

Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government

*200 E. Main St
Lexington, KY 40507*



Docket

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

1:00 PM

Council Chamber

General Government and Planning Committee

Committee Agenda

- [0231-25](#) Approval of February 4, 2025 Committee Summary
- [0228-25](#) Downtown Area Master Plan
- [0234-25](#) Boards and Commissions Comprehensive Review
- [0864-24](#) Short-Term Rentals Update
- [0030-25](#) Electronic Digital Billboards
- [0038-25](#) Lexington's Preservation & Growth Management Program
- [0229-25](#) Items Referred to Committee

Adjournment



Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Master

200 E. Main St
Lexington, KY 40507

File Number: 0231-25

File ID: 0231-25

Type: Committee Item

Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Contract #:

In Control: General
Government and
Planning
Committee

File Created: 02/27/2025

File Name: February 4, 2025 Committee Summary

Final Action:

Title: Approval of February 4, 2025 Committee Summary

Notes:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: 2.4.25 GGP Summary

Enactment Number:

Deed #:

Hearing Date:

Drafter:

Effective Date:

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
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Text of Legislative File 0231-25

Title

Approval of February 4, 2025 Committee Summary



General Government & Planning (GGP) Committee

February 4, 2025

Summary and Motions

Vice-Chair Shayla Lynch called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Committee members Dan Wu, James Brown, Chuck Ellinger II, Shayla Lynch, Hannah LeGris, Emma Curtis, Whitey Elliott Baxter, Dave Sevigny, and Jennifer Reynolds were present. Chair Liz Sheehan was absent. Councilmembers Tyler Morton, Denise Gray, Joseph Hale, and Hil Boone were present as non-voting members.

I. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 14, 2025 COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Ellinger motioned to approve the January 14, 2025 General Government and Planning Committee Summary. Seconded by Elliott Baxter. The motion passed without dissent.

II. BLUE SKY SMALL AREA PLAN

Eve Miller, Senior Planner in Long-Range Planning, presented the 2025 Blue Sky Small Area Plan to the committee. The Division of Planning is developing a Small Area Plan (SAP) for the Blue Sky industrial area, located off Athens Boonesboro Road. In 2023, the Planning Commission identified the Blue Sky Rural Activity Center for inclusion in the Urban Growth Area. In 2024, the Planning Commission recommended a separate SAP for the industrial area to investigate economic development opportunities and additional industrial land uses. The SAP will evaluate the existing infrastructure conditions, the constructed environment, and the natural features, resources, and physical constraints that affect the area. The SAP will specify future land-use designations, how to integrate and connect Blue Sky with other portions of the USA, and economic redevelopment opportunities. A map of the 301-acre site illustrating the primary zoning of I-1 for industrial use was reviewed. The surrounding areas are mainly zoned for business and professional use. An RFP was issued on January 24, 2025, and proposals are due on February 14. Award notifications will be made on February 28, with a notice to proceed on April 24. The project is expected to be completed by Spring 2026, as work will not likely exceed one year. Periodic updates will be given to the Planning Commission and the Council.

Planning anticipates the consultant completing an existing condition and market analysis report, allowing them to reevaluate the location and recommend adaptive reuse and future industrial opportunities. This plan provides the opportunity to address a long-standing goal of considering whether Blue Sky is meeting its potential and whether there are new opportunities.

The committee took no action.

III. A SENSE OF PLACE (Assessment of Lexington's African American Hamlets and Historic Preservation of Their Heritage)

Tiffany Brown, Chief Opportunity Officer in the Mayor's Office, provided an update on the A Sense of Place initiative. The presentation provided the history and significance of historic rural black hamlets in Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky. Ms. Brown began with a brief overview of the steering committee members, including private and public representatives; a timeline of key events; and a list of the 20 rural hamlets with a summary of their historical and economic activities.

The group's current focus is the Cadentown community. LFUCG owns 705 Caden Lane, a historic site where Cadentown is located, which includes Cadentown Baptist Church, the Cadentown Rosenwald School, and a cemetery. This property will become a dedicated cultural heritage hub that houses the history and legacy of all the hamlets in Fayette County. Several components will complete the first phases of this initiative to dedicate a permanent space in Cadentown. Phase one repair includes wooden siding, envelope, windows, paint, and HVAC. The RFP for this work will go out in February 2025, with repairs to begin in March. The estimated completion date is June 2025, when their annual Juneteenth celebration is scheduled. The second phase will include the addition of an accessible bathroom to the church and an ADA pathway from the school to the church. The next phase is cemetery clean-up and site identification. Parks is overseeing this work and is in the process of completing the removal of invasive species to allow archaeologists to begin their work. Lastly, a site feasibility study is underway, providing recommendations for exhibit design with artifacts, oral histories, photos, and more from our hamlet communities. The original fundraising goal was \$500,000; to date, they have raised \$730,144.97. The Sense of Place Historic Marker Mini-Grant Program aims to support the installation of historical markers that highlight significant historic sites within our community and encourage local engagement in preserving and promoting our shared heritage. This grant funding will cover costs associated with design and production, installation, and educational or promotional materials.

Moving forward, the committee will continue to engage with the community, gather and utilize resources, target preservation and rehabilitation efforts, and empower community members to develop strategies that support the long-term vibrancy of our historic black hamlets.

A seminar on collecting oral history is planned for April 15, 2025, at 6 p.m. at the Lexington History Museum.

The committee took no action.

IV. LEXINGTON'S PRESERVATION AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (LPGMP)

Vice Mayor Wu briefly updated the committee on public engagement as part of the LPGMP. The committee's staff and leadership are organizing public engagement opportunities that will be available throughout this process. These sessions will complement the ongoing feedback we plan to receive through the council's online engagement tool, Engage Lexington.

The committee took no action.

V. ITEM REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

The committee took no action.

Vice-Chair Lynch adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.



Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Master

200 E. Main St
Lexington, KY 40507

File Number: 0228-25

File ID: 0228-25

Type: Committee Item

Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 2

Contract #:

In Control: General
Government and
Planning
Committee

File Created: 02/27/2025

File Name: Downtown Area Master Plan

Final Action:

Title: Downtown Area Master Plan

Notes:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: Downtown Area Master Plan

Enactment Number:

Deed #:

Hearing Date:

Drafter:

Effective Date:

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
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Text of Legislative File 0228-25

Title

Downtown Area Master Plan



LEXINGTON

RECONNECTING TO OUR DOWNTOWN

Lexington's Downtown Area Master Plan



Boyd O. Sewe | LRP - Senior Planner
General Government & Planning (GGP) Committee | 03.04.2025



1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

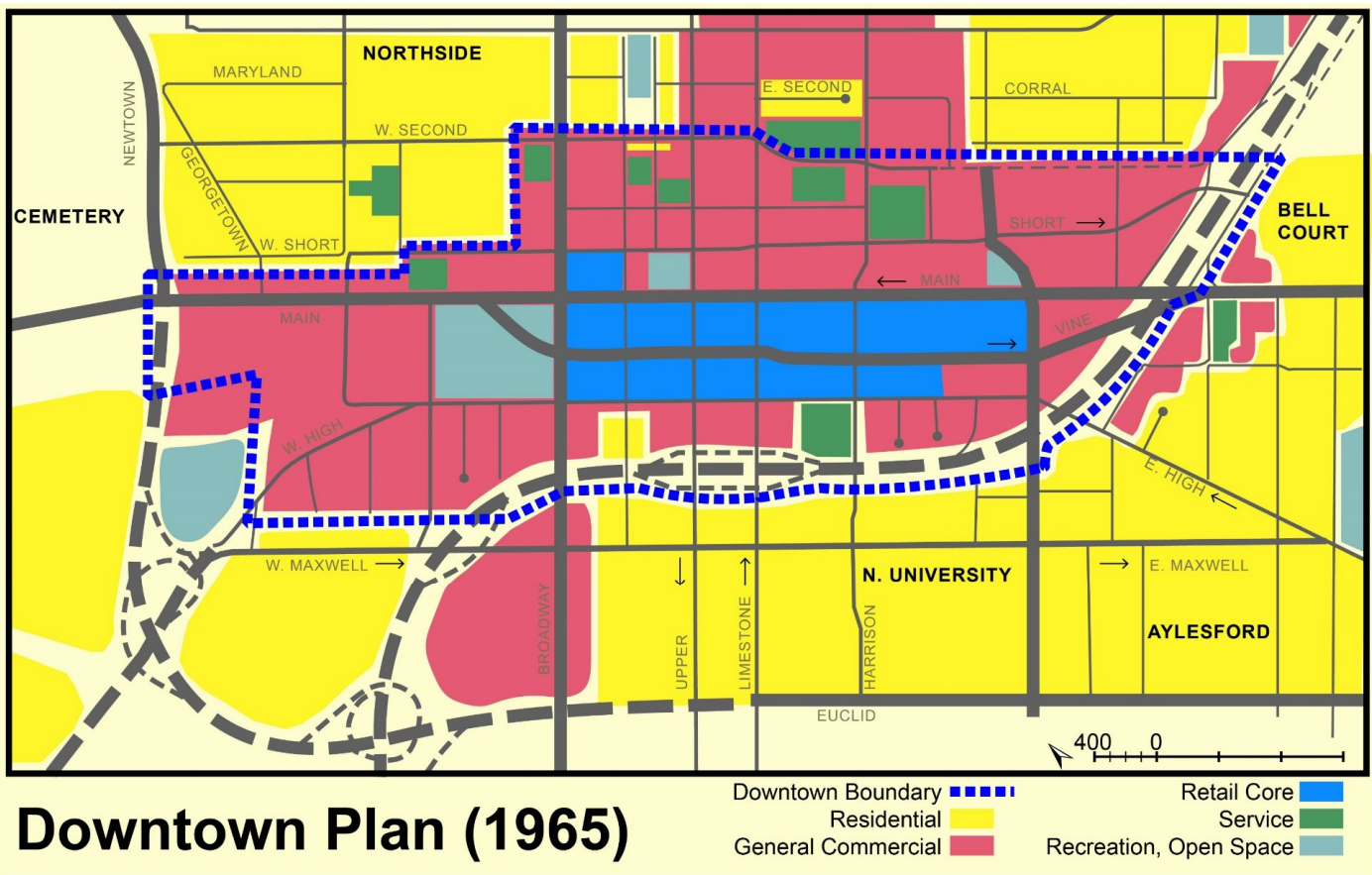
- 2045 Comprehensive Plan
 - * Placemaking policy #13: Update the Downtown Master Plan.
- The Comprehensive Plan involved extensive public outreach, and the request for a new downtown plan emerged as a key community priority.
- Council allocated \$500,000 towards developing a downtown master plan.
- This master plan will be considered by the Planning Commission as an amendment to the 2045 Comprehensive Plan.



RECONNECTING TO OUR DOWNTOWN



LEXINGTON



Lexington's Downtown Area Master Plan



2. THE NEED FOR A DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

- 1973 Comprehensive Plan adopted the 1965 Downtown Urban Renewal Project.
- Urban renewal in the 1960s significantly reshaped downtowns. Lexington's downtown plan included a proposed highway through the city center.
- The downtown area has evolved and developed since then but lacks a cohesive strategy for future growth.
- A Downtown Master Plan – Envisioning the Future was completed in 2007 by DDA but was not adopted.
- This plan will define the downtown area and clarify how it interacts with surrounding neighborhoods.





3. COMMUNITY-CENTERED APPROACH

- Input from diverse voices including residents, businesses, and institutions.
- Public outreach will be central and inclusive, ensuring broad engagement throughout the process.
- The engagement process will be designed to reflect the diverse perspectives, needs, and priorities of Lexington.
- The plan will focus on investment within established neighborhoods, ensuring that development benefits existing residents.



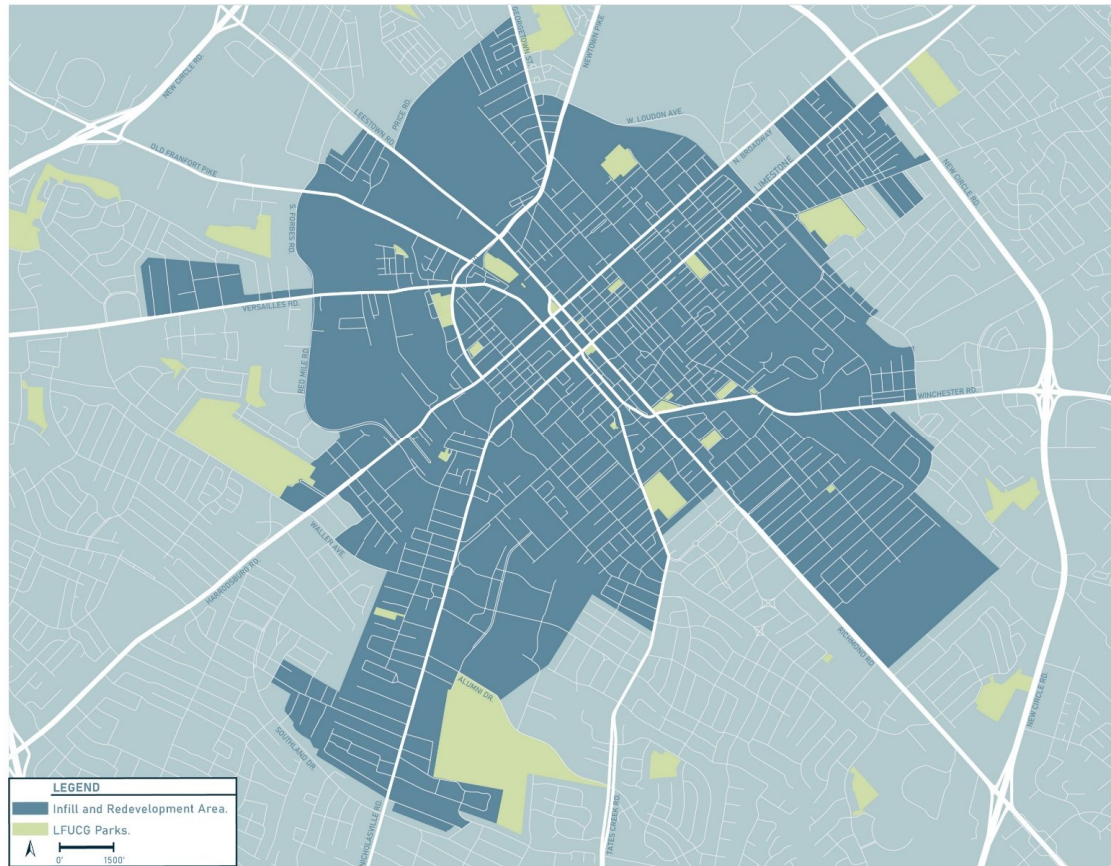


4. KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

- Align with Imagine Lexington 2045 by establishing clear short-term and long-term priorities.
- Develop actionable strategies for:
 - * Sustainable growth, redevelopment, and preservation.
 - * Increased housing options and investment opportunities.
 - * Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle safety.
 - * Improved connectivity between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
 - * Stronger support for tourism and economic development.
 - * Strengthening community ties and supporting current residents.



5. INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT AREA MAP



Lexington's Downtown Area Master Plan



6. PLAN SCHEDULE

- RFP Issue Date: February 13, 2025.
- Proposal Due: March 14, 2025.
- Award Notification: April 04, 2025.
- Anticipated Beginning of Contract: May 30, 2025.
- Length of contract: 18 months.





7. NEXT STEPS

- Consultant selection will mark the next phase, launching detailed engagement efforts.
- Stakeholders will have opportunities to participate and provide input throughout the planning process.
- Council engagement will be key to ensure alignment with funding and policy priorities.
- Public input and collaboration are crucial—we encourage all stakeholders to stay engaged and help shape the future of downtown Lexington.



Questions?



LEXINGTON





Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Master

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File Number: 0234-25

File ID: 0234-25

Type: Committee Item

Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Contract #:

In Control: General
Government and
Planning
Committee

File Created: 02/27/2025

File Name: Boards and Commissions Comprehensive Review

Final Action:

Title: Boards and Commissions Comprehensive Review

Notes:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: 3.4.25 Presentation Boards and Commissions
Review, Full Report Boards and Commissions
Review

Enactment Number:

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Hearing Date:

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History of Legislative File

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Text of Legislative File 0234-25

Title

Boards and Commissions Comprehensive Review

Strengthening Lexington's Boards and Commissions

An evaluation of representation, function, accessibility, and transparency

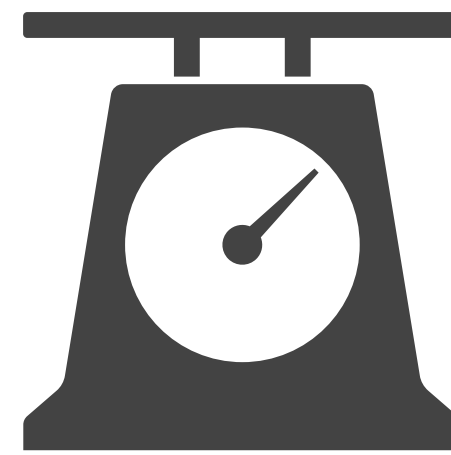


Presentation to General Government and Planning Committee
March 4th, 2025

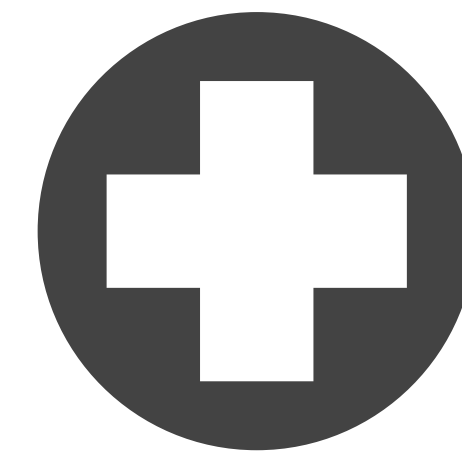
Goals and Scope



Gather information about
Boards and Commissions



Assess what is and isn't
working



Recommendations for
representation, accessibility,
functionality, and transparency

Background



Methodology

Mapping Boards & Attending Meetings

Boards and Commissions

Boards and Commissions Members Member Survey Meeting Rubrics Implementation Staff Survey Imported table

Views Group View 35 hidden fields Filter Grouped by 1 field Sort

Find a view

Grid view Survey Findings Attending Meet... Group View

Name	Staff POC	Website	Legislation	Bylaws
16 Water Quality Fees Appeals Board	Frank Mabson	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://codelibrary.amleg.com	https://www.lexingtonky.gov
CATEGORY Fund Based Boards Count 12				
17 Agricultural Extension District Board	Ryan Farley	https://www.lexingtonky.gov		
18 City Employees Pension Fund Board	Samantha Coleman	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://codelibrary.amleg.com	
19 Corridors Commission	Hilary Angelucci	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://codelibrary.amleg.com	https://drive.google.com
20 Downtown Development Authority	Kevin Atkins	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://codelibrary.amleg.com	
21 Downtown Lexington Management District	James Frazier	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://drive.google.com/f	https://drive.google.com
22 Economic Development Investment Board	Kevin Atkins	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://drive.google.com/	https://drive.google.com
23 Ethics Commission	Council Clerk's Office	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://codelibrary.amleg.com	
24 Industrial Authority Board	Craig Bencz	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://codelibrary.amleg.com	https://drive.google.com
25 Opioid Abatement Commission	Carmen Combs	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://drive.google.com/f	https://drive.google.com
26 Police and Fire Pension Fund Board	Susan Combs	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://codelibrary.amleg.com	
27 Public Arts Commission	Heather Lyons	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://codelibrary.amleg.com	
28 Sister Cities Program Commission	Kay Sargent	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://codelibrary.amleg.com	
CATEGORY External Boards Count 20				
29 Affordable Housing Governing Board	Rick McQuady	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://codelibrary.amleg.com	https://drive.google.com
30 Airport Board	Eric Frankl	https://www.lexingtonky.gov	https://codelibrary.amleg.com	https://drive.google.com

70 contacts



70 Boards and Commissions Mapped

41 Board or Commission Meetings Attended



CivicLex

Member Survey & Staff Survey



Boards and Commissions Research Project

What is the boards and commissions research project?

This summer, the nonprofits CivicLex and CivStart were hired by the City of Lexington to research and evaluate LFUCG's Legislative Boards and Commissions, with the ultimate goal of making them more effective and accessible to all Lexington/Fayette County residents.

Each week, CivicLex staff will attend and document LFUCG Board and Commission meetings. We will also survey board and commission members to gain deeper insights into their functions and engage the public through focus groups and interviews. Please use this page to learn more about the project, and feel free to reach out to info@civiclex.org with any questions!

Who is CivicLex?

CivicLex is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Lexington with the mission of strengthening civic health in our community. We were founded with the mission of making it easier for Lexington residents to get involved in local government. Our vision is to build a city in which every Lexington resident can meaningfully participate in the decisions that shape where they live.

Who is CivStart?

CivStart is a nonprofit designed to help local governments use technology better. CivStart provides local government leaders technical knowledge, peer connections, and pilot program implementation to deliver practical results. CivStart is working on the Boards and Commissions Research process to provide insight and recommendations for improving the public facing and internal technology that LFUCG's boards and commissions use.

How will this affect you?


We are gathering information about how Boards and Commissions currently operate. During this time, we will likely:

- Reach out to you about meeting dates for scheduled meetings times and locations.
- Attend Board and Commission meetings
- Request that Board and Commission members take a 10-15 minute survey about their work



Take our survey and learn more about the project!
civiclex.org/bandc-hub

249 Member Respondents



LFUCG and External Organization Staff Boards and Commission Survey

Welcome! This survey is a part of CivicLex's Boards and Commissions research project. It is designed for LFUCG staff who work with at least one of the 70 legislative boards and commissions in the City of Lexington, or for staff of external organizations with an LFUCG appointed board. This survey is anonymous, but does request that you identify your department and which specific board and commissions you work with. All questions are optional, and if there is any feedback you would like to share that you are not comfortable being matched with this information, there is a link at the end for a 100% anonymous submission. Please feel free to contact Kit Anderson, kit@civiclex.org with any questions.

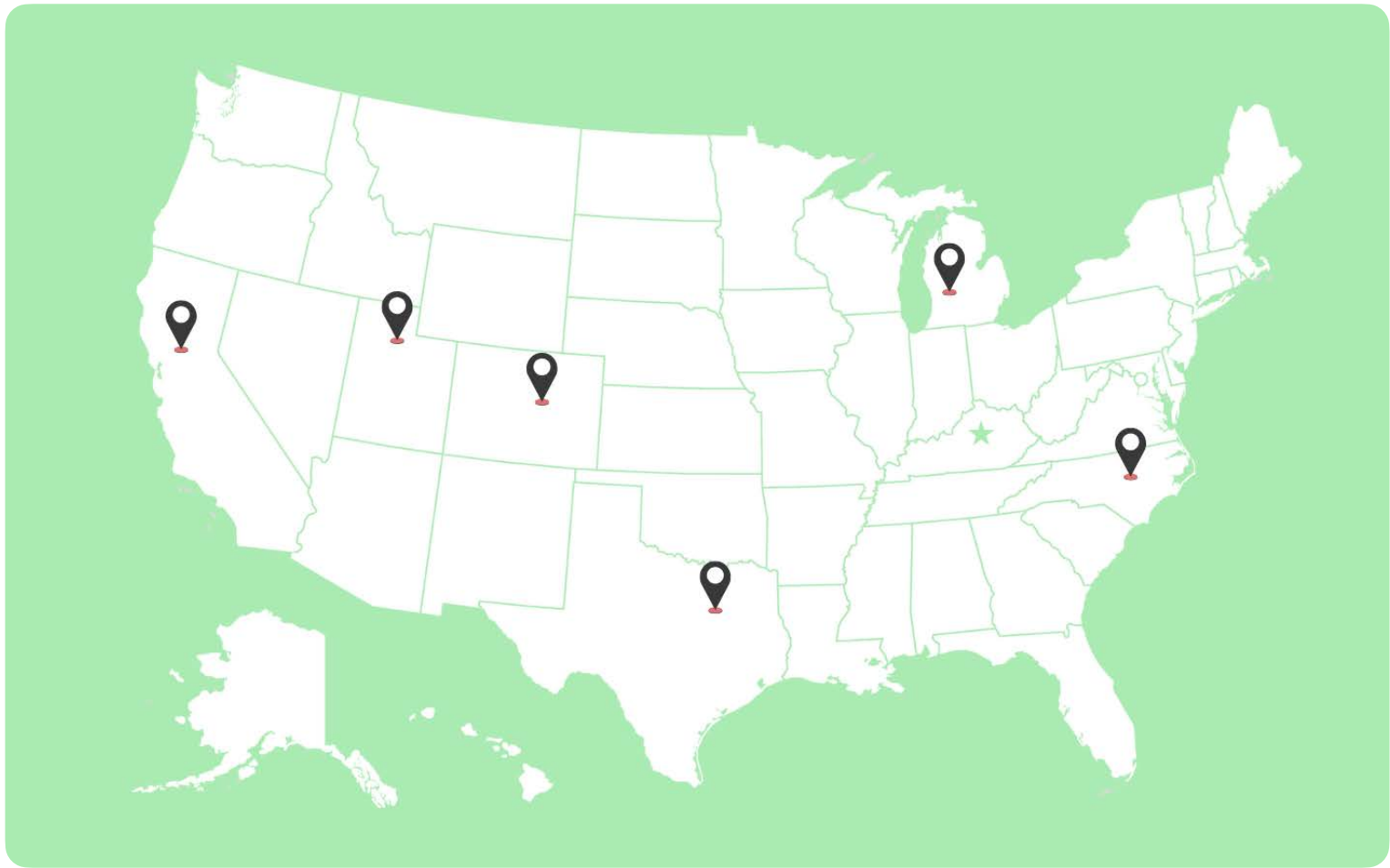
Do you work for LFUCG or an External Organization with an LFUCG appointed board?

☐ LFUCG

☐ External Organization

25 Organizations, Departments, and Divisions Represented

Peer City & Technology Research



6 Peer Cities
Researched



LEXINGTON

21 Meetings with LFUCG
Technology Stakeholders

Public Engagement & Student Focus Group



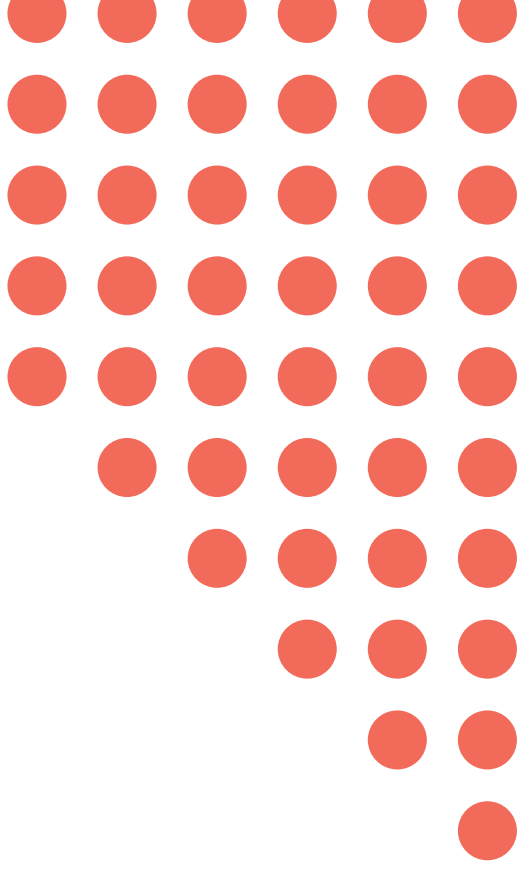
260 Face to Face
Conversations



9 Fayette County
Public Schools
Students

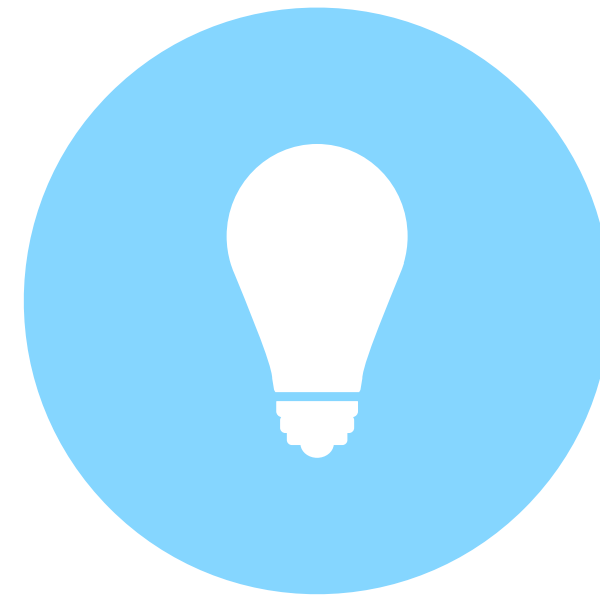


CivicLex

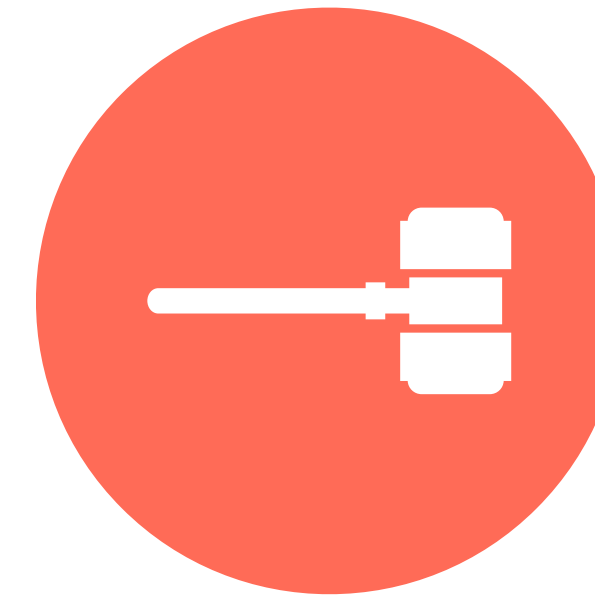


Findings

Categories



Advisory



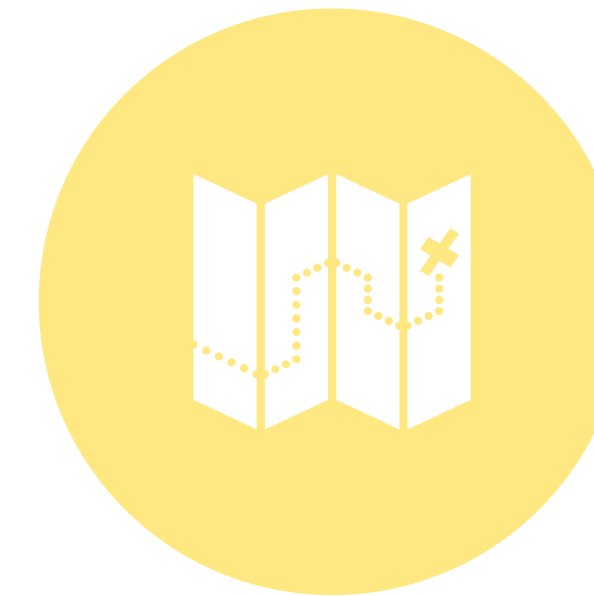
Quasi-Judicial



External



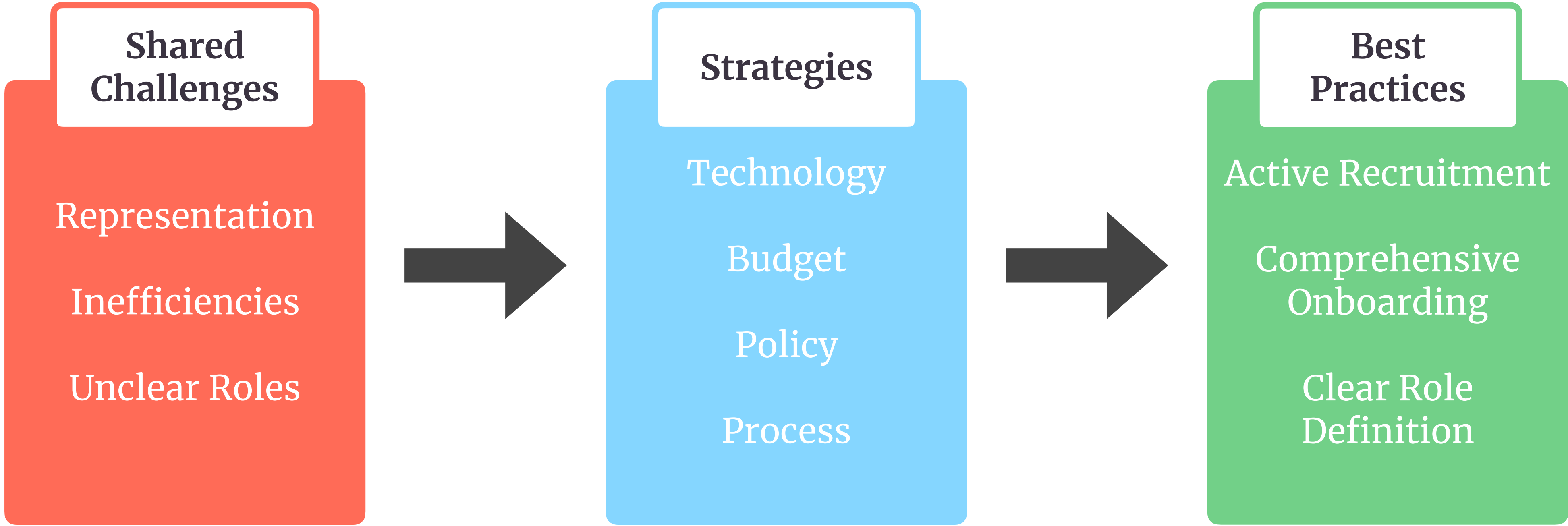
Fund Based



Place-Based

Peer Cities

Shared challenges must be met with many different levers:



Technology

What is working well?

Hybrid meeting options

Google Drive

Website Management

What needs improvement?

Granicus Software

Calendar/Notifications

Document Management

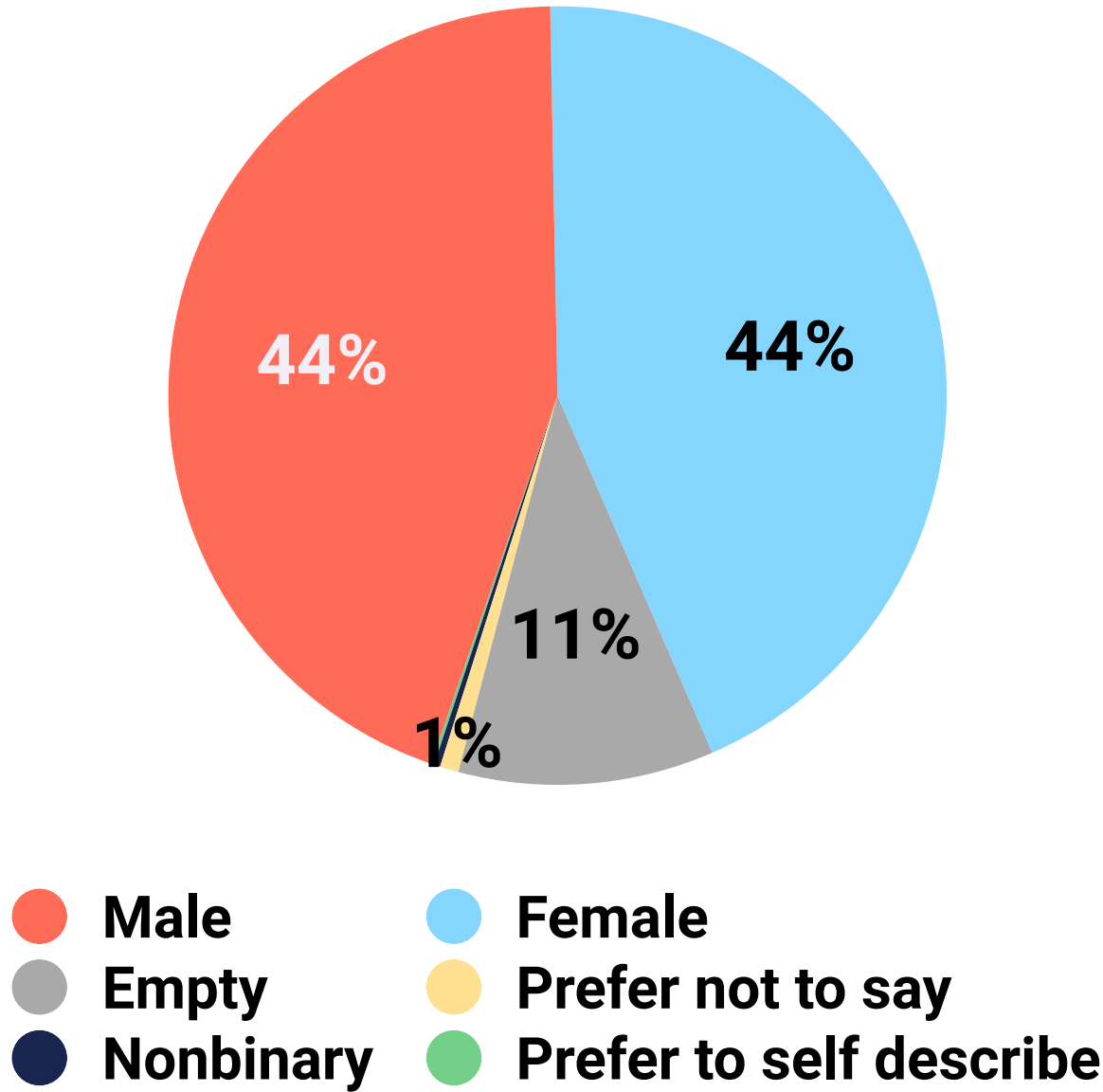
Digital Literacy



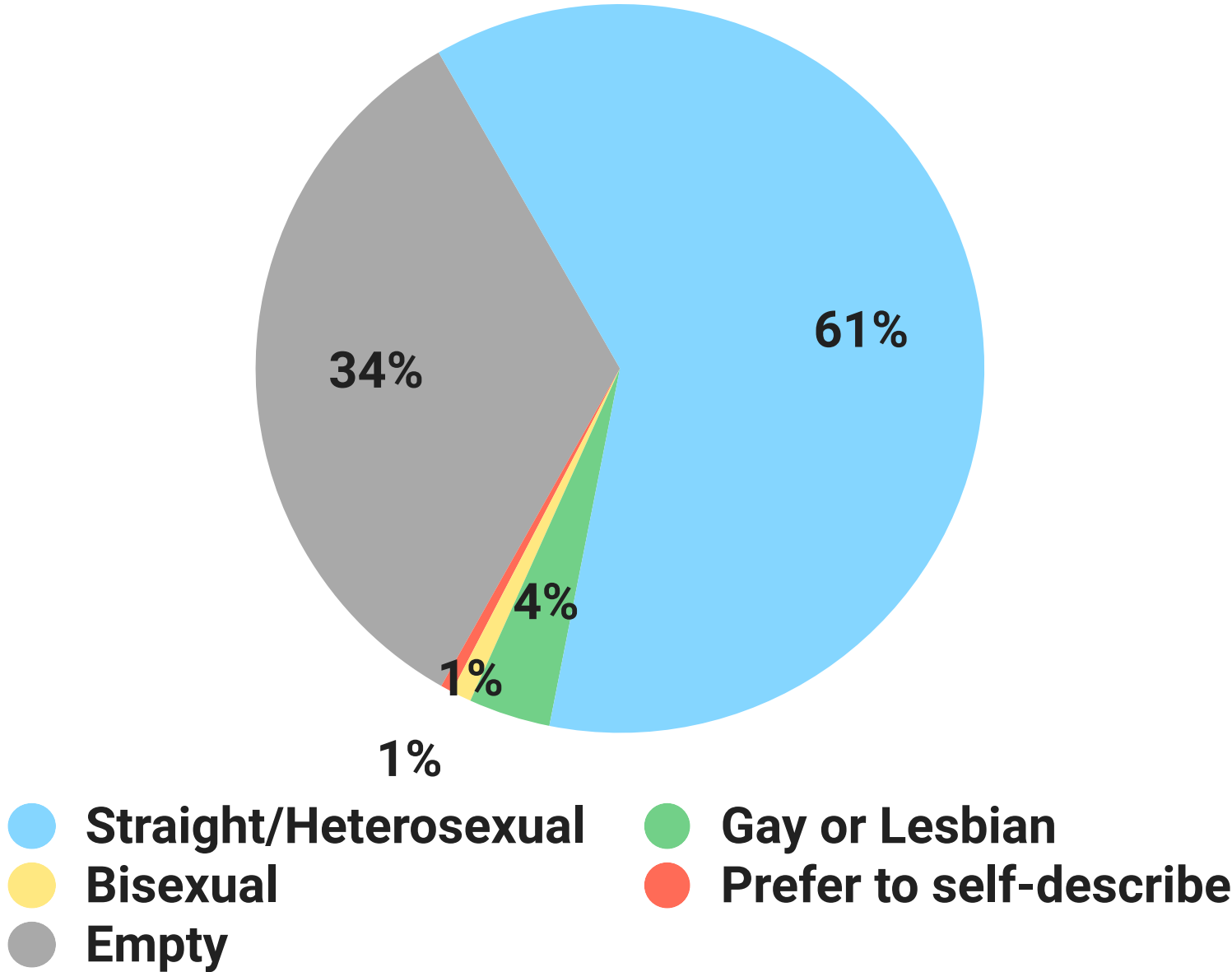
CivicLex

Demographics

Gender, All Boards

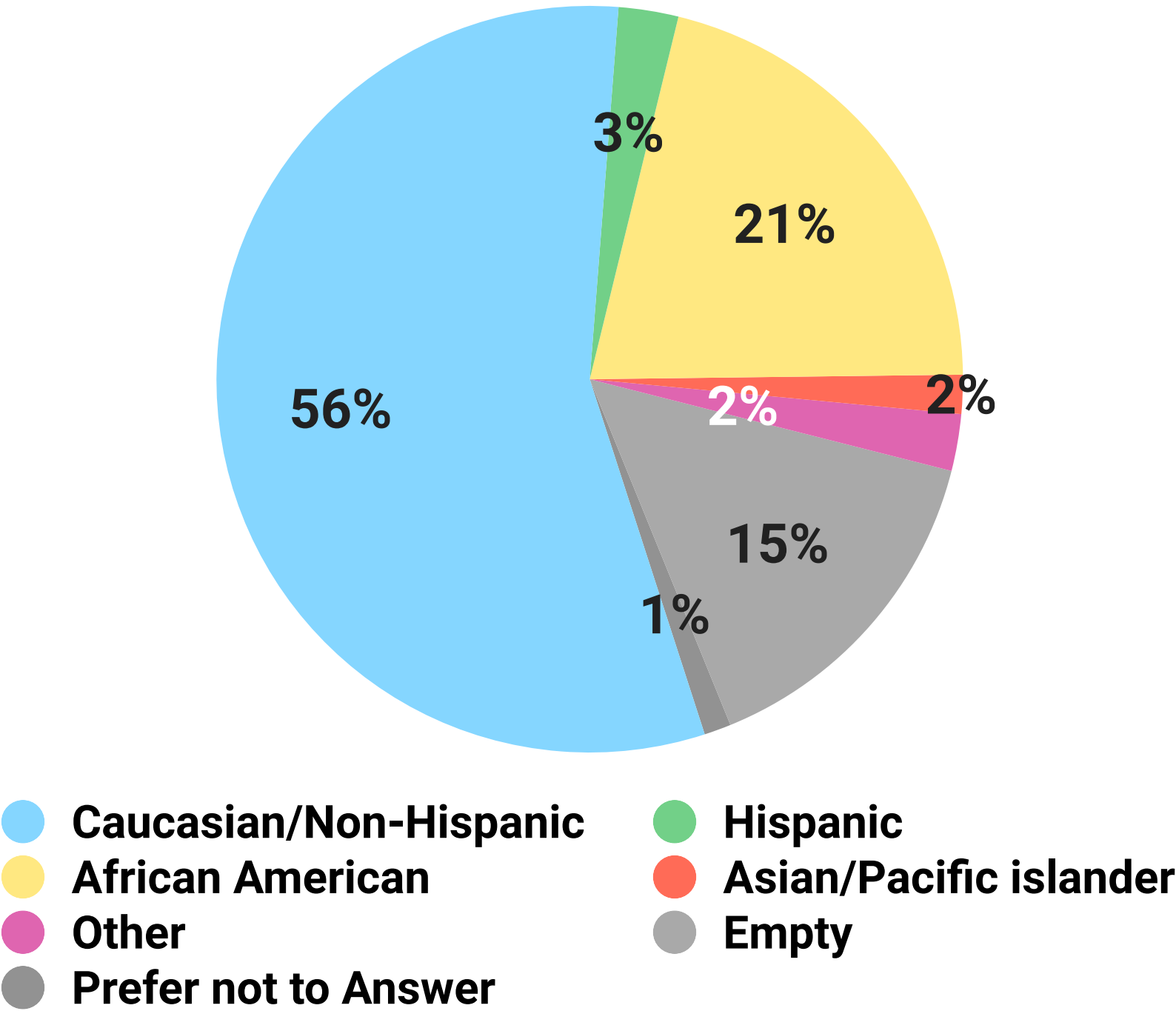


Sexual Orientation, All Boards

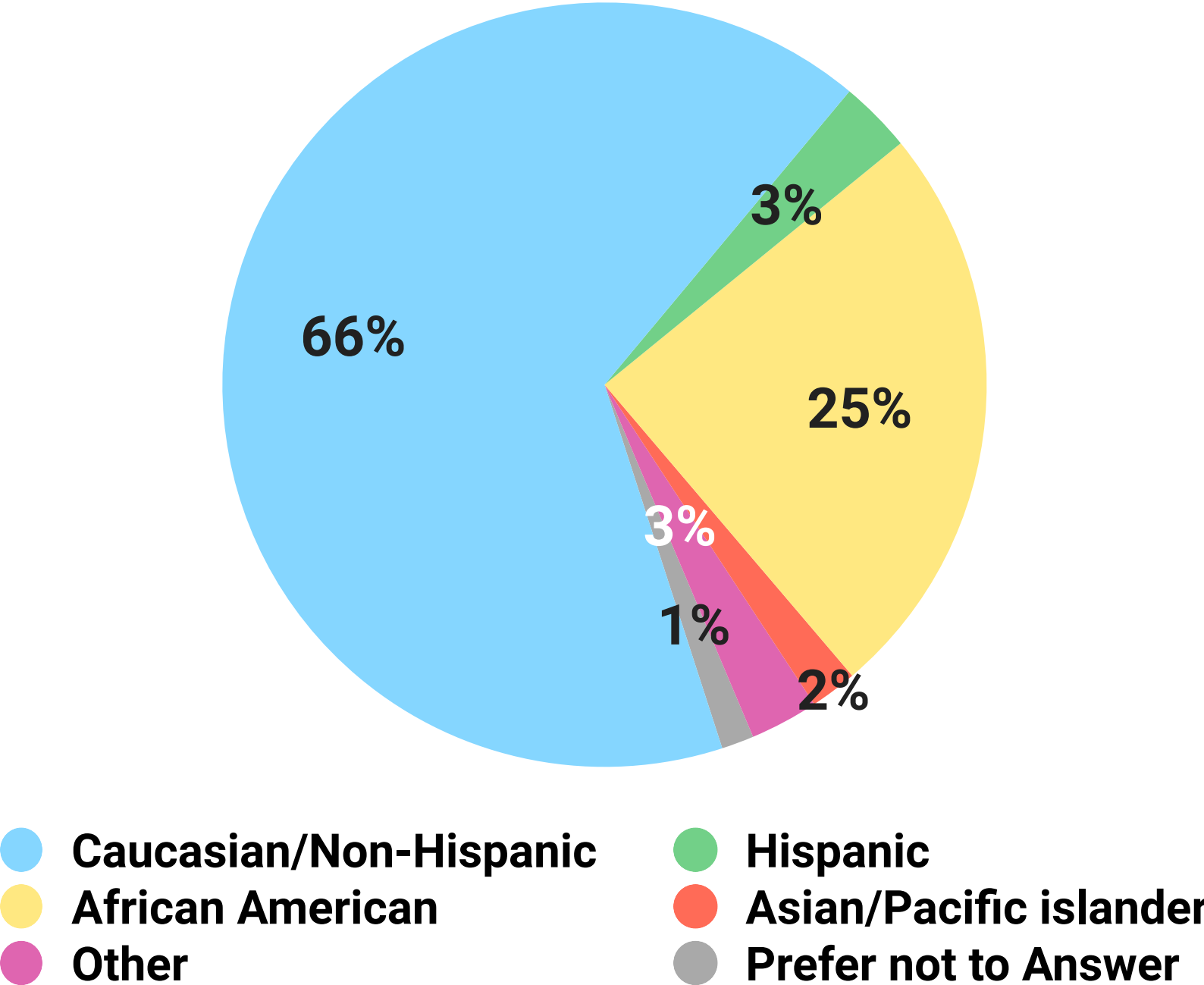


Demographics

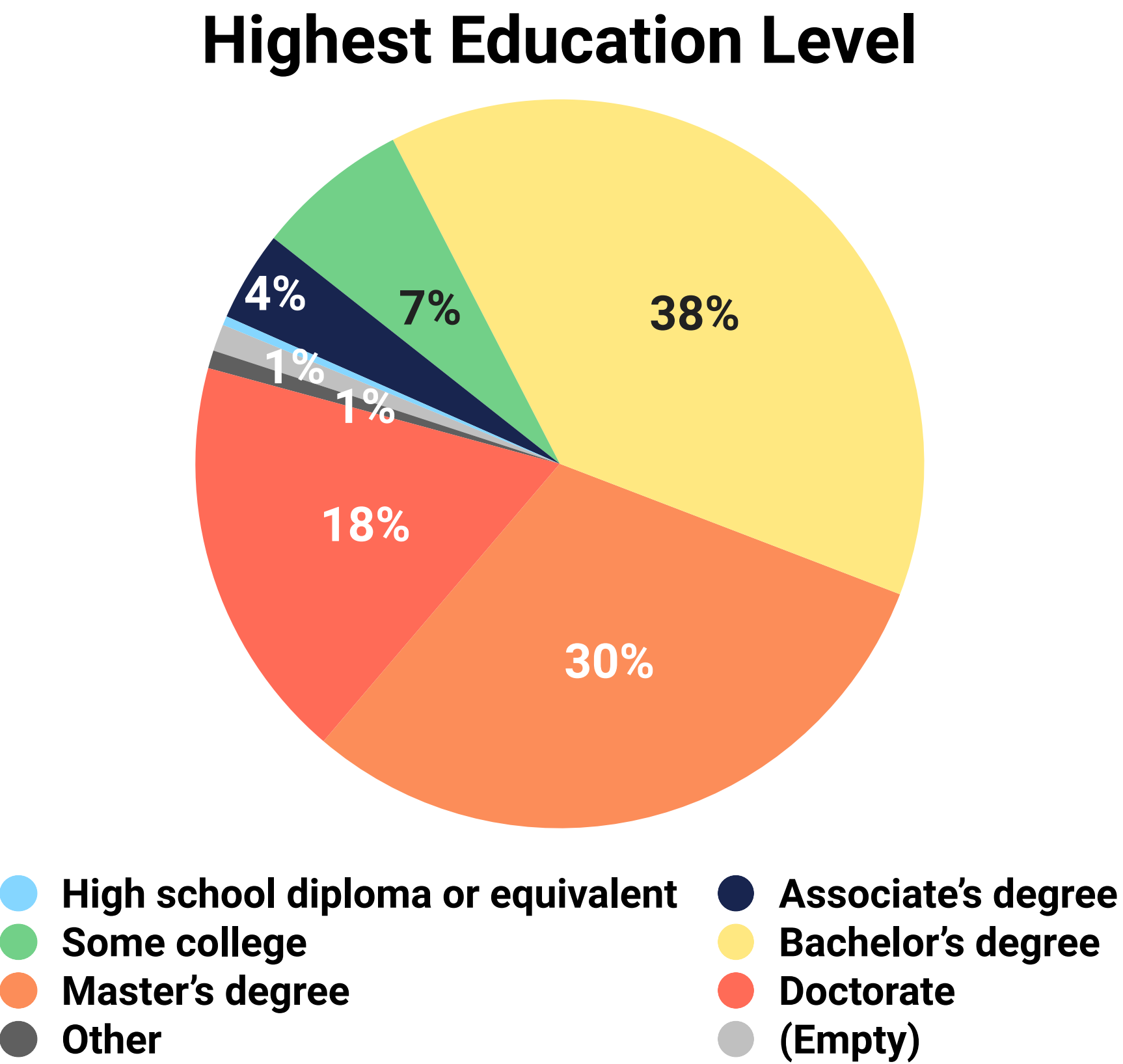
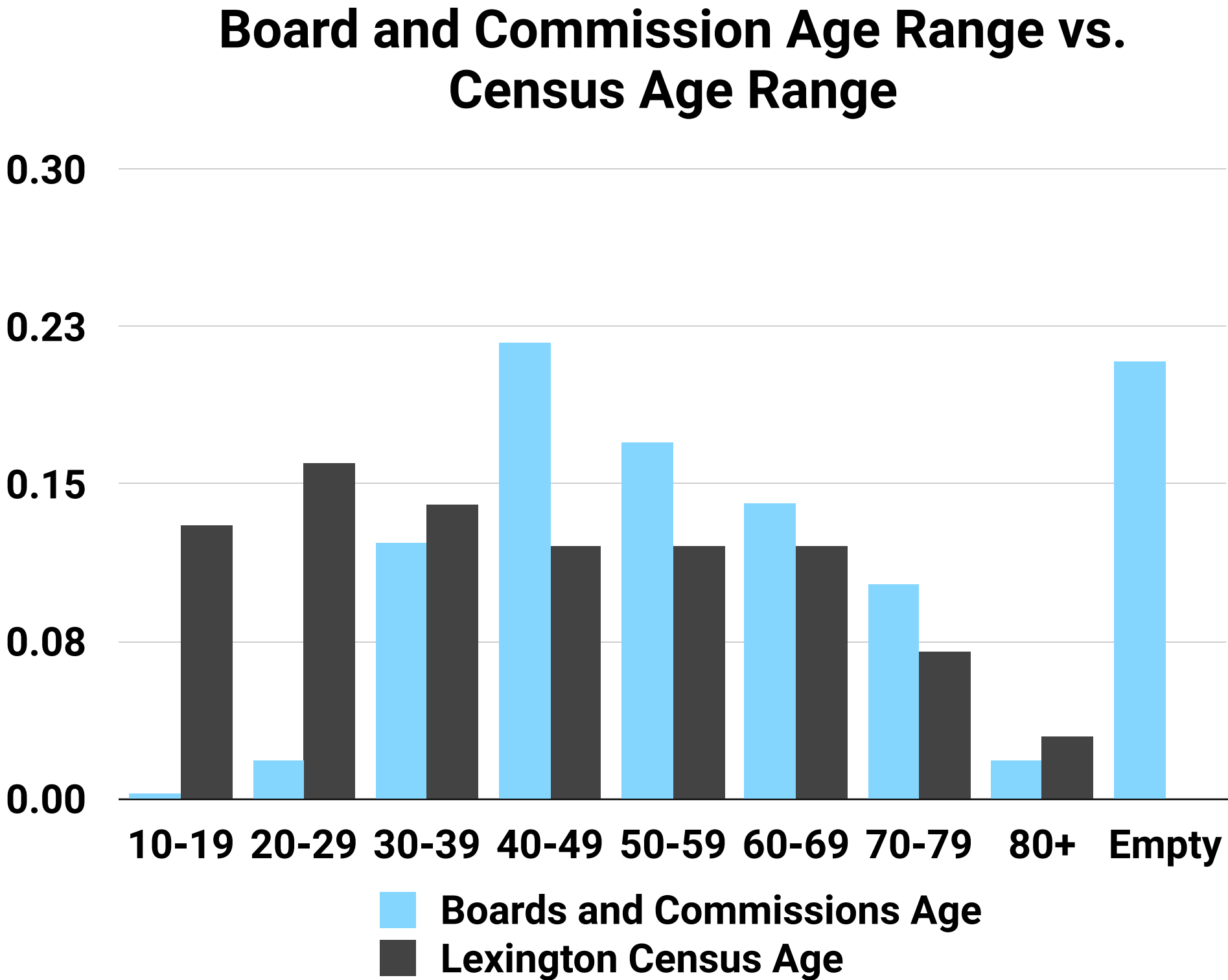
Ethnicity, All Boards



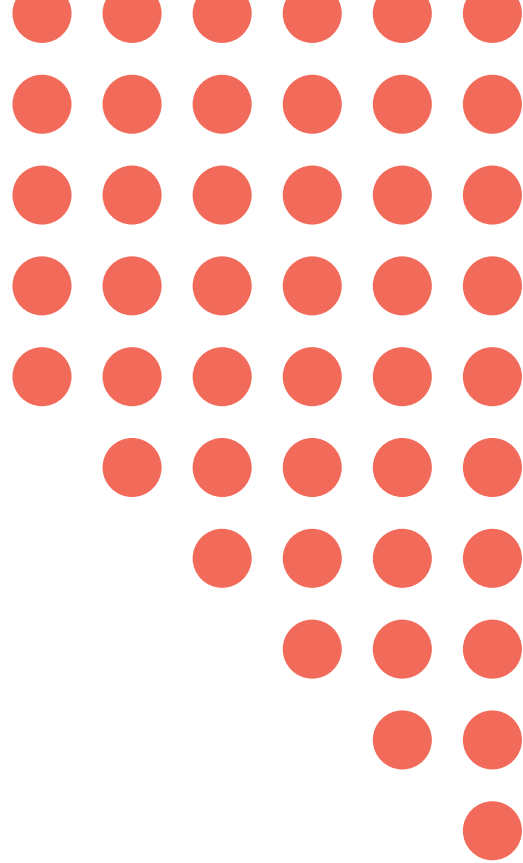
Ethnicity, All Boards
(Empty Values Excluded)



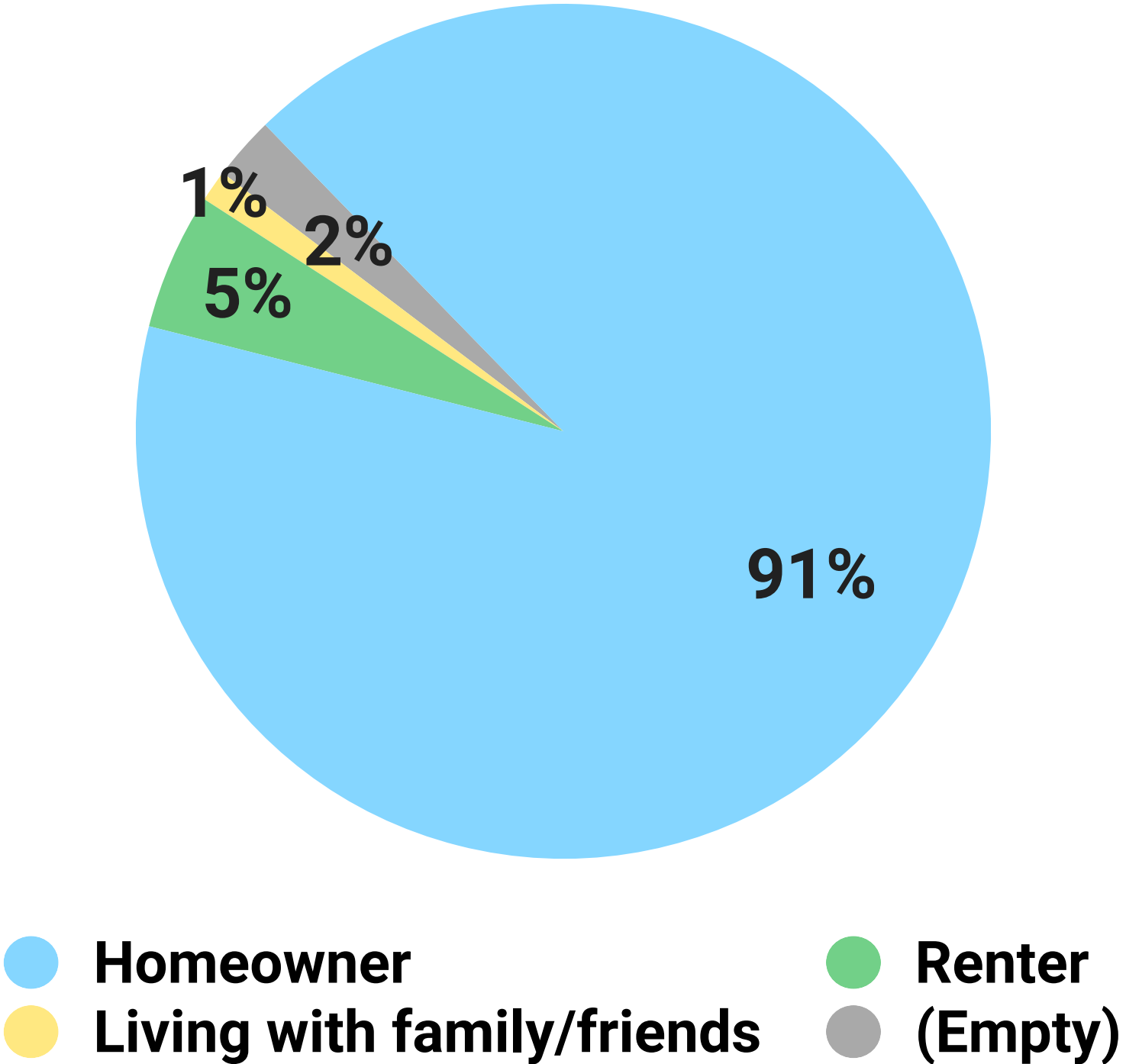
Demographics



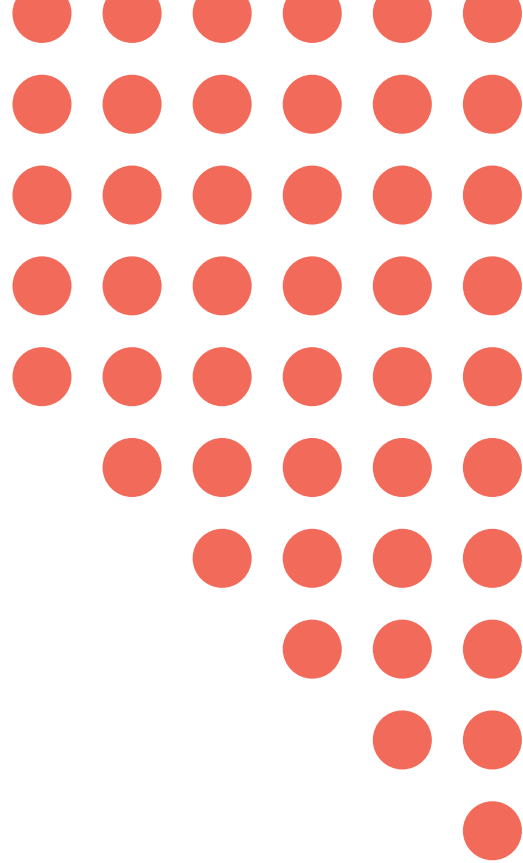
Demographics



Housing Situation



Survey Analysis



	Effectiveness (Scale of 1 to 5)	Legislative Action (% aware of action)	Trouble Recruiting (% some or a lot)	Increase Accessibility? (% think should)	Training (% received)
Quasi-Judicial	4.6	42%	46%	11%	82%
Fund Based	4.5	41%	35%	23%	29%
External	4.6	20%	18%	17%	61%
Place-Based	3.8	8%	78%	37%	17%
Advisory	3.7	45%	54%	57%	34%

Recommendations



CivicLex

Representation

1. **Reduce logistical barriers to joining Boards and Commissions**
 - Meeting locations
 - Meeting times
 - Stipends
 - Childcare
2. **Make joining a Board or Commission less intimidating**
 - Perceived politicization
 - Public education resources
 - Buddy/mentor system
3. **Evaluate use of Seat Designations**
 - Pros and cons for representation
4. **Streamline and daylight appointment process**
 - Audit current application
 - Increase communication
 - Term limits
5. **Invest in training new members**
 - Minimum orientation
 - Digital literacy support

Functionality

6. Create and maintain a comprehensive Boards and Commissions Calendar

- Consistency
- Distribute calendar authority
- Feature usage

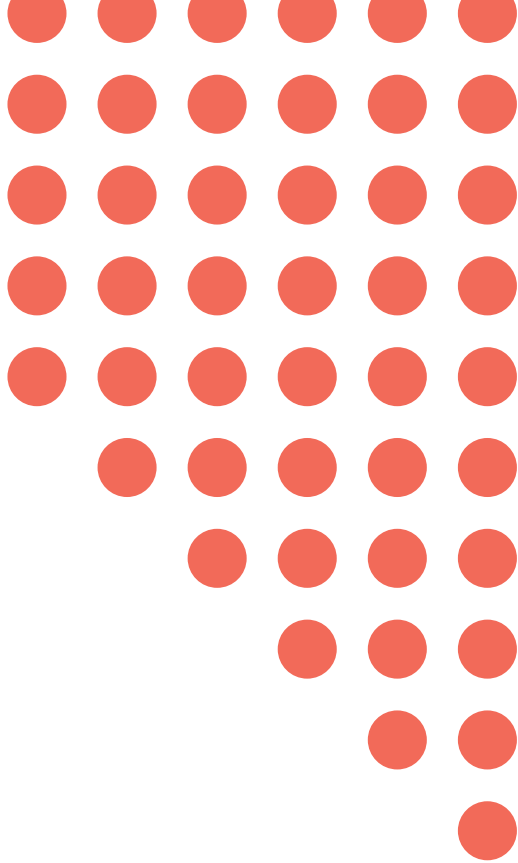
7. Increase the effectiveness of Boards and Commissions meetings

- Agendas
- Frequency
- Participation
- Facilitation
- Connection with council

8. Strengthen staff capacity to support Boards and Commissions

- Clarify relationship with LFUCG
- Onboard staff points of contacts
- Host periodic meetings
- Strengthen tech support

Accessibility



9. Improve user experience of attending meetings

- Information and materials
- Virtual meetings
- Venues
- Visual cues and signage
- Public comment
- Closed sessions
- Microphones
- Interpretation

10. Increase public awareness and understanding of Boards and Commissions

- Social media and online resources
- In-person engagement
- Mixers and events
- Marketing language
- FAQ page

Transparency

11. Clarify purpose and structure of Boards and Commissions

- Powers and responsibilities
- Connection with LFUCG
- Sunset process*
- Self-evaluation*
- Pausing boards

12. Improve public records document retention and transparency

- Clearer guidelines
- Formalize storage
- Documentation policy
- Guidance for webpage development

13. Increase understanding of who is on boards

- Applicant demographics
- Reporting on membership

14. Facilitate knowledge sharing between boards

- Combined trainings
- Member cohorts
- Peer learning groups

Next Steps



Access Lexington

Point of Contact: Kristy Stambaugh,
kstambau@lexingtonky.gov

Chair: Emily Elliot

The Access Lexington Commission works to promote the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities within the Lexington-Fayette Urban County community, and to advise the Mayor and the Urban County Council on issues that impact persons with disabilities. The Commission is well integrated with different LFUCG Divisions and other public institutions, with seven "ex officio" seats reserved for representatives from divisions including Social Services, Public Safety, Building Inspection, and Environmental Quality and Public Works.

Functionality

- Strong public presence with accessible meeting schedules and Zoom links.
- Clear understanding of goals of the Commission and strategies to achieve them.
- Meetings have a clear structure and helpful tie ins to different parts of LFUCG.

Accessibility

- Virtual meetings enhance accessibility for many attendees.
- Closed captioning is typically available, but sometimes hindered by technical issues.
- Agenda not made available for observers of the meeting.

Representation

- Virtual meetings helpful for individuals who would have trouble attending in person meetings.
- All 19 seats are designated: 7 ex officio from LFUCG, 12 community members.
- 2 seats reserved for at-large community representatives.

Transparency

- Website up to date, includes meeting schedule, meeting materials, contact information, current projects, and accessibility resources.
- Virtual meetings are recorded.
- Google drive includes meetings records back to 2016.

From the Board:

include any specific goals or recommendations from Board

Boards and Commissions
Snapshots

Boards and Commissions

Report abuse Sign up

Airtable

Boards and Commissions

Members Member Survey Meeting Rubrics Implementation Staff Survey Imported table

Views Group View 35 hidden fields Filter Grouped by 1 field Sort

Find a view

Grid view Survey Findings Attending Meet... Group View

	Name	Staff POC	Website	Legislation	Bylaws
16	Water Quality Fees Appeals Board	onky.gov	Frank Mabson	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://codelibrary.amleg...
CATEGORY Fund Based Boards Count 12					
17	Agricultural Extension District Board	du	Ryan Farley	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	
18	City Employees Pension Fund Board	onky.gov	Samantha Coleman	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://codelibrary.amleg...
19	Corridors Commission	tonky...	Hilary Angelucci	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://codelibrary.amleg...
20	Downtown Development Authority	ky.gov	Kevin Atkins	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://codelibrary.amleg...
21	Downtown Lexington Management District	firm.com	James Frazier	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://drive.google.com/f...
22	Economic Development Investment Board	ky.gov	Kevin Atkins	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://drive.google.com/f...
23	Ethics Commission	ice@le...	Council Clerk's Office	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://codelibrary.amleg...
24	Industrial Authority Board	ky.gov	Craig Bencz	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://codelibrary.amleg...
25	Opioid Abatement Commission	ky.gov	Carmen Combs	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://drive.google.com/f...
26	Police and Fire Pension Fund Board	ky.gov	Susan Combs	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://codelibrary.amleg...
27	Public Arts Commission	cy.gov	Heather Lyons	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://codelibrary.amleg...
28	Sister Cities Program Commission	gov	Kay Sargent	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://codelibrary.amleg...
CATEGORY External Boards Count 20					
29	Affordable Housing Governing Board	tonky.gov	Rick McQuady	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://codelibrary.amleg...
30	Airport Board	airport...	Eric Frankl	https://www.lexingtonky.g...	https://codelibrary.amleg...

70 contacts

Boards and Commissions
Dashboard

CivicLex

40

Thank You!

Strengthening Lexington's Boards and Commissions

*An evaluation of representation, function,
accessibility, and transparency*

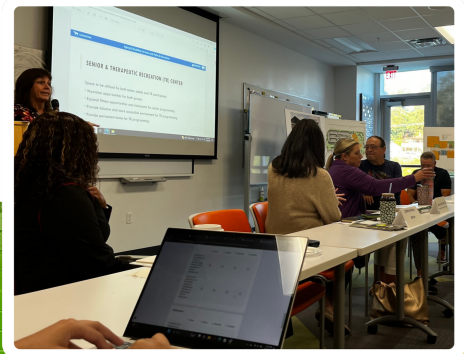


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I. Background and Acknowledgements

In 2024, CivicLex and CivStart entered into a partnership with the Lexington–Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG) to explore how Lexington’s Boards and Commissions function and how they could be improved. The goal of the project was to understand who serves on these boards, how accessible they are to the public, and what changes might make them more effective, inclusive, and impactful. This report covers what we learned through that process.

What is CivicLex?

CivicLex is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization working to strengthen Lexington, Kentucky’s civic health by growing civic knowledge and capacity, strengthening social cohesion, and building more responsive civic institutions. CivicLex is funded by a combination of grants, individual donations, and consulting work. We were contracted by the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG) through a competitive RFP process to spend nine months researching and writing the contents of this report. The primary staff involved in this project were Kit Anderson, Deputy Director; Lilly Bramley, Project Specialist; and Richard Young, Executive Director. For more information, visit our [website](#).

What is CivStart?

CivStart is a nonprofit innovation hub with a mission to spark innovation with local government leaders and nurture the growth of emerging govtech startups in an inclusive ecosystem. Civstart was contracted by CivicLex to aid in the research and writing of this report, primarily on sections related to peer city and technology research. The primary staff person involved in this project was Nick Lyell, Co-Founder & Chief Impact Officer. For more information, visit their [website](#).

Acknowledgements

This report would not be possible without the work and input of countless elected officials, LFUCG staff, and Lexington residents. We would particularly like to thank:

- LaShawn Barber, Tori Cruz–Falk, Alicia Larmour, Councilmember Shayla Lynch, and Vice Mayor Dan Wu for helping steward this process.
- Administrative Specialist Senior Melissa McCartt–Smyth and CIO Liz Rodgers for lending their extensive expertise on the function and process Lexington’s Boards and Commissions.
- Gregory Butler, Anna Gregory, and Eric Neely for coordinating engagement with Lextran, the Crafted Social Winter Market, and Bryan Station High School.
- The hundreds of Boards and Commissions members and staff who welcomed us to their meetings, answered our questions, and work every day to make Lexington a better place.

II. Introduction & Summary

In communities all across the United States, municipal Boards and Commissions serve as a critical, if overlooked, connection point between the public and their local government. These civic bodies composed of everyday residents and city staff influence and guide policy decisions, oversee taxpayer resources, and provide input on everything from land use to social services.

The Lexington–Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG) currently has 67 active Boards and Commissions, each with a distinct purpose. Here are a few examples:

- **The Planning Commission** directly shapes Lexington’s future by governing how our city grows. They review zoning changes, land–use proposals, and much more.
- **The Access Lexington Commission** advocates for people with disabilities in Lexington, raises awareness about disability issues and resources, and advises LFUCG to make services, programs, and places more accessible.
- **The Dunbar Neighborhood Center Board** helps manage and support the programs, activities, and funding of Lexington’s Dunbar Center.
- **The Civil Service Commission** oversees LFUCG’s hiring processes and holds hearings for disciplinary disputes between LFUCG and its employees.

Despite their importance, few Lexington residents know these boards exist, let alone how to join, engage with, or influence their work. This gap in public awareness limits participation and affects how well these boards represent and serve the community.

At CivicLex, we believe that a community’s ability to solve its own challenges is shaped by how well people understand and interact with their local government. We call this **civic health**. We see civic health as consisting of three parts: civic knowledge, social cohesion, and institutional responsiveness. Boards and Commissions sit at the intersection of all three. Effective Boards and Commissions help residents understand and engage with civic issues, encourage connection and deliberation across difference, and impact whether government listens to and reflects the needs of its residents. Boards and Commissions are not just an avenue for resident participation, they’re a reflection of whether local government is truly accessible and representative.

What we found

Through a combination of data analysis, direct observation, and public engagement, our research revealed both strengths and challenges within Lexington’s Boards and Commissions system. We attended dozens of board meetings, surveyed current members and city staff, and spoke with residents in public spaces from bus stops to high school basketball games about their awareness and perception of Lexington’s Boards and Commissions.

Categorizing Boards and Commissions

Lexington's 67 Boards and Commissions are diverse in function, structure, and governance. To better analyze trends across them, we started our process by grouping them into five categories:

- **External Boards:** These boards operate outside of LFUCG, but have city-appointed members (e.g., the Airport Board or Lexington Public Library Board).
- **Quasi-Judicial Boards:** These boards make legally binding or regulatory decisions (e.g., the Planning Commission or Board of Adjustment).
- **Advisory Boards:** These boards provide recommendations on specific policy areas (e.g., the Tree Board or Social Services Advisory Board).
- **Place-Based Boards:** These boards represent specific locations in Lexington (e.g., the Parking Authority Board or Charles Young Neighborhood Center Board).
- **Fund Based Boards:** These boards oversee and allocate financial resources for specific purposes (e.g., the Agricultural Extension District Board or Economic Development Investment Board).

Grouping the boards into these categories allowed us to identify patterns, strengths, and challenges.

Who serves on Boards and Commissions?

One of the clearest findings from our research was that based on the data we have, Lexington's Boards and Commissions aren't fully reflective of all of Lexington. Some characteristics, such as gender representation and sexual orientation, are fairly representative, and some, like ethnicity, are close. But there are also some stark representational issues on Lexington's Boards and Commissions. Here's what we found:

- **There are significant disparities in geographic representation.** Near-downtown council districts (Districts 1, 3, and 5) are overrepresented, while Lexington's more suburban districts (specifically Districts 4, 7, and 8) are significantly underrepresented. All other districts are also underrepresented, but to a lesser extent.
- **People under 40 are underrepresented on LFUCG Boards and Commissions.** This is most stark for people under the age of 30. The median age of a board member is 51, significantly older than Lexington's citywide median of 37.
- **93% of board members are homeowners,** despite nearly half of Lexington's population renting their homes.

These imbalances are by no means intentional, but they do reflect a variety of important observations about Boards and Commissions, especially how they recruit their members. Many board seats are filled through personal networks, with new members being invited by existing ones or by city officials.

How do residents feel about engaging with Boards and Commissions?

For residents who want to engage with local government, Board and Commission meetings can be difficult to navigate. Here are some barriers we observed:

- **Lack of public awareness:** Very few residents know when, where, or if board meetings happen. Nearly a quarter of Lexington's boards don't have meeting schedules readily available online.
- **Meeting times:** Many boards meet during daytime work hours, making it difficult for residents who work during the day to attend.
- **Gaps in technology & transparency:** There is little technological consistency from board to board, including digital access, agenda and meeting distribution, web presence, and more.

Despite these challenges, our engagement also revealed a deep interest in getting involved. In our public conversations, residents expressed enthusiasm about the idea of serving on a board but often didn't know the opportunity existed.

Dimensions of Analysis

To develop actionable recommendations, we examined Lexington's Boards and Commissions through seven dimensions:

1. **Strengths and Challenges:** What's working well, and where do boards struggle?
2. **Processes:** How are boards structured, and how do they function?
3. **Resources:** What funding, staffing, and materials do boards have access to?
4. **Legislative Impact:** How do boards influence local policy decisions and interact with government?
5. **Recruitment:** How do people join, and what barriers exist?
6. **Accessibility:** How open and engaging are boards to the public?
7. **Training:** What support do board members receive, and how involved are they in decision-making?

Recommendations

From our findings, we developed a set of 14 recommendations spanning four objectives: representation, functionality, accessibility, and transparency.

Within each of these objectives, the recommendations include specific strategies that may or may not apply to individual boards. We offer both “priority” and “opportunity” strategies. “Priority” strategies are high priority and address critical gaps, bringing Boards and Commissions up to a functional baseline, while “opportunity” strategies are lower priority additional opportunities to increase these four characteristics beyond the baseline.

Below is a table of the recommendations included in this report.

Representation		
Recommendation #1: Reduce logistical barriers to joining Boards and Commissions		
1.1	Evaluate current meeting locations	Priority
1.2	Evaluate current meeting times	Priority
1.3	Explore providing stipends for a limited number of Boards and Commissions members	Opportunity
1.4	Explore providing childcare specific events/meetings	Opportunity
Recommendation #2: Make joining a board or commission less intimidating		
2.1	Reduce perceived politicization of board membership	Priority
2.2	Increase public education resources	Opportunity
2.3	Buddy/mentor system	Opportunity
Recommendation #3: Evaluate the use of seat designations		
3.1	Evaluate the necessity of seat designations	Priority
Recommendation #4: Daylight the appointment process		
4.1	Audit the current board and commission application	Priority
4.2	Increase communication about Boards and Commissions vacancies	Priority
4.3	Investigate term limits by board category or on a board-by-board basis	Opportunity
Recommendation #5: Invest in training new members		
5.1	Explore a minimum orientation and onboarding	Priority
5.2	Increase digital literacy support	Opportunity
Functionality		
Recommendation #6: Create and maintain a comprehensive Boards and Commissions calendar		
6.1	Ensure that all Board and Commission meetings are published on the LFUCG calendar	Priority
6.2	Distribute calendar authority	Priority
6.3	Encourage full feature usage of the LFUCG calendar	Priority
Recommendation #7: Increase the effectiveness of Boards and Commissions meetings		
7.1	Standardize agenda distribution & release	Priority

7.2	Evaluate current Board and Commission meeting frequency	Priority
7.3	Structure meetings for member participation	Opportunity
7.4	Offer facilitation training for board chairs	Opportunity
7.5	Increase connection between Boards and Commissions and Urban County Council	Opportunity
Recommendation #8: Strengthen staff capacity to support Boards and Commissions		
8.1	Clarify relationships between boards and LFUCG divisions and staff	Priority
8.2	Provide LFUCG staff points of contact with staff-specific onboarding materials	Priority
8.3	Ensure staff points of contact have backend authority	Priority
8.4	Host periodic meetings for staff points of contact	Opportunity
8.5	Strengthen tech support for board chairs and staff points of contact	Opportunity
Accessibility		
Recommendation #9: Improve user experience of attending meetings to enhance public engagement		
9.1	Provide clear information and guidance materials in meetings	Priority
9.2	Ensure virtual meetings links are posted promptly	Priority
9.3	Evaluate access at board meeting venues	Priority
9.4	Provide visual cues and signage at meetings	Priority
9.5	Clarifying public comment in meetings	Priority
9.6	Consider having closed sessions at the end of meetings	Opportunity
9.7	Provide and encourage the use of microphones in meetings when necessary	Opportunity
9.8	Provide multilingual software and interpretation	Opportunity
Recommendation #10: Increase public awareness and understanding of Boards and Commissions		
10.1	Increase social media and online resources about Boards and Commissions.	Priority
10.2	Invest in in-person engagement	Opportunity
10.3	Host mixers and events about Boards & Commissions	Opportunity
10.4	Adjust marketing language and communications	Opportunity
10.5	Supplement the FAQ Page	Opportunity
Transparency		
Recommendation #11: Clarify structure and purpose of Boards and Commissions		
11.1	Clarify board powers and responsibilities	Priority
11.2	Define board connections with LFUCG	Priority
11.3	Create sunset and consolidation process for ineffective boards	Opportunity
11.4	Encourage boards to adopt a self-evaluation process	Opportunity
11.5	Provide an option to pause board operations	Opportunity

Recommendation #12: Improve public records document retention and transparency		
12.1	Set clearer guidelines for document retention	Priority
12.2	Formalize document storage and collaboration tools	Priority
12.3	Develop a policy that determines what LFUCG Board and Commission meetings are recorded	Priority
12.4	Provide guidance for board webpage development	Opportunity
12.5	Create attendance recording standards	Opportunity
Recommendation #13: Increase understanding of who is on boards		
13.1	Encourage better gathering of applicant demographics	Priority
13.2	Provide reporting on Board membership	Opportunity
Recommendation #14: Facilitate knowledge sharing between boards		
14.1	Host combined trainings for new board members	Opportunity
14.2	Investigate new board member cohorts	Opportunity
14.3	Create peer learning groups	Opportunity

Next Steps

The findings in this report offer an opportunity for Lexington to reimagine how Boards and Commissions operate—not just as formal government entities, but as accessible spaces where residents from all backgrounds can shape the policies that impact them. The following sections detail our research methodology, survey results, insights from peer cities, and more detailed recommendations.

II. Project Activities and Methodology

To gain a comprehensive understanding of LFUCG's Boards and Commissions and hear from a broad range of residents and stakeholders about how they can be improved, CivicLex and CivStart used a variety of research methods.

These included:

- **Board Mapping:** Our team organized boards by focus area and identified staff points of contact and chairs, charting meeting times, structures, and more.
- **Peer City Research:** We investigated practices in peer cities, conducting interviews with public agencies in Raleigh, North Carolina; Boulder, Colorado; and Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Salt Lake City, Utah, with additional information from written reports from Dallas, Texas and Sacramento, CA.
- **Member Survey:** We gathered insights from board members on their recommendations for improvement through a comprehensive survey process.
- **Meeting Attendance:** We attended 41 LFUCG Board and Commission meetings from September to November to document their activities and gather qualitative data.
- **Staff Survey:** We surveyed 64 staff points of contact from each board to understand their perspectives and any impact boards may have on their work.
- **Public Engagement:** We conducted a series of pop-up public engagement events in locations throughout Lexington to understand the general public's knowledge and perception of Lexington's Boards and Commissions.
- **Student Focus Groups:** We worked with local high school students to attend and evaluate board meetings to help us understand the user experience of attending Board and Commission meetings.
- **Technology Research:** We explored current uses of technology and what technology solutions could be used to enhance public access and participation with Boards and Commissions.

The following section of this report provides details on the purpose and results of these activities.

Research Activities

Activity 1: Mapping the Boards

An early goal of our research was to gain an overall understanding of the number, status, composition, and function of all LFUCG Boards and Commissions. Using a platform called Airtable, we built a database for each board to track the name, staff point of contact, membership, bylaws, legislation, chairs, meeting frequency, and meeting location of each Board or Commission.

Through this process, we found significant variation between Boards and Commissions, and it was difficult to get a full understanding of how LFUCG's Boards and Commissions were originally created and how they are currently organized. Some Boards and Commissions are part of the LFUCG Urban-County Charter, some are constitutionally required, and some have been built in response to specific events or policies. To help us better navigate the ad hoc nature of these entities, we developed a typology for the Boards and Commissions. This typology allowed us to find shared opportunities and challenges, and made it easier to understand the full depth and breadth of how these entities make or advise public policy.

Name	Staff POC	Website	Legislation	Bylaws
Water Quality Fees Appeals Board	Frank Mabson	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Fund Based Boards Count: 12				
Agricultural Extension District Board	Ryan Farley	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
City Employees Pension Fund Board	Samantha Coleman	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Corridors Commission	Hilary Angelucci	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Downtown Development Authority	Kevin Atkins	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Downtown Lexington Management District	James Frazier	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Economic Development Investment Board	Kevin Atkins	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Ethics Commission	Council Clerk's Office	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Industrial Authority Board	Craig Bence	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Opoid Abatement Commission	Carmen Combs	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Police and Fire Pension Fund Board	Susan Combs	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Public Arts Commission	Heather Lyons	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Sister Cities Program Commission	Kay Sargent	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
External Boards Count: 20				
Affordable Housing Governing Board	Rick McQuay	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov
Airport Board	Eric Frankl	https://www.leicounty.gov	https://codebook.az.gov	https://www.leicounty.gov

Airtable Base Mapping LFUCG Boards and Commissions

Boards and Commissions Typologies:

- **External Boards:** Boards outside of LFUCG, affiliated with external organizations.
- **Quasi-Judicial Boards:** Boards with specific legal or regulatory roles.
- **Advisory Boards:** Boards providing expertise and guidance on various topics.
- **Fund Based Boards:** Boards responsible for financial oversight or given budgets.
- **Place-Based Boards:** Boards with a geographic or location-based focus, like community centers or neighborhoods.

One of the primary resources for information for this database was LFUCG's website, which helped provide information on staff points of contact and some information on each Board and Commission. However, at the time of the mapping (Fall 2024), many individual board pages were missing key information. A handful of board pages did not include links to their

establishing legislation, and twenty-six individual board pages did not include information or links to the bylaws of the boards. We were unable to find any online information about the meeting schedule of sixteen boards.

Since this process, the LFUCG website has been overhauled and many pages have been updated, but the content on individual board pages still varies considerably. Over the course of this project, three boards have been removed from the LFUCG website: The Downtown Development Authority, Police and Fire Pension Fund Board, and the Animal Care & Control Advisory Committee.

Activity 2: Peer Cities Research

Lexington is not alone in having municipal Boards and Commissions — almost all communities in the United States have similar civic bodies. As part of our research, we reached out to public officials in several peer communities to understand how their Boards and Commissions function, the technology solutions they use to ensure their efficient and effective operations, and how these differ from the strategies used in Lexington.

The communities included in the benchmarking review were Grand Rapids, Michigan; Boulder, Colorado; Raleigh, North Carolina; Salt Lake City, Utah; Sacramento, California; and Dallas, Texas. We identified these peer cities by their size and demographic composition, their recent status as site visit locations by Commerce Lexington's leadership trip, and other shared characteristics.

In our conversations with public officials, our team requested and reviewed information from these communities related to:

- **Structure of Boards and Commissions:** How many boards do other cities maintain, what are their membership requirements, how are they legislated, and who do they report to?
- **Representation of membership:** How do peer cities measure representation of board members, and what policies or programs do they have to expand recruitment of new members?
- **Application process and onboarding:** How do potential members apply to join boards, what training opportunities are available, and who manages onboarding new members?
- **Transparency, governance, and engagement practices:** Are Boards and Commissions accessible to the public? How is participation encouraged, and what resources and documentation are available to the public?
- **Meeting management:** Who runs Board and Commission meetings? Are there any meeting standards followed by all boards?

- **Data and reporting to elected officials:** What accountability mechanisms are there for boards? Do elected officials receive regular report outs, if so, on what basis?
- **Technologies and tools:** How do peer cities use technology and other tools to facilitate the above goals? What tools work well for them?
- **Other challenges and opportunities:** What are peer cities overall feelings about Boards and Commissions? What is and isn't working for them?

Activity 3: Technology Research

Technology plays a critical role in how Boards and Commissions function, how they are managed, and how they engage with the public. To better understand how LFUCG Boards and Commissions were currently using technology in their work, CivStart conducted interviews with staff members of LFUCG, board members, and those involved in IT and website management for the government.

CivStart conducted one or more interviews with the following LFUCG staff and stakeholders to understand processes, challenges, and opportunities around technology and boards and commissions:

- **Liz Rodgers**, Chief Information Officer (CIO), Lexington–Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG)
- **Melissa McCartt–Smyth**, Administrative Specialist Senior, Lexington–Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG)
- **Nick Brock**, Digital Content Administrator, Lexington–Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG)
- **Traci Wade**, Manager – Planning Services, Lexington–Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG)
- **Graham Pohl**, Former Board Member, Planning Commission
- **Carmen Combs Marks**, Opioid Abatement Commission, Lexington–Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG)
- **Michael Popatov**, Chair, Tree Board
- **Nick Such**, Former Website Maintenance Lead, Lexington–Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG)

Activity 4: Attendance of Board and Commission Meetings

Through the civic information and reporting arm of CivicLex's work, our staff have attended hundreds of public meetings of LFUCG Boards and Commissions. Through that experience, we know that there can often be a difference between reading about a meeting and attending a

meeting. As part of this process, we decided it was essential to attend Board and Commission meetings with an eye towards their functionality.

To accomplish this goal, CivicLex selected 41 meetings to attend during the months of September – November, 2024. For these meetings, we tried to guide ourselves through the same user experience that a member of the public would experience.

We reviewed the LFUCG website for each meeting to find locations, dates, and times. Out of the 41 meetings we selected, 6 meetings were cancelled without notice, and 3 meetings times or locations changed without updating the website. Some of the Boards and Commissions that we selected to attend did not have meeting schedules posted, so we were required to individually reach out to staff points of contact to find if there was a scheduled meeting during the window of our research.

During this phase, we discovered that several Boards and Commissions were either in the process of being dissolved or were dormant. We also learned that many boards either canceled meetings regularly or met on a quarterly or annual schedule, which limited the number of meetings we could attend within our three-month research period.

For the 32 meetings we were able to attend during this research period, we used a standardized procedure for documenting our experience and observations. Before each meeting, we introduced ourselves to the board members and gave a brief overview of our research. We took detailed notes on the overall experience and meeting agenda. We collected agendas to review beforehand and used a rubric to score each meeting based on our understanding of their accessibility, engagement, functionality, and effectiveness.



Dunbar Neighborhood Center Board Meeting



Parking Authority Board Meeting Entrance

Data Collection Activities

Activity 5: Board and Commission Member Survey

Perhaps the largest differentiating factor between Boards and Commissions and every other part of the local policymaking process is their member composition. Most boards consist of a combination of city staff and volunteer residents with some type of applicable expertise or experience. Boards often rely on these volunteer residents to provide critical input and

feedback on important policy matters. As such, we knew that capturing their perspective was essential.

To gather and analyze member feedback, we created a survey that used a combination of multiple choice, open response, and scale rating questions to understand how boards function, their demographic information, and additional feedback.

Because many members are private citizens and volunteers, we did not attempt to directly contact individual members via their personal email addresses to ask them to take the survey. But, our team promoted the survey in a variety of ways to reach as many sitting Board and Commissions members as possible:

- Direct outreach to staff points of contacts
- Direct outreach to Board and Commission Chairs
- Requesting Board Chairs to send the survey to Board and Commission members
- Virtual and in-person attendance at Board and Commission meetings
- Providing a one sheet about the project with a QR code and link to the Member Survey at meetings

Outreach for the member survey lasted from September to December of 2024. Initially, outreach was directed to staff points of contact, requesting information about board meeting dates, times, and locations. Follow-ups were sent to boards that had not submitted any survey responses. We also worked with Councilmembers and staff to send personalized follow ups for boards with low response rates.

Members had the option to complete the survey anonymously or provide a name and contact information to receive updates about the project. **In total, we received responses from 249 Board Members across 59 Boards and Commissions.**


Activity 6: LFUCG and External Organization Staff Survey

There is likely no group of people that are more directly impacted by how LFUCG Boards and Commissions function than the staff in LFUCG and external organizations. As we started this process, we knew that it was important to tap into their perspectives. While we had a number of one-on-one conversations with LFUCG staff throughout this process, the most data-rich process for gathering input came through a survey we designed to gauge staff perceptions of the boards they work with, including their functionality, accessibility, structure, and impact.



Information sheet for Boards and Commissions Members and Staff

Through this survey process, we contacted a list of approximately 130 staff members, including points of contact for Boards and Commissions and other staff whose work is regularly impacted by Boards and Commissions. The survey was built to be anonymous, and did not ask for names or contact information from respondents. However, since respondents were asked to identify their organization and/or department, it is a feasible concern that some respondents would be able to be identified. To accommodate for this, the survey also included a link for a 100% anonymous feedback form, a single open response question with no identifying information required.

A screenshot of a survey form titled "LFUCG and External Organization Staff Boards and Commission Survey". The form is from CivicLex. It includes a welcome message explaining the survey is part of CivicLex's research project, designed for LFUCG staff or external organizations with an LFUCG appointed board. It states the survey is anonymous but requests identification of the department and specific board/commission. It also mentions a link for a 100% anonymous feedback form and contact information for Kit Anderson. At the bottom, there is a question: "Do you work for LFUCG or an External Organization with an LFUCG appointed board?" with two radio button options: "LFUCG" and "External Organization".

Excerpt from Boards and Commissions Staff Survey

The staff survey was open for two months (December 2024 and January 2025) and received a total of 64 responses after follow up from the CivicLex team and LFUCG Staff. Because the staff survey was launched after the member survey, several staff reported that they had already taken the member survey and communicated their feedback about Boards and Commissions.

In total, we received responses from 64 staff members in 25 different organizations, departments, and divisions, including the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO's) Office, Fayette County Clerk, Code Enforcement, Urban County Council, Social Services, Planning and Preservation, Youth Services, Environmental Services, Environmental Quality and Public Works, Fayette County Cooperative Extension, Finance, Fire Department, General Services, Housing Advocacy and Community Development, Historic Preservation, Human Resources, Information Technology, Lexington Police Department, Lexington Public Library, Lexington-Fayette County Health Department, Lextran, Lyric Theatre and Cultural Arts Center, Mayor's Office, Parks and Recreation, and the Arboretum.

Engagement Activities

Activity 7: Student Focus Group

Through our research process, we wanted to find a way to understand the experience and perspective of residents who may be attending a Board or Commission meeting for the first time. We also wanted to hear from people that don't typically participate in formal civic processes.



Student Focus Group Orientation

To accomplish these goals, we recruited and compensated high school students from across Lexington to attend Board and Commission meetings for the first time and report back on their experience. The initial goal was to have 12 students join Board and Commission meetings, with two representatives from each of the following public high schools: Bryan Station, Frederick Douglass, Henry Clay, Lafayette, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Tates Creek. Ultimately, nine of those students participated in the project.

The students went through an orientation session with CivicLex staff to learn more about the research and the role they would play. Afterward, they selected Board and Commission meetings that fit their schedules to attend. Each student was sent an invite to the meeting, and we encouraged students to do their own research on the board in advance. Each student attended a meeting and completed a survey to share their thoughts and impressions. They were then interviewed and recorded to gain a deeper understanding of their experience.

Overall, the students were enthusiastic about engaging with their local government and gaining a deeper understanding of LFUCGs Boards and Commissions. Their feedback and perspectives were invaluable in helping us make further recommendations.

Activity 8: Public Engagement

Through CivicLex’s general work, including our *Public Input* research, we knew coming in to this project that public awareness and understanding of Boards and Commissions was quite limited. As such, we determined that a large-scale public survey would not be an effective tool for gathering information about very detailed aspects of how Boards and Commissions. Instead, we decided the best outcome from public engagement would be through approachable one-on-one conversations that could reveal more subtlety and also provide for a fully-informed exchange.

We launched the public engagement phase of this project in December 2024 through a series of casual conversations that we themed and titled as “Fireside Chats”. Our first Fireside Chat was held at Greyline Station during a Winter Market. We created a welcoming environment by setting up armchairs, a paper fireplace, and offering free cookies and hot cocoa. Participants were invited to take a seat and complete a conversational survey that explored their general knowledge about local government, awareness of Boards and Commissions, and factors that would encourage participation in meetings or board membership. We engaged approximately 150 participants during the market.

In January 2025, we adapted the Fireside Chats for engagement at the Downtown Transit Center with a voting activity that asked participants about solutions that would make them



Fireside Chats at Greyline Station

more likely to volunteer to work with local government on a community issues. Options included paid stipends, engaging in impactful work, holding meetings during evenings or weekends, offering virtual meetings, and hosting meetings in your neighborhood. Participants were invited to use tokens to vote for the reason that would most motivate them to get involved.

We replicated the same engagement structure of conversational surveys and a voting activity at another engagement event at the New Circle Road Walmart transit stop, which is a hub for Lextran buses, Wheels Paratransit, and several shuttle services. We interacted with approximately 20 individuals during our time there, who shared that they would be interested in joining a board but were unaware of the opportunity to do so. Similar to the previous location, transportation emerged as a barrier, and participants emphasized their preference for virtual meetings. Between the voting activity and conversational survey, we engaged with approximately 40 participants at this site.



Pop Up Engagement at the Downtown Transit Center

Our final Fireside Chat took place at Bryan Station High School during their Basketball Week Double Header with Frederick Douglass High School, where we altered the format to appeal to a younger audience and match the event itself. We engaged approximately 50 students and parents, asking them to vote by placing basketball stickers for what would inspire them to volunteer for Boards and Commissions. After voting, participants could try their luck by shooting a miniature basketball for a chance to win different types of candy.



Student Engagement at Bryan Station High School



Pop Up Engagement at the New Circle Road Walmart

III. Findings

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of Lexington's Boards and Commissions, examining their structure, function, and member experiences. The analysis is divided into an overview of our Board and Commission categories, an analysis of the demographics of current members, and summaries of our findings from the Member Survey and Staff Survey. Next, we share findings from conducting our peer city assessment and technology research. Finally, we share takeaways from the engagement activities of this project, including the student focus group and in-person public engagement.

Board and Commission Categories

To better understand the diverse roles, structures, and functions of Lexington's 67 Boards and Commissions, we grouped them into a typology that consisted of five distinct categories of work. We created this typology based on the unique roles that each board serves in the community and from the input we heard from peer cities who categorize their boards. This typology allowed us to draw out common analyses across boards while still accounting for the wide variation amongst them. This categorization also helped add significance to our member survey data, as we performed our statistical analysis across the categories instead of individual boards. These categories are:

- 1. External Boards** – Boards or Commissions that primarily work with distinct organizations that are not directly a part of LFUCG, like the Airport Board, the Arboretum Advisory Board, or the Carnegie Literacy Center Boards of Directors. There are various reasons for why external organizations have LFUCG-appointed boards, often related to historic funding sources. External Boards have the highest independence of all Boards and Commissions, and often the staff point of contact for these boards is not an LFUCG employee.
- 2. Quasi-Judicial Boards** – Boards or Commissions that sit to interpret some aspect of LFUCG law, like the Planning Commission, the Board of Adjustment, or the Civil Service Commission. Board meetings are typically structured as a hearing or approval process, where board members are presented with a specific case, hear deliberation of both sides, and vote to make a decision about its outcome. Quasi-Judicial boards have specifically designated powers, and as a result, tend to have a clearer vision of their purpose and function.
- 3. Advisory Boards** – Boards or Commissions that mainly serve in an advisory role to LFUCG around a specific social or political issue, including the Commission on Veterans Affairs, the Social Services Advisory Board, and the Tree Board. These boards fulfill a range of roles, including advising LFUCG staff and officials, facilitating community engagement or

programming, contributing to policy development, and advocating for their goals to both LFUCG and the public.

4. **Place-Based Boards** – Boards or Commissions that oversee or advise a specific place, site, or district in Lexington, like the Charles Young Neighborhood Center Board, the Paris Pike Corridor Commission, and the Parking Authority Board. The purpose, function, and amount of power of these Boards varies, and is tied to the place they oversee.
5. **Fund Based Boards** – Boards or Commissions that make financial decisions about a specific tax or fund in LFUCG, including the City Employees Pension Fund Board, the Economic Development Investment Board, and the Agricultural Extension District Board. These boards make various funding decisions, including creating budgets, setting tax rates, choosing investments, and allocating money for specific projects.

Member Demographics

One of the main objectives of this project was to gain a clearer understanding the current composition of Lexington’s Boards and Commissions. Understanding this composition gives us one indicator of how well Boards and Commissions are positioned to represent the broader Lexington community.

Just as much as professional expertise, the demographic makeup of Lexington’s Boards and Commissions influences the decisions they make and the resulting policy outcomes that impact life in Lexington. We believe that more representative boards can increase public trust, strengthen accountability, and make decisions that better reflect the priorities and needs of the broader community.

To analyze Board and Commission demographics, we examined two sources of demographic information about members: data collected when members submit applications, and questions included in our Boards and Commissions Member Survey. The datasets partially overlap, but have different features, as can be seen on the following page.

In our analysis, we defaulted to demographic information from the LFUCG Member Applications for all characteristics that are included in the application demographics (age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, political party, and council district). We supplemented this information with survey data on education level and housing situation.

Demographics from LFUCG Member Applications:

- **772 respondents** to at least one demographic question.
- Collected across an extended period of time when members initially applied for Boards and Commissions.
- Includes: age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, political party, and council district.

Demographics from CivicLex Boards and Commissions Member Survey:

- **249 respondents** to at least one demographic question.
- Collected between September 4, 2024 and November 29, 2024.
- Includes: age range, gender, race/ethnicity, highest level of education, housing situation, and council district.

Demographic Overview

Lexington's Boards and Commissions presented a complex demographic picture. Overall, Boards and Commissions' gender representation mirrors the composition of Lexington. Some disparities exist, including Quasi-Judicial Boards, which skew more male, and Advisory and External Boards, which skew slightly more female. In terms of racial/ethnic composition, the boards tend to be more diverse than our community at large, reporting lower percentages of Caucasian/Non-Hispanic members, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian populations compared to Lexington and higher representation of African American members. Some board types (particularly Quasi-Judicial and Fund Based) reflect substantially higher Caucasian membership.

In terms of sexual orientation, the overwhelming majority (92%) of respondents identify as Straight/Heterosexual, with little variation across board categories once non-responses are excluded. While this number is quite high, it tracks as mostly representative with available national and local population statistics.

Two of the most significant disparities in Lexington's Boards and Commissions are the age of members and their housing status. The median board member age is 51, significantly older than Lexington's median of 37. Only a handful of boards report a median age under 45, while several reported having median ages roughly two standard deviations higher than Lexington's median. A striking 93% of board members report being homeowners, a contrast to the roughly 54% homeownership rate in Lexington.

There also significant disparities when it comes to geography. Council Districts 1, 3, 5, and 12 are all significantly overrepresented on Boards and Commissions, while Districts 4, 7, 8, and 11 fall far short of being proportionally represented.

Educational attainment is also notably high, with 90% of respondents holding a college degree and many Board and Commission members possessing advanced degrees.

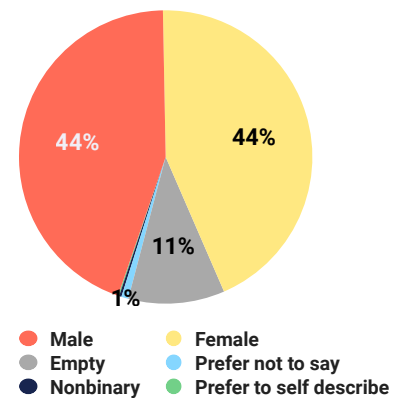
Gender

Across all 772 Boards and Commissions seats, gender representation largely matched Lexington's demographics, with 44% of members identifying as female, 44% identifying as male, and less than 1% identifying as nonbinary or preferring to self describe. 11% declined to answer the question. When empty responses are removed, members who reported a gender are 50% male and 49% female, which is very close to the demographics of Lexington's population at large, which identifies as 50.8% female.

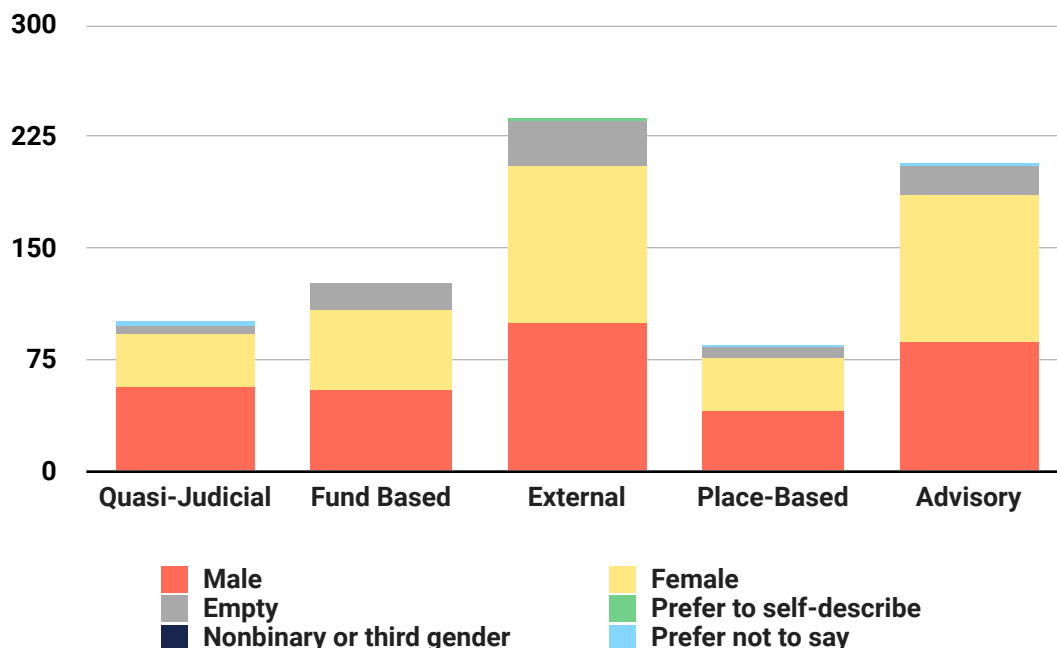
There are some gender-based disparities across board categories, most notably in Quasi-Judicial boards, which reported as 56% male. In contrast, both Advisory and External Boards reported as more female than male, but in neither did female rise above 50%.

In terms of individual boards, notably male boards (more than 75% male) include the Environmental Commission, the Infrastructure Hearing Board, and the Water Quality Fees Appeals Board. Notably female boards (more than 75% female) include the City Employees Pension Fund Board, the Civil Service Commission, the Housing Authority Board, and the Library Board of Trustees.

Gender, All Boards



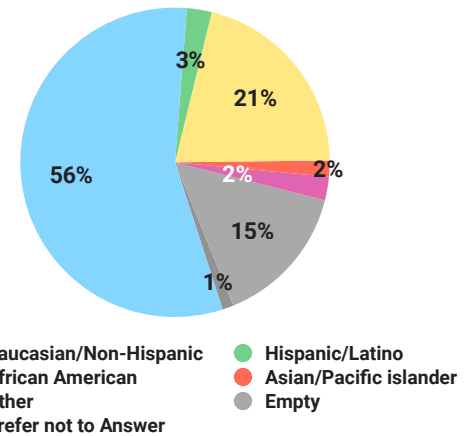
Gender by Board Category



Race/Ethnicity

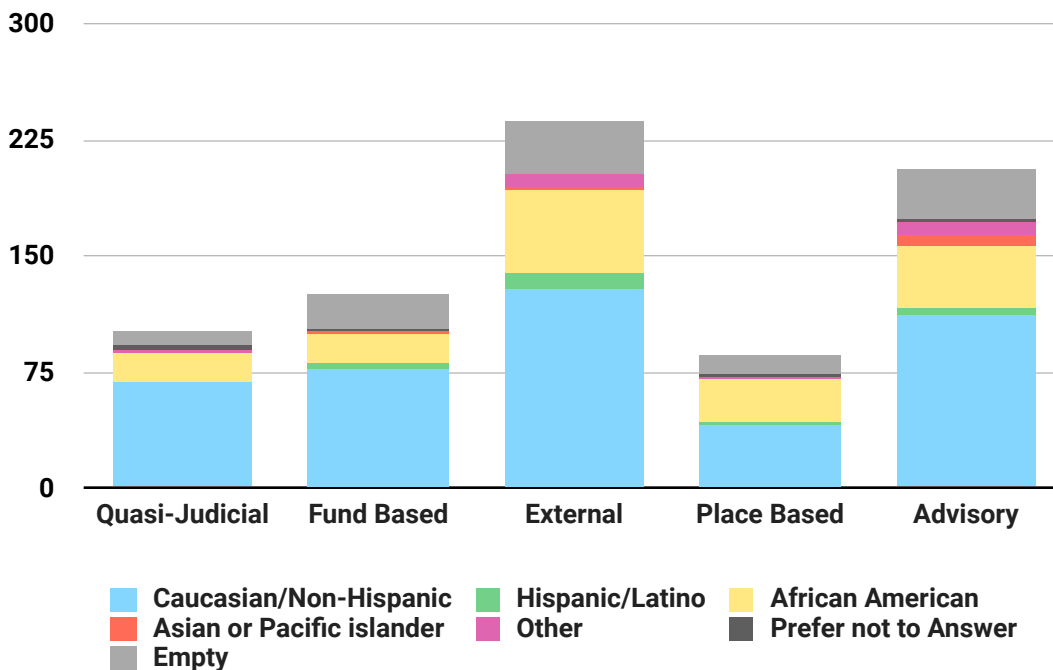
On average, reporting from Lexington's Boards and Commissions indicate that on the whole, they are more racially/ethnically diverse than Lexington, while there are still several ethnic groups that are underrepresented. Across all Boards and Commissions seats, 56% of members identify as Caucasian/Non-Hispanic, 21% identify as African American, 3% identify as Hispanic, 2% identify as Asian or Pacific Islander, and 2% identify as other. 17% of members declined to answer the question.

Race/Ethnicity, All Boards



According to the most recently available US Census data, Lexington Fayette County's population identifies as 68% Caucasian alone, 15% African American alone, 9% Hispanic or Latino, 4% Asian or Pacific Islander alone, .2% American Indian alone, and 8% two or more races.

Race/Ethnicity by Board/Commission Category



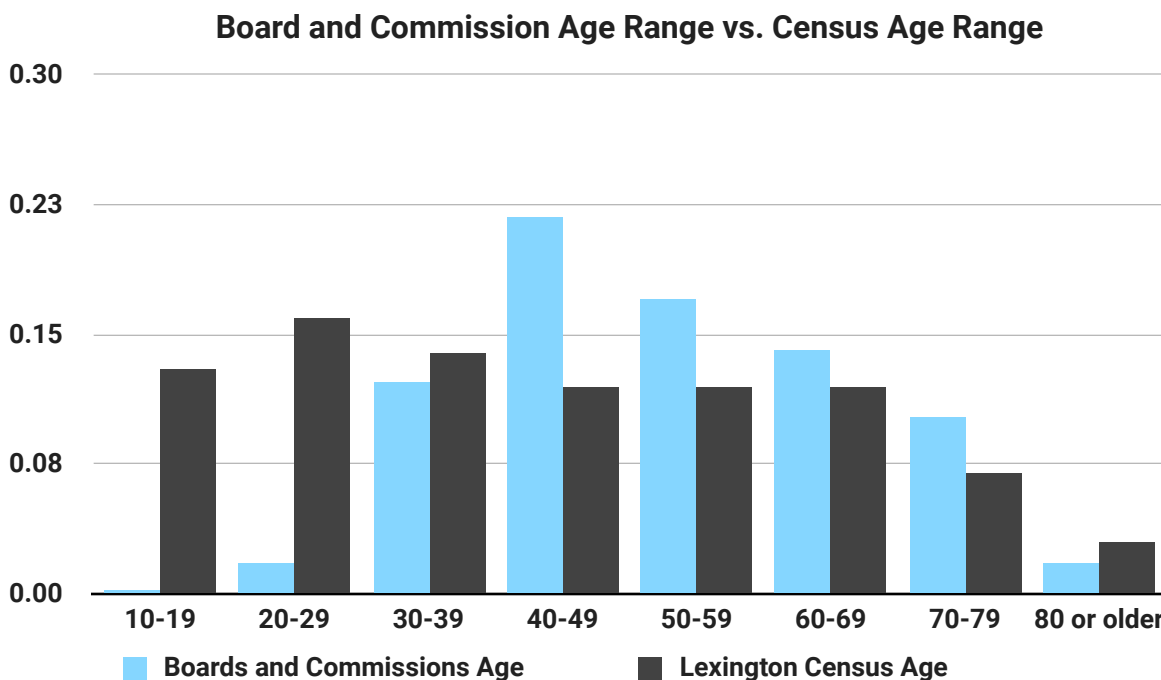
From this data, we see that Lexington's Boards and Commissions report being less Caucasian (12% difference), Hispanic/Latino (7% difference), Asian or Pacific Islander (2% difference), and American Indian (.2% difference) than Lexington's population. When non-responses are removed, Hispanic/Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, and American Indian all remain substantially underrepresented, while Caucasian rises to 67%, mirroring Lexington.

More clarity is provided on these disparities when looking at representation in the categories of Boards and Commissions. Quasi-Judicial and Fund Based Boards and Commissions report having the highest proportion of Caucasian members, with 68% and 61% of members identifying as Caucasian/Non-Hispanic, respectively, including non-response data. Advisory, External, and Place-Based Boards are all more diverse than Lexington, on average.

There are six individual Boards and Commissions that report having disproportionately (at least one standard deviation) higher percentages of Caucasian members than Lexington's population, with 93% or more Caucasian members: The Board of Architectural Review, Courthouse Area Design Review Board, Environmental Commission, Fire Pre-Disciplinary Review Board, Parking Authority Board, and the Raven Run Advisory Board.

Age

Members of Lexington's Boards and Commissions are substantially older than the population of Lexington. Across all Boards and Commissions members, the median reported age is 51 years old, while Lexington's median age is only 37, according to American Community Survey (ACS) data. Of all of the 772 reported Board and Commission members, only 16 reported as being under the age of 30.

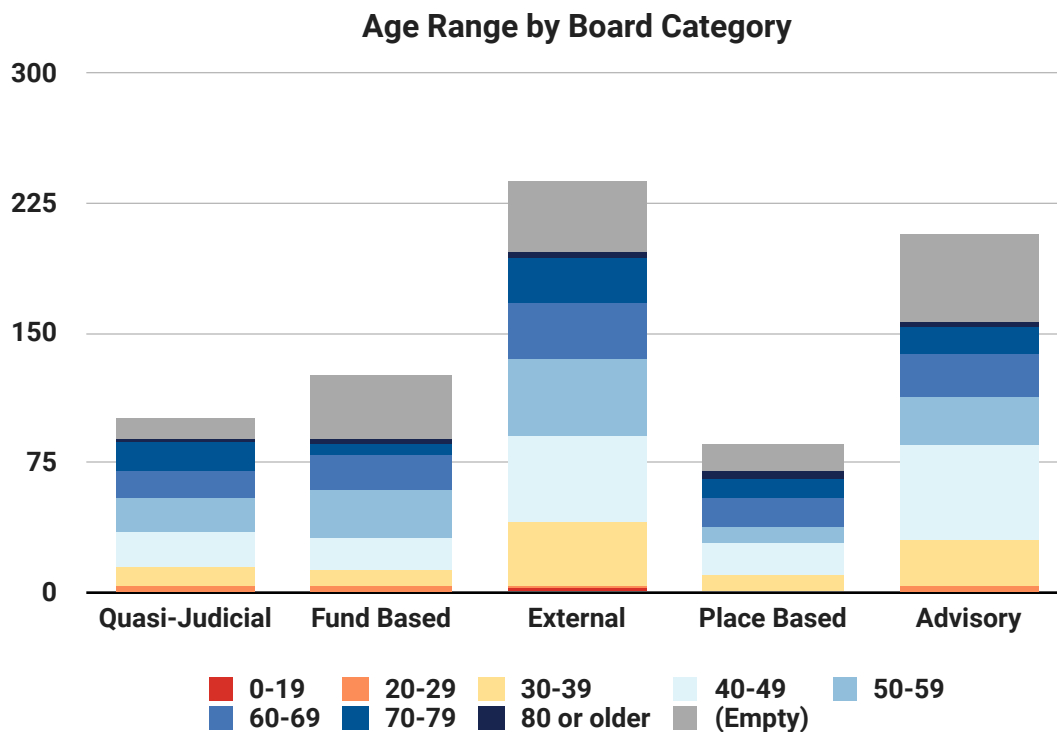


When distributed by category, there is slightly more nuance in the age disparities on Lexington's Boards and Commissions. By category, Place-Based Boards report the highest median age of 57 years old, followed by Quasi-Judicial boards at 54 years old and Fund Based

Boards at 53.5 years old. The median age of External Boards members is 51, and the lowest median age is Advisory Boards, at 48 years old.

In the chart below, the yellow segments represent Boards and Commissions members between the age of 30 and 39. Blue toned segments represent members older than 39, indicating members older than the median age of Lexington. The orange and red toned segments represent members younger than 30, indicating members younger than the medium age range of Lexington.

Individually, the “youngest” board is the Administrative Hearing Board, with a reported median age of 43, still higher than Lexington’s median age. Only four other boards reported having a median age under 45 years old: the Social Services Advisory Board, Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Coalition, Neighborhood Action Match Program Review Board, and the Lexington Children’s Museum.



The “oldest” board is the Board of Architectural Review, with a median age of 72. There are six boards with a median age over 65 years old: the Picnic with the Pops Commission, the Charles Young Neighborhood Center Board, the Planning Commission, the Housing Authority Board, the Parking Authority Board, and the Board of Architectural Review.

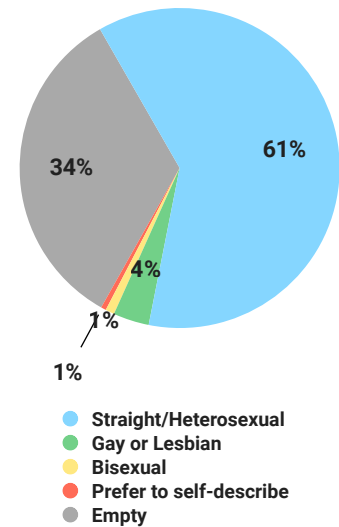
Sexual Orientation

The application for LFUCG Boards and Commissions also includes an optional question for applicants to describe their sexual orientation as Straight/Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, prefer not to say, or prefer to self-describe. Of the 772 member seats, 259 members, or 34%, selected “prefer not to say” or left the question blank.

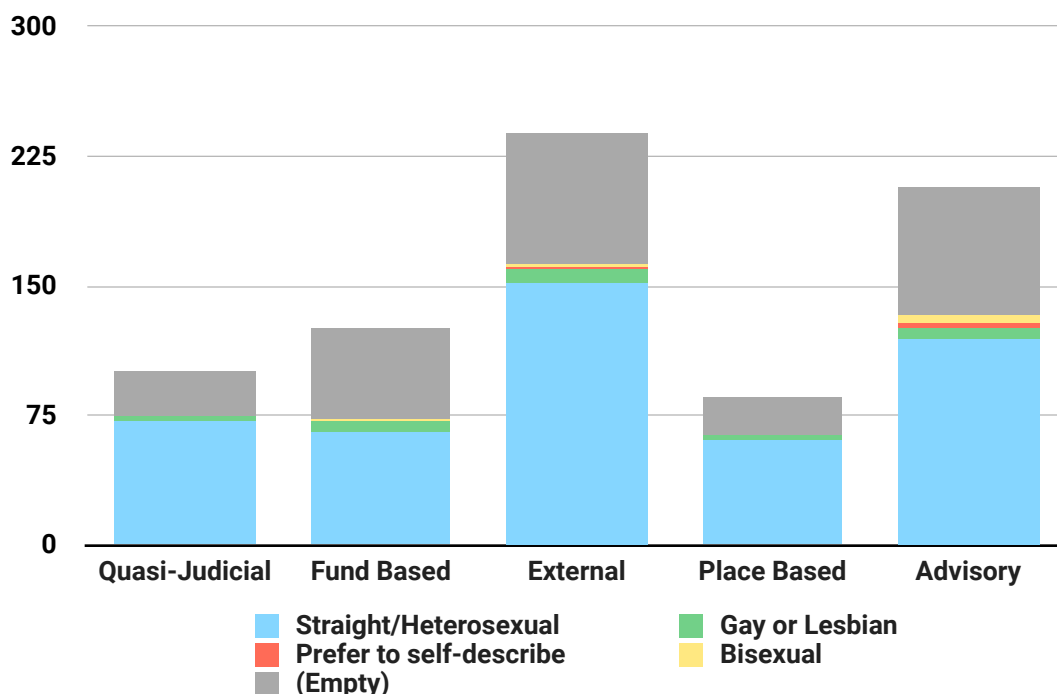
As shown in the chart to the right, 61% of members reported being Straight/Heterosexual. 4% reported being Gay or Lesbian, and 1% each reported as bisexual or prefer to self-describe. If the empty responses are removed, 92% of all Board and Commission members who selected a sexual orientation reported as Straight/Heterosexual.

There is limited data on the sexual orientation of Lexington’s population as a whole. The UCLA Williams Institute reports that, according to Gallup Daily Tracking Data, 3.4% of Kentucky residents responded yes to the question “Do you, personally, identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?” between 2015 and 2017. It is possible that this proportion would be higher for Lexington/Fayette County specifically, or with more recent data.

Sexual Orientation, All Boards



Sexual Orientation by Board Category

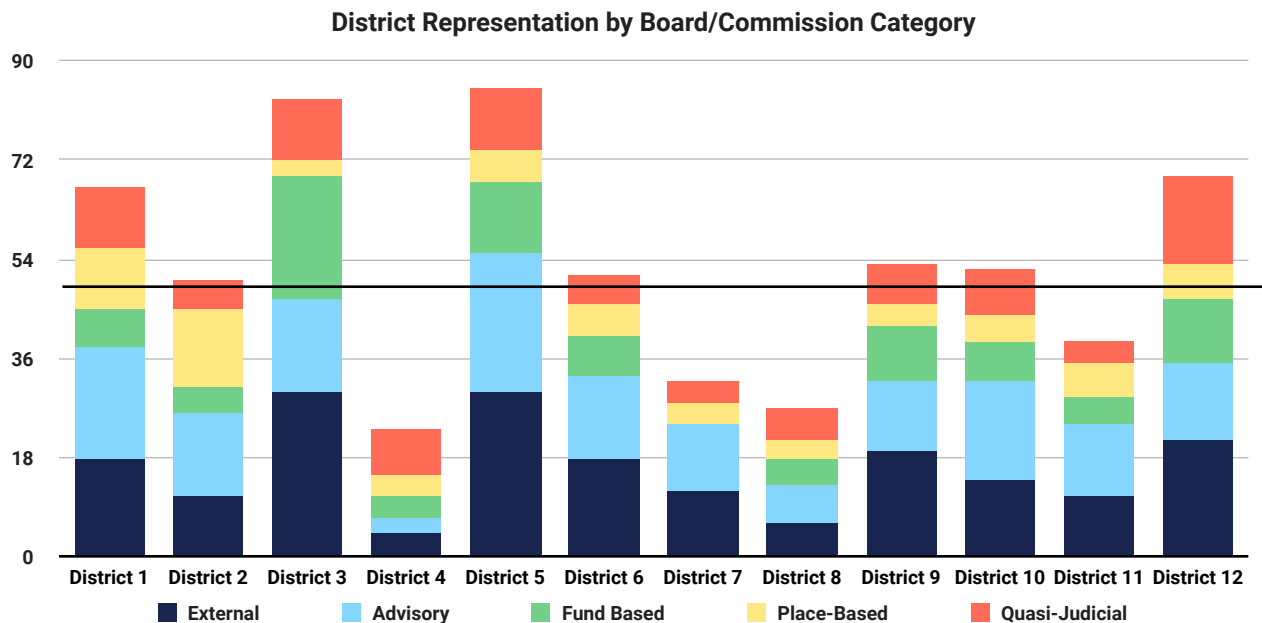


There is little variation of sexual orientation by board category, as shown in the chart below. When empty values are excluded, approximately 90% of advisory board and fund based board members identify as Straight/Heterosexual, followed by 94% of external board members, 95% of Quasi-Judicial Board members, and 97% of place-based Board members.

Council District

The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council is structured into 12 similarly populated council districts, with approximately 26,000 residents each. Lexington's Boards and Commissions have significant disparities in representation when it comes to Council Districts. Specifically, Districts 1, 3, 5, and 12 are overrepresented, while Districts 4, 7, 8, and 11 are underrepresented. In the chart below, the thicker horizontal black line represents the share of board members if districts were proportionally represented.

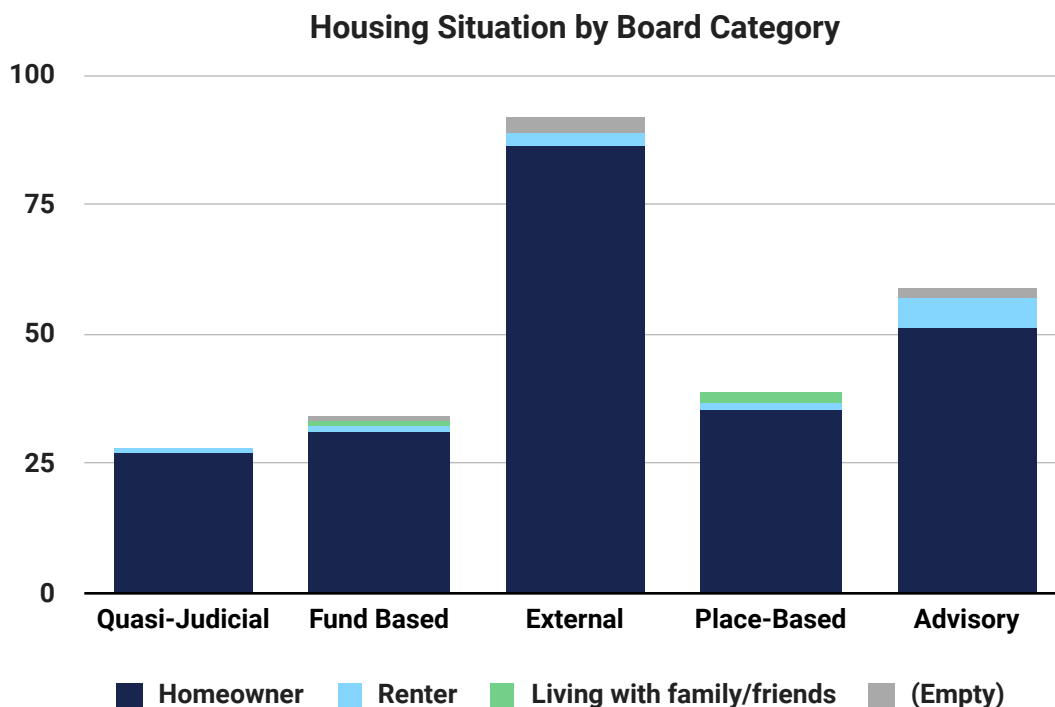
Some of this variation is likely due to Place-Based Boards and boards with specific geographic representation required. However, this is not the only variable, as districts with the highest representation (districts 1, 3, 5 and 12) have some of the lowest proportions of place-based board members. The biggest disparity by category for lower represented districts (districts 4 and 8) is Advisory Boards, followed by External Boards. For example, the two districts with the largest overall population of board members (districts 3 and 5) have very low proportions of place-based board members (the yellow segment on the chart below).



Housing Situation

The current LFUCG Boards and Commissions application does not include a question about the current housing situation of applicants. In the CivicLex member survey, 243 board members responded to the question “Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?” As shown in the chart on the next page, almost all (93%) Board and Commission members report being homeowners. According to 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) Data, 53.6% of housing units in Lexington are occupied by homeowners, while 46.4% of units are occupied by renters.

By category, Quasi-Judicial and External Boards have the highest proportion of respondents who are homeowners (96%), followed by 91% of fund based board respondents, 90% of Place-Based Boards, and 89% of Advisory Boards.



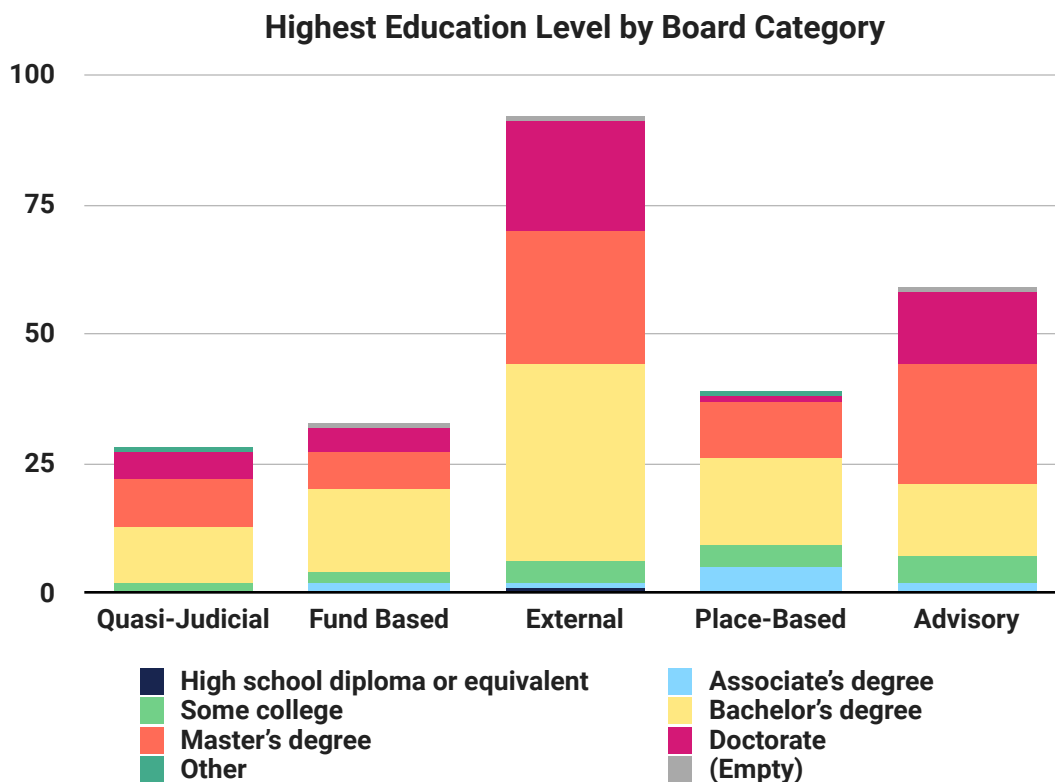
The member survey also asked respondents how many years they have lived in Lexington/ Fayette County, and found that over 70% of respondents have lived in Lexington for at least twenty years. Only twelve respondents (5%) reported that they have lived in Lexington for less than five years.

Education

The CivicLex member survey included a question about the highest education level of current Board and Commission members. Of the 246 respondents to this question, the majority (90%) have a college education. Within that number, 30% hold a Master's Degree, and 18% have a Doctorate. Less than 2% of respondents reported a High School Diploma or lower as their highest education level.

In contrast, Census data suggests that between 40–50% of Lexington–Fayette County residents over 25 have a Bachelor's Degree or higher, meaning that Board and Commission members are disproportionately more likely to have advanced degrees compared to the general population.

By category, Advisory Boards have the highest proportion (63%) of respondents with a Master's Degree or Doctorate. About half of external and Quasi-Judicial board respondents have a Master's Degree or higher, followed by 38% of fund based board members and 32% of Place-Based Boards.



Findings: Member Survey

As mentioned in the activities section of this report, our team thought it was essential to hear from members of the Board and Commissions directly to understand what it's like to serve on these boards. We wanted to know what resources members use, the challenges they face, and how recruitment, accessibility, training shape, and other factors their experience or service.

Across the board categories, we found many similarities between boards types. Respondents from all board categories were proud of their commitment to community service and motivated to join Boards and Commissions in order to give back to Lexington and provide their expertise to help shape public policy. Boards and Commissions also faced common challenges across categories, including resource limitations, recruitment hurdles, and the need for more robust onboarding processes and training. Below are some other major takeaways across the categories:

Processes: There is quite a bit of variability in how efficiently different board categories operate. Fund based and External Boards tend to have more clearly defined roles, consistent communication, and documentation. Advisory and Place-Based Boards reported some issues with process clarity and meeting efficiency, indicating that there is some ambiguity and uncertainty in how they operate.

Resources: For obvious reasons, Fund Based Boards reported having access to dedicated budgets and staff support. Advisory and Place-Based Boards brought up financial constraints and limited access to additional resources.

Legislative: How different Boards and Commissions report engaging with LFUCG and the legislative process broadly varied. Fund Based and External Boards reported maintaining closer, direct relationships with LFUCG officials and could point to clear legislative outcomes. Advisory and Place-Based Boards struggled more with their relationships with LFUCG and saw fewer legislative outcomes.

Recruitment: Across all Boards and Commissions, participation was largely driven by a desire to serve the community, and members were recruited by invitation or word of mouth. Most boards indicated some challenges in recruitment. Across all boards, there was not a clear understanding of who does the recruiting and how it exactly happens. Of all categories, Place-Based Boards reported facing significant recruitment barriers, including low public awareness and heavy time commitments.

Accessibility: Across all board types, meetings are officially open to the public, but there is little public participation. The main reasons that boards reported for low public participation were inconvenient meeting times, low public awareness, logistical hurdles, and the complex nature of the content. While Place-Based Boards reported seeing higher levels of community

attendance, Advisory, Quasi-Judicial, Fund Based, and External Boards reported inconsistent or low turnout. Although some board members felt that existing outreach measures are fine, many acknowledged that they need more targeted communication and engagement efforts to improve accessibility and public involvement, especially for underrepresented communities. At the same time, many respondents indicated that they didn't think it was necessary for the public to be more involved in their board.

Training: A clear takeaway across all Boards and Commissions is that there is a lot of room for opportunity in the onboarding process. While members of Quasi-Judicial and Fund Based Boards reported experiencing formal onboarding and training, many members of other boards said they received little if no training when they joined. Despite this, many board members said they learned on the job and were confident in their ability to serve on their board.

For complete findings, please see Appendix 2: Member Survey Analysis by Board Category.

Findings: Staff Survey

As a part of our Boards and Commission research, CivicLex also conducted a survey of key staff of LFUCG and External Boards and Commissions whose work is regularly impacted by Boards and Commissions. Many staff members have spent extended periods of time working with LFUCG's Boards and Commissions, and offer a unique and important perspective on their overall function and impact.

In total, we heard from 64 LFUCG and External Organization staff about the impact of Boards and Commissions on their work. These staff came from 27 different divisions, departments, and external organizations, including the Office of the Chief Administrator (CAO) Social Services, Parks and Recreation, Planning & Preservation, Housing Advocacy & Community Development, the Lexington Police Department, The Lyric Theatre, The Arboretum, and the Lexington Public Library.

What is the impact of Boards and Commissions on staff?

Breadth of Impact: Of the 64 staff respondents, 73% reported that their work is impacted by LFUCG's Boards and Commissions often or very often. Only three respondents reported that Boards and Commissions impact never or almost never impact their work.

Depth of Impact: Staff were asked to identify the Board and Commission they work with the most frequently and answer a series of questions about that particular board, including how much that board impacts their work on a scale of 1 to 5. The average response to the amount of impact was a 3.7 out of 5.

Quality of Impact: Staff were also asked to rate how positive or negative the impact of the Board was on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being very negative, 5 being very positive). On average, staff rated the impact of Boards on their work as a 3.9 out of 5, a positive rating. By category, External Boards received the most positive rating, closely followed by Advisory Boards.

Positive/Negative Impact on Work

Board Category	Average Rating
Place-Based	3.0
Quasi-Judicial	3.5
Fund Based	3.7
Advisory	4.4
External	4.5

Types of Impact: Staff were also asked several questions to measure the general impact of all Boards and Commissions on the accessibility, equity, and efficiency of their work. As shown in the chart and table below, most board categories received positive scores on most of these measures. External Boards and Advisory Boards tended to receive the highest ratings for making work more accessible, equitable, and efficient, compared to other board categories. Across all boards, staff rated the accessibility of boards the highest and their efficiency the lowest.

Overall Impact of Boards on Staff Accessibility, Equity, and Efficiency

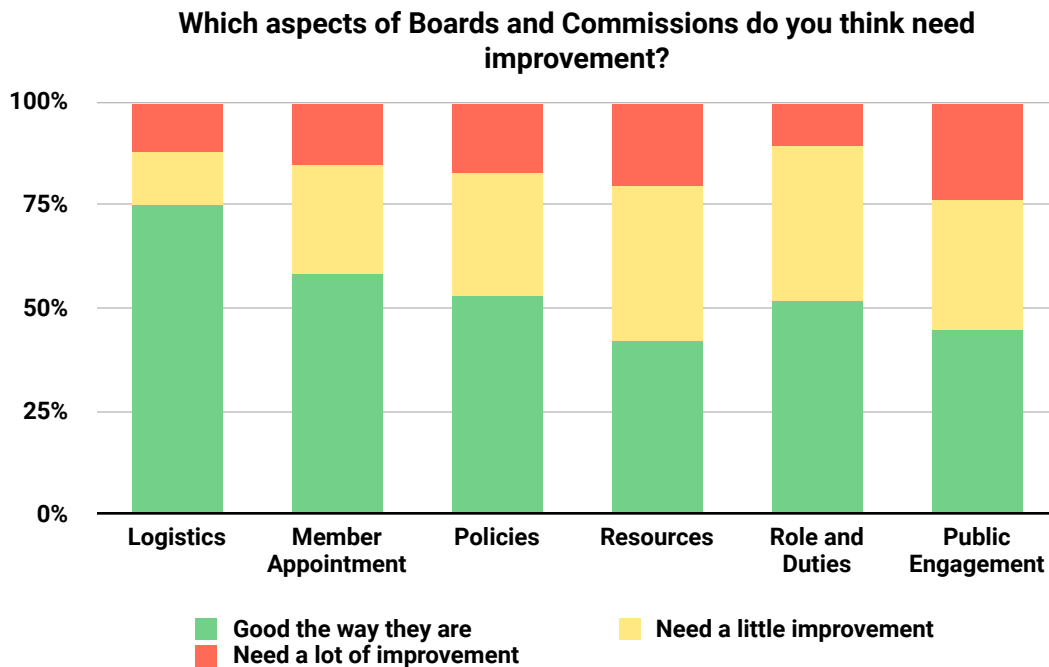
	Less/More Accessible	Less/More Equitable	Less/More Efficient
Quasi-Judicial	3.9	3.2	2.9
Fund Based	4.0	3.6	3.4
External	4.1	4.0	3.6
Place-Based	3.4	3.0	2.8
Advisory	3.9	3.9	3.5

What changes would staff like to see with Boards and Commissions?

Staff-Requested Changes: The staff survey also asked a series of questions to determine if staff would like to see changes to LFUCG's Boards and Commissions, and if so, what those changes would be. Specifically, they were asked to rate the level of improvement needed across five aspects of Boards and Commissions work:

- Board meeting **logistics** (date, time, location)
- **Member appointment** process

- **Policies**, by-laws, and processes
- **Resources** of boards (staff support, budgets)
- **Roles, duties**, and scope of boards
- **Public Engagement** of boards



Overall, about half of the staff respondents indicated that they felt that most aspects of Boards and Commissions were good the way they are. Staff were the most satisfied with the meeting logistics of boards – 75% of respondents rated logistics as good the way they are. Staff were least satisfied with the resources and public engagement of boards, with about 40% of staff rating the current resources and public engagement as good the way they are.

The staff survey also included three open response questions about the overall direction of Boards and Commissions and general feedback, including if they thought any new boards should be created or if any should be consolidated, dissolved, or separated from LFUCG.

Staff-Requested New Boards: The majority of staff respondents did not indicate any Boards and Commissions that they think should be created. Only 9 out of 64 staff suggested additional boards, which are listed below.

- **A youth council or board**, with members representing young people in Lexington and Fayette County
- A public health board focused on reviewing Lexington’s **pandemic response** and addressing lessons learned

- An additional board focused on **housing and zoning**
- A **Healthy Community Board** that works with LFUCG and public health entities to improve health outcomes and connect governmental and nongovernmental organizations
- An **International Business and Innovation Board**
- A **Natural Areas Board**
- A **Unified Code Enforcement Board** that could centralize and consolidate the responsibilities of several existing boards, overseeing issues ranging from building safety and environmental regulations to zoning laws, public health, false alarm violations, and other local ordinances.
- A **Watershed Management Board**

Staff-Requested Board Dissolution & Consolidation: The majority of staff respondents did not indicate any Boards or Commissions that they think should be dissolved or separated from LFUCG. Only 7 out of the 64 interviewed staff suggested dissolving or consolidating boards, which are listed below.

- **Dissolution:**
 - The **Alarm Advisory Board**, moving its responsibilities to the Administrative Hearing Board or another alternative
 - The **Vacant Property Review Commission**, as long as the enforcement mechanisms on vacant properties is a 1% increase in property tax
 - The **Environmental Commission**
- **Consolidation:**
 - All boards that manage civil fines and citations
 - Consolidating boards for individual parks into the broader **Park Advisory Board**, and focusing efforts on representing changing community and neighborhood needs on the Parks Advisory Board
 - Several staff indicated that they are **open to the idea of consolidating boards**, but aren't sure which specific boards could be rearranged

Additional Board Feedback: We also heard from 20 of the 64 staff on general feedback about Boards and Commissions, which is summarized below:

- **Positive feedback:** Staff indicated that boards offer valuable involvement from citizens, are a significant amount of public service from residents, and can be learning opportunities to help residents understand how local government operates. Several staff also mentioned the strength of specific boards, including the Administrative Hearing Board, the Social Services Advisory Board, and the Mayor's International Affairs Advisory Commission.

- **Critical feedback:** Staff said that boards can be very time consuming for them, that appointments to boards are perceived as “invitation-only” and not broadly representative of Lexington, that some boards have limited impact on the issues they deal with, and that some members are disengaged and only join boards as a resume building activity.

Findings: Best Practices and Shared Challenges from Peer Cities

Boards and Commissions are vital to the governance and community engagement frameworks of many U.S. cities, and the challenges faced by LFUCG are recurring challenges across jurisdictions.

Below are insights from interviews and research of six peer cities: Raleigh, NC; Boulder, CO; Grand Rapids, MI; Salt Lake City, UT; Dallas, TX; and Sacramento, CA. Though conducted by CivStart, these interviews included topics beyond technology in order to support the goals of the project.

Best Practices from Peer Cities

Representation

- **Measurement and tracking:** Cities like Raleigh have highly effective demographic tracking built into the application process. Grand Rapids shared how technical requirements for board expertise sometimes hinder other representation goals. Boulder addresses representation imbalances by focusing less on credentialing in recruitment and more on lived experience and community interest as key qualifications.
- **Enhanced recruitment strategies:** Salt Lake City utilizes community engagement teams to target underrepresented groups and deploy tools like Salesforce to track demographics and outreach impact.
- **Equity-focused appointments:** Most cities (including LFUCG) incorporate demographic goals into their strategic plans, ensuring boards reflect the communities they serve.
- **Simplified application processes:** Boulder provides streamlined, user-friendly application tools and resources to encourage participation with the goal of lowering barriers for candidates with backgrounds representative of the community.

Structured Onboarding and Training

- **Recruitment-based training:** Boulder hosts a Community Leadership Academy which educates residents about the Boards and Commissions process before even applying.
- **Mandatory training:** Nearly all cities (as well as LFUCG) mandate training on open meeting laws, ensuring informed participation. This can provide an already-existing touchpoint to expand onboarding support.

- **Comprehensive welcome packets:** Enacted in Raleigh and proposed in Boulder and Salt Lake City, comprehensive welcome packets include clear guidelines, expectations, and resources in a handbook for new board members and for staff liaisons.
- **Regular staff liaison coordination:** Raleigh conducts bimonthly liaison meetings to share insights and resolve common issues efficiently.

Technology Integration

- **Centralized platforms:** Grand Rapids and Raleigh use software like Granicus and OneMeeting supplemented by applications like Board Docs for applications, agenda management, document retention, and data tracking.
- **Accessibility enhancements:** Many of the cities interviewed incorporate features like live interpretation, ADA compliance in virtual meetings, and hybrid meeting solutions for public accessibility.
- **Data portals:** Salt Lake City's Boards and Commissions dashboard is built as an open data systems with the goal of fostering transparency and accountability.

Strategic Role Clarification

- **Focal point:** Dallas identified the need for a single point of contact responsible for ensuring board and commission compliant. In Raleigh, this role doubles as a training focal point for staff and new board members as well.
- **Categorizing boards:** Boulder categorizes boards by function (e.g., advisory, Quasi-Judicial, General Improvement Districts, and Task Force) to tailor processes to their roles.
- **Work plan alignment:** Raleigh mandates that each board present an annual work plan to be approved by council, which determines the boards approved scope of work, and then present an annual report on the boards activities. This helps ensure alignment with city priorities, clarity on deliverables and expectations, and strengthens the boards' own sense of connection to the larger mission of the city.

Accessibility, Compensation, and Support

- **Stipends:** Cities like Salt Lake City offer nominal stipends to reduce financial barriers to participation.
- **Transit:** Grand Rapids ensures that all public meetings are held in locations with access to public transit routes.
- **Childcare and Amenities:** Grand Rapids' "Commission Night Out" is a fun event deigned to recruit new board members that provides childcare and food for all attendees.

Shared Challenges Across Peer Cities

Recruitment and Retention

- **Barriers to Entry:** Perceptions of exclusivity or intimidation deter applicants, especially from underrepresented groups.
- **High Time Commitment:** Demands for training, site visits, and extensive preparation make board service less accessible for those with competing obligations.
- **Perception of Politicized Appointments:** Boulder's report recommended moving Boards and Commission appointments out of elected officials' hands and into the City Manager or Department Heads' decision-making to reduce real or perceived politicization of appointments.

Administrative Inefficiencies

- **Decentralized Coordination:** Cities like Raleigh and Grand Rapids report challenges in standardizing processes across departments. Boulder has categorized its boards into several categories which merit different levels of standardization and oversight from the city.
- **Inconsistent Records Management:** Cities indicated that there were logistical and adoption challenges with document retention tools like SharePoint, limiting transparency.
- **High Vacancy Rates:** Dallas identifies specific boards with expertise requirements often having 40% or greater vacancy rates. In many cities, there is a lack of clarity on who is responsible for recruitment and expertise requirements are named as potential causes.

Engagement with City Councils

- **Limited Interaction:** Boards often lack structured communication channels with city councils, leading to misaligned priorities.
- **Unclear Feedback Loops:** Boulder indicated that they experienced gaps in reporting board activities and aligning with council objectives.

Technology Challenges

- **Fragmented Systems:** Other cities struggled with integration between platforms like Granicus and departmental tools. Grand Rapids is addressing this by moving to OneMeeting, which integrates with OneDrive.
- **Shadow IT:** Other cities reported that when existing city-owned technology solutions create barriers (to sharing documents, posting calendar events, etc.), city staff and board members will often start using their own tools outside the direct purview of the city and without coordination across Boards and Commissions.

- **Hybrid Meeting Complexities:** Technical and regulatory barriers complicate consistent hybrid meeting formats. Raleigh provides meeting management tools for shared documents and Owl devices for hybrid meetings.

Role Uncertainty

- **Misaligned Expectations:** Across cities, boards frequently operate outside their intended scopes due to vague mandates or unclear authority levels.
- **Lack of Sunset Mechanisms:** Few cities have processes to review and retire boards when their purpose is fulfilled. Raleigh has an attendance threshold requirement as well as a requirement for board annual reports and strategic plans. Boulder was in the process of creating a sunset policy and review system for older boards and those marked as task forces when we interviewed them.

Comparing Appointment Processes

Appointment processes are a critical part of fostering public trust, transparency, and ensuring the best people representing the right mix of expertise and experience are getting onto boards. The processes vary between cities and often heavily reflect the overall form of government each city has: strong mayor, city manager, weak mayor, etc.

For example, in Boulder, Raleigh, Grand Rapids, Dallas, and Sacramento, where the City Manager plays a key role in governance broadly, they are also an influential office in making appointments, often in consultation with relevant department heads, and sometimes a designated review committee. In our interviews, these cities highlighted the ways that this helps depoliticize the appointment process. Still, with the exception of Raleigh and Boulder, the Mayor holds the ultimate legal appointing authority, with Council providing approvals, similar to LFUCG. In Salt Lake City, which shares a strong-mayor system with LFUCG, the Mayor makes the appointment and Council approves these appointments (as in LFUCG).

In Raleigh and Boulder, which are council-manager systems, the mayor is a largely honorary title for a regular sitting at-large member of the council. As a result, the Council is the primary body responsible for nominations, appointments, and approval, with input from the City Manager and the relevant department heads provided.

Dallas has a unique hybrid approach, with three boards specifically receiving appointments from the City Manager, while the Mayor appoints the Chair of the remaining Boards and Commissions and the Council appoints the Vice Chair of all the remaining Boards and Commissions.

As with the type of government, there is no firm consensus on a best practice or preferred form of appointment for Boards and Commissioners. Each is posited with pros and cons. Putting appointments in the hands of a City Manager or department head is often cited as a

depoliticizing measure, but it also insulates these often-opaque positions from democratic oversight. Sharing appointment authority between the Mayor and Council as Dallas has done can provide both bodies with a voice, but can also set up oppositional camps within Boards. An all-council approach is efficient and closest to the voters, but lacks the checks and balances of a multi-body appointment process.

City	Government Type	Appointment
Lexington, KY	Strong-mayor	Mayoral appointment; Council approval
Raleigh, NC	Council-manager (weak mayor)	Council appointment and approval
Grand Rapids, MI	Commission-manager	Mayoral appointment; Commission approval
Boulder, CO	Council-manager (weak mayor)	Council appointment and approval
Salt Lake City, UT	Strong-mayor	Mayoral appointment; Commission approval
Sacramento, CA	Council-manager	Mayoral appointment; Council approval
Dallas, TX	Council-manager	Mayor appoints Chair; Council appoints Vice-Chair; City Manager makes appointments to 3 boards

Findings: Technology Research

Many of the highest-functioning Boards and Commissions, who are often working in conjunction with LFUCG staff points of contact, are making effective use of the technology tools available to them to run effective meetings. Many of the recommendations provided in this report for technology tools and gaps pertain more to raising the floor of the lowest-functioning boards and bringing those in the middle to the highest level of function. The following are technology-related aspects of the process that are working well:

- **B&C Application Technology:** The current application process is meeting the needs of LFUCG and the community by facilitating easy applications, custom questions for each board or commission, and a workflow on the backend that allows for various stages of multi-party approvals and votes before transitioning someone onto a board.
- **Hybrid Meeting Options:** Options for hybrid or virtual meetings through Zoom increase accessibility and flexibility for participation for boards equipped with the right software and physical infrastructure.
- **Google Drive:** While not an official technology purchased by LFUCG, Google Drive is utilized by almost every board and commission as an effective way to create agendas, collaborate on documents, and share files. It benefits from being widely used and therefore requiring little

training and having broad interoperability. The downside is that this is not officially owned and controlled by LFUCG, which may have public records implications or limit functionality when crossing into officially-licensed technology systems.

- **Staff Points of Contact:** Having LFUCG staff serve as points of contact ensures a basic level of functioning for all boards, familiarity with the basic suite of technology tools used by all boards and commissions, and provides a way to systematize the use of technology and processes across LFUCG. This last advantage is not currently being utilized to its full potential. A dedicated boards and commissions staff person could use this already existing staff network to make many changes and systemize processes across the entire organization.
- **Website Management:** Clear role definition and responsibilities for website updates and approvals exist.

There is also an ongoing ground-up rebuild of LFUCG's website, focusing on improved user-experience for front and back-end users, enhanced accessibility, and future custom feature needs. After the initial research phase of this report, many of these changes were released. These in-progress changes should be considered in the context of this report's recommendations, as they may provide opportunities to solve several issues at once and make large improvements to the functioning, accessibility, public engagement, and diversity of the applicant pool of Boards and Commissions.

Conversations with LFUCG staff suggest that the new website will feature larger file size limits, streamlined document organization, and a better calendar/events system. These changes are expected to improve public access to board materials, increase transparency, and make it easier for staff to manage and update meeting information, ultimately fostering greater public engagement and operational efficiency. A major limitation remains that the existing Granicus software makes API integrations difficult, and so will require time and custom code from the website vendor in order to integrate beyond existing iframes or links directly into Granicus.

Findings: Student Focus Group

Throughout the students participation, they provided honest and critical feedback, highlighting challenges in attending meetings. Below are some examples of the main challenges they faced:

Location: Students encountered difficulties in attending meetings regarding meeting locations, times, and dates, even with the details provided to them. This even occurred when we provided the information for them.

- **Confusion regarding meeting locations:** One student shared their experience in attending a meeting, where the location was unclear, largely because of discrepancies involving the website. *"Unfortunately nobody was at the meeting, and the meeting never happened. To be*

fair, it might've happened at [meeting location] where it was stated on the CivicLex doc, but if so, that would mean that the website was not accurate. Additionally, if a member of the public were to want to attend this meeting, they would be met with the same situation, which more realistically represents the general public."

- **Lack of clear signage:** Another student observed the lack of signage leading to the meeting room. They stated, *"The door was locked, there were no signs pointing to which door to go into or where to go. I had to ask a couple of people, 'Hey, are you here for [board or commission]? Do you know where it is?'"*

Accessibility: Several students observed significant accessibility issues during the meetings they attended. These range from technical issues with microphones to language access, agenda and material availability, and a lack of communication about the context of the meetings.

- **Microphones:** A student noted that despite microphones being available, not all participants used them correctly. They observed, *"Even though everyone had mics, not everyone was talking into them. People in the crowd didn't have any mics to talk into even though they also participated in the discussion Sometimes it felt like the people were talking to each other rather than an actual meeting."* Additionally, another student pointed out that even with microphones, communication between board members was challenging: *"Board members couldn't hear each other even when they were using the microphones."* Another student reflected *"At some points, I didn't really understand because I just feel like it was kinda soft spoken, I couldn't really hear much of what was going on."*
- **Agendas and materials:** The availability of meeting agendas and materials also emerged as a pivotal issue. A student emphasized the benefit of having an agenda to follow: *"The agenda really, really helped! It helped some of the pieces fall into place, even though they didn't tell you up front exactly—you could kinda look ahead and say, okay, I see where this will connect."* However, another student did not receive an agenda, and had difficulty following their meeting: *"A few times, they referenced information that was given to the council members and some members of the public in packets of paper. I was not offered one and couldn't find if they were giving them out."* This suggests that the availability of materials is not consistent, but that when they are available they are an extremely valuable resource for understanding the meeting. In contrast, some students commented on the importance of visual presentations during the meetings. One student remarked on the effectiveness of a staff member's presentation: *"I think, [organization staff], who gave the presentation, that was done really well. Because she had that presentation up on the board, and she just wasn't speaking, so there was a visual aspect to it as well."* The inclusion of visual aids like slides or displays makes it easier for the public to follow the discussion.
- **Understanding boards:** The students also noted that understanding the board's discussions was challenging, particularly for those unfamiliar with the topics or language

used. One student expressed difficulty in understanding the conversations: *“Something that makes it hard to understand is that I don't have full understanding/information of what they are talking about and mostly I have to understand through context.”* Another student added that the use of specific jargon posed a barrier: *“They used a lot of very specific jargon... I can imagine other people having a difficult time understanding that jargon, especially if it's their first or second meeting, or a sector of the world they don't work in.”* Another student appreciated when board members took time to explain their remarks, writing *“The members seem really passionate and explain their areas in-depth which was helpful. As an outsider, it is sometimes hard to know what they are referring to.”*

- **Lack of public awareness of programs:** Several students pointed out that the public often lacks information about specific programs or activities offered by the board. One student shared a personal experience, highlighting the value of boards and commissions: *“I think that the [program] is a great program... I personally relate to this very much because when we first came to the US, my mom had a baby, and we did in fact have a hard time since we didn't know about any of the procedures that were going to take place. We were very lost since it's a new place with new laws and regulations. The [program] would have definitely been a huge help for us.”*

Meeting structure: The students observed logistical challenges in the meetings, particularly regarding their structure and public engagement. They noted that meetings often seemed focused on providing updates rather than addressing important issues or actively engaging the community. One student remarked, *“The meeting just seemed to be them updating.”* Another student wrote, *“The board didn't mention any plans, goals, or solutions; the meetings seemed more like an update of what is happening in and around the [organization].”*

Work culture: Throughout their observations, some students reflected that the board meetings they attended had trouble staying on track or working as team, noting some issues with meeting etiquette.

- **Off-topic conversations:** Some board meetings had a difficult time with staying on the agenda. One student observed, *“It seemed like some of the members started getting off topic. One guy was talking, and then some of the other members started having their own conversations, so I was like, what's going on here?”*
- **Meeting etiquette:** The students had differing experiences with the etiquette and dynamics of the meetings they attended. One student reported *“It addresses important topics and really interesting ones. Also, I noticed that all the people in the meeting were really calm, the discussion was really respectful and it was faster than I expected.”* However, some students highlighted instances of passive-aggressiveness or tension between board members. One student noted a moment during nominations for board positions, writing *“At times, it seemed very disorganized, especially when they were trying to do the nominations for boards. There were a*

lot of snippy remarks, sarcasm, and attempts to push responsibilities onto others. I understand the dynamics, but as an outsider ... it was difficult to maintain attention, and when inside jokes or remarks about absent individuals started to emerge, it felt like there was an 'in-group' and 'out-group.' I didn't really know what was going on."

Another student further noted, *"I also learned that there seems to be a lot of passive aggression on this commission, and not all of the members share the same opinion, which causes some infighting."*

Findings: Public Engagement

Through the 260 face-to-face conversations we had with Lexington residents about Boards and Commissions, several key themes and patterns surfaced across geographic locations, communication style, and demographics.

Fireside Chats: Through the 150 conversations and survey responses during the market, we heard that individuals would be more likely to join a Board or Commission if the meeting times were flexible, if they were given orientation or training, and if the Boards or Commissions would contribute to meaningful, impactful work.

During our conversations, numerous participants expressed surprise at the existence of so many different Boards and Commissions in Lexington, and seemed excited at the opportunity to get involved. We commonly heard that participants were aware of the organizations and causes that the board served, but not that there was a body of city staff and resident volunteers helping guide that work.

Downtown Transit Center: Through this activity, we heard that the top motivating factors for residents to join a Board or Commission were meetings on evenings or weekends, meetings in residents' neighborhoods, and payment for volunteers to join a board.

In addition to the voting activity, we also conducted the same conversational survey with people waiting for buses or spending time at the Transit Center. Many of the conversations we had indicated an interest in joining boards and helping community, with transportation to meetings and the preference for virtual or local meetings being common concerns. Echoing other engagement conversations, the majority of participants indicated that their primary motivation for joining a Board or Commissions would be a desire to help their community.

We also asked individuals at the Transit Center if receiving a stipend would help accommodate participation. Respondents were notably split — some felt that volunteering is about service and shouldn't be paid, while an equal portion were concerned about the time commitment of joining a board, particularly when earning an hourly wage, and thought that a stipend would be important to account for taking time off work.

IV. Recommendations

The recommendations in this report are designed to help Lexington's Boards and Commissions make meaningful progress towards becoming more representative, accessible, functional, and transparent. The recommendations are grouped into these same focus areas.

While each area is distinct, they all reinforce one another. Clearer processes and better public communication encourage greater participation, leading to a more representative membership. We see this as a cycle that can strengthen Lexington's civic health.

A note on implementation

We understand that each board has different structures, challenges, and resources, and as such, the recommendations we provide here aren't designed to be one-size-fits-all solutions. We also understand that if the totality of these recommendations were adopted at once, it would pose an immense workload burden on LFUCG staff.

Because of these issues, we want to be clear that we view each of these recommendations as an open-ended goals, with suggested strategies for implementation that we have provided based on our research and engagement. .

While we believe many of these recommendations can be accomplished through relatively simple process improvements, some will require legislative, budgetary, or procedural changes, and some will require additional staff capacity. Given our limited understanding of LFUCG's operations, we created a very simple hierarchy for how we believe LFUCG should prioritize the implementation of the strategies included in this report:

- **Priority Recommendations:** These are designed to bring Boards and Commissions to a more functional baseline level, and we see them as higher priority.
- **Opportunity Recommendations:** These should be seen as additional improvements that build on this baseline.

Our hope is that these recommendations will inform ongoing conversations among LFUCG staff, elected officials, and board members about how to improve these critical institutions. Not every recommendation will be immediately feasible, but we hope that together, they offer steps toward making Lexington's Boards and Commissions more effective, inclusive, and connected to the public that they serve.

Objective 1: Representation

Representation is a core component of all democratic governments. In Lexington, residents vote on over twenty local elected officials to represent themselves and their interests, from the Mayor and City Councilmembers to School Board Members and Circuit Judges. While Boards and Commissions members are not elected, they are representatives. We believe that ensuring that each Board and Commission appropriately represents those in Lexington that their work impacts or serves is essential to their effectiveness, the trust they receive from the public, and their impact.

There are different types of representation needed in each Board and Commission. Some boards may need a wide variety of professional representation, while others may need members with a narrow set of interests but a broad range of lived experiences. For the purpose of this report, the following goals are primarily geared around increasing two types of representation: **Demographic** and **Experiential**.

Demographic representation refers to how much the demographics of board members (age, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, council district) match the demographics of Lexington as a whole. **Experiential representation** refers to how much the experiences of board members (education level, income, housing situation, time spent in Lexington) match the experiences of Lexington residents as a whole. To be clear, both of these types of representation should supplement the professional and expertise needs that are essential to many of the Boards and Commissions being able to function. With this in mind, we believe that increasing both demographic and experiential representation is one of the most important strategies to bring new residents into Lexington's Boards and Commissions, improve community awareness and outreach, and strengthen the relationship between LFUCG, Boards and Commissions, and the Public.

The following goals address the most significant barriers to representation we have identified throughout this project. Each goal applies to individual Boards and Commissions at different levels, but will likely be more relevant to more boards than any other set of goals in this report.

Recommendation #1: Reduce logistical barriers to joining Boards and Commissions

Many of the residents we interviewed during our fireside chats and canvassing expressed a genuine interest in serving their community and in the subjects of Boards and Commissions. However, most residents had logistical concerns that would make their participation more difficult. Taking steps to reduce the logistical barriers to join boards could help broaden representation, reach new members committed to service, and expand community outreach. The strategies listed below are potential ways to help reduce these barriers.

Priority Strategy 1.1: Evaluate current meeting locations. LFUCG should reevaluate current Board and Commission meeting locations to ensure that they are in accessible locations, taking into account their geographic location, transit access, parking, and physical accessibility. *Peer City: Grand Rapids, Michigan hosts all public meetings along local public transportation routes.*

Priority Strategy 1.2: Evaluate current meeting times. For boards trying to broaden membership representation, LFUCG should strongly consider hosting meeting times outside regular working hours. Many participants in our public engagement events expressed an interest in serving on a Board or Commission to help address a community issue, but had little flexibility with their full time jobs to be able to leave to attend meetings.

Spotlight: Public Engagement

In Fireside Chat interviews at the Downtown Transit Center, Time commitment and work schedules were the number one most common barrier identified for community members interested in volunteering for a Board or Commission.

Opportunity Strategy 1.3 – Explore providing stipends for a limited number of Boards and Commission members. If board meetings are scheduled during working hours, LFUCG could offer stipends to make participation more feasible for members who may lose wages for being at meetings. LFUCG should be careful to consider the specific burden of participation for different Boards and Commissions, as not all members or boards may necessitate a stipend. For example, stipends could be offered to members of boards that meet more than a certain number of hours a month, or for Chairs or Officers of boards. *Peer City: Salt Lake City, Utah offers stipends to boards and commissions members to reduce participation barriers.*

Opportunity Strategy 1.4 – Explore providing childcare for specific events/meetings. While many Board and Commission meetings happen during the school day, not all do. To increase recruitment among parents, LFUCG could offer childcare or child friendly meeting spaces for in-person board meetings that take place outside of the school day. For boards without adequate resources to fund or staff childcare, LFUCG could also investigate partnerships with nonprofit organizations, libraries, schools, or recreation/community centers. *Peer City: Grand Rapids, Michigan offers free childcare and food for board recruitment events.*

Implementation note: These strategies do not apply evenly across boards. When considering implementation, LFUCG should address setting accessibility guidelines by board category, with more flexible guidelines for boards with fewer resources and less frequent meetings. Another potential strategy is to create a resource pool that board can apply to for specific representation initiatives (like a board applying for funding to pay for childcare at a public meeting). We believe that an opt-in approach could help boards assess their own needs and take steps towards addressing them without adding additional burden for members or staff.

Recommendation #2: Make joining a board or commission less intimidating

One public engagement participant said the biggest thing that would stop them from volunteering for a Board or Commission was “fear of the unknown.” Most community members do not regularly interact with boards of any kind, and many of the residents we talked to throughout this research expressed that they would be intimidated to join a board, even if they had an interest in the subject or the right experience. There are many potential programs that could make joining a board less intimidating, and help more residents entertain the possibility of this type of service. These include:

Spotlight: Public Engagement

Most public engagement participants were unaware that there were so many Boards and Commissions in Lexington with vacant seats, and those who were curious had difficulty figuring out how to apply to a vacant seat online.

Priority Strategy 2.1: Reduce perceived politicization of

board membership. We believe that for LFUCG to increase Board recruitment, it's essential to clarify that joining a board or commission is open to everyone, not just those involved in politics. To do this, LFUCG should revise language in educational resources and communication about board participation to focus on the open-to-everyone volunteer nature of service. Many members of the public we engaged with were unaware that anyone could join a board or commission, and this simple change in language could highlight that fact. Members of the public were very responsive to the framing of volunteering to work with local government in service of a community issue.

Opportunity Strategy 2.2: Increase public education resources. LFUCG could create educational resources that help the public understand what different boards do and what board meetings are like in accessible language and formatting. These materials could emphasize the aspects of board work that might relate to lived experiences like connection to a specific place or interest in a community cause. We think this would help expand recruitment efforts to focus on what board members do, not just what qualifications they need to have.

Opportunity Strategy 2.3: Buddy/mentor system. LFUCG could develop a buddy system, where new board members are paired up for their first term of service, or a mentorship program where new members are matched with more experienced ones. These options would help new members understand meeting dynamics, board context, and expectations.

Recommendation #3: Evaluate the necessity of seat designations

Priority Strategy 3.1 – Evaluate the necessity of seat designations. Seat designations are a powerful tool to influence the representativeness of Boards and Commissions, but their impact can be complicated. To improve the representativeness of LFUCG’s Boards and Commissions, LFUCG should evaluate the specific impact of seat designations on individual boards and make

determinations on a board-by-board basis on if they should be increased, decreased, or maintained.

Some boards may benefit from fewer seat designations that are more broad to open up broader possibilities for recruitment and to incorporate interests and expertise that may not traditionally be a part of their work. Other boards who do not currently have trouble recruiting may increase their representativeness by adding more requirements, including demographic or experiential categories.

Almost all of LFUCG's Boards and Commissions set some sort of guidance for the experience, qualifications, or positions of potential members. These include:

- **Professional designations:** Some boards designate seats for representatives of specific industries or organizations. For example, the Economic Development Investment Board reserves a seat for a private equity/venture capital representative, a housing industry representative, and two financial investment or banking industry representatives.
- **Geographic designations:** Some boards designate seats for members who live in specific places. For example, the Airport Board designates that two of their nine members must live within a three mile radius of the airport.
- **Interests and expertise:** Some boards generally require that all of their members should have an interest or expertise in the subjects of their board. For example, the Raven Run Citizens Advisory Board requires that all public members must have a specific interest or expertise in the preservation and maintenance of the natural environment.
- **Demographic designations:** Some boards designate seats for members that fit specific demographic or personal requirements. For example, the Mayor's International Affairs Advisory Commission (MIAAC) designates three seats for foreign-born residents of Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East.
- **LFUCG designations or "Ex Officio" seats:** Many boards designate seats for working representatives of LFUCG or other specific organizations. This is also called an "ex officio" member, literally meaning a member "from the office". For example, the Parking Authority Board designates a seat for the LFUCG Commissioner of Finance or a designated representative.

By our count, forty-four Boards and Commissions have strict seat designations for specific jobs, licenses, demographics, or locations. Forty Boards and Commissions have some sort of general experience or interest requirements, and forty have seats designated for LFUCG representatives.

In the Member Survey, 40% of respondents stated that they have some trouble or a lot of trouble recruiting new members. When asked about the biggest challenges of recruitment, many respondents mentioned trouble with finding members to fit some of the narrower seat designations, like the Commission on Veteran's Affairs finding veterans of each branch of the US Armed Forces or the Raven Run Citizens Advisory board recruiting representatives of five different organizations and three professional specialties.

Recommendation #4: Streamline and daylight appointment process

Through the Member and Staff Survey, as well as attending Board and Commission meetings, one of the most commonly identified points of confusion for boards was the member application and appointment process. There are several key snags in the current process, including:

- **Lack of awareness of vacancies:** The number one recruitment barrier identified in the Member Survey was a lack of public awareness and open seats of boards by the majority of Lexington residents and community members.
- **Divided responsibilities:** There is no clear expectation for who is in charge of the recruitment, application, and appointment process for each board. Some members and staff, particularly of External Boards, work proactively to fill seats that are about to expire, and make specific requests to the Mayor for their preferred new member. Other boards seemed to lack agency in finding new members, and reported that their members are simply appointed by the Mayor and Council.
- **Unclear application process:** Once potential members submit an application, there is some confusion about how long the approval process takes, when individual boards are updated about potential applicants, when applicants are officially approved to be a part of the board, and how long terms last. Some boards expressed a desire to recruit new members more actively, but weren't sure of the right steps to take or where in the process they should get involved. While attending a place-based board meeting, we observed a long time member whose term had expired without them realizing, who showed up to the meeting but was unable participate or vote because they were no longer officially a member.

There are a variety of strategies to address these challenges, and to broadly bring more awareness and understanding of the membership appointment process. These include:

Priority Strategy 4.1: Audit the current Board and Commission application. LFUCG should review and evaluate the current universal Board and Commission application. The current application is standardized across all Boards and does not represent an undue burden for applicants. However, we believe there are a handful of specific changes to the application that

could increase representation and understanding throughout the application process. These include to:

- ***Make demographic questions opt out instead of opt in:*** Currently, the Boards and Commissions application asks potential applicants to identify their Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Gender, Date of Birth, and Council District with a series of optional multiple choice questions. As seen in the demographic survey, anywhere from 10–30% of members left demographics blank, depending on the question. To reduce this number while preserving privacy, make demographic questions required, but include a multiple choice option for “Prefer not to say”.
- ***Add additional demographic/experiential questions:*** Consider adding questions related to other demographic/experiential elements of representation, like income, highest education level, housing situation, and time lived in Lexington.
- ***Include a link to identify Council District:*** 125 current Board and Commission members did not include the Council District they live in with their application. Including a link to [find your council district](#) may help reduce this number.
- ***Consider removing ability to apply for multiple boards at once:*** Currently, applicants can apply for up to five boards at a time with one application. While this could be helpful for applicants with overlapping interests and experiences, the interface for multiple boards is somewhat confusing. Additionally, the ability to ‘batch apply’ to multiple board may contribute to applicants that apply for board as a resume builder, a problem identified in the Member and Staff survey. Consider splitting applications into two parts: one with general information about the applicant (demographics, contact info) that would apply to all boards, and successive pages specific to each board with questions about interests, qualifications, seat requirements, and motivations.
- ***Clarify language about applying for boards with no current vacancies:*** Currently, potential members can submit an application for boards whether or not there is a currently vacant seat. This is a helpful tool for recruitment that can develop a pool of applicants for when a seat becomes available, but might currently be confusing to users. Clarify language in the application and on board pages with links to submit a notice of interest in boards, rather than a full on application.

Priority Strategy 4.2: Increase communication about Board and Commission vacancies.

LFUCG should increase internal and external awareness about current and upcoming vacancies to ensure that more potential members hear about the opportunity to apply. This could include centralizing all boards with current or upcoming vacant seats on the LFUCG website so that users can see a list of all boards with vacant seats in one place, rather than clicking into each individual page to check vacancies. LFUCG could incorporate updates about board membership into reports from relevant divisions and departments, council updates, and annual reports by boards.

LFUCG could also empower boards to take a more proactive approach to recruiting by setting expectations about member appointment and how much influence they have and by distributing authority to view current applications in Granicus to more staff points of contact. Another strategy would be to include language about vacancies and applying to join a board and help serve Lexington on the Boards and Commissions homepage, to make sure interested visitors know that applying to a board is an option for them. *Peer City: Boulder, Colorado recently made updates to their [Boards and Commissions landing page](#) to encourage new applications and participation.*

Opportunity Strategy 4.3: Investigate term limits by board category or on a board-by-board basis. Throughout our conversations about Boards and Commissions, we received various questions about term limits for board members. Much like other strategies in this report, we consider term limits to be a complex issue. There are very real reasons for adopting term limits for Board and Commission members, including preventing stagnant leadership, bringing fresh, new energy onto boards, and more. But it also poses risks for further exacerbating the already existing gaps in recruitment and eroding knowledge and leadership of experienced members. LFUCG could consider investigating term limits for Board and Commission members, but we would recommend not applying a universal standard. Instead, we would recommend that LFUCG consider creating rules on a board-by-board basis or by category.

Recommendation #5: Invest in training new members

Many Boards and Commissions members have specialized skills and experience necessary to make highly impactful decisions about Lexington's local government and community. It is important to ensure that Boards and Commissions members are qualified for their work, but we have also found that these necessary qualifications can be a burden to recruiting representative memberships. Additionally, we know from our public engagement that intimidation about what sitting on a board is like, even without specific professional requirement, is an obstacle for community members to get more involved. To address both of these issues, we recommend investing in more training resources for Boards and Commissions members to expand recruitment and build confidence for new members. Potential training strategies include:

Priority Strategy 5.1: Explore a minimum orientation and onboarding: According to the Member Survey, less than half of current members received training when they joined

Spotlight: Airport Board

The Airport Board provides a comprehensive orientation for new member to help them understand how both the Board and the Bluegrass Airport Operate. Members are also provided with a governance manual that covers information about the role of the Airport Board, board committees, board meetings, mission and core values, and policies and legislation.

These steps, along with dedicated staff support, empower members to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to serve on the board, rather than requiring that all members have pre-existing experience in aviation or airport management.

their board. LFUCG should ensure that all Boards and Commissions offer some sort of onboarding or orientation for new members. The extent of the orientation could depend on the category and unique role of each board, but should likely include an overview of the history and purpose of the board, the relevant LFUCG Departments and legal processes, the recent work and accomplishments of the board, contact information of members, staff, and partners, communications processes, and basic expectations for participation and attending board meetings. *Peer cities: Raleigh, North Carolina created a Boards and Commissions Training Handbook to assist with onboarding new members.*

Opportunity Strategy 5.2: Increase digital literacy support: LFUCG could create resources for Boards and Commissions interested in increasing their use of technology to improve accessibility, functionality, or transparency. This could include resources on hosting virtual or hybrid meetings, uploading minutes to google drive, using a/v technology for in-person meetings, using social media or online communications, and updating individual Board and Commission website pages.

Objective 2: Functionality

One of the main goals of this project is to help improve public engagement with and representation on Lexington's Boards and Commissions. However, our past experience tells us that increasing public engagement with civic processes actually has the possibility of backfiring if that process is confusing or frustrating. A bad experience in civic life cannot only lead to disillusionment in the moment, but can, over time, undermine civic health.

For this reason, a key category of our recommendations revolves around increasing the **functionality** of Board and Commissions. More functional Boards and Commissions that value the time, labor, and expertise of Board and Commissions members, staff, partners, and guests will not only be more efficient, they'll help build stronger trust in Lexington's civic life.

The following goals outline the most important steps we have identified to bring all Boards and Commissions up to a baseline level of operation. Each goal is intentionally broad, but includes potential strategies for different Boards and Commissions to help reach them.

Recommendation #6: Create and maintain a Comprehensive Boards and Commissions calendar

One of the most difficult aspects of engaging with many Boards and Commissions is simply finding the right time and place to do so. LFUCG Boards and Commissions lack an integrated, comprehensive, public-facing system for managing meeting schedules, cancellations, and notifications. Residents cannot engage in board meetings they don't know about, and can be discouraged and left frustrated by unexpectedly cancelled meetings. If members of the public cannot reliably find and attend a board meeting, they are less likely to join as a board member.

Priority Strategy 6.1: Ensure that all Board and Commission meetings are published on the LFUCG calendar. The LFUCG website has a centralized calendar for Council meetings, LFUCG events, and many (but not all) Board and Commission meetings. LFUCG should standardize this calendar and list scheduled meetings for all 67 Boards and Commissions.

Priority Strategy 6.2: Distribute calendar authority. Towards the goal of including all board meetings on the city calendar, LFUCG should ensure that all staff points of contact have the ability to add and edit calendar events.

Priority Strategy 6.3: Encourage full feature usage of the LFUCG calendar. LFUCG should work with board chairs and staff PCs to develop resources to ensure that all features of the Boards and Commissions calendar are being used by boards. During the writing of this report, LFUCG released a new website with enhanced calendar functionality. Many of our recommended features are now functionally possible, but not yet being taken advantage of by all boards and their staff PCs at the time of writing. We believe high priority features include or implement are:

- **Notifications:** Allowing residents to subscribe to updates from specific boards and commissions and to receive email and/or SMS updates on meeting schedule changes, pre-meeting agendas, and post-meeting minutes.
- **Additional Information:** Relevant events on the calendar should be linked directly to board documents such as members, agendas, and past meeting minutes.

Recommendation #7: Increase the effectiveness of Boards and Commissions meetings

Over the course of this project, our team attended and observed 41 individual Board and Commission meetings. Public meetings are fundamental to the function of all boards, and varied widely in terms of their location, facilitation, efficiency, content, and user experience. Some of the board meetings were focused, collaborative, and gave a clear understanding of the purpose and function of the board to anyone observing. Other meetings struggled with facilitation, technology, and participation.

We heard repeatedly from board members, staff, and residents that poorly run meetings are a key obstacle for Boards and Commissions to achieve their purpose. They can be frustrating for the volunteer members and staff, and discouraging for members of the public who are thinking about getting involved. We believe there are a variety of ways that many Boards can improve their meeting experience for staff, members, and the public.

Spotlight: Student Focus Group

In our student focus group, one student attempted to attend a meeting that was listed on the LFUCG calendar, but discovered once they arrived that the meeting venue had been changed without notice, stating that *“Unfortunately nobody was at the meeting; and the meeting never happened. To be fair, it might’ve happened at [different location] ... but if so, that would mean that the website was not accurate. Additionally, if a member of the public were to want to go to this meeting, they would be met with the same situation”*.

Priority Strategy 7.1: Standardize agenda distribution & release. LFUCG should ensure that all Boards and Commissions have meeting agendas and that they are distributed in advance so members and guests are aware of topics of discussion and can prepare to weigh in. Boards and Commissions should also have copies of agendas available for guests and members of the public at meetings.

Priority Strategy 7.2: Evaluate current Board and Commission meeting frequency. LFUCG should evaluate if current meeting schedules are necessary for the purpose and scope of the individual boards. Throughout our research and engagement, we received feedback that many Advisory and Place-Based Boards could reduce the frequency of their recurring meetings.

Opportunity Strategy 7.3: Structure meetings for member participation. A key weakness of many advisory and Place-Based Boards is a lack of participation opportunities for board members. Many meetings are structured around staff sharing updates for the board, with minimal opportunity for engagement or discussion. LFUCG could consider encouraging Boards and Commissions to structure agendas for more collaboration, or reducing the meeting frequency of Boards and Commissions with limited participation opportunities to when there are specific issues to work through to create more participation from members.

Opportunity Strategy 7.4: Offer facilitation training for board chairs. Chairs of Boards and Commissions are volunteers who dedicate a significant and meaningful amount of time to the work of their boards. While they have a combination of skills and experience that are necessary to leading their boards, they may not know the best practices of leading a meeting. There is no standardized facilitation training for chairs. Understanding the significant work of chairing a Board or Commission, we believe that LFUCG could offer optional, compensated facilitation training for Board Chairs. The [facilitation center](#) at Eastern Kentucky University could be a helpful resource for this recommendation.

Opportunity Strategy 7.5: Increase connection between Boards and Commissions and Urban County Council. LFUCG Councilmembers are an important asset to the purpose and functionality of many Boards and Commissions. Councilmembers that sit on boards can help guide conversation, connect the work of the boards with other aspects of LFUCG, and offer important perspective on how to collaborate between Boards, LFUCG, and the public. We think

Spotlight: Senior Services Commission

The Senior Services Commission is a good example of an Advisory Board that provides opportunities for participation for members. These include:

- **Inviting LFUCG staff** to give presentations about relevant projects and issues, for example the designs for Lexington's new Senior and Therapeutic Recreation Center.
- Forming **member committees** for working through Board specific project. The Senior Services Commission has committees for Advocacy, Education, Housing, and Transportation.
- Inviting **updates from other Boards and Commissions**, including an update from the Board of Health.
- Connecting the work of the Commission to other **community projects**, like through partnership with the Dementia Friendly Lexington Program.

that that boards struggling to connect with LFUCG could initiate or strengthen their relationships with current or former Councilmembers.

Functionality Recommendation #3: Strengthen staff capacity to support Boards and Commissions

LFUCGs Boards and Commissions are more effective when paired with a well-equipped staff point of contact, but staff do not always have the resources they need to effectively work with boards. Overburdened staff points of contact can be demotivating for boards, reducing the effectiveness of Board and Commission meetings. We believe there are a variety of opportunities to strengthen staff capacity to support boards.

Priority Strategy 8.1: Clarify relationships between boards and LFUCG divisions and staff.

Throughout our research and engagement, several boards, particularly in the advisory category, expressed confusion about which division/department of LFUCG they should report to, and what staff they could potentially work with. LFUCG should clarify these relationships, potentially consolidating staff time, saving resources, and helping connecting the board's work with LFUCG more directly.

Priority Strategy 8.2: Provide LFUCG staff points of contact with staff-specific onboarding materials. LFUCG should develop a standardized onboarding packet for creating a well-functioning board and provide it to staff points of contact (PCs). This packet could include resources on basic technology processes, meeting management, member expectations, potential meeting venues, and potential engagement strategies.

Priority Strategy 8.3: Ensure staff points of contact have backend authority. LFUCG staff points of contact (PCs) represent essential links between LFUCG and its Boards and Commissions, yet they don't all have access to updating information about their boards. LFUCG should ensure that staff PCs have the ability to manage backend software for Boards and Commissions, including adding and editing calendar events, uploading minutes and agendas, communicating with board members, and reviewing and tracking new member applications.

Opportunity Strategy 8.4: Host periodic meetings for staff points of contact. LFUCG could consider hosting periodic, regular meetings for Board and Commission staff points of contact to strengthen inter-departmental communication. *Peer cities: In Raleigh, North Carolina, staff PCs meet quarterly to discuss the work of their boards, air common issues and solutions, and share knowledge.*

Opportunity Strategy 8.5: Strengthen tech support for board chairs and staff points of contact. Board and Commission chairs and staff PCs have mixed levels of technical capacity and expertise. LFUCG could provide board chairs and staff PCs with basic technology resources, and a list of who to contact about different technology issues like virtual meetings, updating the calendar, distributing and documenting minutes, and audio-video technology.

Objective 3: Accessibility

Throughout our public engagement during this project, most of the residents we talked to were unaware of the existence of Lexington's Boards and Commissions. From our student focus group, we learned that the experience of attending a Board or Commission meeting could be confusing and alienating. We think that addressing both the discovery of Boards and Commissions and their user experience could go a long way to helping the public feel more connected to these critical decision making bodies. The following section outlines strategies to make it easier for members of the public to learn about, understand, and engage with Boards and Commissions.

Recommendation #9: Improve user experience of attending meetings to enhance public engagement

LFUCG Boards and Commissions face challenges in engaging the public during meetings due to a lack of accessible tools and clear information. This disconnect can lead to decreased attendance and limited participation. There are a variety of strategies for Boards and Commissions looking to make their meetings friendlier for guests and members of the public. These include:

Priority Strategy 9.1: Provide information and guidance materials in meetings: To improve the experience of attending a Board or Commission meeting, LFUCG should encourage boards to provide printed agendas alongside materials that explain the purpose and function of the board. Boards should also encourage their members and speakers to introduce themselves before speaking in meetings.

Priority Strategy 9.2: Ensure virtual meetings links are posted. If meetings are virtual or have a hybrid option, LFUCG should ensure that relevant links are included in public notices and calendars.

Priority Strategy 9.3: Evaluate board meeting venues.

Where a meeting is located has a significant impact on who can and will show up. LFUCG should encourage Boards and Commissions to choose meeting venues that are known to the community (libraries, community centers, schools), with accessible parking and entrances. Boards should also consider the location of their meeting venues relative to driving, walking, and public transportation options. When choosing a meeting room, Boards and Commissions should try to use spaces with adequate space for public seating.

Priority Strategy 9.4: Provide visual cues and signage at meetings. Board and Commission meetings are often in buildings that members of the public don't regularly enter. LFUCG should encourage Boards and Commissions to provide clear directional signage leading to

Spotlight: Student Focus Group

"The agenda really, really helped! It helped some of the pieces fall into place, even though they didn't tell you up front exactly—you could kinda look ahead and say, okay, I see where this will connect."

meeting locations. Boards should also consider providing legible name placards for members and staff, ideally indicating the role of each individual.

Priority Strategy 9.5: Clarifying public comment in meetings. LFUCG should encourage all Boards and Commissions to indicate whether or not public comment is allowed in their agendas. For meetings that include public comment, LFUCG should encourage boards to provide visible or verbal guidelines outlining expectations for public comment and where in the agenda comment will be accepted.

Opportunity Strategy 9.6: Consider having closed sessions at the end of meetings. Occasionally, some boards may need to enter a confidential, closed session during a meeting. When this typically happens, guests from the public are asked to exit the room for an indeterminate amount of time and wait to re-enter. LFUCG could encourage Boards and Commissions to hold closed sessions at the end of meetings when possible. If this is not an option, board chairs should communicate to guests when a closed session is necessary, and make sure to clarify if and when the regular meeting will resume afterwards. This is particularly important for virtual meetings.

Opportunity Strategy 9.7: Provide and encourage the use of microphones in meetings when necessary. LFUCG could provide microphones for board meetings that occur in larger spaces where it may otherwise be challenging for guests to hear and understand speakers. If microphones are necessary, board chairs and staff PCs should work to help members understand proper use and how closely they need to speak to be audible.

Opportunity Strategy 9.8: Provide multilingual software and interpretation. Ideally, all of LFUCG Boards and Commissions would have the capacity to enable participation in multiple languages. Knowing the sheer scope of Boards and Commissions would make this extremely challenging, LFUCG could identify what boards are working to reach residents who need multilingual or ASL interpretation, and provide software or interpreters during their meetings. These boards should advertise which meetings will include interpretation. LFUCG should also ensure that virtual or hybrid meetings use built in closed captioning options.

Spotlight: Grand Rapids Commission Night Out

Consider adopting practices from other cities, such as Grand Rapids' "Commission Night Out," where Council sessions are held in different neighborhoods. These events often include childcare, food, and opportunities to engage with boards, making them more accessible to the public.

Recommendation #10: Increase public awareness and understanding of Boards and Commissions

One of the most commonly cited challenges in the Boards and Commissions members and staff surveys was a lack of public awareness of boards, a conclusion echoed in the public engagement for this project. While a large portion of the residents we engaged for this project

were interested in public service and volunteering for local issues, most were unaware of the existence of most legislative Boards and Commissions, and those that were were not sure how to get involved. There are a variety of strategies that could help bridge this gap and increase participation, including:

Priority Strategy 10.1: Increase social media and online resources about Boards and Commissions. LFUCG should increase the amount of virtual resources about Boards and Commissions. This could include board explainers on the LFUCG website, social media campaigns highlighting specific boards or vacant positions, short videos interviewing board members or staff, promoting specific boards on relevant interest pages, or including information about boards in LFUCG communications like Council newsletters.

Opportunity Strategy 10.2: Invest in in-person engagement. LFUCG could invest in face to face communication about Boards and Commissions by working with staff and elected officials to include boards in their existing outreach. This could include having a table for boards at Civic Expos and other community events, recruiting Councilmembers to share information about Boards and Commissions at neighborhood meetings, working with community organizations and neighborhood associations to include resources at events, or even creating kiosks with information about Boards and Commissions in public spaces like libraries, schools, and community centers.

Opportunity Strategy 10.3: Host mixers and events about Boards & Commissions. LFUCG could work to host casual events where the public can meet Board and Commission members, learn about their work, and learn about opportunities to get involved. LFUCG's Boards and Commissions Fair is a precedent for this. Low stakes events at a public-friendly location like a coffee shop or park could provide an informal opportunity for potential volunteers to connect with board members.

Opportunity Strategy 10.4: Adjust marketing language and communications. Throughout public engagement for this project, most residents responded to talking about Boards and Commissions as a volunteer opportunity and a chance to work with local government to solve community issues. LFUCG could work to reach new residents by using language that resonates with a broader audience. The actual names of many Boards and Commissions (e.g. "Environmental Commission", "Affordable Housing Governing Board") are powerful tools to attract new interest. We believe that referencing specific boards when relevant, not just the general concept of "Joining a Board or Commission" would be very effective.

Opportunity Strategy 10.5: Supplement the FAQ Page: LFUCG could supplement the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on the LFUCG website to help residents navigate the process of attending meetings and joining boards.

Objective 4: Transparency

Transparency is not only important for building accountability and trust in government, but can also aid in strengthening the representation, functionality, and accessibility of boards. The following recommendations outline how to increase the clarity and availability of information about Boards and Commissions for other boards, LFUCG staff, elected officials, and members of the public.

Recommendation #11: Clarify structure and purpose of Boards and Commissions

Through our research and engagement, we found a significant amount of confusion and uncertainty from board members about what boards have the power to do, how they fit within the LFUCG structure, and their ultimate purpose. This lack of clarity can leave boards feeling uncertain and directionless. LFUCG should clearly define the roles, powers, and connections of its Boards and Commissions. To provide clarity and understanding, we recommend the following:

Priority Strategy 11.1: Clarify board powers and responsibilities. LFUCG should ensure that each board/commission has a clear understanding of its powers and limitations. These powers are likely already defined in bylaws or ordinances, so LFUCG should make sure that Board and Commission members receive these bylaws upon onboarding and fully understand them, including their scope and application. Observations of several meetings revealed that many boards misunderstood the extent of their powers, often overestimating their authority.

Priority Strategy 11.2: Define board connections with LFUCG: LFUCG should make sure that applicable council, staff, and administration officials clearly understand each board/commission's role within the larger LFUCG structure. It should also ensure that Board and Commission members of each board understand this as well. LFUCG should also create a comprehensive overview of how they fit into the organization and their specific responsibilities as an educational resource for the public.

Opportunity Strategy 11.3: Create sunset and consolidation process for ineffective boards: Through our research and engagement, we heard from board members and staff that there were some Boards and Commissions that were no longer fulfilling their purpose. LFUCG could create a process that initiates a board review for sunset or consolidation based on objective factors, including member attendance, meeting cancellations, and whether the board is achieving its goals.

Opportunity Strategy 11.4: Self-evaluation or annual report process. LFUCG could encourage boards/commissions to conduct annual self-evaluations. This could include providing an annual list of goals for the year, and self-evaluating based on these goals. Self evaluations could also be reported out to Council with an opportunity for accountability and requests for

additional resources. Alternatively, LFUCG could require boards in specific categories to present an annual report to the Urban County Council.

Opportunity Strategy 11.5: Clarify options to pause

operations. Throughout our research and engagement, we heard from many people that not all Boards and Commissions need to be functioning all the time. Currently, boards like the Cemetery Board can be placed on hold, but they are not empowered to initiate the pause themselves. LFUCG could investigate its ability to allow some boards to self-elect pausing their operations when not needed. We believe that giving boards the authority to pause their activities when necessary would increase flexibility and efficiency within the system.

Spotlight: Raleigh Annual Reports

After conducting a review of their Boards and Commissions, the city of Raleigh passed a resolution requiring every Advisory Board and Commission to make an annual report to the City Council with a general work plan for the year, policy areas to be explored, and participation methods. Quasi-Judicial Boards are exempt from this resolution.

Recommendation #12: Improve public records document retention and transparency

Priority Strategy 12.1: Set clearer guidelines for document retention. While all Board and Commission members have access to online video resources about KY open records laws, it is unclear if every LFUCG Board and Commission understands whether they are subject to document retention policies, and if they are, what exactly those policies are. LFUCG should create clear materials and guidance that instructs boards on guidelines for document retention, document storage, public accessibility of documents, and expected timelines for updating documentation.

Priority Strategy 12.2: Formalize document storage and collaboration tools. Throughout our research and engagement, we observed many Boards and Commissions utilizing a variety of document storage tools, including Google Drive, OneDrive (and MS Docs, PPT), OnBase, Accela, and Granicus. Because of IT staff's cyber-security requirements, the otherwise ubiquitous MS 365 software within LFUCG has gone largely unused in favor of a Google Drive owned by an LFUCG staff person.

Since many Board and Commission members are not employees of LFUCG, Google Drive could be an effective solution for collaboration both inside and outside LFUCG. That said, Boards and Commissions using Google Drive systems not owned or centrally controlled by LFUCG poses risks. LFUCG should create a strategy for either bringing these Google Drive accounts under the purview of LFUCG or offer a different document collaboration and retention system. Either option would have the goal of ensuring documents continue to be collaborative, accessible, and up-to-date, while also ensuring they are more readily shared with the public, interoperable with other LFUCG document storage technologies, and backed up in case of accident.

Priority Strategy 12.3: Develop a policy that determines what LFUCG Board and Commission meetings are recorded. Currently, some LFUCG Boards and Commissions are recorded live in

person, some are recorded by nature of their virtual format, and some are not recorded at all. LFUCG should create a category-specific policy determining if board meetings should be recorded. Recording and sharing recorded meetings can also increase accessibility to residents who cannot make the scheduled meeting times.

Opportunity Strategy 12.4: Provide guidance for website development: Different Board and Commission pages on the LFUCG website have different content. LFUCG could assist staff POCs and board chairs with basic expectations about what content should be present on a Board and Commission page. The Access Lexington Commission provides a great example of a robust, up-to-date page providing information for residents.

Opportunity Strategy 12.5: Create attendance recording standards. Attendance is often not recorded by boards. Additionally, when it is recorded, it is not stored in a way that makes it easy to analyze from a comprehensive LFUCG point of view. LFUCG could create a policy for Boards and Commissions that balances a uniform approach with the type of board and its individual needs. A solution could include providing distributed login authority for Granicus (see recommendation 1-c) to enable staff POCs to log attendance records for board and commission members. This data could be made transparent to the public, providing important accountability to positions that are unelected.

For more information about potential software options, please see Appendix 3: Technology Vendor Considerations

Recommendation #13: Increase understanding of who is on boards

Priority Strategy 13.1: Encourage better gathering of applicant demographics: LFUCG should adopt an opt-out system for collecting applicant demographic data rather than the current opt-in approach. The current response rates limit the ability to assess the demographics of board members. By making demographic data collection opt-out, LFUCG is more likely to receive higher participation rates, providing a more accurate understanding of the demographics of boards and commissions.

Priority Strategy 13.2: Provide interactive reporting on board membership: LFUCG should have the ability to inform Council, The Mayor, and the public with simple up-to-date charts tracking overall demographics of board and commission members in various ways without requiring significant effort from LFUCG staff. Currently, there is a member dashboard available on the [Boards and Commissions webpage](#), but it is a static version that is manually updated by staff. LFUCG could explore implementing an interactive, live dashboard of Boards and Commission members that allows users to sort and filter data by category or individual board. More broadly, LFUCG could update how data is stored and displayed into a larger, centralized hub, or “data lake”. This could facilitate easier analysis and connections across data points from boards to other key city data, among many other benefits.

Recommendation #14: Facilitate knowledge sharing between boards

Boards and Commissions work on a wide variety of issues that impact our community. These issues are often complex, involving multiple adjacent sub-issues. The inherently interconnected nature of Lexington's civic issues and Boards mean that oftentimes, different boards end up working on similar issues without knowing it. Similarly, through our research and engagement, we found significant overlap in the operations, governance, strategy, outreach, and processes of different boards, particularly boards of the same category.

We think that facilitating more knowledge sharing between board members and staff could help increase collaboration, problem solving, and institutional knowledge. These could include:

Opportunity Strategy 14.1: Host combined trainings for new board members. If LFUCG invests in training new board members as described in recommendation 1.11, we believe that to facilitate connection between boards, LFUCG could offer initial training sessions for all new members across boards. This could happen on a semi-regular basis, quarterly or bi-annually. While some training will naturally be board specific, a centralized training that provides an overview of the purpose and function of boards, relationship with LFUCG, relevant policies and processes, and member expectations for new members across boards could be a valuable opportunity to situate new members and create connection across boards.

Opportunity Strategy 14.2: Investigate new board member cohorts. To facilitate even greater connection across boards, LFUCG could consider a cohort approach to training new board members together, where members who join boards within a set period of time are treated as a "class" and continue to convene periodically after onboarding. The implementation of this would likely depend on the leadership of individual board members, but could be a member-driven approach to increasing knowledge sharing.

Opportunity Strategy 14.3: Create peer learning groups. LFUCG could also facilitate member led peer learning groups to facilitate knowledge-sharing between boards. In this model, individual board members could join relevant peer groups (i.e., *boards working to expand community outreach*, *Community center boards*, or *boards that work downtown*) that convene members from relevant boards to meet, learn from each other, or work on projects together.

V. Appendices

Appendix 1: Board and Commission Snapshots Placeholder

The final component of this report will be a series of 67 Board and Commission snapshots with reflections and comments from each individual board. These snapshots will be compiled after staff, chairs, and members have the opportunity to review this report and provide a response to the individual board reflections we have assembled.

Appendix 2: Member Survey Analysis by Board Category

Advisory Boards

Advisory Boards: The Access Lexington Commission, Alarm Advisory Board, Commission on Veterans Affairs*, Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Coalition, Environmental Commission*, Homelessness Prevention & Intervention Board, Mayor's International Affairs Advisory Commission*, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board*, Racial Justice and Equity Commission, Senior Services Commission*, Social Services Advisory Board*, and Tree Board*.*

We received 52 survey responses from members of an advisory board out of a possible 190 currently occupied seats, for a response rate of 27%. Of the twelve Advisory Boards we identified, we received at least one survey response from eight, asterisked above.

Many of the Advisory Board members we heard from were fairly new to their position – the average number of terms served by advisory board respondents was one. These members found their Boards to be moderately effective, with Advisory Board respondents rating their boards effectiveness at achieving their missions as a 3.7/5.

Through the survey, Advisory Board members identified several strengths and challenges, including:

- **Strengths:**
 - **Strong individual leadership** from Board Members and Board Chairs.
 - **Direct legislative impact** resulting from their work.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Resource constraints** that limited funding, staffing, and support from LFUCG
 - **Time commitment and scheduling issues** of potential members who have obligations to jobs, families, and other responsibilities.
 - **Structural issues**, including unclear roles and scopes of Boards and gaps in memberships
 - **Low engagement** from volunteer members and frustration with remote meetings
 - **Systemic issues** that are outside the control of the Board, including regional challenges.

Process

Meeting Frequency & Communication: The vast majority of Advisory Board respondents reported meeting monthly, and report communicating via emails, in-person meetings, and virtual meetings.

Roles: 54% of Advisory Board respondents report that there are clearly defined roles on their boards.

Documentation: 90% of advisory board respondents report that they receive an agenda before board meetings, and 84% reported receiving minutes after meetings.

Efficiency: On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not at all efficient, 5 being very efficient), respondents on average rated the efficiency of their meetings as a 3.7.

Resources

Financial Resources: 43% of Advisory Board respondents report that their Board or Commission has a budget, while 14% were not sure.

Other Resources: 66% of respondents report that they have access to other resources, including staff, facilities, or materials.

Resource Needs: In response to the question “*What additional resources would help your Board or Commission Achieve its purpose?*”, the most requested resource was increased funding, followed by a need for dedicated staff to help with administration, coordination, or department specific resources. Several respondents also cited the importance of LFUCG Leadership engaging with their work and attending meetings.

Legislation

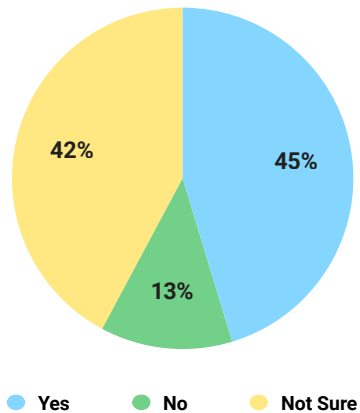
LFUCG Membership: Almost all respondents (92%) reported that the Mayor or a Councilmember sits on their board, but the majority of respondents (52%) were not sure if their board provides an annual report to the Mayor or Urban County Council.

LFUCG Relationship: Most respondents (64%) report working closely or very closely with the mayor and/or councilmembers that sit on their boards.

Legislative Outcomes: 45% of respondents report that they are aware of legislative action being taken based on work by their board. Legislative changes reported include:

- Zoning changes to Accessory Dwelling Units, or ADUs (Senior Services Commission)
- Funding for updates to Lexington’s ADA Transition Plan (Access Lexington)
- Funding for a new Senior and Therapeutic Recreation Center in Shilito Park (Senior Services Commission)
- Funding for supplies for the Veterans Center (Commission on Veterans Affairs)

Are you aware of [LFUCG] taking action on legislation based on work done by your Board?



- Review and updates of zoning ordinances for tree planting and tree canopy requirements (Tree Board)

Recruitment

Reasons for Participation: A desire to serve and contribute to community was the most commonly reported reason for why respondents joined their Board or Commission. This was followed by personal or professional experience

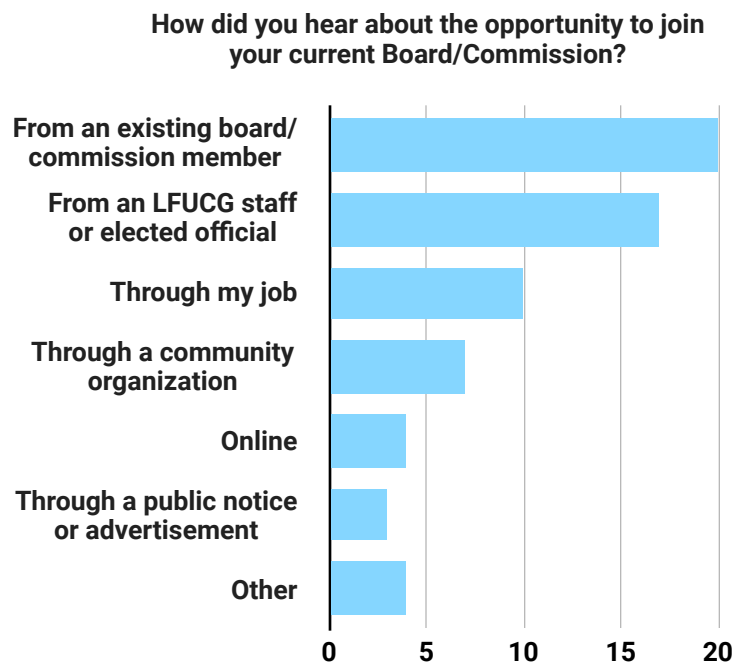
with the focus of the boards, including surviving sexual assault, working with people with disabilities, and immigrating to Lexington. Some respondents report that their board service is linked to their job or that they were directly appointed to their seats by the Mayor. Of note, several respondents answered the question “*Why did you originally join your Board or Commission?*” by simply stating that they were asked to.

Recruitment Path & Tactics: Over 70% of respondents heard about their Board or Commission from an LFUCG staff person, elected official, or

existing board member. 19% of respondents heard about the opportunity from their job, while only 7% heard about the opportunity online. The most commonly reported recruitment tactic of Advisory Boards was word of mouth, followed by recruitment through LFUCG opportunities like council newsletters or through the Mayor’s Office.

Recruitment Barriers: 45% of respondents reported having some trouble recruiting new members, and 9% reported having a lot of trouble. In terms of barriers to recruitment, the most commonly reported issues were:

- **General lack of public awareness** and visibility of Boards, including that many potential members do not know their Boards exist.
- **Limited outreach to diverse communities** and difficulties with traditional outreach strategies.
- **Lack of clear purpose and impact**, including difficulties communicating the meaning of Boards to potential members.



Accessibility

Public Attendance: Almost all respondents (98%) reported that their meetings are open to the public. Only 14 respondents reported that members of the public frequently attend their meetings, half of which were from the Senior Services Commission. About half of the respondents reported that members of the public attend occasionally.

Attendance Barriers: The most commonly cited barrier for public attendance at Advisory Board meetings was lack of awareness of meetings, followed by meeting times during the workday, virtual meeting accessibility issues, and physical accessibility/parking issues. About a quarter of respondents said there were no significant barriers for members of the public to attend meetings.

Increasing Accessibility: 43% of respondents said that they do not feel their Board or Commission needs to be more accessible to the public, while 57% felt that their boards should be more accessible. The two main desires for increased accessibility were increasing general public awareness and increasing input from specific communities, like veterans or residents who have immigrated to Lexington. Many members felt boards were already reasonably accessible, and a few expressed doubt about the value or importance of their boards engaging with the public.

Training

Onboarding: The majority of respondents (66%) did not report receiving training when they joined their Board or Commission. However, 74% of respondents reported that they feel they have the right knowledge to serve effectively on their board.

Training Needs: When asked what additional training could be helpful, the most commonly mentioned need was a structured onboarding and orientation, including information about the mission and pursue of the board, the basic structure of LFUCG, and responsibilities of board members.

Engagement

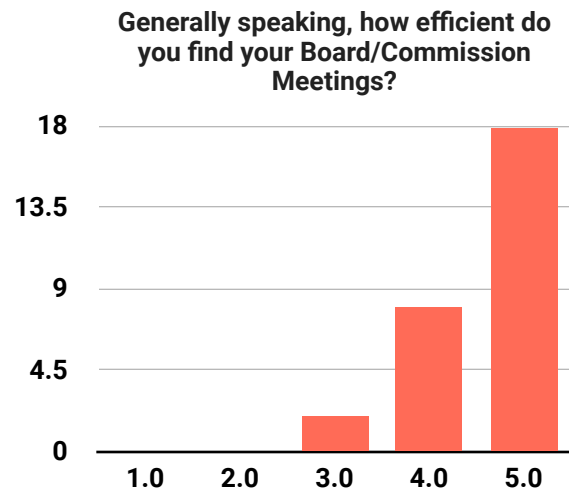
Almost all respondents (93%) report being somewhat or very engaged in their board, and the majority of respondents (80%) are happy with their level of engagement, with the other 20% interested in increasing their level of engagement.

Quasi-Judicial Boards

Quasi-Judicial Boards: the Administrative Hearing Board, the Board of Adjustment*, Board of Architectural Review, Civil Service Commission*, Courthouse Area Design Review Board, Environmental Hearing Board*, Exaction Appeals Committee, Fire Pre-Disciplinary Review Board,*

Historic Preservation Commission, Infrastructure Hearing Board, Internal Audit Board*, Planning Commission*, Police Disciplinary Review Board*, and Rural Land Management Board*, Vacant Property Review Commission, and the Water Quality Fees Appeals Board..*

We received 28 survey responses from members of a Quasi-Judicial board out of a possible 101 currently occupied seats, for a response rate of 27%. Of the sixteen boards we identified as Quasi-Judicial, we received at least one survey response from ten, asterisked above.



The average number of terms served by Quasi-Judicial board respondents was 2. On average, Quasi-Judicial Board respondents rate the effectiveness of their boards to achieve their missions as a 4.6 out of 5.

Through the survey, Quasi-Judicial Board members identified several strengths and challenges, including:

Strengths:

- **Diversity and experience** of the Board members, including a broad range of knowledge, professional backgrounds, and commitment.
- **Strong leadership** from board chairs and staff
- **Neutrality and fairness of decision-making**

Challenges:

- **Mixed opinions on challenges** were noted with Quasi-Judicial Boards, as many members suggested there were no challenges at all.
- **Time Constraints** of Board members.
- **Membership turnover and recruitment challenges**, especially when specific certifications like a CPA registration are required.
- **Difficulty making decisions** on issues that are contentious, emotional, or impacted by specific ordinances or the work of other groups (LFUCG staff, Urban County Council, different Boards and Commissions).
- **Public Engagement and Perception** resulting from mixed public awareness and the political complexity of specific cases.

Process

Meeting Frequency: Quasi-Judicial boards meet at different frequencies, from weekly Planning Commission meetings to quarterly Courthouse Area Design Review Board meetings. Boards like the Police Disciplinary Review Board meet when a case is presented, on a variable schedule.

Roles: 89% of Quasi-Judicial respondents reported that there are clearly defined roles on their board.

Documentation: 93% of members reported that they receive agendas before meetings, and 89% receive minutes after meetings.

Efficiency: On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not at all efficient, 5 being very efficient), respondents on average rated the efficiency of their meetings as a 4.6.

Resources

Financial Resources: 39% of respondents reported that their Board or Commission has a budget, while 36% were not sure.

Other Resources: 86% of respondents reported that they have access to other resources (staff, facilities, materials).

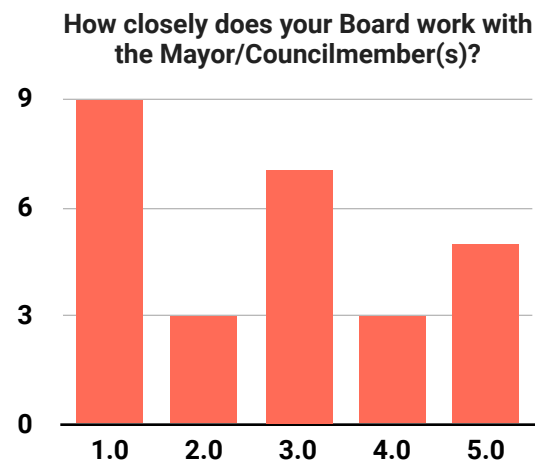
Resource Needs: While the majority of respondents did not express a need for additional resources, some members mentioned specific needs, including paid hearing officers, a community liaison to help members of the public understand the role and jurisdiction of their board, funding, and increased staff contact and research capacity.

Legislation

LFUCG Membership: 36% of respondents reported that the Mayor or a Councilmember sits on their board.

LFUCG Relationship: When asked if their Board or Commission gives an annual report to the Mayor or City Council, 32% replied yes, 25% replied no, and 42% were not sure. As shown in the chart to the right, there was a wide spread in response to the question *“How closely does your board/commission work with the Mayor/Councilmember(s)?”*.

Legislative Outcomes: 42% of respondents were aware of the Mayor or City Councilmembers taking legislative action because of the work of their



Board or Commission. This includes legislative action on:

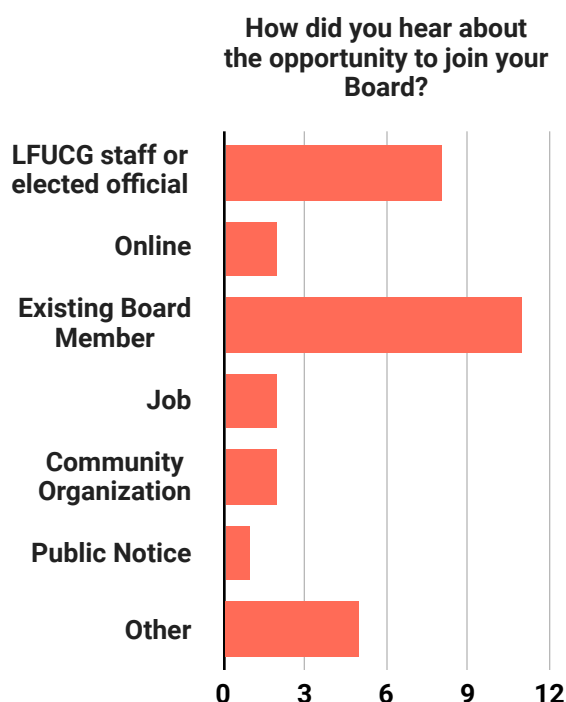
- **Short Term Rentals**, including a zoning text amendment (ZOTA) about Short Term Rentals.
- **The Urban Service Boundary**, a large scale land use decision impacted by both the Planning Commission and Urban County Council.
- **Workplace Equity and Hiring Practices**, including work to reduce disparities in hiring and create job postings that more accurately reflect their roles.
- **Budgetary Actions** across various funds.
- **Changes to Council Rules** and improving department efficiency.

Recruitment

Reasons for Participation: A desire to serve and contribute to community was again the most commonly reported reason for why respondents joined their Board or Commission, closely followed by professional expertise and interest. Several respondents also cited being appointed or asked to join by an elected official.

Recruitment Path & Tactics: The most common referral source of Quasi-Judicial Board members was existing board members, followed by LFUCG staff or elected officials. Over 53% of respondents did not describe any recruitment tactics by their Boards or Commissions, and several others indicated that new members are determined by appointment alone. This suggests that most Quasi-Judicial Boards are not actively involved in recruiting new members, and that respondents who were thinking about recruitment lack clear avenues to reach new members.

Recruitment Barriers: When asked “How do you feel about your current Board/Commission's ability to recruit new members?”, responses were divided evenly (46% each) between having no trouble recruiting new members and having some trouble recruiting new members. Of respondents that described specific challenges with recruitment, key challenges included delay from nominating organizations, strict qualification requirements, the time commitment required for Quasi-Judicial Boards, intimidating subject matter, a lack of differing viewpoints, and a lack of public interest.



Accessibility

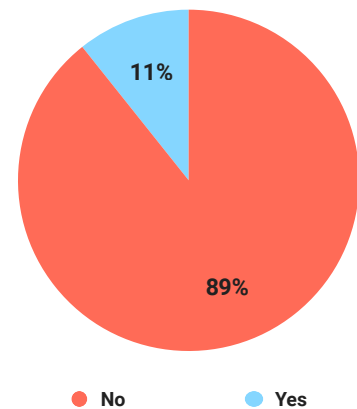
Public Attendance: Most respondents (86%) reported that their meetings are open to the public, with only one board indicating that its meetings are not open and three boards unsure. However, nearly half (46%) of respondents reported that members of the public rarely attend their meetings. Five respondents indicated that the public frequently attends, and respondents from four boards stated they never see members of the public at their meetings.

Attendance Barriers: Barriers to public attendance were noted by several respondents, including logistical issues such as parking inconvenience, meeting times that may not be suitable for the public, and the complexity of subject matter that may deter participation. Almost a quarter of respondents did not cite specific barriers to public accessibility, and only three respondents felt that their board needs to be more accessibly to the public.

Public Communication: About 54% of respondents indicated they communicate with the public, primarily through posted meeting schedules, annual reports, and online communications.

Increasing Accessibility Overall, most respondents did not communicate a pressing need to increase accessibility or public engagement. Some respondents seem to feel this way because their work is internal to LFUCG or too specialized for public engagement, while others seem to be content with the current level of accessibility.

Do you feel your Board needs to be more accessible to the public?



Training

Onboarding: The majority of respondents (82%) reported receiving training when they joined their Board or Commission, while 18% indicated they did not receive any training. Almost all respondents (96%) reported that they feel they have the right knowledge to serve effectively on their board.

Training Needs: When asked what additional training or resources could help, the most common suggestions included updating key guiding documents, continued support from staff for board chairs, and maintaining high-quality initial training sessions. Several respondents reported that the onboarding and resources they received are a strength of their board and role.

Engagement

Most respondents (68%) reported being very engaged with their board, while 21% described themselves as somewhat engaged, and 11% indicated they were not that engaged. Several

respondents reported significant time commitments to work for their board or Commission, with a quarter of respondents spending at least 10 hours a month on work for their board. The majority of respondents (93%) reported being satisfied with their current level of involvement, with only two respondents expressing a desire to become more engaged.

Fund Based Boards

Fund Based Boards: the Agricultural Extension District Board, the City Employees Pension Fund Board, the Corridors Commission, the Downtown Lexington Management District, the Economic Development Investment Board, the Industrial Authority Board, the Opioid Abatement Commission, the Public Arts Commission, and the Sister Cities Program Commission.

We received thirty-one survey responses from members of a fund based board out of a possible 126 currently occupied seats, for a response rate of 25%. Of the twelve Fund Based Boards identified, we received at least one survey from ten, asterisked above.

The average number of terms served by fund based board respondents is 2.5. On average, respondents rated the effectiveness of their boards in achieving their missions as a 4.5 out of 5.

Through the survey, Fund Based Board members identified several strengths and challenges, including:

Strengths:

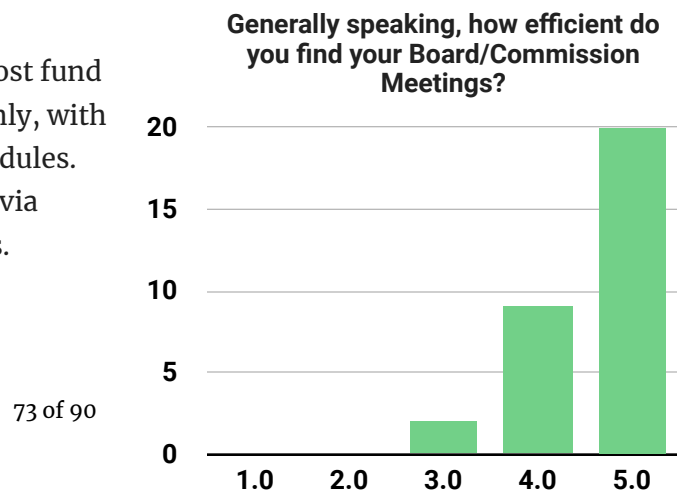
- Variety in experience and opinion of the board members and their passion for the subject matter of their Boards.

Challenges:

- **Funding limitations**, with several respondents noting that limited financial resources affect the scope and impact of their work.
- **Complexity of subject matter**, particularly for boards dealing with financial investments, pension funds, or specialized areas like public art and downtown management.
- **Recruitment challenges**, including difficulty attracting members with the required expertise and managing time commitments.

Process

Meeting Frequency & Communications: Most fund based respondents reported meeting monthly, with a handful of bi-monthly and quarterly schedules. The majority of respondents communicate via email, in-person meetings, and phone calls.



Roles: 87% of respondents reported that their board has clearly defined roles.

Documentation: 94% of Fund Based board members reported receiving agendas before meetings and 90% received minutes after meetings.

Efficiency: Respondents rated the efficiency of their meetings as highly efficient, with an average of 4.5 out of 5.

Resources

Financial Resources: 67% of respondents reported that their board has a budget, while 19% reported that they do not.

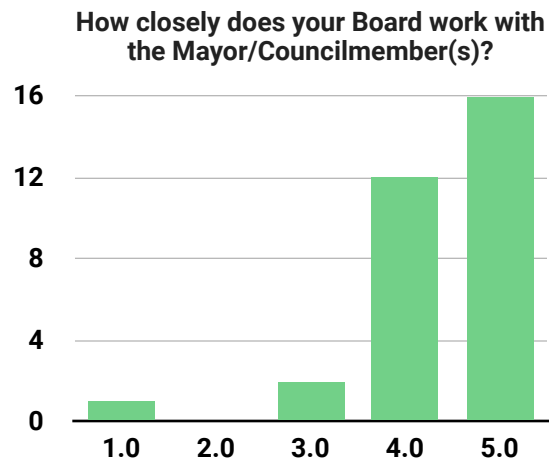
Other Resources: Most respondents (87%) indicated they have access to other resources, such as staff, facilities, and materials.

Resource Needs: The majority of respondents (61%) did not request any additional resources to help their Board or Commission achieve its purpose. Of the responses that did mention additional resources, increased staff capacity and funding were the two most common themes.

Legislation

LFUCG Membership: 97% of respondents reported that a Mayor or Councilmember sits on their board.

LFUCG Relationship: 42% of board members confirmed that their board provides an annual report to the Mayor or City Council. Respondents answered the question “*How closely does your Board or Commission work with the Mayor/Councilmember(s)*” with an average score of 4.4 out of 5.



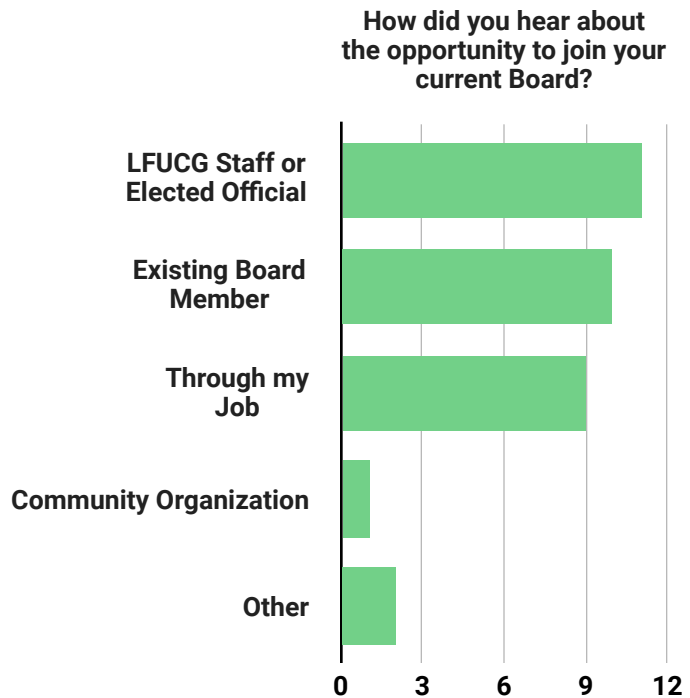
Legislative Outcomes: More than a third of respondents (41%) report legislative action being taken based on the work of their board. For Fund Based Boards, specific legislative action reported tends to be less closely tied with direct LFUCG policy, and can involve action or approval by Kentucky state legislation and statutes.

Recruitment

Reasons for Participation: The most commonly reported reason for joining a fund based board was a desire to serve and contribute to the Lexington community. Many respondents expressed a strong passion for public service, community development, and giving back to Fayette County. Professional expertise and interest in specific subjects like public art, languages,

economic development, and finance, were the next most common reason. A substantial number of respondents noted that they were asked to join, either by existing board members, peers, or through direct appointments by the Mayor.

Recruitment Path & Tactics: When asked “How does your Board or Commission recruit new members?”, about a third of respondents were not sure or didn’t know. Word of mouth was the most commonly mentioned recruitment tactic, from both existing board members and LFUCG staff or elected officials.



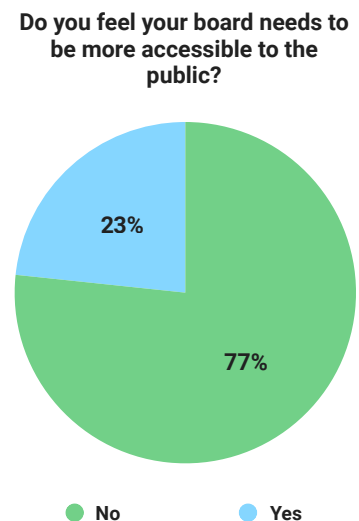
Recruitment Barriers: The majority of respondents (65%) reported that they have no trouble recruiting new members. Only two respondents answered that they have a lot of trouble recruiting new members. Of the respondents that reported they have some or a lot of trouble with recruitment, almost every barrier identified was related to a lack of knowledge/intimidation about the subject of their boards.

Accessibility

Public Accessibility: Most respondents (84%) reported that their meetings are open to the public. Members reported different levels of public attendance at their meetings, with about a third of respondents each selecting they *never*, *rarely*, or *occasionally* see members of the public at their meetings. Only two respondents reported frequently seeing members of the public at their meetings.

Attendance Barriers: Several respondents mentioned that the date and times of their meetings (weekday mornings) are likely barriers to more public attendance.

Public Communication: 48% of respondents reported that their board communicates with the public through channels like email, phone, social media, council meetings, newsletters, and public events



Increasing Accessibility: A majority of respondents (77%) do not feel that their Boards or Commissions need to be more accessible to the public. Many of these respondents cited that their Board or Commission meetings are both open to the public and televised, or that information about their work is available online..

Training

Onboarding: The majority of respondents (71%) reported that they did not receive training when they joined their Board or Commission. 80% of respondents felt that they have the right knowledge to serve effectively on their boards.

Training Needs: Several respondents mentioned that additional training in finance, investments, or fiscal management would be helpful to their work. A handful of members also mentioned that more training about the subject area of their boards (i.e. public art or medical disability) would be beneficial.

Engagement

61% of Fund Based Board members report being very engaged in their boards, followed by 32% who reported being somewhat engaged. The majority of respondents (84%) are happy with their level of engagement.

Place-Based Boards

Place-Based Boards: The Black and Williams Neighborhood Community Center Board, Charles Young Neighborhood Center Board, Dunbar Neighborhood Center Board, Greenspace Trust, Masterson Station Park Advisory Board, Neighborhood Action Match Program Review Board, Paris Pike Corridor Commission, Parking Authority Board, and Raven Run Citizens Advisory Board.

We received 36 survey responses from members of a place-based board out of a possible 85 currently occupied seats, for a response rate of 42%. We received at least one survey from all nine of the Place-Based Boards we identified.

The average number of terms served by place-based board members was 2.3. On average, respondents rated the effectiveness of their Board in achieving their mission as a 3.8 out of 5.

Through the survey, Place-Based Board members identified several strengths and challenges, including:

Strengths:

- **Members:** Several respondents referenced the passion, tenacity, and engagement of place-based board members. to be quite high. Teamwork and togetherness of the members was also mentioned more with Place-Based Boards than any other category.

- **Relationships with LFUCG staff and Councilmembers:** Often, Councilmembers or LFUCG will sit on Place-Based Boards. These placements were identified as an asset to the impact and knowledge of the boards.
- **Strength of the places they help guide:** As the name implies, Place-Based Boards are grounded in specific places. This makes them some of the most concrete and easy to understand boards, and public awareness of the places (not necessarily the boards) tends

Challenges:

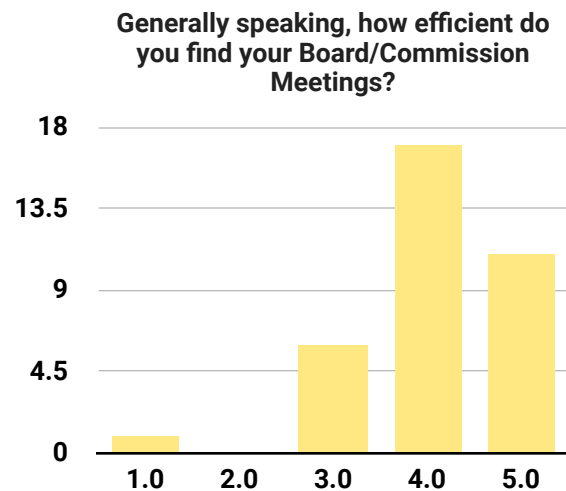
- **Lack of authority and decision making power:** Many Place-Based Boards are structured as Advisory Boards that can make recommendations but don't necessarily have the final say.
- **Funding and budget constraints:** Several respondents mentioned limited operating funds of both their boards and the places they support.
- **Lack of engagement with LFUCG:** Some respondents described difficulties working with different aspects of LFUCG, including coordinating work with multiple departments and needing to schedule meetings with particular LFUCG staff.
- **Quorum and member retention:** Notably, respondents from a handful of boards described recurring issues with getting enough members together to have meetings.

Process

Meeting Frequency: About a third of place-based board respondents reported meeting monthly, and the rest meeting between 4 and 6 times per year. The majority of respondents reported communicating by email, in-person meetings, or virtual meetings.

Roles: 58% of respondents said that there are clearly defined roles on their boards, while almost all (97%) reported receiving an agenda before meetings and minutes after meetings.

Efficiency: Respondents rated the efficiency of their meetings with an average score of 4.0 out of 5.



Resources

Financial Resources: Only 36% of respondents reported that their Board or Commission has a budget.

Other Resources: A large majority (89%) reported that their boards have access to other resources, including staffing, facilities, or materials.

Resource Needs: When asked what resources would help their Board or Commission achieve its purpose, the most common response was more support or connection with LFUCG, including help identifying potential grants, providing updates about projects recommended by the boards, and assistance with fundraising.

Legislation

LFUCG Membership: 53% of respondents reported that the Mayor or a Councilmembers sits on their board.

LFUCG Relationship: Only 14% indicated that their board gives an annual to the Mayor or City Council. Respondents answered the question “*How closely does your Board or Commission work with the Mayor/Councilmember(s)?*” with an average score of 3.4 out of 5.

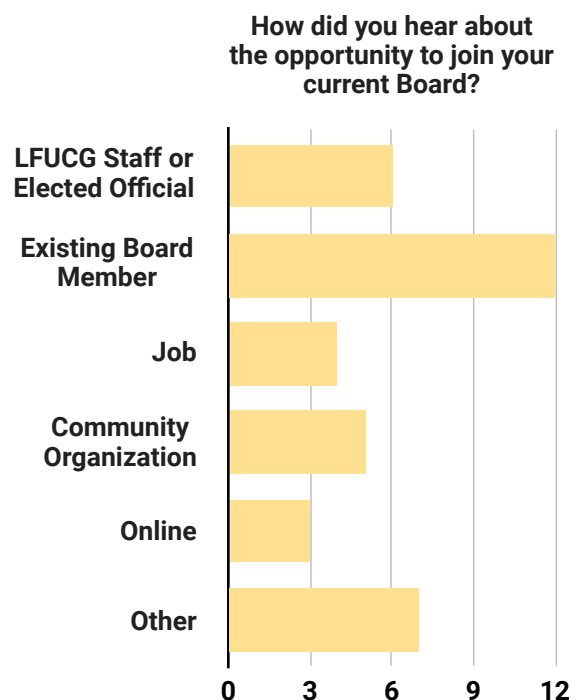
Legislative Outcomes: Only three respondents selected that they were aware of the Mayor or City Council reviewing or taking action on legislation based on the work of their board.

Recruitment

Reasons for Participation: Similar to all board categories, the most commonly reported reason for place-based board Members joining their boards was community service or community involvement. Next most common was a particular interest in parks, greenspaces or conservation, followed by direct appointments or invitations from elected officials or relevant organizations.

Recruitment Path & Tactics: When asked how members heard about the opportunity to join their board, the most common response was through an existing board member, followed by from LFUCG staff or other sources. Similar to other categories, the most commonly mentioned recruitment tactic by place-based respondents was word of mouth, followed by recruitment through LFUCG staff or elected officials and recruitment through community organizations. 78% of respondents reported that they have some or a lot of trouble recruiting new members.

Recruitment Barriers: Of the respondents that expressed they have some or a lot of difficulty with



recruitment, the most common barrier identified was a lack of awareness about the existence of their Board or Commission, followed by a lack of interest for potential members that might be familiar with the board. The time commitment required of members, restrictive seat designations, and a need for greater outreach were also mentioned as barriers to recruiting new members.

Accessibility

Public Attendance: 92% of respondents reported that their meetings are open to the public. 58% of place-based board respondents reported that they see members of the public attending their meetings occasionally or frequently.

Attendance Barriers: Most respondents did not identify any specific barriers for members of the public to attend their meetings. Of the respondents that did identify any specific barriers, a lack of knowledge of the meetings and the time that meetings are held (during workdays) were the most commonly identified themes.

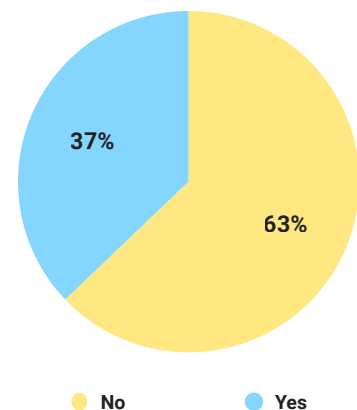
Increasing Accessibility: Only 36% of respondents indicated that feel their Board or Commission needs to be more accessible to the public. Respondents who did not feel their board needs to be more accessible generally indicated that their meetings are already open to the public. Respondents who did feel like their board needs to be more accessible mentioned the importance of community involvement, raising awareness of the board's existence, wanting to increase online accessibility and website quality, and ensuring representation from the communities that they serve.

Training

Onboarding: Only 17% of place-based respondents reported that they received training when they joined their board, while 75% indicated that they feel they have the right knowledge to serve effectively on their boards.

Training Needs: When asked what additional training resources might be helpful, training on LFUCG budgets, processes, and regulations was the most commonly mentioned, followed by general "Board 101" training and onboarding about the history and purpose of different Boards and Commissions. Most respondents (69%) did not describe any additional training opportunities that they thought would be helpful.

Do you feel your Board needs to be more accessible to the public?



Overall Engagement

64% of respondents reported being very engaged in their boards, followed by the remaining 36% that reported being somewhat engaged. The majority of respondents (80%) were happy with their level of engagement, and 14% reported that they would like to be more engaged.

External Boards

External Boards: The Affordable Housing Governing Board, Airport Board, Arboretum Advisory Board, Bluegrass Crime Stoppers, Board of Health, CASA of Lexington, Community Action Council Board, Emergency Medical Advisory Board, Housing Authority Board, Human Rights Commission, Lexington Center Corporation, Lexington Children's Museum, Lexington Convention and Visitors Center Bureau Board of Directors, Library Board of Advisors, Library Board of Trustees, Lyric Theatre and Cultural Arts Center, Picnic with the Pops Commission, and the Transit Authority Board.

We received 92 survey responses from members of an external board out of a possible 238 currently occupied seats, for a response rate of 39%. Of the 20 External Boards identified, at least one survey was received from 18 boards, asterisked above.

The average number of terms served by external board respondents was 1.9. On average, respondents rated the effectiveness of their board in achieving their missions as a 4.6 out of 5.

Through the survey, External Board members identified several strengths and challenges, including:

Strengths:

- **Diversity of skills and experiences** of board members was the most frequently mentioned strength.
- **Commitment to the mission** of their board was also identified.

Challenges:

- **Funding challenges**, including reliance on federal grants and competition with other charitable organizations.
- **Board and volunteer recruitment**, including finding members with specialized skills and finding members that achieve age, race, and socio-economic representation of the community.
- **Operational challenges**, including inconsistent meetings schedules, difficulty communicating expectations of Board members, and LFUCG staffing shortages.
- **Collaboration and outreach**, including coordinating with different public agencies and broadly raising community awareness of their work.

Process

Meeting Frequency & Communications: External Board respondents tend to meet more frequently, with about half of respondents meeting monthly or more often. The majority of respondents communicate via email, in person meetings, zoom, phone calls, and in-person meetings.

Roles: The majority of respondents (89%) reported that their board has clearly defined roles.

Documentation: 96% receive agendas before meetings and 97% report receiving minutes after meetings.

Efficiency: Respondents rated the efficiency of their meetings highly, with an average score of 4.6 out of 5.

Resources

Financial Resources: 74% of respondents reported that their board has a budget.

Other Resources: Most respondents (84%) indicated that they have access to other resources, such as staff, facilities, and materials.

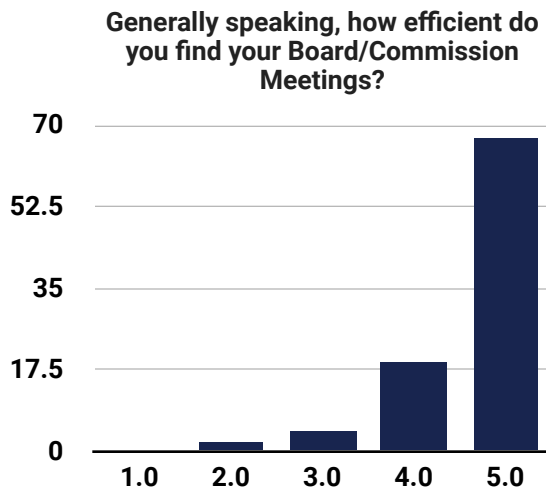
Resource Needs: The majority of respondents (60%) did not request any additional resources to help their board achieve its purpose. Of the thirty seven responses that did, training and development for board members, including training on general board expectations and fundraising, was the most requested resource. Respondents also identified increased funding and dedicated space as helpful additional resources.

Several respondents explicitly stated that they do not see a need for additional resources, and cited strengths like leadership from Executive Directors as a strength of the board.

Legislation

LFUCG Membership: 53% of respondents reported that a Mayor or Councilmember sits on their Board.

LFUCG Relationship; 53% indicated that their Board provides an annual report to the Mayor or Urban County Council. Respondents answered the Question “How closely does your Board or Commission work with the Mayor/Councilmember(s)?” with an average score of 3.6 out of 5.



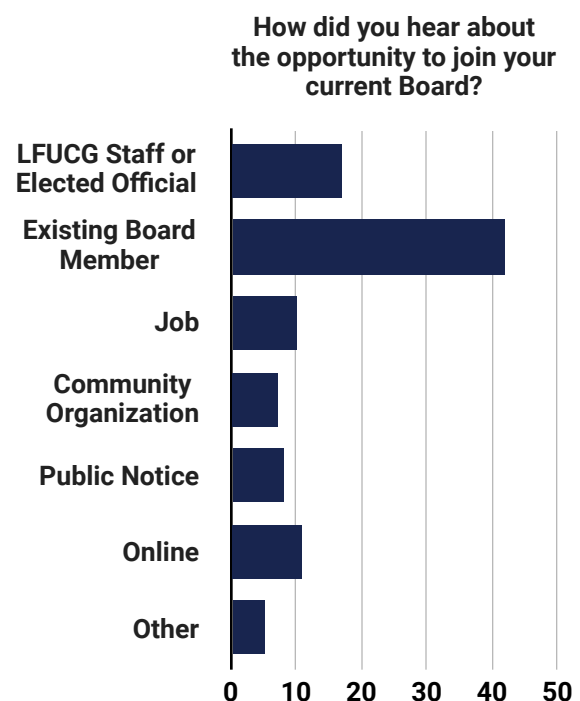
Legislative Outcomes: Most respondents were not aware of any legislative action being taken as a result of the work of their Board, but of the 20% that were, changes included increased funding for the Affordable Housing Fund and the Lexington Public Library, increased resources for emergency services, civil rights ordinances, and new digital billboard regulation.

Recruitment

Reasons for Participation: The most commonly reported reason for respondents joining their External Boards was a desire to serve and give back to the community. Many respondents also mentioned a passion for the mission's of organizations like the Lexington Public Library, Lexington Children's Museum, and CASA. Some respondents also cited personal connections or direct invitations from LFUCG as their reason for joining an External Board.

Recruitment Path: The most common response to the question "How does your Board or Commission recruit new members?" was word of mouth or internal referrals through existing board members. As shown in the chart to the right, almost half of respondents originally heard about the opportunity to join their board from an existing member. Other commonly mentioned recruiting tactics include mayoral appointment, online applications and advertisement, and referrals from community members.

Recruitment Barriers: The majority of respondents (72%) reported that they do not have trouble recruiting new members. Of the respondents that expressed having some difficulty or a lot of difficulty with recruiting new members, the most common barrier identified was the time commitment required of members, followed by a lack of understanding of the mission and role of their boards.



Accessibility

Public Attendance: Most respondents (78%) reported that their meetings are open to the public. External board respondents tended to report less public attendance at their board meetings, with only 7% of respondents reporting frequent public attendance and 43% of respondents reporting occasional attendance.

Attendance Barriers: When asked what might prevent members of the public from attending meetings, lack of awareness of the meetings was the most frequently mentioned barrier, followed by meeting times and locations. About a third of respondents stated that there are no barrier to attending meetings that they know of.

Increasing Accessibility Most respondents (80%) do not feel that their boards need to be more accessible to the public. Many of these respondents cited that their meetings are both open to the public and/or that their organizations already take steps to welcome the public to their meetings.

Some respondents felt that their board is more organizationally focused and does not involve external policy that might necessitate public participation. A few members expressed concern about the specific subjects of their work and the importance of keeping information and programs anonymous. 65% of respondents reported that their board communicates with the public in some manner.

Training

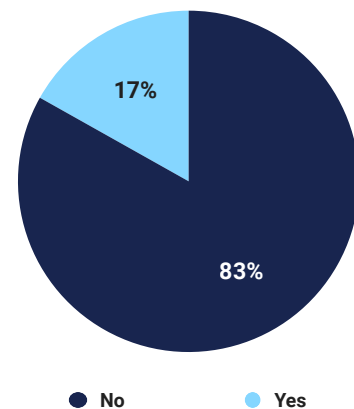
Onboarding: 61% of respondents reported that they did receive training when they joined their board. 73% of respondents felt that they have the right knowledge to serve effectively on their boards.

Training Needs: When asked what additional training resources might be helpful, the most commonly requested subjects were basic board training, followed by financial and budget training. Other training options mentioned include fundraising support, mentorship, and facilitation training.

Overall Engagement

60% of members report being very engaged in their boards, followed by 35% who reported being somewhat engaged. The majority of respondents (82%) are happy with their level of engagement.

Do you feel your Board needs to be more accessible to the public?



Appendix 3: Technology Vendor Considerations

There is a need to evaluate LFUCG's use of Granicus as the primary boards and commissions software. Due to the limitations of this report, the authors were unable to determine the exact possibilities of the existing software. As a first step, LFUCG should contact their Granicus customer success representative and share these issues, which we've collected below for reference. Due to this being a very large company with many interlocking products, it is possible some or all of these challenges can be addressed through updates or backend changes Granicus can implement fairly quickly when presented with specific customer requests from LFUCG.

- **Application Integrations:** Current technologies like Granicus, Drupal, Microsoft 365, and OneDrive are not fully integrated in ways that facilitate easy document references, agenda creation, and meeting minutes and agenda storage and sharing with the public. It is possible there are integrations between Granicus's Boards and Commissions product and their Legistar product that could be better utilized by some boards.
- **Demographic Reporting:** As noted earlier, staff have a very limited ability to customize key data points as displayed within the Granicus application and have no access to historical data directly. All this means that staff spend valuable time exporting data and creating manual reports, with real limitations in demographic data tracking.
- **Communication within B&C Technology:** An ideal solution would empower LFUCG's Boards and Commissions point person with a powerful CRM to quickly and easily identify key contacts across a range of categories, such as board chairs, board members, staff POCs, or all related contacts for a specific board or commission. This is currently done manually through exports from Granicus' Boards and Commissions product, spreadsheets, and individual users' email systems.
- **Limited Admin Roles in Granicus B&C:** The current point person for LFUCG's Boards and Commissions is the only admin for the backend software and so is responsible for many frequent but unpredictable updates. An ideal solution would allow for sub-admin level permissions for users (B&C staff POCs) to maintain and update their own information in the Granicus system, such as attendance records, that could be held in a single location. A Granicus representative suggested that this was possible in the current software.

If working directly with Granicus does not satisfactorily resolve these issues, or if additional issues emerge, LFUCG should consider either replacing Granicus with a different dedicated board and commissions management software or augmenting some of the key limitations of Granicus with supplementary applications. A few example vendors for each of these scenarios is provided below.

Comprehensive Boards and Commissions Vendors

All tools will need to integrate with existing systems (Microsoft 365), meet or exceed existing accessibility standards, and meet or exceed LFUCG cybersecurity standards. The following is an exploration of some options and vendors who can meet the needs identified above, but it should not be interpreted as comprehensive. Any purchase of technology tools should be guided by an RFP process in coordination with LFUCG IT leaders and other stakeholders.

- Granicus Boards and Commissions - Part of the GovMeetings suite of software solutions made for clerks, meeting, and agenda management.
- CivicPlus Board Applications - The primary enterprise-level company competitor to Granicus in this space.
- Several other options oriented toward nonprofit or for-profit organizations offer government versions of their solution including, eScribe Meetings, OnBoard, and Boardable.

Augmentation options to work with Granicus

- **Data Visualization/Warehouse:** As suggested in transparency recommendation #2, an overall data lake or warehouse might assist in providing reports and visualizations on board demographics, tenure, and functions. Potential visualization software includes [Microsoft Power BI](#), [Tableau \(Salesforce\)](#), and [Metabase](#). Potential software for hosting open data management platforms for public-sector entities includes [OpenLogic](#), [OpenGov](#), and [Tyler Technologies' Open Data Platform](#).
- **Document Organization/Management:** Aside from taking the existing usage of Google Drive in-house to LFUCG, other options include [BoardDocs](#) and Granicus' Legistar (already purchased by LFUCG) for the Quasi-Judicial boards.
- **CRM System:** With some limitations identified above, Granicus is working well as an application software. Many of the other challenges relate to it being poorly designed as a communication tool with the various stakeholders from applicants to Board members themselves to staff point of contacts. A dedicated CRM system that integrates with Granicus or has data-import features could help solve this. Potential options include [GovDelivery](#) (owned by Granicus), [Salesforce](#), and [Polimorphic](#).

Appendix 4: Boards and Commissions Member Survey Questions

Thank you for taking CivicLex's Boards and Commissions survey! We appreciate your time and service to the City of Lexington.

If you serve on multiple Boards and Commissions, please fill out this survey one time for each Board or Commission on which you serve. This survey should take about 10–15 minutes.

Please feel free to skip a question if you feel stuck or like it doesn't apply to your work, and reach out to kit@civiclex.org with any questions or concerns!

To learn more about this project, check out our [website](#)!

Role and Responsibilities

- Which board or commission are you a part of?
- How long have you been serving on this board or commission?
- How many terms have you served for this board or commission?

Impact

- What do you see as the primary purpose of your board or commission?
- How effective you believe your board or commission is at achieving this purpose?
- What challenges do you face in trying to achieve the purpose of your board or commission?

Process

- How often does your board or commission meet?
- How do you typically communicate with other members of your board or commission?
- Are there clearly defined roles on your board or commission?
- Do you receive an agenda or other materials before Board/Commission meetings?
- Do you receive minutes of Board/Commission meetings after they happen?
- Generally speaking, how efficient do you find your Board/Commission meetings?

Resources

- Does your board or commission have a budget?
- Do you have access to other resources (e.g., staff, facilities, materials)?
- What additional resources would help your board or commission achieve its purpose?

Legislation

- Does the Mayor or any City Councilmember(s) serve on your board or commission?
- Does your board or commission give an annual report to the Mayor or City Council?
- What kind of report does your board or commission give? (Written, verbal, update in committee, etc)
- How closely does your board or commission work with the Mayor/ Councilmember(s)?

- Are you aware of the Mayor or City Council reviewing or taking action on legislation based on work done by your board or commission?
- Can you briefly explain what action was taken?

Recruitment and Representation

- Why did you originally join your current board/commission?
- How did you hear about the opportunity to join your current board/commission?
- How does your board or commission recruit new members?
- How do you feel about your current board/commission's ability to recruit new members?
- What are the biggest barriers for your board or commission to recruit new members?
- Does your board or commission have any bylaws about representation in the membership of your board or commission? For example, requiring one member from each Council District
- What are the membership requirements set by your board or commission's bylaws?

Accessibility

- Are your meetings open to the public?
- Are your meetings advertised to the public beyond public posting on the city website?
- Do you see members of the public attending your meetings?
- What barriers, if any, do you see for members of the public attending or engaging with your board or commission?
- Do you feel your board or commission needs to be more accessible to the public? Please explain.
- Does your board or commission communicate with the public?
- How does your board or commission communicate with the public?

Training

- Did you receive training when you joined your board or commission?
- Do you feel you have the right knowledge to serve effectively on your board or commission?
- If you feel you need more knowledge, what training or resources would help you gain it?

Technology

- What tools or technologies does your board or commission use to facilitate its work?
- What do you think is the biggest strength of your board or commission?
- What is the biggest challenge your board or commission faces?
- On average, how many hours a month do you spend on work for your board or commission?

General Feedback

- Overall, how engaged would you say you are with your Board or Commission?

- How happy are you with that level of engagement?

Demographics

- What is your age?
- What is your gender?
- What is your race/ethnicity?
- What is your highest level of education?
- How many years have you lived in Lexington–Fayette County?
- Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?
- What Council District do you live in?
- Name (First and Last)
- Email

Appendix 5: LFUCG and External Organization Staff Survey Questions

Welcome! This survey is a part of CivicLex's Boards and Commissions research project. It is designed for LFUCG staff who work with at least one of the 70 legislative boards and commissions in the City of Lexington, or for staff of external organizations with an LFUCG appointed board. This survey is anonymous, but does request that you identify your department and which specific board and commissions you work with. All questions are optional, and if there is any feedback you would like to share that you are not comfortable being matched with this information, there is a link at the end for a 100% anonymous submission. Please feel free to contact Kit Anderson, kit@civiclex.org with any questions.

- Do you work for LFUCG or an External Organization with an LFUCG appointed board?
- What department do you work for?
- How many years have you worked in this role?

Part 1: Current Impact of Boards and Commissions

- Overall, how frequently do LFUCG's Board and Commissions impact your work?
- What LFUCG Board or Commission impacts your work the most frequently?
- In general, what impacts does this board or commission have on your work?
- Overall, how much impact does this board or commission have on your work?
- Overall, how would you describe the impact this board or commission has on your work?
- Is there a second Board or Commission that regularly impacts your work?
 - *If yes: What LFUCG Board or Commission impacts your work the second most frequently?*
 - *In general, what impacts does this board or commission have on your work?*
 - *Overall, how much impact does this board or commission have on your work?*
 - *Overall, how would you describe the impact this board or commission has on your work?*
- Is there a third board or commission that regularly impacts your work?
 - *If yes: What LFUCG Board or Commission impacts your work the third most frequently?*
 - *In general, what impacts does this board or commission have on your work?*
 - *Overall, how much impact does this board or commission have on your work?*
 - *Overall, how would you describe the impact this board or commission has on your work?*
- Do you think Boards and Commissions make your work more accessible to the public?
- Do you think Boards and Commissions make your work more equitable?
- Do you think Boards and Commissions make your work more efficient?
- How would you rank the following public engagement options in order from most to least effective ?

Part 2: Improvements to Boards and Commissions Ideally, would you like boards and commissions to have a larger or smaller impact on your work?

- Which aspects of boards and commissions do you think need improvement? *(For each, select Good the way they are, Need a little improvement, Need a lot of improvement)*
 - Board meeting logistics (date, time, location)
 - Role, duties, and scope of boards
 - Public engagement
 - Member appointment process
 - Policies, by-laws, and processes
 - Resources of boards (staff support, budgets)
- Are there any boards or commissions that you think should be created in LFUCG?
- Are there any boards or commissions that you think should be dissolved or separated from LFUCG?
- Is there any other feedback you want to share about LFUCG's boards and commissions?



Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Master

200 E. Main St
Lexington, KY 40507

File Number: 0864-24

File ID: 0864-24

Type: Committee Item

Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Contract #:

In Control: General
Government and
Planning
Committee

File Created: 08/26/2024

File Name: Short-Term Rental Update

Final Action:

Title: Short-Term Rentals Update

Notes:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: 3.4.25 Short-Term Rentals Update

Enactment Number:

Deed #:

Hearing Date:

Drafter:

Effective Date:

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
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Text of Legislative File 0864-24

Title

Short-Term Rentals Update



Short-Term Rentals Update

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

General Government and Planning Committee





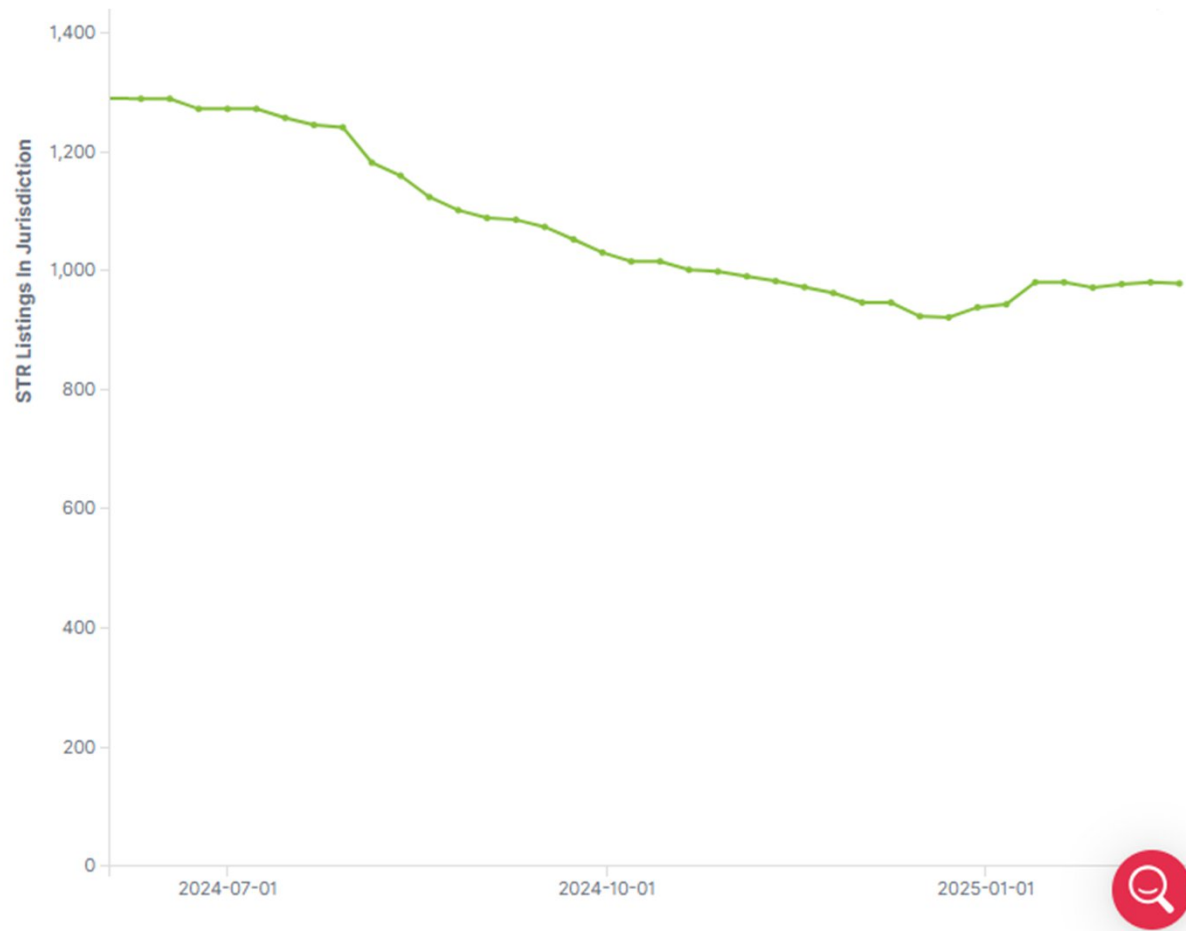
Short-Term Rental Ordinance and Policy Timeline

- Short-Term Rental (STR) Ordinance passed July 11, 2023.
 - There was a 6-month grace period for STR Operators to register existing units.
- In January 2024, the Division of Revenue began identification, investigation and enforcement of non-compliant operators.
 - An RFP was issued for short-term rental compliance and Granicus was selected.
- The Compliance Hotline was launched in late 2024.
- The Short-Term Rental Ordinance was amended December 5, 2024.
- On January 31, 2025, all short-term rental licensees were required to renew their special fees license.





STR Compliance





STR Compliance

- 979 Current Listings
 - 1290 when software went live
- 16 total citations issued
 - 14 unlicensed violations; 2 nuisance violations
 - One \$1,000 citation successfully appealed
 - \$7,000 outstanding
 - \$4750 of citations paid
- 4 properties are up for citation currently
- 78 properties recently identified and have received an initial notice



STR Renewals

- Short-term rentals are a regulated license that must be renewed annually by January 31st.
- Failure to renew results in revocation of the license with the Division of Revenue and zoning compliance.
- Extra steps were taken to notify operators of the renewal:
 - 2 letters to the mailing address for the licensee.
 - Requested outreach from AirBnB to licensees.
 - Direct outreach (phone or email) by Division of Revenue staff.
- Mail delays from January 2025 winter storms:
 - Revenue was still receiving renewal packets sent before the January 31, 2025 deadline as late as February 21, 2025.





STR Renewals

- Renewal is \$200/year for the first STR unit. Additional \$100/year per additional unit
 - 438 initial properties – \$87,600
 - 274 additional properties – \$27,400
 - 712 total properties
 - Total \$115,000 in revenue from renewals





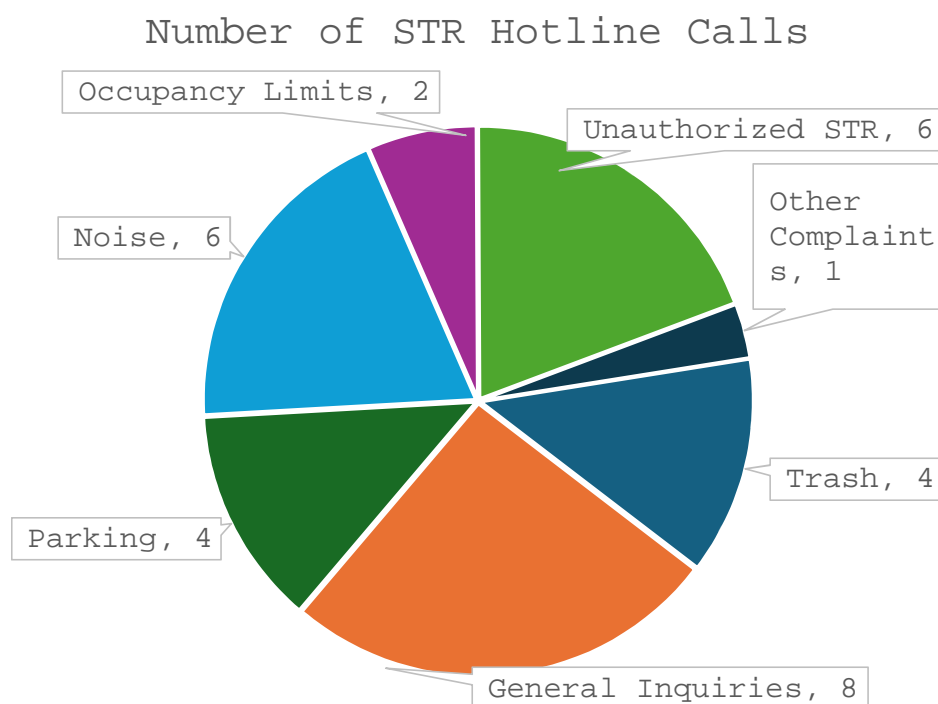
STR Hotline

- The hotline is a 24/7 phone line. Answered through a call center connected to the Granicus Host Compliance software.
- Complaints may be submitted through an online form.
 - Pictures and videos can be uploaded to help support the complaint.
- The hotline provides the ability to automatically alert the emergency contact of the property and the non-emergency number for the Lexington Police Department if requested by the complainant.





Hotline Calls



- Total valid calls – 31 calls *November 14 – Present*
 - Trash – 4 calls
 - General Inquiries – 8 calls
 - Parking – 4 calls
 - Noise – 6 calls
 - Occupancy Limits – 2 calls
 - Unauthorized STR – 6 calls
 - Other Complaints – 1 call
- *Disclaimer: Valid calls do not mean that complaints were substantiated, only that they warranted investigation.*





STR Hotline



You got a new Short-term Rental Hotline call!

This is the 1st report for this address.

We wanted to let you know that we just received a new call on the Short-term Rental Hotline. You'll find the details below.

[Listen to call recording](#)

Call Details

Call ID

0b740ea390a24eeaa0d2ab0d52db8d02

Call Time 30/01/2025 02:42:09 PM (America/New_York)

Caller Name [REDACTED]

Caller's Callback # [REDACTED]

Property's Contact Person Called None

Property's Contact Person's # None

Reported Issue Details

Reported Address Lexington, Kentucky

Reported Issue Details general: Trying to pay short term rental via online process and need to know what his business account number is.

Permit/Registration # None

Please check the hotline listing, evidence may have been uploaded for the Tip/Complaint.





STR Hotline

①

6

Calls in the Past 30 Days

①

45

Total Calls All Time

Calls Over Time ①

● Total Calls





STR Hotline

Call 859-710-9048

Or visit

<https://secure.hostcompliance.com/lexington-fayette-urban-county-ky/complaints/type>



Questions?



LEXINGTON





Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Master

200 E. Main St
Lexington, KY 40507

File Number: 0030-25

File ID: 0030-25

Type: Committee Item

Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 2

Contract #:

In Control: General
Government and
Planning
Committee

File Created: 01/03/2025

File Name: Electronic Digital Billboards

Final Action:

Title: Electronic Digital Billboards

Notes:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: 3.4.25 Electronic Digital Billboards

Enactment Number:

Deed #:

Hearing Date: 01/16/2025

Drafter:

Effective Date:

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	Urban County Council Work Session	01/14/2025	Removed From Docket				Pass
1	Urban County Council Work Session	01/14/2025	Refer	General Government and Planning Committee			Pass

Text of Legislative File 0030-25

Title

Electronic Digital Billboards



Electronic Digital Billboards

For Information Only



Article 17 - SIGN REGULATIONS

Sec. 17-5. - Nonconforming signs.

A legal, nonconforming sign may continue in existence as long as it is properly maintained in good condition.

These provisions shall not prevent the repair or restoration to a safe condition of any sign, but a nonconforming sign shall not be:

- (a) Changed to another nonconforming sign except where only the face or copy is changed;
- (b) Structurally altered so as to increase the degree of nonconformity of the sign;
- (c) Expanded or enlarged;
- (d) Reestablished after its removal; or
- (e) Moved to a new location on the building or lot.

Sec. 17-8. - General requirements.

All signs in all zones shall meet the following requirements:

- (a) Illuminated signs shall be located in a fashion which prevents all direct rays of light from shining beyond the property lines of the lot on which the sign is located.
- (b) No light, sign, billboard or other advertising device shall be designed or erected to imitate or resemble any official marker erected by a government entity or any official traffic sign, signal, or device or use any words, phrases, symbols, or characters implying the existence of danger, or the need to stop or maneuver the vehicle.
- (c) No sign shall be attached to or painted on the surface of any tree, utility pole, or street light.
- (d) Projecting signs shall have at least 8 feet of clearance above a road or sidewalk.
- (e) Neon lighting and other lighted tubing signs may be used on signs where signs are permitted to be directly illuminated as defined in this Article.
- (f) No sign, except for government signs, shall be located within the sight triangle of any intersection.
- (g) No sign shall be placed in or project into the public or private street right-of-way, except as specifically permitted herein.
- (h) Every sign, including those for which a permit is not required, shall be maintained in good and safe structural condition at all times.

Council: DRAFT Amendments

- (i) The immediate premises occupied by a sign shall be maintained by the owner in a clean, sanitary and healthful condition. The premises shall be kept free and clear of weeds, debris, trash and refuse.
- (j) Electronic message display systems shall be inspected by the Division of Building Inspection upon installation to ensure compliance with approved plans, permits and requirements of Article 17.

Sec. 17-11. - Signs permitted by specific zone.

Any sign not specifically permitted shall be prohibited.

(g) Highway Service Business, Warehouse/Wholesale, and Industrial Zones (B-3, B-4, I-1, I-2). Permitted signs may be free-standing or wall mounted, as specified; signs may be non-illuminated, indirectly illuminated, internally illuminated or directly illuminated unless specified otherwise; no free-standing sign shall exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height; no free-standing billboard shall exceed forty (40) feet in height.

(1) Signs shall be permitted as follows:

- (a) The total surface area of signs shall not exceed two (2) square feet per linear foot of street or building frontage, whichever is greater; or thirty-two (32) square feet, whichever is greater.
- (b) One free-standing sign per lot shall be permitted per street frontage, with a maximum of two (2) free-standing signs; not exceeding seventy-five (75) square feet per sign; minimum setback shall be ten (10) feet.
- (c) The surface area of wall-mounted sign(s) shall not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the wall area to which it is attached or thirty-two (32) square feet, whichever is greater, each wall to be considered separately. Only one sign shall be permitted per wall. In the case of a building containing two or more separate uses, these requirements shall be applied separately to the wall area of the building space leased, rented or owned by the individual tenant.
- (d) Window signs shall be limited to no more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total window area.

(2) Traffic directional signs and signs on or under a canopy or awning shall be permitted as regulated in the B-1 zone.

(3) In conjunction with an indoor theater: one marquee, not to exceed twenty-four (24) square feet per theater; such marquee shall project no more than eight (8) feet from the building face to which it is attached and shall have a minimum clearance of eight (8) feet. In addition, one attraction board attached to one free-standing sign, not to exceed twenty-four (24) square feet per theater. The area of the marquee and attraction board shall be included in the computation of the maximum permitted sign area. (Note: Where an attraction board attached to a free-standing sign is not

Council: DRAFT Amendments

utilized, a second marquee, mounted on a different building face, shall be permitted as regulated above.)

(4) One attraction board, wall mounted or attached to a permitted free-standing sign, the area of the attraction board to be included in the maximum permitted sign area.

(5) Menu boards as permitted and regulated in the B-1 zone.

(6) In addition, billboards shall be permitted as follows:

(a) Location.

(i) The lot on which the billboard is constructed must abut a federal or state highway.

(ii) Billboards shall be required to be set back from any street right-of-way twenty (20) feet, or at the same setback as any principal building on the lot, whichever is less.

(iii) Billboards shall not project over the public or private right-of-way.

(iv) No billboard shall be permitted within one hundred fifty (150) feet of any residential zone.

(b) Maximum Size.

(i) No billboard shall exceed four hundred (400) square feet in area.

(ii) Temporary embellishments may be attached, but are limited to ten percent (10%) of the maximum sign area.

~~(c) Minimum Spacing. No billboard shall be permitted within one hundred fifty (150) feet of any residential zone.~~

~~(d) (i) No Standard billboards shall be located at least within five hundred (500) feet of from another standard billboard.~~

(ii) Digital billboards shall be located at least two-thousand five hundred (2,500) feet from another digital billboard.

~~(e) Billboards shall be required to be set back from any street right-of-way twenty (20) feet, or at the same setback as any principal building on the lot, whichever is less.~~

(d) Duration of message for digital billboard: The sign shall remain static for a period of not less eight (8) seconds. The transition from one (1) message or image to the next shall be direct and immediate.

(e) Luminance for digital billboard: Between sunrise and sunset, the maximum luminance shall be five thousand (5,000) nits, and between sunset and sunrise, the maximum luminance shall be five hundred (500) nits. Sunrise and sunset shall be determined by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Council: DRAFT Amendments

(NOAA), US Department of Commerce, for Lexington-Fayette Urban County. The sign must be equipped with an automatic dimmer control or other mechanism that automatically controls the sign's luminance.

Sec. 17-12. - Advertising on interstate highways.

No billboard shall be permitted adjacent to interstate or limited-access highways except in conformance with the ~~setback~~ all requirements established by the Federal Highway Administration, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, and the requirements of this Zoning Ordinance with respect to the zoning district involved.

Sec. 17-18. - Definitions.

The following definitions unique to this Article are listed below.

- (h) Billboard: Signage intended for lease to a variety of businesses, organizations, and/or individuals. In such case, the sign itself shall be an income generator and a commercial use of the property.

Standard Billboard: A billboard erected using traditional materials such as metal, wood, plastic and/or vinyl without internal illumination.

Digital Billboard: A billboard erected using an electronic message display system. Such sign shall have no moving or scrolling messages, special effects, animations, or video display.

NOTE: These are other definitions that are related to billboard regulation

- (p) Electronic Message Display System: A sign with copy or images which includes, but is not limited to reflective disc, direct illumination, rotating veils, light emitting diodes (L.E.D.s), or liquid crystal diodes (L.C.D.s), and is controlled by means of a central computer or video control system and which has no audible sound.
- (q) Flashing or Blinking: Intermittent or sequential illumination for the purpose of attracting attention to the sign. Flashing includes scintillation, light bursts, sparkling, and twinkling.
- (aa) Luminance: The light that is emitted by or reflected from a surface, measured in nits.
- (gg) Nit: A photometric unit of measurement describing luminous intensity (candelas) per unit area. Expressed in SI units, one nit is equal to one cd/m².
- (ll) Rotating or Moving Sign: Any portion of which moves by mechanical means or the wind; does not refer to changing copy with an electronic message display system.

Council: DRAFT Amendments

(mm) Sign: Any copy, including material used to differentiate the copy from the background, which is applied to a surface as a means of identifying, advertising, announcing, or illustrating products, services, and/or events.

(Ord. No. [015-2021](#), § 1, 3-18-2021 Ord. No. [126-2023](#), § 3, 11-2-2023)



STAFF REPORT ON PETITION FOR ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT

PLN-ZOTA-24-00008: AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 17 FOR DIGITAL BILLBOARDS

APPLICANT: Urban County Council

PROPOSED TEXT: SEE ATTACHED (Note: **Red** text indicates an addition to the existing Zoning Ordinance; **Blue** text indicates the staff alternative text; text ~~stricken through~~ indicates a deletion.)

STAFF REVIEW:

On September 26, 2024, the Urban County Council passed a resolution initiating a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance for Planning Commission review and recommendation regarding digital billboards (478-2024). Within the resolution, the Council provided language that would define digital billboards, provide general regulations for the operation of the use, and to establish the zoning districts in which the use would be permitted. The following report reviews the proposed regulations for digital billboards in the community and makes recommendations to modify the proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendment.

TEXT AMENDMENT PROPOSAL

The proposed text initiated by the Urban County Council would allow digital billboards to operate within the same zones as standard billboards: the Corridor Business (B-3), Corridor Node (CN), Wholesale Warehouse and Business (B-4), and Industrial (I-1 and I-2) zones. The digital billboard category would be subject to the same setback, area, and residential separation requirements as standard billboards; however, the council-initiated text includes an increased separation requirement of two-thousand five hundred (2,500) feet between digital billboards due to their potential for creating distractions when grouped together. The proposed text includes a minimum duration time of eight (8) seconds for the message, which is consistent with the limits placed on digital signage in the Lexington Center Business Zone (B-2B) zone and the requirements for digital marquee signs that were adopted in 2023 and 2022 respectively (PLN-ZOTA-23-0002; PLN-ZOTA-22-00001) and the FHWA recommendations for off-premise advertising. The proposal also mirrors the previous digital signage amendments, as it establishes maximum NIT requirements to control the brightness of the sign, as well as prohibitions on moving messages, special effects or transitions, or other distracting effects.

EVALUATION

After review of the Council-initiated text, the Staff has proposed several modifications which are outlined within the proposed staff alternative language. The first significant inclusion was the prohibition of billboards within the Corridor Node (CN) zone, as it is a residential zone, and billboards of any kind are prohibited within the residential zones. The second significant change within the alternative language is a prohibition on converting nonconforming signage to digital signs of any type. Due to the increased risk to driver safety and potential for negative impacts on surrounding uses, digital billboards should be required to meet all applicable criteria in order to be converted. Allowing



nonconforming signs to become digital billboards allows for the potential for inadequate spacing, inappropriate heights, or other aspects that could pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of the community.

The second change from the Council-initiated text is a change to the spacing standard. The staff alternative text clarifies the language proposed by the Urban County Council to more clearly state that digital billboards must also meet the 500-foot separation requirement from standard billboards, as well as the 2,500 square-foot separation from other digital billboards.

The last change from the Council-initiated text is an inclusion of a provision that specifies a specific sign construction requirement for digital billboards. This provision requires that the billboard implement blocking or louver systems to control the viewing angle of the sign. This technology reduces the impact of the sign on the surrounding properties by ensuring that the sign is only visible from a limited angle, which is oriented towards the state or federal highway.

Staff is supportive of the alternative language, because the proposal creates consistency with the current requirements for standard billboards and works to mitigate any potential impacts of the use through restrictions on location, size, construction, and duration.

The PROPOSED STAFF ALTERNATIVE TEXT is attached for further review and consideration.

The Staff Recommends: **Approval of the Staff Alternative Text**, for the following reasons:

1. The proposed text amendment allows for the expansion of the use of electronic billboards within the most intense zones of Fayette County, where standard billboards have already been found to be appropriate.
2. The proposal incorporates spacing and separation requirements to ensure that there is not an undue concentration of the billboards within a particular area, and that the signs are an adequate distance from residential zones.
3. The proposal includes prohibitions on distracting features such as dynamic content, animations, flashing content, or rapidly changing messages, which create distractions and unsafe driving conditions.
4. The proposed text amendment creates standards for the sign's construction that ensure the impact of the sign is directed towards the highway only, and not the adjoining parcels.

DAC/TLW
11/6/2024,
Planning Services/Staff Reports/ZOTA/2023/PLN-ZOTA-24-00008:DIGITAL BILLBOARDS



Article 17 - SIGN REGULATIONS

Sec. 17-5. - Nonconforming signs.

A legal, nonconforming sign may continue in existence as long as it is properly maintained in good condition.

These provisions shall not prevent the repair or restoration to a safe condition of any sign, but a nonconforming sign shall not be:

- (a) Changed to another nonconforming sign except where only the face or copy is changed;
- (b) Structurally altered so as to increase the degree of nonconformity of the sign;
- (c) Expanded or enlarged;
- (d) Reestablished after its removal; or
- (e) Moved to a new location on the building or lot.

(f) Modified or changed to utilize electronic message display systems as a component of the sign.

Sec. 17-8. - General requirements.

All signs in all zones shall meet the following requirements:

- (a) Illuminated signs shall be located in a fashion which prevents all direct rays of light from shining beyond the property lines of the lot on which the sign is located.
- (b) No light, sign, ~~or billboard~~ or other advertising device shall be designed or erected to imitate or resemble any official marker erected by a government entity or any official traffic sign, signal, or device or use any words, phrases, symbols, or characters implying the existence of danger, or the need to stop or maneuver the vehicle.
- (c) No sign shall be attached to or painted on the surface of any tree, utility pole, or street light.
- (d) Projecting signs shall have at least 8 feet of clearance above a road or sidewalk.
- (e) Neon lighting and other lighted tubing signs may be used on signs where signs are permitted to be directly illuminated as defined in this Article.
- (f) No sign, except for government signs, shall be located within the sight triangle of any intersection.

Planning Staff: DRAFT Alternative Text

(g) No sign shall be placed in or project into the public or private street right-of-way, except as specifically permitted herein.

(h) Every sign, including those for which a permit is not required, shall be maintained in good and safe structural condition at all times.

(i) The immediate premises occupied by a sign shall be maintained by the owner in a clean, sanitary, and healthful condition. The premises shall be kept free and clear of weeds, debris, trash, and refuse.

(j) Electronic message display systems shall be inspected by the Division of Building Inspection upon installation to ensure compliance with approved plans, permits, and requirements of Article 17.

Sec. 17-11. - Signs permitted by specific zone.

...

(g) Corridor Business, Corridor Node, Warehouse/Wholesale, and Industrial Zones (B-3, CN, B-4, 1-1, 1-2). Permitted signs may be free-standing or wall mounted, as specified; signs may be non-illuminated, indirectly illuminated, internally illuminated or directly illuminated unless specified otherwise; no free-standing sign shall exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height; no free-standing billboard shall exceed forty (40) feet in height.

(1) Signs shall be permitted as follows:

(a) The total surface area of signs shall not exceed two (2) square feet per linear foot of street or building frontage, whichever is greater; or thirty-two (32) square feet, whichever is greater.

(b) One free-standing sign per lot shall be permitted per street frontage, with a maximum of two (2) free-standing signs; not exceeding seventy-five (75) square feet per sign; minimum setback shall be ten (10) feet.

(c) The surface area of wall-mounted sign(s) shall not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the wall area to which it is attached or thirty-two (32) square feet, whichever is greater, each wall to be considered separately. Only one sign shall be permitted per wall. In the case of a building containing two or more separate uses, these requirements shall be applied separately to the wall area of the building space leased, rented or owned by the individual tenant.

(d) Window signs shall be limited to no more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total window area.

(2) Traffic directional signs and signs on or under a canopy or awning shall be permitted as regulated in the B-1 zone.

(3) In conjunction with an indoor theater: one marquee, not to exceed twenty-four (24) square feet per theater; such marquee shall project no more than eight (8) feet from the

Planning Staff: DRAFT Alternative Text

building face to which it is attached and shall have a minimum clearance of eight (8) feet. In addition, one attraction board attached to one free-standing sign, not to exceed twenty-four (24) square feet per theater. The area of the marquee and attraction board shall be included in the computation of the maximum permitted sign area. (Note: Where an attraction board attached to a free-standing sign is not utilized, a second marquee, mounted on a different building face, shall be permitted as regulated above.)

(4) One attraction board, wall mounted or attached to a permitted free-standing sign, the area of the attraction board to be included in the maximum permitted sign area.

(5) Menu boards as permitted and regulated in the B-1 zone.

(6) In addition, billboards shall be permitted as follows:

(a) Location

(i). The lot on which a billboard is constructed must abut a federal or state highway.

(ii) Billboards shall be required to be set back from any street right-of-way twenty (20) feet, or at the same setback as any principal building on the lot, whichever is less.

(iii) Billboards shall not project over the public or private right-of-way.

(iv) No billboard shall be permitted within one hundred fifty (150) feet of any residential zone.

(v.) No billboard shall be permitted within the Corridor Node (CN) zone.

(b) Maximum Size

(i) No billboard shall exceed four hundred (400) square feet in area.

(ii) Temporary embellishments may be attached, but are limited to ten percent (10%) of the maximum sign area.

(c) Minimum Spacing ~~No billboard shall be permitted within one hundred fifty (150) feet of any residential zone.~~

~~(d)~~ (i) No Standard billboards shall be located within at least five hundred (500) feet from ~~of~~ another billboard.

(ii) Digital Billboards shall be located at least two-thousand five hundred (2,500) feet from another digital billboard, and at least five (500) hundred feet from any standard billboard.

~~(e) Billboards shall be required to be set back from any street right-of-way twenty (20) feet, or at the same setback as any principal building on the lot, whichever is less.~~

(d) Duration of message for digital billboard: The sign shall remain static for a period of not less than eight (8) seconds. The transition from one (1) message or image to the next shall be direct and immediate.

(e) Luminance for digital billboard: Between sunrise and sunset the maximum luminance shall be five thousand (5,000) nits, and between sunset and sunrise, the maximum luminance shall be five hundred (500) nits. Sunrise and sunset shall be determined by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), US Department of Commerce, for Lexington-Fayette Urban County. The sign must be equipped with an automatic dimmer control or other mechanism that controls the sign's luminance. Digital billboards shall utilize blocking or louver technology in order to reduce the sign's viewing angle, and lessen the light trespass impact on surrounding properties.

Sec. 17-12. - Advertising on interstate highways.

No billboard shall be permitted adjacent to interstate or limited-access highways except in conformance with ~~the setback all~~ requirements established by the Federal Highway Administration, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, and the requirements of this Zoning Ordinance with respect to the zoning district involved.

Sec. 17-18. - Definitions.

The following definitions unique to this Article are listed below.

...

(h) Billboard: Signage intended for lease to a variety of businesses, organizations, and/or individuals. In such case, the sign itself shall be an income generator and a commercial use of the property.

Standard Billboard: A billboard erected using traditional materials such as metal, wood, plastic and/or vinyl without internal illumination

Digital Billboard: A billboard erected using an electronic message display system. Such sign shall have no moving or scrolling messages, special effects, animations, or video display.

...

(q) Flashing or Blinking: Intermittent or sequential illumination for the purpose of attracting attention to the sign. Flashing includes scintillation, light bursts, sparkling, and twinkling.

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE
URBAN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
OF LEXINGTON AND FAYETTE COUNTY, KENTUCKY**

IN RE: PLN-ZOTA-24-00008: AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 17 FOR DIGITAL BILLBOARDS – a text amendment to Article 17 to define and regulate digital billboards in the B-3, B-4, I-1, I-2, and CN zones.

Having considered the above matter on **November 21, 2024**, at a Public Hearing, and having voted **8-3** that this Recommendation be submitted to the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council, the Urban County Planning Commission does hereby recommend **DISAPPROVAL** of this matter for the following reasons:

1. Allowing digital billboards within Fayette County should not be permitted because, despite proposed mitigation, such use is inappropriate due to the aesthetic and nuisance impact of increased lighting on adjacent property owners, especially residential land uses.
2. The proposed text amendment is not in agreement with the 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Theme B, Protection Policy #10, which recommends reducing light pollution to protect dark skies. The illumination of a digital billboard will increase light pollution and nuisance to the general travelling public.
3. The request introduces additional roadway conflicts, reducing the efficiency and effectiveness of our roadway systems (Theme D, Goal #1), and creating less safe conditions (Theme D, Goal #1.d).
4. The proposed text amendment does not address numerous concerns, including the possibility of hacking or security of messages on a digital billboard, nor reduction of signage clutter by instituting swapping or removal provisions.
5. The proposed text recommends allowing digital billboards along federal and state highways in Corridor Business, Warehouse and Wholesale Business, Light Industrial, or Heavy Industrial zones. These zones are most common along corridors including New Circle Road, Nicholasville Road, Winchester Road and Richmond Road, which are the most heavily traveled corridors within Fayette County. Thus, higher levels of distraction caused by digital billboards could lead to additional injury and non-injury accidents along the most heavily traveled corridors.

ATTEST: This 3rd day of January 2025.

 by Traci Wade
Secretary, Jim Duncan

LARRY FORESTER
CHAIR

At the Public Hearing before the Urban County Planning Commission, this petitioner was represented by **Daniel Crum, Principal Planner, Planning Services.**

OBJECTORS

- Amy Clark

- Walt Gaffield

- Mike Brower, Southern Heights
Neighborhood Association

OBJECTIONS

- Stated her opposition citing the intensity of the use of digital billboards, enforcement concerns about how digital billboards would affect impoverished portions of Lexington.
- Stated his concern with digital billboards and distracted driving, the locations of potential digital billboards, and if the community wants to build housing on corridors it does not make sense to allow digital billboards.
- Stated the association's opposition because of safety concerns and the possibility of hacking the billboard.

VOTES WERE AS FOLLOWS:

AYES:	(8)	Johnathon Davis, Zach Davis, Forester, Michler, Owens, Penn, Pohl, and Worth
NAYS:	(3)	Barksdale, Nicol, and Wilson
ABSENT:	(0)	
ABSTAINED:	(0)	
DISQUALIFIED:	(0)	

Motion for **DISAPPROVAL** of **PLN-ZOTA-24-00008** carried.

Enclosures: Application
 Council Resolution to Initiate
 Staff Report
 Staff recommended text
 Applicable excerpts of minutes of above meeting



Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Master

200 E. Main St
Lexington, KY 40507

File Number: 0038-25

File ID: 0038-25

Type: Committee Item

Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Contract #:

In Control: General
Government and
Planning
Committee

File Created: 01/09/2025

File Name: Lexington's Preservation & Growth Management
Program

Final Action:

Title: Lexington's Preservation & Growth Management Program

Notes:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: March Update from VM Wu

Enactment Number:

Deed #:

Hearing Date:

Drafter:

Effective Date:

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
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Text of Legislative File 0038-25

Title

Lexington's Preservation & Growth Management Program



LEXINGTON

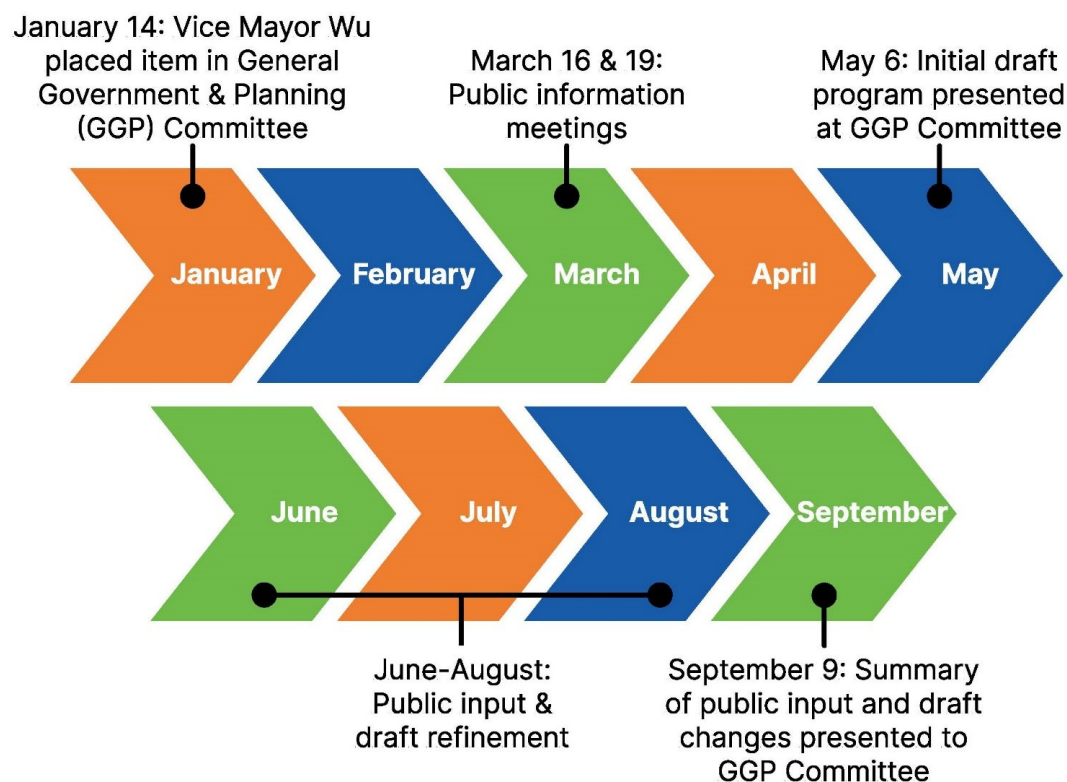
Lexington's Preservation & Growth Management Program (LP&GMP)

For Information Only





General Milestones and Timeline





Public Engagement Opportunities

- Public Meeting Times and Locations:

Sunday, March 16, 2025

2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Marksbury Family Branch Library

2197 Versailles Road, Lexington, KY 40504

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

5 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Lexington Public Library, Eastside Branch

3000 Blake James Drive, Lexington, KY 40509

- Public Input Survey Open March 16 – April 15
- Additional Public Input events and opportunities will be scheduled.





Learn More and Stay Engaged

- Visit Engage Lexington at engage.lexingtonky.gov.
- Register for Engage Lexington.
- View the LP&GMP project page.
- Subscribe to receive project updates.





Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Master

200 E. Main St
Lexington, KY 40507

File Number: 0229-25

File ID: 0229-25

Type: Committee Item

Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Contract #:

In Control: General
Government and
Planning
Committee

File Created: 02/27/2025

File Name: Items Referred to Committee

Final Action:

Title: Items Referred to Committee

Notes:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: Items Referred to Committee

Enactment Number:

Deed #:

Hearing Date:

Drafter:

Effective Date:

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
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Text of Legislative File 0229-25

Title

Items Referred to Committee

ITEMS REFERRED TO THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT & PLANNING (GGP) COMMITTEE

Current	Current Sponsor	Date Referred	Last Presentation	Status	Legistar File ID
A Sense of Place (Assessment of Lexington's African American Hamlets and Historic Preservation of Their Heritage)	J. Brown	April 26, 2022	February 4, 2025		0902-24
Examine Opportunities to Relocate Programming and Initiatives from the Mayor's Office to Other Relevant Divisions within LFUCG.	L. Sheehan	May 31, 2022		In review	
Charter Review	D. Wu	November 1, 2022		July 1 presentation	
Acquire Investor Owned or Other Properties	H. LeGris	November 3, 2022		In progress	
Boards and Commissions Comprehensive Review	S. Lynch	January 24, 2023	March 4, 2025		0804-23
Planning and Development Approval Process Study: Recommendation #8 Tighten Certification to Lock in Requirements	J. Reynolds	June 27, 2023	N/A	In progress	
Planning and Development Approval Process Study: Recommendation #10 Establish a Development Liaison Position	J. Reynolds	June 27, 2023	N/A	In progress	
Electronic Digital Billboards	W. Baxter	June 1, 2018	August 29, 2024	March 4 For Information Only	0863-24
Homelessness Need Assessment RFP	C. Ellinger/D. Gray	October 31, 2023	February 13, 2024	Spring 2025 Work Session presentation	0168-24
Comprehensive Plan Theme A: Equity Policies 1 & 2 Continuing Education	D Wu	January 16, 2024	N/A	In progress	
Bring Back the Bluegrass	D. Gray	January 16, 2024	September 10, 2024		0903-24
Absentee Landlords	D. Gray	August 20, 2024	N/A		
Solar Energy Systems Zoning Ordinance	L. Sheehan/D. Sevigny	October 22, 2024	N/A	May 6 presentation	1048-24
Rural Settlement Study	S. Lynch	October 29, 2024	N/A	Fall/Winter 2025	
Efficiencies in our Development Processes and Compliance with HB 443 (KRS 100.275)	J. Brown	December 3, 2024	January 14, 2025	May 6 presentation	0047-25
Lexington's Preservation and Urban Growth Management Program	D. Wu	January 14, 2025	January 14, 2025	March 4 For Information Only	0038-25
Youth Programming	T. Morton	January 28, 2025	N/A		
Anti-Displacement and Vulnerable Neighborhood Preservation	T. Morton				
Blue Sky Small Area Plan	L Sheehan	February 11, 2025	February 4, 2025	Winter 2025/26	0128-25
Downtown Area Master Plan	H. LeGris	February 11, 2025	March 4, 2025		0228-25
Review and Analysis of all LFUCG-Operated Community Centers	A. Beasley/T. Morton	February 25, 2025			
Annual/Periodic Updates					
Purchase of Development Rights Review	Chair/Ordinance		April 16, 2024	July 1 presentation	0402-24
Lexington History Museum	E. Curtis	May 28, 2019	October 15, 2024	Fall/Winter 2025	1043-24
Landlord and Tenant Advisory Boards	S. Lynch	June 11, 2024	October 15, 2024	Fall/Winter 2025	1044-24
Update on Short-Term Rentals	J. Brown	June 11, 2019	March 4, 2025		0864-24
Subcommittees, Work Groups, Task Forces					
Public Input Subcommittee	H. LeGris	January 17, 2023	June 11, 2024	In progress	0605-24

Updated 2.27.25 A. Larmour