

# **TOWN OF ROTTERDAM PARKS SURVEY**

**A Survey Conducted for the Town Board of Rotterdam  
By Syracuse Project Advance Policy Studies 101 Class  
November 2023**

**Town of Rotterdam Parks Survey**  
**Town of Rotterdam**  
**by Syracuse Project Advance Policy Studies 101 Class**  
**November 2023**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Introduction:** This survey was conducted for the Rotterdam Town Board in order to determine the most favorable uses of a recently purchased 30-acre property. The Town of Rotterdam hopes to convert this property into parkland for the benefit of Rotterdam citizens. Through this survey, the Town of Rotterdam hopes to determine the most popular amenities to include in this new park.

**Methods:** The survey was administered face-to-face at every polling site in the Town of Rotterdam on Election Day, November 7, 2023. The target population consisted of 23,512 people who were over the age of 18 in the Town of Rotterdam. The sample size was 200 people. Overall, the sample population is an accurate representation of the target population in the Town of Rotterdam.

**Findings:** Of the 200 respondents:

1. 92.39% of survey respondents were in favor of the creation of walking, hiking, and biking trails in a new town park in the Town of Rotterdam.
2. 85.13% of survey respondents were in favor of the creation of a playground in a new town park in the Town of Rotterdam.
3. 84.77% of survey respondents were in favor of the creation of a picnic area/pavilion in a new town park in the Town of Rotterdam.
4. 83.85% of survey respondents were in favor of the creation of a new town park that could facilitate winter activities in the Town of Rotterdam.
5. 64% of survey respondents were in favor of the creation of a combination between a nature oriented and a recreation oriented park in the Town of Rotterdam.
6. 51.76% of survey respondents reported not having children aged 0-18 years old.

7. 46% of survey respondents were opposed to a tax increase to fund a new town park in the Town of Rotterdam.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Syracuse University Project Advance Policy Studies 101 class at Schalmont High School conducted a survey on behalf of the Rotterdam Town Board in order to determine the most favorable use of town owned property on Phillips Road, the findings of which are included in this summary. Currently, the Town of Rotterdam wants to convert a 30-acre property on Phillips Road into parkland. The survey was conducted on Election Day, November 7, 2023 at every polling location in the Town of Rotterdam, the town residents' opinions on park amenities were recorded to gauge the best usage for the property. The compiled information will help the Rotterdam Town Board decide which amenities to include in the park.

## METHODS

### How Data Was Collected

#### **Instrument Design**

This survey was created by the Syracuse University Project Advance Policy Studies 101 students at Schalmont High School. This survey has been approved by adjunct instructor Mrs. Ryder. Mrs. Ryder has conducted and aided in the formation of similar surveys for the Town of Rotterdam. The survey was slightly altered by the Town Planner and approved by the Town Supervisor and a Rotterdam Town board member prior to surveying. No pilot testing had taken place due to time allotment.

#### **Target Population and Sample Population**

The target population encompasses the entire population of voters in the Town of Rotterdam, which is approximately 23,512 people over the age of 18, according to the 2020 Census data. The sample was collected as a non-random cluster sample, as surveyors had no way of gathering a list of the entire population of the town. A sample size of 200 was selected providing a 95% confidence interval with a margin of error of  $\pm 7\%$ . The sample population is 0.85% of the target population.

#### **Method of Contact**

The surveys were administered face-to-face and respondents completed it at the polling site. This method made the respondents more likely to participate in the completion of this survey and any questions or misconceptions from those taking the survey could be clarified. Surveys were distributed outside of all ten polling sites in the Town of Rotterdam on Election Day, November 7th, 2023. Administering the survey on Election Day provided an equal opportunity for participation of registered voters.

#### **Quality of the Data**

The sample population seems to be representative of the target population of the survey. The percentages of the variables age, sex, and income closely matched the target population in the Town of Rotterdam. There was a slight bias between the sample population and the target population in the 18-24 and 70-74 age groups and the income bracket of \$150,000-\$199,999. Both the 70-74 age group and the income bracket of \$150,000-\$199,999 were slightly over represented in our sample population, while the age group of 18-24 was slightly under represented. According to the U.S. Census data, there was an age group for 15-19 and 20-24. In this survey the groups were combined, which may have altered the representation of these age groups in the sample population as well. Overall, the sample population is an accurate representation of the target population in the Town of Rotterdam.

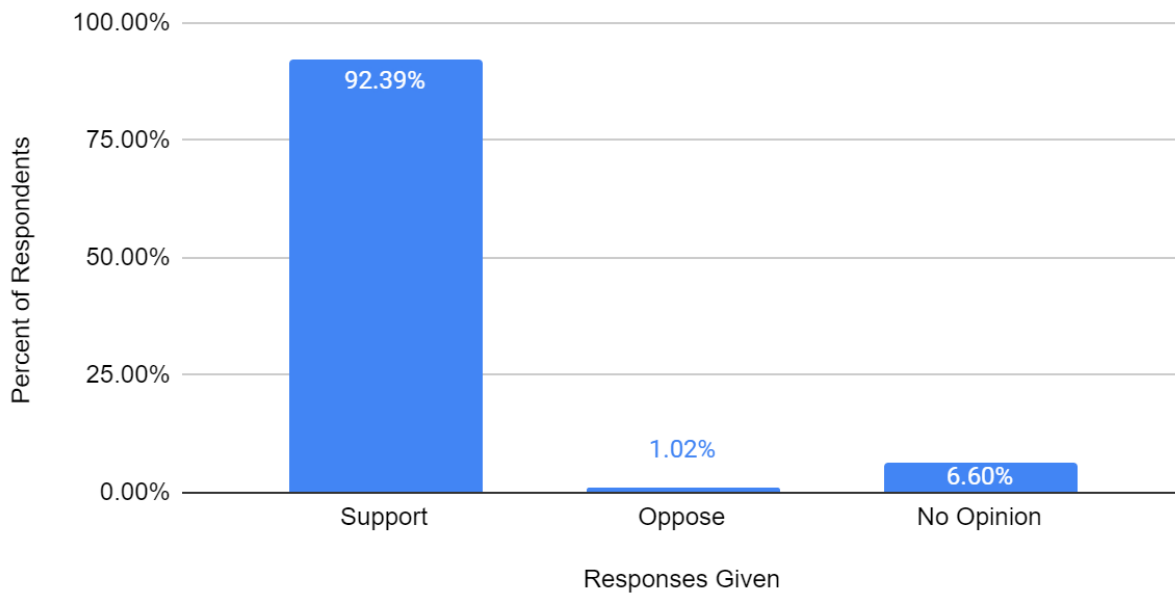
Our recommendation for future surveys is to remove the income question completely or make it optional because some respondents did not provide a response.

## FINDINGS

1. 92.39% of survey respondents were in favor of the creation of walking, hiking, and biking trails in a new town park in the Town of Rotterdam.

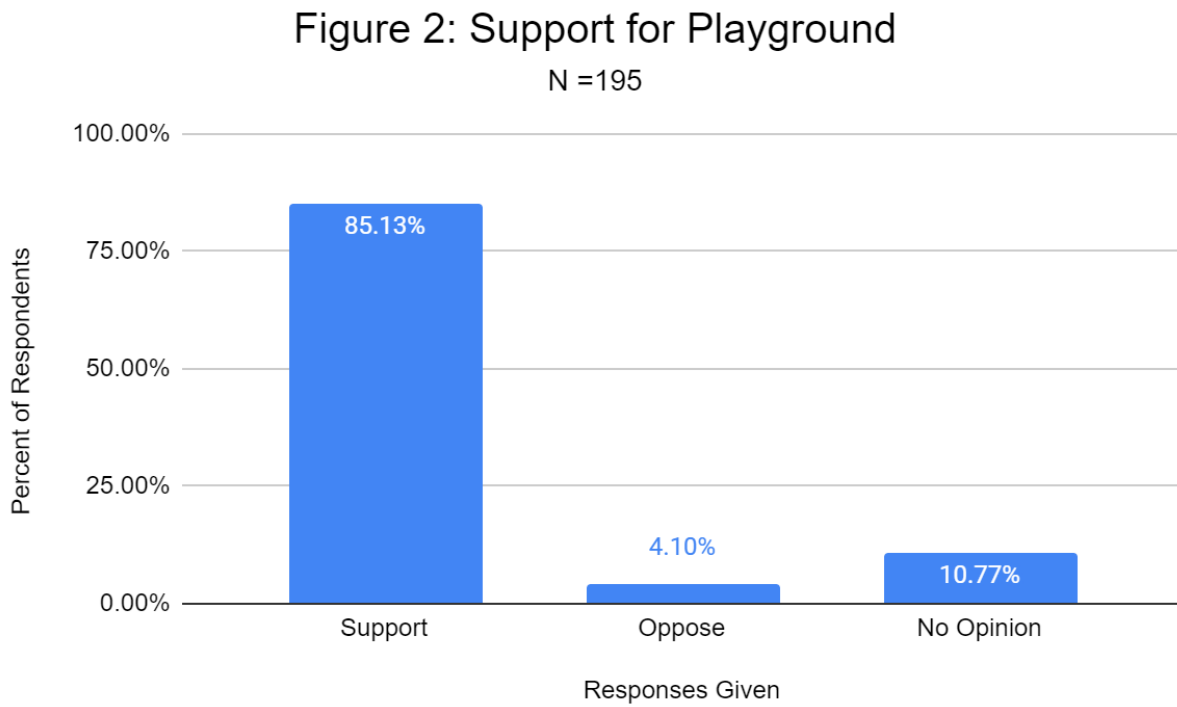
Figure 1: Support for Walk, Hike, and Bike Trails

N = 197



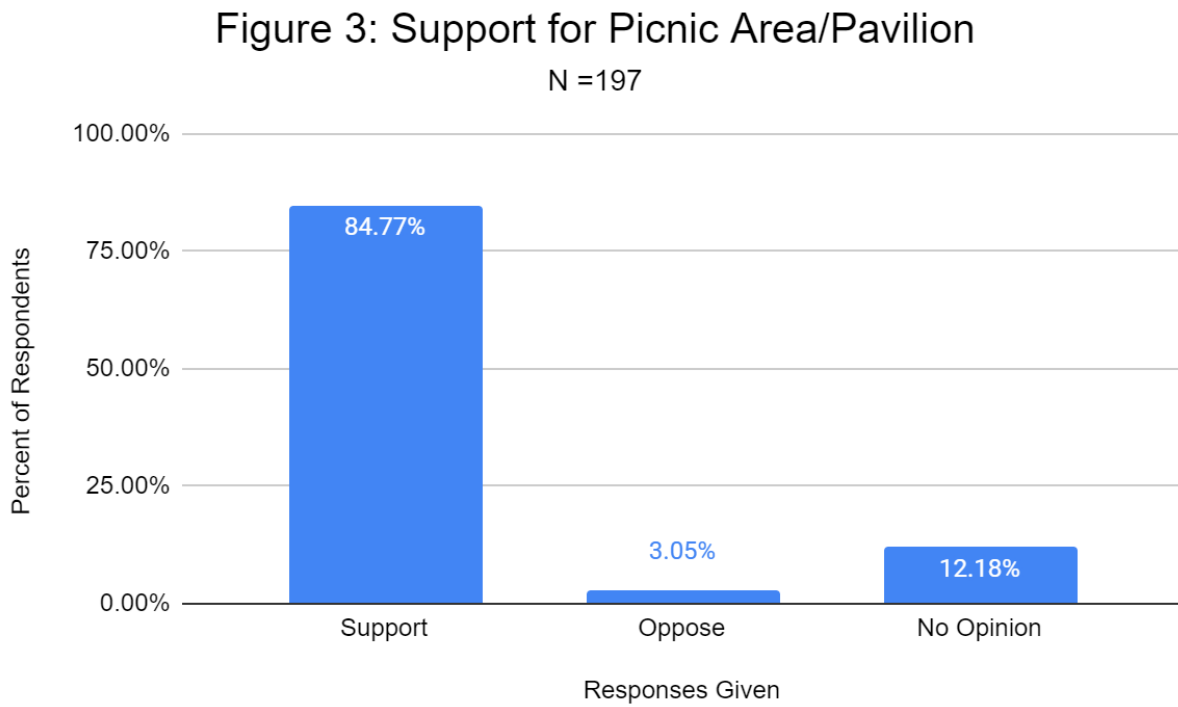
Source: Data was collected by Schalmont High School's Syracuse University Policy Studies 101 Class for the Rotterdam Town Board, November 2023.

- 85.13% of survey respondents were in favor of the creation of a playground in a new town park in the Town of Rotterdam.



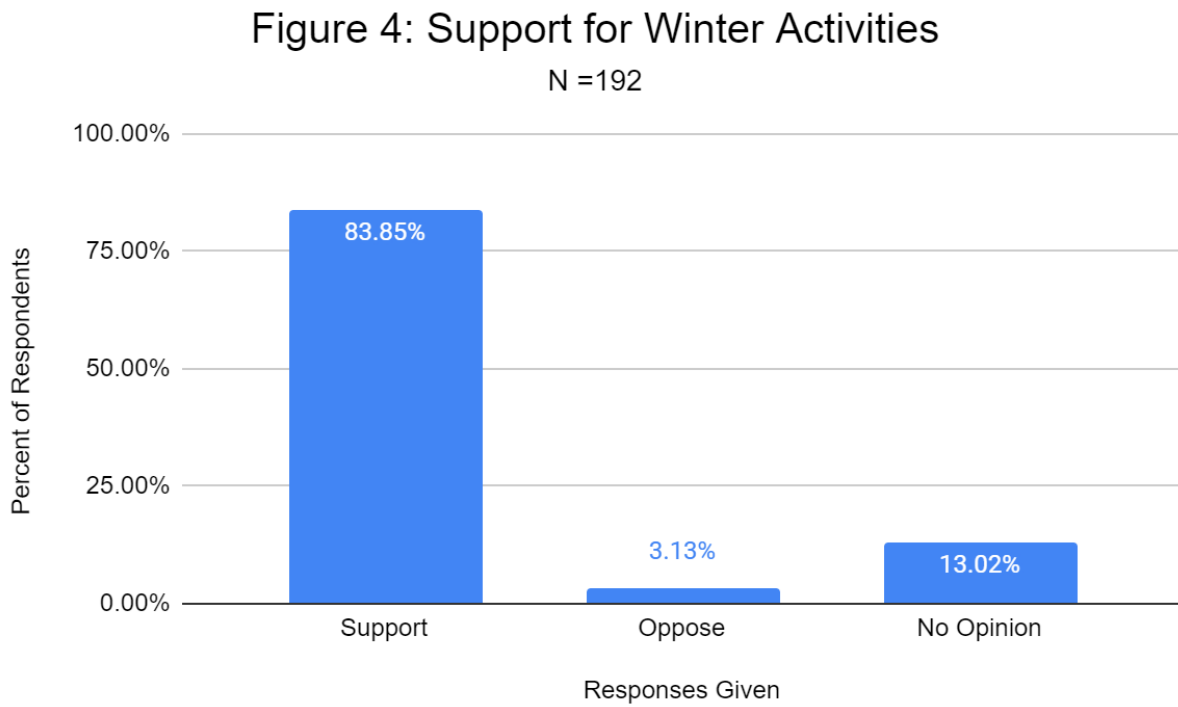
Source: Data was collected by Schalmont High School’s Syracuse University Policy Studies 101 Class for the Rotterdam Town Board, November 2023.

- 84.77% of survey respondents were in favor of the creation of a picnic area/pavilion in a new town park in the Town of Rotterdam.



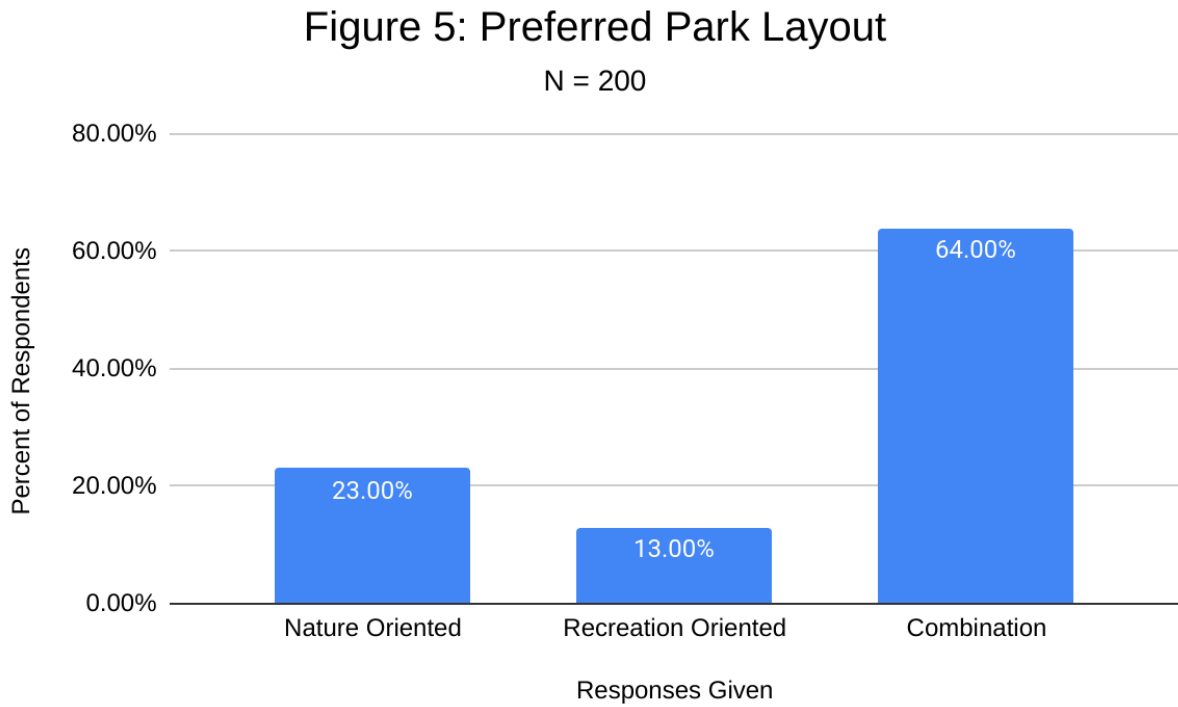
Source: Data was collected by Schalmont High School’s Syracuse University Policy Studies 101 Class for the Rotterdam Town Board, November 2023.

- 83.85% of survey respondents were in favor of the creation of a new town park that could facilitate winter activities in the Town of Rotterdam.



Source: Data was collected by Schalmont High School’s Syracuse University Policy Studies 101 Class for the Rotterdam Town Board, November 2023.

- 5. 64% of survey respondents were in favor of the creation of a combination between a nature oriented and a recreation oriented park in the Town of Rotterdam.

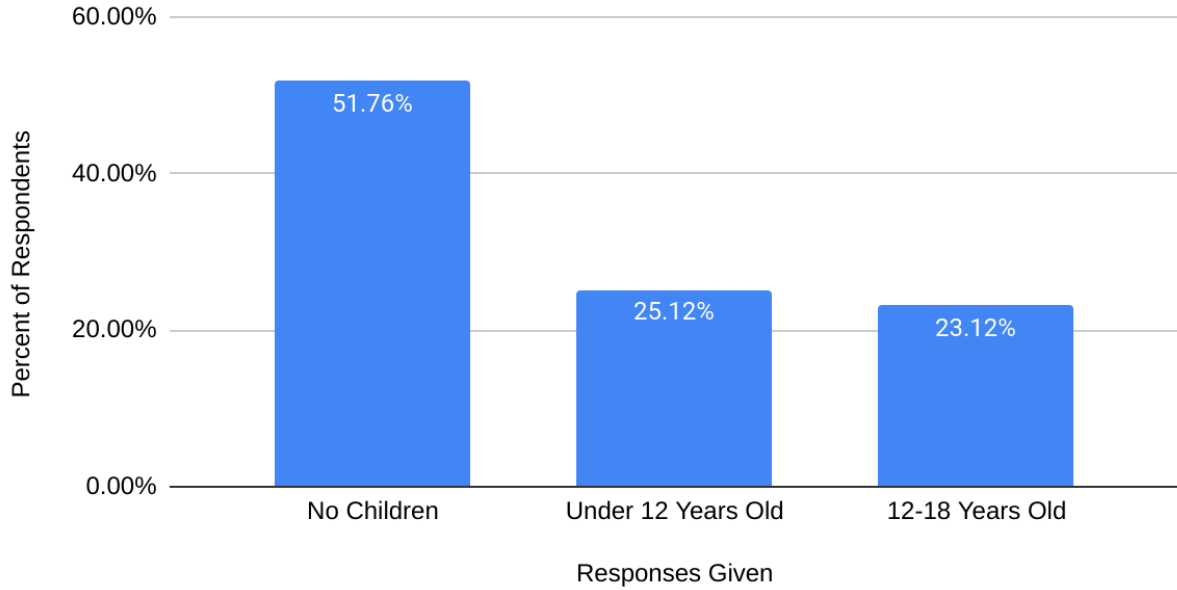


Source: Data was collected by Schalmont High School’s Syracuse University Policy Studies 101 Class for the Rotterdam Town Board, November 2023.

- 6. 51.76% of survey respondents reported not having children aged 0-18 years old.

**Figure 6: Number of Children Age 0-18 Years Old**

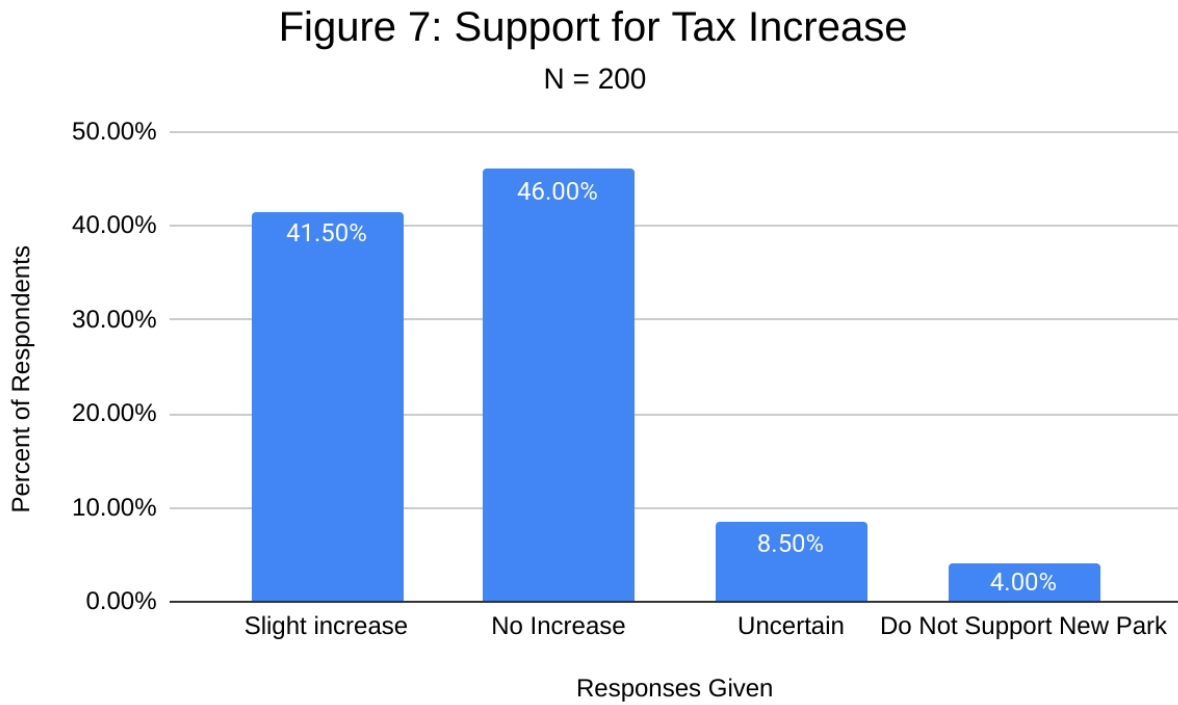
N = 199



Source: Data was collected by Schalmont High School’s Syracuse University Policy Studies 101 Class for the Rotterdam Town Board, November 2023.

Comment: It is important to note that 48.24% of the respondents have children under the age of 18 years old.

7. 46% of survey respondents were opposed to a tax increase to fund a new town park in the Town of Rotterdam.



Source: Data was collected by Schalmont High School’s Syracuse University Policy Studies 101 Class for the Rotterdam Town Board, November 2023.

Comment: It is important to note that 41.5% of those surveyed support a slight tax increase, along with 8.5% of those uncertain

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix I: Blank Questionnaire**

Appendix I-1: Blank Survey

### **Appendix II: Data Frequencies**

Appendix II-1: Data Frequencies for Age

Appendix II-1: Data Frequencies for Gender

Appendix II-2: Data Frequencies for Household Income

Appendix II-2: Data Frequencies for Children

Appendix II-2: Data Frequencies for Support for a New Town Park

Appendix II-3: Data Frequencies for Layout Preferences

Appendix II-3: Data Frequencies for Park Amenities and How Much They Are Supported

### **Appendix III: Written Responses**

Appendix III-1: Written Responses for Infrastructure

Appendix III-1: Written Responses for Nature-Based Amenities

Appendix III-1: Written Responses for Athletic-Based Amenities

Appendix III-1: Written Responses for Miscellaneous

# Blank Questionnaire:

## Town of Rotterdam Park Survey

The Syracuse University Project Advance Policy Studies class at Schalmont High School has compiled this survey for the Rotterdam Town Board. The town owns a 30 acre plot of farmland on Phillips Road and is considering creating a park for residential use. For the benefit of our community, we ask that you take a few minutes to complete this survey:

Please indicate your age group:

- 18-24  
  25-29  
  30-34  
  35-39  
  40-44  
  45-49  
  50-54  
  55-59  
 60-64  
  65-69  
  70-74  
  75-79  
  80-84  
  85+

Please indicate your gender:

- Female  
  Male

Please indicate your annual household income:

- \$15,000-\$24,999  
  \$25,000-\$34,999  
  \$35,000-\$49,999  
  \$50,000-\$74,999  
 \$75,000-\$99,999  
  \$100,000-\$149,999  
  \$150,000-\$199,999  
  \$200,000+

Do you have any children? If yes, please indicate the number of children in each age group.

- No Children  
 Under 12 \_\_\_\_\_  
 12-18 \_\_\_\_\_

Under which conditions would you support a new park for the Town of Rotterdam?  
(Check all that apply)

- Slight Tax Increase  
  No Tax Increase  
  Uncertain  
  Do Not Support New Park

Of the following options, which park layout would you prefer?

- Nature oriented park  
  Recreation oriented park  
  Combination  
 (Hiking/Walking trails)  
 (Sports fields/Playground)  
 (Nature & Recreational)

If you would support a new park in Rotterdam, please indicate how likely you would be to support the following park amenities:

Park Amenity	Support	Oppose	No Opinion
Walk, Hike, Bike Trails			
Community Garden			
Picnic Area/Pavilion			
Playground			
Educational/Historical Facility			
Sports Fields (Multi-use)			
Winter Activities (ice skating, sledding, cross country skiing, snow-shoeing)			
Courts (basketball, pickleball, tennis, volleyball)			
Dog Park			
Amphitheatre			

If there are any other amenities you would like to see in a community park, please indicate these below:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

We appreciate your time and thank you for continuing to make the Town of Rotterdam  
"A Nice Place to Live."

**Frequencies:****Age:**

Please indicate your age group:	# of respondents	% of respondents
18-24 (9.70%)	6	3.00%
25-29 (7.00%)	8	4.00%
30-34 (9.10%)	16	8.00%
35-39 (8.50%)	16	8.00%
40-44 (7.40%)	14	7.00%
45-49 (7.40%)	10	5.00%
50-54 (9.50%)	17	8.50%
55-59 (9.00%)	27	13.50%
60-64 (10.10%)	20	10.00%
65-69 (8.10%)	17	8.50%
70-74 (6.20%)	25	12.50%
75-79 (4.10%)	13	6.50%
80-84 (2.30%)	7	3.50%
85+ (2.40%)	4	2.00%

**Gender:**

Please indicate your gender:	# of respondents	% of respondents
Female (52.00%)	106	53.00%
Male (48.00%)	94	47.00%

**Household income:**

Please indicate your annual household income:	# of respondents	% of respondents
\$15,000-\$24,999 (6.4%)	4	2.00%
\$25,000-\$34,999 (6.9%)	7	3.50%
\$35,000-\$49,999 (10.3%)	19	9.50%
\$50,000-\$74,999 (20.1%)	42	21.00%
\$75,000-\$99,999 (18.4%)	31	15.50%
\$100,000-\$149,999 (20.0%)	48	24.00%
\$150,000-\$199,999 (7.8%)	36	18.00%
\$200,000+ (4.1%)	13	6.50%

**Children:**

Do you have any children? If yes, please indicate the number of children in each age group.	# of respondents (total # of children)	% of respondents
No children	103	60.59%
Under 12	32 (50 children)	18.82%
12-18	35 (46 children)	20.59%

**Support for a new Town Park:**

Under which conditions would you support a new park for the Town of Rotterdam?	# of respondents	% of respondents
Slight tax increase	83	41.50%
No tax increase	92	46.00%
Uncertain	17	8.50%
Do not support new park	8	4.00%

**Layout preference:**

Of the following options, which park layout would you prefer?	# of respondents	% of respondents
Nature oriented park	46	23.00%
Recreation oriented park	26	13.00%
Combination	128	64.00%

**Park amenities and how much they are supported:**

If you would support a new park in Rotterdam, please indicate how likely you would be to support the following park amenities:	Support # respondents (% of respondents)	Oppose # respondents (% of respondents)	No Opinion # respondents (% of respondents)
Walk, Hike, Bike Trails	182 (92.39%)	2 (1.02%)	13 (6.60%)
Community Garden	127 (70.17%)	11 (6.08%)	43 (23.76%)
Picnic Area/Pavilion	167 (84.77%)	6 (3.05%)	24 (12.18%)
Playground	166 (85.13%)	8 (4.10%)	21 (10.77%)
Education/Historical Facility	127 (65.80%)	13 (6.74%)	53 (27.46%)
Sports Fields (Multi-use)	134 (71.28%)	20 (10.64%)	34 (18.09%)
Winter Activities	161 (83.85%)	6 (3.13%)	25 (13.02%)
Courts	141 (73.44%)	23 (11.98%)	28 (14.58%)
Dog Park	130 (69.52%)	27 (14.44%)	30 (16.04%)
Amphitheater	129 (67.19%)	20 (10.42%)	43 (22.40%)

## **Written Responses:**

**If there are any amenities you would like to see in a community park, please indicate these below:**

### **Infrastructure**

- Pool - 5 responses
- Splash Pad - 4 responses
- Adequate Parking - 2 responses
- Dog Water Fountain - 1 response
- Water Fountain - 1 response
- Adult Playground - 1 response
- Shade for Playground - 1 response
- Bathrooms - 1 response
- Sidewalks and Walkways - 1 response

### **Nature Based Amenities**

- Solar Power - 2 responses
- Hunting Privileges - 1 response
- Keep Farmland - 1 response
- More tree planting - 1 response
- Fishing - 1 response
- Hunting - 1 response

### **Athletic Based Amenities**


- Pickleball Courts - 4 responses
- Skateboard Facility - 3 responses
- Cornhole - 1 response
- Soccer Fields - 1 response

### **Misc.**

- Gun Safety Classes for Kids - 1 response



# Town of Rotterdam: Community Survey & Proposals



Presented by the Syracuse University Project  
Advance Policy Studies 101 Class at Schalmont  
High School

January 2024



# What is the Problem?

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The Town of Rotterdam lacks a large community park for residential use.

# SUPA Policies Studies 101

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- Town Supervisor Mollie Collins, Town Planner Peter Comenzo, & Stormwater Management Officer Mary Barrie presented the class with the project
- Assist the Rotterdam Town Board
- Complete a survey of Town residents' opinions about the proposal of a new town park and provide a survey report to the Rotterdam Town Board
- Create a parks policy proposal to be included to the Town Board
- RIT Project Lead the Way Civil and Architectural Engineering make plans for the buildings located on the property

# Survey Methods

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- Election Day, November 7, 2023.
- 10 polling locations in the Town of Rotterdam
- Face-to-face, non-random cluster sample
- Target population of 23,512 registered voters over the age of 18
- Random Sample of 200 was selected
  - The Sample accurately reflects the target population
  - Slight bias:
    - Age group 18-24 was underrepresented
    - Age group 70-74 was overrepresented
    - Income bracket of \$150,000-\$199,999 was overrepresented

## Town of Rotterdam Park Survey

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 60-64  65-69  70-74  75-79  80-84  85+

Please indicate your gender:

- Female  Male

Please indicate your annual household income:

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 \$75,000-\$99,999  \$100,000-\$149,999  \$150,000-\$199,999  \$200,000+

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- No Children  Under 12 \_\_\_\_  12-18 \_\_\_\_

Under which conditions would you support a new park for the Town of Rotterdam?

(Check all that apply)

- Slight Tax Increase  No Tax Increase  Uncertain  Do Not Support New Park

Of the following options, which park layout would you prefer?

- Nature oriented park  Recreation oriented park  Combination  
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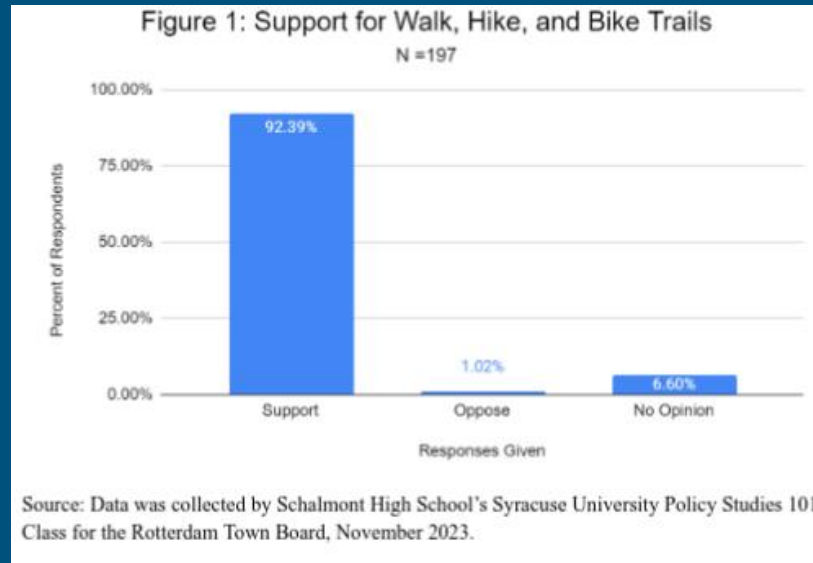
We appreciate your time and thank you for continuing to make the Town of Rotterdam  
"A Nice Place to Live."

# The Survey

# Findings

## OF THE 200 RESPONDENTS:

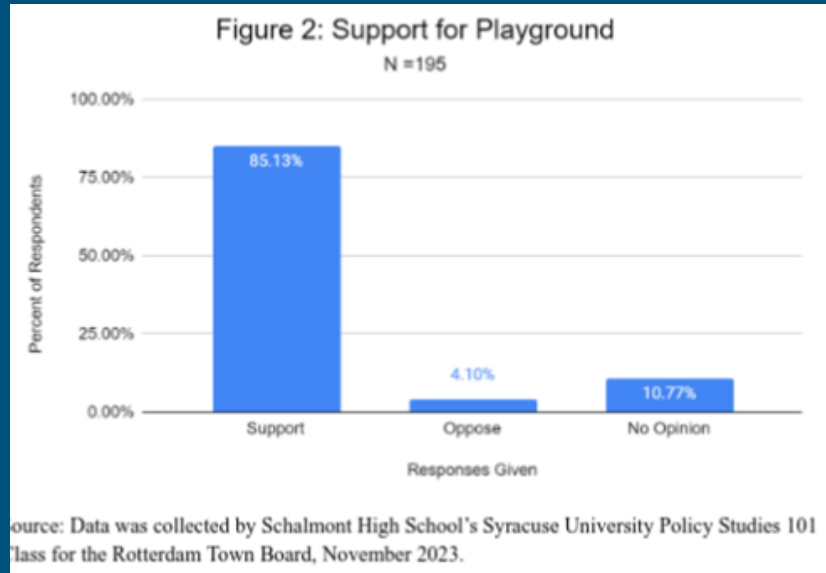
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# Findings

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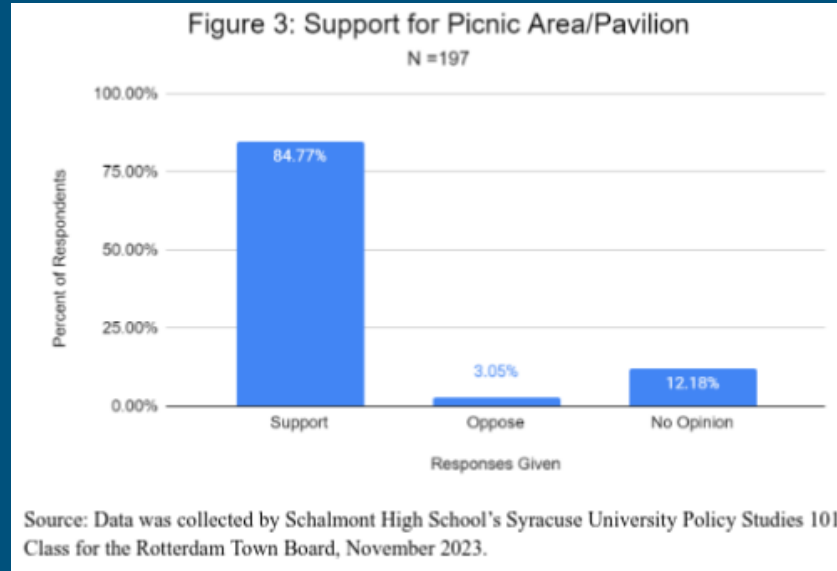
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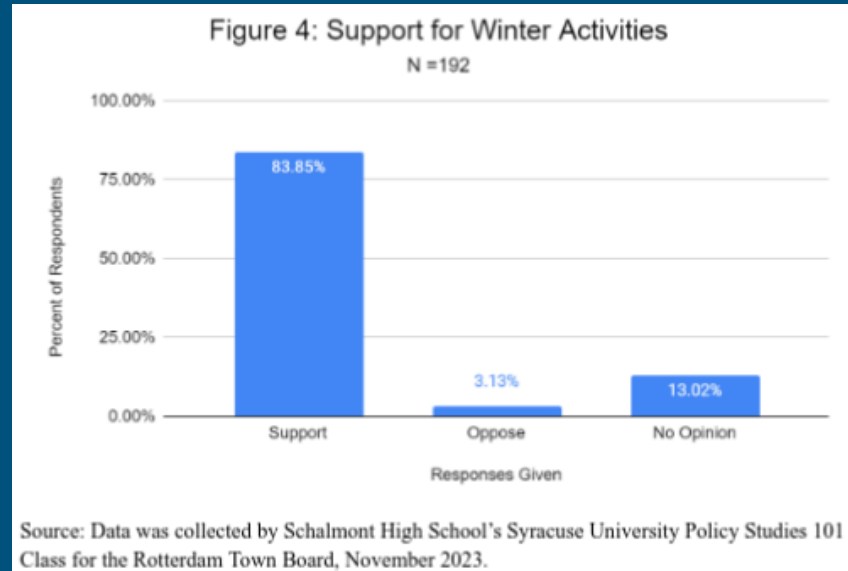
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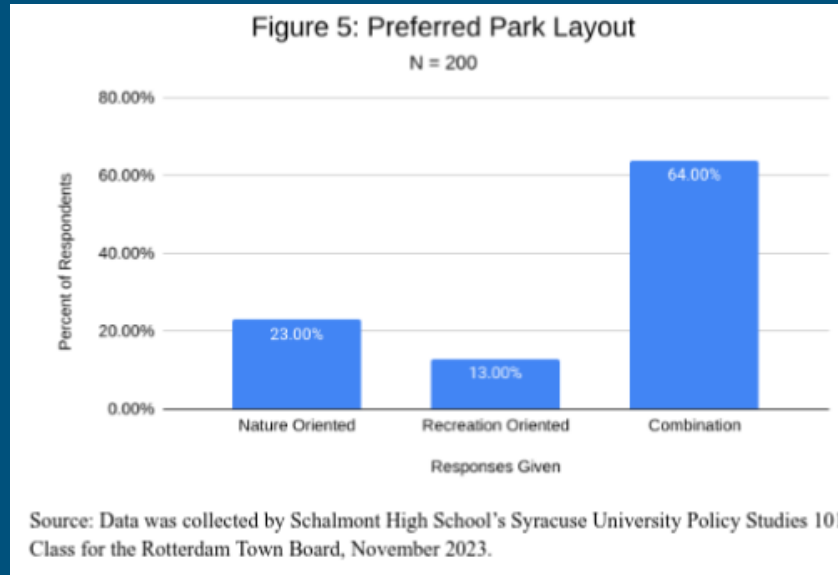
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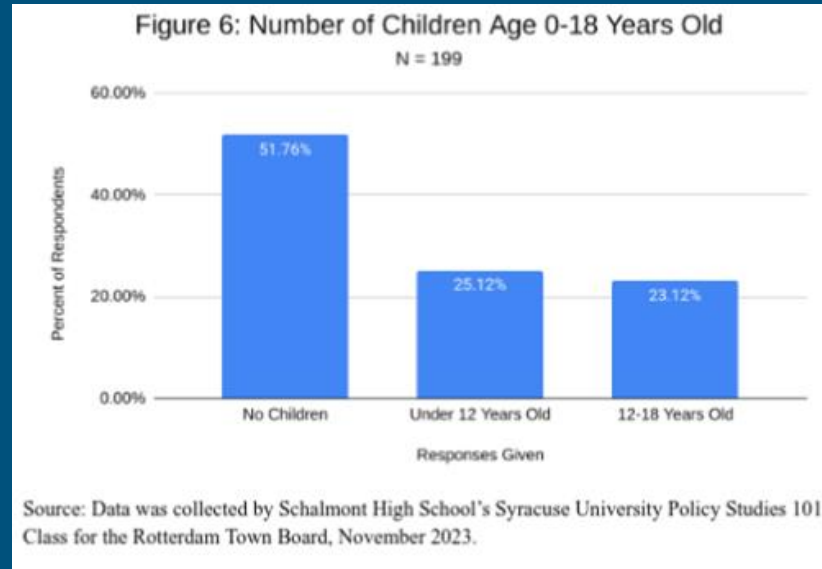
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# Findings

OF THE 200 RESPONDENTS:

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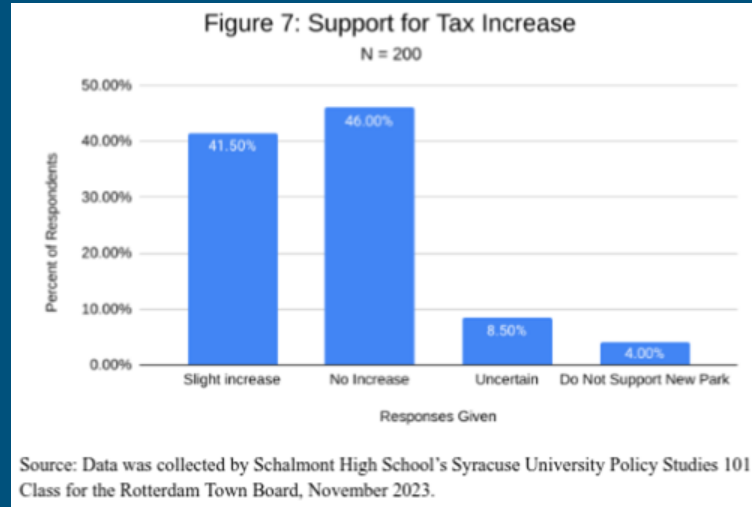


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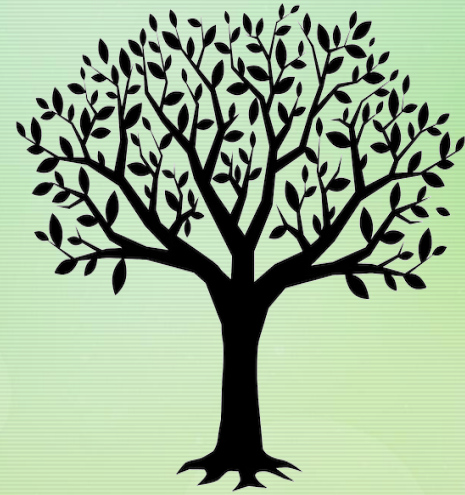
SUPA Policy Studies 101  
2024 Park Policy  
Recommendations

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# CREATING A TOWN PARK

- How to effectively implement new green space in the Town of Rotterdam



# THE PARKS PROBLEM

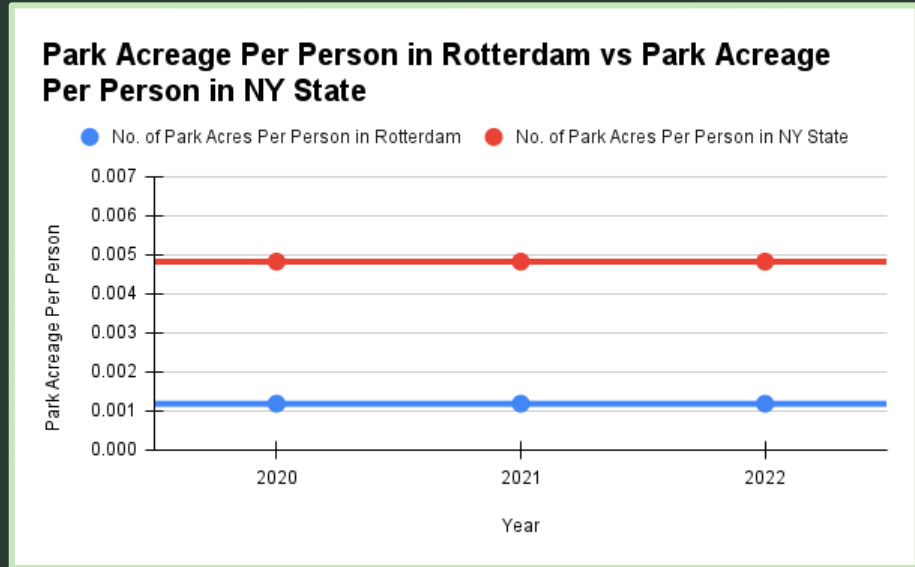
- The Town of Rotterdam lacks a large community park for residential use.
- Green space is crucial for the wellbeing of town residents, as it promotes cognition and reduces stress.

- *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*, 2022.



# WHY DO WE NEED A NEW PARK?

- As Rotterdam is becoming more urbanized, green space is being lost.
- Many Rotterdam citizens live in apartment buildings, which limits their access to green space.
- If nothing is done, Rotterdam's park acreage will remain stagnant while the population increases.



Source - 2020 Census and National Park Service, 2023.

## WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

- The Rotterdam Town Board should develop the property at 210 and 212 Phillips Road into a large town park.
- The Rotterdam Parks Department will need to hire additional employees to oversee and maintain this park.



Photo of farmhouse at 212 Phillips Road

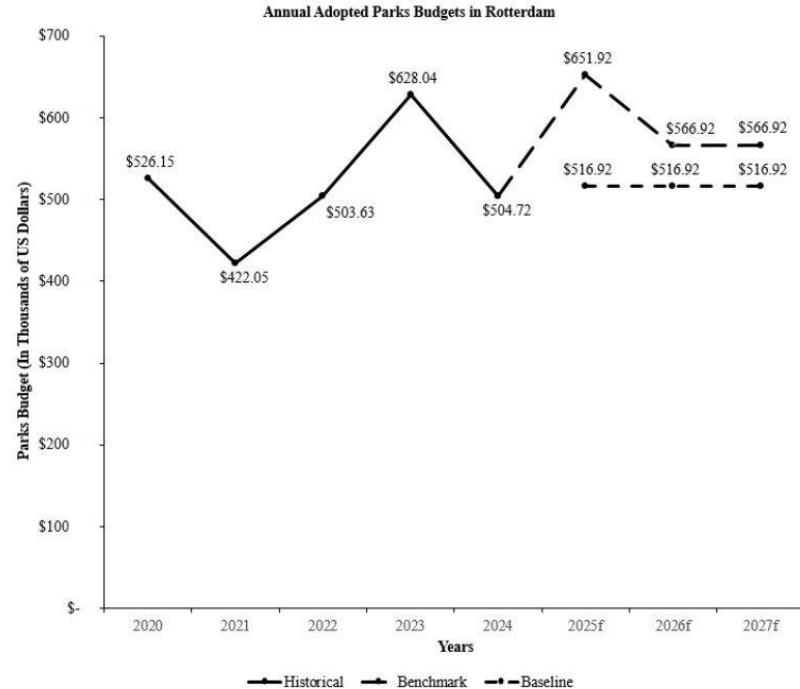
# WHAT DOES THE PARK NEED?

- We conducted a survey that indicates the preferred amenities for a new park are a playground and walking trails.  
*- Town of Rotterdam Park Survey, 2023.*
- These amenities are relatively simple and would keep the space mostly natural while incorporating areas for fun & healthy recreation.



# WHAT CAN WE EXPECT?

- The cost of a playground is approximately \$85,000.  
*- Adventure Park Systems, 2024*
- The annual maintenance budget will be approximately \$50,000.
- Hired employees will need to operate the park, however this factor is not displayed by the graph.



Source – Office of the Rotterdam Town Clerk, 2023, p. 27-29 & Adventure Playground Systems, 2024.

# HOW FEASIBLE IS A NEW PARK?

- Very feasible!
- Rotterdam already owns the property on Phillips Road.
- Converting the area for use as a park would amount to installation and maintenance fees.



Aerial view of the property.

## HOW EFFECTIVE WILL IT BE?

- The new park will make Rotterdam a more attractive place to live and work.
- Rotterdam will gain a permanent green space that its residents can be proud to own.
- Installing a park will improve the general health of Rotterdam citizens.



# REFERENCES

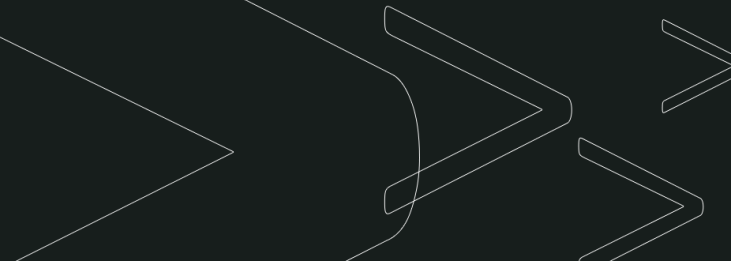
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- U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). QuickFacts. Retrieved on December 11, 2023, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045223>

# THANK YOU!

Thank you for listening and continuing to make Rotterdam a nice place to live!

We would like to extend special thanks to the Town Supervisor Mollie Collins, Board Member Joseph Mastroianni, Town Planner, Peter Comenzo, and Storm Water Manager, Mary Barrie for their guidance in developing this policy.

Finally, thank you to the Town Parks Department for aiding us in developing our policy and giving us the unique opportunity to learn about government hands-on.



# Phillips Road Park

## Project Proposal

Syracuse University Project Advance  
Policy Studies 101  
Schalmont High School  
January 2024



# What is the Problem?

The Town of Rotterdam currently owns vacant structures on Phillips Road.



# 210 Phillips Road, (Property No.1)

## Property Information:

- 30.38 Acres
- Built in 1844
- Updated - 1970
- 1660 Sq. Ft.
- 2 Bedrooms
- 1 Bathroom
- Land Assessed Value - \$58,600
- Total Assessed Value - \$164,000

Source: Town of Rotterdam  
PROS (Property Record Online  
System)



# 212 Phillips Road, (Property No.2)

## Property Information:

- 2.00 Acres
- Built in 1985 | Updated - 1990
- 1575 Sq. Ft.
- 2 Bedrooms
- 1.5 Bathrooms
- Additional Structure: Vacant Barn
- Land Assessed Value - \$31,600
- Total Assessed Value - \$178,000

Source: Town of Rotterdam  
PROS (Property Record Online  
System)



# Proposed Policy

The Rotterdam Town Board will establish a contract with an engineering firm to conduct a feasibility study for the structures located on the 30-acre property on Phillips Road, in Rotterdam, New York.



# Cost Benefit Analysis

## Benefits:

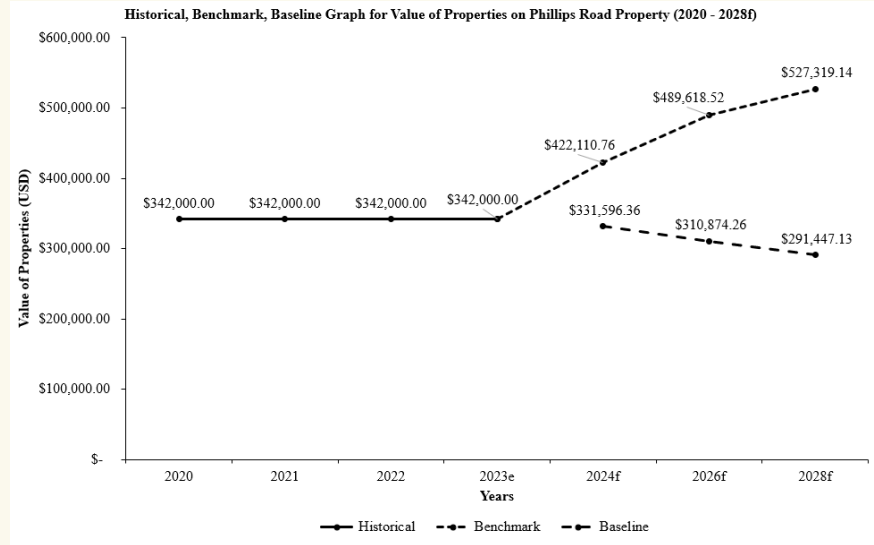
- If updated, the property on Phillips Road will increase in value.
- Renovated buildings will provide sites for community activities.
- The buildings may be used as a source of income for the Town of Rotterdam.

## Costs:

- The cost of the feasibility study.
- Employees needed for upkeep and maintenance of the buildings.
- Buildings remain vacant until completion of the feasibility study.

# Effectiveness of Policy

- Estimated 14.60% increase in value for the properties on Phillips Road within one year of renovations based on a 2023 study of cost vs. value for home renovations completed in Albany, New York.  
-Zonda Media, 2023
- Estimated 7.70% increase in value for the years following the renovation as land value continues to rise naturally along with any additions the Town decides to add to these properties.

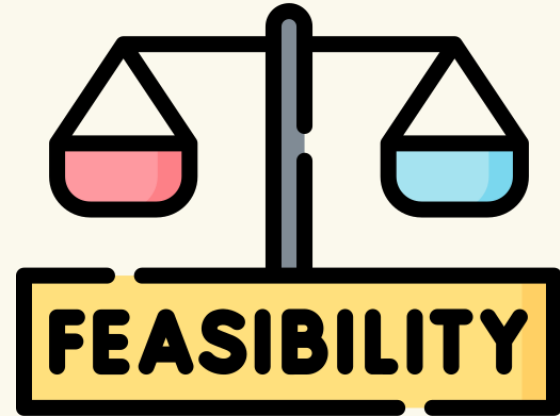


Source: Rotterdam Town Board, Rotterdam Town Assessor's Office, Town Clerk Internal Revenue Service. (2023)  
Credit Karma. (2022)

# Feasibility of Policy

- The Town of Rotterdam is currently investigating new ways to develop a new town park.
- This policy will save the properties on Phillips Road from suffering depreciation due to neglect.
- 54% of survey respondents supported or were indifferent to a slight tax increase to fund a new town park in Rotterdam.

-Town of Rotterdam Parks Survey Report, 2023



# RIT Project Lead The Way Engineering Ideas

- Community area
  - Patio seating with picturesque views
  - Indoor activity area
  - Rentable upstairs living area
- Office space/ Living area
  - Rentable
  - Office space for parks department
  - Upstairs/cellar storage
- Café with activity rentals
  - Café with sitting area
  - Winter activity rentals
  - Offices in basement of home
  - Caretaker residence



# Thank You!

Thank you Supervisor Collins and the Rotterdam Town Board for listening to our presentation and considering our proposal.

## Special thanks to:

- Mollie Collins - Town Supervisor
- Peter Comenzo - Town Planner
- Joseph Mastroianni - Town Board Member
- Mary Barrie - Stormwater Management Officer
- Bradley Canning - Town Assessor
- Rotterdam Parks and Recreation Department

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