

Town of Plattekill

updated Master Plan

final draft May, 2003



Comprehensive Plan (also known as “master plan”)

A comprehensive plan consists of the materials, written and/or graphic including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports, and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the municipality.

New York State Chapter 418 of the Laws of 1995 amending Town Law § 272-a.

Town of Plattekill Vision Statement

To provide for a future in which all of Plattekill’s citizens can experience a high and affordable standard in quality of life and development,
and to promote orderly growth and balanced use of land.

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Supplemental Reports (available at Town Hall or on-line at www.town.plattekill.ny.us)

- 1999 Southern Ulster Alliance Countryside Exchange
- 2001 Town of Plattekill Survey, SUNY-New Paltz American Marketing Association
- 2001 (June) Town of Plattekill Public Sewer and Water Service Feasibility Study

Introduction

In 2000 the Town of Plattekill entered its third century as an incorporated municipality. This updated Town Master Plan seeks to provide a vision and a series of recommended actions as Plattekill sets to establish how land should best be used, preserved and enhanced in the near future of this new century, and what program priorities should be set to support this vision.

The Importance of a Plan

Why update a plan? First, all towns in New York State are obliged to have an up-to-date plan as the legal foundation for any zoning and land use regulations. More importantly, a thoughtful plan, based on public input and a positive perspective for the future, can help set the priorities for coordinated action by Town officials, staff and volunteers. This plan also offers guidance to anyone interested in Plattekill --- including Town residents, property owners, businesses, organizations and prospective businesses or investors --- about our history, our current conditions, and what we prefer as a future. In summary, the leading reasons to update Plattekill's plan are:

- ❖ To help attract the desired future and to help avoid an undesirable future.
- ❖ To establish a contemporary, positive community vision.
- ❖ To identify actions to ensure economic stability and protect valuable natural, cultural and historic resources.
- ❖ To provide guidance and direction to other agencies and interests.
- ❖ To help avoid surprises by understanding the Town's assets and liabilities.
- ❖ To improve access to government and non-government assistance through clarity of vision.
- ❖ To provide a legal and technical foundation for land use policies and tools.

The Planning Process

This plan builds on an original 1973 Town of Plattekill Master Plan, along with a 1993 update of that Plan. Those plans recognized the need to maintain the important and historic role of agriculture in Plattekill, as well as the important but declining role of summer/weekend tourism. A steady increase of residential construction and the need to maintain a high quality and mix of housing types were also leading themes, along with a desire to encourage concentrated development near Modena and other hamlets as “focal points of the Town.”

In 1998 a Master Plan Committee was appointed with an overall goal to provide leadership and advice towards updating the Town’s plans. As noted in the Committee’s early direction from the Plattekill Town Board, the overall goal of an updated plan should be to preserve the past, plan for the present, and prepare for the Town’s future development in a manner that would require a high standard of quality for all development as well as promote orderly growth and balanced use of land. Additionally, the plan should identify other goals to support the community, along with determining what problems need to be addressed and planned for. What types of development would the Town like to see? What are our needs as a community?

The Town Master Plan Committee has been meeting regularly for nearly two years. In late 1999 the Committee agreed to contract assistance from two organizations. First, the New York Planning Federation was retained to provide the committee with overall professional guidance, research and project coordination. Second, the Collegiate Chapter of the American Marketing Association at SUNY-New Paltz was retained to survey resident attitudes about the provision of services and the overall quality of life found in the Town of Plattekill. That work included facilitation of focus groups in each of the Town’s hamlets, as well as the completion and analysis of a randomly-selected survey of some 330 Town residents.

This Plan builds on the work of the Master Plan Committee and on the assistance of our professional partners. Certain other documents and studies also were key references. Most important were:

- ❖ GML Referral Guide and Land Use Plan, prepared by the Ulster County Planning Board.
- ❖ Ulster County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, sponsored by the Ulster County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (1997)
- ❖ Southern Ulster Alliance Countyside Exchange Report, prepared by The Countryside Institute and Glynwood Center (1999)
- ❖ Town of Plattekill Public Water and Sewer Service Feasibility Study, prepared by Dufresne-Henry Engineers at the request of the Town of Plattekill Town Board (2001)

This plan is intended to replace the Town's 1973 comprehensive plan and its subsequent 1993 update.

Finally, the Town Board further asked that the following categories be considered in the preparation of this Plan. They were:

- ✓ Economic development
- ✓ Residential development
- ✓ Recreation
- ✓ Agriculture
- ✓ Infrastructure (water, sewer)
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Commercial uses
- ✓ Government services
- ✓ Capital improvements
- ✓ Cultural/historical resources
- ✓ Sensitive environmental areas
- ✓ Utilities
- ✓ Zoning

Land Use History

The history of Plattekill is predated by relatively vague accounts of Native American activity associated with the Delaware or Leni-Lenape, more recently referred to as the Esopus Indians, who were known to be active along the Wallkill River Valley. European settlement of the area began in the late 1600s and early 1700s through land patents from the English Governor of New York. With an act of the New York State Legislature, Plattekill was divided from the Town of Marlborough to the east, and became the ninth town in Ulster County on March 21, 1800. At the time of its incorporation as a Town, an estimated 1600 people lived here and were focused on the area's farming heritage.¹ By 1860 Plattekill was described as having a soil of *“a fine quality of sandy and gravelly loam.... on which were several hamlets including) Plattekill near the s.line, contains a church and 25 dwellings; Clintondale in the n. part, on the line of Lloyd, a church and 20 dwellings; Flint (New Hurley) in the s.w. corner, on the line of Shawangunk, a church and 15 dwellings, and Modena near the n.w. corner, 16 dwellings.”*²

Subsequent growth in Plattekill was spurred by its railroad era, beginning in 1887 with the incorporation and opening of the Hudson Connecting Railroad. That line served to link the new Hudson River railroad bridge at Poughkeepsie with the main rail line through Orange County south at Campbell Hall. With depots in Modena and outside Clintondale, these two hamlets experienced noticeable development in the early twentieth century. Since the 1950s, Plattekill has seen spurts of residential and agricultural development throughout the Town, linked to the region's economy and improved accessibility to the larger Hudson Valley and New York metropolitan regions via the nearby New York State Thruway and Interstate 84.

Named after the Platte Kill stream in the southwestern portion of the Town, Plattekill has an agricultural heritage worth noting. By the mid-1800s, the Town had become the center of a larger region's prominent fruit growing. Initially

¹ Friends and Neighbors, A Pictorial History of the Town of Plattekill and Southwest Lloyd. Compiled by Shirley V. Anson, 1989, Centennial Committee Clintondale Friends of Meeting.

² Historical and Statistical Gazetteer of New York State. Syracuse: RP Smith Publisher, 1860, p. 665.

dominated by grape growing - including such varieties as Isabella and Catawba and later Concord, Niagara and Delaware – grapes along with raspberries and currants, were particularly important into the 1900s. In *The Village of Clintondale from its beginning ...*³ the decline of grape growing is related to the loss of readily available fertilizing horse manure from New York City in the mid-twentieth century, as the car overtook horse and wagon as the primary means of transportation.

With improved railroad access to markets, dairying also grew as an occupation, with creameries near many of the region's rail stations, including Elting's Corner. However, it has been apple growing that has dominated the past century, with orchards steadily growing in size to compete. Indeed, much of the Town's twentieth century history is punctuated by dramatic weather changes such as early freezes, hail storms, or hurricanes affecting fruit crops, a key to the local economy.

Cold storage of fruit started later in the nineteenth century and became a critical element of fruit production and marketing which survives today. Originally reliant on local ice harvesting, larger refrigerated buildings were soon built. Farms learned the value of shared storage. Early cooperative efforts, such the Clintondale Fruit Growers Co-op, Inc., broadened from storage and helped local growers to better compete in buying, storage and marketing into the 1940s. Today, Plattekill's landscape and economy is still dominated by orchards, irrigation ponds and storage buildings of the fruit business.

The following contrasting photographs show how many aspects of this historic landscape survive today.

³ Hurd, Jerome & Elizabeth. [The Village of Clintondale from its beginning to 1959](#) (1959, p36-40), from the collection of the Town of Plattekill Historian.

The Hamlet of Modena Looking North on Route 32



The Hamlet of Plattekill, View from the West



Views of the Shawangunk Ridge from Plattekill



Plattekill Today

Trends

Today Plattekill is influenced by several trends as part of a larger environmental region and economic marketplace known as the Mid-Hudson Valley. These include:

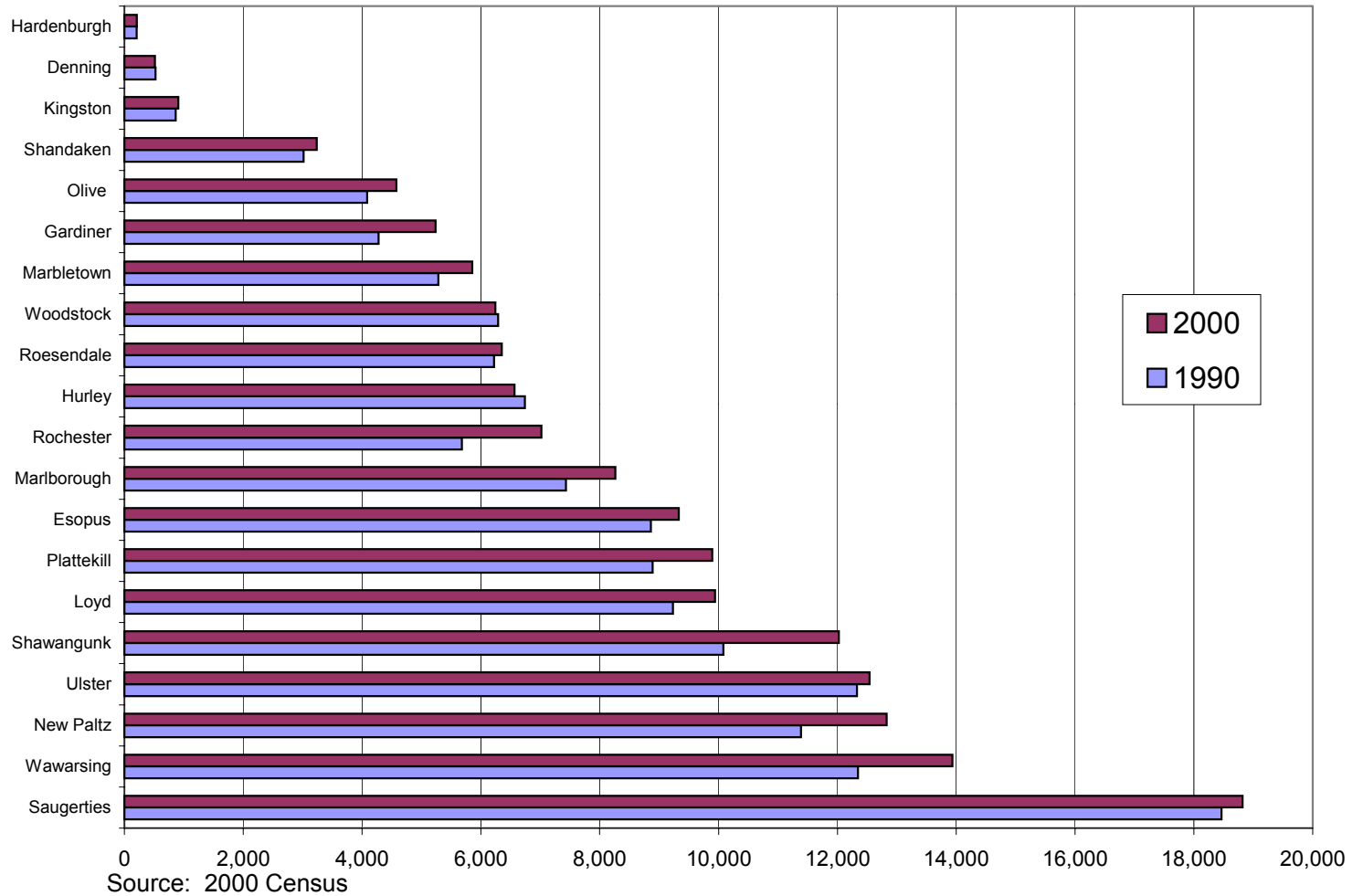
- Strong residential growth as people continue to seek the relative affordability and high quality of location found here. In the past decade, the Town's population grew at a rate of more than 11%, slightly slower than its fast growing, immediate western neighbors of Gardiner and Shawangunk, yet right in pace with the larger Orange/southern Ulster county region as part of the fastest growing area in upstate New York. The Town is increasingly becoming a *bedroom community*. (see table 1)
- Continued importance of agriculture, particularly the many orchards long unique to Plattekill and southeastern Ulster County. Agriculture remains a key aspect of the economy and a prominent element of the Town's landscape and character. Yet fruit growing has become an increasingly challenged business.
- Growing conflicts between neighborhood land uses, aggravated by the site difficulties of new and historic residences near active agricultural uses or expanding, the private outdoor recreation businesses in proximity to residences, and overall increased density of development in some neighborhoods.

- Continued growth of tourism, now less reliant on earlier resort and villa locations, and more diverse and linked to specialized outdoor recreation, sightseeing and other short term visits and activities focused on the region's wealth of agriculture, historic preservation, and rural scenery all within a one or two hour trip from anywhere in one of the world's great metropolitan areas.
- Sustained and growing Hispanic community, long an important influence on the Town. Sixteen percent of the 9892 residents found in the 2000 census report shows that Plattekill has one of the largest and fastest growing Hispanic populations of any town in its region.
- A quiet commuting community, as Plattekill's resident population grows without complementary growth in local employment opportunity. Like much of southern Ulster County and nearby northwestern Orange County, new residents are coming to enjoy an attractive quality of life in many cases anchored to jobs outside of the Town, notably in nearby southwestern Dutchess County or in Newburgh or New Paltz, or further south towards the New York metropolitan region.

A review of the demographics of the Town reinforces the concept of Plattekill facing the challenges and opportunities associated with growth and ethnic diversity in a quiet commuting community.

Figure 1.

Ulster County Towns Population, 1990 - 2000 (Ranked by 2000 Population)



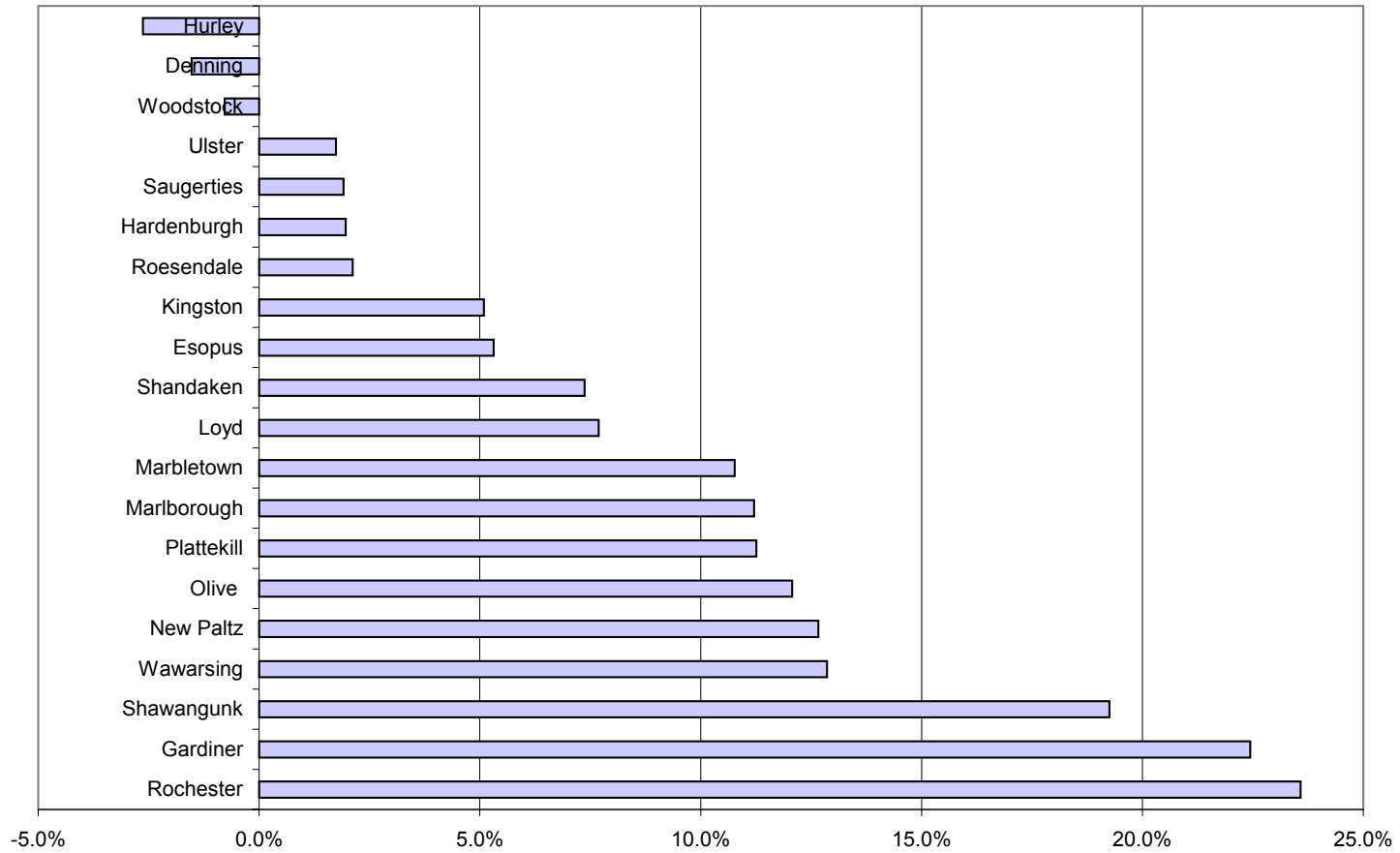
DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Population Growth

According to the 2000 Census, the Town of Plattekill has a population of 9,892, up 11.3 percent from 1990. By size the Town is the seventh most populous in the County. (See Figure 1) In the last ten years the Town has seen a moderate rate of growth, leaving it seventh in rate of growth among all towns in Ulster County, similar to the towns of Marlborough and Marbletown. (Figure 2) Only the towns of Olive, New Paltz Wawarsing, Shawangunk, Gardiner, and Rochester saw higher rates of growth than Plattekill.

Figure 2

Ulster County Towns Ranked by Percent Increase in Population, 1990 - 2000



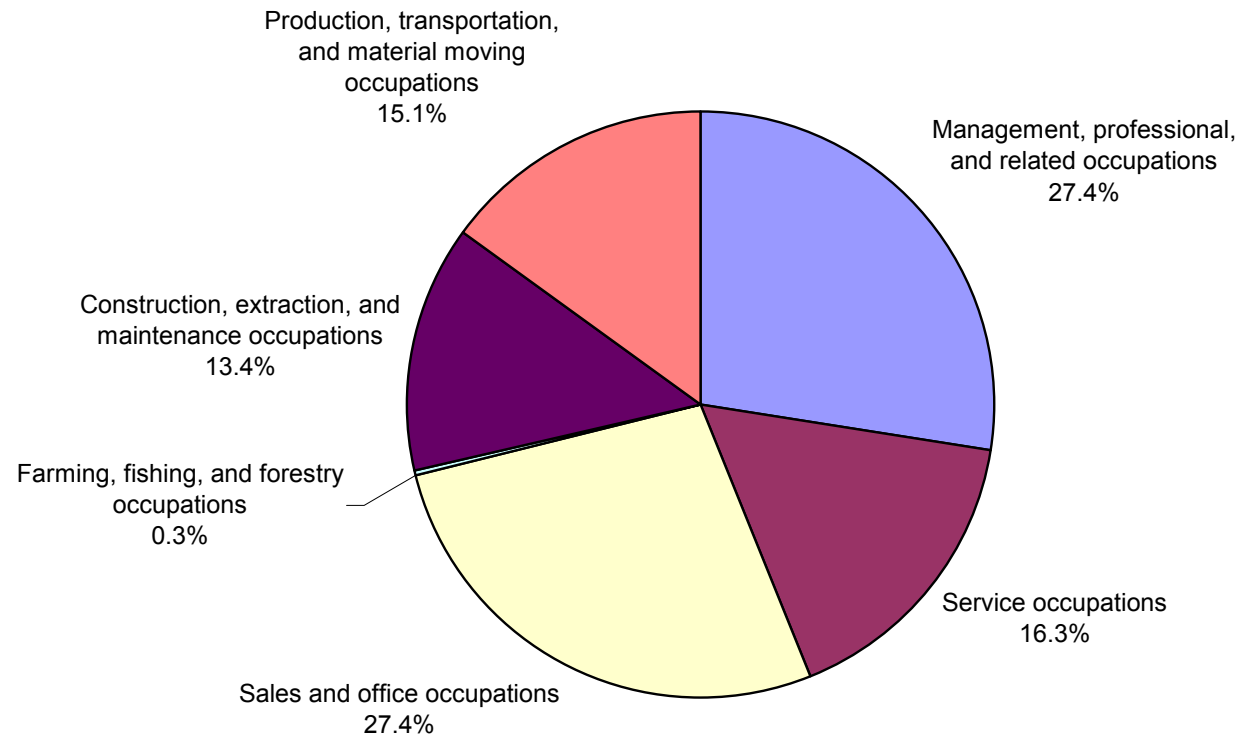
Source: 2000 Census

Occupation

Figure 3 shows that in 2000 the majority of residents were employed in two categories – Sales and Office Occupation and Management, Professional, and Related Occupations. There were lower proportions of the working population involved in Construction, Extraction and Maintenance Operations and Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations.

Figure 3

Plattekill Residents Occupation, Employed Persons over 16, 2000



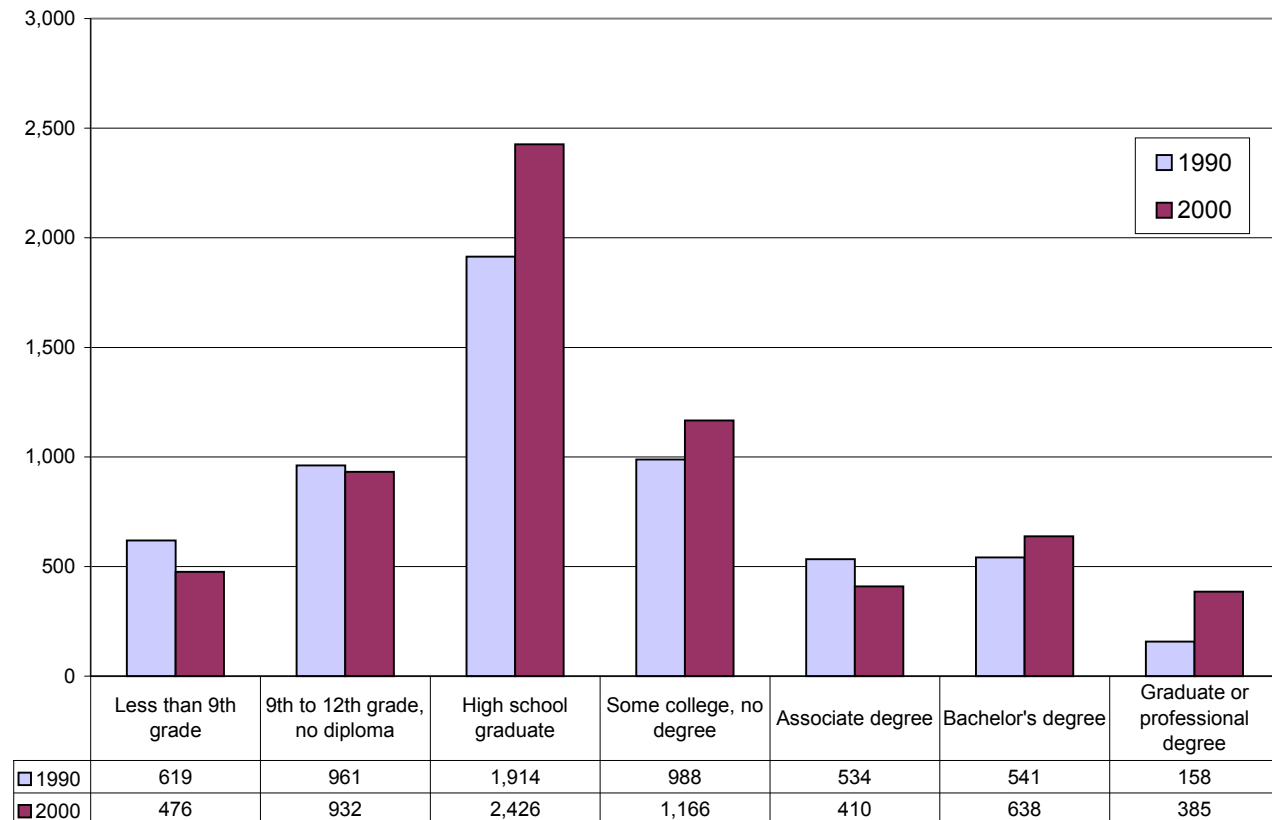
Source: 2000 Census

Education

Combining the findings from Figures 1, 2, and 3 with Figure 4 suggests that the population is growing, becoming better educated and more affluent. As shown in Figure 4, among the population over 25, there was a higher proportion of high school graduates in 2000 than 1990. And the Town experienced an increase in the proportion of residents over 25 with bachelors and, especially, graduate and professional degrees. These new, highly educated, highly skilled workers are also looking a bit farther for work.

Figure 4.

Town of Plattekill, Educational Attainment, Population over 25, 1990 & 2000



Source: 2000 Census

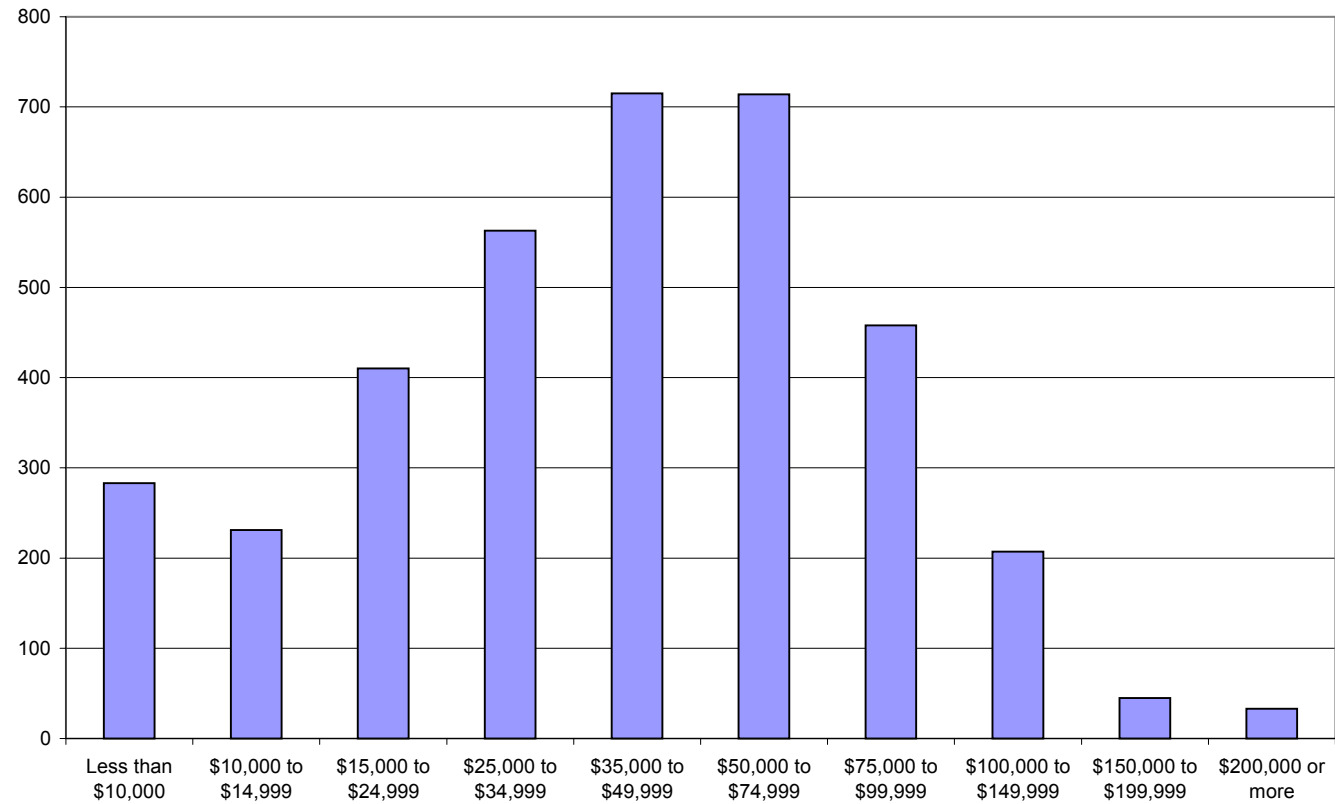
Income

As shown in Figure 5, the town has a majority of its households in the middle income range (\$25,000 to \$75,000).

Note also that there are over 500 households with earnings under \$15,000.

Figure 5

Town of Plattekill, Household Income, 2000



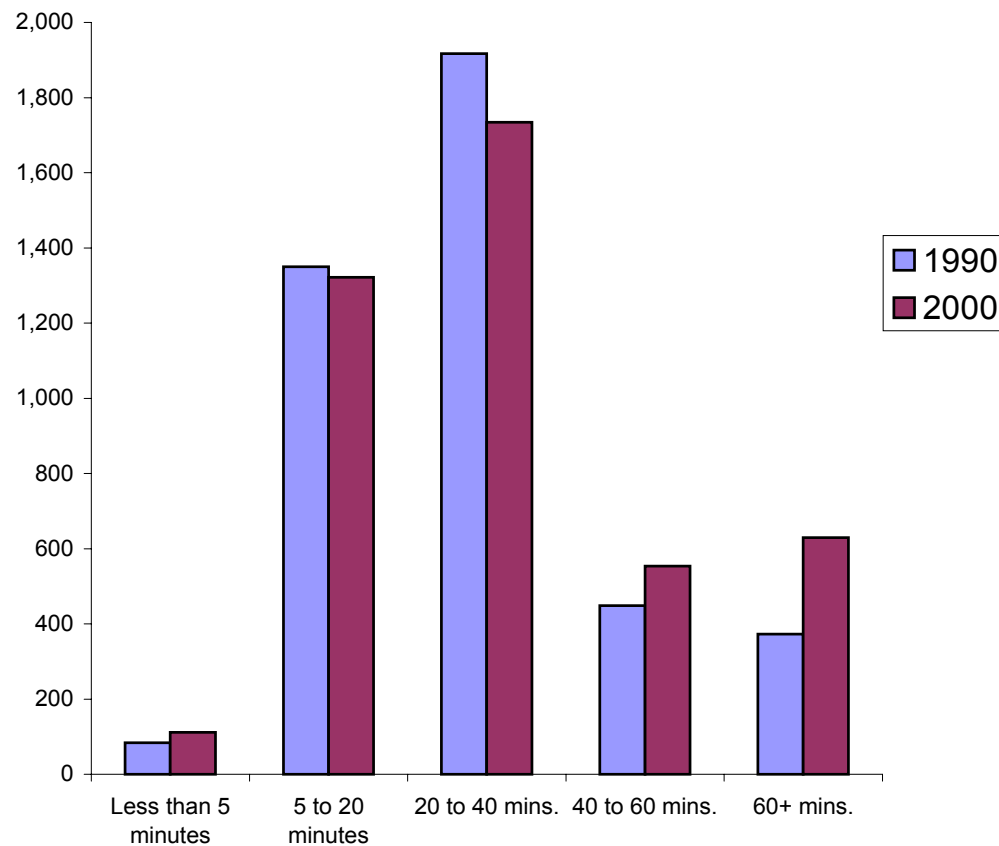
Source: 2000 Census

Commuting Patterns

As shown in Figure 6, more Plattekill residents are commuting longer distances to work. In fact, the largest percent increase in traveling time is 69 percent for workers traveling 60+ minutes to work. This is consistent with the notion that many newer residents in the Town are seeking to live in Plattekill for the quality of life found here. They are willing to move to the community, but either keep or find work elsewhere.

Figure 6

Travel Time to Work, Plattekill Residents, 1990 & 2000



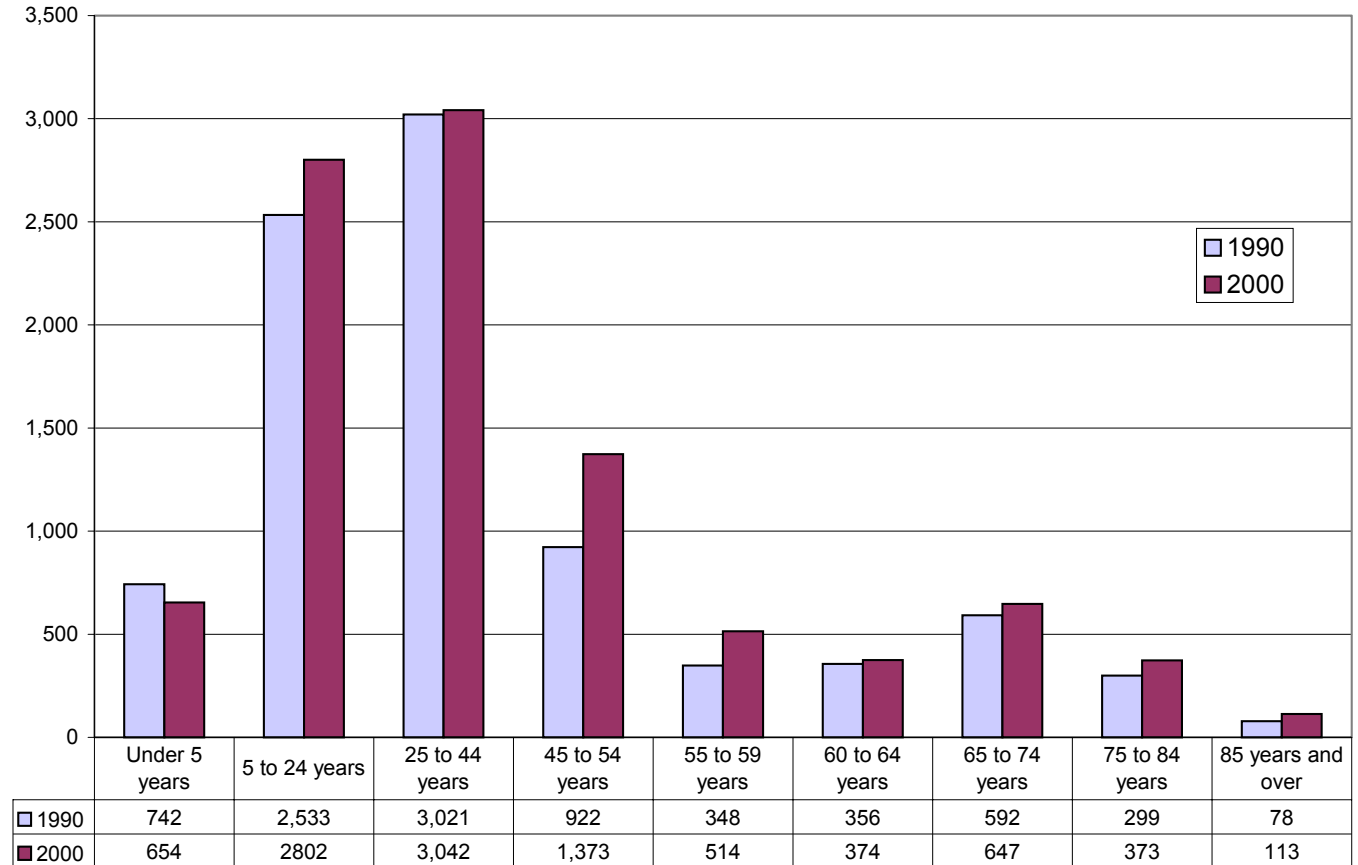
Source: 2000 Census

Figure 7

Town of Plattekill, Age Breakdown, Total Population, 1990 & 2000

Age

Another part of the changing composition of the Town's population is in regard to age. As shown in Figure 7, by 2000, there is a concentration of town residents in the 25 to 44 years of age followed closely by 5 to 24 years. The largest gain in population was in the 45 to 54 age bracket indicating a concentration in 'baby boomers'. There is also a concentration of persons in the 65 to 74 years age category.



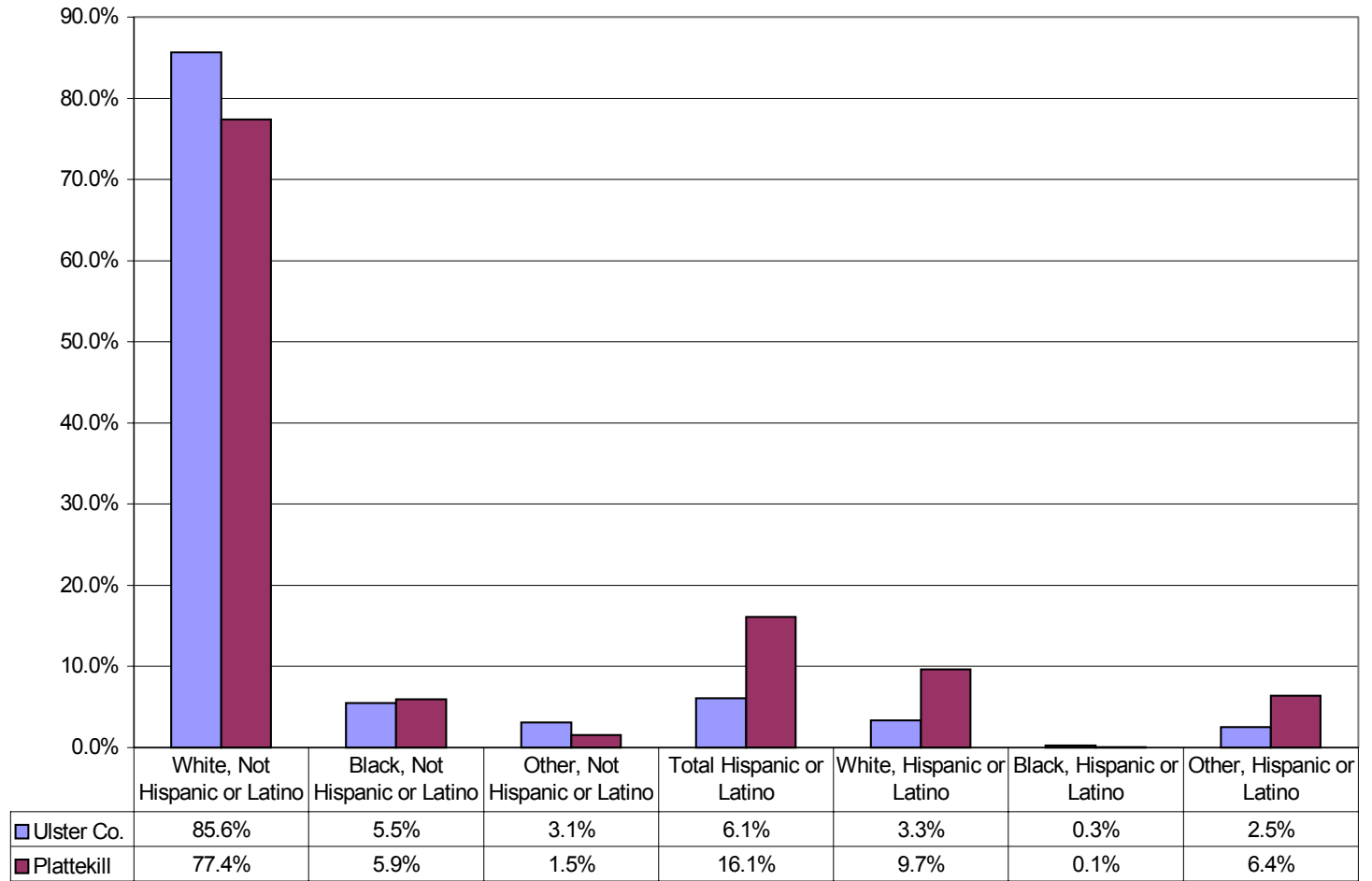
Source: 2000 Census

Figure 8

Ethnicity

The Town of Plattekill is more ethnically diverse than Ulster County as a whole (see Figure 8). Those reporting their ethnicity as white alone, not hispanic or latino, make up 85.6% of the County's population, but only 77.4% of the population of Plattekill. Hispanics or Latinos make up 6.1% of the County's population, but over 16% of the Town's population. Over two-thirds of those identifying themselves as hispanic or latino list their race as white only. (See Figure 8.)

Ethnicity as % of Total 2000 Population



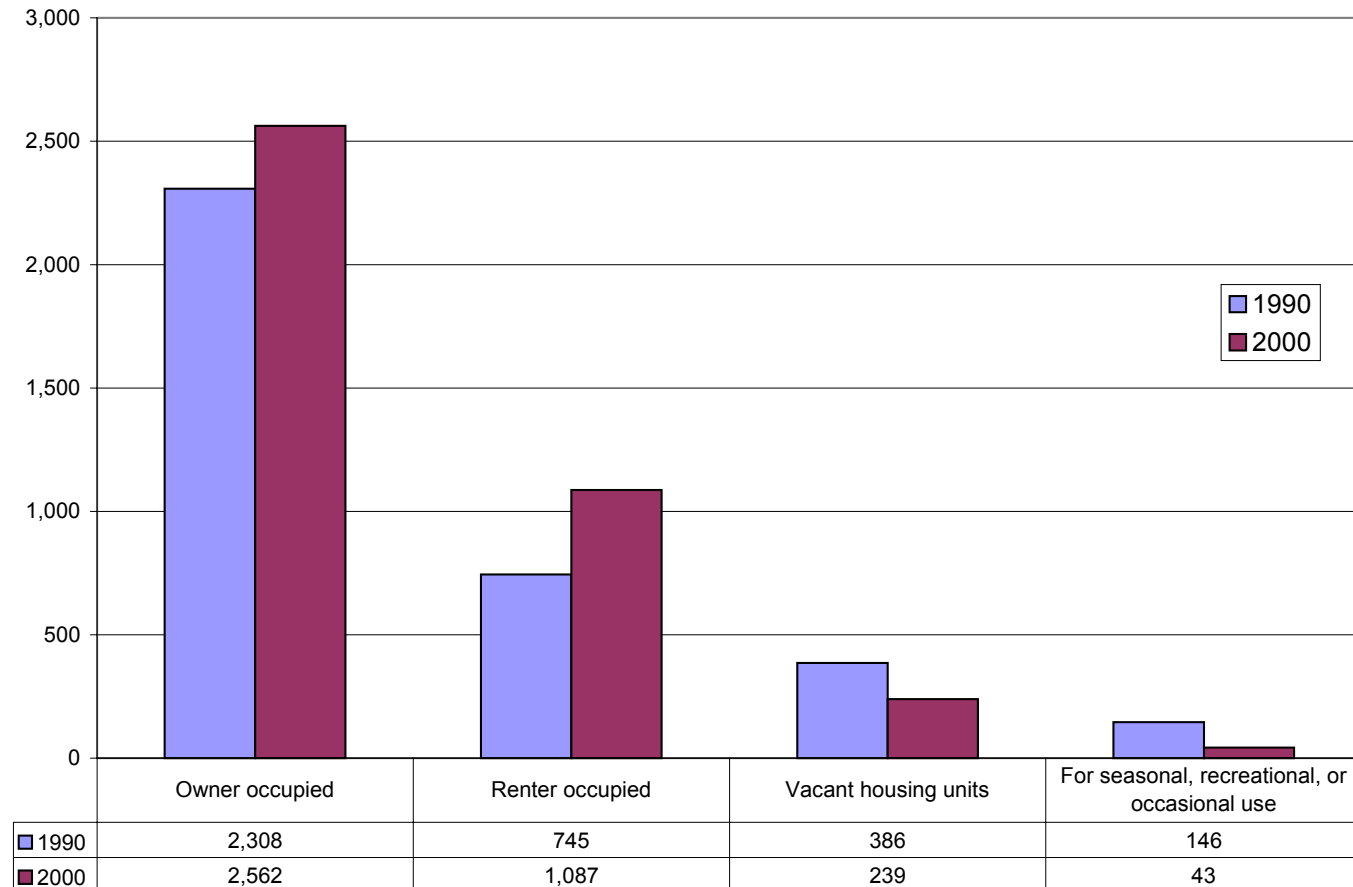
Source: 2000 Census

**Housing
 Occupancy and
 Tenure**

Since 1990, the town saw an increase in owner occupied and renter occupied homes. And, overall, there are more home owners than renters in the community. There was a decrease in the number of housing vacancies and seasonal homes since 1990. (Figure 9)

Figure 9

Town of Plattekill, Housing Occupancy and Tenure, Occupied Housing Units, 1990 & 2000



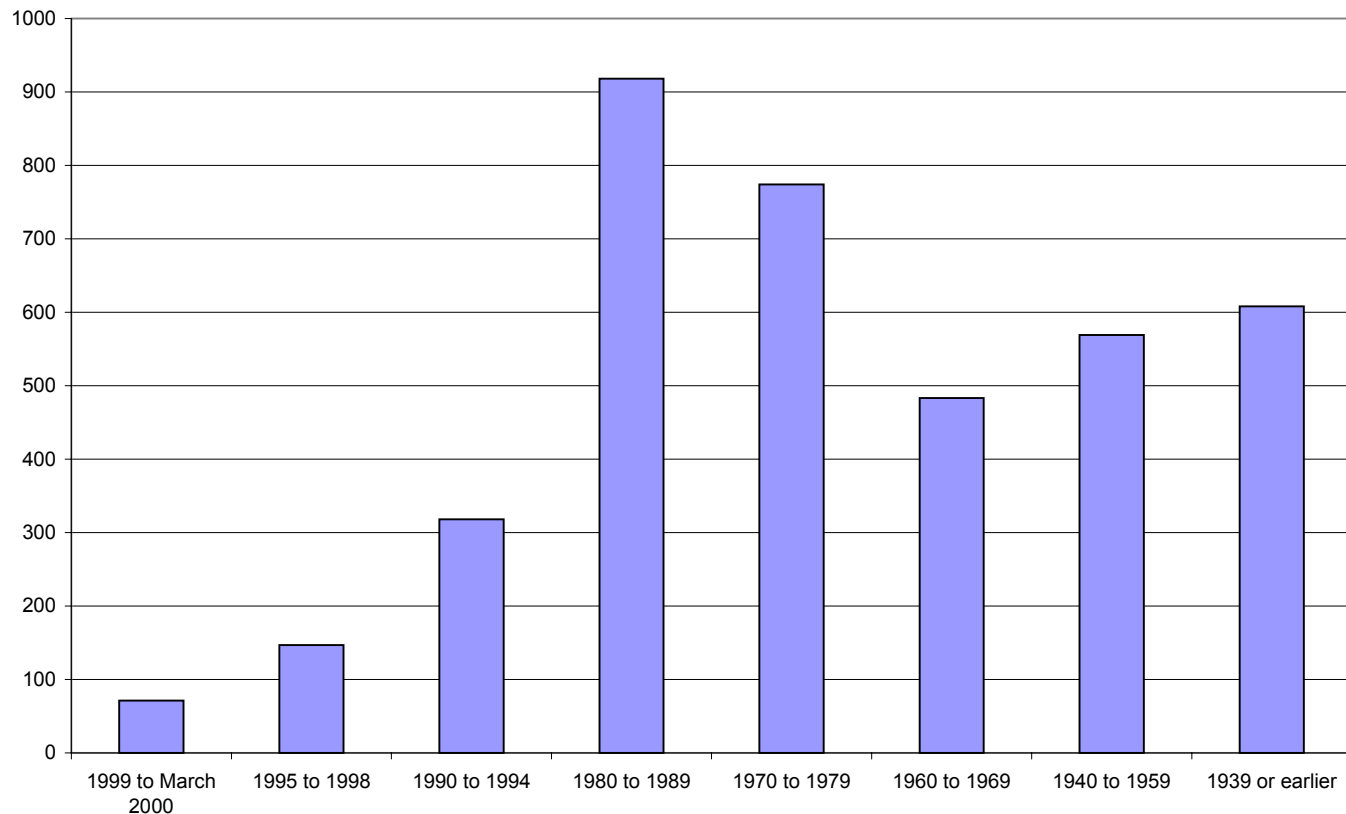
Source: 2000 Census

Year Structure Built

Figure 10 shows the housing in Plattekill by the year in which it was built. While there are a number of older homes in the community, the majority of the homes were built in the 1970s and 1980s with some growth occurring in the early half of the 1990s. Recent increases in housing prices and development activity create the impression that Plattekill is experiencing unprecedented growth. It is worth noting that the number of housing units constructed during the 1990s was slightly more than half of the 900 units built during the 1980s, and still less than the growth seen during the relatively placid 1970s.

Figure 10

Town of Plattekill, Year Structure Built, Total Housing Units, 2000



Source: 2000 Census

Tax Base: A critical trend for the Town of Plattekill relates to the Town property tax base. As shown in Table 1, the property tax base has grown increasingly reliant and residential development. This gain has been at the expense of a diversified tax base, with notable loses in agricultural and vacant land values reflecting both the reduction in active farmland the the conversion of lands to other uses.

Table 1
Town of Plattekill - Property Tax Values by Land Use Type

All values in thousands of dollars and in percent (%) of total Town values.

YEAR	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	1992-2001 GAIN/LOSS
LANDTYPE											
RESIDENTIAL	254,400 72.4%	259,180 72.8%	258,100 73%	264,000 74%	257,300 75%	254,960 78.2%	256,780 78.7%	258,200 78.6%	263,760 78.8%	269,435 79.5%	+15,035
Mobile homes	19,250	19,580	19,400	19,600	8,900	17,930	17,950	18,100	18,400	18,900	-350
Apartments	7,400	7,500	7,400	7,500	6,900	7,030	7,030	7,030	7,030	7,265	-135
VACANT LAND	31,600 9%	31,800 8.9%	30,200 8.5%	29,300 8.2%	27,300 8%	22,000 6.7%	22,000 6.7%	21,660 6.6%	20,400 6.1%	20,100 5.9%	-21,500
COMMERCIAL	9,660 2.7%	9,370 2.6%	9,350 2.5%	9,670 2.8%	12,000 3.5%	9,560 3%	9,276.6 2.8%	10,367 3.1%	10,630 3.2%	10,500 3.1%	+840
FARMLAND	29,340 8.3%	29,300 8.2%	29,000 9%	27,600 7.7%	22,500 6.5%	17,000 5.2%	17,100 5.2%	16,377 5%	16,900 5%	15,879 4.7%	-13,461
UTILITY/PUBLIC	26,380 7.6%	26,350 7.5%	26,350 7%	26,230 7.3%	24,200 7%	22,480 6.9%	21,143 6.6%	22,096 6.7%	23,110 6.9%	23,161 6.8%	-3,219
TOTAL	351,380	356,000	353,000	356,800	343,300	326,000	326,300	328,700	334,800	339,075	

Note the increase in percentage value of residential uses. Note also that in 1997, the Town switched to full value assessment. Thus the values prior to 1997 are not directly comparable to those given for 1997 and subsequent years.

Residential gain in total value is at the expense of farmland and vacant land losses.

Note also that “mobile homes” have consistently contributed approximately 7% of total residential values, a relatively high percentage for the region; demonstrating Plattekill’s strong, historic role in helping meet a range of housing needs

Policies

Three important documents establish public policies and background research in support of this updated Plan.

THE COUNTY LAND USE AND HOUSING PLANS

The first is the Ulster County Land Use Plan and Housing Plan, prepared by the Ulster County Planning Board. These plans are summarized in the General Municipal Law (GML) Referral Guide for municipal officials and property owners on how their local actions relate to concerns of the larger county region. Below are listed the lead policies as defined by the County Planning Board:

- ❖ That major developments, commercial, industrial and multi-family residential, be located in areas that are presently within or are adjacent to central public water and sewer systems and can be provided with good highway access.
- ❖ That environmentally sensitive areas; flood plains, wetlands, mountainous terrain, steep slopes, shorelines, aquifer recharge areas and irreplaceable agricultural lands not be intensively developed.
- ❖ That the existing highway system be preserved and protected by reducing strip commercial development, controlling the number of driveways along these highways and insuring that proper design techniques are used for safer access.
- ❖ That proposed facilities be located to serve the total environmental and economic needs of the community, rather than serve only their specific functional purpose.
- ❖ That the open space and park systems so unique to Ulster County are preserved and protected. That protection shall include minimizing the impact of signs and other structures, like transmission towers that impact scenic vistas.
- ❖ That each community will provide a range of housing opportunities for its residents and will accept a fair share of housing for low and moderate income families.

- ❖ That the enforcement of land use controls is brought into compliance with enabling legislation and judicial decisions to insure implementation of local and county plans.

THE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

A second important policy document is the Ulster County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan of 1997. This Plan notes the substantial role of fruit growing in southeastern Ulster County, with farm addresses from Marlboro, Highland, Clintondale, Plattekill, Walkill, Gardiner and New Paltz post offices dominating fruit production acreage estimates. Plattekill farms also make up critical parts of two “agricultural districts” in the County, District 1 – consolidated in 1989 to include over 21,000 acres of primarily orchards with a mix of vineyards, vegetable and other farms in the towns of Lloyd, Marlboro and Plattekill, and District 2 – consolidated in 1991 to include over 27,000 acres of livestock, orchards, dairy and other cash crops in the towns of Gardiner, New Paltz, Plattekill and Shawangunk.

Such agricultural districts are established through the New York State Agriculture and Markets Agricultural Districts Law Article 25AA. First enacted in 1971, the purpose of this state law is to protect and conserve the state’s agricultural resource base. Farm operations within the defined districts can voluntarily enter into eight-year land commitments administered by the State Department of Agriculture and Markets in cooperation with Ulster County. The benefits of enrollment to a farm operation include:

- ✓ Limitation on unreasonably restrictive local regulations.
- ✓ Various state policies that encourage the retention of viable agricultural acreage.
- ✓ Limitations on use of eminent domain, public acquisition and advancement of public funds affecting farm acreage.
- ✓ Protection from private nuisance law suits (the *right to farm* provisions).
- ✓ Orchard and vineyard replanting/expansion tax breaks.
- ✓ State policy commitment to agriculture by local planning and land use decision-making policies through use of agricultural data statements and disclosures to avoid conflicting, neighboring land uses.

The summary goals of the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan immediately relevant to Plattekill are:

- ❖ **AGRICULTURAL LAND USE AND PROTECTION.** To promote options for preserving farmland without harming the farmer's ability to obtain financing or benefit from the sale of his/her property. Notable here is the need for towns to ensure that new development adjacent to farms does not create conflict and includes buffers when needed. Techniques such as transfer of development rights (TDR), clustering and average density subdivisions are also advocated for new residential development, as is active participation by the Town in purchase of development rights (PDR) programs.
- ❖ **AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY.** To provide an atmosphere in Ulster County that ensures successful farming now and in the future. Here, a variety of recommendations are made for regional cooperation to better utilize the New York City market, for overall market promotion, to encourage local customers to seek local products, and to support green market and farmers' market opportunities for local growers.
- ❖ **AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.** Provide educational opportunities for Ulster County residents that will increase their understanding of and appreciation of agriculture and its practices. Promote the farmer as an effective steward of the land. Here a range of recommendations seek to raise and maintain awareness by children, customers, retailers, property owners and municipal officials.



THE TOWN OF PLATTEKILL PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER SERVICE FEASIBILITY STUDY

In June, 2001 the Town Board received the draft Public Water and Sewer Service Feasibility Study, prepared by Dufresne-Henry Engineers of Newburgh, New York and commissioned by the Plattekill Town Board. This study, presented in full as a supplement to the updated Master Plan, reviewed the feasibility of establishing publicly owned water or wastewater districts to serve the specific, existing "business" zoning districts found in the hamlets of Modena and Plattekill.

Estimated current and near future needs for each of the hamlet business districts are as follows:

UTILITY SYSTEM	MODENA	PLATTEKILL
Estimated water/wastewater demand	160,000 gallons per day	120,000 gallons per day
Water supply, treatment and distribution system capital costs	\$1,500,000 – 2,000,000	\$1,000,000 – 1,200,000
Wastewater collection and treatment facility capital costs	\$6,000,000 – 7,000,000	\$4,000,000 – 5,000,000

Summary findings of this study include:

- ❖ Joint service to two districts. The concept of servicing two districts with a single water supply and/or wastewater collection and treatment/disposal system was ruled out, due to considerable costs of transmission mains within and between the districts.
- ❖ Water supply options. While use of streams and/or lakes, as well as tapping either of the two New York City water supply aqueducts crossing the Town was analyzed, only a groundwater supply offers possibility of meeting New York State Department of Health guidelines. Few resident streams and lakes are nearby or adequate, and the costs associated with new surface water impoundments and mandatory water filtration are excessive. Although legally available as an option, tapping the aqueducts is not recommended. The Delaware Aqueduct from the Rondout Reservoir is a pressure tunnel several hundred feet below grade with few access shaft locations. With either the Delaware Aqueduct or the at grade Catskill Aqueduct from the Ashokan Reservoir, the process of gaining permission from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, including a reservation of right to take the aqueduct out of service at any time, along with capital costs, makes these options unattractive.

- ❖ Wastewater disposal options. The few existing streams in the Town are not able to accept any large volume of effluent discharge from conventional sewage treatment. Suitable soils also do not exist within or near either of the business districts to permit subsurface discharge. Coupled with high costs expected (given the length of service pipes required in each business district and the length of discharge pipes required to the nearest surface water with adequate capacity) suggests that centralized wastewater disposal is not a cost effective option.
- ❖ The Best Option – Water Supply for Modena. The strongest technical argument can be made for creating a water supply system for the Modena Hamlet Business District. Tapping bedrock aquifers there would help reduce or eliminate the potential hazards associated with known contamination of wells by the gasoline additive MTBE due to spillage and leaks at former gasoline service stations, and by any potential future contamination from neighborhood septic tanks and absorption fields. Such a system would also serve to encourage maximum reuse of existing buildings at the heart of the district near the intersection of Routes 44/55 and 32. Central water service is an attractive marketing tool for attracting new development concentrated in this district.

Public Opinion

Early on, the Master Plan Committee recognized the essential need to gain public opinion towards defining any positive consensus recommendations in the Plan. Using a variety of complementary techniques, public opinion was gained through the following primary efforts:

First, from its inception the Master Plan Committee has been composed of individuals representing a range of interests, including municipal officials and community activists. Next, the Committee established a list of government and non-governmental groups with immediate impact on the Town and made efforts to directly contact each. Special work sessions were held with members of the Town's agricultural community, the Town's Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, the Rotary Club, local fire departments and the two resident senior citizen associations, while other key individuals were interviewed.

Next, the Town initiated three unique efforts - photographic survey work by students at Plattekill Elementary School, participation in a regional "countryside exchange", and more formal public opinion polling by a team of students and faculty from the State University of New York at New Paltz (SUNY-New Paltz). The photographic survey was sponsored by Kodak and The Conservation Fund. In the late Spring of 2000, sixth grade students from the Town's resident elementary school were all given disposable cameras and asked to photograph what they liked most about the Town of Plattekill. Those photos, and the subsequent collages made by student teams, provided insight and inspiration for this Plan, while giving those who may be the future of Plattekill a first-hand experience in planning.

*The Challenge -
gaining sustainable
economic
development while
maintaining quality
of life.*

Earlier in 1999 the Town, with a coalition of five neighboring towns and one village known as the Southern Ulster Alliance, hosted the Countryside Exchange, a community assistance program sponsored by The Glynwood Center. During an intensive week of community workshops and programs, hundreds of residents and interested individuals from Plattekill and the neighboring towns of Lloyd, New Paltz and Gardiner worked with a visiting team of European and North American "experts" and agreed that the greatest local challenge was gaining sustainable economic development while maintaining quality of life.

Consensus highlights of the Exchange included:

- ❖ Need for a regional, economic development strategy .
- ❖ Focus on tourism through activities complementary to existing outdoor recreation, agriculture and historic features.
- ❖ Recognition and support for the diversity of values from farming.
- ❖ Need for a more regional approach to land use planning.
- ❖ Improved partnerships between town government and educational institutions.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

More recently, as part of a commission for this Plan update, a public opinion survey of Town of Plattekill residents was conducted by the Collegiate Chapter of the American Marketing Association from SUNY New Paltz. The goal of this survey was twofold: to determine the issues that residents consider important and to measure the level of satisfaction with the role played by the Town in influencing the life styles of its residents.

Working with the Master Plan Committee, a series of two-hour, community focus group sessions were held in each of the Town's hamlets (Modena, Plattekill and Clintondale) where 10-12 residents were invited to help identify leading issues and concerns and to help test possible questions for the more formal survey. A 28-question telephone survey was conducted of 330 randomly selected Plattekill residents. Those responding were first asked to confirm they were residents of the Town. If they were, the survey continued. If they were not, the survey was politely ended.

Generally, the questions were designed to learn if respondents agreed or disagreed with statements and to rank their level of satisfaction with certain conditions or experiences. A few open-ended questions were also asked to help gain additional feedback, and 8 demographic questions helped to define the profile of the population surveyed.

While the complete report from the Collegiate Chapter of the American Marketing Association from SUNY-New Paltz is available as a supplement to this Plan, the leading responses are summarized here:

- 84% of the residents were satisfied with the overall appearance of the town, yet only 46% agree that the Town is doing enough to address the issue of appearance.
- 93% see rural character as important to preserve, while 77% believe the Town should take an active role in preserving farmland.
- Business development and attraction has solid support, but only 17% would like to see “light industrial businesses.” Tourism-focused businesses are supported by 87%, with more shopping or retail supported by 61%.
- Nearly 2/3 of respondents would like to see public transportation options expanded, while most residents are now satisfied with most other Town services such as policing, sidewalks, roads or lighting.
- There is support for the expansion of recreation services, with the greatest support coming from the southern portion of the Town.
- While a modest majority would support legislation requiring property maintenance, only about 1/3 would support this if they had to pay for enforcement.

Assets and Challenges

Through the public outreach efforts, as well as numerous meetings of the Master Plan Committee, a variety of assets and challenges found in Plattekill were identified and considered. While many individuals had particular features or conditions they liked or found as challenges in the Town, certain features and conditions stand out in common.

Generally the Town's **ASSETS** can be grouped as to QUALITY OF LIFE and defined into three categories:

1. **PROXIMITY.** The Town provides immediate access and proximity to a great variety of resources, services, shopping and recreation. Regional benefits include cultural, recreation and education facilities valued by many people. Additionally, easy access to the New York City metropolitan region provides access to a variety of quality employment, services and cultural experiences.

The Town is also served by two primary and intersecting roads, New York State Routes 44/55 and 32, providing ready access to Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, New Paltz and the Catskill region.

2. **LIFE STYLE.** Everyone likes to note in their own terms the special life style afforded in the Town. Notable is its peaceful and safe setting and neighbors who are supportive, reliable and friendly.
3. **ENVIRONMENT.** Plattekill is truly located in a unique place. Scenic beauty and vistas are the most appreciated feature. With that comes a strong appreciation of the Town's agricultural heritage, its sunsets and night sky, its air quality and the wildlife and open landscape.

The Town also faces some leading **CHALLENGES** commonly cited by residents. Again, while individual residents noted various issues in need of improvement, several lead themes emerged. They are:

1. **COMMUNITY IDENTITY.** Too often there is a weak sense of overall Town community identity. This is easy to understand as the Town is divided into several post office service areas, only one of which is called Plattekill. Additionally, the Town's students may attend one of four school districts, with only the Plattekill Elementary School bearing the Town's name, yet serving students in only a portion of the Town. Adding to this locational confusion is that major employment and services areas are generally outside of, yet near the Town, around Newburgh, New Paltz, Wallkill or Highland/Poughkeepsie.
2. **COMMUNITY CENTER.** Many residents agree that the Town lacks a community center or single gathering place or neighborhood. People do find some services in the hamlets of Modena, Plattekill or Clintondale, yet there is strong desire for a larger, central place serving the Town. Modena is most commonly cited as the place most likely to serve this purpose given the location of the Town Hall, Library and other Town facilities, as well as various other commercial services in and around the primary intersection of Routes 44/55 and 32.
3. **SERVICES CONCENTRATED IN MODENA.** Many residents also caution that too many Town services and facilities are being concentrated in Modena. The Town should continue to support satellite programs and facilities, floating municipal meetings at various locations, and support complementary commercial development in all of the Town's hamlets.
4. **BEDROOM COMMUNITY.** Residents express knowledge and concern about the obvious and growing trend: people are working elsewhere and coming to and from the Town of Plattekill as a bedroom community. The desire to create employment opportunities in Town or nearby is strong to help ease commuting demands and help stabilize the tax base.

Land Use Challenges

A number of land use conditions also present important challenges to the Town of Plattekill. First, of the nearly 3700 residential housing units in the Town, nearly one third are mobile homes. The majority of mobile homes are in mobile home parks, with the remainder on individual lots. This high percentage of such housing indicates that the Town is providing a substantial “fair share” of the region’s more affordable housing. Unfortunately, such housing has fixed assessment values determined by New York State, aggravating the tight fiscal constraints all Town officials already face. Further attention to effectively understand and address the needs of these residents is desired.

Plattekill also has a wealth of available, buildable lands. (See Figure 12.) This inventory rises as agricultural land becomes more available, notably for residential subdivisions. The Ulster County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan noted in 1997 that the primary challenge in the two “agricultural districts” found in Plattekill was the conversion of farmland to residential subdivisions.

Now that the Town has on-site shared Geographic Information System (GIS) capabilities and the ability to do mapping analysis, an analysis was done of lands now available for development. While about thirty (30) undeveloped residential building lots exist in approved subdivisions scattered primarily in the center part of the Town, more than one hundred (100) rural building lots exist which could probably be built on today without subdivision approval.

More impressive is the wealth of two categories of land – rural residential property greater than 10 acres with the potential for development, and vacant farm land with the potential for development. While these lands are scattered through the Town, they dominate in the western portion nearest the towns of Gardiner and Shawangunk as well as the northeastern and extremes of the Town.

Particular attention should be made of vacant farm land with development potential. As shown in Figure 11 this land is near two of the fastest growing communities in the region, Gardiner and Shawangunk. Much of Plattekill’s agricultural base is in orchards on soils that may have relatively severe restrictions (e.g., poor drainage, shallow depth, etc.). Nonetheless, given the natural soil capacity of farmland to handle septic system construction, the attractive, open appearance of these lands, often with sweeping views of the western Shawangunk Ridge, and the

increasing desirability and relative affordability of the region, residential construction pressure can be expected at various locations in the Town.

Town of Plattekill Land Use Map, 2002

Figure 11.

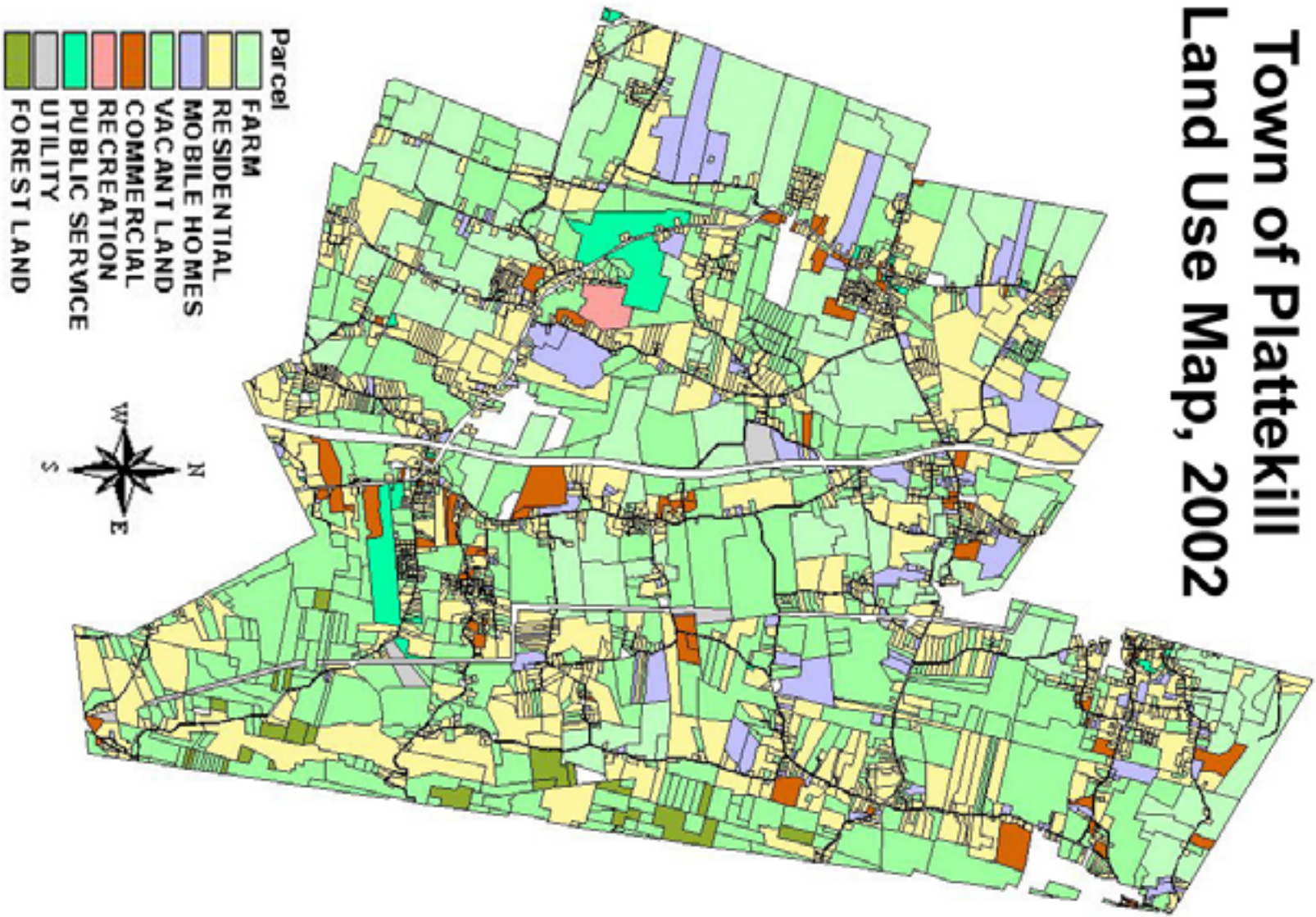


Figure 12.

Town of Plattekill Vacant Lands, 2001



Recommended Actions

The following actions are recommended by the Master Plan Committee for consideration by the Plattekill Town Board. Upon their review and adoption these actions could become priorities for the Town of Plattekill over the next few years.

These recommended actions are grouped under four themes:

- UPDATING TOWN POLICIES AND CODES
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES
- PROTECTING TOWN ASSETS AND RESOURCES
- IMPROVING COMMUNITY IDENTITY
- TRANSPORTATION
- GOVERNMENT SERVICES
- PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

UPDATING TOWN POLICIES AND CODES

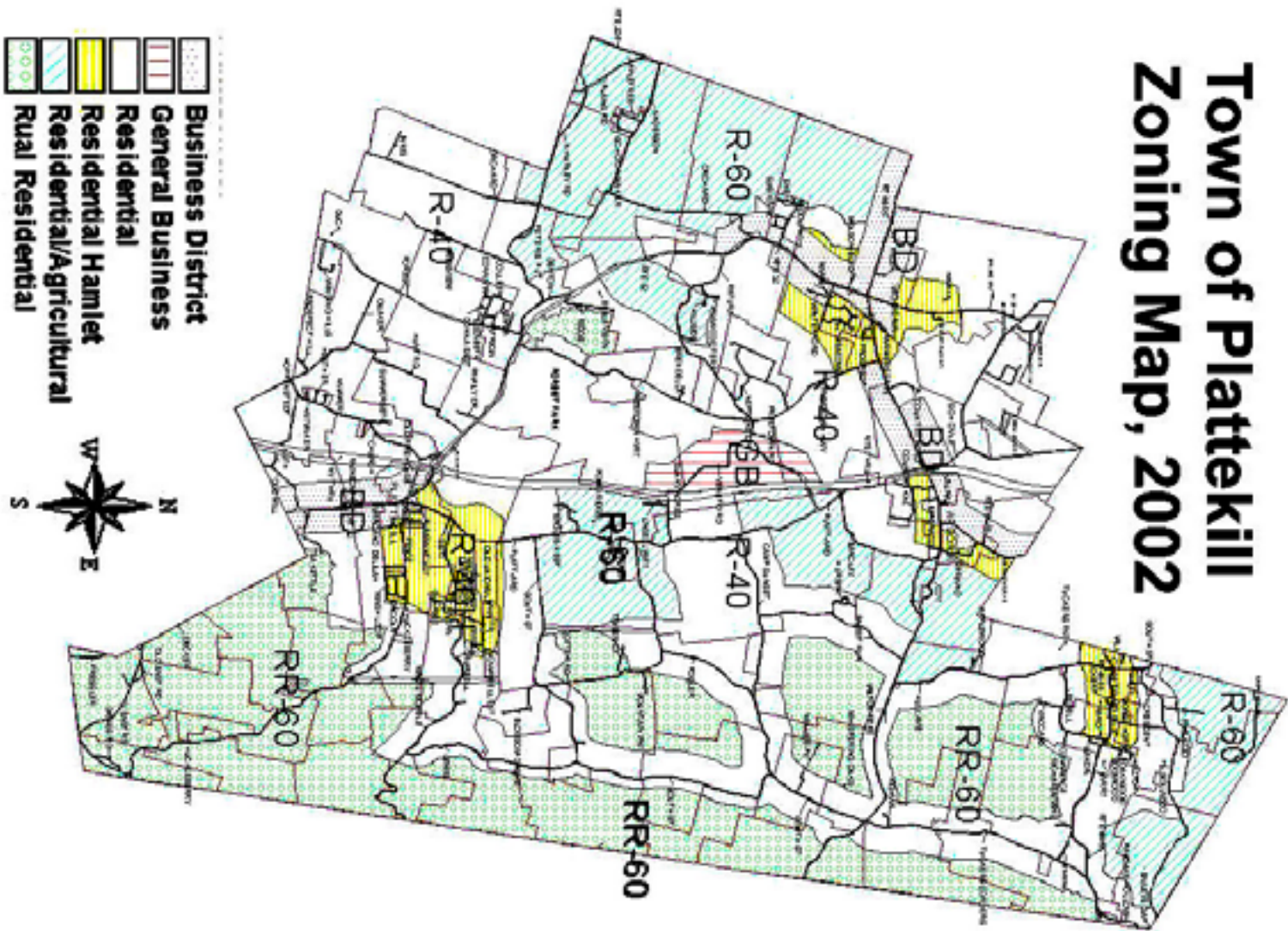
- ❖ A KEY RECOMMENDATION IS THAT THE TOWN **KEEP ITS LAND USE AND ZONING CODES UP-TO-DATE** FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THIS NEW PLAN, WITH CURRENT STATE AND FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS, WITH RECENT CASE LAW, AND WITH TRENDS EXPECTED TO INFLUENCE THE TOWN AND ITS REGION. (A map of existing zoning is shown in Figure 13.)

Recommended updates include:

1. clustering, conservation standards and average density provisions for residential subdivisions to ensure that new housing respects the neighborhood and environmental setting. Use of these technique, along with increased minimum lot sizes to protect scenic ridge views from locations such as the higher elevations near Clintondale, along points off Orchard Drive and County Route 23 or from strategic locations along New York State Route 32.
2. incentives for agricultural activities to continue, including flexibility for on farm activities adding value to farm products and for conversion of farm structures to supplemental or seasonal uses.
3. use of special use or site plan standards to insure that new development is designed borrowing the best elements of traditional neighborhoods found in the southern Ulster County region.
4. provisions for a new business park with potential use of expedited review and incentive zoning bonuses to encourage such development.
5. updated provisions for home businesses recognizing their economic value while ensuring compatibility with their neighborhood locations.
6. contemporary noise and other performance standards to guarantee that land use activities respect their neighborhood setting.
7. enhanced setbacks or buffer areas where new development puts residential and non-residential uses next to one another.

The Town should also explore the use of transfer of development rights (TDR) regulations, ideally in partnership with neighboring Towns, to encourage a balance between growth and preservation particularly related to farms and agricultural lands and key gateway and business locations throughout the Town.

Figure 13.

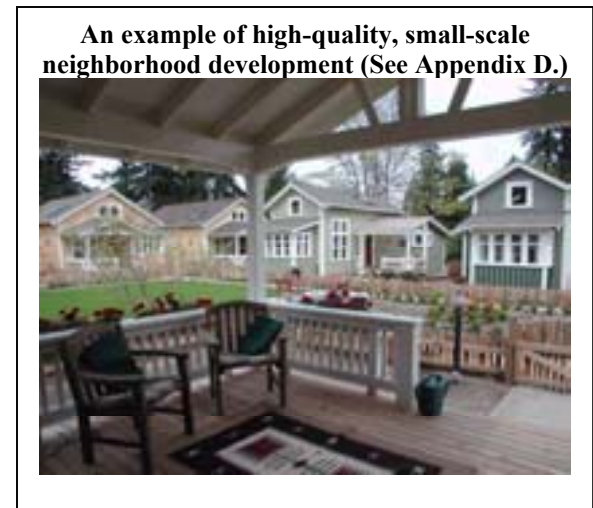


A transition period will be inevitable following the adoption of the new plan, yet prior to adoption of updated codes. To ease the pressures and confusion in defining suitable land uses during this transition, the Town should adopt appropriate policies in response. For example, if conditions warrant, the Town may consider a short-term moratorium on residential subdivisions and on commercial site plans to help Town officials make informed decisions on updated zoning and land use codes.

❖ **ALONG WITH NEEDED ZONING UPDATES, DESIGN STANDARDS ARE STRONGLY RECOMMENDED TO HELP GUIDE DESIRABLE LAND USE IN FOUR PARTICULAR SETTINGS:**

- i. Residential subdivisions on open lands.
- ii. Commercial development along main road corridors.
- iii. Gateways or key entrances to the Town along main road corridors.
- iv. Hamlet infill⁴ and expansion at a scale and mix of land uses complimentary to each hamlet.

Examples of one desired type of designs for housing development are included in Appendix D.



❖ **AS A “FARM FRIENDLY” COMMUNITY, THE MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE TOWN ESTABLISH AN AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AND SUPPORT PROGRAM EMPHASIZING INCENTIVES FOR FARMING ACTIVITIES.**

As a high priority from the public opinion survey, the Town, in cooperation with adjoining Towns and Ulster County, should do all that it can to support its agricultural heritage. Recommendations include evaluation and updating of the land use codes and zoning to be more farm friendly and to encourage opportunity for diversified uses of farm

⁴ “Infill” means development or building designed to “fill in” usable sites between or adjacent to already developed sites.

buildings, farmlands, and farm markets. The Town should also continue to be an active participant to any purchase of development rights programs that exist. A “right to farm” law should also be enacted. An agriculture advisory committee could be created to help define and oversee “farm friendly” initiatives.

- ❖ THE TOWN SHOULD CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS AT INTERMUNICIPAL COOPERATION AS RECOMMENDED IN THE 1999 COUNTRYSIDE EXCHANGE, INCLUDING MAINTAINING ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN **ALLIANCES WITH OTHER HUDSON VALLEY AND SOUTHERN ULSTER COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS.**

Through such alliances the Town can more economically and efficiently realize its role in the region’s market, environment and political setting. Town residents would support, in particular, regional efforts in agricultural protection, business attraction, tourism and public transportation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

- ❖ THE TOWN CAN TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE TO **ENCOURAGE BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND RETENTION** targeting support for tourism and agriculture related business, as well as small scale service and retail businesses. The 2000 survey of residents conducted by the SUNY-New Paltz chapter of the American Marketing Association found that tourism-focused businesses are supported by 87% of the respondents, with more shopping or retail supported by 61%. Any new business must respect the neighborhood setting and scale of the Town. A coordinated effort should be pursued, organized by an existing entity or by a new committee established by the Town Board.
- ❖ **THE TOWN SHOULD CREATE WATER AND SEWER DISTRICTS FOR THE MODENA HAMLET** to promote the location of high intensity/high density uses in this location. The Town should identify lands required to be purchased by the Town in order to operate sewer/water systems (e.g., land for filtration plants, water towers, etc.)
- ❖ STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES ARE RECOMMENDED TO ENCOURAGE NEW DEVELOPMENT IN OR ADJACENT TO EXISTING **HAMLETS AS PREFERRED LOCATIONS**. Essential elements of the Town's rural landscape character, Modena, Clintondale and Plattekill, along with Ardonia and Tuckers Corners are key to the identity of the Town. Focused attention at these locations will help offer development options while retaining some of the rural, open character of lands surrounding the hamlets. This approach will also help the Town more efficiently and effectively provide public services, while promoting historic settings offering a mix of land uses, all within an easy walk, bike or ride. Assurances should also be made in Town codes that new development will help meet pedestrian needs through sidewalks, paths or trails.
- ❖ ZONING SHOULD BE MODIFIED TO PROMOTE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN NODES IN OR IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO EXISTING HAMLETS. As shown in Figure 14, the underlying zoning for the Town features BD zones that extend from the hamlet centers along major roadways into the surrounding countryside. In fact, the hamlets of Modena and Ardonia *are connected* by a single BD zone. These zones should be reconfigured so that the commercial and industrial development associated with the BD zones should be grouped in compact nodes of activity. Unless this change is made, Plattekill runs the risk that the areas surrounding its hamlets will be filled with commercial strip development that weakens the integrity of the hamlets and brings with it associated traffic problems.

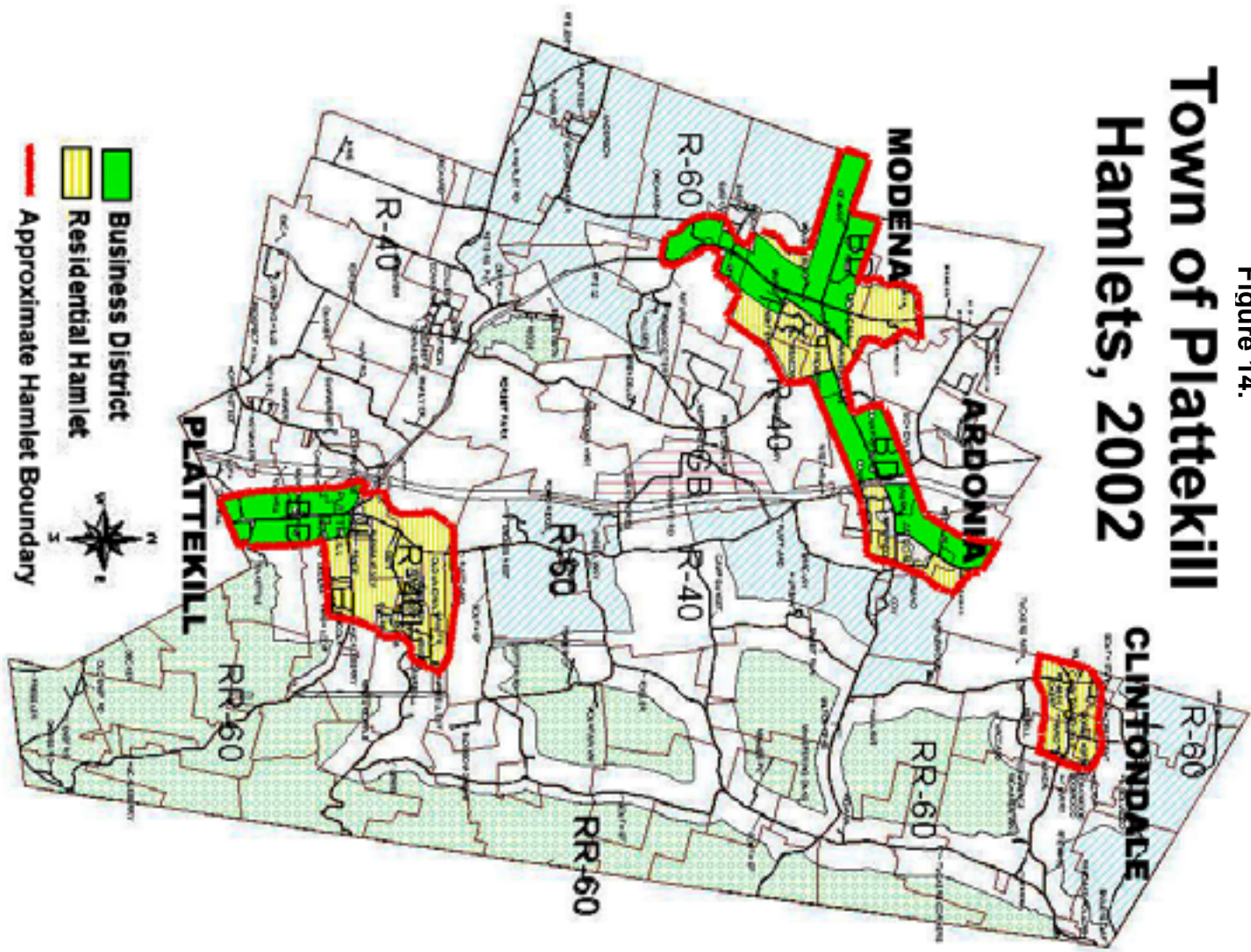
- ❖ IN ORDER TO ENSURE DEVELOPMENT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE DESIRED APPEARANCE OF THE COMMUNITY, THE TOWN SHOULD **CREATE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR EACH BUSINESS DISTRICT** to be included in the site plan review of each project to ensure high quality economic development consistent with community character. The standards should describe the kinds of ancillary residential development that is appropriate for commercial districts.

Mixed Use Hamlet Development



Town of Plattekill Hamlets, 2002

Figure 14.



- ❖ AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE, THE TOWN SHOULD ESTABLISH **A BUSINESS PARK** OFFERING “SHOVEL READY” ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE, “CLEAN” BUSINESSES. In 1996 the Town took an important step by creating business districts after the recommendation of the Economic Development Committee. Learning from the success of nearby communities, provision should be made to go further in the attraction of new business at a targeted, suitable location. The Town should partner with the Empire State Development Corporation and the Governor’s Office of Regulatory Reform towards analyzing the feasibility and benefits of such a business park.

Titled under the Build Now – NY program (see www.gorr.state.ny.us and www.empire.state.ny.us), this program profiles seven generic “shovel ready” sites ranging from Research & Development to Retail. The Business / Commercial Park is most relevant to Plattekill, described ideally as a 60-120 acre park with 5-15 acre individual business sites. Such parks target small to mid-sized business including light industrial, assembly facilities, commercial offices, and accessory warehouses and distribution.

Given its location and access to work force, Plattekill is most likely to attract or incubate light industry and/or services. Consequently the Town may wish to create an industry/office park to support those uses in or immediately adjacent to the hamlets of Ardonia, Modena or Plattekill. A hamlet location for such a facility could be a boon for stores and restaurants in the hamlet itself, providing the facility is created with suitable site development and design standards that make it compatible with other uses (particularly residential) that may be located nearby.

- ❖ GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTING LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS, THE TOWN SHOULD ESTABLISH CLEAR **POLICIES FOR CONDUCTING HOME OCCUPATIONS AND BUSINESSES** WHILE GUARANTEEING NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY. Small businesses, often based in the home, continue to grow as an essential aspect of the local economy. Efforts will be made to better address these uses in Town codes and regulations and to help organize support programs for home businesses in cooperation with regional business organizations.
- ❖ **PLATTEKILL SHOULD PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ITS UNIQUE HISTORY.** Plattekill should encourage organized efforts to promote Heritage Tourism in Plattekill by building upon the area’s heritage. The town should encourage the creation of an annual Heritage festival and seek ways of preserving and interpreting various aspects of that heritage. The Townwide Cultural and Arts organization recommended under

the “Community Identity” recommendations could be the lead organization in this effort.

- ❖ PLATTEKILL SHOULD SEEK TO **DIVERSIFY THE ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES** FOUND IN THE TOWN. For example, the Town currently has four racetracks for motorized vehicles located within its boundaries, three of which are motocross tracks. As part of its economic development efforts, the Town should seek to create other types of tourism and entertainment venues. At the same time, the Town should develop a permitting policy for racing that minimizes the conflicts between racetrack operations and residential areas. Diversification efforts should focus on such enterprises as inns, bed and breakfasts and day spas and retreat centers that may be able to adapt and/or reuse existing facilities that were formerly villas and small hotels.

PROTECTING TOWN ASSETS AND RESOURCES

- ❖ THE TOWN SHOULD DESIGNATE A CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREA AT THE HERTEL LANDFILL SITE TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS ARE CONDUCTED FOR ANY ACTIONS PROPOSED FOR THAT AREA. The Town should also commission a study of the environmental conditions at the Hertel Landfill site to identify any actions that may be necessary to protect the quality of the groundwater sources supplying neighborhoods in the vicinity of the site. The Town should also conduct a similar study for the former Plattekill Landfill site. The documentation needed to create the Critical Environmental Area is included as an appendix to this plan.
- ❖ PLATTEKILL SHOULD CREATE A STRATEGY TO PROTECT OPEN SPACE ALONG THE PLATTEKILL-MARLBORO MOUNTAIN. Elements of this strategy could include creating design standards to mitigate visual impact of any development on the mountain, encouraging the acquisition of lands or easements on the Mountain, and the exploration of the possibility of New York State consolidating its separate holdings on the Mountain for preservation and/or low-impact recreational uses.
- ❖ IN ORDER TO PREVENT ANY PROBLEMS RELATED TO GROUND WATER CONTAMINATIONS, THE TOWN SHOULD CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE ISSUES RELATED TO CONTAMINATION FROM FORMER SERVICE STATIONS. Town officials should seek regular updates on this issue from the State Department of environmental conservation.
- ❖ COMPLETION OF AN INVENTORY OF HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND SCENIC RESOURCES IN THE TOWN WOULD HELP TO IDENTIFY THE TOWN'S ASSETS. With the cooperation of local and state historic preservation organizations, funding should be secured to complete such an inventory in support of other recommended actions in this Plan. In particular, the Town should partner with the Preservation League of New York State, based in Albany, to gain preliminary advice on such an inventory. Funding may now be available in May through the Preserve NY program, administered by the League, in February or March through the New York State Council on the Arts, or through the I LOVE NEW YORK campaign administered by the Empire State Development Corporation.

- ❖ THE TOWN MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT STEPS BE TAKEN TO COMPLETE A **COMPREHENSIVE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN** IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO MEET THOSE NEEDS.

As a next phase of on-going master plan work, the Town should inventory existing resources and identify future needs including, but not limited to, parks and neighborhood pocket parks, trails, full season activities, outdoor recreation on public and private lands, partnerships with other governmental and non-governmental groups, and best use of recreation funds collected through Town land subdivision approvals.

- ❖ **AS PART OF THE OPEN SPACE PLAN, THE TOWN SHOULD IDENTIFY AND ACQUIRE VACANT LANDS ADJACENT TO THE THOMAS FELTON PARK** for future recreational needs.

- ❖ THE TOWN SHOULD ENSURE THAT LOCAL LAWS AND POLICIES **SUPPORT TRADITIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**. Plattekill's rural character is widely recognized as a central ingredient in its quality of life. One essential element in the rural character is the pattern of the built environment. As in most rural areas, Plattekill's develop has two dimension: compact, mixed-use hamlets surrounded by large areas of open space. When zoning was first introduced into communities like Plattekill, it was based upon suburban models of development intent on encouraging low density residential development throughout a community coupled with large districts of commercial strip development. That "suburban pattern" can produce attractive individual homesites. But the overall effect is to disrupt and weaken the traditional development patterns of rural areas.

The diagrams on page 48 show how the pattern of development can affect the rural character of the area. The first picture shows a traditional rural area with farms and open space. The second illustration shows how the area would be affected by standard suburban development. The farmland is converted to housing and large areas of open space become private yards. The third diagram shows development that keeps nonfarm housing concentrated in an attractive hamlet with new commercial development resembling a traditional "main street." Finally, because the nonfarm development is compact, the area can maintain most of the land in large areas of open space.

As indicated in the section on "updating town policies and codes," the Town's zoning ordinance should be revised to promote cluster development in or adjacent to the hamlets. In addition the ordinance should allow compact

mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development in the hamlets, consistent with the Town's traditional patterns of development as illustrated on the next page.

In order to achieve this, the Town should adopt conservation subdivision techniques as the procedure for clustering development when proposed. According to Randall Arendt's book *Growing Greener*, conservation subdivisions involve a four-step process:

Step 1: Identifying conservation areas [e.g., areas with natural resources, cultural resources, views, etc.]

Step 2: Locating house sites.

Step 3: Aligning streets and trails.

Step 4: Drawing in the lot lines.

Source: Randall Arendt, *Growing Greener*, pp. 128-130.

Under conservation subdivision techniques, the density of development is not affected. Rather the approach is to configure the development so that it has minimal impact on the important resources associated with the land to be developed. Thus, the first step in the subdivision process is not to lay out house lots, but rather to identify the physical location of environmental and cultural resources on the property that are worthy of protection. Once the resources to be protected have been defined and mapped, the next step is to map the areas where development can take place. House footprints are then sited in the "developable" area; streets and trails are then added (also taking care to avoid the critical resources on site). Finally, the lot lines are defined, producing a subdivision that meets the existing density schedule but which is configured to conserve the site's critical resources. As in the example below, the number of units developed through the conservation subdivision process is the same as in a regular subdivision process.

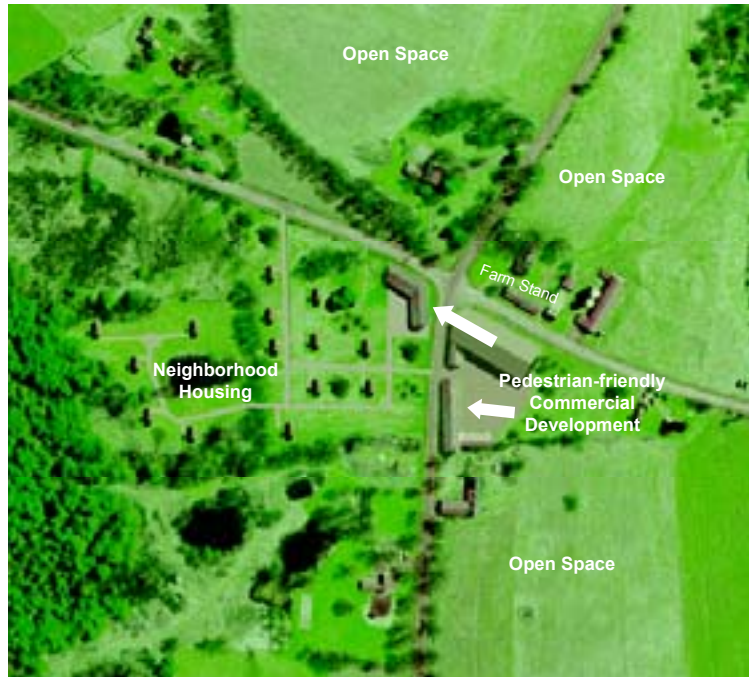
1. RURAL AREA PRIOR TO DEVELOPMENT



2. STANDARD SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT & LOSS OF RURAL CHARACTER



3. DEVELOPMENT THAT PRESERVES RURAL CHARACTER



IMPROVING COMMUNITY IDENTITY

- ❖ **A COMMUNITY CENTER SHOULD BE DEFINED IN MODENA** THROUGH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT TO HELP ESTABLISH A STRONGER COMMUNITY IDENTITY. Since adoption of the Town’s original Plan in 1973, Modena remains a priority location for a mix of more intensive development along with public services and facilities. This is the only location in Town where two primary roads intersect, providing transportation links to all other hamlets and neighborhoods in the Town. A feasibility study also suggest this as a priority location for central water services, an effort to be further pursued in cooperation with possible funding sources through the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation or the United States Department of Agriculture.

- ❖ ROUTE 32 ALONG WITH ROUTE 44/55 REQUIRES SPECIAL ATTENTION GIVEN THE INCREASED PACE OF ACTIVITY ALONG THESE **GATEWAY CORRIDORS**. Routes 32 and 44/55 are the primary travel routes into and out of the Town along which residents and visitors gain first impressions of the Town. T Town policy should encourage the attraction of compatible and well designed new development with requirements and/or incentives to create clear and attractive signage, well-designed landscaping and traditional development patterns as illustrated on the preceding page. The Town could also work, perhaps in partnership with property owners and civic groups, to provide attractive landscaping, along with information signage, at key gateway corridor entrances either at the edge of Town borders or near landmarks and hamlets.

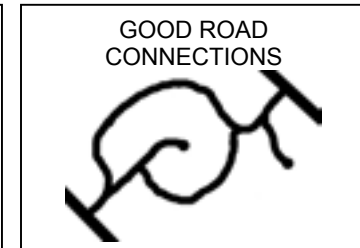
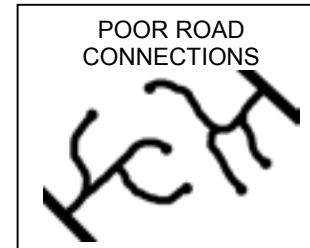


- ❖ TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE TOWN’S COMMUNITY IDENTITY, A STRATEGIC TOWNWIDE PROGRAM SHOULD BE INITIATED TO **PROMOTE THE CULTURAL AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE UNIQUE TO PLATTEKILL**. A TOWNWIDE CULTURE AND ARTS ASSOCIATON COULD BE THE LEAD IN SUCH AN

EFFORT. Styled after other programs in many jurisdictions, such an effort could help galvanize and organize various efforts now going on, while giving an increasingly mobile population a greater sense of place and opportunity to participate in local events, promotion and education. This could also serve to gain greater Town activities meeting important values and needs identified by residents. The heritage festival recommended under the “Economic Development” recommendations could be one of the first activities of this association.

TRANSPORTATION

- ❖ THE TOWN SHOULD WORK WITH THE NYS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND ULSTER COUNTY GOVERNMENT TO REALIGN ROUTE 32 AT ITS INTERSECTION WITH THE PLATTEKILL/ARDONIA ROAD to improve traffic flow and safety. This is a major gateway to the Town from the South. As traffic increases, this intersection may become increasingly dangerous.
- ❖ THE TOWN SHOULD INSTALL SIDEWALKS ALONG THE PLATTEKILL-ARDONIA ROAD to accommodate the pedestrian traffic in the hamlet of Plattekill. As part of this effort the Town should develop street lighting plans to ensure adequate pedestrian safety in areas of the Town that experience heavy pedestrian traffic.
- ❖ PLATTEKILL SHOULD DEVELOP A STANDARD POLICY ON PROVIDING ACCESS TO NEW DEVELOPMENT that ensures a consistent town-wide approach both in the creation and dedication of roads and in associated requirements for pedestrian access. In addition, the Town should encourage roads in all new developments to interconnect with the existing (and/or proposed) network in at least two locations.



- ❖ THE TOWN SHOULD ENSURE THAT ITS LAND USE POLICIES COULD ABSORB THE IMPACTS IF AN INTERCHANGE FOR I-87 IS DEVELOPED IN PLATTEKILL. While no interchange is currently planned for Plattekill, the issue regularly resurfaces for consideration by the Thruway Authority and others. The increase in traffic (and associated commerce) associated with an interchange can be a boost to a Town that is prepared to channel growth in ways that strengthen community character and minimize unwanted traffic problems. On the other hand, if an interchange is created and the Town's policies promote commercial strip development and unregulated curb cuts along its major thoroughfares, the induced growth is likely to damage community character and create unwanted traffic problems. Plattekill should ensure that the zoning along routes 32 and 44/55 will be able to successfully channel the growth and avoid traffic problems. The Town need only look at the strip development and traffic congestion that occurred along Route 299 in New Paltz during the 15 years after the opening of Exit 18 for an illustration of the types of development problems Plattekill wishes to avoid.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- ❖ PLATTEKILL SHOULD ESTABLISH A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS for infrastructure and facilities consistent with the guidelines of the New York State Comptroller. See Appendix C for a copy of the Comptroller's suggested guidelines from the publication "Financial Information for Town Highway Superintendents."
- ❖ OVER THE NEXT 5 TO 10 YEARS, THE TOWN SHOULD STUDY THE DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY SERVICES. Over the last few years there has been a dramatic increase in emergency calls in the Town according to the AEGIS Public Safety System database on 911 calls in the Town of Plattekill maintained by the Ulster County Department of Emergency Communications/Emergency Management. While this database includes calls for police and fire as well as emergency medical services, it clearly shows an increase in demand for emergency services. Note that the total number of emergency calls increased by 45 percent from 2,803 to 4,068 calls. Note also that in 2001, the most frequent type of emergency calls were medical calls. This is occurring at a time when all three of Plattekill's rescue squads are reporting increased difficulty in finding trained volunteers to staff their vehicles.

Top Five Categories of Number of Calls to 911 in the Town of Plattekill, 1998 and 2001	
1998	2001
1. Domestic Dispute (301 calls)	1. Medical (439 calls)
2. Motor Vehicle Accident (278 calls)	2. Motor Vehicle Accident (343 calls)
3. ALS Assist (246 calls)	3. Domestic Dispute (287 calls)
4. Reg. Patrol (148 calls)	4. ALS Assist (213 calls)
5. Difficulty Breathing (118 calls)	5. Abandon 911 (212 calls)
Total 911 Calls: 2,803	Total 911 Calls: 4,068
Source: Ulster County Department of Emergency Communications/Emergency Management.	

This suggests that the first priority would be for the Town to study if it should introduce professional ambulance services in the community to complement and/or replace volunteer services. In addition, as the community continues to grow over the next ten years, the Town should examine the need and/or desirability of reconfiguring the Town fire services to maintain the quality of fire protection services available throughout the Town. The plan should consider the creation of a central fire house with substations. In addition, the Town should examine the need for expanded public safety planning in light of planning being done in Orange County related to potential emergencies at nuclear power plants and other disasters.

- ❖ **THE TOWN SHOULD DEVELOP A PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD** to ensure that the best use is made of the valuable volunteer time of the board members and to provide a “user-friendly” process for the applicants. This manual should address:
 - The procedures and practices by which meetings should be conducted
 - Flow chart of approvals process describing the process for an applicant to place his or her project on the agenda of either the planning or zoning board
 - Applicant guidebook outlining both the boards’ procedures and practices and describing the flow chart of the approvals process.

A sample description of a “flow chart” is included as Appendix B to this plan.

- ❖ **THE TOWN SHOULD EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF CONSTRUCTING A NEW TOWN HALL** that better meets the needs of town government, while serving as an attractive center for community activities. While it is important that the new town hall be functional and affordable, it also is a physical expression of Plattekill's self-image. Therefore, a new town hall should be constructed with a strong sense of design that reflects the rural architectural heritage of the community, and using high quality materials so that the building serves as a source of pride for the entire community.

The Current Town Hall



IMPLEMENTATION

The first step in implementing Plattekill's comprehensive plan is to ensure that it is officially adopted by the Town Board. New York State Town Law Section 272-a 5 spells out that process:

(a) Any proposed comprehensive plan or amendment thereto that is prepared by the town board or a special board may be referred to the town planning board for review and recommendation before action by the town board.

(b) The town board shall, prior to adoption, refer the proposed comprehensive plan or any amendment thereto to the county planning board or agency or regional planning council for review and recommendation as required by section two hundred thirty-nine-m of the general municipal law. In the event the proposed plan or amendment thereto is prepared by the town planning board or a special board, such board may request comment on such proposed plan or amendment from the county planning board or agency or regional planning council.

Public hearings; notice. (a) In the event the town board prepares a proposed town comprehensive plan or amendment thereto, the town board shall hold one or more public hearings and such other meetings as it deems necessary to assure full opportunity for citizen participation in the preparation of such proposed plan or amendment, and in addition, the town board shall hold one or more public hearings prior to adoption of such proposed plan or amendment. (b) In the event the town board has directed the planning board or a special board to prepare a proposed comprehensive plan or amendment thereto, the board preparing the plan shall hold one or more public hearings and such other meetings as it deems necessary to assure full opportunity for citizen participation in the preparation of such proposed plan or amendment. The town board shall, within ninety days of receiving the planning board or special board's recommendations on such proposed plan or amendment, and prior to adoption of such proposed plan or amendment, hold a public hearing on such proposed plan or amendment.

(c) Notice of a public hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the town at least ten calendar days in advance of the hearing. The proposed comprehensive plan or amendment thereto shall be made available for public review during said period at the office of the town clerk and may be made available at any other place, including a public library.

Adoption. The town board may adopt by resolution a town comprehensive plan or any amendment thereto.

Environmental review. A town comprehensive plan, and any amendment thereto, is subject to the provisions of the state environmental quality review act under article eight of the environmental conservation law and its implementing regulations

Agricultural review and coordination. A town comprehensive plan and any amendments thereto, for a town containing all or part of an agricultural district or lands receiving agricultural assessments within its jurisdiction, shall continue to be subject to the provisions of article twenty-five-AA of the agriculture and markets law relating to the enactment and administration of local laws, ordinances, rules or regulations. A newly adopted or amended town comprehensive plan shall take into consideration applicable county agricultural and farmland protection plans as created under article twenty-five-AAA of the agriculture and markets law.

Periodic review. The town board shall provide, as a component of such proposed comprehensive plan, the maximum intervals at which the adopted plan shall be reviewed.

Effect of adoption of the town comprehensive plan. (a) All town land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to this section.

Guide to Terms Used

DESIGN STANDARDS - a type of land use technique focusing on how development will be best designed to meet defined characteristics of a neighborhood or location.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) - a computer based system for storing, mapping and reporting information by geographic location. In New York State, information is available associated either by tax lot parcel or by United States Geological Survey maps.

HAMLET - An unincorporated location within a Town defined by a grouping of homes and businesses including such services as a post office, bank, convenience or general store, church or gathering place. Typically has its own historic name.

HOME OCCUPATION OR BUSINESS - a business conducted within a residence that is incidental and subordinate to the primary residential use.

INCENTIVE ZONING - The procedure, governed by State and Town rules, by which incentives are provided to developers on the condition that specific physical, social or cultural benefits are provided to the community. Increases in number or residential units or allowable square footage or waivers of setback requirements might be offered in exchange for affordable housing, infrastructure improvements, or recreational facilities.

INFILL - Development or building that “fills in” a vacant or under-utilized site located between or adjacent to developed sites.

PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (PDR) - The purchase of some or all the development rights on a parcel of land by deed, easement, or other legal instrument. For example, New York State currently provides funds, on a competitive basis, for the purchase of development rights on agricultural lands.

SITE PLAN REVIEW - The procedure, governed by State and Town rules, for the review of the development or use of a single parcel of land.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT - The procedures, governed by State and Town rules, for the review of the use of land for a particular purpose.

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS - The procedures, governed by State and Town rules, for the review of the division of a single parcel of land into two or more new parcels of land or changes to the legal boundaries of any such parcels.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR) - The conveyance of some or all of the development rights by deed, easement or other legal instrument authorized by the Town to another parcel of land. The land conveying rights is commonly called the “sending” parcel, while land gaining rights is called the “receiving” parcel.

Appendix A. Documentation for Hertell Landfill Critical Environmental Area Designation

TOWN OF PLATTEKILL *PROPOSED HERTEL WATER QUALITY AREA*

CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREA (CEA)

The 2002 Town of Plattekill Comprehensive Plan recommends the designation of Hertel Water Quality Area as a “critical environmental area” (CEA) consistent with New York State Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR Part 617), also known as the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The purpose of such designation is to insure recognition of the importance of this area to future land use decisions and to see that potentially significant, environmental impacts are considered prior to the issuance of planning or zoning permits. Specifically, such designation requires, whenever an action is subject to review under SEQRA, that the presence and characteristics of the CEA be considered prior to the approval of such action. Actions could include Town amendments to its plan or zoning as well as any public agency, including the Town, issuing permits for land subdivision, site plans, and other new or expanded land uses.

The Hertel Water Quality Critical Environmental Area includes the former Hertel Landfill site along with contiguous and nearby properties which could be hydrologically linked to that site. Possible impacts from future development and groundwater withdrawal are the key concern. After public notice and a public hearing, this designation would take effect 30 days after filing with the New York State Commissioner of Environmental Conservation.

PROPOSED HERTEL WATER QUALITY

CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREA (CEA)

Description and Boundary

The location of the boundaries of the proposed Hertel Water Quality Critical Environmental Area is defined as follows (see Attached Map):

- bounded on the westerly side of the Hertel Landfill by a natural watershed division boundary. The land east of this natural divide slopes and drains easterly toward the Pancake Hollow Brook tributary stream. The results of the EPA’s hydro geological studies indicate that both groundwater and surface water flows are directed easterly from the Hertel Landfill site, toward the Pancake Hollow Brook;
- bounded on the southerly (upstream) side of the Hertel Landfill by a separation distance of 1,500 feet, in accordance with criteria established and the “New York State Wellhead Protection Program”, (NYSDEC, 1990). The 1,500 feet separation distance is a regulated distance from a public water supply well that must be protected from sources of contamination; and

- bounded on the easterly and northerly side of the Hertel Landfill by a separation distance of 2,000 feet, in accordance with the criteria threshold for a potentially large environmental impact on Public Health, per 6 NYCRR Part 617.20, Appendix A, Part 2 (18).

Hertel Water Quality Critical Environmental Area

Environmental Character

As provided by NYCRR 617.2(l) a critical environmental area is defined as "...a specific geographic area designated by a state or local agency, having exceptional or unique environmental characteristics. Additionally, and as defined in NYCRR 617.14(g), a critical environmental area must have exceptional or unique characteristics meeting one of three criteria. This critical environmental area meets two of the three criteria:

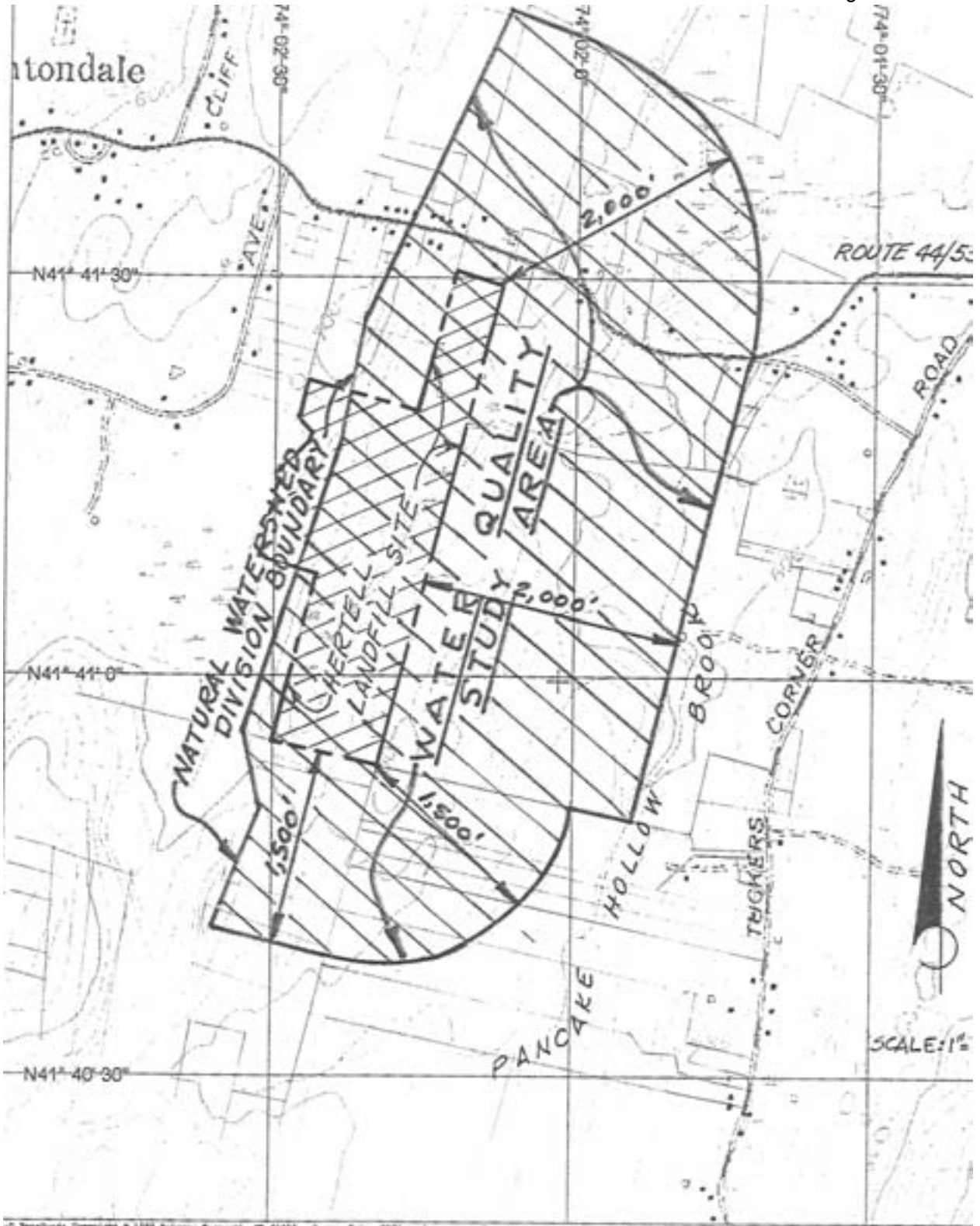
"...a benefit or threat to human health." (NYCRR 617.14(g)(1)(i))

**"...inherent ecological, geological or hydrological sensitivity to change that may be adversely affected by any change."
(NYCRR 617.14(g)(1)(ii))**

The Hertel Water Quality Critical Environmental Area is located in the northeastern portion of the Town of Plattekill, including and surrounding the former Hertel Landfill site. This landfill operated between the mid-1960's and the late 1970's, changing ownership several times. The site was known to receive municipal wastes at eight distinct disposal sites. Previous investigations at the site conducted for the State of New York revealed the presence of chlorinated solvents, toluene, phthalates and several metals in ground water, and phenols, chlorinated solvents, and metals in seep samples.

The reasonableness of this critical environmental area is verified by prior work of hydrogeological consultants for the Town of Plattekill, the NYSDEC's Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste staff, and the EPA's Project Engineer (who is specifically familiar with the Hertel Landfill's water quality contamination and groundwater flow regimes. This area is also justified by the fact that the Hertel Landfill is a "Superfund" site and cleanup activities are considered a federal enforcement proceeding, pursuant to federal law, but were not subject to a formal environmental review that required rigorous investigations of the properties that are included in this proposed study area. Therefore, the Town seeks to ensure that adequate investigation is given to potential, environmental impacts from future land development related to current and future groundwater withdrawal.

Of particular concern is the significance of the effect of water withdrawal to support large-scale residential developments in this study area. The Town is pursuing hydrogeological investigations to generally evaluate this potentially significant impact, and land use modifications as well as conditions on land use permits may be a necessary means to mitigate this issue.



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EXHIBIT A

Appendix B. Proposed Planning Board Procedures

TOWN OF PLATTEKILL PLANNING BOARD *PROPOSED CHECKLIST FOR COMPLETE APPLICATIONS*

This document highlights the changes that are proposed for the Town of Plattekill's Code and the Planning Board's by-laws. The existing rules and procedures that have been identified as issues are:

1. Number of Copies of Applications Required For Submittal:

Currently, applicants for both site plan/special use permits are only required to submit two as applications, while subdivision applicants are only required to submit three. The members of the Planning Board, as well as the Planning Board Clerk, the Town Engineer, and the Town Building Inspector review these applications. The existing requirements do not guarantee that everyone involved in the approval of permits has actually viewed the permit. To eliminate such confusion, it is proposed that applicants for both site plan/special use permits and subdivision submit 10 copies to ensure that there are sufficient numbers available for review.

2. Deadline for submission of materials:

Current deadlines for applicants of site plan/special use and subdivision permits require applications and all other relevant material to be submitted 10 days prior to the next Planning Board meeting. Planning Board meetings are currently held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. This is not common knowledge to all applicants. To eliminate confusion we recommend changing the deadline for all materials to the first of the month in order to be eligible to be included on that month's agenda.

3. Establishment of Completion of Application:

The current site plan/special use permit process states that the Building Inspector determines if the application is complete. However, this is not spelled out explicitly in the Site Plan Review section of the Code. While an enumerated list of approval procedures is detailed in the Subdivision language, it does not clearly state who determines the completion of an application. We recommend that the Building Inspector be given the power to determine the completeness of subdivision applications. The Building Inspector should have a form to provide to applicant that indicates the time and date upon which a completed application was received, or if the application is not complete, the items that need to be added to the application when it is resubmitted.

Applications can be scheduled for meeting agendas based upon the chronological order in which they were accepted as complete.

4. The Role of the Planning Board Workshop Meeting:

The current subdivision review process does not explicitly define a role for the Planning Board's workshop meetings. We recommend that workshop meetings be used for discussions of applications. Based upon the workshop discussions if the application is acceptable to the board, it will be formally considered at the next business meeting. In short, this change would help to ensure that workshop meetings involve the discussion of new proposals, while business meetings should be concerned with approval of applications.

Implementation of the above proposals will involve revision of the code related to planning and zoning of the town of Plattekill, New York. It is suggested that the Town of Plattekill adopt the proposed changes to the following sections of the Town Code:

1. Chapter A114, Planning Board By Laws

2. Chapter 93, Subdivision of Land:

Article II: Approval Procedures

Article IV: Plat Requirements

3. Chapter 110, Zoning

Article XI, Site Plan Review

New language will have to be adopted by the town to incorporate the proposed enumeration procedures.

Proposal for the Revisions of the Planning Board Bylaws

The proposed changes concern the date that workshop meeting is normally held. The current bylaws state that the workshop meeting is held on the first Tuesday of each month, with the regular business meeting held on the second Tuesday. We recommend that the Planning Board bylaws be revised so that they are in accordance with the accepted practice of the Planning Board. This entails the revision of Article **A114-6A**. The existing article is worded as follows:

§ A114-6. Meetings.

- A. Workshop meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month, and regular meetings will be held on the second Tuesday. Meetings may be changed by a majority vote of the Board.

We propose that the revised article be worded as followed, with the proposed changes being highlighted in bold print:

- A. Workshop meetings will be held on the **fourth** Tuesday of each month, and regular meetings will be held on the second Tuesday. Meetings may be changed by a majority vote of the Board.

Proposal for Revision of Subdivision Review Process

The following changes are recommended:

1. The current process as documented in Chapter 93, Article II; Approval Procedures, does not indicate who determines the completeness of the sketch plan and preliminary plat. We propose that the Planning Board Clerk be responsible for the determination and completeness of applications.
2. The current subdivision regulations do not differentiate between the functions that take place at workshop meetings versus business meetings. We propose that workshop meetings be used for sketch plan presentation and discussion. This involves revision of the existing rules governing the submission of sketch plans, as outlined in Chapter 93, Article II.
3. Not every board member has access to a copy of each application for sketch plan and preliminary plat. Current policy states that the applicant only needs to provide two copies of the sketch plan and three copies of the preliminary plat. We propose that the applicant be required to submit ten copies of each so that there are sufficient copies for reference. To do this, minor changes in Chapter 93, Article IV: Plat Requirements will be made concerning the number of copies required. The changes in agenda will also be made in sections of Article II dealing with proper procedure for Submittal.
4. We propose changing the required deadline for submittal of all applications and relevant documents to the first of the month or the proceeding business day. All applications submitted in a timely manner will be on the agenda for the subsequent Planning Board meeting.

The proposed alterations to the Town of Plattekill Subdivision Regulations are to be implemented in the following sections:

93-9. Definitions

The purpose of this section is to define certain words and phrases frequently used in the subdivision process. One such phrase that is defined here in this section is the **Official Date of Submission**. Currently this is defined as follows:

OFFICIAL DATE OF SUBMISSION -- The date when a sketch plan, preliminary plat or final plat shall be considered submitted to the Planning Board, hereby defined to be the date of the regular monthly meeting of the Planning Board, at least 10 days prior to which all required surveys, plans, data and fees are filed with the Chairman or other authorized person of the Planning Board.

We propose that the revised definition of the Official Date of Submission in section 93-9 of the Town Code be worded as follows, with changes highlighted in bold print:

OFFICIAL DATE OF SUBMISSION -- The date when a sketch plan, preliminary plat or final plat shall be considered submitted to the Planning Board, hereby defined to be by the first of the month or the preceding business day. For example, if the last day of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, during which town offices are closed, the plat will need to be submitted the day prior.

Currently, there is much confusion about what materials are necessary and what procedures need to be followed for an application to be deemed complete. We propose that Section 93-9 be amended to include a definition entitled COMPLETED APPLICATION. In formulating an appropriate definition, we seek the counsel and opinions of the planning board.

We propose that the definition of the **Completed Application** be included in Section 93-9 as follows:

COMPLETED APPLICATION – A completed application for review and approval of a subdivision shall contain the following:

- A completed “Town of Plattekill Planning Board Application for Review and Approval of Subdivision”

- A completed Short Form Environmental Assessment Form.
- **Payment in full of all application fees as established by resolution of the Town Board**
- **All documentation required in sections 93-30 and 93-31 of the Town Code**

93-10. Enumeration of procedures

This describes the procedures that applicants for subdivision must follow. The existing rules read as follows.

- A. Preapplication meeting with Planning Board.
- B. Sketch plan showing general concept.
- C. Preliminary plat showing proposal in detail accompanied by filing fees, per § 93-13.
- D. Review by non-town agencies.
- E. Public hearing on preliminary plat.
- F. Planning Board action on preliminary plat.
- G. Final plat submission and review.
- H. Public hearing on final plat.
- I. Planning Board action by resolution.
- J. Completion of improvements or posting of bond, certified checks or suitable alternative surety.
- K. Planning Board signs plat.
- L. Plat is filed in County Clerk's office.

It is proposed that the existing rules be revised in accordance with changes made in the subdivision process. This mainly includes clarification of the role of the Planning Board in the discussion of the sketch plan. Also emphasized is the role of the Planning Board Clerk in determining the completeness of submitted applications. The changes as follows are highlighted:

SEQR PROCESS: needs to be reviewed and incorporated

- A. Preapplication meeting with Building Inspector.
- B. Sketch Plan showing general concept, **to be submitted to Building Inspector for determination of completeness**
- C. **Presentation and Discussion of sketch plan at Planning Board Workshop Meeting.**
- D. **Planning Board Action on Sketch Plan at Business Meeting.** (The SEQR process begins with the completion of the EAF and a classification of the proposed project as either a Type I, Type II or Unlisted action.)
- E. Preliminary plat showing proposal in detail, accompanied by filing fees, per § 93-13, to be submitted to Building Inspector for determination of completeness.
- F. Public Hearing on Preliminary Plat.
- G. Planning Board Action on preliminary plat. (At this stage, the planning board makes a determination of significance for any application deemed an unlisted action under SEQR, issuing a positive declaration if it determines that the project will have a significant impact or a negative declaration for those projects determined to have no significant environmental impact.)
- H. Review by non-Town Agencies.
- I. Final Plat Submission and Review
- J. Public hearing on final plat.
- K. Planning board action by resolution.
- L. Planning Board signs plat.

M. Plat is filed in County Clerk's Office.

§ 93-12. Submission of sketch plan.

We recommend that this procedure be substantially revised to include the following:

- . **Changes in the date of submission**
- . **The number of copies the applicant is required to submit**
- . **The role of the Building Inspector in establishing the completeness of the application**
- . **The sketch plan and discussion will take place at a workshop meeting**

The existing code is worded as follows:

Prior to filing a preliminary plat, the subdivider or his duly authorized representative shall submit a sketch plan showing a basic proposed layout and other information required in § 93-30 of this chapter. At least two copies of this sketch plan shall be delivered to the Clerk or other authorized official of the Planning Board at least 10 days before the next scheduled Board meeting. After submission of the sketch plan, the Planning Board may schedule a field trip to the site, to be accompanied by the subdivider. To facilitate the inspection of the site, the subdivider shall have the center line of any proposed streets marked by temporary stakes. After review of the sketch plan and field inspection, but within 45 days of the official date of submission of the sketch plan, the Planning Board will tentatively approve the sketch plan or recommend modifications in writing.

This is the proposed change, with new language highlighted:

Prior to filing a preliminary plat, the subdivider or his duly authorized representative shall submit a sketch plan showing a basic proposed layout and other information required in § 93-30 of this chapter. **Ten** copies of this sketch plan shall be delivered to the Clerk or other authorized official of the Planning Board **by the first of the month or preceding business day to be on the agenda for the next meeting. For example, if the last day of the month falls on a weekend or a holiday, during which town offices are closed, the plat will need to be submitted the day prior.** The submitted sketch plan will be reviewed by the Building Inspector to determine the completeness of the application. If incomplete the applicant will be informed of what additional documentation

is needed for resubmission of sketch plan. The resubmitted sketch plan will be subjected to the same procedures for approval. A sketch plan determined to be complete will be placed on the agenda of the following Planning Board workshop meeting for presentation and discussion. Completed applications are put on the agenda in the order they are deemed to be complete. After submission of the sketch plan, the Planning Board may schedule a field trip to the site, to be accompanied by the subdivider. To facilitate the inspection of the site, the subdivider shall have the center line of any proposed streets marked by temporary stakes. After review of the sketch plan and field inspection, but within 62 days of the official date of submission of the sketch plan, the Planning Board will tentatively approve the sketch plan or recommend modifications in writing.

§ 93-13. Submission of preliminary plat.

We recommend changing the procedure for Submission of preliminary plat according to the same criteria used for the revision of the processes concerned with submittal of the sketch plan. The existing procedure is worded as follows:

A preliminary plat shall then be prepared and submitted, showing in detail how the subdivision is to be designed, the details of construction, any proposed covenants and other items required in §§ 93-30 and 93-31. A public hearing shall be held within 62 days after the receipt of the preliminary plat by the Clerk of the Planning Board. Such hearing shall be advertised by the applicant at least once in the official town newspaper at least five days before such hearing. Such notice shall conform to Planning Board specifications. The Planning Board shall act, in writing, within 45 days of the hearing, to approve, with or without modification, or disapprove the preliminary plat. This period may be extended by mutual consent of the owner and the Planning Board. Failure of the Planning Board to act within 62 days shall constitute approval.

This is the revised language after the proposed changes, which are highlighted:

A preliminary plat shall then be prepared and submitted, showing in detail how the subdivision is to be designed, the details of construction, any proposed covenants and other items required in §§ 93-30 and 93-31. **Ten copies of the preliminary plat shall be delivered to the Building Inspector or other authorized official of the Planning Board by the first of the month or preceding business day. For example, if the last day of the month falls on a weekend or a holiday, during which town offices are closed, the plat will need to be submitted the day prior. The submitted plat will be reviewed by the Building Inspector to determine the completeness of the application. Completed applications are put on the agenda in the order they are deemed to be complete. If incomplete, the applicant will be informed of what additional documentation is needed for resubmission of the plat. The resubmitted plat will then be subjected to the same procedure for approval.** A public hearing shall be held within 62 days after the receipt of the preliminary plat by the Clerk of the

Planning Board. Such hearing shall be advertised by the applicant at least once in the official town newspaper at least five days before such hearing. Such notice shall conform to Planning Board specifications. The Planning Board shall act, in writing, within 62 days of the hearing, to approve, with or without modification, or disapprove the preliminary plat. This period may be extended by mutual consent of the owner and the Planning Board. Failure of the Planning Board to act within 62 days shall constitute approval.

Currently, the subdivision regulations require approval of to be noted on only two copies of the preliminary plat. This is stated as follows:

- D. Approval of the preliminary plat. Approval, with or without modification, shall be noted on two copies of the preliminary plat, referenced and attached to any statement of conditions.

In order to maintain consistency with the procedures for application, as well as to ensure that no confusion results, we recommend that approval of a particular preliminary plat should be noted on all copies. The changes are highlighted as follows:

- D. Approval of the preliminary plat. Approval, with or without modification, shall be noted on **all** copies of the preliminary plat, referenced and attached to any statement of conditions.

Article IV, Plat Requirements

This article is concerned with the necessary requirements that a subdivision applicant must comply with during the submittal of the sketch plan and preliminary plat respectively. The changes we propose update the requirements of the applicants to be in accordance with the proposed subdivision review process.

§ 93-30. Sketch plan.

The existing requirements for sketch plan as described in the subdivision regulations require little change. The only change required is to revise the number of copies to be delivered to the planning board. The existing language reads as follows:

- A. Number of copies. At least two copies of the sketch plan shall be delivered to the Planning Board.

We propose changing "two" to "ten." The revised language will read as follows, with the changes highlighted:

A. Number of copies. **Ten** copies of the sketch plan shall be delivered to the Planning Board.

§ 93-31. Preliminary plat.

The existing requirements for the preliminary plat as described in the subdivision regulations require little change. The only changes required concern the number of copies to be delivered to the planning board and the deadline for submittal. The existing language reads as follows:

- A. Number of copies. At least three copies of the preliminary plat shall be delivered to the Planning Board.
- B. Details required. Subdividers shall present to the Board a preliminary plat showing the following information. The plat must be submitted to the Chairman of the Board at least 10 days before it is to be considered at a meeting of the Board.

We propose changing the number of required copies from "three" to "ten." Secondly, we suggest that the deadline for submittal be changed from "at least 10 days before it is to be considered at a meeting of the Board" to "by the first of the month or previous business day." The proposed language reads as followed with the changes highlighted:

- A. Number of copies. **Ten** copies of the preliminary plat shall be delivered to the Planning Board.
- B. Details required. Subdividers shall present to the Board a preliminary plat showing the following information. The plat must be submitted to the Chairperson of the Board **by the first of the month or previous business day** to be considered at a meeting of the Board.

Proposal for Revision of Site Plan/Special Use Permit

The site plan/special use permit is an application for special use of a residential area. It is primarily intended for business owners who manage their affairs from their residences. The existing provisions concerning the Site Plan Review can be found in Chapter 110, Article XI of the Town of Plattekill. Unlike the subdivision provisions, there is no formal enumeration of procedures. Secondly, there exists the same problem with insufficient numbers of copies being

required. Third, the deadlines, as with the existing subdivision regulations are very unclear and imprecise. We propose the following changes:

1. An enumeration of procedure as exists for the subdivision application shall be drafted for insertion into the Site Plan Review language. An Enumerated Site Plan Review Procedure should be drafted according to the template of the revised Subdivision Review Procedure.
2. Applicants must supply ten copies of the sketch plan.
3. The deadline for submitting applications shall be changed to the first of the month or the preceding business day.

TO BE INSERTED AT APPROPRIATE LOCATION:

§ 110-???. Enumeration of procedures.

Whenever any site plan is proposed and before any permit for erection of a structure in such proposed site plan shall be granted, the applicant or his authorized agent shall apply, in writing, for approval of such proposed site plan in accordance with the following procedure:

SEQR PROCESS: needs to be reviewed and incorporated

- A. Preapplication conference with Building Inspector.
- B. Conceptual site plan review at planning board workshop. (optional)
- C. Formal Site Plan application showing proposal in detail, accompanied by filing fees, per § 110-???.
- D. Certification by Building Inspector that the application is complete and allowable under existing zoning laws. (The SEQR process begins with the completion of the EAF and a classification of the proposed project as either a Type I, Type II or Unlisted action.
- .
- E. Formal review by planning board at workshop

meeting. (At this stage, at the subsequent business meeting, the planning board makes a determination of significance for an application an deemed unlisted actions under SEQOR, issuing a positive declaration if it determines that the project will have a significant impact or a negative declaration for those projects determined to have no significant environmental impact.)

F. Public hearing on Application.

G. Review by non-town agencies.

H. Planning Board action by resolution.

I. Planning Board signs Site Plan.

K. Zoning permit or approval with Site Plan is filed in Town Clerk's office.

§ 110-??1. Preapplication conferences.

Before preparing a detailed proposal, the applicant should make an appointment with the Building Inspector to familiarize himself with the requirements of this chapter and other regulations, the policies and plans of the Planning Board and other information that may be pertinent to the site plan. Under certain conditions, the applicant may also need the approval of the state or county highway agencies, the County Health Department (which is responsible for the adequacy of lot sizes and facilities for water supply and sewage disposal), the State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Ulster County Planning Board and others; therefore, the applicant should review the proposed site plan with the Building Inspector to determine which, if any, agencies the applicant should contact to discuss the site plan prior to submitting a formal application.

§ 110-??2. Certification of Complete Application by Building Inspector.

Ten copies of the Site Plan Application shall be delivered to the Building Inspector or other authorized official of the Planning Board on or before the first of the month. The Building Inspector shall certify to the applicant that the application is complete. Incomplete applications will be returned with a written indication of materials needed for completion. Applications will be placed on the planning board agenda in the chronological order in which they are certified as complete. Completed applications are put on the agenda in the order they are deemed to be complete.

§ 110-??3. Completed application **A completed application for review and approval of a site plan shall contain the following:**

- A completed “Town of Plattekill Planning Board Site Plan/Special Use Permit Application”
- The names of all owners of record of all adjacent property.
- A completed Short Form Environmental Assessment Form.
- **Payment in full of all application fees as established by resolution of the Town Board**
- **All documentation required in section 110-64 of the Town Code**

§ 110-??4. Fees.

Each application must be accompanied by a fee as established from time to time by resolution of the Town Board, such fee to be paid to the Town Clerk.

Appendix C. Capital Planning Guidelines

**NYS COMPTROLLER’S OFFICE DISCUSSION OF CAPITAL PLANNING EXCERPTED FROM
“FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR TOWN HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENTS”**

Division of Municipal Affairs, 1994

CAPITAL PLANNING

Every town has a process for acquisition of capital assets. However, some lack any advance planning. Replacement of motorized vehicles or construction of capital improvements when emergencies occur may not be the most economical way to finance the acquisition, especially if available federal or state aid is not forthcoming for one reason or another.

The Office of the State Comptroller recommends that municipalities formally adopt a long-range plan for buying needed equipment or building capital improvements. It could be a formal program pursuant to the statutory guidelines contained in Section 99-g of the General Municipal Law, or a more flexible plan undertaken in accordance with locally developed rules and regulations.

The General Municipal Law Capital Program has specific requirements which may be too restrictive for many situations. A more flexible capital plan which would permit your governing board to determine:

- ❖ Number of years of plan (three, five, seven or whatever) rather than six (6) years as required by Section 99-g,
- ❖ Projects to include motorized equipment, office equipment and furnishings and other capital acquisitions, in addition to capital improvements specified in Section 99-g,
- ❖ Designation of someone other than the municipal budget officer (§99-g) as coordinator of the plan,
- ❖ The number of votes needed to modify or amend the plan, could be simple majority rather than two-thirds of total membership required by Section 99-g,

❖ Additional information to be included.

Many of the elements of the capital program outlined in General Municipal Law should be incorporated into the rules and regulations of the less restrictive capital plan. Each town should review its own circumstances and objectives before local legislative action is taken. Pick the process that will work best for you.

PURPOSES AND PRACTICAL USES OF A CAPITAL PLAN

It is readily recognized that the implementation of a capital plan provides management with valuable data to assist them in the orderly acquisition of capital assets within the financial resources of the community. However, several other benefits may be realized as a result of such an undertaking.

1. Management Control -Management, having access to the additional information, is able to establish more meaningful internal control policies for capital assets. Greater control should lead to the avoidance of overlapping projects and costly mistakes. It will also allow management to determine the most appropriate method for financing ongoing operation and maintenance costs.

2. Overall Formal Plan -The execution of a capital plan includes development of an annual capital budget and coordination with the operating budget process. Such a procedure also enables the town to coordinate all proposed projects with each other and with its general growth and requirements.

3. Minimize Financial Impact -Consideration of all available alternatives for financing the acquisition of capital improvements and/or equipment includes the possible establishment of reserve funds. By setting moneys aside in

advance, one is able to lessen the fiscal impact in the year of actual construction or purchase. Future demands for financial resources may be forecast with reasonable accuracy. The relationship to the annual budget and the scheduling of borrowings can be given proper consideration. Remember, it is easier to issue debt than to pay it off.

4. More Complete Picture of Cost -Operation and maintenance cost for a minimum of three years for each capital project should be included in the Plan. Management can then gauge the total cost of acquiring and maintaining the particular asset. In many instances, the annual cost of operation may equal or exceed the amortized cost of acquiring the asset or even its original cost. Consideration should be given to including the estimated cost of operation and maintenance for the entire life of the asset, rather than the recommended three years. It is possible that the town may not be able to fund annual operating costs.

5. Establish Responsibility -Creation of a formal procedure should include identification of the capital planning coordinator and the role of individual department heads and/or their subordinates. The written requirements of such an undertaking should clearly indicate individual responsibilities and proper flow of information, including periodic reports to management.

6. Public Information -The general public should be given the opportunity to submit recommendations and/or to express its views at public meetings where the governing board discusses and adopts the annual capital plan (multi-year plan), and the annual capital budget. Printed copies of the capital plan should be available to the general public. The dissemination of information in this manner will enhance public acceptance of the capital plan, especially if debt will have to be issued.

7. Special Interest -A formal plan, which includes established priorities, should tend to minimize efforts by special interest or neighborhood groups to influence the governing board and continually manipulate the scheduling of capital improvements and/or the acquisition of capital equipment. It should provide greater assurances that the capital assets will be acquired in order of need.

8. Official Statements -Consideration should be given for inclusion of information relating to the Capital Plan in a prospectus or comprehensive annual financial report. Management policies should be prepared for review by rating agencies, independent accountants and the investment community.

9. Securing of Grants -Necessary engineering and legal arrangements for proposed projects or equipment purchases can be scheduled in time to permit the securing of available federal and/or state grant moneys to finance the original acquisition in whole or in part. Procedure to submit applications for operation and maintenance aid can be determined in advance and preliminary steps completed.

10. Municipal Cooperation -Before undertaking major capital improvements (e.g., sewage treatment plant, water filtration facility, new town highway building) consideration should be given to the establishment of a joint municipal project, thus resulting in both reduced acquisition cost and operation and maintenance cost, for all participants.

Management may develop other practical uses for the information compiled during the planning and execution stages. Town management should not consider the implementation of a capital plan unless they determine that it will be beneficial.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION

Management should consider several factors before it determines what the capital plan will include, who will be involved; and how the paperwork will flow. The following questions should be answered before a final decision is made:

- ❖ Will the plan include both real property (land and buildings) and personal property (motorized equipment, office equipment and furnishings, etc.) to be acquired, constructed or reconstructed?
- ❖ Will the plan be developed during the normal budgetary cycle, or will it follow a different timetable.
- ❖ Who will be allowed to submit requests for capital assets to be included (board members, department heads, general public and/or special interest groups)?
- ❖ Who will be responsible for overseeing the plans development and implementation?
- ❖ Can someone be hired specifically for this purpose or will this be an additional duty for someone already on the payroll?
- ❖ How many years should the capital needs be projected?
- ❖ Will there be a central review committee, and if so who will serve on it?
- ❖ Will input be required from department heads possessing special knowledge or technical background?

- ❖ Will periodic reports be required on the status of the plan and its accomplishments?

The foregoing questions should make you realize that the development of a capital plan is not a casual undertaking. Whatever the final decision of the Board, the capital plan should, at the very least, include an identification of the capital assets needed, the order (priority) in which they are to be acquired, how they will be financed and how much it will cost to operate or maintain the individual assets once you have them.

DEVELOPMENT

Each town must determine how to begin and continue its own multi-year capital plan and annual capital budget, taking into consideration the specifics of its operation. The size of the town and budget, personnel composition and commitments, type and extent of services provided, availability of data processing and condition of current records are some of the factors to be evaluated.

After carefully considering all available information the town could decide to immediately undertake the development of a five (5) year capital plan, with the first year to be the annual capital budget.

However, the magnitude of this project and lack of prior exposure to the major elements may result in a determination that implementation should be accomplished in phases. One approach might be the development of a one-year capital budget with a five-year capital plan to follow. This would permit a more analytical review of the what, why, when, how and who of the plan.

Management should establish basic rules to assist department heads in determining items to be included in their requests. The following principles are presented for guidance:

- ❖ Acquisitions which increase fixed asset inventory. They would include:
 - Purchase of land;
 - Construction or reconstruction of buildings; 00 Purchases of machinery and/or equipment; 00 Improvements other than buildings.
 - Any acquisitions the gross cost of which will exceed \$5,000 (recommended). However, many municipalities may elect to establish a reasonable dollar value which is higher or lower, depending on their particular circumstances and/or preference.
 - Any major cash outlay which will be financed by the issuance of bonds, bond anticipation notes and capital notes, would involve the use of moneys previously segregated in a capital reserve or Federal or State fund (i.e., CHIPS).
- ❖ Each department head should review his own operation to identify all needs for capital improvements or equipment. The first step is to make a listing of all previously approved capital improvements which are in progress, or equipment acquisitions approved but still pending. Once this has been accomplished, new capital construction and equipment needs should be identified.
- ❖ The individual submitting a request should include sufficient documentation to enable the review committee to independently determine if the acquisition of the capital item is warranted. The justification should, at the very least, address the following factors:

- How its construction or procurement will enhance, or its non-acquisition will negatively affect operations;
- How estimated cost was determined;
- How the estimated date needed was determined;
- The source or sources of financing (such as state or federal grants, private donations, new user fees, etc.);
- Information for inclusion in bid specifications, or the availability of completed specifications and why;
- If and why there is an available vehicle for trade-in;
- Estimated net operating cost for three (3) years after construction or purchase;
- The last date or estimated date when a similar acquisition was made, if known;
- The extent, if any, to which town personnel will be used for a construction or reconstruction project.

In developing a one-year capital budget or a multi-year capital plan it is important for each department head to state the estimated timetable for items requested. The order of need should be identified for the department plan as a whole and in particular for the first year of its implementation.

By determining priorities for requests, any reduction in availability of resources during the fiscal year may still result in the completion of the most necessary improvements, thus permitting the continuation of services in individual departments. Items at the lower end of the timetable would be given higher priorities in the succeeding year(s).

The individual timetables submitted by the departments have to be merged into an overall schedule for the municipality, with objective consideration of each of the particulars.

It does not seem feasible that management would adopt a plan which lists all of the requests of Department A followed by those of Department B and then Department C. Rather, the blending of departmental needs should result in the securing of the capital items which will most likely benefit the municipality as a whole. Naturally, acquisition dates may be rescheduled at any time should circumstances change.

There are several available methods of financing capital improvements and/or equipment purchases. Management has a responsibility to select the most appropriate one or ones. It is incumbent upon the department head, the fiscal officer, the review committee and others involved in the process of developing the capital plan to present the Board with information on financing alternatives for each item or group of items recommended.

Large towns may find it advantageous to create a staff position with the specific objective of securing outside moneys to help pay for the original cost and/or future operation and maintenance costs. Information on the availability of state and federal aid, private grants or donations and the feasibility of inter-municipal cooperation agreements is only the tip of the iceberg. A tremendous amount of effort is necessary to prepare or coordinate the preparation of preliminary studies and

cost projections, review grant provisions and submit applications, and to work out the details of an inter-municipal agreement.

However, the mere fact that the original local acquisition cost will be zero or close thereto should not be the entire basis for determining that the project will be undertaken. The Board should carefully weigh estimated operation and maintenance cost and their affect on future budgets, and if there is a legitimate need or purpose for the item. Why spend the money for acquisition, no matter how it is provided, if the piece of equipment is going to be used once every two or three years. Would it be more prudent management to rent it?

Advance planning (your multi-year projection) may result in a decision to create a capital reserve in anticipation of a major cash outlay in four or five years from now. This approach may drastically reduce, or even eliminate, the need to issue obligations to finance the capital improvement or equipment purchase. The taxpayer benefits from both the interest yield on capital reserve moneys and the non-incurring of interest cost for obligations which will not be issued.

The selection of a specific type of debt (bonds, bond anticipation notes, capital notes) should take into consideration total dollars involved, prevailing interest rates, relationship to constitutional debt limit, and the appropriate time during the fiscal year to schedule the maturing of the debt so that cash flow is not negatively affected.

The development and implementation of a capital plan/capital budget does not eliminate management's responsibility to comply with state and local statutory provisions. The "advance" information contained in the plan permits town officers or employees not directly involved in the process to prepare for duties that will affect them at some future date. For instance, the budget officer can review the document to determine the need to provide appropriations for equipment and capital outlay, debt service payments, and amounts to be transferred to a capital reserve for future expenditures or as the

operating fund contribution for a capital project. Similarly, the purchasing agent can make necessary preliminary plans so that problems on competitive bidding do not occur and can coordinate his efforts with those of the town clerk who must perform the advertising and public information functions.

CAPITAL PLAN UPDATE

The Capital Plan should be updated annually so that the Plan remains workable and meaningful to the town. The update should follow the same basic process and involve the same officials as the original plan. The multi-year plan is revised by removing the current year from the plan and adding the year following the last year in the current plan.

The primary objective of an update plan is the same as the original:

- ❖ Assure that projects will be carried out within existing resources.
- ❖ That the most pressing needs of the town will be met.
- ❖ Provide for long-range planning that will avoid last minute ill-prepared projects.
- ❖ Produce an up-to-date listing of projects in priority order. This would include the reevaluation of the projects in the remaining years of the capital plan approved last year.
- ❖ The same criteria should be used for each project as in the original plan. Some projects will become more critical and others will become less important.

- ❖ Department heads must again become involved and submit new project for the extended year.
- ❖ The same officials should be required to approve the update as was required for approval of the original comprehensive capital plan.
- ❖ Preliminary cost estimates included in the original plan should be revised because of inflation and other factors that might influence costs.
- ❖ Develop preliminary costs for the projects added to the extended year.
- ❖ Review and reevaluate the resources available. Are there additional revenue sources available or because of local economic conditions are planned resources in jeopardy.
- ❖ Prepare an updated capital plan.
- ❖ Hold public hearings on the new plan at the same time and place as the annual budget hearing.

[NOTE: FLOW CHART THAT APPEARS IN THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT AT THIS POINT HAS BEEN OMITTED.]

CONCLUSION

Remember that all statutory requirements must be adhered to. Adoption of a capital plan does not exempt your municipality from competitive bidding, public meetings and other laws governing the conducting of your operation!

The Office of the State Comptroller's "Financial Management Guide for Local Governments" may be used for legal references, sources of information, definitions and sample forms. Additional assistance may be obtained by contacting:

Bureau of Municipal Accounting Systems

Office of the State Comptroller

A.E.S.O.B.
Albany, New York 12236 Telephone (518) 474-6023

Appendix D. Examples of High-Quality, Compact Housing

NOTE: The examples shown here are taken from promotional material for The Cottage Company, a development company located in Seattle, Washington. The illustrations depict residential developments with dwellings that have less than 900 square feet occupied by singles, married couples and one-child families. They are included here to suggest ways of meeting high-end demand for housing by creating modest, well-designed houses in attractive neighborhood settings. The precise size of housing to be developed in any community is a function of what is allowed by code and what will be supported by the market. Nonetheless this material is included as an example of innovative approaches to residential development that consume less land yet still provide a high-quality residential experience.



The Backyard Neighborhood Development, Langley, WA



The 3rd Street Cottages Development, Shoreline, WA

