

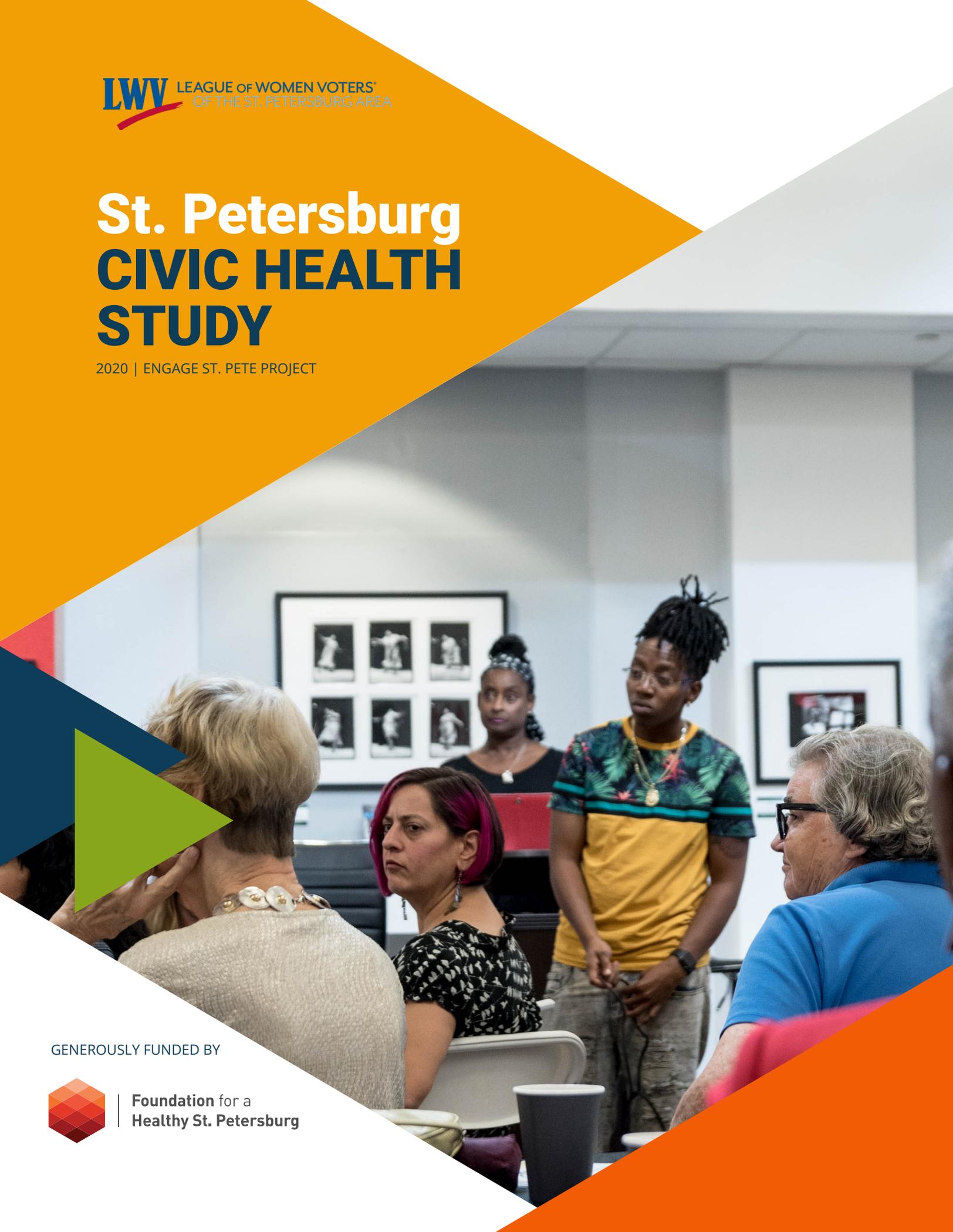
St. Petersburg CIVIC HEALTH STUDY

2020 | ENGAGE ST. PETE PROJECT

GENEROUSLY FUNDED BY



Foundation for a
Healthy St. Petersburg



St. Petersburg Civic Health Study



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
Methodology	6
Findings	7
Conclusion	8
<hr/>	
INTRODUCTION	9
<hr/>	
METHODOLOGY	12
Lessons Learned	13
<hr/>	
DEMOGRAPHICS/POPULATION OVERVIEW	16
Profile of Non-Voter Respondents	18
<hr/>	
ATTITUDES	19
Community and Civic Influence	19
Civic Satisfaction	21
<hr/>	
NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION	23
<hr/>	
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	26
<hr/>	
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION	28
<hr/>	
COMMUNITY/POLITICAL INFORMATION	34
<hr/>	
CONCLUSION: OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES	36
Opportunities	36
Challenges	37
<hr/>	
APPENDICES	38
Appendix A: Measures of Civic Engagement & Civic Health	38
Appendix B: Data Analysis Methodology	41
Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire	42
Appendix D: Focus Group Protocol	46

Welcome & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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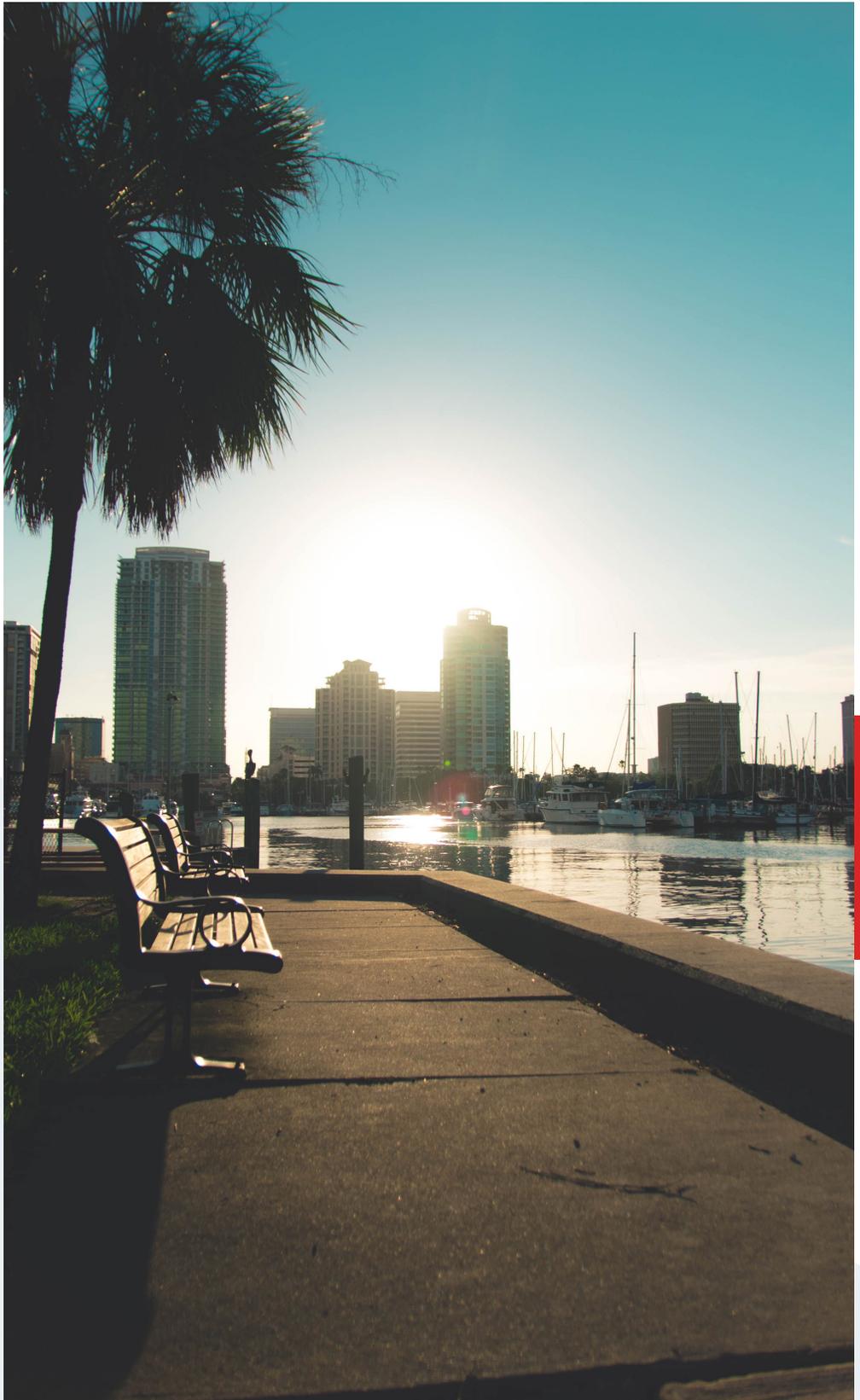
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Dear Readers,

The City of St. Petersburg is an incredibly engaged city. However, how its residents engage in civic and public spaces differs greatly by race, income, and neighborhood. To change the political and social determinants of health, it is critical that we understand how to effectively engage different groups of citizens and communities.

We hope that this report offers insights to non-profits, government agencies, the business community, and residents looking to make a difference in our community. The League of Women Voters is dedicated to educating voters about public policy issues and empower voters; creating a baseline for civic engagement and volunteerism while exploring the intersection of health is the first step to informing organizational efforts to further our mission.

We are grateful to the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg for their funding and support in developing this study and publishing this report. We also worked with many community organizations and stakeholders to gather qualitative and quantitative data found in this report. Without their trust, honesty, and time, we would not have been able to complete this project and amplify their voices.

Our partners include the Deuces Live, St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce, The Well, St. Petersburg Free Clinic, City of St. Petersburg, Florida Department of Health, Council of Neighborhood Associations, Community Tampa Bay, Allendale Methodist Church, 2020 Plan, American Association for Retired Persons, Delta Sigma Theta, Thrive by Five, Pinellas Opportunity Council, Pinellas Public Library Cooperative, St. Petersburg College, Community Action Stops Abuse, Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services, and Healthy Start Coalition of Pinellas.

“ St. Pete continues to be environmentally friendly and needs to continue to raise the bar in that area and social justice areas. - Survey Respondent

Civic engagement is a powerful indicator of health in a community; understanding how residents interface with their government and public institutions can help us create more equitable opportunities for policy and institutional change.

Linsey Grove, DrPH, CPH, CHES

League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area President and Engage St. Pete Co-Lead

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LWVSPA Runaway Inequality Event. Photo by James Schultz



In order to meaningfully, sustainably, and equitably improve civic engagement – and ensure the voices of engaged community members are heard – it is important to understand the civic engagement challenges and opportunities in our city and develop new strategies based on evidence. This research seeks to reduce the civic engagement information gap so community and city partners can develop data-driven recommendations for moving forward towards greater and more equitable citizen voice in influencing decision-making and policy outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

The Engage St. Pete Project was initiated by the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area (LWVSPA) in late 2018 with funding from the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg. The Engage St. Pete Civic Health Survey adopted a broad definition of civic health and engagement, encompassing formal and informal political, community, and neighborhood engagement, as well as perceptions of trust and cohesion. Quantitative data were collected in two rounds: (1) city-wide from January-March 2019 and (2) targeted for underrepre-

sented population groups from July-August 2019. The survey had a total of 1,590 respondents. Qualitative data were collected from May-July 2019. Three formal focus groups targeting black city residents and non-voters were conducted in partnership with the Pinellas Ex-Offenders Coalition (PERC) and the Community Development and Training Center (CDAT). Fifty mini-interviews were conducted with homeless residents, in cooperation with Celebrate Outreach. Over twenty community review meetings and key informant interviews were conducted with local and community-based groups.

FINDINGS

The majority of respondents (55%) reported being satisfied with the way things are going in the City of St. Petersburg, with 28% reporting being dissatisfied and the remaining reporting no opinion. Across more than 500 narrative comments received, the number one issue among both satisfied and dissatisfied residents was concern about the pace and scale of development and new construction, notably the construction of high-rise buildings downtown. The number two issue was affordable housing. These issues are linked by the issue that was third overall: concerns about inequality, gentrification, and the city becoming too focused on the wealthy. Two other important issues for both satisfied and dissatisfied respondents included (1) concern about development occurring without improvements to city infrastructure to accommodate growth in a sustainable way and (2) concerns about development changing the character of the city regarding small businesses, artists, and historic buildings. While some comments opposed development and growth overall, more focused on concerns around the city's priorities with respect to how it is growing and for whom.



Attitudes: Overall, 84% of survey respondents indicated they believe they can have a positive impact on their community. Many of the focus group participants discussed how important mentoring and modeling behavior is with respect to making a positive impact on the community, putting a special emphasis on reaching young people. However, only 60% of respondents believe people like them (socioeconomically, ethnically, etc.) have a say in local government decisions. Respondents who identified as black were significantly less likely than respondents who identified as white to report that people like them have a say in local government decisions. This is consistent with findings from a thematic analysis of community review discussions with organization leaders and members of the black community, who described a history of distrust and broken promises from the local government, as well as experiences of disenfranchisement and powerlessness. During focus group discussions, participants indicated that while they believed they had the ability to voice concerns to local government, they did not necessarily believe anyone would listen. In one focus group, when the facilitator asked a question about whether participants felt they had a say in local government, the response from everyone present was laughter.

Neighborhood Cohesion: Most respondents (68%) believe that people in their neighborhoods are willing to help their neighbors and that people in their neighborhoods generally get along with each other. Approximately 70% of respondents reported that they and their neighbors do favors for each other, and around 30% reported doing favors a few times a month or more. Most respondents answered that they spoke with neighbors at least a few times a month. An analysis using a five-factor measure of neighborhood cohesion found no significant differences in terms of race, gender, or educational levels. However, a significant difference was found between income levels, with people who reported over six figure incomes reporting higher levels of neighborhood cohesion than people who make less than \$50,000 a year. In community review meetings, there was a distinct theme with respect to the perceived negative impact that transience has on neighborhood cohesion, whereas family ties were seen as improving neighborhood cohesion.

Community Participation: A surprisingly high 74% of survey respondents reported volunteering over the past year. The median was twelve hours over the course of the year and the average was eighty-five hours, with 15.6% of respondents reporting volunteering one hundred hours per year or more (roughly 1-2 hours per week). The survey found that respondents from the baby boomer generation volunteer the most, and millennial respondents volunteer the least. City residents are also very charitable, with only 12.4% of respondents reporting they did not donate twenty-five dollars or more in the past year. However, the survey did not ask respondents to distinguish between donations to local organizations and donations to state, national, or international organizations. Thus, it cannot be assumed the high rate of donating benefits the St. Petersburg community directly. Religious institutions represent hubs of engagement in some parts of the city for volunteering, donating, and helping each other out. Respondents from zip code 33712 were significantly more likely to give to religious organizations compared to any other zip code.

Political Participation: Analysis of data from the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections and U.S. Census Bureau indicates strong political participation among St. Petersburg residents, with 86% of the voting age population of St. Petersburg estimated to have been registered to vote in November. In the November 2018 General Election, 66% of registered voters in St. Petersburg cast a ballot. This was higher than neighboring cities Clearwater and Tampa. However, turnout for local elections is quite different. In the November 2017 municipal and county elections, 39.5% of regis-

tered voters in St. Petersburg turned out to vote, and in the November 2019 municipal general elections, only 19.7% of registered voters cast a ballot. There is a cluster of high voter turnout in the neighborhoods just north of downtown and a cluster of low voter turnout in the neighborhoods just south of Central Avenue. These clusters reflect long-standing issues of public investment, wealth, and race that impact voter access, confidence and disenfranchisement. The analysis also revealed lower political participation overall in the far north of the city. A higher percentage of survey respondents reported attending public meetings than either community review participants or census data indicate is representative of the city population. Community review participants from across the city expressed dissatisfaction with the scheduling of public meetings during regular business hours, which is challenging for working people with many obligations to attend. Many participants also highlighted the opportunity cost of engaging in public meetings and other city consultation processes: it takes considerable time and effort, and their participation appears to have little impact on decision-making. There was a palpable sense of frustration with community engagement processes that one participant summed up as “disempowerment through engagement.”

Information: Only 14% of survey respondents reported obtaining information about local news and events from the government. Community review participants were not surprised about this low percentage, with some remarking that people may not notice government messaging unless there is an acute need for that specific information. However, participants – many of whom are actively engaged citizens – also highlighted that it is hard to find things on the city’s website and that the city is not using social media as well as it should be to communicate on key issues that affect residents. The most popular ways for obtaining information about local issues are the internet and social media. We suspect that online engagement may be partially responsible for the higher-than-expected number of survey respondents who reported political participation. With the growth in social media and email organizing in recent years, it has become easy to send a petition in a few easy clicks or email an elected representative. Community review participants noted the older than average age of survey respondents felt that older people are more likely to contact officials because they may have a stronger perception of access to officials. Unsurprisingly, 57% of respondents reported sharing their views about local news or issues by talking to family, friends, and colleagues. However, it is somewhat surprising that the percentage is not higher, as this implies 43% of respondents are not talking about their views on local issues with their family,

friends and colleagues. Some participants noted that discussions of local issues can easily escalate to discussions of polarizing national politics. Others noted that in the age of social media, people talk less to other people in general.

CONCLUSIONS

We found that St. Petersburg is a city with many protective factors that promote civic health among its residents; it is an engaged city with high voter turnout, a strong sense of volunteerism, generosity, and participation in community and government decision-making processes. Despite these strengths, there is room for improvement with regards to economic, health, and other resource-driven disparities. The neighborhoods and communities of St. Petersburg are not homogenous, but rather intersect and interconnect in ways that strengthen the fabric of the city. Shared concerns about development and cost of living can help stimulate discussion and action to ensure that growth is sustainable, equitable, and inclusive. The findings of this study lead us to believe that residents of St. Petersburg are ready for that engagement.

This study also highlighted some real challenges for the City of St. Petersburg. Most notably was a sense that public consultation and engagement processes are not being used effectively to support residents to meaningfully influence city decision-making. Findings from qualitative data show an overall concern with respect to the responsiveness of city government to residents and about what interests influence city decision-making, regardless of neighborhood or demographics. The City of St. Petersburg would benefit from improved communication to and meaningful engagement with residents. This study also reiterated racial dynamics in the city that need to be proactively and equitably addressed. St. Petersburg’s history of broken promises to black neighborhoods was a factor across multiple measurements of civic and community engagement explored in this study. The impacts of this history are not only historical; they impact the city’s civic health today.

The responsibility for engaging residents – especially those who have not been heard or listened to in the past – should be on the city and on civic and community groups, without faulting individuals for not having previously been engaged.

II. INTRODUCTION

Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes. - *Thomas Ehrlich, "Civic Responsibility and Higher Education"*

The Engage St. Pete Project was initiated by the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area (LWVSPA) in late 2018 with funding from the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg. A major component of the project was to develop a baseline measure of civic engagement in the City of St. Petersburg, across all zip codes. The purpose of measuring civic engagement is to identify opportunities and challenges for the Engage St. Pete Project to take forward, as well as to provide useful information to support community organizations and city government in their own outreach, advocacy, and engagement efforts. The findings also support the City of St. Petersburg's measures as part of the STAR Community Rating System™.

LWVSPA is a volunteer-run, non-partisan, non-profit organization that has been supporting civic engagement in the City of St. Petersburg since 1939. LWVSPA is a member of the state and national-level League of Women Voters (LWV), which has been dedicated to helping all voters play their critical role in our democracy since 1920. The LWV has always been non-partisan: it neither supports nor opposes candidates or political parties at any level of government. LWV strategies for supporting civic engagement have traditionally included new voter outreach and registration, providing information about the voting process, hosting candidate forums, educating voters about their rights and about what is on their ballot, advocating for voter rights and enfranchisement, and grassroots organizing around issues of importance to members and their communities (e.g., environmental

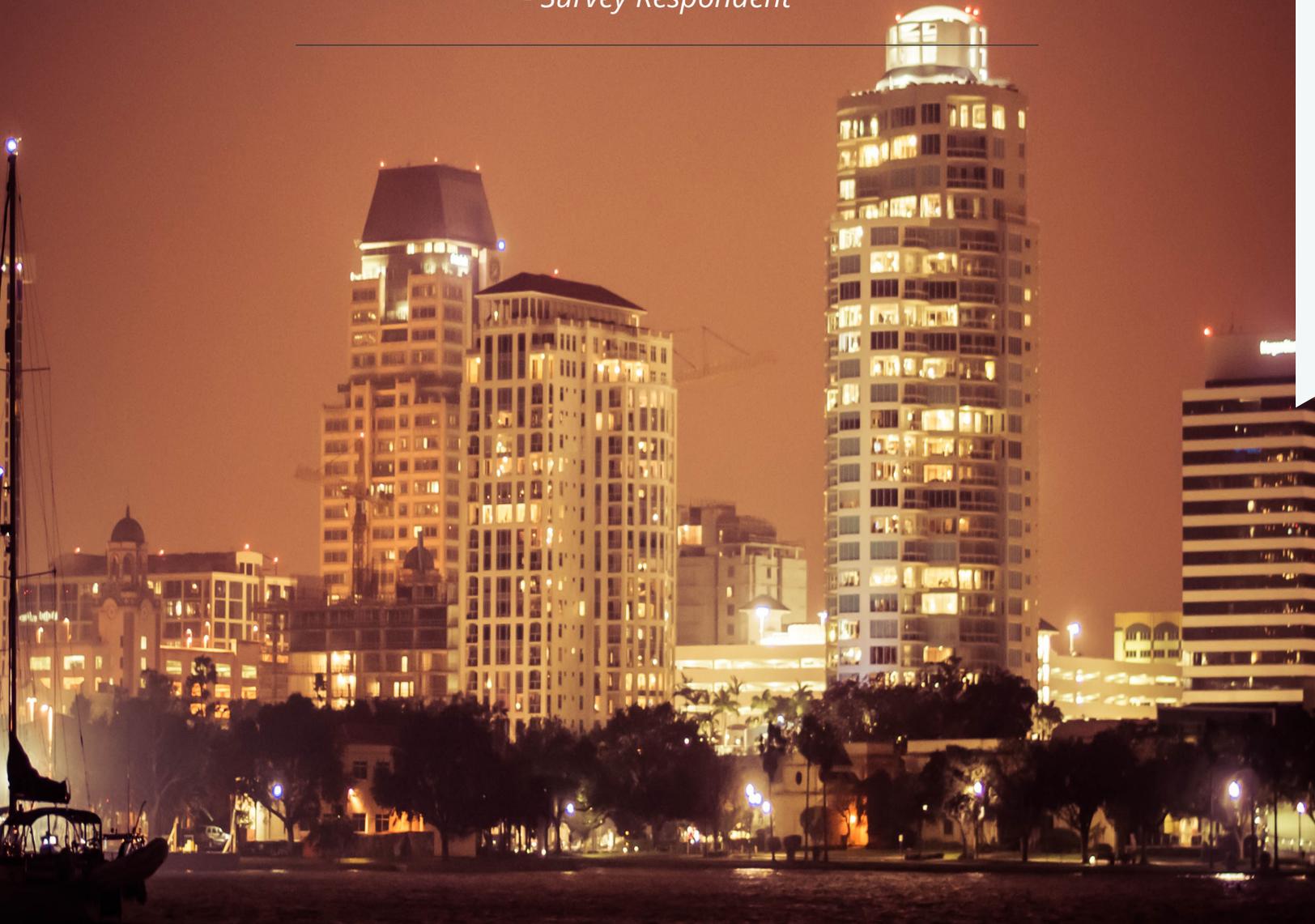
sustainability, immigration, social justice, and reproductive rights).

There are many ways for people to be civically engaged: voting, volunteering, attending public meetings, contacting elected representatives, organizing neighbors for a common activity, joining a local organization, donating to causes impacting the community, and many more. **There are also many factors that impact an individual's level of civic engagement,** not least of which is their health status and the health of their community. Communities with poor health outcomes, driven by social determinants of health such as income, education, and employment, are less likely to engage in policy making and political participation.¹ Conversely, more civically engaged communities tend to enjoy higher levels of self-reported health, income, employment and education.² Civic engagement and voter participation have been linked to increased positive community health outcomes and increased social capital and cohesion. Educated and engaged citizens increase health equity by using their votes and volunteerism to address policy-driven social and structural disadvantages.³ Low civic engagement combined with decreased civic participation often leads to decreased health outcomes.⁴ Marginalized communities who often face greater barriers to health and wellness are also more likely to encounter barriers to democratic participation, including policies that support implicit or explicit voter suppression, limited transportation options, and less flexible employment conditions, among others.⁵

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3. Burden, Barry C., Jason M. Fletcher, Pamela Herd, Bradley M. Jones, and Donald P. Moynihan. "How Different Forms of Health Matter to Political Participation." *The Journal of Politics* 79, no. 1 (2017): 166-78. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/687536>.
4. National Conference on Citizenship. "Florida Civic Health Index 2011: The Next Generation." *National Conference on Citizenship* (2016) Available from: <https://ncoc.org/civic-health-index-22/>
5. Kawachi, I. and B. P. Kennedy. "Health and Social Cohesion: Why Care About Income Inequality?" *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)* 314, no. 7086 (1997): 1037-40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.314.7086.1037>.

“Residential segregation and anti-minority sentiment is plaguing the city. Decent public facilities are located in areas almost inaccessible to minority groups and the economically disadvantaged. Gentrification is plaguing the South Side. There needs to be a committee to address these issues.”

- Survey Respondent



The National Conference on Citizenship defines civic health as “the way that communities are organized to define and address public problems.”⁶ In Florida, civic engagement and civic health rank low compared to the national average. According to U.S. Census data, Floridians are less likely to volunteer, vote, contact a public official, be a member of a community organization, attend a public meeting, work with a neighbor to fix a community problem, or be a member of a civic organization.⁷ Floridian millennials fare even worse. Florida also has lower indices with respect to the social determinants of health relative to other states: lower graduation rates, lower health insurance coverage, higher numbers of children living in poverty, and greater economic disparity.⁸ Data on civic engagement in St. Petersburg specifically has been, prior to this research, extremely limited.

In 2015, the City of St. Petersburg joined the STAR Community Rating System™ (STAR). This system provides a national framework for measurement and certification in sustainability across seven categories of community life: built environment; climate and energy; economy and jobs; education, arts and community; equity and empowerment; and natural systems. In 2016, the city was awarded a rating of three STARS, out of a possible five. The category where the City of St. Petersburg scored the lowest was Equity and Empowerment, which includes measures of civic engagement as well as other social determinants of health. The city received only 21.6 points out of a possible 100 in this category, falling on the lower end of the spectrum compared to other STAR-rated cities across the country. This was in-part due to

a lack of data. St. Petersburg fell in the bottom twenty-fifth percentile of STAR-rated cities on civic engagement because the city did not meet the required threshold for the outcome measures on voting and did not have adequate data to submit for the outcome measures on empowerment and volunteerism. Scores for other parts of the Equity and Empowerment category fared slightly better, but were still low, including environmental justice, civil and human rights, access to services and poverty alleviation. Under the Education, Arts & Community category, St. Petersburg scored well on community cohesion because so many residents “live within one mile of a community venue that provides free access to community events and services.” However, the city did not have adequate data to submit regarding public perceptions of community cohesion.⁹

In order to meaningfully, sustainably and equitably improve civic engagement – and ensure that the voices of engaged community members are heard – it is important to understand the civic engagement and civic health challenges and opportunities in our city, and develop new strategies based on evidence. This research seeks to reduce the civic engagement information gap so that community and city partners can develop data-driven recommendations for moving forward towards greater and more equitable citizen voice in influencing decision-making and policy outcomes.



Above

Coffee in Common Series hosted by the St. Petersburg Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta and the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area.

Left

Downtown St. Petersburg. Photo by James Schultz

6. National Conference on Citizenship. “Florida Civic Health Index 2011: The Next Generation.” *National Conference on Citizenship* (2016) Available from: <https://ncoc.org/civic-health-index-22/>

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9. Sustainability. *Star Certification Results Report: City of St. Petersburg, Certified 3-Star Community*, by Petersburg, City of St., 2016.

III. METHODOLOGY

To measure civic engagement across all zip codes in the City of St. Petersburg, the project team developed the Engage St. Pete Civic Health Survey.

Below

St. Petersburg Peace Protests in response to the death of George Floyd.
Photos by James Schultz



The survey was based on measures of civic health and engagement utilized in the National Conference on Citizenship “Civic Health Index,” the National Civic League “Civic Index,” and the STAR Community Rating System outcomes on neighborhood cohesion, volunteerism and empowerment (see Appendices A and B for further detail on measures and analysis).

Through collaborative meetings in November 2018 and January 2019, community organizations were consulted on the definition and measures of civic health and civic engagement. The project adopted a broad definition, encompassing formal and informal political, community, and neighborhood engagement, as well as perceptions of trust and cohesion. Community feedback also guided both questionnaire design and plans for disseminating the survey and collecting responses. The survey questions were based on validated questions drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey (CPS) 2017 Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement and 2016 Voting and Registration Supplement, the 2016 NORC/University of Chicago General Social Survey (GSS), and other select U.S. Census Bureau and private/academic sources. Some questions were modified for local

relevance and space constraints. The survey questionnaire was pilot tested with LWVSPA members and partners, receiving feedback from more than 50 individuals. The questionnaire was subsequently revised to improve question clarity and understanding. A copy of the final survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

The survey was available online at www.TakeThePoll.org from January 31, 2019 to March 8, 2019 and was also available in paper copy. The survey was promoted via multiple avenues, including social media (Twitter, Nextdoor, and boosted posts on Facebook), electronic outreach by community and City partners, paid advertisements in local print and online media (The Weekly Challenger, Creative Loafing, *tbt and the Tampa Bay Times), posters at all public libraries, and canvassing with door-hangers by youth volunteers from the Teen Arts, Sports and Cultural Opportunities (TASCO) program. In addition, LWVSPA volunteers tabled and crowd-canvassed at seventeen different events at public libraries, recreation centers, and community gatherings to distribute flyers and paper surveys.¹⁰ LWVSPA volunteers were trained to administer the paper version of the survey verbally in case a respondent required support.

10. Locations included: St. Petersburg Main Library, North Community Library, Johnson Community Library, Campbell Park Recreation Center, Childs Park Recreation Center, Frank W. Pierce Recreation Center, Enoch Davis Recreation Center, Gladden Park Recreation Center, Bay Vista Recreation Center, Walter Fuller Recreation Center, Thomas 'Jet' Jackson Recreation Center, Lake Vista Recreation Center, Willis Johns Recreation Center, Roberts Recreation Center, James B. Sanderlin Neighborhood Family Center Community Bazaar, and AARP “Movies for Grown Ups” at AMC Sundial.

The survey was designed to take approximately ten minutes to complete and was fully anonymous. In order to encourage responses from individuals who do not usually participate in community surveys, and thus may be less or differently civically engaged, an incentive was offered in the form of a random drawing for one of forty \$25 Visa gift cards. Entry into the drawing was open to all survey respondents (regardless of how they took the survey) and was optional. Personal information entered for the drawing was kept separate from survey responses to maintain anonymity.

The target for the survey was a sample of 1,063 respondents (for a confidence interval of 95%). This target was exceeded, with 1,211 responses obtained from across all city zip codes. However, preliminary analysis and comparison to the U.S. Census Bureau 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates for the City of St. Petersburg found that the demographics of the sample were highly skewed. Most notably, almost everyone who took the survey had voted in November 2018 and around three-quarters of the respondents were women. Young people and people of color were also notably under-sampled. Overall, the sample was older, whiter, richer, more educated, and more female than the city demographics.

Review of other recent community surveys in Pinellas County found similar demographic challenges. The 2045 Tri-County Transportation Plan Survey (November 2018) also relied on multimodal community outreach to gather a sample of 9,575 respondents from Pinellas, Hillsborough and Pasco counties. However, despite extensive outreach, the Pinellas County results were also whiter and richer than the county demographics. The 2018 Pinellas County Community Health Assessment used a phone survey with random sampling but was still under-sampled for communities of color. Neither of these surveys reported gender.

Considering this information, the project team determined that leaving the survey open for longer would likely continue producing similarly skewed data, and that an alternative approach was needed. This approach was initially two-fold: the team undertook focused discussions with civically disenfranchised groups,¹¹ and the team used the planned community review process to gather qualitative information from many different groups and communities across the city. A qualitative data collection and coding framework was developed to guide this process. Three formal focus groups were

conducted in partnership with the Pinellas Ex-Offenders Coalition (PERC) and the Community Development and Training Center (CDAT) with residents who do not vote or are unable to vote. Fifty mini-interviews were conducted with homeless residents of the city, in cooperation with Celebrate Outreach. Over twenty community review meetings and key informant interviews were conducted with local and community-based groups. These discussions included members and representatives from the St. Petersburg Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA), eight individual Neighborhood Associations,¹² the LWVSPA General Membership Meeting, the American Association of Retired People (AARP), the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce Grow Smarter Initiative, St. Petersburg Free Clinic, Thrive By Five Pinellas, the Pinellas County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations (PCCPTA), Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Community Tampa Bay, Deuces Live, Metro Inclusive Health, the James B. Sanderlin Neighborhood Family Center, UNITE Pinellas, Equality Florida, the Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC), and the St. Petersburg chapters of the NAACP, Sierra Club, and Planned Parenthood.

Based on information from this qualitative process, the team reopened the survey for targeted data collection from under-sampled groups. Outreach specifically to men, non-voters, and the African American community was conducted via text message in partnership with Resistance Labs between July and August 2019. This process yielded an additional 379 survey responses. In total, the survey had 1,590 respondents, and 505 individual comments were collected through the survey and mini-interviews.

LESSONS LEARNED

The outreach approach for the survey yielded several lessons learned that may be useful for future community surveys in St. Petersburg. First and foremost is the need to undertake an organizational network analysis to understand outreach gaps that will require specific, tailored approaches. For LWVSPA, the first round of survey data collection revealed gaps with respect to men, non-voters and people of color. Although these gaps were anticipated to a certain degree, understanding them more fully in advance would have encouraged the allocation of financial resources to fully partner with organizations that

11. "Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes."

12. Disston Heights, Central Oak Park, Fossil Park, Greater Pinellas Point, Child's Park, Riviera Bay and Magnolia Heights. Discussion invitations were extended to all active neighborhood associations in the city.

have strong relationships and trust among populations that LWVSPA's network did not reach effectively. It also would have encouraged more strategic consideration of different outreach and data gathering approaches. For example, partnering with specialized polling firms that use texting to gather data from registered voters was initially rejected as an approach to data collection because these firms focus exclusively on registered voters. However, this approach ultimately proved to be a very successful way to reach women of color.

Related to the above, another core lesson learned is the importance of people knowing and trusting the group that is conducting the survey and the purpose for which the information will be used. Clear outreach materials are essential to explain who is conducting the survey, why it is being conducted, and – perhaps most importantly – how it will benefit the city or broader community. Outreach materials should be tested with target groups to ensure the materials are effectively communicating the information and are culturally relevant. A significant period of time should be planned for community outreach in advance of survey deployment to develop and test outreach materials, circulate information, present and take questions at community forums, and gain buy-in from key stakeholders. It is also worth noting that organizations undertaking community research will likely be more successful in obtaining representative participation if they are not only broadly known but also broadly present through regular attendance at a diversity of community meetings and participation in many different types of community events.

The survey did not include specific questions around faith-based engagement, political affiliation, or



Top left
Lisa Frank, Florida Consumer Action Network Organizer works with volunteers on the Complete Streets Project.

Below
Volunteers assess St. Petersburg streets for the Complete Streets project.
Photos by James Schultz



the length of time that an individual had lived at their current residence. However, the community review process indicated that these factors influence civic health and civic engagement and that they are worthy of further and deeper analysis. The community review process also yielded a few specific suggestions relevant to future surveys, such as:

- » **Clarify the definitions of words like “volunteer,” “charity,” and “community.” Different participants and cohorts of the population interpret these words differently.**
- » **Direct cash incentives may be necessary to increase participation from non-voters.**
- » **Engaging faith-based institutions may be an effective way**

to increase participation from men.

- » **Collect paper surveys at public locations that have broad-based clientele as well as wait times, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles.**

The project team sought to gather information directly from non-voters and from men (in general) through incentives, qualitative formats, and targeted surveys. However, engaging these groups proved a major challenge, regardless of demographics. It is not clear if other community surveys have faced similar challenges with respect to gender representation and participation of non-voters, but it is a lesson to note and confront in future community surveys as these voices may be missing.

“St. Pete continues to be environmentally friendly and needs to continue to raise the bar in that area and social justice areas.”
- Survey Respondent



Above
Brown Pelicans flocking to a fish
cleaning station at Clam Bayou
Nature Park.
Photo by James Schultz

IV. DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Overview

To understand and interpret the findings of the St. Pete Civic Health Survey, it is important to know whose voices are represented and whose voices may be missing.



Above
2017 Women's March in St. Petersburg. *Photo by James Schultz*

The biggest challenge with respect to the demographics of the survey respondents was that more than twice the amount of survey participants identified as women than as men.

Compared with census data on St. Petersburg, which indicates a gender breakdown of 52% women and 48% men,¹³ women were vastly overrepresented in the survey sample. In the second round of data collection, men were specifically targeted, but this only slightly raised the percentage of male survey responses. The challenges faced in obtaining responses from men may be reflec-

tive of lower levels of community engagement by men more broadly (as per existing research about male isolation^{14,15}), which may be a health concern especially as men age. During one community review meeting in South St. Petersburg, participants highlighted that men have more trouble than women finding work, staying civically engaged, volunteering, and getting training; in addition, many men are disenfranchised as a result of prior felony convictions.

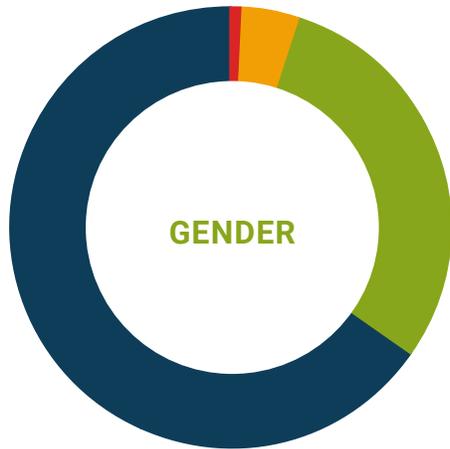
The average age of survey respondents was fifty-two years and the median age was sixty, which places the survey sample as older than the average and median age of St. Petersburg residents according to census data.¹⁶ On average respon-

dents reported having "good" to "very good" health.

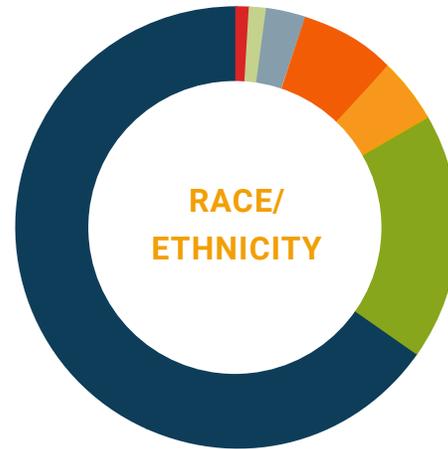
With respect to race and ethnicity, 67% of survey participants identified as White, 17% identified as Black or African American, and 2.5% identified as Hispanic or Latinx. The 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates indicate city demographics of 69% White, 23% Black or African American, and 7.6% Hispanic or Latinx.

Household income was evenly spread amongst survey participants. The median income of survey respondents was in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 range, in line with city data that places the median household income at \$50,622.¹⁷

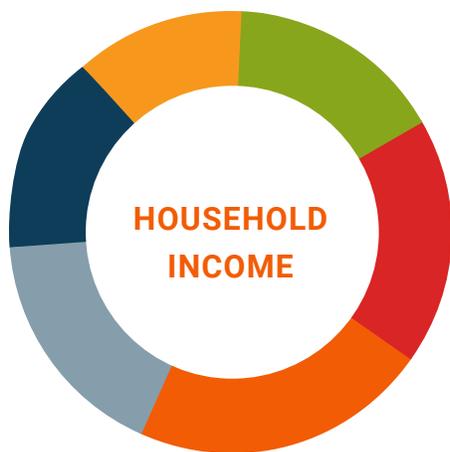
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARTS



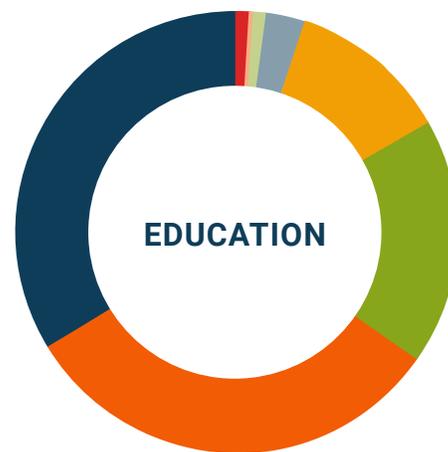
67% Women
30% Men
2% Prefer to Self-Describe
1% Prefer Not to Say



67% White
17% Black or African American
7% Prefer Not to Say
5% Multiracial
2% Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish
1% Asian
1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander



21.8% \$25,999 or Less
21.7% \$26,000 to \$49,999
21.3% \$50,000 to \$74,999
15.7% \$75,000 to \$99,999
21.8% \$100,000 to \$149,999
15.7% \$150,000 or More



34.1% Bachelor's Degree
30.6% Master's Degree or Higher
12.9% Associate's Degree
15.2% Some College
4.3% High School Graduate
1% Some High School
0.3% 8th Grade or Less
1.9% Prefer Not to Say

13. FactFinder, United States Census Bureau / American. "American Community Survey-5 Year Estimates: St. Petersburg, Florida Demographic Information." U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Office. Last modified 2018. Accessed 2018. <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.
14. Markanday, Shikha, Sharon L. Brennan, Haslinda Gould, and Julie A. Pasco. "Sex-Differences in Reasons for Non-Participation at Recruitment: Geelong Osteoporosis Study." *BMC Research Notes* 6, no. 1 (04// 2013): 1. <http://ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edb&AN=86956187&site=eds-live>.
15. Cull, William L., Karen G. O'Connor, Sanford Sharp, and Suk-fong S. Tang. "Response Rates and Response Bias for 50 Surveys of Pediatricians." *Health Services Research* 40, no. 1 (2005): 213-26. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6773.2005.00350.x>.
16. 2017 ACS-5 Year Estimates place the median age in St. Petersburg at 41.2 years.
17. FactFinder, United States Census Bureau / American. "American Community Survey-5 Year Estimates: St. Petersburg, Florida Demographic Information." U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Office. Last modified 2018. Accessed 2018. <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.

Left
Knight Oceanographic
Research Center in the
Bayboro Harbor
Below
Bayboro Harbor
Photos by James Schultz

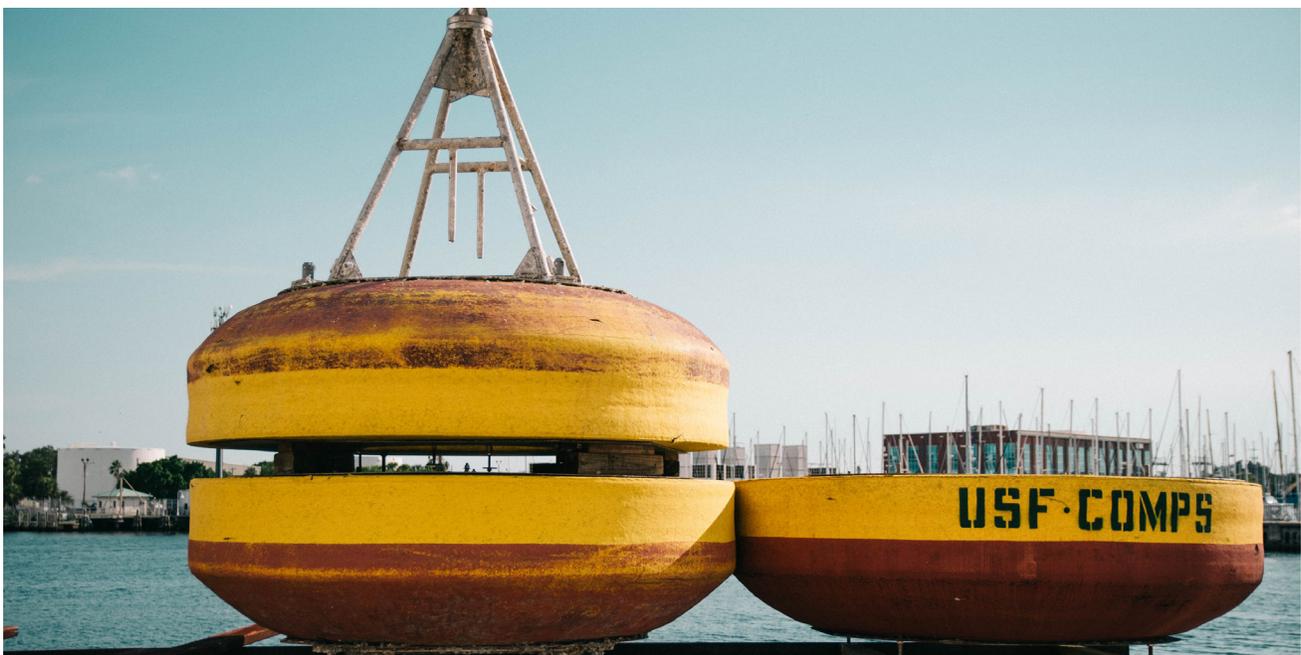
The survey sample has higher levels of education, on average, than the overall city population. Approximately two-thirds of respondents reported having a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 2017 ACS 1-Year Estimates showing that approximately 34% of residents have a Bachelor's degree or higher.



PROFILE OF 113 NON-VOTER RESPONDENTS

Almost all survey respondents reported voting in the November 2018 General Election. The challenges faced in obtaining survey responses from non-voters leaves a serious gap in information for further exploration: how do non-voters engage in the community and interact with the city? The lack of response to the survey by non-voters provides some reason to believe that these individuals may be less engaged, at least in formal ways. The survey's sample of non-voters is too small to be representative or generalizable, but it is nonetheless important to highlight the voices of those non-voters who did respond: 41% feel they have a

good understanding of the important issues facing the City of St. Petersburg and 41% reported being satisfied with the way things are going in the city. The majority believe that they are able to have a positive impact on their community, but they are split on whether or not they have a say in what local government does. Over 20% of non-voter respondents report being civically engaged: 21% attended a public meeting in the past year, 22% contacted a public official, 29% signed a petition, 33% are members of an organization or association, 51% report volunteering over the past year, and 38% report donating to charity.



V. ATTITUDES

Bottom Left
Downtown St. Petersburg from Vinoy Park.
Bottom Right
LWVSPA Runaway Inequality Event. *Photos by James Schultz*



COMMUNITY AND CIVIC INFLUENCE

To assess attitudes around civic and community engagement, respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements: “I believe I am able to have a positive impact on my community” and “People like me don’t have any say about what the local government does.” In one of the most positive findings of the survey, **84% of respondents indicated that they believe they can have a positive impact on their community** (agree or strongly agree). This result was consistent across zip codes, with 79% or more of respondents in every zip code reporting a belief that they can have a positive impact. However, **a notably lower 60% of respondents indicated that people like them have a say in what the local government does.** The percentage of respondents who feel that people like them have a say was highest in 33701 (which includes downtown) and 33704 (which is the most affluent zip code), at 73%. Only about half of respondents 33712 (which includes midtown and much of South St. Petersburg) and 33702/33716 (the far north of the city) indicated that people like them have a say in what the local government does.

When asked about the difference in the percentage between respondents who believe they can have a positive impact on their community and respondents who think people like them have a say in local government, participants in community review discussions provided an interpretation: **that people feel they can have a personal impact on their community, such as by being a positive role model for young people, or**

by working through their church, or any number of ways to impact the community that is not through interaction with government. Participants in focus group discussions, who generally reported believing that they could have a positive impact on their community, also highlighted personal impact examples like this.

During the focus group discussions, participants indicated that while they believed they had the ability to voice concerns to local government, it did not necessarily mean anyone would listen to these concerns. One participant stated, “We have an opinion but sometimes those opinions are not heard, or put on the back burner for other issues that local government seems to [think are] a little more pressing.” This sentiment was shared across focus groups. Another participant echoed this by saying, **“I believe I do have a say. Now whether or not the government makes a move on it, that’s another question.”** Perhaps most evocative of this sentiment is when in one focus group the facilitator asked a question about whether participants felt they had a say in what the local government does and the response from everyone present was laughter.

Statistical analysis of the survey results found significant differences in attitudes based on self-reported racial identity and based on self-reported health status. Respondents who identified as Black or African American were significantly less likely than respondents who identified as White to report that people like them have a say in what the local government does. They were also less likely to report believing that they could have a positive impact on their community. This is consistent with thematic analysis findings from community review

discussions with organizations and representatives from the black community, which reflected a history of distrust and broken promises from the local government as well as experiences of disenfranchisement and powerlessness.

Respondents who reported their health status as excellent, very good, or good were significantly more likely to report believing that they can have a positive impact on their community than people who reported their health as fair or poor. Interestingly, while people with self-reported good or better health status were significantly more likely than people with fair health status to indicate that people like them have a say in local government, there was no significant difference between people with self-reported good or better health status and people with poor health status. Some participants in community review discussions felt that older people are more likely to contact public and elected officials.

That may help to explain this finding, as people in the baby boomer or Greatest generations may have poor health status and less community engagement but feel empowered to have a say through voting and contacting officials.

A number of community review participants felt that both 84% of

“I am happy living here, but I am dissatisfied with: 1. overdevelopment in downtown; 2. increasing rents which force locally owned businesses to close; 3. a city which only caters to the rich.”
- Survey Respondent

respondents indicating they can have a positive impact on their community and 60% of respondents indicating that people like them have a say in local government were too

high. They felt that this reflected the highly engaged nature of the individuals who responded to the survey. They indicated that based on their own experiences and observations, most people do not think they can impact the community or have a say in local government. They may be correct that these results are somewhat high. For comparison, in 2015, AARP found that only 43% of respondents age fifty to sixty-four strongly agreed with the statement “I feel I can contribute to politics if I want to,” and in 2018 AARP found that 52% of study participants age forty-five or older indicated that people of all ages were welcome in community decision-making bodies.

I DON'T HAVE A SAY IN WHAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT DOES (NEGATIVE = I BELIEVE I HAVE A SAY)

ZIP CODE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	TOTAL	% NEGATIVE
33701	42	92	183	72%
33703	22	63	140	61%
33704	27	58	116	73%
33705	34	93	204	62%
33710	30	106	239	57%
33711	23	44	112	60%
33712	19	49	146	47%
33713	17	60	122	63%
33702/ 33716	28	82	214	51%
TOTAL	242	647	1476	60%



LWYSPA Runaway Inequality Event. Photos by James Schultz

CIVIC SATISFACTION

Survey respondents were asked about their general satisfaction with the way things are going in the City of St. Petersburg and were provided with the opportunity to leave a comment about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. **Most respondents (55%) reported being “Satisfied” with the way things are going in the city**, with 28% reporting “Dissatisfied” and the rest reporting “No Opinion.” At 76%, 33704 is by far the zip code with the highest percentage of satisfied respondents. 33704 is also the city’s more affluent zip code, with the highest percentage of households with annual income over \$150,000 and the lowest percentage of households with annual income under \$25,000.¹⁸ Statistical analysis did not find any significant differences in satisfaction across demographic groups.

In over 500 narrative comments, respondents mentioned dozens of points of pride and concern about the city. Thematic analysis of the comments found that the top issues were both interconnected and relatively consistent across the satisfied and dissatisfied respondent groups. **The number one issue, with 124 mentions (first for both satisfied and dissatisfied respondents), was concern about the pace and scale of development and new construction, notably the**

construction of high-rise buildings downtown. The number two issue, with ninety-eight mentions (second for both satisfied and dissatisfied respondents) was affordable housing. These issues are linked by the issue that was third overall, with sixty-seven mentions (third for dissatisfied respondents and fourth for satisfied respondents): concerns about inequality, gentrification and the city becoming too focused on the wealthy. Many comments highlighted the construction of high-rise housing that is too expensive for most people to afford, and gentrification pushing out long-time residents.

Two other top issues (overall and for both satisfied and dissatisfied respondents), further link things together: concern about development occurring without improvements to city infrastructure to accommodate growth in a sustainable way (notably sewer systems and traffic/transportation systems), and concerns about development changing the character of the city (notably through the loss of historical buildings, scale of infrastructure, and pushing out of small businesses from downtown). **While some comments were opposed to development and growth overall, more were focused on concerns around the city’s priorities with respect to how it is growing and for whom.**

Respondents were concerned about how the city is growing and changing because they love their city. It

18. FactFinder, United States Census Bureau / American. “American Community Survey-5 Year Estimates: St. Petersburg, Florida Demographic Information.” U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey Office. Last modified 2018. Accessed 2018. <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.

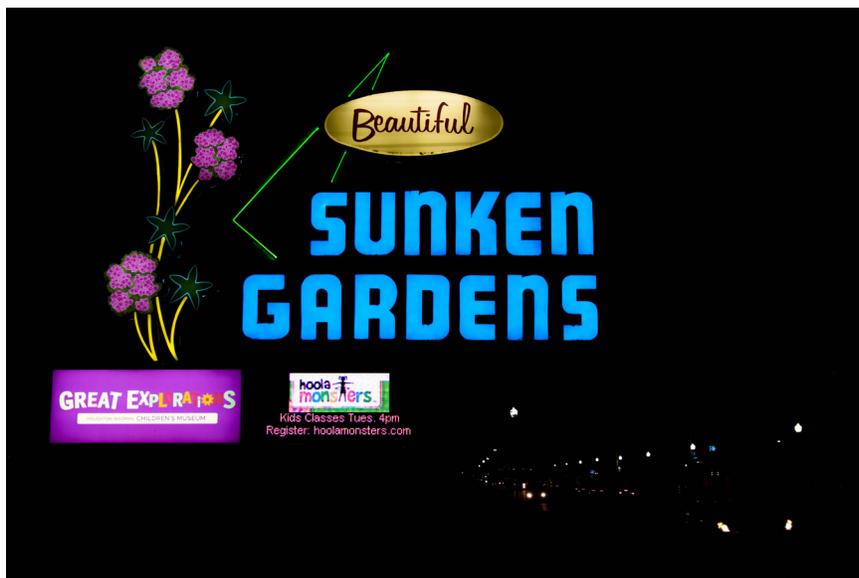
is not surprising that most respondents used the comment to convey concerns they have about the city, but it is also important to highlight that 112 respondents included positive comments about the city. The most frequent positive comment was respondents conveying their love for the city overall (twenty-nine comments), followed by respondents who are happy with the pace of growth (nineteen comments) and pleased with the city government (seventeen comments). Other top positive mentions included the city's actions on environmental issues, the city being a progressive space, and the city's arts and culture scene.

Approximately seventy comments mentioned the city government, seventeen of which were positive and fifty-three of which indicated problems or concerns. **Positive mentions indicated trust in city governance/processes and the city's actions/attitudes on progressive issues (such as supporting the LGBTQ community and promoting biking).** Negative mentions included some of the issues already referred to above, such as city government being more focused on developers/investors than on ordinary citizens and approving too many high-rise buildings. However, negative mentions also included concerns that the city government is not responsive enough to constituents through its various engagement systems and processes, as well as apprehension about accountability, transparency and oversight. There were also several comments indicating distress about the actions of the St. Petersburg Police Department (including alleged instances of police brutality). And some respondents indicated that they felt the city government was too progressive with respect to social issues.

Although some community review participants strongly felt that the city was a good partner in their



Top left
Green Bench Brewing Company being frequented by customers.
Below
The historic Sunken Gardens sign on Fourth Street.
Photos by James Schultz



Left
Another one of St. Pete's vintage neon signs: The Landmark Motel.
Photo by James Schultz

experience, in general, participants conveyed a sense of frustration with city decision-making and citizen engagement processes. Some felt that citizens are engaged after decisions are already made. Others felt the processes are opaque or not clearly understood, so it is hard for ordinary citizens to know when and how to engage in order to influence decisions. Community review participants also confirmed the concerns about the pace and scale

of development and concerns about increased cost of living. Participants were not surprised that downtown (33701) had the highest percentage of respondents who feel that people like them have a say in local government.

VI. NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions related to neighborhood cohesion, or the extent to which they perceive their neighborhoods as trusting and having the ability to come together over shared values and issues. Approximately 70% of respondents reported that they and their neighbors do favors for each other, with around 30% reporting doing favors a few times a month or more. Examples from community review meetings and focus group discussions included pet sitting, taking in packages or mail, lending tools or yard equipment, taking in trash cans, and giving people rides. Quite a few community review respondents indicated having been entrusted with a spare key to a neighbor's house. This finding was relatively consistent across zip codes. However, **respondents residing in the far north of the city (33702, 33762, and 33716) were the most likely to report that they had not done any favors for their neighbors over the past year**, with 43.5% of participants from these zip codes indicating doing no

favors at all. Participants were also asked how often they had conversations or spent time with their neighbors. Most respondents answered that they spoke with neighbors at least a few times a month, but **approximately 25% of those who reside in zip code 33701 indicated that they talk to their neighbors basically every day, more than any other zip code in St. Petersburg.**

The first five neighborhood-related questions in the survey comprise an overall measure of neighborhood social cohesion.¹⁹ They showed no significant differences in terms of race, gender, or educational levels. However, **a significant difference was found between varying income levels, with people who reported over six-figure incomes reporting higher levels of neighborhood cohesion than people who make less than \$50,000 a year.** Overall, 68% of respondents believe that people in their neighborhoods are willing to help their neighbors and that people in their neighborhoods generally get along with each other.

Right

Brown Pelicans
on the old St.
Pete Pier

Bottom

Mural by iBOMS
and Saint Paints.

Photo by James
Schultz



An AARP 2015 Survey of older residents between fifty to sixty-four years old in the Tampa Bay area also asked questions related to neighborhood cohesion, though not directly the same questions as the Civic Health Survey. Results showed that 74% of respondents knew at least five neighbors and about one third of respondents knew ten or more. In addition, 64% of residents in St. Petersburg strongly agreed with the statement "I like my neighbors." Only about one third of respondents in the AARP survey (32%) agreed with the statement "This is a close-knit area." This finding matches the Civic Health Survey's finding for a similar statement, "My neighborhood is close-knit," with which only about 35% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. In contrast, Civic Health Survey respondents indicated trusting their neighbors significantly more than AARP survey respondents. While

19. Robert J. Sampson, Stephen W. Raudenbush, Felton Earls. Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy. Science [Internet]. 1997 [cited 2020 Apr 24];277(5328):918. Available from: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjr&AN=edsjrsr.2892902&site=eds-live>

only 34% of respondents from the AARP survey strongly agreed with the statement “People in this area can be trusted,” 59% of respondents from the Civic Health Survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “People in my neighborhood can be trusted.” Both surveys generally found correlations between cohesion and higher incomes.

The survey did not include specific questions around the length of time that an individual had lived at their current residence. However, **in community review meetings there was a distinct theme with respect to the perceived impact that transience has on neighborhood cohesion.** Both homeownership and the length of time someone had lived in their home/in their neighborhood were perceived as increasing trust and participation in the neighborhood. Linked to this, family ties in the neighborhood were also seen as improving cohesion. Some community review discussions highlighted the importance of having an organizer within the neighborhood who puts efforts into promoting social interaction. In one community review meeting in South St. Petersburg, the long hours and evening hours that many people work were highlighted as having a negative impact on cohesion.

Neighborhood cohesion was a large part of focus group discussions. **Three major themes can be drawn from the focus groups with respect to people’s perceptions of their own neighborhoods: self-preservation, lack of public investment, and the importance of intergenerational modeling.** Self-preservation was

a pervasive theme across focus groups, with participants expressing that either they or others in their neighborhoods kept to themselves. This was expressed primarily by participants stating that people in their neighborhoods “do their own thing.” People keeping to themselves functions as a type of self-preservation, a way to keep safe. For example, one participant stated this sentiment in this way: “... I also feel like if [something] was to go down, they [would say] ‘I ain’t see nothing.’ I feel that way too.” To see something means

“[I] feel like certain zoning and developments have been forced on communities without any public hearings or opportunity to hear resident’s voices.”
- Survey Respondent

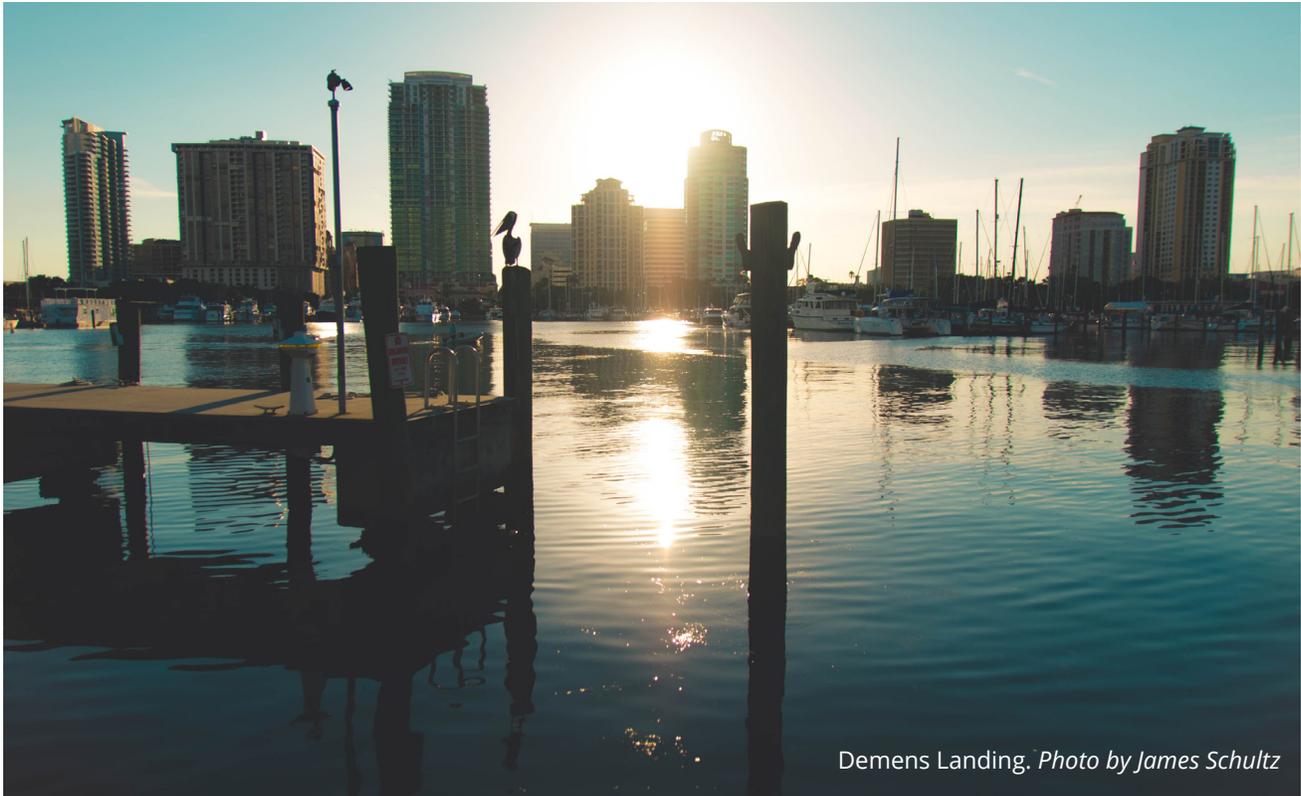
that a person could be implicated in a bad situation and make them the target of violence or punishment. One question participants were asked in each focus group was if they believe their neighborhoods are close-knit. Responses varied, but commonly participants stated that while individuals will help each other, there is not an overwhelming sense of solidarity. For example, one participant stated that people “look out for each other and whatnot. But as far as, like, the whole neighbor-

Above
A St. Petersburg sunset.
Below
Booker Creek in Historic Roser Park.
Photos by James Schultz



hood, [in] certain circumstances they’ll come together, but for the most part it’s, you know, one for one.”

A USC Dornsife/PolicyLink study on equity in Pinellas County published



Demens Landing. Photo by James Schultz

in 2019 highlighted that the county's "history of racial discrimination and disinvestment in communities of color has created entrenched and persistent racial inequities in employment, income, wealth, education, health, justice, housing, and transportation."²⁰ Focus group participants spoke to this disinvestment by pointing out the lack of resources that exist in South St. Petersburg neighborhoods. One participant pointed out that these neighborhoods are "dealing with lack of funds. It's hard to [get together as a community] with a lack of funds... When you start in a struggle, it's hard to reach back and say "brother, I got you." Other participants pointed out specific differences between resources on the north side of the city versus the south side. Multiple participants noted differences in road maintenance and conditions. One participant talking about the roads and trash pick-up said: "The north side got paved alleys...And the big stores on the north side don't have flies flying around their trash cans." Another participant pointed out the differences between parks: "Our neighborhoods can look better...We could have better parks like the ones on the north side. You know what I'm saying? Good parks. Like the white people got."

Many of the focus group participants discussed the importance of focusing on youth, specifically how important mentoring and modeling behavior is for their com-

munities. There was an overall shared sense that one of the best ways to make a positive impact is through being an example for youth because, as one participant said, **"kids are definitely watching, and that's where it starts at."** Another participant talked about how people who have gone on to be successful can set an example for younger people, stating that young people might believe, "Ok, if he can do it, I can do it." Another participant stated the importance of focusing on education as a main community issue saying that **there should be a greater focus on "teaching our young people to read and write and learn and understand."** Attitudes towards mentoring also took on the role of older people having the ability to pass on life lessons, specifically about what older people have learned about their own community histories. One participant summed this up by saying, "I can kind of see we're trying to take what we learned from the older generation and change what we need to and develop from that...and give what we learned to the younger generation. That's in time."

"I like the direction, but there is more that should be done for the youth that are falling through the cracks to prevent the issues that happen when they become adults."

- Survey Respondent

20. Huang, Michelle. *An Equity Profile of Pinellas County*. PolicyLink, 2019.

VII. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

“Overall I like the inclusiveness of the current administration, but I wish the city did not have such racial and socioeconomic divides. I wish the development ongoing now would lift up the poorer communities as well.” - Survey Respondent



A surprisingly high 74% of survey respondents reported volunteering over the past year, noting that the survey left the definition of “volunteering” up to respondents.

The median was 12 hours over the course of the year and the average was 85 hours, with 15.6% of respondents reporting volunteering 100 hours per year or more (roughly 1-2 hours per week). This average is consistent with Census data for the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater metropolitan statistical area (MSA), which shows an average of 81 hours of volunteering for the period 2004-2015 (among those who volunteer).²¹ The survey did not find any significant correlation between people who reported formally volunteering with organizations and people who informally volunteer by helping out their neighbors. Across zip codes, 33704 had the highest percentage of people volunteering at least one hour (82%), while respondents from the aggregated zip codes of 33702, 33762, and 33716 had the lowest volunteering rate (62.2%).



The Civic Health Survey found that respondents from the baby boomer generation volunteer the most, and Millennial respondents volunteer the least. The Corporation for National and Community Service produced a research brief supporting this

Top left & Left
Community members listen to the Coffee in Common Series presentation.

result at the national level: baby boomers exhibited higher rates of volunteerism in their late forties and fifties compared to previous generations. This could be attributed to higher rates of education, an increased likelihood of having children still at home, and high levels of civic involvement in community 69groups. These are all characteristics associated with higher rates of volunteerism.^{22,23} However, for the Tampa Bay MSA more broadly, U.S. Census data shows more Generation X residents volunteering their time (26%) compared to baby boomers (22.4%).²⁴ The reason for higher volunteering results among baby boomers in St. Petersburg, as compared to the rest of the Tampa Bay MSA, may be due in part to the range of volunteer activities available in St. Petersburg to older people and the ease of finding information about these activities.²⁵

Some people give time, some people give money, and some people give both. In St. Petersburg, donations of twenty-five dollars or more were more likely to go to charities (55%) and less likely to go to political campaigns (13%). Only 12.4% of respondents reported that they did not donate at all. This may not be surprising, given that a May 2018 non-profit assessment conducted by the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg and the Non-Profit Leadership Center found that individual donations were second only to government funding as sources of revenue for non-profit organiza-

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN VOLUNTEER HOURS

GENERATION	MEAN HOURS PER YEAR	MEDIAN HOURS PER YEAR
Greatest Generation	88.73	12.00
Baby Boomers	109.80	24.00
Gen-X	88.40	10.00
Millenials	40.69	8.00
Gen-Z	47.32	11.00
Prefer not to indicate age	86.87	10.00
TOTAL	85.39	12.00

tions in Pinellas County.²⁶ However, the Civic Health Survey did not ask respondents to distinguish between donations to local organizations and donations to state, national or international organizations. Thus, the high rate of donating is not necessarily benefiting the St. Petersburg community directly.

Respondents from higher income zip codes, such as 33704, were more likely to donate to all organization types listed in the survey except religious organizations. These areas of the city also tend to have greater proportions of white residents. Respondents from 33712, which has a higher proportion of black residents, were significantly more likely to give to religious organizations compared to any other zip code. This mirrors

U.S. trends in faith affiliation, which show increasing secularism among white Americans²⁷ while, according to Pew, 79% of African Americans in the United States identify as Christian.²⁸ Research has also shown that black donors are more likely to give to religious organizations.²⁹

Religious institutions represent hubs of engagement in some parts of the city, for volunteering, donations, and helping each other out. The community review process corroborated higher levels of volunteering with and donating to churches in areas of St. Petersburg with higher numbers of black residents. Many churches are deeply woven into the fabric of the history of St. Petersburg and the communities they serve. One participant in the community review

21. *Current Population Survey 2015: Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement*. Edited and translated by United States Bureau of the Census. Washington D.C.: Corporation for National and Community Service, 2015.
 22. Grimm, Robert, Nathan Dietz, and John Foster-Bey. *Volunteer Growth in America [Electronic Resource]: A Review of Trends since 1974 / Corporation for National and Community Service*. Washington, DC : Corporation for National and Community Service, 2006, 2006.
 23. Williams, A., J. Fries, J. Koppen, and R. Prisuta. *Connecting and Giving: A Report on How Mid-Life and Older Americans Spend Their Time, Make Connections, and Build Communities*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Retired Persons, 2010.
 24. FactFinder, United States Census Bureau / American. "American Community Survey-5 Year Estimates: St. Petersburg, Florida Demographic Information." U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Office. Last modified 2018. Accessed 2018. <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.
 25. American Association of Retired Persons. *Age-Friendly City Study: Synthesis of Detailed Survey and Listening Session Data*. St. Petersburg, Florida, 2018.
 26. Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg and Nonprofit Leadership Center. *Nonprofit Assessment: An Initial Scan & Survey of Pinellas County Nonprofits*. St. Petersburg, Florida, 2018.
 27. Pew Research Center. "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace." Pew Research Center. Last modified October 17, 2019, 2019. Accessed 2019. <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>.
 28. Masci, D. "5 Facts About the Religious Lives of African Americans." Pew Research Center. Last modified 2018. Accessed 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/02/07/5-facts-about-the-religious-lives-of-african-americans/>.
 29. Rovner, M. *Diversity in Giving: The Changing Landscape of American Philanthropy*. Blackbaud, 2015.

process described how even though some families have been forced to move out of South St. Petersburg due to housing and cost of living, they still attend, volunteer with, and donate to the same church in their old neighborhood. The survey did not ask people to indicate how they donate, but during community review discussions

in South St. Petersburg, participants made a point to highlight regular in-kind donations of clothes, food, and other necessities, often as part of efforts organized by churches to support local families.



Civic Health Survey respondents represent a highly political-engaged segment of the city population: 92% of survey respondents voted in the November 2018 General Election, 30% reported that they had attended a public meeting in the past year, 32% reported contacting their elected representatives to share their views, 40% reported contacting public officials in general, 23.5% had participated in a public action (such as a rally or protest), and nearly half reported that they had signed a petition. These high percentages surprised many participants in the community review process. We suspect, and community review participants largely agreed, that certain forms of participation, such as contacting representatives and signing petitions, may have higher than expected percentages as a result of the growth in social media and email organizing in recent years. It has become both common and easy to “click to sign” a petition or “click to send” an email to an elected representative.

Thus, these percentages may not be indicative of high levels of meaningful engagement with local issues and local government. However, community review participants also felt that the high percentages for contacting officials may be a result of the average age of survey respondents being higher than the average age of city residents, as they felt that older people are more likely to contact officials and may have a stronger *perception* of access to officials.

Community review participants, in general, indicated that the percentage of survey respondents who reported attending public meetings was not in line with their own experiences and observations. Many participants reported that, in their experience, people are reactive and only attend when they are angry or when the issue directly affects them. Civic Health Survey figures are also high when compared with regional data: the U.S. Census Bureau CPS Volunteer-

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION	YES	NO
Did you vote in the election on Tuesday, November 6th, 2018?	92.3%	7.3%
In the past 12 months, have you attended a public meeting, such as a zoning or school board meeting, to discuss a local issue?	30.1%	69.9%
In the past 12 months, have you contacted or visited a public official (at any level of government) to express your opinion?	40.3%	59.7%
Have you shared your views about local news or issues by contacting your local representatives/elected officials?	31.9%	68.1%
Have you shared your views about local news or issues by signing a petition?	48.5%	51.5%
Have you shared your views about local news or issues by participating in a collective action (rally, protest, boycott, etc.)?	23.5%	76.5%

ing and Civic Life supplement data for the Tampa Bay MSA found that the percentage of residents who had attended a public meeting in the past twelve months ranged from 5.3%-11.3% between 2006 and 2015.

Community review participants from across the city expressed dissatisfaction with the scheduling of public meetings during working hours, which makes it very difficult for working people to attend, especially if they do not have a job with flexible time off or scheduling policies. This is supported by the survey data showing that respondents with income over \$150,000 per year were much more likely to attend public meetings. Many participants also highlighted the opportunity cost of engaging in public meetings and other city consultation processes: it takes considerable time and effort to engage (understanding the process, attending multiple meetings, track-

ing developments), but engagement appears to have limited impact on decision-making. Multiple participants communicated the feeling that public meetings were “just a formality” and that “decisions had already been made.” Others highlighted that there is a lot of misinformation and misunderstanding about how consultation processes work and how and when to engage in order to be able to impact decisions. There was a palpable sense of frustration. **One community review participant summed up the feelings we heard from many when she called it “disempowerment through engagement.”**

Voting data indicates comparatively strong political participation of St. Petersburg residents. In November 2018, 66% of registered voters in St. Petersburg voted in the general election. This was the same as the county-wide percentage for Pinellas County, but was

higher than neighboring cities Clearwater (63.5%) and Tampa (61.7%).³⁰ More broadly, **86% of the voting age population of St. Petersburg is estimated to have been registered to vote in November 2018**, as compared to 61% of the voting age population (VAP) of the United States and 56% of the VAP of Florida. Similarly, while only 49% of the VAP of the United States and 47% of the VAP of Florida voted in the 2018 General Election, an estimated 57% of the voting age population of St. Petersburg voted.³¹

Among the small percentage of survey respondents who did not vote in November 2018, 2% reported that they were not eligible to vote and approximately 5% indicated that they were eligible to vote but either had not registered or had not voted. The main reasons that eligible, non-registered respondents reported for why they had not registered were “not interested

30. Supervisor of Elections. *District Voter Turnout Analysis for 2018 General Election*, by Clark, Deborah, 2018.

31. See chart for St. Petersburg figures. For national and state figures Table 4a: Reported Voting and Registration, for States: November 2018, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/p20-583.html> (accessed 11/7/2019)

in the election” and “did not meet the deadline.” **The main reasons that registered respondents reported for why they had not voted were “too busy / conflicting schedule” and “not interested / felt my vote wouldn’t make a difference.”** Nationwide for the 2018 General Election, across ages, genders and other demographic groups, the most common reason that people reported not voting was “too busy / conflicting schedule.” However, among people over the age of sixty-five, people with less than high school education, and people with family income of \$10,000-\$14,999, the most common reported reason was “illness or disability.” Black people were more likely to report “transportation problems” or “illness or disability” than whites or Latinx, and Latinx people were more likely to report “registration problems” than people who identify as black or white. Black respondents were more likely to report “registration problems” than white respondents.³²

Focus group participants discussed more in depth their reasons for not voting. Some participants still faced issues related to registering because of previous felony convictions. One man shared, “I don’t have my civil rights...I’ve been out of trouble for over thirteen years. And I did write to Tallahassee, got on the internet and all this. I had thirty days to respond, to get three more items of ID or whatever. And that wasn’t long enough for me to obtain it.” Other focus group participants were registered to vote but chose not to vote for various reasons. A few participants stated being disillusioned with the political process. One person specifically stated that previous “miscount of ballots” discouraged him from wanting to cast a ballot. Another participant stated that they had “lost faith in voting” since the last time he voted in the presidential election in 2012. Other people generally expressed that they were just not engaged. One participant talked about how they did not think

their vote really mattered. He said, “I did get [a ballot] in the mail. First, I threw it in the garbage. It’s not that I don’t care about what’s going on. But I’m just, you know like, I don’t...care...I mean, like, what happens is going to happen.” The notion that political decisions are made by people in positions of power without the input of citizens was shared amongst other members of that focus group.

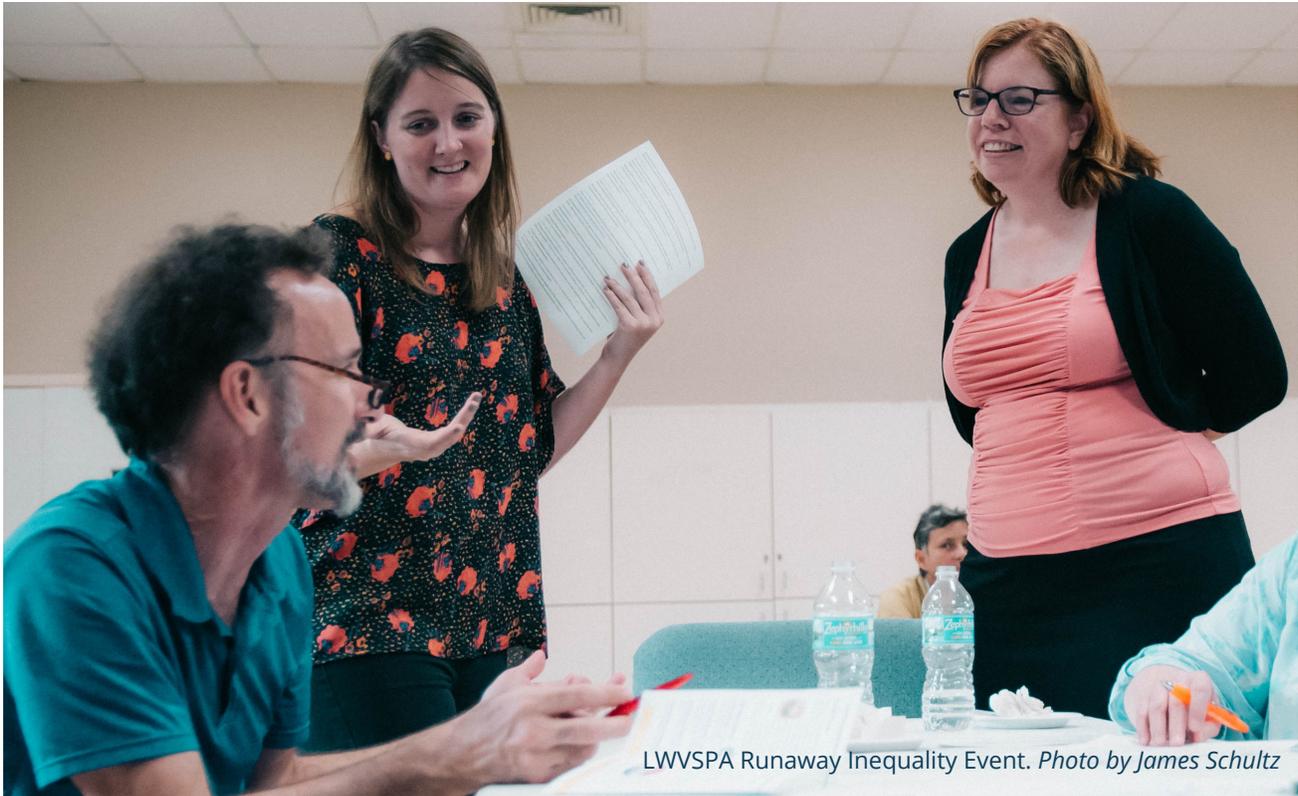
It is important to note that turnout for local elections paints a somewhat less clear picture of political engagement. In the November 2017 municipal and county elections, which included the race for Mayor of St. Petersburg, 39.5% of registered voters in St. Petersburg turned out to vote. In the November 2019 municipal general elections, which saw four St. Petersburg city council seats on the ballot, only 19.7% of registered voters turned out to cast their ballot. For comparison, the neighboring municipality of Seminole saw 23.8% turnout for its

ANALYSIS OF VOTING AGE POPULATION (VAP), ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA (2018)

POPULATION GROUP	ESTIMATED VAP (18 AND OLDER)	% VAP REGISTERED TO VOTE IN 2018 GENERAL ELECTION	% VAP WHO VOTED IN 2018 GENERAL ELECTION	% REGISTERED VOTERS WHO VOTED IN 2018 GENERAL ELECTION
TOTAL	209,845	86%	57%	66%
WOMEN	110,140	89%	60%	67%
MEN	99,705	82%	53%	65%
WHITE	140,288	89%	61%	69%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	43,475	79%	50%	62%
HISPANIC OR LATINO	14,309	57%	32%	57%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections 2018 General Election District Voter Turnout Analysis

Notes on demographic breakdown: These figures should be considered as estimates. The Supervisor of Elections does not require people to provide demographic data in order to register to vote, therefore individuals who opted not to enter some of this information may not be captured in the voting data above. Estimates for White, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino VAP have been calculated to avoid overlap between these groups as far as possible. People of other races, multiple races or unknown race are included in the total but are not included as a separate breakdown because sufficient data were not publicly available. In addition, neither the U.S. Census Bureau nor the SOE currently provides an option for people who do not identify as either male or



LWVSPA Runaway Inequality Event. Photo by James Schultz

mayoral race in 2019 and 25% in 2017 for electing city council seats.^{33,34}

Comparing the election turnout results for registered voters can reveal useful information about which geographic areas are currently turning out to vote more than others. Unfortunately, there are no clear geographic delineations because zip codes, voting precincts, and neighborhoods do not share the same boundaries. However, we can develop a general picture. **Looking at the 2017 and 2018 general election turnout of registered voters in precincts that have at least 1,000 registered voters, we find that the following precincts were among the top 10 highest for turnout in both years: 135, 136, 138, 143 and 145, 200 and 202.** These precincts correspond roughly with the Old Northeast, Crescent Heights, Snell Isle, Shore Acres and Placido Bayou in the northern part of the city, and Isla del Sol and Maximo in the southern part of the city. **The following precincts were among the bottom 10 for lowest turnout in both years: 117, 119, 120, 224, 132, 236, 161 and 162.** These precincts correspond roughly with Winward Point in the far north of the city, Jungle Terrace in the west, and Campbell Park, Bartlett Park, Thirteenth Street Heights, Melrose Mercy, Wildwood Heights, Palmetto Park and Child's Park in the southern part of the city.

The cluster of high turnout in the neighborhoods just north of downtown and the cluster of low turnout in the neighborhoods just south of Central Avenue reflect longstanding issues of public investment, wealth and race that were raised during the community review process and that impact voter access, confidence and disenfranchisement.

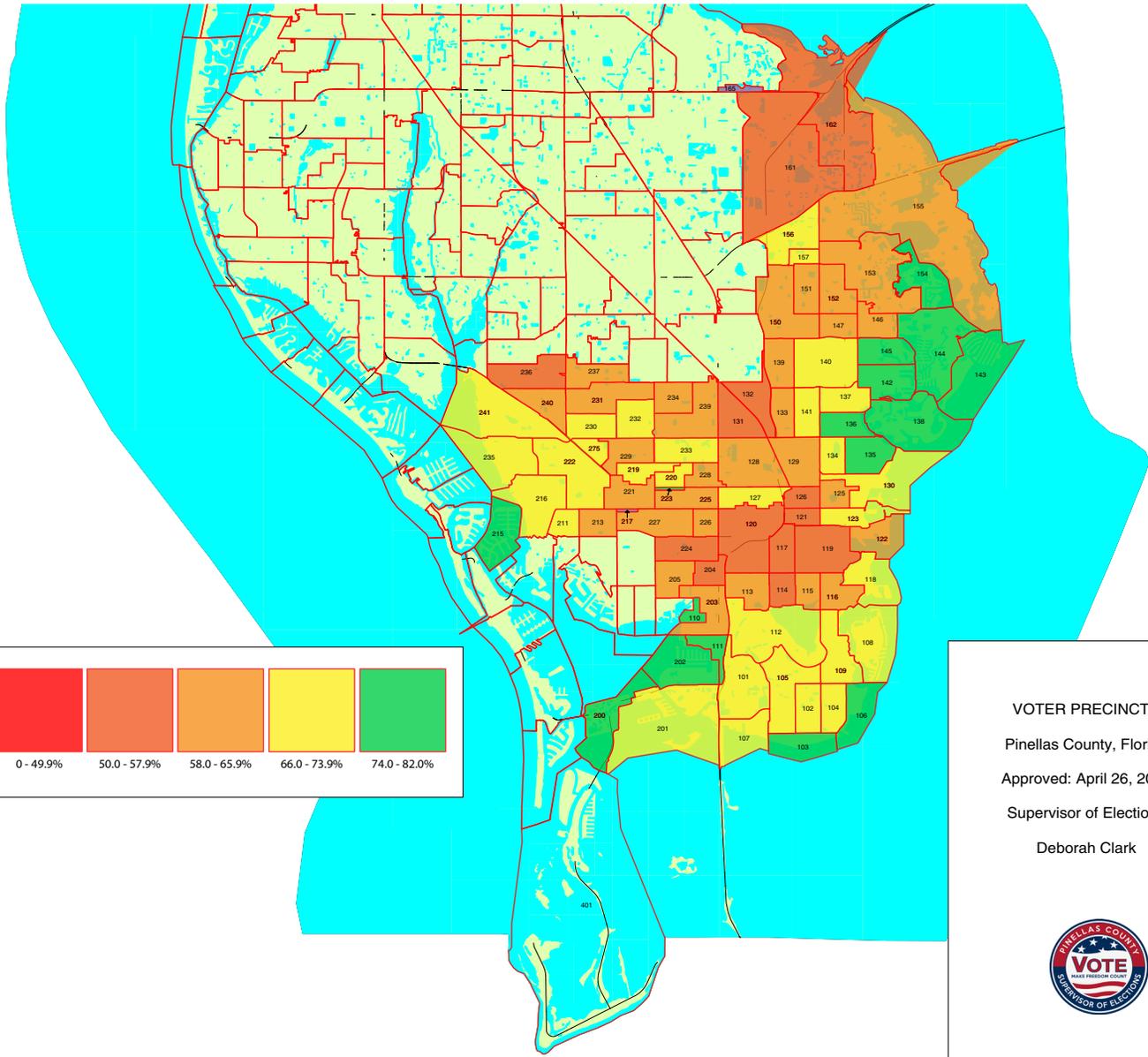
Community review discussions with organizations and representatives from the neighborhoods that are part of the low voter turnout cluster in the southern part of the city highlighted that many people may believe their vote doesn't matter or doesn't make a difference. Issues reflected throughout the city regarding frustrations with community consultation and decision-making processes were also reflected in these neighborhoods. This is linked to a history of promises made and broken by local government to these neighborhoods and the black community more broadly, and a history of infrastructure and economic development programs and processes that disadvantaged or were openly hostile to these neighborhoods -- the impacts of which are not in the past, but still being felt today.

Survey respondents from 33704, which encompasses the high voter turnout cluster of Snell Isle, Crescent Heights and the Old Northeast, and is the most affluent zip code in the city, reported the highest percentages of contacting public and elected officials, signing petitions, and partici-

32. Table 10: Reasons For Not Voting, By Selected Characteristics: November 2018, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/p20-583.html> (accessed 11/7/2019)

33. Supervisor of Elections. *District Voter Turnout Analysis for County Referendum & Municipal General Election*, by Clark, Deborah, 2017.

34. Supervisor of Elections. *District Voter Turnout Analysis for Municipal General Elections*, by Clark, Deborah, 2019.



VOTER PRECINCTS
Pinellas County, Florida
Approved: April 26, 2016
Supervisor of Elections
Deborah Clark



2018 Election Voter Turnout

pating in public actions. The only zip code with a higher percentage of respondents attending a public meeting was 33701, which encompasses downtown (where most of the meetings occur). Survey respondents from 33702 and

33716, which encompass another low voter turnout cluster in the far north of the city, reported the lowest percentages on all five factors of political participation that we looked at in the survey.

ATTENDED A PUBLIC MEETING SUCH AS ZONING OR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING, TO DISCUSS A LOCAL ISSUE

ZIP CODE	YES
33701	43%
33704	40%
33713	36%
33712	31%
33711	30%
TOTAL	30%
33705	30%
33703	27%
33710	25%
33702/33716	17%

CONTACTED OR VISITED A PUBLIC OFFICIAL (AT ANY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT)

ZIP CODE	YES
33704	56%
33701	50%
TOTAL	40%
33711	40%
33713	40%
33705	39%
33710	39%
33703	39%
33702/33716	33%
33712	32%



Demens Landing. Photo by James Schultz

IX. COMMUNITY/POLITICAL INFORMATION

The majority of survey respondents (69%) reported feeling that they have a pretty good understanding of the important issues facing the City of St. Petersburg, ranging from 55% of respondents in the far north of the city (33702 and 33716) to 80% of respondents in the city center (33701 and 33704). Respondents were asked how they obtain information about local news and events and were able to indicate as many sources as they wished. The most popular source is the internet (e.g., online newspapers and magazines, websites, blogs, etc.), with 67% of respondents reporting this as a source for information. The highest percentage of respondents reporting using the internet to get information about local issues was in 33713 (72%) closely followed by 33710 (71%), and the lowest was in 33711 and 33712 (both 54%). The second most popular information source is social media (e.g., Facebook, Nextdoor, Twitter, Instagram), with 56% of overall survey respondents. As with the internet, respondents living in 33713 reported the

highest use of social media (66%), and respondents living in 33711 reported the lowest (45%). Television was the third most common source of information reported by survey respondents (47%), followed by family, friends, and colleagues (39%), emails and newsletters from organizations (38%), newspapers (36%), and radio (30%).

In community review meetings, social media was highlighted as a primary source for both obtaining and sharing information, and some participants felt that some survey respondents may have reported “internet” as a source for information when they meant “social media.” Neighborhood Associations highlighted the Nextdoor platform as a key way that their members get and share information on local issues. The sense that social media may be an even bigger source of information than reflected in the survey is corroborated by the findings of AARP’s Age Friendly City Study, which found that 86% of participants (all of whom were over the age of forty-five) were using social media to stay in contact with friends, family and neighbors.³⁵ Many community review participants were also surprised that so many survey respondents reported reading the newspaper, and felt that this might be due to the average age of survey respondents being older than the average age of city residents.

Only 14% of respondents reported getting information about local news and events from the government, with respondents living downtown (33701), at 19%, being more likely to get information from the

government than people in other zip codes. Respondents living in the far north (33702 and 33716), at 10%, were less likely than other zip codes to get information from the government. Community review participants were overall not surprised about the low percentage of respondents obtaining information from the government. Participants highlighted that many people may not realize what information is coming from the government, or how much information has a government agency as its initial source. They also noted that people may not notice information coming



35. American Association of Retired Persons. *Age-Friendly City Study: Synthesis of Detailed Survey and Listening Session Data*. St. Petersburg, Florida, 2018.

WHERE DO YOU GET MOST OF YOUR INFORMATION ABOUT LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS?

ZIP CODE	NEWSPAPER	MAGAZINE	INTERNET	SOCIAL MEDIA	FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND COLLEAGUES	RADIO	GOVERNMENT AGENCIES	ORGANIZATIONS	NEIGHBORS	TV
33701	41%	15%	69%	56%	37%	27%	19%	51%	33%	38%
33703	41%	11%	65%	54%	36%	32%	14%	35%	19%	51%
33704	34%	12%	70%	53%	43%	32%	15%	50%	21%	38%
33705	44%	5%	68%	57%	44%	35%	14%	38%	26%	50%
33710	31%	6%	71%	58%	37%	30%	13%	29%	15%	48%
33711	41%	11%	54%	45%	38%	34%	13%	34%	29%	56%
33712	43%	12%	54%	53%	47%	28%	16%	32%	20%	59%
33713	30%	5%	72%	66%	41%	29%	14%	48%	27%	43%
33702 / 33716	25%	3%	70%	58%	36%	25%	10%	30%	13%	43%
TOTAL	36%	9%	67%	56%	39%	30%	14%	38%	22%	47%

from the government unless they need that information in the immediate future. However, **participants -- many of whom are actively engaged residents -- also highlighted that it is hard to find things on the city website**, that the city (and elected officials) are not using social media as well as they should be, and that the city does not do a very good job communicating on policy changes and other key issues that affect residents (as compared to positive and promotional communications about the city).

With respect to sharing their views about local news or issues, 57% of respondents reported sharing their views by talking to family, friends, and colleagues. It is not surprising that this is the most popular way to share views. However, it is somewhat surprising that the percentage is not higher, as this implies

that **43% of respondents are not talking about their views on local issues with their family, friends, and colleagues**. Respondents living in 33713 (e.g., Disston Heights, Central Oak Park, Kenwood) had the highest percentage of people sharing views with family, friends and colleagues (67%), and people living in 33712 (e.g., Palmetto Park, Melrose-Mercy, Jordan Park, Mel-Tan Heights, Highland Oaks, Lakewood Estates, Greater Pinellas Point) had the lowest (47%). The second most common way to share views is social media (45% of respondents), followed by talking with neighbors (36%). Respondents living downtown (33701), at 51%, had the highest percentage of sharing views by talking to neighbors, and people living in the far north (33702 and 33716), at 19%, had the lowest. A full 10% of respondents reported that they do not share their views about local news

or issues at all, with 33712 having the highest percent of respondents not sharing their views (17%).

Community review participants did not, in general, find it surprising that many people did not report talking with family, friends and colleagues about local news and issues. A number of participants noted that many people are more reticent to talk with other people about issues or politics now than they were in the past, given current levels of political polarization (or at least more reticent without the “safety” of being behind a screen). **Some participants noted that discussions of local issues can easily escalate to discussions of national politics. Others noted that in the age of social media people are just talking less to other people in general.**



X. CONCLUSION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

We have overall found that the civic health of St. Petersburg is strong; however, the city also faces civic health disparities similar to and linked with the disparities it faces with respect to economic, health and other resources.

OPPORTUNITIES

The City of St. Petersburg and local civic and community organizations have great opportunities to mobilize and learn from an engaged populace that loves their city. Overall, St. Petersburg is an engaged city, with relatively high proportions of residents across city zip codes voting, volunteering, donating to charity, participating in the community, and seeking to engage in government decision-making processes. The vast majority of survey respondents believe they can have a positive impact on their community, and more than half are generally satisfied with how things are going in the city. Where people have concerns about how the city is growing and changing, it is in

many cases coming from the value they place in preserving the city's community and character. Our neighborhoods and communities intersect and interconnect in ways that strengthen the fabric of our city. A lot of very different people across St. Petersburg have similar concerns about development and cost of living. This can help galvanize discussion and action to ensure that growth is sustainable, equitable and inclusive. If public decision-making processes are designed to facilitate participation and seek out learning from under-heard communities, the findings of this study lead us to believe that residents of St. Petersburg are ready for that engagement. There also emerged a shared sense of the importance of intergenera-

Left
St. Pete Peace Protests.

Right
St. Pete Peace Protesters gathering.

Below
St. Pete Peace Protesters marching.
Photos by James Schultz



tional engagement in the city. Mentoring and investing in young people are a key place where positive impact begins. And the results from elderly respondents demonstrate that while health is strongly tied to engagement, it need not be a barrier to it if people with poor health status have avenues and perceptions of access to decision-makers.

CHALLENGES

This study highlighted some real challenges for the City of St. Petersburg. Most notably was a sense that public consultation and engagement processes are not effectively being used to enable nonwhite, civically disillusioned, and younger residents to meaningfully influence city decision-making. This issue spanned from feelings that engagement processes were actively used to disempower residents, to feelings that engagement processes are just “box ticking” exercises, to feelings that engagement processes are too complicated and poorly timed to enable participation. Findings from qualitative data gathering showed an overall concern with respect to

the responsiveness of city government to residents and about what interests are influencing city decision-making, regardless of neighborhood or demographics. This issue of resident influence in decision-making is a particular challenge when combined with the number of concerns respondents raised that are linked to local policy decisions; especially the pace and scale of development, affordable housing, inequality, and gentrification, and concerns about city infrastructure being able to accommodate growth in a sustainable way.

The City of St. Petersburg would benefit from improved communication to and meaningful engagement with residents. City policy and funding decisions, proposed policy changes, and ways to engage need to be easier to find on the city website, clearly explained, and communicated in accessible language need to be easier to find on the website. There needs to be greater use of social media to share information about current and upcoming policy changes, and not only positive accomplishments and announcements. Meetings and discussions need to be held at times

when and places where working people can attend. Processes need to be clearly explained in lay terms. Reasons for decisions should be articulated clearly.

This study also reiterated racial dynamics in the city that need to be proactively and equitably addressed. Black survey respondents were significantly less likely than white survey respondents to believe they have a say in what the local government does. Focus groups and discussions with representatives from the black community highlighted a lack of faith in government commitments, based on a history of broken promises that are still reverberating today.

The onus and responsibility for engaging residents – and especially those who have not been heard or listened to in the past – should be on the city and on civic and community groups, without faulting individuals for not having previously been engaged.

APPENDIX A

Measures of Civic Engagement & Civic Health

INDICATORS USED IN THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP “CIVIC HEALTH INDEX”

Interactions with family, friends, neighbors and people from other cultural backgrounds

- 1 Talking to and Spending Time with Family and Friends
- 2 Discussing Various Issues with Family and Friends
- 3 Providing help to Friends or Extended Family
- 4 Talking to and Spending Time with Neighbors
- 5 Discussing Various Issues with Neighbors
- 6 Doing Favors for Neighbors
- 7 Doing Something Positive for the Neighborhood
- 8 Talking to and Spending Time with People of Different Backgrounds

Political engagement

- 9 Posting About Various Issues on Social Media
- 10 Reading, Watching, or Listening to News
- 11 Voting in Last Local Elections
- 12 Attending Public Meetings
- 13 Contacting a Public Official
- 14 Choosing Services Based on Social or Political Values of Companies

Group membership and participation

- 15 Belonging to Groups
- 16 Number of Groups
- 17 Group You are Most Active With

Volunteering activity

- 18 Volunteering
- 19 How Often Volunteer
- 20 Volunteering Hours in a Year

Donations

- 21 Donating Money to Political Organizations
- 22 Donating Money to Charitable or Religious Organizations

Voting and Registration

- 23 Voting
- 24 Registration

Note: This index previously also included indicators related to confidence in public institutions and trust in other people in your neighborhood.

STAR COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM OUTCOME MEASURES RELEVANT TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Voting:

Increase the percentage of registered voters over time

Increase the percentage of voters participating in local elections over time

Volunteerism:

Demonstrate that at least 35% of residents volunteered in the past year (or demonstrate an increase in the percentage of residents who volunteered over the past 3 years)

Sense of Empowerment:

Demonstrate that at least 50% of residents believe they are able to have a positive impact on their community based on a local survey (or increase over time the percentage of residents who believe)

Neighborhood Cohesion:

Demonstrate an increased percentage of neighborhoods reporting positive levels of neighborhood cohesion through community surveys

FACTORS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL CIVIC LEAGUE CIVIC INDEX SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Engaged Residents

- We have many resident-initiated and resident-led community/ neighborhood organizations and activities
- In community meetings, people tend to work collaboratively to solve-problems; instead of being critical and confrontational
- Neighborhood councils and community groups reflect the community's diversity and regularly work with city officials to provide input into decision-making
- It is easy to find residents to serve on local boards and commissions, or run for office

Inclusive Community Leadership

- We have a wealth of trusted, respected leaders across all-sectors and levels
- We have programs to develop leaders from all backgrounds, ages and sectors; especially those from traditionally marginalized communities
- Local leaders work together, build consensus, and set aside their own ego to focus on getting things done for the whole community
- Leaders and community members face challenges head-on, instead of ignoring tough conversations or decisions
- Government advisory boards, commissions reflect the full diversity of the community and exercise real decision-making power

Collaborative Institutions

- We work with other communities to address local and regional challenges
- Local government, nonprofits, philanthropies, schools, civic associations and businesses collaborate effectively to solve community problems
- We have many trusted organizations that bring people together to resolve pressing conflicts and challenges.
- We have regular, established opportunities for information-sharing and decision-making across various sectors

Embracing Diversity, Equity

- Services and opportunities are provided equitably to all groups and neighborhoods
- We have policies to fight discrimination in all forms
- Immigrants, new residents and underrepresented groups actively participate in community events and discussions
- We honor, value and highlight the contributions of the community's full diversity in our public spaces
- We are taking ongoing steps to discuss, learn about, and help address historical barriers to participation, inclusion and employment

Authentic Communication

- We have many trusted, civic-minded sources of information and news in the community
- Local government and other groups provide information in the languages that people speak and in ways that are culturally appropriate
- There are many ways to communicate with and get information from government (i.e., 311, social media, text, local events, etc)
- We have authentic two-way communications between members of the community, the government and other institutions

Culture of Engagement

- We have a culture of engagement; we expect our government and other institutions to engage the full community to guide decision-making
- Government agencies, nonprofits and other institutions work to learn from residents and other stakeholders before creating new programs
- We make an extra effort to ensure traditionally underrepresented groups are engaged as part of community decision-making
- Government, nonprofits and other groups engage people in accessible, comfortable or familiar locations, and at convenient times for residents.
- Local government and others engage community members in an ongoing fashion, not just when they need buy-in or quick feedback
- We have formal discussions about difficult issues like race, immigration, drug addiction, etc.

Shared Vision and Values

- We have a strong sense of attachment to, and pride in, our neighborhoods and community
- Our community strategic planning efforts include the full diversity of the community to help identify a common vision
- People have a clear sense of what makes the community unique and a shared vision for what we want to become in the future
- Local government and nonprofit actions clearly align with the community's shared vision

APPENDIX B

Data Analysis Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was used to capture the diversity of voices and data available to the project team. A combination of descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and qualitative procedures were utilized to present a rich description of civic and community engagement in St. Petersburg.

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to examine frequencies and means for each survey question. Frequencies and means were calculated using SPSS. Basic demographic data as well as crosstabs are included throughout the report. Valid percent was used to discuss descriptive statistics. Though 1,590 participants participated in the survey, not every participant completed every question. Data shared reflects the amount of people who did in fact answer every question instead of the percentage of overall survey participants. Quantitative data were also analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA), a statistical method for comparing the means of more than two groups. Because ANOVA only offers a way to compare general differences between means, the Games-Howell test was used to assess differences between different groups.

Qualitative data (focus groups, mini-interviews, and community review sessions) were analyzed using a mix of inductive and deductive approaches. The focus group protocol was derived from the survey questions and general construct “buckets” were used as a guide for categorizing and them-

ing data. These constructs followed the pattern of the main groupings from the survey, as well as the format of this report, and included (1) Community Attitudes, (2) Neighborhood Cohesion, (3) Community Participation, (4) Political Participation, and (5) Community/Political Information. Emergent themes were also captured using a thematic analysis approach.

Qualitative data were analyzed collaboratively among team members using a three-step process. Team members were instructed to read transcripts multiple times before summarizing statements into short phrases to capture the essence of participants’ words (initial coding). Initial codes were then analyzed to find similarities and differences and clustered into categories, staying as close to participants’ words as possible (focused coding). Categories were then clustered into major themes in each of the construct buckets. Categories and themes that did not fit into major categories are also reported.

For the purposes of geographic analysis, all survey respondents were asked their zip code. Zip codes that are only partially within the city boundaries, and thus had far fewer survey responses, have been grouped with the nearest zip code that is fully within the city boundaries. In addition, the two northernmost zip codes of the city have been grouped together due to the considerably lower response rate in 33716.

APPENDIX C

Survey Questionnaire

What is the zip code of your permanent residence/principal home?

If you have a non-traditional home or are currently homeless, please indicate the zip code of the place where you regularly stay or receive messages/mail. Students may enter the zip code of their student residence if it serves as their official/permanent residence.

33701	33702	33703	33704	33705	33707	33709
33710	33711	33712	33713	33714	33715	33716
33762						

For each of the following statements, please indicate if you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree:

- I believe I am able to have a positive impact on my community.
- People like me don't have any say about what the local government does.
- My neighborhood is close-knit
- People in my neighborhood are willing to help their neighbors
- People in my neighborhood generally do not get along with each other
- People in my neighborhood do not share the same values
- People in my neighborhood can be trusted

In the past 12 months, how often did you have a conversation or spend time with your neighbors?

- Basically every day
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month
- Not at all
- Don't Know

In the past 12 months, how often did you and your neighbors do favors for each other such as house sitting, watching each other's children, lending tools, and other things to help each other?

- Basically every day
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month
- Not at all
- Don't Know

In the past 12 months, did you get together with other people from your neighborhood to do something positive for your neighborhood or the community?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

In the past 12 months, how often did you talk to or spend time with people from a racial, ethnic or cultural background that is different than yours?

- Basically every day
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month
- Not at all
- Don't Know

For each of the following statements, please indicate if you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree:

- I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important issues facing the City of St. Petersburg.

In the past 12 months, have you gotten information about local news and issues from any of the following sources:

- Print Newspapers
- Print Magazines
- Internet (online newspapers/magazines, webpages, blogs)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- TV or Radio
- Government agencies
- Organizations (email, newsletters, etc.)
- Neighbors
- Family, friends and colleagues

In the past 12 months, have you shared your views about local news or issues in any of the following ways:

- Contacting a print newspaper or magazine
- Writing an article or blog for online media
- Sharing on Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Signing a petition
- Calling into a radio or TV show
- Contacting local representatives/elected officials
- Participating in a collective action (rally, protest, boycott, etc.)
- Talking to neighbors
- Talking to family, friends and colleagues
- Other (specify)

In the past 12 months, please indicate – yes or no – if you have:

- Attended a public meeting, such as a zoning or school board meeting, to discuss a local issue
- Contacted or visited a public official (at any level of government) to express your opinion

Did you vote in the last election on Tuesday, November 6, 2018?

- Yes
- No – Registered but did not vote
- No – Not registered
- No – Not eligible to vote
- Don't know

What was the MAIN reason you did not vote? Enter only ONE answer.

- Illness or disability (own or family's)
- Out of town or away from home
- Forgot to vote (or send in absentee ballot)
- Not interested, felt my vote wouldn't make a difference
- Too busy, conflicting work or school schedule
- Transportation problems
- Didn't like candidates or campaign issues
- Registration problems (i.e. didn't receive absentee ballot, not registered in current location)
- Bad weather conditions
- Inconvenient hours, polling place or hours or lines too long
- Other reason

Which of the following was the MAIN reason you were not registered to vote? Enter only ONE answer.

- Don't know
- Did not meet registration deadlines
- Did not know where or how to register
- Did not meet residency requirements/did not live here long enough
- Permanent illness or disability
- Difficulty with English
- Not interested in the election or not involved in politics
- My vote would not make a difference
- Other reason

How many groups, organizations, or associations would you say you have belonged to over the past 12 months?

- Number of groups / organizations / associations:
- None
- Don't know

Please indicate about how many hours per month (on average) you volunteered for the types of organizations listed below:

- 0 hours
- 1-3 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 7-9 hours
- 10+ hours
- Political organizations
- Educational, sports or youth organizations
- Religious or faith-based organizations
- Social, environmental or community service organizations
- Cultural or arts organizations
- Other type of organization (specify type):
- None

In the past 12 months, did you give money or possessions with a combined value of more than \$25 to a: Mark all that apply

- Political Organization
- Political Party
- Political Campaign
- Charity
- School
- Religious Organization
- Other Non-political Organization (specify type):
- None
- Don't Know

In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the City of St. Petersburg at this time?

- Satisfied
- Dis-satisfied
- No opinion

Please tell us a bit about yourself by answering the following questions.

What best describes your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe:

What is the year of your birth?

What is your race and/or ethnicity? Mark all that apply.

- White
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other (please specify):

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- **8th Grade or Less**
- Some High School but no diploma
- High School Graduate (Diploma, GED or equivalent)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree (academic)
- Associate degree (occupational/vocational)
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree or Higher

Which category represents the total combined income of all members of your household during the past 12 months? This includes money from jobs, net income from business, farm or rent, pensions, dividends, interest, social security payments and any other money income received by members of your family who are 15 years of age or older.

- Less than \$25,000
- \$26,000 to \$50,000
- \$51,000 to \$74,000
- \$75,000 to \$99,000
- \$100,000 or More

Would you say your health, in general, is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair

APPENDIX D

Focus Group Protocol

Purpose: To determine the level of civic engagement among residents in St. Petersburg, Florida and where gaps are in terms of demographics and types of participation.

Key Constructs: (1) Community Attitudes, (2) Community/Political Information, (3) Community Participation, and (4) Political Participation

Facilitator: Thank you all for coming today. I am working with a project called Engage St. Pete, an initiative led by the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area to understand how residents in St. Pete are participating in their communities and local politics. The League recently conducted a citywide survey on civic engagement in St. Pete but wanted to talk to groups of people more in depth to get a deeper understanding of how people are getting involved in their communities.

Part I: Community Attitudes

- Tell me a bit about the neighborhood in which you live.
 - Do you think your neighborhood is close knit? Why or why not?
 - Do people do favors for one another or help each other out in any way? In what ways?
 - Do people get along in your neighborhood? Trust each other?
- Do you hang out or talk with your neighbors?
 - What kinds of things do you talk about? Do together?
 - Do people in your neighborhood ever get together to do anything positive for the community together?
- Do you believe you are able to make a positive impact on your community? Why or why not?
- How satisfied are you with the way things are going in St. Pete?

Part II: Community/Political Information

- Do you think you have a good idea of the major issues facing your community?
- Which sources of information do you rely upon to learn about local news and events?
 - What do you think is the best source of information? What is your “go-to?”
 - Do you share your views about politics or community issues?
- Do you talk to your friends and family about news and local events? How about your neighbors?
- Is it easy to find information about what is happening in your community? In your local government?

Part III: Community Participation

- Are people in your community generally involved in the neighborhood? In the larger community?
- Do any of you belong to groups, organizations, or associations in your neighborhoods or communities?
 - What kind?
 - What is your involvement with them like?
 - If not involved, why not?
- Do any of you volunteer in your communities?
 - For which kinds of organizations?
 - What do you do as a volunteer?

Part IV: Political Participation

- Do you vote in local elections? Did you vote in the last national election?
 - Do you think it's important to vote? Why or why not?
- Have you ever contacted a government official about anything happening in your community? Why or why not?

Closing: Is there anything else you would like to share before we end?

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St. Petersburg CIVIC HEALTH STUDY

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