



*Town of Orangetown*  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF ORANGETOWN  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE  
SACCARDI & SCHIFF, INC.**

*May 2003*

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*Adopted by the Town Board of the  
Town of Orangetown  
May 12, 2003*

**The Town of Orangetown  
would like to acknowledge the following groups and individuals for their assistance  
in the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan:**

Supervisor Thom Kleiner

2003 Town Board Members:

Dr. Edward S. Fisher

Marie Manning

Denis O'Donnell

Denis Troy

and

Former 2002 Town Board Member Robert Bergman

The Orangetown Park Development Advisory Committee  
The Town of Orangetown Ad Hoc Committee for Open Space  
The Town of Orangetown Planning Board  
The Town of Orangetown Zoning Board of Appeals  
The Town of Orangetown Police Department  
The Fire Departments that serve the Town of Orangetown  
The Ambulance Corps that serve the Town of Orangetown  
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James Dean, Superintendent of Highways  
John Giardiello, Director of Office of Building, Zoning, Planning Administration and Enforcement  
Charles Richardson, Director of Finance  
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# *Preface*



## PREFACE

The Town of Orangetown Comprehensive Plan evolved from an approximately 2-year planning process. Various Town officials, representatives, and departments, in conjunction with both public and private groups and the general public, participated in the formulation of this Plan.

Under current New York State Law, the local governing body, in this case the Town Board, is responsible for undertaking and potentially adopting the Comprehensive Plan. The governing body can utilize other entities within the community to assist in the formulation of plan proposals. In Orangetown, the Town Board created a two-tiered committee of local residents and government officials, including members of the Town Board, the Planning Board, and various open space committees to work with professional planning consultants. Meetings were held on an approximately monthly basis, leading up to a draft plan that was the subject of a public hearing and review in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

There are five chapters within this Comprehensive Plan document. Chapter I, Existing Conditions, details the existing conditions of Orangetown relative to land use and zoning, socioeconomic factors, infrastructure, environmental factors and open space and recreation, and community facilities and services. Chapter II, Goals and Objectives, utilizes the Townwide analysis of existing conditions to formulate a series of goals and objectives for the Town within the categories of open space and recreation, residential development, commercial, office, and industrial development, transportation and infrastructure, and community facilities. Chapter III, Plan Proposals, amalgamates the knowledge from the previous chapters into specific plan proposals for the Town. This chapter contains a Land Use Plan and Functional Plans for open space and environmental protection, community facilities, and transportation and infrastructure. Chapter IV, Area Studies, looks at places within Orangetown deemed to require

further, more detailed analysis. Within this chapter are separate sections on six hamlet areas—Pearl River, Orangeburg, Blauvelt, Tappan, Sparkill, and Palisades - including generalized land use plans for each hamlet. Chapter IV also contains a section that describes the guidelines and recommendations of the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study, and a section outlining the current conditions of the Rockland Psychiatric Center, including a general land use plan for the site. Chapter V, Implementation, describes zoning and land development recommendations that should be made to realize the proposals of the Comprehensive Plan. These recommendations are related to Route 303, environmental protection, senior housing, design issues, administration, public improvements, and potential public/private partnerships, among other issues.



*Orangeburg Road with Clausland Mountain in the background*

The Town of Orangetown Comprehensive Plan was initiated with an appreciation of the community's structure. The Plan's open space and environmental protection proposals, for example, address two distinct areas of the Town: the steeply-sloped, heavily wooded Clausland Mountain area in the eastern portion of Orangetown, and the Lake Tappan-Hackensack riverway, including streams, reservoirs, and wetlands in the central portion of Town. These features, the six hamlet areas, the major roadways, and other key aspects of the geography of

Orangetown are depicted in Exhibit 1, Community Structure.

Recognizing this structure, the Town of Orangetown Comprehensive Plan provides guidance for development and open space preservation in Orangetown for the next 15 to 20 years. It provides the context within which the Town can make rational land use decisions. However, this Plan will not be utilized to replace the need

for future detailed studies or site-specific environmental reviews; the Plan will be utilized to provide reference and policy guidance for subsequent analyses, as required by SEQRA. The Orangetown Comprehensive Plan is intended to be flexible, to allow for changes in economic and social conditions, yet firm enough to provide a solid basis for the critical choices that will inevitably arise.



*Existing Conditions*





**I. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

A thorough understanding of existing conditions is a necessary component of the Comprehensive Plan process. The proposed goals and objectives, as stated in a subsequent section of this report, are based on both current and projected information, on both existing conditions and recognizable trends, and on the constraints and desires of the Town. This initial chapter of the Comprehensive Plan outlines the existing conditions of the Town in relation to a number of relevant topics, including, among others, land use and zoning, socioeconomic conditions, infrastructure, environmental factors, open space and recreation, and community facilities and services.

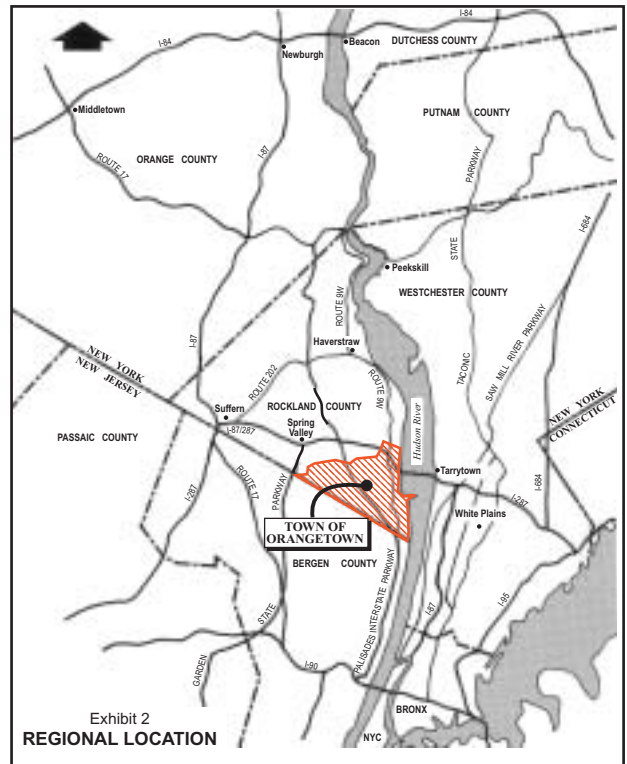
**A. LOCATION AND REGIONAL RELATIONSHIP**

**1. Orangetown**

Orangetown is comprised of four incorporated villages (Nyack, South Nyack, Grand View, and Piermont) and seven unincorporated areas (Upper Grand View, Sparkill, Palisades, Tappan, Orangeburg, Blauvelt, and Pearl River<sup>1</sup>). It is one of a group of historic towns and villages that dot New York’s Hudson Valley, and is home to a number of historic sites and structures.

Bordering New Jersey, Orangetown is the southernmost Town in Rockland County, and lies on the western banks of the Hudson River approximately 15 miles north of the George Washington Bridge. Rockland County is part of the New York Metropolitan Area, and as such, is home to a large and diverse population with ever-changing needs.

In order to address vital issues, such as housing, open space, transportation, and various other area-wide issues, a variety of plans and



documents have been created to guide future land use and development throughout the New York Metropolitan Area. Plans and documents relevant to this Comprehensive Plan are discussed below.

**2. Regional Plans**

**The Rockland County Plan, River to Ridge, A Plan for the 21st Century**, promotes a County-wide vision that deals with the issues inherent in land use, transportation, the economy, housing, parks and open space, and the environment. This vision encourages the preservation and enhancement of existing resources, including the attractive residential neighborhoods, historic properties, and significant natural features that characterize the Town. The County plan recommends controls to limit strip commercial development, particularly along roads

<sup>1</sup> Upper Grand View, although unincorporated, is not a specific subject of this study and will not be analyzed separately. It is, however, considered part of the Clausland Mountain area, an area whose issues are discussed in other portions of this Plan.

like Route 303. Suggested implementation measures specific or relevant to Orangetown include: (1) assisting in the restoration of commuter rail service on the West Shore Rail Line, (2) promoting Park-and-Ride opportunities in Pearl River, (3) developing feeder and other bus routes that link residential and employment concentrations, (4) continue the preliminary goals of the Rockland County Board for Historic Preservation and establish a County Office of Historic Preservation, (5) working to amend the homestead/non-homestead tax system, (6) the utilization of decommissioned State psychiatric facilities to provide enhanced community services and economic development opportunities, in addition to a number of other suggestions for other parts of the County, and the County as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

The Hudson River has been designated as one of the Nation's first American Heritage Rivers, and its influence on the surrounding communities cannot be underestimated. **The New York State Hudson River Valley Greenway** program stresses the importance of regional connection and cooperation in order to establish a Hudson River trail system both east and west of the Hudson River, develop strategies to promote the Hudson River Valley as a single tourism destination area, and promote and protect the agriculture industry in the area with the help of the agricultural community. The Town of Orangetown is a Greenway Community Partner, with a portion of the Greenway Trail system running through Tallman Mountain State Park (as a bike path) and the Old Erie Railroad Bed, also known as the Rail-Trail.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Bike Route 9, which traverses Orangetown on Route 9W, is a major regional trail that begins at the George Washington Bridge.

The Greenway Conservancy and Communities Council, both part of the Greenway program, were designated by Congress in 1996 as the

management entities for the approximately 4 million acre **Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area**. The Heritage Area Plan is intended to preserve, protect, and interpret the environmental and historic heritage of the Hudson River Valley, while improving the area's quality of life and enhancing economic growth. With two designated historic districts, the Town of Orangetown would continue to improve not only the quality of life of its citizens, but enhance the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area with such assets.<sup>4</sup>

The Hudson River was designated as an American Heritage River in 1998, and the villages along the River were designated by the State as scenic areas in 1987.

**A Region at Risk, the Third Regional Plan for the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Area** outlines issues and possible solutions for the metropolitan area as a whole. The major issues deal with economy, equity, and the environment. In order to effectively deal with these issues, five initiatives are identified: Greensward (which deals with the environment and "green" infrastructure of forests, watersheds, estuaries, and farms), Centers (in order to focus future growth at existing major employment and residential areas), Mobility (using the transportation network to connect centers), Workforce (giving groups and individuals the skills and connections needed to bring them into the region's economic mainstream), and Governance (reorganizing and re-energizing political and civic organizations in order to fulfill the above goals).

Implementation of the Regional Plan calls for chief elected officials within the region to (1) adopt plans and regulations that encourage transit-oriented and downtown development and discourage commercial strips and isolated office parks, (2) participate in regional efforts to

<sup>2</sup> Information from *Rockland County: River to Ridge - A Plan for the 21st Century*, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Information from *Hudson River Valley Greenway, Draft Progress Report*, July 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Information from *Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Management and Interpretive Action Plan*, 2000.

protect and manage important natural, agricultural, and recreational landscapes, and (3) work with neighboring communities to share services and facilities to reduce cost, where appropriate.<sup>5</sup>

The Mid-Hudson **Pattern for Progress** report of 2003 also outlines various relevant transportation goals for the Mid-Hudson area.

With the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Orangetown will continue to emphasize the above goals, and put forth specific prescriptions in order to accomplish goals and objectives perceived to be important to the Town of Orangetown, Rockland County, the Hudson River Valley, and the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Region.

**B. TOWN-WIDE ANALYSES**

**1. Land Use And Zoning**

*Existing Land Use*

The Town of Orangetown is a largely built-up community, where the predominant land use is single-family residential. Suburban-style homes, mostly in single-family subdivisions, represent approximately 50% of developed land in Orangetown. The expanse of single-family homes is broken by two open space and three major highway corridors that are generally oriented in a north-south direction. The bulk of the residential development in Orangetown lies between two of the highway corridors: New York State Routes 303 and 304.



*Single-family homes are located throughout the Town*

The following table provides a statistical breakdown of land uses with the Town. As indicated, the category with the largest amount of acreage is single-family residential, with over 4,000 acres of land. Recreation and open space, including both public and private categories, comprises nearly 2,000 acres. Utilities, roads, and railroads make up the third largest category, with over 1,500 acres of land. In addition, there are nearly 1,000 acres of vacant land in Orangetown. Of this amount, approximately 463 acres are zoned for residential development, and approximately 500 acres are zoned for various non-residential uses (See Exhibit 2, Existing Land Use).

**Table I-1  
Orangetown Land Use**

Land Use	# of Acres
<b>Residential: Single-Family</b>	4,355
Two-Family and Multi-Family	509
<b>Commercial/Retail</b>	296
<b>Office/Industrial</b>	1,073
<b>Recreation &amp; Open Space: Public</b>	1,323
<b>Recreation &amp; Open Space: Private</b>	615
<b>Institutional/Quasi-Public</b>	312
<b>Utilities/Railroad</b>	1,513
<b>No Land Use Code</b>	68
<b>Vacant</b>	999
<b>Total:</b>	<b>11,063*</b>

\* This figure only represents the unincorporated areas of the Town and does not include the Villages.

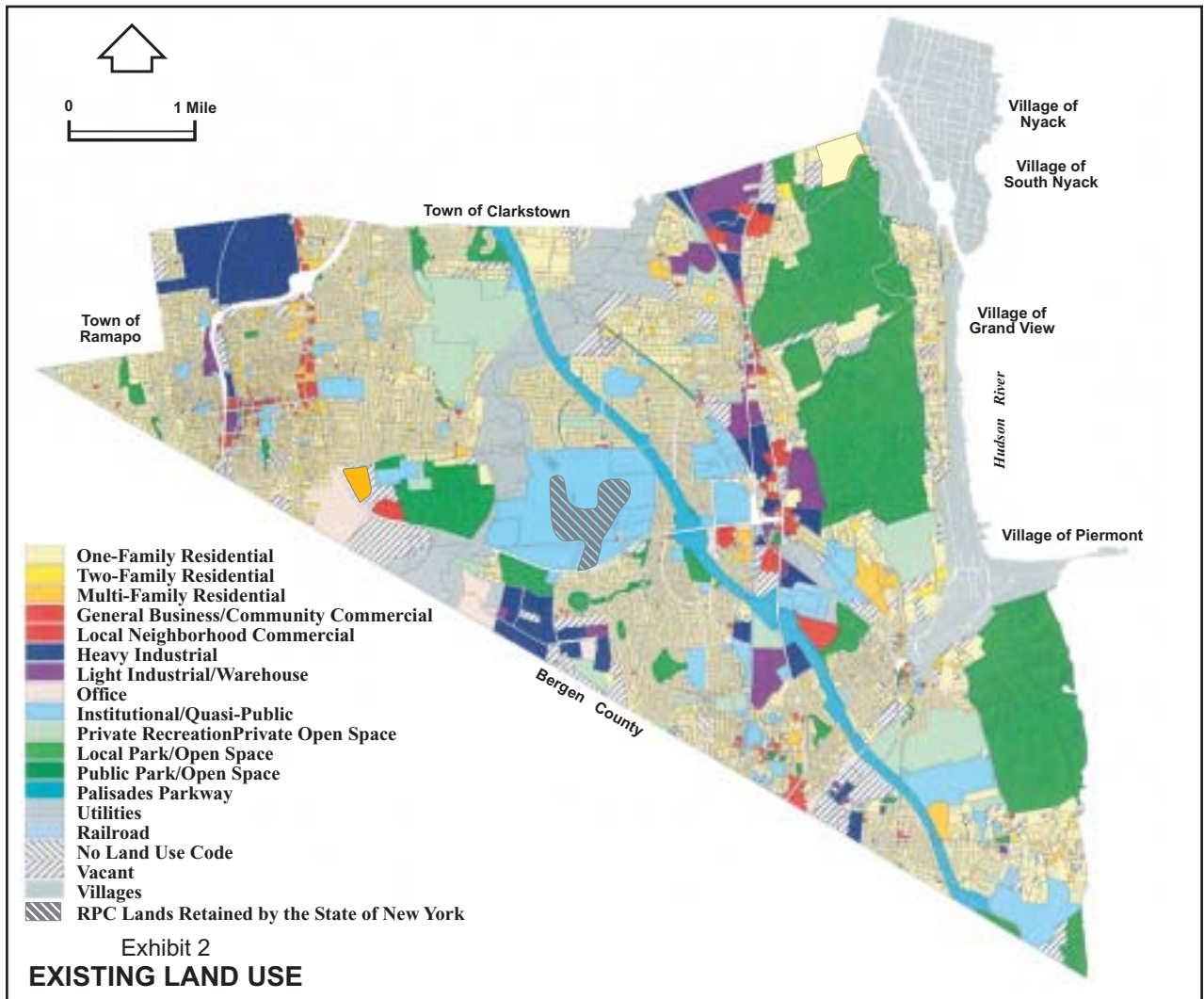
SOURCE: Rockland County GIS, 2000.

The major components of Orangetown’s land use character are described below.

**a. Highway Corridors**

The Town is split by three major north-south arterials: Route 303, Route 304, and the Pali-

<sup>5</sup> Information from *A Region at Risk: the Third Regional Plan for the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Area*, 1996.



sades Interstate Parkway (PIP). These transportation corridors move significant numbers of vehicles every day, and thus have a profound effect upon the surrounding community in terms of physical appearance, land use, and traffic and transportation issues. This is particularly true with the areas adjacent to Route 303.

Along the length of Route 303, land uses include commercial and industrial uses, among others, while a slightly wider radius shows a large number of residential and institutional uses as well. Institutional uses along and near Route 303 include several public schools, colleges, and Town Hall. Also along the length of Route 303, there are several vacant and underutilized parcels where additional development could be

realized. Land use patterns near the Palisades Interstate Parkway (PIP) interchanges and along most of Route 304 differ from the land use pattern of Route 303, given the roads' design as limited access highways (the PIP could also be considered to be an additional open space corridor given its design and extensive right-of-way). Therefore, land use conditions at major intersections along these roads vary. The intersection of the PIP and Route 303, for example, has a number of sites with significant potential for additional development. In contrast, Route 304's signalized intersections in Pearl River provide direct access to the mostly built-up areas, including downtown Pearl River, where the need for business area revitalization has been recognized.

Orangetown has the largest concentration of office and industrial parks in Rockland County. Many of these uses focus on the Town's transportation corridors and include Bradley Corporate Park on Route 303, near the Town's northern border, and several other major office and industrial uses along the southern portions of Route 303, including Daimler-Chrysler. The IBM Executive Conference Center is located between Route 9W and Route 340. Along Route 304 at the North Middletown Road intersection is Wyeth-Ayerst, the Town's largest employer. The Town's other major office and industrial area is on the southern border of the Town. Blue Hill Plaza and Rockland Corporate Park are exceptions to the north-south orientation, and lie near one of the Town's primary east-west thoroughfares, Veteran's Memorial Highway. These two areas also lie adjacent to reservoir lands, Blue Hill Golf Course, and Veteran's Memorial Park, all significant open space and recreation parcels for the Town.



*Industrial uses characterize most of Route 303*

### b. Open Space Corridors

The second type of corridor running north-south through the Town is the open space corridor. Orangetown is fortunate to have not only a number of Town parks within its borders, but State parks and County park areas as well. All of the State and County parks are along the eastern edge of the unincorporated Town, in the steeply-sloped Clausland Mountain area. In addition to this corridor, another open space corridor can be found running through the middle of the Town, along the Hackensack River and Lake Tappan. Adjacent to the water are reservoir lands, Kaufmann Campgrounds, Blue Hill Golf Course, Manhattan Woods Golf

Course, Veteran's Memorial Park, and the Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) property.

### c. Residential

Outside the major transportation and open space corridors, Orangetown is composed primarily of residential land uses, with most of that residential land being detached single-family homes within and around the Town hamlets. As previously noted, residential development is not only the most prevalent type of existing development in the Town, but it continues to be so, since residential permits had the largest percentage of all permits issued within the five years prior to the initiation of the Comprehensive Plan update, with the exception of residential alterations and additions. Even though single-family residential is the predominant residential use, there are a significant number of two-family and multi-family residences found throughout the Town. While the two-family parcels are scattered throughout the Town, the multi-family uses tend to be on or near major roads, including North Middletown Road in Pearl River, Western Highway in Orangeburg, and Route 340 in Sparkill.



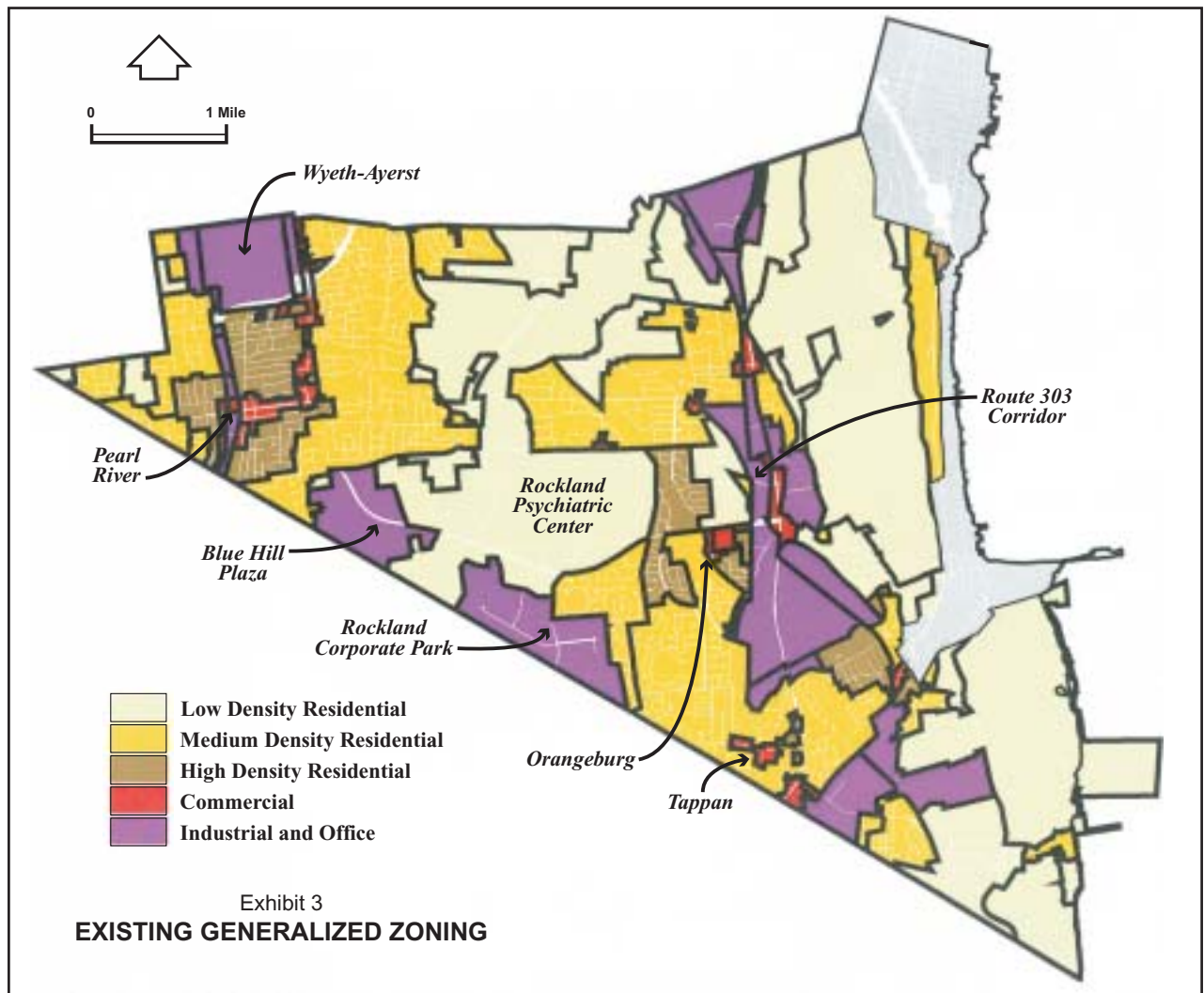
*Multi-family developments exist in a variety of settings in Orangetown*

As described in more detail later in this document, Orangetown is composed of six distinct hamlets: Pearl River, Blauvelt, Orangeburg, Sparkill, Tappan, and Palisades. Each hamlet has an individual character, and is profoundly affected by a combination of factors, including the open space and highway corridors men-

tioned above. Outside these hamlet areas, generally to the east of Route 303 and north of Route 340, are additional single-family areas on and around Clausland Mountain (including the unincorporated area of Upper Grand View). These areas include single-family homes on both large and small lots with development fit into the largely steeply-sloping terrain. Although this area has a predominately open space character, development in certain topography-challenged areas, like Tweed Boulevard, raise environmental concerns that do not exist in many other residential areas within the Town of Orangetown.

**Existing Zoning**

The Orangetown Zoning Ordinance contains 13 separate zoning districts that specify permitted uses and various lot, bulk, and parking controls (See Exhibit 3, Existing Generalized Zoning). The Ordinance also sets forth procedures governing Town Board, Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and Planning Board reviews. The regulations have been amended over time and address a variety of issues. Although the Zoning Ordinance includes restrictions on cell towers and adult uses, for example, it lacks contemporary regulations that deal with planned



unit development, incentive zoning, affordable housing, and environmental restrictions. A summary of the existing zoning provisions follows.

**a. Residential Districts**

**1. Single-Family<sup>6</sup>**

There are five zoning districts in the Zoning Ordinance that focus on single-family development:

R-80	80,000 square foot (s.f.) lots
R-40	40,000 s.f. lots
R-22	22,000 s.f. lots
R-15	15,000 s.f. lots
RG	10,000 s.f. lots

Although the R-80, R-40, and R-22 districts cover the majority of the residentially-zoned land in Orangetown, most of the built-up land is zoned R-15, with homes on 15,000 square foot lots being the predominant land use in the community. The R-80 district includes environmentally sensitive lands in the Clausland Mountain area in the eastern portion of the Town, and the lands in the vicinity of Lake Tappan and the Hackensack River in the central portion of Town. This latter area includes the Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) and Kaufmann Campgrounds, two major areas identified as susceptible to change in the future by both the Town and by the County as part of its Comprehensive Plan. Lands zoned R-40 are located both on and proximate to Clausland Mountain, including some land along Greenbush Road and Clausland Mountain Road, and most of the Palisades hamlet area in the southeastern portion of the Town. Several large areas in the northern portion of Blauvelt are also zoned R-40. In contrast, most of Pearl River, Blauvelt, Orangeburg, and Tappan are zoned R-15.

The largest concentrated areas of R-22 and RG zoning are to the immediate east and southeast of RPC, along the steeply pitched lands adjacent to Tweed Boulevard and Route 9W to the east of Clausland Mountain, and in Pearl River to the east and west of Route 304, just north and south of Central Avenue. The hamlet of Sparkill and nearby areas are also zoned RG.

**2. Multi-Family**

The Multi-family Residence (MFR) District allows apartment uses at a modest density of four to six dwelling units per acre. MFR-zoned lands include two sites to the east of the Tappan hamlet center, two sites along North Middletown Road in Pearl River, and one site along Western Highway in Orangeburg. The other hamlet areas (i.e., Blauvelt, Sparkill, and Palisades) have no multi-family zoning.

Senior citizen housing, group homes of various types, and accessory apartments are permitted in various residential zoning districts. The Town’s land use policies toward zoning for senior housing are not clearly defined in the Zoning Ordinance. Adult housing (for 50+ year old residents) is a Planning Board conditional use in the R-15 and RG Districts, with a maximum density of five dwelling units per acre. In contrast, publicly assisted senior housing is a Town Board special permit use in the RG and MFR residential zones, and in the CS, CC, and CO non-residential zones, at a density of 30 dwelling units per acre. The regulations call for Town ownership of the site at the time of application. Nursing homes, convalescent homes, and homes for the aged are ZBA special permit uses in the R-80 and the MFR Districts. Housing for the physically handicapped is listed as a Planning Board conditional use, with a maximum density of ten units per acre. Conditions include maximum 1-story buildings

<sup>6</sup> Based upon Saccardi & Schiff, Inc.’s analysis, with input from Town Office of Building, Zoning, Planning Administration and Enforcement staff and the Chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals, 2000.

and Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) financing. Some of the Town's zoning regulations may need to be clarified in order to more closely coincide with the Town's goals and policies regarding multi-family housing, particularly for seniors and the handicapped.

In addition, the Planning Board is authorized to approve cluster developments with not more than four attached residences, provided that the overall density does not exceed five units per acre, or a floor-area-ratio (FAR) of 0.20, and further provided that certain R-15 lot and bulk controls apply. A floor-area ratio (FAR) is a maximum amount of development permitted on a given site. For example, an FAR of 0.2 on a 40,000 square-foot parcel will yield a maximum development of 8,000 square feet ( $40,000 \times 0.2 = 8,000$  square feet).

Agency boarding homes and agency group homes are Town Board special permit uses, while agency community residences are ZBA special permit uses. Typically, municipalities have all such uses governed by the same procedure with the same approval body.

Accessory apartments are permitted as an as-of-right use in all of the single-family residential districts (but not in the MFR district where single-family and two-family residences are prohibited). This two-family zoning requires an owner-occupant and various other conditions. In some other communities, this use is treated with a special permit requirement, which can provide additional control, including provisions for a periodic review and renewal of the permit.

In addition to the minimum lot size and density requirements summarized above, the residential zoning districts contain other lot and bulk controls relating to required yards and frontage requirements. Although there are no maximum coverage requirements (building or impervious), there are maximum FAR requirements governing the total amount of square footage (calculated as the total floor area within the

structure divided by the total lot area). FAR has been utilized recently in a number of communities to limit large bulky homes that tend to overwhelm small- to medium-sized residential lots. Although this has not been a major issue in Orangetown, it may be in the future if region-wide real estate trends continue, with buyer preferences for oversized homes. For Orangetown, the maximum building height in these districts is set forth in an unusual manner, using a formula based on inches from the building setback, as opposed to the more typical measure of maximum height in feet and/or stories (e.g., 2½ stories or 35 feet).

The single-family and multi-family districts also permit a wide variety of additional uses by right, as Town Board or ZBA special permit uses, and as Planning Board conditional uses. These include public facilities, religious uses, utilities, hospitals, schools, day care centers, etc. Many of the uses permitted in the R-80, like nurseries, keeping of animals, camps, etc., are not permitted in the higher density, more suburban zoning districts in Orangetown.

#### **b. Non-Residential Districts**

The seven non-residential zoning districts in the Zoning Ordinance are as follows:

LO	Laboratory Office District
LIO	Laboratory Industrial Office District
OP	Office Park District
CS	Community Shopping District
CC	Retail Commercial District
CO	Commercial-Office District
LI	Light Industrial District

Of these seven districts, the LI, LIO, LO, and OP occupy large segments of land area in Orangetown, while the CS, CC, and CO are confined to more distinct areas in and around hamlet centers, including the areas along the East Central Avenue and North Middletown Road corridors in Pearl River, and along discrete portions of Route 303.



The LI (Light Industrial) District encompasses most of the Wyeth-Ayerst (formerly Lederle) site north of downtown Pearl River. It is also present along Route 303 in two major locations: (1) just south of the Clarkstown border, and (2) north and south of Orangeburg Road, extending beyond the Palisades Interstate Parkway (PIP) interchange. Both of these latter areas follow the West Shore railroad line, which provides freight services to the LI-zoned lands in the Route 303 corridor.

The LI District permits manufacturing, wholesale, warehouse and storage uses, offices, commercial recreation, and theaters by right. Town Board special permit uses include railroad and various utility uses. Conditional uses subject to Planning Board approval include skating rinks, parking garages, car wash establishments, gas stations, dry cleaners, night clubs, auctions, and child care centers. Mixed-use office, industrial, and warehouse buildings, including retail outlets (i.e., flex buildings) are not clearly permitted. Adult uses are allowed with a ZBA special permit provided a number of conditions are met. Although this is consistent with recent litigation, it is noted that large areas of the Town are zoned LI.

The maximum FAR for most LI uses is a rather high 0.5 and the minimum lot area is two acres. Height is controlled in terms of inches rather than stories and feet. Performance standards, regulated by the ZBA, are provided to further control proposed uses.

The LO and LIO Districts are less intense than the LI in terms of FAR and uses permitted. The maximum permitted FAR is 0.4, which is also relatively high for a suburban community. The LO permits offices, laboratories, and schools by right; child care facilities are Planning Board conditional uses, and airports are Town Board special permit uses. The LIO permits the same uses as the LO, but adds undertakers and sand and gravel operations as ZBA special permit uses. Commercial forestry, light manufacturing,

and auto sales and service are Planning Board conditional uses.

In terms of location, some LIO and LO Districts exist at the edges of certain LI Districts, presumably as a transitional zone. Additional LO and LIO districts exist along the Route 303 corridor and in the large industrial park area generally to the south of Veteran's Memorial Park.

In contrast, the OP (Office Park) District exists in an area to the west of Veteran's Memorial Park, in the Blue Hill Plaza area. Similar to the LI and LIO, the OP has a maximum FAR of 0.4. Additional permitted uses in this zone include hotels and conference centers

As previously noted, the CS, CC, and CO Commercial Districts cover lesser areas than the other non-residential zoning districts in Orangetown. The CS, a downtown zoning district with a FAR of 1.0, exists in downtown Pearl River and in various hamlet centers including Blauvelt, Orangeburg, and Sparkill. There is also some CS zoning on Route 303 just north of the New Jersey border.

Permitted uses in the CS include retail, restaurants, and offices, among others. Town Board special permit uses include senior housing (encouraging housing in local business districts can be beneficial, however, the density limitations on senior housing may negate the value of this provision). ZBA special permit uses include other typical downtown uses, such as theaters, undertakers, pet shops, upholsterers, commercial print shops, vending machines, and other retail uses not permitted by right. Conditional uses subject to Planning Board approval include hotels and motels, schools for special instruction, and bars. In contrast, the CC, a highway commercial zone, allows a few of the CS special permit uses, but by right (e.g., theaters, pet shops, undertakers, printing). Auditoriums and drive-in movie theaters are added as Town Board special permit uses, and gas stations, fast food establishments, and night

clubs, among others, are included as Planning Board conditional uses. Conversions of gas stations to convenience stores or other uses should probably be added as a new conditional use. With a rather high FAR of 0.3, this district is mapped primarily along North Middletown Road and along Route 303, in both cases with some mixed results. See later sections of this Plan for further discussion.

The CO zone is mapped in a few areas such as Pearl River, Orangeburg, and Tappan. This office zone is more restrictive than the CC in terms of permitted uses and has a lower FAR (0.2).

## 2. Socioeconomic Factors

### *Overall Demographics*

The following demographic information includes Town-wide data as well as specific information on the unincorporated places within Orangetown, without the four incorporated villages of Nyack, South Nyack, Grand View, and Piermont; therefore, references to Orangetown in this section of the Comprehensive Plan will refer only to the unincorporated portions of the Town unless otherwise noted.<sup>7</sup>

The 2000 Census reported a total Town-wide population (including the incorporated villages) of 47,711 persons, a 2.1% increase from the 1990 Census population of 46,742 persons. The 1990 Town population without the villages was approximately 33,521 persons.<sup>8</sup> The 2000 unincorporated Town population increased by almost 1,500 persons, to approximately 35,000 persons.

Over the past twenty years, Orangetown has been subtly changing, with shifts in population, race and ethnicity, and age distribution that have influenced the present shape of the Town and suggest possible future trends. The income, housing, and employment trends of the Town will, to a large degree, influence future demographic and land use patterns. The diversification of the Town's population and the increase in the over 55 population cohort are two such trends.

In 1990, 26.3% of the population was over 55. In 2000, approximately 24.4% of the population was over 55. Estimates for 2005 indicate an increase to approximately 29.1%. The issues raised by a change in the age composition of the population will need to be addressed by the Town, as do the issues raised by a Town of increasing racial and ethnic diversity, as will be seen below.

#### a. Population

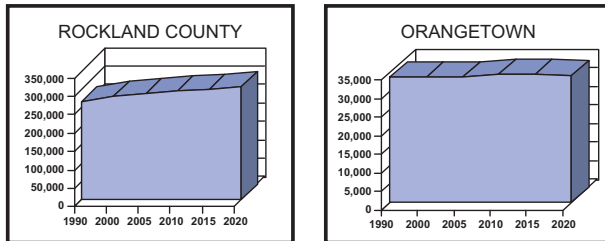
From the 1970 Census to the 1990 Census, the population of Orangetown unincorporated decreased, from 35,999 in 1970, to 34,617 in 1980, to 33,521 in 1990. Reasons for this decline likely include, most significantly, the decrease in the population at RPC, and, to a lesser extent, modest levels of building activity and a decline in household size. The 2000 Orangetown unincorporated population is approximately 35,000 people, an increase from the previous years' populations. Population projections for the next 20 years show that the population of Orangetown is expected to remain relatively static, decreasing by approximately 500 people by the year 2020. This is in

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<sup>7</sup> The hamlets listed for Orangetown in the 2000 Census are Blauvelt, Orangeburg, Pearl River, and Tappan. Other designated areas include Palisades, Sparkill, and Upper Grand View. However, Census data for these smaller unincorporated areas are more difficult to obtain, so the majority of data presented for the unincorporated portion of the Town will only include Blauvelt, Orangeburg, Pearl River and Tappan data.

<sup>8</sup> This data includes the Village of Grand View but does not include the population at Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) because while RPC is its own Census tract, the incorporated Village of Grand View is part of a tract that also houses the unincorporated hamlets of Blauvelt, Orangeburg, and Upper Grand View.

contrast to Rockland County: the County has experienced increases in population since the 1970 Census, with an 8% increase from 1990 to 2000 (from 265,475 persons in 1990 to 286,753 persons in 2000). County population projections forecast continuous increases until 2020.



Source: U.S. Census, Rockland County Department of Planning

**b. Age Distribution**

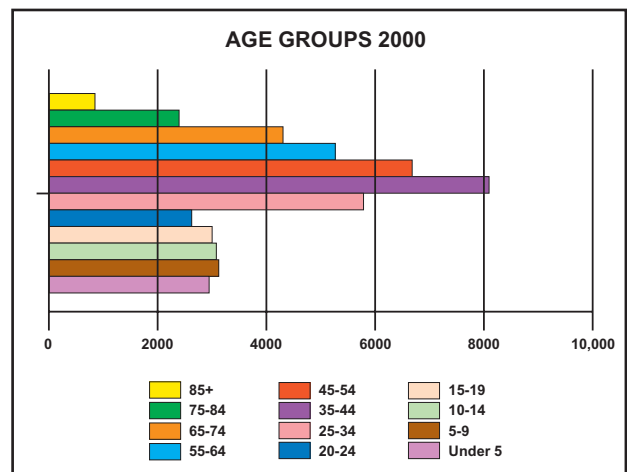
The median age of Orangetown’s population in 1990 was 37.8 years.<sup>9</sup> This is higher than the County’s, which was 34.1 years in 1990. Rockland County’s median age increased for 2000, to 36.2 years of age. Orangetown’s median age has increased in 2000, to 39.9 years of age, and estimates predict a continuing increase in 2005.

For 2000, the largest combined age group was persons 35–44 years of age, and the 45–54 and 25–34 age groups were also substantial. The most elderly age group - those over 85 - had the smallest population in the Town. The Census figures show a decreasing young adult population (20-24). A decrease in young adult population is a common occurrence in suburbia. It happens for a variety of reasons: lack of adequate jobs and housing, or the simple desire to move away from their primary family. It is interesting to note, however, that the younger age groups (i.e. 5 to 19) are also relatively large. So as the younger age groups mature in the next decade or so, it is likely that some of them will move out of the area, and it is anticipated that the young adult age group will decrease as it moves through the age groups. However, the provision of additional housing opportunities,

such as rental or first-time homebuyer housing, possibly at the Rockland Psychiatric Center or other areas throughout the Town, could lessen this trend to some extent.

Another interesting trend that emerges from the Census is the large proportion of the population stationed in the middle of the age groups - the 25-54 age range. As the Town moves through the 21st century, this group will age and cause a large “bump” of population in the “empty nester” segment of the Town’s population. The proportion of the Town’s mature population will be large, and the number of people over 55 will also be large. The increase in persons in these groups represent a potential demand for different social, recreational, and housing needs in the Town.

Taken together, the present and future size of both the younger age groups (25–54) will influence the median age of Orangetown, and affect the makeup of the Town’s age distribution, household size, and population in both the short- and long-term.



Source: Census 2000, U.S. Census Bureau

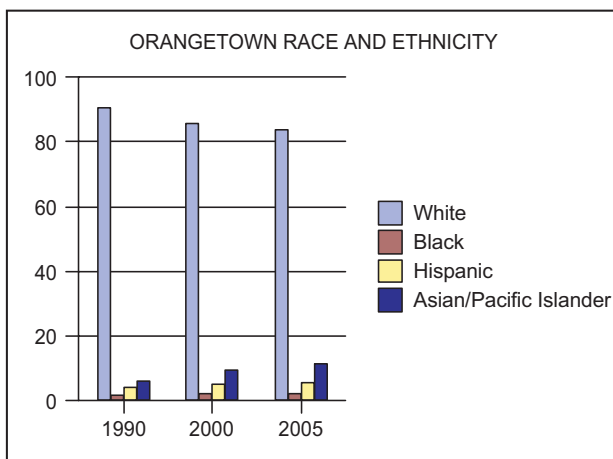
**c. Race/Ethnicity<sup>10</sup>**

While the majority of the Town’s 2000 population is white (84.0%), there had been a decrease in

<sup>9</sup> This data includes the Village of Grand View but does not include the population at RPC.

<sup>10</sup> Information in this section is for the entire Town of Orangetown, including the Villages, but excluding the population at RPC.

the white population since the 1990 Census, when 89.8% of the population was white. In 2000, 5.9% of the Town’s population was Black or African-American, a decrease from 8.2% in 1990. Concurrently, some of the Town’s minority populations are increasing. In 2000, 6.4% of the population was Asian, compared to 5.2% in 1990 and 6.0% was Hispanic or Latino, compared to 4.4% in 1990.<sup>11</sup> This indicates a relative diversification of local character, which may have implications for the Town with regard to community facility and service provision, including potential English as a Second Language classes in the schools. With the continuing migration of both native and non-native populations into and out of the New York Metropolitan Area, such diversification is expected to continue.



Source: U.S. Census, Claritas, Inc.

**Other Socioeconomic Characteristics**

**a. Household Size**

The 2000 Census indicated that the average household size for Orangetown is approximately 2.6 people<sup>12</sup>, as compared with Rockland County’s 3.01 people per household. As

stated previously, this number has decreased from 2.76 persons 1990. Possible reasons for this decline include lower levels of building activity and the increase in the senior population (which typically have smaller households). The County number has also decreased from 3.03 persons in 1990. Figures projected to 2020 have forecast an increase in the number of households over the next two decades for both Orangetown and Rockland County as a whole.

**b. Income and Poverty**

The 1990 median family income for Orangetown (\$63,568)<sup>13</sup> is slightly higher than that for Rockland County (\$60,479), and in 2000, Orangetown’s median family income (\$89,017) was again higher than the County’s (\$78,806). Given that the average household size is smaller than the County’s, Orangetown’s population appears to be slightly more affluent than the County in general.

The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family’s total income is less than that threshold, then that family, and everyone in it, is considered poor, or below the poverty level. In 1999, Orangetown as a whole had approximately 2.2% of its population below the poverty line, while Rockland had approximately 6.3% of families below the poverty line. Both the figures for the County and the Town were lower than in the previous survey in 1989. Poverty is, of course, due to a number of factors, the majority of which have to do with the educational attainment of the population, the types of jobs that people have (to be discussed in a later section), and the cost of living. Another major expense for people is housing, the state of which is discussed below.

<sup>11</sup> Hispanic origin is considered an ethnicity, so people of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race.

<sup>12</sup> For the purpose of comparison, the 1990 and 2000 Census data includes the incorporated villages in Orangetown.

<sup>13</sup> This data does not include Sparkill, Palisades, Upper Grand View or RPC. This is because the available information did not separate RPC from these other areas, and it is believed RPC could cause the data to be somewhat inaccurate.

**c. Housing**

In 2000, 71.2% of the housing in Orangetown was owner-occupied, as compared with 80% in 1990. Single-family homes constitute the majority of the housing stock, although there were some two-family and multi-family homes in certain areas. Between 1990 and 2000, there was an increase in housing units for Orangetown, from 16,121 to 17,330. The Year 2000 tenure status of Orangetown, classified by the unincorporated sections available from the U.S. Census, can be seen in Table I-2 below.

**Table I-2  
Housing Tenure in Orangetown, 2000**

	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied
Blauvelt	94.5	5.5
Orangeburg	70.9	29.1
Pearl River	78.2	21.8
Tappan	93.3	6.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As can be seen, the hamlets of Pearl River and Orangeburg have a higher percentage of renter-occupied housing than the other two hamlets analyzed. Although Orangeburg is home to many of the Town’s college and university campuses, it is important to note that the majority of the students are housed on-campus and do not utilize off-campus housing options. However, the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory has expressed its need for affordable housing options for its students, faculty, and visiting scientists. Regardless of whether owner- or renter-occupied, the provision of housing in Orangetown is an issue, and the provision of affordable housing is an important issue in both Orangetown and throughout the region.

**d. The Labor Force**

The percent of the civilian labor force that was unemployed for Orangetown in 2000 was 3.1%. This was slightly lower than the 3.7% unemployed civilian labor force for Rockland County.

Orangetown has the largest concentration of office and industrial parks in all of Rockland County, and so is home to a number of businesses and corporations (in addition to ancillary businesses and retail). For the Town as a whole (including the Villages), approximately 46% of the population are in management, professional, and related occupations; approximately 25% are in sales and office occupations; approximately 15% are in service occupations; approximately 7% are in construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations; approximately 6.5% are in production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

**Fiscal Conditions**

Town revenues and expenditures over the past six years have been in the \$38 to \$43 million range, with property tax revenues remaining relatively constant at approximately \$27 million per year.

**a. Year 2003 Approved Budget**

The \$45.1 million Town budget for 2003 increases spending by 5.1% and property taxes by 3.2%. Because of State mandated shifts in the relative value of homestead properties vs. non-homestead (i.e., commercial) properties, property taxes for homestead properties increase by 5.6% while non-homestead property taxes decrease by 2.6%.

Like all local governments in the region, Orangetown’s 2003 operating budget reflects higher costs for health insurance (up 15%), as well as another year of 25% increases for property, liability, and worker’s compensation excess insurance costs. Stock market losses partially account for the 25% excess insurance increase

as well as significant increases in required Town contributions to the New York State pension system.

Record low interest rates have reduced the Town's interest income. At the same time, the Town was able to reduce 2003 interest costs by \$400,000 by refinancing existing sewer system debt.

Reliance on the property tax was somewhat lessened by the County's levying of a 0.125% in sales tax for Town purposes. This is expected to bring in \$400,000 in new tax revenues for Orangetown.

The 2003 costs associated with the purchase of surplus land at Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) are largely offset by rental income from the Broad Acres Golf Course at the site. Aside from debt service, RPC costs include additional sewer, highway, grounds maintenance, and insurance spending.

The number of full-time employees remains at 265 in 2003. The size of the Police Department has decreased over time, with 90 sworn officers funded in 2003. Increased use of technology and improved training have contributed to this

efficiency. A major emphasis of the Department is preventive with police in high schools and community policing.<sup>14</sup>

**b. Trends**

The following table shows trends in revenues and expenditures since 1996. Note that variations from year to year have been modest. Perhaps the most significant factors affecting Town finance has been a series of certiorari proceedings (most of which have been settled), the need for revaluation, and the effects of homestead tax policies. The latter item artificially reduces residential property taxes. It can adversely affect economic development initiatives, and when State-required adjustments are made, it can adversely affect homeowner tax rates as well, which was the case for the 2001 and 2002 budgets. It is unlikely, because of the need to protect the residential tax base, that the Town Board will vote at any time in the foreseeable future to eliminate the homestead - non-homestead tax program.

Orangetown has an excellent bond rating (Aa.3), and is significantly below its bonding capacity (9.97%). Borrowing for recreation facility development, open space acquisition,

**Table I-3  
Trends in Revenues and Expenditures for the Town of Orangetown (000,000)**

	Expenditures	Total Revenues	Real Property Tax Revenues	Percent Real Property to Total	State and Federal Aid
1996	\$42.0	\$43.2	\$26.4	61.1	\$1.7
1997	\$37.0	\$40.5	\$27.0	66.7	\$1.9
1998	\$36.8	\$38.7	\$26.5	68.4	\$2.5
1999	\$39.8	\$39.1	\$27.0	69.1	\$3.1
2000	\$41.1	\$38.1	\$26.5	69.6	\$3.1
2001	\$40.9	\$42.5	\$28.3	67.3	\$2.1

Source: Orangetown Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, 2001, Orangetown Adopted Budget, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> Information from the Town of Orangetown Adopted Budget 2003.

or other Comprehensive Plan proposals is possible. However, bonds do have to be repaid, with the major funding source being local property taxes.

In certain instances, like open space acquisition and downtown Pearl River improvements (which are currently being pursued by the Town, concurrent with Comprehensive Plan development), other funding sources such as those for State grants or for Rockland County, Orange and Rockland Utilities, and/or a possible Business Improvement District could augment Town-funded improvements. Unfortunately, this downtown area is not eligible for County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-funded improvements. Like other areas of Town, Pearl River does not meet basic low-moderate criteria for this federal program. Although certain projects (like handicapped and senior projects) may tap the CDBG resource, downtown revitalization in Pearl River, for example, is not possible with this funding source.

Additional development, which will increase total assessed values and generate additional tax revenues, is evident in Orangetown, given real estate trends. Although all development results in some costs, the type of development least likely to cover expenditures is the single-family residence, where school costs, in particular, typically exceed school district revenues. It is recommended that the Town work with the Town's school districts on rezoning in order to minimize impacts based on increases in residential units that generate large numbers of school-age children. Other types of housing and non-residential uses typically generate more in tax revenues than expenditures for schools and other taxing jurisdictions.

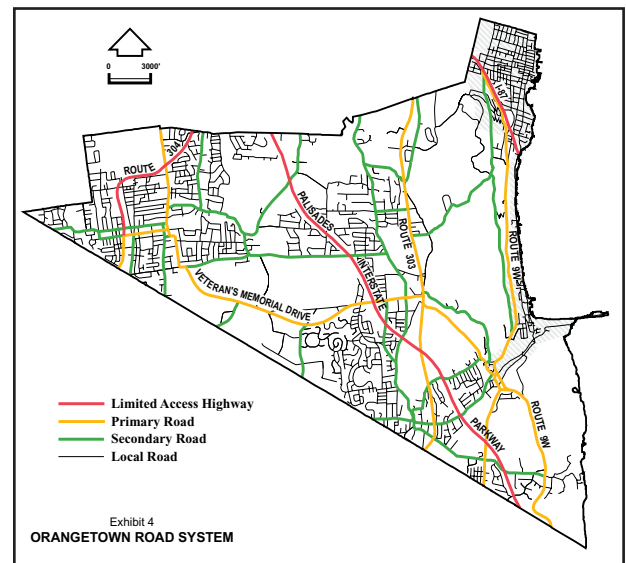
Although some argue that open space is the most favorable land use from a fiscal perspective, this may or may not be the case: open space, once acquired, does not often require future fiscal outlays by the Town; however, active recreation space requires acquisition costs and possible development, maintenance,

and operation costs, particularly if open space lands are utilized for much-needed recreation facilities (e.g., soccer fields, swimming, and Little League fields). Balance among various uses is an important Comprehensive Plan concept in Orangetown from financial and other perspectives.

**3. Infrastructure**

**Roads**

Orangetown is home to a number of transportation corridors of different types (See Exhibit 4, Orangetown Road System). With certain exceptions, the Town is generally well-connected within its boundaries, in addition to being efficiently connected to surrounding communities, both adjacent and far-reaching. A number of roads within Orangetown, including Sickletown Road, Middletown Road, Greenbush Road, Mountain Road, Kings Highway, and Western Highway, are pre-Revolutionary and therefore are of historical significance.



**a. Limited Access/Expressways**

A limited access road/expressway is intended to carry through traffic, without connecting into the local transportation network, except for specifically designed interchanges. These

roads are designed to carry vehicles longer distances at higher rates of speed. Limited access roads/expressways are often regional or larger in scope, and provide important linkages between surrounding communities, the region, and beyond.

Within Rockland County, outside of Orangetown, the New York State Thruway (Interstates 87 and 287) is a regional expressway, providing connections between upstate New York and New York City, as well as New Jersey, Westchester County, and Connecticut communities. The Thruway crosses the Hudson River at the Village of South Nyack via the Tappan Zee Bridge. Both the Palisades Interstate Parkway and New York State Route 304 cross the Thruway just north of the Town's border.

The 42-mile Palisades Interstate Parkway (PIP), which runs generally north-south from the George Washington Bridge to the Bear Mountain Bridge in Bear Mountain State Park, New York, is a limited access road that runs through Orangetown. According to the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), the PIP carries approximately 60,000 vehicles per day through Bergen County and southern Rockland County, decreasing to



*A portion of the Palisades Interstate Parkway, which runs from the George Washington Bridge to the Bear Mountain Bridge*

approximately 30,000 vehicles per day near the Bear Mountain terminus.<sup>15</sup> Within Orangetown, the PIP traverses most of the hamlets, and there are two major interchanges: in Orangeburg at Route 303, and in Orangeburg at Orangeburg Road, proximate to Town Hall. The New York State Thruway can be accessed from the PIP.

New York State (NYS) Route 304 runs roughly north-south through the hamlet of Pearl River. There are several interchanges in Town, including one at North Middletown Road adjacent to Wyeth-Ayerst, Orangetown's largest employer. Route 304's southern terminus as a limited access road/ expressway is at East Washington Avenue in Pearl River, although the road continues into New Jersey, where it becomes Route 503. The northern terminus for Route 304 is in Congers, NY, where it joins US Route 9W. The New York State Thruway cannot be accessed directly from Route 304. Motorists must exit at Route 59 and then travel either east or west to reach a Thruway interchange.

#### **b. Primary Roads**

A primary road is designed to facilitate fast and efficient travel from one section of a town to another, and sometimes, from one town to another. These roads often carry large numbers of vehicles daily, and unlike limited access roads/expressways, a primary road is usually easily accessible from many different sections of a community as well as from individual properties along the right-of-way, thus explaining their heavy use.

NYS Route 303 runs north-south through the eastern part of Town, and bisects the hamlets of Blauvelt, Orangeburg, and Tappan. It carries traffic from New Jersey, where the road is known as Route 505, to its northern terminus in Congers, NY, where it joins with Route 9W slightly south of where Route 304 joins Route

<sup>15</sup> Information from [www.nyroads.com/roads/palisades](http://www.nyroads.com/roads/palisades), June 2001.



9W. Both within Orangetown and outside of it, the Route 303 corridor moves significant numbers of vehicles every day, including passenger cars, both small and large trucks, and buses. Two-way average daily traffic for the year 2000 was as follows:

- State Line to Oak Tree Road: 20,690
- Kings Highway North to Mountainview: 24,770
- Spruce to Erie: 22,907
- Bradley to the barrier: 27,085<sup>16</sup>

A Route 303 Corridor Sustainable Development Study was undertaken beginning in 1999 to develop land use and transportation plans for the communities along this corridor. Sponsored by the Town of Orangetown, Rockland County, the New York Department of Transportation, and the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, the study has addressed the interrelationships between traffic volumes and traffic safety, land use, and community acceptance. As a result, key elements of the Route 303 Corridor Sustainable Development Study have been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. See Chapters IV and V for further detail.

Another primary road in Orangetown is Route 9W. Route 9W runs north-south along the eastern edge of Town, through Palisades, Piermont, Grand View, Upper Grand View, South Nyack, and Nyack. It begins at the George Washington Bridge interchange in Fort Lee, New Jersey and continues north, where it eventually ends in Albany, NY. In Orangetown, Route 9W connects Palisades and the river villages with each other, and all points north.

North Middletown Road is a heavily-trafficked road in Pearl River. Also known as County Route 33, it runs north-south, with a southern terminus at South Middletown Road in Orangetown and a northern terminus at Route 202 in the Town of Haverstraw.

NYS Route 340 connects portions of the hamlets of Palisades, Sparkill, and Orangeburg. It runs roughly north-south, with a northern terminus at Route 303 in Orangeburg near Orangeburg Road, another primary road which extends to the west as Veterans Memorial Drive. Orangeburg Road/Veterans Memorial Drive is a major east-west thoroughfare, and is located in the relative center of the Town. This road runs past Dominican College, Town Hall, RPC, Veterans Memorial Park, Lake Tappan, Blue Hill Plaza, and the Blue Hill Golf Course. It begins at Route 303 and extends to the southern portions of Pearl River, where it joins with Gilbert Avenue and Middletown Road.

Other primary roads throughout Town include Central Avenue, which runs east-west, and is one of Pearl River's main streets, and Route 304 south of East Washington Avenue in Pearl River.

### c. Secondary Roads

Also known as collector or connector roads, secondary roads carry local traffic between primary roads, other secondary roads, and local roads. A secondary road is not necessarily designed for high-speed travel, however, it is often a more direct route than the local roads.

Western Highway runs generally parallel to Route 303. Western Highway's northern terminus is West Nyack Road in West Nyack, and its southern terminus is Old Tappan Road in Tappan. This road runs through Blauvelt, Orangeburg, and Tappan, and has historical significance.

Convent Road is one of the few of Orangetown's major roads that runs east-west. It is on RPC's northern boundary and runs parallel to Orangeburg Road/Veterans Memorial Highway, which bounds RPC to the south. Convent Road is bounded by Western Highway to the east, and joins with Orangeburg Road/Veterans Memorial Drive to form Gilbert Avenue to the west.

<sup>16</sup> Information from Wilbur Smith Associates, June 2001.

Oak Tree Road runs east-west through the southeastern portion of Orangetown. It begins at Washington Street in Tappan and ends at Route 9W in Palisades. It crosses Routes 303 and 340, but passes over and does not have access to the PIP. West Washington Avenue/Old Pascack Road is also an east-west road; it begins at Route 304 and terminates at the New Jersey State line.

Other secondary roads in Orangetown include Tweed Boulevard, Main Street, Clausland Mountain Road, Bradley Hill Road, Greenbush Road, Leber Road, Erie Street, Washington Street, Dutch Hill Road, Lester Drive, Blaisdell Road, Blue Hill South, Sickletown Road, Gilbert Avenue, Old Middletown Road, and East Washington Avenue.

#### d. Local Roads

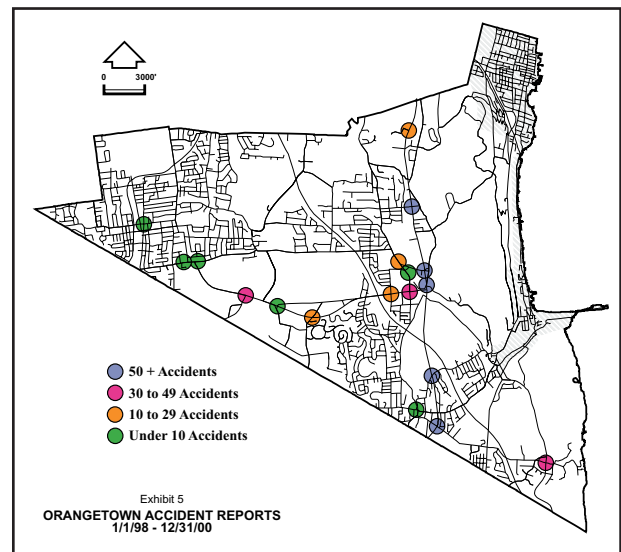
A local road typically services its immediate area and does not necessarily connect to a major thoroughfare. Local roads often provide access to a town's residential areas. Examples of local roads in Orangetown are:

- Blauvelt Road in Pearl River
- Sunset Road in Blauvelt
- Independence Avenue in Orangeburg
- Dederer Street in Sparkill
- Closter Road in Palisades
- Conklin Avenue in Tappan

Although traffic problems exist throughout Orangetown, the most pressing are those related to both volume and safety conditions along Route 303 (these problems are analyzed in detail in the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study, mentioned above and discussed in more detail in Chapter IV). Outside the Route 303 corridor, problems are evident in Pearl River, for example, where the connection between Veteran's Memorial Highway and Middletown Road is awkward, bringing motorists through a two-lane

segment with several turns on streets lined with single-family homes.

The Orangetown Police Department has stated that traffic and traffic-related incidents are the biggest issues the Department is currently facing.<sup>17</sup> Based upon accident reports from January 1, 1998 to December 31, 2000 (See Exhibit 5, Orangetown Accident Reports), information collected indicates that the intersections with the highest accident rates (50 or more accidents) are all on Route 303: Route 303 at Erie Street, Orangeburg Road (driving on Orangeburg Road and moving onto Route 303), Kings Highway in Tappan, Oak Tree Road, and Mountainview Road. Of these intersections, the one with the most accidents was Route 303 and Kings Highway in Tappan, with 95 accidents. The Erie Street and Route 303 intersection was second, with 83 accidents, and the Oak Tree Road intersection was third, with 81 accidents.



Intersections with between 30 and 50 accidents within the approximate two year time frame were more evenly scattered throughout the Town: at Route 303 and Orangeburg Road (driving on Route 303 and moving onto Orangeburg Road), at Oak Tree Road and Route 9W, at Western

<sup>17</sup> As stated in a telephone conversation with Detective Sergeant Douglas J. MacDonnell on January 25, 2001.

Highway and Orangeburg Road, and at Blue Hill Road and Veteran's Memorial Drive.

The intersections that had between 10 and 30 accidents within the two year time period were: Route 303 and Bradley Hill Road, Mountainview Road and Western Highway, Orangeburg Road and Dutch Hill Road, and New Orangeburg Road and Blaisdell Road.

### ***Transit***

#### **a. Railroads**

Currently the Town of Orangetown has one passenger rail line, located in Pearl River. Known as the Pascack Valley line, it offers train service from Pearl River to Hoboken, New Jersey, and New York City, via PATH (Port Authority Trans-Hudson) train connection. A Secaucus transfer station is currently under construction which, upon completion, will provide easier access to Midtown Manhattan, as well as easier transfer to trains providing service throughout the North-east corridor.

The restoration of West Shore passenger service has been advocated by both government leaders and rail activists in Rockland County. The West Shore freight line is currently being considered for passenger service, and is part of a Major Investment Study (MIS)/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). An additional rail line, either as part of West Shore or as a component of the Tappan Zee Bridge, could potentially alleviate traffic and congestion, and encourage increased mass transit use within the County and New York area. Additionally, the area and land uses that would surround a possible new passenger station in the Town would likely reap the benefits of ridership, and a station in one of the Town's hamlet areas would also concur with the long-term concepts for the hamlet areas outlined in the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study. As of the time of this Plan, the fate of the West Shore line is still undetermined.

#### **b. Bus**

In addition to the rail service outlined above, local bus service is also provided to serve both local and commuter needs. The County's Transportation of Rockland (TOR) has stops throughout the Town, and Rockland Coaches Corporation (Red and Tan) provides bus service from Rockland County to New York City. In addition to these services, transportation for the disabled, known as TRIPS, is provided to Rockland County residents who cannot utilize regular bus service.

### ***Utilities***

#### **a. Sanitary Sewers**

The Orangetown Wastewater Treatment Facility, located on Route 303 in Orangeburg, services Orangetown's sanitary sewerage needs. The treatment plant receives the sewage through an extensive network of sewer mains throughout the Town. The facility has a rated average daily flow capacity of approximately 13 million gallons per day (MGD). The current average daily flow is approximately 10 MGD. Therefore, there is approximately 30% additional capacity for growth and future development. The plant is reported to be currently operating well within its permitted discharge limitations.

With few exceptions, the entire Town is served with sanitary sewer. A notable exception is the Tweed Boulevard area in the eastern portion of the Town overlooking the Hudson River.

#### **b. Stormwater Management**

Generally, stormwater management is controlled by rules and regulations enforced by different levels of government, ranging from the Town's zoning, subdivision, and site plan review regulations, the County Drainage Agency's control of larger streams and adjacent development, and the State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC)

State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permits.

These regulations dictate best stormwater management practices during construction activities and in the final design of retention/detention controls for site development projects thereby addressing both the quantity and quality of stormwater.

### **c. Water Service**

Water service in Orangetown is provided by three public water supplies. United Water New York (UW) and the Village of Nyack municipal system provide service for industrial, commercial, and residential customers. Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) has its own well water supply. UW draws approximately 80% of its water supply from wells throughout Rockland County. They also draw water from two surface sources: Lake DeForest in Clarkstown and Cedar Pond Brook in Stony Point.

United Water has an extensive network of water mains within the Town of Orangetown and will extend these mains for a distance of 75 feet for each new metered connection at no cost to a developer. Cost for additional lengths of main would be borne by the developer. United Water has approximately 40 MGD of capacity in Rockland County, with a combination of groundwater and surface water sources, and has interconnections to other public water supplies in New York and New Jersey.

Recently, the New York metropolitan region has experienced drought conditions. This Comprehensive Plan anticipates the drought conditions to be cyclical, and as such, these conditions are anticipated to subside. This issue is discussed further in Chapter III of this Plan.

### **d. Gas and Electric Service**

Orange and Rockland Utilities (O&R) has the franchise for delivering gas and electric service in all of Orangetown. O&R has the responsibility

for providing the necessary infrastructure for delivery of these services to their customers, and they routinely add additional conductors, poles, transformers, and gas mains to update their networks in order to provide reliable service.

O&R will extend new gas and electric service to areas of development for a distance of approximately 100 feet from the nearest utility pole or gas main for each metered connection, at no cost to the developer. Cost for additional lengths of service and incremental costs for special requests, such as three-phase service, redundant sources, looped service, etc., if not normally provided by O&R, is the responsibility of the developer.

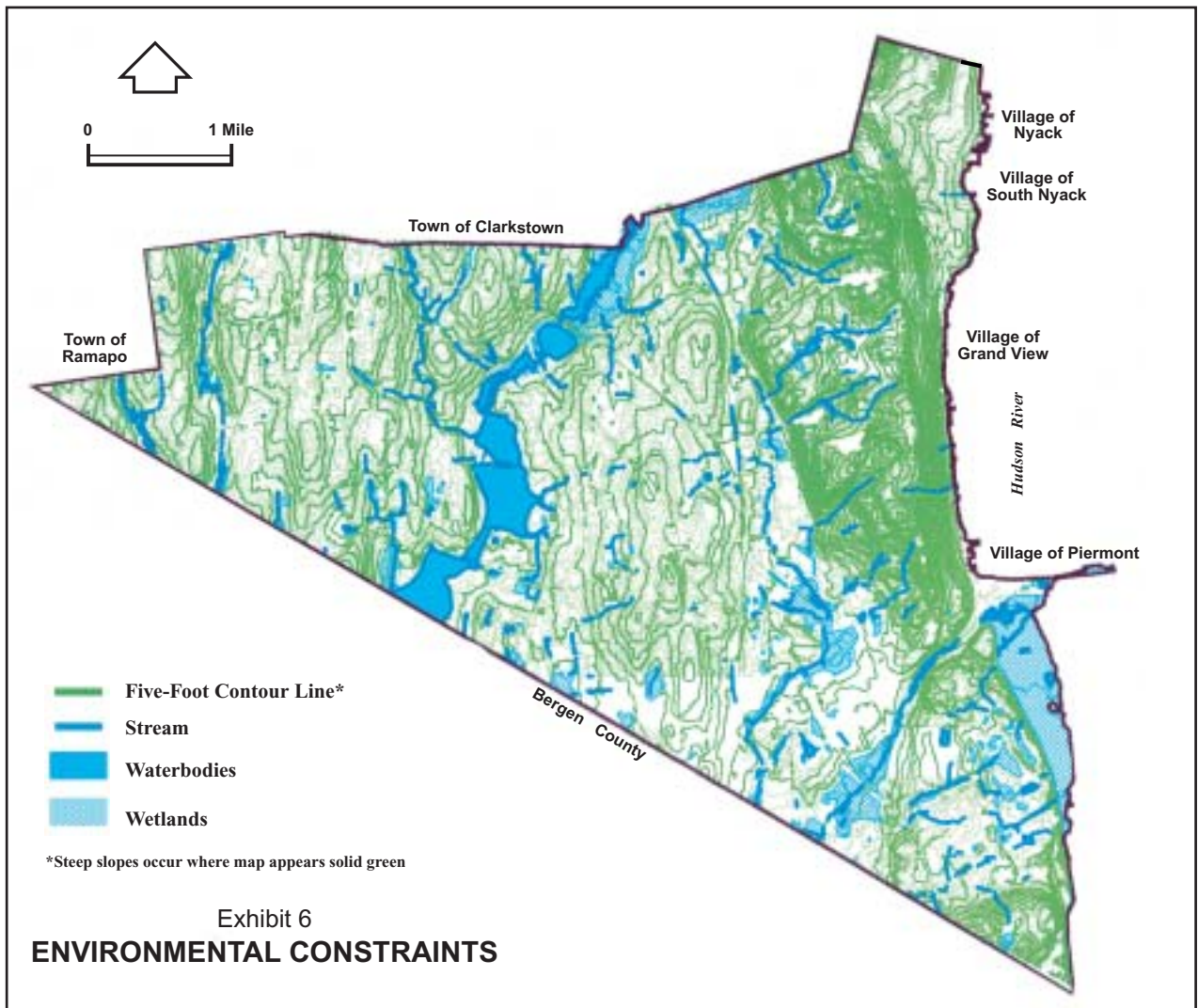
At present, O&R has sold some of its generating capacity as part of an agreement for deregulation of the electric industry in New York. It is anticipated that future needs for gas and electric power in a de-regulated environment will be met by market forces, re-regulation of the industry, or some combination of both.

The Town Board of the Town of Orangetown has expressed concern regarding the safety of the propane tanks at a gas storage facility at the corner of Orangeburg Road and Western Highway. O&R is in the process of removing these tanks.

## **4. Environmental Factors**

### ***Steep Slopes, Wetlands, and Waterbodies***

Orangetown's environmental features, including waterbodies, wetlands, ridgelines, and steep slopes, are defining characteristics of both the Town and the County as a whole (See Exhibit 6, Environmental Constraints). The steep topography in the eastern section of Orangetown known as Clausland Mountain or the Palisades Ridge, bounded on the east by the Hudson River, is a dramatic backdrop against which the more level terrain of the rest of the Town is set.



Steep slopes, defined in this Plan as changes in elevation of 25% or more (i.e., a 25-foot vertical change over a distance of 100 feet), present difficulties for development and require mitigation measures to reduce possibilities of uncontrolled erosion and sedimentation in streams and wetlands. The steep terrain of this area, combined with the area’s land use patterns, results in flooding problems for the Sparkill Creek and the intermittent streams that flow from the Clausland Mountain area. Steep slopes in Orangetown are often attractive wooded areas, where preservation is desirable.

The Town’s waterbodies have significant ecological and scenic value; Lake Tappan and its environs provide beautiful views as one

crosses to and from Pearl River. Lake Tappan, a freshwater drinking water source, is formed



Lake Tappan

by the convergence of the Hackensack River and Naurausaun Brook, which are both Class A drinking water streams. Lake Tappan and its environs are adjacent to a large amount of green space, including Kaufmann Campgrounds, Manhattan Woods Golf Course, Blue Hill Golf Course, Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) land, and Veteran's Memorial Park. The combination of the open land and waterway form a picturesque greenspace corridor.

Another waterbody that defines the Town and its topography, and therefore requires a significant amount of protection, is the Sparkill Creek, with its associated floodplain and wetlands that wind through the southeastern portion of the Town, extending from Clausland Mountain to the Hudson River. The areas abutting the creek have been encroached upon by past development and are affected by uncontrolled runoff from surrounding areas, which adversely affect its drainage and environmental features. There are also a number of smaller waterbodies scattered throughout Orangetown, including Muddy Creek and Pascack Brook, both of which flow north-south through Pearl River. These two waterbodies are part of open space areas set aside by the Town for various forms of recreation.

In another part of Town, an intermittent stream flows from Clausland Mountain toward the Hudson River to the north of the Village of Piermont. Periodic flooding problems occur; during a recent hurricane, rock debris blocked River Road in this locale. Protection of environmentally sensitive lands that feed into these streams is necessary. Along with Sparkill Creek, the other streams in Orangetown require protection from non-point source pollution, as well as flooding. Flooding can also occur from rapid runoff in developed areas throughout the Town, where there is no appropriate place for the water to go (i.e., wetlands, natural flood zones, or detention and retention areas).

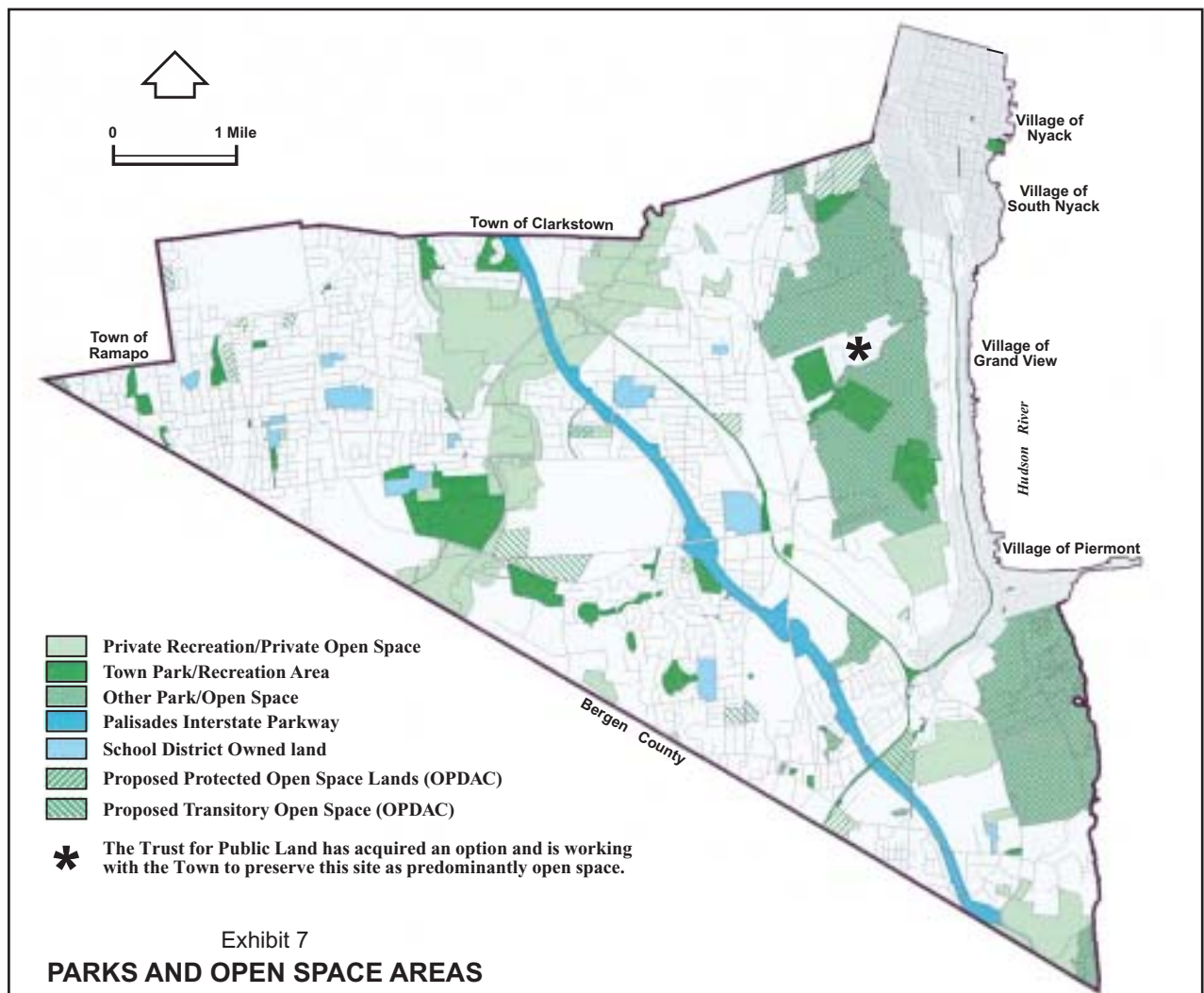
Wetlands are also major factors affecting the pattern of the Town's growth and development,

and the preservation and/or reconstitution of wetlands is important to the Town as a whole. Wetlands serve a wide variety of functions which support a local and regional ecology, including but not limited to flood control, nutrient/sediment trapping, education, visual resources, recreation, ground water protection, and erosion protection. Adjacent to the Hackensack River, in the north-central section of Town, are New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)-designated wetlands (State-designated wetlands are generally 12.4 acres in size or larger). Other areas of State-designated wetlands can be found throughout the Town, the largest of which are located on the Town's northern border near Route 303, between Route 340 and the PIP north of Kings Highway, and on either side of the PIP between Route 340 and Washington Street. Additional wetlands are also found throughout the Town. Some are located directly adjacent to the aforementioned State-designated wetlands, while others are independent of these areas.

Tallman Mountain State Park, Clausland Mountain State Park, and Blauvelt State Park run along a north-south axis on the eastern edge of the Town, and sections of these parks' topographies are comprised of the steep slopes that characterize this part of Town. Clausland Mountain is clearly the most dominant land form in Orangetown. Rising high above the Hudson River (675 feet at its highest point), the topography, steep slopes, extensive tree cover, and small streams create a magnificent, albeit somewhat fragile, natural setting for the eastern portion of the Town. In some locations, development of single-family residences had been placed somewhat precariously on steep terrain in order to capture magnificent Hudson River views.

## 5. Open Space and Recreation

Although characterized as a mostly built-up, suburban community, Orangetown has a broad array of open space resources (See Exhibit 7, Parks and Open Space Areas) that



comprise ±2,500 acres within State, County, and local facilities. Although this acreage is significant, it does not imply that acquisition of additional open space and recreation areas is not an important and necessary recommendation of this Comprehensive Plan. Many parks in Rockland County serve local as well as regional needs. In fact, the County reports that over 50% of the park attendance in Rockland County comes from New York City usage.<sup>18</sup> The parks and open space and recreation areas in Orangetown are used by a variety of different populations (i.e., regional visitors, school and extracurricular groups, Town citizens, the general public, etc.).

Additional open space is being actively pursued by the Town in order to augment the approximately 500 acres of Town-owned active and passive recreation (including school sites). Additional open space could begin to address Little League and soccer field demand. Representatives of both sports, as well as Town officials, have clearly identified this need. The Town has also expressly identified the need for additional indoor recreation space as well as outdoor space, including the need for a Town pool. These needs are anticipated to be addressed in substantial part through the acquisition of surplus acreage at the Rockland Psychiatric Center property.

<sup>18</sup> Source: Rockland County Trends: Open Space, Parks and Recreation, 1970-2010, June 1995.

For the purposes of this Plan and any future acquisition of open space by the Town of Orangetown, it is important to discuss the distinction between active and passive open space. Although certain activities can easily be classified as either passive (walking trails or seating and picnic areas) or active (baseball or soccer fields), there are other activities that are more difficult to categorize (such as fishing). One way to clarify the difference is cost - while passive open space may require little fiscal outlay beyond the acquisition price and minimal upkeep, active recreation space requires a long-term fiscal commitment through its need for continual upkeep and maintenance.

Within the above context, it is important to recognize that approximately 60% of the Town's open space - over 1200 acres - is concentrated in five major park areas in the eastern portion of the Town:

- Clausland Mountain County Park (500 acres)
- Buttermilk Falls County Park (72 acres)
- Tallman Mountain State Park (687 acres)
- Blauvelt State Park (590 acres)
- Tackamack Town Park (105 acres)

With the exception of an outdoor pool and some ballfields at Tallman Mountain, these parks are natural open space areas with portions designated for limited passive recreation, where a number of trails, including the Long Path, provide opportunities for hiking, picnicking, and enjoyment of the rugged terrain of the Palisades ridge, often with spectacular views of the Hudson River. Both the Long Path, which traverses the Clausland Mountain area, and the Rail-Trail are considered to be of historical significance. Bike Route 9, which traverses Orangetown on New York State Route 9W, is also in this area, and is a major regional trail that begins at the George Washington Bridge.

Clausland Mountain, as this entire ridge area is often identified, includes a number of uses in



*The Long Path*

addition to the park areas noted above. These include: (1) single-family residences, some sited on particularly steep terrain (like those on Tweed Boulevard), (2) vacant, privately-owned land zoned for additional single-family homes, and (3) several other public and quasi-public uses, including cemeteries, institutions, and golf courses. Within this area, a number of parcels have been identified for open space acquisition - the ±40 acre Blake property is one example. The Town Board agreed to acquire 25 acres of the Blake property in 2001.

As the topography of Orangetown levels off to the west of Clausland Mountain - generally between Routes 303 and 304 - the physical character of the Town changes, reflecting the suburban nature of places like Blauvelt, Pearl River, and Orangeburg. Within this large expanse, the Town has a number of additional significant open space resources. Of these, the most dominant is United Water's Hackensack riverway corridor of Lake Tappan and the Hackensack River, including associated wetlands and a number of major recreational facilities along the corridor, such as:

- Veterans Memorial Park
- Blue Hill Golf Course and Manhattan Woods Golf Course
- Kaufmann Campgrounds



Also located here is the Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC), where significant acreage of the RPC site across from Veterans Memorial Park has been planned in recent years for a future recreation use based upon the sale of portions of the property by the State to the Town of Orangetown. Pursuant to the contract with the State of New York, at least 216 of the 348 surplus acres must be devoted to recreational purposes. Additional wetland/open space areas may also be set aside as part of the development of RPC, and an open space buffer has been suggested for Lake Tappan.

Both Clausland Mountain and the Lake Tappan/Hackensack River corridor run in a north-south direction, extending south from Bergen County north to Nyack and Clarkstown. Also extending generally on a north-south axis is the Rail-Trail corridor, which extends from Tappan through Sparkill to Blauvelt (with separate trails to Piermont and toward Nyack). Each of these trails requires careful attention, allowing them to continue to serve as an alternative means of transportation and as part of a community-wide open space system. Scattered between these major open space systems are a variety of modestly-sized (i.e., less than ten acres) Town parks, plus a number of school district, college, and privately-owned sites that form the final portions of Orangetown's extensive  $\pm 2,500$  acre open space system. See Table I-4 for an inventory of the various types of open space and recreational resources found throughout the Town.

As indicated on the Parks and Open Space Areas map, planning for future recreation and open space has been an on-going process in Orangetown for the past several years. Among recent studies and plans are those undertaken for a new swimming facility in 1999 (which focused on portions of the RPC site), a recreation master plan for the RPC site (on-going), and the work of the Orangetown Parks Devel-

opment Advisory Committee (OPDAC) and other groups, including the Ad Hoc Open Space Committee. OPDAC has proposed ten acquisition sites and eight additional transitory sites where open space should be preserved through techniques other than acquisition. The Town Board has worked on several sites, including the Blake property site, St. Catherine's Cemetery, the Oak Tree Road Rail-Trail site, the Oak Tree Road/Sparkill Creek site, and several RPC parcels, including the 26 acres north of Veteran's Memorial Drive, the area west of the existing Gaelic Fields, and other portions of the property.

The Town of Orangetown Ad Hoc Open Space Committee has called for additional acquisition, and has prepared a map showing major properties in the Clausland Mountain and the Lake Tappan-Hackensack riverway, as well as other vacant sites throughout the Town. Several sites recommended by the committee are shown on the Parks and Open Space Areas map, and a map listing all of the sites recommended for acquisition by the Ad Hoc Committee is located in Chapter V as Exhibit 18.

## 6. Community Facilities and Services

The presence of a full array of community facilities and services is an integral part of a thriving community. This section outlines the facilities and services that are presently serving the citizens of Orangetown<sup>19</sup> (several of the community facilities and services that serve the incorporated villages within the Town of Orangetown are also discussed herein).

The Town of Orangetown has a plethora of existing facilities and services meant to enhance or assist the lives of its citizens. These services can be broken into discrete categories, and the location of the various existing facilities is shown on Exhibit 8, Community Facilities. Churches and synagogues (as illustrated on the map) are

<sup>19</sup> Information based on the Rockland County 1994 Data Book and correspondence recorded to date with a variety of community service providers, including school, library, police, fire and ambulance representatives.

**Table I-4  
Inventory of Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities**

<b>Town Parks and Open Space Areas</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Description</b>
Azalea Court	9.0	Undeveloped walk along Naurashaun Brook
Blue Hill Golf Course	± 200.0	27-hole facility owned and operated by the Town
Borst Gardens	3.0	Gardens, apple orchard, picnicking, passive recreation
Braunsdorf	1.0	Memorial park with monuments and sitting areas
Central Avenue Field	4.89	Owned by Pearl River Union Free School District; contains playground, ballfield, gazebo, and other amenities; site of many community celebrations
Cherry Brook	3.0	Adjacent to Franklin Avenue School; handball and tennis courts, multi-use asphalt court, children's play area, walking path
Clarke Trail	N/A	Walking trail beginning in Tappan; runs northwest with a spur running into Piermont
DeMeola Fields	9.0	Leased from South Orangetown Central School District; includes baseball and soccer fields
Elliot	9.0	Passive parkland bordering Tackamack Park
Greenbush Center	2.0	Located at former school; site has playground and playfields
Independence	18.0	Lighted tennis and basketball courts, a playground and paths
Kennedy-Reedy Fields	10.0	Leased from South Orangetown School District; includes two ballfields
Lake Tappan	± 350.0	Watershed Recreation Program operated by United Water makes lake and surrounding land available for fishing, hiking, etc. on a permit basis
Long Path	N/A	Stretching from New Jersey to Greene County, the path runs through many of the sites listed here
Muddy Creek		An open space area which contains Muddy Creek, bordering Route 304
Nike	25.0	Former U.S. Government radar tracking station; hiking, open space and scenic views
Pascack North and South Park	26.5	Open space area along Pascack Brook; fishing, walking, and passive recreation
Pilgrim Court	1.5	Neighborhood park site featuring children's play area, open play space
Schaefer	25.0	Undeveloped 25-acre parcel in residential area
Schuyler	25.0	Natural area adjacent to Blauvelt State Park
Shanks Memorial	0.5	Memorial and sitting area commemorating Camp Shanks
Sparkill Memorial Park	1.5	Veterans' monument and the DiFrancesca Playground are at site which adjoins the Town's Rail-Trail
Sparkill Skating Pond	1.0	Leased from the Spring Valley Water Company for use as an outdoor skating area
Stoughton Park	>1.0	Small playground area in the Tappan Military Housing restoration project
Tackamack North and South	105.0	Open space adjoining county and state parklands, including a portion of the Long Path
Tappan Fields	5.0	Leased from South Orangetown School District; has ballfield and playground area
Tappan Memorial	2.5	Passive park with paths, benches and pond area
Veterans Memorial	43.0	Town's most active park site; athletic fields and courts, playgrounds, batting cages, a concession stand, jogging paths, and two ponds
Whitton Field	4.0	Leased from South Orangetown School District; contains ballfield

**Table I-4  
Inventory of Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities  
(continued)**

County Parks	Acres	Description
Clausland Mountain	500.0	Hiking and open space areas; contains portion of the Long Path
Buttermilk Falls	72.0	Open space area for hiking and passive recreation
Andre Hill		Marks location where British spy Major John Andre was hanged and buried in 1780
<b>State Parks</b>		
Tallman Mountain	4.89	Ballfields, swimming pool, hiking, and Hudson River views
Blauvelt	590.0	Open space area for hiking; contains a portion of the Long Path
<b>School Facilities<sup>20</sup></b>		
Cottage Lane Elementary School		A Little League ballfield, basketball court, and a children's playground
Evans Park Elementary School		A small ballfield and a children's playground
Franklin Avenue Elementary School		A softball field and a children's playground
Lincoln Avenue Elementary School		A small baseball field and a children's playground
Palisades		A ballfield
Pearl River Middle School		A soccer field, baseball and softball fields
Pearl River High School		Football, soccer, baseball and softball fields, six tennis courts, four handball courts
Schaefer Elementary School		Two children's playgrounds and two ballfields
South Orangetown Middle School		Two soccer fields, baseball and softball fields, two gymnasiums, and the only indoor public swimming pool in the community
Tappan Zee Elementary School		A baseball field and a children's playground
Tappan Zee High School		A football field, baseball field, softball field, all-weather track, four tennis courts, and a utility field

Source: Manuel S. Emanuel Associates, Inc., 1995, and Orangetown Community Information Guide, 1999.

not discussed in detail in this report. However, it is important to be aware of their presence in the Town, and it is especially interesting to note the high concentration of religious facilities in the Pearl River area.

**Existing Facilities and Services**

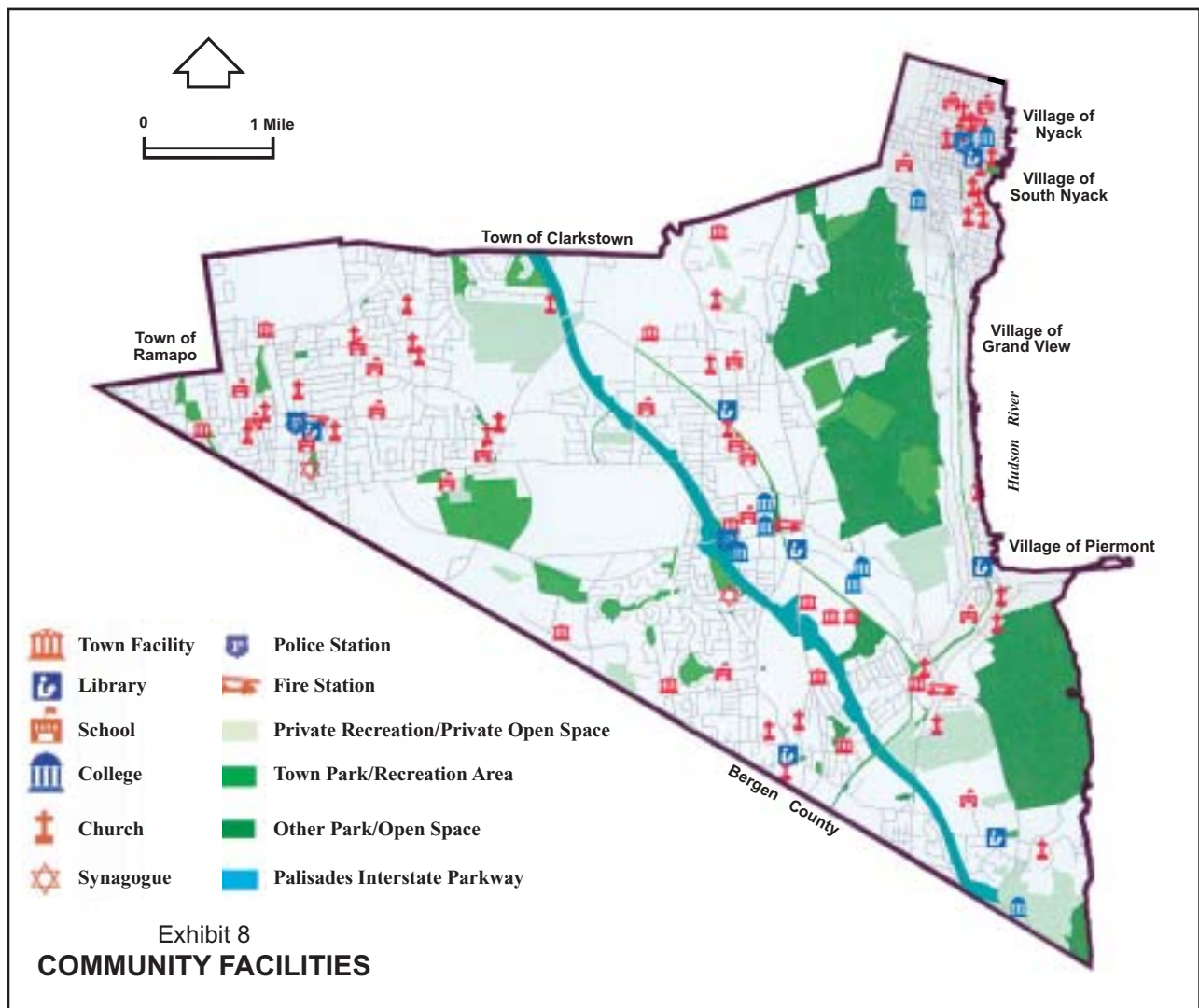
**a. Administrative<sup>21</sup>**

The Town Board consists of five members, including the Town Supervisor, and is the legisla-

tive body for the Town. The Town Supervisor is both the chief executive officer and chief financial officer, and oversees all Town departments. The Director of Finance is appointed by the Town Supervisor, while the Town Board collectively appoints a Town Assessor, Town Attorney, and Town Engineer. Other boards that serve the Town include the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), the Architecture and Community Appearance Board of Review, and the Historic Areas Board of Review.

<sup>20</sup> Some school facilities may have been previously mentioned in the Town parks section.

<sup>21</sup> Town of Orangetown Official Statement, General Obligation Serial Bonds Document, December 2000.



The Superintendent of Highways, Town Clerk, Receiver of Taxes, and the Town Justices are elected positions. Other municipal departments and positions that serve the Town include the Personnel Department, the Highway Department, the Department of Environmental Management and Engineering (also known as the Sewer Department), the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Office of Building, Zoning, Planning Administration and Enforcement. The latter three (Engineering, Parks, and Planning) had a major role in formulating Comprehensive Plan recommendations, along with the Town Board, the Planning Board, and to a lesser extent, the ZBA, the Architecture and Community Appearance Board of Review, and

the Historic Areas Board of Review. There are also committees and advisory boards that work in conjunction with the above, including those focusing on open space and recreation. Local government services can be found throughout the Town, although most are centralized at the Town Hall in Orangeburg.

**b. Public Safety**

A vital component in community service, public safety departments have a strong presence in all the hamlets of Orangetown. An inventory of specific districts and the areas they serve is provided below.

**1. Police**

The entire Town is served by the Orangetown Police Department, and to some extent, by the Orangetown Auxiliary Police (unpaid volunteers used mainly for traffic detail, but who also perform other duties, such as vacant house checks), the Rockland County Sheriff’s Office, the Palisades Interstate Park Police, and the New York State Police. The current police force consists of approximately 90 sworn officers, eight civilian dispatchers, five civilian clerk/stenographers, and approximately 40 auxiliary police officers<sup>22</sup>. The Orangetown Police Department, in conjunction with the Clarkstown Police Department, also serves the Village of Nyack; the Department maintains a substation in Nyack. The Town Police Department is located in Town Hall in Orangeburg, and there is also a police booth in Pearl River. The locations of the three stations are shown on the Community Facilities map.

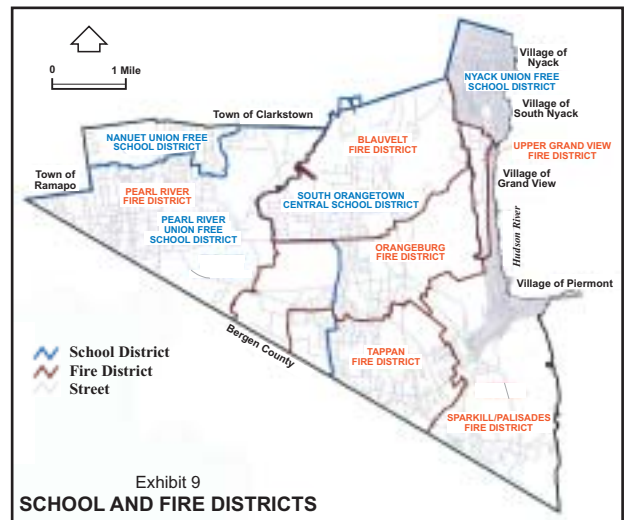
The Orangetown Police Department has provided some additional information regarding its current level of service and has identified present and future concerns for the Town in terms of law enforcement. For the Police Department, the biggest issue in Orangetown is traffic. The Department has a federally-funded Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit that patrols the Town’s major roads. Traffic accidents are an issue, and there are a number of intersections within the Town that have been the scene of a substantial number of accidents. Intersections with more than 50 accidents over a two-year period are all on Route 303, at the intersections of Erie Street, Mountainview Avenue, Orangeburg Road, Kings Highway in Tappan, and Oak Tree Road.<sup>23</sup>

The Police Department has programs for both the youth of the Town and its senior population. A Community Policing Unit (CPU) works

within the community, and often attends various community and Town meetings. With the senior population, the CPU discusses issues such as marketing scams and home safety; for Orangetown’s youth, the Department has programs such as DARE, Youth Court, and “school resource officers”, in addition to its CPU and Youth Division. The Department is currently reporting a need for increased staff, budget, and space.

**2. Fire Districts**

As shown on Exhibit 9, School and Fire Districts, there are five fire districts within the unincorporated Town. Each hamlet has its own fire service, except for Palisades and Sparkill, that share one fire company. The hamlet of Upper Grand View is within the Nyack fire district, and so is served by its fire company. All the companies listed below are volunteer fire companies.



**Sparkill:** The hamlets of Palisades and Sparkill share fire protection services, and are both served by the John Paulding Engine Company No.1. The Company is composed of 46 volunteer members. The Company has three pumpers, an aerial ladder, a support van, and two cars for the fire chiefs. The primary issue identified

<sup>22</sup> Information from the Orangetown Police Department’s website ([www.orangetownpd.com](http://www.orangetownpd.com)), July 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Concurrent with this Comprehensive Planning process, a Route 303 Sustainable Development Study is being undertaken, which is discussed in Chapter IV of this Plan.

by the Company is the decrease in volunteers, both current and anticipated. There are limited incentive programs in place, but a decrease in younger volunteers has continued. Additionally, it was stated that an increase in technology, the inclusion of MDT (a mobile data transmission device currently only in Town police cars) in fire vehicles for example, would be beneficial to the company, and to the provision of fire services throughout Orangetown as a whole.<sup>24</sup>

**Blauvelt:** The Blauvelt Volunteer Fire Company provides fire protection to the four square miles within the hamlet of Blauvelt, encompassing over 1,600 homes and 200 businesses, and a population of over 5,000 people. The Company is composed of 52 volunteer members who responded to 222 alarms in 2000, with an average response time of four to five minutes. The Company operates two 2,000 gallon-a-minute pumpers, a mini-attack pumper, a heavy rescue truck, and a manpower transport vehicle. Within the past decade the Company has experienced a drop in volunteers while concurrently responding to more alarm calls. There are award and incentive programs currently in place to attract and retain volunteers.<sup>25</sup>

**Pearl River:** The fire companies that serve the hamlet of Pearl River are the Pearl River Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 and the Excelsior Fire Engine Company. Located on Central Avenue, the Pearl River Hook and Ladder fire house is a landmark building in the downtown area. Adjacent to a large open space, the fire house signals the beginning of the downtown retail core.

**Orangeburg:** This hamlet is serviced by the Orangeburg Volunteer Fire Association. The Orangeburg Fire Department processed approximately 317 calls in 2000. The Depart-

ment has seven vehicles: a Ford Expedition, a Ford Club Wagon, two pumpers, a Heavy Rescue vehicle, an aerial truck, and one other truck.<sup>26</sup> The Department also recently added a thermal imaging camera to assist with firefighting. The fire station is located on Dutch Hill Road adjacent to Town Hall.



*The Orangeburg Fire Station*

**Tappan:** The Volunteer Fire Association of Tappan provides fire protection for the hamlet of Tappan. The fire station is located in the historic hamlet center, at 123 Washington Street. Currently there is an adjacent parcel that houses a former gas station that the fire department uses for department vehicles. The parcel is also adjacent to a Town park, and this area's potential enhancement is discussed in Section IV of this Plan.

### 3. Ambulance Districts

There are two volunteer ambulance districts that encompass the entire Town: the South Orangetown Ambulance Corps and the Pearl River Alumni Ambulance Corps. There is also the not-for-profit Rockland Paramedics, Inc., formed through Good Samaritan Hospital and Nyack Hospital, that provides emergency medical service to the towns of Clarkstown, Ramapo, Orangetown, and Tuxedo (in Orange County).

<sup>24</sup> Information from telephone correspondence with Assistant Chief Clifford Bullock, March 2000.

<sup>25</sup> Information from correspondence from Chief Christopher Flatley, January 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Information from [www.angelfire.com/ny3/orangeburgfire](http://www.angelfire.com/ny3/orangeburgfire) Accessed in 2000 and December 2001.

As of January 2001, the volunteer South Orangetown Ambulance Corps had approximately 60 members. Its equipment consists of two ambulances and one fly car. A potential issue for the Corps is any potential increase in population. As stated in a letter from the President of the Ambulance Corps, if Town population continued to grow, the Corps would look into the possibility of securing additional headquarters in north Orangetown.<sup>27</sup> Although only limited overall population growth is anticipated in Orangetown, significant growth in the senior population is anticipated, which could be expected to require additional ambulance service.

The Rockland County Director of Emergency Services has expressed concern regarding the ability of volunteers in Orangetown and elsewhere throughout the County to continue to live in their respective communities, given current housing costs.

### c. School System

Orangetown is served by four school districts: South Orangetown Central School District, Nanuet Union Free School District, Pearl River Union Free School District, and the Nyack Union Free School District. The school districts are outlined below and shown on Exhibit 9, School and Fire Districts, and the schools that are within the boundaries of the Town are shown on Exhibit 8, Community Facilities. The following information was provided separately by each school district.

#### 1. Public School Districts

The **South Orangetown Central School District** covers portions of the villages and hamlets of Blauvelt, Grand View, Orangeburg,

Palisades, Piermont, Sparkill, and Tappan. The district has six schools: Tappan Zee High School, Tappan Zee Elementary School, South Orangetown Middle School, Cottage Lane Elementary School, William O. Schaefer Elementary School, and the South Orangetown Early Childhood Program (formerly the Palisades School Early Childhood Program).<sup>28</sup> The total district population for 2001 was approximately 2,661 students, with a per pupil expenditure of approximately \$15,791.<sup>29</sup>

The **Pearl River Union Free School District** covers most of Pearl River and portions of Orangeburg and Tappan, and parts of the Town of Clarkstown (West Nyack and Nanuet). There are five schools within the district: Pearl River Middle School, Pearl River High School, Franklin Avenue Elementary School, Evans Park Elementary School, and Lincoln Avenue Elementary School. The total district population for the 2001/2002 school year was 2,500 students. The total budget for the district was \$36,368,030, with a per pupil expenditure of \$14,547.<sup>30</sup>



*Pearl River High School*

The **Nanuet Union Free School District** is the smallest district in Rockland County. It includes portions of Pearl River and the villages and hamlets of West Nyack, Nanuet, and Spring Valley. There are four schools: George W. Miller Elementary School, Highview Elementary

<sup>27</sup> Information from correspondence from Mr. James Dress, Sr., President of South Orangetown Ambulance Corps, February 2001.

<sup>28</sup> The enrollment of the Palisades School-Early Childhood Program moved to William O. Schaefer Elementary School in the 2000/2001 school year.

<sup>29</sup> Data from the NYS Department of Education and the Times Union newspaper, Albany, NY ([www.timesunion.com/news/reportcard2001](http://www.timesunion.com/news/reportcard2001)), based on information from the 1999-2000 school year.

<sup>30</sup> Information from a meeting with Pearl River Superintendent Dr. Richard E. Maurer, Director of Operations Davis Pritchett, and Director of Community Relations Sandra Cokeley-Pederson, January 2001.

School, A. MacArthur Barr Middle School, and Nanuet Senior High School. The total district population for the 2000/2001 school year was approximately 2,060 students.<sup>31</sup>

The ***Nyack Union Free School District*** contains the villages of Upper Nyack, Nyack, and South Nyack, and the hamlets of Central Nyack, Valley Cottage, and Upper Grand View. Upper Grand View is the only portion of unincorporated Orangetown covered by the district. There are five schools: Valley Cottage Elementary School, Upper Nyack Elementary School, Liberty Elementary School, Nyack Middle School, and Nyack High School. The total district population for the 2000/2001 school year was approximately 2,974 students and the 2000/2001 budget was \$46,216,409.<sup>32</sup>

Meetings and discussions with school district officials focused on issues relating to increasing enrollments (although some see kindergarten enrollments leveling off) and related space problems, and the increasing cost of educating students given contemporary needs, state mandates, etc.

## 2. Colleges

For a Town of approximately 35,000 people (unincorporated), Orangetown is home to a large number of colleges and universities (as shown on the Community Facilities map), with many of them located in and around the hamlet of Orangeburg. Iona College-Rockland Campus (which leases space at Tappan Zee High School through the South Orangetown Central School District), Dominican College, and Long Island University-Rockland Campus are all in Orangeburg. St. Thomas Aquinas College and the New York University School of Social Work (which is housed entirely on the campus of St. Thomas Aquinas College) are in Sparkill, and the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory (LDEO),



*Dominican College*

a research extension of Columbia University, is in Palisades. Nyack College is partially located within the Town and partially within the Village of South Nyack.

The LDEO has some interaction with the Town. There is a lecture series, a day-long open house/science fair in October, and a limited outreach program that works with a small number of local elementary and high school students. A representative of the LDEO has expressed their need for affordable housing for their students, post-doctorates, and visiting scientists. With a small number of graduate students, the LDEO is primarily used for research purposes. Therefore the opportunities for interaction with the surrounding communities are limited.<sup>33</sup>

The New York University School of Social Work is housed entirely on the St. Thomas Aquinas College campus in Sparkill, and as such, does not have any facilities separate from St. Thomas Aquinas College. The opportunities for interaction with other area colleges and universities and the surrounding community as a whole is based on the school's social work program. The NYU program works with other colleges and universities throughout the area that have social work programs, and has relationships with agencies and professional societies in the area related to social work. However, the only link to the community that the program currently has is through its fund raising (including blood drives with the Red Cross and working with the People to People agency in Nyack) and internship activities.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Information from correspondence with Nanuet Superintendent Mark S. McNeill, January 2001.

<sup>32</sup> Information from [www.nyackschools.com](http://www.nyackschools.com). Accessed in 2000 and December 2001.

<sup>33</sup> Information from correspondence with Jeff Shapiro of Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, September 2001.

<sup>34</sup> Information from correspondence with Catherine LaChapelle, Coordinator of the NYU/St. Thomas Aquinas Campus, October 2001.



Dominican College, located on Western Highway in Orangeburg, has a new Global Communications Center, several meeting rooms, and a college bookstore available for use by the public. Additionally, the College interacts with the surrounding community through internships with area businesses, the Campus Ministry program, student-led volunteer organizations, and events held throughout the year, including an annual Health Care Expo and a holiday concert. Also, the Palisades Institute of Dominican College is an outreach program for area business people that provides workshops, seminars, and newsletters dealing with issues critical to the modern business world.<sup>35</sup>

Nyack College has a number of community connections, including sports camps through the Athletic Department, community projects through the Science Department, and tutoring and student teaching through the Education Department. Nyack College's Career Services Department works in conjunction with Iona College, Dominican College, and possibly, this year, Rockland Community College for an annual career fair. Also, the College is currently developing a college-community partnership for outreach to academically distressed youth in the community. Nyack College also has amenities available to the public, including 9 public access computer terminals in the Nyack College Library and the "in house" resources of the library (although there is an annual fee for a library card and borrowing privileges). Current students of St. Thomas Aquinas College, Dominican College, and the Salvation Army Officer Training School have reciprocal borrowing privileges with no annual fee, as do alumni, local pastors and missionaries, and members of the Board of Trustees. Certain campus facilities can also be rented, based on availability.<sup>36</sup>

The student body from these and other area colleges and universities are also visible in Oran-

getown, using certain shopping and restaurant areas. The schools have athletic facilities and additional space that could provide community facility resources for the Town. Cooperation with regard to educational programs and the use of various facilities should be pursued.

### 3. Libraries

The public libraries serving Orangetown are the Blauvelt Free Library, the Orangeburg Library, the Palisades Free Library, the Pearl River Public Library, and the Tappan Library. All of these libraries are part of the Ramapo-Catskill Library System (RCLS). This system covers a four-county area (Rockland County, Orange County, Sullivan County, and South Ulster County), and is comprised of 53 individual libraries and one reading center. A RCLS card can be used at any of the libraries within the system. The largest library in Orangetown is the Pearl River Public Library. There is no library for the hamlet of Sparkill, but residents pay into the Palisades library district, and so often patronize that library. All of the Town's libraries have had either expansions or renovations within the past ten years. Their locations can be seen on the Community Facilities map.

#### d. Senior Services

County departments and programs for senior citizens include Meals on Wheels of Rockland County, Inc., the Rockland County Office for the Aging, the Institute for Senior Education at Rockland Community College (a service of Rockland County Office for the Aging), and various senior centers around Rockland County. Orangetown residents also make up a portion of the Rockland Community College Senior Club.

Orangetown houses the Pearl River Senior Center and Sparkill/Thorpe Senior Center (both sponsored by Meals on Wheels of Rockland

<sup>35</sup> Information from Dorothy Filoramo, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Dominican College, October 2001.

<sup>36</sup> Information from Michael Scales, Executive Vice President, and Peter Moore, Director of Buildings and Grounds, Nyack College, November 2001.

County, Inc.). There are senior residences within Orangetown (but no nursing homes): Dowling Gardens in Sparkill (which shares grounds with Thorpe Village, an Independent Living facility) is a 111-unit Assisted Living facility, and Palisades Gardens Foundations, Inc. in Palisades is a Supportive Housing facility. Both facilities house elderly residents with a wide range of ability, and provide assistance (social, medical, etc.) when they require it. In addition, an Assisted Living facility (known as Alterra) has been constructed across from Blue Hill Plaza in Pearl River. Orangetown also has eight senior citizen clubs dispersed throughout the Town to provide easy access for many senior residents. These clubs meet for trips, speakers, and general socialization.

## 7. Areas Susceptible to Change

As part of the Comprehensive Plan process, the Town has identified a number of geographic areas considered to be susceptible to change, given their current vacant or under-utilized status. Major properties within this category are:

- Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC), an approximately 555 acre site of which 348 acres has been declared surplus by the State of New York, is under contract for purchase by the Town. Residents approved a referendum by a vote of 73% to 27% on November 5, 2002, to permit the Town Board to proceed with the acquisition of 348 acres of surplus land at the site. This property is discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.
- The Route 303 corridor, as analyzed under the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study. The goal of the Study is to create a sustainable approach to transportation and development in the corridor by addressing transportation improvements, while concurrently creating land use control mechanisms to address issues specific to visual quality and the character of the corridor. The Route 303 Zoning Overlay District was approved. This study is discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.
- The Palisades Interstate Parkway Interchange area at exit 5, as it intersects with Route 303. Considered a prestigious location within the Town, the area has great potential. Currently, the majority of the area is vacant or underutilized. A big-box development (Lowe's) is under construction on one parcel within the area, and a large warehouse has been approved for an adjacent parcel. The Town has recognized the prudence of rational land use planning and development for the balance of this area, so that future use of the area is complementary to the goals and objectives of the Town, the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study, and the Rockland County Master Plan.
- Smaller areas throughout the Town that are susceptible to change in the future include Rockland Corporate Park, the Masonic Temple site and Army surplus land, the Kaufmann Campgrounds, and the former Mercedes site, the small commercial area on Convent Road (proximate to the north entrance of RPC), and the golf ranges on northern Route 303 in Blauvelt, on Route 9W in Palisades, and on Route 303 at the PIP. Downtown Pearl River is also susceptible to change. Vacant properties, including one former movie theater, need to be reoccupied. The existing streetscape and parking supply need improvement to strengthen the area. The Town has embarked upon a number of initiatives to address these needs.

# *Goals and Objectives*



## II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: The Future Vision for Orangetown

The drafting of goals and objectives is the second step in the Comprehensive Plan process. Based upon the information obtained in the documentation of existing conditions and in discussions with the Comprehensive Plan Committee, the goals and objectives are concepts to be used as guidance when constructing the Comprehensive Plan. These concepts are borne out through the use of implementation tools such as zoning modifications and land use techniques, and the enforcement of the tenets of the Comprehensive Plan itself, which, subsequent to its adoption, will become a policy document for the Town. It is the goals and objectives that form the vision for the Comprehensive Plan, and thus, for the future of Orangetown.

### A. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

To provide additional open space and recreation facilities to serve existing and anticipated population needs and balance development and environmental preservation goals, the Town will:

1. Strengthen the two north-south open space corridors that already exist in Orangetown—the Lake Tappan-Hackensack riverway and the Clausland Mountain corridor - through acquisition of lands for open space and through zoning and land planning techniques (including clustering) that limit development on steep slopes and wetlands, and along ridge lines and waterbodies. These areas should be priority locations for open space acquisition.
2. Make certain that proposed development that is proximate to Lake Tappan and Clausland Mountain is carefully examined prior to approvals, with mitigation measures provided to protect water resources and steep terrain from uncontrolled runoff.

3. Acquire and develop sites for additional active recreation, such as soccer, baseball, swimming, and other uses, including land for use by the Town, its school districts, and local clubs and organizations, such as the Little League. In addition, acquire and develop sites for additional indoor recreation facilities. This specifically includes land at the Rockland Psychiatric Center site.
4. Work with the County and other communities (possibly including Clarkstown or Ramapo, among others), where appropriate, to secure outside funding for the acquisition of open space lands and recreation sites.
5. Upgrade existing park facilities and recreation programs, where necessary, to provide additional recreational opportunities for current and future populations; utilize recreation fees collected through the subdivision process, user fees, other town funds, and outside grants to support the recreation program. Improve opportunities for Town-owned indoor recreation for youth and seniors, in addition to collaboration with schools and libraries.



*Veterans Memorial Park, the Town's largest recreation facility*

6. Preserve major portions of the Rockland Psychiatric Center as open space, particularly the area to the east of Lake Tappan; secure and develop major portions of that site for active recreation, with the possible participation of private sector recreation providers.

7. Improve, maintain and expand the walking and biking trails in Orangetown; provide connections between major open space areas, hamlet centers and villages; seek to have designated trails provided, such as the Rail-Trail, to help reduce bicycle traffic along major roadways.



*The Rail-Trail in Tappan*

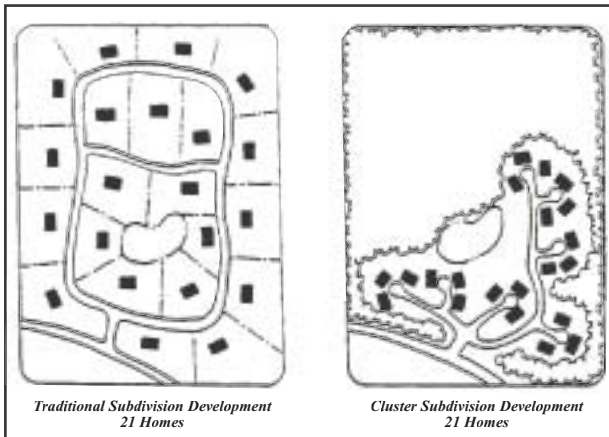
8. Improve access to Lake Tappan and to the Hudson River for boating and other recreational opportunities; work with the State, local villages, and private utility companies to achieve this objective.
9. Improve the open space character along portions of the Town's major roadways, particularly Route 303, possibly with both a landscaped median and with wide front yard landscape strips for developments along the right-of-way, except for the proposed hamlet centers.
10. Provide additional landscaping and urban design treatment within the major downtown hamlet centers, particularly Pearl River; improve the visual character of Orangeburg Road between Route 303 and the Palisades Parkway with a tree planting and design improvement program to identify this area as a major center in Town.
11. Create a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC), similar to the Conservation Advisory Committee that existed in the Town in the 1970s and 1980s, that would act as an advisory group to both the Planning Board and the Town Board on a variety of environmental issues.

## **B. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

In order to provide decent housing for present and future residents, the Town will:

1. Maintain and enhance the quality of life that exists in various neighborhoods throughout the Town, including the preservation of environmental features and open space, provision of quality community facilities and services, promotion of high quality site and architectural design, and the separation and buffering of uses considered incompatible with residential neighborhoods.
2. Continue to permit a broad range of housing types, densities, and locations that provide choices for both existing and future residents. Encourage higher residential densities in and around the Town's hamlet centers, as recommended herein and in the Rockland County: River to Ridge Comprehensive Plan. Work with the Town school districts on rezoning to minimize impacts based on increases in residential units that generate large numbers of school-age children.
3. Provide updated zoning regulations that will help to facilitate the development of a variety of housing options for an increasing senior population, including independent living, congregate and assisted living, nursing homes, and life care communities, with pricing options that meet the varied financial needs of the elderly population.
4. Evaluate and pursue opportunities for affordable housing, particularly starter housing, for public sector employees, as well as volunteers who serve the Town of Orangetown.

5. Consider the use of non-traditional zoning techniques on selected properties, such as the Rockland Psychiatric Center, where such zoning is designed to achieve desired residential and open space objectives; this could include cluster zoning, planned unit development, and incentive zoning, among other techniques.



6. Conserve the Town's sound housing stock through the enforcement of all codes and through the use of housing rehabilitation programs, where applicable, to help upgrade housing for senior citizens, handicapped persons, and other limited income persons.

**C. COMMERCIAL, OFFICE, AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

In order to provide local employment opportunities, necessary tax rates, and a broad array of services for community residents, the Town will:

1. Select geographic areas for economic activity that are suitable for commercial, office, and industrial development in terms of location, access, and environmental constraints, making certain that sites avoid conflicts with nearby uses and residential neighborhoods.
2. Provide and/or require landscaped screening areas to buffer commercial uses that

exist along major roadways and that are adjacent to residential developments, and ensure that commercial building designs, facades, and signage are properly planned to maintain and improve the overall aesthetic quality of the Town.

3. Upgrade local business areas within existing hamlet centers, including Pearl River, Blauvelt, Sparkill, Tappan, and Orangeburg, with appropriate streetscape, parking, landscaping, signage, and utility improvements, and through preservation of historic properties, rehabilitation of existing structures, and marketing for new uses, with funding for these improvements provided through a combination of public and private sector sources.
4. Control strip commercial development on Route 303 and North Middletown Road through more restrictive zoning and lot and bulk revisions, including additional requirements for landscaping along the right-of-way.
5. Maintain the unique open space character of the Veteran's Memorial Drive corridor, which enhances its mixture of recreational, business, and residential uses.



*Blue Hill Plaza*

6. Encourage new business and industrial development (particularly uses that generate significant tax rates and jobs), and the expansion of existing business opportunities at sites zoned for such uses, by

working with State and County economic development agencies, local real estate interests, local colleges, and others in order to provide pertinent information that would help attract desired business activity, and by updating zoning regulations to meet contemporary standards and encourage new growth. A key element necessary to attract new economic development relates to homestead/non-homestead tax policies, which currently favor residential uses over business uses.

7. Pursue opportunities for increased tourism by building upon the natural resources and historic character of the Town; promote the development of bed and breakfast establishments in designated areas through appropriate zoning techniques.

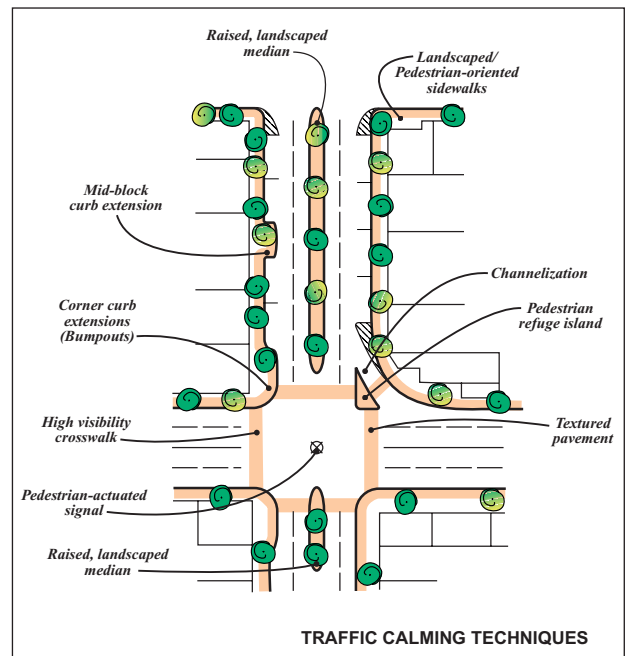
**D. TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

In order to support residential and commercial development while balancing environmental preservation, the Town will:

1. Work closely with the New York State Department of Transportation to improve the safety, traffic-carrying capacity, and aesthetics of Route 303 from the Town of Clarkstown on the north to the New Jersey State line on the south, as proposed in the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study; make certain that any improvements to Route 303 address different segments of the roadway in a distinct manner and account for open space and environmental issues, including the effects of the roadway on the Sparkill Creek.
2. Continue to maintain the high-quality existing road network, and develop a Town-wide program designed to improve existing roads and intersections with said improvements undertaken by appropriate governmental entities (i.e., State, County, Town) and by private developers, where such improve-

ments are necessary to mitigate the impact of site-specific developments as identified through the environmental review process.

3. Provide sidewalks and promote traffic-calming measures in hamlet centers to enhance pedestrian safety.



4. Maximize parking opportunities and provide additional parking in hamlets like Pearl River to serve existing business activity and railroad commuters; work with the County in their efforts to promote Park and Ride lots to reduce the number of vehicles on major commuter roads.
5. Monitor the progress of plans and environmental studies related to the upgrading or replacement of the Tappan Zee Bridge, and the effects of such action on the Town (including the incorporated Villages of Nyack, South Nyack, and Grand View).
6. Work with Rockland County officials in their efforts to have passenger service provided on the West Shore Railroad, and if this is achieved, pursue the development of a railroad station to the south of the Orangeburg

Road bridge, where land use, access, and environmental issues, such as noise, would be properly addressed.

7. Maintain the high quality utility systems that serve existing development, including sanitary sewage and water supply facilities, and monitor the conditions of water pressure, water supply, and water quality.
8. Provide increased stormwater protection for existing streams, including Sparkill Creek, addressing both existing and future erosion and sediment control, flooding issues, and the enhancement of the natural habitat for flora and fauna. Ensure that new development properly protects wetlands and waterbodies, utilizing appropriate best management practices and upgrading erosion, stormwater, sanitary sewage, and water supply facilities, where necessary, to mitigate site-specific impacts identified through the environmental review process. Work with the Rockland County Drainage Agency to address flooding issues and maintain the integrity of the Town's streams and waterbodies.
9. Work with surrounding communities to ensure that major development projects adjacent to the Town do not impair the Town's road and infrastructure systems, including its water resources; upon an assessment of the development's level of impact, the Town should act accordingly and address any potential issues.

10. Wherever possible, pursue opportunities to place overhead wires behind stores (as in Pearl River) or underground in those instances where outside funding sources are available.
11. Identify and preserve roads of historic significance, where possible. Utilize the Town's Historic Roads program more extensively, where practical.

**E. COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

To maintain an adequate level of service, while concurrently planning for the projected growth in the Town's senior population, an increased level of ethnic and racial diversity, and the changes in service that these factors could generate, the Town will:

1. Continue to increase the level of services for a growing senior population.
2. Increase cooperation and foster working relationships between area colleges and the Town; encourage partnerships between the colleges, public school districts, and libraries; pursue programs that could generate special events and/or programs that could be beneficial to Orangetown as a whole.
3. Work with local fire districts and other volunteer organizations to continue to provide high quality services; help monitor or recruit volunteers through the provision of affordable housing opportunities.



*Existing conditions in Sparkill*



*Conditions with improved signage and without overhead wires*



4. Support the efforts of the local police officers to ensure traffic safety through the improvement of roads and intersections, and the construction of additional sidewalks.
5. Continue to identify and preserve historic buildings and other historic resources in designated historic districts and throughout the Town; require that any public improvements within designated historic districts are sensitive to the character of the district; work with the County in its efforts to develop a County-wide historic trail system.



*Tappan Reformed Church, a historic landmark*

6. Promote the arts and cultural activity in Orangetown at local schools, colleges, and, if possible, as part of the reuse of the Rockland Psychiatric Center.
7. Acquire and develop sites for additional indoor recreation for the Town as a whole, possibly as part of the reuse of the Rockland Psychiatric Center.

# *Comprehensive Plan Proposals*



### III. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROPOSALS

By examining Orangetown's existing conditions related to land use, zoning, socioeconomic factors, infrastructure, the environment, open space and recreation, and community facilities, and by integrating this information with the Goals and Objectives chapter, Comprehensive Plan proposals have been formulated. While the goals and objectives delineated earlier are more general and applicable on a Town-wide basis and reflect the subjects outlined in the existing conditions chapter, the proposals outlined below reflect more specific prescriptions for areas within Orangetown that require more consideration, as categories unto themselves. These areas include a Town-wide Land Use Plan and Functional Plans for Open Space and Environmental Protection, Community Facilities, and Transportation and Infrastructure.

#### A. THE LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan is comprised of broad categories intended to guide future land use and development throughout the Town (See Exhibit 10, Land Use Plan). The Land Use Plan will also provide a basis for recommended zoning map changes. This chapter provides basic information for each of the fourteen proposed land use categories, which are based on existing land uses and anticipated land use trends within the Town. While some of these land use categories already exist within the Town, others are new categories intended to guide future land use and development while concurrently preserving open space.

The plan includes three categories of residential development, two categories of open space, one category of development in an open space setting, five categories of commercial development, an office/industrial/related category, an institutional/quasi-public category, and a public parkway category.

#### *Residential*

The **Very Low Density Residential** land use category would encompass the most environmentally sensitive segments of Orangetown, including the eastern portion of Town, adjacent to and within the Clausland Mountain park areas and the Hackensack riverway area. The hamlet of Palisades and the Kaufmann Campgrounds (should development occur in the future) would also be made up almost entirely of this land use. Minimum lot sizes in the area would be 1 to 2 acres, however, clustering would be encouraged to preserve open space. Possible regulations of development of steep slopes in excess of 25% along ridge lines or within wetlands would also be utilized. The existing R-40 and R-80 Zoning Districts are included within this land use category.

**Low Density Residential** is the predominant land use currently found throughout the Town. There are large areas of this low density residential use in each of the hamlets, with the exception of the hamlet of Palisades. With minimum lot sizes of 15,000 to 22,000 square feet, it is anticipated that this land use will continue to hold the largest amount of land in Town in the future. Low density residential has been, and will continue to be, the type and intensity of development that characterizes most of Orangetown, with new housing developed mostly on an infill basis. The R-15 and R-22 Districts are within this category.

**Medium Density Residential** is less prevalent than low density residential, and would be concentrated mainly in or near the Town's defined hamlet centers. Pearl River would have the largest area of medium density residential, encompassing areas within the environs of the downtown area. There would be smaller areas in Orangeburg and Sparkill. Residential develop-

ment in this category would have a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, roughly four dwelling units per acre. The RG and Multi-family Zoning Districts, at 4.0 to 6.0 units per acre, fall under this category, possibly with incentives for affordable units. The Masonic Lodge site and the Army surplus lands on Western Highway north of Tappan, among other parcels, could potentially benefit from this type of land use.

### ***Open Space***

The **Public Park/Open Space** category would be found throughout the Town, at the location of every existing and proposed public park and open space area. The largest amount of public open space is concentrated in the eastern part of Town, at or near the State and County parks. These areas are very large, and are used by not only the entire Town, but by surrounding communities and visitors as well. The public parks in the rest of Town are both large and small; they are vital to the smaller neighborhoods and the community as a whole, offering both active and passive recreation. The largest existing Town park and the proposed park and open space areas at the Rockland Psychiatric Center are centrally located within the Town, adjacent to the Hackensack riverway.

**Private Recreation/Open Space** would be found throughout Town, at the Hackensack riverway (including Blue Hill Golf Course, Kaufmann Campgrounds, and Manhattan Woods Golf Course), and in Blauvelt, Orangeburg, Sparkill, and Tappan. This category would be less prevalent than the public open space categories, which provide park space that can be enjoyed by the entire Town.

### ***Development in an Open Space Setting***

The **Development in an Open Space Setting** category would be found sparingly throughout Town on some of the Town's larger vacant or underutilized parcels. This land use category would be designed to accommodate a type and

level of development that would be determined by the Town Board, along with preservation of significant open space areas on the same parcel. Permitted uses, along with open space, might include senior housing, low density office, or research and development-type uses that benefit from an open space or campus-like environment. Large portions of the RPC property would be one example of an area that could be appropriate for such an approach.

The Town's implementation of this Development in an Open Space Setting category could be based on existing zoning tools, including clustering, or new tools, such as Planned Unit Development (PUD). Planned Unit Development would be a useful tool in preserving open space while still encouraging development, possibly with incentives for specified types of uses. A decision on the potential adoption of PUD zoning will be made as part of an update of the entire Town Zoning Ordinance, when specific standards and controls are proposed.

### ***Commercial***

The **Downtown Area** category is made up of only one area in Orangetown, downtown Pearl River, because of the amenities that make it most like a traditional downtown: access to rail, small shops, walkability, and a mix of commercial, service and residential uses. Along with other efforts to upgrade the area, it is anticipated that this designation, and the mixed-use land use guidelines that accompany it, would permit downtown Pearl River to thrive, and would allow economic development and redevelopment to occur. The existing CS zoning in Pearl River could be broadened to encourage additional development in this locale.

**Commercial Centers** and **Hamlet Centers** would be located in Orangeburg, Blauvelt, Sparkill, and Tappan. The areas within these designations are smaller than the downtown designation mentioned above, and are meant to be different from a downtown: while they will

not attract large numbers of visitors for a variety of purposes (like a downtown might), some amenities would exist that would attract those in close proximity. The exception to this is Tappan, which has historical value, and therefore attracts a number of visitors. The hamlet centers are within CS Districts. However, the density of development and the siting of buildings at the sidewalk's edge in Tappan and Sparkill differ from the more suburban development pattern in Orangeburg and Blauvelt, and future zoning text amendments should be designed to reflect this difference.

The **Mixed-Use Corridor** and **Commercial/Mixed-Use Area** categories would be found along certain designated portions of Route 303 in Blauvelt, Orangeburg and Tappan, in addition to two areas in Pearl River along North Middletown Road and along the eastern portion of Central Avenue. This designation would amend existing CS and CC zoning controls with new regulations designed to limit strip commercial development by permitting a mix of development options, including multi-family housing, retail and service. Additional lot and bulk regulations would be included, responding to the location of these areas along major roadways.

The **Other Commercial** category would encompass other existing commercial properties in Orangetown. The plan would discourage expansion within or around these areas in an attempt to concentrate commercial uses in other designated centers and districts. Included with the Other Commercial district are existing CC-zoned areas at the fringe of the downtown area in Pearl River, both along Central Avenue and Franklin Street, where commercial development should be permitted, consistent with existing conditions. However, development of these areas should not be allowed to detract from Pearl River's downtown area, where a comprehensive revitalization program is underway.

**Office/Industrial/Related** would be distributed throughout the Town in relatively large blocks; many of these areas are currently designated

in this way, and are anticipated to remain so. The Town's office and industrial parks (including Rockland Corporate Park, Blue Hill Plaza, Bradley Corporate Park, and Wyeth Ayerst) and sections of Route 303 make up this category, which includes LI, LO, and LIO Districts. Although large segments of Route 303 are zoned LI, including areas adjacent to the Palisades Interstate Parkway interchange, more upscale uses, rather than uses permitted in the LI Zone, would be more appropriate at this location, if possible, including office, research and development, and hotel and conference center-type uses.

This category also includes the area along Veterans Memorial Highway, in the vicinity of the Pearl River Hilton, where a mixture of uses, including senior housing and vacant land, is currently zoned OP. Future development in this area could include office uses or other compatible land uses in an open space setting.

The **Institutional/Quasi-Public** designation includes schools, colleges and universities, and other categories. This designation is found throughout Orangetown, and is expected to remain dispersed throughout the Town in the future.

The **Public Parkway** designation encompasses the Palisades Interstate Parkway in its entirety.

## B. FUNCTIONAL PLANS

In addition to the Townwide Land Use Plan described above, Functional Plans that focus on planning policies and issues identified for particular categories within the Town's land uses are also necessary components of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The Functional Plans for Open Space and Environmental Protection, Community Facilities, and Transportation and Infrastructure are outlined below.

### *Open Space and Environmental Protection*

With a decreasing amount of developable land, the Town must be cautious when approving

development and must continue to pursue opportunities for open space acquisition. Since the Town has a clear need for additional active and passive open space that has not yet been satisfied, thresholds to limit open space acquisition cannot be quantified. It is a stated objective of the Town of Orangetown to balance open space and environmental preservation with development and redevelopment. Open Space and Environmental Protection Plans are integral components for future land use in Orangetown.



*Sparkill Creek adjacent to Route 303*

## 1. Open Space

The broad policy of the Town of Orangetown on open space is to preserve open areas and to protect the environment, the Town's historical legacy, and the Town's natural beauty. The goal of the Town is to acquire additional open space to fulfill the needs of residents while balancing development and preservation objectives. This can be accomplished through connection with other open spaces such as the Town's two open space corridors or the Rail-Trail; through safeguarding environmentally sensitive resources such as ridgelines, hilltops and escarpments, and limiting sprawl; through the protection and enhancement of local historic and cultural places; through the protection and enhancement of the lakes, river, and streams in the Town; by cooperating

with the school districts, libraries, community organizations, and other municipalities; and through redevelopment of larger parcels, such as the Rockland Psychiatric Center property or the Mercedes site, among others.<sup>37</sup>

It is recommended that additional acquisition of open space should focus on the Town's two open space corridors, the Clausland Mountain corridor and the Lake Tappan-Hackensack riverway, while acquisition of active indoor and outdoor recreation facilities should focus on the land at the Rockland Psychiatric Center site.

The provision of open space in built-up hamlet areas is also vital, providing visual relief, beautification, and active and passive recreation. Although such areas are much smaller in size than the open space areas in the Lake Tappan-Hackensack riverway area or in the Clausland Mountain area, their importance to the quality of life in the hamlet areas cannot be underestimated.



*A simple monument enhances an open space area in Tappan*

In order to preserve remaining land from future development, the Town has taken a proactive stance regarding the purchase of open land, often buying the land itself, with monetary assistance from the State. This was recently done for two sites on Clausland Mountain - the Blake property and a site adjacent to the Nike base property - and is underway for the Collins property on Clausland Mountain.

<sup>37</sup> Information from "The Town of Orangetown Open Space Acquisition Guidelines" prepared by the Orangetown Park Development Advisory Committee and the Orangetown Open Space Ad Hoc Committee, April 2000.

So that the Town can ensure an adequate and satisfactory amount of all types of open space for the future, the Town should continue to acquire sites for both open space and recreational purposes. This would include land for passive recreation and active recreation, including soccer, baseball, swimming, and other uses that could be used by the Town, its school districts, and local clubs and organizations, such as the Little League. The Town should also work to acquire sites or facilitate development for additional indoor recreation facilities. The Town should make certain that such acquisition continue to be supported by both New York State and Rockland County agencies.



*A baseball field at Veterans Memorial Park.*

In 2000, the Orangetown Park Development Advisory Committee (OPDAC) recommended open space parcels in the Town for preservation in the Town of Orangetown Open Space Report. It is important to note that this inventory only included parcels over two acres in size which were coded as vacant by the Town Assessor. The inventory was divided into protected open space and transitory open space. Protected open space, as defined by OPDAC, is land that is permanently protected by dedication as parkland or open space. Transitory open space is land which is an important component of open space in the community but is not permanently protected; this could include private golf courses, reservoirs, and private campgrounds, among others. OPDAC's proposed open space acquisition and protection list is shown on Table III-1.

In addition, there are other parcels which could be acquired by the Town that are of a smaller size. Some of these smaller parcels could likely be within smaller neighborhoods and subdivisions. As recommended by the Town's Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, the Town Code regulations regarding land reserved for recreation purposes in subdivisions needs to be updated in order to reflect the increasingly suburban character of the Town, and to provide a more accurate figure for the percentage and minimum amount of land reserved. Such updating could enable the Town to acquire additional parcels of open space.

Various funding sources, borrowing, the creation of new revenue streams, and the utilization of interest income are some of the techniques the Town could implement to raise funds for acquisition. In addition to additional acquisitions, the Town should also maintain and continually upgrade the condition of its existing park facilities and recreational programs. This could include Town-owned indoor facilities for youth and seniors. Recreation fees, user fees, Town funds, and outside grants should be used to support such programs.

OPDAC and the Town Board clearly recognize the opportunities for major open space acquisition and recreational facility development at the Rockland Psychiatric Center site. The Town has commissioned several studies of the property, which call for both indoor and outdoor facilities. The Town entered into a contract with the State of New York to purchase 348 acres, which was subsequently approved by Town residents in a referendum. Of the 348 acres to be purchased by the Town, 216 acres must be set aside for passive and active recreation; the balance may be used for tax-generating private development, such as senior housing or a research and development park. The Town will develop a pool facility and will make land available to private developers to build private recreation facilities.

**Table III-1  
OPDAC Open Space Recommendations** <sup>38</sup>

Parcel	Location	Protected or Transitory
65.16-1-1 (partial), 65.15-1-11, and 65.15-1-12	3 contiguous parcels (including the Blake property) encompassing approx. 40-50 acres off Bradley Hill Road in Blauvelt	Protected
74.16-1-22	Encompassing approx. 3.76 acres, this parcel is off Queens Court in Sparkill and overlooks Route 340 and Thorpe Village	Protected
77.20-1-1 and 77.15-1-31	Encompassing approx. 21 acres and a portion of Sparkill Creek, these parcels are located off Oak Tree Road in Tappan	Protected
68.11-3-39, 68.11-3-40, 68.16-1-1, and 68.12-1-14	These parcels total approx. 15 acres and border Route 304 in Pearl River and buffer residential uses near Railroad Avenue	Protected
74.09-2-40	Approx. 6 acres, this parcel is in Orangeburg and is contiguous to Independence Park	Protected
77.11-3-4	This parcel is approx. ½ acre, contains an abandoned service station, and is next to Tappan Memorial Park	Protected
77.15-3-20	Approx. 2/3 acre, this parcel is adjacent to the southern terminus of the Rail-Trail	Protected
69.20-2-28 and 69.20-2-29 (western portions)	Approx. 12 acres in size, these parcels are located off Van Wyck Road in Blauvelt; these parcels also border an abandoned section of rail line (parcel 69.20-2-76) which could be used as a rail-trail in the future	Protected
65.15-1-1	Approx. 17 acres, this site is on the Orangetown/Clarkstown border and is the site where dinosaur tracks were located	Protected
73.20-1-23	Approx. 20 acres in size, and is located off Blaisdell Road in Orangeburg	Transitory
73.11-1-2 and others	This is the land at the Rockland Psychiatric Center, over 330 acres of which is proposed to be sold by the State	Transitory
77.12-1-44 and 77.12-1-45	Located off Route 340 in Sparkill, approx. 38 acres in size, contain a portion of Sparkill Creek, and are adjacent to Town-owned land to the NE and the Rail-Trail to the West	Transitory
77.06-3-13 and 77.06-3-23	2 parcels totaling over 17 acres currently owned by the German Masonic Home and includes land leased for the Town's summer camp program	Transitory
69.14-1-28	Approx. 104 acres, this area contains the Kaufmann Campgrounds and Manhattan Woods Golf Course, and a portion of the Naurashaun Brook	Transitory
68.07-2-1 and 68.12-3-21	2 parcels currently owned by American Home Products total almost 15 acres, and separate industrial uses from residential uses	Transitory
73.10-1-4 and 73.10-1-5	Located off Blue Hill Road West, this is the Mercedes site, which totals nearly 7 acres	Transitory
68.20-2-4	Located on Central Avenue in Pearl River, Central Avenue Field totals nearly 5 acres which is used as a community play area/open space, and is owned by the Pearl River School District	Transitory

<sup>38</sup> Town of Orangetown Open Space Report, OPDAC, March 2000.



The Town should work with United Water Resources to improve access to Lake Tappan for both passive and active recreation. Also, the Town should work with the Village of Piermont and the other incorporated villages to facilitate access to the Hudson River for boating and other recreational opportunities for the unincorporated parts of Orangetown.

The walking and biking trails in Orangetown should be improved and expanded to provide connections between major open space areas and hamlet centers. In addition, the Town should seek to have designated trails provided, such as the Rail-Trail, to help reduce bicycle traffic along major roadways. The trail connection to Piermont provides an important linkage in the system, connecting the Hudson River villages with the Town's hamlet centers. In addition, the Town recognizes that the Long Path, considered to have historical significance, must be preserved, and therefore this Plan suggests the implementation of an open space corridor that would run the length of the Long Path in Orangetown.

Particular approaches for open space and recreation for each hamlet area are presented below, and in Section IV, Area Studies.

**Pearl River**

Additional urban design and landscaping improvements need to be implemented along Central Avenue, North Middletown Road, and at the small park adjacent to the railroad station



*The park and railroad station in downtown Pearl River*

in the hamlet center. Also, the nearby Lake Tappan-Hackensack riverway corridor should be both maintained and enhanced, where practicable, possibly through innovative zoning techniques that would preserve significant amounts of open space while still allowing for development.

**Orangeburg**

The landscaping and urban design features along Orangeburg Road should be improved, and the lawn area at Town Hall should be redesigned as a passive park with seating to provide a more appropriate setting for the newly-built September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial. Sparkill Creek should be recognized as an open space asset, and should be incorporated into the Town's open space network, where practicable.



*The lawn at Town Hall*

**Blauvelt**

The completion of the Lion's Club park will provide a park area in the hamlet center. Urban design and landscaping improvements should also be implemented for the hamlet center. Additionally, the Town should maintain the Rail-Trail and should investigate its enhancement and expansion, where funding and space are sufficient.

**Sparkill/Tappan/Palisades**

The Town should work with the Village of Piermont to gain additional access to the Hudson River. Both the Rail-Trail and Sparkill

Creek should also be maintained and enhanced in this area of Town, where possible. Further, the Town should investigate the potential of linking the Rail-Trail with the State, County, and Town park corridor that runs along the eastern edge of the Town. Urban design and landscaping improvements should also be implemented for these hamlet areas.

In addition to open space, an Environmental Protection Plan is also an integral component for future land use in Orangetown. This is detailed below.

## 2. Environmental Protection

Related and parallel to open space acquisition is the issue of environmental protection. Generally, the Town has two major areas that require concerted open space and environmental protection: the Lake Tappan-Hackensack riverway and the Clausland Mountain corridor. The Town should limit development on steep slopes and wetlands, and along ridge lines and waterbodies. This constraint on development could be achieved through land acquisition, and zoning and land planning techniques, including clustering. The Town should encourage cluster development and flexibility in subdivision design and site planning where significant environmental features exist.

When drafting environmental regulations, the Town should establish a minimum area for the wetlands, waterbodies, and steep slopes that it regulates. Also, as part of this environmental protection legislation, the Town should develop stormwater management policies addressing both the quality and quantity of stormwater and the non-point source impacts associated with new development.

Wetlands and waterbodies should be protected through local regulations that limit development, generally with a 100-foot buffer area adjacent to the wetlands and waterbodies. Regulations should address Sparkill Creek, other streams, and locally defined wetland areas. It is also

important to insure that proposed development proximate to these areas is carefully examined prior to development approvals, and that mitigation measures would be provided to protect any environmentally-sensitive areas.

It is recommended that the Town work with the Rockland County Drainage Agency to address flooding issues and maintain the integrity of the Town's streams and waterbodies. In addition, this Plan recommends the creation of a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC), similar to the Conservation Advisory Committee which existed in the Town in the 1970s and in the 1980s, which, in its capacity, would be an advisory group to both the Planning Board and the Town Board on a number of environmental issues. Further, the creation of drainage districts for each of the Town's drainage areas (including Sparkill Creek, Hackensack Creek, Cherry Brook, Muddy Creek, and Pascack Brook) is also suggested in conjunction with addressing existing flooding as well as the future effects of new development.

Sparkill Creek and its tributaries, in addition to the other waterbodies throughout the Town, deserve particular consideration. It is a goal of the Town of Orangetown to protect the ecological environment and water quality within the Sparkill Creek watershed. The Town should utilize the recommendations of both the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study and this Comprehensive Plan in order to limit further development directly adjacent to the Creek,



*Sparkill Creek as it runs through Tappan*

and to require existing development along the Creek to mitigate any adverse environmental impacts that may have occurred in the past. It is also suggested that Sparkill Creek and its tributaries have the potential to become a designated Critical Environmental Area (CEA), which could further protect this resource.

This Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town should not allow any development on slopes in excess of 35% unless proper mitigation measures are proposed, including all reasonable efforts to redesign the developments to avoid such slopes. Any development on slopes of 20% or greater should strive to utilize the natural terrain, particularly for roads and driveways, thus minimizing possibilities for erosion. Measures to control soil erosion during construction should continue to be required as part of site plan or subdivision plan approval.

The visual impacts of development in mountainous terrain should be controlled through regulations designed to minimize development on hilltops and ridgelines, which would otherwise interrupt the natural tree line that forms the attractive backdrop for large segments of the eastern portion of Town.

### **Community Facilities**

The Town's Community Facilities Plan will provide guidelines to maintain adequate levels of service provision with regard to public services, education, and various other social and community services, including library and senior services.

### **Locational Criteria**

The criteria for locating new community facilities throughout the Town in the future would be based on service areas and other factors to the extent practicable, given the built-up nature of the Town. It would, however, be advantageous to have social and community services, including senior services, in every hamlet area, providing that both space and funding

is sufficient over time. Some of these needs, including a meeting room and community center for seniors and youth, is anticipated to be addressed at the Rockland Psychiatric Center on the banks of Lake Tappan. The summary below outlines the existing community facilities that are found in the hamlets.

### **Pearl River**

As part of the Pearl River Union Free School District and the Nanuet Union Free School District, there are eight schools in Pearl River. The Pearl River Public Library is also located here. A police booth is located in the hamlet, and there are two fire companies. There are a number of park areas as well, including Muddy Creek, Braunsdorf Park, Cherry Brook Park, Pascack Park, Borst Gardens, and Pilgrim Court, as well as fields and other areas owned by the school district. For senior citizens, Pearl River has the Pearl River Senior Center, as well as a senior citizen club, which unlike the senior center, does not have a permanent location.



*The fire station in downtown Pearl River*

Although there are a number of open space areas, additional recreation space for both indoor and outdoor uses is still needed. Further, additional senior centers or clubs may be needed in the future, since Pearl River is the largest hamlet in the Town and an increase in the senior citizen population is anticipated.

### **Orangeburg**

As part of the South Orangetown Central School District, there are three schools in the

hamlet of Orangeburg, and there are a number of colleges in this hamlet as well. The hamlet also has its own library branch, the Orangeburg Library. The Town of Orangetown Police Headquarters is located in Orangeburg at Town Hall, and there are two fire companies in the hamlet as well. Town open space includes the Blue Hill Golf Course, Shanks Memorial, Greenbush Center, and Veteran's Memorial Park, the largest Town park. Orangeburg has one senior citizens club.

While there is a senior citizens club in Orangeburg, there is no senior center in Orangeburg, and the club does not have a permanent location. Also, even though this hamlet houses the largest Town park, additional space for both indoor and outdoor recreation is still needed. This could potentially be achieved at the Rockland Psychiatric Center property.

### **Blauvelt**

As part of the South Orangetown Central School District, Blauvelt has two schools. Blauvelt has its own library branch in the hamlet center, the Blauvelt Free Library. Also in the hamlet center is the one fire company serving the hamlet. Open space includes Schyuler Park, Tackamack Park, and Elliott Park. There is also one senior citizens club in Blauvelt.



*The Blauvelt Library, which is in a historic building*

A senior center would be preferable for this hamlet, since there is currently only a senior club, which does not have a permanent space. And even though there is Town open space in Blauvelt, additional space for both indoor and outdoor recreation is still needed.

### **Sparkill/Tappan/Palisades**

As part of the South Orangetown Central School District and the Pearl River Union Free School District, there are two schools in this area, and there are colleges in this area as well. There are also two library branches, the Tappan Library and the Palisades Free Library. There are two fire companies serving this area. Open space in this area includes Independence Park, Schaefer Park, Sparkill Memorial Park, Sparkill Skating Pond, Stoughton Park, Tappan Memorial Park, and Tappan Park. Thorpe Senior Center and senior citizen clubs serve the needs of the area's senior citizens.

Sparkill does not have a library branch of its own. There are no senior services in Palisades. Sparkill and Tappan have senior citizen clubs, but do not have permanent locations for them. There are no local parks in Palisades. Space for both indoor and outdoor recreation is still needed.

As can be seen from the above summary, certain services are stronger in some hamlets than in others. However, increased and continued cooperation between the Town's school districts, libraries, and Town Parks Department could potentially begin to alleviate some of the Town's needs for space for both indoor and outdoor recreation. In addition, both active and passive recreation is anticipated to be achieved on the RPC property.

The Community Facilities Functional Plan is divided into three general categories of recommendation:

## 1. Public Service

Various fire companies and one of the Town's ambulance corps have stated a need for volunteers. In addition, the Director of the Rockland County Emergency Services Department has expressed concern regarding the ability of volunteers in Orangetown and elsewhere to continue to live in their respective communities given current housing costs. Based upon this need, the Town should assist these organizations in either starting or continuing award and incentive programs in order to attract volunteers. Such programs could include housing opportunities, tax incentives, and other benefits programs (i.e., medical and dental benefits, credit unions, labor union membership, etc.).

A number of Town departments have expressed a need for additional space, including the Office of Building, Zoning, Planning Administration and Enforcement, the Department of Environmental Management and Engineering, the Bureau of Fire Protection, and the Police Department.

In conjunction with its other economic and fiscal issues, the Town should consider such space needs, including parking issues, through either publicly-owned buildings or in contract with private owners, in order to accommodate the various community providers that request additional space. Also included in this group could be the school districts and colleges and universities, libraries, and senior groups.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan process, McLaren Engineering performed a preliminary investigation of the Town Hall building in order to identify the building's potential for expansion and consolidation of the Town's various departments that are currently located in outlying buildings throughout the Town. It was determined that if the basement is used and the building is more efficiently utilized, the existing Town Hall building has adequate space to house those that are currently working there as well as those that the Town may wish to relocate there in

order to consolidate Town activities. However, other options include renovation of the existing building, and construction of a new building. Further study (i.e., a programming study) would be necessary before any action is taken.

According to the Orangetown Police Department, one of the most pressing issues for the Town is traffic mitigation and safety. The Route 303 corridor currently has the highest accident rate of all roads in Orangetown. While the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study (discussed in the next chapter) is addressing this, along with other issues, the Town should provide the Police Department with the necessary means to improve traffic safety on all of the Town's roads. This would include increased enforcement of traffic laws and other programs, like traffic calming and roadway design techniques, for increased traffic safety.

## 2. Education

For the Town's four public school districts, large enrollments in the recent past, the potential for still-increasing enrollments in the future, and the subsequent space problems of these enrollments are the most compelling issues. This problem with space encompasses both classroom space and recreational space. To this end, the Town should work to encourage multi-family and senior housing while limiting single-family housing, since single-family homes have a larger impact upon school systems. Also, the Town should work with the school districts on any proposed rezonings to minimize impacts based on increases in residential units that generate large numbers of school-age children. Further, the Town should also work toward acquiring additional open space for the Town as a whole, which could be used by the school districts to supplement their recreation needs.

It has been posited that the Town could benefit from a closer relationship with the colleges and university satellites within its borders. These schools have athletic facilities and additional

space that could provide or enhance community facility resources within the Town. Cooperation with regard to educational programs and the use of various facilities should be pursued.



*St. Thomas Aquinas College in Sparkill*

### 3. Other Services

The Town should also encourage the schools and Town library system to work more closely, pooling both space and resources. This would be beneficial to all involved.

While the Town currently has eight senior citizen clubs (with two of those in incorporated villages) and three senior centers (with one of those being within an incorporated village), the demographic trends projecting increases in the senior population point to a future need for additional services. This could include additional facilities, including Town-owned indoor recreation facilities, and an increase in the types and number of recreation programs for senior citizens, some of which could involve the school districts and the library system.

## ***Transportation and Infrastructure***

### 1. Transportation

The well-defined transportation network that serves Orangetown and the surrounding communities and its potential for improvement is one subject of the Transportation Plan. The Route 303 Sustainable Development Study recommends a comprehensive upgrading of the roadway to improve the traffic safety, intersection capacity, and aesthetics. This

includes safety and aesthetic improvements to the roadway itself, improved signalization, and a median divider. The adopted Route 303 Corridor Overlay District is anticipated to be a means to balance land use and traffic concerns. Combined with the overlay district regulations, other techniques recommended to achieve the goal of a safer, more aesthetically-pleasing street include increased law enforcement, modification of approval procedures, compatibility criteria, lot, bulk, and setback provisions, parking requirements, and landscaping and buffering requirements. Architectural design guidelines, signage, and lighting regulations are recommended for aesthetic purposes. A discussion of the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study can be found in Chapter IV of this Plan.

In order to effect change throughout the balance of the Town's system of roads, the Transportation Plan seeks to encourage transportation enhancements and improvements with outside funding, where possible.

Most road improvements in Orangetown are funded through a regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which establishes priorities on an area-wide basis. Developed with extensive County input, the TIP currently calls for the following road system improvements for Orangetown in the short-term future (through September 2004): (1) construction of a Palisades Interstate Parkway (PIP) bikepath from the New Jersey line to Exit 10, (2) PIP landscaping from the New Jersey line to Exit 10, (3) preventative maintenance along Route 303 from the New Jersey line to the PIP, (4) reconstruction of River Road from Stevenson Street to the Tappan Zee Bridge in Grand View, (5) bridge replacement at Oak Tree Road over Sparkill Creek, (6) bridge replacement at Sickletown Road and Naurausaun (with approach reconstruction as required), and (7) bridge replacement at William Street over Sparkill Creek.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Information from the *Transportation Improvement Program* for October 1, 2001, to September 30, 2004, by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council Mid-Hudson South Transportation Coordinating Committee.

The potential replacement of the Orangeburg Road bridge and the realignment of Routes 303 and 340 has been suggested to improve traffic flow and relieve congestion at a major Route 303 intersection. The Plan recognizes this proposal and its potential benefits to the Orangeburg hamlet area.

In addition to the above, certain innovative improvements can be funded directly with Federal grants. One such applicable Federal program is the Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP), an element of the Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21). Administered by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), the TEP is designed to fund projects outside of what is usually considered for traditional transportation programs, including projects regarding the cultural, aesthetic, historic, and environmental aspects of intermodal transportation networks. Transportation Enhancement activities include, but are not limited to, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, pedestrian and bicycle safety and education activities, acquisition of scenic or historic easements and sites, scenic or historic highway programs (including tourist and welcome centers), landscaping and scenic beautification, historic preservation, rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities, conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails, control and removal of outdoor advertising, archaeological planning and research, environmental mitigation of runoff pollution and provision of wildlife connectivity, and establishment of transportation museums.<sup>40</sup>

Another innovative element of the Transportation Plan is related to traffic calming; reduction of traffic speed and increased safety along Route 303 clearly falls under the category of traffic calming. Other traffic calming techniques in Orangetown should focus on reducing vehicular

speed in residential neighborhoods and hamlet centers by giving priority to pedestrian traffic flow. Specially-designed crosswalks, expanded sidewalk areas, speed humps, and other techniques should be considered.

Mass transit (and related parking lot development in Pearl River and possibly in Orangeburg, if passenger service is restored on the West Shore Line) are integral elements of the regional transportation system. Safe bikeways and trailways are also essential elements of the system, providing a recreation resource as well as an alternative to the automobile.



*The railroad station in Pearl River*

In addition to the above, the Town should also consider a Townwide traffic study that could be used as the basis for developing a Townwide Traffic Management Plan.

## **2. Historic Roads and Historic Preservation**

Portions of Oak Tree Road, Kings Highway, Washington Spring Road, Closter Road, and Rockland Road are currently designated by the Town as historic roads. This means that the Town Board has determined that these portions of the road should be protected by reason of their antiquity as a cultural or heritage resource to the Town, County, State, and Nation. In the Town of Orangetown, any road that is within a historic district is considered a historic road.

<sup>40</sup> Information presented in this section is from "The TEA-21 Transportation Enhancements Program, General Information" pamphlet by the NYSDOT, June 2001.

The Town has enumerated Historic Road Preservation in its Town Code<sup>41</sup>, including the criteria for designation and administrative and zoning procedures. It is the intent and spirit of this local law to (a) preserve, protect, and enhance the Town's historical, architectural, aesthetic, and cultural resources, (b) foster civic pride in the Town's heritage and foster enjoyment of the scenic qualities, (c) ensure harmonious and orderly growth and neighborhood character of the districts, (d) preserve the natural environment of the road, and (e) protect and respect the properties which have received commendation for their historic importance by the State and are listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.



*The start of the Palisades Historic District along Oak Tree Road*

According to the Town Code, "Any road of historical value or aesthetic interest by reason of its antiquity as a cultural or heritage resource to the Town, the County, and State, or the Country may be classified as a historic road. Historic roads may be any specific highways, avenues, streets, or other transportation routes located within the Town which are found to contain historic qualities and lend themselves to effective preservation and interpretation and are so designated under procedures set forth in this local law."

There would be aesthetic, economic, and civic benefit to designating larger portions (or

the entire length) of these roads as historic. There are also other roads in Orangetown that are considered to have historic significance, including Sickletown Road, Middletown Road, Greenbush Road, Western Highway, and Old Mountain Road. In addition, the Rail-Trail and Long Path are also considered to have historic significance. The potential of connecting these roads and areas to the designated historic districts in Tappan and Palisades also exists and incurs its own benefits. Such preservation techniques could provide a more comprehensive understanding and appreciation for Orangetown's history, and could potentially boost tourism in the area.

Additionally, there are opportunities to connect potential historic roads and areas within Orangetown to other historic roadways, trails, and areas throughout the region. Examples include the existing Long Path and the potential recreational and cultural open space network to be known as Rockland Route 200, as proposed in the Rockland County Comprehensive Plan. If constructed, the Rockland Route 200 would encompass roadways, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, and trails, and would tie together the County's existing parks, the Long Path, bike routes, educational institutions, historic and cultural sites, and various other visitor destinations in order to provide identified activities and points of interest.<sup>42</sup>

In order for the proposed Rockland Route 200 to be fully utilized within Orangetown, it would have to acknowledge and include the designated historic areas of Tappan and Palisades, and should likely also include areas of the hamlet of Sparkill. Additionally, the Town's historic roads should also be included: Oak Tree Road and Kings Highway, among others, and other roads that the Town may designate as historic in the future, should all be tied into the network that could comprise the proposed Rockland Route 200.

<sup>41</sup> Adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Orangetown 3-22-1993 as L.L. No. 10, 1993.

<sup>42</sup> Information from *Rockland County: River to Ridge - A Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 2001.



### 3. Other Transportation Systems

The portion of the Historic Trail that runs through Orangetown should be completed and connected to the rest of the trails that run through the County so that residents of Orangetown and adjacent communities, in addition to tourists and commuters, can enjoy it fully. This can be accomplished through funding, and cooperation with the Town's various open space departments, groups, and entities (i.e., the Parks and Recreation Department, OPDAC, and the Town of Orangetown Ad Hoc Open Space Committee).

Improvement, expansion, and maintenance of the walking and bicycling trails should be pursued as an alternative to automobile transportation in Town. The trails connect various hamlet and village areas, and offer opportunities to enjoy the open space features that this Plan is seeking to enhance.

The Town should also work to both maintain and improve public transportation. This could include studying different forms of public transportation (as Rockland County is doing with its commuter alternatives, commuter bus, and paratransit vehicles, among others, which are TIP projects) and encouraging the use of public transportation through education programs, incentives, and increased routes.

In addition to efforts for obtaining funding for improvement projects, the Town should continue to maintain the highest safety standards through road quality and police enforcement of traffic regulations. Also, the Town should assist with traffic and development-related issues that affect not just the Town, but the County and the region (including the Tappan Zee Bridge study and the West Shore Railroad study).

### 4. Infrastructure

The infrastructure plan outlines broad methods for both adequately maintaining the Town's sanitary sewers, water service, and stormwater

management systems, and for improving upon these systems.

Overall, Orangetown's infrastructure for utilities, including sanitary sewer, gas and electric, water, and storm sewer, is well established and subject to Local, State, and Federal regulations. The existing systems also meet the current needs and any foreseeable future needs of the Town.

The Orangetown Wastewater Treatment Plant services Orangetown's sanitary sewerage needs. The treatment plant receives the sewage through an extensive network of sewer mains throughout the Town. The future demands on the Wastewater Treatment Plant can be met with the current facilities. Sewer service is widely available in the Town. There are, however, isolated pockets without service. Future infrastructure expansion will consist mainly of extensions of sewers to areas of development. This will be the responsibility of the developers of these properties. There is no anticipated need for large-scale construction of new facilities, since existing facilities, such as pump stations, force mains, and trunk sewers were designed with the required capacity to accommodate future development.

Water service in Orangetown is provided by three public water supplies. United Water New York (UW) and the Village of Nyack municipal system provide service for industrial, commercial, and residential customers.

Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) has its own well water supply. Future development plans for the RPC property must address whether the water supply is to remain as an independent public water supply, be shut down, or be incorporated into adjacent public water supplies. In any case, there is an existing infrastructure of wells, water mains, and interconnections with UW.

Future water supply requirements for the Town are planned on a regional, State, and

Inter-State basis. There are current facilities for inter-basin transfer of raw water and interconnections with other water utilities for finished water. The combined capacities for the region are anticipated to be adequate for both Orangetown's and the region's future anticipated needs. However, the region has recently experienced drought conditions. While such conditions are anticipated to subside, the Town has expressed concern regarding the availability of water for future development. To that end, the Town could require applicants to provide documentation from United Water stating that sufficient supply exists for the proposed development. This could be incorporated into site-specific environmental reviews.

Stormwater management is controlled by existing regulations at all levels of government. While there are County and State regulations to protect streams, there are a number of locations throughout Orangetown that have flooding problems. In general, these problems are the result of activities that took place prior to the current regulations. These problems can be associated with development within the flood zone, lack of retention/detention facilities, stream encroachment, the filling of wetlands, insufficient sizing of drainage systems and culverts, and the removal of vegetation.

Flooding has also occurred in the streams that flow from the steeply-sloped Clausland Mountain area, including areas in and around the Village of Piermont. Sparkill Creek is an important waterway in this eastern part of Town, winding its way down steep terrain and through built-up areas and wetlands.

Many of the problem areas within the Town will require individual solutions. However, in order to prevent an increase in these types of problems, the Town should maintain a strict review of development plans, review its zoning regulations in the context of steep slopes and wetlands protection, and continue proper maintenance of streams and ditch channels.

This will require implementation of new stormwater regulations that require use of Best Management Practices to control non-point source pollution and coordination between the Town and its surrounding communities, and the County as a whole, since the streams that serve the Town do not stop at municipal boundaries.

The Land Use Plan proposals and Functional Plans outlined above are intended to provide broad guidelines for future development throughout Orangetown. The next chapter analyzes particular portions of Town that require closer examination.

# *Area Studies*



## IV. AREA STUDIES

The area studies presented below are more specific investigations of designated areas in Orangetown that, due to their susceptibility to change and significant influence upon land use and development within the Town, warrant further analysis. The hamlet areas, Route 303, and the Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) are all examined below.

### A. THE HAMLET AREAS

Although the Comprehensive Plan addresses issues primarily for the unincorporated Town of Orangetown as a whole, the goals and objectives for the Town cannot be accomplished without critical analyses of each of the Town's hamlet areas<sup>43</sup>. The following section of this Plan includes profiles of the hamlets listed below, with regard to major issues, such as demographics, land use, and recreation and open space. Following these profiles are the land use and urban design plans for each hamlet. These land use plans are meant to address areas within the hamlet that are subject to change, augment positive design and land use patterns already in place, and create opportunities for improved design and land use within that hamlet.

1. Pearl River
2. Orangeburg
3. Blauvelt
4. Sparkill
5. Tappan
6. Palisades

### Pearl River

#### *Existing Conditions*

With a 2000 population of approximately 15,500 persons, Pearl River is the largest hamlet in Orangetown. It takes up a significant area on the western side of Orangetown, generally to the west of Lake Tappan and the Hackensack riverway. Pearl River is home to Blue Hill Plaza and Wyeth-Ayerst. Pearl River also has a discrete central business district with a number of both institutional and commercial uses. Residential development in Pearl River, while mostly single-family, also includes a number of small apartment buildings, residences above stores, and some two-family homes in the vicinity of the hamlet center and along North Middletown Road. Main thoroughfares in Pearl River include Route 304, Central Avenue, Middletown Road, Gilbert Avenue, and New Orangeburg Road/Veterans Memorial Drive.



*An excellent example of public signage*

With a historic, railroad station-based central business district surrounded by residential land uses, Pearl River is reminiscent of a small town. The central business district is clustered around Central Avenue, where stores and shops line

<sup>43</sup> There will not be an analysis of Upper Grand View, due to its small size and relatively few land uses. Upper Grand View is not considered to be an area unto itself in this Plan, but rather a part of the Clausland Mountain area, an area whose issues are discussed in other portions of this Plan.

both sides of the right-of-way, with their overall design being pedestrian-oriented. Mixed with the commercial uses found in the central business district is a scattering of office uses, some institutional uses (including Central Avenue Field, owned by the Pearl River Union Free School District, a fire station of the Pearl River Fire Department, and municipal parking lots), the Pascack Valley commuter railroad station, and multi-family uses.

Outside the hamlet center, commercial uses can be seen along Route 304, Main Street, Franklin Avenue, East Washington Avenue, and North Middletown Road as well. On North Middletown Road, the commercial uses mix with a variety of uses, including some multi-family uses, all the way to the Route 304 interchange and the Town's northern border. This mixed-use pattern is typical of a suburban strip, where uses rely primarily on automotive traffic, clearly in contrast to the traditional downtown area on East Central Avenue in Pearl River. However, the mixture of uses on North Middletown Road is an asset; from land use, traffic, and aesthetic perspectives, a mixed-use strip is preferable to a commercial strip.

Pearl River has both public and private open space and recreation facilities, mostly concentrated at its eastern edges near Blauvelt and Orangeburg. This includes large tracts for private recreation, including Manhattan Woods Golf Course, Kaufmann Campgrounds, and Blue Hill Golf Course. In addition, there are school fields and Town parks, including Veteran's Memorial Park, the Town's largest park. There are approximately 642 acres of open space within Pearl River.

### ***The Land Use Plan***

Some of Pearl River's large open space parcels, like Kaufmann Campgrounds and the golf courses, have the potential for change in the long-term, and so could be thought of as future potential linkages to the Hackensack riverway open space corridor in the center of Town. If

these sites were instead slated for development in the future rather than open space preservation, they would be strong candidates for a cluster pattern of development, with major portions of the sites retained as open space. If, for example, the maximum amount of development of the Kaufmann Campgrounds under existing R-80 zoning was determined to be 40 residential lots, the same maximum (i.e., 40) would apply on a cluster plan, albeit with smaller lots and large areas of open space.

Along major roadways and at gateways, such as Veterans Memorial Highway, open space is an essential element in the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to the provision of permanent open space, development on vacant land in such areas needs to be cognizant of the Town Board's commitment to open space preservation and quality design.

There is also the potential for enhancing the appearance of North Middletown Road. With its proliferation of small strip malls and small businesses, the area is more suburban than nearby Central Avenue. While it is unlikely that future infill development would significantly alter the road's appearance, it is likely that alternative signage, landscaping, and street trees would have a beneficial effect on the area's overall character. The implementation of design guidelines and strict site plan review for any future development would help accomplish aesthetic improvement along North Middletown Road. Encouraging additional residential uses along this roadway would also be beneficial, and strengthen the roadway's mixed-use character.

### **Downtown**

Since the majority of the neighborhoods in Pearl River consist of residential land use patterns that are relatively well-established, the land use plan for Pearl River concentrates mainly on the vacant and vulnerable parcels (outlined above), and the enhancement of the hamlet's downtown area (See Exhibits 11 and 12, Urban Design Strategies). It is important

that the downtown uses remain distinct from the rest of the hamlet, and do not filter into surrounding neighborhoods. This would weaken the individual nature of both the neighborhoods and the downtown. In order for downtown Pearl River to thrive, it must have a strong and distinct character, separate from the uses that surround it. Downtown Pearl River must be the focal point for the hamlet. This can be accomplished in a number of ways.

An effective way to emphasize the entry into downtown Pearl River, from a design perspective, is to give the intersections of Route 304 and Central Avenue, and Middletown Road and Central Avenue, a special design treatment, likely with signage and landscaping. The wood-carved “Pearl River” signs installed during the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan are highly attractive. Aesthetically pleasing directional signage to landmarks and facilities within the downtown area and the other hamlet centers should be provided.



Downtown Pearl River

Effective techniques to enhance the downtown character of the area could include the upgrading of storefronts and building facades, and a unified streetscape concept, including attractive sign designs throughout the downtown area, coordinated benches, and decorative and coordinated light fixtures. Brick-edged, tree lined sidewalks should be provided to enhance the

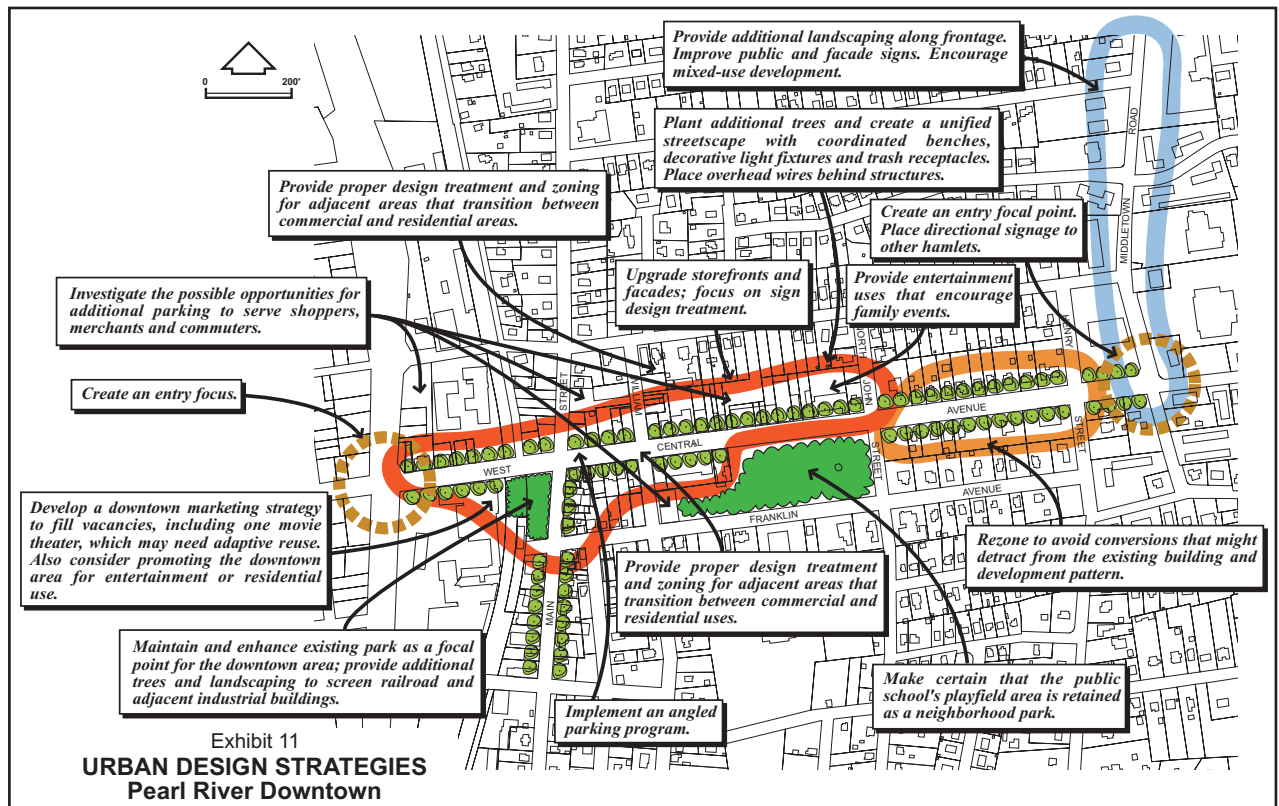




Exhibit 12  
**URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES**  
**Pearl River Downtown**

pedestrian shopping environment. This coordinated appearance could also be enhanced by the continued maintenance and improvement of the open spaces in the area. Specifically, the small park adjacent to the railroad station should have additional trees and landscaping to screen it from the station and the industrial uses nearby, and Central Avenue field, currently owned by the Pearl River school district, should be retained in perpetuity as a public park, in addition to being improved. Along Central Avenue in Pearl River, the zoning should permit outdoor dining to encourage more pedestrian ambiance along the street.

Parking in downtown Pearl River, an issue for both shoppers and commuters, should also be addressed. The Town should consider placing additional parking in the area. Some off-street lots currently exist and new facilities have been proposed, particularly for commuter parking. The angled parking planned along one side of Central Avenue could be used to increase

the on-street supply and to achieve reduced vehicular speeds, as one of several possible traffic calming techniques.

The residential blocks surrounding the downtown dually serve as links and buffers for that area. Therefore, the Town should consider modifying the zoning in those transition areas, in addition to designing the areas as separate visual entities. The rezoning for these areas would ensure that no commercial uses would filter into the residential areas, and would remain within the downtown area, thus keeping the downtown distinct, compact, and walkable. Concurrent with the urban design initiatives and the rezoning of the neighborhood transition areas, the Town should also consider rezoning the sloped area of Central Avenue, from the easternmost movie theater to the North Middletown Road intersection. This could involve a modification to the current CC or CS zoning district, or the creation of a new zoning category for this special area. Current development patterns

along this segment of roadway that leads to the heart of the downtown from North Middletown Road include a pleasant mixture of commercial and office uses in converted residential structures. Because this portion of the road serves as the link between the downtown area and more suburban uses on Middletown Road, it is important to insure that neither the downtown nor the suburban uses extend into this area. This portion of Central Avenue should serve as both a link to the different types of commercial uses, and as a buffer between them. Zoning in this area, however, permits a more intensive development pattern that, if realized through redevelopment or reuse, could adversely affect both the ambiance of the area, and the economic vitality of the nearby downtown stores and shops.

The length of Middletown Road requires separate treatment. Additional landscaping and improved signage and facades would greatly enhance the appearance of the road. The Town should also consider encouraging more mixed-use development in that area, although it is important to note that it should remain separate from the downtown area.

The urban design and rezoning initiatives mentioned above are extremely important for the strength of downtown Pearl River, and will help to protect the unique character that the area already possesses. Several urban design initiatives, including wood-carved entry signage, decorative light fixtures, relocation of overhead wires, and the creation of additional parking opportunities were initiated during preparation of the Comprehensive Plan. But in order for the downtown to continue to grow and thrive, vacant storefronts and parcels need to be addressed. Therefore, the Town, with the assistance of the Pearl River Chamber of Commerce, must develop a marketing strategy geared towards infill development and adaptive reuse of existing buildings within the downtown. Some vacant parcels may require flexible zoning to achieve a realistic reuse. One of the two vacant movie theaters has been razed for the construction

of a bank. Efforts are underway to revive the last remaining movie theater for both movies and live performances, an effort that has been joined by the Pearl River Chamber of Commerce and area residents with the encouragement of the Organgetown Town Board. Clearly, the downtown could be promoted as a place for entertainment or residential uses. Multi-family and senior housing should be encouraged. In the long-term future, a mixed-use development near the train station could emerge as commuter access to Manhattan is enhanced as a result of the Secaucus transfer. See Section V-9 for additional recommendations regarding Pearl River zoning.



*Of the two vacant movie theaters in Pearl River, the one shown above has been razed to construct a bank; the other may be appropriate for reuse for senior housing*

## Orangeburg

### **Existing Conditions**

Orangeburg is home to many of the Town's institutional uses and many of the heavily-trafficked sections of Route 303. This is partially due to the fact that the hamlet is in the central portion of Orangetown, where the Palisades Interstate Parkway (PIP), Route 303, Route 340, and Orangeburg Road converge.

The 2000 population of Orangeburg is approximately 3,400 persons. Although residential





*The intersection of Route 303 and Orangeburg Road*

land use is primarily single-family, there is limited two-family, and extensive multi-family is found near the intersection of Orangeburg Road and Western Highway. Town Hall, along with some commercial and institutional uses, is on Orangeburg Road, proximate to the varied highway commercial, office, and industrial uses along the Route 303 corridor, including restaurants, small plazas with various businesses, gas stations, and automobile dealers and repair shops, among other uses. Near the intersection of Route 303 and the PIP is the site of an approved big-box development. Other public and quasi-public uses within the hamlet consist of the Town's sewage treatment plant/bulk items drop off/green waste/metal recycling transfer area, the Town's building and planning department, the Orangeburg Library, and the local colleges: Iona College–Rockland Campus, Dominican College, and Long Island University–Rockland campus.

At the western edge of the hamlet is the Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC), approximately 555 acres of land on Lake Tappan of which 348 acres is under contract for purchase by the Town. Although within the Pearl River School District, RPC is generally considered to be within the boundaries of Orangeburg.

Office uses are also present within the hamlet, as are large tracts of industrial/warehouse uses, including Worldwide Industrial Park and Rockland Corporate Park. There are also some heavier industrial uses along Route 303 including a plastics plant, an electrical corporation, and a small area with various industrial uses adjacent to the Town sewage treatment plant

and recycling transfer area and engineering department property.

Along Route 303, near the Palisades Interstate Parkway (PIP), a Lowe's home improvement store is currently under construction. Approved through a use variance on this LI-zoned land, this stand-alone development is not consistent with the recommendations of the County's River to Ridge Comprehensive Plan, the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study, and this Comprehensive Plan in the efforts to limit major strip commercial development along Route 303. Nearby and closer to the PIP interchange are vacant and underutilized sites that could be developed in the future, including a golf driving range, and the Army Reserve site.

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the long-term potential of sites on Route 303 at the Palisades Parkway interchange for possible upscale office, research and development, hotel, or conference center uses, which would be preferable to retail uses (which are not permitted under current zoning) and warehouse and industrial uses (which are permitted under current LI zoning).

The hamlet center for Orangeburg is not on Route 303; it focuses on Orangeburg Road, extending roughly from the intersection of Route 303 to the PIP. The West Shore railroad runs generally along portions of Western Highway, to the north and south of Orangeburg Road. Town Hall and some additional institutional uses, including a fire station and a high school, are located at the Orangeburg Road/Dutch Hill Road intersection. A relatively large shopping plaza is located on the southeastern corner of the Dutch Hill Road/Orangeburg Road intersection. This plaza houses a variety of commercial uses, including a bank, a discount store, and a pharmacy. The supermarket in the plaza has closed and has been replaced by a CVS Pharmacy and a small grocery store. The other commercial uses in the hamlet are primarily located on Route 303.

The school fields within the hamlet center, between Dutch Hill Road and Western Highway, and the driving range adjacent to Palisades Interstate Parkway land both have large amounts of open space; the driving range, however, is susceptible to a change in use in the future. Also adjacent to the Palisades Interstate Parkway is a large, vacant area which has received approval for a warehouse use, which is permitted under the existing LI zoning designation. The site intended for an approved big-box store is immediately north of that area. It is important to note that allowing additional commercial uses along Route 303 is not recommended by this Plan, the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study, or the Rockland County Comprehensive Plan.

There is open space and recreation space available through the school district, but that is limited. Veterans Memorial Park, the primary Town park, is also nearby. There are approximately 2.5 acres of public open and recreation space within the hamlet of Orangeburg, at the Shanks Memorial and at Greenbush Center. However, Veterans Memorial Park is closer to residents of Orangeburg than any other area of Orangetown. Regardless, there should be additional open and recreation space considered for this hamlet in the future, and the Rockland Psychiatric Center site could potentially alleviate some of the open space and recreation needs for both Orangeburg and the Town as a whole.



*A drainage area along Route 303; increased protection and/or beautification should occur*

### ***The Land Use Plan***

The property that is currently most significant to Orangeburg and to the Town as a whole is the Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC). Bounded by Convent Road to the north, Orangeburg Road to the south, utility-owned land to the east, and Tappan Lake Reservoir lands to the west, the site has significant potential for change. The Town acquired 340 acres of surplus property at RPC on January 22, 2003, and depending upon what eventually gets developed, the RPC site has the potential to impact both the Orangeburg hamlet, the Pearl River School District, and the Town in a number of ways, including but not limited to, population, school enrollment, demographics, and open space. However, the property offers significant potential for beneficial impacts as well.



*The grounds of the Rockland Psychiatric Center*

This site must be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner, with both development and open space integrated into the site, potentially through a public-private partnership. Currently, the Town is considering different combinations of uses for the site, including a Town park with various indoor and outdoor amenities and facilities, a bio-technology park, and senior residential uses, among other uses. It is also noted that other than a small local and partially vacant commercial area to the north, RPC is surrounded by mostly residential and open space uses. Its large size, however, sug-

gests that mixed-use could be appropriate if uses are planned as a whole, by recognizing the site's varied opportunities, and its physical and environmental constraints. Further discussion of RPC can be found later in this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Outside of RPC there are other areas in Orangeburg that are susceptible to change. For example, the length of Route 303 that runs through Orangeburg has significant potential for development and redevelopment. Such areas include the Route 303/PIP interchange area, and the Route 303/Route 340 area. The Route 303/340 area has long-term potential for a repositioning of the road, connecting Route 340 directly to Orangeburg Road, as discussed in the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study. That Study suggests the long-term possible development of a new hamlet center in that area, perhaps in conjunction with a West Shore commuter railroad station. The Route 303/PIP interchange area has a number of vacant and underutilized parcels, and as such, there is long-term potential for possible upscale office, research and development, hotel, or conference center uses.

Since Sparkill Creek has been adversely impacted from past development, it should be protected so that any future development and redevelopment would not adversely affect it. In addition to being protected, the Creek should be viewed as an asset to this hamlet, and future development or redevelopment should take this into account.

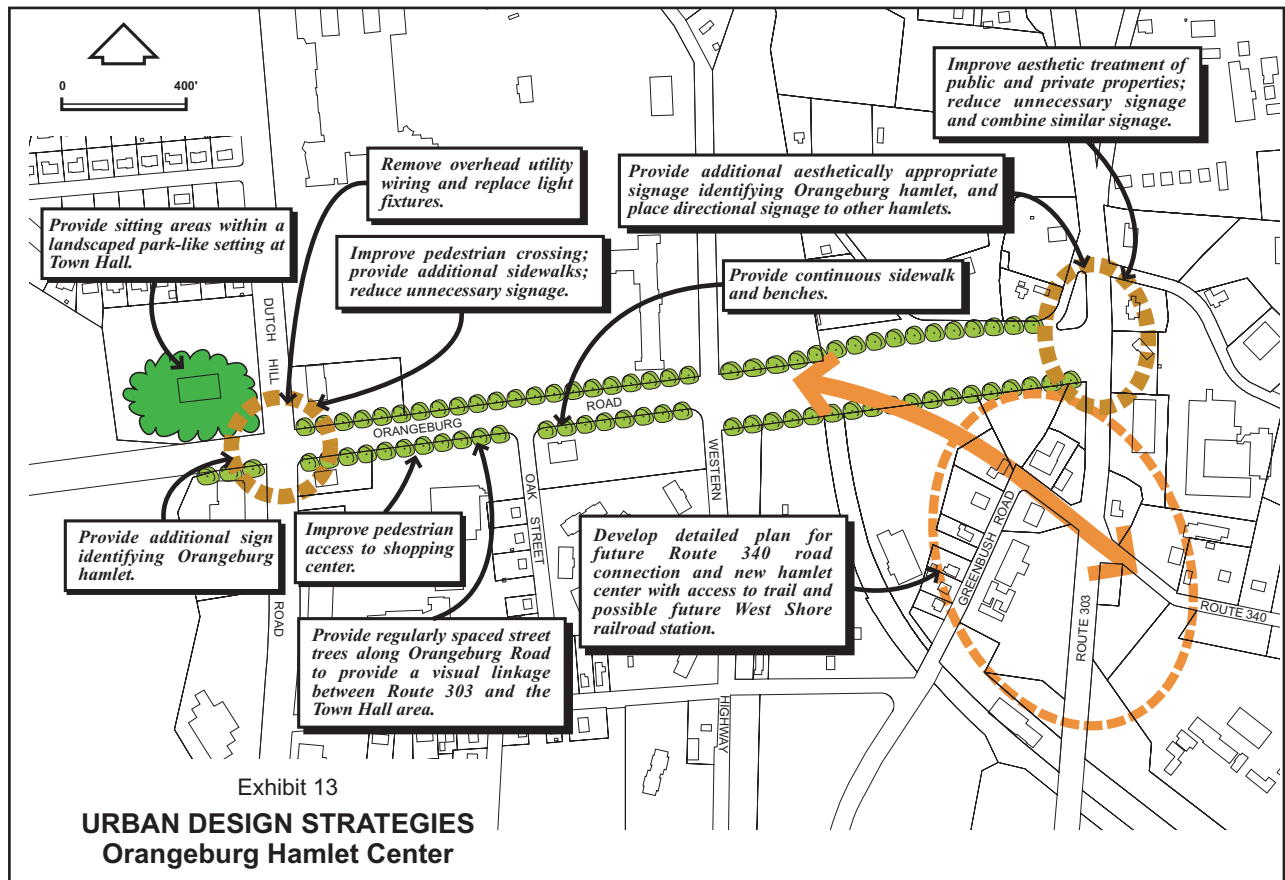
There are a number of large and small properties that, if developed, have the potential to affect both traffic patterns and surrounding uses. Such sites include the driving range and the Daimler-Chrysler property, among others. Other vacant areas are scattered throughout the hamlet. The majority of issues related to Route 303 are addressed in the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study, which is discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

### **The Hamlet Center**

In order to improve the ambiance of the area, it is important that people know they are entering the hamlet center and the government center of Orangetown (see Exhibit 13, Urban Design Strategies). Signage and landscaping should be provided at the main entry areas, primarily at the Orangeburg Road and Dutch Hill Road intersection, and the Orangeburg Road and Route 303 intersection. To support the importance of these entry areas as focal points for the hamlet center, the public and private properties at or near the entry areas should be aesthetically improved. It is also important that unnecessary or garish signage be either replaced or redesigned. Aesthetically pleasing directional signage to the other hamlet centers is encouraged.

Since there is limited open space within the hamlet center, the Town should make every effort to maintain and improve its current open space and place additional street trees and landscaping along Orangeburg Road. Street trees along Orangeburg Road would provide a visual linkage between Route 303 and the Town Hall area. Additionally, the large open space surrounding Town Hall could be designed as a park-like setting with sitting areas. There was a 1993 design for the Town Hall lawn area by the Chairman of Architecture and Community Appearance Board of Review (ACABOR) that could be examined again, or used as a basis for new designs. This area would also benefit visually by the removal of overhead utility wiring and the replacement of the current lighting with more decorative fixtures.

Although suburban in character, this hamlet center would benefit by having improved walkability. This would include sidewalks along Orangeburg Road that connect to each other and lead somewhere, clearly marked crossings, longer signal timing for pedestrians, benches, and improved pedestrian access to the shopping centers. It would also be beneficial to connect the high school and Dominican College



to the surrounding area as well, through both improved walkability, such as sidewalks and paths, and other urban design methods, including signage.

The West Shore rail corridor (which runs through Orangeburg) is currently being analyzed as part of a Major Investment Study/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (MIS/DEIS). Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Trans-

portation, the Federal Transit Administration, New Jersey Transit, Bergen County, New Jersey, and Rockland County, New York, the study is gathering information and preparing the MIS/DEIS regarding the improvement of access and mobility within Bergen and Rockland Counties, with the possibility of additional commuter lines. The goals within the West Shore corridor as stated in the MIS/DEIS draft scoping document are: meet the needs of travelers within the study area, encourage economic growth, improve regional access, reduce roadway congestion, and enhance the transit network.



*Sidewalks would improve the walkability of this area of Orangeburg*

One alternative recommended for further analysis in the MIS/DEIS is the West Shore commuter rail service (via sports complex). It would provide service between West Nyack and Ridgefield Park/Bogota in New Jersey, which would connect to the sports complex, the Secaucus transfer, and Hoboken. These sta-

tions, in turn, connect to Manhattan, other parts of New Jersey, and potentially, the Hudson River waterfront. The study will investigate the possibility of placing a station in the vicinity of Orangeburg. Although it is not necessary for this Comprehensive Plan to account for a potential commuter railroad station in Orangeburg, it is important that the Town keep this possibility in mind when implementing any improvements or changes in that portion of the hamlet.<sup>44</sup>

## Blauvelt

### *Existing Conditions*

Blauvelt is located in the northcentral part of Town, between Orangeburg and the Town of Clarkstown. Primarily defined by its proximity to Route 303, it lies between the Town's two potential open space corridors: the Hackensack riverway and the swath of parkland that runs north-south along the Town's eastern edge. The 2000 population of Blauvelt is approximately 5,200 persons, and the residential use is predominantly single-family.

The Blauvelt hamlet center is relatively small. Located along Western Highway, it is proximate to the former railroad tracks which bisect Western Highway. Commercial uses within the hamlet center include the historic Blauvelt



*The new fire station in Blauvelt's hamlet center*

Market building and other small commercial buildings and strip malls. The library and the new fire station, in addition to the new post office and the under-construction public park adjacent to the Rail-Trail, strengthen the hamlet center.

Blauvelt is fortunate to be home to a large amount of the Town's open space and recreation areas. Due to the large County and State parks within its boundaries, Blauvelt houses approximately 1,300 acres of recreation and open space. A portion of the Rail-Trail moves northwest through the hamlet center and across Western Highway. The Town parks in Blauvelt include DeMeola Fields, Elliott Park, Schuyler Park, and Tackamack North and South Parks, and they have a combined area of approximately 148 acres. In addition, as mentioned above, there is new open space being created in the hamlet, the small park in the hamlet center on Western Highway. There are also vacant parcels along Erie Street, some of which are currently used for parking.

Office uses are scattered throughout Blauvelt. There are small sites within the hamlet center and a number along Route 303, including insurance, realty, and veterinary offices. There are also some office uses within Bradley Corporate Park, in the northern portion of the hamlet along Route 303. To the east along Route 303, there are a number of commercial uses. Further to the north, along Route 303, there is some vacant land and a golf driving range. Smaller



*Along Route 303, a number of office and industrial uses exist*

<sup>44</sup> Information from *The West Shore Corridor Major Investment Study/Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, draft scoping document, June 2001.

commercial areas exist throughout the hamlet as well, such as the area on Convent Road (proximate to RPC's northern entrance).

The remainder of the hamlet is composed of residential uses. There are some multi-family uses and a limited number of two-family uses, but the majority of residential parcels are single-family, similar to the rest of the Town.

### ***The Land Use Plan***

Much of the hamlet of Blauvelt is built-up, and it is for this reason that the land use plan for Blauvelt consists primarily of design improvements to the hamlet center, recommendations for open space improvements, and further enhancement of the hamlet's historic characteristics.

At the hamlet center, there is land along the Rail-Trail that is currently being constructed as a small park. Vacant land on the eastern side of Western Highway is slated for development as a subdivision. Additionally, the large vacant parcels in north Blauvelt, near Bradley Corporate Park, could also be developed: one is currently for lease, and all of them are centrally located along Route 303. The area near the intersection of Route 303 and Erie Street also has development potential as suggested in the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study. But of the vacant land in Blauvelt, the driving range is perhaps the single parcel that is most vulnerable to change due to its proximity to a number of currently vacant parcels. The driving range is currently adjacent to a vacant parcel that is for lease, and it is proximate to two vacant parcels that run along Route 303 along the Town's northern border. Indoor recreational uses have been proposed for the site. The "dinosaur" property, a large site where dinosaur track fossils were found, is proximate to this area as well, and is on the Orangetown Parks Development Advisory Committee (OPDAC) list, the Ad Hoc Open Space Committee for the Town of Orangetown list, and the County of Rockland list for acquisition by the Town.

The small commercial area on Convent Road (proximate to RPC's northern entrance) is currently in a somewhat deteriorated condition. The plaza consists of a construction office, a restaurant, and two vacant storefronts.



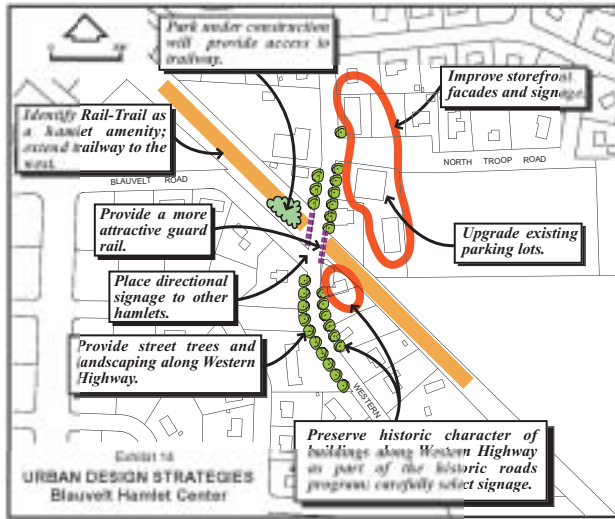
*A commercial area along Convent Road could be subject to change if development occurs on the adjacent Rockland Psychiatric Center property*

Across the street to the east of the plaza is an abandoned gas station. To the northeast of the plaza is a deli and an office use. Due to the potential redevelopment of the RPC site, this area is subject to change, and it is anticipated that if redevelopment occurs on portions of the RPC site, this commercial area may become revitalized.

### **The Hamlet Center**

Blauvelt's hamlet center is small and compact, running along Western Highway roughly perpendicular to the Rail-Trail. With a library branch already in place, a fire station recently built, a new post office, and a small public park currently under construction on the Rail-Trail, the area has potential to become a viable and attractive hamlet center (See Exhibit 14, Urban Design Strategies). The center also has historic significance, and it would be beneficial to the hamlet if this was emphasized.

Western Highway is a historic road with a number of historic structures scattered along its length, including three structures on the National Register of Historic Places: the David Johannes Blauvelt house, the Johannes Isaac Blauvelt house, and the Johannes J. Blauvelt homestead. Other structures with historic value but not on the National Register include



Existing Conditions

the Gerret Blauvelt house, the Blauvelt-Norris-Burr house, and the Jacob J. Blauvelt house, among others<sup>45</sup>. The historic character of these and other buildings along Western Highway, including the Blauvelt Market building and the Blauvelt Public Library building, should be preserved as part of the Town’s Historic Roads program. Currently encompassing only portions of Kings Highway, Oak Tree Road, and Western Highway, the Historic Roads program could be more fully utilized in the Blauvelt center and along the entire length of Western Highway.



Conditions without excessive signage

Improving the character of the hamlet center could also be accomplished by implementing urban design measures: carefully selecting the signage for all structures (the library sign is a good example of attractive signage in this



This plaza could be enhanced with approved signage, landscaping and curbing, as illustrated above

area), improving the storefront facades, upgrading existing parking lots, adding street trees and landscaping along Western Highway, and placing a more attractive guard rail along Western Highway. By emphasizing the center’s small size and historic value through urban design, its individual character will be enhanced.

The Rail-Trail is an important component of an improved Blauvelt hamlet center; it is a valuable hamlet amenity. The public park being constructed by the Lion’s Club will be on the Rail-Trail land, and so will connect to the Trail. Additionally, the Town should work to extend the Rail-Trail further to the west, enhancing its role as a Townwide facility.

<sup>45</sup> Information from Orangetown Town Historian Mary Cardenas, October 2001.

**Sparkill**

***Existing Conditions***

Sparkill is in the southeastern portion of the Town, proximate to the Village of Piermont. The hamlet is bisected by the old railroad tracks, now the Rail-Trail, and by Route 9W and Route 340. Single-family residential is the primary land use in this small hamlet. Of a historic character, the hamlet has a variety of uses in its center: commercial parcels house restaurants, an automobile repair shop, an insurance company, a bank, and other assorted commercial uses. The hamlet is also home to limited office use, and various institutional uses, including a church, post office, the St. Thomas Aquinas College campus, which also houses the New York University School of Social Work and the Venture Center.

Single-family land uses constitute the balance of land use in Sparkill, however two-family uses can be found throughout the hamlet. Multi-family uses within the hamlet of Sparkill encompass small parcels in the center of the hamlet and large sites on Route 340 adjacent to the college.

There is significant open space within the hamlet center, even though the center is relatively compact. Sparkill Memorial Park, along Washington Street, which includes the DiFrancesca playground, is a focal point for the hamlet. As stated above, the hamlet center is also home to a portion of the Rail-Trail, which crosses Washington Street near the hamlet center.



*Sparkill Memorial Park*

The other Town recreation and open space area in the hamlet is the Sparkill Skating Pond. Together, the park and the skating pond total 2.5 acres. But by having the ±687 acre Tallman Mountain State Park nearby, Sparkill is proximate to a large share of recreation and open space.

***The Land Use Plan***

For a relatively small area, Sparkill has a large amount of open space, including parks, sections of the Rail-Trail, and a golf course (in addition to the State and County parks that are in close proximity). The hamlet's adjacency to Tallman Mountain State Park links it to the potential open space corridor for the eastern part of Orangetown, which would join the County, State, and Town parks that sit on the eastern edge of the Town. Such a connection would provide greater opportunity for open space and recreation linkages with the Rail-Trail and the various park areas.

Because of Sparkill's smaller size and compactness and the relatively few vacant parcels within the hamlet, it is anticipated that future development would primarily be infill development. Such development should be controlled through strict site plan review and design guidelines to insure compatibility within the neighborhood, and maintain the historic character of the hamlet.

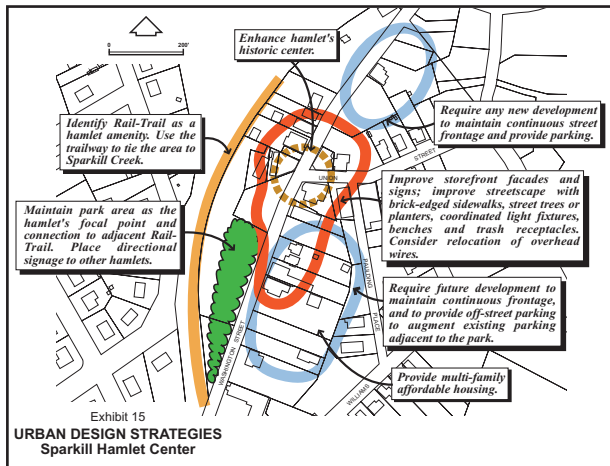


*The historic character of the hamlet should be maintained*



### The Hamlet Center

Since the hamlet center is compact, only relatively modest changes would be required to improve its character and ambiance (See Exhibit 15, Urban Design Strategies). Accentuating the amenities and upgrading existing uses through urban design projects and strict site plan review of future infill development, as mentioned above, would dramatically enhance this hamlet center.



Any future infill development along Washington Street should be required to maintain continuous street frontage. This would enhance the area's compact, historic character. It would also be prudent to require new development to provide off-street parking in order to supplement the lot adjacent to the park fronting Washington Street, which is currently the only large parking lot within the hamlet center.

The intersection of Washington Street and Union Street is generally considered the center of the hamlet, and should be designated as such. Attractive signage and landscaping could mark the spot, which is currently not treated in any way. An improved streetscape, with aesthetically appropriate storefront facades and signs, and coordinated light fixtures, benches, and trash receptacles would enhance the ambiance of the area. The Town should also evaluate the possibility of relocating the overhead wires behind the structures on the eastern side

of Washington Street, as is currently being pursued in Pearl River.



Existing uses in the hamlet center should be upgraded

Additionally, Sparkill Memorial Park should be maintained and enhanced, keeping it as a focal point of the hamlet, with visual connections to the playground and the Rail-Trail provided through appropriate signage and landscaping. There is also the potential to connect the Rail-Trail to the Town's large north-south open space corridor (composed of the large park areas along the Town's eastern border). Such an action would certainly provide increased opportunities for recreation in the hamlet. In addition, the hamlet center could benefit from incorporating Sparkill Creek as an asset to the area.



A memorial and landscaping add visual interest to Sparkill Memorial Park

The hamlet center would likely benefit by the infill development of affordable multi-family housing. The adjacency to the park and Rail-Trail, the small stores and restaurants, and proximity to major roads are benefits to living in the Sparkill hamlet center. In turn, increased population in the center could potentially benefit the nearby commercial uses, and the hamlet as a whole.

## Tappan

### *Existing Conditions*

Tappan lies along the New York-New Jersey border, in the southeastern section of Orangetown. The 2000 population of Tappan is approximately 6,700<sup>46</sup> persons. The hamlet center is generally considered to be at or near the intersection of Greenbush Road and Washington Street. To the east of the Tappan hamlet center on Route 303 are a series of strip shopping centers that provide a variety of retail goods and services. These stores and shops also serve the nearby hamlets of Sparkill and Palisades. Throughout the rest of the hamlet, the land use is predominantly single-family residential. There is, however, an area along Oak Tree Road that is within the LO Zoning District, but is surrounded by R-22 and R-15 residential zoning. A request for a zoning change to higher density residential had been made, and although residential uses are more compatible with the surrounding uses than the existing uses on the property, it is recommended that a clustering technique with overall densities comparable to surrounding areas be used on the subject property, rather than a rezoning, since the density proposed by the property owner would create a density pattern that is incompatible with surrounding uses and is more consistent with this Comprehensive Plan's recommendations for residential density at or near the hamlet centers.

The central portions of Tappan, including the hamlet center, are included in one of the Town's two historic districts. The hamlet center, which includes limited commercial uses, has a number of historic structures. The attractive hamlet center is small, with narrow, curving roads. There is a relatively large number of institutional uses within the center: two churches, a cemetery, a branch library, and a fire station. There are limited commercial and office uses (including a row of converted residential houses on Main Street). Throughout the rest of the hamlet, there is a large number of single-family residential uses and open space areas, including Independence Park and Tappan Memorial Park.



*This section of the Tappan hamlet center illustrates the hamlet's historic character.*

There are several parks and open spaces within the hamlet, in addition to the large State Parks nearby. The parks and open spaces within the hamlet include: portions of Clarke Trail, Schaefer Park (an undeveloped park in a residential area), Stoughton Park, Tappan Fields, Tappan Memorial Park, Independence Park, and the Kennedy-Reedy Fields. These areas provide approximately 61.5 acres of open space to the hamlet.

<sup>46</sup> The population of Tappan, as reported by the Census, includes Sparkill and Palisades.

**The Land Use Plan**

Some of the hamlet’s more vulnerable areas are located north of the hamlet center, on Western Highway. These include the Masonic Temple site (which is vacant on one side of the road and used as a camp on the other) and the Army surplus land, which is north of the temple site. These sites have the potential for development in the future, possibly as residential uses, like senior or affordable housing. If the entire length of Western Highway is designated as historic under the Town’s Historic Roads program (as discussed in Chapter III, Comprehensive Plan Proposals), any future development of these sites could be carefully monitored.

Another area subject to change in the future lies within the Sparkill Creek area near Oak Tree Road. Presently, there are industrial uses in this area, interspersed with vacant land. These vacant parcels are quite large, although sections of them are environmentally-constrained and some buildings on-site appear to be vacant. There is also vacant land adjacent to the portion of the Rail-Trail near Sparkill Creek that is proposed as parking for users of the Rail-Trail.

As stated within the Open Space and Environmental Protection Functional Plan (in Chapter III), the Sparkill Creek area requires especially stringent environmental protection, such as buffer areas and building setbacks. This would include limiting development adjacent to the Creek and requiring existing development along the Creek to mitigate any adverse environmental impacts that occurred in the past. Any infill development of the vacant parcels mentioned above should undergo strict site plan and review processes.

The commercial area along Route 303 in Tappan requires upgrading and improvement. As noted in the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study, this commercial strip contrasts with the historic character of other areas of Tappan. Its redevelopment and/or upgrading is recommended.



Strip commercial development along Route 303 in Tappan needs upgrading

**The Hamlet Center**

The Tappan hamlet center is a designated Historic District. The narrow streets and small storefronts give the center a compact, old-fashioned character, and the Town should work to maintain this character (See Exhibit 16, Urban Design Strategies). This could be accomplished by providing additional landscaping and landscape treatment, where space allows and is appropriate (including the large painted island at the intersection of Main Street and Washington Street) and using attractive storefront signage. Additional signage should also be placed that directs people to points of interest within the hamlet and to points of interest in other hamlets. Because the center is a designated Historic District, the Town should also investigate the possibility of creating a historic walking path, which would incorporate local



commercial uses. Currently, the Tappantown Historical Society occasionally holds walking tours, but a contiguous path does not exist, since there are significant amounts of space between the area’s historic structures.



*A restaurant in a historic building in the hamlet center*

There is also an opportunity to enhance existing open space and incorporate additional open space in the center. The existing church/cemetery area on the corner of Greenbush Road and Old Tappan Road East should be maintained, and the Town should investigate the possibility of closing one section of Greenbush Road to enlarge the open space area. There is also opportunity for the Town to work with the Tappan Fire Department to enhance a site along Washington Street currently used to house Fire Department vehicles. It is adjacent to a Town park, and could potentially be used by the public. In addition, this hamlet would benefit from recognizing Sparkill Creek as an asset to the hamlet, and incorporating the Creek into its open space system.



*This area could be enhanced and used by the public rather than as parking*

**Palisades**

***Existing Conditions***

Without a commercial center, Palisades is perhaps the least defined hamlet in Orangetown. However, Palisades is well-known throughout the County and the region. The hamlet, which is a designated Historic District like Tappan, consists primarily of large single-family homes, and is the easternmost hamlet in Town, lying on the banks of the Hudson River. The hamlet lies south of Tallman Mountain State Park and north of the New Jersey State line. There are historic structures throughout the hamlet area.

The hamlet center consists of the post office, open space, housing, and three vacant parcels. As noted above, the center has no commercial uses. The single-family residential lots in Palisades are larger than in any other hamlet in Town. This is the only hamlet with frontage on the Hudson River, in a section of the hamlet known as Snedens Landing.



*Houses overlooking the Hudson River in Palisades*

This hamlet is immediately south of Tallman Mountain State Park, which is part of the Palisades Interstate Park system, and so has easy access to a large amount of public open space. There is also private open space found within Palisades: the land owned by Columbia University housing the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory is in the southern section of the hamlet, bounded by the Hudson River

to the east and New Jersey to the south; and the Rockland Country Club is also within this hamlet. The IBM Conference Center is also in this hamlet.

### ***The Land Use Plan***

The open spaces mentioned above could, in the future, become potential linkages that would form a continuous north-south open space corridor along the eastern edge of Orangetown. The Town should encourage the preservation of such open space through strict site plan review, and the implementation of environmental protection regulations.



*The post office is one of very few land uses in the Palisades hamlet center*

Also, the large amount of vacant space found within the hamlet center indicates its potential for development, consistent with its single-family zoning. Since the hamlet is small and its character is well-defined, future development should be compatible with existing land uses.

### **B. THE ROUTE 303 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STUDY**

The Route 303 Sustainable Development Study was a joint intergovernmental effort, with the Town of Orangetown, Rockland County, the New York Department of Transportation (NYDOT), and the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) as project sponsors. Through the study and public consensus-building by the project's consultants, a plan was developed that seeks to create a balanced and sustainable approach to transportation and development in the Route 303 corridor

by addressing transportation improvements, while concurrently creating land use control mechanisms that can address issues specific to visual quality and the character of the corridor.

### **The Land Use Vision<sup>47</sup>**

The key goals outlined in the Land Use Vision were to create zoning and land use policies that:

- Protect and buffer existing residential areas;
- Encourage open space preservation and environmental stewardship;
- Preserve existing neighborhood commercial uses and enhance commercial development opportunities (except retail);
- Limit the location, size and siting of new retail development; and
- Foster the creation of focused nodes of neighborhood development.

Included in this Land Use Vision were the following elements:

- Clustering of retail and residential land use and development in the vicinity of three defined neighborhood areas: the Tappan neighborhood area (south of Oak Tree Road), and Orangeburg neighborhood area (between King's Highway and Route 340), and the Bradley Parkway/Greenbush neighborhood area;
- Future development of the Sparkill Creek streambank as a location for pedestrian and bicycle paths and passive recreation;
- Buffering of existing residential areas;
- Encouragement of business-oriented development;
- Historic preservation in the Tappan area;
- Development of improved bicycle and pedestrian access to Route 303 in the Orangeburg area and enhancement of the Rail-Trail;
- Further investigation and development

<sup>47</sup> All subsequent information taken from the Draft Final Report of the *Route 303 Sustainable Development Study*, July 2002.

of an educational corridor connecting St. Thomas Aquinas College, Dominican College, and Iona College with adjacent commercial and residential areas, and the exploration of future shared-use recreational and cultural facilities for these institutions; and

- Cooperation with developers to preserve buffer areas surrounding their properties and to seek opportunities for public use of these open areas.

The mechanism that was implemented for designating special land use considerations for the corridor is the Route 303 Overlay Zoning District. An Overlay Zoning District is a land development control that is applicable to a specific geographic area, and is superimposed over the existing zoning districts. Therefore, the base zoning that defines where commercial, residential, and industrial uses are allowed remains the same as with the current zoning. But the Zoning Overlay provides an opportunity to augment the underlying zoning regulations, and provides for supplemental land development regulations that supercede the relevant provisions of the underlying zoning district.

The Route 303 Corridor Overlay District was adopted in January 2002. The Overlay District regulations apply to all land use applications for which a portion of the subject property is located within the Overlay District. The Overlay District was identified as an early action recommendation since it established a directive to guide development in the corridor as a free-floating legislative action that did not involve substantive amendments to the Town's Zoning Code.

The Overlay District includes several regulatory elements:

- Limitations on building size (65,000 s.f.) applicable to wholesale and retail warehouses and other retail uses as well as movie theaters or cinemas;
- Prohibition of new commercial automotive

uses, as well as outside storage of bulk fuels or liquids and other materials;

- Design standards requiring (where applicable) screening, vegetated buffers, rear yard parking, and connections between abutting parking lots;
- Prohibition of detention ponds, signage, lighting fixtures, or fences within the Route 303 right-of-way or within the vegetated buffer;
- Special permit requirements for curb cuts;
- Requirements of traffic impact study and access management plan for projects that would increase traffic by more than 10 percent; and
- Drainage system requirements.

Within the Route 303 Overlay District, the new zoning regulations prohibit any new residential driveways from connecting to Route 303. In addition, buffers should be created between residential uses and the edge of the Route 303 right-of-way using vegetated buffer areas. Non-residential uses within the Route 303 Overlay District will be limited to those that are consistent with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Study. This includes establishment of a maximum size for commercial structures. All uses will be adequately screened in order to minimize the visual impact to passers-by on Route 303. Direct access to Route 303 would be precluded. Also, the Overlay District specifies distances between curb cuts and from intersections, and encourages the internal circulation of traffic.



*A large automotive dealer along Route 303*

Retail uses are not permitted as-of-right in certain existing zoning districts (such as LI, LIO, and LO). It is important to note that it is the intent of the Overlay Zoning District to

limit the size and extent of large-scale retail development in the Route 303 corridor.



*A lack of screening and excessive signage on Route 303 at Orangeburg Road*

Long-term land use recommendations from the Sustainable Development Study include:

- Local area planning and urban design studies for the three neighborhood areas (the Tappan neighborhood area, Orangeburg neighborhood area, and the Bradley Parkway/Greenbush neighborhood area);
- Development of an access management plan;
- Completion and adoption of a Town-wide open space plan;
- Planning for the reuse of the West Shore Railroad corridor for passenger service and an evaluation of land use impacts on the neighborhood areas; and
- Investigation and potential creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) for the Route 303 commercial areas.

The concept of three village centers on Route 303 is intended to provide for a variety of uses in a hamlet-like setting, and should promote pedestrian safety and a variety of activities and services within a village atmosphere. It would promote the goals of sustainable mixed-use development by encouraging non-motorized pedestrian and bicycle movement, encouraging the efficiency of mixed-use development, fostering a reduction in

automobile use, supporting home and locally-based employment, and promoting a variety of housing choices.

Traffic recommendations proposed for portions of the three village centers include: changes in the number of lanes; wider shoulders, grass medians, and curbs, where practicable; center turn lanes, left turn lanes, and u-turn areas; wider intersections, where practicable; improved crosswalks and sidewalks; and pedestrian and bicycle circulation, among other recommendations.

Zoning for the village center concept would vary from the lot, bulk, and use requirements of the underlying zoning districts. In order for the three village centers to be effective, it would be necessary to provide new tools by which development applications would be evaluated and approved. These tools include specific items that override the base zoning for items such as approval procedures, compatibility criteria, permitted uses, height, density, FAR, and setback provisions, parking requirements, landscaping and buffering requirements, architectural design guidelines, signage, and lighting.

Although actual development of three new centers could be achieved over time, zoning for this type of development needs to be implemented to promote this concept. The village center concept was not included in the adopted Zoning Overlay District. However, this concept may form the basis for additional legislation for Route 303 in the future, potentially as part of the Town's comprehensive Zoning Code update.

In order to address the corridor's transportation safety deficiencies and to support the Land Use Vision, a set of transportation improvements was also created. Throughout the course of the Route 303 study, early action projects were identified to address the Town's most serious and immediate traffic safety needs. Key elements included: installation of signage,

traffic signals, and enhancement of sidewalks and crosswalks.

In addition to the early action projects, long-term transportation improvements were recommended as well, including:

- Median treatments;
- Continuous two-way left turn lanes;
- Driveway access management;
- Design for speed control (traffic calming);
- Sidewalks and crosswalks;
- A bicycle and pedestrian multi-use path;
- A Sparkill Creek greenway path; and
- Potential Route 303 transit shuttle.

Stream corridors, such as Sparkill Creek, require protection to insure that the impacts of new development do not cause excessive erosion of the streambed and stream bank, and that water quality impacts from storm water are minimized. Sparkill Creek regulations would also serve to protect the area from the effects of adjacent development by using buffer zones and development restrictions. The buffer zones would be established on either side of the Creek, and would seek to either limit or prohibit new development of structures or impervious surfaces within the regulated area. Although Sparkill Creek regulations were not included in the Zoning Overlay District, they may form the basis for additional legislation for Route 303 in the future.

All side and rear setbacks for parcels adjoining the Palisades Interstate Parkway (PIP) right-of-way at its interchange with Route 303 should be further protected from that prescribed in the underlying zoning district. A mandatory vegetated buffer should also be considered as part of the special PIP considerations. Although specific PIP-area regulations were not included in the adopted Zoning Overlay District, they may be included in future legislation for Route 303.

In addition, some full corridor initiatives would also increase the public and community investment in the character of the Route 303 corridor: for example, the creation of a formal or informal mechanism to enhance the corridor through unified street signage, landscaping and flower planting, litter control, and seasonal banners and decorations.



*Existing conditions in a plaza on Route 303*



*Conditions with street trees added and facades improved*

### C. Rockland Psychiatric Center<sup>48</sup>

The Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) covers approximately 555 acres of land and water in the geographic center of Orangetown, and is zoned R-80 Rural-Residential. Of the approximate 555 acres, approximately 47 acres are subject to water rights (being underneath Lake Tappan, which is owned by United Water Resources) and therefore cannot be built upon. The remaining 508 acres house buildings, various structures, roadways, utilities and other facilities, and undeveloped, vacant land. In addition to Lake Tappan, approximately 48 acres of the vacant land is wetland. RPC is bounded by Veterans Memorial Drive to the south, Convent Road to the north, the Lake Tappan Reservoir to the west, and utility land and Palisades Interstate Parkway land to the east.

Surrounding uses consist of single-family homes, golf courses, high-rise office uses, lim-

<sup>48</sup> Information presented in this section is taken, in part, from *Rockland Psychiatric Center, Options for Reuse* by Kasler Associates, Craig Whitaker Architects, and Kenneth LeBrun Consultants, April 1998.



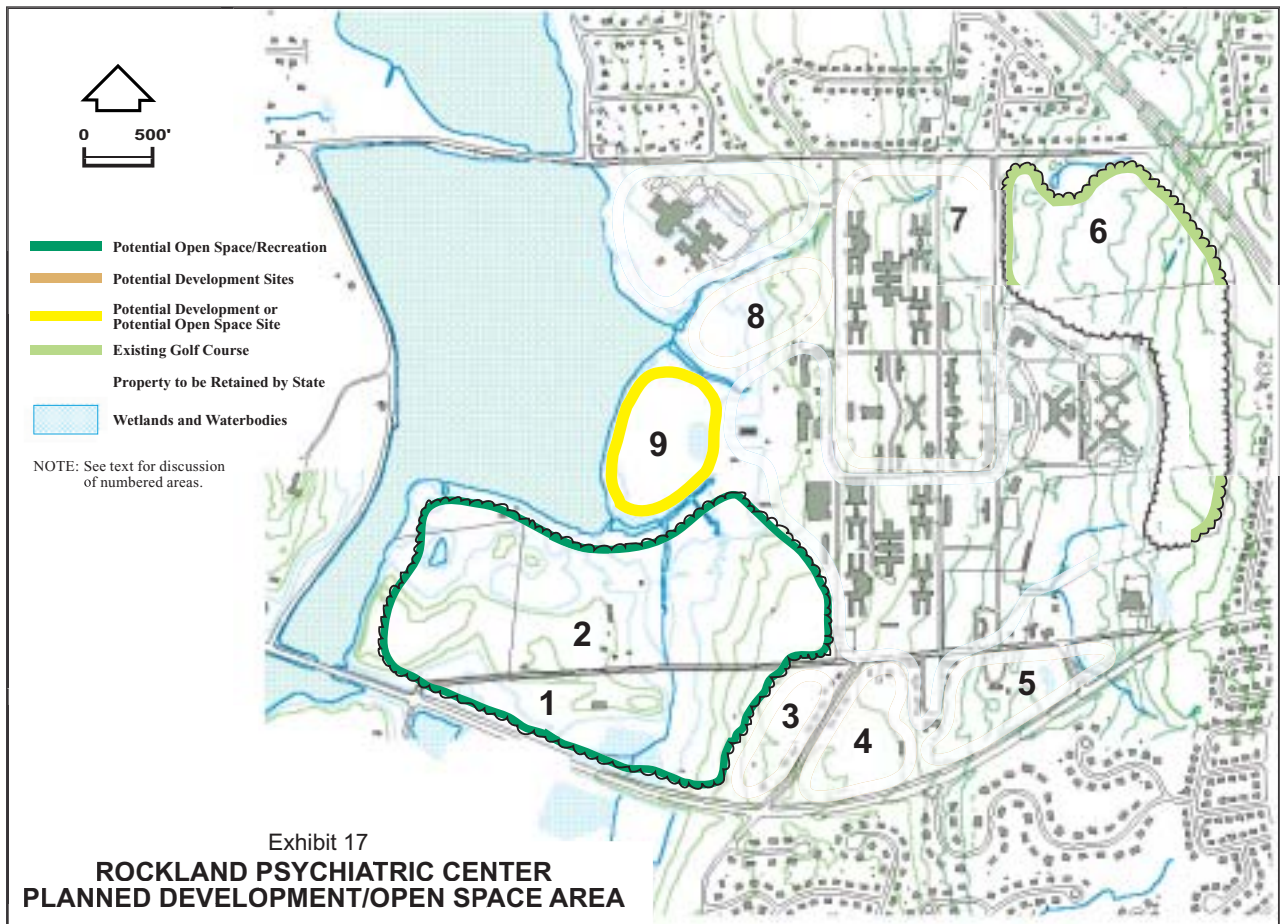
ited commercial uses, and open space and recreational uses. On Convent Road, proximate to RPC's northern entrance, there is a small commercial area which is currently in a deteriorated condition, with vacant storefronts and a generally poor appearance. It is anticipated that with development on the RPC property and the subsequent population that would either live, work, or play there, this commercial area could become revitalized and provide viable commercial services to the surrounding area.

On January 22, 2003, the Town acquired 348 acres of surplus land, which has a total of 69 buildings and structures. The State retained the Children's Psychiatric Facility, the Adult In-Patient Facilities, and Cook-Chill Plant, and other various facilities (therefore retaining approximately 50 buildings and structures), totalling approximately 200 acres. (See Exhibit



The Rockland Psychiatric Center site and its environs, with Lake Tappan to the west and the Palisades Interstate Parkway to the east

17, Rockland Psychiatric Center Planned Development/Open Space Area). Any development or redevelopment of the property that is anticipated to be sold is dependent upon the physical characteristics of the site, in addition to the environmental condition of the site. These characteristics are outlined below.



The topography of the site is varied, with some limited portions of the site being somewhat steep. The land generally slopes from east to west, with the highest elevations at  $\pm 250$  feet above sea level on the eastern part of the site, dropping to  $\pm 55$  feet above sea level at the edge of Lake Tappan along the western part of the site. Approximately 50 acres of the site contain slopes of 10% or greater, and approximately 21 acres of the site contain slopes of 15% or greater. This corresponds to approximately 13% and 5% of the total acreage that the Town has acquired, respectively. These sloped areas can be found on the northcentral portion of the site near the Children's Psychiatric Center, the northeastern portion of the site on or near the golf course area, and in the southwestern portion of the site proximate to Lake Tappan and Old Orangeburg Road. It is also important to note that a previous study of the soil conditions on the site indicated that certain soils pose development constraints, due to either wet conditions or steep slopes.

While there are no New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) wetlands (i.e., over 12.4 acres in size) on the site, there are wetlands which fall under the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). According to both State and Federal maps, and fieldwork performed under a previous study<sup>49</sup>, the total wetland acreage on-site was determined to be approximately 48 acres. Although scattered throughout the property, there are locations where a majority of the wetlands are found: east of Lake Tappan and south of the Children's Psychiatric Center; west of the ballfield and the Nathan Kline Institute (NKI) and north of Old Orangeburg Road; west of the Cook-Chill building between Old Orangeburg Road and Veteran's Memorial Drive; east of Blaisdell Road north of Veterans Memorial Drive; along the intersection of Old Orangeburg Road and Veterans Memorial Drive; and in the northcentral portion of the site east of

First Street. With a 100-foot buffer around the site wetlands as required by the Town, the total acreage dedicated to wetlands and wetland buffers is approximately 78 acres.

In 1996, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was performed for the site, and it was determined that there were a number of environmental problems on the RPC property, including PCB's, pesticides, oil and gasoline, asbestos, and lead paint. Additionally, landfilling activities had historically taken place on the site.

Notwithstanding these constraints, the RPC property is a topographically and ecologically diverse site with a high recreation, natural and man-made habitat potential. But while the site's drainage conditions, soil erosion, environmental condition (and the remediation that would likely be necessary with redevelopment), and infrastructure framework are impediments to redevelopment of the site, the varying elevations, mature trees, and landscaped areas are significant amenities. The large acreage available for development, the site's central location, and access to major roadways also enhance its potential for residential, non-residential, and recreational uses.

As seen in Exhibit 17, there are several potential development and open space parcels on the RPC site. Of the areas acquired by the Town, it is anticipated that approximately one-half of the acreage would be for open space or recreation, and one-half of the acreage would be for development. Pursuant to the contract with the State, at least 216 of the 348 surplus acres must be devoted to recreational purposes. However, requests for proposals for development have not yet been formulated, so the final mix of uses is unable to be determined at this time. In addition, this Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town implement innovative zoning techniques on this site, such as cluster-

<sup>49</sup> Kasler Associates, Craig Whitaker Architects, and Kenneth LeBrun Consultants.

ing or a Planned Unit Development approach, and as such, additional open space may be preserved in that way.

The area to the immediate north of Veterans Memorial Highway (Site 1 on the map) has been recognized as an ideal park or public-private recreation site. If developed in this way, this site could act as an extension of the Town's Veterans Memorial Park, which is located directly across Orangeburg Road to the south. Additional open space farther to the north, across Old Orangeburg Road (Site 2 on the map), lying between the Gaelic Fields and Lake Tappan, might also be desirable open space that could become potential parkland or recreational facilities.

Several potential development areas are also located in the southern portion of RPC (Sites 3,4, and 5). In total, these sites might be suitable for senior housing, low-density office, or research and development uses. Access to these sites could be from either Orangeburg Road or Old Orangeburg Road, depending upon the type of use and its access needs.

The vacant land adjacent to Lake Tappan in the western portion of the RPC site (Sites 8 and 9) also offers potential for senior housing, low-density office, or research and development uses. Although access to the two sites would have to be from the central portion of the RPC campus using RPC roadways, each site offers potential water views that could significantly enhance their value for development. And although waterfront sites are often attractive locations for recreation, the proximity to other potential open space and recreation sites (Sites 1 and 2) makes these two sites perhaps more appealing for development that takes advantage of water views.

Lastly, area in the north-central portion of the property (site 7), with over 20 existing buildings, is a significant potential development area on the RPC site as well. However, given the costs associated with the redevelopment of this built-up portion of the property, any reuse should be

of a significant magnitude to warrant a major private sector investment. The bio-tech campus suggested for this area might be that type of use.

All of the sites mentioned above have great potential, for either recreation, development, or redevelopment. The entire property is centrally located within the Town, and is proximate to both major Town roadways and the Palisades Interstate Parkway. Additionally, the large amount of potentially developable property gives the Town an unprecedented opportunity for environmentally-sound, well-planned growth, which, if accomplished, could benefit the Town and its residents for years to come.

The Town of Orangetown, working with State agencies, public-private partnerships, and prospective developers could achieve the Town's development and recreation and open space objectives for this pivotal property. Rockland County had applied for Empire Zone designation for 388.3 acres at RPC and nearby properties, along with other areas throughout the County. Although designation was not awarded in this round, if designation is granted in the future, business incentives, from property tax abatement to utility rate reductions, would be implemented in order to both attract new business and expand existing business.

# *Implementation*



## V. IMPLEMENTATION

### A. ZONING AND RELATED LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATORY CHANGES

In addition to zoning map changes previously described, there are a number of additional zoning and related land development recommendations that should be made to implement various proposals of the Comprehensive Plan. Each of these is summarized below.

#### 1. Route 303: Implementing the Sustainable Development Study

The rezoning of Route 303 should be designed to respond to the land use component of the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study. In addition to the Overlay Zoning, this would involve certain minor adjustments to existing zoning district boundaries and regulations, and the adoption of new commercial zoning regulations and design principles for the future large-scale development that was envisioned by the Town in each proposed hamlet area: the Bradley Parkway/Greenbush area, the Orangeburg area, and the Tappan area. These new hamlet developments would be encouraged through density enhancements, and would be designed as pedestrian-oriented centers with a mixture of land uses in a traditional hamlet-like settlement.

##### a. Office and Industrial Zoning.

The existing office and industrial zoning (LI, LO, and LIO) should be retained for large segments of the corridor, with text changes resulting in reductions in the maximum amount of development per lot. The reductions would limit future traffic generation and would allow for additional open space treatment. Recommended changes include reducing the floor-area ratio (FAR) in LI from a rather high 0.5 to a more realistic 0.4, and in LIO and LO from a high 0.4 to a more reasonable 0.3. A landscaped buffer strip with a minimum width of at least 25 feet would be required along each property's Route 303 frontage.

The LIO and LI Districts are very similar, and could possibly be consolidated into one district on Route 303 and at other locations in Town where this zoning exists.

At the intersection of Route 303 and the Palisades Interstate Parkway, the existing zoning is LI. The site adjacent to the Lowe's development site has been approved for a warehouse use, which would not take advantage of the site's location adjacent to the PIP. Depending on the outcome of the current site plan process, the Town Board may evaluate the zoning of this site within the context of the balance of the properties at the PIP interchange, and within the context of the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study and the Rockland County Comprehensive Plan. Some of the other parcels at this interchange area are either vacant or underutilized, and could be developed in the future. This Comprehensive Plan recommends that future development conform to the recommendations of the Rockland County River to Ridge Comprehensive Plan, the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study, and this Comprehensive Plan by limiting major strip commercial development. Further, this Comprehensive Plan recognizes the long-term potential of these vacant or underutilized sites and recommends upscale office, research and development, hotel, or conference center-type uses in this area.

##### b. Density Reductions and Density Incentives for Certain Types of Commercial Development.

The CC Commercial zoning that currently exists along Route 303 should be modified even more significantly than the proposed office and industrial zoning, thereby implementing the Sustainable Development Study's policy to limit strip commercial use along this roadway. In the Erie Street portion of the corridor, the existing land area zoned CC should be reduced in size and its FAR should be reduced from 0.3

to a more typical 0.2 for a highway commercial strip. This FAR would apply to other CC-zoned areas along Route 303 as well. Although larger stores, supermarkets, and shopping centers, up to the maximum building size as permitted in the Overlay Zone, would still be permitted in the CC, a greater parcel size would be required for such uses with the significantly reduced FAR of 0.20. As with the industrial zones, wide landscaped buffer areas 25 feet in depth would be required along the Route 303 frontage of the new commercial developments. In the Tappan area of Route 303, existing CS should be changed to CC. CS is the commercial zoning district mapped in the nearby historic hamlet center and in Sparkill. The basic commercial zoning on Route 303 should be CC, with certain incentives designed to allow relatively low traffic-generating uses and the hamlet-type development envisioned in the Sustainable Development Study.

Although it is important to have these two commercial zoning categories in the Town (CC and CS), there needs to be some revisions to the use, lot, and bulk regulations of each, along with a review of the mapping of these zones in areas such as Route 303.

Development incentives raising the FAR back to 0.3 should be provided in the CC regulations for the relatively low traffic uses, like office and research buildings, hotels, senior, or multi-family housing, the latter of which would be permitted through a Special Permit. Even greater inten-

sities of development with a FAR of 1.0 could be permitted through a Special Permit for new multi-story, mixed-use hamlet center development, following the design principles set forth in the Sustainable Development Study.

This type of incentive zoning could also be utilized for other aspects of the Route 303 zoning. The intent should be to limit unattractive development with adverse traffic impacts. Promoting sound development and upgrading the corridor in that manner should also be pursued where intended purposes warrant such an approach.

### c. Other Recommendations

In the Sparkill Creek area, the Sustainable Development Study calls for open space treatment to protect the stream and surrounding area with a long-term recommendation of creating a Sparkill Creek greenway path. This should be incorporated into a Town-wide effort to protect all wetlands and waterbodies.

Elsewhere in the corridor, the Route 303 overlay regulations preclude new individual residential driveway connections directly to Route 303 where residential use is permitted, e.g., south of the Palisades Interstate Parkway interchange in Tappan. In such areas, common driveways and direct access to side streets would be preferable.

## 2. Environmental Protection Regulations and Cluster Development

The Town should adopt regulations designed to protect the most sensitive environmental features of the land, including those features relating to development: (1) on steep slopes, (2) along prominent ridgelines, and (3) within or in close proximity to wetlands and waterbodies. The major issue in these areas is not the amount of development, per se, but how it is designed with respect to the site's environmental features. Hence, the Town should encourage cluster development and flexibility in subdivision design and site planning where



SOURCE: Sustainable Development Study, 2002.

significant environmental features exist. Within this context, the Planning Board's authority to mandate cluster design techniques should be utilized.

The Town's current cluster regulations limit the amount of flexibility that the Planning Board can utilize to generate quality environmental design. These regulations should be modified so that all traditional lot and bulk controls, other than density, can be freely disposed of on sites where environmental constraints need to be addressed.

Currently, the Town Code states that land with slopes (unexcavated) of over 25% constitutes the establishment of a conservation easement, which is an area that shall remain undisturbed and preserved in its natural state. There shall be no excavation, cutting, removal, alteration, destruction or clearing of perennial or annual vegetation, including trees or the disturbance of soil. When designing site plans and subdivisions on the steepest terrain, particularly in the Clausland Mountain area, this Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town should not allow any development on slopes in excess of 35% unless proper mitigation measures are proposed, including all reasonable efforts to redesign the developments to avoid such slopes. Any development on slopes of 20% or greater should strive to utilize the natural terrain, particularly for roads and driveways, thus minimizing possibilities for erosion. These thresholds are figures that have been used throughout both Rockland and Westchester Counties in order to protect steep slopes. Structures should be designed to fit into the hillside. Regrading should blend into the natural slope of the land, although the types of soils found on Clausland Mountain may warrant maximum slopes for cuts and fills of up to 33%. Replanting should consist of indigenous vegetation, replicating the original landscaping to the extent possible. Measures to control soil erosion during construction should be required as part of site plan or subdivision plan approval.

The visual impacts of development in mountainous terrain should be controlled through regulations designed to minimize development on hilltops and ridgelines, which would otherwise interrupt the natural tree line that forms the attractive backdrop for large segments of the eastern portion of Town. Used in conjunction with cluster techniques, this might require redesign, relocation, and/or alternative siting of homes at less prominent locations on individual sites in order to maintain the visual quality of the Town from off-site locations.

Wetlands and waterbodies need protection given their ecological and hydrological values. These features should be protected through local regulations that limit development within these areas, generally with a 100-foot buffer area adjacent to the wetlands and waterbodies. Regulations should address Sparkill Creek, other streams, and locally defined wetland areas, which would be identified on a site-specific basis. Wetlands should be mapped for each site at the time an application is submitted to the Town. The wetland mapping should be accompanied by analysis of wetland functions, which would help define the ecological importance of each wetland, particularly if a permit is requested for wetland disturbance. The permits for disturbance of wetlands, waterbodies, or buffer areas would be possible, provided proper mitigation measures were proposed. Mitigation measures could include wetland replacement, restoration, or enhancement, depending on site-specific conditions. Filling of wetlands could be permitted, if detailed analysis determines that no suitable alternative exists.

When drafting the environmental regulations, the Town should establish a minimum area for the wetlands, waterbodies, and steep slopes that it regulates. For example, an isolated wetland of less than 5,000 square feet could be exempt from the regulations. Similarly, small steeply sloped areas could also be exempt, otherwise small areas with topographic changes or even man-made berms would be regulated, which would run contrary to the intent of the

proposal to control development on the most sensitive land areas in Orangetown. In order to assist with this process, additional staffing would be needed (i.e., a wetlands biologist or similar personnel), or a consultant could be hired on retainer in order to assist the Town in enforcing the environmental regulations.

Also, as part of this environmental protection legislation, the Town should develop storm-water management policies addressing both the quality and quantity of stormwater and the non-point source impacts associated with new development. This could include the creation of drainage districts for each of the Town's drainage areas (including Sparkill Creek, Hackensack Creek, Cherry Brook, Muddy Creek, and Pascack Brook) in conjunction with addressing existing flooding as well as the future effects of new development. Alternatively, the Town could designate the Sparkill and other waterbodies as Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) or create an overlay zone to encompass certain waterbodies, thus providing more specific regulations for these areas. Only one CEA currently exists in the Town, encompassing most of the hamlet of Upper Grand View.

### 3. Innovative Zoning Techniques

For vacant and underutilized parcels of land throughout the Town, there is the opportunity to implement innovative zoning techniques in order to achieve the Town's stated goals, specifically the preservation of open space while simultaneously encouraging development. Such zoning techniques include incentive zoning, floating zones (like Planned Unit Development (PUD)), and clustering, among others.

Incentive zoning is a technique whereby bonus provisions for public benefit activities is provided to the developer. For example, a developer could attain a density bonus for the provision of affordable or senior housing within a development. This method could be used

throughout the Town, possibly with multi-family housing proposals.

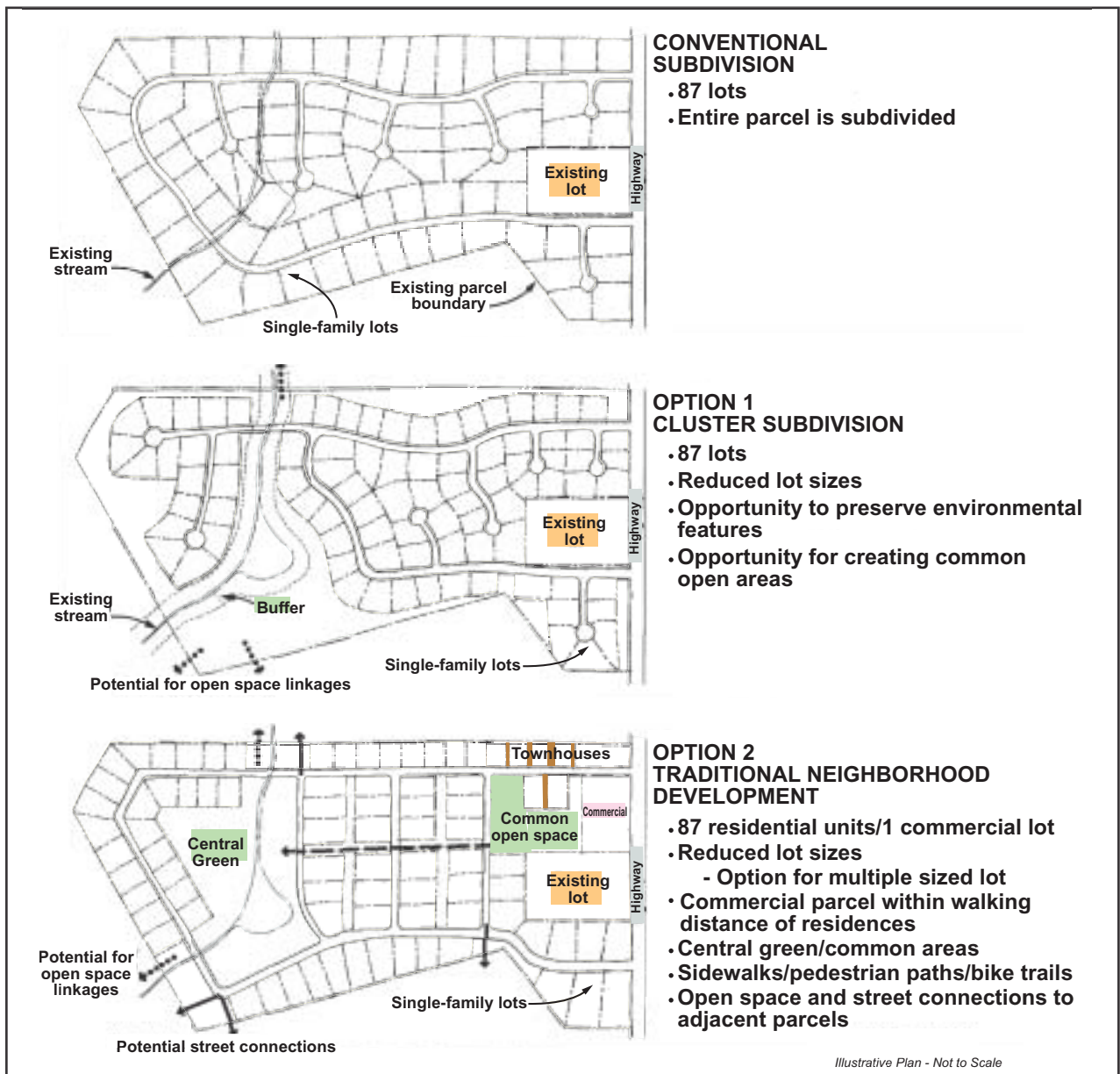
The potential future development of certain large tracts of land (including portions of the Rockland Psychiatric Center and the former Mercedes site) in an environmentally sensitive manner could be achieved through the application of innovative zoning techniques, whereby a mixture of development and open space uses would be designed for the site as a whole, with more flexible lot and bulk controls than would otherwise be available with conventional zoning. PUD, for example, is a type of floating zone, mapped on a case-by-case basis at the Town Board's discretion, upon the review and conceptual approval of plans for the subject site. PUD zoning would specify, in broad terms, the types of uses that would be considered, including both residential and certain non-residential uses, the amount of open space, and the maximum density in terms of dwelling units per acre or FAR. A decision on potential adoption of PUD or other innovative zoning will be made as part of an update of the Town Zoning Ordinance, when specific standards and controls are proposed.

An existing zoning technique that could be applied to parcels throughout the Town is clustering. Also known as average density, this method reduces lot sizes and bulk controls in a development without reducing the overall site density, and the land that is not used for development is considered permanent open space.

These zoning techniques could be designed to allow for density incentives for certain types of development, such as senior housing, which has lesser impacts than other housing options in terms of traffic generation, utility demands, community service utilization, school children generation, etc., or for a set-aside of affordable units for seniors or for families.

The Town has a number of options that it could pursue with regard to affordable housing. Oran-





getown could advance certain regulatory controls, including its existing accessory apartment regulations, and adopt new incentive zoning that would permit or require affordable housing set-asides in cluster developments, PUDs, senior housing, and/or multi-family developments. Another option would involve the actual development of an affordable housing community for first-time homebuyers, possibly targeted at public-sector employees, volunteers, etc., who have difficulty carrying mortgages and taxes,

given housing prices in Orangetown. A smaller project (perhaps 20 units) could be devised in conjunction with funding from County, State, and Federal sources. If sale prices were reduced to the \$200,000 range, housing would be affordable to families earning approximately \$75,000 per year. In order to pursue this option, the Town could identify a suitable site and work with the County Community Development Block Grant program to create an appropriate financing package.

#### 4. Senior Housing

Although senior citizen housing should certainly be a permitted use in the PUD regulations, the Town's overall zoning policies for senior housing need to be clearly stated in other portions of the Ordinance as well. A clearly established Town policy would provide opportunities for additional senior housing projects in the future. Contemporary definitions of various senior housing types, including independent living, congregate care, assisted living, skilled nursing, and life care communities – which differ significantly – need to be addressed. Appropriate standards for each type of living arrangement should be articulated in the Ordinance, recognizing the various impacts and levels of ability, from empty nesters and young seniors to older seniors in need of some personal or medical care. Parking requirements for each type of senior use, for example, vary considerably, with independent living units typically requiring 1.5 spaces per unit and assisted living and skilled nursing requiring 0.5 spaces per bed.



*An assisted living facility on Veterans Memorial Drive*

At present, the Zoning Ordinance has regulations for senior housing and for adult housing. Senior housing is defined as accommodations for persons 62 years of age or older, and 55 years of age for physically handicapped persons (the Town also has separate regulations for projects specifically designed for physically handicapped persons). Senior housing is permitted with a Town Board Special Permit on Town-owned land in the RG and MFR residential districts, and in the CC, CS, and CO non-residential districts. In each of these districts, there is a maximum density of 30 one-bedroom

units per acre. More thought and refinement needs to be given to this zoning. Clearly, the ownership issue needs to be addressed. Further, the one-bedroom requirement for senior developments with independent living units is too restrictive; younger seniors in independent living units often desire a second bedroom for visitors or grandchildren.

In contrast, adult housing, which allows accommodations for persons 50 years of age or older (but no child under the age of 18), is defined as attached housing, and is allowed in the R-15 and RG districts as a Planning Board conditional use. Adult housing, typically called age-restricted housing, is more often designed for those persons 55 years of age and older. Age-oriented communities often offer extensive recreational facilities, some with full-scale, 9-hole or executive golf courses. The zoning should anticipate this type of community and provide appropriate regulations and controls.

The minimum lot size for adult housing in Orangetown is 5 acres, and the maximum density is 5 dwelling units per acre, with not more than 4 townhomes in any one structure. Other regulations for adult housing follow the regulations for cluster developments. Interestingly, the overall density in the RG is 4 units per acre (10,000 s.f. lots), and in the R-15, it is approximately 3 units per acre (15,000 s.f. lots). In the MFR, the density ranges from 4.0 to 6.0 dwelling units per acre. The density for adult housing is similar to family housing in these districts, even though impacts would be significantly less.

Given the above, it is suggested that the density for adult housing (preferably with 55+ rather than 50+ as the age limit) should be increased to approximately 8 dwelling units per acre, responding to the need for this type of housing and the lesser impacts on traffic, community facilities, school age children, etc., with a requirement that 10% of the units be marketed at prices that would make them affordable to seniors whose total income is within 80% of the County median income.

In the Town’s more urban settings, such as downtown Pearl River, senior or adult housing could be of the independent living type, with easy access to shopping, transportation, personal services, and other amenities in the local business area. Here, the densities would be much higher, particularly if the housing was adaptive reuse of an existing building, e.g., a vacant movie theater in Pearl River. In other more outlying locations, this housing should offer a package of services, including transportation, recreation, and even convenience shops and amenities for its residents.

**5. Upzoning**

Wholesale changes in zoning map designations for large segments of Orangetown are not necessary since development patterns are reasonably well-established. However, two exceptions do exist where rezonings may be warranted. These include certain areas on Clausland Mountain, including Tweed Boulevard and Route 9W, both of which are zoned R-22. Although mostly built-up, development of remaining sites at R-40, 1-acre densities may be more appropriate in this locale, given its extremely hilly terrain.

A reduction in density in this area would help address flooding problems in downstream areas and would be more responsive to aesthetic problems evidenced by certain existing developments on portions of this steep and highly visible land.

A second possible upzoning involves certain public and quasi-public sites that the Comprehensive Plan proposed to remain as such, rather than be developed in accordance with underlying residential densities. These sites, which include existing public school district sites and properties owned by various colleges, could be rezoned to R-80. This zoning would be consistent with existing zoning for other public and quasi-public sites, including existing golf courses and the Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) site. If in the future a specific

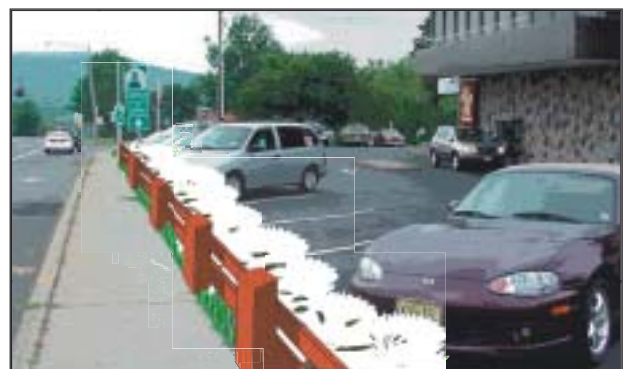
development plan were proposed, rezoning to another zoning district could be considered by the Town Board. Possible implementation techniques are listed in Table V-1.

**6. Landscaping Development Sites, Particularly the Parking Lots**

Site plans in a suburban community like Orangetown require extensive landscaping and buffer treatment along road frontages, along property lines where non-residential uses abut residential uses, and around and within parking lots. The Zoning Ordinance needs to establish minimum standards for landscape treatment. With some minor exceptions, it does not at present. With minimum standards, the Architectural and Community Appearance Board of Review could review and approve landscape planting plans that provide appropriate design treatment on a site-specific basis.



*Existing conditions*



*Aesthetics could be improved with decorative fencing and/or a low hedge.*

The current parking regulations should be amended to specifically require planting islands

**Table V-1  
Implementation Techniques**

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Potential Use in Orangetown</b>
Overlay Zoning	Additional land development controls applicable to a specific geographic area, superimposed over existing zoning.	The Clausland Mountain area could have a natural resource protection overlay, whereby steep slope areas would be preserved and clustering of development would be mandatory. The Route 303 Overlay Zone has been adopted.
Floating Zones	An unmapped zoning district that could potentially be applied to certain sites.	Senior citizen housing of various types and densities could be provided for in a floating zone with mapping requirements, limited to parcels of certain minimum size and with access characteristics, such as location on a State or County Road. Such zoning could establish traditional lot and bulk controls, and additional requirements for senior services.
Planned Unit Development (PUD)	A type of floating zone. Flexible zoning, within certain broad parameters and at the discretion of the Town Board, for large tracts of land, often permitting a mixture of uses with development realized over time.	A potential zoning technique for large sites like the Rockland Psychiatric Center. Useful for open space preservation and development of special types of housing.
Incentive Zoning	Bonus provisions for public benefit activities. Can be considered with PUD.	A tool for the possible creation of some affordable units as part of an overall development. Can be tied into all multi-family housing proposals and all residential rezoning.
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	Development potential sent from one property to another so that the sending parcel can be preserved.	May not be applicable in Orangetown. Receiving area would have to be appropriate for additional development. Sending and receiving areas would have to be within the same school district.
Recreational Zoning*	Zoning designed to permit existing recreational use only.	Discussed for private golf courses and Kaufmann Campgrounds. However, it raises serious economic issues for each site. If considered, it should be tied to a low-density cluster provision to allow some economic return on the land.

Tool	Description	Potential Use in Orangetown
Conservation Easements	A voluntary agreement between a private owner and governmental entity or not-for-profit to limit development (the conservation easement provides tax benefits for the property owner).	This may be an additional tool to reduce development potential within the two open space corridors in Town. This tool is currently used on a limited basis and are the only wetland and steep slope regulations the Town currently has. Language in the Town Code may need to be updated.
Mandatory Clustering (Section 278 of Town Law), also known as Average Density	Reduction of lot sizes and other lot and bulk controls, but not overall site density. Land not utilized for development would be permanent open space.	Authority could be granted to the Planning Board, on a Town-wide basis, for all sites or in conjunction with other tools.
Critical Environmental Area (CEA) Designation**	Designated location requires intensive environmental review.	Could be applied to additional areas, such as the Lake Tappan-Hackensack riverway and the Sparkill Creek area.***Language in Town Code may need to be updated.
Wetland Protection	Regulations to limit impacts on wetlands, waterbodies, streams, and adjacent areas through a permitting procedure.	Could be applicable to protect areas around Lake Tappan, Sparkill Creek, and other waterbodies and wetlands.
Ridge Line Protection	Limit development in areas prone to adverse visual impacts.	Could apply to portions of Clausland Mountain, such as the Route 9W/ Tweed Boulevard Area.
Steep Slope Protection	Regulations to mitigate impact on steep terrain.	Could apply primarily to Clausland Mountain, possibly in conjunction with an overlay district.
Stormwater Management Control Regulations	Addresses the impacts of development on the quality and quantity of stormwater.	Could be considered to protect Lake Tappan, Sparkill Creek, and other waterbodies in Town.
Land Banking of Required Parking	Waiver of the paving of required parking, with landscaping provided on an interim basis.	Already in use; its application could be expanded to additional sites.

\* Recreational zoning, which has been upheld in the Town of Mamaroneck, needs to be carefully considered with regard to an owner’s rights to a fair return on the land.

\*\* Previous SEQRA regulations made all activities in a CEA Type I Actions.

\*\*\*One CEA currently exists in Orangetown, in the hamlet of Upper Grand View.

within large parking lots, specifying that not more than approximately 15 cars could be parked in one aisle without a raised landscape island. Street trees both within large parking lots and along adjacent roadways should be required. Where parking lots abut sidewalks, a low hedge or low decorative fence should be required to separate pedestrian areas from parked cars.

Throughout the Ordinance, many of the parking ratios are high, often requiring more parking than needed, based on industry standards. This includes, for example, parking requirements for office uses at 1 per 200 square feet and industrial, research, and warehouse uses at 1 per 300 square feet. Some of these requirements should be adjusted to reflect true demand (e.g., office ratios at approximately 1:300, research ratios at approximately 1:500, and warehouse ratios as low as 1:1,000 should be considered). For some uses, rather than simply lowering these and other standards, the Town should amend the Ordinance to add specific language that would authorize a waiver of excess spaces, on a case-by-case basis. Such a waiver would require documentation, presented to the Planning Board as part of the site plan approval process, showing that parking demand would be less than the zoning ratio would otherwise require. If convinced, the Board would have the applicant draw the full number of spaces on the site plan, but the plan would clearly mark those spaces where pavement is waived, and where landscaping would be provided in lieu of the parking.

If at any time after approval the Town determines that some or all of the waived parking is needed, it would recall the site plan and require paving of the spaces. In the meantime, additional landscaping would be realized on the site.

## 7. Oversized Houses on Small Lots

Throughout the New York region, new single-family construction has resulted in exceedingly

large homes, typically in excess of 4,000, 5,000 and 6,000 square feet (s.f.). With garages often provided on the ground floor level, the resulting 2½- and 3-story structures could visually conflict with older neighboring homes that are often more modest in scale and have mature landscaping. Where the oversized homes are constructed on an infill basis, neighborhood concern is high.

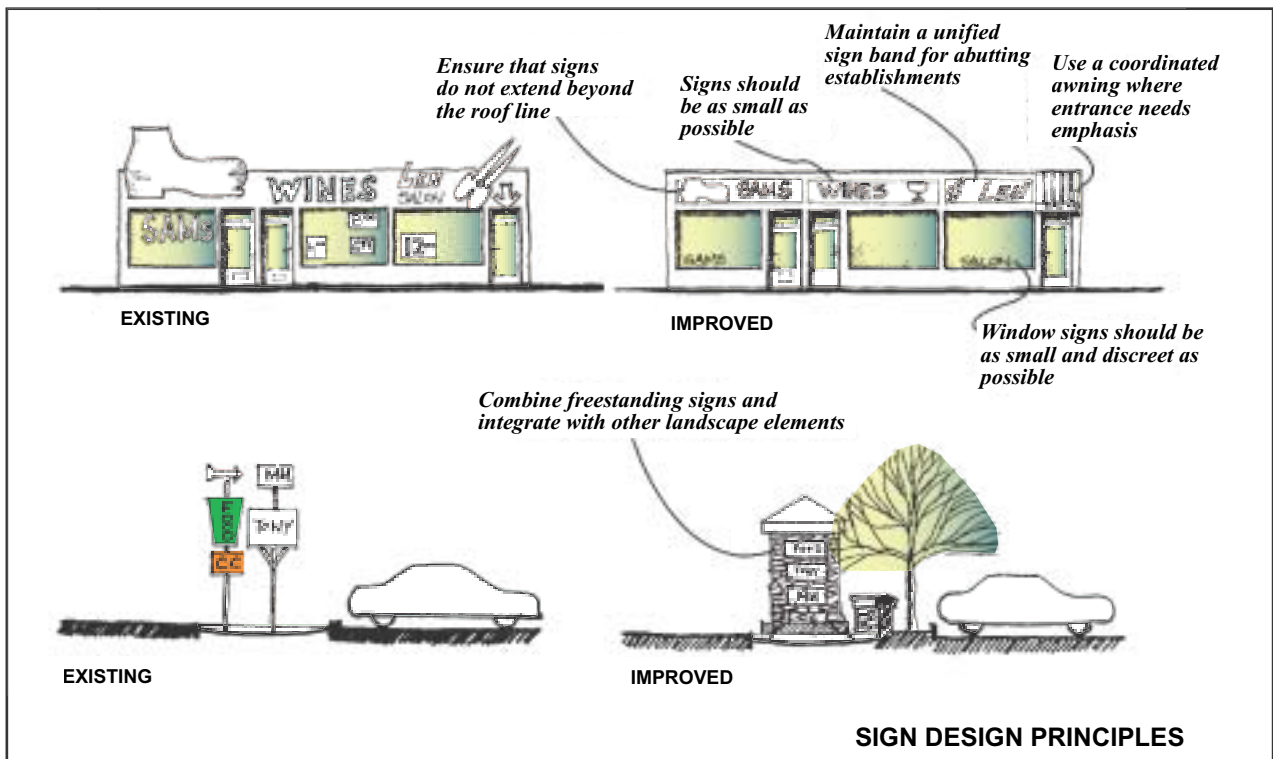
In Orangetown, the existing zoning regulations prescribe a maximum FAR for single-family homes, a technique now being utilized by many communities to limit excessively large single-family house sizes. In the R-80, for example, the FAR is 0.10, thereby limiting the house size to 8,000 s.f. on an 80,000 s.f. lot. In the R-40, the 0.15 FAR would allow a 6,000 s.f. home on a 40,000 s.f. lot. In the R-15, the FAR is 0.2, thereby limiting the house size to 3,000 s.f. on a 15,000 s.f. lot. In the 10,000 s.f. RG district, the 0.3 FAR would allow 3,000 s.f. homes.

Although the FARs for some of these districts could be lowered, it may be more important for the Town to consider additional zoning provisions relating to single-family development, specifically a requirement for maximum impervious surface (building coverage and paved area), which would ensure a minimum amount of green area per lot, and a revision to the current regulation to specify maximum height in feet and stories, rather than the current regulations that measure height in inches from the property line. In addition, the Orangetown Street Specifications for Subdivisions need to be updated as well.

## 8. Other Design Issues

Orangetown has a number of architectural and design controls dealing with building and community appearance, historic preservation, and sign design.

- The Sign Ordinance, which sets forth standards for size and location of signage should be supplemented with sign design



guidelines, providing examples of quality signage that applicants could utilize as a basis for their proposed signage. Guidelines should emphasize storefront and free-standing signs, with photographs and good and bad examples illustrating materials, color schemes, lettering, and lighting. Lighting issues (i.e., extensive lighting, lighting design, etc.) are the responsibility of the Architecture and Community Appearance Board of Review under site plan review.

- Although not part of any regulations, the public signage in Orangetown should also be examined. In many locations, there are far too many signs. In each of the hamlet centers, wood-carved identification signs, like those in Pearl River, would be desirable. The Town should also continue to install signage that has a more traditional appearance, particularly in the historic districts and areas. A coordinated package of well-designed directional signs to public buildings, parking lots, etc., should also be

considered. Well-designed public signage would provide a model that private sector signage could emulate.

- The land development regulations also need to be revised and updated, addressing contemporary road and cul-de-sac design standards and potential traffic-calming techniques, such as speed bumps, sidewalk bumpouts, paved crosswalks, etc. In addition, the Town Code regulations regarding land reserved for recreation purposes in subdivisions also needs to be updated to reflect the increasingly suburban character of the Town. Regulations or guidelines regarding the backs of houses facing the road and regulations regarding flag lots should be included either in the Subdivision Regulations or in the Zoning Ordinance. A comprehensive update of both the development regulations and the Zoning Ordinance is recommended.
- The Town recently enacted a property maintenance law to control boarded-up

windows, trash, debris, and other aesthetic problems on private properties. The Town should closely monitor this law to see if any additions or revisions are necessary.

## 9. Zoning in Pearl River

As previously noted, commercial zoning in Pearl River should be changed to reflect a number of proposals of the Plan. This includes the CC zoning on North Middletown Road, the CS on Central Avenue, and the additional commercial and industrial zoning generally to the south and west of the Central Avenue business center.

The suggested zoning changes should be designed to strengthen Central Avenue as a mixed-use downtown area by adding additional opportunities for development, while limiting and controlling retail uses outside its immediate confines. Uses along Central Avenue should be built to the sidewalk, continuing the pedestrian scale for the downtown area. The current FAR in the CS is 1.0. This could be increased to 1.5 to encourage additional development on Central Avenue or near the railroad station, the latter of which may be a candidate for a mixed-use development combining apartments and stores<sup>50</sup>. Here and in the other hamlet centers, the mixed-use concept could be further encouraged by permitting mixed-use by either special permit or as-of-right.

Along Central Avenue in Pearl River, the CS should permit outdoor dining, for example, to encourage more pedestrian ambiance along the street. Apartment development should be allowed, possibly within the vacant movie theater, particularly if efforts to secure a theater reuse are unsuccessful. Work/live space should be permitted for artists and designers, and incubator space should be permitted for new business development. Parking standards should be adjusted to recognize the existence of on-street and off-street public parking lots.

South and west of Central Avenue, existing zoning should be changed to residential on those blocks and properties where non-residential uses do not predominate. Housing sites should be identified in these locations to provide additional patrons for Central Avenue businesses.

In the sloping CS area to the east of the fire station along Central Avenue, existing zoning should be changed to preclude an expansion of traditional downtown retail uses. This area is more appropriate for conversion of existing houses to professional offices, boutiques, and other uses that would complement the existing structures and not drain retail business from the heart of the Pearl River downtown area immediately to the west.



*Along Central Avenue in Pearl River, conversions and adaptive reuse of existing structures should occur*

Along North Middletown Road, the CC zoning needs to be amended to require additional landscape treatment along the road's frontage and to allow multi-family development as part of the mixture of permitted uses. This area has some attractive, nicely landscaped shopping areas, and some classic strip commercial centers, where parking lots and storefronts' signage are particularly unattractive. Certain commercial uses, e.g., fast food establishments, gas stations, and other auto-related uses, including

<sup>50</sup> Other currently zoned CS areas should have lower FARs reflecting their current density of development. An FAR of 1.0 would be appropriate in Tappan and Sparkill, for example, while a lower FAR of 0.2 or 0.3 would be appropriate in the more suburban local business areas in Orangeburg and Blauvelt, where private parking lots serve groups of stores.



conversions of gas stations to convenience stores, should be limited and strictly controlled, with site access, signage, and landscaping carefully reviewed prior to approvals.

## 10. Administration

Although the centralized administration for the Office of Building, Zoning, Planning Administration and Enforcement is effective, the planning department could use additional staff services to support various boards and agencies. In general, planning and zoning in Orangetown is complicated by multi-agency reviews required by the Zoning Ordinance.

Among the multi-agency issues are the extensive listing of Special Permit and Conditional Permit uses in the Ordinance. Some of these uses have no site-specific standards, and others, like senior housing, have standards that need to be updated. Moreover, the basis for designating one approving agency - Town Board, Planning Board, or Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) - over another is unclear and inconsistent.

The Ordinance should be revised with more consistency given to the approval process. The Town Board should review Special Permit applications for proposals with broad public policy issues involved. The Planning Board should focus on uses that have land use or site planning implications. Although this would give the Planning Board the majority of the cases, the Board reviews most of these same cases, in any event, as part of site plan approval. The Zoning Board of Appeals should focus its attention on cases requiring extensive documentation or with legal implications. Such cases are more appropriate for the ZBA's quasi-judicial role and responsibilities in the planning process. Where uses are similar -- such as nursery schools and day care centers (the Planning Board and ZBA currently grant approvals), various types of group homes (the Town Board and ZBA currently grant approvals), and senior housing and adult housing (Town Board and

Planning Board currently grant approvals) -- the approving agency should be the same board. This would help the designated approving agency understand issues and recall previous applications with similar circumstances.

The relationship between the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board is often confusing when variances are required for major subdivisions and large-scale site plans. One method to address this issue is to have applicants study an as-of-right plan as an alternative in its SEQRA-required environmental studies, then compare the as-of-right to their preferred plan, documenting the necessity of the requested variances. In addition, the ZBA approval of use variances should be limited and not used by applicants who are really seeking zone changes from the Town Board. In many locations throughout the Town, zoning district lines split individual properties. This situation may lead to requests for variances that could be eliminated if the zoning map were amended to avoid split zoning. ZBA procedures relating to non-conformity also need to be examined based upon past experience, particularly where zoning changes are proposed and legal non-conforming situations result.

In addition, the performance standards in the Ordinance are currently addressed by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The standards should be updated and shifted to the Planning Board, which is more familiar with such matters given its frequent role as lead agency for environmental reviews under SEQRA.

The Zoning Ordinance as a whole contains excellent provisions. However, its structure, with the use of extensive tables and notes, is particularly confusing and somewhat contradictory. It certainly is not a user-friendly document. The Ordinance should have a comprehensive updating, not just a series of amendments to implement the Comprehensive Plan and Route 303 Sustainable Development Study proposals outlined above.

**B. OTHER IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES**

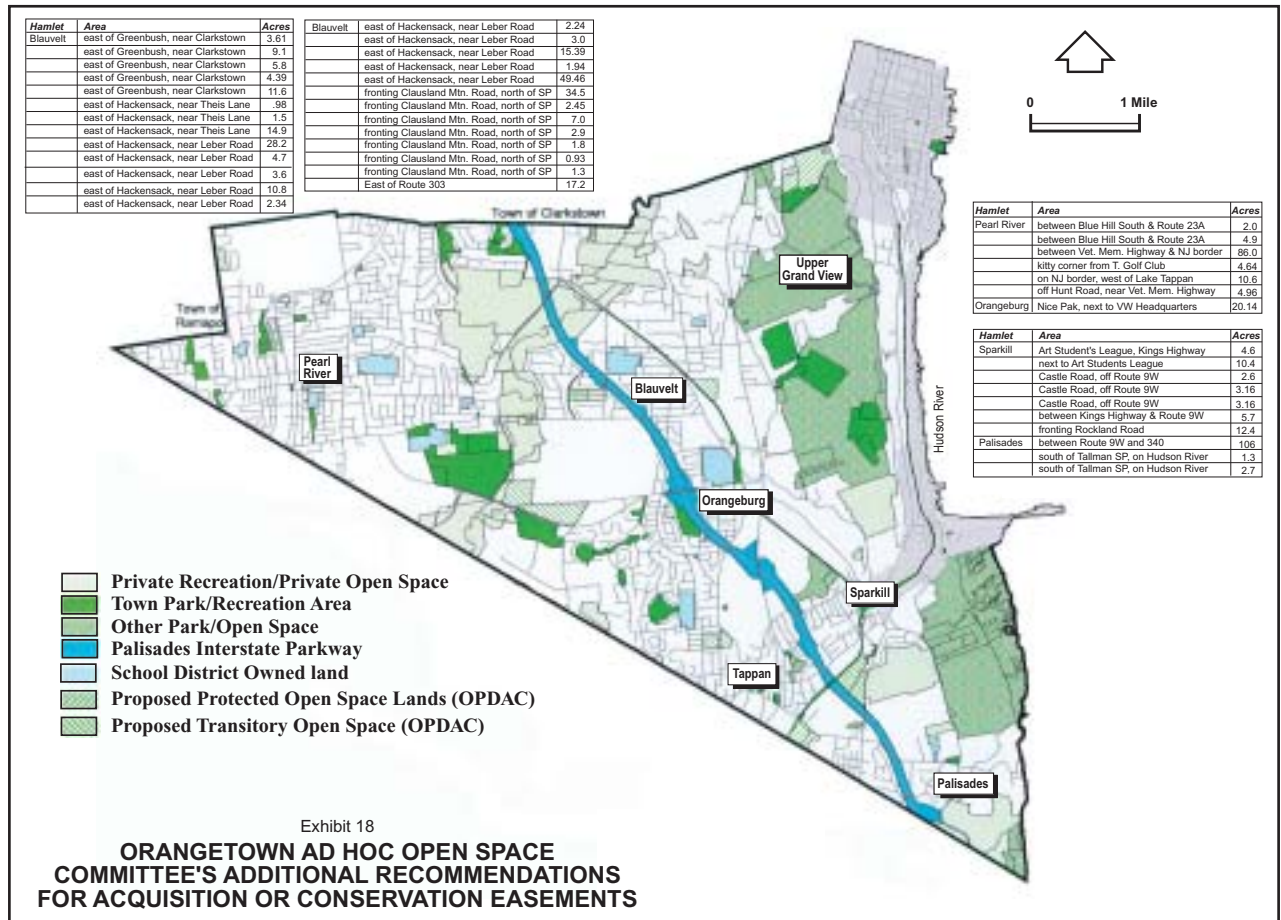
The implementation tools previously described generally fall within the category of local ordinances and related land development policies. Although essential to Comprehensive Plan implementation, these regulations and policies need to be augmented with direct government expenditures for open space acquisition, recreation facility development, downtown revitalization, road improvements, etc. With its resources, coupled with funding from the County, State, and Federal government, Orangetown should proceed systematically to program, fund, and construct all such capital projects.

Open space preservation techniques include options other than funding from governmental sources. Site plan and subdivision approvals can result in open space either through set-asides of certain land or through payment of

recreation fees. Incentive zoning can be utilized to produce additional open space on a given site, in exchange for increased development densities. Planned Unit Development (PUD) regulations are a vehicle that may be useful in this regard. Other techniques include the use of conservation easements and local trusts to augment public sector action to acquire additional open space sites identified by the Town. See Table V-1 for a variety of potential implementation techniques for environmental preservation.

The Orangetown Ad Hoc Open Space Committee has recommended a number of parcels for potential acquisition or conservation easements (see Exhibit 18).

In addition, this Plan recommends the establishment of a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC), which, in its capacity, would



act as an advisory group to the Town Board and Planning Board on various environmental issues.

The Town can also seek to implement other portions of the Comprehensive Plan by providing economic incentives to the private sector. Joint public/private partnerships for major redevelopment projects are occurring throughout the region at a variety of locations, including sites adjacent to commuter railroad stations. If such opportunities were realized in the future along the West Shore in Orangeburg or adjacent to the Pearl River station, the Town could: provide certain capital funds for public improvements, utilize its powers of Eminent Domain under Article 15 of New York State law to assist in land acquisition, and/or work with the State and the County IDA on financing, tax abatement, or other economic incentives.

In downtown Pearl River, another opportunity for a public/private partnership could relate to the establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) to complement already initiated urban design improvements in that area. A BID could help fund marketing and promotional companies and could also sponsor or undertake clean up and maintenance programs.

At RPC, a coordinated Town effort, working with State agencies such as the Empire State Development Corporation and prospective developers, could achieve the Comprehensive Plan's development and open space objectives for that key site.

## C. NEXT STEPS

Following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town should move ahead on a short-term action program that includes:

1. A comprehensive revision of the Zoning Ordinance and related land development regulations, including the environmental protection regulations and watercourse diversion regulations, senior citizen zoning recommendations, and others, as called for in the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Continuation of the downtown revitalization program in Pearl River, including the visual design, zoning, and promotional efforts described in the Plan. As the Pearl River design improvements are realized, similar efforts, albeit on a smaller scale, should be planned and implemented in the other hamlet centers.
3. The acquisition and development of additional open space and recreational facilities, including portions of the Rockland Psychiatric Center site.
4. Continued implementation of the Overlay Zoning District and safety improvements along Route 303 as called for in the Route 303 Sustainable Development Study.

It is important to note that this Plan, or the Generic Environmental Impact Statement that preceded Plan adoption, will not be utilized to replace the need for future site-specific environmental reviews for zone changes, site plans, subdivisions, etc. The Town of Orangetown Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide reference and policy guidance for subsequent analyses, as required by SEQRA.

*Appendix*

