



**NY Forward**

## **Village of Dolgeville, NY**

**New York Forward**

**Survey Summary**

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Prepared by Highland Planning

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## OVERVIEW

### Background

In 2023, the Village of Dolgeville was selected by the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) to receive a \$2.25 million award from New York State Governor Kathy Hochul through the NY Forward (NYF) program. The award will allow the Village to develop a Strategic Investment Plan and implement key catalytic projects to advance the community's vision for downtown improvements. Projects selected for funding by the state will transform the community and support a vibrant local economy.

NY Forward was launched in 2022 to support a more equitable downtown recovery for New York State's smaller communities, with a focus on hamlets, villages, and neighborhood-scale commercial centers. NY Forward is led by the New York State Department of State, in close partnership with Empire State Development, Homes and Community Renewal, and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

### Survey Methodology

In June 2023, Highland Planning administered a survey to gauge community members' perceptions of opportunities within the Village of Dolgeville in order to inform the funding options for the New York Forward Program. This survey will advance the work of the Local Planning Committee by identifying perspectives and concerns of community members. This document summarizes the results of the community survey administered as part of the NYF public engagement process.

The online questionnaire was hosted on Survey Monkey and was estimated to take 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey was conducted from June 20, 2023 – July 30, 2023 and received 82 responses. The survey was promoted through the Dolgeville website, a pop-up event, and social media posts.

The survey asked the following eleven questions:

1. When you think about what Downtown Dolgeville is like presently, what word would you use to describe the area to your friends and family?
2. When you think about what Downtown Dolgeville might be in 15 years, what word would you like to be able to use to describe the area to your friends and family?
3. How often do you visit Downtown Dolgeville?
4. What do you think is currently missing in Downtown Dolgeville?

5. What enhancements are most needed to encourage new investment and economic growth in Downtown Dolgeville?
6. What business establishments would you like to see more of in Downtown Dolgeville?
7. Which of the following housing options should Dolgeville prioritize within the Downtown area?
8. What discourages you from going to Downtown Dolgeville more often?
9. What are the highest priorities for Downtown Dolgeville?
10. What best describes your relationship to Dolgeville?
11. What is your home zip code?

A majority, 81.71%, of respondents came from the 13329 zip code, followed by 13452 with 3.66%. The remainder of the respondents resided in 13041, 13365, 13416, 13454, 13470, 21797, 32764, and 33510. The zip code 13329 is associated with the local post office located within Dolgeville.

## Key Findings

High-level takeaways from the survey include the following observations:

**Respondents focused on the state of the roads.** The state of the roads has implications for both safety and community pride.

**Respondents desire a vibrant, bustling, and prosperous community.** Respondents want to see a balance of historic charm with modernity. This vision includes economic growth, community involvement, green spaces, and a focus on welcoming families.

**There is a clear desire for more diverse amenities in Downtown Dolgeville.** Respondents expressed a need for increased retail options, entertainment venues, recreational facilities, and dining establishments. This highlights the community's wish for more local opportunities to engage and spend time. Specialty stores and boutiques were highlighted as a desired retail type by 57% of respondents.

**The survey underscores the importance of community gathering spaces and family-friendly entertainment.** These priorities are closely aligned with creating an inviting atmosphere where residents can connect, engage in activities, and socialize.

The results of the survey show a desire for affordable housing options and economic growth. Respondents suggest achieving this through supporting businesses and utilizing vacant properties which highlights the community's desire to attract new residents, encourage investment, and enhance the overall quality of life.

## Survey Results

Results of the survey are included below:

**Question 1:** When you think about what Downtown Dolgeville is like presently, what word would you use to describe the area to your friends and family?

Some respondents view Dolgeville positively, noting its quaintness, beauty, and potential as a nice, quiet, and friendly place to live. However, there are concerns about the town being rundown, with abandoned areas, neglected buildings, and a lack of development. Associated words also included sad, depressing, and empty. Overall, the opinions about Dolgeville, NY vary from appreciation for its charm to worries about its condition and development.

**Question 2:** When you think about what Downtown Dolgeville might be like in 15 years, what word would you like to be able to use to describe the area to your friends and family?

In envisioning Dolgeville, NY, 15 years from now, the descriptions paint a picture of transformation and growth. The town is expected to evolve into a vibrant, thriving community with a mix of desirable qualities. Respondents' answers are categorized as follows:

- **Positive Development:** The town is described as booming, vibrant, bustling, prosperous, clean, and desirable. It has become a place people are excited to visit and explore. Young families spend time at local shops and eateries. The town has successfully transformed from previously rundown areas into a picturesque and revitalized destination.
- **Community Involvement:** The sense of community remains strong, with a focus on family fun, being family-friendly, welcoming, and offering various opportunities.
- **Economic Improvement:** Economic improvements are evident, with previously empty buildings now occupied by businesses, contributing to the overall revitalization.

- **Green Spaces:** The town has successfully combined local businesses with green spaces, creating a walkable and enjoyable environment for residents and visitors.
- **Historic Charm and Modernity:** Dolgeville maintains its historic charm, with beautifully repaired and renovated buildings, while also embracing modernity and progress. Residents take pride in the town's history, renovated infrastructure, and improved street appearance.
- **Welcoming and Accessible:** The town is known for being welcoming, offering unique shopping experiences and accessible restaurants for everyone.
- **Engaging Activities:** Community spaces and recreational opportunities, including a playground for kids and various activities, enhance the overall quality of life.
- **Progressive and Forward-Thinking:** Dolgeville is seen as a progressive and forward-thinking community that values all age groups.

**Question 3: How often do you visit Downtown Dolgeville?**

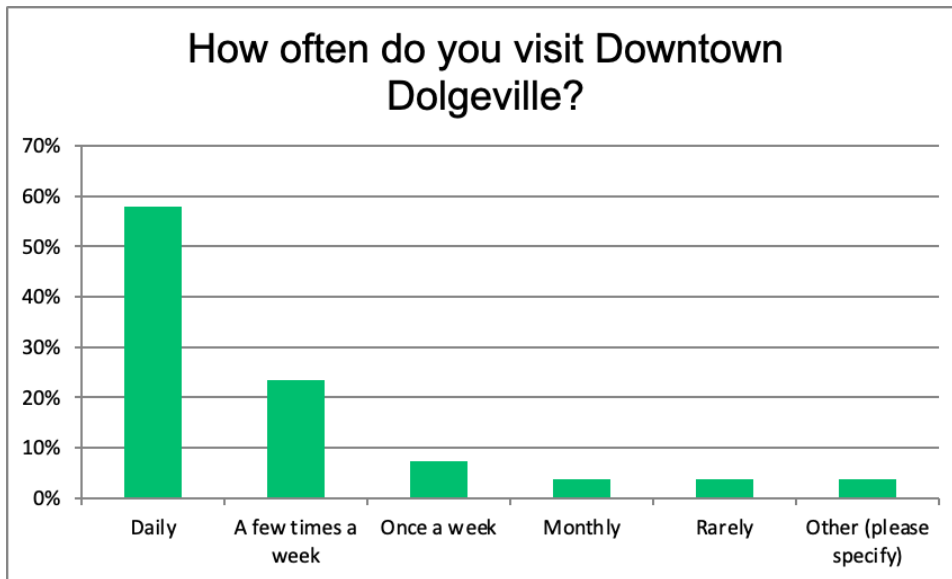


Figure 1.

The survey data indicated the frequency of visits to Downtown Dolgeville as follows:

- **Daily:** 58% (47 individuals)
- **A few times a week:** 23% (19 individuals)
- **Once a week:** 7% (6 individuals)
- **Monthly:** 4% (3 individuals)
- **Rarely:** 4% (3 individuals)
- **Other:** 4% (3 individuals)

Question 4: What do you think is currently missing in Downtown Dolgeville?

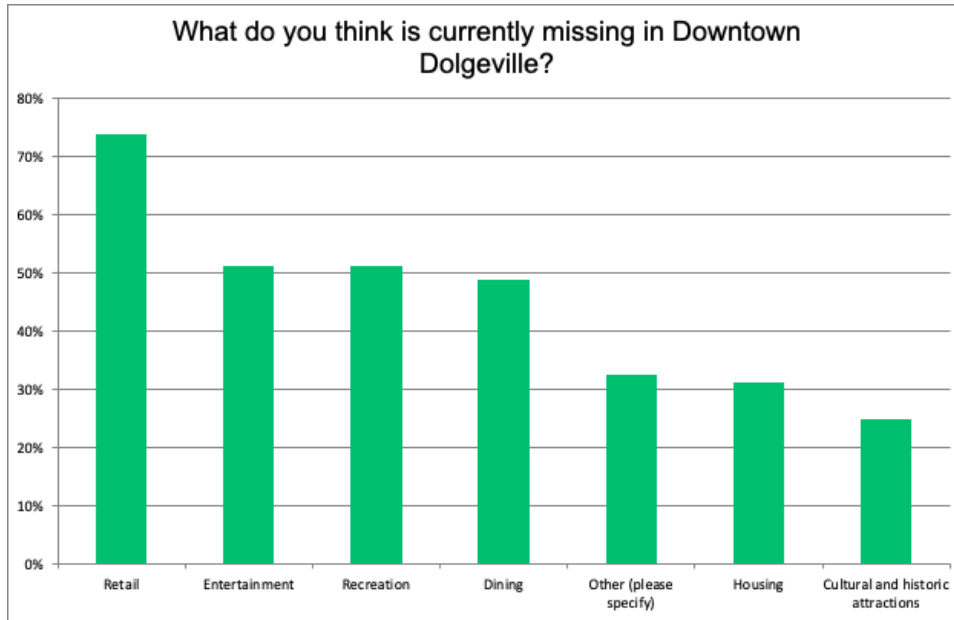


Figure 2.

The data reflects a variety of interests among the respondents, with a significant focus on retail followed by entertainment, recreation, and dining.

- **Retail:** 74% (59 individuals)
- **Entertainment:** 51% (41 individuals)
- **Recreation:** 51% (41 individuals)
- **Dining:** 49% (39 individuals)
- **Other (please specify):** 33% (26 individuals)
- **Housing:** 31% (25 individuals)
- **Cultural and historic attractions:** 25% (20 individuals)

The respondents who answered “other” made specifications in the following categories:

- **Infrastructure and Facilities:** New pavement, smooth roads (several mentions), parking, trees, benches, shade, and seating, affordable and accessible transportation, cell service
- **Business and Services:** Dinner options, professional services, nail salon, butcher, fish market, clothing store, Long John Silver’s, Bennigan’s, full buildings
- **Jobs:** Manufacturing

- **Childcare:** Affordable childcare/early childhood intervention, activities for children
- **Community and Recreation:** Fitness area, things open in the evenings, softball field, some type of sports or multi-use facility, movie theatre with a stage

**Question 5:** What enhancements are most needed to encourage new investment and economic growth in Downtown Dolgeville?

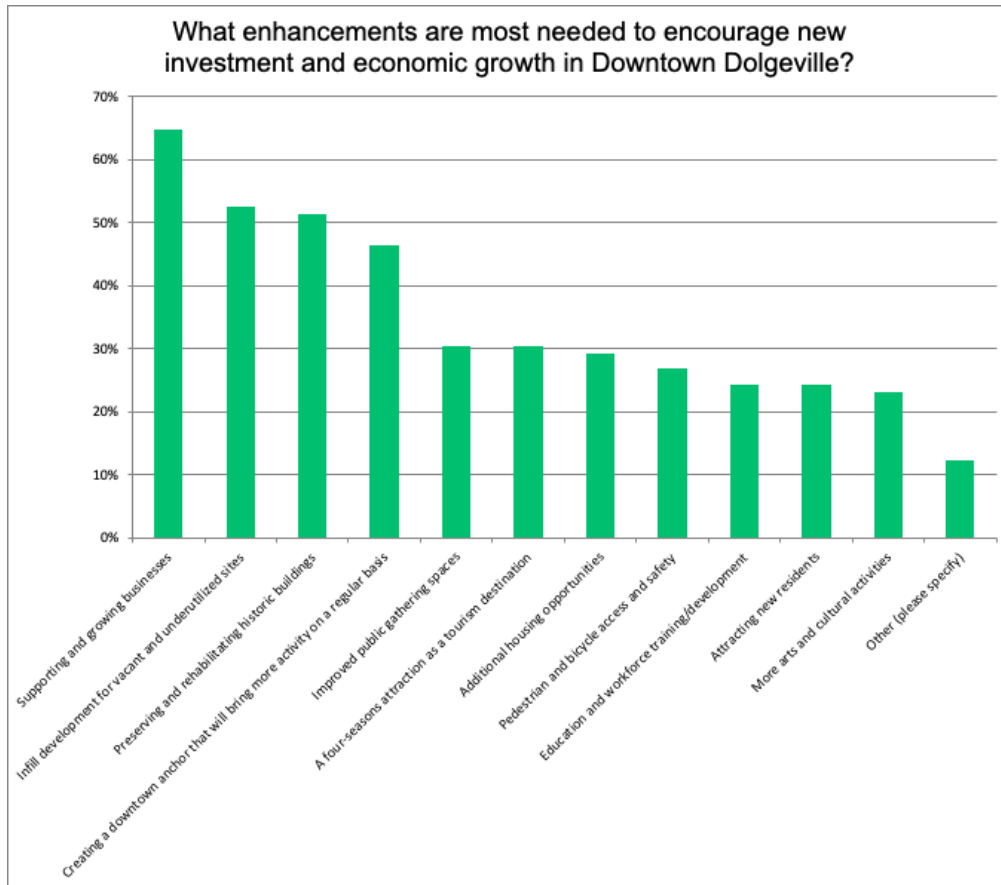


Figure 3.

Respondents’ answers revolved around urban development by supporting businesses and utilizing vacant properties specifically those that are historic.

- **Supporting and growing businesses:** 65% (53 individuals)
- **Infill development for vacant and underutilized sites:** 52% (43 individuals)
- **Preserving and rehabilitating historic buildings:** 51% (42 individuals)
- **Creating a downtown anchor that will bring more activity on a regular basis:** 46% (38 individuals)
- **Improved public gathering spaces:** 30% (25 individuals)



- A four-seasons attraction as a tourism destination: 30% (25 individuals)
- Additional housing opportunities: 29% (24 individuals)
- Pedestrian and bicycle access and safety: 27% (22 individuals)
- Education and workforce training/development: 24% (20 individuals)
- Attracting new residents: 24% (20 individuals)
- More arts and cultural activities: 23% (19 individuals)
- Other (please specify): 12% (10 individuals)

The "other" responses are summarized as follows:

- **Infrastructure and Appearance:** Improve roads, renovate old buildings, improve wastewater
- **Transport and Accessibility:** Enhance public transportation and childcare with transportation.
- **Economic Growth:** Want more stores and businesses.
- **Urban Planning:** Create green spaces, consider a roundabout, and establish a park.
- **Recreation:** Spaces for active youth such as a skateboard area.

**Question 6:** What business establishments would you like to see more of in Downtown Dolgeville?

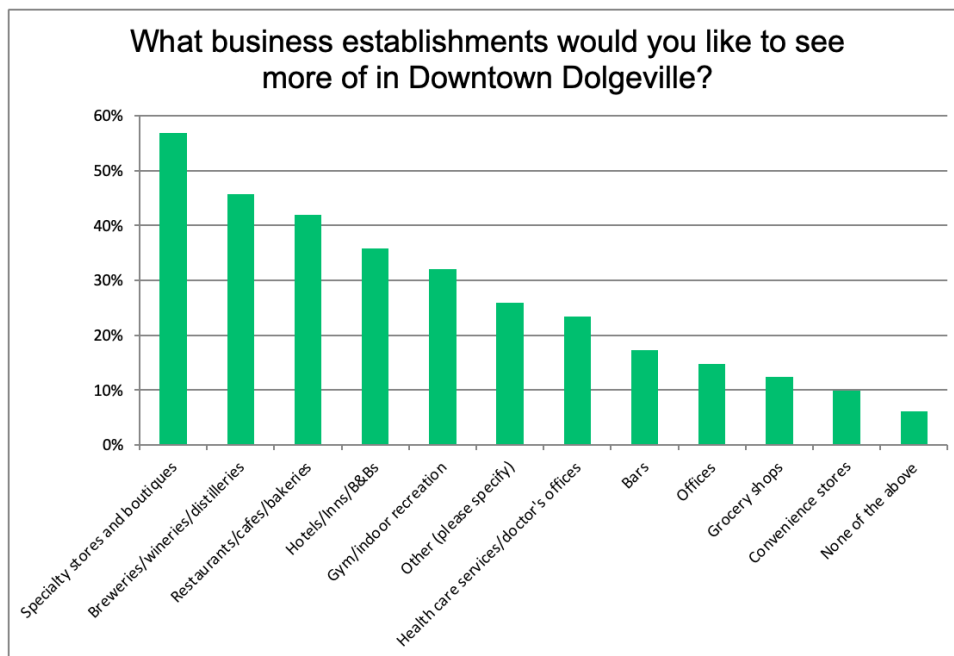


Figure 4.

The majority of respondents expressed interest in specialty stores and boutiques followed by breweries/wineries/distilleries, and restaurants/cafes/bakeries.

- **Specialty Stores and Boutiques:** 57% (46 individuals)
- **Breweries/Wineries/Distilleries:** 46% (37 individuals)
- **Restaurants/Cafes/Bakeries:** 42% (34 individuals)
- **Hotels/Inns/B&Bs:** 36% (29 individuals)
- **Gym/Indoor Recreation:** 32% (26 individuals)
- **Health Care Services/Doctor's Offices:** 23% (19 individuals)
- **Bars:** 17% (14 individuals)
- **Offices:** 15% (12 individuals)
- **Grocery Shops:** 12% (10 individuals)
- **Convenience Stores:** 10% (8 individuals)
- **None of the Above:** 6% (5 individuals)
- **Other (Please Specify):** 26% (21 individuals)

The suggestions in the “other” category are categorized as follows:

- **Infrastructure:** Improved cell tower coverage, establishment of a meat processing facility, creation of an art center for children, enhanced entertainment options, a liquor store, mom and pop shops, manufacturing facilities, Aldi supermarket, a dollar store, clothing store
- **Services:** Childcare services, legal services, nail salon, deli, bank, proposal for repurposing the old Dolgeville school space for a certified kitchen/building
- **Healthcare and Facilities:** A full-time doctor in the new clinic, mention of additional services and facilities needed, veterinary services,
- **Youth and Recreation:** Desire for indoor entertainment spaces for kids
- **Environment:** Suggestion for a unique business along the creek that leverages its natural properties for eco-friendly purposes

**Question 7:** Which of the following housing options should Dolgeville prioritize within the Downtown area?

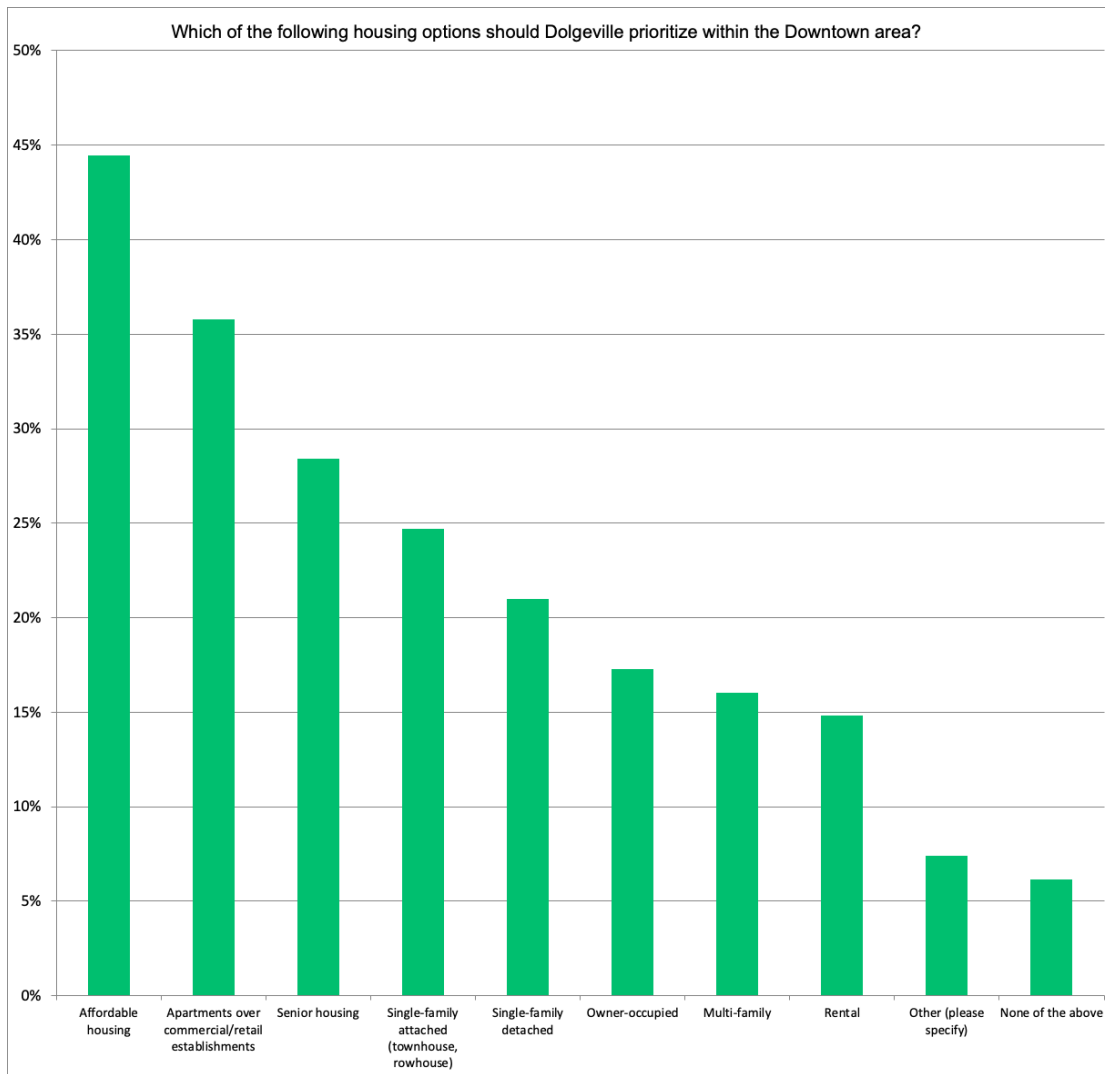


Figure 5.

The majority of respondents expressed interest in affordable housing or apartments over commercial/retail establishments followed by senior housing and single-family attached houses. The fewest respondents highlighted rental housing as a housing option to prioritize.

- **Affordable Housing:** 44% (36 individuals)
- **Apartments over Commercial/Retail Establishments:** 36% (29 individuals)
- **Senior Housing:** 28% (23 individuals)
- **Single-Family Attached (Townhouse, Rowhouse):** 25% (20 individuals)

- **Single-Family Detached:** 21% (17 individuals)
- **Owner-Occupied Housing:** 17% (14 individuals)
- **Multi-Family Housing:** 16% (13 individuals)
- **Rental Housing:** 15% (12 individuals)
- **Other:** 7% (6 individuals)
- **None of the Above:** 6% (5 individuals)

The suggestions in the “other” category are summarized as follows:

- Incentives to bring families with jobs into Dolgeville
- Increased retail
- Housing that is taken care of
- Upscale, luxury apartments
- Vacant housing needs to be improved
- A question arose about what “affordable housing” means in this context

**Question 8:** What discourages you from going to Downtown Dolgeville more often?

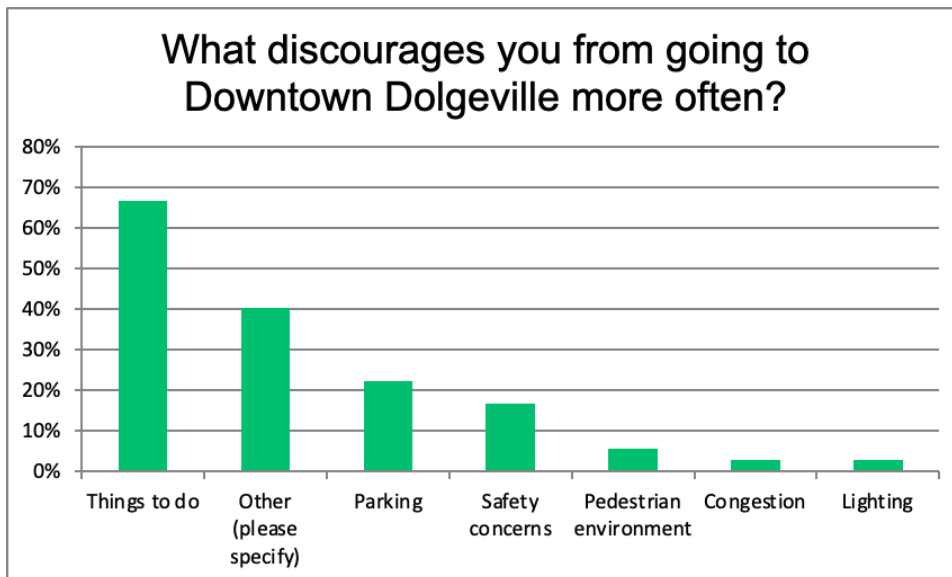


Figure 6.

Community members expressed a desire for enhanced recreational opportunities and voiced concerns about parking and safety.

- **Things to do:** 67% (48 individuals)
- **Parking:** 22% (16 individuals)
- **Safety Concerns:** 17% (12 individuals)

- **Pedestrian Environment:** 6% (4 individuals)
- **Congestion:** 3% (2 individuals)
- **Lighting:** 3% (2 individuals)
- **Other (Please Specify):** 40% (29 individuals)

Many respondents highlighted concerns in the “other” category as summarized below:

- **Infrastructure and Road Conditions:** Many respondents highlighted Main Street as a road that needs immediate attention as it is a hazard and unsightly. The roads were mentioned in a general sense of needing improvement as well. One respondent also mentioned the need for sidewalks. Some drivers ignore crosswalks.
- **Local Shopping and Services:** Currently residents need to go to Little Falls or Herkimer to get items they cannot get in town but would prefer to support local stores. Dolgeville is in need of a clothing store.
- **Attractions and Entertainment:** Limited variety of restaurants, there is little to do and very few places to eat, there is no "window-shopping" in Dolgeville so there is little reason to take a leisurely walk in the downtown area, there are not any entertainment services or businesses.
- **Community Perception and Engagement:** One respondent said that the people of Dolgeville are unwelcoming, several said that there is nothing that draws people or families to Dolgeville.

Question 9: What are the highest priorities for Downtown Dolgeville?

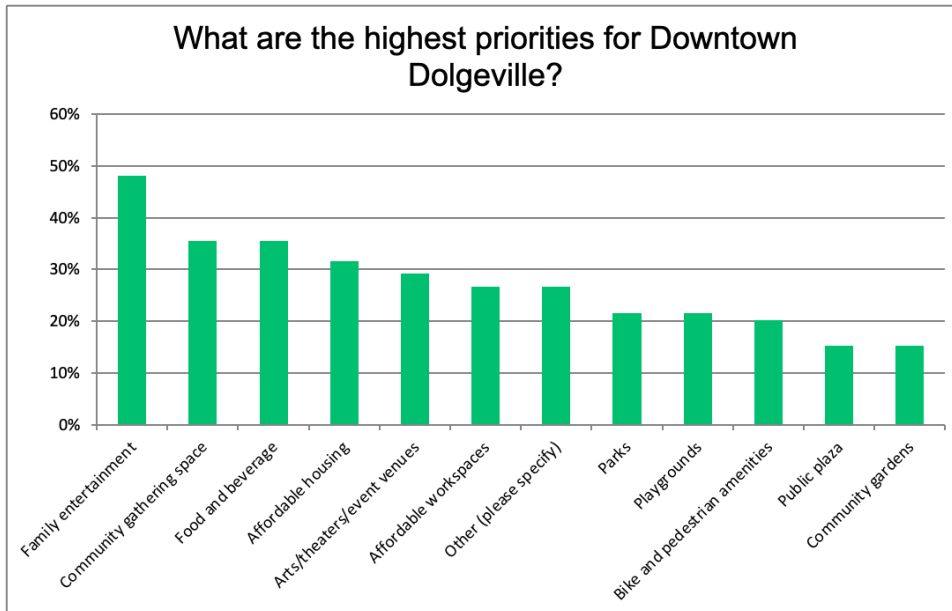


Figure 7.

Family entertainment led as a priority for Downtown Dolgeville followed by community gathering spaces, increased food and beverage options, and affordable housing, all receiving over 30% of respondent’s selection.

- **Family Entertainment:** 48% (38 individuals)
- **Community Gathering Space:** 35% (28 individuals)
- **Food and Beverage:** 35% (28 individuals)
- **Affordable Housing:** 32% (25 individuals)
- **Arts/Theaters/Event Venues:** 29% (23 individuals)
- **Affordable Workspaces:** 27% (21 individuals)
- **Parks:** 22% (17 individuals)
- **Playgrounds:** 22% (17 individuals)
- **Bike and Pedestrian Amenities:** 20% (16 individuals)
- **Public Plaza:** 15% (12 individuals)
- **Community Gardens:** 15% (12 individuals)
- **Other (Please Specify):** 27% (21 individuals)

Those who responded in the “other” category gave answers within the following themes:

- **Infrastructure and Roads:** Repave the main road (several comments), restoration of aged buildings, parking
- **Economic Development and Jobs:** Job variety and more employment opportunities, more business, retail, and industry
- **Community Services and Amenities:** Affordable and accessible childcare with transportation, senior services such as transportation
- **Quality of Life:** Make Dolgeville a place in which people want to live, work, and raise their families
- **Attractions:** Create a sports facility, theatre, a water park for the kids

**Question 10: What best describes your relationship to Dolgeville?**

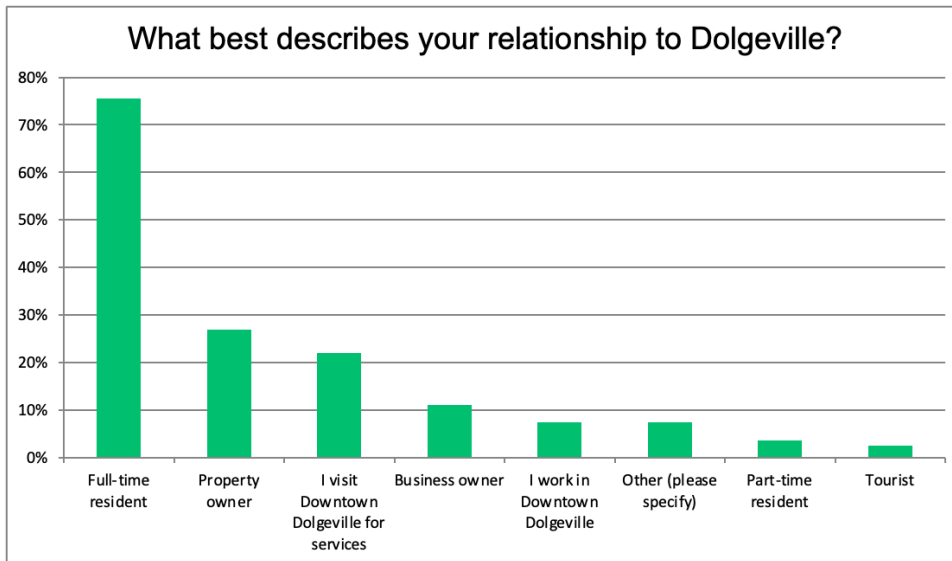


Figure 8.

- **Full-Time Resident:** 76% (62 individuals)
- **Property Owner:** 27% (22 individuals)
- **I Visit Downtown Dolgeville for Services:** 22% (18 individuals)
- **Business Owner:** 11% (9 individuals)
- **I Work in Downtown Dolgeville:** 7% (6 individuals)
- **Part-Time Resident:** 4% (3 individuals)
- **Tourist:** 2% (2 individuals)
- **Other (Please Specify):** 7% (6 individuals)

Those who responded with “other” said they have lived in Dolgeville all their life, live just outside of town, or have family in Dolgeville so visit often.