

Expanding Housing Choice

Exploring ways to provide a wider variety of housing options



Expanding Housing Choices Questionnaire – Summary Results

During the summer, over 1300 people responded to a questionnaire issued by the Durham Planning Department aimed at gaining insight into people’s perceptions of issues driving current trends in the housing market and of their own housing choices. The questionnaire was not intended to be a scientific survey, but as a means to gauge public opinion to inform future directions of this initiative.

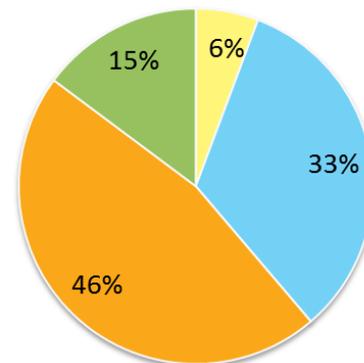
The questionnaire was made available from June 15 through August 15. Advertisement of the questionnaire was coordinated by the City and County public affairs’ offices through traditional and social media platforms. In an effort to reach a broader cross-section of the Durham community, Planning Department staff attended events throughout the summer, including the Rock the Park concert series, the Durham Farmers’ Market, and the Latino Festival. Flyers were also distributed through the Police Department during National Night Out events.

Below are the summarized results of the questionnaire. Appendix A includes a select set of cross-tabulated results that draw connections between how people feel about their own housing choices and what their perceptions are about potential new options. Following each question, participants were invited to provide additional comments. These comments are summarized in Appendix B and, listed in their entirety, in Appendix C.

Question 1: At the current rate, how many people move to Durham each year?

This question was asked to help gauge perceptions of the magnitude of growth that Durham is experiencing. The most common answer (7,300 people annually), is also the correct answer.

■ 300 ■ 3,000 ■ 7300 - CORRECT ■ 17,000



1,218 respondents

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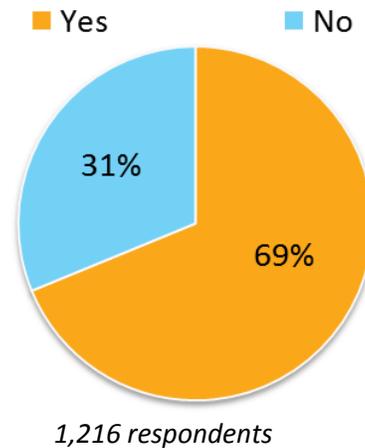
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Question 2: Median home sale prices have increased by 35% since 2013. Do you view this as a problem?

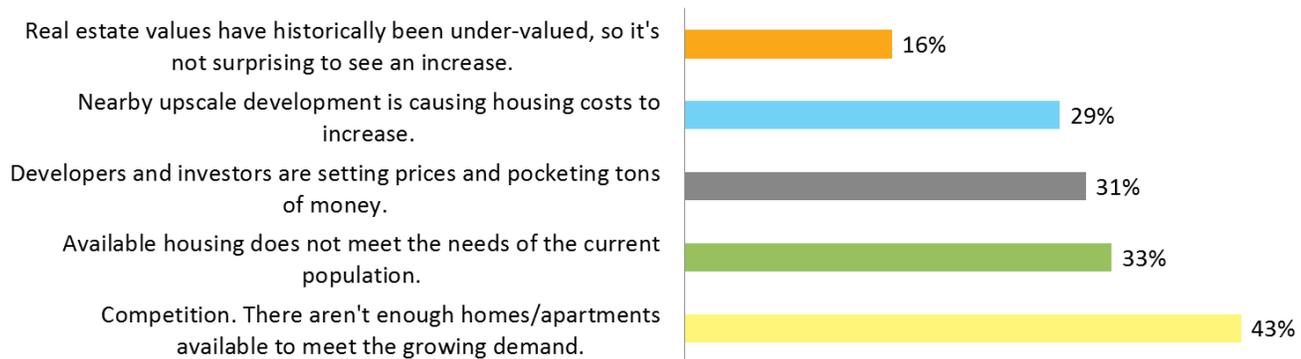
This question was asked to help educate and gauge perceptions of the rising cost of housing. A large majority of respondents (69%) viewed the rising cost of for-sale homes as a problem, while 31% did not.

The 261 comments received on this question revealed nuances that are not captured in the numerical tallies. All comments have been summarized grouped by theme and are found in Appendix B and C.



Question 3: In your opinion, what are the top two (2) things driving the cost of housing?

This question was asked to understand respondent's perceptions of what is driving the increased cost of housing; there is no right or wrong answer. The most common response, indicated by 43% of respondents, is that "Competition" is a top reason for the increased cost of housing. A close grouping of the second, third and fourth most common responses indicate that there are a variety of opinions, and that potentially all of the options carry some truth in people's perceptions. Eighty-one (81) comment were submitted with this question and have been summarized and grouped by theme and are found in Appendix B and C.



1,081 respondents

Each respondent was allowed two choices, explaining why the percentages add to greater than 100%.

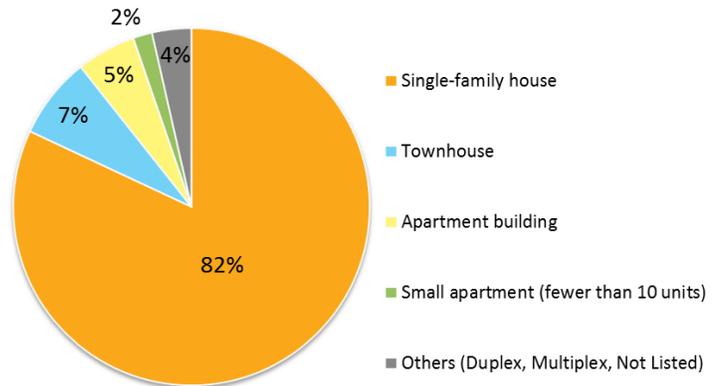
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Question 4: Which of the following best describes the housing you currently live in?

This question was asked to help assess participant's current housing type. Respondents overwhelmingly live in single-family housing types (82%), which is reflective of the existing inventory of housing in Durham. Those living in apartment buildings were under-represented in the results of the questionnaire. While 30% of housing units are apartments, only 5-7% of the respondents indicated living in apartments.

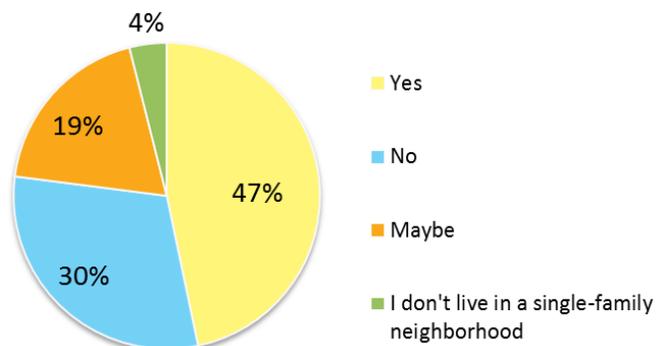


This question is also useful in helping to cross-tabulate results with other survey questions. Additional insights will be found in Appendix A of the report.

1,145 respondents

Question 5: Would you be open to new types of housing in your neighborhood as a way to address the housing shortage?

This question was asked to broadly assess whether or not people would be willing to accept a degree of change in the housing types available in their current neighborhoods. Nearly half (47%) of respondents indicated they would be open to new housing types. Thirty percent (30%) said they would not, while nearly 20% indicated 'Maybe'.



1,137 respondents

The 204 comments received in reaction to this question provide nuances that are not captured in the numerical tallies. All comments have been summarized and grouped by theme and are found in Appendix B and C.

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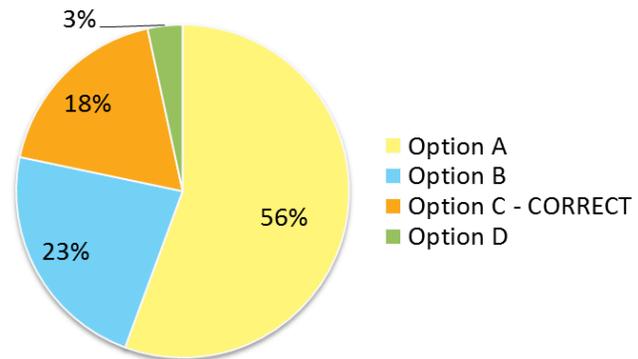
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Question 6: Duplexes are houses divided into two units with a separate entrance for each, but not all duplexes look alike and can be difficult to spot. See if you can identify which of the following is actually a duplex.



This question was designed to be difficult – to challenge common assumptions about duplexes. Option C was the correct answer, however, a majority of respondents (56%) believed Option A to be a duplex.

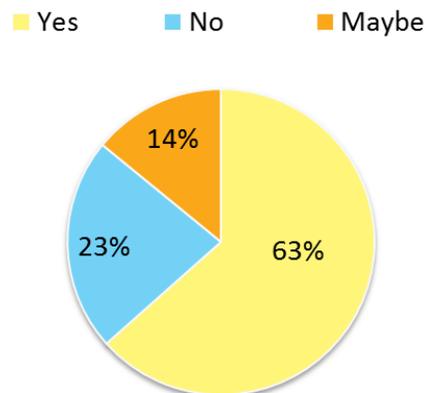


1,025 respondents

Question 7: Would you be comfortable with duplexes in your neighborhood?

This question was asked to measure respondent's comfort level with having duplexes in their neighborhoods. Sixty-three percent (63%) of respondents indicated they would be comfortable, 14% indicated 'Maybe', while 23% said they would not be.

The comments received in response to this question give further insight into the circumstances in which respondents felt that duplexes would or would not be appropriate in their neighborhoods. The 132 comments are summarized and grouped by theme and are found in Appendix B and C.



1,087 respondents

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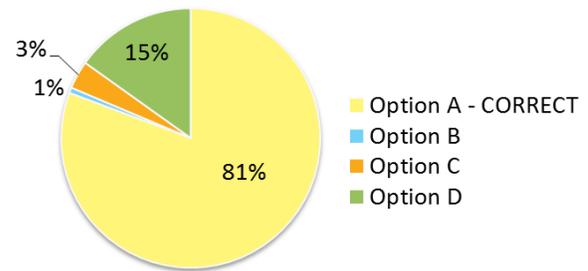
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Question 8: Triplexes are houses divided into three units with a separate entrance for each. Sometimes they can blend into a neighborhood and be difficult to spot. Can you identify which of the following is a triplex?



For variety, this question was not intended to be a difficult question – there are three easily identifiable doors in the correct response (Option A). A vast majority of respondents (81%) identified the correct response.

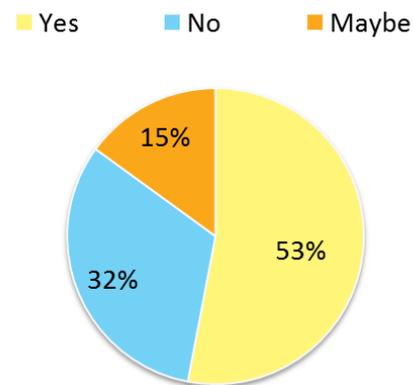


1,023 respondents

Question 9: Would you be comfortable with triplexes in your neighborhood?

This question was asked to measure respondent's comfort level with having triplexes in their neighborhoods. Fifty-three percent (53%) of respondents indicated they would be comfortable, 15% indicated 'Maybe', while 32% said they would not be. Results for this question demonstrate that respondents had slightly more hesitancy or negative impressions about triplexes than duplexes (Question 7).

The comments received in response to this question give further insight into the circumstances in which respondents felt that triplexes would or would not be appropriate in their neighborhoods. The 99 comments are summarized and grouped by theme and are found in Appendix B and C.



1,062 respondents

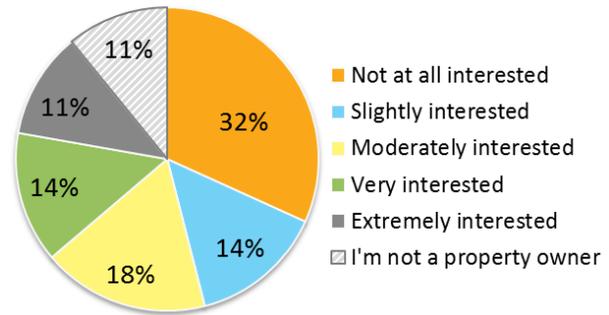
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Question 10: Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are allowed in most Durham neighborhoods. They are small, secondary dwelling units built on the same lot as the main house, and can be either attached or built independently. How interested would you be in building an ADU?

This question was asked to gauge respondent’s interest in having an ADU on their property. Results are mixed, with 32% of respondents indicating they are not at all interested, 25% expressing they are either extremely or very interested, and another 32% with a moderate degree of interest. Eleven percent (11%) of respondents answered this option was not available to them, because they are not property owners.



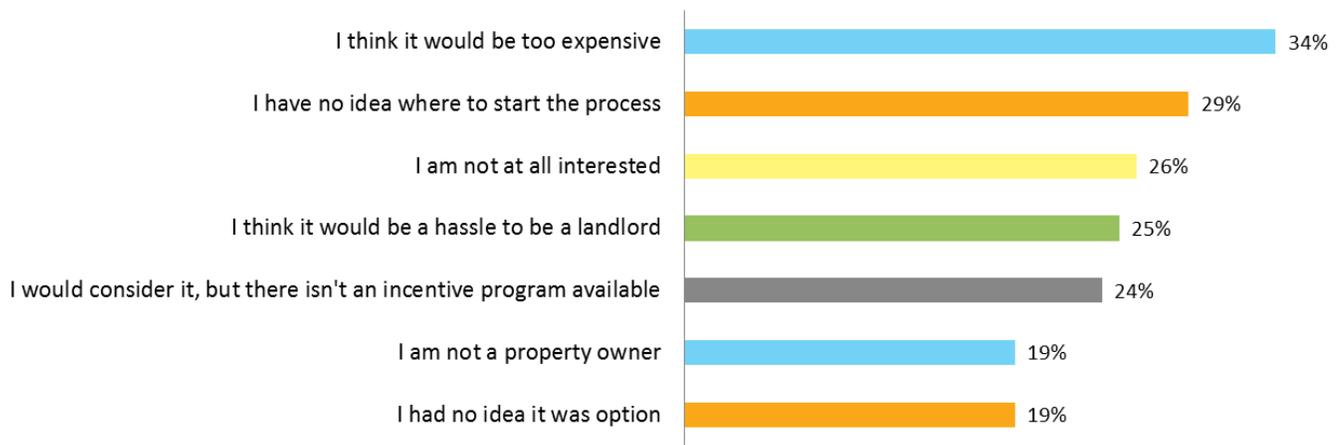
1,095 respondents

Comments received related to this question, and the following question provides more nuance and description of the challenges associated with ADUs. The 158 comments received are summarized and grouped by theme and are found in Appendix B and C.

Question 11: What are the top three things that are keeping you from building an ADU?

This question was asked to understand respondent’s perceptions of the impediments to building ADUs. The most common response (34%) was related to the expense. Confusion about the process (i.e. design, permitting, construction) was the second most common response (29%). All of the responses received a relatively high number of votes, indicating that potentially all of the options carry some truth as to why more Accessory Dwellings are not built.

One hundred and seventy seven (177) comments were received in response to this question and provide further insights. Comments are summarized and grouped by theme and are found in Appendix B and C.



852 respondents

Each respondent was allowed three choices, explaining why the percentages add to greater than 100%.

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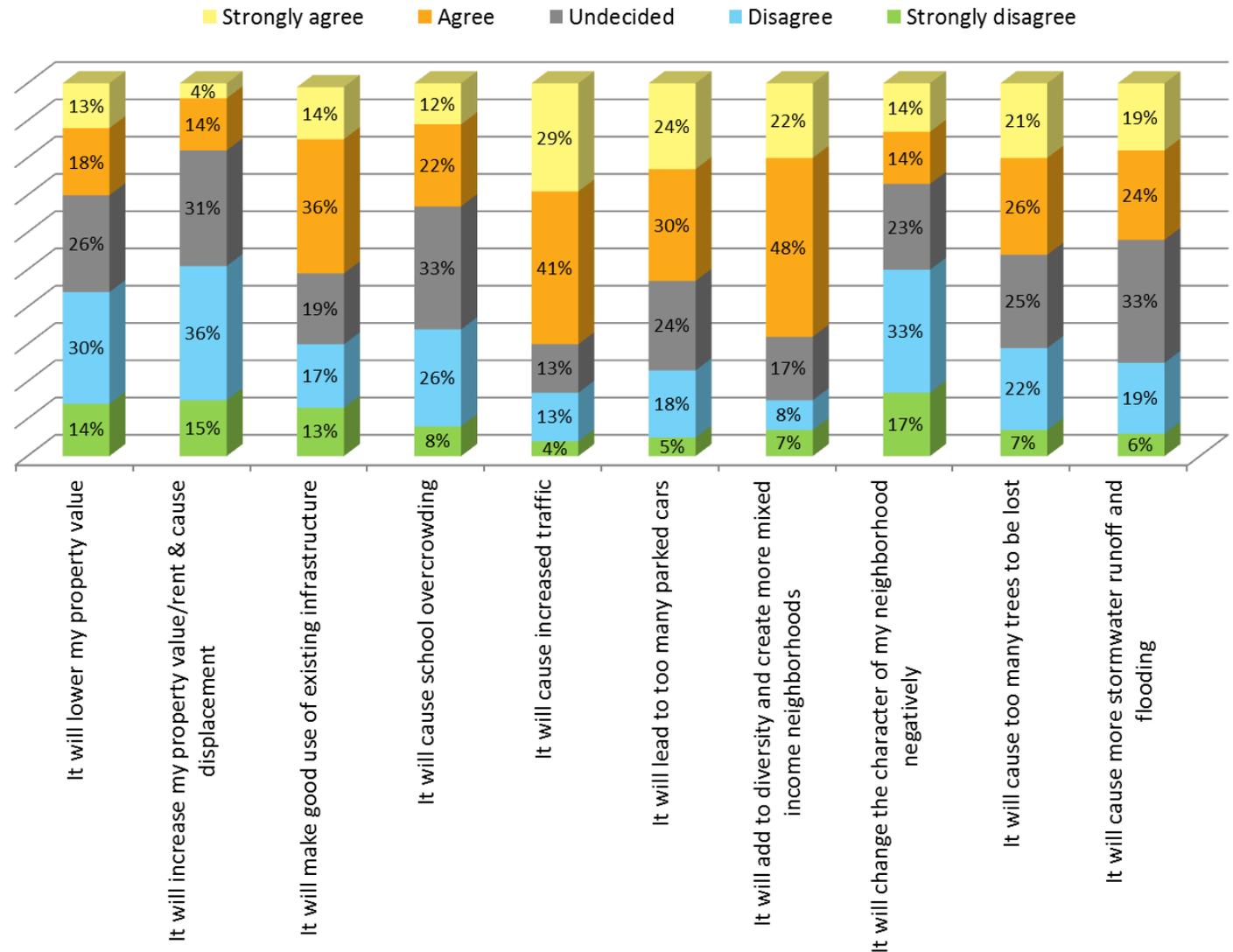


Question 12: To better understand the impacts of expanding housing choices, please rate how you feel about allowing more housing types in your neighborhood (see chart)

These questions were asked to understand respondent's perceptions on a broad array of issues such as property values, diversity, neighborhood character, infrastructure and services, and environmental impact.

Overall, respondents appeared to hold a wide variety of opinions about the impact of expanding housing choices; however, there are areas of commonality (50% or above):

- **Traffic.** Seventy percent (70%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it would lead to increased traffic.
- **Diversity.** Seventy percent (70%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it would lead to greater diversity and mixed income neighborhoods.



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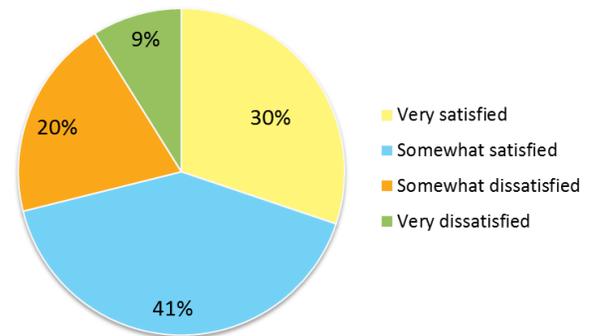


- **Parking.** Fifty-four percent (54%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it would lead to too many parked cars.
- **Property Value/Displacement.** Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that it would cause values to increase and lead to displacement of long term residents. An additional 31% were undecided.
- **Neighborhood Character.** Fifty percent (50%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that neighborhood character would be negatively changed. Twenty-three percent (23%) chimed in as undecided.
- **Infrastructure.** Fifty percent (50%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed it will make good use of existing infrastructure. Nineteen percent (19%) were undecided.

Question 13: How satisfied are you with the housing choices currently available to you?

This question was asked to help assess participant's satisfaction with the housing choices available to them. Results indicate that 71% are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied, while 29% are either somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

This question is also useful in helping to cross-tabulate results with other survey questions. Additional insights will be found in Appendix A of the report.



1,006 respondents