

*Town of Ancram Survey Results ~
A summary of open-ended questions related to Town vision and goals*

Summary

The complete Ancram survey summary data and open-ended responses (through Survey Monkey) have been presented to the Town in .pdf format. The purpose of this document is to summarize the most frequent responses to open-ended questions that relate to the Town's vision and goals.

Question 1 – 9 Demographic Information from Participants

- ***A total of 342 surveys were completed in response to the Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan Survey.***
- ***The survey represented all areas of town: 54% of respondents were from outside hamlet areas with 26% from Ancramdale, 15% from Ancram, and 5% from Boston Corners.***
- ***The survey represented more long-term residents: 47% are long-time residents or landowners, with 27% living or owning land 11-20 years, 15% less than 5 years, and 11% 5-10 years.***
- ***Slightly more than half were full-time residents (52%, 44% were part time, and a small percentage (5%) were landowners but not a resident.***
- ***Almost all respondents own their home. About 2% are renters.***
- ***The survey represented older residents: About 50% were 65 years old and older. There were no respondents < 19 years and only 27 aged 20-44.***
- ***About 88% have no school aged children living with them.***
- ***Working at home and retired were the most common answers about work status (39% retired). For those not working at home, more (17%) work 25 or more miles from home.***
- ***There were a wide variety of reasons people were attracted to the area. The most common response was that they purchased a home (34%) but 30% said it was the scenic countryside.***

Question 10 Please add your suggestions to improve this vision for the next Decade

This question is in response to Question 9: "Does this vision still capture what you hope Ancram will be like in the next decade?" This is in reference to the 2010 overall vision established for the Town. A total of 128 of those responding to the survey commented on this. Almost 95% had marked that in general they felt the vision still captured what they hoped Ancram would be like in the next decade.

To summarize the topics most often commented on in this response:

- ***Twenty-three (23) persons gave responses that noted a desire for more small businesses in town. The vast majority of those request small businesses that would provide essential services, such as a restaurant or café, groceries, or a gas station/ convenience store.***
- ***Thirteen (13) persons responding noted that there was a need for improved cell phone and broadband service.***
- ***Twelve (12) of those commenting on this question remarked that they would like to see dilapidated buildings renovated or removed.***
- ***Eleven (11) of those responding to this question expressed a desire for strong protection of the environment and natural resources.***

- Eleven (11) of those commenting stated that preserve of rural character was important to them.
- Eight (8) people responding noted that there is a need for affordable housing in Town.
- Seven (7) persons responding noted that more jobs were needed in the area.
- Another seven (7) persons stated that farming should be sustainable in Ancram.

Question 11 *If you think the direction, wording, or scope of this goal should be changed, please give us your suggestion(s)*

This question is in response to “Is this goal still relevant to the future of the Town of Ancram?” Reference 2010 Goal 1: Agriculture and Open Space. Almost 94% of those responding to this question marked “yes, in general” meaning that they view this goal as still being relevant. There are a total of 57 related comments.

To summarize the topics most often commented on in this response:

- Ten (10) persons gave responses that noted a desire for organic farming, without pesticides to be encouraged.
- Eight (8) of those commenting on this question remarked that they would like to encourage new farming venture. Five of those responding specifically wanted small farms – not large, factory farms.
- Seven (7) persons responding basically noted that that they wanted the town to preserve rural character – farms, open space and scenic views.
- Five (5) people responding essentially noted that farms need to be profitable.
- Four (4) of those responding to this question expressed a desire for environmental protection.
- Three (3) persons of those commenting stated that they desired to encourage sustainable farming.

Question 12 *If you think the direction, wording, or scope of this goal should be changed, please give us your suggestion(s)*

This question is in response to “Is this goal still relevant to the future of the Town of Ancram?” Reference 2010 Goal 2: Environment. Over 96% of those responding to this question marked “yes, in general” meaning that they view this goal as still being relevant. There are a total of 50 related comments.

To summarize the topics most often commented on in this response:

- Six (6) persons gave responses that noted a desire for dark skies; three of those requested restrictions on night lighting.
- Five (5) of those commenting on this question remarked that they would like to protect natural resources including ridgelines (2), lakes & streams (2), and valleys & fields.
- Five (5) persons responding basically noted that that environmental protection should be a priority.
- Five (5) people responding essentially noted that Alternative energy should be encouraged (1 noted small scale only)
- Four (4) of those responding to this question stated that there should be no solar power; three of those responding also did not want any wind power in Town.
- Three persons (3) of those commenting stated there should be more emphasis on climate change.

Question 13

If you think the direction, wording, or scope of this goal should be changed, please give us your suggestion(s)

This question is in response to “Is this goal still relevant to the future of the Town of Ancram?” Reference 2010 Goal 3: Community Character. Almost 97% of those responding to this question marked “yes, in general” meaning that they view this goal as still being relevant. There are a total of 29 related comments.

To summarize the topics most often commented on in this response:

- Five (5) persons gave responses that noted there is already a sense of community and great communication.
- Four (4) of those commenting on this question remarked that they would like to maintain ongoing volunteer activities/ make residents aware of opportunities.
- Two (2) persons responding noted that Preservation costs money/ Derelict buildings do not retain historic character.
- Two (2) more people responding noted that the Town should go with majority/ be impartial.
- Two (2) of those responding to this question stated that open communication/ improvement is needed.
- Two (2) persons of those commenting stated that newcomers should be engaged.

Question 14

If you think the direction, wording, or scope of this goal should be changed, please give us your suggestion(s)

This question is in response to “Is this goal still relevant to the future of the Town of Ancram?” Reference 2010 Goal 4: Community Services. Over 93% of those responding to this question marked “yes, in general” meaning that they view this goal as still being relevant. There are a total of 31 related comments.

To summarize the topics most often commented on in this response:

- Six (6) persons gave responses that noted a desire to offer community-based services for all ages.
- Four (4) of those commenting on this question remarked that more programs needed for seniors.
- Three (3) persons responding noted that services and facilities are needed for youth/ teens.
- Three (3) more people responding noted that they are in favor of recreational facilities and services for all.
- Two (2) of those responding to this question stated that the Ancram kids camp is a great program.
- Two (2) persons of those commenting stated that medical/ emergency health services are needed.

Question 15

If you think the direction, wording, or scope of this goal should be changed, please give us your suggestion(s)

This question is in response to “Is this goal still relevant to the future of the Town of Ancram?” Reference 2010 Goal 5: Town Infrastructure. Almost 98% of those responding to this question marked “yes, in general” meaning that they view this goal as still being relevant. There are a total of 33 related comments.

To summarize the topics most often commented on in this response:

- Seven (7) persons gave responses that noted a desire for improvements to broadband/ cell phone services.
- Four (4) of those commenting on this question expressed a dissatisfaction with road maintenance.
- Four (4) persons responding noted that dilapidated buildings are in need of attention.
- Three (3) more people responding noted that speed & volume of traffic are an issue.

Question 16 *If you think the direction, wording, or scope of this goal should be changed, please give us your suggestion(s)*

This question is in response to “Is this goal still relevant to the future of the Town of Ancram?” Reference 2010 Goal 6: Town Centers. Over 95% of those responding to this question marked “yes, in general” meaning that they view this goal as still being relevant. There are a total of 69 related comments.

To summarize the topics most often commented on in this response:

- Thirteen (13) of those responding to this question expressed a desire to address dilapidated buildings.
- Eleven (11) of those commenting stated that Ancramdale hamlet or other areas may be equally important.
- Nine (9) people responding noted that improvement is needed at the intersection of Routes 7 & 82.
- Seven (7) persons responding noted that heavy truck traffic is too much, especially on Route 82.

Question 17 *If you think the direction, wording, or scope of this goal should be changed, please give us your suggestion(s)*

This question is in response to “Is this goal still relevant to the future of the Town of Ancram?” Reference 2010 Goal 7: Economic Development. Over 92% of those responding to this question marked “yes, in general” meaning that they view this goal as still being relevant. There are a total of 62 related comments.

To summarize the topics most often commented on in this response:

- Twenty-four (24) of those responding to this question stated that telecommunications improvements are needed.
- Five (5) of those commenting noted that they would like to see the encouragement of agricultural retail/ (eco)-tourism.
- Three (3) people responding noted that they don’t want small or home-based businesses to be residentially unfriendly. Concern over delivery trucks and increased traffic are expressed.
- Three (3) persons responding essentially noted that zoning is not business friendly, due to the issue of maintaining rural character.
- Another three (3) people answering this question noted that local job opportunities are needed.

Question 18 *If you think the direction, wording, or scope of this goal should be changed, please give us your suggestion(s)*

This question is in response to “Is this goal still relevant to the future of the Town of Ancram?” Reference 2010 Goal 8: Housing. Almost 87% of those responding to this question marked “yes, in

general” meaning that they view this goal as still being relevant. There are a total of 55 related comments.

To summarize the topics most often commented on in this response:

- Twelve (12) of those responding to this question stated support for provision of affordable housing.
- Ten (10) of those commenting noted that they do not want to see large scale residential housing development.
- Six (6) people responding noted that senior housing is needed.
- Three (3) persons responding do not support affordable housing.
- Three (3) people answering this question do not promote senior housing.

Question 19 and 20 Environmental Topics

All of the environmental features posed in this question were important to a vast majority of respondents except allowing large scale commercial solar power farms. For that, 46% said that was not important. There were mixed responses for encouraging eco-tourism as well. Protecting groundwater for drinking, protecting water resources and natural areas, and encouraging green and renewable energy were the environmental topics that had the most number of people indicating they were important.

Question 21 and 22 Agricultural Topics

All four areas explored in this question were important to the vast majority (all over 83% important). Agriculture is clearly important to most people. A small percentage did not feel encouraging all types of agriculture was important. Maintaining open space (fields, woodlands and wetlands,) was identified as the priority.

Question 23, 24 and 25 Ancram Hamlet Topics

Adding welcome signs, landscaping the mill area and constructing a sidewalk from Town Hall to Ancram Center were not important to the majority. Slightly more people think more law enforcement of speed limits in the hamlet is not important (140 people) than did (111 people). The other Ancram topics were all important to a large majority. The top priorities were that the town should take a more active role in the removal of dilapidated structures and site improvement, encouraging small businesses, and improving the Route 82/7 intersection. A very strong majority (78%) feel there should be more businesses in the Ancram Hamlet. The most preferred business types were (in order) convenience goods, café, restaurant, and food/grocery stores.

Question 26, 27 and 28 Ancramdale Hamlet Topics

Of the topics listed in this question, there was a slight majority that felt it was important to have more speed enforcement on Route 82, with the majority for other topics answering that they were not important. There were a lot of ‘don’t know or no opinion’ responses to topics related to Ancramdale. The strongest response was that 66% said more street lighting was not important. Adding sidewalks, curbing at intersection of 82/3 and 8 showed mixed results: about 43% said it was not important while 40% said it was important. There appears to be a wider variety of opinions about what should occur in Ancramdale than in Ancram. The top two priorities were to restrict heavy truck traffic and establish a hamlet planning group. More people indicated there should be more businesses (162 people), but 107

said there should not – another topic with mixed feelings. For those that did feel more businesses were desired, convenience, restaurant, café, and food/grocery were the preferred types.

Question 29, 30 and 31 Boston Corners

About half of the participants supported many of the topics related to Boston Corners, but there were relatively higher numbers of people who indicated ‘don’t know or no opinion’ on this question. The majority did not know or had no opinion about the placement of guardrails on Boston Corner Road. About 43% felt establishing a Boston Corners planning group was important and 36% had no opinion about that idea. Of all the topics, marking walking/biking lanes on roads had the most people indicate that was important (58%). Other topics that had at least 50% were more parking at the rail trail head entries, encouraging small businesses, and providing maps and guides to historic places. There was a wider range of feelings about these topics in Boston Corners compared to those about Ancram Hamlet. The top priorities were to allow businesses in hamlet and along Rail Trail and more parking at trail head. A slight majority (54%) indicated they think there should be more business in Boston Corner but 45%. For those that do want new businesses, those types centered on café, convenience, rail-trail related and small businesses.

Question 32 and 33

The town government topics were all important to a vast majority of participants. All had more than 74% of participants indicating they were important. This indicates a strong desire to have the Town Government continue to address all those topics. Priority actions were related to communication, responsiveness and ease of access to Town officials.

Question 32 and 35

There were a variety of opinions related to the grounds around Town Hall. Almost half (49%) said that building more recreation facilities there was not important. About 42% said adding on to Town Hall for a community center was not important and about the same number said it was important. Similarly, opinions were split as to whether it was important to establish a walking trail from Town Hall to Ancram Center. 52% however thought it was important to establish a walking/jogging trail around Town Hall. When asked to prioritize these ideas, there were none that rose to the most important. However, building more recreation facilities was felt to be the least important use of that area.

Question 36 and 37

Like the Town Government topics, public services for the most part were all satisfactory except for broadband and cell service. Large majorities felt the other public services were currently satisfactory. An equally large (72% and 69%) said that broadband and cell service was not.

Question 38 and 39

This explored recreation topics. Four ideas had mixed opinions: development of biking maps and tours, more community events, support hunting and fishing, and develop a plan to improve Bass Memorial Field. For those, opinions were split as to whether this was important or not important. For the other topics, the majority felt they were important. The priorities were more walking/jogging opportunities in natural areas and shared bike lanes and shoulders.

Question 40 and 42

This question explored the need for affordable housing. 37% said having more affordable housing was important while 47% said it was not important, with the remainder with no opinion. Of the affordable housing options, large rental apartment buildings were not supported. Smaller multi-family rentals and purchased manufactured homes had slightly more support but were not among the favored solutions. Rental of single family homes, purchase of 2-family homes, rental of accessory apartments, and purchase of single family homes had the most support. There were a wide variety of other ideas offered to meet affordable housing needs (see print out).

Question 43

Question 43 *Please share any comments about other topics or future actions the Town should address.*

There are a total of 124 responses to this request for additional comments on other topics or future actions that should be addressed.

The Following are Additional Responses to Prior Survey Questions, listed under Question 43.

Q8: What brought you to this area?

- No zoning, No comprehensive plans, No restrictions, Farm area.

Q 19: Environment

- Institute climate smart programs – What does this mean?
- Allow large scale commercial solar farms with location/ siting control

Q 20: Of the items listed above what are the top 2 priorities for you?

- Allow small scale, wouldn't that involve changing zoning laws and possibly allow other less than 3 acres projects?

Q 21: Agriculture and Open Space

- Depends what types. What does sustainable mean? Ensure agricultural protection. Like what?

Q 22: Of the items listed above for Agriculture/ Open Space, what are the top 2 priorities for you?

- All items listed for Agriculture/Open space are top priorities

Q 24: Of the items listed above for Ancram, what are the top 2 priorities for you?

- Until there is some business in Ancram Center, why have sidewalks?

Q 26: Ancramdale hamlet

- Make a pedestrian crossing – What kind? Walk; cross bridge? Restrict heavy truck traffic – Why? We need deliveries.

Q 27: Of the items listed above for Ancramdale, what are the top 2 priorities for you?

- Protect the stream; get grants to improve the bridge design; welcome signs
- All going against community character. What are you looking for?
- No need for the listed items – leave the Town alone.

Q 30: Of the items listed above for Boston Corner, what are the top 2 priorities for you?

- Maintain rural character; protect streams & water

Q 33: Of the items listed above for Town Government, what are the top 2 priorities for you?

- Communications from the town hall are comprehensive and informative.
- Stop trying to change the Town's.

Q 35: Of the items listed above for the Town Hall grounds, what are the top 2 priorities for you?

- We have plenty as it is; these ideas are not necessary. Ancram should not encroach on private property, please, with any new walking trails.
- All money makes work, not important at all. Typical committee add-on; none of it will be useful.
- Make the town hall area more attractive. It could be much better with landscaping & perhaps some sculptures or colorful art work. Its bland looking. Thank you for doing this!
- Sadly we are so car dependent here.
- Area seldom used at current time, waste of money to expand.
- Access to the town hall & grounds for the benefit of community & visitors, limit construction due to maintenance costs.

Q 37: Of the items listed above for Public Services, what are the top 2 priorities for you?

- Broadband difficulties noted
- I was unable to email from under my ___ channel but not from my house here
- What do you mean by priority? We have the services most do well. Just sometimes snow removal equipment gets over-zealous and goes too wide on some of the small roads.
- Jim's crew did a great job on Westfall Rd. but I would like to mention that very many people are unhappy with the white material used on Simons Rd. It's very rough and the rock doesn't fit with Ancram.
- All but #6 seem important (Broadband).

Q 39: Of the items listed above for Recreation, what are the top 2 priorities for you?

- Access to natural trails in state land, easement of public access roads (old railroad beds)
- Enjoy your own land or farm, you will be too busy for recreation anyway if this is done right.
- Will WInterfest happen again? The Town Hall vestibule displays are well done.
- Don't want trails and traffic in DWMA

Q 42: Other ideas to meet your affordable housing needs:

- Work on more local jobs so housing can be found without assistance. Light-manufacturing is a big priority for me.
- Move to City – No more housing in the Center of Ancramdale.

Question 43: Please share any comments about other topics of future actions the Town should address.

To summarize the topics **most often commented** on in response to Question 43:

- o Eleven (**11**) persons gave responses that noted a desire to Preserve Rural Character, Agriculture, and Open Space.
- o Eleven (**11**) persons responding expressed approval of the Town Supervisor.
- o Seven (**7**) of those commenting on this question remarked that Broadband and Cell Phone Service Improvement is needed.
- o Seven (**7**) of those responding to this question expressed a desire to preserve natural (and scenic) resources.
- o Seven (**7**) of those commenting expressed an Approval of this Survey.
- o Five (**5**) people responding noted that there is a need to address dilapidated buildings.
- o Five (**5**) persons responding noted that more Community Events/ Facilities are desired.
- o Five (**5**) persons gave responses that noted road improvements are needed.
- o Four (**4**) persons stated that small businesses are needed to serve basic needs.
- o Four (**4**) of those responding to this question expressed a desire to Leave the Town as it is.

Review full responses for other comments.