

Questionnaire Results Summary

Plum Borough Implementable Comprehensive Plan
October 2025

Background

The Community Questionnaire serves as a valuable tool for the plan, offering insight into residents' values, priorities, and preferences. It was developed with input from the Steering Committee following its first meeting with the planning consultant, where members discussed what they needed to learn from the community to identify the plan's Key Issues. Pashek+MTR developed a draft online questionnaire in collaboration with the steering committee.

The Borough, the consultant team, and steering committee members promoted participation in the questionnaire in various ways, including:

- Publishing a project website, *growingplumforward.com*, where the questionnaire link featured prominently
- Committee members spreading the word to their networks, social media pages and email lists
- In-person outreach at Fall Fest, the senior center, and the Plum Library Fall Book Sale
- Publishing an article in the *Trib*
- Sharing the questionnaire link on Borough socials
- Repeated SavvyCitizen messages
- Targeted ads on Facebook
- Yard signs at municipal buildings

Response rate

Between early September and late October 2025, the questionnaire received 500 responses online. Pashek+MTR examined the data to check for repeated responses, flagging any IP address (the address of an individual device) associated with four or more responses for further analysis. Multiple responses from the same device could point to multiple members of the same household or different responses from a public location, such as a library computer. A detailed review of the multiple-response cases indicated that they were unique and unlikely to be the result of any effort to unduly influence results. The questionnaire was not designed as a statistically valid survey, as its sample is not random. The value in this type of tool lies especially in the qualitative information it generates, which will help the committee learn what is important to the community.

Findings

Pashek+MTR summarized the most important responses to the questionnaire. For additional tabulations and much more detail in qualitative comments, see the full questionnaire printout.

Q1 Why did you choose to live, work, and/or own a business in Plum Borough? Select all that apply:

N/A I do not live, work, or own a business in Plum Borough	0.81%
I have always lived in Plum	30.16%
Convenience of location/proximity to downtown Pittsburgh	18.83%
Cost of housing/rent	21.05%
Family, friends are here	34.01%
Housing and neighborhood quality	39.07%
Job or work opportunities	8.30%
Parks, recreation, sports, things to do	13.36%
School quality	33.81%
Shopping/services I need are local/convenient	7.89%
Restaurants/bars/coffee ships are local/convenient	4.86%
Well-run local government	3.04%

Other responses to this question made up 13.56% of respondents. The following is a summary of the responses:

- Family and Personal Ties: Many residents moved to or remained in Plum to be near family or due to personal circumstances such as marriage, work commitments, or long-term attachment to the community.
- Proximity and Employment: Access to jobs in nearby areas like Pittsburgh, Monroeville, and Springdale influenced relocation and residency decisions, with some long-term residents originally moving for work decades ago.

- **Community Character and Lifestyle:** Respondents value Plum's small-town charm, safety, good schools, and sense of community, as well as its semi-rural atmosphere with open space, quiet streets, and outdoor opportunities.
- **Housing and Affordability:** Affordable housing historically drew residents, though rising taxes and costs are growing concerns; others were attracted by specific housing options such as farms, condos, or retirement communities.

Q2 What three things does our community do best?

The topics most frequently mentioned in response to this open-ended question were as follows:

- **Safety and Public Services (about 35%)** – Residents consistently mentioned effective police, fire, and EMS services, along with low crime and good emergency response.
- **Community Support and Events (about 28%)** – People emphasized how the community comes together in times of need, supports each other, and hosts frequent family- and youth-oriented events.
- **Schools and Programming (about 22%)** – Many responses praised school quality, teachers, programs for kids, and the overall school system. The Borough is also praised for well-maintained parks, sports fields, recreational opportunities, and the library.

Other mentions made up the remaining 10% of responses and included things like snow removal and maintenance.

Q3 What three things would you like to see change in our community?

The topics most frequently mentioned in response to this open-ended question were as follows:

- **Business Development and Economic Growth (about 23%)** – Residents emphasized attracting new businesses, restaurants, and retail, filling vacant storefronts, supporting locally owned businesses, and creating mixed-use or tech hubs to strengthen the local economy.
- **Taxes and Fiscal Responsibility (about 20%)** – Many comments focused on lowering property, school, and senior taxes, freezing future tax increases, and reducing wasteful spending to make living in the Borough more affordable.

- **Roads, Traffic, and Infrastructure (about 14%)** – Common concerns included road maintenance, potholes, stormwater management, improving traffic safety, adding sidewalks and bike lanes, and widening major roads like Route 286.
- **Family Attractions and Recreation (about 11%)** – Residents highlighted the need for splash pads, playgrounds, parks, pools, recreational centers, teen programs, trails, and community events to provide family- and youth-oriented activities.
- **Green Space Preservation and Environment (about 6%)** – People wanted protection of parks, trails, woods, and farmland, limiting new housing development to maintain open space, and addressing environmental concerns like fracking or injection wells.
- **Communication and Transparency (about 6%)** – Residents expressed a need for better communication from local government, including timely updates on road work, events, policies, and planning decisions, as well as clearer channels to provide input.

Other mentions made up the remaining 20% of responses and included topics such as senior services and utilities management.

Q4 How would you describe our community?

Plum is widely seen as a safe, family-oriented, and welcoming community with a small-town/suburban feel, but many residents want more amenities, infrastructure improvements, affordability, and stronger community cohesion. Some themes include:

Strengths & Positive Attributes:

- Family- and kid-friendly: Many described Plum as a great place to raise children, with safe neighborhoods and good schools.
- Safe and quiet: Repeatedly noted as a low-crime, peaceful, and secure community.
- Close-knit and neighborly: Strong sense of community, supportive neighbors, and people willing to help each other.
- Suburban/rural charm: Enjoyable mix of residential, rural, and natural landscapes; proximity to the city while retaining a “country feel.”
- Community services: Police, fire, EMS, library, and community programs received praise.

Challenges & Concerns:

- Lack of business, amenities, and activities: Limited shopping, restaurants, and entertainment options; people often travel outside Plum for basic needs.
- High taxes and cost of living: Concerns about affordability, especially for seniors and middle-class families.
- Infrastructure and maintenance issues: Roads, abandoned properties, and outdated facilities noted as problems.
- Community identity and inclusivity: Perceived divisions between neighborhoods; some feel new residents or non-longtime residents are excluded.
- Governance and planning frustrations: Criticism of government spending priorities, red tape, and lack of attention to business growth or recreation beyond youth sports.

Q5 How important are each of the following issues to the future of Plum? (Please rate the importance of each, with 1 being not so important and 5 being very important.)

	1 (NOT IMPORTANT)	2	3	4	5 (VERY IMPORTANT)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Community safety (fire, police, EMS)	0.47% 2	0.23% 1	3.50% 15	9.56% 41	86.25% 370	429	4.81
Communication with residents and business owners	0.93% 4	2.33% 10	10.96% 47	23.54% 101	62.24% 267	429	4.44
Proactive infrastructure management to stay ahead of issues (e.g. stormwater/flooding, landslides)	0.71% 3	3.06% 13	15.53% 66	22.12% 94	58.59% 249	425	4.35
Attracting businesses in Plum	2.58% 11	3.04% 13	14.52% 62	20.61% 88	59.25% 253	427	4.31
Improving traffic safety and road conditions	1.64% 7	2.81% 12	14.99% 64	25.06% 107	55.50% 237	427	4.30
Developing/revitalizing parks and recreation facilities	2.56% 11	5.83% 25	17.72% 76	27.97% 120	45.92% 197	429	4.09
Conservation and/or protecting the natural environment, green space, and farmland	4.47% 19	7.29% 31	16.47% 70	27.06% 115	44.71% 190	425	4.00
Collaboration with local organizations, nearby communities, and/or the school district	5.37% 23	5.61% 24	21.73% 93	21.73% 93	45.56% 195	428	3.96
Housing options and/or affordability	7.96% 34	7.73% 33	24.82% 106	20.14% 86	39.34% 168	427	3.75
Improving walking and/or biking conditions	11.03% 47	9.62% 41	22.77% 97	18.31% 78	38.26% 163	426	3.63
Addressing environmental concerns (air quality, tree canopy, climate resilience)	10.61% 45	12.50% 53	21.70% 92	20.99% 89	34.20% 145	424	3.56

The top five most important issues were, in order:

1. Community Safety (fire, police, EMS)
2. Communication with residents and business owners
3. Proactive infrastructure management
4. Attracting businesses to Plum
5. Improving road safety

Q6 How do you believe the Borough can best serve its senior citizens during the next decade?

The topics most frequently mentioned in response to this open-ended question were as follows:

- **Tax Relief / Financial Support (about 45%)** - The most frequently mentioned need is reducing or eliminating school and property taxes for seniors, especially those on fixed incomes or long-term residents.
 - Other financial suggestions include discounts on utilities, garbage, water/sewer, and local fees, as well as low-interest loans or tax rebates to help maintain homes.
- **Affordable and Senior-Friendly Housing (about 20%)** - Respondents emphasized the need for more affordable housing options, such as one-floor condos, patio homes, or senior communities.
 - There is interest in creating housing that allows seniors to downsize but stay in the community, while freeing up homes for younger families.
- **Community and Social Engagement (about 15%)** - Expand programs at the senior/community center: fitness, social activities, volunteer opportunities, and events tailored to seniors.
 - Address loneliness and social isolation via “adopt-a-senior” programs, outreach, and intergenerational activities. Encourage community connection, e.g., volunteers assisting with errands, yard work, or home maintenance.
- **Transportation (about 13%)** - Accessible transportation is a recurring theme: shuttle services to medical appointments, grocery stores, churches, and the senior/community center.

- Suggestions include a local bus loop or senior shuttle program to supplement limited county transit.
- **Home and Property Assistance (about 7%)** - Offer help with snow removal, lawn care, home maintenance, and minor repairs, especially for seniors living alone or on fixed incomes.
 - Provide trusted directories of services and organize volunteer programs.

Some other themes included health, safety, and accessibility, as well as respect and inclusion.

Q7 What factors most affect how confident you feel about staying in your home as you get older? Select all that apply:

This does not apply to me or I don't know	11%
I can afford to stay in and maintain my home	60%
Services and amenities I may need are nearby	39%
I can rely on support from family, friends, or neighbors	28%
I will need to downsize in the future	25%

Other comments included themes of:

- The majority of residents are most concerned about **affordability, especially taxes**, which directly impacts their ability to stay in their homes.
- Housing suitability for aging (single-floor, low-maintenance homes) and potential need for **assisted living or senior services** are secondary concerns.
- Safety and neighborhood conditions are mentioned but are less prominent.

Q8 Where do you think Plum Borough should focus its parks and recreation efforts in the future?

	HIGH PRIORITY	PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	NOT NECESSARY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Protect open space and natural resources	31.28% 132	42.65% 180	22.99% 97	3.08% 13	422	1.98
Develop walking and biking trails that connect parks, neighborhoods, schools, and businesses	36.47% 155	28.47% 121	25.88% 110	9.18% 39	425	2.08
Improve amenities in existing parks	26.54% 112	43.84% 185	25.12% 106	4.50% 19	422	2.08
Expand recreation programs and activities	28.61% 121	39.95% 169	25.77% 109	5.67% 24	423	2.09
Host more community events	24.34% 102	33.89% 142	32.46% 136	9.31% 39	419	2.27

The following is a summary of other comments:

- Residents want well-maintained, family-friendly parks and recreational amenities, including splash pads, inclusive playgrounds, walking trails, and safe bike paths, while addressing overuse by non-residents.
- Empty buildings and lots should be repurposed for community activities, pop-up dining, and events that engage local families.
- Communication and promotion of community events and programs need improvement to increase awareness and participation.
- Support exists for local transportation improvements, EV infrastructure, and collaborations with community organizations rather than relying solely on borough-led initiatives.
- Residents value environmental stewardship, including maintaining green spaces, walking trails, and managing wildlife populations, while also focusing on reducing living costs and supporting local businesses.

Q9 How well do the current Borough services (e.g., police, trash, snow removal) meet the needs of residents?

This sliding scale question averaged a 6.8 out of 10 response.

Q10 Do you feel that the Borough should focus more resources on any of the following? Select all that apply:

No changes needed	7.19%
Food assistance programs	25.18%
Trash and recycling services	23.74%
Street cleaning and maintenance	32.13%
Snow removal	24.22%
Public safety	35.01%
Stormwater management strategies	42.45%
Education and literacy programs (e.g. financial, early childhood)	36.45%
Public restrooms	14.39%
Code enforcement	21.82%

The highest rated responses were stormwater management strategies, education and literacy programs, and public safety, closely followed by street cleaning and maintenance. About 10.5% of total responses were comments, which included themes of:

- **Basic Services & Safety:** Residents want well-maintained roads, reliable trash and snow removal, functional fire departments and hydrants, gas line safety, and effective code enforcement. Concerns also include loud or reckless drivers, dog leash enforcement, and school bus safety.
- **Community Growth & Amenities:** Support for new businesses that provide jobs and essential services (grocery, clothing, entertainment), lower taxes, recreation opportunities (parks, trails, splash pad, children's programs), and a potential town center.

- **Environment & Infrastructure:** Interest in maintaining parks and the environment, deer culling, trimming overgrown trees, managing litter/undergrowth, on-street parking, and improved bus stop infrastructure.

Q11 Which public safety concerns are most important to you? Select all that apply:

None of the above	0.95%
Property crime (e.g., theft, vandalism)	63.12%
Traffic safety/speeding	53.90%
Substance-related issues	23.88%
Fire protection services	45.86%
Emergency medical services	51.77%
Natural disaster preparedness	34.04%
Utility reliability	53.43%
Other (please specify)	8.98%

Other comments included themes of:

- Residents want stronger public safety and emergency services, including well-funded fire departments, paid EMS/ambulance services in-network with insurance, better police patrolling, and measures to address crime, reckless driving, school safety, and bullying.
- Traffic and infrastructure improvements are needed, including better intersection management, safer roads, bus stop safety, expanded highways, and consistent snow and ice removal.
- Utilities and environmental safety are major concerns, with residents highlighting power outages, gas leaks, home and industrial explosions, electrical problems, and air quality monitoring near gas wells.

Q12 What would you say is the greatest housing problem in Plum? Select one:

None of the above - I do not think there are housing issues in Plum.	22.83%
Affordability for renters	4.47%
Affordability for would-be owners	24.57%
Condition of housing	4.22%
Not enough larger homes	2.48%
Not enough smaller, low-maintenance homes	17.87%
Location of homes relative to daily destinations	5.46%
Other (please specify)	18.11%

Some themes of the comments included:

- Residents are concerned that too many large, high-end housing developments are being built, and they want more diverse options, including condominiums, family-sized rentals, senior-friendly single-floor homes, and custom-built houses.
- High property and school taxes are a major concern, making homeownership and living in Plum increasingly difficult, especially for seniors and young families.
- Infrastructure and services, including traffic management, public transportation, grocery access, and walkability, need to keep pace with new housing developments.
- Residents want better enforcement of property maintenance, accountability for rental homes, and preservation of green space to maintain Plum's rural character.

Q13 Which of the following do you believe is the highest priority for future development in Plum?

Over 75% of respondents said expanding retail and commercial options, as well protecting green space and farmland, is the most important.

Q14 Would you support local regulations that protect farmland by limiting development for uses like housing or businesses?

83% said yes, 17% said no.

Q15 What do you believe are the biggest threats to farmland in our community?
Select all that apply:

74% of respondents saw large scale development and housing as the biggest threats to farmland.

Q16 How often do you visit the Borough website?

A few times a week	1.23%
About once a week	2.46%
A few times a month	11.33%
Once a month	18.72%
Less than once a month	49.26%
Never	17.00%

Q17 Where do you typically get information about local government news or decisions?

The majority of respondents get their information from social media (32%), the local paper (28%), and Savvy Citizen (13%).

Q18 Which of the following would you be willing to do to support our community?
Select all that apply:

The majority of respondents would share feedback on Borough plans or policies (46%), donate funds or supplies (42%), or attend a community workshop (40%).

Q19 Which best describes you?

90.45% of respondents live in and own a home in Plum Borough. 3.5% rent, 4.27% live in and own/operate a business, and 1% work in or own/operate a business in the Borough.

Q20 In which age range do you fall?

Under 20: 0.75%

20-24: 0.25%

25-34: 12.5%

35-44: 22%

45-54: 14%

55-64: 18%

65+: 33%

Q21 How long have you lived in, worked in or had a business in your community?

	Less than 5 Years	6-14 Years	More than 15 Years	Not Applicable
Lived Here	10%	20%	70%	1%
Worked Here	7%	9%	14%	70%
Owned a business here	3%	4%	6%	89%

Q22 If you would like to add comments that would help us better understand successes, issues or ways to better our community, please add them below.

Comments are summarized in the following:

- Support for local business and redevelopment: Residents want more locally owned shops and restaurants, revitalization of vacant sites (including former

municipal/police building site), and simpler permitting/code enforcement processes.

- Concerns about taxes and fiscal management: High property and school taxes are major worries; transparency around spending; and growth that broadens the tax base instead of raising rates.
- Infrastructure and public safety priorities: Clements Road, Davidson Road, and New Texas Rd as maintenance/traffic issues, flooding/stormwater, especially along Albers Creek, and “infrastructure should keep pace with new development”; funding and staffing for volunteer fire/EMS
- Community amenities and livability: People value parks and events but want more walkability, trails, and gathering spaces; opinions are mixed on recreation spending like the splash pad; interest in full-day kindergarten and early education programs.
- Balancing growth and preservation: Residents are divided between protecting Plum’s rural character and supporting new housing, with some advocating for smaller homes for seniors and families.

Note: 129 of 500 respondents provided email addresses to receive updates regarding the project.