



Town of Duck | Herron Property Planning Process

# Open House and Stakeholder Interviews

## Engagement Summary

### About the Events

On October 9-10, 2025, the project team hosted several public engagement events, including stakeholder interviews and an open house event, to collect input from the community about their vision and ideas for the future of the Herron Property.

On October 9, 2025, the project team hosted a series of five stakeholder interviews at the Town Hall Conference Room, bringing together a total of 37 stakeholders throughout the afternoon. These conversations provided a valuable opportunity to hear directly from business owners, property owners, Planning Board members, and other stakeholders about their ideas and priorities for the redevelopment of the Herron Property. Each discussion focused on three main topics: Opportunities and Challenges, Town Needs and Values, and Vision and Priorities. The interviews were designed to be conversational, giving attendees a chance to share their unique perspectives.

On October 10, 2025, community members gathered at the Paul F. Keller Meeting Hall for an Open House event, held from 4:00 to 6:30 PM. More than 20 attendees stopped by to share their thoughts, ideas, and what they would like to see developed on the Herron Property. Around the room, a series of interactive boards invited participants to share feedback on different aspects of the project, while maps of the Herron Property helped familiarize attendees with the property's location and existing conditions. The maps also encouraged conversation about potential uses and design features.

Public input is a vital part of this process, and the input collected during these events, in conjunction with other input received through the survey and online feedback, will be used to help guide the development of the concept plans for the Herron Property.

Key takeaways and meeting notes from the public open house and stakeholder interviews are summarized in the following sections.



## Photos from the Stakeholder Interviews and Open House

### Stakeholder Interviews



### Open House





## Key Takeaways

The following are key takeaways from the Open House based on the Stakeholder input received:

**Natural Character & Environmental Preservation** - Community members consistently emphasized the importance of preserving the natural character of the Herron Property. There is a strong desire to maintain green space, protect mature trees, especially the oak trees, and avoid overdevelopment. Many participants expressed a preference for passive uses like walking trails, birding areas, and nature-based play, reinforcing the Town's identity as a peaceful, scenic destination.

**Community-Oriented, Multi-Use Space** - There is broad support for creating a flexible, multi-use space that can host farmers markets, festivals, and community events throughout the year. Residents envision a space that can adapt to seasonal needs and serve as a gathering place for all ages, with features like pavilions, picnic areas, and food trucks that support casual, community-driven use.

**Recreation & Wellness Amenities** - Participants expressed interest in a variety of recreational features, including inclusive playgrounds, fitness circuits, and dog parks. While some supported pickleball courts, others raised concerns about noise and overuse. Suggestions also included indoor recreation options for rainy days and wellness-focused amenities.

**Public Services & Amenities** - Public restrooms were one of the most frequently requested amenities, along with minimal but functional parking. Ideas for a visitor or welcome center, wayfinding signage, and bike parking were also popular. Some stakeholders supported the idea of a public safety building or expanded town services, though opinions varied on the best use of the property.

**Housing & Community Services** - Several stakeholders highlighted the need for affordable or workforce housing, particularly for essential workers like teachers, medical staff, and town employees. Mixed-use development concepts—such as housing above a health clinic or public facility—were proposed as a way to address housing shortages while maintaining community-serving uses.

**Access, Infrastructure & Circulation** - Traffic flow, pedestrian safety, and access to the site were recurring concerns. Participants noted challenges with Duck Road and Scarborough Lane, and emphasized the need for thoughtful circulation planning, cross-access easements, and minimal lighting to preserve dark skies. Infrastructure limitations, such as wastewater capacity, were also noted as constraints.

**Town Identity & Aesthetic** - Maintaining Duck's small-town charm, walkability, and maritime forest aesthetic was a top priority. Residents want development to reflect the town's history and values, with architecture that complement existing buildings and features that celebrate local culture, such as bird-themed art, historic references, and Instagram-worthy landmarks (such as a prominent public art installation that attracts visitors to take selfies and group photos for posting on social media).

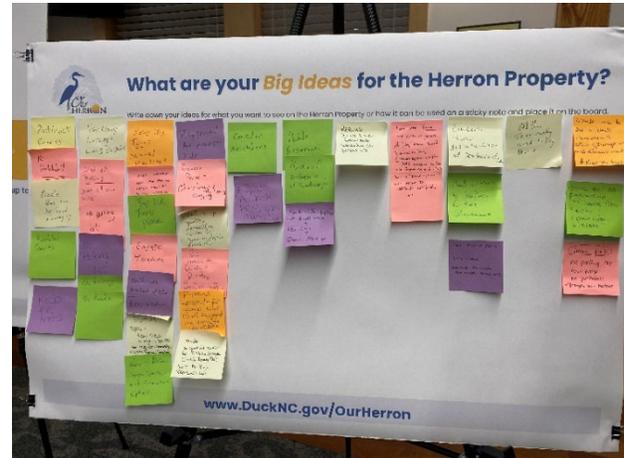


**Phased & Thoughtful Development** - There was a clear preference for slow, incremental development that allows for community feedback and future flexibility. Many participants urged the town to avoid rushing into decisions and to prioritize sustainability, low-maintenance design, and long-term community benefit over short-term gains.



## Community Open House

Participants were invited to provide input about what should be considered for inclusion in the future development of the Herron Property by placing a sticky note with their thoughts on an input board at the event. The following is a transcription of all of the responses received:



### Input Received

Open House Comments	
1.	Keep it natural, develop as open space. Avoid something that draws more traffic.
2.	Dog Park
3.	Bike Path. Traffic circle at Duck and then Roadway to Scarborough.
4.	Town park. No parking lot. Low noise. No pickleball. Hands on nature.
5.	Some sort of partnership with ripple fiber.
6.	Would love to see a park. Somewhere to allow gatherings and/or farmers markets. Keep the trees.
7.	Did the town really need to buy this?
8.	No pickle ball. Dog park. Another pavilion for craft fairs etc.
9.	Need assistance to Sea Pines for road maintenance.
10.	Concern about maintenance of Scarborough Ln.
11.	Lean into Duck and birds in general. A playscape built to mimic nature, (ground spiderweb for food), elevated walkway like the Sequoia Zoo in Eureka CA for a "birds eye view" waterscape to celebrate our fowl etc.
12.	Rebuild police and fire ambulance somewhere on present site.
13.	Park with equipment for small kids and pavilion and some parking.
14.	Plenty of restrooms at Scarborough.
15.	Public restroom.
16.	Consider neighbors.
17.	Space available for Farmers Market etc.
18.	Dowdy Park – Christmas and Thanksgiving staging.
19.	Playground for younger kids.
20.	Build a top-quality recreation center like those in Virginia Beach, VA.
21.	Park similar to Dowdy and park by Currituck lighthouse.
22.	Maybe a combined court for pickleball, basketball (like at Dowdy Park). Not a big parking lot.
23.	Playground appropriate for younger kids. Ducks' playground now is only for older children.
24.	Keep natural use for future needs such as a police station.
25.	Keep big trees. Natural playscape.
26.	Keep Oak Trees please x2.



<b>Open House Comments</b>	
27.	Multi-use market space. Keep nature.
28.	Engage with nature.
29.	Multiuse space – keep trees as much as possible. Use for community markets (farmers, Christmas).
30.	Keep it natural. Green space and recreation options.
31.	Parking located along Duck Rd.
32.	Not all parking. Not all one use. Pickleball can be loud and annoying.
33.	No pickleball.
34.	Pickleball courts x2.
35.	No roads.
36.	No parking x3.
37.	I would like to see the Herron Property remain open space for future civic use. I appreciate the town's acquisition of this property and hope we seize any future opportunities like this.



# Stakeholder Interviews

Community members representing property owners, business owners, long-time residents, neighboring property owners, and homeowners' association representatives were invited to participate in small-group interviews. As representatives of other groups, many of the participants took the information discussed during the interviews to share with their associations, friends, and neighbors. The following is a summary of the input received at the Stakeholder interviews:

## Session 1

### Opportunities

- **Community Health & Housing**
  - Potential for a health clinic paired with housing, especially for older residents and local workers.
  - There is limited affordable housing options in Duck. Long-term housing for employees who currently commute from neighboring communities could be an opportunity.
- **Tourism & Public Amenities**
  - Duck's identity as a tourist destination calls for amenities like playgrounds (designed with unique or historical themes), bathrooms, and parking.
  - A welcome center for visitors to rest and learn about the community, with wayfinding signage and interactive art elements, could enhance the visitor experience.
  - Capitalize on seasonal dual-use concepts uses (e.g., birding habitat in off-season, playground in peak season).
- **Public Safety & Infrastructure**
  - Possible relocation of police or fire department if public safety lease ends.
  - Parking solutions to support walkability and reduce traffic congestion.
- **Recreation & Green Space**
  - Strong interest in unique playgrounds (with swings), walking trails, and splash pads. An emphasis was made for activities for kids and families.
  - Emphasis on preserving green space and natural features, including pollinator habitats and water elements.
  - Ideas for adult-friendly playgrounds inspired by international models for creative play (e.g., workout equipment or interactive stations to encourage activity).

### Challenges

- **Space & Traffic**
  - Limited space and traffic congestion are major concerns, especially if a potential housing development is considered for the property.
  - There is limited space to support the development of a public safety building on the property. Previous community input revealed that a police station in the center of town may not be desirable due to noise and other aspects.
  - There is limited space for an additional curb cut on Duck Road to access the property.
  - The new bridge may reroute traffic from Duck and should be considered.



- Access to Scarborough Lane remains difficult. This must be considered with any proposal.
- **Maintenance & Cost**
  - Splash pad and water features may be costly and difficult to maintain due to the beachfront environment and salt air.
  - Hardscaping (walking paths) should follow natural foot traffic patterns.
- **Usage & Value**
  - There is a risk of a potential playground being underutilized unless it is designed as an attraction for families in neighboring communities.
  - Although additional parking could relieve pressure on businesses, parking is not a major issue except during special events. It may not be prudent to use the space exclusively for parking.

## Town Needs, Values, and Priorities

- **Desired Features**
  - More green space, public bathrooms, and kid-friendly activities.
  - A mix of quiet and active zones to reflect Duck's character.
  - Cross-access with the Aqua parking lot to expand usability of the property and improve circulation.
  - Emphasize minimal commercial expansion.
  - Incorporate a variety of uses on the site so that it can be utilized for multiple purposes at different times of the year.
  - Emphasize the walkable character of the town and ensure the walkability and pedestrian-friendliness of the property.
- **Community Sentiment**
  - Strong desire to keep the area natural and avoid over-commercialization.
  - Emphasis on preserving Duck's charm and walkability.

## Final Thoughts

- Traffic is a recurring issue that affects both residents and tourists and may deter tourists from the area.
- Development should balance community needs, environmental preservation, and tourism appeal.



## Session 2

### Opportunities

- **Community Amenities**
  - The existing playground is not large. This could be an opportunity to have an additional playground, including features for older children, shade structures, and no fencing as to not block access.
  - Add a community pool, gazebos, and a corner store.
  - Create a gateway or entry point into Duck with parking and unique features. A unique feature could be a viewing platform to experience the tree canopy and the views. This would attract all ages and compete with Corolla.
- **Mixed-Use Development**
  - Combine a health clinic with housing above for medical staff, addressing a critical housing shortage in the Outer Banks.
- **Environmental & Recreational Features**
  - Preserve large trees and enhance the tree canopy experience.
  - Design as a continuation of the boardwalk.
  - Add birding attractions to appeal to a wide age range.
  - Consider an e-bike charging station.
- **Design & Layout**
  - Use the flat terrain for flexible development.
  - Position buildings at the front (along Duck Road) with parking in the rear.

### Challenges

- **Community Consensus**
  - It will be a challenge to get agreement among stakeholders.
  - Need to balance seasonal tourism (“17 weeks”) with year-round resident needs.
- **Impact & Access**
  - Consider the potential impact on surrounding properties.
  - Emphasize the importance of cross-access easements for vehicles and pedestrians to help reduce congestion and maintain traffic flow.

### Town Needs, Values, and Priorities

- **Town Identity**
  - Maintain Duck’s family-friendly character and iconic boardwalk.
  - Avoid over-commercialization and preserve natural aesthetics.
- **Preferred Features**
  - Public safety building is a potential use but there is concern about this particular use as compared to other potential uses.
  - Avoid big box retailers, excessive parking, and pickleball courts.



## Final Thoughts

- Development should reflect Duck's values and serve both residents and visitors.
- Do not rush into a final decision for development. There should be an emphasis on thoughtful planning, inclusive amenities, and preserving the town's charm.
- This is a unique situation for the Town to buy land and then have an opportunity for the community to participate in the development process.



## Session 3

### Opportunities and Challenges

- **Development Approach**
  - Favor slow, phased development to ensure thoughtful planning.
  - Consider leaving parts of the property open and natural.
- **Community & Cultural Features**
  - Create a multi-use space for year-round events like farmers' markets, festivals, and holiday markets.
  - Include iconic elements that reflect Duck's history and charm (e.g., duck statue, bird themes – Osprey/Herrings, historic hunting village, interactive art). (Example, Manteo historic boat structure)
  - Include birding attractions.
  - Include Instagrammable, interactive gateway imagery.
  - Extend the boardwalk trail and preserve existing trees and maritime forest.
- **Recreation & Wellness**
  - Build a park for all ages, with fitness trails, skate park, and sunset viewing perches.
  - Add water features such as koi ponds, sound gardens, or wetland-style installations.
- **Mixed-Use & Infrastructure**
  - Consider a public safety building, town office expansion, and affordable housing for essential workers.
  - Explore a covered pavilion for events, and possibly a public workout facility (indoor or outdoor).
  - Add restrooms and explore mobile restroom options.

### Challenges

- **Community Impact**
  - Avoid overdevelopment that could attract more visitors than the town can accommodate.
  - Be cautious about creating features that separate Duck from neighboring communities and attracts more people than the community can accommodate.
- **Parking**
  - There are mixed views on the need for a parking garage:
    - An idea was presented for a 3-4 story parking garage that could also house restrooms.
    - Some see it as a solution for seasonal congestion and event overflow.
    - Others worry it clashes with Duck's walkable character and aesthetic.
  - Paid parking could be considered, but enforcement and business cooperation are key.
- **Commercial Competition**
  - Avoid developments that compete with existing businesses (e.g., arcades, large commercial spaces).
  - No public pool, arcade, or excessive commercial use.



## Town Needs, Values and Priorities

- **Town Services**
  - Address office space shortages with a potential two-story, Outer Banks-style building. This could be an opportunity to expand Town Hall offices or relocate the community gathering space to this location.
  - Provide affordable housing for medical staff, teachers, and town employees—though concerns exist about competing with private developers.
- **Cultural Identity**
  - Support art, music, and nature-focused development. Opportunity to relocate the art gallery from Town Hall to this location.
  - Preserve Duck’s natural beauty and maritime forest.

## Final Thoughts

- The space should be a flexible, multi-use space.
- Incremental development is preferred; doing nothing is still an option versus rushing into a decision.
- Keep the natural, open aesthetic, aim for passive uses, and avoid overstaffed facilities.
- Restrooms are essential and could be supported by local businesses or mobile units.
- Consider future needs and err on the side of caution. (e.g., you can build on top of a park in the future, but it is more difficult to change the use if a structure is built today.)
- Address nighttime use with minimal lighting to preserve dark skies.
- Ensure sustainability and ecology are incorporated into the design and development of the property.
- Preserve trees on the property.



## Session 4

### Opportunities

- **Community & Public Use**
  - Create a destination space for relaxation, dog-friendly areas, and outdoor gatherings.
  - Include a pavilion, bathrooms, picnic tables, and food trucks to support casual use and events.
  - Develop a welcome center to guide visitors to local businesses.
- **Multi-Use Development**
  - Combine a community center, meeting hall, history center, and event space.
  - Consider mixed-use housing for essential workers (police, fire, lifeguards), possibly above public facilities.
- **Recreation & Engagement**
  - Add interactive art installations (e.g., murals, painted rocks, QR codes).
  - Include pickleball courts, a splash pad for kids and dogs, and a fitness circuit with exercise stations. Consider that pickleball may be a fad.
  - Maintain green space.
  - Consider a venue for concerts and explore a mobile concession/bar for events that could be rented to different vendors.
- **Infrastructure & Services**
  - Small-scale parking with a rock base.
  - Potential site for a police station (not large enough for fire).
  - Recycling center to reduce visitor-generated waste. (Not the entire property)

### Challenges

- **Site Limitations**
  - The property is small, which limits development options.
  - Town Hall is overcrowded; relocating the meeting hall could free up space.
- **Access & Safety**
  - Duck Road frontage is a blind spot; Scarborough Lane access may disturb neighbors.
  - Circulation and flow of space need careful planning.
  - Crosswalk visibility near Aqua is poor and poses safety risks.
  - Work with Aqua and urban cottage for cross access.
- **Financial & Planning**
  - Development costs and funding are key concerns.
  - Need to balance development with community impact.

### Town Needs, Values and Priorities

- **Desired Features**
  - Walking and sitting areas that complement existing uses.
  - Bike parking to support boardwalk access.
  - Year-round, multigenerational amenities.
  - Outdoor space with space for pavilion, bathroom, picnic tables, or food trucks.



- **Character & Identity**
  - Preserve Duck’s walkable, quaint downtown feel.
  - Avoid franchise-style development and excessive traffic.
  - Reflect the Town’s active off-season community spirit.
- **What Should Be Avoided**
  - Health center development.
  - Construction of a parking garage.
  - Over-commercialization or features that compete with existing businesses.

## Final Thoughts

- Prioritize multi-use, flexible space that serves both residents and visitors.
- Consider incremental development and preserve natural aesthetics.
- Restrooms are needed, possibly supported by mobile units.
- Avoid overstaffed facilities; focus on low-maintenance options.
- Be cautious and forward-thinking—this may be the last open space available for development.



## Session 5

### Opportunities and Challenges

- **Recreation & Wellness**
  - Outdoor amenities: tennis, pickleball, basketball, inclusive playground with swing set.
  - Indoor recreation facility: racquetball, gym for rainy days and noise control.
  - Fitness circuit with adult exercise equipment.
  - Fenced dog park for year-round use.
- **Public Amenities**
  - Public restrooms (widely supported), though infrastructure and tree impact must be considered related to the wastewater facilities needed.
  - Minimal parking to support access without overdevelopment.
  - Visitor center with brochures, wayfinding map, and interactive QR codes.
  - Could be used for public safety building – not big enough for fire but potential for police.
- **Nature & Education**
  - Teaching garden and walking trail on the southern side of the property as a buffer zone against the adjacent drain field.
  - Consider arboretum-style landscaping and educational signage like Aviation Park.
  - Birding areas, duck pond, and relaxation zones with greenery.
- **Community & Identity**
  - Gateway to Duck with historical and architectural elements that reflect the town's character.
  - Trolley stop to improve town circulation.
  - Space for kids and families to gather and learn about Duck's history and nature.
  - Tower structure for scenic views and a “walk-over” feature.

### Challenges

- **Infrastructure & Access**
  - Traffic flow, ROW space, and pedestrian safety, especially on Duck Road and Scarborough Lane are concerns.
  - Lighting concerns—prefer downlighting to minimize impact on neighbors.
  - Wastewater limitations due to proximity to drain field; vegetative buffer and easement needed. (Odor concerns)
  - Water supply must be kept separate from wastewater systems.
- **Development Impact**
  - Avoid over-commercialization (e.g., food trucks competing with local businesses).
  - Concern about parking enforcement and beach access management related to development of this property.
  - Accessibility to the boardwalk must be considered.
  - Opposition to a stoplight at the entrance.



## Town Needs, Values, and Priorities

- **Missing Features**
  - Fenced dog park.
  - Public restrooms and minimal parking.
  - Nature-based and educational elements.
- **Character & Aesthetic**
  - Preserve Duck's history.
  - Emphasize natural vegetation: live oaks, cypress, and natural grasses.
  - Architecture should match existing Town Hall buildings.
  - Emphasize birding, duck hunting heritage, and peaceful green spaces.
- **What Should Be Avoided**
  - Water park.
  - Development that turns the property into only a parking lot.

## Final Thoughts

- Town is doing well with current resources.
- Emphasize sustainability: solar panels, refillable water stations.
- Begin with simple, phased development to learn what the community truly needs.
- Consider a live-stream "park cam" to engage the public.
- Account for future traffic changes due to the new bridge