

Town of Durham, NY

Draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan

Prepared by the Durham Comprehensive Plan Committee

Draft "C": February 13, 2020

Proposed steps for adoption of the Durham Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan Committee proposes that the following steps be taken for the build-up to formal adoption of the Plan by the Town Board. Most of these steps are legally required.

1. December 19, 2019: The Committee informally sends Draft A of the Plan to Town Board members, the Town Clerk and the town lawyer. They are individually invited to send informal comments to the Committee Chair by 5 January 2020. [Done.]
2. Wednesday January 8, 2020: The Committee meets to discuss the comments received and, as necessary, to edit the draft, thereby creating Draft B. [Done.]
3. By Wednesday January 15, 2020: The Town Clerk posts Draft B at the town website, together with notice of a public hearing that the Comprehensive Plan Committee (not the Town Board) will hold on 5 February 2020. The Town Clerk also posts notice in one or more local newspapers, and emails interested residents as appropriate. [Done.]
4. Wednesday February 5, 2020: The Committee holds its public hearing at the Town Barn at 7:30 pm. The Plan is explained, and comments are invited. [Done.]
5. Wednesday February 12, 2020: The Committee meets to discuss the comments received and, as necessary, to edit the plan, thereby creating Draft C, which it formally submits to the Town Board. [Done.]
6. By Friday February 14, 2020: The Town Clerk posts Draft C at the town website, together with notice of a public hearing that the Town Board will hold on 3 March 2020. The Town Clerk also posts notice in one or more local newspapers.
7. Tuesday March 3, 2020: The Town Board holds its public hearing as part of its regular meeting.
8. Subsequent steps, on dates to be determined:
 - The Town Board reviews the Plan, taking into consideration comments made at the public hearing, and decides whether to make any modifications to the Plan.
 - The Town Board refers the Plan to the Greene County Planning Board for “239 review”. (This is designed to identify whether County concerns have been taken into consideration.) If there is no response from the County within 30 days, the Town Board can move forward.
 - The Town Board adopts a resolution establishing itself as the lead agency for State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) review. In this review, the Town Board determines whether or not adoption of the Plan will have negative environmental consequences. If the Town Board agrees there are no adverse consequences, it passes a “Negative Declaration” resolution and then files that with the state Department of Environmental Conservation.
 - The Town Board then files a notice to be printed in the state Environmental Notice Bulletin.
 - After all the above steps have been carried out, the Town Board passes a resolution to adopt the Comprehensive Plan.
 - The Town Clerk keeps on file the final version of each of the documents created in the above steps, posts the Plan at the town website, and sends a copy of the Plan to the County.

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Section A: Executive Summary

This 2020 Comprehensive Plan, which replaces the one adopted in 2008, was drafted over a two-year period by a committee established by the Durham Town Board. The Plan examines three questions:

1. What are Durham's current characteristics?
2. How do Durham's residents want things to change?
3. What can Durham and its residents do to reach that desired future?

This Plan does not control the Town Board; the Board can choose not to adopt it, or it can choose to adopt some but not all of its recommendations.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee obtained input from the Durham community through a series of public meetings and through an online survey.

Durham, a town of remarkable scenic beauty, is located on land that descends gently from the northern edge of the Catskill Mountains. The town, which has about 2,700 residents, is largely rural but includes four hamlets – East Durham, Oak Hill, Durham village and Cornwallville.

Throughout the 1800s the town's primary economic activity was farming. Then during the 1900s the focus slowly shifted to tourism. About 40% of Durham's residences are now second homes.

Durham's population is getting older. The Town's median age increased from 35 to 47 between 1980 and 2010; the percentage of the population that is aged 65 or more is steadily increasing; the percentage that is aged under 18 is steadily decreasing; and the percentage that is aged between 25 and 34 decreased by half over the past twenty years or so.

Arising from input from the community and from extensive discussion within the Comprehensive Plan Committee, this Plan contains seven main recommendations, each of which contains a number of sub-recommendations. An abbreviated version of the recommendations is as follows:

- *Recommendation 1:* The Town Board should aim to achieve full implementation of some of the recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan within two years of the Plan's being approved, with as many as possible of the remaining recommendations being fully implemented by two years after that. The Town Board should establish an unpaid *Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee*, which in turn should divide its membership into work teams that will focus on specific recommendations and that will, as necessary, recruit volunteers to assist them. Grants should be sought to help finance implementation of some of the recommendations.
- *Recommendation 2:* The Town Board should find new ways for residents to be informed of community developments. These should include significantly enhancing the town's website, publishing a town newsletter, publishing an annual report, and holding an annual town meeting to present the annual report and receive feedback from residents.
- *Recommendation 3:* The Town Board should request the Implementation Committee to organize and encourage a range of community activities. These activities should include providing community meetings, classes and sporting activities; encouraging a local resort to permit Durham residents to use its swimming pool; encouraging the provision of

trails in Durham that can be used for hiking, biking, etc.; organizing a farmers' market; and more.

- *Recommendation 4:* The Town Board should work with local business leaders and organizations for the development of a critical mass of retail, restaurant and other businesses within Durham. In particular, it should encourage the provision of a commercial urgent care facility and/or of a doctor's office within Durham.
- *Recommendation 5:* The Town Board should work actively to persuade existing or new entities to provide cell phone service and affordable and reliable broadband service that can be accessed by every residence and business within Durham.
- *Recommendation 6:* The Town Board should encourage better property maintenance and work to enhance the beauty of Durham's streets and buildings. In particular, it should strengthen and more effectively and evenly enforce local laws regarding unregistered vehicles and derelict properties.
- *Recommendation 7:* The Town Board should encourage the development of a unified approach to historic preservation.

Section B: Introduction

(a) The role of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan

This 2020 Comprehensive Plan replaces the plan adopted in 2008. It examines three questions:

1. What are Durham’s current characteristics?
2. How do Durham’s residents want things to change?
3. What can Durham and its residents do to reach that desired future?

The role of this Comprehensive Plan is to assist the Durham Town Board over the coming decade or so as it makes decisions and develops and implements policies and legislation. The Plan does not control the Town Board; the Board can choose not to adopt the Plan; and if it does adopt it, it can still choose not to follow all of the recommendations.

The Plan is called ‘comprehensive’ because it doesn’t just explore what the Town Board can do; it explores what contributions can also be made to the Plan’s objectives by government agencies, businesses, organizations, and the full range of Durham’s residents.

If a Comprehensive Plan is to be meaningful, it must be drawn up by a committee representing the community. And that committee must go to considerable lengths to ensure that the Plan represents the views not just of the committee members, but also of broad sectors of the Durham community. The Committee has attempted to meet those objectives.

If this Comprehensive Plan is adopted by the Durham Town Board: (a) any future land use regulations introduced by the Town Board must be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan; (b) any future capital projects for Durham by other governmental agencies must take the Plan into consideration; and (c) various forms of funding assistance for Durham are more likely than they would be if there were no Comprehensive Plan.

(b) The people who developed the Plan

This document was researched and written during most of 2018 and 2019 by the Durham Comprehensive Plan Committee. The following people served on the Committee during some or all of its work:

Ray Armstrong	Nick Nahas * †	Joe Sniado †
Joan Breslin * †	Joanne Rascoe	Linda Sutton *
Chuck Brooks †	Bernard Rivers	

* *Town Board member*

† *Served at one point as Chair or Co-Chair of the Committee*

People who served on the Town Board during some or all of the Committee’s work were:

Joan Breslin	Scott Hulbert	Nick Nahas
Jerry Cunningham	Shawn Marriott (Supervisor)	Linda Sutton
George Deckers		

Nan Stolzenburg of Community Planning & Environmental Associates served as a consultant to the Committee for early parts of the project.

Financial support for the Committee's work was received from the Hudson River Valley Greenway Grant Program, the Town of Durham, the Durham NY Chamber of Commerce and the Oak Hill Preservation Association. Committee members received no financial compensation for their work.

(c) How the Durham community provided input

Durham's Comprehensive Plan Committee cast its net wide in asking members of the community what they like about the town and its available services, what they don't like, and what they would like to see changed.

The occasions and means through which these opinions were expressed were:

1. A public meeting on October 3, 2018 to which all residents were invited.
2. A meeting on the same date to which all town board members and all town employees were invited.
3. A set of focus group meetings on January 26, 2019 to which all residents were invited in order to discuss (a) business, tourism and agriculture; (b) community character and services; (c) senior citizens; (d) youth and young adults; and (e) part-time and new full-time residents. These topics were chosen based on what had been learned at the meetings held on October 3, 2018. The topics were discussed in turn, with one hour devoted to each discussion.
4. An online survey during May 2019, to which 246 residents responded.

The opinions expressed by residents in the above meetings and survey are captured in Appendix 2 and summarized in Section D, below.

(d) The structure of this Plan

The main bodies of data drawn upon for this Plan are contained in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Appendix 1 is summarized in Section C ("Overview of Durham"), and Appendix 2 is summarized in Section D ("Community Views").

The Committee drew upon Section C ("Overview of Durham") and Section D ("Community Views") in drawing up Section E ("Vision and Goals").

Finally, based on Section E ("Vision and Goals"), and after extensive discussion, the Committee came up with its Recommendations, captured in Section F.

(e) Why this Plan is relatively concise

The Committee has seen comprehensive plans for some other towns that are 300 pages long, and has seen Recommendations sections in those plans that are 50 pages long. Very few people are likely to read all the way through such plans. Comprehensive plans also often contain many recommendations that are vague both as to what actually should be done and as to who should do it. This Committee has tried to avoid those problems.

Section C: Overview of Durham

As spelled out in Appendix 1, Durham is a town of remarkable scenic beauty in Greene County, New York. Its 49 square miles descend gently from the northern edge of the Catskills. Durham has about 2,700 residents and 1,800 housing units. The town is largely rural but it includes four hamlets – East Durham, Oak Hill, Durham village and Cornwallville.

The first permanent settlement was in 1784. Many of the Town's current homes were built before the Civil War. In 1875 there were over 300 farms in Durham, mostly dairy farms. However, the last 40 years have seen a significant decline in the number of active farms.

As a result of Durham's scenic beauty, tourism has long been the town's primary economic activity. In addition, about 40% of Durham's residences are now second homes.

Crime levels in Durham are dramatically lower than in the state as a whole.

Durham's population of 2,700 people is getting older. The Town's median age increased from 35 to 47 between 1980 and 2010, and the percentage of the population that is aged 65 or more increased from 16% to 20% between 1990 and 2010. Meanwhile, the percentage of the Town that is aged under 18 declined from 29% to 20% between 1980 and 2010, and the percentage that is aged between 25 and 34 declined from 14% to 7% between 1990 and 2010.

Between 2013 and 2018, the graduation rate at Cairo-Durham High School increased from 75% to 89%; during this time, the State-wide graduation rate improved modestly, but not nearly as much.

The students at the Cairo-Durham High School have in recent years performed slightly better in standardized tests than have those in New York State as a whole; but that is not the case with the students at the Cairo-Durham Middle and Elementary Schools.

The Cairo-Durham school district has one teacher for every 11 students; New York State as a whole has one for every 14. The annual expenditure per non-Special-Ed student in the Cairo-Durham school system is about \$11,700; the figure for New York State as a whole is 8% higher. Between 2001 and 2017 the total expenditure by the school district on all non-Special-Ed students increased by 16% (after adjusting for inflation) even though, during this time, the number of students benefitting from this expenditure decreased by 31%.

In Greene County as a whole, the unemployment rate has largely tracked national and state levels. Median household income in Durham is modestly lower than at the state level.

Durham has no planning board; the town board serves this function. It has no zoning board because it has no zoning ordinances. Of the thirteen other towns in Greene County, twelve have planning boards and nine have zoning boards.

Property taxes in Durham (including town, county and school taxes, but excluding fire protection and street lighting) total about \$35 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Other Greene County towns range from \$16 (Windham) to \$63 (Catskill Village).

(For further details, see Appendix 1.)

Section D: Community Views

As explained in Section B above, members of the Durham community were invited to express opinions on their likes, dislikes and ideas regarding Durham and its available services. They did so through some public meetings and an online survey.

Of the 246 people who responded to the survey:

- 69% were full-time residents of Durham and 31% were seasonal or weekend residents.
- 7% were under 40 years old, 60% were 40 to 64 years old, and 33% were 65 years old or more.
- 38% live in or near East Durham, 26% live in or near Cornwallville, 16% live in or near Durham hamlet, and 13% live in or near Oak Hill.

A report on the opinions expressed at the meetings and in the survey is provided in Appendix 2. The highlights are as follows:

Topic 1: Community character:

- Most residents strongly appreciate Durham's rural character and its peace and quiet.
- Residents tend to identify more with their hamlet than with Durham as a whole, creating a limited sense of Durham-wide togetherness.
- There are only limited community links between long-term residents, new full-time residents, and part-time residents. For some, this is a problem; for others it is not.
- A fair number of residents, both full-time and part-time, would like to see the community strengthened through more community events.

Topic 2: Economic vitality:

- For some businesses, Durham benefits from being within reach of Albany and New York City. But for other businesses, Durham is too far from large urban areas to tempt many businesses or employees to be based here.
- Durham used to be a vibrant farming community; but now it's difficult for local farmers to compete profitably with large farms elsewhere.
- Many residents would like to see more economic development in Durham.
- If broadband internet services were available and affordable throughout Durham, that would attract more small businesses and telecommuters; it would also significantly benefit students.

Topic 3: Rural beauty and local environment:

- Almost without exception, residents enormously appreciate Durham's rural beauty and the possibilities that Durham and nearby towns offer for outdoor recreational activities.
- However, blight of properties is a problem that concerns many residents. Some houses are abandoned or inadequately maintained; others have several abandoned cars on the property.
- Some residents would like to see less public assisted housing ("Section 8") in East Durham; others are not concerned about this.

Topic 4: Historic integrity:

- Some residents feel that more could be done to protect and enhance Durham's historic hamlets, buildings, stone bridges, etc.

Topic 5: Infrastructure:

- The core infrastructure services paid for by the town are police, ambulance and road maintenance. The two fire departments are staffed by volunteers, but the town helps cover equipment costs. Some residents would like the town to provide additional services such as piped water and sewer systems within areas of higher-density housing, partly in order to attract new businesses.
- A significant number of residents feel that it's very important for high speed Internet (i.e. broadband) and cell phone service to be accessible at every residence and business at a reasonable cost.

Topic 6: Community services:

- The Durham Elementary School was closed in 2013 because its enrollment had fallen by 33% since 2001. The school provided events that made it the center of community life. The closing of the school makes it harder to attract people to live here.
- The former elementary school building is used for occasional community center meetings. Many residents would like this program to be increased, and for the building also to be used for volunteer-based and sporting activities.
- Durham has no doctor's office and no urgent-care facility.
- There are very limited services and housing for seniors.
- Many residents would like safe and legal access to Catskill Creek swimming holes and/or a public pool.

Topic 7: Communications and coordination:

- Many residents find it difficult to know what is going on in Durham, and would like communications to be improved through an updated town website, a regular emailed town newsletter and an occasional print town newsletter.

Topic 8: Local government:

- No strong opinions were expressed.

(For further details, see Appendix 2.)

Section E: Vision and Goals

The following Vision and Goals are derived from the findings in Section D (Community Views).

Durham's renowned scenic beauty is the result of its combination of mountains, valleys, forests, meadows and creeks. Durham's four hamlets (Durham, East Durham, Oak Hill and Cornwallville) are close enough to major cities to be convenient to both residents and visitors, yet far enough from them to ensure that the hamlets retain their unspoiled and historic charm.

Building on these strengths, it is Durham's vision that within a few years it will be possible to say the following:

“Durham offers the very best in small-town living, with remarkable scenic beauty, a high quality of life for its residents, and a delightful experience for its visitors. Durham provides a healthy economy, quality public services, safe roadways and walkways, and well-maintained properties and structures. Durham is known for its farming heritage, its friendly neighbors, its strong sense of community, its excellent civic participation, its effective and participatory government, its welcoming environment for part-time residents and visitors, and its commitment to personal freedoms. As a result, Durham is a place where people want to live, work and visit.”

Durham seeks to achieve the above vision by meeting the following goals:

Topic 1: Community character: Reinforce the existing strong sense of community by finding new ways for all residents – both full-time and part-time – to meet and cooperate.

Topic 2: Economy vitality:

- (a) Ensure that Durham provides increased business and employment opportunities.
- (b) Encourage the development of a critical mass of retail, restaurant and health facilities.

Topic 3: Rural beauty and the local environment: Protect and enhance the scenic beauty and the environmental integrity of Durham's mountains, valleys, forests, meadows and creeks. And work collectively to support the removal of abandoned cars, the fixing of derelict properties, etc.

Topic 4: Historic integrity: Protect and enhance Durham's historic hamlets, buildings, stone bridges, etc.

Topic 5: Infrastructure: Provide adequate and cost effective police, fire, ambulance and road maintenance services. And find ways for affordable broadband and cell phone service to be available throughout the town.

Topic 6: Community services:

- (a) Make use of existing locations for a much broader range of community meetings, classes and sporting activities.

- (b) Encourage the provision of increased opportunities for swimming, fishing, hiking, hunting and other outdoor activities.*
- (c) Encourage volunteerism.*

Topic 7: Communications and coordination:

- (a) Provide an improved town website, a regular emailed town newsletter, and an occasional print town newsletter, such that Durham's town board, businesses and community groups can more effectively inform all residents of their services and planned activities.*
- (b) Encourage local businesses to develop a unified marketing plan.*
- (c) Participate in regional tourism and business organizations.*

Topic 8: Local government: *Maintain an effective and participatory local government that works ceaselessly to support the above goals.*

Section F: Recommendations

In this section, concrete recommendations are provided for actions by the Town Board that, over the next few years, will help move the town towards achievement of the Vision and Goals.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee sought to produce recommendations that are clearly defined in terms of who needs to do what; that are unlikely to trigger widespread opposition; and that should not have a significant impact on the Town's budget except in cases where external grants can be raised to cover that impact.

As previously mentioned, this Plan does not control the Town Board. The Board can choose not to adopt the Plan, and it can choose to adopt some but not all of the recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Work for speedy implementation of this Plan

The Town Board should aim to achieve full implementation of some of the recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan within two years of the Plan's being approved, with as many as possible of the remaining recommendations being fully implemented by two years after that. To enhance the chances that these goals will be met, the Town Board should establish a *Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee*.

Duties that the Town Board should assign to the Implementation Committee include the following:

- (a) Constantly monitor progress in the implementation of the recommendations in this Plan, and support this with coordination, encouragement and assistance as needed.
- (b) Provide a written and verbal report to a Town Board meeting each month. This report should summarize what progress was made in the past month in the implementation of each recommendation in this Plan.
- (c) Seek grants that will help finance implementation of the recommendations in this Plan. (Possible sources of funding include state and federal agencies, private and community foundations, and Durham residents. If the grants have to be made to a nonprofit organization rather than to the town, and if an appropriate nonprofit organization does not already exist, establish and operate a nonprofit organization to request and administer these grants.)

The Implementation Committee should function as follows:

- i. The Implementation Committee should have at least eight members, all unpaid. The Town Supervisor should propose who should serve as Chair and Deputy Chair, and those two people should then propose the remaining members. The Town Board should then approve the entire membership and should provide them with clear terms of reference. The Committee membership should include at least one but no more than two members of the Town Board.
- ii. For each recommendation, the Implementation Committee should set up a work team consisting of a lead person (from the Committee) plus one or more other people (from the Committee or from the community).

- iii. The Implementation Committee should determine priorities and establish desired timelines for implementation of the different recommendations.

Recommendation 2: Improve communications

The Town Board should find new ways for residents to be informed of community developments.

Specifically, the Town Board should:

- (a) Significantly enhance the Durham website so it can serve as the central resource for information-sharing within Durham. (The town has already started on making some improvements to the website. But some of the recommendations here would require more substantial improvements, which might require external funding.)
- (b) Provide at the Durham website, and in downloadable form, information about the town's features and resources. The information provided should be similar in scope to that which is provided in Appendix 1 to this Plan.
- (c) Add to the Durham website an opportunity for residents to live-stream town board meetings.
- (d) Provide further features at the website as discussed in other recommendations below.
- (e) Expand and make effective use of the Town's list of email addresses of residents.
- (f) Provide a regular emailed town newsletter and an occasional print town newsletter.
- (g) Early each year, publish and circulate an Annual Report describing what the Town Board, the Implementation Committee, and others have achieved during the previous calendar year, and what their plans are for the coming year.
- (h) Hold a Special Town Meeting on a weekend day in the spring of each year to present the above Annual Report and to receive feedback from residents. (This meeting should be organized by the Town Board or the Implementation Committee; but it should not be a decision-making meeting OF the Town Board.)

Recommendation 3: Increase community activities

The Town Board should request the Implementation Committee to organize and encourage a range of community activities.

Specifically, the Town Board should ask the Implementation Committee to do as follows:

- (b) In cooperation as necessary with the Durham Community Center Planning Committee, arrange for the provision at the former Durham Elementary School and other Durham locations of a broad range of community meetings, classes and sporting activities.
- (c) Arrange, in particular, for the provision of activities for senior citizens and young people. And seek ways for seniors and young people to provide mentoring and other services to each other.

- (d) Find volunteers, or hire a part-time person, to help manage the activities taking place at the former Durham Elementary School, and to ensure that the building is used in a responsible manner.
- (e) Negotiate with one or more resorts for them to permit Durham residents to use their swimming pool during non-peak hours in exchange for a small seasonal fee.
- (f) Arrange, in cooperation with the Brandow Park Committee, for expanded facilities and services to be provided at Brandow Park.
- (g) Develop options for the provision of trails in Durham that residents and visitors can use for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, ATVing, access to Catskill Creek swimming holes, and access to historic locations. Where such trails would involve crossing private land, conduct negotiations with the relevant landowners, with the Durham Valley Land Trust, with county and state agencies, and with interested funding sources regarding the possible acquisition of the necessary easements.
- (h) Provide ways at the Durham website for residents to post invitations for others to join them for hiking and other recreational activities (including at Ski Windham, where there are significant discounts on season tickets for local students).
- (i) Organize community-strengthening events and activities. These could include:
 - i. A farmers' market.
 - ii. A "Durham Day," where residents can do a driving tour with stops at various town locations of interest (sometimes with a volunteer available there to provide explanations), ending up at a setting where local organizations have booths to promote their activities, where one or two talks are provided, and where residents can meet each other over food such as hotdogs and ice cream provided by volunteers or vendors.
 - iii. Community pot-luck dinners.
 - iv. Volunteer-based roadside cleanup days.
 - v. "Welcome wagon" visits to the homes of new residents to greet them and to inform them about community activities.

Recommendation 4: Enhance economic development

The Town Board should work with local business leaders and organizations for the development of a critical mass of retail, restaurant and other businesses within Durham.

Specifically, the Town Board should:

- (a) Encourage the provision of a commercial urgent care facility and/or of a doctor's office within Durham.
- (b) Encourage the Durham NY Chamber of Commerce and the Greene County Chamber of Commerce to develop a unified marketing plan for Durham's businesses.
- (c) Evaluate whether to encourage small businesses by offering tax incentives.
- (d) Find ways to capitalize on the increasing popularity of Windham and Hudson by promoting Durham as a side-destination for tourists to those towns.

- (e) Develop pages at the Durham website (and sometimes develop related downloadable materials) that provide:
 - i. all the information that an individual might need when deciding whether to start a small business in Durham;
 - ii. a complete and accessible list of all town laws and regulations;
 - iii. a description of forms of artisanal and homestead farming that could be viable in Durham.
- (f) In conjunction with interested Oak Hill residents, evaluate the costs, possible sources of funding, and benefits of providing more sidewalks, street lights and parking in Oak Hill, primarily in order to encourage more visitors to the hamlet's commercial facilities.

Recommendation 5: Advocate for improved broadband and cell phone coverage

The Town Board should work actively to persuade existing or new entities to provide cell-phone service and affordable and reliable broadband service that can be accessed by every residence and business within Durham.

Specifically, the Town Board should request the Implementation Committee to do the following:

- (a) Research and submit to the Town Board a report and accompanying map showing which specific residential and business properties within Durham are currently able to access which forms of cell-phone and broadband service.
- (b) Research ways in which some rural towns within the United States have succeeded in creating new entities, or persuading existing entities, to provide broadband that can be accessed by all. Research also whether some other Greene County towns might be interested in collaborating on such a venture.
- (c) Then submit to the Town Board a second report proposing what actions should be taken, and by whom, to provide access to cell-phone service and to affordable and reliable broadband service for those Durham residents who don't currently have such access.

Recommendation 6: Encourage better property maintenance

The Town Board should work to enhance the beauty of Durham's streets and buildings to benefit local residents and to encourage tourism and new residents.

Specifically, the Town Board should:

- (a) Strengthen and more effectively and evenly enforce local laws regarding unregistered vehicles and derelict properties.
- (b) Arrange for the Town to accept or collect unwanted vehicles and other large items once or twice a year at no charge.

- (c) Develop a page at the Durham website describing building and code enforcement requirements.

Recommendation 7: Improve historic preservation

The Town Board should encourage the development of a unified approach to historic preservation.

Specifically, the Town Board should:

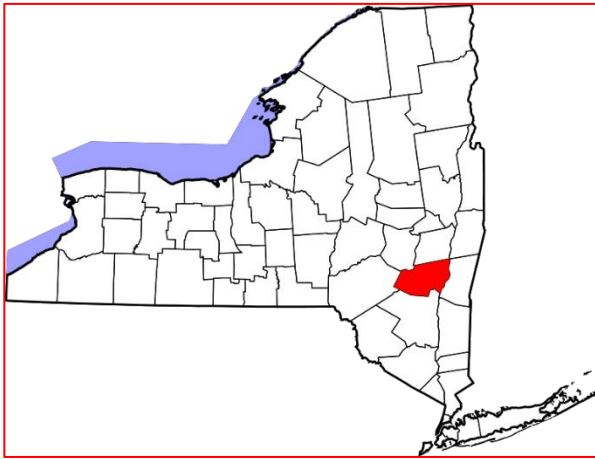
- (a) Evaluate a possible integrated strategy for the work of some or all of the following: the Durham Historic Preservation Commission, the Town Historian, the Oak Hill Preservation Association and the Durham Center Museum.
- (b) In association with the above organizations, develop a page at the Durham website containing an accurate and current map showing historic places in the Town.
- (c) In association with the above organizations, seek sources of funding that will help property owners renovate historic structures.

Appendix 1: A Description of the Town of Durham

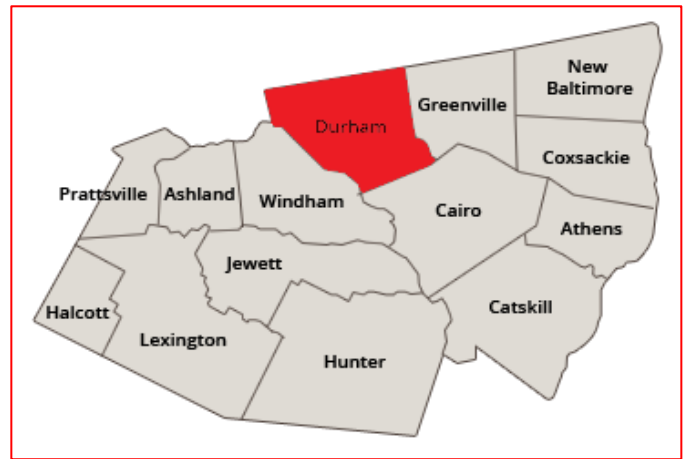
Location ¹

The Town of Durham is located in the northwest corner of Greene County, New York, about thirty miles southwest of Albany, the state capital. Durham is bordered by the town of Greenville to the east, the town of Cairo to the southeast (with which it shares the Cairo-Durham School District), the town of Windham to the southwest, the Schoharie County town of Conesville to the west, and the Albany County towns of Rensselaerville and Westerlo to the north. Durham's 49 square miles slope from the northernmost escarpment of the Catskill Mountains to a plain that gently rolls north to Albany and east to the Hudson River Valley. Durham is largely rural but includes four hamlets (East Durham, Oak Hill, Durham village and Cornwallville) and three smaller population groupings (West Durham, South Durham, and Hervey Street).

Map 1: Greene County in the context of NY State



Map 2: Durham in the context of Greene County



Durham's highest elevation is found near its northwest corner, where Mt. Pisgah is at 2,912 feet. From there, a chain of peaks and notches extends southeast – Mt. Nebo, Mt. Hayden, Barlow Notch, Ginseng, Jennie Notch, Mt. Zoar and Kate Hill. The hamlets are between 500 feet and 1,000 feet above sea level. Durham's lowest elevation is 380 feet, just south of East Durham.

The Town of Durham is part of the geographic area loosely defined as the Mid-Hudson Valley, and is located entirely within the Hudson River watershed.

History

After thousands of years during which Native Americans passed through the area, newcomers Lucas DeWitt, John Plank, and Hendrick Plank established a settlement in 1784 in the location now known as Oak Hill.

Durham was originally known informally as "New Durham," because of the many settlers from Durham, Connecticut. The name was changed to "Durham" in 1805. The borders of Durham were finalized in 1836.

Map 3: Durham²



The principal attraction of Durham to its early settlers was the water power available from the streams running down from the Catskills. Mills for working wood, grain and iron were located along the stream banks, particularly in Oak Hill.

It was not long, however, before farming became the dominant activity. The rocky but reasonably fertile land was heavily farmed in the nineteenth century; in 1875, Durham had 304 farms, occupied by about sixty percent of Durham's families.³ However, there have been far fewer active farms in recent decades.

Tourism, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, provided a fresh economic stimulus to the community. Tourists, particularly those of Irish descent, wanted to visit the countryside and escape from the city environment. Over the past fifty years, this same spirit has also led to the discovery of Durham by part-time residents who work elsewhere.

Land

Any new visitor to Durham will see a rural and pastoral community, even though farming is now responsible for only a small percentage of the town's income. In the upper elevations, second-growth forest has reclaimed the once-cleared land where agriculture has long been impractical. Lower down, open meadows alternate with hay, occasional plantings of corn and other crops, second growth forests, and thick brush.

As of March 2019, the breakdown of Durham land use was as shown in the following table.⁴ Only 10.8% of the land was classified as Agricultural, down from 15.6% in 2006. However, some of the 32.8% of the land that is classified as "vacant" is also used for farming.

Table 1: Land use in Durham in 2019

Property Class	Number of Parcels	Acres	Percent of Town Area
Residential	1,507	14,682	48.2%
Vacant Land	713	9,987	32.8%
Agricultural	42	3,286	10.8%
Forests, Conservation Lands and Parks	20	1,118	3.7%
Commercial (primarily lodging), Industrial	99	849	2.8%
Community Services, Recreation and Entertainment, Public Services	39	565	1.8%
Total	2,420	30,487	100.0%

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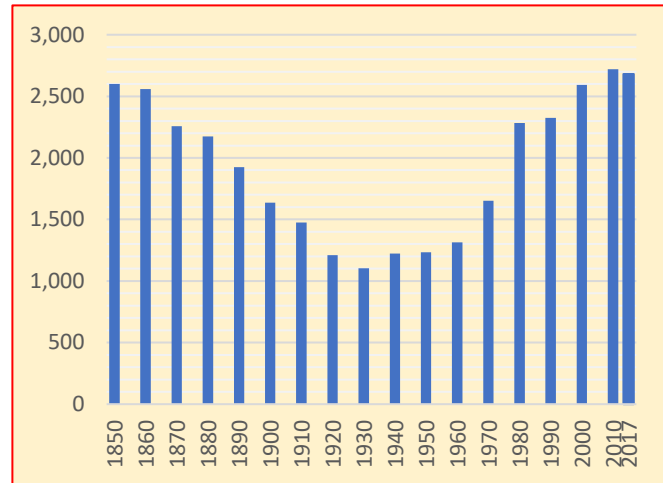
People

(a) Population

Durham’s population declined from about 2,600 in 1850 to 1,100 in 1930 (see Chart 1). But from then it climbed steadily, reaching a new peak of 2,700 in 2010.

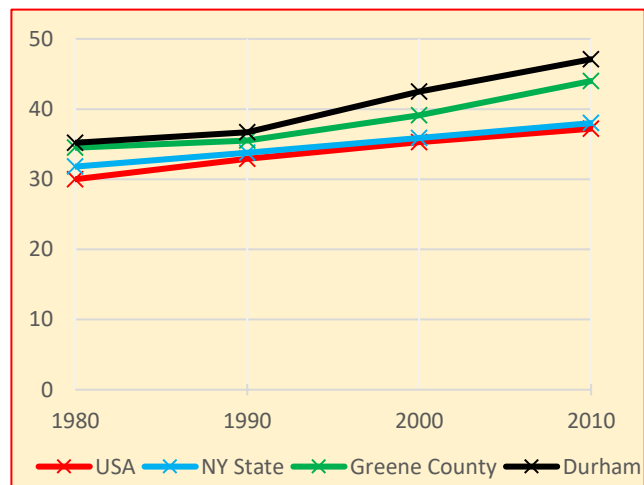
Durham’s population is 98% white. The USA as a whole is 72% white.⁶

Chart 1: Population of Durham⁵



Durham’s median age increased from 35 to 47 between 1980 and 2010 (see Chart 2). There was also an increase in median age for the USA as a whole, but that increase was less marked than in Durham.⁷

Chart 2: Median age of population



The percentage of Durham’s population that is aged 65 or more increased from 16% to 20% between 1990 and 2010 (see Chart 3). The percentages for New York State and the USA as a whole remained essentially flat at 13%. Projections by Cornell University for Greene County as a whole suggest that this aging of the population will continue in 2020 and 2030.

Chart 3: Percent of population aged 65 or more

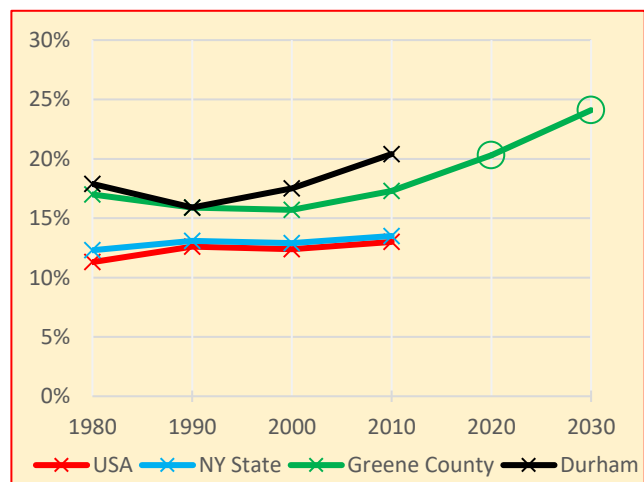
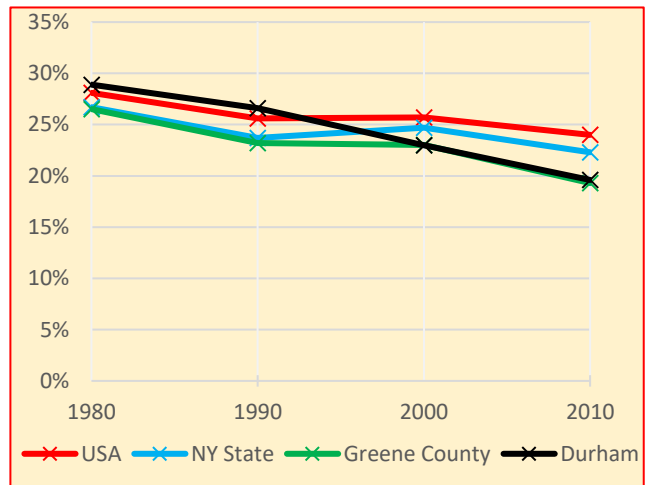


Chart 4: Percent of population aged under 18

At the same time, the number of children and young adults is dropping significantly. As shown in Chart 4, the percentage of the population that is aged under 18 declined from 29% to 20% between 1980 and 2010.

Between 1990 and 2010, the number of people in Durham between the ages of 25 and 34 declined from 323 (14% of the population) to 203 (7% of the population).⁸



(b) Households

As of 2010, Durham had 1,807 housing units, of which 64% were “occupied” (sometimes on a second-home basis), 25% were “for seasonal, recreational or occasional use”, and 11% were currently vacant. Of those that were “occupied”, 43% were owner-occupied with a mortgage or loan, 38% were owner-occupied with no mortgage, and 19% were occupied by renters. The median value of the owned housing units in 2017 was about \$180,000. The median rental paid for rented housing units in 2017 was \$790 per month.⁹

The houses that are occupied on a part-time basis tend to be spread throughout the town, rather than being in “enclaves” as is the case with some other scenic towns. These houses sometimes become occupied on a full-time basis once their owners retire.

Just over three-quarters of the housing units in Durham (78%) are single-unit detached homes, mostly laid out on rural lots, and many built before the Civil War. Half of the remaining units (11%) are mobile homes, with the remaining 11% being in multi-family properties. Durham has one long-established mobile home park on Route 81 near Oak Hill; most of the remaining mobile homes are in small subdivisions and scattered sites.¹⁰

Thirty-two percent of Durham’s housing units were built prior to 1940; 47% were built between 1940 and 1989, and the remaining 21% were built in 1990 and later.¹¹

(c) Health

The annual number of deaths per 100,000 people on an age-adjusted basis over the years 2014-2016 was 734 in Greene County (details not available for Durham), 638 in the state as a whole, and 584 in New York City.¹²

During the year from mid-2017 through mid-2018, Greene County had 14 deaths from overdoses of opioids (primarily pain-relievers, but also heroin). This came to 29.4 deaths per 100,000 people, which was the second highest rate among all 62 counties in the state.¹³

(d) Education

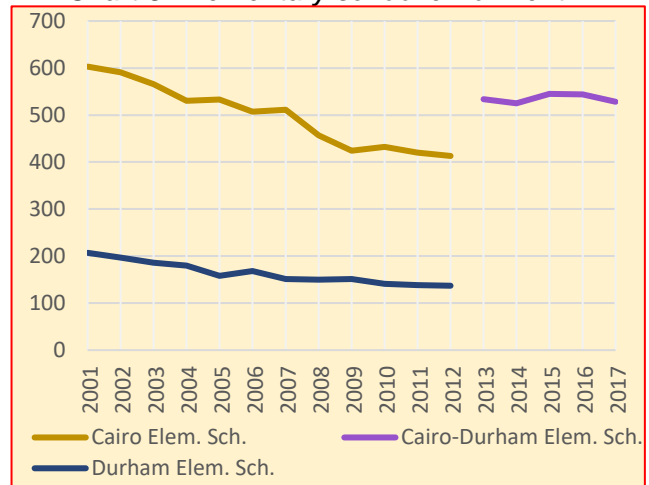
The [Cairo-Durham School District](#) has one high school, one middle school and one elementary school; these serve Cairo and the great majority of Durham. (5% of Durham is served by the Greenville School District and under 1% is served by the Windham School District.¹⁴)

In 2017-18, Cairo-Durham High School had 383 students (down by 19% over the previous five years)¹⁵ and 55 teachers and teaching assistants.¹⁶ There is one teacher for every 10 students, as compared with the New York State average of one teacher for every 14 students.¹⁷

In the same year, Cairo-Durham Middle School had 270 students (down by 12% over the previous five years)¹⁸, 41 teachers and teaching assistants¹⁹, and one teacher for every 12 students.²⁰

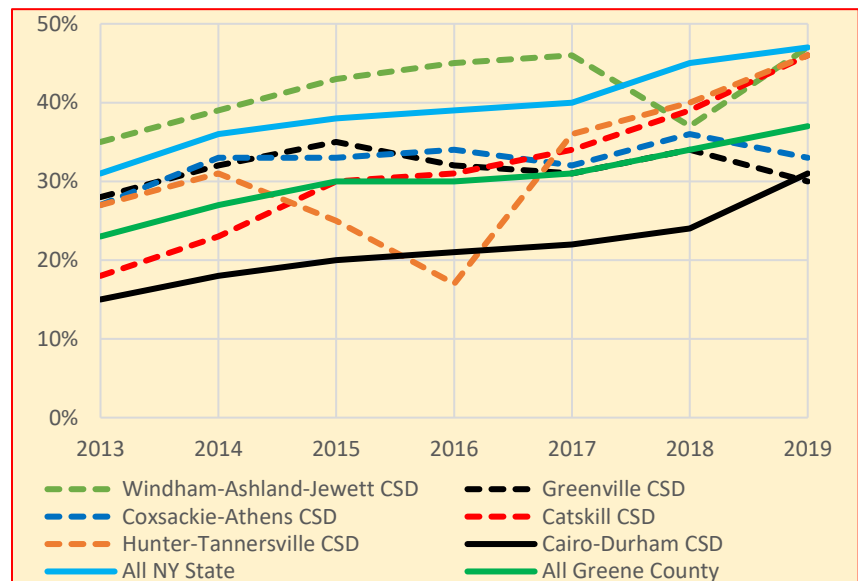
Prior to 2013, the school district had one elementary school in Durham and one in Cairo. But in 2013 Durham Elementary School was closed, partly because its enrollment had declined by 34% (i.e. from 207 to 137) since 2001. (See Chart 5.) The enrollment at the larger Cairo Elementary School had declined at an even greater rate during that period. The Durham children were transferred to the Cairo school, which was renamed Cairo-Durham Elementary. The combined school now has 531 students – fewer than the pre-combination Cairo school alone had prior to 2004 – together with 57 teachers and teaching assistants, with one teacher for every 12 students.²¹

*Chart 5: Elementary school enrollment*²²



Cairo-Durham High School’s graduation rate steadily improved from 75% to 89% between 2013 and 2018, during which time the State average improved somewhat less, from 75% to 80%.²³ The High School students perform well in standardized tests, with 86% being rated as proficient in Math and English Language Arts on average over the years 2013-2018, compared with a state average of 84%.

*Chart 6: Percent of students in Grades 3-8 rated proficient in Math tests in all Greene County school districts and New York State*²⁵



But as shown in Charts 6 and 7, the results for the Elementary and Middle School students (i.e. Grades 3-8) are poor. In 2019, only 31% of the Cairo-Durham Grade 3-8

students were rated as proficient in Math and 30% in English Language Arts, as compared with 47% and 45% respectively in New York State as a whole. Furthermore, in 2017 and 2018 Cairo-Durham Grade 3-8 students performed less well on both tests than did the students in each of Greene County's other five school districts, though in 2019 Cairo-Durham caught up somewhat. In January 2019 New York State designated the Elementary school as being in need of "Comprehensive Support and Improvement" because of its low academic performance.²⁴

Chart 7: Percent of students in Grades 3-8 rated proficient in English Language Arts tests in all Greene County school districts and NY state ²⁶

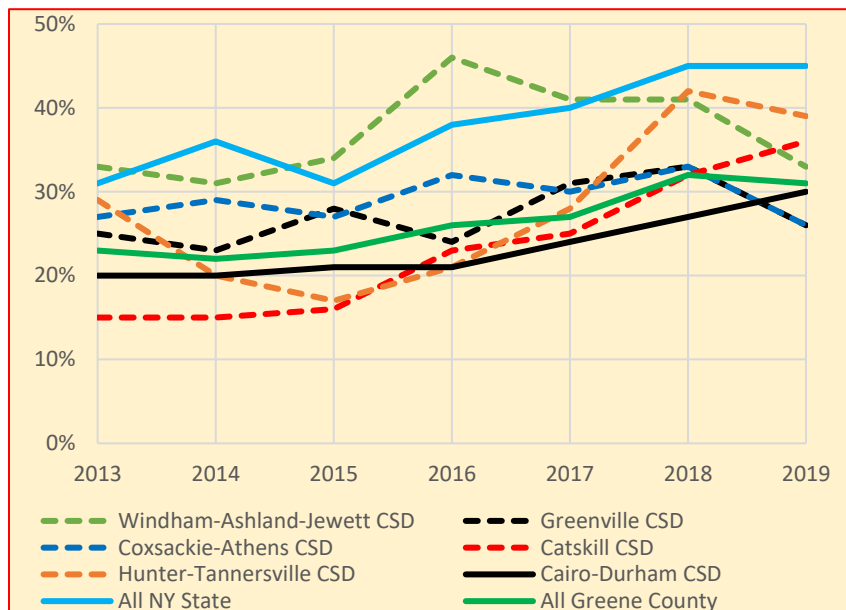


Table 2: Expenditure per student in 2017 in all Greene County school districts and New York State ²⁷

The 2017 expenditure per General Education (i.e. non-Special-Ed) student in the Cairo-Durham school district was \$11,709 – see Table 2. The figures for New York State and for Catskill, Cossackie-Athens and Greenville were between 7% and 10% higher. The figure for Hunter-Tannersville was 48% higher and for Windham-Ashland-Jewett was 81% higher.

	2017 Expenditure per Student	
	General education	Special education
Cairo-Durham CSD	\$11,709	\$22,500
Catskill CSD	\$12,896	\$32,493
Cossackie-Athens CSD	\$12,567	\$25,190
Greenville CSD	\$12,723	\$29,777
Hunter-Tannersville CSD	\$17,375	\$34,396
Windham-Ashland-Jewett CSD	\$21,170	\$29,968
All New York State	\$12,692	\$32,794

Between 2001 and 2017 the total expenditure by the Cairo-Durham school district on non-Special-Ed students increased by 16%, after adjusting for inflation – yet during this time, the number of students benefitting from this expenditure decreased by 31%.²⁸

In Greene County as a whole in 2017, 27% of females aged 18 to 24 years were enrolled in college or graduate school; the percentage of males was much lower, at 13%.²⁹ (Data are not available for Durham.)

The former Durham Elementary School building (37,764 sq. feet on 30 acres³⁰) is now used in part for a Questar III BOCES (NY State Boards of Cooperative Educational Services) program providing Cairo-Durham High School students with training in operating and repairing bulldozers,

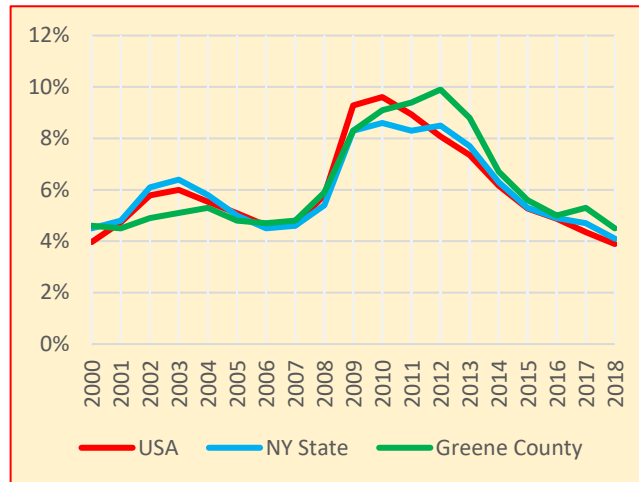
backhoes and other large construction-related diesel equipment. The school building is also used for occasional community center meetings.

(e) Employment

In the year 2000, Durham had a population that included 2,070 people aged 16 and over. Of these, 1,058 were employed, 132 were unemployed (for an unemployment rate of 11%), and 880 were not seeking work.³²

Employment data are not available for Durham for years since 2000. But as shown in Chart 8, the unemployment rate in Greene County as a whole has largely tracked national and state levels, which in 2018 were between 4 and 4.5%.

*Chart 8: Unemployment rate*³¹

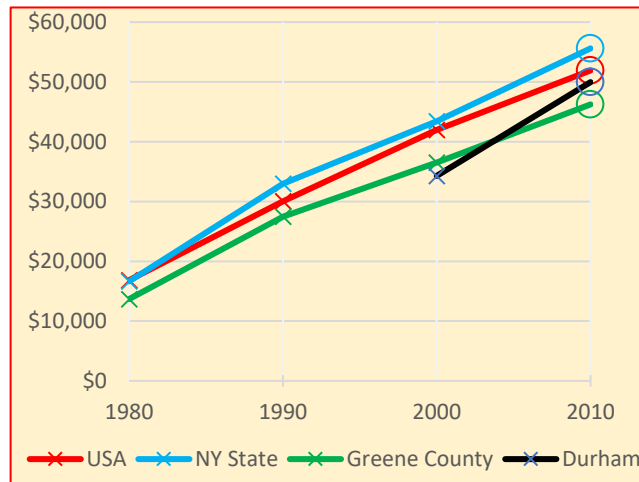


(f) Income

In 2000, median household income in Durham was about \$34,000, about 18% below the national level of \$42,000. (See Chart 9.) The US Census Bureau estimates that by 2010, the gap had reduced slightly.

In 2000, 11.5% of the Durham population was below the poverty line, broadly comparable with the national level.³⁴ Data are not available for later years.

*Chart 9: Median household income*³³



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(g) Crime

Between 2010 and 2017, Durham had only one violent crime (a case of aggravated assault in 2014), and an average of eight property crimes per year (see Chart 10). (Violent crime covers murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Property crime covers burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft. These numbers are based on reports by the Durham Police Department to the FBI.)

As shown in Charts 11 and 12, the Durham crime rate is dramatically lower than the crime rate at the state and national level.³⁵

Chart 10: Number of crimes in Durham

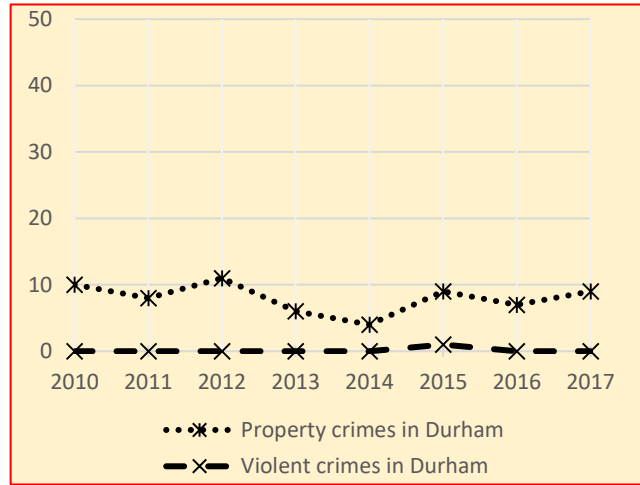


Chart 11: Number of property crimes per 100,000 residents

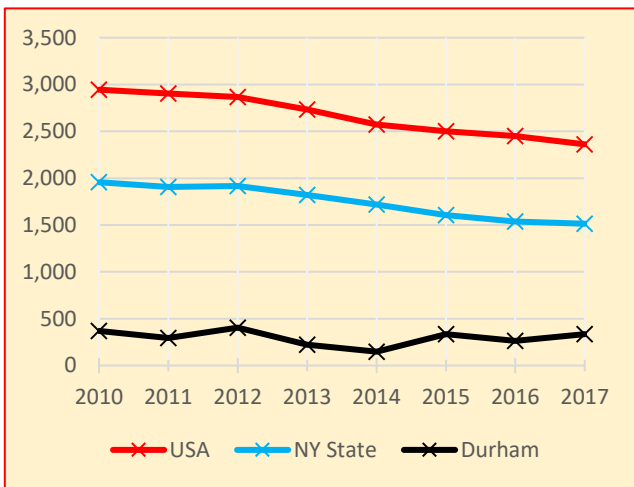
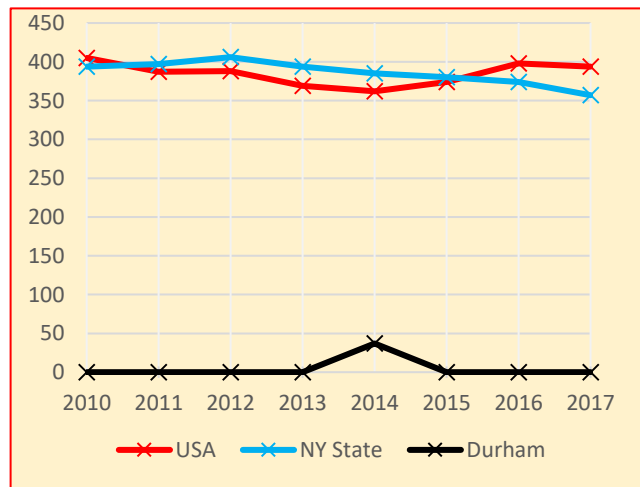


Chart 12: Number of violent crimes per 100,000 residents



Cultural and community resources

(a) The hamlets

There are four hamlets within the Town of Durham: East Durham, Oak Hill, Cornwallville and Durham village. The hamlets are fundamentally rural in nature and their qualities reflect that of the surrounding countryside.

East Durham is the traditional center of commerce and tourism. Oak Hill, designated as one of eleven “Historic Hamlets of New York,” is undergoing a certain amount of revitalization and has several storefront businesses primarily aimed at visitors. Cornwallville and Durham village, which have especially scenic views but no stores, have become a particular magnet for “weekenders” and summer residents. Cornwallville, Oak Hill and Durham village are remarkable in that they present virtually intact sets of 19th Century village architecture. Within central

Cornwallville, the fire house and post office are the only structures younger than 75 years old. The Methodist church from Cornwallville reflects 19th Century upstate architecture so accurately that it was chosen to be part of the Farmers' Museum in Cooperstown.³⁶

(b) Scenic Byway

In 1991, twenty-two miles of road in the Town of Durham were designated by the State as "New York State Scenic Roads." The community's application for this designation arose in the course of a successful local campaign to block a County attempt to site a landfill in the area. At the time of this designation, Durham represented the most mileage in a Town ever so designated. The scenic roads, now designated a New York State Scenic Byway, consist of parts of County Road 20, Stonebridge Road, Dugway Road, Susquehanna Turnpike, Mitchell Hollow Road, Cunningham Road, Sutton Road, Cornwallville Road, Cochrane Road and Prink Hill Lane.

The view from the Town's scenic roads extends east over the Hudson River Valley to Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, and New Hampshire and north to the Adirondacks. Looking southeast is a panoramic view of the Northern face of the Catskills. The then DEC Commissioner commented in his New York State scenic road designation letter on the "extraordinary scenic quality" of the roads.

Susquehanna Turnpike in Durham village is included in the National Register of Historic Places, and is believed to be one of the few turnpikes in the entire nation that is listed there.

(c) Environmental resources

The Town of Durham contributes over 30,000 acres of land and 100 miles of streams to the Hudson River watershed, thereby playing a critical role in maintaining the health and condition of the downstream Hudson River estuary.

Durham's year-round creeks include Catskill Creek, Thorp Creek, Cornwallville Creek, Fall Creek, Bowery Creek, Ten Mile (or Saybrook) Creek, Durham Creek and Squirmer Valley Creek. These creeks were an important stimulus to the Town's early settlement in the 18th Century. Numerous mills for working wood, grain and iron were located along the stream banks prior to the 20th century and were responsible for much of the Town's initial prosperity.

Approximately 1,160 acres of freshwater wetlands have been identified in the Town of Durham; the larger areas are regulated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The wetlands almost all lie along streams, making them important for flood control.

The Town encompasses important wildlife habitat including that of many hawks, deer, wild turkey, bear, bobcat, coyotes and other animals common to the Northern Catskills. In addition, 13 plant species, 7 butterfly species, and 14 species of fish, turtle salamanders, and birds have been assessed as regionally rare or of heritage designation.³⁷

(d) Historical resources

In 1989, the Town enacted Local Law No. 1 to "protect and enhance the landmarks and historic districts which represent distinctive elements of Durham's historic, architectural, and cultural heritage" and to "enhance Durham's attractiveness to visitors." Following the enactment of this local law and meeting the requirements of the National Historic

Preservation Act, New York State designated The Town of Durham as a *Certified Local Government*.

The [Durham Historic Preservation Commission](#) (DHPC) was established by the Durham Town Board in 1989 with a mandate to protect and enhance the town's historic landmarks and to foster civic pride in the accomplishments of the past. As one of its first acts the DHPC established the Cornwallville Historic District, encompassing the central area of village; the DHPC must give its approval for major changes to buildings within the District. In 1997 the commission developed a town-wide inventory of 767 historic properties. These ranged from dwellings, barns, churches and school buildings to cemeteries and ice houses. (The full listing can be found in the 1997 report.³⁸) The DHPC also maintains a list of properties that are shown on county, state and national historic registers. DHPC members are appointed by the town board. (Separately, the Oak Hill Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. It includes a number of buildings clustered in the center of the hamlet. It has no official connection with the DHPC.)

The [Canajoharie and Catskill Railroad](#) ran for 26 miles from Catskill to Potter Hollow through the Town of Durham. It never reached Canajoharie. The line's only locomotive began – and ended – operating in 1840. In May of that year a bridge over the Catskill Creek collapsed under the weight of the train, killing one person and injuring others. The line never functioned again.³⁹

(e) Museums and cultural resources

The [Durham Center Museum](#) is located on Route 145 two miles west of East Durham. It emphasizes local history and folk arts. The museum is partially housed in a one-room schoolhouse dating from 1837, and is filled with an array of artifacts, historical records and memorabilia; it also provides genealogical research facilities. It is open from 11 am to 3 pm on Saturdays from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

The [MJQ Irish Cultural and Sports Centre](#) is located on 120 acres of land in East Durham. It includes the Donegal Cottage, a reconstruction of a traditional Irish farm house.

The residents of Durham and visitors to East Durham have financed the building of [Our Lady of Knock Shrine](#). Many tourists visit it when they come to East Durham.

(f) Parks and public land

The Town owns and operates [Brandow Park](#) in Oak Hill. The park has a baseball field, play area, basketball court, tennis court, bathrooms and a sheltered picnic area; it is used by the Town of Durham Summer Recreation Program.

The Town of Durham and the Cairo-Durham School District share in the maintenance of the playing fields at [Kellegher Memorial Park](#) which is leased from the Irish Cultural Centre; the park has a baseball field and a soccer field.

The [Catskill Creek](#) runs wide and gentle through Durham, mostly shallow but with deep pools every now and then. For decades it was a popular setting for summer swimming and fishing, and it is stocked with trout annually by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. However, there are now no public access points to the creek for swimming, though access for fishing is still permitted.

The [Long Path](#), a 357-mile hiking trail from near New York City to near Albany, crosses Durham at the upper end of Sutton Road.

(g) Clubs, organizations, committees, activities

[4H](#): Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H and Youth Development programs provide hands-on experience in agriculture, science, natural environment and healthy living to thousands of young people each year throughout Greene and Columbia counties. The programs enable the members to build their public speaking skills, help their communities, and develop their leadership and organizational skills.

[Association for the Preservation of Durham Valley](#): This is an unincorporated charitable organization whose mission is the preservation and enhancement of the scenic, cultural and historic attributes of the Durham Valley area and its environs. In the 1970s and 1980s the Association, working with others, was instrumental in blocking the erection of a series of power lines through the Durham Valley, and also in blocking the placing of a large waste-dump facility in the Cornwallville area. The Association has also lent its support to the Scenic Byway project and has opposed the building of large cell towers in the Valley.

[Catskill Mountain Beekeepers Club](#): This club holds well-attended monthly meetings at The Shamrock House in East Durham.

[Cornwallville Conservation Corporation](#): This is owned by a group of people who are dedicated to the preservation of land for outdoor pursuits and wildlife conservation. From time to time local landowners donate their land to the corporation in exchange for a share in the ownership of the corporation. The corporation currently owns just under one thousand acres within Durham, most of it being forested. Nearly all of the land has a “forever wild” conservation easement with the Durham Valley Land Trust.

[Democratic Committee](#): Durham’s Democratic Town Committee represents and organizes activities for registered members of the Democratic Party within Durham.

[Durham Community Center](#): This offers to the public two to four meetings a month in the former Durham Elementary School.

[Durham NY Chamber of Commerce](#): This tax-exempt membership-based organization supports community and business projects.

[Durham Task Force](#): This was initiated in the 1990s with the objective of persuading the Town Board and others to reduce blight and to beautify the Town. But in addition, the Task Force organizes a Fourth of July parade and fireworks in East Durham; it puts on a St. Patrick’s Day dinner; it runs the [Durham Reading Room](#) (a free service based in the East Durham Post Office building that provides Wi-Fi, copying and fax facilities and books for loan); it places flower boxes throughout the Town; it organizes the annual “Christmas in Durham” party for the community, and it holds monthly meetings for interested parties.

Durham Valley Land Trust: This is a tax-exempt organization formed in 1992 by local residents. Its objective is to protect and preserve the natural resources and scenic beauty of the Durham Valley. The Land Trust has achieved this by acquiring conservation easements on some 1,300 acres of forests, fields and meadows within the Durham Valley. These easements mean that the land in question is preserved in its current state for generations to come. The Land Trust has also sponsored the Durham Valley Scenic Byway organization, which has arranged for 22 miles of roadway to be designated a “New York State Scenic Byway.”

East Durham Volunteer Fire Company: This volunteer-based organization shares responsibility with the Oak Hill – Durham Volunteer Fire Company for fire protection within Durham.

Knights of Columbus (East Durham): This Catholic organization organizes bingo games, dances, Sunday breakfasts, and more.

Local Churches: Durham churches are the Shrine of Our Lady of Knock (East Durham), Cornerstone Baptist Church (East Durham), Durham-Oak Hill United Methodist Church (Durham and Oak Hill), and St. Paul's Lutheran Church (Oak Hill).

Oak Hill - Durham Volunteer Fire Company: This volunteer-based organization shares responsibility with the East Durham Volunteer Fire Company for fire protection within Durham.

Oak Hill Preservation Association: This non-profit organization seeks to support and preserve the history and culture of Oak Hill and the surrounding area. Founded in 2004, OHPA has distributed more than \$80,000 in grants for restoration of endangered historic buildings and support of community service projects. It has organized educational programs and has supported publications, documentaries, Oak Hill Days, workshops, historic register listings and social media pages. OHPA meets five times a year, and membership is open to all.

Republican Club and Republican Committee: Durham’s Republican Committee represents and organizes activities for registered members of the Republican Party within Durham.

Rip Van Winkle Soccer Club / Northern Catskill Youth Association: This offers recreational soccer games during July and August for players 4 to 14 years old, soccer academy on Saturdays during September and October for players 4 to 14 years old, and competitive soccer from March to June for players 8 to 18 years old. Games are played at the Rip Van Winkle Soccer Field in Cairo and at the Cairo-Durham Elementary School

Senior Citizens: There is no senior center in Durham, but Durham seniors sometimes attend functions at the senior center located at the Acra Community Center on Old Route 23B in Acra. Durham seniors can also benefit from services provided by the Greene County Department for the Aging, and can attend meetings in Greenville, Rensselaerville and Windham.

Business and economic resources

(a) Agriculture

Durham has been a farming community for more than 200 years. In 1875 there were just over 300 farms in Durham, of which four-fifths, mostly dairy farms, consisted of 50 acres or more.⁴⁰ In 1944 there were 70 dairy farms in Durham, but by 2019 there was only one.⁴¹ Historically, there was also a lot of poultry farming, and orchards with apple and pear trees. There are now only 42 land parcels in Durham classified as Agricultural.

There are still farmers in Durham who can farm profitably, but not many. The 2000 census recorded that of the 1,058 employed adults in Durham, only 11 worked full-time in farming and forestry. However, that number is dated, and does not include people whose primary employment is in a non-farming context but who enjoy doing some farming on the side; people who would like to farm full-time but who need to take a part-time non-farming job on the side; and people who work in a non-farming context but who seek to use their land to grow or raise as much of their family's food requirements as possible.

(b) Tourism

Fueled by Durham's scenic beauty, tourism has long been the town's primary economic activity. Tourism started in the nineteenth century with farmers taking in summer boarders. Subsequently resorts, boarding houses and bungalow colonies were built.

In the twentieth century some visitors, particularly those of Irish descent, began building and buying houses to serve as second homes for use during vacations and weekends. As of April 2019, 39% of the 1,507 lots in Durham that are classified as "residential" were owned by people whose mailing address was outside Durham, suggesting that around 40% of Durham residences are second homes.⁴²

The [Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival](#) is held at Walsh Farm in Oak Hill for four days each July. It features traditional and contemporary bluegrass as well as jam bands, old time, swing and Cajun, and draws some of the nation's most celebrated performers. It is attended by around 6,000 people each day.

East Durham's [MJQ Irish Cultural and Sports Centre](#) includes a modern festival pavilion. The [East Durham Irish Festival](#) takes place every Memorial Day Weekend at the pavilion. Featured are major folk and rock bands from throughout the United States. Attendance at the two-day event is measured in the thousands. Near the festival pavilion is the [Donegal Cottage](#), a reconstruction of a traditional Irish farm house.

East Durham also hosts the [Catskills Irish Arts Week](#) every July. The best teachers and students of Irish culture, particularly musicians, travel to East Durham from far and wide to attend the classes and perform together during the evenings at the local pubs.

A major tourist attraction is the [Zoom Flume Water Park](#) near East Durham.

Other tourism attractions include [K&K Equestrian Center](#) at Ravine Farm (guided trail rides) and the annual [Catskill Mountain Thunder Motorcycle Festival](#).

Resorts, guest houses and motels in Durham include [Blackthorne Resort](#), [Camp Govoah](#), [Captain's Inn Point Lookout](#), [Country Campsites](#), [The Country Place](#), [Deer Watch Inn](#), [The Dewitt Oak Hill](#), [Gavin's Irish Country Inn](#), [Hull-O Farms](#), [McGrath's Edgewood Falls](#), [Michael Dee's Motel](#), [Rose Motel](#), [Shamrock House](#) and [Simply Durham Cottages](#).

Also of great importance to the Town's tourist economy is [Windham Mountain](#), a major ski resort in the neighboring Town of Windham.

(c) Other business operations

Retail outlets, restaurants and service providers based in the Town of Durham include: ⁴³

- [Angel's Café](#) in East Durham serves burgers, pizza, Mexican food and more.
- [Anne Lafferty Realty](#) in East Durham sells real estate throughout the region.
- [B&G General Mechanical](#) in Oak Hill provides plumbing services.
- [Borwegen's](#), near Oak Hill, provides trucking, transport and excavation services.
- [Captain's Inn Point Lookout](#) on Route 23 offers family dining and lodging.
- [Catskill Mountain Signs](#) creates customized signs.
- [Cunningham and Sons](#) on Cunningham Road sells all kinds of seed.
- [Cunningham Fence](#) installs fencing.
- [Dean's Mills](#) is a grain and feed store near East Durham.
- [Dollar General](#) near East Durham sells household supplies.
- [Doreen's Salon](#) in East Durham offers hair care, nail care, facials and tanning.
- [Durham Valley Liquor Store](#) in East Durham sells wines and spirits.
- [East Durham Farms](#) grows and sells organic produce.
- [East Durham Hardware](#) in East Durham sells hardware.
- [East Durham Indoor Flea Market](#) sells items from antiques to clothes.
- [Foxtail Community Farm](#) near Norton Hill sells fresh produce and baked goods.
- [French and Scouser](#) in Oak Hill sells antique furniture.
- [Gavin's Irish Tea Shop](#) in East Durham offers breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea.
- [Greene Bee Greenhouse](#) in Cornwallville sells vegetable starts, perennials and shrubs.
- [Guaranteed Irish](#) in East Durham sells imported Irish products.
- [Harbor Equipment](#) near East Durham sells horse and stock trailers.
- [Hort and Pott](#) in Oak Hill offers bespoke botanical craft.
- [Keepin' Touch Massage Therapy](#) in East Durham provides massage services.
- [Lawyer's General Store](#) is in East Durham.
- [Lloyds of East Durham](#) in East Durham sells used cars.
- [Lounsbury Appliance](#) in Oak Hill sells appliances.
- [McGrath's Edgewood Falls](#) in East Durham has a restaurant and pub dining room.
- [The Milk Run](#), near East Durham, sells fuel and operates a convenience store and grill.
- [Mooney's Auction Service](#) in East Durham buys and sells household items.

- [Oldies and Goodies](#) in East Durham sells antiques and collectibles.
- [The Saloon of East Durham](#) is a restaurant serving wings, burgers, pasta and more.
- [Shamrock House](#) in East Durham has a bar and a restaurant, and also offers lodging.
- [Stirred Water Herbs](#) in South Durham sells vitamins and herbs.
- [I.U. Tripp](#) in Oak Hill sells antiques and collectibles.
- [The Yellow Deli](#) in Oak Hill is a restaurant serving sandwiches, salads, etc.

(d) Employers

Employment is provided within the agricultural, tourism and retail sectors as discussed above, and by the Town of Durham.

In addition, Greene County's largest private-sector employer is GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), a major pharmaceuticals corporation that operates a toothpaste-manufacturing plant between East Durham and Oak Hill employing over 200 people. GSK took over the plant when it purchased the former owners, Stiefel Laboratories, Inc., in 2009. GSK at first planned to close down the plant and eliminate 260 jobs, but in 2010 it reversed itself and instead decided to invest \$56 million in the plant.

Community facilities and infrastructure

(a) Transportation

The nearest interstate highway is Interstate 87, which runs north-south and can be accessed at Leeds, 18 miles east of Durham.

The nearest Amtrak train station is at Hudson, 25 miles east of Durham. Frequent trains run from there to Albany and New York City.

The Greene County Transit System's Route 706 provides scheduled bus transport on weekday mornings in a loop from Catskill to Coxsackie to Greenville to Oak Hill to East Durham to Cairo to Catskill, and on weekday afternoons in the opposite direction.⁴⁴ The bus is free for seniors. However, no public transport is available in Cornwallville or Durham village.

Roads within Durham consist of: (a) 21 miles of state roads – namely, portions of routes 23 and 81, both of which connect with Interstate 87, and route 145; (b) 23 miles of county roads; and (c) 78 miles of town roads, of which 66 miles are black top or oil and stone and 12 miles are dirt. The town roads are maintained by the Town of Durham Highway Maintenance Department, which has 8 employees and an annual budget of \$1.3 million.

(b) Infrastructure and facilities

Water, sewer, and solid waste: Being largely rural, Durham has no public water or sewer systems; all residences rely on wells and septic systems. The Town maintains a recycling center next to the town hall. Residents can take garbage and recycling materials to transfer stations in Catskill, Coxsackie or Windham, or they can have them collected from their homes by private haulers.

Utilities and telecommunications: Central Hudson provides electricity to the Town. Verizon provides landline telephone service. Mid-Hudson Cable provides cable service, including broadband internet, to residences in the more highly populated areas. Cellular phone coverage is spotty. Satellite internet and TV services are available.

Medical facilities: Durham has no medical facilities; but hospitals are available in Hudson (23 miles away) and Albany (32 miles away), and urgent care facilities are available in Catskill and Coxsackie (both 18 miles away).

Emergency Services: Emergency services in Durham are provided by the town police force, the town ambulance service, and two volunteer fire departments. The Town of Durham police force consists of 5 part-time officers, who are assisted by the Greene County Sheriff and New York State police as needed. Ambulance and fire services are provided by the Durham Ambulance Squad, the Oak Hill - Durham Volunteer Fire Company, and the East Durham Volunteer Fire Company. All services work together through a mutual aid system with each other and, when needed, with surrounding towns. Durham has a helipad for emergency medical transportation.

Town government

(a) Town government

The town is governed by a Town Board consisting of a supervisor (elected to two-year terms) and four other members (elected to four-year terms). Town Board meetings, which are open to the public, are held on the first and third Tuesday of each month.

Administrative staff, some of whom are part time, include an elected Town Clerk / Tax Collector, Highway Superintendent, and two judges, together with an appointed Town Assessor, Code Enforcement Officer, Building Inspector, Police Sergeant, Bookkeeper, Town Attorney, Deputy Clerk, and two departmental clerks.

Durham has no planning board; the town board serves this function. It has no zoning board because it has no zoning ordinances. Of the thirteen other towns in Greene County, twelve have planning boards and nine have zoning boards.⁴⁵

(b) Town budget and tax rate

Property taxes in Durham (including town, county and school taxes, but excluding fire protection and street lighting) totaled about \$35 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2018-19. Other Greene County towns ranged from \$16 (Windham) to \$63 (Catskill Village). (See Chart 13.)

Between 2006 and 2019, Durham's residents have had an average annual increase per \$1,000 assessed property value of 1.9% in town taxes, 1.1% in county taxes, and 1.1% in school taxes.⁴⁶

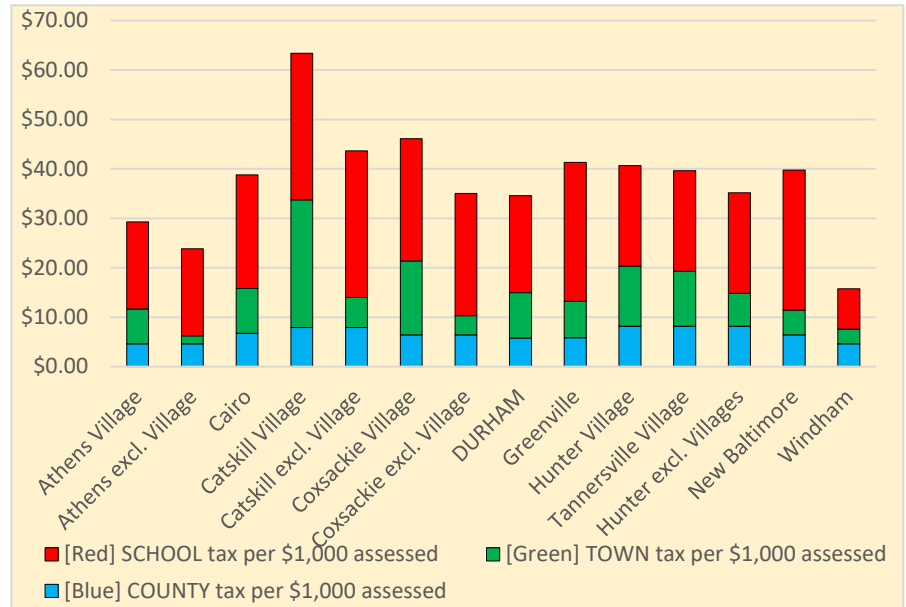
Of Greene County's 14 largest towns and villages, Durham came fifth highest in 2019 in terms of town taxes, and eleventh highest in terms of county taxes, school taxes, and total taxes.

As shown in Table 3, below, the 2019 budget for the Town of Durham is \$2.787 million.

Table 3: Durham Town budget, 2019⁴⁷

General Fund	\$1,190,104
Highway Fund	\$1,324,900
Fire Protection	\$261,120
Street Lighting	\$11,400
Total	\$2,787,524

Chart 13: 2018-19 property tax rates for all Greene County towns with over one thousand people, \$ per \$1,000 of assessed property value⁴⁸



Appendix 2: Community views

As explained in Section B above, members of the Durham community were invited to express their opinions on their likes, dislikes and ideas regarding Durham and its available services. They did so through some public meetings and an online survey.

After the public meetings, the Committee consolidated the key views that had been expressed into a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). This is shown in Part A, below.

Then In May 2019, Durham's residents were invited by the Comprehensive Plan Committee to respond to an online survey. An analysis of the responses to that survey is provided in Part B, below.

Part A: SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

At the public meetings, the discussions covered the following topics:

- **Topic 1: Community character**
- **Topic 2: Economic vitality**
- **Topic 3: Rural beauty and local environment**
- **Topic 4: Historic integrity**
- **Topic 5: Infrastructure**
- **Topic 6: Community services**
- **Topic 7: Communications and coordination**
- **Topic 8: Local government**

Within each of the above topics, the opinions expressed have been grouped below as follows:

- **Strengths:** Positive aspects of Durham life that residents would like to see maintained or increased.
- **Weaknesses:** Negative aspects of Durham life that residents would like to see reduced or eliminated.
- **Opportunities:** Things that Durham residents feel could be done to maintain or increase the above strengths or to reduce or eliminate the above weaknesses.
- **Threats:** Environmental, economic or political trends or actions that residents feel could harm Durham but that are caused by factors beyond the community's control.

Important note: Many of the opinions shown below were articulated by just one or two people, and no effort was made to confirm the accuracy of the facts those people stated or to find out how many people agreed or disagreed with each opinion. (To obtain a sense of which opinions are widely held, please see the survey results in Part B below.)

Topic 1: Community character:

- Strengths regarding community character:
 - Relaxed pace / Simplicity of life / Peace and quiet / A land that time forgot / Privacy / Personal freedom.
 - Strong close-knit sense of community / Nice people / Neighbors look out for each other / Active community / Great and safe place to raise kids / Family oriented.
 - Small-town character / A community with deep roots and heritage.

- Visitors are offered a pace of life and natural features that other places do not provide.
- Weaknesses regarding community character:
 - People identify much more with their hamlet than with the whole town of Durham, creating an inadequate sense of town-wide togetherness.
 - The four hamlets don't always have the same problems; planning that does not recognize this may not be fully effective.
 - The town is not as prosperous as it was – many people are struggling.
 - There are limited community links between long-term residents, new full-time residents, and part-time residents, and the latter two groups rarely participate in community events; this decreases the overall sense of community.
 - As with many other communities, there is a drug-use problem.
- Opportunities regarding community character:
 - The community could put on an annual fair with a BBQ, with all local organizations invited to have booths to show what they are doing and invite new members.
 - A committee could be established that welcomes new full-time and part-time residents.
 - Occasional pot-luck dinners, dances, etc. could be organized, possibly at the hamlet level.
- Threats regarding community character:
 - There is a danger that if all the opportunities discussed above were successfully implemented, the town would grow and its whole character might change in ways that not all of its residents would like.

Topic 2: Economic vitality:

- Strengths regarding economic vitality:
 - Local restaurants / Friendly shop owners / Several small local businesses.
 - Within reach of NYC and Albany / Two hours to everything.
 - Land that is good for farming / Strong history of family farming.
 - Several resorts.
- Weaknesses regarding economic vitality:
 - Durham is too far from large urban areas to tempt many businesses to be based here or many commuters to live here.
 - Durham lacks a critical mass of stores and restaurants (and linked parking) to attract visitors and residents.
 - Durham is insufficiently business-friendly.
 - Many locations within Durham have no access to broadband and cellular service, or these services are available but are weak or too expensive; all this seriously impacts business development, employment opportunities, home-based businesses, the ability for workers to telecommute and for students to study online, and indeed people's very willingness to live here.
 - Durham was a farming community, but now it's difficult to farm profitably / Some farmers have to get employment on the side to keep farming.
 - Potential employers (particularly farmers) find it hard to attract staff that they can afford; but people who seek employment (particularly young people) find it hard to find jobs with wages at the level they need.

- The revenue from tourism has decreased.
- There is not much tax revenue from entities other than single family residences; as a result, the tax burden on home-owners is too great and may force some people to leave, and there is insufficient tax revenue to adequately cover ambulance service, among other things.
- The Greene County Government does not provide sufficient attention to Durham / Greene County Tourism, and the Greene County Chamber of Commerce, are not as effective as they could be / Durham’s government and businesses are insufficiently involved in regional groups, activities and fundraising opportunities.
- Opportunities regarding economic vitality:
 - Durham could take a strong position with providers of cell-phone service and broadband regarding the need to provide improved service.
 - Durham could be more business-friendly and encourage more medium-size businesses (ones that could improve the tax basis and that could afford to invest in infrastructure) and more small and ‘green’ businesses, including a pellet mill (to take advantage of the abundant supply of trees), local food production, homesteading, and crafting / Information could be provided regarding forms of specialized farming that could be viable in Durham.
 - Durham could provide more parking and signage in business districts.
 - Durham could seek to attract more non-chain restaurants, bars, shops, a bank, an urgent care facility, and doctors
 - Durham could market itself and its businesses better, providing a unified and dynamic website and marketing campaign / Durham could organize coordinated businesses events and economic programs that lead the outside world to think of the Town as a single coherent entity.
 - Durham could seek to revitalize tourism by seeking to attract more people interested in scenic beauty, outdoor activities, agriculture, etc. / Durham could provide a tourism kiosk and a tourism map / Durham could provide hospitality training for shop and restaurant employees so that they could be aware of what is going on and could be better ambassadors for Durham.
 - Major companies in Durham, particularly GSK, could be encouraged to be more involved with the community.
 - Unused farmland could be made available for glamping (glamorous camping), mountain biking, etc.
- Threats regarding economic vitality:
 - As has been the case in rural communities for centuries, young adults and young families might be tempted to leave Durham because greater opportunities are available elsewhere.
 - The increased need for liability insurance makes it harder to start some new businesses and offer some services than it used to be.

Topic 3: Rural beauty and local environment:

- Strengths regarding rural beauty and local environment:
 - Classically rural / Much natural beauty and scenery / Mountains / Views / Creeks / Trees.
 - Agricultural / Pastoral.
 - Access to outdoor recreational activities / Hunting / Fishing / Snowmobiling / Hiking / Skiing.
- Weaknesses regarding rural beauty and local environment:
 - Blight of properties is a big problem; some houses are abandoned or inadequately maintained and have several abandoned cars on the property; this makes Durham a less attractive place to live / There is insufficient code enforcement regarding this problem.

- Opportunities regarding rural beauty and local environment:
 - Durham could seek to reduce blight (e.g. abandoned vehicles and un-maintained buildings) by strengthening and/or more effectively enforcing local laws / Durham could offer once or twice per year to accept or collect unwanted vehicles etc. at no charge.
 - A volunteer clean-up day in various locations would strengthen community.
- Threats regarding rural beauty and local environment:
 - (No threats mentioned)

Topic 4: Historic integrity:

- Strengths regarding historic integrity:
 - Historic character / Historic structures and districts.
- Weaknesses regarding historic integrity:
 - (No weaknesses mentioned)
- Opportunities regarding historic integrity:
 - Do more to protect and enhance Durham’s historic hamlets, buildings, stone bridges, etc.
- Threats regarding historic integrity:
 - (No threats mentioned)

Topic 5: Infrastructure:

- Strengths regarding infrastructure:
 - Town roads are in good shape.
- Weaknesses regarding infrastructure:
 - The town provides no piped water, sewer systems, or piped natural gas; this makes it harder to attract businesses, particularly along the creek, where it’s sometimes difficult to install septic systems.
 - The town has difficulties providing adequate and cost effective police, fire and ambulance services, well-maintained roads, and adequate storm drainage.
 - There are a lot of conversions to Section 8 housing in East Durham, adversely affecting the town.
 - Oak Hill has several shops and businesses of interest to pedestrians, but has inadequate sidewalks and street lighting.
 - Dirt roads are expensive to maintain and less safe than paved roads; but some residents like them because they provide a more rural feel / On summer weekends there is a lot of noise from motorcycle groups / The hamlets sometimes experience problems with speeding traffic.
- Opportunities regarding infrastructure:
 - Durham could seek to attract businesses that can afford to develop water and sewer infrastructure.
 - Initiatives could be launched to reduce the amount of new Section 8 housing.
 - Efforts could be made to eliminate the dumping of industrial waste into the creek.
 - More sidewalks and street lights could be provided in pedestrian-heavy hamlets, particularly Oak Hill.
- Threats regarding infrastructure:

- It may be hard to prevent more public assisted housing (“Section 8”) coming in.
- Pollution might be introduced into Durham’s creeks upstream, outside Durham.

Topic 6: Community services:

- Strengths regarding community services:
 - Some family-oriented activities available during much of the year / Summer recreation program for children.
 - Local police department / Local ambulance.
 - Community provides fundraising for its fire departments.
- Weaknesses regarding community services:
 - The Durham Elementary School was closed in 2013 because its enrollment had fallen from 207 to 137 since 2001 / It is a challenge to attract people to live here when there is no local elementary school / The school provided events that made it the center of community life; the loss of the school had a negative impact on the overall sense of community
 - Durham has no doctor’s office and no urgent-care or mental-health facility.
 - The ambulance service is inadequately funded.
 - There are insufficient services and housing available for seniors wishing to age in place.
 - There is insufficient public transportation.
 - There is very little for young people to do / There are insufficient outdoor recreation opportunities / Durham no longer has little league or other sports teams / Popular swimming holes have been closed / There are no Durham walking trails available.
 - There are not enough volunteers / The volunteer fire departments no longer have junior members / There is limited information on what volunteer opportunities are available, so people willing to volunteer don’t offer their services.
- Opportunities regarding community services:
 - Now that Durham elementary school has been closed and the building is occasionally used as a community center, increased use could be made of the building / The community center could have a dedicated part-time staff person (maybe a volunteer) to keep it open longer and to ensure that those using it treat it responsibly / New services could be offered at the community center, e.g. fitness classes, basketball games, after school care, activities for seniors, a trade school for teens, movie nights, etc. / The community center could be made available to people who wish to connect their computers or phones to the internet, and possibly also to those who wish to make use of community-provided computers / The community center could become a satellite setting for classes provided by Columbia Greene Community College / Grants could be sought to support various activities at the community center.
 - Mentoring programs could be established at the community center (and elsewhere) that connect volunteers who have specific skills (e.g. re computers) with seniors, young people, and others who would like to learn or benefit from those skills.
 - Efforts could be made to increase the amount of volunteerism, particularly by high school students but also by adults of all ages.
 - If there were a well-managed well-publicized community project that required lots of volunteers working together, this could get the project done and build community.
 - Durham could provide more summer and year-round youth programs and day camps.

- Durham could provide safe and legal access to the Catskill Creek and bring back its swimming holes / Durham could provide more parks, recreation facilities, hiking trails, and fishing opportunities.
- More senior housing, including assisted living facilities, could be provided / Seniors could be provided with volunteer-based services such as delivery of groceries and prescriptions, transportation, meals on wheels, etc. / Much more could be done to publicize senior services that already exist.
- More could be done to ensure the financial viability of local fire and ambulance services.
- Public transportation could be provided to Columbia Greene College.
- Threats regarding community services:
 - (No threats mentioned)

Topic 7: Communications and coordination:

- Strengths regarding communications and coordination:
 - (No strengths mentioned)
- Weaknesses regarding communications and coordination:
 - There is a lack of communications and knowledge about available services and programs, forthcoming events and local news.
- Opportunities regarding communications and coordination:
 - Durham could improve communications by providing (a) an improved town website, (b) a regular email-based town newsletter, (c) an annual printed town newsletter, and possibly (d) a phone app; using these, Durham’s town board, businesses and community groups could more effectively inform each other and local residents of their services and planned activities.
- Threats regarding communications and coordination:
 - (No threats mentioned)

Topic 8: Local government:

- Strengths regarding local government:
 - (No strengths mentioned)
- Weaknesses regarding local government:
 - Residents are generally unaware of what the town board plans to do and has done.
- Opportunities regarding local government:
 - The Town Board could publish a report covering the past year, and a work plan covering the coming year, describing what it has done and plans to do (including what it is doing to implement the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan).
 - The Town Board could increase awareness of existing services and programs.
 - Durham could start a job shadow program that links students with Town Board members so they can learn how a Town is run.
- Threats regarding local government:
 - Laws might be passed or regulations introduced at the county, state or federal level that lead to a reduction in individual property rights.

Part B: Summary of Responses to Survey Questions

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 <i>and/or</i> 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

Endnotes

- ¹ Parts of this document draw upon information in the 2008 “Town of Durham Comprehensive Plan”, <https://www.durhamny.com/departments/town-clerk/applications-forms/653-2008-comprehensive-plan/file.html>.
- ² This map courtesy of Jeff Bliss, Durham resident and retired cartographer, airteach@verizon.net.
- ³ Source: “The History of Greene County” by J.B. Beers & Co, published 1884.
- ⁴ Source: Data from <http://gis.greenegovernment.com/giswebmap/>, as compiled 5 March 2019.
- ⁵ Source: US Census data: www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html. The 2017 number is a US Census Bureau estimate: <https://factfinder.census.gov>.
- ⁶ Source: US Census data for 2010: www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html.
- ⁷ Source for 1980 to 2010 in Charts 2 to 4: US Census data: www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html. Source for projections for 2020-2030 in Chart 4: Cornell Program on Applied Demographics: <http://pad.human.cornell.edu/>.
- ⁸ Source: US Census data (www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html).
- ⁹ Source: US Census data (www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html) for 2010, and US Census Bureau estimates (<https://factfinder.census.gov>) for 2017.
- ¹⁰ Source: Estimates for 2017 by the US Census Bureau (<https://factfinder.census.gov>).
- ¹¹ Source: Estimates for 2017 by the US Census Bureau (<https://factfinder.census.gov>).
- ¹² Source: NY State Dept. of Health: https://webbi1.health.ny.gov/SASStoredProcess/guest?_program=/EBI/PHIG/apps/chir_dashboard/chir_dashboard&p=i&t&ind_id=Nd32.
- ¹³ Source: NY State Dept. of Health: https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/opioid/data/pdf/nys_jan19.pdf.
- ¹⁴ Source: <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/orptbook>
- ¹⁵ Source: NY State Education Department: <https://data.nysed.gov>.
- ¹⁶ Source: Cairo-Durham School District www.CairoDurham.org.
- ¹⁷ Source: Public School Review: www.PublicSchoolReview.com.
- ¹⁸ Source: NY State Education Department: <https://data.nysed.gov>.
- ¹⁹ Source: Cairo-Durham School District: www.CairoDurham.org.
- ²⁰ Source: Public School Review: www.PublicSchoolReview.com.
- ²¹ Source: NY State Education Department: <https://data.nysed.gov>, plus Cairo-Durham School District: www.CairoDurham.org, plus Public School Review: www.PublicSchoolReview.com.
- ²² Source: NY State Education Department: <https://data.nysed.gov>.
- ²³ Source: NY State Education Department: <https://data.nysed.gov>.
- ²⁴ Source: www.cairodurham.org/news/district-accountability-designation and www.cairodurham.org/files/Cairo-Durham-ESSA-Slides-revisedPDF.pdf.
- ²⁵ Source: NY State Education Department: <https://data.nysed.gov>. Details are as follows:

<i>% of Grade 3-8 students rated proficient in Math tests</i>	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Cairo-Durham CSD	15%	18%	20%	21%	22%	24%	31%
Catskill CSD	18%	23%	30%	31%	34%	39%	46%
Coxsackie-Athens CSD	27%	33%	33%	34%	32%	36%	33%
Greenville CSD	28%	32%	35%	32%	31%	34%	30%
Hunter-Tannersville CSD	27%	31%	25%	17%	36%	40%	46%
Windham-Ashland-Jewett CSD	35%	39%	43%	45%	46%	37%	47%
All Greene County	23%	27%	30%	30%	31%	34%	37%
All NY State	31%	36%	38%	39%	40%	45%	47%

²⁶ Source: NY State Education Department: <https://data.nysed.gov>. Details are as follows:

<i>% of Grade 3-8 students rated proficient in ELA tests</i>	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Cairo-Durham CSD	20%	20%	21%	21%	24%	27%	30%
Catskill CSD	15%	15%	16%	23%	25%	32%	36%
Coxsackie-Athens CSD	27%	29%	27%	32%	30%	33%	26%
Greenville CSD	25%	23%	28%	24%	31%	33%	26%
Hunter-Tannersville CSD	29%	20%	17%	21%	28%	42%	39%
Windham-Ashland-Jewett CSD	33%	31%	34%	46%	41%	41%	33%
All Greene County	23%	22%	23%	26%	27%	32%	31%
All NY State	31%	36%	31%	38%	40%	45%	45%

²⁷ Source: NY State Education Department: <https://data.nysed.gov>.

²⁸ 2001 expenditure: \$9.2 million. 2017 expenditure: \$14.2 million (an increase of 54%). Inflation over that period: 38%. 2001 students: 1,762. 2017 students: 1,210 (a decrease of 31%). Source: NY State Education Department: Fiscal Supplement reports at <https://data.nysed.gov/archive.php?instid=800000051526>. Inflation source: www.in2013dollars.com/2001-dollars-in-2016.

²⁹ Source: US Census Bureau estimate: <https://factfinder.census.gov>.

³⁰ Source: Cairo-Durham School District (<https://www.cairodurham.org/files/Operations%20and%20Maintenance%202019-20%20Budget%20Presentation%20ADA.pdf>).

³¹ Source: Greene and NY data from the NY State Dept. of Labor: <https://labor.ny.gov/stats/laus.asp>. US data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics: <https://www.bls.gov/lau>.

³² Source: US Census data: www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html.

³³ Source: US Census data (www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html) for 1980-2000, and US Census Bureau estimates (<https://factfinder.census.gov>) for 2010.

³⁴ Source: US Census data: www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html.

³⁵ Source: FBI data: <https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov>.

³⁶ Source: “In the Shadow of the Catskills – An Illustrated History of Cornwallville, New York”, Karen R. Rivers, 2018.

³⁷ Source: 2008 “Town of Durham Comprehensive Plan”, <https://www.durhamny.com/departments/town-clerk/applications-forms/653-2008-comprehensive-plan/file.html>.

³⁸ The listing is available at the Durham Town Hall, and in Appendix B of the Durham Valley Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan at http://durhamvalley.com/scenic_byway.html.

³⁹ Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canajoharie_and_Catskill_Railroad.

⁴⁰ Source: “The History of Greene County” by J.B. Beers & Co, published 1884.

⁴¹ Source: Presentation on Cornwallville Day, August 24, 2019, by Jerry Cunningham, who was a Durham dairy farmer for over 60 years.

⁴² Source: Data from <http://gis.greenegovernment.com/giswebmap/>, as downloaded 9 April 2019.

⁴³ Businesses are shown if they operate from a known address within the Town of Durham and they have a website or an active Facebook page. Apologies to any businesses that were omitted.

⁴⁴ Source: <http://greencountytransit.com/Routes-Schedules/Updated-Route-706-Brown>.

⁴⁵ Source: Web sites of Ashland, Athens, Cairo, Catskill, Coxsackie, Durham, Greenville, Halcott, Hunter, Jewett, Lexington, New Baltimore, Prattsville and Windham. All have planning boards except Durham and Prattsville. All have zoning boards except Ashland, Durham, Hunter, Prattsville and Windham.

⁴⁶ Source: www.greenegovernment.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/RPTS-2018-19-Blue-Book.pdf.

⁴⁷ Source: <https://www.durhamny.com/doc-center/town-clerk/816-2019-adopted-budget/file.html>.

⁴⁸ Source: www.greenegovernment.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Tax-Rates-2019.pdf. Details are as shown below. Rates shown do not include special taxes for fire protection, street lighting, sewer services, piped water, etc., because some of these are only available to certain residents within each town. Residents of each of the five villages shown pay a Village tax plus a reduced Town tax. These are combined in the Town tax column.

Greene County Town	Property taxes, 2018-19, per \$1,000 of assessed property value			
	(Blue) COUNTY tax	(Green) TOWN tax	(Red) SCHOOL tax	Total
Athens Village	\$4.5873	\$7.0635	\$17.6156	\$29.2664
Athens excl. Village	\$4.5873	\$1.6051	\$17.6156	\$23.8081
Cairo	\$6.7461	\$9.0301	\$22.9760	\$38.7521
Catskill Village	\$7.9092	\$25.8039	\$29.6661	\$63.3791
Catskill excl. Village	\$7.9092	\$6.0762	\$29.6661	\$43.6514
Coxsackie Village	\$6.4384	\$14.9344	\$24.7237	\$46.0965
Coxsackie excl. Village	\$6.4384	\$3.8626	\$24.7237	\$35.0246
DURHAM	\$5.7521	\$9.2217	\$19.5908	\$34.5646
Greenville	\$5.8624	\$7.3634	\$28.0999	\$41.3257
Hunter Village	\$8.1917	\$12.1350	\$20.3314	\$40.6581
Tannersville Village	\$8.1917	\$11.1094	\$20.3314	\$39.6325
Hunter excl. Villages	\$8.1917	\$6.6157	\$20.3314	\$35.1388
New Baltimore	\$6.4384	\$4.9475	\$28.3369	\$39.7228
Windham	\$4.5873	\$2.9677	\$8.1797	\$15.7348