

- 1. Envisioning the future.** The Comprehensive Plan identifies where town members want Ancram to be in 20 years and describes how to get there. It is not a law; 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 175 people participated in the workshops; 434 responded to a town-wide survey; 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 large parcels to protect 60% of a parcel's acreage; a site plan review process to steer building away from farmland and environmentally sensitive areas; the implementation of the 2008 Groundwater Protection Plan, which recommends an average density of one home per 3.5 acres outside the hamlets, and the development of an Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan.
- 5. Supporting affordable housing.** The Plan recommends zoning changes to allow flexible building lots as small as ½-acre town-wide (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.
- 6. 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.
- 7. Attracting businesses and jobs.** The Plan recommends the Town create an economic development 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 allow the evaluation of any new business idea not already in zoning. The Plan also recommends that the size and scale of new businesses be consistent with the rural character of the Town.
- 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 the tax dollars effectively, the Plan recommends appointing a Financial Analysis Advisory Committee to assist Town officials examine the "what, when, why and how" of major capital projects and long-term community needs, developing a Five-Year Town Capital Plan, establishing a Highway Advisory Committee, and exploring shared municipal services.
- 10. Getting your input and answering your questions.** Community workshops to review the Plan's strategies will be held in February 2009, followed by public hearings in March. The Town Board will also hold workshops and public hearings before adopting the Plan, so there will be plenty of opportunity for you to comment on the Plan.