

ROCKFISH VALLEY AREA PLAN

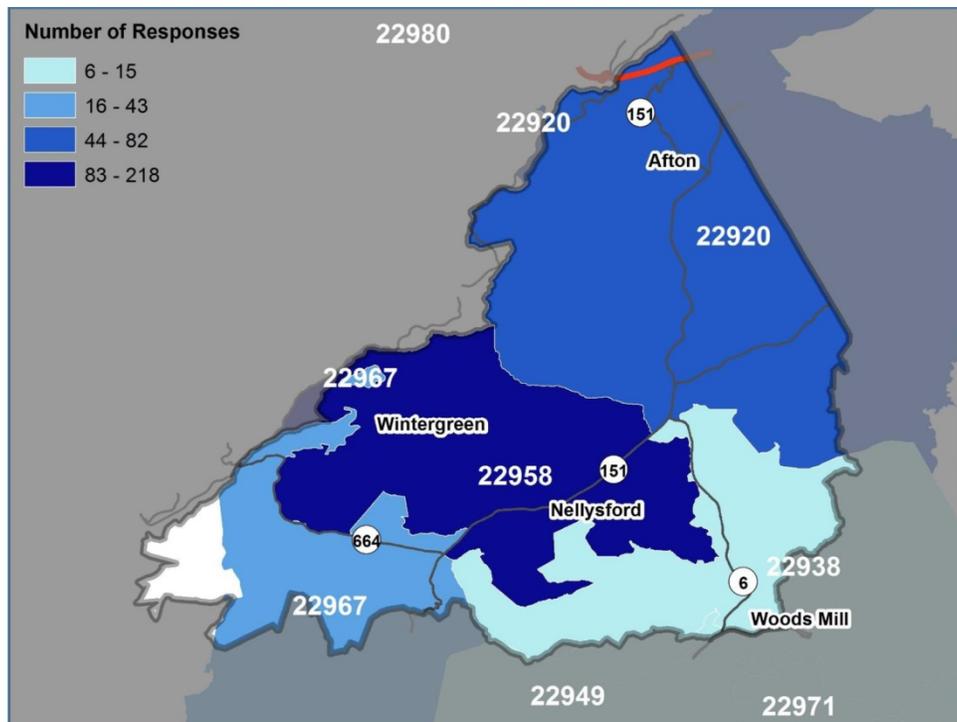
Summary of Responses – Community Survey

Overview:

In an effort to engage and solicit responses from Nelsonians regarding their priorities, concerns, and values for the future of the Rockfish Valley, Nelson County and TJPDC staff developed a public survey. Survey questions generally address five categories of issues: transportation, agriculture, natural resources, community, and economy. Two primary types of question formats were used: one asked respondents to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with a given statement, and the other asked respondents to rate the level of importance or unimportance of a specific issue.

Prior to deployment of the survey, the format and draft questions were presented to the Ag Working Group advisory committee for feedback. After incorporating suggestions received from the committee, the final version of the survey was released to the public in late May of 2016, available both online (via the Survey Monkey platform) and in print. Paper copies of the survey were initially placed at the Rockfish Valley Community Center and the Nelson County local government offices. The survey was advertised on the project webpage, and a link to participate in the survey efforts was sent to the Nelson County email distribution list on two separate occasions.

At the time of the June 28th Open House public meeting, there were roughly 250 responses to the survey, primarily received via the online format. Although the survey was initially scheduled to close on July 1st, it was extended to July 15th in response to requests by attendees of the Open House to engage a wider variety of community members. In addition to extending the deadline, Nelson County staff also distributed additional paper surveys throughout the community in hopes of reaching a more representative cross-section of the residents of Rockfish Valley. By extending the survey deadline and the increased distribution of the paper survey, the final number of responses at the close of the surveying period totaled 431. The map below displays the number of responses from each ZIP code in the study area, with the 22958 and 22920 ZIP codes being the most heavily represented areas.



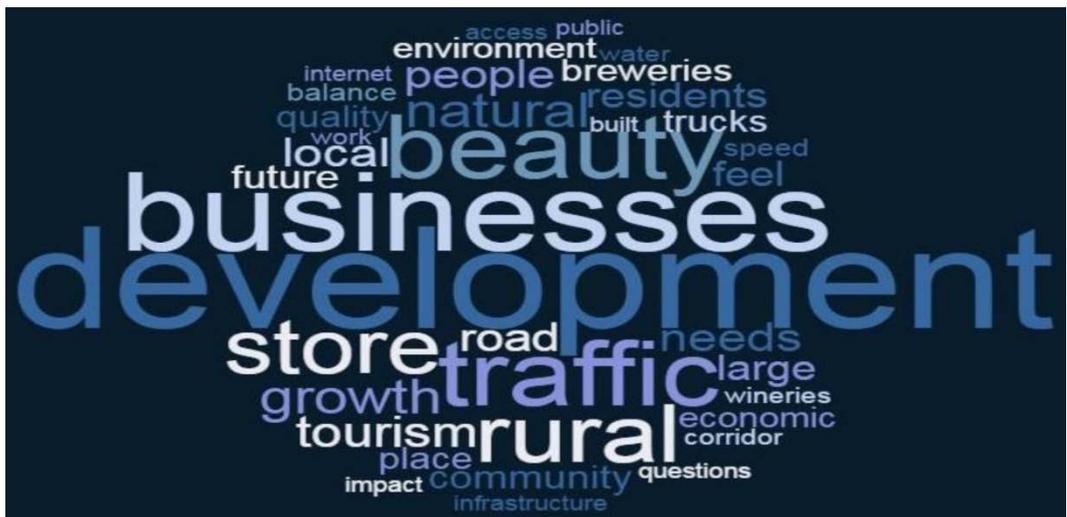
General Info:

- 431 total survey submissions
- 234 written responses
- 95% submissions from Nelson County property owners
- 28 questions specific to the Rockfish Valley area (unless otherwise noted)

Patterns & Recurring Themes:

- The Rockfish Valley is a beautiful, special place
- Balancing growth and development with rural preservation
 - Managing the amount, location, and appearance of development
 - Maintaining the rural character and lifestyle
 - Preserving rural appearance and mountain scenery
 - Supporting and facilitating the growing tourism industry
 - Promoting growth and development in designated areas: Nellysford and Lovingston
- Transportation issues and concerns:
 - Road safety
 - Drivers under the influence of alcohol
 - Traffic volume (including passenger vehicles AND commercial trucks)
 - Traffic speed – lower speed limits
 - Infrastructure upgrades
 - Bicycle lanes and other options for non-motorized mobility
- Requests for infrastructure improvements:
 - Roadways and stoplights
 - Telecommunications, broadband, and fiber optic internet
- Critique of survey questions, content, and design
- Atlantic Coast Pipeline
 - “Stop the pipeline” / “No pipeline”
 - Other long-range planning efforts will be futile if the pipeline is constructed

Written comments were entered into a “word cloud” generator, which provides a visual representation of recurring themes; words that appeared in the comments section with higher recurrence are shown in larger font. Development, businesses, traffic, and beauty had the most occurrences, as shown below.



Top 10 Occurrences:
69...Development
54...Business
44...Traffic
43...Beauty
39...Rural
37...Store
23...Natural
23...Growth
21...Tourism
20...Local

Responses to Each Survey Question (#1 – #28):

- (Q1): 63% have lived in Nelson County for 10+ years. *Only 5% are not residents.*
- (Q2): <prompt to enter ZIP Code>
- (Q3): 95% own property in Nelson County.
- (Q4): 86% said they travel through the Rockfish Valley very frequently.
- (Q5): 96% said it is important to protect and preserve the Rockfish Valley's rural character and unique sense of place. *71% said it is critically important.*
- (Q6): 87% said access to recreational amenities (such as parks) is important. *35% said it is critically important.*
- (Q7): 93% said access to reliable telecommunications and broadband service is important. *56% said it is critically important.*
- (Q8): 96% said safe/reasonable levels of traffic and congestion on roads is important. *58% said it is critically important.*
- (Q9): Regarding access to employment opportunities in Nelson County: 49% said this is important, while 50% felt this is unimportant or felt neutral.
- (Q10): Regarding increased or continued development: 31% said this is important, 42% said this is unimportant, and 26% felt neutral.
- (Q11): 79% said managed or reduced development is important. *41% said this is critically important.*
- (Q12): Regarding alternative transportation options (such as sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, etc.): 54% said this is important, 20% said this is unimportant, and 25% felt neutral.
- (Q13): Regarding alternative commuting options (such as park and ride lots, bus, carpool, etc.): 38% said this is important, 29% said this is unimportant, and 32% felt neutral.
- (Q14): 97% give importance to clean water and watershed protection (for well water, agriculture, fishing, and swimming). *81% said this is critically important.*
- (Q15): 96% give importance to clean air (such as healthy air quality, high level of visibility, etc.). *83% said this is critically important.*
- (Q16): 98% give importance to preserving mountain scenery and scenic views. *85% said this is critically important.*
- (Q17): 96% give importance to conserving environmental features (such as wildlife habitat, forests, wetlands, etc.). *73% said this is critically important.*
- (Q18): 89% give importance to dark skies lighting (for minimal light pollution and maximum night sky visibility).
- (Q19): Regarding economic vitality (including job creation and job growth): 51% said this is important, while 48% felt this is unimportant or felt neutral.
- (Q20): 80% give importance to public infrastructure (such as roads, sewer, telecommunications).
- (Q21): 92% give importance to access to local foods and the success of local ag operations.
- (Q22): 98% agreed that, "Maintaining working farm lands, forests, and orchards in the Rockfish Valley is important to preserving the area's rural character."
- (Q23): 80% agreed that, "There should be a greater effort to balance development and rural preservation."

- (Q24): In response to the statement, “Traffic is not as big of a problem as one would think,” 50% said they disagree, 31% agreed with the statement, and 19% felt neutral.
- (Q25): In response to the statement, “More should be done to increase, expand, or promote agritourism,” 54% said they agree, 10% disagreed with the statement, and 36% felt neutral.
- (Q26): 72% agreed with the statement, “I feel positive about the future of Nelson County,” while 14% disagreed and 14% felt neutral.
- (Q27): In response to the statement, “Overall, tourism is more harmful to our community than helpful,” 69% said they disagree, 12% agreed with the statement, and 19% felt neutral.
- (Q28): In response to the statement, “The direction of change in Nelson County is positive,” 42% agreed, 22% disagreed, and 36% felt neutral.

Responses Organized by Topic:

Local Sense of Place & Authentic Character:

- 96% said it is important to protect and preserve the Rockfish Valley's rural character and unique sense of place. 71% said it is critically important. (Q5)
- 79% said managed or reduced development is important. 41% said this is critically important. (Q11)
- 98% agreed: "Maintaining working farm lands, forests, and orchards in the Rockfish Valley is important to preserving the area's rural character." (Q22)
- 80% agreed: "There should be a greater effort to balance development and rural preservation." (Q23)

Environmental Resources:

- 97% give importance to clean water and watershed protection (for well water, agriculture, fishing, and swimming). 81% said this is critically important. (Q14)
- 96% give importance to clean air (such as healthy air quality, high level of visibility, etc.). 83% said this is critically important. (Q15)
- 98% give importance to preserving mountain scenery and scenic views. 85% said this is critically important. (Q16)
- 96% give importance to conserving environmental features (such as wildlife habitat, forests, wetlands, etc.). 73% said this is critically important. (Q17)
- 89% give importance to dark skies lighting (for min. light pollution/ max. night sky visibility). (Q18)

Transportation:

- 96% said safe/reasonable levels of traffic and congestion on roads is important. 58% said it is critically important. (Q8)
- Regarding alternative transportation options (such as sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, etc.): 54% said this is important, 20% said this is unimportant, and 25% felt neutral. (Q12)
- Regarding alternative commuting options (such as park and ride lots, bus, carpool, etc.): 38% said this is important, 29% said this is unimportant, and 32% felt neutral. (Q13)
- 80% give importance to public infrastructure (such as roads, sewer, telecommunications). (Q20)
- In response to the statement, "Traffic is not as big of a problem as one would think," 50% said they disagree, 31% agreed with the statement, and 19% felt neutral. (Q24)

Infrastructure & Amenities:

- 80% give importance to public infrastructure (such as roads, sewer, telecommunications). (Q20)
- 93% said access to reliable telecommunications and broadband service is important. 56% said it is critically important. (Q7)
- 87% said access to recreational amenities (such as parks) is important. 35% said it is critically important. (Q6)

Economic Development:

- 92% give importance to access to local foods and the success of local ag operations. (Q21)
- Regarding economic vitality (including job creation and job growth): 51% said this is important, while 48% felt this is unimportant or felt neutral. (Q19)
- Regarding access to employment opportunities in Nelson County: 49% said this is important, while 50% felt this is unimportant or felt neutral. (Q9)
- Regarding increased or continued development: 31% said this is important, 42% said this is unimportant, and 26% felt neutral. (Q10)
- In response to the statement, "More should be done to increase, expand, or promote agritourism," 54% said they agree, 10% disagreed with the statement, and 36% felt neutral. (Q25)
- In response to the statement, "Overall, tourism is more harmful to our community than helpful," 69% said they disagree, 12% agreed with the statement, and 19% felt neutral. (Q27)