



## **Town of Woodbury Comprehensive Plan**

**Issues Identification Workshop  
August 26, 2004  
Central Valley Elementary School**

The first public workshop for the Town of Woodbury Comprehensive Plan was held on Thursday, August 26, 2004. Approximately thirty community members and Town officials attended the workshop. The purpose of this initial workshop was to introduce the community to the comprehensive planning process. In addition, participants were asked to work together to define the Town's strengths and identify issues that should be addressed in the plan.

Following a presentation by The Saratoga Associates, workshop participants were divided into breakout groups for a more in-depth discussion. Participants were asked the following set of questions: 1 – What do you like about living/working in Woodbury? What is working, and should be protected and enhanced? 2 – What problems/concerns should be addressed through the plan? What can be done to improve life in the Town? Participants were also asked to prioritize concerns, describe what should be accomplished regarding the priority concerns and identify potential obstacles. The participants' responses for each are listed below.

### **GROUP 1**

#### ***What do you like about living/working in Woodbury?***

- Small town atmosphere
- Quiet
- Open space
- Parks – open to residents
- Low crime rate
- Schools
- Diversity – small town with conveniences of larger community
- Close to everything

#### ***What problems/concerns should be addressed through the plan?***

- Traffic: commuter, commercial, residential, retail, tourists
- Taxes
- Annexation – protect borders
- Development
  - Overdevelopment
  - Type of development
  - Mix of uses inappropriate
  - Too much development is overwhelming infrastructures and environmental resources
  - Stop urbanization, try to maintain rural atmosphere
- Geographic Location: “Crossroads of Orange County”
- Air pollution /noise pollution
- Sullivan County casino traffic
- Address traffic issues without widening roads and impacting scenic resources
- MTA proposed train station at Woodbury Commons and increased traffic as a result

### ***Priority Concerns***

- Traffic
- Taxes
- Annexation
- Stop urbanization and over-development
- Noise and air pollution

### ***What would you like to accomplish in regard to this concern?***

#### Traffic:

- Improve I-86/I-87 interchange area
- Trucks/commercial traffic off of Route 32
- New exit ramps north of Exit 16 to move traffic off of Route 32 and create a direct exit to Woodbury Commons
- Noise barriers
- Relocate or remove toll booth

#### Taxes:

- Stabilize school taxes through controlled growth
- Prevent erosion of tax base (annexation concern)
- Property tax
- Create additional tax base
- Increase share of sales tax distribution
  - Woodbury Commons/Orange County
- Integrate technology into workforce
- Prioritize budget to maximize tax base

#### Annexation:

- Stop
- Keep current borders
- Impacts tax base
  - Natural resources
  - Water supply
  - Infrastructure

#### Stop urbanization and over-development:

(Natural resources protection/ character of Town/Infrastructure overload)

- More office development (not retail)
- Moratorium
- Address signage
- Teeth to zoning enforcement & building

#### Noise and air pollution:

- Less pollution
- Reduction in traffic/cars
- Reduce idling trucks and buses
- Restrictions on commercial vehicles
- Size
- Pollutants emitted
- Number of trucks
- Reduce number of false alarms for commercial business – emergency vehicle sirens for false alarms during the night are loud and disruptive

***What are some potential obstacles to accomplishing this? “How to...”***

Traffic:

- Fund improvements (potential tax on casino; grants)
- Install cloverleaf for new exit – the amount of land required is substantial
- Get political support at state level (lobbyists?)

Taxes:

- Stabilize school taxes thru controlled growth
- Prevent erosion of tax base (annexation concern)
- Property tax
- Create more tax base
- Better cut of sales tax distribution
  - Woodbury Commons/Orange Co.
- Integrate technology into workforce
- Prioritize budget to maximize tax base
- Maintain source of revenue
- Get Orange County to restructure tax distribution
- Control school spending (accountability is important)
- Control legal expenses

Annexation:

- Get political support at all levels
- Implement comprehensive plan
- Get a “5-star” legal team
- Get more residents to vote
- Educate Town Residents
- Get a strong government

Stop urbanization and over-development:

- Write stronger zoning – create
- Implement and enforce comp. Plan
- Require sever penalties to encourage enforcement
- Have enforcement staff

Noise and air pollution:

- Create enforceable laws
- Get rid of toll booths
- New exits/access to thruway
- Restrict type of commercial & industrial development (stump grinding)

**Group 2**

***What do you like about living/working in Woodbury?***

- Beautiful parks
- Not too built-up – commercial/residential separate
- Easy access to NYC
- Wonderful school system
- Countrywide feel with convenience (shopping, etc.)
- Recreation-trails, mountains

- Culture
- Rich in history
- Family oriented-lots of organized activities for families
- Mountains/open space
- Private yet neighborly
- Commutes are easy because of access to Route 6 & Thruway

***What problems/concerns should be addressed through the plan?***

- As businesses start to shrink, they might start encroaching on residential areas. Mostly along Route 32.
- Growth of community requires change in infrastructure to handle traffic growth, etc.
- Landscape changed – rural character encroached upon
- Protection – open space, wetlands
- Zoning – protection of property – environment/scale protected from annexation
- Low density zoned areas should stay that way, increase SF acreage to 3-5 instead of 1-2
- Laws should protect existing residents
- Master Plan - corridor residential, wasn't reflected in zoning
- Balanced growth especially on Rte. 32 corridor, residential, rural feel
- Protection of natural resources and water supply
- Variety of housing
- Rate of growth – at some point will have to stop
- Resources will run out
- What infrastructure can handle – water/sewer/roads
- Potential noise/pollution, increased traffic, Rte. 32, is in a valley- reverberations can be felt 1 mile away
- Financial burden – NYS to implement impact fees. Developers should have to pay fees
- Inappropriate adjacent uses on Rte 32 – small parcels should have appropriate-sized businesses.
- Traffic near hub/Harriman Commons/Police

***Priority Concerns***

- Protect and enforce existing zoning laws
- Open space plan/appearance – wetlands protection
- Prevent annexation
- Balanced growth
- Draw high paying jobs (no more retail)
- Traffic on Route 32
- Quality of Life: Noise, Pollution, Air Quality, Visual Pollution
- Protection and Maintenance of Parks and Recreational facilities
- Overdevelopment
- Residential business

***What would you like to accomplish in regard to this concern?***

- Original Master Plan encouraged development at south end of town
- Development could occur at north end of town
- Lobby for Thruway entrance at north end near Cornwall – would direct traffic from Rte. 32.
- 70-80 ac industrial zoned - Nepara AQ issues
- Development around large chemical plant that brings in tankers of ammonia (near schools and Woodbury Commons)
- In early 2000, schools were closed due to fumes
- Concern about Ace Farm zoning – what will it become with new owner? Will it remain 2 ac zoning? Recommendation to make it 3 ac was recommended, but never put in place.

- Does this plan stand up in a court of law or could property be annexed and made part of another town/village (no longer town of Woodbury)
- Will a comprehensive plan zoning protect existing residents?
- Zoning could consider property within viewshed of pond could be protected as open space (who owns surrounding land?)
- Metro North Railroad station at Woodbury Commons.
- More consistent zoning - should be all corridor residential
- Tax incentives could be put in place for residences on Rte. 32 to keep residences looking nice
- C.R. business on Rte. 32 with entrances onto the highway-
- Safety issues (conflicts with pedestrians)
- Capacity
- Street crossings – as a pedestrian impossible.
- Warwick – pedestrian improvements a good example
- Open Space Plan as a supplement
  - Conservation
  - Landscape suffers
  - Cluster developments with open land around it that connected for public access.

***What are some potential obstacles to accomplishing this?***

- Zoning definitions need to be tightened – Bed and Breakfasts, home occupations, corridor residential zone
- Zoning should reflect what we want to occur
- Property maintenance codes – enforceable
  - Garbage should not be allowed to pile up
  - Vehicles should not be parked in yards
- 50¢ toll on Thruway may have an effect on truck traffic on Rte. 32. Tandem trailers – not all making deliveries locally.
- Money – Many people with vested interest in seeing more development (construction industry, lawyers, etc.)
- Pressure on politicians from powerful special interest group/re: zoning, etc.
- Lack of inter-municipal agreement between town villages
- Lack of community participation regarding the process
- Fear of the unknown
- Areas of town that aren't as populated are areas of concern
- Plan should encompass entire town – not excluding areas/residents.
- Woodbury doesn't have fair share of tax base (and money from Woodbury Commons) – the Town should get its fair share so it can afford expensive infrastructure improvements – storm sewer, sanitary sewer, etc.

**Group 3**

***What do you like about living/working in Woodbury?***

- Open space
- Small Town
- Low Density
- Parks/Schools
- Recreation Facilities
- People who live here
- Kept and enhanced
- Open space protection

***What problems/concerns should be addressed through the plan?***

- Quality of life issues
- Sales tax – impact on town, county plan?
- High Taxes spiral
- Water – Roadway Air Quality\*
- Water Resources and quality
- Rte. 32
- NYSDOT Impacts – Traffic lights
- Commuter Station – Traffic Issue
- Lck of enforcement – Rte 32 selective
- Specific & clear understanding-home occupation, B&B, corridor residential
- Communication between various agencies and departments
- Density & zoning issues – development standards lacking
- Border protection

***Priority Concerns***

- Quality of life – maintain and improve
- Traffic issues – control, environmental impact
- Tax issues
- Enforce master plan and future comprehensive plan
- Protecting existing border of Town and features such as recreation

***What would you like to accomplish in regard to this concern?***

- Maintain and improve quality of life
- Control traffic
- Environmental impact of traffic
- Improve tax issues

***What are some potential obstacles to accomplishing this?***

- Lack of funding and staying power
- Power to create a “Win”
- Lack of education on how to make it work and achieve success
- A feeling of being pushed around which leads to apathy
- Lack of consistent message and accurate information
- Feeling that participation does not lead to being heard

**Public Comment**

- How is committee selected? Answer: The Town Board received applications and is reviewing for potential conflicts of interest and commitment
- Good start with issues identification. However, the Board should enact building moratorium during the comprehensive plan process and zoning changes
- Should have more people involved in these meetings – need to publicize meetings more
- It is necessary to show the importance of creating a blueprint of community
- Would the moratorium be recommended by TSA? Answer: This is a tool that some communities have used while undertaking a comprehensive plan. However, this is not typically recommended and would be a decision of the Town Board to look into further, if necessary.