



## **Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc.**

FAQ's as related to Property as of 12.6.2021

This document will continue to be updated as questions are received

### **Q. Why is Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson (GSHH) creating a Long-Range Property Plan?**

A. GSHH operates 17 properties that are used for program and administrative services. The process has actually been underway since council realignment in 2007 when GSHH became "property rich" with multiple properties used for program and administration services. In 2010, GSHH completed a comprehensive inventory of council properties. The result of the 2010 inventory was that GSHH did not need nor could it afford to own all its properties. Based on criteria of utility, condition, and maintenance cost we began divesting the council of several properties, beginning with the sale of surplus land and have steadily monetized or sold obsolete properties. That brings us to today. In order to continue to be successful in our mission, the Board of Directors must ensure each location is well-managed, safe, and fulfilling its purpose while considering girl programming, administrative needs, and fiscal responsibility.

The properties owned by GSHH, both for program and administration, are the most valuable assets owned by the council. In order to continue to be successful in our mission of providing leadership experiences for girls, we need to make sure we are properly managing those assets to provide those experiences and to be fiscally responsible.

### **Q. Why were all the properties assessed?**

A. It was imperative that GSHH assess our processes, programs, and properties in order to effectively execute our mission.

GSHH is continually focused on:

- The integrity and relevancy of Girl Scout programs
- The execution of our mission to inspire and empower girls and young women

In order to do this and serve the needs of our membership, it was important for council to make assessments to:

- Find the most beneficial and relevant use(s) for our membership
- Find the most cost-effective use and potential use of our properties

The assessment helped us to identify properties to maintain, upgrade, sell, or end leases.

Specifically, to:

- Provide the best in girl programming and adult training
- Maintain the integrity of our programs and properties
- Match future program needs with planned development and investments
- Alleviate strains on the council's financial well-being

### **Q. Why are GSHH camps under-utilized?**

A. Our council is aligned with a national downward trend away from traditional camping. However, our research pinpoints other reasons why some girls (with decisions also driven by leaders and parents) don't go camping, including rustic conditions and distance.

**Q. Will any camps, scout houses, or service centers be closed/sold?**

A. The evaluation and recommendations by Newmark Knight Frank (NKF) include these options for several properties. The Board of Directors has voted to accept the recommendations, but reserves the option to amend, delay or deny the recommendations.

Council plans are continuously evolving and will continue to do so as new options and opportunities present themselves. We will continue to share updates through the usual council communication channels as those plans unfold.

**Q. Who developed the Long-Range Property Plan?**

A. The Board of Directors approved retaining Newmark Knight Frank (NKF) to complete a comprehensive and data driven assessment of all GSHH properties in 2020. NKF, operated by Newmark Group, Inc., is one of the world's leading and most trusted commercial real estate advisory firms, offering a complete suite of services and products for both owners and occupiers. NKF is the firm working with GSUSA to assist councils across the country with property strategy. A final report from NKF was issued to and approved by the Board of Directors in Spring 2021. From there, the Board Property Plan Committee was formed to create the Long-Range Property Plan.

**Q. What criteria was used to evaluate the properties?**

A. The guiding principal behind the property review was this: *the program needs of girls drive property*. Criteria considered included property usage, fitness of the facility for its intended purpose, program potential, operating costs, ADA compliance, revenue streams and financial sustainability.

Our properties must support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) by providing a place for safe and meaningful opportunities. The property must also be well used, ADA compliant, and financially sustainable. NKF analyzed the following data points:

- The previous master property plan developed in 2010
- Demographic data (current and projected) of girl members and potential girl members
- Cost analysis for each property
- Usage statistics for each property
- Membership surveys to girls and adult volunteers, community volunteers, staff, and Board Directors
- Financial climate
- Trends in outdoor programming
- Locations, capacities, safety, sustainability

**Q. What will happen to the money from selling properties?**

A. Any funds generated from the sale of properties will be used to develop our remaining properties into outstanding sites for outdoor program. We also envision moving to an "Experience Center" concept to create excitement in the communities that we serve by focusing on these four key areas:

1. Reaching and retaining more girls through access in high traffic, visible locations with sidewalk appeal to draw visitors during their daily routines/errands and flex spaces for recruitment, training, troop meetings, and badge activities
2. Reimaging revenue by providing an introduction to outdoor experiences to drive camp interest and retaining merchandising that integrates into the arrival experience and hours of operation linked to programming and members' schedules

3. Creating effective operations by providing efficient work spaces that incorporate hybrid elements of in-person and remote work + shared desks/offices
4. Staying relevant to the brand through design that reflects today's Girl Scouts and camp aesthetic with updated multimedia and imagery

**Q. How will you keep membership updated on the process?**

A. We will continue to share updates through the usual council communication channels as those plans unfold.

**Q. Why does the plan recommend closing some of our properties?**

A. Many of our program properties are not used very much, are in poor repair, or are not suitable for providing the high quality outdoor program we want to offer our girls. These factors were all used in determining the recommendations for specific properties.

**Q. Will girls have opportunities for resident camp and outdoor program if there is no council-owned property in my area?**

A. Yes. A major component of the plan is to ensure that girls in the council have access to high quality resident camp locations and outdoor program opportunities.

**Q. What will happen to the money from selling properties?**

A. The plan recommends that any funds generated from the sale of properties be used to develop our remaining properties into outstanding sites for programming.

**Q. Why do you want to create high-end fancy camps?**

A. GSHH is not looking to create high-end fancy camps, GSHH wants to create camps that will meet the needs of both the Girl Scout of today and tomorrow. GSHH wants to upgrade the camps and will continue to offer experiences for girls who wish to have a more "rustic" experience.

**Q. Is there a possibility that some of the properties slated to "exit" be sold and then leased back by GSHH so they could continue to be used by our volunteers and girls? If so, can you identify which properties might fall into this category and commit to exploring that?**

A. Yes, the possibility exists for some properties to be leased back to GSHH for continued use by membership. The council will look at this as a possibility.

**Q. How do you intend to resolve the assertion that according to the Bylaws, the disposition of this many properties is substantial enough to require a delegate vote?**

A. Our council attorney reviews this question each time we sell a property to ensure we are in compliance with the Bylaws and the Guidelines set forth by the NYS Attorney General.

**Q. What about deed restrictions on the properties?**

A. Each property will go through a due diligence phase to ensure that the council is in compliance with all applicable guidance.

**Q. Which of the Board committees have been engaged in the long range property plan?**

A. The entire Board has been involved in the property plan strategy starting with our first engagement with Newmark Knight Frank (NKF) in early 2020 through present day.

The Finance Committee, which meets monthly to review council finances and make recommendations to the CEO and Board, is engaged with this work as they monitor adherence to the operating budget, set long-range financial goals, and strategies to achieve the goals. These goals work cooperatively with our strategic plan and property strategy.

This past September the Board adopted our 2021-2024 Strategic Plan whose objectives set the path for our council for the next three years. This plan lays the foundation work from which the Property Plan Committee developed the property strategy.

**Q. At the recent Fall Delegates meeting, the strategic actions on page 15 of the report seem to be a done deal and that no further Board consideration of the Newmark Knight Frank (NKF) recommendations is contemplated.**

A. The strategic actions presented were approved by the full Board. Defining a strategy will always be an important and necessary process, but flexibility is important to both the property strategy and the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. If the COVID pandemic has taught us anything, it's taught us that the world as we know it can flip on a dime, therefore strategic flexibility is a major asset to any plan. The Board has and will continue to exercise flexibility as we move through the planning and execution process, monitoring items such as, but not limited to the following focus areas that could drive a plan change: membership increases/decreases, market variables, population trends, and financial changes.

**Q. If this is a full steam ahead action plan, will the Board be reviewing the strategic actions should the financial circumstances of the council change?**

A. The strategic property plan is not just based on financial considerations. This plan is based on the many items including but not limited to:

- Demographics
- Population
- Membership
- Utilization

**Q. What is the Board's role in all of these decisions?**

A. The Board are the fiduciaries that steer the organization towards a sustainable future by adopting sound, ethical, and legal governance and financial management policies, as well as by making sure the organization has adequate resources to advance its mission. The Board has three primary legal duties that are being upheld through all strategic planning work underway in the organization. Duty of Care to take of the organization by ensuring prudent uses of all assets, including facility, people, and good will. A Duty of Loyalty to ensure that the organization's activities and transactions are, first and foremost, advancing its mission; recognize and disclose conflicts of interest; make decisions that are in the best interest of the organization and not that of an individual Board Director or any other individual or for-profit entity. A Duty of Obedience to ensure that the organization obeys applicable laws and regulations, follows the Bylaws, and adheres to our stated corporate purposes and mission.

**Q. Did the Board vote to move forward with this plan.**

A. Yes, the Board voted unanimously to move forward with this plan.

**Q. So are you just doing what Newmark Knight Frank (NKF) told you to do?**

A. No, the Board of Directors reviewed the information presented by NKF to make the decisions based on the data.

**Q. We believe the days of use are wrong? What can you do about that?**

A. GSHH will go back and re-review the calculations for the days of use.

**Q. Where did you get the list of the needed upgrades? Especially with regards to Camp Wendy?**

A. The upgrades necessary came from multiple sources including but not limited to:

- Volunteer requests
- Safety guidelines

**Q. What about land preservation?**

A. We are looking into that as an option.

**Q. Did GHH take into account people moving into the area?**

A. Yes, Newmark Knight Frank (NKF) did utilize information that was current at the time regarding the home sales in the 7 counties of the council. We have asked them to update that info to see if significant changes exist.

**Q. Who was surveyed?**

A. The survey was two pronged;

1. Newmark Knight Frank (NKF) interviewed multiple stakeholders
2. Survey was sent to all members in December of 2020

Reminders to complete the survey were sent out in *Headlines & Happenings* and posted on Social Media

**Q. Has Council thought about renting to other organizations?**

A. In the past council has rented to outside organizations, however currently GSHH is not due to COVID. Also at some locations, in order to rent to other organizations extensive upgrades need to be made.

**Q. How will the upgrades to camps be determined?**

A. There will be an advisory group formed consisting of Girls, Volunteers, and Board Members to help with planning the future upgrade to the camp locations.

**Q. Does Camp Wendy have a reverter clause to go back to the Borden family?**

A. We are not aware of a reverter clause but as with all property transactions there will be a due diligence phase.

**Q. Have you considered town distance?**

A. Yes the majority of the council is located within 2 hours of a camp location and most of the council is within 1 hour of a camp location.

**Q. What is being done about meeting spaces?**

A. Council is working on ways to help Service Units and Troops find places to meet due to the decrease in available spaces due to COVID.

**Q. How many people responded to the surveyed? And from which areas from the council.**

A. The respondents are broken down as follows:

Girl Survey by Location:

54%	Westchester
21%	Dutchess/Putnam
20%	Rockland/Orange
5%	Sullivan/Ulster

Girl Survey by Grade:

60%	K-5
24%	6-8
16%	9-12

Adult Survey by Location:

49%	Westchester
18%	Dutchess/Putnam
26%	Rockland/Orange
7%	Sullivan/Ulster

Adult Survey by Primary Role:

44%	Troop Leader
33%	Parent
14%	Volunteer
9%	Service Unit Member/Other

**Q. Is there another way we can look at this to save Camp Wendy? Can Local troops raise money or get corporate sponsors. Can we look at volunteers to help?**

A. To bring Camp Wendy to a minimum standard the costs would be in excess of \$900,000 as indicated in the presentation. Those costs do not include ongoing maintenance or improvements to make the camp more attractive to girls.

**Q. Why do you want to make Wendy fancy?**

A. It is not a matter of making Wendy fancy – it is bringing it to minimum standard for the safety of all who would like to utilize it.

**Q. What about the Buck Funds for Camp Wendy?**

A. The Buck Grant of \$270,000 was awarded to GSHH in June 2015 to enhance the camp experience. The grant was for the following:

- Expansion of ropes course at CAB and RH
- Climbing program at Wendy which included the expansion of the astronomy tower
- Expanding archery at Wendy and improving archery at CAB and RH
- Winterization of areas at RH
- Expenses included in the budget included:

- Staffing and related training Certifications
- Engineering inspections
- Course inspections
- Printing and supplies
- Allowance for travel
- Equipment including helmets, harnesses, GPS, telescope
- Improvements to ropes, zip line at CAB, RH and Wendy
- Archery equipment – kits and training
- Indoor climbing wall and climbing tower at Wendy
- Capital improvement to RH ropes and CAB

On the items above the following was spent:

2015 - \$5,232.12  
2016 - \$146,546.02  
2017 - \$19,151.35  
2018 - \$66,202.15  
Total - \$ 237,528.64

Current Balance \$32,714.36

**Q. Why do we need an indoor climbing wall – was that necessary?**

A. The indoor wall was installed between 2016 and 2018.

**Q. Some of the items on the to-do list are not necessary as Camp Wendy is a “rustic kind of camp”. I understand girls want STEM in Westchester. There should be an option for something girls can use. I can slash the list in half – who came up with this list of \$1M**

A. The list of items to be done was given to GSHH by volunteers who are very familiar with the camp.

**Q. Please recheck the days of usage for Camp Wendy as there were times that camp was closed due to water or electrical issues.**

A. We will double check the days of usage.

**Q. Regarding the number of girl members in Ulster - if we are losing resources, the numbers will continue to go down. What kinds of things will be done to encourage girls to join Girl Scouts? How do we not lose girls to Boy Scouts?**

A. We will continue to work on ways to recruit and retain girls in all of the council footprint.

**Q Are there other options to explore save Wendy? We already spoke about Edith Macy putting up a solar farm. The Boy Scouts announced a partnership where they are leasing their land from the camp at 10 mile river so they don't have to sell their properties. So it seems other organizations in scouting are getting creative and thinking outside of the box and not simply selling off their properties. So I would like to know what is our council doing other than cutting and running – what was considered and why there are viable options.**

A. One of the things that council has have been actively pursuing with regards to Camp Ludington has been Land Banking/Land Preservation. In 2015 we did work with Scenic Hudson with CAB with regarding our surplus land. We are working with the Trust for Public Land right now in Ludington to preserve about 100 acres of surplus land. We did reach out again to talk about Wendy and there was no interest. With regards to a Solar Farm on the Camp Wendy

property - that option was reviewed in the past however the Town changed the code to restrict solar panels to a max of 15 acres or 15% of the total acreage, whichever is greater.

**Q. Please remember to look to the future to make investments where people are moving**

A. The Board has and will continue to exercise flexibility as we move through the planning and execution process, and will continue to evaluate.

**Q. Have you looked in the historical society, partnership with the town?**

A. We will continue to look at all options.

**Q. You talk about the cost of competing camps – if we add to our properties to make our selves more viable and profitable – what will it do to the cost to girls? \$700 for my girls is not viable It will make it for out of range for many of my families.**

A. As noted, this is a 3 year plan. Cost considerations will be reviewed as we move further in the process.

**Q. When girls and families leave Girl Scouts is there an exit interview?**

A. No there isn't an exit interview – However every year GSUSA gathers info via the Voices Count Survey to ask questions regarding the reason why someone stays or leaves Girl Scouts.

**Q. What about service unit programming? How do service units do that?**

A. Many service units organize and run local programming for the girls in their local area.

**Q. Regarding Ludington – has the Trust for Public Land (TPL) been made aware of our plans?**

A. Yes, we have spoken to TPL and some of our other funders that we have worked with in the past. We have reached out to multiple sources as they could be potential buyers for these properties. Scenic Hudson was not interested as Ludington was too far from the Hudson River.

**Q. When will the sales start?**

A. This is a long range property plan to take place over the span of 3 years. Some of the plan is already in motion – i.e. Pleasantville and the surplus land at Ludington.

**Q. When will the presentation be released?**

A. It was posted on the website November 22, 2021.

**Q. Is there any flexibility in the plan or is it a done deal and you are just telling us?**

A. This is a 3 year plan with a timeline, as mentioned there is flexibility in our strategic plan and property plan. We continue to evaluate the following as well as other items: population trends, finances, feedback from the Town Halls, etc. We will be reviewing all the information and continue to do our due diligence

**Q. Is there a plan of what will be done with the funds generated by the sales of the property?**

A. The plan is to utilize the funds generated to reinvest in the remaining properties.

**Q. Has anyone looked into renting the camps to other organizations?**

A. In the past GSHH did rent out Camp Ludington to another camp program, but they no longer wish to utilize the property. GSHH did also explore renting out to a different summer camp – however they were not interested as it didn't have the amenities they were looking for. There

would need to be a large investment of funds into the locations to make them attractive to a renter. Also, pre-COVID other organizations, etc. were able to rent out other GSHH properties as long as it didn't interfere with our Membership's ability to use the property.

**Q. Girls enjoy pitching tents – Is that going away?**

A. As we get closer to developing the property investment plans, we will form a task force to gather information as to the specifics that members would like to see at the locations.

**Q. Some weeks at CAB sell out quickly now – will the closing of the other camps affect that more.**

A. The camps that are closing have not been utilized for day or summer camp in years.

**Q. Are you getting rid of GS Traditions?**

A. No, Girl Scout Traditions will always be a part of Girl Scouts.

**Q. What about programming at camps?**

A. Part of the plan is to be able to offer better programming at the camp locations. Some ideas that have been discussed are facilitated camping to help new leaders get used to camping with the girls.

**Q. Will girl input be solicited for future plans?**

A. Yes.

**Q. Why do you want to be premiere? We are Girl Scouts, we don't need to be fancy.**

A. Premiere isn't looking to be fancy - we are looking to be the best! This includes facilities, activities, etc.

**Q. Where did the list of items needed at the Scarsdale house come from?**

A: The items were compiled from meetings that have taken place with GSHH staff and Village of Scarsdale staff.

**Q. Are you closing the locations right away?**

A. No, this is a 3 year plan. Any changes to location availability will be communication to membership

**Q. How did you count days of usage?**

A. If the location was reserved at all for the day – it was considered a day of use.

**Q. We are concerned about the resources of others. In Westchester, we have the financial resources, girls in Ulster County don't have financial resources.**

A. We will continue to look for ways that we can continue to serve the girls of our council.

**Q. What about non-stem programming. It is fine that girls in Westchester may be interested in that but girls up north are not. What about that?**

A. This isn't about prioritizing one type of programming over another. GSHH believes that all programming is important so that girls have choices.

**Q. On the camp experience slide, you mention troop camping, girl camping but you don't mention summer camp. Will CAB – continue to be a day camp and Rock Hill continue as a resident camp? Will tent camping continue there?**

A. Yes, summer camp is still planned at CAB and RH as well as troop camping opportunities.

**Q. I didn't realize that any Girl Scout troop can utilize any property – I was always given the impression that we had to live in the town. So does this mean we can utilize the Larchmont or other GS House?**

A. Yes, all Girl Scout Heart of the Hudson members may reserve properties owned by Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson. Please review the website for information on the locations and reservations that can be made via Doubleknot.

**Q. Camps are very expensive – will cost be viable? When you start adding in all these amenities, will it be affordable? The cost needs to be affordable to all of our girls, the ones in Westchester who can afford it but for also those in Ulster who have less financial resources.**

A. We will continue to review all financial information. And we have always offered financial assistance to those who request and qualify.

**Q. I hope not too much weight was just placed on the survey results.**

A. The survey was one of multiple factors taken into consideration.

**Q. What happens after all of this, say in the next five years or so, what are we going to do if we run into financial problems and there is nothing left to sell? We need a way to find a way to raise money, the strategy of gaining financial securing can't just rely on property. What is our plan once we have sold everything and we are still in this situation?**

A. This decision isn't being made purely on financial information. Council will reinvest sale proceeds in remaining properties for the future of Girl Scouts; not into current operations.

**Q. In 2012, with Girl Scouts Centennial, we established a museum. Memorabilia was gathered from all communities at Camp Wendy – what will happen?**

A. We would like to see the museum relocated to a location that is more accessible to the broader membership as the museum is a history of the entire council.

**Q. We believe that the costs listed for the Fanny Fay are too high?**

A. We will revisit the estimated costs.