

Survey Response Summary

Characteristics of respondents

- 71% of respondents have lived in Dunstable for 10 or more years.
- More than one-third of respondents have school-aged children.
- Nearly one-third of respondents have a household member aged 65 years or older.
- 80% of respondents chose to live in Dunstable because of its rural character.
- 49% chose to live in town because of the school system.

Management and Finances

- Taxes, the need for additional revenue, and fiscal responsibility/sound management/cost containment were identified as three of the most critical issues facing the town over the next ten years. In fact, taxes ranked second on the list of 17 critical issues, while the need for additional revenue ranked eighth.

Schools

- Maintaining, improving or restoring the quality of the schools was rated the top issue facing the town over the next ten years. The school budget and rising educational costs ranked at number 3 on the list of top 17 issues.
- Under Question 7 (choice for spending the \$100 in town funds), the number two response was that the respondent would spend his/her money to enhance the school budget.

Housing

- Nearly half of the respondents felt that there are poor housing options (47.45%) for seniors, while 38.04% were unable to respond to this item.
- Over half (57%) of the respondents rated housing affordability as fair (19%) or poor (38%).
- The need for affordable housing ranked ninth on the list of 17 top issues facing the town, while the need for senior housing ranked number 14. Approximately 78% of respondents favor creating additional senior housing, and 57% of respondents favor creating additional affordable housing.

Economic Development

- 47% of the survey respondents rated access to employment as excellent or good, while 41% rated access to employment as fair or poor.
- Creating and attracting new businesses ranked as number 4 among the top 17 critical issues facing the town over the next ten years. Lack of a commercial/industrial tax base ranked as number 6.
- 88% of respondents favor creating additional opportunities for small-scale neighborhood-style business development, and 70% favor encouraging more intense economic development in strategic locations. 81% favor agri-tourism and eco-tourism.
- 62% of respondents oppose restricting or prohibiting business/commercial development.
- Under Question 7 (choice for spending \$100 in town funds), the number one response was to support new businesses.
- 89% of respondents favor adopting energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives.

Land Use

- Growth, development and overdevelopment ranked as number 5 among the top 17 issues facing the town over the next ten years while maintaining rural/agricultural character ranked tenth.
- 78% of survey respondents favor creating design guidelines for new development.
- 62% of respondents oppose revising the zoning regulations to allow single-family homes on smaller lots (1 acre instead of 2).
- 57% of respondents oppose revising zoning regulations to allow multi-family housing in certain areas.

Transportation

- 75% of respondents rate traffic flow in the Town Center as either good or fair; only 12.5% find it to be poor.
- Over 85% of respondents rate traffic flow in other areas of town as excellent or good.
- Over 85% of respondents rate speed enforcement as excellent or good.
- Over half (56%) of the respondents felt that pedestrian accommodations are poor, while only 22% felt that they are excellent or good.

- 77% favor increasing available accommodations for non-motorized transportation, while 71% of respondents favor adding sidewalks or pathways.
- Adding sidewalks was ranked third in responding to Question 7, where respondents identified where they would spend their \$100 in town funds.
- 45% of the respondents rate bicycle facilities as poor, while 22% felt that they are excellent or good.

Open Space and Recreation

- Over 60% of the respondents rate the number of recreational facilities/opportunities as excellent or good.
- Approximately 87% of the respondents rate the amount of open space protected as excellent or good.
- 52% of survey respondents favor acquiring additional open space.
- 69% of survey respondents favor protecting additional agricultural lands.

Natural and Cultural Resources

- 90% of respondents rate the protection of wetlands, wildlife habitat and water resources as excellent or good.
- 89% of respondents rate agricultural preservation as excellent or good.
- 83% of respondents rate forestry as excellent or good.
- 81% of respondents rate historic preservation as excellent or good.
- 68% of respondents rate cultural/community events as excellent or good.

Services and Infrastructure

- The following services were rated as either excellent or good by at least 50% of the respondents:
 - Public Safety/EMS (83%)
 - Schools (76%)
 - Town Hall (68%)
 - Library (64.5%)
 - Road Maintenance (58%)
 - Recreation (54%)

(Of note, many respondents were unable to rate elder services, code enforcement, veteran's services, animal control, or water services.)

- Upgrading/expanding the water system ranked number 7 among the top 17 issues facing the town over the next ten years, and 68% of survey respondents favor improving public water infrastructure.
- Road maintenance ranked number 11 on the list of top 17 issues facing the town over the next ten years.
- Public safety funding and staffing ranked number 12 on the list of top 17 issues.
- Traffic on Route 113 and in the Town Center ranked number 14 on the list of top 17 issues facing the town over the next ten years.
- Infrastructure maintenance and improvements ranked number 16 on the list of the top 17 issues facing the town over the next ten years
- Maintaining and improving municipal services ranked as number 17 on the list of top 17 issues facing the town over the next ten years.

Additional Summaries of Questions 5 - 8

Question 5- Responses submitted by more than 9 individuals by rank

1. Maintain/improve/restore quality of schools (66 responses)
2. Taxes (63)
3. School budget/increasing costs/lack of school funding (42)
4. Create/establish/attract more businesses (37)
5. Growth/development/overdevelopment (33)
6. Lack of commercial/industrial tax base (31)
7. Water system needs upgrading/expansion (27)
8. Need additional revenue (23)
9. Affordable housing (18)
10. Maintaining rural/agricultural character (18)
11. Road maintenance (17)
12. Public safety funding and staffing/full time fire and EMS (14)
13. Fiscal responsibility/sound management/cost containment (13)
14. Traffic on Route 113/in Town Center (12)
15. Senior/elderly housing (11)
16. Infrastructure maintenance/improvements (12)
17. Maintain/improve municipal services (10)

Question 5: 10 or more responses by topical category

Management and Finances

- Taxes (63)
- Need additional revenue (23)
- Fiscal responsibility/sound management/cost containment (13)

Schools

- Maintain/improve/restore quality of schools (66)
- School budget/increasing costs/lack of school funding (42)

Housing

- Senior/elderly housing (11)
- Affordable housing (18)

Economic Development

- Create/establish/attract more businesses (37)
- Lack of commercial/industrial tax base (31)

Land Use

- Growth/development/overdevelopment (33)
- Maintaining rural/agricultural character (18)

Transportation

- Traffic on Route 113/in Town Center (12)
- Traffic in general (10)

Services and Infrastructure

- Water system needs upgrading/expansion (27)
- Public safety funding and staffing/full time fire and EMS (14)
- Road maintenance (17)
- Infrastructure maintenance/improvements (12)
- Maintain/improve municipal services (10)

Question 6:

Majority of respondents favor the following:

1. Adopting energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives (89%)
2. Creating additional opportunities for small-scale neighborhood-style business establishments (88%)
3. Encouraging agri-tourism and eco-tourism (81%)
4. Creating housing opportunities for seniors (78%)
5. Creating design guidelines for new development (78%)
6. Increasing available accommodations for non-motorized transportation (bicycles and pedestrians) (77%)
7. Adding sidewalks/pathways (71%)
8. Encouraging more intense economic development in strategic locations (70%)
9. Protecting additional agricultural lands (69%)
10. Improving public water infrastructure (68%)
11. Creating affordable housing (57%)
12. Acquiring additional open space (52%)

Majority of respondents oppose the following:

1. Restricting or prohibiting business/commercial development (62%)
 2. Revising zoning regulations to allow single-family homes on smaller lots (1 acre instead of 2) in certain areas (61%)
 3. Revising zoning regulations to allow multi-family housing in certain areas (57%)
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Question 7- If every Dunstable resident were given \$100 in town funds, which project or initiative would you fund with your share?

Top 3 Responses:

1. Support new businesses (21.71%)
 2. Enhance school budget (18.99%)
 3. Add sidewalks (10.85%)
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Question 8 - Six Major Themes from the Responses

- Thank you for the survey and seeking our input!
- Improve/fund schools
- Allow more business
- There is already enough open space
- Protect rural character