

Town of Clinton
2025 State of the Town
Michael Whitton, Town Supervisor

I want to acknowledge the new Town Board members, Marion Auspitz and Charlie Dykas. I welcome them to join us to do the important work of serving members of our community.

I also want to thank all employees of the Town of Clinton for their hard work and dedication. I am continually impressed with our employees' commitment to excellence. It is truly appreciated.

History of Clinton

From the Town Comprehensive Plan

Early settlers followed waterways for the obvious benefit to their agricultural enterprises. They also established mills with waterwheels on many of the larger creeks and tributaries. The origin of Clinton's seven hamlets (Bulls Head, Clinton Corners, Clinton Hollow, Frost Mills, Hibernia, Pleasant Plains and Schultzs ville) is tied to a number of these mills, which served to make the hamlets more self-sufficient.

Town population peaked at 2,130 people in 1830, a figure that was not to be surpassed until the 1970 Census. Access to more distant commercial centers such as Poughkeepsie was eased with the coming of the railroad to Clinton Corners in 1870. This was followed by telephone and telegraph lines, the automobile and finally by electric power in the 1930s.

With the development of the industrial centers and the accompanying job opportunities to the south, population began to decline after 1830, reaching a low of just over 1,000 residents by both the 1930 and 1940 Census counts. Access to Clinton from Poughkeepsie and more distant areas, in particular New York City, improved during the 1950s and 1960s when roads were widened and resurfaced. Principal roads like the newly constructed Taconic Parkway and the asphalt surfaced Salt Point Turnpike, Hollow Road and State Route 9G encouraged population growth. The trend that began in the 1930s and 1940s of individuals, often from the New York City area, purchasing property in the town, frequently farms, for weekend retreats accelerated.

Agriculture formed the economic basis for the town from its founding into the mid-to late-1970s. The focus on the products produced continued to change to meet the conditions and demands of the times. During most of the 1800s some 80% of Clinton's landscape was cultivated, in pastures or in meadow. By 2009, less than 10 percent of the town's acreage was coded by the Assessor's Office as agricultural, with 14 horse farms the predominant use. In addition, some lands not coded as agricultural do have secondary agricultural uses. The vast majority of residents that work now do so outside the town. The number of people working from their homes, at least part-time, is accelerating due to the availability of electronic communication means. There is increasing support for doing and buying more locally. In general the population is also aging, with a significant increase in retirees.

Much of Clinton's architectural legacy, spanning the variations of over 200 years of its

history, is concentrated in the seven hamlet areas. However there are many historical intact farm houses and barns along its rural roads. Protection of the town's historic heritage and scenic rural qualities has continued to receive high levels of support from a large majority of the respondents to the surveys associated with the comprehensive planning process.

The 2000 Census showed a town population of 4,010, nearly twice the number there were in 1830, but almost four times the number from 1940. Yet the growth did not reverse the decline in the number of schools in town, nor the number of post offices. Centralized school districts, a trend which began in the 1940s, finally closed all eleven of Clinton's one-room schools. Now Clinton's children leave town every school day to attend public schools in the neighboring towns of Hyde Park, Millbrook, Pine Plains and Rhinebeck. There are no post offices named just "Clinton". The one post office that remains in town, Clinton Corners, compared to the eleven which were present in 1940, attests to the continuing trend in consolidation of services. Most parts of the town are served by post offices in Millbrook, Rhinebeck, Salt Point, Staatsburg and Stanfordville. This means a large percentage of the residents don't have a mailing address with the word "Clinton" in it. Fire protection and ambulance services are divided between two different fire districts, East Clinton and West Clinton. Police protection is provided by the Dutchess County Sheriff's Department, which maintains a small substation in the Town Garage in Schultsville, and by the New York State Police.

There are no central water or sewer systems. All residents are totally dependent on private wells for potable water and on individual septic systems for sewage disposal.

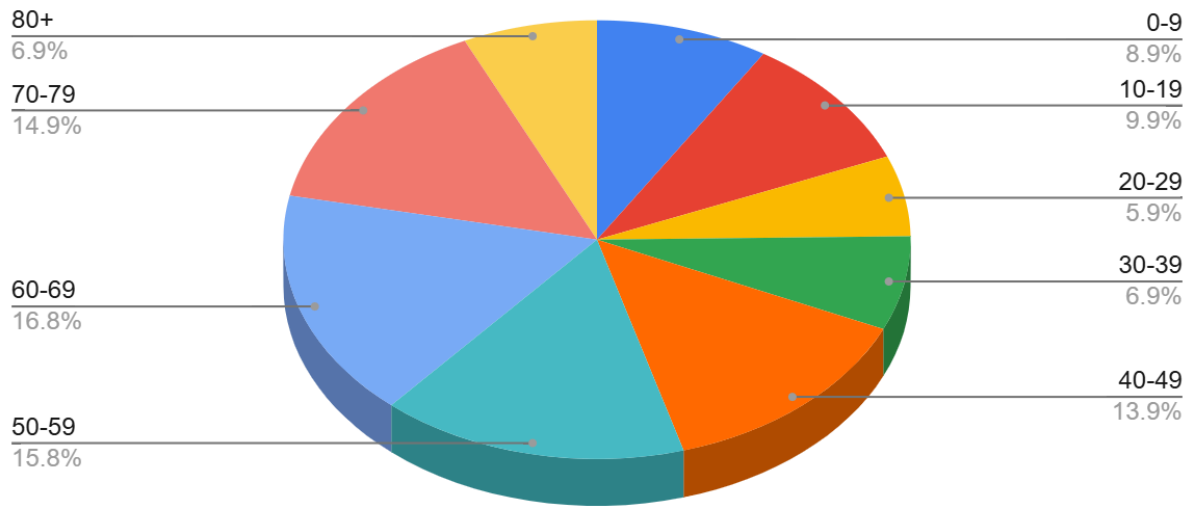
The reality is that there is no Clinton town center to serve as a focus of activities and commerce. As noted above, there are also no public schools that might serve as a community focus. Many, if not most non-residents, and even some residents, may not have a good idea of the town boundaries, given the plethora of mailing addresses.

Given the foregoing history, establishing a clear vision statement for the town that captures the essence of what has been happening has indeed been a challenge.

Statistics

Population (2020 census)	4061
Area (square miles)	38.1
People per square mile	10.5
Median age	54.3
Households	1570
Persons per household	2.5
High school grad or higher	89.6%
Bachelors degree or higher	49%
Population with Veteran status	7.2%
Per capita income	\$83,827
Median Household Income	\$119,615

Percentage by age range

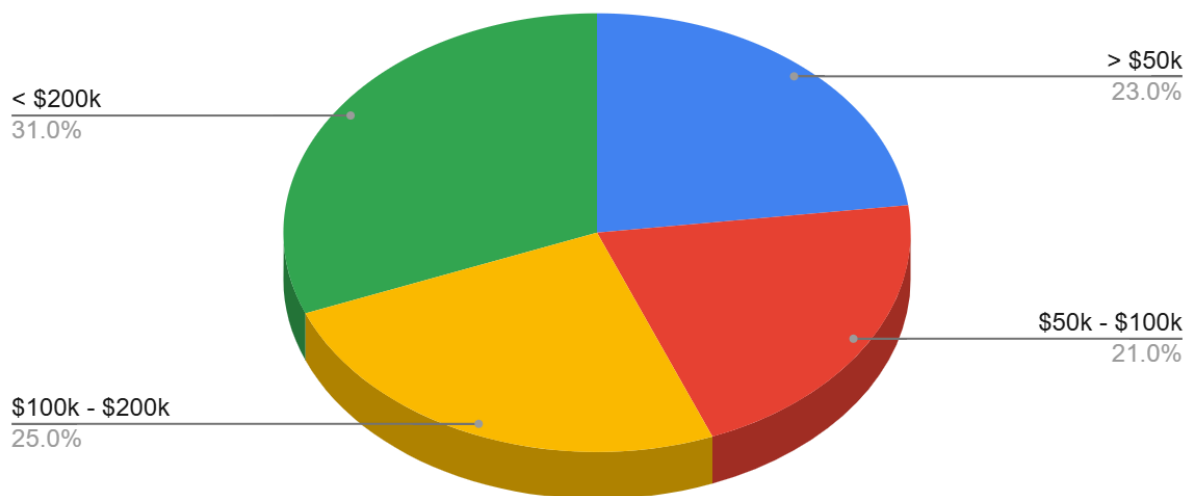


Budget and Taxes

The 2025 Town budget can be found on the Town of Clinton website at www.townofclinton.com

I feel that a budget is a reflection of values. I am also constantly mindful that over 50% of the town budget is funded through property taxes. A great deal of money comes from Sales and Mortgage taxes. These are indirect taxes on residents that are a source of income for the Town.

Household Income



I would like to take a moment to let residents know how few of their tax dollars pay for the vital services received from the Town. When residents tell me “I pay high taxes,” it almost always means “I pay high taxes and I’m not getting value for my dollar.”

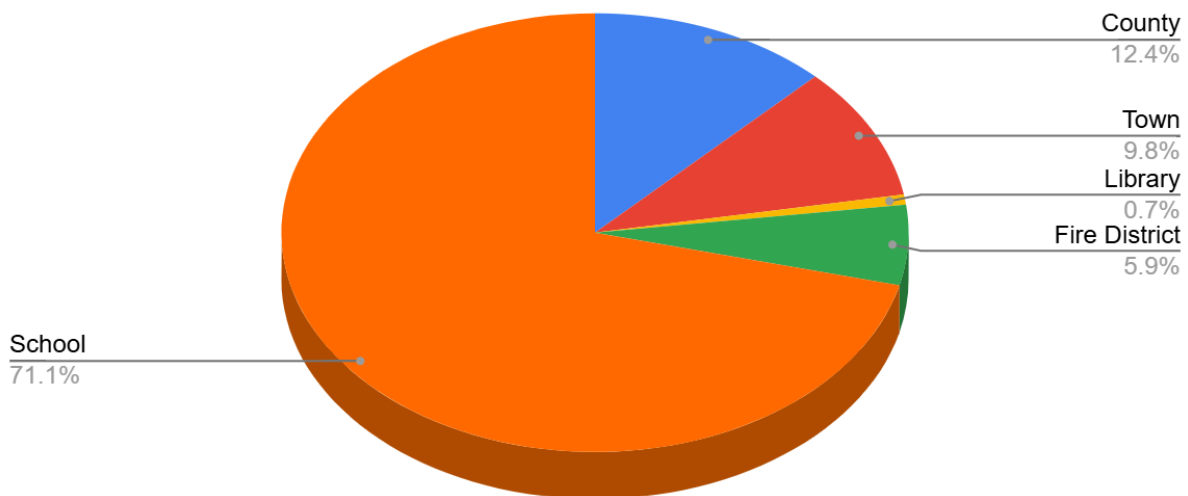
The tax rate for the Town of Clinton is the lowest it has been since 2010 and 2011. In the past 52 years, since 1973, these are the only two years that our tax rate has been lower than the current rate. This is the furthest that Dutchess County records for the tax rate go back.

The percentage of tax dollars that go to the Town varies upon where you live, This is because your property may be located in one of two fire districts, East Clinton or West Clinton. Your property may also be located in one of four school districts, Hyde Park, Millbrook, Pine Plains, or Rhinebeck.

For example, my property is located in the East Clinton Fire District and the Rhinebeck Central School District. Only 10.97% of my property taxes go to the Town of Clinton. The rest is distributed among the school district (67.47%), Dutchess County (13.84%), East Clinton Fire District (6.88%), and the Clinton Community Library (0.83%).

Below is a graph of average tax distribution throughout the Town of Clinton. On average, Town property taxes represent just under 10% of the property taxes paid by our residents. For every dollar paid in property taxes, the Town of Clinton receives less than 10 cents.

Average Property Tax Distribution



2024 Accomplishments

The Town came to an agreement with the Clinton Community Library on a lease arrangement. The library has a new lease with the Town for 99 years. This will ensure that the Clinton Community Library will be a part of our Town for many years to come.

Our Building/Zoning and Highway departments were authorized to purchase and use new software to help make those departments more efficient. The new software will streamline the permitting and approval process for residents; it will also make our Highway Department more efficient in handling repairs and maintaining our roads.

In the interest of improving transparency in your Town government, a Laserfische Public Portal is now available. Anyone should be able to see agendas and minutes of all Town board meetings. This portal also contains local laws passed by the Town Board and completed FOIL requests. To access this portal, go to the Town website (www.townofclinton.com) and navigate to the Laserfische Public Portal under the Government tab.

We have increased security at Francis J. Mark park and the Town Campus in Schultsville. Security cameras were added to these locations. In the long run, this should be a net benefit for users of these facilities, both in safety and money spent. This will make it easier for the Town to monitor safety and prosecute those who break laws on our properties.

Our Hometown Heroes project began in 2024 to great success! Volunteers have installed the first 18 banners honoring Town veterans. More banners will be installed in subsequent rounds. Anyone interested in having or sponsoring a banner should contact the Supervisor office at (845) 266-5853. I would like to thank Dave Stewart, owner of DS Home Services, for devoting his time and expertise to installing the Hometown Heroes banners.

The windows in the Town Hall were fixed and have new shades. Previous to these improvements, the windows could not be opened and the drapes only served a decorative function. Also, the floor in the basement of Town Hall was replaced. This old floor was extremely uneven and unsafe. The new floor looks wonderful

and has been evened out. These improvements were paid for with grant funds.

The Town of Clinton is serious about protecting our environmental resources in our agricultural community for future use. With this in mind we have approved installing more solar panels on the old salt shed and conducting an energy study in the Highway garage. Both of these projects will be funded with grant money.

The solar panels will make the Town more energy efficient while lowering our electricity bill. An energy study will give us ideas on how to be more energy efficient in the Highway garage. This building was chosen because our benchmarking project showed that it is the least efficient building on the Town campus.

All of these activities, and many more, earned the Town of Clinton the distinction of being a Bronze-certified Climate Smart Community. This was possible through the hard work and dedication over several years of the Clinton Climate Smart Task Force, chaired by Joe Phelan. They immediately began work to become a certified Silver community. I would like to thank Joe and all members of the Task Force.

2025 Goals

We hope to continue maintaining and improving the Town campus. For many years maintenance was put on a back burner. In the end this cost taxpayers more money to repair things that should have been fixed long before.

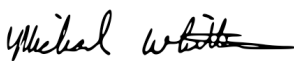
With this in mind, we are refinishing the flooring in the main Town Hall. This space is not only used periodically for meetings. It is also used for many community events—including board games, exercise, and learning opportunities. All events and meetings are open to the public, making this space vital for all taxpayers.

The Town also plans to continue to improve the basement space. This will include the previously mentioned replacement of the floor; it will also involve a new paint job and renovating the kitchen facilities in that room. Not only will this enable the Town to use that space more often, but we are hoping these improvements will turn our basement into a heating/cooling facility for those in need during extreme weather events.

Shortly after completing our current Comprehensive Plan thirteen years ago, the Town embarked on revising our Zoning Code. We intend to conclude the long-awaited Zoning Revision in 2025, after which a committee will be constituted to create a new Comprehensive Plan.

Finally, this Town Board is committed to creating a responsible budget every year. We have accomplished that goal while I have been Town Supervisor and there is no reason to depart from this practice. As always, I will work closely with the members of the Town Board to administer Town finances responsibly in the 2026 budget, while continuing to make Town services more efficient and always serving taxpayers.

Michael Whitton, Town Supervisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Whitton", with a stylized flourish at the end.