

- Land use patterns and zoning districts in adjacent towns.
- The need to balance commercial and residential development with preservation of rural character.
- The natural features of the land including wetlands, waterbodies, floodplains, and steep slopes.
- Potential fiscal impacts of overdevelopment or spread-out development patterns.

The following land use descriptions take into account all of the above, and are based upon the Centers and Greenspaces Plan. Fourteen land use categories appear on the District Map. It is important to note that the density classifications are generalized at this point. Specific district lines and acreage designations will be defined in the subsequent zoning update. As part of that update, the Town should consider incorporating the use of “average density” in determining lot counts. “Average density” means that residential density is averaged over the entire parcel, placing no restrictions on minimum lot size as long as the total density of the overall project does not exceed the maximum permitted. Under this flexible approach, lot sizes can vary within a development to accommodate both environmental and economic conditions.

The objectives and general location of each of the following use categories are described below:

- Conservation
- Rural Agricultural
- Rural Residential
- Lower Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Higher Density Residential
- Mixed Use Commercial
- Office/Industrial
- Quarry
- Special Flood Hazard

CENTERS:

- Hamlet - Pleasant Valley
- Hamlet - Washington Hollow
- Hamlet - Salt Point
- Hamlet Residential (includes Pleasant Valley, Washington Hollow, Salt Point)



Districts

Conservation

This category includes the land east of the Taconic State Parkway, and north to the Washington Hollow hamlet area. Large land holdings by the Institute of Ecosystem Studies, Rockefeller University, the Innisfree Foundation, and the Taconic-Hereford State Forest make this section of the Town particularly important for a coordinated conservation program. Most of this land is already contained in the lowest density residential district under existing zoning, but the plan map further lowers the density to prevent additional fragmentation of this environmentally sensitive area.

This area contains some of the most rugged land in the Town. The general combination of steep slopes, shallow soils and exposed bedrock over much of the terrain makes the siting of septic systems and foundations difficult. Road access is poor in many areas. Land uses should be limited to lower density, primarily single family residential, recreation, and other minimal impact activities that protect the unique features of this region. Where larger parcels are available for development, conservation subdivision techniques should be used to preserve the greenspace characteristics of the land and avoid construction on portions of the property with natural constraints.

Rural Agricultural

This land category includes much of the land in the north and northwest sectors of the Town, connects across the Taconic State Parkway to lands north of the Washington Hollow hamlet, and includes a portion of the southern part of town. It is the largest category in terms of overall acreage.

The northwest sector contains a large percentage of the remaining agricultural land in Pleasant Valley. The areas surrounding Gretna Road, Malone Road, Fox Run, and sections of North Avenue, Netherwood Road, and Salt Point Turnpike all have extensive farmland. Protecting agriculture and the necessary food growing potential of the land is not only important to the county's economy, but also contributes to the scenic and rural qualities that residents responding to the 2006 Community Survey so strongly supported.

Portions of this land contain significant natural constraints, including large areas with shallow soils or soils with low permeability, moderate and steep slopes, and sizeable wetlands, especially in the northwest section. Although most of this district still remains in large parcels, scattered areas have been subdivided into smaller pieces and flag lots lining the back roads in strip residential patterns.

This category of land is primarily designed for activities compatible with farming or farm-related businesses, and lower density residential and accessory uses. Recreation, low-impact resort uses, camps, golf courses, and fish and game preserves or clubs are also appropriate. A lower density residential designation, by itself, will not protect farm properties or rural qualities, but lower densities allow for more creative land siting decisions and conservation techniques. Where development at higher densities will significantly alter large tracts of land, conservation subdivision development from a lower overall density allows growth to be carefully placed off good farm soils or within the wood line. Conservation density development and other greenspace preservation techniques should be strongly encouraged in this district and on other large, undeveloped parcels.

The intent is to protect the district from overdevelopment, encourage continuation of agricultural uses, and discourage sprawl through the remaining rural areas. All development should be compatible with the natural limitations of the land.

Rural Residential

This category bridges the gap between the Conservation district along the eastern portion of town, and areas to the west that have experienced continued growth and development over the last decade. The area encompasses numerous DEC and NWI wetlands, as well as sections within the 100-year floodplain of the Wappinger Creek



and tributaries. According to the 2007 Municipal Aquifer Report, the soils in this area are predominantly Type C and Type C/D, meaning that slower aquifer recharge rates necessitate an appropriate change in development potential in order to protect water quality and quantity.

Lower Density Residential

This category includes a large area located in the central portion of the Town, along with a smaller section located in the area of Salt Point. Although this category is not consistent with the surrounding agricultural nature of the northern portion of town, its inclusion reflects conformance with pockets of existing smaller parcel sizes.

Medium Density Residential

This category includes many of the areas of Pleasant Valley that already contain suburban style single family home development. Further development in this district is likely to be consistent with the average density of already developed parcels. This land use category serves as a buffer for the less populated, more rural surrounding areas and helps maintain the focus of development in the Pleasant Valley hamlet center.

Natural limitations in these areas vary, with some areas containing good soils for development and others having more marginal soils. Because of their distance from community centers, central water and sewer connections are not projected, although more intensive development near the hamlet boundaries could be included in any future utility district. Actual density for any given project will be determined by the features of the particular parcel and the restraints placed on the land by the provision of individual wells and septic systems. While much existing development in these areas has taken on a pattern more typical of suburban locations, care should be used in new developments to preserve the more rural features, including existing tree cover, areas of wetlands, steep slopes and other natural features, and traditional agricultural forms like hedgerows and stone walls. Most homes are on Class C and D soils. Development in adjacent districts and on nearby parcels should be at a lower density.

Higher Density Residential

This category describes the mostly developed southwest section near the Town of Poughkeepsie line, south of the substation and wetland, and north of Wappinger Creek. It contains the parcels along the ridgelines of Clark and Timothy Heights, as well as the properties lining Bower Road and Route 44. Most of this area is already zoned for higher density residential development. Because of its existing density and location near the Wappinger Creek, Route 44 Corridor and Pleasant Valley hamlet, this area should be included in any future consideration of a central utilities district.

While this plan recommends maintaining the essential residential character of this area with housing set back from a roadway lined with street trees to form an entrance transition to the hamlet of Pleasant Valley, other compatible low traffic volume uses would also be appropriate under special permit conditions (for example and not limited to accessory apartments and multi-family housing options, family day care, bed and breakfast establishments, professional offices and home occupations). Existing spot or strip highway business uses, both here and in other non-commercial areas along Route 44, should be allowed to exist and treated under the nonconforming provisions of the zoning law.

Mixed Use Commercial

This category includes the Route 44 corridor in an area between Mill Lane and Rossway Road and several parcels along the south side of Route 44 just east of the Taconic State Parkway, all of which are currently part of the Neighborhood Commercial District. The purpose of this category is to allow for a variety of mixed uses, but in a contained area that eliminates the possibility of continuous strip development. Development and redevelopment in these areas will involve improved site design, landscaping, and architecture, in an effort to “retrofit the strip” (as recommended in the Greenway Guides).