

Town of Durham 2019 Comprehensive Plan Committee

Summary of responses to survey questions

September 19, 2019

In May 2019, Durham’s adult residents (about 2,000 people) were invited by the Comprehensive Plan Committee to respond to an online survey. A paper version of the survey was also made available. A total of 246 people responded – a response rate of 12%. An analysis of the responses is provided below.

Q1: Please share your email with us so that we can share the results of this survey:

Number of People	Response
186 (76%)	Provided an email address
60 (24%)	Did not provide an email address
246 (100%)	Total

Q2: What area in the Town of Durham do you live in or near?

Number of People	Response
93 (38%)	East Durham
63 (26%)	Cornwallville
39 (16%)	West Durham / Durham
33 (13%)	Oak Hill
14 (6%)	Other
4 (2%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Q3: What is your age group?

Number of People	Response
3 (1%)	20 or under
14 (6%)	21 – 39
146 (60%)	40 – 64
82 (33%)	65 or over
1 (0%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Q4: Are you a seasonal/weekend resident?

Number of People	Response
77 (31%)	Yes
168 (69%)	No
1 (0%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Q5: Tell us one of your favorites things about Durham

Number of people	Summary of responses
57 (23%)	Scenic mountain views
43 (17%)	Rural
40 (16%)	Quiet, tranquil, serene, peaceful
19 (8%)	The people, community, neighbors
11 (4%)	Family/hometown
10 (4%)	Nature
7 (3%)	Catskill Creek and other creeks
6 (2%)	Outdoor sports/hunting/skiing
4 (2%)	Agriculture
2 (1%)	Laid back / relaxed
2 (1%)	Low taxes
11 (4%)	Other
34 (14%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Q6: Why do you choose to live in Durham?

Number of people	Responses (People were invited to choose up to three of the following.)
184	Rural character
100	Family roots and/or Family and friends
41	Cost of living
39	Best overall value
27	Good place to raise children
20	Close to employment
9	Other
7	Did not respond
246	Total

Q7: If you could change one thing about Durham, what would you like to see changed?

Number of people	Summary of responses
37 (15%)	Reduce blight (remove abandoned cars, fix derelict properties, etc.)
25 (10%)	Encourage more retail/restaurant businesses
18 (7%)	Reduce local taxes
14 (6%)	Encourage better broadband and phone access
9 (4%)	Reopen access to Catskill Creek swimming spots
6 (2%)	Provide more community activities, especially for kids
6 (2%)	Reduce low-income rental housing
5 (2%)	Encourage job creation
5 (2%)	Restrict loud vehicles/motorcycles
4 (2%)	Restrict use of roadside LED signs and spotlights
3 (1%)	Provide zoning
2 (1%)	Provide free garbage pick-up to taxpayers
2 (1%)	Reopen the elementary school
2 (1%)	Provide bike/hiking trails
2 (1%)	Provide a community pool
2 (1%)	Improve dirt roads
46 (19%)	Other
58 (24%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Q10: What types of activities and programs would you like to see offered in Durham?

Number of People	Summary of Responses <i>(Some people provided more than one of these)</i>
24	Social/Community gatherings – BBQ, picnics, family events, etc.
22	Fitness/exercise classes/gym
22	Senior activities/groups
22	Adult education/continuing education-lectures/classes
19	Programs for young people
13	Swimming: Pool – 7, creek – 3, public swimming – 2, lake – 1
13	Agricultural: Farmers' market – 6, community garden – 5, gardening groups/tours – 2
11	Hiking/nature walks
10	Art and cultural events
10	Fairs
10	Sports for adults
9	Movies/movie theater
6	Art/concert venue
6	Community center
5	Community cleanup days
	Various responses by 4 or fewer people
98	Did not respond
246	Total

Q8: Are there sufficient gathering places in Durham?

Number of People	Response
121 (49%)	Yes
86 (35%)	No
40 (16%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Q9: What places in Durham do you think could be utilized as gathering places?

Number of people	Summary of responses <i>(People were invited to provide up to three responses.)</i>
	<i>Options that were mentioned in the introduction to the question:</i>
81	The former Durham elementary school
37	Brandow Park
32	Firehouses
31	Michael J. Quill Center
18	Churches
	<i>Further options suggested by participants:</i>
15	Durham town hall
13	One of the Town's restaurants or bars
13	One of the Town's resorts
3	Knights of Columbus hall
2	The former 1-room schoolhouses
50	Other
103	Did not respond
246	Total

Q11: How do we encourage volunteerism?

Number of People	Summary of Responses
56 (23%)	Inform people (via email, town newsletter, word of mouth, etc.) of volunteering opportunities
20 (8%)	Provide tax or other financial incentives for volunteering
13 (5%)	Organize one or two big volunteering events (e.g. a spring road cleanup) that people will see they can benefit from
8 (3%)	Encourage high school students to volunteer
3 (1%)	Publicly recognize/honor the volunteers
3 (1%)	Provide a community center at which volunteering activities can take place
8 (3%)	Other
135 (55%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Q13: What ideas do you have on how to make this recreation available?

The main ideas were:

- Provide a walking path such as in Windham.
- Create pool at community center.
- Partner with landowners to provide land for these activities, sharing revenue with them and providing insurance coverage for those activities.
- Organize guided bird-watching hikes.
- Provide welcome parties for new/seasonal homeowners.
- Encourage farming renaissance.
- Place a banner across Route 145 to encourage participation at events.
- Negotiate with resorts for town access to their pools.
- Have town volunteers maintain public swimming holes.
- Provide better marketing of the town's existing recreation capabilities.

Q16: If a central calendar of events was available on the Durham website, would you make use of it?

Number of people	Response
173 (70%)	Yes
29 (12%)	No
44 (18%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Of those who responded No, most said that this was because they don't have a computer or don't have access to the Internet. But some said they would not go to check a website but would be pleased to receive the information by email.

Q12: What types of recreation should we encourage in Durham?

The majority of 166 respondents mentioned multiple items, which made creating a useful tally difficult. Since many of these grouped items were popular together and were each mentioned 20 times or more, they are listed together. The most popular mentions by far: hiking; swimming; biking; fishing; hunting. Honorable mentions: winter sports (cross country skiing, snowmobiling, ice skating); children's sports; ATV trails; gym; festivals/food trucks/public BBQ's; horseback riding; team sports. In the area of swimming six people mentioned the need for a public pool and a few of those wanted it to be an indoor pool. Interesting one-off ideas include: Animal rescue events; bowling; historic tours.

Q14: Would you like to receive more information as to what is occurring in Durham?

Number of people	Response
183 (74%)	Yes
20 (8%)	No
43 (17%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Q15: What types of events would you like to be notified about?

154 responded; 92 skipped this question.

Of the 154, the great majority said, in effect, that they would like to be informed of almost all events.

Specific events that several people asked to be informed of included Town Board meetings and volunteer opportunities.

Q18: Would you like to see more economic development come to Durham?

Number of people	Response
160 (65%)	Yes
35 (14%)	No
51 (21%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Q17: How would you like to receive information as to what is occurring in Durham?

Number of people	Response (People could only choose one)
111 (45%)	Email
37 (15%)	Mailed newsletter
17 (7%)	Social media
13 (5%)	Local newspaper
10 (4%)	Radio
5 (2%)	Text message
8 (3%)	Other (Mostly specifying that any/all of the above would be OK)
45 (18%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Q20: What ideas do you have on how to attract business to our area?

Number of People	Summary of Responses (Some people provided more than one response)
22	Lower taxes
20	Advertise/promote local business success stories
16	Tax incentives
13	Fix-up/clean-up appearances
11	Incentives – low cost loans/grants
9	Greater cooperation/opportunities through County/NYS
8	Simplify/reduce restrictions/regulations
6	Better schools
6	Host job/business fairs
6	Use social media
6	Outreach to attract new businesses
5	Keep rural appeal
4	High speed broadband access
126	Did not respond
246	Total

Q21: Do you feel that the infrastructure supporting Durham is sufficient?

Number of people	Response
78 (32%)	Yes
108 (44%)	No
60 (24%)	Did not respond
246 (100%)	Total

Q19: What businesses or type of development would you like to see in Durham

Number of people	Summary of responses (Some people provided more than one response)
48	Restaurants (either upscale or family oriented)
16	Grocery
14	Manufacturing or light industry
13	Farmers' market
10	Retail shopping
9	Higher end hotels
8	Agriculture
6	Tourism
5	Movie theater
5	Coffee shop/diner
4	Medical care
4	Senior housing
4	Kids' places
3	Services for homeowners (electrical, plumbing, etc.)
3	Craft brewery
3	Campgrounds
3	Solar farms
3	Assisted living
104	Did not respond
246	Total

Q22: What infrastructure investment do we need in Durham?

Number of people	Responses (People were invited to choose up to three of the following.)
124	Broadband
43	Roads
35	Sewer
34	Water
25	Sidewalks
18	Electrical grid
16	Parking
25	Other (of whom 9 called for improved cellphone service)
84	Did not respond
246	Total