**Event Summary**

The outreach booth was stationed in the central atrium of the Menlo Park Mall in Edison. Because the mall was crowded and the booth was well positioned, many people passed by the booth from multiple directions. Rutgers POET and Middlesex County Office of Planning staff engaged with at least 46 people based on the number of demographic feedback cards collected, however there were many other people who gave feedback but a survey card was not collected. At least 150 people engaged and participated. The mall draws visitors regionally therefore, the respondents who do not live in Middlesex County worked or studied within the county.

**Survey Responses**

**Summary**  
Respondents’ comments on what they like about the county mainly touched on the following themes, in order of number of comments received: (1) Public Services & Facilities; (2) Transportation; (3) Parks & Open Space. Respondents’ comments regarding changes they would make about the county mainly touched on the following themes: (1) Transportation; (2) Public Services & Facilities; (3) Miscellaneous.

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

**Public Services & Facilities (13 comments)**  
Respondents shared a variety of public services that they felt were effective including: recycling, response to maintenance issues, and the educational system and opportunities. One person each highlighted the animal shelter, ice skating rink, and excellent senior citizen services.

- Education
  - School opportunities (2 comments)
- Rutgers
- Education system

- Public Works and Sanitation
  - DPW
    - Fast response to problems and maintenance requests made by citizens (2 comments)
    - Good recycling efforts and policies for rubbish pickup (fridge, stove, etc.) (2 comments)
    - Recycling, but need more

- Other
  - Excellent senior citizen services
  - Animal Shelter
  - Roosevelt ice skating rink

**Transportation (10 comments)**  Many participants liked the county’s proximity to major highways and cities and the convenient transit hubs that allow for accessibility to other areas. Accessibility related to ADA was also mentioned as a benefit. A few participants highlighted the roads including the back roads as being something they appreciated.

  - Proximity
    - Accessibility
    - Close to major highways
    - Close to major cities (2 comments)
  - Public Transit
    - NJ Transit has decent ADA policy
    - Good transit into city
    - Many convenient transit hubs
  - Roads
    - I love my commute on the back roads!
    - Roads (2 comments)

**Parks & Open Space (9 comments)**  Participants enjoy access to the parks and open spaces that allow for outside recreation. One participant specifically mentioned the golf courses and another noted that the parks are well-maintained.

  - Parks (5 comments)
  - Roosevelt Park
  - Open space
  - Golf courses
  - Good park maintenance

**Arts & Culture (8 comments)**  Many participants appreciate the diversity in the county, and overall, people liked their small, quiet community with art and museums.

  - Art and museums
  - Ethnic shopping
  - Diversity (3 comments)
  - Family-oriented
  - Small community
  - It’s quiet
Land Use & Development (8 comments)  The quality and variety of shopping and restaurants attract visitors from around the county.
- Shopping
- Shopping (2 comments)
- Variety of restaurants and shopping (2 comments)
- Great mall area, like that it’s quieter than Newark
- Mall, came from Union County to shop
- The Menlo Park mall, traveled from Monmouth County to come shop
- Other
- Real estate is impressive

Miscellaneous (6 comments)  Overall, respondents liked the feel and aesthetics of the county.
- Accept dogs in many establishments
- It looks nice
- Everything is cool
- “We’re happy here”
- Better than Hudson and Essex County
- Make Monroe Township the ideal town in MC

Public Safety
- Feel safe here
- Low crime

Economic Opportunity
- Job opportunities
- Fostering the business community
Environment
• Waterfront

Public Health
• Medical network

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

Transportation (31 comments) This theme received the greatest number and variety of comments. The most common concerns focused on road maintenance such as fixing potholes, cleaning the roads, speeding up road repairs, and improving public transit, policies to share the road, and limiting traffic.

• Road work
  ○ Construction! Road department not using resources well, especially employees. Using our taxes.
  ○ Repair work taking too long at Metropark, need a bigger parking lot there
  ○ Road repairs take too long, I-287 repairs by Whole Foods
  ○ Road work (3 comments)

• Road maintenance
  ○ Better maintain roadways (3 comments)
  ○ Make roads cleaner and wider
  ○ Roads need to be cleared of snow

• Potholes
  ○ Potholes on Rt 18
  ○ Maintain infrastructure as shipping/freight increases

• Driver Safety
  ○ Improve driver safety on Rt 27
  ○ Vision Zero
  ○ Rude, aggressive drivers

• Alternative Transportation Modes
  ○ Improve bike policies and paths, roads should be shared (2 comments)
  ○ Fix NJ Transit (3 comments)
  ○ Better public transportation (3 comments)

• Traffic
  ○ New Brunswick traffic
  ○ Route 1 congestion
  ○ Traffic (2 comments)

• Other
  ○ Gas is expensive
  ○ More traffic lights at intersections

Public Services & Facilities (14 comments) Participants’ suggestions focused on improving educational opportunities, improving ADA policies and social services and programs for people with special needs, activities for children, teens, and young adults, providing information on recycling, and doing a better job of cleaning the streets and sidewalks. One participant stated a need for social and economic incentives for students and immigrants.
• Education
  ○ JFK high school needs improved administration and environment
  ○ Improve education for special needs students
  ○ More funding for schools
  ○ MCC needs stronger curriculum
  ○ Social and economic incentives for students, immigrants
• Public Works
  ○ Better recycling information and program
  ○ Teach the community how to recycle especially Perth Amboy
  ○ Trash on sidewalks
  ○ Sweeping the streets often
  ○ Leaves are picked up automatically
• Social Services
  ○ Improve ADA policies, social services does not have enough resources for handicapped
  ○ Promoting/participation with special needs individuals /programs
  ○ More activities for kids and teens (2 comments)

Miscellaneous (8 comments)  The most common comments by participants were to not change anything, and to legalize marijuana.
  • Nothing (3 comments)
  • “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”
  • Legalize marijuana (3 comments)
  • Less people

Land Use & Development (5 comments)  While one respondent said there was too much development, overall, respondents wanted more walkable shopping areas, including upscale shopping, antiquing, restaurant options, and town centers.
  • More upscale shopping and antiquing
  • More places to eat out
  • South Plainfield needs a town center
  • Too much development
  • Less car dealerships, more walkable areas

Parks & Open Space (4 comments)  Participants had a variety of suggestions, including cleaner parks, and indoor recreation areas for children.
  • Additional dog parks
  • More parks and indoor places for kids that’s not a mall
  • Cleaner parks
  • No more cutting down trees and nature for the greenway in Metuchen

Economic Opportunity (4 comments)  Multiple participants would like lower taxes, and one specifically wanted more job opportunities.
  • More job opportunities
  • Lower property taxes (3 comments)
Arts & Culture
• More politeness in public
• More diversity

Environment
• Cleaner beaches
• Pollution along roads

Public Safety
• Violence in school in New Brunswick
• I don’t feel safe walking in New Brunswick

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY
Slightly more males than females participated. There were a few participants over the age of 65 years old, and slightly more participants below 34 years of age. Participation was racially and ethnically diverse, including black, white, Asian American, and Hispanic participants. However, there were fewer Hispanic participants, but enough respondents chose "more than one race" to indicate racial diversity.