2026 FIPPOA Community Survey Results Memo

Background

The 2026 FIPPOA Survey was designed and conducted in early 2026 to provide an updated snapshot of the community and its priorities to inform the future of FIPPOA's work. A committee of the FIPPOA board - Henry Robin (President), Allan Baum (Vice President), Leland Rechis, and Russell Saray - worked with a consultant - Lyle Matthew Kan - to build the survey questions and distribution strategy.

The survey was released to property owners, renters, visitors, boaters, and business owners via FIPPOA's mailing list and social media. The survey ran from March 3, 2026 to April 3, 2026.

A total of **543 individuals participated** in the survey with 72% of respondents identifying as property owners, 13% identifying as renters, 7% identifying as visitors, 2% identifying as boaters, and 5% identifying as business owners.

Demographic Consistency

The demographics of those surveyed mirrored findings from the 2018 FIPPOA Community Survey - which only surveyed FIPPOA members. On the whole, the community remained **majority male (90%), gay or lesbian (89%), white (94%), and cisgendered (83%)**[1].

Three out of four respondents were either Baby Boomers and Gen Xers, with a **median age of 59**. The majority were coupled - 53% married, 16% unmarried couples, and 3% polyamorous relationships. Fourteen percent of respondents have children, and 75% of those with children brought them out to Fire Island Pines.

Two thirds of respondents claim New York City as their primary residence. Two thirds are either employed full-time or self-employed, while a quarter are retired. Sixty one percent of respondents report an annual household income in excess of $300,000 with 36% reporting an annual household income in excess of $500,000.[2]

---

[1] Note: For sexual orientation and race, this was calculated removing respondents who selected "I Decline to State". A significant number of respondents selected "I Decline to State" when asked about their race and ethnicity (15%) and transgender status (17%). Only one person identified as transgender in the 2026 FIPPOA Community Survey - an increase from 0 in the 2018 FIPPOA Community Survey.

[2] Note: For income, this was also calculated removing respondents who selected "I Decline to State".

Homeowners

Twenty four percent of homeowners have owned their home for five years or less. The median age of those owning their home less than five years was 47.
Forty two percent of homeowners rent their homes - with 27% renting weeks and weekends and 15% renting shares. While income was not a predictive feature in determining whether a homeowner was more or less likely to rent, **those who owned their homes for less than five years and those who were under 45 were significantly more likely to rent** at 60% and 61% respectively.

While the majority of homeowners and renters still rent via personal relationships and local realtors, there is growing usage of platforms like Airbnb and Vrbo.

Satisfaction with FIPPOA

Ninety two percent of homeowners are either extremely satisfied, satisfied, or somewhat satisfied with FIPPOA - only 7% were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

Nearly 9 in 10 property owners who took the survey are FIPPOA members. The majority of FIPPOA members engaged with FIPPOA regularly - relying on the FIPPOA newsletter for Pines-related news and updates, attending annual meetings, using the website, community bulletin board, and social media, as well as reaching out to directly to a FIPPOA board or staff member.[3]

Those who were not members identified "I do not think FIPPOA is focused on the right stuff" and "I have had a negative experience with FIPPOA" as the top two reasons for not being members. "I do not want to spend the money" and "I think membership is too expensive" were tied as the third reason respondents identified for not being members.

The Beach & Community of LGBTQ People - Keeping Fire Island a Special Place

Uniformly, respondents noted deep attachment to Fire Island Pines is a special and magical place for LGBTQ people. **The beach was identified as the top draw of Fire Island Pines, with the community of LGBTQ people being a very close second.** As one respondent put it,

[3] In fact, when it comes to the FIPPOA newsletter, more respondents get their Pines information from the FIPPOA newsletter than any other source (74%). The second most cited way people get information is word of mouth (63%) followed by Facebook groups like Boys of Fire Island (47%). These results should be taken in context, however, since the survey was distributed primarily via the newsletter and social media.

“I think the community and epic natural setting together make the Pines explode with a unique and special energy.” In the words of another, “We love Fire Island because it is an predominantly a gay destination and community, unlike any other in the world. We've been to a number of other gay locales, but we are unique in what we have. Needing to arrive by ferry for most of us, creates a safe cushion so residents feel a sense of security to be who they are with freedom and without fear.”

The beach was also identified as the top area for socialization - with 73% of respondents socializing at the beach. **After public safety in the Pines, dune health and the state of the beach were ranked as a close second when asked about the top area of satisfaction.** In general, respondents praised FIPPOA for the actions it has taken to preserve the beach.

This appreciation for the beach and community was at times in conflict with the realization that Fire Island Pines will need to evolve on some fronts. Most respondents noted that some changes in the future will be necessary and some may indeed be welcomed, however, they encouraged FIPPOA to continue to reflect on what makes the Pines special and keep that front and center in decision making.

Sixty percent of respondents either attend Pines Party or would like to attend Pines Party but are not in town. Those 45 and under were slightly more likely to either attend or would like to attend but are not in town at 69%.

<u>What the Community Cares About</u>

The Pines community is extremely generous with 87% of homeowners contributing to Fire Island Pines charities - with 95% giving to more than one FIP charity.

The community is focused on recycling with 9 in 10 respondents participating in some kind of recycling. Thirty nine percent of respondents already recycle glass, 94% indicated they would recycle glass or it would be easier for them if there were curbside pick of glass recyclables.

Two thirds of respondents have noticed the increased ferry service and 50% have utilized it to visit Fire Island Pines more frequently, come out later in the day, or visit later in the season.

Respondents indicated satisfaction with the extended Pines season, neutral about the renting through platforms like Airbnb and Vrbo, and unsatisfied with the increased vehicle ownership and traffic on Fire Island Blvd. **Thirty five respondents indicated they owned a**

vehicle with an additional 48 reporting they were considering purchasing a vehicle. The main reason identified for owning a vehicle was the transportation of goods. Those under 45 represent 31% of vehicle owners and 21% of those considering purchasing a vehicle.

Future Focus

Quality of life issues continued to be an area respondents encouraged FIPPOA to focus on - with much of the attention focusing on the state of Fire Island Blvd. The top three areas respondents noted were upgrades and improvements to Fire Island Blvd, additional recycling and waste management options, and bamboo and invasive species mitigation. There was mixed to minimal enthusiasm for more lights on the boardwalk, a public restroom in the harbor, and more signage indicating points of interest.[4]

There was a stable floor of 35% of respondents supporting both an Emergency Medical Services District and Erosion Control District for the Bay. However, 49% and 53% of respondents respectively requested more information.

Half of respondents supported an AIDS memorial near their home with another 12% supporting it somewhere else in the Pines. Only 13% of respondents were opposed to an AIDS memorial in the Pines.

Summary

In general, respondents believe Fire Island Pines to be a special slice of heaven on earth. While the demographics may be slowly shifting as a new wave of younger homeowners moves in, 90% of respondents indicated the Pines is extremely to somewhat friendly, inclusive, and welcoming - including 89% of people of color, 85% of straight people, and 85% of visitors. The beach and community of LGBTQ people are what was noted as making the Pines such a magical place, with much gratitude to FIPPOA for contributing to dune health and the state of the beach. Safety was also highlighted. Upgrades and improvements to Fire Island Blvd, inclusive of vehicle ownership and traffic, were repeatedly cited as the top concern for respondents.

[4] It should be noted that a public restroom was the top issue for visitors. It was not for any other group.