



# City of Amsterdam

## Community Needs Assessment

## Community Survey

**We need your help to improve the City of Amsterdam!**

*Tell us what your neighborhood needs . . . Tell us what services you and your family need . . .  
Tell us what Amsterdam's economy needs . . . Tell us what improvements will make our City more livable .*

### INTRODUCTION

The City of Amsterdam, in conjunction with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), is conducting a Community Needs Assessment to identify its priority needs and opportunities for the next 2-5 years. The information generated from this survey will be used not only by the City and HUD to craft a two year action plan for targeting federal assets to help the City, it will also serve as a basis for revising the City's Comprehensive Plan (and thereby much reducing the cost of such an update).

This survey should take you about 15-20 minutes to complete. **All responses are anonymous and every response received before August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015 will be noted and considered.** Summarized results will be released to the public, but individual responses will not available to anyone.

If you prefer, you may complete this survey at [www.SurveyMonkey/](http://www.SurveyMonkey/)

Hard copy responses can be dropped off at the same location additional copies of the survey are available: City Hall, Amsterdam Free Library, The Inman Senior Center, Centro Civico, and other places around the City. Or they may be mailed to: City Hall, ATTN: DCED, 61 Church Street, Amsterdam NY 12010. Additional downloadable hard copies can be printed from the City website – [www.amsterdamny.gov](http://www.amsterdamny.gov).

The questions herein were generated from many sources: the last comprehensive plan, other planning documents, but most recently and importantly, a series of brainstorming and roundtable discussion in which nearly a hundred of your fellow citizens put forth what they thought Amsterdam needed.

If you have any questions about anything on the survey you are encouraged to stop and call the Director, Community and Economic Development at (518) 841-4323 or email [rvonhasseln@amsterdamny.gov](mailto:rvonhasseln@amsterdamny.gov) for an explanation before you complete it.

Thank you for giving your time and thoughts to building a better City! We need and appreciate it!

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**PART I – GENERAL**

1. In one word, what do you think is Amsterdam's *number one* priority need? \_\_\_\_\_

2. In one word, what is Amsterdam's greatest barrier to meeting that need? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which of the following do you feel are the most important?

GOALS	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Improve Image and Identity In Region				
Rebuild Economic Foundation				
Reestablish Downtown as Community Center				
Stabilize and Strengthen Neighborhoods				
Redevelop Old Mill Sites				
Enhance Important Gateways				
Create a City Greenway System				
Other:				
Other:				

4. Which of the following venues/activities in Amsterdam do you enjoy? (Check all that apply)

- Run / Walk / Bike
- Restaurants / Cafes
- Sports Venues
- Theaters
- Museums
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Street Festivals / Fairs
- City Parks System
- Retail / Shopping
- Youth Activities

5. Do you volunteer in Amsterdam?  I would like to become a volunteer  I don't volunteer  
 I already volunteer (Organization / Location) \_\_\_\_\_

6. What charities are you most interested in? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What *geographic area(s)* in Amsterdam have the greatest need?

- East End
- West End
- South Side
- Market Hill
- Reid Hill
- Downtown
- Upper Church Street
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the one thing would you do *first* to improve the City of Amsterdam?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is one thing that would most improve *your* quality of life in Amsterdam?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

10. List three (3) words that best describe Amsterdam as it is *now*: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
 \_\_\_\_\_

11. List three (3) words that best describe Amsterdam as it *could be*: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**PART II – PUBLIC SERVICES USED**

**12. During the past year, have you used any of the following public services in Amsterdam, and how would you rate your experience?** (Please check all that apply in either the positive or negative experience column: if you did not use, please check that column)

PUBLIC SERVICES YOU HAVE USED WITHIN THE PAST YEAR	DID NOT USE	USED POSITIVE EXPERIENCE	USED NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE
Senior Services			
Youth Services			
Public Transportation			
Affordable Housing Services			
City-Sponsored Recreational Programs			
Employment Programs			
Food Programs/Community Meal Services			
Subsidized Healthcare			
Subsidized Childcare			
Mental Health or Substance Abuse Services			
Other:			
Other:			

**PART III – TRANSPORTATION**

**13. What do you think are Amsterdam’s priority Transportation needs?**

TRANSPORTATION NEEDS	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Build Bike Lanes and Signage				
Install Bike Racks at Key Places				
Better Maintenance of Bike/Hike Ways				
Assist Owners in Sidewalk Repair				
Install Sidewalks Where There Are None				
Integrate City Buses with Regional System				
Regular Times and Stops for City Buses				
Inspect Taxi Services				
Relocate Train Station to Downtown				
Make Train Station Intermodal				
Other:				
Other:				

**PART IV – FOOD**

**14. What do you think are Amsterdam’s priority Food needs?**

FOOD NEEDS	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Create New Food Pantry/Free Meal Locations				
Expand Senior Food Programs				

Establish Community Gardens/Urban Agriculture				
Form a Volunteer Food Council				
Increase Farm-to-Fork Options				
Seek Small and Mid-Sized Grocery Stores in City				
Develop a Food Service Business incubator				
Promote Small Diverse Restaurants				
Work with Schools on Healthy Food Options				
Work with Others to Expand Nutritional Knowledge				
Other:				
Other:				

**PART V – EDUCATION**

**15. What do think are Amsterdam’s priority Education needs?**

EDUCATION NEEDS	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Increase Workforce Soft Skills Training				
Pre-K Schooling				
Increase Vocational Training				
Increase Project Based Learning (PTECH)				
Draft City/School Long Term Coordination Plan				
Actively Attempt to Change Outside Perceptions				
Promote Additional Use of Arts Center				
Teach Homeownership in Local Schools				
Parent Education Outreach				
Increase Community Engagement				
Other:				
Other:				

**PART VI – MARKETING**

**16. What do you think are Amsterdam’s priority Marketing needs?**

MARKETING NEEDS	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Promote the Golf Course More				
Improve Ties to the Capital Region				
Market to Specific Industries/Commercial Groups				
Publish an Inventory of Good Available Properties				
Increase Heritage Tourism				
Create/Promote Year-Round/Winter Activities				
Create/Promote Additional Waterfront Activities				
Create a Low Tech/Small Business Incubator				
Promote Historic Preservation Tax Credit Options				
Promote HUB Zone Program				
Other:				

Other:				
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**PART VII – HOUSING**

**17. What do you think are Amsterdam’s priority Housing needs?**

HOUSING NEEDS	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Large Single Room Occupancy Facility				
Affordable Housing				
Market Rate Housing				
Condos/Townhouses				
Mixed Use Housing				
Transitional Housing				
Expanded/Year-Round Homeless Shelter				
Downtown Apartments Over Retail				
Veterans Housing				
Senior Housing				
Other:				
Other:				

**PART VIII - REVITALIZATION**

**18. What do you think are Amsterdam’s priority Revitalization needs?**

REVITALIZATION NEEDS	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Increase Waterfront Access/Activities				
Historic Preservation Incentives				
Improved/Increased Code Enforcement				
Prevent the Spread of Blighted Properties				
Build an Attractive Downtown Core				
Simplified Zoning/Planning/Code Procedures				
Grow the Land Bank				
Redevelop Old Mill Sites				
East End Redevelopment				
Develop Additional Cultural/Recreational Draws				
Other:				
Other:				

**PART IX – PUBLIC SERVICES NEEDED**

**19. Which public services are needed most by Amsterdam residents?**

PUBLIC SERVICES NEEDED	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Safe and Reliable Childcare				
Crime Prevention/Awareness Programs				
Housing with Support Services				

Healthcare Services				
Mental Health Services				
Substance Abuse Services				
Senior Services				
Abused & Neglected Children Services				
Domestic Abuse Services				
Youth Services				
Literacy Programs				
English as a Second Language				
Veterans Services				
Transportation Services				
Services for Persons with Disabilities				
Other:				
Other:				

**PART X – INITIATIVES FOR HOMEOWNERS, LANDLORDS, and TENANTS**

**20. Which initiatives would best help Amsterdam Homeowners, Landlords and Tenants?**

HOMEOWNER, LANDLORD, and TENANT INITIATIVES	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Weatherization, Lead, Asbestos Assistance				
Housing Rehabilitation Incentives/Grants				
Homeownership Incentives				
Accessibility Assistance				
Energy Efficiency Programs				
Landlord Tenant Association(s)				
1 <sup>st</sup> Time Home Owner Education				
Incentives to Rent to Special Needs Persons				
Help for Seniors to Stay in Own Homes Longer				
Homesteading Programs				
Other:				
Other:				

**PART XI – NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVES**

**21. Which Neighborhood Initiatives would best help *your* neighborhood?**

NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVES	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Neighborhood Association				
Off-Street Parking				
Safe Sidewalks and Walkable Streets				
Neighborhood Parks and Greenspaces				
Homeownership Incentives				
Bus Stops and Public Transportation				
Community Policing and Crime Prevention				
Absentee Landlord and Slumlord Penalties				

Re-use or Demolition of Vacant Properties				
Food Access				
Tree Planting				
Flood Prevention and Drainage				
Enhanced Street Lighting				
Other:				
Other:				

**PART XII – DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT**

**22. Which initiatives would best help redevelop the Downtown area?**

DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Upper Floor Housing Incentives				
Commercial Façade Improvements				
Microbrewery				
“Nightlife”/Entertainment/Dining				
Streetscape Improvements				
Sports/Recreation/Street Events				
Farmers Market				
Niche Market/Destination Stores				
Tree Planting				
Public WIFI/Internet Service				
Improved/Expanded Parking				
Public Art				
Downtown Merchants Association				
Other:				
Other:				

**PART XIII – PUBLIC FACILITIES and AMENITIES**

**23. Which facilities would most benefit Amsterdam?**

PUBLIC FACILITIES and AMENITIES	DO NOT NEED	LOW NEED	MEDIUM NEED	HIGH NEED
Additional Parking Facilities				
Expanded City Recreational Center				
Visitor Center				
Regional Sports /Tournament Facility				
Outdoor Theater				
Indoor Theater(s)				
Marina				
Antiques Center				
Artist Work/Live Space				
Large Event/Catering Venue				
New Commercial/Industrial Space				
Improved/Expanded Trails/Nature Preserves				

Windmill				
Other:				
Other:				

**PART XIV – STUDENTS** *(Omit this part if you are not a student)*

**24. Do you plan on making Amsterdam your home upon graduating from high school/college** *(if applicable)?*

- Yes     No     Undecided

**25. If the answer to Question 24 was “Yes” please explain why:** \_\_\_\_\_

**26. If the answer to Question 24 was “No’ or “Undecided,” what could change in the City of Amsterdam that would encourage you to stay?** \_\_\_\_\_

**27. If offered tuition incentives at a local college, would you agree to live & work in Amsterdam for the next five years upon graduation?**

- Yes     No

**28. Would you consider living in Amsterdam if there was a program to partially pay for your student loans in exchange for renting or owning a home in the City?**

- Yes     No

**29. Would childcare be a priority for you to work/study in Amsterdam?**

- Yes     No

**30. If entrepreneurial/start-up assistance was available, would you be interested in starting a business in Amsterdam?**

- Yes     No

**PART XV – BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

*In order to ensure that we have heard from all parts of our community, please answer the following questions about yourself. Sharing this information is up to you, and your individual identity will not be associated with your responses in any way.*

**31. What is your zip code?**     12010     Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**32. What is your Gender:**     Male     Female     Other     Prefer not to share

**33. What is your Race/Ethnicity?** *(Please check one)*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Two or More Races   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to share |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North American Indian |  |

**34. Are you Hispanic or Latino?** *(Please check one)*

- Yes  Prefer not to share  
 No

**35. What is your age?** *(Please check one)*

- Under 14  14-17  18-21  22-24  25-35  36-45  46-55  
 56-65  66-75  Over 75  Prefer not to share

**36. What is your highest education?** *(Please check one)*

- Not a High School Graduate  Bachelor Degree  
 High School Grad or Equal  Post Grad or Professional Degree  
 Some College  Prefer not to share  
 Associate Degree

**37. Which of the following represents you best?** *(Please check all that apply)*

- City Resident  Full-time Employee  
 High School Student  Work/Study in Amsterdam; reside outside the City  
 College Undergraduate Student  Government Employee  
 College Graduate Student  Non-Profit Employee  
 Entrepreneur/Local Business Owner  Affordable Housing Provider  
 Intern  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Part-time/Seasonal Employee

**38. If you reside in the City, what best describes your residence?** *(Please check one)*

- Single Family Residence  Group Home or Quarters (Nursing, Senior, etc.)  
 Two family Residence  Other (specify) : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Multi-Family Residence  Prefer not to share  
 Apartment Building

**39. If you reside in the City, do you rent or own your residence?** *(Please check one)*

- Rent  Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Own  Prefer not to share

**40. If you reside in the City, in which ward do you live?** *(Please check one)*

- First Ward  Fourth Ward  
 Second Ward  Fifth Ward  
 Third Ward  I don't Know

**41. What geographic area in Amsterdam do you live in?**

- East End  West End  South Side  Market Hill  Reid Hill  
 Downtown  Upper Church Street  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**42. How many persons (including you) are in your household? (Please check *one*)**

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> One   | <input type="checkbox"/> Five                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two   | <input type="checkbox"/> Six                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three | <input type="checkbox"/> More than Six       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four  | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer Not to Share |

**43. What is your annual household income? (Please check *one*)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer Not to Share | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 - \$49,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure            | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 - \$59,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$20,000  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 - \$69,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 - \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 - \$79,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 - \$39,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 or More    |

**44. How often do you use public transportation? (Please check *one*)**

- Most days     More than once a week     More than once a month     Rarely     Never

**45. How many vehicles does your household have? (Please check *one*)**

- 0     1     2     3     More than 3

**46. Have you participated in a local planning effort before? (Please check *one*)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> This is my first time | <input type="checkbox"/> I've sat on a committee or board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes             | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to share              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequently            |   |

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. If you have any additional comments you'd like to add or contribute, please include them below, or attach an additional sheet.

**47. Additional Comments**

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**Please note that your answers are anonymous and every comment will be considered and noted.**

*If you would like to stay involved with this or other planning public participation activities, please call or email the Director of Community and Economic Development, City of Amsterdam at (518) 841-4323 or [rvonhasseln@amsterdamny.gov](mailto:rvonhasseln@amsterdamny.gov).*

**Thank you for your participation!**