



# Town of Blenheim, NY

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

February 2014

*Prepared by*

Town of Blenheim Comprehensive Plan Committee

*With assistance from*

Schoharie County Planning and Development

## **Acknowledgments**

### **Comprehensive Plan Committee**

Don Airey, Chairman

Renee Grabowski, Secretary

Larry Bliss

Rhonda Downs

Diane Ericson

Melissa Graham

Anne Mattice-Strauch

Christina Snyder, Community Planner

### **Town Board**

Robert H. Mann, Supervisor

Robin Alley, Town Clerk

Keith Graham

Chet Keyser

Anne Mattice-Strauch

Joe Ward

### **Schoharie County Planning and Development**

Shane Nickle, Senior Planner

Zachary Thompson, Planner

Brian Fleury, GIS Specialist


**Special thanks** to all of the citizens of Blenheim who participated in the comprehensive plan process, and to Christina Snyder, for producing the final version of the plan on behalf of the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

## Adoption

*The Town of Blenheim Comprehensive Plan 2014*  
was adopted by the Blenheim Town Board

On February 3, 2014

By: \_\_\_\_\_



Shawn Smith, Town Supervisor

### **Community Vision**

"Blenheim is a resilient community dedicated to preserving and protecting our numerous natural resources, local culture, and historical heritage, while attracting sustainable small businesses, young families, seniors, and retirees. Blenheim's unique quality of rural lifestyle is strengthened by awareness and promotion of the blended values presented by a revitalization of traditional and niche agriculture, small business, entrepreneurship, art, and tourism. In the face of enormous adversity, we are moving confidently towards a bright future. Blenheim is tiny, but sturdy."

*Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Committee, 2012*

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Why Create a Comprehensive Plan? .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Comprehensive Plan Process.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Community Engagement: Town of Blenheim Survey Overview .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Highlights of the Survey Results.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<b>Amending the Plan .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Community Background .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Historical Perspective .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Town Government and Budget .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Census Data .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Community Vision .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Plan Elements .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Public Safety, Infrastructure, and Services .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Transportation and Streetscape .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Community Resources and Involvement.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Open Space, Recreation, and Tourism .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Economic Development .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Housing .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Land Use .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: TOWN OF BLENNHEIM GENERAL SURVEY 2011 .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: MAPS.....</b>	<b>39</b>



## **Introduction**

### ***Why Create a Comprehensive Plan?***

The goals of a Comprehensive Plan are multi-fold. The Plan seeks to anchor local decision-making by elected officials in the context of shared, long-term community goals and objectives. It is a roadmap for the Town's future. Thus, it endeavors to identify unique historic, natural, and other features of the Town of Blenheim for preservation, economic development, and cultural/recreational purposes. The Plan also provides the framework in which future local laws will be considered or adopted. The Plan addresses a range of issues such as land use, agricultural preservation, residential development, general preservation, economic development, industrial uses, tourism, government grant opportunities, overall town growth, and a shared vision for the future. The Plan shall reflect the intent to:

- Define a shared, positive vision for our community.
- Identify and protect historic and/or natural resources, and address any possible related liabilities.
- Determine whether citizens are interested in land use regulations (e.g., site planning, town board approval of new businesses and zoning) and enable those regulations as desired.
- Make the public aware of what the community wants and does not want.
- Minimize conflict over future town growth and/or changes.
- Identify and protect assets/resources and identify and address liabilities.
- Prevent future problems and avoid repeating past mistakes.
- Improve access to government and private support, funding, technical assistance, partnerships (e.g., economic development grants, NYS Power Authority assistance).

### ***Comprehensive Plan Process***

In November of 2010, the Town of Blenheim appointed a Comprehensive Plan Committee tasked with developing a Comprehensive Plan via a public input process. The Committee worked closely with Schoharie County Planning and Development to generate the final Plan.

One of the most important aspects of a Comprehensive Plan is the consideration of the desires, perspectives, and input from Blenheim residents and property owners. In large part, this was accomplished through the distribution of a Town Survey and through official Public Hearings and Comment Sessions. The constructive input of town residents was a critical component in the drafting of an approved Comprehensive Plan. An overview of survey results is provided in the following section; this survey in conjunction with comments gathered during public sessions was used to generate the goals and objectives of the Plan. The Committee also considered what residents indicated they did not want for the town's future.

Additionally, this Plan takes into account information gathered during a community planning process in response to devastation from Hurricane Irene in 2011. In January of 2012, the Town of Blenheim formed a committee to work with FEMA on the ESF 14 initiative to generate a long-term community recovery plan that would create a structured vision to assist Blenheim throughout the recovery process. The Comprehensive Plan and the *Blenheim Long-Term Recovery Plan* complement one another and may be used in tandem to guide Town decision-making about local community development. The *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan* may be found on the Town website at ([www.blenheimny.org](http://www.blenheimny.org)). The primary issues that surfaced via the community survey were also identified as significant projects in the Plan.

### ***Community Engagement: Town of Blenheim Survey Overview***

A successful townwide survey was undertaken in 2011 with a 33% return rate (190 out of 576). This provides the Town of Blenheim with a statistically accurate view of public opinion that can be used when making decisions. As such, the surveys are an integral part of the Town of Blenheim Comprehensive Plan. Goals and objectives throughout the Plan were derived in large part from the survey results and may serve as recommendations to the Town for future decision-making. Highlights from the survey results are described below. (See *Appendix A for the full set of survey questions and results*).

Residents who responded to the survey can be described as follows:

- 55% of respondents are full-time residents; 37% are part-time residents; 8% are landowners only
- 79% of respondents own their own land/home
- 10% are from the Hamlet of North Blenheim
- 77% have lived in or owned land in the Town for 10 or more years
- 66% said that they live in Blenheim for the rural environment. Preservation of rural character, scenic quality, and local farms were ranked as the most important aspect of Blenheim's future for the majority of respondents

## Town of Blenheim Comprehensive Plan 2014

### Highlights of the Survey Results

#### Town Services, Environment, and Amenities

*Survey respondents were asked to rate the Town of Blenheim as "good," "adequate," or "poor" on a variety of criteria, with results as follows:*

GOOD	ADEQUATE	POOR
Air quality (85%) Town road snow removal (49%) Water quality (49%)	Police response, enforcement of noise ordinance, preservation of environmental resources, preservation of historical landmarks, recycling program, regulation/oversight of gas pipeline, road conditions, landline phone service, trash disposal	Cellular telephone service (72%) <b>p.13</b> Proximity to employment (51%) <b>p.25</b> Cable service (47%) <b>p.13</b> Enforcement of junk law (47%) <b>p.22,26</b> High speed Internet service (45%) <b>p.13</b>
A majority of survey respondents generally favor adding or improving the following services:  <div style="text-align: center;"><b>ADD or IMPROVE...</b></div> Special property cleanup days (69%) <b>p.22</b> Historical Society/Rebuilding of Blenheim Schoolhouse Museum & Blenheim Bridge (60%) <b>p.19</b> Ambulance service (51%) <b>p.13</b> Senior services (51%) <b>p.20</b>		
Close to half or a majority of respondents are in favor of the following (using funding sources other than taxes):		A majority of respondents are not in favor of the following:
<div style="text-align: center;"><b>IN FAVOR OF...</b></div> Paving Town roads (77%) <b>p.14</b> Shared services with nearby towns (69%) <b>p.14</b> Registry of historic sites (68%) <b>p.19</b> Utilization of natural resource to bring in tourism (67%) <b>p.22-23</b> Town events for tourism (65%) <b>p.22-23</b>		<div style="text-align: center;"><b>NOT IN FAVOR OF...</b></div> Paving private roads (72%) Sidewalks (67%)* Street lighting (59%)
<b>Other programs or amenities that respondents would favor in Blenheim:</b> Increased ambulance service, Town events for residents, tax incentives for business, hiking trail, land acquisition for siting town facilities removed from floodplains, senior programs, art programs, fire protection, youth programs, police protection, bike path, tax incentives for open space, town park and playground, ATV/snowmobile trails, equestrian trails		*19 survey respondents indicated that they lived in the hamlet and 2 of these respondents were in favor of sidewalks.



# Town of Blenheim Comprehensive Plan 2014

Land Use, Development, and Regulation	
<i>Respondents favor almost any type of new land use/development, with a few exceptions.</i>	
<p>Residents indicated the Town should <b>ENCOURAGE</b>: (p.25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agriculture and farming (89%)</li> <li>Retail businesses (83%)</li> <li>Home-based businesses (82%)</li> <li>Overnight accommodations (79%)</li> <li>Outdoor sports (78%)</li> </ul> <p>Other land uses that a majority of respondents believe that Blenheim should encourage include: assisted living facility, cell towers, child care center, light industry, logging, niche farming and agri-tourism, professional services, recreation areas, tourism, residential wind turbines</p>	<p>Residents indicated the Town should <b>DISCOURAGE</b>: (p.27)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heavy industry (76%)</li> <li>Mining (69%)</li> <li>Natural gas drilling/hydrofracturing (67%)</li> </ul>
<b>Respondents indicated it is important for the Town of Blenheim to regulate a wide range of uses, with a few exceptions.</b>	
<p>Residents indicated the Town should <b>REGULATE</b>: (p.27-29)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land use that adversely impacts the environment (80%)</li> <li>Land use that significantly lowers surrounding land values (79%)</li> <li>Good management practices for farming and logging (77%)</li> <li>Natural gas drilling (76%)</li> <li>Historic character (76%)</li> <li>Threats to agriculture (76%)</li> </ul> <p>Other uses that a majority of respondents would like to see regulated include: adult bookstores/shops, ATV/snowmobile use, business signs, general development, industrial facilities, junk vehicle storage, lighting for commercial use, telecommunication tower location, wind turbine location (mainly commercial), mining, mobile homes, noise, aesthetics of development, subdivisions, vacant property/dilapidated buildings</p>	<p>Residents indicated the Town should <b>NOT REGULATE</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Livestock (48%)</li> <li>Lighting for residential uses (52%)</li> </ul>

## Town of Blenheim Comprehensive Plan 2014

<b>General Concerns</b>
<b><i>A majority of respondents indicated concern regarding the following topics:</i></b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONCERNS (TOP 3)</b></p> <p>Schoharie Creek and stream flooding (82%) <b>p.14-15</b>  Stream bank stabilization and erosion control (77%) <b>p.14</b>  Natural gas drilling/hydrofracking (73%) <b>p.27</b></p> <p><b>Additional concerns: dam safety – Gilboa Reservoir, existing propane gas pipeline, personal well water quality, loss of farmland, lack of cell coverage, loss of natural areas, Schoharie Creek water quality, dam safety – Blenheim-Gilboa Power Project, speeding</b></p>
<b>Blenheim's Future</b>
<b><i>A majority of respondents rated the following characteristics as very important to the town's future:</i></b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHARACTERISTICS IMPORTANT TO BLENHEIM'S FUTURE (TOP 3)</b></p> <p>A clean and green environment (e.g., air &amp; water quality) (76%) <b>p.27-29</b>  Farming and agriculture business opportunities (73%) <b>p.25</b>  Rural character (73%) <b>p.27-29</b></p> <p><b>Other characteristics that a majority of respondents rated as 'very important': scenic quality, preservation of current farms, quality of school district, local job opportunities, historical richness of area, quality of community services</b></p>

See the full survey results in Appendix A for more information.

### **Implementing the Plan**

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan requires a commitment from the Town Board to regularly consult the Plan as a guide for decision-making regarding growth, development, and the overall character of the Town of Blenheim. Absent the appointment of a Planning Board, the Town may choose to appoint a Town Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee would:

- Work towards implementing most objectives of the plan.
- Research and apply (upon approval of appropriate municipal board) for funding sources. In order to be successful in grant applications, the Town should prepare a well-thought out set of plans and grant ideas that include project need, work scope, budget, and time frames. Having these ready will allow Blenheim to be better prepared to develop grant applications as they become available.
- Undertake any other requests of the municipal board.

The Blenheim Comprehensive Plan is composed of seven overarching "Plan Elements," which represent core focus areas for plan implementation. These include:

- Public Safety, Infrastructure, and Services
- Transportation and Streetscape
- Community Resources and Involvement
- Open Space, Recreation, and Tourism
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Land Use

Each Plan Element encompasses a series of goals, objectives, and tasks that taken as a whole seek to promote the overall vision of the community for the future.

- **Goals** are broad, concise statements defining a generally desired direction. They express an overall course of action and are relatively permanent in nature. Goals are intended to serve as a guide, particularly in the decision-making process as it relates to basic choices. In aggregate form, goals provide a broad framework for action, forming the basis upon which more detailed decisions are made. Goals provide the connective link between general direction and specific recommendations for objectives/actions.
- **Objectives** describe in further detail the intent of the goal and guide the actions of Town staff and policy makers.
- **Tasks** are specific actions undertaken to implement an objective and work toward achieving the goal.

The Plan is implemented by following the objectives and carrying out the tasks contained within the body of the Plan.

### ***Amending the Plan***

The Comprehensive Plan should be regularly reviewed and updated in response to major changes in the community. Therefore, the Advisory Committee or other designated body by the Town is responsible for reviewing and updating this plan every seven years from the date of adoption or last review.



## Community Background

### Historical Perspective

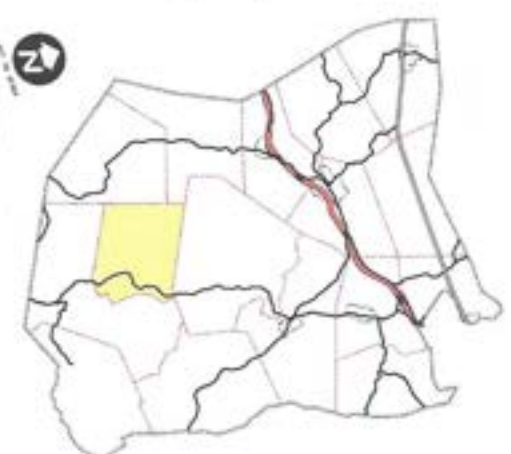
The Town of Blenheim, one of the original six towns in Schoharie County, New York, derives its name from the 40,000 acre Blenheim Patent tract of lands granted by King George II of England on November 28, 1769 to forty grantees. The Blenheim Patent was, itself, named after the Battle of Blenheim. The Town of Blenheim, located in the southwestern part of the county, is situated east of Oneonta and southwest of Albany, New York. Dutch and German Palatines established the first European settlements in Blenheim sometime before 1761. Blenheim, along with the rest of the Schoharie Valley, acquired a reputation as the "Bread Basket of the Revolution," supplying George Washington's army with grain. The Town of Blenheim was officially formed from Schoharie on March 17, 1797. In 1803, the Town of Jefferson was formed from part of Blenheim; in 1828 a section of Blenheim became part of the Town of Fulton; and in 1848 a portion was used to form part of the Town of Gilboa.

Blenheim's population peak occurred in 1840, reaching 2,725 residents; as of the 2010 Census, Blenheim's population was 377. At one time Blenheim boasted 13 one-room schoolhouse districts and five post offices. Today, students attend school outside of Blenheim in the Gilboa-Conesville School District, and only one post office remains, with limited business hours. Farming was the chief occupation in Blenheim up until around 1959. In earlier times, farmers grew wheat, hops, oats, potatoes, apples, grain, corn, and tobacco, along with raising cows, sheep, and horses. Today, Blenheim's land yields primarily timothy, oats, sunflowers, alfalfa, and grain corn.

On August 15, 1968, the Power Authority of the State of New York (NYP&A) filed an application with the Federal Power Commission to build a one million kilowatt pump storage facility in the towns of Blenheim and Gilboa. On June 1, 1973, the first unit was successfully operated as a pump. Eighty-one parcels with 51 owners, encompassing over 3000 acres of land, were transferred from Blenheim and Gilboa to NYP&A for the project.



Schoharie County, New York



Town of Blenheim, New York

The Town of Blenheim has experienced a few disastrous events with a profound effect on the local quality of life as well as community development and growth. On March 13, 1990, the propane gas pipeline then owned by Texas Eastern Products Pipeline, now owned by Enterprise Products Partners LP, exploded, killing two people, injuring four others, sending one person to the hospital in cardiac arrest, and burning 17 structures including nine residences. A new municipal building, housing the fire department, Town offices, and the post office, was built on the site of a previous structure that was burned down in the explosion. Roughly twenty years later, on August 28, 2011, Hurricane Irene inundated the Town of Blenheim with record levels of flooding that surpassed all previous flood incidents. Local homeowners suffered extensive damage to private property, the Town's municipal building was flooded, and local cultural and historical resources were affected. Flooding from the hurricane also washed away the Old Blenheim Covered Bridge, the town's iconic treasure. Built in 1855, the bridge was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964, as the world's longest single-span, wooden covered bridge. As noted in the prior section, the *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan* was generated with the assistance of FEMA as a community-driven plan for recovery from the devastation caused by the flooding.

### ***Town Government and Budget***

Blenheim's town government is composed of a Town Supervisor with four Town Board members, an elected Town Clerk, an appointed Assessor, and an appointed Highway Superintendent. Republican Bob Mann was re-elected as Town Supervisor in 2011. Blenheim does not have a Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals.

The Town of Blenheim operating budget consists of approximately \$450,000 in expenses offset by revenues of \$140,000, leaving a local tax burden of \$310,000. The majority of expenses are related to highway maintenance and repair activities, which consume 58% of all expenditures. The 2013 budget is an exception to the general norm. Hurricane Irene resulted in dramatic increases to both expenditures and revenues due to federal disaster recovery efforts. Over the past several years, the budget has faced increases due to additional employee benefit costs of both health insurance premiums (580% increase over ten years) and NYS Retirement contributions (529% increase over ten years). In addition to these expenses, there are other influencing factors such as fuel prices, material costs, and workers compensation insurance premium increases (50% increase over ten years). These factors lie largely beyond the control of the Town Board and have led to generally small tax increases year after year. The increase in 2010 was 2%, 2011 was 2.7%, 2012 was 4.1%, and 2013 was 3.6%. Without growth in assessed value through new construction or additional revenue streams, tax increases will remain the norm going forward.



### ***Census Data***

According to the United States Census Bureau, the Town of Blenheim consists of a total area of 34.4 square miles of which 33.9 square miles is land and 0.4 square miles is water. The Schoharie Creek is the main waterway through the town. New York State Route 30 is the primary roadway, consisting of a north-south highway in the eastern part of Blenheim.

As of the 2010 U.S. Census, 377 people (192 females, 185 males), 158 households, and 100 families reside in the Town of Blenheim. Population increased 14.24% from 2000, a gain of 47 people, and this population is approximately the same size as what existed in the town in 1950. Historically, the town was once geographically larger (the Towns of Jefferson, Fulton, and Gilboa were all created from the Town of Blenheim) and the current town boundaries were not established until March 16, 1848. After the new town boundary formation, the population ranged from a high in 1870 of 1,437 people and steadily declined to a low of 260 people in 1970. The population since 1970 has fluctuated between the mid 200s and mid 300s. The racial makeup of the town is 97.3% White, 0.80% Black or African American, and 1.6% Hispanic or Latino.

There are 158 households of which 22.8% have children under the age of 18 living with them, 52.5% are married couples living together, 7% have a female householder with no husband present, and 3.8% have a male householder with no wife present. 29.1% of all households are made up of individuals and 4.4% have someone living alone who is 65 years of age or older. The average household size is 2.39 and the average family size is 2.88.

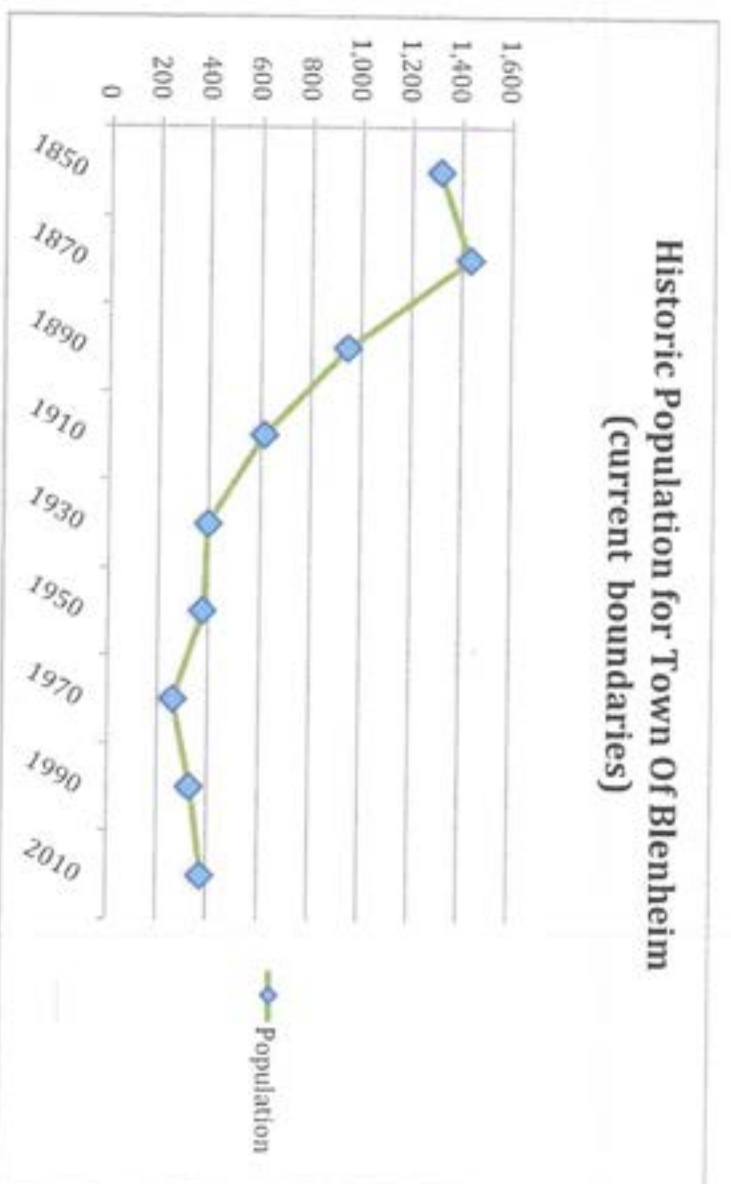
The Town age distribution is spread out with 22.1% under the age of 19, 2.7% from ages 20 to 24, 21.8% from ages 25 to 44, 28.4% from ages 45 to 64, and 23.1% who are 65 years of age or older. The median age is 47.7 years.

The median income for a household in the town is \$50,833, close to the median for NYS - \$55,603 and Schoharie County - \$50,864. The median income for a family is \$53,393. The per capita income for the town is \$20,865. 18.3% of the population and 8.3% of families are below the poverty line. In contrast, 11.4% of people in the County are below poverty level. Out of the total Town population, 25.9% of those under the age of 18 and 26.5% of those 65 and older are living below the poverty line.

Approximately half of the housing units in Blenheim are seasonal. There are 361 housing units – 158 occupied and 203 vacant. Of the 203 vacant, 177 of these units are seasonal/recreational use.

Approximately 271 people are 16 years or older in the Town. Of the over-16 labor force, 120 are employed with a 9.8% unemployment rate. The average travel time to work is 32 minutes. The occupation breakdown is as follows (out of 120 total): 54 –

management, business, science, and arts; 24 – service; 13 – sales and office; 24 – natural resources, construction, maintenance; 5 – production, transportation, and material moving.





## Community Vision

The community vision reflects the vision first generated by the community during recovery efforts following devastation from Hurricane Irene, as part of the Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery planning process. Subsequently, Comprehensive Plan Committee members reviewed and updated this vision in light of the Comprehensive Plan Survey results.

*Blenheim is a resilient community dedicated to preserving and protecting our numerous natural resources, local culture, and historical heritage, while attracting sustainable small businesses, young families, seniors, and retirees. Blenheim's unique quality of rural lifestyle is strengthened by awareness and promotion of the blended values presented by a revitalization of traditional and niche agriculture, small business, entrepreneurship, art, and tourism. In the face of enormous adversity, we are moving confidently towards a bright future. Blenheim is tiny, but sturdy.*

*Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Committee, 2012*

## Plan Elements

### **Public Safety, Infrastructure, and Services**

Public infrastructure includes the facilities and systems that provide municipal services, such as the Town Hall, fire stations, libraries, and the street, water, and sewer systems. Long-term planning for community growth requires provisions for installation of public improvements and the provision of new infrastructure to accommodate development.

In 1997 the County of Schoharie instituted a 911 system and every residence in the Town of Blenheim was assigned a unique number for the road where it resides. Police are dispatched through the 911 system; state troopers typically respond from the Cobleskill office. The Town is under the fire protection district of the Blenheim Hose Company, Inc., located at 1748 State Route 30. The Town Hall, including a meeting room, Judge's and Town Clerk's offices, and post office, also reside at this location. The Town contracts with Middleburgh Emergency Volunteer Ambulance Corp (MEVAC) in nearby Middleburgh, NY, for ambulance service. MEVAC or a County Emergency Medical Services Coordinator provides advanced Life Support (ALS) service. Blenheim does not have a public water or sewer system.

Blenheim residents indicated via the community survey that they are generally satisfied with emergency response and other services in the Town, though many favor improving or expanding ambulance services and fire protection as needed. Residents are largely in favor of sharing/combining services with nearby towns (i.e., road maintenance, snow removal). The majority of survey respondents also indicated that they see no need to add or expand public facilities such as public water and sewer facilities, the Town garage, or the Town Hall. However, most are in favor of land acquisition for siting Town facilities in areas removed from the flood plain.

A significant majority of survey respondents indicated ongoing concern regarding Schoharie Creek and stream flooding and the need for stream bank stabilization and erosion control. Blenheim citizens continue to share concern regarding dam safety (Gilboa Reservoir, Blenheim-Gilboa Power Project) and the oversight and regulation of the existing propane gas pipeline. Given the town's experience during Hurricane Irene and prior experiences with the pipeline explosion, the Plan addresses issues related to emergency and disaster mitigation and response.

The Middleburgh Telephone Company (MIDTEL) is the predominant provider of telephone, cable, and broadband service to the area, amongst others. Cable and broadband, however, are not offered on all the county roads in Blenheim, leaving sections of the town without coverage. Cell phone coverage is generally not available in Blenheim. Depending on the service provider, cell signal may be received on Route 30 by the Hager Cemetery, various spots on Burnt Hill and Cole Hollow Road, and in the Lansing Manor parking lot. In response to the community survey, residents indicated that they find cable service, cellular telephone service, and high-speed Internet services to be poor. The majority are concerned about the lack of cell coverage and many favor improving high-speed Internet access.

**Goal 1:** Improve technological services (e.g. cellular service, high-speed Internet, cable) throughout the Town of Blenheim to improve entertainment, increase safety, and encourage the growth of small businesses.

**Objective:** Work with local utilities, providers, and the New York Power Authority (NYPA) to determine best way to expand cellular service in the region.

**Objective:** Work with local utilities to determine how and where the expansion of high-speed Internet and cable service should proceed.

**Objective:** Work with public officials and legislators to promote rural broadband legislation.

Objective: Continue to implement "Town Wide Cell Phone Service Coverage" project and "Broadband and Community-Wide Wireless" project as described in the *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*.

**Goal 2:** Government services are delivered in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.

Objective: Continue to study and pursue consolidation of highway services with local Towns and/or Schoharie County.

Objective: Maintain training for highway crewmembers by participating in programs such as the Cornell Local Roads Program and the Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District ditch clearing/hydro-seeding training.

**Goal 3:** Ensure residents and visitors in the Town of Blenheim are safe in the event of large-scale hazards.

Objective: Continue to implement the "Hydrology and Engineering Study of Schoharie Creek" project as described in the *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*.

Objective: Comply and implement applicable actions in the Schoharie County All-Hazards Mitigation Plan. Although flood and dam break are the major concerns, assure that other hazardous situations are not ignored, including, but not limited to, wildfires and NYPA water releases.

Task: Explore land acquisition and funding for Town emergency evacuation center/shelter.

Task: Continue to implement the "Town Facilities Upgrade" as described in the *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*, including exploring relocation of the Town Highway Garage to the County Highway Outpost.

Objective: At a minimum, ensure that development in special flood hazard areas complies with the Town of Blenheim Flood Damage Prevention Law.

Objective: Improve communication with Schoharie County Emergency Management Office.

Task: Appoint a Town Emergency Management Liaison.



Task: Develop a reliable method of communication between the Town and County Emergency Operations Center. As a "front line" town next to the New York Power Authority (NYPA) Dam, notification from NYPA should be made to County and Town of Blenheim at the same time.

Task: Develop a reliable method to notify public in floodplain regarding New York Power Authority water release.

Task: Develop a reliable method to notify the public regarding pipeline work, safety, and emergencies.

Task: Explore using siren system for other hazards besides flood/dam break.



## Transportation and Streetscape

The Town of Blenheim's transportation system is comprised of its highways, rural roads, and recreational trails. The existing transportation system in Blenheim is highly effective in moving goods, vehicles, and people within and through the community. Together, these transportation systems have helped to shape the rural character of the town and will continue to influence its development into the future. The components of the town's transportation system often share the public realm across the entire public right-of-way, resulting in the frequent interaction between vehicular traffic with pedestrians, farm tractors and equipment, and occasionally farm animals. It is thus important that all components of the transportation system be considered in relation to one another to ensure a safe and efficient transportation system.

New York State Route 30 is the primary north-south highway that traverses the eastern part of Blenheim. County routes North Road and West Kill Road are the primary east-west routes; Blenheim Hill Road is another primary county road, which runs SW-NE. According to the NYSDOT Highway Inventory, there is currently a total of approximately 66 miles of road throughout the Town of Blenheim:

Town:	21.96 (6.17 of this is seasonal)
County:	15.72
State:	6.77
Private:	9.13
State land roads:	12.53

The majority of Town expenses are related to highway maintenance and repair activities, which consume 58% of all expenditures.

In terms of public transportation, Schoharie County Public Transportation provides bus routes throughout the county. At this time there is no bus scheduled that serves the Town of Blenheim. The town lacks pedestrian amenities, including crosswalks and pathways of any kind, requiring pedestrians to walk along the shoulder of the road directly adjacent to traffic.

The majority of survey respondents considered road conditions, Town road maintenance, and snow removal in the town to be "adequate to good." Residents are in favor of paving Town roads but are opposed to paving private roads. Roughly half of the survey respondents have concerns about speeding and heavy commercial truck traffic in Blenheim. Expanding public transportation options is not a current concern for the majority of respondents.

In terms of Main Street use and image, the majority of respondents are currently opposed to formal sidewalks and street lighting in Blenheim. However, residents did indicate general support for non-vehicular pathways, such as bike paths, hiking trails, and equestrian trails.

**Goal 1: NYS Route 30 continues to serve as the primary traffic route through the Town.**

**Objective:** Calm traffic speed and increase pedestrian safety on NYS Route 30 in the Hamlet of North Blenheim.

**Task:** Meet with NYS Department of Transportation Regional Engineer to discuss inexpensive methods to calm traffic in North Blenheim (e.g., wider lane markings, crosswalks, bulb outs, and other streetscape elements).

**Task:** Investigate "Complete Streets" program and policies regarding potential future streetscape improvements that would facilitate and create options for safe pedestrian and cyclist mobility within the hamlet.

**Objective:** Consider adopting a Road Preservation Law to protect Town roads from impact of heavy vehicle use, perhaps similar to one adopted by Schoharie County.

**Objective:** Solicit further public input regarding the "Main Street Sidewalks, Lighting, and Landscaping" project as described in the *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*.

**Task:** Further survey and get public input from Town residents, especially property owners and residents of North Blenheim to determine if pedestrian upgrades are warranted.

**Goal 2: Town of Blenheim residents better utilize existing public transportation opportunities.**

**Objective:** Work with Schoharie County Department of Transportation to increase the knowledge of and/or availability of county-sponsored transportation for residents, especially for senior citizens, to provide access to shopping areas and health care facilities.

### ***Community Resources and Involvement***

The Community Resources and Involvement element encompasses resources, activities, and services that contribute to the human needs of Blenheim citizens and the community's overall well being.

Blenheim enjoys a long history as part of the "Breadbasket of the Revolution" and residents value the town's rich history. The Old Blenheim Covered Bridge opened in 1855 as a wooden covered bridge. The open span of 210' was the longest for a single-span covered bridge in the world until flooding caused by Hurricane Irene destroyed the bridge on August 28, 2011. The Blenheim Schoolhouse Museum resides in a historic one-room schoolhouse located on its original site along East Side Road in the hamlet of North Blenheim, across from the bridge location. Another area that contributes to the character of the community is the North Blenheim Historic District, comprised of 25 contributing buildings and 1 contributing place (the Presbyterian Church); this district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 due to its significant architectural examples of the Greek Revival Style. Blenheim residents rate the historical richness of the area as very important to the town's future, and a strong majority are in favor of the creation of a registry/publication of the historic sites in Blenheim. The majority also favored improvements related to the historical society, rebuilding of the schoolhouse, and rebuilding the Blenheim Bridge.

Most of Blenheim is served by the Gilboa-Conesville School District. All of Bear Ladder and side roads thereof to the north are served by Middleburgh School District, with the exception of one property. North Road is primarily served by Jefferson School District. Blenheim survey respondents considered the quality of the school districts very important to Blenheim's future.

Blenheim does not offer any healthcare services within the town limits. However, several medical hospitals are located within an approximately 60-mile radius, including the following:

Cobleskill Regional Hospital, Cobleskill, NY  
Bassett Healthcare, Cooperstown, NY  
A.O. Fox Memorial Hospital, Oneonta, NY  
Margaretville Memorial Hospital, Margaretville, NY  
The Albany Medical Center, Albany, NY  
St Peter's Hospital, Albany, NY  
Other hospitals in the Albany area



Blenheim, and Schoharie County itself, do not have any nursing home facilities. A few are located within a 30-mile radius, including Robinson Terrace in Stamford, NY and A. O. Fox Memorial Hospital Nursing Home of Oneonta, NY. Nursing home care may be found within a 60-mile radius, at the Mountainside Residential Care Center in Margaretville, NY, as well as in the Albany area. Adult care, special needs, and in-home care, as well as many health care providers, are located within Schoharie County and in surrounding areas.

In terms of community services, the majority of survey respondents found proximity to healthcare and social services to be "poor to adequate." The majority consider the quality of community services to be very important to Blenheim's future, and would favor adding local health care services, senior services, and youth services. Residents also favor the idea of town events and activities that contribute to a strong sense of community in Blenheim, including art programs, community events, senior and youth programs, and seasonal town decorations.

### **Goal 1: Promote the preservation of historic sites and historic resource education in the Town of Blenheim.**

**Objective:** Update and maintain Town historic inventory.

**Task:** Create a Town historic site registry/publication.

**Objective:** Continue to implement the "Bridge School House Museum Restoration" project as described in the Town of *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*, as well as other significant historic sites.

**Objective:** Educate and increase the viability of the North Blenheim Historic District.

**Task:** Work with NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and others to determine ways to educate and secure funding for the preservation of the District.

**Objective:** Rebuild the Blenheim Covered Bridge at original location.

**Task:** Continue to assist the County in securing federal, state, and private funds for the covered bridge rebuild.



Task: Continue to implement the "Blenheim Bridge Restoration Concept" project as described in the Town of *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*.

**Goal 2: The full range of Town of Blenheim residents has access to high quality and affordable healthcare.**

Objective: Educate people on the location of current healthcare facilities and pursue closer facilities.

Task: Pursue a visiting health care program through a regional hospital and Schoharie County Health Department.

Objective: Continue to implement the "Community Services Needs Assessment" project as described in the Town of *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*.

**Goal 3: Activities for the full range of Town of Blenheim residents and visitors are made available.**

Objective: Continue to explore options for a multi-use facility to provide community services (e.g., senior and youth programs, visiting doctor/health care options) and recreational facilities. The current Town Hall may be such facility if new Town Hall/Fire Station is located outside of the floodplain.

Task: Continue to implement the "Community Cultural Center" project as described in the *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*.

Objective: Work with Schoharie County Youth Bureau and Schoharie County Office of the Aging to introduce youth and senior activities or encourage Town residents to better utilize existing programs.

## Open Space, Recreation, and Tourism

Blenheim's scenic beauty, access to outdoor recreation, and location within a wealth of state forest lands are highly valued by the community. In the community survey, residents rated the town's rural character and scenic qualities as very important in Blenheim's future.

Blenheim has two primary park settings in the center of town. One park is located behind the Town Hall, offering picnic tables, a pavilion, and community-wide access to the creek. The second, Bridge Park, is the most active community open-space area within the hamlet, commonly used as an outdoor gathering space for Blenheim community events. Projects identified via the *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan* seek to commingle a connected parks and trails system throughout the town. This park and trail system would allow residents and visitors to enjoy Blenheim's scenic beauty and become a dotted line connection to other regional parks such as Mine Kill State Park and the Long Path. Blenheim's scenic beauty and natural setting are also one the town's greatest assets when it comes to tourism. With the abundant acreage of state forest in Blenheim, there are numerous outdoor sports available for residents and visitors alike (e.g., snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, hiking, camping). The Lansing Manor Museum is a significant tourist attraction to the area, as was the Blenheim Bridge prior to its devastation in Hurricane Irene.

Blenheim residents strongly supported promoting the local natural environment as a tourism asset, indicating that Blenheim should encourage outdoor sports and recreation areas as a land use. The majority are in favor of creating bike paths, hiking trails, ATV/snowmobile trails, and equestrian trails. Residents are also in

**Water bodies, Floodplains, Streams, Creeks –** Lower Blenheim-Gilboa Reservoir falls predominately within the Town boundary. The western portion of the Upper Reservoir is also in Blenheim. Both reservoirs are part of the New York Power Authority's Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project. Streams running through the Town are the Schoharie Creek, Mill Creek, West Kill, Mine Kill, Betty Brook, Cole Brook, and Doney Hollow Creek. Floodplains along the Schoharie Creek, West Kill, and Mill Creek total 1,262 acres – most of which is located along the Schoharie Creek.

**Wetlands –** Four New York State (NYS) wetland areas, between 12 and 27 acres in size, are located to the north of Burnt Hill Road; another area of approximately 30 acres is found to the east of Duck Pond Road near its intersection with Burnt Hill Road. A NYS wetland of approximately 22 acres in size can be found along the Mill Creek, just south of North Road, near its intersection with Blenheim Hill Road. A series of smaller NYS wetlands is located south of Welch Road and east of Cornell Road, near the intersection of the two routes; these wetlands total approximately 22 acres.

**Agricultural District –** There are 1,819.5 acres (or 2.8 square miles) of land area in the Schoharie County Agricultural District 1 on both sides of, and generally close to, the Schoharie Creek in Blenheim.

**Forests –** The 2001 National Land Cover Dataset classifies 18,108 acres of land in Blenheim as "Deciduous Forest," "Evergreen Forest," or "Mixed Forest." In other words, 82% of the 21,974 acres in the Town of Blenheim are classified as forested. An additional 1,257 acres, or 5.7% of the Town's land area, is classified as "Woody Wetlands" and does have some level of forest cover associated with it.

favor of tax incentives for preservation of open space. A strong majority of Blenheim residents supported the idea of holding Town events and utilizing current natural resources to encourage tourism in the area. As well, residents supported improvements in the overall image of the town, including better enforcement of the junk law and establishing dedicated property cleanup days.

**Goal 1:** Raise community awareness of residents' and property owners' responsibility to help maintain the appearance of the Town.

**Objective:** Commence Town clean up days. One day can be dedicated to private property/streams and a separate day for public property/roadsides/ditches.

**Objective:** Offer assistance to property owners to help clean up property in an effort to minimize regulatory measures and violations.

**Goal 2:** The Town of Blenheim is a great place to live, visit, and recreate with activities for both residents and visitors.

**Objective:** Continue to implement the "Blenheim Parks and Recreation Plan" project and "Main Street Beautification Plan" as described in the *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*.

**Task:** Pursue plans and funding for recreational opportunities related to the Schoharie Creek (e.g., kayaking, canoeing, fishing) and development of a trail system for hikers, equestrians, and ATVs.

**Task:** Create, encourage and support a task force of Town "trail users" to pursue membership in the Schoharie County Trail Association to help create public, multi-use trail or trails in the Town of Blenheim.

**Task:** Work with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to coordinate utilization of the various trails through State lands. Actively participate with the State as they develop new forest management plans to ensure that the needs and concerns of Blenheim are incorporated. Other users such as equestrian, ATV, snowmobile should be accommodated as much as possible. Parking areas for access should be adequate and maintained.

**Objective:** Utilize Town owned property (e.g., flood acquisition properties) for the maximum recreational benefit of all.



## Town of Blenheim Comprehensive Plan 2014

---

**Objective:** Continue to implement the "Town Marketing and Tourism Strategy" project as described in the *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*.

**Objective:** Consider developing a welcome packet for new residents to include relevant information on town government, activities, plans, maps, and other items of interest.

**Objective:** Promote the Town of Blenheim as a great place to live and/or do business through websites and brochures.



### ***Economic Development***

As of 2013, the economic base of the Town of Blenheim consists of two companies – one state owned and one private – a range of agricultural businesses, one garage, a number of individually owned and home-based businesses, and a community of artists. Commencing operation in 1973, the New York State Power Authority (NYPA) is the largest employer within the borders of the Town of Blenheim. The NYSPA currently employs over 100 individuals, however, few are local residents. The Mine Kill State Park, adjacent to the NYSPA, is a local employer of area teens during the summer swimming season, giving preference to local residents. Half of the survey respondents indicated that they find proximity to employment to be “poor” in the Blenheim area.

A number of entrepreneurial ventures exist in the Town of Blenheim. Blenheim Pharmacal, Inc., which began operation in 2004 as a pharmaceutical packaging company, currently employs 23 full time employees. The Covered Bridge Garage has been locally owned and operated since 1986 (formerly Moore's Auto Service, 1945-1985). Other locally run businesses include custom woodworking, a computer-consulting business, and lumber businesses.

A large portion of the town's acreage is devoted to agriculture. The most recent addition to the farming community is the Blenheim Hill Farm, which provides natural and organic meat and produce to New York City. The Shaffer farm, which is over 100 years old, currently operates a small beef cattle business. The Parsdale Farm, an operating farm since 1710, continues to produce hay. Royal Oak Farm has been operating for 134 years (as of 2013), and today produces various agricultural products including sunflower seeds, soybeans and corn. Mattice's River Bank Farm, a working farm since before 1832, offers diverse wholesale produce, including items such as sweet corn, pumpkins, and tomatoes. Mattice's River Bank Farm hires 3-10 part-time employees at various times throughout the growing season.

A number of artists live in Blenheim, representing a wide range of talents in woodworking, welding, pottery, and other artisanal crafts. The members of the Comprehensive Planning Committee believe that these individuals represent a largely untapped economic resource for the Town of Blenheim.

Blenheim residents indicated via the community survey that they believe the preservation of current farms, support for farming and agricultural business opportunities, as well as local job opportunities in general, will be very important in Blenheim's future. The majority of residents favor tax incentives for bringing businesses into the community.

**Goal 1: Encourage compatible economic development and actively promote local arts, culture, and agriculture.**

**Objective:** Explore the interest of the local business owners in the establishment of a small business committee to become a liaison between the Town Board and Blenheim businesses, and to undertake such tasks as deemed necessary to encourage business development. The committee would work on the following:

- Survey and catalogue current residents reporting as a business and all non-resident based businesses that can be located. Find out their needs and explore possible means to support them.
- Interview experts and businesses newly located in other towns to find out what initially attracted them.
- Conduct a survey of residents to find out how many are considering starting a business, what types of business they are considering and what help they need to proceed.
- Obtain facts and information useful to prospective businesses, including obtaining information about availability of utilities and Town services.
- Study the implications of this information and compile the results as recommendations to the Town Board and, if one exists, Advisory Board, Planning Board.
- Become an ongoing liaison between businesses / prospective businesses and the Town Board and other Boards (as they exist).

**Objective:** Sponsor events with local agriculture and artists to promote these businesses and to attract tourists.

**Objective:** Work with Schoharie County economic development officials to entice agricultural economic development in the County that would benefit farms in Blenheim. This may entail encouraging, within the town or nearby, the relocation or start-up of agricultural service businesses such as: feed stores, tack shops, veterinary supply, farrier services, farm equipment parts and repair shops, farm supply operations, farm services, etc. as a means of supporting local farms, broadening the tax base and providing employment for local residents.

**Objective:** Continue to implement the "Economic Development Plan" project, "Blenheim Farmers and Artisans Market" project, and "Small Business Incubator" projects as described in the *Blenheim Long Term Community Recovery Plan*.

**Objective:** Municipal facilities will be made available for special events, exhibits, and use by area arts organizations as appropriate, based on availability, capacity, and associated costs.



## **Housing**

The major focus of the Housing Element is to ensure the availability of quality housing for all throughout Blenheim, via new construction or rehabilitation of existing housing stock. There are 361 housing units in the Town of Blenheim – 158 occupied and 203 vacant – according to the 2010 US Census. Approximately half of the housing units in Blenheim are seasonal/recreational use (accounting for 177 of the 203 “vacant” housing units). During flooding from Hurricane Irene, approximately 30 homes in Blenheim suffered damage. At the time, as described in the *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*, “community members identified the highest need as ensuring housing aid to rebuild and rehabilitate damaged housing.” These workshops also revealed a community interest in longer term housing needs, such as an increased supply of rental housing and building lots located out of the flood plain.

The majority of survey respondents found affordable housing in Blenheim to be good or adequate, and believe affordable housing will be very important in the future. Only a small percentage of Blenheim residents found additional second home development to be important. Survey respondents indicated general support for addressing senior housing needs (e.g., encouraging the development of assisted living facilities).

**Goal 1:** Encourage new construction and maintenance/repair of quality, affordable housing that meets the needs of all age and income groups resulting in housing that is safe, clean, and attractive.

**Objective:** Enforce property maintenance aspects of the New York State Building Code.

**Objective:** Secure grant funding for housing and building rehabilitation.

**Task:** Cooperate with applicable agencies (e.g., Western Catskills Community Revitalization Council, Schoharie Area Long Term Recovery [SALT], Schoharie County Office for the Aging) to identify property owners in need of housing rehabilitation assistance and to obtain funding for housing repairs throughout the town.

**Task:** Survey and collect data on existing housing conditions and continue to implement the “Housing and Resources Coordinator” and “Main Street Beautification” projects as described in the *Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Plan*.



## **Land Use**

The Town of Blenheim passed a Flood Damage Prevention Law as Local Law 1 of 2004; there is currently no zoning law, subdivision regulations, or site plan review. The Land Use element addresses ways to accommodate growth and economic development while respecting the strong rural, small town character and natural resources of the Town of Blenheim. Blenheim residents believe a clean and green environment is very important for Blenheim's future. The Comprehensive Plan survey indicated that residents support the protection, management, and conservation of natural resources throughout the township. A large majority of residents indicated that they share concerns related to stream bank stabilization/creek erosion control, natural gas drilling/hydrofracking, loss of farmland, personal well water quality, loss of natural areas (forest land, meadows, streams), and the Schoharie Creek water quality. A majority of residents are in favor of tax incentives for preservation of open space. Close to half of survey respondents were in favor of adding some form of development planning and site plan review.

**Goal 1:** Protect the rural character of the Town (quality of surface and groundwater supplies, integrity of mapped floodplains, integrity of unique physical environments and wildlife habitats) while promoting appropriate economic development.

**Objective:** Adopt minor land use controls, but allow property owners to maintain strong history of land use rights.

**Task:** Consider drafting and adopting a land subdivision law that incorporates storm water management and erosion control techniques. Encourage residential development in appropriate areas following traditional patterns of rural development by discouraging "sprawl" subdivisions containing lots that are uniform in size, shape, and building design and by encouraging new building lots to follow existing waterways, hedgerows, stone walls, and other distinguishable features whenever possible. Subdivision law can provide guidance and encourage identification of building envelopes on lots, without invoking mandatory regulations.

**Task:** Consider drafting and adopting a town wide land use law that:

- Allows most common uses by right (e.g., single family homes, agriculture, and home based business) as is currently the case.
- Prohibits heavy industrial uses (e.g., natural gas exploration and development, chemical manufacturing, large scale mining) town wide.
- Requires buffering of adult uses from sensitive areas (church, daycare, town hall).
- Incorporates a method for handling abandoned structures and junk.

- Requires site plan review for land uses uncommon in the town (e.g., cell towers, adult uses, light industry, commercial wind turbines, small businesses). Site plan review means the use is allowed, but there may be items such as landscaping, signage, and parking requirements that need to be implemented for public health and safety (i.e., avoid disrupting the agricultural or rural residential nature of the area and avoid nuisances such as misdirected run-off from parking areas, intrusive lighting, loud noises, noxious emissions, excess traffic and other effects).
- Requires minimum acreage requirements for new building lots in sensitive areas such as Agricultural Districts and Special Flood Hazard Areas (except for new building parcels developed for property owner family members).
- Requires new development to provide a buffer between itself and any neighboring active farms.
- Creates a riparian habitat zone for the Schoharie Creek and tributaries to establish undeveloped buffers (size to be determined) that protect water quality and help reduce flood hazards.

Task: If subdivision law is adopted, appoint a Planning Board to review subdivisions; if land use law or any law that regulates land area (e.g., acreage, setback) is adopted, appoint a Board of Appeals. Review by Board for uncommon types of land uses will invoke State Environmental Quality Review to help further ensure that public health and welfare is being protected.

Task: If subdivision and/or land use law adopted, develop written applications and instructions for all types of permits, including forms for violations of local codes.

Objective: Use education materials as much as possible to avoid land use regulatory requirements.

Task: At the sketch plan phase and upon intent to receive a building permit, all subdividers, builders, and property owners should be given educational materials to consider general principals basic to good lot design/development and regulations for storm water, floodplain, and wetlands. Such principals briefly include:

- Avoid building in the center of a meadow.
- Reduce visual prominence by building into woodland edges.
- Maintain irregular field edges when they occur.
- Avoid large setbacks from the road if the lot is small or near a village/hamlet.

- Open up views through limb pruning and selective tree removal, as opposed to clear-cutting.
- Avoid critical wildlife areas and steep slopes.
- Preserve significant site features such as stone walls and large stands of trees.
- Provide for road and trail linkages to future subdivisions.
- Consider using a landscape architect to help prepare major subdivision plans.

**Goal 2:** Protect the quality of surface and groundwater supplies, protect the integrity of mapped floodplains, preserve the integrity of unique physical environments and preserve wildlife habitats.

**Objective:** Town Boards and or Code Enforcement Officer help property owners obtain proper permits including Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans, federal wetlands – Army Corps of Engineers, state wetlands – NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Floodplain Development Permits, as appropriate.



**APPENDIX A: TOWN OF BLENHEIM GENERAL SURVEY 2011**

## Town of Blenheim General Survey 2011

### 1. Please rate Blenheim with regard to the following: (190 surveys tallied)

	Good	Adequate	Poor	COMMENTS
Affordable housing	59	69	21	41 – no answer
Air quality	161	13	2	14 – no answer
Animal control	59	74	20	37 – no answer
Cable service	18	40	89	43 – no answer
Cemeteries	44	95	5	46 – no answer
Electric services	64	85	24	17 – no answer
Emergency response - Ambulance	52	76	27	35 – no answer
Emergency response - Fire	72	71	12	35 – no answer
Emergency response - Police	32	83	40	35 – no answer
Enforcement of junk law	14	52	89	35 – no answer
Enforcement of noise ordinance	40	77	19	54 – no answer
High speed internet services	23	42	86	39 – no answer
Notification of town events	22	77	64	27 – no answer
Preservation of environmental resources (i.e. timber, waterways, scenic view, etc.)	54	80	28	28 – no answer
Preservation of historical landmarks	53	81	30	26 – no answer
Proximity to employment	5	50	96	39 – no answer
Proximity to health services	7	73	80	30 – no answer
Proximity to social services	10	84	60	36 – no answer
Recycling program	61	86	14	29 – no answer
Regulation/oversight of gas pipeline	11	76	48	55 – no answer
Road conditions	44	96	31	19 – no answer
Telephone service – cellular	7	27	136	20 – no answer
Telephone service – landline	66	78	21	25 – no answer
Town road maintenance	73	75	26	16 – no answer
Town road snow removal	94	70	10	16 – no answer
Trash disposal service	64	84	13	29 – no answer
Water quality	93	52	16	29 – no answer
Other (specify)				

Additional Comments:

## 2. Would you generally favor adding or improving any of the following public services or facilities?

	YES	NO	If YES, please check here if you would be in favor of spending tax money to make this improvement
Ambulance service	96	63	<input type="checkbox"/> 62
Animal control	34	121	<input type="checkbox"/> 15
Curbside garbage pickup	30	131	<input type="checkbox"/> 16
Development Planning/Site Plan Review	85	71	<input type="checkbox"/> 29
Fire protection	87	74	<input type="checkbox"/> 49
Health care services (i.e. Clinic)	85	75	<input type="checkbox"/> 28
High speed internet service	92	65	<input type="checkbox"/> 23
Historical Society/rebuilding of museum/Blenheim Bridge	114	53	<input type="checkbox"/> 43
Law enforcement	60	102	<input type="checkbox"/> 24
Public transportation	44	115	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
Public water & sewer	25	137	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
Recreational facilities	68	89	<input type="checkbox"/> 21
Seasonal town decorations (i.e. holiday greenery, flags, etc.)	87	77	<input type="checkbox"/> 26
Senior services (i.e. group activities, outreach, etc.)	97	61	<input type="checkbox"/> 32
Sidewalks	23	140	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Special property cleanup days (i.e. tire day, hazardous waste disposal, etc.)	131	38	<input type="checkbox"/> 44
Town garage	68	94	<input type="checkbox"/> 31
Town hall	54	108	<input type="checkbox"/> 21
Town park	69	89	<input type="checkbox"/> 23
Youth services (activities, community service, etc.)	82	71	<input type="checkbox"/> 29
Other (specify)			<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional Comments:



3. Please indicate if Blenheim should encourage the following land use, development, or business:

	YES	NO	Please check here if you feel comfortable having this near your home	Suggested Location
Agriculture & farming	167	10	<input type="checkbox"/> 113	
Assisted living facility	102	56	<input type="checkbox"/> 54	
Cell towers	145	31	<input type="checkbox"/> 82	
Child care center	99	57	<input type="checkbox"/> 49	
Heavy industry (i.e. chemical plant)	22	145	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	
Home-based business	155	15	<input type="checkbox"/> 81	
Light industry (i.e. assembly work)	134	35	<input type="checkbox"/> 62	
Logging	102	66	<input type="checkbox"/> 42	
Mining	36	132	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	
Natural gas drilling/hydrofracking	42	127	<input type="checkbox"/> 19	
Outdoor sports (i.e. hunting, fishing, etc.)	149	24	<input type="checkbox"/> 80	
Overnight accommodations (i.e. bed & breakfast, hotel, campgrounds, etc.)	150	21	<input type="checkbox"/> 77	
Niche farming and agri-tourism	141	21	<input type="checkbox"/> 75	
Professional services (i.e. dentist, attorney, etc.)	132	29	<input type="checkbox"/> 77	
Recreation areas	133	29	<input type="checkbox"/> 67	
Retail businesses (i.e. restaurants, grocery, hardware, etc.)	157	13	<input type="checkbox"/> 73	
Tourism	139	26	<input type="checkbox"/> 57	
Wind turbines (commercial)	88	76	<input type="checkbox"/> 49	
Wind turbines (residential)	125	44	<input type="checkbox"/> 73	
Other (specify)			<input type="checkbox"/>	

Additional Comments:

4. Is it important for the Town of Blenheim to regulate the following:

	YES	NO	Comments
Adult bookstores and/or shops	121	49	
ATV/snowmobile use	111	58	
Business signs	100	64	
Department of Environmental Protection purchase of land for the New York City water shed	136	38	
Development (i.e. housing, business, etc.)	134	35	
Good management practices for farming and logging	146	30	
Historic character	144	25	
Industrial facilities	139	34	
Junk vehicle storage	138	37	
Land use that adversely impacts the environment	152	23	
Land use that significantly lowers surrounding land values	148	29	
Lighting for commercial use	101	67	
Lighting for residential use	67	98	
Livestock	72	92	
Location of cell/telecommunication towers	130	46	
Location of wind turbines - commercial	127	45	
Location of wind turbines - residential	104	68	
Mining	132	41	
Mobile homes and mobile home parks	125	48	
Natural gas drilling/hydrofracking	145	31	
Noise	125	44	
Scenic impact of structures	119	50	
Subdivisions	125	38	
Threats to agriculture	144	26	
Upkeep of vacant parcels and dilapidated buildings	135	39	
Other (specify)			

Additional Comments:

5. Are you in favor of the following:

	YES	NO	Using Tax Funds	Using Other Funds (i.e. grants, donations, etc.)
Art programs	111	53	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 98
Creating a bike path	103	65	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 82
Creating a hiking trail	112	54	<input type="checkbox"/> 15	<input type="checkbox"/> 84
Creating ATV/snowmobile trails	95	73	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 70
Creating equestrian trails	93	66	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 71
Creation of a registry/publication of historic sites in Blenheim	129	35	<input type="checkbox"/> 35	<input type="checkbox"/> 74
Increased ambulance service	119	39	<input type="checkbox"/> 55	<input type="checkbox"/> 53
Increased fire protection	111	47	<input type="checkbox"/> 54	<input type="checkbox"/> 50
Land acquisition for conservation	80	74	<input type="checkbox"/> 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 56
Land acquisition for future town recreational areas	84	68	<input type="checkbox"/> 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 52
Land acquisition for siting town facilities removed from flood plain	113	42	<input type="checkbox"/> 49	<input type="checkbox"/> 53
Music programs	84	74	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 65
Outdoor athletic fields	82	76	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 55
Paving private roads	27	136	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 19
Paving town roads	146	21	<input type="checkbox"/> 74	<input type="checkbox"/> 42
Police protection	104	55	<input type="checkbox"/> 39	<input type="checkbox"/> 39
Senior programs	112	44	<input type="checkbox"/> 27	<input type="checkbox"/> 60
Sharing/combining services with nearby towns (i.e. road maintenance, snow removal)	131	29	<input type="checkbox"/> 54	<input type="checkbox"/> 33
Sidewalks	29	127	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 21
Street lighting	43	112	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 19
Tax incentives for preservation of open space	103	53	<input type="checkbox"/> 21	<input type="checkbox"/> 38
Tax incentives to bring in businesses	117	46	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 44
Town events for residents (i.e. fireworks, parades, picnics, etc.)	119	39	<input type="checkbox"/> 27	<input type="checkbox"/> 64
Town events for tourism	123	35	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 72
Town park	104	55	<input type="checkbox"/> 27	<input type="checkbox"/> 52
Town playground	97	61	<input type="checkbox"/> 21	<input type="checkbox"/> 56
Utilization of current natural resources/areas to bring in tourism	128	34	<input type="checkbox"/> 21	<input type="checkbox"/> 67
Youth programs	110	48	<input type="checkbox"/> 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 63
Other (specify)			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional Comments



6. How concerned are you about the following:

	Concerned	Not Concerned	No Opinion
Dam safety – Blenheim-Gilboa Power Project	118	32	4
Dam safety – Gilboa Reservoir	132	37	4
Existing propane gas pipeline	132	34	6
Heavy commercial truck traffic (specify road _____ )	85	54	20
Increased traffic (specify road _____ )	55	70	19
Loss of farmland	131	31	7
Loss of natural areas (i.e. forest land, meadows, streams, etc.)	128	36	3
Stream bank stabilization/creek erosion control	147	16	7
Lack of cell coverage	129	37	6
Natural gas drilling/hydrofracking	139	33	1
Personal well water quality	132	30	8
Schoharie Creek & stream flooding	156	11	4
Schoharie Creek water quality	127	39	3
Speeding	95	65	11
Wind turbines - commercial	79	84	9
Wind turbines – residential	44	114	14
Other (specify)			

Additional Comments:

**7. Please rate the FUTURE importance of the following town characteristics:**

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Affordable housing	79	65	25
Clean and green environment (i.e. air & water quality)	144	23	4
Farming and agriculture business opportunities	138	29	8
Historical richness of area	111	52	10
Improved town buildings	71	76	26
Local job opportunities	115	45	11
Local shopping opportunities	72	70	27
More recreation for residents	43	77	46
More second home development	38	61	68
Outdoor sports and recreational opportunities	58	78	35
Preservation of current farms	134	34	5
Quality – school district	121	42	8
Quality – community services	100	57	15
Rural character	139	35	1
Scenic quality	137	34	3
Vibrant tourism industry	64	75	29
Other (specify)			

Additional Comments:

**8. Please take a moment to tell us a bit about yourself (Please circle answer):**

a) Your age group	18-35 (8)	36-55 (66)	Over 55 (109)
-------------------	-----------	------------	---------------

b) Length of Residency/Land Ownership in Blenheim:	0-10 (34)	10-20 (55)	20+ (91)
--	-----------	------------	----------

c) Your Association with Blenheim (circle all that apply):	Own land (147)	Own home (151)	Commercial business (3)
	Rent land (3)	Rent home (2)	Home-based business (14)
	Artist (13)	Farm full time (2)	Farm part time (14)

d) Please specify your residency status in Blenheim:	Full time (104)	Part time (70)
--	-----------------	----------------

e) Where in Blenheim do you live (circle all that apply):	In the hamlet/village (19)	On a private road (35)	On a town road (76)
	On a county or state road (61)	On a farm (15)	Other: _____

f) Why do you live/own property in Blenheim (circle all that apply):	Cost of living (36)	Employment (9)	Rural environment (126)
	Family/friends (68)	Hometown (17)	Housing (10)
	Location (73)	Recreation (49)	Rural character (116)
	Schools (19)	Affordable land (57)	Farmland (33)
	Historic character (42)	Second home (48)	Low crime rate (68)
	Property taxes (50)	Other _____	

**Please include any additional comments that you may have:**



---

## APPENDIX B: MAPS

---

---

---

