


Public Involvement Report 2019-2020



HRTPO
Heartland Regional
Transportation Planning Organization



Public participation is integral to good transportation policies, programs and projects. Without meaningful public involvement, there is a risk of making poor decisions or decisions that have unintended negative consequences. More than an agency requirement and more than a means of fulfilling a statutory obligation, meaningful public participation is central to good decision-making. The HRTPO is responsible for actively involving all affected parties in an open, cooperative and collaborative process that provides meaningful opportunities to influence transportation decisions.

The Public Participation Plan (PPP), adopted in November 2018, describes the HRTPO's strategies and techniques to inform and engage the public in transportation planning issues with the purpose of maximizing participation and effectiveness. This report measures the effectiveness of the HRTPO's public participation plan.

Public Participation Goals

INFORM

Inform the public, to the maximum extent possible with available resources, of opportunities to participate in the transportation decision-making process.

HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

- ✓ At least one meeting or opportunity is located in each county annually.
- ✓ Translators are available at public meetings in areas where a high proportion of the affected population comprises non-English speakers or when requested.
- ✓ 100% of board and committee meetings are accessible to persons with disabilities.

INVOLVE

Involve the public early and often in the transportation planning process.

HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

- ✓ 100% of HRTPO meetings have comment cards available.
- ✓ 100% of HRTPO committee meetings will have time for public input on the agenda.
- ✓ Responses to public inquiries are made within 3 working days of the day of receipt.
- ✓ Responses to media inquiries are made within 1 working day of the date of receipt.

INCLUDE

Reach out to the geographical, organizational and demographic communities that compose the TPO planning area to increase the opportunity to participate in developing transportation plans and services.

HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

- ✓ Interested governments, organizations, user groups, and individuals will have the opportunity to share their level of satisfaction on the HRTPO public participation process.
- ✓ Specific efforts will be made to include traditionally underserved populations in 100% of the region's counties.
- ✓ Placement of HRTPO materials at 100% of public libraries in the region.

IMPROVE

Continually identify and implement ways to improve the public participation processes.

HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

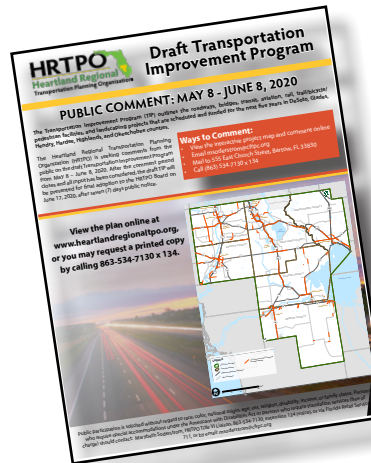
- ✓ Collect and document measures of success each year.

INFORM

Inform the public, to the maximum extent possible with available resources, of opportunities to participate in the transportation decision-making process.

HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

- ✓ At least one meeting or opportunity is located in each county annually.
- ✓ Translators are available at public meetings in areas where a high proportion of the affected population comprises non-English speakers or when requested.
- ✓ 100% of board and committee meetings are accessible to persons with disabilities.



HOW WE INFORMED THE PUBLIC

- » Provided adequate notice of all meetings to HRTPO members, committee members, and interested parties by mail/e-mail at least 7 days in advance.
- » Disseminated press releases announcing meetings and activities, opportunities for public participation, and the availability of documents for public review.
- » Posted meeting agendas on web page at least 7 days in advance of event.
- » Included details in meeting announcements for interested persons to respond in writing, by phone or by e-mail.
- » Provided assistance, upon request and adequate notice, to the hearing and visually impaired, those with limited English proficiency, the transportation disadvantaged, or others requiring special assistance at HRTPO meetings and events.
- » Maintained a mailing list of all interested parties and their preferred contact method including US mail, e-mail, SMS text messaging, or phone.





Board and Committee Meetings

DATE & TIME	PURPOSE	LOCATION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
07-17-19 1:30 pm	Multi-County LCB	Okeechobee	17
07-24-19 10:30 am	Glades/Hendry LCB	Glades	14
08-06-19 11 am	Board	Highlands	24
08-21-19 10 am	TAC	Highlands	26
08-29-19 2:30 pm	CAC	Highlands	14
09-18-19 10 am	Board	Highlands	19
10-16-19 10 am	TAC	Highlands	21
10-23-19 10:30 am	Glades/Hendry LCB	Hendry	14
10-24-19 2:30 pm	CAC	Highlands	14
10-30-19 12 pm	Multi-County LCB	Highlands	25
11-06-19 10 am	Board	Highlands	28
01-15-20 10 am	TAC	Highlands	21
01-15-20 1:30 pm	Multi-County LCB	DeSoto	20
01-22-20 10:30 am	Glades/Hendry LCB	Glades	15
01-23-20 2:30 pm	CAC	Highlands	12
02-19-20 10 am	Board	Highlands	22
03-18-20 10 am	TAC	Highlands	18
03-26-20 2:30 pm	CAC	Highlands	13
04-15-20 10 am	Board	Teleconference	14
04-15-20 1:30 pm	Multi-County LCB	Teleconference	21
04-22-20 10:30 am	Glades/Hendry LCB	Teleconference	16
05-20-20 10 am	TAC	Highlands/Teleconference	18
05-28-20 2 pm	CAC	Highlands/Teleconference	15
06-17-20 10 am	Board	Highlands/Teleconference	13
06-24-20 10:30 am	Glades/Hendry LCB	Hendry/Teleconference	17

TAC - Technical Advisory Committee CAC - Citizens Advisory Committee LCB - Local Coordinating Board

Other Public Meetings

DATE & TIME	PURPOSE	LOCATION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	TRANSLATION AVAILABLE	TRANSLATION REQUESTED?
09-20-19 8:30 am	Heartland 2060 Summit	Polk	133	Yes	None
10-30-19 9 am	Heartland Mobility Forum	Highlands	48	Yes	None
11-13-19 9 am	Heartland 2060 Summit	Highlands	81	Yes	None
11-21-10 10 am	Project Priority Workshop	Hardee	17	No	None



Public Comment Periods

DOCUMENT	FROM	TO	COMMENTS RECEIVED*
Amendment to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Fiscal Years 2018/19 – 2019/20	October 28, 2019	November 4, 2019	0
Unified Planning Work Program for Fiscal Years 2020/21 – 2021/22	March 6, 2020	April 6, 2020	0*
2020/21-2024/25 Transportation Improvement Program	May 8, 2020	June 8, 2020	20*
2019/20-2023/24 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments			
August 6, 2019	July 23, 2019	July 30, 2019	0
September 18, 2019	September 4, 2019	September 11, 2019	0
February 19, 2020	February 12, 2020	February 18, 2020	0
April 15, 2020	April 7, 2020	April 14, 2020	0

*Number of comments received does not include comments received from the Florida Department of Transportation or the Federal Highway Administration.

Media Coverage

PUBLICATION/OUTLET	TITLE	DATE
Lake Okeechobee News	Joint meeting airs public transit's future	October 10, 2019
Highlands News-Sun	HRTPO to FDOT: Four-lane all of SR 70	November 9, 2019
Lake Okeechobee News	Good Wheels exits, MV Transportation takes over	February 24, 2020

INVOLVE

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HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

- ✓ 100% of HRTPO meetings have comment cards available.
- ✓ 100% of HRTPO committee meetings will have time for public input on the agenda.
- ✓ Responses to public inquiries are made within 3 working days of the day of receipt.
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HOW WE INVOLVED THE PUBLIC

- » Maintained active, standing committees such as the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), as well as the Glades/Hendry and Multi-County Local Coordinating Boards so residents have an opportunity to participate in the continuous transportation planning process.
- » Designed a community engagement strategy that incorporates a complementary mix of smaller, community-based forums, large-scale public forums and online opportunities for engagement.
- » Informed HRTPO members of recommendations from the TAC and CAC and informed HRTPO members of trends indicated from other contacts with the public.
- » Allocated time for public input on each committee's agenda.
- » Responded to citizen, agency and media queries on all HRTPO related topics and plans, providing interim responses while questions are being researched.
- » Provided comment forms to solicit input in writing at public meetings or online.

HRTPO Board

Elected Officials

DeSoto County

Commissioner Elton Langford
Commissioner Buddy Mansfield, Alternate

Glades County

Commissioner Tim Stanley

Hardee County

Commissioner Colon Lambert
Commissioner Noey Flores, Alternate

Hendry County

Commissioner Mitchell Wills
Commissioner Michael Swindle, Alternate

Okeechobee County

Commissioner Terry Burroughs
Commissioner Kelly Owens, Alternate

Highlands County (Unincorporated) & the City of Lake Placid

Commissioner James Brooks
Commissioner Don Elwell
Commissioner Ron Handley
Commissioner R. Greg Harris
Commissioner Arlene Tuck

The City of Avon Park

Mayor Garrett Anderson
Councilmember Maria Sutherland, Alternate

The City of Sebring

Councilmember Curt Ivy
Clerk Kathy Haley, Alternate

Agency Representatives

Florida Department of Transportation (Non-Voting)

FDOT District One Secretary, L.K. Nandam

Citizen Advisory Committee

Primary Voting Members

DeSoto County

Debbie Wertz

Glades County

Phillip Kelly

Hardee County

Katrina Blandin
Donna Doubleday

Hendry County

Keitha Daniels

Highlands County

Ray Royce
Kristie Vazquez

Okeechobee County

Michelle Sanders
Leah Suarez

City of Sebring

Bruce Behrens

City of Avon Park

George Karos

Florida Department of Transportation

Lori Carlton, Exofficio

Technical Advisory Committee

Primary Voting Members

Central Florida Regional Planning Council

Jennifer Codo-Salisbury

City of Arcadia

Terry Stewart

City of Avon Park

Robert Trevino

City of Clewiston

Randy Martin

City of LaBelle

Gary Hull

City of Moore Haven

David Miller

City of Okeechobee

David Allen

City of Sebring

Ken Fields

City of Wauchula

Kyle Long

DeSoto County

June Fisher

Glades County

Bob Jones

Hardee County

Randall Lanier
Todd Miller

Hendry County

Margaret Emblidge
Shane Parker

Highlands County

Melony Culpepper
Clinton Howerton, Jr.

Okeechobee County

Stef Matthes
Louis Johnson

School Board Representative

Nicole Havee

Sebring Airport Authority

Mike Willingham

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

Margaret Wuerstle

Town of Lake Placid

Joe Barber

Non-Voting Member

Florida Department of Transportation

Lori Carlton

Local Coordinating Board

DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Okeechobee Counties

Elected Officials

DeSoto County

Commissioner Terry Hill

Hardee County

Commissioner Noey Flores, Vice Chair

Highlands County

Commissioner Don Elwell, Chair

Okeechobee County

Commissioner Bryant Culpepper

Citizen Members

Disabled Representative

Aric Robison

Elderly Representative

Jessie Alford

Citizen Advocate

Ingra Gardner

Gerald Cruz Camacho, Alternate

Citizen Advocate User Representative

Patty Bond

Private Transportation Industry Representative

Robert Layne, Positive Medical Transport

Madelon Mansfield, JJ Medical Transport, Alternate

Medical Community Representative

Elizabeth Lind

Audra Wheatley, Alternate

Penny Pringle, Alternate

Agency Representatives

Florida Department of Transportation Representative

Charlene Ross

Michelle Peronto, Alternate

Department of Children and Families

Sheilea Watkins

Michael Day, Alternate

Public Education Community

Robert Smith

Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, or Division of Blind Services, representing the Department of Education

Bruce Emmerton

Leigh Ann Bellamy, Alternate

Laurel White, Alternate

Christina Martin, Alternate

Veterans Services

Larry Kirsch

Sarah Carter, Alternate

Agency for Health Care Administration

Signe Jacobson

Glenda Gonzalez, Alternate

Children at Risk Representative

Wendy Amos

Erin Linhardt, Alternate

Tonya Akwetey, Alternate

Charlene Edwards, Alternate

Department of Elder Affairs

Joan Cecil

Dalia Dillion, Alternate

Zeka Barbosa, Alternate

Shelby Yevington, Alternate

Frances Hazel, Alternate

Nancy Yarnald, Alternate

CareerSource Board

Ann Martin

Lenora White, Alternate

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Donna Fain

Mollie Brown-Ferrier, Alternate

Mary Edwards, Alternate

Milory Senat, Alternate

Community Transportation Coordinator (Non-Voting)

Kelly Kirk-Brooks, MV Transportation

Glades and Hendry Counties

Elected Officials

Glades County

Commissioner Donna Storter-Long, Chair

Tim Stanley, Alternate

Hendry County

Commissioner Emma Byrd, Vice Chair

Citizen Members

Disabled Representative

Lisa Sands

Elderly Representative

Mary Bartoshuk

Citizen Advocate

Kristina Rodriguez

Bill Iffland, Alternate

Medical Community Representative

Nancy Acevedo

Maria Rickter, Alternate

Agency Representatives

Florida Department of Transportation Representative

Kelley Fernandez

Michelle Peronto, Alternate

Department of Children and Families

Aaron Stitt

Charlene Blum, Alternate

Public Education Community

Jim Brickel

Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, or Division of Blind Services, representing the Department of Education

Fareedah Laney

Agency for Health Care Administration

Signe Jacobson

Lonnie Thompson, Alternate

Children at Risk Representative

Edwin Melendez

Vanessa Fischel, Alternate

Department of Elder Affairs

Shelby Yevington

Linda Howard, Alternate

Sarah Richards, Alternate

CareerSource Board

Rebecca Meeler

Suseth Cunningham, Alternate

Community Action Agency

Fred Richards

Barbara Ramos, Alternate

Veterans Service Office

Bob Jones

Community Transportation Coordinator (Non-Voting)

Kelly Kirk-Brooks, MV Transportation

INCLUDE

Reach out to the geographical, organizational and demographic communities that compose the TPO planning area to increase the opportunity to participate in developing transportation plans and services.

HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

- ✓ Interested governments, organizations, user groups, and individuals will have the opportunity to share their level of satisfaction on the HRTPO public participation process.
- ✓ Specific efforts will be made to include traditionally underserved populations in 100% of the region's counties.
- ✓ Placement of HRTPO materials at 100% of public libraries in the region.



HOW WE INCLUDED THE PUBLIC

- » Ongoing improvements to the website to provide current information about the HRTPO activities, members, meetings, and contacts and the addition of a Resources section including information on public transportation, freight, the Transportation Disadvantaged program, and speakers bureau.
- » Engaged in online social platforms as a communication tool to inform and include the general public, partner governments, community organizations, and traditionally underserved communities and direct traffic to the HRTPO website.
- » Distributed copies of draft plans and programs to public libraries and public facilities in the region.



HRTPO
Heartland Regional
Transportation Planning Organization

About News Events Board & Committees Plans Resources Contact

Citizens Advisory Committee
Fill out an application now to join!

The Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) coordinates transportation plans for the Heartland Region including the six counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands and Okeechobee and the urbanized area of Highlands County including the cities of Sebring and Avon Park.

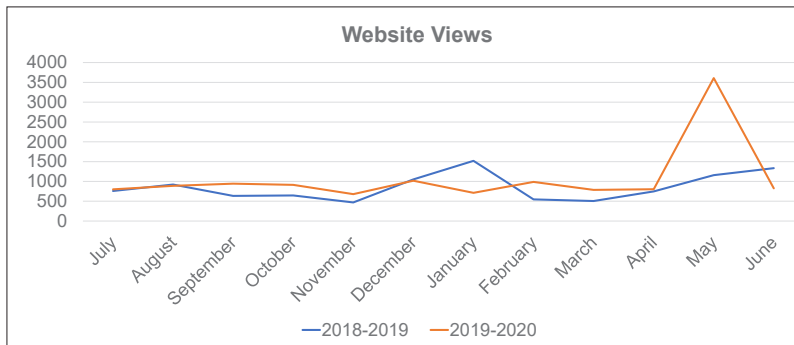
Latest News

Highlights from the June 20, 2018 HRTPO Meeting
July 26, 2018
Highlights from the June 20, 2018 HRTPO Meeting Sebring, FL. Below are highlights from the June 2018 HRTPO Governing Board Meeting. To view the full agenda and all meeting materials ...[Read More](#)

Contact the HRTPO

- info@heartlandregionaltpo.org
- 863-534-7130
- 555 E Church St, Bartow, FL 33830
- [Media Contact](#)
- [Follow HRTPO on Facebook](#)

Public Comment Period Open: Draft Transportation Improvement



Top 5 Visited Web Pages

1. Transportation Improvement Program
2. Transportation Disadvantaged
3. 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
4. Plans and Program
5. Boards and Committees

Top 5 Viewed Documents

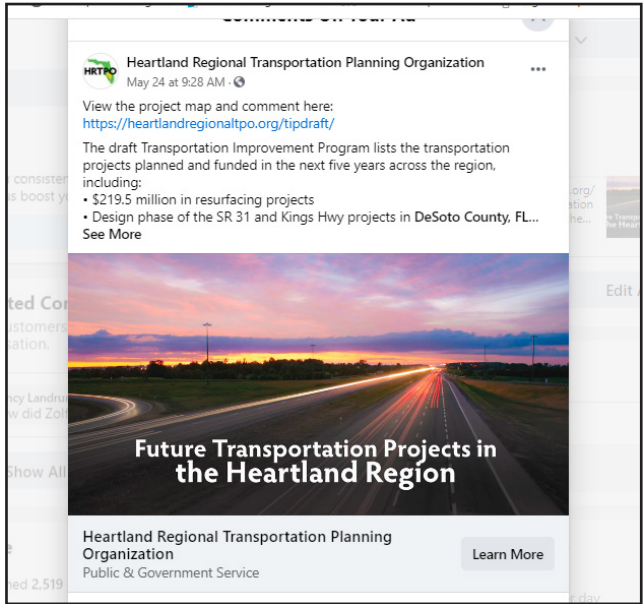
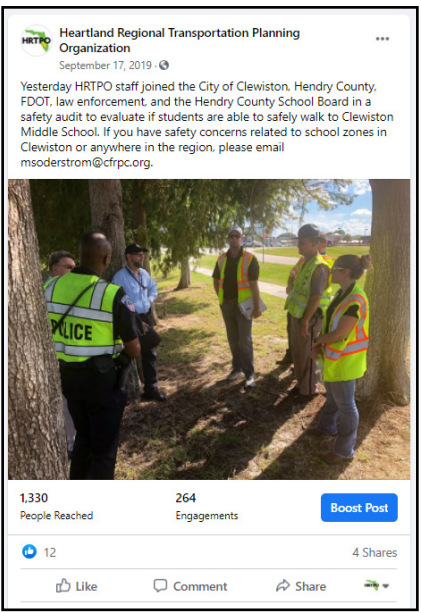
1. Meeting Agendas
2. 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
3. Public Participation Plan
4. Transportation Improvement Program
5. Congestion Management Process Policy and Procedures Handbook

General Contact Information

- info@heartlandregionaltpo.org
- 863-534-7130
- 555 East Church Street, Bartow, FL 33830
- [Follow HRTPO on Facebook](#)
- [Media Contact](#)
- [Staff Contact Information](#)



» **58,387 reaches** (+275%)
» **1,899 engaged users** (+34%)
» **258 page likes** (+39%)



Join us:
facebook.com/
heartlandregionaltpo

IMPROVE

Continually identify and implement ways to improve the public participation processes.

HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

- ✓ A base-line of results will be established so that future outcomes may be evaluated with a regional perspective.

COMMENT CARD

Comment: _____

Please submit your comments today or mail this card to:
HRTPO 555 East Church Street, Bartow, FL 33830

Name: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____

HRTPO
Heartland Regional
Transportation Planning Organization

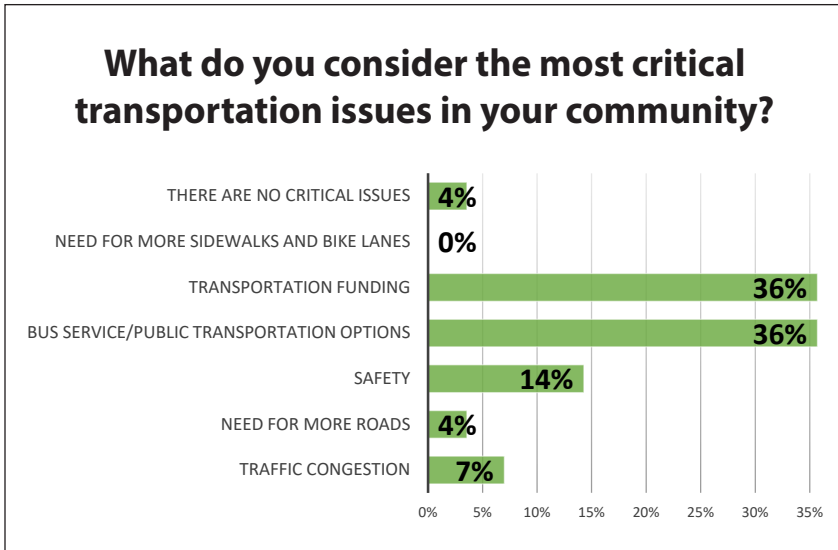
Please add me to the mailing list

HOW WE IMPROVE THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

- » Refresh website as dynamic content is available
- » Continue to execute the recommendations of the adopted Limited English Proficiency Plan
- » Enhance use of Facebook and explore other online communication tools
- » Continue to work with local governments and community partners to advertise committee openings to fill any vacancies on the established committees
- » Reevaluate annual survey tool and enhance collection of demographic information for participants
- » Evaluate changing circumstances and adapt project schedules, outreach methods, and meeting formats to ensure safety of participants during the COVID-19 pandemic

Survey Results

A survey requesting feedback on HRTPO communication efforts, priorities, demographic information, and an opportunity for open comment was sent to all members of the organization’s email mailing list, shared on the HRTPO Facebook page, and posted to the www.heartlandregionaltpo.org for less than one month. Twenty-eight individuals completed the survey, and 100% of respondents indicated they were familiar with the HRTPO and its mission and 93% indicated they had participated in the transportation planning process in the past year.

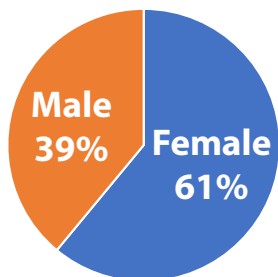


- » 89% strongly agree, somewhat agree, or were neutral that overall, they are satisfied with communication efforts of the HRTPO.
- » 93% strongly agree, somewhat agree, or were neutral that they are satisfied with the information provided by the HRTPO on public notices, flyers, newsletters, and presentations.
- » 100% strongly agree, somewhat agree, or were neutral that the HRTPO provides for persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services.

Survey Comments:

- » We need to continue to up grade the rural area transportation grid in order to supply food and fiber.
- » The “grading system” for projects definitely needs to be re-evaluated with public input.
- » A text or phone call to remind me of a meeting would help.
- » Invest in better data since the 2020 census will likely underestimate the areas population and growth potential.

Respondent Demographics



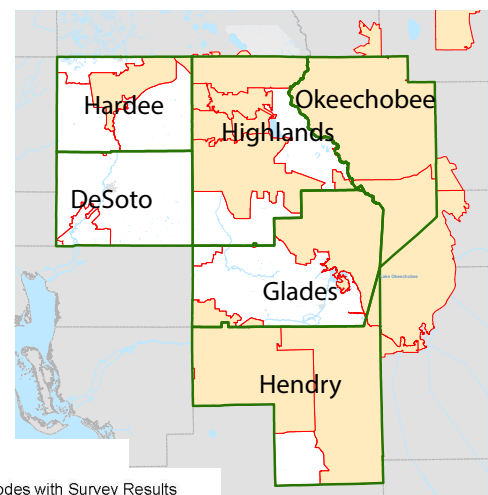
Age Group

18 and under	0%
19-34	10.7%
35-54	35.7%
55 and older	53.6%

Racial or Ethnic Group(s)

African-American (non-Hispanic)	7.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.6%
Asian/Pacific Islanders	0%
Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	78.6%
Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin	7.1%
Middle Eastern or North African	0%
Other	10.7%

Survey Participation by Zip Code



Legend

- Zip Codes with Survey Results
- Zip Codes with No Survey Results