

Questionnaire Results Summary

Jefferson Hills Borough Implementable Comprehensive Plan
January 2023

Background

The Community Questionnaire collected input from a large sample of Jefferson Hills residents, providing a rich data source that the plan's Steering Committee can use for insight into community values, priorities, and preferences. The questionnaire came together following the first meeting of the committee with plan consultant Pashek+MTR, where the committee discussed what it needed to learn from the community to select Key Issues around which the plan could take shape. Pashek+MTR developed a draft online questionnaire. Committee members and staff reviewed the draft and provided feedback that is reflected in the final version.

The borough promoted participation in the questionnaire in various ways, including:

- Publishing a project website, *jeffersonhillspan.com*, where the questionnaire link featured prominently
- Committee members spreading the word to their networks, social media pages and email lists
- In-person outreach at Community Day, two Concert in the Park events, and Holiday in the Hills
- Multiple articles in *IN West Jefferson Community Magazine*
- Sharing the questionnaire link on the borough website
- Repeated promotion on the borough's social media
- Distribution of a "last call" postcard mailer to every household in the community

Response rate

Between July and December 2022, the questionnaire received 1,212 total responses. Pashek+MTR examined the data to check for repeated responses, flagging any IP address (the address of an individual device) associated with four or more responses for further analysis. Multiple responses from the same device could point to multiple members of the same household or different responses from a public location, such as a library computer. A detailed review of the multiple-response cases indicated that they were unique and unlikely to be the result of any effort to unduly influence results.

The questionnaire was not designed as a statistically valid survey, as its sample is not random. The value in this type of tool lies especially in the qualitative information it generates, which will help the committee learn what is important to the community. That said, the response total of 1,212 represents a valuable share, roughly 10%, of the community's 12,366 total residents.

Findings

Pashek+MTR summarized the most important responses to the questionnaire. For additional tabulations and much more detail in qualitative comments, see the full questionnaire printout.

Q1 How important are each of these aspects of our community to you today? (1,195 responses)

The highest-ranking five aspects (Very Important) were, in order:

1. Safe community to live in
2. Quality of schools
3. Well-run local government
4. Low tax rates
5. Environmental quality (clean air and water, quiet and beautiful natural setting)

The lowest-ranking five aspects were (Not Important), in order:

1. Public transportation opportunities
2. Place of worship
3. Job or work opportunities
4. Montour Trail access
5. Jefferson Hills Public Library

Q2 What is your favorite thing about Jefferson Hills? If you were explaining to a friend why they should locate here, what would you tell them? (768 responses)

The topics most commonly mentioned in response to this open-ended question were as follows.

- **School District - 42% of comments**
 - The school district is excellent.
 - The community engages the community with popular events, such as high school football.
- **Sense of Community - 32% of comments**
 - The community is welcoming, and neighbors work together.
 - Jefferson Hills is a family-oriented community.
- **Green space/Semi-rural feel - 30% of comments**
 - Residents appreciate the peaceful, quiet semi-rural feel.

- Jefferson Hills has an abundance of green space and wooded areas that residents enjoy.
- **Safety - 18% of comments**
 - Jefferson Hills is a very safe community.
 - Public safety services (Police, Fire, and EMS) are responsive and reliable.
- **Neighborhoods/Housing - 10% of comments**
 - Residents take pride in their neighborhoods and property.
 - People appreciate the housing stock in Jefferson Hills.
- **Location- 10% of comments**
 - The community is close to the city and its amenities but still has a rural feel.
 - Jefferson Hills is conveniently located near popular roadways, boroughs, and recreational assets.
- **Close to shopping/medical facilities - 8% of comments**
 - Jefferson Hills is close to various shopping amenities.
 - There is an abundance of quality medical facilities located in the community.

Q3 How important to you are the following issues in the communities as we move forward? (1,099 responses)

The highest-ranking five aspects were, in order:

1. Affordability of living here
2. Attracting businesses to Jefferson Hills
3. Addressing traffic safety issues
4. Expansion of recreation facilities, such as playgrounds or sports fields
5. Stormwater management/flooding prevention

The lowest-ranking five aspects were, in order:

1. Public transit service
2. Further building out the Montour Trail system
3. Development and redevelopment opportunities
4. Additional recreation programming, such as exercise or fine art classes
5. Increasing collaboration with nearby communities

Q4 What three things would you like to see change in our community? (2,245 individual comments)

The topics most commonly mentioned in response to this open-ended question were as follows.

- **Recreation facilities, amenities, and programs - 24% of comments**
 - A recreation or community center, pool, spray park, or ice rink
 - Create more walking or biking trails
 - Provide more activities and events for all ages.

- Work with the school district to increase public access to the pool and other recreational assets.
- Repurpose the old high school or another property for recreation.
- **Commercial development – 13% of comments**
 - Develop Route 51 as a commercial corridor.
 - Attract a variety of businesses to the community.
 - Provide more shopping and dining options.
- **Leadership/Fiscal management – 12% of comments**
 - Increase transparency and professional communication to improve perception and engagement between residents and Borough leadership.
 - Find opportunities to collaborate with nearby communities for shared services and resources such as police services or recreational assets.
 - Limit increases in taxes or find ways to relieve the tax burden on residents.
 - Increase outreach to all residents in the borough, especially areas on the fringes of the community.
- **Residential development – 9% of comments**
 - Limit or reduce the development of housing plans in the community.
 - Require new housing developments to provide sidewalks or green space.
- **Safety – 9% of comments**
 - Prevent speeding and traffic violations.
 - Improve public safety service availability for Fire and EMS.
 - Implement road changes, such as improvements to dangerous intersections and tunnels.
- **Green space and parks – 6% of comments**
 - Preserve green space and the semi-rural feel of the community.
 - Improve existing parks and playgrounds.
- **Other**
 - Limited walkability including a lack of available sidewalks and trails
 - Property maintenance and code enforcement issues in residential and commercial areas
 - Air quality and pollution issues due to nearby industrial areas

Q5 What three things does our community do best? (1,584 individual comments)

Respondents identified the following community assets (organized by topic):

- **Public safety – 22% of comments**
 - Jefferson Hills is a peaceful and safe community with low crime.
 - Public safety services such as the Police, Fire, and EMS are reliable, responsive, and engaged in the community.
- **Recreation and community programming – 18% of comments**
 - The Borough provides quality community events and activities, including Community Day and Concerts in the Park.
 - There are many recreation opportunities for families and children.
 - Jefferson Hills Library is an asset due to its programming, resources, and engagement with the community.
- **Schools – 17% of comments**
 - The school system is excellent with great teachers and staff.
 - The high school sports teams create community team spirit, and borough residents are very supportive.
- **Public services – 10% of comments**
 - Roads are clean and well-maintained during winter weather.
 - Public Works is very active and responsive.
 - The community provides good sanitation services.
- **Sense of community – 5% of comments**
 - The Borough fosters a great sense of community and community pride.
 - Jefferson Hills is very family-oriented and is good at attracting young families.
 - The community is very welcoming, friendly, and residents come together to help each other.
- **Other**
 - Availability of green space, including well-maintained parks and access to recreation opportunities, such as the Montour Trail and Peters Creek Watershed
 - Quality housing stock and beautiful neighborhoods

Q6 Jefferson Hills Borough has seen significant residential development during the last decade. When it comes to future land use and development, please rank the following priorities according to what you would most like to happen here (1 being highest priority, 6 being lowest priority) (1,043 responses)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Permanently protect green space	57%	14%	9%	8%	4%	8%
Continue adding plans with single-family homes on relatively large lots	10%	14%	12%	12%	18%	33%
Increase smaller housing options (townhomes, patio homes and/or multi-family)	8%	12%	16%	16%	24%	24%
Cultivate additional development of retail and services in general	19%	31%	20%	17%	11%	4%
Cultivate additional development of office or light industrial businesses	4%	13%	24%	22%	22%	16%
Build up mixed-use village areas (housing and businesses) around Gill Hall, Large and near Yoli's along Clairton/885	6%	15%	20%	23%	18%	18%

Q7 Do you think Jefferson Hills should remain a bedroom community/primarily residential area? (1,018 responses with 152 individual comments)

	Respondents as %
Yes	72%
No	13%
Other	15%

Comments on this question included the following themes, primarily:

- The community needs additional businesses with a variety of options, including small businesses, retail, and restaurants.
- Develop the Route 51 corridor.
- There needs to be a balance between commercial development and green space preservation.
- Commercial development would benefit the community by providing additional tax revenue

Q8 Which of the following is closest to your sentiment on unconventional oil and gas development (fracking) in Jefferson Hills? (1,010 responses with 127 individual comments)

	Respondents as %
This activity is categorically inappropriate for Jefferson Hills	42%
This activity should be limited to industrial areas and its impacts tightly controlled	36%
This activity is appropriate for large priorities, even in residential areas, provided that it observes regulations	15%
This activity should be encouraged in more areas of the Borough	7%

Comments on this question included the following themes, primarily:

- Concerns that fracking would lead to environmental and public health problems in the long-term
- Profits from fracking could relieve residential tax burden or pay for additional community amenities.

Q9 How often do you, including family members, visit the following parks? (1,016 responses)

	Do not	1-5 Times/ Year	6-10 Times/ Year	11-20 Times/ Year	Frequently
Gill Hall Park (Located along Gill Hall Road)	31%	35%	11%	8%	15%
885 Andrew Reilly Memorial Park (Along Route 885)	33%	35%	10%	8%	14%
Beedle Park (Along Decker Avenue)	67%	18%	5%	5%	5%
Lobbs Park (Along Walton Road)	83%	13%	2%	0%	2%
Tepe Park (Along Willem Drive)	76%	13%	4%	2%	4%

Q10 Do you feel that the Borough should make it a priority to develop, build and operate a Community Center? (1,013 responses with 198 individual comments)

Answer Choices	Respondents as %
Strongly Agree	44%
Agree	21%
Neutral	18%
Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	12%

Comments on this question included the following themes, primarily:

- It should be built without an increase in taxes, with the help of a third-party business/organization or another community building should be repurposed
- Jefferson Hills is behind other communities regarding recreational facilities
- There is a need for a recreation facility with programming and activities for all ages
- The community should invest in existing recreational assets

Q11 How can the Borough best serve its senior citizens during the next decade? (558 individual comments)

The topics most commonly mentioned in response to this open-ended question were as follows.

- **Fiscal responsibility – 39% of comments**
 - Tax relief or limiting tax increases for seniors would allow them to stay in the community and keep their homes.
 - Limiting borough spending would reduce the cost of living for seniors.
- **Senior programming and resources – 13% of comments**
 - Senior residents could benefit from resources, such as educational information, programs that connect seniors to help with housing/yard maintenance, and social support services.
 - Additional recreational programming and facilities, such as exercising, walking trails, and a gathering space for seniors.
- **Housing – 12% of comments**
 - There is a need for affordable and appropriate housing, such as patio homes and single-level housing.
 - New developments should have amenities and access for seniors.

- **Transportation – 5% of comments**
 - Senior residents need access to reliable transportation to community assets, such as shopping and recreation.
 - A consistent shuttle or public bus system would greatly benefit seniors.

Q12 Tell us about something you’ve noticed in another community that you think our community should try? (523 individual comments)

The topics most commonly mentioned in response to this open-ended question were as follows:

- **Recreational facilities and programs**
 - A community center, recreation center, exercise facility, pool, or splash pad
 - Upgrade current recreation amenities, including playgrounds, concession stands, seating, fields, and parking lots.
 - Develop natural assets, including the Peters Creek Watershed and Montour Trail, for recreational fishing, walking, and biking.
 - Provide activities for all ages.
 - Integrate walking and biking trails into the community.
 - Advertise community events on borough social media and other forms of media.
 - More programs at the library, including educational classes.
 - Additional community events. such as:
 - Holiday celebrations (Fourth of July, Easter, Christmas, etc.)
 - 5k walks or runs or community fundraisers
 - Food or food truck festivals
 - Block parties or movie nights
 - Farmers markets/craft fairs
- **Commercial development**
 - Revitalize Route 51 to make it safer and more of a destination as a shopping corridor.
 - Attract a variety of businesses, including small businesses, restaurants, retail, and breweries, so that residents do not have to travel to other communities for these things.
 - Cultivate walkable business districts or a walkable main street.
 - Encourage mixed-use development in business districts.
 - Create an attraction for Jefferson Hills.
 - Improve processes for opening a business in the community.
- **Local government**
 - Identify ways to consolidate or share services with nearby communities, such as public safety or other municipal services.

- Improve transparency and communication regarding council meetings and decisions.
- Increase the enforcement of property maintenance ordinances and codes.
- Require sidewalks and green space preservation in new residential developments.
- Improve walkability and biking infrastructure in the community.
- Preserve trees and green space.
- Provide emergency update notifications .
- **Public safety**
 - Increase police engagement with residents.
 - Create safer roads and intersections.
 - Improve fire station availability.

Q13 In what age range do you fall? (1,018 responses)

	Respondents as %
Younger than 18	0%
18 to 25	1%
26 to 34	8%
35 to 54	54%
55 to 64	14%
65 or older	21%
Prefer not to answer	2%

Q14 How many children under 18 live in your household? (1,019 responses)

	Respondents as %
None	45%
1	13%
2-4	40%
More than 4	1%
Prefer not to answer	1%

Q15 What is your annual household income? (1,016 responses)

	Respondents as %
Less than \$29,999	2%
Between \$30,000 and \$49,999	4%
Between \$50,000 and \$74,999	6%
Between \$75,000 and \$99,999	9%
Between \$100,000 and \$150,000	23%
More than \$150,000	34%
Prefer not to answer	22%

Q16 Which area of Jefferson Hills do you call home? (987 responses with more than 230 individual comments)

	Respondents as %
Gill Hall	51%
Large	8%
Floreffe	5%
885	12%
Other	23%

Other communities people identified are included here in order of most commonly to least commonly mentioned.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Old Clairton Road | 8. Pleasant Hills |
| 2. Hunter Fields | 9. Coal Valley |
| 3. Ridge Road | 10. Clairton |
| 4. Tepe Plan | 11. Wall Plan |
| 5. Finleyville | 12. Practice Tee |
| 6. Chamberlin Ridge | 13. Chapel View Farms |
| 7. Near the old High School | 14. Walton Road |

- 15. Near the municipal building
- 16. Oakwood
- 17. Worthington
- 18. Near the new high school
- 19. Jefferson Place
- 20. West Bruceton
- 21. West Jefferson Hills
- 22. High Road
- 23. Regency
- 24. Sylvania Heights
- 25. Chapelridge
- 26. Dale Road

- 27. Payne Hill
- 28. Deer Park
- 29. Upper West Elizabeth
- 30. Setter
- 31. Riverview
- 32. Waterman Farms
- 33. Town Hall
- 34. Jefferson Estates
- 35. State Street
- 36. Beverly Hills
- 37. Jefferson Woods

Q17 How long have you lived in, worked in or had a business in your community? (1,008 responses)

	Less than 5 Years	6-15 Years	More than 15 Years	Not Applicable
Lived Here	13%	35%	50%	1%
Worked Here	8%	11%	15%	67%
Owned a business here	3%	4%	3%	89%

Q18 If you would like to add comments to inform Jefferson Borough’s long range-planning, please add them below. (256 individual comments)

The topics most commonly mentioned in response to this open-ended question were as follows:

- **Public safety**
 - Address speeding and dangerous intersections such as the intersection of Gill Hall and Old Clairton Road.
 - Provide additional fire stations in areas of need.
 - Ensure that public safety services such as Police, EMS, and Fire can keep up with population growth.
- **Local government**
 - Improve transparency and communication between council and residents.
 - Modernize municipal transactions and processes, such as tax payments.
 - Population growth is putting pressure on local services and infrastructure. such as schools and roads.

- Improve infrastructure, such as roads, tunnels, traffic lights, and signage, as residential development continues.
- Limit tax increases and make considerations for seniors.
- Provide services and programming for seniors.
- Consider fringe communities, such as Floreffe, Gill Hall, and High Road.
- Address environmental concerns, such as air quality, pollution, and preventing fracking.
- Increase walkability and sidewalk availability.
- **Balancing development and green space**
 - Limit new housing development.
 - Create environmental requirements for new developments, such as green space preservation.
 - Protect green space, trees, and wildlife.
 - Keep the semi-rural feel that drew many residents to the community.
- **Businesses**
 - Attract more businesses to the community to provide more shopping and dining options for residents and additional tax revenue for the borough.
 - Consider a variety of business types, such as small businesses, breweries, restaurants, medical, and industrial.
 - Improve borough processes to open businesses.
- **Housing**
 - Provide more appropriate and affordable housing options.
 - Ensure that there are housing opportunities for seniors.
- **Recreation**
 - Create more recreation opportunities, such as summertime programs and activities or events that celebrate the diversity of the community.
 - Upgrade and expand upon existing recreation opportunities Beedle Park and Gill Hall Park.
 - Develop more open space, parks, and trails.
 - Add facilities to Peters Creek, such as seating or a picnic area.
 - Provide more programs and activities at the Jefferson Hills Library.
 - Build a community center.

Finally, 328 of 1,212 respondents provided email addresses to receive updates regarding the project.