

# Newsletter

Rochester Residents  
Association, Inc.

Fall 2001

## *In this issue:*

**T**he Association was founded in late 2000 to discuss ways to protect the natural beauty, open spaces, and small town way of life that makes our town attractive. We also aim to provide a forum to encourage and attract business growth in a way that is consistent with the preservation of our quality of life.

An Introduction to the Rochester Residents Association Page 2

*A description of our mission and goals*

Land Use and Ownership in the Town of Rochester Page 4

Census 2000 Summary Page 5  
*How many of us are there?*

Questionnaire on the Future of Rochester Page 6  
*Share your thoughts with us.*

Voter Registration Form Page 9  
*Are you registered?*

Why you should join Page 10

Membership Application Page 11  
*We invite you to become a member*

---

Post Office Box 257  
Accord, NY 12404  
accord-kerhonkson.com

Published Quarterly  
Volume 1, Issue 1

# Rochester Residents Association, Inc.

Fall 2001

Dear Town of Rochester Neighbors:

We're pleased to provide you with a complementary copy of the first newsletter of the Rochester Residents Association, Inc. The non-partisan Association was founded in late-2000 by a group of residents who are committed to preserving our town's rural atmosphere but who, at the same time, realize that growth and development are inevitable. We believe that the sometimes-conflicting goals of preservation and development can be reconciled in a common sense manner that is acceptable to everyone in our community.

There have been a number of instances in the last few years where residents have been hurt by issues in their neighborhoods. Some of the issues have been extremely divisive and many have resulted in lawsuits and other legal proceedings. Every neighborhood has been affected to some degree. We believe that these conflicts have frequently been distorted by rumors, false information, and a lack of understanding of objectives.

The Association was founded to provide a forum to discuss economic, demographic, and other development issues that affect our town in a rational and civil manner, taking into account the history of our town and its distinguished heritage. The Association does not intend to formulate policy; we will, however, attempt to provide unbiased and factual information to assist members and residents in making up their own minds on issues of importance and common concern.

The Association follows a long tradition of local volunteer organizations that have taken the lead in protecting and enhancing the character of our community through informative and constructive dialogue. The natural beauty, open space, and small-town atmosphere that the Association strives to preserve is also a draw to visitors, who contribute to the area's economic base. The Association recognizes that preservation of the local landscape is a key component of a sustainable economic development program for Rochester that relies on tourist dollars to create jobs and build prosperity.

*Continued...*

Post Office Box 257 • Accord, New York 12404  
E-mail: [resident@accord-kerhonkson.com](mailto:resident@accord-kerhonkson.com)

*Contributions to the Rochester Residents Association, Inc. are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.*

# **Rochester Residents Association, Inc.**

At the end of this newsletter is a two-page survey. We would like to hear your opinions on the quality of life in the Town of Rochester as well as your suggestions on how to improve it for future generations. We will publish the results of this survey in a future edition of our newsletter.

We urge you to join our efforts to preserve the positive qualities that make our community a special place. If you have any questions about our activities, please write or send an e-mail to [resident@accord-kerhonkson.com](mailto:resident@accord-kerhonkson.com). We also encourage you to visit our webpage, which is accessible through [www.accord-kerhonkson.com](http://www.accord-kerhonkson.com).

## **Rochester Residents Association, Inc. Advisory Board**

Len Bernardo  
Jessica Lowrie  
John McKinney  
Z. Win

Astrid Fitzgerald  
Dr. Martin Lupowitz  
Charlotte Snyder

Sara Harris  
Mark Lybolt  
Robert Warner, MD

Post Office Box 257 • Accord, New York 12404  
E-mail: [resident@accord-kerhonkson.com](mailto:resident@accord-kerhonkson.com)

*Contributions to the Rochester Residents Association, Inc. are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.*

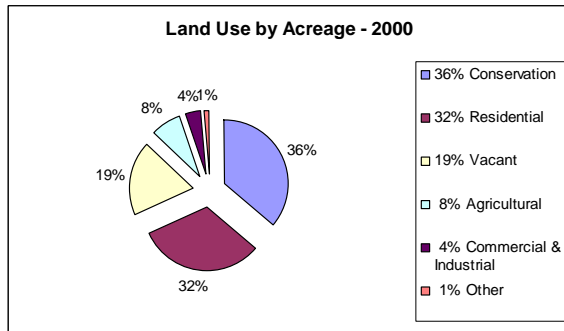
# Rochester Residents Association, Inc.

## LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP IN THE TOWN OF ROCHESTER

According to the 2000 property tax assessment roll of the Town of Rochester, the town consists of approximately 55,250 acres and is divided into approximately 4,525 property tax parcels.<sup>1</sup> The number of tax parcels increases each year through subdivisions. Separately, the town's building inspector recently noted that the number of building permit applications is up this year, with 28 new home and 16 new mobile home permits through May 31, 2001. Permit fees collected increased by 320% over the same period in 2000.

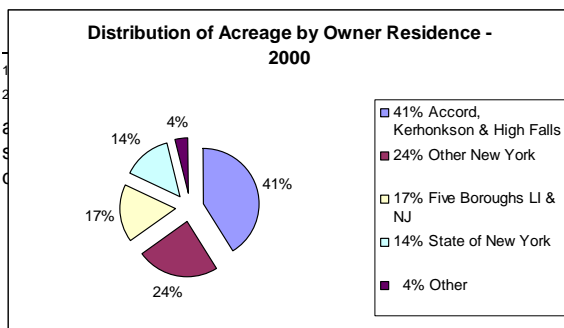
### **By Acreage**

By acreage,<sup>2</sup> 36% of the land in the town is wild forest or conservation woodlands; 32% is used for residential purposes; 19% is vacant residential or commercial land; 8% is designated as agricultural; 3% is used for commercial purposes, 1% is used for industrial applications, and 1% is other. (*Chart 1*)



**Chart 1** shows how land in the Town of Rochester is used according to State of NY usage designations.

Of this land, 41% is owned by people with mailing addresses in Accord, Kerhonkson and High Falls (the three post offices that serve Rochester); 40% is owned by people in other parts of New York State and in the State of New Jersey, and 14% is owned by directly by the State of New York and its agencies. (*Chart 2*)

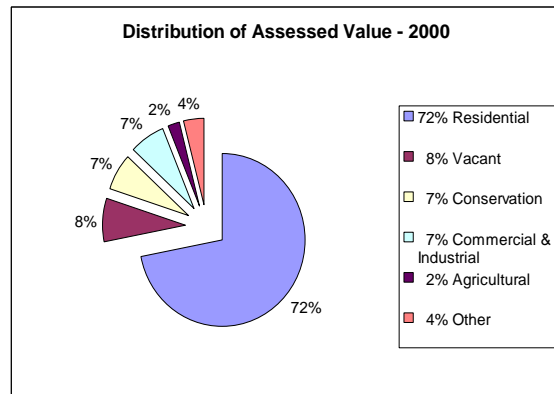


**Chart 2** shows how land in the Town of Rochester is owned according to the location of the owner's mailing address.

### **By Assessed Valuation**

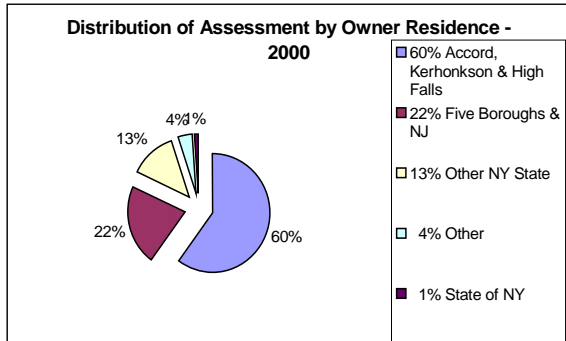
Rochester's tax assessed value is approximately \$325.6 million. This figure represents the sum of the assessed values of all properties in Town. In determining the amount of tax each property owner pays, the assessed value is multiplied by a "multiplier" (that is different for each type of usage, i.e. commercial, residential, etc.) and by the town's standard tax rate.

By assessed value, 72% is comprised of residential properties; 8% is vacant residential and commercial land; 7% is commercial; 7% is conservation, and 2% is agricultural. (*Chart 3*)



**Chart 3** shows the breakdown of the assessed value of the Town of Rochester's 2000 property tax assessment roll.

By assessment value, 61% is owned by people in with mailing addresses in Accord, Kerhonkson and High Falls, 35% is owned by people in other parts of New York State and in New Jersey. (*Chart 4*)



**Chart 4** shows how the assessed valuation of the town is distributed according to the owner's mailing address.

**Conclusions**

These figures demonstrate what is already widely known: (1) that we have a large population of people who own homes and property in Rochester, but who do not necessarily consider Rochester to be their primary residence, (2) a large part of land in the town (14%) is owned by the State of New York (Palisades Interstate Parks Commission), (3) large portions of town (36%) are held by conservation groups (Open Space Institute, Mohonk Preserve, etc.), and (4) residential land and homes constitute the largest percentage by far of our town's tax assessment – industrial and commercial categories represent only a combined 7% of the tax assessed value.

**REGISTER TO VOTE**

If you are not registered to vote, we encourage you to do so in order to exercise your right to determine how our town is governed. The Rochester Residents Association will not endorse or support any candidate or party, but we do believe that voting is an important element of community participation and responsibility. A voter registration form is attached on page 9. Simply complete the form, cut it out and mail it to the Ulster County Board of Elections, 284 Wall Street, Kingston, NY 12401 (tel: 334-5470). You can also obtain the form at the Post Office or on-line at:  
[www.co.ulster.ny.us/elections/registration.htm](http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/elections/registration.htm)

**CENSUS 2000 RESULTS**

The last day to postmark your application is October 12, 2001.

The 2000 Census reported a 23% growth in the town's population since the last Census was taken in 1990. As of the Census date, there were 7,018 residents. Here is the breakdown:

Male	3,546	50.5%
Female	3,472	49.5%

Up to 14 years	1,560	22.2%
15 to 19 years	469	6.7%
20 to 34 years	1,136	16.1%
35 to 44 years	1,286	18.3%
45 to 54 years	1,111	15.8%
55 to 64 years	652	9.3%
Over 65	804	11.6%

The median age was 37.8 years; 93.4% of respondents indicated their race as White, 2.5% indicated Black or African American and 0.5% (each) indicated American Indian and Asian, 2.2% indicated more than one race, with the balance consisting of other designations.

In Rochester, there were 2,688 households as follows:

Family Households	1,831	68.1%
Non-family Households	857	31.9%

Of these, 994 households had children under 18 and 592 included individuals over 65. The average household size was 2.58 people and the average family size was 3.10 people.

There were 3,750 housing units, including 1,062 vacant units (mostly seasonal). Of the 2,688 occupied units, 2,053 were owner-occupied and 635 were renter-occupied.

**VISIT OUR WEBPAGE**

Our webpage is hosted by Accord-Kerhonkson On-Line, which lists all businesses and organizations in town and provides an on-line archive of news about the Town of Rochester. To learn more about our organization visit [www.accord-kerhonkson.com](http://www.accord-kerhonkson.com) and click the link to the Rochester Residents Association webpage.

## **About the Survey**

We have developed the questionnaire that appears on the following pages in an attempt to gauge the attitudes and preferences of our town's residents on questions relating to future economic development, preservation of open spaces, our rural residential and agricultural countryside, and the types of businesses that should be permitted in our neighborhoods.

The town government circulated a similar survey in 1969 prior to the completion of our town's comprehensive plan, which was meant to serve as the guide for future development in the Town of Rochester. Many of the forecasts in that plan have been accurate and it will be useful for future informed debate to have an accurate reading of the current pulse of our community.

This survey is being mailed to all property owners in town. Some people who rent homes may not have received this survey because there are no easily accessible public records that list the names of all residents who rent. We invite people who are in this category to write to us for a copy of the survey and we encourage them to participate by responding.

You do not have to be a member of the Rochester Residents Association to answer the survey; we welcome all responses.

The results of this questionnaire will be published in a future edition of the Rochester Residents Association newsletter. The results of the 1969 survey will also be published in order to see if public opinions have changed in the past 30 years.

If you have any questions, please write to us at PO Box 257, Accord, NY 12404 or contact us by e-mail at: [resident@accord-kerhonkson.com](mailto:resident@accord-kerhonkson.com).

Thank you for your participation.

You don't have to join the Association to respond to the survey.

## Rochester Residents Association Survey

1. Do you favor continued growth in the size of the town's population?

Yes     No  
 Not sure

2. If you favor continued growth in the town's population, how fast should that population grow?

Slowly     Moderately  
 Rapidly     Not Sure

3. Rate the general appearance of the Route 209 corridor.

Excellent     Good  
 Satisfactory     Poor  
 Not Sure

4. What do you consider to be most appealing about living in Rochester? (also use additional sheets)

5. What do you consider to be the least appealing about living in Rochester?

6. During the next ten years, would you like to see economic activity in the town:

Not Increase  
 Moderately Increase  
 Significantly Increase  
 Not Sure

7. Would you like to see future commercial development (retail and service businesses)

Expand  
 Stay the Same  
 Not Sure

8. What type of economic development should be encouraged?

	Yes	No	Maybe	Sure
Agriculture				
Arts & Culture				
Light Industry (industrial park)				
Small Retail/Service Stores				
Large Retail/Service Stores				
Retirement Housing				
Second/Vacation Homes				
Senior Citizen Housing				
Strip Mall Developments				
Logging/Log Yards				
Mining/Gravel Banks				
Tourism				
Trailer Parks				
Affordable Housing				

9. If you believe retail and services businesses should expand what types of retail and service shops would you prefer?

10. Do you believe that local government should develop a long-range plan to increase job and tax revenues or should economic and market forces determine its future?

Long Range Plan  
 Economic Forces  
 Not Sure

11. Regardless of the type of economic development that may occur in Rochester, how important is it to you that the current historical layout of small hamlets and open farm and woodland spaces be preserved?

Very important  
 Important  
 Somewhat Important  
 Not Important  
 Not Sure

12. Should future development in these hamlets be carefully planned for in the town's Comprehensive Plan?

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Disagree  
 Not Sure

## Rochester Residents Association Survey

13. Do you believe it is important to regulate the exterior appearance and size of commercial buildings so they will reflect the historical and rural character of Rochester?

- Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Disagree  
 Not Sure

14. Do you favor including more detailed standards and guidelines in the subdivision and zoning regulations to achieve the following objectives:

	Favor	Maybe	Against
Preservation of Wetlands			
Historical Preservation			
Preservation of Open Spaces			
Better Design in Commercial Buildings			
Preservation of Residential Neighborhood Qualities			

15. Do you favor municipal regulations that include: (more regulation, stay the same, less regulation)

	More	Same	Less
Protection of Ground Water			
Commercial Development			
Commercial Signs/ Billboards			
Excessive Noise			
Forestry Practices			
Home Occupations			
Excessive Junk, Debris, Trash			
Excessive Floodlighting			
Preservation of Views			

16. Are you in favor of zoning? The purpose of zoning is to divide the town into designated sections such as agricultural, residential, industrial, etc., so that the normal business and social activities of one group do not impose intolerable living conditions on another.

- Yes      No

16. Are you in favor of encouraging an industrial park in our Town to attract light industry? Some people think this will increase business and job opportunities and help carry the tax load. Some say it will destroy the Town's rural character.

- Favor      Oppose  
 No opinion

18. In what part of town do you live?

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Road: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Do you have another residence?

- Yes      No

20. Did you complete a Census form in Rochester?

- Yes      No

21. What are the occupations of the adults in your household?

\_\_\_\_\_

22. How far is your home from your place of employment? (in miles)

23. What recreational facilities do you feel the town should provide? (Please circle)

- Ballfields  
 Swimming Areas  
 Picnic areas  
 Skating  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

24. Are you in favor of two story garden apartments or condominium developments in Town?

- Yes      No  
 Not sure

25. Realizing that the town's population is going to increase, would you favor efforts:

- To retain as much as possible the present character of the town  
 Become more (sub)urbanized

26. What are the most important things that need to be done to make this a better town? (use additional sheets if necessary)

27. If we can contact you to discuss this survey, please write your name and telephone number.

\_\_\_\_\_



## **Why should I join the Rochester Residents Association?**

- If your family has been in Rochester for a long time, your ancestors might have fought to protect this area. Joining the Association is a way to ensure that the local characteristics that they fought for are preserved for your children and future generations.
- If you are a recent arrival, joining is a way to meet your neighbors and to learn about what's going on in town and in your neighborhood.
- If you are a metropolitan refugee or second homeowner who came here to get away from it all and aren't interested in "getting involved" it is important to join the Association in order to support efforts to preserve the tranquillity and natural beauty that brought you to our community.
- If you are a farmer or if you own large open spaces, the whole community benefits from the views that your land provides. Join to discuss ways to preserve these spaces and to learn about ways to reduce the cost of ownership through conservation easements, tax breaks, and grants.
- If you are a business owner, it is a good way to discuss ideas about sustainable business activity and to learn how to increase your business activity in a non-invasive manner.
- If you are a developer, the Association provides a forum to discuss ideas that will maximize the value of your investment while at the same time protecting the qualities that make Rochester an attractive community to live and work in.

## **What will my contributions be used for?**

- Production of our quarterly newsletter – despite an all-volunteer staff, we do pay certain production expenses. This newsletter, for example is being sent to over 3,000 households.
- Hosting open meetings and events for our members to learn about and discuss current issues.
- Mailing expenses – we will continue to mail notices of public hearings and information on development issues to households in neighborhoods directly affected by such projects. In the past six months, we have sent over 500 household mail contacts of this type.
- Research – we subscribe to and have access to a number of databases and on-line records that assist us in conducting factually accurate and objective research on matters that have an impact on the quality of life in our residential neighborhoods and our community's economic development. Some of this research will assist in our public and private-donor grant requesting activities.
- Web-based information distribution – we will continue to develop information on our town that is available on our web page.

*The Rochester Residents Association, Inc. is a tax-exempt organization recognized under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.*



Rochester Residents Association, Inc.  
PO Box 257  
Accord, NY 12404

Non-Profit Org  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Accord, NY  
Permit No. 257

**Resident Survey Enclosed**