



Durham Township, Bucks Co. Comprehensive Plan Survey Questionnaire Results

MAY 2016

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The Durham Township Board of Supervisors is beginning the job of updating its Comprehensive Plan from 2006. A comprehensive plan is the keystone of a municipal land use-planning program. A comprehensive plan has been referred to as a master plan for the future of a community. Whether it is referred to as a master plan or a comprehensive plan, it provides a framework of a vision of how land use in the municipality should occur over the next ten to twenty years. It is a guide for zoning decisions, open space preservation programs, and planning for water supply, public utilities and wastewater facilities.

While a comprehensive plan does not necessarily provide answers to all of the questions, it is a document that describes the history, current state, and future vision for the community. It acts as a road map to guide future growth and development while promoting the health, safety and general welfare of the people. It provides a plan for the continued preservation of the farming industry along with protection for our prime agricultural soils. It is required to be updated a minimum of every ten (10) years.

Survey Questionnaires were e-mailed to approximately 300 residents who registered their e-mail address with the township, publicly announced and made available at all public meetings, placed on the township website & FaceBook Page, on the township office counter and bulletin board and sent US Mail when requested individually. The majority of the responses indicated a strong desire to remain “as-is” or a rural farming community with preservation of agricultural beliefs and aspirations. A desire to supplement the farming trade by establishing small “home-based” businesses along with a few local cafés and restaurants was indicated.

The enclosed survey results are just one of the ways to allow residents the opportunity to provide input into the process. The Board of Supervisors wanted to know what type of development the residents would like and where this development should occur, so several questions were specific while others were more general in addressing a variety of topics usually associated with future community planning. The need for improved roads, community facilities, water quality & supply, sewage & waste treatment, storm water drainage, and other capital improvements that may be forecasted. It also provides a plan for the protection of natural and historic resources in the township.

Total number of survey responses received was 84.

Response results:

1) Do you own or rent the property where you reside?

The STRONG majority of those taking the survey were owners (80) at 95.24%.
Four (4) were year round renters...4.76%

2) Are you a seasonal /weekend Township resident?

Seasonal/weekend residents only numbered three (3) at 3.57%

3) How long have you resided in the Township?

02...Less than one (1) year...2.38%
11...01 to 5 years...13.10%
12...06 to 10 years...14.29%
24...11 to 20 years...28.57%
35... More than 20 years...41.67%

4) What is your gender?

33... Females responded... 33.39%
48... Males responded... 57.14%
03... Left Blank ... 9.47%

5) Why do you choose to live in Durham Township? (check all that apply)

- 77... Community rural character ...91.67%
- 10... Close to employment ...11.90%
- 36... Family & friends ...42.86%
- 36... Good place to raise children...42.86%
- 17... Family roots ...20.24%
- 35... Type of housing...41.67%
- 33... Reasonable tax rate...39.29%
- 34... Proximity to Delaware River...40.48%
- 15... Cost of living...17.86%
- 29... Quality of Schools...34.52%
- 23... Reduced regulations...27.38%
- 15... Housing costs17...86%
- 01... Employment...1.19%
- 23... Best overall value...27.38%
- 16... Close to major highways...19.05%
- 11... Other: ...13.10%

Extracts of "Other":

...Low Housing density...Average household income above the national average...Able to have large animals...Private-quiet area..." down to earth"
...Low crime, low population, minimal development...Historic area...Lots of preserved open space.

6) Where do you work?

- 16... In the township...19.05%
- 33... Outside of Township...39.29%
- 03... Student...3.57%
- 30... Retired...35.77%
- 02... Presently unemployed...2.38%

7) What is your biggest concern about the future of Durham Township?

Extracts of above question:

...The biggest concern cited was over uncontrolled development & loss of the townships' rural character & beauty, a close second was installation of the pipeline through the township, it was mentioned 24 times or 28.57%... Transparency of local officials... Increasing taxes, water quality... lack of an adequate tax base to maintain needed township services... infringement by local & state government...maintaining a volunteer fire department... increased government regulations, over-development on less than 3 acres, needlessly improving our already nice country roads...Being ignorant of citizens concerns...Allowing run-down properties to exist...Noise & light pollution...Pollution of air, water & land and the lack of a police presence.

8) What are your CURRENT issues living in Durham Township?

Extracts of above question:

...The proposed installation of the PennEast Pipeline (15 times or 17.85%)...Lack of a non-internet/e-mail hard-copy Newsletter...Lack of funds (taxes)...Lack of transparency with local government boards...Current elected officials do what they want and not what the citizens want...condition of local roads & bushes...too much control by government of private property...too much development was mentioned several times...frequent loss of electrical power...animosity between elected officials decreases efficiency...lack of environmental awareness and action by the local governments...operating a business illegally in a residential area...excessive noise via gun shots & barking dogs...Deteriorated houses/property upkeep...Speeding vehicles...Lack of restaurants, shopping and employment opportunities...No FIOS...Lack of communication methods during/after bad storms...Flooding issues...Lack of recreation facilities...Littering/dumping on dirt roads...No police department...Dogs run free (no leash)...Poor condition of State roads...

9) What changes in the Township (whether positive or negative) over the past 10 years have you noticed?

Extracts of above question:

Positive: Roadside mowing & trimming done frequently...Lots of preserved & open space land established...Established a township to resident e-mail notification system...Community Day...Township website...Partial restoration of the township landmark aka the mill.... Summer concerts/social events...Positive attitude of all township employees...Safe place to live...Renovation of township building...Maintaining a fairly low tax rate...Improved upkeep of township bandstand, boat & park...Friendly & kind people...Very slow growth... reactivation of Historical Society...Good management at township level.

Negative: Increase in employee expenses...Elected/Appointed officials not representing citizens...Less maintenance of roadways and roadside gutters (several comments)...More homes on smaller lots...Loss of rural feeling...Lack of people to volunteer to make the community better...No cooperation by elected officials with neighboring organizations... Continuous disregard of our speed limits on all roads...several properties becoming an eyesore... Possibility of increased taxes / borrowing funds for improving the roads... Recent “secret meetings” to discuss public business...Polarization of politics...Increased traffic...deteriorating historic houses...Retirement of Supervisor Manfred Marschewski...Recent bickering at public meetings... Township got less friendly...Increased regulation on everything.

10) Do you believe the quality of life in Durham Township is:

53...Excellent...63.10%
29...Good....34.52%
None... Fair or Poor
02... Left Blank

11) Do you believe the quality of life in Durham Township is:

04...Improving...4.76%
13...Declining...15.48%
64...Remaining the same...76.19%
03...Left Blank

12) Recreational activities in the Township are:

62...Adequate...73.81%
16...Inadequate...19.05%
06...Left Blank

13) How do you get news about the Township?

38...Municipal Website...45.24%
50...E-mail...59.52%
39...Newspaper...46.43%
26...Facebook or other social media...30.95%
02...Left Blank

14) Would you encourage or discourage the following LAND USES in the Township?

Residential – Single-Family Homes

48...ENCOURAGE...57.14% 30...DISCOURAGE...35.71%

Residential – Multi-Family Units

08...ENCOURAGE...9.52% 74... DISCOURAGE...88.10%

Senior/Assisted Living Units

17...ENCOURAGE...20.24% 57...DISCOURAGE...67.86%

Agriculture/Farming

81...ENCOURAGE...96.43% 00...DISCOURAGE...0%

Retail Development

15...ENCOURAGE...17.86% 69...DISCOURAGE...82.14%

Public Outdoor Recreation

46...ENCOURAGE...54.76% 31...DISCOURAGE...36.90%

Light Industrial/Manufacturing

20...ENCOURAGE...23.81% 63...DISCOURAGE...75.00%

Motels/Hotels

06...ENCOURAGE...7.14% 76...DISCOURAGE...90.48%

Convenience Stores

18...ENCOURAGE...21.43% 62...DISCOURAGE...73.81%

Tourism Based: Bed & Breakfast, Restaurant, Etc.

44...ENCOURAGE...52.38% 38...DISCOURAGE...45.24%

Fast Food, Pizza, Chinese Restaurants

10...ENCOURAGE...11.90% 72...DISCOURAGE...85.71%

Professional Office Park (medical, legal, technology)

11...ENCOURAGE...13.10% 68...DISCOURAGE...80.95%

Department Store

03...ENCOURAGE...3.57% 77...DISCOURAGE...91.67%

Service Business' (Barber, dry cleaner, hardware, Etc.)

30...ENCOURAGE...35.71% 49...DISCOURAGE...58.33%

Home-based Business'

59...ENCOURAGE...70.24% 21...DISCOURAGE...25.00%

15) If you have another land use you would like to either encourage or discourage in the Township, please write-in below:

Encourage: playground, bike/walking trail, outdoor community amphitheater..." Not changing a thing!" ...Bakery, coffee house...Cafe...Farm preservation...Low density housing.

Discourage: Quarry...Golf Courses...Mining...Pipelines...Housing developments.

16) Durham Township should attempt to preserve additional agricultural land. (Pick One)

62...Strongly Agree...73.81%

15...Agree...17.86%

4...No Position...4.76%

1...Disagree...1.19%

1...Strongly Disagree...1.19%

17) Durham Township should actively pursue additional industrial development to strengthen the tax base. (Pick One)

02...Strongly Agree...2.38%
10...Agree...11.90%
11...No Position...13.10%
24...Disagree...28.57%
37...Strongly Disagree...44.05%

18) Unless Durham Township grows significantly, present township services will not need to be increased. (Pick One)

32...Strongly Agree...38.10%
32...Agree...38.10%
12...No Position...14.29%
07...Disagree...8.33%
01...Strongly Disagree...1.19%

19) Historic structures in Durham Township should be preserved. (Pick One)

59...Strongly Agree...70.24%
22...Agree...26.19%
03...No Position...3.57%
00...Disagree
00...Strongly Disagree

20) What do you think is missing from Durham Township? Choose all that apply.

25...Parks and Open Space...29.76%
32...Trails...38.10%
19...Restaurants...22.62%
03...Shopping...3.57%
08...Park Amenities (Swimming Pool, Tennis Courts, ball fields)...9.52%
20...Pedestrian connectivity...23.81%
08...Services/activities for senior citizens...9.52%
05...Entertainment activities...5.95%
13...Other...15.48%

Extracts of Other:

...Community Center...Several:” Nothing, leave it alone” ...Join the “Wild & Scenic” group...Better internet/cable TV...Disc golf course.

21) The previous version of the Comprehensive Plan emphasized the desire to maintain a “Small Town” atmosphere in Durham Township. Which of the following community features have the most impact on the township’s ability to achieve these desires? Choose up to four, or choose “None of the above”. You can add a community feature after “Other”.

- 50...Housing density and types...59.52%
- 05...Architectural style and aesthetic design features of housing...5.95%
- 25...The physical form / density of commercial uses...29.76%
- 23...The types of businesses occupying commercial uses...27.38%
- 10...The architectural style and aesthetic design of commercial uses...11.90%
- 42...The location and size of open spaces and natural areas...50%
- 08...The design of streets and highways...9.52%
- 29...The amount of automobile traffic...34.52%
- 08...The presence of a walkable, mixed-use town center...9.52%
- 39...Preservation of historic buildings and sites...46.43%
- 06...Landscaping of private development...7.14%
- 02...Landscaping of public facilities and rights of way...2.38%
- 08.....9.52%
- 02...None of the above...2.38%
- 08...Other (please describe) ...9.52%

Extracts of Other:

All eight said: Keep it as-is...small town.

22) Do you find the overall condition of the township roads (do not include State Roads Route 611 & 212, Lehnenberg, Gallows Hill, Durham Hill Roads) adequate?

- 53...YES...63.10%
- 29...NO...34.52%
- 2...No Response

23) Would you be willing to pay increased taxes to upgrade/widen the township roads?

- 18...YES...21.43%
- 62... NO...73.81%
- 4...No Response

24) Do you find the overall condition of the State Roads adequate?

- 19...YES...22.62%
- 64...NO..76.19%
- 01...No Response

25) Do you feel that the Township should increase taxes or borrow money to modernize its facilities, i.e. new township building or community center?

- 07...YES...8.33%
- 74...NO...88.10%
- 03...No Response

26) As Durham Township grows in the future, should additional land be set-aside for recreational use.

55...YES...65.48% 25...NO...29.76% 04...No Response

27) How would you like to see the Townships historic grist mill utilized?

20...Minimum Required Maintenance to Stabilize...23.81%
14...Complete Restoration into Museum...16.67%
10...Complete Restoration into Community Center...11.90%
05...Complete Restoration into Township Offices...5.95%
36...Combination of above...42.86%
04...None of the above...4.76%
07...NO Opinion...8.33%
04...Other: ...4.76%

Extracts of Other:

...Rental property to generate income...Working mill...Local products farmer's market...Sell, convert inside into commercial rental offices while leaving the outside historically intact.

28) How do you feel about the current status of recreational areas in the townships?

00...Too Much...00%
62...Sufficient...73.81%
20...Not Enough...23.81%
02...No Response

29) Would you like to see increased public transportation in the area?

12...YES...14.29% 66...NO...78.57% 06...No Response

30) Do you feel that the Township should continue to bear the cost of monthly recycling at the township building?

31...YES...36.90% 19...NO...22.62% 36...Never used it...42.86%

31) Do you find the following services ADEQUATE in the Township?

State Police:	49...YES...58.33%	20...NO...23.81%	12...N/A...14.29%
Fire:	72...YES...85.71%	03...NO...3.57%	08...N/A...9.52%
Ambulance:	63...YES...75%	07...NO...8.33%	12...N/A...14.29%
Road Depart:	61...YES...72.62%	21...NO...25%	00...N/A...0%
Snow Removal:	80...YES...95.24%	02...NO...2.38%	01...N/A...1.19%
Trash Collect:	57...YES...67.86%	07...NO...8.33%	23...N/A...27.38%
Open Govt:	56...YES...66.67%	16...NO...19.05%	11...N/A...13.10%
Public Library:	72...YES...85.71%	02...NO...2.38%	10...N/A...11.90%
Storm Water:	46...YES...54.76%	14...NO...16.67%	20...N/A...23.81%
Zoning:	54...YES...64.29%	06...NO...7.14%	19...N/A...22.62%

Additional comments for above: None

32) Do you attend local government monthly meetings?

26...YES...30.95% 56...NO...66.67% 00...NEVER...00%

Discussion:

- ...I love the sense of community in this beautiful majestic village that is a great place to raise children if the health & value of our local environment is protected.
- ...Eliminate the bridge on Stouts Valley Road over the Cooks Creek to control traffic.
- ...Have people walking their dogs control them.
- ...Include trash removal fee in our yearly taxes.
- ...If it is not broken, then PLEASE do not try to fix it.
- ...Township should be more aggressive in forcing PennDOT to improve the state roads.
- ...Good schools and libraries like ours are vital for the success of a community.
- ...Township officials would benefit from expanding an open mindset to all residents.
- ...Pipeline is a HUGE issue and we could lose everything we live here for should it be approved.
- ...Whenever possible public meetings should be kept as short as possible so people will attend.
- ...Go back to two large item clean-up days per year.
- ...The road crew does a great job. Keep our small town small. I will gladly pay more taxes in lieu of more development and traffic.

...Compromise & working together would be a great place to start!

...We moved to Durham Township for the beauty & peacefulness of this area. If we wanted a Lower or Central Bucks atmosphere we would have moved there. I am against making our roads slick & fast for hurried drivers. No more commercialism either.

...We need more & constant updates on information facing the township. Stormwater management needs to be updated as flooding has become a major issue upstream and in the New York reservoirs.

THE DURHAM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, STAFF AND ALL TOWNSHIP BOARDS WISH TO THANK EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS SURVEY.

END OF REPORT....