DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Town of North Salem, New York
C O M P R E H E N S I V E P L A N



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On behalf of North Salem Town Board
North Salem, NY

May 2011

Name of Action:
Town of North Salem 2011 Comprehensive Plan

SEQRA Classification:
Type I Action

Location of Proposed Action:
Town of North Salem, New York

Lead Agency:
Town of North Salem Town Board

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In February 2011, the draft Comprehensive Plan (an update intended to replace the Town's 1985 Master Plan), hereinafter referred to as "the Plan," was completed. The Plan contemplates long-range planning strategies and actions for managing development in North Salem.

1.1 Purpose of Environmental Impact Assessment

Adoption of the Plan is classified as a Type I Action according to SEQR regulations and requires an environmental impact assessment as prescribed by 6 NYCRR §617 State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR). A generic environmental impact statement (GEIS) assesses a broad-based action or a group of related actions and is more conceptual in nature than a site-specific environmental impact statement (EIS). The GEIS does not replace the need for separate and distinct site-specific EISs in connection with any future development proposals. Each specific proposal for any site is independently subject to SEQR.

The Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) public scoping document (adopted by the Town Board on February 22, 2011) determined the elements to be evaluated in the DGEIS. This DGEIS addresses recommendations set forth in the Plan and examines potential town-wide environmental impacts that may result from the Plan including, but not limited to, the potential land use changes and/or other actions required to implement the Plan. In compliance with the requirements of SEQR, this DGEIS includes the following:

- Description of the Proposed Action and its purpose and benefits;
- Assessment of existing conditions;
- Evaluation of potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and
- Alternatives (in some cases, analyses are based on conceptual information due to the comprehensive and prospective nature of the Proposed Action and its component parts);
- Identification of any necessary mitigation measures to minimize potential significant adverse environmental impacts;
- Identification of any significant adverse environmental impacts that cannot be avoided if the Proposed Action is implemented; and
- Identification and brief discussion of any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources that would be involved in implementation of the Proposed Action.

1.2 Description of the Proposed Action



The Proposed Action involves adoption of the proposed 2011 Comprehensive Plan by the Town of North Salem Town Board. The Plan provides a blueprint of the Town's planning strategies and actions that are proposed for implementation over the next decade in North Salem. It will replace the 1985 Master Plan. As stated in the Plan, the Town's vision involves maintaining and enhancing its rural residential character and identity. In pursuit of this vision, the Plan's guiding principles are to:

1. Preserve and protect the Town's natural resources, including open space, wooded hills, water bodies, wetlands, wildlife habitat and scenic views.
2. Preserve and protect the Town's historic and cultural resources, including buildings, landmarks and artifacts.
3. Expand open space and recreational opportunities for all residents.
4. Provide a variety of housing choices that enables residents to remain in the community.
5. Reduce the Town's carbon footprint and proactively adapt to climate change.
6. Provide public facilities and services in a fiscally responsible manner and at levels adequate to ensure the health, safety and general welfare of residents.
7. Support a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation network.
8. Encourage agricultural uses as a source of the Town's economic vitality.
9. Limit non-residential development, in keeping with the rural character of the Town, to what is necessary to provide North Salem residents with adequate services.

The Comprehensive Plan includes a number of recommendations to address the needs and priorities of the Town. Some key recommendations are summarized below.

<u>Community Character and Design:</u>

- Preserve Rural Character
    - Maintain and enhance the overall rural appearance of the Town through the site plan and permitting processes.
    - Adopt a "disturbing the peace" noise ordinance for residential areas to regulate the hours of operation for heavy, noisy machinery (construction and landscaping equipment, such as leaf blowers), and establish appropriate decibel limits and a complete set of general noise standards.

- Create and adopt a local dark sky policy to help reduce nightly use of outdoor lighting and energy consumption.
- Preserve and enhance scenic landscapes of the Town's rural areas.
- Incorporate new development into the Town's natural landforms.
- Strengthen the historic identity of the Town.

Land Use and Zoning:

- Preserve Town Character through Zoning
  - Maintain all existing residential densities (R-4, R-2, R-1, R-1/2 and R-1/4) with the exception of rezoning two areas in the general vicinity of Turkey Hill Road and east of Cat Ridge Road from R-2 to R-4, consistent with its current development, and limiting the PD-CCRC district to its current location.
  - Modestly expand the RO zone on Fields Lane and add flex-type mixed uses and service businesses under special permit to the list of permitted uses to allow flexibility in the types of businesses permitted.
  - In areas of the Town that are environmentally fragile, explore the implementation of "performance zoning" regulations to regulate the intensity of development that is acceptable based upon soils, topographic and additional natural resources data rather than traditional zoning.

- Protect Environmental Resources
  - Amend the current tree preservation ordinance to simplify the approval process for homeowners and add provisions for the harvesting of trees.
  - Adopt legislation for steep slopes to better protect the Town's environmentally sensitive areas, water resources and wetlands and to preserve viewsheds.
  - Preserve environmentally-sensitive undeveloped land to avert sprawl, reduce carbon footprint and protect natural ecosystems, including wetlands and forests.
  - Explore and encourage the use of tools for open space preservation, including outright purchase of land, purchase of development rights or acceptance of conservation easements, with funding through bonds or the establishment of a community preservation fund. In addition the Town supports the basic provisions of New York State's Agricultural and Markets' Article 25AA and the County's agricultural districts.

- Preserve and Enhance Open Space Resources
  - Preserve visible/scenic land and landscapes.
  - Preserve ecologically significant land.
  - Connect important open space areas.
  - Enhance existing open space areas.

Environmental Resources

- Protect Water Quality
    - Support and facilitate domestic well and public well testing.
    - Reduce road salt application rates during winter.
    - Adopt an ordinance to protect local aquifers.

- Promote Environmentally-Friendly Provisions
    - Promote solar, geothermal and other renewable energy sources for new development.
    - Promote land planning that accommodates motor and public transportation but places greater importance on pedestrians.
    - Promote affordable housing near workplaces and mass transit.
    - Adopt and implement a Climate Action Plan

Housing:

- Promote Affordable Housing Initiatives
    - Increase support for affordable rental units by exploring partnership opportunities with both for-profit and non-profit organizations to construct and rehabilitate affordable rental housing.
    - Work with Westchester County to implement the fair housing settlement and facilitate fair and affordable housing.
    - Consider other policies: liberalizing regulations and incentivizing the creation of accessory dwellings, encouraging accessory dwelling owners to include accessory dwellings in the Moderate Income Housing (MIH) stock, establishing an affordable housing trust fund, and buying existing homes (negotiating the purchase and/or taking as a vehicle to obtain title) and renting them to income constrained tenants.

Transportation:

- Support Transportation Improvements on State and Local Roads
    - Advocate for NYSDOT improvements to major thoroughfares I-684 and I-84 from Brewster to the Connecticut boundary, including I-684 northbound off ramp to I-84 capacity and safety improvements.
    - Advocate NYSDOT to increase capacity of I-684 (widening from 2 to 3 lanes at the Route 35 interchange).
    - Support improvements at the intersection of Route 202 and Croton Falls Road.
    - Continue to coordinate with the Town of Somers and the NYSDOT in developing a solution to the parking and traffic congestion problem in Croton Falls.
- Promote Safe Transportation

  - Encourage slower travel speeds through more vigorous enforcement and speed limit reductions [June, Titicus (Route 116) and Bloomer Roads].
  - Provide context sensitive solutions for safety enhancements at key intersections.
- Manage Traffic Demand at Key Land Uses
  - Develop traffic demand management programs for the schools and the Town's Summer Camp at Mountain Lakes Park.
- Encourage Transportation Related Actions that Promote Energy Conservation
  - Encourage ride-sharing for energy conservation.
  - Encourage ways to reduce fuel consumption.
  - Encourage use of hybrid vehicles or non-fossil fuels in motor vehicles.
  - Conduct a bicycle study to determine the best routes and facilities for accommodating bicycle travel.

Public Facilities and Services:

- Enhance Public Facilities and Services
  - Form a committee comprised of representatives from the School District, Town government and residents to study the sharing of services.
  - Maintain and support tax incentives for volunteers in the Croton Falls Fire Department and the North Salem Volunteer Ambulance Corps.
  - Research funding and grant availability to allow all schools to become emergency shelters.
- Enhance Recreational Facilities
  - Preserve Town-owned parks and consider instituting a program of capital infrastructure maintenance for recreational facilities.
  - Explore the feasibility of providing a swimming pool and support facilities at Mountain Lakes Park that is run by the Town under a license agreement with the County of Westchester.
  - Update the 1994 Town Recreation Master Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan can be viewed as a mitigation measure against the prospective impact of development on environmental resources in North Salem. It strives to guide development in a manner that will protect and enhance the natural resources, community character and quality of life, while improving the Town's economic viability. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is needed to implement the Town's vision and goals.

Capital Plan

The Plan recommends implementation of the recommendations via a capital planning process that would assist the Town in making choices about which capital projects should be implemented, how they should be financed and when. This will be helpful to

establish funding of high-priority projects in a timely and cost effective manner.

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSES

The following evaluates the proposed 2011 Comprehensive Plan, including a discussion of existing conditions and of potential adverse environmental impacts, as well as any necessary mitigation.

2.1 Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy

This section describes the existing land use, zoning and public policy within the Town of North Salem and evaluates any potential impacts associated with the 2011 Comprehensive Plan. This evaluation considers consistency with the Town's local planning objectives, as well as regional plans such as *Westchester 2025*, Watershed Plans and the Greenway Community Compact.

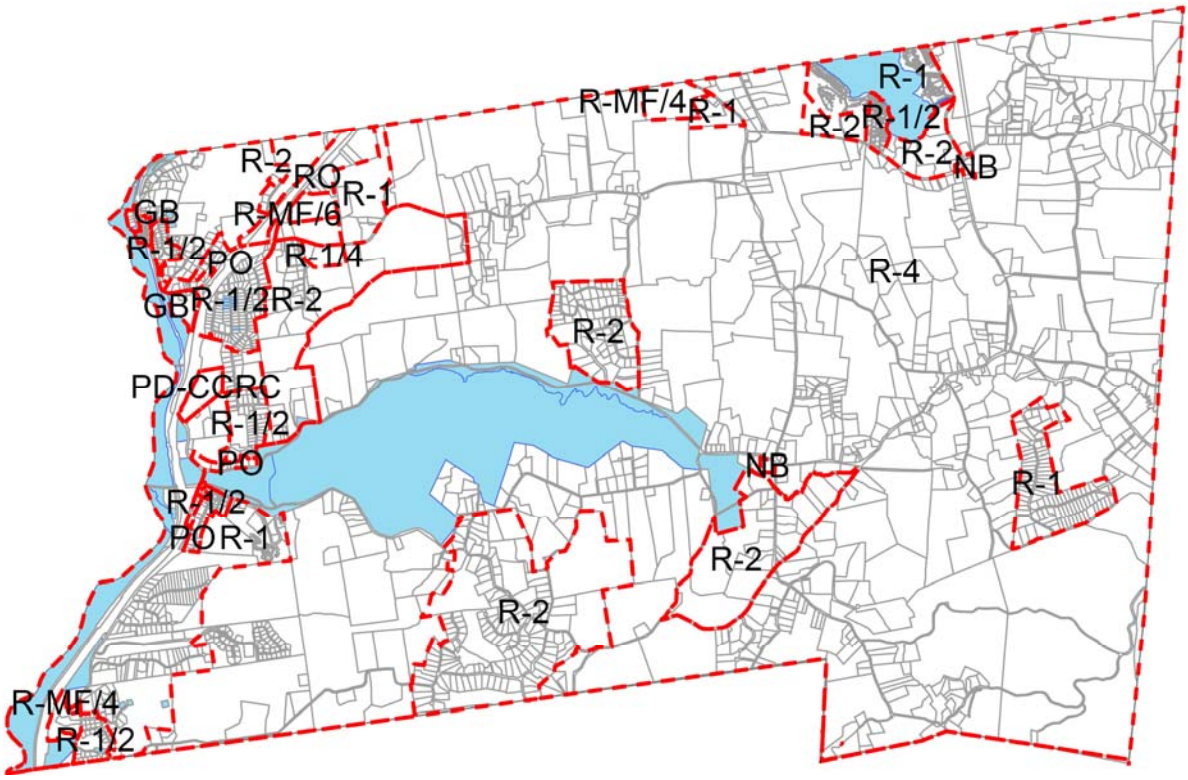
2.1.1 Existing Conditions

Zoning

The current zoning ordinance for the Town was adopted in 1987. At that time, the bulk of Town land was rezoned to R-4 (Rural Density Residential District) and to R-2 (Low Density Residential District), which permit a single-family dwelling per four and two acres, respectively. The zoning ordinance was amended in 2000 to include new multi-family sites and a new zoning district, the Planned Development - Continuing Care Retirement Community District. Since 1987, four parcels in the Town were rezoned to medium to high-density residential zoning districts (R-MF/6 and R-MF/4 districts) with inclusionary requirements in 2000 and 2001. This was intended to increase opportunities for the creation of affordable housing choices in the Town.

The zoning ordinance currently consists of 13 zoning districts **(Figure 1)**, which include eight residential (five single-family, two multifamily and one planned development-continuing care retirement community), four commercial (two business and two office) and one planned development district.

Figure 1: Generalized Zoning



Land Use



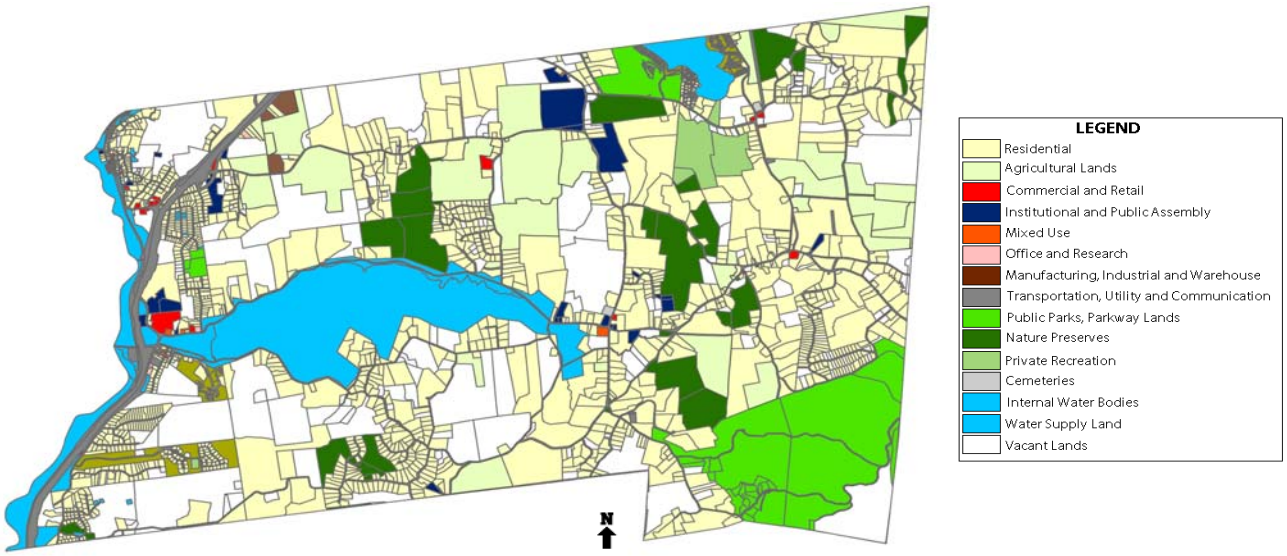
North Salem is characterized by the predominance of its residential land, which totaled 5,771.1 acres or 38.8 percent of Town land in 2007 (**Figure 2**). Undeveloped and vacant land, another primary land use, occupied 3,299.3 acres or 22.2 percent of Town land area in 2007. Other predominant land uses include agricultural land at 1,372.5 acres or 9.2 percent of Town land area, New York City water supply lands at 1,270.9 acres or 8.5 percent, and park land at 1,052.67 acres or 7.1 percent.

Approximately 130 acres of land are located in business zoning districts; however, only about 95 acres are used as businesses. The proportion of land in the Town that is zoned for and occupied by business uses is slightly less than 1 percent. However, business use is predominant throughout the agricultural land (9.2% noted above), used as horse

farms, orchards, etc.

Similarly, while residential zoning districts occupy 88 percent of the Town's land area, residential land uses occupy only 30 percent. There are two small hamlets, Purdys and Croton Falls, where housing co-exists with small, locally oriented businesses. Most residential development in North Salem took place prior to 1980; over 40 percent of the housing stock was constructed in 1949 or earlier. In 2000, the majority of North Salem's 1,979 housing units were single-family homes, representing 94.3 percent of the Town's housing stock, with small multi-family structures of two to six units comprising the balance. Between 2000 and 2009, the Town issued a low average of eight (8) residential building permits annually.

Figure 2: Land Use Map



Public Policy

In general, the Town's land use and zoning practices and policies are consistent with other regional plans. *Westchester 2025* is a regional (Westchester County) comprehensive plan that is currently underway, and it updates its predecessor *Patterns*. *Westchester 2025* indicates that development of "greenfields" is a shrinking component of new construction in the County, and that the future lies in redevelopment of residential, commercial and industrial space with most new construction located in downtowns and centers, especially those with access to a rail station.

The Town of North Salem is a *Greenway Compact Community*, which encourages regional cooperation to further Greenway criteria of natural and cultural resource protection, regional planning, economic development, public access, and heritage and environmental education.

The Town of North Salem, along with nine local municipalities, Westchester County and the NYC Department of Environmental Protection participated in developing the *Comprehensive Croton Watershed Water Quality Protection Plan (the Croton Plan)* in 2007. It assesses watershed conditions, identifies water quality impacts and sets forth strategies to reduce those impacts and prevent water quality degradation while enhancing valued community character.

2.1.2 Potential Impacts

The implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is expected to preserve the Town's existing patterns of development as well as its natural environment by directing development into the areas most characteristic of those patterns. The Plan has been designed to promote limited commercial activities in the existing hamlets of Croton Falls, Purdys, Peach Lake and Salem Center, and to reduce land-consumptive development in the rural sections of the Town. In areas of the Town that are environmentally fragile, the Plan recommends evaluating the implementation of performance zoning regulations to regulate the intensity of development that is acceptable based upon soils, topographic and additional natural resources data rather than traditional zoning. The Plan will reduce land development impacts when compared with the Town's future development under existing land use regulations.

No changes were recommended in the Plan to existing residential zones (R-4, R-2, R-1, R-1/2 and R-1/4) with the exception of rezoning two areas in the general vicinity of Turkey Hill Road from R-2 to R-4. This zoning recommendation (R-2 to R-4) will result in a reduction of density. The Plan recommends that any action affecting residential density should take into consideration the limitations of Town's existing transportation system, the present and future availability of community facilities and utilities, maintenance of the Town's historic buildings and sites, preservation of open space and natural features and the character and prevailing density of the existing residential development in the area.

The Plan recommends that the Town consider permitting two or three family dwelling units that are currently not permitted in areas where mixed single-family and multi-family residential character has already been established, such as in the hamlets, to contribute toward housing stock variety and/or affordable housing. These areas meet some criteria for more moderately dense housing and provide opportunities for some

redevelopment. The Plan also recommends continued support of accessory apartments and residential units above retail in mixed commercial-residential areas. By promoting residences above commercial uses in designated hamlet areas, which offer access to transportation services and water and sewerage services, the Plan encourages a range of residential densities and diversity of housing types while also considering the Town's environmental constraints and infrastructure limitations.

The Plan's recommended policies to consider in support of affordable housing include: liberalizing regulations and incentivizing the creation of accessory dwellings, encouraging accessory dwelling owners to include accessory dwellings in the Moderate Income Housing (MIH) stock, establishing an affordable housing trust fund, buying existing homes and renting them to income constrained tenants and increasing support for affordable rental units by exploring partnership opportunities with both for-profit and non-profit organizations to construct and rehabilitate affordable rental housing. Further, the Plan recommends working with Westchester County to implement the fair housing settlement and facilitating fair and affordable housing.

The Plan recommends a modest expansion of the RO zone on Fields Lane and to add flex-type mixed uses and service businesses under special permit to the list of permitted uses to allow flexibility in the types of businesses permitted. This RO zone expansion may lead to new business development; however, it would be consistent with development patterns in the area and helps address the Town's non-residential development needs for tax rateables.



The Plan recommends the preservation of environmentally sensitive undeveloped land to avert sprawl, reduce carbon footprint and protect natural ecosystems including wetlands and forests. It encourages cluster development where appropriate to preserve open space. Legislation for steep slopes was recommended to better protect the Town's environmentally sensitive areas, water resources and wetlands and to preserve viewsheds. It is recommended that a Town-wide trail system be evaluated, along with collection of appropriate recreation fees-in-lieu of payments. It also recommends that the current tree preservation ordinance be amended to simplify the approval process for homeowners and to add provisions for the harvesting of trees. Tools recommended for open space preservation include consideration of a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program that would raise funds for acquiring land or conservation easements, the establishment of a community preservation fund and the adoption of the basic provisions of New York State's Agricultural and Markets' Article 25AA, and continued support of the County's agricultural districts.

The Plan's land use, open space protection and natural resource conservation recommendations are consistent with major findings of regional planning initiatives including the *Westchester 2025, Greenway Community Compact* and the Comprehensive *Croton Watershed Water Quality Protection Plan*.

2.1.3 Mitigation Measures

The adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town of North Salem will not in and of itself impact land because it does not directly authorize any particular development project. Future land development applications will be required to comply with the Town's land use and environmental regulations and SEQRA. The Plan encourages increased density in areas where such a character is established and in hamlets to accommodate the Town's housing and economic development needs. Additionally, the Plan's recommendations encouraging cluster development and protection of the Town's environmental resources and open space will help achieve growth that is consistent with the vision and goals of the Town, as well as other regional plans. No mitigation is necessary.

2.2 Historic Resources

This section evaluates the components of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan that serve to protect or enhance the existing historic resources within the Town and the Town's character and design.

2.2.1 Existing Conditions

In 1984, the Town created a Historic Preservation Commission, an administrative and advisory board for the Town's Landmark and Historic Preservation law and Historic Roads law, which regulates historic landmarks and local roads of North Salem.[1] Since 1986, the Town has designated twenty-five local landmarks, three (the Purdy Homestead, Union Hall and Delancey Hall) of which are on the State and National Register of Historic Landmarks. The most well known landmark is the Balanced Rock on Titicus Road. Of the twenty-five local landmarks (refer to Table 1), fifteen are residences, four are community facilities, two are mixed use (commercial and residential), one is a commercial property, one is infrastructure, one is a stone structure and one is a natural site. Baxter Road is the only designated historic local road.



Although there are no historic districts currently in Town, residents of Purdys are beginning the process of forming an historic district. According to the Town's historian, there are eight other possible areas that are candidates for historic districts, but they have not begun the process.

Since the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, four additional landmarks were designated by the Town and are now included in the description above and the table below.

[1] A historic landmark is any building, structure, object, ruins, cemetery or natural object, configuration, geological formation or feature or parcel of land which has historic significance or is identified with historic personages or important historic events. A historic road is "any road of historical value or aesthetic interest by reason of its antiquity as a cultural or heritage resource."

Table 1: Local Historic Landmarks, Roads and Districts, North Salem		
Title	Address	Property Type
Landmarks		
Thaddeus Crane House	2 Baxter Road	Residence
Keeler Homestead	85 Keeler Lane	Residence
Purdy Homestead	102 Titicus Road	Mixed Use
Mills House	425 Mills Road	Residence
Samuel Wallace House	1 Wallace Road	Residence
John June House	71 June Road	Residence
Delancey Hall	266 Titicus Road	Community Facility (Town Hall)
Uriah Wallace House	264 Titicus Road	Residence
Stebbins Baxter Quick House	669 Titicus Road	Residence
Union Hall	673 Titicus Road	Commercial
Old Methodist Church	687 Titicus Road	Residence
Charles Decker House	8 Juengstville Road	Residence
Crow's Nest	9 Juengst Raod	Residence
Purdys Hotel	2 Main Street	Multi-Family Residence
McKeel's Market	8 Main Street	Mixed Use
Keeler Lane Bridge	Keeler Lane	Infrastructure
Quick Barn	667 Titicus Road	Community Facility (Storage Barn)
The Balanced Rock	667 Titicus Road	Natural
The White Elephant	81 Keeler Lane	Community Facility (Historic Society Headquarters)
The D.D. Smith House	Titicus Road	Residence
The Margaret M. Mahoney House	12 Main Street	Residence
Spur Street Cottage	3 Spur Street	Residence
Purdy's Schoolhouse	6 Old Schoolhouse Road	Residence
Central High School	520 Route 22	Community Facility (School)
Purdy Homestead Stone Chamber	100 Titicus Road	Structure
Roads		
Baxter Road	Baxter Road	Historic Road
Districts		
Pending	Purdys Hamlet area	Mixed Use District

Source: Town of North Salem web site, Historic Preservation Landmarks Page, supplemented by the Planning Board Chair.
* Shaded cells indicate landmarks on a National or State Register.

2.2.2 Potential Impacts

The Plan recommends strengthening the historic identity of the Town by encouraging new projects to be located and designed to complement the Town's historic settlement patterns, rural character, established architecture and traditional streetscape scale. The

adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will support the protection of existing historic resources in the Town and will further encourage designation and protection of new historic projects, roads and districts.

2.2.3 Mitigation Measures

The recommendations of the Plan will result in a positive impact on historic resources in the Town. Other recommended actions of the Plan (related to noise control, lighting and energy consumption, among others) are specifically designed to enhance the Town's visual and community character, and to affect positive impacts on the community. Therefore, no mitigation is necessary.

2.3 Natural Resources

This section generically documents the existing conditions and describes how recommendations of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan may have potential impacts upon natural resources within the Town. The analysis includes the following natural resource categories: geology, soils and topography; surface waters and wetlands, groundwater resources; and vegetation and wildlife.

2.3.1 Existing Conditions

Groundwater

Bedrock aquifers underlie all parts of North Salem and generally provide the sole source of potable water for residents and businesses. Less than three percent of total groundwater recharge is estimated to be removed from aquifers by wells. By this measure, substantial groundwater potential remains in the Town. Groundwater resources can nevertheless be overtaxed locally by concentrated pumping that exceeds groundwater recharge in particular areas. In upland areas, most wells, including most domestic wells, have sustainable yields on the order of 3 to 10 gallons per minute.

Due to the widely distributed settlement pattern in North Salem, large quantities of domestic wastewater are returned to the Town's aquifers from septic systems. This may warrant point of use water treatment systems or installation of community water or sewer districts in some areas. North Salem also has some bedrock formations containing radioactive minerals that slowly decay and release radiological constituents into well water.

North Salem's Planning Board currently requires project applicants to take a hard look at all new water demands proposed in the Town. For larger projects, the Planning Board frequently retains a professional hydrogeologist to help review proposed pumping test protocols, review water budgets, assess wastewater loading impacts on Town aquifers, and review the proposed project "water budget" impact on the new site and on adjacent existing wells, streams and wetlands.

According to a recent Town survey, nearly 300 of the 443 participants use domestic wells for their daily water needs, while the rest live in areas where water is provided from one of North Salem's central community well systems. Among those on domestic wells, nearly 200 have sampled their wells for bacteria and over 100 have tested their wells for radiological compounds. Opinions vary on whether the Town should support sampling or whether sampling should simply be recommended; a narrow majority believed sampling should remain a personal responsibility.

Geology, Soils and Topography

The Town of North Salem lies within the New England Uplands/Hudson Highlands physiographic province. Generally the topography of the Town consists of many small, steep hills and ridges bisected by streams and narrow river valleys, with elevations ranging from approximately 1,000 to 200 feet above sea level. Steep hills tend to decrease in height from east to west and slope down from the north and the south toward the Titicus River and Titicus Reservoir, which form a narrow-to-broad east-west valley across the approximate center of the Town.

The Town Planning Board is currently working on draft legislation for steep slopes that has been submitted to the Town Board for review and adoption. Adopting local environmental controls on steep slopes will help to minimize disturbance to these fragile environmental features and excessive soil erosion.

Surface Waters and Wetlands

The Town's network of streams, rivers and lakes (including Croton River and Titicus River and Reservoir), combined with the numerous wetlands throughout the Town, form a vital component of the Town's rural character. The Town's wetlands are a critical element in the Town's ecological reserve, providing not only water quality filtration but also areas of high ecological diversity and productivity that provide habitat and foraging grounds for a wide variety of species.

Vegetation and Wildlife

An Eastern Westchester Biotic Corridor (EWBC) Study released in 2002 identified that the Town of North Salem contributes to the biodiversity of the region in the form of grassland habitat associated with agricultural lands. Within this habitat several avian (bird) species were identified that use the grasslands for breeding. In addition, two clusters of amphibian and reptile biodiversity were identified: 1) the Crook Brook wetlands and Turkey Hill, and 2) the area south of Peach Lake.

The EWBC encompasses much of the eastern portion of the Town; however, potentially viable habitats also exist in many other portions of the Town, particularly north and south of Titicus Reservoir. The lands south of the Titicus Reservoir are contiguous with the "Titicus Greenway" of Lewisboro, which represents an opportunity for inter-municipal conservation efforts.



In 2009, the Town extended its study area to the central section of Town to include property north and south of the Titicus Reservoir. In 2010 the Town further extended its study to include lands along the Putnam

County border. The Town is currently working with other partner communities to develop specific zoning mechanisms that recognize the biodiversity value of the EWBC.

2.3.2 Potential Impacts

The Plan recommends specific measures to protect the quality of groundwater in the Town. The Plan recommends improving the Town's yield test protocols for new domestic and community wells. Use of decentralized wastewater treatment is encouraged in appropriate residential development. The Plan also recommends limiting the amount of road salt and replacing it with brine during winter.

The Plan encourages the Town to explore possible measures to preserve and enhance onsite groundwater recharge, and to consider adopting an ordinance to protect local aquifers. The Plan recommends domestic well and public well testing for radiological exposure, and it recommends that new wells be sufficiently spaced over wide areas. The Plan also encourages the Town to undertake detailed mapping of potentially high-yield aquifers for future development, and to improve tracking of current consumption levels against groundwater capacity to better manage aquifer development and allocation.

The Plan recommends adopting legislation for steep slope protection. In areas of the Town that are environmentally fragile, the Plan recommends considering "performance zoning" regulations that would regulate the intensity of development that is acceptable based upon soils, topographic and additional natural resources data.

2.3.3 Mitigation Measures

To mitigate any adverse impacts of development, the Plan recommends several measures to protect the Town's groundwater resources and improve water quality. These include improved yield tests, smaller wastewater treatment facilities, enhancing onsite groundwater recharge and increasing aquifer protection. The Plan also supports adopting regulations that protect ecologically significant/sensitive lands such as steep slopes and wetlands, which can generate a positive impact in the community.

2.4 Infrastructure

This section focuses on the Town's water supply and wastewater infrastructure. The assessment provides an overview of existing conditions within the Town and an analysis of the infrastructure impacts associated with the 2011 Comprehensive Plan.

2.4.1 Existing Conditions

There are three public water supply systems in North Salem but no public sewage treatment systems. The three municipal water districts include: 1) Croton Falls Water District, 2) Candlewood Park Water District and 3) Sunset Ridge Water District. Improvements to address water quality are currently underway in the Croton Falls Water District and in the planning stage for the Sunset Ridge Water District. The Town Board approved the Peach Lake Sewer District in 2008. Construction is underway and completion is expected for the end of 2011, hookups in 2012 and operation of the system is expected to commence in 2012.

2.4.2 Potential Impacts

The Plan recommends that the Town consider point of use water treatment systems or installation of community water or sewer districts in some areas.

North Salem's Planning Board currently requires project applicants to thoroughly evaluate all new water demands proposed in the Town. For larger projects, the Planning Board frequently retains a professional hydrogeologist to help review proposed pumping test protocols, review water budgets, assess wastewater loading impacts on Town aquifers, and review the proposed project "water budget" impact on the new site and on adjacent existing wells, streams and wetlands.

2.4.3 Mitigation Measures

The recommendations of the Plan concerning groundwater recharge and protection, combined with the Town's development review process, will help mitigate adverse impacts of development on the Town's water supply systems.

2.5 Transportation



This section evaluates the 2011 Comprehensive Plan for any potential effects on the local road network, specifically regarding any proposed zoning district changes, safety considerations and changes occasioned by regional influences. It provides estimates of potential traffic from development that would be generated by changes in the 2011 Comprehensive Plan.

2.5.1 Existing Conditions

In 2000, the average travel time to work for North Salem residents was 38 minutes. Seventy-three percent of residents drove alone to work. The automobile was the primary means of travel for most of the residents. In 2000, 98.4 percent of residents had a vehicle available. Approximately 30 percent had three (3) or more vehicles, and the average number of vehicles per household was 2.3.

Travel Corridors

The Town has one *Limited Access Highway*: I-684, and six *Major Roads*: Route 22, Titicus Road, Grant Road/Peach Lake Road, June Road, Hardscrabble Road and Bloomer Road. The Town is currently evaluating potential advantages and impacts of taking over County roads including June Road, Hardscrabble Road and Bloomer Road to have authority over their maintenance, improvements and planning. In addition, the Town has identified several corridors for consideration as scenic roadways.

Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes in the Town were found to fluctuate at locations with some experiencing growth and some decline. Route 22 was found growing at a rate of about 4-6 percent per year. Traffic on I-684 has grown steadily south of Titicus Road and remained steady or decreased north of Titicus Road.

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council's draft 2009 Congestion Management Process (CMP) identified congestion along the following roads:

- I-684 (south of Titicus Road) – congested – 2009 AM Peak Hour
- I-684 (entire length in North Salem) – congested – 2035 AM and PM Peak hours
- Segment south of Cross River Road expected to be severely congested in 2035 in PM peak hours.

Public Transportation

The Town of North Salem and surrounding communities are served by MTA's Metro North Harlem Branch line via two train stations (Croton Falls and Purdys). The Croton

Falls Station is approximately 48 miles to Grand Central and the average travel time is 1 hour and 16 minutes. Service is provided every 15-30 minutes during peak hours and approximately every hour during off-peak hours. There are two shuttles which provide bus service to the station. In 2006, the station served an average of 570 passengers on a weekday.

The Purdys Metro-North station is located in the Purdys hamlet area of North Salem. The station is approximately 46 miles from Grand Central and the travel time is 1 hour and 12 minutes (4 minutes less than the travel time from Croton Falls). In 2006, the station served an average of 613 passengers on a weekday.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities



The Town has limited bicycle and pedestrian facilities. There are no dedicated greenways or bicycle routes. There is tremendous recreational bicycling around the Titicus Reservoir (Titicus Road and Mills Road). The following roads are identified as part of Westchester County's Trail and Bike Route System for future road improvements for providing bicycle travel:

- Mills Road – situated on the south side of Titicus Reservoir between Routes 22 and Peach Lake Road/ Grant Road (Route 121), this Town-recommended route follows local roads to connect the North Salem hamlets of Purdys and Salem Center: 4.3 miles in length
- Route 22 – from White Plains north to Putnam County, this central route through the north country links hamlets and is a popular route with organized groups: 27.7 miles
- Grant/Peach Lake Road – this north County route branches off from Route 22 in Bedford Village and continues north into Putnam County. It passes through a scenic semi rural landscape occupied by horse farms and low-density development: 13.9 miles

Sidewalks are limited in the Town and can be found in the Croton Falls station area. Sidewalk networks in the train station areas are not complete. There are also no sidewalks in the vicinity of schools or parks.

2.5.2 Potential Impacts

Several intersections in North Salem are identified in the Plan where context sensitive solutions are needed for safety enhancements, and action in partnership with DOT is recommended. The Plan also recommends improvements on I-684 to minimize cut-

through traffic in the Town, including continuing three lanes to the south, improving traffic movement from I-684 north to I-84 east, and improving interchange areas including Hardscrabble Road, Route 22 and Route 35.

The Plan recommends improving traffic flow in Croton Falls, particularly at the intersection of Route 202 and Croton Falls Road. Continued coordination with the Town of Somers and the NYSDOT in developing solutions to the parking and traffic congestion problems in Croton Falls is also recommended.

The Plan recommends better management of traffic flow generated by key land uses and at key intersections, for example, near schools and the Town's Summer Camp at Mountain Lakes Park, and by encouraging use of Transportation Demand Strategies such as ride sharing and carpooling.

For safety, the Plan encourages speed limit evaluations and better enforcement, as well as slower travel speeds through more vigorous enforcement and speed limit reductions [June Road, Titicus Road (Route 116) and Bloomer Road]. In addition, the Plan recommends evaluating strategies for reducing sign clutter, improving pavement markings, considering alternatives to traffic signals, access management along key corridors, congestion management for I-684, partnering with adjacent communities and regional transportation planners, and considering designating roads with scenic quality. [Finch Road has been added to the Plan's list of potential scenic roads (Open Space section).]

The Plan encourages transportation related actions that promote energy conservation such as ride-sharing, reducing fuel consumption, using hybrid vehicles or non-fossil fuels in motor vehicles, and accommodating bicycle travel. For improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities, the Plan recommends preparing a bicycle and pedestrian master plan, identifying routes, projects and safety.

The Plan recommends enhancing the parking and traffic flow for rail stations in the Town, and encourages the use of shuttles, ride share program and development of park and ride facilities in adjacent communities.

The Plan recommends establishing traffic impact guidelines and criteria for traffic studies to help in development review. Consideration of access management and parking standards is recommended when updating the Town zoning code. The Plan also encourages continued coordination with the County and NYSDOT, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) and with neighboring communities.

The adoption and future implementation of the Plan will not negatively impact transportation systems in the Town. Although the inclusion of additional commercially

zoned parcels on Fields Lane may generate additional vehicle trips to the area and to the surrounding road network, this increase will be offset by residential density controls recommended in the Plan. If recommendations of the Plan are adopted, improved transportation management will result.

2.5.3 Mitigation Measures

To address current and potential transportation system issues, the Plan identifies recommendations for improved traffic management, safety, parking and energy conservation measures. The adoption of the Plan and recommended actions, in collaboration with State and regional entities, will result in system-wide improvements.

2.6 Community Character and Visual Resources

There are a number of scenic viewsheds and road corridors within the Town. This section evaluates the potential impacts of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan on the visual resources and community character of the Town.

2.6.1 Existing Conditions

Historically, North Salem was an agricultural community, and the character of the Town continues to reflect its rural past. Since 1964, North Salem has evolved from a farming community to a low-density suburb with a rural character. Although there are many working farms in the Town, more land is occupied by single-family houses. The hamlets of Purdys and Croton Falls grew around the train stations and I-684. One of the more notable transformations includes Peach Lake, which has become an area of relatively dense single family housing as a result of conversions from seasonal, vacation homes and a strong demand from vacationers for lakeside property. Other developed areas include the subdivisions on Hilltop Drive (off of Titicus Road), along the Route 22 corridor, west of Delancey Road and south of the Titicus Reservoir toward the Lewisboro border. Residents are continually drawn to the Town because of its high quality of life, open spaces and rural character.

2.6.2 Potential Impacts



The Plan identifies potential open spaces for preservation based on a comprehensive inventory of existing designated open spaces and scenic viewsheds, combined with an inventory of environmental features, agricultural properties and historic resources. The objectives for the Town's open space include preserving visible/scenic land and landscapes, preserving ecologically significant land, connecting important open space areas and enhancing existing open space areas.

The impact on community character will be positive. The intent of the Comprehensive Plan is to protect those factors that make North Salem an attractive place to live and work. The Plan achieves this through a balanced approach that focuses development in specific locations while conserving open space resources and protecting community character. In addition, by focusing development that is appropriately scaled and designed in the hamlet areas, for example, the Town can expand its economic base while maintaining the character of its less developed areas.

2.6.3 Mitigation

The Plan recommends maintaining and enhancing the overall rural appearance of the Town through the site plan and permitting process. It encourages preserving and enhancing scenic landscapes of the Town's rural areas, including the viewsheds along scenic roadways, and incorporating new development into the Town's natural landforms. The Plan recommends creating and adopting a local "dark sky" policy, which would help reduce nightly use of outdoor lighting and energy consumption. The Plan also recommends conservation of public lighting usage through installation of motion detectors on streetlights and undertaking a cost-benefit analysis of illuminated municipal buildings. Adoption of a "disturbing the peace" ordinance is also recommended, as well as a noise ordinance to regulate the hours of operation for heavy, noisy machinery, and to establish appropriate decibel limits and a complete set of general noise standards.

2.6 Public Services

This section describes community services that are currently available to Town residents, focusing on police protection, fire protection and emergency services, utilities, recreation and schools.

2.6.1 Existing Conditions

Police

The North Salem Police Department and the New York State Police both provide police protection in the Town. The North Salem Police Department is available part-time. The local police department is located in the Town Office buildings on Titicus Road (Route 116) in the Annex building behind the Town Court and meeting room. The New York State Police are available 24 hours a day, with barracks located in Somers and sub-stations in Lewisboro and Pound Ridge. The State Police force serving North Salem has 3 sergeants, 34 uniform troopers, 5 investigators, 1 police canine and 12 vehicles. The North Salem Police Department has 15 part-time police officers, 1 parking enforcement officer, 4 patrol cars, and 2 four-wheel drive vehicles available to supplement the State police patrols.



The North Salem Police Department reports that residents of North Salem currently receive adequate police protection, and expansion of police services is not required at this time. Coverage improved with changes made in September 2008, which included increases in departmental personnel and more patrol hours. The Police Department hired more part time officers and the department put on

an additional full tour, for a schedule of two half tours and one full tour (primarily focused on traffic control).

Fire

The Croton Falls Fire District (CFFD) provides fire protection and emergency services to most of the Town of North Salem. The CFFD is a taxing authority independent of Town government that funds the Fire Department (facilities/equipment and protection services). The CFFD has a range of 60 to 80 volunteer fire fighters (40 to 50 active), about 20 EMTDs (Emergency Medical Technicians with Defibrillator training), 1 paramedic and several first responders who are trained in various types of first aid.



The CFFD has stations in Croton Falls and in Salem Center available to respond to service calls. The station located in Salem Center has recently expanded, providing additional office, meeting and training space and two additional bays for equipment and trucks. The CFFD has 8 pieces of equipment and trucks available including: 4 pumper trucks with 750-gallon to 2,750-gallon water capacity, 2 combination mini-attack pumpers/rescue vehicles (each holding approximately 250 gallons or more of water), and a rescue vehicle and a utility truck.

Water supply is a one of the biggest issues in providing local fire protection. Since the Town has no fire hydrants, the CFFD is equipped with four pumper trucks to carry water, as well as ice augers to replenish water supply in the winter. The location of the Croton Falls Department is another issue: congestion on nearby roads (Route 22, Somerstown Turnpike and Croton Falls Road) delays response time out of the station.

A small part of North Salem, including residences located on Valeria Circle and along Nash Road, are served by the Golden's Bridge Fire Department (GBFD), which is one of three volunteer fire departments that serve the Town of Lewisboro. The GBFD has approximately 70 volunteer fire fighters, including paramedics and EMTs who can respond to the North Salem area from their department in Lewisboro within 5-8 minutes. Equipment available at the Fire Department includes: 2 "Class A" pump trucks, 1 mini-attack pumper, a 3,300 gallon tanker, a large rescue vehicle and 2 rescue vehicles.

Between 2006 and 2009, the Fire Department responded to an annual average of 570 calls. In the last few years, there has been more demand for emergency services in terms of EMS (Emergency Medical Service) calls.

EMS



The North Salem Volunteer Ambulance Corps (NSVAC) provides emergency medical services in the Town of North Salem. Consisting of 15 volunteer EMTDs and first responders, the NSVAC responds to approximately 365 calls per year and is equipped to handle 400-plus calls per year (excluding multi-casualty incidents). The number of calls typically varies between 0 and 5 calls in any given day. The NSVAC and local ambulance companies from surrounding communities respond to calls in neighboring communities as part of a mutual aid program. Since each of the local volunteer ambulance companies is not equipped to handle large accidents, each community's ambulance service supplements the services of adjoining communities. Additionally, North Salem is part of an emergency medical service consortium (which involves 8 communities) under which North Salem contracts for advanced life support services (ALS paramedics respond along with the NSVAC).

The NSVAC recently relocated its facilities to a newly constructed, larger building on Daniel Road, in Croton Falls, to provide adequate facilities for volunteers serving shifts, office, meeting and training space and 4 bays for ambulances. The NSVAC has 3 ambulances and a County-owned MCI trailer, equipped to provide care for 50 people. The current facilities generally serve the community's needs. Points for improvement for the NSVAC include additional professionally trained volunteers.

2.6.2 Potential Impacts

The Plan supports the Town's existing resources and recommends maintaining and supporting tax incentives for volunteers in the Croton Falls Fire Department and the North Salem Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

2.6.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant actions are proposed in the Plan concerning community services, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

2.7 Socioeconomics

This section examines the socioeconomic impacts of the recommendations of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan.

2.7.1 Existing Conditions

Demographics

The Town of North Salem covers an area of 23.2 square miles, with a population density of 241.5 persons per square mile in 2000. The Town had a total population of 5,225 in 2007, and is one of the smallest Towns in Westchester County. The County's most recent population projections show slow population growth rates in North Salem for 2005 through 2015 (1 percent or less per 5-year period) and slow rates of decrease from 2015 through 2030 (-0.5 percent to -1.5 percent per 5-year period). During the same period, the County's population is projected to continue to increase slowly (at rates of 0.8 percent to 1.2 percent). The Town is experiencing a gradual shift toward an older population, with a median age of 37.6 in 2000. North Salem lacks significant ethnic and racial diversity, with the minority population (all races except white) making up only 8 percent of total population.

Employment

Residents of the Town are employed primarily in management, professional, service and office occupations. The majority of residents work outside of Town: 57.6 percent work within Westchester County. The Town had a low unemployment rate of 3.1 percent as of 2000. Local employers include offices, stores, restaurants, institutions, schools and other businesses and services in the Town's hamlet areas, along NYS Route 22 and in the area of Hardscrabble Road and Fields Lane. Two other sources of jobs in North Salem are farms and estate homes, which frequently employ service workers. Horse farms also employ grooms, trainers and other animal care and farm workers.

2.7.2 Potential Impacts

Adoption of the Plan recommendations is expected to result in an overall decrease in the future residential build-out of the Town and therefore a reduction in future population and associated impacts.

2.7.3 Mitigation Measures

Since the adoption of the Plan will potentially reduce future population, and additional Plan recommendations provide measures for land and resource conservation, no mitigation measures are necessary.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES

This section identifies and evaluates a No Action alternative to the proposed 2011 Comprehensive Plan.

A. No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, land use development would continue to be regulated by the existing zoning, site plan, subdivision and other land use regulations governing the physical development of North Salem. This alternative would not further the Town's goals and would prevent the Town from achieving its vision for the future. Without the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, many of the public benefits identified would not be realized. While the existing regulations may be sufficient to protect natural resources, the benefit of the Plan is that it suggests a manner in which the Town can accommodate growth while enhancing community character and protecting the Town's valuable resources. The proposals in the Plan will generate positive impacts, such as preservation and expansion of open space, greater flexibility in zoning and the concomitant benefits, including lower traffic generation, water consumption, wastewater generation and reduced disturbance to the natural environment. Alternatively, development under the current zoning may potentially exacerbate usage levels and demand for public facilities and services. Increases in traffic volumes and congestion may impair the Town's environmental resources. Further, economic development potential in hamlet areas could be limited. The absence of the Plan will place the Town in a position of reacting to development instead of being proactive in its efforts.

B. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan

The vision, goals and strategies contained in the Comprehensive Plan represent public preferences as expressed by residents, land and business owners and other interested parties who were afforded significant opportunities for input through a community-wide survey and other public forums. The goals and objectives respond to the identified needs of the Town.

4.0 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

This section describes any potential that the Proposed Action may have for triggering further development in terms of significant increases in local population, increasing the demand for support facilities, and increasing Town-wide development potential.

Implementation of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan is expected to

result in an overall decrease in the potential full residential build-out under present zoning regulations and therefore a potential reduction in population and associated impacts. The greatest concentration of future potential development is expected to occur within and around hamlet areas of existing development, and this development will be minimal.

5.0 UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

No unmitigated adverse environmental impacts have been identified that may result from implementation of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan recommendations. The Plan itself is a guidance document and has no direct unavoidable environmental impacts. It may lead to increased development and potential population growth. Redevelopment will likely replace existing vacant and underutilized buildings with new uses that correspond to market conditions and Town needs.

6.0 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

This section identifies and evaluates the extent to which the Proposed Action may cause a loss of environmental resources, both in the immediate future and in the long term, addressing generic components.

Under the Proposed Action, some areas of existing undeveloped land (in the RO zone on Fields Lane) will be committed to development of businesses. There would be irreversible loss of energy resources due to construction under the Proposed Action. To the extent that specific development or redevelopment is encouraged by the Comprehensive Plan, certain resources will be committed, including for example construction, labor and energy resources. In addition, the demand for municipal water, sanitary sewage and solid waste disposal, and services such as police and fire protection, may also increase from any new housing constructed (in the hamlet areas of Croton Falls, Purdys and Peach Lake) under the Proposed Action. At the same time, a major objective of the Comprehensive Plan is to accommodate future growth in a manner that respects the Town's environmental resources. Therefore, some existing natural resources, including wetlands and forest areas, will be preserved. The Comprehensive Plan, in general, proposes a decreased level of development, thereby decreasing the Town's commitment of resources. In conclusion, the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources would not adversely impact the future development of the Town.

7.0 EFFECTS ON USE AND CONSERVATION OF ENERGY RESOURCES

This section generically evaluates the effects and aspects of the Proposed Action pertaining to the use and conservation of energy resources.

Overall, the 2011 Plan is expected to result in reduced demand for future energy resources within the Town in comparison to what may be necessary under present development policies. As the Town considers "green" oriented changes to development regulations—including, for example, reducing development in environmentally sensitive areas and connecting parks and open spaces—it will encourage reductions in energy demand.

8.0 APPENDIX

The Appendix will include SEQRA documentation (Positive Declaration, DEIS Scope, Notices, Town Board Resolutions)