

RTP Outreach to Millennials: Set the Table!

Summary of Results
June 2017

Introduction



The Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) combined two innovative outreach strategies, the civic dinner party and a “meeting-in-a-box,” to create *Set the Table!*, a public engagement campaign geared toward Millennials. The civic dinner party outreach concept is tailor-made for this age group, combining community discussion with friends, food, and social media. The “meeting-in-a-box” element enabled individual Millennials to independently host these civic dinner parties with their peers, aided by facilitation materials created by VTC that helped organize and orient their discussions.

VTC recruited 20 North Jersey Millennials to host dinner parties with their friends, during which they discussed topics covered in NJTPA’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). As part of the “meeting-in-a-box,” VTC developed a discussion card game based on outreach questions from the RTP, as well as a Host Kit that included a variety of other materials.

Recruitment

VTC used a variety of social media and networking strategies to recruit dinner party hosts. The opportunity was shared across social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. VTC reached out to a host of community organizations, civic centers, political and volunteer groups, and university offices whose members might be excited by the idea and familiar with fostering community conversations. VTC also handed out and hung up flyers in Rutgers Newark, small businesses, and other public spaces, contacted previous focus group participants, and notified the Together North Jersey network. News of *Set the Table!* was shared on statewide online news outlets and featured on an NJ 101.5 radio segment.

Interested persons were directed to an online application that screened for age and county of residence and collected their contact info. Each qualified applicant received an introductory email and then a follow-up phone call with a VTC staff member. This ensured applicants were serious about participating and understood the project’s goals.

Applicants were invited to attend a Meet & Greet in either Newark or New Brunswick. The meetings were casual, giving hosts the opportunity to meet one another and the project staff, learn more about Set the Table! and their hosting responsibilities, and receive their host kits and \$100 stipends. In Newark, pizza was served and VTC facilitated a short run-through of several of the dinner party questions. The New Brunswick event was cancelled due to snow so staff met with hosts individually at the VTC offices.



Host Kit & Discussion Cards

NJTPA's RTP outreach questions were the basis for the dinner party discussion questions. Two or three questions were included from each of the RTP's seven topics, and some were reworded for more relevance to this age group. All questions were open-ended rather than multiple choice, and hosts were instructed to ask at least one question from each topic during their parties.

In order to ensure smooth facilitation, VTC created a card game format for the discussions. This included two types of discussion cards: "Chew on this..." cards with discussion questions and "Food for Thought" cards with facts about New Jersey to help stimulate conversation. The format was flexible so that each group could decide how to run through the questions; for example, either one person could facilitate the discussion or each participant could take a turn asking a question.

Throughout the discussions, the groups decided altogether what responses they wanted to share with VTC and NJTPA. These comments were collected on a "Feedback Form" for each of the seven topics. On the form, one side was for note-taking during the discussion, and the other was where the group flushed out their three "Big Ideas." Once their parties were over, hosts sent these forms back to VTC in provided postage-paid envelopes.

Hosts received all of the necessary materials in Host Kits, which were distributed during the Meet & Greets. Each Host Kit is packaged in a small pizza box with Set the Table! branding. Each kit included the discussion cards, Feedback Forms, prepaid envelope, Host Guide with instructions for hosts, participant contact info slips, gummy bears, and microwave popcorn.

Events

VTC hosted a Meet & Greet (described above) to familiarize applicants with Set the Table! and distribute project materials. About 15 of the 20 dinner party hosts attended. VTC also held a Wrap Up event in Newark where hosts described their experiences with the project and discussed how they could best stay connected with NJTPA for future outreach.

Set the Table! hosts held 20 dinner party events throughout the region. They were responsible for setting the date, time, and location, inviting a group of 6-8 friends, using their host kits to facilitate discussion of the RTP questions, and recording their responses and sending them to VTC. In total, about 120 people participated in these dinner parties as either hosts or guests.

County	Parties
Essex	8
Bergen	3
Hudson	3
Middlesex	3
Morris	1
Passaic	1
Union	1

Lessons Learned

Being that Set the Table! was an ambitious and unconventional outreach effort, its formation gave rise to valuable lessons that can inform future deployment of this engagement model.

Social media was an integral component of VTC's host recruitment strategy, however it was not as effective as was expected. VTC launched the Set the Table! recruitment period using mainly Facebook and Twitter, however, though the project pages received "Likes" and viewership, these platforms did not yield many applicants. VTC realized that even though many Millennials use social media, they are not likely to respond to solicitations from unfamiliar sources. Rather, many hosts stated in their applications that they had been referred by a friend or through an email list. It is possible that others saw Set the Table! advertisements on social media and then referred friends whom they thought would be interested in participating. Recruitment especially picked up once the project received coverage on NJ.com and was shared throughout the TNJ network.

Set the Table! is based on two outreach models that place a considerable amount of responsibility on the participants. Dinner party hosts were asked to attend two events in Newark, entrusted with a \$100 stipend obliging their commitment, and tasked with arranging a dinner party, facilitating a discussion, and returning the feedback they collected. VTC counted on at least several hosts being unable to fulfill all of these responsibilities, or having to send hosts constant reminders to do so.

In fact, this was hardly the case. All twenty hosts held a dinner party and sent feedback to VTC, and many attended two project events in Newark. Nearly all dinner parties were held by the deadline of May 1 (though quite a few occurred at the last moment) and most feedback was sent in by May 5. The variable of participant responsibility was hardly an issue in VTC's use of the civic dinners and "meeting-in-a-box" outreach models. Rather, if participants are dependable and capable, outreach like Set the Table! can indeed yield a great deal of participation with reduced project staff time.

The majority of staff time was concentrated at the project's beginning to recruit hosts and develop dinner party facilitation materials. Both of these tasks required a lot of time, however the latter resulted in a set of outreach materials that can be reused. During the project's Wrap Up event, dinner party hosts commented that their gatherings attracted a lot of interest and that people were engaged by the idea of a civic dinner party. Set the Table! could undoubtedly be used successfully to collect feedback on a range of issues and scaled to accommodate a large number of participants.

Dinner hosts supplied valuable suggestions for improving Set the Table! during the Wrap Up event. They agreed that timing was an issue while trying to cover all of the discussion questions and suggested adding time limits for each topic. Another possible solution could be to have each group focus on only one topic instead of all seven. A few hosts stated that simultaneously taking notes and participating in the discussion was difficult to do, and that having a staff member present to take notes would have been helpful. A host of a smaller gathering said she found the multi-tasking easy. Nearly everyone agreed that the \$100 stipend was adequate to cover food costs for 6-8 guests.



During the Wrap Up hosts also discussed how they could continue to be involved in NJTPA's outreach efforts. They believed that although initially attracting participation is difficult, people will continue to be involved once they are in the loop. They felt that the civic dinner party program could be sustained; meeting monthly would be fatiguing, but quarterly meetings could sustain interest. Traveling to Newark or New Brunswick was an obstacle to participation for some. Continuing to communicate with dinner hosts and participants through social media or video conferencing is a good option, but personal engagement is ideal. Two co-hosts from Rutgers University said that there would be considerable interest among students if NJTPA hosted town hall style meetings once per semester on campus. During the meeting there could be a break-out session in which there are small group discussions using the Set the Table! materials.

Reports

The following pages report the feedback that hosts collected during their dinner party discussions. The feedback is divided into the seven topic areas contained in the RTP. Within each topic, VTC highlights the themes that recurred throughout all of the feedback. The different dinner party groups offered similar comments on a variety of issues. In the following report, such comments are marked by the number of times they appeared in parenthesis and the duplicates are omitted.

RTP Outreach to Millennials: Set the Table!

Feedback Report
June 2017

Topic #1: Getting Around

Summary

Public transportation is very desirable and great for accessing NYC. It could be improved with increased connectivity between cities in NJ and throughout the region, more reliable and widespread service, and more real-time transit information available. Better station lighting, signage, and protection from the elements, as well as more lively business and police activity around stations, would make riders feel safer. Light rail, trolley service, and dedicated bus lanes had significant support. Responses showed considerable support for increased and better bike and pedestrian infrastructure, especially bike lanes and Complete Streets. Drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians all feel unsafe when in close proximity to each other, and increased bicycling and walking can reduce air pollution. Several respondents suggested creating more programs like Citibike outside of the major cities. Many people feel they need a car to get around outside of cities and would like more options, such as ride-sharing.

Comments

Public transit only goes to Manhattan and does not connect in the ways we actually move.

Bring back light rail and street cars!

More bike lanes and rental programs!

Use dedicated bus lanes!

Transit

- Subways, trains, and taxis are better suited for city environments
- We need more transit to run on net zero emissions
- Bus drivers have bad attitudes – they argue with passengers and stop the bus to do it.
- Create a better NJ Transit experience. It's always delayed.
- Public transit is a huge advantage for North Jersey residents. It should be more frequent, reliable, safe, and clean.
- Public transit (buses) is generally unreliable. It's hard to transport large things on public transit.
- Improving public transportation in North Jersey can lead to attracting influencers to move here.
- More public spaces around stations, with drug stores, bars and restaurants, wi-fi, and safety.
- The HBLR takes too long and doesn't feel safe due to limited police presence.

- Subsidize the ferries. They are privately owned and the only thing Jersey City could possibly influence.
- Formalize jitneys
- Bus service is suspended but work is not, makes it difficult.
- Make more transportation (i.e. buses and trains) available by demand instead of by traditional schedule.
- Many of us would prefer to use public transportation.

Transit Info

- Are there live app updates or a live schedule board for buses in NJ? Many complained of a lack of reliability with buses specifically. They sometimes don't come or come very late. Third party bus companies are particularly bad.
- The NJ Transit bus app is a great idea, keep improving and developing it. Send alerts for delayed buses or road work that delays any transportation
- The bus is unreliable, needs more real time information.
- More bus stop technology (arrival time signs) and express buses.

Transit Infrastructure

- Make NJ Transit more efficient with light rail and trolleys. (3 responses)
- Use dedicated bus lanes. (2)
- Improve the condition of rail stations and bus stations. Many bus stations have no cover from the elements which discourages us from using them. Safety is also a concern for those walking to/from stations/stops at odd hours. (2)
- Buses on single lane roads cause traffic and they have nowhere to pull over (cars are often parked in bus stops and there's no enforcement).
- Get NJ Transit off of Amtrak tracks!



Transit Access and Connectivity

- Public transit only goes to Manhattan and does not connect in the ways we actually move. (3)
- More train stations and train stops. One shouldn't have to drive 30 minutes to the nearest train station. (2)
- Build the North Brunswick train station so there are more options for travel on the Northeast Corridor.
- Invest in connecting the rail lines.

- More cross-transit access
- Easier access to public transit, including proximity to parking.
- Why does it take two hours by bus to go from Bloomfield to Paramus?
- Provide more routes for current public transportation.
- Make train connections to Brooklyn.
- High-speed rails to regional cities: NYC, Boston, Philly, DC

Ped/Bike

- More bike lanes! (7 responses)
- Have a program like Citibike that takes place outside of the big cities. (3)
- Protected bike lanes, improved bike safety, along with pedestrian-centered planning. (2)
- Bikes are and inexpensive and environmentally friendly form of transportation. (2)
- Some prefer walking to help the environment and get exercise.
- Most of us would prefer to walk if they had the option. Someone who lives and works in Jersey City prefers to bike.
- In Newark, Route 21, Broad Street, and Halsey Street feel like highways and are unsafe for pedestrians.
- Build more rental bike facilities, encourage bikes on local roads but DON'T take car lanes away, and allow for plenty of bike storage in downtown areas.
- Scale of and density around urban areas decreases the attractiveness of walking/biking, like industrial areas or surface lots and abandoned land in Newark.
- More sidewalks with storefronts. Put parking lots behind store, make it more convenient to walk into town than for everyone to hop into a car and drive to a supercenter.

Cars

- We prefer cars as transportation but partly because they are a necessity. Where we live you can't get around without a car.
- Some prefer to drive but are discouraged by traffic and lack of parking.
- Cars are better used in less congested environments.
- Self-driving cars, taxis, and Ubers. Improved and more efficient traffic patterns. Decrease the overall number of cars on the road and increase carpooling.
- Self-driving cars could change traffic patterns completely. Traffic is a huge frustration for all and with self-driving cars we can be more productive.
- Reduce traffic with ride-sharing.

Infrastructure

- The federal and state governments should rehabilitate the tunnels
- WE DON'T NEED TO ALLOCATE FEDERAL MONEY TO BUILDING A WALL; FIX OUR BRIDGES [sic].
- Funding for car infrastructure vs. other modes seems extremely imbalanced.
- The majority of us drive to work or at least to the train or bus to get to work. You need a car if you aren't going into a big city or off main roads.
- Nobody wants to drive. There is too much traffic. Also NO PARKING. Many of us live in heavily populated areas near NYC. We rent and don't have driveways and there are NO areas for street parking. You circle for two hours looking or pay astronomical prices for parking. Improve public transit in the state and we will happily drop our cars.

Other

- Bad drivers and bad pedestrians are a problem. We should pilot speed gun enforcement.
- The future of transportation: the connection of Main Streets from city to city, more public transportation, and bike lanes. Or Uber takes over.
- We would love to ride a ferry if there were more options and it were affordable.

Topic #2: Great Places

Summary

Respondents identified many reasons why they love where they live and how they define an ideal community. Common answers were public transportation, small businesses, and close proximity to NYC and other amenities like the beach and parks. Another important component was a diverse population and access to a variety of restaurants and cultural activities. People are proud of their thriving downtowns with small businesses, shops, and restaurants. Some groups suggested that creating public gathering spaces can help form communities and promote face-to-face conversations and culture sharing between neighbors. People like the cultural diversity of New Jersey and want it protected. Many felt they would not be able to stay in NJ because of high housing costs and taxes, while others want to remain for their jobs, family, and friends.

Comments



Affordability

- More than half the group wants to leave NJ because it's too expensive.
- Build housing for the actual middle class, not just luxury and affordable housing.
- I want to stay in NJ but can't afford to live here any longer.
- We want to leave NJ because taxes are high.
- Most of us stated we didn't plan on staying in NJ for the foreseeable future. Most of us said the cost of living is too high even with jobs in NYC. It's impossible to buy a home and costs \$13 to get into the city. There are other cities that are making themselves more desirable and cost far less.

Community Building

- Public spaces and sense of community. Having events and places for people to gather creates a community. When people know each other, they can give support and feel safe and happy. (6)
- We want to live in a place that has a diverse group of people and ideas. (3)
- Establish relationships between new residents and those who have lived there for a long time. #nogentrification (2)
- Low barriers of entry to communities can include supper clubs, tours, athletics, bar crawls.
- Get cities and towns to be more sustainable. Get your town to join Sustainable Jersey or be part of committees. Just get involved.
- Promote socially responsible citizenship
- The built environment is important: walkability, transit, open space help people to connect. But community is more important.

Transportation

- Access to NYC (4)
- Nearby rail/train stations for getting into the city (3)
- Close to major highways and roads
- Pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods with nearby green spaces and shopping.
- Living in New Jersey is convenient for getting around.
- Train service is good.
- Riding public transportation makes you feel closer to the community and forges a sense of kinship.
- Bike-friendly
- More safe bike lanes and bike racks
- Frequently running public transportation
- My favorite thing about Boonton is the many modes of transportation for getting around.

Arts & Culture

- As rents get higher, culture and diversity gets lost.
- Need improved art culture and infrastructure
- Proximity to cultural amenities (NYC)
- Traditions! Yearly events in your community help with the town's culture, like a carnival or festival.
- There are lots of museums, shops, and places to show visitors.



Downtown Areas

- Having access to a variety of food, including both grocery stores and restaurants. Having foods from many ethnicities. Food brings people together. (2)
- Many places to go out and eat
- Restaurants and businesses open late, after work and into the evenings
- Walkable downtowns
- It's sad to see small businesses close. Give them more support!
- Great coffee shop!

- Jersey food!
- My favorite thing about living in Pequannock is the small businesses.
- Thriving businesses, shopping and restaurants. We want a little of both, not necessarily in a downtown setting.

Nature & Green Space

- Jersey Shore (2)
- In NJ we can go outside and explore nature (hiking, camping). (2)
- Coordinated park systems that are integrated into the community.
- Close proximity to parks (Lincoln Park)
- More open green spaces and pocket-parks like in New York City with seating, free Wi-Fi and public art.
- Many recreational places
- Lots of open space to walk in South Jersey
- More walking paths and open spaces. All of us love walking, running, and spending time outside. We also have dogs and we love parks and dog parks. We want fresh air spaces that are easily accessible!

Ideal Community

- Most of us agreed our ideal community has a high walkability score, lots of local shops and restaurants, and we'd like to know our neighbors.
- Our ideal community is progressive and has well-maintained sidewalks that lead somewhere and are safe.
- Ideal community: Being able to buy a house in an urban/diverse area with good schools. Able to enjoy nightlife and culture while young and single but also able to stay and raise a family.
- Our ideal community has a sense of security and inclusivity for all people.
- Walkable, trees, good schools, Main Street, friendly, affordable, diverse, parks, public spaces, safe, sense of community
- Walkability, density, diversity, and culture

To Stay or Not to Stay

- Reasons for staying: pride, grew up here, close to NYC, cultural diversity
- Reasons for not staying: don't like driving, want warmer weather, career, want to see other places
- Good education and schools
- NJ is well-located with access to the shore, the mountains, and the city.
- Our immediate reaction to staying in NJ is NO.
- All participants plan to stay in NJ in the near future because of career, family, location, proximity to NYC, and diversity. We will stay in Hudson County until we're priced out.
- Jersey City has a lower cost of living than Brooklyn, the community is more welcoming and established, and it's less dense.
- We plan to stay because of jobs, house, family and friends.

Topic #3: Economy

Summary

Most respondents expressed their love for small businesses and advocated giving them more support to open, thrive, and compete with larger stores. This includes tax credits, utility payments, incentives, business incubators, and educating about alternative models like co-ops. Many want to see more jobs in NJ in diverse industries that match the training people have, especially in creative industries like film and the arts. Some professionals are underemployed or have long commutes to NY. Another common suggestion was creating more recreational activities for teenagers and adults who are underemployed. Doing so could discourage drinking, drug use and criminal behavior. Increasing the minimum wage is suggested by some as a way to boost the economy. The high cost of living drives people away and hurts the economy.

Comments

More recreational options for teenagers and young adults to lessen drug use.

Cost of living in NJ is prohibitively high

Give more support to small, locally-owned businesses.

Provide more employment opportunities for 18-30 year olds in diverse and creative fields.

Small Businesses

- Give more support to small, locally-owned businesses, like incubators, lower rent and utilities, and tax credits/abatement. (8)
- Small businesses need more opportunities for tax incentives and start-up costs, especially for places with high rents like Jersey City and Newark. (3)
- We would like more casinos and more mom & pop stores/small businesses. (2)
- Minority businesses are not supported enough. (2)
- Get people to take more pride in NJ. When people like where they live they take more care of it and will invest more. People think of NY as a place for small businesses but not NJ.
- Close down major corporations to allow mom & pop stores to thrive.
- Assist small business owners and Millennial start-ups—let's get on the modern side of things.
- Enforce no loitering to attract businesses.
- Traffic and bad buses detract from business.
- Old blue laws are bad for business.
- Pedestrian friendly downtowns in small towns to attract people to stroll and shop
- Create business programs that model community ownership models, like housing co-ops.
- Increasing diversity around train stations brings businesses and visitors to shops.
- North Jersey needs more affordable, healthy food stores.
- A lot of residences going up, need more boutique shopping
- Improve reasons for businesses to stay in NJ. Many are moving out of state because it makes financial sense.

Jobs

- Millennials in North Jersey don't necessarily have jobs in the areas they have their degree in. Many still live with their parents and have a long commute to work. (2)
- Provide more employment opportunities for 18-30 year olds in diverse and creative fields. (2)
- Create more jobs.
- Hold job fairs throughout the state.
- More professional jobs in town
- Internships for non-college applicants. There are so many things for post college grads that miss a whole group of people.
- Create more jobs with livable wages.
- Need a community champion to foster and promote a more robust non-profit scene

Education

- Fund schools no matter their demographic background.
- Give teachers support and fair pay.
- Get rid of laws the artificially burden parts of the economy, like public schools paying for private school transportation.

Recreation

- Teenagers don't have enough options for activities and entertainment, leading to alcohol and drug use. (2)
- We should have more tourist attractions that aren't at the beach, and more aesthetically pleasing, unique places (like TopGolf).
- Free gathering spaces like community centers and parks
- Wish there was more cultural vibrancy
- More sports recreational leagues for all ages—not just kids; adults need activities too! This is important in poorer areas where many people don't go to college. This can fill in their downtime.
- Develop more opportunities for recreation for young adults/professionals.

Cost of Living

- Increase the minimum wage to grow the middle class economy while limiting inflation and cost of living. It would make people's lives easier because NJ is very expensive. (2)
- High cost of living prevents people from coming to NJ.
- Poor road conditions and potholes raise the cost of driving and living.
- Raise the minimum wage—if people make more they can spend more.
- Lower property taxes for residents

Other

- Regulate new products and services (like alternative workspaces, marijuana) to increase tax rolls.
- Legalize marijuana for economic opportunity and to reduce crime.

Topic #4: Technology

Summary

Many of these responses touched on how technology will change transportation. Electric cars are popular, and there is excitement about self-driving cars because of safety, convenience, and greater commuting options. Technology can also be used to improve communication around transportation issues, such as live traffic conditions, parking supply, and transit status. Many commented on how technology can be used to improve infrastructure and everyday life. A number of respondents suggested that Wi-Fi be made into a public utility because it has become a basic necessity. Several described government websites as outdated, and others suggested using applications and websites to improve connections with local government. Technology will also impact jobs and change the way people and businesses work. Some respondents expressed concerns about increased automation.

Comments

Traffic lights that analyze traffic patterns to improve efficiency of signal timing

Free, public wifi statewide

Self-driving cars will increase safety and ease travel issues.

Promote electric cars through charging stations and priority parking.

Internet

- Free Wi-Fi statewide (3)
- Internet/Wi-Fi should be a public utility. It has become a necessity like water and gas and policy should reflect this. (2)
- Ubiquitous Wi-Fi service, indoor and outdoor. High speed data connection for all devices.
- Start building the 5G network to help the spread of data.

Autonomous Vehicles

- Self-driving cars will increase safety and help people become autonomous. (2)
- Self-driving cars could help with public transit reliability.
- The number of self-driving cars and the use of services like Uber/Lyft will increase, allowing for more options to carpool/get places.
- We're excited about self-driving cars.
- Self-driving cars and drones excite us most, you have the best of both worlds—convenience of a personal car and ability to maximize commuting time. Many of us commute over two hours each day.

Green Technology

- Solar panels and electric cars are the way to go. (2)
- Promote electric cars through charging stations and priority parking.
- Make taxis electric.

- We're excited about wind power.
- Invest in clean energy for the state. This will pay back 100%. Create tax incentives for cities investing in clean energy. Look into removing carbon from the ocean and air.

Travel information

- Improved GPS map devices and apps that are able to understand what lane your car is in for more accurate directions.
- Use parking apps and dynamic supply and demand parking management for better land use. The "Best Parking" app resells/repurposes excess, unused monthly parking capacity. It makes parking less expensive and creates more efficient parking supply and land use.
- Expand the use of electronic billboards for travel times on NJ Turnpike/Parkway. These are good and should be on 24/7 to help with travel.
- More transit apps with schedules and timetables, and more real-time transit info for all networks. HBLR signage is usually broken.
- Use devices to better connect with public transportation.



Other Transportation

- Ease of contacting Uber/Lyft (2)
- Traffic lights that analyze traffic patterns to improve efficiency of signal timing (2)
- More "no-stop" tolling systems, like at the Tappan Zee bridge, using EZ pass or mail-in only. It will keep traffic moving.
- Hyperloop!
- Remove red light cameras.
- Gear texting and driving campaigns towards older as well as younger people.
- Living and working at home may decrease the need for transit and other services.
- High-speed travel
- Transportation is what we are mostly interested in as far as technological advances.
- Mini TV screens on buses
- Charging ports for mobile devices on buses or at bus stops
- We were excited at the ideas of the hyperloop, self-driving cars, and telecommuting. We don't want to drive if we don't have to!

Technology and Government

- We need open data resources to give citizens tools to advocate for things they couldn't before.
- Better government websites that are as efficient as other sites.
- Let's connect the city of Orange more via technology.
- Technology moves fast but government moves slow. Wish government was more innovative.

Technology and the Economy

- Make sure technology is not taking away jobs. People need jobs.
- Technology can help clean up water ways or other jobs that are too dangerous for humans to do.
- Online shopping may decrease variety in built environment.
- More apps for local and small businesses.
- Holograms for presentations can allow someone to reach people worldwide for personal or business purposes.
- Telework will grow due to technology.

Problems

- Technology should be cleaner inside and out.
- Problems from technology include distracted driving and people getting lazy or not communicating.
- We need less automation and more human interaction. Things get lost in automation.
- Not looking forward to everything being automated
- New software for getting around, like schedules and maps on our smartphones, increases dependency on technology. We think less about where and when.

Other

- Excited for video/audio recording on eyeware (Google glasses)
- Excited for more advanced smartphones
- Excited for virtual reality
- Curious about new social media outlets
- No "dead zones" for cell service
- Robots for surgeries! Removing highly-paid doctors who perform surgeries could lower the cost of medical bills.

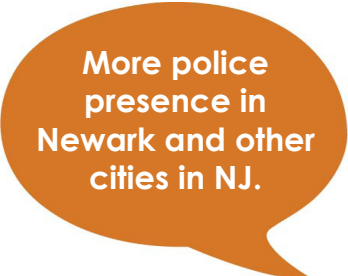


Topic #5: Safety


Summary

Discussion about safety touched mainly on policing and transportation safety issues. Most would like their communities and transit stations to be better lit. Respondents often commented that they want to see more police on the streets and want them to be more approachable and part of the community. Discussion of transportation safety touched mainly on the dangers of close proximity between bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists. Pedestrians feel unsafe when walking near or crossing major roads, and both drivers and bicyclists feel unsafe when sharing the road. Many were concerned about speeding, reckless drivers, and distracted or drunk driving. In addition, several would like to see more police presence around transit stations and on light rail. A number of comments touched on strengthening communities to increase safety, such as by having more activity on the streets, community watch programs, and more activities and places to go for teenagers.

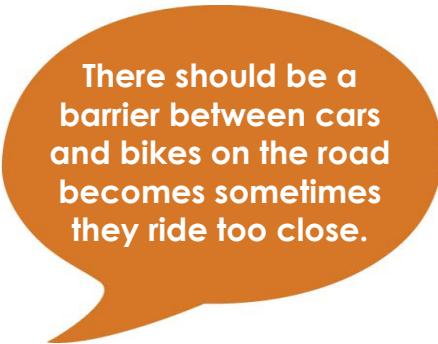
Comments



More police presence in Newark and other cities in NJ.



Active streets and windows feel safer.



There should be a barrier between cars and bikes on the road becomes sometimes they ride too close.



Install more lighting in public places like bike paths and train stations.

Lighting

- Install more lighting in public places like bike paths and train stations, and keep it maintained. (5)
- Fill local areas with local stores and parks that are well lit.
- Better nighttime lights on sidewalks and roads, but not to cause more light pollution

Policing

- More police presence in Newark and other cities in NJ to improve the perception of safety. (3)
- There are no beat cops on the streets and police are unapproachable as they roll by in their squad cars. (2)
- More police presence by establishing a neighborhood watch in all wards.
- We feel safer when the cops are part of the community and involved, not seen as big brother.
- Riding the PATH feels safe because there is always high ridership and Port Authority police presence. Even the Journal Square stop feels safe at night because there are so many people getting off the train with you.
- Light Rail is not well patrolled, and since tickets aren't regularly checked riders tend to hop on and off and cause trouble.

Traffic Safety

- Use cloverleaf designs when possible to help ease the flow of traffic and reduce accidents.
- Don't feel safe driving or walking near NJ Transit buses
- Install better signage at intersections.

- We feel unsafe about other peoples' driving habits, like drunk driving and texting.
- Drivers and Jitneys in downtown Jersey City speed and are careless.
- People cross roads at busy intersections. When driving in a new city it's hard to quickly understand how pedestrians there move, and one can easily hit a jaywalker.
- Buses drive by people at night leaving them in dangerous areas, and mountains of snow prevent people from boarding the bus
- Potholes are dangerous, roads should be paved routinely
- Design buses so drivers can see smaller objects around.

Bicyclist and Pedestrian Safety

- There should be a barrier between cars and bikes on the road becomes sometimes they ride too close. We need more bike lanes. (4)
- Build better pedestrian infrastructure and Complete Streets or at least walking and biking paths so people feel safer roaming around. (3)
- Improve pedestrian safety in Newark. Better marked crosswalks with clear signals.
- Educate people about pedestrian safety, such as where to cross appropriately and who has the right of way.
- I feel unsafe as a pedestrian when crossing major highways, like McCarter in Newark. Install sky bridges?
- Uneven sidewalks

Safety & Built Environment

- Empty storefronts and buildings feel unsafe. More windows and active streets feel safer. (3)
- Let more community places like recreation centers, libraries, parks and such be open late and have good hours so people have places to go and be occupied.
- Install more "blue lights" in parking garages and other places where people feel unsafe, especially at night.
- Keep neighborhoods cleaner and minimize abandoned homes and property.

Youth

- Keep our young people busy when they are outside of school with creative programming.
- Reinvest in after school programming and lengthen the school day.

Other

- We have an overall sense of safety in our communities. We've left our cars unlocked or back doors open overnight and never had a problem. (2)
- Clean up Newark. Broken glass, needles, overall garbage. Dirty cities feel less safe and welcoming.
- Some people in Newark feel like they have to look over their shoulder all the time, especially at night or if hard of hearing.
- Ban guns statewide.
- First-time offenders should get harsher sentences.
- Even in a safe neighborhood, carjacking can happen.
- Invest more in education and mental health infrastructure both in communities and in prisons.
- The city needs to acknowledge the violence and project positivity.
- We feel safe with a sense of community.
- It's important for men to understand women's perspective—that they feel unsafe in different ways and have to be hyperaware of their surroundings.
- Rude, sexist, or racist transit operators and poor customer service. Develop a code of conduct.
- Reduce penalties for non-violent drug crimes.
- Extend protection on campus into the broader community.

Topic #6: Environment

Summary

Discussion regarding the environment touched on air and water pollution, climate change, and making communities more sustainable. Some thought the government should be more engaged with these issues. Respondents commonly highlighted the relationship between motor vehicle traffic and air pollution. To remedy this problem, they supported investing more in public transit, increasing bike ridership, and easing traffic conditions so that vehicles do not sit idling at stop lights or in traffic jams. Many were concerned about water quality and outdated infrastructure and would like increased government transparency. Respondents considered climate change mitigation to be a very important issue and suggested encouraging or incentivizing green practices like ridesharing, biking, and home or business emission reduction. Recycling was another important topic and respondents would like better litter reduction efforts and education about recycling practices. Green space is popular and people would like more preservation or the conversion of unused lots. Several comments supported cleaning up the rivers in North Jersey.

Comments

Changing the way people get around can improve air quality.

Climate change is the most pressing issue.

Increase recycling rates and decrease littering with education, enforcement, and more bins.

Increase funding to improve old water infrastructure for better water quality.

Transit

- Put NJ back on the map for public transit! Invest in heavy/light rail lines and rapid transit buses with special lanes to beat congestion. Let the buses drive in the shoulder at rush hour. (3)
- More convenient and accessible carpooling options
- Optimize the use of existing infrastructure, such as bus priority lanes.
- We need to encourage people to walk and bike more instead of driving.

Climate Change

- Climate change is the most pressing issue. (2)
- It is scary that it our government isn't doing anything about climate change.
- Individuals and businesses both contribute to global warming and should be reached differently. Tax plastic bags and reexamine the effect of big factories on neighboring communities.
- Climate change will kill us all.
- Reduce carbon emissions by encouraging carpooling, ridesharing, and bike riding.
- Overpopulation: we produce too much carbon and consume too much. Too many cars on the road. We need to educate the public to think about generations after us.
- Incentivize climate change mitigation. Pay residents and businesses to reduce their emissions.
- Reduce animal carbon footprint. Start moving our diet away from the excessive amount of meat consumed.

Water Quality

- Clean up NJ Rivers like the Raritan, Passaic, and Hudson. (3)
- We are concerned about air, water, and soil pollution. (3)
- Increase funding to improve old water infrastructure for better water quality. (2)
- Everyone is hesitant to drink the tap water in Hudson County, and damage to the water infrastructure effects water quality. Water infrastructure needs testing and a PR campaign.
- In Jersey City there are lots of water main breaks. It needs to be more clear how to test your water.
- Upgrade old infrastructure to improve water and air. Make a new water plan for the state.
- Our government should be more transparent regarding water quality standards and air pollution.
- Companies are dumping waste into the water.
- Improve basic necessities. There are consistent problems with water quality.
- Designate land to protect water.

Air Quality

- Air pollution!! Congested areas have poorer air quality compared to suburban/rural areas. More people, businesses, and cars effect air quality and the ozone. (2)
- Less traffic lights or better signal progression to ease traffic flow and reduce car pollution. (2)
- Concerned about having kids in NJ because of asthma rates
- Enforce tree requirements – we need more trees for mental health and shade.
- NJ should commit to lower greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality by improving public facilities, transit, and building standards.
- Changing the way people get around and less congestion on the road can improve air quality.
- Traffic and idling cars cause air pollution, soot, and dirt and produce greenhouse gases.



Recycling & Composting

- Improve recycling by having more specific dumpster containers for various recyclables and compost and issuing fines for not recycling. (2)
- Decrease garbage: reduce, reuse, recycle, rot. Reduce: less plastic bags and containers; Reuse: reusable water bottles with filling stations, reusable takeout containers; Recycle: single stream, better education of what to recycle, more bins, Rot: teach about composting, food waste, and community gardens.
- Litter! Lack of garbage cans in urban areas, particularly outside of the downtown and gentrified neighborhoods. Lack of recycling cans period. Every garbage can should have a recycling can next to it. (2)

- Create nationalized or statewide recycling standards and better education to increase efficiency in all systems.
- Finding a place to compost is difficult in urban areas.
- Enforce anti-litter campaigns for clean streets.
- Provide more education and enforcement around recycling.

Green Space

- Less destruction of forests. (2)
- More green spaces! (2)
- Studies show better health outcomes for those who live within short distance of green space/park for recreation.
- Replace green space in a city/town when it has been removed.
- Convert empty lots to parks.
- Hold county and other officials accountable for keeping all parks clean and up-to-date.
- Tree-lined streets are nice, there should be more. (2)



Green Energy

- We should invest in clean technology ASAP. Why isn't the government using it?
- County should promote solar panels with incentives
- Invest in green energy. Create solar and wind farms. Use batteries to store energy. Move away from dying energy sources (coal and natural gas). Incentivize electric cars by building more charging stations.

Other

- Light pollution from major cities
- Sound pollution from highways
- Lawns cause huge environmental problems with fertilizer.
- Encourage people to use reusable bags.
- NJ should focus on bioremediation of superfund sites rather than rely on developers to clean up.
- Cities should do better clearing the sidewalks when it snows.
- More bioswales
- Water conservation—every summer there's a drought and people continue to waste water by watering their lawns. Encourage rain water harvesting and upgrade reservoirs.

Topic #7: Resiliency

Summary

Comments on resiliency showed that respondents feel their communities are unprepared and are unsure of what they should do during a disaster. They do not feel their communities are more prepared since Sandy and many are still recovering. Many of these comments suggested improving communication between local governments and residents in order to educate residents about ongoing resilience strategies and maintain contact during an emergency. Some respondents suggested governments use social media, push notifications, and inform residents in person or through local networks. There was also concern about the ability of infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events and support for limiting development in flood-prone areas. Many would like more financial and material assistance available to recover from disaster, particularly for low-income people.

Comments

Communicate better with the public regarding emergency plans and resources.

Back communities out of flood-prone areas

Increase resilience of local networks, such as power, internet, and water.

We don't feel prepared for any kind of disaster.

Communication

- Communicate with the public better regarding emergency preparedness, plans, shelters, and resources, both before and during disaster. (6)
- A personal network within the community could help with communication during a disaster. (2)
- More communication via social media.
- The city government can get more involved in informing the public in person, as opposed to just an "email blast."
- Government does well with evacuation messages

Infrastructure

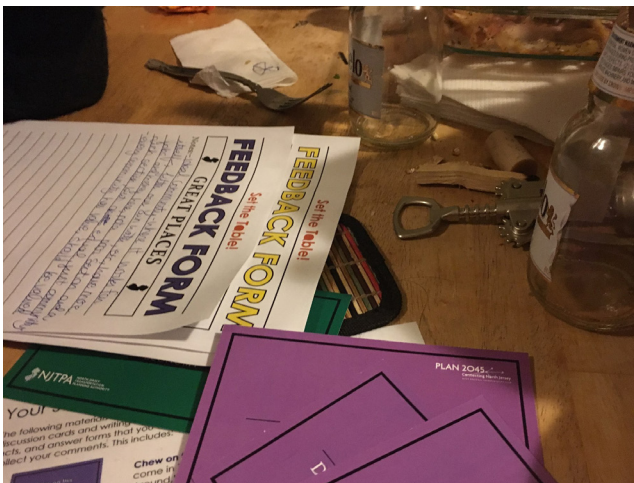
- Put utility lines underground to prevent big power outages. (3)
- Increase resilience of local networks, such as power, internet, and water. (2)
- Diversify the electrical grid.
- Routinely clean storm sewers, fill potholes, and create berms.
- Create back up power sources that do not depend on power plants. Create a program to help NJ residents create energy independence by installing solar and batteries to hold energy.
- PSE&G cuts down trees in the interest of safety, but they must replenish them with new trees.
- Gas station lines were very long during Sandy, and it seemed like the cops and their buddies were able to cut in line.

Land Use & Flooding

- Back communities out of flood-prone regions.
- Increase Blue Acres and open space to build up buffers in vulnerable towns and cities.
- Stop developing land. We're too overdeveloped. We need more permeable land, which would stop flooding and recharge aquifers.
- Prioritize evacuation of vulnerable areas as opposed to reactionary methods like raising homes. Use TDR.

Financial

- A disaster assistance fund to help workers when businesses close during a disaster
- Aid local businesses making efforts to help the local community. They were a huge help during Hurricane Sandy, offering outlets and more for residents who needed help.
- Our government doesn't seem prepared and doesn't seem to have helped lower-income people recover from Sandy because of the higher amount of home foreclosures and small businesses closing.
- Grants for back-up generators



Preparedness and Planning

- We don't feel prepared for any kind of disaster and we're not sure how our city is planning or how it will communicate with residents. (2)
- We feel as if we aren't prepared for another natural disaster because some communities are still recovering from Sandy and some residents are still homeless. (2)
- We need more long-term solutions addressing climate change and getting to the root of the problem on top of short-term safety precautions. (2)
- There should be better planning for power outages, such as a shelter with backup generators that is previously publicized.
- Have better preparation and planning!
- Our area doesn't have enough shelters in place to prepare.
- Jersey City and Bayonne are not more resilient since Sandy.
- Overall lack of preparedness is another "Sandy" hits. No one has a generator if the power goes out. It would be helpful if there was a place with a generator where people could go in their respective cities.
- Grossly under-prepared for Sandy. Create emergency plans to lessen the stress when it happens again.
- Equip residents with emergency kits.