

# Municipal Place Gateway & North Riverside Neighborhood Zoning Study Public Survey Summary

*May 23, 2019*

## INTRODUCTION

---

A public survey was developed for the Municipal Place Gateway and North Riverside Neighborhood Zoning Study. As shown on the map on the next page, the study focuses on two commercial areas: the Municipal Place Gateway and the North Riverside Neighborhood. The survey was accessible from the Village of Croton-on-Hudson's website for approximately two months (March 8, 2019, to May 5, 2019). A total of 1,437 responses were received, of which 1,076 were electronic responses and 361 were written responses.

The Survey was widely publicized through e-blasts, social media, the Village website, posters, and other means. In addition, a paper copy of the survey was mailed out to all Croton-on-Hudson residents. Respondents had the option to take the survey online or mail the printed copy back to the Village.

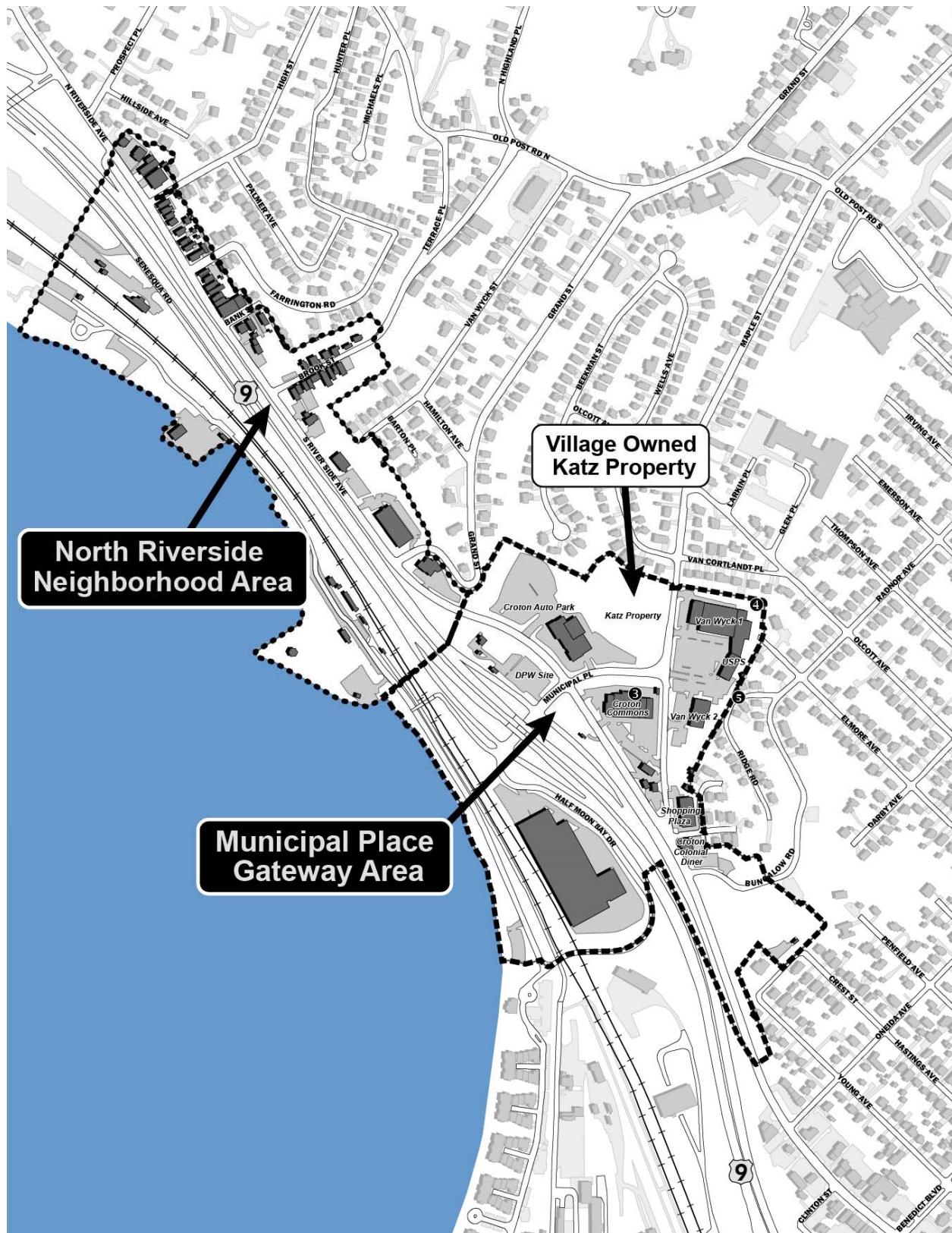
The purpose of the survey was to gather input on the key issues and opportunities for the two commercial areas to better understand how the Village can facilitate improvements where needed. This report summarizes the 19-question survey. While most questions were multiple choice, some asked for open ended responses. Frequently cited "other" responses were summarized for each question. Feedback from this survey will be considered by the project's working group for incorporation into the report. The survey can also be used by the Village to gauge interest in other future projects and initiatives. All figures in this survey have been rounded and approximated for simplicity and clarity.

It should be noted that many of the questions allowed respondents to provide comments in an open-ended response. The open-ended comments numbered in the hundreds for each question, and the thousands overall, and therefore, could not all be captured in this summary. Where comments reflected recurrent themes or provided new and innovative ideas, they were incorporated into the summary.

Finally, it is important to note that this survey, while informative, is not a scientific poll of the public as a whole. Survey participants were not randomly selected. The survey results reflect the opinions of those who decided to take the poll, i.e., it is a self-selecting survey. Although the survey is not a scientific gauge, it is a worthwhile method to get an understanding of broad issues and opportunities in the Village. The public survey is just one of a variety of public outreach methods, including focus groups and stakeholder meetings, utilized for this planning process. Feedback from the different outreach methods helped to provide a more representative understanding of public opinion on issues that affect Croton-on-Hudson.

***DRAFT***

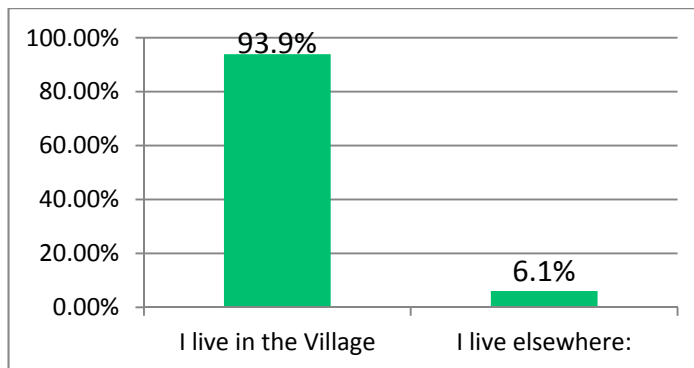
# LOCATION MAP



## GENERAL QUESTIONS

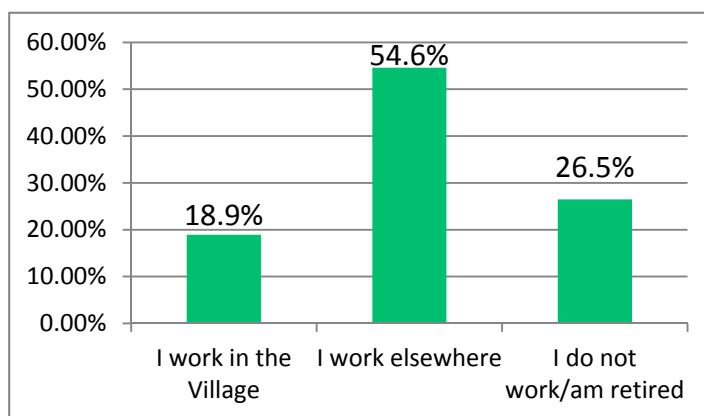
### *Do you live in Croton-on-Hudson? (Survey Question 1)*

The vast majority of people who took this survey (roughly 94 percent) live in Croton-on-Hudson. Most of the rest of survey respondents live elsewhere. (1,428 responses)



### *Do you work in Croton-on-Hudson? (Survey Question 2)*

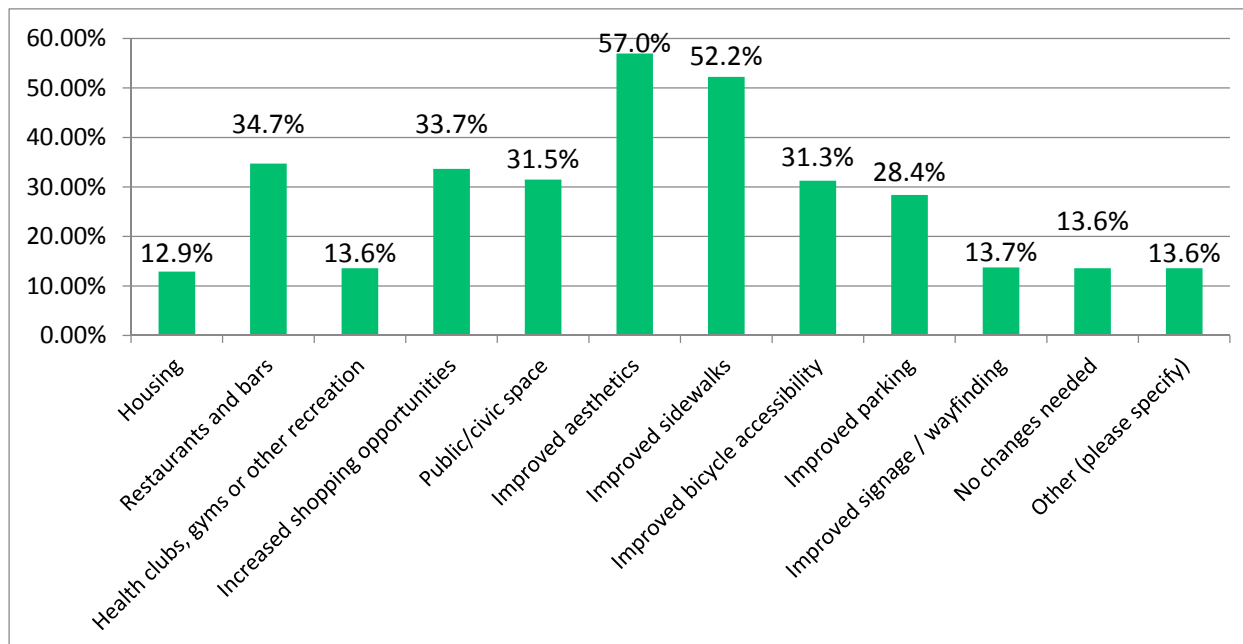
Over half of the respondents (roughly 55 percent) work outside of Croton-on-Hudson. Roughly 27 percent of respondents do not work or are retired. The remaining respondents (roughly 19 percent) are people who work in the Village. (1,427 responses)



## MUNICIPAL PLACE GATEWAY QUESTIONS

*What types of amenities or other changes to the Municipal Place Gateway do you think would make the area more desirable or appropriate?*

*[Check all that apply] [Survey Question 3]*



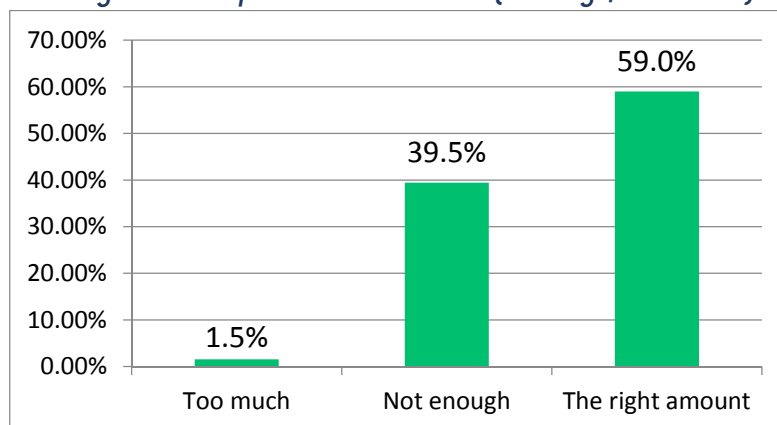
Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% because participants were asked to check all that apply.

Over half of respondents indicated improved aesthetics (roughly 57 percent) and improved sidewalks (roughly 52 percent) would help to make Municipal Place Gateway more desirable or appropriate. Other additional amenities respondents listed are restaurants and bars, increased shopping opportunities and public/civic space. (1,325 responses)

Other frequently cited priorities included redeveloping the Westchester County Department of Public Works site, retaining existing views to the Hudson River and beautifying the gateway area.

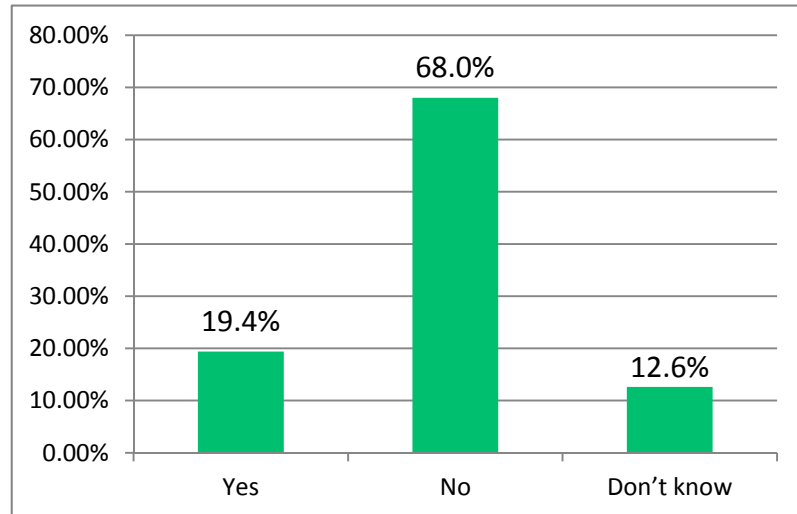
### *What do you think about parking availability at Municipal Place? Is there: [Survey Question 4]*

In terms of parking availability at Municipal Place, the majority of respondents (roughly 59 percent) indicate there is enough amount. Roughly 39 percent of respondents believe there is not enough parking. (1,298 responses)



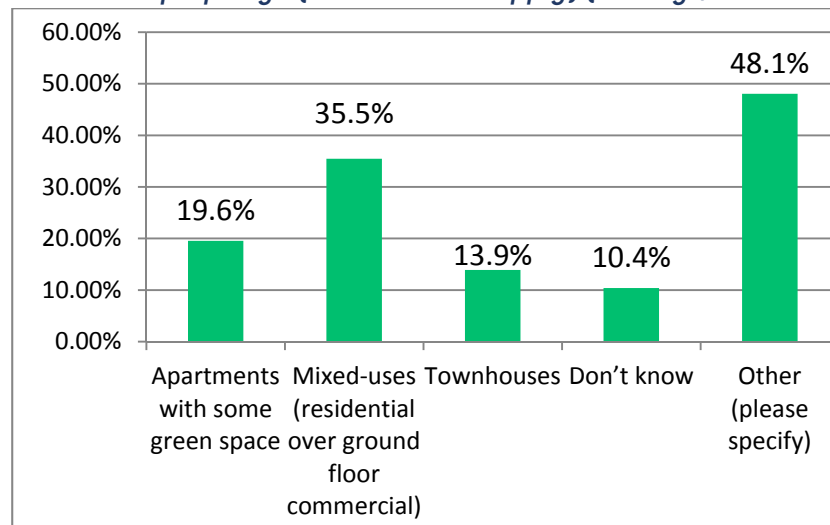
**Would you be interested in seeing more housing options such as apartments or townhomes in Municipal Place Gateway Area? (Survey Question 5)**

The majority of respondents (roughly 68 percent) were not interested in seeing housing in the Municipal Place area. Approximately 20 percent supported housing and 13 percent were not certain (13 percent).  
(1,316 responses)



**The Village of Croton-on-Hudson is considering options regarding “the Katz property” a village-owned site of 2.3 acres fronting on Rte 129 across from the post office and in the heart of the Municipal Place Gateway District (see aerial at the top of this page). The Village seeks options that would be pedestrian-friendly, consistent with the character of the Village, and provide economic opportunities that would complement our existing business base. Do you agree with introducing the following uses at the Katz property? (Check all that apply) (Survey Question 6)**

Of the options provided, a third supported mixed use development at the Katz site. Just under half of respondents provided other options besides those provided. The remaining respondents indicated the potential for developing apartments, mixed-use or townhouses.  
(1,309 responses)



Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% because participants were asked to check all that apply.

In the “Other” category, respondents expressed a mixed opinion on the future use of the site. In the 629 comments, several themes emerged. Many respondents reported that they do not support any changes to the area (“leave it as is”). The

idea of creating some kind of public space was commonly reported. Some expressed the need for a public civic/park space and others preferred a passive green space which preserved the existing wooded character of the area. Some respondents wrote that the creation of park space could be done in conjunction with development. With regard to development, significant amount of respondents supported commercial uses in the area rather than residential uses.

Noteworthy themes for the “other category” are listed below:

- Nothing should be done with this property.
- Create public park.

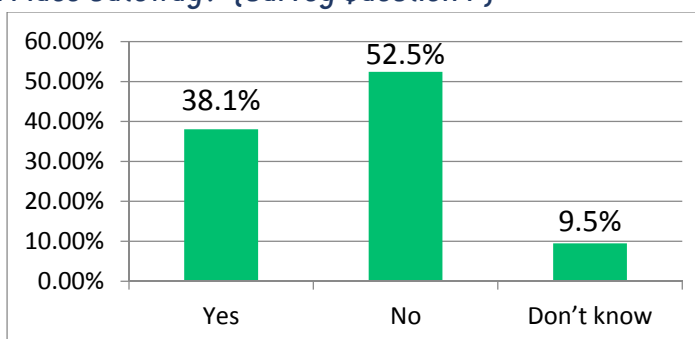


- Preserve as public green space.
- Entertainment (i.e. bowling alley, movie theater).
- Recreation Center, Community Center.
- Commercial only, more shops and restaurants.
- Some residential only if green space is included.
- No high-rise housing.
- Views are a concern.
- Traffic is a concern.
- Office space.
- Grocery store.
- Relocate existing post office.
- Playground.
- Townhouses or apartments for senior citizens with public green space provided.
- Small shops (i.e. children's clothing, florist shop, coffee shop).
- Art center and exhibition gallery.

## Do you agree with introducing mixed use (residential over ground floor commercial) into existing shopping areas in the Municipal Place Gateway? (Survey Question 7)

Just over half of respondents do not support introducing mixed-uses into this area. 38 percent do support mixed-use development.  
(1,306 responses)

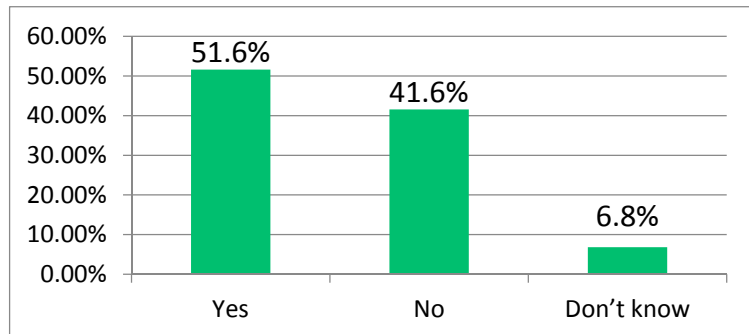
There were 157 open ended comments associated with this question. The noteworthy/commonly expressed themes are listed below:



- Remain as is.
- Occupy current vacant storefronts prior to building new development.
- Mixed use only if the architecture respects the existing Village character and provides sufficient parking behind the building.
- Economic and social benefits as it could create a more walkable streetscape.
- Existing shopping areas are sufficient for the Village.
- Introduce new diversity of local businesses.
- New development opportunities should require developers pay for improved aesthetics (eg. architecture, landscaping, etc) and facilities (eg. playgrounds, etc).
- Limit to 2 to 3 stories.
- Views are a concern.
- Traffic is a concern.
- Commercial only, residential optional.
- Mixed use only if schools could handle and easily accommodate the influx of kids.

*In Harmon at the intersection of South Riverside Avenue and Benedict Boulevard, two new buildings have recently gone up. They are three stories as allowed by new zoning that was adopted. Is a height of three stories appropriate in Municipal Gateway? (Survey Question 8)*

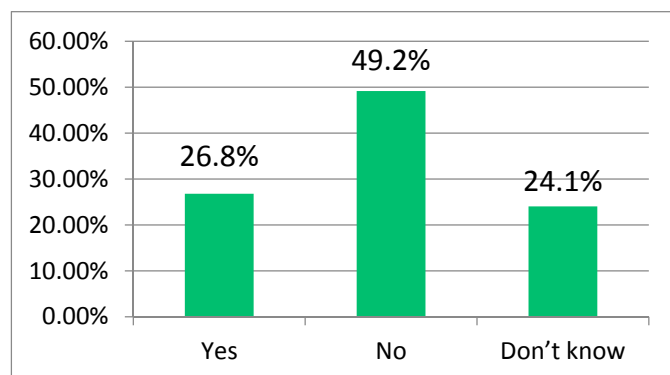
When considering the appropriate height in Municipal Place Gateway, over 50 percent of respondents (roughly 51 percent) indicated that three stories is appropriate. (1,319 responses).



*Would development incentives such as increased FAR (bulk) or an additional story be an acceptable way to encourage a developer to provide a public amenity such as a park or cultural space? (Survey Question 9)*

About half of respondents indicated that development incentives or an additional story would not be an acceptable way to encourage a developer to provide a public amenity. (1,310 responses)

Respondents' comments had mixed opinions. Some noted the concern with overdevelopment and adequate amount of existing parks. Other respondents supported an additional story with public space only if the current waterfront views wouldn't be obstructed. Respondents frequently cited the need to understand what the meaning of FAR is.



*Are there areas in the Municipal Place Gateway Area that should be made to feel more walkable (i.e. with improved sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, benches)? If so, where? (Survey Question 10)*

Respondents expressed the importance of improving the sidewalks along the shopping plazas of Van Dyck and Croton Commons, the Katz property, and the entire Riverside Avenue. Concerns for access to the waterfront were frequently cited. Specific areas where potential interventions should occur, as reported by respondents are listed below. (736 responses)

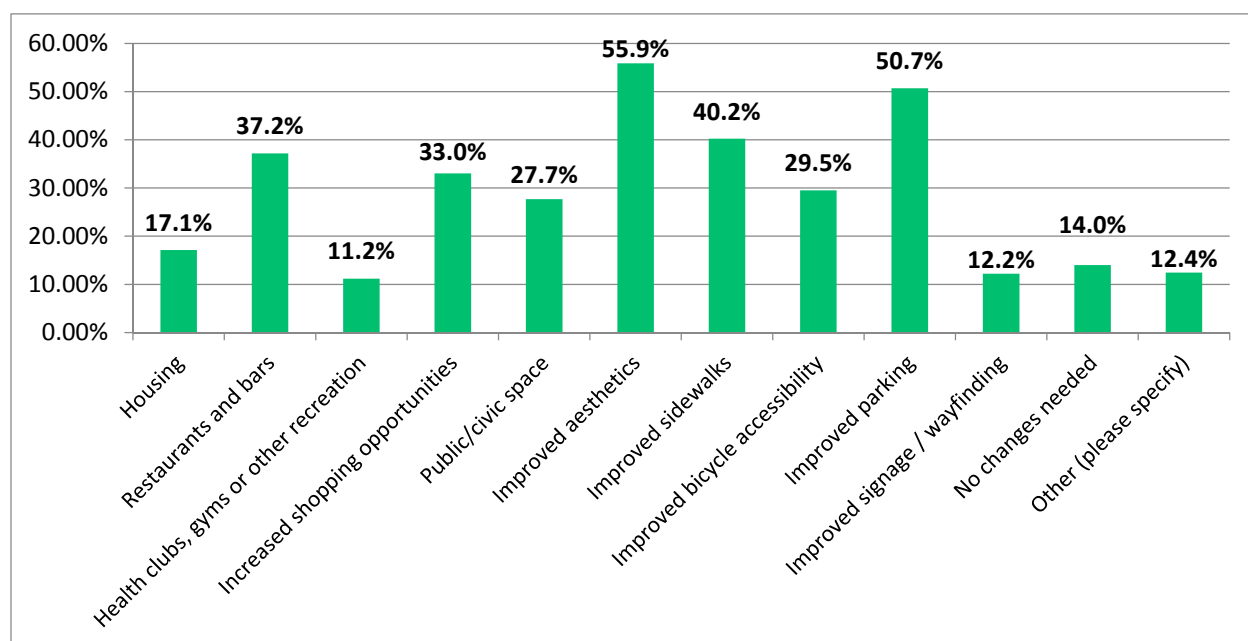
- Municipal Place Gateway Area (general)
  - Improve Village signage.
  - Implement sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting and benches.
  - Improve bus stop areas.
- South Riverside Avenue

- Between Municipal Place and Route 129.
- Implement sidewalks on both sides of street.
- Access to Hudson River waterfront
  - Improve pedestrian access to Croton Landing Park, Senasqua Park and Half Moon Bay.
- Route 129
  - Implement sidewalks on both sides of street.
- Katz Property
  - Address the intersection condition.
  - Implement sidewalks.
- Croton Point Avenue
  - Improve lighting under overpass.
- Other
  - Redevelop Westchester County Department of Public Works site.

## NORTH RIVERSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD AREA QUESTIONS

*What types of amenities or other changes to the North Riverside Neighborhood Area do you think would make the area more desirable? (Survey Question 11)*

*Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% because participants were asked to check all that apply.*



The two most important changes to the North Riverside Neighborhood Area that respondents identified are improved aesthetics (roughly 56 percent) and improved parking (roughly 51 percent). The improvement of sidewalks, the addition of restaurants and bars and increased shopping opportunities were also important. (1,278 responses)

In the “Other” category, some of the frequently cited themes emerged:

- Leave as is.
- Spend on existing infrastructure upgrades.
- Increase shopping opportunities.

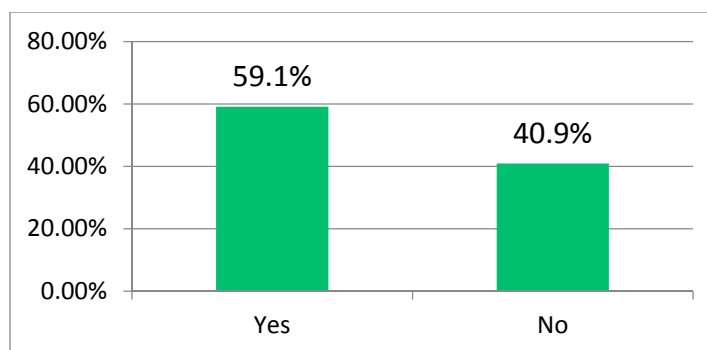


- Bring more business like opportunities that contribute to tax revenue.
- Create a more walkable and pedestrian friendly Riverside Avenue.
- Fill in vacant storefronts.
- Add greenery/landscaping.
- Improve signage.
- Traffic calming measures, slow traffic, improve safety.
- Improve roadways (i.e. better paving to reduce numerous reoccurring potholes).
- Provide a better connection to the waterfront (i.e. another pedestrian bridge to the river).
- Create a neighborhood park or dog park.
- Increase the street width of Riverside Avenue.
- Restore the historical character of the area that was destroyed by route 9.
- Incentivize homeowner beautification.
- Open view of the Hudson River.
- Renovate the pedestrian bridge to be aesthetically improved and ADA compliant.
- Better green buffer to route 9.

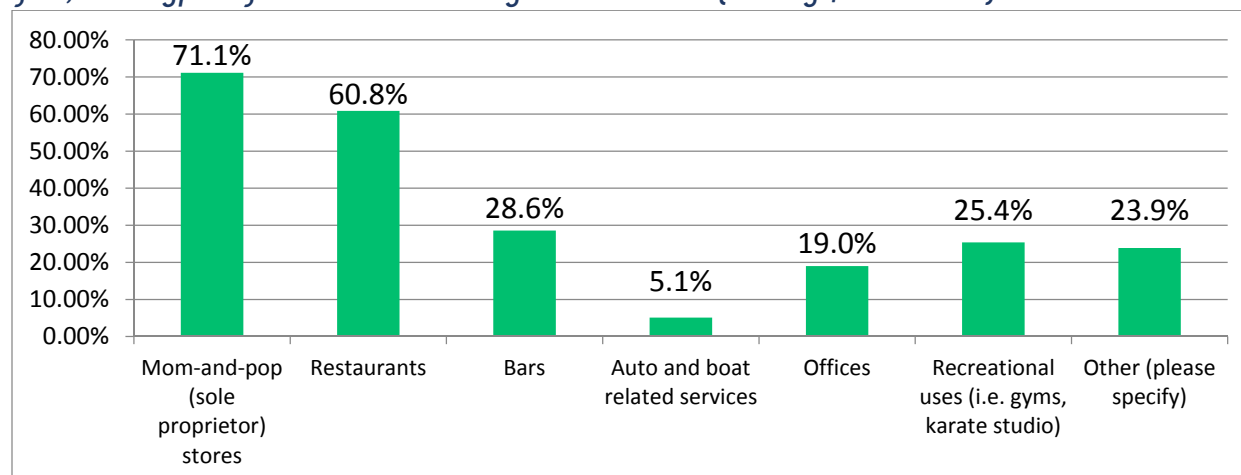
## Would you like to see additional businesses in the N. Riverside Area?

### [Survey Question 12]

The majority of respondents (roughly 60 percent) expressed the interest in seeing additional businesses in the North Riverside Neighborhood Area. (1,259 responses)



## If so, what types of businesses would you like to see? [Survey Question 13]



Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% because participants were asked to check all that apply.

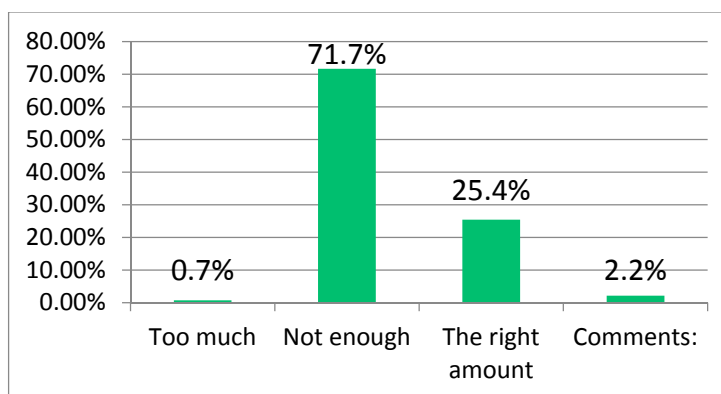
When selecting desired businesses in the area, the vast majority of people who took this survey would like to see more "mom-and-pop" businesses (roughly 71 percent) and restaurants (roughly 61 percent). Other businesses that respondents listed are bars, recreational uses and offices. (1,001 responses)

In the "Other" category, some of the frequently cited themes include:

- Current local businesses are ample for the area.
- Fill in vacant commercial storefronts prior to selecting new sites for commercial development.
- Businesses such as a hardware store, bookstore, gift shop or antique store.
- Recreational uses (i.e. roller rink, ice skating, outdoor sports such as canoes, kayaks, etc.)
- Kid friendly establishments (i.e. young children to teenagers).
- Food places such as a fresh produce grocery store, coffee shop, deli or bakery.
- Healthy food options such as food market, smoothie shop or salad shop.
- Arts and recreation (i.e. art gallery, Zumba, bike shop).
- Office spaces or communal work spaces.
- Professional services (i.e. healthcare, legal, insurance, architecture).
- Park or green space.
- No more auto places.
- No big-box stores.
- No chain stores.
- Shopping or clothing store.
- Create 3 story mixed use developments on few empty/underutilized lots.

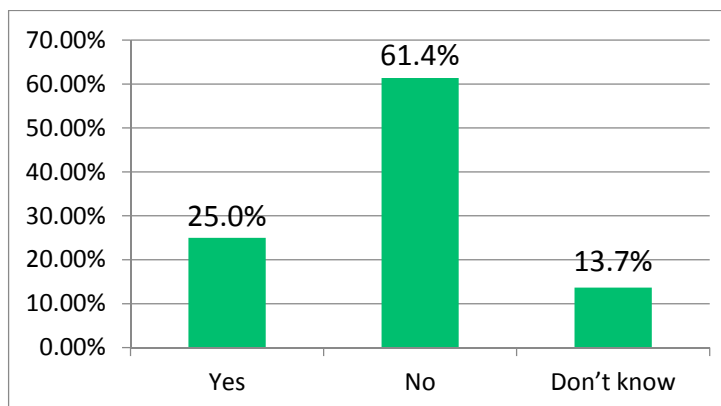
## What do you think about parking availability at North Riverside? Is there: (Survey Question 14)

Parking appears to be an issue in the North Riverside area. The majority of respondents (roughly 72 percent) wrote that there is not enough parking availability.  
(1,250 responses)



## Would you be interested in seeing more housing options such as apartments or townhomes in the North Riverside Area? (Survey Question 15)

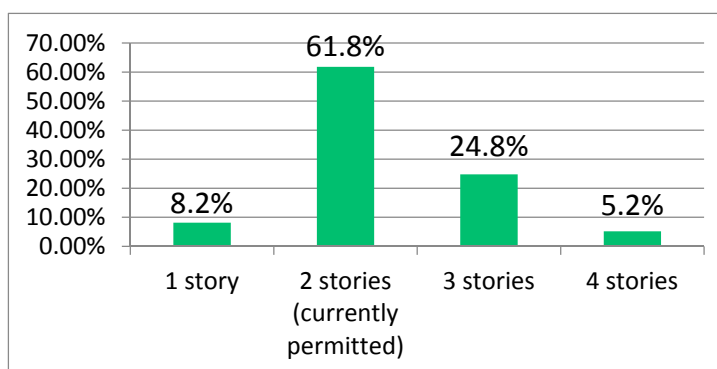
This question indicates that there doesn't appear to be support for apartments or townhomes. Within the North Riverside Area, roughly 61 percent of respondents shared no interest in seeing more housing options. It is important to note that the existing area does already include a number of mixed use buildings with apartments over commercial uses.  
(1,273 responses)



## How many stories are you comfortable with at the North Riverside Neighborhood Area? (Survey Question 16)

Respondents expressed comfort in keeping the North Riverside Neighborhood Area to the existing two stories (currently permitted). About one quarter of residents were comfortable with a height of three stories. (1,213 responses)

This question included an open ended comment field, which solicited 188 responses. Concern about overdevelopment was a frequently cited concern. Some respondents expressed the need to address impacts to schools, infrastructure, and traffic that may come with new development. Some respondents indicated that future development could be developed to three stories as the existing grade slopes downward toward the river. Therefore, the existing lower grade at Riverside Avenue will retain existing residences view out to the Hudson River.



## Are there areas in the North Riverside Neighborhood Area that should be made to feel more walkable (i.e. with improved sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, benches)? If so, where? (Survey Question 17)

Survey respondents expressed the need to make Riverside Avenue more walkable in order to create a safer street for pedestrians. Various suggestions on how to improve the main avenue varied from adding traffic lights, crosswalks and sidewalks, refining existing sidewalks and roads and improving access to the Hudson River waterfront and public spaces. Specific areas where potential interventions should occur, as reported by respondents are listed below. (684 responses)

- Entire Riverside Avenue
  - Improvements along the road, including bicycle lane, new and improved sidewalks.
  - Addition of sidewalks on west side of street.
  - Improve sidewalks and crosswalks near the restaurants and businesses.
- North Riverside Avenue
  - Pedestrian safety between High and Brook Street creates a great demand for crosswalks or stop signs. In particular, respondents indicated crosswalks to be located at the Firehouse and Farrington Road.
  - Between Chevy and Grand Street.
- South Riverside Avenue
  - Between Brook Street and Municipal Place, and Municipal Place to Bungalow Road.
  - The area surrounding Shoprite.
- Intersection of North and South Riverside Avenue at Brook Street
  - Rework the existing pedestrian bridge.
  - Improve the vitality of the intersection.
- Hudson River waterfront
  - Improve pedestrian access to Senasqua Park.
  - Improve pedestrian access to Croton Landing.
- Improve access to Upper Village

- Brook Street
  - Due to traffic concerns, the street could become a one way street or eliminate on street parking.
- Katz property
  - Addition of sidewalks abutting property.

*Are there other issues that you think should be addressed in this plan? If so, please enter them below. (Survey Question 18)*

The primary comment the respondents cited was to retain the existing small village charm of Croton-on-Hudson. To do so, the majority of respondents highlighted the need to strengthen the connectivity between the two study areas, Municipal Place Gateway and North Riverside Neighborhood, enhance the existing building and streetscape, and reflect the impact on traffic, parking, schools, and taxes. In addition to these main priorities, the respondents expressed a diversity of opinions on housing developments. With new proposals, some respondents suggested that future developments could assist with current issues by providing underground parking facilities. Other common categories as reported by respondents are listed below. (583 responses)

Retain existing small village charm

- Architectural design guidelines for future developments.
- Village signage and wayfinding to access the waterfront.
- Beautify gateway entrances.
- Strengthen connection from Upper to Lower Villages.
- Identify a proposal for the Westchester County Department of Public Works site (former skate park).

Mobility

- Improve traffic safety and flow.
- Not enough parking.
- Widen the narrow street of North Riverside between Brook and High Street.

Housing

- Implement housing for mixed income residents and senior citizens
  - Incorporate underground parking.
  - Construct new development using sustainable practices with no reliance on non-renewable energy.
- Retain existing views to the Hudson River.

Commercial Areas

- Increase maintenance on existing commercial areas.
- Fill in the vacancies with local, diverse businesses and not chain stores.
- Create a walkable community.

Urban Design

- Addition of more greenery particularly along the trackside of North and South Riverside Avenue.