

DESTINATION 2040

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ♦ NJ
MASTER PLAN



Destination 2040 Phase 2 Outreach March-April 2019

Summary of Outreach to English as a Second Language (ESL) Students

East Brunswick Public Library ESL Class
South Brunswick Public Library ESL Class
New Brunswick Public Library ESL Class

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Introduction

Middlesex County is interested in obtaining feedback from a variety of county residents, employees, and students for Destination 2040, the update of their master plan. In order to obtain comments from the county's large population of immigrants and limited-English proficient (LEP) residents, Rutgers Public Outreach and Engagement Team (POET) facilitated discussions with students in three ESL and citizenship classes held in libraries located in East Brunswick, South Brunswick, and New Brunswick.

Phase 1 of the Public Engagement Plan for Destination 2040 included general outreach to the public at events, feedback boxes at libraries throughout Middlesex County and online asking what they like and what they would change about the county. Phase 2 outreach involves more detail feedback on twelve specific elements or topics of the master plan (arts & culture, economic opportunity, environment, historic preservation, housing, land use & development, parks & open spaces, public health, public safety, public services & facilities, technology & innovation, and transportation).

Adult ESL (English as a second language) classes are ideal for outreach to immigrants and LEP residents as they comprise of people from diverse backgrounds in a setting where they feel comfortable and are surrounded by peers. LEP students are expected and encouraged to engage in English, therefore the materials used during outreach do not need to be translated if they are clear and simple. This enables engagement with LEP and immigrant communities without the cost of translation services.

Rutgers POET developed an activity packet to guide discussion about topics related to county master plan for Destination 2040. The activity packet was designed not only to obtain feedback from the students but also to help them practice speaking and writing in English.

Recruitment

Among the many benefits of working with ESL classes to collect public feedback is the ease of recruiting participants. The students can participate in the outreach activity as part of their regularly scheduled attendance in the class, and staff time necessary to publicize and drive participation is minimal. Building on existing relationships with librarians and ESL and citizenship class instructors, Rutgers POET scheduled outreach activities in three intermediate-level classes, as the activity packet is designed for intermediate-level English speakers. There are many ESL programs offered, so POET focused on outreach to those where students can attend for free.

Format for Discussions

POET developed the activity packet based on the topics and discussion questions used in the previously developed *Set the Table!* meeting facilitation kit for Destination 2040. Some of the discussion questions included in the *Set the Table!* kit were simplified and combined or generalized to be more appropriate for English language learners. The packet included 7 questions that students could respond to in three different ways: group discussion, interviewing a partner, or writing their answers. Students who were not comfortable speaking could still share their responses. These discussion questions were followed by a four-question visual preference survey.

In each class, POET staff used the activity packet to lead the students through a discussion about what life is like in Middlesex County and how the county compares to the places their country of origin. The discussion captured students' written responses in the activity packets as well as notes taken by the Rutgers POET facilitators.

Lessons Learned

ESL classes proved to be an excellent venue for Destination 2040 outreach. The students were generally unreserved about responding to questions and sharing their ideas, and the information they shared was detailed and specific about issues, challenges, and opportunities in the county. The class instructors appreciated the county's interest in their students' experiences and recognized the benefit to students of hearing new voices and learning new vocabulary. Students enjoyed speaking about their experiences and relating similarities and differences between their places of origin and their new homes in the county, giving unique perspectives on how life in the county is and how it could be improved.

Summary of Topics Discussed

Question #1: How is where you live now different than the country you came from?

Respondents identified a variety of positive ways in which Middlesex County is different from their home countries, including cleaner streets, quieter and safer neighborhoods, more access to nature and open space, less pollution, increased job opportunities, public education, variety of services offered, policing and modest traffic. Negative differences focused primarily on transportation. Many students noted that the public transportation system here is inefficient and inconvenient, and that it is difficult to get around without access to a car. Many expressed a desire to be able to walk to their destinations more easily. Several respondents also noted a lack of sufficient street lighting.

Question #2: What is most important when you choose a place to live? (Housing)

Participants noted many factors involved when choosing a place to live. Most listed education and safety as top priorities. Many respondents also noted a clean environment, convenient public transportation, religious institutions, access to jobs, and community facilities such as libraries and parks.

Question #3: What changes would you like to see where you currently live? (Housing, Land Use and Development, Public Services)

Most respondents expressed a desire for improved transportation facilities, including efficient public transit, better maintenance and snow removal of roads and sidewalks, less traffic congestion and brighter street lighting at night. Some residents also want more community-oriented sports, educational programming, expanded school facilities, increased job opportunities and greater emphasis on recycling and waste management. Most respondents also wanted lower taxes.

Question #4: Was finding a job here easy? What would make it easier? (Economic Opportunity)

Respondents' experiences finding a job were varied. For some, the ability to speak English and technological skills made finding a job relatively easy. For others, finding employment has been difficult as language is a significant barrier. Many participants expressed a desire for more resources such as career training, placement agencies, job fairs and low-cost or free ESL classes.

Question #5: Is it easy or hard to find healthy food where you live? (Public Health)

Nearly all participants noted that while it is relatively easy to find healthy food, it is often expensive, particularly organic food. Residents identified a variety of options for accessing healthy food, including Costco, Trader Joe's, Walmart and farmers' markets. Some respondents noted that children's school lunch menus often lack healthy food options.

Question #6: Are you able to easily get around the area? What is most difficult about getting to the places you want to go? (Transportation)

Nearly all respondents noted that the public transit makes it difficult to get around New Jersey, and that in many cases a car is the only way to travel to get employment, services and facilities efficiently. Some respondents also noted challenges to using a car, such as traffic congestion, lack of parking, and the cost of owning and maintaining a vehicle. Residents without a car sometimes must use ride-hailing services, such as Uber and Lyft.

Reports

The attached reports provide detailed answers received from the students which were recorded in their activity packets or in facilitators' notes. To ensure students' reassurance of privacy, demographic information was not collected.

EAST BRUNSWICK ESL CLASS

Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2019

Location: East Brunswick Public Library, Civic Center Drive, East Brunswick, NJ 08816

Rutgers POET Staff: Miriam Salerno, Trish Sanchez

Event Summary

This was a large, intermediate-level class of about 30 students held at the East Brunswick Public Library. The group was very diverse, with students originating from a number of places, including Russia, Moldova, Belarus, China, South Korea, Egypt, and Chile.



Survey Responses

Question #1: *How is where you live now different than the country you came from?*

Respondents identified a variety of positive ways in which Middlesex County is different from their home countries, including cleaner streets, quieter and safer neighborhoods, more access to nature and open space, less pollution, increased job opportunities, public education, variety of services offered, policing and modest traffic. Negative differences focused primarily on transportation. Many students noted that the public transportation system here is inefficient and inconvenient, and that it is difficult to get around without access to a car. Many expressed a desire to be able to walk to their destinations more easily. Several respondents also noted a lack of sufficient street lighting.

- (Russia): Clear, nice, silence here in New Jersey.
- (Moldova): Lots of cars, shops, and many entertainment centers.
- (Russia): Safety
- (Egypt): No cops. Cops here are very aggressive. No lights in the streets.

- Transportation is better in South Korea. Public transportation is hard here—two hours to go to library from home by bus. Chile has better transportation. Beautiful and healthy countryside in Chile, never need to drive. I can walk to get to the bus stop. Sidewalks aren't everywhere. Bad lighting in America. Ryders Lane is very dark by Bicentennial Park.
- (Belarus): Less public transportation. Areas organized in a way that forces you to drive.
- (China): My country has convenient transportation. The transportation here is not convenient.
- (Chile): In my country I lived in the city. Now I live in East Brunswick, more like the countryside. The public transportation is not good. I wait for a long time, and trips are long.
- (South Korea): Nature is better here than in my country. But transportation is better in my country.
- (Egypt): It is cleaner here than in my country, and very quiet and all people abide by the law. Here it is very dark at night.
- (South Korea): Public transportation is not enough here. Walking is not easy. School transportation is excellent. Basketball grounds for teens is not enough. Sidewalks are not good and are dangerous. Night light is not enough.
- (China): The air is cleaner here. There are blue skies. It's better than in my country. In my opinion, I like Chinese food better than here.
- (South Korea): This place is free and you can do what you want regardless of age.

Question #2: *What is most important when you choose a place to live?*

Participants noted many factors involved when choosing a place to live. Most listed education and safety as top priorities. Many respondents also noted a clean environment, convenient public transportation, religious institutions, access to jobs, and community facilities such as libraries and parks.

- Nice, clear, silence
- I like this area. The schools and shops are near my house.
- Safety
- Schools and churches, lights in the streets, no pollution
- There is very good education in East Brunswick.
- Library and education, shopping, church, family
- Education and environment, safety
- School—good for my daughters, security, safety
- I live in Edison because they have many Chinese restaurants and supermarkets.
- I live in East Brunswick because the school is good for my granddaughter.
- Good schools for my grandchildren
- Education and a clean environment
- Education and safety

- Education (schools and colleges), transportation (bus and train), safety for my family, jobs
- Education, safety, access to jobs, environment, transportation
- Education, safety, environment, community
- Education, safe environment, friendly community, Korean community
- It's easy to buy something, nearby supermarket. Quiet and safe place. Good environment
- School/high school, good community, good activities (library, park), transportation (bus, train), quiet and safe community, near supermarket, dog park, good environment, church
- Education and safety, weather

Question #3: *What changes would you like to see where you currently live?*

Most respondents expressed a desire for improved transportation facilities, including efficient public transit, better maintenance and snow removal of roads and sidewalks, less traffic congestion and brighter street lighting at night. Some residents also want more community-oriented sports, educational programming, expanded school facilities, increased job opportunities and greater emphasis on recycling and waste management. Most respondents also wanted lower taxes.

- I like everything and want to change nothing.
- Lights in the streets. Transportation. No no no cops in the streets or follow me. Most of the time they didn't tell the truth and lied, I'm sorry to say that.
- More areas you can reach by walking. Don't organize new areas (plazas), but renovate old ones. Pedestrians' responsibility!
- Big, freedom, weekend
- Public transport, lower taxes
- More sidewalks, more streetlights
- Build more new houses.
- Environmental protection, more trees, clean air, and fish
- Recycling systems. We collect items separately, but they collect them together.
- Good food market, recycling, garbage, school food, property taxes
- I want more centers to learn sports like basketball, soccer, and gymnastics. I want more lights in East Brunswick because it's very dark at night.
- More education and training clubs for children. Improvement of night lighting and safety. More public transportation.
- Swimming pool in East Brunswick High School
- Small local stores and restaurants. Open space for residents to rest and socialize. Community center.
- Change the poor roads. More bus stations.
- Renovated roads and more public transport

Question #4: Economic Opportunity *Was finding a job here easy? What would make it easier?*

Respondents' experiences finding a job varied. For some, the ability to speak English and technological skills made finding a job relatively easy. For others, finding employment has been difficult as language is a significant barrier. Many participants expressed a desire for more resources such as career training, placement agencies, job fairs and low-cost or free ESL classes.

- It's easy for me to get a job. I would like to have more agencies in our community. I am a seamstress and could not find an agency.
- No
- No. I want to be a big chef, but I don't know how I do that or how I go to or join an academy.
- Confidence makes it easy. And experience, too.
- I want to learn more English and how to drive.
- Not easy. I want to improve my English ability and learning skills.
- It was easy to find a job in this area, but the job is basic. In supermarket, store, restaurant, or Fedex for moving boxes. In this area there are many stores, always hiring. For professionals it is difficult to find jobs if you don't speak English.
- If a person wants a job, Edison is a good place. There are many supermarkets and restaurants. For immigrants it is good. Don't need too high an education.
- My daughter found a job easily. Her English is very good.
- Retired.
- Most of all, language is the important thing to get a job. I can't get a job doing what I want just because of my English.
- I think it is easy but not for me because I am not good enough at speaking English.
- I think it's not easy here. When I search for my career (graphic design) I find it far away.
- Finding a job is not easy here. Job information is not easy to access. Transportation is not good. Training opportunities can help to find a job.
- Not easy to find a full-time job.
- It is not easy to find a job.
- I am retired. I used to have a part-time job. It's easier than to find a full-time job.
- I'm looking for a job and it's easy to find, the only thing is I need to speak English very well. Now I'm looking for a job in Spanish or French, instead of improving my English. Actually, I applied for Rutgers in HHRR and never called me back.
- Yes. I have a part time job because I can use AutoCad.

Question #5: *Is it easy or hard to find healthy food where you live?*

Nearly all participants noted that while it is relatively easy to find healthy food, it is often expensive, particularly organic food. Residents identified a variety of options for accessing healthy food, including Costco, Trader Joe's, Walmart and farmers' markets. Some respondents noted that children's school lunch menus often lack healthy food options.

- Yes
- In my community it is easy to find healthy food. In our yard there is a small garden where we grow various vegetables.
- Easy
- Yes, it is easy but it's hard to find some kind of food like sour soup or lucia
- Prices are high for organic food, but it's not too difficult to find.
- It's easy to find healthy food from Walmart, farm, Costco.
- I think it's easy. Healthy food is in farmers' markets and Asian supermarkets.
- Yes, it's easy, in all supermarkets and farm food. The taste is no good.
- It's easy to find healthy food in some supermarkets, Shoprite, Costco. I rent a small garden. I like planting vegetables by myself.
- We find healthy food in Costco and H-Mart (Korean market) easily. Fresh fish, meat, and vegetables, dumplings, and noodles too.
- Easy. Healthy food in supermarkets.
- It's easy. I can buy organic foods in nearby markets, such as Trader Joes, Whole Foods, Acme, etc.
- It is easy. I can find healthy food in every market.
- It is easy to find healthy food from the grocery store. I can get all vegetables and fruits and make my healthy food at home.
- It is easy to find healthy food. But children's school lunch menus do not have enough healthy food. A menu with vegetables and fruits would be helpful.
- Easy
- It is ok.
- It's easy to find healthy food here.
- It is easy to find, lactose free, gluten free.
- I think it's easy. I usually go shopping at Korean H-Mart.

Question #6: Are you able to easily get around the area? What is most difficult about getting to the places you want to go?

Nearly all respondents noted that the public transit makes it difficult to get around New Jersey, and that in many cases a car is the only way to travel to get employment, services and facilities efficiently. Some respondents also noted challenges to using a car, such as traffic congestion, lack of parking, and the cost of owning and maintaining a vehicle. Residents without a car sometimes must use ride-hailing services, such as Uber and Lyft.

- Get to the train station
- It's easy, I drive
- Problems with public transportation
- Not easy. It's far from the bus stop.
- No, it's difficult to move if you don't have a car. Public transportation is slow and there aren't many sidewalks. More buses are needed.
- Easy, I drive
- Easily. Because serial [sic] take bus.
- Senior center bus comes here easily.
- No, I don't think so. I can't go anywhere without driving. For example, to get to Rutgers, I can get there in just 5 minutes. But if I take a bus, it takes over 2 hours (according to GPS).
- To take taxi is very hard.
- No, it's difficult because no local buses. Without a car I can't go anywhere.
- Not easy to get around. There is poor public transportation.
- No
- No more bus stations, no sidewalk
- Not easy

Question #7: Do you mostly...? (Choose 2)

Most participants selected driving as their most frequent transit mode. They also take transit, walk, or use ride-hailing services like Uber or Lyft. No participants reported biking or taking taxis frequently.

Response	Count
Drive	18
Take transit	9
Walk	7
Uber or Lyft	3
Bike	0
Taxi	0

Visual Preference Survey Responses

Response	Count
What activities would you like the county to offer?	
Educational Programs	17
Fine and Performing Arts	10
Recreational Facilities	6
Street Fairs	4
Sports League	3
Other: Music	1
What kind of environmental issues affect where you live?	
Air Pollution	8
Loss of Green Space	7
Waste/Recycling	7
Flooding	5
Water Pollution	3
Other: Pollution from Factories	1
What kinds of new technology are you the most excited about?	
Medical Breakthroughs	16
Solar/Clean Energy	8
Public WiFi	8
Driverless Cars	5
Electric Cars	4
Other: Research about how healthy food affects health and lifespan	1
What is your greatest safety concern where you live?	
Truck/Car Crashes	13
Home Break-Ins	9
Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety	8
Other: No Streetlights; Increasing Teen Suicide; Bullying; Drugs	5
Mugging	3
Gang Violence	2

SOUTH BRUNSWICK ESL CLASS

Date: Thursday, March 14, 2019

Location: South Brunswick Public Library, 110 Kingston Ln, Monmouth Junction, NJ 08852

Rutgers POET Staff: Trish Sanchez, Dan Swain

Event Summary

This class meets weekly at a classroom in the South Brunswick Public Library. There were approximately 15 students in attendance, and students spoke English quite well. Students in this class were from the following countries: India, China, Turkey, Romania and Puerto Rico.

Survey Responses

Question #1: *How is where you live now different than the country you came from?*

Class members identified a number of things they like about Middlesex County compared to their home countries, including its cleanliness, senior services and activities, accessible public transportation, open space, public education options, effective policing, and light traffic.

- I live in South Brunswick and come from India. I like this country because roles of driving and clean. My home country is India.
- I'm living in Middlesex County. South Brunswick, NJ. I like this City because people are nice. The town's services are very good. Like South Brunswick provides ESL for the people who came from other countries. My home country is China.
- I live in South Brunswick. I come from India. I like both countries. I like America because independent and beautiful country. My home country is India.
- This country is more advanced and clean compared to our country. Nobody can interfere what you do. Everybody obey the law. My home country is India.
- I live in South Brunswick. I have been living in this town for four years. I came from southern part of India. It's a crowded area. My home country is India.
- I live in Monroe Township. Our township has many communities (buildings) for senior citizens. Any more activities happening in our senior center and our library. This is different from my home country. My home country is India.
- I am from Istanbul, Turkey. Istanbul is a big city. There is lot of traffic and the city is overcrowded. I live in Dayton in Middlesex County. Here is so quiet and no traffic. The life is easier in here. We can reach any destination without traffic hassle.
- This country is more safe, much expensive in mortgage and living cost but better public education system. People follow the transit rules and is more respectful. My home country is Puerto Rico.
- I live in Middlesex County. I came here from India. It is a different culture and language from my home country. My home country is India.
- The difference I found out which is quite prominent for me is public transportation. It will be great if I have easy access for public transportation like bus service in my area. My home country is India.

- To begin with the streets are wider and cleaner. The traffic rules are followed by all citizens. The police and the 911 concept is refreshing change from back home. My home country is India.
- I came from a city, capital of Romania. I love the countryside landscape of Middlesex County. I love nature, I love the parks, I love open spaces; I don't like the lack of public transportation. My home country is Romania.
- It's totally different compared to my home country. But the most different is the language. It is very difficult to communicate with others if I can't speak fluent English. My home country is China.
- I live in South Brunswick. I am from India. It is totally different than my country. It is beautiful, lot of green, less traffic compared to my country. My home country is India.

Question #2: *What is most important when you choose a place to live?*

Most participants identified access to public education as a significant factor in choosing where to live. Many residents noted the presence of other amenities, such as medical services, parks, retail, and libraries as important factors as well. Some participants also mentioned a vibrant community as a factor.

- School district, beautiful nature, and I like the public library
- I think the most important thing for me to choose a place to live is safety.
- School is very important where we are. And community should be good.
- Schools, shopping malls, neighborhood, other facilities like doctor, gym, park
- I chose this location because of the cutoff date in schools. My daughter's birthdate is October 2nd. I didn't get in admission in Plainsboro schools.
- Not crowded, good neighborhoods, good schools, library
- The school system is very important for us.
- Public education system, near work, quiet place, many options to move around home
- School district, neighborhood should be good
- Firstly I chose the place according to ratings of school districts. Also I chose the community which is safe to live and has club house with gym in it and play park, walk, trail, etc.
- School district and rating; friends and people of our community; kid friendly places where they can be entertained; safety
- Public schools; gas heating
- The education system for children and safety, convenience
- The schools should be good. The neighborhood should be lively.

Question #3: *What changes would you like to see where you currently live?*

Participants would like to see improved public transportation, lower taxes, expanded school facilities, increased job opportunities, and a greater emphasis on recycling and waste management.

- I lived in South Plainfield. I like the school district and nature and people.
- I think I'd like to see the town where I live is getting better and better. Like town services, traffic schools, safety.
- We want public transport.
- All facilities are good but only thing is public transport and property tax is very high.
- I would like to see the changes in transportation for preschoolers.
- Unfortunately, in the past four years it became more crowded. Need more building in high school and another middle school. Only citizens have to vote for referendum. Unfortunately, senior citizens not ready for supporting US.
- Public transportation needs to be improved.
- Stop the gas compressor station.
- Before we live their commute is very good; easy access to malls and shopping places, easy access to highway, 287, NJTP; taxes are very high in SB
- Easy commute to go any place would be preferable; recycle and waste management
- More public transport; lower property taxes
- Community bonding
- More support for new people just move from the other country; job opportunities
- Public transportation

Question #4: *Was finding a job here easy? What would make it easier?*

When asked about difficulty finding a job, residents noted that language remains a significant barrier. However, while some experienced difficulty securing a job, most participants found it relatively easy to find a job in the area, noting that a wide variety of jobs are available depending on skills and experience. Some participants recommended that more job training and job fairs be made available to immigrants.

- Without Visa categories. Home businesses. Like beauty or homemade cooking.
- Talk about finding a job. I think it's easy to find but for language problem. We only can find a basic job. So for me I need to improve my English to find a better job.
- Finding a job here easy. It is a person who would be educated and smart. There are more options to do a job. We can choose what we want. Conversation is important in this country.
- Yes finding a job is easy here because you have lots of choices other than your own field. Second thing here is minimum wages is fixed. Only newcomers have little problem like language, communication and rules over here.
- I think it's easy to find a job here. If we have the proper communication skills and different kinds of jobs available here like part time jobs, weekly two day jobs. I didn't try for the job here.

- Yes. Here we have more options like part-time, work from home (remote) flexible timing for IT professionals. Internet makes everything easier (I guess). Need more session/help to get job and training for immigrants like ESL programs.
- I have never tried to find a job here but some of my friends say it is difficult to find a suitable job for individuals around the area.
- For my daughter it was easy she is 18 and many half time jobs are offered in the area.
- They always ask for experience if we try than only you get experience; did you work before somewhere. Job fair for newcomers with no experience.
- Finding a job is not very easy. I would say it is moderate. More advertisement of jobs and not only recommendations should be considered but giving a chance to a new or fresher is also important. Training programs for newcomers or fresher's to do their internship would be highly recommended.
- It was fairly easy to find a job but I think more job fairs need to be conducted to widen our choices. More opportunities for people with minimal experience would be a plus.
- Fair jobs for newcomers; internships
- No it is very difficult. I need to apply EAD card first. Some train to get the certification or license.
- No finding a job is very difficult. They ask experience that I don't have it. There is a lot of competition. They should select some office where we can go and get training.

Question #5: *Is it easy or hard to find healthy food where you live?*

Participants noted that while it is relatively easy to find healthy food, it is often expensive. Residents identified a variety of options for accessing healthy food, including Costco, Trader Joe's, and farmers' markets. However, high prices in stores often make healthy food inaccessible.

- I like the organic food every week we go to the Trader Joe's. It's very less price we need nearby that will be very good.
- I like it's easy and hard. Because say easy we can go Costco buy some organic vegetables but the price is high. So every time I go shopping I go several supermarkets to find something priced isn't high and good.
- It is easy to find healthy food. We get fresh vegetables and fruit and everything organic.
- Here is very easy to find healthy food. You have different choices and you have to find everything (mostly) in one store. You have lots of choices to organic food also the only thing is organic is more expensive.
- It is hard to find healthy food near to our community because we need to spend more money to buy organic food.
- Yes. We have a few shops (farmer's shops) to get healthy food. We even have Indian groceries so our kids don't miss our home country food and dishes. We even have a Gasktco nursery farm and Monroe community garden as well. I have rented a plat and tried to grow vegetables. We all had good time as a family.

- It is easy to find healthy food there are lots of grocery store. We can easily access to buy. But when we compare to our country sometimes it is no fresh as our country's food. Especially vegetable.
- Yes is easy! There are many options to everyone. Even we have farmers near to buy directly.
- Like healthy food is quite expensive like organic food. As always taxes also too high. It is difficult to buy healthy food.
- It is easy to find healthy food which has no preservatives or more organic one. But how to make sure whether the advertising is correct or not and the price of organic food is very expensive.
- It is easy to find healthy food in South Brunswick. There are plenty of store and supermarkets nearby. I just wish that organic food was cheaper.
- Easy but the quality is not reflected in prices.
- Yes. There are lots of choice in market. And it's easy for me to select organic or Chinese food. It's easy to find healthy food but its expensive

Question #6: *Are you able to easily get around the area? What is most difficult about getting to the places you want to go?*

Participants identified a need for expanded public transportation, noting that many services and facilities are only accessible by car. Residents without a car are sometimes forced to use ride-hailing services, such as Uber. Some participants also noted traffic as an issue when driving around the area.

- We need a public transportation. We need more.
- I drive so it's easy for me to go anywhere. But the most difficult thing for me is driving alone to a new place.
- We are able to easily get shops. Where are more options? And everything is close to my place (schools)
- Many attraction places are very far. So it's very difficult about getting to scenic places.
- No. My community is far away from the stores malls and schools we have to go by car. Particularly my son's preschool is far away. No other option for us. Without a car we can't survive.
- Unfortunately, no public transportation like our country. But I can get around with our own car. Next option is Uber. We have limited buses to NYC (not to other cities)
- As far as you have a car it is easy to get around
- Yes traffic is only in the commute hours. Parking in big towns like New Brunswick or Edison.
- Major highway is very far from shore. And too much traffic. Driving is tedious.
- No, at least not where I live. Easy Access for commuting with public transportation would be great if provide by county or government people
- I commute by using my car but it would be good to have better public transportation to get to places that may be far.

- No there are limited options to get to public transport
- Yes its easily for me to get around. The most difficult thing is how to find the interesting place

Question #7: Do you mostly...? (Choose 2)

Driving was the most commonly selected mode of transportation. Participants also reported taking transit, using ride-hailing services, walking, and using taxis. No participants reported biking frequently.

Response	Count
Drive	12
Take transit	5
Uber or Lyft	4
Walk	4
Taxi	1
Bike	0

Visual Preference Surveys

Response	Count
What activities would you like the county to offer?	
Sports League	10
Recreational Facilities	9
Street Fairs	8
Educational Programs	1
Fine and Performing Arts	1
Other: Swimming	1
What kind of environmental issues affect where you live?	
Loss of Green Space	10
Waste/Recycling	9
Air Pollution	2
Flooding	1
Water Pollution	1
Other	0
What kinds of new technology are you the most excited about?	
Solar/Clean Energy	12
Medical Breakthroughs	6
Public WiFi	6
Electric Cars	4
Driverless Cars	1
Other	0
What is your greatest safety concern where you live?	
Truck/Car Crashes	9
Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety	8
Home Break-Ins	7
Mugging	2
Other: Gun Control	1
Gang Violence	0

NEW BRUNSWICK ESL CLASS

Date: Thursday, March 21, 2019

Location: New Brunswick Free Public Library, 60 Livingston Ave, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Rutgers POET Staff: Trish Sanchez, Sarah Tomasello

Event Summary

This ESL class meets regularly in the community room of the New Brunswick Public Library. Approximately 15 students with varying levels of English proficiency were in attendance. Most students originated from Central and South American countries, while several students came from India and Egypt.



Survey Responses

Question #1: *How is where you live now different than the country you came from?*

Respondents identified a variety of positive ways in which Middlesex County is different from their home countries, including cleaner streets, quieter and safer neighborhoods, beautiful weather, and less pollution. Some participants also noted a greater number of job opportunities in New Jersey compared to their home countries.

- (Honduras): Better opportunities for employment here. Very good security. Opportunities for study.
- (Venezuela): My country has political problems. No security.
- (Mexico): Huiluco Huaquechula, Puebla is a very beautiful town. The climate always provides greenness.

- (Dominican Republic): The weather is different in the Dominican Republic, hot, no snow. This country is more organized, cleaner transit and ordered better.
- I've lived here for 7 years. I like New Jersey.
- (Peru): This country is better because we have many opportunities for all people.
- (Dominican Republic): Where I live now is more organized, nicer.
- (India): Better living conditions, better hospitals, good security.
- (Colombia): The people in my country are friendlier and share everything that happens. Crazy traffic. Here is more organized.
- (India): Very much love it here. Very peaceful, environmentally safe. Clean air and clean water. Four seasons. Winter, summer, fall, and spring. Snow is very much my favorite. Less polluted. Job opportunities and education.
- (Egypt): My country is noisy and the traffic there is terrible. In the US I enjoy the quiet and driving.
- (Bolivia): Organization and planning. Management of the money. Roads are clean. Safety and order.
- (El Salvador): Here in the United States, we have four seasons. In El Salvador, we have only two seasons. The security in my country is great, in El Salvador the violence is high.

Question #2: *What is most important when you choose a place to live?*

Participants noted many factors involved when choosing a place to live. Most listed education and safety as top priorities. Many respondents also noted the importance of a clean environment, convenient public transportation, peace and quiet, access to parks and open space, and job opportunities.

- Transportation, better education, the stores, the park, and cultural diversity.
- Town is small and quiet.
- Peace is important. Employment. The parks, beautiful flowers. Unity, family. Safe and secure streets.
- For me the most important thing is transportation and place. Safety and quiet.
- Transportation and job opportunities.
- Schooling, structured houses, paid off houses, security, good maintenance.
- Peaceful, education (schools and universities), security, close stores, close hospitals, parks and walking.
- Education (schools and college), transportation, parks, playgrounds, security, safety.
- Greenery, security, safety.
- Safety, education, transportation, green areas.
- Schools, parks, security in the neighborhood.
- More security. More police enforcement.

Question #3: *What changes would you like to see where you currently live?*

Most respondents expressed a desire for improved maintenance of public amenities, including roadway maintenance and snow removal. Many participants also wished to see traffic congestion addressed. Some participants expressed a desire for lower taxes.

- None. The people are all very nice.
- More parks.
- I want paved streets in New Brunswick. I want NJ Transit to have a route in Somerset for Hamilton Street from Rutgers (Busch Campus and Livingston Campus).
- Too much parking.
- I would like to see more cleaning and order for the homeless.
- Taxes.
- Better snow maintenance. Actually have people cleaning snow for us.
- More maintenance in routes. Traffic. Clean school areas.
- Public transportation. Roads, sidewalks, potholes. Decrease taxes. Traffic.
- Taxes are very high, as a high amount goes to school and I don't have children. I see this is not fair.
- Increase minimum wages. Traffic is terrible, they have to change that.
- Changes on the peak hours of traffic on Route 1.
- More police presence in school zones for the kids

Question #4: *Was finding a job here easy? What would make it easier?*

Respondents' experiences finding a job varied. For some, language skills made finding a job relatively easy. For others, finding employment has been difficult. Many participants expressed a desire for more resources such as career training and low-cost or free ESL classes.

- Yes for me it was easier finding a job in New Jersey. Of the other states, I went to Mississippi and Virginia. The work is different.
- Yes. More factory, warehouse, distribution, Uber, taxi, agency staffing...Students: part time in the office, in the stores, in the library.
- I love my job working at a day care.
- Yes, I found a job easily, but we know the language and culture. After you begin a job you can take course for applying to better jobs.
- It was hard to find a good job. Providing more ESL classes for a low price or free can help.
- Yes
- More support for adults for training in other careers. More opportunities to learn English in free conversation classes.

- Yes. Lots of jobs, for me it was easy. As a substitute teacher in a big county.
- I didn't try to find a job, however I'm wondering if my experience in Egypt will be considered in the US or not.
- No! Too much bureaucracy for people who come with a degree. Training and more access to education. ESL classes.
- In my case it was a little easy to get a job.
- More education to get a good job. Quality training to get a good position.

Question #5: *Is it easy or hard to find healthy food where you live?*

Nearly all respondents find it easy to access healthy and organic food in their communities due to the number and variety of supermarkets in the New Brunswick area. However, some respondents noted that the high cost of healthy and organic food can be prohibitive.

- Yes, it is easy for me.
- More markets.
- Yes, I love organic food at Trader Joe's supermarket. It is healthy food. Various supermarket with excellent food, and farmers markets.
- I love fruit and vegetables. North Brunswick for green market. I love mango orange.
- Yes, in New Brunswick it is easy because we have different stores, grocery stores and convenience stores, and there are many farmers.
- Yes, it is very easy.
- Yes it is easy.
- Yes. I have a lot of healthy supermarkets close to my house. I can choose organic, direct to the farms, fresh and delicious. It's very easy for me.
- For me it's very easy to find all vegetable farms, market, organic.
- It's very easy. There are lots of places around my home.
- "Easy" but it is expensive to buy healthy, organic.
- Yes, it is easy to find healthy food here.
- More vegetables, fruits, beans.

Question #6: Are you able to easily get around the area? What is most difficult about getting to the places you want to go?

Nearly all participants noted that it is relatively easy to get around the Middlesex County/New Brunswick area with a car, but otherwise it is difficult. Some respondents also noted some challenges when using a car, such as traffic congestion, parking, and the cost of owning and maintaining a vehicle.

- I drive
- Most difficult is the traffic slows at lights
- I am driving. I like my car, it's easy.
- The most difficult thing is to have and maintain your own car.
- Yes I am able to get around easily. The most difficult thing is to find parking.
- The high traffic. The only way to go to other places is to drive my car or use Uber.
- Yes
- Yes it's very easy.
- Yes, driver's license for those people who don't have a driver's license.
- Yes, it is easy to get around Middlesex County/New Brunswick area. Other areas are more difficult, like Monroe Township.

Question #7: Do you mostly...?

Many participants frequently either drive or use public transit as their main mode of transportation. Some also reported using ride-hailing services, walking, taking taxis, and biking.

Response	Count
Drive	10
Take transit	6
Uber or Lyft	3
Walk	3
Taxi	2
Bike	1

Visual Preference Surveys

Response	Count
What activities would you like the county to offer?	
Educational Programs	11
Other: Arts; Football; Baseball; Museums (art, history); YMCA; Adult and senior programming	6
Fine and Performing Arts	4
Recreational Facilities	4
Sports League	3
Street Fairs	3
What kind of environmental issues affect where you live?	
Other: Mosquitos; Squirrels; High traffic; Trucks	6
Waste/Recycling	6
Air Pollution	5
Loss of Green Space	4
Water Pollution	1
Flooding	0
What kinds of new technology are you the most excited about?	
Solar/Clean Energy	10
Medical Breakthroughs	6
Public WiFi	6
Electric Cars	5
Driverless Cars	2
Other	0
What is your greatest safety concern where you live?	
Truck/Car Crashes	7
Gang Violence	6
Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety	4
Home Break-Ins	3
Mugging	2
Other: Noisy for Rutgers students Thursday-Sunday; Mugging at train station	2