



**RAW RESULTS OF VISIONING WORKSHOP
PUBLIC INPUT
CHESTNUT RIDGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES,
OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS
(SWOT)**



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For the Village of Chestnut Ridge, NY

Workshop Held Wednesday, January 8, 2020, 8:00 PM
Chestnut Ridge Middle School Cafeteria

INTRODUCTION

On January 8, 2020 at 8:00 PM, the Village of Chestnut Ridge held a visioning meeting and workshop about the future of the Village at the Chestnut Ridge Middle School Cafeteria. The meeting was for the purpose of collecting background data, views and opinions from community residents and stakeholders. This was the first of two public meetings at the outset of the Comprehensive Plan Process to develop policy recommendations and zoning code changes that will guide the future development of the community.

To accomplish this, Nelson, Pope & Voorhis (NPV) – the Village Planners - coordinated with the mayor and Village Board to design a meeting that would consist of four break-out groups. Each group had an opportunity to discuss the Village’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

This meeting was well-attended by roughly 70 members of the public, as well as the Comprehensive Plan Committee members and five staff members from NPV. The meeting began with introductions and a welcome by Mayor Presti and Jonathan Lockman of NPV. Mr. Lockman provided a short description of why the Town was undertaking the comprehensive planning process and how the process would unfold over the following year. Mr. Lockman further explained the purpose of the public meeting, introduced the process that the consultant team had undertaken thus far, and provided a framework for the workshop procedure.

METHOD

Prior to the meeting, blank flip chart pads were set up in four corners of the cafeteria room at the Chestnut Ridge Middle School cafeteria. Five maps of the area were on display showing aerial photography, zoning and existing land uses, environmental constraints, and an analysis of zoning non-conformities. Attendees were mostly divided into four random groups according to the quarter of the year when their birthdays occurred (January-March; April-June; July-September; and October-December), although some attendees declined to attend the group indicated by their birthday.

Jonathan Lockman, Stu Turner, Adriana Beltrani and Maxwell Vandervliet served as facilitators for the four groups. Each group was invited to discuss Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing Chestnut Ridge, with approximately 20 minutes for each of the four topics. It was clarified that a strength was an existing positive quality of the Town, while an opportunity was a positive circumstance that was not present in the Town yet but could be pursued in the future. Likewise, a weakness was an existing negative quality of the Town, while a threat was a negative circumstance that was not present in the Town yet but could develop in the future.

After all groups had been given time to engage with facilitators on each of the four topics of the SWOT analysis, flip chart pages with notes from each group were taped up against the back windows for all participants to see. Participants were provided eight sticker dots and asked to vote on the compiled lists of responses by placing their dots next to the responses on the lists that they felt were most important. Each person had to decide how to allocate their dots among the various responses in the four categories. Attendees were allowed to use all dots in one category or on one item, or to place single or multiple dots among the various responses in different categories however they wished.

Because there was only one set of lists and only a few persons could vote at a time, a half hour of time was allocated after individual group discussion for participants to cast their votes. This also allowed opportunities for attendants to engage the consultants, the Mayor and Village Board and Comprehensive Plan committee members on a one-on-one informal basis.

Upon completion of the and discussions and voting, the consultant team announced the close of the meeting. It was announced that the results of the SWOT meeting would be posted on the Village Website. It is noted that the responses set forth below are paraphrased notes of the more robust discussions held during the meeting.

RESULTS

These are the raw results from the exercise and no analysis of results is offered at this time.

	Number of Dot Votes	No dot Votes But Listed (# of times)
<u>Strengths</u>		
• Greenspace, trees, environment and open space	31	3
• Family oriented & child friendly	17	2
• Residential character, small community and suburban feel	16	2
• Historic sites and architecture	8	
• Proximity to resources (NYC, NJ shopping)	7	
• Village Services: Fire, water and ambulance	3	
• Diversity and multiple houses of worship	2	
• Light traffic	2	
• Senior Housing and assisted living	2	

Total dot votes: 88		

	Number of Dot Votes	No dot Votes But Listed (# of times)
<u>Weaknesses</u>		
• Lack of zoning enforcement, poor property maintenance, parking enforcement problems, illegal rentals and conversions	42	10
• Outdated or inadequate zoning codes	38	
• Lack of Gov. transparency and communication, inadequate website and follow-through	27	7
• No village center and lack of community	16	2
• Pedestrian connections, bike safety & lanes	11	4
• High property taxes, school system and recycling/garbage services	6	

• Lack of community, participation and intertown socialization	5	4
• No interest in preserving history	2	
• Threats, division and potential for hate crimes	2	
• Traffic and too many trucks and non-school busses		3
• Dirty roadways, potholes and litter		2
• Too many sidewalks and streetlights		2

Total dot votes: 149

	Number of Dot Votes	No dot Votes But Listed (# of times)
<u>Opportunities</u>		
• Improve zoning ordinances, make realistic/fair	32	
5		
• Curtail/regulate urbanization to specific areas	10	
• Increase tax revenue/ratables	8	2
• Additional restaurants, businesses and business opportunities	6	3
• Create a Village Center	5	3
• Cultivate a sense of community among all residents and neighbors	4	3
• Increase communication among existing residents and newcomers	4	1
• Preserve green space and historic/cultural resources		2
• Decrease traffic, improve pedestrian connections		1

Total dot votes: 69

	Number of Dot Votes	No dot Votes But Listed (# of times)
<u>Threats</u>		
• Lack of zoning enforcement related to housing	56	20
• Declining school system and decreasing youth	27	2
• Loss of trees, greenspace and lot sizes	23	4
• Increasing traffic and pedestrians in roadways	19	1
• Poor and declining infrastructure & public services	17	3
• Increasing property taxes	16	2
• Trash, litter and disrespect of physical environment	9	
• Hate crimes, threats, political divisions	7	
• Lack of affordable and adequate housing	4	
• Leaving land undeveloped	4	

Total dot votes: 182

Final Totals	
Total Dots Pasted on Sheets	491
Dots fell off (votes not counted)	3
Grand total of dot votes counted	488
Number of votes / number of participants	7.1 votes per participant (69 people present)