

East Brunswick Library

Date: Wednesday, December 12, 2018, 4 pm–7 pm

Location: East Brunswick Library,

Rutgers POET Staff: Miriam Salerno, Trish Sanchez, Sarah Tomasello

Event Summary

The outreach booth was stationed at the entrance to the East Brunswick Library, enabling project staff to engage with people as they entered and left the library. Based on the number of comments and demographic surveys, POET and Middlesex County staff engaged with at least 47 people and approximately 70 total including those who did not fill out feedback cards.

Survey Responses

Summary Respondents' comments on what they like about the county emphasized the following themes, in order of number of comments received: (1) Public Services & Facilities; (2) Arts & Culture and Transportation; (3) Parks & Open Space. Respondents' comments regarding changes they wanted to see in the county mainly focused on the following themes: (1) Transportation; (2) Public Services & Facilities; (3) Land Use & Development.

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

Public Services & Facilities (13 comments) Respondents especially enjoyed East Brunswick Library services. They also appreciated the school system, senior services, and the Middlesex County recycling website.

- East Brunswick Library (9 comments)
- Schools
 - East Brunswick schools
 - Schools are wonderful – so many opportunities
- Senior services (senior walks, Meals on Wheels, and other County services for seniors)
- Middlesex County website about recycling

Arts & Culture (7 comments) Participants appreciated the county's friendly residents and close-knit communities. They also liked the cultural and ethnic diversity and the benefit of having kids' activities nearby. Another person liked the new Sayreville mall that provided jobs for the person's teenaged children and was a new place to go.

- Friendly people (3 comments)
- Close-knit community (2 comments)
- Cultural and ethnic diversity
- Kids' activities nearby

Transportation (7 comments) Participants liked the county's proximity to multiple locations, including the shore, NYC, and Atlantic City.

- Close to shore and NYC (3 comments)
- Bus to Atlantic City
- Easy to get to job
- Central location
- Everything is accessible and nearby

Parks & Open Space (4 comments)

- Open space
- Parks
- County parks, Cheesequake is favorite park
- JFK Park in Sayreville—path around lake, fountain, skateboard rink

Economic Opportunity

- Lots of jobs in the area
- Big companies for jobs

Housing

- I love having a yard.
- Bigger, better quality rentals

Public Safety

- Very safe environment
- Low crime rate

Land Use & Development

- New mall in Sayreville – creates jobs for teenaged kids, new place to go

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

Transportation (16 comments) Participants were frustrated with traffic on various routes (e.g. Route 1, Route 18, Ryders Lane, Route 9, Route 35). They also wanted to see improved roadway conditions like better paved roads and reconfigured stoplights.

- Traffic
 - Traffic (2)
 - Route 18 traffic (2)
 - Traffic on Route 1, 17 and Ryders Lane



- Route 9 to Route 35 in Woodbridge by Jewelry Exchange
- Less out-of-town traffic
- Make getting into New Brunswick easier
- Roadway Conditions
 - Better paved roads
 - Repave Arthur Street in East Brunswick
 - Speeding on Patrick St.
 - Get rid of the stoplights on Rt. 18
 - Need light on Rues Ln. and Winton Rd., traffic light, flashing on stop sign
 - Road repair–Tices Lane between Rt. 18 and Ryders Ln.
 - Add flashing speed limit sign warning drivers of speed limit change on Rt. 529 bridge into Old Bridge
- More bus routes

Public Services & Facilities (10 comments) Participants would like to see reduced corruption and improvements to schools and senior services.

- Corruption
 - Corruption
 - Term limits at all levels
 - No double dipping of services and benefits (e.g. judges holding multiple positions)
- Schools
 - Air conditioning in the high school
 - Remove layers of administration in school districts
 - More special education services for students, custom-tailored for each student
- Senior Services
 - Senior center needs to offer more outdoor activities

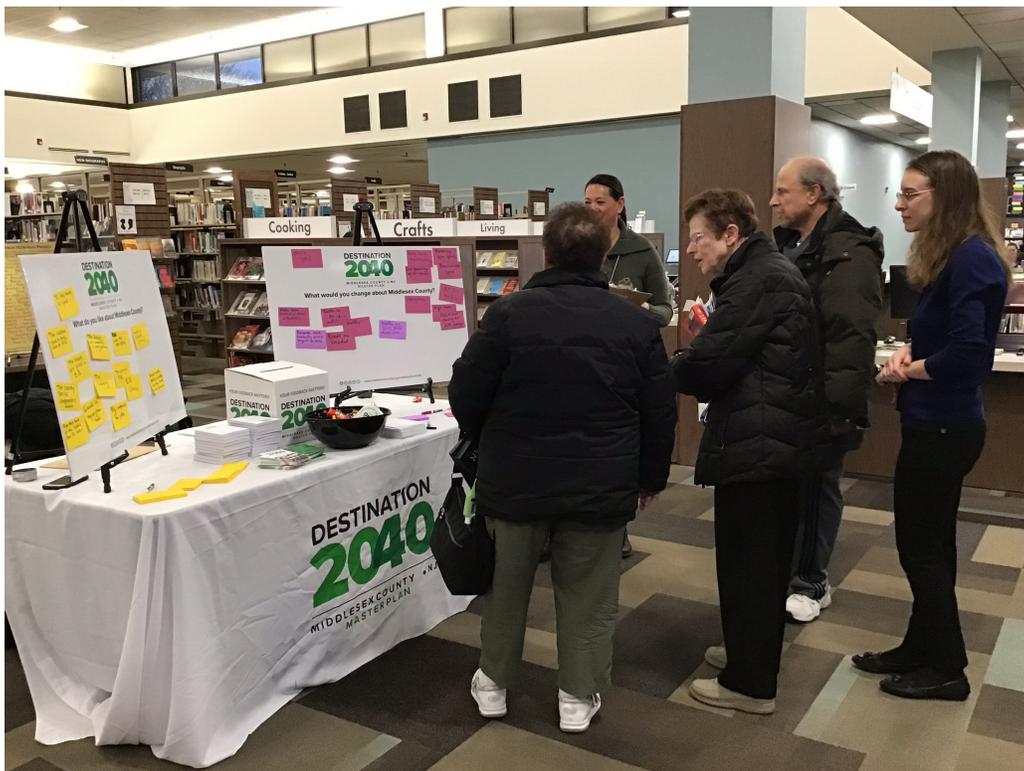
- Consortium on senior centers to share activities and cost / trips
- Regulations need overhaul (18-year-old draft but 21-year-old requirement to drink)
- Additional parking at East Brunswick Library

Land Use & Development (8 comments) Two respondents saw a disconnect between new commercial construction occurring while existing buildings sit vacant nearby. Others mentioned the need for more tax-generating properties, overdevelopment in East Brunswick, and the excessive use of variances.

- Empty storefronts
 - New construction going on. Too many abandoned stores.
 - Empty stores but keep building stores
 - Need more restaurants/bistros. Empty strips on Route 18.
- Too much development in East Brunswick
- More rateables
- Less governing by variances.
- East Brunswick needs a walkable retail downtown like Metuchen
- Add sidewalks. Create town center where people can gather.

Economic Opportunity (6 comments) Participants wanted to see more jobs and industries, including manufacturing. They also thought that taxes were too high.

- Jobs
 - Bring back manufacturing
 - More jobs
 - More industries
- Taxes
 - High taxes (2)
 - High property taxes



Parks & Open Space

- Preserve open space (2)
- Add more amenities (e.g. benches, paths) to park between Parlin and Sayreville

Arts & Culture

- Encourage more community service projects for teens.

Housing

- Make homeownership more affordable

Technology & Innovation

- Mobile app so citizens can report issues (e.g. road/traffic problems) to the county

Demographic Summary

As seen in Figure 1 below, a few more men participated than women. In Figure 2, the age of participants skewed toward older adults; the majority of participants were aged 45-64, and about one-third were over the age of 65. Almost 60% of the participants were White, not Hispanic (Figure 3). A third of the participants identified as Asian, and a small percentage of people identified as Black, not Hispanic.

Figure 1

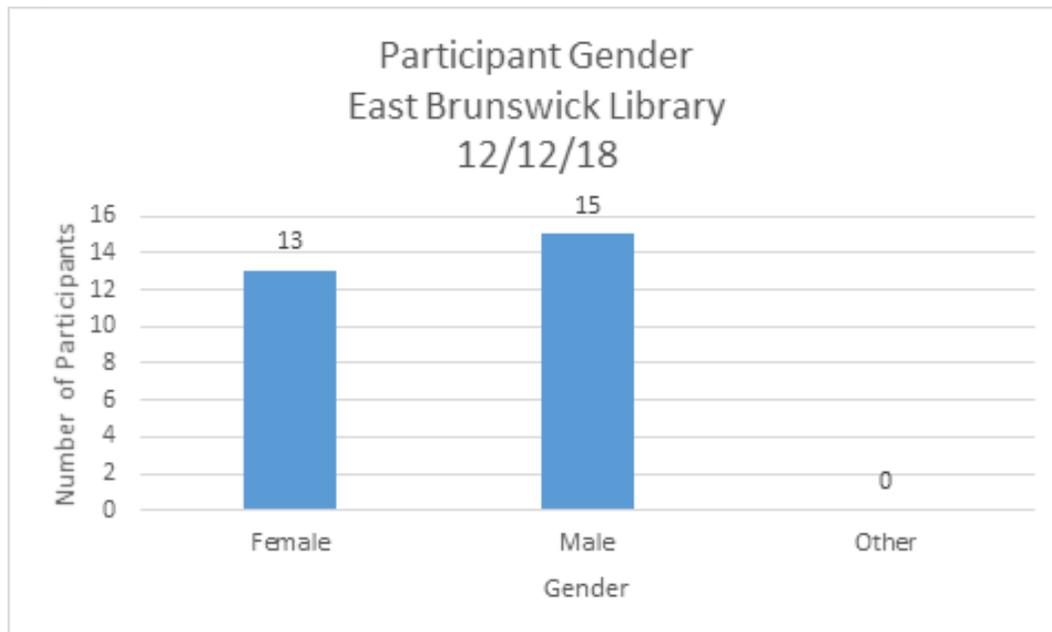


Figure 2

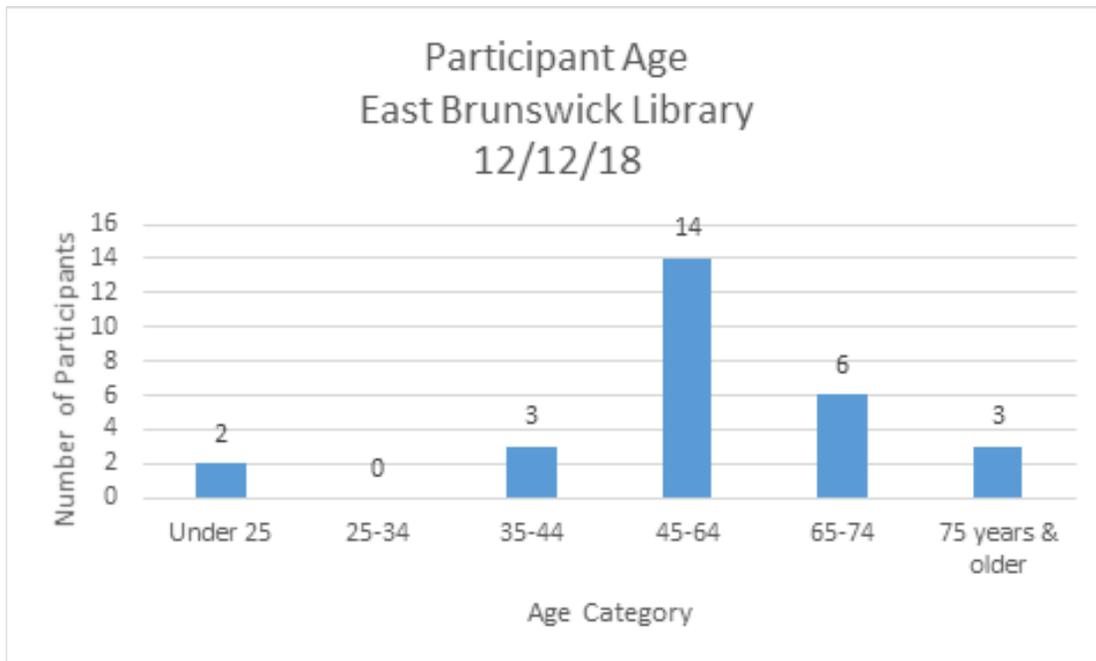


Figure 3

