

The ten goals of this plan began to take shape at the Philipstown 2020 community planning workshop, April 27 to 29, 2001, where residents came together to articulate their shared vision for Philipstown's future. The results of this workshop were the starting point for the Comprehensive Plan Special Board's work, which was to further refine the goals and develop strategies to achieve these goals.

The overarching theme of these goals is that residents would like Philipstown's traditional qualities to be maintained and enhanced. There is no overwhelming groundswell of support for drastic changes. On the contrary, the deepest concern was to retain the town's character and authenticity while managing future growth.

Detailed recommendations for actions to achieve these goals and strategies are in Chapter 3. The ten goals and the supporting strategies listed in this section, in no particular order, are the most important elements of this plan. Planning and zoning decisions should be consistent with fulfilling these goals. These goals should also be used as a guide for other organizations and agencies operating within the town.

Where the words "encourage" or "discourage" are used in this chapter, it is important to read them in context. This Comprehensive Plan balances conservation and development. If a particular kind of development is "encouraged," that does not mean that the plan seeks to encourage development more than conservation; rather it means that where development is going to occur, certain kinds are encouraged and other kinds are discouraged.

This chapter also introduces the concept of "authenticity," a term that John Shapiro, an economic development consultant to the Town, explained on page 35 of his report to the Town entitled "Pointers for Economic Development." "Authenticity" as used in this Comprehensive Plan means an interrelated set of community values, including economic diversity, support of local businesses, a small-town feeling, a mix of housing types, a strong corps of emergency services volunteers, and small-scale traditional forms of development. Authenticity is about maintaining the affordability and livability of the Town for local people, while avoiding excessive gentrification and catering primarily to the needs of tourists.

Goal 1) Conserve Philipstown's rural, historic and river-community character

Philipstown is a unique place characterized by great natural beauty, historic places and a sense of small-town community. This uniqueness is fragile and could be lost through a rapid influx of development. Development should be done in a manner that is sensitive to the town's special rural and historic qualities. There are four broad categories of strategies for this goal.

- a) Discourage intensive development in areas not designated for future growth in the Comprehensive Plan, allowing only low-density development**
 - i. provide incentives for voluntary density reductions
 - ii. encourage open space development, also known as clustering or conservation development, where appropriate
 - iii. development should be in scale and in character with its surroundings and lot size
 - iv. encourage a pattern of rural dirt roads with low-density rural subdivisions
 - v. require new rural roads to be compatible with the existing road system. In particular, new roads off of dirt roads should be in character with the surroundings.
 - vi. encourage institutional uses which fit the character of the community, and maintain good zoning control over those uses. Institutional uses on large parcels of land are traditionally low-intensity uses. If these parcels were developed for residential use it could have a large impact on the character of the community

- b) Preserve elements that contribute to Philipstown’s rural and historic character** — *dirt roads, stonewalls, historic structures, sites and areas, significant trees, ridgelines, farmland, forests, the Hudson River shoreline and scenic viewsheds*
 - i. preserve the character of designated dirt roads pursuant to a road master plan
 - ii. preserve stonewalls, historic structures and large trees, and require consideration of these in the building permit process
 - iii. promote continued use of agricultural land for farming
- c) Improve the visual qualities of Route 9**
 - i. establish buffers and higher standards for building design, as appropriate
 - ii. phase out billboards
- d) Facilitate visual and physical access to the Hudson River**

Goal 2) Maintain and enhance the socio-economic diversity of Philipstown’s population

Philipstown’s special quality comes from its residents as well as its physical setting. The quality of life that makes the Town what it is relies on housing that is affordable to current residents and their families.

Residents who work in the community strengthen Philipstown’s small-town character. This character and quality of life are threatened by escalating housing costs. Creative solutions for securing a range of housing that fits the community character for a variety of income levels should be pursued, and home-based businesses and local small businesses providing a range of services should be encouraged. This plan identifies three broad strategies to achieve this goal

- a) Increase the availability of moderate-priced rental and ownership housing with appropriate controls on their location and impact**
 - i. allow accessory housing by right
 - ii. encourage two-family housing with appropriate controls on location and impact
 - iii. encourage multi-family housing located in or next to mixed-use centers
 - iv. encourage a mixture of housing types and include moderately priced housing in new developments
 - v. encourage integration of senior housing into the fabric of the community
 - vi. encourage mixed-use development where housing is mixed with commercial uses
 - vii. provide incentives and/or requirements for the permanent dedication of units as affordable housing
 - viii. consider creating a non-profit entity devoted to providing affordable housing for Town residents
 - ix. allow multi-family housing that serves local needs where a unique opportunity exists to replace an undesirable use with significant numbers of housing units (e.g. the Quarry Pond site).
- b) Allow senior housing that addresses local and regional income levels and needs, and is in keeping with the scale of Philipstown and the goals of this plan** — *Locate senior housing in mixed used developments or adjacent to hamlet centers — close to shopping and other conveniences such as transportation and recreation*
- c) Encourage home-based business opportunities for local trades and other businesses** — *These businesses should be controlled to minimize the impact.*
- d) Create small-scale mixed-use village-type centers where local businesses can locate and thrive** — *These centers can provide rental and ownership housing and also be a place for retail and professional services that cater to the local community.*

Goal 3) Strengthen the town-wide sense of community

There is a strong desire for more community cohesion to pull together different segments of the community. This will help foster Philipstown's small-town character and encourage the proud tradition of volunteerism in the community.

- a) **Provide improved Town Hall and Community Center facilities (youth, senior, administrative, recreation) that will help bring together residents from various parts of the town** — *This strategy is tightly linked with the next goal, #4, which addresses recreation.*
- b) **Explore further cooperation among school districts and the possibility of creating a unified Philipstown school district serving Garrison, Cold Spring, Nelsonville, North Highlands, and Continental Village**
- c) **Encourage the provision of health care facilities** — *There is strong interest to have some level of health care facilities reestablished at the Butterfield Hospital site.*
- d) **Maintain the volunteer fire and ambulance corps, and explore consolidation of emergency services, considering manpower needs**

Goal 4) Expand recreational opportunities to offer a wider variety and greater capacity to meet current and future demand

Recreation is an important service provided by the Town. It provides a wide range of activities, serving all ages, at an affordable cost. Recreation is also a means for pulling different segments of the community together. Strategies for expanding recreational opportunities focus on Town facilities and programs, riverfront access, and working with outside agencies.

- a) **Educate the public about current offerings by the Town and outside agencies**
- b) **Develop and implement a cooperative recreation plan with all interested parties, linking it to other Town programs and regulations**
 - i. identify and encourage use of other facilities owned by schools and non-profits
- c) **Explore opportunities to combine recreation with municipal, private, and non-profit development projects**
- d) **Explore the full range of options for funding recreational properties**
- e) **Identify sites for new structured recreational facilities that could also serve as a community focus** — *A swimming pool and ice rink were two of the most requested facilities in the town-wide survey.*
- f) **Work with Putnam County Division of Planning & Development and NY Department of Transportation (DOT) to plan for appropriate road improvements along Route 9D to develop additional biking opportunities in the town**
- g) **Develop trail networks, including identifying bike trail opportunities to connect different areas of town, developing linkages for the north-south Greenway Trail and the east-west Northern Putnam Trail, and maintaining the existing horse trail network and consider additional horse trails where appropriate.**
- h) **Improve riverfront access using the Putnam Riverfront Alliance inventory of access points (appendix H). Riverfront plans should be developed closely with the Village of Cold Spring, Philipstown, Putnam County and all other stakeholders.**
- i) **Consider lands for hunting** — *As lands are preserved keep in mind that NY Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) manages lands more actively for hunting than NY State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.*

Goal 5) Control real property taxes and ensure they are reasonable and equitable

The issue of development versus land preservation and their respective impacts on property taxes and the costs of municipal services continues to be an area of concern within Philipstown. However, there is strong consensus that to make decisions based on fiscal impact alone will result in plans that dilute the special character that is the town's core value. Philipstown, as a whole, is not experiencing a property tax crisis, but some long-term residents are suffering the effects of rising property taxes, and strategies to address this particular part of the community should be pursued. Planning decisions should be driven by the other goals of this plan, while efforts are made to contain the cost of municipal services.

- a) **To the extent legally permitted, ease the tax burden on those most severely impacted by tax increases**
- b) **Maximize tax revenues while minimizing the costs of providing municipal services** — *This can be accomplished by encouraging commercial development in appropriate locations and upgrading existing commercial property to increase its assessed value. Development in areas with limited infrastructure should be discouraged.*
- c) **Consider tax impacts in decision-making, but do not let that consideration result in an overemphasis on luxury housing or allowance of commercial development that undermines the town's special character which could have, in fact, the effect of degrading the assessed values of residential property, outweighing any tax benefits from the development.**

Goal 6) Pursue an economic development strategy focused on maintaining the town's diversity and authenticity

Philipstown's existing businesses provide a range of products, services and employment to the town and region. They also play a major role in shaping our special small-town character, which in turn is one of Philipstown's most positive features. New commercial development should be consistent with the town's aesthetic and qualitative goals, while maintaining Philipstown's strong economy. The strategies below focus on formulating planning guidelines and new zoning ordinances to manage future commercial development that is sensitive to the community's authenticity. Clearer and more specific guidelines and ordinances will make it easier for businesses that are consistent with this, and other goals of this plan, to locate in Philipstown. The ten strategies below address the range of businesses in the town:

- a) **Accommodate retail development in designated areas that**
 - i. are in keeping with the town's population, traffic patterns and community interests and meet stringent design guidelines
 - ii. minimize sprawl
 - iii. concentrate retail development at high traffic hubs and in quantities that can be supported by local demand
 - iv. prohibit big box retail
 - v. discourage strip commercial development
- b) **Encourage mixed-use village-type development that provides opportunities for local businesses to locate near each other**
- c) **Improve the character of development on Route 9** — *This strategy focuses on improving the aesthetics and reducing the negative impacts, such as noise, light pollution and environmental hazards, that businesses may have on their surroundings.*
 - i. focus on creating a mixed-use hub in the Perks Plaza area or other appropriate locations
 - ii. adopt further design guidelines
 - iii. provide adequate buffers between commercial and residential districts
 - iv. apply aquifer protection guidelines
 - v. prohibit noisy and obtrusive uses

- d) **Recognize the traditional commercial and industrial nature of parts of Route 9 but reduce its impact using the strategies above in 6c**
- e) **Recognize the historic scenic character of the rural parts of Route 9 and Route 9D and limit the scope and type of commercial development using the strategies above in 6c, and also**
 - i. preserve the scenic qualities of Mekeels Corner at Route 301 by planning the sites to obscure the buildings from Route 9
- f) **Identify areas where soil mining can take place** — *Under State law the Town has limited control over soil mining; through zoning it can specify its location. The Town can apply a limited range of conditions but most of it is controlled by NYDEC. Soil mining is a traditional industry in Philipstown and it provides needed materials for construction and dirt road maintenance*
- g) **Ensure that tourism-related businesses do not threaten the authenticity of the town and can be supported by existing infrastructure**
- h) **Encourage home-based businesses while controlling their impact**
- i) **Develop strategies for future reuse of large institutional properties**
- j) **Recognize the importance of non-profits and religious organizations because of their affinity with the town and their contributions to the town's quality of life**

Goal 7) Protect Philipstown's natural resources

The town's natural resources are its green infrastructure contributing to public health, habitat, recreation and community character. Since over 40% of the town is protected as state park land or by conservation organizations, Philipstown is in a strong position with regards to natural resource protection. It is also important regionally as a valuable part of the federally designated Highlands Region. However, development pressures continue to pose a threat to our natural resources. Below is an array of strategies to protect our natural resources that need to be balanced with the other goals of this plan.

- a) **Protect water quality and quantity**
 - i. identify and protect aquifers, recharge areas and stream corridors
 - ii. develop a program for septic system maintenance, remediation and education measures to minimize risk of surface and groundwater contamination
 - iii. protect quality of Cold Spring's water supply
 - iv. support NYC in efforts to avoid filtration of Catskill water supply serving Continental Village
- b) **Create an ongoing process to identify critical parcels of land for preservation and to develop ways to achieve these preservation objectives**
 - i. adopt a natural resource protection plan, and implement it through land use regulations and other measures
- c) **Preserve habitat and scenic resource values by encouraging the use of Open Development Area (ODA) regulations and clustering** — *The ODA has helped Philipstown keep the density of housing down by allowing landowners to develop their land without having to put in a typical suburban subdivision.*
- d) **Facilitate the community's appreciation and enjoyment of the Hudson River**
 - i) encourage access and use of the riverfront to meet the variety of demands and needs of the community
 - ii) safeguard and enhance the habitat of the river and its tributaries
- e) **Protect environmentally sensitive areas, including**
 - i. Cold Spring Reservoir and Foundry Brook
 - ii. Scofield Ridge
 - iii. Large contiguous forest blocks (i.e. matrix forest)
 - iv. Hudson River shoreline

- v. Constitution Marsh
- vi. Brooks, wetlands and riparian buffer zones
- vii. Ridgelines and steep slopes
- f) Develop strategies to protect against environmentally hazardous material**
 - i. work with other agencies to identify hazardous materials and safeguards against them
- g) Increase awareness and encourage commercial and residential construction practices which will reduce impacts on municipal services as well as the environment**
 - i. water conservation
 - ii. recycling programs
 - iii. renewable energy applications
 - iv. incorporation of materials with longer life
 - v. use of biodegradable materials
 - vi. efficient use of lighting
- h) Conduct a town-wide biodiversity assessment, identifying areas that may have high habitat value for biodiversity**
- i) Encourage adoption of new waste treatment methods to reduce the impact the current septic requirements have on the landscape**

Goal 8) Improve safety and aesthetics of roads

The roads in Philipstown are not only our way of moving from place to place but they also play a big part in shaping our community's character. Below are strategies that address this goal and also relate to other goals of the plan.

- a) Develop a master plan for all roads in the town**
- b) Establish speed limits on Town roads**
- c) Where appropriate, introduce "traffic-calming" design measures on roads**
- d) Create pedestrian footpaths and bikeways**
 - i) in pedestrian areas such as Garrison hamlet center slow down traffic for pedestrian and bicyclist safety
- e) Proactively engage the county and state in road issues**
 - i. enforce speed limits
 - ii. install traffic lights
 - iii. design roads for slower speeds, especially in areas with existing or proposed population concentrations such as Perks Plaza on Route 9 and Garrison hamlet center on Route 9D
 - iv. access to high volume highways
 - v. transportation of hazardous and noxious materials
 - vi. evacuation plan
- f) Limit larger development projects to major thoroughfares**

Goal 9) Locate new development where it can be supported by existing infrastructure, and develop new infrastructure only where it is supportive of the Town's development and conservation goals

This can also be called the plan's 'smart growth' goal. At the core of the town's authenticity is growth and development that so far has been within the scale of the community, located along major thoroughfares and kept away from more rural areas. As development pressures mount this goal's strategies will direct development to areas where it can be reasonably supported and not drastically change the character of an area. Decisions to put in larger roads or waste treatment facilities will be considered in light of all the goals of this plan.

- a) **Concentrate new commercial and industrial development in designated mixed-use or industrial areas**
- b) **Locate denser development adjacent to existing areas of settlement**
- c) **With active local community involvement, study appropriate areas for new mixed-use development, explore use of central sewer and water where appropriate, and consider developing master plans that balance community character and development potential. This might be done as a follow-up step for one or more of the following areas (exact boundaries to be determined as part of the preliminary study):**
 - i. Perks Plaza area in conjunction with rerouting of Fishkill Rd. — *create pedestrian friendly district*
 - ii. Continental Village
 - iii. Rt. 403 / Rt. 9 / gas station — *establish it as a gateway to Philipstown; investigate installing an information kiosk*
 - iv. Garrison Hamlet Center — *Snake Hill Road to Upper Station Road— create a pedestrian friendly district*
 - v. Route 9D on the boundary with Cold Spring
 - vi. Large institutional uses
- d) **Anticipate redevelopment opportunities before they arise such as institutional uses, large tracts and old industrial sites**
- e) **Allow denser mixed-use development areas that can become community hubs, creating more pedestrian-oriented environments**
 - i. After soliciting community participation (see c above), select one or more locations for mixed-use developments, such as Perks Plaza, St. Basil's, Glencllyffe, and the intersection of Routes 403 and 9

Goal 10) Revise land use regulations to implement the Comprehensive Plan and streamline the land use approval and enforcement process

This, the final goal, has strategies to ensure that Philipstown can achieve this plan's goals. Central to the success of this plan is a planning process that is easy to navigate for the type of development that is consistent with the community's goals.

- a) **Enforce existing regulations**
- b) **Implement a computer based system to track the permitting process**
- c) **Rewrite the zoning code and land development regulations to ensure that they are consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and are clear, understandable, flexible, and easy to administer**
 - i. review bulk standards as they apply to Manitou, Lake Valhalla and Continental Village, and other places where non-conforming lots create special circumstances
 - ii. establish procedures for review boards to clarify issues for each application
- d) **Empower a committee to oversee implementation of the Comprehensive Plan**
- e) **Develop a staff position to follow through on strategies of the Comprehensive Plan**