

SECTION 4: TOWN PROFILE

Profile information is presented and analyzed to develop an understanding of a study area, including the economic, structural, and population assets at risk and the particular concerns that may be present related to hazards analyzed later in this plan (e.g., low lying areas prone to flooding or a high percentage of vulnerable persons in an area). This profile describes the general information of the Planning Area (physical setting, population and demographics, general building stock, and land use and population trends) and critical facilities located within the Town of Blooming Grove Planning Area.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Town of Blooming Grove Planning area includes the Town of Blooming Grove and two incorporated villages (Village of South Blooming Grove and the Village of Washingtonville) within the Town's boundary. This section presents a brief history of the Planning Area.

The original inhabitants of the area were the Waranawandogons, the Catskills, and the Warwarsings. These were all a part of the Lenni Lenape. During the 1680's Colonel Patrick Mac Gregorei was granted right to purchase land from the native people to settle at the mouth of the Moodna Creek. The Town of Blooming Grove was first settled in the early 1720s and was previously named Cornwall Township. Industry grew in the form of flour mills, rag mill, and saw mills using the Satterly Creek for power. In 1830, an eastern part of the Town was incorporated into the Town of Hamptonburgh, and in 1843 a southern part of the Town was incorporated into the Town of Chester (Van Deusen et al 1908.) Post World War II, the greater New York population grew significantly; creating a market for dairy farmers within the Town of Blooming Grove. The rapid growth and the trend of commuting to work create the feeling of a bedroom community. Despite the changes in occupation and commuting trends, the Town cherishes its rural character, and this can be seen in the vision statement of the Comprehensive Plan (Blooming Grove Comprehensive Plan 2005).

The Town seeks to retain its rural character by directing commercial development in appropriate locations and providing a broad range of housing options (Blooming Grove Comprehensive Plan, 2005 p2-1)

Currently, a good portion of residents commute to New York City for employment via bus and rail services. The Town is located within the triangle formed by three major highways: Interstate 84, New York State Thruway, and New York Route 17. The Town of Blooming Grove's economy has shifted away from agriculture, manufacturing, and industry toward sales and service (Blooming Grove Comprehensive Plan, 2005.)

The Village of South Blooming Grove is physically located within the southeast region of the Town of Blooming Grove. The Village was incorporated in July 2006, and as of 2009, formally adopted a Zoning Code and Planning Board (Village of South Blooming Grove, Date Unknown).

The Village of Washingtonville is physically located within the northern region of the Town of Blooming Grove. The Village was named in honor of President George Washington. First settled in 1731, the Village of Washingtonville contains America's oldest winery. The Village has more commercial enterprises, housing a number of smaller malls. Washingtonville Central school district provides education for residents within the planning area and is located in the Village. The Village of Washingtonville has been successful in redevelopment in housing and increasing commercial business (Orange County Comprehensive Plan, 2010.)

The Town of Blooming Grove governing body consists of a town supervisor, deputy town supervisor, and three board members. The Town also has departments of assessor, building inspector, highway, justice court, parks buildings and grounds, police and senior.

Physical Setting

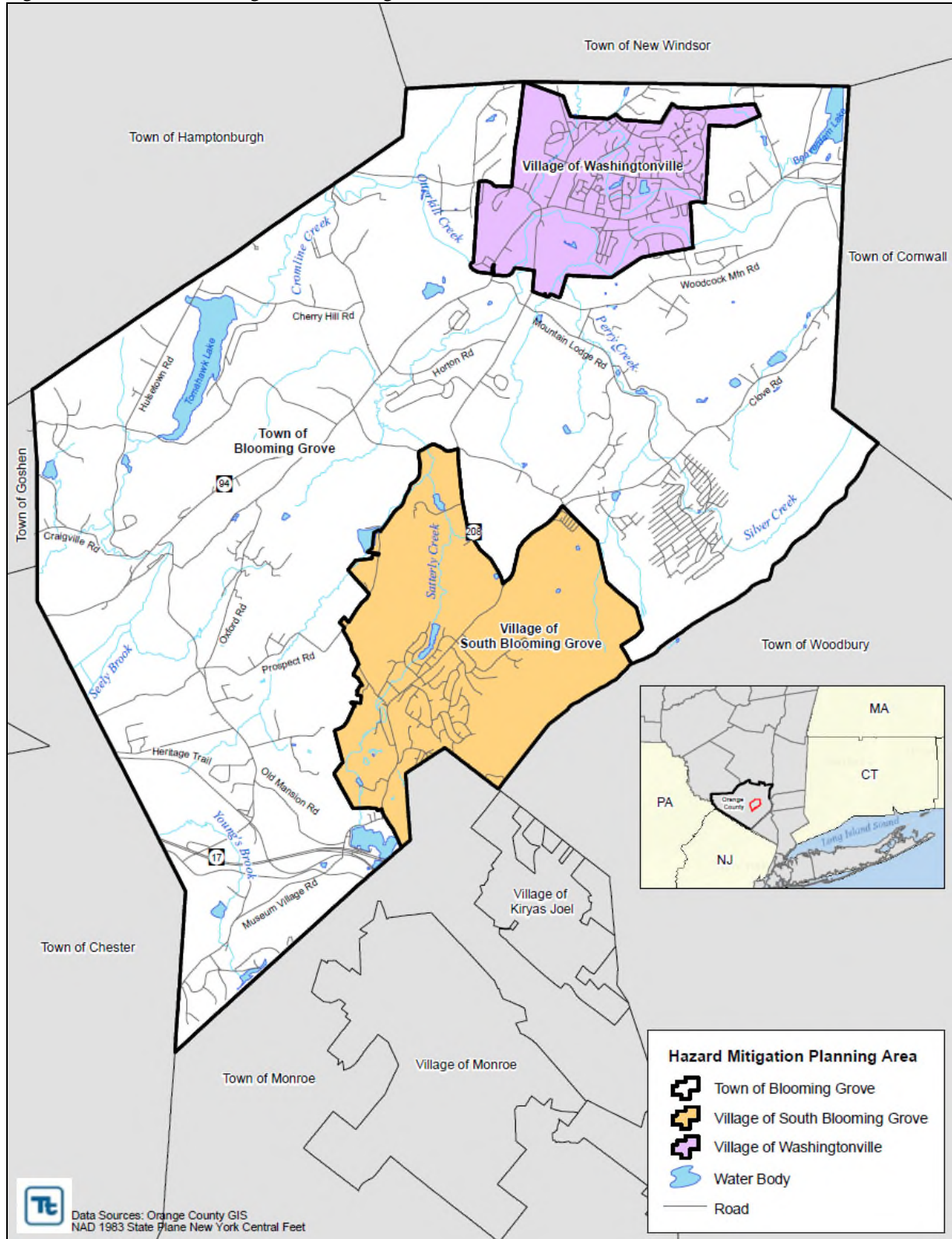
This section presents the physical setting of the Town of Blooming Grove Planning Area, including: location, hydrography and hydrology, topography and geology, climate, and land use/land cover.

Location

The Town of Blooming Grove covers approximately 35 square miles. The Town is located in the central portion of Orange County. The Town of Blooming Grove is bordered to the east by the Towns of Woodbury and Cornwall, to the north by the Towns of New Windsor and Hamptonburgh, to the west by the towns of Chester and Goshen, and to the south by the Town of Monroe and Village of Kiryas Joel (Town of Blooming Grove, 2011). Figure 4-1 displays the Town of Blooming Grove and its villages.

SECTION 4: REGIONAL PROFILE

Figure 4-1. Town of Blooming Grove Planning Area



Source: Orange County GIS



SECTION 8: PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

BACKGROUND

Section 201.6.a(4) of Chapter 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (44CFR) states: “Multi-jurisdictional plans (e.g. watershed plans) may be accepted, as appropriate, as long as each jurisdiction has participated in the process and has officially adopted the plan.” The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and New York State Office of Emergency Management (NYSOEM) both encourage multi-jurisdictional planning. Therefore, in the preparation of the Town of Blooming Grove Planning Area Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), a Planning Partnership was formed to pursue grant funding for the plan and to meet requirements of the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA) for as many eligible local governments in Town of Blooming Grove as possible.

The DMA defines a local government as follows: “Any county, municipality, city, town, township, public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government; any Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or Alaska Native village or organization; and any rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity.”

THE PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

Initial Solicitation and Letters of Intent

Town of Blooming Grove solicited the participation of the Village of South Blooming Grove, the Village of Washingtonville, and the Washingtonville Central School District at the commencement of this project. Local governments interested signed a “Letter of Intent” and/or a resolution committing their participation and resources to the development of the Town of Blooming Grove Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan. Town of Blooming Grove, the Village of South Blooming Grove, the Village of Washingtonville, and the Washingtonville Central School District comprise the Planning Partnership for this effort.

Table 8- 1. Participating Jurisdictions

Planning Partnership
Town of Blooming Grove
Village of South Blooming Grove
Village of Washingtonville
Washingtonville Central School District

Planning Partner Expectations

The Planning Committee agreed to the following list of expectations:

- Establish Plan development goals;
- Establish a timeline for completion of the Plan;
- Ensure that the Plan meets the requirements of DMA 2000 and FEMA and NYSOEM guidance;
- Solicit and encourage the participation of regional agencies, a range of stakeholders, and citizens in the Plan development process;
- Assist in gathering information for inclusion in the Plan, including the use of previously developed reports and data;
- Organize and oversee the public involvement process;
- Develop, revise, adopt, and maintain Volume I of the Plan in its entirety and the local jurisdictional annex in Volume II.

Jurisdiction Annex Templates

Jurisdictional annex templates were created to help the Planning Committee prepare their jurisdiction-specific annexes and ensure all criteria of Section 201.6 of 44CFR would be met, based on the partners' capabilities and mode of operation. The template and detailed instructions were designed to lead each partner through a series of steps that would generate the DMA-required elements that are specific for each partner. The designated point-of-contact for each participating jurisdiction was asked to complete the template using the detailed instructions, guidance from the consultant and technical assistance provided at the jurisdictional annex workshop (discussed below). The templates and their instructions can be found in Appendix F.

Workshop

A series of jurisdictional annex meetings were held for planning participants throughout the months of June, July, and August of 2013. Attendance at one or more of these meetings was highly recommended for the participants. At the meetings, an overview was provided for each section in the annex. The sessions were designed to be instructional, but also to allow for open discussion and questions. In addition, personalized technical assistance was available and provided to each jurisdiction, if needed. Topics discussed during these meetings included:

- DMA 2000 overview
- Jurisdictional Annex Templates Tools
- Jurisdictional Annex Template
 - Overview
 - Risk ranking
 - Cost/benefit review
- How to address vulnerable areas and facilities

The participants were led through an exercise to rank risk for the planning area as a whole. Concurrently, each committee member was asked to review the ranking of each risk specifically for its jurisdiction,

based on probability of occurrence and estimates of potential dollar losses to structures vulnerable to the hazard.

Benefit/Cost Review

Each jurisdiction’s annex includes an action plan of prioritized initiatives to mitigate natural hazards. Section 201.6.c.3iii of 44CFR requires the prioritization of the action plan to emphasize the extent to which benefits are maximized according to a cost/benefit review of the proposed projects and their associated costs.

As part of jurisdiction annex template completion, the Planning Committee was asked to weigh the estimated benefits of a project versus the estimated costs to establish a parameter to be used in the prioritization of a project. This benefit/cost review was qualitative; that is, it did not include the level of detail required by FEMA for project grant eligibility under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program. This qualitative approach was used because projects may not be implemented for up to 10 years, and the associated costs and benefits could change dramatically in that time. Each project was assessed by assigning subjective ratings (high, medium, and low) to its costs and benefits, as follows:

Table 8- 2. Benefit/Cost Review

Costs	
High	Existing funding levels are not adequate to cover the costs of the proposed project, and implementation would require an increase in revenue through an alternative source (e.g., bonds, grants, and fee increases).
Medium	The project could be implemented with existing funding but would require a re-apportionment of the budget or a budget amendment, or the cost of the project would have to be spread over multiple years.
Low	The project could be funded under the existing budget. The project is part of or can be part of an existing, ongoing program.
Benefits	
High	Project will have an immediate impact on the reduction of risk exposure to life and property.
Medium	Project will have a long-term impact on the reduction of risk exposure to life and property or will provide an immediate reduction in the risk exposure to property.
Low	Long-term benefits of the project are difficult to quantify in the short term.

Using this approach, projects with positive benefit versus cost ratios (such as high over high, high over medium, medium over low, etc.) are considered cost-beneficial and are prioritized accordingly. For many of the initiatives identified in the action plans, participating jurisdictions may seek financial assistance under FEMA’s HMGP or PDM programs. Both of these programs require detailed benefit/cost analysis as part of the application process. These analyses will be performed when funding applications are prepared, using the FEMA model process. The Planning Committee is committed to implementing mitigation strategies with benefits that exceed costs. For projects not seeking financial assistance from grant programs that require this sort of analysis, the Planning Committee reserves the right to define “benefits” according to parameters that meet its needs and the goals and objectives of this plan.

Completion of the Planning Process

All participating jurisdictions completed the planning and annex-preparation process. Completed jurisdictional annexes are presented in Section 9.