

**CROTON-ON-HUDSON
DRAFT COMMUNITY CENTER SURVEY ANALYSIS**

**PREPARED FOR
THE VILLAGE OF CROTON-ON-HUDSON**

**BY
URBANOMICS**

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INTRODUCTION

The Croton Community Center Committee prepared the questionnaire to survey Village of Croton-on-Hudson's residents regarding the desires and needs for a community center. This survey not only determines interest in such a facility, but will guide the proposal and planning processes in terms of functionality and costs.

This report summarizes the results of the 7 question survey, beginning with the respondent characteristics derived from questions 6 and 7. This is then followed with a description of the weighting process, summaries of each question on current and future activities, and finally, conclusions regarding the overall interest level in a Community Center in Croton-on-Hudson.

RESPONDENTS

A total of 554 survey responses were received, representing 2,801 households (according to the Federal Bureau of the Census). This is a response rate of 19.8 percent, enough to be statistically significant.

The respondents represent 255 households with one or two residents, 284 households with three to five residents and 9 households with six or more residents. The average size of surveyed households is 2.84 persons, slightly larger than the 2.65 persons per household according to the 2000 Census.

These households contain a total of 1,577 persons, the largest number of whom were between the ages of 31 and 54 (604 persons), followed by children under the age of 18 (482 persons), those 55 and over (401), and finally those 19 to 30 (90 persons). Due to the nature of the questionnaire, it is not possible to establish which household member filled out the survey, nor is it possible to know if more than one person from within a household did so.

WEIGHTING

It is generally the case that individuals with strong feelings to either extreme are the most likely to fill out a survey. Thus the responses were weighted to represent the population of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson as a whole, so that no one group, potentially more likely to fill out the survey, would have more input into the results than appropriate to their share of the overall population.

The demographic factors requested included the number of persons in each household as well as the number of members in each household in four different age cohorts: Under 18, 19-30, 31-54 and 55 and over. Unfortunately, with the exception of the Under 18 category, these age groups do not correspond to the Census cohorts for household heads, so they are not directly comparable.

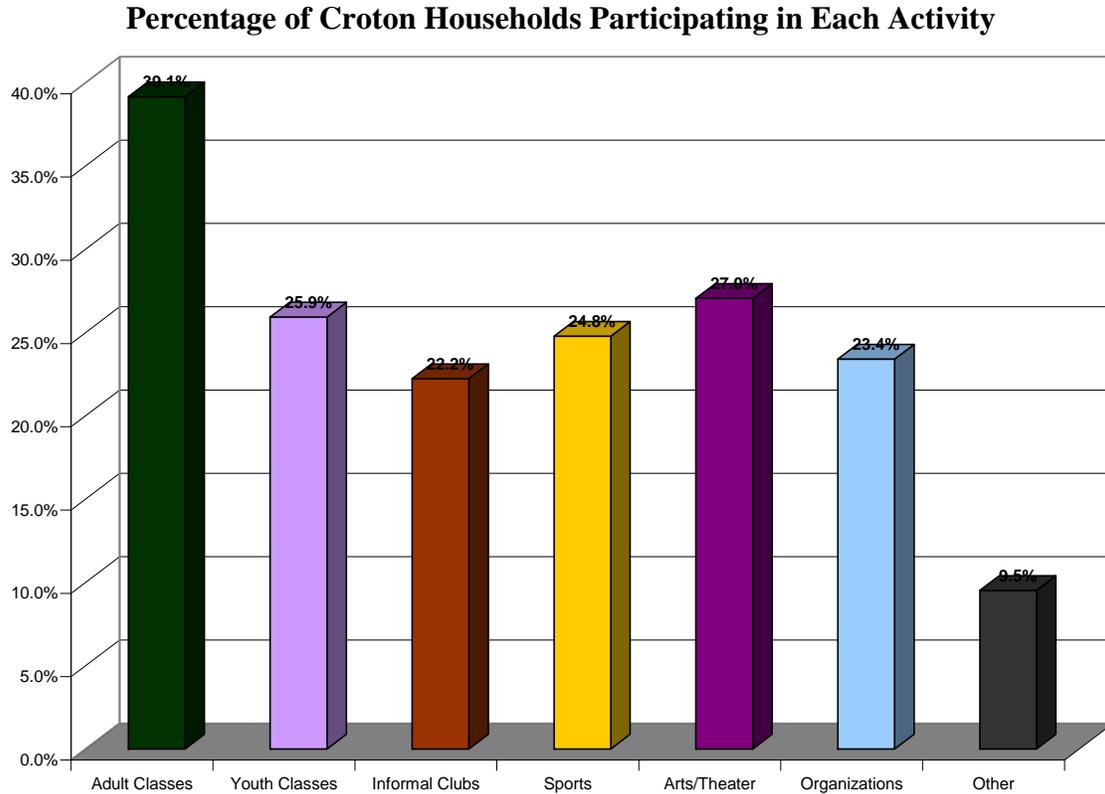
However, the consultant was able to determine the number of single persons living alone (77) and the number of households with children (259). The remaining 218 responses were classified as childless households with more than one resident. To this end, the responses were apportioned to the Croton-on-Hudson 2000 Census¹ results in order to represent the 1,187

¹ No more recent population estimates are available for Croton-on-Hudson.

households with children under 18, the 622 single person households and the remaining 992 households of other types.

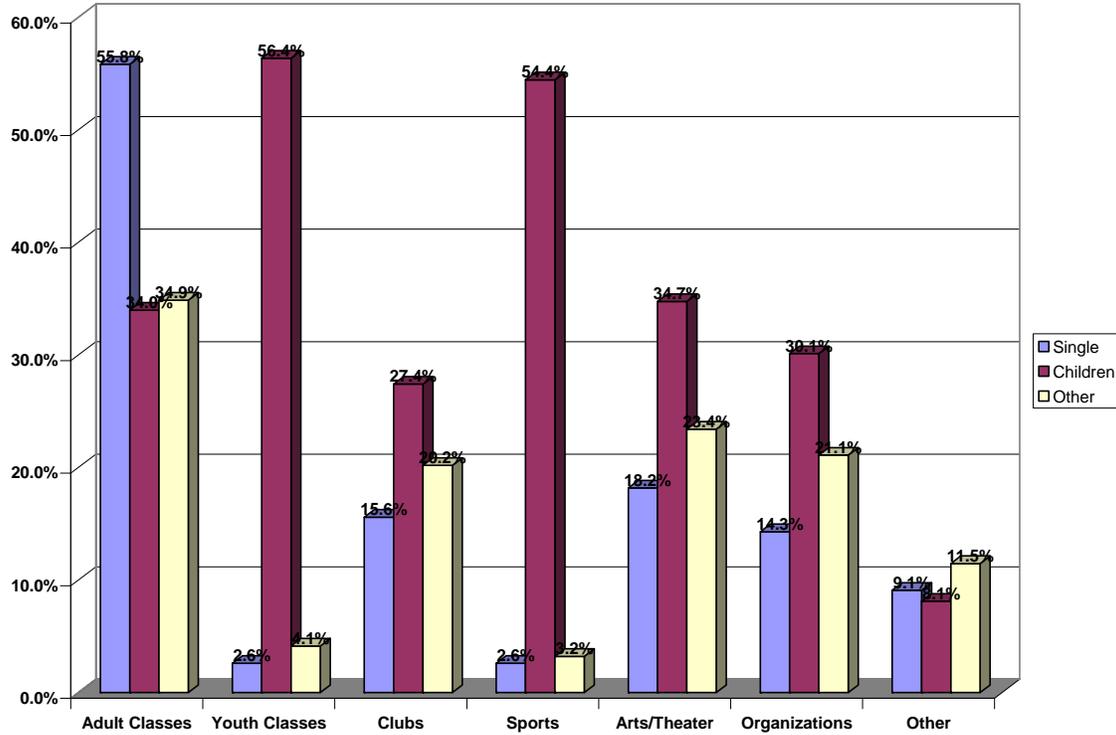
1. IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES DO MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD CURRENTLY ENGAGE:

Survey respondents were asked to check each activity members of their household take part in. A chart illustrating activity participation by household follows.



Classes, activities or programs for adults run by Croton Recreation Dept: Adult education classes are by far the most heavily attended of any of the activities listed in Question 1, with almost 2 in every five respondents taking part. As seen in the chart below, in terms of activity participation by household type, single person households are the most likely to take adult education classes, having a 55.8 percent participation rate, followed by other multi-person households (34.9%) and households with children (34.0%).

Activity Participation by Household Type



Classes, activities or programs for youth/teens run by Croton Recreation Dept: Youth and teen classes are attended by members of 25.9 percent of Croton households. This overall number consists of participation from 56.4 percent of households with children, and, unexpectedly 4.1 percent of other multi-person households and 2.6 percent of single person households.²

Informal clubs that often meet in homes: One in five households has at least one member who is a member of one or more informal club, such as a book group or game club, that meets in a private home. Participation rates by household type are led by households with children (27.4 %), followed by other multi-person households (20.2%) and single person households (15.6%).

Local sports organizations: One in four Croton households has one of more members who participate in local sports. This rate is surely skewed by children’s leagues, as a full 54.4 percent of households with children have one or more member taking part, but adult only households such as singles and other multi-person have participation rates of 2.6 percent and 3.2 percent respectively.

Local arts or theatrical activities: Participation in an arts or theater group is the second most popular activity in Croton, with 27 percent of households taking part. Participation is led by households with children (34.7%) followed by other multi-person households (23.4 %) and singles (18.2 %).

Organizations that meet at houses of worship, schools, etc.: Clubs and organizations that meet in public places such as houses of worship and schools, including Scouts, AA and benevolent societies have members in 23.4 percent of Croton’s households. Once again, participation rates

² The latter two rates may just be an error of self-reporting.

are led by households with children (30.1 %) followed by Other multi-person households (21.1 %) and singles (14.3 %).

Other: One in ten respondents reported participation in other, unlisted groups. These included political and volunteer organizations as well as participation in classes and sports (e.g., bocci, biking, curling and sailing) not sponsored by the Croton Recreation Department.

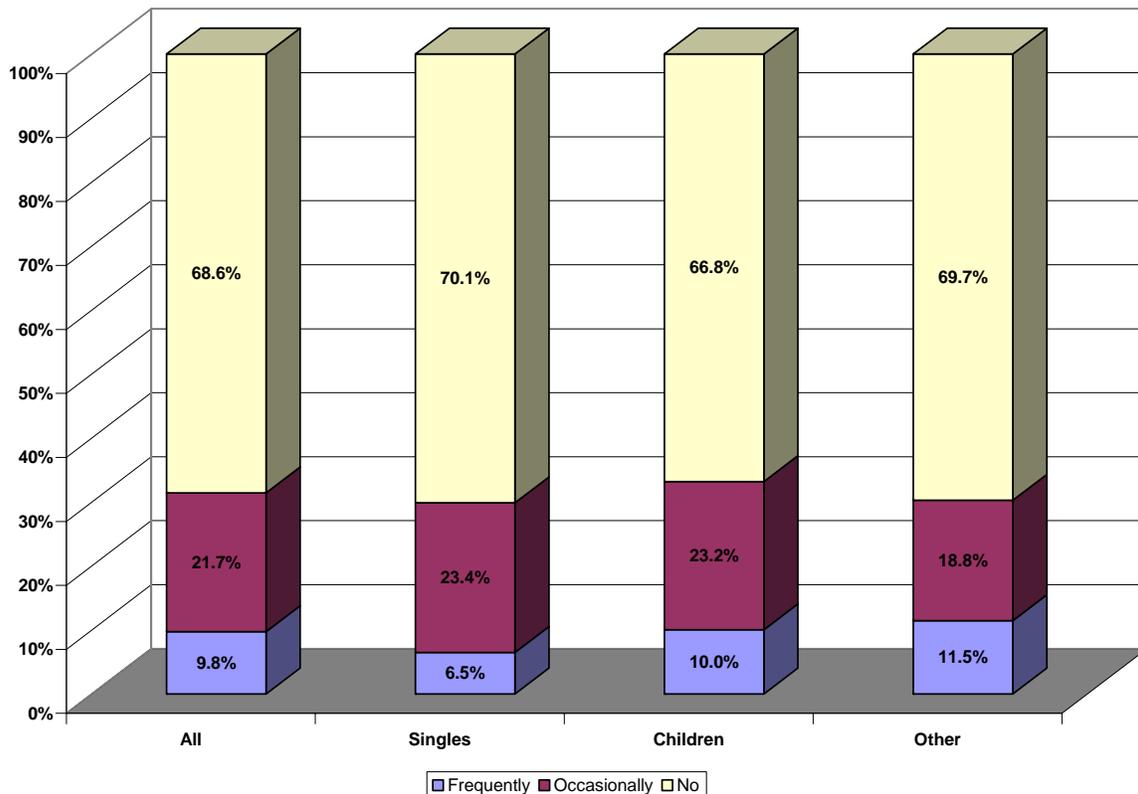
Participation in these “other” groups was led by the other multi-person households with 11.5 percent, followed by singles at 9.1 percent and households with children at 8.1 percent.

2. HAVE MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES AT COMMUNITY CENTERS IN OTHER MUNICIPALITIES?

Frequency

The likelihood of Croton residents to use other municipalities’ community centers is the roughly the same, regardless of household type. As seen in the chart below, only one in every ten households report that members use other community centers frequently, while just over 20 percent report occasional use. Nearly 7 out of ten respondents said they never use other community centers. The same basic pattern holds true for single person households, those with children, and other, multi-adult households, although single person households are slightly less likely to be frequent users (6.5%) but slightly more likely to be occasional users (23.4%). Other households, those with more than one adult member, are slightly more likely to be frequent users (11.5%), but the same proportion report never using other centers.

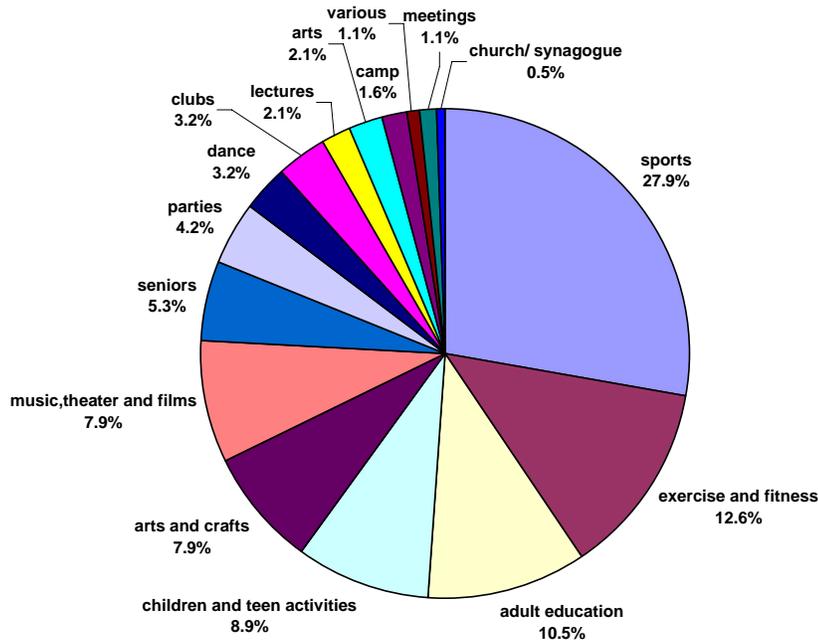
Frequency of Other Community Center Use by Household Type



Activities at Other Community Centers

Respondents were also asked to indicate what types of activities they take part in at other community centers. Due to the limited number of unique and varied responses, they are not weighted.

Activities at Other Community Centers



Of the 190 legible responses, the most popular activity by far (27.9%) was participating in sports, be it basketball, soccer, swimming or fencing. This was followed by exercise and fitness classes (12.6 %); adult education (10.5%), including defensive driving, parenting and computers among others; children and teen activities (8.9%). Arts and crafts, including jewelry and pottery making as well as painting and sculpting and music, theater and films were each activities of 7.9 percent of respondents. Senior activities followed at 5.3 percent, parties (4.2%) and dance at 3.2 percent. Clubs ranging from chess and computer to girl scouts were activities for an additional 3.2 percent, while 2.1 percent attend both lectures and art exhibits. Camp activities were listed by 1.6 percent as well as meetings and various for 1.1 percent. Only 0.5 percent of respondents listed church/synagogue attendance as an activity.

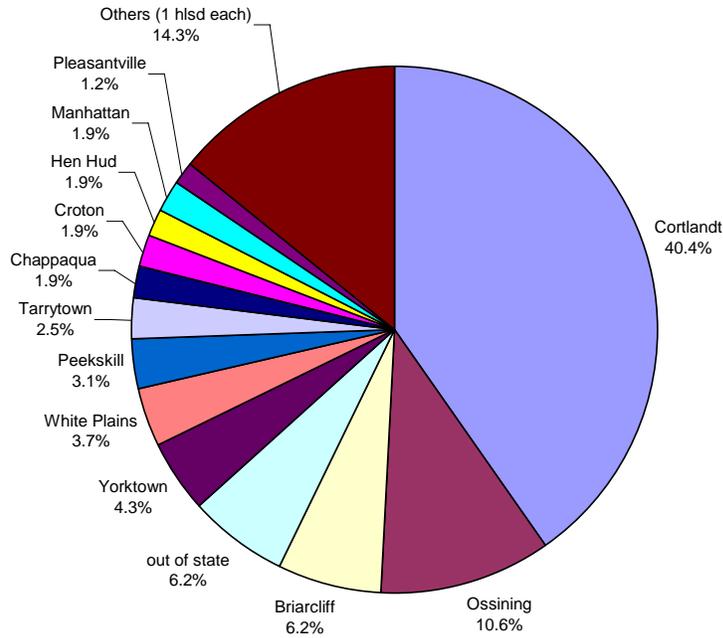
Location

Those who use community centers or facilities in other places were asked to identify the location. The 40 respondents who indicated other places listed some 168 incidents of usage in 36 unique locations.

As shown in the chart below, four in every ten responses indicated that Cortlandt was the destination for community center activities. This was followed by Ossining at 10.6 percent, Briarcliff and Out of State with 6.2 percent, Yorktown (4.3%), White Planes (3.7%), Peekskill

(3.1%), and Tarrytown (2.5%). Chappaqua, Croton, Hen Hud and Manhattan each had 3 responses, or 1.9 percent of total, while Pleasantville had 2 or 1.2 percent.

Locations of Other Community Center Use

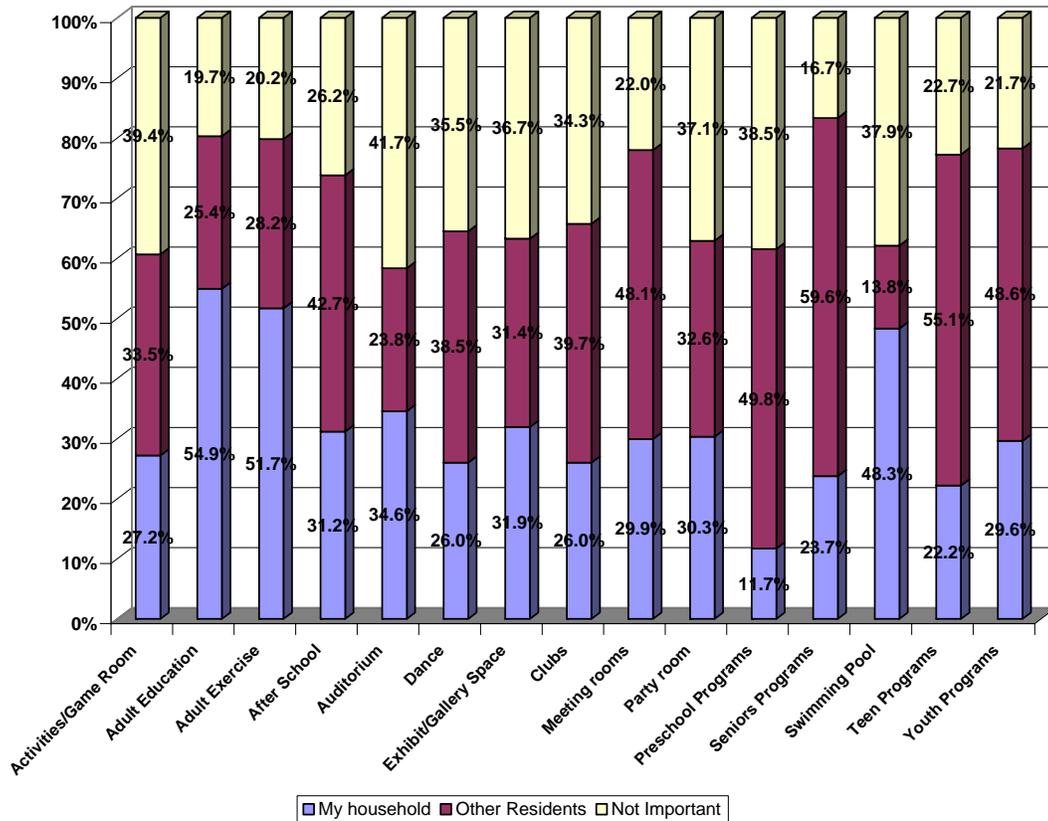


The individual towns listed just once in the responses included Ardsley, Bedford Hills, the Bronx, Bronxville, Brooklyn, Cold Spring, Dobbs Ferry, Garrison, Greenburgh, Irvington, Mahopac, Mt. Kisco, New Castle, Phillips Manor, Putnam County, Scarsdale, SUNY Purchase, Valhalla, Various, Verplanck, West Point, Yonkers, as well as facilities such as Premium Athletic Club and the Rec. Department.

3. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR LEVEL OF INTEREST RELATING TO EACH OF THE ACTIVITIES LISTED.

Survey respondents were asked to look at the list of activities and mark off if the activity is important to the respondents' own household, the households of other Croton residents or not important at all. The responses are illustrated in the following chart and summarized below where interest levels for "My Household" and "Other Residents" are described.

Interest Level for Activities



An **Activities/Game Room** was of personal interest to just over one quarter of residents (27.2%), but a full third believe that a game room would be of interest to others.

Adult education classes had the most personal interest (54.9%) of any of the activities listed. An additional 25.5 percent of respondents felt that these classes would be of interest to other residents.

Adult exercise classes had the second most personal interest (51.7%) of any activities after adult education. An additional 28.2 percent of respondents felt that these classes would be of interest to other residents as well.

After school programs would be used by 31.2 percent of respondents with an additional 42.7 percent believing that they would be important to others.

An **Auditorium** is an important addition for 34.6 percent of households, while 23.8 percent think that others would use it even if they did not.

Dance classes would be used by members of 26 percent of resident households, however another 38.5 percent believe that other residents would use them.

More than thirty percent of households are desirous of an **Exhibit/Gallery Space**, with an additional 31.4 percent believing that it would be used by others.

Informal Clubs and other activities: Although it is not specified as to whether this category indicates clubs run by the community center or just space maintained for them, a full 26 percent of residents feel this would be useful for members of their households. Another 2 in five think it would be useful for others.

Meeting rooms for clubs and organizations were of interest to 29.9 percent of households, but half of all households believe access to meeting space would be utilized by others' organizations.

A **Party Room**, available for community events and personal reservations is of interest to almost one third of Croton households. An additional third feel that while they would not use it, it would be of interest to others.

Only 11.7 percent of households are interested in taking part in **Preschool Programs**, yet almost half of respondents think they would be helpful for others.

Seniors Programs would be used by 23.7 percent of responding households, while a resounding additional 59.6 percent think they would serve others.

The third most popular activity on the list, almost half of all respondents were interested in a community **Swimming Pool** for their own households, while an additional 13.8 percent feel that others in the community would use it.

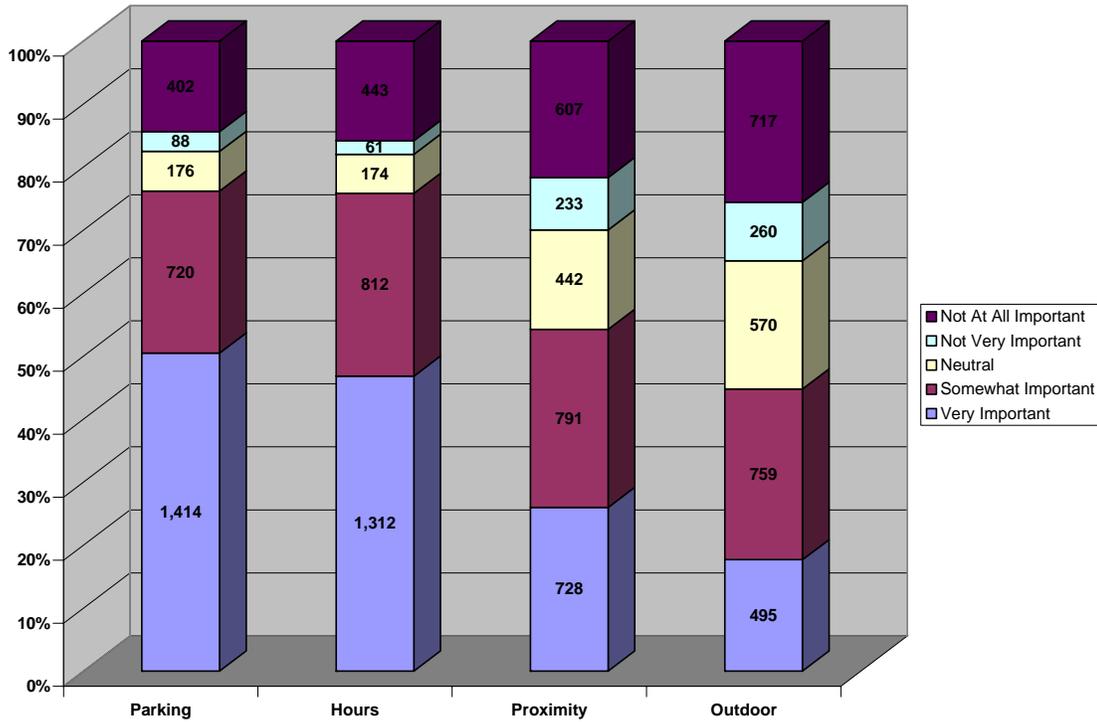
Teen programs are of personal interest to only one in five respondents, however 55.1 percent believe that others would use these programs.

Youth programs for children in elementary and middle school would be of interest to members of at least 29.6 percent of households. However, almost one half of respondents believe that other households' members would participate.

4. HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD'S WILLINGNESS TO USE A COMMUNITY CENTER?

The survey respondents were asked to rate the following logistical attributes as Very Important, Somewhat Important, Neither Important Nor Not Important, Not Very Important, and Not At All Important.

Importance of Logistical Attributes

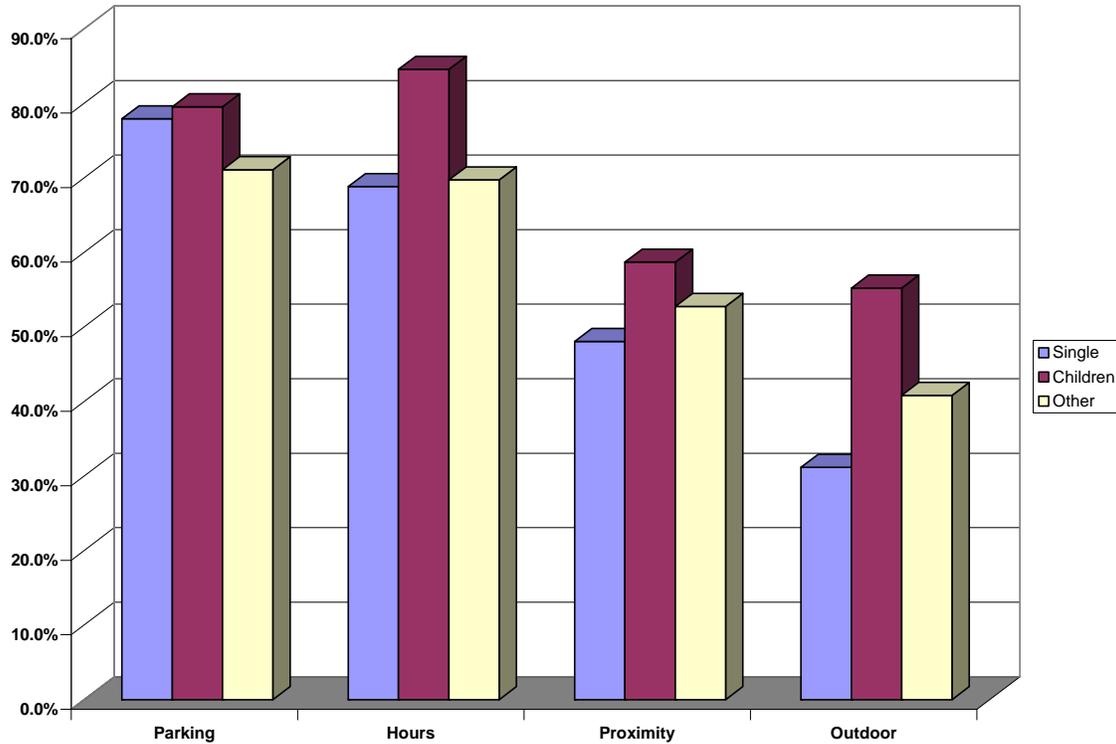


Adequate Parking

Adequate parking was the most important of the logistical attributes, with more than three quarters of households believing that it is either very important or somewhat important to the use of the center. Fewer than one in five felt that parking was not important to the community center, while only 6.3 percent of respondents were neutral on parking.

As seen in the chart that follows, there was not a lot of difference among the groups in terms of the importance by household type. Four out of five households with children rated parking as an important or very important factor, followed by 77.9 percent of single person households and 71.1 percent of other multi-person households.

Percent of “Important” Responses by Household Type



Hours of Operation

The responses indicated that the hours of operation, although not specified, were almost as important as the parking, with 75.8 percent of respondents deeming them important and 18 percent not important. Again, 6.2 percent remained neutral.

Hours of operation held the most importance to households with children (84.6 %); whereas other multi-person households and single households rated the importance of the attribute similarly at 69.7 percent and 68.8 percent, respectively.

Proximity to Village Center

Proximity to the Village Center was deemed important by more than half of the respondents, while 30 percent did not feel it was important and 15.8 percent were neutral. Once again, this attribute was most important to households with children with 58.7 percent rating it as important or very important, followed by other multi-person households at 52.8 percent and single person households at 48.1 percent.

Adjacent Outdoor Space

Adjacency to outdoor space was important to less than half of the residents, with one in five being neutral and almost two in every five not thinking it important. More than half (55.2%) of households with children rated the adjacency to outdoor space as being an important characteristic of the community center; however fewer other multi-person and single person households felt the same way with only 40.8 percent and 31.2 percent respectively.

Other

Respondents were given the option of writing in other attributes that were most important to them, 47 did. The results are summarized as follows.

Space and design: 17 respondents were commented on the design and capacity of the center, concerning themselves with “adequate space” that could be “multi-use” that is handicap accessible as well as with design issues: with “attractive looking” and “cool for hanging out” being requirements of some respondents.

No Taxes/No Center: Nine respondents emphatically stated that no new taxes and no new center should come about.

Children/Teen Programs: Seven respondents specified requirements for youth activities, including “multipurpose for kids of all ages”, “afterschool programs” and more teen “cool activities”. An additional two related comments requested that the center be “within walking distance of schools” and “away from traffic”.

Quality Staff: Four respondents stated that good quality staff, able to supervise children and teens, were very important to the success of the center.

Affordable Programs: Three respondents stated the need for the activities and programs to be affordable to all residents.

Other specifications included “child-free” events, audio/visual equipment, as well as daytime and extended evening hours. One final comment got at the operations side of the center, specifying that the center should not duplicate any existing services.

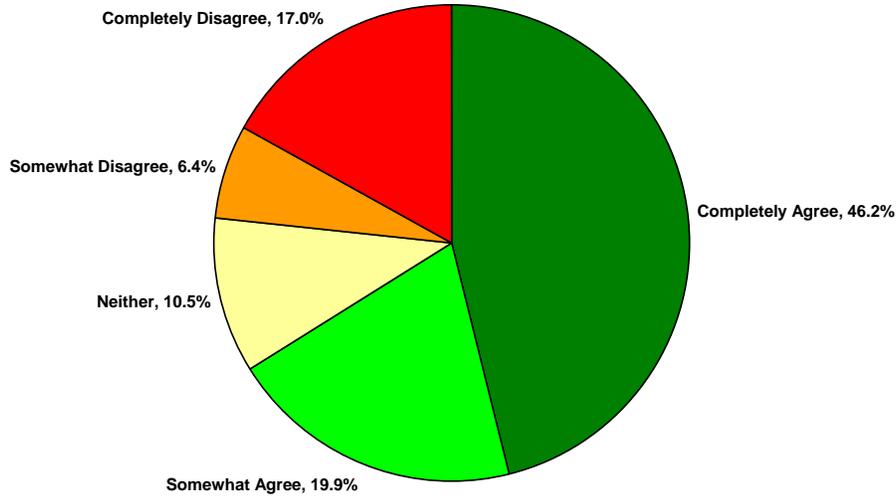
5. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

Respondents were asked if they Completely Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree or Completely Disagree.

Croton Needs a Community Center

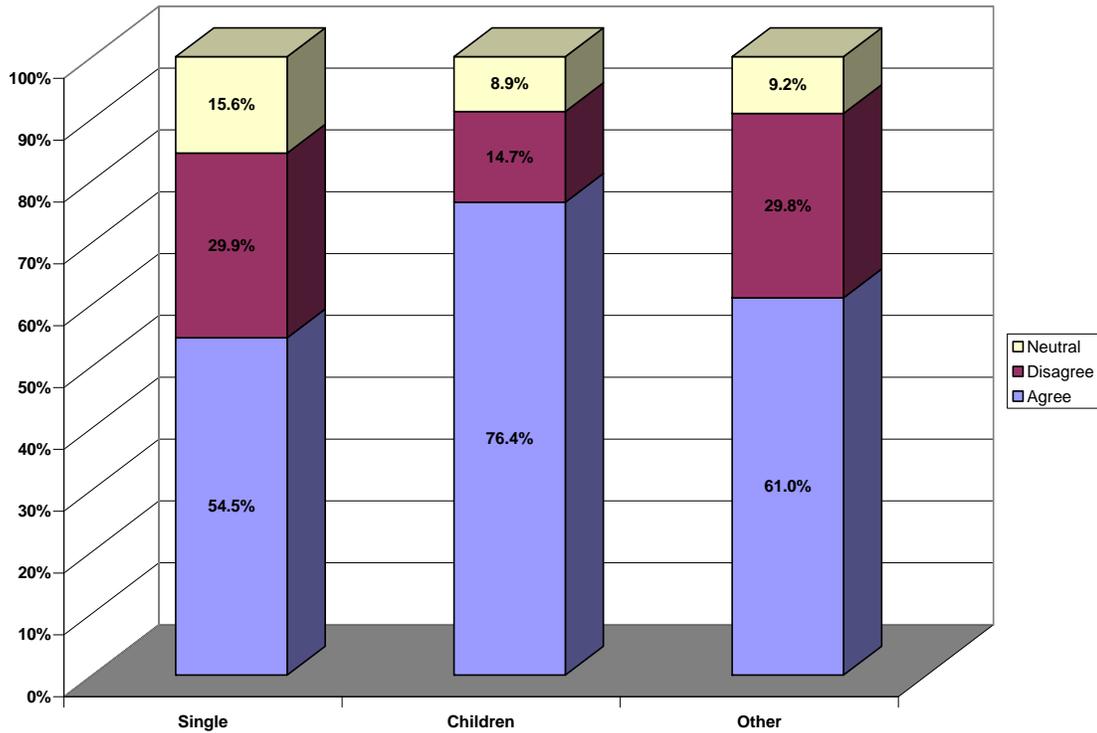
In response to the overall question of whether Croton-on-Hudson needs a community center, 66.1 percent of all households responded in the positive, with 46.2 percent Strongly agreeing, and 19.9 percent somewhat agreeing. One in ten households was neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. Somewhat disagreeing with the statement were 6.4 percent of households, while a full 17 percent completely disagreed.

“Croton Needs a Community Center” Responses



In terms of preference by household type, the responses were aggregated into the positive, the neutral and the negative, as seen in the chart below.

“Croton Needs a Community Center” Responses by Household Type



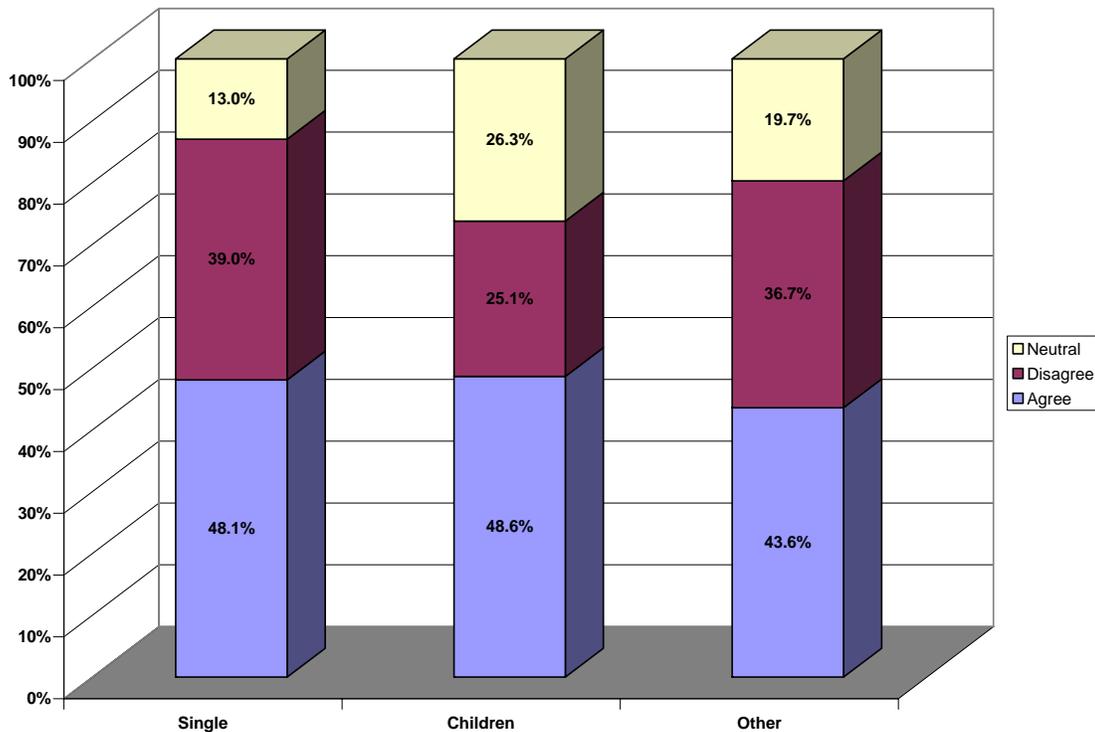
Households with children are the most supportive of the community center with more than 3 out of every four indicating that they are in agreement with the idea. Fewer than 10 percent (8.9%) are neutral and only 14.7 percent do not support it. Almost two-thirds (61.0%), of other multi-person households support the community center, while 9.2 percent are neutral and 29.8 percent are against it. More than half (54.5 %) of single person households were in agreement that the community center is needed, 15.6 percent were neutral or undecided on the subject, but a full three in every ten disagree—thinking a community center is not needed.

Fitness Center

In response to the statement “Croton’s Community Center should have a fitness center,” 46.7 percent of households agreed, 32.3 percent disagreed and more than one in five did not have an opinion.

Support by household type was rather evenly distributed with 48.6 percent of households with children agreeing, followed by 48.1 percent of single person households and 43.6 percent of other multi-person households. Single person households were the most likely to disagree with 39.0 percent, followed by other multi-person households at 36.7 percent and households with children at 25.1 percent.

“Croton Needs a Fitness Center” Responses by Household Type



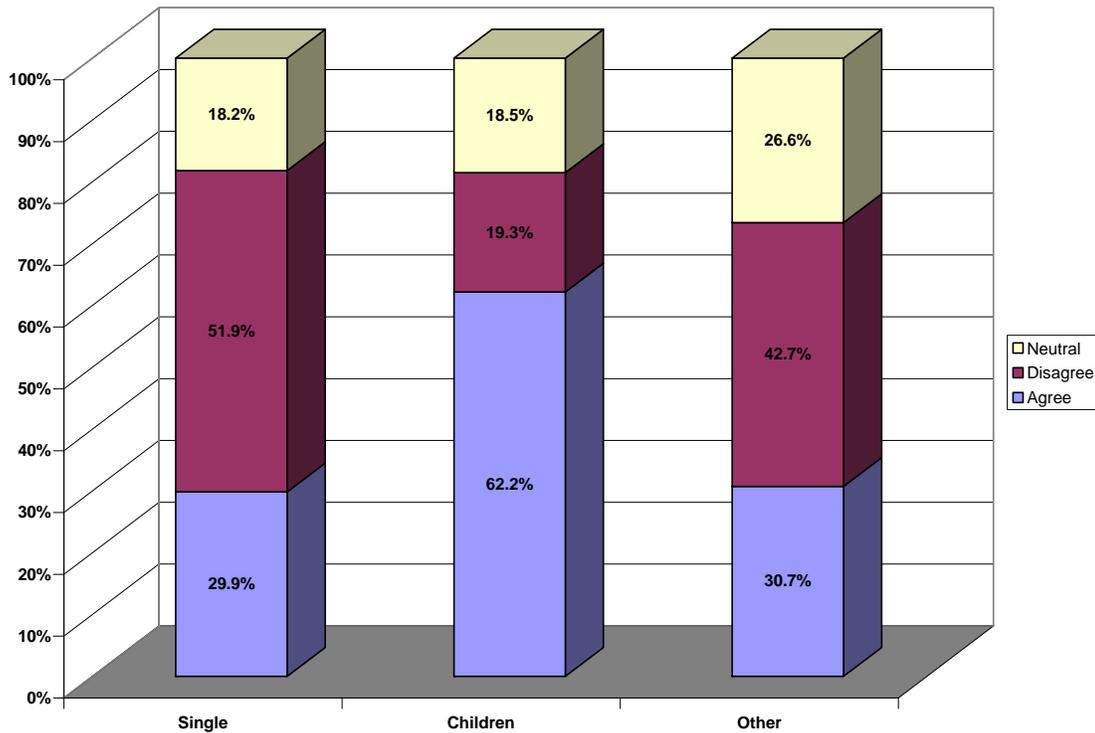
Of all households that did not support the idea of a community center in general, 8.0 percent of those that disagree and 28.1 percent of the neutral believe that Croton-on-Hudson does need a fitness center.

Basketball Court/Gymnasium

Overall, only 43.9 percent of households agreed that the community center should have a basketball court/gymnasium, with 21.3 percent being neutral and 34.8 percent being against the idea.

In terms of household type, households with children are the greatest supporters of the basketball court/gymnasium, with almost two thirds of these households agreeing, whereas only half that proportion of other and single households agreed (30.7% and 29.9%, respectively). One in every five households with children did not agree with the need for a gym, whereas 2 out of five “other” households and more than half of single person households felt it is not necessary.

“Croton Needs a Basketball Court/Gymnasium” Responses by Household Type



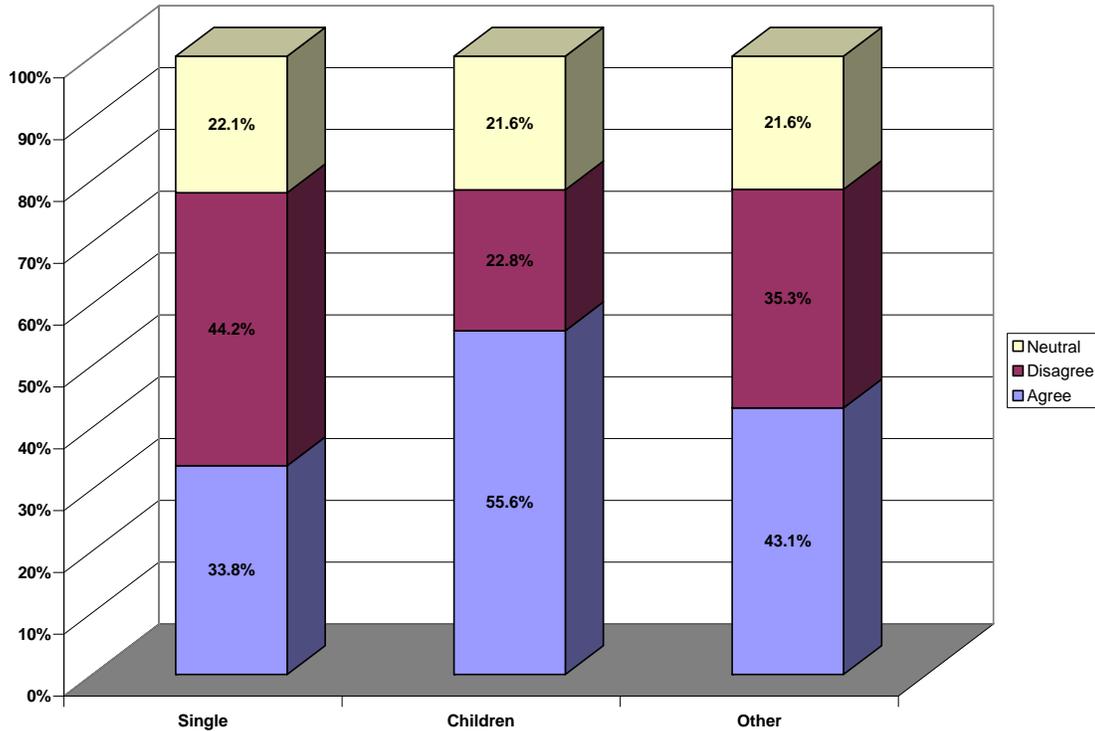
Of all households that did not support the idea of a community center in general, 8.0 percent of those that disagree and 19.9 percent of the neutral believe that a basketball court/gymnasium is needed in Croton-on-Hudson.

Theater

Almost half (46.3%) of responding households agreed that the community center should have theater space. One in three disagreed, but one in five did not have an opinion.

In terms of household type, once again, households with children were most supportive at 55.6 percent in agreement followed by other multi-person households (43.1%) and finally singles (33.8%). Across the board, one in every five respondents was neutral on the idea; but 22.8 percent of households with children, 35.3 percent of other multi-person households and 44.2 percent of single person households are against it.

“Croton Needs a Theater” Responses by Household Type



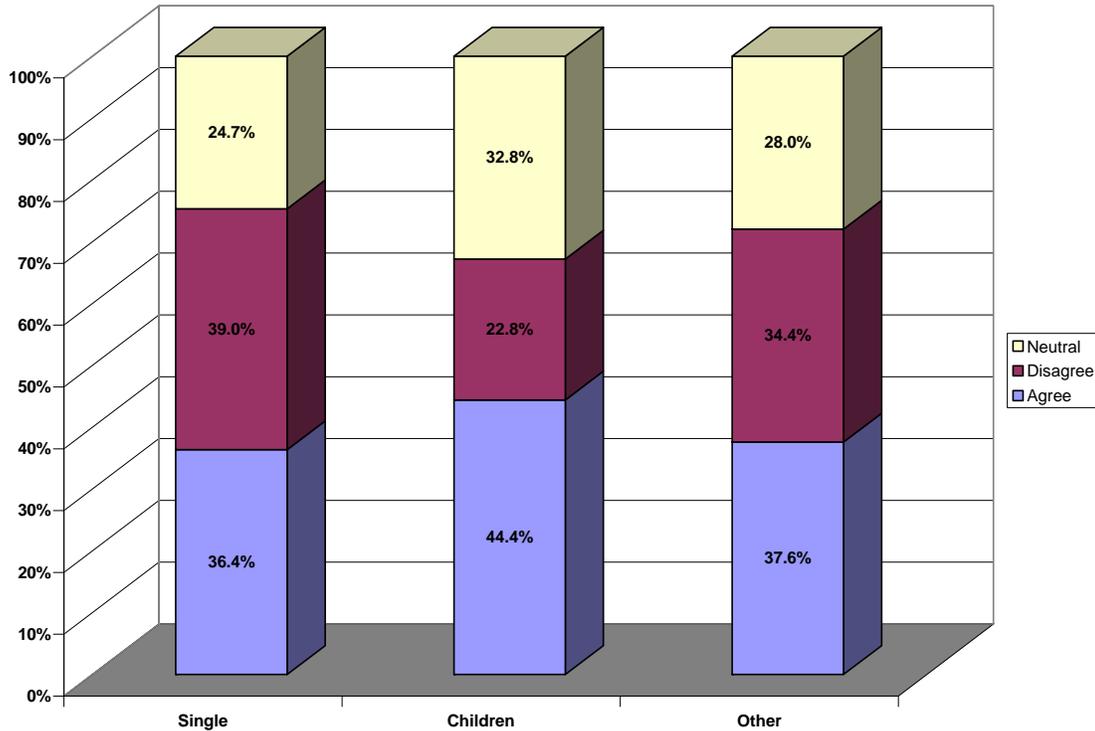
Of all households that did not support the idea of a community center in general, more than one in ten (10.3%) of those that disagree and three in ten (30.1%) of the neutral believe that a theater is needed in Croton-on-Hudson.

Office and Storage Space for Non-Profits Groups and Clubs

Four in every ten households supports the idea of the community center having dedicated office and storage space for non-profit groups and clubs, while the remaining households are fairly evenly split between those who are against the idea and those who are neutral.

Households with children are more likely to support this idea, with 44.4 percent agreeing and only 22.8 percent disagreeing that the community center should house office/storage space. Other multi-person households follow with 37.6 percent supporting the idea and 34.4 percent disagreeing. Singles are the least supportive with 36.4 percent in agreement and almost 1 in 5 feeling the storage space is unnecessary.

“Croton Needs Office/Storage Space” Responses by Household Type



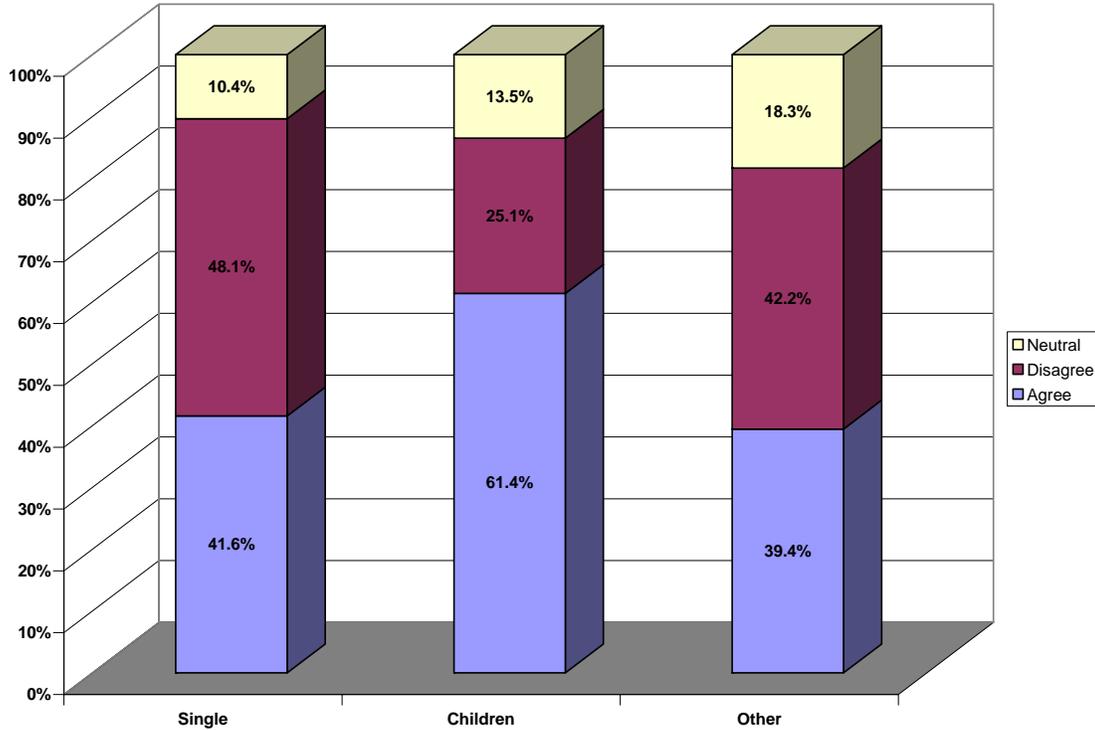
While there is a relatively high level of neutrality across the board for this question, when looking at opinion by household type, single person households are the least likely to be so with 24.7 percent, while other households and those with children following at 28.0 percent and 32.8 percent respectively.

Of all households that did not support the idea of a community center, 10.7 percent of those that disagree and 27.3 percent of the neutral believe support creating office/storage space for community groups and non-profits.

Swimming Pool

Just under half of all residents support the idea of a community pool in Croton while just over one third disagree, with the remaining 14.5 percent maintaining a neutral stance. The swimming pool question is one of the most influenced by household type, as seen below.

“Croton Needs a Swimming Pool” Responses by Household Type



Households with children show the strongest support for a swimming pool at the community center, with 61.4 percent agreeing with the idea and a relatively small 25.1 percent being against it. Only 13.5 percent of households with children stated no opinion. For both single and multi-adult households without children, roughly forty percent support the idea of a pool. Resistance to the idea is stronger in the single person household category, with 48.1 percent being against the idea in comparison to the 42.2 percent for the other childless group.

Of all households that did not support the idea of a community center, 11.4 percent of those that disagree and more than one in three of the neutral believe that Croton-on-Hudson would be well served by a swimming pool.

Write-in Comments

The survey requested that any additional comments be included on a separate sheet of paper. Extensive comments were received from 34 different respondents, with key points numbering 41. The most prevalent of course, was the issue of Taxes: 17 respondents were emphatic that they did not want to see taxes raised because of this project. Seven respondents stated that there are sufficient venues for the listed activities in the Village already, and the new school additions should be utilized instead of spending money on new space. Five respondents thanked the Village for giving them the opportunity to express their opinions.

Four comments dealt with suggestions for the physical plan of the facility. Suggested locations included: near the railroad station, so that residents of nearby towns could make use of it; the Croton Auto park site; the lot adjacent to the municipal building; and, filling the Duck Pond.

Three comments were received regarding the survey instrument itself. One suggested different questions; one was against the color and another in favor of it.

Two comments recommended that the Village not spend money on a new project until existing facilities were paid off or fixed (e.g., the school expansion; the Spencer field scoreboard).

Two comments were received regarding the future administration of the community center: the first requesting a conduct code and the second administration by a committee, not just a few residents.

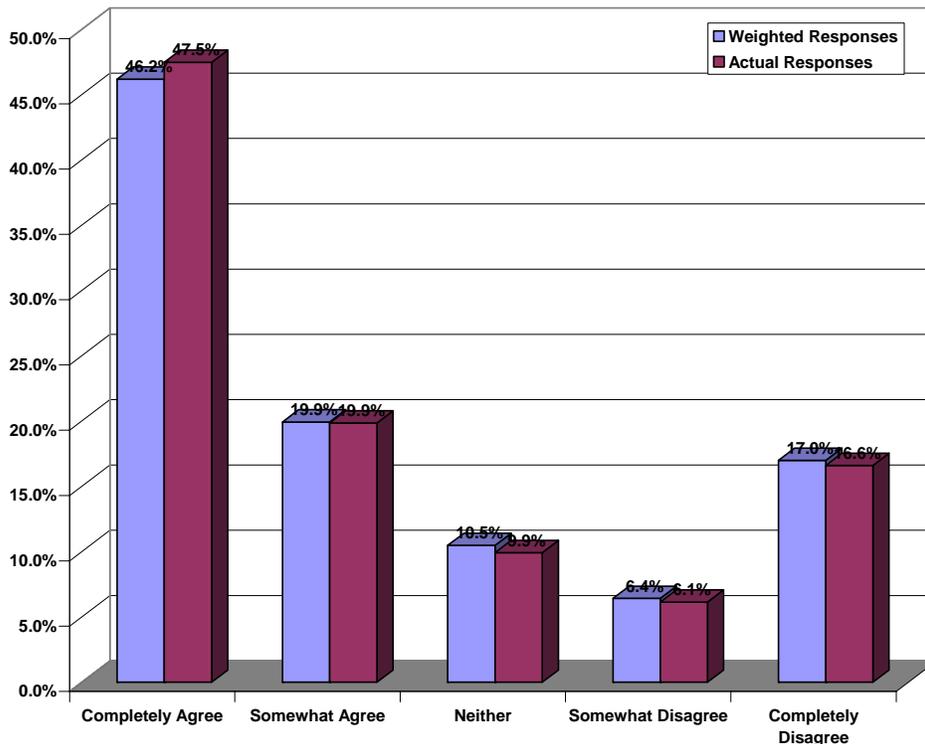
Two planning suggestions were made, the first advising that the Senior Club’s needs assessment is underway and should be used as a planning tool for the center. The second was a volunteer for helping with arts programs.

Two other comments were made. One suggested that a book mobile would be a better use of funds and the last that the Village should beware of another “skate park fiasco”.

CONCLUSION

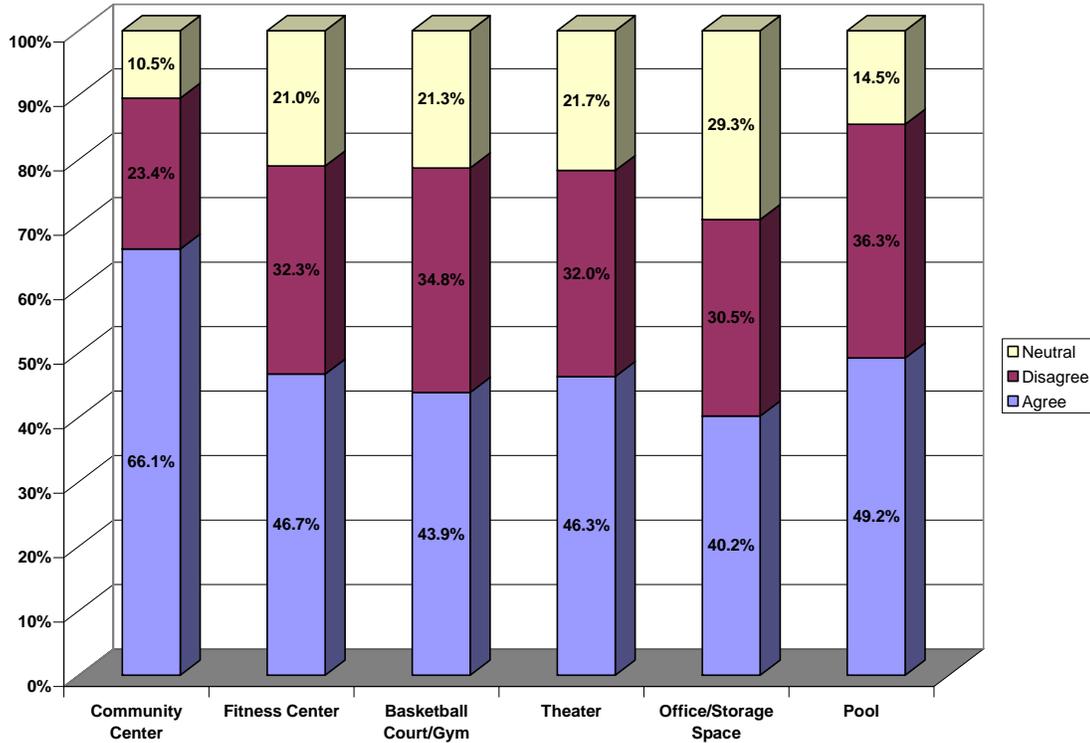
Just under two-thirds of weighted households either Completely Agree (46.2%) or Somewhat Agree (19.9%) that Croton-on-Hudson should have a community center, while just under one quarter Completely Disagree (17.0%) or Somewhat Disagree (6.4%). The actual unweighted response results are even more positive, with 47.5 percent Completely Agreeing and 19.9 percent Somewhat Agreeing with the idea that Croton needs a Community Center and a lower 16.6 percent Completely Disagree and 6.1 percent Somewhat Disagree.

“Croton Needs a Community Center” Question Results: Weighted and Actual



Components of the center, as determined by the questionnaire listings, should include a swimming pool (49.2% support it), a fitness center (46.7%), a theater (46.3%), a basketball court/gymnasium (43.9%) and finally office/storage space (40.2%).

Overall Support for All Components of Question 5



The most important logistical attributes mentioned on the survey are adequate parking and hours, however many residents wrote in that they want a community center that has an attractive design and adequate space and staffing for many different types of activities.

The dissenting views are primarily from those who do not want to see a tax increase in order to pay for the center.