

2007 Water Mill Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Online Survey

*Purpose: Help the CAC focus our efforts as
we communicate to Southampton Town*

February 12, 2007

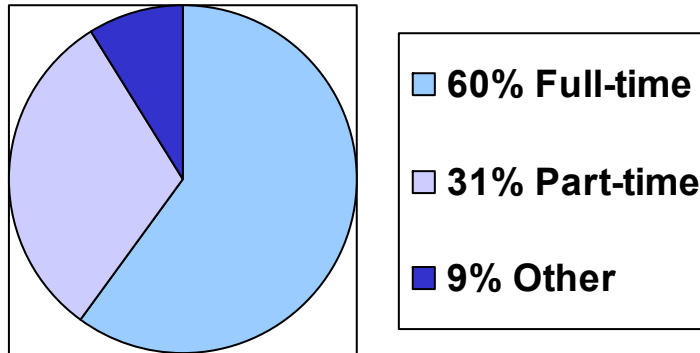
About the Water Mill CAC Survey

- Questionnaire developed during two CAC meetings.
- In January 2007, emailed to 138 people on the CAC mailing list.
- Survey link forwarded to leadership of WM Museum and Community Club for forwarding to their membership.
- Publicized in *Southampton Press* “Grist of the Mill” and in a news article.
- Additional post cards distributed through WM Post Office.
- Survey button on CAC Web site.
- Total of 114 survey responses.
- 75% (85 people) came from the original CAC mailing list.

This survey is a slim cross-section of Water Mill residents. Maybe only 10% of home and business owners. So we should use these findings as guidance and not make assumptions that opinions represent the entire hamlet.

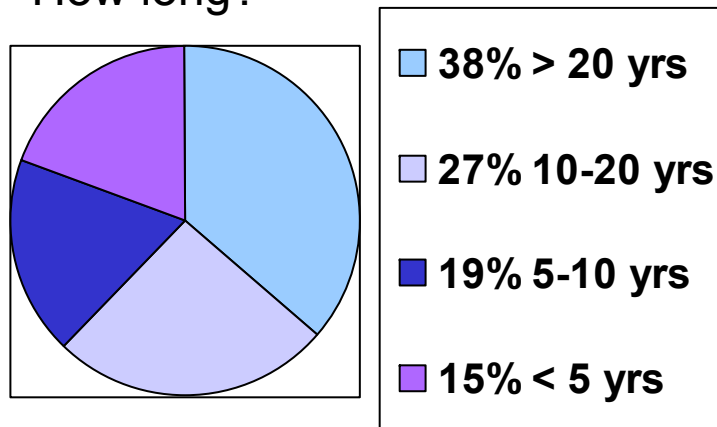
A cross-section with a bias towards full-time, long-term residents


How much?



- **37% Within walking distance of the Water Mill Hamlet center**
- **36 % Overlooking agricultural preserve**
- **27% Situated either on, or within view, of a Water Mill pond, bay or oceanfront**

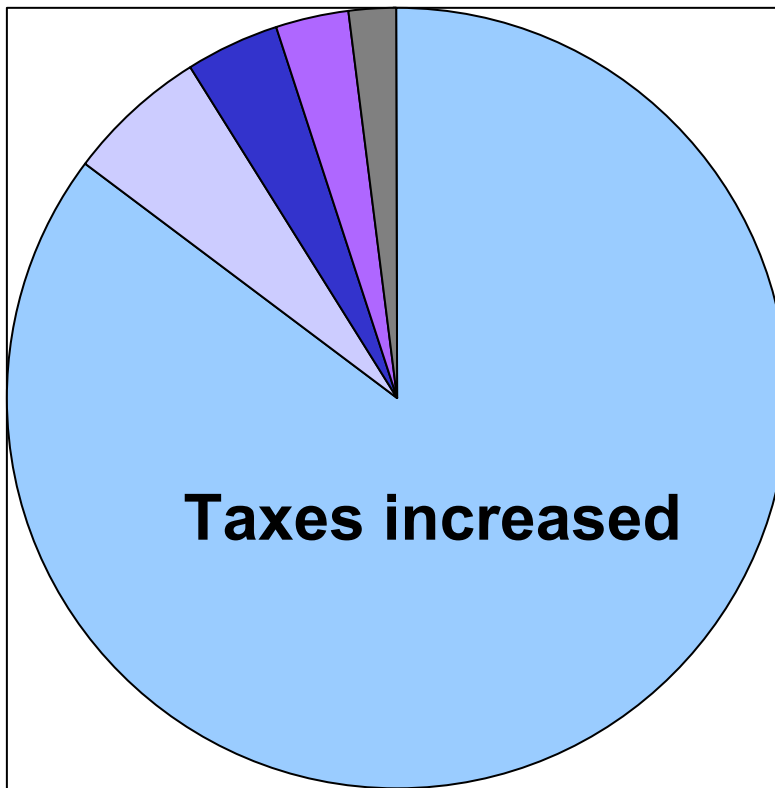
How long?




- **71% are registered to vote in Water Mill, 29% are not**
- **9% operate businesses within walking distance of the Hamlet center or on Montauk Highway**
-  **22% work from their homes**

In the past two years, how has your tax bill changed?

(not your assessment, but the actual amount you are required to pay to the Tax Assessor)



- 86% Taxes increased
- 6% Taxes decreased
- 4% Don't know
- 3% Same
- 2% Don't Pay

 People in this survey who have lived in WM for less than 5 years did not have tax increases

We are most satisfied with the status quo of:

- 71% Friendliness of community
- 68% Fire protection
- 66% Neighborhood security
- 63% Beach lifeguards
- 62% Police protection
- 61% Ambulance service
- 59% Quality of ocean beaches

??? Would we like any of these to be higher?
??? What can WM residents do?
??? What can SH Town do?

The Top 7 Hot Topics

1. Road safety and traffic
2. Containment of residential and commercial development
3. Preservation of land and rural character
4. Quality of ponds and bays
5. Enforcement of zoning violations
6. Road litter
7. Flooding and road run-off

The Top 7 Hot Topics

7. Flooding and road run-off

76% Unsatisfied with storm drains to control flooding

73% Unsatisfied with control of road water run-off

- *"I can't escape from my home on **Flying Point** if there is a nor'easter because of the flooding during and after ordinary-strength storms."*
- *"**Head of Pond and Upper Seven Ponds Rd.** coming off the bridge where water settles summer/winter. Especially in winter needs storm drain to avoid accidents on ice. Instead they (Town) spends money continually repairing the asphalt which gets washed away with the standing water. More economical and safer to install storm drain by fire plug. A one time fix."*
- *"**Seven Ponds Road coming off of David White's Lane** is a major flood area. This road is heavily trafficked as a short cut to Scuttlehole Rd. and Sag Harbor so should be high on the list for more drainage. One storm drain at intersection going into **Upper and Lower Seven Ponds**."*
- *"There used to be delicious watercress in the stream alongside the **Hamptons Alliance Church**, but with the runoff directed into the stream, the watercress, the shellfish, and the bay south of it have both suffered in quality."*
- *"**Hayground Rd.** is a problem during heavy rains - it can become a lake very quickly."*
- *"We know **Deerfield Road north of Head of Pond** may be a challenge after a heavy rain fall."*
- *"There should be more drainage to prevent the rainwater from entering **Mill Pond**."*
- *"We live in an area that floods easily and have had many scary incidences over the years. **Water Mill Towd and Deerfield** have problem runoff during even moderate rain storms... cars are stuck and damaged."*
- *"The town continues to spend money on elaborate road improvements and flooding still is a major problem."*
- *"The flooding problem is obvious to see after a heavy rain. Why doesn't anyone do something?"*

info@ourwatermill.org

??? Besides the list submitted to Town Hall, what else can CAC do?

??? What can WM residents do?

??? What can SH Town do?

The Top 7 Hot Topics

6. Road litter

7. Flooding and road run-off

77% believe removing road litter needs improvement

- *“There is a growing amount of litter on the streets in this community.”*
- *“Eliminating litter on residential streets are very important issues for our quality of life.”*
- *“There should be fines imposed for littering. Signs should be posted in this regard.”*

The Top 7 Hot Topics

5. Enforcement of zoning violations
6. Road litter
7. Flooding and road run-off

78% Unsatisfied with enforcement of zoning violations

53% believe signage code enforcement needs improvement

47% believe business code enforcement needs improvement

- *“Code enforcement is seldom, if ever, seen.”*
- *“Position of Town Highway Superintendent should be an ELECTED position, not appointed (cronyism has prevailed regarding this position).”*
- *“Signage and night lighting seems to be overlooked. Greatly affects the sense of the quality of the community.”*
- *Enforce the removal of plantings on the highway right of way, pruning back the existing intersections to allow for safer driving conditions.”*
- *“No recreational vehicles on the beach.”*
- *“Not adequately enforced: signage; speed limits; cell phone use; use of preserved land.”*
- *“CR 39 along by Brick & Stone looks like a dump considering it is the gateway to the Hamptons.”*
- *“Change building guidelines, i.e.. setbacks, square footage, pyramid law, amount of building lot coverage, the number of people per house, do year round rental regulations and hire more code enforcement.”*

78% Unsatisfied with enforcement of zoning violations

- *“ Home with more than 2 persons per legal bedroom or more than 4 vehicles for a 3 bedroom house.”*
- *“ Architectural Review board - should be strengthened. No buildings on ag reserve land.”*
- *“ Chariots of Fire should not be storing large amounts of old cars and these should be cleaned up. There should not be any "junk yards" in Water Mill.”*
- *“ It would help if the ZBA were abolished. Having a Board, the essential purpose of which is to approve violations of zoning laws, is a waste of the taxpayers money and contributes to unneeded and destructive development. It's like having a Felony Board of Appeals, where one could go to explain the reasons one had for stealing from the 7-11, e.g., I wanted the money...”*
- *“ Less variances to the zoning code permitted, and more public scrutiny of them. Do not hold hearings on short notice on weekdays - part-time residents are feeling really shafted on those - and we pay just as much in taxes as everyone else.”*
- *“ One-acre zoning has destroyed the south side of Water Mill. Let it not happen across the highway.”*

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??? This is a continuous issue
CAC has been on top of.
What can we further do?
??? What can WM residents do?
??? What can SH Town do?

The Top 7 Hot Topics

4. Quality of ponds and bays
5. Enforcement of zoning violations
6. Road litter
7. Flooding and road run-off

79% unsatisfied with the quality of our bays and ponds

(increases to 87% if you live near a bay or pond)

- *"Have not ventured in a few years into bays or ponds, but pleasant memories."*
- *"The over building which leads to more septic systems which in turn endangers wildlife, bays, lakes, well water and ocean. We have only one earth!"*
- *"Trustees should be taking a firm stand to get the town to control run-off, drainage and pollution of the waterways by homeowners, commercial interests and developers and to adequately fund the necessary measures to see this happens."*
- *"Storm drains go back into the ground, the bays, the lake and eventually the ocean. You can't stop mother nature. Does Hurricane Katrina ring a bell?"*

Mecox Bay

- *"Mecox Bay used to be a pleasure to swim in in the 1980's - now it is always too shallow and too much algae."*
- *"It would help the water levels in houses around Mecox Bay and the pond if the "cut" between the ocean and the bay were open more often."*
- *"Mecox Bay and surrounding ponds being choked by various plants."*
- *"The Town Trustees need to make sure the DOT isn't leaving piles of road sweepings on dead end roads near bodies of water like that of Mecox Bay where the waste can wash into the bay."*

Mill Pond

- *"Serious pollution in Mill Pond - this should be a high priority in attention and funding by the Trustees and Town."*
- *"Mill Pond should not be the cesspool for the thousands of geese that pollute with their 1/2 lb of excrement."*
- *"Motor boats should be allowed to promote aeration and re growth of natural plants."*
- *"Lake Nowedoah is an algae infested odorous mess and needs to be refreshed."*

??? What should CAC be doing?

??? What can WM residents do?

??? What can SH Town do?

The Top 7 Hot Topics

3. Preservation of land and rural character
4. Quality of ponds and bays
5. Enforcement of zoning violations
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7. Flooding and road run-off

80% believe we need improvement in land preservation

- *“The selling of the farmlands is the beginning of the end. Soon no one will be able to afford to live here. There will be no “Next Generation”. Land preservation has to be stepped up a notch. Now Thiele and Levy want to eliminate the R.E. transfer tax, are they nuts!!!! The prices of land are going up so we need more money to buy and keep open space!!!”*
- *“Controlling heedless development would be helpful - and really trying to preserve what is left of the farmland.”*
- *“Too much relentless development and the building of ever-bigger houses. More town or PLT purchases of land, or conservation easements, are needed to preserve the rural and small town character.”*

??? CAC has already done a lot here.
Is there anything more CAC
can be doing?

??? What can WM residents do?

??? What can SH Town do?

81% believe preservation of rural character needs improvement

- *“Obviously I want Water Mill to retain its semi-rural nature and include affordable housing for moderate wage earners.”*
- *“More town or PLT purchases of land, or conservation easements, are needed to preserve the rural and small town character.”*
- *“It is important for the hamlet to retain its historic character and to preserve the volunteer community organizations that support the historic and recreational facilities of the hamlet.”*
- *“The threat of widening Montauk Hwy and losing the special historic character of the community.”*

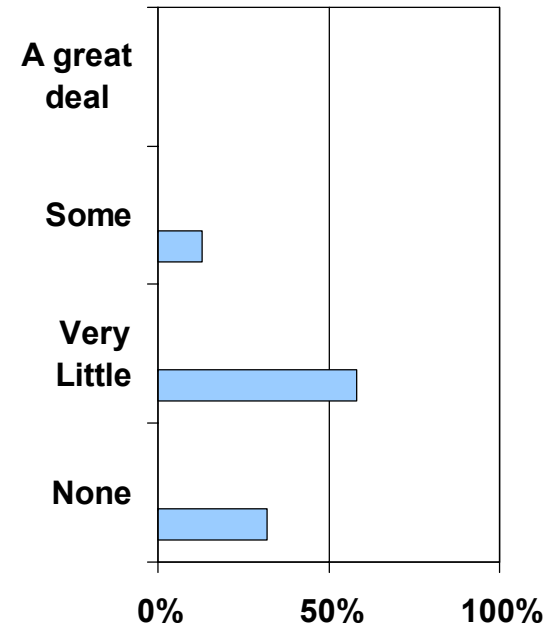
??? Besides land preservation what else constitutes rural character?
What else can CAC be doing?
??? What can WM residents do?
??? What can SH Town do?

The Top 7 Hot Topics

2. Containment of residential and commercial development
3. Preservation of land and rural character
4. Quality of ponds and bays
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87% want very little to no additional residential and commercial development

- *“Much of Water Mill is already gone. I despair that anyone will stop the development.”*
- *“With so much commercial property for sale in the original part of Water Mill village, I feel it is totally unnecessary to indulge in further commercial development - we are liable to end up as a Ghost Town. Let us try to fill up the vacant properties in the middle of the village, before giving permission to develop the land at the extremities - please.”*
- *“I would really like to see the commercialism stopped from creeping from one hamlet or village to another. We do not need to go any further along the path to “strip cities.” We have seen countless examples from other parts of the island, where there are no longer any defined boundaries between hamlets.”*
- *“The closing of illegal businesses; a moratorium on future growth until what is built is filled, rented or sold.”*
- *“Two shopping centers are enough. Control of present commerce - lights, signage, advertising.”*
- *“Fewer McMansions on less than 1 acre lots.”*
- *“Overdevelopment -removal of trees, road congestion, construction of oversized houses.”*
- *“Halting excessive development that will turn Water Mill into a suburban rather than rural area.”*



??? What should CAC be doing?
??? What can WM residents do?
??? What can SH Town do?

It's clear what we don't want, but no majority consensus on what we might support



Opposed or strongly opposed

- 75%** New office buildings
- 72%** New 24-hour mini-mart
- 68%** New auto repair
- 67%** New car wash
- 64%** New multiple family homes
- 63%** New retail shopping areas



Support or strongly support

- 47%** New fire house
- 46%** New ambulance dispatch garage
- 45%** New museum
- 43%** New affordable housing
- 40%** New senior housing
- 40%** New ice skating rink

The Top 7 Hot Topics

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93% say road safety and traffic
need improvement

87% cite traffic and high speed issues on back roads

84% cite road repair

83% cite amount of traffic through WM

- “Controlling traffic, speed with which both private vehicles and delivery/landscape vehicles travel. Total disregard for all posted speed limits. Police don't seem to care.”
- “Too much traffic on non-highway residential roads. Speed limits not enforced.”
- “Some of the police should spend more time to control traffic and speeding i.e. Cobb Road and Cobb Rd West.”
- “Traffic on Montauk Highway. Need better regulation for turning - so as not to be sitting between two lanes of too fast moving traffic.”
- “Excessive speeding on back roads needs to be policed and drivers ticketed. I am particularly aware of it on Head of Pond Road since I live there. Drivers routinely speed at over 60mph. Cyclists, pedestrians, other vehicles are often in danger. Greatly increased volume of traffic/ trucks in the last 2 years.”
- “Speed limits are set too high and not monitored; almost one out of two drivers (including drivers of huge construction vehicles) use their cell phones; perhaps Southampton could become the first town in the state to issue tickets for cell phone use; it would become the safest town in the state!”
- “ I worry for my kids driving around, let alone kids on their bikes.... The police spent an inordinate amount of their time on such a limited section of the road in well known speed trap locations between the small windmill and the 4 corner intersection. Can't they get around more?? Try Deerfield Road, a favorite location for drag speeding motorcycles.”
- “Speeding of traffic on Halsey Lane - have called police, but don't think they check. Parking in front of PO is an accident waiting to happen. If someone is getting out of their car on drivers' side and there is a car in the turn lane, cars coming from the east have to swerve to avoid hitting car person and can hit turn lane car head on.”

??? What should CAC be doing?

??? What can WM residents do?

??? What can SH Town do?

From time to time there are any number of traffic studies and recommendations in various stages of discussion at Southampton Town Hall.

Please rate your level of information on the following issues:

% of people who have no information

- 72% Creating traffic circles on Route 27 (Montauk Highway) at the east and west entrances of Water Mill
- 55% Removing Water Mill Route 27 (Montauk Highway) parking to create four lanes of traffic
- 52% Condemning private property and assuming control of the LIRR right of way to create another roadway
- 46% Increasing bus and rail frequency

info@ourw.

??? Should CAC be doing anything about this information gap?

??? What can WM residents do?

??? What can SH Town do?

Early reviews of these possible solutions....

Creating Traffic Circles

- *"Only traffic circle that works is the roundabout for Rt. 14 in Sag Harbor/North Haven built by the state. Scuttlehole road is a disaster. We would need the scope of the Riverhead Traffic Circle at Peconic Hospital to keep the traffic flowing currently with the major trucks going through. Do we have the room???"*
- *"I can understand the intersection of county Road 39, but hopefully it will flow as smoothly as those in Riverhead, and not be a fiasco like the joke of a circle on Scuttlehole."*
- *"This is a really dumb idea! Just as the Mitchell Lane circle was a dumb idea."*
- *"It would just clog up things more than they already are."*
- *"Prefer traffic circles to additional traffic lights."*
- *"The major problem in Water Mill is the traffic light. I don't see any benefit to traffic circles there. Traffic circles are of the most benefit when major roads intersect. Re the traffic light: the light was put there for the benefit of the businesses in what is essentially an unnecessary shopping center. Get rid of the traffic light and traffic will flow more smoothly. Maybe the businesses would relocate to Bridgehampton Commons, saving everyone trouble."*
- *"I am strongly opposed to traffic circles. Proponents of them should be required to drive for several days in Italy. Or England."*
- *"Circles are not in character with the historic village of Water Mill, they are an eyesore and look totally out of place in the Hamptons - I am not sure even if they really help the traffic flow (which is largely at a standstill for much of the year!)"*

Eliminating parking and 4 lanes through Water Mill

- *"Good idea."*
- *"Opposed."*
- *"Would need to provide more parking for access to Post Office and deli and restaurants."*
- *"I would like to see a pilot project."*
- *"The stores and post office should all have rear entrances to make it easier to get and out-move the post office to alleviate part of the problem-make it free standing like in Wainscott."*
- *"Eliminating parking a good idea - it is not safe to get out of driver's side of car when parked. BUT - NOT to create four lanes of traffic."*
- *"That would be a disaster and ruin the hamlet."*
- *"I am heartily opposed to having 4 lanes through our small town."*
- *"No! More highway means more traffic! Those has been proven in other municipalities in the US."*
- *"As was stated in the Town's Master Plan this is an ineffective way to control traffic. After many years of construction, the road will just fill up again during peak periods. I think the best approach is to leave Route 27 difficult to navigate during peak periods while also making mass transit from the city more attractive."*

Early reviews of these possible solutions....

Rail and bus

- “Since the local busses from Riverhead come in and leave standing room only there are clearly not enough to handle the day laborers; especially in the 5PM to 7Pm time slot in summer when it's dark later..”
- “I would like to see Five Towns Rural Transit plan implemented.”
- “Anything is better than current LIRR service
- “Increasing train service is important.”
- “A train between villages may work.”
- “This would be a great solution, but I have no confidence that even if it were made available the people (weekenders/construction workers) who are responsible for most of the congestion would use it.”
- “Need to provide a transportation alternative to driving on roads, e.g. train trolley service within East End.”

Another roadway alongside LIRR

- “Opposed to using LIRR to create a bypass highway.”
- “Extremely opposed.”
- “Strongly opposed to this idea.”
- “Not in favor too many wetlands involved.”
- “Too much impact on homes, businesses, water bodies and farm fields. I do not think it will happen.”
- “This would generate more traffic. We don't need that. The easier we make it for people to come from the City, the worse our problem is.”
- “To encourage another roadway will invite more traffic. Watermill should not become a suburb type of environment.”

84% believe road repair needs improvement

- *“Road repair near Water Mill Museum.”*
- *“Schwenks Road has not been paved in well over a decade and is full of pot holes. Also ag. preserve land on the west side has a large culvert that drains all its runoff directly onto Schwenks road. The highway department wants people to write letters. In this busy world we should be able to send emails.”*
- *“Potholes. fix them properly and not just 'bandaided'.”*
- *“Improved road paving.”*

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??? What can WM residents do?

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How are they doing?

**We are most satisfied with the police
Least satisfied with Town highway and road
repair, and code enforcement**

**How many of us consider them
satisfactory**

- 46% Town police
- 27% Town trustees
- 17% Town highway and road repair
- 14% Elected Town Council
- 13% Town code enforcement officials

**How many of us consider them
unsatisfactory**

- 57% Town highway and road repair
- 41% Town code enforcement officials
- 27% Elected Town council
- 22% Town Trustees
- 17% Town police

How many believe these institutions community institutions provide objective information

- 75% Water Mill CAC
- 52% *Southampton Press*
- 34% *East Hampton Star*
- 30% *Dan's Papers*
- 20% SH Town Trustees
- 20% New York State elected officials
- 14% SH elected Town Council
- 13% SH Town Government
- 13% Newsday

What else came up?

- *“The deer population....we hit a deer recently with our car and it was traumatic for all.”*
- *“Get rid of the deer! The population is excessive and destructive.”*
- *“Let's control the deer population with commercial hunting.”*
- *“Some of the buildings in Water Mill town center are dilapidated.”*
- *“Stores in community center are rundown.”*
- *“Rundown hamlet center.”*
- *“Store fronts in the hamlet center need improvement.”*

??? What should CAC be doing?

??? What can WM residents do?

??? What can SH Town do?