Strategies aligned with their vision for the future of Ventura. Over two-thirds of respondents felt that the Strategies were either "very aligned" or "somewhat aligned" with their vision for Ventura (70%), while 11% felt neutral. About one-fifth of respondents felt that the Strategies were not very representative of Ventura. Specifically, 19% said that the strategies were either "somewhat well" or "not well" (19%) representative of Ventura.
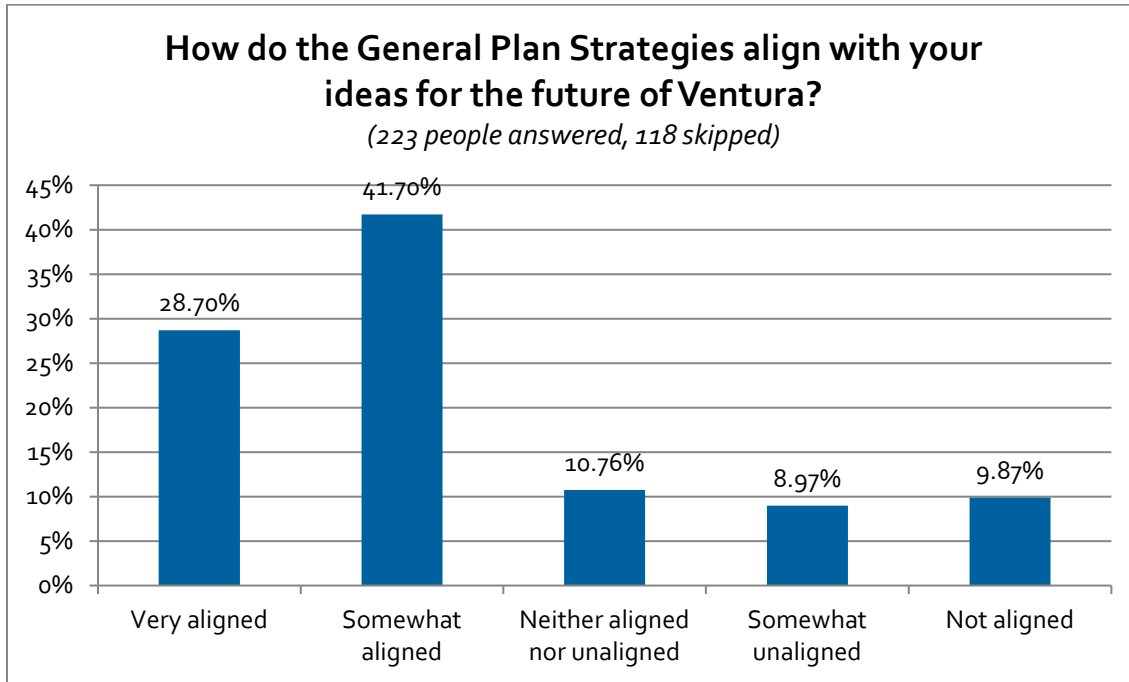

Figure 3: Strategies Feedback

Survey participants were asked if there were any Strategies they would add, remove, or modify. Recurring themes from the comments are summarized below.

Community Character and Design

- Include strategies for the Waterfront areas and Midtown
- Establish design guidelines that preserve the unique/historic character and respect the existing scale of the city's neighborhoods

Environment

- Explicitly call out the need to phase out oil extraction and other polluting industries
- Increase educational programming and resident awareness around waste reduction, recycling, composting, and other sustainability issues
- Address reduction of pesticides in agriculture
- Incorporate strategies to protect and enhance biodiversity and wildlife in the city

Economy

- Strengthen regional partnerships and coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, the County, and the State
- Include strategies to strengthen tourism in the city
- Address funding needs for public services and programs

Access and Mobility

- Identify opportunities for additional transit hubs, such as Downtown
- Emphasize decreasing reliance on cars; continue supporting a car-free downtown
- Include strategies that explicitly address parking and traffic challenges in the city
- Recognize and address the needs of Ventura's aging population, particularly those who are/could become mobility disabled; more emphasis on providing disabled access to all parks, beaches, and open spaces

Equity and Engagement

- Need more engagement with long-term residents and the agricultural community
- Center the needs and experiences of residents