



COMMUNITY INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Town Council Chambers Building
765 Lynn Street, Herndon, VA 20170

Thursday, February 5, 2026 | 7:00 PM

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. November 6, 2025 Community Inclusion and Engagement Committee meeting Minutes
- 3. Comments**
 - a. Comments from the Staff Members
 - b. Comments from the Committee Members
 - c. Comments from Citizens
Members of the public may, for one 3-minute period, provide public comments, requests, consent or general item comments, and comments on matters not included on the agenda.
- 4. Presentation**
 - a. Communications Overview
- 5. Discussion**
 - a. Review and Discussion of the Town's Welcome Packet
 - b. Review and Discussion of the Town of Herndon Website
- 6. Adjournment**



Community Inclusion and Engagement Committee Regular Meeting

Agenda Item 2.a.

Agenda Item: November 6, 2025 Community Inclusion and Engagement Committee meeting minutes

Meeting Date: February 5, 2026

Category: Approval of Minutes

Prepared by: Margie Tacci, Deputy Town Clerk

Description:

This is a request to approve the November 6, 2025 Community Inclusion and Engagement Committee meeting minutes.

Background/Timing Impact:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Legal Impact:

N/A

Staff Recommendation/Next Steps:

Recommend approval as presented.

Attachments:

1. November 6, 2025, DRAFT Meeting Minutes

HERNDON COMMUNITY INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 6, 2025

1. Call to Order

Mayor LeBlanc called the November 6, 2025, Community Inclusion and Engagement Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Herndon Council Chambers Building, 765 Lynn Street, Herndon, Virginia. In attendance were: Mayor Keven LeBlanc; Councilmember Alex Reyes; and Committee members Yelena Barth, Rosemary Kendall, Andrew Lacher (elected Chair during the meeting), Fanny Salazar-Laske and K Scarry (elected Vice Chair during the meeting).

Committee Member Charles Hall was absent.

Staff present during the meeting: Brent Heavner, Chief Communications Officer; and Margie Tacci, Deputy Town Clerk.

Determination of a Quorum

Mayor LeBlanc determined there was a quorum of five Committee members present. He stated Mr. Abdul, who had originally been appointed to this Committee, had to resign due to employment conflicts.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Mayor LeBlanc welcomed everyone and asked the committee members to introduce themselves, their organization or community group they represent.

Community Inclusion and Engagement Committee (CIEC) members introduced themselves and provided some background on their organization/group they represent.

Mayor LeBlanc asked Committee Members Lacher and Barth, who were members of the previous Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (HDEIC), to provide background on that group. There was discussion among the Committee about what had occurred with the HDEIC, along with expectations and the meeting schedule for the CIEC.

Mayor LeBlanc referenced the CIEC's charter, stating that all members should have received a copy of it. He expanded on the importance of engagement, along with inclusion. He referenced the updates and changes that were made to this Committee, and highlighted the work of the member organizations.

3. Organizational Meeting Item

a. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Mayor LeBlanc stated that the first order of business is the Election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the CIEC.

Mayor LeBlanc called for nominations for the Chair for the term November 6, 2025 through December 31, 2026.

Election of Chair

Committee member Kendall nominated Committee member Lacher for Chair. Nomination was seconded by Committee member Fanny.

The question was called on the motion, which carried by 4-0 roll call vote. The vote was: Committee Members Barth, Kendall, Salazar-Laske and Scarry voting "Aye". Committee Member Lacher abstaining. Committee Member Hall was absent.

Election of Vice Chair

Committee member Lacher nominated Committee Member Scarry for Vice Chair. The nomination was seconded by Committee Member Kendall.

The question was called on the motion, which carried by 4-0 roll call vote. The vote was: Committee members Barth, Kendall, Lacher, and Salazar-Laske voting "Aye". Committee Member Scarry abstaining. Committee Member Hall was absent.

Mayor LeBlanc congratulated Chair Lacher and Vice Chair Scarry.

4. Comments from the Audience

Chair Lacher reviewed the process and asked those who wanted to provide Comments from the Audience to come forward. There were no comments from the audience.

Mayor LeBlanc took a moment to review the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) laws that also apply to this Council-appointed Committee.

5. Comments

a. **Comments from the Staff Members**

Chair Lacher asked if there were any comments from staff.

Brent Heavner, Chief Communications Officer, stated that he is here to be the committee's resources, engagement, communications and use this group to better understand and communicate to the residents.

Responding to a question from Chair Lacher, Mr. Heavner and Mayor LeBlanc reviewed the communication process between the CIEC and Town Council.

Margie Tacci, Deputy Town Clerk, stated that the Clerk's office would be providing staff support to the Committee.

Councilmember Reyes congratulated the newly elected Chair and Vice Chair and stated that he was looking forward to working with the Committee.

b. **Comments from the Committee Members**

Vice Chair Scarry: provided comments about being raised in Herndon and her love of the community. She wants to help communities to flourish by being inviting and supportive of everyone in Herndon. She stated that everyone is better in the community when all work together.

Committee Member Salazar-Laske: stated that she has lived in the Town for 16 years and has learned a lot about how to help those that are new to the United States. She provided comments on the importance of inclusion and providing a sense of belonging in Herndon.

Committee Member Barth: stated that Herndon is a special place and wanted to see the positive impact CIEC could have on the community.

Committee Member Kendall: provided comments about her professional background and stated that she has training in diversity. She has an understanding of how to give a voice to those that have not had a voice.

Chair Lacher: stated that he was looking forward to working with all members of the CIEC. He provided information about his background and stated that he has seen the value of diversity through his work in the community. He wants everyone in Herndon to feel the value of community.

6. Discussion

a. **Open Discussion - Future Topics and Interests**

Chair Lacher opened a discussion on future topics and priorities for the Community Engagement and Inclusion Committee (CIEC) and invited Councilmember Reyes and Mayor LeBlanc to share Council's expectations.

Councilmember Reyes emphasized that Herndon is strongest when residents know and understand one another. He highlighted the value of faith-based, historical, and cultural connections and expressed interest in continued dialogue about Herndon's evolving community identity.

Mayor LeBlanc stated that the Committee's purpose is reflected in its name and that inclusion and engagement should focus on bringing people in and helping them connect. He discussed the purpose of bringing in all the groups that the members of the Committee represent, along with Town staff, in supporting the Committee's mission. He also provided comments on place-making and how community design, business types, and communications affect belonging, and suggested visible symbols of inclusion such as additional flags or cross-cultural events. He referenced low attendance at events such as Juneteenth and questioned how outreach and trust-building could be improved, citing events such as National Night Out and school-based activities as opportunities for engagement.

There was discussion among staff, Mayor LeBlanc, Councilmember Reyes, and the Committee Members on the following topics:

1. Community identity and how residents inside and outside the Town limits identify with Herndon.
2. Inclusion and engagement of underserved or less visible groups, including seniors, individuals with special needs, and renters.
3. Outreach methods and the effectiveness of current Town communications, including the Town newsletter and Mayor's Office communications.
4. Cultural, seasonal, and holiday events, including attendance challenges and opportunities for cross-cultural activities.
5. Work that faith-based groups are doing in the community. Vice Chair Scarry indicated that she would invite Mayor LeBlanc to the next meeting of a Reston-Herndon clergy group.
6. Food insecurity and family needs during the holiday season, including coordination of food and coat drives.
7. Informal community conversations and relationship-building through shared meals and neighborhood events.

8. Business inclusion, including support for small, home-based, and minority-owned businesses and improved visibility of registered businesses.
9. Welcome efforts for new residents, including review of the Town's welcome packet and challenges reaching renters and apartment communities.
10. Use of metrics and data tools to measure belonging, engagement, and Committee effectiveness.
11. Looking ahead to upcoming milestones; the Herndon Community Center's 50th anniversary, the Mayor's Volunteer Reception 40th anniversary, and the country's 250th anniversary, we should consider ways to incorporate these celebrations into our events and programming.
12. Committee role, goals, and meeting structure, including agenda organization, time management, and procedural guidelines. There was a request to review this topic during each Committee meeting.

With general agreement from the Committee, staff was requested to explore and prepare information on the following topics for possible inclusion on future meeting agendas:

1. Review of Town communications methods and outreach tools (to be included on the next meeting agenda).
2. Evaluation of the Town's welcome packet and options for reaching renters and apartment communities (to be included on the next meeting agenda).
3. Metrics or benchmarking tools related to belonging and engagement. Committee Members were asked to send any comments on this topic to the Town Clerk's office or to Brent.
4. Business inclusion and visibility of local businesses.
5. Community representation and engagement of underserved populations.
6. Holiday season support efforts and information-sharing related to food and coat drives.

7. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Lacher adjourned the November 6, 2025 Town Council Regular Meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Margie C. Tacci
Deputy Town Clerk

Minutes approved by Community Inclusion and Engagement Committee:



**Community Inclusion and
Engagement Committee Regular
Meeting**
Agenda Item 4.a.

Agenda Item: Communications Overview

Meeting Date: February 5, 2026

Category: Presentation

Prepared by: Brent Heavner, Chief Communications Officer

Description:

At the request of the Community Inclusion and Engagement Committee, staff has prepared an overview presentation outlining the Town's communication and outreach program.

Background/Timing Impact:

This presentation is intended to provide the Committee with sufficient familiarity to make informed recommendations to the Town Council regarding communication and outreach priorities and efforts.

At the November 6, 2025 meeting, the Committee requested that staff provide an overview of the Town's communications.

Fiscal Impact:

None.

Legal Impact:

None.

Staff Recommendation/Next Steps:

Staff suggests that the CIEC use this presentation as an opportunity to ask questions and offer recommendations to further enhance the effectiveness of the Town's communication program.

Attachments:

1. FY2026 Communications Overview

Communication Program Update

Town of Herndon, Office of Communication & Economic Engagement

Key External Audience Segments



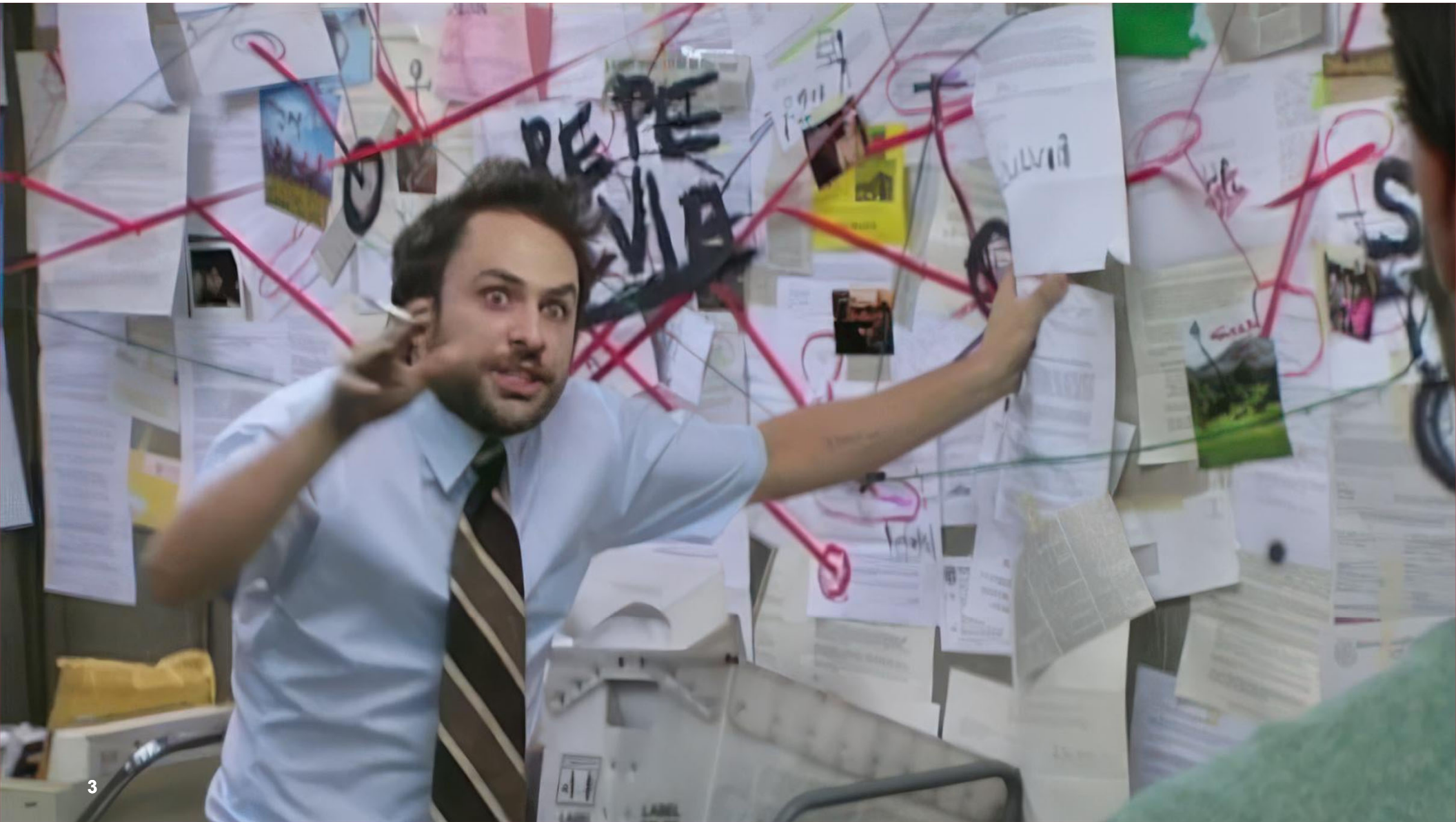
Residents



Businesses



Visitors



3

Key External Audience Segments



Residents

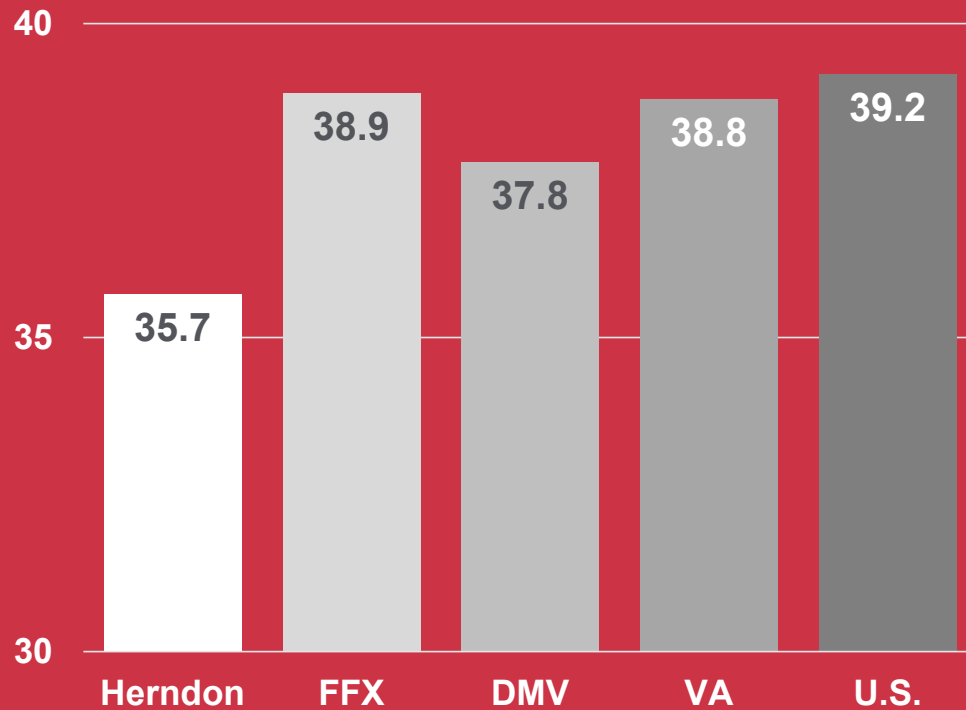


Businesses



Visitors

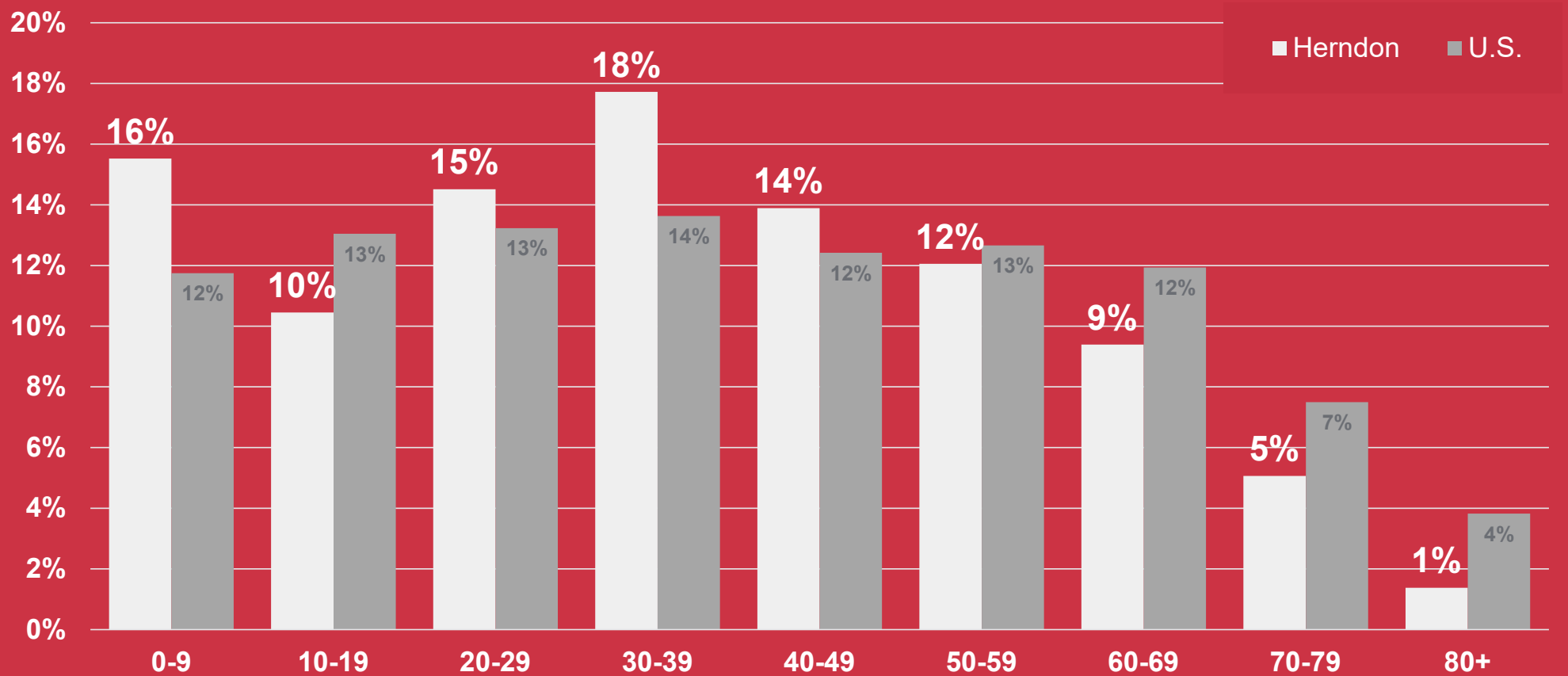
Median Age



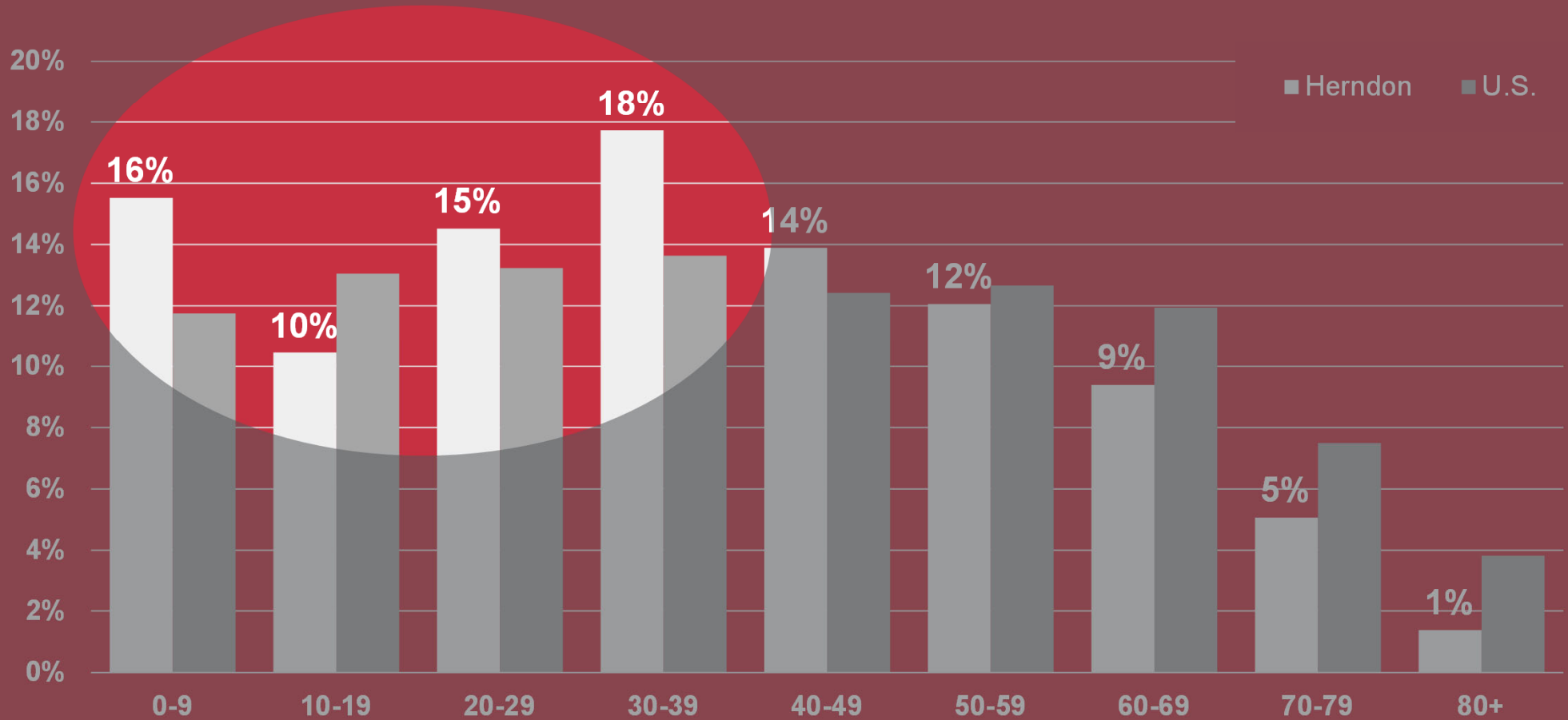
35.7
Median age

Herndon's median age is 6% lower than the DMV's, 8% lower than Commonwealth's and 9% lower than the U.S. as a whole.

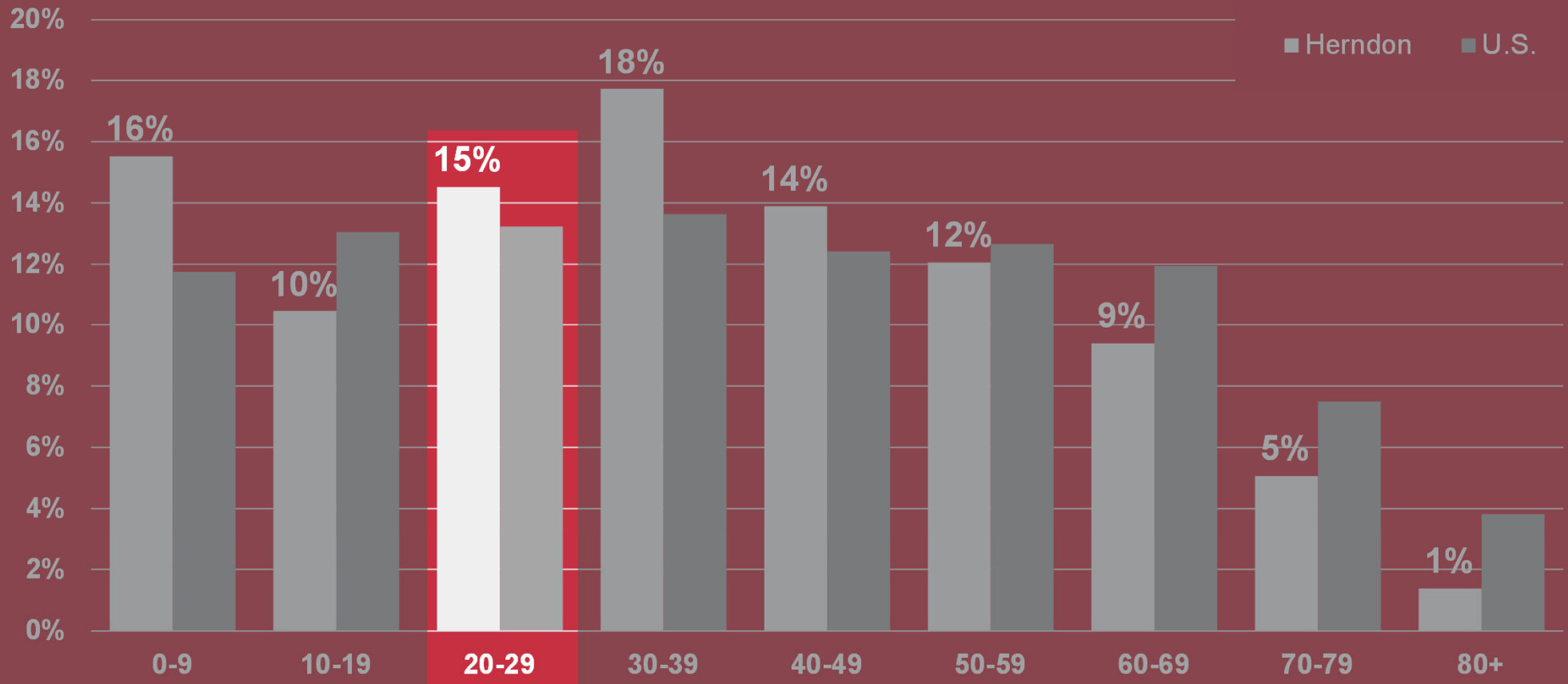
Age Distribution, Herndon vs. U.S. Population



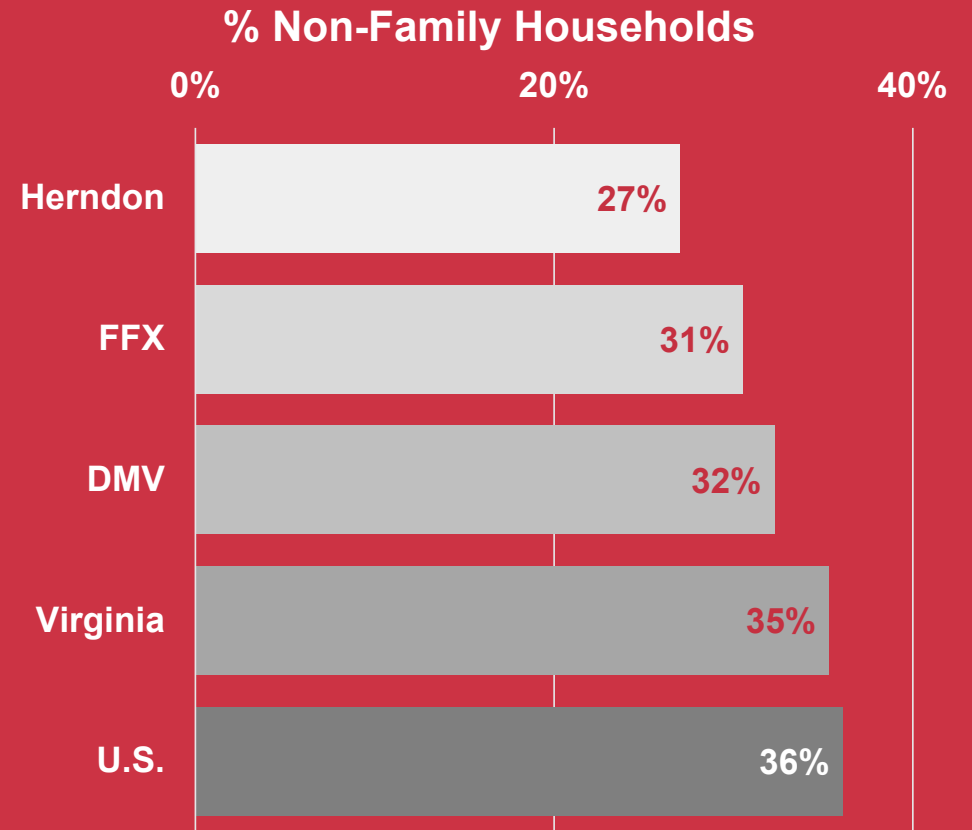
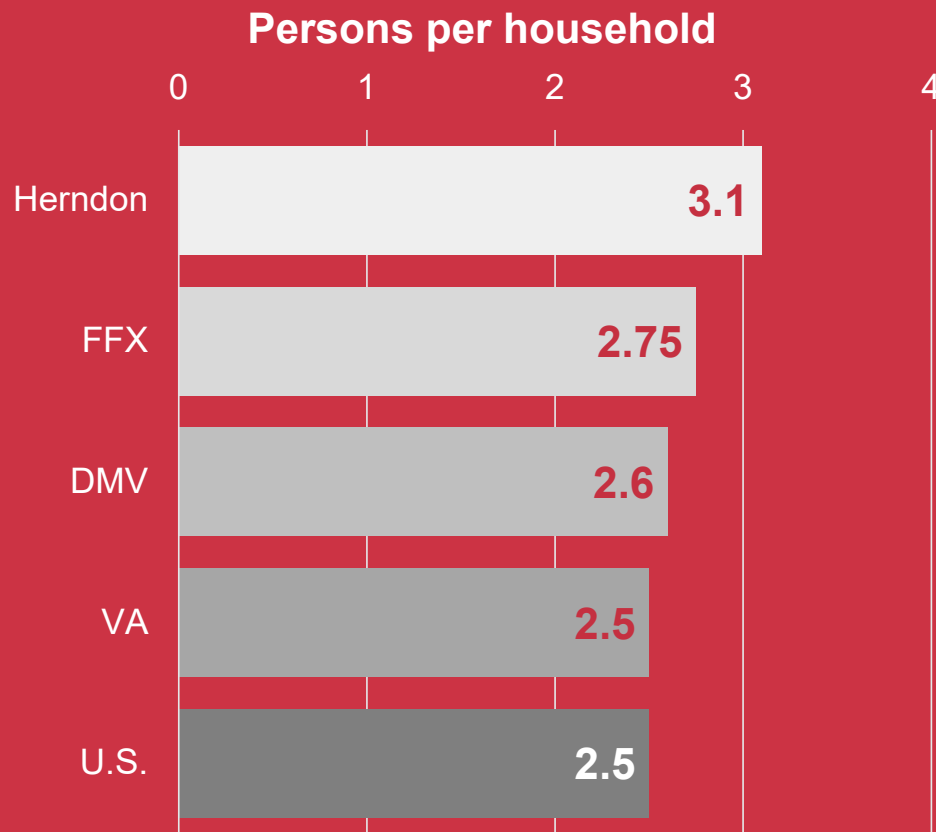
Age Distribution, Herndon vs. U.S. Population



Age Distribution, Herndon vs. U.S. Population

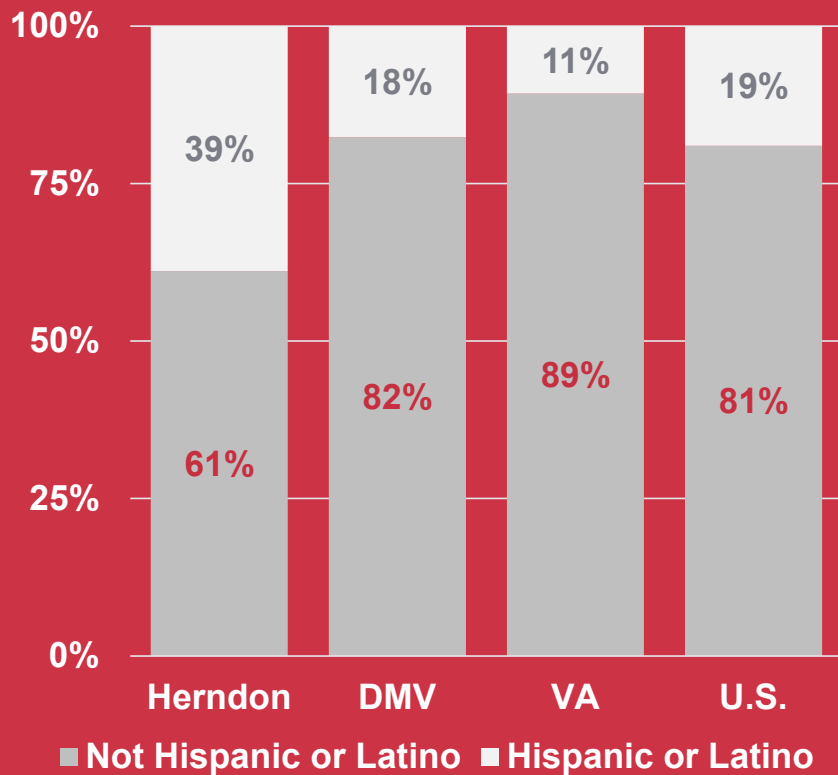


Household Composition

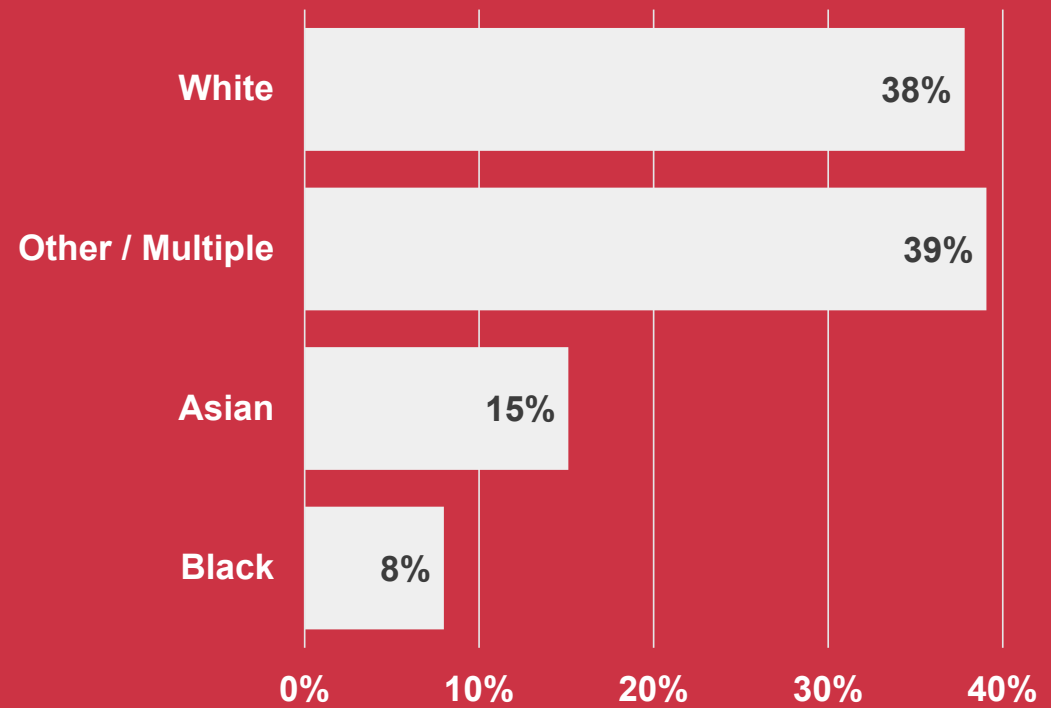


Race & Ethnicity

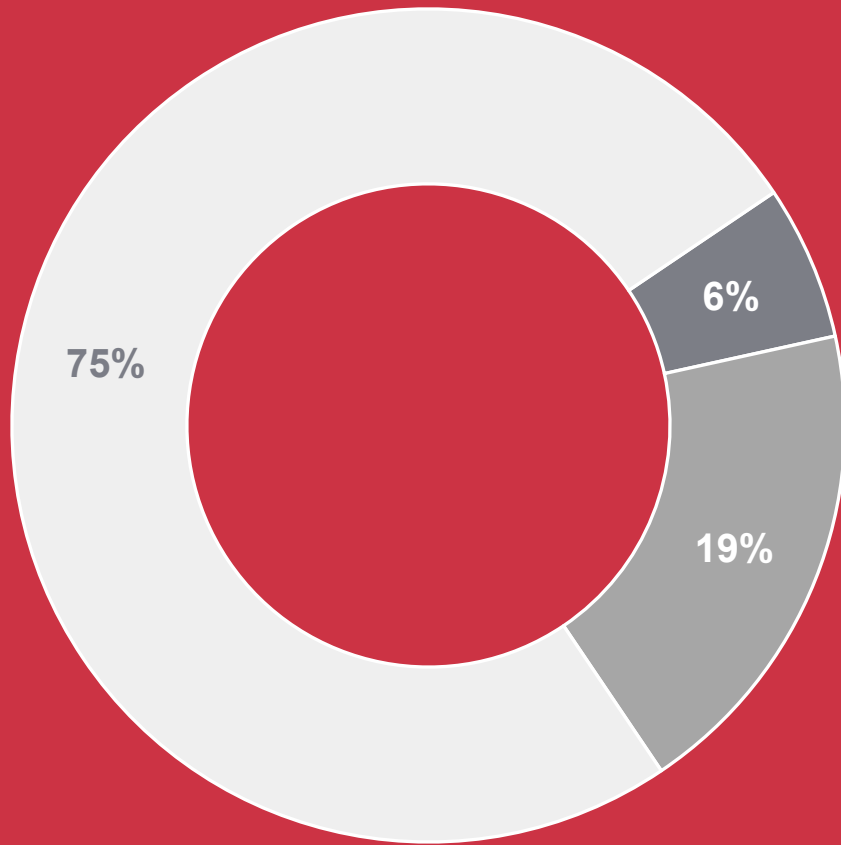
% Hispanic or Latino



% Residents by Race



Languages Spoken



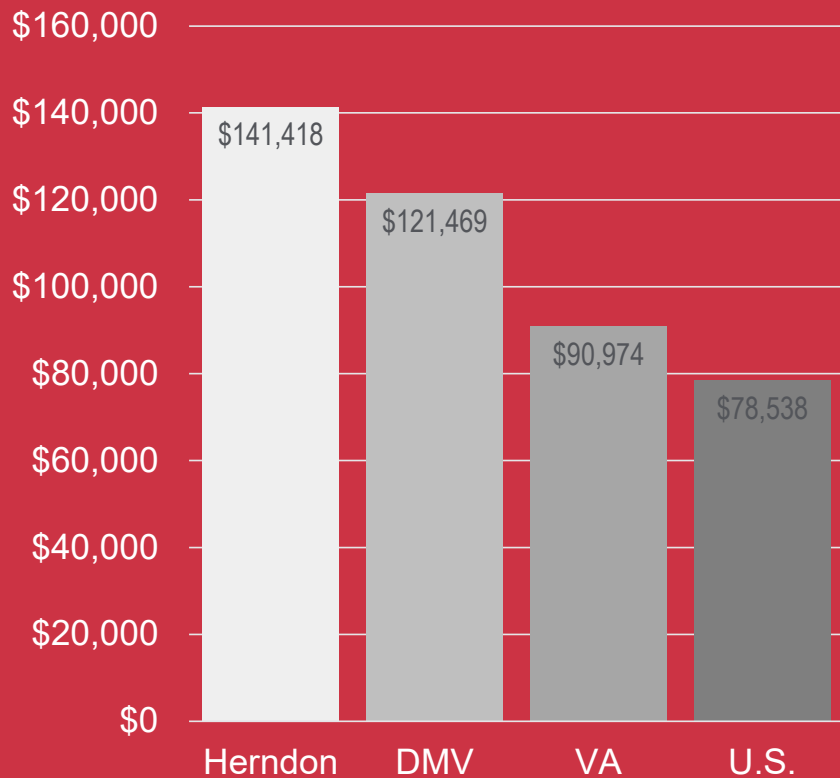
■ Not Proficient in English,
Speaks Other Language

■ Not Proficient in English,
Spanish Speaker

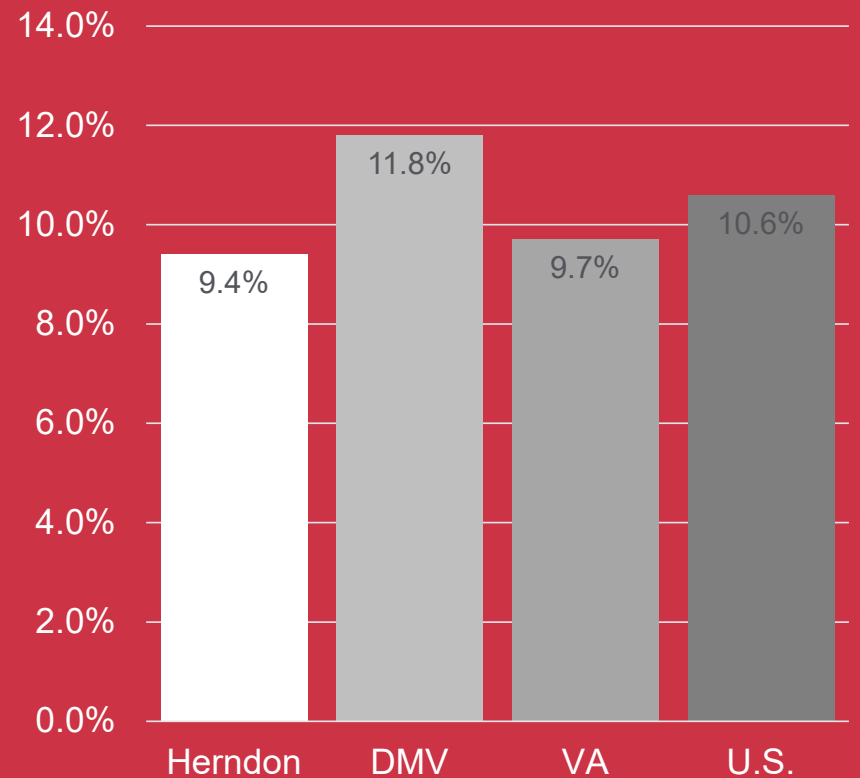
■ Proficient in English

Income

Median Household Income



Poverty Rate





To Summarize...

In aggregate residents of Herndon are younger, more diverse, more likely to be living as part of families, than average residents of the DMV, Virginia, and the United States as a whole.



How Does this Guide our Communications?

What media habits and technology preferences do we need to understand to communicate with residents of Herndon effectively?

General Trends

- A majority under 30 are online “constantly.”
- Smartphone adoption is up 32% over the past decade and exceeds 91% nationwide. Trend is now accelerating among older residents.
- Most Americans express interest in local government news, but only 68% receive it at least “sometimes.”
- Fewer than half of U.S. adults (45%) say it is easy to get the local government information they need.
- 25% of those who sometimes follow local government news are satisfied with its quality.
- 70% Americans rely on friends and family for local government information, while just 32% use local government websites.

SOURCE: Pew Research Center; Neonich.

LIVE DIFFERENTLY.

TOWN OF
Herndon
VIRGINIA

In the Herndon Context...

- 54% of people at Herndon's media age say they use the internet **almost constantly**.
- Households at Herndon's median HHI are **21% more likely to subscribe to broadband** than the average home.
- People living in areas like Herndon tend to have a 99% smartphone adoption rate.
- Less than 33% of people in Herndon's median age group get news from traditional sources. At least 45% of people in Herndon's median age **group regularly get news from social media**.
- In aggregate based on demographics, residents of Herndon are considerably more likely to be social media users than the average U.S. adult.

Program Assessment & Path Forward

Where We're Going...

- **Maturing as an organization** with regard to our communication functions.
- An integrated **internal service provider** that supports all Town functions.
- A **brand steward** that manages the Town's brand internally and influences its perception externally.

Current MARCOM Program

**Focus on public information
and press relations functions**

1.8 Employees

**Print-first allocation of
outreach resources**

Nascent brand adoption

FY26 MARCOM Program

Focus on public information
and press relations functions

1.8 Employees

Print-first allocation of
outreach resources

Nascent brand adoption

LIVE DIFFERENTLY.

TOWN OF
Herndon
VIRGINIA

Beyond a Focus on Public Information

- Available isn't enough.
- Proactive content calendar with native-format content.
- More connected content across platforms (and better measurement).
- More storytelling, infotainment, and celebration of who we are.
- Every touchpoint is an opportunity for brand expression.
- Get real people face-to-face when we can.

FY26 MARCOM Program

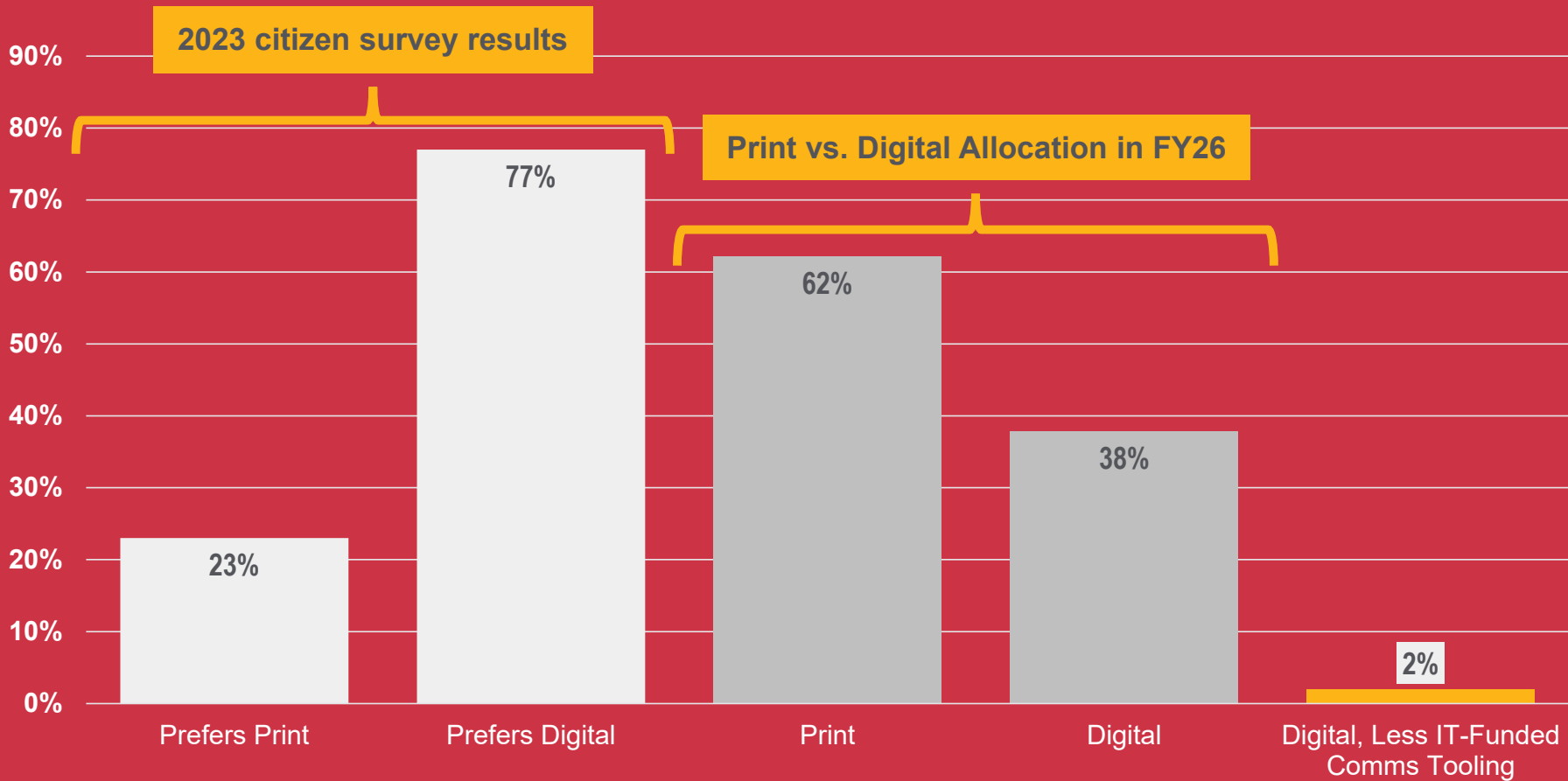
Focus on public information
and press relations functions

1.8 Employees

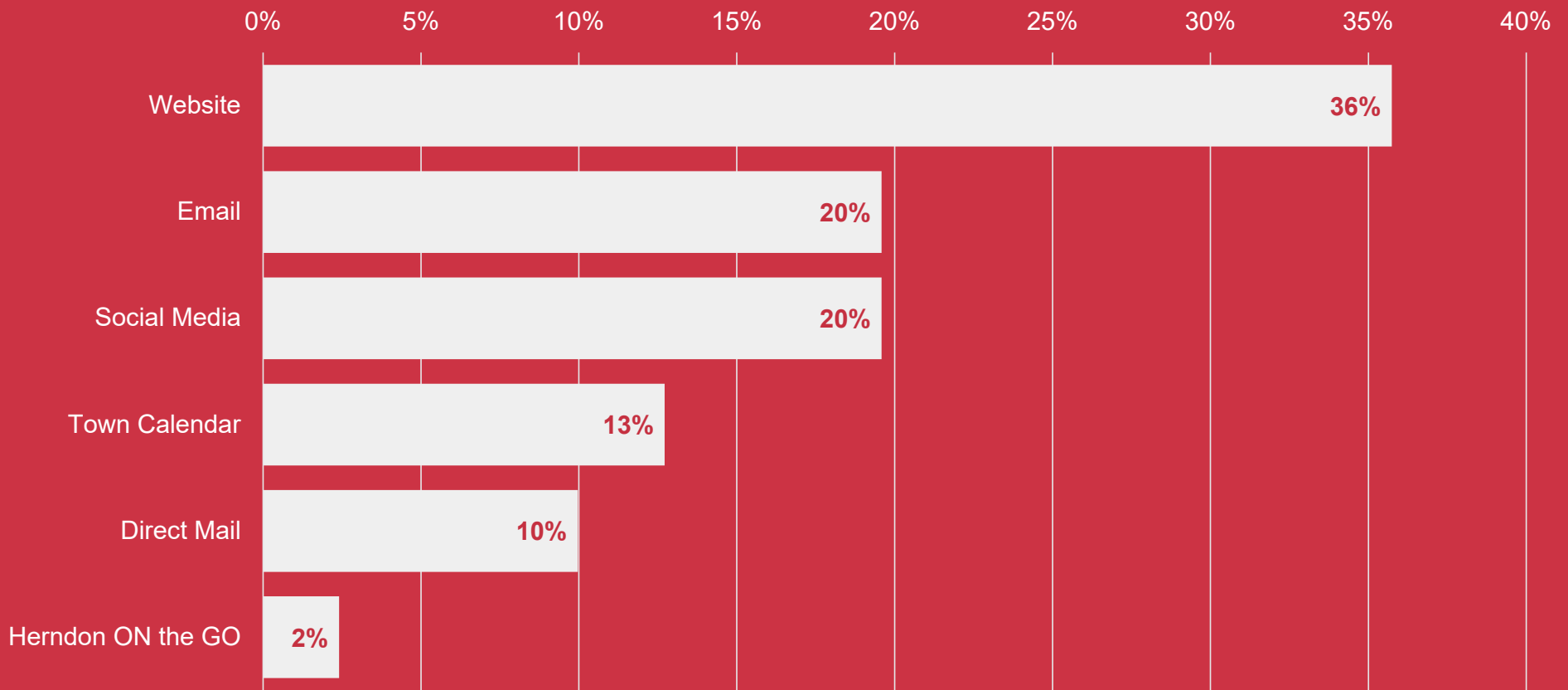
Print-first allocation of
outreach resources

Nascent brand adoption

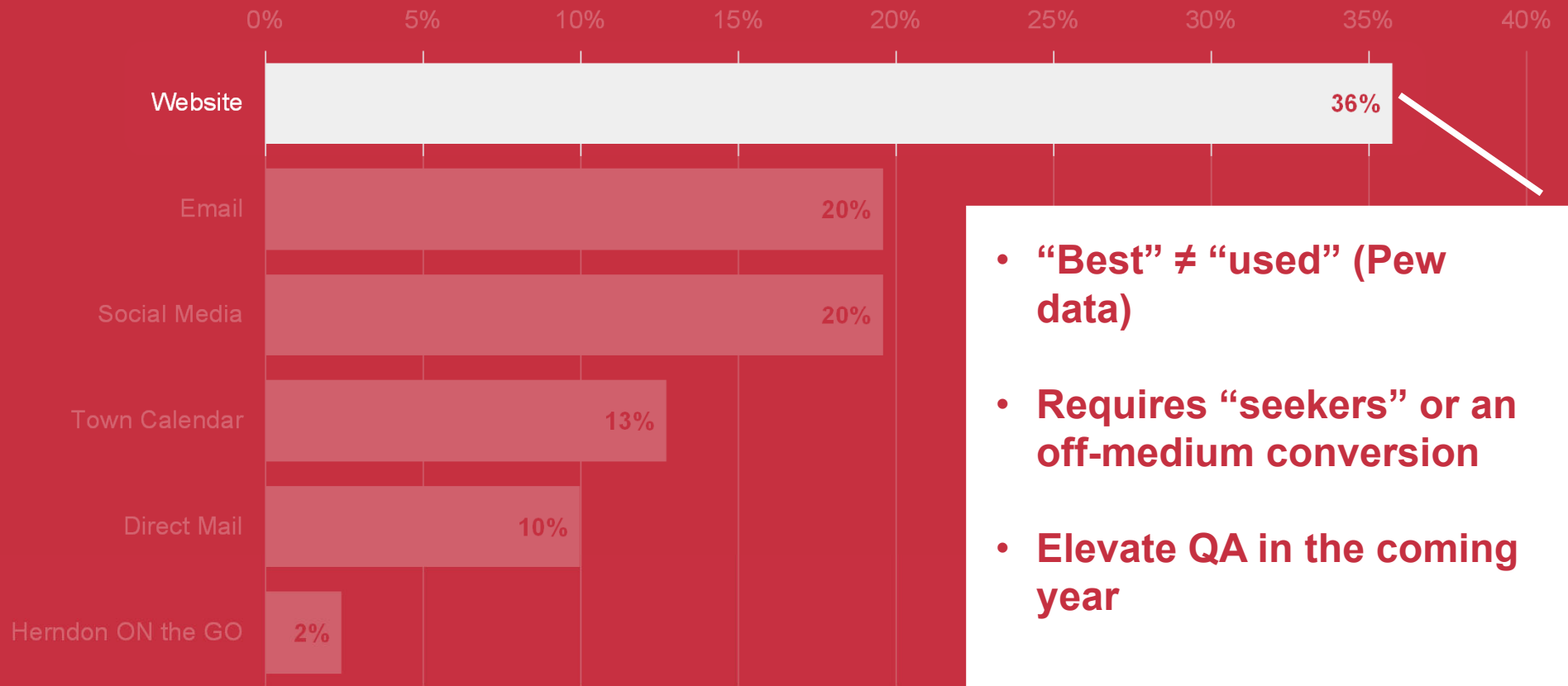
Preferences vs. Prioritization



Resident Survey - “Best Way to Learn”

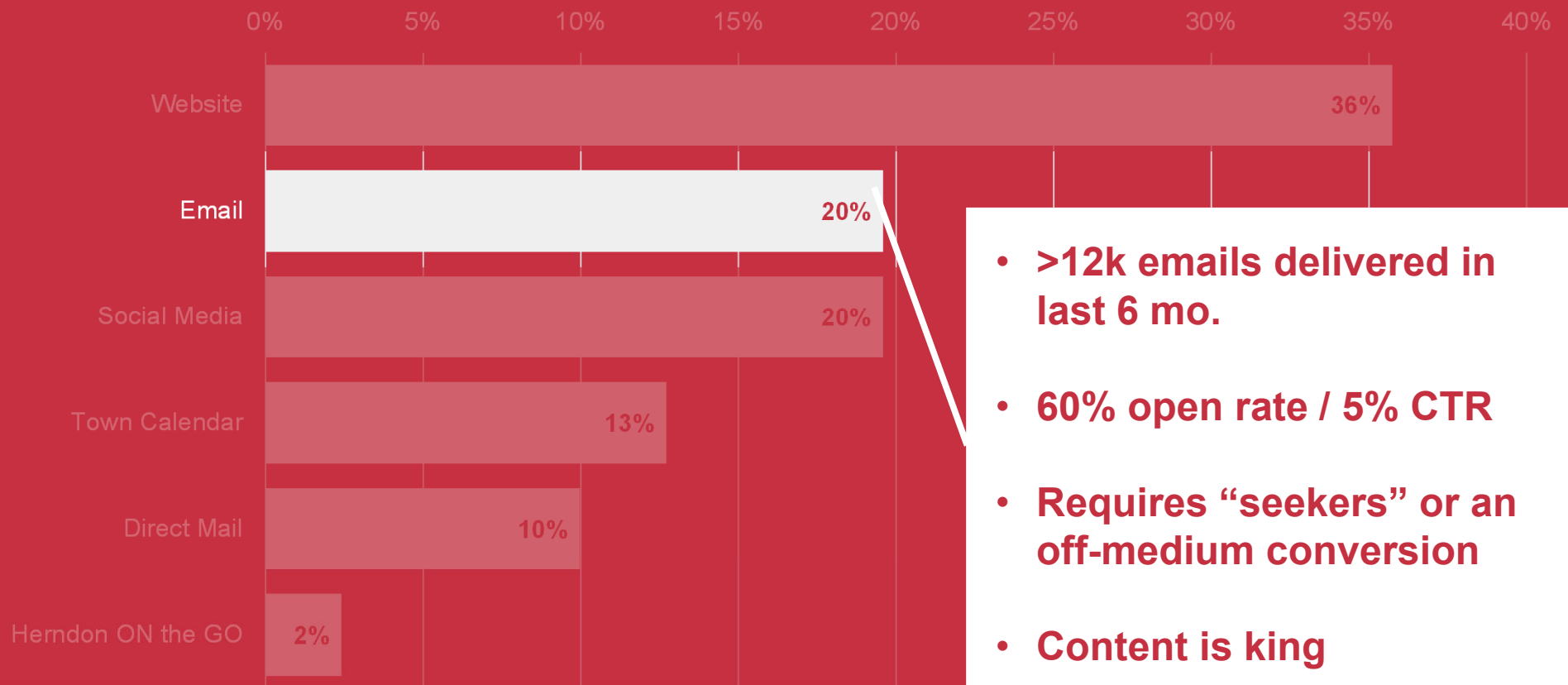


Resident Survey - “Best Way to Learn”



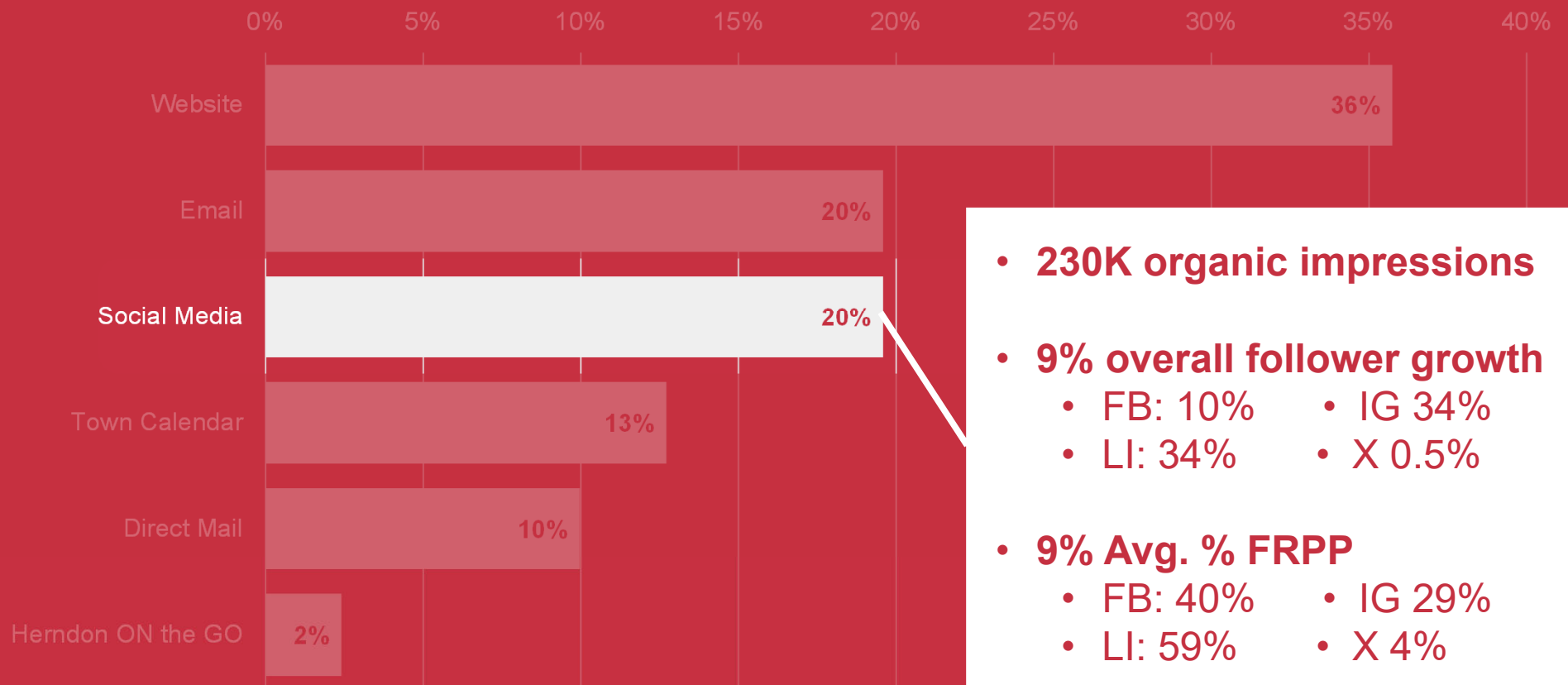
- “Best” ≠ “used” (Pew data)
- Requires “seekers” or an off-medium conversion
- Elevate QA in the coming year

Resident Survey - “Best Way to Learn”

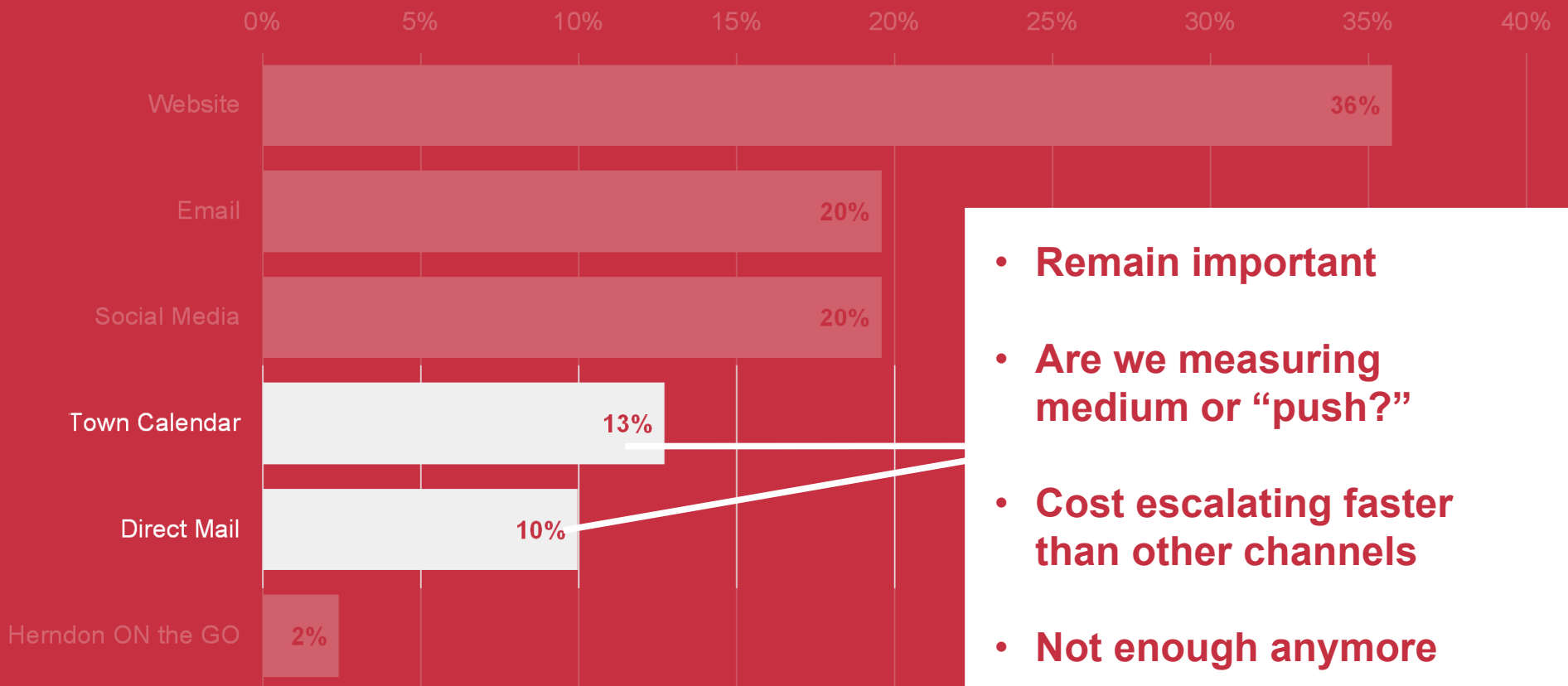


- **>12k emails delivered in last 6 mo.**
- **60% open rate / 5% CTR**
- **Requires “seekers” or an off-medium conversion**
- **Content is king**

Resident Survey - “Best Way to Learn”



Resident Survey - “Best Way to Learn”



- Remain important
- Are we measuring medium or “push?”
- Cost escalating faster than other channels
- Not enough anymore

FY26 MARCOM Program

Focus on public information
and press relations functions

1.8 Employees

Print-first allocation of
outreach resources

Nascent brand adoption

Staffing

- Focus on content AND internal service provision – needs of our audiences AND our internal clients / the organization as a whole.
- Tooling, processes, and coordination can be force multipliers.
- Marketing Supervisor – content, workflow, campaign coordination.
- Multimedia Production Specialist – dramatically enhance our collateral production capacity, especially video and photo content.

FY26 MARCOM Program

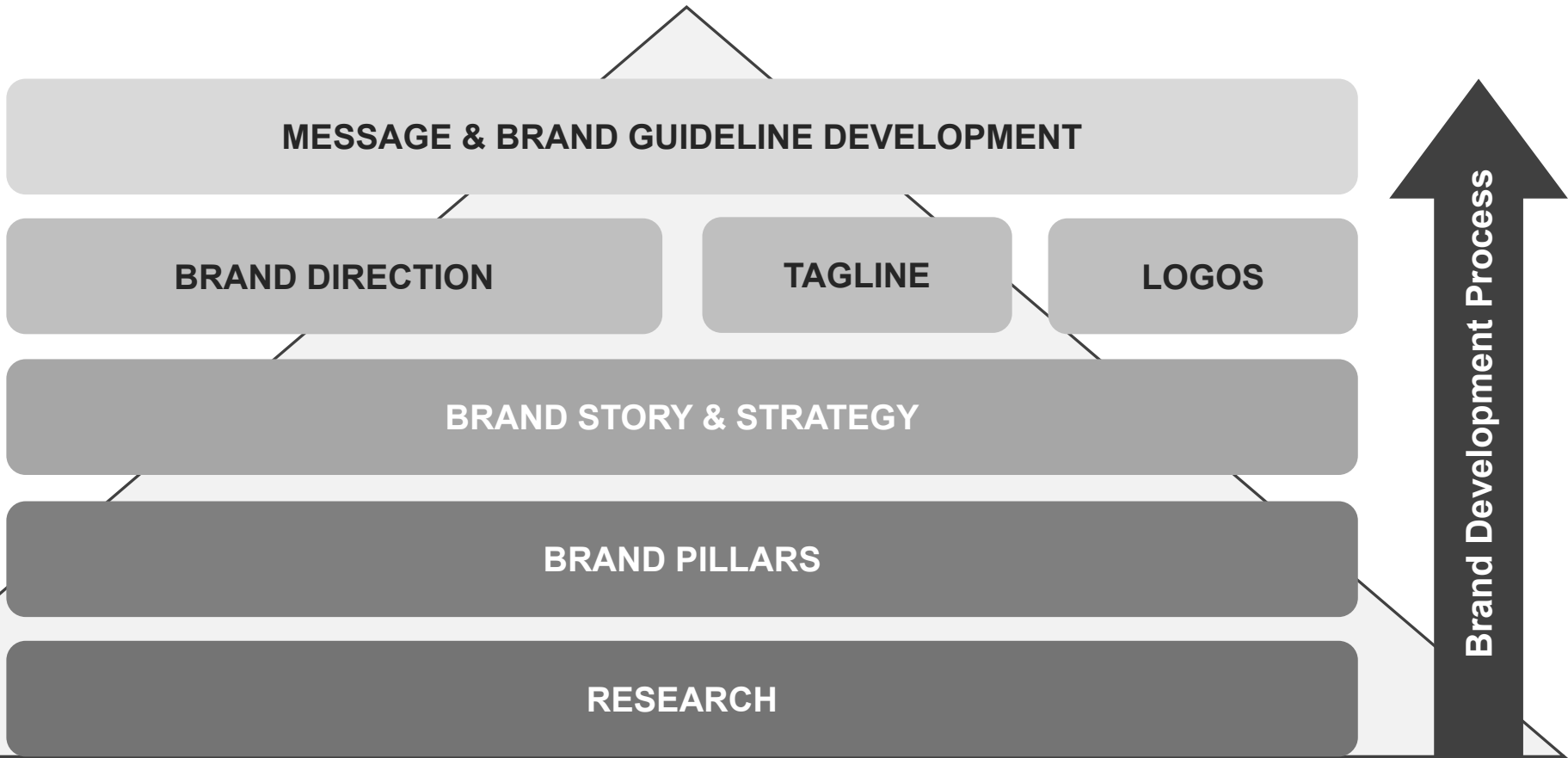
Focus on public information
and press relations functions

1.8 Employees

Print-first allocation of
outreach resources

Nascent brand adoption

Brand Development Process



Brand Development Process



Brand System

- Governance
- Fidelity
- Workability
- Socialization
- Adaptation

Brand Implementation Process



Strategic Foundation



TOWN OF
Herndon
LIVE DIFFERENTLY.

Implementation

Activation

Amplification

Adaptation

TOWN OF
Herndon

LIVE DIFFERENTLY.



**Community Inclusion and
Engagement Committee Regular
Meeting**
Agenda Item 5.a.

Agenda Item: Review and Discussion of the Town's Welcome Packet

Meeting Date: February 5, 2026

Category: Discussion

Prepared by: Brent Heavner, Chief Communications Officer

Description:

Continue review and discussion of welcome packet sent to new residents.

Background/Timing Impact:

At the last meeting on November 6, 2025, the Committee talked about the Town's Welcome Packet and asked staff to add it as a discussion item to its next meeting agenda.

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Legal Impact:

N/A

Staff Recommendation/Next Steps:

This is a discussion item; staff has no recommendation.

Attachments:

None



**Community Inclusion and
Engagement Committee Regular
Meeting**
Agenda Item 5.b.

Agenda Item: Review and Discussion of the Town of Herndon Website

Meeting Date: February 5, 2026

Category: Discussion

Prepared by: Brent Heavner, Chief Communications Officer

Description:

Committee to discuss effectiveness of the Town website.

Background/Timing Impact:

At the last meeting on November 6, 2025, the Committee talked about the Town's website and asked staff to add it as a discussion item to its next meeting agenda.

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Legal Impact:

N/A

Staff Recommendation/Next Steps:

Staff welcomes recommendations from the committee for enhancements to the Town website.

Attachments:

None