

# Town of Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan Update

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**Town of Mount Hope**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE (CPUC)**

**Final Committee Draft - Approved 12/21/17**

For consideration and adoption by the Mount Hope Town Board

# Town of Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan Update

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## Section 1: Introduction

The Town of Mount Hope was first inhabited by settlers in 1733, but the Town was not formally established until 1825. The Town is located in western Orange County and is bounded by the Town of Wallkill to the east, the Town of Greenville to the south, the Town of Deer Park to the west and the Town of Mamakating (Sullivan County) to the north. The Shawangunk Mountains lie along the Town's western boundary. The Town of Mount Hope is configured as an oblong rectangle and is more than 25 square miles in size. Located within the Town of Mount Hope is the Village of Otisville. The Village occupies 0.7 square miles in the northwestern portion of the Town.

The Town is blessed with bountiful natural resources that contribute to the community's character and quality of life. This includes the Shawangunk Mountains, the Shawangunk Kill, and the Little Shawangunk Kill. Other significant natural features include Guymard Lake, Watts Pond, and Indigo Creek.

The Town's population has steadily increased from 1990 to 2014. In 2014 the Town of Mount Hope had a population of 7,043. When compared to the Town's 1990 population of 5,971, the population of Mount Hope increased by approximately 18%. The agricultural heritage of Mount Hope is still very much intact. Most residents live on large lot suburban plots or on rural lots with active agriculture.

The Town of Mount Hope is governed by the Town Board. This board consists of five (5) members: the Town Supervisor and four (4) councilpersons. The titles of Town Clerk and Highway Superintendent are also elected positions.

The Town of Mount Hope has now completed its 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update. This is the first plan update since the Town's 1991 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. This section summarizes the planning effort and plan contents. This updated plan is the result of over a year's worth of work by the Town of Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan Update Committee, elected officials, volunteers from the various town boards and committees, town staff, and local residents. The Comprehensive Plan Update Committee held regular meetings during the planning process and provided numerous opportunities for resident's to have input.

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan's primary role is to establish the community's vision and provide a blueprint for its future growth and development. The plan is intended to be directional about how to attain the community's vision for the future; assigning responsibilities and prioritizing specific actions that will be taken to achieve the preferred future development. A Comprehensive Plan provides the mechanism for identifying the current state of the community and the future desired state of the

community. The plan may include a wide range of topics about the community such as residential growth, commercial growth, economic development, land-use, infrastructure, transportation, open space and natural resource conservation, recreation, and preservation of community character.

Under New York State law, municipalities are granted the authority and responsibility to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans. As defined in the state legislation, a comprehensive plan is a document that presents goals, objectives, guidelines and policies for the immediate and long-range protection of a community's assets as well as strategies for enhanced growth and community development. Sometimes referred to as a master plan or land use plan, a comprehensive plan provides guidance to Town leaders and helps to ensure that community needs will be met in the future.

It is important to understand that the action items described in the plan are not requirements. Rather, they are recommendations designed to provide focus and direction as the Town of Mount Hope moves ahead to reach its preferred future. It will be up to the local community to decide on an ongoing basis which initiatives they will implement and how they wish to proceed. Although any future land use regulation must be in accordance with the principles of the Comprehensive Plan, there is no legally binding requirement that the Town implement each of the action items proposed in the plan. The Town Board should carefully examine proposed land use strategies to minimize the cost to residents and protect private property rights.

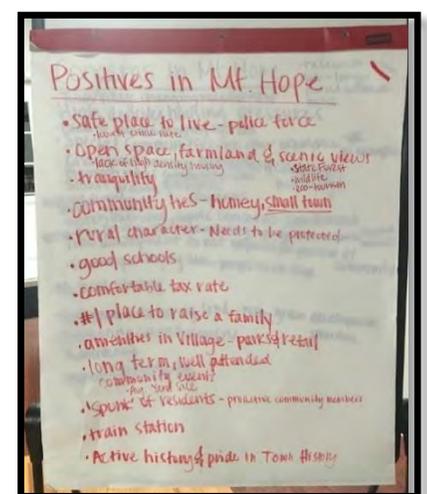
### How was the Comprehensive Plan prepared?

To assist with the development of an updated Comprehensive Plan, the Town Board established the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee to work with the consulting team toward understanding the important challenges in Mount Hope today. The committee held regularly scheduled monthly meetings to work on elements of the plan. In addition to the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee meetings, two public workshops were held to give residents the opportunity to provide input into the plan.

The initial workshop was held in September 2016. At this meeting B&L gave an overview of the planning process, provided current demographic data, and presented to the community where there have been major changes in the community since the 1991 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. Residents were asked to give feedback on the things they like



and dislike about their Town. The primary purpose of this workshop was to identify key issues that should be addressed through the plan.



The second meeting was held in December 2016 and was focused on establishing the Town's vision for the future. The public workshops allowed for residents to voice their desires for the future of their community.

Based on community feedback received at these workshops the consulting team and the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee worked together to construct a Town-wide framework to define how all of the Town's plans and initiatives will fit together, and prioritize the goals of the plan. In order to realize the community's vision the plan will be used as a guide to manage change in the future as well as create the foundation for changes to local policies.



The Comprehensive Plan Update Committee held a Public Meeting / Public Hearing on November 27, 2017 to review its draft of the Comprehensive Plan with the public. Based on public comments received, the Committee made some final refinements to the document before voting to recommend the proposed plan to the Town Board on December 21, 2017.

### **How is this document organized?**

The 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update is made up of four sections. Section 1 includes the Introduction and details about the planning process and the plan's development. Section 2 outlines the vision and goals for the future of Mount Hope based on community input and feedback. Section 3 provides the plan recommendations to achieve the goals outlined in Section 2. Lastly, Section 4 includes a prioritized description of suggested projects and policy changes. Appendices include Appendix A: Existing Conditions Report and Appendix B: Public Meeting Notes.

## Section 2: Vision and Goals for the Future

### Vision Statement

Thinking about the future, residents of Mount Hope envision their community as follows:

*The Town of Mount Hope is a vibrant rural community that has conserved active farmland and protected its abundant natural resources and scenic beauty while guiding appropriate residential and commercial growth in and around the Village of Otisville, in the Town’s small hamlets, and in other well-defined, compact development areas. The Town provides cost-efficient services to its residents, maintains public safety, and celebrates its history and culture while encouraging residents and welcoming visitors to patronize its small businesses and enjoy its rural character and outdoor recreational opportunities.*

This vision for the future of Mount Hope should be viewed as a target for the community to aim its energy and investments toward.



### Goals

To achieve its vision, the Town has established a set of goals to guide decision-making. The recommendations in this comprehensive plan attempt to direct action toward achieving these goals. The goals are to:

- Maintain Mount Hope’s rural character by working with landowners to encourage stewardship, preserving farmland and supporting efforts to diversify and enhance the economic prospects of agriculture, and partnering with regional conservation organizations on open space conservation and trail development.



- Protect natural resources and conserve scenic landscapes such as those associated with the Shawangunk Ridge.



- Carefully manage drinking water resources (surface water and groundwater) that serve residents of the Town and the region.



- Maintain a balanced tax base – though some residential development is anticipated it is important to recognize that from a fiscal perspective, new residential growth rarely pays for itself in property taxes. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the community maintains a balance of residential development, commercial development, and open space.



- Encourage agricultural-related businesses, craft industries, and eco-tourism/agri-tourism throughout rural parts of Town and small business development in the Village, the hamlets, and other compact development areas. Ensure that traditional and modern infrastructure exists to support small business success.



- Provide for a variety of housing options (styles, price points, etc.) to support the diverse needs of current and future residents while retaining the overall low density, rural pattern of development prevalent through most of the Town.



- Retain the scenic, meandering characteristics of the Town’s rural roads and highways while enhancing safety for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians where necessary. Promote off-road bicycle and pedestrian connections between areas of activity in the Village and the Town.



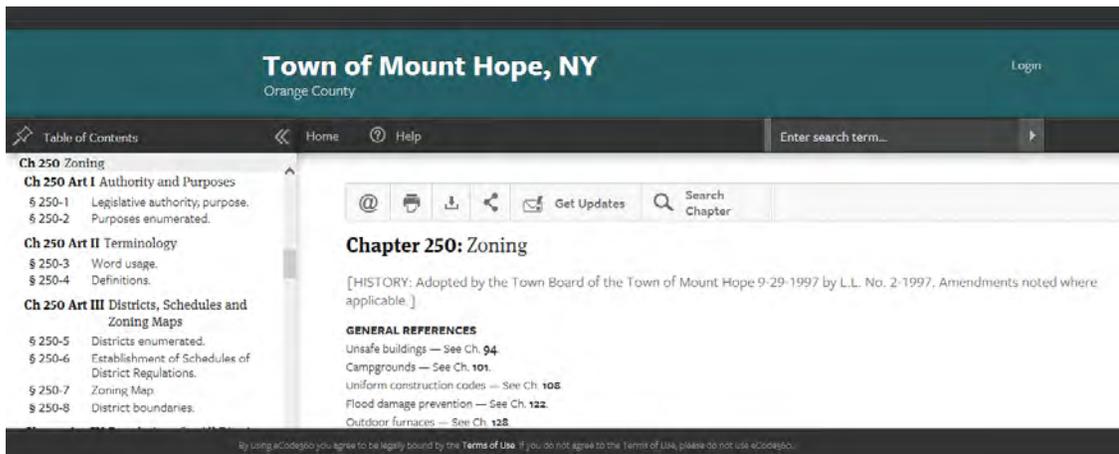
- Continue to cooperate with the Village of Otisville on issues of mutual concern. In many ways, the Village is the center of the community and its success is important for all town residents. Look for opportunities to share services when appropriate.



- Participate in regional planning initiatives and provide input on proposed development projects and major public investments that occur nearby and that could impact Town residents.



- Modernize development regulations to ensure that they are clear and effective. They should establish appropriate standards and guide development in a manner consistent with this plan.



- Enhance the quality of, and access to, the Town’s cultural, historic and recreational resources.



- Promote energy efficiency and conservation, and the use of renewable energy in the Town.



## Section 3: Plan Recommendations

### Update Land Use Regulations to Preserve Rural Character

The preservation of the Town of Mount Hope’s rural character is perhaps the most common overall goal expressed by residents when asked to describe their aspirations for the future. Though the phrase “rural character” does not have a universal definition, in Mount Hope it seems to be characterized by the gently rolling landscape and steep rise of the Shawangunk Ridge, undeveloped meadows and woodlots, working farms and agricultural land, and natural resources such as streams and wetlands. It also consists of the compact and historic Village of Otisville, a handful of smaller, crossroads hamlets, and the rural highways and local roads that connect these places. With just a few exceptions, residential development is spread out along these rural roads at low densities.

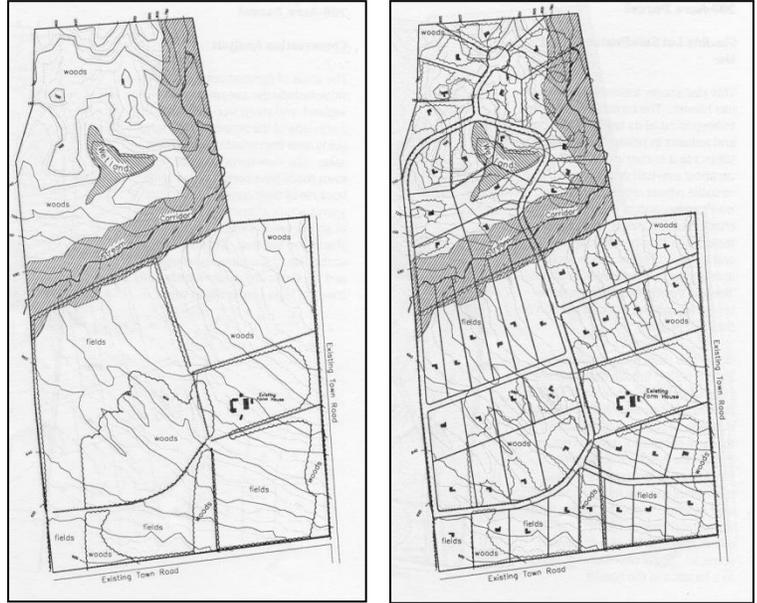
Maintaining these characteristics in the face of the incremental growth that is occurring in the region is a challenge. The Town welcomes appropriate development and respects the private property-rights of individual landowners; however it desires to manage change in ways that preserve the features of the community that residents value most. To do so, a number of considerations should be included when the Town reviews and updates its land use regulations:

- Review residential density – the Town currently manages residential density through a combination of a minimum lot size for each zoning district – 40,000 square feet (just shy of 1 acre) or two acres depending on the district – combined with a formula that looks at specific environmental conditions such as slopes, soil types, etc., on the site to be developed. This methodology tends to keep residential densities somewhat lower than what the minimum lot size would suggest. However, when the soils or other environmental conditions are appropriate, the minimum lot size of 40,000 sf applies to most of the Town (everywhere residential is allowed except the Resource Preservation Zones, RP-1 and RP-2, which cover the ridge and where the minimum lot size for residential is 2 acres). Development at this density, if it were to occur, would not be appropriate across the Town’s landscape. When reviewing the zoning, the Town should look at the range of actual lot sizes that the formula-based approach has produced and consider whether the minimum lot size of 40,000 sf is appropriate in the RA, SR-1, SR-2, and LB Districts. In particular, the RA (Residential Agricultural) District is the largest zoning district in the Town, and the notion of 40,000 sf residential lots throughout this area may be inconsistent with the Town’s desire to maintain its rural character.

Another consideration is whether the existing zoning’s formula-based approach for determining the actual minimum lot area at a given site is overly cumbersome to administer. The Town’s experience with this approach should be reviewed as it updates its zoning.

- Separate the concept of “density” (the number of homes that can be built per acre) from the concept of “lot size” - 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. In the Town's RA District, for example, if you own 100 acres of perfectly buildable land and you wish to maximize your development value of this land, you would therefore divide the entire 100 acres into 100, 1-acre building lots (note: this example is simplified for illustrative purposes). Without changing the number of homes that could be built, we could instead say that the permitted density cannot exceed 1 home per 1 acre, but the minimum lot size can be much smaller as conditions allow. Using the simplified example above, you could still create no more than 100 building lots on the 100 acres. However, the lots could vary in size as conditions and imagination allow. In the rare instance where sewer and water are present, housing lots could be quite small. By separating the issue of lot size from the issue of density, a developer must no longer divide the entire original parcel of land into residential housing lots in order to maximize development potential and profits. Instead, he/she could achieve the maximum allowed density while creating lots of various sizes and preserving exceptional features of the landscape through creative design.



Conventional “minimum-lot-size” based subdivision regulations require the developer to divide the entire original parcel (above left) into residential housing lots (above right) in order to achieve full development potential and profit.

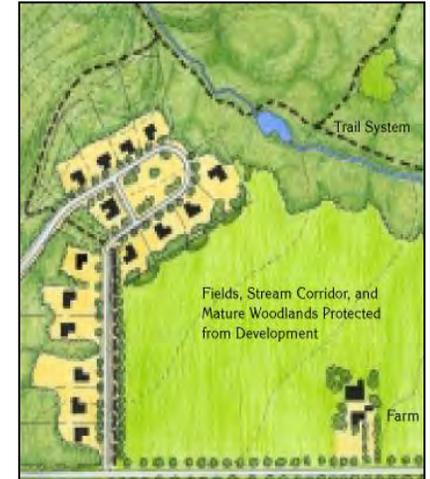
- Require the use of Conservation Subdivision Design for larger subdivisions - Although conservation subdivisions should be considered for all subdivisions, it is recommended that the Town require subdivisions consisting of five or more proposed lots to develop a conservation subdivision plan utilizing the methodology described below. The Town may want to distinguish between “major” and “minor” subdivisions in its Subdivision Regulations for this purpose.

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 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 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 the resource identification process; however, more detailed site specific information should be provided and confirmed through a site visit. 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 the remaining 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 comparison of a conventional subdivision (left) with a conservation subdivision (right). In both cases, a total of 16 residential lots were created. A conservation easement ensures that the open land preserved as part of the conservation subdivision (right) cannot be further subdivided or developed in the future.

#### **Conservation Subdivision Design** (term coined by Randall Arendt)

Uses open space resources present on a site to be developed as the starting point for design (In the same way that a golf-course community is designed).

The **four-step conservation subdivision design process** is quite simple:

1. Identify conservation areas – potential development areas follow once the conservation areas have been “greenlined”.
2. Locate house sites
3. Align streets and trails
4. Draw in the lot lines

**Conservation easement** – a legal tool that ensures that conservation lands set aside as a result of this process remain undeveloped.

**Ownership options for conservation lands** - an individual landowner or several landowners in the new conservation subdivision, a homeowner's association, the Town of Mount Hope, or a land conservancy such as the Orange County Land Trust.

See Randall Arendt's, *Rural By Design: Planning for Town and County, Second Edition* (2015) for more information about Conservation Subdivision Design.

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 should 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.

Cumulatively, open lands set aside as part of conservation subdivisions can create networks of open space or greenways through the community. These green networks provide valuable wildlife habitat and can become the basis for a network of pedestrian or recreational pathways (see discussion about the Otisville-Mount Hope Trail Network below).

- Discourage repeated frontage development – the easiest form of development for small, one or two lot subdivisions in rural areas is the creation of new lots along the frontage of existing rural roads and highways. Individually, these small subdivisions have little impact on the municipality and the character of the community. Cumulatively, however, this pattern of development repeated across the landscape can have significant effects on the character of the area and on the safety of rural roads. Consider the aerial image at right. There is a lot of undeveloped land in the image, but that would not be what someone would see if they traveled down this road. Instead, because all of the house lots were created along the frontage, the road has a more suburban



Frontage development along a rural road in Mount Hope (Google Earth)

feel. In addition to the impact on rural character, this form of development creates access management problems on rural highways because of the frequent driveways. Finally, this pattern also makes future development of interior lands increasingly difficult due to growing “not-in-my-backyard” (NIMBY) sentiment that typically develops among residents of the frontage homes.

When the Town’s zoning and subdivision regulations are amended to comply with this plan, the Town should consider creating mechanisms to minimize road frontage development. For example, a threshold could be established that limits the number of individual lot-splits (which are typically frontage lots) for which a landowner can obtain approval from the Planning Board before being required to prepare at least a conceptual subdivision plan for the entire original property. In establishing this threshold, the Town should balance its desire to reduce the incremental carving-up of road frontage through small subdivisions and individual lot splits with thoughtful consideration of the cost to the landowner of such requirements. As another example, the Town’s zoning and subdivision regulations should allow well-designed flag lots with shared driveways (and cross-easements), as an alternative to frontage lot development.

- Consider the use of Incentive Zoning as a mechanism to exchange modest density increases for specified public benefits – Incentive Zoning establishes a framework for negotiation between the Planning Board and the developer of a proposed project. Under Incentive Zoning, the Planning Board is authorized to grant a developer additional housing units above the base density in exchange for the developer’s agreement to provide specified public benefits. The Incentive Zoning provision must be carefully written to set clear parameters about the extent of the potential density bonus and to specify the public benefits that are required in order to receive the density bonus. The review process established under the incentive zoning provision would ensure that the benefits gained are worth the incentives provided.

Incentive Zoning can be a very useful tool for achieving community goals. For example, in Mount Hope it is recommended that Incentive Zoning be used in conjunction with conservation subdivisions (described above) to provide public access to protected open space for the development of a trail network. It is important to recognize that there is no automatic right for the public to have access to open lands created from conservation subdivisions. When the land remains in private ownership, even under a conservation easement, all of the rights of land ownership except the right to further develop the property remain. This includes the right to prevent trespassing. The Town cannot compel a private landowner to allow public access on their land. However, the Town can purchase the right for public access and/or offer incentives to the landowner for allowing public access through open lands. Incentives can be built into the revised land use regulations as an incentive zoning provision. In this case, the developer of a conservation subdivision would be offered some modest increase in the allowed density, perhaps up to 10% or 15% of the total number of permitted housing units, in return for permitting public access to the open lands. And although NYS General Obligations Law has become much more supportive in terms of limiting the liability of landowners who allow public access to their

lands for the purposes of enhancing recreational opportunity, the town could extend its own existing liability coverage to any trails created as part of this network. These types of incentives can be very powerful tools for establishing a community trail network.

Incentive Zoning could also be used to improve the availability of moderately priced housing in Mount Hope. In this case, a density increase would be permitted where the subdivision proposal provides housing opportunities for low- or moderate-income families. The amount of the density increase would be based on carefully written standards established when the incentive zoning provision is developed. For example, the provision might state that for each affordable housing unit provided, one additional building lot or dwelling unit may be permitted, up to a maximum 15 percent increase in dwelling units above the base density. Affordable housing would be defined as having a sale or rental price affordable to a household earning some percentage of area median income, adjusted for family size, as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

### **Promote Open Space and Farmland Conservation**

Modifications to the Town’s land use regulations, as described above, can do much to shape growth in ways that are more appropriate for preserving the community’s rural character. However, land development is not something that all landowners desire for their property. Farmers, for example, may wish to continue farming if the economics of agriculture remain favorable or have their land remain in agricultural production if there is a next generation of farmer willing to work the land when they are ready to retire. Issues such as farm business viability and intergenerational farm transfer are being addressed in the region by entities such as Orange County, the Orange County Land Trust, and others. In partnership with these entities and organizations, the Town of Mount Hope can play an active role in providing farmers and other large landowners with information about alternatives available for conserving their land. Some of the tools and techniques for doing so are further described below.

The most commonly used and effective tool for setting aside all or part of a property for conservation purposes is the conservation easement. A conservation easement allows a landowner to continue owning and using their property (for specified conservation purposes), while restricting the future development of the property. Such easements can be effective for a set period of time (a term easement) or, more commonly, are effective in perpetuity (permanent). The easement is

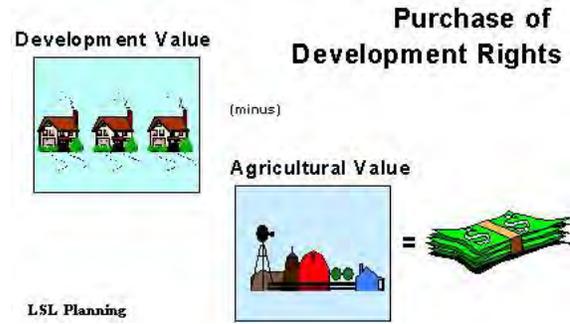
#### **Conservation Easement:**

A conservation easement, or grant of development rights, is a legal agreement on a parcel of land that governs what can occur on the land in the future. A conservation easement can be tailored to the specific needs of a parcel. Typically a conservation easement will protect working lands for agriculture and/or forestry, and can either prohibit or limit future development. It is granted by the landowner to the “holder” which is usually a land trust or public agency. The landowner retains ownership of the property and continues to use it and pay taxes, while the holder is responsible for ensuring that the terms of the conservation easement are followed by monitoring it on a regular basis.

prepared as a legal document (like a deed) and is filed at the County Clerk’s Office.

There are many reasons why a landowner might choose to place their land under a conservation easement. A simple desire to see the land remain undeveloped for

future generations is one; but there are often financial considerations that contribute to the decision. For property tax purposes, land under easement could be assessed at its conservation value because it has no development potential. If the landowner donates the easement to a land trust – such as the Orange County Land Trust, the value of this donation could be deducted as a charitable contribution for income tax purposes. In some cases, there may be money available from an organization or government agency to pay the landowner for all or part of the value of the conservation easement. In such cases, the purchase of the conservation easement is known as a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR).



When a landowner sells development rights as part of a PDR program, they are paid a negotiated price for the development value of the land. All other rights remain with the landowner, including the right to prevent others from trespassing on the land. The value of the development rights is the portion of the total land value attributed to its development potential. An appraisal is required to determine and apportion the value of development and other rights (e.g. recreation, timber, agriculture, etc). Each easement is unique and terms are negotiated. In general, development rights

are sold by the landowner who remains the fee owner of the land. Conservation easements tend to be attractive options for landowners because they continue to own the land and the right to enjoy it for its open space uses such as recreation, wildlife management, agriculture, forestry and related economic activities.

Whatever their reasons, it is important to recognize that conservation easements are voluntary and must come from willing landowners. The Town of Mount Hope can play a valuable role in making information about conservation easements available to landowners and to encourage and facilitate the process of executing them when there is landowner interest.

Announcement by the Orange County Land Trust of the award of state funds for the protection of almost 200 acres of farmland in the Town of Mount Hope by PDR (October 2016).



We have been awarded a New York State Farmland Protection Implementation Grant to conserve 197 acres of farmland in the Town of Mount Hope. Conserving this farmland will enable Otisville-based Farmer's Daughter to affordably purchase the property, ensuring that the land remains in agricultural use.

We applaud Governor Cuomo, Department of Agriculture & Markets Commissioner Richard Ball, and the State Legislature for their commitment to farmland preservation. We would also like to thank Scenic Hudson, Orange County Government, the County's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, and the Town of Mount Hope for their support.

Click [here](#) for the Governor's press release on the farmland protection program grants.

The Town could also consider taking a more direct role in conserving farmland and open space. Now, or at some point in the future, Mount Hope could explore opportunities for developing a local program to acquire special parcels of open space land from willing sellers. More information would be needed before the Town would be 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, could be considered. One option, authorized as the Hudson Valley Community Preservation Act by the State Legislature only for communities in Westchester and Putnam Counties about ten years ago, would be the establishment of a Community Preservation Fund. A Community Preservation Fund 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. Absent a blanket authorization such as the Hudson Valley Community Preservation Act, Towns in New York State must obtain individual authorization from the State Legislature to implement this type of program. Communities such as Warwick, right here in Orange County, have done so and have been able to generate significant funding for their open space and farmland conservation efforts through this mechanism. Other funding sources for the Town to consider - separate from or in conjunction with a real estate transfer tax authorized as part of a Community Preservation Fund - would be to set aside budgetary funds on an annual basis or to develop a revenue bond to extend costs over a period of years.

### **Develop a vision for an interconnected network of Open Space and Recreational Resources**

To complement the Town of Mount Hope's "High & Healthful" slogan, the Town could develop a plan for a network of interconnected Open Space and Recreational Resources. The plan could build from the inventory work conducted as part of this comprehensive plan effort and result in a parcel specific inventory of farmland, open space, recreational resources. This map would identify critical natural and recreational resources, and the remaining open lands that would benefit from 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.

Such a plan 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 above. 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 discussed above).



An example of a community-wide open space vision from the City of Saratoga Springs, NY

Another important function of this vision would be to further define two important trail networks that have been identified as opportunities for the community through this process. The first is the **Otisville-Mount Hope Trail Network**. This proposed local linkage, first identified in the *Otisville Veteran’s Park & Town of Mount Hope Park Master Plan Document (Fall 2010)* commissioned by the Otisville Grange, illustrates a possible connection between two important recreational facilities in the community. Taking this concept a step further, it would be possible to work with landowners to further define the route of this connection; and perhaps to show how appropriate residential development south of the Village of Otisville, utilizing conservation subdivision design, could be organized as a network of well-connected residential neighborhoods that are tied to the Village and to the two parks by a highly-desirable bike and pedestrian trail system. The Old School Community Center (OSCC) site is also located almost immediately south of the Otisville Veteran’s Park, and could be incorporated as a destination along the Otisville-Mount Hope Trail Network.

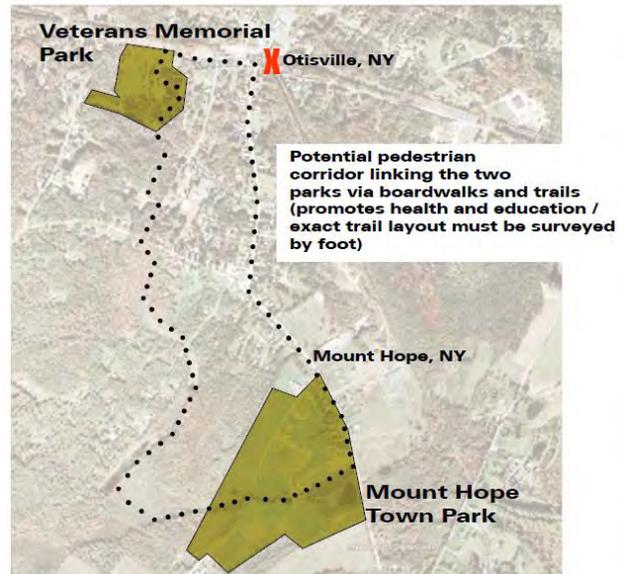
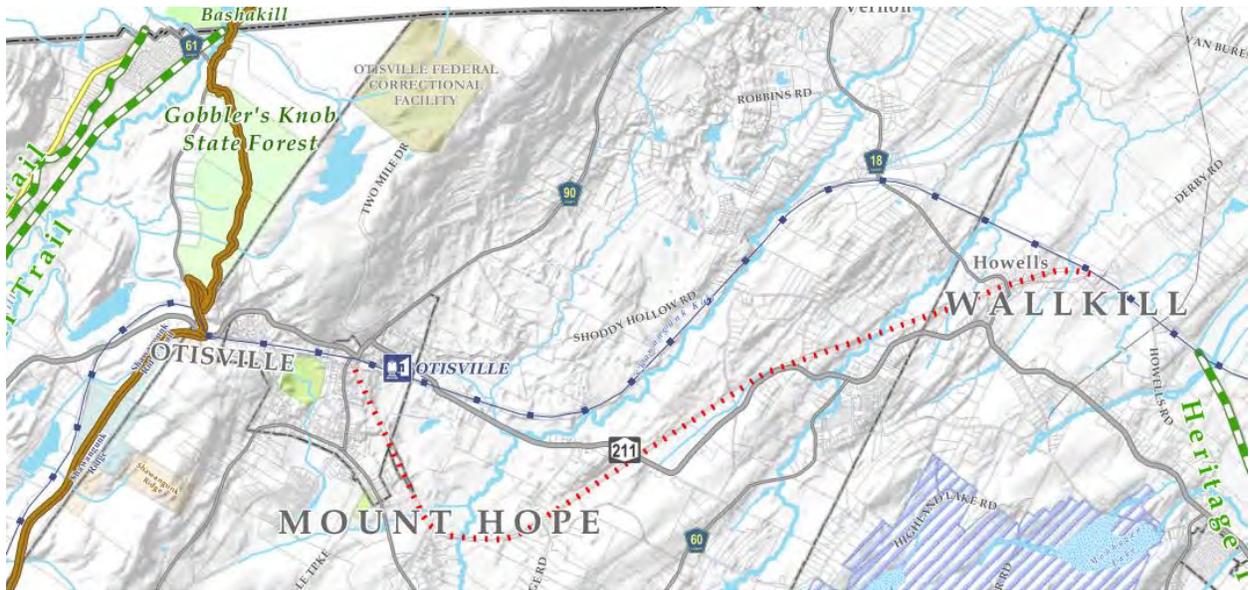


Illustration from the *Otisville Veteran’s Park & Town of Mount Hope Park Master Plan Document (Fall 2010)* by UrbiNova Design

The second trail connection opportunity that could be further defined through this process would be the next extension of the **Orange County Heritage Trail**. The county trail will be extended through the City of Middletown to Howells in the coming year. The Town of Mount Hope would like to see this trail continued in the future to the Village of Otisville. This approximately seven mile extension was identified in the *Orange County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* (1998) but was not a high priority project for funding at that time. With the upcoming construction of the trail to Howells, now would be the right time to begin advocating for the planning and design of the future extension to Otisville. As part of a regional network of trails, the Orange County Heritage Trail could boost Mount Hope's eco-tourism / agri-tourism efforts.



The proposed Orange County Heritage Trail Extension, shown in red, follows the abandoned railbed from Howells to Otisville – from a map entitled *Orange County Trails and Protected Open Space* (March 2015)

The former rail right-of-way is no longer under single ownership, but it still exists as a series of linear parcels. There are 14 parcels owned by 12 different persons/entities that comprise the corridor in the Town of Mount Hope (18 parcels with 15 owners total if including the properties in the Town of Wallkill). The trail would require 7 road crossings in the Town of Mount Hope (8 in total to Howells), though only one crossing of NYS Route 211 (the main rural highway in this part of Town). The ownership condition complicates the project but it is still feasible. The Town of Mount Hope should begin working with the property owners and the County to advance this effort recognizing that it may take several years to accomplish.

### Protect Environmental Resources

- Environmental Resource Protection Overlay Zoning – When updating the Town's land use regulations, consider establishing an environmental resource protection overlay zone to better identify and protect sensitive environmental resources in the Town. Building from the existing Floodplain Overlay Zone (§250-16) the new overlay zoning district could encompass additional categories of environmental resources such as: state regulated wetlands, NWI wetlands, steep

slopes, and perhaps buffers around streams. These would be mapped and included as an overlay on the Town’s existing districts on the zoning map. Appropriate considerations for protecting each type of resource could be included in the text for this district. For example, the text could reference existing state and federal regulations regarding wetlands, maintaining vegetated buffers of a specified width could be required for stream corridors, or limitations on development in areas of steep slope could be incorporated into the overlay regulations.

- Stormwater / Green Infrastructure – Article X of the Town’s zoning law deals with Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control. This section of the zoning law is relatively new and appears to cover current best management practices with regard to these issues. When updating the Town’s land use regulations following completion of this plan, the Town could consider adding additional incentives or requirements for the incorporation of green infrastructure practices in development proposals.



Example of parking area bioswale from the Stormwater Coalition of Tompkins County

Green infrastructure (GI) is an approach to design that uses natural processes such as soils and vegetation to manage stormwater and create healthier environments. Green infrastructure is an environmentally friendly alternative for treatment of water quality and quantity. Examples of green infrastructure practices that can easily be incorporated into development proposals include porous pavers / pavement, raingardens, bioswales, and green roofs.

- Ridgeline Protection – The view to and from the Shawangunk Ridge is one of the defining features of Mount Hope’s landscape. Under the Town’s existing regulations for the RP (Resource Preservation) Districts, development density along the Shawangunk Ridge is controlled through a formula that takes into account average elevation, slope, exterior building design and coloration, and tree clearance. The effectiveness and efficiency of this

Buildings should be setback from a ridgetop at a distance that allows the natural topography and vegetation to screen the structures. Structures should be placed in small hollows or otherwise protected areas to reduce visual impacts. In addition, development should not occur on exposed ridges or rock outcroppings. The following illustration shows that building placement on top of a ridge is visually undesirable. In placing the building below the ridgetop, the homeowner will continue to have scenic views through selective pruning of trees.

vistas and screen new development on hillsides. Native shrubs and trees should be retained on hillside terrain to help maintain natural drainage swales, reduce erosion, and preserve the character of the hillside. Existing vegetation and trees should be protected from damage during construction and clear cutting should be kept to a minimum whenever possible. Minimizing the disturbance of existing vegetation would serve to screen the new development during construction. The use of vegetation to reduce visual impacts is illustrated on the following page.

**This...**

When trees are added to a site, native species should be used and arranged in natural appearing clusters. This would serve to screen new development in such a way as to preserve existing views from neighboring residences. Selective pruning of vegetation is one technique to preserve views both from the structure and from neighboring residences.

**Not This...**

**Utilities**  
All utilities should be located underground whenever possible. In addition, utility housings should be safely screened by native plant species and located so as to minimize their visual impact. For areas with rocky terrain or for cost prohibitive reasons, placing of utilities near the road edge and offsetting the alignment can assist to screen a cleared utility corridor.

**Landscaping**  
Vegetation should be considered an important element used to preserve existing

**Architectural Design**  
The design of a structure can also have a significant visual impact. The following guidelines suggest ways in which to blend into the existing natural environment

Town of Canandaigua 2

An example of Ridgeline Development Guidelines from the Town of Canandaigua, NY

approach should be considered by the Town as it updates its land use regulations.

As a supplement to these regulations, the Town could create design guidelines or “best development practices” for hillside development that demonstrate techniques for minimizing the visual impact of development on the ridge.

- Groundwater Protection – Households in the Town of Mount Hope rely primarily on individual wells for the provision of drinking water; therefore, it is important that the Town understand the condition of its groundwater resources. Ensuring that the quantity and quality of its groundwater resources are not compromised by development or pollution is critical.

The Town is currently concerned about a proposal by the City of Middletown and Orange County to develop a well-system on the county-owned “Indigot Lands” in the southeastern corner of Mount Hope. These lands were identified for public water supply many years ago and were originally planned to part of a county reservoir system. The Town of Mount Hope is supportive of regional initiatives to promote economic development and the provision of adequate infrastructure to support such development recognizing that quality jobs are important to the Town’s residents. However, the Town also wishes to ensure that homeowners in Mount Hope are not adversely affected by this project and that groundwater quantity and quality remains sufficient. Therefore, the Town is considering whether to commission an aquifer study to obtain an independent analysis of this potential issue.

### **Promote Rural Business Development**

- Commercial and Hamlet Zoning - The Main Street area of the Village of Otisville is the primary commercial district in the Town of Mount Hope. However, outside of Otisville the Town has Local Business (LB) Zoning Districts along Route 211 immediately east of Village, along Mount Hope Road immediately northwest of Grange Road, around the intersection of Mount Hope Road and Guymard Turnpike, and along New Vernon Road from its intersection with Ledge Road to its intersection with Spruce Road. The latter two LB Districts roughly coincide with the historic hamlets of Mount Hope and New Vernon.

The LB District allows a fairly wide range of commercial uses, and with only rudimentary area and bulk regulations, many different types of commercial activities could be located in these areas. The list of uses, associated definitions, and the area and bulk regulations should be reviewed and updated as necessary when the zoning is amended. For example, it may be useful to have different use and area and bulk standards in portions of the current LB District that coincide with the historic hamlets of Mount Hope and New Vernon compared to those areas of the current LB District that are zoned commercial simply because they are located along a state highway. This could be accomplished a number of ways including establishing a separate zoning district (LB-2 or H) for the “hamlet” areas. The more compact and mixed-use nature of these areas could then be recognized through the use and area and bulk regulations.

The LB District regulations do require that all proposed uses undergo site plan review. This gives the Planning Board the ability to consider the design/layout of a proposed project. However, absent some direction about design in the Town’s zoning, the Planning Board and the applicant do not have any guidance about the desired look and feel of new commercial buildings. To ensure that new businesses that locate in the LB District contribute positively to the community’s rural character as well as its economy, the Town should consider developing design guidelines and standards for development in the LB District. In addition to aesthetic considerations, design guidelines and standards could address issues such as access management, stormwater management and the incorporation of green infrastructure practices, bicycle/pedestrian accommodations, and buffers or transitions between commercial development and adjoining non-commercial development.

The design guidelines and standards could be prepared in conjunction with the zoning amendments that will likely follow the completion of this comprehensive plan or they could be added later. In either case, care should be taken to ensure that references to the design guidelines and standards are incorporated at appropriate locations in the zoning text so that it is clear that they must be considered as part of the review of future development proposals. The design guidelines and standards should also be richly illustrated with photos and sketches to make them easily understood by applicants, members of the Town’s review boards, and the public at large. Orange County’s Design Manual (2011) provides many suggestions and would serve as a good starting point for the preparation of commercial development design guidelines and standards for Mount Hope.

**Crossroads**  
Crossroads are places that already have some of the ingredients of a new center but at lower densities: perhaps there are some auto-oriented commercial uses; often there may be a fire station, town hall or other civic use; it is surrounded by developable lands that are suitable for future walkable neighborhoods. This area is already a destination for the local community. New development at the crossroads has the potential to complete the mix of land uses to create a new compact, mixed-use place with a distinct identity for the community.

**Crossroads Diagnostic:**

- It is the intersection of two important roads.
- It is a local destination for convenience shopping.
- It is not intensively developed—buildings are not close enough to each other to make a compact walkable place and existing buildings are surrounded primarily by undeveloped land.
- The overall land use pattern is unclear—the uses are primarily auto-oriented commercial uses, but there may be some residential uses or some civic uses such as a post office or fire station.
- Infrastructure can support intensification of the Crossroads intersection and can also support compact neighborhoods around the new center.

**PLACES**

**PLACES**

**Details**

**New Rural Commercial District**

A new rural commercial center is a looser aggregation of small and medium-sized buildings than the small “downtown” where zero lot line buildings line “main streets.” It is still organized according to the same principle of connectivity, green infrastructure and mixed use and many of the same design principles apply.

- Parking is organized into smaller interconnected lots behind retail and mixed use buildings.
- In some areas on-street parking may be appropriate.
- Pedestrian connections may be a combination of sidewalks and winding paths which create a comprehensive pedestrian experience.
- Intersections are traffic-calmed and make pedestrian-friendly.
- The open spaces between the buildings are well landscaped in a cohesive and coordinated way and link to the surrounding green network.
- Buildings are sited in different ways and there are no midlines or back lots, but all buildings have a positive relationship to the street with entrances clearly facing the street.
- Design guidelines disallow highway-type signage in favor of neighborhood-scale signage.

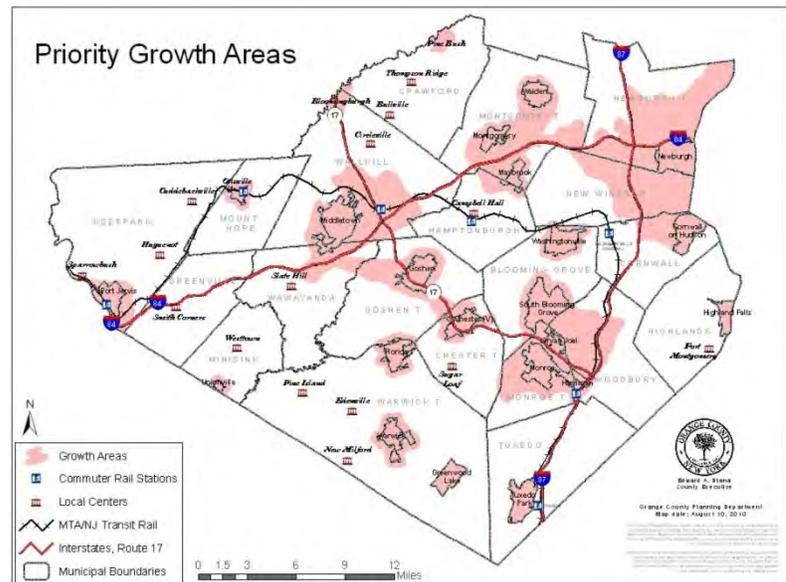
The Orange County Design Manual (May 2011) provides guidance regarding the design of rural commercial districts such as those in Mount Hope.

- Right to Farm – Agriculture remains a very important economic activity in the Town of Mount Hope. The Orange County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2015) is a guide for communities such as Mount Hope and it provides a great deal of information about agricultural resources, programs and policies, and tools and techniques available to support the continued viability of farming in Mount Hope and elsewhere in the County.

Sometimes, in places where new residents move to rural parts of the County such as Mount Hope, conflicts can arise between farmers and new, non-farm neighbors who are unfamiliar with agricultural practices and the noises and smells that can accompany them. Much of this can be resolved through education and communication. However, it has been noted that the Town of Mount Hope does not have an official policy indicating its support for agriculture. Adopting a “Right-to-Farm” Law would be a simple way for the Town to make its position clear. Model “Right-to-Farm” Law language is included as an appendix to the County’s Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. Communities that have such a policy often celebrate that fact by noting it on signage at key entranceways to the community.

- Agricultural-related businesses and craft industries – A sometimes overlooked aspect of traditional rural life is that work and home activities are often intertwined. Unlike the suburbs, where commercial and residential uses tend to be strictly separated from one another, rural areas have always been places where agricultural related business activities and craft industries have existed to provide a means for residents to earn a living. To the degree that such operations remain small, or at least low-impact, they should not be limited or unreasonably restricted by local land use regulations. The Orange County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2015) contains some model regulatory language, including definitions and suggestions for zoning changes, that are intended to accommodate a wider range of rural, agricultural-related activities. These suggestions and others should be considered for the Residential Agriculture (RA) District in Mount Hope as part of the zoning amendments that follow this plan.
- Eco-tourism / Agri-tourism – Tourism is an increasingly important component of the economy in Orange County and the Hudson Valley. Proximity to the New York Metropolitan Region means that millions of the region’s residents and visitors could potentially be drawn to the abundant attractions that exist in this area. The Montreign Resort Casino, opening later this year in neighboring Sullivan County, is just the latest addition to the Hudson Valley’s offerings. The Town of Mount Hope, with its beautiful rural landscape and connections by car and rail to the larger region, could take advantage of this macro-trend by encouraging opportunities for eco-tourism / agri-tourism in the Town. Allowing for a wide-range of agricultural related business activities and craft industries as described above, or permitting inns and bed-and-breakfasts in appropriate locations, would support these efforts. The Old School Community Center (OSCC), a cultural, artistic, education and recreation center under development by the not-for-profit Friends of the Otisville School, could also become an attraction. Some of the other suggestions in this plan, such as the proposed extension of the Orange County Heritage Trail to Otisville and the proposed Otisville-Mount Hope Trail Network, are also consistent with this approach.

- Review the Office, Research, Industrial Park (ORIP) Zoning District – The ORIP Zoning District is located in two areas of the Town. The first is an area behind Town Hall, immediately east of the Otisville Train Station along the north side of the train tracks. Presumably this area was designated ORIP due to its location along the railroad tracks. However, with limited freight rail activity in this corridor, poor road access, and a lack of infrastructure, these parcels remain undeveloped. A second area of ORIP zoning exists to the north, straddling Old Mountain Road and Bull Road. This area includes Wessels’ Farms and the abandoned laboratory facility just north of the Historical Society’s Eleazer Harding House property. The appropriateness of the ORIP District designation in either of these locations should be reviewed.
- Expansion of Village-style development – The Orange County Comprehensive Plan (2010) identifies Otisville and areas immediately around the Village as the “Priority Growth Area” in the Town of Mount Hope. This is generally consistent with the Town’s vision. In particular, the Town envisions the potential for some expansion of Village-scaled development to the south and east of the Village.



Priority Growth Areas from the Orange County Comprehensive Plan (2010)

To the south, the vision includes the concept of using conservation subdivision design to create neighborhoods that are well-connected to one another and to the Village by the Otisville-Mount Hope Trail Network (described above).

To the east, the Otisville Metro-North Station is located just  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from Main Street. With some vacant land in this area, a long-term opportunity for village-scaled, transit-oriented development (TOD) could be



The view looking west down Kelly Hill Road from the Otisville Train Station - Main Street in the Village of Otisville is just  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile away.

created. However, this type of development would require careful planning by the Town and would likely be dependent on infrastructure investments and transit improvements that are not currently anticipated.

### Additional Townwide Recommendations

- **Affordable Housing** – Affordable housing is a significant issue throughout the Hudson Valley Region. This year’s edition of Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress’ Annual Housing Report shows the continued extent of this problem for both renters and owners in Orange County and the other eight counties covered in the report. According to HUD, an affordable home is typically based upon a housing payment of no more than 30% of the monthly household income. When a household pays more than 30% it is considered to be unaffordable and at more than 50% it is Severely Cost Burdened.

In Orange County, almost 50% of low income renters (those with income at or below 80% of the household area median income) are Severely Cost Burdened. Similarly, 46% of low income homeowners are Severely Cost Burdened. The National Low Income Housing Coalition’s (NLIHC) annual Out of Reach report shows that the monthly gap for 2017 between Fair Market Rent and Affordable Rent at the Mean Renter’s Wage Rate is \$767 in Orange County.

The Town of Mount Hope recognizes the importance of this issue and seeks to provide for its fair share of affordable housing. There are, however, few locations in the Town that are suitable for even moderate density development. Aside from the Village of Otisville and areas of the Town immediately adjacent to it, the Town is primarily rural. Even in the Village, lack of adequate infrastructure limits the ability to develop in a denser pattern than currently exists. Furthermore, the existing character of the Village and the rural character of the Town are important to the community.

Given these considerations, one solution for increasing the potential number of affordable housing units in the context of a rural community such as Mount Hope would be to allow for the provision of accessory rental units by the owners of single family homes in the Town. Accessory rental units can be accomplished in a number of different ways – above detached garages, attached directly to a home, etc. Carefully regulated by the building department, these can be served by onsite water and septic systems that are prevalent on properties throughout the Town. In addition to the potential expansion of rental



Example of an accessory rental unit above a detached garage in a rural part of the Hudson Valley

housing supply that such units could create, homeowners would stand to benefit by offsetting their housing costs with rental income.

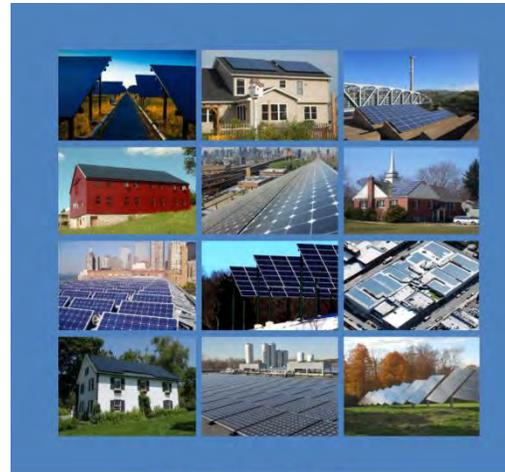
Combined with an allowance for some duplex units and an incentive zoning provision for affordability discussed in relation to conservations subdivisions above, creating a process for permitting accessory rental units as part of the zoning amendments that follow the completion of this plan should address the Town's need for affordable housing in a manner consistent with the Town's overall goal of preserving its rural character.

- **Renewable Energy** – The Town of Mount Hope recognizes that the provision of energy for homes and businesses is in a dynamic process of change across New York State. With the Governor's announcement in 2016 of an ambitious Clean Energy Standard, 50 percent of New York's electricity must come from renewable energy sources like wind and solar by 2030. State programs and incentives to increase the use of wind and solar are already shaping the marketplace and creating more demand for such facilities.

The Town has witnessed an increase in the number of homes and businesses seeking permits to install rooftop solar panels. More recently, commercial scale solar systems have been proposed in parts of the Town. These Large-Scale Solar Systems are ground mounted and produce energy primarily for offsite sale or consumption. By virtue of their size, they have the potential to impact the character of areas where they are located.

Recognizing that the Town's existing zoning regulations were not well prepared to address this relatively new technology, the Town Board passed a temporary moratorium on these large scale systems in the spring of 2016. The Town is in the process of updating its regulations in order to create a clear review process for these proposals that includes appropriate standards and provisions for allowing these systems while protecting the Town's character and quality of life.

- **Rural Road Standard** - Review the Town's Street and Road Specifications as they pertain to minor subdivision / rural development roads. Narrow rural streets help maintain rural character, reduce development and maintenance costs, and reduce speeding in residential neighborhoods. The Town may wish to consider reducing the pavement width for these rural roads. Road widths of between 18 and 20 feet are generally adequate for most low volume subdivision streets. In addition to street width, the Town should review its standards for right-of-way clearance on low



### New York State Model Solar Energy Law

May 2016

The New York State Model Solar Energy Law ( May 2016) was prepared by Sustainable CUNY of the City University of New York (CUNY) with support by Pace Law School's Land Use Law Center and the NYSolar Smart Planning and Zoning Working Group.

volume local roads. In order to preserve rural character in conservation subdivisions, cleared width standards for the right-of-way should not exceed about 6 to 8 feet on either side of the roadway.

**GREENWAY GUIDE A5 Protecting the Countryside**

**RURAL ROADS**  
For low-volume rural roads, retain the narrow widths, natural edges, and scenic winding character of the traditional roads, rather than imposing wider, suburban-scale standards into the countryside.

Older roads in rural areas are often 16 to 18 feet wide. However, modern road standards routinely require wider specifications in response to increased speeds and liability concerns. Local roads are straightened and widened, clearing away all vegetation, destroying stone walls and other historic features, and making unnecessary rock cuts and uniform slopes. Even off of narrow, naturally graded roads, new driveways are often required to be much wider than the main road, with curbing and storm drains that are out-of-place in rural areas.

The results of wider roads in rural areas tend to be faster vehicle speeds, more serious crashes, and higher construction and long-term maintenance costs. Excessive speeds help make the death rate per vehicle mile for rural areas much higher than the rate for urban areas. Rural roads should be context sensitive, designed to reflect the character of the surrounding countryside, and compatible with slower farm equipment, nearby vegetation, and crossing wildlife.



**Rural Road Guidelines**  
(especially where traffic is under 400 vehicles per day<sup>1</sup>)

- Adopt road standards that are consistent with local rural conditions, not imported from suburban areas;
- Maintain natural and cultural roadside features, such as rock outcroppings, stone walls, and rows of trees;
- Limit grading and clearing to the minimum necessary, based on traffic volumes and visibility at curves;
- Only use curbing when natural drainage is not feasible;
- Minimize road width, except for roads with significant truck use;
- Reduce access points by promoting shared driveways;
- Use wooden or box beam guide rails, where appropriate, rather than standard galvanized models;
- Consider alternatives to standard asphalt, such as porous paving, chip seal, or gravel;
- Designate local scenic roads and establish standards for long-term protection and maintenance.

*Unique roadside features, such as stone walls and farm fences, add to the scenic qualities of rural roads and entice drivers to slow down and enjoy the views.*

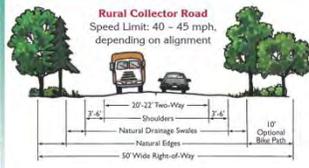
*Wide vegetation clear zones are unnecessary on low-volume rural roads - 10 feet is desirable for all-purpose rural roads or at curves, and 2 to 5 feet for low-volume access roads under 40 mph<sup>2</sup>.*

*This guide is intended for local roads, not higher volume state or county thoroughfares.*

**Rural Road Guidelines**  
(especially where traffic is under 400 vehicles per day<sup>1</sup>)



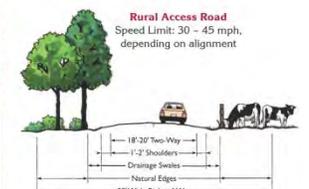
**Rural Collector Road**  
Speed Limit: 40 - 45 mph, depending on alignment



*Rural Collector Road, 22 feet wide plus shoulders*



**Rural Access Road**  
Speed Limit: 30 - 45 mph, depending on alignment



*Rural Access Road, 16 feet wide*



**Private Road**  
Speed Limit: 25 - 35 mph



*Private Road with pull-outs, 13 feet wide*

*\*For guidelines on a wider range of road types, including roads with separated walking or bike paths, see Design Guide for Rural Roads.\**

Sources:  
<sup>1</sup>Cornell Local Roads Program, Highway Standards for Low-Volume Roads in New York State, 2008  
<sup>2</sup>Dutchess Land Conservancy, Design Guide for Rural Roads, 1998

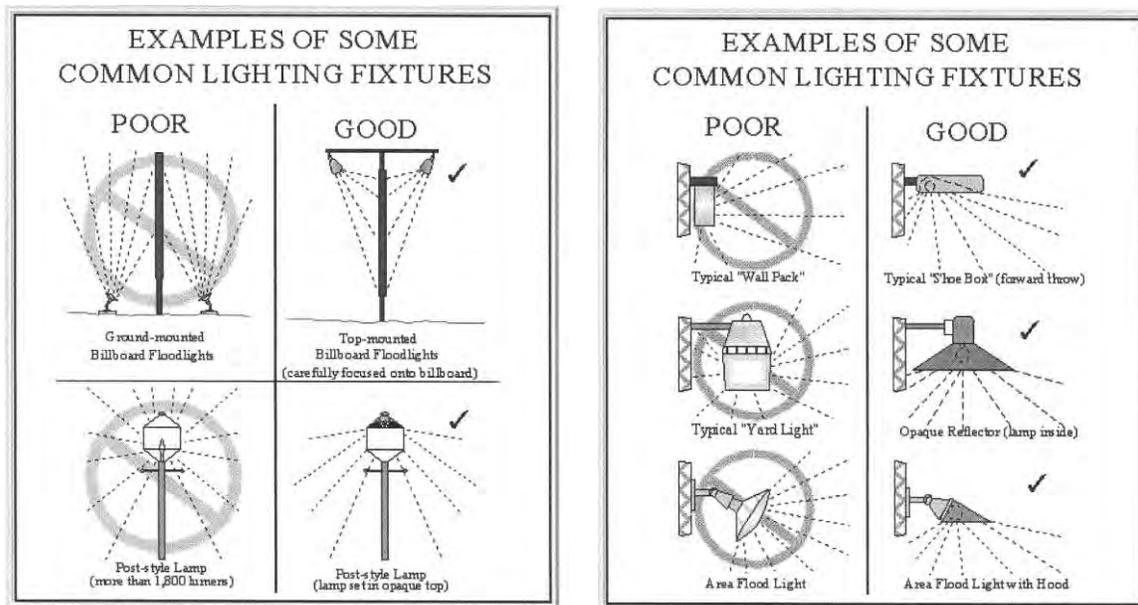
2013 Dutchess County Planning & Development Poughkeepsie, NY www.dutchessny.gov

Rural Road Guidelines prepared by the Dutchess County Department of Planning & Development (2013)

- Promote Good Lighting - When reviewing its land use regulations, the Town should ensure that the zoning code includes provisions that 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.

Promoting these “good lighting” characteristics throughout the Town of Mount Hope would minimize the adverse visual impact of current and future development. Sensitive areas such as the Shawangunk Ridge, and less sensitive areas that nonetheless help define the character of the community (such as the hamlet commercial areas), would benefit from attention to lighting issues. This can be accomplished through the provision of information to property owners, and through the Site Plan Review process for new development.



## Section 4: Implementation

To implement the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Mount Hope should undertake several follow-up actions once the plan is adopted by the Town Board. Recognizing that it is not possible to complete everything at once, it is helpful to prioritize among the various possible activities so that the most important and most attainable are addressed first. To that end, a handful of short-term priority projects are listed below. These projects should be initiated immediately or soon after adoption of the plan. Each priority project is described in some detail, with responsible entities and, where appropriate, potential sources of funding identified. An additional set of medium-term projects are also listed that are intended to be undertaken as the short-term priority projects are completed and as time and resources allow.

To monitor progress on implementation, it is recommended that the Town Board convene a meeting once a year with representatives of the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and town staff that are involved in land use and development issues. This annual meeting would provide an opportunity to review progress and to adjust accordingly to ensure that important recommendations in the plan are moving forward. It would also allow for new development-related issues or concerns that may arise from time to time to be identified and responded to as appropriate.

### Short-term Priority Projects

These projects should be initiated immediately or soon after the Town Board adopts the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Update Land Use Regulations** – perhaps the most important tool that the Town has for ensuring that the vision and goals of the comprehensive plan are implemented over time is to update the Town’s zoning and subdivision regulations. This is critical because most change that occurs in the Town is driven by individual landowners, business owners, and occasionally developers who are interested in making some type of investment in their property. The land use regulations provide the framework that guides what can and cannot be done. Therefore, it is critically important that these regulations are updated to reflect the plan. Ideally, the regulations should be clear about what is desired and should establish a process that allows development that is consistent with the comprehensive plan to occur with an appropriate review and limited delay. On the other hand, development that is inconsistent with the plan and the regulations should not be permitted.

The Town’s zoning and subdivision regulations have not been comprehensively reviewed in many years. As a consequence, some of the work that will be required now will simply focus on updating and modernizing language that is outdated or unclear. For example, zoning definitions are in need of refinement. However, other changes to the zoning are necessitated by

recommendations in the comprehensive plan. For example, adding provisions for conservation subdivision design and allowing accessory rental units in conjunction with single family homes are regulatory changes that are specifically called for in the comprehensive plan.

Some of the main revisions to the Town’s land use regulations that are contemplated include:

- New sections should be added to the zoning for conservation subdivisions, to address frontage development, and to provide for incentive zoning
  - Definitions section (§ 250-4) will need to be updated
  - The basic district structure will probably remain unchanged, but the size of the ORIP (Office Research Industrial Park) District will likely be reduced. The Local Business (LB) District should also be examined to determine whether separate “hamlet business” standards should be applied to those portions of the LB District that coincide with the historic hamlets of Mount Hope and New Vernon.
  - Tables of Use and Bulk Requirements for each zoning district should be updated – consider separating out use table from area and bulk table
  - § 250-15 Off-street parking and loading facilities should be updated to ensure that excessive parking is not required and to allow for and encourage the use of green infrastructure techniques
  - Floodplain Overlay Zone (§ 250-16) should be expanded in scope to an Environmental Resource Protection Overlay Zone and the overlay district should appear on the zoning map.
  - § 250-22 Accessory uses in residential districts should be amended to allow for well-regulated accessory apartments
  - Article IX related to the Planning Board should be updated emphasize the importance of sketch/concept plan review, to expand the section on plan requirements to ensure that the Planning Board gets the information it needs from applicants, to expand the section on design considerations especially related to commercial uses, and to review and possibly expand the section on special requirements for conditional uses
  - Chapter 210, Subdivision of Land, may also need to be updated
  - Chapter 193, Solar Energy should be updated to better address current concerns related to the proliferation of commercial solar
- **Aquifer Study** – the Town Board has already initiated a study of the Town’s groundwater resources. This study is timely because the Town wishes to ensure that groundwater quality and quantity are not negatively impacted by the City of Middletown and Orange County’s proposal to develop a well-system on the county-owned “Indigot Lands”.
  - **Open Space Conservation and Recreation Plan** – Based on community input throughout this process, there appears to be interest in furthering the Town’s efforts to identify important farmland and open space resources in the community and to work with farmers and other landowners to provide more information about conservation options. Additionally, two specific

trail concepts – the Otisville-Mount Hope Trail Network and the possible extension of the Orange County Heritage Trail to Otisville – were identified through this comprehensive plan update process. Both of these trail concepts will require additional pre-planning and engagement with property owners and other stakeholders or potential partners. Under the rubric of an Open Space Conservation and Recreation Plan, the Town of Mount Hope could advance these initiatives as a priority project. To organize the effort, a volunteer committee (perhaps a reconstituted version of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee) could be established by the Town Board for this purpose. The “Open Space Conservation and Recreation Committee” could begin by reaching out to Orange County Planning and/or the Orange County Land Trust to find out more about programs that are already available to the community and to landowners. The Town could also set aside some funding for the services of a planning consultant to assist the committee in the development of the Open Space Conservation and Recreation Plan. Town funding might be used to leverage additional grant funds for this effort from Orange County and/or from state sources such as the Hudson River Valley Greenway, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s Hudson River Estuary Program, or the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets.

- **Adopt a Right-to-Farm Law** – model “right-to-farm” law language is included as an appendix to the Orange County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. Adopting such a policy would be a simple way for the Town to express its continued support of agriculture.

### Medium-term Projects

As the short-term priority projects are completed and as time and resources allow, the Town Board may wish to undertake additional initiatives that are indicated in the Comprehensive Plan Update. Examples of such projects might include:

- Preparation of design guidelines or “best development practices” for ridgeline and hillside development – this would be an illustrated guide to minimizing the visual impact of development on the Shawangunk Ridge that would be an educational supplement to existing regulations.
- Hamlet Master Plans and customized zoning and design guidelines for the historic hamlets of Mount Hope and New Vernon – these two traditional settlements have unique characteristics that could be enhanced through more site specific planning involving the residents and property owners in these hamlets.
- Examine opportunities for village-scaled, transit-oriented development between Main Street in the Village and the Otisville Metro-North Station located ½ mile to the east – this would likely be a joint effort with the Village of Otisville and with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). Aside from the Village itself, this is the one area of the Town where some

higher-density development could be appropriate if infrastructure is expanded and rail service is improved.

### **Long-term Project**

The comprehensive plan should be reviewed in its entirety again in approximately 7 to 10 years. Updating the plan at that interval should ensure that the plan continues to serve the changing needs of the community and provides valuable policy guidance for the Town Board, the volunteer boards and committees, town staff, and the public at large.

## Appendix A: Inventory and Analysis

October 2016

### Town Summary

The Town of Mount Hope is located in western Orange County and is bounded by the Town of Wallkill to the east, the Town of Greenville to the south, the Town of Deer Park to the west and the Town of Mamakating (Sullivan County) to the north. The Town of Mount Hope was first inhabited by settlers in 1733. The Town was established in 1825 and was formed using portions of the Towns of Deerpark and Wallkill. The Shawangunk Mountains lie along the Town's western boundary. The Town of Mount Hope is configured as an oblong rectangle and is more than 25 square miles in size. Located within the Town of Mount Hope is the Village of Otisville. The Village occupies 0.7 square miles in the northwestern portion of the Town.

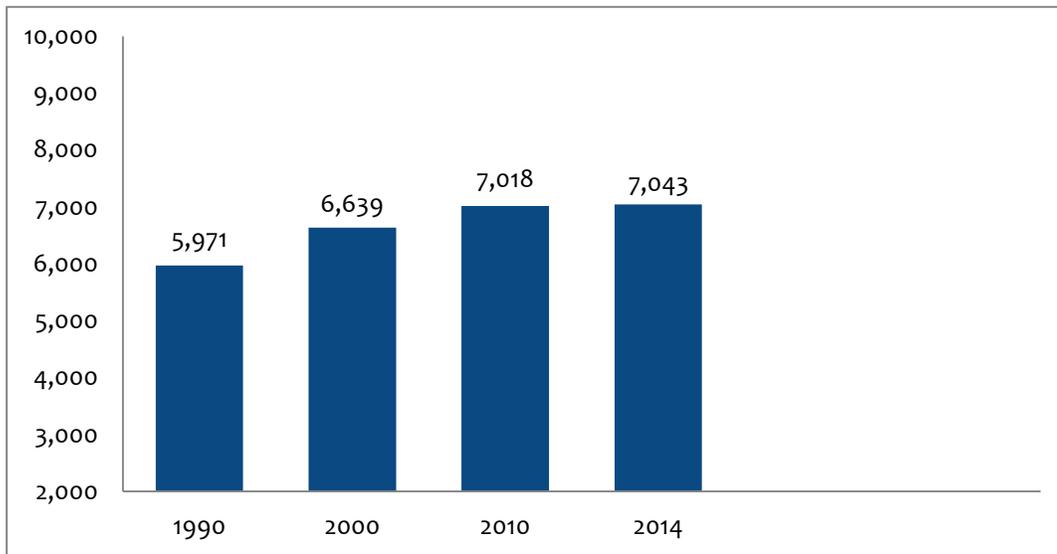
The Town Board consists of five (5) members: the Town Supervisor and four (4) councilpersons. The titles of Town Clerk and Highway Superintendent are also elected positions.

### Population and Housing

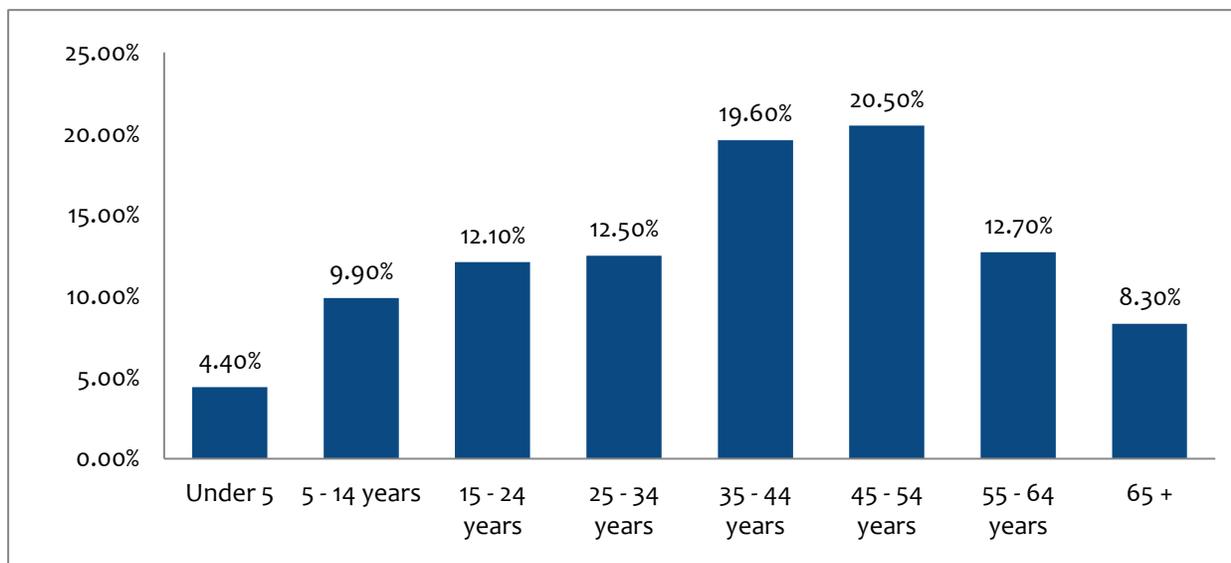
All demographic data used in this report was obtained from the United States Census Bureau. Data reflects characteristics of Census Tract 115, Orange County, New York which is coterminous with the Town boundary and includes the Village of Otisville.

According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 2014 5-year estimate, the Town of Mount Hope had a population of 7,043 residents in 2014. The Town's population has increased steadily from 1990 to 2014. Compared to the Town's 1990 population of 5,971, the population of Mount Hope has increased by approximately 18%. The Town of Mount Hope experienced the most growth between the 1990 and the 2000 census, with an increase of population of 10.1%. Population growth slowed between 2000 and 2010, with an increase of only 5.4% to 7,018 residents. The current population of Mount Hope is 7,043 persons.





According to 2014 ACS data the median age in Mount Hope is 41 years old; the 1991 Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan reports the median age in 1990 as 29.6 years old. This figure shows a significant change within 24 years. The 2014 ACS data show the largest age cohort is made up of those that are ages 45 to 54 years of age. The largest age cohort in the county are those ages 45 to 54 and the largest cohort in the state are those ages 25-34. This shows that the population of Mount Hope is on track with trends within the County, but older compared to residents of the state.



There are 276.41 persons per square mile, and 69.46 housing units per square mile in the Town of Mount Hope. This is an increase in density compared to data reported in the Town's 1991 Master Plan which showed 260 persons per square mile and 56.58 housing units per square mile. In 2014, average household size in the Town was 2.96 persons per household. The number of persons per household in Mount Hope was greater than that of the county (2.9 persons), state (2.62 persons), and country

(2.63 persons). The 2014 figure is slightly higher than the 2.85 persons per household that was reported by the 1990 census.

The Town of Mount Hope has a total of 2,007 housing units, of these units 1,761 (87.7%) are occupied while 246 (12.3%) are unoccupied. The total number of units is distributed by structure type as follows:

<b>Structure Type</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Units</b>
Single Family	1,884	93.9%
Two Family	20	0.1%
Three or More Family	91	4.5%
Manufactured Structure	12	0.6%
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>2,007</b>	<b>100%</b>

Single Family housing units are the most common type of unit within the Town of Mount Hope, making up 93.9% of all units located within the Town. Two family homes and manufactured homes are among the least common housing units within the Town, making up a combined 0.7% of all units. Mount Hope's housing stock is fairly old; 43.6% of units are 47 years old or older (built in 1969 or earlier) and 41.6% of units are between 17 and 46 years old (built between 1970 and 1999). Only 14.8% of units in Mount Hope were built in the last 16 years (between 2000 and 2014). The age of the housing stock in Mount Hope is well aligned with the County trends, but is significantly newer when compared to state-wide data.

According to 2014 ACS data, the Town's median house value for owner occupied units was \$258,300. This number was slightly lower than that of Orange County (\$268,600) and New York State (\$283,700). The median monthly gross rent for renter occupied units was \$1,238 which is higher than the County (\$1,156), State (\$1,117) and US (\$920) figures.

### **Socio-economics**

The Town of Mount Hope's median household income (MHI) was \$74,435 in 2014. That was somewhat higher than the MHI of \$70,794 for Orange County as a whole. The Town's poverty rate of 9.1% was lower than Orange County's 12.6% and 15.6% statewide. Of the 7,043 town residents 2,491 were employed in civilian operations in 2014; only 2.8% of Mount Hope residents were unemployed. The largest portions of residents (34.2%) were employed in the management/business/science/arts occupations. Other major employment sectors included service occupations (23.8%) and sales and office occupations (20.1%). Natural resources/construction/ maintenance occupations made up 12.2% and production/transportation/ material moving occupations made up the other 11.4%.

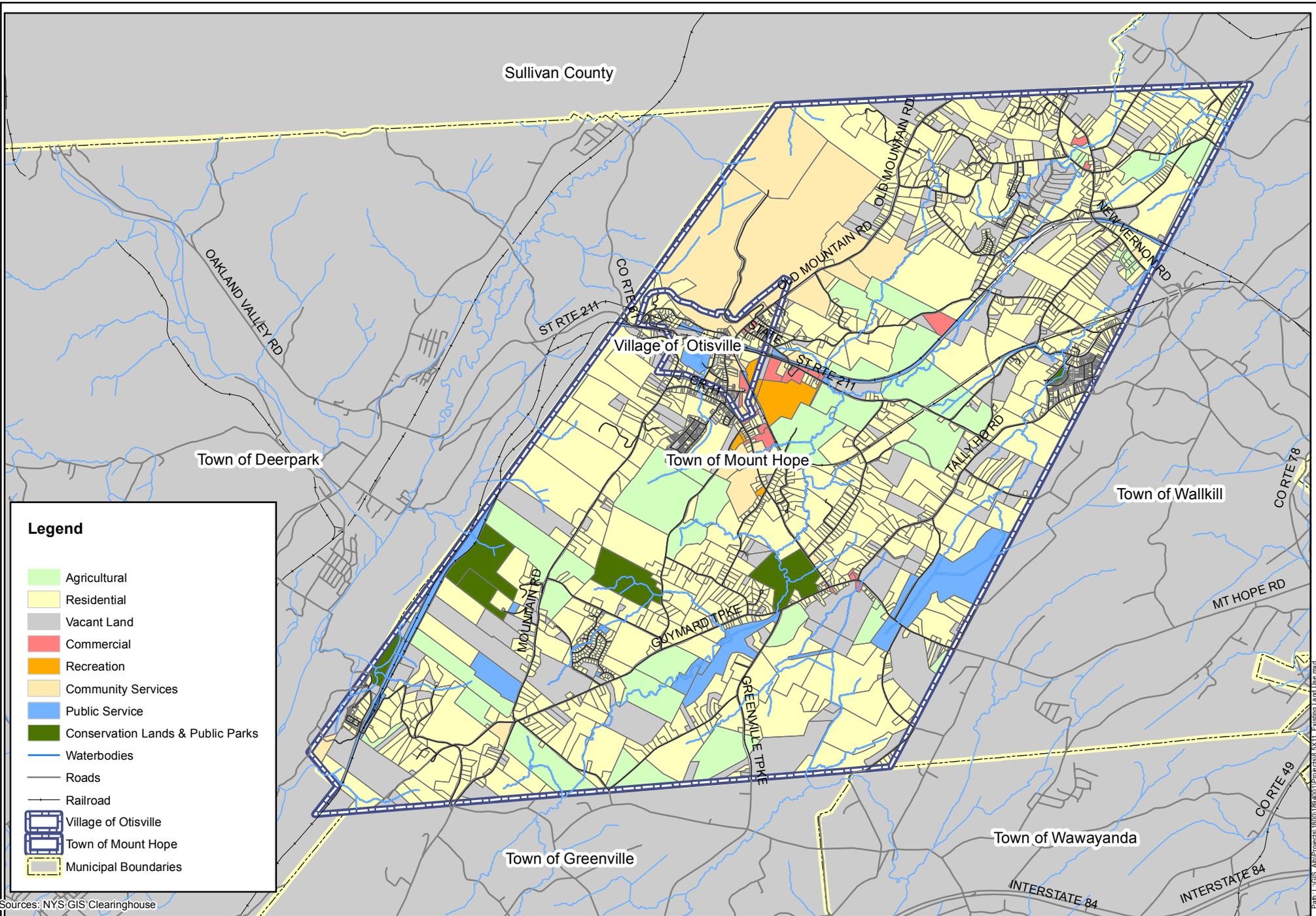
Not surprisingly, the vast majority of employed Town residents (83.2%) drove alone to work in 2014. Another 10.1% carpooled, while only 4.0% utilized public transportation or other means and 2.6% of residents worked from home. The average travel time to work for Mount Hope residents in 2014 was

40.6 minutes. Over 3.0% of the Town’s households have no vehicles available, whereas, 5.3% of residents in the County have no vehicle available. The trends in Mount Hope are similar to those in Orange County. However, county mean travel time to work decreased to 31.8 minutes; meaning on average residents of the county can get to work nearly 9 minutes faster than residents in Mount Hope.

### Current Land Use Patterns

The Town of Mount Hope’s current land use pattern is depicted on the Existing Land Use map. Land use on this map is derived from recent tax parcel data. It is important to note that the land use assigned to each parcel is the primary use as determined by the local tax assessor. If the primary use of a parcel is commercial for example, the entire parcel is coded for that use – even if the majority of the land area is not used for that activity. This should be remembered when reviewing the Existing Land Use map and the table below.

Property Class	Acres	%
Agriculture	1,678.05	10.60%
Residential	6,311.20	39.85%
Vacant Land	4,202.49	26.53%
Commercial	82.19	0.52%
Recreation & Entertainment	105.05	0.66%
Community Services	1507.58	9.52%
Public services	532.51	3.36%
Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands & Public Parks	138.76	0.88%
Not Classified	1,280.26	8.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,838.07</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Legend**

- Agricultural
- Residential
- Vacant Land
- Commercial
- Recreation
- Community Services
- Public Service
- Conservation Lands & Public Parks
- Waterbodies
- Roads
- Railroad
- Village of Otisville
- Town of Mount Hope
- Municipal Boundaries

Sources: NYS GIS Clearinghouse



PARTIAL GIS AND PROCESSING PROVIDED BY THE ESRI CLEARINGHOUSE

It is clear from the table above that Mount Hope’s primary land use, is residential. 39.85% of the Town’s parcels are assessed as residential uses. These uses include single family and multi-family year-round residences, rural residential with substantial acreage, seasonal residential units, mobile homes, and multi-use/multi-structure residential units. Table 3 shows that a majority of residential units are single-family year-round residences, accounting for 75.96% of homes. Rural residential units make up the second largest portion of residential units, accounting for 11.97% of homes. 5.15% of units are used as seasonal homes. Since the 1991 Plan, single family residences have increased by 3.96% while mobile homes have decreased by 2.23%.

<b>Residential Unit Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>%</b>
One Family Year-Round Residence	3655.46	75.96%
Two Family Year-Round Residence	123.65	2.57%
Three Family Year-Round Residence	13.01	0.27%
Rural Residence with Acreage	575.99	11.97%
Seasonal Residence	247.79	5.15%
Mobile Home	133.31	2.77%
Residential - Multi-Purpose/Multi-Structure	62.85	1.31%
<b>Total Vacant Land</b>	<b>4,812.06</b>	<b>100%</b>

Aside from residential and vacant land, described in greater detail below, agricultural land occupies the third most amount of land in the Town, with 10.60% of total acres being used for agricultural purposes. 9.52% of the Town is used for community services; community services include educational and religious facilities, and well as correctional facilities. Public service uses - which include parcels owned and operated by public utility services, water treatment facilities, communication utilities, etc., occupy 3.36% of Town acreage. 8.0% of the acreage within the Town is “not classified”, indicating that data was not available for certain parcels within the Town.

<b>Property Class</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>%</b>
Vacant Residential	1,417.90	33.74%
Vacant Agriculture	2,766.37	65.83%
Vacant Commercial	18.22	0.43%
<b>Total Vacant Land</b>	<b>4,202.49</b>	<b>100%</b>

Of the vacant land within the Town of Mount Hope the majority (65.83%) is identified as vacant agricultural land. In fact, the over 2,700 acres of vacant agricultural land exceeds the acreage of land classified as agricultural (over 1,600 acres) in the Town. Residential vacant land makes up the next

largest vacant land category with 33.74%, and commercial vacant land makes up only 0.43% of the overall vacant land in the Town.

Recreational & Entertainment and Commercial uses are concentrated within the Village of Otisville. The area immediately surrounding the intersection of Main Street and Highland Avenue is where most of the commercial activity is concentrated. This area is home to a few restaurants, post office, wine and liquor store, hair salon, deli and grocery, and a hardware store. The Otisville Metro North station is located within Mount Hope approximately 500 feet from the Village’s boundary along Kelly Hill Road. Although the Village of Otisville is not being directly engaged in the 2016 planning process the Town and Village are closely connected and the Village is an integral part of the larger Mount Hope community because of the amenities located there.

The 1998 Countywide Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan encourages municipalities to implement local laws that are sensitive to agricultural practices. The desired effect of these laws is to encourage the growth of agricultural practices within the county and to protect existing farmland. The plan also encourages economic development related to the County’s agricultural sector such as the development of new agriculture related businesses. Improving the economic prospects of local agriculture is especially important in Mount Hope because much of the agricultural land is no longer farmed and some of this land has been developed or experienced development pressures.



A current “hot topic” issue related to land use in Mount Hope is the growing use of solar energy.

Solar Energy – Regulating solar has become an issue as utility-scale solar energy facilities become more common. Like many communities in New York and across the country, Mount Hope has recently discovered the difficulty in regulating these proposals. Large commercial farms typically have a large number of solar panels and the array occupies large amounts of acreage. The abundance of unutilized or underutilized farmland and open space such as crop lands or pastures in the Town of Mount Hope has made the Town a target for large solar companies looking for land. New York State has developed a model regulation in order to ease this pressure on municipalities. As the issue has become more common, there are also numerous local laws regulating such facilities that have been adopted by municipalities across New York State that can be reviewed for inspiration as Mount Hope considers how to craft its own regulations.

### Land Use Regulations

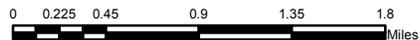
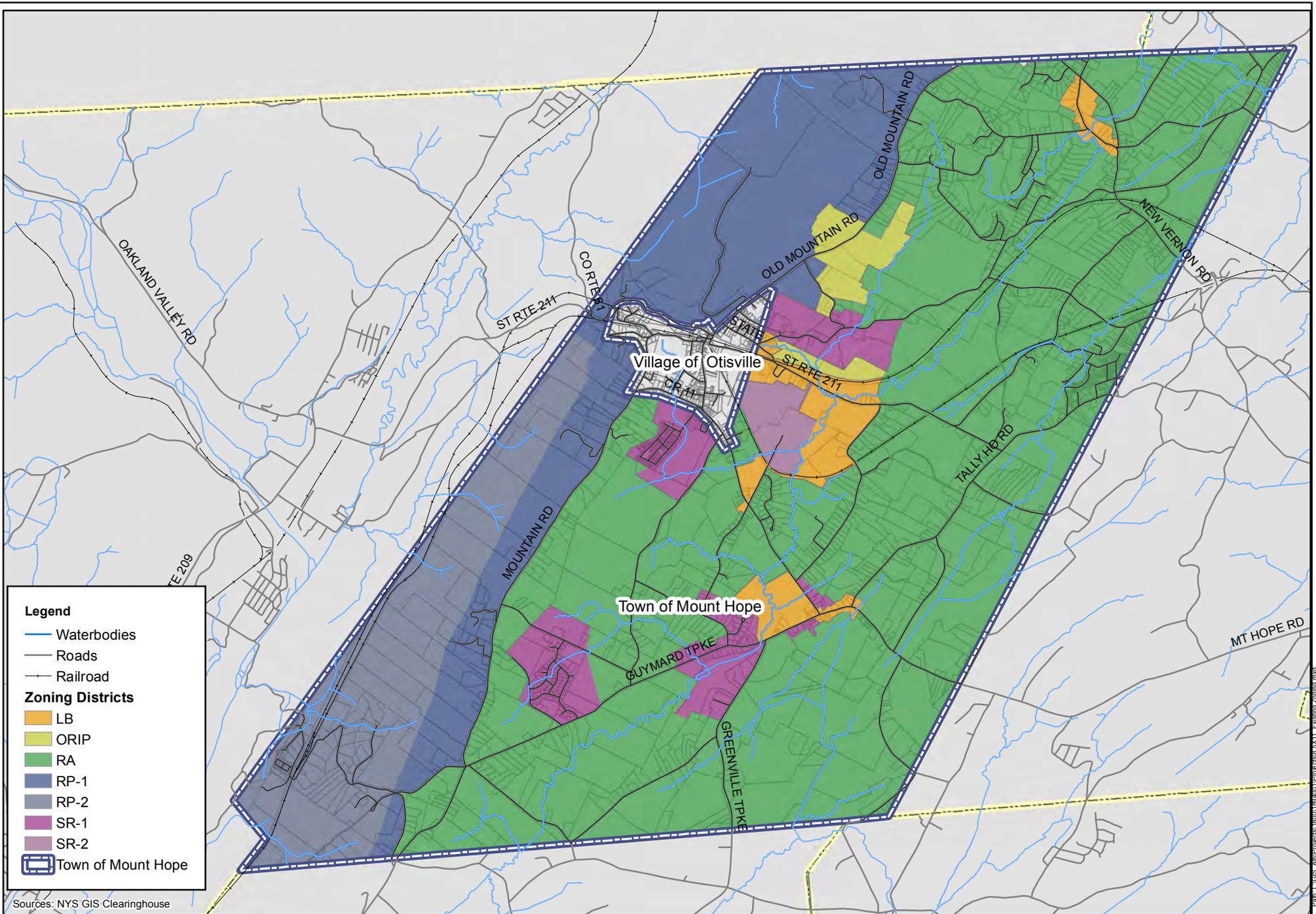
Mount Hope's current zoning divides the Town into seven (7) districts. These districts include: Office, Research, Industrial Park (ORIP), Local Business (LB), Suburban Residential (SR-1), Medium Density Residential (SR-2), Residential Agriculture (RA), Resource Preservation 1 (RP-1), and Resource Preservation 2 (RP-2).

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Zone Description</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>%</b>
LB	Local Business	528.47	3.33%
ORIP	Office, Research, Industrial Park	278.17	1.75%
RA	Rural Agriculture	9812.63	61.84%
RP-1	Resource Pres 2 acres or greater	2469.80	15.56%
RP-2	Resource Pres 2 acres or greater	1715.19	10.82%
SR-1	Sub Residential 1du per acre	894.88	5.65%
SR-2	Medium Density Res - Mobile Home Parks	165.30	1.05%
<b>Total Acreage</b>		<b>15869.97</b>	<b>100%</b>

The Office, Research, Industrial Park (ORIP) districts are located northeast and east of the Village of Otisville in two distinct areas separated by an area designated for Suburban Residential (SR-1). The Local Business (LB) district is concentrated in three (3) distinct clusters around the Town. There is a large cluster located east of the Village of Otisville along Route 211, the northern part of White Bridge Road, and the northern part of Grange Road, a second cluster where Mount Hope Road intersects with Tally Ho Road and Guymard Turnpike, and a small cluster in the Northeastern corner of the Town along New Vernon Road.

There is only one area zoned for Medium Density Residential (SR-2); it is located east of the Village of Otisville and bisects the LB district. The Suburban Residential (SR-1) districts are scattered in four locations throughout the Town of Mount Hope. This zone is comprised of residential subdivisions on smaller lots than other residential areas of the Town. The largest zone in this Town is the Residential Agriculture (RA) district. This district occupies all of the land along the eastern border of the Town, much of the interior, and most of the northern and southern boundaries. Resource Preservation (RP-1 and RP-2 districts) have the same regulations as one another. However, RP-2 is isolated to areas with the steepest slopes while RP-1 is in areas of lesser slopes. RP-1 is located along the east side of the ridge and the RP-2 is located on the west side of the ridge.

Mount Hope's zoning code was based primarily on existing land use patterns; because of this land use in Mount Hope is relatively consistent with the existing zoning. Large lot requirements and special preservation districts have allowed for some protection of the rural character of the Town.



Path: C:\GIS\workspace\mount\_hope\map\_documents\mount\_hope\_existing\_zoning.mxd

### Environmental Features

The Development Constraints map highlights some of the environmental features found in the Town of Mount Hope. The Town is blessed with bountiful natural resources that contribute to the community's character and quality of life.

Among the most important of these resources are the Shawangunk Kill and the Little Shawangunk Kill as well as tributaries of the Basher Kill and the Neversink River. Other important waterbodies in the Town include Guymard Lake, Watts Pond, and the Otisville Water Supply Reservoir.

The 2010 Orange County Water Master Plan (an amendment to the County's 2003 Comprehensive Plan) highlights the Village of Otisville and the surrounding areas in Mount Hope as proposed growth areas. This is important because it suggests where future infrastructure and service improvements will be targeted. The Town of Mount Hope is located on the Shawangunk watershed. According to the Orange County Water Master Plan Mount Hope does not have any waters or watersheds that are significantly impaired. However, maintaining good water quality in these waterbodies is important for several reasons; they support important ecosystems and also impact drinking water resources such as the Village of Otisville and the City of Middletown's water systems.

Areas bordering on a stream, river, pond, lake, or wetland that are periodically submerged by flood water are considered to be floodplains. Floodplains serve two important purposes; they act as temporary natural water storage areas during periods of high water after heavy rains or melting snow, and they reduce peak flows during flooding, therefore limiting downstream bank erosion. In Mount Hope, 100-year and 500-year flood zones have been identified by the



Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) predominantly along the Shawangunk Kill corridor. The Development Constraints map identifies the location of the floodplains in Mount Hope. The 500-year flood plain in Mount Hope occupies less than 0.5 acres within the Town, while the 100-year floodplain occupies approximately 807 acres in Mount Hope.

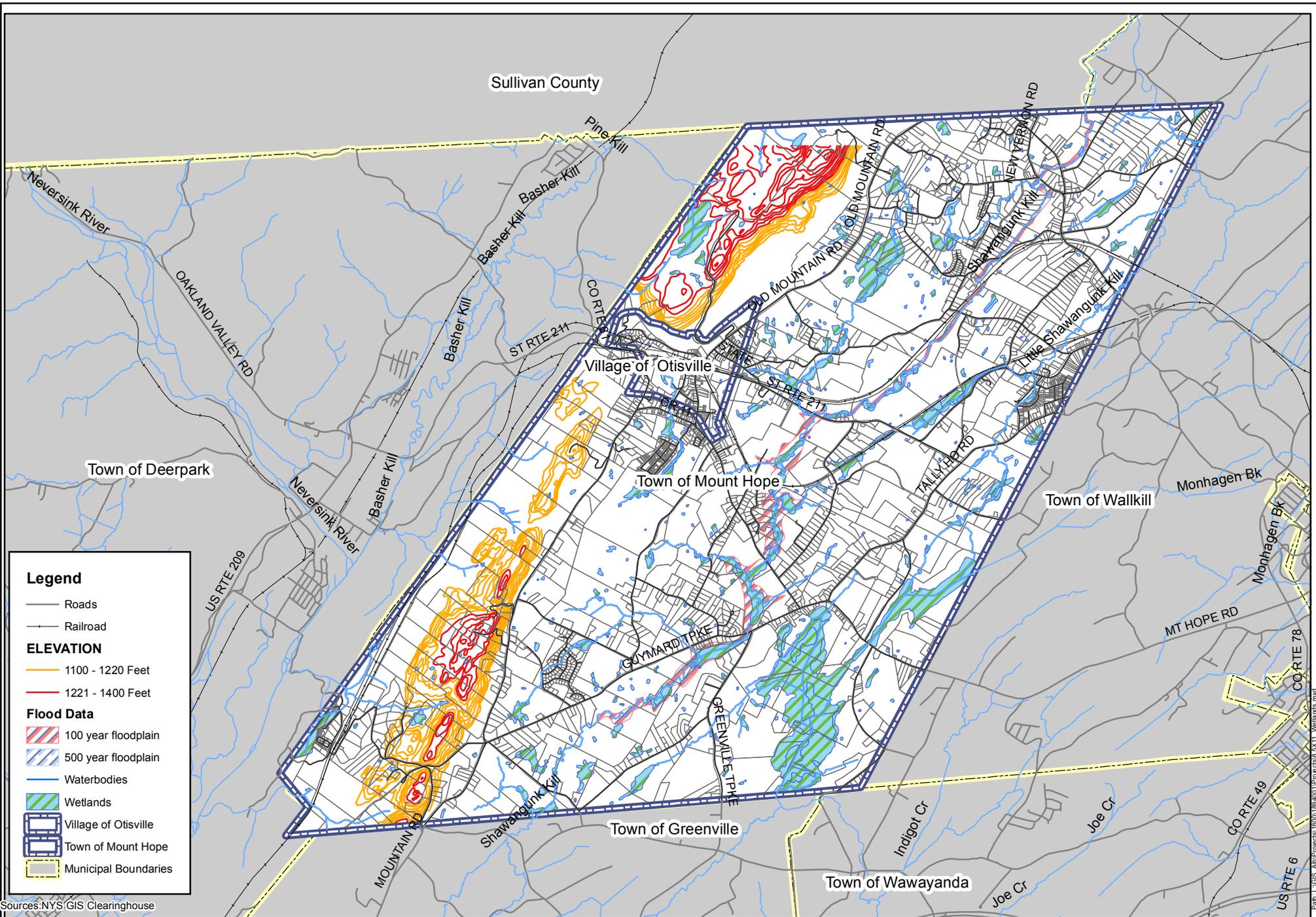
Wetlands are another significant natural resource found throughout Mount Hope. Wetlands are generally defined as areas covered with shallow water permanently or for periods long enough to support aquatic or semi-aquatic vegetation. Areas designated as wetlands may include bogs, swamps, marshes, wet meadows, floodplains, and water-logged (hydric) soils. Wetlands serve many

important functions including: providing habitat for wildlife and plants, playing a role in stormwater management and flood control, filtering pollutants, recharging groundwater, and providing passive recreational and educational opportunities.

Federal policy regarding wetlands is that there shall be no net loss. Under the most recent federal rules (which took effect in fall of 2000), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulated a disturbance of 1 acre or more of wetlands. If the disturbance is more than ½ acre, an individual permit must be obtained from the Army Corps. Federally regulated wetlands, because they are not mapped as such, can be difficult to identify and are sometimes overlooked in project reviews. It requires vigilance on the part of responsible landowners and local review boards to ensure that these smaller wetland areas are not destroyed as development occurs.

New York State, through the Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), generally regulates all wetlands which are 12.4 acres or more. New York State regulated wetlands are mapped and are therefore more likely to be considered in project reviews. The Development Constraints map shows areas that are currently designated as state wetlands by the NYS DEC. Fairly substantial areas in the southeastern portion of the Town as well as many other smaller areas scattered throughout the Town contain state and federally regulated wetlands. The Town of Mount Hope has approximately 1,280 acres covered by wetlands; that is 8.1% of the total land area in the Town.

The eastern portion of the Town is relatively flat. The southwestern and northwestern parts of the Town, however, become increasingly hilly. The points of high elevation (1,100 feet or greater) can be seen on the Development Constraints map. While steep slopes do not necessarily preclude development, they do create severe constraints in terms of both environmental suitability (i.e. Erosion concerns) and cost.



**Legend**

- Roads
- Railroad
- ELEVATION**
- 1100 - 1220 Feet
- 1221 - 1400 Feet
- Flood Data**
- ▨ 100 year floodplain
- ▨ 500 year floodplain
- Waterbodies
- ▨ Wetlands
- ▭ Village of Otisville
- ▭ Town of Mount Hope
- ▭ Municipal Boundaries

Sources: NYS GIS Clearinghouse



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## Recreation

Recreational resources in the Town have been recently expanded through the recent development of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County (CCEOC) Education Center & 4H Park. This multi-phase project began in October 2013 and is scheduled to be complete in 2020. CCEOC is the premier research-based cooperative educational system focusing its resources on current and future issues in order to positively affect agriculture, families and youth, environment, and economic development in Orange County. The Park grew out of a need to expand Extension programs to meet the growing needs of the community in all areas of programming such as, Family and Consumer Sciences and Agriculture.

Other recreational facilities include Mount Hope Town Park, Shoddy Hollow Fishing Hole, and Veterans Memorial Park. Mount Hope Town Park offers several softball, baseball, and little league fields, a football field, tennis and basketball courts, a large pavilion, passive recreation open space, a small pond, playground areas, and several large parking areas. Shoddy Hollow Fishing Hole is located off of Shoddy Hollow Road and is maintained by the Town Highway Department. Veterans Memorial Park is located in the Village of Otisville. Veterans Memorial Park has a pavilion and restrooms, a memorial area, a small playground, a large area for passive recreation, and a walking/fitness trail. Other recreational services run by the Town include a Summer Youth Recreation Program for youth in the community.



The old Otisville School in the Village may become another recreational asset for the community. Purchased by the not-for-profit Friends of the Otisville School (FOTOS) in May 2017, the 33,000 square foot, 3-story brick building on approximately 5 acres is now known as the Old School Community Center Inc. (OSCC). The organization envisions a number of potential community-based activities for this site including both indoor and outdoor recreational uses.

## Transportation and Infrastructure

The Town of Mount Hope's transportation infrastructure consists almost entirely of roadways. State Route 211 is the only major State Route that travels through Mount Hope and Otisville. State Rt. 211 stretches for 5 miles within Mount Hope and provides east-west access through the Town and Village. There are seven (7) County Routes that run through Mount Hope and Otisville to enhance connectivity in the area. CR90 (Old Mountain Road), CR60 (Tally Ho Road), CR24 (Guymard Turnpike), and CR 73 (Mountain Road/Seybolt Avenue) run southwest-northeast through the Town.

CR18 (New Vernon Road), CR11 (Mount Hope Road/Highland Avenue), and CR94 (Greenville Turnpike) run southeast-northwest through the Town. State and County have a 45 mile per hour (mph) speed limit; this limit is reduced to 30 mph within the Village of Otisville. The Town also maintains 53 miles of local roads throughout the Town.

Commuter rail services the area with a Metro-North Line. The Port Jervis line runs east-west through the Town and Village, including one stop in Otisville. The Port Jervis Line begins in Port Jervis, continues onto the Otisville stop, and makes several more service stops before the line turns into a NJ Transit Line. In order for residents to reach New York City they must change trains at Secaucus Junction, from there they can which continue onto New York City – Penn Station. The total travel time of this trip takes approximately 30 minutes without layovers between transfers.

There are several small airports located in communities surrounding Mount Hope. Stewarts International Airport is located approximately 30 miles from Mount Hope and is the closest international airport to the Town.

Most homes within Mount Hope utilize wells and septic systems for their water and wastewater needs. The exceptions are the State and Federal correctional facilities and the Hidden Valley housing development which has a private water system and sewer service provided through a special district. The Village of Otisville provides public water within the Village, but it does not provide public sewer service.

### Cultural and Historic Resources

“Mount Hope was established in 1825; land used to create the municipality included portions of the neighboring Town of Deerpark and Town of Wallkill. In 1846, the arrival of the Erie Railroad in Otisville changed the sleepy town into a center of commerce for the surrounding area. While the railroad sparked a decline in trade within Mount Hope, many citizens in Otisville had railroad-related jobs and relied on the railroad for transportation. In the early 1900s, Otisville became a chief supplier of butter for the New York City market.”

*An excerpt from Mount Hope and Otisville, Craig and Goldsmith*

Both agriculture and equestrian heritage are present throughout Mount Hope and Otisville. As mentioned earlier a majority of the Town’s land is used for agricultural purposes. There are several horse training facilities located throughout the Town.

The Mount Hope Historical Society works to keep the heritage of the Town alive by hosting annual events and exhibits. The Historical Society even wrote a book documenting the history of the Town and associated Village. The group typically holds events at the



Eleazer Harding House located in the Town just north of the Village of Otisville. The Eleazer Harding House dates back to 1790, the home has been restored and is used as a museum to show how life was lived in an earlier time. The home is owned and operated by the Mount Hope Historical Society and is located alone County Route 90 (Old Mountain Road). The Mount Hope Town Historian is available one day a week at the house year-round.

The Dodge-Greenleaf House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in March of 2008. The picturesque home is located on State Route 211 in the Village of Otisville. The home was built in 1855 in the Gothic Revival style. The home has changed ownership several times since its construction and still remains private property today. The home was once owned by the Erie Railroad and was used for worker housing while the Otisville Tunnel was being constructed underneath the property. The Otisville Tunnel was constructed in 1908 and is the longest tunnel on New York's Metro-North commuter railroad. The site includes two parcels, encompassing 2.6 acres of land. Combined, the site is home to the L-shape house, three outbuildings, and a non-contributing swimming pool. Other contributing structures on the site include an old gas pump near the barn, a cut-granite hitching post, and a remnant of the early foundation.

Mount Hope is located within the Minisink Valley Central School District (CSD). The district is made up of two elementary schools, an intermediate school, a middle school, and a high school. The Minisink Valley CSD encompasses 115 square miles within Orange County. At this time there are approximately 4400 students enrolled at the four schools at the Route 6 Campus and at the new Otisville Elementary School in the Town of Mount Hope.



As described above, the not-for-profit Friends of the Otisville School (FOTOS) intends to develop a cultural, artistic, education and recreation center at the 101-year old former Otisville School in the Village. If successful, the Old School Community Center could become a significant cultural and historic asset for Otisville, Mount Hope, and the surrounding region.

# Appendix B: Public Meeting Notes





# TOWN OF MOUNT HOPE

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

### ORANGE COUNTY, NEW YORK

To: Town of Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan Update Committee  
From: Katie Crawford, Land Use Planner I – Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C.  
Date: September 21, 2016

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### Issues Identification Workshop: Public Comments Summary

Meeting Location: Community Center, 7-11 Baker Street  
Meeting Date/Time: September 20, 2016, 7:00pm – 8:30pm  
Meeting Attendees: See Attendance Sheet

#### Summary Notes:

This was the first Public Workshop for the Town of Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan Update. Michael Welti, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner at Barton & Loguidice, began by welcoming everyone and thanking them for attending. Mr. Welti delivered a short presentation (slides attached) which covered the following:

- *Meeting Purpose and Agenda*
- *Introductions – Comprehensive Plan Update Committee and Consultant Team*
- *What is a Comprehensive Plan? - an explanation of the legal framework and description of what a comprehensive plan can achieve*
- *Development of the plan – a summary of the process*

Mr. Welti then facilitated a discussion with the audience regarding issues of concern that should be addressed through this comprehensive plan update. A summary of that discussion follows on the next page.

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## ***Town of Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan Update*** ***Issues Identification Workshop Summary***

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### **Attendance**

Approx. a dozen people (8 signed-in) plus members of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee.

### **What do you like about living in Mount Hope?**

Safe place to live – local police force and a low crime rate

Open space – lack of high density housing

Farmland, scenic views (ridgeline), state forest land, wildlife, and eco-tourism

Strong community ties – homey and small town feel, neighbors help one another; #1 place to raise a family and a proactive community

Rural character – this needs to be protected from development

Good public schools

Comfortable tax rate

Local amenities – retail options, parks, and train station

Long term, well-attended community events – August Annual Yard Sale

Active history (historical society) and pride in Town's heritage and history

### **What problems/concerns should be addressed through the plan?**

The relationship between the Town and the Village should be examined (consolidation?)

Former research lab parcels could be an opportunity

High density housing pressures are a significant concern - there was discussion of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) and its potential impact on the Town's ability to control such development.

Lack of useable Town-wide mapping system

Changing zoning pressures and challenges associated with change

Maintain the rural character – possibly with education and attraction of new residents

Growth should be smart to not create traffic issues or impede on positives of the community or leave a large footprint on the community

Wetland development regulations need to be examined

New demand may change needs for water/sewer or wells/septic

Heritage trail extension – wayfinding signage and connections with other existing trails

Lacking a local library

Attract and promote small businesses and the preservation of agricultural land

### **Outreach – Additional Suggestions**

Outreach could be achieved through local Facebook Page

Outreach could be achieved through non-electronic communications

Schedule should not conflict with school district or other municipal activities

Moms of school-aged children should be included – outreach to PTO or PTA

Perhaps try internet surveys or break down by geographic areas to collect info

 TOWN OF MOUNT HOPE  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
UPDATE

ISSUES IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP

September 20, 2016      Town of Mount Hope, New York      

## Agenda

- Project Team Introduction
- What is a Comprehensive Plan?
- Development of the Plan
- Issues Identification



# Agenda

- Project Team Introduction
- What is a Comprehensive Plan?
- Development of the Plan
- Issues Identification



# Introductions

- Town Officials:
  - ▣ *Chad Volpe, Town Supervisor*
  - ▣ *David Bavoso, Town Attorney*
- Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) Members:
  - ▣ *Daniel Golebiowski, ZBA Chairman*
  - ▣ *Dominick Cambareri, Town Board Member*
  - ▣ *Ike Palmer, Village Trustee*
  - ▣ *Jim Kowalczyk, Town Resident*
  - ▣ *Lee Runnalls, Village Resident*
  - ▣ *Matthew Howell, Town Board Member*
  - ▣ *Wayne Howell, Planning Board Chairman*



## Introductions

- Barton & Loguidice Consultant Team:
  - *Michael Welti, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner*
  - *Chuck Voss, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner*
  - *Katie Crawford, Land Use Planner 1*



## Agenda

- Project Team Introduction
- What is a Comprehensive Plan?
- Development of the Plan
- Issues Identification



## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- The definition of “town comprehensive plan” identifies a document with both an immediate and a long-range view:

“town comprehensive plan” means the materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the *immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the town* located outside the limits of any incorporated village or city.

Town Law §272-a (emphasis added).

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- A Comprehensive Plan’s primary role is to:
  - Establish the community’s vision for its future;
  - Be directional about how to attain this vision; and
  - Assign responsibilities for and to prioritize the specific actions that will be taken following completion of the plan.

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- The Plan provides a venue for identifying:
  - ▣ *The current state* – take stock of the situation – What do you cherish? What are your issues/concerns about the future?
  - ▣ *The desired state* - what does the community want to be like in the future – what is its vision?
  - ▣ *How* does the community intend to get there?

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- According to state law, the plan may include a wide range of topics “at the level of detail adapted to the special requirements of the town...”
- Topics such as residential growth, economic development, land-use, infrastructure, and community character will be addressed in the Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- Benefits of adopting a Comprehensive Plan
  - ▣ All land use regulations *must be* in accordance with a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to this section.
  - ▣ All plans for capital projects of another governmental agency on land included in this comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to this section shall take such plan into consideration
- Updating zoning and subdivision regulations is one of the most important tools communities in New York State have for ensuring that future growth contributes to achieving the community's vision and goals described in the Plan

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Zoning &amp; Regulatory Measures:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▣ Development Guidelines or Standards</li> <li>▣ Innovative Zoning Techniques</li> <li>▣ SEQR Compliance</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Potential Non-Regulatory Tools:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▣ Farmland and open space conservation</li> <li>▣ Purchase of development rights</li> <li>▣ Special districts (BID, SAD, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Capital Budgeting:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▣ Community Facilitates and Infrastructure</li> <li>▣ Phasing Strategy</li> <li>▣ Grants and Financing Opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Organizational Capacity:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▣ Governmental and Private Sector</li> <li>▣ Regional and Inter-municipal Connections</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|--|---|

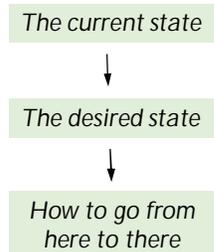
# Agenda

- Project Team Introduction
- What is a Comprehensive Plan?
- Development of the Plan
- Issues Identification



# Development of the Plan

- Ten Steps in preparing a Plan
  1. Plan to Plan ✓
  2. Structure and Schedule the Process ✓
  3. Gather and Analyze Data
  4. Identify Problems, Issues, and Concerns
  5. Develop a "Vision" for the Plan
  6. Develop Plan Goals and Objectives
  7. Generate and Evaluate Plan Alternatives
  8. Select and Develop a Preferred Plan
  9. Adopt the Plan, Set an Implementation Schedule
  10. Monitor for Results and Impact



By: Michael Chandler  
From: Planning Commissioners Journal #39, Summer 2000

## Development of the Plan

### □ Ten Steps in preparing a Plan

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10. Monitor for Results and Impact

The current state



The desired state



How to go from  
here to there

By: Michael Chandler

From: Planning Commissioners Journal #39, Summer 2000

## Development of the Plan

### □ Existing Planning Documents:

#### ■ Municipal Documents

- 1991 Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan
- Town Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

#### ■ Countywide Documents

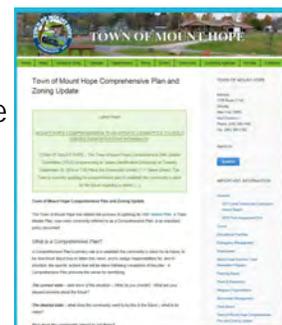
- 1998 Orange County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan
- 2004 Orange County Open Space Plan
- 2010 Orange County Comprehensive Plan
- 2010 Orange County Design Manual
- 2010 Orange County Water Management Plan

## Development of the Plan



## Development of the Plan

- Involvement = Ownership = Commitment
  - Issues Identification Workshop ✓
  - Visioning Workshop
  - Town-wide Public Meeting
  - Public Hearing
  
- Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) Meetings
- Website: <http://townofmounthope.org>
- Email: [CPUC@townofmounthope.org](mailto:CPUC@townofmounthope.org)



## Development of the Plan

### □ Ten Steps in preparing a Plan

1. Plan to Plan ✓
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The current state



The desired state



How to go from here to there

By: Michael Chandler

From: Planning Commissioners Journal #39, Summer 2000

## Development of the Plan

### □ Project Timeline:

- CPUC Kick-off Meeting – June 9, 2016
- Monthly CPUC Meetings
- Issues Identification Workshop – September 20, 2016
- Visioning Workshop – TBD
- Town-wide Public Meeting - Draft Plan Presentation – TBD
- Public Hearings (2)
- SEQRA / Plan Adoption by Town Board – Winter 2017
  
- Phase 2 - Zoning Code Update – Spring 2017

## Agenda

- Project Team Introduction
- What is a Comprehensive Plan?
- Development of the Plan
- Issues Identification



## Issues Identification

- What do you like about living/working in Mount Hope? What is working, and should be protected or enhanced?
- What problems/concerns should be addressed through the plan? What can be done to improve life in Mount Hope?

## Next Steps

- Next CPUC Meeting
  - 5:00 PM on Thursday, September 29, 2016 @ Town Hall
- Visioning Workshop – November?
- Stay in touch:
  - Website: <http://townofmounthope.org>
  - Email: [CPUC@townofmounthope.org](mailto:CPUC@townofmounthope.org)



## Thank You

- Next CPUC Meeting
  - 5:00 PM on Thursday, September 29, 2016 @ Town Hall
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# TOWN OF MOUNT HOPE

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

### ORANGE COUNTY, NEW YORK

To: Town of Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan Update Committee  
From: Katie Crawford, Land Use Planner I – Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C.  
Date: December 14, 2016

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### **Visioning Workshop: Public Comments Summary**

Meeting Location: Community Center, 7-11 Baker Street  
Meeting Date/Time: December 13, 2016, 7:00pm – 9:00pm  
Meeting Attendees: See Attendance Sheet

#### **Summary Notes:**

This was the second Public Workshop for the Town of Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan Update. Michael Welti, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner at Barton & Loguidice, began by welcoming everyone and thanking them for attending. Mr. Welti delivered a presentation (slides attached) which covered the following:

- *Meeting Purpose and Agenda*
- *Introductions – Comprehensive Plan Update Committee and Consultant Team*
- *What is a Comprehensive Plan? - an explanation of the legal framework, a description of what a comprehensive plan can achieve, and the process for preparing the update in Mount Hope*
- *Project Update – accomplishments thus far (Issues Identification and Existing Conditions)*
- *Preliminary Vision Statement and Goals – as developed by the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee – followed by a facilitated discussion*
- *Brainstorming – “Food for Thought” followed by breakout groups*

Following his presentation of them, Mr. Welti facilitated a brief discussion with the audience to receive feedback about the preliminary vision statement and goals prepared by the project team and comprehensive plan update committee. Participants provided comments and suggestions. These are summarized on the next page.

Mr. Welti continued with some “food for thought” related to local and regional trails, the train station and its relationship to the Village, farmland conservation, and conservation subdivision design. He then instructed the audience to break into groups around three tables to brainstorm ideas for achieving the vision and goals. A member of the consultant team was stationed at each of the tables. After about 40 minutes, everyone reconvened to hear the ideas from each of the groups. Ideas generated by the groups are also summarized on the following pages.

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## ***Town of Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan Update***

### ***Visioning Workshop Summary***

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#### **Attendance**

Approx. thirty people (20 signed-in) plus members of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee.

#### **Preliminary Vision Statement Feedback**

The Vision Statement received a lot of positive feedback from residents

#### **Preliminary Goals Feedback**

A transportation goal should be included in order to capture issues such as lack of bike and pedestrian transportation, safe accessibility, and recreational accessibility  
Agri-tourism/Eco-tourism should be incorporated into the goals – zoning recommendations could reflect the need for hospitality accommodations within the Town  
The Town should also pay attention to ways that they can be included in regional planning discussions (particularly county level and with surrounding municipalities) – would like more opportunity to have input on development projects and major public investments that occur nearby and which could impact Town residents.

#### **Breakout Group Discussion**

Proposed connection between the Village and Town park was encouraged by residents and by one of the relevant property owners – it was encouraged that seating areas, light commercial development, trails, and pedestrian facilities be coupled with this initiative – further discussion with individual property owners should be done  
Possibility to extend the County Heritage Trail through to Otisville was encouraged by the public and by one of the relevant property owners – further discussion with individual property owners should be done – there is also a possibility this could extend further towards Port Jervis  
The more densely developed areas should have seating areas and other accommodations for the aging population  
The corridor between the Village and Town should be where the concentrated development occurs or the area on Rt. 211 along the Heritage Trail and around Otisville– this development should include restaurants and other commercial opportunities  
Code enforcement within the Town is lacking and should be improved  
Conservation subdivisions should be encouraged for new residential development that occurs within the Town  
Planned Development Districts should be considered in order to provide an avenue for accommodating unique development opportunities  
Commercial solar should be located in areas that are easy to camouflage and do not interfere with scenic viewsheds (for example, not on the ridgeline)– other sustainable energy options should be explored for the Town  
The wetland buffer should be extended back to its original distance  
Aquifer rights/protection of the aquifer should be reflected in the planning process (along Walkkill and Deerpark border)  
The Village and Town should be working more closely when reviewing land use regulations  
The Town is located in an area where they can attract NYC tourism thanks to the Otisville Metro-North passenger rail station

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Route 211 overpass and T-turn required a road-grade or another alternative trucking route could be proposed

The Town should focus in on what the definition of modern agriculture really is and what should be allowed, what the minimum size should be, and how it is enforced

Residential regulations may need to overlook a minimum lot size or square footage for households to attract young professionals to the area

Common space maintenance in conservation subdivisions should be regulated

Soil-based zoning may be a unique way to control future development (in terms of density)

The sense of community in Mount Hope should not be compromised

The plan should review how to approach development that is out of character with the Town – development around power lines should also be monitored closely as well as high density development

Area near the Grange may have too much commercial zoning

The horse farm on 211 that is for sale may become an issue depending on who it is sold to – it is a special property that contributes to the Town's unique character

Municipal sewer – is this needed to allow for appropriate commercial development?

Improve concurrency and referral process between Mount Hope and neighboring municipalities for development projects just beyond the Town's border that are likely to have an impact on the Town

Need to address temporal differences in land development regulations over time where possible (i.e. philosophies regarding on-site stormwater drainage have changed over time)

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Following the group report backs, Mr. Welti reminded everyone about the date/time of the next Committee meeting (January 5<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 PM @ Town Hall), thanked everyone for coming, and wished them a Happy Holiday. The meeting was adjourned at about 9:00 PM.



# TOWN OF MOUNT HOPE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

## VISIONING WORKSHOP

December 13, 2016 | Town of Mount Hope, New York



## Agenda

- Introduction
- Project Update
- Preliminary Vision and Goals
- Brainstorming – breakout groups



## Agenda

- Introduction
- Project Update
- Preliminary Vision and Goals
- Brainstorming – breakout groups



## Introductions



- Town Officials:
  - Chad Volpe, Town Supervisor
  - David Bavoso, Town Attorney
- Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) Members:
  - Daniel Golebiowski, ZBA Chairman
  - Dominick Cambareri, Town Board Member
  - Ike Palmer, Village Trustee
  - Jim Kowalczyk, Town Resident
  - Lee Runnalls, Village Resident
  - Matthew Howell, Town Board Member
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## Introductions



- Barton & Loguidice Consultant Team:
  - Michael Welti, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner
  - Chuck Voss, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner
  - Katie Crawford, Land Use Planner 1
  - Robert Murphy, Jr., AICP, Land Use Planner III

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- The definition of “town comprehensive plan” identifies a document with both an immediate and a long-range view:
 

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## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

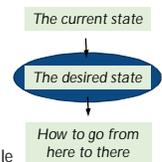
- Zoning & Regulatory Measures:
  - ▣ Development Guidelines or Standards
  - ▣ Innovative Zoning Techniques
  - ▣ SEQR Compliance
- Potential Non-Regulatory Tools:
  - ▣ Farmland and open space conservation
  - ▣ Purchase of development rights
  - ▣ Special districts (BID, SAD, etc.)
- Capital Budgeting:
  - ▣ Community Facilities and Infrastructure
  - ▣ Phasing Strategy
  - ▣ Grants and Financing Opportunities
- Organizational Capacity:
  - ▣ Governmental and Private Sector
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## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- The Plan provides a venue for identifying:
  - ▣ *The current state* – take stock of the situation – What do you cherish? What are your issues/concerns about the future?
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## Development of the Plan

- Ten Steps in preparing a Plan
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By: Michael Chandler  
 From: Planning Commissioners Journal #39, Summer 2000

## Agenda

- Introduction
- **Project Update**
- Preliminary Vision and Goals
- Brainstorming – breakout groups



## Project Update

- **Project Timeline:**
  - CPUC Kick-off Meeting – June 9, 2016
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  - Visioning Workshop – December 13, 2016
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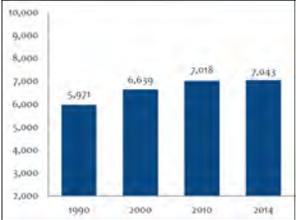
## Project Update

- Existing Planning Documents:
  - **Municipal Documents**
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    - Town Zoning and Subdivision Regulations
  - **Countywide Documents**
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    - 2004 Orange County Open Space Plan
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    - 2010 Orange County Design Manual
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## Project Update

### Existing Conditions

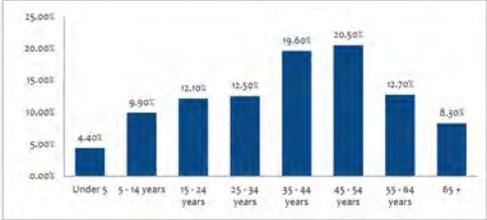




Year	Population
1990	5,971
2000	6,639
2010	7,018
2014	7,043

## Project Update

### Existing Conditions



Age Cohort	Population
Under 5	4,401
5 - 14 years	9,901
15 - 24 years	12,101
25 - 34 years	12,501
35 - 44 years	19,601
45 - 54 years	20,501
55 - 64 years	12,701
65 +	8,301

Population by Age Cohort  
 Median Age in 1990 was 30  
 Median Age in 2014 was 41

## Project Update

### Existing Conditions

Structure Type	Number of Units	Percentage of Total Units
Single Family	1,884	93.9%
Two Family	20	0.1%
Three or More Family	91	4.5%
Manufactured Structure	12	0.6%
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>2,007</b>	<b>100%</b>

Built 1969 or earlier: 43.6%  
 Built 1970 to 1999: 41.6%  
 Built 2000 to 2014: 14.8%

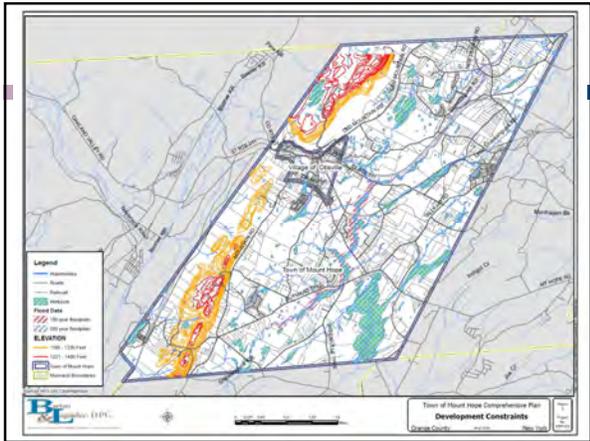
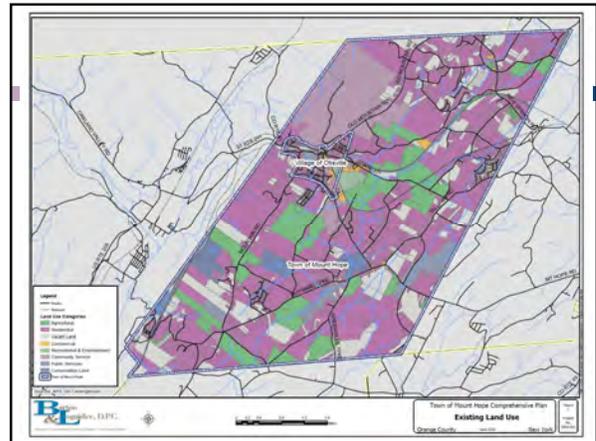
## Project Update

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### Existing Conditions

Table 2 - Existing Land Use

Property Class	Acres	%
Agriculture	1,678.05	10.60%
Residential	6,311.20	39.85%
Vacant Land	4,702.49	26.53%
Commercial	82.19	0.52%
Recreation & Entertainment	105.05	0.66%
Community Services	1507.58	9.52%
Public services	532.51	3.36%
Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands & Public Parks	138.76	0.88%
Not Classified	1,280.26	8.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,838.07</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Project Update

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### Issues Identification Workshop – September 2016

A collage of four photographs capturing the atmosphere of the Issues Identification Workshop. The images show community members seated in a room, participating in discussions, listening to a presentation, and interacting with staff members.

## Project Update

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### Issues Identification Workshop – September 2016

**What do you like about living in Mount Hope?**

- Safe place to live – local police force and a low crime rate
- Open space – lack of high density housing
- Farmland, scenic views (ridgeline), state forest land, wildlife, and eco-tourism
- Strong community ties – homey and small town feel, neighbors help one another; #1 place to raise a family and a proactive community
- Rural character – this needs to be protected from development
- Good public schools
- Comfortable tax rate
- Local amenities – retail options, parks, and train station
- Long term, well-attended community events – August Annual Yard Sale
- Active history (historical society) and pride in Town’s heritage and history

## Project Update

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**What problems/concerns should be addressed through the plan?**

- The relationship between the Town and the Village should be examined (consolidation?)
- Former research lab parcels could be an opportunity
- High density housing pressures are a significant concern - there was discussion of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) and its potential impact on the Town’s ability to control such development.
- Lack of useable Town-wide mapping system
- Changing zoning pressures and challenges associated with change
- Maintain the rural character – possibly with education and attraction of new residents
- Growth should be smart to not create traffic issues or impede on positives of the community or leave a large footprint on the community
- Wetland development regulations need to be examined
- New demand may change needs for water/sewer or wells/septic
- Heritage trail extension – wayfinding signage and connections with other existing trails
- Lacking a local library
- Attract and promote small businesses and the preservation of agricultural land

## Agenda

- Introduction
- Project Update
- Preliminary Vision and Goals
- Brainstorming – breakout groups



## Preliminary Vision and Goals

### Vision Statement

The Town of Mount Hope is a vibrant rural community that has conserved active farmland and protected its abundant natural resources and scenic beauty while guiding appropriate residential and commercial growth in and around the Village of Otisville, in the Town's small hamlets, and in other well-defined, compact development areas. The Town provides cost-efficient services to its residents, maintains public safety, and celebrates its history and culture while encouraging residents and welcoming visitors to patronize its small businesses and enjoy its rural character and outdoor recreational opportunities.

## Preliminary Vision and Goals

### Goals

Maintain Mount Hope's rural character by working with landowners to encourage stewardship, preserving farmland and supporting efforts to diversify and enhance the economic prospects of agriculture, and partnering with regional conservation organizations on open space conservation and trail development.



## Preliminary Vision and Goals

### Goals

Protect natural resources and conserve scenic landscapes such as those associated with the Shawangunk Ridge.



## Preliminary Vision and Goals

### Goals

Carefully manage drinking water resources (surface water and groundwater) that serve residents of the Town and the region.



## Preliminary Vision and Goals

### Goals

Maintain a balanced tax base – though some residential development is anticipated it is important to recognize that from a fiscal perspective, new residential growth rarely pays for itself in property taxes. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the community maintains a balance of residential development, commercial development, and open space.



## Preliminary Vision and Goals

### Goals

Encourage agricultural-related businesses and craft industries throughout the rural parts of Town and small business development in the Village, the hamlets, and other compact development areas. Ensure that traditional and modern infrastructure exists to support small business success.



## Preliminary Vision and Goals

### Goals

Provide for a variety of housing options (styles, price points, etc.) to support the diverse needs of current and future residents while retaining the overall low density, rural pattern of development prevalent through most of the Town.



## Preliminary Vision and Goals

### Goals

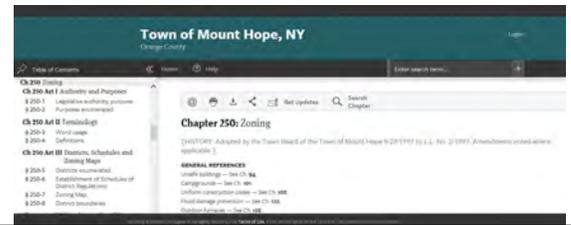
Continue to cooperate with the Village of Otisville on issues of mutual concern. In many ways, the Village is the center of the community and its success is important for all town residents. Look for opportunities to share services when appropriate.



## Preliminary Vision and Goals

### Goals

Modernize development regulations to ensure that they are clear and effective. They should establish appropriate standards and guide development in a manner consistent with this plan.



## Preliminary Vision and Goals

### Goals

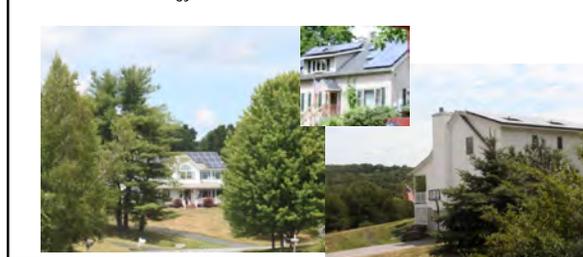
Enhance the quality of, and access to, the Town's cultural, historic and recreational resources.



## Preliminary Vision and Goals

### Goals

Promote energy efficiency and conservation, and the use of renewable energy in the Town.



## Preliminary Vision and Goals

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Discussion - in terms of the preliminary vision statement and goals presented:

- ▣ Which of these make the most sense to you? Why?
- ▣ What would you change? What have we missed?

## Agenda

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- ▣ Introduction
- ▣ Project Update
- ▣ Preliminary Vision and Goals
- ▣ Brainstorming – breakout groups



## Brainstorming

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Three (3) Breakout Groups:

- ▣ What are your ideas for achieving the vision and goals for the future of Mount Hope?
  - ▣ Projects, Programs, Opportunities, etc.



## Brainstorming

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Food for Thought:



## Brainstorming

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Food for Thought:

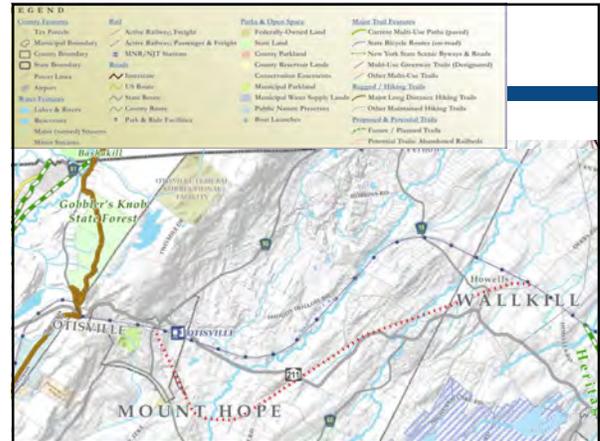
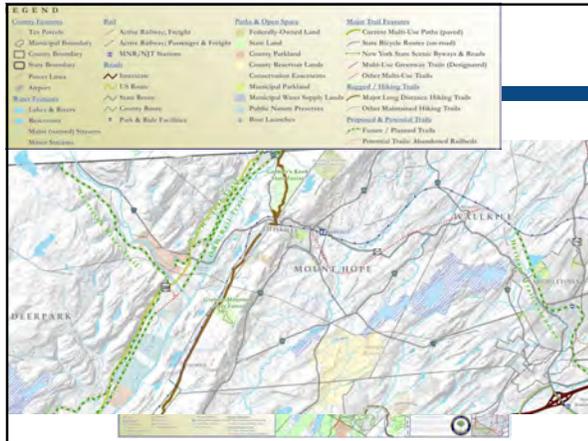


## Brainstorming

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Food for Thought:





## Brainstorming

Food for Thought:

## Brainstorming

Food for Thought:

## Brainstorming

Food for Thought:

ORANGE COUNTY LAND TRUST

We have been awarded a New York State Farmland Protection Implementation Grant to conserve 197 acres of farmland in the Town of Mount Hope. Conserving this farmland will enable Otisville-based Farmer's Daughter to affordably purchase the property, ensuring that the land remains in agricultural use.

We applaud Governor Cuomo, Department of Agriculture & Markets Commissioner Richard Ball, and the State Legislature for their commitment to farmland preservation. We would also like to thank Seneca Hudson, Orange County Government, the County's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, and the Town of Mount Hope for their support.

Click [here](#) for the Governor's press release on the farmland protection program grants.

## Brainstorming

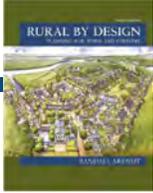
Food for Thought:

Conservation Subdivision Design

Figures 19-5A and B: Predevelopment Situation and "Yield Plan". The land prior to development, shown in Fig. 19-5A, consists of roughly 80 percent upland, almost equally divided between farmland and forest, with the remainder being wetlands and floodplains. The conventional layout of 72 houselots (Fig. 19-5B) also serves as a "Yield Plan", demonstrating the number of houselots the property would ordinarily support in a standard plat with no usable open space. Source: Arendt 1993

## Brainstorming

Food for Thought:  
Conservation Subdivision Design




**Figures 19-6 A and B: Step One, Identifying Primary and Secondary Conservation Areas.** The first step involves identifying Primary Conservation Areas (Fig. 19-6A, limited to wetlands, floodplains and steep slopes), and Secondary Conservation Areas (Fig. 19-6B) including those unprotected elements of the natural and cultural landscape that deserve to be spared from clearing, grading, and development. In this example the mature upland forest habitat is of critical environmental importance, while the farmland's ecological value is negligible  
Source: Arendt 1993

## Brainstorming

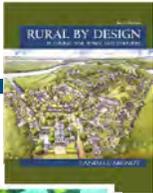
Food for Thought:  
Conservation Subdivision Design




**Figures 19-7 A and B: Potential Development Areas and Step Two, Locating House Sites.** Delineating

## Brainstorming

Food for Thought:  
Conservation Subdivision Design




**Figures 19-8 A and B: Step Three, Aligning Streets and Trails, and Step Four, Drawing in the Lot Lines.** The third step consists of tracing a logical alignment for local streets to access the 72 homes and for informal footpaths to connect various parts of the neighborhood, providing recreational space while building community among residents (Fig. 19-8A). The final step involves drawing in the lot lines, perhaps the least important part of the process. Successful developers of open space subdivisions know that most buyers prefer homes in attractive park-like settings, and that views of protected open space enable them to sell lots or houses faster and at premium prices (Fig. 19-8B). Such homes also tend to appreciate more in value, compared with those on lots in standard "cookie-cutter" developments offering neither views nor nearby open space Source: Arendt 1993

## Brainstorming

Three (3) Breakout Groups:

- What are your ideas for achieving the vision and goals for the future of Mount Hope?
  - Projects, Programs, Opportunities, etc.



## Next Steps

- Next CPUC Meeting
  - 5:00 PM on Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 @ Town Hall
- Stay in touch:
  - Website: <http://townofmounthope.org>
  - Email: [CPUC@townofmounthope.org](mailto:CPUC@townofmounthope.org)



## Thank You

- Next CPUC Meeting
  - 5:00 PM on Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 @ Town Hall
- Stay in touch:
  - Website: <http://townofmounthope.org>
  - Email: [CPUC@townofmounthope.org](mailto:CPUC@townofmounthope.org)






Town of Mount Hope  
Comprehensive Plan Update Public Meeting  
Mount Hope Community Center  
Monday, November 27, 2017 - 7:00 p.m.

The following members of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) were present:

Dominick Cambareri  
Daniel Golebiowski  
Matthew Howell  
Lee Runnalls  
Ike Palmer

Also in attendance were:

Michael Welte (B&L)  
Chad Volpe

Mr. Welte opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m. He welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the public meeting/public hearing.

Mr. Welte gave a brief background of the plan along with updates and highlights of the plan prior to the slide show presentation.

The presentation ended at 7:45 p.m. Mr. Welte began a question and answer session.

Public Comment:

Mr. Frank Ketcham was the first person to speak. His comments centered on the Old School Community Center being incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan Update. Mr. Ketcham cited what he felt were positive reasons and suggestions for the inclusion of the Old School Community Center in the Master Plan as outlined in the attachment.

Following Mr. Ketcham, Mr. Ken Pinkela spoke. He is also on the Old School Community Center Committee with Mr. Ketcham. He supports what Mr. Ketcham submitted for review and Mr. Ketcham's comments. He sees the old school as an asset to the plan.

The last speaker was Mr. James Smith. He shared his comments on three concerns: Complete Streets, trail networks, and senior housing.

He would like to have Complete Streets incorporated into the plan. Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. Thus they would make for easier living for senior citizens.

Mr. Smith would like to have trails networked such as the Heritage Trail. A network of trails and pathways would allow all individuals no matter what age to access natural places and would preserve open spaces. It would also allow for growth of agricultural tourism and to interact with the natural environment.

His final topic was keeping senior citizens in the community or part of the family longer. He wants to ensure that they have easy access to the necessities of life. He proposes that senior housing or a cluster development would assist in obtaining this goal.

Next Committee Meeting:

The next working meeting of the committee is scheduled for Thursday, December 21, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

Adjourned:

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Submitted

Frank Ketcham  
212 Homestead Lane  
Otisville NY 10963  
845-239-2825  
Ketch@Frontier.com

Draft Master Plan- Committee  
Public Hearing 11/27/17

Comments to the Master Plan Committee:

Committee Chairman and Committee Members,

I feel that the newly created **Old School Community Center** should be considered to be included in the Master Plan update. Upon review of the Draft Master Plan for the Town of Mount Hope, I would like the Committee to consider the following information.

Page 6.

**"...Encourage Agricultural- Related businesses, craft industries and Eco Tourism/Agritourism"**

The **Old School Community Center Inc (OSCC)** is in the Center of the Village of Otisville and at 33,000 sqft is the largest potential available space in the Town of Mount Hope. Purchased by the Non-Profit Group, Friends of The Otisville School (FOTOS) in May of 2017 it has already become an exciting and exuberant volunteer driven project. Not only is the 3 story brick building primed to be an incubator for all kinds of business, including **Agricultural- Related businesses, craft industries and Eco Tourism/Agritourism**, but the owners purchased the building with the purpose of making it a hub for Community Services and are making every effort to proceed with that Plan.

Page 8.

- **"...Enhance the quality of and access to, the Town's cultural, historical and recreational resources"**

The recently created **Old School Community Center Inc (OSCC)** has an Auditorium with one of the largest available stages in Orange County. The potential to bring Professional and semi Professional, and Introductory Drama, Music, and the Arts has come to Mount Hope. Potential for classes in many of the Arts are already being developed and planned.

The Gymnasium will have a new multi use surface, where sports and events will take place as well as be an area to be used as a rental Hall.

There are Plans to exhibit cultural and Historical items throughout the building as well as have revolving art work that allow Local (Far and Near) Artists to show their talents.

Culturally the nearness to the World Class Fei Tien Schools, Shen Yun, and Dragon Springs opens an unimaginable potential. With more and more new Community residents moving to the area for this, The OSCC, opens an opportunity to allow for our Communities to merge and become friends and neighbors. The OSCC is nestled upon approx 5 acres of property. One of

The largest Paved Parking Area in the Town of Mount Hope. A baseball/Softball/ Utility Field with Dugouts and Bleachers.

Another large Playing Field, a Park Area (with an Area planned for Raised Gardens and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)). Future Benches, flowers, Gardens, and Walkways.

\*The OSCC Grounds are in between the Village Park and the Town Park and can easily become part of the path connecting the two, as recommended in this report. The OSCC Grounds are mentioned in the Village of Park Plans designed by Consultants and Approved by the Village.

Page 17.

**“...Another important function of this vision would be to further define the two important trail networks that have been identified as opportunities for the Community.**

- **First is the Otisville-Mount Hope Trail Network.**

The recently created OSCC's 101 year old building and grounds lies directly between the Village Park and the Town Park.

The Consultant's Design of the Otisville Veteran's Memorial Park and the Town's \$30,000 "Maser" Report both mention the closeness to each other as being a benefit to the Community.

It will be a natural fit to include the OSCC in the middle of the **Local Trail Network**. The grounds can be used for an exercise path, with Stations to do other exercises, an information center, a parking lot, a pass through, or a shortened loop.

- **“...Next the Extension of the Heritage Trail**

The recently created OSCC is one block from where the Heritage Trail will come thru the Village. It can be a starting/finishing point. An intersection. An Information Center. An Air-Conditioned rest area, or even in the future, a café'.

- **Closeness to the Railroad Station**

The OSCC is within a half mile of the Metro North Railroad. Available Local Taxi service and other pick ups makes the potential of the OSCC even more attractable.

Page 41.

### **Recreation**

The OSCC is poised to be the newest Premier, Recreation location in the Town of Mount Hope.

This historic brick building and grounds have been the center of the Community's recreation since it was built 101 years ago, until 10 years ago, when the MVCSD abandoned it and gave it to the Town of Mount Hope, when the School District built the new Elementary School on Mount Hope Road.

The Town Board at the time had the vision to see this building as the asset that it is. With little money to dedicate to the school, it remained empty while its future was debated. With 3 Public Elections held, the Town of Citizens of the Town of Mount Hope successfully voted to **1. keep the Building, 2. to turn it into a Community Center, and 3. to sell it to the Non- Profit FOTOS. It was written into the deed to be a Community Center and that's what it will be.**

For these reasons I believe and truly hope, that the Master Plan Committee will consider adding the **Old School Community Center (OSCC)** as part of the **2017 Master Plan of the Town of Mount Hope.**

The FOTOS Board of Directors has not officially met since this Public Hearing was scheduled, therefore I don't have an official statement from us, but many of the Board members feel the same as I do and I'm sure many of the volunteers and citizens that have already come out to support us, would expect to see it included...

Page 20. **Groundwater Protection**

**"...Currently Concerned... about a Proposal be the City of Middletown and Orange County to develop a well system on the County owned "Indigot Lands" (Should this be the Indigot Watershed?)**

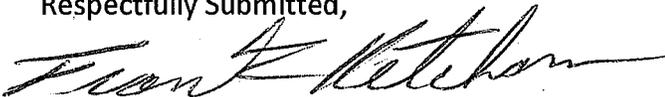
This Proposal has already become a reality. At 1,000,000 gal/day plus, this has a great potential to have a direct affect on Mount Hope. Please update this to be more proactive.

There have been no studies... just hear say. The Town's Engineer's have been hired to protect us. We are an "Interested Party". Have we received any of the past data that has been used to steal this water from us?

Have our County Legislators stepped up for us?

Commission an independent Aquifer Study. Now.

Respectfully Submitted,



Frank Ketcham

Mount Hope Resident

FOTOS/Old School Community Center Board of Directors



Engineers  
Planners  
Surveyors  
Landscape  
Architects  
Environmental  
Scientists

Engineering  
For Tomorrow's  
Challenges

*Return to  
FRANK KATCHANA*

Former  
**Minisink Valley Elementary  
School**

*Village of Otisville, Orange County, New York*

**Site Evaluation**

*Prepared By:*

**MASER CONSULTING P.A.**

1607 Route 300  
Suite 101  
Newburgh, N.Y. 12550  
[www.maserconsulting.com](http://www.maserconsulting.com)

*And*

**VERTICON**  
LTD

24 Gilbert Street Extension  
Monroe, N.Y. 10950  
[www.verticon.net](http://www.verticon.net)

January 15, 2010

*This was a \$30,000 report the Town  
had done.*

## CREATING A RURAL CENTER



With assistance from the Orange County Department of Planning under the direction of Mr. David Church and his staff, we are able to make various observations that, by using good planning practices and successful local case studies, you can evaluate the benefit of the potential adaptive re-use of the former school building. ~~This could add sound and beneficial services to support the local tax base and expand business and recreational activities.~~



The landscape permits a new center for intensifying an emerging pattern of mixed use occupancies. (For example, a re-located Town Hall including possibly Village offices or other civic uses, i.e. senior center, YMCA, various types of mixed use office space or a center for aspiring artists could fit into such a facility.) The center is naturally surrounded by homes and businesses that are suitable for walkable neighborhoods. A conceptual site plan has been prepared to depict some potential site improvements for site access, parking, circulation and screening (see attached Concept Plan). An assumed office use was utilized in preparing the conceptual plan as an office generates higher site demands.



This idea is one of many smart growth planning concepts supported by the Orange County Department of Planning and is adopted around the country. Your community must build a consensus on where to grow and in what capacity. Good planning considers anticipating future growth corridors and areas typically where public utilities are available such as water, sewer, power, drainage, etc.



The subject property is within walking distance to an environmental feature, Veterans Memorial Park comprised of 33.6± acres. This green space and public facility is about 200-250 feet northeast of the school site. The Orange County Department of Planning is currently working on a proposed zoning map for the Village of Otisville (attached is a draft copy). The map provides a visualization of proposed "smart development" in a way that compliments your C-1 central commercial district as well as your 33± acre park land property. The Planning Departments mission, amongst others, is to help the development and proper expansion of quality Committees.



May 7, 2014

**Project Funding for the Town of Mount Hope**

On April 28, 2014 Mr. Victor Cornelius of Endeavor, Inc. visited KC Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C. in Circleville, New York to meet with Mr. Chad Volpe, Town of Mount Hope Supervisor, and representatives from our office.

Mr. Cornelius explained his background in grant writing and his experience in obtaining state and federal funding for municipal projects in the Hudson Valley area. He has been able to secure millions of dollars to help local towns finance projects that include but are not limited to wastewater treatment facility upgrades, sewer collection system upgrades, and construction of new community centers.

Mr. Cornelius reviewed different options that municipalities have when applying for funding.

On April 26, 2014 Governor Cuomo and the U.S Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced the federal approval of the New York State Disaster Recovery Action Plan to help struggling homeowners and businesses following Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene, and Tropical Storm Lee. "Funded through HUD's Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG – DR) program, New York State's recovery action plan calls for a combined \$1.7 billion investment in a variety of housing, infrastructure, and business recovery activities".<sup>1</sup> HUD is using federal money to assist with the funding of projects at a 100% match that were caused by major storm events or that can prevent and/or assist during a future major storm event.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) is another federal program offering low-cost and low or no interest financing for a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects. CWSRF applications are received by the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC).

On a state level, the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) serves as the single entry point for access to economic development funding. It was created by Governor Cuomo to streamline and expedite the grant application process. By applying through the CFA, many programs and grants can be selected for consideration depending on the type of project.

<sup>1</sup> Governor Cuomo and HUD Announce Approval of New York State's Disaster Recovery Action Plan, April 26, 2013.

The Town of Mount Hope described six projects that can possibly receive funding through state and federal grants:

- 1) Hidden Valley Sanitary and Storm Sewer
- 2) Hidden Valley Bond Reduction
- 3) Park Barn
- 4) Pool Building
- 5) Otisville School
- 6) 4-H Park Facility

1) Hidden Valley Sanitary and Storm Sewer

Storm sewer repairs are necessary at the Hidden Valley Subdivision. Improvement to the storm sewers can provide benefits to the sanitary sewer system by preventing inflow and infiltration. Funding is available for areas that are served by sanitary and storm sewers or that were damaged by past storm events as part of the HUD Disaster Recovery program. The Town of Mount Hope can apply for 100% match funding in an effort to be better prepared for major storm events. Funding can also be awarded to the town as a result of infrastructure hardship that was caused by past storms.

2) Hidden Valley Bond Reduction

The Hidden Valley Wastewater Treatment Facility was upgraded in 2008. The upgrade of the plant is being paid for by the Town of Mount Hope through bonding. The Town may be able to pursue low interest loans at a 50% market interest rate through the Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) to pay off the existing bond.

3) Park Barn

The Town of Mount Hope is considering installing bathrooms in the lower level of the barn to provide sanitary facilities for the public without having to cross the entire park. The facilities must be ADA compliant. There are potential funding sources for adding ADA facilities and removing barriers for accessibility.

#### 4) Pool Building

The existing pool building behind the Police Department is the potential site for a youth center. The building is bisected by the Town and Village boundary. Due to its proximity to both the Town and the Village, the building renovations could be funded through community block grants. It would be a strong candidate because of the consolidated services aspect of serving both the municipalities and because of the intended use of the space. This project could also be a candidate of funding through the HUD Disaster Recovery program. Allowing the building to act as an emergency shelter by providing cots and power via a generator, the community center could receive federal funding.

#### 5) Otisville School



The school building could be converted for municipal use and if the renovations include an emergency services center, the project could potentially be funded through the HUD Disaster Recovery program. Funding could also be provided due to the fact that damage to the building was caused by past storm events. There is also a possibility of being granted money through the Monsanto Fund which invests in programs across rural America. It was also recommended by Mr. Cornelius to begin a "Friends of Otisville Elementary School" group on the Town website to begin gaining interest in converting the space into something useful for the Town. The group could eventually be turned into a local development corporation (LDC) in an effort to obtain funding from the government as well as private organizations. This should only be considered if the Town is intending to maintain ownership of the building.

#### 6) 4-H Park Facility

4-H is a youth development organization where attendees engage in hands-on learning activities in the areas of science, citizenship, and healthy living. The organization is looking to relocate to the Town of Mount Hope. 4-H would be established on 63 acres of land that the Town owns and this new facility could possibly receive funding through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).