

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF WORK

Executive Summary

1. Problem Statement

The ability of the Town of New Paltz to balance economic, societal and ecosystem needs is challenged by the disconnection between economic drivers and the planning and management of ecosystem services. For example, existing programs for local and regional planning of land use are disjointed from the programs for planning and management of transportation, and water and waste water infrastructure. One result is that the areas of the Town otherwise suitable for office, light industrial and mixed use development lack water and sewer infrastructure in some areas. In other areas, Town districts rely on expensive water and sewer services provided by the Village of New Paltz, which in turn relies on the NYC Aqueduct and an aging sewer facility. Another is that the Town's zoning code has not been updated to reflect contemporary uses included in the Regional Economic Development Strategy, the Regional Sustainability Plan, or the Town's Farmland Preservation Plan

Recommended actions will be to realign governance institutions to sustain ecosystem services and integrate the planning and management of these services.

The first step towards sustainable development for the Town of New Paltz will be to revise the Master Comprehensive Plan so it addresses these economic, societal and environmental needs that have not been fully integrated into all aspects of the use, development, restoration and conservation of the New Paltz community and its resources. Sustainability works from the bottom-up, and is rooted in the actions and decisions by individuals, private enterprises and the local community. Therefore, it will not only be necessary to get all governing boards to work cooperatively in the process; it will also be necessary to include the community (SUNY New Paltz, businesses, residents).

The Town's Zoning Code, subdivision regulations and other land use laws need to be reviewed and updated in several categories of services: land use and development; agriculture and forestry; transportation, especially the optimum and efficient use of the existing road resources and development of sustainable alternatives to car-dependent transportation; industrial activities; water infrastructure, recreation and tourism, especially agritourism. As noted, the Town's regulatory framework needs to be updated to address and incorporate updated uses and standards that address changing land uses, regional economic development and sustainability initiatives and the State's smart growth policy. That regulatory framework needs to encourage and support sustainable land use and protect the Town's environmental resources, while allowing prompt and efficient review of proposed activities.

An evaluation of current and future human activities in the Well-Being for Mid-Hudson region document prepared by SUNY New Paltz CREEO highlights trends that continue to draw on ecosystem services and economic competitiveness, including:

- loss of natural and agricultural lands to development at rates far exceeding population growth;
- Land degradation, a decline in land quality caused by human activities causing adverse impact on agronomic productivity, the environment, and its effect on food security
- transportation infrastructure that impedes more efficient intermodal systems;
- an aged water and wastewater infrastructure unable to handle current demands;
- practices and policy disincentives that deter timely responses and cost savings to developers.

This document has established some benchmarks that can be used later in the process to determine success of the program and/or necessary changes.

II. Goals and Milestones

The goal is to revise the Town's Master Comprehensive Plan, incorporating the New Paltz smart growth agenda where zoning ordinances and planning policies for land use are created to support a strong and vibrant economy, meeting societal and cultural needs in balance with a diverse and resilient ecosystem. Actions have already taken by the Town, such as participating in the Climate Smart Communities and the Zero Waste Community initiatives, adopting the Energy Star 3.0 program as an element of the Building Code and preparing a Farmland Preservation Plan.

A critical element of the Town's land use planning that will be essential to this desired state is to carry out the SEQRA process to update the 1995 GEIS document prepared specifically for the Putt Corners Road corridor for development; water and waste water infrastructure by the Joint Town and Village Planning Board. That planning document foretold the increasing demands that are being placed on finite water resources to supply drinking water, combined with changing land use practices, population growth, aging infrastructure, and climate change.

New Paltz is a community that has fully embraced and routinely applies many aspects of the regional sustainability plan in all decisions and actions. While the near-term actions recommended herein will have specific milestones, the adoption and use of sustainability as a guide to local and regional decision making will take time. As sustainability becomes embedded in the fabric of individual, corporate and governmental thinking, the return on that investment should continue indefinitely.

The Sustainability and Resiliency project will be summarized by four major recommendations:

1. Adopt and maintain policies and procedures that encourage new/expanded business and promote local workforce development consistent with the comprehensive planning strategy and objectives, including clear communication of the Town's strategy and objectives to potential developers;
2. Align governance and administrative review to enhance the zoning and planning process by streamlining permit applications to reduce time and costs;
3. Develop land use policies and create corridors for planned commercial development consistent with the regional economic development strategy, smart growth principles and other initiatives that may leverages the strengths and opportunities of the New Paltz community and its region, such as collaboration with SUNY New Paltz on START UP NY initiatives consistent with the Comprehensive Plan;
4. Provide plans and an implementation strategy for a sustainable community water and waste water infrastructure that supports sustainable development in designated growth areas of the Town that have the ability to support development incorporating the State's smart growth principles.

Each of these recommendations will be discussed to review near-term actions that address these shortcomings:

Actions

(a): Review and revise the Town's current Master Plan and draft Comprehensive Plan to direct economic growth, encourage renewable/net zero practices and address quality of life issues by including adopted objectives of the Regional Economic Development Strategy and other initiatives that will permit a business plan strategy to lead investment, policy and programming outcomes;

(b) Development of an appropriate mix of land uses, protect and enhance the physical environment, and shape the built character of the Town of New Paltz and provide a sustainable economic base for the community by revising and updating the Zoning Codes that regulates; size and density of development and the use of land while eliminating outmoded provisions that conflict with contemporary uses and planning standards;

(c) Planning to improve the quality of life and living environment through supporting sustainable Smart Growth that contributes to the tax base, expands job opportunities for residents and ensures a appropriate level of services for future land use including identification of specific developable parcels and streamlining environmental review by use of a GEIS that reduces the cost and time of site specific environmental review;

(d) Incorporate sustainable criteria into sewer and water infrastructure including water discharge: water re-charge, keeping water on site, groundwater baseflow, gray water management for new developments and for retrofitting existing developments.

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The Town of New Paltz was founded in 1678 by French Huguenots both patent from the governor and purchase from the local Esopus Indian tribe. Huguenots were refugees who had immigrated from the German Palatinate, where they had settled after fleeing France during religious persecution.

The Town is centrally located in Ulster County with three major transportation routes running through it: NYS Thruway off exit 18, State Route 32, State Route 208 and State Route 299. The Wallkill River flows northward from Lake Mohonk, New Jersey through New Paltz on its way to join the Rondout Creek, which in turn feeds into the Hudson River.

The portion of the Shawangunk Ridge which includes the Mohonk Preserve and Minnewaska State Park Preserves is in the town. The ridge is the single busiest rock climbing destination in North America, with some 50,000 technical climbers visiting the area each year.^[31]

According to the 2010 census, there were 14,003 people, 4,515 households, and 2,381 families residing in the town. The population density was 378.4 inhabitants per square mile. There were 4,679 housing units at an average density of 138.0 per square mile (53.3/km²). The racial makeup of the town was 84.7% White, 5.3% Black, 0.30% Native American, 4.4% Asian, 0.05% Pacific Islander, and 2.8% from two or more races.

In the town the population was spread out with 27.3% under the age of 19, 22.5% from 20 to 24, and 10.7% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 26 years.

The town is governed by a town board composed of four at-large members who serve for four years and a supervisor who serves for two years. The highway superintendent serves for two years, while the town clerk is elected to a four-year term.

DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Program goals will be carried out through a specific work task agenda to promote urban revitalization

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Paltz,_New_York

and create new tools to promote smart growth and reinvestment. This project will review how land use planning will facilitate comprehensive planning and zoning to curb sprawl, revive hubs and corridors, provide choices in affordable housing, and conserve natural resources, farms, forests, and open space. The program will also consider water and waste water infrastructure build out for clean and abundant water including planning approval criteria for a new way of thinking about water discharge: water re-charge, keeping water on site, groundwater baseflow, gray water for new developments and for retrofitting existing developments.

A General Plan is for adoption of policies and procedures that encourage new/expanded business and promote local workforce development through land use planning will serve as the basis for these projections. Ultimately, revisions will be made to the Master Comprehensive Plan. A key assumption in understanding the magnitude of these projections is that the projections reflect a theoretical build-out of all unincorporated areas, rather than what is likely to appear on the ground over the next 10 years.

Planning for future development of the Town using the GEIS and SEQRA process to establish priorities for implementation and enabling strategies for local land use will enhance the zoning and planning process by streamlining permit applications to reduce time and costs and create corridors for planned commercial development. The Town will align with Mid-Hudson REDC strategies by land use planning strategies (Smart Growth) which includes a specific GEIS plan for an industry cluster on Putt Corners Road that potentially could create 833 jobs over a ten-year period. Specifically plan development will include going through the SEQRA process for the Putt Corners Road corridor to make a “shovel ready” area which will reduce approval times and costs for interested developers. This GEIS will address measures to reduce or mitigate traffic impacts, promote access management that will preserve transportation infrastructure, encourage geothermal and solar renewable energy and provide planning for water and waste water infrastructure for sustainable development through the implementation of strategy recommendations.

The Assumptions and Methodology² for projecting development will be cataloged to represent a range of estimates for potential population, dwelling units, and employment for the unincorporated areas of New Paltz. For instance, there is approximate developable land area on Putt Corners Road equaling more than three million square feet of space. Reducing 65% of developable coverage for open space would allow the total developable portion to be 1.05 million square feet. Also taking into consideration the reduction of buildable space for roadway right-of-ways and stormwater facilities would leave approximately 50% of the area available for development or 500,000 square feet. This 500,000 sq. ft. building area could be developed as Commercial Office, light industry or business park, creating a potential workforce of 833 employees. The total resource cost test comparing the sum of avoided utility costs by implementing energy efficient building code requirements then analyzing new building utility consumption against standard non-efficient utility consumption benchmarks will be used to quantify GHG emission reduction/avoidance. Likewise GHG emissions for workforce and suppliers can be calculated by using the same assumptions and methodology available through resources such as Berkeley CA Cool Climate and NYSERDA/DOT.

Under this project, municipal support for new businesses will effectively increase the need for a local workforce through job creation since a local workforce development is conducive to new or expanded businesses. By hiring local and reducing a workforce’s average commute to a ten mile radius, transportation fuel use and GHG emissions will be reduced and can be measured using the Regional Sustainability Plan indicators for transportation under NYSDOT and NYSERDA GHG emissions. The effect of hiring a local workforce could mean reducing its carbon footprint by 4 metric tons per employee per year if a local workforce uses non-motorized transportation including bicycles and walking paths; or by 3 metric tons if public transportation is used.³ A level of density appropriate to

2 <http://www.rctlma.org/genplan/content/appendix/appendix.html>

3 <http://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/business-calculator>

support water and sewer infrastructure should also increase support for existing public transportation services. Each employee would reduce the carbon footprint by 1 metric ton if commuting for work was reduced to a ten mile radius. Likewise, if these commercial properties limited at least fifty percent of their supply procurement to local sources it would reduce its carbon footprint by 400 metric tons per year while supporting the local economy.

Using the Regional Sustainability Plan indicators for energy use savings for energy efficient buildings and GHG emissions for MSW by using County Planning, the Town will be able to determine the positive environmental impacts and reduction of GHG emissions. Once GHG emission saving and avoidance for the first three-year period have been benchmarked and more accurate information is available on developed commercial space, there will be more accurate estimates of GHG emissions using available data sources for a 25-year analysis.

When creating and applying “green” standards and metrics, the integration of sustainable activities and cooperation within and among governmental jurisdictions is a key to success and will carry incentives. For instance, development of a consistent, sustainable land use plan that uses best available new technologies will provide integration with regional transportation plans and other public infrastructure plans including extensive public participation and local involvement. By recognizing preferred “green” practices, the Town can gain regional support for sustainable practices and Smart Growth practices that align with the Cleaner Greener Communities program.

TIMELINE AND IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Work- Ongoing/Completed:

- 1) The Town engineering is compiling information for stormwater management for the Town’s 2013 MS4 Plan. In 2012 the Town was notified by NYSDEC that it had been included in the watershed and an MS4 Plan was required. There is also a study on the Putt Corners Road water and waste water infrastructure funded by Ulster County Shovel Ready Fund.
 - 2) Ulster County DOT is finalizing plans to expand and re-pave South Putt Corners Road. The Town is requesting that the rehabilitation of this road include a bicycle lane and underground utilities.
 - 3) A DRAFT Zero Waste Action Plan has been written which includes a section on Planning and Financing for future recommendations/actions that will include corridor development, zero waste industrial parks, business hubs and cluster development. A paid college intern is collecting data to incorporate into overlay maps and include input from Town/Village Zoning and Planning Boards as part of the project. Information will be included in the Final Zero Waste Action goals and strategies for adoption by the Town/Village Boards.
 - 4) The Town had retained a consultant to prepare a DRAFT Comprehensive Plan for the Town. A draft plan was submitted, but the limited Town funds available for the purpose were exhausted during review of the Plan. At this time, the Plan remains in draft.
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5) The Town retained a consultant to prepare a Farmland Preservation Plan. That Plan has been accepted by the Town, but no funding has been available to address its recommendations, including zoning and land use revisions to accommodate agricultural uses.

6) The Town has adopted a wetlands law that provides an additional level of protection for Town wetlands not adequately protected by the Army Corps or NYSDEC wetland regulatory programs.

7) The Town's Transportation Committee has adopted proposed Access Management standards to conserve and maintain the highway resources in the Town. Those standards are presently being reviewed for incorporation into the Town's land use regulations and procedures.

Work Schedule

January 1st through June 30th 2014: Interaction with Town committees and departments. Data collection on census tract, stormwater, water and waste water infrastructure, mapping of natural resources, demographics, community asset inventory and parcel information for development of zoning and planning amendments. Engage the public to assist in community asset inventory and to create channels of cooperation for a successful program. First public meeting will be held in February 2014. Strategies through revisions of zoning ordinances specifically to reduce obstacles in receiving approvals will include engineering studies and creation of overlays identifying:

- parcels suitable for development;
- Transportation impacts/study
- water and waste water infrastructure planning and management
- SEQRA assessment to update and expansion of the generic GEIS done in 1995 for the Putt Corners Road corridor
- Natural resource inventory
- Creation of a shovel-ready overlay map after studies have been completed
- Open up discussions with SUNY New Paltz on the START-UP New York incentive to evaluate community needs from a tax perspective

June 1st through July 31st 2014: Recommendations for revisions of Master Comprehensive Plan effecting zoning ordinances, planning for land use and the changes to the 1995 GEIS for Putt Corners Road will be forwarded to the Town Board. Integration of SUNY New Paltz for land use recommendations that leverage development promoting job creation and workforce retention of graduates will be discussed at the Town Board level. There will be some overlap as overlay maps continue to be prepared and master documents amended for final Town Committee(s) approval.

- Development of codes/law for Town Boards/committee discussion
- Creating overlay maps of:
 - o vacant, abandoned, burnt out and/or foreclosed structures for the purpose of designating areas in need of revitalization and to highlight parcels in need that would qualify for additionally streamlining of zoning/planning permitting process.
 - o Low-income areas by census tract to determine methodology for revitalization including transportation, job creation, special needs, etc.
 - o Gray areas for stormwater control, additional development, seasonal vendor opportunities, and community gardens
 - o Community asset mapping

August 1st through October 31st 2014: Public dissemination of draft master plan and changes to local law/Town code for public comment period and Board discussion. Resolutions prepared for Town Board to adopt new laws and policies. Amendments to Master Comprehensive Plan and Town code:

- Include in planning approval criteria new way of thinking about water discharge: water re-charge, keeping water on site, groundwater baseflow, gray water for new developments and for retrofitting existing developments.
- Integrated distressed property remediation program;
- Consolidating water and sewer services can help improve services and defray the costs of extending or improving infrastructure through private/public partnerships;
- Highlight opportunities for corridor development to promote local business and land use in proximity to SUNY New Paltz;
- Following “Better Site Design” practices to facilitate design and review process of projects which incorporate standards for sustainability and include the economic objectives of the Mid-Hudson Regional Development Plan;
- Define “blueways” that provide clean and abundant water are essential for public health, and recreational and manufacturing economies need to be maintained through focused and strategic upgrades to municipal waste water and drinking water facilities;
- Policies for continued marketing of “greenway” system as the trail links to Lloyd through Rosendale into Kingston as a means to increase tourism and local economy.

November 1st through December 31, 2014: Development of information for local businesses and curriculum for schools; creation of outreach strategies to entice new business to the area; implementing protocol for annual assessment reporting as a method to assess success of program and for making recommendations for changes; creation of a sustainability and resiliency steering committee.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Following project partnerships with contact information:

Partner/Supporter	Contact Information
Town of New Paltz	Susan Zimet, Town Supervisor – PO Box 550, New Paltz, NY 12561 (845) 255-8456
Village of New Paltz	Curt LaValla, Village Planning – PO Box 877, New Paltz, NY 12561 (845) 255-0130
Hudson Valley Regional Council/Pattern for Progress	Jonathan Drapkin, Executive Director - 3 Washington Center, 2nd Floor, Newburgh NY 12550-4667 (845) 564-4075
Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District	Gary Capella, Director – 652 State Route 299, Highland, Y 12528 (845) 883-7162 x5
Town of New Paltz Water Department	Chris Marx, Supervisor – PO Box 550, New Paltz, NY 12561 (845) 255-0150
New Paltz Climate Action Coalition	Ann Guenther, Chair – 17 Military Lane, Gardiner, NY 12525 (845) 255-9297
New Paltz Chamber of Commerce	Michael Smith, President - 257 Main Street New Paltz, NY 12561 (845)255-0243/(845)255-5189 fax info@newpaltzchamber.org
New Paltz Recycling and ReUse Center	Laura Petit, Recycling Coordinator – PO Box 550, New Paltz, New York (845) 255-8456
Family of New Paltz	Michael Berg, Executive Director - 51 North Chestnut Street New Paltz , NY 12561 (845) 255-8801

Broader influence of this project - A member of our recycling staff serves on the NYSAR3 Legislative Committee and worked directly with Region II of the EPA under a Sustainable Materials Management pilot project that expanded its Zero Waste initiative to parallel many goals already outline in the Mid-Hudson Sustainability and Regional Economic Development Plans thereby bringing our influence to regions outside of our immediate area.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Information will be disseminated through the social media process, news media, public access television and public meetings. Interactive workshops will be held to distribute information and receive public input. Special efforts will be made to communicate the land use and sustainability recommendations and zoning changes to property owners of land in identified development corridors and potential development partners. That outreach will include incorporation of recommendations and comprehensive plan objectives into the land use application procedures and shared with the regional chamber of commerce, individuals and firms providing consulting services. The Town will work with environmental groups, property owners and other stakeholders to use the GEIS process to streamline environmental review of potential growth areas and facilitate site specific review.

PROJECT EVALUATION

The project will be evaluated using Regional Sustainability Plan indicators for energy use savings, GHG emissions data provided by County Planning and reviewing Mid-Hudson Economic Develop strategies to determine positive environmental impacts and alignment with regional development goals. Included in the final report will be GHG emission savings and avoidance with analysis of plan success or recommended changes. Once the first three-year period has had benchmarked data and more accurate information is available on developed commercial space, there will be more accurate estimates of GHG emissions using available data sources for a 25-year analysis.

PROJECT TEAM

The Team identified to collect data and make recommendation on actions to promote sustainable development practices is 1) George Lithco a partner in Jacobowitz and Gubits, LLP, and a member of the firm's Land Use and Municipal Teams. The firm has represented 26 municipalities in the Mid-Hudson region as general and special counsel. It has served as counsel to the New Paltz Planning Board since 1992, and also serves as special counsel to the Town Board on a variety of land use, environmental and municipal matters, including preparation of the Town's master plan and special zoning laws. He has deep knowledge of municipal zoning and planning law and has hosted regional training workshops on land use, zoning and environmental topics for continuing legal education course to the Ulster County Planning Board, regional chambers of commerce and individual planning, zoning and legislative boards for local officials; 2) Town Engineer, David Clouser of Clouser and Associates has been providing professional services for the Town since 1995. He specializes in transportation engineering, wetland biology, habitat assessment, noise assessment, complex water and sewer system design, etc and has experience in the review of large scale development projects is extensive, where numerous community impact issues are evaluated to verify compliance with the standards of the "hard look" of the SEQRA review process. 3) Town Board and Supervisor is a board of elected officials committed to economic health and environmental protection of the Town; 4) Town Zoning and

Planning Boards are made up of qualified volunteers that are appointed by the Town Board with varying backgrounds including engineering; 5) Highway Superintendent has twenty years experience in highway operations and is knowledgeable of water and waste water systems, transportation infrastructure and buildings and grounds maintenance.

FUNDING

In addition to donations from private organizations and tax levy dollars, the Town of New Paltz will use eligible in-kind services to satisfy all or a portion of the local funding requirement. In-kind contributions may be tangible surplus property from departments or ReUse Center or services which benefit the project or program. These services include but are not limited to: data collection, fieldwork, photography, excavating, grading, clearing, signage, research, etc. The Town plans on partnering with SUNY New Paltz, Empire State Development and Ulster County to use GIS information and other data already available and for interns that are capable of doing field work, overlay maps and reporting. Funding through Ulster County Shovel Ready Funds is already being used for engineering studies involving water/waste water on Putt Corners Road corridor and is 50% reimbursable. These funds are for municipalities to create and improve the infrastructure necessary to promote industrial development. Anticipated cost for the study is \$8,500.

Resources:

Federal and state funding programs including:USEPA, NRCS, Coastal Zone Management (CZM) grants and Coastal Estuary Land Protection; HUD Community Development Block Grant program, and; US Dept of Commerce (USDOC) Economic Development Funds; USDA programs; Foundations.