

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Ossining is located in the northern section of Westchester County (refer to Figure 1, Location Map). Although the Town of Ossining includes the incorporated Villages of Ossining and Briarcliff Manor, this *Comprehensive Plan* focuses on the Unincorporated Area of the Town of Ossining (refer to Figure 2, Location of Unincorporated Area of the Town) because the Town's planning and zoning powers are limited to the unincorporated portion of the Town of Ossining.

The Town of Ossining is approximately 3.1 square miles in size. The Town is bordered along its southern boundary by the incorporated Villages of Ossining and Briarcliff Manor. The Towns of New Castle, Cortlandt and Mount Pleasant border the Town of Ossining to the north and east. And the Village of Croton-on-Hudson is located to the immediate northwest of the Town.

The primary roadways providing access to and from the Town from the larger region include New York State Routes 9 and 9A, Saw Mill River Parkway and Taconic State Parkway. Other roadways such as North State Road and County Routes 133/Somerstown Road and 134/Hawkes Avenue provide more local connections. [*Note: the roadways are described in more detail in the Transportation section of the Existing Conditions chapter.*]

In addition to roadways, the Town is directly connected to the surrounding municipalities and the rest of Westchester County via public transportation, infrastructure, services, employment, and commercial/shopping opportunities (refer to Figure 1). Similarly, Westchester County and its municipalities are directly linked to the rest of the New York Metropolitan Region.¹ The close proximity and connection to the region, by highways, rail lines and water resources, has impacted Westchester County's employment base and economic sector, job opportunities for residents, population growth, housing, cultural and recreational attractions, travel options, and services. This regional connection is reflected in the data and analysis described in this document.

¹ The New York Metropolitan Region includes Westchester County and the lower Hudson Valley counties, New York City, Long Island and some areas in northern New Jersey and southern Connecticut.

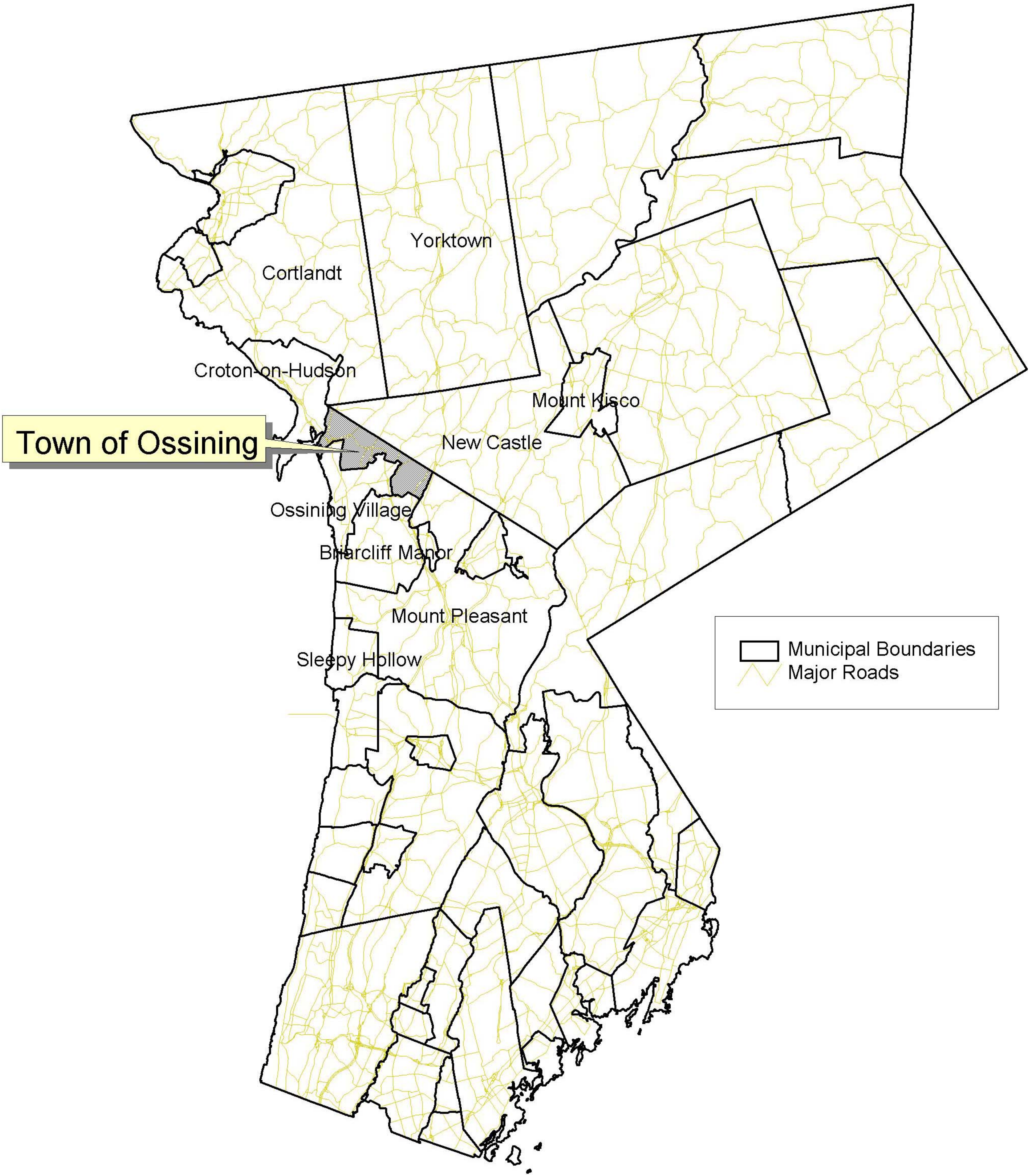
- **Historic Overview**

According to the Ossining Historical Society, the Town was purchased in 1685 by Frederick Philipse from the Sint Sinck Indians, members of the Wappinger Confederacy. The land area was part of the Manor of Philipsburg, which extended from Spuyten Duyvil Creek to the Croton River. Since the last Lord of the Manor of Philipsburg, Colonel Frederick Philipse, was a Loyalist during the Revolutionary War, the Manor was confiscated by the State in 1779. Subsequently, many of the former tenants bought their old farms from the State.

Highlights of the creation of the Village of Ossining, Town of Ossining and Village of Briarcliff Manor include:

- ❖ In 1813 the Village of Sing Sing was incorporated.
- ❖ In 1845, by an action of the state legislature, a new township was created from the northern part of the Town of Mount Pleasant. On the advice of an eminent Indian authority this new Town was christened Ossinsing, a different form of Sing Sing. In 1846, the name was shortened to Ossining which proved easier for people to pronounce.
- ❖ In 1901, local officials changed the name of the Village to Ossining to avoid confusing goods made in the Village with prison-made products that were at that time allowed to be sold on the open market.
- ❖ The Village of Briarcliff, east of the Village of Ossining, was settled during the nineteenth century, and was then called Whitson's Crossing after one of the early families. In 1902 it was incorporated as the Village of Briarcliff Manor, the name was given to it by Walter W. Law founder and chief landowner.

Location Map



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Town of Ossining, New York
September 2000

Note: This map is for general planning purposes only
Source: Westchester County GIS

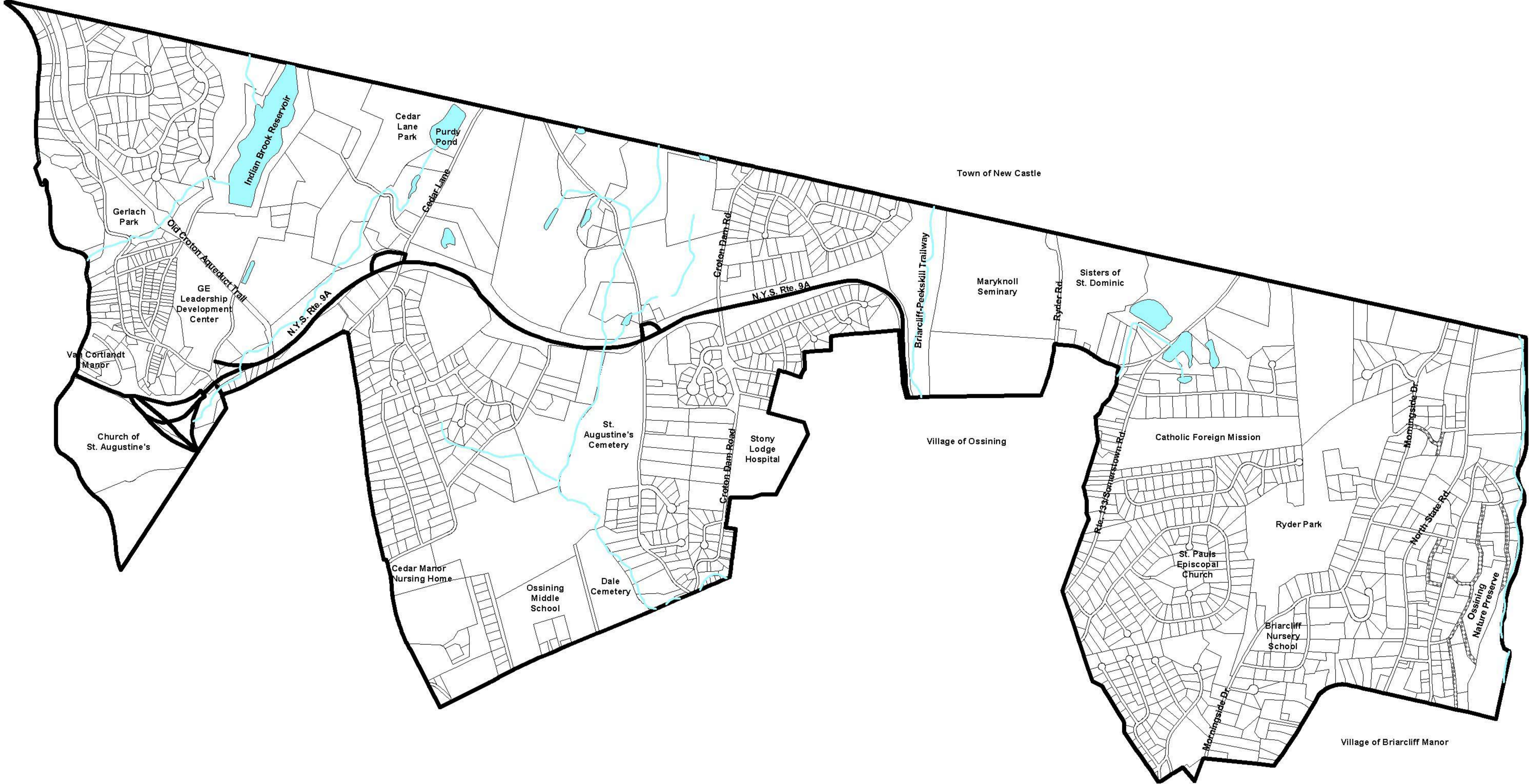


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7000 0 7000 14000 21000 28000 35000 Feet

Figure 1

Location - Unincorporated Area of the Town of Ossining



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Town of Ossining, New York

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800 0 800 1600 2400 Feet

Figure 2

The *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan* is a **vision** document intended to identify the important positive attributes and components which define the Town of Ossining. It is also a blueprint for the community's future. The *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan* provides a lot of information about existing conditions, relevant issues and opportunities in the Town, surrounding Villages and other parts of the County. The *Comprehensive Plan* also contains the goals and objectives applicable to various subject matters ranging from quality of life to community services, which will guide public and private decisionmakers in the short and long term. In addition, the *Comprehensive Plan* identifies hundreds of specific implementation strategies and recommendations which the Town, Villages, residents, businesses, property owners and/or organizations can initiate to help achieve the future vision for Ossining.

The current *Comprehensive Development Plan* for the Town of Ossining was completed in 1969 (more than 32 years ago).

A. **Organization of the Comprehensive Plan**

In order for this *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan* to be user-friendly and easy to follow, the descriptions of existing conditions, issues, opportunities, goals, objectives, implementation strategies and recommendations are grouped together by subject matter (with cross references to other sections of the *Plan* as appropriate). Part One of the document provides an overview about Ossining, comprehensive planning, and highlights the Town's existing conditions, factors and issues relevant to: demographics, housing, transportation, natural resources open space and recreation, land use and zoning, and community services.

The second part of the document contains the "Vision Plan," consisting of chapters on: Community Appearance, Environmental Resources, Residential, Parks and Recreation, Community Services and Facilities, Transportation, and Future Development/Redevelopment. Each of the chapters contains goals, objectives and specific implementation strategies relevant to the subject matter.

Part three of the *Comprehensive Plan* contains the appendix.

B. What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan (also called a master plan or comprehensive development plan) is a document prepared for a community, county or specific region which establishes an overall plan and recommended actions relevant to the current and future needs of the area. Comprehensive plans typically contain: maps, graphics, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material identifying goals, objectives, policies, guidelines, standards, and options for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the community.

As indicated in the following overview, State legislation recognizes the importance of Villages, Towns, Cities and Counties to prepare and adopt their own comprehensive plans:

- (a) Significant decisions and actions affecting the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of communities are made by local governments;
- (b) Among the most important powers and duties granted to a local government is the authority and responsibility to undertake comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens;
- (c) The development and enactment by the local government of a comprehensive plan which can be readily identified, and is available for the public, is in the best interest of the people of each community;
- (d) The participation of citizens in an open, responsible and flexible planning process is essential to the designing of the optimum comprehensive plan;
- (e) The comprehensive plan is a means to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of the community and to give due consideration to the needs of the people of the region of which the community is a part; and
- (f) The comprehensive plan fosters cooperation among governmental agencies planning and implementing capital projects and municipalities that may be directly affected thereby.

C. Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan

This *Ossining Comprehensive Plan* project was undertaken by the Town in 2001. The primary reasons why the Town decided to initiate the planning process were:

- The Town's planning document was outdated and did not clearly identify the community's current vision and specific initiatives to help achieve that vision;
- The Town Board wanted to have a vision and plan for the community to refer to when addressing potential uses and impacts from reuse of properties or development of the undeveloped parcels in Ossining; and
- The Town wanted to be pro-active in dealing with regional and inter-municipal issues, protecting its resources, and planning for community and/or service needs.

The following sections of this chapter describe the role of the Comprehensive Plan Committee and Town Board, public participation, the project background material and formation of the proposed *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan*.

D. Role of the Committee and Town Board

The Comprehensive Plan Committee, Town Board members and other Town representatives have been actively involved with the project consultants in formulating drafts of each component of the *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan*. The Comprehensive Plan Committee is comprised of representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Environmental Advisory Committee, Town staff, civic and business groups, and residents (refer to the list of Committee members listed on the title page of this *Plan*). Various service providers, agencies and communities as well as numerous residents were consulted and input incorporated into the *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan*.

The recommended draft *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan* was referred by the Comprehensive Plan Committee to the Town Board for their review and further action in the planning process, including conducting a public hearing, completing the SEQR review and referrals to appropriate entities, and then adopting the *Plan*.

According to Section 272-a of NYS Town Law, the Town Board has the authority to oversee preparation and adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. State legislation also specifies that the effect of adopting a Comprehensive Plan is that:

- (a) All Town land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to Section 272-a of Town Law. Land use regulation is defined as "an ordinance or local law enacted by the Town for the regulation of any aspect of land use and community resource protection, and includes any zoning, subdivision, special use permit or site plan regulation or any other regulation which prescribes the appropriate use of property or the scale, location and intensity of development."
- (b) All plans for capital projects of another governmental agency on land in the Town shall take into consideration the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

E. Public Participation

Input from residents, businesses, workers, service providers and property owners has been a very important part of the planning process. Opportunities for the public to identify their opinions and provide a broader perspective on issues and recommendations started with the Public Opinion Survey. Public input and involvement continued throughout the planning process with public meetings and discussions. The project schedule included several Public Workshops, the Public Opinion Survey, a Public Hearing, and numerous meetings with community groups and elected officials. In addition, the public has had opportunities to review and comment on the background sections and the proposed *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan*.

The March 2001 Public Workshop for the *Ossining Comprehensive Plan* was held at the Ossining Community Center. This Public Workshop gave the community a chance to listen to an overview of the planning process, highlights of the Inventory and Analysis material, and the next steps in the *Comprehensive Plan* process; hear about results of the Public Opinion Survey; and participate in identifying issues and opportunities relating to different subject matters.

The October 2001 Public Workshop was also held at the Ossining Community Center and was attended by more community members. The draft Vision Statement, Goals and Objectives were presented by the project consultants and then the attendees actively participated in identifying specific actions, ideas or initiatives that should be considered for the different subject matters. Input from the public

discussion was utilized by the project consultants and Comprehensive Plan Committee in preparing the draft implementation strategies and recommendations contained in this *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan*.

[**Note:** *Public Workshop flyers were distributed around the community, notices placed in local media, articles placed in the Town's Newsletter and Website. In addition, the October Public Workshop meeting was videotaped and shown on the local GoTV television channel.*]

The background material, project information, Fact Sheet and draft sections were distributed at the public meetings as well as made available at Town Hall; newsletters were sent to the community with updates about the project from the Supervisor and meeting announcements; press releases were submitted to the media; and involved groups and organizations helped distribute material to their members and interested people. In addition, all of the material and the proposed *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan* were placed on the Town's website, allowing the community to download the *Plan* and submit their comments to the Town prior to adoption of the final *Plan*.

Other public outreach efforts occurred with individual groups, organizations and community members. This planning project was also coordinated with the Villages of Ossining and Briarcliff Manor and Town of New Castle on issues and potential initiatives of common interest.

F. **Background Material**

Several major tasks were completed during the process of developing the *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan*. These tasks helped compile the necessary data and information about various subject matters, issues and opportunities, as well as public opinion, which were used to prepare the background materials and establish the framework for the *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan*.

- **Inventory and Analysis**

The Inventory and Analysis/Basic Studies was the first component of the *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan* project. This material provides an overview of the Town's (and other communities') history, current conditions and future trends. The Inventory and Analysis/Basic Studies material contained a wide range of data, analysis and information regarding the following topic areas: demographics, environmental resources, transportation, land use, housing, the commercial areas, open space, parks and recreation, and community services and facilities.

The information contained in the Inventory and Analysis/Basic Studies material was derived from local, regional, State, and Federal sources. The project consultants reviewed previous plans and studies (for the Town, surrounding municipalities and the County); compiled and reviewed a wide array of reports, data and information; contacted various organizations involved in applicable projects and efforts; then prepared analysis for each of the topic areas.

Subsequent components of the planning process included the Public Opinion Survey Analysis, a Development Potential Analysis of certain study areas in the Town, Planning Analysis, preparation of a Vision Statement, along with Goals and Objectives, Recommendations and Implementation Strategies for various subject matters. The end result is this *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan*.

- **Public Opinion Survey**

The public opinion survey was mailed to 2,229 residents, merchants/tenants and property owners in the Unincorporated Town of Ossining. Careful attention was given to developing a database for the mailing which targeted people within the Unincorporated Areas of the Town, and not property owners in the Villages of Briarcliff Manor and Ossining.

A total of **328** surveys were received and tabulated for this analysis, which results in a **14.7% response rate**. The strong response rate indicated that local residents, businesses and property owners were interested in expressing their opinions on issues of concern to them and identifying subject matters for consideration in the *Comprehensive Plan*. In addition to responding to options listed for each survey question, most respondents took the opportunity to provide written comments for many of survey questions — several respondents actually attached pages to their survey with more written comments. The results and analysis for the survey are contained in the *Public Opinion Survey Analysis* report.

- **Development Potential Analysis**

A thorough *Development Potential Analysis* was prepared for seven study areas in the Unincorporated Area of the Town as part of the planning process. Criteria, methodology and information were prepared to evaluate and map the underdeveloped and vacant parcels in the Town. The *Analysis* resulted in calculation of “net” acreage and possible development potential within each of the seven study areas. This information was then used by the project consultants, Comprehensive Plan Committee and Planning Board to prepare some of the policy

recommendations and implementation strategies which are contained in the *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan*.

- ***Vision Statement, Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies***

The Comprehensive Plan Committee first prepared an overall Vision Statement for the *Plan*. This Vision Statement defines the future vision of the community and established the foundation for the rest of the Vision Plan chapters.

Once the Vision Statement was finalized (and public input received on the draft version), Goals and Objectives were prepared for the different subject matters. The Goals and Objectives evolved out of information and analysis prepared for the Inventory and Analysis/Basic Studies material, the *Ossining Public Opinion Survey* as well as input about issues and opportunities from the Comprehensive Plan Committee and project consultants. Input from the public outreach meetings, held in connection with the project, was also incorporated into the material.

The subsequent project task, preparation of the Implementation Strategies, supports the Goals and Objectives. The Implementation Strategies provide another level of detail by describing **specific** initiatives and actions for implementing each of the Objectives within each subject — as well as identifying key groups which should be actively involved in each initiative. The Vision Statement, Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies form the basis for this *Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan*.