

# Town of Thurston Housing Needs Assessment

*Completed November 2024*



## *Executive Summary*

In 2023, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board partnered with the Town of Thurston to submit a community planning grant application the New York State Office of Community Renewal. In November 2023, the Town of Thurston was awarded \$25,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to develop a housing needs assessment for the Town. Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board was named as subrecipient of the grant to assist the Town with implementing the project.

*A housing needs assessment* gathers information about the state of housing in the Town, formulates recommendations for policies and actions to improve housing within the Town, and provides the basis for the Town to apply for a future grant to receive funds to assist low-to-moderate income homeowners in the Town with housing rehabilitation, septic and well replacement, and/or mobile home accessibility modifications.

The Town of Thurston mailed a housing and community survey to all Town residents at the end of April 2024 asking for responses by June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. The survey included questions related to community needs, housing needs, and gathered homeowner information to create a waiting list of potential applicants for the CDBG Housing Activities application. Although the Town asked for survey responses by June 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Town continued to accept survey responses whenever they arrived.

During May 2024, members of the Housing Needs Assessment Committee and representatives from Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board conducted a windshield survey to evaluate the exterior condition of all residential structures in the Town. There were 640 residential structures in the Town of Thurston evaluated during the windshield survey, of which 555 appear to be fully-occupied or the home's occupation status is uncertain.

The housing and community survey was delivered to approximately 584 addresses with 82 responses, which is a response rate of 14%. Approximately two-thirds of respondents had at least one person over the age of 62 in the home. Additionally, approximately 25% of respondents had at least one child under age 17 in the home and just over 10% of respondents had at least one person with a disability in the home. Nearly 100% of respondents stated that they own their home.



## *Executive Summary*

In terms of housing issues, the most prevalent issue respondents reported with their homes was the presence of rodents. Additionally, nearly one-third of respondents reported water issues in their house. Committee members stated that water drawn from wells in many areas of the Town requires treatment before it is drinkable. Other significant issues appear to be with heating and insulation, electrical, and septic tank issues. Twenty-nine (29) respondents were interested in the housing rehabilitation program, and sixteen (16) of the interested respondents appear to be income-eligible. Of these sixteen (16) respondents, fifteen (15) live in stick-built or modular homes.

The windshield survey identified fifteen (15) homes in the Town of Thurston, which represents approximately 2.7% of the total fully-occupied or occupation status uncertain residential structures. The windshield survey also identified one-hundred and one (101) fully-occupied or occupation status uncertain residential structures that, based on their exterior conditions, were rated at Poor (requiring major rehabilitation) or Deteriorated (likely requiring reconstruction). Another ninety-seven (97) structures were identified as Average (likely requiring at least minor rehabilitation). The windshield survey results indicate there are 198 fully-occupied or occupation status uncertain residential structures rated as Deteriorated, Poor, or Average in the Town of Thurston which equates to approximately one-third of all fully-occupied or occupation status uncertain residential structures in the Town. The number of residential structures in Thurston requiring rehabilitation is likely higher than that represented in the windshield survey as the windshield survey is subjective, all areas of the house may not be able to be seen from the road, and there may be issues on the interior of the house that would not be identified from the windshield survey.

A list of housing and community goals the Town intends to pursue in the future is below:

- Provide information to residents about housing assistance programs available to them such as the Energy Saving and Weatherization program offered by Pro Action of Steuben and Yates and programs offered through Arbor Housing & Development and Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation.
- Pursue Community Development Block Grant(s) for Housing Activities. Thurston applied in July 2024 for an implementation grant and plans to apply again in July 2025 should the grant not be awarded. Thurston hopes the grant will be awarded and becomes a source of assistance for residents of the Town.

## *Executive Summary*

- To publicize resources and improve the sense of community, the Town may hold more community events such as community days and yard sales. These events could be held in conjunction with the Fire Department.
- Investigate grant funding sources to assist homeowners with water issues as evidenced by the survey and committee member statements, many homeowners in the Town need to have a water filtration system installed to have drinkable water from their wells.
- Work with Steuben County Public Health to improve park amenities.
- Complete requirements to become a New York State Pro-Housing community.



## *Introduction and Project Summary*

In 2023, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board partnered with the Town of Thurston to submit a community planning grant application the New York State Office of Community Renewal. In November 2023, the Town of Thurston was awarded \$25,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to develop a housing needs assessment for the Town. Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board was named as subrecipient of the grant to assist the Town with implementing the project.

*A housing needs assessment* gathers information about the state of housing in the Town, formulates recommendations for policies and actions to improve housing within the Town, and provides the basis for the Town to apply for a future grant to receive funds to assist low-to-moderate income homeowners in the Town with housing rehabilitation, septic and well replacement, and/or mobile home accessibility modifications.

The Town of Thurston created a Housing Needs Assessment Steering Committee to guide the development of the assessment. This committee is comprised of two Town Board members, one Town Assessor, three Town residents, and two representatives from Steuben County Public Health who agreed to assist with the needs assessment. The Housing Needs Assessment Committee met on a monthly basis between February 2024 and November 2024.

The development of the Housing Needs Assessment consisted of the following key components:

- Creation and distribution of a community survey administered to all Town residents.
- Completion of a windshield survey to acquire data on the exterior condition of homes in the Town.
- Public presentation of community and windshield survey results at a public hearing.
- Development of goals and objectives for the Town moving forward related to housing needs.
- Development of a list of potential applicants for a future CDBG-funded housing rehabilitation program to be administered by the Town of Thurston.

## Thurston Overview and Statistical Data

### Location and Overview of Thurston

Thurston is located in central Steuben County and is bordered by Bath to the north, Campbell to the east, Addison and Rathbone to the south, and Cameron to the west. Within the broader context of New York State, Thurston is located within the Southern Tier Region encompassing Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware Schuyler, Steuben, Tompkins, and Tioga Counties. The Town’s landscape is defined by hills, valleys, small lakes, ponds, and creeks which flow to the Canisteo river. Much of the soils are indicated to be prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance by data from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Town of Thurston was formed on February 28, 1844 when 22,000 acres were split off from the eastern section of the Town of Cameron. The Town is named for William B. Thurston, the principal landowner. Merchantville and Risingville were the primary hamlets. In the late 1800s the name Merchantville was dropped, and the hamlet was called Thurston. The first settlers were Luke Bonny and William Smith on Bonny Hill in 1813. William Jack and Stephen Aldrich settled near Cranberry Lake, known as Friend's Pond, in 1822. Edwin Merchant, for whom Merchantville was named, purchased land and set up a blacksmith and wagon shop in 1841. Risingville became the center of the lumbering business beginning in 1852 and was recognized for its huge, up-do-date sawmill.

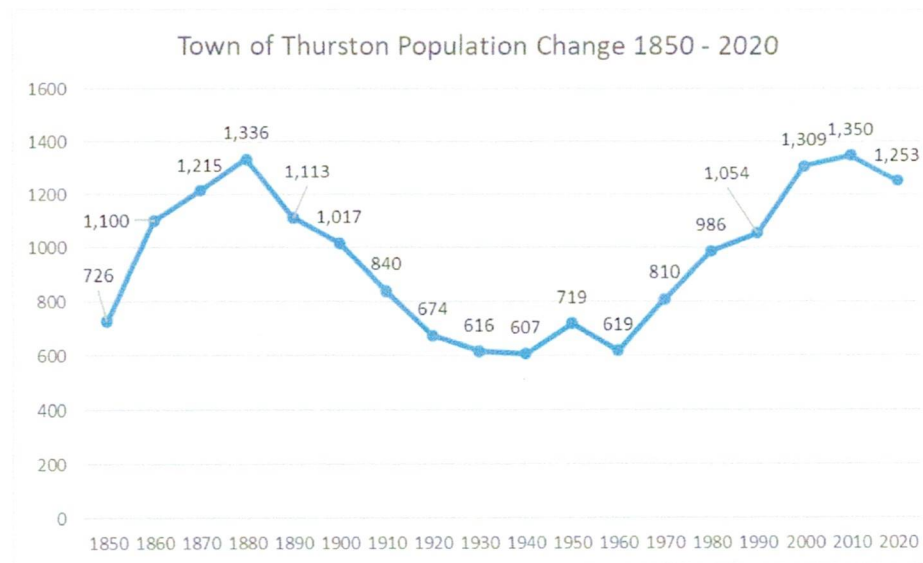


Thurston at a Glance	
2020 Population	1,253
2010 Population	1,350
Area	36.4 sq. mi.
Median Age	45.7
Population Density	31.7 people per sq. mi.
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau	



## Thurston Overview and Statistical Data

As of the 2020 Census, Thurston has a population of 1,253, a slight decrease from 1,350 in 2010. As can be seen in the below to the right, the population of Thurston has remained between approximately 600 and 1,350 since 1850. The Town of Thurston has a total area of 36.4 square miles. The only commercial enterprises within the Town are farms, independent contractors, and one campsite. The majority of those living in Thurston work outside of the Town.



Census data also indicates that 56.4% of the population is employed. The most common industries of the employed population are manufacturing (27%), educational services, health care and social services (21.7), construction (10.4%), and retail (9.5%). The median household income is \$63,750. 13.1% have earned a Bachelor's Degree or higher level of education, and 77.1% of school-aged children are enrolled in school.

Subsets of the population include:

- 17.3% of households spend 30% or more on housing costs
- 1.9% have no vehicle available
- 13.7% living with one or more disabilities
- 5.1% are without telephone service
- 6.8% veterans
- 10.1% have no computing device
- 9.6% are living at or below the poverty level, within which 13.8% are under the age of 18
- 18.6% have no internet subscription (10.1% under 18 years, 9.4% 18-64 years, and 4% 65+)
- 18.8% under 18 years of age
- 19.6% over the age of 65



## *Thurston Overview and Statistical Data*

The Town has an active and engaged Board and Town Supervisor, continually seeking ways to improve the community, including its housing stock. The Town has 623 units, 493 of which are occupied, according to the 2020 Census. 86.4% of units are owner-occupied, as opposed to rented. Vacancy rates are 1.6% for homeowners and 6.9% for renters. The median value of owner-occupied units is \$125,800. 1.1% of households have 2-or-more unit structures; 79.4% of households have 1-unit structure, and 19.5% are mobile homes or other types of units. 61.9% of houses have two or three bedrooms, which matches the average family size of 2-3 individuals.

The majority of households have families, at 71.3% of units, according to the American Community Survey (ACS). 20.4% of family households were on Social Security Income, cash public assistance income, or Food Stamps/SNAP in the year leading up to 2020. People 65 or older are in 32.5% of households, whereas 30% of householders are age 55-64. 25.9% households have one or more people under 18 years, and 20% of households have school-aged children belonging to the householder. Of the population, 18.8% are under 18 years old, with 11.4% between 5 and 14 years. Of occupied households with no spouse present, 12% are female, and 4.9% are male. The race of householders is predominantly white, at 95.1%.

Most householders moved in before 2010, 94.6%, with 63.2% having moved in between 2000 and 2010. 84.2% of occupied housing was built before the year 2000, including 21.8% built in 1939 or earlier. The median monthly housing cost is \$965. 17.3% of households (81) spend 30% or more on housing costs. The most common heating fuel is gas contained in a bottle or tank, 40.3%, while 27.6% use other fuels besides utility gas, contained gas, electricity, fuel oil, or coal (wood for example, fits this category). Real estate taxes cost \$1,500 or more for approximately 79.6% of housing units (90% of owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage and 74.3% of those without a mortgage). 50% of owner-occupied households responded that they are fuel costs are “not charged, not used, or payment included in other costs,” while another 32.7% pay \$750 or more annually.

## *Housing and Community Survey*

The Town of Thurston mailed a community survey to all Town residents at the end of April 2024 asking for responses by June 3rd, 2024. The survey was also posted on the Town of Thurston website. The survey included questions related to community needs, housing needs, and gathered homeowner information to create a waiting list of potential applicants for a CDBG Housing Activities application. A copy of the community survey mailed to all Town residents can be found in Appendix B.

Approximately 585 surveys were delivered to Town residents and the Town received 82 responses, which equates to a response rate of approximately 14%. Of these 82 responses, 29 were interested in potentially receiving assistance through a potential future housing rehabilitation program.

### **Community Needs Results**

As stated above, part of the survey related to community needs, and residents were able to provide opinions about Thurston at-large. This part of the survey was designed to capture as much information as possible from residents that not only pertained to housing needs, but that would also help the Town identify future projects and funding.

The first question in the survey surrounded residents' likes and dislikes about living in Thurston. Residents were also given space in the survey to express any other thoughts they may have. The most common words found in the comments can be found on the next page. Some common likes and dislikes from these citizen comments can also be found on the next page. A full list of responses can be found in Appendix D.



## Housing and Community Survey

The word cloud below represents the fifty most common words found in the citizen comments from the housing and community survey. Three words originally in the top fifty were excluded from the word cloud: “Thurston”, “town”, and “dislike”.



The five most common words mentioned in the comments are rural, roads, community, live, and quiet. All respondents mentioning the words “rural” and “quiet” did so in a positive sense as aspects they like about Thurston. The words “community” and “live” appear to be related to words around them, such as comments about the length of time the respondent has lived in the community, or that a respondent owns property in Thurston but does not live there. A final comment about some of the other words in the word cloud above are that residents appear to want low taxes, residents have mixed opinions about their neighbors, and some residents have concerns about property maintenance and code enforcement.

The most common “likes” and “dislikes” from the survey are below.

### Likes

- Rural
- Quiet
- Peaceful
- Hometown Feel

### Dislikes

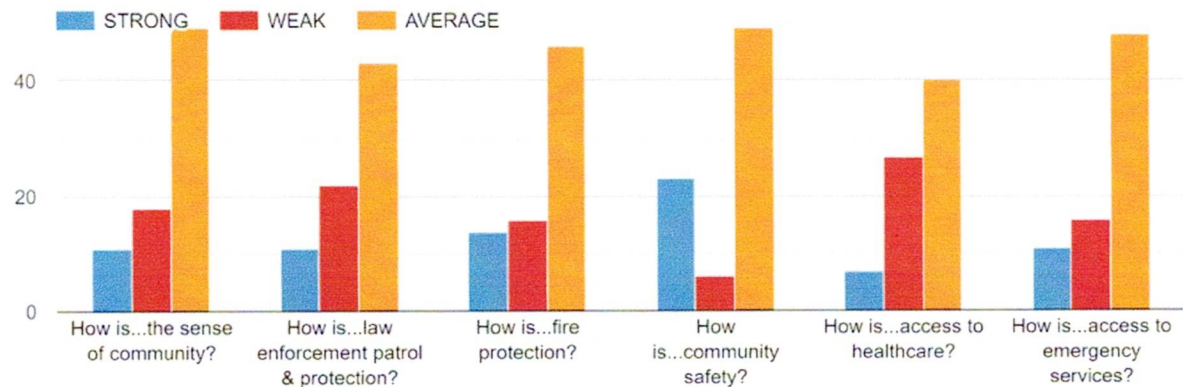
- Junk Cars/Junk Around Houses
- Potholes
- Road Conditions



## Housing and Community Survey

### Community Needs Results

Residents were also asked about services/situations in the Town, concerns about possible issues in Thurston, and whether various things were needed in the Town. The results from survey respondents to these questions are below and on the following pages.

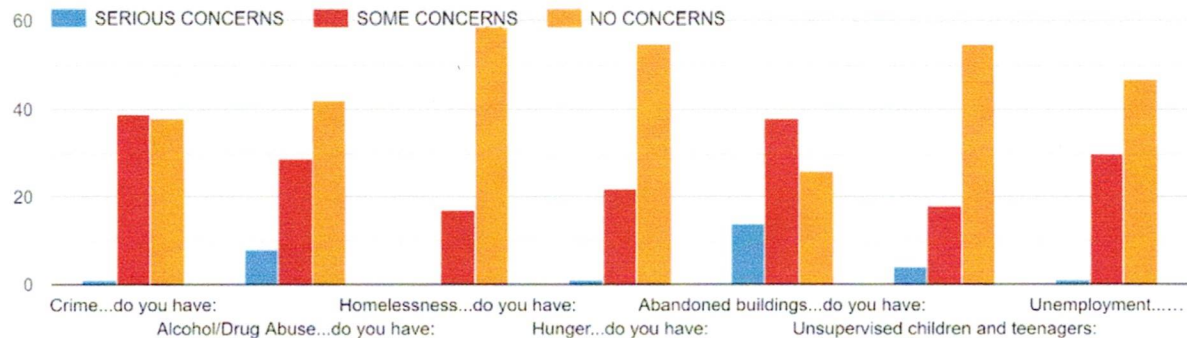


	Average	Strong	Weak
Sense of Community	62.82%	14.10%	23.08%
Law Enforcement Patrol and Protection	56.58%	14.47%	28.95%
Fire Protection	60.35%	18.42%	21.05%
Community Safety	62.82%	29.49%	7.69%
Access to Healthcare	54.05%	9.46%	36.49%
Access to Emergency Services	64.00%	14.67%	21.33%

In terms of services/situations in the Town of Thurston, most respondents identified all services and situations (such as sense of community) as average. Two items of note are that Access to Healthcare had a much higher percentage of respondents stating it was weak in the Town (36.49%) than other services. The ambulance provider for the Town of Thurston is AMR and the nearest hospitals are in Bath and Corning. Another item to note is that Community Safety had a much higher percentage of respondents stating it was strong in the Town (29.49%) than other services.

## Housing and Community Survey

### Community Needs Results



	No Concerns	Some Concerns	Serious Concerns
Crime	48.72%	50.00%	1.28%
Alcohol/Drug Abuse	53.16%	36.71%	10.13%
Homelessness	77.63%	22.37%	0%
Hunger	70.51%	28.21%	1.28%
Abandoned Buildings	33.33%	48.72%	17.95%
Unsupervised Children and Teenagers	71.43%	23.38%	5.19%
Unemployment	60.26%	38.46%	1.28%

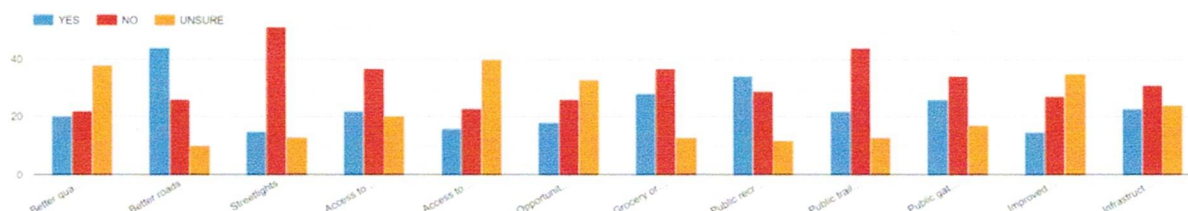
In terms of possible issues in Thurston, the category with the most concerns by far was abandoned buildings. 48.72% of respondents had some concerns about abandoned buildings and 17.95% of respondents had serious concerns about abandoned buildings. The next highest category of potential issues with concerns was crime, with 51.28% of respondents having either some concerns or serious concerns about this issue. There were some concerns expressed about alcohol and drug abuse as well, but survey respondents were generally not concerned with homelessness, hunger, unsupervised children and teenagers, and unemployment.



## Housing and Community Survey

### Community Needs Results

4. Are the following things needed in the Town of Thurston?



	Yes	No	Unsure
Better Quality, Affordable Housing	25.00%	27.50%	47.50%
Better Roads	55.00%	32.50%	12.50%
Streetlights	18.99%	64.56%	16.46%
Access to Parks and Play-ground Areas	27.85%	46.84%	25.32%
Access to High Quality Child Care	20.25%	29.11%	50.63%
Opportunity to Start a Business	23.38%	33.77%	42.86%
Grocery or Other Stores	35.90%	47.44%	16.67%
Public Recreation Trails (hiking, biking, horses)	45.33%	38.67%	16.00%
Public Trails for Recreational Motorized Use (ATVs)	27.85%	55.70%	16.46%
Public Gathering Areas (indoors or outdoors)	33.77%	44.16%	22.08%
Improved Cemetery Up-keep	19.48%	35.06%	45.45%
Infrastructure that Promotes Physical Activity	29.49%	39.74%	30.77%

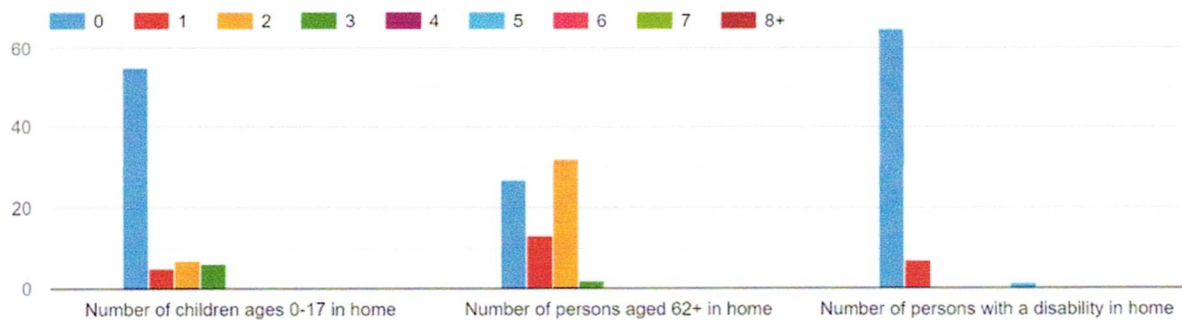
In terms of the items listed above that might be needed in Thurston, the top two items were better roads (55%) and public recreation trails (45%). The items that residents felt most strongly against having in Thurston were streetlights (64.5%) and public trail for recreational motorized use (55.7%). Respondents were unsure whether Thurston needed access to high quality child care, better quality, affordable housing, improved cemetery upkeep, and the opportunity to start a business. A final interesting item to note is that nearly half of respondents did not want a grocery or other store in the Town.



## Housing and Community Survey

### Housing Results

As part of the Housing and Community Survey, the Town collected data on the current state of housing in the Town and information about householders. This information is useful in creating the Town's goals and applying for future grant funding. Results from this section of the survey are outlined below and on the following pages.



	0	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Children Ages 0-17 in Home	75.34%	6.85%	9.59%	8.22%	0%	0%
Number of Persons Aged 62+ in Home	36.46%	17.57%	43.24%	2.7%	0%	0%
Number of Persons with a Disability in Home	89.04%	9.59%	0%	0%	0%	1.37%

Approximately two-thirds of respondents had at least one person over the age of 62 in the home. Additionally, approximately 25% of respondents had at least one child under age 17 in the home and just over 10% of respondents had at least one person with a disability in the home. Nearly 100% of respondents stated that they own their home.

## Housing and Community Survey

### Housing Results

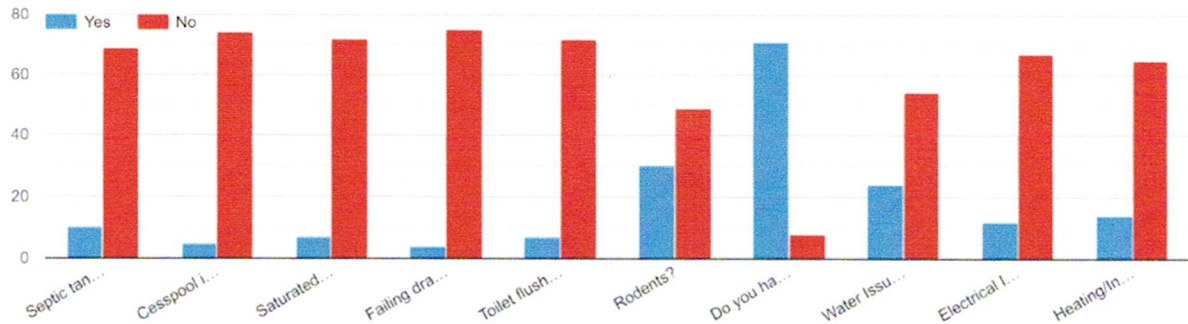


	Doesn't Need Repairs to Roof, Foundation, Wiring, or Plumbing	Needs Some Repairs – Has Old Roof, Poor Wiring, No Insulation, etc.	Roof Leaks, Poor or No Foundation, Dangerous Wiring, Needs Siding, etc.
Percentage of Respondents	66.67%	25.00%	8.33%

Approximately two-thirds of respondents stated their home does not need repairs, while approximately one-third of respondents state their home needs either some repairs or significant repairs.

## Housing and Community Survey

### Housing Results



	Yes	No
Septic Tank Issues	12.66%	87.34%
Cesspool Issues	6.33%	93.67%
Saturated Drain Fields	8.86%	91.14%
Failing Drain Fields	5.06%	94.94%
Toilet Flushing Slowly	8.86%	91.14%
Rodents	37.97%	62.03%
Complete Indoor Plumbing	89.87%	10.13%
Water Issues	30.77%	69.23%
Electrical Issues	15.19%	84.81%
Heating/Insulation Issues	17.22%	82.28%

The most prevalent issue respondents reported with their homes was the presence of rodents. Additionally, nearly one-third of respondents reported water issues in their house. Committee members stated that water drawn from wells in many areas of the Town requires treatment before it is drinkable. Other significant issues appear to be with heating and insulation, electrical, and septic tank issues.



## *Housing Windshield Survey*

### **Windshield Survey Results**

There were 640 residential structures in the Town of Thurston evaluated during the windshield survey, of which 555 appear to be fully-occupied or the home's occupation status is uncertain. The housing and community survey was delivered to approximately 585 addresses with 82 responses, which is a response rate of 14%. Twenty-nine (29) respondents were interested in the housing rehabilitation program, and sixteen (16) of the interested respondents appear to be income-eligible. Of these sixteen (16) respondents, fifteen (15) live in stick-built or modular homes.

Fifteen (15) homes in the Town of Thurston represents approximately 2.7% of the total fully-occupied or occupation status uncertain residential structures. The windshield survey also identified one-hundred and one (101) fully-occupied or occupation status uncertain residential structures that, based on their exterior conditions, were rated at Poor (requiring major rehabilitation) or Deteriorated (likely requiring reconstruction). Another ninety-seven (97) structures were identified as Average (likely requiring at least minor rehabilitation). The table below shows the total number of structures rated Deteriorated, Poor, and Average, the type of structure, and their percentage of the total number of fully-occupied structures in the Thurston.

## Housing Windshield Survey

### Windshield Survey Results

*Table of Fully-Occupied and Occupation Status Uncertain Residential Structures in Thurston Rated Deteriorated, Poor, and Average*

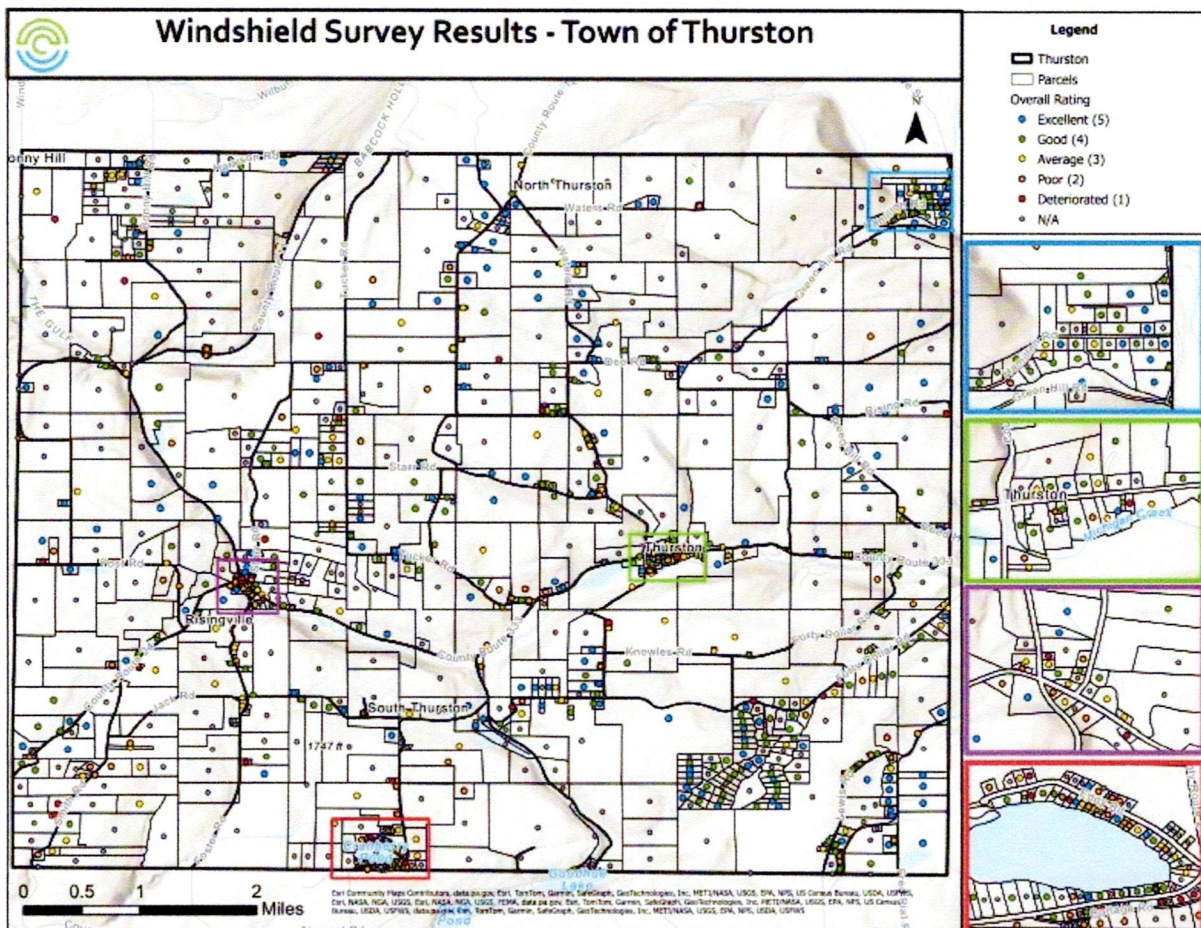
	Number	Percentage of Total Structures
<b><i>Deteriorated</i></b>	19	3.4%
Stick-Built or Modular	5	0.9%
Mobile Home	9	1.6%
Uncertain if Mobile, Stick-Built, or Modular	5	0.9%
<b>Poor</b>	82	14.8%
Stick-Built or Modular	49	8.8%
Mobile Home	26	4.7%
Uncertain if Mobile, Stick-Built, or Modular	7	1.3%
<b>Average</b>	97	17.5%
Stick-Built or Modular	55	9.9%
Mobile Home	37	6.7%
Uncertain if Mobile, Stick- Built, or Modular	5	0.9%
<b><i>Total</i></b>	198	35.0%
Stick-Built or Modular	109	19.6%
Mobile Home	72	13.0%
Uncertain if Mobile, Stick- Built, or Modular	17	3.1%



## Housing Windshield Survey

### Windshield Survey Results

The table above shows that there are 198 fully-occupied or occupation status uncertain residential structures rated as Deteriorated, Poor, or Average in the Town of Thurston which equates to approximately one-third of all fully-occupied or occupation status uncertain residential structures in the Town. Of structures rated Deteriorated, Poor, or Average, one-hundred and nine (109) are stick-built or modular, equating to approximately one-fifth of fully-occupied or occupation status uncertain residential structures in the Town. Therefore, dependent upon the income of the owners, the windshield survey shows at least one-fifth of fully-occupied or occupation status uncertain structures in Thurston need some form of rehabilitation and are eligible based on their structure type, and a further seventy-two (72) mobile homes may be eligible for accessibility improvements. The number of residential structures in Thurston requiring rehabilitation is likely higher than that represented in the windshield survey as the windshield survey is subjective, all areas of the house may not be able to be seen from the road, and there may be issues on the interior of the house that would not be identified from the windshield survey.



*\*Note a larger version of this map is present in Appendix F*

## *Thurston's Future: Housing and Community Goals*

This housing needs assessment document has identified issues and potential areas to improve in the future. A list of housing and community goals the Town intends to pursue in the future is below:

- Provide information to residents about housing assistance programs available to them such as the Energy Saving and Weatherization program offered by Pro Action of Steuben and Yates and programs offered through Arbor Housing & Development and Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation.
- Pursue Community Development Block Grant(s) for Housing Activities. Thurston applied in July 2024 for an implementation grant and plans to apply again in July 2025 should the grant not be awarded. Thurston hopes the grant will be awarded and becomes a source of assistance for residents of the Town.
- To publicize resources and improve the sense of community, the Town may hold more community events such as community days and yard sales. These events could be held in conjunction with the Fire Department.
- Investigate grant funding sources to assist homeowners with water issues as evidenced by the survey and committee member statements, many homeowners in the Town need to have a water filtration system installed to have drinkable water from their wells.
- Work with Steuben County Public Health to improve park amenities.
- Complete requirements to become a New York State Pro-Housing community.



## *Appendix A*

### Project Team List

Jennifer Hargrave, Town Board Member

Daniel Gee, Town Board Member

Gerald Gebhard, Town Assessor

Bill Caudill

Dawn Keegan

Rosalyn Renner

Mealea VanDenburg, Steuben County Public Health

Terence O'Shea, Steuben County Public Health

Brian Toy, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board

Michael Volino, Town Supervisor



## Appendix B

### Copy of Community Survey

#### TOWN OF THURSTON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SURVEY

Hello Thurston Residents! The Town of Thurston is conducting a community survey as part of the Town's Community Development Block Grant-funded Housing Needs Assessment project. This survey will provide information to the Town about community and housing needs as well as assist the Town in pursuing a future Community Development Block Grant to run a housing rehabilitation program in the Town of Thurston. This survey should take approximately 10 – 15 minutes to complete.

Surveys should be returned by **June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**. You may return your paper survey via the self-addressed stamped envelope provided, or drop it off at Town Hall (7578 County Route 333 Campbell, NY 14821) in the mailbox close to the road with the numbers "7578". A link to an electronic form of the survey can be found on the Town website (<https://townofthurstonny.org/>).

**Please only fill out the survey once, either in paper or electronic format.** Please contact Brian Toy at Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board (607-962-5092 ext. 210) with any questions about the survey.

#### PART 1 – COMMUNITY NEEDS

1. What do you like or dislike about living in Thurston? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please CIRCLE the rating you feel best applies to each of the following services/situations in the Town of Thurston:

a. How is... the sense of community?	STRONG	WEAK	AVERAGE
b. How is...law enforcement patrol & protection?	STRONG	WEAK	AVERAGE
c. How is...fire protection?	STRONG	WEAK	AVERAGE
d. How is...community safety?	STRONG	WEAK	AVERAGE
e. How is...access to healthcare?	STRONG	WEAK	AVERAGE
f. How is...access to emergency services?	STRONG	WEAK	AVERAGE

3. Please CIRCLE the level of concern you have about possible issues in Thurston:

a. Crime...do you have:	SERIOUS CONCERNS	SOME CONCERNS	NO CONCERNS
b. Alcohol/Drug Abuse...do you have:	SERIOUS CONCERNS	SOME CONCERNS	NO CONCERNS
c. Homelessness...do you have:	SERIOUS CONCERNS	SOME CONCERNS	NO CONCERNS
d. Hunger...do you have:	SERIOUS CONCERNS	SOME CONCERNS	NO CONCERNS
e. Abandoned buildings...do you have:	SERIOUS CONCERNS	SOME CONCERNS	NO CONCERNS
f. Unsupervised children and teenagers:	SERIOUS CONCERNS	SOME CONCERNS	NO CONCERNS
g. Unemployment...do you have:	SERIOUS CONCERNS	SOME CONCERNS	NO CONCERNS

4. Are the following things needed in the Town of Thurston? (please CIRCLE YES, NO, or NOT SURE)

a. Better quality, affordable housing	YES	NO	NOT SURE
b. Better streets	YES	NO	NOT SURE
c. Streetlights	YES	NO	NOT SURE
d. Access to parks and playground areas	YES	NO	NOT SURE
e. Access to high quality child care	YES	NO	NOT SURE

## Appendix B

### Copy of Community Survey

f. Opportunity to start a business	YES	NO	NOT SURE
g. Grocery or other stores	YES	NO	NOT SURE
h. Public recreation trails (hiking, biking, horses)	YES	NO	NOT SURE
i. Public trails for recreational motorized use (ATVs)	YES	NO	NOT SURE
j. Public gathering areas (indoors or outdoors)	YES	NO	NOT SURE
k. Improved cemetery upkeep	YES	NO	NOT SURE
l. Infrastructure that promotes physical activity	YES	NO	NOT SURE

Any Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### PART 2 – HOUSING NEEDS

The Town of Thurston is exploring opportunities to assist homeowners with repair and rehabilitation of their homes. As part of this effort, Thurston is gathering data on the current state of housing within the Town. Your feedback and information provided in this section are appreciated and vital to this effort.

5. Which condition best describes the house that you live in? Please check one box:

Doesn't need repairs to roof, foundation, wiring, or plumbing	Needs some repairs – has old roof, poor wiring, no insulation, etc.	Roof leaks, poor or no foundation, dangerous wiring, needs siding, etc.

6. Do you or have you had?

	Yes	No
Septic tank issues?		
Cesspool issues?		
Saturated drain fields?		
Failing drain fields?		
Toilet flushing slowly?		
Rodents?		
Do you have complete indoor plumbing? (includes hot and cold piped water, a flushing toilet, and a bathtub or shower)		
Water Issues? (odors, contamination, insufficient water, etc.)		
Electrical Issues?		
Heating/Insulation Issues?		

7. Please answer the following:

Number of children ages 0-17 in home	
Number of persons aged 62+ in home	
Number of persons with a disability in home	

Do you or your family own or rent your home? (check one)	Own	Rent	Something Else



## Appendix B

### Copy of Community Survey

#### PART 3 – HOMEOWNER INFORMATION FOR FUTURE HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

As stated above, the Town of Thurston is currently exploring opportunities to assist homeowners with repair and rehabilitation of their homes. In order for Thurston to develop and receive funding for a program offering these services, the Town must prove there are enough residents potentially interested in receiving assistance through the program, which is the purpose of the questions below. Please note that indicating interest does NOT require you to participate in a future housing rehabilitation program offered by the Town should funding be received.

##### 8. FOR HOMEOWNER:

	YES	NO
If the Town receives funding for housing rehabilitation and you are eligible, would you be interested in potential assistance?		
Would you be willing to grant a temporary easement across your property, if necessary, for construction?		

**IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO EITHER PART OF QUESTION 8, PLEASE COMPLETE QUESTION 9 AND PROVIDE YOUR ADDRESS AND A SIGNATURE BELOW**

9. Please circle the number of people (including children) living in your household in the left column. Then, to the right on the same line, circle your total household income from all sources except student loans or loans from the G.I. bill.

(START HERE) ↓ If the Number of People in Your Household Is	Circle if Your Total Family Income is BELOW or EQUAL TO	Circle if Total Family Income is BETWEEN or EQUAL TO	Circle if Total Family Income is EQUAL TO or ABOVE
1	\$29,200	\$29,201 and \$46,700	\$46,701
2	\$33,400	\$33,401 and \$53,400	\$53,401
3	\$37,550	\$37,551 and \$60,050	\$60,051
4	\$41,700	\$41,701 and \$66,700	\$66,701
5	\$45,050	\$45,051 and \$72,050	\$72,051
6	\$48,400	\$48,401 and \$77,400	\$77,401
7	\$51,750	\$51,751 and \$82,750	\$82,751
8	\$55,050	\$55,051 and \$88,050	\$88,051

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**OPTIONAL:** Would you like to receive emails from the Town of Thurston? Yes ☐ No ☐

*I understand that this information may be used by the Town of Thurston and Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board to apply for grant funding as needed. I certify that the information contained in this survey is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.*

Your Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your time!**



## Appendix C

### Copy of Windshield Survey

#### Thurston Housing Conditions Windshield Survey Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Housing Conditions:	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Average (3)	Poor (2)	Deteriorated (1)	Comments
Foundation						
Roof						
Siding						
Doors/Windows						
Yard						
Chimney						
Garage						
Other						

**Excellent (5)** – no apparent problems

**Good (4)** – A structure recently built and meeting codes or which, if somewhat older, has had careful maintenance of both structure and grounds. No surface wear is apparent and repairs are not needed.

**Average (3)** – (Minor Deficiency). A sound structure but in need of surface maintenance and possibly showing small signs of wear. The structure is not as well maintained as the “good” category and the pavement or accessory building may need repairs. Minor maintenance needed.

**Poor (2)** – (Major Deficiency). Significant surface wear is noticeable. The structure is slightly out of plumb with cracks, holes, or breaks evident in walls, foundation, and roof. Paint is blistered and windows, steps, etc., may need to be replaced. Major maintenance is needed.

**Deteriorated (1)** – (No Rehabilitation Feasibility). The structure is unsound and totally substandard. The foundation, roof, and bearing elements have substantial defect.

Building Occupancy Status:	Check One
Fully Occupied (House or multi-family complex appears to be fully inhabited)	
Partially Occupied (Some units appear vacant; some appear inhabited. Clues to look for vacancy: no names on mailboxes, no curtains or blinds, broken out windows, etc.)	
Unoccupied and Boarded (Residence is entirely unoccupied; all windows and doors are securely boarded)	
Unoccupied and Unboarded (Residence is entirely unoccupied; one or more windows and doors are <b>not</b> securely boarded)	

Building Material:	Check One
Wood	
Masonry (brick or block)	
Stone	
Metal (includes vinyl siding)	
Other	

Building Type:	Check one
Stick-built or Modular	
Mobile Home	

Evidence of Recent Improvement:	Check one
Yes (obvious recent improvements to building, such as new porch, new roof, new siding, new paint)	
No (no obvious improvements)	

Evidence of Current Improvement:	Check one
Yes (Evidence of <b>current</b> improvement activity. Building materials, ladders, work crew or posted building permit still on locations)	
No (No <b>current</b> improvement activity)	

## Appendix D

### Citizen Comments

- The rural landscape.
- Like - quiet, rural, personable Town employees (Town Clerk, Assessors, Highway Dept., etc.) Dislike - dirt roads) dust/mud) but...respect the effort!, lax property owners (junk)
- I have lived peacefully in Thurston for over 25 years. Not many people and everyone is respectful. I like: living free way out away from the city and big governing! I dislike: giving taxpayer money to others to spend on self!
- I do not live in Thurston but only have 7 1/2 acres of land there.
- People very friendly and caring. Weather is good. It's quiet.
- Lack of freedom to do what you want to with property I own and pay taxes on.
- We live out of town yet still near Corning and Elmira - we have mostly good neighbors.
- The Village is looking like a dump!
- Taxes, maintenance of roads especially in the winter
- Rural, quiet, country
- Peaceful down to earth people.
- Don't like junk cars
- Our road and ditches are terrible. They are getting worse every year. Have you turn on Knowles Rd. lately. My tax dollars should be as good as everyone else.
- Rural community, no grocery options
- Dislike all the junk houses and junk all around them. Town looks like a slum!
- I live in the woods. It's very peaceful with lots of wildlife and good, distant neighbors.
- Need ...better ion Town every other...
- This survey is a joke. Nothing will be done to anything needed. Waste of time.
- No community connection.
- Rural community, safe, quiet.
- Pretty country, peaceful, rural setting, close friends with neighbors
- Privacy, rural
- Small town living
- Rural
- Privacy, country setting
- Peace and quiet, helpful neighbors
- Drug/alcohol, petty crime, we need pride
- I like the peacefulness and dislike the lack of internet/cellular service
- The small town and country atmosphere and the friendliness of the people because of that.
- Our current code enforcement officer
- I like that it is remote, not many people and farmland. I dislike money being spent that doesn't need to be.
- The lack of code enforcement. Many areas that need to be cleaned up. Start fining people. Main issues at end of Tanglewood Trail.
- Beautiful upstate NY, rural living.
- It feels homie
- Like
- I like the beautiful rural character and peaceful surroundings.



## Appendix D

### Citizen Comments

- The town supervisor taking it upon themselves to run the town without concern for fiscal health of the town or its residents
- Love that it's nice and quiet. Appreciated how everyone worked hard and banded together in regards to Casella. Highway dept dump truck has loud exhaust.
- Lived here for 45 years! When we first moved here, everyone took care of their homes and properties! Not everyone does that anymore! For shame! Most are not real friendly neighbors anymore because over the years others have bought homes as older residents have passed on.
- The natural beauty (small bodies of water; the hills); the wildlife (bald eagles; osprey; blue heron; etc.)
- The town supervisor and board willing to stand up to the state for what is right for us!
- Like - quiet, friendly; Dislike - numerous potholes, excessive junk in some yards
- Like its rural character
- Rural area, hometown feel
- Rural setting, low crime, people are friendly, dislike Town road conditions
- I like the small town feel
- Rural
- Nice quiet community
- Like people minding their own business
- Dislike the high taxes
- Pros - small town, out in the country, room to sprawl; Cons - the speed people tear through town
- Its location is more country than in town.
- Peaceful and friendly.
- Like small
- No zoning, taxes are too high for quality of surroundings! No one does anything to keep things cleaned up.
- I love the country and work well with neighbors
- It has been working ok
- Distance from busier areas, connection to family
- Our area has beautiful hills and valleys, neighbors are kind and have an independent spirit
- It's home
- Dislike: No cable/internet at 5242 Starr Rd
- Quiet, not overly regulated, neighbors respectful, keep to self, friendly
- Rural, quiet when trucks aren't running through and natural beauty of the area
- It is very rural!
- Quiet, rural, peaceful and safe community for most part
- I dislike farms that spread toxic waste from long Island and poison our water!
- Like - ruralness, small community, Dislike - number of rundown homes
- Community needs to clean up the town Risingville is a disgrace
- Quiet town to live in. Too many people put their nose where it doesn't belong.



## Appendix D

### Citizen Comments

- Zoning, stricter code enforcement
- Keep Thurston remote and safe --> this is all city talk!! City's are not safe! Spend money on roads, fire department, sheriff support, church community hunger outreach programs.
- It is unfortunate that the board and Town are so narrow minded. They do not look to the future and the betterment of the town. Yes it was a farm community but times have changed.
- Town streets/roads are in poor condition.
- Make owners take care of their property i.e. trash, chickens, etc. driving through the village looks like a slum.
- Tucker Road needs new stone and chip, the stone dust used on dirt roads is way to dusty!!
- Benny Hill Rd needs work
- I am concerned about PFAS in my water
- I received this survey to complete but I am unable to do so not living on my land as of today. I hope to have a house on 4880 Griffin Rd soon. What I do not like is when you try to call the town hall you get no one. Sometimes you can leave a message and sometimes you can't. Another thing I do not like in this town, no cell service, which makes me think about selling my land and moving somewhere else.
- Basically no business in the Town. No access to healthcare or stores. Would be interested in assisting in development anyway possible.
- Town of Thurston is very rural America.
- Need better roads
- Lower taxes not provide entertainment.
- Thurston is a rural area. Would not want to change that.
- There must be pride in yourselves and in the community you live before improvements are made or the improvements get destroyed or misused by those whom do not have pride. Address the drug/crime.
- Don't ruin our comfy little community with modern nonsense
- Many roads are rough. There is no reason for these to be paved. They were better and cheaper to maintain when they were dirt. Lets switch them back to dirt rather than paying the \$100 or more per foot required to replace oil and stone roadways. Most of us live in Thurston because it is a sleepy quiet community of a small population. We don't want it to grow, we want it to stay comfortably as it is. I would prefer that the focus be on keeping property values as low as possible and on allowing people to enjoy quiet, comfortable living free of interference and burdens of trying to make the community grow and taking care of individuals that have made poor life decisions and won't take care of themselves. I'm not interested in property values being high so that its a "bank account" for people's children who likely don't deserve it.

## Appendix D

### Citizen Comments

- We need stricter code enforcement. There are several areas on Fort Dollar Road that need attention. They are environmental risks and safety issues.
- A Town recreational facility would be great.
- Board meetings need to be different day.
- Clean up around residential homes - suggestion: maybe town can provide 2 dumpsters (1 metal and 1 garbage) once or twice a year and a recycle container for pop and water bottles - town can keep \$ from those and the metal disposal in dumpster.
- Speed limit is 35 - but no one seems to stay within that limit. Campbell usually responds to most [fire] calls. Everyone should have access [to healthcare] in some form nowadays. AMR comes through on a regular basis when it is called for. We did have an instance once where a man said he would kill everyone in Thurston. He still lives in town. Would make for noise pollution [public trails for ATVs]. Need the cemetery mowed more often. [See paper survey for extra comments on additional page]
- I am interested in being on the Housing Needs Assessment Steering Committee and have experience with such.
- Do you organize a community picnic?
- County roads are far superior in condition than town roads
- Roads need a lot of immediate attention in terms of pot holes and condition. Remediation needs to be long lasting and not seasonal
- Condition of Thurston roads is very concerning
- Need to keep taxes down, you start adding all this and they will go up. The playground wasn't free. Taxpayers are paying for it. How many kids will be using it? Ridiculous
- House needs more efficient windows
- No Dollar Generals!
- No protection by law enforcement, terrible leadership as far as tax collectors/ assessors, we would never have moved here had we known how high our taxes would be...we are telling others to live elsewhere, Thurston needs to stop taxing so high when Thurston is a mess!! Our neighbors are never watching their children - no helmets, playing in/on the side of our busy road, burning when burning bans are in effect, lack of proper code enforcement overall, our neighbors need to be asked to clean up their junk, get their house completed, and stop helping to keep Thurston a mess, sludge - this is just another terrible part of the community
- We need to have property cleanup. There are too many properties with trash and run down structures, including houses. They are an eyesore and a bad impression for all going into town...including Risingville!

## Appendix D

### Citizen Comments

- Michigan Creek has filled in and the village backyards flood. The creek needs to be dug out.
- Under better roads: Griffin Road
- We like not having businesses in Thurston such as grocery stores etc. that disrupt the country atmosphere - lights, noise, pollution, etc. Public trails would be great as long as it doesn't come at a cost to private property owners.
- Is there a need for public transportation? Thank you for fighting PFAS chemical situation!
- My concern is neighbors who just throw out garbage, food, paper, cans, etc. out in their yard which call in rats, mice, snakes, and other animals. Dogs loose and not taken care of.
- Public needs to have input!