

Town of Washington Comprehensive Plan Action Plan Workshop – May 22, 2010

Notes written on the large sheets of paper from the breakout sessions

Goal 1: Our Goal Is A Healthy Natural Environment.

For Groups 1-5 please see report at the end of the document

Group 6:

- Add
 - traffic, air quality, noise concerns – how to manage
 - encouragement of alternative/green energy sources; zoning issues – wind, solar, geo, other clean sources
 - the above should address goals of overall plan
 - wetlands protection a priority– include under #1
 - forest protection – include under #1
 - tree ordinance – development
 - enforcement of regulations
 - managed timbering
 - stronger language/teeth/enforcement/penalties/fines
- Subtract
 - 6b – remove “minimize”

Goal 2: Our Goal Is A Scenic Rural Landscape.

Group 1:

- Enabling hunting, beagling, biking, hiking and other divers recreational activities through the preservation of open space and corridors
- View shed/ridge line protection is very generic, too open ended or are there certain areas that need protection? Needs more discussion
- Development restriction is very confining. What does it mean specifically?
 - Keep existing zoning? Make new zoning spaces to enable larger tracts of land for farming
- Village must be a destination in itself, while protecting the open spaces. Strengthen the Village Business Community.
- Millbrook is very special - character needs to be protected in a sustainable way – businesses and open spaces
- No billboards
- Ponds? Make new or protect existing? What is meant?

Group 2:

- Fence lines, protection of existing stone walls
- Protection of old trees (6” diameter)
- Maintain trees (and remove dead trees)
- Shady streets
- No berms?
- No obstruction to fauna migration – corridors

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- Restrict residential and commercial development to existing settled areas
 - Yes strongly
 - Require cluster housing
 - Establish conservation fund
 - Encourage re-use of abandoned buildings
 - Don't regulate – driving people away
 - Put codes and ordinances online
 - Follow through and enforcement and fines for violations of clear cutting, etc.
- Historic Preservation – investigate a tax benefit to encourage
- Beagling and hunt club – private use but a public benefit

Group 3:

- Eliminate flag lots
- Village is settled area – not hamlets
- Focus commercial in the Village of Millbrook
- Restrict commercial development to village
- Restrict commercial development in Mabbetsville – potentially maximum of 50/50 which is current
- Densify village responsibly
- Intramunicipal board between village and town for master plan
- Restructure governance
- Preserve rural landscape
- South road – preliminary work done – but why not approved for scenic road
- Better shoulders on roads for bikes
- Historical preservation - to ensure that railroads stone culverts etc are preserved
- Keep character of the neighborhood
- Landmarking buildings to help set standards
- Prevent creation of mismatched housing (cheap or mansion i.e. 40,000 sq ft house or trailer park – building code) – prevent creation of another Stamfordville
- Review architectural standards in town building codes and consider updating to enable historical or consistent character
- Better way to design storm water ponds – for better/improved aesthetics

Group 4:

- Definition of restricted development to “village” not “existing settled areas”
- Development is not just “commercial” – also “light industrial” and “multi-family residential”
- Restrict further development in Mabbetsville
- Ridgeline protection is both building and tree line
- Maintain view shed – prevent trees and berms on roadsides views
- Desirability of burying phone lines – prevent abusive tree trimmings
- Village and town should become “national register historic districts”
- Preserve dirt roads

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Group 5:

- Commercial developments – small no big box, no chain stores, no billboard, no neon
- Settled areas = Millbrook Village – not Mabbettsville
- Develop architectural guidelines for commercial zones – control signage size and location, plantings, color, paving, need guidelines or a pattern book
- Manage dirt roads properly – preserve dirt roads, keep them passable
- Coordinate with Central Hudson/Local Government on tree clearing near power lines
- Consider buried power lines
- Can burying power lines be considered together with dirt road maintenance
- Protect ridge lines
- Protect scenic roads
- Limit cell phone towers
- Consider adding roundabouts/rotary instead of traffic lights and to control traffic
- Rural road standards – paving – encourage oil/gravel over asphalt? Is there an environmental impact?

Group 6:

- Zoning laws are key
- Add:
 - Stronger designation of historic/cultural buildings/structures – what should get preserved – strengthen #6
 - Language of #1 – strengthen; air-tight zoning
 - Building only where infrastructure can support
 - “settled” defined as where there is existing infrastructure
 - No cluster housing
 - Ponds – “protect existing ponds” – add language
 - Ponds should also be included under wetlands ordinance
 - Maintain dirt roads – don't pave – add to town regulations
 - Make beagling language clearly positive “preserve”
 - Add #10 – encourage/support organizations that presser open spaces – hunt clubs, Rockefeller, Innisfree, Cary/IES, private schools (Dutchess Day)
 - Codify zoning regulations for scenic vistas, ridgelines, viewsheds, etc. Strong regs enforced.
- Subtract:
 - Lose #7 – too hard to judge “traditional” – what we want preserved goes under historical

Goal 3: Our Goal Is A High Quality Of Life.

Group 1:

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- Marketing town's assets through education – need to activate – via website, handouts, require contractors to educate, user-friendly dissemination, Town Hall hours adjusted for convenience of public and hands-on/on-site education programs for all ages.
- Seek grants
- Find a more appropriate language encouraging relation between Village and Town
 - Consolidation? Explore some elements
- Identify tough overriding issues of Village and Town that affect both – come up with funding ideas, etc. Come up with mechanisms that can benefit both simultaneously; continuing joint efforts on very tough problems post master plan.
- Bike lane between Millbrook and Mabbettsville and elsewhere. Action to coordinate with DOT to make more safe the Holcyon Monument Circle (Not Master Plan issue, but one to take care of)
- Walkways in Village
- Town to encourage affordable housing and it should be in Village
- Tax affordability issue!! Overhaul, coming to a common ground of understanding
- Review “exemptions”
- Reduce driving/smart growth network www.smartgrowth.org
- Cooperative and shared services

Group 2:

- Reduce the use of “managed development” in the Visioning Statement
- Reduce high taxes (development increases taxes)
- Maintain status quo from previous (1970s) Comprehensive Plan
- What can be added to plan to help quality of life issues going forward
- How to keep out “big box” stores
- Advertise/market our existing town assets
- Encourage cultural activities – arts, movies, recreation, library (books)
- Strengthen existing businesses
- Provide business opportunities (jobs) for “our children” to stay
- Dynamic/diversity of community (old and young people) to live together
- Encourage farming (incentive programs) – survey farmers what would make them stay?
- Don't let people leave Millbrook Village (to Sharon, Millerton or Washington Hollow) – encourage Millbrook as a center of commerce

Group 3:

- Needs to be better defined – What does healthy diversity of housing mean? What exactly does affordable mean?
 - Doesn't mean development of new “low income” housing but supporting affordable housing. What is the need?
 - Investigate the possibility town encouragement of providing affordable housing (use existing) for town service volunteers and employees (firemen, police, emergency service workers)

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- Coordinate regional “affordable” housing
- Needs a lot more work to articulate the plans
- Level of taxation (unaffordable) works against diversity of housing
- Explore combining village and town government and services (efficiency, economy of scale could drive down taxes). Evaluate and understand the impact on tax exempt properties – possible partial payment of taxes (examples?) PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes)
- Need something for teenagers to do socially (outside of school) instead of hanging out in front of Stewarts.
- Need facility/enabling of more art and cultural opportunities (feeds into teen activities and seniors)
- Study other similar town plans to see what could work here (Rhinebeck, Millerton) – which consultants were used? (Professionals)
- More use of school facilities/integrate with community services.

Group 4:

- Recreation
 - More recreational options in Village – education of what you have
 - Recreational center in the Village –more activities
 - Bike to the pool – unsafe bike. Designate bike routes and maintaining biking roads that exist
 - DOT clarify that need to advocate for biking routes on 82
- Public parking in Village in terms of long range planning
- Fire services need to be maintained despite emergency services will be prioritized
- Create a study to look at emergency services to ensure plans created to mitigate against systemic change in interests and availability of volunteers
- Do not build additional affordable housing – there is sufficient supply
- Look at housing from a regional perspective
- Better high speed internet and cell phone coverage
- Maintain library – very good now
- Senior transportation service
- Tax breaks for ridgeline protection
- Avoid pollution around aquifers
- Ensure sand and gravel extraction has a give back i.e. lakes when extractions has occurred
- Protect main water supply by zoning so do not allow development of things that could compromise this. disciplined management
- Rates of extraction of water – limits and monitoring and studying
- Town meetings on television and Youtube
- Impact of Bennett hall on water supply as an example and timing
- Deer management – encourage and support
- Sewage treatment plant – official study to understand capability/capacity to handle additional development i.e. Bennett Hall

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- Septic treatment maintenance – establish standard for density of population in given area/by acreage – new buildings and existing
- Educating people on chemicals used in lawn maintenance – impact/enforcement
- Incentives to retain forest land – alter assessment criteria and include forest land in agricultural definition – local incentives to retain forests
- Prevent ATVs in forests

Group 5:

- More “children and youth services”
- Resist “condo” status
- More police coverage “12 midnight – 7AM”
- More support for volunteer fire company
- New development is not an alternative to bring taxes under control
- Advocacy at state level
- New affordable housing is not an answer
- Housing is a regional issue
- Enhance existing rental base

Group 6:

- Add:
 - Clarification of language/goals of diverse housing
 - Clarification of specific zoning mechanisms for types of housing
 - Create a housing committee – standing committee for protection against big developers
 - *Written clarification and MOA between town and village relationship – legal safeguards
 - Park facilities – increase educational use – nature trails, educational walks, programs, etc.
 - Maintain and increase park/recreation
 - Encourage recreational interactions (and other) between private schools/towns as well as IES, etc.
 - Increase coordination of PR for ed/agri/nature programs between public/private organizations – flyers for IES programs sent simultaneously with town recreation flyers

Goal 4: Our Goal Is Working Farms.

Group 1:

- School lunch programs utilizing local produce – facilitate partnership between grower and community schools
- Preserve open space for potential future farming
- Support local agriculture

Group 2:

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- Need to develop the existing markets through “a new agrarianism” or co-ops for produce/meat outlets
- 35,000 total acres in Washington, 12,000 is farmland or wooded
- Tax incentives for farmers (programs) to create stability
- How to expand farming? – avoid feed lot farming and avoid manure dumping
- Are town residents willing to pay more tax to support farming
- Year round farmer’s market – a covered facility
- What we care about as a community? Farms (encourage/increase); no cluster housing; no gated/walled communities

Group 3:

- What is a sustainable farmer?
- Definitions of a farmer/farm - \$10,000 income from farm and 10 acres of land minimum a year
- Passing farms on and protect open space
 - i.e. “Hudson Valley Fresh” (dealing with federal milk commodity pricing)
 - create an incentive for farmers (not just taxes)
 - protect open farm land when farmer stops farming
 - DLC or land banks or sell development rights to protect open space
 - Learn by other town’s mistakes (like East Fishkill)
 - Upzone to higher zoning for ag land (50 acres) – could have consequences
- Coordinate with neighboring towns – use their density for living
- Encourage/create “niche” farmers/farms (heritage breeds/heirloom)
 - Learn from other communities (Great Barrington)
 - Encourage/create leasing opportunities for new farmers
 - Create outreach programs
 - Encourage micro-farming

Group 4:

- Expand the goal to enable and [market locally grown foods and help create local markets for that as well
- Niche farms, organic/sustainable methods and co-ops
- Consider regulating insecticide and toxic chemicals
- Consider allowing extraction of gravel, sand or other materials from farms that have it in a controlled way revenue subsidy
- Consider further tax breaks for keeping working farms
- Give tax breaks to DLC designated property
- Encourage horse and local dairy industry to protect those open spaces
- Encourage buy “local” programs; cooperate regionally to encourage markets here and other areas like NYC (popular)
- Can we duplicate any of what Rhinebeck has done to encourage local markets (the Farm Market)
- Farming complexes? Organized or subsidized

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- Develop options for shepharding transitioning large family owned farms and other open land to niche farms and other uses to preserve open spaces
- Tax increase must be controlled to sustain it – consolidate school districts /purchasing power and administration
- Encourage alternative energy farming as well

Group 5:

- Change definition of “farm” to local standard (v. \$10,000 or 10A)
- Open spaces farmland protection plan
- Establish a “farm authority” – in existence Coop Ext, Farm Bureau, etc
- Training program for the young
- *Support local agriculture and the supporting businesses and separate open space as a concept of preservation – certainly adjunct to agriculture but covered
- Support “community preservation act” (a law) a real estate tax Red Hook or Rhinebeck uses. County does not
- *Put higher tax on houses and less on open land – Ag assessment law put in “open space assessment” in place, not just “ag assessment”
- Consider “impact fees” on development
- Incentivize a good “green” act – keeping “real” farms no pesticides, etc. (keeping hedgerows)

Group 6:

- Add:
 - 3 – clarify to “control the impacts of surrounding land use on farms” (protecting farms)
 - 2 – rewrite positively – “limit regs on farming”
 - 6 – clarify language – to promote individuals subsistence farming (within goals of plan)
 - Encourage local Millbrook farmers at farmers market

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Goal 5: Our Goal Is A Vibrant Village Of Millbrook And Hamlet Of Mabbetsville.

Group 1:

- Stop delineation of business planning between the Village and Town – cooperate/coordinate
- Zoning (signage, etc.) is STIFFLING for both existing and new business, planning board takes way to long, but nice character needs to be maintained
- Developing attractions to make the Village a destination – positively viewed, arts, entertainment, etc. (culturally attractive annual arts festivals, etc.) bakery, etc. don't restrict town business attractions as they will be part of draw to the area. Even a movie theater. Using existing bricks and mortar.
- Have to be sensitive to the surrounding aquifer in Mabbetsville
- Whatever is developed must be architectural congruent with the character of the town and village
- Need inventory of attractions and amenities and market study to decide how to move forward as a destination – from outside of the Town as part of common theme – some of the activities are viewed as exclusionary or exclusive
- Need new development of attractions that have the following character: horses, dairy, art, coffee, movies, theater, do something with the Thorne Building

Group 2:

- Focus/steer business development in Village, not Mabbetsville and new business should not be allowed or encouraged or no new hamlets be encouraged – soften this language – want to keep Mabbetsville viable, but don't encourage business that is best suited to Millbrook Village
- Marketing Millbrook as an “experience” (emotional attachment)
- Look into neighboring town that is developing at Washington Hollow. Partnership with bordering Town of Pleasant Valley for border development like in joint EMS aide program
- Dutchess County Economic Development Council – take advantage

Group 3:

- Town should be involved in Bennett
- Village is “not” commercially vibrant – any Master Plan which encourages commercial development outside of Village hurts
- Need more/better internet service
- Creative recruitment of new business in Village – a movie theater
- Community leaders/business leaders must be more supportive of new and existing businesses
- No chains – revisit bowling alley permits – no big box stores
- Any activity in Mabbetsville has to take into account potential impact on Millbrook Village water supply
- Merger of Town and Village desirable

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- Invite major landlords to openly participate in planning process (e.g. George Whalen, Philip Metagart)

Group 4:

- Town/Village issues – what can town do to encourage Village business
- Can housing for town be in village? Yes
- Does the town/Village cooperate in creating Comprehensive Plan? Village has a liaison at meetings
- Explore expanding relations with adjoining township
- Learn from nearby towns (stores open on Sunday)
- Parking in village – find out what the parking requirements are for new businesses
- Failure that town and village aren't working on comprehensive plan together
- Consider melding Millbrook and Washington governments into one governmental body – will town residents be prepared to pay for Thorne Building, sewer and water?
- Discourage (not allow) strip malls, neon, chain stores, billboards
- Town has no commercial zoning other than existing – or by special permit according to Jerry Baker
- Do Not allow new commercial areas of development
- Jerry Baker states that Town is discussing further commercial districts in Washington Hollow (Cottonwood, Copperfield area), Mabbettsville, and South Millbrook (bus depot area) – Do not want to allow.
- Don Hansen states that Mabbettsville is only existing commercial zone in Washington
- Control issuance of special permits. Do not allow any new or expanded businesses in any area. Do not allow issuance of permits
- Develop type of strategy to decide most viable businesses in the Village
- Clearly define what type of special permits are allowed to avoid 'wedge-issues' or 'foot in the door' issues that can be exploited. Do not want more commercial
- Advertise village assets

Group 5:

- What is happening to Bennett and Thorne Building? Movie theater in Thorne Building
- Need to be more specific
- What does cooperate mean between Village of Millbrook and Town of Washington? – save money via joint services; not damage the village; for example Bennett College is in Village not Town; do no harm – village also affects Town in terms of water
- We agree that business center should be Millbrook Village – no strip malls/hamlets which will harm the Village i.e. Mabbettsville Market may/will compete focus public services in the Village

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- Rezone Village to enhance this concentration of services limited number of retail spaces in the Village perhaps constrained by parking, access to biking as alternative to car, ease of walking
- Agree no big box stores – small scale – agree do not become like Pleasant Valley
- Big speed bumps – to eliminate big trucks from coming through village
- Bad reputation prevents for petty ticketing in Millbrook
- Home occupations – clearer definitions of what is supported.
- Unmet needs in the village to create traffic – try to eliminate /minimize duplication; more planning to create useful attractive services
- Millbrook village has reputation for not saying thank you versus other towns
- Be more directly involved in Bennett Hall – it will impact all hopes and dreams for rural village if it turns into a development complex – destroys water and sewer; historical character be compromised.

Group 6:

- Clarify zoning regulations for hamlets – what is a hamlet? Proceed cautiously...
- Support vibrant retail life
- Promote retail on Main Street/1st floor as opposed to services (incentives for landlords?)
- Promote extended hours (past 5, Sundays) for retail; promote activities too
- Try to keep retail localized within existing boundaries – not sprawling
- Utilize Thorne building as an anchor
- 6 – “should new b. areas/hamlets be allowed? See #2
- Prevent/forbid/discourage development of new b. areas/hamlets until existing village/Mabbettsville is fully utilized
- Prevent commercial development in Washington, support development in Millbrook – lessen zoning regulations that make it tough to open new businesses – parking spaces, etc.
- Merge village and town administration

Summarized notes from Goal One: A Healthy Natural Environment.

Notes on Natural Resource goals from the public meeting of 22 May 2010, Town of Washington (compiled by Dave Strayer)

The suggestions for goals and actions have been divided into 3 categories: those that were mentioned by most of the groups; those that were mentioned by at least 2 groups (but not most of the groups); and those that were mentioned by only 1 group. (The suggestions have merit but they weren't mentioned by a lot of people). Some of the items in this last category weren't even supported by a majority of people in a group, based on my observations. The items are not listed in any particular order within each category.

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Ultimately, some of these goals and actions will fit better in a section of the comprehensive plan other than natural resources, but for now they are all listed here.

1. *Goals or actions that were mentioned by most groups* (subheadings under each goal/action were not necessarily mentioned by most groups)
 - Protect water quality and quantity
 - map aquifers and recharge zones
 - limit rates of groundwater extraction so as to prevent drawing down the aquifer; conduct studies of groundwater hydrology to determine how much groundwater can be extracted without drawing down the aquifer
 - protect village water supply
 - control development in Mabbettsville to protect aquifer, wetlands, and village businesses (1 group said stop all new business development in Mabbettsville)
 - manage stormwater to prevent flooding and habitat degradation and encourage groundwater recharge
 - Protect wetlands, including vernal pools (to protect water and biodiversity)
 - don't exempt all ag activities from wetlands protections
 - Coordinate town actions that affect natural resources with those of other nearby municipalities (village of Millbrook most often mentioned, but also county, state, and adjoining towns; examples include development of Bennett College site, flood protection, groundwater protection, protection of stream corridors)
 - Protect forests and trees
 - consider tax breaks to keep land in forests (like ag exemptions)
 - develop incentives for sustainable forest management
 - prevent forest fragmentation
2. *Goals or actions that were mentioned by at least 2 (but not most) groups*
 - Green town operations to reduce environmental impacts (town buildings, highway dept., etc.)
 - Enforce existing regulations
 - Set up a formal, periodic review (like every 5 years) of the implementation and effectiveness of items in the new comprehensive plan
 - Work with town highway dept and DOT to minimize the undesirable effects of road management (paving, widening of shoulders, ditch-cleaning, salting, tree-cutting, development of transportation network, etc.); scenic road designation may be a useful tool
 - Work with utility companies to minimize the undesirable effects of right-of-way management (chiefly tree-trimming, but also burial of power lines where possible)

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- Preserve and enhance air quality
 - Minimize the undesirable environmental impacts of sand and gravel operations, or (some groups) eliminate them altogether, to the extent that this is legally possible; remediate abandoned sand and gravel mines
 - Protect animal populations (apart from any protection arising from habitat protection such as wetland or forest protection)
 - Don't develop regulations that infringe on agricultural operations
 - Use education as a tool to help reach environmental goals (applies to many of the specific goals named elsewhere)
 - educate homeowners about proper use of pesticides and salt
 - support county funding for Cornell Cooperative Extension
 - Adopt and enforce a noise ordinance
 - Develop/encourage/allow management of deer populations
 - Limit new development in town
 - Protect riparian buffers
 - Work with the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies and Hudsonia to better use scientific information to assess and minimize environmental impacts
 - Control/regulate development on steep slopes to reduce its environmental impacts (erosion, runoff, etc.)
 - Encourage the use of green energy (wind, solar, geothermal); support alternative energy production, if it has low scenic and environmental impacts
3. *Goals or actions that were mentioned by just 1 group*
- Broaden the existing goal about managing forests for timber production to include production of biomass energy (where such production is compatible with other goals such as scenery, protection of biodiversity and water, etc.)
 - Require all new development to use permeable (pervious) surfaces to the greatest possible extent
 - Beautify town
 - Require regular maintenance of septic systems
 - Reduce undesirable environmental impacts (e.g. erosion, noise) of ATVs.
 - Recognize and manage open space other than working farms
 - Balance the benefits of any new environmental regulation against its costs
 - Put town meetings on TV to better educate people about what town is doing
 - Protect ridgelines (for scenic value); provide tax breaks for ridgeline and viewshed protection
 - Develop green building standards for new development
 - Reduce household waste; encourage recycling and composting
 - Reduce truck traffic through village
 - Prohibit development of hamlets other than Mabbettsville in the town

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- Support dirt roads
- Develop bike paths and walking trails
- Develop rail bed into rail trail
- Reduce light pollution
- Provide faster internet access
- Upgrade village sewage treatment plant
- “Healthy” and “natural” are unrealistic goals for natural resources
- Encourage use of native plants in landscaping
- Support farming but try to reduce its undesirable environmental effects
- Adopt a tree ordinance