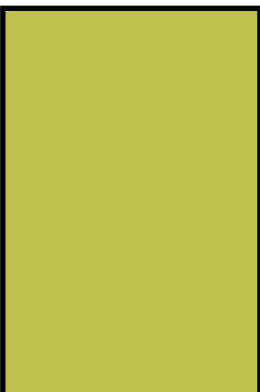


City of Battle Creek

2020 Public Engagement Report

A Review of Public Participation in the Creation of the 2020-24 Consolidated Plan



Citizen Engagement Overview

Every five years, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires the City of Battle Creek to conduct a community-wide needs assessment as part of the Consolidated Plan. This planning requirement serves as the application for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership entitlement funding.

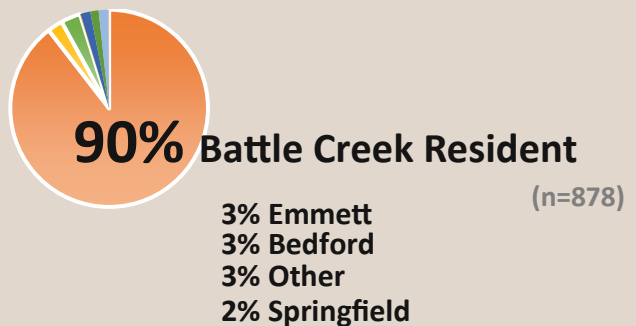
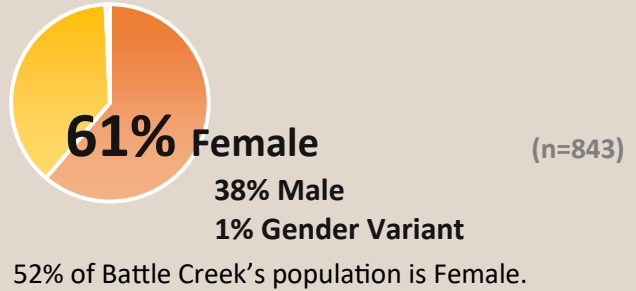
In the fall 2019, as part of the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan planning process, the City of Battle Creek Community Development Division distributed a survey to the community (950 responses), and held 9 public meetings to gather public input.

Public Meetings (9 total) were held at six of the City's eight Neighborhood Planning Councils; a participant's meeting at the SHARE Center, a drop in day center for homeless people; a focus group session for service providers, and a Neighborhood Leadership meeting at the City's Department of Public Works. Over 125 people participated in the sessions. The majority of the data collected is from the perspective of people experiencing the needs first hand.

Survey Respondents (950 total) shared their perspective of the needs in their community. The survey was offered online and distributed via water bills. Respondents were asked to prioritize program activities and answer an open-ended question about improving their neighborhood—590 open ended responses were received. The demographics and priorities expressed in the surveys are presented on the following pages.

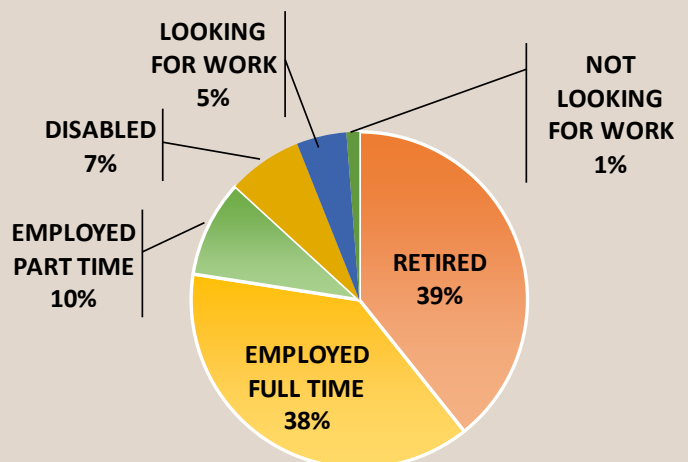
City staff worked with consultants from BC Pulse and a group of community volunteers to analyze the open-ended responses from the surveys. This analysis is available by request and may be added to this report as an addendum at a future date.

Survey Respondents

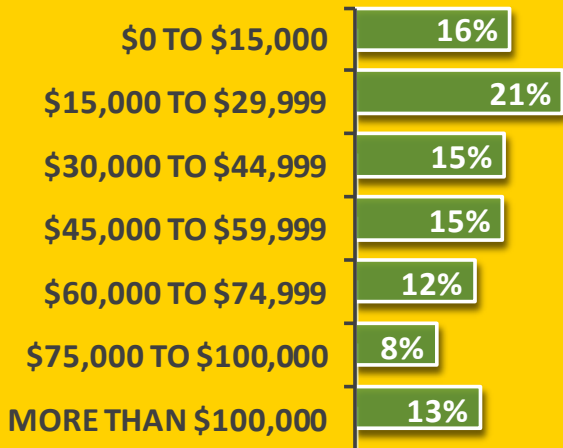


Employment Status of Survey Respondents

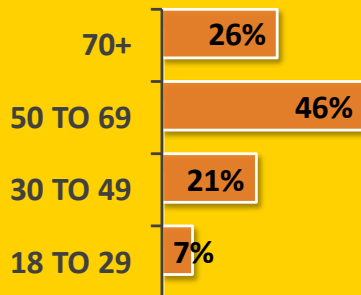
Answers the question: Which of the following best describes your employment status?



Income of Survey Respondents (n=935)

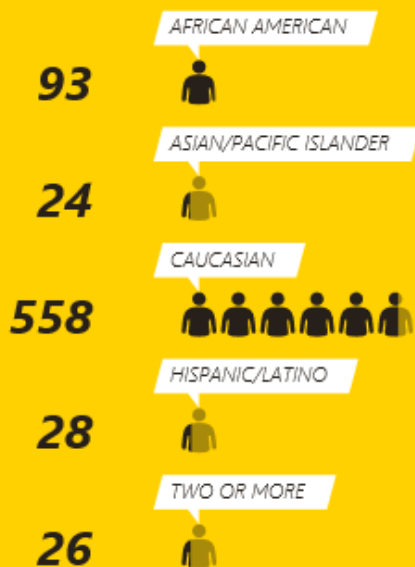


Age of Survey Respondents (n=1087)



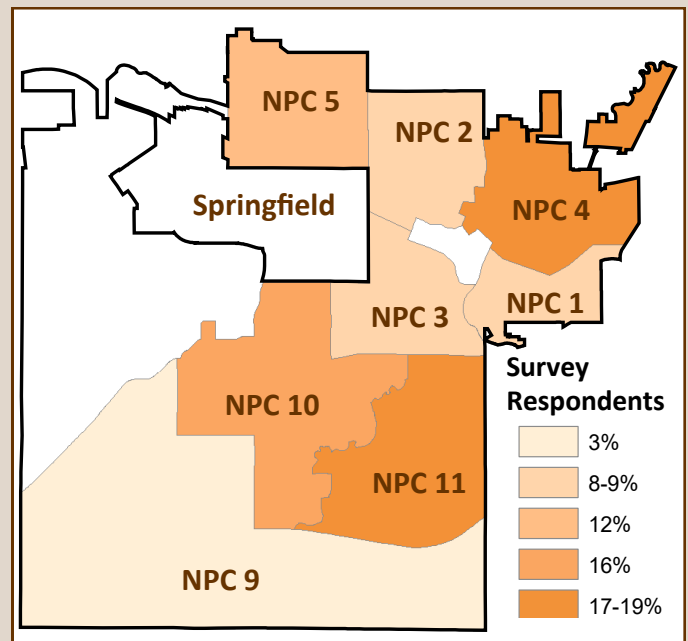
72% of survey respondents were residents over 50 despite only comprising 45% of the Battle Creek population.

Race/Ethnicity of Survey Respondents



Residency of Survey Respondents

Answers the question: What Neighborhood Planning Council (NPC) do you currently live in?



NPC's 4, 5, 10, and 11 contributed the most respondents to the survey sample (12-19% each).

Types of Data Collected

The survey presented the question "what housing and community development services are needed in your neighborhood". Respondents were asked to consider 38 community development services and rank them as "high", "medium", or "low" need, or indicate "no opinion".

The data aligned with activities eligible for federal programs and focused on needed services as opposed to problems that needed fixing.

The open-ended portion of the survey, as well as the discussion portions of the public meetings resulted in answers to the question "If you could change one thing in your neighborhood, what would it be and how would you do it?"

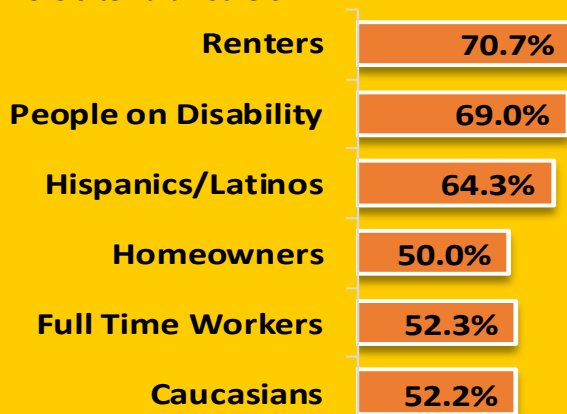
Respondents could mention items not on the list and often identified problems that they considered urgent and/or most important.

Highest Service Need (n=1179)

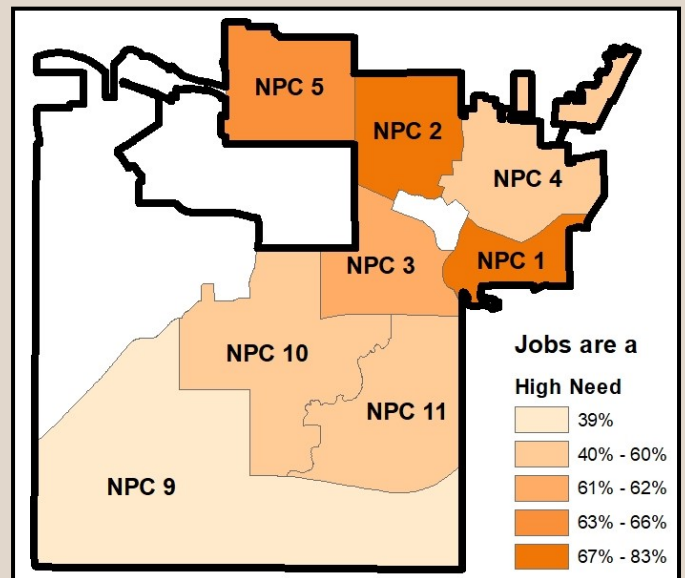
Answers the question: Of the 38 service needs listed on the survey, which were ranked as “High Need” by the most respondents?

Rank	Need Category	Percent
1	Mental Health Services	53%
2	Increase Job Opportunities	51%
3	Health Care	51%
4	Street Improvements	50%
5	Veteran Services	48%
6	Substance Abuse Services	47%
7	Senior Services	46%
8	Crime Prevention and Victim Services	44%
9	Rental Housing for People Who Are Homeless	43%
10	Youth Services	42%
11	Transportation	42%
12	Weatherization Improvements	41%
13	Child Care	40%
14	Rental Housing for Seniors	39%
15	Homeowner Housing Rehab	38%

Mental Health Services ranked as a high need regardless of respondents income, race, age, employment status, tenure, or residence—making it by far the most broadly felt need. Five years ago, mental health was ranked as the 8th highest concern, so this represents a significant change. While all demographic groups rated it as one of the highest needs, some groups did so more often than others.



Increase Job Opportunities was the second highest need overall, and most demographic groups ranked it as a top five concern. NPC's 1, 2 and 5 rated it a high priority most often over 63% of the time.



A few needs significantly increased in importance between the 2014 and 2019 surveys:

Rental housing for people that are homeless increased 13 positions, ranking as the 9th highest concern. This was largely driven by respondents with household incomes below \$30,000 and African Americans, who included it as a top five issue for the first time in 2019. Respondents looking for work or underemployed rated it a high need over 60% of the time in both 2014 and 2019.

Transportation increased in priority by 12 positions to the 11th highest ranking. It was the second highest ranked priority for Hispanic/Latino respondents who rated it as a high need 67.9% of the time—up from 17.5% in 2014. Respondents with incomes under \$15,000 rated it high 60% of the time in 2019 and 54% in 2014; respondents with a disability, 64% compared to 59% in 2014; and renters, 65% compared to 59%.

Street light improvements and lead abatement while generally considered lower priority issues, did increase 9 and 8 positions in priority respectively

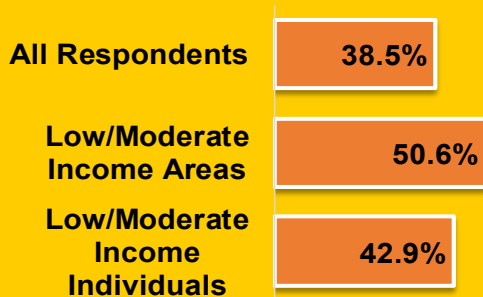
Highest Service Needs Among Target Demographic Groups

Community Development programs must be targeted to benefit a Low/Moderate Income (LMI) Household (defined as \$29,500 or less for an individual or \$42,250 or less for a family of four) or produce a benefit for all people in an area where at least 51% of households are low/moderate income.

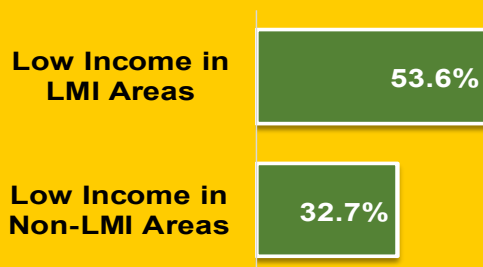
In some instances there were significant differences between the priorities of “all respondents” and those of these targeted populations.

Homeowner Housing Rehab ranked 15th amongst all

respondents but was a top five need for respondents living in LMI Areas with 50.6% rating it as high.



Living in an LMI area was a more significant factor than income in determining need. Low-income respondents in poorer areas rated homeowner rehab as a high need about 20% more often than low-income respondents living in middle and upper income neighborhoods.



Most Important Issue (n=455)

Answers the question: Which issues were mentioned most often by respondents when asked what one thing they would change about their neighborhood?

Rank	Issue Category	Percent
1	Speeding/Traffic Concerns	11%
2	Public Safety	11%
3	Improved Public Infrastructure	8%
4	Street Lighting	7%
5	Build/Improve Sidwalks	6%
6	Code Compliance	6%
7	Improve Neighborhood Conditions	6%
8	Parking Issues	5%
9	Noise Issues	5%
10	Housing Rehab	5%
11	Trash/Neighborhood Clean-up	5%
12	Rental Housing Concerns	4%
13	Vacant Buildings	4%
14	Neighborhood Organizing/Relationship Building	4%
15	Economic Development	3%

Please note that the percentages above are much lower than the service need ratings because respondents to this question were asked to pick their top issue and give an open-ended response.

Responses to this question were much more varied in 2019, and many top issues decreased in significance.

Responses about **speeding and street lighting** Increased by a few percentage points, but in general most of the hot button issues from 2014 stayed the same or decreased in significance. **Code compliance** was the top issue in 2014, but in 2019 code related comments were cut in half—from 13% to 6%. Comments about improving **neighborhood conditions, rental housing concerns and addressing vacant buildings** were all similarly reduced.

In 2014, 12% of all comments were about the lack of **neighborhood organizing and relationship building**, compared to only 4% in 2019.

Top Five Service Needs Amongst Various Demographic groups

Some demographic groups rated service needs higher on average than others. As part of the planning process for community development programs, demographic groups that have a special or disproportionate need must be considered. A comparison of the priorities of these demographic groups to those of “all respondents” suggest some potentially significant differences, and may indicate a special need.

Age: 19-29	%
Health Care	63.3%
Domestic Violence Services	58.3%
Child Care	58.3%
Help People Purchase Homes	56.7%
Crime Ed & Victim Services	56.7%

Age: 30-49	%
Mental Health Services	61.9%
Job Opportunities	60.8%
Street Improvements	57.4%
Youth Services	52.3%
Substance Abuse Services	52.3%

Age: 50-69	%
Mental Health Services	55.6%
Job Opportunities	55.1%
Street Improvements	52.5%
Health Care	52.2%
Substance Abuse Services	50.1%

Age: 70+	%
Senior Services	47.9%
Health Care	47.0%
Street Improvements	47.0%
Mental Health Services	42.9%
Job Opportunities	42.5%

Disabled	%
Job Opportunities	74.1%
Rental Housing for Homeless	72.4%
Mental Health Services	69.0%
Weatherization	67.2%
Veteran Services	65.5%

Employed Full Time	%
Job Opportunities	55.8%
Mental Health Services	52.3%
Substance Abuse Services	50.6%
Street Improvements	49.7%
Health Care	48.4%

Looking for Work	%
Street Improvements	74.4%
Rental Housing for Homeless	64.1%
Mental Health	64.1%
Job Opportunities	61.5%
Health Care	59.0%

Part Time	%
Mental Health Services	60.3%
Health Care	57.7%
Rental Housing for Homeless	57.4%
Job Opportunities	56.4%
Employment Training	55.1%

Retired	%
Senior Services	49.8%
Mental Health Services	49.5%
Street Improvements	48.3%
Health Care	48.3%
Job Opportunities	46.7%

Not Looking for Work	%
Rental Housing Rehabilitation	90.0%
Clean Up of Vacant Lots	90.0%
Job Opportunities	80.0%
Mental Health Services	70.0%
Health Care	70.0%

Hispanic/Latino (n=28)	
Child Care	67.9%
Transportation	67.9%
Mental Health Services	64.3%
Youth Services	64.3%
Street Improvements	64.3%

Caucasian (n=558)	
Mental Health Services	52.2%
Job Opportunities	50.7%
Health Care	48.9%
Street Improvements	48.8%
Substance Abuse Services	47.8%

Asian/Pacific Islander (n=21)	
Health Care	61.9%
Job Opportunities	61.9%
Help People Purchase Homes	57.1%
Weatherization	57.1%
Mental Health Services	57.1%
Crime Ed & Victim Services	57.1%
Domestic Violence Services	57.1%

African American (n=93)	
Job Opportunities	76.3%
Help People Purchase Homes	67.7%
Rental Housing for Homeless People	67.7%
Mental Health Services	63.4%
Health Care	63.4%
Youth Services	63.4%
Street Improvements	63.4%

Two or More Races (n=26)	
Weatherization	76.9%
Veteran Services	61.5%
Lead Paint Testing/Abatement	57.7%
Legal Services for Renters	57.7%
Mental Health Services	57.7%
Clean Up Vacant Lots	57.7%
Street Improvements	57.7%
Street Lighting	57.7%
Accessibility for Disabled	57.7%
Child Care	57.7%

Less than \$15,000	
Mental Health Services	64.5%
Job Opportunities	64.5%
Street Improvements	62.7%
Rental Housing for Homeless People	60.9%
Veteran Services	60.9%

\$15,000 to \$29,999	
Job Opportunities	58.8%
Rental Housing for Homeless People	52.7%
Health Care	56.1%
Veteran Services	53.4%
Street Improvements	54.7%

\$30,000 to \$44,999	
Mental Health Services	57.5%
Health Care	56.6%
Senior Services	54.7%
Job Opportunities	53.8%
Weatherization	50.9%

\$45,000 to \$59,999	
Street Improvements	52.4%
Job Opportunities	49.5%
Mental Health Services	44.8%
Substance Abuse Services	44.8%
Health Care	42.9%

Homeowner	%
Health Care	53.6%
Job Opportunities	50.6%
Mental Health Services	50.0%
Street Improvements	48.9%
Substance Abuse Services	45.6%

Renter	%
Mental Health Services	70.7%
Crime Ed & Victim Services	69.1%
Job Opportunities	68.3%
Street Improvements	66.7%
Youth Services	66.0%

The City of Battle Creek's **Community Development Division** supports neighborhoods by administering federal and state-funded programs and coordinating community development planning efforts. It administers the federal **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** and **HOME Investment Partnership** formula grant programs and the state CHIP Medicaid Lead Safe program.

For additional community development resources or more information about the five year consolidated planning process visit the Community Development Department's webpage at: www.battlecreekmi.gov

The survey instrument and the data collected during the public engagement process is available upon request. For more information contact Community Development Manager Chris Lussier at cplussier@battlecreekmi.gov or (269) 966-3267.

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