

Transportation

Subcommittee Members: Dan Weller and Tom Beaumont

Key Observations:

- Routes 44, 82, 44A and 343 are the main thoroughfares in the town, Route 44 being the most heavily traveled.
- Approximately 64 miles of roadway is maintained by the Town Highway Department, 30 of those miles cover dirt roads.
- As a rural community in close proximity to a rapidly urbanizing region, access to that urban core and its employment, shopping and recreational opportunities are becoming increasingly important.
- Several roads in the town of Washington can be considered scenic routes and some have been listed in the Dutchess County Natural Resource Inventory as having scenic vantage points because of the views they command and the undeveloped nature of the road corridor.
- The Town is served by the County Bus System, which provides numerous routes passing through the village of Millbrook.

Street and Highways

The primary mode of transportation in Washington is by private automobile. This section describes the existing road network and the patterns of use which have evolved. It classifies roads by function and by jurisdiction.

Function

The functional classification of roads is related to their level of use and the type of service they provide. Although roads may be designed for multiple functions, most can be included in one of three general categories: thoroughfares, collectors and local roads.

Thoroughfares are roads providing for through traffic to areas outside the municipality and outside the county. They carry large volumes of traffic and are usually maintained by the state. Industrial or large-scale commercial activities are best suited where they can access this type of road. In Washington, Routes 44, 44A, 82 and 343 are thoroughfares.

Collector roads function to link areas in the municipality to one another and to major highways and are usually maintained by Dutchess County. They serve to collect traffic from local roads and channel it to the larger highways. These roads typically provide the most appropriate locations for community facilities and large-scale residential developments.

Local roads provide access to individual properties from the collectors and thoroughfares. They are not meant to carry through traffic or large volumes of local traffic; they generally serve detached single-family residential uses exclusively. These roads are either private or maintained by the town.

Problems occur when roads serve more than one function. When residences and commercial areas are located along major highways, these roads must serve two functions: regional (moving goods and people from one locality to another) and local (providing access to adjacent property). The result is traffic congestion, hazardous turning movements and a much lower average speed on what should be a high capacity thoroughfare. This situation is occurring along some areas of Washington's thoroughfares.

Jurisdiction

The table below shows the number of miles of roads in Washington under each jurisdiction. The distribution is fairly representative of most areas of the county.

Town of Washington - Road Jurisdiction		
Jurisdiction	Miles	Percent of Total
New York State	25.10	23.2
Dutchess County	18.57	17.2
Town of Washington	64.21	59.5
Total	107.88	100.0

The town is served by three state highways, which can be considered thoroughfares as described in the classification above. Two are generally east-west routes, while the other is a north-south artery. Routes 44 and 44A connect the Poughkeepsie urbanized area with northeast Dutchess County and New England. They also provide access to the Taconic State Parkway just west of the town line and thus to the New York metropolitan area and the Capital Region of NYS. Route 44 is the most important regional highway in Washington and has the highest traffic volumes. Route 44A (formerly the Sharon Turnpike) acts as a bypass around the village of Millbrook for through travelers. This is an extremely important differentiation of function; long-distance travelers can maintain their speed without interfering with those wishing to stop in Millbrook, and traffic in the village is significantly reduced. In this way, travelers with different needs can be separated for the most efficient passage of traffic. Route 82 serves as a connection to the north where it intersects with State Route 199 in Pine Plains and to the south across State Route 55 toward the southwest urban core of the county. Route 343 connects Routes 44 and 82 with Route 22 in the Harlem Valley and provides access to southeast Dutchess County.

Traffic count information for state highways is collected by the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT). Because the counts vary in the number of days calculated and the number of highways counted each year, DOT uses a unit of measurement known as the Average Annual Daily Traffic, or AADT, to show the number of vehicles traveling over a designated section of highway.

State Touring Routes in the Town of Washington				
Route	Section Length	Start Description	End Description	AADT (Year)
44	.81	Access Taconic State Pkwy	Start NY 82 Overlap	12580 (2005)
44	1.04	Start NY 82 Overlap	NY 82 Old Rt 44A	10220 (2006)
44A	2.05	NY 82 Old Rt 44A	Stamford Rd	3630 (2006)
44A	1.06	Stamford Rd	Franklin Ave	3080 (2007)
44A	9.57	Franklin Ave	Rt 343 Start Rt 22 Overlap	4300 (2007)
82	3.09	Camby Rd	Rt 343	4550 (2006)
82	1.89	Rt 343	Start US 44 Overlap	7550 (2005)
82	6.02	Clinton Corners Rd	Hunns Lake Rd	3440 (2005)
343	7.12	Rts 44/82 Millbrook	Rt 22 Spur	3130 (2006)

Source 2007 Traffic Data Report for New York State

There are nine county highways in the Town of Washington including routes 99, 111, 24, 98, 23, 57, 95, 97 and 96 comprising 17 percent of the total road coverage. The county roads serve as collectors, although most also provide direct access to a number of residences and commercial uses. The local access and through functions of the county roads may be coming into conflict where traffic volumes approach those more characteristic of thoroughfares.

The highest traffic volumes can be found on Route 44 between Washington Hollow and the 44A intersection. From the 44A intersection to South Millbrook, the level of traffic remains high, indicating a high degree of travel between the village of Millbrook and the western part of the county. However, much of the volume is shifted to Route 44A, which provides for through travel between Poughkeepsie and Amenia and alleviates traffic congestion in the village. The other state roads leading out of the municipality account for traffic volumes about half that of this section of Route 44. Counts are fairly low on one section of Route 44A from Stamford Road to the intersection with route 44, perhaps indicating that Stamford Road or Canoe Hill Road are major turnoffs.

The most heavily traveled county road is CR 99, which connects Routes 44 and 343 and provides access to CR 98 and the Shunpike. The average annual increase at CR 99 was almost 10 percent from 1981 to 1985. Route 111 in South Millbrook follows closely, with traffic volumes three times as high as most county roads.

The pattern of road use is determined by the routes people take to work, shopping and other activities. Statistics regarding commuting patterns show that more than 90 percent of Washington workers commute to areas within Dutchess County. Of the workers holding jobs outside the county, nearly half commute to New York City.

These figures indicate a fairly dispersed workforce, with commutes to the east, south and west, while traffic counts indicate that there is a distinct concentration of traffic in one area, Route 44 west of the village. Other factors are therefore responsible for a substantial portion of this volume.

Many goods and services are provided along the Route 44 corridor southwest of Washington, as well as this being the primary route for through travel from Poughkeepsie to Millbrook. Several locations in Washington and Millbrook, such as the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, DRAFT DOCUMENT - For internal committee review

Innisfree Gardens, The Farm and Home Center, as well as antique and other shopping opportunities in the village, regularly attract visitors from the Poughkeepsie area and longer distance travelers seeking a weekend escape.

Another factor influencing traffic patterns is the location of residences in the town. There is a concentration of residential development in the south Millbrook area out to Oak Summit. The county roads in this area experience traffic volumes as high as those for the Shunpike; and on Route 111, counts approach a range usually found on state roads. Other areas of residential concentration are Mabbettsville and the area bounded by 44A, Stanford Road and the village border.

Accidents

Information concerning accidents is compiled by the Dutchess County Traffic Safety Board. Accident data was examined for the years 1983 and 1984, during which there was an annual average of 116 accidents in the town of Washington. In 2004-2006 the annual average number of accidents was 32. About three-quarters of the accidents involved only property damage, while one-fourth caused one or more injuries.

Most of the accidents occur on state roads or at intersections of state and county or town roads. Several areas appear to have more than the average number of accidents. These include the intersections of Short Road with NYS 44, Butts Hollow with NYS 343, Stamford Road with County Route 57, NYS 44 and 343 with 82, and the stretch of NYS 82 south of the intersection with South Road.

Road Conditions and Improvement Plans

State roads in the town are maintained according to federal standards adhered to by the New York State Department of Transportation.

Town Roads

Of the 64.21 miles of town roads, 34.21 miles are paved and 30 miles are dirt roads. Maintenance of the unpaved roads is ongoing and performed on an as-needed basis. According to the town highway superintendent, a ten-year schedule of maintenance and improvement for town roads would be desirable to reach a more appropriate proportion of standard roads. However, the Town is currently operating on a fifteen year schedule. Most Town roads are established by use and not by ownership of the Right-of Way. When a new building is constructed additional runoff into town roads from the driveway occurs.

Paved road maintenance is less expensive per mile than unpaved road maintenance according to the Town Road Supervisor. In the same interview he said that the cost of paving currently unpaved roads is very expensive and any substantial mileage would undoubtedly require bonding.

Scenic Roads

Several roads in the town of Washington can be considered scenic routes because of the views they command and the undeveloped nature of the road corridor. Two sections of the road, in particular, have been listed in the Dutchess County Natural Resource Inventory as having scenic vantage points: Route 82 north of Verbank and Route 98 (North Mabbettsville Road)

north of the Shunpike. Other roads which are important for their natural beauty are Route 44A and Route 343 east of Little Rest.

These roads might be considered for protection through designation as scenic roads and nomination for inclusion in the state scenic roads program. They can also be protected through proper highway management, use of screening techniques, control of billboard and road sign use, and careful planning of utility line locations.

Public Transportation

Washington is served by the Dutchess County Loop System (Countywide Bus System), which provides numerous routes passing through the village of Millbrook.

Railroads

Metro-North Commuter Railroad provides two major rail lines connecting Dutchess County with Grand Central Station in New York City. The Harlem Valley line extends to Wassaic, Ten Mile River and Dover Plains in eastern Dutchess, and the Hudson River line serves Beacon, New Hamburg and Poughkeepsie. In addition, Amtrak trains travel along the river, making stops at Rhinecliff and Poughkeepsie. Washington residents can travel to the Poughkeepsie station by means of Route 44 and to the Dover Plains station by Route 343.

Airports

The nearest airport facility with regularly scheduled commercial flights is Stewart International Airport. The Dutchess County Airport also provides services for recreational flights, corporate aircrafts and charters. Sky Acres Airport in Unionvale, which lies about 15 minutes south of Millbrook provides facilities for private airplanes.

Bike trails

The Town of Washington has no designated bike trails, however Dutchess County has several designated Scenic Bike Trails identified. The Harlem Valley Rail Trail is located in Amenia, 10 miles from Millbrook. This trail can be used by bikes and is traffic free.

Transportation Subcommittee

In preparation for the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the Steering Committee established separate subcommittees each charged with direct responsibility for data collection, analysis, and making recommendations to the Steering Committee on topic areas typically covered in a Comprehensive Plan. The Transportation Subcommittee was charged with the responsibility of updating the Transportation section of the 1987 Town of Washington Master Plan. Some observations on the transportation from the Subcommittee include the following:

- Gravel Roads (primarily located in remote areas of the Town) help preserve environmental resources/control development, but the Town has problems maintaining these roads. The grade/quality of gravel roads is an E.
- The cost of maintaining unpaved or gravel roads are greater than for paved roads (almost one-half of the town roads are gravel). Further, the Town does not have the funding to pave these roads.
- Gravel roads also present an obstacle in terms of cost and safety issues for emergency service vehicles.

- Public transportation is available in Millbrook.
- There are plans to enhance/enlarge Stewart Airport by the Port Authority of New York, which may bring more people into the regional area.
- There is a lack of bike paths in the Town, although it appears that there has been an increase in bicycle traffic.

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