

# Shandaken Community Survey

## Summary of Themes and Priorities

The first community survey for the new Shandaken Comprehensive Plan was open from December 2024–March 2025 and generated 469 survey respondents.

**The top 5 issues (selected by 30% or more) were:**



### 1. Environmental Protection

The top priority, selected by over 58% of respondents, was to protect and steward the air, water, land, forests, and wildlife of Shandaken.

### 2. Internet, Cellular, Broadband

Community members want improved communications infrastructure, especially along Route 28. People expressed concern especially for seniors and others who experience medical emergencies who may not be able to contact emergency services.

### 3. Housing

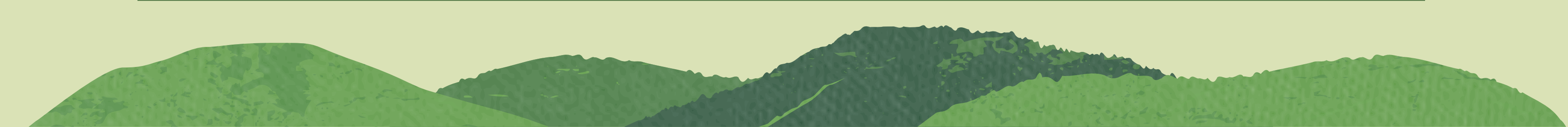
There is broad consensus that there is a need for more housing that is affordable to young adults, families with children, members of the workforce, volunteer firefighters and first responders, and seniors. Community members expressed support for fixing up and preserving old buildings. While some people feel short term rentals are good for local tourism and businesses, many feel that they threaten housing affordability and replace full-time neighbors, which in turn harms a sense of community cohesion. People want to see an increase in stable, full-time residency to sustain critical resources like grocery stores, medical facilities, and schools.

### 4. Climate Change & Disaster Preparedness

People are especially concerned about flooding, especially in the Hamlet of Phoenicia. There is strong support to reduce the Town's cumulative carbon footprint through sustainable building practices, concentration of housing and business activity, and reduction of fragmentation and sprawl.

### 5. Infrastructure & Public Works

There was a strong focus on increasing capacity for firefighting and emergency services, and strengthening local volunteerism to sustain these and other community resources. Survey respondents also mentioned investments in physical infrastructure such as sidewalks and roads, especially in the hamlet centers.



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## Insights and Next Steps

There were ten (10) open-ended responses on the first survey, which revealed more nuanced ideas and sentiments that community members have about different issues. Based on those open ended responses, we learned:

### When asked about what they love most about where they live...

People mentioned peace and tranquility, natural beauty, clean air and water, arts and culture, the quirkiness of the people who live in Shandaken, and their close-knit communities.

### When asked what they want to see in Shandaken...

People mentioned grocery stores and medical services most frequently. Other responses included more nightlife and restaurants, indoor recreation facilities, public transit, better cellular service, hardware store, transfer station, activities for youth and seniors, and affordable housing.

### When asked what they would miss most if it were gone...

People mentioned their local libraries, the Pine Hill Community Center, hiking and access to nature, their vibrant main streets and restaurants, clean water, and more.

### A vision for the future...

Overall, community members love Shandaken the way it is, and want to continue living within the beauty and serenity of nature alongside their neighbors in tight-knit communities.

They also want to make sure that younger generations can afford to live in Shandaken, and they want their community to grow enough to sustain businesses like a grocery store, medical facilities, and thriving small businesses.

In other words, community members want to use this comprehensive plan to figure out...

**How can Shandaken preserve what makes it unique – its small-town feel and sense of wildness – while expanding the community so it thrive for generations to come?**

Other guiding questions include:

- How can Shandaken leverage outside investment for local benefit?
- How can Shandaken increase its presence of full-time residents within an economy that is largely driven by tourism?
- How can Shandaken fund public infrastructure and meet community needs without intensive growth?