
TOWN OF PUTNAM VALLEY, NEW YORK
DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND
DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT (GEIS)

2007



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**Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS)
for the
Town of Putnam Valley
Comprehensive Plan
and the Future Adoption of
Zoning and Subdivision Amendments to Implement the Plan**

Title of Action: Adoption of the Town of Putnam Valley Comprehensive Plan and the Future Adoption of Zoning and Subdivision Amendments to Implement the Plan

Project Location: Town of Putnam Valley, Putnam County, New York

Lead Agency: Town of Putnam Valley Town Board
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Acceptance Date:

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Close of Comment Period:

Town of Putnam Valley 2007 Comprehensive Plan

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With assistance from the Hudson Highlands Land Trust and with partial funding provided by the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council and the New York State Department of State

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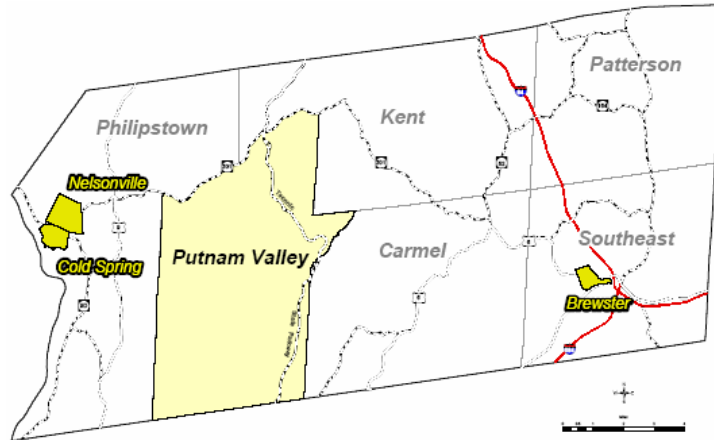
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Putnam Valley has a land area of approximately 27,300 acres. The Town is situated in the southwest portion of Putnam County and is bordered by the Town of Philipstown to the west and northwest; the Town of Kent to the northeast; and the Town of Carmel to the southeast. To the south of Putnam Valley are the Towns of Yorktown, Cortlandt, and the City of Peekskill, all in Westchester County.



Located entirely within the mountainous terrain of the Hudson Highlands, Putnam Valley's natural setting is one of the key defining characteristics of the Town. Wetlands, heavily forested areas, numerous creeks, streams, and lakes, and varying topography with prominent ridgelines and rural roads all contribute to the Town's scenic beauty and are considered valuable amenities by Town residents and visitors alike. From a development perspective, however, these same environmental features pose significant constraints.

The Town of Putnam Valley had a population of 10,686 in 2000, which represented about 11.2% of Putnam County's total population of 95,745 people. Putnam County's population grew by 14.1% between 1990 and 2000, which was the highest growth rate of any county in New York State for that time period. During the same time, Putnam Valley's population grew by 17.5%. Unchecked, Putnam County is projected to continue to grow faster than Westchester and Dutchess Counties in the coming decade.

Putnam Valley, known as the "Town of Lakes," is home to several large lakes and other water features, such as creeks, brooks and wetlands. Lake Peekskill, Lake Oscawana, Barger Pond, Roaring Brook Lake, Bryant Pond, and Indian Lake are important resources in the Town. Neighborhoods have been created around some of these lakes, particularly Lake Peekskill, Lake Oscawana, and Roaring Brook Lake, and these communities continue to be desirable places to live. Yet development pressure in these areas and throughout the Town has given rise to concerns about water quality. Many of the dwellings in the lake communities and other high density residential areas were constructed as summer cottages and have since been converted for year-round use.

There are a number of prominent ridgelines in Town that have and will continue to shape the growth of the Town. Putnam Valley's varied topography results in moderate to steep slopes over a significant portion of Town. In fact, 36% of the Town is constrained by slopes equal to or greater than 20%.

With some exceptions, most of the land in the Town that remains undeveloped is either constrained with steep slopes and wetlands or is land that is considered to be open space. This land includes both permanent open space and land that is agriculturally used, but could be developed. The abundance of park and open space area is considered a major benefit of living in Putnam Valley. The most prominent open space feature in Town is the Clarence Fahnestock State Park, which is approximately 14,086 acres in size and dominates the northern portion of Town.

The Town has historically relied on the use of wells for water supply and septic systems to manage wastewater collection. Only about 3% of the residences/businesses in Putnam Valley have a public water supply and only 5% are connected to a public sewer system for wastewater collection and disposal. The remaining homes are served by private water wells and septic systems. The lack of public water and a community-wide public wastewater collection and treatment system presents a constraint to development, since new development is restricted to areas where soil conditions are suitable for effective treatment of wastewater and where lot sizes are large enough to meet Health Department requirements.

Septic failure and ground and surface water contamination has been a critical issue for decision makers and residents of the Town for years. Of particular concern are the areas of Town, particularly the lake communities, where lot sizes are often less than .5 acres and septic systems are failing or do not exist at all. Given the high density of these areas, it is difficult to maintain proper distances between water wells and septic systems and the conversion of once small summer cottages to year round residences is straining the underground facilities.

Oregon Corners, located at the southwesterly portion of Town and extending into the Town of Cortlandt in Westchester County, is currently considered the Town's principal business area and provides a variety of small retail and service businesses. The parcels located within Oregon Corners are predominately developed and future expansion of this commercial district is somewhat constrained due to lack of municipal water, steeply sloped areas, and the convergence of the Oscawana Brook and the Peekskill Hollow Creek. Historically, commercial development within Oregon Corners and throughout the Town has been haphazard, with little consideration to site organization, architectural design and compatibility, signage, landscaping, and pedestrian mobility and access.

The Town of Putnam Valley, like most municipalities in New York State, has had to work hard in recent years to maintain adequate revenues in the face of rising demand and rising costs for public services. Since the bulk of Town revenues are derived from property taxes, increased costs are quickly translated to increased taxes for local property owners. What many people do not realize, however, is that town taxes account for only about 10% to 20% of their overall

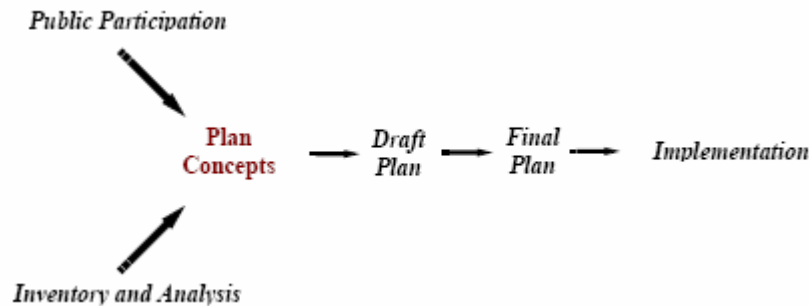
property tax burden. Putnam County also levies a small amount of property tax, but most (about 70% to 80%) of a property owner's tax burden in Putnam Valley comes from school district taxes. Not surprisingly, residents in Putnam Valley have expressed frustration with the cost of property taxes, and school taxes for property owners in the Putnam Valley School District are indeed high.

The Town of Putnam Valley has been attentive to its growth and change over the years. The Town adopted its first Master Plan in 1965 and second Master Plan in 1990. The recommendations of the 1990 Master Plan were not implemented until the Town adopted a new zoning code in March of 1995. In 2002 the Town prepared a Comprehensive Plan update and in 2003 the Town circulated a Town-wide survey which culminated in the 2005 Housing Plan; the 2002 and 2005 Comprehensive Plan updates were never adopted by the Town Board and the 1990 Master Plan still governs today.

The Town has wisely chosen to take a fresh, comprehensive look at issues related to its continued growth and development through this planning process. This comprehensive plan builds upon the studies completed over the last two decades and will help ensure that Putnam Valley remains a great place to live, work, and visit in the future.

The Comprehensive Planning Process began with a commitment of the Town of Putnam Valley Town Board to plan the community's future and update its seventeen year old plan. The Town Board appointed members to the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) to advise in this planning effort. The CPRC conducted working meetings at least once a month during the time period from May 2006 to March 2007. Each CPRC meeting was open to the public and a portion of the agenda for each meeting was reserved for public comment.

At the start of the CPRC's work, simultaneously with the initial portions of the public outreach process, existing conditions in the Town and region were examined. The results of this investigation are documented in the Inventory and Analysis Section of this Plan. The Inventory and Analysis describes existing environmental resources and constraints, open space and recreation, land use and land use regulations, demographic and housing market characteristics, infrastructure, transportation, community services and schools, cultural and historic resources, and the general fiscal setting.



All materials related to the Comprehensive Planning Process were made available on the Town's website (www.putnamvalley.com) and at the office of the Town Clerk. In an effort to keep the public informed about meetings, flyers were posted at Town Hall and around Town; and the local newspaper, *The Putnam County News and Recorder*, was used to promote special meetings.

In addition to the working meetings of the CPRC, special opportunities for public involvement included the following, all of which were facilitated by The Chazen Companies:

- **Community Survey** – As part of the Housing Plan, a community survey was issued to Town residents in late 2003. The survey was mailed to all property owners within the Town, as derived from the 2003 real property tax roll. The survey was sent to 4,609 households and 1,052 households returned the survey. This survey, as well as a report summarizing the findings of the survey, is included in Appendix B of this Comprehensive Plan.

- **Community Visioning Meeting** – The Community Visioning Meeting was held on July 17, 2006. Participants were asked to help identify the issues of concern that should be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan, and to work together to begin defining the community’s vision for the future. A brief overview of the Comprehensive Planning Process was presented and attendees were asked two basic questions: 1) What do you like about living in Putnam Valley? 2) What problems/concerns should be addressed through the Plan? Participants were separated into groups and discussion relative to the above questions was further discussed. Participants reconvened and group discussions were summarized.
- **Informational Workshop** – The Informational Workshop was held on September 21, 2006. The primary purpose of the workshop was to educate the public about creative land use, conservation, and water quality tools and techniques and to have a discussion about the appropriateness of these tools and techniques for Putnam Valley.
- **Town-Wide Public Meeting** – A Town-wide Public Meeting was held on January 31, 2007. The primary purpose of the meeting was to introduce to the public the preliminary Vision, Goals, and Draft Recommendations that were developed for the Comprehensive Plan by the CPRC. The CPRC utilized the public input from this meeting to refine its preliminary draft.
- **Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) Public Hearing**
- **Town Board Public Hearing**

Specific recommendations were developed to address the problems and issues defined as part of the inventory and through the public outreach process. Finally, a strategy for implementing the recommended policies and actions was created. Once the Town Board adopts the Comprehensive Plan, it should serve as a guide for future action by both public and private entities active in the community.

Vision Statement

The Town of Putnam Valley recognizes that it occupies a special location in the metropolitan region. It is a small, mainly rural community in the heart of the Hudson Highlands, yet its residents benefit from the diverse opportunities and amenities that the region provides. The community should take action to protect its abundant natural resources and to conserve a network of open lands that extends throughout the town, not only to protect the quality of its water and preserve its rural character, but also to provide vital habitats to continue the Town's important role as a critical and diverse regional biodiversity area. Rural roads and pathways link residential neighborhoods, lake communities, commercial corners and recreation areas to one another. The natural landscape has contributed to an enviable quality of life for residents, but development of remaining undeveloped lands must be approached carefully in order to maintain this prized quality of life. Further development of the commercial corners should take into account the needs of Town residents and the limitations of the Town's topography. The Town seeks to encourage tourism, which will help sustain existing retail commercial establishments while not damaging its fragile environment.

Goals

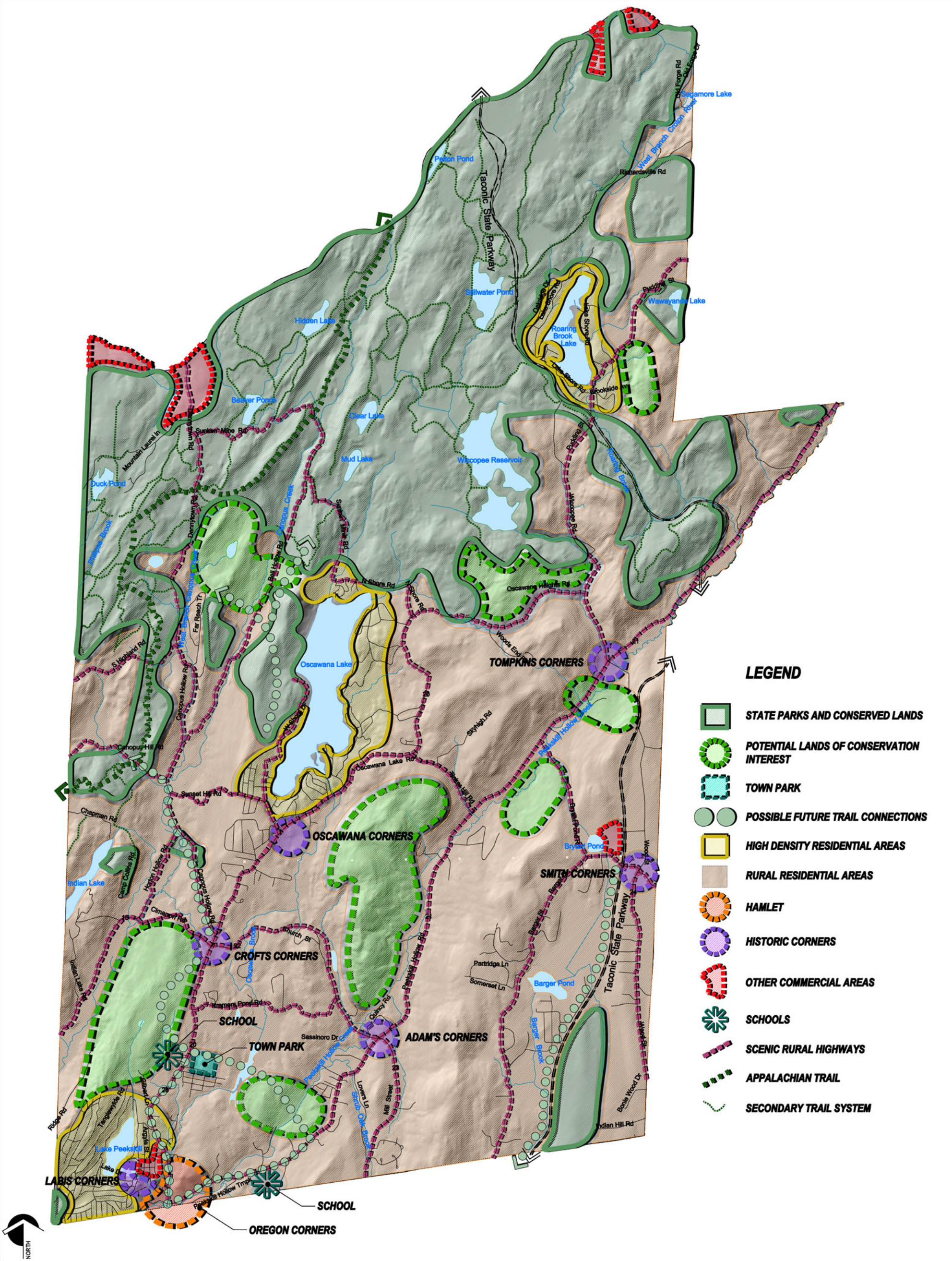
In order to achieve the vision described above, the Town of Putnam Valley has established the following goals to guide decision-making. These goals address the various topics and issues raised through the analysis of existing conditions, the community survey, the public workshops, and through the experience and knowledge of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee. The recommendations in the comprehensive plan attempt to direct short-term and long-term actions toward meeting these goals.

- Maintain and strengthen efforts to protect the abundant natural resources that exist in this Hudson Highlands community. Safeguarding water quality in this "Town of Lakes" is among the priority natural resource concerns.
- Work with willing landowners to conserve some of the remaining agricultural lands and special open spaces in Putnam Valley, especially in the southern part of Town where most residents live. Utilize creative land development techniques to ensure that open lands are conserved even as development occurs.
- Create a network of conserved open lands that stretches throughout the community, protecting biodiversity and creating opportunities to link residential neighborhoods, lake communities, commercial corners and recreation areas to one another.
- Support efforts to maintain agricultural activity, including the equine and forestry industries, in Putnam County, recognizing the possible need or desire to grow local food production capacity in the future.

- Identify strategies and guidelines for the revitalization of Oregon Corners in cooperation with the Town of Cortlandt. Similarly, enhance the other traditional corners to serve as smaller neighborhood centers for the community. Focus appropriately designed business development at Oregon Corners and in the other traditional corners through public investment in infrastructure and/or streetscape, and creative parking solutions.
- Encourage creatively designed residential development that harmonizes with the unique landscape of Putnam Valley. Scenic views and ridgelines should be preserved and hillsides protected.
- Protect the quality of our drinking water through aquifer and surface water protection. Consider the long-term sustainability of groundwater resources when determining overall housing densities in Putnam Valley.
- Develop a coordinated approach to the resolution of long-standing public health and environmental issues related to wastewater management in the Town's lakeside communities and other densely populated locations in the Town.
- In order to keep rising property and school taxes in check, promote fiscal stability through a balanced approach of managed residential growth, open space conservation, and appropriately scaled and located commercial development.
- Retain the scenic, meandering, rural character of roadways that traverse Putnam Valley and ensure that local road standards also allow for rural roads as part of new development. Limit trip generation in Oregon corners and the other traditional corners by enhancing the pedestrian environment, slowing traffic, and encouraging shared or public parking arrangements. Consider opportunities for public transportation in concert with regional public transportation providers.
- Create a range of residential densities and housing types that afford residents and employees of Putnam Valley and their families the opportunity to reside in the Town, consistent with the Town's unique environmental constraints and infrastructure limitations.
- Enhance opportunities for active and passive recreation in Putnam Valley. Partner with the state park, the school district, and other providers to maximize the effect of limited financial resources.
- Improve information about and tell the story of Putnam Valley's historical and cultural resources. Develop mechanisms for protecting and enhancing these resources for future generations.
- Promote energy efficiency and conservation, and the use of renewable energy in the town.

- Coordinate and streamline the development review process to enable projects that are consistent with the vision, goals, and recommendations of this plan to achieve approval in a predictable, straightforward manner.
- Cooperate with neighboring municipalities on issues of mutual concern, and look for opportunities to partner in the delivery of services when appropriate.

PLAN CONCEPTS



LEGEND

- STATE PARKS AND CONSERVED LANDS
- POTENTIAL LANDS OF CONSERVATION INTEREST
- TOWN PARK
- POSSIBLE FUTURE TRAIL CONNECTIONS
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREAS
- RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS
- HAMLET
- HISTORIC CORNERS
- OTHER COMMERCIAL AREAS
- SCHOOLS
- SCENIC RURAL HIGHWAYS
- APPALACHIAN TRAIL
- SECONDARY TRAIL SYSTEM

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Putnam Valley Comprehensive Plan 2007

Town Of Putnam Valley
Putnam County, New York

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Date:	6/6/07
Scale:	NTS
Project:	10616.00
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COMMERCIAL AREAS

Hamlet of Oregon Corners

Issues:

- Oregon Corners, located at the southwesterly portion of Town and extending into the Town of Cortlandt in Westchester County, is currently considered the Town's principal business area and provides a variety of small retail and service businesses. Oregon Corners is located in the Town's current CC-1 Zoning District, which consists of approximately 52 parcels and 59 acres of land.
- The parcels located within Oregon Corners are predominately developed and future expansion of this commercial district is somewhat constrained due to steeply sloped areas on the easterly and westerly sides of Oscawana Lake Road, north of Enloe Street, and on the westerly side of Peekskill Hollow Road, north of the Mahopac National Bank. Additional constraints to this area include the convergence of the Oscawana Brook and the Peekskill Hollow Creek and their associated floodplains. Oregon Corners is served by a central sewage system; however, this area is reliant on individual wells for water supply. Depending on the water budget, drawing water from the underlying aquifer and transporting sewage out of the area can have a negative impact on the aquifer. The Town is able to discharge approximately 50,000 gallons of sewage per day to the Westchester County Peekskill Hollow Creek interceptor sewer. As users are taxed by unit size and no meters exist at the sewer station to determine flow, it is unknown how much wastewater is currently being discharged from Oregon Corners to the interceptor sewer. New development or redevelopment within the sewer district will need to determine existing flows to the system and identify whether there is capacity for additional discharge.
- Historically, commercial development within Oregon Corners has been haphazard, with little consideration to site organization, architectural design and compatibility, signage, landscaping, and pedestrian mobility and access.
- Local business owners view large box stores and commercial strip development as threats to the already fragile profitability of their businesses.
- Parking in Oregon Corners is limited and no municipal parking exists; existing private parking areas provide little connectivity and formal shared parking agreements are rare.

- The commercial properties in Oregon Corners provide little relief to property owners for increasing tax rates. Given the topography constraints in this area, Oregon Corners cannot be expanded enough to have a significant impact on property taxes.
- Oregon Corners extends into the Town of Cortlandt via a bridge over the Peekskill Hollow Creek. If additional commercial development takes place in this area, it is more likely to occur in Cortlandt, where the land is relatively flat.
- The Town of Putnam Valley and the Town of Cortlandt will need to partner together to make Oregon Corners a successful downtown business area. There is currently no intermunicipal planning effort between the two Towns relating to the future of Oregon Corners.

Recommendations:

- **Re-examine CC-1 Zoning District boundary lines and allowable uses.** The Town should re-examine the boundaries of the Community Commercial (CC-1) Zoning District. Parcels that are particularly constrained and not suitable for commercial development should be eliminated from the CC-1 Zone and parcels proximate to Oregon Corners that are suitable for such development should be incorporated. The Town should review the list of permitted and specially permitted uses currently provided for in CC-1 Zoning District. Appropriate uses not currently provided for should be considered for inclusion, with emphasis on mixed-uses. Uses that are considered to have potential negative impacts should either require a special use permit or be eliminated, as appropriate.
- **Improve walkability within Oregon Corners.** The most basic solution to improving walkability in a downtown area is the addition or expansion of sidewalks and crosswalks. Combined with traffic calming to influence the “behavior” of traffic, pedestrian infrastructure improvements provide a safe walking environment. The Town of Putnam Valley has been awarded a federal grant to assist in the installation of sidewalks along Oscawana Lake Road. As sidewalks will likely be provided as part of the County’s improvements to Peekskill Hollow Road and the County has indicated that



Maria's Deli & Grocery - Oregon Corners

sidewalks will be provided from Oregon Corners to the library, on the Oscawana Brook side, the Town should consider using the federal grant money to install sidewalks on the westerly side of Oscawana Lake Road.

Although the County is considering using a stone/gravel type of sidewalk surface on the easterly side of the road, due to the proximity of Oscawana Brook, concrete sidewalks, complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act, could be installed on the westerly side without negatively impacting surface water resources.

Although steep slopes on the westerly side of the street may prevent a connection to Morrissey Drive, it is feasible that a sidewalk could begin opposite the library. It may be beneficial to provide a crosswalk allowing a safer connection between the library and the future location of the sidewalk.

The only foreseeable obstacle that would need to be addressed if the Town wished to install sidewalks on the westerly side of the street is the current parking area provided in front of the hardware and liquor stores, south of Enloe Street. Present conditions allow for perpendicular parking in the front of these buildings, the stalls of which likely extend into the County right-of-way. If sidewalks were to be installed on this side of the street, either the sidewalk would have to jog to be located directly in front of building, with parallel parking between the sidewalk and the street, or the parking for the hardware store and liquor store would need to be relocated to the rear of the building, which appears to be feasible given the size of the parcel.

A new bridge will likely be provided over the Peekskill Hollow Creek at Oregon Corners as part of the County's improvements to Peekskill Hollow Road. A pedestrian connection, preferably a sidewalk, over the Peekskill Hollow Creek would allow residents of Cortlandt and those doing business in Cortlandt to walk into Putnam Valley and visit the merchants in Town.

The Town should consider developing a sidewalk design standard/specification to ensure that future sidewalks, whether constructed as a result of the above-mentioned federal grant, or proposed by a property owner in association with a land development application, are consistently designed.

Questions remain about the appropriate location for sidewalks in Oregon Corners. Business owners from Oregon Corners should be considered stakeholders in the decision making process. Because the sidewalks would likely be located in the County right-of-way, it is anticipated that the County would be responsible for their repair; however, individual business owners might be responsible for snow removal or regular clean-up. These

issues are among those that should be investigated further as part of the Oregon Corners Master Plan. By that time more concrete information about the proposed improvements to Peekskill Hollow Road, from Adams Corners to Oregon Corners, should be available from the County.

- **Improve traffic congestion at Oregon Corners.** Over the last number of years, Oregon Corners has seen new commercial buildings constructed; further, there are currently a number of commercial projects proposed at Oregon Corners. The additions of the Mahopac National Bank and the Putnam professional building have already brought additional traffic to the area and future development will probably increase congestion. Also, given the small number of east-west transportation routes in Town and the geographic location of Oregon Corners, continued residential development in the Town of Putnam Valley is likely to further exacerbate the traffic conditions at this hamlet.

It is recommended that land development applications before the Planning Board that could have an adverse impact on transportation at Oregon Corners continue to be required to prepare in-depth traffic impact statements as part of the Planning Board's SEQRA evaluation; such evaluations should consider the cumulative impacts of approved and pending Planning Board applications. Further, if traffic congestion becomes significantly burdensome, the Town may wish to prepare a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for portions of the Town that impact traffic congestion at Oregon Corners. The Town of Colonie, New York, has pioneered the use of mitigation fees under SEQRA. A GEIS could be prepared for the Oregon Corners area that would identify specific mitigation measures to improve transportation at Oregon Corners. The GEIS could be used by the Town to require applicants proposing land development projects that impact Oregon Corners to submit mitigation fees that would be used by the Town to fund the necessary transportation improvements. Although the preparation of a GEIS requires an up-front cost by the Town, this cost can be recouped and such a program would allow equitable distribution of the burden.

- **Develop design guidelines.** The Town should improve the character and aesthetics of Oregon Corners while maintaining the scale of development there through its zoning regulations. Small-scale commercial, mixed with some residential, would be appropriate for Oregon Corners. The Town should develop design guidelines for new and infill commercial/mixed-use development at Oregon Corners that could be administered by the Planning Board during their review of an application. Appropriate design can be the difference between whether a use is or is not appropriate, and design guidelines help to clarify how particular uses can be made to fit into the area.

The development of design guidelines for Oregon Corners could include, but is not limited to, building placement close to sidewalk edges, parking in the rear or side of buildings, maximum building footprint, minimum and maximum building height, exterior building materials, landscaping, lighting requirements, and signage.

Example of Design Guidelines

1. Use landscaping to buffer adjoining residential property.

2. Use landscaping – such as hedges, shrubs, or a low wall of stone, wood, wrought iron, or an acceptable substitute - to screen parking and to maintain an edge along the sidewalk.

3. Buildings located close to the sidewalk (or with shallow setback) to create “sense of enclosure” for pedestrians.

4. Off-street parking located at the side or rear of buildings – not in front of buildings.

5. Use Interior parking area landscaping to breakup continuous areas of pavement.

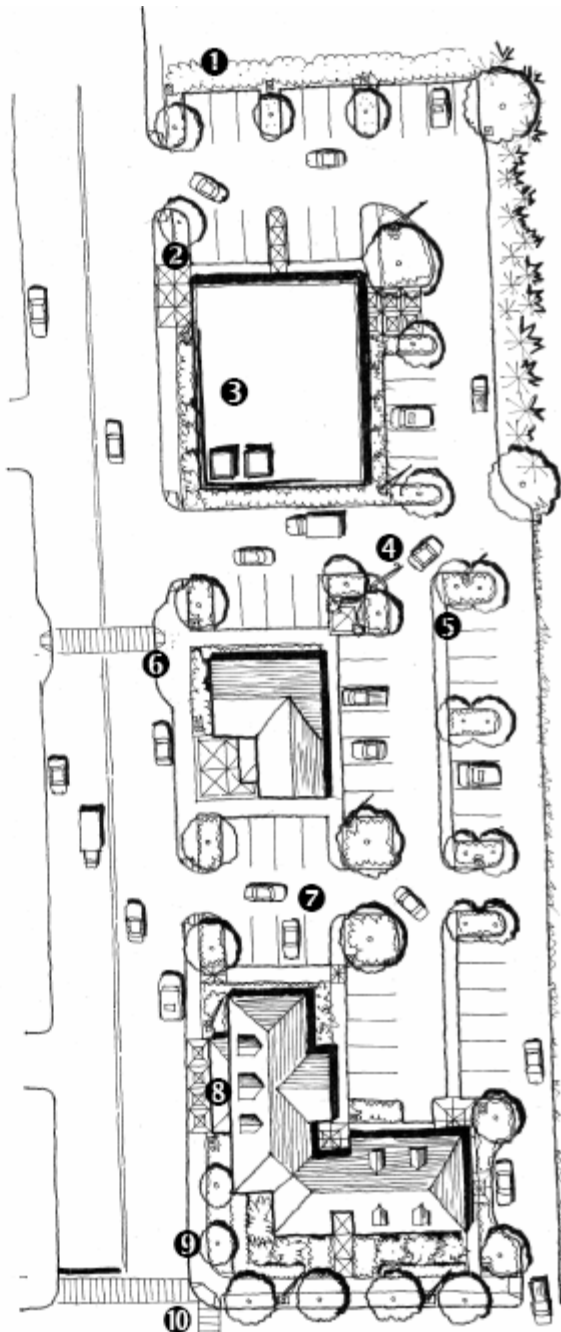
6. Bulb-out can be used to define on-street parking areas, slow traffic, and shorten crossing distance for pedestrians.

7. Consolidated points of access from street. Use cross-easements* to provide shared access through side and rear parking areas.

8. Main building façade and main entrance facing the street. On a corner lot, main facades along both streets. A secondary entrance facing the rear parking is strongly encouraged.

9. Street trees on interior side of sidewalk to preserve sight distances when necessary; or in sidewalk near the curb with porous hard surfaced grate.

10. Well defined pedestrian crosswalks. ADA compliance.



T

Design guidelines can be incorporated into the Town's Zoning Code through the special use permit and/or the site plan review processes. Specifically, the Town could require any infill, redevelopment, or new development within Oregon Corners to obtain a special use permit, likely to be issued by the Planning Board, which would be subject to meeting the Town's design guidelines. Alternatively, the Town may wish not to require a special use permit, but incorporate the same guidelines into the Planning Board's site plan review process.

➤ **Encourage mixed-uses, infill development and redevelopment.**

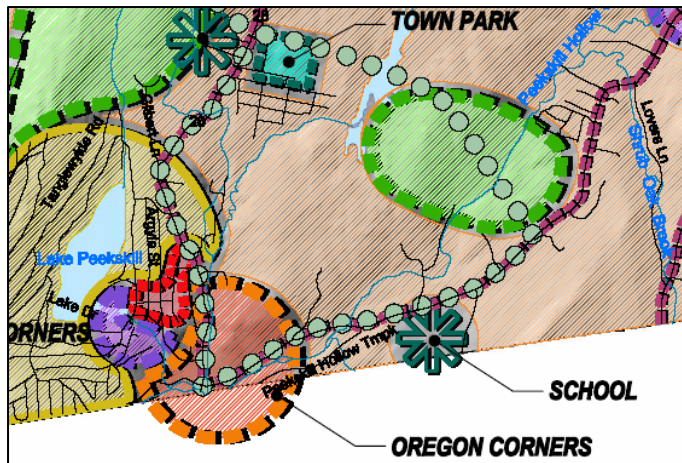
Mixed-use can involve any variety of office, small-scale retail, entertainment or higher-density residential uses. These can be mixed horizontally (within a site) and/or vertically (within a building), whichever is more appropriate. Active uses, such as retail and entertainment, should be encouraged on the first floor, with residential or office uses on the floor(s) above.



Two Duck Inn – Oregon Corners

Due to the environmental constraints in the area, mainly steep slopes and the presence of the Peekskill Hollow Creek and Oscawana Brook, it is likely that future development in the area will take the form of redevelopment and infill development. As redevelopment and infill development can pose less of an impact than extending a commercial zoning district to allow for new commercial development, it is recommended that the Town encourage infill development and redevelopment at Oregon Corners. Any development at Oregon Corners should be designed to minimize impact to the Peekskill Hollow Creek and the Oscawana Brook. These streams should be preserved, left uncovered, and be used as an amenity to add to the uniqueness of this area. The Town can indirectly encourage this form of development by revising the zoning code so that redevelopment is easier to achieve, developing sensible off-street parking requirements and the encouragement of shared parking agreements, providing appropriate bulk zoning requirements (setbacks, coverage, etc.), identifying locations for future municipal parking, improving the public realm in the area by adopting design guidelines to improve the streetscape, and resolving water budget and sewer capacity issues at Oregon Corners.

- **Promote coordination of commercial development/redevelopment among property owners and business owners.** Drawing resources from property owners in order to coordinate ongoing maintenance and improvement activities can enhance the success of Oregon Corners and therefore the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) may be appropriate for this area. A BID provides a mechanism for property owners and business owners to raise funds for supplemental services, such as beautification, marketing, and business recruitment and retention. It could also assist in developing shared parking arrangements. Organizing a BID requires property owners to tax themselves to raise funds and establish an operating budget under their control to provide for additional services that will help the overall economic success of Oregon Corners.
- **Consider partnering with the Town of Cortland in the development of a Master Plan for Oregon Corners.** A Master Plan for Oregon Corners should be developed to refine these recommendations and to identify other specific recommendations. The Master Plan for Oregon Corners should include the commercial area encompassing Rush Drive and consider plans for the Putnam Valley Library. The Town should reach out to property owners and business owners at Oregon Corners when developing the master plan so that their input and desires are reflected. Furthermore, entities such as the public utility and phone companies should be consulted to help strategize alternatives for issues such as the overhead power lines in the hamlet. Finally, since Oregon Corners extends beyond the Town of Putnam Valley, the Master Plan should be undertaken in partnership with the Town of Cortland. An intermunicipal planning effort such as this would make an ideal candidate for funding under New York State's Quality Communities Program.



Historic Corners

Issues:

- Oregon Corners is considered the Town's principal business area; however, there are several other historic corners in Town which have traditionally contained small family businesses. The intensity of

commercial development in these areas varies from corner to corner, largely due to topography. However, the businesses, many of them delicatessens, serve as important small general stores for the residents of the Town and provide an essential convenient place to eat and purchase common household items.

For the purposes of this plan, “historic corners” includes Adam’s Corners (Peekskill Hollow Road and Mill Street), Crofts Corners (Oscawana Lake Road and Church Street), Oscawana Corners (Oscawana Lake Road and Sunset Hill Road), Tompkins Corners (Peekskill Hollow Road and Wiccopee Road), Labis Corners (Lake Drive and Morrissey Drive), and Smith Corners (Wood Street and Bryant Pond Road). Although there are additional historic corners in Town, such as Christian Corners, these corners are not currently zoned or used for commercial development and are therefore not considered under this section.

- There is a lack of aesthetic cohesiveness at a number of the commercial corners in Town.
- There is currently no long range vision for the commercial corners and the Town needs to determine the best use for these areas.
- Historically, development has been disorganized, with little consideration to site organization, architectural design and compatibility.
- Similar to Oregon Corners, business owners at the Town’s historic corners view large box stores and commercial strip development as threats to the already fragile profitability of their businesses.
- Although these corners are primarily zoned either Neighborhood Commercial (CN) or Community Commercial (CC-2), in some cases, the existing uses do not reflect the intent of these Districts.
- Parking at some of these corners is severely limited, particularly at Oscawana Corners, Tompkins Corners, and Adams Corners.

Recommendations:

- **Consider a new hamlet with commercial and mixed uses at Crofts Corners.** Given the topography constraints at Oregon Corners and the fact that this area is generally built-out and is restricted by the presence of the Peekskill Hollow Creek and Oscawana Brook, new commercial development will need to be located elsewhere. Crofts Corners is an attractive place for new mixed-use development for a number of reasons. The area is proximate to Town Hall, is located at the intersection of two well maintained County roads, and possesses fewer environmental constraints as compared to Oregon Corners. This area is currently located in the Very Low-Density (R-3) Zoning District; however, adjacent parcels where the Town Hall, Town highway garage, and fire station are located, are zoned Neighborhood Commercial (CN).



Crofts Corners – Oscawana Lake Road and Church Road

Locating mixed-uses in this area is certainly feasible. A real-estate business is already located here and there is a potential for redeveloping one or more parcels which contain dwellings that are in need of repair. Additionally, a parcel located at the intersection of Cimarron Road and Oscawana Lake Road is currently zoned Community Commercial (CC-2) and is the subject of a Planning Board application in which the applicant is proposing a mixed-use (retail/residential) project. This parcel does not appear on the Town's zoning map as being zoned CC-2; however, the parcel was converted to CC-2 under a now-repealed section of the Zoning Code, which created certain commercial floating zones within the Town.

The rezoning of this area does not need to be expansive and should not negatively impact surrounding residential uses. Providing for small scale mixed-use development in this area can be accomplished by including those parcels in proximity to the intersection of Oscawana Lake Road and Church Street. Mixed-use development is most successful when active uses, such as retail and entertainment, are located on the first floor, with residential or office uses on the floor(s) above. Generalized design guidelines recommended for the historic corners (below) could ensure that

new commercial development in Crofts Corners retains traditional hamlet design form.

In the long-term, a mini-master plan for Crofts Corners could be developed to govern the expansion of this corner into a somewhat larger hamlet. A master plan would ensure that the potential impacts of growth in this future hamlet are dealt with comprehensively and that such development takes advantage of the special historic character of this area.

- **Neighborhood commercial development.** The Community Commercial (CC-2) and Neighborhood Commercial (CN) Zoning Districts were designed to provide less intense commercial and mixed-use development in areas of Town located proximate to residential neighborhoods. These districts were designed to provide limited services to the adjacent residential community and not compete with the commercial uses found in the CC-1 Zone (Oregon Corners). Although many of the uses located in the CC-2 and CN Zones complement the Town's rural character, some of the uses in the CC-2 Zone along Morrissey Drive and some of the uses found in the CN Zone at the intersection of Peekskill Hollow Road and the Taconic State Parkway detract from the residential character and quality of life in surrounding residential neighborhoods and do not comply with the intent of the existing CC-2 and CN Districts. Further, there are commercially used parcels along Oscawana Lake Road, such as the Putnam Valley Country Store, that should be included in CN District.



Putnam Valley Market at Oscawana Corners

The Town should re-examine the allowable uses in the CN and CC-2 Zones. Although the CC-2 Zone should provide for slightly more intense uses than the CN Zones, uses should not negatively impact surrounding residential neighborhoods and should be complementary to the area. More intense uses that may cause greater impact to the area should continue to require a special use permit.

The Town could develop design guidelines, appropriate signage and lighting requirements, and require landscaping and buffer areas to improve the aesthetics of these uses. Particular attention should be paid to those commercially zoned parcels that immediately abut residential uses.

- **Develop design guidelines.** Similar to recommendations provided for Oregon Corners, design guidelines would be appropriate for the historic corners in Town. Generalized design guidelines and standards should be developed and should be used for the historic corners. These would articulate broad design principles that are applicable to all of the corners. These guidelines could be administered by the Planning Board during their review of an application.
- **Provide for sensible off-street parking requirements.** The viability of each of the commercial corners in Town is impacted by limited parking, both on-street and off-street. The Town's parking requirements must be sensitive to the limited amount of parking that is feasible in these areas. While the Town's current off-street parking requirements are not unreasonable, the Town should reexamine these regulations for appropriateness and practicability. Although it is necessary to provide a sensible amount of off-street parking, requiring applicant's to provide more parking than is necessary will only discourage new business in these areas.

The Town may wish to consider providing separate off-street parking requirements for the commercial corners, with consideration to the geographic size of the corners and their constraints to development. The Town's parking standards should encourage controlled access points/curb cuts to the street and shared parking arrangements. Additionally, if parking can not be located on-site, the Town should continue to allow parking off-site, within a certain distance from the proposed use. Further, the parking requirements should discourage on-street perpendicular parking.

- **Re-examine the bulk zoning requirements in the CN and CC-2 Zoning Districts.** The current area and setback requirements for the Neighborhood Commercial (CN) and Community Commercial (CC-2) Zoning Districts do not encourage future new development, infill, or redevelopment. The bulk requirements in commercial zones should reflect the desire to locate buildings close to the street line and should provide for reasonable setback requirements (front, side, rear).
- **Work with the County to enhance the entranceway at Adams Corners.** An entranceway or gateway is important in providing a sense of arrival into a community. The Adams Corners entranceway could be enhanced to be more welcoming. The existing concrete island at Adams Corners could be reconstructed to provide an exterior perimeter of concrete curb, with brick and landscaping provided in the center. As both Peekskill Hollow Road and Mill Street are County owned roads, the Town will have to work with the County to develop a plan or encourage this improvement as part of the Peekskill Hollow Road improvements, already scheduled for the area.

➤ **Use the historic corners as information gateways to the community.**

The Town should consider using its historic corners and hamlet areas as information gateways or centers to provide residents and visitors a place to obtain local information of interest. Information such as trail maps, park locations, lodging, area attractions, Town government, and cultural and natural resources could be provided. An attractive sign, welcoming the public to the historical corner, may be appropriate and information could be distributed by brochure, electronic kiosk, or by other means.



Joey's Deli at Adams Corners

Other Commercial Areas

Issues:

- There are existing vacant parcels currently zoned Neighborhood Commercial (CN) that are haphazardly located and not suitable for commercial development.
- The Planned Commercial (PC) Zoning Districts are suitably located; however, the allowable uses may not be consistent with the Town's rural character.
- Many of the existing uses along Morrissey Drive detract from the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Morrissey Drive does not currently reflect a positive image as the main entrance into Lake Peekskill.
- There are existing commercial businesses, such as the Putnam Valley Country Store, that service the surrounding residential neighborhoods and are considered an asset to the Town, but are not commercially zoned.
- Existing businesses located outside of Oregon Corners and the historic corners also view large box stores and commercial strip development as threats to the already fragile profitability of their businesses.

Recommendations:

- **Develop a proactive small business retention and recruitment strategy.** Work with local merchants and regional business organizations

- such as the Putnam County Economic Development Corporation, the Putnam Valley Economic Revitalization Corporation, the Putnam Valley Business Association, the Western Putnam Economic Development Council, the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce, and other similar organizations - to develop strategies for retaining the Town’s small businesses and for encouraging appropriate new businesses to locate here. As part of this effort, the Town could identify gaps in the services currently provided to residents within the local market area (market analysis) so that these could be filled by existing or new businesses. The strategy could also attempt to identify non-polluting or “green” industries that might be attracted by the Town’s location in the region and its extraordinary quality of life.
- **Consider working with local merchants throughout the Town and regional organizations to develop a marketing campaign or other initiatives to encourage greater support for, and the success of, local businesses.** Small local stores, such as the Pudding Street Market and the Putnam Valley Market, provide an important service to local residents. To retain these important local services, the Town could work with business owners and regional business organizations to develop a “buy local” marketing strategy that emphasizes the importance of patronizing these small businesses, and a feedback mechanism to help local businesses understand how to better meet the needs of local residents.
- **Promote increased tourism in Putnam Valley taking advantage of the region’s unique beauty, outdoor recreational opportunities, and proximity to the New York City metropolitan region.** One economic development strategy the Town should consider is the promotion of tourism to assist in generating revenue in the Town and for local businesses. Tourism could be enhanced, for example, by allowing bed-and-breakfast establishments in appropriate zoning districts which could take advantage of regional attractions such as Fahnestock State Park. Tourism efforts could, among other things, promote the use of hiking trails in Town by distributing trail maps throughout the Hudson Valley region to attract hikers to the area or by encouraging the establishment of hiking tours. Existing facilities and organizations that already attract visitors to the area, such as the Taconic Outdoor Education Center, could become partners in these efforts. Rather than leave the potential economic impact of these visitors to chance, the Town could work with such organizations to pro-actively identify opportunities for local merchants to provide services to these visitors.

Tourism efforts could also be enhanced through the creation of one or more Special Events organized for various times of the year. Many communities organize such events to take advantage of unique attributes or interests. Examples include the Garlic Festival in Saugerties, the

Balloon Festival in Cambridge, or the Tug Boat Roundup in Waterford. The Town Park or other suitable locations could be used for these types of events.

The Town should establish a Tourism Task Force to review such opportunities and to spearhead implementation of appropriate strategies. The Town should include representation from existing businesses and organizations in the town and the region on the Task Force, and the Task Force should be encouraged to conduct roundtable discussions or other types of public meetings to involve the community in the generation of creative and viable ideas.

➤ **Revise Neighborhood Commercial (CN) Zoning District boundary.**

A review of the Town's existing zoning map reveals that there are a number of vacant parcels, currently zoned Neighborhood Commercial (CN) that are haphazardly located and are completely surrounded by very low-density residentially zoned land. An example of where this occurs is on the westerly side of Peekskill Hollow Road, north of the onramp to the Taconic State Parkway. The parcels in question are not suitable for commercial development and should be rezoned to be consistent with the surrounding parcels. Further, there are commercial parcels along Oscawana Lake Road, such as the Putnam Valley Country Store, that should be included in the CN District.



Putnam Valley Country Store – Oscawana Lake Road

➤ **Continue to utilize the Planned Commercial (PC) Zoning District.**

There are approximately ten parcels in Town that are currently zoned Planned Commercial (PC). The majority of these parcels are located along NYS Route 301, with one parcel located on Bryant Pond Road, proximate to the Taconic State Parkway interchange. All of these parcels are located outside the Putnam Valley Central School District; however, their location is suitable for commercial development and it is recommended that these parcels remain commercially zoned. The parcel located adjacent to Bryant Pond is relatively flat and a future commercial use at this location would likely take advantage of the proximity to the Taconic State Parkway. The parcels at the extreme north end of Town benefit from their access onto Route 301.

Although it is recommended that the PC zoned parcels remain within the Town's zoning scheme, the uses permitted in this zone and the intent of

the District should be re-examined due to the fact that the majority of these parcels are contiguous to Fahnestock State Park and because the parcel adjacent to the Taconic Parkway abuts Bryant Pond.

- **Create a third commercial/mixed-use zoning district along Morrissey Drive.** Parcels located along Morrissey Drive are currently zoned Community Commercial (CC-2). Morrissey Drive serves as the main thoroughfare into Lake Peekskill and is surrounded by residential neighborhoods. The majority of the existing uses at this location are industrial and do not reflect the intent of the underlying zoning district. Commercial uses in this area should be aesthetically pleasing and future development or redevelopment in this area should be designed in a manner that promotes a proper gateway to Lake Peekskill and the surrounding neighborhoods, while benefiting from the more concentrated commercial uses at Oregon Corners.

It is recommended that Morrissey Drive be rezoned to promote low impact mixed commercial and residential development. Apartments should be encouraged over commercial uses and future commercial uses in this area should not impact the surrounding residential neighborhoods and should complement the hamlet of Oregon Corners; industrial, light manufacturing, heavy service uses, and warehousing in this area should be discouraged. Design guidelines should be developed and should be utilized by the Planning Board to promote attractive development or redevelopment and good site design for these properties.

High Density Residential Areas

Issues:

- Lot coverage, small lot size, nonconforming parcels, and failing septic systems are ongoing concerns.
- Given the small lot sizes, proper separation distances between wells and septic systems cannot be met.
- Many of the dwellings in the lake communities and other high density residential areas were constructed as summer cottages and have since been converted for year-round use.
- Small nonconforming vacant lots continue to be constructed upon. This raises concerns relative to groundwater quality and public health, safety, and welfare.
- Property owners that wish to renovate existing dwellings in these high density residential areas are often required to obtain numerous variances.

Renovations/additions that do not further impact the environment should be encouraged to improve the quality of life and visual appeal of the area.

Recommendations:

- **Provide for groundwater management in high density areas.** Lake communities and other high-density residential areas in Putnam Valley have often been constructed on extremely small lots and a majority of the existing septic systems were constructed prior to current standards. For all lake communities or similar densely settled areas, the current condition of both groundwater and surface water resources should be evaluated to determine if the use of septic systems is affecting either resource. If impacts are occurring, measures to improve or replace on-site wastewater treatment should be evaluated, potentially by adding on-site treatment systems to reduce nutrient loading or by installing either decentralized or conventional sewage treatment systems.

Prior to investing in any sewage management program, the Town should require a local area, or project scale assessment of the vicinity ground water budget to evaluate whether transporting effluent out of the area through use of any class of sewage collection system will negatively impact the quantity of groundwater remaining to support local wells, streams, or wetlands. It is also recommended that where septic system discharges are negatively affecting not only groundwater but surface water resources including lakes, the Town prioritize wastewater management approaches before investing in a centralized water supply. By this approach, contamination degrading both well water and surface water resources will be addressed first, and the community may not need to invest in a municipal water system unless there are also widespread capacity shortfalls.

Another option the Town could consider is the establishment of one or more septic management districts. Such districts would promote the periodic inspection and regular maintenance of septic systems, and would help fund septic enhancement techniques, or the rehabilitation or replacement of substandard systems. If the Town wishes to establish such a district, a study would need to be conducted to survey the parcels that would be included and identify the potential cost of the district. Public education about the proper functioning and care of septic systems may be an appropriate initial step.

There are several high density residential areas in Town where septic system failure is a concern. Further research is required to determine the best approach or combination of approaches for each of these areas.

- **Reduce new construction on nonconforming lots.** The current zoning code automatically merges abutting nonconforming lots which are owned by the same owner(s), unless more than one livable structure exists on the merged lot. The Town should continue consolidating abutting nonconforming lots and the following options should be considered as the Town works towards reducing the impacts associated with the development of undersized lots.

The current zoning code requires newly created subdivision lots to contain a certain amount of “buildable area” or area which is considered unconstrained. There are currently no provisions within the code that require existing nonconforming parcels that do not meet the buildable area requirements to seek relief from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Town should consider requiring that development proposals for existing lots that do not meet buildable area requirements go to the ZBA for an area variance. It should be noted that the success of this option is directly related to decisions made by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Town should also consider using floor-area-ratio requirements to limit the size of structures relative to lot area on nonconforming lots.

One of the primary impacts of developing undersized parcels is the installation of septic systems and water wells and the cumulative impact of these on the aquifer. In consultation with the Putnam County Department of Health, the Town should consider prohibiting the installation of septic systems on undersized lots that are smaller than 1.5 acres in size.

Finally, nonconforming tax delinquent parcels are routinely auctioned by the County at an extremely low cost. Historically many of these parcels have been exceptionally undersized; still they have been purchased and later developed by the new property owner. It is recommended that the Town work with the County to ensure that these parcels remain undeveloped. There are several options that should be considered including the purchase of these parcels by a land trust or by the Town, or by working with the County and perhaps a land trust to conserve these lands by conservation easement.

- **Re-write regulations for the expansion of existing structures on nonconforming lots.** As described throughout this plan, existing nonconforming lots throughout the Town pose a public health concern. Developed nonconforming lots considerably out-number those that are vacant. Many of these undersized lots, originally developed as seasonal vacation homes, have been expanded upon and converted for year-round use. These conversions are usually coupled with large expansions of livable area and additional bedrooms; however, many conversions have taken place without the necessary septic upgrades. Typically, the County Health Department will not require any improvements to existing septic

systems if the number of bedrooms (or potential bedrooms) remains the same.

The Town should discourage additions that result in additional bedrooms on lots that do not meet the minimum lot area requirements or are not of a certain size. The Town may also wish to require any applicant seeking a building permit on an undersized lot to have the septic system physically inspected and certified as being in good working order and require improvements as necessary.

- **Lake Protection Program.** Putnam Valley, known as the “Town of Lakes,” is home to several large lakes and other water features, such as creeks, brooks and wetlands. Lake Peekskill, Lake Oscawana, Barger Pond, Bryant Pond, Roaring Brook Lake, and Indian Lake are important resources in the Town. Neighborhoods have been created around these lakes, particularly Lake Peekskill, Lake Oscawana, and Roaring Brook Lake, and these communities continue to be desirable places to live. Yet development



Lake Oscawana

pressure in these areas and throughout the Town has given rise to concerns about water quality. The conversion of undeveloped land to developed land generally increases stormwater runoff and can contribute to degradation of water quality if pollution controls are not implemented. The more intensive, year-round use of what were once seasonal homes along the lakes has also created water-quality concerns. Lake Oscawana has been identified as a 303(d) impaired waterbody by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and strict compliance with the NYSDEC stormwater requirements and local ordinances dealing with stormwater and erosion control is necessary.

Given the fact that Lake Oscawana is a 303(d) impaired waterbody and poorly planned development within its watershed can negatively impact the lake’s water quality, the Town should consider designating the Lake Oscawana watershed as a Critical Environmental Area (CEA). Following designation, the potential impact of an action subject to SEQRA on the environmental characteristics of the CEA must be evaluated in the determination of significance prepared pursuant to SEQRA. If the Town develops its own Type 1 Action list under SEQRA, as recommended

elsewhere within this Plan, development proposals within the Lake Oscawana CEA that are customarily identified as Unlisted Actions, should be upgraded to Type 1 Actions on this local list.

The Town should consider mapping the watershed boundaries of the prominent lakes in Town and use this mapping as a resource in the course of reviewing land development applications before the Planning Board. The Stormwater Phase II Regulations require municipalities to incorporate stormwater management into their local code. The Town should continue to require strict compliance with the NYSDEC stormwater regulations and must adopt a local law for stormwater management and erosion and sediment control, which would supplement or take the place of Chapter 155 of the Town Code, "Soil Erosion and Sediment Control."

It is recommended that the Town develop a program to educate its residents, specifically those residing within the lake watershed areas, regarding concerns relative to water quality and good watershed management practices. The Town's Environmental Commission could be charged with taking a lead role in education and outreach to the public, which may include workshops, flyers identifying best management practices, and working with the existing lake associations in a collective manner to promote lake protection. Putnam County could also be a partner in this effort.

The Town may wish to further research the separation and reuse of gray water in high density residential areas. Any water that has been used in a home, except water from toilets, is called gray water. Dish, shower, sink, and laundry water comprises the majority of residential wastewater. This water may be reused for other purposes, especially landscape irrigation. The separation and reuse of gray water reduces water consumption and can benefit failing septic systems.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Issues:

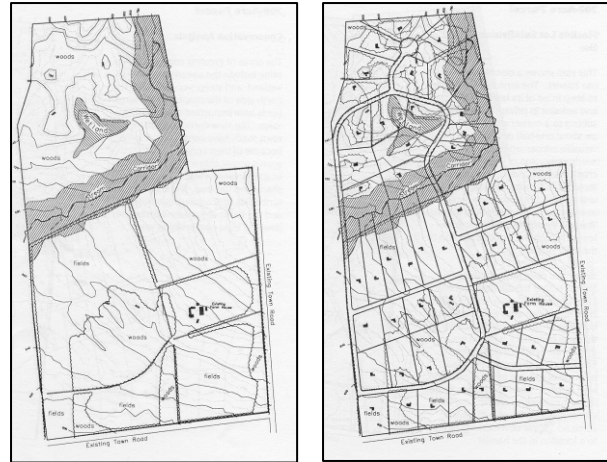
- Based on the Putnam County Groundwater Protection and Utilization Plan, some of the existing minimum lot area requirements in Town do not support the development of sustainable lots, in terms of aquifer protection.
- More often than not, subdivisions are being created using a conventional approach, which leads to sprawl and does little to conserve open space.
- Existing secondary street specifications do not reflect the rural character of the Town and require excessive street widths that result in more

impervious surface than is required. Requiring an applicant to install concrete curbs discourages innovative stormwater design.

- This area is primarily residential. A wider range of housing options and selected low-intensity nonresidential uses, complementary to the area and consistent with this plan and the Town's Housing Plan, are needed to accommodate the residents of the Town.
- This area is largely dependent on individual wells for water supply. Larger subdivisions, requiring numerous wells, can negatively impact the underlying aquifer.
- The Preservation (PD) Zoning District includes parcels that are privately owned and **therefore not permanently protected.**

Recommendations:

- **Require conservation subdivision design.** Under the Town's existing regulations, the density of development is controlled by mandating that every house be placed on a housing lot of some minimum area. For example, a hypothetical zoning district might require that each new home be placed on a lot with a minimum size of 3 acres. An owner of 100 acres of



Example of a "Conventional Subdivision" Plan

perfectly buildable land who wishes to maximize the development value of this land would therefore divide the entire 100 acres into 33, 3-acre building lots (note: this example is simplified for illustrative purposes). Without changing the number of homes that could be built, the Town could instead say that the permitted density cannot exceed 1 home per 3 acres, but the minimum lot size can be much smaller as conditions allow. Using the simplified example above, the owner could still create no more than 33 building lots on the 100 acres; however, the lots could vary in size as conditions and the imagination allow. By separating the issue of lot size from the issue of density, the developer is no longer required to divide the entire original parcel into residential housing lots in order to maximize development potential and profits. Instead, the owner could achieve the maximum allowed density while creating lots of various sizes and preserving exceptional features of the landscape or preserving agricultural lands through creative design.

Although conservation subdivisions should be considered for all subdivisions, it is recommended that the Town require all subdivisions consisting of three or more proposed lots to develop a conservation subdivision plan utilizing the methodology described below.

Conservation Subdivision Design is a type of clustering that addresses the form of development. In addition to the environmental and viewshed

benefits of allowing homes to be situated in a creative manner, a network of conserved open lands can be created in the process. These conserved lands, for example, might function as wildlife corridors or create buffers



A comparison of a conventional subdivision (left) with a conservation subdivision (right). In both cases, a total of 16 residential lots are being created

between residential areas or preserve agricultural lands. In addition, the conserved lands could provide benefits related to stormwater management. This type of benefit is increasingly important as the Town is required to address the Phase II Stormwater Regulations required by the NYSDEC.

Conservation Subdivision Design allows the designer to take advantage of better soils for septic system locations and design criteria could be established to allow septic fields and well locations within the open space parcel(s). Further, provisions to allow shared systems and community water and wastewater facilities could be developed to eliminate concerns regarding locating individual septic systems and wells on smaller lots.

The Conservation Subdivision Design approach begins with the identification of open space resources present on the site to be developed (environmentally constrained land, significant habitats, agricultural land, historic or scenic views, significant woodlots, etc.). The mapping provided with the Inventory and Analysis portion of this Comprehensive Plan (Appendix A) can be a useful guide for starting this identification process. The number of permitted dwelling units within the subdivision is determined by subtracting areas of constrained land (wetlands, wetland buffers, watercourses, steep slopes, floodplains, etc.) from the gross lot

area and dividing that number by the allowable density for the zoning district. Homes (the number based on allowable density for the zoning district) are then designed into the development areas of the site in a creative fashion. Flexible lot sizes and area and bulk standards facilitate this creativity. Identifying road and trail alignments and lot lines are the final steps in the Conservation Subdivision Design process.

A required open space set aside should also be established. These minimum open space set asides would ensure meaningful open space conservation, and still allow creative subdivision design. To make it easier to achieve or exceed the minimum open space set aside, and to promote housing diversity in the town, duplexes could be permitted in conservation subdivisions, in addition to detached single-family homes.

In all cases, a conservation easement will be the legally binding mechanism for ensuring that the open space set aside as part of a conservation subdivision cannot be further developed or subdivided in the future. In most cases it is recommended that a private landowner, or several landowners, in the new subdivision retain ownership of the land under easement. For larger subdivisions, a homeowner's association may sometimes retain ownership of the open lands. In rare cases, the town or a land trust may become the owner of the open lands.

As the Town reviews and approves conservation subdivisions, consideration must be given to the stewardship of these preserved lands. During the review process, the Planning Board should require that the applicant provide a management plan for the conserved lands. Stewardship is generally the responsibility of the land owner, but the holder of the conservation easement must also monitor to ensure that the terms of the easement are met. Monitoring consists of periodic site visits to ensure that non-permitted activities are not taking place within the easement area, negotiations with property owners if there are violations, and identifying whether the easement is serving its intended purpose. A local land trust or the town may serve as the holder of these conservation easements. If the town is not the holder of an easement created through the conservation subdivision approval process, it should still retain a third party right of enforcement. When a land trust agrees to hold an easement it will usually require a stewardship fee to cover the long-term cost of monitoring activities. If the Town takes on monitoring and enforcement responsibilities, it should consider creating a dedicated monitoring fund and requiring a stewardship fee for this fund as well.

- **Establish a maximum development density of 1 home per 3 acres and redefine buildable area requirements** As described further in the Putnam County Groundwater Protection and Utilization Plan, the annual aquifer recharge rate in much of Putnam County is approximately 7 inches

and septic system densities of approximately one system per every 3 acres are recommended. Further, the Health Department's required separation distance between wells and septic systems was designed to control contamination, not to control the amount of water drawn from the aquifer. The current permitted densities of 1 home per acre (R-1) and 1 home per 2 acres (R-2) are too dense for an area where there are no public water or sewer services available or envisioned. Build-out of the areas currently zoned R-1 and R-2 at the density currently allowed would have a significant impact on the character and fiscal situation of the community, in addition to the impacts associated with providing a well and septic on one and two acre lots. In an effort to provide sustainable lots and to reduce the fiscal impacts associated with residential development, it is recommended that areas currently zoned R-1 and R-2, be rezoned to R-3.

[]. Currently, lots proposed within the R-1 Zoning District require a minimum of 20,000 sq. ft. of buildable area, with the R-2 and R-3 zones requiring 30,000 sq. ft. It is recommended that the minimum buildable area requirement in the R-3, CD and PD zones be increased, with substantially all of the proposed structure and substantially all of the total site disturbance located within the buildable area. Buildable area is currently defined in the zoning code as lands not constrained by slopes equal to and greater than 20%, lakes, ponds or watercourses, wetlands, rock outcroppings greater than 20,000 sq. ft. and certain easements. It is further recommended that wetland, waterbody, and watercourse buffer areas and floodplains also be identified as "unbuildable area".

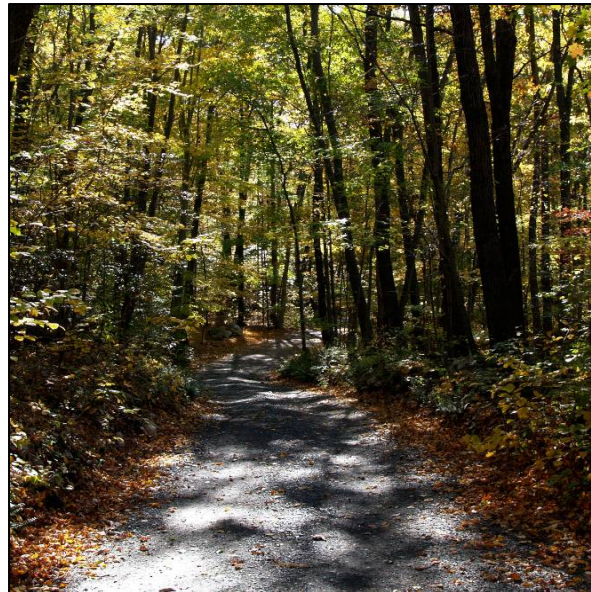
Maintain a maximum development density of 1 home per 5 acres in the Conservation (CD) Zoning District. It is recommended that the minimum lot area in the Conservation (CD) Zoning District remains 5 acres. However, as previously recommended, the minimum buildable area requirement in the CD zone should be increased, with substantially all of the proposed structure and substantially all of the total site disturbance located within the buildable area.

Re-evaluate the Preservation (PD) Zoning District. Approximately 8,872 acres of land in Town is presently zoned Preservation District (PD). The PD Zoning District is intended to encompass lands that are publicly owned, owned by a quasi-public entity, or that are tax exempt. Land in the PD Zone is primarily used for permanent open space purposes or for low intensity recreational purposes; the construction of single-family residences is prohibited in this Zone. The PD Zones are generally located in the northern half of Town and encompass all of Fahnestock State Park.

The Town should continue utilizing the Preservation District designation for all properties that are publicly owned and utilized as parkland (whether for passive or active recreation), and for other properties that are set aside as permanently protected open space (by conservation easement or similar mechanism). As new properties are protected through the Town's open space conservation efforts (recommended elsewhere in this plan) or by the efforts of other agencies or organizations, they should be added to the PD Zone. The PD zone would limit the use of these lands to public recreation or conservation purposes.

Properties that are currently zoned PD, but that are not publicly owned or permanently protected should be re-evaluated as the Town amends its zoning law to implement this plan. Most of these properties are owned by tax exempt organizations and utilized for conservation or recreational purposes. However, the future of these properties is uncertain and there is concern that if sold to private parties they could be more intensively developed and their contribution to the community's rural character and fiscal stability could be lost. The Town should consider placing these properties in a new Agricultural-Recreational (AR) Zoning District that would specifically recognize their long-standing use for agricultural and/or recreational purposes and which would allow these uses of the land to continue. Additional large parcels that are currently used for these purposes (but that are not in the current PD zone) could also be considered for inclusion in this new zoning district. The Town should also consider whether to allow very low density residential use of land (maximum density of perhaps one home per 20 or more acres) in the AR District. This would enable very large agricultural parcels, for example, to be divided into somewhat smaller hobby farms if conditions warrant.

- **Consider adopting rural street design standards.** Oftentimes, the required minimum residential street width is excessively wide. Wide residential streets inadvertently encourage speeding and, in areas with no sidewalks, can create an unsafe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. This recommendation would require further discussion with various Town Departments, such as the Highway Department, and with emergency service providers in the area, to ensure safety. Information about



Sunk Mine Road

the function, safety, and benefits of narrower streets has become available from transportation engineering organizations, such as the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), in recent years.

- **Re-examine the list of permitted and specially permit uses in residential zoning districts.** As the majority of the land in Town is either residentially zoned or is permanent open space (i.e. Fahnestock State Park), the Town should allow small, very low-impact, nonresidential uses in R-3 zone. Zoning should accommodate low-impact nonresidential uses as specially permitted uses. The special permit requirements could ensure that such uses will not negatively impact surrounding residential properties. Nonresidential uses that could be allowed in the R-3 Zone by special use permit include, but are not limited to, antique stores, bed and breakfast establishments, small restaurants, home-based businesses, camps, agriculture, and the like.

- **Allow greater housing diversity.** As the Town's population ages, it is critical to consider housing options for seniors. In addition, low-moderate income housing options are needed in the Town. Accessory apartments, ECHO units, apartments above commercial, well-designed owner-



A row of duplexes that have been designed to be indistinguishable from single-family detached homes

- occupied duplexes, workforce housing, and multifamily housing within the sewer district at Oregon Corners are options that would be appropriate in at least some portions of Town (these options are further discussed in the Putnam Valley Housing Plan, which is an appendix to this comprehensive plan). Zoning should be changed to accommodate owner-occupied duplex housing options as specially permitted uses. The special permit requirements could ensure that such units are designed to be indistinguishable from the single-family homes in the neighborhood.

- **Improve testing protocols for subdivision using individual wells.** It is recommended that the Town develop a pumping test protocol for any subdivision proposing more than 5 individual wells. Pre-drilled wells should be collectively flow tested for 72 hours at a combined rate equal to twice the flow rate of the proposed future subdivision's water

requirements, with data collected from adjacent streams, lakes, wetlands, and surrounding existing wells.

PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Issues:

- The majority of the permanent open space in Town is associated with Fahnestock State Park and is located in the northern portion of Town. The majority of the Town's population lives in the southerly half of Town where only 3% of the Town's open space exists. There is currently no strategy for obtaining additional open space.
- The Town Park is reaching its capacity and there is a need for additional parkland.
- Although numerous logging and horse trails exist, there are no established, publicly accessible, recreational trails in the southern half of Town. There are no walkable connections from schools, commercial corners, and already existing public lands.
- Unfragmented tracts of land and natural resources contribute to the quality of life in Putnam Valley and also serve an important function in maintaining a healthy environment by providing wildlife corridors and buffers to sensitive areas.

Recommendations:

- **Establish an Open Space Committee.** Putnam Valley is fortunate to possess a diversity of natural resources and a small-town quality of life. The Town should consider developing an Open Space Committee to assist in retaining and protecting the Town's unique environmental features and natural resources. The primary mission of the Committee would be to define, inventory, and evaluate the Town's priority open space resources and work with the Putnam Valley community to recommend and promote a plan for the protection of these resources. The Committee would have the responsibility to



A view from Fahnestock State Park

identify land that may be acquired (through purchase, lease, easement, etc.) for conservation, open space, recreation, and related purposes and to make recommendations for its purchase.

Although the committee would provide advisory information to the Town Board as requested, the committee would have no regulatory powers. In considering appointments to the committee, the Town Board should identify appointees that are broadly representative of the community, so as to ensure a broad cross-section of community viewpoints.

As many volunteer-based board and committees already exist in Town, it may prove difficult to find dedicated volunteers to compose this committee. An alternative to creating a new committee is to alter the Environmental Committee's charter (if need be) to include the above-described initiative.

- **Develop a “*Lands of Conservation Interests Map*.”** The Town should develop a *Lands of Conservation Interest Map*, focusing on the undeveloped parcels in Town and building on the natural resource inventory already completed as part of this plan. The Town of Putnam Valley should create a parcel specific inventory of its open space resources. This map would identify critical natural and recreational resources, and the remaining open lands that require the community's careful stewardship. Categories of open space resources would be defined by the community, but might include items such as: high quality agricultural land, environmentally sensitive lands, recreational facilities, rural and scenic roads and vistas, community gateways, ridgelines and/or land above a certain elevation, existing and potential trail connections, etc. These resource categories would be mapped and collectively would define a network of open spaces in the community. **Properties that are already publicly owned or permanently protected should be included on this map. For example, state lands, town parks, parcels protected by the Hudson Highlands Land Trust, and land set aside as open space through the development process (such as at Meadow Ridge) should be displayed as existing components of the Town's open space network. Properties that are not yet protected, but that are of significant interest to the community should also be identified on this map. These could include special places such as** the CYO Camp, Smithtown Gospel, Camp Welmet, Cimarron Ranch, Camp Combe, the soccer camp on Peekskill Hollow Road, Granite Mountain, and lands now or formerly owned by HYH Associates, LLC. In addition to creating a vision for the community's open space network, the *Lands of Conservation Interest Map* would serve two important functions. First, it would assist the Planning Board and developers in identifying conservation lands as part of the Conservation Subdivision Design Process described elsewhere in this plan. The map would provide a preliminary indication of the types of resources that are present on the site

to be subdivided, and it would show how these resources are related to the community's overall open space system. Housing lots and home sites could then be located to minimize their impact on these important resources. Second, the map would be an important tool to help identify lands that should be protected through the purchase or donation of land or easements from willing landowners as part of the Town's Open Space Conservation Program.

- **Consider funding options for land acquisition and preservation of open space and parkland.** Throughout the preparation of this plan and during the public visioning meeting and workshops, there was much discussion about the potential acquisition of open space. The Town should explore opportunities for developing a local program to acquire special parcels of open space land from willing sellers. It is very important to note that participation in such a program by Town landowners is strictly voluntary.

More information will be needed before the Town is ready to determine the best approach for funding such a program. Important considerations would include the approximate amount of land to be protected, the anticipated total cost of protecting this land (through fee simple acquisition and/or conservation easements), the availability of grant funds from governmental agencies and private foundations, the average cost to Town taxpayers, and the fiscal costs and benefits associated with such an initiative.

Usually, communities will develop answers to these questions prior to reaching a decision about funding a local program, or in cases when voter approval is desirable or necessary.

In terms of actual sources of local funding, several mechanisms used elsewhere in New York State, should be considered. The newest option, authorized as the Hudson Valley Community Preservation Act by the State Legislature for communities in Westchester and Putnam Counties earlier this year, would be the establishment of a Community Preservation Fund. Such an act would allow the Town to impose a real estate transfer fee of up to two percent of that portion of the sales price that is above the median home value to fund the establishment and preservation of parks, nature preserves, historic places, recreational areas, open spaces, agricultural areas, wetlands, forest areas, and the like. Other options for the Town to consider separate from or in conjunction with the real estate transfer tax authorized under the Hudson Valley Community Preservation Act, are to set aside budgetary funds on an annual basis or to develop a revenue bond to extend costs over a period of years.

- **Determine the potential build-out of the Town Park and identify future need.** The Town Recreation Department and the Putnam Valley School District have an excellent relationship and frequently share recreational facilities in an effort to best provide students and residents with recreational opportunities. Based on discussions with the Town's Recreation Department and the Athletic Director at the Putnam Valley High School, there is a need for additional fields (such as a Little League field) and other recreational facilities.

The Town should begin planning for the future by first identifying whether the existing Town Park could be expanded upon in the future to meet the needs of the residents of Putnam Valley. It is understood that the Recreation Department is currently in the process of enhancing the Town Park by constructing an additional playground and is considering the incorporation of a dog park. If the existing Town Park cannot be further expanded, the Town should begin identifying available lands for additional facilities, including little league fields and an indoor recreational facility. A recreational needs assessment might help clarify and prioritize the need for such facilities, and would assist the Town in pursuing grants for them in the future. As indicated in the Inventory and Analysis section of this plan, the majority of the residents of the Town live in the southern half of Town and future recreational amenities should be centrally located.

- **Develop mechanisms for creating and funding recreational trails.** A conceptual network of new trails and paths is illustrated on the Plan Recommendations Map. The Plan Recommendations Map shows some of the most obvious possible connections. It is important to note that most of the lands through which proposed trails are illustrated are privately owned lands today and therefore are not immediately available for public use. There are numerous existing logging trails and horse trails throughout the Town that traverse private and public lands. These trails are generally not mapped but could be located and mapped during the development of the Lands of Conservation Interests Map described above.

New trail systems should be multi-use, providing options for hiking, walking, biking, cross-country skiing, and in some areas perhaps horseback riding. As the rural Town and County roads in Putnam Valley are generally not conducive for on-street cycling, off-road cycling should be promoted when developing new trails. Wherever possible, trails should also be designed to provide handicapped accessibility. However, it is possible that some of the trails will not be able to accommodate the full range of uses described due to characteristics of the landscape or other limiting factors. The intent of this initiative is to create a well-connected, well-maintained network of trails and paths throughout the community.

The process for establishing a trail network should be community driven, and would benefit from the participation of a local group of committed advocates. Such a group could help with landowner contacts, with trail maintenance, and other long-term activities that are necessary for the success of this kind of system. The Town could assist in the planning and design of these trails, help negotiate with landowners in some cases, help address liability, and coordinate maintenance and safety issues. Landowner participation must be completely voluntary.

When planning and designing specific trail segments, consideration should be given to appropriate mechanisms for ensuring that trail users are well-informed about any rules or regulations that apply to use of the trail. For example, if trail use is limited to non-motorized vehicles (ATV's and other motorized vehicles can negatively impact trails and result in unwanted noise), special design elements (such as bollards or gates) should be utilized in addition to signage to make this clear; or if adjoining landowners are concerned about users leaving the trail and crossing their property, signs and/or design elements should be considered to make it clear that users must remain on the trail. Attention to such details will ensure that the Town's growing network of trails remains a source of pride (not a source of concern) throughout the community.

The Town should work with the Putnam County Department of Planning, the Hudson River Valley Greenway and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in creating, funding, and maintaining trail systems throughout the Town. Such organizations can also assist in educating landowners and the community about issues such as liability and maintenance.

Liability concerns are often expressed when considering recreational trails and there are mechanisms in New York State that provide landowners with protection regarding liability. The New York State Recreational Use Statute (NYS General Obligations Law subsection 9-103) limits the liability of landowners that voluntarily allow access to their land for trails and other recreational activities. This particular law applies to landowners that permit (and also to those that do not permit) use of their property if the following conditions are met: the landowner does not charge fees and the landowner does not maliciously fail to guard against hazards. Landowners meeting these conditions are protected under this law and liability of those allowing access is no greater than those landowners who post their land against trespass.

Liability concerns can also be addressed through individual insurance policies or through liability insurance from trail partners. Oftentimes, an individual landowner's insurance policy will also assist in protecting the landowner against the risk of litigation. Many communities have partners

in creating trail networks and the landowner may be added to the policy as an “additional insured.”

There are many mechanisms that communities and organizations can use to create trail networks and many ways in which to fund such networks.

- Create trail networks by engaging tools such as the Park Land Reservation requirement and Conservation Subdivision Design. Open lands created as part of the conservation subdivision design process would provide an opportunity for willing property owners to become part of a town-wide trail network. The Town currently has within its subdivision regulations a Park Land Reservation requirement. The recent trend has been for the Town to accept a fee in lieu of parkland. The Planning Board could require actual land, instead of the in lieu fee to satisfy this requirement. This would ensure corridors for future trails as development occurs.
- Create trail networks by seeking additional opportunities for trails along existing rights-of-way. The New York State Local Open Space Planning Guide suggests that linear corridors, such as utility rights-of-way and stream corridors are opportunities for the development of trail networks.
- In addition to funding open space preservation, local funding mechanisms can be established for trail development.

It is understood that Putnam and Westchester Counties are currently planning a trail connection from the Town of Yorktown, across the Taconic State Parkway, and north into the Town of Putnam Valley. This proposed multi-use trail would be located in the right-of-way of the Taconic State Parkway (on the southbound side) and would likely be funded and constructed by New York State. The State has already constructed a bicycle/pedestrian overpass over the Taconic State Parkway, south of NYS Route 6, in the Town of Yorktown. In talking with Putnam County planners, the trail is scheduled to extend to Bryant Pond Road and could be extended further north in the future. The Town should work with the Putnam County Department of Planning and the New York State Department of Transportation during the planning process and to ensure that this project is brought to fruition.

- **Promote the use of existing trails within the Town.** The Town is fortunate to have numerous existing trails traversing mainly the northern portions of Town. Approximately 6.5 miles of the Appalachian Trail traverses the northern and western portions of the Town and numerous trails are contained within Fahnestock State Park. Many residents in Town may not know that these trails exist, and if they do, may not know where they are located or how to access them. Fortunately, these trails have

been around for years and have already been mapped. The Town should promote the use of these trails by educating its residents about their location by providing maps of the trails at Town Hall and at other locations.

- **Continue to work with adjacent communities and environmental organizations like the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance and the Hudsonia Institute to develop strategies for protecting bio-diversity throughout Putnam Valley.** Beginning in 1999 and continuing to the present, Putnam Valley has partnered with the Towns of Cortlandt, New Castle, and Yorktown to learn more about the biological resources of the region. These four Towns commissioned a study by the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance (MCA), which resulted in the Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Plan. The plan describes a large area of undeveloped landscape in Putnam Valley where biodiversity is most abundant and in which wildlife is free to move. Since this plan's publication, the Town's Commission for the Conservation of the Environment (PVCCE) has been working with the MCA and the Hudsonia Institute in the preparation of a Wildlife Habitat and Biodiversity Protection (WHBP) Overlay District. Recently, the PVCCE held a town-wide informational meeting to educate residents on the Town's biodiversity and the proposed overlay district. The primary goal of the proposed WHBP overlay is to require any land development application that is located in the overlay to provide a biodiversity assessment/habitat survey in the beginning stages of the application process.

Information emanating from the Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Plan, prepared by the MCA, and guidelines provided by the Hudsonia Institute, should be used to identify and consider methods of natural resource protection throughout the Town. This Comprehensive Plan supports and endorses the findings of the Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Plan. Many of the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan will help achieve the biodiversity goals and recommendations within the Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Plan. The Town should include the WHBP overlay district, or a similar mechanism, within the zoning update.

ADDITIONAL TOWN-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Land Use, Zoning, and Land Development

- **Adopt recommendations provided within the Town of Putnam Valley Housing Plan.**

This section provides a range of recommendations for consideration in addressing the components of need identified with respect to affordable and workforce housing in light of community concerns regarding impacts on neighborhood character and the environment. Prior to the preparation of this comprehensive plan, The Chazen Companies was commissioned

to prepare an amendment to the Housing Plan portion of the Town of Putnam Valley's Master Plan, which was originally adopted in 1965 and updated in 1990. The recommendations below are taken from the Putnam Valley Housing Plan, which was not previously adopted, but has been made a part of this comprehensive plan as an appendix.

Reexamine Multifamily Code Provisions. Based on the findings of the Housing Plan, there appears to be some demand for housing for people in older cohorts and for affordable housing alternatives. While there is some community support for providing such housing opportunities, this support is qualified by concerns regarding community and environmental impacts. In the survey of residents (see Appendix B for a copy of the survey), respondents expressed concerns that new multifamily developments would not fit well with the existing fabric of the community. Concern was also raised that the current permissible density is excessive given that there are prevalent natural environmental constraints, such as steep slopes, wetlands and poor soils. Given the numerous physical development constraints and the Town's limited infrastructure, the Town should focus on options other than traditional multifamily development to increase housing opportunities within the Town; however, multifamily housing may be appropriate within the sewer district at Oregon Corners (Sewer District #2). If multifamily housing is to be considered in this area, it is recommended that 25-50% of the units be set aside as affordable housing. The existing multifamily code should be amended to reduce the base density, require a percentage of the units to be set aside as affordable housing, include special use permit criteria, and include design standards to ensure that the design and architectural elements of the units reflect the rural character of the Town.

The Town may also wish to consider requiring that a certain percentage, perhaps 20% or more of the units in larger subdivisions, be developed as affordable housing. This type of inclusionary zoning would be accomplished by amending the zoning code with specific provisions to ensure, among other things, that affordable units remain affordable. As recommended elsewhere in the plan, owner-occupied and well designed duplexes that are indistinguishable from single-family residences or accessory units could be used to accommodate these affordable housing units.

The Town could also consider mechanisms for giving preference to members of the volunteer fire department and ambulance corps, school teachers, employees of the Town, and the like for affordable units created as a result of its inclusionary zoning program.

Elder Cottage Housing Opportunities (ECHO). Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO) homes, also known as “Granny Flats,” are a type of accessory apartment or dwelling that is a temporary, movable, self-contained cottage designed to enable older persons to live near family in order to reduce the likelihood that a person is institutionalized. A major benefit of ECHO housing is that it enables the elderly to live independently in a home of their own, while simultaneously allowing them to live near family support. ECHO units are gaining popularity as a senior housing option and could be considered on single-family lots in the R-3 and CD Zoning Districts as special use permits that would terminate as a result of a transfer in ownership or change in occupancy. ECHO units are generally restricted to occupancy by a senior person who is related by blood, marriage, or adoption to the owner of the property on which the unit is located. However, they could also be made available to disabled persons who desire to live near relatives for assistance.

It is important to note that ECHO units are a type of accessory dwelling unit, but ECHOs are specifically designed for elderly relatives of property owners. ECHO units are not intended to be permanent structures and are designed to be removable when they are no longer needed. Other types of accessory dwelling units are permitted in Putnam Valley, which are not necessarily tied to habitation by older persons. Additional recommendations regarding accessory dwelling units are provided below.

ECHO housing units consists of modular construction, providing one or two bedroom ADA-compliant units, with floor areas ranging from 500 to 950 square feet. The materials of construction vary and there may be electric or propane HVAC systems. The foundation of ECHO units can be supported by pressure treated lumber and the water and septic disposal are provided by tying into the existing systems serving the site. The property owner and/or ECHO occupant are responsible for the maintenance of the unit. The cost of these units may range from \$19,000 upwards and there is a private market providing for rental units as well as outright purchase. The Town may consider regulating the rental price of ECHO units, although the implementation and legality of such a requirement would need to be examined. The permitted rent charged by the landlord could be based on a percentage of the tenant’s gross annual income. However, since the occupants of ECHO units are relatives of the property owner, arrangements for rent and payment of utilities are typically worked out between the occupant and the host family, and rent is generally minimal. “Evaluation of the HUD Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity Program,” October 2003, by the Center of Housing Research at Virginia Polytechnic University, provides detailed information on ECHO housing along with additional references to other supporting technical information.

Typical standards include locating ECHO units at the rear of the principal building and in conformance with all required setback and bulk requirements of the base zoning district. Practically speaking, the application of ECHO units in Putnam Valley is somewhat limited by environmental constraints and septic capacities, both of which would need to be incorporated into the special use criteria if this type of housing is to be provided. Furthermore, the special use criteria could limit the units to two occupants each and those 62 years old and older. Standards related to maximum square footage, height, and number of bedrooms are also appropriate. As ECHO units would be connected to existing water and wastewater services, the well and septic systems would be required to be approved by the Putnam County Department of Health. Although ECHO units are generally prefabricated, specific design standards could be incorporated into the special permit standards to ensure that the architecture and design is consistent with the existing community character.

The Town should consider the applicability of ECHO units for seniors and disabled persons in Putnam Valley given the range of standards that would need to be addressed to appropriately site these units. Furthermore, appropriate resources for proper monitoring and enforcement should be allocated to ensure the success of an ECHO program.

Accessory Apartments. Accessory apartments, are particularly well suited to young people and seniors, should continue to be encouraged as an option in single-family residential districts and above commercial uses in mixed-use applications. These types of units could provide a housing option for young people, single persons, small single-parent families, and older persons that do not have the desire for or means to purchase a house, and/or seek to live close to their family. The Town may wish to regulate the rental price of accessory apartments; however, the implementation and legality of such a requirement would need to be examined. Given the number of existing accessory apartments in Town, the task of administrating such a program may prove to be difficult.

The current Zoning Ordinance allows accessory apartments, by special use permit, in principle dwellings units within the CD, LP, R-1, R-2, and R-3 zoning districts. The current zoning also provides conditions with which the applicant must comply before a special use permit for an accessory apartment is granted. The special use permit must be renewed every three years. Because of the special permit requirement, accessory apartments are subject to approval by the Planning Board.

In order to continue to provide for accessory apartments and to support their continued use, the Town should consider several changes to the

current zoning standards. It is recommended that accessory apartments be allowed in existing detached accessory structures as well as in principal buildings, with a cap of no more than two dwelling units on any parcel. Expansions to accessory structures should be possible in order to create the accessory apartment, but expansions should be limited to a certain number of square feet or to a percentage of the floor area of the accessory structure. The Town should also consider eliminating the need to renew special permits for accessory apartments every three years. The Town should maintain the requirement for termination of the permit upon transfer of ownership of the property. The Town may also want to consider an amnesty period during which those residents who have illegal accessory apartments would be able to bring them up to code without garnering a penalty. This would help to ensure that accessory apartments are safe and adequate for occupancy, and fully documented and kept track of by the Town.

In addition, given the existing density of the LP Zoning District and the fact that homes in the LP Zone were constructed as summer cottages and are therefore more likely to be constrained by water and septic capacities, it is recommended that accessory apartments no longer be permitted as a special use within the LP Zone.

Residential Units above Commercial Uses. In the non-residential CN, CC-1, CC-2, and PC Zoning Districts, residential units above commercial establishments are currently permitted. Given that these districts already have a certain amount of development and some level of services, the Town should explore options for increasing the amount of mixed-use development in these districts as a way to diversify its housing stock in more developed areas, as opposed to expanding into undeveloped areas. Design standards should be developed to ensure compatibility among the mixed uses and with surrounding neighborhoods.



Oregon Hardware at Oregon Corners

Establish a Housing Rehabilitation Program. Considering the age of some of the Town's housing stock, and the slow growth of new units, particularly smaller structures within affordable price ranges, the Town may want to consider rehabilitation and housing conversions as possible options to

expand senior and low-income housing. Further, if the Town includes a payment in lieu of affordable housing provision as an alternative to on-site affordable housing, these resources could be used to fund a rehabilitation program.

A local housing rehabilitation program could be created to assist income eligible households with home repair needs to bring substandard units up to code. The goal of a rehabilitation program is to improve and preserve housing for moderate, low or very low-income households, including families and senior citizens. Communities or nonprofit housing providers are often eligible for state or federal financing assistance, such as grants or deferred loans, underwritten by HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which may also be used to fund housing rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation programs are typically designed with requirements that applicants must reside within the Town, that the owner is the occupant, or that the unit will be reserved for rental to income qualified households. Applicants agree to repay grants received if the home is sold to an ineligible person. Typically, to qualify for funds, the total household income must be at or less than the moderate or low income levels, defined respectively as 80% or 50% of the area median income for the applicable family size. Individual grants typically range from \$5,000 to \$20,000, or more, depending on program criteria. A housing rehabilitation program would also promote the elimination of unsafe housing conditions and preserve housing stock that is affordable to lower income households.

Covenants are filed with the County Clerk's office when a developer enters into a rehabilitation program. Deed restrictions are self-enforcing, legally binding agreements that limit the use or activities that may take place on a property. The restriction specifies the duration, and any income limits, in order to ensure that terms of use and resale restrictions for eligible households are known. Once rehabilitation is completed, the "monitoring process" is minimal and it is triggered any time a property is conveyed. If a county planning agency, or any other public entity, advanced funds used to underwrite repairs, the seller of a unit typically commits to repaying funds to that entity if the property is conveyed sooner than stipulated; furthermore, the seller is typically limited in the amount of profit allowed when a subsidized unit is conveyed ahead of schedule. Because of this, deed restrictions do not require constant monitoring in order to administer them.

Due to the relatively high average incomes in the Town, which may make it ineligible for some public funding sources, it may be possible to join a consortium of communities that would offer a regional housing rehabilitation program, such as through the County or other regional entity.

Putnam County Housing Corporation (PCHC) currently has two housing rehabilitation program offerings from which Putnam Valley residents could benefit. Drawing on its specific expertise as a non-profit housing provider, PCHC may be able to provide technical or administrative assistance tailoring programs to local needs. The PCHC 'Putnam Home Repair Program' utilizes \$700,000 of funds from the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation to assist income eligible homeowners with home repairs. An application form is used to verify the income eligibility of applicants, with the home repair program covering 40% of the cost for identified eligible housing rehabilitation improvements while grant funds pay for the other 60% of the cost of the required repairs. PCHC also offers the Senior Action Wagon (SAW) program to seniors or disabled homeowners that are income eligible in order to make more modest, minor home repairs.

Support Regional Housing Initiatives. There are regional non-profits, such as the Putnam County Housing Corporation, that are specifically involved in project design and construction in the region. There should be a detailed examination of the potential to partner with these groups to support housing opportunities in the region at large. Providing the development of housing options in the region that would be available to residents of the community provides a means to achieve some of the housing needs of Putnam Valley residents. Non-profit housing providers are also well qualified to pursue state or federal grants or formulate housing financing applications, such as historic rehabilitation tax credits or low income tax credits.

- **Re-consider the role of the Advisory Board on Architecture and Community Appearance (ABACA).** The basic aesthetic quality of a building, or group of buildings or structures, significantly contributes to how a project is perceived and the exterior of a building can preserve, enhance, and/or develop the character of a particular area. Article VI of the Putnam Valley Town Code provides for the establishment of an Advisory Board on Architecture and Community Appearance (ABACA), specifies the type of applications that are to be referred and reviewed by the Board, and provides some general review criteria. Currently the Code specifies that ABACA is to review subdivisions of five or more lots, any application within the Hillside Management District, any application for the construction or alteration of any structure in excess of 1,200 cubic feet, and certain variances issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

It is recommended that the Town consider incorporating design guidelines into the Planning Board approval process and review the role, and need for, ABACA.

- **Consider revising the noise ordinance and implementing blasting regulations.** Chapter 82 of the Putnam Valley Town Code provides for some protection from excessive noise. During the course of preparing this plan and in speaking with the Code Enforcement Officer, it is evident that revision to this Chapter is required to properly protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Town. Although there are a variety of sources that create excessive noise, among others, the noise ordinance should specifically address blasting, rock hammering and hydraulic rock splitting and incorporate acceptable decibel levels for all noise generators.

Blasting operations and the use of explosives are more frequently used as the remaining sites to be developed are particularly constrained. Blasting can be dangerous and constitute a potential public and private nuisance. Blasting operations have been a source of potential danger to persons and property, are of a highly volatile nature, and are obvious sources of potential physical harm to residents and others in the Town. It is recommended that the Town establish procedures for the regulation of blasting and the use of explosives in blasting operations. Many communities require blasting mitigation plans to be prepared by the applicant and issue blasting permits when the applicant has demonstrated compliance with State, federal, and local requirements and guidelines.

- **Encourage developers to utilize existing vacant or underutilized buildings.** For starters, the Town should inventory and map all vacant buildings, both commercial and residential. Mapping the vacant buildings in Town can assist a potential developer in locating available sites. Utilizing vacant buildings for redevelopment will assist in keeping the commercial area in Town compact in nature and also provide opportunities for additional development. There are numerous ways in which the Town could encourage such activities including tax incentives, an expedited review process, or a reduction in application fees.
- **Prepare for and comply with the Phase II Stormwater Management Regulations.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in an effort to protect and preserve the nation's water resources, has developed a stormwater management mandate. The Phase II Stormwater Requirements involve a permit for discharges from Municipal Separate Stormwater Systems (MS4s) in Urbanized Areas. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) issued two general permits under the State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) to comply with the EPA law. The two state permits address MS4s in urbanized areas and construction activities.

Also under the Phase II Regulations, MS4s are required to develop and implement a stormwater management program by 2008. Generally, a

stormwater management program must contain six minimum control measures, according to the MS4 Phase II Permit requirements. Each minimum control measure must describe measurable goals as well as select and implement management practices to achieve the goals. The minimum control measures include: public education and outreach; public involvement and participation; illicit discharge detection and elimination; construction site runoff control; post-construction runoff control; and pollution prevention and good housekeeping. So, for example, the Town could work with partners to provide educational services related to septic system maintenance and the prevention of illicit discharges into the Town's storm drainage system.

As part of the Phase II Requirements, the Town will be required to develop and adopt a Stormwater Management Ordinance. Although the Town's Code currently includes a "Soil Erosion and Sediment Control" chapter, this Chapter will require revision in order to comply with the criteria provided by the Phase II Requirements. The Town may also wish to provide certain design criteria in its ordinance, such as, but not limited to, encouraging gravel driveways or other more permeable surfaces. Stormwater discharges piped directly into waterbodies should be discouraged.

The Putnam Valley Highway Department and Town decision makers have been very proactive in addressing this federal mandate. The Town should continue to work closely with the DEC to ensure that it will comply with the Phase II Stormwater Requirements in 2008 and continue to set an example to developers in Town by installing proper stormwater management facilities.

- **Strengthen zoning regulations that address the protection of steep slopes and ridgelines.** The Town should revise its regulations to better control the development and alteration of hillside areas and ridgelines to minimize adverse effects to water quality and view sheds. Though the Town has historically provided some protections to steep slopes, sections of the Zoning Code that deal with constructing on steep slopes should be revamped.



A view of an undisturbed ridgeline at Fahnestock State Park

Limitations could be placed on the type and amount of development that occurs in steep slope areas and guidelines for construction on steep slopes could also be developed. Limitations should also be provided that would disallow development within a certain distance of the crest of a ridgeline. Locating buildings below ridge-tops and selectively clearing natural vegetation still creates views for the homeowner while preserving community viewsheds. Ridgelines should be identified on a map, which would be made part of the ordinance.

- **Re-examine the Town's wetland and watercourse ordinance.** Chapter 144 of the Town Code provides protection to wetlands, watercourses, and waterbodies. This Chapter of the Code is strictly enforced and requires an applicant to obtain a wetlands permit when disturbance occurs within 100-feet of a wetland, watercourse or waterbody. This Chapter should be re-examined to ensure that contemporary forms of protection are being utilized, that the existing buffer requirements are sufficient, to clearly define the wetland permit approval process, and to ensure that the wetland approval and site plan approval processes complement one another. The Town should make certain that parcels involved in land development are being inspected for the potential presence of wetlands. It is therefore recommended that a qualified individual inspect every parcel for which an application is being sought that involves land disturbance.



Wetlands located within Putnam Valley

As the Town moves forward in enhancing its regulations concerning wetlands, waterbodies, and watercourses, the Town should consider working with organizations such as the Hollowbrook Water Watch and the City of Peekskill and seek grants for the preparation of future studies and protective measures.

- **Develop regulations to protect underlying aquifers.** In an effort to sustain a plentiful supply of high quality drinking water, drinking water resources, whether from ground water, surface water, or both, should be protected via the Town's land use laws. The Town has an existing Ground and Surface Water Protection Overlay District within its current zoning ordinance which provides certain protective controls and use prohibitions. The existing overlay includes all lands within the City of Peekskill

Watershed, all lands within the New York City Watershed, and certain “Aquifer Protection Zones.”

It is recommended that the Town review the technical merits of the existing ordinance and as well as the currently mapped “Aquifer Protection Zones.” Distinct aquifer areas should be defined on the basis of typical well yields, present or future potential levels of use, and aquifer vulnerability to contamination. The criteria by which the existing Aquifer Protection Zones were delineated should serve as one starting point for this work.

Based on the aquifer types and areas defined above, a revised Ground and Surface Water Protection Overlay Map should be prepared. Utilizing the data described above, previous hydrological reports prepared for the Town and County, and the revised map, an aquifer protection ordinance should be prepared.

- **Address home-based businesses.** In recognition of the changing nature of the workplace and given the small amount of commercially zoned land in Town, home based businesses or home occupations, should continue to be permitted in the Town’s residential areas. Standards should be strengthened for such businesses so that they do not detract from the residential character and quality of life of the neighborhoods in Town. Further, when and whether a Special Use Permit is required should be re-examined.
- **Work with the Putnam County Department of Health.** The Town of Putnam Valley should work with other Putnam County communities and the Putnam County Department of Health to revise existing protocols for installing sanitary sewage treatment systems. One County requirement that should be addressed is the fact that the County requires the septic system expansion area to be completely cleared of trees if fill is required for the installation of the system. The removal of trees in an area that will likely never be occupied by a septic system appears to be unnecessary and contributes to stormwater runoff. Of particular concern is the unnecessary removal of vegetation in environmentally sensitive areas. With regard to existing developed lots, Putnam Valley and other Putnam County communities should also impress upon the County their desire to utilize enhanced and unconventional systems where appropriate. The current informal agreement with the Putnam County Department of Health relating to the postponement of Health Department approval until a wetlands permit/permit waiver is issued should be codified subsequent to discussion with the Health Department. Further, the Town should support the adoption of the “Draft Procedures and Policies for House Additions,” dated October 2006, prepared by the Putnam County Department of Health.

- **Develop landscape requirements.** If properly designed and installed, landscaping can buffer noise, reduce visual impacts, provide shade, filter water, provide habitat, control stormwater and the erosion of topsoil, and beautify the community. The Town should develop regulations for the installation and maintenance of landscaping and screening in both commercial and residential zones, which focus on the promotion of native vegetation. Landscaping should be used to enhance the visual appeal of commercial uses, to buffer nonresidential from residential uses, and to maintain the rural character of the community as seen from the many public thoroughfares. The Planning Board has historically required landscaping on certain projects; however, more formal requirements should be developed.

- **Promote “good lighting.”** The zoning ordinance should be revised to promote “good lighting” that does its intended job well, with minimum adverse impact on the environment. Outdoor lighting is used to illuminate roadways, parking lots, yards, sidewalks, public meeting areas, signs, work sites, and buildings. It provides for better visibility and a sense of security. But if outdoor lighting is not well-designed and properly installed, it can be costly, inefficient, glary, and harmful to the nighttime environment. “Good lighting”, as described by the New England Light Pollution Advisory Group and the International Dark-Sky Association, has four distinct characteristics:
 - It provides adequate light for the intended task, but never over-lights.
 - It uses “fully-shielded” lighting fixtures, fixtures that control the light output in order to keep the light in the intended area.
 - It has the lighting fixtures carefully installed to maximize their effectiveness on the targeted property, and to minimize the area and/or point of illumination’s adverse effects on neighboring properties.
 - It uses fixtures with high-efficiency lamps, while still considering the color and quality as essential design criteria.

- **Remove ambiguities and inconsistencies in the Code.** The Town Board has taken the initiative to improve several Chapters of the Town Code. The primary goal of the revisions was to provide well organized ordinances that would eliminate ambiguities and contradictions and present a clear and consistent document to the reader. This work began in 2005, prior to the commencement of work on this plan and the realization that a new comprehensive plan would be required. It is recommended that the work already completed on the subdivision and

zoning ordinances be used as a starting point when implementing the recommendations of this plan.

- **Consider developing a list of actions that would constitute a Type 1 Action under SEQRA.** Section 617.4(a)(2) of 6 NYCRR permits agencies to adopt their own list of Type 1 Actions, in addition to those already provided for within the SEQRA statute. The fact that an action or project has been listed as a Type 1 action carries with it the presumption that it is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and may require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

Given the significant environmental constraints in the area, the Town may wish to develop its own list of activities that would constitute a Type 1 Action under SEQRA. Those actions may include large subdivisions on lands that are particularly constrained, projects involving substantial land disturbance, projects on lands or near waterbodies designated as Critical Environmental Areas, and the construction of new wireless telecommunication towers.

- **Re-examine how the Town assesses commercial properties.** During the course of preparing this plan, a commercial development subcommittee was formed to focus on the commercial development recommendations of the 1990 Master Plan and the proposed, but never adopted, 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update and to continue researching the existing number of commercial properties in Town and how they are assessed. The subcommittee found that commercial properties were assessed at low values when compared to comparable residentially used land, that many commercial properties were not reflected as such in tax assessment records, and that the Town should consider reevaluating how commercially used lands in Town are assessed.
- **Consider creating a property tax moderation committee.** The Town of Putnam Valley, like most municipalities in New York State, has had to work hard in recent years to maintain adequate revenues in the face of rising demand and rising costs for public services. Since the bulk of Town revenues are derived from property taxes, increased costs are quickly translated to increased taxes for local property owners. What many people do not realize, however, is that Town taxes account for only about 10% to 20% of their overall property tax burden. Putnam County also levies a small amount of property tax, but most (about 70% to 80%) of a property owner's tax burden in Putnam Valley comes from school district taxes. Not surprisingly, residents in Putnam Valley have expressed frustration with the cost of property taxes. Addressing the issue of taxes in Putnam Valley will be an ongoing challenge. The Town should consider creating an advisory committee that can focus on this issue, further research ways to moderate local property taxes, and keep the Town

Board and residents apprised of decisions made at the State level that affect property taxes.

- **Require fiscal impact analyses.** The Planning Board should require applicants that are proposing large projects in Town that may impact taxes to submit a fiscal impact analysis. Although the Planning Board may require such an analysis on any project, it should consider requiring fiscal impact analysis for residential subdivisions of five or more lots. Further, communication between the Town and the School District should be improved so that the impacts of development can be properly monitored by the School District.
- **Management strategies for road de-icing.** Road salt can be a considerable contaminant of surface water and wells and sand can clog drains and catch basins. In 2006, the Town entered into a pilot road salt management project to use a saline solution in environmentally sensitive areas of Town, such as lakefront roads and areas where wells are located close to the street. Management methods should continue to be developed to minimize threats of salt contamination of groundwater resources. For salt threats associated with road deicing, curbing and impermeable snow pile aprons are needed in vulnerable areas to avoid introduction of salt from melting snow-piles into groundwater near wells. Protocols developed by the NYS Department of Transportation can be used to help distinguish between road salt and water softener contamination in wells. Areas particularly vulnerable to road salt contamination can be identified for special road construction and de-icing protocol evaluations.
- **Consider Developing a Solid Waste Management Plan.** Work with Putnam County and private haulers to investigate issues associated with solid waste disposal in the Town and to prepare a Solid Waste Management Plan if needed.

Recommendations for Town Hall Efficiency

- **Improve Code Enforcement.** The Town's land use laws are only as good as its code enforcement. The Town's Building Department currently enforces the majority of the Town's land use laws. The Building Department issues building permits, certificates of occupancy, and is responsible for issuing violations in accordance with several of the chapters of the Town Code, including, but not limited to, Zoning, Freshwater Wetlands, Watercourses, and Waterbodies, Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, Flood Damage Prevention, Forestry, Tree Cutting, and Littering and Dumping. The Building Department is responsible for enforcing the vast majority of code violations, not to mention the numerous inspections and approvals that are required for building construction.

Like many communities in the area, the Town's Building Department is understaffed and it is impossible for the staff to patrol the entire Town on a regular basis and discover and enforce every violation. There are a number of recommendations that could be implemented to improve the Town's code enforcement.

As fiscal conditions allow, the Town Board could consider hiring additional code enforcement staff to help alleviate the amount of work that is currently being conducted by a small department. A code enforcement officer does not necessarily have to be certified to conduct building inspections or issue building permits and certificates of occupancy; many of the violations reported to the Building Department deal with property maintenance and zoning infractions. By charging some members of the staff with enforcing these types of violations, those responsible for evaluating construction plans and issuing associated permits would have more time to conduct thorough and timely reviews.

The Town should establish a "Code Violation Hotline" to allow the public to bring violations to the attention of the Building Department. This would reduce the amount of patrols in Town and allow the Department to work on remediation, rather than expending a great deal of resources in patrolling for violations. A designated phone number could be established and publicized that would allow residents to leave messages for the Building Department on an answering machine; similarly, a designated code violation email system could be established.

A large number of violations reported and enforced by the Building Department deal with wetlands. The Town currently employs an outside consultant that acts as the Town's wetlands inspector and who delineates wetland boundaries, issues wetland permit waivers, and provides recommendations to the Planning Board on land development projects that involve wetland and wetland buffer encroachment. The current code does not allow the wetland inspector to issue violations and require the property owner to remediate. The Town should consider revising its code to allow the wetlands inspector to issue wetland violations and require remediation, thus relieving the Building Department of this responsibility.

New zoning and land use restrictions should be drafted in a manner in which they can be straightforwardly enforced and fines should be substantial enough to encourage compliance. Further, Code Enforcement Officers should be given the authority to require immediate remediation. Local law violations typically result in appearance tickets that undoubtedly encumber the local court and violations often go unaddressed. In the alternative, the Town could work towards the establishment of a "code violation ticket," not unlike a police officer issuing a speeding ticket. This

type of system has been established in other communities and has been successful. Code Enforcement Officers would be able to issue a code violation ticket, requiring the property owner to pay a fine and rectify the violation; fine increments could increase until the violation is remedied. This system would allow for an expedited means of remediation and would free up an already burdened court. Regardless of whether such a program is implemented, the Town Board and Town Justices should work together in developing an approach that leads to the proper enforcement of the Town's environmental laws and development regulations.

Address space issues at Town Hall. The Town Hall and courtroom is

located at 265 Oscawana Lake Road, just north of Crofts Corners. The Town Hall is a converted one room school house and was originally built in 1925. There have been several additions to the building; however, the building's size and layout are no longer adequate and the Town is in need of a larger facility. The building currently contains



Town Hall-265 Oscawana Lake Road

the offices of the Town Supervisor, Town Clerk, District Clerk, Building Department, Assessor, Planning Department, and Zoning Board of Appeals. The Town Hall is also home to the Putnam Valley Court and the sole meeting room is used for court proceedings and Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Assessors meetings.

Files required to be maintained in the offices of the Town Clerk, Building Department, and Planning and Zoning Department occupy a tremendous amount of space and duplicate and triplicate files are currently being maintained. These departments only have the storage capacity for current applications, with approved projects and files for non-active projects being stored in a non-temperature controlled storage trailer. It is recommended that a central file room be established that is accessible by all departments and the public and is overseen by a file clerk. The file clerk could assist in creating a computerized filing system, and could scan paper documents that are currently being stored in triplicate. Applicants should be required to submit plans in both digital and paper formats to assist in improving coordination between departments and reducing the amount of documents to be stored.

It is recommended that the Town consider the commissioning of a space utilization study for Town Hall. This study could determine the best use of space at Town Hall and determine if the building, as it exists today, will be able to meet the needs of the future. Experts in this field can identify minor changes to improve space utilization in the short term and identify possible expansion opportunities in the long term.

- **Improve communication and coordination between Town departments.** It is clear that better communication among the departments is needed to properly enforce the Town's laws. Each office should be utilizing a central network that allows each department to view Town files, but not necessarily alter them. The network should allow each department to view building permit records, violations, pending applications, zoning information, ownership records, property sales, and the like.

Town department heads, board chairpersons, and Town consultants should continue to meet on a monthly basis to discuss relevant issues and pending applications in an effort to improve coordination and efficiency.

During the Planning Board's review of a land development project, the Planning Board should consult with Town Departments, the School District, and emergency service providers to identify concerns, determine if the project will result in adverse impacts, and to identify proper mitigation.

- **Provide Geographic Information Systems (GIS) at Town Hall and Town Highway Garage.** It is recommended that the Town consider utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software. GIS provides the ability to overlay an abundance of data over a parcel boundary, or series of parcels, to identify on-site constraints. Overlays that could be prepared include soil boundaries, aerial photography, surface water resources, geology, steep slopes, and the like. GIS could assist with Phase II Stormwater Regulations and could be utilized to map Town infrastructure such as stormwater facilities, fire hydrants, wells, water and sewer lines and connections, etc. Data is widely available and the cost of the software may be obtainable through a grant.

Recommendations for Energy Conservation

- **Promote the use of alternative, renewable energy sources for public and private buildings.** The Town should coordinate with New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) to determine options, including grant funding, for more energy efficient systems. The Town could, for example, replace less efficient heating and cooling systems and utilize alternatives such as geothermal energy; even simple

actions such as utilizing compact fluorescent light bulbs should be considered. This sector of the energy market is changing and growing rapidly, and numerous technologies are becoming available to harness renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind, hydro, and more. The use of photovoltaic cells and hydro-electricity are just two examples that should be considered. The New York State Energy Conservation Construction Code and NYSERDA are resources to the Town and to developers.

- **Encourage LEED standards for new development and redevelopment of buildings and sites in the Town.** The LEED Green Building Rating System® is the national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. Participation in LEED is voluntary. The standards have been developed by the U.S. Green Building Council through consensus by all members of the building industry. LEED standards address a variety of site design, building design and construction materials based on the long-term sustainability of the community. Green buildings are typically healthier than conventional buildings, more environmentally friendly, and potentially more profitable. Buildings of this type do not necessarily cost more than conventional buildings, mostly because the operational benefits outweigh the costs.

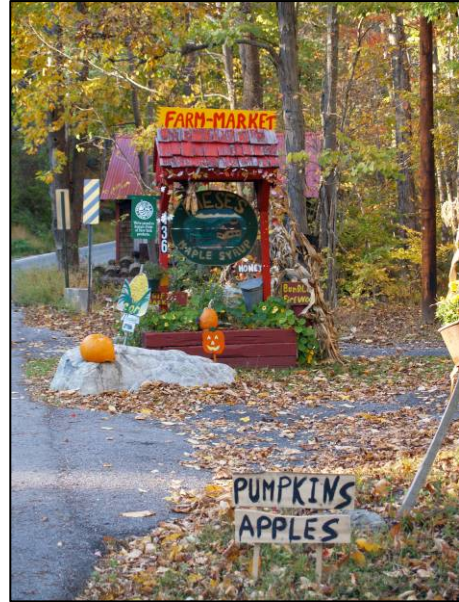
LEED information could be provided through the Building Department and distributed as potential developers seek information regarding building in Putnam Valley. In an effort to encourage LEED projects, the Town could charge lower application fees for those projects that will comply with LEED criteria. For more on LEED, visit the U.S. Green Building Council website: www.usgbc.org.

- **Encourage energy efficiency.** The Town should encourage new development to meet energy efficiency standards by providing the latest and most state of the art energy efficiency rating system guidelines to the Building Department for distribution to potential developers seeking information regarding building in Putnam Valley. The Town should also encourage property owners maintaining existing buildings in Town to conduct an energy audit to determine if the structure is energy efficient and where minor alterations could occur to maximize efficiency.

Recommendations for Agriculture

➤ **Promote agriculture as a land use.**

New York State established an Agricultural Districts Law - Article 25AA in 1971 in response to concerns that non-agricultural land uses were encroaching upon valuable farmland. Authorized at the state level, the Agricultural Districts Law is implemented at the County level. This program is voluntary and provides several protections to farmers including agricultural tax assessment; protection against unreasonable local regulations; special review of proposed eminent domain takings; required Agricultural Impact Statements for public projects; notification requirements to inform property buyers about surrounding farming practices; and limited protection against nuisance lawsuits. There are currently 30 parcels located in Town that are within the County Agricultural District.



Niese's Maple Syrup Farm

Producing farms contribute to the local economy through sales of agricultural products and job creation. In addition, use of land for agricultural purposes limits sprawl and the impact sprawl has on property and school taxes and demand on public services. According to the American Farmland Trust, on average, it costs \$1.15 to provide services for every dollar raised from residential land uses. By comparison, for every dollar paid in property taxes for farmland or open land, it costs the community, on average, \$0.28 for services to this land.

Although Putnam Valley is not thought of as being strongly agricultural, there are prime farmland soils in the southern portion of Town and historically Putnam Valley, like most of the surrounding area, was farmed. The Town should consider promoting agriculture by making available literature that identifies the benefits of



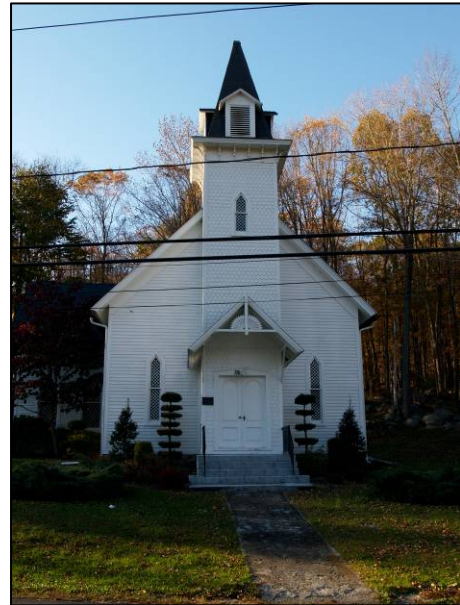
Cimarron Ranch

agriculture and the tax benefits and protections that come along with it. The Town should work with the Putnam County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board to promote agri-businesses and agri-tourism that could lead to niche markets in the area. Farm stands and farmer's markets are certainly feasible in some areas of Town. If such a program was successful, the Town could endorse a "Buy Local" program and extend the program into partnerships with local restaurants.

The Town should allow agricultural uses as a permitted use in all of its residentially zoned areas. The Town should revise its zoning ordinance to comply with Agricultural Districts Law. There are several requirements in Agricultural Districts Law that ask municipalities to carefully consider farm operations within local agriculture districts when making any land use decision. Further, the Town should encourage farmers to use best management practices for agriculture, which can be obtained from the Putnam County Soils and Water Conservation District.

Recommendations for Historic and Cultural Preservation

- **Create a town-wide inventory of historic and cultural resources.** As identified in the Inventory and Analysis section of the Plan, the Town is fortunate to have a number of historic and cultural buildings and sites located within its borders, including several churches and synagogues. The Town Board should initiate the creation of a town-wide inventory of historic and cultural resources, including gristmills, stonewalls, and stone chambers. The inventory should identify significant historic properties and sites and should also identify sites that have been listed and properties that are eligible for listing on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. If a significant concentration or a number of historic places exists within the community, the Town Board could consider the establishment of a local historic district or historic standards. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation could provide technical assistance for this action and committed citizens could develop the survey.

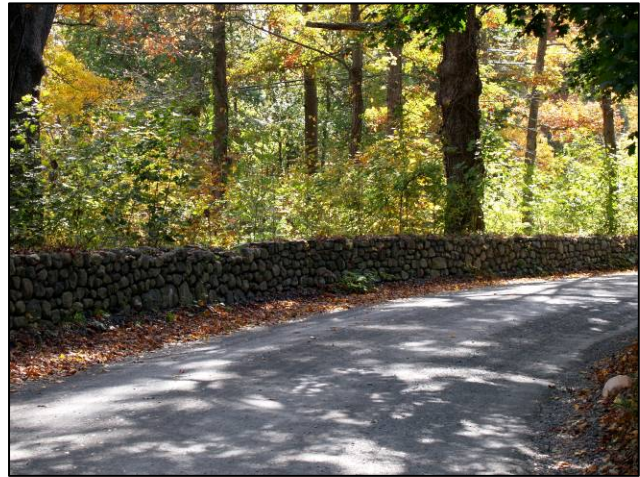


Tompkins Corners Methodist Church

Recommendations for Transportation

➤ **Preservation of scenic roads.**

The visual quality of the Town, or what residents and visitors see as they visit and travel around on a daily basis defines how people feel about Putnam Valley. Residents and visitors alike see Putnam Valley from their cars. What is visible from the roads, along with views from trails and recreational areas, forms the basis for their image of the Town. Therefore, the protection of scenic resources, including stonewalls and chambers, in Putnam Valley is essential to maintaining the Town's rural character.



Horton Hollow Road

Putnam Valley is fortunate to have an extensive network of Town, County, and State scenic roads. Although these roads are tremendous asset to the Town, they are not technically designated as scenic corridors and there is no known strategy in place to protect their integrity. Although the Town has control of what ultimately happens to its Town-owned and maintained roads, the same cannot be said for County and State roads. It is therefore recommended that the Town use this comprehensive plan to designate all County and State Roads, among other Town roads, as scenic roads and promote their protection by discouraging improvement projects that will diminish their rural character.

Although reasonably narrow and winding streets have been known to reduce speed and increase safety, it is understood that some improvements to scenic roads may be necessary to improve certain sections where extreme verifiable safety concerns exist. When State and County projects are proposed within the Town, the Town must be involved in the planning process and make any concerns it may have known to County and State decision makers.

- **Re-examine weight limits.** The Town may also wish to consider re-examining the local permissible weight limits on Town roads to ensure that current truck routes are acceptable.

- **Require traffic impact assessments.** It is recommended that the Planning Board continue to require applicants to prepare in-depth traffic impact statements as part of the Planning Board's SEQRA evaluation when the proposed action could have an adverse impact on transportation.

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town Board should be viewed as an important but initial step in a much longer process. Implementation of the key recommendations in the plan will continue over the next several months and years. It is important to establish a strategy for implementation; to ensure that the community's effort to develop this plan will lead to specific actions that move the community toward the vision and goals outlined herein.

The specific actions that will be necessary to implement the plan are described and prioritized below. As appropriate, responsibility for pursuing these activities has been assigned and potential sources of funding identified. Although the community may desire to implement all of the recommendations immediately, an incremental approach is likely to be more efficient and realistic based on the availability of staff, funding resources, and volunteers.

Immediate Actions

- ☞ Update the Town's Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to reflect the recommendations set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

Priority Actions (*initiate within two years from adoption of the plan*)

- ☞ **Update other sections of the Town Code** – In addition to the zoning and subdivision regulations, other related sections of the Town Code will need to be updated consistent with this plan. They include, but are not limited to, Chapter 103 "Streets and Sidewalks," Chapter 144 "Freshwater Wetlands, Watercourses, and Waterbodies," and Chapter 155 "Soil Erosion and Sediment Control."
- ☞ **Oregon Corners Master Plan** – Work with the Town of Cortlandt to secure a planning grant and develop an intermunicipal steering committee to oversee development of the Master Plan.
- ☞ **Establish an Open Space Committee** – Organized as a subcommittee of the Environmental Commission, this group would be charged with development of an Open Space Conservation Program for the Town. The Environmental Commission would oversee and be responsible for this work, and would report progress to the Town Board. However, additional volunteers should be named to the Open Space Committee to bolster the seven-to-nine-member Environmental Commission's ability to accomplish this work. The Committee should begin by developing a Lands of Conservation Interest Map. It could work with organizations such as the Hudson Highlands Land Trust to reach out to landowners to provide information about options such as the donation of land or conservation easements. It could also work to develop a funding mechanism for a town sponsored open space

acquisition program that would work with willing land owners to purchase land or conservation easements. A process and criteria for selecting appropriate acquisition projects would also need to be developed.

- ☞ **Lake Protection Program** – Spearheaded by a second subcommittee of the Environmental Commission, this effort would coordinate and facilitate the activities of the various lake community groups in the town. Like the Open Space Conservation Program (above), the Environmental Commission would oversee and be responsible for this work, and would report progress to the Town Board. However, additional volunteers – at least some from the Town’s lake communities - should be named to the Lake Protection Committee to bolster the seven-to-nine-member Environmental Commission’s ability to accomplish this work. An initial focus of this effort should be the development of an educational program for property owners to learn about proper septic system maintenance and other “best management practices” for common household activities such as car washing, pesticide application, etc. Additional activities would include the development of watershed mapping and the organization and funding of individual community groundwater management strategies.

Beyond these four (4) priority projects, there are several other activities that could also be initiated during this timeframe as community energy and resources allow. They include:

- Development of a small business retention and recruitment strategy. With the assistance of regional or state economic development agencies, the Town should prepare a long-term economic development strategy focused on the retention and recruitment of small businesses that are appropriate to the unique qualities of Putnam Valley.
- Establishment of a Tourism Task Force to organize efforts at promoting tourism in Putnam Valley. Among the early initiatives for this task force would be develop partnerships with existing attractions in Putnam Valley (Fahnestock State Park, Taconic Outdoor Education Center, etc.), and to coordinate public discussion and brainstorming about a special event(s) that could be developed in the community.
- Creation of a study group to investigate the continuing rise in property taxes, and in particular school taxes in the Putnam Valley School District. This group should include membership from the school board and/or school district administrative staff. Because this will likely be an important topic at the state level in the coming years this study group should, among other things, stay attuned to developments in Albany and seek to influence the state level debate on the town’s behalf as appropriate.

- Conduct a recreation needs assessment to address the need in the future for additional parkland or other types of recreation facilities.
- Establish a Housing Rehabilitation Program – work in partnership with the Putnam County Housing Corporation (PCHC) to better utilize existing county programs or to develop a local program(s) to provide housing rehabilitation assistance to low income or elderly homeowners in Putnam Valley.
- Improve code enforcement capability.
- Work with the Putnam County Health Department to determine best management practices for land clearing related to the installation of septic systems and other issues described within this Plan.

Medium Term Actions (*initiate within four years from adoption of the plan*)

- Town Hall Service Delivery and Space Utilization Strategy.
- Historic and Cultural Resources Inventory.
- Crofts Corners Master Plan.
- Putnam Valley Trails Coalition – outgrowth of the Open Space Committee's work.

Long Term Actions (*initiate within seven years from adoption of the plan*)

- Review this comprehensive plan.

Monitoring for Progress

To monitor progress in implementing the plan, and to identify and address new problems and changes that are likely to emerge in the coming months and years, there needs to be ongoing dialogue between the Town Board and the other official boards and committees (both permanent and temporary) that deal with land use and planning issues in Putnam Valley. To accomplish this, the Town Board should convene joint meetings between these boards and committees on a regular basis. At a minimum, these joint meetings should be held annually. The frequency could be adjusted as appropriate at the Town Board's discretion.

Generally, each of these Boards/Committees could provide a brief report of their activities since the last joint meeting with an emphasis on any large projects, decisions, or issues that they have addressed or are currently considering. The purpose of the meeting would be to provide a forum and collaborative environment for identifying and troubleshooting problems or emerging concerns. It would also be used as an opportunity to check progress on the various implementation activities described in this section of the Comprehensive Plan. Any such meetings must, of course, be open to the public, be properly noticed, and should provide an opportunity for public comment. Ultimately, the Town Board is responsible for plan implementation. The joint meetings would assist the Town Board in monitoring progress and making adjustments as needed. The

Comprehensive Plan itself should be understood as a living document. As such, the plan may need to be adjusted or updated from time to time in order to reflect the current conditions and needs of the community. The joint meetings could help future Town Boards become aware of when that time has arrived. However as a point of reference, the last implementation item described in this section suggests that within five to seven years the Comprehensive Plan, as a whole, should be updated.

GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), the Putnam Valley Comprehensive Plan and associated appendices shall also serve as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). SEQRA establishes a process requiring the consideration of environmental factors early in the planning stages of actions that are undertaken, approved, or funded by State, regional or local agencies. This systematic approach allows adverse impacts to be avoided or mitigated.

According to §617.10 of 6 NYCRR: “Generic EISs may be broader and more general than site or project specific EISs and should discuss the logic and rationale for the choices advanced. They may also include an assessment of specific impacts if such details are available. They may be based on conceptual information in some cases. They may identify the important elements of the natural resource base as well as the existing and projected cultural features, patterns and character. They may discuss, in general terms, the constraints and consequences of any narrowing of future options. They may present and analyze, in general terms, a few hypothetical scenarios that could and are likely to occur.”

The “action” that requires SEQRA review is the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Although not currently proposed for adoption, the Town Board is developing related Zoning and Subdivision Code Amendments and Zoning Maps to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. It is the intent of the Town Board for this GEIS to analyze both the Comprehensive Plan and the contemplated adoption of Zoning and Subdivision Code Amendments to implement the plan. It is anticipated that to the extent that future Zoning and Subdivision Code Amendments are made to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, adoption of such regulations would not necessarily require the preparation of a separate GEIS, and that the Town’s obligation under SEQRA may be satisfied by the preparation of this document.

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is a Type 1 Action under the SEQRA regulations. However, the action will not result in a significant adverse environmental impact. The Plan and its recommendations carefully consider the environmental resources found within the Town and future zoning and subdivision regulations will be crafted to preserve and enhance those resources. As explained in more detail below, the adoption of the Plan and future legislation is expected to have a positive effect on the Town’s environmental resources. The Inventory and Analysis (see Appendix A) clearly identifies these critical resources.

The Comprehensive Plan should be viewed as a mitigation measure against the prospective impact of development on environmental resources in Putnam Valley. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning and Subdivision Code Amendments currently being developed by the Town Board strive to guide new

development in a manner that will enhance the community in the future. Environmental sustainability is one guiding principle that was determined early in the comprehensive planning process as being of particular importance. Environmental sustainability can be thought of as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the community to meet its needs in the future. Specifically, this involves managing the community’s natural resources for the benefit of this and future generations.

Balancing environmental sustainability, fiscal responsibility, and respect for property owners is an important approach that is evident when considering the Plan recommendations as a whole. It is important to note that the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in the approval of any development activity, either private or public. Accordingly, it will not directly result in any physical impacts to the environment; instead any prospective impact is indirect and as a result of one or more specific proposed projects. As individual projects and activities are proposed, environmental reviews in accordance with SEQRA and local, State and Federal regulations will be conducted by the Planning Board or other approving agency on a site-specific basis. The site-specific environmental review should consider the scale of the proposed action and consistency with the concepts and vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

Cross-Reference Table

Elements that must be contained in a Draft EIS (according to 6 NYCRR 617.9(b)(5))	Location in this document
A concise description of the proposed action, its purpose, public need and benefits, including social and economic considerations.	Section 1: Introduction Section 2: Comprehensive Planning Process Section 3: Vision and Goals Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map Section 5: Implementation Section 6: GEIS Appendix A and B
A concise description of the environmental setting of the areas to be affected, sufficient to understand the impacts of the proposed action and alternatives.	Section 1: Introduction Section 3: Vision and Goals Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map Section 6: GEIS Appendix A and B
A statement and evaluation of the potential significant adverse environmental impacts at a level of detail that reflects the severity of the impacts and the reasonable likelihood of their occurrence. The EIS should identify and discuss the following only where applicable and significant:	<p><i>(a) Short and Long Term Impacts, Cumulative Impacts:</i> Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map Section 6: GEIS Appendix A and B</p> <p><i>(b) Adverse Impacts that Cannot be Avoided or Adequately Mitigated:</i> Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map</p>

	<p>Section 6: GEIS Appendix A and B</p> <p><i>(c) Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitment of Environmental Resources:</i> Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map Section 6: GEIS Appendix A and B</p> <p><i>(d) Growth Inducing Impacts:</i> Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map Section 6: GEIS Appendix A and B</p> <p><i>(e) Use and Conservation of Energy</i> Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map Section 6: GEIS Appendix A and B</p> <p><i>(f) Solid Waste Management</i> Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map Section 6: GEIS Appendix A and B</p> <p><i>(g) Public Acquisition of Lands/Agricultural Land</i> Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map Section 6: GEIS Appendix A and B</p>
<p>A description of mitigation measures</p>	<p>Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map Section 5: Implementation Section 6: GEIS Appendix A and B</p>
<p>A description and evaluation of the range of reasonable alternatives to the action in sufficient detail to permit comparative assessment.</p>	<p>Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map Section 6: GEIS</p>
<p>A list of any underlying studies, reports, EISs and other information obtained and considered in preparing the statement including the final written scope.</p>	<p>A list of existing materials reviewed include:</p> <p>The Code of the Town of Putnam Valley.</p> <p>The Putnam Valley 1990 Master Plan and 2002 Update (never adopted).</p> <p>Results from the 2003 Town-wide Survey.</p> <p>The “Putnam County Groundwater Protection and Utilization Plan,” prepared by The Chazen</p>

	<p>Companies, dated September, 2004.</p> <p>The “Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Plan,” prepared by Nicholas Miller, M.S. and Michael Klemens, Ph.D.</p> <p>The “New York Agricultural Landowner Guide,” prepared by the American farmland Trust.</p> <p>The “Lake Peekskill Water Facility Plan,” prepared by Insite Engineering, dated January, 2000.</p> <p><i>“Hydrogeologic Assessment and Delineation of of Aquifer Protection Zones,”</i> prepared by HydroEnvironmental Solutions, Inc., dated June, 2001.</p> <p>The <i>“Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan for Putnam County,”</i> prepared by the Putnam County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, dated August, 2004.</p> <p>Section 1: Introduction Section 2: Comprehensive Planning Process Section 3: Vision and Goals Section 4: Plan Recommendations and Plan Concepts Map Section 5: Implementation Appendix A and B Public Hearing Transcripts</p>
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PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed action is to set forth a vision for the community given changes in demographics, economic activity, land use, and increased understanding of the threats to the sustainability of the Town’s resources. The proposed action seeks to protect the long-term viability of the Town’s community character, natural resources, and quality of life, while improving its economic viability. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan , and its implementation through Zoning and Subdivision Code Amendments, is needed to implement the Town’s vision and goals.

OVERVIEW OF ZONING AND FUTURE BUILD OUT

Summary of Existing and Anticipated Zoning

Currently the Town of Putnam Valley is divided into ten zoning districts which are summarized in Appendix A, Inventory and Analysis. In addition, the current zoning ordinance provides for three Environmental Management Overlay Districts, including the Wetlands and Watercourse Overlay District, the Hillside

Management Overlay District, and the Ground and Surface Water Protection Overlay District. The Wetlands and Watercourse Overlay requires conformance with Chapter 144, "Freshwater Wetlands, Watercourses, and Waterbodies," of the Town Code, which provides local permitting authority for disturbance within 100 feet of a Town regulated wetland, watercourse or waterbody. The Hillside Management Overlay District requires certain protective measures for disturbing slopes of 20% or greater. The Ground and Surface Water Protection Overlay provides certain protective controls and use prohibitions and consists of land within the Town that is located in either the Peekskill Hollow Creek Watershed, the New York City Watershed, or within certain mapped Aquifer Protection Zones (APZs).

To summarize the major revisions to the Town's zoning scheme as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan, future amendments to the Town's Zoning Code would remove the R-1 (1 home per 1 acre) and R-2 (1 home per 2 acres) Districts and convert these lands to a residential district that allows one home per 3 acres. Further, the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) Zone would be expanded by approximately 120 acres and a new commercial district would be created to replace the Community Commercial (CC-2) District that currently encompasses the Morrissey Drive area.

It is anticipated that the Town's future Zoning Code will consist of nine zoning districts and, although modified to provide further protections as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan, continue to utilize the Hillside Management and Ground and Surface Water Protection Overlay Districts (or some variation thereof). Although the name and precise purpose of each of the districts is subject to change with the adoption of the future Zoning Code, the nine anticipated districts and two overlay are described below (as contemplated by the Comprehensive Plan). Wetlands, watercourses and waterbodies would continue to be regulated under Chapter 144 of the Town Code. This chapter will be updated at a future time as recommended in the plan.

Community Commercial 1 (CC-1). The CC-1 District should provide for a variety of commercial activities, mixed with some residential uses, within the hamlet of Oregon Corners. The CC-1 District should be designed to accommodate most of the retail and service needs of the community while reflecting the character of a small town business district through a well-balanced mixture of land uses. The District should maintain and allow for appropriately scaled commercial development, multifamily development, infill, and redevelopment that is of an appropriate scale and architectural style and that promotes a pedestrian friendly environment that is consistent with design guidelines that will be developed for this area.

Community Commercial 2 (CC-2). The CC-2 District should provide for a variety of commercial and light industrial activities that are of moderate intensity, mixed with some residential uses. The uses within this District should serve the

convenience and needs of the community and should not be a detriment to the surrounding residential uses and rural character of the area.

Community Commercial 3 (CC-3). The CC-3 District should provide for a variety of mixed commercial and residential uses along and in the vicinity of Morrissey Drive that are low impact, are compatible with the residential neighborhood of Lake Peekskill and residences on Morrissey Drive, and are consistent with the design guidelines that will be developed for the area.

Highway Commercial (HC). The HC District should provide for light industrial uses and more intense commercial development than allowed in the Town's other commercial zones. Uses within the HC zone could generate more traffic than uses provided elsewhere.

Neighborhood Commercial (NC). The NC District should provide low intensity commercial and mixed use development in areas of Town located proximate to residential areas. This District should be designed to provide limited services to the adjacent residential community. This District should maintain and allow for appropriately scaled commercial development and a mix of uses that are consistent with design guidelines that will be developed for the historic corners in Town.

Lake Peekskill Residence (LP). This zoning district should encompass the existing high density single family residential uses surrounding Lake Peekskill. This District should provide for residential uses but should also eliminate the further creation of small lots that would otherwise contribute to existing threats to water quality and public health and safety. The density of this District should remain at one dwelling unit per two acres.

Rural Residential (RR). This District should provide for low density residential development in a rural setting while allowing some low-impact nonresidential uses. In order to support adequate aquifer recharge and sustainable lots, consistent with the recommendations of the Putnam County Groundwater Protection and Utilization Plan, this District should allow for an average density of one dwelling unit per three acres.

Conservation (CD). This District should provide for single-family residential development while maintaining substantial areas of open space, protecting natural resources and preserving environmental features. This District should establish and regulate very low density residential areas at an average density of one unit per five acres.

Preservation (PD). The PD District should provide for public recreation and/or conservation on lands that are publicly owned and other properties that are set aside as permanently protected open space (by conservation easement or similar mechanism).

Agricultural-Recreational (AR). This District should serve a similar function as the PD Zoning District but should include parcels that are not publicly owned such as tax exempt parcels presently zoned PD and those larger parcels that are currently used for this purpose. In addition to providing for recreation and conservation, this district should allow for agricultural uses and, if determined appropriate, very low density residential (i.e. 1 du/20 acres).

Ridgeline Protection Overlay District. This overlay district should be designed to minimize structural intrusions upon the visual landscape, preserve the important aesthetic, scenic, and ecological character and nature of higher elevation areas and prominent ridgelines, and to maintain the rural character and scenic beauty of the Town. An option the Town Board is currently evaluating to accomplish this type of ridgeline preservation is the establishment of Ridgeline Protection Map that would illustrate important ridgelines throughout the community. Development activities could be prohibited within a certain vertical distance from the upper most portion of the ridgeline, while design standards could be developed to reduce the visual impact of the site development that does take place below the no-build zone.

Ground and Surface Water Overlay District. This overlay district currently exists and should be modified to better protect the health and welfare of residents by minimizing the potential for contamination and depletion of the Town's ground and surface water. One of the potential limiting factors to the sustainable carrying capacity of the land in the Town is its ability to provide water in sufficient quality and quantity such that its use by some users does not adversely affect its use by other users. Another potential limiting factor to the carrying capacity of the land is its ability to accept wastewater discharges from increasing number of septic systems before loading begins to adversely affect the quality of groundwater and surface water used by and enjoyed by Town residents and the environment.

This overlay district is currently comprised of all lands within the boundaries of the New York City Watershed, City of Peekskill Watershed, and certain Aquifer Protection Zones (APZs). The Town Board is considering amending the regulations to require the issuance of an Aquifer Protection Permit for certain uses proposed within mapped APZs, the issuance of a Watershed Protection Permit for certain uses located within the District (but not in an APZ), the prohibition of certain uses within the entire District, and a requirement for the applicant to provide a calculation to determine if water consumption is greater than the natural recharge.

Build Out Analysis

To assess the potential impact of the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, a build out analysis was performed using the existing zoning map and existing zoning ordinance. There is no single method for conducting a build out analyses and the complexity of such an analysis varies

depending on its intended use. Since a number of unpredictable factors will influence the future development of the Town, a more generalized analysis was conducted to provide an overview of future development patterns and potential growth under existing zoning compared to development associated with the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Certain logical assumptions were made in the preparation of the build out for both existing and future conditions. Certain constrained lands such as wetlands and associated wetland buffer areas, slopes equal to and greater than 20% and 100-year FEMA Floodplains were mapped using Geographic Information Systems and were removed from consideration. Further, a development efficiency factor of 20% was applied to the calculation to account for the need for road infrastructure, stormwater management, sewage disposal, driveways, unmapped wetlands, and other unmapped environmental constraints. The remaining lands were then examined, permitted densities applied, and the development efficiency factor was applied to approximate the full build out of the Town under both the existing and future zoning conditions.

The existing zoning would allow for the development of approximately 760 additional residential units in the Town. If new zoning was adopted that was consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, it is anticipated that these new regulations would allow approximately 600 additional units. It should be noted that the unit counts provided are higher than the actual number of homes that would likely be built in Town due to factors that include inaccessible developable areas, irregular shaped parcels, poor soils, and existing and proposed bulk zoning requirements such as frontage, yard setbacks, and coverage requirements.

IMPACT ON LAND

The adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town of Putnam Valley will not in and of itself impact land because it does not directly authorize any particular development project. However, the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will reduce land development impacts when compared to the Town's future development under existing land use regulations.

Future land development applications will be required to comply with the Town's land use and environmental regulations and SEQRA. Some of the key development constraints in Putnam Valley relate to topography and soils, which are fully described and mapped in Appendix A of the Comprehensive Plan, Inventory and Analysis.

Rezoning the current R-1 (1du/acre) and R-2 (2 du/acre) Zoning Districts to 1 home per 3 acres, redefining the current buildable area requirements, requiring the use of conservation subdivision design for larger subdivisions, and redrafting

regulations relating to development on steep slopes will reduce development on less suitable lands. Further, the Town's existing Soil Erosion and Sediment Control ordinance (Chapter 155 of the Town Code) and existing and future New York State stormwater regulations will provide proper safeguards related to soil erosion and stormwater runoff.

The Town's topography, slopes, and soils are fully described, analyzed, and mapped in Appendix A of the Comprehensive Plan, Inventory and Analysis. Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan that relate to land disturbance and, when implemented, will reduce associated impacts include, but are not limited to:

- ***Strengthen zoning regulations that address the protection of steep slopes and ridgelines.*** Although the Town has historically provided some protections to steep slopes, the Comprehensive Plan recommends that regulations be developed to better control the development and alteration of hillside areas and ridgelines. It is anticipated that a Ridgeline Protection Overlay Zone will be developed and will prohibit development within a certain distance from the crest of important ridgelines throughout the Town. Further, development standards will likely be drafted to reduce the visual impact of land development that takes place below the no-build zones.

For additional information, please see Page 48 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***Require conservation subdivision design.*** Conservation subdivision design is a type of clustering that addresses the form of development and is fully described within the Town's Comprehensive Plan. In addition to the environmental and viewshed benefits of allowing homes to be situated in a creative manner, a network of conserved open lands can be created through this process. These conserved lands, for example, might function as wildlife corridors or create buffers between residential areas or preserve agricultural lands. In addition, the conserved lands could provide benefits related to stormwater management.

Conservation subdivision design allows the designer to take advantage of better soils for septic system locations and design criteria have been established to allow septic fields and well locations within the open space parcel(s). Further, provisions to allow shared systems and community water and wastewater facilities could be utilized to eliminate concerns regarding locating individual septic systems and wells on smaller lots.

Under the Town's existing cluster subdivision regulations, the minimum lot size can be reduced to 2/3 of an acre (with community sewer and water) or 1 acre (without community sewer and water). The lot count of a

clustered subdivision is currently determined by first reviewing a conventional subdivision plan; the number of lots in a clustered subdivision cannot exceed the number of lots that would be approved under conventional means. The existing cluster provisions specifically regulate minimum lot size and setback requirements and require a 30% open space set aside. Future conservation subdivision regulations will be much more flexible in terms of design (lot size and setbacks) and will likely require a larger open space set aside.

For additional information, please see Page 27 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Establish a maximum development density of 1 home per 3 acres and redefine buildable area requirements.** As described further in the Putnam County Groundwater Protection and Utilization Plan, the annual aquifer recharge rate in much of Putnam County is approximately 7 inches and septic system densities of approximately one system per every 3 acres are recommended. As a result, the current permitted densities of 1 home per acre (R-1) and 1 home per 2 acres (R-2) are too dense for an area where there are no public water or sewer services available or envisioned. Build-out of the areas currently zoned R-1 and R-2 at the density currently allowed would have a significant impact on the character and fiscal situation of the community, in addition to the impacts associated with providing a well and septic on 1 and 2 acre lots. In an effort to provide sustainable lots, zoning districts that currently allow 1 home per acre and 1 home per 2 acres will likely be rezoned to allow 1 home per 3 acres.

There is approximately 1,507 acres of land currently located in the R-1 Zoning District and 1,930 acres of land currently located on the R-2 Zoning District. As a result of implementing the Comprehensive Plan, these lands would be rezoned to allow 1 home per 3 acres.

Amount of Land Rezoned to Allow 1 Home Per 3 Acres

	Existing (acres)	Proposed (acres)
1 home/1 acres	1,509	0
1 home/2 acres	2,172	0
1 homes/3 acres	9,241	12,281

The Town's existing Zoning Code requires 20,000 sq. ft. (in the R-1 Zone) and 30,000 sq. ft. (in the LP, R-2, R-3, and CD Zones) of each lot to contain buildable area. Buildable area is currently defined as the gross lot area minus land consumed by access easements and rights-of-way, wetlands, watercourses and waterbodies, slopes equal to 20% or greater, and rock outcroppings greater than 20,000 sq. ft. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the buildable area requirements be revised to

increase the amount of buildable land per acre and to limit the amount of development outside the buildable area. The plan recommends that, at a minimum, 80% of the proposed principal building and at least 65% of the total site disturbance should be required to be located within the buildable area. Further, wetland buffer areas and FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas are recommended to be added to the list of constraints to be subtracted from the gross lot area in determining a site's buildable area. Utilizing Geographic Information Systems, approximately 9,570 acres of land within the Town is constrained by wetlands and associated wetland buffer areas, slopes equal to and greater than 20% and 100-year FEMA Floodplains. It should be noted that this is only an approximation and takes into account only mapped environmental constraints. The actual amount of constrained land in Putnam Valley is much greater, given the fact that the Town regulates wetlands that are ½ acre in size and greater, watercourses, and intermittent streams.

For additional information, please see Page 30 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***Prepare for and comply with the Phase II Stormwater Management Regulations.*** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in an effort to protect and preserve the nation's water resources, has developed a stormwater management mandate, known as the Phase II Stormwater Management Regulations. As part of the Phase II Requirements, the Town will be required to develop and adopt a Stormwater Management Ordinance. Although the Town's Code currently includes a "Soil Erosion and Sediment Control" chapter, this Chapter will require revision in order to comply with the criteria provided by the Phase II Requirements. The combination of existing and future State and local regulations will effectively reduce impacts associated with soil erosion and stormwater runoff.

For additional information, please see Page 47 of the Comprehensive Plan.

IMPACT ON WATER

The adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town of Putnam Valley will not in and of itself impact water resources; however, future land development applications may impact such resources and the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will reduce future impact on these resources when compared to the Town's future development under existing land use regulations. Existing surface and groundwater resources are described in detail analyzed, and mapped within Appendix A.

Chapter 144 of the Town Code, “Freshwater Wetlands, Watercourses and Waterbodies,” provides a tool for future development to be located away from significant environmental features. By utilizing Chapter 144 of the Town Code, implementing recommended buildable area requirements and by utilizing conservation subdivision design, potential erosion and sedimentation impacts and other forms of non-point source pollution will be reduced. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the Town must comply with the Phase II Stormwater Management Regulations.

Future land development applications will be required to comply with the Town’s land use regulations, State and federal regulations, and SEQRA. Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan that relate to protection of water resources include, but are not limited to:

- ***Provide for groundwater management in high density areas.*** The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that lake communities and other high-density residential areas in Putnam Valley are largely comprised of small lots with septic systems constructed prior to current standards. The Plan recommends that for all lake communities, or similar densely settled areas, the current condition of both groundwater and surface water resources be evaluated to determine if the use of septic systems is affecting either resource. The Comprehensive Plan identifies several approaches that the Town may consider if groundwater contamination is found to be affecting the public health or lake quality, all of which would require further investigation. No specific implementation measures are currently proposed; therefore, no impacts have been identified. For additional information, please see Page 24 of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ***Reduce new construction on nonconforming lots.*** Small nonconforming vacant lots continue to be constructed upon throughout the Town. Construction on small lots raises concerns relative to groundwater quality and public health, safety, and welfare. In particular, development of undersized lots is associated with potential contamination of water supply wells and degradation of surface water, especially in densely populated lake communities. Developed nonconforming lots considerably out-number those that are vacant. Many of these undersized lots, originally developed as seasonal vacation homes, have been expanded upon and converted for year-round use. These conversions are usually coupled with large expansions of livable area and additional bedrooms.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that to reduce new development on small nonconforming lots, the Town should continue to merge abutting nonconforming lots which are owned by the same party, require existing nonconforming lots that do not meet the buildable area requirements to obtain a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals, work with the Putnam County Department of Health to develop more stringent local requirements

for the installation of septic systems on lots that are smaller than 1.5 acres, and to discourage additions that result in additional bedrooms on lots that do not meet the minimum lot area requirements or are not of a certain size. The table below identifies the number of lots that do not currently meet the minimum lot area requirements, the number of lots that will not meet the minimum lot area requirements as a result of implementing the Comprehensive Plan, and the number of lots that are smaller than 1.5 acres.

Nonconforming Lots and Lots Less Than 1.5 Acres in Residential Districts

	Existing Zoning	Post Comprehensive Plan Implementation
Lots that do not meet minimum area requirements	4,102 lots	4,732 lots
Lots less than 1.5 acres in size	4,265 lots	4,265 lots

For additional information, please see Page 25 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Lake protection program.** Given the number of waterbodies in Town and their importance to the community and fact that Lake Oscawana has been identified as a 303(d) impaired waterbody, the Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town develop a program to educate its residents, specifically those residing within the lake watershed areas, regarding concerns relative to water quality and good watershed management practices. The Town’s Environmental Commission could be charged with taking a lead role in education and outreach to the public, which may include workshops, flyers identifying best management practices, and working with the existing lake associations in a collective manner to promote lake protection. Putnam County could also be a partner in this effort.

For additional information, please see Page 25 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Establish a maximum development density of 1 home per 3 acres and redefine buildable area requirements.** This recommendation is described in the above section, “Impact on Land.” The rezoning of the R-1 and R-2 Zoning Districts to RR (1 home per three acres) not only reduces the amount of physical land disturbance, but consistent with the Putnam County Groundwater Protection and Utilization Plan, it will also lessen the

impact to the underlying aquifer by reducing the density of wells and septic systems.

For more information, please see Page 30 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***Develop regulations to protect underlying aquifers.*** The Town has an existing Ground and Surface Water Protection Overlay District within its current zoning ordinance which provides certain protective controls and use prohibitions. The existing overlay includes all lands within the City of Peekskill Watershed, all lands within the New York City Watershed, and certain “Aquifer Protection Zones.” It is anticipated that the amended Ground and Surface Water Protection Overlay District will continue to utilize the same three watershed areas and APZs and will require the issuance of an Aquifer Protection Permit for certain uses proposed within mapped APZs, the issuance of a Watershed Protection Permit for certain uses located within the District, but not in an APZ, the prohibition of certain uses within the entire District, and will require the applicant to calculate if water consumption is greater than the natural recharge.

For more information, please see Page 49 of the Comprehensive Plan.

IMPACT ON AIR

The adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town of Putnam Valley will not in and of itself impact air quality. However, as a result of continued residential development and the small expansion of commercial districts at the historic corners, minor adverse impacts to local air quality can be anticipated. These impacts will not be of a type or magnitude that would adversely impact human health or the environment. The implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will have the effect of improving air quality by reducing density, limiting land disturbance, and protecting open space.

IMPACT ON PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town of Putnam Valley will not in and of itself impact plant and animal resources located within the Town. However, where new development is proposed, existing vegetation will be removed and some wildlife may be displaced.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends several methods for limiting the potential adverse impacts of development on plants and animals. As described below, many of these recommendations will be implemented through the future adoption of zoning and subdivision amendments. In addition to the Comprehensive Plan recommendations and contemplated zoning code amendments described below, land development applications before the Planning Board will continue to be required to request information from the New York Natural Heritage Program (of

the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources) regarding endangered, threatened, and rare species that are known to occupy or are in proximity to the project site. This investigation will occur during project specific SEQRA evaluations and may lead to detailed habitat studies and biodiversity assessments which will be used to properly protect plant and animal species.

Beginning in 1999 and continuing to the present, the Town has partnered with the Towns of Cortlandt, New Castle, and Yorktown to review the biological resources of the region. These four Towns commissioned a study by the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance (MCA), which resulted in the Miller, N.A. and M.W. Klemens "Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Plan, Balancing Development and the Environment in the Hudson River Estuary Catchment," 2004. This Plan describes the need to preserve core habitats and secondary habitats connecting them to allow for continued biodiversity in the face of increasing development.

Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan that relate to the protection of plants and animals include, but are not limited to:

- **Require conservation subdivision design.** This recommendation is described in the above section, "Impact on Land." The Town can use the open space set aside required under future conservation subdivision regulations to develop a network of conserved lands that can act as a wildlife corridor and aid in the preservation of plants and animals.

For additional information, please see Page 28 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Continue to work with adjacent communities and environmental organizations like the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance and the Hudsonia Institute to develop strategies for protecting biodiversity throughout Putnam Valley.** The Comprehensive Plan recommends that information emanating from the Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Plan, prepared by the MCA, and guidelines provided by the Hudsonia Institute, be used to identify and consider methods of natural resource protection throughout the Town. The Comprehensive Plan supports and endorses the findings of the Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Plan and many of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan help to achieve the biodiversity goals and recommendations within the Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Plan. Amended zoning and subdivision procedures to implement the plan will incorporate appropriate mechanisms for assessing biodiversity impacts early in the project review process.

For additional information, please see Page 40 of the Comprehensive Plan.

IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL LAND RESOURCES

The adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town will not adversely impact the agricultural resources in the Town. The Plan supports current agricultural activities and suggests the promotion of local agriculture through education, promotion of agri-business and agri-tourism, encouragement of farmer's markets, and the establishment of a buy local program.

Additional information on agriculture in both Putnam Valley and Putnam County and a map of parcels located in the Agricultural District can be found in Appendix A. Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan that relate to agriculture include, but are not limited to:

- **Promote agriculture as a land use.** The proposed Zoning Code allows agriculture as a permitted use in the Rural Residential (RR), Conservation (CD), and Preservation (PD) Zoning Districts. The Plan also recommends that the Zoning Code be amended to comply with the Agricultural Districts Law, by providing separate standards for the approval of farm operations located with agricultural districts.

For additional information, please see Page 58 of the Comprehensive Plan.

IMPACT ON AESTHETIC RESOURCES

The intent of the recommendations found in the Comprehensive Plan is to enhance the aesthetic resources in the community. Protection of community character in both the developed and undeveloped areas of the Town is an important goal of the Plan. Several recommendations assist in protecting community character including gateway enhancement, infill and redevelopment in developed areas of the Town, the use of conservation subdivision design, a focus on compact development within the historic corners, and the preparation of design guidelines for commercial and mixed-use development. In addition, the Plan recommends that a Master Plan for Oregon Corners be prepared to address specific issues at Oregon Corners, including aesthetics and design.

Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan that relate to the visual enhancement of the community include, but are not limited to:

- **Preservation of scenic roads.** Putnam Valley is fortunate to have an extensive network of Town, County, and State roads that have scenic value and that contribute to the Town's rural character. Although these roads are a tremendous asset to the Town, they are not technically designated as scenic corridors and there is no known strategy in place to protect their integrity. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that since the Town does not have control over what ultimately happens to County

and State roads, such roadways should be designated as scenic roads by the Town and if significant modifications are proposed to County and State roads within Putnam Valley, that the Town should become involved in the planning process and make any concerns it may have known to County and State decision makers.

For additional information, please see Page 60 of the Comprehensive Plan. Scenic roads within the Town of Putnam Valley are illustrated on the "Plan Concepts" map located within the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***Re-consider the role of the Advisory Board on Architecture and Community Appearance (ABACA).*** Article VI of the Putnam Valley Town Code provides for the establishment of an Advisory Board on Architecture and Community Appearance (ABACA), specifies the type of applications that are to be referred and reviewed by the Board, and provides some general review criteria.

Members of the ABACA have raised concerns about the existing ordinance and have stated that recommendations provided to referring Board's and departments have not been seriously considered. A revised ordinance should be prepared that addresses concerns raised by both members of the ABACA, the Planning Board, and the Building Department. The proposed ordinance should require ABACA review for specific applications, require that the ABACA meet regularly, require that the ABACA include the applicant in its application process, outline procedures for the ABACA and the referring agent to follow, and require the referring agent to provide findings if recommendations provided by the ABACA are not enforced.

For additional information, please see Page 46 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***Develop design guidelines.*** The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town improve the character and aesthetics of Oregon Corners, and other historic corners, by developing design guidelines for new and infill commercial/mixed-use development. These guidelines will be administered by the Planning Board and include provisions for building placement, location of off-street parking, exterior building materials, landscaping, lighting, and signage. Existing structures within these designated areas will not be required to comply with these guidelines; however, as new and infill development takes place, the Planning Board will apply the design guidelines to improve the aesthetics of Oregon and the other historic corners.

For additional information, please see Page 12 and 19 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Strengthen zoning regulations that address the protection of steep slopes and ridgelines.** As described above, it is anticipated that a Ridgeline Protection Overlay Zone will be developed and will prohibit development within a certain distance from the crest of important ridgelines throughout the Town. Further, development standards will likely be drafted to reduce the visual impact of land development that takes place below the no-build zones.

IMPACT ON HISTORIC AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town will not negatively impact historic and archeological resources in the Town. The Plan recognizes the importance of these resources and calls for a town-wide inventory of historic and cultural resources that could build from known resources identified in Appendix A. Future zoning amendments will likely include a conservation subdivision design approach for residential development. This approach would allow the flexibility to locate development in a manner that protects historic or archeological resources on the site. Further, as part of its SEQRA evaluation, the Planning Board will continue to require applicants to request information from the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation regarding State and nationally listed historic resources and archeological preservation.

The Town's known historic and cultural resources are discussed within Appendix A of the Comprehensive Plan. Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan that relate to historic and archeological resources include, but are not limited to:

- **Create a town-wide inventory of historic and cultural resources.** Although several sites within the Town have been identified as eligible for inclusion, the National/State Register of Historic Places lists only two historic sites within the Town of Putnam Valley, the Taconic State Parkway and the Tompkins Corners Methodist Church (located at the intersection of Peekskill Hollow Road near Wiccopee Road). The Comprehensive Plan recommends the initiation of a town-wide inventory of historic and cultural resources, including gristmills, stonewalls, and stone chambers. The inventory would identify significant historic properties and sites and would also identify sites that have been listed and properties that are eligible for listing on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

It is anticipated that this work will be completed by a group of volunteers and that this inventory will lead to the overall protection of the historic and cultural resources that exist throughout the Town. For more information, please see Page 59 and Appendix A of the Comprehensive Plan.

IMPACT ON OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

The adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town will have a positive impact on open space and recreation in the Town. In addition to the Plan recommendations described below, the Plan suggests that the Town determine the potential build-out of the Town Park and future recreational needs, recommends that the Town develop mechanisms for creating and funding recreational trails, and promotes the use of existing trails within the Town. Further, through the Planning Board subdivision approval process and in an effort to contribute funds to the future recreational needs of the community, the Town will continue to require applicants to contribute a sum of money in lieu of parkland to its recreation fund. The Town's recreation fee is currently \$5,000 per lot and assists with the future recreational needs of the Town.

A detailed account of the Town's existing open space and recreational amenities are provided in Appendix A and lands that are currently protected from development are illustrated on a map titled "Protected Lands." Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan that relate to open space and recreation include, but are not limited to:

- **Require conservation subdivision design.** This recommendation is described in the above section, "Impact on Land." Future amendments to the Zoning Code will likely include provisions for conservation subdivision design and will likely include an open space set aside requirement. A perpetual conservation easement restricting development of the open space will likely be required.

For additional information, please see Page 28 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Establish an Open Space Committee.** The Comprehensive Plan recommends the establishment of an Open Space Committee to assist in retaining and protecting the Town's unique environmental features and natural resources. The primary mission of the Committee would be to define, inventory, and evaluate the Town's priority open space resources and work with the Putnam Valley community to recommend and promote a plan for the protection of these resources. The Committee would have the responsibility to identify land that may be acquired (through purchase, lease, easement, etc.) for conservation, open space, recreation, and related purposes and to make recommendations for its purchase. The committee would provide advisory information to the Town Board as requested and would have no regulatory powers.

For additional information, please see Page 34 of the Comprehensive Plan and the "Protected Lands" map found in Appendix A.

- **Develop a “Lands of Conservation Interests Map.”** The Comprehensive Plan recommends the development of a “Lands of Conservation Interests Map.” The map would build upon the mapping that was completed as part of the Comprehensive Plan initiative (see Appendix A) and would focus on the undeveloped parcels in Town. The map would identify critical natural and recreational resources and the remaining open lands that require the community’s careful stewardship.

For additional information please see Page 35 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Consider funding options for land acquisition and preservation of open space and parkland. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town consider exploring avenues for the purchase of land as open space and parkland. More information will be needed before the Town is ready to determine the best approach for funding such a program. Important considerations will include the approximate amount of land to be protected, the anticipated total cost of protecting this land (through fee simple acquisition and/or conservation easements), the availability of grant funds from governmental agencies and private foundations, the average cost to Town taxpayers, and the fiscal costs and benefits associated with such an initiative.

For additional information please see Page 36 of the Comprehensive Plan.

IMPACT ON CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, there are no Critical Environmental Areas within Putnam Valley; therefore, the adoption and future implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town will have no impact on such areas.

IMPACT ON TRANSPORTATION

The adoption and future implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will not negatively impact transportation systems in the Town. Although the inclusion of additional commercially zoned parcels at Crofts Corners, Adams Corners, Oscawana Corners, and Tompkins Corners may generate additional vehicle trips to the area and to the surrounding road network, this increase will be offset by residential density controls recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. For example, the build out analysis estimates the number of potential new units under the existing zoning ordinance to be 760 units. If new zoning is adopted that is consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, it is anticipated that these new regulations would allow approximately 600 units. When compared to the potential new units under the future zoning ordinance,, a

net reduction in approximately 160 single-family detached units translates to a reduction in approximately 162 vehicle trips per peak hour generated by new residential development. The minor expansion of commercially zoned areas at the Town's historic corners is not expected to adversely affect transportation systems. It is expected that fewer vehicle trips will result from new commercially zoned land compared to the number of trips that would be generated by full residential build out under the existing zoning ordinance. For example, if the newly zoned commercial lands resulted in the construction of 100,000 sq. ft. of office space, that new construction would generate 149 vehicle trips per hour.

A description of the Town's existing transportation network is provided in Appendix A. Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan that relate to transportation include, but are not limited to:

- ***Establish a maximum development density of 1 home per 3 acres and redefine buildable area requirements.*** This recommendation is described in the above section, "Impact on Land." The rezoning of the R-1 and R-2 to RR (1 home per 3 acres), recommended changes to the Town's buildable area requirements, and other regulations that will have the effect of reducing residential growth will greatly reduce the number of potential vehicle trip ends.
- ***Consider adopting rural street design standards.*** The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town re-examine its street specification requirements and consider adopting rural street design standards. The Town's current street specifications require that each new street be 22 feet wide, curbed, and have a grade of no more than 8%. These standards are more typical in suburban areas and are not consistent with the Town's mountainous terrain and rural atmosphere. Not only does the Town's current street specification result in streets that look out of place, wider streets increase stormwater runoff and curbing results in less innovative stormwater design abilities and impacts reptile and amphibian crossings.

Amendments to the Town's street specifications are not proposed at this time and will need to be further discussed with the Highway Superintendent and Town officials. For additional information, please see Page 32 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***Re-examine weight limits.*** The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town consider re-examining the local permissible weight limits on Town Roads to ensure that current truck routes are acceptable.

IMPACT ON ENERGY

The adoption and future implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town will not have a significant impact on energy consumption. While additional

commercial and residential development may increase energy usage, if zoning amendments are adopted that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, approximately 160 fewer residential units would result. Further, the plan identifies ways in which energy consumption can be reduced for commercial and residential buildings that are constructed.

Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan that relate to energy conservation include, but are not limited to:

- **Promote the use of alternative, renewable energy sources for public and private buildings.** The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town work with the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) to determine options, including grant funding, for more energy efficient systems for both Town and privately owned buildings.

For additional information, please see Page 56 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Encourage LEED standards for new development and redevelopment of buildings and sites in the Town.** The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is the national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. Participation in LEED is voluntary. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that LEED information be provided to builders through the Building Department and also describes methods in which the Town could encourage builders to construct new buildings to meet LEED standards.

For additional information, please see Page 57 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Encourage energy efficiency.** The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town encourage new development to meet energy efficiency standards by providing the latest energy efficiency rating system guidelines to the Building Department for distribution to potential developers and builders.

For additional information, please see Page 57 of the Comprehensive Plan.

NOISE AND ODOR IMPACTS

The adoption and future implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town will not result in increased noise and odor impacts. While the construction of new commercial and residential buildings will result in temporary construction related noise, the rezoning of the R-1 and R-2 Zones to RR (1 home per 3 acres) and

other contemplated zoning amendments that tend to reduce residential growth will help in maintaining ambient noise levels.

Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan and sections of the Draft Zoning Code that relate to noise and odor include, but are not limited to:

- ***Consider revising the noise ordinance and implementing blasting regulations.*** The Comprehensive Plan recommends that Chapter 82, Noise, of the Town Code be amended to properly protect against excessive noise and to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents and business owners in Town. In July of 2007, the Town amended Chapter 82 to expand quiet hours and to restrict activities which hammer, crush or shatter rock and other activities during daylight hours.

The Plan also recommends that the Town adopt blasting regulations. Historically the Town has not regulated blasting operations. Given the topography constraints throughout the Town and the fact that the remaining vacant lands are becoming more and more constrained, the Town has become increasingly concerned regarding ongoing blasting activities related to land development applications. Future blasting regulations will likely require a blasting permit to be obtained from the Code Enforcement Officer, require a pre-blast survey to be conducted within 500 feet of the parcel on which blasting is to occur, provide for notification requirements, require liability insurance to be submitted, regulate hours of operation, and provide for certain best management practices.

It is anticipated that the revisions to Chapter 82, Noise, and regulations pertaining to blasting operations will improve the public health, safety, and welfare of the Town's residents and business owners. For additional information, please see Page 47 of the Comprehensive Plan.

IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH

The adoption and future implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will have a positive impact of public health. The improvement of drinking water resulting from the Plan's implementation, the improvement of pedestrian mobility at Oregon Corners, and the development of new and the promotion of existing recreational trails will all serve to improve public health.

Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan that relate to the improvement of public health include, but are not limited to:

- ***Provide for groundwater management in high density areas.*** This recommendation is described in the above section, "Impact on Water." The overall purpose of improving groundwater quality is to improve the

quality of drinking water and therefore improve the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents and business owners within the Town.

For additional information, please see Page 24 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***Reduce new construction on nonconforming lots.*** This recommendation is described in the above section, “Impact on Water.” A primary concern of developing undersized parcels is the installation of septic systems and water wells and the cumulative impact of these systems on the underlying aquifer.

For additional information, please see Pages 25 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***Consider revising the noise ordinance and implementing blasting regulations.*** This recommendation is described in the above section, “Noise and Odor Impacts.” The overall purpose of adopting a noise ordinance and regulating blasting is to improve noise and air quality and therefore improve the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents and business owners within the Town.

For additional information, please see Page 47 of the Comprehensive Plan.

IMPACT ON GROWTH AND CHARACTER OF COMMUNITY OR NEIGHBORHOOD

The impact on community character will be positive. Long time residents and more recent residents are drawn to the Town because of its high quality of life and rural character. The intent of the Comprehensive Plan is to protect those factors that make Putnam Valley an attractive place to live and work. The Plan achieves this through a balanced approach that focuses development in specific locations, conserves open spaces, and encourages economic development. In addition, the Plan considers the fiscal responsibility associated with its recommendations. By focusing commercial development that is appropriately scaled and designed in the historic corners for example, the Town can expand its economic base while maintaining the character of its less developed areas. The use of conservation subdivision design can also serve to protect community character while allowing for continued residential growth.

Future zoning amendments will likely include illustrative design guidelines for the historic corners. These design guidelines will address concerns raised during the comprehensive planning process about the aesthetic quality of development and its impact on community character. The guidelines will provide the Planning

Board and potential applicants with a better understanding of what is desired in terms of new commercial and mixed-use development at the historic corners.

For an in-depth analysis of demographic and market conditions within the Town, please see Appendix B, Putnam Valley Housing Plan and Community Survey. For additional information on infrastructure, community services and schools, and general fiscal setting, please see Appendix A. Recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan that relate to growth and character of the community include, but are not limited to:

- ***Consider a new hamlet with commercial and mixed uses at Crofts Corners.*** Given the topography constraints at Oregon Corners and the fact that this area is generally built-out and is restricted by the presence of the Peekskill Hollow Creek and Oscawana Brook, new commercial development will need to be located elsewhere. Crofts Corners is an attractive place for new mixed-use development for a number of reasons. The area is proximate to Town Hall, is located at the intersection of two well maintained County roads, and possesses fewer environmental constraints as compared to Oregon Corners. This area is currently located in the R-3 Zoning District; however, adjacent parcels where the Town Hall, Town highway garage, and fire station are located, are zoned Neighborhood Commercial (CN).

A real-estate business is already located in this area and there is a potential for redeveloping one or more parcels which contain dwellings that are in need of repair. Additionally, a parcel located at the intersection of Cimarron Road and Oscawana Lake Road is currently zoned Community Commercial (CC-2) and is the subject of a Planning Board application in which the applicant is proposing a mixed-use (retail/residential) project. This parcel does not appear on the Town's zoning map as being zoned CC-2; however, the parcel was converted to CC-2 under a now-repealed section of the Zoning Code, which created certain commercial floating zones within the Town.

The rezoning of this area is not intended to be expansive and therefore will not adversely impact surrounding residential uses. It is anticipated that approximately 30 acres (approximately 15 parcels) would be rezoned from residential to Neighborhood Commercial (NC), which is an existing zoning classification within the Town. It is the intent of this District to maintain and allow for appropriately scaled commercial development and a mix of uses that are designed to be consistent with the design guidelines that will be prepared as part of the Plan's implementation.

As is the case in more than 90% of the Town, this area is not serviced by a central water or wastewater system and, in the short term, it is expected that future development at Crofts Corners will continue to use individual

wells and septic systems. It should be noted that well yields in this area are known to be outstanding and a future municipal system in this area is feasible and the Town and its consulting Hydrologist continue to work toward developing a municipal water system and water district in this area.

This initiative was started because of high chloride concentrations in the Croft Corners area and drinking water that does not meet NYS Department of Health Drinking Water Standards. Over the last number of years the Town's consulting Hydrologist has been sampling wells for sodium, calcium, magnesium, chloride, total hardness, and volatile organic compounds. The results of groundwater quality sampling continue to indicate that the residences with the greatest chloride concentrations are located near the intersection of Oscawana Lake Road and Canopus Hollow Road. The salt impacts in this area are likely due to the former unprotected storage of road salt at the nearby public works facility and/or from road deicing. The results of the March 2007 sampling indicate that 9 of the 15 properties sampled in the Crofts Corners area do not meet Drinking Water Standards¹; since the groundwater quality studies began in 2002, 9 wells have been removed from the sampling program due to four or more continuous quarters where chloride concentrations met Drinking Water Standards.

As indicated above, the Town continues to work toward developing a municipal water system and water district at Crofts Corners. In the meantime, residents with chloride-impacted wells will continue to drink bottled water provided by the Town. The future use of this area for commercial purposes may accelerate the pursuit of a municipal water supply that will provide high quality water to affected residents and future uses at Crofts Corners. If a municipal system is not provided, future commercial uses at Crofts Corners would not be as severely impacted as affected residential uses because most commercial uses do not depend on high quality drinking water.

Future commercial and mixed uses will be accessed from Oscawana Lake Road (County Route 20), Church Street (County Route 22), or Cimarron Road. Given the small amount of land involved with this new hamlet and the limited infrastructure in place, a modest increase of commercially zoned land at Crofts Corners will not negatively impact the level of services of any of the above-named streets. If, for example, Crofts Corners was built out to include a 2,000 sq. ft. antique store, 4,000 sq. ft. office, 3,000 sq. ft. restaurant, 3,000 sq. ft. clothing store, and included 12 apartments over commercial space, an additional 64 vehicle trips would be added to the PM peak hour.

¹ HydroEnvironmental Solutions, Inc. Groundwater Quality Report-1st Quarter 2007.

For additional information, please see Page 17 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Create a third commercial/mixed-use zoning district along Morrissey Drive. Parcels located along Morrissey Drive are currently zoned Community Commercial (CC-2). Morrissey Drive serves as the main thoroughfare into Lake Peekskill and is surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Commercial uses in this area should be aesthetically pleasing and future development or redevelopment in this area should contribute to an appropriate gateway to Lake Peekskill and the surrounding neighborhoods. These uses should be compatible with the surrounding residential area while benefiting from the more concentrated commercial uses at Oregon Corners. This concept is not new for this area; the Town's current 1990 Master Plan provides for a similar recommendation regarding its use and proposes a connection to Oregon Corners.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that Morrissey Drive be rezoned to promote low impact mixed commercial and residential development.. The Plan recommends that apartments should be encouraged over commercial uses and future commercial uses in this area should not impact the surrounding residential neighborhoods and should complement the hamlet of Oregon Corners. Design guidelines will likely be developed for this area in connection with the Plan's implementation so that attractive development or redevelopment and good site design will be incorporated into its future growth.

It is anticipated that the commercial district to encompass Morrissey Drive will include approximately 22 tax parcels and approximately 8 acres of land, starting from Oscawana Lake Road and including portions of Morrissey Drive. This area includes 4 vacant parcels, 7 parcels that currently contain a residential use, 5 commercially used parcels, and 5 parcels that are more industrial in nature. The 22 parcels that would be rezoned have a total assessed value of \$5,510,100 and contribute approximately \$116,648 to property taxes (\$16,915 in Town tax and \$99,732 in school tax). It is anticipated that if these parcels were to be developed with commercial/mix uses, the total assessed value and therefore tax benefit to the Town and School District would increase.

With the exception of those Lake Peekskill Residents that do business on Morrissey Drive, the ingress and egress to the existing and future businesses on Morrissey Drive will continue to be from Oscawana Lake Road, which is a County owned and maintained thoroughfare. Given the total acreage involved within this future district, the individual parcel sizes (ranging from .08 acres to 2 acres), and the topographic constraints

known to occupy the area, the rezoning of approximately 1,115 linear feet of Morrissey Drive will not negatively impact the surrounding road network.

For additional information, please see Page 23 of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Revised Neighborhood Commercial (CN) Zoning District boundary.** A review of the Town's existing zoning map reveals that there are a number of vacant parcels, currently zoned Neighborhood Commercial (CN) that are haphazardly located and are completely surrounded by very low-density residentially zoned land. An example of where this occurs is on the westerly side of Peekskill Hollow Road, north of the onramp to the Taconic State Parkway. The parcels in question are not suitable for commercial development and are recommended to be rezoned to be consistent with the surrounding parcels. Further, there are commercial parcels along Oscawana Lake Road, such as the Putnam Valley Country Store, that should be included in the CN District.

It is anticipated that approximately 40 tax parcels or 120 acres of land in proximity to one of the Town's historic corners could be zoned from residential to commercial. The parcels to be included should be specifically chosen for their proximity to existing commercially zoned land and their lack of environmental constraints.

For additional information, please see Page 22 of the Comprehensive Plan and Appendix A.

- **Allow greater housing diversity and adopt recommendations provided within the Town of Putnam Valley Housing Plan.** The Town's existing Zoning Code allows for multifamily residential development in the R-1, R-2, and LP Zoning Districts. The current Code also allows for accessory apartments, by special use permit, within the CD, R-1, R-2, R-3, and LP Zones. In addition, residential units above commercial establishments are currently permitted within the CN, CC-1, and CC-2 Zoning Districts.

Although the Town has had a multifamily housing law in place for several decades, the majority of the housing stock (92.1%) in Putnam Valley consists of single-family detached homes. In the past 12 years, 14.7% of new units that received building permits have been multifamily units. All of these multifamily units, 64 in total, are part of one condominium development known as Highfields, which is connected to the Town's sole sewer system. There are also more than 126 known accessory apartments in the Town. The Town's topographical, environmental and

infrastructure constraints are a likely reason that there are more accessory apartments than multifamily units.

New York State does not have a comprehensive affordable/workforce housing policy or plan. But the decision of the State's highest court in *Berenson v. Town of New Castle* and subsequent cases mandate local provisions for contributing to regional needs for affordable housing. This court case and its applicability to multifamily housing are discussed within the Housing Plan (Appendix B).

The demographics section of the Housing Plan includes relevant information on Putnam Valley and other communities in the region. The results of the analysis presented within Section 6.0 of the Housing Plan indicate that there may be unmet need within Putnam Valley, ranging from 101 to 194 affordable units through 2010. Section 6.0 also presents an analysis of the number of occupied housing units as of the 2000 Census that, based on income characteristics of households and housing costs, meet the federal government's definition of affordable to very low/low/moderate income households. This analysis shows a gap (of 104 units) between the number of Putnam Valley families that earned 50% or less of the HUD region median income and the number of housing units that were affordable to that group as of the 2000 Census.

As a result of findings associated with the Housing Plan and continued research and analyses prepared in connection with the Comprehensive Plan, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Allow multifamily housing in the CC-1 Zoning District as a specially permitted use. Future zoning amendments should consider a density of five units per acre, require each multifamily development to be serviced by a central water and sewer system, and include an affordable housing component. This will continue the Town's provision for multifamily housing in its commercial hamlet, while ensuring adequate treatment of the sewage generated.
- Allow accessory apartments in the RR and CD Zoning Districts as a specially permitted use. Apartments should be allowed to be located within the principal dwelling and within existing accessory buildings.
- Allow Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO) units within the RR and CD Zoning Districts as a specially permitted use. An ECHO unit should be permitted on a lot of at least 3 acres and the unit should be inhabited by a person of 62 years of age or older.

- Allow duplexes within the RR and CD Zoning Districts as a specially permitted use. A duplex should be allowed on existing conforming lots and within conventional and conservation subdivisions. Where a duplex is proposed, the duplex should account for two units; therefore, the lot should be of sufficient size to allow for two units.
- Allow residential units above commercial uses within all commercial Zoning Districts.

It is anticipated that with the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town will conform with the Berenson requirements by creating a range of residential densities and housing types that afford residents and employees of Putnam Valley and their families the opportunity to reside in Town while still be cognizant of the Town's environmental constraints and infrastructure limitations.

The implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is expected to preserve the Town's existing patterns of development as well as its natural environment by directing development into the areas most characteristic of those patterns. The Plan has been designed to promote commercial activities in the existing hamlets, and to reduce land-consumptive development in the rural sections of the Town. By preserving substantial opportunities for affordable housing through multifamily housing and the allowance of accessory apartments and ECHO units, future legislation will promote a diversity of housing stock. It is anticipated that new legislation prepared to implement the Comprehensive Plan will provide for more multifamily housing opportunities than would the existing zoning laws.

ALTERNATIVES

The Town of Putnam Valley may adopt the Comprehensive Plan as proposed. Alternatively, the Town may adopt the Comprehensive Plan with changes. A third alternative action is to not adopt the Comprehensive Plan. The third alternative might also be referred to as the no action alternative.

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town of Putnam Valley as proposed would provide the most appropriate balance of properly scaled growth and economic development, open space and natural resource protection and recreational opportunities, as well as enhancement of community character. The importance of this balance has been expressed by Town residents and is reflected in the vision and goals of the Plan. This preferred alternative would further the Town's goals and assist the Town in taking the necessary steps to achieve its vision. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan with changes, while an alternative that the Town could consider, is not the preferred alternative. The Town and the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) have reviewed

and evaluated numerous alternatives to many of the recommendations which are reflected in the Comprehensive Plan and have devoted a significant amount of time and energy into developing a plan that reflects the needs and desires of all residents. The Plan represents the results of an extensive public involvement process. To the greatest extent possible, the Plan as proposed provides a balance of resident needs and desires. Alterations to the Plan at this time may upset the balance that has been achieved.

The no action alternative would not further the Town's goals and would prevent the Town from achieving its full vision for the future. Further, the Comprehensive Plan being considered for adoption builds upon studies completed over the last two decades, such as the 2002 Comprehensive Plan update, 2003 Town-wide survey, and 2005 Housing Plan, none of which were ever adopted by the Town Board. While existing federal, State and local regulations could be sufficient to protect natural and cultural resources, the benefit of the Comprehensive Plan is that it suggests a manner in which the Town can grow, while still enhancing community character and protecting the Town's valuable resources. This delicate balance can only be achieved through a deliberate and collaborative planning process. The absence of a plan, a program for implementation, and future zoning and subdivision regulations will place the Town in a position of reacting to development instead of being proactive in its efforts.