

Ancram Comprehensive Plan



**Prepared by the Town of Ancram NY
Comprehensive Plan Committee**

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Volume 2 available at Town Hall

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Overview

In 20 years, Ancram residents want Ancram to look and feel much as it does today.

We want to maintain its rural character, protect the environment, ground water, working farms and open spaces and encourage its small town, community-oriented activities.

But Ancram residents also want the problems facing the Community in 2009 to be fixed, and fixed as soon as possible. We want affordable housing for seniors and young people, the Town centers to be revitalized to help support, retain and attract businesses and jobs to the Community, and residential and commercial development consistent with the desire to protect farmland, open space and the environment.

And while everyone recognizes that we face difficult, long standing problems which will not be easy to resolve, the Community wants to become more aggressive and urgent about implementing plans to solve these problems.

Ancram is made up of a variety of “constituencies.” The Vision, Goals and Strategies in this Plan are based on extensive participation by all these constituencies in the planning process. While each of these groups has a different perspective on things, we all agree on one thing: we all want Ancram to maintain its unique qualities and special character, and we all want to help figure out how to do that for the benefit of the entire Community.

The Ancram Comprehensive Plan Committee operated with two principles. First, conclusions and decisions were based on public input and expert advice, not on the personal opinions of Committee members. Second, decisions were reached by consensus, not 5-4 or 4-3 votes. As a philosophy, the Committee tried to balance and incorporate all perspectives. As a result, the Ancram Comprehensive Plan outlines an approach which supports agriculture, open space, rural character, and the environment, and at the same time encourages affordable housing, business investment, job creation, and prudent residential and commercial development.

Crucial to the long term success of the Plan is developing a spirit of trust and cooperation among residents and between residents and Town government. Transparent government decision-making and improved communications are important steps to building the more unified community we need to accomplish the challenges before us.

The Comprehensive Planning Process

New York State law grants municipalities the authority to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans. As defined by law, a comprehensive plan is a document that identifies goals, objectives, principles, and policies for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth, and development of a community. A comprehensive plan is long-term in nature, provides guidance to municipal leaders, government agencies, community organizations, local businesses, and residents, and helps to ensure that the community's needs are met, both now and in the future. New York's laws require that local zoning laws be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan provides the backbone for the local zoning law.

Ancram's Comprehensive Plan is an example of consensus building among varying interest groups to create a vision, goals, strategies and an implementation plan for the Town. A variety of tools was used to gather public opinion throughout the planning process. The Plan incorporates the knowledge and skills of a citizen advisory committee, special interest groups, the general public, and planning experts. The process was organized to answer three primary questions:

1. What are the current conditions in the Town of Ancram?
2. What is the future vision and direction desired by the community?
3. What can the community do to attain its vision?

This effort has led to the creation of realistic goals, strategies and recommendations that can be implemented through policy changes, program initiatives, organizational changes, grant acquisition, regulatory updates, and other actions that will guide the Town toward a successful future.

The Plan is based on a completely open process with extensive public input. All documents, maps, meeting notices, and meeting minutes have been posted to the Town website. Weekly meetings and periodic feedback workshops have been open to the public. Weekly emails and numerous mailings have been sent throughout the process to inform community members of the Plan's progress.

Listed below are the planning events and milestones that took place over a 26-month period from April 2007 through June 2009:

- Weekly, open Comprehensive Plan Committee Meetings
- Community Workshops to identify positives, negatives, and a future vision
- A Town-wide survey
- Topic meetings with organizations and individuals
- Development of a town-wide Inventory and Profile document
- Development of a Build-out Analysis
- GIS mapping of all important Town features

- Assessment of Town Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- Development of a 2030 Vision Statement
- Development of goals and recommended strategies to attain them
- Workshops for feedback on the survey, vision, goals, and strategies
- A Water Study, done by the New York State Rural Water Association
- Evaluation of the 7/82 and 82/8/3 intersections by Laberge Group
- Analysis of three buildings in the hamlet of Ancram by Laberge Group
- An analysis of septic options for the hamlet of Ancram by Laberge Group
- Hamlet revitalization concept study by Synthesis Landscape Architects
- Development of an Implementation Plan
- Special Town Board meeting to review the draft Plan
- Comprehensive Plan Committee sponsored public hearing
- Review of the draft Plan with the Planning Board
- Presentation of the Comprehensive Plan to the Town Board

Going forward, the Ancram Town Board will be responsible for adopting and implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The major steps in this process are:

- Town Board review and public hearings on the Comp Plan
- Required review of the Plan by the County Planning Board
- State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) determination
- Adopting the Plan by a resolution of the Town Board
- Appointing a Zoning Revisions Committee
- Developing a Comp Plan Implementation management process

Public Participation and Input

Four hundred thirty four people (a statistically valid 29% response rate representing about 40% of the adults in Ancram), representing a cross section of Ancram residents, participated in the survey conducted in December 2007. Most people (over 90%) felt it was very important to protect groundwater, streams, ponds, wetlands, and to maintain open space and agriculture. Improving town government, town centers (specifically Ancram), expanding recreational opportunities (especially trails), and attracting small businesses and restaurants were other important topics to participants. Residents view agriculture and the environment as top priorities. Desired improvements in town government concentrated on enhancing communication and information about town initiatives and activities, and strengthening the building/code enforcement process. A strong majority of participants did not want to encourage residential development but supported promoting affordable housing opportunities, senior housing, and requiring new residential development to protect open space and the environment. Single family dwellings are the preferred housing type. There was not much support for providing municipal water or sewer services or expanding the size of our hamlets. People did not support large apartment buildings or large subdivisions.

Participants at the Community workshops held in the Fall of 2007 identified the following things as the important positive features of Ancram: rural, scenic and agricultural character; farmland and open lands still exist; locally grown foods are available; the fire department and rescue squads; sense of community is strong; the environment is protected and important to the community; lack of big box stores and large businesses that don't fit into the town's rural character; lack of large development; outdoor recreation is available; well maintained roads and a good highway network, and an accessible government.

Participants at the Community workshops in the Fall of 2007 also identified the following features as the most important negative features of Ancram: poor appearance and maintenance of buildings; speeding truck traffic through the centers of Ancram and Ancramdale; the dangerous 7/82 intersection; lack of business and economic development; concerns over land uses; lack of cell service and general lack of services; loss of farms and decline of agriculture; high taxes; lack of recreation opportunities; difficulty in finding affordable housing; lack of communication and conflicts among citizens and between citizens and the Town government.

Participants in April 2008 workshops endorsed the Vision and supporting Goals recommended by the Committee, and participants in workshops in February 2009 reviewed and endorsed the Strategies proposed to attain the Plan's Vision and Goals.

Profile and Inventory Report

The Profile and Inventory document describes Ancram as it is today, based on available statistics, special studies and extensive mapping. The report compiled and analyzed population, housing, income, and other demographic data as well as environmental and community resources.

Major demographic findings include an increasing population (a 13.6% increase 1980-2000), an aging, older population, an increase in the number of houses (29%) disproportionate to the increase in population, and a decrease in housing affordability. Land use development has slowed since 2000 but there are now an equal number of acres used for housing as for agriculture. There has been an increase in traffic volume on all state roads through Ancram.

Ancram's environment includes several significant wetland areas (Drowned Land Swamp) and ecological areas (Taconic Ridge and Harlem Valley) that are home to a diversity of wildlife. Steep slopes, floodplains, and poor soils are important natural resources features that highly influence both the natural and man-made environment. Numerous scenic areas have been identified including the Route 22 corridor, Fox Hill Road, Saw Chuck Road, Cottontail Road, Taconic State Park, Drowned Land Swamp, and Round Ball Mountain.

Ancram consists of 27,475 acres which are classified as follows:

- 9,751 acres on 98 parcels are agricultural, averaging 99 acres
- 7,758 acres on 153 parcels are rural estates, averaging 50 acres
- 5,581 acres on 304 parcels represent vacant lands, averaging 18 acres
- 1,636 acres on 623 parcels are residential, averaging 2.63 acres
- 880 acres on 8 parcels are wild, forested, and conservation lands
- 628 acres are roads
- 354 acres are recreational land
- 333 acres on 25 parcels are commercial and industrial lands
- 56 acres are large bodies of water
- 43 acres are community service lands

Ground Water Study

The New York Rural Water Association examined the Town's water resources and geology to help Ancram understand its groundwater resources. This study found that some areas in Town have development constraints due to low water capacities. Ancram has unconsolidated aquifer resources that do have higher water yield available, but these areas are very susceptible to contamination from land use activities. The study identified areas of high sensitivity to surface activities.

The recommendations included establishing a development density not to exceed an average of one septic system per 3.5 acres; zoning changes to establish minimum standards for some kinds of development; use of an aquifer or groundwater protection overlay or other standards to limit high-risk activities, further consideration of potential impacts to public water systems, and non-regulatory actions that could be implemented by the Town.

Build-Out Analysis

A build-out analysis estimates the amount of development that can occur if all developable land is built according to current land use regulations. The build-out analysis considers environmental constraints that would limit development in certain areas. It does not predict when, at what rate, or where development would occur first.

The analysis resulted in a build-out capacity of 5,337 potential new residences in Ancram under current zoning regulations, compared to the approximately 900 we have now. If all water, wetland, and flood hazards are considered as non-buildable, the potential development capacity is 4,553 new residences. If steep slopes over 15% are considered as non-buildable, the potential development capacity of the Town is 2483 new residences.

Studies Relating to Hamlet Revitalization

Additional studies done by the engineering firm Laberge Group and Synthesis, LLP, a landscape architectural and planning firm, to assist in developing strategies for hamlet revitalization, are summarized below:

- **NYS Route 82/7 Intersection in Ancram:** The reduced sight distances and skewed approach at this intersection can be improved through methods to increase intersection awareness, reduce sight constraints by making grade changes, and provide better alignment by reducing the curvature of Route 82 and realigning County Route 7. Several immediate, low cost methods to improve the intersection were recommended while plans and funding are put in place for the major work.
- **NYS 82 and County Routes 8/3 in Ancramdale:** Although sight distances were deemed acceptable at this intersection, developing a tighter 4-way stop and realigning CR 3 could reduce the number of accidents that occur at this intersection.
- **Structural Assessment of 3 buildings in Ancram:** The best candidate for saving and rehabilitation is the Tin Smith House. Stiehle House has some potential for rehabilitation, but it needs extensive work. The Porter Building has the least potential for rehabilitation due to extensive deterioration. Costs to renovate these structures could run between \$200,000 and \$300,000 each. Costs to remove and rebuild them could run between \$300,000 and \$400,000 each.
- **Septic Options for Ancram:** Two alternative small scale community septic systems for the center of Ancram were analyzed, one serving the 4 buildings in the immediate town center which could house approximately 15 families, and the other serving approximately 50 families living within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the center of Ancram. In both cases, the cost per year per dwelling would be in the range of \$2500 to \$3500.
- **Ancram Hamlet Revitalization:** To resolve the 82/7 intersection problem and create a new Ancram town center, which could attract retail and mixed commercial and residential uses, would require carving back the retaining walls on the private properties on the north and south corners of Route 7 to improve sight distances, and to move the southern section of Route 7 so it intersects with Route 82 at right angles. This would require relocating the Fire House. To complete this entire project would require either obtaining the cooperation of private property owners and the Fire District, or the Town purchasing the parcels needed to accomplish the intersection work.

Plan Implementation and Priorities

The Ancram Town Board is responsible for adopting and implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Although the Comprehensive Plan is not yet complete or adopted, Town Board has started implementing many of the Plan's recommendations, which were based on Community input and reflect a consensus of what the residents of Ancram want to see happen.

The next steps in the Plan implementation process are for the Town Board to:

- hold a public hearing,
- establish implementation priorities,
- adopt the Comprehensive Plan,
- appoint a Zoning Revisions Committee to revise the Town's zoning and subdivision laws to be consistent with the new Comprehensive Plan, and
- develop a Comprehensive Plan implementation management and review process.

Top 10 Things to Know

“Keep Ancram the Way It Looks Now, and Make a Few Things Better.”

These were the most important messages from the Community during the two year Comprehensive Planning process. Here is how the Plan approaches these objectives:

1. Envisioning the future. The Comprehensive Plan identifies where town residents want Ancram to be in 20 years, and describes how to get there. It is not a law, but it provides the basis for laws. In fact, New York State requires us to base local zoning laws on a Comprehensive Plan. The Plan addresses all the issues identified during the planning process, represents a consensus of what the community wants, and provides guidance for town, county and state officials as they decide local issues.

2. Building from community input. The Plan’s vision, goals, and strategies are based on community input, fact-finding, and expert advice. More than 225 people participated in workshops; 434 people, a statistically valid 29% response rate, responded to a town-wide survey, representing about 40% of the adults living in Ancram; and more individuals and groups contributed at open Committee meetings. The Committee thoroughly reviewed findings by the NYS Rural Water Association, accredited engineers, and other subject matter experts and included this information in the Plan.

3. Funding development. The Plan recommends using federal, state, and private grants, not the town’s tax money, as the primary way to fund Plan initiatives.

4. Identifying town priorities. More than 90% of survey respondents identified the top priorities as encouraging agriculture, protecting water and the environment, and preserving open space. That’s why the Plan proposes:

- zoning changes to require open-space development for major (five or more lots) subdivisions to protect 60% of a parcel’s acreage;
- a site plan review process to steer building away from farmland and environmentally sensitive areas;
- implementation of the 2008 Groundwater Protection Plan, which recommends an average density of one home per 3.5 acres outside the hamlets;
- development of an Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan.

5. Attracting businesses and jobs. The Plan considers agricultural businesses and non-agricultural businesses as equally important economic activities, as both provide jobs and economic opportunities for Town residents. The Plan recommends that the Town create an economic development committee and plan, change zoning to expand our commercial districts and mixed commercial/residential uses, allow for additional farm-related businesses and establish a “floating zone” process to evaluate the concept and location of any business not already permitted in a zone, subject to the size and scale requirements of the floating zone law. The Plan also recommends that the size and scale of new businesses be consistent with the rural character of the Town.

These recommendations are designed to make Ancram more “farm and business friendly”, and recognize that our businesses and our farms provide the jobs necessary to sustain and improve the Community.

6. Supporting affordable housing. The Plan recommends zoning changes to allow flexible building lots as small as ½-acre in the hamlets and, subject to the 3.5 acre average density guideline, outside the hamlets) plus accessory apartments in homes, garages and barns and multi-unit homes town-wide.

7. Securing grants for town centers. The Plan suggests securing additional Community Development Block Grant funding to develop and implement plans to improve our Town centers, stimulate our local economy to support, retain and attract business and jobs, and to develop affordable housing.

8. Improving the community. To improve a sense of community and community services, the Plan proposes increasing town government transparency through regular email and written communication, posting financial information on the town website, annual meetings focused on long-term issues, support for historic preservation and volunteerism, and programs for seniors and youth.

9. Promoting efficiency and effectiveness. To make sure the Town has adequate infrastructure and uses tax dollars effectively, the Plan recommends that the Town Board consider appointing a Financial Analysis Advisory Committee to assist Town officials examine major capital projects and long-term community needs, develop a Five-Year Town Capital Plan, establish and explore shared municipal services.

10. Keeping the Plan Current. The Plan recommends that the Town reviews and, if necessary, modifies zoning on an annual basis, and formally reviews and updates the Comprehensive Plan at least every five years.

Top 6 Zoning Improvements

The rural, scenic, agricultural character of the Town is what people most want to preserve and protect. At the same time, we want to increase opportunities for affordable housing, business development and jobs. To achieve these goals, we need to change our zoning. The 6 most important changes are:

1. Protect Open-Space: To protect agriculture, groundwater, the environment and open space, the Plan proposes that all major subdivisions be required to leave at least 60% of the parcel in “open space,” and to steer all new building away from prime farmlands and environmentally sensitive areas.

To protect ground water, the Plan proposes moving to an average lot size (not a minimum lot size) of 3.5 acres per home outside the hamlets, which the 2008 Groundwater Protection Plan Study recommends as the maximum level of development for Ancram given our soil types and current groundwater recharge rates.

The 60% open space guidelines are required for major (over four lot) subdivisions, recommended for minor subdivisions, and not applicable to individual building lots.

2. Provide Lot Size Flexibility: Ancram’s current zoning outside the hamlets requires you have a *minimum* of 3 acres to build on. The Plan proposes moving to an *average* lot size system, which eliminates the need for a minimum of 3 acres. This flexible system allows lots as small as ½ acre if water and septic are available and approved by the County Board of Health, as long as the *average* of all the lots in a subdivision is 3.5 acres.

For example, if you had a 35-acre parcel, with the 3.5 acre average lot size requirement you could subdivide and develop ten lots. These ten lots do not have to be 3.5 acres each – they can be any size you want to make them, as long as you end up with no more than ten lots and at least 60% “open space” overall. For example, you could have nine ½-acre lots and one 30.5-acre lot.

For property owners, this means more flexibility, and for property buyers, it means the chance for smaller building lots than are possible under current zoning.

3. Make Zoning More “Business Friendly”: Home based businesses, standalone businesses and agricultural businesses are all equally important economic activities. Current zoning restricts the size of the commercial/business districts in Town. The Plan recommends expanding the size of the commercial/business zones, expanding commercial and mixed-use commercial-residential uses, and permitting agriculture-related businesses in the Agricultural Zoning District outside the hamlets. In addition, the Plan supports home-based businesses, and recommends establishing a “floating zone” process which would allow the Town to evaluate any business not envisioned in the zoning plan and decide if it is suitable for the Community.

4. Expand Affordable Housing: The Plan allows accessory apartments in homes, barns and garages and multi-family homes in all parts of Town, which are not now permitted. In addition the Plan recommends establishing an expanded mixed-use business/residential zone in Ancram and Ancramdale with ½ acre lot sizes, water and septic permitting. Lot size flexibility also offers opportunities for smaller, more affordable lots outside the hamlets.

5. Common Sense Design Standards: The Plan recommends using design standards in the hamlets and for commercial and major subdivision development to insure that all new development and renovations meet certain minimum “common sense” requirements to maintain a consistent, small town, rural look and feel.

6. Site Plan Review: The Plan recommends using site plan review to insure that development is done in compliance with zoning regulations and design standards.

Zoning Revisions Needed: *The Town’s zoning and subdivision laws will have to be revised after the Comprehensive Plan has been adopted so they are consistent with the new Plan, as required by law.*

The Town Board will appoint a Zoning Revisions Committee consisting of members of the Town Board, the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Comprehensive Planning Committee, and other interested and committed town officials and residents.

Because zoning laws are complex legal documents, the Zoning Revisions Committee should retain a professional advisor to ensure zoning revisions are written correctly and can stand up to legal challenges.

The Community's Vision for 2030

Our Vision statement describes what Ancram seeks to become – how it will look, feel and function in 2030. This vision is based on the ideas of the people of Ancram, contributed through a series of workshops, a community survey and ongoing public meetings. The vision below describes what those of us who live here today want Ancram to be like in 2030.

Ancram in 2030 will look and feel much like it does in 2008, maintaining its predominantly rural character. We have successfully met many of the challenges facing our community, and continue to address issues that impact us.

Ancram focuses on establishing policies and programs to preserve the important elements which define its rural character, which include working agricultural landscapes, open space, a strong sense of community, well maintained hamlets, low density housing in the countryside, small businesses serving our needs, and infrastructure appropriate for a small, rural town.

Agriculture, Open Space & Environment:

In 2030, agriculture is healthy, thriving, and is the primary land use in Ancram. New farmers and farming activities exist alongside family farms which have been operating here for generations.

Ancram and the entire region have experienced a resurgence of agriculture, driven by our proximity to major markets and consumers' demands to "buy local", healthier foods that use less energy to produce and transport.

Our family dairy farms operate successfully, benefiting from innovative new approaches and marketing strategies. In addition, a variety of specialty livestock, fruit, and vegetable operations are well established, as are several large scale crop farms. Horse breeding, boarding and training continue to be important activities. Most of Ancram's farmland is protected from development.

We protect our environment and our important scenic views. Programs are in place to protect groundwater, streams, wetlands, woodlands, ridgelines and wildlife habitats. Concerns for the environment stimulate extensive use of alternative sources of energy, and we enjoy clean air and "dark skies".

Community, Government & Historic Places:

In 2030, Ancram is a family-friendly, caring community working together. We have high levels of volunteerism, a strong sense of community identity, pride in our past, and confidence in our future. Ancram supports efforts to preserve its past, helping restore many of the important historic places in Town.

Town officials work to make Ancram a great place to live. They spend our money carefully, tax us fairly and deliver services efficiently and effectively. Living in Ancram is affordable for young families. Seniors are able to find the housing, services and support they need to live close to family and friends.

Ancram has adequate recreation areas, hiking and biking paths, parks, campgrounds, playgrounds and athletic fields. Activities sponsored by the Fire Company, the Churches, the Youth Commission and a variety of other local community organizations occur regularly, are widely attended, and add to a sense of community. We have excellent fire, police and emergency medical services. Our children and grandchildren live and raise their families here.

Business, Development & Infrastructure:

In 2030, water and septic issues and protection of our rural character control decisions affecting residential development, economic development and the development of infrastructure.

Town roads are in good shape, are consistent with rural road standards, and dangerous intersections have been fixed. Speeding and traffic problems are rare.

Ancram has a range of affordable housing alternatives, but residential growth does not interfere with agricultural activities. All commercial activities are managed to protect the Town's rural character.

The visual appearance of the Ancram and Ancramdale hamlets is greatly improved. Deteriorated buildings have been renovated or removed. Our town centers provide opportunities for people to meet, shop, eat out and just relax, with a variety of small shops, and restaurants. Many residents work from their homes, with reliable access to modern telecommunication services. Medical and professional services and home-based businesses serve the Town's residents. The Ancram paper mill continues to operate, providing jobs in the area.

Summary of Goals & Strategies

Goals define what we intend to achieve. Strategies define how we plan to achieve these Goals. The following eight goals and supporting strategies to achieve them will help the Town of Ancram achieve its 2030 Vision:

Goal 1. Agriculture and Open Space: Encourage farming and the rural, small town, scenic character of Ancram by promoting the profitability and productivity of our town's current farms, attracting new farming ventures, protecting farmland, and preserving open space and important scenic views.

Strategies for Goal 1:

- a. Use NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets funding to develop an Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan that outlines programs and policies to support farms, farming, agricultural open space and environmentally sound farming practices. Adopt a local right-to-farm law.
- b. Use an enhanced site plan review process and zoning to promote open space development that protects farmland, open space and important scenic views. Focus on the layout of new developments to avoid active agricultural areas and farmland soils.
- c. To better reflect the actual and desired land use outside the Hamlets, rename the Rural Residential Zoning District to the Agricultural Zoning District and allow agriculture-related commercial uses in the Ag Zoning District, subject to review and permit procedures to be developed during the zoning revision process.
- d. Revise zoning controls in the Ag Zoning District from a *minimum* lot size to an *average* density system to provide for flexibility, smaller lots and maintenance of large contiguous open spaces suitable for farming and recreation. For major subdivisions, require that 60% of a developed parcel be maintained as open space.
- e. Take full advantage of the NYS Agricultural Districts in Town, ensure they include all viable farmland, and ensure Ancram follows Ag and Markets laws and requirements.
- f. Develop incentives to encourage developers and landowners to protect open spaces and farmland.

Goal 2. Environment: Develop policies and programs to protect groundwater, watersheds, streams, wetlands, woodlands, ridgelines and wildlife habitats. Protect clean air and “dark skies,” and encourage the use of alternative energy sources.

Strategies for Goal 2:

a. To protect groundwater resources, implement the 2008 NY Rural Water Association Study recommendations. This includes shifting to an *average* density of one dwelling per 3.5 acres outside the hamlets from the current 3 acre *minimum* lot size. Prohibit all building, mining and logging on or within a minimum of 100 feet of water, streams, wetlands and other areas of hydrogeologic sensitivity. Consider buying or leasing the development rights in critical areas of hydrogeologic sensitivity to protect them. Promote use of environmentally sound agricultural “best practices” as recommended by the NY State Department of Ag and Markets.

b. To avoid exceeding the development capacity of a parcel, review and determine, the number of buildable lots on a parcel according to the presence of defined environmental obstacles like wetlands, water and steep slopes which make lots unbuildable.

c. To protect scenic views, designated ridgelines and rural character, establish visual impact analysis standards and visual impact mitigation recommendations, based on DEC guidelines, to be applied by the Planning Board during site plan, special permit and subdivision reviews. Compliance with these standards should be required for major (over 4 lots) subdivision developments, and voluntary for others.

d. Update Ancram’s zoning and other land use laws to ensure new development minimizes negative impacts to visual and scenic resources and other natural resources, and require new development to provide visual buffers to protect existing development.

e. Establish site plan review requirements for development on slopes greater than 15% to control storm water runoff, erosion, and negative impacts to steep slopes and defined ridgelines, consistent with DEC guidelines.

f. Establish gravel mining and logging regulations consistent with DEC guidelines, exempting from regulation small-scale (under 1000 tons annually) gravel mining by landowners on their own land.

g. To maintain rural character, reduce the number of driveways by allowing for

front loaded roads, shared driveways, shared access ways, and limited use of flag lots during development to minimize impacts to the environment and community character.

h. Adopt standards and guidelines for small scale solar and wind energy installations for residential, agricultural, small business and community uses.

Goal 3. Community Character: Promote a strong sense of community through communication, an open exchange of information and building consensus on important decisions facing the Town. Actively support volunteer activities and community efforts to preserve the town's historic places and landscapes.

Strategies for Goal 3:

a. Increase Town government transparency, communication and participation by regular, expanded newspaper, website, email and newsletter coverage of Town policies, programs, laws, and activities; by establishing an annual town meeting to discuss long term issues; by encouraging open discussion; by posting Town financial and other information on the website; and by updating the Town government ethical conduct law.

b. Reinforce and expand existing community initiatives to identify, catalogue and preserve the Town's history and historic places and seek funding through historic preservation grants from private, state and national sources.

c. Assess impacts on defined historic resources as part of subdivision, site plan and special use permit approvals.

d. Enhance Ancram's gateways with specially designed welcome signs.

e. Establish and enforce regulations and policies to minimize roadside trash accumulation.

Goal 4. Community Services: Provide community services and recreational facilities and opportunities to meet the needs of all age groups.

Strategies for Goal 4:

a. Appoint task forces to develop formal plans to meet the services and recreational needs of the community, with special attention to the needs of seniors and teens. Identify and use grant funding available through private, State and Federal sources to implement these plans.

- b. Develop a town-wide pathway/hike/bike trail system for recreation and connection of important protected open spaces. Develop recreational areas with public access along the Roe Jan Kill, and support camping and campgrounds.
- c. Ensure access for emergency services and Town highway department vehicles in considering and approving development projects.

Goal 5. Town Infrastructure: Maintain adequate and appropriate Town buildings, roads, signs, traffic control and bridges, scaled to meet the needs of a small, rural community. Improve the information systems and management processes supporting all town departments.

Strategies for Goal 5:

- a. Consider establishing a Financial Analysis Advisory Committee to assist the Town Board to identify and evaluate long term capital spending needs and establish a Five-Year Capital Plan, updated annually, to meet those needs. The Plan should cover all current Town-owned properties, roads and equipment, and cover future needs.
- b. Continue use of Cornell's Rural Road Design Standards for all new Town roads, and the NY Association of Towns Highway Superintendent Manual for the management of the Town highway department.
- c. Limit curb cuts and use access management techniques for new development to increase road safety and maintain rural road character.
- d. The Town Board should formally expand its oversight of the Highway Department budget or consider establishing a Highway Advisory Committee to assist with management of costs and planning issues related to maintaining town roads, which account for 80% of the Town's annual budget.
- e. Evaluate on an on-going basis the feasibility of sharing services with neighboring towns and the county, and implement shared services where it minimizes costs and taxes.
- f. Invest in the computer hardware and software to provide all town departments adequate management tools and information.

Goal 6. Town Centers: Enhance the appearance and safety of the hamlets, with Ancram the top priority. Provide for safe roads, crossings, intersections and traffic flows, and control heavy truck traffic.

Strategies for Goal 6:

- a.** Focus on the revitalization of the hamlet of Ancram to stimulate economic development, attract business investment and expand jobs. Use Federal, State and private funding sources to help implement Comprehensive Plan and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) recommendations to support revitalization efforts.
- b.** Amend zoning to create hamlet zoning districts named Ancram, Ancramdale and Boston Corners with uses and development standards specific to each hamlet in order to maintain the unique character of each.
- c.** Offer incentives and support grant applications to assist property owners with building improvements.
- d.** Establish hamlet design standards to ensure new or renovated commercial buildings are consistent in scale and design with the small town, rural character of the Community.
- e.** Resolve the 82/7 intersection problems, address the deteriorating buildings, and plan for future waste-water treatment, so Ancram becomes an attractive town center and is able to retain and attract businesses, jobs and additional residential investment.
- f.** Involve all Ancram center “stakeholders” and all business and private property owners in the Ancram revitalization planning process.

Goal 7. Economic Development: Encourage home-based businesses, construction and building trades, retail businesses, and other business activities consistent with our rural, small town character, supported by reliable telecommunications services and business friendly zoning.

Strategies for Goal 7:

- a.** Consider establishing an Economic Development Committee to create a business development and marketing plan to retain and expand existing businesses, attract new businesses and jobs and encourage Ancram residents to use local businesses. Identify business opportunities unique to Ancram, and try to develop businesses which will draw visitors and spending to our Town.
- b.** Support and promote local businesses of a size and scale consistent with the Community’s small town rural character.

c. Allow for expanded commercial areas and mixed-use commercial/residential uses in the Hamlets, subject to commercial design standards, and size and scale requirements which protect the small town, rural and scenic character of the Community.

d. Consider offering incentives to retain businesses and jobs, help existing businesses expand, and attract additional businesses and jobs to the Town.

e. Provide for review and possible approval of any business not specifically permitted in zoning through a “floating zone” capability, subject to safeguards to limit the size and scale of these activities to protect the Town’s small town, scenic, rural character.

f. Work with the County and neighboring communities to enhance telecommunications and utility infrastructure.

Goal 8. Housing: Improve the supply of affordable housing, housing for seniors and control large-scale residential development, consistent with the Community’s desire to protect farmland, open space and the rural character of the Town.

Strategies for Goal 8:

a. Allow for smaller, more affordable lots in the Hamlets and the Agricultural Zoning District. Where water and septic conditions allow, and County Board of Health approvals are obtained, allow ½ acre lots in expanded mixed-use Business/Residential zones in Ancram and Ancramdale. In the Ag Zoning District, allow lots as small as ½ acre if water and septic are available, subject to maintaining an average density of one dwelling per 3.5 acres for the entire parcel and complying with the proposed 60% “open space” design requirements.

b. Create more affordable rental units by allowing apartments in single-family homes and accessory buildings like garages and barns subject to special use permits.

c. Allow small-scale garden apartments, senior citizen housing, nursing homes and continuous care senior facilities, subject to site plan review and special use permits.

d. Allow multi-family dwellings with a maximum of 4 units subject to site plan review and special use permits.

Detailed Strategies

These specific strategies, policies and programs will guide the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The Detailed Strategies are also organized around our eight Goals:

1 Agriculture and Open Space

- 1.1 **Agricultural Zone** -- To reinforce the importance of agriculture in Ancram, adopt a local “Right to Farm Law”, and rename the existing Rural Residential Zone to the Agricultural Zoning District.
- 1.2 **Farmland Protection Plan** -- Use available NYS Ag and Markets grants to develop an Agricultural/Farmland Protection Plan which will recommend zoning revisions and programs that promote profitable agriculture and protect farmland.
- 1.3 **Purpose Statements** — Zoning purpose statements should be expanded to recognize agriculture’s contribution to the town’s rural quality through open space, wildlife habitats, watershed purification, and natural resource preservation.
- 1.4 **Open Space Development** -- In the Agricultural Zoning District, require “open space development designs” for all major subdivisions. Open space development guidelines should a) protect at least 60% of the parcel to be developed b) establish an average density of one dwelling per 3.5 acres, c) allow for a variety of lot sizes as small as ½ acre, subject to adequate water and septic and d) tailor standards for minor subdivisions and single house developments so they are more flexible and less complex. “Open space” should be clearly defined, and should exclude things like lawns, roads, courtyards, and driveways. Density incentives or other mechanisms should be put into place to encourage developers to exceed the 60% target for open space and connect open space whenever possible to create unfragmented agricultural or other open space lands. While not required for minor subdivisions, open space guidelines should be encouraged for minor subdivisions as well, if there is a possibility that the minor will evolve into a major over time. This “total project” evaluation approach is required by SEQR to eliminate the ‘segmentation’ of development into a series of smaller projects as a way to avoid SEQR requirements.
- 1.5 **Minimize Development on Farmland** -- To minimize the impact of

new development on agricultural land, all structures should be placed outside of lands having prime farmland soils and placed on the edges of open farm fields. Non-farm structures should be located away from active farm fields, prime soils, soils of statewide importance, etc. Buffer zones between farmland and new residential uses should be established by the new residential user, not the farm.

- 1.6 Site Plan Review** – Improve the Site Plan Review standards and processes to steer all new residential and commercial development to areas within the lot which will minimize the negative effect on farms, farmland and open space. This process should be used to evaluate and permit non-farm uses located in the proposed agricultural zoning district so that they do not negatively impact farm operations and open space. Require Site Plan review for major subdivisions, and recommend it for minor subdivisions.
- 1.7 Farm Worker Housing** – Continue to allow farm worker housing as a permitted right, and simplify the process for obtaining approvals for farm worker housing.
- 1.8 Agricultural Advisory Committee** – Consider appointing an Agricultural Advisory Committee of farmers, landowners and town officials to work on developing the Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan and advising the Planning Board and Town Board on agricultural matters on an ongoing basis.
- 1.9 Development Rights** -- Develop a program to support landowners who wish to sell or lease development rights, and consider allowing the transfer of development rights from one parcel to another. Funding for these projects need not be drawn from Town funds, but could be raised privately via grants, voluntary contributions or from transfer taxes on property sales above the average value of sales in the town, if this process can be established. Direct agricultural protection efforts to those locations identified as being part of the core farmlands in Ancram, and encourage the use of agricultural easements placed on farmland by willing landowners.
- 1.10 Ag District 1** – In coordination with the County, review all land in County Ag District 1 to insure it includes all viable farmland and removes land that should not be included.
- 1.11 Density Control Schedule** -- Review and revise the Density Control Schedule to make it applicable to the variety of smaller lots permitted under the average density concept and open space development design guidelines. Allow for reduced road frontage requirements in order to creatively site new houses, and modify side yard and front yard setbacks as appropriate.

1.12 Farm Stands - Promote farm stands as uses permitted by right in Ancram. Currently, zoning requires that farm stands can only have produce grown principally on the same lot. Change this section of zoning to promote farmers working together to sell local produce via farm stands.

1.13 Additional Farm Related Businesses – Allow additional farm related business uses (such as, but not limited to, farm markets, farm equipment repair and small scale slaughterhouses) in the Agricultural Zoning District, subject to size limitations consistent with the rural character of the town. Develop a list of approved ag-related businesses based on NYS Department of Ag & Markets recommendations. Require special use permits and site plan review using the recommended NY State Ag and Markets site plan review process. Establish adequate buffers between new agricultural businesses and residential areas in the agricultural zone to protect the residential areas. These buffers should be the responsibility of the new agricultural-related businesses. New agriculture-related business uses should also be evaluated during the site plan review process based on supplemental regulations to ensure the:

- 1.13.1 Nature, intensity, scope, size, appearance, and type of proposed use conform to existing ag structures and uses;
- 1.13.2 Use is located in a way that does not interfere with ag operations or expansion;
- 1.13.3 Use benefits agriculture, forestry or open spaces.

1.14 Agriculture- Related Home Occupations -- Amend zoning section V (1) to allow a variety of home occupations. High impact home occupations such as farm machinery repair and sawmills should be subject to special use permits.

1.15 Land Use Laws -- Amend local land use laws to reference NY Agriculture and Markets Law 25-aa and Town Law 283-a requirements for agriculture data statements, notices of intent, and disclosure statements. Ag Data Statements are required to be filed for certain land uses proposed within 500 feet of a farm operation located in an agricultural district. Notices of Intent are required when public funds are spent on certain capital projects located in an agricultural district, and can be considered as ag-impact statements. Disclosure Notices are required to be given to all prospective land buyers in an agricultural district prior to signing a purchase contract and are designed to notify property

buyers about the sights, sounds, smells, and other aspects of agriculture in the area. Realtors should give out these statements, but the Planning Board could also give out these disclosures as part of their process.

- 1.16 Definitions** -- Define agriculture in the zoning law to be consistent with Section 301 of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law. Current zoning does not include any definition.

2 Environment

- 2.1 Protect Groundwater Supply** -- To prevent the long term deterioration and depletion of the Town's groundwater supply, implement the recommendation of the 2008 NY Rural Water Association Ancram Groundwater Study (see Volume 2, Appendix D) to decrease the average residential density outside the hamlets from one residence per 3 acres to one residence per 3.5 acres.
- 2.2 Prevent Groundwater Contamination** -- To protect the Town's groundwater resources from surface contamination, implement recommendations regarding residential development and protection of hydrogeologically sensitive areas as presented in the 2008 NY Rural Water Association's Groundwater Protection Plan, and exclude all development, mining and commercial logging within a minimum of 100 feet of water, streams, wetlands, vernal pools and other hydrogeologically sensitive areas. Conduct further water studies as recommended, implement the public education recommendations included in the Groundwater Protection Plan report, and encourage environmentally sound agricultural "best practices" as recommended by the NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets.
- 2.3 Site Plan Review** -- Establish site plan review processes which will be required for major subdivisions and recommended for minor subdivisions, which will steer all new subdivisions and development within a parcel away from environmentally and hydrogeologically sensitive lands. Environmentally sensitive lands are identified in Map Appendix G in Volume 2 Hydrogeologically sensitive areas are identified and mapped on page 34 of the Groundwater Protection Plan in Volume 2, Appendix D.
- 2.4 Stream Side Buffers and Vernal Pools** -- Adopt a minimum 25-foot streamside vegetation buffer. Streamside vegetation buffers should be natural vegetation and not lawns. If the natural streamside vegetation buffers are not already present, landowners should not be required to create them, except as part of a major subdivision development. Landowners of any

streamside or wetland parcels will, of course, have unlimited access to streams and wetlands. Establish a 100 foot buffer to protect vernal pools, and review the adequacy of vernal pool protection as part of the site plan review process for major subdivisions.

2.5 Determining Building Lots – Determine the number of buildable lots on a parcel based on the presence of defined environmental obstacles. Defined environmental obstacles should include water, wetlands and floodplains. Establish both a formula-based mechanism (such as: water acreage yields no buildable lots; wetlands, floodplains and steep slopes yield 50% of allowed buildable lots; no environmental issues yield 100% of allowed buildable lots), and a “yield management” mechanism which would permit a developer to demonstrate, through site layout, perk and well tests, how many parcels, up to the average density of 1 home per 3.5 acres, can be accommodated on a given parcel while meeting all the Town’s open space development guidelines and water and wetland buffers.

2.6 Gravel Mining -- Update section V (A) (2) Excavation. This section should be consistent with and reference the New York State DEC mining law requirements and outline the specific standards which the Town is authorized to review. Review and update existing regulations that establish mines as uses allowed subject to a special permit, and maintain scenic overlay standards related to mines. Develop town gravel mining standards as follows:

2.6.1 For mines that require a DEC permit, require a Special Use permit with supplementary regulations that address conditions over which the Town has authority as outlined in Title 27, MLRA §23-2703-2. For all other mines require a special use permit with supplementary regulations designed to protect the community including such things as (but not limited to) appropriate mapping, a detailed mining and reclamation plan, traffic, visual and noise impact studies, and completion of a full Environmental Impact Statement in the event that a positive SEQRA declaration is made. As with all projects, the Planning Board should secure legal and engineering advice as needed, to be paid for by the applicant via an escrow account.

2.6.2 Exempt from regulation mining done by landowners on their own land, for their own use or for sale, in quantities less than 1,000 tons or 750 cubic yards, whichever is less, within twelve successive calendar months.

- 2.7 Commercial Logging** -- Establish commercial logging standards and a permitting process consistent with DEC logging guidelines for State owned lands including guidelines for things such as days and hours of operation, truck traffic levels, noise levels, erosion control, setbacks and clear cutting. Both the landowner and the logger should be required to sign for and post the permit, and a survey map clearly identifying the area to be logged must be filed with the Town prior to the permit being issued. This logging permit process should be no more complex than obtaining a building permit, and should not require site plan review. The intent of this process is to protect neighbors and the Community from unprofessional logging practices. Landowners who are cutting trees for their own use or for sale and are not using a commercial logger or logging firm should be exempt from this commercial logging permit process.
- 2.8 Solar and Wind Power** – Revise zoning to allow solar and wind power for agricultural, residential, and small business use. Refer to NY State Board of Real Property Tax Law Section 487 and NYS Department of Ag and Markets guidance regarding agricultural wind, solar and waste energy systems. Evaluate solar and wind energy for Town facilities like the Town Hall, the fire house and the Town garage. Exclude large commercial wind and solar operations as inconsistent with the rural character of the Community.
- 2.9 Environmental Conservation Committee** – Consider appointing an Environmental Conservation Committee to advise the Town Board, the Planning Board, the ZBA and other town officials on environmental matters. The first assignment for this Committee could be to inventory and map hydrogeologically or environmentally sensitive sites in Ancram which should be targeted for preservation.
- 2.10 Steep Slopes** -- Development on steep slopes over 15% can be permitted subject to site plan review and with guidelines and standards which control stormwater run-off and visual impacts on ridgelines. All land use laws in Ancram should be updated to reference appropriate NYS DEC and Federal stormwater requirements. All commercial land disturbances greater than 1 acre require preparation of a State Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, as does all residential development that disturbs more than 5 acres. Establish erosion and sedimentation control standards that are based on NYS DEC best management practices. Work to minimize impervious surfaces, and avoid compaction of soils over large areas in areas of hydrogeological vulnerability.

- 2.11 Ridgeline Protection** – Establish guidelines to protect designated ridgelines. Designated ridgelines should be determined by the zoning revisions committee based on their topographical prominence and scenic importance. On these designated ridgelines, locate structures so rooflines do not extend above the existing tree line or ridgeline. Use the NY State DEC guidelines for assessing and managing visual impacts of development, and selective tree removal instead of clear cutting to the maximum extent. These requirements will be mandatory for major subdivisions, and encouraged for minor subdivisions.
- 2.12 Lighting Standards** -- Establish municipal, residential and commercial lighting standards in zoning to minimize the negative visual impact of excessive glare and light. Include lighting standards in the site plan review process to reduce light pollution and glare. Any parking lot should minimize glare to nearby properties. Final lighting standards should be consistent with NYS Safety Codes. Standards should cover things like pole height, lighted signage, types of fixtures, maximum illumination levels by zoning district and mitigation techniques to minimize light pollution.
- 2.13 Scenic Corridor Overlay** -- Revise the boundaries of the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone to reflect sight lines and reflect terrain features, and not be a fixed distance off Route 22.
- 2.14 Visual Impact Analysis** -- Establish visual impact analysis standards for major subdivisions (over 4 lots) based on DEC policy for the Planning Board to apply during the site plan review process. NYS DEC provides a model for this in its Visual Assessment Policy. When a major subdivision has the potential to impact visual resources of importance to the Town, the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals should require use of the DEC Visual Environmental Assessment Form during the SEQRA process to help evaluation of visual impacts. Per SEQRA, major subdivision projects undergoing site plan review or special permit approval should be required to do an inventory of aesthetic resources on site, determine the extent of visibility of the project, determine if the project will have a significant negative impact on the aesthetic character, and mitigate impacts. All new subdivision development should be required to provide adequate visual buffers to protect existing development. The Town should:
- 2.14.1 Encourage use of screening, relocation, camouflage, low profiles, or downsizing visible structures.

- 2.14.2 Encourage avoiding placement of buildings in the middle of large open areas. Place structures along the edges.
- 2.14.3 Promote protection of mature and historic trees, and other unique features such as stone walls.
- 2.14.4 Promote commercial building design and siting that is consistent with historic and traditional architecture and development patterns in the area, including setbacks, building styles, scale, rooflines, and signage.
- 2.15 Flood Plain Zoning District** -- Include the Floodplain overlay district on the official zoning map and exclude uses such as golf courses in floodplains to minimize the potential for groundwater pollution.
- 2.16 Scenic Protection Plan** -- Review the Scenic Resource Protection Plan to determine which of the roads it had recommended to become scenic corridors and byways, if any, should actually be designated as such.
- 2.17 Purpose Statements** -- Ensure that all Ancram's land use laws include purpose statements that detail the important role the aesthetic/visual character plays in the town, as visual and scenic resources are highly valued by residents.
- 2.18 Water Resource Protection** -- Amend local land use laws so that the development review process for major subdivisions includes an assessment of and evaluates potential impacts to the groundwater supplies of neighboring properties. Authorize the Planning Board to require groundwater studies to consider the location, yield and quality of wells if necessary. Consider buying land, or purchasing or leasing development rights, to protect certain areas of hydrogeological vulnerability
- 2.19 Major Subdivision Regulations** -- Review and revise the Town's existing regulations relating to major subdivisions to ensure that natural, cultural, and historic resources are preserved, and ensure that all time frames and administration are consistent with NYS Town Law are all aspects that should be reviewed and revised.
- 2.20 Roads and Driveways** -- When new roads are being proposed in a development or subdivision, allow for the use of front-loaded roads, shared driveways and shared access ways. These tactics prevent multiple curb cuts to the existing road and can be very effective in protecting open spaces and rural character.
- 2.21 Flag Lots** -- Allow for limited use of flag lots under certain circumstances. Zoning and subdivision should very clearly state the siting standards for such configurations so that they protect farmland and open space, and do not hasten conversion of

farmlands or result in other unintended consequences. When done correctly, flag lots can effectively protect natural resources, open space, and character of an area by setting structures off the road, and limiting a uniform look of subdivisions.

- 2.22 Fuel Storage** -- Change zoning use category “fuel storage and distribution” (i.e., gas stations) as allowed in the Business and Industrial districts from permitted by right with site plan review to requiring a special use permit with site plan review. These uses have high potential to be polluting, and these districts are located in the densest locations within Ancram. Special care should be taken in siting these for safety and potential pollution reasons.
- 2.23 Natural Habitats** – Incorporate into land use laws the review and protection of critical natural habitats by requiring a biodiversity assessment before a major subdivision is presented for consideration. New projects should avoid fragmenting forestlands, and should protect vernal pools and their associated upland habitats. In areas such as the Drowned Lands Swamp area, the Town should recognize that conditions may warrant a wetland buffer in excess of the 100-foot minimum required by DEC and proposed for Town zoning. This requirement to review natural habitats as part of the development process will be mandatory for major subdivisions, and recommended for minor subdivisions.
- 2.24 Local Type 1 List** -- Consider developing a local Type I list for SEQRA purposes. SEQRA allows municipalities to establish their own Type I list. This list would identify those uses that are more likely to have negative environmental impacts. Major subdivisions of 5 or more lots, non-agricultural buildings over 20,000 square feet in size, and industrial developments are examples of uses that might be considered for this list. Type I actions would require applicants to fill out the Full Environmental Assessment Form during the SEQRA process.
- 2.25 Noise Control** – Update and enforce the Town noise ordinance, and establish penalties for chronic offenders which will encourage compliance with the law.
- 2.26 Roadside Trash** – The Town Board should establish or review, strengthen and enforce existing town laws against littering, and support or establish regular programs to deal with preventing and collecting roadside trash.

3 Community Character

- 3.1 Improve Communications** -- To improve and expand communications and encourage community participation in town government, establish a regular monthly email update process,

initiate a quarterly, mailed-to-the-home, Town/Community/Fire District newsletter and establish a Town and community bulletin board both on the web site and in a prominent location to advertise events and activities.

- 3.2 Annual Town Meeting** -- Improve the Community's dialogue with Town government by establishing an annual or semi-annual town-meeting day to talk about longer term issues and concerns not suitable for discussion at monthly Town board meetings.
- 3.3 Open Government** -- To promote open government, expand the Town web site to include information about town activities and all town information now available to the public at Town Hall or the County level like the annual Town budget, monthly Town financial reports, monthly building department reports, property tax assessment information, voter registration information, etc. In addition, all Town applications and forms should be made available and downloadable from the Town web site.
- 3.4 Encourage Participation in Decision Making** – To help achieve consensus on important issues facing the Town, Town Officials should encourage an inclusive, open discussion, listen with respect to all points of view, focus on the facts rather than opinions, and make decisions based on the long term vision and goals of the Community, tempered by the realities of day-to-day budget constraints.
- 3.5 Preserve Town History** -- To preserve and communicate the Town's history and traditions, expand support for the Town historian and other historic preservation efforts; encourage taking a complete inventory of all the Town's historic places and historic structures, to be conducted by the Town Historian. Define procedures for and encourage a historic resource "assessment" as a regular part of all major subdivisions, special use permit applications and site plan reviews. Use the environmental assessment required under SEQRA to review and mitigate impacts to the Community's historic and archaeological resources identified and mapped by the Town Historian's inventory. Amend the site plan section of zoning to include an inventory and assessment of a project's impact on historic resources.
- 3.6 Incentives for Historic Preservation** – Consider establishing local incentives that encourage private property owners to carry out stabilization, rehabilitation, and improvements to historic structures on the Town Inventory of Historic Places. To ensure that the historic structures are preserved permanently, also consider property owner requests to hold an historic easement on a property, subject to evaluating the legal and financial impacts of accepting such an easement.

- 3.7 NYS Historic Preservation Office** –Request an advisory opinion from the NY State Historic Preservation Office when a project has potential impacts to historic/archaeological resources, as needed.
- 3.8 Historic Preservation Laws** -- Local land use laws should reference and require compliance with applicable State and federal laws related to protection of historic and archeological resources including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Section 14.09 of the State Preservation Act of 1980 and SEQRA, Part 617.
- 3.9 Map/Inventory Historical Places** -- Fully develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) map showing historic and cultural places in the Town. The inventory should include all historical markers, cemeteries, and other historical and cultural sites. Consider making this inventory a full historical survey. This would identify all properties that may be eligible to be placed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. This information can be used on the Town web site and in a Town marketing and business development brochure to promote economic development.
- 3.10 Support Volunteers** -- To provide needed community services, continue to provide financial support to encourage and assist Town and Community volunteer activities.
- 3.11 Ethical Conduct Law** -- To clarify expectations regarding Town government operations and conduct by town officials, update and implement the Town’s ethical conduct law to address conflicts of interest, open meetings and other appropriate topics. Establish a Town ethical conduct committee as envisioned in the current Town ethics law.
- 3.12 Community Gateways** -- Enhance the community gateways or “welcome” signs, with landscaping, lighting, and special signage. Gateways can establish a theme and can include signs, sculptures, or historic objects.

4 Community Services

- 4.1 Develop a Community Services Plan** -- Appoint a Task Force to identify additional community services needed, with a special emphasis on meeting the needs of seniors, children and teens. Develop a formal Community Services Plan, estimate financial resources needed to implement this Plan, and identify and secure sources of grant funding to support implementation of the Plan.
- 4.2 Develop a Recreational Services Plan**—Consider appointing a Task Force to identify additional recreational facilities needed for

all ages. This task force should evaluate and develop programs to create public parks, campgrounds, access to the Roe Jan and a Community hiking/biking trail system. Tasks will include securing private property owner participation, exploring the use of NY State insurance programs for these kinds of activities to protect the Town and participating property owners from liability, and seeking funding from State agencies and private organizations for implementation. Create a plan and map showing potential systems of open space pathways and corridors to offer recreational opportunities and protect environmentally sensitive areas. Preserved open spaces should be connected via trails. These projects, when approved, should be included in the Town's Capital Plan..

- 4.3 Emergency Preparedness Plan** – Create a process to ensure that Town residents are protected with an updated Emergency Preparedness Plan and disseminate the contents of that plan to the Community.
- 4.4 Road Safety** -- Create a process to ensure that emergency services and the Town Highway Superintendent are consulted prior to the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals approving a development proposal to ensure that potential emergency service and road safety issues are evaluated and mitigated.
- 4.5 Per Lot Recreation Fee** -- Consider establishing a per lot recreation fee for new major (over 4 lots) subdivisions to support new recreation programs in town.

5 Town Infrastructure

- 5.1 Financial Analysis Advisory Committee:** Consider appointing a Financial Analysis Advisory Committee to work as a “staff” for the Town Board, Highway Department and other town officials to help identify the long term capital needs of the Community, and determine how and when to accomplish them. This Committee should also be “tasked” to develop the skills, experience, process and contacts to assist all Town agencies to plan and analyze large capital projects, and to support each specific requirement as needed and as requested. Members of this Board should be appointed for terms similar to those of Planning Board members, and should become the Town’s “institutional memory” on financial planning and financial management issues which often play out over long time periods.
- 5.2 Capital Plan** -- Develop a Five Year Town Capital Plan, and update it annually. Identify the financial requirements to fund the Capital

Plan, and possible funding sources. The Five Year Capital Plan should cover buildings, roads, equipment and other Town and Fire District capital expenditures, including planning for future highway department needs.

- 5.3 Town Law 272-a** -- As per Town Law 272-a, ensure all government agencies consider and respect this Comprehensive Plan when implementing capital projects in Ancram.
- 5.4 Shared Municipal Services** – Pursuant to NY State initiatives to minimize costs and taxes, establish a task force to evaluate, on an ongoing basis, further sharing or consolidating all municipal services (such as highway department functions, fire, assessment, ZEO/building Inspection, etc) with neighboring communities and the County.
- 5.5 Waste Treatment** -- Any future consideration of public waste treatment in hamlets should include all alternative options such as cluster systems, small centralized community systems, sequencing batch reactors, alternative collection systems to reduce costs, small and decentralized wastewater management systems, constructed wetlands, and other technologies. All may be more cost-effective than traditional sewer systems.
- 5.6 Highway Advisory Committee** – Because the Town Highway Department is such a large part of the annual Town budget, the Town Board should either expand its financial oversight of the highway department or consider appointing a Highway Advisory Committee to help do that financial oversight and identify and plan for staff, equipment, facilities and other requirements related to Town roads.
- 5.7 Rural Road Standards** – Continue using The NY Association of Town Highway Superintendent Manual and Cornell’s Rural Road Standards for the town’s road management program. Review and update town’s municipal and subdivision road standards, and ensure that they reflect rural road standards. Consider adopting the low-volume road classification and maintenance standards advocated by the Local Roads Research and Coordination Council (Manual: Guidelines for Rural and County Roads, December 1992) and the AASHTO Guidelines for Geometric Design of Very Low-Volume Local Roads, 2001.
- 5.8 New Town Roads** -- Establish a policy for how, and under what circumstances, the Town will review and accept new roads as official town roads.
- 5.9 Traffic Impact** – Authorize the Planning Board to require, if they believe it is necessary, traffic impact studies whenever a project is likely to have a significant impact on traffic levels.
- 5.10 Access Management Techniques** – Update development

standards to apply access management techniques to new development. Access management serves to reduce the number of curb cuts on roads. Proper access management can prevent costly highway improvements, can improve safety, reduce congestion and delays, and make pedestrian travel safer. Some basic access management principles are:

- 5.10.1 Access through a shared road or driveway.
- 5.10.2 Site parking areas to the rear, or side.
- 5.10.3 Use of landscaping to establish visual and physical boundaries between parking lots and people.
- 5.10.4 Including landscaped islands within parking lots.
- 5.10.5 Limiting access to a site with preferably one controlled point.
- 5.10.6 Use of street trees wherever possible.

5.11 Cul-De-Sacs -- Minimize use of cul-de-sac roads. Cul-de-sacs should only be used when no other alternatives exist. Should a dead-end road be necessary, use a “T” end or a “hammerhead” design instead of a cul-de-sac. Where a cul-de-sac is the only alternative, reduce the “bulb” width as much as possible consistent with access and turnaround for emergency and highway vehicles. Consider limiting the number of units with access to a cul-de-sac to 6.

5.12 Roadside Tree & Vegetation Management – Develop policies that balance the need for adequate control of roadside vegetation for reasons of road safety, road widening and electric line protection with the desire of property owners to protect trees and vegetation along roads adjacent to their properties. Establish a Town policy that local, county and state highway departments and electric company crews should consult with property owners before cutting trees and vegetation along roads. While this policy cannot be enforced except at the Town level, it can be communicated to the state DOT, county and electric company crews, and may contribute to preservation of roadside vegetation, which contributes to the rural character of the Community.

5.13 Dangerous Intersections -- Work with the County and State to improve traffic safety in the hamlets.

6 Town Centers

6.1 Hamlet Revitalization -- Involve all community “stakeholders” including community groups, the Fire District, the Churches and all business and private property owners in the revitalization planning process. Review and implement recommendations of the

- Community Development Block Grant Project related to the revitalization of our hamlets, improving the 82/7 and 82/8/3 intersections and the problem of the deteriorating buildings in the center of Ancram. Evaluate the feasibility of implementing sewer options and alternatives for the buildings in the center of Ancram.
- 6.2 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding** – Apply for annual CDBG technical assistance funds to support community development planning efforts, and apply for major CDBG funding available to support town center improvements, housing renovation and affordable housing activities.
- 6.3 Rename Hamlet Zones** – Amend zoning to create hamlet zoning districts named Ancram, Ancramdale and Boston Corners with uses and development standards specific to each hamlet in order to maintain the unique character of each.
- 6.4 Hamlet Boundaries**-- Make only minor changes to hamlet boundaries, adjusting them slightly to follow parcel boundaries subject to environmental constraints; consider expanding the hamlets by several hundred yards if possible based on terrain and environmental constraints, to provide for additional affordable lots. In Ancram, consider reclassifying the hamlet areas on Poole’s Hill Road past Five Roses Road to Agricultural zoning from 2 acre zoning; also consider reclassifying the 50% of the 1 acre zone closest to the hamlet center at the southern Route 7 hamlet boundary to half acre zoning, with the other half of that 1 acre zone being reclassified as agricultural zoning with 3.5 acres average lot sizes. Finally, consider reclassifying the 2 acre minimum lot size zoning in Ancram, Ancramdale and Boston Corners to 2 acre average lot zoning with a requirement for 60% open space. These proposed changes are outlined in the Zoning Concept Map attached to the end of this document.
- 6.5 Expand Commercial Zones** –Consider increasing the size of the Business/Residential zone in Ancram to approximately ½ mile from the 82/7 intersection along both sides of Route 7 going north and south, ½ mile south along Route 82 and approximately 300 yards north on 82. In Ancramdale, the Business/Residential zone should extend from the 82/8/3 intersection to Maple Lane. These expanded mixed-use “Business/Residential” zones should be one parcel wide from the roads, adjusted for any very large or very small parcels. Review and determine what commercial uses will be permitted in these zones to ensure they are of a type, size and scale appropriate for the small, rural nature of the hamlets. Consider establishing a business/residential zone along Route 22 at the Route 3 intersection to build around the Citgo/AmeriStore site, consistent with commercial design standards currently in

effect in the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone.

- 6.6 Parking** -- Identify locations that may be suitable for a municipal parking lot in Ancram. Should a Town parking lot be created, ensure that it is adequately screened from the road with landscaping. Preferably, place parking lots to the rear of buildings.
- 6.7 Building Improvement Grants** -- Look into façade improvement grants, low interest loans, incentives, and other programs to help property owners improve buildings. Identify and document problem properties and work with property owners to improve the use and appearance of residential, commercial, or mixed-use buildings throughout the Town. Establish policies and communicate to all property owners that property tax assessments are normally not raised for cosmetic facade improvements.
- 6.8 Deteriorating Buildings** – Should any deteriorating buildings in Ancram be demolished or moved, the vacant lots should be cleared of debris and re-seeded or landscaped to improve the aesthetic character of the lot until it is developed again.
- 6.9 Hamlet Design Standards** – Consider establishing commercial and subdivision development design standards to ensure new commercial buildings and residential subdivisions in the hamlets are built in a manner consistent in scale and design to the traditional nature of Ancram’s hamlets. Definition of what is “traditional” should be consistent with the variety of architectural styles and designs now present in the Community. These design standards should be written with the intent of attracting new business and residential investment to the hamlets, be based on ‘common sense’ and not be onerous or expensive.
- 6.10 Intersections** -- Work with DOT and the County transportation department to improve the Routes 7/82 and 8/3/82 intersections with grade, alignment, signaling and speed posting changes. Conduct a traffic engineering study of these intersections to detail strategies for improvements.
- 6.11 Highway Noise** – Consider enacting highway noise restrictions per Section 386 of the New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law to control noise from “jake brakes”. An outright prohibition of the use of engine brakes, commonly referred to as "jake brakes," is not encouraged as it may violate Federal regulations regarding interstate commerce. Also work with the NY State DOT to reduce speed limits on 82 South toward Ancram, and move the lower speed limits further out of town than the current 35 MPH zone.

7 Economic Development

- 7.1 Economic Development Committee/Plan** – Consider establishing an economic development committee to assist the Town in implementing the economic development related sections of this plan, to help market Ancram and attract new businesses and jobs. This committee should develop an Economic Development Plan designed to recruit new businesses, to attract and retain employment opportunities, and create and maintain a vacant land and building inventory to identify and promote potential redevelopment sites. In the short term, businesses should be recruited that the local market can support, while we explore attracting or developing unique businesses which are logically suited to the area and the assets of the Community. Because we do not have the local population needed to support retail businesses, we need to create plans to attract, develop or expand retail businesses which will serve as a “draw” for people to visit Ancram. Work with neighboring towns and the County to develop economic plans and programs.
- 7.2 Expand Commercial Opportunities** – Expand the opportunity for commercial development in the Hamlet Business Districts, the Agricultural Zone and the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone. Encourage mixed-use commercial/residential uses in the Hamlet Business Districts, allow small scale commercial operations in the Agricultural Zoning District subject to special use permit and site plan review, and continue authorizing any commercial activity allowed anywhere in Town to be conducted in the Scenic Overlay Zone except gravel mining, airports and bus stations, which already are prohibited in the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone. Commercial activities should comply with the standards and guidelines in force for the zoning districts in which they are located.
- 7.3 Incentives** -- Consider incentives to support, retain and attract businesses, retail and restaurant operations, service businesses and home-based businesses to Ancram.
- 7.4 Telecommunications** -- Work with the County and neighboring towns to improve telecommunications services. Foster improved telecommunications and utility infrastructure, including cellular, broadband services, fiber optic, Wi-Fi, DSL, high speed Internet, and/or cable access connections. Identify locations on public land that may be technically and aesthetically feasible for placement of

transmission tower structures. Participate in State-level programs aimed at improving telecommunication technologies in rural areas. In hamlet areas, encourage co-location of services: for example allow cellular utilities to be placed on the top of or within existing structures.

- 7.5 Support Local Businesses** -- Promote local businesses on the town web site and in the Town newsletter, encourage local businesses to advertise on the town web site and in the Town newsletter, and encourage local residents to patronize local businesses.
- 7.6 Building Trades** -- Stimulate the construction and building trades with the affordable housing programs outlined as part of Goal 8 below.
- 7.7 Expand Jobs** -- Stimulate expansion of jobs via the development and implementation of the Economic Development Plan and the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan.
- 7.8 Size and Scale of Businesses** – Establish zoning regulations which require all commercial activities to be of a size, scale and appropriateness consistent with the small, rural, scenic character of the Town.
- 7.9 CDBG Funding** -- Apply annually for available CDBG funding for economic development planning grants and projects and establish a strong relationship and reputation with the CDBG program.
- 7.10 Floating Zone** – Review and strengthen provisions and standards in current zoning regarding the “floating zone” concept to provide flexibility in allowing and siting commercial businesses compatible with the rural, scenic character of the Town. The “floating zone” provision could be used to permit the establishment of commercial businesses not envisioned in Zoning in any part of Town including in the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone. Expand the floating zone performance standards to require dedicated open space, and design and layout standards that will ensure consistency with open space, environmental and other goals and policies of the Town. Design and layout standards could include but are not limited to screening, buffering, protection of steep slopes and ridgelines, minimization of traffic impacts, and maintenance of connections with other existing open spaces and unique habitats. Approval of a “floating zone” application will be the responsibility of the Town Board, with Planning Board review and advice, and should be subject to special use permits and site plan review and public hearings.
- 7.11 Mining** -- Remove “extraction” from the “manufacture, fabrication, extraction...” line in the use schedule and make it its own use category since extraction (mining) is already defined and

regulated separately.

- 7.12 Commercial Design Standards** -- Establish “common sense” design standards for all commercial uses to help attract new investment, new businesses and new jobs to Ancram. These standards should include things such as architectural style guidelines, screening and buffering requirements, building form, and lighting, and signage guidelines. These standards should ensure new and renovated commercial and mixed-use development (where allowed) retains the small town, historic, and rural character of the Town
- 7.13 Home Occupations** -- Split home occupations into two categories: “low impact” (homeowner plus up to two additional employees on site with no exterior evidence of commercial use), which should be permitted by right with no review, and “high impact home occupations” (up to four employees and requiring some combination of vehicle, material or equipment storage on the property, additional parking, signage and client or supplier traffic), which should require a special use permit.
- 7.14 Ancram Mill** – Anticipate needs for either expansion or cutbacks at the Ancram Mill, and charge the Ancram Economic Development Committee with developing approaches and alternatives to deal with either eventuality. Maintain the existing Industrial zone in the center of Ancram to support the operation of the Mill.

8 Housing

- 8.1 Implement Average Density Zoning** – In the Agricultural Zoning District (outside the hamlets) eliminate the three acre minimum lot size zoning requirement and replace it with an average density zoning system which will permit flexible lot sizes as small as $\frac{1}{2}$ acre subject to 1) a parcel average of one dwelling/lot per 3.5 acres; 2) the availability of adequate water and septic and 3) County Board of Health approval. As an example, if you own 10.5 acres, you could subdivide to 3 lots, and the lots could be any size you wanted them to be, assuming adequate water and septic are available.
- 8.2 Open Space Development Design** – Develop and implement “Open Space” development requirements in the Agricultural Zoning District based on the average density of one dwelling per 3.5 acres and requiring protection of at least 60% of the parcel as “open space.” Define how “open space” will be determined to provide for large contiguous open space areas suitable for agriculture, and set standards for open space, cluster and conservation development designs. Apply this same open space

development concept to the 2 acre average lot size zones in the hamlets. Open space development guidelines should be required for major subdivisions, and recommended for minor subdivisions.

- 8.3 Site Plan Review** -- Develop and adopt a Site Plan Review Process that will be required for major subdivisions and recommended for minor subdivisions, that reviews where development will be sited on lot, and ensures development is located to protect certain areas like environmentally and hydrogeologically sensitive areas and farmland, and also ensures that other Town zoning requirements are being met..
- 8.4 Density Bonuses** – In addition to offering density bonuses and/or incentives to encourage developers to increase open space beyond the 60% target, consider offering an incentive when developers offer at least 20% of the homes in their development as “affordable homes” to qualified Ancram residents.
- 8.5 Major Subdivisions** – The Planning Board may require traffic impact studies, well water capacity analyses, hydrogeological (water/wetland) sensitivity analyses, biodiversity/environmental assessments and the use of access management techniques for all major subdivisions as part of the permitting process.
- 8.6 Half-Acre Hamlet Zoning** -- Revise zoning in the Ancram and Ancramdale hamlets to provide for expanded mixed-use Business/Residential zones as shown in the “Proposed Hamlet Zone Map” attached. Allow ½ acre lots in these zones subject to the availability of adequate water and septic. In Ancram the proposed boundary of the expanded Business/Residential zone should be one parcel deep on both sides of 7 and 82 for approximately ½ mile from the 82/7 intersection going north and south along Route 7, approximately ½ mile south of the 82/7 intersection on Route 82, and about 300 yards north on Route 82. In Ancramdale, the ½ acre Business/Residential zone should extend from the 82/8/3 intersection along Route 8 to Maple Lane.
- 8.7 2-4 Family Homes** – Town-wide, permit the construction of or conversion of single family homes to two-to-four family homes, septic and water permitting, subject to special use permits and a two story height limit.
- 8.8 Expand Hamlets** – Consider expanding the hamlets to expand the availability of smaller, affordable lots, and have hamlet boundaries follow the lot lines of parcels in the hamlets subject to an evaluation of environmental constraints which could limit development.
- 8.9 Parcels of 3.5 to 7 Acres** -- Outside the Hamlet districts, allow all parcels between 6 and 7 acres one minor subdivision to create two lots, provided the resulting parcels are over 1/2 acre, and

adequate water and septic are available. For parcels between 3.5 and 5.99 acres which were not originally part of a major (over 4 lots) subdivision, consider allowing one minor subdivision providing the resulting parcels are over ½ acre, adequate water and septic are available, setback and access requirements to be determined are met .

- 8.10 Accessory Apartments** -- Allow one accessory apartment in single family dwellings and in accessory buildings like barns and garages, septic and water permitting, town-wide, subject to County Board of Health and town building inspector approvals, and subject to special use permits.
- 8.11 Garden Apartments and Senior Housing** – Amend zoning to allow for garden apartments and senior citizen housing in the hamlets, subject to site plan review process, special use permits and protection of open space. Include definitions in zoning for both housing types. Establish design standards to require senior housing and garden apartments to have a single family housing appearance similar to other residences in the hamlets.
- 8.12 Nursing Home, Assisted Living and Continuous Care Facilities -** Establish provisions and standards in zoning to accommodate nursing home, assisted living and continuous care facilities.
- 8.13 Manufactured Housing/Mobile Homes** – Continue to allow manufactured housing (mobile homes) subject to guidelines for single family homes.
- 8.14 Mobile Home Parks** -- Mobile home parks should be retained in zoning as a permitted use subject either to the current zoning guidelines or to the open space development guidelines which will apply to all future residential subdivision development.
- 8.15 CDBG Funding** -- Apply for CDBG funding for affordable housing acquisition and housing renovation efforts.
- 8.16 Densely Populated Areas in the Agricultural Zoning District** – Identify densely populated areas in the Agricultural Zoning District, such as Rhoda Lake, Carson Road, Four Corners Road and Four Roses Road, and establish these areas as separate zoning districts with setbacks more appropriate for the lot size configurations in these areas. The setbacks established for these areas should be consistent with the setbacks now in the Hamlets.

9 General Recommendations

- 9.1 Zoning Revisions Committee** -- Appoint a Zoning Revisions Committee to bring the Town's zoning and subdivision laws into alignment with the Comprehensive Plan. Identify all town laws pertaining to land use and consolidate them in a single Land Use

Laws document, which should be updated annually.

- 9.2 Consistency in Laws** -- Review and update Town Zoning law to ensure consistency between the local regulations and NYS laws related to administration and procedures.
- 9.3 Annual Zoning Review** -- After the Zoning Revisions Committee has done its work and the revised zoning is adopted, the Town Board should establish a Committee which includes the Chairs of the Planning Board and ZBA and the ZEO to annually review the zoning regulations and recommend changes, if necessary and appropriate, to the Town's zoning laws.
- 9.4 Zoning Purpose Statements** -- Review purpose statements in zoning Section I (C) and the declaration of policy within the subdivision law to ensure that the Vision and Goals of this Comprehensive Plan are addressed.
- 9.5 Use Definitions** -- Make sure that each use allowed and identified in the use schedule and throughout the regulations is defined in the zoning law.
- 9.6 Fee Schedules** -- Establish a fee schedule that adequately covers expenses related to the normal review of a project. Expenses for hiring of professionals to assist the Town in project reviews, if necessary, will be paid for by the applicant via an escrow account as per current town law.
- 9.7 Fines and Penalties** -- Establish and enforce appropriate fines and penalties for violating town laws which are consistent, at a minimum, with NYS minimum guidelines.
- 9.8 Update Fees** -- Review and update all town fees no less frequently than every other year.
- 9.9 Grant Writing** -- Retain the services of a professional grant writer as needed to aid in funding the initiatives recommended in this plan.
- 9.10 Special Use Permits** -- Consider authorizing the Planning Board to issue special use permits. Currently the Zoning Board of Appeals is authorized to do this review. However, when the planning process requires an application to have both site plan approval and a special use permit, it would be more efficient to have one board do the review and approval. It is recommended that the Planning Board take on all project review and approval roles and the Zoning Board of Appeals concentrate on its appellate roles related to variances and appeals.
- 9.11 ZEO Enforcement** -- Provide ZEO with the authority and tools to enforce zoning, subdivision and NYS property maintenance laws.
- 9.12 Subdivision Parcel Management** -- Develop an improved tracking system for long term subdivision parcel management.
- 9.13 Geographic Information /System (GIS)** -- Expand use of GIS tools in all town departments. Ensure that the Planning Board, ZBA and

Building Inspector/ZEO office use the Geographic Information System (GIS) maps (on paper or on computer) developed for this Comprehensive Plan to better understand the resources at each site as they are reviewing development proposals.

- 9.14 Revise Comprehensive Plan** -- Review and update the Comprehensive Plan every five years or more frequently, as needed.
- 9.15 Board, Committee and Task Force Procedural Guidelines** -- Establish process guidelines and bylaws for town appointed boards like the Youth Commission, the Planning Board and the ZBA and for Town appointed committees and task forces. These guidelines should address, at a minimum, minute-taking, public notices of meetings, open meeting law requirements, budget approval processes, and committee member conflicts of interest, and be consistent with the NYS Open Meeting Law.
- 9.16 Hunting Preserves and Shooting Clubs** – Establish standards related to operating hours, size and scope of operations and noise levels to protect neighbors from disruption from hunting preserves and shooting clubs.
- 9.17 Manage and Track Plan Progress** -- The Town Board should establish implementation priorities, milestones and performance measures for each strategy to track progress, establish an annual plan implementation status review, and create a Plan Implementation Coordinating Committee to help establish and maintain the momentum needed to accomplish the goals and strategies.
- 9.18 Property Assessment Process** – Consider appointing a Property Assessment Review Committee to work with the Tax Assessor to communicate property assessment processes and procedures to the Community, to determine if the town should revalue all properties annually to maintain 100% equalization rates and to establish guidelines for maintaining current and fair assessment for all properties over time.
- 9.19 Outside Wood Burning Furnaces** – Consider establishing standards and guidelines for the use of outdoor wood burning furnaces in the hamlets and other densely populated areas to prevent smoke pollution from impacting nearby neighbors.
- 9.20 Planning Board Discretion** – Wherever the Planning Board is authorized to require certain information to review projects, they should have the authority to waive these requirements provided such a waiver does not prevent or circumvent the purposes and intent of local law or this Comprehensive Plan. At the same time, the Planning Board should have the authority to approve projects with special conditions, if circumstances warrant, supporting the

intent of local law and this Comprehensive Plan.

9.21 Written Planning Board Guidelines – The Town should compile written guidelines and requirements for the benefit of applicants to the Building Department, the Planning Board and the ZBA, so applicants seeking a building permit, or coming before the Planning Board or ZBA for review can understand up front what the requirements are, how much things will cost and how long things will take. This information should be handed out to applicants and be posted on the Town web site, along with all forms needed for building permits and Planning board or ZBA review.

9.22 Look-Back Period for Calculating Major Subdivision Status – Because of the proposed change from minimum lot size to average lot size zoning, the 60% open space requirement and other requirement for major subdivisions, major subdivision status should be calculated based on subdivisions created after the adoption of the zoning based on this Comprehensive Plan.

9.23 Grandfathering – All conditions which exist as of the adoption of the new zoning based on this Plan shall be permitted to continue in the future. Any future actions which require a building permit will require compliance with the new zoning law.

9.24 Development Rights – If the allocation of development rights is not determined at the time of a subdivision, Town Zoning and Land Use Laws should assume development rights have been allocated in proportion to the acreage in each lot of the subdivision.

Comprehensive Plan Implementation

Implementation Activities Already Underway

Since the Comprehensive Planning process started in April 2007, the Ancram Town Board has taken a series of steps to implement ideas that the Community has generated as part of the comprehensive planning process. These Town initiatives have been taken without an adopted Plan, and represent a commitment to following through on the Vision and Goals articulated by the Community and captured in the Comprehensive Plan.

The important initiatives related to the Comprehensive Planning process already underway and supported by the Town Board include:

1. Developing the Town web site and expanding it to include financial and budget information.
2. Securing a \$21,000 grant from the Community Development Block Grant program to explore opportunities for affordable housing, economic development and hamlet revitalization, and appointing a committee to begin work on this activity.
3. Securing a \$25,000 grant from the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets to develop an agriculture and farmland protection plan, and appointing a committee to begin work on this activity.
4. Initiating a Community Newsletter.
5. Appointing a senior citizens committee to develop activities, services and programs for seniors.
6. Reviewing and implementing the Town's Ethical Conduct Law, including appointing an Ethics Committee.

7. Providing better Town Government communications and transparency by initiating a monthly Town Workshop to supplement the monthly Town Board Meeting, and by posting monthly financial and budget information on the Town website.
8. Setting up a Grants Committee to focus on finding the funds to support Town and Comp Plan priorities.
9. Providing support for the Town Historian to undertake an inventory of the Town's historical places.
10. Providing support for the Town's efforts to improve cell service in the area.
11. Authorizing the Planning Board to invest in GIS mapping capabilities.

Next Steps in the Implementation Process

Going forward, the Town Board has the ultimate responsibility for continuing the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The immediate priorities facing the Town Board include:

1. Reviewing the Draft Comprehensive Plan, holding public hearings on the Plan and deciding whether any changes to the Plan are necessary prior to adopting it.
2. Adopting the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Appointing a Zoning Revisions Committee to work on zoning and subdivision law and site plan review changes needed to implement recommendations in the Plan to protect groundwater, open space and agriculture and to support affordable housing, economic development and hamlet revitalization.
4. Reviewing and confirming the implementation priorities outlined below, and using them as a checklist of implementation activities and time frames.
5. Resolving to re-evaluate the Plan every five years to ensure that it stays current and relevant to conditions in Ancram.
6. Establishing a Comprehensive Plan implementation management and review process.

Implementation Priorities

Implementing the Comprehensive Plan will require a series of Town Board policy decisions, program initiatives and regulatory changes and coordination with local, county, regional and state organizations and agencies. Plan implementation will also require finding the funds to make things happen.

Success will be based on setting the right priorities and allocating scarce resources – people and funding – to the most important priorities. Priority Action Schedules 1 & 2, on the following pages, list the major actions required by the Town Board and by the Zoning Revisions Committee, which will be appointed by the Town Board. The suggested priority of each action is indicated as follows:

- X** Action already underway
- A** Highest Priority - Implement first, preferably within 12 months
- B** Medium Priority - Implement after the A priorities are underway, preferably within 18 months.
- C** Low Priority - Implement after the B priorities are underway, preferably within 36 months.
- O** Ongoing action needed

Key to Types of Action

Each strategy represents a specific type of action that the Town can take. These types of actions are:

- 1. Capital Improvement:** Any action that results in an investment and improvement in property, structures, equipment, staff or other similar items.
- 2. Policy:** Any action that results in establishment of a policy that will govern the actions of the Town.
- 3. Program:** Any action that results in establishment of a plan, activity, committee, proposal, or similar items.
- 4. Regulatory:** Any action that results in the development of new or amendment of existing land use related laws in the Town. This typically refers to zoning, site plan review, or subdivision laws.

Assistance to the Town Board

The Town Board (TB) oversees all aspects of implementation of the Plan and directs all work to be done in the future. At the Town Board's request, the following boards, organizations, or individuals can assist the Town Board in implementation:

PB	Planning Board
A	Attorney, Planner or other Professional advisor
HD	Highway Department
C	County
ZRC	Zoning Revisions Committee
AAC	Agriculture Advisory Committee
CLC	Columbia Land Conservancy
H	Town Historian
NC	New Committee to be formed as recommended in this plan
Youth	Youth Commission
EDC	Economic Development Committee
CPC	Comprehensive Planning Committee
FC/FD	Fire Company/Fire District
ECC	Environmental Conservation Committee

Priority Action Schedule 1: Recommended Town Board Actions

First Priority: Appoint a Zoning Revisions Committee with members from the Planning Board, the ZBA, the Comp Plan Committee, the Town Board and from the Community. The Zoning Revisions Committee should review and revise zoning, subdivision, site plan and other land use laws to bring them into alignment with the new Comprehensive Plan. Zoning revisions priorities are listed separately under Priority Action Schedule 2.

Other Town Board Priorities, by Goal:

Date to be Completed	Summary of Task/Action	Type of Action	Assistance	Time Frame
Goal 1. Agriculture and Open Space: Encourage farming and the rural, small town, scenic character of Ancram by promoting the profitability and productivity of our town's current farms, attracting new farming ventures, protecting farmland, and preserving open space and important scenic views.				
	Adopt right to farm law	Regulatory	ZRC, NC	B
	Develop and adopt Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan	Program	AAC	BX
	Appoint Agricultural Advisory Committee	Program	TB	BX
	Develop program and support purchase or lease of development rights (easements)	Program	TB, CLC	C
	Review and update Ag District 1 with County	Program	COUNTY PLANNING	O
Goal 2. Environment: Develop policies and programs to protect groundwater, watersheds, streams, wetlands, woodlands, ridgelines and wildlife habitats. Protect clean air and "dark skies," and encourage the use of alternative energy sources.				
	Implement regulatory recommendations from Water Study	Regulatory	ZRC	B
	Establish a local Type I list for SEQRA purposes	Regulatory	TB/ECC	C
	Appoint an advisory Environmental Conservation Committee	Program	TB	C
	Implement additional studies recommended in the Water Study	Program	TB/ECC	C
	Evaluate use of solar and wind	Program	TB/ECC	C

Date to be Completed	Summary of Task/Action	Type of Action	Assistance	Time Frame
	systems for town facilities			
	Review existing scenic resources protection plan	Program	TB/ECC	C
	Consider purchasing or leasing land or development rights to protect certain hydrogeological sensitive lands	Program	TB, CLC/ECC	C
Goal 3. Community Character: Promote a strong sense of community through communication, an open exchange of information and building consensus on important decisions facing the Town. Actively support volunteer activities and community efforts to preserve the town's historic places and landscapes.				
	Establish email, newsletter, bulletin board communication methods and expand web site capabilities	Program	TB	AX
	Establish annual or semi-annual town meeting day with public	Program	TB	A
	Enhance participation in decision making	Policy	TB	OX
	Inventory historic resources and add this to the computer database of information on the town	Program	TB, H	C
	Consider establishing incentives for historic preservation, and consider accepting historic easements after careful evaluation of its impact	Program, Policy	ZRC	C
	Request advisory opinions from the NYS Historic Preservation Office as needed	Policy	PB, ZBA, TB	O
	Continue to provide financial support to encourage volunteer activities	Policy	TB	OX
	Update and implement town's ethical conduct law and establish an ethical conduct committee	Program, Regulatory	TB	AX
	Establish new gateway/welcome signs	Program	TB, HD	B
Goal 4. Community Services: Provide community services and recreational facilities and opportunities to meet the needs of all age groups.				
	Appoint task force to identify community service needs	Program	TB	AX
	Develop and implement a recreational services plan	Program, Capital Improvements	TB, NC	CX
	Create process to ensure the town	Program	TB, FCFD	A

Date to be Completed	Summary of Task/Action	Type of Action	Assistance	Time Frame
	has an updated Emergency Preparedness Plan			
	Establish process to gain input from emergency services and Highway Superintendent during development review processes	Policy	FCFD, HD	A
	Establish a per lot recreation fee for new lots in major subdivisions	Policy	TB	C
	Work with County to expand local transfer station hours and services	Program	TB	C
Goal 5. Town Infrastructure: Maintain adequate and appropriate Town buildings, roads, signs, traffic control and bridges, scaled to meet the needs of a small, rural community. Improve the information systems and management processes supporting all town departments.				
	Establish a Financial Analysis Advisory Committee to assist Town related to capital needs	Program	TB	A
	Develop five-year Capital Improvement Plan and update it annually	Program	TB, HD, NC	A
	Ensure other government agencies consider this Plan when undertaking capital projects	Policy	TB, PB, ZBA	AO
	Study and share municipal services with neighboring communities and County	Program, Policy	TB, COUNTY	C
	Future consideration of waste treatment in hamlets should be comprehensive and consider economic alternatives	Policy, Program	TB	C
	Establish a Highway Advisory Committee	Program	HD	C
	Establish policy on acceptance of new roads	Policy	TB, HD	B
	Establish policies related to roadside tree and vegetation management	Policy	TB, HD	C
Goal 6. Town Centers: Enhance the appearance and safety of the hamlets, with Ancram the top priority. Provide for safe roads, crossings, intersections and traffic flows, and control heavy truck traffic.				
	Implement Community Development Block Grant recommendations related to hamlet revitalization and involve community stakeholders	Program, Policy	TB, NC	B
	Seek additional grant funding	Program	TB, GC	AX
	Improve the 7/82 and 8/3/82	Capital	TB, HD	CX

Date to be Completed	Summary of Task/Action	Type of Action	Assistance	Time Frame
	intersections	Improvement		
	Consider enacting highway/truck noise restrictions	Regulatory	TB	C
Goal 7. Economic Development: Encourage home-based businesses, small retail businesses, and other economic activities consistent with our rural, small town character, supported by reliable telecommunications services.				
	Establish economic development committee to implement economic development related strategies	Program	TB	AX
	Create incentives to attract appropriate businesses	Program, Regulatory	TB, NC	B
	Enhance telecommunications infrastructure	Capital	TB	OX
	Develop alternatives to deal with expansion or cutbacks in the Ancram Mill	Program	TB, NC	C
9. General Recommendations for all Goals				
	Appoint a Zoning Revisions committee	Program	TB	A
	Amend zoning as recommended to the Town Board by the Zoning Review Committee	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Establish annual zoning law review procedures to ensure the law stays current	Program	TB, PB, ZBA	B
	Establish fee schedules and update fines and penalties	Program	TB	B
	Retain services of a grant writer as needed	Program	TB	B
	Enhance ZEO code enforcement capability	Program, Regulatory	TB, ZRC	B
	Expand use of the GIS tools to be used in all town departments	Program, Capital	TB	CX
	Track progress of plan implementation; review/revise Plan as necessary every five years	Program	TB, NC	AO
	Establish guidelines for committees and ask forces	Program	TB	C
	Consider appointing Property Assessment Review Committee to work with Tax Assessor	Program	ZRC	C

Priority Action Schedule 2: Recommended Zoning Revisions Committee Actions

First Priority: Retain a professional planner to work with the ZRC to assist with the review and revision of the zoning, subdivision, site plan and other land use laws.

Other ZRC Priorities by Goal:

Date to be Completed	Summary of Task/Action	Type of Action	Assistance	Time Frame
Goal 1. Agriculture and Open Space: Encourage farming and the rural, small town, scenic character of Ancram by promoting the profitability and productivity of our town's current farms, attracting new farming ventures, protecting farmland, and preserving open space and important scenic views.				
	Amend zoning: rename districts, update purpose statements, update agriculture-related definitions, establish open space development designs, establish density incentives for open space protection, development standards for open space protection, improve site plan review, allow for farm worker housing, revise density control schedule, allow for farm stands, allow for additional farm related businesses, establish buffers between farm and non-farm uses, establish stream buffers, allow for agriculture related home occupations.	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend all land use laws to reference and incorporate NY Agriculture and Market 25-aa and Town law 283-a requirements.	Regulatory	ZRC	A
Goal 2. Environment: Develop policies and programs to protect groundwater, watersheds, streams, wetlands, woodlands, ridgelines and wildlife habitats. Protect clean air and "dark skies," and encourage the use of alternative energy sources.				
	Amend zoning as per Water Study to	Regulatory	ZRC	A

Date to be Completed	Summary of Task/Action	Type of Action	Assistance	Time Frame
	change density from one dwelling per 3 to 3.5 acres.			
	Amend zoning to enhance site plan review as a process to protect environmentally sensitive land	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend zoning to establish revised water and wetland buffers	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend zoning to define environmental assets to be protected and establish formula-based and yield management density calculations	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend zoning to update excavation regulations, establish commercial logging standards	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend zoning to address solar and wind power	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend zoning to address steep slopes, ridgeline protection, lighting standards, revise Scenic Corridor Overlay boundaries, establish visual impact analysis standards, include floodplain map on zoning map, enhance purpose statements to detail critical role aesthetic/visual character plays,	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend subdivision law to ensure water resource protection, natural, cultural and historic resources are analyzed and preserved, to establish road standards that protect open spaces and rural character, allow for flag lots	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend zoning and subdivision laws to ensure review and protection of critical natural habitats on major subdivisions.	Regulatory	ZRC	A
Goal 3. Community Character: Promote a strong sense of community through communication, an open exchange of information and building consensus on important decisions facing the Town. Actively support volunteer activities and community efforts to preserve the town's historic places and landscapes.				
	Amend subdivision and zoning to require historic resource assessment during project review	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend local laws to reference and require compliance with existing	Regulatory	ZRC	A

Date to be Completed	Summary of Task/Action	Type of Action	Assistance	Time Frame
	State and federal historic preservation laws			
Goal 5. Town Infrastructure: Maintain adequate and appropriate Town buildings, roads, signs, traffic control and bridges, scaled to meet the needs of a small, rural community. Improve the information systems and management processes supporting all town departments.				
	Update road standards to be consistent with rural roads, minimize use of cul-de-sac roads, and use existing manuals and guidelines for town road management	Program, Regulatory, Policy	ZRC	A
	Incorporate traffic impact studies in development review	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend zoning and subdivision laws to establish road access management techniques	Regulatory	ZRC	A
Goal 6. Town Centers: Enhance the appearance and safety of the hamlets, with Ancram the top priority. Provide for safe roads, crossings, intersections and traffic flows, and control heavy truck traffic.				
	Amend zoning to rename hamlet zones, adjust hamlet boundaries, review and update commercial districts and uses in hamlets, parking standards	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Establish policy on demolition on deteriorating structures	Policy, Regulatory	TB	A
	Amend zoning to establish commercial design, siting and scale standards	Regulatory	ZRC	A
Goal 7. Economic Development: Encourage home-based businesses, small retail businesses, and other economic activities consistent with our rural, small town character, supported by reliable telecommunications services.				
	Amend zoning to expand commercial opportunities in a manner consistent with the rural character and environment of the town	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Create incentives to attract appropriate businesses	Program, Regulatory	TB, NC	A
	Amend zoning to strengthen floating zone to provide flexibility for business development that is consistent with Ancram's goals	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend zoning regarding home occupations	Regulatory	ZRC	A
Goal 8. Housing: Improve the supply of affordable housing, housing for seniors and				

Date to be Completed	Summary of Task/Action	Type of Action	Assistance	Time Frame
control large-scale residential development, consistent with the Community's desire to protect farmland, open space and the rural character of the Town.				
	Amend zoning to implement use of average lot size/density zoning, open space development designs, use of density bonuses, ½ acre hamlet zoning, allowance for 2 to 4 family homes accessory apartments, garden apartments, senior housing, nursing homes, assisted living, continuous care facilities	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Enhance site plan review law for all development	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend subdivision law to ensure the Planning Board requires adequate studies to protect resources in town	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend zoning to allow parcels between 3.5 and 7 acres one minor subdivision to create two lots	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Continue permitting manufactured housing, and mobile home parks as per zoning standards	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend zoning to establish different setbacks for very dense areas such as Rhoda Lake, Carson Road, Four Corners Road, and Five Roses Road	Regulatory	ZRC	A
9. General Recommendations for all Goals				
	Amend zoning so that it is consistent with NYS laws	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend zoning to ensure purpose statements are consistent with this plan and use definitions are complete	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Authorize the Planning Board, not ZBA, to issue special use permits	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Develop tracking system for recording subdivision activity	Program	TB, PB	A
	Amend zoning to address hunting preserves and shooting clubs	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Develop outdoor wood burning furnace regulations	Regulatory	ZRC	A
	Amend land use laws to include waiver provisions consistent w. plan	Regulatory	ZRC	A

Glossary of Terms

The Comprehensive Planning documents contain technical planning terms which are unfamiliar to many people. We have prepared this Glossary of Terms to help make these documents clear and easier to understand. If you have a question not answered by the Glossary, please contact any Comp Plan Committee member for a definition.

AADT: Annual Average of Daily Traffic; A number that shows how many cars pass by a specific spot on a highway or road.

Access Management: Placement and design of vehicle access for every lot on a highway segment to create safe egress and ingress in a manner which reduces the number of curb cuts to the maximum extent.

Accessory apartment: A dwelling unit that has been added onto, or created within, a single-family house, barn or garage.

Adaptive reuse: When an existing building is changed, renovated or adapted from a prior use to a new use.

Adequate Public Facilities Regulation: A set of regulations that requires that the public facilities needed to service a certain level of development be in place and functional prior to approval of a development.

Affordable Housing: Housing that costs no more than 30% of the buyer's income for rent or principle, interest, taxes, and insurance. For example, someone earning \$50,000 a year, an affordable house costs no more than \$15,000 a year (\$1250 per month). This translates into a house costing about \$142,000.

Agricultural Data Statement: A written statement required when certain land use determinations within five hundred (500) feet of a farm operation located in a NYS Agricultural District takes place. The statement must include information about the proposed project, and is included in the application for project approval. A notice of the project application is mailed to owners of land associated with the neighboring farm operation identified in the statement. The Planning Board is required to evaluate and consider the statement in its review of possible impacts of a project on nearby farm operations.

Agriculture: This includes: the raising of crops, animals, or animal products, the selling of such products grown on premises, and any other commonly accepted

agricultural operations, including incidental mechanical processing of products, including animals or crops raised for personal consumption or recreational purposes. Defined and regulated by the NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Agricultural District 1: That portion of the Town of Ancram that is included in the New York State Certified Agricultural District established as per State Agriculture and Markets Law 25-aa.

Aquifer: an underground collection of potentially drinkable water.

Aquifer recharge area: The location where surface water enters the ground to replenish an aquifer. These areas are important to protect from surface contamination to prevent pollution of drinking water in areas where wells are the primary source of drinking water.

Average Lot Size Zoning: A zoning standard that allows flexibility in creation of new lots where the emphasis is on meeting an average lot size over all the lots created on the parcel, instead of relying on a specific minimum lot size for each and every parcel.

Average density: The number of buildings or housing units allowed on a particular area of land is controlled by setting either a minimum lot size or an average lot size. Use of a minimum lot size requires all lots created on a given parcel of land to be at least that size. Use of an average allows flexibility in the size of lots created with some small if water and septic can be permitted and others large. Average density facilitates maintenance of open space. Note Average Lot Size Zoning, above is the same concept.

B1 District: The zoning district established by the Town of Ancram to regulate business uses.

Best management practices: Accepted practices designed to minimize negative environmental impacts.

Biodiversity Assessment: An inventory and evaluation of the biological and ecological resources in the Town of Ancram. The assessment process uses trained volunteers and methods and standards established by the regional environmental organization, Hudsonia.

Buffer: Open spaces, landscaped areas, fences, walls, berms or any combination used to physically separate or screen one use or property from another so as to visually shield or block noise, lights, or other nuisances.

Building Envelope: That part of a parcel that is disturbed for development and within which the principal building or principal use shall be located.

Build-out: A technique used to estimate the total number of homes and people that would result if the all developable parcels of the town were built on.

CAC: Conservation Advisory Council.

CDBG: Community Development Block Grant, which is a program of the United States government designed to provide planning and implementation funds to communities to assist in hamlet revitalization, economic development, affordable housing and building renovation.

CEA: Critical Environmental Area. Established through procedures outlined in the State Environmental Quality Review Act.

CIP - Capital Improvement Plan: A plan developed by a municipality to guide their scheduling and budgeting of any kind of capital improvement such as roads, sewer, water, sidewalks, municipal buildings, etc.

Clustered subdivision: A flexible subdivision technique where all the residences to be built on a parcel are located together on smaller lots in order to preserve open space or environmental features on the parcel.

Commercial Design Standards: A set of guidelines to be followed in site and/or building design and development of commercial uses. Usually used to help maintain the traditional character of a community and prevent new commercial development from dramatically changing the physical and visual footprint of the Community without Community oversight.

Condominium: Multiple housing units that are individually owned, but that share land and infrastructure. They can be in the form of a multi-family house, multi-unit apartment building or town houses.

Conservation easement: The grant of a property right stipulating that the described land will remain in its natural state and precluding future or additional development.

Consistent in Size and Scale: Conveys the Community's intent that new development be similar to existing development in terms of size, height, bulk, intensity and aesthetics to its surroundings. New and modified structures should match the context established by neighboring buildings. Commercial/industrial uses targeted toward regional markets should seek to use sites and structures used historically for similar or larger scale operations.

Cornell Rural Road Standards: The Cornell Rural Road Program is one of 58 Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) Centers established by the Federal Highway Administration in the United States. They provide training and technical assistance to local highway and public works officials in New York State. CRRP establishes a variety of guidance documents, training manuals, and standards for road construction and building.

Dark Skies: The term given to the night sky that remains un-impacted by outdoor light pollution.

DEC: Department of Environmental Conservation.

Demographics: Numbers, percentages and statistics that describe the characteristics of a community's population, dwellings and land use.

Density: The number of residential structures allowed per acre. It is not the same as minimum lot size. Also the number of families, individuals, dwelling units, households, or housing structures per unit of land.

Density Bonus: An applicant can receive an increase in the allowable density that a parcel can have if they supply something desired by the town, such as preserving open space, a scenic view, or other public amenities.

Density Control Schedule: Standards in the Town of Ancram Zoning Law that establish the maximum level of development allowed per acre in each zoning district.

Development Rights: The right of a landowner to develop property based on a community's zoning.

DOT or NYS DOT: NY State Department of Transportation.

Farmland Protection Plan: A plan developed locally that inventories farmland and farm activities and outlines strategies and actions that could be taken locally to protect and maintain those activities.

Fiscal impact analysis: An analysis of the costs and revenues associated with a specific development application.

Flag Lot: A lot meeting minimum frontage requirements where access to the public road is by a narrow private right-of-way or driveway.

Floating Zone: An unmapped zoning district where the zone requirements are defined and the zone is fixed on the map only after an application for development is approved by the Town Board. The floating zone provision allows the Town to review and evaluate projects that would otherwise not be permitted under existing zoning.

Flood Plain Zoning District: A zoning district established in the Town of Ancram Zoning Law to regulate land uses within the floodplain of a stream as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. A floodplain is the channel and relatively flat area adjoining the channel of a natural stream or river that has been or may be covered by floodwater. The flood plain includes the floodway and the flood fringe area.

Front-Loaded Road: A street designed so that all homes are located on only one side to afford each residence maximum viewing of open space lands or other features. This contrasts to a double-loaded street where houses are placed on both sides.

Garden Apartment: One or more two-story, multi-family structures with each structure including related off-street parking, open space and recreation areas.

GIS: Geographic Information System; a computerized mapping and analysis tool that allows parcels, wetlands, topography, soils, geology, environmentally sensitive areas and land uses to be plotted and visually presented.

Grid pattern of streets: Where streets are in square or modified square blocks, interconnected with one another, and where there are no dead ends or cul-de-sacs.

Group homes: A dwelling unit or part thereof in which, for compensation, lodging and meals are provided; personal and financial services may be offered as well.

Groundwater: The supply of freshwater under the surface in an aquifer or geologic formation that forms the natural reservoir for potable water.

Hamlet: A populated area within a town that is not part of an incorporated village. Characterized by densely situated homes and small businesses surrounded by area farms and open space. Also referred to as a Traditional Settlement Pattern.

Historic Character or Traditional Character: Describes the qualities and attributes of Ancram's physical and visual landscape that embody the events, traditions and personalities of its past. Historic character describes the unique architectural variety, style and scale of our Community, including color,

proportion, form, and architectural detail. However, the physical layout of the Community, its landscape patterns, the pre-automobile network of roads, and other elements also contribute to historic character. Among these elements are active agricultural operations with low density residential development interspersed with denser population centers such as the hamlets, roads and windbreaks lined with old mature trees, stone walls, deep rural setbacks, and small/irregular field or pasture dimensions. Ancram's historic character is strengthened by the presence of historic churches, houses, barns and out-buildings from the periods of its settlement by farmers in the 1700's and early 1800s. Historic character is also boosted by the presence of sites related to NY State and Federal Historic Register listed properties.

Home-based occupations:

High impact: Any nonresidential use conducted in a residence or accessory structure by the owner of same, which is incidental to the use of the dwelling for living purposes and does not materially change the residential character of the dwelling unit or vicinity. There can be exterior evidence of such secondary nonresidential use such as signage, parking, material storage and exterior lighting, and there may be additional traffic caused by customers, clients, vendors or sales representatives entering the premises. Not more than three or four nonresidents are employed on premises.

Low Impact: An occupation or business activity conducted wholly or partly in a dwelling unit or accessory structure as an accessory use by the resident, which is clearly secondary to the use of the dwelling for living purposes. Low impact home-based occupations do not change the character of the structure, lot or neighborhood and have no exterior evidence of that use within the structure. This work typically employs only one or two individuals on site, produces only household quantities and types of waste, requires a low number of, if any, daily client visits (and therefore no additional parking), requires no outdoor material storage, and does not involve an excessive amount of delivery truck visits. Signage, if present at all is usually limited to a small door or lawn plaque.

Hydrogeologically sensitive areas: The *hydrogeologic sensitivity* of a location is a relative measure of the ease and speed with which a contaminant could migrate into and within the upper-most water-bearing unit. High to very high hydrogeologic sensitivity ratings indicate that, in general, ground water could be easily and quickly impacted by surface activities.

Important Aesthetic Features: Denotes elements of architecture and landscape that have been identified by the community as significant to the local

quality of life and sense of place. They may be specific elements such as structures, scenic roads, parks, waterways, crossroads, and stone walls; or they may be more diffuse resources such as open spaces, formal/informal historic districts, and scenic views. These can include historic structures and landscapes, country roads, agricultural fields and operations, views of hills and mountains, streams and wetlands, and the hamlet areas.

Inclusionary zoning: A residential housing development in which a percentage of the dwelling units is affordable to low- to-moderate income households.

Industrial (I1) District: The zoning district established by the Town of Ancram to regulate industrial uses.

Jake Brakes: Usually seen in trucks, jake brake shuts off the exhaust valves so that in the exhaust stroke, the burned gasses cannot escape through the exhaust valves. Instead they press against the head of the piston and causes the piston to slow down. When the intake valve opens, some of the exhaust escapes out the intake valve and gives a distinctive loud rapping noise. Jake brakes are used in large truck engines to assist in slowing the vehicle.

Land use laws: Any law that regulates the siting of structures or use of land.

Limited Commercial Use: Indicates the types of non-residential uses that would be allowed in selected community locations such as hamlet areas. The evolution of many hamlet areas has included mixed use with commercial activities such as mills, inns, or corner stores located within a cluster of residences. Typically, the commercial uses are few in number and small in scale relative to the overall size of the hamlet and the number of nearby residents and structures.

Limited commercial uses include: home-based businesses, restaurants, bed & breakfasts, country inns, small retail shops (with goods like antiques or specialty foods), and country groceries. High-volume retail establishments such as convenience stores, filling stations, and fast-food restaurants would not qualify as a limited commercial use. High-impact commercial establishments such as auto service firms or modern manufacturing firms would also not be considered limited commercial uses. Standards to regulate commercial establishments in hamlet areas should include:

- Allowance for mixed uses on one parcel and within the zoning district
- No side yard setback requirements for attached structures, and minimal setback requirements for detached structures
- Allow additional, but limited parking. Use street in front of buildings and locate any off-street parking to the side or the rear of the property.

- Increase lot coverage limits to 80 percent or more
- Add side and rear yard buffers where a limited commercial mixed-use zoning district would abut a residential district.

Limited commercial use may also refer to a use that has minimal impact on the property where it takes place and almost none on adjacent properties with qualities including:

- No creation of noise or vibration, light, odor, dust, smoke, or other air pollution noticeable at or beyond the property line
- No change to the character of the lot or the surrounding neighborhood
- Adequate screening of outside storage of goods, materials, or equipment
- Signs limited in size
- No chemical or metal waste, or potential contamination of surface or ground water

Low Volume Roads: A road designed, constructed and maintained for roads that have an average daily traffic of less than 400 vehicles per day.

Major Subdivision: A subdivision not classified as a minor subdivision, including but not limited to subdivisions of more than four (4) lots, or any size subdivision requiring any new street or extension of utilities, or the creation of any public improvements.

Manufactured Housing: Factory-built, single-family structures that meet the National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act (42 U.S.C. Sec 5401), commonly known as the HUD code. Mobile homes are manufactured houses built prior to 1976 HUD Standards (see Mobile Homes, below). Mobile homes and Modular homes are both manufactured housing. Modular homes typically are manufactured in one or more pieces and transported to the site for placement on a permanent foundation. Manufactured homes and mobile homes are normally built in one or two pieces and transported to the site with a chassis for placement on a temporary foundation.

Minor Subdivision: The subdivision of land into two (2), three (3) or four (4) lots fronting on an existing road, not including any new street or road, or the extension of utilities, or the creation of any public improvements, and not adversely affecting the remainder of the parcel or adjoining property, and not in

conflict with any provision or portion of the Comprehensive Plan or Official Map of the Town.

Mobile home: A manufactured dwelling unit built prior to the 1976 HUD standards (National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act).

Modular home: Factory: built, single-family structures that meet the National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards.

Multi-unit homes: A building containing two-to-four dwelling units, including units that may be located one over the other.

National Historic Preservation Act: The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470) is the nation's primary historic preservation law. The act created the National Register of Historic Places, the official list of properties significant in the history, architecture, archeology and culture of the United States. The act also called for the creation of State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) to administer the national program at the state level. In addition, any project that involves federal funds, licenses or permits is reviewed in accordance with Section 106, which establishes procedures to be followed by federal agencies whose actions may directly or indirectly have an effect on historic properties and directs those agencies to consult with SHPO to assess those effects. Therefore, any approvals/permits/funding that are given by a federal agency must also be reviewed by SHPO. The comments of an independent review agency, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, may be sought when federal agencies are involved in relevant undertakings. Examples of federal undertakings include but are not limited to CORPS permits, FCC permits (cell towers), FDIC approvals/funding (banks, mortgage insurance, etc.), or HUD funding, etc.

NWI: National Wetlands Inventory: a nationwide system of wetlands inventory and mapping.

NYS: New York State.

New York State Preservation Act Section 14.09: The New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 was established as a counterpart to the National Historic Preservation Act and declares historic preservation to be the public policy and in the public interest of the state. The act created the New York State Register of Historic Places, the official list of sites, buildings, structures, areas or objects significant in the history, architecture, archeology or culture of the state, its communities or the nation. The act also requires state agencies to consult with the SHPO if it appears that any projects being planned may or will cause any

change, beneficial or adverse, in the quality of any historic, architectural, archeological or cultural property that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places or listed on the State Register or that is determined to be eligible for listing on the State Register. It requires state agencies, to the fullest extent practicable, consistent with other provisions of the law, to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to such properties, to explore all feasible and prudent alternatives and to give due consideration to feasible and prudent plans that would avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to such property. The act also establishes agency preservation officers within state agencies for the purpose of implementing these provisions. In addition, the act reaffirms and expands the role of the State Board for Historic Preservation, which advises and makes recommendations to the State Historic Preservation Officer on preservation programs and activities, including State and National Registers nominations and statewide preservation planning efforts.

NYS OPRHP: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

Open Space Development Design: A design process that allows for the creation of multiple homes on a parcel while setting aside 60% of the parcel as undeveloped. The undeveloped area becomes protected and preserved open space. Reduced lot sizes and flexible road standards allow development to take place on the least sensitive parts of the project site. In contrast, a conventional subdivision divides and develops all the land into roads and house lots with no regard for preservation of open space and natural areas.

Open Space: Refers to undeveloped lands without dwellings, structures, roads, or driveways. Some of these lands may provide opportunities for active or passive recreational use. In rural areas, this term tends to apply to larger areas of land while in more densely developed areas such as hamlets and villages' smaller parcels of size may serve as a valuable open space. Typically the term does pertain to lands in active agricultural use, but not, for example, to the area of a farm surrounding the dwelling and outbuildings. While the habitat that comprises open space is of diverse type and quality, fields or yards of mown grass within or surrounding housing developments, office parks, or other institutions are not generally considered open space. Open space land may either be publicly or privately owned. Land with active extractive industries such as open mining or clear cutting of timber is not generally considered open space until the activity has ceased and the land has been allowed to recover and re-vegetate. Apart from active agricultural land, some land may be regulated open space set aside in order to protect natural or cultural resources such as wetlands, floodways, historic sites, critical habitats, scenic views, etc. Other lands may be 'open space' because the owner has not chosen to put the land to an economic

use or because it is marginally productive. Some private lands are owned as conservation areas for the express purpose of protecting open space.

Prime Soils: Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses. It has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if it is treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, an acceptable level of acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable content of salt or sodium, and few or no rocks. Its soils are permeable to water and air. Prime farmland is not excessively eroded or saturated with water for long periods of time, and it either does not flood frequently during the growing season or is protected from flooding.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs): A voluntary sale of the rights to develop a piece of property by the landowner to a government agency or a land trust. The sale price is determined by an appraisal. The land is restricted to farming or open space.

Ridgeline: The long, narrow crest or horizontal line of hills, usually at the highest elevation.

Right to Farm Law: A State, County, or local law passed that states that an agricultural practice used on land subject to an agricultural assessment shall not constitute a private nuisance, when an action is brought by a person, provided such agricultural practice constitutes a sound agricultural practice pursuant to an opinion issued upon request by the commissioner of NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.

ROW: Right-of-Way; A strip of land acquired by reservation or dedication and intended to be occupied by a road, crosswalk, water lines, sidewalks, etc.

Rural Character: Describes the features and qualities of Ancram's physical and natural landscape that were shaped by current and past economic activities such as agriculture, mining, forestry and low density residential uses, interspersed with open, working agricultural landscapes and scenic views. Concentrations of population and structures exist in a limited way in the hamlets, but Ancram's land is predominantly used for agriculture - as pastures, cropland and woodlands. Ancram does not have an extensive street grid or transportation network, and has limited pedestrian walkways other than narrow often unpaved rural roads. Our hamlets typically have a fairly well defined border and buffer of undeveloped open spaces and agricultural lands, and are located at key road crossings, near

important civic structures such as places of worship, or adjacent to historically important natural features like streams. Our hamlets have a diverse mix of lot size and architectural styles. Historic structures from various periods in the community's life are present. Outside these hamlets, residents typically occupy a range of residential types such as estates, farms and a variety of residences including old farmhouses, newly built modern homes, modulars, manufactured homes and trailers. Evidence of current and past agricultural activity is present, including but not limited to crop fields, hay fields, livestock pastures, corrals, orchards, farm buildings, stone walls, windbreaks, hedgerows, and woodlots. Farm equipment noise and farm smells are a daily fact of rural life. Most local roadways tend to be narrow with limited driveways or crossroads, and rural roads tend to be lined with trees, fences, or stone walls.

Ancram's rural character also embodies a quality of life based upon traditional rural landscapes, activities, lifestyles, and values. Ancram is characterized by a balance between the natural environment and human uses with low-density residential dwellings, farms, forests, mining areas, outdoor recreation and other open space activities. Ancram's rural character can also be defined as the patterns of land use and development:

- In which open space and natural landscapes are preferred over built-up environments;
- In which clean air and dark skies are prized and protected;
- That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas;
- Which values the nature of farming and the role it plays in the community, and accepts the sounds and smells of a working farm;
- That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities;
- That are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat;
- That reduce the conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
- That generally do not require extensive municipal services; and
- That are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and ground water and surface water recharge and discharge areas.

Rural Guidelines: A set of illustrated design guidelines that detail the siting, layout, and architectural features that may be required in a certain district. These usually are associated with specific zoning regulations.

Scenic corridor: A designated location, usually along one or more roads, that has been identified as being scenic.

Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone: A zoning district established by the Town of Ancram to regulate land uses in the scenic corridor.

Scenic Protection Plan: A Plan developed by the Town of Ancram that inventories scenic locations and outlines strategies including the creation of scenic overlay areas to protect those locations.

Section 301 of the NYS Ag and Markets Law: That section of State law that defines agriculture, farm operations and other terms used in the Agricultural Districts Program.

Senior Housing: There are a variety of options to let seniors age in their own homes. These include independent living apartments or cottages, condominiums, in-law apartments/granny flats, co-housing, adult homes, assisted living, nursing homes and Continuing Care Retirement Communities.

Sensitive Environmental Features and Areas: Refers to natural resource locations that have a high potential for significant damage or degradation from direct or cumulative impacts arising from new development or shifts in existing land uses. Some sensitive environmental features and areas have been inventoried, mapped or identified as being locally, regionally, nationally or globally significant for its rarity and/or degree of vulnerability. Typical examples include but are not limited to: wetlands, streams/river corridors, steep slopes, floodplains, highly erodible soils, and aquifer recharge and discharge areas, and habitats of rare or endangered species.

SEQRA: The State Environmental Quality Review Act which is the New York State law that regulates when and how environmental reviews for development projects will be done.

Setback: The distance between a building and any lot line.

Shared Access Way: A means of physical approach for vehicular or pedestrian traffic into or out of a location that is shared and used by one or more different parcels of land.

Site plan review law: A review process that evaluates use of a single parcel of land whereby the planning board is authorized to review the arrangement, layout and design of the proposed use.

Sketch plan: A concept or informal map of a proposed subdivision or site plan that has sufficient accuracy to be used for the purpose of discussion during the initial stages of a review process.

Soils of Statewide Importance: This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are determined by New York State. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable. In some states, additional farmlands of statewide importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by state law.

SPDES: State Pollution Discharge Elimination System; A state program to eliminate erosion and sedimentation of water bodies.

Special Use Permit: An authorization of a particular land use which is permitted in the Town of Ancram Zoning Law, subject to special requirements to assure that the proposed use is in harmony with the Zoning Law and will not adversely affect the neighborhood if such requirements are met.

Steep Slope: Land areas where the slope exceeds 15%.

Subdivision review: A process where the Planning Board reviews and approves all new lots to be created in the town.

Subsidized Rental Unit: Assistance toward rental or purchase price from public or private agency. This is different from "affordable housing" (see affordable housing definition above).

SWCD: Soil and Water Conservation District.

Term Conservation Easement for Tax abatement: When a grant of property rights by a property owner to and/or for use by the public (usually a conservation easement) is given, the town can offer a tax abatement of some or all of the owners Town property taxes for some period of time in return. A Town could do this to encourage property owners to encourage things like encouraging land use that is compatible with:

- The protection of surface waters and ground water recharge and discharge areas.
- The protection of environmentally sensitive lands for fish and wildlife habitat
- Encouraging rural lifestyles and opportunities to live and work in rural areas;
- Establishing or expanding walking, hiking or biking trails on town and private property

- Protecting and expanding the visual landscapes that are found in rural communities;
- Reducing the conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low: density development.

Town House: Also known as row houses, these are individually owned and deeded units that share common walls within a building.

Town Law 272 a: The New York State Town Law that regulates local municipal establishment of comprehensive plans.

Traditional Character of the Community: Describes the qualities and attributes of Ancram's physical and visual landscapes that embody the varied events, traditions and personalities of its past. Traditional character describes the unique architectural variety, style and scale of the Community, including color, proportion, form, and architectural detail. The physical layout of the Community, the landscape patterns, the pre-automobile network of roads, and other scenic and economic elements also contribute to Ancram's traditional character. Among these elements are active agricultural operations with low density residential development interspersed with denser population centers such as the hamlets, roads and windbreaks lined with old mature trees, stone walls, deep rural setbacks, and small/irregular field or pasture dimensions. Ancram's traditional character is strengthened by the presence of historic farmhouses, barns and out-buildings from the periods of its settlement by farmers in the 1700's and early 1800s. Our traditional character is also boosted by the presence of sites related to NY State and Federal Historic Register listed properties. **Also see Rural Character, Historic Character.**

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs): The voluntary sale and purchase of development rights between two private parties which shift development rights from one parcel to another parcel under a Town approved plan to encourage growth in certain designated areas and to discourage growth in other areas. When TDRs are sold, the land they came from is then restricted to farming or open space.

Type 1 List for SEQRA: An action or a class of actions that are more likely to have negative environmental impacts than other kinds of actions. New York State law establishes a list of actions that are automatically considered a Type I action. Municipalities can add to this list for local purposes if they desire.

Vernal pools: Seasonal wetland areas that support the spring growth of certain specific species. In the winter vernal pools may be frozen over after having been filled with fall rains. In the spring usually around mid-March through April, the

season of the vernal equinox, the pools melt and animals begin to lay their eggs there.

Visual Impact Analysis: A process used to analyze the visibility of a project, structure, building, or use from a variety of points or locations. NYS DEC publishes guidance documents that outline procedures for conducting such an analysis.

Workforce housing: Housing that is economically feasible for families whose income level is categorized as moderate within the standards set by HUD or a local housing agency.

ZBA (The Zoning Board of Appeals): The board designated by the Town to consider requests for variances to and interpretations of the Town Zoning Law.

ZEO (Zoning Enforcement Officer): The administrative officer designated to administer this Zoning Law and issue zoning related permits.

Zoning Purpose Statement: The statement(s) included in the Town zoning laws that establish one or more reasons for regulating land uses. This statement is usually tied closely to the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Frequently Asked Questions

These “Frequently Asked Questions” have been compiled from conversations with hundreds of Ancram residents and property owners who have been following the progress of the Comp Plan over the past 24 months. Reviewing these questions and answers tells you what others in Town have been thinking about, and may help answer some of your own questions. If you have any other questions, talk to or email any member of the Comp Plan Committee. We will get you an answer.

1. How does the Comp Plan help the Town?

If adopted and implemented, the Comprehensive Plan will keep Ancram looking and feeling pretty much the way it is today – rural, agricultural, with lots of open space. The plan also will help solve problems we face today so we can better protect farmland, develop more affordable housing, attract more businesses and jobs, improve the 82/7 intersection, and revitalize the center of Ancram. Because it identifies where residents want Ancram to be in twenty years and how to get there, the Plan can guide Town, County, and State officials as they decide local issues. As the basis for zoning updates, it gives us better ways to manage growth and better protect current residents from future, large-scale developments. Having a current Comprehensive Plan also makes Ancram more competitive when we apply for private, State and Federal grants to implement the ideas in the Plan. Finally, the Comp plan is based on what we say we want, so adopting it and implementing will take us in directions we all said we wanted to go.

2. What is the problem with our current zoning? Why do we need to change it?

The problem with our current zoning is it does not let us do things we say we want to do. There are at least six things the Community says are very important which are not supported under current zoning. Specifically, our current zoning does not allow us to: 1) protect farmland, open space and rural character; 2) provide smaller lots and accessory apartments in single family homes, barns and garages to improve our base of affordable housing; 3) provide for flexible lot sizes; 4) expand the commercial zones and mixed-use commercial-residential uses to attract businesses and jobs; 5) support agriculture-related businesses outside the hamlets; 6) properly protect groundwater and the environment. All these priorities require that we make changes to zoning.

3. How does the Comprehensive Plan help protect open space, the environment, and farmland?

Open Space: The Plan recommends the Town adopt zoning which requires “open space development” designs with at least 60% of the parcel in open space for major (over five lots) subdivisions. This kind of development concentrates all development in 40% of a parcel, leaving the balance of the land available as open space.

Environment: The open space development design outlined above will help protect 60% of our land. To protect the environment and groundwater, the Plan proposes adopting the 2008 NY Rural Water Association Study recommendations of going to an average density of 3.5 acres outside the hamlets, prohibiting any development in environmentally sensitive areas and determining the number of buildable lots on a parcel based on the environmental capacity of the land.

Farmland: Farms are businesses. When they are profitable, they can stay in business and use farmland productively. So the best way to protect farmland is to find ways to keep active and sustainable farming businesses in the Town. The proposed Comprehensive Plan helps several ways: 1) With the proposed average density system of zoning, farmers will be able to sell off smaller lots and keep more land in farming under their own direct control; 2) Developers will have to leave 60% of a parcel in open space, suitable for farming use; 3) more farm related support businesses will be permitted in the Ag Zoning District; 4) the Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan effort will develop additional strategies to help farmers become more profitable and to protect farmland.

4. How does the Comprehensive Plan help get more businesses and jobs into town?

The Comprehensive Plan devotes an entire section to economic development. Recommendations range from zoning changes to expand hamlet business districts and mixed commercial/residential uses to hamlet revitalization, additional farm-related businesses, and upgraded telecommunications services. But, for a business to want to be here, we have to demonstrate we are dealing with our problems, especially in the center of Ancram, and the Comp Plan recommends additional actions to help do that. The Plan also proposes building an economic development plan to address the future, market Ancram, and attract new businesses and jobs. And because our population is not really large enough to support local retail businesses, the Plan recommends we figure out, through the economic planning effort, how to develop businesses or attractions which will draw visitors to Ancram.

5. How does the Comprehensive Plan help get more affordable housing?

Outside the hamlets the Plan proposes zoning changes to allow lots as small as ½ acre where water and septic permit, as long as an average density per parcel of one house per 3.5 acres is maintained. In the hamlets, the Plan also recommends zoning changes to permit lots as small as ½ acre if water and septic permit. Town-wide, the Plan recommends zoning changes to allow accessory apartments in homes, barns, and garages and allowing multi-family dwellings.

6. Why a 3.5 acre average lot size, not one or two?

The 2008 Ancram water study done by the NY Rural Water Association recommended a 3.5 acre average density to protect ground water. This recommendation is based on ground water recharge rates, soil types and the septic draining rates associated with these soil types.

7. How can you protect farming, farmland, the environment and open space with only 3.5 acre average lot sizes – don't we need to go to 20 acres?

Our research indicates that the 60% open space development design requirements and site plan review for careful and smart layout of new development can protect important environmental and farmland locations.

8. How will "open space development" affect my property values?

It should not change your property values; if anything, they may go up because property values are enhanced when open space is preserved.

9. What if I don't want to do an "open space design".

Most developers prefer the clustering that a 60% open space design requires, as it reduces the cost of infrastructure and improves profits. Home buyers prefer it too, because a development that has a lot of open space maintains the rural, country "feel." A single family home built on a lot that is not part of a larger subdivision will not have a problem with this, as you will have more than 60% open space by definition.

10. What good are these ½ acre lots if we don't have the water or septic to support them.

There are many ½ acre lots in town already, dating back before 1972. They work well in places where the soils can support septic and water, but not everywhere. As one more thing to accommodate affordable housing, we want people who can build on smaller lots to have that choice. And as septic technology improves, more small lots could be buildable.

11. What about mobile homes?

They are treated like any other single family home.

12. What is an “environmental constraint”?

An environmental constraint is land that you can't build on due to water, wetlands, or very steep slopes. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that development not exceed the capacity of our land to support it, parcel by parcel. A developer will be asked to demonstrate he can build all the homes (up to the permitted density) he plans while meeting the Town's density and other requirements, or be limited by a formula which lowers the number of homes based on the amount and type of unbuildable land.

13. What's about the scenic overlay zone?

It stays pretty much as it is, but the Plan suggests that the Overlay Zone boundaries be slightly adjusted to reflect sight-lines based on terrain, and not be based simply on a fixed distance on either side of Route 22.

14. Route 22 may be the best place in town for a commercial zone. Are businesses allowed in the Scenic Overlay Zone?

Using the proposed Floating Zone concept, any business that makes sense and is consistent with the rural character of the Town could be approved in the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone except bus stations, airfields, vehicle/equipment repair shops and gravel mines. This is how it works now, and remains the same in the Comp Plan.

15. Why can't gravel miners run their business without the burden of all this regulation?

Gravel Miners are regulated by DEC. The Comprehensive Plan adds no new regulations. It only says that the Town should apply existing rules that DEC has already set up. These rules include deciding where gravel mining can and cannot

be done, to protect the Community. We want the gravel miners to be able to operate their businesses per the DEC guidelines, but we also want to protect the Community from mining practices that could damage our environment and disadvantage people living near mines.

16. What are these "commercial design standards"? Does that mean I have to paint my house a special color?

No need to repaint your house. The proposed design standards are targeted at new commercial operations to keep them looking appropriate for our small town rural environment. Standards could include building in a style consistent with the existing architecture of the Community, placing parking behind or on the side of structures, not right on the road, and making sure signage and lighting are appropriate for the area.

17. How does implementing the Comp Plan actually happen, and how much does that cost?

The Town Board will take the leadership role in implementing the Plan. They will decide on what gets implemented, when and how. Some recommended actions will require funds to implement, and the Plan recommends the use of grant money, not town tax dollars. The most important first step for the Town Board after the Plan is adopted will be to appoint a zoning revisions committee to redo the Town's zoning and land use laws to reflect the wishes of the Community and the recommendations of the Plan. Zoning changes could cost \$20,000-\$30,000.

18. How much will my taxes go up because of this Plan?

They should not go up at all because of the Comprehensive Plan *especially* if the Town Board decides to implement the ideas in the Comprehensive Plan by getting grant money when possible. If the Town incurs costs above and beyond what we can get in grants, that may cause taxes to go up.

19. What about grants – it seems like the more grants we get, the more it costs us in tax money.

Either we can pay the whole cost of work we decide we need to do, or we can go for grants and pay only part of the cost. Paying part seems the better way to go. If we don't use available grant money, some other Town will, and we will be less competitive when it comes to attracting businesses and jobs. Once we have decided to do something, getting a grant to help with the funding is like getting free money. But grants are difficult to get – there is a lot of competition for them, and they require a real commitment from the Community and the Town Board to the project, and a solid Comprehensive Plan.

20. What happens if the Plan is adopted? What if it is not adopted?

If adopted, the Town Board will start implementing, will appoint committees to work on recommended actions, and we will make slow but steady progress. The most important first step in the implementation process will be to appoint a Zoning Revisions Committee to fix the Town's zoning and land use laws to make them consistent with the revised Comp Plan. If the Plan is not adopted, things will stay as they are, and we will miss an opportunity to protect farmland, the environment and open space, provide for more affordable housing, promote economic development and jobs and better control large scale development.

21. Can we adopt the parts of the Plan we like, and not the rest?

During the upcoming public hearing process, the Comprehensive Plan Committee and then the Town Board can modify the Comprehensive Plan based on public input, so the Plan finally adopted should be one that the Community supports. It's important to remember that all the Strategies, taken together, are recommended to achieve the Goals and Vision. So if we don't implement the entire Plan over time, there will be holes in the Vision. Once the Plan is adopted by the Town Board, the Town Board will have to set priorities about what to do first and what to do later, because we will not be able to do it all at once. So as a practical matter, the Town Board will control the pace of progress and what gets done, in what order, over time. It probably makes sense to work on the items that are most important to the Community like the zoning changes to protect agriculture, water, the environment and the zoning changes to provide more affordable housing and more opportunities for economic development. The other thing we should think about starting early in the process are the long lead time projects, like fixing the intersections and the Town centers.

22. How much does fixing the zoning cost? Why can't we do that ourselves?

Zoning revisions could cost \$20,000-\$30,000. We do not have the capability in Town to do the zoning revisions on our own. We need professionals to help rewrite our zoning laws so they are done correctly and can stand up to legal challenges in court. We tried rewriting our zoning on our own about 10 years ago, and the people involved with that effort say we really do need outside expert help to do it correctly and in a timely way. Zoning laws are complex legal documents, requiring extensive knowledge of land use concepts, definitions, and state laws.

23. Can we vote on the Plan?

NY State law says the Town Board must adopt a plan by a resolution of the Board. There is no option to have the public vote to approve or reject a Comprehensive Plan. But if the Town Board wanted to let the Community “vote” on the Comprehensive Plan, it could send around another questionnaire asking people to express an opinion on the Plan, and indicate if they are in favor or against the Town Board adopting it.

24. This all just seems too complicated to me. Why can't we just leave things alone, and keep Ancram just as it is?

Everyone at the Workshops and everyone who responded to the survey agreed we wanted to keep Ancram the way it is, as long as we fix some of the obvious problems. But to keep Ancram the way it is now is a very difficult thing to do, and requires that we do some things differently to keep most things the same. That is what the Strategies try to do.

25. Does anything get “grandfathered?”

Yes, the Plan proposes that all “current conditions” be grandfathered.

26. What other Towns have gone through this process, and what have the results been?

Lots of towns have gone through this process. Some have had good experiences; some have not. Success depends on whether the Plan reflects the vision and goals of the Community and especially on the committed leadership of town officials over time to implement the Plan.

27. Does this open space plan mean I am going to have to look at a clustered development?

Hopefully not – the Plan recommends that new developments must provide visual buffers between their structures and their neighbors.

28. What happened to the “Planning Issues List” we developed last year? Does the Plan deal with all the issues we identified?

Yes – we used the Planning Issues List as a checklist for developing the Vision, the Goals and the Strategies. Every item on the Planning Issues List has been addressed, one way or the other.

29. What is the Site Plan Review Process For?

The site plan review process will let the Planning Board review where structures are going to be located in a subdivision or on a lot. The process is designed to make sure development is consistent with the Town's zoning and subdivision laws, and structures are kept away from designated open space, environmentally sensitive areas and prime farmland.

30. What are “development rights”, and how do they get allocated when a parcel is subdivided?

“Development rights” give a property owner the right to build on a lot. When a parcel is subdivided, the person doing the subdivision will allocate the total number of development rights to each lot either based on the size of each lot, or based on a different formula which could give some lots more development rights and others lots less. If no allocation of development rights is specified in a subdivision, Town zoning will assume that the development rights have been allocated in proportion to the acres in each lot, based on the Town's 3.5 acre average density guidelines outside the hamlets, or based on other density guidelines in other Zones.

31. So, what happens next?

The steps which lead to a completed Comp Plan include:

- 1) The Comp Plan Committee will revise and finalize the Comp Plan based on the comments received at the June 22 Public hearing;
- 2) After the Plan has been revised and finalized, it will be presented to the Town Board at the July 16, 2009 Town Board meeting.
- 3) The Town Board will review the Plan, hold its own Public Hearing, revise the Plan if needed, submit the Plan to the county for County review, do a SEQRA Review (NYS Environmental Quality Review) of the Plan, and then adopt the Plan.
- 4) After adopting the Plan, the Town Board will then appoint a zoning revisions committee to work on bringing the Town's zoning laws into alignment with the new Comprehensive Plan.
- 5) The Town Board will then decide on how to implement the approved Comprehensive Plan, and will appoint the implementation committees and task forces needed to keep the momentum going.

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