

North East Borough and Township Residents Survey
Results and Summary
10/15/09

Between the on-line and hard copy responses, there were a total of 158 surveys completed. With that number of returns and an estimated Borough and Township population of 12-14,000 (12,303 in the 2000 census), we have a confidence level of 95% that the results reflect the opinions of all the residents, within a 7.75% margin of error.

A question-by-question summary of the responses:

1. **Age:** 64% between 40-64, 20% between 25-39, 13% 65 and over.
2. **Gender:** 72% female.
3. **How often do you visit DT North East?**
 - A. More than once a week – 41%
 - B. Daily – 37% (78% more than once a week or daily.)
 - C. Once or twice a month – 11%
 - D. Once or twice a year – 6%
 - E. Once a week – 5%
4. **What are your primary reasons for visiting DTNE?**
 - A. Grocery/Specialty Foods – 75%
 - B. Post office – 75%
 - C. Banking/Financial – 69%
 - D. Restaurants/Bars – 64%
 - E. Pharmacy – 57%
 - F. Events/Festivals – 54%
 - G. Gas/Auto Repair – 47%
 - H. Doctor/Dentist/Optometrlist – 41%
 - I. Church/Day Care – 39%
 - J. Retail Shopping – 37%
 - K. Florists/Gifts – 34%
 - L. Library – 33%
 - M. Hair/Salon – 31%
5. **What is the average amount you spend *per week* in DTNE?**
 - A. \$51-\$100 – 30%
 - B. \$26-\$50 – 28%
 - C. Under \$25 – 24%
 - D. \$101-\$200 – 14%
 - E. Over \$200 – 5%
6. **Do you feel parking in DTNE is a problem?**
 - A. No – 83%
 - B. Most frequent comments if Yes (17%):
 - i. Top three complaints:
 - a. Downtown merchants/employees parking in front of their stores.
 - b. Parking meters – 2 hours not enough time, poorly enforced.

- c. Difficult to parallel park – size of spaces, narrow streets, traffic.
- ii. Other comments (by frequency of mention)
 - a. Not enough parking, especially at peak hours.
 - b. Event parking.
 - c. On Main Street.
 - d. Need 15 minute spots for drop-offs.
 - e. Difficult for vans, especially those with wheelchair lifts.

7. Which of the following characteristics most influence you to shop for goods and services in DTNE? (Choose and rank your top five.)

- A. Convenient Location – 4.14 (ranking on 1-5 scale)
- B. Shopping Local – 3.41
- C. Variety & Selection – 3.03
- D. Best Prices – 3.02
- E. Clean Store – 2.84
- F. Sales and/or specials – 2.83
- G. Personal/Courteous Service – 2.74
- H. Safe Environment – 2.70
- I. Pleasant Atmosphere – 2.65

8. Where do you typically shop, other than in DTNE?

- A. HarborCreek Area – 72%
- B. Peach Street – 67%
- C. Millcreek Mall – 45%
- D. North East Twp – 21%
- E. Westfield – 6%
- F. Downtown Erie – 5%
- G. Other:
 - i. On-line
 - ii. Buffalo/Colony Plaza

9. If you don't regularly shop in DTNE, what improvements and/or activities would encourage you to do so? (Rank each from 1-5.)

- A. Additional Stores/Services – 4.31
- B. Competitive Pricing – 4.02
- C. Destination Retail Shops – 3.83
- D. General Clean-up of the DT – 3.72
- E. Attractive Stores – 3.71
- F. Common Business Hours – 3.45
- G. Special Events & Activities – 3.36
- H. Improved Building Interiors – 3.28
- I. Enhanced Historic Features – 3.23
- J. Improved Traffic Flow – 2.67
- K. Improved Pedestrian Flow – 2.62
- L. More Green Space – 2.59
- M. Improved Sidewalks & Curbs – 2.58
- N. Other – most frequent comments:
 - i. Evening hours for more businesses.
 - ii. Extended weekend hours.
 - iii. More of a selection of stores.
 - iv. Clothing stores.

- v. Place to promote local artists.
- vi. Problem area – kids hanging out in front of Common Ground and in the Park.

10. What kinds of stores or services (new and in addition to existing businesses) would you like to see in DTNE? (Rank each from 1-5.)

- A. Bakery – 4.04
- B. Clothing Store – 3.96
- C. Local manufacturers' Store (Welch's. Better Baked, etc.) – 3.80
- D. Specialty Clothing – 3.62
- E. Family Restaurant – 3.59
- F. Specialty Gift Shop – 3.48
- G. Fine Dining – 3.39
- H. Sporting Goods/Golf/Hunt/Fish – 3.39
- I. Arts Incubator – 3.18
- J. Office Supply Store – 3.17
- K. Book Store – 3.17
- L. Retail Incubator – 3.15
- M. Card Store – 3.14
- N. Crafts & Hobbies – 3.03
- O. Take-Home Food Service – 3.03
- P. Other suggestions most mentioned, in order of most mentions:
 - i. Shoe store.
 - ii. Jewelry Store – (local handmade, beach glass, etc.).
 - iii. Coffee Shop open evenings, interactive with "open-mike" nights – poetry, music, etc.
 - iv. Mexican Restaurant (appeal to college students).
 - v. Micro-Brewery.
 - vi. Wine Shop with local wines.
 - vii. Sit-down Ice Cream/Diner – for kids and families.
 - viii. Services like office supplies and copying that stays open evenings.
 - ix. A national specialty/destination retailer.
 - x. Candy Store.
 - xi. Home Interior Store.

11. In the next 5-10 years how would you like to see DTNE develop? (Select your top five.)

- A. Keep small town charm and character – 87%
- B. Improve/maintain the historic character – 72%
- C. Add specialty or niche retail – 56%
- D. Better streetscaping – trees, planters, benches, etc. – 50%
- E. Add more restaurants and food service – 47%
- F. Add more services businesses – 47%
- G. Additional comments – most frequent ones:
 - i. Improve Main & Lake Street intersection – left turn lanes, pedestrian crossing light, etc.
 - ii. Clothing store – especially a women's store.
 - iii. Appeal more to tourists – make the DT a destination.
 - iv. Take care of Issues with kids, noise, skateboarding, bikes on sidewalks, etc.
 - v. Outdoor seating for dining.
 - vi. Sidewalk repairs.
 - vii. RR underpass appearance.

12. **Other Comments** - There were 54 additional comments, some quite lengthy, others saying simply keep up the good work or thanks for the opportunity to participate.

The suggestions/observations mentioned the most include:

- A. Emphasize more and better retail, with competitive pricing.
- B. Have common business hours; stay open at least one night a week and on weekends.
 - i. One person went to great length to describe how a "Downtown Thursday Night" might work, how various merchants could participate with special events, and suggested having Common Ground show movies to the youngsters while their parents shop or enjoy the restaurants and/or other special events such as book signings, or poetry readings, or music at the Boston Bean, etc.
- C. Need a nice casual dining place, local wine bar, and more entertainment opportunities to bring people into the DT.
- D. Make the RR underpass an attractive gateway.
- E. Fix up/paint the buildings, preserving and featuring the historic character/architecture.
- F. Add turn lanes on Main and Lake Streets.
- G. Some say we need more law enforcement, others say we need less police and they need to be friendlier, and should perhaps patrol on bikes to show small town charm and demonstrate energy efficiency awareness.
- H. Better utilize the upper floors of DT buildings.
- I. A Downtown presence of one or more of the local wineries would help bring more people to the DT – it seems like a logical anchor for the DT.
- J. Provide a destination showcase of local products.
- K. Make the Baker's Run area behind the municipal parking lot more of a park-like feature. Connect Mechanics Alley to the parking lot with a foot bridge and create a pedestrian mall there. Also, locate neat shops along the alley north of West Main and tie all of that to the Borough Hall parking lot with another foot bridge.
- L. More trees.
- M. Can we eliminate the parking meters?
- N. Need more lighting in the municipal parking lot, people feel unsafe there at night.
- O. Help "pull" the homes on Main and Lake Streets into the character of the DT with some incentives, landscaping and historic lighting.
- P. Consider the needs of the growing student body at Mercyhurst, and their families, but don't let too much rental housing destroy the neighborhoods.
- Q. Fix the sidewalks.