

Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan PACE Community Survey Results January 21, 2021

Respondents

More than 350 people responded to the Town of Ossining's Comprehensive Plan survey. The survey's aim was to receive input from the public on their issues, opportunities and ideas for the Town. Just under half of the respondents (45.85%) reside in the Unincorporated Town of Ossining with just over a third of the respondents (36.92%) residing in the Village of Ossining. The rest of the respondents live in the Village of Briarcliff Manor (17.23%). It is therefore unsurprising that the vast majority of respondents (91.67%) belong to the Ossining Union Free School District, with only a relatively small number (7.47%) belonging to the Briarcliff Manor Union Free School District.

In regards to where people work, most respondents do not work in the immediate area. A minority (21.71%) of respondents say that they are currently working from home. Of those, most predict that they will return to their offices or at least enter into some kind of hybrid work situation in the immediate future with only about 10% indicating that they will continue to work from home indefinitely. Interestingly, about a third of the respondents (32.78%) were already working from home before the pandemic started. The largest group of respondents (34%) are in the 'not applicable' category, which can indicate either retirement age or those who are not currently employed. About a third of the respondents (37.43%) who answered indicated that they either work in another municipality within Westchester County or outside of the County altogether. Respondents also reflected on their mode of transportation. A large share of respondents (55.26%) use their personal vehicles as their main mode of transportation to work and/or school, while 30.72% do not use any mode of transportation for those purposes, as they either work from home or do not work at all. A small minority (11.99%) mostly depend on Metro North trains as their main mode of transportation.

The average age of residents who responded to the survey are over 45 years old, with 40.86% being between 45-64 and 42.86% being older than 65. Only 16.28% of those who responded are between 18-44. Most respondents in the survey indicated through comments

that they have lived in the community for extended periods with most respondents having lived in the area for at least 10 years. In addition, most respondents are homeowners as opposed to renters, although a sizeable minority of renters also exist in the community. The community almost universally considers their housing to be average or above average. Furthermore, almost 70% of respondents indicate having an annual household income of at least \$100,000.

Community Issues and Assets

Respondents express a wide range of reasons for why they love living in the community. Most of these have to do with the physical characteristics of Ossining. Respondents express a love of the open spaces and the natural beauty of the area (73.7%) as well as waterfront access (57.1%). However, many are concerned about developments, which could alter that character. Respondents mention this in their comments. The quality of the school district is considered one of the most important attributes of Ossining (40.52%). Development of dense housing (49.85%) and rentals (42.65%) is considered by many to be a threat to the current character of the Town. However, at the same time, housing cost and choice (49.72%) is also a concern for many. Respondents were also vocal about the importance of diversity (50.43%), as well as, a sense of community (49.85%) and the importance of green building (76.88%). Respondents also wanted to encourage the protection of air, soil, and water quality (93.16%) and of protecting natural areas/open space (93.73%).

Another issue that respondents feel strongly about is the community's encouragement of sustainability among its residents (50.29%). When asked about what sustainability meant to them, the respondents produced a wide range of answers. These answers ranged from environmental priorities to economic ones, as well as, housing and diversity priorities. Consensus was most apparent for the importance of issues like preserving open spaces (85.34%), recycling efforts (69.08%), increasing walkability (60.52%), the support of local businesses (71.18%), and the maintenance of existing infrastructure (83.86%). Walkability was examined in greater detail through comments in the survey, including support for more sidewalks in the community to improve pedestrian safety.

Respondents also responded to questions regarding the utilization of businesses in Ossining versus neighboring communities. Respondents are about 25% more likely to do their shopping outside of Ossining and they are about 20% more likely to recreate outside of Ossining. The respondents reflect, in their comments, a need for more services in Ossining and would be open to businesses that complement the existing local economy. Respondents would like Ossining to provide more opportunities for local residents to shop and spend money locally. Finally, through comments, respondents offered ideas of services and businesses that they feel are missing.