



## TOWN SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON 2009 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### Town of Washington: A community profile

Based on the initial research completed by more than 40 citizens, the Comprehensive Plan Update subcommittees and the consultant, the Town developed the following summary of vital statistics about the Town of Washington.

#### Employment

Many residents are employed by the education, health care, social services and professional services industries. Manufacturing and agricultural employment declined since 1990.

Median household income for Town residents actually decreased by over 6% when adjusted for inflation between 1989 and 1999.

#### Natural Resources

An important component of the town's future is the protection of natural resources, including water, prime agricultural soils, and other ecological assets. Many of these natural resources have been protected and conserved through the administration of zoning.

Most town residents are served by individual wells and private on-lot septic systems.

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## 2009 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC SURVEY COMING SOON

The Town of Washington wants to hear from you.

The Town is currently in the initial stages of updating the 1987 Master Plan. The new Master Plan, also known as a Comprehensive Plan, will outline the vision, goals, and actions the Town will take over the next 10-15 years.

A Comprehensive Plan is a document that presents goals, objectives, guidelines and policies for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the community. It provides guidance to municipal leaders and helps to ensure that the needs of the community will be met. The Comprehensive Plan will serve as the reference for all laws the town adopts related to planning and land use, including the Town Zoning Ordinance.

There will be a community values survey, in which we are reaching out to all town residents, including the village, and asking that you share your thoughts and concerns so that they may help shape the Town's future.



The Town of Washington remains a rural community with abundant open space.

The survey will also be available online and we encourage every resident who can to complete the survey online if possible. It will greatly simplify the survey tabulation and analysis process and reduce your postage costs.

The survey will also ask you to think about the future, rather than past efforts or current conditions. It will ask questions related to each area that the plan addresses such as housing, transportation, infrastructure and the environment.

Information and updates about the Comprehensive Plan will be available at Town Hall, Village Hall, the Millbrook Post Office, the Millbrook Library, the Town transfer station, and on the Town's website,

<http://www.washingtonny.org>

to make sure that every interested resident has an opportunity to participate. There will also be several community visioning workshops in the Fall. This will be an opportunity to ensure maximum citizen participation and further define the Town's future direction. We plan to distribute the survey to every household.

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**TOWN OF WASHINGTON COMMUNITY PROFILE**  
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**Natural Resources**  
**(continued)**

The Town contains large areas that are classified as state and/or federal wetlands and portions lie within the 100-year flood plain. Prime agricultural soils comprise approximately 20% of the town. The town's landscape provides a variety of scenic views.

**Government**

The Town of Washington is governed by a Town Supervisor and Town Board. The town has two recreational facilities as well as a variety of other recreational attractions. Town residents are served by three school districts: Millbrook Central School District, Webutuck Central School District, and Dover Union Free School District.

The Town maintains a contract with the Village of Millbrook for fire and rescue services, because volunteer levels at the Fire Department and Rescue Squad have declined.

The Millbrook Fire Department and Rescue Squad have experienced problems recruiting and training volunteers, and the cost of providing emergency services has risen considerably.

**Housing**

There were 2,192 housing units in the town in 2000. Over 37% of those units are occupied by renters while 63% were owner occupied. The town has a 3.8% vacancy rate in its housing market. Housing prices more than doubled between 1990 and 2000. A median valued home in town was \$402,924 in 2008.

**Land Use**

Land uses in the Town of Washington have remained stable over the past 20 years. Agricultural land use accounts for 36.7% of the town's land area. There are 156 parcels in town that are 50 acres or greater, totaling roughly 22,000 acres, which is about 64% of the Town. They are a significant part of the Town's open space, and are a positive for the Town's tax base because they pay more in revenue than they take out in service. Fifty-two percent of the town is woodland while wetlands and water bodies account for 8%.

Some farmers are struggling to maintain large acre farms, and farm support services like feed and supply, and farm equipment repair have diminished. Currently there are 5,270 acres of land with conservation easements and 1,676

acres of land is owned by conservation organizations. The town's state-certified agricultural district includes approximately 23,000 acres.

**Population**

The population of the Town of Washington stands at 4,742, including the Village of Millbrook, an increase of 6% from 1990 to 2000. The number of preschool children and young adults declined (-11% each), while the number of school-aged children (+21.3%) and middle-aged adults (+25.6%) grew. The percentage of senior citizens also increased to more than 18% in 2000.

The school population (now 1,213 students) grew by 45% in the past 20 years. Second homeowners are considered an important part of the community.

**Transportation**

The Town Highway Department maintains approximately 64 miles of roadway, including 30 miles of dirt roads. Several roads in the Town of Washington have been identified as scenic routes or having scenic vantage points or views.

The Town is served by the LOOP bus system, which is administered by Dutchess County and which provides services on routes passing through the Village of Millbrook. There are no bicycle paths in the town, although it appears that there has been an increase in bicycle use.

**Zoning**

Six zoning districts exist including four residential districts, one hamlet mixed-use district and a land conservation district. Four floating districts exist including Environmental Preservation, Industrial/Office, Mobile Home and Hamlet. There are also overlay districts: agricultural protection and aquifer protection. The Village of Millbrook and Mabbettsville are the town's two commercial areas.

The town has two historic buildings that are listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places and numerous properties that have been identified as outstanding examples of regional architecture that could be protected.

*Editing and layout design by  
Mike Hagerty*

**2009 Comprehensive Plan Survey Coming Soon**  
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We want to hear from you. Once the community profile is completed, it will yield more detailed background information. It will also be available on the Town's web site, <http://www.washingtonny.org>. You can expect to receive the survey in the mail in the coming weeks.

To review the subcommittee draft reports in detail, please refer to the Town's web site, <http://www.washingtonny.org>. Click on Master Plan on top. The Town hopes that all residents will remain informed and involved as the community moves forward with the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Sincerely,

Thomas Beaumont and Donald Hanson  
Co-Chairs, Master Plan Update Committee

## Share Your Vision

Participating in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan process will be one of the most important decisions you make for yourself, your family and your community over the next ten years. During the next few months please take advantage of the opportunities to share your Vision For Our Future.

### Participate...It's your town's future !!

- Please complete and return your survey promptly. It will also be available on the Town's web site.
- Come, participate in the Town's visioning workshops to be held this Fall. (Date and time to be announced).
- Keep informed.
- Visit the Town's web site <http://www.washingtonny.org>



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**Town of Washington  
Resident**