



ANALYSIS OF RESULTS CHESTNUT RIDGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY



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For the Village of Chestnut Ridge, NY

Survey Opened on March 19, 2020 , and
Closed on April 24, 2020

Date of This Report: June 5, 2020, rev. August 12, 2020

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 on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the Village. This was the first of two planned 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. A report on this Visioning Meeting was completed in late January and is hosted on the Village website.

This meeting was well-attended by roughly 69 members of the public, as well as the Comprehensive Plan Committee members and five staff members from NPV. A second public workshop session was scheduled for March 19, 2020 and was designed to engage the public on strategies to address the issues identified at the first meeting. A survey was planned to provide wider outreach for the subject matter of both planned meetings. .

On March 11, 2020, the fifth meeting of the Comprehensive Meeting was held. Both the contents of the proposed survey and the design of the March 19 workshop were finalized. However, at the time of the March 11, 2020 meeting, it was apparent that COVID-19 disease was beginning to spread, and that a public meeting might be subject to cancellation, particularly if the School District closed the Elementary School Building where the public meeting was scheduled. The Committee at this time did not want to cancel the public meeting and asked the Mayor and Village staff to explore holding the meeting at an alternate location.

Unfortunately, over the next four days, the COVID-19 pandemic began to expand with multiple closures of schools and meeting venues throughout Rockland County. By the weekend, the Mayor informed the committee that the public session at Fleetwood Elementary School on March 19th was cancelled.

Considering public assembly limitations instituted by Executive Order of the Governor of New York, it was decided that the survey would be expanded to serve as a substitute to the March public session.

The Comprehensive Plan Survey, covering all the topics planned to be discussed at the March public meeting session, was released online on March 19th. An invitation to take the survey was mailed to all residents and individuals on the tax roll. Paper copies of the survey were made available to anyone who requested them, if they preferred not to submit online or did not have computer or smart phone capabilities. Originally, the survey responses were scheduled to be collected with a closing date of April 15, 2020. Given the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mayor decided to extend the collection of survey responses to April 24, 2020, to ensure the maximum possible participation. In total, the survey received 704 total responses, exceeding all expectations. Similar sized communities typically receive only a few hundred responses.

Out of these 704 total responses, 555 were submitted by Chestnut Ridge residents (self-identified) and 149 non-residents (self-identified). Attached to this report are three sets of raw result outputs, with tallies of answers to questions broken out three ways:

555 resident respondents;

143 non-resident respondents; and

704 total respondents.

(Note 6 respondents did not say where they were from.)

In the analysis of results on the following three pages, we summarized the responses from the 555 residents. The results for the non-residents and total results are included for context but are fundamentally similar in the outcomes.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted and analyzed on the platform “Survey Monkey.” A postcard was mailed to all addresses on the tax rolls inviting residents to take the survey, followed up by email blasts announcing the survey and reminding residents to participate near the end of the survey collection period. Paper surveys were distributed to those who did not have computer access or who preferred the use of paper.

Survey Monkey can only accept a submission from one browser on a specific device. The software blocked a second submittal from any one browser with a pop-up message. Households with more than one respondent were advised that each member of that household who wished to participate should use a different phone, laptop, or tablet to fill out the survey.

In its reporting, Survey Monkey does not keep track of the individual device identification number (“internal IP addresses”) of the respondents. However, it does keep track of the internet router numbers from which surveys were sent (“external IP addresses”). It appears that from a look at the list of routers utilized to submit surveys, there were no security problems.

- 451 of the 704 total responses came from internet routers with a unique number.
- There were 76 instances where two people shared a router location.
- There were 18 instances where three people shared a router location.
- There were 3 instances where four people shared a router location.
- There was 1 instance where five people shared a router location.
- There were 2 instances where seven people shared a router location.
- 16 of the total responses were paper copies that were entered on NPV’s computer by Melinda Stach, Administrative Assistant, on April 28, 2020.

We did note some instances where write-in answers were identical in wording; more so than would be predicted by coincidence. However, this probably indicates discussion between respondents rather than any misuse of the software.

A router location typically is shared within a residence. Duplicate use of a particular router could also indicate employees of the same business who logged in from work, or members at a group domicile (such as a nursing home or the Fellowship Center).

Analysis of Results, for 555 Resident Respondents

Note about Scoring: Many of the questions asked respondents to indicate their level of support for a possible policy statement. Survey Monkey assigned the following values to each answer: 1 = strongly support, 2=support, 3 = neutral, 4= do not support, and 5 = strongly do not support. Percentages for each answer are shown. The software then calculated a weighted average score of all the responses to each question.

Some of the questions asked respondents to indicate their level of support with a choice between two answers, with 1 = support and 2 = do not support. For these questions, percentages for each answer are shown as well as weighted averages.

All About You – Questions 1 through 4

- Approximately 60% of residents responding lived on or near Hungry Hollow Rd. or Chestnut Ridge Rd.
- There appeared to be participation from all parts of the Village.
- About half of the respondents lived in the Village over 15 years.
- Those who indicated that they knew of families who moved out of the village indicated that the two most prevalent reasons were a desire for different schools and concerns about rising property and school taxes.
- Under “Other Reasons” for families moving away, respondents could enter phrases in their own words. 188 respondents chose to enter “other reasons.” Some of the more notable responses were:
 - Changing demographics (31)
 - Influx of Orthodox Jewish and/or Hasidic Residents (31).
 - Lax zoning and/or lack of enforcement of existing zoning (13).
 - Issues with NYS mandatory vaccination policies (8).
- It is notable that the exact phrase “lack of zoning law enforcement and overdevelopment” was entered by 8 different respondents, who submitted their surveys on April 13 and 14.

Design and Appearance of Single-Family Homes and Minimum Lot Sizes – Questions 5 through 10

Question	Analysis	1 Strongly Support (percent)	2 Support (percent)	3 Neutral (percent)	4 Do Not Support (percent)	5 Strongly Do Not Support (percent)	Weighted Average
5	The respondents were neutral about a policy of bringing nonconforming lot sizes into conformance.	23.5%	14.5%	17.3%	10.7%	34.0%	3.17
6	Respondents supported lowering Floor Area Ratio requirements .	45.0%	16.2%	8.1%	11.5%	19.2%	2.44
7	Respondents did not support relaxing Floor Area Ratio limits to allow expansion so residents can add more space.	18.1%	7.9%	7.9%	23.8%	42.3%	3.64
8	Respondents supported increases in required side and rear setbacks.	39.9%	20.5%	15.7%	15.3%	8.7%	2.32
9	Respondents supported keeping required side and rear setbacks the same.	19.7%	21.0%	27.0%	17.1%	15.3%	2.87
10	Respondents supported stricter architectural review and design guidelines.	50.4%	20.3%	12.0%	8.1%	9.2%	2.06

Multifamily Housing Choices – Potential Sites for Development, Questions 11 through 18

Question	Analysis	1 Strongly Support (percent)	2 Support (percent)	3 Neutral (percent)	4 Do Not Support (percent)	5 Strongly Do Not Support (percent)	Weighted Average
11	Respondents did not support allowing for higher density housing types such as duplexes, townhomes, or apartments.	8.3%	14.0%	7.0%	15.6%	55.0%	3.95
12	Respondents were neutral regarding an affordable housing mandate.	12.2%	27.9%	13.9%	15.5%	30.5%	3.24
13	Respondents supported a policy where a variety of housing would be available at various prices, but without a mandatory system requiring affordable housing.	21.3%	28.4%	18.6%	15.7%	16.0%	2.77
14	Respondents did not support allowing multifamily apartments or townhomes in the Red Schoolhouse Road/GSP interchange area.	10.0%	16.0%	14.0%	22.0%	38.0%	3.62
15	Respondents supported allowing the Green Meadow Waldorf School/Threefold Foundation to expand its housing for teachers.	44.3%	19.7%	17.3%	8.0%	10.8%	2.21

Question	Analysis	1 Strongly Support (percent)	2 Support (percent)	3 Neutral (percent)	4 Do Not Support (percent)	5 Strongly Do Not Support (percent)	Weighted Average
16	Respondents supported allowing the Green Meadow Waldorf School/Threefold Foundation to expand its commercial operations such as the Food Coop.	45.6%	21.2%	19.5%	6.6%	7.1%	2.08
17	Respondents did not support allowing higher density at the Gould Academy property or other sites on Chestnut Ridge Road.	9.3%	9.0%	11.1%	15.9%	54.7%	3.98
18	Respondents were neutral towards a policy to allow the creation of accessory apartments for family members at single family homes.	20.4%	24.9%	10.9%	13.3%	30.4%	3.08

Types of Housing – Visual Preferences, Questions 19 to 23

Question	Analysis	1 Strongly Support (percent)	2 Support (percent)	3 Neutral (percent)	4 Do Not Support (percent)	5 Strongly Do Not Support (percent)	Weighted Average
19 to 23	Respondents generally did not support any of the photo images of multifamily dwellings.		12.6% to 38.1%		61.9% to 87.4%		1.62 to 1.87

Religious Uses: Places of Worship and Religious Schools, Questions 24 and 25

Question	Analysis	1 Strongly Support (percent)	2 Support (percent)	3 Neutral (percent)	4 Do Not Support (percent)	5 Strongly Do Not Support (percent)	Weighted Average
24	Respondents did not support the statement that the Place of Worship amendments to the zoning code was a positive step.	22.5%	5.4%	9.8%	13.9%	48.4%	3.6
25	Respondents supported a policy that the Village should adjust the Place of Worship zoning code amendments in the years ahead if problems arise.	47.3%	16.5%	12.3%	8.0%	15.9%	2.29

Traffic Issues, Questions 26 through 32

Question	Analysis	1 Strongly Support (percent)	2 Support (percent)	3 Neutral (percent)	4 Do Not Support (percent)	5 Strongly Do Not Support (percent)	Weighted Average
26	Respondents were neutral about the relocation of the end of DeSalvo Court.	24.9%	17.8%	40.9%	6.4%	10.0%	2.59
27	Installation of a traffic signal system at Williams/Summit Roads at Red Schoolhouse Road was supported.	33.8%	31.5%	18.4%	7.7%	8.6%	2.26

Question	Analysis	1 Strongly Support (percent)	2 Support (percent)	3 Neutral (percent)	4 Do Not Support (percent)	5 Strongly Do Not Support (percent)	Weighted Average
28	Support was shown for the provision of sidewalks along Red Schoolhouse and Chestnut Ridge Roads, and along all major roads.	50.2%	21.0%	5.7%	6.1%	16.9%	2.18
29	Support was shown for the provision of sidewalks within new housing developments.	44.9%	19.6%	10.9%	8.0%	16.6%	2.32
30	An additional travel lane for Red Schoolhouse Road under the GSP bridge was supported.	38.0%	27.3%	18.2%	6.1%	10.3%	2.23
31	Widening and signalization of the northbound on-ramp for the GSP was supported.	31.7%	22.1%	25.5%	10.1%	10.6%	2.46
32	A requirement for developer contributions to fund traffic improvements around the GSP interchange in exchange for incentive zoning was supported.	55.7%	19.6%	11.4%	5.2%	8.2%	1.91

Increase in Tax Ratable Properties, More Employment, Shopping, Economic Development, Questions 33 through 43

Question	Analysis	1 Strongly Support (percent)	2 Support (percent)	3 Neutral (percent)	4 Do Not Support (percent)	5 Strongly Do Not Support (percent)	Weighted Average
33	Respondents supported industrial and commercial development in the Red Schoolhouse Road area.	28.0%	26.5%	14.2%	12.0%	19.3%	2.68
34	Respondents were neutral about allowing light industrial development where only offices are allowed now.	13.9%	29.6%	16.0%	16.7%	23.8%	3.07
35	Respondents were neutral regarding allowing light industrial development in the laboratory-office district.	18.5%	24.8%	17.4%	16.7%	22.7%	3
36 to 42	When asked to choose their visual preference between types of commercial buildings, converted residences with front and side yards as well as traditional one-or two-story shopfronts with parking lots behind, were supported. Larger commercial buildings were not supported.		29.3% to 75.4%		24.7% to 70.6%		1.25 to 1.71

Question 43. Under “Add comments about any images you see,” respondents could enter phrases in their own words. 68 respondents chose to enter comments. A majority of commenters preferred smaller scale buildings and felt that many of the images were too urban and not in character with the Village.

Green Space and Parks and How to Pay for It, Questions 44 through 47

Question	Analysis	1 Strongly Support (percent)	2 Support (percent)	3 Neutral (percent)	4 Do Not Support (percent)	5 Strongly Do Not Support (percent)	Weighted Average
44	Mandating that development blends with the natural environment was supported.	70.4%	18.8%	6.3%	2.8%	1.9%	1.47
45	The protection or acquisition of open space was supported.	69.9%	15.7%	9.1%	2.8%	2.6%	1.53
46	Requiring preserved open space as part of any rezoning for higher density housing was supported.	70.0%	14.4%	7.0%	4.2%	4.4%	1.59
47	Enactment of a Tree Law, requiring a permit to cut any tree over a specified size was supported.	61.8%	9.6%	6.1%	9.8%	12.8%	2.02

New Businesses, Question 48

- A majority of respondents supported the following types of new businesses:

Office
Recreation
Grocery Stores
Health Services
Restaurants

Farmers Market
Hobby Shop
Clothing Store
Bakery or Specialty Foods
Gym or Fitness Center

- A majority of respondents did not support the following types of new businesses:

Family Entertainment
Industry
Shopping Centers
Automotive Repair or Sale

Entertainment
Bar
Movie Theater

- Respondents were given the opportunity to write in comments about new businesses. 58 respondents chose to write in their comments about what types of new businesses should be promoted. Some of the more notable responses were:
 - No changes (12)
 - Duplicative responses containing the exact words “do not support hazardous materials producers (11)
 - Parks (7)
 - Civic spaces, community gardens, arts center (6)

Mixed Use Buildings, Question 49

- 46% of respondents wished to discourage a mixed-use pattern anywhere in the Village. 21 % wanted to encourage a mixed-use pattern in the entire Village, and 19% wanted to encourage mixed uses in the Red Schoolhouse/GSP interchange area only.

Other Comments, Question 50

- Respondents were given the opportunity to write in comments about anything at all at the end of the survey. 142 respondents chose to write in. Some of the more notable responses were:
 - Issues of promoting diversity, changing mix of ethnic and religious groups (27)
 - Need for more greenspace and parks (20)
 - Member of the Fellowship Community at Threefold Foundation asking for their needs to be considered (11)
 - Need for better zoning administration and enforcement (7).
 - Sidewalks, Bicycle-Pedestrian facilities (6)
 - School quality issues (6)