

**SYNOPSIS OF COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS  
CONSOLIDATED PLAN PREPARATION  
NEWBURGH, NEW YORK  
MAY THROUGH JUNE 13, 2014**

In order to better ascertain public perception of the needs and priorities for the use of CDBG funds, the City prepared a Community Survey, which was available on the City website and was provided in hard copy to attendees at public meetings and at the focus group sessions. The survey was available in English and Spanish between May 24 and July 7, 2014. A copy of the English survey is included as **an Appendix** to the Consolidated Plan.

**Respondent Profile**

The City received 69 responses to the English survey and three responses to the Spanish survey. Responses described below may not always reach this total, as some respondents skipped questions.

Respondents were asked to identify which Ward they were from and to indicate whether they were a Resident, a staff member of a service agency, a City or County Government employee, a housing provider, or a business owner.

In the English language survey, 26 persons did not know in which Ward they lived. Ward Four had thirteen respondents, Wards One and Two had ten each and Ward Three had seven respondents. Fifty-one persons classified themselves as Residents, two were government employees, eleven listed themselves as service organization staff, no one classified him/herself as a housing provider, and four persons classified themselves as business owners. One person skipped the question.

In the Spanish language survey, two respondents lived in Ward One and one person lived in Ward Four. All three categorized themselves as residents.

**General Questions**

Asked to rank the most important housing problems, the 72 respondents listed the following as “Very “Important”” (followed by the number of persons making this selection):

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1) Unsafe or poor neighborhood conditions | 59 |
| 2) Unsafe or poor housing conditions      | 48 |
| 3) Code Violations                        | 42 |
| 4) Affordable housing                     | 38 |

Neither Homelessness nor Overcrowding were perceived as a major issue. Comments submitted by twelve respondents focused on crime, the need to “clean this place up,” and high taxes.

When asked to rank the importance of Activities and Programs for Low- and Moderate Income Persons, the top three “Very “Important” items were:

- 1) Crime Prevention 50
- 2) Economic Development 50
- 3) Infrastructure (Streets, Sidewalks, Sewers) 42
- 4) Affordable Housing 40

Crime Prevention and Affordable Housing were rated as “Very “Important” by 72.4 percent of the respondents. Infrastructure was deemed “Very Important” by 60.8 percent of the respondents. It should be noted that another 12 persons rated Crime Prevention as “Important,” and another 16 persons rated Economic Development as “Important.”

**Specific Activities**

The survey then addressed a series of Specific Activities that can be funded by the CDBG program.

The first Specific Activities question dealt with Homeownership Needs. The question received 62 responses, and the leading topics, ranked by the number of “Very Important” responses, were:

NEED	“VERY IMPORTANT”	“IMPORTANT”	TOTAL “VERY “IMPORTANT” AND “IMPORTANT”
Lead-based Paint Screening	31	12	43
Energy Efficiency Improvements	26	22	48
Rehabilitation Assistance over \$15,000	26	15	41
Rehabilitation Assistance under \$15,000	22	20	42

Over three-quarter of the respondents feel that Energy Efficiency is a key issue (ten persons skipped this question, so the percentage is based upon 62 responses). Lead-based Paint Screening has a very high number of “Very Important” ratings, reflecting a concern that is prevalent in the City’s older housing stock. Affordable New Construction was deemed “Not Needed” by 12 persons and one comment observed that the City has plenty of vacant housing.

Affordable Rental Housing Needs were addressed next. This topic received 57 responses and while the greatest number of “Very Important” and “Important” responses focused upon Rental Housing for the Elderly, the number of responses for Preservation of Existing Affordable Units and Lead-based Paint Screening/Abatement were very close behind. Section 8 Rental Assistance received 10 “Not Important” ratings and nine “Not Needed” ratings, while Affordable New Construction received seven “Not Important” and nine “Not Needed” ratings.

NEED	“VERY IMPORTANT”	“IMPORTANT”	TOTAL “VERY IMPORTANT” AND “IMPORTANT”
Preservation of Existing Affordable Units	27	12	39
Lead-based Paint Screening/Abatement	25	14	39
Rental Housing for Small Families	24	14	38
Rental Housing for the Elderly	22	19	41
Rental Housing for Large Families	23	12	35

The question about Housing for Persons with Special Needs questioned the housing needs of six groups. Only 56 persons responded to this question. Not surprisingly, “Assisted Living for the Elderly” emerged as the most important concern with 75 percent of respondents rating this need as “Very Important” or “Important.”

NEED	“VERY IMPORTANT”	“IMPORTANT”	TOTAL “VERY IMPORTANT” AND “IMPORTANT”
Assisted Living for the Elderly	21	21	42
Housing for Persons with Mental Illness	20	11	31
Housing for Persons with Developmental Disabilities	19	13	32

Housing for persons with mental illness received the second greatest number of votes because of a high number of “Very Important” votes.

Economic Development was the fourth area of inquiry in the survey, and 61 persons responded to questions in this topic. The response rate was high for this question, and several topics tied in terms of number of “Very Important” ratings, as shown in the following table. The following are the top six areas, ranked by the number of “Very Important” responses:

NEED	“VERY IMPORTANT”	“IMPORTANT”	TOTAL “VERY IMPORTANT” AND “IMPORTANT”
Downtown Revitalization	43	13	56
Job Development/Creation	41	12	53
Small Business loans	30	16	46
Retail Development	29	18	47
Lending for Community Redevelopment	29	18	47
Job Training Programs	29	14	43

Downtown Revitalization garnered 91.8 percent of the top ratings, followed closely by Job Development/Creation, which received 86.8 percent of the highest rankings.

The Infrastructure topic included a wide range of issues, including water and sewer improvements, street lighting, and storm drainage. Sixty-two persons responded in this section and the numbers were very close for the total of “Important” and “Very Important” votes, as shown in the following table.

NEED	“VERY IMPORTANT”	“IMPORTANT”	TOTAL “VERY IMPORTANT” AND “IMPORTANT”
Improve Existing Roads	44	10	54
Improve Existing Water and Sewer Lines	39	9	48
Improve Streets and Sidewalks	36	16	52
Improve Existing Storm Drainage	35	17	52
Street Lighting	35	15	50

As shown above, two of the top rated issues center upon streets and roads. It is interesting to note that water and sewer topics received high ratings, as they are typically not issues of great concern in a pool of respondents who are Residents, as opposed to business owners and government employees.

These rankings are in consonance with the relatively high ranking that infrastructure received in the general questions at the start of the survey. The public meeting and focus group discussions did not give much emphasis to infrastructure issues.

The Community Services for Low- and Moderate-Income Persons presented respondents with nineteen issues to rank. The 59 respondents felt that Transportation to Services or Jobs was the most important need. The table below notes the top ranked items and the ranking votes each received.

NEED	"VERY IMPORTANT"	"IMPORTANT"	TOTAL "VERY IMPORTANT" AND "IMPORTANT"
Transportation to Services or Jobs	33	12	45
Food Bank	31	14	45
Afterschool Care	31	17	48
Youth Counseling/Mentoring	30	18	48
Job Training	28	16	44
Child Care Services	27	19	46
Senior Programs	26	22	48
Public Safety	24	23	47

The choices covered a wide range of topics, but the responses evidence the earlier concern in the survey and in focus group discussions about transportation to jobs. Still, a number of programs (for youth, children and the elderly) received a greater number of total votes on the basis of a greater number of "Important" rankings.

When asked to rank Public Facilities for Low- and Moderate-Income Neighborhoods respondents were presented with a range of activities. The need for Public Transportation facilities followed the earlier high ranking for services, while the public safety facilities ranking of second highest followed the earlier expressed concerns. The need for playground and green space had not emerged as an issue in earlier questions, but makes a strong showing here.

Three areas had a substantial number of "Important" rankings, and are worth noting. Training Centers in particular follows from the earlier emphasis upon job creation and job training. The issue of accessibility was not a topic of concern elsewhere.

NEED	"VERY IMPORTANT"	"IMPORTANT"	TOTAL "VERY IMPORTANT" AND "IMPORTANT"
Public Transportation	37	14	51
Playgrounds and Green Spaces	36	13	49
Public Safety Facilities	35	17	52
Senior Centers	18	26	44
Training Centers	13	25	38
Accessibility to Public Buildings	22	25	47

Asked to rank activities for Homeless Needs, respondents noted the need for Homeless Prevention as the top priority. Emergency Shelters for Families and Life Skills Training were seen as the second most “Very Important” item. Emergency Shelters for Women received 26 “Very Important” ratings, other topics, such as Mental Health Care, and Operations of Existing Facilities, received higher total rankings because of the larger number of “Important” rankings. Fifty-eight persons responded to this question; 14 skipped it.

NEED	“VERY IMPORTANT”	“IMPORTANT”	TOTAL “VERY IMPORTANT” AND “IMPORTANT”
Homeless Prevention	31	14	45
Life Skills Training	28	17	45
Emergency Shelters for Families	28	16	44
Emergency Shelters for Women	26	11	37
Supportive Services for Families	25	19	44
Mental Health Care	24	19	43
Transitional Housing for Families	23	19	43
Operation of Existing Facilities	24	17	41

The topic of Elimination of Blight had 60 total responses. Code enforcement received the greatest number (40) of “Very Important” ratings, thirteen “Important” ratings and no “Not Important” or “Not Needed” rankings. This was by far the most important topic in this question and corresponds to the need expressed in earlier questions and in focus group meetings.

### **Fair Housing Questions**

The Community Survey then focused on Fair Housing issues.

When asked if they had experienced housing discrimination in Newburgh, eight of the 59 respondents said Yes. This number included two of the Spanish language survey respondents. Six of the eight persons who experienced discrimination did not report it, because they were not sure of their rights, did not think it would make a difference, or did not know where to report it. Also, two persons feared retaliation and did not report the discrimination.

Fifty-two percent of the respondents felt that housing discrimination was not an issue in Newburgh, though 31.9 percent of respondents felt that discrimination was becoming more of a concern. Only 14.5 percent felt that discrimination had become less of a concern in the past two years.

However, only 20.3 percent of respondents felt that persons in Newburgh would know where to report discrimination, and 54.2 percent stated that people would not know where to report discrimination. The remaining 25.5 percent of respondents did not know yes or no to the question. This high percentage of negative responses and the not knowing on the part of another 25 percent indicates a need for more education and outreach in this area.