NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TOWN OF AMENIA

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Public Hearing will be held by the Town Board of the Town of Amenia on October 6, 2022 at 7:00 o'clock p.m. at Amenia Town Hall, 4988 Route 22, Amenia, New York, at which time all parties in interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard regarding the Draft Amendments to the Town Comprehensive Plan.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Town Board has determined that the Proposed Action is a Type I action pursuant to Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law and Part 617 of the New York State Code of Rules and Regulations (commonly known as "SEQRA") which requires that a full Environmental Assessment be completed prior to Adoption.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that a copy of the Draft Amendments to the Town Comprehensive Plan will be available for review and inspection at the Office of the Town Clerk during regular office hours at Amenia Town Hall, 4988 Route 22, Amenia, New York and on the Town website at www.ameniany.gov.

Dated: Amenia, New York
September 15, 2022

BY ORDER OF THE TOWN BOARD

DAWN MARIE KLINGNER, TOWN CLERK

TOWN OF AMENIA
TOWN BOARD

4988 Route 22, AMENIA, NY 12501
(845) 373-8860 www.ameniany.gov

RESOLUTION No. 65 of 2022

RE: RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF AMENIA INTRODUCING DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, the authority and responsibility to undertake comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens is among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a Town government; and

WHEREAS, it is best interest of the people of the Town of Amenia for the Town Board to periodically review and update its comprehensive plan with specific goals developed with the participation of its citizens to create an optimum comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, Town Law §272-a sets forth general parameters for the content of the comprehensive plan and the procedure for amending; and

WHEREAS, amending a Comprehensive Plan is a Type I action pursuant to Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law and Part 617 of the New York State Code of Rules and Regulations (commonly known as "SEQRA") which requires that a full Environmental Assessment be completed prior to adoption; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has completed Part I of the Environmental Asset Form and has determined that the Proposed Action is an action for which there are no other Involved Agencies and that the Town Board is therefore, by default, the Lead Agency for this action; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board wishes to introduce the draft amendments to the Town of Amenia Comprehensive Plan for public comment and review to ascertain the future needs of the Town so that appropriate land use regulations may be adopted and implemented; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board hereby introduces the draft Amendments to the Town of Amenia Comprehensive Plan in the form annexed hereto; and

WHEREAS, a copy of the aforesaid proposed Amendments to the Town of Amenia Comprehensive Plan have been provided to each member of the Board; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board shall hold a public hearing on said proposed Amendments to the Town of Amenia Comprehensive Plan on October 6, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at Amenia Town Hall, 4988 Route 22, Amenia, New York.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that:

1. The recitations set forth above are incorporated in this Resolution as if fully set forth and adopted herein.

2. That the Town Board hereby authorizes and directs the Town Clerk to act as follows with respect to the proposed Amendments the Town Comprehensive Plan:

   a. To post, and to publish or cause to be published a public notice in the official newspaper of the Town of Amenia of said public hearing at least ten(10) days prior thereto;
   b. To serve a copy of this Resolution, Part I of the Environmental Asset Form, and the annexed proposed Amendments to the Town of Amenia Comprehensive Plan, and the Public Hearing Notice to the municipal clerk of each abutting municipality not less than ten (10) days prior to said public hearings;
   c. To refer a copy of the draft Amendments to the Town of Amenia Comprehensive Plan, Part I of the Environmental Asset Form, this Resolution and the Public Hearing Notice to the Planning Board of the Town of Amenia for its advisory review and comment pursuant to Town Code §121-69; and
   d. To provide a copy of this Resolution, Part I of the Environmental Asset Form, the draft Amendments to the Town of Amenia Comprehensive Plan and the Public Hearing Notice to the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development for their advisory review and comment in accordance with General Municipal Law § 239-m.

Motioned By: Gutierrez; Seconded By: Perotti

The foregoing resolution was voted upon with all councilwomen/councilmen voting as follows:

Supervisor Perotti	Aye
Councilwoman Doyle	Aye
Councilman Gutierrez	Aye
Councilman Blackman	Aye
Councilman Rebillard	Aye

Dated: Amenia, New York
September 15, 2022

DAWN MARIE KLINGNER, TOWN CLERK

Instructions for Completing Part 1

Part 1 is to be completed by the applicant or project sponsor. Responses become part of the application for approval or funding, are subject to public review, and may be subject to further verification.

Complete Part 1 based on information currently available. If additional research or investigation would be needed to fully respond to any item, please answer as thoroughly as possible based on current information; indicate whether missing information does not exist, or is not reasonably available to the sponsor; and, when possible, generally describe work or studies which would be necessary to update or fully develop that information.

Applicants/sponsors must complete all items in Sections A & B. In Sections C, D & E, most items contain an initial question that must be answered either "Yes" or "No". If the answer to the initial question is "Yes", complete the sub-questions that follow. If the answer to the initial question is "No", proceed to the next question. Section F allows the project sponsor to identify and attach any additional information. Section G requires the name and signature of the applicant or project sponsor to verify that the information contained in Part 1is accurate and complete.

A. Project and Applicant/Sponsor Information.

Name of Action or Project: Amenia Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Updates		
Project Location (describe, and attach a general location map): Amenia, New York (town wide)		
Brief Description of Proposed Action (include purpose or need): The Town Board of the Town of Amenia proposes to update its Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code to reflect changes in background conditions and to further implement the goals and objectives of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. In particular, the Town seeks to advance its affordable and workforce housing goals, as well as facilitate green infrastructure.		
Name of Applicant/Sponsor: Town of Amenia Town Board	Telephone: 845-373-8118 E-Mail: vperotti@ameniany.gov	
Address: 4988 Route 22		
City/PO: Amenia	State: NY	Zip Code: 12501
Project Contact (if not same as sponsor; give name and title/role): Victoria Perotti, Supervisor	Telephone: (845) 373-8118 ext. 111 E-Mail: vperotti@ameniany.gov	
Address:		
City/PO:	State:	Zip Code:
Property Owner (if not same as sponsor):	Telephone: E-Mail:	
Address:		
City/PO:	State:	Zip Code:

B. Government Approvals

B. Government Approvals, Funding, or Sponsorship. ("Funding" includes grants, loans, tax relief, and any other forms of financial assistance.)

Government Entity	If Yes: Identify Agency and Approval(s) Required	Application Date (Actual or projected)
a. City Counsel, Town Board, or Village Board of Trustees ☑Yes ☐No	Town Board Approval	September 2022
b. City, Town or Village Planning Board or Commission ☑Yes ☐No	Planning Board Referral	September 2022
c. City, Town or Village Zoning Board of Appeals ☐Yes ☑No		
d. Other local agencies ☑Yes ☐No	Housing Board Referral	September 2022
e. County agencies ☑Yes ☐No	County Planning 239-m	October 2022
f. Regional agencies ☐Yes ☑No		
g. State agencies ☐Yes ☑No		
h. Federal agencies ☐Yes ☑No		

i. Coastal Resources.

i. Is the project site within a Coastal Area, or the waterfront area of a Designated Inland Waterway? ☐Yes ☑No

ii. Is the project site located in a community with an approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Program? ☐Yes ☑No

iii. Is the project site within a Coastal Erosion Hazard Area? ☐Yes ☑No

C. Planning and Zoning

C.1. Planning and zoning actions.

Will administrative or legislative adoption, or amendment of a plan, local law, ordinance, rule or regulation be the only approval(s) which must be granted to enable the proposed action to proceed? ☑Yes ☐No

- **If Yes,** complete sections C, F and G.
- **If No,** proceed to question C.2 and complete all remaining sections and questions in Part 1

C.2. Adopted land use plans.

a. Do any municipally- adopted (city, town, village or county) comprehensive land use plan(s) include the site where the proposed action would be located? ☑Yes ☐No

If Yes, does the comprehensive plan include specific recommendations for the site where the proposed action would be located? ☑Yes ☐No

b. Is the site of the proposed action within any local or regional special planning district (for example: Greenway; Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA); designated State or Federal heritage area; watershed management plan; or other?) ☑Yes ☐No

If Yes, identify the plan(s):

Remediaton Sites:314007, Remediaton Sites:314006

c. Is the proposed action located wholly or partially within an area listed in an adopted municipal open space plan, or an adopted municipal farmland protection plan? ☐Yes ☑No

If Yes, identify the plan(s):

C.3. Zoning

a. Is the site of the proposed action located in a municipality with an adopted zoning law or ordinance. ☑ Yes ☐ No
If Yes, what is the zoning classification(s) including any applicable overlay district?
RA, RR, HM, HR, SR, HC, OC, M, FPO, SCO, SPO, HPO, AQO, MCO, SMO, RDO, and MHO

b. Is the use permitted or allowed by a special or conditional use permit? ☑ Yes ☐ No

c. Is a zoning change requested as part of the proposed action? ☑ Yes ☐ No
If Yes,
i. What is the proposed new zoning for the site? The local law would update the zoning code to clarify the affordable and workforce housing regs. In addition, it would add solar as an allowable use on Town property.

C.4. Existing community services.

a. In what school district is the project site located? Webutuck Central School District

b. What police or other public protection forces serve the project site?
Dutchess County Sheriff

c. Which fire protection and emergency medical services serve the project site?
Amenia Fire Company and Wassaic Fire Company

d. What parks serve the project site?
Beekman Park, Borden Park, Town Hall Field, Wassaic Park

D. Project Details

D.1. Proposed and Potential Development

a. What is the general nature of the proposed action (e.g., residential, industrial, commercial, recreational; if mixed, include all components)?

b. a. Total acreage of the site of the proposed action? _____ acres
b. Total acreage to be physically disturbed? _____ acres
c. Total acreage (project site and any contiguous properties) owned or controlled by the applicant or project sponsor? _____ acres

c. Is the proposed action an expansion of an existing project or use? ☐ Yes ☐ No
i. If Yes, what is the approximate percentage of the proposed expansion and identify the units (e.g., acres, miles, housing units, square feet)? % _____ Units: _____

d. Is the proposed action a subdivision, or does it include a subdivision? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If Yes,
i. Purpose or type of subdivision? (e.g., residential, industrial, commercial; if mixed, specify types)

ii. Is a cluster/conservation layout proposed? ☐ Yes ☐ No
iii. Number of lots proposed? _____
iv. Minimum and maximum proposed lot sizes? Minimum _____ Maximum _____

e. Will the proposed action be constructed in multiple phases? ☐ Yes ☐ No
i. If No, anticipated period of construction: _____ months
ii. If Yes:
- Total number of phases anticipated _____
- Anticipated commencement date of phase 1 (including demolition) _____ month _____ year
- Anticipated completion date of final phase _____ month _____ year
- Generally describe connections or relationships among phases, including any contingencies where progress of one phase may determine timing or duration of future phases: _____

f. Does the project include new residential uses? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes, show numbers of units proposed.

	One Family	Two Family	Three Family	Multiple Family (four or more)
Initial Phase	_____	_____	_____	_____
At completion of all phases	_____	_____	_____	_____

g. Does the proposed action include new non-residential construction (including expansions)? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes,
i. Total number of structures _____
ii. Dimensions (in feet) of largest proposed structure: _____height; _____width; and _____ length
iii. Approximate extent of building space to be heated or cooled: _____ square feet

h. Does the proposed action include construction or other activities that will result in the impoundment of any liquids, such as creation of a water supply, reservoir, pond, lake, waste lagoon or other storage? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes,
i. Purpose of the impoundment: _____
ii. If a water impoundment, the principal source of the water: ☐ Ground water ☐ Surface water streams ☐Other specify:
_____
iii. If other than water, identify the type of impounded/contained liquids and their source.
_____
iv. Approximate size of the proposed impoundment. Volume: _____ million gallons; surface area: _____ acres
v. Dimensions of the proposed dam or impounding structure: _____ height; _____ length
vi. Construction method/materials for the proposed dam or impounding structure (e.g., earth fill, rock, wood, concrete):
_____

D.2. Project Operations

a. Does the proposed action include any excavation, mining, or dredging, during construction, operations, or both? ☐Yes ☐No
(Not including general site preparation, grading or installation of utilities or foundations where all excavated materials will remain onsite)
If Yes:
i .What is the purpose of the excavation or dredging? _____
ii. How much material (including rock, earth, sediments, etc.) is proposed to be removed from the site?
- Volume (specify tons or cubic yards): _____
- Over what duration of time? _____

iii. Describe nature and characteristics of materials to be excavated or dredged, and plans to use, manage or dispose of them.
_____
_____
iv. Will there be onsite dewatering or processing of excavated materials? ☐Yes ☐No
If yes, describe. _____
_____
v. What is the total area to be dredged or excavated? _____acres
vi. What is the maximum area to be worked at any one time? _____ acres
vii. What would be the maximum depth of excavation or dredging? _____ feet
viii. Will the excavation require blasting? ☐Yes ☐No
ix. Summarize site reclamation goals and plan: _____
_____
_____

b. Would the proposed action cause or result in alteration of, increase or decrease in size of, or encroachment into any existing wetland, waterbody, shoreline, beach or adjacent area? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes:
i. Identify the wetland or waterbody which would be affected (by name, water index number, wetland map number or geographic description): _____
_____

ii. Describe how the proposed action would affect that waterbody or wetland, e.g. excavation, fill, placement of structures, or alteration of channels, banks and shorelines. Indicate extent of activities, alterations and additions in square feet or acres:

_____

_____

_____

_____

iii. Will the proposed action cause or result in disturbance to bottom sediments? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes, describe: _____

iv. Will the proposed action cause or result in the destruction or removal of aquatic vegetation? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes:

- acres of aquatic vegetation proposed to be removed: _____
- expected acreage of aquatic vegetation remaining after project completion: _____
- purpose of proposed removal (e.g. beach clearing, invasive species control, boat access): _____
- proposed method of plant removal: _____
- if chemical/herbicide treatment will be used, specify product(s): _____

v. Describe any proposed reclamation/mitigation following disturbance: _____

c. Will the proposed action use, or create a new demand for water? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes:

i. Total anticipated water usage/demand per day: _____ gallons/day

ii. Will the proposed action obtain water from an existing public water supply? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes:

- Name of district or service area: _____
- Does the existing public water supply have capacity to serve the proposal? ☐Yes ☐No
- Is the project site in the existing district? ☐Yes ☐No
- Is expansion of the district needed? ☐Yes ☐No
- Do existing lines serve the project site? ☐Yes ☐No

iii. Will line extension within an existing district be necessary to supply the project? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes:

- Describe extensions or capacity expansions proposed to serve this project: _____
- Source(s) of supply for the district: _____

iv. Is a new water supply district or service area proposed to be formed to serve the project site? ☐Yes ☐No
If, Yes:

- Applicant/sponsor for new district: _____
- Date application submitted or anticipated: _____
- Proposed source(s) of supply for new district: _____

v. If a public water supply will not be used, describe plans to provide water supply for the project: _____

vi. If water supply will be from wells (public or private), what is the maximum pumping capacity: _____ gallons/minute.

d. Will the proposed action generate liquid wastes? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes:

i. Total anticipated liquid waste generation per day: _____ gallons/day

ii. Nature of liquid wastes to be generated (e.g., sanitary wastewater, industrial; if combination, describe all components and approximate volumes or proportions of each): _____

iii. Will the proposed action use any existing public wastewater treatment facilities? ☐Yes ☐No
If Yes:

- Name of wastewater treatment plant to be used: _____
- Name of district: _____
- Does the existing wastewater treatment plant have capacity to serve the project? ☐Yes ☐No
- Is the project site in the existing district? ☐Yes ☐No
- Is expansion of the district needed? ☐Yes ☐No

- Do existing sewer lines serve the project site? ☐Yes ☐No
- Will a line extension within an existing district be necessary to serve the project? ☐Yes ☐No

  If Yes:
  - Describe extensions or capacity expansions proposed to serve this project: _____

iv. Will a new wastewater (sewage) treatment district be formed to serve the project site? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:
- Applicant/sponsor for new district: _____
- Date application submitted or anticipated: _____
- What is the receiving water for the wastewater discharge? _____

v. If public facilities will not be used, describe plans to provide wastewater treatment for the project, including specifying proposed receiving water (name and classification if surface discharge or describe subsurface disposal plans):

_____

vi. Describe any plans or designs to capture, recycle or reuse liquid waste: _____

e. Will the proposed action disturb more than one acre and create stormwater runoff, either from new point sources (i.e. ditches, pipes, swales, curbs, gutters or other concentrated flows of stormwater) or non-point source (i.e. sheet flow) during construction or post construction? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. How much impervious surface will the project create in relation to total size of project parcel?

_____ Square feet or _____ acres (impervious surface)

_____ Square feet or _____ acres (parcel size)

ii. Describe types of new point sources. _____

iii. Where will the stormwater runoff be directed (i.e. on-site stormwater management facility/structures, adjacent properties, groundwater, on-site surface water or off-site surface waters)?

_____

- If to surface waters, identify receiving water bodies or wetlands: _____
- Will stormwater runoff flow to adjacent properties? ☐Yes ☐No

iv. Does the proposed plan minimize impervious surfaces, use pervious materials or collect and re-use stormwater? ☐Yes ☐No

f. Does the proposed action include, or will it use on-site, one or more sources of air emissions, including fuel combustion, waste incineration, or other processes or operations? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes, identify:

i. Mobile sources during project operations (e.g., heavy equipment, fleet or delivery vehicles)

_____

ii. Stationary sources during construction (e.g., power generation, structural heating, batch plant, crushers)

_____

iii. Stationary sources during operations (e.g., process emissions, large boilers, electric generation)

_____

g. Will any air emission sources named in D.2.f (above), require a NY State Air Registration, Air Facility Permit, or Federal Clean Air Act Title IV or Title V Permit? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Is the project site located in an Air quality non-attainment area? (Area routinely or periodically fails to meet ambient air quality standards for all or some parts of the year) ☐Yes ☐No

ii. In addition to emissions as calculated in the application, the project will generate:
- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Carbon Dioxide (CO_2)
- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Nitrous Oxide (N_2O)
- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)
- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Sulfur Hexafluoride (SF_6)
- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Carbon Dioxide equivalent of Hydroflourocarbons (HFCs)
- _____Tons/year (short tons) of Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs)

h. Will the proposed action generate or emit methane (including, but not limited to, sewage treatment plants, landfills, composting facilities)? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

i. Estimate methane generation in tons/year (metric): _____

ii. Describe any methane capture, control or elimination measures included in project design (e.g., combustion to generate heat or electricity, flaring): _____

i. Will the proposed action result in the release of air pollutants from open-air operations or processes, such as quarry or landfill operations? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes: Describe operations and nature of emissions (e.g., diesel exhaust, rock particulates/dust):

_____

j. Will the proposed action result in a substantial increase in traffic above present levels or generate substantial new demand for transportation facilities or services? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

i. When is the peak traffic expected (Check all that apply): ☐ Morning ☐ Evening ☐Weekend ☐ Randomly between hours of _____ to _____.

ii. For commercial activities only, projected number of truck trips/day and type (e.g., semi trailers and dump trucks): _____

iii. Parking spaces: Existing _____ Proposed _____ Net increase/decrease _____

iv. Does the proposed action include any shared use parking? ☐Yes☐No

v. If the proposed action includes any modification of existing roads, creation of new roads or change in existing access, describe:

vi. Are public/private transportation service(s) or facilities available within ½ mile of the proposed site? ☐Yes☐No

vii Will the proposed action include access to public transportation or accommodations for use of hybrid, electric or other alternative fueled vehicles? ☐Yes☐No

viii. Will the proposed action include plans for pedestrian or bicycle accommodations for connections to existing pedestrian or bicycle routes? ☐Yes☐No

k. Will the proposed action (for commercial or industrial projects only) generate new or additional demand for energy? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

i. Estimate annual electricity demand during operation of the proposed action: _____

ii. Anticipated sources/suppliers of electricity for the project (e.g., on-site combustion, on-site renewable, via grid/local utility, or other):

iii. Will the proposed action require a new, or an upgrade, to an existing substation? ☐Yes☐No

l. Hours of operation. Answer all items which apply.

i. During Construction:

- Monday - Friday: _____
- Saturday: _____
- Sunday: _____
- Holidays: _____

ii. During Operations:

- Monday - Friday: _____
- Saturday: _____
- Sunday: _____
- Holidays: _____

m. Will the proposed action produce noise that will exceed existing ambient noise levels during construction, operation, or both? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes:

i. Provide details including sources, time of day and duration:

_____

ii. Will the proposed action remove existing natural barriers that could act as a noise barrier or screen? ☐Yes ☐No

Describe: _____

n. Will the proposed action have outdoor lighting? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes:

i. Describe source(s), location(s), height of fixture(s), direction/aim, and proximity to nearest occupied structures:

_____

ii. Will proposed action remove existing natural barriers that could act as a light barrier or screen? ☐Yes ☐No

Describe: _____

o. Does the proposed action have the potential to produce odors for more than one hour per day? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes, describe possible sources, potential frequency and duration of odor emissions, and proximity to nearest occupied structures: _____

p. Will the proposed action include any bulk storage of petroleum (combined capacity of over 1,100 gallons) or chemical products 185 gallons in above ground storage or any amount in underground storage? ☐Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Product(s) to be stored _____

ii. Volume(s) _____ per unit time _____ (e.g., month, year)

iii. Generally, describe the proposed storage facilities: _____

q. Will the proposed action (commercial, industrial and recreational projects only) use pesticides (i.e., herbicides, insecticides) during construction or operation? ☐ Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Describe proposed treatment(s):

_____

ii. Will the proposed action use Integrated Pest Management Practices? ☐ Yes ☐No

r. Will the proposed action (commercial or industrial projects only) involve or require the management or disposal of solid waste (excluding hazardous materials)? ☐ Yes ☐No

If Yes:

i. Describe any solid waste(s) to be generated during construction or operation of the facility:

- Construction: _____ tons per _____ (unit of time)
- Operation : _____ tons per _____ (unit of time)

ii. Describe any proposals for on-site minimization, recycling or reuse of materials to avoid disposal as solid waste:

- Construction: _____
- Operation: _____

iii. Proposed disposal methods/facilities for solid waste generated on-site:

- Construction: _____
- Operation: _____

s. Does the proposed action include construction or modification of a solid waste management facility? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Type of management or handling of waste proposed for the site (e.g., recycling or transfer station, composting, landfill, or other disposal activities): _____

ii. Anticipated rate of disposal/processing:

- _____ Tons/month, if transfer or other non-combustion/thermal treatment, or
- _____ Tons/hour, if combustion or thermal treatment

iii. If landfill, anticipated site life: _____ years

t. Will the proposed action at the site involve the commercial generation, treatment, storage, or disposal of hazardous waste? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Name(s) of all hazardous wastes or constituents to be generated, handled or managed at facility: _____

ii. Generally describe processes or activities involving hazardous wastes or constituents: _____

iii. Specify amount to be handled or generated _____ tons/month

iv. Describe any proposals for on-site minimization, recycling or reuse of hazardous constituents: _____

v. Will any hazardous wastes be disposed at an existing offsite hazardous waste facility? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes: provide name and location of facility: _____

If No: describe proposed management of any hazardous wastes which will not be sent to a hazardous waste facility: _____

E. Site and Setting of Proposed Action

E.1. Land uses on and surrounding the project site

a. Existing land uses.

i. Check all uses that occur on, adjoining and near the project site.

☐ Urban ☐ Industrial ☐ Commercial ☐ Residential (suburban) ☐ Rural (non-farm)
☐ Forest ☐ Agriculture ☐ Aquatic ☐ Other (specify): _____

ii. If mix of uses, generally describe: _____

b. Land uses and covertypes on the project site.

Land use or Covertype	Current Acreage	Acreage After Project Completion	Change (Acres +/-)
• Roads, buildings, and other paved or impervious surfaces			
• Forested			
• Meadows, grasslands or brushlands (non-agricultural, including abandoned agricultural)			
• Agricultural (includes active orchards, field, greenhouse etc.)			
• Surface water features (lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, etc.)			
• Wetlands (freshwater or tidal)			
• Non-vegetated (bare rock, earth or fill)			
• Other Describe: _____			

c. Is the project site presently used by members of the community for public recreation? ☐Yes☐No

i. If Yes: explain: _____

d. Are there any facilities serving children, the elderly, people with disabilities (e.g., schools, hospitals, licensed day care centers, or group homes) within 1500 feet of the project site? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes,

i. Identify Facilities:

_____

e. Does the project site contain an existing dam? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

i. Dimensions of the dam and impoundment:

- Dam height: _____ feet
- Dam length: _____ feet
- Surface area: _____ acres
- Volume impounded: _____ gallons OR acre-feet

ii. Dam's existing hazard classification: _____

iii. Provide date and summarize results of last inspection:

_____

f. Has the project site ever been used as a municipal, commercial or industrial solid waste management facility, or does the project site adjoin property which is now, or was at one time, used as a solid waste management facility? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

i. Has the facility been formally closed? ☐Yes☐ No

- If yes, cite sources/documentation: _____

ii. Describe the location of the project site relative to the boundaries of the solid waste management facility:

_____

iii. Describe any development constraints due to the prior solid waste activities: _____

g. Have hazardous wastes been generated, treated and/or disposed of at the site, or does the project site adjoin property which is now or was at one time used to commercially treat, store and/or dispose of hazardous waste? ☐Yes☐No

If Yes:

i. Describe waste(s) handled and waste management activities, including approximate time when activities occurred:

_____

h. Potential contamination history. Has there been a reported spill at the proposed project site, or have any remedial actions been conducted at or adjacent to the proposed site? ☑Yes☐ No

If Yes:

i. Is any portion of the site listed on the NYSDEC Spills Incidents database or Environmental Site Remediation database? Check all that apply: ☑Yes☐No

☐ Yes – Spills Incidents database — Provide DEC ID number(s): _____

☑ Yes – Environmental Site Remediation database — Provide DEC ID number(s): 314007, 314006

☐ Neither database

ii. If site has been subject of RCRA corrective activities, describe control measures: _____

iii. Is the project within 2000 feet of any site in the NYSDEC Environmental Site Remediation database? ☑Yes☐No

If yes, provide DEC ID number(s): 314007, 314006

iv. If yes to (i), (ii) or (iii) above, describe current status of site(s):

_____

v. Is the project site subject to an institutional control limiting property uses? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- If yes, DEC site ID number: _____
- Describe the type of institutional control (e.g., deed restriction or easement): _____
- Describe any use limitations: _____
- Describe any engineering controls: _____
- Will the project affect the institutional or engineering controls in place? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Explain: _____

E.2. Natural Resources On or Near Project Site

a. What is the average depth to bedrock on the project site? _____ feet

b. Are there bedrock outcroppings on the project site? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If Yes, what proportion of the site is comprised of bedrock outcroppings? _____ %

c. Predominant soil type(s) present on project site: _____ _____ %
_____ _____ %
_____ _____ %

d. What is the average depth to the water table on the project site? Average: _____ feet

e. Drainage status of project site soils: ☐ Well Drained: _____% of site
☐ Moderately Well Drained: _____% of site
☐ Poorly Drained _____% of site

f. Approximate proportion of proposed action site with slopes: ☐ 0-10%: _____% of site
☐ 10-15%: _____% of site
☐ 15% or greater: _____% of site

g. Are there any unique geologic features on the project site? ☐ Yes ☑ No
If Yes, describe: _____

h. Surface water features.

i. Does any portion of the project site contain wetlands or other waterbodies (including streams, rivers, ponds or lakes)? ☑ Yes ☐ No

ii. Do any wetlands or other waterbodies adjoin the project site? ☑ Yes ☐ No

If Yes to either *i* or *ii*, continue. If No, skip to E.2.i.

iii. Are any of the wetlands or waterbodies within or adjoining the project site regulated by any federal, state or local agency? ☑ Yes ☐ No

iv. For each identified regulated wetland and waterbody on the project site, provide the following information:

- Streams: Name 825-8, 825-76, 825-75, 825-81, 825-82, 825-84, ... Classification C(T), C(TS), D, B
- Lakes or Ponds: Name 825-79.1 Classification C
- Wetlands: Name Federal Waters, NYS Wetland, Federal Waters, Fe... Approximate Size NYS Wetland (in a...
- Wetland No. (if regulated by DEC) AM-27, AM-28, AM-25, AM-23,...

v. Are any of the above water bodies listed in the most recent compilation of NYS water quality-impaired waterbodies? ☐ Yes ☑ No

If yes, name of impaired water body/bodies and basis for listing as impaired: _____

i. Is the project site in a designated Floodway? ☑ Yes ☐ No

j. Is the project site in the 100-year Floodplain? ☑ Yes ☐ No

k. Is the project site in the 500-year Floodplain? ☐ Yes ☐ No

l. Is the project site located over, or immediately adjoining, a primary, principal or sole source aquifer? ☑ Yes ☐ No
If Yes:

i. Name of aquifer: Principal Aquifer

m. Identify the predominant wildlife species that occupy or use the project site: _____

n. Does the project site contain a designated significant natural community? ☑ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Describe the habitat/community (composition, function, and basis for designation): Rich Shrub Fen, Rich Graminoid Fen, Rich Sloping Fen

ii. Source(s) of description or evaluation: _____

iii. Extent of community/habitat:

- Currently: 0.66, 2.72, 1.66, 2.92, 1.52 acres
- Following completion of project as proposed: _____ acres
- Gain or loss (indicate + or -): _____ acres

o. Does project site contain any species of plant or animal that is listed by the federal government or NYS as endangered or threatened, or does it contain any areas identified as habitat for an endangered or threatened species? ☑ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Species and listing (endangered or threatened): Bog Turtle, Timber Rattlesnake, Carolina Whitlow Grass, Brook Floater, Hill's Pondweed, Dwarf Wedgemussel, Hidden Spike Moss, B...

p. Does the project site contain any species of plant or animal that is listed by NYS as rare, or as a species of special concern? ☑ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Species and listing: New England Cottontail

q. Is the project site or adjoining area currently used for hunting, trapping, fishing or shell fishing? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, give a brief description of how the proposed action may affect that use: _____

E.3. Designated Public Resources On or Near Project Site

a. Is the project site, or any portion of it, located in a designated agricultural district certified pursuant to Agriculture and Markets Law, Article 25-AA, Section 303 and 304? ☑ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, provide county plus district name/number: DUTC021, DUTC023

b. Are agricultural lands consisting of highly productive soils present? ☐ Yes ☐ No

i. If Yes: acreage(s) on project site? _____

ii. Source(s) of soil rating(s): _____

c. Does the project site contain all or part of, or is it substantially contiguous to, a registered National Natural Landmark? ☐ Yes ☑ No

If Yes:

i. Nature of the natural landmark: ☐ Biological Community ☐ Geological Feature

ii. Provide brief description of landmark, including values behind designation and approximate size/extent: _____

d. Is the project site located in or does it adjoin a state listed Critical Environmental Area? ☑ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. CEA name: Sarney Site, Millbrook Meadow

ii. Basis for designation: Inactive landfill toxic polluntants present, Protect wetland

iii. Designating agency and date: Agency:Dutchess County, Agency:Stanford, Town of, Date:6-19-85, Date:4-8-87

e. Does the project site contain, or is it substantially contiguous to, a building, archaeological site, or district which is listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, or that has been determined by the Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places? ☑ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Nature of historic/archaeological resource: ☐ Archaeological Site ☐ Historic Building or District

ii. Name: Eligible property:The Manor House, Eligible property:Century Lodge & Annex, Eligible property:Stone Chapel, Eligible ...

iii. Brief description of attributes on which listing is based:

f. Is the project site, or any portion of it, located in or adjacent to an area designated as sensitive for archaeological sites on the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) archaeological site inventory? ☑ Yes ☐ No

g. Have additional archaeological or historic site(s) or resources been identified on the project site? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Describe possible resource(s): _____

ii. Basis for identification: _____

h. Is the project site within fives miles of any officially designated and publicly accessible federal, state, or local scenic or aesthetic resource? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes:

i. Identify resource: _____

ii. Nature of, or basis for, designation (e.g., established highway overlook, state or local park, state historic trail or scenic byway, etc.): _____

iii. Distance between project and resource: _____ miles.

i. Is the project site located within a designated river corridor under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Program 6 NYCRR 666? ☐ Yes ☑ No

If Yes:

i. Identify the name of the river and its designation: _____

ii. Is the activity consistent with development restrictions contained in 6NYCRR Part 666? ☐ Yes ☐ No

F. Additional Information

Attach any additional information which may be needed to clarify your project.

If you have identified any adverse impacts which could be associated with your proposal, please describe those impacts plus any measures which you propose to avoid or minimize them.

G. Verification

I certify that the information provided is true to the best of my knowledge.

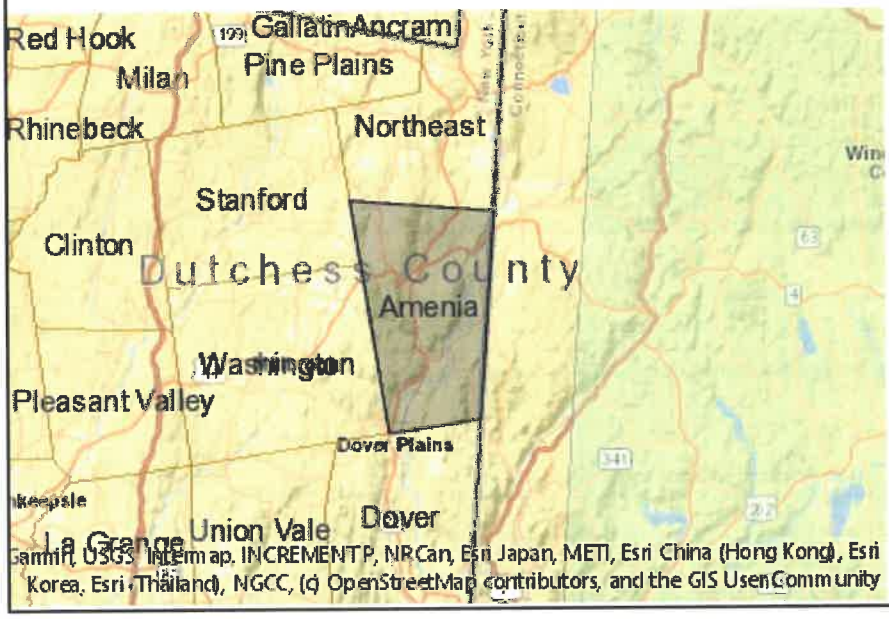
Applicant/Sponsor Name Town of Amenia Town Board Date 9/15/2022

Signature _____ Title _____

PRINT FORM

EAF Mapper Summary Report

Thursday, September 15, 2022 12:01 PM



Disclaimer: The EAF Mapper is a screening tool intended to assist project sponsors and reviewing agencies in preparing an environmental assessment form (EAF). Not all questions asked in the EAF are answered by the EAF Mapper. Additional information on any EAF question can be obtained by consulting the EAF Workbooks. Although the EAF Mapper provides the most up-to-date digital data available to DEC, you may also need to contact local or other data sources in order to obtain data not provided by the Mapper. Digital data is not a substitute for agency determinations.

B.i.i [Coastal or Waterfront Area]	No
B.i.ii [Local Waterfront Revitalization Area]	No
C.2.b. [Special Planning District]	Yes - Digital mapping data are not available for all Special Planning Districts. Refer to EAF Workbook.
C.2.b. [Special Planning District - Name]	Remediaton Sites:314007, Remediaton Sites:314006
E.1.h [DEC Spills or Remediation Site - Potential Contamination History]	Yes - Digital mapping data for Spills Incidents are not available for this location. Refer to EAF Workbook.
E.1.h.i [DEC Spills or Remediation Site - Listed]	Yes
E.1.h.i [DEC Spills or Remediation Site - Environmental Site Remediation Database]	Yes
E.1.h.i [DEC Spills or Remediation Site - DEC ID Number]	314007, 314006
E.1.h.iii [Within 2,000' of DEC Remediation Site]	Yes
E.1.h.iii [Within 2,000' of DEC Remediation Site - DEC ID]	314007, 314006
E.2.g [Unique Geologic Features]	No
E.2.h.i [Surface Water Features]	Yes
E.2.h.ii [Surface Water Features]	Yes
E.2.h.iii [Surface Water Features]	Yes - Digital mapping information on local and federal wetlands and waterbodies is known to be incomplete. Refer to EAF Workbook.
E.2.h.iv [Surface Water Features - Stream Name]	825-8, 825-76, 825-75, 825-81, 825-82, 825-84, 825-77, 825-87, 825-85, 825-83, 825-135, 825-86, 825-106, 825-110, 825-110.2, 825-110.1, 825-136, 825-89, 825-89.1, 825-97, 825-91, 825-96.1, 825-90, 825-92, 825-95.1, 825-88, 825-105, 825-112, 825-107, 825-111, 825-93, 825-95.2, 825-113, 825-113.1, 825-94, 825-114, 825-115

E.2.h.iv [Surface Water Features - Stream Classification]	C(T), C(TS), B, B
E.2.h.iv [Surface Water Features - Lake/Pond Name]	825-79.1
E.2.h.iv [Surface Water Features - Lake/Pond Classification]	C
E.2.h.iv [Surface Water Features - Wetlands Name]	Federal Waters, NYS Wetland
E.2.h.iv [Surface Water Features - Wetlands Size]	NYS Wetland (in acres):29.2, NYS Wetland (in acres):16.6, NYS Wetland (in acres):119.0, NYS Wetland (in acres):59.7, NYS Wetland (in acres):27.1, NYS Wetland (in acres):137.5, NYS Wetland (in acres):33.8, NYS Wetland (in acres):186.8, NYS Wetland (in acres):53.0, NYS Wetland (in acres):22.4, NYS Wetland (in acres):19.5, NYS Wetland (in acres):23.1, NYS Wetland (in acres):217.4, NYS Wetland (in acres):19.0, NYS Wetland (in acres):290.9, NYS Wetland (in acres):18.2, NYS Wetland (in acres):34.4, NYS Wetland (in acres):52.7, NYS Wetland (in acres):120.5, NYS Wetland (in acres):43.3, NYS Wetland (in acres):34.3, NYS Wetland (in acres):24.2, NYS Wetland (in acres):58.6, NYS Wetland (in acres):21.6, NYS Wetland (in acres):17.0, NYS Wetland (in acres):66.3
E.2.h.iv [Surface Water Features - DEC Wetlands Number]	AM-27, AM-28, AM-25, AM-23, AM-22, AM-16, AM-15, AM-26, AM-20, AM-17, AM-19, AM-18, AM-6, AM-33, AM-8, AM-7, AM-10, AM-9, AM-11, MT-29, AM-12, AM-13, AM-5, AM-21, MT-35
E.2.h.v [Impaired Water Bodies]	No
E.2.i. [Floodway]	Yes
E.2.j. [100 Year Floodplain]	Yes
E.2.k. [500 Year Floodplain]	Digital mapping data are not available or are incomplete. Refer to EAF Workbook.
E.2.l. [Aquifers]	Yes
E.2.l. [Aquifer Names]	Principal Aquifer
E.2.n. [Natural Communities]	Yes
E.2.n.i [Natural Communities - Name]	Rich Shrub Fen, Rich Graminoid Fen, Rich Sloping Fen
E.2.n.i [Natural Communities - Acres]	0.66, 2.72, 1.66, 2.92, 1.52
E.2.o. [Endangered or Threatened Species]	Yes
E.2.o. [Endangered or Threatened Species - Name]	Bog Turtle, Timber Rattlesnake, Carolina Whitlow Grass, Brook Floater, Hill's Pondweed, Dwarf Wedgemussel, Hidden Spike Moss, Bald Eagle
E.2.p. [Rare Plants or Animals]	Yes
E.2.p. [Rare Plants or Animals - Name]	New England Cottontail
E.3.a. [Agricultural District]	Yes
E.3.a. [Agricultural District]	DUTC021, DUTC023
E.3.c. [National Natural Landmark]	No
E.3.d [Critical Environmental Area]	Yes
E.3.d [Critical Environmental Area - Name]	Sarney Site, Millbrook Meadow
E.3.d.ii [Critical Environmental Area - Reason]	Inactive landfill toxic polluntants present, Protect wetland
E.3.d.iii [Critical Environmental Area – Date and Agency]	Agency:Dutchess County, Agency:Stanford, Town of, Date:6-19-85, Date:4-8-87
E.3.e. [National or State Register of Historic Places or State Eligible Sites]	Yes - Digital mapping data for archaeological site boundaries are not available. Refer to EAF Workbook.

E.3.e.ii [National or State Register of Historic Places or State Eligible Sites - Name]	Eligible property:The Manor House, Eligible property:Century Lodge & Annex, Eligible property:Stone Chapel, Eligible property:Outdoor Pool/Bar/Grill, Eligible property:Tennis Courts, Eligible property:Caretaker House, Eligible property:Garden House, Eligible property:Wellness Barns, Eligible property:The Walled Garden, Eligible property:FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (GRIDLEY CHAPEL), Eligible property:Town Hall (former Amenia Elementary School), Eligible property:Amenia Free Library (1938), Eligible property:Troutbeck (Delamater) House, Eligible property:GAIL BORDENS CONDENSED MILK COMPANY, Eligible property:LUTHERS LIVESTOCK AUCTION BARN, Eligible property:BRIDGE A-16, Maxon Mills, Winegar, Hendrik, House, St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Wethersfield, Beth David Synagogue, Indian Rock Schoolhouse, Smithfield Presbyterian Church & Cemetery, Mumford, Lewis
E.3.f. [Archeological Sites]	Yes
E.3.i. [Designated River Corridor]	No

Introduction

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A ~~comprehensive plan~~Comprehensive Plan or M~~m~~aster P~~p~~lan is a statement of a community's goals and a conceptual road map for how to achieve them. Its purpose is to present, in an easily accessible and readable format, a guide to decision making on important land use issues. A ~~c~~Comprehensive P~~p~~lan expresses a vision of what the town residents want the community to be and become over a specified time period, usually around 20 years.

In reading and using a C~~c~~omprehensive P~~p~~lan, it is also important to understand what it is not. It is not a detailed instruction manual that tells exactly what to do or what will happen. It does not predict the future, although it does look ahead and express the Town's goals for the future. It does not prescribe exact courses of action, because these must be developed with care in response to a wide variety of situations that may arise. It would be short-sighted to mandate only one way to accomplish a community's goals in a ~~comprehensive plan~~Comprehensive Plan, when creativity and responsiveness to public input and evolving community needs may result in better solutions.

A ~~comprehensive plan~~Comprehensive Plan is not the law. It is an understandable and common mistake for citizens to confuse a Comprehensive Plan with the zoning code that implements it. They are two different things. The Comprehensive Plan sets the direction and goals for the community and recommends in a general way how these can be accomplished. In contrast, the zoning code is a detailed document that translates the goals into law. All too often, communities think they have gained control over their future merely by adopting a Comprehensive Plan. Yet, a Comprehensive Plan is only as meaningful as the steps taken to implement its stated objectives. ~~Although they have taken a major step in the right direction, the adoption of a plan does not change anything. Amenia learned this the hard way in 1991, when the Town adopted a Master Plan, but never followed through with zoning changes and other actions to make the Plan a reality~~.

PUTTING THE PLAN INTO ACTION

A Comprehensive Plan is an important first step, but to have effect its recommendations must be translated into zoning laws, budget allocations, public investments, and other actions that have the force of law. That is why it is so important that the Comprehensive Plan accurately reflect community consensus. Without strong community support, a Town Board will be reluctant to pass implementing legislation. While changes to the law must be consistent with the guidance provided by the Comprehensive Plan, the Plan is not by itself a legally enforceable document. This Plan provides guideposts to observe as the Town conducts the complex process of implementation, but it does not provide the details of the implementation process. The Plan is like a sketch of what a house will look like when it is built, not the house itself or the blueprints that tell the builder exactly what to build. The zoning code is the document that actually says what is and is not allowed, and it is the day-to-day decisions of local boards, officials, and citizens that determine what is actually built and what land is preserved. The zoning should reflect the guidance in the Comprehensive Plan, but should not be confused with the Plan.

This Comprehensive Plan is comprehensive in its scope, not its detail. It is intended to integrate many related issues so that their connections are clear and understandable. The community should, however, have realistic expectations of what a Comprehensive Plan can and cannot accomplish. It can guide the future, but not determine it. It can recommend actions, but it cannot ensure that they will occur. Only the people of the Town of Amenia and their elected and appointed officials can chart the future course of the Town. Their commitment to fulfilling the goals of the Plan through specific actions will be the chief determinant of its success. This success depends upon the willingness of the citizens of the Town to work together to make it happen.

AMENIA'S COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

In August, 2002, The Town Board of Amenia established a Master Plan Revision Committee (MPRC) to review the 1991 Amenia Master Plan and to make recommendations on what should be changed, added to or deleted from the plan. The MPRC made many efforts, through meetings and workshops, to include everyone in Town who wanted to participate and contribute to the review process.

The Master Plan Revision Committee concluded that, overall, the 1991 Amenia Master Plan is a sound document and does not need to be re-written. It needs to be updated, modified in places, expanded in others, and translated into specific action recommendations that the Town Board can enact and enforce. The only serious flaw in the 1991 planning process was not a problem with the Plan itself. The main problem was that many of the most important recommended actions were never acted upon. As a result of this conclusion, the MPRC focused on action steps and prepared and submitted to the Town Board a document entitled "Recommended Action Amendments to Amenia Comprehensive Plan" (Action Amendments) on December 15, 2003. The Action Amendments stressed the need for the Town to take action, particularly with respect to amending land use regulations to implement the existing plan.

Upon completion of the work of the Master Plan Review Committee, the Town Board appointed a new Committee, the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC), for the purpose of refining and implementing the Action Amendments. The Town then retained a professional planning and zoning consultant, Joel Russell, who reviewed the Action Amendments and recommended that they be used as source materials for the Comprehensive Plan Update but, primarily for technical and legal reasons, not become part of the Plan Update itself. The Action Amendments contain most of the ideas and concepts that are presented in this Comprehensive Plan Update and are considered a Reference Document to this Plan. They are not an official part of this document and will not be formally adopted by the Town. They do contain considerable background and much of the rationale for the Plan Update recommendations and several of the maps prepared by the Master Plan Review Committee for the Action Amendments are included in Appendix I of this Comprehensive Plan. Pages 3 and 4 of the Action Amendments describe in more detail the process followed by the MPRC to develop these recommendations.

A ~~comprehensive plan~~Comprehensive Plan is a living document and its refinement and modification should be a continual, dynamic process. But the real measure of success of any Comprehensive Plan is its implementation. Without implementation, a Comprehensive Plan is merely an empty promise. The most important first step in implementing a Plan is revising land use codes (especially zoning) to bring them into conformance with this document. Because this vital step was never taken after the adoption of the 1991 Master Plan, CPIC focused its attention on developing a new zoning code that will implement the recommendations of the 1991 Master Plan and the vision and goals for Amenia that emerged from the Master Plan Review process.

In 2007 the Town adopted a Comprehensive Plan Update concurrent with a corresponding zoning code to immediately implement its zoning and land use recommendations.~~The process of revising land use regulations has occurred concurrently with writing this Comprehensive Plan Update, with the intention that the Town Board will adopt a new zoning code at the same time as it adopts this Comprehensive Plan Update.~~

~~This document therefore is not a new Comprehensive Plan. Rather, it is~~is the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update expanded ~~an update, expanding~~ upon the vision and goals that were expressed or implied in the earlier plan, while recommending action steps that largely follow the direction of the 1991 plan. In ~~those~~ cases where the proposed action steps conflicted ~~may conflict~~ with the 1991 plan, the~~is~~ 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update was~~is~~ intended to supersede those conflicting recommendations. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update was ~~For those with limited time to review all of the documents, this Update has been~~ written so that its vision and action recommendations can be read and understood as a stand- alone document. However, to fully understand it, the 1991 Plan should also be consulted.

This document is an update to the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. Similar to its predecessor, it is not a complete re-write, but rather a strategic update to account for changes in background conditions, and to further implement the goals and objectives of the prior plans.

EFFECT OF CHANGES IN STATE LAW

In the years since the 1991 Master Plan was adopted, state law affecting comprehensive planning has changed in three significant ways:

1. Although this is not a recent change, it is worth noting that ~~T~~the legal name for this type of document is no longer "Master Plan," as in was in 1991, but "Comprehensive Plan." Therefore, what was formerly called a Master Plan is now referred to as a Comprehensive Plan. Because the original Master Plan remains in place and is being updated, this document is called a "Comprehensive Plan Update." This explanation should help alleviate some confusion over terminology. The recommendations in this 2022 Update build upon the 1991 Master Plan and the 2007 Update~~, but~~ by updating information, analyzing recent trends, and adding~~add to it by making~~ specific action recommendations, particularly regarding affordable housing.

2. The original 1991 Master Plan was adopted by the Planning Board, as required by state law at that time. The law now requires adoption by the Town Board. Therefore, to ensure ~~the~~ its legal validity ~~of the existing Master Plan, the~~ 1991

Master Plan, as updated in 2007, together with this 2022Comprehensive Plan Update are being adopted together by the Town Board and designated as the "~~2007~~ 2020 Amenia Comprehensive Plan." The Town Board's resolution accepting this Comprehensive Plan Update technically constitutes a readoption and amendment of the 1991 Master Plan.

3. In 1991, a Master Plan was considered an advisory document that was not binding on the Town or its boards. Under current law (Section 272-a of the Town Law), all Town land use regulations must be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. This is an important substantive change in the law. Also, plans for capital projects undertaken by other levels of government, such as County and State agencies, must take into consideration the recommendations of an adopted Comprehensive Plan. This could be especially important in connection with this Plan's recommendations for state Department of Transportation improvements to Route 22 and any state construction of facilities at the Taconic Developmental Disabilities Services Office Campus (Taconic DDSO).

HUDSON RIVER VALLEY GREENWAY

In the year 2000, the Amenia Town Board endorsed the Hudson River Valley Greenway Principles and thereby became one of the first communities in Dutchess County to embrace these principles of smart growth. A summary of the Greenway principles and procedures is attached in Appendix B of the Action Amendments, pp 57-58. These principles are consistent with the Town of Amenia's vision and goals as expressed in this Comprehensive Plan Update. The intention of the town in endorsing these principles was to use them in making day-to-day decisions about development of land, preserving open space, and regulating the siting, appearance and impacts of new businesses.

Following the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Town Board updated the zoning law to ~~One of the reasons behind the review of the master plan and the repeated recommendation that the zoning law be brought into agreement with this Plan is to~~ strengthen the Town's commitment to fulfilling the Greenway principles. This Comprehensive Plan Update further advances the Greenway principles.

DESCRIPTION OF THIS PLAN

Many ~~comprehensive plan~~Comprehensive Plans are written in a formal official-sounding language that makes them difficult and uninteresting to read. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update ~~This Plan Update~~ deliberately adopted~~s~~ a more informal tone intended to make reading the~~is~~ document more pleasant and conversational. It started~~s~~ by presenting the vision and goals for the Town, as gleaned from citizens who participated in the process, and then proceeds to make action recommendations to bring the vision and goals to fruition.

This Comprehensive Plan Update follows the same principles, builds on the goals, objectives, and recommendations of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update, and provides new demographic and background information to keep the plan current. The Comprehensive Plan Update starts by articulating the Town's vision and goals for its future in Chapter I. Chapter II describes changes in the Town that have occurred ~~in the past 15 years,~~ since the adoption of the 1991 Master Plan and 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update. It explores the implications of these changes and makes policy recommendations in

response to these changes. Chapter III makes specific action recommendations for the Town to follow to implement the vision and goals in Chapter I, the policy recommendations in Chapter II, and the recommendations from the 1991 Master Plan and 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update that remain valid today. Chapter IV contains background information and data relevant to understanding the Town's current situation, referencing other plans and documents that provide additional information.

Although the Comprehensive Plan is a living document that should be reviewed and updated as needed, state law requires that a Comprehensive Plan explicitly state the maximum intervals for a review of the Plan. Accordingly, this Comprehensive Plan shall be formally reviewed in its entirety by the Town Board at intervals of no more than ten years, and adjustments and revisions will be made as needed and deemed necessary at such intervals. This shall not preclude review and revision at any other time.

Chapter I: Vision and Goals

VISION

As a result of the public participation process leading up to the 2007 Update, ~~that occurred in 2002 – 2003,~~ the following vision statement emerged and was endorsed at several public meetings.

> **What Amenia can and will become:**
> **We want Amenia to grow into a diverse, vital and business-friendly community of agriculture, small businesses and homes all located in an appealing setting with great natural beauty; a unique unity of six different, clean, well-preserved historic town hamlets (Amenia, Wassaic, Amenia Union, South Amenia, Smithfield, and Leedsville); and amenities that attract residents, travelers, shoppers, diners and vacationers.**

This vision statement continues to guide this 2022 Update.

GOALS

In order to fulfill the community's vision as stated above, it is important to articulate specific goals that will guide actions to be taken by the Town government and its citizens. The goals listed below have been reviewed at several town meetings in 2002 and 2003, and continue to enjoy~~ed~~ widespread endorsement. These goals were reviewed as part of the 2022 Update at public hearings held on **[INSERT DATES]**.

1. To achieve a broad-based balance between the rural, historic, and agricultural beauty of the town as it is and the need for appropriate and smart economic growth and development.

2. To establish a business-friendly[1] attitude and commitment that:
   a. will attract and support the development of retail, small business, service businesses and even light industry,
   b. will create employment opportunities (especially for young people), and
   c. will increase tax revenues.

3. To develop and encourage the growth of agriculture as a profitable business within the context of preserving open space.

4. To encourage more housing – low, affordable, moderate-income, high-end, and rental – to create a genuinely multigenerational community:
   a. a vital place with good schools for growing families, and
   b. a safe place for young people to grow up and to which they will want to return because of the employment opportunities they have here;
   c. an attractive, safe place for elderly people.

~~[1] See the Recommended Action Amendments in Appendix I for a further discussion of what being "business-friendly" means and of what kinds of businesses Amenia wants to attract.~~

5. To promote environmentally sustainable energy practices, particularly through brownfield redevelopment and the installation of a community solar farm.

~~5.~~6. To maximize our strengths and attract tourists, shoppers, athletes, lovers of good food and wine, historians, and other money-spenders.

~~6.~~7. To forge a strong positive public consensus about the future of Amenia so that we will live up to the commitments we make, enforce the laws/regulations we have, and consistently support community pride.

Since the 2007 Update, the need for workforce and affordable housing has continued to grow. This 2022 Update and the accompanying Zoning Code amendments build on Goal #4, to "encourage more housing – low, affordable, moderate-income, high-end, and rental – to create a genuinely multigenerational community." Specifically, this Update and the Code amendments jointly support the following objectives, as articulated by the Housing Board:

- Preserve and encourage affordable housing units within the Town;
- Promote the construction of moderate-income housing units within the Town; and
- Clarify the approvals and administrative process within the Workforce Housing Law.

Chapter II: Changes in Amenia since 1991 and Current Policy Implications

OVERVIEW

Amenia ~~in 2007~~today appears to be much the same as the Amenia of 1991, yet much has changed over the past ~~16~~ years. Some of the important changes are: the extension of the Metro-North railroad line to Wassaic; the sale to a private owner by New York State of the northern portion of the campus of the Taconic Developmental Disabilities Services Office; the related expansion of state and private not-for-profit community based homes for the developmentally disabled; the ~~opening~~ continuing northward extension of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail ~~from Wassaic terminal to the North East town line~~; the preservation of many acres of land by the Dutchess Land Conservancy; opening of Silo Ridge luxury residential resort; and the continuing turnover of dairy farms to other uses, primarily other forms of agriculture, but some conversion to residential development and some reversion to forestland. In addition, the closure in 1994 of the Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center in Wingdale resulted in 1600 layoffs and the subsequent closure of the Harlem Valley Division for Youth facility in 2004 added another 200 layoffs. All in all, the community is transforming from a formerly agrarian community with a strong economic and employment base in three major state institutions, to a community that is especially attractive for outdoor recreation and second-homeowners, with a more diversified economic base that includes one major state facility (Taconic DDSO), several agricultural operations, and a number of smaller employers, including Pawling Corporation, public and private not for profit service providers, and many small private businesses offering a range of products and services.

SPECIFIC CHANGES AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. Demographic Changes

A. Population

~~The Town has seen a considerable increase in weekend, commuter, and telecommuter populations and a decrease in local jobs due primarily to the closure of Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center and Harlem Valley Division for Youth in the Town of Dover. This has led to a decrease in residents who earn their income locally. The loss of local jobs and lack of affordable housing have made it increasingly difficult for long-time local residents to afford to live in Amenia. The actual population of year-round town residents has increased 1.5 percent from 1990 when adjusted to account for the significant overall population loss attributed to the reduction in resident population at the Taconic DDSO. Census data do not provide any estimates of the town's seasonal population, but observed trends indicate that more people are using Amenia as a weekend destination. At the same time, incomes are up, school populations have stabilized or decreased slightly after the growth of the 1990s, and there has been relatively slow growth in housing and businesses. (See Chapter IV for more details about Amenia's changing demographics).~~

~~The character of the community is changing. The new population (year-round and weekend residents included) coming into Amenia tends to be more affluent families with fewer or no children. The changing demographics affect the kinds of stores and services the town attracts as well as the sense of community and types of activities that occur. Affluent part-time residents rarely participate in the volunteer emergency services that are essential to the community's welfare and also constitute an important part of its social life.~~

~~The growth in the retired population and second homeowners means less demand on schools, at least in the short-term. If these groups are replaced in the future by families with children, this picture could change dramatically. Such a change is difficult to foresee, but it has happened to other communities, and is already happening immediately to the south, in the Town of Dover.~~

At the time of the 2007 Update, the Town had already been seeing a considerable increase in weekend, commuter, and telecommuter populations. As many businesses continue to embrace remote and hybrid work schedules, telecommuting has increased allowing workers to live farther from urban employment hubs. Yet locally, the area has lost significant employers over the past 30 years, including the Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center and Harlem Valley Division for Youth in the Town of Dover, as well as the scaling back of the Taconic DDSO. This loss in local jobs has led to a decrease in residents who earn their income locally. Combined, the loss of local jobs and lack of affordable housing have made it increasingly difficult for long-time local residents to afford to live in Amenia. Since 1990, the population of Amenia has dropped by 27.4 percent (see Table IV-1).

The character of the community continues to shift. The population is older, increasing from a median age of 38.0 in 1994 to 40.5 in 2020. Between 2010 and 2020, the percent of the population under age 18 decreased by 8.1 percent, while the percent aged more than 75 increased by 37.9 percent.[1] This change is also reflected in the reduced household size, which decreased from 3.2 people in 1990 to 2.6 people in 2020. The changing demographics affect the kinds of stores and services the town attracts, as well as community needs, grade school enrollment, and employment sectors.

B. Housing

Nationally, amidst demographic shifts and economic changes accelerated by the COVID pandemic, the housing shortage has become a housing crisis, with an estimated 4.3 million apartment rentals needed by 2035.[2] At the time of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update, Dutchess County, along with the country, was experiencing a housing boom, creating thousands of jobs and new homes. Yet even at that time, Amenia, through its Comprehensive Plan, recognized the need for more housing, particularly, affordable housing. And as we know now, that housing boon was a bubble that burst in

[1] American Community Survey (ACS) (5-Year Estimates)."Cumulative Age." U.S. Census Bureau. Prepared by Social Explorer.

[2] U.S. Needs 4.3m More Apartments by 2035 to Address Demand, Deficit and Affordability." NMHC, July 22, 2022, https://www.nmhc.org/news.

2008, causing one of the worst recessions in national history. The need for affordable housing is acute. ~~There is a housing boom in Dutchess County; housing has been the strongest industry in the county in recent years, creating thousands of jobs and new homes.~~

While there remains a supply of existing affordable housing within Amenia (many of them mobile homes), a significant percentage of households are "cost-burdened," meaning that they are paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing.[3] Moreover, the percentage of Amenia residents who are cost-burdened has increased considerably since the 2007 Update. At that time, approximately 22 percent of homeowners were cost-burdened, as were 34.5 percent of renters. Current data reports that ~~A~~approximately ~~22~~ 29 percent of ~~home-owners~~homeowners and 45.9 percent of renters are paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing. (See Tables IV-10 and IV-11).[4]~~, while approximately 34.5 percent of renters are paying more than 30 percent.~~]]

Even during the time leading up to the 2007 Update, the housing boon was of little help to areas like Amenia where the new~~New~~ housing construction ~~is~~ was geared toward the higher end of the market, decreasing the proportion of ~~and does not provide~~ housing options affordable to ~~middle-income~~most residents. After the economic crash of 2008, the gap between incomes and home prices expanded further in Amenia and throughout the country.

~~Amenia now has a serious housing affordability problem,~~Amenia's housing affordability problem, which was already significant at the time of the 2007 Update, has continued to swell, exacerbated both to national economics, where incomes have not kept pace with the costs of living, and regionally, where wealthier new residents continue to raise the demand for higher housing prices ~~as the overall increase in prices in the region and the upward pressure on prices from new residents who come from other areas has adversely affected the availability of moderately priced housing~~. ~~This~~ As the availability of moderately priced homes decreases, this growing imbalance will ~~have significant~~continue to impact on ~~the~~ social and economic diversity of Amenia if the community does not take action to deal with it. In addition, this lack of affordable housing has historically created ~~is creating~~ a serious recruitment and retention problem at the Taconic DDSO, the Town's largest single employer. ~~T~~In 2007, the Taconic DDSO went~~has~~ gone so far as to have the Dutchess County Loop Bus System run a special bus for each shift at the facility.~~, and many other employees have had to carpool.~~

C. Social and Economic Issues

~~Partly~~ Largely because of the housing affordability crisis, there is growing concern that

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[3] "Defining Housing Affordability." US Department of Housing and Urban Development. 2014. https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr-edge-featd-article-081417.html.

[4] US Census Bureau; ACS 5-Year Estimates 2017-2022; Social Explorer. "SE:A10049: Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months (Dollars) for Housing Units with a Mortgage" and; "SE:A10051:Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months (Dollars) for Housing Units Without a Mortgage;" and "SE:A18002:Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months"

Amenia is losing the traditional economic diversity of its population. This diversity is reflected in a wide variety of incomes, occupations, and backgrounds. Amenia is the kind of place it is because of the solid corps of middle-class families who work in the local economy and staff emergency services and volunteer activities. As this segment of the population is priced out of the market, Amenia is at risk of losing its historic identity. Most new housing construction is available only to wealthy purchasers, leaving a dwindling portion that is affordable to existing local residents. History is not just about buildings and landscapes; it is also about the generations of families and the organizations and businesses that occupy those buildings and landscapes.

Amenia has managed to maintain much of its rural appearance and beauty, but the composition of its population is changing, and many long-term local families are feeling squeezed by increased property values and a shortage of local jobs. They are also finding it hard to build and operate local businesses because of the lack of suitable locations. This has exacerbated tensions between those who have come to Amenia from elsewhere to enjoy its rural tranquility and those who grew up here and seek opportunities to make a living locally.

The 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update documented ~~T~~the conflict over where to develop new local businesses~~ development has erupted in controversy over where to put new businesses~~. The plan noted that ~~: t~~the Route 22 corridor is a prime location for these businesses, but it is also the scenic byway that carries the most traffic and provides an experience of rural beauty to residents and visitors alike. It further noted that ~~T~~the most logical place to put new businesses is in the existing hamlet, but the lack of sewers makes this virtually impossible. Thus, the potential zoning and density of Route 22 ~~zoning ha~~was ~~been and continues to be the~~ a major source of conflict within the Town. Following the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Town adopted a tiered approach to the zoning which permitted greater density if sewer was provided. However, the ultimate ~~R~~resolution of this conflict depends upon finding a solution to the sewer issue. As with the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update, the success of this update ~~The success of this Plan therefore~~ turns more on installing sewers in the hamlet than on any other single action. With sewers in the central hamlet, it could become a vibrant place capable of attracting business and having a level of activity, services, jobs, and entertainment that would enable the Town to attract people from surrounding towns and to retain its young people.

The community needs to hold onto its core population of working families who own and work in local businesses and provide public services to their fellow citizens. This means maintaining and enhancing a diverse economic base and offering a climate conducive to the success of businesses and other organizations. There is also a need for economic incentives to make housing more affordable, and especially, to keep emergency services volunteers in town. Such volunteers cannot be long-distance commuters who work in Westchester or New York City. They have to live and work nearby so that they can respond quickly to local emergencies.

The Town needs to do as much as it can to keep middle-class families in the community and attract new ones that have a stake in the Town. They are its backbone and its future. An important measure to consider is the incentivization of the creation of moderately priced workforce housing. Other incentives that could be considered—to the extent

legally permissible—would be incentives for emergency service volunteers such as property tax relief, subsidized or free health insurance, and discounts or free permits for town services such as the transfer station and the use of recreation facilities. ~~One type of measure that might be considered, to the extent legally permissible, would be to provide incentives for emergency services volunteers, including moderately priced workforce housing, property tax relief, subsidized or free health insurance, and discounts or free permits for town services such as the transfer station and the use of recreation facilities. In addition, the availability of moderately priced workforce housing is crucial to retain and attract middle-class families.~~ Another incentive, that would also help farming, would be to lease development rights or make payments in other forms to full-time farmers in return for their important "service" in keeping the landscape open and beautiful for all to enjoy.

While the Town needs to keep its middle-class families, it also benefits from the presence of a large number of second-home owners and retirees, who pay taxes but do not send children to school. These residents generally contribute more to taxes than they consume in municipal services. They also employ many local service workers and spend money in the community.

2. Large-Scale Resort and Second-Home Development ~~Proposals~~Projects

Approved in 2016 and completed in 2019, Silo Ridge Field Club is a luxury resort community located off Route 22 between Amenia and Wassaic. The resort, centered around 245 residential units and an 18-hole golf course, sits on 800 acres, mostly open space. Development of Silo Ridge provided economic contributions to the Town in the form of approximately 3,000 construction jobs and 200 permanent jobs. Project officials ~~have~~ estimated that within its first ten years, Silo Ridge would provide nearly $42 million in tax revenue to the Webutuck Central School District, $7.7 million in tax revenue to the Town of Amenia; $11.9 million to Dutchess County; and $1.7 million to the Amenia Fire District, including the Wassaic Fire District.[5] ~~Since the completion of the 1991 Master Plan, the then-proposed golf course on Route 22 which occupies much of Delavergne Hill has been built and has undergone three changes of ownership. The current owners are hoping to add a large resort development to this golf course.~~

Tourism and weekender residents are important to the local economy. The addition of guest rooms in Amenia will encourage more tourists to visit, shop, and eat in Amenia. The increase in hospitality will further enhance the Town's reputation as a location for vacationing and for country homes that are easily accessible to New York City. The resort provides local employment opportunities and increases the Town's tax base. As a condition of its approval, project developers created and dedicated a public park, Artisan's Park Overlook, on DeLaVergne Hill that overlooks the Field Club and offers views of the Harlem Valley.

The right mix of uses in the Hamlet of Amenia—supported by sewers-- will add economic synergy between the existing population and businesses and the new residents and

[5] Allison Dunne, "Developers Revise Silo Ridge Project for Dutchess County," WAMC. January 7, 2015, https://www.wamc.org/hudson-valley-news/2015-01-07/developers-revise-silo-ridge-project-for-dutchess-county.

businesses at Silo Ridge.

~~At the time of adoption of this Comprehensive Plan Update, this proposal was still under review by the Town Board and Planning Board and is subject to modification as a result of the SEQR process and changes in the zoning code that are intended to implement the recommendations of this Plan Update. In addition to this proposal, the Town more recently received a proposal for an equestrian-oriented "farm community" development on Depot Hill, which faces Delavergne Hill across the Harlem Valley. These two important proposals close to the hamlet center are at a scale that is unprecedented for Amenia and could dramatically change the Town's character.~~

~~The addition of guest rooms in Amenia will encourage more tourists to visit, shop, and eat in Amenia. This will further enhance the Town's reputation as a location for vacationing and for country homes that are easily accessible to New York City. It will provide needed local employment opportunities and a boost to the community's tax base. With the right mix of uses and with sewers in the Hamlet of Amenia, it will also add economic synergy between the existing population and businesses in the Hamlet of Amenia and the new residents and businesses that will locate on the golf course property. This synergy will be good for business in Amenia.~~

It is important to the other goals of Amenia's Comprehensive Plan that these types of developments be designed in a way that does not detract from the scenic character of the community. Protection of most of the landscape as open space, either as recreational land for golf, or forest lands, or for farming and equestrian activities, will help maintain the scenic character of what is widely regarded as the Town's most important viewshed, i.e., the views from the top of DeLaVergne ~~Delavergne~~ Hill, down the Harlem Valley, and across the Valley to Depot Hill. Silo Ridge has supported these goals by maintaining 80 percent of its acreage as open space and by providing the public park, Artisan's Park Overlook to provide views of the picturesque valley below.

In Amenia's Zoning Code, the Resort Development Overlay District (RDO) provides use and design flexibility to encourage resort development that fits into the rural character of the Town and protects its scenic, historic, and environmental resources. This district provides a procedure for master planned development of large properties to promote tourism, recreation, and open space and natural areas protection.

It is also important that the growing tourism economy and weekender population does not displace existing residents. Throughout the country, vacation communities are finding that the short-term rental market is consuming the local housing supply and pricing out long-time residents and workers. The Town of Amenia should consider short term rental regulations to help preserve existing entry level rental and for sale homes for local residents and workers.

Where possible, configuration of development as a traditional neighborhood development (TND) is recommended as the best way to achieve a compact pedestrian-oriented layout that preserves open space and reduces driving. With such a layout, residents would be able to arrive by train from New York City and take shuttles to the new developments and to

the revitalized Hamlet, where they could meet most of their needs on foot.

3. Metro-North Extension: Wassaic and Ten Mile River Railroad Stations

The completion of the Wassaic and Ten Mile River railroad stations has already had a significant impact on the ~~t~~Town and will continue to offer an important opportunity for economic growth. The filled parking lots at both sites indicate the numbers of people who come in and out of Amenia on a weekly basis. As with the 2007 Update, this update emphasizes the importance of ~~This Comprehensive Plan Update recommends~~ finding ways to attract more visitors to stop, linger and spend money in Amenia. The existence of these stations also makes it easier to attract light industry and "back-office" development to the community.

The Ten Mile River station offers an especially good opportunity to build a new mixed-use transit-oriented hamlet that takes advantage of railroad access to create a walkable community with a sense of place. Such developments do not increase traffic as much as single-use residential subdivisions and are highly recommended in this Plan Update and in "Greenway Connections." The Ten Mile River station is the best site in the Town for such a development (and one of the best in the County). The Dutchess County Department of Planning has provided the Town with a conceptual sketch of the site that illustrates how such a "transit-oriented development" (TOD) might be designed. The portion of the site that would be involved in the TOD is not essential to the functioning of the DDSO, and this Plan Update calls for cooperation among the State, County, Town, and private investors to maximize the economic potential of this area. For a fuller discussion of this issue, see #2 under "Unfulfilled Opportunities for Change" below.

4. Harlem Valley Rail Trail

The development and continuing expansion of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail from Wassaic station ~~to the North East town line and beyond adds~~ another feature to the Town's recreational attractiveness. This trail, with two sections totaling over 26 paved miles, ~~15-mile trail~~ will eventually be part of a 46-mile Rail Trail extending all the way to Chatham. It has the potential to stimulate development of more recreational facilities and related service industries to service the hikers, bikers, runners, dog-walkers, skate- boarders, bird-watchers, and others who use the Rail Trail. It is also one of several attractive features that make Amenia an even more desirable community in which to live, vacation, or spend weekends. The ~~possible~~ extension of the Rail Trail into Wassaic hamlet offers an opportunity both to develop nature trails and walks and to entice tourists to the historically interesting and unique hamlet of Wassaic.

5. ~~Proposed~~ Consolidation of District Schools and Relocation of Town Hall

At the time of the 2007 Update, total enrollment in the Webutuck Central School District was 902 students. As of the 2020-2021 school year, enrollment significantly decreased to 626 students. Because of this decreased enrollment, certain district schools have closed and the remaining ones reconfigured. Previously, the school district included three elementary schools, from pre-K to 5th grade, and one junior/senior school, from 6th to 12th grade. Since then, two of the elementary schools, Millerton Elementary and Amenia Elementary, were closed and consolidated into a single school, Webutuck Elementary. Eugene Brooks Intermediate School opened shortly after the 2007 Update and hosts 4th through 8th grade. Webutuck High School hosts 9th through 10th grade.

When Amenia Elementary closed, the Town purchased the property, and it became the new location for the Town Hall. This relocation has allowed the Town Hall anchor civic use within the Hamlet of Amenia, adding ~~The quest for a new and more suitable home for the Town Hall continues. It is a major goal of the Town to keep the Town Hall as an anchor civic use in or near the center of the Hamlet of Amenia. This is important because it adds~~ vitality, convenience, and a sense of civic identity to the hamlet center. ~~It~~ The location also provides public parking and brings in foot traffic that supports the commercial uses that the Town wishes to attract and retain in the hamlet center. ~~If the proposed consolidation of schools in the Webutuck District takes place, the possibility exists that the Town Hall might move into the Amenia Elementary School. This would keep this key government office close to the center of the hamlet. Other potential options include expansion on the current site if the firehouse moves or relocation to a more central spot in the Hamlet after sewers are installed in the Hamlet.~~

6. The Taconic DDSO Campus

Since the adoption of the 1991 Master Plan, two major changes have occurred at the Taconic DDSO Campus. In 1999 Metro North extended service to Wassaic and added the Ten Mile River Train Station. In 2000 the northern half of the Taconic DDSO was sold by New York State to a private owner.

The future value to the Town of redevelopment of the privately owned parts of the North Campus makes it potentially one of the most important factors in the Town's future. Because the Taconic DDSO campus includes both a Metro-North commuter railroad station and water and sewer facilities, this is a prime site for mixed-use high-density transit-oriented development. (For a fuller discussion, see below under "Unfulfilled Opportunities for Change.")

In the Town's Zoning Code, the Mixed-Use Institutional Conversion Overlay District (MCO) provides use and design flexibility to encourage productive reuse of privately owned portions of what was formerly the Wassaic Developmental Center (now Taconic DDSO) campus. This district provides greater use flexibility and a procedure for master planned development of this property in a manner that advances the Town's development goals.

7. Old Amenia Landfill / Solar Farm

The Old Amenia Landfill now belongs to the Town and when all the work to mitigate the presence of PCBs is completed, the land may provide many opportunities ~~for recreational uses and some municipal uses if visual impacts are limited. There is also an opportunity to link the Rail Trail to Silo Ridge via a nearby underpass under Route 22.~~to support the Town's sustainability goals. The site may be suitable for a community solar farm, which is a collection of photovoltaic (PV) solar panels that convert the sun's energy into electricity for distribution to the power grid. Solar farms help mitigate climate change by reducing the use of fossil fuels, and they benefit consumers by reducing energy costs. Solar installations are quiet, emission-free facilities that do not generate industrial impacts like pollution, noise, or traffic. Concerns about impacts on scenic views or community character can be addressed with landscaping and screening. Solar farms can also integrate features to support local ecology, such as integrating wildlife corridors and pollinator-friendly, native

vegetation.

8. Land Preservation

Before 1991, only 522 acres in Amenia were protected by conservation easements granted to the Dutchess Land Conservancy. Since 1991~~In the past 15 years~~ there have been voluntary donations of 34 more conservation easements totaling 3,031 acres, bringing the total preserved land in the Town to 3,553 acres. This is private land that remains on the tax rolls and is in addition to the land preserved by the state and county. The Conservancy remains active in the Town and is assisting the community in achieving its land preservation objectives, at no cost to the Town's taxpayers. Preserved private land that pays taxes will never demand municipal services or add students to local schools, and studies have shown that it is generally beneficial to the property tax situation in a Town. In addition to existing federal and state income tax incentives for conservation easements, there is now an additional state income tax incentive that provides a tax credit to partially offset the property taxes paid for conserved land. (See below under Agriculture.)

In addition to the private land preserved through conservation easements, there are approximately 600 acres of land protected through state ownership or dedication as town parkland.

The Town is in danger of losing much of its open landscape to development. A combination of proactive planning by the community and cooperation by landowners and conservation organizations is needed to keep Amenia's landscape beautiful and productive.

Certain portions of the Town's open spaces are are protected by the Scenic Protection Overlay District (SPO), which protects the scenic character of scenic resources in the Town, including scenic road corridors, the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, and prominent scenic areas that remain substantially undeveloped and/or that lie within important scenic viewsheds.

9. Agriculture

Agriculture is a distinguishing feature of Amenia, responsible for much of its rural beauty and bucolic charm. This has attracted the weekenders, commuters, and retirees who have become the fastest growing part of the community. Thus, in addition to the economic value it adds for its products and jobs, farming has an independent and possibly even greater economic value contributing to the appeal, beauty, and property values of the Town as a whole. It is the single most important and easily lost feature that distinguishes Amenia's landscape as a rural community. Changes in the nature of agriculture in Amenia are leaving a profound imprint on the Town, socially, economically, visually and environmentally. The number of dairy farms in Amenia continues to decline. Dairy farming is a capital- and labor-intensive industry, which sustained a vigorous agri-business support industry that has also declined. A different kind of farm industry, which is more diversified, is replacing dairy farming throughout Dutchess County. It includes horse farms, sheep farms, organic vegetable farming, and raising other animals and crops for specialized niche markets. The traditional dairy farms and the families that operated them are increasingly part of Amenia's history as the nature of farming changes.

However, the retention of agriculture as a viable industry offers significant benefits to the Town and has regional ramifications. Since many farms operate in more than one town, Amenia's land use decisions affect agricultural enterprises in neighboring towns. Also, as energy and transportation costs increase, and farming in other parts of the United States suffers from drought, flooding, and soil depletion, Amenia's farmland may someday prove to be a resource that is of greater economic value for its crop and livestock production. Preservation of this land from development therefore has potentially great value to the future economy of the Town and the region. Large intact parcels, many currently kept open by farming, also have great value for biodiversity.

Voluntary techniques, especially the use of donated conservation easements, have become an important and useful tool for preserving farmland. Many of the wealthy newer owners of farmland who value the rural landscape of Amenia have been donating conservation easements on their land to the Dutchess Land Conservancy. A large number of these landowners lease the land at little or no cost to local farmers who are able to farm it without worrying that it will someday be sold for development. This is a win-win for both the landowner and the farmer, as it adds to the farmer's land base at little or no cost while enabling the landowner to take advantage of agricultural district property tax incentives. Federal and state income tax deductions have provided additional incentives for this form of land preservation since the 1980s. A new state conservation easement income tax credit instituted in 2007 provides a further incentive by offering an income tax credit for property taxes paid by owners of land protected by conservation easements. This costs the Town nothing, helps keep land in agricultural production, and relieves some of the property tax burden on owners of agricultural land.

On the other hand, some local property tax policies are encouraging the sale and subdivision of this land resource. Such policies include the over-assessment for property tax purposes of agricultural land and buildings, despite the state's requirements that land and buildings in an agricultural district have preferential assessment. The practice of valuing agricultural buildings at their replacement cost rather than the depreciated cost of their construction makes agriculture less economically viable. The Town assessors should use the discretion that they enjoy under state law in valuing agricultural land, wetlands, and forestland to make it possible for the owners of large tracts of land to afford to keep these lands intact and to use as much as possible of them for farming.

Please see Chapter IV for a fuller description of trends and changes in agriculture in Amenia and Chapter III for specific action recommendations on how to keep agriculture viable as an industry in Amenia.

10. Sustainability

Amenia recognizes the significance of environmentally sustainable development practices, including supporting renewable energy. A meaningful way to support this goal is through the redevelopment of the Old Amenia Landfill, a brownfield, into a community solar farm. (See #7, Old Amenia Landfill / Solar Farm). Most of this Comprehensive Plan Update is essentially about making Amenia more sustainable: that is, enabling Amenia to grow and prosper without depleting or destroying the environmental, historic, and visual resources that form the basis of that prosperity. All of the above discussion in this Chapter is aimed at building a more sustainable future for the Town. Some other objectives worthy of mention include the following:

- Sustainable energy policies, by encouraging the use of wind power in appropriate locations, encouraging energy-efficient buildings, especially buildings that meet LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards, and an energy efficient land use pattern that reduces private automobile usage, encourages walking and bicycling, and takes advantage of commuter rail services.
- Careful attention to all environmental and habitat protection issues in the review and approval of all development. This requires the creation of detailed environmental inventories and a system of ensuring that the Town's environmental resources are adequately protected when development occurs.
- Protection and adaptive reuse of historic structures.
- Use of Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) as a model for development in higher density areas of the Town, especially the hamlets of Amenia and Wassaic, and other large-scale developments that may occur, such as the suggested Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) at Ten-Mile River Station. TND refers to the development of compact complete communities that include single-family homes, apartments, townhouses, workplaces, shops, restaurants, inns, hotels, community facilities, and recreational facilities. Its goal is to create a pedestrian-oriented environment in which residents and those who work in the area can walk comfortably between different land uses and minimize the use of automobiles. There is a large literature on TND (also known as "new urbanism" and "neo-traditional development") which is available through the website of the Congress for the New Urbanism (www.cnu.org). The Charter of the New Urbanism, available on that website, is an expression of the principles of this type of development. This approach has gained currency since the 1991 Master Plan as the preferred way to achieve sustainability through mixed use development that reduces dependence on cars and allows higher density development to be attractive and diverse.

  In the Town's two hamlet-specific zoning districts, the Hamlet Mixed-Use District and the Hamlet Residential District, are meant to maintain the traditional scale, density, and style of the hamlets, including the facilitation of pedestrian-oriented development.

11. Safety and Security

The Town of Amenia wants to ensure that there will not be any New York State Department of Correctional Services facilities located in the Town.

12. Zoning Updates

Since the drafting of the 2007 Update, the Town has adopted new zoning laws. Among other changes, the zoning laws include several overlay districts meant to achieve certain goals articulated in the 1991 Master Plan and the 2007 Update. The overlay districts, which are addressed more specifically in other parts of this Update include:

- Floodplain Overlay District
- Stream Corridor Overlay District
- Scenic Protection Overlay District
- Aquifer Overlay District
- Mixed-Ise Institutional Conversion Overlay District
- Soil Mining Overlay District
- Resort Development Overlay District
- Mobile Home Park Overlay District

UNFULFILLED OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

Sometimes what does not change is as important as what does. Changes that are desired and expected but that fail to materialize, can affect a community as much as planned and unplanned changes that actually occur. There are two important examples of this:

1. Sewers in the Hamlets of Amenia and Wassaic

The single most important thing that has *not* happened ~~in the last 15~~preceding years is the same one that has been talked about for at least ~~43~~0 years: the need for a sewer system in the Hamlet of Amenia. This has been a keystone of planning for the Town and remains so. Yet, despite several efforts over many years to create a sewer system for the town center, it has yet to happen. Without a sewer system, most of the planning goals in this Plan and in all prior plans will be frustrated. This is because the key to a successful, prosperous, and beautiful Amenia is a sewer system in the center of the hamlet to support a vibrant and economically robust town center surrounded by countryside that remains scenic, historic, and appealing to visitors.

One of the key issues in finding a solution to the sewer problem has been obtaining land on which to locate a facility. A number of parcels have been under consideration in recent years, including land at Silo Ridge, land near Freshtown shopping plaza, and the Allen Sand and Gravel parcel south of the hamlet. A study committee has been actively researching this issue and continues to pursue it. A Comprehensive Plan cannot prescribe the solution to this critical problem – it can only highlight its critical importance and call attention to it.

Future development proposals for large-scale developments near the hamlet of Amenia (similar to Silo Ridge) may provide a solution to this challenge. ~~The proposed large-scale developments close to the Hamlet offer the best opportunity the Town may have to solve this problem for the foreseeable future.~~ As a condition for their approval, the Town can require that the project ~~In order for these developments to provide maximum benefit to the Town (Silo Ridge alone will likely have a population larger than the current population of the Hamlet itself), they should also~~ contribute significantly to providing public sewer service to the Hamlet. There are many ways this can be accomplished, including but not limited to the construction of a sewage treatment plant by a developer or developers with extra capacity to serve the hamlet, extension of the collection system into the hamlet, providing funds to assist in hooking up hamlet units to the new system, and providing land for needed sewage treatment facilities. The developers of these projects can also work with each other and the Town to share the cost of providing sewage disposal facilities. If the Town and the developers work together on the sewage issue, they can finally solve the perennial problem of providing sewers in the Hamlet of Amenia. This will benefit the developers as well as the Town by making it possible to upgrade and beautify properties in the Hamlet, while making them far more economically productive. It is to the advantage of the Town and the developers to do this, since the Hamlet is their front door, and they are gateways to the Hamlet.

Water and sewer service are also badly needed in the hamlet of Wassaic to protect water quality in the Wassaic Creek and to enable that hamlet to absorb future growth. Although not as pressing or as chronic a problem as in the hamlet of Amenia, this is also a critical

element of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. There are several possible ways to address the need for sewers in Wassaic: (1) construction of a sewer plant at the Allen Sand and Gravel site, which might be able to service both hamlets; (2) construction of a sewer facility just outside the hamlet of Wassaic in connection with large-scale redevelopment of land there (such as the former livestock auction/gravel mine property); or (3) connection to the existing sewer plant at the Taconic DDSO, which has considerable excess capacity but is more than a mile away.

2. Future of the Taconic DDSO Area

The Taconic Developmental Disabilities Services Office (DDSO) was at one time slated to close permanently in the 1990s, but has changed its course. The Taconic DDSO is a regional agency of the NYS Office of Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities. The Taconic district includes Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam, and Ulster counties. The DDSO has offices in each of the five counties and a large campus in Wassaic. It operates a network of residential and habilitative programs throughout the region, as well as providing clinic services and service coordination. It also provides support services which enable families to keep their family member with a disability at home. Taconic works closely with many private voluntary agencies which provide related services. Taconic provides them with technical assistance and training. The DDSO and the private sector plan and work together to ensure the best quality of life possible for people residing in the Taconic district who have developmental disabilities. Taconic DDSO's mission is to ensure that persons with developmental disabilities living in Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam, and Ulster Counties and their families are provided services and supports of their choice that promote participation, integration, and independence. The quality of care and therapy offered is highly regarded and the facility continues to attract top level therapists, sometimes from far away, whose care enables the most disadvantaged members of our society to live in good health and with dignity.

At its peak, the Taconic DDSO campus in Wassaic housed as many as 5,500 residents and was practically self-sustaining, with a large farm operation and on-site processing and production of most of the basic food-stuff and other domestic needs. Policy changes and advances in treatment resulted in the dramatic decrease of utilization to the point at which, in the late 1980's, total closure was contemplated.

In the 1990's, concern over the future of the Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center in Wingdale, led the Taconic DDSO to begin an in-depth public planning process to determine the best use for the entire facility if the state decided to close it and reintegrate all developmentally disabled citizens back into their communities. Due to changes in prevailing treatment and philosophy, many developmentally disabled citizens were reintegrated into their communities or mainstreamed in the community. However, it also became apparent that there would continue to be an ever-changing population that needed more intensive campus-based care. Therefore, the State decided to sell only the northern half of the facility. It has continued ~~to operate the~~ scaled back operations in the southern campus. ~~with approximately 750 staff and approximately 200 citizens at any given point in time~~.

Taconic DDSO remains an important element of the local economy. Although it is not as active as it was in its peak years, it ~~is still the Town's largest employer and~~still provides both high quality jobs and important services to people in the Town and the region. As

such, the Town wishes to see the DDSO remain and thrive as a vital institution that employs local residents and provides services to them. It is an important part of our community and its payroll helps to support many local businesses. The approximately 273-acre site retained by NY State has well developed infrastructure, with a high-volume water plant, a large, modern sewage treatment facility with a capacity adequate for several thousand residents, a large emergency electricity generator, a 23 million btu/hr low pressure central steam heating system and a high-voltage three phase electrical supply and transformer- station.

The entire site, including State and privately owned land, comprises approximately 350 acres and covers the crest of a prominent and evenly sloped hill in the middle of the valley. The entrance of the facility is shared with the Ten Mile River Metro-North Commuter Rail Station, alongside of which flows a delightful reach of the Ten Mile River. Well located for vehicular access, the site is within 1,000 feet of Route 22 and easily accessible from I-84, I-90 and I-95. The site also contains a visually prominent hilltop and hillsides, some of which are undeveloped and should be preserved as scenic open space.

Currently, the buildings in the privately owned north half of the campus are unused and in very poor condition. ~~On the South Campus, the DDSO has plans for an $11 million, 37,000 square foot Local Intensive Treatment facility and has made improvements and upgrades.~~ More could be done with the portion of the site that is now privately owned. The Town's goal is to find a mutually beneficial solution that results in private investment in economic development on the privately owned portions of the campus.

While the existing facility is an important economic asset to the community, the unused privately owned portions of it represent a unique opportunity for future economic development. Owing to the facility's advantages of location and existing infrastructure, planners have since the 1990s identified this site as being highly suitable for economic development. The rail station provides an ideal opportunity for a "transit-oriented development," discussed elsewhere in this Plan. The Dutchess County Planning Department has developed a conceptual plan for a "transit-oriented development" at the Ten Mile River Metro-North station, which would be a mixed-use hamlet center with a small main street, multi-family housing, and single-family housing on the hillside to the east of the station. Small-scale retail, service commercial, and benign light industrial uses that fit in with a hamlet context would also be included. This Plan represents one desirable future for this area, but it will require an active public-private partnership involving the private owner, the Town, the County, the Taconic DDSO, and Metro-North Railroad to fulfill this or any other similar vision.

In addition, a full-service retirement community, offering medical- and frail-care could be located on a portion of the site. The same could be true for light industry such as a biomass energy plant, a vocational education and training facility, or some other type of school, office, or institutional campus. These would provide valuable, well-paid new jobs accessible by commuter rail, a broadened tax-base, and the security of a more

diversified economy. As sustainability becomes a household word and the goal of all communities, these opportunities are important. For significant capital investments to be made on or near the Wassaic campus, there is a need for cooperation and predictability so that the State, the Town, and private investors can work together to make the best use of the land and facilities. In addition to using the sewer plant to provide public sewer service to the north campus and Ten-Mile River station area, the excess capacity of this facility could, if financially feasible, also help to solve long-standing sewer problems in the hamlet of Wassaic, the densely populated portion of the Town along the Dover border, and the hamlet of Dover Plains in the Town of Dover.

The Town encourages the creation of a dynamic public/private partnership with the State that will do the following:

- **provide for the consolidation and modernization of facilities,**
- **maintain the traditionally excellent forms of care for the developmentally disabled,**
- **attract private capital investment by making key infrastructure, including the sewage plant and water system, available to surrounding areas.**

Full realization of the enormous potential benefits to all residents of Amenia, including employees and residents of both group-housing and the traditional facility, from the joint and optimal use of this unique asset, can be achieved only with mutual cooperation. The alternative is an extraordinary loss of opportunity for economic sustainability that would benefit the entire community.

To support redevelopment of this area, the Town's Zoning Code includes the Mixed-Use Institutional Conversion Overlay District (MCO), which provides use and design flexibility to encourage productive reuse of the campus. This district provides greater use flexibility and a procedure for master planned development of this property in a manner that advances the Town's development goals.

RECENT ISSUES NEEDING RESOLUTION

Every community has issues that evoke strong feelings. Amenia is no exception, and this section attempts to grapple with two issues which the Comprehensive Plan cannot ignore. However, such issues should not be the driving force behind the planning process nor should they be allowed to capture or divert the process from its main function, which is to envision the future for the Town as a whole and lay out a path toward fulfillment of this vision. The broad principles, vision, and goals of the Comprehensive Plan establish a policy framework within which these contentious issues can be resolved in a principled way that benefits the community as a whole and avoids favoring or discriminating against individuals.

1. Automobile-Oriented Business Uses in the Route 22 Corridor

One of the more controversial issues ~~in recent years has been~~throughout the years continues to be the location of ~~where to locate~~ new commercial development, particularly ~~and the extent to which such development should be located~~ along the Route 22 Corridor. This

issue needs to be resolved in the context of the overall planning process.

The Town of Amenia faces a number of dilemmas in relation to this issue:

A. The Town wants to be business-friendly and encourage needed businesses, especially a department store and movie theater, but it also wants to preserve and enhance the scenic and historic character of the Route 22 corridor, focusing new commercial development in and adjacent to the hamlets, while maintaining and enhancing the visual quality of rural stretches of road and of hamlet gateways.
B. The Route 22 corridor is a favorable location for businesses from a commercial standpoint, because it provides access, large amounts of customer traffic, and visibility. This potentially conflicts with the Town's desire to maintain the scenic character of Route 22, especially in the "gateway" areas to the hamlets. It also conflicts with the Town's desire to manage access to Route 22 so that there are not too many curb cuts which create safety hazards and impede traffic flow.
C. In order to accomplish the Comprehensive Plan's goal of concentrating business in the hamlets, there must be adequate infrastructure, especially sewers in the hamlet of Amenia.
D. The most commercially advantageous locations for business uses, in the absence of sewers in the hamlets, is exactly where the Comprehensive Plan says they should *not* go, i.e. along Route 22 outside of the hamlet centers.

How can the Town resolve these dilemmas?

In the long-term, the Town would like to see the hamlet of Amenia become a ~~vital~~ vibrant and strong town center. This can only happen if there is a sewer system to support a wide variety of commercial and residential uses. The Town would also like to see most of Route 22 kept free of strip commercial development. The existing commercial strips (such as Cousins, and Fudgy's~~, and the Amenia Archery Shop~~) would remain and would be upgraded over time, but further commercial development would be located close to the hamlet centers, and in a hamlet configuration rather than a "strip" development pattern. A hamlet configuration pulls buildings close to the street, with parking in the rear or to the side, creating a walkable streetscape. Strip development is characterized by stand-alone buildings surrounded by parking, especially in the front. It is not conducive to walking.

In the short-term it may be difficult to achieve the goal of a stronger hamlet center because of the lack of sewers. As a result, short-term development pressure will continue to mount in locations along Route 22 outside of the hamlet center. If the Town yields to this pressure, it will violate a fundamental tenet of the Plan, i.e. to avoid commercial strip development along Route 22. Also, once strip development starts to increase along Route 22, it will be hard to stop. As more and more property owners seek to develop their properties as commercial strips, it becomes difficult for a Town Board to say "yes" to some and "no" to others in a similar situation. It also becomes more difficult to make the case for sewers in the hamlet center, since much of the business activity in the Town will have moved out of the center. This movement of businesses from the center to the strip has been the death knell for countless historic town centers and is not consistent with the goals of this Plan. If the Town resists this pressure to allow strip commercial development along Route 22, however, there will be continuing difficulty in locating businesses, especially those catering to auto-oriented uses.

One solution that was explored in the course of the Comprehensive Plan deliberations was the idea of creating a second mixed-use hamlet center in and around the Freshtown Shopping Plaza on the east side of Route 22. This would involve adding streets south of the existing shopping center and adding at least one additional access point on Route 22. The north end of this parcel could be used for mixed-use commercial and auto-oriented development, and the south end primarily for residential. A pedestrian (and possibly eventually a vehicular) linkage to Route 343 could also be part of such a plan. This would provide an area where there could be increased business and residential growth, near the existing hamlet center but off of Route 22. This area could either have its own sewage treatment system or be linked to a centralized system in the hamlet. Such an approach would continue the growth of the hamlet center in the organic way that towns have historically grown, provided that the environmental constraints of the site allow it.

The area on the west side of Route 22 is more problematic, because Route 22 is a high-speed through road in this location, north of where it narrows down and enters the central hamlet area. The current configuration and design of Route 22 does not lend itself to a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use place because of the speed of traffic and design of the highway. However, with proper planning and improvements to the highway and its intersections, both sides of Route 22 could be harmoniously developed to create a safe and memorable place using the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Development described in Chapter II. This place would offer a range of shopping, commercial service, living, and recreational opportunities, and would complement and enhance the existing central hamlet. This Plan Update recommends that a specific planning effort begin immediately to determine how to accommodate a wide range of commercial and residential uses that support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan following the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). The specific plan would include reconfiguring Route 22 and adding a network of side streets. It would allow commercial development to occur on the west side of Route 22 across from Freshtown in a pedestrian-friendly manner consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Because of the wetlands in the area, and its environmental sensitivity, an environmental analysis should be the first step to ensure that plans are based upon a sound understanding of the environmental constraints of the area.

Route 22 is not friendly to pedestrians or conducive to hamlet style development in its current state. However, it can be redesigned according to a sound plan to look, feel, and function like Route 22 as it passes through the center of the Amenia hamlet: narrower, with sidewalks and crosswalks, a traffic light, and slower traffic. It could even have on- street parking and the feel of a true "main street," like Route 44 in Millerton or Millbrook, or Route 9 in Rhinebeck. If Route 22 could be redesigned in this manner, then the two sides of Route 22 in the vicinity of Freshtown Plaza could be knitted together into a coherent main street district, with side streets, and a mix of residential and commercial uses. This will add long-term value to all of the properties in the area and to the Town as a whole. When the plan is sufficiently fleshed out, it should be adopted as part of this Comprehensive Plan and presented to the NYS Department of Transportation for consideration whenever any road improvements are to be made in the Route 22 Corridor.

Eventually Route 22 will be rebuilt by the state, and when it is, it should be done to the Town's specifications based upon this detailed plan.

2. Soil Mining

Mining has historically been an important part of the Town's economy. The materials produced from the mining of sand and gravel are needed for construction of roads, septic systems, homes, and other desired development. Mining also provides jobs for local residents. The Town is well-endowed with sand and gravel deposits, primarily in the stream valleys that run north-south through the Town (see map of sand and gravel deposits). Peat may also be a product that can be mined in the Town in the future.

However, mining is also a land use that conflicts with the rural tranquility and residential character of much of the Town. For this reason, the opening of new mines has been a source of increasing conflict in recent years. The primary negative impacts of mining are noise, vibration, dust, heavy truck traffic, and scarring of the scenic landscape. Where quarrying occurs, the noise and vibration are especially objectionable. Under state law, there is very little a town can do to control mining. The primary tool is zoning, through which a town can determine acceptable locations for mining by establishing zoning districts where it is and is not permitted and by requiring a special permit for establishing a mining operation. A town can also intervene in the DEC mining and mined land reclamation permit process, but all decisions regarding the operational characteristics of the mine (including some matters frequently regulated by zoning such as setbacks, depth of excavation, water quality protection, and hours of operation) are pre-empted by DEC.

Mining is a highly lucrative land use in the Town of Amenia. Most parcels that have significant deposits of sand and gravel are worth far more as mining sites than as development sites, because the current market value of the gravel deposits is far greater than the current market value of the land for development. The value of these deposits is increasing all the time, as more and more towns in the region have either exhausted their resources or zoned very restrictively against mining, reducing the amount of mining that can occur in the region.

Balancing these factors, the Town's Zoning Code provides for a Soil Mining Overlay District (SMO), the purpose of which is to provide environmentally appropriate locations for soil mining to occur where landowners can achieve a reasonable return on their land from sand and gravel mining without adversely impacting their neighbors.

The Town's ~~In recognition of the need for sand and gravel and of its very high economic value, the Town's~~ policy toward this resource extraction industry, as reflected in the overlay district, has the following key elements:

A. Mining should be allowed only where it can be done in a manner that does not annoy residential neighbors, detract from scenic views, harm the environment, damage town roads, or destroy valuable agricultural land.
B. The best way to accomplish the approach outlined in A above is to institute a soil mining overlay district, limiting mining to specified locations that meet the criteria in A above and C below.
C. These overlay districts should only be mapped in areas that are not visible from major

roads, that are reasonable distances from residential neighbors and environmental resources such as streams, wetlands, and important habitats, that have convenient and direct access to state and county highways, and that have readily accessible sand and/or gravel deposits. While screening and berming may be used to mitigate impacts of mining, parcels where this would block scenic views should not be included in the mining overlay.

D. Although the Town has very little regulatory control over a mining operation itself, because under state law DEC pre-empts local regulation, the Town has the right to comment on and try to influence DEC's permitting decisions. It also has the right to enforce DEC permit conditions. Therefore, the Town should seek to ensure when DEC reviews a mined land reclamation permit, that groundwater resources are adequately protected. Where mining occurs under farmland soils, the permit should require that at least 12 inches of stockpiled farmland soils are reclaimed.

E. Because DEC's staffing limitations have made it very difficult for the agency to provide adequate monitoring and enforcement of mining permit conditions, the Town should use all legal means available to obtain funds from mining applicants to pay for long-term inspection, monitoring, and enforcement of the conditions imposed in DEC permits and Town special permits for mining. This can be done through the rezoning and special permit application processes by which mines obtain approval from the Town.

F. In consideration of the very valuable privilege granted by the Town in allowing mining of land, the post-mining use of reclaimed land should be restricted to agriculture, recreation, and nature preserves. A landowner derives a very significant return from the mining, and the restriction of future uses is not a significant deprivation in value in comparison to the value added by permission to mine. The preservation of this land should be accomplished by a permanent conservation easement on the land to preclude future development. There should be an exception to this "no future development" principle where the land is particularly well-suited to a more developed use, such as land lying close to a hamlet center that would make a good extension of the hamlet, land that would be a suitable site for a school, sewage treatment plant or other needed public facility, or land that is ideally located for light industry or service businesses that are badly needed by the town and for which suitable locations are difficult to find.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES AND THEIR POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Amenia continues to see a shift in demographics, particularly due to an older population with smaller households without school-aged children. ~~is becoming a more upscale community with higher land values and a more affluent population.~~ Its year-round population has been declining, although this trend could reverse as development pressure advances from the south. Amenia's job base has also declined, and the economy has changed from a base of agriculture and state institutions, to an economy that still relies substantially on a major state institution, but that also services a robust second-home and tourist market as well as commuters who live in the Town and commute to jobs elsewhere in Dutchess County and the region. Agriculture remains a viable part of the economy as it makes the transition from traditional dairy farming to more profitable niche markets, while adding value to all of the property in Amenia. The Taconic DDSO campus remains a mainstay of the economy, although not as significant as in past years. However, it also offers an unparalleled opportunity for sustainable economic development.

Amenia faces the dilemma of how to provide jobs and business opportunities for local residents, given that the hamlet center is the preferred location but that it lacks sewers.

There is also a need for commercial development to increase the non-residential tax base and support municipal services. This need creates pressure to build in less appropriate locations such as the farmland along the Route 22 corridor and hamlet gateways, which this Plan seeks either to preserve as open space and/or to transform into attractive entries into the community. The necessary solution is to provide sewers in the hamlet center. This has been discussed for over 30 years, but it is difficult to achieve. There is no more important priority of this Plan than to install a sewer system in the hamlet of Amenia.

Chapter III: Summary of Action Recommendations

This Chapter summarizes the action recommendations of the Amenia Comprehensive Plan in a concise format that is easy to follow. The rationale for these actions is contained in Chapters I and II of this document, the 1991 Master Plan, and the 2003 Action Amendments.

PRIORITY ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

A Comprehensive Plan is not just a wish list of all the things that would be desirable for a community. It should set priorities that are important, realistic, and achievable. Three priorities have emerged above all others in the process of developing this Comprehensive Plan Update. They have been discussed above, but will be highlighted in this section of the plan.

1. Sewers in Amenia Hamlet

There is nothing more important to the future of Amenia than the installation of a sewer system in the hamlet of Amenia. This is the keystone on which the rest of the Plan stands or falls. Creating a vital and economically robust center is necessary both to preserve the countryside and to strengthen the Town's economy. This cannot be done without sewers. The Town must work with the County, State, and private developers to find a solution to this most important problem facing the Town. Proposed large-scale developments close to the hamlet provide a one-time opportunity for a public-private partnership that would solve this problem. This opportunity should not be missed.

2. New Zoning Code

The major failing of the planning process that culminated in the 1991 Master Plan was that it never resulted in changes in the land use laws that establish the pattern and placement of future development. Adopting new zoning that truly embodies the Town's vision for its future, as articulated throughout this Comprehensive Plan Update, the 1991 Master Plan, and other planning documents, is as important as putting sewers in the hamlet, and more easily accomplished. Indeed, to put in sewers without also putting in appropriate zoning creates the risk that the sewer system will encourage development that is not consistent with this Plan.

For this reason,- zoning amendments were drafted and adopted concurrently with the 2007 Update.~~the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee has focused most of its efforts over the past two years on revising the Town's antiquated zoning law. A new zoning law, which implements the vision and goals of this Plan, has been circulated for public comment and is being formally introduced concurrently with this Plan Update. Adopted together, the Comprehensive Plan and the new Zoning Law will complement one another and the Zoning will implement the Plan. The promise of the 1991 Plan will finally be fulfilled~~.

In addition to ~~a~~ the new zoning laws, revisions to the Town's subdivision law and certain other chapters of the Town Code ~~will~~ may be needed to ensure consistency and alignment

among the various town laws and planning documents. This will establish a system of rational planning for the future that embodies the hopes and wishes of the majority of the residents of Amenia.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS BY TOPIC

Hamlet of Amenia

The development of the Hamlet of Amenia is the Town's first priority, and a sewer system ~~and new zoning are~~ is essential for any of the other needed changes to occur. ~~However, assuming that these pieces are going to be put into place, then~~Once a sewer system is ~~provided, there~~provided, there are other important actions that should be taken to make the hamlet as successful as possible.

1. Create a detailed development plan for the Hamlet, using the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Development, that allows organic growth along a more fully developed and interconnected street network, consistent with the site's documented environmental constraints. The first phase of this planning effort should begin as soon as possible, and should focus on the area around the Freshtown shopping plaza, including both sides of Route 22, as described above in the section on "Automobile-Oriented Businesses in the Route 22 Corridor." The planning process would be a cooperative effort involving the Town, landowners in the affected area, neighbors, and the community at large. Such a plan would include the creation of new streets, redesign of existing streets and intersections, and the conscious creation of a walkable, pedestrian-friendly downtown with a sense of place, as described in Chapter II. A major feature of this concept is the use of ground floor storefronts, with apartments and office spaces on upper floors lining the main streets. This would be a specific area plan for the center of town, following the principles of traditional village center development (similar to Millbrook, Millerton, and Rhinebeck). The overall planning area would extend from approximately Serevan Restaurant on the west to Mygatt Road on the east, and from Maplebrook School on the north to the large complex of wetlands and former site of Lake Amenia on the south. A new road system would be laid out, with certain areas identified for mixed-use residential and small-scale commercial, larger-scale commercial uses, residential neighborhoods, and recreational areas.
2. An important element of any long-term plan for the hamlet includes protection or improvement of the integrity of the visual gateways into the hamlet from the north, south, east, and west. This means that existing natural conditions should either be maintained or if development occurs it should enhance these gateways.
3. The development plan should include detailed plans for future improvements to Routes 22, 44, and 343, so that they become pedestrian-friendly main streets as they pass through the Freshtown area and the existing hamlet center. These plans should be written so that they can guide the New York State Department of Transportation in making future changes to the state roads. Important priorities should be to narrow the travel lanes as they pass through the hamlet, to include on-street parking on both sides of the road, to line the streets with sidewalks, planting strips, and street trees, and to provide other streetscape amenities. Fountain Square is an outstanding example of improving the streetscape and the public realm, and the principles used to develop it should extend up and down the state roads that intersect

in the hamlet. Route 44 in the Villages of Millbrook and Millerton and Routes 9 and 308 in the Village of Rhinebeck provide good examples of how this can be done effectively.

4. The development plan should take account of phasing issues, because it will most likely take 10 to 20 years to implement. Some of the critical steps that will need to be phased carefully include:
    - Water and sewer systems
    - Zoning analysis and potential changes (should be done before any of the other steps are taken)
    - State road improvements, including sidewalks along Route 22 between the Hamlet center and Freshtown
    - Expansion of the hamlet road system, especially the creation of new side streets that lend themselves to commercial and automobile-oriented uses; creation of a street network for the addition of residential neighborhoods; possible use of an "official map" under state law to establish the location of future town roads and public parks
    - Siting of recreational uses.
    - Encouragement and cooperation in the protection and development of Brickyard Pond in a way that integrates this unique resource into the recreational and tourism fabric of the hamlet while safeguarding its natural rustic beauty and biodiversity.
    - Location of commercial and mixed land uses, most likely in the existing central hamlet area and at the Freshtown shopping center node; however, until the alignment and design of Route 22 is changed, the addition of most kinds of commercial and mixed uses across Route 22 from Freshtown will be problematic.
    - Connecting the Harlem Valley Rail Trail with neighborhoods and other amenities in the hamlet.

Hamlet of Wassaic

There is strong desire to celebrate the historic buildings in the Hamlet of Wassaic and to ensure that future development and redevelopment respects its history as an agricultural crossroads with a coherent assemblage of 18th and 19th century structures. Since the 2007 Update, the Town has adopted a Historic Preservation Overlay District, which provides special protection of the historic hamlets and individual structures to preserve the rural and historic quality of the Town. Some ~~of~~ additional the actions that could help fulfill this goal are:

~~1. Include the hamlet in an historic overlay district in the zoning law.~~

~~2.~~1. Consider establishing an "historic district" under state law to provide further regulatory protection for the hamlet.

~~3.~~2. Allow a more flexible mix of uses that is reflective of the agricultural history of the hamlet and that will encourage economically feasible adaptive reuse of the historic structures.

~~4.~~3. Recognize and improve the hamlet with historically appropriate signage, lighting, sidewalks, and landscaping, especially to make it recognizable as a "place" from passing trains.

~~5.~~4. Request that Metro-North Trains slow down and/or have a "flag-stop" in the Hamlet of Wassaic.
~~6.~~5. Continue the rail trail to connect to the sports field and town park.
~~7.~~6. Explore the possibility of linking Wassaic Hamlet to the existing Sewer Treatment and/or Water facilities at the Taconic DDSO.

Natural Resource Protection

The protection of natural resources and the environment is a major priority of the 1991 Master Plan, and ~~it is an even greater priority in this~~continues to be in this Comprehensive Plan Update. The importance of this issue increases as development pressures in the community intensify, community awareness of this issue becomes more focused, and regional, national, and international perspectives provide further evidence of the need to protect the functioning of natural systems upon which we all depend. This section lists a variety of actions that need to be taken to achieve the Plan Update's natural resource protection goals.

1. **Preservation of open space generally.** Outside of the areas that are designated for growth, particularly the hamlets of Amenia, Wassaic and the site of the Taconic DDSO, protection of undeveloped land as open space should be accomplished using a combination of regulatory techniques through zoning and subdivision regulation, as well as non-regulatory actions such as the voluntary donation of conservation easements to conservation organizations and the purchase of open space land and development rights. Since the 2007 Update, the Town's Zoning Code has been amended to include provisions for Open Space Development to preserve large tracts of open space to maintain the rural appearance and environmental resources of the Town and avoid conventional subdivision patterns. "To avoid this pattern, which conflicts with the goals of the Amenia Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Amenia encourages four open space development options: conservation subdivision, transfer of development rights, limited development subdivision, and flag lots. The Town wishes to discourage conventional subdivisions where they would detract from the Town's rural landscape and natural resources. To mitigate any hardship that these options may impose on landowners wishing to create no more than three new lots, the Town has provided for a streamlined "small-scale development" option as well." (See Chapter 121, Article V of the Town Code.)
    - A natural resources and open space plan should be prepared by the Town and incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan in order to set priorities and protect open space in the most efficient and appropriate manner. Such a plan would inventory and prioritize resources such as agricultural land (see, for instance, the map prepared by the Master Plan Committee and included in the Map Section of this Comprehensive Plan delineating Agricultural Development Districts prioritizing areas for farmland preservation), scenic viewsheds, steep slope areas, areas important for habitat and biodiversity, wildlife corridors, areas important for water quality protection, and potential recreation sites and trail corridors. Recommendations made in the January 2007 report by ~~Hudsonia on "Significant Habitats in Amenia"~~c should be a major consideration in drafting an open space plan.

- The Town should consider having the Conservation Advisory Council take the next step beyond a natural resource and open space plan and prepare an "open space index" consisting of an open areas inventory and an open space map. This would enable the CAC to become a conservation board under General Municipal Law (GML) 239-x and 239-y, taking advantage of a provision in state law that empowers CACs to have a greater role in protecting the environmental resources of the community.
- Various forms of "open space development" should be used to protect important open space resources in Amenia. One of the most common and effective is "conservation subdivision," in which a percentage of identified priority open space land is permanently protected in connection with development projects. Since the 2007 Update, this recommendation has been incorporated into the open space provisions of the Town Code. (See Chapter 121, Article V.)
- Open space development includes, in addition to conservation subdivision, the strategic use of flag lots and limited development subdivisions to reduce density and protect open space in areas designated for protection. These techniques involve a trade-off in which a landowner makes voluntary reductions in allowable density and restrictions on the location of house sites in return for more flexibility in road frontage and road construction requirements. Since the 2007 Update, this recommendation has been incorporated into the open space provisions of the Town Code.[6]
- The requirement of a **conservation analysis** at the very beginning of project planning is essential, so that the Town can ensure that the land of greatest conservation value is protected through the development review process. Since the 2007 Update, this requirement has been incorporated into the Town Code's provisions for open space development. As part of the sketch plan for any conservation subdivision (and for certain conventional major subdivisions), applicants are required to submit a conservation analysis, consisting of inventory maps, description of the land, and an analysis of the conservation value of various site features. In preparing the conservation analysis, applicants are required to consult the Hudsonia report, "Significant Habitats in the Town of Amenia" and encouraged to consult with the Dutchess Land Conservancy and Dutchess County Soil and Water Conservation District.[7] ~~All of the materials and environmental resources referenced above would come into play in a conservation analysis, including the biodiversity map, wetlands mapping, recreational plans, scenic overlay, aquifer overlay, watercourses, historic buildings and sites, and agricultural land, to ensure that project planning takes account of environmental, scenic, and historic resources. This~~ The submission of the conservation analysis occurs ~~should occur~~ as a dialogue with the Planning Board before development planning begins, and before any SEQR documents are submitted.

[6] See Amenia Town Code Chapter 121, Article V, Open Space Development

[7] See Town Code Section 121-20

- The Town should continue to support private and public efforts to protect open space resources through the use of voluntary and purchased conservation easements. All lands identified as worthy of conservation through the Town's natural resource inventory and open space planning processes should be protected as much as possible in this manner, which costs the Town nothing and contributes greatly to its character. Collaboration between the Town and land conservation organizations, such as the Dutchess Land Conservancy, is helpful both in securing voluntary donations of open space land and conservation easements and in making the conservation analysis and conservation subdivision process work well.
- The Town should support adoption at the state level of the Community Preservation Act, which would enable towns to enact a transfer tax on real estate to be used for purchasing development rights (conservation easements) on farmland and other important open space land. This would create a source of funds to protect land and could be used as the local match for county, state, and federal programs that currently exist or that may be created in the future. If the state law enabling this transfer tax is passed, the Town should follow through by enacting such a tax locally and using it to pursue its open space protection goals.
- Taxation of wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, and other environmentally constrained land should reflect these constraints which impact their market value to provide property tax relief to landowners. Property tax assessments should reflect all natural resource constraints.

2. **Protection and Enhancement of Agriculture as a Business.** Agriculture has historically been an economic mainstay for Amenia, although its character has changed significantly in recent years. The changing face of agriculture is described briefly in Chapter II and the background data are presented in Chapter IV. It is important to recognize what local government can and cannot do about agriculture. The Town has no control over commodity prices or most of the costs of doing business, especially labor, energy, and supply costs. It cannot overcome the effects of state or federal regulation. The best it can do generally is to stay out of the way of farming by not over-regulating or over-taxing it at the local level. There are some other measures that the Town can and should take to help the farm economy, including the following:
    - Allow flexible land uses to enable farms to diversify and engage in economic activities in addition to farming. ~~Under current zoning farmers have few choices other than either farming or residential development.~~ Allowing operation of a variety of small-scale businesses such as recreational uses, bed and breakfasts, agri-tourism businesses, equipment repair, crafts, antique shops, solar energy systems, and other low-impact business operations on farms can enable a farm family to stay on the land and continue to make a living by supplementing farm income derived from farming. Since the 2007 Update, the Town has adopted zoning changes that allow an expanded list of permitted uses in agricultural districts. (The uses divided into those that are permitted "by right," pursuant to Planning Board review, or subject to a special permit).
    - Adopt property tax assessment policies that keep taxes low and are more conducive to keeping farmers on the land. These include avoiding

"assessment creep," in which farmland assessment goes up automatically every year based on state recommendations on assessment practice, which the Town is not obligated to follow. The Town should also follow the spirit of the state's Agriculture and Markets Law Article 25AA and methods prescribed in the Valuation Reference Manual published by NYSORPS which bases land assessment on soil types and values land for its current use, not its potential use for development. The valuation of farm buildings should be based upon depreciated replacement cost methods prescribed in the manual or by those that may be established in the future by NYS Agriculture and Markets. In addition, the Town should encourage the assessor to do everything else legally permissible under state law to minimize agricultural taxation, since property taxes tend to drive farms out of business.

Lands constrained by conservation easements and, as mentioned above in Section 1, environmentally constrained lands, should receive property tax assessments that reflect those limitations.

Land should be accurately categorized according to the code that applies to its current use, e.g., agricultural land should not be coded "vacant land," rather "crop land" or another specific use.

- Another incentive would be to lease development rights or make payments in other forms to full-time farmers in return for their important "service" in keeping the landscape open and beautiful for all to enjoy.

3. **Wetlands.** Amenia has significant wetland resources, which have been identified in various mapping document described in Chapter IV. ~~Wetlands are regulated at~~In addition to wetlands protections at the state and federal level, ~~but~~ the Town Zoning Code includes laws for wetland and watercourse protection, including the Stream Corridor Overland District, which specifically protects the water resource values and biodiversity of the Wassaic Creek, Amenia Creek, Webutuck Creek, and Ten Mile River and certain designated tributaries. ~~should consider adopting its own stand-alone wetlands law to better protect these resources, especially smaller wetlands and isolated wetlands that may be significant but not regulated by the state or federal regulatory schemes.~~ Taxation of wetlands should be based on their market value, which is minimal, to provide relief to landowners who own wetlands.

4. **Steep Slopes.** Due to the steep topography covering portions of the Town, and the risk of soil erosion and habitat destruction from excessive disturbance to steep slopes, the Town should consider adopting regulations governing land use on steep slopes.

5. **Scenic Preservation.** Amenia's extraordinary scenic resources are a major factor in making the Town a popular location for second homes and tourists. In order to allow growth that does not compromise the Town's scenic character. Since the 2007 Update, the Town ~~, this Plan update recommends that the Town~~ adopted a Scenic Overlay District, encompassing highly visible hilltops, hillsides, rolling terrain with farms and fields, and other scenic features of the Town. This overlay district does~~would~~ not preclude development, but ~~would~~ subjects most development to a

visual impact analysis requirement and site plan review to ensure that development occurs in a manner that protects scenic character. The Scenic Overlay District is~~would be~~ mapped based upon the visibility of areas from multiple public vantage points and the value that certain identified viewsheds have to the community's residents. Many of these were identified in the 1991 Master Plan and are described in Chapter IV. They have also been identified at several public workshops. The view from Delavergne Hill at the turnout on Route 44 is the viewshed that has been mentioned most often. The Scenic Overlay District was an important addition to the Zoning Code following the 2007 Update and should be maintained and updated as necessary to ensure that it continues to facilitate scenic resource protection.

6. **Scenic Town Roads.** In order to preserve scenic qualities of small town roads such as Deep Hollow, Cascade, and Tower Hill, the Town should consider a scenic road designation and maintenance ordinance.

7. **Aquifer Protection and Overlay District.** The Town has identified groundwater as a key environmental resource requiring protection. This finding is supported by the "Harlem Valley Watershed Investigation, Dutchess County, NY," a report prepared in 1998 by the Chazen Companies. This report provides background information and protection recommendations for the aquifer system in the Harlem Valley Towns of Pawling, Dover, and Amenia. Chazen Companies followed up this report with the production of an aquifer map in 2004, which divided the Town into four types of aquifer districts, with recommendations for aquifer protection in each. The Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority prepared a model aquifer overlay protection district provision for consideration by Towns in their zoning laws, and the Town of Amenia has used this model, together with the Chazen study and map, as the basis for a new section in the proposed zoning law on aquifer protection. The Town should continue its vigilance to prevent and clean up point-source pollution such as old and illegal dumps and raw sewage discharge.

Following the 2007 Update, the Town adopted an ~~The Town's Zoning Code includes an~~ Aquifer Overlay District (AQO) to protect groundwater resources that provide both public and private drinking water supplies. This was an important addition to the Zoning Code that should be maintained and updated as necessary to assure aquifer protection.

8. **Surface Water Protection.** As important as groundwater, the streams, lakes, and ponds in Amenia need to be treated with special care when there is development near them. A stream corridor overlay district, floodplain overlay district, or similar measures, can help to protect the water quality of these resources by imposing additional review requirements on development that occurs in locations where it could be harmful to surface water. ~~This should also be included in the revised zoning code.~~ Following the 2007 Update, the Town adopted a Floodplain Overlay District and a Stream Corridor Overlay District to protect surface resources. This was an important addition to the Zoning Code that should be maintained and updated as necessary to facilitate surface water protection.

9. **Biodiversity and Forestland.** The importance of biodiversity to a community's

ecological and social health is only just beginning to be fully appreciated. This should be a major consideration in the Town's open space protection plan. Protection of biodiversity and the forests that contain much of the Town's biodiversity should be a major consideration in all development review decisions. Hudsonia, Inc., a non-profit environmental research organization, has completed a detailed map showing significant habitats that is included as part of this Comprehensive Plan Update (see Appendix I). It should be consulted by landowners, developers, and reviewing boards and officials whenever land use permits are under consideration. Biodiversity studies should be conducted on all large development properties before any development planning occurs, through the conservation analysis process described in (1) above. Unlike wetlands, which enjoy considerable legal protection, forestlands do not have such protection and therefore must be studied carefully to determine which ones contain important biological resources that should be protected.

10. **Soil Mining.** ~~The Town needs to establish a soil mining overlay district in its zoning, as described in detail in Chapter II, to ensure that soil mining occurs only in appropriate places and in a manner that is environmentally sound.~~ Following the 2007 Update, the Town adopted a Soil Mining Overlay District to implement the measures detailed in Chapter II. This overlay district should be maintained and updated as necessary to ensure that soil mining occurs only in appropriate places and in a manner that is environmentally sound.

11. **Timber Harvesting and other Extractive Industries.** Logging and associated timber processing are important elements of the management of Amenia's landscape and produce economic value for the Town. It is therefore necessary to have a system of logging regulation that makes it easy for sustainable timber harvesting to occur, but that prevents the type of logging that could lead to deforestation, destruction of biodiversity and scenic quality, and erosion and sedimentation. Amenia needs to have simple and straightforward timber harvesting regulations, which would require logging operations to be done pursuant to a forest management plan prepared by a qualified forester and reviewed by a qualified forestry management consultant retained by the Town. Proper performance guarantees should also be required to ensure that logging does not damage roads, streams, or hillsides where trees are cut and where harvested logs are transported. There is also a need to regulate in a minimal way certain other extractive activities, such as the removal of stones from the surface of the land and soil mining under the DEC permit threshold of 1000 cubic yards per year. These activities, if done with care, are not generally harmful in themselves. However, the access roads that are built for them and the potential for erosion, sedimentation, debris clutter, and other unattractive or dangerous conditions are of concern to the Town.

12. **Need for a Town Environmental Inspector.** If all of the above recommendations are to be successfully implemented, the Town will need to retain a qualified environmental inspector who can oversee implementation of wetlands regulation, conservation analysis, mining regulation, stream corridor protection, timber harvesting, and other environmental protection provisions in the Town Code. This inspector could be retained as a consultant or staff member or as a staff person shared with neighboring towns that have the same need. Without such a staffing

capability, the provisions in the Town Code are likely to go unenforced.

Historic Preservation

The protection of Amenia's historic resources is an important priority of the 1991 Master Plan, which carries over into this Plan Update. Action steps that need to be taken include:

1. **Identification of historic resources.** Considerable work on identification of historic resources has been done. See Chapter IV for a listing.

2. **Measures to protect these resources.** Identification and designation of historic resources, by itself, does not protect them. The Town's Zoning Code includes a Historic Preservation Overlay District, which is limited to the hamlets and individual buildings and sites that have recognized historic significance. The Town should take ~~the next~~further steps ~~and~~ to enact protections in one of more of the following forms:
   - ~~Historic overlay districts in zoning~~
   - ~~Listing individual structures to protect outside of overlay districts~~
   - Historic districts administered by a separate historic district commission
   - Design standards, specific to districts, or more generic ones that require alterations and new structures to be compatible with the historic fabric of a specific hamlet or, if in an isolated location, the historical traditions of the Town as a whole.
   - Demolition restrictions which impose a delay or other restriction on demolition to help ensure that historically significant buildings are not torn down without a deliberative process and an opportunity to save them from demolition.

3. **Measures to encourage economically feasible reuse of these resources.** In addition to regulatory protection, there need to be incentives in the form of use flexibility and density increases to allow for the economically productive reuse of historic properties and their surrounding land. Many of these buildings are expensive to restore, repair, maintain, and operate, and it is sometimes necessary to allow architecturally and historically appropriate development of land on a large historic property in order to make it economically viable. Similarly, as long as the building's historic integrity is maintained, there is no reason not to allow a wide range of uses of it.

Economic Development

The economic development goals of the Town of Amenia have been and still are:

1. To maintain diversity in economic opportunities by increasing the diversity of the economic base.
2. To create a business-friendly attitude in Town government
3. To encourage those sectors of the economy that do the most to support local agriculture and forestry, produce a range of jobs for the local population, provide needed local services, offer shopping and entertainment opportunities for local people, and take advantage of the Town's scenic and rural character to attract second-homeowners and tourist businesses.

As mentioned elsewhere, there are a number of projects and actions already in progress intended to do this, including the ~~proposed~~ Silo Ridge development (completed in 2019) and the expansion of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. Zoning that protects the unique character of the Town while encouraging compatible businesses will support the Town's economic development goals. Some specific recommended action items include:

1. **Revising the zoning law so that it is both business-friendly, ~~and~~ protective of the Town's natural environment, and consistent with the Town's housing affordability goals.** More specifically:
   - Maintain and update as necessary the ~~Creating a~~ resort development overlay zone to give added flexibility for businesses that contribute to the second-home and tourist economy, while protecting significant scenic, agricultural, and environmental resources and provide specific public benefits including sewers for the hamlet and public access to open land and recreational resources.
   - Simplifying the approval process so that zoning approvals can combine special permit and site plan approvals in one board, reviewing small projects in a streamlined manner.
   - Encouraging transit-oriented development at the Ten Mile River Metro-North Station
   - Revising the rules for home occupations to encourage those home occupations that do not disturb neighbors but add economic value to the Town. Amenia is an ideal location for home-based businesses and for telecommuters who work one or two days per week in the City and spend the rest of their time in the countryside.
   - Regulate short-term rentals.

2. **Reusing portions of the original Taconic DDSO property** by developing a public-private partnership to make economic use of this site which is ideally located for redevelopment. This will enable the site to fulfill many of the Town's economic development objectives.
3. **Providing adequate water and sewer services** to places designated for growth, especially the hamlet of Amenia. The granting of special zoning privileges such as the resort development overlay should be done in conjunction with a public- private partnership to accomplish this top priority.

4. **Supporting agriculture and forestry** as local businesses that provide economic value and enhance the economic value of all of Amenia's land because of their contribution to scenic landscape character.

5. **Finding good locations for service businesses** that are needed in the Town but that are difficult to site because of environmental constraints, lack of sewers, and concerns for scenic protection. A more detailed plan for the Hamlet of Amenia, where many of these businesses can be located if appropriately planned, will help solve this problem.

Housing

As described elsewhere in this Plan Update, Amenia faces ~~an impendingimpendinga~~ worsening crisis in housing affordability. There are several concrete steps that the Town should now take to address this situation. They include the following actions.

1. **Zoning revisions.** Changes are needed in the zoning code to encourage the production of housing for those who can no longer afford to live in Amenia. These changes include the following:
    - Allowing high density housing in hamlets that have water and sewer services, both existing (hamlet of Amenia with a new sewer) and new (transit-oriented development at Ten Mile River station using the state's existing water and sewer systems).
    - ~~Allowing accessory apartments in single-family homes town wide.~~Reduce regulatory hurdles to allow accessory apartments on single-family lots as-of-right.
    - Allowing two-family, multi-family, and other multiple housing types, such as apartments and townhouses in more locations, subject to appropriate siting and design controls. Such housing should be part of a larger community and make a positive contribution to its design, rather than standing alone in an isolated compound.
    - "Workforce housing" set-asides in new developments. This is housing that is restricted in price or rental cost, and that is maintained at a below- market rate in the future through deed restrictions; also called, affordable housing. Amenia's Zoning Code currently provides density incentives for developers to include workforce housing, and in some cases, requires a certain percentage of workforce housing. Alternatively, developers can pay a "fee in lieu" of providing such housing; these fees are kept in the Workforce Housing Trust Fund, which is used "exclusively to provide for the acquisition, purchase, planning, development, construction, improvement, rehabilitation, sale or resale, rental, subsidy, support, or other legal means of creating or supporting more workforce housing for income-qualified households within the Town and/or to provide or make capital improvements to water and/or sewer infrastructure to the hamlets of Amenia or Wassaic."[8] ~~Workforce housing units can be required in developments above a certain size and/or they can be encouraged through density incentives. They can also be required in connection with any large-scale commercial or resort development. It can be helpful to provide developers with alternatives, such as payments in lieu of providing the housing, providing infrastructure to enable affordable housing to be constructed in desirable locations such as the hamlets, or allowing employee housing to count toward the workforce housing requirement.~~

2. **Institutional and administrative changes.** In order for the workforce housing provisions to be effective, the Town ~~will need to~~is in the process of ~~institute a~~revamping its program to administer a workforce housing program, selecting eligible owners and tenants, and ensuring that the housing continues to be affordable and occupied by qualified owners and tenants in the future. The workforce housing program is administered by the Housing Board.~~The Town can and~~

[8] Town of Amenia Zoning Code § 121-42

~~should favor those who provide important municipal services, such as emergency services personnel, teachers, and municipal employees, in allocating such housing. The Town should establish a committee to work on this and should consider a cooperative venture with other towns and/or the County to administer a complex program of this type.~~

- The construction of workforce housing can be further incentivized by reducing regulatory obstacles, including: eliminating fees for municipal review and building permits; reducing the minimum required floor area per unit to the State minimum; and reducing the required amount of off-street parking, particularly in the hamlet areas.
- To ensure that the "fee in lieu" amounts are appropriate and sufficient, the required amount should be dynamic and correlated to the median income of the area.
- For orderly implementation of the workforce housing program, the procedures and responsibilities of the Housing Board should be clarified.
- Unnecessary tenant restrictions, including minimum income requirements, should be removed.

Infrastructure

As emphasized in ~~this~~ the 2007 Plan Update, infrastructure development is a key element of achieving the Town's planning objectives. Sewers in the hamlet of Amenia are the clear first priority. However, there are other important infrastructure needs, which the Town should begin to plan for, including:

1. Water and sewer services elsewhere, especially Wassaic
2. Transportation infrastructure, especially an enhanced road network in the Hamlet of Amenia as described in the section on the Hamlet of Amenia.
   - Long-term planning should begin for making Amenia more transit-friendly and pedestrian-friendly, especially by connecting the rail station nodes to local shuttle or bus systems.
   - The Town should consider implementing certain recommendations of the Route 22 Corridor Management Plan prepared by the Poughkeepsie Dutchess County Transportation Council.
   - All road design and reconstruction projects should be conducted with special attention to making them safe and attractive to pedestrians and bicyclists. Especially important is the provision of sidewalks in the hamlets of Amenia and Wassaic.
   - Maintaining and improving truck access to the Hamlet of Wassaic. The existing "jug handle" at the north end of Old Route 22 (81) where large trucks driving north sometimes need to veer left in order to turn the sharp right on their way to making deliveries in Wassaic Hamlet should be retained.
3. Public services, such as needed facilities for emergency services personnel, schools, the highway department, recreation facilities, town offices, etc. In particular, the highway garage and salt shed are too close to the Wassaic Creek and better sites are needed for these structures. The Town should engage in a capital planning process to plan for these and other municipal facilities.
4. Planning for the school districts should be better coordinated with development planning in the Town.
5. ~~Expansion and/or relocation of Town Hall.~~

~~5.~~ Incorporation of sustainable energy practices, particularly solar energy.

6. In addition, the Town needs to proactively acquire property for future municipal needs as opportunities arise.

Recreation

The Town adopted a recreation master plan in August 2006. That document is a Reference Document used in the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan Update and is hereby incorporated by reference.

Land Use Regulation

Many of the most important recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan Update can only be accomplished through changes in zoning, subdivision regulations, and other land use regulations, which is why the concurrent adoption of the 2007 Update and Zoning Code was so critical. The 2007 Zoning Code revisions represented a substantial departure from the old zoning, and were designed to fit Amenia's unique circumstances as it moved into the 21st Century, seeking to preserve its heritage and environment while adapting to significant changes in demographics, development pressure, and economic forces. This 2022 Update builds on that precedent to further implement the recommended goals and objectives of the Town.~~. This issue will not be covered here, since it has been extensively discussed elsewhere, and the Plan Update has made redrafting the zoning one of the three highest priority actions of the Town.~~

~~If the Town continued to develop according to the rules in place under the old zoning (i.e. the zoning existing prior to the adoption of the Plan Update and accompanying new zoning), the results would substantially conflict with the goals and vision articulated in the 1991 Master Plan and this Plan Update. The primary conflicts relate to the overall pattern of development, which would likely be suburban sprawl that covers most of the landscape with houses on relatively large lots, rather than clustered settlements surrounded by open space. In addition, the old zoning is not business-friendly, requiring an arduous approval process generally involving both the Planning Board and the Zoning Board, which does not necessarily produce a good result, but does make it difficult to receive an approval. The old zoning has neither adequate design standards for new commercial and multi-family development nor needed use and dimensional flexibility. The old zoning does not include incentives for development in the hamlets that would be sufficient to encourage development with a sewer system, nor does it do anything to address the emerging crisis in housing affordability. It also lacks meaningful environmental review processes and standards, which forces the Town to rely exclusively on the SEQR process. If the Town continued to build out under the old zoning, the long- term consequences would ultimately destroy the rural and hamlet character and diversity that the 1991 Master Plan and this Plan Update seek to protect.~~

~~The manner in which the vision and goals in this Master Plan and its updates will be achieved through zoning are best explored through a reading of the new zoning law. It represents a substantial departure from the old zoning, and is designed to fit Amenia's unique circumstances as it moves into the 21st Century, seeking to preserve its heritage and environment while adapting to significant changes in demographics, development pressure, and economic forces.~~

Note: The ~~proposed~~ current zoning maps are included in Appendix II.

Other Levels of Government

Successful implementation of a town's Comprehensive Plan depends not only on actions by town government, but also actions of the private sector and of other levels of government. Often actions of the County or State have profound ramifications for a Town, particularly those actions that involve highways, water and sewer infrastructure, and state institutions. Since an adopted Comprehensive Plan must be taken into consideration for capital projects by county and state agencies, this Plan Update can help the Town in negotiating with these agencies to fulfill the Town's goals.

Therefore, it is critical that Dutchess County and New York State take particular consideration of the following elements of this Comprehensive Plan:

- Infrastructure development, especially roads, but also water, sewer, the rail trail, and the railroad. All decisions on these matters by agencies at all levels of government should take the recommendations of this Plan into account.
- Special attention needs to be paid by the New York State DOT to traffic calming and sidewalks in the area of the hamlet center extending from Fudgy's north to Freshtown plaza and Maplebrook School. The Town wants this to become a pedestrian-friendly community center, where traffic slows as it passes through, and where there are frequent, well- marked crosswalks, wide sidewalks, street trees, appropriate lighting fixtures, and on-street parking in front of buildings that are close to the street. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) is promulgating new standards for "context-sensitive solutions" in road design and management issues in hamlet areas, and such a solution is clearly needed in this part of the Town. This Comprehensive Plan should be further updated by developing a more detailed plan for this area of Route 22 to give guidance to DOT. A similar plan should also be developed for Routes 44 and 343 as they pass through the Hamlet from west to east.
- In addition to traffic calming to make the Hamlet more pedestrian- oriented, safety improvements are needed along Route 22 between Maplebrook School and Sharon Station Road. This section of the road is dangerous and especially hazardous for school buses.
- The Route 22 Corridor Management Plan prepared by consultants for the County and State contains access management recommendations for all towns in the Harlem Valley. This study seems to be virtually unknown to anyone in the Town. However, its recommendations should be reviewed for consistency with this Comprehensive Plan. If the Town's planning recommendations are inconsistent with the County and State plans, the Town should communicate its concerns to appropriate County and State agencies.
- The New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) should work in close cooperation with the Town, County, Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Conservation, community at large, and private investors to redevelop portions of the site no longer used for state services to developmentally disabled clients. The access roads and water and sewer facilities at the site

should be made available to any new development there, as well as to the surrounding area, including the hamlet of Wassaic if economically feasible.

Chapter IV: Background Information

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background information that informs the analyses and policy recommendations in Chapters II and III. Information contained in the town's 1991 Master Plan and 2007 Update has been updated, as necessary, to reflect current conditions. This chapter also includes information from the town's Conservation Advisory Council (CAC), which prepared a town-wide natural resources inventory in 2005.[9]

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Demographic information can be used to portray the characteristics of residents of the Town of Amenia. This section reviews the population composition, growth and decline of the population, and the various factors involved with changes in population. In addition, a description of data on education, household income, housing, and the labor force for the town is provided.

Population Change

Since the 1991 Master Plan, the Town of Amenia experienced a net loss of population of ~~nearly 22.1~~ 27.45 percent, decreasing from a 1990 population of 5,195 to its current total population of 3,769 ~~4,048~~ residents, as of 2020. This substantial decrease was inconsistent with Dutchess County as a whole, whose population generally increased over the same time period~~steadily from 1990 to 2000~~. As shown in Table IV-1, the County's growth rate has exceeded that of the Town over the last 30 years.~~during the past decade.~~

Table IV-1

Population Trends 1990-2020

Area	1990	2000	2010	2020	1990-2020 % Change
Town of Amenia	5,195	4,048	4,436	3,769	-27.4%
Dutchess County	259,462	280,150	297,488	295,911	14.1%
Sources: Census 2020 , 2010, 2000, 1990, Prepared by Social Explorer, SE: T002					

~~However, the precipitous~~Much of the decline in the population of the Town of Amenia indicated in Table IV-1 is ~~primarily~~ due to the decrease in number of Amenia residents living at the Taconic DDSO. This conclusion is indicated by the steep decline in the number of persons living in institutional or non-institutional group quarters and the decrease in population density of the census block group that includes the Taconic DDSO. As shown in Table IV-2, in 1990 a total of 1,262 persons in Amenia resided in group quarters, including the Taconic DDSO. With the decline of the number of consumers residing in that facility, the number of group quarters residents in Amenia has dropped by ~~95.5~~ 81.2 percent, ~~to 57~~ 237 persons in 2020.[10~~2~~] While the group quarters residential population declined, the number of persons

[9] Demographic data has been sourced from the US Census Bureau through the decennial survey or the American Community Survey (ACS). Wherever possible, the decennial survey was used. However, as of the date of this writing, the 2020 Census report has not been fully released, and the 2010 Census report provides limited datasets. Where information was not available from the decennial Census reports, the information was sourced from ACS 5-year estimates. Each table includes source references.

[10] The 2000 number represents the Town of Amenia group quarters population reported by the US Census in 2000.

living in households increased somewhat from 3,933 persons in 1990, to ~~3,991~~4,087 persons in ~~2000~~2020, a net increase of ~~1.5~~3.9 percent.

Table IV-2 Population Trends Adjusted to Reflect Non-Group Home Residents

Town of Amenia	1990[1]	2000[1]	2010[1]	2020[2]	1990-2020 % Change
Persons in Households	3,933	3,991	4,125	4,087	3.9%
Persons in Group Quarters	1,262	57	311	237	-81.2%
Total Population	5,195	4,048	4,436	4,324	-16.8%

Sources: [1] US Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010 Census of the Population, SF-1
[2] American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates), "Group Quarters Population, 2020" U.S. Census Bureau; Prepared by Social Explorer.

While the number of persons living in households increased slightly from 1990 to 2020, the number o households and the average size of households in the Town of Amenia has decreased~~, and the number o households in the Town of Amenia, increased slightly from 1990 to 2000, the average size of households ha decreased~~ (see Table IV-3). On the other hand, in Dutchess County, the number of households increase substantially. The Town of Amenia and Dutchess County both experienced a decrease in average househol sizes and now have similar averages of 2.6 and 2.5, respectively, as of 2020. Yet, this decrease was mo substantial for Amenia, which fell from an average household size of 3.2 in 1990; whereas in Dutchess Count the average household size was 2.7 during the same period. ~~This decrease in household size was al experienced regionally. As of 2000, the average household size in the Town of Amenia was 2.46, down fro 3.24 in 1990. The County currently has a larger average household size of 2.63, down from 2.66 in 1990.~~ The declines generally reflect the aging of the population, as older populations generally have fewer children livir at home. In addition, the sharp decline in the average household size in Amenia reflects the decline of th institutional and non-institutional group quarters residents. Currently, the average household size in Ameni 2.6 persons, is ~~similar to that found~~slightly higher than in surrounding communities, with Dover averagir ~~2.74~~2.4, North East averaging ~~2.5~~2.3, and Washington averaging ~~2.37~~2.0 persons per household.[11~~3~~]

Table IV-3a Household Trends since 1990

Area	1990[1]	2000[1]	2010[1]	2020[2]	1990 – 2020 % Change
Number of Households					
Town of Amenia	1,620	1,625	1,741	1,552	-4.2%
Dutchess County	89,567	99,536	107,965	110,095	22.9%
Average Household Size					
Town of Amenia	3.2	2.5	2.4	2.6	-19.8%
Dutchess County	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.5	-6.0%

Sources: [1] US Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010 Census of the Population, SF-1
[2] American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates), "Household by Type, 2020" and "Average Household Size, 2020" U.S. Census Bureau

Notes: As of the date of this writing, the 2020 Census report has not been fully released, and limited datasets are available. Where information was not available from the 2020 Census, the information was sourced from ACS 2020 5-year estimates. The source is noted for each column.

Employees of the Taconic DDSO have indicated that this number is an under representation of the current number of people living at the Taconic DDSO.

[11] US Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Table IV-3b Regional Household Sizes

	Town of Amenia	Town of Dover	Town of North East	Town of Washington	Dutchess County
Average Household Size in 2020	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.0	2.5
Sources: American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates), "Average Household Size" U.S. Census Bureau					

Population Distribution by Age

According to the ~~2000 Census~~2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the median age of Amenia's population is ~~40.2~~40.5 years old, ~~slightly~~ notably older than the median of 38.0 identified in the 1991 Master Plan. The rise in the median age in the Town of Amenia is consistent with the trends reported in the 1991 Master Plan. The median age in Amenia has ~~steadily~~ generally increased over the past ~~twenty~~ forty years from 36.2 in 1980, to 36.9 in 1989, ~~and~~ to 38.0 in 1994, 40.2 in 2000, 38.2 in 2010, and back up to 40.5 in 2020.

Currently, the highest proportion of residents in the community falls within the 35-44 and 45-54 age categories, comprising 29.3 percent of residents. This proportion is consistent with previous years. Notably, however, the percent population over 75 years has been growing. In 2000, 7.8 percent of residents were more than 75 years old, and 2.0 percent were more than 85 years. As of 2020, 9.3 percent of the population is over 75 years, and 4.0 percent is over 85 years. ~~However, as shown in Table IV-4 the remaining age groups have fairly consistent percentages of the total population, averaging between 9 and 14 percent. The proportion of town residents 65 years of age or older was 13.2 percent in 1994, and 17.15 percent in 2000~~. Therefore, a large percentage of the town's total population falls within the retirement and elderly age category.

The increase in median age from 1991, and the large proportion of town residents within the retirement age category, is consistent with observed trends that the Town of Amenia has attracted retirees and empty nesters from the more urban areas of New York. Combined with national trends of the aging "baby-boomer" generation, longer life expectancies, and lower birth rates, the median age of Amenia has risen higher than the County as a whole, whose median age in ~~2000~~ 2020 was ~~36.7~~38 years.

Table IV-3c
Population Distribution of Amenia and Dutchess County, 2000-2020

	2000		2010		2020	
Age Group	Amenia	Dutchess County	Amenia	Dutchess County	Amenia	Dutchess County
Under 5 Years	5.5%	6.2%	4.6%	5.1%	4.3%	4.6%
5 to 9 Years	7.3%	7.3%	5.5%	5.9%	7.2%	4.7%
10 to 14 Years	6.8%	7.4%	6.0%	6.6%	6.5%	5.8%
15 to 17 Years	4.1%	4.1%	4.3%	4.5%	6.3%	3.8%
18 to 24 Years	6.5%	9.4%	8.6%	10.9%	8.1%	10.8%
25 to 34 Years	11.3%	12.5%	9.4%	10.6%	9.2%	11.9%
35 to 44 Years	16.3%	17.7%	12.9%	13.4%	16.3%	11.5%
45 to 54 Years	14.8%	14.2%	16.1%	16.9%	13.0%	14.3%
55 to 64 Years	10.3%	9.0%	15.0%	12.5%	12.3%	15.1%
65 to 74 Years	9.4%	6.50	9.4%	7.2%	7.5%	10.0%
75 to 84 Years	5.8%	4.0%	5.9%	4.5%	5.2%	5.1%
85 Years+	2.0%	1.5%	2.3%	1.9%	4.0%	2.5%

Sources: American Community Survey (ACS) (5-Year Estimates)."Age." U.S. Census Bureau. Prepared by Social Explorer.

Median Household Income

~~As shown in Table IV-5, the median household income of the Town of Amenia increased from 1989 to 1999. During that decade, the Town's median household income rose almost 25.7 percent, as compared to an overall decline of 6.7 percent across the County and 1.8 percent decline across all of New York State. Anecdotal evidence suggests that one factor affecting the increase in median household income is that the new population coming into Amenia tends to be more affluent. This new population is generally comprised of weekenders, who upon retirement may become full-time residents. The increase in Amenia of this type of resident has also affected the school age population which, as mentioned in Chapter II, has decreased (changes in school enrollment from 1991 to the present is also discussed later in this chapter, under "Schools").~~

As shown in Table IV-5, the median income in Amenia, after dipping in 2010 (after the economic crash of 2008), has remained similar since 1990.

Table IV-5

Median Household Income (Adjusted for 2020 Inflation Value)

Area	1989[1]	1999[1]	2010[2]	2020[2]
Town of Amenia	$66,282	$61,556	$45,156	$64,604
Dutchess County	$89,941	$83,295	$69,838	$81,842
New York State	$70,223	$68,086	$55,603	$71,117

Sources: [1] US Census Bureau, Census 2000 and 1990 Census of the Population and Summary Table, SF-3
[2] American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates), 2010 (5-Year Estimates) "Median Household Income (In Inflation Adjusted Dollars)" U.S. Census Bureau, Social Explorer.
Notes: For the years 1989 and 1999, adjusted values were calculated using the US Bureau of Labor Statistics Inflation Calculator (bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)

Employment

Approximately 50 percent of the Amenia labor force was employed by the government in 1980, which clearly indicated the importance of the Taconic DDSO as a major employer. However, since the significant downsizing of the center, the distribution of employment has changed; as of 2020, only 17.2 percent of Amenia's labor force is employed in the educational, health and social services industry (see Table IV-7). Tables IV-6a, IV-6b, and IV-7 show the current employment distributions of the Town of Amenia and Dutchess County. In both Amenia and Dutchess County, the highest percentage of the employed population works in management, professional, and related occupations, followed by sales and office occupations.

Table IV-6a

Town of Amenia and Dutchess County: Employment by Occupation, 2020

Occupation	Amenia		Dutchess County	
	Employed Population	% Employed Population	Employed Population	% Employed Population
Management, professional, and related occupations	564	29.7%	60,290	41.2%
Service	357	18.8%	28,031	19.1%
Sales and Office	505	26.6%	31,600	21.6%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	47	2.5%	760	0.5%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	151	8.0%	13,247	9.0%
Production	87	4.6%	4,645	3.2%
Transportation and Material Moving	187	9.9%	7,882	5.4%
Total	1,898	100.0	146,455	100.0%

Sources: American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates) "Occupation for Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over" U.S. Census Bureau

Table IV-6b Town of Amenia and Dutchess County: Employment Sector

	Amenia		Dutchess County	
Sector	**Employed Population**	**% Employed Population**	**Employed Population**	**% Employed Population**
Private Sector	1,201	63.3%	91,104	62.2%
Public Sector	286	15.1%	23,192	15.8%
Self-Employed (Incorporated and Not Incorporated)	259	13.6%	13,678	9.3%
Private Non-Profit	152	8.0%	18,191	12.4%
Unpaid Family Workers	0	0.0%	290	0.2%
Total Employed Population	1,898	100.0%	146,455	100.0%

Sources: American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates) "Employment Sector for Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over"

As of 2020, the industries with the highest percent of Amenia's workers are retail trade and education, health, and social services, with 17.2 percent each.~~In 2000, the greatest proportion of the Amenia labor force was employed by the educational, health, and social services industry (35.3 percent), while the information sector employed the least amount of people (0.8 percent)~~. Amenia's significantly larger farming and forestry industry, as compared with Dutchess County overall, indicates the region's rural character and agricultural importance. Although agriculture is a vital industry in this area, it ~~only~~ comprises only ~~3.3~~4.4 percent of the labor force, a sharp decrease from 7.4 percent in 1980. As noted above, this table illustrates the notable change in the percentage of Amenia's work force employed in "educational, health and social services," which was 50.1 percent in 1980 and decreased to 17.2 percent in 2020. Industries that have seen a notable increase in percentage of workers include "retail trade," which increased from 8.7 percent in 1980 to 17.2 percent in 2020; "finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing," which increased from 2.2 percent in 1980 to 8.2 percent in 2020; and "arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services," which increased from 2.3 percent in 1980 to 8.9 percent in 2020. These changes may reflect an increase in tourism and shift to the service industry.

Table IV-7 Town of Amenia and Dutchess County: Employment by Industry, 2020

Industry	Amenia				Dutchess County	
	1980		2020		2020	
	Employed Population	Percent of Employed Population	Employed Population	Percent of Employed Population	Employed Population	Percent of Employed Population
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	152	7.4%	83	4.4%	1,666	1.1%
Construction	100	5.0%	164	8.6%	9,061	6.2%
Manufacturing	208	10.2%	207	10.9%	8,988	6.1%
Wholesale trade	223	2.1%	0	0.0%	2,847	1.9%
Retail Trade	NA	8.7%	327	17.2%	16,373	11.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	59	2.8%	121	6.4%	7,499	5.1%
Information	NA	NA	28	1.5%	2,540	1.7%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	45	2.2%	155	8.2%	9,114	6.2%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	1,139	5.3%	145	7.6%	16,225	11.1%
Educational, health and social services	NA	50.1%	327	17.2%	42,458	29.0%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	48	2.3%*	169	8.9%	13,730	9.4%
Public administration	80	3.8%	131	6.9%	7,131	4.9%
Other services	NA	NA	41	2.2%	8,823	6.0%
Total	2054	100.0%	1,898	100.0%	146,455	100.0%

Notes: *Defined as "Personal Services" in 1991 Master Plan

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Social Explorer. "Industry, 1980"; American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates) "Industry By Occupation Civilian Population 16 Years and Over" U.S. Census Bureau

~~Much of the Amenia labor force works in professional, service, sales, and office type positions which constitutes over 70 percent of the employed population. Farming, fishing, and forestry make up the smallest proportion. The Amenia labor force is actually divided fairly similarly to the Dutchess County labor force, except for the agricultural and professional/management sectors.~~

HOUSING

The recent rapid escalation in housing prices and growing discrepancy between incomes and living expenses has forced ~~focused~~ attention on housing and its affordability. The country is in the midst of a housing crisis, and Amenia is no exception. This section reviews current housing conditions in Amenia and discusses techniques and alternatives for meeting housing demands in the coming years. This section also includes goals and objectives for guiding decisions on housing

issues.

Adequacy of Existing Housing Stock

~~The US Census provides the most detailed data regarding Amenia's housing stock.~~ The statistical portrait of ~~the~~ Amenia's housing stock is portrayed in Tables IV-8a, IV-8b, and IV-9, below. The data shows that as of 2020, there are 4,087 housing structures units in the Town, of which about 60 percent are owner-occupied, and 40 percent are renter-occupied.[12] Compared to Dutchess County, in which 73 percent are owner-occupied and 27 percent renter-occupied, Amenia has a significantly higher rate of renters. Moreover, as shown in Table IV-9, the ownership rate in Amenia has markedly shifted over the last 20 years, decreasing from 68.8 percent in 2000 to 60.5 percent in 2022. These tables also show that, although single-family homes make up the majority of Amenia's owner-occupied homes, renters are almost evenly split between single-family and 2-4 family homes. These factors about the growing proportion of renters and their housing preferences are important for determining the types of new housing that are most needed, and should be encouraged, in Amenia. ~~Another 57 persons were living in group quarters at the Taconic DDSO. Table IV-8 describes the type of housing in which residents were living in 2000.~~

Table IV-8a Housing Stock, Town of Amenia and Dutchess County, 2020

Tenure and Number of Units in Structure	Amenia		Dutchess County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner Occupied:				
1 (Detached or Attached)	2,189	53.60%	184,639	67.10%
2 To 4	109	2.70%	5,611	2.00%
5 or More	16	0.40%	3,505	1.30%
Mobile Home	160	3.90%	6,047	2.20%
Boat, Rv, Van, Etc.	0	0.00%	77	0.00%
Total Owner Occupied:	2,474	60.50%	199,879	72.60%
Renter Occupied:				
1 (Detached or Attached)	642	15.70%	23,154	8.40%
2 To 4	597	14.60%	25,649	9.30%
5 or More	310	7.60%	24,245	8.80%
Mobile Home	64	1.60%	2,436	0.90%
Boat, Rv, Van, Etc.	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total Renter Occupied:	1,613	39.50%	75,484	27.40%
Total (All)	4,087		275,363	

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates) "Total Population In Occupied Housing Units By Tenure By Units In Structure". Social Explorer.

[12] Housing structures include the total of single-family houses, multi-family buildings, mobile homes, and boats, RVs, etc. in which people reside.

Table IV-8b Town of Amenia Housing Ownership Status, 2020

Type	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
-	2000[1]		2020[2]	
Owner-Occupied	1,118	68.80%	2,474	60.50%
Renter-Occupied	507	31.20%	1,613	39.50%
Total	1,625	100.00%	4,087	100.00%

Sources: [1] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates). "Total Population In Occupied Housing Units By Tenure By Units In Structure, 2020". Social Explorer.
[1] U.S. Census Bureau. "Tenure, 2000". Social Explorer.

A high percentage of Amenia's housing structures were built before 1960. Of the estimated total number of 1,855 housing structures, approximately 1,188 (64 percent) were built in this period, with 789 (43 percent) being built prior to 1940. This is generally true, however, for most of the communities in the Harlem Valley with the exception of Dover, which has a higher percentage of mobile homes.

Table IV-9 Town of Amenia Year Housing Structures Built

Year Built	*Number*	*Percent*	*Std. Error*
2014 or Later	25	1.3%	16.97
2010 To 2013	8	0.4%	9.70
2000 To 2009	24	1.3%	13.33
1990 To 1999	149	8.0%	56.97
1980 To 1989	90	4.9%	31.52
1970 To 1979	107	5.8%	28.48
1960 To 1969	264	14.2%	64.85
1950 To 1959	307	16.5%	71.52
1940 To 1949	92	5.0%	45.45
1939 or Earlier	789	42.5%	115.76
Total:	1,855	100.0%	123.03

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates). "B25034:Year Structure Built." Social Explorer.

~~Finally, the median value of owner-occupied units was $127,700 in 2000, a significant increase from $42,300 in 1980, reflecting regional increases in home prices. Only Pine Plains and the City of Poughkeepsie had lower values among Dutchess County municipalities, while North East had a nearly equal value of $127,900. The median in the County itself was $154,200. The median gross rent of $607 was lower only in the Village of Red Hook, but has increased dramatically from $244 in 1980.~~

Housing Trends and Costs

The housing situation in Dutchess County has changed significantly over recent decades. Lower- and middle-income people wishing to stay within, or move to, the community have had a difficult time affording homes. The rise of housing prices, which has accelerated at a much higher rate than incomes, has created an affordability crisis among ~~some segments~~a growing majority of the population. The high cost of housing is also reflected in the rise in land prices which, as noted in the 1991 Master Plan, has limited farmer-to-farmer sales of agricultural land.

A review of current real estate offerings on the Multiple Listing Services (MLS) and Zillow for the Town of Amenia in ~~November of 2006~~August of 2020 showed limited listings. Most of the listed homes had three bedrooms with lot sizes either less than one acre or more than 20 acres, without much in between. The homes on the smaller lots were valued around $300,000, and the homes on the large lots ranged from $725,000 to several million dollars. There were also several listings for undeveloped parcels ranging from 27 to 422 acres and from $630,000 to $8,900,000. Interestingly, although the number of housing units has increased since the 2007 Update (see housing stock tables, above), the number and types of homes listed for sale seem to have decreased. Most notably, the 2007 Update observed multiple listings for mobile homes, the most affordable housing type, whereas the current search showed no mobile homes and few others. The MLS site lists three single-family homes, and Zillow listed five single-family, one multi-family, and four undeveloped lots. ~~the majority of three- to four-bedroom homes on one- to four-acre lots averaging roughly between $200,000 and $500,000 depending on size, condition, and location. However, it was not uncommon to see properties listed between $700,000 and $3,000,000. These high-priced homes were generally renovated farmhouses or new construction at least 3,500 square feet in size, and were located on large lots. In several cases, the high prices of these homes appear to be driven by the profit potential for the development of the land, as opposed to the size and quality of the existing home. In accordance with this, there were several tracts of land for sale in the $1,000,000 to $3,000,000 range, depending on location and acreage. Mobile homes represented the most affordable housing type ranging between $20,000 and $70,000, generally depending on the condition of the home and the size and location of the lot. These figures derived from the MLS are asking prices only. The actual sale prices of property are often lower, but sometimes substantially greater.~~

A search of rental homes produced four listings: two single-family homes, one within a duplex, and one within a four-apartment building. The rent prices ranged from $1,275 for the apartment to $8,500 for the larger single-family home. These prices represent a substantial increase from the 2007 Update, which stated that the rent ~~Rental rates have not increased quite as substantially over the past couple decades. Gross rent~~ for nearly 45 percent of Amenia's rental units ~~is~~ was between $500 and $749.

Housing Development Alternatives

A number of housing styles are common in a rural area such as Amenia: single- and two-family homes, multi-family dwellings, accessory apartments, upper-floor apartments in mixed-use buildings, residential care facilities, and mobile homes and parks. Different patterns of housing developments, such as conservation subdivisions, including limited development subdivisions and flag lots, provide some alternatives. A variety of housing types, including two-family, multi-family, apartments in mixed use buildings, and single- family detached are also necessary for a balanced housing stock. To address affordability concerns

it is important to have both higher density housing in hamlet areas served by public water and sewer and housing that is dedicated as "workforce housing" for people who live and work locally. In light of the housing statistics discussed above, new housing in Amenia should include to a large degree, rental homes in a variety of types and should not be limited to single-family homes for purchase. These housing options are described below.

SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED

The most prevalent housing type in Amenia, single-family homes on individual lots, will continue to represent the greatest number of housing units in the Town. Single-family detached housing can be arranged in several different patterns to achieve various planning goals.

Conventional Subdivision

Conventional subdivision of land is focused on providing the maximum number of lots within a parcel by breaking the land into lots according to the minimum lot size prescribed by zoning regulations. All land within the parcel is divided into private ownership with little meaningful open space and no significant protection of natural resources. The resulting pattern of development has contributed to the "sprawl" pattern of communities in which large pieces of open land lose their character.

Conservation Subdivision

Conservation subdivisions are an alternative to conventional subdivisions. In Conservation subdivisions, units are clustered or sited on those portions of a property most suitable for development, while leaving substantial portions as undeveloped open space. Conservation subdivisions may include a variety of lot sizes, ranging from large farm or estate lots to small hamlet-size lots. Conservation subdivision results in the preservation of significant blocks of open space, wildlife habitat and corridors, and other important environmental resources, while allowing compact development, more walkable neighborhoods, and more flexibility than conventional subdivisions. The undeveloped land must be protected by a "conservation easement," which is a perpetual restriction on the use of the land, created in accordance with the provisions of Article 49, Title 3 of the Environmental Conservation Law or § 247 of the General Municipal Law, for the purposes of conservation of open space, agricultural land, and natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources.

Conservation subdivisions can be used where preservation of open space, agricultural land, and natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources is important. Its use generally reduces the road and utility costs, and allows for smaller lot sizes and sometimes smaller, more affordable, houses; however, unless there is an alternative way of treating sewage effluent, the clustered units must be sited so that septic systems function properly on the smaller lots.

~~Two-family~~Duplexes, triplexes, and other types of appropriately scaled ~~or~~ multi-family homes can be included in conservation subdivisions, as can accessory apartments (see below). By allowing and encouraging these housing types, additional open space is preserved, and costs to the environment, individuals, and the municipality are minimized, as compared to conventional subdivision development. These housing types meaningfully contribute to the housing stock by addressing the diverse needs of diverse community. ~~The allowance of other housing types not only increases the amount of additional open space that can be saved, it~~

~~also increases the types of housing that are generally more affordable to lower and middle income residents.~~

LIMITED DEVELOPMENT SUBDIVISION

A Limited Development subdivision is a very low-density subdivision in which the average lot size is at least four times the minimum lot size for a conventional subdivision in the zoning district or 20 acres, whichever is greater. House sites and densities are regulated by a permanent conservation easement. The incentive for this permanent density reduction and land preservation is the allowance of inexpensive unpaved private roads to provide access. This option helps to preserve open space by keeping large amounts of land permanently undeveloped. Its purpose is land preservation, not the provision of affordable housing.

FLAG (REAR) LOTS

Flag lots are lots where most of the land is set back from the road and access is gained through a narrow access strip. Where carefully planned, flag lots can enable landowners to develop interior portions of parcels at low density and low cost, preserving roadside open space, and avoiding the construction of expensive new town roads.

SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED AND MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

Single-family attached housing units, commonly known as townhomes or row houses, share at least one wall with adjacent units. As a specific type of townhomes, *garden townhomes* have modest lot coverage of not more than 25-35 percent to preserve open space. The open space may be natural or landscaped, active or passive, open to the public or limited to residents. Akin to cluster-style development, garden townhomes provide for enhanced stormwater management for reduced flooding (through less impervious surfaces), decrease infrastructure strain, conserve natural and scenic space, and foster social communities.

~~Each unit is attached to one other unit on either side.~~ Duplexes are residential structures containing two separate housing units; triplexes have three housing units; and quadplexes have five housing units. Often large older homes are divided and converted into multi-family structures. ~~Multi-family units take many forms including garden apartments or older homes converted into separate apartments. Either of these housing types allows an opportunity to provide a more affordable choice when compared to single-family detached homes.~~Compared to single-family homes, multi-family homes are more affordable to purchasers and/or renters, have lower construction and maintenance costs, and place less strain on municipal resources.

Within Amenia, the hamlets are particularly well suited for multi-family homes. Yet, ~~C~~construction ~~of multi-family units~~ is effectively limited by the requirement for public sewer. Because projects at multi-family densities can only be developed with sewer, or in limited cases, on a common septic system, careful attention must be paid to their siting.

RENTAL HOUSING

Rental housing ~~may take many~~can take practically as many different forms as for-purchase housing. Single-family homes can be rented, as can accessory apartments ~~above garages (accessory apartments)~~on single-family lots, townhouse units, or apartments in ~~an apartment~~multi-unit building. A diversified stock of rental units ~~can~~ provides ~~a greater selection of~~ housing options for a growing portion of the population, including ~~people on limited incomes (e.g.~~recent college graduates, first-time homebuyers, and ~~the elderly~~"empty-nesters" looking to downsize~~)~~. In addition to the new construction, ~~T~~the following strategies can achieve greater numbers of rental units:

- Conversions of large structures (including large houses, barns, and other buildings) into multi-family dwellings
- Upper-floor apartments in mixed-use buildings
- Accessory apartments in residential and hamlet zoning districts

ACCESSORY APARTMENTS

An accessory apartment (also called an accessory dwelling unit, or ADU) is a housing unit created on the same lot as an existing residential structure, ~~within an existing residential structure or in an accessory structure~~ which is subordinate to the main ~~unit~~ structure, and in which complete living facilities, including cooking and plumbing, ~~facilities~~ are provided. They can either provide additional living quarters for the property owner, or they can be rented out to tenants. Sometimes and colloquially known as mother-in-law suites, accessory apartments may be attached to the main structure, such as, above an attached garage, or detached, such as in a converted barn or carriage house. As suggested by their colloquial term, accessory apartments are commonly used to allow multi-generational families to continue living together.

As rental units, a~~A~~ccessory apartments are a way to provide rental housing without the construction of new multi-family units, at the option and on the terms of the individual property owner. These rental units also provide an additional revenue source for the property owner.

Regulations for accessory units must account for the adequacy of infrastructure, including ~~A concern with accessory units, however, is that they must not impose burdens on the~~ septic ~~or~~ and water ~~systems~~utilities and emergency access.

MOBILE ("MANUFACTURED") HOMES

Mobile homes, which are now more commonly called "manufactured" homes, currently comprise 1.6 percent of Amenia's housing stock and represent the lowest cost housing available to community residents. They are found on individual lots and in mobile home parks, which range from thoughtfully designed to ~~poorly and~~ haphazardly laid-out.

Towns can use regulatory controls, such as designating specific zoning districts for manufactured homes or requiring a special permit for their use, ~~The allowance of mobile home parks and mobile homes in specific mapped zoning areas, or as special permit uses, is one method a town can use~~ to preserve this affordable housing option without detriment to the community. The Town's Zoning Code provides for a Mobile Home Park Overlay District which identifies appropriate locations for mobile home parks and requires certain conditions.

~~The use of mobile homes by farmers for worker housing must be allowed as-of-right under the~~ To ensure affordable housing for farm workers, New York State Agriculture and Markets Law requires that farmers be permitted, as-of-right, to use mobile homes to provide housing for workers and their families. ~~to ensure affordable housing for workers and their families in this industry.~~ The temporary use of mobile homes by a land owner, who intends to build a permanent residence within one year, may also be considered permissible by a town.

SENIOR HOUSING

As discussed in the 1991 Master Plan, Amenia lacks senior housing, which is housing designed for the needs of an older population. In senior housing, there is an emphasis on safety and accessibility that conventional housing options may lack. Senior housing can be

owned and operated by a public~~ly~~ entity (typically a municipal housing authority).~~or~~ a private company, ~~privately owned, or owned by~~ a non-profit corporation, or through a public-private partnership. Whatever the method of ownership, however, the percentage of Amenia's residents who are above age 65 continues to grow, increasing the need for housing options for the senior population.~~elderly housing expands housing options for senior citizens~~. Many elderly residents of Amenia may be occupying houses which are too large, have stairs, and/or are too costly to maintain ~~too much to heat~~. Many of these residents also have a great deal of equity built up in their homes. They may be willing to move to specially designed apartments more closely attuned to their current housing needs.

Seniors, who often face mobility challenges, ~~often~~ benefit from being close to community facilities with the convenience of shopping and other services nearby. Therefore, the hamlet centers are advantageous locations for ~~locating~~ senior housing ~~near hamlet centers can be advantageous for the elderly~~. However, senior housing, ~~because it is usually~~as with other types of multi-family housing, typically requires a sewer system or a common septic system, which ~~is~~ are not currently available in any of Amenia's hamlet centers. Another possible solution to the senior housing issue, which does not require a sanitary sewer system, is the use of accessory apartments in the hamlet areas.

Affordable Housing Issues

As discussed in Chapter 2, Amenia, like the rest of the country, has a growing housing affordability problem. A comparison of Tables IV-10 and IV-11 shows that renters generally pay a greater percent of their income on housing than homeowners~~are generally forced to spend a greater percentage of their income on rent than homeowners are required to spend on their mortgages each month.~~ According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), "the generally accepted definition of affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care."[4]

Another term for "affordable housing" is "workforce housing" – housing that is affordable to a large majority of the workforce in any region. In ~~the Town of~~ Amenia, approximately 45.9 ~~34~~ percent of renters reside in housing that is considered "unaffordable" ~~to them~~, as compared to ~~22~~ 28.7 percent of homeowners. Both of these percentages have increased since the 2007 Update, which reported that 34 percent of renters and 22 percent of homeowners were paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. Yet, the percent of renters who are cost burdened continues to grow at a higher rate than the percent of homeowners. Thi~~s~~e dichotomy ~~between renters and home owners~~ indicates a greater need for affordable rental housing. ~~As indicated in section 5.3 of the~~As reported in the 1991 Master Plan, the demand for affordable rental housing ~~is~~ was primarily from young families and the elderly. While these sectors of the population continue to place a high demand for affordable housing, a growing portion of the greater population has become cost burdened as rising housing costs continue to outpace income levels.

As the demographic analysis ~~suggests~~shows, the median age of Amenia is increasing, indicating a growing population that ~~is likely to~~will increase demand for affordable housing. Oftentimes, ~~aging individuals or couples~~people prefer to "age in place" and retire in their

hometown~~,~~ because that is where their friends, family, place of worship, community, and general support system is. ~~In order to do this~~To do so, they may also wish to "downsize" from their existing home to something more manageable in terms of affordability, ~~size~~accessibility, and maintenance. This increases the demand for smaller, more affordable housing in a community that ~~may~~ is already ~~be~~ experiencing ~~rising housing costs and an aging population, and where market forces are producing large houses on large lots which do not serve the population that wants to downsize.~~a housing shortage.

[4] http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/

Table IV-10
Homeowners Paying More Than 30% or at least 50% of Income on Home Ownership Expenses

Owner-Occupied Housing Units:	951	
Homeowners Who are Paying at Least 30% of Income for Ownership Costs	273	28.7%
Homeowners Who are Paying at Least 50% of Income for Ownership Costs	85	8.9%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. **American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates) "SE: B10040:** Residents Paying More Than 30% or at least 50% of Income on Home Ownership Expenses". Social Explorer		

Table IV-11 Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in 2020

Percentage of Household Income	Number of Households	Percentage of Households
Less than 10 Percent	56	9.3%
10 to 29 Percent	220	36.6%
30 to 49 Percent	137	22.8%
50 Percent or More	139	23.1%
Not Computed	49	8.2%
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 (5-Year Estimates) "SE:A18002:Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months ". Social Explorer		

The limited supply of affordable housing is a problem discussed in the 1991 Master Plan and continues to be a problem today. Among the groups most affected by this problem in the Town of Amenia are schoolteachers, town employees, emergency services volunteers, and the elderly.

At the local level, zoning revisions can respond to the housing affordability problem by encouraging accessory apartments, higher density housing, especially multi-family housing, smaller units, and senior housing. These housing options increase the range of housing choice, and, through the introduction of smaller dwelling units, reduce housing costs as well. Denser development also places less strain on municipal resources.

Inclusionary housing is a zoning technique that goes further in promoting housing affordable to the local workforce~~. Inclusionary housing programs have been developed in several communities in Westchester County and Connecticut in response to severe pressures on housing prices. Inclusionary housing programs allow~~by granting a developer a density bonus in exchange for the provision of a certain percentage of housing units affordable to low and moderate income households. Regulations that *require* developers to provide affordable housing are called "mandatory" inclusionary housing policies; unsurprisingly, mandatory programs are more effective than incentive programs. ~~or can require provision of the same. Mandatory programs are often the most successful.~~ The affordable unit's selling prices are indexed to the median income of the residents of the area or to the average salary of municipal or school district employees. ~~Town or school district employees, or current Amenia emergency services volunteers can be given preference or priority in the sale or rental of such units. The difficulty with such~~

~~a program, however, is that it requires substantial oversight at the municipal level.~~
Amenia's inclusionary housing regulations provide a density bonus to developers who provide workforce housing, defined in the Zoning Code as, "Single-family, two-family, or multifamily housing that is owned or rented by an eligible household, as defined in § 121-42, and priced to be affordable to moderate-income households whose members live and/or work in the Town of Amenia and who cannot otherwise afford market rate housing."

LAND USE AND ZONING

Land Use Pattern

The overall land use pattern in Amenia has not changed significantly since the last land use survey was conducted for the 1991 Master Plan. The biggest changes have been the creation of several subdivisions and the decline in the acreage devoted to active farms. Previous development tended to fill in along existing Town roads. The creation of subdivisions, particularly those outside the existing hamlet areas, contributes to a sprawling suburban atmosphere in some areas of the Town.

Land use surveys were conducted for both the 1969 Comprehensive Development Plan (in 1968) and the 1991 Master Plan (in 1989). The most notable change between 1968 and 1991 was the decline in the amount of land devoted to agriculture, which decreased by 3,874 acres or 25 percent over that twenty year period. Since 1991, the amount of land devoted to agriculture has decreased another 12 percent.

Amenia still has significant amounts of land available for development. Most of the farms that have gone out of business are still vacant, having been purchased by single owners with no need to actively farm the land, although many of the new landowners lease the farmland to local farmers in order to keep the land open and to maintain agricultural value taxation. An increasing amount of this land is being protected through voluntary conservation easements. Some lands have been purchased by investors and lie fallow, awaiting some form of development. It is anticipated that the decline in traditional farming will continue, although some of it will be replaced by horse farming and specialized niche agriculture.

Amenia is still a rural Town with development primarily in and around the hamlets of Wassaic and Amenia, as well as in the southern end of the Town near the hamlet of Dover Plains. The smaller crossroad areas of Amenia Union, Smithfield, Leedsville, and South Amenia, also have some concentrated development—although the development in these areas is primarily ~~comprised~~ composed of older single-family homes. The areas surrounding these hamlets and crossroads are largely rural. This development pattern has prevailed in Amenia for the better part of 200 years.

Zoning

~~Although Amenia's zoning code has been updated over the years, it is primarily based on the 1969 Master Plan, which recommended that the Town adopt a zoning ordinance. The Town is divided into seven zoning districts: Agricultural, Residential – Medium Density, Residential – High Density, General Business, Highway Business, Industrial, and Flood Hazard. The current zoning map (see Appendix II) reflects many of the land use concepts that were discussed in the 1969 Master Plan, namely concentrations of residential and commercial areas around the hamlets with industrial areas being encouraged along State Highway 22 from Amenia to Wassaic. As Chapters II and III point out, the zoning is not consistent with the 1991 Master Plan or with this Plan Update. If left unchanged, it would lead to the pattern of suburban sprawl and commercial strip development that is found in the towns and counties south of Amenia along the Route 22 corridor. The 1991 Master Plan had recommended zoning changes; however, for the most part, these were never adopted.~~

Amenia's Zoning Code was substantially revised alongside the adoption of the 2007 Update. The Town is divided into several land use and overlay districts. Overlay districts are intended to provide additional protection of important environmental resources and/or to permit certain types of economically productive uses that would not otherwise be allowed in a particular land use district. The districts are listed and summarized as follows:

- Rural Agricultural District (RA)
  The purpose of this district is to maintain the Town's working landscape by promoting agriculture, forestry, recreation, land conservation, and low-density residential uses, as well as compatible open space and rural uses, by encouraging such activities and discouraging large-scale residential development.

- Rural Residential District (RR)
  The purpose of this district is to allow residential uses in a rural setting, at a lower density than is allowed in the hamlets.

- Hamlet Mixed-Use District (HM)
  The purposes of this district are to maintain the traditional scale, density, architectural style, and mixed-use character of the existing Amenia and Wassaic hamlet core areas, to allow them to be restored, revitalized and expanded to become more economically viable, and to allow for the creation of new hamlet centers where access to commuter rail stations makes such centers viable for transit-oriented development.

- Hamlet Residential District (HR)
  The purpose of this district is to maintain the traditional scale, density, and character of small hamlets and the residential neighborhoods surrounding the hamlet cores and to allow expansion into surrounding land areas that are generally within walking distance from the hamlet centers or the train stations.

- Suburban Residential (SR)
  The purpose of this district is to maintain the character of existing suburban density residential developments and to allow a limited extension of suburban growth patterns.

- Highway Commercial District (HC)
  The purpose of this district is to allow commercial uses that rely heavily on automobile and truck access and that would not be compatible with a hamlet mixed-use area.

- Office/Commercial/Industry Mixed-Use District (OC)
  The purpose of this district is to allow areas for light industrial, service commercial, office, and research facilities. Such districts may also include, where compatible, housing and limited retail commercial development intended to support the primary uses or to provide adaptive reuses for existing commercial or industrial buildings.

- Industrial/Manufacturing District (M)
  The purpose of this district is to allow industrial and related uses and adult entertainment, uses that are not compatible with most commercial, office, or residential uses, in isolated and well-buffered locations.

- Floodplain Overlay District (FPO)
  The purpose of this overlay district is to control development within the one-hundred-year floodplain in order to minimize flood damage and protect water resources. This district also incorporates, by reference, the Town's existing floodplain protection chapter.

- Stream Corridor Overlay District (SCO)
  The purpose of this overlay district is to protect the water resource values and biodiversity of the Wassaic Creek, Amenia Creek, Webutuck Creek, and Ten Mile River and certain designated tributaries.

- Scenic Protection Overlay District (SPO)

The purpose of this overlay district is to protect the scenic character of scenic resources in the Town, including scenic road corridors, the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, and prominent scenic areas that remain substantially undeveloped and/or that lie within important scenic viewsheds.

- Historic Preservation Overlay District (HPO)
  The purpose of this overlay district is to protect the historic character of those hamlets and individual buildings and sites that have recognized historic significance, while encouraging their adaptive reuse where appropriate.

- Aquifer Overlay District (AQO)
  The purpose of this overlay district is to protect groundwater resources that provide both public and private drinking water supplies.

- Mixed-Use Institutional Conversion Overlay District (MCO)
  The purpose of this overlay district is to provide use and design flexibility to encourage productive reuse of privately owned portions of what was formerly the Wassaic Developmental Center (now Taconic DDSO) campus. This district provides greater use flexibility and a procedure for master planned development of this property in a manner that advances the Town's development goals.

- Soil Mining Overlay District (SMO)
  The purpose of this overlay district is to provide environmentally appropriate locations for soil mining to occur where landowners can achieve a reasonable return on their land from sand and gravel mining without adversely impacting their neighbors.

- Resort Development Overlay District (RDO)
  The purpose of this overlay district is to provide use and design flexibility to encourage resort development that fits into the rural character of the Town and protects its scenic, historic, and environmental resources. This district provides a procedure for master planned development of large properties to promote tourism, recreation, and open space and natural areas protection.

- Mobile Home Park Overlay District (MHO)
  The purpose of this overlay district is to provide appropriate locations for mobile home parks to be located, consistent with the requirements of the Code.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER, OPEN SPACE, AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Scenic Resources

The many hills and valleys of Amenia create spectacular views throughout the Town. The rural roads and scenic vistas that are considered most worthy of preservation were originally inventoried, evaluated and mapped by the Amenia Master Plan Committee and the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development, and described in the 1991 Master Plan. That map has been updated in this Plan to identify a potential Scenic Protection Overlay District.

Among the factors that were considered in the designation of scenic roads were the following:

- The roads were older and generally narrow;
- The roads were lined with trees, stone walls or open meadows;
- The roads ran through scenic countryside or offered scenic vistas; or
- The roads were lined with farms and farmhouses or forests.

Scenic roads can be important because of the surrounding landscape, the way they fit into that landscape,

and/or the way that they are constructed. The lands and land uses on either side of a road are part of what make it scenic. In Amenia, the scenic roads often have views of bucolic farm lands and tree covered hills. Specific view spots and view corridors can also qualify a road as scenic, and in some cases, a view may be the most important feature identified and may justify its inclusion as a scenic road. The way in which a road was constructed is another factor that can make it scenic. Street trees, the curvature of the road, and whether the road is paved, dirt, or gravel, all contribute to the scenic qualities of a road. Land use controls and road construction standards can both contribute to the preservation of scenic roads in Amenia.

Under New York State law, a municipality may adopt regulations to protect the scenic character of roadways. A town can adopt a local law that includes guidelines for widening, paving or repaving or installation of drainage improvements on scenic roads or for new development that occurs off of scenic roads. The local law could also provide guidance on the preservation of stone walls and specimen trees, which oftentimes enhance a scenic roadway.

A list of scenic roads identified in the 1991 Master Plan with a brief description of their scenic features and history is outlined below.

US 44 - DE LA VERGNE HILL. (FROM THE AMENIA TOWN LINE TO LAKE AMENIA ROAD).

One of Amenia's greatest views is from De La Vergne Hill. As US 44 curves around the hillside, a vast panorama of the Harlem Valley is visible. From this high point, hills, farms, fields and forests can be seen stretching east to Connecticut and south to the Hamlet of Wassaic. The view is especially spectacular with seasonal foliage and atmospheric conditions. A local church along this hillside holds Easter sunrise services to take advantage of the early morning scene. Visitors are often struck by the beauty of the foothills and valley as they enter the "Gateway to the Berkshires."

Built in 1805, this road was originally called the "Dutchess Turnpike." It connected Poughkeepsie with Sharon, Connecticut. The house at the junction of Routes 83 and 44, at the top of the hill, was the original toll house. The old turnpike cut more sharply down the hill and did not swing out in a wide curve as the current highway does. Just below the curve in the road is "Squabble Hole," an old iron ore pit enlarged and converted into a golf course lake.

CLARK HILL ROAD

Clark Hill rises to the east out of the Oblong Valley through corn and hay fields and ends up as a wooded lane at the crest of a ridge. Several houses stand along the one mile road but they do not detract from the view of nearby hills and fields. The most impressive feature of the road is at its summit where it curves and affords an impressive view to the north and south of the Oblong Valley and Rattlesnake Mountain to the west. Limestone formations, including a natural bridge, along the western end of the road are unique features. The view changes as the light changes during the day and during the year. A setting summer sun causes the whole valley to glow with a purplish light, contrasting greatly with the deep blue sky above a snow-covered scene in winter.

DEEP HOLLOW ROAD

Deep Hollow Road is a gravel Town road between NY 22 in Wassaic and US 44 near Lithgow. The 2.4-mile portion of the road within the Town of Amenia is characterized by

deep forests that emerge into broad fields. The road ends in the Town of Washington.

At the NY 22 terminus, there are two stone charcoal kilns that once supplied fuel for Noah Gridley's Iron Furnace in Wassaic, which is no longer in existence. After negotiating through a narrow passage of rock outcrop, the road crosses the Wassaic Creek over a steel-decked bridge, continuing uphill as it follows the creek which lies far below. The remains of the historic road from Wassaic to Smithfield, via Turkey Hollow, are visible one tenth of a mile beyond the bridge. About a mile and a half from NY 22, the road crosses Wolf Brook and continues along the mountainside several hundred feet above the gorge. Access to Turkey Hollow can be gained from this road.

Unspoiled forest, wildlife, mountain streams, foliage, and seasonal views make this road an important scenic resource.

TOWER HILL ROAD (FROM THE FIRST BRIDGE AT THE BOTTOM TO THE TOWN LINE)

Tower Hill Road is a narrow road that winds through dense forest for much of its length, providing access to Wassaic State Forest. This road largely follows natural contours, paralleling a brook, of which there are frequent views. Water often rushes over small falls of rocks along bends in the road, especially during the spring. Though the hills along this road are of modest height, they produce a distinct chasm effect at several points. Combined with deep woods on either side, this effect creates a cloistered atmosphere. Proceeding westward, this route climbs slowly uphill, offering many scenic vistas.

In addition, there are Old Cellar Holes in the area, as well as abundant wildlife, including rattlesnakes.

FLINT HILL ROAD (FLINT HOMESTEAD TO VINEYARD)

On this steep 1.3 mile road, there is a mile of breathtaking views. The Catskill Mountain Range is visible, as well as Stissing Mountain, Silver Mountain, Cascade Mountain, and the beautiful hills surrounding Smithfield Valley. The scenery is intensified at sunset and during the autumn when the foliage is brilliantly colored. There are many species of wildlife on Flint Hill. Deer often feast at a huckleberry patch near the reforested section of the hill. This area is also a home to quail and wild turkeys. The road was named for the Flint family who originally owned four farms in Smithfield. One pre-Civil War home originally owned by the Flint family is located on this road. The old name for the road was "The Bowery," meaning 'farm' in Dutch. A row of sugar maples, near the 1814 Flint homestead, was planted by the grandfather of Catherine Flint Leigh, a town historian. About half way up the road is the site of a hand dug ice pond. The ice had been used in the past to refrigerate milk before it was brought to market. At the top of Flint Hill Road, the vineyards of Cascade Winery are visible.

SMITHFIELD VALLEY ROAD—ROUTE 83 (132 SMITHFIELD VALLEY ROAD TO SMITHFIELD CHURCH)

Smithfield Valley Road extends 2.6 miles with expansive views of the valley, including large wetlands and active horse and dairy farms. Many deer and wild turkeys inhabit the area. A stream with waterfalls runs alongside, once the site of a grist mill. Several large farms with gracious old homes are located on Smithfield Valley Road. The Smithfield Presbyterian Church, built in 1847, is the third church erected on this site. The manse behind the Church was built for the sexton, in front of which is an Indian grinding stone.

A pre-Civil War schoolhouse is still standing with two large maple trees in front of it. The boy's outhouse in back is now attached to the building by an addition.

Smithfield was originally called "The City." There is a graveyard near the Church and an old oak tree under which an outdoor sermon was preached in 1770 by the Rev. George Whitefield, as the church was not large enough to accommodate the crowd.

COUNTY ROUTE 5 (ROUTE 83 TO TOWN LINE)

Extending off Smithfield Valley Road, County Route 5 generally continues in a northerly direction, winding through a valley of large farms next to a small brook. Several old houses are present, including the Parshall House and the Albert and Mary Lasker Estate. Although not a road of spectacular distant views, this short stretch is a continuation of the Smithfield Valley and its agricultural atmosphere. The large estates and quiet pace of this road make it a significant scenic resource.

At one time, a road called "Three Cabin Lane" connected County Route 5 and Morse Hill Road.

LEEDSVILLE ROAD (AMENIA UNION TO ROUTE 343-- COUNTY ROUTE 2)

Distant hills, including Rattlesnake Mountain, are visible from this two lane road curving through canopies of trees, scattered houses, and occasional cornfields. The road is on the Webatuck Creek floodplain in the northern part of the Oblong Valley. Views on each side differ with hills, fields, and woods alternating.

Among the houses along this road are several that were built in the early nineteenth century. One of the oldest houses in Amenia (the Delemater house, est. 1761) is located on the grounds of Troutbeck (former Spingarn Estate), where the famous Amenia conference of the NAACP took place. St. Thomas Episcopal Church, home of a notable organ, is of historic importance. Lewis Mumford's house, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Preservation, is located on the west side of Leedsville Road. Significant historical sites, on which noteworthy buildings once stood, are the Grist Mill and the Buckley Forge. In addition, there is a cemetery which is not visible from the road.

SOUTH AMENIA/AMENIA UNION ROAD (FROM STEELWORKS CIRCLE TO AMENIA UNION—COUNTY ROUTES 3 AND 2))

This road is marked by open views of actively farmed fields, stone walls, and hills, such as Rattlesnake Mountain. Dotted along this route are horse, sheep, and dairy farms, old houses, and picturesque farm buildings.

A historic mileage marker is present at Clark Hill Road, as well as archaeological sites and a cemetery. The British used this road on their retreat to Fishkill. The Hamlet of Amenia Union has a Buckley plow as a commemoration of the local iron ore industry.

South Amenia Road is characteristic of a typical country road, cutting through wetlands and forests. Contributing to its beauty are numerous wild flowers, brilliant fall foliage, stone walls, and gentle sloping turns. Wildlife sightings in the area have included deer, bobcats, raccoons, foxes, wild turkeys, and other various bird species ranging from great blue herons to bluebirds.

SHARON STATION ROAD (FROM NY 22 TO TOWN LINE)

The road was named for a once active railroad station. This road runs from NY 22, past an old flooded ore pit, then through a small settlement around the railroad station. Just past the settlement, in the Town of North East, is a large and active dairy farm. It crosses the railroad at the Town line. As it continues into the Town of North East, it winds through pastures where sheep, cows, and horses graze. It also navigates through fields with outstanding distant views before finally crossing the New York/Connecticut State line into Sharon Valley.

Interesting points along this road are the iron ore pit (now a pond), the old railroad station, and an old hotel called the "Old Roxy." The latter two are both now being used as residences.

BOG HOLLOW ROAD (COUNTY ROUTE 3 FROM A QUARTER MILE EAST ON SINPATCH ROAD TO STATE LINE)

Scatacook Indians lived in this area.

OLD ROUTE 22 (COUNTY ROUTE 81 FROM CULVER FARM TO 464 OLD ROUTE 22)

Beautiful views of the west side of the Harlem Valley reveal some remaining deposits from the last ice age, as well as wetlands and farmlands. The beauty of this road is marred by gravel pits and heavy traffic.

Along this road are the Monroe house and the Birdman house. One of the houses is dated 1855.

DEPOT HILL ROAD (FROM WATER TOWER TO OLD ROUTE 22)

Traveling south and looking eastward, a patchwork of textured fields sloping gently uphill toward forest-covered summits fills the landscape. To the west is a broad view of mountain tops over the horizon, including De La Vergne Hill. A large old farm sits at the half way turn of the road, which then crests to the well-manicured Keane Stud Horse Farm. At the western end of the road is an immense view of the valley and the Silo Ridge Country Club, with Wassaic to the south.

SEPARATE ROAD (FROM THE CHURCH TO BANGALL ROAD)

Separate Road was named for the parishioners who separated themselves from the Smithfield Church. This two-mile road contains an old cemetery, (the Kinney burying ground), a view of the Smithfield Church, a dairy farm, and ruins of the Separatist Church. This road, which winds along the edge of a large wetland, offers many opportunities to observe wildlife. Much of the road is heavily forested, with leaves overhanging the road.

The naming of the road indicates its historical perspective. In addition to the Kinney burying ground, another graveyard is situated on the Belaire Farm. An old road that once cut across the swamp is no longer used.

POPLAR HILL ROAD (FROM THE TOWN LINE TO SINPATCH ROAD)

Poplar Hill Road (Dutchess County Route 4) starts at the north end of Sinpatch Road and runs to the Town boundary at the intersection with Benson Hill Road. (This is not to be confused with Benson Road which is a side road between Wassaic and South Amenia).

The scenic part of Poplar Hill Road is about two miles long. East Mountain parallels the road, rising approximately 600 feet above it. In the valley to the west of the road is Swift Pond. The ridge on which the Taconic DDSO is located forms a backdrop to the pond. On both sides of the road are fields that are farmed and used for growing Christmas trees. There are good distant views from the top of Poplar Hill north to Rattlesnake Mountain, South Amenia, and Peaked Mountain. The whole aspect is one of contrasting ridges and valleys.

CASCADE ROAD (FOLAN ROAD TO THE WINERY)

This is a wooded country road which follows the contours of the land. Traveling north, the road ascends uphill until its terminus, with mountainous terrain on the left and deep ravines on the right. Masses of ferns grow alongside sections of the road. Most of the road is densely wooded with some clearing for a few driveways leading to houses set back from the road. During the winter, parts of the road offer views into the valley near Perry Corners Road.

PERRY CORNERS ROAD (FROM NORTH EAST TOWN LINE TO HALF MILE SOUTH)

Although only a short stretch of the scenic portion of this road is in the Town of Amenia, open views of the valley and hills around Kildonan School provide scenic vistas. Deer and wild geese are often found here. This road could continue as a scenic road into the Town of North East.

NY 22 (NORTH EAST TOWN LINE TO PERRY CORNERS ROAD)

Traveling south on NY 22, beginning at the North East Town line, provides views of distant mountains. Still an agricultural area, there are several dairy farms along this short stretch and beautiful views to the east. Often times, early morning mist lies in the valley, accentuating its beauty.

BUTTS HOLLOW ROAD

The scenic section of this road in the Town of Amenia is quite short (less than one mile) and is not particularly scenic when traveling westward. The view of the valley traveling east is quite spectacular for a very short distance, but is marred by electric wires crossing the view and two obtrusive elements: the turquoise water tower of the Taconic DDSO and the junkyard behind Whitey's Garage. The 1991 Master Plan recommended that this road not be considered as scenic.

MYGATT ROAD (OLD NORTH ROAD) (FROM NY 22 TO 47 MYGATT ROAD (OLD BENHAM LAND))

This quiet back road travels through the original heart of the Town of Amenia, once called "Amenia Center". Until the Dutchess Turnpike was built in 1805, this small settlement was the center of town. It boasted several churches, including the Old Red Meeting House (1758), a cemetery, and several trade establishments. Today, old houses remain along the road, as well as the stone-walled cemetery and an old schoolhouse. The road winds past homes through open fields and wooded areas. Sheep are raised at one farm, and wild birds, including heron, are often visible at the "Benham Pond".

ROUTE 22 (FROM RTE 81 TO MAY LANE)

This stretch of Route 22 is a scenic corridor that contains three significant view points.

ROUTE 22 (FROM LAKE AMENIA ROAD TO HALF MILE NORTH OF DEEP HOLLOW ROAD)

This stretch of Route 22 has a scenic trail corridor adjacent to it.

AMENIA-WASSAIC ROAD (COUNTY ROUTE 81--HALF MILE SOUTH OF DEPOT HILL RD)

Amenia-Wassaic Road has a view point approximately one half mile south of Depot Hill Road, however the road in its entirety is not considered scenic.

ROUTE 343 (FROM SHARON STATION ROAD TO TOWN LINE)

This stretch of Route 343 is a scenic corridor that contains one significant view point.

KENNEL ROAD

Kennel Road has a view point approximately one half mile east of the Amenia Town Line, however the road in it entirety is not considered scenic.

Open Space

To residents and visitors alike, Amenia presents itself as largely undeveloped. This section discusses the preservation of one of Amenia's most important visual resources: its open space. Open space can serve many different functions including recreation, preservation of ecological systems, agricultural production, flood control, and protection of historic character, water supply, water quality, and scenic character.

Older master plans were more concerned with the provision of recreation areas and parks than with the preservation of open space for other purposes, especially the conservation of environmentally significant areas and resources. In the Town of Amenia, open space includes farms, forested areas, wetlands, parks, and trails. When considering open space, it is important to be aware of the many different functions that open space serves, which has consequences for how it is to be owned, managed, and regulated.

Open space is held in a variety of ownerships. Public agencies, such as town, county, and state governments, have title to parkland. Quasi-public agencies, such as institutions and churches, often own open space, although such open space is not necessarily protected as such. However, the greatest amount of open space is owned by private individuals who hold title to farms and forests throughout the Town. They are the stewards of the Amenia's open space resources.

Amenia currently has a natural resource inventory prepared by its Conservation Advisory Council. Chapter III makes specific recommendations concerning next steps in open space planning and conservation. Rural communities, such as Amenia, often seek to protect open resources because they define the character of the town. Amenia has been a farming community throughout its history and the interplay between the fields, forests, hills, and valleys throughout the Town create spectacular images for visitors and residents alike.

Preservation of open space is difficult to separate from the preservation of farmland and farming. Hence, a variety of techniques for protecting agricultural uses, or for preserving agricultural lands, are also discussed as methods for open space preservation. Protection of scenic resources is another reason for preserving open space. Scenic vistas and roads contribute to a community's character and give aesthetic enjoyment to visitors.

WHAT ROLE CAN GOVERNMENT PLAY?

Town Role

The role of a town in open space preservation is limited by fiscal constraints. However, a town can utilize its zoning and subdivision regulations to require the protection of open space as part of the development approval process. A town can also encourage private efforts to protect and preserve much of the town's open space resources. Amenia has consistently supported the use of private land conservation tools such as conservation easements.

Zoning regulations can be used to protect the most important and sensitive environmental features from inappropriate development. For example, they can be utilized to designate and protect priority conservation areas for biodiversity and to protect steep slopes, wetland, and floodplain areas from adverse effects of development. Along with subdivision regulations, zoning can be used to require buffer zones along streams and to direct development away from ridgelines.

Since the 2007 Update, the Town has adopted new zoning laws that protect open space, including through the use of overlay districts and requirements for open space development.[13]

Other supplementary techniques can better help preserve open areas. For example Conservation Subdivisions, which are discussed in the "Housing Development Alternatives" section, allow homes to be placed on smaller lots while protecting significant open space areas.

County and State Role

As discussed in the Introduction of the Plan Update, in the year 2000, the Amenia Town Board endorsed the New York State Hudson River Valley Greenway Principles and became one of the first communities in Dutchess County to embrace these principles of smart growth, including the preservation of open space. As a member of the Greenway Compact Program, the Town of Amenia is eligible to receive state grants to preserve open space.

Dutchess County has developed conservation programs of its own. Greenway Connections supplements the Hudson River Valley Greenway by encouraging cooperation among communities within Dutchess County to develop in a regional context and protect the area's scenic resources. The County also implements the Open Space and Farmland Protection Matching Grant Program, adopted in 1999, which allows local municipalities to apply for grants to be used for the protection of agricultural lands and resources.

Private Landowners

Private landowners can contribute to the preservation of open space by voluntarily donating conservation easements on their property to nonprofit land trusts such as the Nature Conservancy or the Dutchess Land Conservancy. These easements contain

[13] See Town Code Chapter 121, Zoning

perpetual restrictions on development and may permit limited amounts of development in carefully selected locations.

AMENIA'S OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Major open space resources in the Town of Amenia include Beekman Park and the Wassaic Multiple Use Area. As discussed in Chapter II of the Plan Update, since 1991 the Harlem Valley Rail Trail from Wassaic station to the North East town line has been developed, and is a significant addition to the open space resources of the Town. Only a small portion of open space is provided permanent protection through public ownership.

The 1991 Master Plan identified several specific resources worthy of protection which should continue to be protected. The Natural Resources report prepared by Dutchess County had identified Turkey Hollow and Swift Pond as significant natural areas. The same document also noted the importance of Bog Hollow and Rattlesnake Mountain as natural resources, and identified the view on US 44 from De La Vergne Hill as a scenic view of countywide importance.

The tract along Turkey Hollow Road is designated forest land, and much of Amenia's active farmlands are within an agricultural district. However, these classifications do not provide permanent protection to these lands.

A comprehensive biodiversity inventory has been prepared by Hudsonia, Inc., a non- profit research organization. This map and description of important habitats will be an important tool in protecting the biological resources of the Town.

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Open space within a community may be preserved through several different approaches:

- Preservation of environmentally constrained and environmentally significant areas such as steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, and priority biodiversity conservation areas.
- Preservation of agricultural uses or, failing that, of agricultural lands, including prime and important agricultural soils.
- Development of a hamlet-based settlement pattern with sufficient infrastructure to support anticipated development.
- Preservation Overlay Districts (Agriculture, Aquifer, Environmental, and Historic) which are mapped over existing zones and which trigger special precautions and permits to protect agriculture, aquifers, environmental and historic resources.
- Transfer of Development Rights.
- Purchase of Development Rights.

Historic Resources Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

The following five properties are listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.[5] (A sixth property, the Hendrik Winegar House, was demolished in the 1990s. This house was occupied well into the 20th century and was one of the last remaining early 18th century German style homes in Amenia, leading to its designation as a historical landmark). This designation affords an honorary recognition and some protection when state or federal agencies consider an action that might affect the resource. It also triggers a heightened level of review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) and may make available tax incentives or other funding for historic preservation or restoration. However, only local regulation can protect the integrity of these resources comprehensively.

BETH DAVID SYNAGOGUE

In the early 20th century, people of Jewish faith who had emigrated from Eastern Europe to the Lower East Side in New York City began moving upstate to pursue country life and agricultural practices. The proximity of the Harlem Valley railroad made Amenia a desirable location to settle. In 1929, the Beth David Synagogue, located on East Main Street, was constructed to serve the 12 to 15 Russian Jewish families who had settled in the area. Although the congregation fluctuated over the years, dwindling to only 12 members in the 1970s, it remains a significant representation of Eastern European Jewish architecture and a place of worship.

INDIAN ROCK SCHOOLHOUSE

Constructed around 1850 along Mygatt Road, the Indian Rock Schoolhouse educated children in Amenia until about 1927. Having remained intact to the present, unlike the other 11 one-room schoolhouses in the area, it is architecturally significant as it exhibits the Gothic Revival style implemented in many 19th century schoolhouses. It is also a representation of the educational movement that took place across New York State during the mid 1800s, particularly in a rural farming community.

LEWIS MUMFORD HOUSE

In the small hamlet of Leedsville sits the home of renowned writer and humanist, the late Lewis Mumford. Mumford is best known for his books and essays on urban design, architecture, and culture. He was presented with numerous awards including the National Book Award (1961), the National Medal for Literature (1972), and the Smithsonian Institution's Hodgkins Gold Medal. Mumford received other honors such as the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1964), and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1975. After visiting friends in Amenia and being drawn to the country life, Lewis Mumford and his wife Sofia purchased a summer home in the area in 1929. By 1936, the couple moved into the home permanently and lived there until their deaths in the 1990s. Although several renovations were made over the years and some modern homes have been constructed nearby, this property retains its historical integrity and architectural significance as a mid 19th century house.

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[5] New York State Department of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. Document Imaging for National Register. [Online Documents.] Available at http://www.oprhp.state.ny.us/hpimaging/hp_results.asp. Accessed November 14, 2006.

ST. THOMAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, located in Amenia Union on Leedsville Road, is a sophisticated, stylistically advanced church constructed between 1849 and 1851. It was designed by renowned architect Richard Upjohn and remains a prime example of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture in Dutchess County. Its presence in this small, rural community can be attributed to the influence of Reverend Homer Wheaton, a prominent minister of the Episcopal Church in Columbia and Dutchess Counties. His connection with the New York Diocese introduced him to Richard Upjohn. St. Thomas' Episcopal Church has been noted by scholars to be one of the best American representations of the rural English Gothic church.

MAXON MILLS GRAIN ELEVATOR

The Maxon Mills Grain Elevator, located in the center of Wassaic Hamlet, was added to the New York State Register of Historic Places in 2006. It is one of the last remaining studded wood crib elevators in the United States. The grain elevator, which is at the crossroads of the historic agricultural industrial area, was an integral part of the railroad corridor. However, the loss of railroad freight service has made the milling of grain in this area no longer feasible. After sitting empty for approximately five years, the Maxon Mills Grain Elevator is currently undergoing restoration.

Locally Significant Historic Places

There are numerous historical sites and districts in Amenia that have local significance and deserve consideration for protection. These places, combined with the area's scenic beauty, add to the Town's charm and tourist appeal. In 2001, the Town declared its churches and cemeteries "Sacred Sites Worthy of Recognition," the first step in having them nationally recognized. The phrase "worthy of recognition" reflects the fact that the community believes the particular historic site is important enough to the community that it be recognized by outsiders and that its preservation be considered in future planning and development. "Worthy of Recognition" is a local designation and carries with it no restrictions such as paint colors, uses, expansion or renovations aside from those already prevailing in town zoning. It also carries no funding for restoration or maintenance of the building or site. Although congregations of Temple Beth David and St. Thomas' Episcopal Church completed the processes necessary for a National Register designation, others are still eligible.

Aside from sacred sites, each hamlet of Amenia contains a surprising number of houses, commercial buildings and barns of historic significance which, along with the scenic beauty of the Town, are of great value to the growing heritage tourism market in the Town and in Dutchess County.

The Dutchess County Department of Planning 1986 Survey of Historical Resources identified 145 sites in the Town of Amenia, 53 of which were in the Amenia Hamlet and 20 in Wassaic Hamlet. The purpose of the survey was to identify "districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects" that are of importance to the Town and it "aid in the longer term task of planning for the protection of these resources".

In 2001 when the Amenia Historical Society was researching and preparing the material on Sacred Sites, the intention was that in 2003 the focus would be on Amenia's historic public buildings which help define the character of the hamlet: the bank building at Fountain Square, the old E. Colin Smith store in Amenia Union, and Indian Rock School in Amenia Centre are just a few examples. The intention was to follow that with recognition of historic homes.

The Amenia Historical Society has compiled a list of specific sites with historical importance:[6]

- First Presbyterian Church and Manse
- Amenia Library
- Willson/Eaton remaining buildings (now Ducillo)
- Benham House
- Mygatt Pond
- Palmer Houses
- Wassaic House (in the center of Maxon Mills)
- Wassaic Post Office
- Native American sites
- Robert Blinn House – Wassaic
- John Delamater House
- Troutbeck
- Old Amenia Fairgrounds property
- Iron ore pits
- Amenia Burying Ground and Amenia Island Cemetery
- Dr. Jerome House
- Sheffield Mills Factory
- Two stone charcoal furnaces in Wassaic
- The Borden Plant (now Pawling Rubber)
- The Steelworks site in Wassaic
- Former Reed/Smith/Ketcham/Hoadley (now Jones) Houses in Wassaic
- Former Chaffee Cabin (made of chestnut) in South Amenia
- Site of Captain James Reed Mill in South Amenia
- The South Amenia Presbyterian Church
- Deacon Barlow House in South Amenia (pre-Revolutionary War)
- Swift Pond
- Sinpatch (World Peace site) and Benton House
- Wassaic State School
- The Railroad ad Rail Trail
- Willowbrook School site
- Old Post Office building in South Amenia
- Shundi's (former Methodist Church, Grange Hall) in Amenia Union
- Hitchcock House, Amenia Union
- Barnum Cigar Factory and Stationary Business (being renovated)
- Episcopal Church in Amenia Union

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[6] Linden, Ann. Historic Resources – Town of Amenia. Amenia Historical Society. Amenia, New York. October 14, 2005.

- Rudy Eschbach's House (formerly Captain Delamater's)
- Delamater/Reed House
- South Amenia Cemetery
- First settler cemetery in Wassaic
- Amenia Union Cemetery
- Delamater Cemetery
- Cemeteries on NY 22 (Knickerbocker and Perry among others)
- Historical markers (R. Sackett's, NY 343)
- Morehouse House (Kroeger's)
- Rowe House
- Swift House (was Jobe, now Lopane)
- Swift House (Captain Boyd's)
- Evartson House (part of Smithfield Farms)
- Smithfield Presbyterian Church and Cemetery
- Separate Cemetery
- Old houses in Smithfield
- Adams Mills (Bel Air) and Kinney burying ground (one stone left)
- Old school in Smithfield
- Old Road markers (one on Amenia Union Road, one on Tower Hill Road)
- Butts Hollow Road (at top near Town line)
- Old farm house at the foot of Butts Hollow Road
- Old Baptist Church in Amenia (now KJ's)
- Gridley Chapel
- Old Wassaic School House

A historic building inventory by Betsy Strauss lists several additional locally significant sites. On Perry Corners Road, she included the Maplebrook School Farmhouse (originally Ingraham), the property on which is located the Marge Finger House. To the north of this site sits Mr. Lomb's place, formerly owned by author/artist DeCost Smith, and previously by H. Peters. Along the same road is the Mead Farm, on which Nathan Mead, who moved to town in 1740, built a house in 1800. The red "tenant house" just to the south is possibly even older. Perry's Corner is a small collection of homes and barns built between 1740 and 1770. Once part of Amenia, they are now within North East's borders. On Rt. 22 just north of the Maplebrook School, Ms. Strauss mentions the Maplebrook Headmaster's home.[7]

Amenia is also part of the Upper Housatonic National Heritage area. This includes the hamlet of Wassaic which used to be an industrial center. Noah Gridley, an iron industrialist, owned a large portion of Wassaic, including several nearby ore pits and mines. Gridley's home, chapel, office, and remains of his hotel still exist, as well as ruins of old charcoal kilns. Another industry in Wassaic was the Borden Condensed Milk Factory[8].

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[7] Strauss, Betsy. Historic Buildings Inventory. Personal Inventory. September 30, 2006.
[8] Amenia Historical Society. The Walk in Wassaic on October 7. October 31, 2006.

Additionally, the hamlet of Leedsville is historically significant in its own right. It was named after Leeds, England, because of the presence of the woolen industry in both locations. Myron Benton, a 19th century poet, and Joel Benton, founder of the Harlem Valley Times, resided here. The Benton family also owned Troutbeck before Joel Spingarn assumed ownership. Spingarn, noted friend of Lewis Mumford, played an integral part in establishing the NAACP. Amenia's character is rich in history, the preservation of which is crucial to many local residents.

Historically significant structures can be protected through local ordinances. Historic Preservation Overlay Districts, which require certain considerations to be made when construction, alteration, or demolition might affect historic landmarks, can be implemented through zoning to protect historic resources. Historic Preservation Overlay Districts could protect buildings included on the National or State Register of Historic Places, as well as structures deemed locally significant. Regulating identified resources of local historical significance would be necessary to ensure their protection.

AGRICULTURE IN TRANSITION

Amenia's agriculture is its longest surviving industry. However, farming has been in decline in recent decades. There are currently 37 farms operating on 10,704 acres of farmland in the Town of Amenia. This is a twelve percent reduction in the acreage of farm land since 1989. A summary of the percentages of land devoted to agriculture is presented in Table IV-12.

Table IV-12

Percentage of Land Devoted to Agriculture

Area	1989*	2006**	2017***
Total land area of Amenia	26,795 acres	26,795 acres	27,660 acres
Total land in agriculture districts	17,455 acres (65%)	NA	18,332 acres (66%)
Total crop land, agriculture soils	4,150 acres (15%)	NA	NA
Total farm land (gross acres)	12,188 acres (45%)	10,704.26 acres (40%)	11,735 acres (42%)
Of this total farm land in Amenia:			
Devoted to crops	49%	26%	47%
Devoted to dairy farming	36%	18%	14%
Agricultural endeavors	15%	15%	NA
Vacant agricultural land (land that is part of a productive farm, but is not utilized)	NA	41%	30%

Sources: *1991 Master Plan **Dutchess County Real Property Tax Service Agency, Parcel Data, Town of Amenia *** ACS 5-Year Estimates (2017-2022) ~~Census?~~

Dairy farming was the primary agricultural activity in Amenia for over 100 years. However, as of the 2007 Update there were ~~are currently~~only five operating dairy farms in Amenia, as opposed to the nine reported in the 1991 Master Plan. The decline of the dairy industry is consistent with the predictions of the 1991 Master Plan. Table IV-13 shows the decline in dairy farming over time.

Table IV-13 Dairy Farms

	1959*	1964*	1989*	2002**
Dairy Farms in Amenia	55	42	9	5
Sources: *1991 Master Plan ** CPIC				

As dairy farming has decreased, other forms of agriculture have developed in Amenia, including, horse, beef and sheep farms as well as vineyards, nurseries, and other cash crops. A more recent addition to Amenia's agricultural economy is horse farms. Keane Stud is one of the largest breeding farms in New York State and employs between 20 to 25 people. Other farms in Amenia are devoted to raising crops or to harvesting hay. As of 2020, 65 percent (18, 071 acres) of the Town of Amenia was in farms.[14]

One of the trends in agriculture in Dutchess County is toward specialization into niche products that take advantage of local or New York City markets. The Cascade Mountain Winery is one such operation that sells most of its production at the winery. Venison, goat, sheep, organic beef, organic vegetables and pick-your-own are some of the other types of farming that have developed in recent years. Christmas tree farms and nursery growers are local viable businesses that take advantage of the land resources.

Table IV-14

Agricultural Land Use, 2022

~~2017~~

Type of Agriculture	Acres	Percent of total Agricultural Land
Agricultural vacant land (productive)	3,552.48	30.3%
Cattle, calves, hogs	39.12	0.3%
Dairy products: milk, butter and cheese	1,665.69	14.2%
Field crops	5,571.21	47.5%
Fish, game and wildlife preserves	32.37	0.3%
Horse farms	599.92	5.1%
Livestock and products	26.88	0.2%
Other livestock: donkeys, goats	118.20	1.0%
Sheep and wool	88.50	0.8%
Vineyards	40.60	0.3%
Total Agricultural Land	11,734.97	100.0%
Sources: Dutchess County Real Property Tax Service Agency, Parcel Data, Town of Amenia		

Agriculture's Opportunities and Constraints

Agricultural uses in Amenia face a number of constraints which are reflected in the 2002 Census of Agriculture for Dutchess County. The census showed that although the number of farms has increased since 1982 (from 635 to 660); the amount of farmland has decreased (from 137,963 acres to 112,400 acres). In addition, the total value of agricultural products

[14] Community Profile: Agriculture and Farms - 2020 Amenia, New York" 2020. Cornell University.

in the County has continued to decline, from $37,500,000 in 1982 to $31,712,000 in 2002.

A number of factors contribute to the decline. First, the profit margins continue to shrink as costs rise and farmers face increasing competition. This is the particular case with dairy farms which face competition from out-of-state farms and dairies. As the agricultural sector has shrunk, the support services for farms have also contracted.

Perhaps the biggest pressure on agricultural land has been the rapid escalation in land values. The escalation is the result of several factors. Amenia is experiencing some subdivision development as it becomes a home for those who work in Poughkeepsie, Danbury or the northern portion of the New York City metropolitan area. In addition, Amenia's popularity as an area of second homes has kept upward pressure on land prices. Second home buyers are often interested in purchasing large tracts of land but not necessarily in keeping the land in agricultural production.

As discussed in the 1991 Master Plan, farmers are affected by increased land values in several ways: the agricultural value assessment on their farmland is not protected against tax increases, and the high land value limits future purchases of agricultural land— farmers must rely on land that is already owned by the family or try to lease/rent land for farming purposes. The problem is particularly acute when there are not any heirs interested in taking over the farm operation when their adult relatives retire.

All these factors have contributed to reduce traditional farming operations in Amenia. Some new agricultural uses have appeared, such as horse farms and vineyards to replace some of the farms lost. Agriculture is in transition, and its future is uncertain. However, the strong desire of residents of Amenia to keep agriculture thriving can help the Town craft policies that will improve the future prospects of agriculture.

In the 1991 Master Plan, 81 percent of the respondents to the townwide opinion survey agreed or strongly agreed that agricultural lands should be preserved. Maintaining the rural character of the Town was also seen as an aim of any economic growth and development program by over 70 percent of the respondents. It is reasonable to assume that these opinions are still valid. Residents of the Town clearly feel that agricultural lands should be preserved. Agriculture is still a very important part of Amenia's economy, employing almost 7 percent of its workforce. Perhaps just as importantly, agriculture and its interplay with the natural landscape create the image that is Amenia to its residents and visitors alike. If Amenia is to remain a Town of open fields and natural areas, agricultural preservation is critical. The preservation of agriculture requires, in particular, emphasis upon maintaining "prime farmland soil" in large, contiguous parcels.

Ultimately, the decision to farm or not to farm is an economic one. Financial incentives to farmers may not be within the Town's financial capabilities. However, there are various other techniques that can be used to retain and preserve the Town's agricultural land, farm operations, and rural character. Some preservation techniques include conservation subdivisions, transfer of development rights, limited development subdivisions, and flag (rear) lots. These are included in the proposed zoning law that accompanies this Comprehensive Plan update.

In addition, voluntary techniques, especially the use of donated conservation easements,

are a useful tool for preserving farmland. See Chapter II for a fuller discussion of how the increasing use of this tool has been preserving farmland in Amenia and will likely continue to do with improved tax incentives.

NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The factor that most shapes Amenia's character is the natural environment and the scenic beauty and biodiversity that it supports. The pattern of hills and valleys, of forested and open areas, of lakes and streams all form a landscape familiar and precious to Amenia residents. In January 2007, Hudsonia completed a report on "Significant Habitats in Amenia." Maps of the entire town were produced and provide excellent information for the guidance of land use decisions. The report is available as a reference document in Town Hall. This section reviews the components of the Town's natural setting and highlights ways in which it can be protected. Appendix I contains several maps showing key features of Amenia's natural resource inventory. These maps were instrumental in understanding existing conditions and formulating policy actions for protection of natural resources and the Town's environment.

Geology and Topography[9]

The topography of the Town of Amenia has been formed by hundreds of millions of years of geological processes of which the most recent event was the end of the last ice age approximately 18,000 years ago. The Town is underlain by four types of bedrock: the Wappinger Group, Hudson Highland gneiss, Poughquag quartzite, and Pelitic rock.

The Hudson Highlands and Poughquag formations are found mainly in the southeastern section of Amenia, on East Mountain. Water yields from wells in these formations tend to be low.

Pelitic rocks are the most extensive bedrock formation in Dutchess County. They compose many of the upland areas of the Town including the hills west of Amenia and Wassaic and Rattlesnake Mountain.

The most important formation is the Wappinger Group. In it are found the most productive agricultural soils in Town. These limestone soils run in three general belts along either side of the Webatuck Creek, north of Wassaic Hamlet to the vicinity of Sharon Station and in the Wassaic Creek Valley south of Smithfield. Internal erosion of the limestone leads to the formation of cavities and channels for groundwater. Well yields are generally good. An important consideration, however, is that because of these channels, sewage and other contaminants move easily through the bedrock having deleterious effects. Therefore it would be good practice to monitor the development of septic systems in these areas. Included in this area is the hamlet of Amenia and portions of the hamlet of Wassaic.

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[9] Much of the information in these sections is derived from the 1991 Master Plan and the 2005 Amenia CAC Natural Resources Inventory.

Sand and gravel deposits are found along the major streambelts in Amenia. These areas, which are the most prolific sources of groundwater in the Town, are also mined as a natural resource. They are discussed further in the section below on soils.

The topography of Amenia gives the Town its character. Gently rolling hills are interspersed with steep ravines and broad stream valleys, creating a varied and almost unique landscape.

The elevations in the community range from slightly less than 400 feet to slightly more than 1,400 feet above sea level. The lowest elevations are found along the Ten Mile River at the Dover Town line, the highest just southwest of the intersection of Flint Hill Road and Cascade Mountain Road.

East Mountain, Rattlesnake Mountain, and the ridge running to the west of Route 22 shape the Town's topography as do the Webatuck Creek Valley and the Wassaic Creek Ravine (Turkey Hollow).

One of the key development constraints is slope. In general, slopes above 25 to 30 percent are considered unbuildable. Slopes from 15 to 30 percent require special siting consideration. Slopes from 0 to 15 percent are considered to be free of constraints, with slopes from 0 to 5 percent considered level land and slopes from 5 to 15 percent are considered moderate. Table IV-15 describes the percentage of land in Amenia constrained by slopes.

Table IV-15
Slopes

Percent Slopes	Acreage	Percent of Total
0-15	10,854	41%
15 and over	15,941	59%
Total	26,795	100%

Source: 1969 Master Plan

The 1991 Master Plan recommends restricting development in the Town to slopes below 25 percent, which is generally a good practice. Under carefully controlled circumstances, disturbances on slopes greater than 30 percent can be acceptable. A town can implement these restrictions through zoning and subdivision regulations. Best practice regulations include limiting development on the steepest slopes, and prohibiting commercial development in such areas because of the large areas required for parking. Residential development can be clustered on the least constrained sites.

Drainage Basins

Almost all of Amenia is drained by the streams and rivers that empty into the Housatonic River in Connecticut. The Housatonic flows into Long Island Sound. A very small portion is drained by the Jansen Kill which eventually flows into the Hudson River. Table IV-16 shows the area drained by the five major streams in the Town: Wassaic, Webatuck, Ten Mile, Bog Hollow and Jansen Kill.

Table IV-16
Drainage Basins

Basin	Acres	Percent
Ten Mile River	3,506	13.0%
Wassaic Creek	12,514	47.0%
Webatuck Creek	9,334	35.0%
Bog Hollow	1,332	4.8%
Jansen Kill	109	0.2%
Total	26,795	100%

Sources: 1969 Master Plan

Surface Water

The streams listed above form the major surface water resources of Amenia. The streams and the lands which border them (the streambelt) are a significant wildlife habitat and community open space resource. Their protection and incorporation into an open space network is an objective of the Comprehensive Plan.

The other major surface water features are the various lakes and ponds found throughout the Town. These range from smaller impounded livestock ponds on individual farms to much larger natural ponds. The most significant ponds in Amenia include Round Pond (49 acres) which is split by the Amenia/Northeast border, Crystal and Arrowhead Lakes, Swift Pond (61 acres), Brickyard Pond (10.8 acres), and Bog Hollow Pond. All of these lakes and ponds are on private property.

Over the long term, the Town may wish to acquire a public swimming area. A possibility would be the reconstruction of Lake Amenia which is adjacent to Beekman Park. The lake drained after its dam broke and is currently a large wet area. If the lake were reconstructed (although as a slightly smaller lake), there exists the potential to develop a significant recreation area. However, this prospect depends on various geologic and environmental features, including possible flooding impacts.

The State of New York classifies surface waters according to their quality. Quality is rated as either suitable for drinking, suitable for fishing, or suitable for secondary contact recreation such as boating. Class AA and A waters are suitable for drinking. According to the 1991 Master Plan, the Ten Mile River and its tributaries, as measured in Dover Plains, were classified as A or AA. This level of water quality should be maintained. The State Department of Environmental Conservation is charged with reviewing applications for discharges into such streams. Discharges are generally allowed if it can be proven that water quality will not deteriorate.

Groundwater Resources

Almost all residents of Amenia draw their drinking water from groundwater supplies. The water system in the hamlet of Amenia also draws its supply from wells. The yield and extent of groundwater is dependent on the underground soil formation from which

the well draws. For example, thick sand and gravel deposits yield more groundwater than bedrock.

Three main types of aquifers are found in Dutchess County. These include bedrock, glacial till, and sand and gravel. Bedrock aquifers have varying well yields depending on the type of rock. Collectively, these groundwater resources in the Town are part of the Harlem Valley aquifer.

The need for protection of the aquifer may be self-evident, but it is necessary to emphasize just how critical the need for protection is. The Town completed an aquifer study (the "Harlem Valley Watershed Investigation") that identifies aquifers and recharge areas and has worked to integrate the County's model aquifer protection ordinance into local regulations. Model groundwater protection ordinances, which utilize zoning tools such as Aquifer Overlay Districts, can be implemented by towns to protect these valuable resources.

Depletion of aquifers can occur many ways and present communities with an array of water quality issues when not recharged adequately. The number of homes that can rely on a particular aquifer resource is limited. As the number of homes increases, the water table level may drop, causing older, shallower wells to run dry. These wells must be dug deeper and deeper in a never ending process unless the balance between recharge of the aquifer from rainwater and septic system effluent and withdrawal from wells is once again achieved. Overcrowding can also result in pollution of wells from septic system leachate.

If water withdrawn from an aquifer is released as surface water into streams, it does not recharge the aquifer as water released through underground septic systems would. In residential areas, this effect often occurs when a central sewage system is installed to solve a pollution problem and residents continue to rely on individual wells for their water supply. The water table drops and wells may run dry because household water is being discharged from the sewage treatment plant into streams and very little is being returned or recharged to the aquifer.

The effect is similar if the aquifer recharge area is significantly reduced. The most water is recharged from the least developed areas. As development occurs and parking lots, streets, and housing get built, the percentage of pervious surfaces (those areas which rainfall can penetrate) declines and the rainfall is instead concentrated in a man-made storm drainage system which most often discharges into surface water supplies.

Impervious areas can also be a source of pollution to aquifers. Oil from cars, road salts, and the like, leach into the aquifer. The ground can filter many potential contaminants before they reach the groundwater supply, but not all. Soil permeability and depth of the water table are several determining variables. In many instances, the aquifer and the water supply may become contaminated because of a spill. The 2005 Amenia CAC Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) identified some of the major sources of groundwater pollution, including the following:

- Road deicing salts
- Organic solvents
- Farms and golf courses (e.g., chemical fertilizers, manure, pesticides)
- Petroleum products
- Septic wastes

In Amenia, the issue of groundwater protection is particularly important because of the nature of the aquifers underlying much of the Town. The sand and gravel aquifers have high permeability rates, meaning that water flows through them quickly. This also means that contaminants can flow quickly through the aquifer. The same is true, although to a lesser extent, of the limestone based aquifers found in the Wappinger Group which have many underground channels and caverns capable of transmitting water quickly. The issue of groundwater protection in Amenia is also complicated by the fact that much of the community's best agricultural land lies over these aquifers, leading to concerns that they could be contaminated by pesticides and fertilizers. An aquifer protection ordinance, which recognizes these factors while providing the greatest possible protections to groundwater supply, could be designed. The ordinance could implement recommended practices by concentrating on regulating point sources of pollution through the prohibition and restriction of certain uses.

Wetlands and Floodplains

Closely allied with water resources are wetlands and floodplains. Wetlands are areas that are periodically inundated. They support a wide variety of water tolerant plants and also serve as habitat for many types of wildlife. Wetlands are also extremely important in flood protection. They serve to detain water during storms and slow both the velocity and amount of storm water. Wetlands are also important in recharging aquifers.

In New York State, all wetlands over 12.4 acres (5 hectares) are regulated by the Department of Environmental Conservation. There are 28 such wetlands in Amenia. Any filling or use of land within these designated wetland areas requires a permit from the DEC. Wetlands smaller than 12.4 acres are regulated by the US Army Corps of Engineers and could be regulated and mapped at the local level as well (refer to the Amenia CAC Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) of 2005 for methods of determining wetlands). Maintaining an accurate inventory of wetlands within the Town can be useful when analyzing development proposals. According to the NRI report of 2005, there are approximately 137 wetlands altogether, equaling 1,547 acres, or 5.9 percent of the total land area, within Amenia. It is good practice for a town to require developers of residential subdivisions and builders of commercial projects to identify smaller wetlands on their sites and not disturb them. Only through actual field research can the true location and status of wetlands be determined. Important wetlands exist in the Bog Hollow area, north and east of the Amenia hamlet, and in the upper reaches of Wassaic Creek south of Smithfield.

Floodplains are the areas adjacent to streams that may be inundated during flooding. The generally accepted standard for risk is the 100-year floodplain, that area which has a one percent chance of being flooded in a given year. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has mapped these floodplains in Amenia. These 100-year floodplain areas have

been designated for the Ten Mile River and Webatuck Creek. The other floodplain areas designated are for Amenia Creek which runs north from the hamlet of Wassaic to the hamlet of Amenia, generally paralleling Route 22.

Within the 100-year floodplain, development is strictly regulated. Within a 100-year floodplain, it is good practice for a town to utilize zoning tools, such as a Floodplain Overlay District, to restrict the development of new residential structures and septic systems. Passive uses, such as parking or recreation areas, or temporary uses such as farmers' markets, could be permitted.

The previous discussion is particularly appropriate for the hamlets of Amenia and Wassaic through which the 100-year floodplain passes. In Amenia, both sides of Mechanic Street and a large area of Route 343 just east of Mechanic Street are within the preliminary 100-year flood boundaries.

Soils

Knowledge of soil types is extremely important in determining what types of development are appropriate. Septic systems must be properly sited, agricultural soil protected, and buildings placed on suitable land.

SOIL GROUPINGS

Soil surveys conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Services indicate several prominent soil types throughout Amenia: Nassau-Cardigan and Nassau-Rock, Galway-Farmington, Georgia silt loam, Copake gravelly, and Stockbridge silt loam and Stockbridge-Farmington. As stated in the NRI of 2005, Stockbridge silt loam is one of the highest rated agricultural soils in Dutchess County, according to the US Department of Agriculture's scale. Georgia silt and the Copake groups are also prime farmland. These soils, located mainly in valleys, are leftover glacial deposits from the last ice age. However, many soils in this region are not ideal for structures, especially septic systems.

AGRICULTURAL SOILS

The US Soil Conservation Service has identified those soils in Dutchess County classified as prime agricultural soils. In addition, soils of statewide importance have been mapped as well.

Unfortunately, many of the same characteristics that make soils prime for agricultural uses – their good drainage characteristics, their fertility, their levelness and the like—also make them appropriate for urban uses. Thus, there is a constant competition in urbanizing counties like Dutchess between various uses of these soils. Farmers often find it more attractive to sell their land for development than to eke out a marginal income from agriculture.

In Amenia, pressures to sell farmland for residential development are slowly increasing. Long-term farmers also face competition from new uses such as horse farms and those for whom farming is not their primary source of income. While the last two trends affect the way of life the Town has known for many years, they do not develop the agricultural

soils for urban or suburban type uses. Such uses are the greatest challenge to preserving the open space character of the community.

SOIL LIMITATION

A variety of factors discussed below impose limits on various development types.

- Depth to bedrock

In Amenia, soils in upland areas often have very shallow depth to bedrock. Septic systems and buildings are very difficult to place in such soils. In addition, these soils are often found in steeply sloped areas and are subject to erosion. In some areas of Amenia, rock outcroppings occur as well. East and Rattlesnake Mountains and the hills west of Amenia and Wassaic feature these thin soils.

- Permeability

Permeability refers to the rate at which water drains through soil. Soil must be permeable enough to allow for septic systems to function so that residential development can occur. Farmlands also require decent permeability. On the other hand, soils that have a high permeability can also rapidly move pollutants. Thus, while sand and gravel areas may be the best area for siting a septic system in terms of its efficiency, they also pose the greatest danger of contamination from spills and leaks of polluting materials. Amenia's most permeable soils are generally found in creek valleys.

- Hydric Soils

Hydric soils are more commonly known as wetland soils. Because of their low permeability, they are not suitable for septic systems, and because of their often saturated nature, they are not suitable for building. Hydric soils can be used as a guide to highlight potential wetland areas not identified by the DEC.

- Erosion and Sedimentation

An ongoing concern, particularly in agricultural areas is erosion and sedimentation of soils. Good agricultural practices can reduce erosion rates. Another major concern is with construction and road projects. The erosion rate from these areas is particularly high. Sedimentation of streams can damage water quality and destroy fish and wildlife habitats. As such, erosion and sedimentation control best practices are an important element of local water quality protection efforts.

SOIL SUITABILITY

The 2005 Amenia CAC Natural Resources Inventory included a rating of the types of soils in Amenia according to their development limitations. Results are summarized in Table IV-17 below.

Most of the well drained soils classified as having slight limitations are found in the major creek valleys in Town. Soils with moderate limitations, deep soils over bedrock with high erodibility, are most prevalent along Route 22 from Wassaic northward into the Amenia hamlet.

Table IV-17
Soil Groups by Development Limitations

Limitation	Acres	Percent of total land area in Amenia
Slight (0-15%)	6,305	25%
Moderate (16-25%)	1,137	4%
Severe (25%)	3,486	12%
Excessive (over 25%)	15,867	59%
Total	26,795	100%

Sources: Amenia CAC Natural Resources Inventory of 2005

Soils with severe limitations on development have poor drainage and are subject to flooding. They include the major wetland and swamp areas in the Town such as Bog Hollow, the area along Wassaic Creek south of Smithfield, and the area north of Wassaic along Amenia Creek.

Soils with excessive development limitations are found on steep slopes and include bedrock outcroppings. These include East and Rattlesnake Mountains and the hills to the west of Route 22.

Mineral Resources

Sand and gravel deposits are found underlying most of the major streambelts in Amenia. Deposits are especially thick along the Ten Mile River and Webatuck Creek and in Amenia Creek running south along Route 22 from the Town Center. Only a few deposits are found along Wassaic Creek. These deposits are the most prolific source of groundwater in the community. However, they are a significant resource for the construction industry. Several sand and gravel operations or soil mines operate in Amenia. They provide material for the construction industry in Dutchess County and the northern New York Metropolitan area. Sand and gravel deposits are not unique to Amenia, and are widespread in this area of New York and Connecticut.

Currently, sand and gravel extraction is allowed by special permit in Amenia, although some operations continue as a nonconforming use in residentially zoned areas. Other aspects of such operations are regulated by the Department of Environmental Conservation which must also issue a permit to allow mining. The key issue for Amenia is the amount of soil mining that is allowed, the minimization of the effects thereof on other residents and scenic resources and, more importantly, how the areas that are mined should be reclaimed. The extent to which the Town can regulate soil mining is limited because DEC exercises the ultimate regulatory authority.

Chapter II of this Plan contains a detailed examination of issues relevant to mining.

Forest Lands

Uninterrupted stretches of forest contribute to the overall rural character of the community. Approximately 9,000 acres of forest cloak the ridges surrounding Amenia in an ever changing array of color and life. Most of the forested land occurs on East

Mountain, in Bog Hollow, on Rattlesnake Mountain, and in the complex ridge and valley system that runs northward from Butts Hollow Road through Tower Hill, Deep Hollow, Turkey Hollow and Cascade Road. A great deal of this forested land is associated with steep slopes and, consequently, has not been developed.

To someone not familiar with the history of Amenia, it will come as a surprising fact that more of Amenia is forested now than in the recent past. Native Americans once burned extensive tracts of forest to make game more visible, many acres of forest were turned into charcoal for the iron industry, and agricultural land has returned to forest. Early historical accounts of Amenia explain the first two forest clearings, and stone walls in the middle of dense forest give mute testimony to the last.

The tree species vary considerably with elevation, proximity to water, and age. A wide variety of hardwoods and softwoods exist. There are a few places where groves of unusually large trees survive, probably because of their remoteness. Cataloguing and marking these trees is an important step in preserving them. Communities of wild flowers, herbaceous plants, lichens, and fungi are also found in the forested areas of the Town.

Besides scenic beauty, forests provide vital watershed protection, wildlife habitats, recreation, and an important source of wood for construction, fuel, and furniture. On a broader level, forests provide a "sink" for carbon dioxide gas which has been implicated as a possible cause of global warming.

As stated in the 1991 Master Plan, logging and development pose a threat to Amenia's forests. Since most of the forested land is in private hands, conservation of these lands depends largely on the wisdom and foresight of the property owner. Unlike some of the Town's resources, forests are a renewable resource. However, if logging is not done in a careful fashion, long-term impacts to the forest could result. A forest management plan that identifies best management practices for extraction and site stabilization is a common tool used to protect local forests from logging activities, and to preserve these valuable resources for the enjoyment and benefit of present and future generations. At the least, a management plan would include an up-to-date inventory of acreage and types of trees, significant stands of trees, wildlife habitats, and sensitive watershed and ground water recharge areas. Use of the forests should be balanced between immediate and future needs. Consideration should be given to replanting after cutting occurs, protection of forest soils from erosion during and after cutting, preservation of certain important wildlife habitats, and the complete preservation of groves of trees designated as special by virtue of their type, size, and/or location.

Biodiversity and Wildlife

The forested and agricultural lands and abundant wildlife define the rural character of the town. The slow pace of development and the decrease of agriculture have created ideal conditions for the growth of wildlife. However, increasing development pressures may jeopardize their wellbeing. Undertaking a study of Amenia's biodiversity, including its wildlife populations and ecological systems, and assessing the possible effects of

development on their wellbeing, would assist in ensuring their protection. The biodiversity of a community is its ecological underpinning, and there is an increasing recognition that landscape fragmentation threatens biodiversity and the ecological health of the natural (and human) environment.

To understand Amenia's biodiversity, one must appreciate the different existing habitats, how they relate to one another, and how development may affect each. Habitats are developed by geological processes, biological interactions, differences in altitude and proximity to water, and, in the modern world, the action of mankind. A summary of the habitats in Amenia follows:

Marble Knolls. Knolls of Stockbridge limestone ("marble") emerge from the glacial deposit filled valleys. Many of these low hills were recently pasture and are now grown over in dense stands of red cedar, although deciduous trees may dominate some. In general, the soils are limey, sandy, and well drained. Certain rare plants may occur and could support a rare butterfly, the falcate orange-tip. Exposed rock outcrops could be habitats for various snakes. Owls may winter in the cedars and certain species may breed there. This habitat may be threatened by development and mining.

Wetlands. Nearly 6 percent of Amenia, approximately 1,500 acres, is wetland. In addition to their value for flood storage, groundwater recharge areas, and purifiers of surface and groundwater, wetlands form an important and diverse habitat for many species of plants and animals. Our understanding of how wetlands serve as habitat for numerous species is evolving as natural resource specialists continue to study wetland form and function. It has been determined that endangered species such as the sedge wren and the bog turtle may inhabit certain local wetlands. Many other species of birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals either inhabit or use wetlands to some degree. Preservation of wetlands for wildlife habitat is equally as important as protecting these resources for their value in water quality and quantity management. The movement of wildlife species between wetlands and between wetland and upland areas is also an important aspect of biodiversity and needs to be understood in order to adequately protect ecological systems.

Streams with Floodplains. The two principal streams in town are the Wassaic Creek and the Webatuck Creek which join in the southern part of Amenia to form the Ten Mile River. The Webatuck Creek traverses all of Amenia from north to south and has a wide flood plain along most of its length. In the Oblong Valley, Webatuck Creek forms the center of this very scenic valley. Bordered on the west by forests and on the east by farmland, it is a significant wildlife habitat. The Wassaic Creek flows through the Smithfield Valley via wetlands and floodplains, and eventually joins the Webatuck Creek near the Taconic DDSO to form the Ten Mile River. The Ten Mile is a significant stream with wide floodplains and terraces. These valleys are significant for wildlife in their own right and because they constitute corridors that connect other wildlife habitats.

Upland Streams. These are small streams that flow from the ridges into the valleys. They generally lack floodplains and may be intermittent or seasonal. These are important spawning streams for fish and important sources of water for wildlife in the forested

upland areas. Wassaic Creek is a fast running upland stream as it passes through the Deep Hollow/Turkey Hollow area.

Ridges and Uplands. The ridges that outline the Harlem Valley are significant wildlife habitats. Rattlesnake Mountain, East Mountain, Deep Hollow, Bog Hollow, Turkey Hollow, Tower Hill, Peaked Mountain, Clark Hill, Cascade Mountain, and Kniblow Hill form an interconnected series of ridges and deep valleys that are probably the most important wildlife habitats in Amenia.

Significant Natural Features

The Dutchess County Environmental Management Council has identified significant natural areas in the County. These areas have been identified as possessing unique characteristics deserving preservation. In Amenia, two areas have been so designated:[10]

- Swift Pond and Cleaver Swamp in the southern portion of the Town are important wildlife habitats and vegetation areas which are privately owned. However, there is an identified hazardous waste site adjacent to the swamp on the Sarney Farm Superfund Site. The US Environmental Protection Agency has excavated contaminants and taken measures since 1990 to prevent spreading of hazardous wastes to groundwater drinking supplies. Monitoring wells have been installed to continually evaluate the migration of contaminants.[11]
- Turkey Hollow is a privately owned steep ravine through which the Wassaic Creek passes. The ravine is cool and moist, providing an important habitat for unique plant and animal species. Large evergreen trees (hemlocks) also grow in this area. Turkey Hollow is protected as forest land through its enrollment in the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Forest Tax Program, Section 480-a.

As a result of its topography, Amenia also offers a wide range of scenic views. Ridgelines form important viewsheds and scenic backdrops in most of Amenia. A Scenic Protection Overlay District is a zoning tool used by municipalities to protect ridgelines from development. Such a district could prohibit new structures or logging from breaking the continuity of any ridgeline. These types of restrictions will preserve an area's natural beauty and prevent the building of roads into areas that are too steep. Limiting logging will prevent erosion of thin mountain soils and flooding in the valleys below, as well as preserving the scenic value of the land.

Other important natural features in Amenia include the Oblong Valley along Webatuck Creek, Rattlesnake Mountain and East Mountain, and the Bog Hollow area. The Oblong Valley, a river valley between Leedsville and the Taconic DDSO, is bordered by Rattlesnake Mountain to the west and the Connecticut hills to the east. Defined by the Webatuck Creek, it is a unified geographic area designated mainly for agricultural use.

The Wassaic State Forest/Multiple Use Area across from the Taconic DDSO is another important natural area. State ownership and designation as a natural area protect it from

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[10] Dutchess County, Natural Resources, 1985

[11] US Environmental Protection Agency. Five-Year Report For the Sarney Farm Superfund Site. PDF Document. Available at www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/fiveyear/f2006020001154.pdf. Accessed December 5, 2006.

development. Most of the other important natural features in Amenia have, however, no permanent protection.

Preservation of these natural areas can be achieved through a variety of mechanisms. These methods include the use of conservation easements on the most important features of a property, or the dedication or sale of land to a private land trust such as the Nature Conservancy or the Dutchess Land Conservancy. Other techniques include zoning, which limits or prohibits development on the most environmentally constrained sites, such as those areas in wetlands or with extremely steep slopes. On areas in which development is allowed, cluster techniques could be used so that significant areas of open space can be preserved.

SCHOOLS

Amenia is served by two school districts. The Webutuck Central School District serves most of the community, including the hamlets of Amenia and Wassaic. The southwestern portion of the community (including land on either side of Route 22 to a point just below the hamlet of Wassaic), including the Taconic DDSO, and the area around Dover Plains is served by the Dover Union Free School District.

Webutuck Central School District

The Webutuck Central School District operates ~~four~~ three facilities~~: the Millerton Elementary School, the Amenia Elementary School,~~ the Webutuck Elementary School, Eugene Brooks Intermediate School, and Webutuck ~~Junior and Senior~~ High School located on Webutuck School Road, also known as Haight Road, just north of the Amenia Town line. Table IV-18 presents information on current enrollment at these buildings.

Table IV-18

Webutuck Central School District: Facilities and Enrollment, ~~2006~~2019-2020

School	Grades	Enrollment
~~Millerton Elementary~~	~~Pre-K, ACE*~~	~~20~~
Webutuck Elementary	Pre-K-3	165
Eugene Brooks Intermediate School	4-8	262
Webutuck High School	9-12	199
Total	K-12	626

Sources: NYS Dept. of Education - data.nysed.gov/

Table IV-19 shows the historical enrollment trends, as well ~~as the amount of the school district budget raised by local taxes~~per pupil ~~expediture~~expenditure.

The 1969 Master Plan foresaw the need for several additional classroom buildings due to projected population increases. Given the lower growth rate in the region and continued

decline in household sizes, the expected student enrollment did not materialize to the extent forecast. The 1991 Master Plan reports that the Webutuck School District (now called the Northeast Central School District) had a total enrollment of 1,073 students in 1989-90. At the time of the 2007 Update, total enrollment had decreased to 902 students, a decline of approximately 16 percent between those years. Since that 2007 Update, enrollment has decreased further to 626 students (as of the 2019-2020 school year), representing a decline of approximately 31 percent. ~~The enrollment has declined approximately 16 percent since 1990.~~

Table IV-19

~~Webutuck~~ Northeast Central School District: Enrollment and Expediture Trends, 2000-2020~~07~~

Year	# of Students	Per Pupil Expenditure
2000-01	944	$7,412~~1.99~~
2001-02	927	$7,994~~.28~~
2002-03	876	$8,876~~5.71~~
2003-04	887	$9,466~~.13~~
2004-05	871	$10,216~~5.62~~
2005-06	~~NA~~891	NA
2006-07	902	$11,628~~7.98~~
2007-08	863	$21,226
2008-09	829	$21,796
2009-10	792	$23,135
2010-11	NA	$23,142
2011-12	757	NA
2012-13	737	$23,784
2013-14	757	$23,119
2014-15	735	$24,235
2015-16	737	$24,804
2016-17	708	$25,315
2017-18	664	$26,931
2018-19	647	$26,151
2019-2020	626	$26,227

Sources: New York State Education Department data.nysed.gov/
Notes: Historical financial data not adjusted for inflation

~~The Webutuck Central School District Long Range Facilities Plan outlines many objectives for the coming years. Consolidating core educational services on a central campus, located on district property on Haight Road, has been proposed to enhance educational opportunities for students as well as efficiency for district operations. Purchase of surrounding properties may be necessary to satisfy program demands. A restructuring of grades is also proposed to accommodate space issues of a centralized campus. Millerton Elementary School may be used for early childhood education programs, as well as the headquarters for the district's transportation services. The district's other off-site facility, the Amenia Elementary School, may also be considered for early childhood education programs. Enactment of this Plan is dependent on community comments and further evaluation.~~[12]

Demographic and financial information from the NY State Department of Education

indicates that 49 percent of students in the Northeast Central School District are economically disadvantaged. Per pupil expenditure in the 2020-21 school year was $28,502.29, somewhat higher than the Dutchess County average of $22,280.82 per pupil.

Dover Union Free School District

The Dover Union Free School District does not operate any schools in the Town of Amenia, although parts of the Town are within its boundaries. Students from Amenia are transported by bus to Wingdale Elementary, Dover Elementary, and Dover Middle School, and Dover~~Junior/Senior~~ High School. Table IV-20 describes the facilities and their enrollment.

Table IV-20
Dover Union Free School District: Facilities and Enrollment, ~~2006~~2020-2021

School	Grades	Enrollment
Wingdale Elementary	K-2	~~351~~279
Dover Elementary	3-5	~~361~~289
Dover Middle School	6-8	352
Dover ~~Jr./Sr. HS~~High School	~~6~~9-12	~~1,043~~435
Total	K-12	~~1,755~~1,351

Sources: NYS Dept. of Education - data.nysed.gov/~~Dover Union Free School District website, http://www.doverschools.org/,~~

The Dover School District occupies almost all of the Town of Dover, and portions of the Towns of Washington, Union Vale, and Amenia. Approximately 250 of the 3,500 property parcels within this district are located in Amenia.[13] While ~~enrollment has been relatively stable over the past decade,~~ significant growth in the 1990s increased enrollment approximately 28 percent from the 1989-90 to 2001-02 school years, enrollment decreased by 23 percent in the past decade. ~~However, since that peak, enrollment figures have declined approximately 4.3 percent. Recent development levels in Dover indicate a potential for increased enrollments in the years to come.~~[14]

Demographic and financial information from the NY State Department of Education indicates that 60 percent of students in the Dover School District are economically disadvantaged. Per pupil expenditure in the 2020-21 school year was $20,364.65, slightly lower than the Dutchess County average of $22,280.82 per pupil.

Table IV-21 shows the historical enrollment trends, as well as ~~the amount of the school district budget raised by local taxes~~per pupil expenditure.

Table IV-21
Dover Enrollment and Expenditure Trends, 2002-~~2007~~2020

Year	# of Students	Per Pupil Expenditure
2001-02	1,833	NA
2002-03	1,821	$6,100.10
2003-04	1,757	$6,970.31
2004-05	1,759	$7,529.08
2005-06	1,713	$8,002.41
2006-07	1,755	$8,126.43
2007-2008	1,663	$15,281
2008-09	1,627	$16,987
2009-10	1,577	$17,077
2010-11	1,560	$17,629
2011-12	1,514	N/A
2012-13	1,472	$18,376
2013-14	1,441	$19,235
2014-15	1,387	$20,288
2015-16	1,343	$21,443
2016-17	1,322	$21,851
2017-18	1,341	$22,033
2018-19	1,335	$22,623
2019-20	1,351	$20,364.65

Sources: NYS Education Department – data.nysed.gov
Notes: Historical financial data not adjusted for inflation

~~The District employs over 120 teachers and almost 220 total personnel. Schools within the district are currently well below capacity with average class sizes ranging from 17 to 26 students. The District tries to maintain class sizes of no more than 26 students. Overall, the District expresses no capacity concerns, although there is limited space for program expansions, especially if enrollment increases.~~

~~In December 2005, district voters approved a $1.5 million renovation project which includes a new outdoor track at the high school as well as miscellaneous maintenance and~~

~~[13] Christopher Prill, Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs, Dover Union Free School District, personal communication 11/7/06.~~
~~[14] Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development. Major Projects Report June 2006. PDF Document. Available at http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Planning/majorprojects-reportjune2006.pdf. Accessed December 4, 2006.~~

~~repairs. No expansion projects are currently underway or predicted, but the District's Facilities Committee continually reviews the area's growth and longevity of its buildings.~~

UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Without sufficient utility and infrastructure systems, towns cannot support additional growth. This section reviews the solid waste disposal system and water and wastewater issues in the Town. An ongoing issue faced by the Town of Amenia, even since the 1969 Master Plan, has been the development of a central sewer system in the hamlet of Amenia. This section supports the need for such a system as described in Chapter II, and examines the impact that utility systems have on the land use pattern of a community and the way that it evolves over time.

Solid Waste

The closing of the private Harlem Valley landfill in the Town of Amenia in 1987 brought the national solid waste crisis into sharp focus for Town residents. The existence of the landfill was one of the reasons the Town decided not to join the Dutchess County Resource Recovery Agency (DCRRA) when it was established in 1982. Suddenly, the private carters which were picking up residents' garbage were forced to turn elsewhere for the disposal.

Many of the private carters are now relying on the facilities of the Dutchess County Resource Recovery Agency, established by the New York State Legislature to provide solid waste management services for residents of Dutchess County. In 1984, local legislation was enacted to create a centralized solid waste management service throughout the County. Several years later in 1990, a County law was imposed for the collection and management of recyclables whereby solid waste facilities (including municipalities) are required to separate out recyclable materials. The DCRRA operates a Waste-to-Energy Power Plant for garbage, and a Material Recovery Facility for recyclables. In addition, they sponsor an annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day for toxic and electronic waste. The DCRRA also provides an incineration service to those people wishing to dispose of confidential documents.[15]

In Amenia, the Town operates a transfer station and recycling center on Old Route 22 between Wassaic and Depot Hill Road. The transfer station collects bulk trash (e.g., appliances, furniture, etc.) for a fee, but does not accept hazardous materials.

The charter of the DCRRA outlined its responsibility for the disposal of garbage in the county. If its waste management plans are realized, the municipal and private garbage collectors in Dutchess County should be able to adequately dispose of their garbage for the foreseeable future. The Town's role will be to assist in the coordination of that effort through the encouragement of recycling activities, the scheduling of bulk waste collection days, the monitoring of private carters and the maintenance of the transfer station. Town residents will need to be educated regarding the use of the transfer station and recycling center. An ongoing concern is the sanitary and orderly appearance of the recycling center.

[15] http://www.dcrra.org/. Accessed November 28, 2006.

Water

Most residents of Amenia rely on wells for their water supply. The wells draw from groundwater stored in bedrock aquifers as well as the more prolific sand and gravel aquifers, which underlie much of the Town. However, in the Town Center of Amenia and the Taconic DDSO, water systems service a number of parcels. Both of these systems also draw their supply from the groundwater.

Amenia's water district services approximately 1,000 residents and businesses in the Town Center (the exact number of residents and businesses is currently being surveyed). The water tank in the district has a maximum storage capacity of 200,000 gallons. There are currently four wells that provide water for the district. The daily usage within the district averages 100,000 gallons, while peak flows have reached 145,000 gallons per day. Table IV-22 outlines the capacity of the different wells that exist in the water district.

Table IV-22
Town of Amenia Water District—Capacity of Wells, 2006

Well	Capacity (Gallons Per Minute)
Well #1	15
Well #4	36
Well #5	20
Well #6	33
Well #4A (proposed)	40-64

Source: Gary Bonds, Water Treatment Operator, Town of Amenia Water Department, personal communication 12/18/06.

The operating budget for the Water District is $175,000 per year. The Town also has an ongoing capital improvements fund of $100,000. However this money has not yet been designated for a specific project, and there are currently no large-scale capital improvement projects in the Town of Amenia. The most recent improvements were in 2001-02, when 2,000 linear feet of water main were added to the system to create a loop, and in 1999-2000, when 1,000 linear feet of water main were replaced.

As previously stated, much of Amenia is underlain by a prolific sand and gravel aquifer from which many residents draw their water supply. Because of its high porosity, the aquifer also transmits pollutants quickly. However, the quality of groundwater can be protected by aquifer protection practices or regulations.

Sewer System

One of the most critical issues facing the Town, as emphasized in this Plan's vision and goals statements, is the need for a sewage treatment system in the hamlet of Amenia. The only existing sewer system in Amenia currently is at the Taconic DDSO. Provision of central collection and treatment is essential for public health and any opportunity for expansion of commercial or residential uses in the hamlet.

The 1969 Master Plan indicated the need for a sewer system. The 1991 Master Plan also indicated the need as a priority. The proposed area for providing treatment in the Hamlet is east of the traffic light, along Route 343 to Mechanic Street (and up Depot Hill to Prospect Street), north on Route 22/44 to the Freshtown Plaza, south on Route 22 to Lake Amenia Road, and west along Route 22/44 to the Seravan Restaurant. These are the proposed areas to be served, although without a site for locating a wastewater treatment plant, no formal Sewer District has been officially designated or voted upon by homeowners included within this proposed district.
The proposed district would include a build-out potential for approximately 160,000 gallons per day (GPD) of treatment required. The expected cost per household would have to be approximately $500 - $600 per year, in order to be affordable for the households that would benefit from such a system. Early feasibility studies (in 2004) without a specific location put the capital (construction) cost of a Conventional System at approximately $6.7 million and annual Operation and Maintenance cost at approximately $170,000.[16]

A Constructed Wetlands system, as a lower cost, sustainable system for treatment of 160,000 GPD has a more affordable capital cost of approximately $5.9 million and an annual Operation and Maintenance cost of approximately $100,000. With the Constructed Wetlands System, there may be an opportunity for NYSERDA grants for sustainable, alternative energy projects in New York State, but funding sources have diminished over the past five years, as competition for grants increases. Realistically, low-cost or no-interest loans seem to be the only funding sources available to the town.

Finding an appropriate site for either system has been elusive. Land acquisition for municipal services has not been a priority for the Town Boards for the past 10 years. The Conventional System uses less land, but would cost more to build and operate, while the Constructed Wetlands System uses more land, but costs less to build, and less to operate. The town is willing to work with potential developers to get a system in place; however, it has to be affordable to the users who will be paying for the system for the duration of its usefulness, or it could potentially be too costly for older, fixed income residents to remain in their homes.

A sewer system will allow for more business in the Hamlet, a more dense and vital downtown area, with the quality of life that comes with mixed-use occupancy. More apartments could be made in some of the older, empty buildings with stores or restaurants on the street level and living quarters on the second and third floors. This Comprehensive Plan has a vision statement that incorporates such goals.

Overhead Wires

The 1991 Master Plan identified overhead wires as a major impediment to an appealing visual character in the hamlet. Unfortunately, the cost of burying utility wires can be prohibitive, particularly for a community with a limited tax base. It was suggested in the

[16] All estimates are initial estimates only and are based on work performed for the Town by Morris Associates Engineering Consultants in 2004.

previous Master Plan that the Town and the state encourage the local utility companies to devise a solution which at a minimum straightens the poles. Ideally, some of the wires would be eliminated or relocated to easements which might run behind the buildings on Main Street.

Storm Drainage

Most storm drainage in Amenia is accommodated in open swales and culverts. Developers are required to show drainage facilities on subdivision plats and site plans which are submitted to the Town.

The 1991 Master Plan noted the need for a comprehensive map which identified storm drainage facilities in Town.

The recommended standards in the previous Master Plan for the installation of covered storm drainage systems include those areas in the hamlets that have lots that average less than 20,000 square feet. Storm drainage systems were also recommended for areas where impervious surfaces exceed 35% of the land area and where mobile home parks exist.

Storm drainage systems may also be needed where erosion and sedimentation is a concern along many of the Town's steeper roadways. In other instances, open drainage could continue to be used. Amenia's Subdivision Regulations could be improved to provide better detail on both storm drainage and erosion and sedimentation controls.

TRANSPORTATION

This section examines the transportation resources of the Town of Amenia. While the town's transportation resources are geared toward the road network, which has evolved since colonial times, some attention is also paid to mass transit and pedestrian facilities. The Route 22 Corridor Management Plan prepared by the Poughkeepsie Dutchess County Transportation Council has recommendations for road network improvements in the hamlets to improve traffic flow and enhance pedestrian and bicycle access.

Functional Road Network and Inventory

Roadways are divided into functional classifications according to the purpose they serve. The categories range from expressways to rural roadways which may even be unpaved.

Limited Access Highways. These include roads known as expressways or freeways to which entrances and exits are controlled by the means of ramps. Limited access highways provide express transportation service for large volumes of traffic. The nearest limited access highways to Amenia are the Taconic State Parkway to the west and Interstate 84 and 684 in the Town of Southeast in Putnam County.

Arterial Roads. Arterial roads carry traffic between towns and also within the community. In the Town of Amenia, U.S. and New York State highways, as well as most county roads, could be considered arterials. These include the following roads:

- U.S. 44
- NY State Highway 22
- NY State Highway 343
- Dutchess County 2—Leedsville Rd. (to Amenia Union)
- Dutchess County 2—Amenia Union Rd. (Amenia Union to South Amenia)
- Dutchess County 3—Bog Hollow Road and Kent Road
- Dutchess County 4—Sinpatch Rd. and Poplar Hill Road
- Dutchess County 81—Old Route 22 (Amenia Wassaic Road)
- Dutchess County 83—(82 A) Smithfield Road
- Dutchess County 86—Bangall Amenia Road
- Dutchess County 105—Sinpatch (entry to State School to hwere it meets D.C. 4)
- Dutchess County 1—Sharon Station Road (Route 22 to the CT line)
- Dutchess County 5—(off Smithfield Road)

Other Town Roads that Serve as Arterials

- Sharon Station Road (Rt. 343 to D.C. 1)
- Perry Corners Road
- Randall Rd. (into Benton Hill)
- Yellow City Road
- Separate Road

Roads that Should not be Arterials because of Dangerous Conditions

- Deep Hollow
- Tower Hill

Collector Roads. The function of collector roads is to collect traffic from residential areas and funnel it to the arterial system. Since most of Amenia is rural, few roads serve this function exclusively. In the rural sections, most people live adjacent to the arterial roads. The following roads in the Amenia hamlet serve as collector roads:

- Depot Road
- Hamm's Road
- Mygatt Road
- Lake Amenia Road

Residential Streets. Residential streets serve to provide access for traffic having a destination or origin on a particular residential street.

Rural Roads. Amenia has a number of roadways that serve as important links in the transportation system but are not paved. These include sections of Tower Hill Road, Deep Hollow Road and similar roads. Some streets in new residential subdivisions, such as those in Troutbeck, have also been built to rural standards. Residents have expressed a concern about the maintenance and preservation of scenic character of town gravel roads such as Cascade, Deep Hollow, and Tower Hill roads.

The road classification system provides a way of looking at proposed development projects; and indicates how the road network should function in the future. New subdivisions should provide a hierarchy of streets with access to an arterial road. New houses, in general, should not be encouraged to have direct access to arterial streets, and adjacent subdivisions should be connected by collector roads or residential streets.

Traffic Conditions

The highest traffic volumes are found on the State and U.S. Highways within Amenia. Table IV-23 lists the most recent traffic volumes (in vehicles per day) for major roadways in Amenia. The figures in the table are based on short term counts that were adjusted to account for vehicle mix (i.e., cars, trucks, buses, etc.), day of the week, and seasonality to produce estimated daily averages. Truck traffic is higher on Route 22 and roads serving sand and gravel operations.

Traffic congestion can be measured using Level of Service (LOS) guidelines which estimate average vehicle delay in approaches to intersections. These calculations range from LOS A, where all traffic clears the intersection with minimal delays or during each light cycle, to LOS F, where it may take several signal cycles to clear the intersection or where drivers may experience difficulty making left turns. Generally, LOS C or D is considered acceptable at the peak hour. The intersection of NY 22/US 44/NY 343, the most heavily traveled intersection in the Town, experiences some congestion during regular rush hours. But in general, all intersections within the town operate at LOS A or B.

Table IV-23
Traffic Volume Counts, Town of Amenia

Route	Start Location	End Location	Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)	Year
NY 22	Start NY 343 Overlap (in Dover)	CR 81	~~5,297~~6,013	2019~~00~~
NY 22	CR 81	End NY 343 Overlap, Start US 44 Overlap	~~5,478~~5,376	2019~~2003~~
NY 22	End NY 343 Overlap, Start US 44 Overlap	NY 199 (in North East)	~~5,201~~4,711	2019~~00~~
US 44	NY 44A (in Millbrook)	NY 343, Start US 22 Overlap	~~3,904~~3,681	2019~~01~~
NY 343	US 44, End NY 22 Overlap	Conn. State Line, End NY 343	~~3,595~~5,365	2019~~01~~

Source: New York State Department of Transportation Traffic Data Viewer, https://www.dot.ny.gov/tdv ~~, 2003 Traffic Volume Report for Dutchess County~~

Generally, the NYS Department of Transportation does not consider two lane roadways congested until they reach volumes of 10,000 to 12,000 vehicles per day. When they exceed 15,000 vehicles per day, the roads are considered severely congested. None of the County roadways approach congested levels. Traffic levels on Routes 22 and 343 should continue to be monitored.

Pedestrian, Bicyclist and Transit Issues

Founded in 1986, and incorporated in 1996, The Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association has worked in conjunction with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation &

Historic Preservation, the New York State Department of Transportation, Dutchess County, and several local communities to redevelop the abandoned Harlem Valley rail bed into a hiking and biking trail. The Harlem Valley Rail Line to Chatham in Columbia County is now being converted for pedestrian and bicycle uses. Currently, there are about 15 miles of paved trails open to the public, with another 8 miles nearing construction. When completed, the trail is intended to be 46 miles long.[17] Opportunities to eventually tie the trail into the Appalachian Trail could also be pursued by the County.

Several routes of the County Loop bus system serve Amenia and provide service to the Taconic DDSO from Poughkeepsie. Buses travel from Poughkeepsie via Millbrook, Dover Plains, Millerton, and other local municipalities.

Railroad

In 2000, New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority extended Metro-North rail service to Wassaic on its Harlem Line. Previously, service terminated at the Dover Plains station. This rail expansion also included the Ten Mile River Station. Filled parking lots at these stations indicate the importance of this rail line in Amenia. This railroad has the potential to encourage economic growth and increase the pedestrian vibrancy of local hamlets if careful planning strategies are implemented to guide development.

[17] Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc