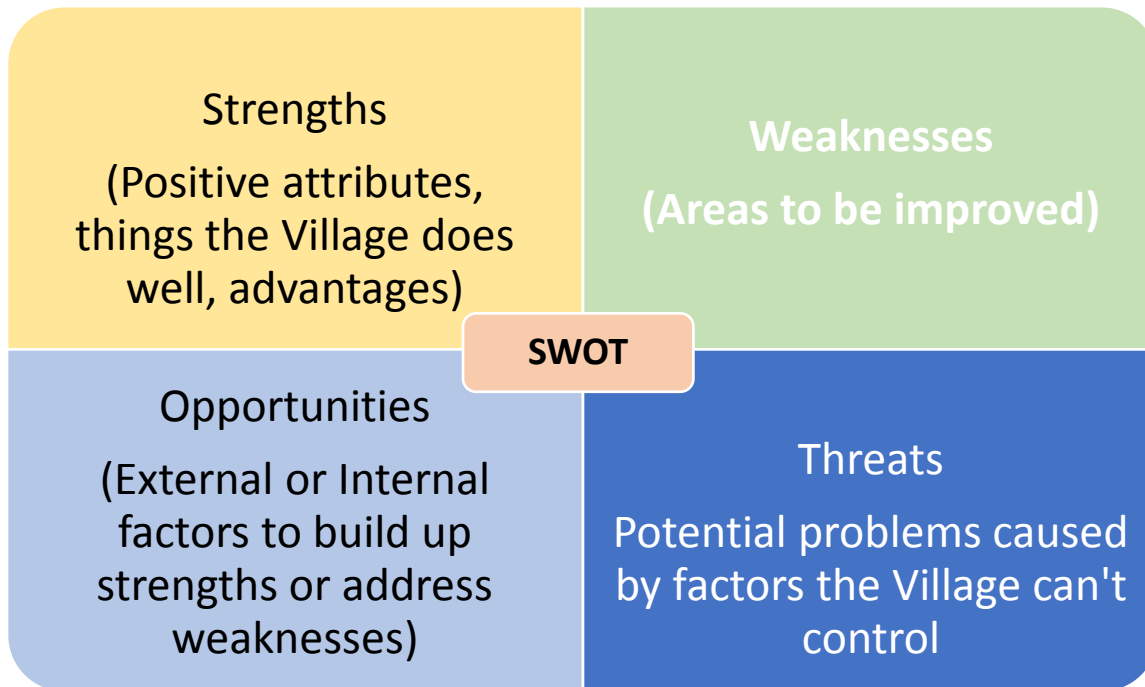


Town of Durham

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis v1 October 2018

The following was compiled from the public workshop. This will be added to with information from the focus groups and survey.



Strengths

- Natural beauty (views, creeks, trees)
- Home town
- Small town/ community
- Rural (open space)
- Relaxed pace/ simplicity of life/ peace & quiet/ Privacy
- Personal freedom
- Closeness (nice people/neighbors helping others)
- Historic character
- Resorts
- Local police dept
- Within reach of NYC & Albany
- Working on improving our homes & personal interactions w/ neighbors
- Local restaurants, friendly shop owners
- Community support local fundraisers – fire depts
- Creates a sense of community
- Summer recreation program for children
- Local ambulance

- Task force has lots of family-oriented activities year round
- Access to recreational venues
- Town roads are in good shape
- Second home-owners are an asset

Weaknesses

- Budget and funding in general
- Funding for ambulance in particular
- Elementary School was functioning in 2008 when first plan was done. Now it is not.
- School was center of community - significant loss of sense of community
- Significant challenge to attract people to live here when there is no school locally
- Durham was a farming community – now farmers can't farm profitably
- Loss of community events
- Seniors services and housing needed – age in place
- High taxes here may drive people out of their homes
- There is no doctor office in Durham or any urgent care
- There is lack of sustainable revenue from something other than single family residences
- Tourism industry has decreased. Old buildings formerly tourist use - run down or converted to apartments.
- Blight is a big problem. Houses and lack of property maintenance detracts Durham as an attractive place for new residents.
- Aesthetics and property maintenance are poor
- Sidewalks & street lamps needed
- Abandoned cars on properties
- Code enforcement needed for clean up
- Second home owners are new residents that don't participate in community life
- Employment opportunity needed
- Jobs for youth needed, above minimum wage
- Need to be business friendly
- Need restaurants (not chains)
- Improve parking for businesses needed
- More signage for business districts needed
- There is a clash of cultures between long-term residents and newcomers. Decreases sense of community. New residents vs. old – cooperation needed.
- Need to keep people (age 30-50) in the area
- Need to recognize town has changed
- Swimming hole loss
- Walking trail needed
- We are too far from larger population areas (Albany) - makes it hard to attract business and industry
- Lack of broadband and cell technology. Poor cell network. This is connected to employment issue – lack of communication technology limits home based businesses and those that want to telecommute. Issue is both accessibility and affordability.
- Lack of a regional view – we need to become more involved in regional groups and efforts. There is need to do more with Greene County agencies and organizations, especially in funding requests.

- No infrastructure – is a problem for attracting business. Lack of water and sewer plays part in business development. Areas along the Creek are also difficult as they are poor places for septic system use.
- Ongoing issue related to dirt roads. To pave or not to pave.
- The website is in place, but people don't use it. Lack of broadband is part of the reason.
- There are a lot of conversions to Section 8 housing, adversely affecting Town. People are buying up properties to convert to Section 8. They can rent them by the week. Some are not maintained well.
- Brandow Park is not upgraded.
- Weight limits on roads - tractor trailers disobey
- Lack of Parks and Recreation
- No health care close-by, no doctors
- Drug use problem
- Motorcycle noise
- Speeding through town
- Snow plowing – on property, drifting
- Road crews - tarmac on roads & lawns
- We do not yet have *“appropriate technology and amenities to compete”*

Opportunities

- Implementation of goals from 2008
- Improve quality of public services
- Issues in the hamlets may be different from those in the whole town. The plan needs to address this and be flexible to identify different issues in different places.
- There is a need to market our town
- There is need for a strong action plan and the need to engage community more. Town Board needs an annual work plan to implement the recommendations in the Plan. Make the plan relevant.
- Removal of no residence law for assistance
- Improve town communication to residents
- Laws & regulation to preserve home rule
- Bring back our swimming holes/ restore water recreation
- Safe and legal access to Catskill Creek
- Parks and Recreation needs
- Trails needed
- Youth programs for summer – day camp
- More things for our children to do & offered to make them want to stay
- Highlight business district
- More shops
- Encourage 'green' business
- Economic business development (Route 145 – Oak Hill and East Durham)
- Be business friendly
- Improve parking for businesses
- More signage for business districts
- Attract restaurants (not chains)
- Encourage businesses that can afford to provide infrastructure
- More control of development
- Need more tourism – attract people here

- Revitalize churches
- Bring in health care, doctors
- Blight - dilapidated properties & businesses: Code enforcement needed, impose fines
- Enforce existing laws – health, building, traffic, land use (too many properties w/ multiple non-registered vehicles, blight, tall unkept yards, buildings in various states of construction – not progressing – buildings in need of demolition)
- Enhance visual presence of hamlets (expand sidewalks, add street lights)
- Work on well-maintained properties
- Greater involvement and volunteerism
- Better use of elementary school (fitness classes, after school care, seniors)
- Community center – use empty building that isn't being used. Increase our summer rec program to throughout the year
- Have a community wide event that offers food
- Encourage new residents to move here
- Create job opportunities/ Increase broadband for telecommuters/ Attract industry that can afford water & sewer infrastructure
- Loss of elementary school – reopen:
Bring back Durham students - Committee to start process/ Hire a consultant/ tax basis- increased/
Need more info on money savings for closing the school- full disclosure / Apply for grants
- Be more inclusionary
- Section 8 housing – too much coming in
- Removal of no residence law for assistance/ Zoning/ Good legal team/ Moratorium on building or limiting certain types of housing
- Expand town website with more local info/ Once a year send newsletter to second homeowners with info (re: elected officials)/ Town quarterly newsletter
- Trade school - teens
- Encourage assisted living/ transportation service
- Creative legislation – our people have a say, not just people coming to make a venue/ building
- Code enforcement – re: Industrial waste dumped into creek
- Financial support to maintain expenses for elementary school recreation activities
- Local government working with community
- Expand senior housing as assisted living
- Senior services – grocery & pharmacy delivery, transportation, meals on wheels
- Need to get GSK more input into the community
- Get rid of drug problem
- Offering garbage pick-up spring and fall at town barn
- Farming opportunities
- Improving the quality of life
- Tourism

Threats

- Effects of growth and how can we keep our community values and character in the face of growth. The fear was expressed that the Town will lose what it is in the face of the growth they need/want.
- Section 8 housing – too much coming in
- Loss of individual property rights
- Industrial waste dumped into creek

- Loss of sense of community