

**TOWN OF WASHINGTON**

**MASTER PLAN**

**2006**

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*The following past and present members  
of the Planning Board helped in the  
development of this plan.*

<i>John Callender</i>	<i>Marvin Jager</i>
<i>Gerald Cascio</i>	<i>Frank Musmanno</i>
<i>Lindsay Collins</i>	<i>Jack Sheehy</i>
<i>Lynn Cook</i>	<i>Tom Talpey</i>
<i>Charles Fields</i>	<i>Tom Taylor</i>
<i>Rufford Harrison</i>	

*Former members who contributed to the previous Master Plans*

<i>Kenneth Brighton</i>	<i>Marvin Jager</i>
<i>David Crane</i>	<i>Jeremy Langley</i>
<i>William Crowley</i>	<i>John W. MacNeil</i>
<i>Julia Dunton</i>	<i>G. Michael Otterson</i>
<i>Charles Fields</i>	<i>David Rochford</i>
<i>Beth Gallagher</i>	<i>Thomas Talpey</i>
<i>Richard Griffith</i>	<i>Timothy Wolfe</i>
<i>Robert Hamill</i>	

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## **Preface**

The Master Plan is authorized by and was developed according to N.H. RSA 674:2.

The Master Plan is a public record of land use and development principles for the town. The plan recognizes changing public opinion in relation to the use of land and water resources for both residential and economic growth, and establishes parameters for guiding such growth through the town's Land Use Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

The Master Plan of the Town of Washington was first published in 1982 and revised in 1992 and 2005. It is a statement of a vision for the town and recommendations for guiding its growth for the future. The Plan also discusses Washington's population, economic activity, and natural, historical and cultural resources. The plan is based upon an analysis of the existing conditions in the town, the opinions of town residents, and the knowledge of town officials and Planning Board members.

# Section I - Vision Section

## Chapter 1. Vision Statement

A primary emphasis must be placed on preserving and protecting the quality of life and rural character of the town. This quality is sustained by unique village centers, rich in a visual historical heritage, surrounded by a natural area of lakes, farmland, forest and mountain topography. Our view of the future envisions a town where:

- . growth is managed to ensure that development enhances the quality of life with minimal visual and environmental impact on the rural surrounding.

- . the density of development, lot sizes, and growth are consistent with the capacities of roads, the Capital Improvement Plan, and the constraints of existing natural resources.

- . a high priority is given to the protection and preservation of its inherited historic cultural and scenic resources.

- . environmentally friendly cottage and small home businesses are encouraged.

- . commercial development is encouraged for businesses that are compatible in visual esthetic and complementary to a bedroom recreational community's needs, and minimally impact and fully support the protection and preservation of the existing quality of life, while industry or industrial growth that is in conflict with this vision is restricted.

- . open space preservation is encouraged for enhancement of out-door recreational opportunities, protection of natural resources including drinking water quality, and enhancement of the quality of life for residents and visitors.

## **Chapter 2. Guiding Principles and Recommendations**

One of the main functions of a Master Plan is to document the land use principles of a community regarding growth and the future of the town. The community attitudes surveys done in 1990 and 2003, as well as those done in 1981 for the original Master Plan, were used to help guide the Planning Board in arriving at the Vision Statement and the guiding principles.

The Vision Statement is an image the town wishes to achieve; the principles here outlined guide and assist the Planning Board in working toward that goal. The recommendations listed are priority actions to be considered in moving toward the Vision.

### **Core Principles**

Impact fees, land use planning regulations, building permits and conservation easements should be used as growth management tools.

Agricultural lands, forests, surface and ground water and all other natural resources should be managed and conserved for long term sustainable production and use.

Development on slopes exceeding 15%, which can result in soil erosion, should be avoided.

Commercial/ industrial land use should be well designed, with appropriate landscape buffers.

Unique or fragile natural resources and features along with historical sites should be protected from development.

Housing upgrading should be encouraged.

The use of privately and publicly funded land trust and conservation easements to acquire and maintain property of significant environmental or aesthetic value should be encouraged and supported.

Plans for the expansion and preservation of open space and green belts should be emphasized.

Community voluntarism should be encouraged in local government and services, acting broadly in serving the residents' needs.

## Environment, Land Use, and Open Space Principles

Principle: *Encourage the continuation and expansion of appropriate agricultural activities.*

Recommendations: Discourage land uses that adversely impact land currently used for or potentially useable for agricultural pursuits.

Support programs for the conservation of agricultural lands.

Encourage use and marketing of locally grown agricultural products.

Principle: *Promote long term multiple use management of forests.*

Recommendations: Guide housing development to conserve forest areas, which provide erosion control, slope stabilization and protection from wind, and maintain aesthetic value.

Develop and support regulatory and conservation strategies for the protection of forests, balancing the economic realities and development needs with the preservation of the forests.

Encourage the adoption of sound forestry management practices by property owners.

Principle: *Protect the recreational opportunities inherent in undeveloped land, and maintain a high standard of water quality in lakes, ponds, and streams.*

Recommendations: Maintain public access to water bodies and trails.

Encourage development proposals to safeguard and/or enhance recreational resources.

Maintain town beaches, boat launching sites, and town playgrounds.

Principle: *Conserve, maintain, and improve wildlife habitat on both public and private lands.*

Recommendations: Support wildlife habitat protection in development proposals.

Develop land use controls that maintain a high quality environment conducive to wildlife.

Identify critical habitat areas and encourage management practices for their maintenance.

Principle: *Manage extraction of geological resources to minimize impacts on adjacent land*

Recommendations: Encourage restoration of natural systems, aesthetics, and uses after resource extraction.

Implementation Techniques:

The most common implementation technique for preserving open space and undeveloped land is putting conservation easements on the land. In this technique, the development rights to the property are purchased, so development can never take place on that land. The rights are often purchased by or donated to a conservation organization. Another technique is the outright purchase or donation of a property to the town, state, or a conservation organization. This method gives all the privileges of ownership to the new owner, occasionally with stipulations that the land not be sold for development at a later date.

Land use regulations can be used to protect open space, the environmentally sensitive areas, wildlife habitats, and forests, all of which have recreational value. The most common of these is cluster development, which allows the developer to build all the houses in one small area of the site while preserving the remaining land as open space for the enjoyment of the residents of the development and sometimes for the general public. The overall density prescribed in the zoning ordinance is adhered to, but the location of the buildings is changed. Other regulations to protect certain elements of the environment (such as wetlands, shorelines, floodplains, etc.) are commonly used to keep development out of those areas, sometimes providing a buffer for protection.

## Growth and Development Principles

Principle: *Provide for housing development compatible with sound land use planning, including the provision of safe, healthy housing available to low income people and those with special needs (such as elderly and handicapped people).*

Recommendations: Encourage the maintenance and rehabilitation of current housing stock whenever feasible.

Establish and maintain minimum standards for housing.

Develop alternative housing approaches in an effort to provide lower cost dwelling units for families unable to afford conventional homes.

Principle: *Provide for appropriate commercial and light industrial development to expand the tax base and provide employment opportunities in the town.*

Recommendations: Consider adding a new zoning district to the town to provide for commercial and light industry businesses to locate. Adopt regulations that will provide the flexibility needed by such developers while maintaining the control needed to protect the public safety and the aesthetic qualities of the area.

Consider adopting new zoning districts that designate specific areas of the town for specific land uses and residential compactness.

### Implementation Techniques:

The most common techniques used to control growth and land use are zoning and subdivision regulations. Many innovative tools are available through zoning to guide growth in terms of location and also in terms of housing cost. Public or private housing trusts are also used to promote low cost housing. Regulations can allow the construction of accessory apartments ("mother-in-law apartments") or the conversion of large older homes into several apartment units. By combining appropriate regulations regarding commercial and industrial development in the zoning (Land Use) ordinance and site plan review regulations, a community can have economic development without it being an eyesore, public nuisance, or hazard to the health, welfare, and safety.

## Public Facilities and Services Principles

Principle: *Provide for safe, efficient movement of traffic within the town.*

Recommendations: Improve the portion of town roads that do not meet town road standards to enhance safety and traffic flow.

Principle: *Preserve the Class VI roads for emergency access and recreational activities such as hunting, hiking, skiing, and snowmobiling.*

Recommendations: Prohibit vehicular use of Class VI roads during the mud season.

Restrict off road vehicle use of Class VI roads where such use would seriously damage them..

Principle: *Provide schooling that meets or exceeds minimum state standards, in an environment conducive to high scholastic achievement.*

Recommendations: Provide liaison to the school board to ensure continual provision of adequate facilities.

Principle: *Provide adequate public safety through the Police and Fire Departments.*

Recommendations: Emphasize the Capital Improvements Program in planning for the replacement and addition of police, fire, and rescue vehicles, and heavy equipment needed for highway and road maintenance, in order to coordinate the timing of such expenditures.

Principle: *Manage the solid waste recycling center to meet the needs of a town population expected to increase by 25% during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

Recommendations: Promote public awareness of the practical necessity of a comprehensive solid waste management program that protects human health and the environment.

Promote a system of waste management that includes recycling.

Participate in programs sponsored by New Hampshire Resource Recovery Association on the economical disposal of waste.

Principle: *Protect the public's health by ensuring the safe disposal of wastewater and septage.*

Recommendations: Require disposal of wastewater in a manner which fully protects ground and surface water resources.

Control the density of housing to conform to the ability of the soil to handle sub-surface septic systems.

Make site inspections of marginal or inadequate septic systems particularly those that may be contaminating waters used by swimmers.

Implementation Techniques:

In addition to growth control regulations, common techniques include the Capital Improvements Program and departmental rules and regulations. The Capital Improvements Program is a listing of all the expected expenditures for capital improvements over a period of six to ten years. The document is updated yearly, and is used as an advisory tool by the Board of Selectmen.

## Section II – Land Use

### Chapter 3. Existing Conditions

Development in Washington is primarily residential, split between year round and seasonal use. As stated in the chapter on Population, the 2000 Census data show that 53% of the homes are seasonal. The majority of those are clustered on relatively small lots around five of the town's twenty-some ponds - Ashuelot Pond, Island Pond, Highland Lake, Millen Pond and Half Moon Pond.

Lake Ashuelot Estates, on the eastern shore of Ashuelot Pond, was developed in the late 1960s, prior to any land use regulations in Washington. With an original total of 482 lots, this is by far the largest single development in town. It is serviced by eleven miles of private roads, which are maintained by the homeowners' association. As the year round population in this area increases, there is pressure to have the town take over the roads. LAE is accessible via a paved town road and a dirt road with their junction at the entrance to the development.

The average lot size in Lake Ashuelot Estates is approximately one acre. To date, 153 lots have been built on. The main section of development, which abuts the pond, consists of lots averaging about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre and is 80% built out. Another section that is further away from the pond for the most part can not be developed due to high incidence of ledge. The northern section, along the east bank of the Ashuelot River, has many open lots which range from one to two acres. While the lots within this development are generally undersized, most of the homes are substantial – not just small summer “camps.” Many people have built homes to be used as summer residences for a time, with the intention of eventually using them as their retirement homes. Lately there has been a trend toward construction of year round homes on available lots. Obviously, as the population continues to age, there is potential for this trend to continue. The town has taken ownership of a number of lots for non-payment of back taxes, in some cases because the owner couldn't build due to unsuitability for sewage disposal purposes. In recent years, the town has sold most of these non buildable lots to abutters who have merged them to their properties, making them unavailable as potential building lots.

Island Pond was also developed in the late 1960s and consists of water front lots of less than one acre and off shore lots of three acres or more. Many of the homes are substantial but for the most part are for seasonal use. There are currently about 150 lots on the east side of the pond, but there is potential for future subdivision on the west side, greatly increasing the size of the overall developed area around the pond.

The west side of Highland Lake was subdivided into some 50 lots in the 1930s, and consists mostly of summer camps which are winterized, although a few houses built there during

the last twenty years are substantial, year round homes. There are many trailers in the area, which due to recent changes in State Law and the Land Use Ordinance must each have its own septic disposal system. This is a heavily populated area in the summer and the town was forced in the early 1990s to take over the main access road, Valley Road, which was formerly private, due in part to the number of properties that it serves

Highland Haven, a development on the east side of Highland Lake, contains some 75 lots, most of them not built on. There are about 10 lots on the shore of the lake which are small (1/2 acre or less) the remainder being two acres or more. Just south of this there is another 10-lot subdivision, approved in the early 1990s, while further south along the lake there is Highland Forest, a subdivision of some 40 ten-acre lots, which is actually close to if not south of the Washington/Stoddard town line. Most of these lots are not yet built on.

Millen Pond has many homes around it, many dating from early in the last century, some seasonal and some year round, on a total of 55 lots. Camp Morgan, a town-owned recreational facility, occupies a good deal of the northeastern shore of the pond. There are few remaining developable lots around the pond.

Half Moon Pond has a few older summer cottages along the south eastern shore, but there is potential for a future sizable development along the western shore. A subdivision around Freezeland Pond was approved in 1990, consisting of 26 lots, ranging in size from 5 to 20 acres, but none has been built on. South of this, around Smith Pond, a subdivision of 10 to 15 lots has been created, with only about one half of the lots being developed to date with substantial homes on them and only a few occupied year round.

There are three major subdivisions in town which are not located on or near a body of water: Washington Heights, Martin Road and Sandy Knolls Road. These subdivisions all have larger lots (5 to 10 acres) and are geared toward year round residences. Washington Heights has 28 lots off Lempster Mountain Road, with an additional eight lots on Route 31. About one half of the lots in this subdivision have been built on, including a few seasonal homes. The Martin Road subdivision is on the western side of Lovell Mountain; there are a few houses, occupied year round, and also a couple of summer camps. The potential is there for this subdivision to be improved and fully occupied by year round residents. Sandy Knolls Road, off Mountain Road in East Washington, consists of 18 lots, 5 of which have year round homes; the remainder is as yet undeveloped. The status of these three developments has not substantially changed in the last ten years. A new subdivision was recently approved between Mill Street and East Washington Road consisting of 13 lots of approximately five acres.

There is still a lot of potential for future subdivisions in Washington, totaling perhaps as much as 1000 seasonal or year round homes, which eventually could more than double the town's present population. However, because of the minimum requirements of the present Land Use

Ordinance and septic disposal designs it would appear that there can no longer be a summer cottage type development. The earliest projects in town were designed for purely summer use and did not have regulations to control them. There are no public water or sewer services in Washington, with all lots depending on individual wells and septic systems, and it is conceivable that a higher density of homes could lead to future groundwater pollution problems. A recent rise in the number of building permit applications, should the trend continue, could be cause for concern that the next ten or twenty years could bring on problems influencing the safety and quality of life in sections of Washington. On the other hand, with so many empty lots in subdivisions already approved, it is unlikely that additional major subdivisions would be easily marketable, unless they had some amenity not found in existing developments.

With so few available water front lots there may, however, be a certain amount of pressure on land near other as yet undeveloped ponds.

Commercial or industrial land use is presently limited to the general store, the post office and a few small businesses scattered throughout the town. There are no industrial businesses in town.

The NH Supreme Court ruled in 1991 in the “Chester” case that each town in the state must allow reasonable opportunity for low and moderate income people to obtain housing. Washington, like many small towns across the state, must analyze their Land Use Ordinance to determine if reasonable opportunities for the development of lower cost housing exist, and if they don’t, then amendments should be drafted and presented to the Town voters. A review of the Washington Land Use Ordinance was made considering the “Chester” decision and the following observations were documented in the previous Master Plan. The same conclusions could be reached today.

Currently the town consists of one district. The Ordinance allows single family or duplex homes on two acre lots everywhere in this district, provided the terrain (wetlands, ledge and slopes) will support them. Apartments are limited to two per building and only one dwelling is allowed on a single lot. Multi-family (defined in RSA 674:43 as more than two units per building) development is prohibited. Mobile home parks are prohibited. Cluster developments are permitted anywhere in town but must have a minimum of 15 acres in the tract; they are limited to single family dwellings and must have a minimum lot size of one acre for each home, with proportionate “open space.” There are no provisions for further reduction of lot sizes when the septic percolation rate is good or package plants could be utilized, thereby reducing the necessary lot area.

The “Chester” case has established that some zoning techniques used by the town are exclusionary in that they effectively exclude lower income people from living in the community. Washington has three of the six targeted techniques, to some degree: 1) exclusion of multi-family dwellings; 2) prohibition of mobile home parks; and 3) lot area requirements. As noted above, Washington allows placement of a mobile home on a lot but the lot must meet the minimum space requirements (2 acres, 200 foot frontage), therefore increasing the total cost of the housing.

The two acre minimum lot size could be construed as excessive and there are no provisions for reducing it if the soils are well suited for septic system leachate disposal.

Washington also has a high number of seasonal homes, many of which are older and could be purchased for a relatively low cost. It may be possible for a lower income family to afford to buy one of these and still pay for the upgrades necessary to make it a year round unit, but often those costs are too high.

The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission has done a fair share analysis of lower income housing opportunities as required under state law. It was done using a model developed for the Office of State Planning and was updated using the detailed census data available in 1992. The model considers households that were “in need” in 1989 meaning that they were earning 61% or less of the median regional income, and had one or more of the following conditions: overcrowded units, substandard units, or overpayment (paying more than 30% of income on housing costs, including utilities)

The study indicated that Washington did not have any households classified as “in need” in 1989. The town’s fair share of the regional need for low cost housing was 18, and 4 credits were given (probably for mobile homes), resulting in a total fair share figure of 14. This means that if Washington were to accommodate its fair share of the low cost housing in the region (the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region), 14 low cost homes, apartments, or rent assisted housing units would be needed. Washington’s portion is 0.9% of the regional total.

One of the disadvantages of using these data as an accurate figure for the need for low cost housing in Washington is that the town has little to do with the economic center of the region, the Hanover/Lebanon area. Washington residents probably have more to do with the Hillsborough and Concord than with the Hanover/Lebanon area. Thus a more realistic figure could be obtained if an analysis were done on the Concord or Hillsborough economic centers, which would include Washington. The state has mandated that these studies be done based on regional planning areas, which in cases like Washington’s does not make a lot of sense. However, it is probably safe to say the Town of Washington should provide around a dozen or so units for lower income people.

## **Chapter 4. Population**

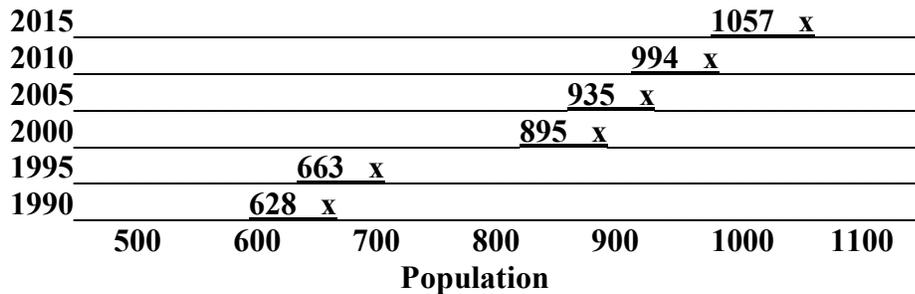
The population of Washington has fluctuated greatly since the first official census in 1773, when it was 132. It grew to over one thousand in the 1800’s as people moved northward from southern New England. Once the railroad and canals opened up the Midwestern United States, the population of many New England towns, including Washington, declined. In fact, by 1960, it had dropped to 162. The population grew to 895 in 2000. Table 1 shows the population count from each of the last three censuses, along with projections by the Office of State Planning through the year 2015.

**Table 1**

Year	Pop.	(Average) % Increase/Year
1980	411	
1990	628	4.0%
2000	895	2.9%
2005	935	.7%
2010	994	1.1%
2015	1057	1.1%

The graph below (Figure 3) shows steady growth since 1990. The census figure is considered to be the most accurate available, and often corrects for inaccuracies in annual estimates. It is common to see a larger than expected increase or decrease during the year before the census.

**Figure 3. Population Growth**



Though the population of Washington increased by 42.5% from 1990 to 2000, for an average annual increase of 3.6%, this is less than the 4.0% average annual increase during the period 1980 – 1990 and is more than the projected increase of 1% per year for 2000 to 2010. The population projections done by the Office of State Planning have not been updated since the 2000 Census, and therefore do not reflect documented changes in population. It is likely the population growth for the period 2000 - 2010 will be higher than 1.1% annually.

The town of Washington is influenced by the surrounding towns, and a Master Plan would not be complete without a comparison of the demographics for this sub region. The population statistics of this area can be seen in Table 2

**Table 2: Population of Sub Region**

Town	1990	2000	Average Number Increase	Annual % Increase	% of Subregion	
					1990 %	2000%
Washington	628	895	267	3.6	5.7	7.1
Marlow	650	747	97	1.2	5.9	5.9
Stoddard	622	928	306	4.0	5.7	7.4
Windsor	107	201	94	7.2	0.9	1.6
Hillsboro	4498	4928	430	.8	41.1	39.3
Bradford	1405	1454	49	.3	12.8	11.6
Newbury	1347	1660	313	1.8	12.3	13.3
Goshen	742	741	- 1	0.0	6.8	6.8
Lempster	947	971	24	.2	7.8	7.8
Sub Region	10946	12525	1579	1.1		

The data in Table 2 indicate that of the nine towns in the subregion, Hillsborough is by far the largest and Windsor is by far the smallest. The seven other towns in this area had populations between 700 and 1700 in 2000. The average annual increase for the sub region for 1990 – 2000 was 1.1%. Washington, Windsor, Marlow, Stoddard and Newbury, had higher growth rates. As expected, Hillsborough had the highest numerical increase, but surprisingly, Goshen had a decrease in population. Washington, Stoddard and Newbury each had significant numerical growth, while Marlow, Bradford, Goshen and Lempster had the same or lower percentage of the regional population in 2000 than in 1990.

The population growth of the community is inseparable from the growth in housing units, which are of three types: single family(SF), multifamily(MF), and mobile homes(MH). The vast majority of homes in Washington are single family. Data on housing growth are available from the State Office of Energy and Planning from information they collected from each town on building permits issued.

Table 3 shows the housing data for Washington, by year and type. The 1990 data are from the 1990 Census plus the permits issued for the remainder of the year. The figures for 1991 through 2002 are the number of permits issued for each type of housing. The housing supply grew from 866 at the end of 1990 to 962 by the end of 2002, an increase of 96 units, or 12%. This includes seasonal homes.

**Table 3: Housing in Washington 1990-2000**

Year	SF	MF	MH	Total	% Increase
1990	795	7	64	866	
1990	4		1	5	.5%
1991	9			9	1.0%
1992	3		1	4	.5%
1993	3			3	.3%
1994	7		1	8	.9%
1995	1		2	3	.3%
1996	4		1	5	.5%
1997	1		-1	0	0.0%
1998	6		2	8	.9%
1999	12		4	16	1.8%
2000	7		2	9	.9%
2001	10		1	11	1.1%
2002	14		1	15	1.6%
2003	25			25	2.8%
2004	32			32	3.8%
Total	933	7	79	1019	16.4%

The sub regional data on housing from the 2000 census and updated by the State Planning Board; in 2002 can also be examined, to better see how Washington fits in with the surrounding towns regarding housing supply. These data are given in Table 4.

**Table 4: Sub-regional Housing by Types - year 2002**

Town	SF	MF	MH	Total Units	% Sub-region
Washington	891	24	45	960	12.0
Marlow	352	14	45	411	5.0
Stoddard	921	28	24	973	12.0
Windsor	106	22	3	130	1.6
Hillsborough	1981	460	69	2510	31.0
Bradford	705	67	35	807	10.0
Newbury	1335	53	11	1399	17.0
Goshen	351	19	35	405	5.0
Lempster	503	18	94	615	7.5
Total				8210	

Table 4 shows these towns have mostly single family housing. Hillsborough and Bradford each have a significant number of multi-family units, while Hillsborough and Lempster have a significant number of mobile homes. These figures include both year round and seasonal homes. Differences between the figures in Table 3 and Table 4 can probably be attributed to the reclassification of homes by the homeowner. Table 4 was taken from Current Estimates and Trends in New Hampshire's Housing Supply Update: 2002 prepared by the New Hampshire Office of Energy & Planning.

Table 5 shows the number of seasonal and year round homes.

**Table 5: Sub-regional Housing - From Energy and Planning**

Town	Seasonal	Year Round	% Year	
Total				
	Units	Units	Round	Units
Washington	511	449	7.8	960
Marlow	86	325	6.0	411
Stoddard	514	459	8.0	973
Windsor	61	69	1.2	130
Hillsborough	324	2186	38.0	2510
Bradford	183	624	11.0	807
Newbury	585	814	14.0	1399
Goshen	97	308	5.0	405
Lempster	159	456	8.0	615
Total	2520	5690		8210

Of the 8,210 units of housing in the sub region, 5,690 or 69% are year round. Washington has a typical number for a small town with virtually no industry or employment opportunities.

The significance of these numbers is that Washington, along with a few other neighboring towns, has a significant number of seasonal residences, which means a significant increase in the population during the summer months when these units are occupied. This puts additional demands on the public services and increases traffic on the local roads during the summer. These fluctuations in the population should be considered when a town plans for expenditures for public services.

Affordability is becoming increasingly important as housing costs continue to escalate. The population in general is getting older, and the demand for elderly and handicap accessible housing will rise with it. Lower income housing often results in higher school enrollments and community service costs, as families with younger children are the largest consumers of such housing. Housing that is affordable to low and moderate income families will continue to be a problem, and cannot reasonably be solved by any individual community. This is a national problem, and is tied both to the economy and to local, state, and federal government policies. The Upper Valley/Lake Sunapee Council did a fair share analysis in 1989 as required by state law. Please refer to Chapter 3 for more information.

## Chapter 5: Economic Activity

The economic base of Washington is dependent on residential land, as there are only a handful of small businesses in town, including two farms. The greatest source of local public revenue is the residential property tax. Table 7 depicts the growth in the tax base from 1990 – 2003.

**Table 6: Growth in Tax Rate**

Year	Net Evaluation	Tax Rate	Capital Expenditures
1990	85,548,668	14.15	54,325
1995	88,110,616	17.85	176,907
1996	89,010,954	18.07	151,481
1997	89,959,065	18.99	216,756
1998	88,176,969	21.04	494,886
1999	88,096,337	23.71	95,907
2000	89,074,419	24.94	117,773
2001	89,562,046	25.35	271,894
2002	90,648,599	26.30	418,285
2003	92,160,878	30.98	242,649
2004	94,606,665	35.70	285,161

Table 7 shows Washington’s employment pattern. The categories are defined in the 2000 Census.

**Table 7: Employment 2002, Based on Place of Residence and travel time to work**

**Total population age 16 and older - 693**

**Those not in work force - 261**

**Total in work force - 432**

**Total out of home workers – 372**

**Travel time to work for those working outside the home**

Less than 30 minutes	30 to 44 minutes	Over 45 Minutes
177	68	127

**Table 8: Areas of Employment**

**AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT**

**Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining 4.9%**

<b>Construction</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>20.4%</b>
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	<b>.6%</b>
<b>Retail Trade</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>Information</b>	<b>.2%</b>
<b>Finance, Insurance, Real estate, Rental &amp; Leasing</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Professional, scientific, management, waste management</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
<b>Education, health, social services</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Arts, Entertainment, recreation, accommodations and food service</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Other services (except public administration)</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Public Administration</b>	<b>3%</b>

About 55% of the workforce in Washington work in the community or within 30 minutes driving distance. It is a fair guess that many of these people are employed in Hillsborough. The majority work in durable goods manufacturing, construction, retail sales, education and agriculture. This has not changed since the last census.

## **Chapter 6. Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources**

### **A. Historic Background**

Washington, a rural town in southwestern New Hampshire, was first settled in 1768, and was incorporated and named in honor of General George Washington in December of 1776. The first census taken in Washington Township was in 1773, by Issac Temple of Stoddard. At that time, the population was 132. Subsequent census records show the population increased to a high of 1135 in 1830, when the town's economy sustained a variety of small mills, a resident physician, a dentist, three churches, and a hotel, in addition to 200 farms. The town then maintained more than 50 miles of roads to provide transportation routes for these uses. There were eight school districts to provide educational opportunities for the children.

In addition to the usual institutions (churches, schools, lyceums, etc.) two unusual organizations developed in town. The Seventh Day Adventist faith had its origins in Washington in the 1840's, and from here spread throughout the world; the original church building still stands in the southwestern part of Washington. A prestigious academy (Tubbs Union Academy) was founded in Washington in 1849, and although short-lived, at one time had an enrollment of more than 100 students from all over New Hampshire and beyond.

Many sons and daughters of the town have gone on to distinguished careers in a variety of fields. These include at least one United States Congressman, several college presidents, a number

of college professors, and quite a few doctors, lawyers, ministers, and founders of major businesses. Most of these came from the mid-nineteenth century, when the population was higher than at any time before or since. Some of Washington's distinguished citizens have been memorialized on the town common: twelve young men who died in the Civil War, honored with a soldiers' monument, and Sylvanus Thayer, "the father of West Point". The town library is named after Sarah Shedd, who worked in the Lowell Mills and gave her savings for the library.

The population of the town decreased continually from 1830 until 1960 when it reached 162. The mills and businesses were gone by the beginning of the twentieth century, and many farms were abandoned as people moved west. Washington changed from a diverse, nearly self sufficient community to a predominantly rural residential town. Several large summer communities began on the shores of some of the lakes in town. The many acres of land cleared for crops and pasture have returned to woodland,

and many of the old roads have been abandoned or closed "subject to gates and bars." All but one of the schools were closed, as the diminishing population did not warrant so many and transportation from outlying areas became easier

After World War II the country began to grow anew, and Washington was no exception, although growth was slow to come to this area. Since 1960, the population has grown, but at a slower rate than the previous population boom in the 1800's. The population is projected to reach the previous high of 1,135 by the year 2010. The town must continue to plan for future growth, and decide how best to control it in order to maintain the qualities of life that make Washington such a desirable place to live. The town also must consider the realities of a larger population in terms of needed services, both public and private.

Two large volumes provide a thorough history of the town: [A History of Washington, New Hampshire 1768 – 1886](#), published in 1886 and reprinted in 1976; and [Portrait of a Hill Town: A History of Washington, New Hampshire, 1876 – 1976](#), published in 1976.

## **B. The Natural Environment**

Washington, a town of about 53 sq. mi., lies in the southeast corner of Sullivan County some twenty miles west of Concord. Its rugged hills form two watersheds: via the Ashuelot River, the west slopes drain to the Connecticut, while drainage on the east flows to the Merrimack via the north branch of the Contoocook. The largest of Washington's 26 lakes and ponds are Ashuelot Pond (about 430 acres), Island Pond (200), Highland Lake (190 in Washington, the remainder in Stoddard), Millen Pond (150 ) and Halfmoon Pond (80).

Washington includes two villages: The town center has an elevation of 1507 feet, while East

Washington is at 939 feet. The highest summit is Lovell Mountain, at 2496 feet, but several others reach to about 2000 feet. It is a rocky town, with many large boulders, outcrops and areas of ledge underlying stony loam. Maple, beech, birch, red oak, ash, red spruce, hemlock and scattered stands of white pine cover some 90% of the town. The mix of forest, farms, fields, ponds and wetlands is much admired by both residents and visitors.

Wildlife is both indigenous and migratory, but poorly planned development threatens the habitat. In Pillsbury State Park is a small rookery of Great Blue Herons, and other habitats could be protected by better forestry and agricultural management.

The forest is one of the town's major assets. It stabilizes the soil, retards runoff, provides habitat, buffers sound and wind, enhances the scenery, and is a wood source for both industry and fuel, but it is gradually disappearing as land ownership becomes more fragmented.

Two thirds of the taxable land (about 23,800 acres) is forest, capable of repeated crops of wood. State (8000 acres) and town (500 acres) forests continue to be managed in ways that are compatible with town goals, but smaller tracts are vulnerable to growth pressures.

The town's largest landowner is the State. Pillsbury State Park, about 5000 acres, is largely in Washington, and the State also owns the 500 acre Max Israel tract about half a mile east of the park. Other public lands include the commons in the two villages, the town garage and transfer station, the roadways, and the 138 acre lakeshore recreation area known as Camp Morgan.

The town has fifteen owners of tracts of more than 200 acres, four of whom are organizations rather than individuals; about 200 owners of 10 – 200-acre tracts; and 100 owners of tracts between 2 and 10 acres. Smaller lots number some 1200, many in lakeside communities planned for summer cottages that are gradually being winterized.

Maps have been prepared by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission showing a variety of natural features. Incorporated in this Master Plan by reference, these maps may be seen in the Town Hall, or on the Town web site ([www.washingtonnh.org](http://www.washingtonnh.org)). One of them addresses soil types that are suitable for agriculture; only 5% of the total town area, these soils are largely in the two villages and the Faxon Hill area.

Only ten to fifteen percent of the town is suitable for industrial or commercial development,. They are defined by their slopes (less than 9%), good drainage, lack of ledge and the fact that they are not subject to flooding. Approximately 30-35%, of the land in town is suitable for houses with basements. This land has a slope of less than 16%, is not in a flood plain and is not poorly drained.

Steeper slopes, up to 50%, cover about a quarter of the town, including much of Lovewell Mountain, the northern corners of the town, Oak Hill and a line running northeast from Ames Hill

to the town line.

Washington has more than 75 streams, evenly distributed except for Lovewell Mountain and part of Pillsbury, where streams are fewer. The maps show which of these streams are subject to overflow and land that is typically moist – about 10% of the town.

Another result of the County's analysis of soil types was the finding of eight possible gravel pits, leading to a potential supply of road gravel.

### **C. Cultural Resources and Town Services**

This section deals with the services and facilities provided by the Town that are usually thought to be essential in maintaining a desirable life style for the residents and which may be affected by land use decisions. These services are important in promoting the health, safety, general welfare, educational and social needs. The present facilities are in general minimal, but are supplemented by neighboring communities through cooperative agreements. However, these services and facilities may need to be expanded as the population continues to grow.

Fire Fighting Facilities: The Washington Center Fire Station is built on approximately one acre of land under lease from the descendants of the Heald family, together with a small tract of about .048 acres deeded to the Fire Department in 1992 by Martha and Robert Hamill. The lease has some 54 years to run. The Center Station was recently enlarged to provide better space for the Rescue Squad and storage of essential equipment. The present Fire Station in East Washington is built on privately owned land with inadequate space for expansion. Recently a parcel of land on East Washington Road was purchased by the Town for the eventual erection of an expanded facility. The Fire Department is staffed by about 50 volunteers working under the direction of a Fire Chief. The department owns eight trucks: two pumpers, one tanker and the ambulance are housed in the Center Station. The East Washington Station holds a pumper and a tanker. The forestry truck and spare tanker are stored in the old Highway Garage on Half Moon Pond Rd. The town continually updates this equipment in order to keep pace with the protection needs of a growing population

Police Protection: The Washington Police Department has an authorized strength of 4 officers (1 full-time, 3 part-time), a part-time Secretary and volunteer animal control officer. They operate out of the old schoolhouse in the center of town. Patrol activities are conducted with the single cruiser, a 4-wheel drive SUV, an ATV and a snowmobile. The cruiser is equipped with digital radio communications and there are 3 portable radios for the officers to share. Dispatching is contracted with Hillsboro Police Department. The Department has mutual agreements with all neighboring towns, and is a signatory to an extended authority agreement among all municipal agencies in Sullivan County. The physical plant is anticipated to be able to meet the growing workload due to increasing population and traffic occurring in the town, but will need some ADA, safety and energy consumption upgrade soon. The increasing workload will require the department

to constantly upgrade and meet the changing requirements of the technology being developed and put to use throughout the State's law enforcement community.

Water Supply and Sewage Facilities: No central water distribution facilities exist in Washington, the residents relying entirely on individual wells. No major problems with this arrangement have been reported. Likewise, there is no central sewage disposal system in town, all buildings relying on individual septic facilities. Some of these systems are antiquated and may be operating at full capacity or beyond. A few residents along some of the lake shore depend on holding tanks which must be pumped out periodically by commercial haulers; this is left up to the individual owner to arrange. Although, by contract pursuant to state regulations, the town has a disposal site for emergency use only, there is no regular facility for sewage disposal and it is left to the commercial haulers to find an approved disposal site. The most important potential problem with the septic system arrangement is the contamination of lakes and ponds, creating a health hazard for swimmers. Town residents must be vigilant towards the possible existence of marginal, inadequate or failing systems that may be polluting the ground or surface waters. Although the situation is far from critical, some thought should be given to strengthening regulations protecting the ground water resources and controlling the housing density so that they correspond with the ability of the land to handle sub-surface sewage disposal.

Solid Waste Disposal: The town has a transfer station and recycling center, established in 1996, located on route 31 about two miles southeast of the center of town. Household waste is collected and compacted at the site and is transferred by truck and trailer to an approved disposal facility a considerable distance away. Glass, metal cans and some types of plastic bottles are collected for recycling. Paper, cardboard, tires, old appliances, waste resulting from construction or demolition and hazardous wastes are collected separately for proper disposal. Brush is accumulated for eventual burning. The facility is well run and at present appears to be functioning adequately, although the quantities of some categories of materials may be approaching critical points due to the expense or inconvenience of disposing of them. The adequacy and efficiency of this facility needs constant monitoring and the public needs frequent education on its importance.

Energy: All energy resources except wood, solar, and wind are imported into town. There is one gas station at the general store in Washington Center for automotive and recreational vehicle use. The Town has its own fuel facility. All other petroleum products, including heating fuels, are purchased from companies in other towns. Electrical service is provided by both Public Service of New Hampshire and the New England Cooperative. Several dams that once produced mechanical energy have fallen into disuse. Potential hydroelectric sites have not been formally identified. There are no known coal deposits within Washington, nor are there any geothermal resources in this area. There has been some discussion of town woodlots in the past but only a minimal amount of tree harvesting on town land has been completed. There is at least one example of solar energy collection in town but none involving the use of wind. These systems are relatively expensive and require initiative of private individuals to implement.

Transportation: The only transportation facilities serving Washington are the roads, as there are no air, water, train or bus facilities; Public transportation ended with the stage coach era. During the 1800s more than 50 miles of town roads reached outward from the main thoroughfare (the present route 31) to meet the needs of an expanding community, but by the middle of the century, farming and local industry began a decline, reducing the need for road maintenance. During the late 1920s and early 1930s several miles of town roads were closed subject to gates and bars, and some 10 miles of town roads were officially discontinued. By 1958 less than half of the original mileage was maintained in a condition suitable for normal travel. The “old” roads continue to be used for recreational purposes and are an essential part of a regional system of snowmobile trails.

The maps in the town hall show the roads throughout the town with their classifications. Three roads are maintained by the State: about one half mile of the road from East Washington into Bradford, a one mile class 3 recreational road in Pillsbury State Park and approximately 12 miles of Route 31 (once the 2<sup>nd</sup> NH Turnpike) which is the main artery through town. Two of these roads are paved, while the one in Pillsbury State Park has a gravel surface. The town maintains four paved class 5 roads, totaling about 12 miles: East Washington Road (5.4 miles), Lempster Mountain Road (2.5 miles), Faxon Hill Road (3 miles), and Washington Drive (1.7 miles). The town also maintains numerous gravel or dirt class 5 roads, totaling about 34 miles. Some of these roads receive heavy usage, especially during the summer when many seasonal residents are living in Washington. Several roads in Washington are privately maintained, mostly in the Ashuelot Pond area, and have an increased traffic count in the summer

The Town of Washington is also responsible for the care and maintenance of nine bridges. Many bridges were built in the 1800 and 1900s with whatever stone and timber were available at the time. Most of these bridges are constructed on hand laid stone abutments and have inadequate width and load bearing capacities. Consideration for the future replacement or rehabilitation of these structures needs to be addressed in the near future to keep pace with the inevitable growth in Washington..

The town needs to begin planning for the eventual need for major road repair and upgrading to accommodate safely the increasing volume of both seasonal and year round traffic. Thought should be given to the eventual need for expansion of residential areas and the need for adequate roads to service them. The Class VI roads that are no longer being used for regular traffic and which are being utilized as a recreational source should be maintained for those purposes.

Education: Washington once had as many as ten schools scattered throughout the town, but today only one school is in use, serving grades kindergarten through five. Students in grades six through twelve attend the Hillsborough-Deering schools, for which the town pays both the educational and transportation costs. The grade school contains classrooms, a large recreational/assembly room, a computer room, cafeteria facilities, a nurse’s station, special-needs space and office space, and is located on town property, which was part of the Camp Morgan property. It was erected in 1992 and enlarged in 2000. It appears adequate to serve the needs of the

school district for the foreseeable future.

In 2003/2004 an independent study was made of the advisability of enlarging the school and returning the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to town rather than bussing them to Hillsborough, but a town vote showed a sizable majority favoring the continuance of the out of town arrangement.

Recreation: Growth within the region and the Town of Washington is due in large part to the high environmental quality, scenic beauty and recreational potential of the area. Washington is in the center of an extensive system of well maintained trails used by hikers, cross country skiers, snowmobilers, hunters, fishermen and horse riders. Recreational use is an important activity in town, so it is important for the town to continue to recognize the significance of the recreational opportunities that exist, and to guide growth and development in such a manner as to protect the high quality of the environment and maintain the recreational potential. In particular, the water quality of lakes in Washington should continue to be a major concern in town planning and site development. This is of special concern because of the high level of mercury in three of Washington's ponds and the reported finding of Eurasian milfoil and other invasive vegetation in lakes in surrounding communities.

One of the most important recreational amenities is Camp Morgan, owned by the town since 1980. It is located on Millen Pond, not far from the center of town. The major facilities there include a beach, softball field and a heated handicapped-accessible building that includes a kitchen. This facility is used for dances, public meetings, elections and meetings and activities of various town groups. It is also available for rental. During the winter months lunches are served to seniors by volunteer seniors twice a month for a nominal fee and bingo games are held. More than 100 children participate weekdays in a summer recreational program run by the Parks and Recreation Department. There is also public access to the trail network from the property.

Library: Near the town common in the center of town is the Shedd Free Library, founded in 1869 from a bequest in the will of Sarah Shedd, who worked in the mills at Lowell, Mass., and left her life savings and a few books to start the library. It is housed in a small brick building built in 1881 with funds donated by Luman T. Jefts and contains a collection of over 8300 books, close to 300 audio recordings, two books on CD, well over 500 video recordings, 25 DVDs and 42 magazine subscriptions. There are more than 830 registered patrons and the library together with the associated Friends of the Library organization sponsors various events to promote reading and library use for adults as well as children.

Village Districts: In 2001 a village district was formed solely to manage and maintain the dam at the exit of Ashuelot Pond, when insurance costs became so high that it was not possible to afford liability protection by any other means. This entity is run by a board of directors consisting mainly of residents of Lake Ashuelot Estates and is funded by small dues from members of that association.

The Highland Haven Village District was established on August 6, 1994 in order to protect and maintain the land and property held in common.

Archives: The Archives are located in the Town Hall. Past town records can be found there.

## ***APPENDIX I***

## Master Plan Questionnaire

Background Information – This section is designed to obtain general information about the residents of Washington.

1. Check EACH of the following which apply to you

- 70% \_\_\_ year round homeowner
- 17% \_\_\_ seasonal homeowner
- 11% \_\_\_ owner of undeveloped land

For Washington Residents Only answer questions 2 – 6.

2. How many years have you lived in Washington?

- 3% \_\_\_ Less than 1
- 44% \_\_\_ 1 – 10
- 17% \_\_\_ 10 – 20
- 34% \_\_\_ Over 20

3. What age bracket are you in?

- \_\_\_ less than 18
- 3% \_\_\_ 18 – 30
- 15% \_\_\_ 31 – 45
- 39% \_\_\_ 46 – 60
- 34% \_\_\_ 61 – 75
- 6% \_\_\_ 75 and over

4. Do you have any children under age 18 living with you?

- 22% \_\_\_ Yes How many? \_\_\_
- 77% \_\_\_ No

5. Where do you work?

- 2% \_\_\_ unemployed
- 13% \_\_\_ in Washington
- 20% \_\_\_ within 25 miles of Washington
- 27% \_\_\_ more than 25 miles from Washington
- 36% \_\_\_ retired

6. What kind of housing do you live in?

- 94% \_\_\_ single family house
- 4% \_\_\_ two family houses
- 1% \_\_\_ mobile home
- \_\_\_ others (specify)

General – This section is designed to determine how you feel about the town.

1. Do you think the town has adequate public services and facilities? Please rate the following town services as 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = excellent.

All areas good to excellent. Some concerns noted in regards to Town Offices, roads and police.

\_\_\_\_ solid waste  
\_\_\_\_ education  
\_\_\_\_ recreation  
\_\_\_\_ police  
\_\_\_\_ fire  
\_\_\_\_ rescue  
\_\_\_\_ Library  
\_\_\_\_ roads  
\_\_\_\_ town offices

2. Do you feel the town budget is

\_\_\_\_ too low to provide needed services  
61% \_\_\_\_ reasonable  
30% \_\_\_\_ too high for the services provided  
7% \_\_\_\_ too high because too many services are offered

3. Do you feel the school budget is

1% \_\_\_\_ too low to provide needed services  
61% \_\_\_\_ reasonable  
28% \_\_\_\_ too high for the services provided  
7% \_\_\_\_ too high because too many services are provided

4. In the last five years, has Washington grown

2% \_\_\_\_ too slow  
60% \_\_\_\_ just right  
37% \_\_\_\_ too fast

5. Should the town manage its growth?

80% \_\_\_\_ yes  
19% \_\_\_\_ no

6. Controls on growth and land use should

11% \_\_\_\_ be more lenient than they are  
45% \_\_\_\_ remain the same  
43% \_\_\_\_ be stricter than they are now

13. Are you in favor of designating specific sections of town for different land uses, such as Rural, Residential, and Business?  
 60% \_\_\_ yes  
 29% \_\_\_ no  
 10% \_\_\_ no opinion
14. Are you in favor of requiring different minimum lot sizes in these different sections for the purposes of better planning for growth?  
 54% \_\_\_ yes  
 31% \_\_\_ no  
 14% \_\_\_ no opinion
15. Open space and greenbelts  
 29% \_\_\_ should be established now  
 12% \_\_\_ are not important  
 58% \_\_\_ should be planned now and gradually established over the years.
16. What do you feel are the most serious problems facing Washington today?  
 Please rate as 1 = not a problem, 2 = a minor problem, 3 = a serious problem, or 4 = a very serious problem. (Please rate all below)  
 Only area considered a problem by more than 50 % of respondents was budget growth
- \_\_\_ lack of enforcement of land use and building regulations
  - \_\_\_ solid waste disposal
  - \_\_\_ education
  - \_\_\_ population growth
  - \_\_\_ lack of jobs
  - \_\_\_ property taxes
  - \_\_\_ budget growth
  - \_\_\_ roads
  - \_\_\_ uncontrolled development
  - \_\_\_ others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Residential and Business – This section is designed to find out your attitudes toward future residential and business development in Washington.

17. Residential growth should occur (check all that apply)  
 Majority feel growth should occur along town roads, state roads and the village center
- \_\_\_ around village center
  - \_\_\_ along town roads
  - \_\_\_ along state highways
  - \_\_\_ along lake shores
  - \_\_\_ in forested areas
  - \_\_\_ in farming areas

\_\_\_ anywhere at all

18. Further commercial development is

40% \_\_\_ not necessary

29% \_\_\_ necessary, and existing regulations are adequate

18% \_\_\_ necessary, but existing regulations are not strict enough

12% \_\_\_ necessary, but existing regulations are too strict.

19. Please indicate your feelings toward the following types of development in Washington. Rate them as 1 = should be encouraged, 2 = should be discouraged, or 3 = it doesn't matter to me.

E – Encourage

D - Discourage

E \_\_\_ single family dwellings

D \_\_\_ two- family dwellings (duplex)

D \_\_\_ apartment buildings (multi – family)

D \_\_\_ low income housing, single family or duplex units

D \_\_\_ low income housing, multi – family units

D \_\_\_ condominium complex

D \_\_\_ mobile homes

E \_\_\_ summer vacation homes

E \_\_\_ retirement residences

E \_\_\_ bed and breakfast

\_\_\_ motels or inns

E \_\_\_ restaurants

\_\_\_ retail stores

\_\_\_ business and professional offices

D \_\_\_ shopping centers

\_\_\_ convenience stores

\_\_\_ gasoline stations

E \_\_\_ auto service center

E \_\_\_ home based business with no outward appearance of business

E \_\_\_ working farms

\_\_\_ senior/community center

20. Control over home based businesses should be based on (check one or more)  
Controls based on traffic volume, storage and number of employees.

\_\_\_ control not needed

\_\_\_ traffic volume or frequency

\_\_\_ vehicle and/or material storage

\_\_\_ income

\_\_\_ number of employees

\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- 21 For non-home based businesses, where would you prefer commercial development to be located?

20% \_\_\_\_ scattered throughout town  
26% \_\_\_\_ in/around village center  
6% \_\_\_\_ along town roads  
46% \_\_\_\_ along state highways.

22. Industrial development, which can help affect a town's tax base,

36% \_\_\_\_ is not wanted at all  
56% \_\_\_\_ light industry is okay  
7% \_\_\_\_ heavy industry is okay

23. Is affordable housing a problem in Washington?

30% \_\_\_\_ yes  
69% \_\_\_\_ no

24. Should the town consider adopting a building code?

50% \_\_\_\_ yes  
49% \_\_\_\_ no

25. Should the town consider hiring a land use regulation enforcement officer?

29% \_\_\_\_ yes  
70% \_\_\_\_ no

26. Should the town consider appointing a code enforcement officer?

33% \_\_\_\_ yes  
66% \_\_\_\_ no

27. Are you in favor of the following? (Check those you favor)

Majority in favor of elderly health services, transportation, and a senior center. Less than 50% were in favor of senior housing.

\_\_\_\_ elderly health services  
\_\_\_\_ elderly transportation  
\_\_\_\_ elderly housing  
\_\_\_\_ senior/community center

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN MARCH 1, 2003

Please feel free to add comments or voice your concerns next to the appropriate question, or add an attached sheet if sufficient space is not provided.

Residents comments were too scattered to determine a consensus.