

Douglas Downtown Authority Survey Responses

September 15, 2026

Survey participation

The survey received 289 responses.

Connection to Douglas Responses Share

Full-time resident	146	50.5%
Property owner	42	14.5%
Seasonal resident	36	12.5%
Business owner	21	7.3%
Visitor	14	4.8%
Employee in Douglas	6	2.1%
Other/local connections	24	8.3%

Respondents were highly familiar with downtown:

- 106 visit several times per week.
 - 87 visit daily.
 - 53 visit weekly.
 - Altogether, 246 respondents—85%—visit at least weekly.
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What people currently value

Respondents most frequently selected:

Existing downtown strength Responses Share

Restaurants and dining	200	69.2%
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Existing downtown strength Responses Share

Small-town atmosphere	193	66.8%
Walkability	154	53.3%
Events and festivals	110	38.1%
Arts and culture	94	32.5%
Shopping	84	29.1%
Historic character	81	28.0%
Waterfront access	58	20.1%

The results show strong support for protecting the community's character, scale, walkability, and locally oriented atmosphere.

What respondents believe is missing

Identified need	Responses Share	
Additional dining options	187	64.7%
Retail shopping	146	50.5%
Entertainment venues	105	36.3%
Outdoor recreation opportunities	56	19.4%
Housing	56	19.4%
Public gathering spaces	46	15.9%
Family-friendly activities	38	13.1%
Arts and cultural spaces	36	12.5%
Professional services	21	7.3%

Dining, retail, and entertainment stand out as the three most significant perceived gaps.

Businesses and uses people want added

Desired business or use	Responses	Share
Bakery	141	48.8%
Live music venue	137	47.4%
Restaurant	123	42.6%
Boutique retail	92	31.8%
Bookstore	84	29.1%
Wellness or fitness facility	68	23.5%
Wine bar	66	22.8%
Performing arts venue	65	22.5%
Brewery or taproom	65	22.5%
Senior housing	53	18.3%
Workforce housing	52	18.0%
Mixed-use development	51	17.6%
Outdoor recreation business	46	15.9%

A bakery, live music venue, and additional restaurant received the strongest support. Respondents also showed meaningful interest in housing, wellness, arts, and mixed-use development.

Former Police Department property

The most-supported uses were:

Potential use	Responses	Share
Restaurant	196	67.8%
Retail space	162	56.1%

Potential use	Responses Share	
Café or coffee shop	113	39.1%
Mixed-use development	110	38.1%
Community meeting space	85	29.4%
Art gallery	81	28.0%
Residential use	65	22.5%
Visitor information center	39	13.5%
Office space	29	10.0%

The results strongly favor an active, public-facing commercial use. A restaurant or retail-oriented mixed-use project appears most consistent with public preferences. Office space received comparatively limited support.

Written responses frequently combined:

- A restaurant, café, bakery, or other food use
- Retail on the ground floor
- Housing or residential use above
- Community, art, or gathering space
- A business capable of operating year-round

Desired identity for Downtown Douglas

When asked what downtown should be known for in ten years, the leading responses were:

Desired identity	Responses Share	
Dining destination	66	22.8%
Arts and culture	49	17.0%
Small-business community	44	15.2%

Desired identity	Responses Share	
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Historic character	35	12.1%
Family-friendly atmosphere	28	9.7%
Entertainment and events	18	6.2%
Shopping destination	16	5.5%
Waterfront recreation	12	4.2%
Housing opportunities	10	3.5%

No single identity dominated. Instead, respondents appear to support a combination of dining, arts, locally owned businesses, and historic character.

Improvements that would increase downtown visits

Improvement	Responses Share	
More restaurants serving lunch	174	60.2%
More year-round businesses	143	49.5%
Expanded evening and weekend hours	118	40.8%
More entertainment or live music	114	39.4%
More retail shopping options	100	34.6%
More outdoor seating and gathering spaces	60	20.8%
More community events and activities	56	19.4%
More convenient parking	43	14.9%
Additional public restrooms	17	5.9%
Better pedestrian and bicycle amenities	16	5.5%

The findings suggest that existing businesses' availability may be nearly as important as recruiting new businesses. Lunch service, consistent hours, evenings, weekends, and year-round operations were repeatedly emphasized.

Recurring written-comment themes

The open-ended responses reinforced several themes:

- Better use of Wade's Bayou and the waterfront, including seating, recreation, boating access, dining, music, and community events
- More restaurants, particularly lunch, bakery, café, affordable, casual, and takeout options
- More consistent and year-round business hours
- Live music, performing arts, festivals, and activities for different age groups
- Preservation of Douglas's historic, quiet, and small-town character
- More green space, landscaping, trees, seating, and attractive public gathering areas
- Housing that supports year-round residents, workers, and seniors
- Improved connections between downtown destinations through walking, biking, transit, parking, and wayfinding
- Continued attention to Beery Field, the former Police Department property, Wade's Bayou, and Blue Star Highway

Overall conclusions

The survey points toward five broad priorities:

1. Recruit and support additional dining, especially lunch, bakery, café, casual, and year-round options.
2. Encourage active commercial or mixed use of the former Police Department property, with restaurant and retail uses receiving the strongest support.
3. Expand entertainment, live music, arts, events, and public gathering opportunities.
4. Improve use of Wade's Bayou, Beery Field, and other public spaces while enhancing landscaping, seating, and waterfront access.
5. Preserve Douglas's small-town and historic character as development occurs.