

City of Poquoson

2017 Citizen's Survey

Summary Report

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February 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Poquoson has conducted mailed citizen surveys several times in its history in order to gauge the performance of local services, and solicit preferences on land use and development to be incorporated into the City Comprehensive Plan. Public surveys were last undertaken in 2004 and 2006, with their results being included within and as an appendix to the 2008-2028 Comprehensive Plan. Mailed surveys have historically had a high response rate and provided clear, useful feedback to Planning and Community Development staff.

The following is an overview of the City's Comprehensive Plan Update and surveying process, followed by totals of all responses received for the 2017 Citizens' Survey, including general category totals of all write-in responses. These pages are intended to serve as a brief, readable summary and record of responses as prepared by City staff and citizen volunteers, and therefore more detailed graphs and analysis of the results have not been undertaken in this report.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

Poquoson's Comprehensive Plan Update process includes a 'public participation' element to inform the public and solicit their views on the future. This element is led by a 'Community Participation Team' (CPT) of citizens appointed by City Council to organize and encourage citizen participation in the update process. The CPT is supervised and assisted by City staff and a Comprehensive Plan Development Steering Committee, whose role is to guide outreach efforts, review citizen input gathered during the update process, and present their findings and recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan to the Poquoson Planning Commission.

As part of the 2018-2038 Comprehensive Plan Update process, a group of ten citizens were appointed by City Council to serve on a Community Participation Team in early 2017. Two Planning Commissioners and one Economic Development Authority member were subsequently chosen to serve on the Development Steering Committee.

The CPT and Steering Committee met on a regular basis from June of 2016 through July of 2017 and designed public involvement programs, staffed outreach efforts, and compiled the results of public input meetings. It also drafted and tabulated a community-wide citizen survey on the Comprehensive Plan and associated issues of community planning and land use.

The CPT began with outreach and advertising efforts to generate interest in the Comprehensive Plan update process, and to better understand citizen opinions on issues of land use and community development. The Team began by creating comment cards asking general questions about the present and future of Poquoson as a community. These comment cards were passed out to citizens by Team members in public places from September through October, as well as during the 2016 Poquoson Seafood Festival. Comments were also collected online through the City website from August through October.

The CPT conducted a public meeting on October 18, 2016 at the Poquoson High School. The meeting was advertised in the Daily Press, in the Island Tide, on the City website and social media, and on flyers sent to homes within City utility bills. The public meeting was facilitated by Dr. Michael Chandler, Director of Education for the Citizen's Planning Education Association of Virginia. Forty members of the public and six high school student volunteers attended. Participants were asked to rotate among seven tables representing seven major topics within the Comprehensive Plan, where they could join in discussions and then record their thoughts and comments on blank index cards.

Citizens were encouraged to voice their opinions, likes, concerns, and their outlook for the future on each of the following specific topics:

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Quality of Life
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Community Services
- Environmental Management
- Land Use

THE 2017 CITIZENS' SURVEY

Beginning in January of 2017 the Community Participation Team, assisted by their Steering Committee, the Poquoson Planning Commission and City staff began developing a "Citizen Opinion Survey" to gather additional citizen comments for the Comprehensive Plan Update Process. The Team developed a self-administered four page survey with a variety of questions on land use and community development, based on public feedback that the Team received through their previous outreach efforts, including public comment cards and the Comprehensive Plan Public Meeting.

The survey was approved by the Poquoson Planning Commission and mailed to citizens beginning on June 7, 2017. Each Poquoson household (over 4,700) was provided a paper copy of the survey via U.S. mail for their input. The survey included a postage-paid return envelope to facilitate the easy return of completed surveys to City Hall.

The Community Participation Team, Steering Committee, City staff and several citizen volunteers began tallying returned surveys beginning on June 26, 2017. A total of 1,303 surveys (representing a 28% response rate) were received and tallied before the Team's deadline to present their results to the Planning Commission on July 17, 2017. Note that any surveys not submitted on official paper, or received after July 14, 2017, were not included in this tallying effort.

All received public comments were subsequently typed, edited and bound. The citizen opinion survey results were also tallied, summarized and bound. Copies of all the citizen comments were made available for citizen review on the City website and the Poquoson Planning Department.

SURVEY RESULT TOTALS

The following pages display all questions included in the 2017 Citizens' Survey, alongside summary totals for all received responses, grouped into three categories:

- Agreement and Ranked Choice Questions,
- Write-In Response Questions,
- and Respondent Demographics Questions.

Percentages for agreement and ranked choice questions responses have been included when appropriate. Note that while demographics, agreement and ranked choice questions were tallied by a large group of City staff, CPT and citizen volunteers, the tallies of write-in responses included in this report were assembled at a later date due to issues of time by a group of individual Planning Commission and CPT volunteers. While these tallies provide a useful summary of the most common answers to these questions, a full listing of every recorded response to the six write-in questions included in the 2017 Citizens' Survey have been included as an appendix to this report.

While more detailed analysis of survey responses is not included in this report, relevant response totals and discussions of those totals were included in each chapter of the City of Poquoson 2018-2038 Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted by Poquoson's City Council on October 9, 2018.

Response totals in this report and its appendix were derived from an Excel dataset of all valid survey responses, assembled by City staff, CPT and citizen volunteers. This dataset has been made available for public inspection on the City of Poquoson website from mid-2017 through early 2019. The response dataset, along with physical copies of the 2017 Citizens' Survey, received responses, and additional comment card/online feedback received by the CPT during the Comprehensive Plan Update process, are on file in the Poquoson Planning Department and may be made available upon request.

POQUOSON CITIZENS' SURVEY 2017 – AGREEMENT AND RANKED CHOICE QUESTION ANSWERS

Development Aesthetics:	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Didn't Answer
1. Poquoson's current commercial buildings are of a quality standard appropriate for our City's image.	250	503	238	239	46	24
	19%	39%	18%	18%	4%	2%
2. Poquoson has attractive main streets and gateway entrances.	269	488	238	216	72	19
	21%	37%	18%	17%	6%	1%
3. Poquoson should require higher architectural and landscaping standards in non-residential areas.	300	432	309	158	76	28
	23%	33%	24%	12%	6%	2%
4. Poquoson should invest public funds to plant trees and add quality landscaping along our main streets.	341	384	268	162	126	22
	26%	29%	21%	12%	10%	2%
Smart Growth:						
1. It is more important to preserve trees and open space than it is to have more development.	598	327	175	138	53	11
	46%	25%	13%	11%	4%	1%
2. It is important to have less development in Poquoson even if it means we pay more in taxes for services.	339	366	174	245	162	16
	26%	28%	13%	19%	12%	1%
3. New developments should be more compact to make them more walkable and preserve more open space.	415	389	262	122	80	33
	32%	30%	20%	9%	6%	3%
4. Construction of sidewalks in Poquoson is a high priority.	469	342	254	114	105	14
	36%	26%	19%	9%	8%	1%
5. Construction of bike paths in Poquoson is a high priority.	411	326	284	131	138	10
	32%	25%	22%	10%	11%	1%
6. Poquoson currently as a town "center" that serves as the "heart" of our community.	183	403	270	248	168	30
	14%	31%	21%	19%	13%	2%
7. Poquoson should concentrate new development into a walkable "downtown" for citizens to meet, shop, and gather.	286	397	303	179	117	18
	22%	30%	23%	14%	9%	1%
Shopping and Business:						
1. Existing shopping and businesses in Poquoson meet my needs.	297	526	156	230	84	10
	23%	40%	12%	18%	6%	1%
2. I would like to have more businesses in Poquoson so that I would not have to leave Poquoson to shop.	171	317	302	270	221	20
	13%	24%	23%	21%	17%	2%
3. Poquoson would benefit from more fast food and chain restaurants.	47	141	227	317	557	13
	4%	11%	17%	24%	43%	1%
4. Poquoson would benefit from more chain retail stores.	63	183	226	300	512	18
	5%	14%	17%	23%	39%	1%
5. Having small, locally-owned businesses is better than having big chain stores in Poquoson.	648	396	156	68	25	9
	50%	30%	12%	5%	2%	1%
6. Local businesses and small stores are important indicators of Poquoson's well-being	600	444	163	53	32	11
	46%	34%	13%	4%	2%	1%

Housing and Residential Development:	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Didn't Answer
1. Zoning codes should be amended to allow renovating or modifying existing homes into apartments or duplexes.	58	132	205	338	544	26
	4%	10%	16%	26%	42%	2%
2. Zoning codes should be amended to allow for new smaller single-family homes on smaller lots.	125	344	239	274	294	26
	10%	26%	18%	21%	23%	2%
3. New multi-family apartments and townhomes should be permitted along Wythe Creek Road and Victory Blvd.	80	217	200	275	507	24
	6%	17%	15%	21%	39%	2%
4. Poquoson needs more modest "starter homes" for young families with school-aged children.	296	417	249	167	153	21
	23%	32%	19%	13%	12%	2%
5. Poquoson needs more independent and assisted living options for retirees and the elderly.	174	361	0%	193	143	20
	13%	28%	0%	15%	11%	2%
Storm Flooding and Sea Level Rise:						
1. Residential and commercial development should not be allowed in areas that are susceptible to flooding.	456	318	241	181	87	18
	35%	24%	18%	14%	7%	1%
2. Poquoson should promote living shorelines and preserve tidal wetlands as a buffer against flooding.	805	322	98	30	22	25
	62%	25%	8%	2%	2%	2%
3. Poquoson needs stricter limits on paving and other development activities that increase stormwater runoff.	530	352	270	86	35	29
	41%	27%	21%	7%	3%	2%
4. Future development should be encouraged in areas of higher ground within Poquoson, such as the Big Woods.	260	341	257	151	265	29
	20%	26%	20%	12%	20%	2%
5. Poquoson is currently doing a good job maintaining roadside drainage ditches to prevent storm flooding.	264	530	234	167	87	21
	20%	41%	18%	13%	7%	2%
Conservation and the Environment:						
1. Clear-cutting of woodlands should not be allowed in Poquoson.	632	311	177	97	68	17
	49%	24%	14%	7%	5%	1%
2. Poquoson should incentivize private landowners to plant trees and preserve woodlands.	496	412	244	78	53	19
	38%	32%	19%	6%	4%	1%
3. Poquoson should coordinate more efforts to clean up trash along local waterways and shorelines.	462	511	246	41	17	25
	35%	39%	19%	3%	1%	2%
4. Poquoson should champion the preservation and restoration of shellfish populations in local waters.	655	422	166	17	21	20
	50%	32%	13%	1%	2%	2%
5. Poquoson should encourage using natural methods to control mosquitos, such as dragonflies and bats.	662	347	181	54	39	18
	51%	27%	14%	4%	3%	1%

Which one of the following commercially zoned areas in Poquoson would be the best location for small shops, stores, and restaurants? (Ranked 1 through 4, where 1 is MOST preferred and 4 is LEAST preferred)

	1 (most preferred)	2	3	4 (least preferred)	Not Ranked	Question not answered
Waterfront areas like Messick Point, Rens Road, and Browns Neck Road	187	170	299	495	77	75
	14%	13%	23%	38%	6%	6%
Along Wythe Creek Road	614	374	127	71	42	75
	47%	29%	10%	5%	3%	6%
Victory Blvd and the Big Woods	383	323	203	257	62	75
	29%	25%	16%	20%	5%	6%
Poquoson Ave, near Hudgins and Odd Road	49	227	441	424	87	75
	4%	17%	34%	33%	7%	6%

From the following list, please number up to five types of land use which you feel would be most appropriate for the Big Woods area of Poquoson. (Ranked 1 through 5, where 1 is the land use you would MOST like to see)

	1 (most preferred)	2	3	4	5	Not in top 5	Question not answered
Single-family homes	111	74	63	81	104	793	77
	9%	6%	5%	6%	8%	61%	6%
Multi-family homes	21	47	39	44	66	1009	77
	2%	4%	3%	3%	5%	77%	6%
Professional office space	78	76	119	120	119	714	77
	6%	6%	9%	9%	9%	55%	6%
Commercial/retail space	101	87	91	105	110	732	77
	8%	7%	7%	8%	8%	56%	6%
Medical facilities	132	149	161	134	110	540	77
	10%	11%	12%	10%	8%	41%	6%
Light industrial or research space	51	52	95	104	118	806	77
	4%	4%	7%	8%	9%	62%	6%
A public park, field, or community center	315	272	118	94	84	343	77
	24%	21%	9%	7%	6%	26%	6%
Public / private recreational or sports facilities	78	215	195	104	98	536	77
	6%	17%	15%	8%	8%	41%	6%
Undeveloped conservation space (maintained at public expense)	250	82	95	81	76	642	77
	19%	6%	7%	6%	6%	49%	6%
Mixed-use development including open space, shops, and residences	214	90	118	124	123	557	77
	16%	7%	9%	10%	9%	43%	6%

Where should new sidewalks be built in Poquoson? (Ranked 1 through 4, where 1 is MOST preferred and 4 is LEAST preferred)

	1 (most preferred)	2	3	4 (least preferred)	Not Ranked	Question not answered
Poquoson Ave, Little Florida Road, and Odd Road (to connect the schools)	864	167	106	66	26	74
	66%	13%	8%	5%	2%	6%
Victory Blvd	98	337	213	487	94	74
	8%	26%	16%	37%	7%	6%
New Residential Developments	204	285	432	227	81	74
	16%	22%	33%	17%	6%	6%
Older Residential Neighborhoods	106	317	316	396	94	74
	8%	24%	24%	30%	7%	6%

Please rank the following communication strategies the City of Poquoson could use to strengthen its ties with city residents.

	1 (most preferred)	2	3	4	5	Not in top 5	Question not answered
An online City newsletter	428	251	190	127	79	125	103
	33%	19%	15%	10%	6%	10%	8%
Text alerts for City events and important dates	241	226	177	129	157	270	103
	18%	17%	14%	10%	12%	21%	8%
Periodic town hall meetings with elected representatives and City staff	139	176	231	247	203	204	103
	11%	14%	18%	19%	16%	16%	8%
A prominent outdoor electronic message board advertising important events	258	143	137	100	125	437	103
	20%	11%	11%	8%	10%	34%	8%
Televised broadcasting of additional City boards and commissions	87	113	183	251	294	272	103
	7%	9%	14%	19%	23%	21%	8%
Posting online minutes and agendas of additional City boards and commissions	114	228	203	231	177	247	103
	9%	17%	16%	18%	14%	19%	8%

Please review the following 11 attributes and number up to five that you feel best describe Poquoson's "small town atmosphere".
(Ranked 1 through 5, where 1 is the statement you feel best describes Poquoson)

	1 (best describes)	2	3	4	5	Not in top 5	Question not answered
Small geographical size	119	54	64	67	100	850	49
	9%	4%	5%	5%	8%	65%	4%
Low density of homes and stores	86	42	70	81	91	884	49
	7%	3%	5%	6%	7%	68%	4%
Peace and quiet	284	150	168	138	118	396	49
	22%	12%	13%	11%	9%	30%	4%
A smaller, friendly population	216	141	129	141	100	527	49
	17%	11%	10%	11%	8%	40%	4%
Smaller roads and less traffic	62	59	100	104	106	823	49
	5%	5%	8%	8%	8%	63%	4%
Lots of trees and open space	64	47	71	87	77	908	49
	5%	4%	5%	7%	6%	70%	4%
A low crime rate	329	309	186	146	87	197	49
	25%	24%	14%	11%	7%	15%	4%
A good school system	337	265	166	116	96	274	49
	26%	20%	13%	9%	7%	21%	4%
Responsive local government and public services	51	30	70	76	101	926	49
	4%	2%	5%	6%	8%	71%	4%
Strong civic institutions, like clubs and churches	54	51	63	101	91	894	49
	4%	4%	5%	8%	7%	69%	4%
Good neighborhood character	117	81	107	99	163	687	49
	9%	6%	8%	8%	13%	53%	4%

POQUOSON CITIZENS' SURVEY 2017 – WRITE-IN QUESTION ANSWERS AND COMMENTS

What new retail businesses and commercial establishments would you like to see in Poquoson?

Note: Highlighted rows are breakdowns of the preceding results. For instance, of 109 responses for a coffee shop, 39 specifically mentioned Starbucks or Starbucks-like.

None; I like it as it is	179
Boutique/Specialty/Gift Shops, Mom & Pop/Locally Owned	111
Coffee Shop	109
<i>Starbucks</i>	39
Restaurants	79
<i>Upscale</i>	19
<i>Locally Owned/Independent</i>	22
Medical offices/facilities	68
<i>Med Xpress, Doc-In-The-Box</i>	35
Fast Food	66
<i>Chick-Fil-A</i>	50
Grocery	66
<i>Upscale</i>	15
<i>Walmart style</i>	15
General Retail (Target, Peeples, TJ Max, etc.)	60
Clothing/shoe store	53
Bakery	41
WaWa style	35
Gas station - larger, more accessible	29
Ice Cream/Yogurt	25
Farmer's Market	21
Walmart Style	22
Brew Pub/Winery/Bar	22
Hardware	20
Fishing Supplies/Bait & Tackle	17

What new cultural, arts, and educational enterprises you would like to see in Poquoson?

<i>Comment Categorization</i>		<i>Summary of Comments</i>
Art Auditorium	106	New Venue - movie or traditional theater, auditorium, arts center, outdoor recreational, arts, concert space/amphitheater
Recreation	84	YMCA, indoor and outdoor rec, walking and biking paths, community sports center, local hangout for kids/teens
Education	66	Continuing education classes, trade school and vocational training, bookstores
Culture	65	More support/space for Poquoson Museum, more local history, waterman's museum
Arts (General)	54	Art galleries and studio spaces, craft shows, support local and regional artists, farmers markets

What new restaurants and entertainment venues would you like to see in Poquoson?

None	175
Chic-Fil-A	143
Local, no chains, unique, family-owned, etc.	81
Coffee Shop / Coffee House /coffee with open mic	77
Movie Theater / Cinema with Food	61
Starbucks	56
Steak House	55
Waterfront Concerts / Live Music / Outdoor Music Festivals / Concert Pavilion	47
Microbrewery / Brew Pub with Restaurant or Live Music	40
Bakery / Donut / Bagel Shop	33
Upscale Restaurants / Fine Dining	30
Panera Bread	29
Family-friendly / Family Restaurants	27
Ice Cream Shop	26
Youth Center / Entertainment Venue for kids and teens / Things for kids to do	26
Seafood	25
Putt-Putt Golf	20
Deli-Style Sandwich Shop	15
Bowling	15
Waterfront Restaurants	14
Upscale bar / High end drinking establishment / Wine bar	14
Theater / Dinner Theater	14
World / multi-ethnic / variety cuisine	13
Hi Quality	12
Any that want to come / Market decide	12
Not fast food	12
Country or Family Style / Home Style / Piccadilly's / Cafeteria	11
Outdoor Movies / Movies that can be watched by boat / Drive-in Theater	11
Healthy / Organic Options	11
Italian or Greek/Italian / Mediterranean	10
Skating	10
Five Guys	9
Tea Room	8
Indoor Tennis Courts / Rec Center / Sports Complex	8
Sweet Frog / Frozen Yogurt	8
Thai	8
Bar and Grill / Sports Bar	8
Dairy Queen	7
Wawa	7
Arby's	7
Chipotle	7
Firehouse Subs	6
Sushi	6
Farmer's Market	6
Entertainment Venue / Music or Performance Arts Venue with stage / Venue for large parties	6
Olive Garden	6
Ruby Tuesday	6
Other (5 or less responses)	275

The City of Poquoson currently owns 8 acres in Big Woods directly north of City Hall Avenue. How should this property be developed? Please be specific.

<i>Comment Categorization</i>		<i>Summary of Comments</i>
Leave Alone	262	No more development, Traffic concerns, Leave as entrance buffer, Leave for future (public) use
Park/Public Area	220	Walking & bike trails, Dog park, For kids, Environmental preserve, Keep trees, Cultural events, Farmers market, Storm parking, Sports fields
Shopping/Retail	121	Small shops, Gas station, WAWA, Target, Walmart, Need tax revenue
Residential	117	Small and affordable, Young families, Starter homes, Single Family Housing, Low density., Townhomes, No apartments, Senior housing, Assisted living
Mixed Use	91	City Center (Like Newport News), Town Center concept, Church, Good landscaping
General Business/Commercial	89	Need tax revenue, Small businesses, Hotel, Need to widen Victory Boulevard before development
Recreation	86	Family Rec/Sports Complex, Ballfields, Movie Theater, Bowling, For teenagers/Young adults, Special events space, Golf course
Medical Facilities	55	Assisted living, Med-Express, Patient First, Nursing home, Child care
Professional Office Space	51	Aesthetic standards, High-end
Community Center	50	Youth Rec Center, YMCA, Auditorium, Multipurpose
Restaurant	50	High-end, Chic-Fil-A, Starbucks
Light Industrial	20	Landscaped layout, Respect the environment
Research/Tech Center	18	Tech Center, NASA supporting facility, Low traffic generator
Educational	10	New school site, Culinary school
Specific Additional Comments	76	Traffic concerns, Widen Victory Boulevard first, No housing, Aesthetics, Gateway not an eyesore, Nice entrance to Poquoson, Avoid wetlands, Need tax revenue, Keep trees, Emergency evacuation
Blank/No Comment	298	

What types of new land use or development, if any, would you support at Messick Point?

Restaurants	171
Park/playground/picnic areas	143
Public beach	103
Boating/marine activities	99
Retail stores/shops	68
Marina	58
Concert venue	47
Piers	40
Residential	37
Family-oriented	22
Retail seafood	20
Restaurants (seafood)	18
Walking trails	16
Boat storage	9
Boardwalk	8
Camping	8
Educational activities/courses	7
Farmers market	6
Hotel/resort	6
Other	96

Additional Comments (Open-Ended Comment Space)

Note: Highlighted rows are breakdowns of the preceding results.

Community Character	208
<i>Maintain "small town" (look, feel, atmosphere, charm, size, ...)</i>	<i>118</i>
<i>Control development, growth</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>City appearance (Clean up, more coherent aesthetics)</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Good schools</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Safe; low crime</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Add sidewalks & bike paths</i>	<i>12</i>
Economics/Budgeting	118
<i>Suggestions for new development, fill vacant commercial space, improve infrastructure</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Taxes (change rate, broaden tax base)</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Promote sustainable financial management</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Affordable housing, new residential development</i>	<i>12</i>
Land Use	103
City Government	75
Infrastructure	60
Environmental Concerns	41
Public Education	28
Public Safety	28
Parks and Recreation	26

POQUOSON CITIZENS' SURVEY 2017 – DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTION ANSWERS

	Under 18	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 to 65	65+	No response
What is your age?	1	88	348	338	497	31
	0%	7%	27%	26%	38%	2%

	Less than 1 year	1 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 to 20 years	Over 20 years	No response
How long have you lived in Poquoson?	18	117	105	238	774	51
	1%	9%	8%	18%	59%	4%

Do you work in Poquoson?		
I work in Poquoson	157	12%
I work outside the City	552	42%
I am currently not working	36	3%
I am currently retired	537	41%
No response	21	2%

Do you own a business based in Poquoson?		
Yes	122	9%
No	1106	85%
No response	75	6%

How many children in your household are enrolled in, or are planning to attend, Poquoson's public schools?		
None	935	72%
One	138	11%
Two	135	10%
Three or more	46	4%
No response	49	4%