

Town of Wallkill

Draft

Comprehensive Plan

Adopted – July 28, 2005



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**Town of Wallkill
Comprehensive Plan
July 2005
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

WALLKILL is a growing community that faces the difficult challenge of managing development while retaining its unique natural and rural characteristics. This comprehensive plan attempts to balance the various demands and interests to ensure that future development is consistent with the overall vision for the town.

This update builds upon the foundation set by the previous Master Plan of 1974 and is intended to guide the town's growth for the next 5 to 10 years. The Comprehensive Plan serves as the town's official policy document, providing a set of general planning principles relating to issues of land use, natural resources, housing, and economic development (among others) to guide future growth and development. The analysis and recommendations in this plan will provide the foundation for future zoning updates and amendments, the development of new regulatory mechanisms, and other public investment strategies.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The plan was conceived in order that the Town of Wallkill may remain an attractive community in which to live and work, with stable or expanding property values and strong social and economic health. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to realize the community's vision for the future and guide the town's growth through the provision of orderly, coordinated and beneficial development.

The plan is intended to be a "living document" and should be reviewed periodically and updated on a regular basis to ensure that it continues to reflect the long-range planning objectives of the community. Each year, the town should conduct a progress review detailing achievements, steps completed on goals, and re-set or confirm implementation priorities.

IMPLEMENTATION

To realize Wallkill's vision, the Comprehensive Plan must be actively applied, revisited, and used as a framework through which decisions are made, priorities established and actions taken that advance the town's goals and objectives. While the Wallkill Town Board will take the leadership role in this effort, the Comprehensive Plan calls upon citizens, civic organizations, institutions and businesses to coordinate their efforts with a shared sense of direction and partnership. It is recommended that the town board or a subcommittee/task force devote time each month to comprehensive plan implementation and establish sub-committees for various tasks (e.g., zoning update task force, open space planning, economic development, etc.). *Please note*

that plan implementation is outlined and detailed within the Strategic Plan section of this document.

PLAN LAYOUT

The plan is set up in six sections – Introduction (this section), the Vision Statement which highlights the broad goals for Wallkill’s future, the Land Use Plan where the recommended growth pattern for the town is presented, the Strategic Plan which lists the specific recommendations to implement the plan, the Conclusion, and an Appendix where most of the demographic and background data can be found.

PLANNING PROCESS: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Town of Wallkill mobilized a significant effort to involve the entire community in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan. Several public input meetings were held, all of which were highly publicized and well attended. The public involvement process began with a kickoff meeting on June 30, 2002 and continued with several smaller, individual focus group meeting on November 14, 2002. In each of these meetings, the goal was to understand the broad array of issues faced by the town and begin to think about potential visions for the future.

Since the outset of the process, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) held monthly and bi-weekly meetings open to the public. The CPAC also sponsored a public forum on November 6, 2003 to solicit public input in an informal exchange of ideas regarding the future vision of the town.

These venues allowed the public to express their concerns, desires and recommendations at critical points in the planning process. The forums introduced the planning concepts to the public and gave residents an opportunity to officially contribute their “vision” for the future of the town. Specific issues warranting attention at these meetings included the following:

- The amount of future development that will occur in the town and its impact on remaining open space, the character of existing development and the need for additional town services.
- The need to protect the area’s natural resources, including lakes, rivers, wetlands, and scenic vistas. These features make an important contribution to the quality of life in the town; development densities should be limited in areas that contain such natural features.
- Potential conflicts between existing PID zoning that allows most uses and the desire of some residents to limit future uses to mostly low density residential.

- The quality, function, scale and appearance of future development, both residential and nonresidential.

A workshop meeting with the Town Board and CPAC was held on September 4, 2003 to obtain additional comment and input; information and dialogue was again shared during two workshops with the Town Board, Planning Board and CPAC on December 18, 2003, and January 15, 2004. An additional workshop/discussion session with Town Board, Planning Board, and CPAC representatives was held on February 17, 2005.

A final public workshop was held on May 12th, 2005 to review the draft plan with a focus on the Character Areas map and land use plan. At this meeting, participants heard a brief plan summary and then formed break-out groups looking at individual sections of the town (east, west, and north). Comments made at the workshop helped with refinement of the character areas map and, after consideration by the CPAC, many suggestions were integrated into the plan.

During the comprehensive planning process, hundreds of citizens expressed candid views about the Town of Wallkill – its present strengths and weaknesses, as well as future opportunities and threats. In listening to what citizens said, broad areas of consensus emerged concerning the kind of community they want the town to become. These expressed community values, priorities and aspirations provide the basis for a shared vision of Wallkill's future. The recommended strategies for addressing the policies and goals identified by the CPAC and shaped by public comment form the plan's final *Vision Statement*. This *Vision Statement* defines citizens' expectations and directions for the future, frames the mandate for the Comprehensive Plan and provides the benchmark to measure progress.

CHAPTER II: VISION STATEMENT

The Town of Wallkill seeks to balance a healthy economic environment with quality residential and commercial character while protecting the integrity of its natural resources and infrastructure. In addition, the town will work towards achieving the following principles:

- Development practices and other activities, if any, will not lead to pollution of the air, water, light, or soil; nor increase the hazards of soil erosion and flooding; terrain; streams; marshes; and areas subject to flooding should be preserved.
- The establishment of a pleasant environment for the benefit and social well-being of the residents; ensure compatibility between residential and non-residential uses with appropriate buffer requirements.
- A balance of land uses in the town to strengthen the local tax base and its effect on school taxes.
- The establishment of employment opportunities and encourage the expansion, diversification and integration of existing employment activity.
- Conservation of the historical, cultural and natural resources in the town.
- Development and implementation of policies, incentives and regulations that will support preservation of farmland and the natural environment, ensure the provision and protection of an adequate supply of beneficial open space, maximize the recreational value of natural areas for all citizens and concentrate development where infrastructure exists.
- Establishment of policies, strategies, and programs to limit future increases in school taxes.

Residential Land Uses

The Town of Wallkill seeks a balanced diversity of housing opportunities and types to meet the needs of its current and future residents. The Town seeks to maintain its existing supply of housing, including its variety of price ranges, to accommodate residents of all income groups and all ages.

Commercial Land Uses

The Town of Wallkill seeks to provide a balance of commercial opportunities to reflect the local factors of the area and individual sites and recognize regional, town and neighborhood center opportunities. Commercial development should be directed to locations appropriate for the scale and intensity of commercial activity consistent with the land use plan. Further, development

should complement the community's needs and enhance the overall quality of life for Wallkill residents.

Industrial Land Uses

The Town of Wallkill seeks to ensure that a wide range of industrial and related uses contributes to the goals of accommodating diversified economic growth of the town, promoting efficient land utilization, equalizing the tax base through a balance of ratables within the five school district, and generating new employment opportunities, without adversely affecting either the rural character of the town or the natural environment or amenity of residential areas.

Open Space/Agriculture and the Natural Environment

The Town of Wallkill is committed to conserving its open space, natural, and agricultural resources. This includes preserving existing farms, safeguarding the livelihoods of the town's farmers and protecting the town's natural resources as a critical component of quality-of-life.

Furthermore, the town seeks to preserve its open spaces and scenic vistas, minimize harm to the local landscape, protect and limit the fragmentation of habitats for wild animals of all species from development, protect watercourses, wetlands, steeply sloped lands, and establish an integrated, well-connected open space system.

Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities

The Town of Wallkill seeks to improve the quality of life for its residents offering a variety of recreational experiences, providing quality facilities and services, protecting natural and historic areas, and developing educational opportunities throughout the Town for a diverse and growing population.

Infrastructure

The existing utility infrastructure should be maintained. The town of Wallkill seeks to support its existing settled neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas by maintaining existing public sewer capabilities while ensuring sound environmental operation of private septic systems. The Town will continue to provide its residents with adequate, accessible and efficient community services and facilities for the support and benefit of the community. The town is committed to providing and maintaining an efficient, safe and well-maintained network of roadways and public transportation to serve local and through-travelers, especially residents, businesses and visitors. The Town is also committed to maintaining the rural flavor of Wallkill by protecting the character of many of its rural and scenic roadways.

Economic Development

The Town of Wallkill seeks to sensitively develop its economic sector with a diversified base of business and industry consistent with the other goals of this Plan so as to strengthen the Town's tax base and to provide employment opportunities for area residents while preserving the Town's rural residential character. The appearance of and ease of access to, local business areas is of critical importance. Commercial development should contribute to and enhance the town's character and identity and not result in adverse environmental impacts.

Education

The Town of Wallkill seeks, to the extent feasible, to situate business (impacting ratables) equitably throughout the five school districts. This is to be done to financially support the education of the students who live in the Town as well as to lift the burden from the local taxpayers.

CHAPTER III: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The future land use plan is the centerpiece of the Comprehensive Plan. It synthesizes all of the goals and policies into a single, coherent vision. The overall objective of the future land use plan is to provide guidance for the town's land use regulations – primarily the zoning ordinance. In order to implement the plan, a thorough update of many local land use regulations will be required. These tasks and activities are outlined within the strategic plan section of this document.

General Land Use Concepts addressed in the land use plan

The land use plan is intended to direct growth to areas where efficient infrastructure exists and to minimize adverse impacts upon environmental resources. It is based on a series of concepts and principles designed to help the town achieve its far-reaching vision:

1. Limit the adverse impact of growth in outlying areas and retain the predominantly rural residential character of the town.
2. Focus higher density growth in areas with sewer and water infrastructure
3. Protect natural resources such as scenic views and corridors, natural resources (wetlands, steep slopes, ridgelines, etc.) and open space through a broad regulatory and incentive-based program
4. Promote sound commercial and industrial activities in designated areas appropriately related to residential neighborhoods. Address transitions between zoning districts, buffers, and uses incompatible with surrounding areas
5. Ensure that the design of future development is consistent with the unique characteristics of Wallkill
6. Ensure that the town has the tools available to plan and manage growth and change and provide adequate public services to the community

Land Use Character Areas

The land use plan has been divided into several character areas – representing general land and development concepts with similar natural, cultural, or development features meant to outline future land use patterns. These character areas do not represent specific zoning boundaries, but rather, broad development, land use, and conservation categories. Nevertheless, these character areas should be considered and further refined when making updates to the town’s zoning ordinance.

Rural and Residential Character Areas

- Agriculture/Rural
- Suburban/Low Density Residential
- Suburban/Moderate Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential

Commercial Character Areas

- Neighborhood Center
- Town Center
- Enterprise
- Northern Enterprise
- Office, Research, and Medical

Corridor Character Areas

- Route 17 and 76 Business Corridor
- Route 211 East Corridor
- Route 211 West Corridor
- Scenic Corridors (Route 302 and Goshen Turnpike)
- Stream, water body, wetland and water resource areas

Rural and Residential Character Areas

Agriculture/Rural

The Agricultural/Rural character areas are primarily found on the outskirts of town and are, for the most part, zoned R-A. Low density residential and agriculture are the dominant land uses along with a significant amount of park and recreation resources available (public and private). There is limited public infrastructure within the character area. As such, the majority of recent development has consisted of single-family detached homes on lots ranging from 2 to 5+ acres in size.

The Agricultural/Rural character areas represent a special link to the farming history, natural resources, and unique characteristics of Wallkill.

As such, future development should occur at a low density and special efforts should be made to mitigate environmental impacts and protect the area's rural character (woodlands, farmlands, historic settlements, etc). Further, uses should reflect the diverse activities that contribute to and not detract from the area's quality of life including residential, agriculture, recreation, and small, sensitively-designed commercial operations to support local residents. The conservation subdivision style of development (an enhanced form of cluster) should be promoted as the preferred style of residential development within this character area.

There are several additional options the town could implement to help manage growth and the character of new development within this character area including lowering overall densities, utilizing amenity zoning (or transfer of development rights) to transfer development to designated growth areas, providing incentives for development that meets high standards or provides locally-desired amenities such as permanently protected open space, and promoting or requiring a conservation subdivision approach to development as the preferred method of residential subdivision (as discussed above).

For residential projects that follow the conservation subdivision approach, the town should continue to use the two (2) acre minimum lot size and soils formula for calculating density. This will result in significant protection of important resources and enhanced site design without changing the number of allowed units. Projects that do not use the conservation approach should be calculated using a slightly larger minimum lot size (3 acres) as well as the soils formula to limit adverse impact on rural character. Overall, once development



Figure 1: Farms, open space, and scenic roads contribute to the pleasant and unique experience found within the agricultural/rural character areas of Wallkill.

constraints, infrastructure, and other site development factors are considered it is likely that the development density within this character area will be around one unit for every four acres. *Note: this figure represents an average density that takes into account open space, development constraints, and other site features and does not represent minimum lot size.*

Suburban/Low Density Residential

These areas serve as a transition from the more built-up areas of the center of town to the rural and agricultural periphery. There is a mix of housing types and lot sizes and some, but limited public infrastructure.

Suburban/Low Density Residential character areas are closer to major highways and collectors but still retain the unique characteristics and qualities typical of the rural areas of town. Currently, much of this character area is zoned R-2, a designation which is more appropriate for sections of town with sewer and water infrastructure. As there is currently no zoning district that matches this description, minimum lot size and dimensional figures should be determined by the town during implementation of this plan. However, overall future residential development within the Suburban/Low Density areas should occur at a density of approximately 1 unit for every 2 or 3 acres, particularly in areas without public infrastructure.

Similar to the Agriculture/Rural character areas, special effort should be made to mitigate development impacts to environmental and cultural resources using traditional zoning techniques, amenity zoning, and high quality site planning through conservation subdivision. The conservation subdivision approach, as previously discussed, should be the preferred method of residential development within this character area. Furthermore, in those areas with demonstrated capacity for public infrastructure such as sewer, water, and highway access new hamlet areas or neighborhood centers could be established.

Suburban/Moderate Density

These areas, primarily zoned R-2, are generally located in and around the center of town where public services and infrastructure are readily available (or relatively easily extended). The Suburban/Moderate density character areas should continue to house a substantial number of future Wallkill residents. Primary issues within this character area relate to transitions between residential and adjacent commercial and industrial development, particularly where current Planned Interchange Development zoning is currently found; traffic and automobile congestion; a need for pedestrian amenities, and overall maintenance of neighborhood quality.

Future development within this residential character area should include internal connections, small-scale mixed uses to support local residents, and pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks and street trees. Furthermore, development should be encouraged within existing sewer and water district areas prior to expansion of infrastructure. This character area should continue to be typified by pleasant residential neighborhoods with an average density of 1 unit for every $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ acre. For projects using the conservation subdivision technique, density should be calculated using the same minimum lot size figures as allowed under current zoning (0.75 acre). For projects that do not utilize the conservation approach the minimum lot size should be slightly larger (1.5 acre).



Figure 2 Conservation subdivisions could include single family homes on small lots like the one above. The entire neighborhood area would be surrounded by open space and conservation areas.

Medium Density Residential

These areas are generally located close to the City of Middletown and have access to all public infrastructure and resources. Currently zoned R-1 for the most part, existing lots within the Medium Density Residential character area are typically small and housing types vary including single family detached, duplexes, condominiums, and apartments.

Future medium density growth should be achieved through a variety of residential types including single- and two-family housing (attached and detached) on small lots, townhomes, and a limited number of small multi-family units with municipal infrastructure and services. In addition, this area can serve to provide the town with affordable and alternative housing opportunities (e.g., workforce housing, senior housing, etc.). Housing that provides options for ownership rather than rental should be the dominant residential development type. These uses and concepts could be encouraged by the town through density bonuses or other incentives. Additionally, within this character area a small amount of moderately-sized commercial uses are allowed to serve local residents.



Figure 3: Residential development patterns within the Medium Density character area could look like this – single family detached units on small lots

In order to achieve a livable, pleasant environment within this area (the densest residential area in town), the conservation subdivision technique should be implemented here. Future density within the

Medium Density Residential character area should be lower than what is currently allowed within the R-1 zoning district, particularly for large multiple dwelling projects. For single-family projects, the minimum lot size should remain the same (12,500 square feet) where conservation subdivision techniques are employed. Otherwise, this figure should be slightly increased. Furthermore, yard setbacks, height limits, and other dimensional requirements should be reviewed to ensure that housing needs of the community can be met through a variety of housing styles and options.

Primary issues in these areas are the enhancement of the built environment including pedestrian amenities, aesthetics and design, reconciling incompatibilities among adjacent land uses (as above), and mitigating the impacts of high density development on the municipal and school infrastructure.

Commercial/Business Character Areas

Neighborhood Center

The Neighborhood Center areas describe the small mixed-use hamlets of Wallkill typified by Circleville and Scotchtown.



Figure 4: Intersection of Goshen Turnpike and Route 302 in Circleville, one of Wallkill's unique and historic hamlets.

Future development in the neighborhood center character areas should be organized around focus areas which contain shopping, services, recreation, and office and institutional facilities needed to support the neighborhoods. These facilities would be ideally located in close proximity to one another, so that all the essential facilities for the neighborhood are within walkable distances.

Businesses within the Neighborhood Center character areas are harmonious with nearby residential uses and are limited in size and use so as to minimize impact (e.g., traffic, noise, etc.).

Typical commercial uses include small grocery or drug stores, small offices, and restaurants that serve and anchor surrounding residential neighborhoods. Inappropriate business uses

would include auto-related service businesses, manufacturing and warehousing, and similar intense commercial operations.

The primary advantages offered by the neighborhood centers are their pedestrian-oriented nature, the sense of community offered by a highly connected street layout, and the convenient proximity to shopping, services and parks.

The Wallkill Character Areas Map (map 1) shows a total of seven neighborhood centers. However, the town should refine these locations as well as encourage and investigate the establishment of new centers to serve growing areas of town as appropriate.

Office and Research Character Area

This character area provides concentrated areas of employment opportunities such as corporate headquarters as well as research and development, medical, and educational facilities serving a local, community, or regional market area. The Office and Research character area also provides a transition or buffer between more intensive retail and service centers and residential land uses or between major arterials and adjacent residential neighborhoods. Landscaping and open space requirements ensure that development is in keeping with a “campus-style” setting and uses are limited to those which do not produce noise, air, or other environmental nuisances. Furthermore, all development should be required to carefully consider and protect sensitive natural resources including but not limited to streams, wetlands, and steep slopes.

The Office and Research character area is located in areas with full public infrastructure. Existing nodes of office uses are already established in the Town along I-84 and Crystal Run Road. Currently, there is no corresponding zoning district (a new Office and Research Park zoning district is proposed).

Town Center

This character area presents opportunities for retail establishments, which provide sales and services for a wide range of consumer needs. Typical existing and future uses here include large-scale regional retail businesses such as the regional mall, major retail outlets, office complexes, hotels and convention facilities, and entertainment centers with supporting goods and services. Some areas of the town center are also appropriate for higher density residential, mixed use, and senior housing.

The area is located at the intersection of major arterials or highways and is easily accessible to users throughout the region. The area



Figure 5: Example of a commercial structure that would be in keeping with the Neighborhood Center vision



Figure 6: Crystal Run Healthcare, a typical commercial use found within the Office and Research Character Area.



Figure 7: Infill within the Town Center should include pedestrian amenities including sidewalks, street trees, and benches and enhance the experience of being within the town's focal areas

includes the physical and infrastructural conditions to sustain large-scale commercial development. However, traffic is and will continue to be a growing concern for the town center area.

The Town Center character area should be used to maximize and enhance the existing regional commercial areas of the town and to create a regional identity. As with many other character areas, aesthetics, landscaping, and the improvement of pedestrian resources are key planning issues.

Enterprise

The Enterprise character area zoning district allows for both commercial and industrial uses such as office buildings, warehouses, and light manufacturing complexes. Broadly speaking, this character area is located along portions of I-84 in the

southern section of town and County Route 78 just north of the City of Middletown.

The intent of the Enterprise character area is to provide an environment conducive to the development of light industrial and complementary commercial uses, including research and



Figure 8: Businesses within the Enterprise areas should be sited with minimal impact on the surrounding environment. Performance standards should be used to limit the adverse impact of new business operations on surrounding areas.

development institutions, professional and administrative facilities, concentrated business/employment parks, warehousing and storage/distribution, low-intensity processing, assembling and wholesaling uses which can maintain high standards of appearance, including open spaces and landscaping; limit external effects such as noise and odors; and in some cases do not require a high level of public services. Non-nuisance type of manufacturing operations should be

permitted, but should conform to stringent performance standards so as to minimize adverse impacts associated with the use, particularly related to adjacent land uses.

Northern Enterprise (Route 17M and 17K)

The northern enterprise area presents the town with a unique opportunity for future economic development and growth. This area, situated along Route 17, has excellent transportation access to the surrounding region, New York State and beyond. The primary land use classification is vacant with some commercial, industrial, agriculture, and residential scattered through the area.

Future uses here should be those that balance the needs of the community in terms of economic growth, local employment opportunities, offsetting property taxes, and the protection of natural and cultural resources. For example, while the area is well suited for warehouse and distribution businesses, the bucolic setting could also serve as a wonderful corporate campus environment.



Figure 9: Development within the Northern Enterprise areas should fit into the surrounding environment and leave as much existing vegetation as possible.

Primary planning concerns for this area include limited sewer and water infrastructure (the area well outside the town's existing sewer and water districts) and the potential adverse impacts from growth on the rural qualities and scenic beauty of the area and existing residences. Future development must be sensitive to the wonderful natural resources found in this part of town including the wonderful views of the Shawangunks, the Shawangunk Kill River and other water resources, woodlands and natural habitats, and the overall rural character of the area.

Corridor Character Areas

Route 17 and Route 76 Business Corridor

This north-south corridor bisects the town and serves as an important link to the Industrial character area in the northern part of town. Primary issues related to this character area revolve around form and efficiency. Excellent transportation infrastructure allows the corridor to serve as a support area for larger commercial and industrial zones and surrounding residential areas. However, limited access to sewer or water restricts development density and use. Future uses for this character area should



Figure 10 Existing business along Bloomingburg Road (County Route 76) within the business corridor character area.

include those normally classified as light industry and general business. However, the character, form, and design of new development should be carefully planned and reviewed including but not limited to height, structural design, landscaping, setbacks, coordination with adjacent uses, and access management. One implementation option to consider - performance-based zoning - focuses on the form and impacts of development based on its specific setting rather than a district-wide minimum standard and could be an appropriate tool to help the town achieve its goals for this area.



Figure 11: Route 211 in Wallkill looking west into the City of Middletown.

Route 211 Corridor East

The eastern segment of 211 through Wallkill is the prime retail corridor of the town. Most of the larger retail operations including the Galleria Mall are accessed off of this roadway. The 211 Corridor East character area is currently characterized by auto-oriented commercial development and general business uses such as shopping centers, service stations, restaurants, and small service businesses. It is envisioned that this pattern will continue, and may include a mix of relatively higher density housing along or surrounding the corridor.

The primary issues in this character area relate to the look and efficiency of development particularly related to design, landscaping, traffic, and transportation access management. The essential function of this area is to create a pleasant and efficient environment for general retail shopping and business. Future development should fit an

enhanced aesthetic through updated design, setback, access, and landscaping requirements as well as architectural standards. *(Note: The 211 Corridor East character area also encompasses the surrounding commercial uses along East Main Street and some of the other areas in the vicinity currently classified as “General Business” in the town’s zoning ordinance.)*

Route 211 Corridor West

The western segment of 211 is characterized by a lower density of commercial development interspersed with residential, agriculture, and other uses. Outside of the City of Middletown, there are limited sewer or water services here and future development should reflect this through a relatively low intensity pattern. This corridor serves as a transition from urban to rural character areas and should not

transform into a strip-style development pattern. Rather, development should be focused in nodes at key locations near the City of Middletown and the neighborhood center area around Howells Depot. In addition to protection of rural character, throughout this corridor, similar to other commercial areas in Wallkill, landscaping, site design, and access management are key issues to be addressed.

Route 78 and Mount Hope Corridor

This corridor is located just west of the City of Middletown and is home to a number of institutional and school facilities. Current zoning is R-1 (high density residential) surrounded by lower density

residential zones to the west. The corridor includes a significant amount of open land that has limited development potential due to environmental constraints (slopes, wetlands, etc.). Recently, a few commercial uses have located along the corridor in areas adjacent to the city where access to municipal services is available.



Figure 12: Future commercial development should be appropriate to the surrounding setting. Here, a new office building in New Hampshire fits into the local architectural style.

Future commercial growth along this corridor should be located to the east of Route 78 closer to the City of Middletown, avoiding major constraint areas. Additionally, the town should investigate the possibility to locate a small neighborhood center or “country hamlet” to serve the residential areas of Pocatello. Any such commercial development should be small in scale, and include only non-nuisance types of uses (for example, small professional offices and restaurants to serve local residents would be appropriate while gas stations and similar uses would not fit the vision for this area).

Scenic Corridors (Route 302 and Goshen Turnpike)

Wallkill is home to a number of beautiful, scenic roads including Route 302 and Goshen Turnpike. For example, in the 1988 Orange County Comprehensive Plan entitled "Preserving Scenic Qualities in Orange County," the "Panoramic views from Scotchtown Turnpike near Circleville" was one of 11 recognized views in the County. Further, Route 302 links directly to the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway and is a State Scenic Road from Route 17K (just north of Wallkill) up to Pine Bush.ⁱ

Future development along these and similar routes in Wallkill should pay careful attention to the history and beauty of the corridors. Structures should not disturb views and viewsheds, and the overall rural character should be preserved through a variety of measures including roadside setbacks and buffers. New buildings should “fit in” with the existing character and be designed at an appropriate scale and style. A scenic corridor overlay is one tool that can help the town ensure that future development respects the unique identity and special characteristics of these routes.



Figure 13: The beauty and history of Wallkill can still be easily seen along its many scenic roads.

It is important to note that in addition to the corridors listed above, there are many other wonderful and scenic rural roads within the Town of Wallkill. As the town moves through implementation of the plan, these additional resources should be formally identified and recognized and then considered for inclusion in a similar type of protection strategy.

Wallkill’s Water Resources

The Town of Wallkill’s water resources, its rivers, streams, water bodies, reservoirs, and wetlands, are special features, important for quality of life, recreation, drinking water, and natural habitats. The town should pay particular attention to the protection and enhancement of these resources. A comprehensive water protection strategy should be initiated and could include: efforts to increase awareness of how homeowners and individuals can contribute to water protection (e.g., limiting use of pesticides, performing regular septic system inspection and maintenance, etc.); conservation of sensitive resources through purchase of land, easements, and development rights; promotion of “low impact development” techniques which reduce



Figure 14: the Wallkill River during the Spring flood season.

or eliminate off-site stormwater; and regulation of uses and activities within the town’s water resource areas (e.g., stream and wetland buffers).

CHAPTER IV: THE STRATEGIC PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION AND PRIMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strategic Plan is the “action plan” for the Town of Wallkill Comprehensive Plan, outlining steps required to implement the land use plan and goals derived through the planning process. The following actions summarize the plan’s “primary recommendations.” Implementation of this plan and the community’s vision of the future should begin with a prioritization of these efforts:

- Overall plan implementation: Establish a committee or task force to prioritize the comprehensive plan recommendations and initialize implementation. (note: the town board should assume lead responsibility, however, the task force could also include members of different boards and committees such as the comprehensive plan review committee, the zoning board of appeals, the planning board, and the conservation commission as well as non-affiliated individuals and volunteers).

The town should also review and update the plan on a regular basis to ensure that it continues to reflect the long-range planning objectives of the community. Specifically, the town should conduct an annual progress review detailing achievements, steps completed on goals, and re-set or confirm implementation priorities

- Zoning update: Establish a zoning update task force to work specifically on amending the town’s development regulations. Such a task force should include individuals from various town boards and committees including but not limited to the town board, planning board, zoning board of appeals, other sub-committees, unaffiliated town volunteers, and town staff as appropriate (perhaps approximately 5 – 7 members).
- Affordable housing: Establish an affordable housing task force to evaluate and implement a program based on both regulatory (inclusionary housing ordinance) and incentive mechanisms (density bonus) to advance quality housing for existing and future Wallkill residents.
- Landscaping and site design: Ensure for high quality site planning and design for commercial developments in Wallkill.

Review and enhance landscaping standards and the plan review process as well as site monitoring. Develop design guidelines for the town's major commercial corridors, beginning with Route 211 between the City of Middletown and Goshen Turnpike.

- Open space conservation: Continue and enhance the town's open space protection effort to include an identification and prioritization of land protection needs and resources. The program should also identify appropriate funding mechanisms including grants, develop regulatory mechanisms for sensitive features such as stream corridors, establish developer incentives to protect open space during the development process, and address stewardship needs for conservation areas.
- Natural resource protection: Continue efforts to protect the sensitive natural and cultural resources of Wallkill. This effort should be tied into the open space planning program discussed above. However, individual resources could receive special attention through regulations restricting or limiting development in stream corridors, wetlands and wetland buffers, natural habitats, steep slopes, scenic corridors, and viewsheds.

2. LAND USE AND GROWTH POLICIES

Proposed land use patterns are intended to accommodate future growth in harmony with the natural capabilities of the land and the ability of the town to adequately provide municipal services.

Wallkill's scenic and natural resources are among the town's primary assets. Future land use and development must proceed in such a way that these assets are protected and enhanced while establishing a built environment that is both functional and reflects the special characteristics of Wallkill.

In order to provide for development that fits the character of the surroundings, functions in efficient and coordinated fashion and supports the vitality of the community, the following land use implementation policies are recommended;

- A. Maintain a sound land use policy to regulate, preserve and guide further growth and development.
- B. Encourage orderly and attractive development of commercial and residential uses.
- C. Preserve the special rural, agricultural, and historical qualities of Wallkill
- D. Provide for efficient community services and infrastructure appropriate to the community's desired land use patterns

A. Maintain a sound land use policy to regulate, preserve and encourage further growth and development

As Wallkill grows and changes, the town and community must continue to adapt and establish policies that meet new challenges. The following recommendations outline the broadest actions the town must take to move this plan into implementation.

A.1 Evaluate and implement the land use plan

For the most part, the town's land use plan is realized and implemented through zoning and other development strategies that regulate how land is subdivided, built-upon, and utilized. The following section outlines a priority scheme for implementing the land use plan over the immediate, mid-term, and long-term time periods. Please note that each of these strategies is discussed in detail within appropriate sections of this strategic plan.

Immediate Level (within 4 – 6 months)

- Develop a prioritized agenda to make immediate changes to the town's land development regulations. Initial priorities include:
 - Address immediate issues related to the Planned Interchange Development (PID) district and the Manufacturing Industrial (MI) district.
 - Remove residential from the PID district as an allowed use
 - Establish a planned residential district as a floating zone for use within the PID in appropriate locations.
 - Develop performance guidelines for transition areas between residential and PID and MI districts
 - Develop Conservation Subdivision ordinance as the preferred method of residential development in Wallkill.
 - Review the R-1 district and make recommendations regarding density and use, particularly related to apartments and other high density residential uses. In addition, consider ways to promote homeownership opportunities for workforce housing and integrate the protection of open areas and natural resources into site planning.
- Provide the Planning Board with an enhanced toolkit to review new development applications.

Initial plan priorities include, among other actions, protecting the rural character of Wallkill through "Conservation Subdivisions" and addressing transition areas between commercial and residential areas.

- Utilize a professional landscape architect to assist the planning board during the subdivision and site plan review processes. Consider hiring a professional planner to assist with project review under SEQR (a cost which should be paid for by the applicant). The planner could also assist with identifying and remedying inconsistencies between zoning regulations and policies of the comprehensive plan.

Second level (initiate within 6 months)

- Continue to address the PID district
 - Establish new districts from the existing PID to match the character area map and descriptions
 - Continue to address transition areas in PID. Conduct neighborhood-level workshops to identify appropriate uses, intensity and scale for transition areas.
- Develop landscaping standards and guidelines for commercial and residential development
 - Incorporate standards for landscaping, architecture, signs and other aspects of development into the zoning ordinance to be reviewed by the planning board during the application process.
 - Develop design guidelines for commercial development, in particular for development along Route 211, as well as for residential areas.
- Initiate an affordable housing program and task force to address this issue. This should include a variety of tools including but not limited to inclusionary zoning, density bonuses, and amenity zoning (transfer of development rights), promotion of infill and housing rehabilitation, and other efforts and policies.
- Address sensitive environmental resources (stream corridors, wetlands, steep slopes, etc.) through regulations, education, and incentives.
- Work cooperatively with school districts and surrounding municipalities to limit increases in school taxes.
- Initiate an open space planning effort and development of a Greenprint plan highlighting priority lands for protection and funding.

Long term

- Continue implementation of the projects and recommendations listed in the strategic plan, including updating the town's zoning ordinance to match the comprehensive plan's character areas.
- Initiate a town-wide or area GEIS to determine the specific, cumulative impacts from development and build-out and

establish mitigation measures based on future costs and needs. If possible, this recommendation should be initiated along with the second level priorities (within six months)

- Conduct neighborhood center planning and update zoning as appropriate
- Address other important town resources such as rural corridors through appropriate zoning techniques (e.g., scenic road corridor overlays).
- Develop a park, recreation and trails plan to identify future recreation needs and opportunities.
- Develop design guidelines for development within the rural areas of town.
- Identify Comprehensive Plan update needs.

A.2 Protect the natural environment from the adverse impacts of development

As change and growth occurs, maintaining the natural environment will be a key component to maintaining a high quality of life in Wallkill. The town must work to identify and protect natural resource areas throughout the town so they remain community assets for future generations. The following strategies should be incorporated into land use and site planning to ensure that the unique natural qualities of the community are preserved.

- Initiate a Greenprint planning process to address conservation needs related to natural resources, open space, views and viewsheds, and agriculture. As part of the Greenprint, inventory significant scenic and natural resources and open space in town and adopt regulations for natural areas to carefully protect these resources from the adverse impacts of development.
- Promote bio-diversity: increase the understanding of how natural and ecological resources in Wallkill interact and the specific needs of diverse habitats. The Orange County Open Space Plan asserts that the area’s unique features and circumstances – its geology, ecology, low-density development pattern, and active agricultural uses produce exceptional bio-diversity (or “biological diversity”).ⁱⁱ
- Maintain and protect Wallkill’s stream corridors and wetlands: Stream corridors and the related ecological habitat provide recreational and educational opportunities; beautification and aesthetic enhancement of the town; effective visual and auditory screening between adjoining land uses; and enhanced property values. Proper management of stream corridors will continue to enhance the quality of life for residents of the Town of Wallkill. One tool to consider, a stream and wetlands preservation ordinance would provide a framework to develop buffer zones for the

Open space planning is recommended to complement regulatory efforts to conserve the unique characteristics and beautiful open space resources in Wallkill.

town's streams, flood plains and wetland areas as well as the requirements that minimize the land development within those buffers.

- Promote the preservation of the picturesque rural character of the town including ridgelines which provide scenic vistas and scenic roads and consider adopting regulations to preserve these resources.
 - Protect scenic roadways: Wallkill is home to many rural roads and open space areas figured primarily by farmland. These scenic resource areas include open vistas, rural roads, expanses of panoramic landscapes, tree lined streets or scenes of active agriculture. Such landscape components, including views of wooded plains, pastoral open space, hilly terrain, wetlands and fields, etc. contribute to the overall landscape of Wallkill and form the basis of a scenic resource protection strategy. The town should consider adoption of a scenic road corridor ordinance to ensure that future development does not diminish the unique qualities of these. Specific areas to consider include but are not limited to Route 302 and Goshen Turnpike.
 - Protect hillsides and steep slopes: These environmentally sensitive areas not only provide wonderful views and scenic qualities but are especially prone to erosion and degradation through development. In general the town should minimize any site disturbance of slopes exceeding fifteen (15) percent and ensure for the maintenance of the natural topography and drainage patterns of land to the greatest extent possible. These efforts will serve to limit soil loss, erosion, excessive storm water runoff, and the degradation of surface water while preserving view corridors and scenic vistas where applied, for example, in concert with the scenic road corridor ordinance.
- Ensure that future development does not adversely impact the town's drinking water resources. Work towards a goal of zero runoff from new development. The following strategies should be considered for incorporation into zoning and subdivision regulations:
 - Continue to restrict development where soils that do not support conventional on-site sewage disposal and services from the municipal system are not available. Restrict development in areas of severe limitations for septic systems unless they can be overcome through proper engineering and design.

- Generally restrict development on slopes in excess of fifteen (15) percent in grade.
- Utilize stream and wetland buffers, limiting development and runoff in these areas.
- Promote “low impact development” techniques such as bio-retention ponds and pervious paving materials during the site planning process. These techniques can greatly reduce the amount of stormwater runoff and pollution generated by new development.



Figure 15: **Bio-retention cells** (also known as rain gardens) provide a storage area where storm water collects and filters into the soil, mimicking the site’s pre-development hydrology

A.3 Monitor growth and update land development policies as appropriate

- Monitor residential and commercial growth by zoning district, school district and type (e.g., single family, multi-family, etc.). Establish a rate of growth or threshold that would trigger further study or consideration of new development policies.
- Periodically review height and density limits to discourage uses that are inappropriate in size and scale vis-à-vis the surrounding uses.
- Consider developing a Generic Environmental Impact Study (GEIS), either town-wide or focused in specific areas such as the RA district, to conduct a detailed build-out study identify and evaluating the specific impacts expected from development and growth on all town services and aspects of livability including sewer, water, transportation and traffic, schools, rural character and open space. This type of study could then serve as the basis for establishing a mitigation program for future development.
- Consider additional growth management tools to ensure that municipal services can keep pace with the rate of development and change in Wallkill. Tools to consider include but are not limited to a building permit cap and an adequate facilities ordinance. Any such strategy should be carefully studied in terms of its legality and impact on affordable housing.

A.4 Work cooperatively with school districts and surrounding municipalities to limit increases school taxes

Development and change can result in a myriad of tax implications depending on a variety of factors including (type of land use, value, services needed, etc.). Since Wallkill is covered by five school districts, tax implications related to growth patterns tend to be demonstrated at the school district level. As such, specific efforts are

needed to better understand and mitigate the impacts of development on schools and cost of services.

- Work to limit the need for expanded municipal and school district services.
 - Develop an intermunicipal study for school districts that are seeing significant residential growth. This effort, developed cooperatively by both school district(s) and towns in the area would look at the costs and benefits of various land use types, intensities, and patterns and could help identify the fiscal costs of development. The study should also include a fiscal model to analyze the future financial impact of existing and alternative land use policies.
 - Enact growth management strategies that limit development to areas with adequate public infrastructure. Research the potential for a local Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance or other growth management tools.
 - Update land use regulations in accordance with the character areas map and land use plan and locate infrastructure in future development areas,
 - Conduct a study of development impacts and mitigation options through a GEIS,
 - Research the potential to establish an intermunicipal tax-sharing agreement among school districts,
 - Negotiate PILOT agreements to cover a broad impact area.

(note: these options are discussed in more detail within the plan appendix)

- Consider ways to distribute ratables evenly throughout Wallkill school districts. This plan promotes a more even distribution of business uses (commercial, industrial, etc) through Wallkill without resulting in adverse impacts to quality of life and sensitive natural resources. In addition to the traditional commercial areas in the center of town (e.g., the Galleria Mall, at the I-84 interchange, etc.), economic growth areas are also located along Route 17 and in the northern section of town (17K). Connecting these areas to municipal infrastructure would dramatically enhance their desirability as economic development areas for new businesses. Said infrastructure should be for the sole purpose of economic development within that area.

B. Encourage orderly and attractive development of commercial and residential uses

Recent growth in Wallkill has presented the town with many concerns related to the type, rate, and character of new development. The following strategies discuss broad policies related to implementation of the land use plan as well as the general design and aesthetic of future development

B.1 Enhance the site design and review process

Wallkill is a growing, vibrant town. Future development should contribute to and enhance the community as a special place to live, work, and play. In addition to sound land use planning, site planning and design are major components to maintaining the unique characteristics of Wallkill for future generations. As such, the following site planning and design strategies should be considered:

- **B.1.1 Ensure for a high standard of site planning and landscape design in all commercial development projects through the following efforts:**
 - Continue to require site plan review of all commercial development proposals to encourage the sound design, orderly maintenance and establishment of infrastructure responsibility
 - Establish landscaping requirements for new commercial development particularly related to roadside development. Encourage visually attractive commercial developments, which incorporate into their design substantial landscaping, attractive signs and other aesthetic amenities. Review and update the town's requirements related to lot coverage and impervious surfaces.
 - Utilize a professional landscape architect and/or certified planner to assist the planning board with review of significant commercial and residential projects.
 - In general, require commercial sites to be designed and landscaped in a manner that preserves the aesthetic character of their original surroundings and require that all commercial uses be appropriately buffered from residential areas.
 - Establish an Architectural Review Committee, to enforce standards particularly related to protection of Wallkill's rural character.

- Continue to enhance the review of development applications in terms gaining a thorough understanding of their potential impact upon the town's natural, cultural, municipal, and school resources. Utilize the NYS SERQA review process to strengthen project review and mitigation of impacts through the consideration of alternative designs. Provide a statement of findings for all significantly-sized projects under review by the town.
 - Consider utilization of an expanded environmental review checklist (again following SEQRA) to ensure that all aspects of potential impact from new development are discussed and reviewed during the site plan and subdivision approval processes. Work to mitigate the adverse impacts of development to the fullest extent possible.
 - Encourage enhanced design standards and maintain landscaping of public spaces such as major thoroughfares and "gateways" into Wallkill to reinforce a positive town image, promote better quality design, serve as a guide to enhance existing properties, and assist in keeping development in character with the surrounding uses
 - Include the Conservation Commission in the site plan review and approval process, particularly in rural areas and where there are water resources involved in development applications.
 - Establish a Forestry / Shade Tree Commission to help ensure that special native specimen trees that are good representatives of species are preserved
- **B.1.2 Increase the ability to monitor and enforce site planning and design agreements**
 - Strengthen performance guarantees (e.g., secure a letter of credit) to ensure that developers complete agreed-upon site plan requirements (e.g., landscaping, parking, etc.).
 - Enhance the ability of the town to enforce standards related to agreements made during the site plan review process. Consider using town staff (e.g., zoning enforcement officer) to conduct site inspections. *Note: the cost of site inspections could be paid for by the applicant.*
 - Establish a simple, easy-to-use and implement enforcement system, perhaps similar to a traffic ticket system for infractions.

- Consider establishing a sunset provision to revoke town permits after a certain period of time if construction has not begun.
- Establish and enforce policies that land clearing or site preparation may not occur prior to final town approvals and review by the Conservation Commission.

B.2 Promote orderly development of commercial uses in Wallkill

The Town of Wallkill’s commercial areas provide job opportunities for local and regional residents, shopping convenience, and a significant tax base (among other benefits). However, commercial growth can also lead to increased traffic, the need for expanded public services (e.g., police), and adverse impacts to the environment, rural character, aesthetics, and quality of life. In Wallkill, future commercial development (retail, office, industrial, and so on) that is located and designed in coordination with the vision, goals and objectives of the community and the land use plan will contribute to a “fiscally-stronger” community without adversely impacting the qualities that make the town such a special place.

- Direct new regional development into designated Town Center commercial nodes.
- Encourage the preservation and enhancement of “neighborhood centers” that serve shopping and service needs; include streetscape improvements, including the development of sidewalks, in site plan requirements to satisfy residents’ desires for increased pedestrian and bicycle path movements. *In addition, see recommendations for new “Country Hamlets” on page 35.*
- More intensive commercial activity, such as large shopping centers which serve regional markets, should be located in close proximity to regional transportation routes and in consideration of the need to balance ratables within the five school districts.
- Promote development of the northern industrial area of Wallkill in a manner that respects the rural character of the area.

B.3 Enhance Wallkill’s Neighborhood Centers

Currently, existing neighborhood centers are not tied into nearby residential neighborhoods and often lack the defining elements that link them to a neighborhood. Improvements to these areas could be realized through enhanced design guidelines, landscaping, improved parking management, enhanced connectivity and access for all modes of travel, and the provision of small parks and open spaces.

The land use plan proposes neighborhood centers to include a core area which would act as a focal point for the surrounding neighborhood. The core area would include small scale commercial uses to serve the daily needs of local residents. In general, neighborhood centers area physically and aesthetically unified where all elements and land uses are designed to function as an integrated whole (rather than as a series of unconnected, unrelated developments). For example, housing in the surrounding area is physically linked with the core area in order to facilitate pedestrian movement, new buildings are designed at an appropriate scale and look to fit in with surrounding structures and uses, and all development is sensitive to local historic resources.



Figure 16: One of Wallkill's unique hamlet areas – Circleville with the town park and golf course at the top.

A possible strategy for developing neighborhood centers in Wallkill is outlined below:

Initiate a neighborhood planning effort: A neighborhood planning effort made up of local residents and businesspeople for each neighborhood center could serve to conduct more detailed planning for individual areas. Each task force would:

- Develop a plan and/or design guidelines for a neighborhood center area to be adopted by the town as an amendment to the comprehensive plan.
- Refine the neighborhood center area boundaries
- Develop a list of desired uses (as well as undesired)
- Define commercial design standards to ensure compatibility with surrounding development including bulk and area standards as well as architectural guidelines.
- Identify pedestrian networks and opportunities to encourage pedestrian oriented design.

As neighborhood action plans are completed and adopted, they should be implemented in coordination with the comprehensive plan. Most likely, this would include amendments to the town's zoning ordinance, perhaps through the establishment of a new district (or overlay) and/or design guidelines to ensure that future development is in keeping with the vision and goals for the neighborhood center.

B.4 Tap the economic potential of Wallkill’s Industrial and Research/Office Park Areas

The town’s office and industrial areas are its long-term economic development catalyses. These areas enhance the local tax base and provide opportunities for residents to work in a close proximity to home. The success of these areas will lead to direct improvements in the quality of life for the Wallkill community. Overall, the town should encourage industrial development (and redevelopment) that strengthens the economy of Wallkill and the region and makes a positive contribution to the physical environment.

- Update zoning regulations, specifically the Planned Interchange District and MI District to meet the town’s goals for commercial, industrial, and office development and implement the land use plan. This effort should consider the following:
 - Review and evaluate the MI district in terms of location, particularly related to the land use vision and allowed/special use permit uses. This could be accomplished through creation of a new zoning district (to possibly replace the MI) and the establishment a set of allowed uses that represent the town’s vision for these areas.
 - Reserve suitable areas for corporate campus style development to accommodate executive office/service uses and support functions.
 - Encourage land reconfiguration to suit the needs of industry where it leads to appropriate and more efficient use of industrial land, in harmony with the surrounding environment.
 - Require industrial land uses to locate on properly zoned sites with good transportation access, adequate public facilities and services, and suitable topography and soils to minimize impacts to the environment and surrounding residential uses.

- Establish a high level of landscaping and site planning standards and ensure for quality industrial and office design. Overall, these standards should strive to maintain and enhance the environmental quality of industrial areas, including minimizing pollution, ensuring a safe and pleasant working environment, which create an attractive area and encourage further investment. For example, these standards should include guidelines to encourage the following:
 - Visually attractive office and industrial developments which incorporate into their design substantial landscaping, attractive signs and other public amenities such as walkways, lighting, and open space.

- Construction materials and building design that blends in with the site and surrounding areas.
- Access management efforts to limit traffic impacts from new development. For example, encourage the consolidation of ingress and egress, shared parking facilities, service roads connecting adjacent business uses, and the incorporation of pedestrian walkways.
- Ensure for compatibility with surrounding land uses. In Wallkill, a substantial amount of the town's commercial development is located in close proximity to residential areas. While this proximity and concentration can provide for an efficient land use pattern, it may also result in conflicts between adjacent use types. For the most part, these conflicts occur in areas of town where current PID and MI zoning abuts residential uses and districts. Within all such "use- transition" areas of town the following planning concepts should be addressed through zoning and site planning.
 - Require compatibility between industrial uses and surrounding uses and the environment through the use of appropriate transitional zoning. All industrial uses should be appropriately buffered from residential areas through use of setbacks, landscaping and/or other design techniques. This could most easily be accomplished through updates to the PID zoning district limiting uses, limiting bulk and height, and establishing stringent landscaping and buffer standards in areas of close proximity to residential land uses. One tool to consider is the incorporation of performance-zoning measures in the zoning code to protect adjoining properties from adverse effects of industrial uses.
 - In addition to mitigating transitions between land uses within Wallkill, consider regional cooperation and the cumulative impacts of industrial development with surrounding municipalities.



Figure 17: Industrial Road – one area of Wallkill's PID zoning district where conflicts between commercial and residential uses have been an issue.

B.5 Enhance Wallkill's Regional Town Center

The regional Town Center is a focal point for community activities. The area includes high intensity commercial retail development

catering to the local and regional market and serves as a primary southern gateway to the NYS Route 17 corridor and is also the location for such major civic activities as the Town Hall and Police Station (future Town of Wallkill Government Center will be located just north of this area). The core is a diverse mix of regional and community-serving retail and public/community facilities, surrounded by medium-to-high density residential development.

- Development should emphasize community-serving employment and the promotion of the stable retail development designed to accommodate pedestrian oriented access and reinforce transit utilization, open space, quality architecture and integrated streetscapes.



Figure 18: Design guidelines for commercial areas could help ensure that future development is in keeping with the community's vision for the town. Above – a fast food restaurant in Pittsford, New York designed fit into the community.

- Pursue attracting regional commercial uses to the Town Center area in order to strengthen the tax base and to provide convenient services to residents.
- Establish guidelines for a pedestrian system and unifying streetscape and landscaping enhancements; The creation of a pedestrian corridor with wide sidewalks, plazas and other pedestrian amenities including an extension along Crystal Run Road and from the Galleria and Orange Plaza
- Identify open space enhancement opportunities and reuse strategies for existing large lot vacancies; and
- Establish design guidelines to ensure that new development in the

Regional Town Center meets the intent of this plan.

- Allow and encourage senior housing opportunities within the town center area.
- Consider locating a visitor's center to provide information about the town's scenic and natural resources, parks, rural corridors, and to promote the area as the gateway to the Shawangunks.
- Initiate a traffic study for Route 211 in the town center area.

B.6 Work to revitalize and re-use existing commercial areas

The town's existing development sites offer excellent opportunities for infill and economic development. These areas should be targeted for re-use and intensification as appropriate. In general, the town should protect and enhance established commercial business areas as they provide vital service for residents and encourage reuse of

underutilized and vacant properties. Additional recommendations related to revitalizing existing, underutilized areas include:

- Develop design guidelines for Route 211. Design guidelines would help establish a common vision for the corridor in terms of architecture, landscaping, signage, pedestrian amenities, road specifications, setbacks, and other features. The guidelines could then be incorporated into the town's zoning regulations.
- Direct commercial development to locations appropriate for the scale and intensity of specific activities and consistent with the land use plan.
- Review and revise existing zoning and permit regulations as needed to minimize constraints to adaptive re-use, particularly in retail and industrial areas.
- Develop an action plan for revitalization of old commercial corridors (Mechanicstown), including comprehensive strategies for addressing complex problems of decay, vacancies, and disinvestment.
- Encourage reuse of underutilized industrial properties and identify the major redevelopment and revitalization opportunities in the town and establish criteria for evaluating them. For example, there are several parcels throughout the town marked by vacant buildings that once served as either light industry or secondary commercial uses. Reuse of such vacant buildings, in particular along the entire stretch of Route 211, is encouraged. As a first step, all such vacant and underutilized buildings should be inventoried.

B.7 Maintain Wallkill's Residential Areas and Livability

The Town of Wallkill includes a broad array of residential living opportunities ranging from large lot single-family homes to high density townhomes and apartments. For the most part, residential densities should relate to the character and density of surrounding developed areas, topography and natural features, utilities and other community services and facilities. As highlighted in the land use plan, densities should be restricted in areas not served by public sewer and, in particular, areas with poor soil conditions.

- Implement the character areas described in the land use plan
- Incorporate amenity zoning and density bonuses into the development code, combining investment in public facilities with private developments, and other similar types of incentives, to



Figure 19: A Wallkill resident in one of the town's pleasant residential neighborhoods walking her dog

encourage residential amenities and necessities such as affordable housing and open space conservation.

- Monitor and review development annually to assure that residential construction is occurring at desired densities.
- Continue to use the soils-based formula to determine residential density in areas without sewer and water infrastructure as this technique has been an effective planning tool for the town. However, as discussed below, the conservation subdivision approach should be used as the predominate method for site layout and planning.

B.8 Enhance residential site design and treatment of natural features through conservation subdivision design

New housing should reinforce the unique characteristics of Wallkill’s natural, cultural, and rural qualities.

To accomplish this goal, the utilization of conservation subdivision techniques should be promoted as the preferred style of residential development according to the following principles:

- Natural features should be preserved and incorporated into the residential developments.
- Development should include open space that preserves important ecological resources and improves the quality of the neighborhood design.
- New housing styles should be sensitive to existing environmental and historical



Figure 20: This sketch shows how a small conservation/cluster subdivision can protect important natural and community resources – in this instance, woodlands, a small stream, and the view from the roadside.

- resources and features.
- Ensure that lighting that is appropriate to the setting of the area and development. For example, in some areas of town, particularly within the RA Character Areas, limited or no lighting may be suitable while in more urban areas of town street lights to promote walking and roadway safety are appropriate.
- For residential projects that follow the conservation subdivision approach, the town should continue to use the two (2) acre minimum lot size and soils formula for calculating density. This will result in significant protection of important resources and enhanced site design without changing the number of allowed units. Projects that do not use the conservation approach should be calculated using a

slightly larger minimum lot size (3 acres) as well as the soils formula to limit adverse impact on rural character.

B.9 Promote elderly and affordable housing

Wallkill should remain a place for persons and families of all ages and economic levels. Working to accomplish this grand goal, the town should encourage affordable housing and housing for elderly through incentives, regional cooperation, and regulatory mechanisms including:

- Establish an affordable housing task force to consider these and additional strategies for the creation of affordable housing units in Wallkill.
- Promote a fair mix of housing types in the town including housing for the elderly. The livability of these developments should be prime concern in the review process. Large-scale developments for the elderly would be most appropriately located near the Town Center and in areas near services and public transportation.
- Cooperate with the Orange County Housing Consortium and other agencies for the provision of moderate to low-income housing and maintenance and rehabilitation activities in the town.
- Consider establishing an inclusionary zoning ordinance (requiring 10-20% of housing within a new development be affordable), or some type of incentive program for the provision of affordable units.
- Consider enacting a density bonus program for senior housing, particularly within the town center and areas with appropriate infrastructure, services, and public transportation.
- Evaluate alternative types of housing to apartments that increase density and provide more diverse housing opportunities (e.g., small lots for single family detached units, two-family units, etc).
- Identify opportunities for accessory dwelling units (also known as “in-law apartments”) which could help supply a significant amount of affordable housing in town within existing built areas.
- Review how changes in the town’s zoning and development regulations might impact the provision of affordable housing. Furthermore, work to ensure that affordable housing units are not be concentrated in any one area, but dispersed



Figure 21: Affordable housing should be integrated with market-value homes. Image source: www.pedbikeimages.org / Dan Burden

throughout the town where infrastructure and services are available.

- Identify areas appropriate for affordable housing and utilize zoning, incentives, and methods to reduce development costs to encourage the development community to provide such units.

C. Preserve the special rural, agricultural, and historical qualities of Wallkill

Wallkill's open space, scenic, historic, cultural, and agricultural resources are primary components of what makes the town a special place to live. In addition to enacting regulatory measures, the town must pro-actively work to protect and conserve these features for future generations. This should include the establishment of an integrated open space protection and agricultural enhancement program.

C.1 Enhance the local open space program: Wallkill is a fast-growing community in a high-growth county and region. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that development is occurring more and more in the fringe areas of town – impacting many of the unique characteristics that Wallkill residents find so special (open space, woodlands, farms, etc.). As development occurs outside of the traditional core area of town, a balance must be found between conservation of open space resources and rural character and the needs of a growing community. An open space program would help identify specific resources such as agricultural lands and fields, forests, rural corridors, viewsheds, and historic properties, establish conservation priorities, and set out a funding strategy appropriate to the community. This open space program should include the following:

- An open space or Greenprint plan which would include identification of primary conservation resources based on a variety of criteria including development pressure, conservation value, and cost. The plan would also describe funding opportunities and sources for purchase of development rights efforts and other implementation mechanisms such as tax incentives and term easement programs (term easements can be an effective way to keep land under development pressure as open space or agriculture without expending public funds). Overall, the plan should focus on the variety of ways to promote the protection of open space and agriculture.
- Building off of the comprehensive plan, review the town's zoning and subdivision regulations focusing on needed

protections for sensitive environmental resources such as ridgelines which provide scenic vistas. Such an ordinance could establish height limitations and setback restrictions (for example, structures should not be higher than the ridgeline) to ensure for the protection of important views and vistas.

- Establishment of conservation subdivision techniques and other methods of conserving agricultural land and open space within the context of new development.

C.2 Promote the enhancement of agriculture in Wallkill

Farming remains an important component of Wallkill. In addition to providing economic opportunity and a lifestyle tied to the heritage of the region, there are many intangible benefits associated with farmland, including aesthetic, open space and sense of place.

Farming is part of the rural lifestyle and is a central part of Wallkill's past. The town should work to sustain the long-term viability of local farming operations and their benefits to the community. The tools to preserve farmland may rely on regulatory, educational or incentive-based measures in order to reduce pressure to develop outlying area, to improve the financial situation of farmers, and to improve the relationship between the farming community and non-farming residents. At the forefront, Wallkill must work with local farmers and support their economic vitality – thereby preserving farmland and open space. To accomplish these goals, a variety of efforts are suggested:

- Integrate the enhancement of agriculture into the previously recommended Greenprint plan.
- Establish a farmland preservation task force to assist with farmland conservation prioritization and an agricultural advisory committee to address agricultural issues and report to the Town Board.
- Promote protection of the town's "Black Dirt" through zoning, incentives, and purchase of development rights.
- Review zoning laws to ensure they do not restrict the continuation of agricultural operations in Wallkill. For example, review allowed uses and other standards that impact farmers' use of the land.
- As part of the Greenprint plan, establish a process to transfer the development rights from agricultural areas to growth areas. This could be accomplished through an amenity zoning ordinance or Transfer of Development Rights program (TDR). These programs allow landowners to transfer the



Figure 22: Agriculture in Wallkill, such as horse farms, contribute to the rural character of the community and should be supported through a comprehensive enhancement program.

right to develop one parcel of land to a different parcel of land.

- Establish a purchase of development rights program working with farmers and landowners on a volunteer basis. This type of program can preserve farmland by compensating landowners for permanently maintaining the property as farmland.
- Enhance links to local land trusts in the area. Typically, conservation easements or development rights are held by a land trust. Enhancing connections and cooperation with land trusts will enable the town to protect open space without taking on the burden of maintenance, stewardship and easement monitoring.
- As previously discussed, establish a conservation subdivision ordinance for use town-wide. Promote this method of development as the preferred form of subdivision, particularly within the rural areas of Wallkill. This site planning tool allows for land development while limiting the impact of new growth upon surrounding farmland and natural resources.
- Review and strengthen “Right to Farm” policies as appropriate and needed. Right to farm laws were enacted to protect agricultural operations within a state or county by providing owners with a defense against potential nuisance suits that might be brought against the farm.
- Require notification to be included with deeds for new development informing new homeowners about surrounding agricultural operations and the rights of farmers to operate using accepted practices.

C.3. Maintain and protect the quality and character of historic features and settlement patterns.

Wallkill is home to a number of unique historic places, sites, and features including the hamlet of Scotchtown and the John Tears Inn on Goshen Turnpike among others. These irreplaceable historic and rural resources of the town should be preserved and interpreted for educational purposes. In general, the town should encourage the preservation and renovation of existing housing stock. Furthermore, in areas of the town where there is an historic or consistent design character, encourage new development to maintain and support the existing character. Establishing such a program will require substantial historical research, intensive field documentation, and comprehensive evaluation of resources individually and in relation to other properties. This work should be conducted as part of a long-term historic preservation plan that would accomplish the following:

- Examine the development of taxation policies that are supportive of the preservation of historic resources.

- Review and update the town's inventory of historic resources, survey historical buildings and sites.
- Study the feasibility of establishing design control districts to protect historic structures.
- Consider establishment of a local Historic Preservation Ordinance to preserve and enhance the distinctive architectural and cultural heritage of neighborhoods; to strengthen the town's economic base by the stimulation of the tourist industry, to protect and improve property values; and to foster economic development.
- Establish an Architectural Review Committee to protect and preserve the historical and rural character of communities, landmarks and scenic roadways (byways) of Wallkill.

D. Provide for efficient community services and infrastructure appropriate to the community’s desired growth and land use patterns.

Efficient and well-maintained community services are essential components of a livable community. Roads, pedestrian amenities, sewer and water, parks, and other community resources all make up the public infrastructure necessary for growth, development, and daily life.

A GEIS is recommended to help the town determine the long-term impacts of development on municipal services such as roads, schools, fire, and police and identify mitigation measures.

D.1 Ongoing development review: Continue to utilize and enhance the subdivision site plan and SEQRA review processes to ensure that adequate community services and infrastructure will be available to service proposed new developments and require mitigation of any potential adverse impacts, where appropriate.

D.2 Conduct a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) to better understand the specific impacts of future development on the community’s infrastructure. A GEIS can help the town realize its goals (such as maintain its rural character) even as development occurs by highlighting capacity limits and forming the basis for a mitigation program.

D.3 Enhance Wallkill’s Transportation System

- **Review and Enhance Roadway Design Criteria**
 - Provide access for alternative transportation (e.g., bicycle lanes), limit the conflicts between automobile and non-motorized forms of travel, and employ traffic calming techniques where applicable.
 - Prioritize intersection and highways that need immediate improvement
 - For example, identify ways to synchronize traffic control devices and simplify intersections where feasible, with specific attention given to the intersection at Goshen Turnpike and Route 302.
 - Enhance access management for new and existing development, for example, where practical, encourage the consolidation of ingress and egress to commercial areas and pursue vehicular and pedestrian connectivity between major commercial areas.
 - Allow flexibility (e.g., smaller road widths) for development projects that protect open space, natural

features, and important cultural resources through the conservation subdivision approach or other development/conservation techniques.

- Promote connectivity of roadways in new developments. An inter-connected street pattern will provide travel options and alternatives for local residents and should be encouraged. For example, where stub streets are provided or future connections are planned, limits on cul-de-sac lengths (currently 1,000') could be eased or removed.
- Incorporate a public participation process in which the public has timely notice and opportunity to identify and comment on transportation concerns.

- **Address Traffic and Circulation needs**

In general, the town should continue to study and mitigate the impacts of development on the town's transportation network. This continuing effort could be integrated into the recommended GEIS or as a separate study to identify the specific transportation costs associated with new development. This information would allow the town to establish mitigation measures for future project-related transportation impacts. Note: this process already takes place for projects within certain areas of Wallkill where development contributes to a roadway enhancement fund.

In addition to this effort, the town should promote the coordinated and efficient use of all available and future transportation modes with a focus on providing circulation services that benefit all residents, including pedestrian and bicycle circulation as well as the needs of the elderly and disability communities.

Additional strategies the town should consider related to traffic and circulation include:

- Ensure the repair and necessary improvements of roads throughout the town to provide a safe, efficient and adequate transportation network.
- Require new developments to demonstrate that there will be adequate road capacity before approval or issuance of permits.
- Fully utilize all available federal and state funding for transportation enhancement projects
- As demands on the town's road network increases, the town should continue to prepare site specific road improvement plans to identify future roadway connections and patterns (one such study for future Exit 122 was recently completed and is described

- further in the appendix). Moreover, these studies should also include a land use element describing appropriate uses and densities. This localized planning tool will help to ensure that future growth beneficially impacts the community and ties into the town's vision. When completed, these plans could be adopted as amendments to the comprehensive plan.
- Initiate a traffic study for Route 211 in the town center area.
 - **Enhance sidewalks and crosswalks:** There are significant needs and issues related to the pedestrian environment within Wallkill. These should continue to be addressed through the town's subdivision and site planning processes. The following strategies and policies should be implemented to enhance walking and bicycling within the town:
 - Develop a town-wide sidewalk and trail plan for Wallkill. The plan should focus on ways to enhance the town's on-road and off-road bicycle and pedestrian system. Components of the plan could include identification of priority areas for improvements, town-wide linkages, intermunicipal connections (e.g., rail trails), funding, and an implementation schedule. (Note: this could be integrated with other open space and/or park planning efforts such as the recommended Greenprint plan and Park and Recreation plan.
 - In general, sidewalks should be provided in the more dense areas of town and connect residential zones to commercial areas, schools, and parks.
 - Pedestrian crosswalks and bicycle crossings should be provided throughout the community as necessary for the safety, convenience and feasibility of pedestrian travel between the community's residential, shopping, employment, recreation and institutional sites.

D.4 Maintain and enhance sewer and water services

- Investigate opportunities for shared services agreements with other municipalities to provide infrastructure in designated growth areas.
- Protect resources by focusing growth and the provision of services within development areas and limiting new infrastructure in areas of town where growth should be limited (e.g., according to the land use plan).
- Develop a town-wide (or area wide) Generic Environmental Impact Statement to coordinate long term growth with the

town's capacity to provide infrastructure services such as water and sewer.

- Work with developers to build infrastructure in conformance with the town's land use plan and growth policies.
- Increase cooperation and coordination between Planning and Zoning, Parks & Recreation, Public Works & Utilities and other town staff for the planning of Wallkill's diverse infrastructure and public facilities.

D.6 Continue to provide and promote parks and recreational facilities for Wallkill residents

A Parks and Recreation Master Plan should be prepared to serve three broad purposes:

- Provide a rational basis for maintenance and improvement for parks, recreational and community facilities and services
- Establish long-range goals for facility acquisition and improvement projects.
- Identify a wide variety of funding sources for recreational enhancements.

The town should continue to enhance its recreation system through the following steps. Many of these activities are ongoing. However, these issues should also be included in any future park and recreation planning effort.

- Maintain and improve the quality of programs, facilities, and parks for benefit and enjoyment of town residents.
 - Research the need to locate a new park in the Pocatello area.
 - Review the need, location, and programming of a neighborhood oriented community center. Initial concepts include a year-round indoor recreational and educational facility which could incorporate game rooms, a gymnasium and arts and craft workshops.
 - New facilities (i.e. youth centers, community pool, indoor skating rink, additional child care programs) should be conveniently sited in or near residential neighborhoods, where they can be easily accessed by residents and contribute to the sense of community.
 - While community and recreational facilities should be improved and/or expanded to meet the growing



Figure 23: The Wallkill Town Park and the town golf course in Circleville are popular community resources.

needs of the town, Wallkill should seek opportunities for the efficient and multiple use of facilities, in order to limit increases in costs.

- Continue preservation of Highland Lakes State Park.
- Pursue opportunities to utilize the abandoned railroad right of way as a linear park.
- Offer recreation programs and facilities, which promote tourism and preserve and promote the historical and cultural heritage of the town as well as its natural resources.
- Pursue and promote the development of public/private regional recreational facilities and activities.
- Establish public access to Wallkill's water resources including the Wallkill and Shawangunk Kill.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The Town of Wallkill is a special and unique place to live, work, and enjoy the outdoors. The town includes a diverse range of living opportunities from “city-living” to rural country estates and an important agricultural history that can still be seen in today’s active farms and beautiful farmland. Wallkill’s natural resources, its streams, topography, unique soils, wetlands and ponds, forests, and plant and animal habitats are treasures that contribute to the town’s rural character and identity. This plan encourages continued and expanded maintenance and protection of these and other special features of Wallkill including cultural, historic, and recreational amenities.

As the town grows over the next 5 years and beyond, this plan should serve as a guide for development policies and initiatives to enhance Wallkill’s livability. This includes setting the stage for economic development and smart-growth so that more residents can live and work within the same community, maintaining and limiting the adverse impacts of development on residential neighborhoods, continuing to provide a high level of public services, and moving forward in the protection of open space and natural resources for future generations.

Furthermore, the plan should be updated and amended regularly. This document presents a snapshot of the community, its vision, and its recommended policies at this point. As changes occur in the local and regional economy and land use and development patterns these policies should be revisited and updates so as to remain current with the concerns, needs, and desires of future Wallkill residents and businesspeople.

Town of Wallkill

Comprehensive Plan

Appendix

- **Appendix A: Existing Conditions**
- **Appendix B: Orange County Plan Summary**
- **Appendix C: Town of Wallkill History**
- **Appendix D: Planning Maps**

Appendix A: Existing conditions

Demographics

Population

In 2000 The Town of Wallkill had a population of 24,659, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (see table 1). While the town is considered relatively dense when compared with nearby municipalities and the County as a whole, Wallkill has a unique diversity of housing options and densities ranging from the high density areas surrounding the City of Middletown to the rural, large lot wooded and farm areas on the periphery.

In terms of the town's rate of growth, the US Census indicates a relatively low population increase between 1990 and 2000 (7.14 percent), when compared with the population increase in the Town of Hamptonburgh, (19.85 percent), Wawayanda (13.68 percent), Montgomery (12.92 percent), Goshen (12.29 percent), Mount Hope (11.9 percent), and Orange County as a whole (10.96) percent for the same time period. It should be noted, however, that anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that this region is growing faster than the Census growth rates (which was extrapolated from the total population change between 1990 and 2000) would indicate. Further analysis, which includes a review of building permits issued over the past several years (discussed further in the Housing section), validates the faster rate of growth.

Table 1: Comparative Population Data of Walkill and Bordering Municipalities

	Wallkill	Orange County	City of Middle-town	Goshen	Waway- anda	Hampton- Burgh	Mont- gomery	Mount Hope
Square Miles	62.18	816.00	5.13	43.98	35.18	26.59	50.42	25.20
Total Pop.	24,659	341,367	25,388	12,913	6,273	4,686	20,890	6,639
Percent Population Increase (1990- 2000)	7.14	10.96	4.95	12.29	13.68	19.85	12.92	11.19
Person/SqMi	397	418	4,948	294	178	176	414	263
Persons/SqMi Percent Increase	7.30	10.87	4.71	12.64	13.38	18.3	12.81	10.97

Source: U.S. Census Data (1990 & 2000);

Ethnicity

The population trends for Orange County as a whole show a general increase for all ethnic groups, though some groups are increasing more rapidly (see table 2). Unlike many other townships in Orange County, Wallkill’s white population decreased by 3.36 percent over the last ten years. Since 1990, all other bordering municipalities’ (with the exception of the City of Middletown which also experienced a decrease of 12.1 percent) white population increased by at least 6.94 percent. Furthermore, the total Black/African American population in Wallkill increased by 69.91 percent over the ten-year span. The Hispanic population also increased substantially by 86.77 percent, behind only Wawayanda and Montgomery with a 127.78 percent and a 140.36 percent increase, respectively.

Table 2: Population Increases By Percentage Among Ethnic Groups from 1990 to 2000

Ethnicity	Wallkill	Orange County	City of Middle-town	Goshen	Wawayanda	Hampton-Burgh	Montgomery	Mount Hope
White	(3.36)	4.43	(12.10)	10.23	9.72	17.30	6.94	7.05
Black/African American	69.91	24.20	30.10	5.21	25.00	16.46	113.57	15.49
American Indian	13.64	46.24	40.48	(30.00)	91.67	(60.90)	20.45	10.65
Asian or Pacific Islander	46.77	45.31	20.28	76.60	46.38	72.50	30.28	81.48
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	NA	105.00	NA	NA	NA	0.00	NA	NA
Hispanic/Latino	86.77	84.53	49.54	84.11	127.78	71.07	140.36	24.36
Other Race	76.87	87.38	51.25	95.83	197.50	88.88	214.74	64.86

Source: U.S. Census Data (1990 & 2000);

Age

Comparison of the 1990 and 2000 census for Wallkill revealed moderate increases in population in age groups 0-17 and 18-59, with 3.29 percent and 6.47 percent increases respectively, while that of Orange County rose 16.57 percent and 8.87 percent respectively (see table 3). More specifically, over the ten-year span, Wallkill’s 20-34 population decreased by 14.59 percent, concurring with neighboring towns and the Orange County decrease of 16.84 percent. Simultaneously, the 60 and over cohort increased by 18.15 percent in Wallkill, and 8.58 percent in the County. It is important to note this growing demographic and the potential impacts on housing types and the future needs for housing (affordable housing, senior housing, elderly housing, etc.) and municipal services such as public transportation.

Table 3: Percentage Increase in Age Groups from 1990 to 2000

Age	Wallkill	Orange County	City of Middle-Town	Goshen	Waway- anda	Hampton- burgh	Mont- gomery	Mount Hope
0-17	3.29	16.57	11.97	14.76	12.93	22.52	18.37	(1.94)
18-59	6.47	8.87	7.14	4.71	14.44	18.87	12.99	14.22
20-34	(14.59)	(16.84)	(13.36)	(18.05)	(20.00)	(18.38)	(15.92)	(14.99)
60+	18.15	8.58	(11.38)	30.85	12.16	18.44	2.54	11.50

Source: U.S. Census Data (1990 & 2000); Extrapolated by Ferrandino & Associates Inc. (2003)

Housing

The Census data show an increase in housing units in Wallkill (**see table 4**). The number of available units increased between 1990 and 2000 from 8,230 to 9,283 respectively (an increase of 12.79 percent). Additionally, the number of occupied units rose from 7,670 in 1990 to 8,866 in 2000 (an increase of 15.59 percent), while the number of vacant units dropped from 560 units to 417 (a decrease of 25.54 percent) units over the ten-year span. This is similar to the trends experienced by the County as a whole, which saw available and occupied units increase by 10.77 percent and 15.59 percent respectively, and vacant units decrease by 14.42 percent.

A review of building permits issued over the last five years indicates a potentially higher growth rate than indicated by the census data. Based on the permit data, approximately 130 single-family homes have been constructed per year since 2000. This building rate is approximately 24% higher than the rate extrapolated from the census data. Additionally, there have been several apartment buildings constructed in the last five years. (Note: a more detailed discussion of recent building data is provided later within this section under “development trends”).

Table 4: Percentage Increase in Housing Units over 10-Year Span from 1990 to 2000

	Wallkill	Orange County	City of Middle-Town	Goshen	Waway- anda	Hampton- burgh	Mont- gomery	Mount Hope
Units	12.79	10.77	6.41	16.69	16.13	20.63	12.35	4.96
Occupied	15.59	13.08	7.14	18.19	16.91	21.74	13.02	8.58
Vacant	(25.54)	(14.42)	(4.10)	(3.53)	(1.25)	0.00	0.54	(25.0)

Source: U.S. Census Data (1990 & 2000)

Employment

A positive trend for Wallkill is the 28.3 percent decrease in unemployment since 1990 which is more than six times the decrease experienced by Orange County as a whole over the same time period. Also, there has been a 7 percent increase in the population included in the labor force (16 years and older category for Wallkill). This is similar to the trend for Orange County as a whole, which shows an 8.83 percent increase in the 16 years and older population (see table 5).

Table 5: Comparative Percentage Increases in Working Age Pop.(16 & Older) in Past 10 Yrs.

	Orange County	Wallkill	City of Middle-Town	Goshen	Waway- anda	Hampton- burgh	Mont- gomery	Mount Hope
16 and Older	8.83	7.00	4.51	6.95	14.51	18.43	12.45	14.74

Source: U.S. Census Data (1990 & 2000)

Income

Wallkill experienced an increase of 29.83 percent median household income between 1990 and 2000, from \$39,764 to \$51,625 (see table 6). This figure is lower than that of most surrounding communities with the exception of the City of Middletown. Wallkill’s increase in median household income (and that of the surrounding towns) was significantly lower than that of Orange County, which experienced a 100.8 percent increase, from \$30,056 in 1990 to \$60,355 in 2000. Of its surrounding neighbors and Orange County as a whole, Wallkill ranked third lowest in median household income in 2000, slightly above the Town of Montgomery (\$49,422), but far above the abutting City of Middletown which ranked the lowest (\$30,194).

Table 6: Comparative Data on Median Household Income

	Wallkill	Orange County	City of Middle-Town	Goshen	Waway- anda	Hampto n- burgh	Mont- gomery	Mount Hope
1990 Median Household Income	\$39,764	\$30,056	\$39,570	\$46,566	\$45,733	\$52,976	\$35,000	\$39,280
2000 Median Household Income	\$51,625	\$60,355	\$30,194	\$60,066	\$61,885	\$74,412	\$49,422	\$56,948
Percentage Increase	29.83	100.8	(23.69)	28.99	35.32	40.46	41.21	44.98

Source: U.S. Census Data (1990 & 2000)

Existing land use conditions/issues

The following section describes the existing land use and development conditions in the town of Wallkill including a brief summary of growth patterns, densities, infrastructure resources, and community amenities.

Town Planning Background

Land use planning in the Town of Wallkill began in the mid 1960's when the Town became part of the Middletown Regional Planning Board; however, the zoning ordinance at the time was not based on any comprehensive plan per se. Thus, by the late 60s and early 70s it became clear that an overall plan was still necessary for the proposed zoning amendments at that time to have a solid base. This led to the creation of the 1974 Town of Wallkill Master Plan.

Existing Conditions

In analyzing the existing land use conditions of the town, the town utilized fieldwork, information gleaned from workshops with the CPAC and a Geographic Information System (GIS) database, maintained by Orange County. This GIS database is a general representation of how land is being used and is broken down into various land use categories. The database is parcel-specific, i.e., each property is assigned one use for the entire area of the property. The location of these land use categories is illustrated in **map 2: Existing Land Use** and the area of each category is shown in **table 7**.

Land use Category	Number of Parcels	Area (Acres)	Percent of Total Land Area
Residential	6177	11,889.42	29.5
Commercial / Office	389	1411.38	3.5
Industrial	100	741.11	2
Agricultural	106	6633.87	16
Parks/Forest/Recreation	173	3608.16	9
Community/Public Services	151	1460.65	4
Other (incl. Roads, Vacant Land)	1709	14434.35	36
TOTAL	8805	40,178.94	100

Source: Orange County Water Authority (OCWA), Land Use Inventory of Wallkill - 2004. Percentage figures have been rounded.

Residential Areas

The dominant character of the Town of Wallkill is that of a residential community with over a quarter of its land occupied by single-family homes, located in a variety of neighborhoods throughout town.

There are currently five (5) different types of residential densities allowed in Wallkill, ranging in size depending on the zoning district and the availability of public water and sewer infrastructure. Residential lot sizes vary widely with smaller lots from

approximately 10,000 square feet (mostly found close to the City of Middletown and in the town's small hamlets), to larger parcels over 100-acres on the periphery.

Residential uses encompass approximately 11,889 acres, or twenty-nine percent (29.5%) of Wallkill's total land area (see **map 2**). Based on the data obtained from the OCWA there are approximately 6,177 housing units in the Town. According to data obtained from the Wallkill Building Department, from 2000 through 2004, 783 residential units have been built; approximately 80% single-family detached homes. In the first quarter of 2005, 22 permits have been issued for single-family homes, and construction of a 242 unit apartment building is pending (permit issued in 2004).

Higher density neighborhoods are found surrounding the City of Middletown. For the most part, these areas are made up of older homes situated on lots approximately one quarter of an acre in area. Single-family homes are interspersed with some commercial uses and community facilities. The provision of public water and sewer concentrated such development east of the City of Middletown. However, a significant amount of development in the last thirty years has occurred in areas of the town lacking water and sewer service. Due to the need for on-site septic systems and wells and more stringent development standards, single-family subdivisions in recent years have generally been of a lower density, approximately one to two acres per residence, and more scattered than in the past.

As illustrated in **Map 4a** (Development Trends – Building Permits 2000 to 2005), single-family development over the last 5 years has been fairly evenly distributed across the town with concentrations occurring in the eastern and northern sections of town (e.g., outside of Circleville, along Scotchtown Collabar near Goshen Turnpike, around the eastern section of the City of Middletown, etc.). **Map 4b** (Development Trends – Lots Subdivided since 1993) shows lot subdivisions since 1993.

Affordable housing

As local job opportunities increase in town, the ability to work near to home is becoming a greater reality for more Wallkill residents. However, the cost of housing (including mortgages, rents, etc.) threatens to force local workers outside of the town and even region in the search for affordable housing. Affordable housing, often referred to as “workforce housing” is a growing issue in Wallkill and Orange County. According to the county's 2003 Comprehensive Plan, housing county-wide is becoming less and less affordable. For example, the 2002 median sale price for a home was almost \$215,000, a 32% increase from 2000.

Nevertheless, it remains a difficult task to determine how much affordable housing is needed within a specific municipality. According to the county's comprehensive plan, affordable housing is housing that is priced to meet the needs of those persons earning 80% of the area's median income – for Orange county this figure is \$42,240 (the 2002 median income for a three person household in Orange County was \$52,800).

Furthermore, it is generally accepted that affordably priced housing means that a household spends no more than 30% of its annual earnings on housing costs. Based on these assumptions an affordable rent or mortgage for a family earning 80% of the

median income in Orange County would be approximately \$1,050 per month (see below):

- Median income for three person household in Orange County: \$52,800
- Affordable housing income level – 80 percent of the median income: \$42,240 (80% of \$52,800)
- Maximum of 30 percent of income for housing costs: \$12,672 (30% of \$42,240)
- Monthly allocation for housing: \$1,050 (\$12,672/12)

Commercial

Commercial land uses, including office space, encompass about 1,315 acres, or three percent (3%) of Wallkill’s total land area. The pattern of “strip development” that has characterized commercial development in the Town, however, gives the appearance that business uses encompass far more of the Town land area that is actually the case. This is particularly true since commercial development takes up much of the Town’s more visible locations along major arterials and at prominent intersections.

According to the OCWA data, the number of currently developed commercial properties is 389 (see map 2). While the major concentration of commercial areas exists along NYS Route 211 and Route 17 in the southeastern portion of the town, commercial uses are also located west of the City of Middletown along Mohagen Avenue; and north of the City of Middletown along NYS Route 17M in the vicinity of Shwangunk Road. Large commercial complexes and nodes of office uses exist in the town predominantly in the I-84 interchange along Crystal Run Road. In addition, commercial uses serving local residential neighborhoods have developed in Circleville at the intersection of Goshen Turnpike and Route 302; along Route 17M between Washington Heights and Fair Oaks; and in Scotchtown at the intersection of Goshen Turnpike and Route 211.

Major issues related to commercial development in town include:

- transitions between commercial and residential areas (primarily where PID zoning is adjacent to residential districts),
- inadequate landscaping and poor site design, lack of pedestrian amenities and general connectivity, and
- a lack of defined desired uses – primarily within the PID zoning district.

Industrial

Industrial uses encompass approximately 741 acres, or two percent (2%) of Wallkill’s total land area. With the exception of Tetz concrete operation, there are a limited number of smaller industrial uses in town (see map 2), which are predominantly “light” in nature, that is, mostly storage, warehousing or smaller scale manufacturing uses. The designated industrial districts exist along the east side of NYS Route 17 south of I-84, and northwest of the City of Middletown between Mohagen Avenue and NYS Route 17M. Industrial uses are located at major interchanges within the town, including Crystal Run Road, Route 211, Route 302 and Route 17K.

Primary issues related to the town’s industrial areas include:

- limited public infrastructure in industrially-zoned areas (which reduces development potential and value)
- the lack of specific, allowed uses within the MI district (currently, a broad range of uses are reviewed as special permit applications).
- conflicts with adjacent land uses

Agricultural

It is estimated that agriculture uses encompass about 6,634 acres or twelve percent (16%) of Wallkill's total land area and are concentrated along the southeast, northeast and northwest perimeter of the town (**see map 2**). The majority of farms in Wallkill are dairy farms, with a significant amount of land considered inactive farmland. Cattle, other livestock, horse farms, poultry farms, and nurseries and greenhouses make up the rest of the agricultural land. Nonetheless, based on the 2000 Census, less than 1 percent of the labor force in Wallkill is employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting.

Farmland in the town is generally described as upland. The upland soils are particularly well suited to grasses and as a result grow good quality hay and silage. Of the total 6,634 acres of farmland, "black dirt" (also called "muckland") farms occupy approximately 175 acres northwest of the City of Middletown (**see map 5**).

The town is underlain by two general soil seriesⁱⁱⁱ (a collection of several soil types of similar development origin) which can be described as follows:

Mardin Eri: This soil series is the most prevalent Town-wide. It is found on dominantly sloping and sloping, deep, moderately well drained and somewhat poorly drained, medium textured soils; on uplands. Soils of this series can pose moderate to severe limitations to various types of development.

Hoosic-Madrin-Canandaigua: This soil series occupies the areas of the Town along its eastern boundary, surrounding the Wallkill River. The soils of this series are dominantly gently sloping and range from excessively drained (Mardin soils) to poorly drained (Canandaigua soils). Canandaigua soils are hydric soils, which underlie floodplains and wetlands of the Town. Hoosic soils and Mardin soils are developed extensively throughout the Town. The moderately well drained aspects of these two soils generally pose moderate limitations to various types of development.

Parks/Recreation and Community Facilities

Parks/recreation land uses and community facilities encompass about 3,608 acres or nine percent (9%), of Wallkill's total land area (**see map 2**). The Town of Wallkill has thirteen park and recreational areas, both public and privately-owned: Highland Lakes State Park is a state park located in the eastern section of town covers over 3,000 acres and is mostly undeveloped woodlands. The park is listed as a permanently protected open space for Orange County. Dundee Circle Park located at the intersection of Dundee Circle and Stoneridge Road; Patio Road Park located on Patio Road; Memorial

Park; Fortune Road Park located on Woodstock Road; Marlboro Commons Park located at the intersection of Sheffield Drive and Fitzgerald Drive; C. Hudson Thompson Memorial Park (Circleville Park); Howard Drive Park (The Little League Park); Stephens Avenue Park located at the intersection of Mills Road and Stephens Avenue; Sarah Lane Park located on Sarah Lane and Crystal Run Road; Washington Heights Park located between New York Avenue, Ontario Road and Rhode and County Route 17M (North Street); and Circle Drive Park on Circle Drive.

The C. Hudson Thompson Memorial Park in Circleville (Circleville Park) is the largest town park and has facilities for swimming, fishing, paddle boating, volleyball, picnic areas, pavilions, baseball and soccer fields and a playground. The town has an active recreational program open to residents of all ages, including programs such as adult softball leagues, ballroom dancing, a senior citizens program and Little League baseball and soccer, which includes over 400 participants.

The town recently conducted a community survey^{iv} regarding the nature and condition of the existing recreational facilities. The populace at large and governmental leaders indicated dissatisfaction with the overall range of community facilities and services. Of particular note were the town's parks and recreational facilities. Residents did not express a high level of satisfaction with the existing parks and level of maintenance. Major areas of concern generally centered on the need for enhanced enforcement of property maintenance codes and increased police patrol; installation of new playground equipment, provision of biking and walking trails; and organization of community activities for residents of all ages.

Community facilities encompass 1460 acres and include the Town Hall, libraries, hospitals, educational facilities, places of worship public cemeteries, including Wallkill Cemetery along Route 17 near Middletown and Pinehill Cemetery off of Route 17M and a range of public service facilities, such as local neighborhood associations and others. Such community facilities are extremely important to the well being of the Town and its residents. For many residents, Town facilities provide the primary (or only) means of recreational opportunities.

The Town of Wallkill Town Hall is located at 600 Route 211 East; however, the town will relocate its operations this summer to a recently-purchased structure at 99 Tower Drive. The future town hall facility, to be known as the Town of Wallkill Government Center, will provide increased space for town operations, including office and meeting space and will contain the majority of administrative offices and meeting facilities used by elected and appointed officials. As with the existing facility, the future town hall will house the offices of the Town Supervisor, Town Clerk, Treasurer, Water Department, Assessor, Building Inspection Department, Land Use and Zoning Offices and Police Department. Meetings and public hearings of the Town Board, Planning Board and like bodies are normally conducted at town hall.

The town is served by three libraries: the Middletown/Town of Wallkill Thrall Library located at 11-19 Depot Street; the Ramapo Catskill Library System at 619 North Street; and the Orange County Community College Library at 115 South Street.

Two major hospitals serve the Town of Wallkill Arden Hill Hospital, which merged in 2002 with Horton Memorial Hospital to form Orange Regional Medical Center (ORMC). Plans for a new hospital to be located north of East Main Street and directly east of Midway Park Drive are currently being developed and financial feasibility studies are being updated to reflect recent cutbacks in hospital reimbursement at both state and federal levels. Details such as the size of the new hospital are still being determined, but initial thoughts are for approximately 375 to 400 beds. It is anticipated that the new hospital will be the largest acute care facility between the Tappan Zee Bridge and Albany.

Infrastructure

Water

The Town of Wallkill's main sources of drinking water include rivers, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs and wells. In order to meet State and U.S. EPA standards, the town must undertake rigorous yearly inspections and testing. As part of the planning process, the town continues to publish an Annual Drinking Water Quality Report. Unlike many other rural/suburban municipalities in New York, Wallkill is in the advantageous position of being relatively well serviced by a water and sewer system. The Town of Wallkill Consolidated Water District #1 (Cons. W.D. #1) water source is entirely a ground water (well) supply having approximately 4,300 connections, and services approximately 14,200 people encompassing approximately 7,542 acres (**see map 6**).

Sewer

The Town of Wallkill's sewer system covers approximately 6,019 acres (**see map 7**). For the most part, residential uses within the R-1 and R-2 districts are fully serviced by a sewer system. However, there are selective parcels zoned R-1 and R-2 situated further north that are not serviced by a sewer system. The Rural Agricultural (RA) parcels are not serviced by the town's municipal sewer system.

The town has two major drainage basins – Shawangunk Kill Basin and the Wallkill River Basin. The Town's existing sewage plant is located on the Wallkill River with a capacity of 4 million gallons per day (MGD). The current average daily load is 3.1 MGD. The existing pipes for the system have a capacity of 900,000 gallons.

Roads

The Town of Wallkill presently maintains 166.2 miles of town-owned. Most of the roads are paved; however, approximately thirteen (13) miles of these roads are maintained as gravel roads. In addition to these roads, there are numerous private roads within the town, with maintenance responsibilities belonging to the abutting property owners.

A major study is currently being undertaken which proposes the reconstruction and reconfiguration of the NYS Route 17 Exit 122 Interchange and associated

improvements on existing town and county roadways, including East Main Street (CR 67) and Crystal Run Road. This project is being progressed to address identified operational and safety problems, non-standard and non-conforming geometrics and bridge structural needs. The plan also highlights new roads that will coordinate with and enhance economic development within the town's designated commercial areas.

Natural Features and Open Space

Wallkill has a diverse natural environment including many creeks, streams, and water bodies, varied topography and scenic views, forest and woodlands, animal and plant habitats, and other unique natural features.

Water

The town contains significant water resources, such as the Shawangunk, Dwaarkill and Wallkill Rivers, and the Highland and Pocatello Lakes. The Wallkill River provides numerous areas that support important habitat for wildlife, including a number of rare plants. Scattered throughout the town, wetlands encompass 1,796 acres or more than four percent (4%) of Wallkill's total land area (**see map 8**). The Wallkill and Shawangunk Kill rivers were identified in the Orange County Open Space Plan as priority aquatic systems due to their unique ecosystems. There are three well head protection zones located within the Town limits, and four on the southeastern border with Hamptonburg. There is a water supply water shed located west of Middletown, which is classified as a permanently protected open space.

Slopes and Topography

The elevation of Wallkill ranges from 360 feet above mean sea level (a.m.s.l.) to 1040 feet a.m.s.l. The highest elevations are in the Pocatello and Howell's Depot sections of Town, in the southwest. The lowest elevations are in the Mechanicstown area, in the southeast. The average elevation of the Town is approximately 650 feet a.m.s.l. Steep slopes (greater than 15% grade) are found throughout the town with areas of concentration found in Highland Lakes State Park and the area of town, south of the reservoir, west of the City of Middletown. (**see map 8**). The Town is characterized by a glacially modified landscape, and the majority of the Town is underlain by loamy till and ground moraines. There are also significant sand and gravel deposits along the Wallkill and Shawangunk Kill.

Areas of Biological Significance

According to a study completed by the Orange County Planning Department, Wallkill has a significant amount of land considered "biologically significant." Areas of importance include the Highland Lakes State Park, areas along the Wallkill, Dwaarkill,

and Shawangunk Kill Rivers, a major portion of the western section of town south of Route 211 (in the area of the reservoirs), and other smaller sites scattered through town. Specific animal species and communities identified within these areas include the northern goshawk, red-shouldered hawk, upland sandpiper, wood turtle, midland clubtail, cobra clubtail, and an amphibian concentration area.

Historic Resources

The town contains wealth of rural and historic resources, including two buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. The John Tears Inn is located at 1224 Goshen Turnpike, and the William Bull, III House, also known as the “Brick Castle,” is located on Bart Bull Road. In addition to the National Register locations, the county has identified the “Panoramic views from Scotchtown Turnpike near Circleville” as one of eleven scenic preservation sites within the county. The town’s history is posted on the town web site www.wallkill.com and summarized within this appendix.

Administrative and Political Structure

Town Board and Planning Board

The Town of Wallkill is divided into four (4) wards, each with its own elected representative. The wards are further divided into five (5) election districts. The Town is governed by a Town Supervisor and by the aforementioned four (4) Councilpersons (one per ward). The Town’s planning activities are overseen by the Land Use and Zoning Department and appointed Planning Board members. The Planning Board consists of seven (7) members. As does the Zoning Board of Appeals. Both boards meet regularly. Land use is regulated according to zoning law, which was adopted in 1979 and includes site plan and subdivision regulations.

Schools Districts

The Town of Wallkill and its surrounding area consist of five (5) different school districts determined by geography (**see map 9**). These include Middletown School District, Goshen Central School, Valley Central School District, Pine Bush Central School District and Minisink Valley Central School. Each district has a School Board,^v elected by popular vote and nine members with the exception of Pine Bush which has seven. All of these districts service children living within and outside of the Town. Other schools include Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Harmony Christian School, Orange County BOCES and Orange County Community College.

The presence of five school districts within the town’s borders create certain tax equity challenges. According to a recent study conducted by the Orange County Partnership, while the town overall enjoys a balance between residential and commercial tax payers, between individual school districts there are significant differences. For example, the vast majority of commercial land uses are found within the central portion of town while significant residential growth has been occurring within the outlying areas. As a result, some school districts are relying more and more on residential uses to cover taxes. This is particularly noticeable within the Pine Bush School District which covers

35% of the town but includes only a few commercial areas fully-serviced by public utilities. The following Table summarizes the land area covered by the five school districts:

School District	Percent of Wallkill's Land Area covered by District
Pine Bush Central	35%
Middletown City	32%
Valley Central	15%
Minisink Valley Central	9%
Goshen Central	9%

Land Use Implications on School Taxes

Overall, Wallkill has a balance and diversity of commercial and residential uses. As the following chart shows, within Wallkill commercial land uses make up over 50 percent of the total tax assessment. However, looking at individual school districts, it is clear that there are significant geographic differences regarding the distribution of commercial land uses (often referred to as “ratables”).

	Total Dollar Amount and Percent of Taxes Paid by Land Use*		
	Residential	Commercial	Total
Town of Wallkill	\$23.57 48%	\$25.75 52%	\$49.32
Middletown SD	\$27.87 52%	\$26.03 48%	\$53.9
Goshen SD	\$21.47 62%	\$13.39 38%	\$34.86
Valley Central SD	\$23.88 69%	\$10.8 31%	\$34.68
Pine Bush SD	\$23.22 78%	\$6.58 22%	\$29.8
Minisink SD	\$25.14 89%	\$3.06 11%	\$28.2

**Dollar amount in millions*

Note: district figures represent entire school districts which cover land both within and outside of the Town of Wallkill

Source: Orange County Partnership, 2005

As the table shows, the town has an overall healthy balance - In Orange County, only the Town of Newburgh receives a higher proportion of tax revenue from commercial land uses. However, it is important to note that individual towns are somewhat limited in how much impact they can have upon the regional economic situation. For the most part, the town can set the stage for an enhanced tax base through zoning and infrastructure policies. But, these policies must be considered within the framework of how they relate to overall plan goals, the desired land use pattern of the town, and the realities of the regional and local economy. Some tools the town could consider to address differences between school district tax base and ratables are discussed below.

Please note that these tools are concepts that should be researched more in terms of their feasibility and legality in Wallkill.

Land use regulations and infrastructure: the town could increase the amount of commercially zoned land within school districts with limited ratables and work to extend infrastructure into these areas.

Mitigation of impacts: The town should investigate a mitigation schedule for new development to cover the cost of new students. This could be accomplished subsequent to completion of a town-wide or area GEIS that establishes thresholds, costs of future resources needed (e.g., new school), and costs related to new development (e.g, the specific impact of each new home). Mitigation fees could then be set for each new development. Other fees could be established to off-set the costs of other infrastructural needs such as transportation improvements, parks, etc. However, it is important to note that enacting fees to mitigate the costs of new students is not common practice in New York State. Any such effort should include a significant amount of legal research and outreach to the development community.

Intermunicipal tax-sharing agreements: a system could be set up to pool all school tax revenue town-wide, and redistribute the funds to each school district based on some type of formula.

Negotiated PILOT agreements: similarly, in cases where new commercial operations pay fees in lieu of taxes, these payments could be negotiated to cover an impact area rather than only the specific school district where the new business will be located.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance: at issue is the impact residential growth is having on those school districts without a significant commercial base. These areas are encumbered by more students each year while revenues are not keeping up with increased demand (residential typically does not pay for itself). If a specific school district can show that it does not have the resources to manage a large influx of new students, an APFO could be enacted to ensure that growth does not get out of hand. The APFO would require project applicants to show that there is sufficient capacity within the school district to receive new students from the development. If this could not be shown, the project would be denied.

Fire Districts

The town and its surrounding area consist of seven (7) volunteer fire companies, each within a separate Fire District (**see map 10**). A Fire District is a political subdivision of the state and each separate district is governed by a board of Fire Commissioners of the State who are elected officials. The Board of Commissioners prepares an annual budget, which is submitted, to the Wallkill Town Board. The town collects the funds from property owners of the Fire District in the annual taxes and returns the operating funds

to the District. When needed, there is an Orange County Mutual Aid System, which provides assistance to the fire companies.

Development Trends

This section highlights some recent development trends in Wallkill, particularly related to residential growth. The rate and amount of growth has become a significant concern – to such an extent that a moratorium on residential growth was enacted in late 2004. This discussion highlights some of these issues, forming the basis for the plan’s recommendations regarding future development densities and patterns.

Building Permits

As noted in **table 9** below, an average of 130 single-family residential building permits have been issued per year since 2000. This average is higher than the approximately 105 units per year extrapolated from the 1990 and 2000 census data. In addition to the single-family homes, the apartment building permits issued represent approximately 360 units. (Note: according to the Wallkill Building Department there are approximately 18 apartment complexes within Wallkill, some of which have as many as 200+ units.)

Number of Permits Issued			
Year	Single-Family	2-Family	Apartment Buildings*
2000	105	-	-
2001	109	-	1
2002	175	2	-
2003	130	2	10
2004	133	1	1
2005 (thru 3/29)	22	-	-

Source: Town of Wallkill Building Department, 2005.

*these figures represent approximately 360 total units in apartments between 1/1/2000 and 3/29/2005

Wallkill’s apartments, primarily found within the R-1 district, offer residents housing options and are an important component of the town’s diverse housing stock. However, the increase in the number of apartment structures has become a development concern recently, primarily in relation to impacts on municipal services and the growth rate of the town. As part of the initial zoning update discussed in the strategic plan, it is recommended that the town review the R-1 district and work to identify appropriate densities, particularly related to apartments.

As the following table shows, Wallkill already has a rather high percentage of its total housing units within large apartment, condominium, or other similar types of structures (for this discussion, large apartments/condominiums are considered any structure with 10 or more units). Furthermore, there are approximately 400 apartment/condominium units either already approved or being considered within the development review process. After a cursory review, it seems as if the town already has its share of large housing facilities. For example, with the exception of the City of Middletown, the

number of housing units found within large apartment/condo structures in Wallkill far surpasses all Orange County municipalities. This preliminary analysis points to the need for further analysis and discussion regarding the R-1 district, residential land uses and types, and the overall future build-out of the town.

Total Units within Large Apartment Buildings
and Condominiums

Municipality	Total Units
Middletown, City of	1,390
Wallkill	1,124
New Windsor	1,080
Newburgh, City of	1,018
Monroe	557
Goshen	506
Cornwall	398
Warwick	366
Port Jervis, City of	356
Blooming Grove	262
Montgomery	224

Source: US Census, 2000 – total units represent the number of housing units found within a structure of 10+ units

Note: Twelve (12) additional towns in Orange County have less than 200 units within large apartment buildings.

Development Potential

A look at the existing land use pattern within Wallkill shows that a significant amount of land remains for development within most zoning districts, but particularly within the RA district (outlying areas of town). A preliminary look at the growth potential of the town at currently allowed densities shows that the future build-out would result in significant impacts to all aspects of livability including traffic, schools, infrastructure, rural character, etc. A full build-out study is recommended as part of an area- or town-wide Generic Environmental Impact Statement which would help the town to better understand the cumulative impacts of future growth (10-20 year period) on critical issues such as traffic, water and sewer service, emergency services, and community character (to name a few). As discussed earlier, this study could also serve as the basis for changes in densities and the establishment of a mitigation effort.

Land Use Findings and Implications

- The predominant land uses are rural agricultural and single-family residential;
- Only a small percentage of land has been developed for industrial land use in the past 28 years;
- Considerable amount of land is subject to constraints posed by location in wetland areas;
- The lack of specific use standards in PID and MI districts has led to a somewhat inefficient land use pattern and a lack of development predictability. This has lead

to incompatible adjacent uses and concerns regarding transitions between zoning districts.

- A significant amount of future development potential remains within the town, particularly in outlying areas such as the RA district. However, there are also significant infill opportunities close to the center of town. .
- The quality, function, scale and appearance of future development, both residential and nonresidential has not been sufficiently addressed.
- Tax base differences between the town's five school districts highlights the need for an enhanced commercial tax base overall, a more balanced dispersal of ratables, and perhaps growth management efforts to ensure that residential growth does not overwhelm school district resources.
- Affordable housing is a significant and growing issue within Wallkill and throughout Orange County

Appendix B: Orange County Plan Summary

Orange County maintains an overall comprehensive plan that includes all the municipalities in the County. The most recent update was concluded in October 2001, with an addendum completed in January 2003 entitled Strategies for Quality Communities in the 21st Century. The Plan discusses patterns of development, utilizing the “urban-rural” concept of previous County plans. This concept encourages development in and around the existing built-up areas. The Plan also describes various “Smart Growth” techniques, outlining specific strategies, which focus on open space, housing economic development, transportation and utilities.

Key Goals of the Orange County Plan include:

- Conserve the County’s natural land resources in a sustainable, linked combination of parks, open space, agricultural lands and waterfront.
 - Utilize and adequately maintain the County’s existing parks and strategically acquire or facilitate the preservation of additional parkland or prominent vistas, and develop facilities to meet the needs of all users.
 - Identify undeveloped areas of the County as appropriate for permanent open space, establish acquisition priorities and conserve farmland to enhance the open space character of the County as well as to diversify its economic base.
 - Utilize the active and passive recreation and open space potential of waterfront resources.
- For all built environments of the County, including residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and recreational, utilize infill redevelopment and new development techniques, which enhance the advancement of quality communities.
- Secure the rural ambiance and community aesthetic of the County through control of land use along its multipurpose corridors.
 - Maintain the separate and distinct character of different segments of roadway corridors.
 - Preserve active and inactive rail corridors in enhance transportation, economic development and recreation functions in the County.
 - Maintain the existing pedestrian and bike trails, while providing for their future expansion in the County.
- Promote a multi-modal transportation network that meets the needs of all segments of the County’s current and future population for intra- and inter-County travel, and that adequately supports anticipated economic development.

- Strengthen the economy by attracting and supporting businesses that will enhance the County’s economic base and provide jobs, tax revenues, and an orderly and sustainable land use pattern that accommodates the best of the County’s old economy while providing the attributes necessary to build the new economy.
 - Enhance, support and maintain the County’s quality of life to attract an educated, highly skilled and diversified workforce and high earning businesses demanding a range of skills.
 - Build the foundation for a knowledge-based economy to capture part of the region’s share of the growth in technology and globally oriented businesses.

- Promote a broad range of housing opportunities that meet the needs of all segments of the County’s population, and ensures the maintenance and rehabilitation of the County’s existing housing stock.

- Encourage the provisions of adequate utility systems that meet the needs of Orange County residents and businesses while balancing the preservation and quality of the County’s natural resources.
 - Provide an adequate supply of high quality water in support of the County’s residential business community.
 - Ensure the availability of environmentally sound sewage treatment systems and disposal techniques appropriate for different land development patterns, which serve existing development and provide sufficient capacity to accommodate anticipated residential and business growth.

- Identify, protect and promote the County’s historical and cultural resources, ensuring their ability to enhance the sense of place and quality of life of County residents while providing an important component of overall County economic development.

- Preserve and promote the County’s historic heritage y supporting and enhancing cultural values within the County.

The County Plan accurately depicts the Town of Wallkill as a predominantly low medium density residential area. In general, the Plan seeks to conserve the County’s natural land resources in a sustainable, linked combination of parks, open space, agricultural lands and waterfront. At the same time, the Plan calls for more urbanized development in the Cities of Newburgh, Middletown and Port Jervis.

It is important to note that the County Plan is considered advisory only. State law gives the County the right to approve or disapprove projects that have inter-municipal or countywide significance (General Municipal Law §239 (l) & (m)). A municipality’s planning, zoning or governing board may overrule the County’s

decision by a majority plus one vote. Nevertheless, the concepts espoused in the County Plan represent fundamentally prudent planning principles and it is the objectives of the Town of Wallkill's Comprehensive Plan to adhere to these principles.

Appendix C: HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF WALLKILL

Source: Dorothy Hunt-Ingrassia Historian Town of Wallkill – Historian

The Town of Wallkill was established April 7, 1772, at the home of Samuel Watkins in Campbell Hall in the present Town of Hamptonburgh. Vast tracts of wilderness, called patent, were acquired from the Indians over the period from 1703 to 1761. The original Wallkill Precinct was created from portions of two of these patents, the Minisink Angle and the John Evens Patent.

Wallkill Precinct originally extended into Ulster County and was much larger than its present day boundaries. In 1798, by an act of the legislature, the present Orange-Ulster County boundaries were formed.

In 1782, the Congregational Church, at what is now Howells, was organized and has the distinction of being the second Congregational Church formed in the State of New York and the first church group in this area.

In 1787, George Huston of Neelytown settled on 300 acres in the southeastern part of Wallkill. His father James Huston who was a descendent of Rev. Joseph Houston, first minister of the Goodwill Church of Montgomery, bought this land for him. In 1796, a church was organized at the home of George Houston and he donated three acres for a church site and burial ground. Because of the preponderance of Scottish families, it was decided to name the settlement, which grew up around the church, Scotchtown.

The First Congregational Church was organized in 1785 in the settlement not yet known as Middletown. The church acquired ½ acre of land from the estate of John Green, to which was added 15-1/5 square rods from the husband of the minister's niece, Jonathan Owen. The Rev. Charles Seelay served as the first pastor and construction was begun in 1786 but not finished until some ten to twelve years later.

In 1792, several families joined to organize the Wallkill Old-School Baptist Church which met at various places for thirty years before building on land donated by Silas D. Horton at Rockville, some two and three quarter miles north of Middletown. A fifth church was organized in 1799 in an area between the present Fair Oaks and Bloomingburg. The meetinghouse was known as "The Old Union House."

Settlement Clusters

Scotchtown – situated on high ground, this section of country being about one thousand feet above tidewater. It undoubtedly took its name from the nationality of the early settlers, McVey, McWhorter, McInnis, McLaughlin and McCord. The first store opened in 1803. There was also a wagon-shop and blacksmith-shop.

Mechanicstown – about two miles east of Middletown which sprang up around the forge and trip-hammer works of Messrs. Otis & Miller. There was a hotel there, a glove manufactory and a feed mill. Its name was derived from the fact it was a settlement of “industrious mechanics.”

Circleville – half way between Scotchtown and Bloomingburg was previous to 1791 a thick forest, with a single log house, occupied by a Mr. Coddington. Circleville’s post office was established in 1850. There was a blacksmith shop there, wagon-shops, shoe-shops and two creameries. Samuel Bull, Sr., a blacksmith who settled near Circleville, is said to have been employed construction the chain used in the obstruction of the Hudson River during the Revolution. Church services were held in the “White School House” until the Circleville Presbyterian Church was built. The Name Circleville was given to the Church Village by Mrs. Mary Bull, who thought Circleville, in Ohio, was a very pleasant name.

Phillipsburgh – (was known as Hampton in 1806, but the name was changed due to the number of families by the name of Phillips) lies east of Middletown, on the Wallkill River, and was a place of great expectations. With its magnificent waterpower, and government contracts for powder during the war of the Revolution, it had every prospect of advanced growth. People from the vicinity of what is now Middletown went to Phillipsburgh to do their shopping. However, the growth of Middletown as an important railway village dwarfed Phillipsburgh. The Erie began daily service in 1843 and Middletown became the end of the line and an important rail center.

Howells Depot – was a station on the Erie Railroad northwest of Middletown. The Post office was established in 1846. Early businesses comprised of freighting and general traffic of the Erie Railroad; a general merchandise store, drug store, hardware store, tin shop, hotel, blacksmith and wagon shops and a meat market.

Van Burenville – name bestowed upon a village near the northeast angle of the Town of Mount Hope. It arose from the establishment of a post office by that name, given no doubt in honor of President Martin Van Buren. It was formerly a place of considerable business on an old stage-route; however, the opening of the plank-road left Van Burenville away from travel routes and its business disappeared.

Fair Oaks – was a station upon the Midland Railroad, later known as the New York, Ontario and Western. Fair Oaks was established May 14, 1872. A hotel built there had been opened for business the day the battle of Fair Oaks, Va. was fought. This battle prompted the naming of the hamlet as Fair Oaks.

Crawford Junction, Purdy’s Station and Lockwood – were trackside-stopping places on the New York, Ontario and Western Railways.

Millsburgh – a ridge of land running from Scotchtown toward Bullville, was a neighborhood settled, among others, by Jacob Mills, whose descendants were numerous and constituted the prominent families of the district.

Stony Ford – was so called as early as 1767. It was a fording place over the Wallkill River from Montgomery. There was a rift across the stream at this point literally paved with cobblestones.

Brimstone Hill – in the northern part of the town, was so named from a story told of a drinking spree at an old log tavern in early times. Being short on glasses, an extra one was brought in that had been used in mixing up some brimstone. In the darkness of the evening, a man drank whisky from the glass and the place was so named.

Michigan (Michigaan Corners) - the name applied to a cluster of houses on the crest of Three-Mile Hill, in the eastern part of the Town. Named because Malcolm McLaughlin bragged about his imaginary trip to Michigan to the extent they nicknamed him Michigaan.

Davistown – an old name for a neighborhood in the eastern part of the Town, near Three-Mile Hill, arising from the Davis families, which were numerous in that section.

La Grange – had its first post office in the Town of Wallkill. It was called “Wallkill” and was kept by John Monell. Another Post office was a large, hollow white-oak tree. Any person being at the vicinity of Scotchtown would bring them up and deposit them in this tree; then, as the neighbors passed, they would take what belonged to them and leave what belonged to others.

Honey-Pot – was a mellifluous name bestowed many years ago upon an excellent spring of water a mile or more from Circleville. There were various traditions as to the reason for the name, whether it was because of the sweetness and purity of the water that flowed from the spring, whether a “bee-tree” with its rich deposit of honey once stood by the spring, or whether stolen honey was once hidden there, remains a mystery.

Guinea – an old name applied to a settlement of African Americans, east of the Honey-Pot farm. They had been the slaves of Col. McLaughry, of New Windsor, and were freed by him, 1825 to 1828. The Colonel gave this land to them.

By 1809, the Town’s location on the route between Sullivan County’s lumbering and tanning products and the Hudson River made the building of the Montgomery Turnpike a profitable venture. Several other turnpikes followed making the area through which they were routed a trade center. By 1848, Middletown had a population of 1360 and incorporated as a village.

In 1851, the Middletown and Bloomingburg Plank Road was built and soon followed by a second one called the M. & U., which made transportation into the area and the railroad even easier. Also in 1851, the world’s first telegraph line was strung along the Erie Railroad and the first railroad train dispatch was sent over the portion of the wire through Middletown from Turner’s (Harriman) to Port Jervis.

The Town of Wallkill became bitterly divided politically as the Civil War era approached and in 1860, the Republicans carried the first Supervisor’s election and then

the Presidential election in Wallkill. During the War, Middletown and Wallkill together supplied no less than six companies and regiments to fight for the Union. After the war, Middletown boomed and by 1888, Middletown was granted her charter as a city.

Wallkill remained rural through the first half of the twentieth century. In the early 1960's the Town began to feel the impact of development as new highways put it within driving distance of New York City and New Jersey. The opening of Routes 17 and 84 and the placement of interchanges in the Town changed the complexion of the area. In 1960, the census reported 8000, and in 1980, the census showed the population grew to 20,481. By 1987, it had grown to approximately 27,000.

Appendix D: Planning Maps

Map 1: Wallkill Character Areas

Map 2: Existing Land Use

Map 3: Existing Zoning

Map 4a: Development Trends – Building Permits 2000 to 2005

Map 4b: Development Trends – Lots Subdivided Since 1993

Map 5: Prime Farm Soils

Map 6: Water Service Areas

Map 7: Sewer Service Areas

Map 8: Natural Resources

Map 9: School Districts

Map 10: Fire Districts

Map 11: Wallkill Location Map

Endnotes:

ⁱ Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan, Draft Oct. 2004

ⁱⁱ Orange County Open Space Plan, June 2004, Page I/II-2.

ⁱⁱⁱ Soil Survey of Orange County, New York. US Dept. of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service in cooperation with Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station. Issued October 1981.

^{iv} Town of Wallkill Parks & Recreation Survey, February 2001.

^v The Board of Regents of the State of New York formulates general educational policies and established minimum standards and requirements. The State Legislature determines certain aspects of the school program by law. Subject to these provisions, each local Board of Education is responsible for schools in there respective districts.