

# Summary Article of TogetherSJ Survey

*By Gaya Vukkadala*

MFPA has been active for over a decade ensuring that the Martin Fontana Park provides the community with the shaded walkways and quiet zones. The association was a result of community volunteers who wanted to preserve the old oak trees that we love and take for granted during our walks in the green-belt. MFPA took on additional tasks such as the Five Islands development where one can appreciate and learn about native plants. Also, the association has set up benches and worked closely with San Jose's PRNS department to keep our parks attractive and inviting.

While the Board and members are focused on enhancing our parks, unbeknownst to us we are also being recognized by city leaders as an organization that is very engaged with our community. So, when the City embarked on a new initiative "TogetherSJ" an effort "to improve community building, public safety, beautification, and emergency preparedness" they reached out to our MFPA Board President Kelly Shepherd.

She invited the city coordinators to our Board meeting. After a series of meetings MFPA worked actively with the City's TogetherSJ team to conduct a survey to get a pulse on what's important to our fellow neighbors. Here are some salient take-aways from this neighborhood survey.

- Over 80% of the respondents rated our neighborhood as 4 or 5 (on a scale of 1 to 5) in cleanliness and safety
- The survey said we need to do better is in disaster preparedness with just under 30% saying we are at a 4 or 5 rating
- We know that ours is a very friendly neighborhood. The survey confirmed our perceptions. Over 60% of the residents are on a first-name-basis with at least five of their neighbors. What's more they have conversations with their neighbors as opposed to just saying "Hello!"
- Over 40% have participated in neighborhood activities. On the flip side 41% of residents are not aware of neighborhood associations and 30% have not been involved with their neighborhood associations.
- Top concerns of the MFPA community are Homeless and Public Safety. Residents would also like to see an improvement in park maintenance and less speeding on our roads.

To summarize, we appreciate the friendliness, cleanliness and safety of our area though we are concerned about larger widespread issues of homelessness and speeding cars. We are also not able to get more folks to participate in neighborhood associations and be better prepared for disasters.

TogetherSJ team has shared the survey results with City leaders and they plan to address some of these concerns. Effectiveness of these efforts will be measured by another survey in a year's time.