

FINAL DRAFT

TOWN OF WESTFORD

MASTER PLAN



Adopted: _____, 2012

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TOWN OF WESTFORD MASTER PLAN

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APPENDIX A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Community Survey (Blank)
- Survey Results
- SWOT Workshop Minutes
- Public Hearings Minutes

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Westford General Store:	Campsidechef.com
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Westville Methodist Church	Madeline Woerner

Special Thanks To:

Joann Toby for the brief history of Westford.
All Westford residents who participated in the survey, workshops, and planning meetings.

SECTION 1: PLANNING PROCESS AND VISION

1.1 Planning Process

A master plan is a written document that identifies the vision and goals of the community and growth and development strategies to make the vision reality. A master plan is not a law in itself. A master plan is a means to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of the town.

Towns are authorized adopt a master or comprehensive plan by New York State Town Law Section 272-a. New York State law requires that all local land use laws be consistent with a comprehensive plan or planning process.

A master plan becomes a valuable tool for communities. The plan guides local decision making regarding land use, including enactment of land use laws, and capital projects. All land use laws should be reviewed, and updated to be in accordance with the plan. Comprehensive plans can be an important supporting document when applying for grants.

This Master Plan attempts to answer three questions for Westford:

- 1) What are the current conditions in the Town now?
- 2) What do we want for the future of our Town?
- 3) How can we get to that future?

The Vision for Westford sets the direction the Town wishes take for the future. It was developed directly from the public input received throughout the process. The vision is a statement of what the community wishes to become.

The goals in this plan are broad statements of ideal future conditions desired by the Town. The goals are consistent with the stated vision for Westford and offer more specific direction. The actions are recommended steps that the Town can take to accomplish each goal.

The Town Board assigned the task of developing a comprehensive plan to the Town of Westford Comprehensive Plan Committee by resolution on May 6, 2011. This committee met between May 16th 2011 and May 21st 2012 and organized a planning process that included the following steps:

- A community survey
- a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) workshop
- a Visioning workshop
- bi-monthly working meetings

Specific sources of information used to prepare this plan included:

- The Otsego County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan
- The Otsego County Housing Needs and Opportunities Study

- The NYS Office of Real Property Tax Services, MUNIPRO website
- City Data www.city-data.com
- US Census Bureau www.americanfactfinder2.com
- NYS Broadband Map <http://www.nysbroadband.ny.gov/index.htm>
- NYS Archeological Sensitivity Map <http://www.oprhp.state.ny.us/nr/>
- www.wikipedia.com
- The History of Westford

Pursuant to NY Town Law 272-a, the plan should be reviewed and updated every five years. The process should include public input, reassessment of the vision and goals, a review of the progress made in implementing the plan. Revisions should be made to keep the plan relevant to conditions in Westford at the time. The process includes public hearings, county review, SEQRA review, and adoption by resolution.

1.2 Purpose / Vision Statement

We, the residents of Westford, cherish and protect our rural and natural landscape, our community character, and our high quality of life. Westford is a town of open spaces, forests, scenic views, rolling hills, active farms, historic hamlets, and low-density rural development. We have an agricultural tradition and history that we wish to honor and preserve. We value our clean air and water. Westford is a safe and peaceful place to enjoy our families, our small-town atmosphere and outdoor recreation. Westford is pleasant place for people relax, retreat, and to spend their twilight years. In Westford, housing is affordable for all ages and income levels. Our town government provides quality services to meet the needs of the community. Our local economy is based on small businesses and agriculture. Westford is a place where community members have respect and tolerance for each other and support each other.

The residents of Westford want to maintain peace and quiet and a clean environment in which to live and foster good health. We want to encourage economic development and growth while we also preserve our open spaces, agriculture and our rural community character.

In the coming years, we will protect our rural and natural landscape and conserve our natural resources so that Westford remains bucolic, healthy and secure. We will preserve the agriculture, historic buildings, and scenic vistas that contribute to our community character. We will defend property values to protect residents' investments and maintain the tax base. We will enhance small business opportunities, including improved telecommunications, so that the residents of Westford can enjoy economic prosperity. We will provide necessary quality public services and infrastructure while keeping taxes reasonable. We will encourage quality and affordable housing opportunities for a range of household incomes. We will plan for measured, well thought out and managed growth.

SECTION 2: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2.1 Community Survey

A community survey was distributed via direct mail to 597 property owners. Surveys were also available at the Town Clerk's office for other interested residents. 174 responses were received, constituting a response rate of 29%. The results of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Issues of Importance

Respondents to the survey indicated that the most common reasons for living in Westford were the general quality of life (111 responses) and small town atmosphere (95 responses). The three challenges facing Westford that received the greatest number of responses are protecting water quality and supplies (74 responses), controlling taxes (69 responses), and loss of agriculture (66 responses).

Respondents indicated that the issues of greatest importance (>80 % of respondents indicating the issue was very important or important) were water quality (81%), and environmental conservation (80%). Other issues of importance (75% through 80%) were farmland and rural preservation (79%), preserving historic sites (77%), septic and waste water (78%), roads and traffic control (78%), and control of development (75%).

Respondents indicated the greatest amount of support (>70% of respondents indicating support) for future town efforts to preserve farmland, rural character, and historic sites (83%, 79% and 72%, respectively). Respondents also indicated that the town should pursue better internet and television connections (72% and 64%, respectively). There was also support for promotion of business (67%), while at the same time there was support for allowing business development only in certain areas (59%). A majority of respondents also support road preservation local laws (63%).

Rating of Town Services

Respondents to the survey indicated the greatest amount of satisfaction (>40% indicating excellent service) from the Town Clerk (51%), the waste transfer station (48%), and the Fire Dept and EMS (48%). All other town services received responses indicating that the majority of respondents feel the services are adequate. However, for dog control, the zoning board of appeals, flood plain administrator, and land use officer, the percent of respondents that answered the question for these services is less than 50%, indicating that respondents may not be aware of the nature of services provided by these officials of the town.

Land Use Ordinance

The majority of respondents (34%) indicated that they don't know or have no opinion with regard to satisfaction regarding the current land use ordinance. 26% of

respondents are satisfied with the current regulations. There is a near even split between respondents who feel there is too much and too little regulation (15% and 16%, respectively). At the same time, 62% of respondents indicate that it is important or very important for the town to regulate land uses within districts and 68% of respondents indicate that it is important or very important to regulate development density.

Site plan review is contained within the land use ordinance. A significant majority (48%) of the respondents doesn't know or have no opinion about site plan review. This may be an indication that the land use enforcement office has not determined that any project in Westford has required a special use permit and site plan review. At the same time, the majority respondents indicate that it is important to regulate commercial property, landscaping, parking, lighting and signs (53%, 38%, 46%, and 60%, respectively).

Minimum lots size is specified within the land use ordinance and 47% of respondents have indicated satisfaction with the minimum lot size (3 acres); in addition, 64% of respondents indicated that it is important or very important for the town to regulate minimum lot size.

Subdivision Regulation

The majority of respondents (40%) indicated that they don't know or have no opinion on the land use ordinance. 29% of respondents are satisfied with the current regulations. There is a near even split between respondents who feel there is too much and too little regulation (11% and 9%, respectively).

Property Maintenance

A slight majority of respondents (35%) have don't know or have no opinion on property maintenance. 25% of respondents feel that there is not enough property maintenance regulation, while 21% of respondents are satisfied with the regulations. 9% of respondents feel there is too much regulation. Similarly, a large majority of respondents (68%) feel the town should pursue demolition of derelict structures and a majority (63%) of respondents also feel that regulation of junkyards is important or very important.

Enforcement

A slight majority of respondents (37%) have don't know or have no opinion on property maintenance. 25% of respondents feel that there is not enough property maintenance regulation, while 17% of respondents are satisfied with the regulations. 9% of respondents feel there is too much regulation.

Land Uses

The land uses with the largest margin of support (>75% of respondents supporting) were maple syrup operations (90%), organic farming (86%), agri-tourism (82%), alternative livestock (83%), veterinarian and animal businesses (79%), residential scale energy (77%), bed and breakfasts (76%) and home businesses (75%). Other land uses that received moderate margins of support (50% through 75%) were medical offices (72%), woodlot management (71%), restaurants (68%), small businesses (67%), retail shops (65%), wind energy (65%), outdoor wood boilers (60%), and light industry and cellular towers (55%).

Land uses with moderate margins of opposition (50% through 75%), included heavy industry (63%), natural gas wells (60%), pipelines and compressor stations (57%), mining (56%), and waste to energy facilities (garbage incinerators) (53%).

Agriculture and Farmland Protection

A large majority (83%) of respondents feel that the town should pursue agricultural and farmland protection. All agricultural enterprises had the support of the majority of respondents, with the exception of mega farms or concentrated animal feed operations (CAFOs, animals that are confined, a large dairy CAFO has >700 cows). 41% of respondents are opposed to mega farms. Processing facilities, such as yogurt factories or slaughterhouses, had support from a slight majority (41%) of respondents; however many respondents (10%) indicated that their support was dependent on factors such as scale and/or type.

Housing

The majority of respondents feel that housing in Westford is affordable. A large majority of respondents (70%) feel that Westford does not need or should restrict locations of mobile home parks. The majority of respondents felt that the town does not need or should restrict the location of single mobile homes and apartments (56% and 38%, respectively).

2.2 Meetings & Workshops

All regular Planning Board meetings were open to the public. The comprehensive planning meetings were held in conjunction with regular board meetings. Notices for all comprehensive planning meetings were posted in the Westford post office, the general store, town hall and solid waste transfer station. The letter that accompanied the community survey, which was sent to all town property owners, included a notification of the regular schedule of Planning Board meetings. A website was developed to keep residents and property owners up-to-date on planning activities and to post important documents. The website was www.townofwestfordplanning.webs.com.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) workshop

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) workshop was held during the regularly scheduled Planning Board Meeting on July 18th 2011. Special posters were placed at the above mentioned locations. Twenty-eight community members attended and participated in the workshop. Attendants listed and prioritized Westford's strengths (things that are good now), opportunities (things that could be good in the future), weaknesses (things that are bad now) and threats (things that could be bad in the future). Each participant had three priority stickers for each of the four categories and used them to rank the items on the list for each category. The results of the workshop can be found in Appendix A.

Participants listed the strengths of Westford, consolidated strengths that were related, and then prioritized them. Rural Character, including open space, clean air and water, was the greatest ranked strength with 23 priority one stickers and 3 priority two stickers. Farming was the second greatest ranked strength with 9 priority two stickers and 4 priority three stickers. Community and neighborliness received 1 priority one sticker and 5 priority three stickers. Access to cultural resources in Oneonta and Cooperstown received 2 priority two stickers and 5 priority three stickers.

Participants listed the weaknesses of Westford, consolidated weaknesses that were related, and then prioritized them. Outdated landuse regulations were the greatest ranked weakness with 17 priority one stickers, 4 priority two stickers and 2 priority three stickers. Enforcement of regulations was the second greatest ranked weakness with 3 priority one stickers, 15 priority two stickers and 2 priority three stickers. Lack of technology infrastructure received 1 priority one sticker, 2 priority two stickers and 11 priority three stickers. Property deterioration received 4 priority one stickers, and 5 priority two stickers. Farming economics received 4 priority one stickers, 1 priority two sticker and 1 priority three sticker.

Participants listed the opportunities for Westford, consolidated opportunities that were related, and then prioritized them. Preserving, maintaining and protecting rural residential character was the greatest ranked opportunity with 24 priority one stickers, and 1 priority two stickers. Restraint of industrialism was the second greatest ranked weakness with 1 priority one stickers, 16 priority two stickers and 2 priority three stickers. Sustainable, green economic development in the form of small business received 1 priority one sticker, 2 priority two stickers and 9 priority three stickers. Alternative farming and food production received 6 priority two stickers and 4 priority three stickers. Enforcement and responsibility received 2 priority two stickers and 6 priority three stickers.

Participants listed the threats to Westford, consolidated opportunities that were related, and then prioritized them. Natural gas drilling was the greatest ranked threat with 27 priority one stickers, and 2 priority two stickers. Pollution of natural resources was the second greatest ranked threat with 1 priority one stickers, 22 priority two stickers and 3 priority three stickers. Loss of home rule received 2 priority two stickers and 15 priority

three stickers. Devaluation of property values received 1 priority one sticker and 6 priority three stickers.

Vision Workshop

A vision workshop was held on September to develop a Vision Statement for the Town. Nine community members attended and participated in the workshop. The attendants broke into two work groups. Each group was given worksheets with a series of questions designed to get the participants thinking of what the community would like for the future. The groups then drafted short vision statements. The planning board then combined the two vision statements. The vision statements fit together nicely as three paragraphs stating "what Westford had/is now" , "what Westford wants in the future" , and "what Westford will do in the future". (see Section 1.2)

Summary of Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2011 - The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed a draft community survey. Edits to the questions were made. The Planning Board discussed a tentative schedule for workshops.

May 16, 2011 – The Planning Board and members of the public further discussed the draft community survey and strategies for distributing the surveys to the tax payers.

June 20, 2011 – The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed the tally of surveys received back from tax payers to date. Discussion included best methods for presenting qualitative and quantitative responses.

July 18, 2011 – The Planning Board and members of the public participated in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, workshop. The results are included in this plan in Appendix A.

August 18, 2011 – The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed the completed tally of surveys returned from tax payers. The results of the survey are included in Appendix A. The website www.townofwestfordplanning.webs.com was announced. Discussion included questions from the public regarding timeframe for completion of the plan, and concurrent review and amendment of the land use ordinance.

September 19, 2011 – Bryan Larabee joined the Planning Board. The Planning Board and members of the public participated in a Vision Statement workshop.

October 3, 2011 – The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed the draft vision statement resulting from the workshop. Edits were made. The resulting vision statement is found in Section 1.2 of this plan. The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed draft actions related to Goal 1 "Promote agriculture and protect farmland".

October 17, 2011 - The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed draft actions related to Goal 2 "Maintain the rural community character of the town".

November 7, 2011 - The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed draft actions related to Goal 3 "Provide high quality and efficient public services and infrastructure".

November 21, 2011 - The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed draft actions related to Goal 5 "Conserve Natural Resources and Natural Habitats".

January 2, 2012 – The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed draft actions related to Goal 6 "Promote diversified, quality, affordable housing opportunities". The board will review the draft Master Plan, including Sections 1, 2, and 3 which were distributed to members in the last week of December.

February 6, 2012 – The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed the Plan from Section 1.1 through Section 3.5.7. Joann Toby provided a brief history of Westford. Psalm Wyckoff will call Bill Gibson at the USDA Farm Service for statistics on farms. Psalm Wyckoff will work on the section on Vegetative Cover and Soils. Madeline Woerner will work on the section on Wildlife and Habitats and Visual Resources.

February 20, 2012 –The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed the Plan from Section 3.5.8 to the end, and reviewed edits resulting from the previous meeting. The Board discussed adding a section regarding energy development.

March 6, 2012 – The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed Goal 7 "Plan for and encourage responsible energy development and consumption. The Board reviewed edits resulting from the previous meeting.

March 19, 2012 – The Planning Board and member of the public reviewed edits resulting from the previous meeting. The Planning Board discussed the schedule for completion and forwarding to the Town Board. The Planning Board will fill out the SEQR Environmental Assessment Form Part I.

April 2, 2012 – The Planning Board and members of the public reviewed the status report to be sent to the Town Board. The Planning Board set the final schedule for completion of the Plan and the Public Hearing.

April 16, 2012 – The Planning Board finalized the draft for the public hearing. The roles of each member and rules of conduct for the meeting was established. Written comments accepted until May 4th.

April 30, 2012 – Public Hearing scheduled. The minutes of the public hearing are attached in Appendix A.

May 7, 2012 – The Planning Board reviewed the results of the public comment period and hearing. No public comments, from the public hearing or submitted in writing, including any objection, revision, or addition to the contents of the plan. Public concerns raised during public meeting were revisited. The full package for recommendation to the Town Board will be prepared for the May 21, 2012 meeting.

May 21, 2012 – The Planning Board recommended the final draft Town of Westford Master Plan to the Town Board via resolution. A cover letter and SEQR full environmental assessment form will accompany the plan.

SECTION 3: CURRENT SETTING – TOWN INVENTORY AND DESCRIPTION

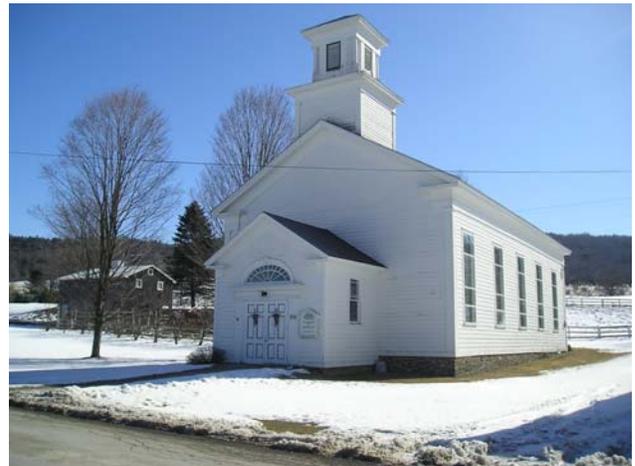
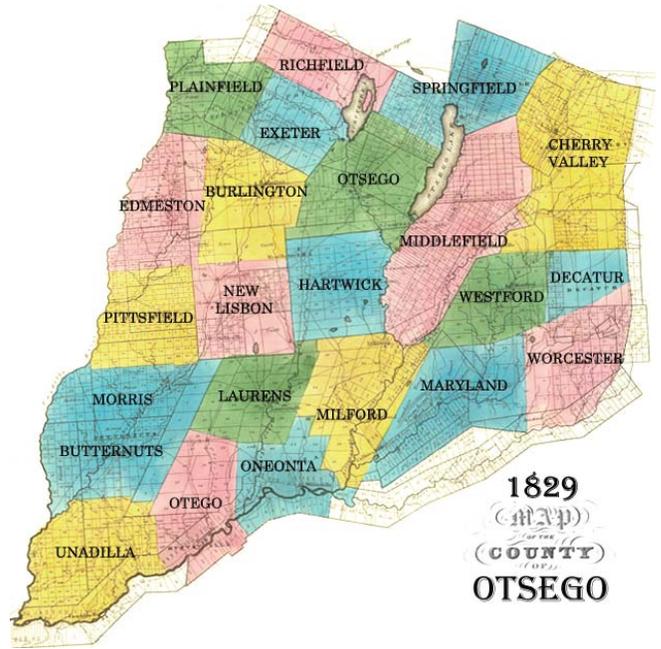
3.1 History

A Brief History of Westford

Condensed from "the blue book"—Two Centuries In Westford

Before the American Revolution, the area that is now Westford was associated with the Cherry Valley settlement and was part of the large colonial county of Albany. The British had acquired the land in 1669 by taking over the Hudson River holdings of the Dutch. In 1772, the entire colony west of Schoharie Creek was split from Albany County and named Tryon County. After the Revolution, Tryon County was renamed Montgomery County.

In 1787, Robert Roseboom arrived from New Jersey and settled on a farm in Maple Valley that still bears the Roseboom name. In 1791 Otsego County was formed from Montgomery, and six years later, in 1797, the large town of Cherry Valley was broken up, creating the additional towns of Middlefield, Springfield, and Worcester. The new town of Worcester included the Westford area. This arrangement lasted 11 years, when the 1808 Act of the New York State Legislature separated Westford, Maryland, and Decatur from the town of Worcester. The town of Westford was organized on March 7, 1809, at the house of David Smith, and Robert Roseboom became the first supervisor.



Westville Methodist Church

In 1824, there was a proposal put forth to remove Westford from Otsego County, which the townspeople successfully fought. A reporter at the time noted, "Westford's rural, almost pristine setting is what its 650 residents find most appealing. Westford's

residents—new and old—are willing to fight to preserve their community's natural beauty...."

In the half century after its first settler arrived, Westford grew rapidly. By 1830, there were 1,645 residents in the town. Twenty some years later, the railroad arrived south of Westford, and the population then began to decline steadily for 140 years, a trend that reversed in 1970 when the population again began to increase.

By 1878, Westford was described thus: "Westford is a pleasant village, located northeast of the centre of the town, on Elk Creek, and contains four churches,-- Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptists,--and the following business interests: one physician, three merchants, a carriage-shop and undertaker, a grist- and saw-mill, a flax-mill, an insurance agent, three blacksmiths, and two shoe-shops." (Otsego History, p. 354.)

Agriculture and related industries were the main occupations in the town. Statistics for 1875 show that hay, wheat, oats, and other grains, corn, potatoes, and maple syrup were the leading products of that time. Ten years earlier, the worlds' best hops were grown in Westford and won for Thomas Kinch a first prize at the 1865 convention of the International Hop Growers Association.

The years immediately before and after World War I saw significant changes in Westford. In 1912, long-time resident physician George Sloan retired, and Westford residents had to depend on outside doctors. The last cheese factory closed in 1920, as farmers began sending their milk to new creameries in Schenevus and Worcester.



Moving Dr Jackson's office to the Farmer's Museum.

The Baptist Church disbanded in 1933, the Methodist Protestant Church in Maple Valley closed its doors in 1929, and by 1927 the Presbyterian Church had been turned into the Community Hall, under the auspices of the newly formed Westford Community Association.

In the years after the turn of the century, Westford had hand-crank phones and 32-volt Delco, but through the 1920s and 1930s, 110-volt electric power lines gradually

replaced the old battery-powered units, aided by the passage in 1936 of the Rural Electrification Act. At about this time, Grant Tyler was the driving force behind the effort to get streetlights in the hamlet, in spite of some vocal opposition. And, by the mid-1930's, Westford had dial telephones.

After the 1940s, the number of working farms began to decrease and businesses like Huntington-Westford trucking and Harold Tyler's Maple Farm sprang up. New homes also began to be built, including Cooper Hills Estates in 1986, built on land that was formerly part of the Herbert Peeters farm. The Westford post office was erected in 1986.

In 1987, Westford made the front page of the Albany Times-Union newspaper when its residents successfully banded together to keep an incinerator out of the town. The battle was the impetus for the creation of a planning board and the development of land-use regulations for the town.

Since its bicentennial in 1987, Westford has continued to be a largely rural and residential town. The hamlet is little changed since the photograph taken of it in the 1860s that is in the collection at the New York State Historical Association's library. The general store is still in operation after more than 150 years. Westford has two churches, Methodist and Episcopalian. The original Methodist church in Westford, built in the 1820s, moved down the road 35 years later to become the Westford Literary Institute, a private secondary school where Andrew S. Draper (New York State's first secretary of education) once taught, is now a private residence. Breezie Maples farm is now the major maple-syrup producer, and Huntington trucking is still in operation, although the days of the grist mills, sawmills, and cheese factories are long gone.

3.2 Demographics

3.2.1 Population

As of the census of 2010, there were 868 people, which represents a 10.7% increase from the population in 2000, making Westford one of the fastest growing towns in Otsego County in the past ten years. This is a continuation of a trend of increasing population since 1970. The town population has increased 99.54% in that time, while the Otsego County grew only 10.8%. Westford was the second fastest growing town in the county during that time period.

**TABLE 3-1
POPULATION TRENDS**

	Reported Population								Population Change 1970 to 2010	
	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	#	%
Westford	685	602	526	435	652	634	784	868	+433	49.6%
Otsego County	46,082	50,763	51,942	56,181	59,075	60,517	61,676	62,259	+583	0.9%

Source: So Tier East Regional Planning and Development Board

665 of the residents of the town were of voting age. The population density was 25.7 people per square mile. Westford is a relatively homogenous community with respect to race and origin. The racial makeup of the town was 96.4 % White, 0.3 % African American, 0.8 % Asian, 0.2 % from other races, and 2.2 % from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 2.4 % of the population.

In the age groups 25 to 65 years and over 65 years of age, Westford is comperable in population distribution to Otsego County. However, Westford has a significantly smaller population of 15 to 25 year olds and at the same time has a significantly higher population of children less than 15 years of age. This likely is a reflection of the "brain drain" as young people leave Westford after college for regions with greater job and earning prospects. Often those young people return to Westford in their late twenties and thirties to raise a family. As population of Westford ages, the need for services to serve the Town's senior population will grow such as in the area of public transportation.

**TABLE 3-2
AGE DISTRIBUTION**

	2010 Age Distribution				Median Age
	<15 yrs old	15-24 yrs old	25-65 yrs old	>65 yrs old	
Westford Town	170 (19.6%)	80 (9.2%)	483 (55.6%)	135 (15.5%)	43.7
Otsego County	9,145 (14.7%)	12,567 (20.2%)	30,266 (48.6%)	10,287 (16.5%)	40.1

Source: 2010 US Census

3.2.2 Income

In 2010, the median household income in Westford was \$46,250, which is a 35% increase over 2000. In 2000 and 2010, Westford households had a higher median income than households in Otsego County.

From 2000 to 2010, the percent of families below the poverty level rose from 6.8% to 8.4%, likely reflecting economic conditions. However, the poverty rate in Westford remains lower than Otsego County as a whole.

**TABLE 3-3
INCOME AND POVERTY**

	Median Household Income 2000	Median Household Income 2010	Percent of Families below the Poverty Level in 2000	Percent of Families below the Poverty Level in 2010
Westford Town	\$34,318	\$46,250	6.8%	8.4%
Otsego County	\$33,444	\$43,091	8.8%	9.6%

Source: 2010 US Census

**TABLE 3-4
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN 2010**

	Population over 25 yrs	0-12 yrs of School	High School Diploma	Some College or Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree or higher
Westford Town	632	12.1%	40.2%	26.3%	21.4%
Otsego County	39,938	11.8%	35.6%	27.1%	25.5%

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-yr estimates

The Town of Westford has a higher rate of residents obtaining their high school diploma than the rest of the county. Westford has a lower rate of residents attaining a bachelor's degree. Educational attainment is linked to poverty as generally, higher levels of education typically correspond to higher earnings and lower poverty rates. In Westford, the poverty rate for individuals with less than a high school diploma is approximately 40%, while the poverty rate for individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher is 9% (2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-yr estimates).

3.2.3 Housing

In 2010, there were 514 housing units at an average density of 15.2/sq mi. Of those housing units, 349 were occupied, 67.9%, and 165 were vacant, 32.1%. Of the

occupied units, approximately 90.3% were occupied by the owner, while 9.7%, or 34 units were occupied by renters.

The common categories of residences in the town are single family residences and mobile homes. There are no developments, or subsidized housing in Westford. Mobile homes, where they occur, are situated on individual parcels or are clustered on lots (four mobile homes or less). The estimated median house value from the Census' 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5 year estimate was \$115,900¹, as compared to \$64,500 in 2000, an increase of nearly 80% in ten years. In 2000, the median year homes were built was 1966.

Otsego County conducted a housing needs and opportunities study in 2009. Westford was included in the study in the Route 7/Interstate 88 corridor communities. According to that study approximately 35% of renter households and 20% of owner households in this corridor were "cost burdened", that is the rents exceeded 30% of their income. The median household income in 2010 in Westford was \$46,250; therefore, an affordable rent or mortgage would be \$1156 (30% of the monthly income).

In order to determine the affordability of homeowner units, a comparison can be made between the median value of homeowner units and median household income. Nationally, a ratio of 2.0 or less is considered "affordable" as the generally accepted standard. In 2010, the ratio in Westford was **2.5** (\$115,900/\$46,250), compared to **1.9** in 2000 (\$64,500/\$34,318), indicating that the homes in Westford are somewhat less affordable than they were ten years ago.

There is one senior housing facility in Westford. The Tender Care living facility is located on Greenbush Rd. Senior citizens living in Westford either live alone, live with family, or must move to other communities to find assisted living.



Farmhouse on Co Rt 34 (Elk Creek Rd)

3.3 Existing Land Use Patterns

The Town of Westford is located in the eastern portion of Otsego County. Westford is bordered by the Towns of Maryland and Worcester on the south, the Town of Decatur to the east, the Town of Roseboom to the north and the Towns of Middlefield and Milford on the west.

¹ At the time of this plan, the US Census had released only basic population and housing information. All other estimates are from Census American Community Survey 5 yr estimates from 2006-2010. Some estimates are adjusted for inflation.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 33.8 square miles. The Town consists of approximately 900 parcels. The hamlets of Westford and Westville are historic population centers. The hamlet of Westford is located in the central portion of the town at the intersection of County Routes 34 and 36. The hamlet of Westville is located in the southwest portion of the town on the town line and along County Route 35.

Predominate land uses in the town are residential, agricultural, vacant and forest lands. Small commercial businesses and home occupations are located throughout the town, including but not limited to, home day cares, wood working shops and construction companies, auto body and repair garages, saw mills, maple sugar producers, and trucking companies.

**TABLE 3-5
PROPERTY USES**

PROPERTY USE	2001 ²		2011 ²	
	ACRES	%	ACRES	%
Agriculture	4006	18.7%	3925	17.9%
Residential	10680	49.9%	11235	51.3%
General	57	0.3%	57	0.3%
Single Family	2727	12.7%	3423	15.6%
Multi Family	10	0.0%	10	0.0%
Rural (>10 acres)	4875	22.8%	5232	23.9%
Seasonal	1535	7.2%	1350	6.2%
Mobile	710	3.3%	558	2.5%
Multipurpose	766	3.6%	605	2.8%
Vacant	4209	19.7%	4230	19.3%
Commercial	9	0.0%	9	0.0%
Recreation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Community Service	14	0.1%	14	0.1%
Industrial	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Public Services	19	0.1%	19	0.1%
Forest	2365	11.1%	2464	11.3%
Other	87	0.4%	0	0.0%

While the acreage in agricultural use appears to have decreased by a small percentage, according to Bill Gibson at the USDA Farm Service, the number of active dairy farms in Westford has declined from approximately 10 in 1990 to three active farms today. Small niche farms, such as Christmas trees, vegetables, and small beef cow operations have filled some of the gap left by the loss of dairy farming.

² Acreages as recorded with the Otsego County Real Property Tax Department on surveys and deeds. Newer surveys may include acreage corrections between years of record. Property use as determined by the town assessor for assessment purposes.

3.4 Cultural, Recreational and Historic Resources

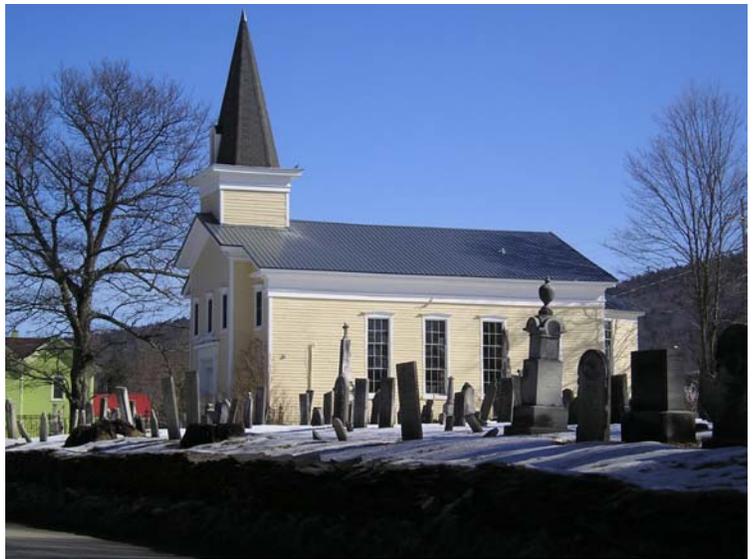
3.4.1 Cultural Resources

The Town has three churches, the Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church located in the hamlet of Westford and the Methodist Church located in the hamlet of Westville. The Town Hall and the Westford Methodist Church serve as community centers for various activities.

3.4.2 Historic Resources

There are no buildings listed on the National or State Registers of Historic Places. The Town Hall was built in 1915; therefore, it is eligible for the Registers. Several of the town's church structures and the hamlets of Westford and Westville may be eligible for the Registers, as they have largely remained unchanged since the late 1800s. According to the NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation online mapper, there are a few isolated areas of archeological sensitivity in the town, primarily located along the Cherry Valley Creek.

Cemeteries in the Town of Westford include the following: the Westville Baptist Churchyard Cemetery (Co Rt 35), the Badeau Cemetery (Co Rt 34), Westford Village Cemetery (Co Rt 34), the Presbyterian Church Cemetery (Co Rt 34), Draper Hill Cemetery (Skellie Rd and Draper Rd), Roseboom Hill Cemetery (Co Rt 34 and Steve Braun Rd), and an unnamed cemetery on Roseboom Road (located at the town line).



Former Westville Baptist Church and Cemetery

3.4.3 Recreational Resources

Recreational facilities in the town include:

- Betty and Wilbur Davis State Park
 - Includes fishing access, hiking and walking trails, playground and pavilions
- Gopher Field
 - Includes little league ball field, swings, a tennis court, and soccer goals
- Busacker Park located at the Town Hall
 - Includes a pavilion picnic area



Betty and Wilbur Davis State Park

State recreational properties in the Town include Hooker Mountain State Forest (Hooker Mt Rd), Hooker Mountain State Wildlife Management Area (Stanley Roseboom Rd), and Maple Valley State Forest (Draper Hill Rd). Otsego County owns the Five Points County Forest located on Van Cleef Rd.

Several community events are held in the Town including the Easter Egg Hunt at the Town Hall, the Halloween Party at the Town Hall, and the Christmas Pageant held at the Westford Methodist Church sponsored by the Westford Community Association. The Westford Fire Department holds several dinners fundraising dinners at the Fire Department or at the Westford Methodist Church.

3.5 Environmental & Natural Resources

3.5.1 Water Resources

Prominent surface water bodies are the Elk Creek and little Elk Creek, which drain the majority of the town, flowing southward and the Cherry Valley Creek, which is located just west of the western most boundary of the town. The Elk Creek and Little Elk Creek, and all tributaries to them and the Cherry Valley Creek are classified by NYS DEC as Class C streams, and is therefore protected. Nearly all the streams in the town also support trout spawning.

NYS Class II regulated freshwater wetlands (> 12.4 acres) are present along the Elk Creek (near the intersections of Cronin Rd and Co Rt 34 and Charlie Burton Rd and County Rt 34) and along the Cherry Valley Creek at the southwest most limit of the

town. A NYS Class I regulated freshwater wetland is located along County Rt 36 south of the intersection with All Rd. Federally regulated wetlands (> 1/10 of an acre) are present throughout the town.

Groundwater is the source of drinking water for nearly all residents of the town. Wells in the valleys will commonly be in the unconsolidated glacial sediments. Wells on the hills are commonly in the bedrock. A principal aquifer is located in the southwest portion of the town associated with the Cherry Valley Creek. Portions of this aquifer can produce greater than 100 gallons per minute.

FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps indicate the 100 year flood zones are present along the Elk Creek and Little Elk Creek, most of its tributaries, and tributaries to the Cherry Valley Creek. The most wide spread portion of the 100 year flood zone is the reach of the Elk Creek where it flows south out of the town.

3.5.2 Terrain & Slopes

The Town of Westford consists of rolling hills and valleys. Topography covers a range of slopes from almost 0% to greater than 30%. The highest elevation is 2,320 feet above sea level at its highest point, located within Hooker Mt. State Forest on the southern boundary of the Town.

The topography is dominated by the Elk Creek Valley, and the Cherry Valley Creek. Tributaries of these two creeks cut into the surrounding hillsides. The majority of slopes in the town range from 5% to 15%, with some exceeding 15%. Slopes associated with tributaries of the Elk Creek and Cherry Valley Creek occasionally exceed 30%.

3.5.3 Vegetative Cover

The predominate vegetative cover types are agricultural, northern hardwood forest, and evergreen forest. Agriculture is prominent in the valleys where gentle slopes and quality soils are located. Planting of food crops and vegetables is most common on the valley floor where gentle slopes and higher quality soils are located. Livestock is often grazed on the shoulders of the valley where the floor transitions to moderate slopes. These areas are less suited for planting and harvesting crops, but are ideal for forage. Some agriculture areas are located on the hill tops where soils have a higher proportion of clay. Many of these areas are reverting to natural cover types as farming is less active in the Town.

The northern hardwood forests in the region are sometimes referred to as Maple-Beech-Birch forests. The predominate tree types provide many social and economic benefits including timber products, maple syrup production, and hunting. Forests promote high water quality because runoff rates are low, causing precipitation to soak into the ground limiting erosion and water contamination.

3.5.4 Wildlife and Habitats

According to the NYS DEC Natural Resources on line mapper, there are no reports of rare plants and animals and no significant natural communities in the Town of Westford. However, Westford woodlands are home and haven to numerous native plant species included on New York's lists of protected, rare, threatened, and/or exploitably vulnerable plants, including Bloodroot, Trillium, Dutchman's Breeches, Pinkster Flowers (azalea nudiflora linnaeus) and Lady Slippers to name a few. These native plants should be considered for preservation.

According to NYS DEC's American Ginseng website: Ginseng is an important forest crop. It grows on well drained, rich soils under northern hardwoods. Most of New York State has the potential for growing ginseng (including Westford). It also has the potential to provide more of an economic return than any other forest crop. Ginseng is an important source of income for many Westford residents and could become a source of income for many others. The cultivation of ginseng is a rapidly expanding business in the state with an unlimited potential.

New York State maintains the Hooker Mt State Wildlife Management Area in the southern portion of the town.

3.5.5 Wind Resources

According to the NYS NYSEERDA Small Wind Explorer website, some hill top ridges in the town have average wind speeds in excess of 13 mph at approximately 120 ft above grade, including the vicinity of Rabbit Run Rd and the northern portion of Smokey Hollow Rd.

3.5.6 Soils

Soil types vary greatly in characteristics of texture, moisture, and temperature. Silt loams comprise the predominant on hilltops and slopes and formed in glacial till. Till is typically poorly sorted resulting in heavy silt and clay soils that are moderately well drained. There slope allows, these soils are commonly used for pasture and forestland. Some areas are suitable for growing hay or corn.

On the valley floor, gravelly loams are predominant. These soils formed in glacial outwash, kames, eskers, and moraines, where the melting glacial waters sorted the soils before depositing them. These soils are typically well drained and moderately coarse in texture, which makes them ideal for farming and planting crops.

Prime farm soils are found most commonly in the valleys with some isolated areas on the hills sides. Soils of statewide significance are found throughout the town.

3.5.7 Visual Resources

Well known scenic vistas in the town are the down the Elk Creek Valley, including a view of the familiar landform known as Camel Hill, the view of the Cherry Valley from Betty and Wilbur Davis State Park and views from the crest of Peeters Road.

3.5.8 Geology

Devonian aged siltstones and shales of the Hamilton Group (Panther Mountain and Moscow Formations) and the Genesee Group (Unadilla Formation) are present at the surface in the town. Natural Gas is present in some formations at depth beneath the town, including, but not limited to, the Marcellus and Utica Shales and the Oneida Sandstone.

The bedrock is overlain by surficial unconsolidated material that was deposited by glaciers in the last ice advance. The majority of the town is covered by till. Till is directly deposited by a glacier, as a result the particles have not been sorted by meltwater. Till is characterized by heavy soils with a high clay content and lots of cobbles. Kame deposits are present in the Elk Creek and Cherry Valleys. Kames are round hills of sand and gravel formed by glacial meltwater in contact with the ice. The hamlet of Westford is built on a kame. Two other kames are present near the intersection of Elk Creek Rd and Greenbush Rd and on the eastern end of Serafin Rd. A large kame is located in the town south of the Hamlet of Westville. Westville itself is built on glacial outwash, where meltwater flowing away from the ice deposited well sorted sands and gravels.

3.6 Agriculture

The Town of Westford has approximately 85 parcels (3925 acres) that have been assigned an agricultural property use code by the assessor in 2011. Agricultural activities do occur on properties that have other use codes, such a large residential parcels. The dominate farm enterprises include dairy and livestock farms. Other enterprises present in the town include organic vegetable farms and an elk farm. Approximately 420 parcels (13,021 acres) are enrolled in Agricultural District No 2.

Although acres of land codes by the assessor as primarily agricultural in use has remained relatively steady in Westford, during the eight year review of Agricultural District No. 2, the County Planning Department documented that the number of active dairy farms and the acres of land actively farmed in this portion of the county are on the decline.

According to Bill Gibson, of the Farm Service there were over ten active dairy farms in Westford in the 1980s and 1990s. Today, there are three active dairy farms. The steady number of acres in agricultural use may be attributed to livestock farming and cropping for hay and corn production that may be replacing the lost dairy farms.

In 1999 the County Planning Board of Representatives adopted the County's first Agricultural Protection Plan. The plan looked at what programs and activities need to be undertaken in the County in order to keep farming viable. Over one hundred goals and objectives were identified in the plan, and various agencies in the County have worked to implement these goals and objectives. The County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board has begun the process to update the county's plan. The update of the plan will look at agriculture as economic development on the premise that a profitable farm is farm that does not need assistance in preservation but is sustainable.

3.7 Community Facilities, Services And Infrastructure

3.7.1 Community Facilities & Services

The Town Hall and Westford Volunteer Fire Department and Emergency Services Squad is located at 1812 County Highway 34 in the former Westford School (circa 1915).

The Fire Department provides services to Town of Westford and has mutual aid with all neighboring fire departments. The Fire Department is funded through taxes applied to the fire department district property owners. Fund raising, donations and grants are additional sources of revenue. The 2012 budget was approximately \$38,000. The Fire Department has 20 active volunteer fire fighters and 7 additional in-active members. The Emergency Service Squad consists of 5 EMTs and 1 First Aid Provider. The emergency service squad is augmented by approximately 6 firefighters trained in CPR/AED .

The highway garage and solid waste transfer station are located at 115 Strong Hill Road. Highway equipment and materials are stored at this location. The 2012 highway budget is approximately \$385,000. The highway department has **four** full-time employees.

As a service, the Town maintains a garbage truck, collects garbage and transports it to the MOSA station in Oneonta free of charge to town residents. One part-time employee manages the solid waster convenience station at 115 Strong Hill Rd. Otsego County provides recycling services at the same location. The 2012 town budget includes approximately \$50,000 for solid waste services.

3.7.2 Transportation

The Westford Highway department maintains the network of roads that are used by the residents. There are no state highways in Westford. The town roads function as collector roads that provide access to the county highways within the town, and thereby to state highways outside the town boundary.



Badeau Hill Rd

**Table 3-5
Westford Roads**

Road Owner	Road Type	No. of Roads	Miles
County	Paved Highway	4	17.9
Town	Paved	18	24.3
Town	Gravel or Dirt	23	19.6
Town	Seasonal	4	2.9

3.8 Economic Development

Businesses in the Town of Westford are located throughout the town and are primarily small, low impact businesses such as carpenter and contractor workshops, auto repair shops, a gun and ammunition shop, the general store, and various home businesses. The majority of the employed residents commute to work outside of the Town, including employers in Schenevus, Cooperstown, Oneonta, Cobleskill, and Albany.



Westford General Store

Information on “industry” relates to the kind of business conducted by a person's employing organization. According to the 2000³ Census, the numbers of residents employed in construction or manufacturing remained steady, with the exception that a higher percentage of people are employed in construction. The percentages of persons working in wholesale or retail trade and finance, real estate, insurance, professional, scientific or management industries has remained stable. The number of residents in the education field also remained stable from 1990 to 2000.

Fewer people worked in agriculture, forestry, fishing, or hunting in 2000 than in 1990. The percentage of residents working in transportation, warehousing, and utilities also dropped between 1990 and 2000.

The number of people employed in health and social service industries went up significantly from 1990 to 2000. In 1990, there were no residents recorded working in the arts, recreation and entertainment industries, however, approximately 6% of residents were employed in this field, reflecting the growing tourism industry in the neighboring Cooperstown area.

**TABLE 3-6
OCCUPATIONS FOR THE EMPLOYED CIVILIAN POPULATION
(16 YRS AND OVER)**

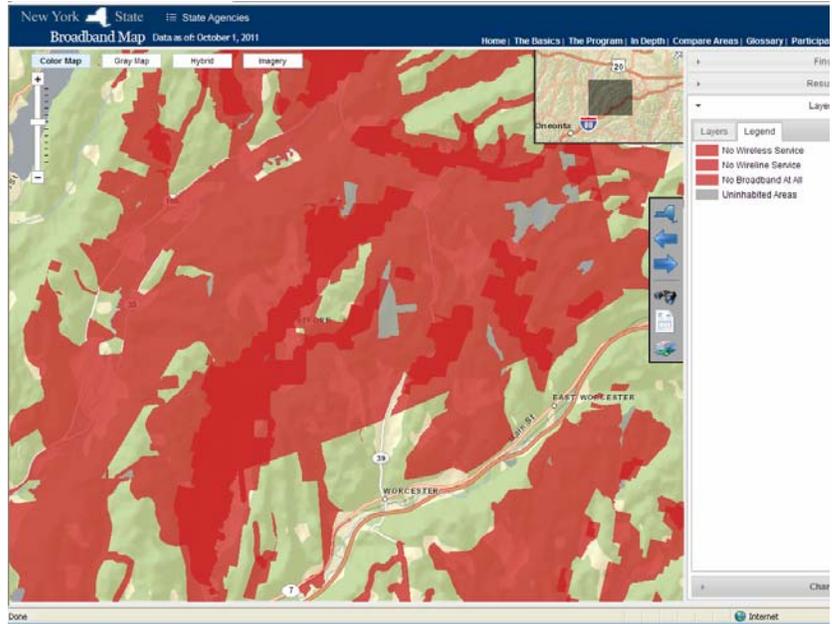
	OCCUPATION in 2000		OCCUPATION in 1990	
Total employed civilian population over 16 yrs old	347		269	
Management, professional, and related occupations	94	27%	51	19%
Service occupations	54	16%	44	16%
Sales and office occupations	82	24%	71	26%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	13	4%	34	13%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	36	10%	-	-
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	68	20%	59	22%

³ At the time this plan was drafted, the 2010 Census data on employment had not been released.

**TABLE 3-7
INDUSTRIES FOR THE EMPLOYED CIVILIAN POPULATION
(16 YRS AND OVER)**

	INDUSTRY in 2000		INDUSTRY in 1990	
Total employed civilian population > 16 yrs old	347		269	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining (did not include mining in 1990)	23	7%	31	12%
Construction	38	11%	21	8%
Manufacturing	35	10%	34	13%
Wholesale trade	8	2%	3	1%
Retail trade	41	12%	37	14%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	31	9%	42	16%
Transportation and warehousing	29	8%	37	14%
Utilities	2	1%	5	2%
Information (not included in 1990)	2	1%		
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	10	3%	9	3%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (Business, repair and personal services in 1990)	10	3%	12	4%
Professional, scientific, and technical services (business and repair services in 1990)	5	1%	6	2%
Administrative and support and waste management services (personal services in 1990)	5	1%	6	2%
Educational, health, and social services	110	32%	62	23%
Educational services	30	9%	26	10%
Health care and social assistance (did not include social assistance in 1990)	80	23%	36	13%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (Entertainment and recreational services in 1990)	21	6%	0	0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	7	2%		
Accommodation and food services	14	4%		
Other services (except public administration)	11	3%	11	4%
Public administration	7	2%	7	3%

Through the community survey, 72% residents of Westford have indicated that they feel that the town should pursue increasing broadband internet access. According to NY's broadband website, "broadband, sometimes referred to as high-speed Internet, is a critical engine for communities to enhance social and economic well-being and a vital resource to educate our youth, create jobs, promote public safety, and deliver essential services such as healthcare." Broadband internet access is widely viewed as critical to economic development, allowing for cottage industry and home businesses to thrive in rural areas like Westford. The New York State Broadband maps shows that nearly the entire town of Westford has no broadband coverage, either wireless or wireline.



3.9 Local Government

The legislative body in Westford is the five-member elected Town Board and one elected Town Clerk. The town employs 5 people, including the Highway Superintendent and highway crew, and the part-time solid waste attendant. The Town contracts for legal and assessing services. Other local officials include the five-member planning board and the five-member zoning board of appeals, the members of which are volunteers and appointed by the Town Board.

Regulations in the town include the land use regulation (including special use permits and site plan review), subdivision regulation, and cell tower regulations.

Below is a summary of the information available on Westford from the NYS Office of Real Property Tax Services:

County of Otsego Town of Westford	
Appointed Assessor:	Mr. Douglas J. Gohde
Residential Assessment Ratios (RAR) Information:	
There is no RAR Information	
2011 Fiscal Dates:	
Fiscal Year Begins:	01/01/2012
Valuation Date:	07/01/2010
Taxable Status:	03/01/2011
Tentative Roll:	05/01/2011
Grievance Day:	05/24/2011
Final Roll:	07/01/2011
2010 Assessment Equity Statistics	
Coefficient of Dispersion:	
All Property:	23.56
Residential:	22.87
Price Related Differential:	
All Property:	1.13
Residential:	1.08
2010 Levy Year Tax Rate and Levy Information from the State Comptroller's Office (OSC):	
Municipal Tax Levy =	312,055
Assessed Value(AV) Tax Rate =	9.34
Assessed Value (AV) Tax Rate for Towns Inside Village Area =	0.00
School Tax Rate Per \$1000.00 of Assessed Value:	
362401-Cherry Valley-Springfield	20.26
364001-Milford	29.19
363601-Schenevus	30.11
366606-Worcester	26.85
2010 Assessment Roll Total Parcel Count: 936	
2010 Assessment Roll Exemptions Information:	
Number of Parcels with Exemptions for City/Town Purposes:	154
Equalized Value(\$000) of Exempt Parcels:	3,822
Percent of Municipal Equalized Value:	5.80

SECTION 4: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: Promote agricultural business and protect farmland

The residents of Westford, through public participation in meetings and workshops, have indicated a strong support for fostering and encouraging agriculture. Agriculture is a cornerstone of the rural economy and contributes to Westford's community character. The community would like to protect, promote and encourage farming in Westford and ensure that development in all forms is complementary to agricultural development.

Objective 1.1 – Support existing farm operations.

Action: Review and amend existing land use laws to ensure they are farm-friendly. Land use regulations include standards on lot dimensions, limitations on principal structures, and specify the uses that allowed as-of-right and uses that require special permits and site plan review. The rapidly changing nature of the agricultural industry often outpaces the process for review and amendment of land use regulations. The current land use ordinance in Westford should be reviewed to ensure it is not unreasonably restrictive with regard to farming operations.

Action: Enact a local Right to Farm Law. A Right to Farm law protects farmers from nuisance lawsuits filed by individuals who move into a rural area where normal farming operations exist, and who later use nuisance actions to attempt to stop those ongoing operations.

Action: Pursue a town ag and farmland protection plan through a NYS Ag and Markets grant. This grant provides funds to local governments to develop farmland protection plans that would further the agricultural protection goals contained in this master plan.

Action: Encourage eligible property owners to apply for agricultural tax benefits. Landowners who earn \$10,000 in gross income from a farm on more than 7 acres of land or those that earn \$50,000 or more of gross farm income on less than 7 acres are eligible under state law.

Action: Encourage land owners and farms to become members of CADE (Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship). CADE works to build a vibrant local food system, in which locally owned agricultural businesses thrive and consumers are nourished by healthy sustainably produced food. With a knowledgeable staff supplemented by consultants experienced in production, business development, marketing and distribution, CADE is a catalyst for strengthening multiple sectors of regional food systems.

Action: Promote the New York Farm Link program to keep existing farms in business after the transfer of ownership. NY FarmLink provides educational resources, consulting, and opportunities that enable more

farms to be transferred and joint ventures to be developed for the economic enhancement of New York State agriculture.

Action: Promote the Graze NY program through the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). Graze NY help farms families with the adoption of prescribed grazing management systems that contribute to the financial, environmental and social well-being of local watersheds. The program provides assistance to dairy farms and all other livestock operations.

Action: Appoint a farmer to the Planning Board. New York State town Law (Section 271.11) authorizes a town to appoint one or more agricultural members to the Planning Board.

Action: Support Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs. In a PDR program, compensates a farmer for the Fair Market Value of a conservation easement on the farm property that limits the future right to develop the property for non-agricultural uses. In this way, farmers can access the equity while ensuring that the property is preserved for future farming. The Town could support future applications to NY Ag & Markets FPIG program.

Objective 1.2 – Encourage agricultural activities that provide supplemental income or add value to existing agricultural operations and products

Action: Review and amend existing land use laws to allow supplemental farming activities as-of-right without requiring site plan development review.

Action: Encourage direct market operations such as community supported agriculture (CSA). Direct marketing brings farm-grown produce directly to consumers at farm stands, farmers markets, and consumer-supported agriculture, and agritourism venues (example: the Susquehanna Valley garlic festival).

Action: Encourage livestock farming such as beef, sheep, goats and nontraditional livestock such as llama, alpaca and elk. Several area farms have successfully converted from dairy farming to alternative livestock as a viable agricultural business.

Action: Encourage agro-tourism and other alternative agricultural operations (organic, sugar bush, u-pick, animal preserves). Agri-tourism is rising in popularity as people seek to reconnect with the land and better understand and control their food supply. Agri-tourism operations can bring additional income for traditional farmers and land owners.

Action: Encourage Otsego County to update the county's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan to include strategies to encourage ag-economic development opportunities.

Objective 1.3 – Preserve Prime Farm Soils

- Action: Review and amend existing land use laws with respect to soil preservation.** Land uses permitted in the town and other aspects of the land use ordinance should be reviewed for compatibility and/or impact to prime farm soils and soils of statewide significance.
- Action: Consider performance based land use regulations.** Performance zoning has a primary objective of protecting natural resources and a secondary objective of providing flexibility in the design of residential developments. The protection of natural resource features is accomplished by limiting the extent of development intrusion into each resource. Permitted uses could be based on soils engineering data (available from the soil survey). For example, development on soils that would perform poorly for septic systems could be limited for residential development. Performance based zoning should be carefully considered so that the goal of protecting farmland is balanced with the farmer's rights to utilize their properties.
- Action: Ensure the Planning Board considers impacts to Agricultural District 2 when reviewing applications** by requiring agricultural data statements in applications, where applicable (pursuant to NYS Agriculture and Markets law (Article 25-AA and 283-A)). This requirement ensures projects are compatible with farm operations within agricultural districts.
- Action: Encourage cluster or conservation subdivisions in areas of prime farm soils and soils of statewide significance.** Cluster subdivision allows for lots that are smaller than normally allowed by dedicating or reserving land to be saved for open space. Cluster subdivision does not need to be allowed in all land use districts, but could be applied to areas with prime soils and soils of statewide significance or where other circumstances or natural features make it appropriate.

Objective 1.4 – Encourage property owners to put abandoned agriculture into productive use

- Action: Encourage property owners of fallow agricultural land contact CADE to find farmers interested in leasing property.** CADE actively assists farmers and land owners interested in leasing property find each other. Fallow properties with existing fencing and water sources are particularly attractive to beef cattle farming operations.

Objective 1.5 - Encourage Environmental Stewardship In Farming

- Action: Encourage farmers to work with the SWCD and NRCS on Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) and non-point Source Abatement and Control Grants.** AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farmers make common-sense, cost-effective and science-based decisions to help meet business objectives while protecting and

conserving the State's natural resources. Farmers work with local AEM resource professionals to develop comprehensive farm plans

Action: Encourage farmers to develop comprehensive nutrient management plans. CNMP are conservation plans for animal feeding operations that are designed to evaluate all aspects of farm production and outline conservation practices that help achieve production and natural resource conservation goals.

GOAL 2: Maintain the rural community character of the town

Westford is proud of its small town, rural character. The community is characterized by traditional agricultural development where small hamlets are surrounded by agriculture and green space. This historic development pattern is complemented by the historic and cultural structures common throughout the town. The community would like to encourage development that is compatible with this rural community character by enhancing and revitalizing the hamlets while conserving the open spaces in the surrounding area.

Objective 2.1 – Enhance and revitalize the hamlets while conserving open spaces in the countryside

Action: Review and amend existing the land use ordinance with community character in mind. The hamlet district should have lots and permitted uses consistent with traditional development patterns (i.e. small lots and setbacks) that also allow for conformance with NYS building and health codes. Hamlets traditionally have mixed uses which contribute to a vital community. The residential-agricultural district should have a mix of residences, farming and farm supportive businesses, as well as home-based and commercial businesses that are consistent with the rural character of the town and the environment. Minimum lot sizes and road frontages alone are often not sufficient to preserve rural character.

Action: Amend the site plan requirements within the land use ordinance to include enhanced review and specific development standards for features that impact character including lighting, signs, landscaping, parking lots, non-residential building design, etc. Provide development standards that will ensure that new building is consistent with rural character. Amendments may include:

- Building dimension, layout and materials requirements to ensure new commercial structures are consistent with rural character. Features that deserve consideration include roof pitch and style, windowless walls, large wall expanses, sidewalks, etc.
- Review of long-term community impacts and cumulative impacts of other proposals.

- Require parking lots of new commercial buildings to be located to the side or rear of the structure. Parking lot standards should include green spaces. Parking lots not associated with buildings should have visual screening from the road.
- Use deeper front setbacks and more screening as needed to protect both rural and scenic character. The placement and selection of planted vegetative screening should consider road safety issues as well as the screening function.
- Projects that propose to change the character of a road by removing road-side trees should be discouraged unless safety is an issue.
- Ensure that adequate buffers are provided between residential and other types of development

Action: Consider amending the subdivision regulations to establish procedures for clustering and conservation subdivisions. Clustering of parcels can be reminiscent of historic rural development patterns and conservation subdivision preserve large continuous blocks of properties that can preserve open space while allowing for conservation of natural resources.

Objective 2.2 – Maintain the high quality of the bucolic rural landscape

Action: When reviewing projects under the site plan review currently within the land use ordinance, require a traffic impact study for projects that will increase traffic on the roads by greater than 100 vehicle trips per day. A traffic study should include overall traffic patterns, volumes, flows, trip generation, design hour volume data, trip distribution, intersection level of service, and existing and projected traffic in order to assess impacts to road service and safety.

Action: Inventory visual resources. Locations of visual significance to the community should be inventoried. Proposed projects can then be assessed for visual impacts and techniques identified to mitigate negative impacts.

Action: The Town Highway Department should develop a policy to preserve roadside features on local roads wherever safety allows. Features to preserve include such things as stonewalls and large trees and hedgerows. Communicate the town policy to the County Highway Department.

Action: Consider lighting standards within the site plan review section of the land use law. Downward-directed lighting, lower pole heights, and limiting wattages can reduce light glare and has the added benefit of being more energy efficient.

Action: Consider a noise ordinance to limit noise impacts in residential areas. A noise ordinance would limit the allowable noise either at the property line or at the nearest receptor from temporary noise sources and/or permanent sources. The ordinance can incorporate the need for noise barriers to mitigate noise impacts.

Action: Discourage clear cutting of timber stands on hill tops and steep slopes. Selective cutting during timbering can maintain tree canopy and forest habitat.

Objective 2.3 – Preserve historic and cultural structures and features within the town

Action: Support efforts to inventory historic structures, historic landscapes and view sheds, historical markers, cemeteries, and other historical and cultural sites identified in the town. Inventories can include maps and photographs.

Action: Support efforts to nominate individual properties and districts to State and National Registers of Historic Places. Letters of support from the town can be provided for inclusion in applications.

Action: Support the Westford Historical Society’s efforts to archive historic documents. Support pursuit of grants for historic preservation projects and potential future presentations of historic materials for the benefit of the public.

Action: Consider a landowner recognition program for landowners who restore, rehabilitate or protect a historic resource. Recognize these landowners with the presentation of a certificate or marker.

Action: Amend site plan review within the land use ordinance to assure protection of the town’s historic resources. Site plan review should include consideration of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) and the New York State Preservation Act (Section 14.09), and SEQR (Part 617).

Action: Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings, especially old barns, and in the hamlets. Amend the land use ordinance to allow conversion of buildings to new uses as a specially permitted use, rather than demolition.

Action: When reviewing projects, use the New York State Office for Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) website to identify archeologically sensitive areas and historic sites to ensure applications address the potential for impacts to such features.

GOAL 3: Provide high quality, efficient public services and infrastructure

The Town of Westford provides necessary, high quality public services while keeping taxes reasonable. Through the planning survey, the residents of the Town expressed high satisfaction with the Town Clerk, Highway Department Fire Department and the waste transfer station. The Town Board and the Planning Board received the next highest rating in satisfaction. It appeared from the survey results that respondents may not be aware of the nature of the dog control, the zoning board of appeals, flood plain administrator, and land use officer. The respondents also indicated that controlling taxes is one of the top three challenges facing Westford. In the future, the Town will strive to continue to provide high quality services in the most efficient manner possible so that the tax levy remains reasonable.

Objective 3.1 – Maintain a safe and high quality town road infrastructure

Action: Review the town road constructions standards and make revisions, if needed, to meet current standards for rural roads.

Action: Consider adopting the low volume and low maintenance road classifications according to the Local Road Research and Coordination Council Manual: Guidelines for Rural Town and County Roads and the AASHTO Guidelines for Geometric Design of Very Low-Volume Local Roads, 2001.

Action: Consider various methods of road preservation including: road use local laws, road use agreements with heavy industry, establishing truck haul routes, and low volume/low maintenance road designations. These methods protect town roads from the potential for damage from high intensity truck traffic, thereby protecting tax payers from bearing the cost burden of repair.

Action: Establish a policy for how, and under what circumstances the Town will review and accept new roads as official town roads. New roads should resemble traditional rural road development patterns

Action: Encourage new projects, such a subdivisions and commercial developments, to minimize new curb cuts onto existing roads and to follow traditional rural road development patterns. Dead-end roads or cul-de-sacs should be discouraged.

Action: Collaborate with the Otsego County Sheriff and the NYS Police for increased speed enforcement along roadways in the town, especially the hamlets.

Action: Support efforts to install sidewalks in the hamlets. Sidewalks provide safer places for pedestrian traffic and reduce the potential for accidents. State and federal funding may be available for such projects.

Objective 3.2 - Plan and budget for potential infrastructure investments

Action: Concentrate any future public infrastructure in hamlet areas. This will result in the most efficient delivery of services and encourage traditional rural development patterns that concentrate density in the hamlets. If the hamlets ever need public water and/or waste treatment facilities in the future, consider alternatives to traditional sewer systems, including shared septic systems, package plants, and other innovations.

Action: Develop a Capital Improvement Plan that includes all capital expenditures in the town budget, including roadways, highway equipment, recreational facilities, etc. The plan should have a multi-year outlook so that the Town Board can track the useful life all facilities and equipment and plan future improvements in the most efficient manner, including prioritizing projects, identifying funding sources, and equipment and staffing needs. The plan should be updated annually, to show the projects completed in the past year and adding a year in the future. The plan will help reduce the potential for emergency replacement of equipment

Action: Consider fees and policies to ensure that new proposed projects pay for increased need for services and infrastructure. In this way, the Westford residents are protected from bearing the cost burden of impacts from new development.

Objective 3.3 – Continue to provide high quality emergency services through the Fire Department and First Responders

Action: Support the Westford Fire Department and First Responders. The Town of Westford relies upon its volunteer firemen and first responders to serve the emergency services needs of the community. Support can be given through assistance in recruiting, equipment, building services, training, ect. Support efforts to obtain state and federal aid that will serve to increase the resources of these departments. Support incentives that will encourage membership within these departments.

Action: Maintain the Westford Hazard Mitigation Plan. Westford's Hazard Mitigation Plan was developed in conjunction with Otsego County. This plan identifies various natural hazards and identifies methods to mitigate those hazards. FEMA requires the plan in order for towns to

be eligible for certain federal hazard mitigation grants. FEMA also requires the plan be reviewed and updated every five years.

Action: Develop an Emergency Preparedness Plan. While the Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies actions that can be take before a hazard event takes place, an emergency preparedness plan identifies actions to be taken immediately after a hazard event takes place. Westford is fortunate to have limited vulnerability to many hazards. A plan would outline the measures that may be taken to assist community members in the event of emergencies, either natural or manmade.

Action: Review impacts to emergency services during site plan review. In order to ensure that emergency service and road safety issues are evaluated and mitigated during project development, the Planning Board should consult with the Fire Chief and the Town Highway Superintendent prior to approval of a proposed project.

Objective 3.4 - Encourage improvements in quality-of-life services that meet the needs the residents of the town.

Action: Support the Westford Post Office. As the US Post Office faces fiscal challenges, rural post offices are being considered for closure. The US Post Office in the hamlet of Westford is an critical community facility that provides vital services to local residents and businesses.

Action: Encourage the Tri-County library system book mobile to continue stopping in Westford. Access to the library system provides educational materials for the youth in Westford and entertainment to all residents, some of which have limited means to visit the libraries in other communities.

Action: Continue to provide high quality solid waste services. Town should continue to review the functionality of the station so that the service continues to be ever more efficient and cost effective. The Town could encourage residents to continue find further reductions in wastes delivered to the station though recycling and composting. Less waste delivered to the station lowers costs to the taxpayers by limiting trips to the MOSA station and lowering the tipping fees paid by the town.

Action: Assist Seniors in getting quality-of-life services. Services for seniors are provided by several agencies in Otsego County, such as Office for the Aging, HEAP, NY Connects, Meals on Wheels, the senior meal centers, and various faith-based organizations. Often seniors are unaware of these programs, how to contact them, or have limited means to of transportation to take advantage of them.

Action: Increase the public's awareness of public transportation opportunities.

The Otsego Express Route 5 bus travels from Hartwick to Schenevus to start the bus run that travels to East Worcester and back to Oneonta five days per week. If sufficient people in Westford were interested in riding the bus, town could approach the county about considering a reroute that goes through Westford.

Action: Foster improved tele-communications and utility infrastructure,

Improved tele-communications will benefit the youth of the community through access to educational materials. (See also discussion on economic benefits under Objective 4.1).

Objective 3.5 – Ensure the enforcement of the land use regulations currently in place

Action: Ensure the enforcement of the local laws currently in place within the town,

including the land use ordinance, the site plan review regulations, the subdivision regulation, and the telecommunications law. The Land Use Enforcement Officer (LEO) enforces the town's current land use laws. Pursuant to the land use ordinance, all new permitted uses require permits from the LEO. The LEO should also direct property owners who propose land uses that are not permitted as-of-right (i.e. specifically named as a permitted use within the land use ordinance) to apply for a special use permit from the Planning Board or use or area variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), as appropriate.

Action: Ensure the enforcement of NYS laws that are currently applicable within the town,

including the property maintenance code, and the NYS building code. The Otsego County Code Enforcement Office enforces the New York State codes. The Town Board should communicate with the County to ensure that enforcement is occurring appropriately.

GOAL 4: Enhance business opportunities and economic prosperity

Westford's historic economic base is agricultural and related businesses. Agritourism has become a new trend in Westford, as animal preserves, cider mills, Christmas tree farms, and maple syrup operations start up and grow. Agriculture and tourism are often complementary industries, and a diversity of small businesses contributes to a healthy local economy. Westford residents may benefit from technology advances that allow for telecommuting. Westford wants to be a business-friendly community by supporting small, home-based, and agricultural businesses that complement the historic economic development of the community.

Objective 4.1: Foster economic development

Action: Review and amend existing the land use ordinances regarding permitted uses and uses allowed with a special permit. Amendments should include definitions of land uses, including but not limited to, light industry, home base businesses, etc. In the hamlet districts, a diversity and density of small-scale businesses will contribute to a healthy economic center. In the agricultural-residential district, new larger businesses scaled to fit in Westford, including light industry, agricultural and commercial business, may provide future employment opportunities for the residents.

Action: Review the special use permit and site plan review requirements within the current land use regulations and consider amendments so that development standards ensure that new business fits the community. Streamline the review process for applications that meet the standards so that the regulations are not viewed as a roadblock for business but as a way to foster new development that promotes the small town, historic, and rural character of Westford. Development standards could include building form and scale, sign size and design, parking lot and driveway standards, lighting, and landscaping.

Action: Foster improved telecommunications and utility infrastructure, including broadband services, fiber optic, Wi-Fi, DSL, high speed Internet, and/or cable access connections. Improved telecommunications will provide economic development opportunities for telecommuting.

Action: Form a Westford Business Council. Business people in Westford have a stake in the economic health of the town and benefit from supporting each other. These businesses and individuals can help to strengthen and diversify their own business community. The council could assist each other in expansion, advertisement, securing funding, etc.

Action: Inform local small business owners about Otsego County Economic Development Department's low-interest loan programs. Loan programs include the micro-enterprise revolving loan fund, the rural

economic development loan fund, and the job development loan fund.⁴

Action: Support agriculture and related businesses. Encourage local farmers to work with Cornell Cooperative to identify value-added agricultural and agritourism opportunities. Provide information to existing area farmers regarding financial incentives that are available through the County Economic Development Department, such as the rural economic development loan discussed above.

Action: Support forestry related business, including timbering, Christmas tree farms and maple syrup businesses. The DEC forestry management program encourages responsible stewardship of forestlands while ensuring a sustainable timber harvest. Explore options to encourage local landowners to cultivate sugar bush stands and produce maple syrup products. Support efforts by local landowners to convert abandoned farmland into tree farms and nurseries. Provide information to property owners on programs and trees offered by the Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation district and the NYSDEC 's Saratoga Tree Nursery.

Action: Support home-based business, home industries, and tourism based businesses. Home-based and cottage businesses complement the rural character of the community. Small-scale tourism and agritourism businesses can provide new opportunities for Westford. Land use related regulations should support these types of economic ventures.

Action: Coordinate development efforts with adjoining municipalities to ensure that development near municipal boundaries do not negatively impact neighboring communities.

⁴ The Micro-Enterprise Revolving Loan Fund

- businesses employing fewer than five (5) employees
- amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$150,000
- 4% fixed interest rate and terms of up to 15 years.

The Rural Economic Development Loan Fund

- agricultural and hi-tech businesses
- amounts ranging from \$12,000 to \$75,000
- 4% fixed interest rate and terms of up to 15 years.

The Otsego County Job Development Loan Program

- industrial, service and nonretail commercial projects
- amounts ranging from \$20,000 to \$150,000
- fixed interest rate of 4% and terms of up to 15 years.

GOAL 5: Conserve natural resources and natural habitats

Westford's environment is rich in natural resources and wildlife habitats. Natural resources, such as clean air and clean water, are key elements in the high quality of life in Westford. Rich wildlife and natural habitats contribute to the rural character of Westford. Natural resources can also contribute to economic development, such as the use of prime soils that support agriculture, forests that support timbering and maple sugaring. The key is to find a balance, to conserve these resources through sustainable use and protect the environment for the benefit of the current and future generations.

Objective 5.1: Protect ground-water and surface-water quality and quantity

Action: Ensure that DEC and Federal regulations for stream, stream bank disturbance, and wetland buffers are adhered to. DEC regulates stream and stream bank disturbances for all streams that are classified as C (t) or higher. NYS prohibits disturbance with 50' from a stream bank. Streams with steep slopes (greater than 45 degrees) have additional setbacks. The majority of streams in Westford are class C(t) streams. DEC also regulates wetlands greater than 12 acres and requires a 100 ft setback. The Federal government regulates wetlands greater than 0.1 area and prohibits filling of wetlands of this size.

Action: Evaluate impacts to unconsolidated aquifers during site plan and subdivision review. The planning board should carefully evaluate all new developments located above unconsolidated valley-fill aquifers for potential impacts to ground water resources and soils. A primary aquifer is located in the south-west portion of the town.

Action: Require pump tests (24, 48, or 72 hour tests as appropriate) for projects proposing groundwater withdrawals greater than 1000 gallons per day during site plan and subdivision review. Pump tests demonstrate whether or not the withdrawal from the aquifer will impact surrounding water sources and wells will occur. Agricultural water should be exempt from this requirement.

Action: Require adequate development space for reserve fields for new septic systems designs for large subdivisions and site plan approval. A reserve field can replace a failed septic system.

Action: Require Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP) in accordance with the NYSDEC State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) general permit for commercial developments or major subdivision applications. SWPPPs are designed to prevent stormwater from leaving development sites carrying sediment and other contaminates.

Action: Educate property owners on the importance of well head protection zones around private wells. Storage of chemicals around wells, such as pesticides, fertilizers, and fuel should be avoided in the vicinity of drinking water wells, particularly wells that are shallow or constructed in unconsolidated materials.

Action: Limit the development of buildings within the 100-year floodplain through enforcement of the town's existing flood plain regulation. The floodplain regulation requires a flood development permit for all development in the 100 year flood hazard area. The flood plan regulation is required by the National Flood Insurance Rate program, without which residents of Westford would not be able to get flood insurance.

Action: Encourage participation in the Conservation Reserve Enhanced Program (CREP). CREP provides incentives for landowners to plant forest buffers, filter strips, or field borders within the riparian zones along creeks and streams.

Objective 5.2: Conserve high quality soils

Action: Require low-impact erosion and stormwater runoff controls in site plan review or the development of subdivisions. Loss of high quality soils from erosion and sedimentation of surface water bodies are the two most common and easily prevented environmental impacts resulting from construction projects.

Action: Allow the Planning Board revise the subdivision and site plan regulations to include requirements for:

- Building envelopes to protect environmental resources such as steep slopes (over 20%) and wetlands.
- Erosion and sediment control plans 2 ft contours
- Limit development on steep slopes greater than 20%
- Limit driveways to 15%
- Limit new roads to 12%
- Enforce DEC setback requirements from streams and wetlands – 50ft / 100 ft

Action: Request maps of town resources from the County Planning Dept and establish procedures to ensure that the Planning Board utilizes all data available (such as those included in this plan) during project review.

Objective 5.3: Protect wildlife and critical habitats

Action: Amend the local subdivision and site plan regulations to include review of project impacts on wildlife and critical habitats and require the following:

- Prevention of forest fragmentation and maintain forested, wet and other natural connections
- Use of native plants when landscaping
- Maintain riparian (vegetated) buffers along creeks and streams
- Maintain vegetated corridors between habitat types
- Avoid placement of structures along migratory paths.

Action: Support local efforts to eradicate invasive plants and animals. Invasive species can adversely affect the natural ecosystem if left unchecked. When identified it is recommended that these species be eradicated before they spread and cause greater harm to the local ecosystem.

GOAL 6: Promote diversified, quality, affordable housing opportunities

Housing in Westford is generally affordable and housing development in Westford limited to occasional new home projects implemented by property owners. The housing stock is older than many of the communities in Otsego County and the relatively low median home value in Westford is indicative of the challenges the community and residents faces in keeping those older homes in safe, adequate and in energy efficient condition. In addition, housing options for seniors who no longer wish to maintain large homes or live alone is limited. Allowing for alternative senior housing in hamlets can bring economic benefit to local businesses where seniors can purchase goods or services.

Objective 6.1 – Improve housing stock available for all income levels and stages of life

Action: Consider amending the land use regulations to allow for accessory dwelling units such as mother-in-law apartments or cottages on parcel. The current regulations allow only one primary structure per parcel. Allowing small cottages or attached structures on residential parcels will provide additional opportunity for alternative senior housing.

Action: Support individuals and agencies seeking State and Federal funds to rehabilitate housing, improve home energy efficiency and improve neighborhood conditions, both in the hamlets, and town-wide. There are several funding sources that can provide for home improvements that will make homes safer and more energy efficient.

Action: Ensure that structures comply with applicable local, state and federal standards for health, safety, and energy efficiency through code enforcement. By ensuring that structures comply with these standards will help to keep the conditions of the available housing stock in Westford safe and adequate.

Action: Encourage Otsego Rural Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity to consider sites in Westford for future projects. These organization provide housing assistance for low income families that may otherwise find homeownership out of reach.

Action: Support development of small to moderate sized multi-unit senior housing developments. There are limited opportunities for our aging seniors as they reach the stage in their life when maintaining a large home is long longer desirable. Small-scale housing developments for seniors can provide an option that allows residence to stay in the town that they love near friends and family.

GOAL 7 : Plan for and encourage responsible energy development and consumption

Energy usage in our community has been on the rise and is likely continue to rise in the foreseeable future. Higher energy costs and fluctuation energy prices are negatively impacting the residents of Westford. Meeting our community's energy needs within the current economic setting will be a major challenge in the future. Increasing energy efficiency, energy conservation and conscientious use of local energy sources are strategies for responsible energy development and consumption.

Objective 7.1 : Increase energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption locally

Action: Encourage local residents and business owners to take advantage of weatherization programs and energy efficiency incentive programs available through NYSERDA and from Opportunities for Otsego. Improving the energy efficiency of homes will help residents keep their homes comfortable with less expense.

Action: Take advantage of the FlexTech Energy Audit Program from NYSERDA. This program provides free energy audits for local governments with 10 employees or less. A NYSERDA contractor will audit all the town's buildings, make recommendations on energy efficiency improvements and projects, project the payback period and identify grant programs to fund the projects.

Action: Encourage local power supply companies to install the most efficient technologies in the power distribution infrastructure within the town. Such improvements may be installation of LED street lights in the hamlets to reduce costs to the lighting district tax payers, to other improvements on transformers, etc.

Action: Develop a fleet management plan. As fuel prices continue to rise, good maintenance of the town's fleet of vehicles will help maximize fuel efficiency. Planning for new vehicle purchases will help to retire older vehicles to replace them with for efficient ones.

Objective 7.2: Plan for responsible energy development

Action: Consider reviewing and amending the existing land use ordinance with respect to energy development. The land uses that are permitted as a right, allowed with a special use permit, or prohibited should be reviewed. Energy development projects could be added to those lists of land uses, including but not limited to wind, natural gas, biofuels/wood, solar and hydroelectric. These revisions should consider what districts are appropriate for these development types. The scale of the development projects should also be considered, i.e. residential, commercial, and/or industrial.

Action: Consider adoption of development regulations for energy development projects where the town had clear jurisdiction to regulate the activity. While some energy development projects are outside of the town's purview regulate, some energy development projects are within the town's authority to regulate. Adoption of regulations such as a wind can help the town ensure that such developments do no have a significant adverse impact on the town and its residents.

SECTION 5: ACTION PLAN

This action plans sets for the actions described in Section 4, who would be responsible for taking the lead on each action and a proposed timeframe for each. Several of the actions below include terms such “encourage”, “promote”, “support”. The adoption of this Master Plan is an achievement that, in itself, begins these actions.

TB = Town Board
PB = Planning Board

S = Short Term
M = Mid Term
L = Long range

<i>ACTION</i>	<i>OBJECTIVE</i>	<i>RESPONSIBILITY</i>	<i>TIMEFRAME</i>
Review and amend existing land use laws to ensure they are farm-friendly	1.1	TB	M
Enact a local Right to Farm Law	1.1	TB	M
Pursue a town ag and farmland protection plan through a NYS Ag and Markets grant	1.1	TB / PB	L
Encourage eligible property owners to apply for agricultural tax benefits	1.1	Assessor	S
Encourage land owners and farms to become members of CADE (Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship)	1.1	TB	S
Promote the New York Farm Link program	1.1	TB	S
Promote the Graze NY program through the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)	1.1	TB	S
Appoint a farmer to the Planning Board	1.1	TB	S
Support Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs	1.1	TB / PB	S
Review and amend existing land use laws to allow supplemental farming activities as-of-right without requiring site plan development review	1.2	TB	M
Encourage direct market operations such as community supported agriculture (CSA)	1.2	TB /PB	S
Encourage livestock farming and nontraditional livestock	1.2	TB /PB	S
Encourage agro-tourism and other alternative agricultural operations	1.2	TB /PB	S
Encourage Otsego County to update the county's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan	1.2	PB	S
Review and amend existing land use laws with respect to soil preservation	1.3	TB	M
Consider performance based land use regulations	1.3	TB	L
Consider impacts to Agricultural District 2 when reviewing applications by requiring agricultural data statements in applications	1.3	PB	S

Encourage cluster or conservation subdivisions in areas of prime farm soils and soils of statewide significance	1.3	PB	S
Encourage property owners of fallow agricultural land contact CADE to find farmers interested to leasing property	1.4	TB / PB	S
Encourage farmers to develop comprehensive nutrient management plans	1.5	TB / PB	S
Encourage farmers to work with the SWCD and NRCS on AEM and non-point Source Abatement and Control Grants	1.5	TB / PB	M
Enhance and revitalize the hamlets while conserving open spaces in the countryside	2.1	TB / PB	L
Review and amend existing the land use ordinance with community character in mind	2.1	TB / PB	S
Enhance review and specific development standards for features that impact community character	2.1	TB / PB	S
Establish procedures for clustering and conservation subdivisions	2.1	PB	S
Require a traffic impact study for projects that will increase traffic on the roads by greater than 100 vehicle trips per day	2.2	TB	S
Inventory visual resources	2.2	TB / PB	M
Develop a policy to preserve roadside features	2.2	TB / PB	M
Consider lighting standards	2.2	TB	S
Consider a noise ordinance	2.2	TB	S
Discourage clear cutting of timber stands on hill tops and steep slopes	2.2	TB	S
Support efforts to inventory historic structures, historic landscapes and view sheds, historical markers, cemeteries, and other historical and cultural sites	2.3	TB / PB	S
Support efforts to nominate individual properties and districts to State and National Registers of Historic Places	2.3	TB / PB	S
Support the Westford Historical Society's efforts to archive historic documents	2.3	TB / PB	S
Consider a landowner recognition program for landowners who restore, rehabilitate or protect a historic resource	2.3	TB / PB	S
Amend site plan review within the land use ordinance to assure protection of the town's historic resources	2.3	PB	S
Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings, especially old barns, and in the hamlets	2.3	TB / PB	S
Use the NYS OPRHP website to identify archeologically sensitive areas and historic sites	2.3	TB / PB	M
Review the town road constructions standards and make revisions, if needed, to meet current	3.1	TB	S

standards for rural roads			
Consider adopting the low volume and low maintenance road classifications	3.1	TB	M
Consider various methods of road preservation	3.1	TB	S
Establish a policy for how, and under what circumstances the Town will review and accept new roads as official town roads	3.1	TB / PB	S
Encourage new projects to minimize new curb cuts onto existing roads and to follow traditional rural road development patterns	3.1	PB	M
Collaborate with the Otsego County Sheriff and the NYS Police for increased speed enforcement along roadways in the town	3.1	TB	M
Support efforts to install sidewalks in the hamlets	3.1	TB / PB	m
Concentrate any future public infrastructure in hamlet areas	3.2	TB / PB	m
Develop a Capital Improvement Plan that includes all capital expenditures in the town budget	3.2	TB	M
Consider fees and policies to ensure that new proposed projects pay for increased need for services and infrastructure	3.2	TB	M
Support the Westford Fire Department and First Responders	3.3	TB / PB	S
Maintain the Westford Hazard Mitigation Plan.	3.3	TB	S
Develop an Emergency Preparedness Plan.	3.3	TB	S
Review impacts to emergency services during site plan review	3.3	TB	S
Support the Westford Post Office	3.4	TB / PB	S
Encourage the Tri-County library system book mobile to continue stopping in Westford	3.4	TB / PB	S
Continue to provide high quality solid waste services	3.4	TB	S
Assist Seniors in getting quality-of-life services	3.4	TB	S
Increase the public's awareness of public transportation opportunities	3.4	TB / PB	M
Foster improved tele-communications and utility infrastructure	3.4	TB / PB	S
Ensure the enforcement of the local laws currently in place within the town	3.5	TB	S
Ensure the enforcement of NYS laws that are currently applicable within the town	3.5	TB	S
Review and amend existing the land use ordinances regarding permitted uses and uses allowed with a special permit	4.1	TB / PB	M
Review the special use permit and site plan review requirements within the current land use regulations and consider amendments so that development standards ensure that new business fits the community	4.1	PB	M

Foster improved telecommunications and utility infrastructure	4.1	TB / PB	S
Form a Westford Business Council	4.1	TB / PB	M
Inform local small business owners about Otsego County Economic Development Departments low-interest loan programs	4.1	TB / PB	M
Support agriculture and related businesses	4.1	TB / PB	S
Support forestry related business, including timbering, Christmas tree farms and maple syrup businesses	4.1	TB	M
Support home-based business, home industries, and tourism based businesses	4.1	TB	M
Coordinate development efforts with adjoining municipalities to ensure that development near municipal boundaries do not negatively impact neighboring communities	4.1	TB / PB	L
Ensure that DEC and Federal regulations for stream, stream bank disturbance, and wetland buffers are adhered to	5.1	TB	L
Evaluate impacts to unconsolidated aquifers during site plan and subdivision review	5.1	TB / PB	L
Require pump tests (24, 48, or 72 hour tests as appropriate) for projects proposing groundwater withdrawals greater than 1000 gallons per day during site plan and subdivision review	5.1	PB	M
Require adequate development space for reserve fields for new septic systems designs for large subdivisions and site plan approval	5.1	PB	M
Require adequate development space for reserve fields for new septic systems designs for large subdivisions and site plan approval	5.1	PB	M
Require Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP)	5.1	TB / PB	L
Educate property owners on the importance of well head protection zones around private wells	5.1	TB / PB	L
Limit the development of buildings within the 100-year floodplain	5.1	TB	S
Encourage participation in the Conservation Reserve Enhanced Program (CREP)	5.1	TB / PB	S
Require low-impact erosion and stormwater runoff controls in site plan review or subdivisions	5.2	PB	L
Revise the subdivision and site plan regulations with include review of impacts on soils	5.2	PB	M
Request maps of town resources from the County Planning Dept and utilizes all data	5.2	TB / PB	S
Amend local subdivision and site plan regulations to include review of impacts on wildlife and critical habitats	5.3	PB	L
Support local efforts to eradicate invasive plants and animals	5.3	TB	L

Consider amending the land use regulations to allow for accessory dwelling units	6.1	PB	S
Support individuals and agencies seeking State and Federal funds to rehabilitate housing, improve home energy efficiency and improve neighborhood conditions	6.1	TB	S
Ensure that structures comply with applicable local, state and federal standards for health, safety, and energy efficiency through code enforcement	6.1	TB	S
Encourage Otsego Rural Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity to consider sites in Westford	6.1	TB / PB	L
Support development of small to moderate sized multi-unit senior housing developments	6.1	TB / PB	L