

D. FUTURE LAND USE

Overview

The Future Land Use chapter is intended to be a generalized policy guide for the overall future growth and development of the Town. The vision for the future of the Town of Ramapo is one of development that is appropriate in terms of type, amount, scale, context and location; and which is compatible with and gives appropriate consideration to the Town's suburban character; preservation of natural resources; a strong economy with employment opportunities and services; housing and homeownership options; diverse cultural and recreational facilities; and sufficient community services and facilities.

The vision for Ramapo's future is reflected in the Land Use Plan as well as in the concepts, goals, objectives and implementation strategies described in this and previous chapters on Natural Resources and Open Space, Transportation, Housing, Community Character, and Community Services and Facilities. The Future Land Use chapter, including the goals and objectives, implementation strategies, and the *Land Use Map* described below, essentially serves as a synthesis of the recommendations made in the earlier chapters of this Plan.

Goal and Objectives

Goal: Promote a balanced pattern of land use that primarily encourages the concentration of future development in areas with adequate infrastructure and facilities, so as to make efficient utilization of the transportation network and infrastructure, to preserve the Town's environmental and scenic resources, and to provide a variety of additional housing opportunities in areas of the Town most appropriate for such development.

- 1. Objective:** Encourage land uses that minimize impacts to the Town's natural resources, particularly to surface waters, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, wildlife habitats, steeply-sloped areas and other critical environmental areas.
- 2. Objective:** Control the scale and intensity of land use development to levels that minimize traffic congestion on area roadways, encourage use of public transportation, and support transit-oriented or planned development opportunities.

3. **Objective:** Ensure that additional development occurs in locations that are most suitable for such development in consideration of surrounding land uses, transportation capacity, and availability and capacity of infrastructure.
4. **Objective:** Ensure that additional development occurs at a scale that is appropriate to the area and that appropriate measures are taken to reduce potential impacts to nearby residential areas.
5. **Objective:** Encourage opportunities for a broad range of industrial and commercial uses so as to provide a variety of employment opportunities, encourage a diversified economy and tax base, and provide goods and services for the Town's residents and businesses.
6. **Objective:** Permit a range of residential opportunities in terms of varied density, housing type and prices.

Land Use Plan

The *Land Use Plan* (dated January 2004) depicts the major elements of Ramapo's transportation system, its existing and proposed open spaces, and the general ranges of recommended land uses and development intensities throughout the Town.

The *Land Use Plan* is intended to serve as a general guide for future development in the unincorporated areas of the Town of Ramapo. For the most part, it proposes that higher intensity development be located in areas that currently have a more dense or suburbanized character and contain adequate infrastructure - especially where such areas have access to mass transit, major roads, public sanitary sewers and water supply. Conversely, lower intensity development is recommended for those areas of the Town that presently have a low- or very low-density character and more limited infrastructure capacity.

The overall pattern of land uses and intensities recommended on the Land Use Plan generally mirrors the existing pattern in the Town - with the highest development intensity found in Monsey (particularly in proximity to Route 59) and a decreasing level of development intensity in roughly concentric circles around this area. However, certain deviations from this overall pattern currently exist (e.g., a concentration of commercial development along Route 202 in the Pomona area) and certain deviations from this overall pattern are recommended in this Plan in order to achieve specific goals and objectives.

The *Land Use Plan* is not merely a duplication of existing development patterns and intensities. It is future-oriented and recommends higher densities in areas where such densities would be supportive of municipal planning policies and planned infrastructure investment, and where additional development would be appropriate. The basic premise of this approach is that encouraging such a development pattern will help to provide the increasing need for a more diversified housing supply while at the same time protect groundwater quality and supply, preserve critical open space and environmental resources in less intensely developed areas. The recommended land uses on the *Land Use Plan* illustrate the goals, objectives and implementation strategies contained in the previous chapters of this Plan.

The plan calls for two new mechanisms to insure that the water and sewerage infrastructure is sufficient to meet the demands of new developments.

Potable water capacity is projected to grow over the planning period. United Water has a series of improvements and additions planned for their system which project the ability to meet the requirements of the Town.. To insure adequate resources, the Town will require all applicants to provide a report prepared by a Licensed Professional Engineer that sufficient capacity exists for the particular application.

The County Sewer District Number 1 indicates that it has or will be able to manage sewage treatment capacities required for the Town. It did note that the increasing densities “may” lead to an overload of the collection system in the future since it was designed for lower densities. The Town has proposed that all applicants provide a report prepared by a Licensed Professional Engineer that sufficient capacity exists for the particular applicant. In this manner, the Town can have an ongoing assessment of the capacity as development proceeds and determine with the Sewer District and the developer a course of action if required. The town is seeking to have developers pay their fair share of the improvement costs, minimizing the expense to the County Sewage District No. 1.

Following is a description of each of the proposed land use categories on the *Land Use Plan*, which are based on existing land uses, anticipated land use trends within the Town, and zoning changes recommended in this plan in order to achieve specified goals and objectives.

Residential Development

As suggested above, the overall pattern of development density recommended in this Plan generally mirrors the existing pattern in the Town – with the highest densities

existing and recommended to remain in Monsey (particularly in proximity to Route 59) and with decreasing densities in roughly concentric circles around this area. The appropriate residential density results from an examination of many factors including:

- The form and intensity of residential development in relation to the nature of the surrounding neighborhood;
- The capacity of the land and surrounding area to accommodate additional residential development in consideration of: the surrounding road system and opportunities for use of public transportation; sanitary sewer and public water systems; accommodation of increased stormwater runoff; and minimization to natural resources;
- The secondary impacts of residential uses in terms of demand for public services such as schools, places of worship, and recreation, and protective services.

The following residential land use categories are reflected on the *Land Use Plan*:

- *Rural Residential* - This land use category encompasses the most environmentally sensitive and the more rural portions of the Town of Ramapo including the portions of the western area of the Town, the Route 202 corridor and the northeastern corner of the Town within the RR-80 and RR-50 Rural Residential Zoning Districts (which permit a density of 1 unit or less per acre). It is recommended that properties located within these zoning districts retain their existing zoning designations, with the exception of the Pierson Lakes subdivision in the western portion of the Town south of Route 17 and the Skyview Acres subdivision in the northeast area of the Town. Pierson Lakes is proposed to be placed in a new zoning district – the RR-160 District – that would limit density of area to no more than 1 unit for every 4 acres. Skyview acres is proposed to be placed in an RR-80. It is noted that the Pierson Lakes subdivision covers a very large portion of the western area of the Town..

Most of the areas within this land use category are also overlain by the “Conservation Development” designation (discussed below) in which conservation techniques aimed at protecting environmental resources (such as the use of “average density” (“cluster”) subdivision, conservation zoning, and/or open space preservation) are specifically recommended.

- *Low Density Residential* - The Low Density Residential land use category encompasses the large-lot single-family residential areas located within the R-25, R-35, R-40A and R-40 Residential Districts in portions of Monsey, Viola and the northeast portion of the Town. This land use category involves a density of roughly

between 1 to 2 dwelling units per acre. It is generally recommended that properties located within these zoning districts retain their existing zoning designations. However, where the Town Board decides that rezoning low-density residential areas (i.e., properties within the R-25, R-35, R-40A or R-40 Residential Districts) is warranted to meet housing needs and/or to meet other objectives, it should do so in a manner that retains the low-density suburban character of the area. Consistent with this would be rezoning a property from the R-40 to the R-25 District (i.e., not the R-15 or R-15C District which allow two- and three-family dwelling at a considerably higher overall density). In this way, low-density suburban development will continue to characterize the nature of these areas of the Town.

Properties located to the north of Conklin Road, currently located within the RR-50 rural density district, are indicated within the “Low Density Residential” designation on the *Land Use Plan*, following the general density (i.e., R-25 and R-35 Districts) in this area of the Town. Similarly, the “Patrick Farm” property and surrounding properties are indicated within the “Low Density Residential” designation on the *Land Use Plan* following the general density (i.e., R-50, R-40 and R-35 Districts) east of Route 202 in this area of the Town, as are a number of properties along the east side of Camp Hill Road north of Route 202. One property in particular, known located at the northeast corner of Old Route 202 and Camp Hill Road, is recommended to be changed from RR-80 to R-40 to be compatible with properties in the surrounding area.

The “Lorterdan” property, located in the western portion of the Town along Sterling Mine Road, and which is recommended for development as an age-restricted (55 and over) planned community is indicated within the “Low Density Residential” land use classification on the *Land Use Plan*. The zoning proposed for this district would restrict maximum development coverage (i.e., the area covered to building and pavement) to no more than 25% of the total site area. In addition, a minimum of 50% of the site area will be required to be open space lands. Further, the Planning Board would be able to designate a portion of these lands including existing sensitive environmental features such as wetlands, stream corridors or steep slopes as conservation easement lands or preserve them through other appropriate means. Development of this property for the purposes of constructing an age-restricted community as currently proposed (i.e., including the maximum development coverage and minimum open space requirements described above) should be done at a density of no greater than 1 unit per gross area. Reflective of this density, the property is indicated within the “Low Density Residential” land use classification on the *Land Use Plan*. However, if this property is not developed as an age-restricted community according to the parameters currently proposed (e.g., if it is proposed to be subdivided in the standard manner or proposed for development as a non-age-restricted

development), such development should be subject to the property's existing RR-80 zoning designation.

The "Wrightman Plateau" property is also included within the "Low Density Residential" land use classification on the *Land Use Plan*. This property should be developed in accordance with the requirements for a "Public Parkland Dedication Development" use which would be added as a Special Permit use in the R-40 District and applied to the Wrightman Plateau property and surrounding lands. This special permit use would include the following features: mandatory cluster development; and dedication in fee of at least 80% of the land as public parkland to the Town, County, State or PIPC. The number of units which would result from application of this zoning approach to the Wrightman Plateau area will not exceed 463 units. Reflective of this density, the property is indicated within the "Low Density Residential" land use classification on the *Land Use Plan*. However, if this property is not developed according to the parameters described in this Plan (e.g., if it is proposed to be subdivided in the standard manner), such development should be subject to the property's existing RR-80 zoning designation.

Certain large undeveloped properties are overlain by the "Conservation Development" (discussed below) in which conservation techniques aimed at protecting environmental resources or providing open space connections are recommended.

- *Medium Density Residential* - This land use category encompasses those large portions of Monsey and Hillcrest located within the R-15 District. Thus, this land use category involves a density of roughly between 3 to 4 dwelling units per acre and includes a mixture of one- and two-family homes. These areas generally represent a transition from the more intensive areas of Monsey and the Village of Spring Valley and the lower-density suburban areas to the west and north of them. The majority of the properties within this zoning district are proposed to retain its current zoning designation, with the exception of a certain areas within Monsey which are designated within higher density residential land use categories in order to address the housing needs in that area of the Town.
- *Medium-High Density Residential* - This land use category encompasses the large portion of Monsey located within the R-15C Residential Conversion District. Thus, this land use category involves a density of roughly between 3 to 12 dwelling units per acre and includes a mixture of one-, two-, and three-family homes. As discussed in the "Housing" and "Community Character" chapters, limited expansion of the R-15C district is recommended.

- *Multi-Family Residential* - As discussed in the “Housing” chapter, in lieu of extending the R-15C district onto undeveloped properties (or large properties proposed for redevelopment) for the purpose of meeting the Town’s housing needs, the creation of standard multi-family districts (that would permit multi-family residential development such as garden apartments and/or townhouses) is proposed. Such housing is usually developed at densities between 8 to 16 dwellings per acre.

The Land Use Plan indicates several areas particularly suitable for such multi-family development within this land use category based upon the considerations outlined in the “Housing” chapter. As identified in the “Housing” chapter, the following areas are designated within the “Multi-Family Residential” land use category: the undeveloped, Planned-Office (PO) zoned property located on the north side of Route 59, west of its intersection with Remsen Avenue; and, several properties located to the east and west sides of Route 306, north of its intersection with Route 59 and mostly located within the CS district. Additional areas proposed for multifamily districts include:

- **Blueberry Hill** - In keeping with the density of the Blueberry Hill apartment complex, it is proposed to extend the multi-family zone further to the west on both sides of Kearsing Parkway. This multifamily zone is proposed as 12 dwelling units per acre and will result in additional public parkland and new and rehabilitated drainage facilities. This is expected to solve a number of flooding and drainage issues downstream.
- **Summit Avenue** - This area is proposed as a new multifamily zone close by to Spring Valley High School. The concept here is to site a preference for multifamily development over the option of extending the R-15C zone. This is again compatible with the surrounding densities.
- **Area adjacent to Monsey Glen Park** – this development is proposed at a density of 8-12 dwellings units per acre based upon its proximity to the Monsey downtown area, the availability of water and sewerage facilities, its access to public transportation and the access to the Town’s proposed pedestrian/bike path/park. In addition, the property is segregated by the slope of the land to buffer the adjoining residential areas (site specific review including impacts to adjacent county park may justify a different density.)

Since properties recommended for rezoning to a multi-family district have different site and locational characteristics, the “Housing” section recommends the creation of two or more (e.g., up to 4) multi-family zoning districts that would permit between 8 units per acre (i.e., the lowest density multi-family district) and 16 units per acre (i.e.,

the highest density multi-family district). The differing site and locational characteristics of the properties considered for rezoning should guide the determination as to the appropriate multi-family district for each property considered. Based on such factors, the “Housing” section makes specific density recommendations for the properties specifically included in the “Multi-Family Residential” land use classification on the *Land Use Plan*. In addition, the “Housing” section recommends that such factors also be considered for any other properties considered for multi-family development in the future and recommends that the Town should seek consistency in its rezoning actions (i.e., properties with similar site and locational characteristics should be placed in similar zones).

[Note: Refer to the “Housing” section for a discussion of criteria for placement of properties within a multi-family district.]

- *Specialized Housing* - This land use category corresponds to those properties currently located within the Specialized Housing Residential (RSH) District which permits a limited variety of senior housing facilities. The “Housing” chapter recommends zoning amendments to expand the variety of housing options available to seniors. Such amendments may or may not include expansion of the RSH District.

[Note: While the residential land use categories discussed above are based on the recommended overall density of residential development within these areas, other non-residential uses such as places of worship and schools would continue to be permitted in residential areas subject to appropriate requirements.]

- *Clustering (also known as Average Density Subdivision)* - Consideration should be given to increasing the use and flexibility of the Town’s “average density” subdivision regulations (known as “cluster development” in New York State Town Law). The use of clustering can serve as a means of protecting critical resources – particularly those not already specifically protected. Under the use of clustering the dimensional requirements in the Zoning Law are allowed to be modified so as to provide an alternative permitted method for the layout, configuration and design of lots, buildings, and structures; roads, utility lines and other infrastructure; and parks in order to preserve the natural and scenic qualities of open land. It is important to note, however, that use of this technique does not result in greater density (i.e., number of housing units) than if the land were subdivided into lots conforming to the normally applicable minimum lot size and other dimensional requirements of the zoning district in which the property is located.

It is recommended that there be increased use of clustering once again, this time with the emphasis on preserving environmental resources located on lands proposed for subdivision (as compared to reserving lands for community services as was done when the Town was developing). The use of clustering subdivision in this manner would be particularly appropriate since a number of the larger undeveloped properties in the Town contain significant environmental features that may have hindered their development in the past and which could be largely preserved if developed in the future using clustering. An important feature of this use of clustering is that landowners and developers are encouraged to pay close attention to the unique topography and natural features of their properties, and to shift development away from ecologically sensitive areas. It simply encourages that development occur in areas of a site that are most suitable to development. The lands set aside using clustering can be preserved using a variety of measures, including acquisition by local government or a non-profit conservation group, ownership by a homeowners association, or through conservation easement.

In order to provide incentives for its use and to increase the effectiveness of it, additional flexibility in the use of clustering should be considered. Consideration should be given to changing the Town's "average density" requirements so as to:

- Make it easier for the Planning Board to allow or require the use of clustering without having to receive Town Board authorization on a case-by-case basis; and
- Allow greater flexibility in the layout of clustering subdivision, including the form of housing that may be provided in an "average density" development. For example, the use of alternative forms of housing, such as townhouses or semi-attached dwellings, has significant potential to result in the preservation of more open space than single-family detached homes spread out over larger areas. However, the Town may wish to require Town Board approval on a case-by-case basis for the provision of semi-attached or multi-family units in cluster developments.

The following areas have been identified for potential use of clustering because they contain lots identified in the *Development Potential Study* as subject to further subdivision, because the *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that these areas remain within low density residential districts, and because the use of clustering in these areas could serve the purpose of open space preservation and environmental protection:

- The Route 202 corridor along the southeastern border of Harriman State Park;

- The northeastern portion of Ramapo north of Conklin Road;
- The undeveloped properties to the north of Viola Road between College Road and Route 306;
- The underdeveloped properties along West Maple Avenue in the vicinity of Weldler Park;
- The Patrick Farm property
- The underdeveloped properties on the north side of Carlton Road west of its intersection with College Road; and
- The residentially-zoned areas in the western portion of the Town.

[Note: These properties, recommended for cluster development, have been overlain by the “Conservation Development” designation (i.e., over the underlying “Low Density Residential” land use category) on the “Land Use Plan” map.]

While the larger parcels identified above may be particularly suitable for the use of clustering due to their size, location and/or presence of environmental resources, clustering should be considered throughout the Town when there is opportunity to set aside land for one or more of the following purposes:

- Preservation of water recharge areas and aquifers, steep slopes, stream buffer areas, wildlife habitat areas or other environmental resources not specifically protected through other means;
- Preservation of community character through the preservation of buffer zones along roadways and other property boundaries;
- An extension of a public park or linear connection between parks;
- Holding of land for a needed community facility; and/or

- The preservation or protection of streams, wetlands or waterbodies and the lands surrounding such areas.

Commercial, Office and Industrial Development

Providing a well-balanced mix of residential and business zones is an important planning consideration for any community. As a result, an important objective of this Plan is to encourage opportunities for an appropriate range of industrial, office and commercial uses so as to provide a variety of employment opportunities, encourage a diversified economy and tax base, and to provide goods and services for the Town's residents and businesses.

The Town must select areas that are suitable for commercial, office, and industrial development in terms of location, access, and environmental constraints, making certain that sites avoid conflicts with nearby uses and residential neighborhoods. The Town's current land use plan, as reflected in the Town's Zoning Map, generally accomplishes this. For example, the Town's commercial, office and industrial zones are generally located in areas of Town that are suitable for such development in terms of traffic access and roadway capacity, that minimize potential impacts to residential neighborhoods and that can accommodate such development with minimal impacts to natural resources. However, there are a number of factors that should affect the location of commercial, office and industrial zones in the Town in the future, including the following:

- Certain areas of unincorporated Ramapo have been zoned for commercial, office or light industrial uses but have not been used for such purposes or have remained undeveloped or vacant for a long period time suggesting that the zoning of such areas does not reflect the needs of the respective markets. Such areas should be considered for rezoning to a zone that would permit development consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan.
- A large, primarily undeveloped area in the western portion of the Town is located within the PI District – a zoning district that permits a variety of light industrial uses. The Plan recommends elimination of Planned Industry (PI) zoning in the Torne Valley in order to prevent any further industrial development in this area. Present threats to this environmentally significant region posed by proponents of a quarry operation and by power plant operators will be virtually eliminated. Within this area, the plan proposes creation of a CEA (Critical Environmental Area) to provide special development controls. **The Rockland County Resource Recovery program** operates in the proposed CEA, and should be protected with both a buffer, and

reasonable expansion area for future operations. The specifics of the buffer and expansion area should be developed as part of the modifications to the Zoning Law.

Highlights of the proposed changes are:

1) *Designation of the Torne Valley Area of Western Ramapo as a “Critical Environmental Area”*

The New York State Environmental Quality Review Act permits municipalities to designate a specific geographic area having exceptional or unique environmental characteristics as a “critical environmental area” or “CEA.” The importance of CEA designation is that the potential impact of any proposed development or other action on the environmental characteristics of the CEA area is automatically a relevant area of environmental concern and must be evaluated by the lead agency in determining whether a project will have any significant adverse impacts. This provides an additional level of environmental protection from development in these sensitive geographic areas. Much of the Torne Valley area of western Ramapo appears to meet the “exceptional or unique environmental characteristics” for CEA designation, thus the Town will pursue designation of this area as a CEA.

2) *Elimination of Planned Industry (PI) Zoning Existing in the Torne Valley and Amendment of Commercial and Industrial Zoning in Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas.*

The Plan recommends the elimination of Planned Industry (PI) zoning in the Torne Valley in order to prevent any further industrial development in this area. A significant portion of the Torne Valley is located within the Planned Industry (PI) zoning district – a district that allows a wide variety of industrial uses including light manufacturing, warehousing, and freight and truck terminals. As described above, this area contains numerous critical natural resources including the Ramapo-Mahwah Aquifer that has been designated as a sole source aquifer by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and as a “Primary Water Supply Aquifer” by the NYSDEC and the NYSDOH. The Ramapo River and an associated tributary and floodplains run through this area. As also described above, the Ramapo River, which naturally recharges the aquifer, feeds an important nearby well field that provides a third of Rockland's drinking water. Thus, while centrally-located portions of this area contain existing utility functions (i.e., a former municipal landfill and a electric substation), additional development in the form of industrial development in the rest of the area would have considerable potential to cause significant harm to these critical resources. Present threats to this environmentally significant region posed by proponents of a quarry

operation and by power plant operators will be virtually eliminated through elimination of industrial zoning in the Torne Valley.

The impact of such zone changes on County facilities in the area will need to be considered by the Town Board in the preparation of the implementation zoning regulations.

The Town should also review the zoning of certain commercially- or industrially-zoned properties that are located in more environmentally sensitive areas of the Town. Generally, large-scale commercial or industrial development has greater potential than residential development to significantly impact sensitive environmental resources considering the greater amount of impervious surfaces (e.g., roof top, parking and other paved areas) and the resulting increase in stormwater runoff, the greater amount of traffic, and the greater amount of overall land disturbance (which results in more tree removal, potential for erosion and sedimentation, etc.) typically involved with such land uses. The Town should consider efforts that would serve to reduce potential impacts of large-scale industrial development in this area, including:

- Amending the types of permitted uses in the zone so as to prohibit uses that have the greatest potential to cause environmental impact;
 - Restricting the amount of permitted impervious surfaces; and
 - Changing the zoning of portions of this area to a district(s) that permits less intensive land uses.
- The majority of the commercially- and industrially-developed lands within the Town of Ramapo are located within the incorporated Villages. This includes: the extensive amount of commercial and industrial development along the Route 59 corridor in the Villages of Spring Valley, Airmont and Suffern; the Route 45 corridor in Spring Valley and Chestnut Ridge; and the traditional downtown areas of Spring Valley and Suffern. It appears that limited, if any, additional lands suitable or needed for commercial, office or industrial development (i.e., in addition to that already zoned in this manner) are located within the unincorporated area of the Town. Regional shopping needs are generally met along the Route 59 corridor in Spring Valley and the Town of Clarkstown and in nearby shopping centers in New Jersey.

The following commercial, office and industrial land use categories are reflected on the Land Use Plan:

- *Neighborhood Business* - This land use category consists of properties currently located within the Town's Neighborhood Shopping (NS) District. The NS District permits a limited number of commercial uses geared towards providing local convenience goods and services to the surrounding community. Two existing neighborhood business areas are located in the Hillcrest area around the intersection of Route 45 and Eckerson Road and in Monsey along Route 306 north of its intersection with Route 59.
- *Community Business* - This land use category consists of properties currently located within the Town's Community Shopping (CS) District. This district permits a much wider range of commercial uses than the NS, geared towards providing goods and services to a larger portion of the Town. This category is located primarily along Route 59 in Monsey and Route 202 in the Pomona area. No properties are proposed to be rezoned to correspond to this land use category. Conversely, a number of properties currently within this zoning district has been suggested as more appropriately developed in a residential or mixed-use nature.
- *Laboratory-Office* - This land use category consists of properties currently located within the Town's Professional Office (PO), Laboratory-Office (LO) and Laboratory-Office Restricted (LO-R) Districts. No properties are proposed to be rezoned to correspond to this land use category. Conversely, a number of properties currently within these zoning districts have been suggested as more appropriately developed in a residential or mixed-use nature.
- *Light Industry* - This land use category consists of properties currently located within the Town's Planned Industry (PI) District – a district that allows a wide variety of industrial uses including light manufacturing, warehousing and freight and truck terminals. The largest such area is located along Route 17 in the western portion of the Town. Portions of this area that are underlain by the Ramapo-Mahwah Aquifer are recommended for rezoning to a district that permits less intensive land uses such as a residential district.

Mixed-Use Development

The Town's Zoning Code is a conventional (Euclidean) zoning code, typical of suburban communities throughout the United States, with its focus on the strict separation of land uses into disparate zoning districts (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial) and reliance

on inflexible use and dimensional requirements within each separate zone. Such zoning has been cited as one of the main reasons (along with the construction of the Interstate Highway System and Federal mortgage subsidies) for suburban “sprawl.” The negative effects of “sprawl” have been widely publicized and include a reliance on the private automobile and traffic congestion, loss of open space, inefficient provision of utilities and public services, among other effects.

- *Mixed-Use Development (Commercial and Multi-Family Development)* - The areas described below are identified in the “Mixed-Use Development (Commercial and Multi-Family Development)” land use category on the Land Use Plan:

Several related approaches have been proposed in response to suburban sprawl including the provision of mixed-use zoning districts that would permit or even encourage a well-designed mixture of commercial and residential development in a planned development. The Land Use Plan identifies three areas of the Town where mixed-use development (consisting of a mixture of commercial and residential uses) would be appropriate. These areas differ significantly from one another, thus different approaches should be applied.

Route 202

The first area is an undeveloped area located on the north side of Route 202 just west of the Palisades Interstate Parkway interchange. The property is currently zoned Professional Office (PO) – a zoning district that would allow large-scale office development on the property.

This property has been identified as a property that could be appropriately developed with a mixture of uses developed in accordance with “neo-traditional” design principles. Neo-traditional development is a reaction to the “sprawling” pattern of development found in most suburban communities with its emphasis on large-lot single-family development and strip-type development along commercial corridors. Neo-traditional development is based on the belief that a return to traditional neighborhood patterns (e.g., narrow tree lined street with a mixture of uses and housing types) is essential to restoring functional, sustainable communities. Neo-traditional development draws on neighborhood and village designs from the early part of the 20th century to create more interactive and livable communities. Defining features include a grid system of streets, pedestrian-friendly design, a mix of uses, and traditional architectural styles. The basic elements of neo-traditional design are as follows:

- The development has a discernible center. This is often formal civic spaces and squares, and sometimes a busy or memorable street corner. Typically, a transit stop would be located at this center.
- Certain prominent sites at the termination of street vistas or in the neighborhood center are reserved for civic buildings. These provide sites for community meetings, education, religion or cultural activities.
- Streets within the neighborhood are a connected network, typically in a grid-like pattern, which disperses traffic by providing a variety of pedestrian and vehicular routes to any destination.
- Most of the dwellings are within a five-minute walk of the center, an average of roughly 2,000 feet.
- There is an inclusion of a variety of dwelling types - usually houses, rowhouses and apartments - allowing apartments to mix with houses, and rentals to mix with owner-occupied housing so that younger and older people, singles and families, the poor and the wealthy may find places to live together.
- There are small playgrounds in every neighborhood
- The streets are relatively narrow and shaded by rows of trees in order to slow traffic and to create an environment suitable for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Buildings in the neighborhood center are placed close to the street similar to placement of buildings in traditional downtowns.
- Homes have front doors, porches, and windows that face the street. Parking lots and garage doors rarely front the street. Parking is relegated to the rear of buildings, usually accessed by alleys.



Neo-traditional development draws on neighborhood and village designs from the early part of the 20th century to create more interactive and livable communities. Defining features include a grid system of streets, pedestrian-friendly design, a mix of uses, and traditional architectural styles. Properties located around the Route 59 and Route 306 intersection in the Monsey area have been identified as particularly suitable for redevelopment in accordance with neo-traditional design principles.

The Town should investigate the use of Planned Unit Development (PUD) regulations as a means to permit the development of this area in accordance with the mixed-use, neo-traditional design principles described above. PUD regulations are typically used to encourage and allow more creative and imaginative design of land developments than is possible under conventional regulations. Planned Unit Development is intended to allow flexibility in planning and designing land development proposals. This flexibility often accrues in the form of relief from compliance with conventional zoning ordinance site and design requirements. Ideally, this flexibility results in a development that is better planned, that contains more amenities, and ultimately a development that is more desirable to live in than one produced in accordance with typical zoning ordinance and subdivision controls. An intrinsic, and often neglected, premise upon which the approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) must be conditioned, is that while greater density or more lenient siting requirements may be granted, the Planned Unit Development should contain features not normally required of development constructed in accordance with conventional zoning (such as public open space and recreation facilities). In addition to the design requirements described above, the PUD regulations should contain certain other standards related to overall permitted intensity of development, minimum

open space and environmental resource preservation and minimum setbacks from surrounding properties and roadways.

Route 59

As shown on the *Land Use Plan* and the *Monsey Area Plan*, properties located around the Route 59 and Route 306 intersection in the Monsey area have been identified within an area particularly suitable for mixed-use development. This area, however, differs significantly from the area mentioned above in that this area consists of numerous separately-owned properties, most of which are developed. Most of these properties are developed in a way (e.g., auto-body shops, etc) that do not contribute in a positive way to the appearance of the area.

It is envisioned that this area be redeveloped in a way that would make this area a focal point of the Monsey community. Such development would consist of mixed-use buildings that consist of commercial uses (e.g., retail and office) on the first floors and apartments above – typical of buildings in traditional small town centers – around the Route 59/ Route 306 intersection and the surrounding roadways. Examples of such traditional small town centers are shown in the photographs above. As shown on the Monsey Area Plan, this more traditional form of mixed-use development would be complemented by the multi-family development proposed around the “core.” In addition, planned expansion of sidewalks, streetscape improvements and proposed trailways around this area (all described in other chapters of this Plan) would serve to make this area a focal point or center of the Monsey community. The Town should investigate the appropriate zoning revisions (e.g., amendment to the requirements of the NS District, creation and application of a mixed-use zone in this area, creation of PUD regulations) that would permit such mixed-use development in this area. This area also has the potential for various types of multi-family development.

Route 17 Corridor

The Route 17 corridor is currently zoned in a variety of commercial and industrial zoning districts. Development of this area in accordance with existing zoning has the potential to result in relatively large-scale commercial strip or industrial development that may not be appropriate to the character and environmental sensitivity of this area. Instead, the Town should consider revising the zoning of the Route 17 corridor in order to allow appropriately scaled mixed-use development (i.e., a mixture of commercial and multi-family development) in those areas of the Route 17 corridor.

Conservation/ Open Space/ Community Services

The Land Use Plan indicates certain areas throughout unincorporated Ramapo within the following land use categories based on the existing use of the land and/or recommendations in this plan in order to achieve specified goals and objectives:

- *Conservation Development* - This designation corresponds to those areas of the Town where conservation of natural resources is particularly emphasized. The “Natural Resources and Open Space” chapter of this Plan recommends a number of measures to encourage the preservation of natural resources in these areas including the use of “average density” (“cluster”) subdivision, innovative zoning techniques such as a resource protection overlay zoning and other regulatory approaches, and open space preservation and acquisition. The recommended development density is reflected in the underlying land use classification (e.g., “Rural Residential” or “Low Density Residential”).
- *Public Park/Open Space* - This land use category is located throughout the Town and includes improved existing public parks, public golf courses, other outdoor public recreation facilities such pools, and also includes publicly-owned but undeveloped open spaces. The public park and open space areas in the Town are both large and small and offer both active and passive recreation.
- *Proposed Open Space* - This category consists of properties being considered for acquisition by the Town or the County as identified in the “Natural Resource and Open” and “Community Services and Facilities” chapters.
- *Community Services* - This category corresponds to lands currently occupied by public and private schools, cemeteries, places of worship, cultural facilities, social organizations, and other such public and quasi-public community services scattered throughout the Town.
- *Utilities* - This category corresponds to lands currently used for communication services, land used in the rendition of water and sewer facilities, public service utilities, and special franchise property (electric and gas, water, telephone, etc.).