

**SUMMARY OF:**  
**BOROUGH OF WOODCLIFF LAKE**  
**MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY**

This document provides a summary of the results of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake Master Plan Community Survey. The purpose of the survey was to provide a channel for residents to share their suggestions and concerns to help guide the development of the Master Plan. The survey asked the same 5 questions as those discussed in the Master Plan Virtual Kickoff Workshop (held on May 12, 2021 via Zoom), and also served to provide an alternative forum for residents who could not attend the workshop.

The survey was distributed both physically via a flyer that was mailed to Borough residents, as well as through an online form that was published on the Borough website. It was open for approximately 2 months in May and June of 2021. The survey garnered 10 physical responses, which were collected at Borough Hall, and 202 responses online, for a total of 212 responses.

The following sections detail the responses to the 5 questions asked in the survey. A summary of the most common topics mentioned by respondents, as well as a summary of other topics mentioned in the responses, are provided for each question except Question 5. Because Question 5 generated highly varied responses, they were not grouped according to commonality. It should be emphasized that the survey is not meant to serve as a “quantitative poll” to gauge majority opinion; it is a qualitative documentation of the diverse visions, needs, concerns, and priorities within the community. To this effect, the results of the survey will serve as a basis for developing a long-term vision statement, associated goals and objectives, as well as specific recommendations and action items for the Master Plan.

**Question 1: What image does Woodcliff Lake currently project? Has this image improved or deteriorated in the past 5-10 years?**

Most commonly mentioned:

- Small town, suburban, quiet, residential, family oriented, tight-knit
- Upscale, affluent
- Exclusivity, elitist, lack of diversity
- Bucolic, tree-lined streets, lots of greenery & open space
- Great schools
- Image has stayed about the same
- Image has improved: unspecified (most respondents did not explain specific reasons).
- Image has deteriorated: Broadway is a hodgepodge/eyesore/dilapidated, overdevelopment, vacant and dilapidated spaces, gas station, litigations and antisemitism

Other topics mentioned:

- Rural/pastoral history
- Boring, stagnant, NIMBY-ism
- Good public events, services, pool, plenty of places of worship
- Concerns on overcrowding on the East side.
- Bad roads, lack of walkability
- Lack of sense of community, in-fighting and political division
- High taxes, bad budgeting
- Stable tax base, good corporate neighbors
- Galaxy Gardens is a mess
- No resources like library and community center
- Fusco's Market should be an attraction
- Lots of seniors
- Image has improved: new upscale homes, image of neighboring towns have been deteriorating, more community events, beautification of causeway, shopping at Tice's, new passive park
- Image has deteriorated: bad decisions by mayor/council, McMansions, fighting against affordable housing, loss of farms on Chestnut Ridge, more congestion, Post Office, garbage around the Reservoir after storms, spot zoning variances, poorly maintained trees.

## **Question 2: What are Woodcliff Lake's best assets?**

### Most commonly mentioned:

- Schools (e.g. quality and small sized classes)
- Small town feel, sense of community, involved volunteers
- Natural beauty, reservoir, tree canopy, parks
- Public events, Old Mill Pool and other recreational programs and facilities
- Single family, large lots, low density, beautiful well-kept homes
- DPW & Recycling Center, police & fire
- Access to highways and trains, close to NYC, shopping sources, good medical providers, etc.
- Tice's Corner

### Other topics mentioned:

- Safe, quiet, clean, low crime
- Country/rural feel
- Currently not overdeveloped or too congested
- Supportive parents' organizations
- Low taxes compared to other towns
- Stable ratable base w/ limited but quality corporate businesses
- Care of historic sites
- Not happy that Woodcliff Lake pays more for high school taxes
- Opportunity to redevelop Broadway
- Churches and assisted living facilities
- Mixture of short- and long-term residents on Borough Council
- Lake is underutilized (want restaurants, waterfront activities, better parking access)
- Lake should be protected from crass improvements or sight lines.
- Tice Center underutilized (should be made available to other groups)
- Too many police officers
- Borough Hall staff easy to work with
- Lack of industrial developments
- Limited opportunities for young people in the future to locate here
- Sidewalks – some would like for safety, others feel it takes away from rural feel
- Concerns on overdevelopment and apartment buildings
- Ban on commercial vehicles on driveways overnight
- Multi-generational, diversity of backgrounds
- Wood Dale Park needs a facelift
- Excellent Shade Tree Committee

### **3. What are the most pressing issues Woodcliff Lake faces now? What might be the biggest challenges in the next 5-10 years?**

#### Most commonly mentioned:

- Overdevelopment, restricting tall buildings and high-density multifamily development
- Beautify Broadway Corridor, quaint walkable downtown, attract retail and restaurants
- Balance of development/tax revenue without losing small town feel
- Increases in traffic, overcrowded schools, and demand on municipal services if there are more development in WLC and neighboring towns
- Lack of sidewalks and bike paths (need way for kids to walk from school to pool or fields)
- Lack of library or community center
- Retention of bigger corporate businesses and their tax revenue
- Commercial vacancies, finding ways to repurpose vacant buildings and recruiting new tenants
- Proper maintenance and improvement of roads, trees, parks and fields, and lake
- Preserving open space
- Increasing home prices, lack of affordability for young people and seniors
- Balancing the budget, budget shortfalls
- Rising taxes, especially for high school

#### Other topics mentioned:

- Chabad could bring traffic and noise to residential neighborhood
- Keeping town vibrant with young families moving in
- Public transit to NYC
- Lack of busing for elementary school
- Revise Shade Tree laws to allow solar panels
- Bring Verizon Fios to everyone
- Zoning variances
- Galaxy Gardens outcome
- Meeting affordable housing obligations
- No need for new Master Plan
- Without a Master Plan, our town is exposed legally and aesthetically
- Corruption, greedy developers and their political enablers
- Unification of neighborhoods on East side and West side, East side a dumping ground for uses other neighborhoods don't want.
- Different vision by the controlling minority, more attention to ethics, special interest infighting
- Keep Glen Road a private road by not allowing right turn off Exit 170 on Parkway
- Dangerous intersections and difficult turns (Woodcliff & Werimus; Woodcliff & Broadway)
- Underutilized Borough-owned properties that should be put to good use (e.g. convert the Westervelt-Lydecker House into a museum/historical society to make it profitable; do limited-run tours of the Harriet Tice House)
- Composting
- Spruce up the Reservoir area, finish the trails
- Reduce amount of automobiles used

- Do away with masks on children in school
- Impacts of COVID and remote work, potential challenges to Chestnut Ridge building space
- Assisting residents with appointments for vaccine
- Climate change impacts, more destructive storms, power outages, clean air and water, natural hazards like wildfires
- Maintaining current quality of life and services
- Keeping gun-related destruction out of our town
- Concerns with school curricula and not indoctrinating students
- School system needs to better address bullying and marginalization of students who are not in the dominant culture
- Division, growing antisemitism, battle to exclude affordable housing, perception of racist and elitist community, need for diversity, be more inclusive to minorities and low income families
- Peaceful resolution of conflicts with religious organizations in town, encourage mutual support
- Exploding deer population
- Trees falling on power lines and causing damage
- Better governance, elected officials need to come together and be open to everyone's thoughts and opinions, focus on bringing peace and harmony and what is best for our town.
- More community programs

#### **4. In the next 5-10 years, my vision for Woodcliff Lake is...? I want Woodcliff Lake to have...?**

##### Most commonly mentioned:

- Maintain a small town, single-family residential, family-oriented character
- Restrict overdevelopment and high-density development, making sure newly developed structures are reasonable size and maintain visual appeal & design character of the community.
- More sidewalks and bike lanes, more accommodation for walkers, runners, and bicycles; especially for kids and seniors who may not drive.
- Improved, walkable downtown area, redevelop abandoned properties, more small businesses, shops, restaurants, but not too built up.
- Improved parks and more recreational amenities (e.g. children's playgrounds, pickleball, basketball, soccer field, gaga-bit, boating and fishing on the lake)
- More community events (fireworks, concerts, etc), more activities for kids and seniors
- Complete trail around Reservoir, open walking trails through town and with connecting towns
- Maintain parkland, remain a green community with lots of open space
- Continue to have solid tax base and good schools
- Fix roads, signage, and dangerous intersections (e.g. Woodcliff Lake Ave at Church Road, Dorchester Ave to Train Station, school to intersection of Pascack, Highview and Broadway)
- Library (or 100% reimbursement) and community center
- Flat/reduced taxes

##### Other topics mentioned:

- Senior housing like senior condos, less property taxes for seniors
- Outdoor fitness gym, obstacle course-like areas
- Strong financial outlook, incentivizing businesses to stay or to come
- Less political differences
- No critical race theory in schools
- Underground power lines
- Share service with neighboring towns for services like police, school superintendent
- Extricate from regional high school funding formula
- Make town more appealing for families with children
- Plan for BMW campus for when they relocate
- More children's playgrounds
- Stay as it is
- No need for downtown, no building along Broadway
- Use Lydecker house as a community center or for other community uses
- Sense of history, maintaining a connection with the past
- Ban all political signage from front lawns
- Greater diversity and inclusivity
- No new strip malls or conversion of farms to shopping plazas
- Better utilization of the lake, incorporate the beauty of the lake into any redevelopment of the train station area, possible lake-front restaurant

- Affordable housing, but no other high density development
- More transparent zoning requirements
- Streetscapes with safe lighting, sidewalks with landscaping on Broadway, more walking paths through town
- Consider converting empty office spaces into our own high school
- Memorial for the police & fire departments
- Waterfall, koi pond, kids playground area at the Galaxy Gardens Park
- New Post Office
- More housing by the train station
- Transportation for seniors to get around town when they can no longer do it on their own
- Higher frequency of recycling, bulk, and grass clippings pick-up
- Fire Department sub-station on or close to Chestnut Ridge Road to respond to calls from those business buildings.
- Have Borough leaders earn residents' trust by being responsive to concerns, hearing and responding to public comments in a meaningful way.
- Less corrupt mayor, council, and administration.
- Old Mill pool needs to be updated and heated
- Better train schedule to NYC
- A program that better communicates with residents re: events for everyone, welcoming new residents with information on businesses and resources, buddy system
- More trash cans in places where people walk dogs
- Protect independent businesses, no chains
- Better management at municipal office, faster service at building department
- More local education such as community college
- Possibly use vacant spaces for marijuana growing facility, but no dispensaries
- Traffic light around Old Mill
- More recreational south of Rinzler and Galaxy Gardens
- Bring back the swim team
- Less lawsuits
- Less regulations
- Make sure property owners maintain trees and signs
- Borough assistance with digging out fire hydrants after big snow storms
- Food recycling program
- No more masks
- More frequent trash and recycling pickup

## 5. Any additional topics that you would like to bring to the Borough's attention?

- Join the Bergen County Cooperative Library System
- Keep out corruption, Council needs to make better decisions and make progress
- Control the deer population
- Engage the County to widen Woodcliff Avenue and install sidewalks
- Illuminate the American flag on the Causeway, or take it down at sunset and raise at sunrise.
- Allocate resources to maintain cleanliness
- Stop runaway spending and mismanagement, vote by line item for budget, keep expenses in check
- Tri-Boro recreational activities that can be bigger, better
- Access to local libraries should be renegotiated
- NJ Transit service on weekends and during snow emergencies
- Address the issue of making a right turn off Exit 171 on the Parkway
- Fix the train crossing grade
- Continue to fight the EWR and Teterboro flight paths over Woodcliff Lake
- Reduce late night train whistles from approaching and departing trains, should be a quiet zone
- Reinforce that garbage/trash cans should not be placed curbside for weekly pickup
- Reinforce no commercial vehicles allowed on driveway overnight
- Worry of backroom deals, Borough leadership needs to earn residents' trust
- More transparency when the Council negotiates on behalf of the town, represent interests of the entire town, strong leadership to stand up to special interest groups, not happy with Chabad settlement.
- Recommend that NJ Transit move the station to the Coles Crossing area.
- Enforce zoning and ordinances to ensure every property is maintained, not the town's responsibility to protect the investments of commercial land owners
- Reexamine current budget and keep school taxes in check
- Continue "green" initiatives
- Teach civics and proper history in schools, avoid critical race and gender theories
- Encourage and support the traditional 2-parent family
- Resist any attempt to permit high density housing at 188 Broadway
- More investment in protecting tree cover, provide contact info for Shade Tree Committee to enforce tree preservation
- Cars should be more considerate with pedestrians during drop off/pick up
- Happy with new curbside recycling
- Sidewalks from the train to ball fields
- Faster Borough response for home and property improvements
- Clean up and repurpose area south of the tennis courts
- Create a Woodcliff Lake Chamber of Commerce and host events like "A Taste of the Pascack Valley"
- Address abandoned houses on Woodcliff Avenue
- Make it possible to obtain more info and details when requested from town officials

- Block new multifamily or townhomes, or restrict to below 6 units per acre; affordable housing could have slightly higher density
- Wood chipper in town for big storms with fallen trees
- Make sure trees are replaced
- Stop adding new services that increase taxes
- Shade Tree Committee creates hardship for homeowners
- Need police to direct traffic at Rose Avenue in the mornings
- Remove ourselves from the Passaic Valley school district
- Install new light at Broadway intersection by train station
- Inappropriate behavior by Borough administration, stop political rewards
- More integration with neighboring towns, consider town merger to cut cost
- Access from Woodcliff Lake to Park Ridge/Montvale between Wyandemere Drive and Sony Drive
- Extend weekend hours at the recycling center
- Worry about Whole Foods and the traffic it could generate
- Disappointed at political divide, negative campaigns and personal attacks during campaign seasons
- Tennis courts need to be resurfaced
- Farmers market at the train station
- Concerns on the future of the Hilton
- Remove the old barn at the train station
- Rebuilt intersection at Galaxy Gardens, add a stoplight
- Allow apartments at 188 Broadway as part of Broadway redevelopment
- Annual budget newsletters
- Organic gardening and landscape management
- Local compost and mulching center
- Galaxy Gardens is not suitable for a park