



Perth Amboy Cathedral International

Date: Sunday, December 16, 2018, 8:30 am –12 pm

Location: Perth Amboy Cathedral International, 205 Smith Street, Perth Amboy

Rutgers POET Staff: Stephanie Crozier, Dan Hutton, Donna Iken

EVENT SUMMARY

The outreach booth was stationed at the entrance of Perth Amboy Cathedral International. The outreach table was set up before and after services and an announcement was made to encourage worshipers to visit the table and respond to the survey questions. Staff engaged with approximately 80 participants, based on the number of comments including those who did not fill out feedback cards.

SURVEY RESPONSES

Summary The majority of comments on what participants liked about the county referenced the following topics, ranked by number of comments received: (1) Arts & Culture; (2) Public Services & Facilities; (3) Land Use & Development. Most comments about changes in the county referenced the following topics: (1) Public Services & Facilities; (2) Transportation; (3) Economic Opportunity.

Question #1 Responses *What do you like about living/working in Middlesex County?*

Arts & Culture (24 comments) Participants highlighted the diversity and the many cultural activities in the area.

- Community

- Community residents, neighbors, and people (6 comment)
- The smallness of the communities in Middlesex
- Like suburbs
- Community opportunities
- Nobody bothers anybody
- Diversity
 - Diversity (6 comments)
 - Diversity – global, ethnic, melting pot, good for everyone
 - Middlesex County is a very diverse and welcoming community.
 - Diversity in Sayreville
- Arts & Activities
 - Performing Arts
 - Free concerts
 - Culturally rich
 - I also appreciate that there are lots of arts and theatre programs.
 - Music in the summer on the waterfront

Public Services & Facilities (11 comments) The most common positive response from participants highlighted their appreciation for the school system. Respondents also liked recreation opportunities and government services.

- Education
 - Like the college experience
 - Good school systems
 - Middle School has good safe busing
 - Good schools in Perth Amboy
 - Cultural (race/ethnicity) awareness course in Edison school district implemented and know it is in other parts of Middlesex County
- Monroe is clean and quiet (2 comments)
- Road preparation for snow removal
- Good garbage operations in Woodbridge
- Woodbridge operations are good
- Mail in for DMV services

Land Use & Development (9 comments) Participants commented on the variety and proximity of shopping and dining options

- Shopping nearby
 - Good shopping—food, clothes, all needs here (3 comments)
 - Close shopping centers (3 comments)
- Restaurants
 - Lots of good eats (2 comments)
 - Diverse restaurants

Miscellaneous (6 comments) Participants liked the county's proximity to other places and the fact that the county is growing.

- Location
 - Location, accessibility and convenience (3 comments)
 - Countryside
- Growing (2 comments)



Transportation (6 comments) Respondents liked the highway access and some public transit.

- Public Transit
 - Close proximity to trains
 - Good public transit bus line
 - Access link availability for special needs in Middlesex is great
- Highway Access
 - Easy access to a lot of highways
 - Closeness to 95, main roads, like most parking
- Commute to New York City

Parks & Open Space (4 comments)

- Waterfront (3 comments)
- Parks

Economic Opportunity

- More value for money (compared to New York)
- Close proximity to large cities for employment opportunities

Housing

- I like the housing developments and communities in the county
- Adult living communities

Public Health

- I liked that there were a lot of people who appreciate the help that the Health Department offered.
- Good medical services

Public Safety

- Police department
- Good police security

Historic Preservation

- Historic

Question #2 Responses *What would you change about Middlesex County?*

Public Services & Facilities (19 comments) Respondents would like to see better schools and more educational options. They also want more collaboration between the county and their own local organizations and municipalities. Finally, respondents want lower taxes, especially for those who do not have children in the school system.

- Education
 - School choice
 - ◆ Implement more charter schools
 - ◆ More schools for “gifted” students
 - ◆ I would allow children to attend whatever school they want as elementary school.
 - ◆ Tuition affordable for less income
 - Better Public Schools
 - ◆ Better public schools (2 comments)
 - ◆ Less crowded schools (2 comments)
 - ◆ Better high school
 - ◆ Better schools in the middle to lower class areas
 - School programs
 - ◆ More school-based program on preventions
 - ◆ More child well-being and not technology-based
 - ◆ Homeschoolers should be allowed to do certain activities at schools. This is because we pay taxes too but don’t benefit from school.
 - ◆ Full day pre-k and kindergarten
- Governance and collaboration
 - County collaboration between each office
 - More coordination between the county and non-profits
 - Faith-based representation in Middlesex County offices and councils
- Public works
 - Less visible garbage
 - Cleaner county (example: streets, highways)

Transportation (18 comments) Respondents want better and more public transit options, and improved roadways.

- Public Transportation
 - Transportation system is not the best or close by
 - Public transport minimal and concentrated in certain areas
 - Public transportation for services
 - Better public transit, add light rail
 - Better service here on train and buses
 - More parking in transit areas
 - Access Link should cross over into the entire state of New Jersey. It should pick up door to door without being based on where bus stops are (eg. Border area, friend can’t get Access Link because 2 blocks away from bus stop)
- Roadways
 - Better roads (4 comments)
 - Potholes (2 comments)

- Traffic
 - Route 27 and Oak Tree
 - South Edison traffic is gridlocked
 - Traffic on 287
 - A light takes long to change at the end of 440 (Harvardtown, Perth Amboy) and it's not easy to see kids crossing (maybe need to see light)
- Commute to New York City should be cheaper

Economic Opportunity (14 comments) Many respondents would like to see more job opportunities in the area and more small businesses and assistance for entrepreneurs.

- Taxes
 - Property taxes are too high (5 comments)
 - School taxes too high for seniors and residents who do not have children (5 comments)
 - Taxes not commensurate to what getting, more bank for buck, not good value (so just moved to Monmouth County)
- More job opportunities
 - More jobs (3 comments)
 - More jobs in Perth Amboy
 - More jobs for entry level
- Small Businesses
 - More small businesses
 - More possibilities for the start of small businesses (help with start up and/or funding)

Housing (8 comments) The most common concern with housing is affordability.

- Housing affordability
 - More affordable housing, general (3 comments)
 - Affordable homes for single mothers
 - More subsidized housing – rent is going up (Old Bridge)
- Homelessness
 - Better shelters for homeless women and children
 - Housing for homeless vets
- More single homes

Land Use & Development (4 comments)

- Shopping
 - More grocery stores in South Amboy
 - Bring back small business shopping
 - Stores for senior community clothing
- More restaurant development on the waterfront

Arts & Culture

- Bring back arts
- Cultural focus program child-free
- Diversity and inclusion

Environment

- Flooding

- Flood prevention for all flood zones
- It is not fair that more and more homes need flood insurance and the town is not addressing the issue (South Plainfield)
- Cleaner water in Perth Amboy

Public Safety

- Police
 - More cops around Perth Amboy
 - More police on streets in Perth Amboy, especially with U-turns
- Better lighting

Parks & Open Space

- Cleaner parks
- Parks more environmentally-friendly, cleaner, park maintenance nicer (broken swing sets)

Public Health

- Food insecurity

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

About one-third of participants filled out the demographic survey. As shown in Figure 1, slightly more than half of the participants were female. Half of the participants were between the ages of 45-64, and the rest of the participants were generally evenly distributed above and below that age category (Figure 2). As shown in Figure 3, all of the respondents identified as Black or Black, Hispanic.

Figure 1

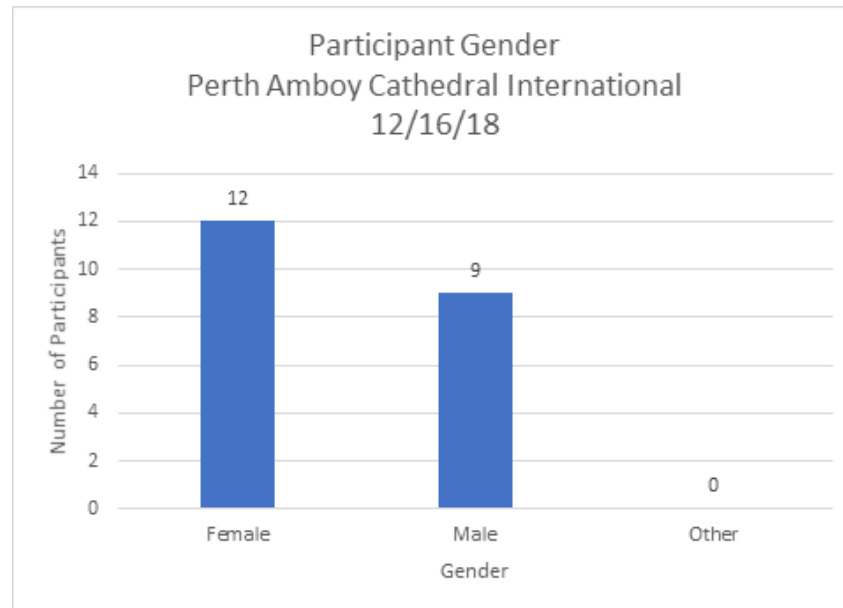


Figure 2

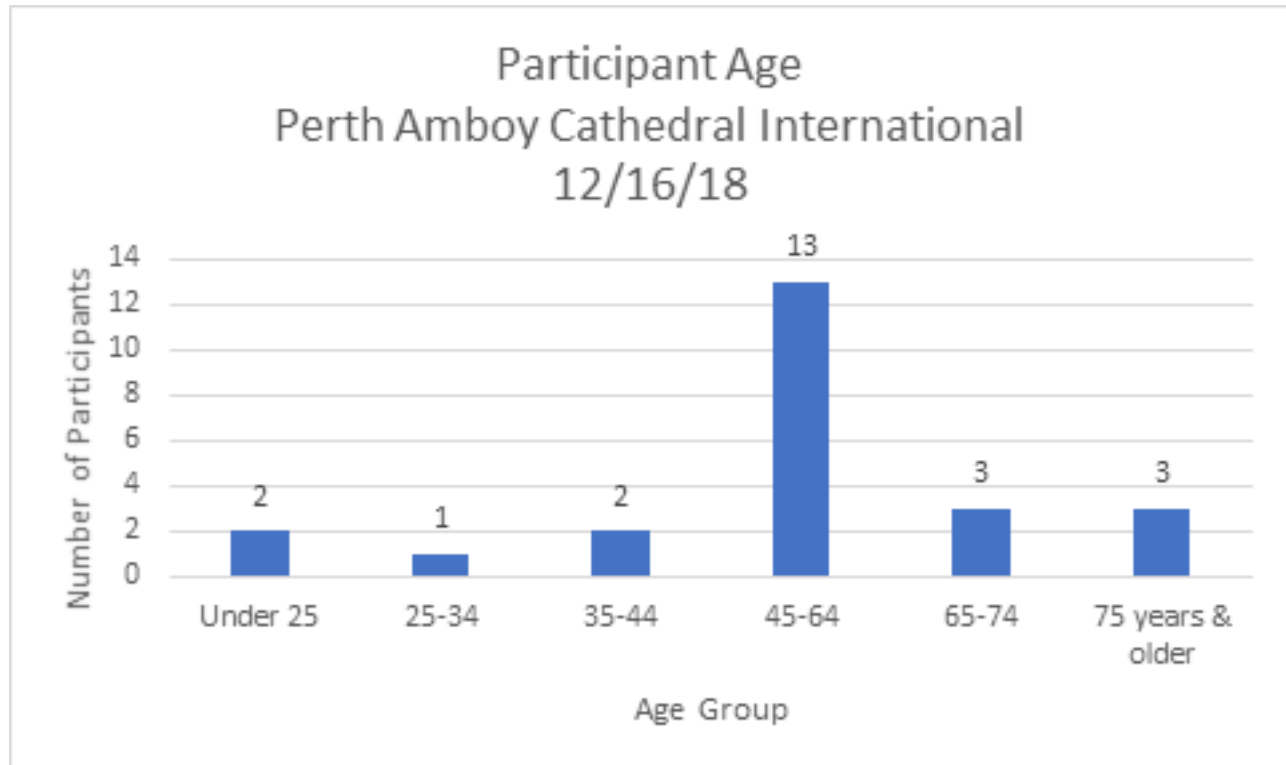


Figure 3

