

POLICY AREA: Transportation

For most Pleasant Valley residents, the private automobile is the exclusive mode of daily transportation. Over 92 percent (down from 1990's 94 percent) reported going to work by car, with over 84 percent driving alone (up from 80 percent in 1990). Only 1.2 percent of residents commute by public transit, including the County LOOP bus system and the trains south, which has not changed for the past ten years. A similarly small percentage reported walking to work. The primary employment destination points for local residents are the Town of Poughkeepsie, Pleasant Valley, City of Poughkeepsie, East Fishkill, and elsewhere in Dutchess County, in that order.

In the 2006 Community Survey, the majority of respondents (76.7 percent) supported the idea of reducing traffic congestion in the town center by making more rear lot connections and by reducing the number of driveways accessing NYS Route 44. Past planning documents have also recommended a bypass route around the Pleasant Valley hamlet as the long-term solution to congestion at this bottleneck. Comments from residents at several 2007 public workshops indicate that all of these ideas are still supported.

Transportation goals should include a stronger emphasis on public transit and other alternatives to the car. Town goals should also include controlling transportation impacts via better land use and site plan decisions, and a reconsideration of the role of the pedestrian in the design of the hamlet center. A well-designed hamlet center that includes shared driveways, proper pedestrian amenities, landscaping, and traffic calming measures can help to alleviate traffic congestion. The general plan concept to discourage development in agricultural districts and concentrate growth in compact hamlet centers will reduce automobile dependency and traffic congestion, while making public transportation more feasible.

Roadways as Greenways

In addition to addressing traffic congestion, the Town should promote ways to visually enhance its roadways. A program which includes rebuilding stone walls, planting buffers to block views at visually disruptive locations, selectively pruning to reveal open space vistas, and adopting guidelines outlining sensitive maintenance procedures for locally designated scenic roads, would help make roadways into greenways. Pleasant Valley should recognize that its roads and rights-of-way are the Town's most prominent public spaces, the means by which residents visualize their community, and are areas where the Town can most directly control its future character.



The Taconic State Parkway is an important north-south transportation corridor in Pleasant Valley



Improvements are needed in the hamlet of Salt Point to promote walkability

Roadway systems should also be viewed as economic assets. Route 44 can be an asset for the economic development of the Town, and plans should focus on how best to take advantage of it without losing its traffic carrying functions. Plans that will smoothly carry traffic through the hamlets, while also being conducive to “park once and walk around” shopping are advantageous to local businesses. Providing for rear parking lots with shared parking, shared driveways to lessen vehicular turning conflicts, and internally linked circulation or service roads between adjacent parcels should be encouraged to achieve pedestrian-friendly hamlets.

To further promote the concept of a walkable hamlet and to encourage less dependence on the car, the Town should support sharing of roads between motor vehicles and other means of transportation. Repairing and extending the sidewalk system along primary connecting streets, improving shoulders, incorporating planted medians, and integrating bicycle/walkways with a town-wide trail system all help to achieve this goal. Sidewalks or trails connecting heavily populated areas with town recreation centers should be a priority.



Residential streets with large setbacks and no street trees look so wide that they induce higher speeds



Narrower residential streets lined with trees provide a pedestrian scale and sense of enclosure to help slow traffic

Implementation Strategies: Transportation

Short-term:

- 5.1 Establish an Official Town Map which would include lands and roads owned by the Town and other government agencies, roads that are town roads by use, and future designated road rights-of-way.
- 5.2 Adopt site plan and subdivision regulations that limit the number of access points on collector roads and highways, and encourage shared driveways and shared parking lot connections.
- 5.3 Adopt zoning regulations that include, as part of the review process, the effect of any development on transportation issues, and the view from the roadway.
- 5.4 Adopt zoning regulations about the inclusion of pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, public recreational facilities, benches, bike racks, and crosswalks as part of the review process.
- 5.5 Include the Comprehensive Plan hamlet designs as part of the review for all development and re-development proposals.
- 5.6 Establish a Town program to implement techniques for visually enhancing public roadways.
- 5.7 Include public transportation availability on the Town's website.
- 5.8 Work with the NYS Department of Transportation and State and Federal funding sources to provide medians in the town center.

Long-term:

- 5.9 Periodically review public transportation needs in the Town and encourage alternatives to the dependence on individual automobiles.