Raritan Bay Medical Center, Perth Amboy

Date: Thursday, December 13, 2018 from 9 am–1 pm

Location: Raritan Bay Medical Center, Perth Amboy

Rutgers POET Staff: Stephanie Crozier, Silvia Cuevas, Michael Swan

EVENT SUMMARY

The outreach booth was stationed in the concourse level of Raritan Medical Center in Perth Amboy. Rutgers POET and Middlesex County staff engaged with approximately 100 people total based on the number of comments and demographic cards collected.

SURVEY RESPONSES

Summary Comments on what participants liked about the county mainly focused on the following themes ordered by the number of comments received: (1) Public Services & Facilities; (2) Parks & Open Space; (3) Transportation. Comments regarding changes participants would make primarily emphasized the following themes: (1) Transportation; (2) Public Services & Facilities; (3) Economic Opportunity. Six participants wrote their responses in Spanish; these comments have been translated to English.

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

Public Services & Facilities (17 comments) Respondents appreciated the county's educational institutions, senior services, and public works programs.

- Education
  - Schools/education (5 comments)

- ○ Middlesex County College (3 comments)
  - ○ High school
  - ○ County scholarships for students
  - ○ Colleges
- Senior Services
  - ○ Senior center is great!
  - ○ County providers' services for elders.
- Public Works
  - ○ New garbage and recycling containers are great
  - ○ Snowplows are good
- Utilities, police/fire
- Outreach programs for the poor.

Parks & Open Space (16 comments)   Respondents liked aspects of the county's parks, open spaces, and coastline.
- Parks
  - ○ Parks (3 comments)
  - ○ Cleanliness (3 comments)
  - ○ Abundance of parks or green space (2 comments)
  - ○ Plays (2 comments)
  - ○ Quiet
  - ○ Warren Park and its participation with community
- Waterfront
  - ○ Jersey Shore
  - ○ Running along the waterfront Perth Amboy
- Open Space
  - ○ Accessible, natural spaces
  - ○ Open space

Transportation (14 comments)   Participants liked that the county is within close proximity to desirable amenities and places.
- Regional Accessibility
  - ○ Convenient location to larger cities (NYC and Philly) (2 comments)
  - ○ Close to many attractions and conveniently located to airports
  - ○ Shopping close to highway
  - ○ Close to coast
  - ○ Location west, north and south
  - ○ Centrally located to major roads, downtown New Brunswick, dinner, shows and the hospitals
  - ○ Everything you need close together, PA to Perth Amboy: safer, more businesses
  - ○ North Brunswick is convenient.
  - ○ Proximity
- Less congestion than Long Island
- Roads are well-maintained.
- Transportation
- Perth Amboy is a walkable town. Available transit.

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Arts & Culture (9 comments)   Participants liked the county's friendly and diverse communities.
- Friendly and diverse communities
    - Diversity (3 comments)
    - Religious/cultural values
    - Calm neighborhoods, nice people, enjoy environment
    - Friendly environment, multi-cultural, community
    - Friendly place
- Good Shepherd Church
- Great street fairs in Piscataway, free music in summer

Public Health (9 comments)   Respondents liked the hospitals and medical facilities in Middlesex County.
- Hospital (3 comments)
- Outstanding medical facilities
- Great hospital in Woodbridge (possibly referring to Raritan Bay Medical Center)
- Diverse patrons of local hospitals
- Raritan Bay Hospital (Old Bridge) amenities and expansion
- Hospitals' culture of caring and kindness
- Hospitals improving their services

Land Use & Development (5 comments)
- Shopping (3 comments)
- Restaurants
- Proximity to entertainment and groceries

Economic Opportunity
- Taxes

Environment
- Overall pretty clean

Housing
- Housing facilities

Miscellaneous
- I like everything.

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

Transportation (35 comments)   Transportation received the greatest number of comments. The most common concerns were roadway conditions, traffic, public transportation and parking.
- Roadway conditions
    - Potholes ("pothole heaven") (7 comments)
    - Roads are bad or need repair (4 comments)
    - Please fix the bridges/roads
    - Better roads, better pedestrian crossings at schools and in general
    - Broken parkways
- Traffic
    - Traffic/congestion (6 comments)
    - 1 hour to commute from New Brunswick to Old Bridge Raritan Bay
    - Traffic congestion in the afternoon, I plan my deliveries around it
    - Too busy Old Bridge to New Brunswick too much traffic
    - Change Bypass routes for I-287, too much traffic
- Public Transportation
    - Public transit is bad
    - Public transportation is very late: 813, 815, 817
    - Needs more buses that stop in more places
    - Not enough seating for bus stops in Perth Amboy
- Parking
    - Parking
    - Free parking in Perth Amboy
    - I don't like the parking and then getting a $64 ticket.
- People don't follow traffic signs, people don't follow left turn lane, go in lane and cut everyone off
- Enable left turns on roads
- Additional pedestrians and blinking traffic light
- Eliminate tolls on the Turnpike and Parkway. Car insurance too high.

Public Services & Facilities (9 comments)   Participants would change the county's education system, libraries, public works programs, and use of taxes.
- Education
    - Better school system, more afterschool activities
    - Better school system
    - Able to get an education

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- Libraries
  - My library is too small (Sayreville)
  - More libraries
  - Too small libraries
- Public Works
  - Cleaner roads, leaf removal
  - Trash removal
- Better management of taxes

Economic Opportunity (9 comments)   Participants believed that prices and taxes are too high. They would like to see lower taxes, a higher minimum wage and more jobs for people who need them.
- Taxes
  - Lower taxes (4 comments)
  - High property taxes
- Cost of living
  - Too expensive to live
  - Living cost is high, need to reduce prices
- Pay is low, raise minimum wage
- Jobs for people who are in need

Housing (8 comments)   People wanted to change the high cost of rent and housing and wanted to see more affordable housing for senior and middle-income residents.
- Rents are high (3 comments)
- More affordable housing (3 comments)
- More affordable housing for middle-income residents
- More affordable housing, including senior housing

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Parks & Open Space (6 comments)   Respondents wanted to see various changes made to the park system, such as more class offerings and better maintenance.
- Parks
    - Goose poop issues in parks
    - Improve classes/activities offered in parks (e.g. cooking, hiking, snow shoes), see Monmouth County as a model
    - Parks need maintenance and seats.
    - Larger parks in Piscataway
- Waterfront
    - Jogging path on Perth Amboy waterfront
    - Cleaner beaches, no charges to go to beach

Land Use & Development (6 comments)   Participants would change the amount and type of development occurring in the county, though one person wanted more modern malls.
- Miss small businesses, less of them, only malls
- Overdevelopment, Route 18 Old Bridge, cutting down trees
- More modern malls
- Overpopulation is very high (density)
- Construction
- Want free parking in hospital areas

Environment (6 comments)   Participants commented on the lack of cleanliness in the county resulting from litter.
- Litter
    - Trash everywhere on New Brunswick streets and open space woods
    - Cleanliness
    - Clean sidewalks, Perth Amboy
    - Trash on street and waterways
- Environmental clean-up "cancer alley"
- Environment (trees are important)

Arts & Culture (4 comments)
- More concert venues
- A lot of diversity and stores
- More recreation for children
- Religious choices

Public Health
- People's access to healthcare and medication. Patient education. Doctors don't have time to help patients.
- Mental / medical care for veterans
- Improve public health and medical health. Help people who are working.

Miscellaneous
- Convenient to everyone
- Shared services, too political, affordable housing, less parochial

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Demographic Summary

More than twice the amount of females participated than males, as shown in Figure 1. As shown in Figure 2, people of almost all ages participated, with the majority aged 45-64. Participation was ethnically and racially diverse; most participants identified as White, Hispanic and White, not Hispanic, followed by Black, not Hispanic and Asian, and Black, Hispanic and Other Race (Figure 3).
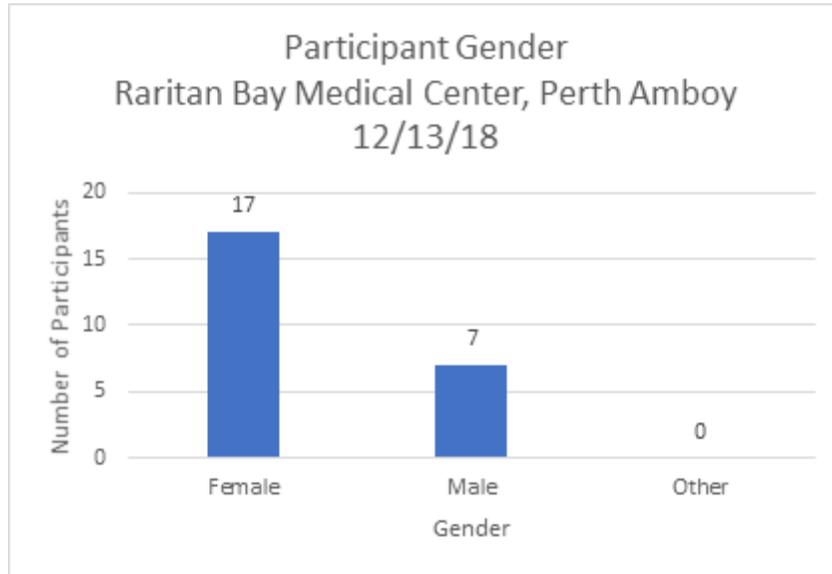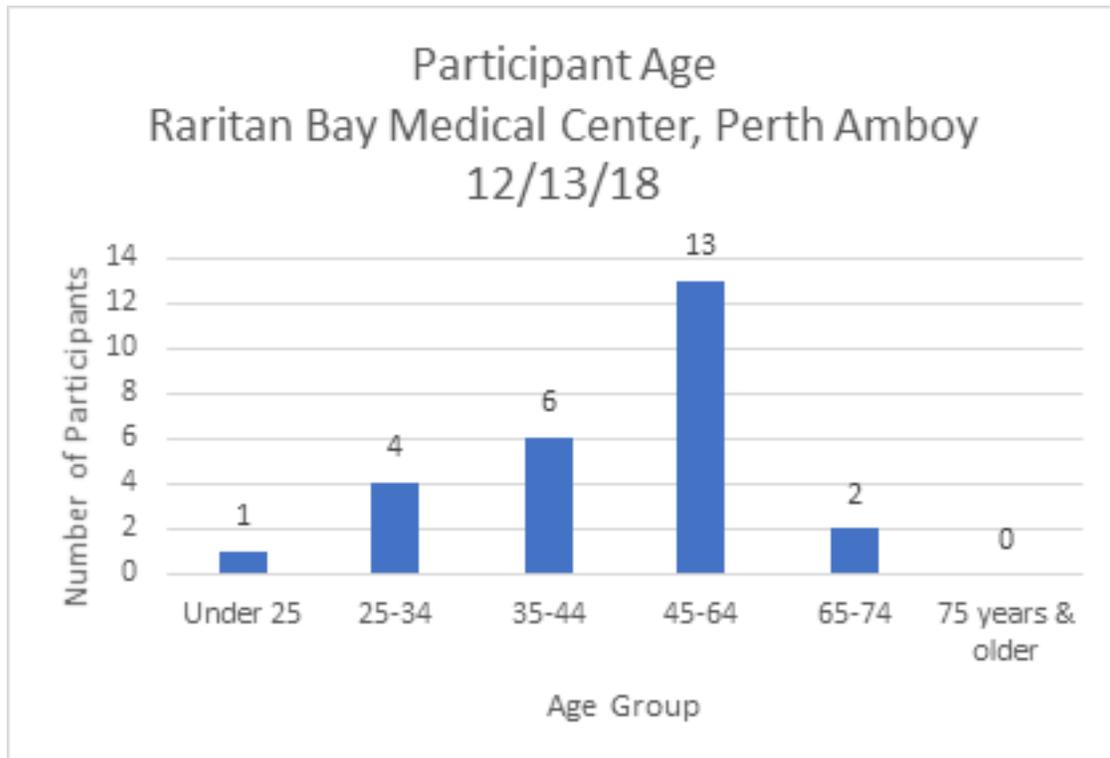
Figure 1

Participant Gender
Raritan Bay Medical Center, Perth Amboy
12/13/18

Figure 2

Participant Age
Raritan Bay Medical Center, Perth Amboy
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Figure 3

Participant Race/Ethnicity
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