

## Office/Industrial

Two large areas that were zoned for light industry are now in this category. The largest district includes the electric substation at the western entrance to the Pleasant Valley hamlet, as well as two existing industrial uses and a large vacant property at the intersection of West Road and Salt Point Turnpike. The second district is between Mill Lane and Rossway Road in the south-central part of Town. This second district is comprised primarily of a single parcel. Due to the proximity to the Town center and the location along a major transportation corridor, this area may provide a unique opportunity for economic expansion in the Town. This parcel should not be developed in sections, but rather as part of a comprehensive plan for the area.

Office and industrial uses provide Pleasant Valley with the opportunity to create jobs and diversify the tax base. While they contribute to the economic well-being of the Town, improperly sited or buffered uses can detract from the immediate vicinity by, among other things, funneling truck traffic onto residential streets and country roads, and consuming large amounts of land for operations that may not be compatible with the more rural characteristics of the area. However, modern light industrial uses are more likely to have the appearance and impacts of an office park than a smoke-belching factory. For this reason, and to promote flexibility in land uses, offices as well as certain commercial uses compatible with manufacturing and warehouses (such as auction halls, auto sales and repair, building supplies, equipment rental, health clubs, and transportation facilities) should be permitted in these office/industrial areas. Like and compatible uses should be grouped together within an area to promote safety and appropriate utilization of use.

## Quarry

Mining is an essential component of the construction industry, providing needed raw materials as well as generating jobs and taxes. However, the effects of larger scale operations, such as noise, dust, erosion and visual impacts, can extend beyond their property boundaries. Truck traffic on local roads and through hamlet centers is also a concern. In addition, by removing topsoil, vegetation, overburden and bedrock materials that provide a natural filtering and cleansing medium for water moving over the surface and through the ground, underlying aquifers can be affected.

The Map retains the quarry district under current zoning. Under a recently enacted state law, local governments have limited control of larger mining operations, but can determine through zoning where mining and truck access on local roads are permitted. The Town should carefully review future mining permit applications to ensure that erosion and sediment controls, buffers from streams and property lines, reclamation plans, and performance standards are in place to minimize off-site impacts and to protect the aquifer and future water supply sources.

## Special Flood Hazard

The 100-year floodplain category contains the low-lying areas and major stream corridors defined on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's maps as 100-year floodplains. It primarily consists of the banks of the Wappinger Creek and its major tributaries. In contrast to the scattered state-regulated wetlands, the 100-year floodplains form continuous corridors. This category is an updated version of the existing flood hazard zone as designated on Pleasant Valley's current zoning map.

Uses in the floodplain district should be generally limited to agriculture, forestry, recreation and other uses that would be minimally affected by high water. Structures that would house either humans or livestock should be sited elsewhere. Floodplain setbacks also provide stream protection, although the Town should supplement this category with separate stream protection guidelines that would help preserve and maintain the integrity of more minor waterways.

The major exception to these general floodplains recommendations must be the hamlet of Pleasant Valley, the center of which is almost entirely built in the 100-year floodplain. Improvements since the last great flood in the 1950s have reduced the high water potential, but floodplain regulations still apply in the hamlet center. The siting of septic systems in a flood prone area is a particular problem, adding another argument for central utilities in the hamlet area. Since the Plan recommends reinforcing, not abandoning the hamlet center, new construction



must conform to the floodplain standards and, to the greatest degree possible, limit downstream consequences. Placing residential uses in upper floors, providing for first level parking, and flood-proofing non-residential structures are among the techniques for limiting damage due to future flooding.

## HAMLETS

The concentrated, mixed-use village or hamlet settings that evolved in the pre-automobile era still make sense from an economic and social perspective. They promote community activities, help conserve resources, make shopping a personal and enjoyable experience, foster the spontaneous and un-chauffeured movement of children, and build individual community identity by offering an historic sense of place. Businesses can also benefit through shared access and parking, the collective attraction of many nearby products and services, and the surrounding strong residential base of support. By contrast, when the bulk of development spills out into the countryside, the capital budgets of local governments and school districts are stretched to the limit to provide expanded services such as roads, utilities, snow removal and bus service.

### Hamlet - Pleasant Valley

The hamlet of Pleasant Valley serves as the town center, hosting an array of shops, services, and government functions. It is located adjacent to the Wappinger Creek, at the confluence of several major roads. A large portion of the town center is located within the floodplain of the Wappinger Creek, making the addition of hamlet-scale residential difficult. The lack of central water and sewer is also a limiting factor to allowing for appropriate, hamlet-scale infill development.

The following sections will focus on particular problem areas and recommendations for improvements in order to make the hamlet a more attractive and economically successful town center (see Graphic #3 - Pleasant Valley Hamlet Illustrative Sketch Plan):

#### *Pleasant Valley Hamlet Boundaries*

The perceived boundaries of the Pleasant Valley hamlet are difficult to define due to creeping strip commercial areas extending out along Route 44, the angular road patterns, and the uneven patchwork of residential projects in the area. In order to better connect the outlying sections of the hamlet, sidewalks should be extended on at least one side of West Road past the elementary school, on North Road to the apartments, and on South Road as any significant development occurs. Roadside shoulders could also be improved to encourage biking.

Although zoning regulations in hamlet districts should be more flexible in allowing a mixture of uses, such as housing over storefronts or home offices, principal commercial uses should still be restricted from residential side streets in the hamlet districts and concentrated in walkable units, not stretched out along major roadways.

#### *Road Network*

Another major obstacle to hamlet development is the existing road configuration. Although Route 44 brings thousands of potential consumers through the commercial center each day, it is built at a highway scale, not a hamlet scale. Instead of a pedestrian oriented main street commercial district, the design of Route 44 acts as a barrier and effectively divides the hamlet into two separate segments.

The lack of rear lot connections reinforces the linear character of the hamlet. All possibilities to interconnect the street network and create internal links between individual properties or side streets should be pursued. North Avenue should be extended along Maggiacomo Lane and across the creek to connect with South Avenue. This will allow direct north-south travel through the hamlet and encourage close-in development off South Avenue to give the hamlet some depth on the south side of the creek. While the lack of necessary infrastructure and topographical limitations inhibit commercial development to the south and east of Wappinger Creek in the Hamlet of Pleasant Valley, the construction of the bridge to extend Maggiacomo Lane to connect with South Avenue together with the

development of central water and sewer for this area, could provide the critical infrastructure necessary to support commercial development in appropriate areas. Without these necessary components, an expansion of the commercial zone would result in haphazard strip development which would be detrimental to adjoining residential property owners and a drain on the vitality of established businesses in the core of the hamlet. Municipal parking will be created to the rear of the existing businesses on the north side of Route 44, with shared access conveniently available to North Avenue. Another location for a secondary road is a connection from the Presbyterian Church and library to Maggiacomo Lane. This emerging grid-like road pattern is one of the most important recommendations of the plan.

### **Pleasant Valley Hamlet Illustrative Sketch Plan**

The attached concept plan illustrates some of the desired improvements to the Pleasant Valley hamlet, including:

- Traffic calming measures, to increase vehicle and pedestrian safety and improve traffic flow, include the closure of some driveways, addition of center medians to channelize left-turn movements, and new extended curbs at intersections to shelter on-street parking and shorten crosswalk distances;
- Shared parking lots behind storefronts to consolidate access points and maximize parking capacity;
- Rear lot access road connecting Quaker Hill and North Avenue to new shared parking lots;
- Infill buildings located along the street frontage to expand commercial and residential uses, while reaffirming historic development patterns in the hamlet;
- Improved sidewalks with additional street trees;
- New residential building off Maggiacomo Lane, possibly for affordable senior housing;
- Future Wappinger Creek walkway connection between Town parks;
- Potential Maggiacomo Lane connection to South Avenue via bridge over Wappinger Creek.

### ***Route 44 Streetscape***

The entire length of Route 44 through the hamlet needs to be reconsidered with the goals of narrowing the field of vision from a five-lane highway to more of a two-lane main street, eliminating excess entrance and exit drives, and making pedestrians feel more comfortable. The Town must work with the County and the Department of Transportation and property owners on a comprehensive circulation, parking, and landscaping improvement program for the hamlet (see Graphic #3 - Pleasant Valley Hamlet Illustrative Sketch Plan for ideas). Such a program must address the following issues:

- Access to parcels fronting Route 44 should be shared with adjacent properties whenever possible. Incorporating planted/mountable medians and limiting driveways will increase both automobile and pedestrian safety, help keep the flow of traffic moving through the hamlet, create additional on-street parking spaces, allow more room for landscaping, and make walking along the sidewalks easier.
- Buildings should be located close to the street with short or no setbacks, and parking lots should be located to the rear of the buildings.
- Additional crosswalks should be added to facilitate easier pedestrian flow throughout the Pleasant Valley hamlet.
- The existing sidewalks should be upgraded to include a buffer strip with street trees to make the pedestrian feel less vulnerable to passing cars. Periodic “bumpouts,” (areas where the curb curves out into the parking lane), can be used to shelter the sidewalks and parked cars, also shortening crosswalks at key locations.

