Town of Greenville, New York

Community Comprehensive Plan - Final Action Plan

Adopted December, 2008

Reaffirmed July, 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Plan is the product of nearly three years of work by dozens of individuals who worked cooperatively for the success of the Town of Greenville. The following people contributed many hours of concerted effort to the production of the plan. Their commitment, energy and enthusiasm made this plan possible.

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FUNDING

- Hudson Valley Greenway Communities Grant
- Industrial Development Agency Grant
- Office of Small Cities; Technical Assistance Program Grant
- Town of Greenville

INTRODUCTION

Under New York State law, municipalities are granted the authority and responsibility to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans. As defined in the state legislation, a comprehensive plan is a document that presents goals, objectives, guidelines and policies for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the community. Also known as a master plan or land use plan, a comprehensive plan provides guidance to municipal leaders and helps to ensure that the needs of the community will be met.

The Town of Greenville has been developing its Comprehensive Plan over the past two years, using a comprehensive plan committee and the assistance of River Street Planning & Development, who were engaged by the Town to facilitate the planning process.

Planning Process

The planning process has been overseen by a project Steering Committee. The role of the Steering Committee has been to guide and lead the planning process; collect and share relevant information; review documents; supervise the consultant team; educate residents about the process and the plan roles and responsibilities, charge and scope; and conduct community outreach and publicity. The committee conducted dozens of community conversations and coordinated the planning, logistics and outreach associated with survey distribution, focus groups, community visioning meetings and public workshops. They reviewed materials and documents and maintained the flow of communication with elected officials. A community profile documenting existing conditions in the Town was prepared. A written and online community survey was conducted which had a 12% response rate of town-wide residents. A public

visioning workshop was conducted in May 2007 with approximately 100 participants. In May of 2008, an action planning workshop was held with approximately 85 residents and stakeholders.

Community Profile Summary

The first document prepared under the comprehensive plan was a community profile that evaluated the existing conditions in the community and identified opportunities and constraints facing the Town. The community profile is available as a separate document and on the plan's website. Key issues and findings are summarized below.

Demographic and Housing Analysis

Greenville's population grew 5.8%. Increasing population may affect available housing by creating a tight housing market. It may affect the local school district, requiring larger budgets and classroom size. Population growth can provide a greater applicant pool for jobs and be an incentive for new business location and commercial growth. Increasing population can also spread the tax burden among more tax payers.

The number of households in the Town increased by 5.5% between 1990 and 2000, mirroring its population growth. With the exception of married couples with children, all other household types experienced double-digit increases over the last decade. As the number of households continues to increase, there will be demand for additional types of housing units including market rate and affordable housing, senior housing, townhomes and condominiums as well as single family homes at all price points.

The Town has a higher percentage of residents with a high school diploma as compared to Green County and New York State. However, the Town lags the State in the number of residents with advanced degrees, although the number of persons with bachelor's degree and higher in Greenville has almost doubled in the past ten years. This trend toward more residents with higher education is important for future high-end jobs. The significant increase in the number of school aged children will affect the school system perhaps resulting in larger class sizes, and the need for additional teachers, classroom space, budgets and tax levy. However, the apparent loss of families with young children (-30.5%) will eventually moderate the demand for school services. This "yo-yo" effect – demanding that schools adjust to changing family trends can frustrate educators and tax payers alike. Increasing senior population in the Town will affect the availability of senior services, including health care services and housing.

A healthy housing market should provide good quality units that address resident demand in terms of number of bedrooms, location, price and other considerations. The generally accepted standards for measuring availability in a healthy housing market are vacancy rates in the area of 5% for rental units and 1% for purchase housing. According to the 2000 census, the vacancy rental rates for the Town were 5.5% and the owner vacancy rate was 2.5%. The tight housing market could be attributed to the population increase witnessed by Greenville. Significant price escalation has occurred in recent years has likely worsened this trend. Housing prices for the Town grew in excess of 100%. The affordability ratio in 2006 was 4.95 for the Town. A significant percentage of residents in Greenville are cost burdened – paying in excess of 30% of their income for housing costs. Low and moderate income families are pinched further by substantial increases in the cost of transportation and utilities

Owner occupied housing lost value between 1990 and 2000. Although this statistic is self reported by persons completing census forms, it remains significant that residents felt their housing had lost approximately 18% of

its value between 1990 and 2000. Although significant price escalation and market demand occurred after 2000, the underlying trend is a concern since the housing price "bubble" has clearly burst. Vacancy rates are close to the norm, which indicate a tight housing market. This could have attributed to the higher sales prices of homes in the area. Additionally, there are no affordable housing facilities available for rent in the Town. Currently, only 10 residents are served through the Section 8 program. According to the Greene County Rental Assistance Program, there is a definite need for affordable housing in Greenville.

Tax Assessment Analysis

Approximately 52.7% of the Town's land area is dedicated to residential uses including single and multi family homes. Vacant land makes up an additional 34.0% of the Town's land uses. All other categories combined make up the balance of 13.3% with no other category occupying more than 4.0% of the land.

An imbalance exists between the percentage of land in residential use (52.7%) and the taxable value that this land contributes (75.6%) in Greenville. Residents use only 52.7% of the land, but contribute 75.6 cents of every dollar raised through property taxes. Commercial, industrial and public service properties also contribute positively to the tax base compared to their acreage, although they comprise only a small portion of town-wide land uses. Owners of single family homes occupy only 15.8% of the Town's acreage but pay 54.8 cents of every dollar raised through property taxes.

Economic Base

The Town experienced an increase in the labor force participation rate during the last decade. The major employment industries remain the same: education, health care and social services industries, retail trade, and public administration. The Town experienced an increase in the labor force participation rate during the last decade. The major employment industries remain the same: education, health care and social services industries, retail trade, and public administration. Unemployment levels in the Town in 2000 were lower than the County. Nearly 40% of Town residents work outside of Greene County.

Median incomes at the Town and County level actually decreased when adjusted for inflation between 1989 and 1999. As Table 16 indicates, when year 1989 incomes in the Town of Greenville were adjusted for inflation, median household income decreased 1.5% from 1989 to 1999 and median family income decreased 1.9%. Per capita income increased by less than 1%. In comparison, the County's median household income decreased by 1.1%, while median family income increased by less than 1%. Per capita income increased by 10.8%.

Greenville's income profile is not uncommon in upstate New York. There has been minimal improvement in median income in the Town and incomes have lagged inflation, limiting buying power and household income. The area is experiencing increasing concentration of residents with moderate or low incomes as well as residents living below the poverty line. Greenville residents spend less on most products and services than the national average with most spending running about 5% to 15% below national spending estimates. As the Town considers its commercial needs for serving the existing population, attracting retailers that require modest levels of disposable income are probably more realistic. However, as there are currently few options, any medium to

large box retailer with modest pricing would quickly become a regional draw that brings with it many additional considerations for the community (i.e. traffic congestion).

Agriculture

There is one state-certified agricultural district in Greene County, and as of November 2006 includes 36,755.11 acres (approximately 8.7% of total area in Greene County). Approximately 3,274.23 acres of property in Greenville are located in Greene County Agricultural District. Eighteen parcels representing 981 acres in the Town of Greenville are assessed as agricultural, according to 2006 tax assessment records. This represents 4.0% of the total acreage in the Town and less than 1.0% of the total assessed value. Agriculture uses are permitted as of right in the Town's six districts.

Community Facilities, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Three public parks provide a variety of recreational amenities for Greenville residents. Community residents have identified new recreation projects that the Town is currently considering. The majority of Town residents are served by the Greenville Central School District.

The school drop out rate has been on the rise though it lags the NYS rate significantly. The majority of Greenville High School students graduate on time and with a regent's diploma. Law enforcement service is provided by State Police and the County Sheriff Department, while fire and rescue service is provided, the Greenville

Volunteer Fire Company and the Freehold Volunteer Fire Company. There are three sites in Greenville listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places.

Transportation

Route 32 and Route 81 are the two major roadways in Greenville, with Route 32 being the most traveled through the Town. Approximately 63 miles of roadway is maintained by the Town Highway Department. Transportation projects to be completed in 2007 include resurfacing Drake Hill Road, Gay Head Earlton Road and the remainder of Willow Brook Road, as well as ditch work, culver pipe replacement and tree trimming throughout the Town. The Greene County Transit System provides public transportation services in Greenville twice a week. Pedestrian safety is a major concern in the hamlet areas of Greenville.

Infrastructure

Part of Greenville is served by a municipal water system that is in excellent condition and the rest of the Town is served by private wells. Part of the Town is served by a municipal sewer system, while the rest of the Town relies on private septic. Upgrades to the sewer system would need to be implemented to accommodate any new development projects. There are many wetlands and watersheds in the Town. Stormwater management is a growing issue.

Land Use

Overall, the land use regulations in Greenville provide for a variety of land uses, encourage growth in the existing developed areas, and limits growth in the rural agricultural areas. Planned unit development and cluster

development is permitted and allows for further flexibility in development. Historic preservation is addressed through the demolition permit process in the Hamlet Residential and Hamlet Business Districts.

Environmental Resources

Greenville is located in a temperate climate characterized by four distinct seasons. Elevations in the Town range from about 350 feet to 1100 feet above sea level. Soils within the Town of Greenville are variable, and contain many different soil types that fall within three general categories. The Town of Greenville is rural in nature and land cover is predominantly forest, pasture, cultivated fields, or old fields that are in various stages of succession.

Greenville contains numerous areas that are classified as state and/or federal wetlands, primarily located in the northeastern section of the town (east of NYS Route 32 and north of (and generally proximate to both sides of) West Road), where the soils are more poorly drained and the topography is relatively flatter than elsewhere. Portions of the Town lie within the 100-year flood plain. The Town of Greenville has only one known hazardous waste site, Royal Metal Products (Site 420009), in the hamlet of Surprise, near the Town's eastern border.

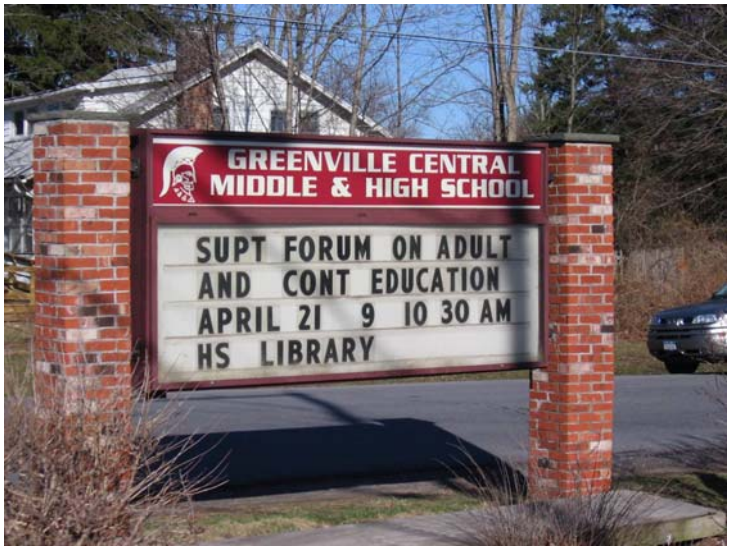
Community Survey

In order to assess resident concerns about issues facing the future of the Town, a survey was conducted. A paper survey was mailed to every household, and made available in local establishments. The survey was also

available on the Internet. Over 400 surveys were completed – a very high response rate for comparable community surveys. Included here are items of particular note from the survey results.

Responses

Over 12% of the Town population of 3,316 responded to the survey. Since one survey was mailed to each household, we assume that the majority of households returned only one survey and that these 408 surveys represent approximately 30% of the 1,340 households in the Town. Responses came in primarily from long time residents (45% living in the community 21 years or longer), and homeowners (93%). Respondents are satisfied with the current pace of development (45%) and would like the community population to increase slightly (54%) or remain about the same size (31%).



Town Government

Approximately half of the respondents feel it is very important for the Town to retain current laws banning landfills (57%), regulate appearance of commercial and retail businesses (53%), regulate billboards, signage and advertisements (53%), preserve rural and historic character (52%), and pursue sharing of Greene County sales tax revenues (51%). In comparison, 33% felt that adopting an open burning ordinance and 28% felt that expanding municipal water and sewer systems was not important. Although 33% of respondents felt that public water/sewer is essential for growth.

Economic Development

A very high percentage of respondents indicated support for visual appearance of businesses (61%). Residents also strongly supported the notion that development and rural character can co-exist (49%), that the Town should recruit new businesses (44%), that economic development brings jobs and lower taxes (43%), and that farming is an important future development opportunity (41%). Respondents did not support the development of an industrial park in the Town (46%).

Residential Development

Respondents indicated a strong preference for regulation of development with 76% feeling that the Town should limit mobile home parks to specific areas in town, 70% indicating that major subdivisions must respect rural and historic character, 63% indicating that new housing should preserve open space and 62% indicating that Greenville should limit land use based on ability to support septic and water.

Future Investment Issues

Respondents strongly support the Town's efforts to pursue funding to protect sensitive environmental sites (68%), protect scenic landscapes (67%), protect open spaces (62%), and protect historic buildings and sites (52%).

Land Management Issues

Respondents showed strong or moderate support for the use of all land management tools in the Town of Greenville. The strongest support by residents was for local regulations to protect streams or wetlands (60%), special zoning to protect scenic views (55%), incentives for private land conservation (52%), and creating a land trust for the conservation of open space (50%).

Open Ended Questions

The survey included several open-ended questions that allowed people to include their own opinions, rather than simply reacting to suggestions. There were 172 responses to the question "what do you like most about Greenville." Categories that received the most responses include the small town/rural atmosphere, scenic views. Respondents also frequently commented that Greenville is quiet and peaceful, has friendly people, great schools, and open spaces. Greenville also has great access to recreation including town parks and is close to major urban areas, and has local shops and community resources. Further Greenville is also liked for its sense of community and natural beauty. Likewise, there were also 172 responses to the question "what do you dislike most." The top response by far was that Greenville has too many dollar stores. There were also a significant number of responses that commented on the lack of shopping opportunities, high taxes, and limited grocery store access.

Additionally, respondents had the opportunity to provide general comments about issues facing the Town. The primary issues identified were consistent with the other results of the survey and included: a desire to keep Greenville a small rural town (21 people), frustration with the level of taxation (12), need to encourage smart planning and development (13), and need for retail stores (10).

Community Visioning Workshop

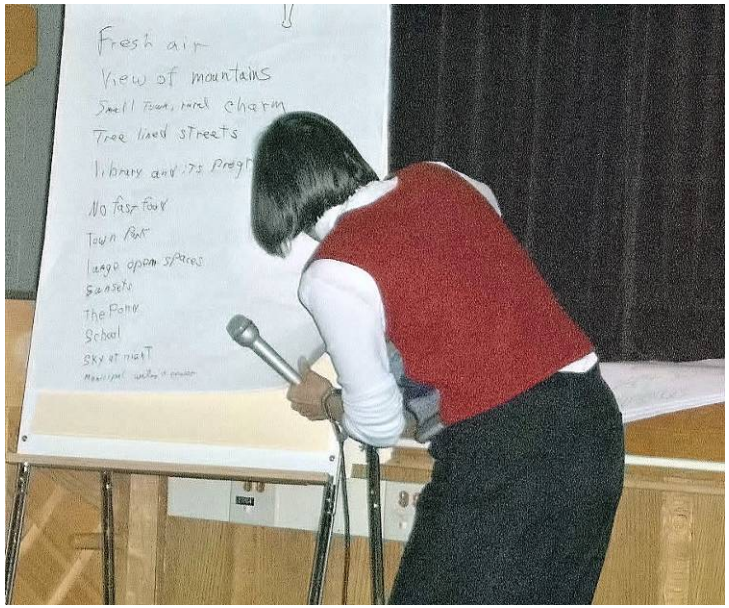
A vision statement and set of planning goals form the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. The vision statement describes the preferred future that the Town seeks to achieve together. A public visioning workshop was held to develop the vision statement. At the meeting, the committee and the consultants presented an overview of the comprehensive planning effort and explained the visioning process. Participants were asked to finish three statements:

- "What I love about Greenville…"
- "Things I would change about Greenville…"
- "When these things are preserved or changed, Greenville will…"

Participants identified many things that they love about Greenville. The main themes that emerged were that Greenville was a quiet safe rural community with open spaces, farms, clean air and views of the mountains. Residents also identified that they love the recreational amenities including the pond, the parks, and golf courses and community resources like the library and the school. Other things residents love about the community was its commuting distance to other areas, knowing your neighbors, and the nature and wildlife.

In discussing community challenges, most discussed the need for design standards, improved zoning ordinance, consistent law and code enforcement, department stores, restaurants and food stores and that there were too many dollar stores. Residents also identified the need for improved clean up and maintenance of the property, recreation/community center and further development of the Town Park. Water and sewer systems, volunteers, jobs, farmers market and community participation are also needed in Greenville.

Finally, residents described their preferred future for Greenville. Most responded that there will be Main Street revitalization, buildings will be restored, children will stay in Greenville after college, the Town will be well maintained, and there will be an industrial park that sits back from the highway. Greenville will also have commercial development concentrated along state highways, more businesses, good design standards, and improved infrastructure.



Vision Statement

Using feedback from the visioning workshop, a draft vision statement and set of goals for the Comprehensive Plan have been developed. The goals address key elements including land management, town government, housing, economic development, open space, recreation, and infrastructure, and community services. The vision statement and goals are listed briefly below. The Action Plan is organized by these goals, and identifies specific items for the Town to accomplish to further each goal.

The purpose of a vision statement is to provide direction for the community's growth and development, serving as a foundation underlying the development of goals and strategies for implementation. Reflecting the common

values of local residents, it expresses the "ideal future" that the community hopes to attain. Residents and leaders of the Town have established the following vision statement for Greenville:

"Residents will work collectively to conserve and enhance Greenville's small-town rural character and natural beauty. Growth will be well planned and aesthetically pleasing and will create new economic opportunities for all. Desired services will be supported by a productive tax base that is broad, diverse and growing".

Greenville's Goals

Based upon the Vision Statement above, as well as an inventory and analysis of the existing conditions in the Town and on input from the community gathered from the Community Survey and at the Public Workshops, the following goals were identified. These goals guided the action planning process and allowed for the development of the initiatives and projects outlined in this action plan.

1. **Land Management and Historic Preservation** - Greenville will adopt sustainable land use practices, initiate design and aesthetic standards revise its zoning and preserve historic buildings and places.

2. **Town Government** - Greenville will provide responsive, open and transparent local government. Professional leadership and excellent communication with residents will inspire a collaborative environment for successful implementation of community plans

3. **Housing** - New housing in the hamlets of Greenville will be designed and planned to fit with the Town's rural and historic character. Greater housing choice, including senior housing, vacation and town homes will be available. Assertive code enforcement and rehabilitation programs will enhance older homes and rental property.

4. **Economic Development** - Greenville will encourage a knowledge-based, "green" economy that is competitive and prosperous. It will promote commercial expansion, niche retail and specialty farming. Small technology companies will flourish with enhanced telecommunication infrastructure. New and existing commercial property will be visually attractive and complement community character.

5. **Infrastructure** - Greenville will improve and expand municipal infrastructure including public sewer and water systems to support new and existing development. It will encourage state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure (entertainment, phone, wireless internet and high-speed data transfer) to spark technology growth. Excellent transportation will include well-maintained roads, public transit shelters, bike lanes and racks, and a network of sidewalks in the hamlets.

6. **Community Facilities and Recreation** - Greenville will offer a full array of recreation and cultural resources and high-performing educational facilities that provide opportunities to residents of all ages

7. **Open Space and Environment** - Greenville will conserve its environmental resources including the picturesque natural setting, water resources, farms and open spaces.

Adoption and Monitoring

Plan implementation should begin when the Town Board formally adopts this document as the guide for future development in the Town of Greenville. The plan should be used to assist in making decisions and setting priorities, including those established by the annual Town budget. As required under state law, any new land use regulations or amendments in the Town must be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, an important role of the Town Planning Boards will be to review this document to make sure that the goals and ideas of the plan are integrated into land use and development decisions.

State law also stipulates that all plans for capital projects of another governmental agency on land included in the plan take the plan into consideration. This provision is designed to prevent government actions from disregarding the recommendations of a comprehensive plan. The involvement of local residents will also be vital in helping the Town to achieve the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. To keep the plan implementation on schedule, the Planning Board will be charged with annual review and evaluation of plan implementation for a period of not less than five years. Each year, the Board will prepare an annual status report on the accomplishments of the last twelve months to inform residents about what is being implemented. The status report will be presented at a Town Board Meeting.

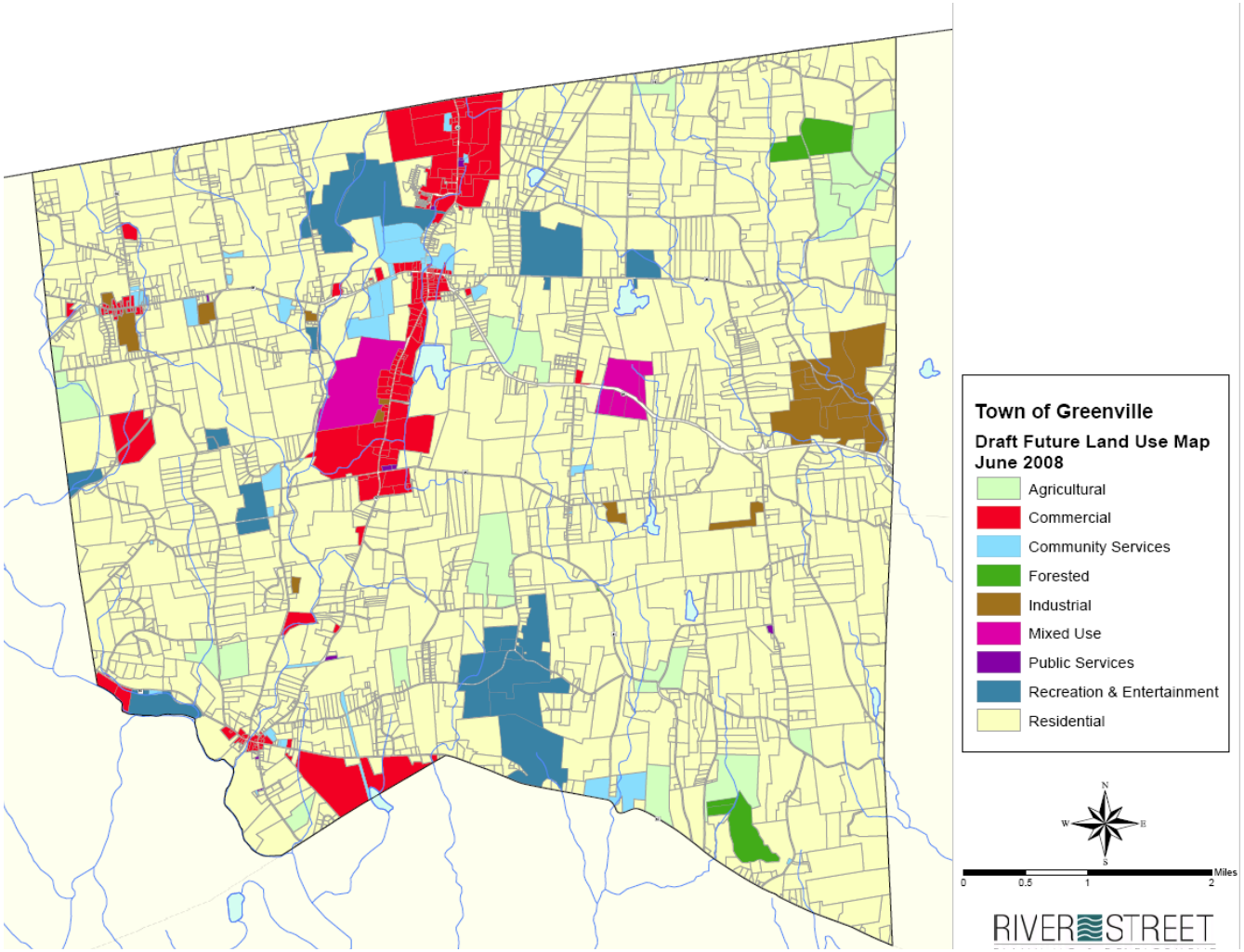
Future Land Uses

As Greenville imagines its future, the Town will continue to support agriculture and its agricultural history, while looking for opportunities to expand its tax base in appropriate areas. Greenville would like to retain its rural and historic character, protect its natural features and allow for some commercial development in areas with existing infrastructure.

Shown below, the Future Land Use map depicts the preferred future land use for Greenville over the next 10 years. Categories on the map include agricultural, commercial, community services, forested, industrial, mixed use, public services, recreation and entertainment and residential land uses. The mixed use category would include a mix of residential and commercial uses. Of note is additional commercial land use opportunities around Bryant's Country Square, along Routes 32 and 81 and the hamlets of Greenville, Norton Hill and Freehold. There are two areas of mixed use – one adjacent to the expanded commercial area on Route 32 and another on Route 81 near the fire house. These areas are along major roads and reflect an expansion of existing commercial development. An area of proposed industrial (in an area with a fair amount of vacant land) is proposed for Route 81 in Surprise. This area would be appropriate for industrial development as it has the infrastructure necessary to support industrial development.

The remaining area in Greenville, for the most part, reflects existing land uses or areas under current development. Much of the current vacant land in Town could become low-density residential that is reflective of the rural character of the Town. The key to Greenville's future is to allow for some commercial and industrial

development, while maintaining the natural, historic and rural environment. Additional discussion of how Greenville will accomplish its future land use goals is found throughout the rest of the Action Plan.



ACTION PLAN

The Town has intentionally created a visionary plan rather than a technical document. The following action plan outlines a broad range of initiatives to accomplish the established vision. Some of the actions are readily achievable within the existing planning and funding framework, while others will require additional creativity, financial resources and innovative collaborations. The ongoing development of progressive new zoning ordinance will be linked to this action plan and provide the technical framework to guide its implementation. This Action Plan is organized by the seven goal statements described above.

1. LAND MANAGEMENT AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Goal One:

Greenville will adopt sustainable land use practices, initiate design and aesthetic standards revise its zoning and preserve historic buildings and places.

Context:

Greenville will pursue all actions that preserve character, safety and livability. Its scale and convenience will be enhanced by investment in roads, trails, telecommunications systems, recreation and cultural opportunities that will yield significant benefits for the local economy and improve the appearance and quality of life. The Town will also support enhancement of amenity projects including improved access to libraries, recreational opportunities, theater, the arts, and transit service whenever possible. This goal is consistent with the County Economic Development Strategy that focuses on "preservation and enhancement of the physical and environmental characteristics that make Greene County a distinct and identifiable place, while providing for the needs of existing and prospective residents." The County has identified a number of complementary objectives that include encouraging greater density in existing hamlets, promoting policies to improve community appearance, supporting Main Street revitalization, and balancing economic growth with preservation of the community's natural environment, quality of life, and rural character.

Actions:

1.1 Make Zoning Consistent With The Plan

Greenville is updating its zoning ordinance at the same time that it is preparing this plan to ensure that the ordinance encourages the preferred land use pattern. The new zoning translates the goals of the plan into daily guidelines that encourage tax base expansion, open space preservation and conservation of agricultural lands and environmental resources. Key issues being addressed in the zoning include updating definitions to include all contemporary uses, exploring new zoning tools (like clustering, conservation standards, protection of environmental resources, density incentives, performance and incentive techniques), and identifying land

suitable for commercial and industrial growth. Revised subdivision standards and new design standards will improve the visual impact of new development.

1.2 Encourage Historic Preservation

The preservation of historic buildings and places promotes the public welfare by making the Town a more attractive and desirable place to live. Communities that identify, protect, enhance and promote their historic and cultural resources help enhance community pride, establish a unique sense of place, facilitate tourism and attract additional investment. The Town recognizes that historic preservation can also increase property values, protect the character of hamlets and the Town's unique identity. Today three buildings are listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places, and thirteen are listed on the Greene County Register of Historic places. Greenville's approach to historic preservation will balance the need for regulation with incentives to encourage the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures and places. As possible, the Town will inventory historic resources, create incentives for property owners to maintain properties, support listing resources on state and national registers and revise their demolition review process.

1.2.1 The demolition review process for all buildings older than fifty years limits the detrimental effect of demolition on the character of the Town.

1.2.2 The Town will identify existing historic landscape and architectural elements (such as stonewalls, wells, bridges, cemeteries, etc) and archeological resources and encourage their protection.

1.2.3 The Town will ensure that adjacent land uses do not detract from or threaten the historic resources.

1.3 Educate The Community About Planning, Zoning And Development Issues

Residents asked the Town to increase communication with them about planning and development issues.

1.3.1 To support this request, the Town will provide materials including the Comprehensive Plan, and Zoning Ordinance and Map on its website. Over time, all municipal functions, agendas and minutes will be available online.

1.3.2 Applicants will be required to submit digital data, materials, site plans and other data so that projects can be posted and reviewed more easily by the public.

1.3.3 For board members, the Town will encourage participation in required and voluntary training for municipal officials provided by the New York State Department of State and the New York Planning Federation. Taking full advantage of the technical assistance and planning provided by Greene County organizations including Planning and Economic Development, Industrial Development Agency, Soil and Water Conservation Department among others will be a priority.

1.3.4 As appropriate the Town may choose to retain professional planning services to advise on the implementation of new land management tools and educate the public about these tools.

1.4 Implement Comprehensive Design Standards

There has been broad and consistent support for the adoption of detailed streetscape, landscape and building design standards as part of the zoning revision. These standards will preserve the integrity of the different hamlets and improve the appearance of new developments while allowing for change. Residents asked that the standards be flexible and address a range of issues including aesthetic and architectural character, low scale lighting, signage, buffers, facades and the location of parking. The pedestrian's needs will be addressed as the core of these standards.

2: TOWN GOVERNMENT

Goal Two:

Greenville will provide responsive, open and transparent local government. Professional leadership and excellent communication with residents will inspire a collaborative environment for successful and speedy implementation of community plans.

Context:

Basic community services, efficiently delivered, are the foundation of this goal. Greenville will be a community whose tax base supports high quality and environmentally sustainable municipal services. It will provide excellent customer service at all levels of government, including fire and emergency services, well-maintained public infrastructure, a healthy environment and protected historic resources. It will deliver these services efficiently, equitably and cost effectively.

Many initiatives described throughout the plan will require a higher level of service from the Town government. Although the plan actively calls on the plan to implement the initiatives - saying the plan "will" rather than the Town "should", it is recognized that many factors, including the current economic climate, will affect the Town's ability to respond. In no way should this language be seen to obligate the Town to certain

actions. The comprehensive plan must flexibly respond to future opportunities and constraints and the Town will evaluate appropriate actions in the years ahead.

Actions:

2.1. Develop A Technology Plan

A technology plan will be developed. The plan will receive annual budget appropriations to meet day-to-day needs and begin to develop a "virtual" Town government.

2.1.1 Over time, the Town website will be improved and provide for all Town functions to be available electronically such as payment of taxes, application for permits and review of all development proposals.

2.1.2 All boards will post agendas, work session and other meeting minutes and materials. All development proposals coming before the Town Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeal will be submitted digitally (including all data, plans, schematics and site plans).

2.1.3 All codes, ordinances, plans, budgets, reports, audits, maps and other materials will be available for public review and comment.

2.1.4 At the point that it becomes feasible, the Town will make digitally based audio and video transcripts of Town Board, Planning Board and other important Town meetings available through the Town website, and taped broadcast of Town meetings will be available via a local cable access station. The Town will use the upcoming cable franchise negotiations as an opportunity to begin discussion about these new services.

2.2 Explore Shared Services

The Town will evaluate the desirability and feasibility of sharing services to reduce the growing costs of delivering needed services to citizens. The School District is particularly interested in strengthening relationships and sharing services whenever appropriate. The Town will address resident concerns about potential loss of autonomy in considering these opportunities. Shared services with nearby Towns and Villages, the County and the School District might be evaluated. The Town could apply for a NYS Shared Municipal Services Incentive Grant. This program is intended to study the feasibility of consolidating services. It covers costs associated with consolidations, mergers, dissolutions, cooperative agreements and shared services among municipalities and other entities like School Districts. Some communities use this process to develop plans to share equipment or personnel, coordinate fire and EMS services, or create buying pools for materials like gas, oil or asphalt, for example. A number of additional projects that could be supported by this funding source are described through this action plan.

2.3 Consistently and Assertively Enforce Town Codes

The consistent and assertive enforcement of all Town codes has been identified as a top priority by residents. As the economy contracts, many owners of marginal property cannot afford ongoing maintenance resulting in an increase in code violations. Specific issues such as storage of junk cars have been identified as important issues.

2.3.1 The Town will review and, as necessary, revise municipal codes.

2.3.2 The Town will continually evaluate code enforcement staffing levels. Recent increase in code enforcement staff is viewed as an important step.

2.3.3 The Town will maintain a high standard in code enforcement. Residents have suggested that violators should have their names posted on the Town's web site if they have been repeatedly notified about the problem and have not addressed the problem.

2.3.4 The Town will evaluate the development of incentives to assist low income property owners to address code violations. The Town will explore making grants available to support housing rehabilitation, perhaps in partnership with local non-profit housing groups.

2.4 Continue To Encourage And Recognize Volunteerism

The Town will continue to recognize the substantial positive impact that volunteers provide to the community. It is especially important to recognize the contribution of volunteer firefighters and

emergency services volunteers since recruitment of these volunteers has been identified as an area of concern by the service providers.

2.4.1 The Town will initiate a regular agenda item in its Town Board Meeting Agenda to recognize at least one volunteer at each meeting. Not only does this recognize individual contributions, but it also creates "good news" about the Town that will be reported in the local news media. As the Town's web site is improved, residents will be asked to nominate volunteers for recognition.

2.4.2 The Town will participate in a volunteer recognition event annually in cooperation with community based organizations such as the school, library and emergency service providers.

2.4.3 Volunteers will also be recognized as part of the annual Greenville Day event.

2.5 Advocate With The County And State Legislature About Issues Affecting The Town

The Town will be more aggressive in reaching out to its County Representatives and State and Federal legislative Delegations to advocate for the Town's needs. Specific issues such as the rising cost of services, unfunded mandates, impact of tax-exempt land and the cost of emergency services and training have been identified. The Town will formally request that County Representatives provide a periodic update at Town Board meetings about issues relevant to the Town.

2.6 Increase Town Capacity to Implement the Comprehensive Plan

Many actions in the require the Town to adopt new initiatives, provide additional services and incentives, engage in new partnerships, complete additional studies and prepare grant applications.

2.6.1 Expanded Town staffing and resources necessary to undertake these actions will need to be phased in over time as budget allows. Additional staff capacity will be required for some initiatives.

2.6.2 The Town has recently engaged an independent grant writer. This function will be essential to plan implementation since it is expected that many initiatives will need to be grant funded.

2.6.3 The Town will collaborate with the Greene County Department of Economic Development and planning to take advantage of their knowledge, technical assistance and additional support for grant applications.

2.6.4 The Town will engage engineers, historic preservation specialists and planners to assist with project review and implementation. As possible, the cost for these services will be borne by the developer.

2.7 Negotiate Voluntary Agreements With Non Profit Land Owners

The Town will explore options to negotiate voluntary payments in lieu of tax agreements with large nonprofit organizations, It will also explore levying a charge on nonprofit land owners for services including fire and emergency services.

3. HOUSING

Goal Three:

New housing in the hamlets of Greenville will be designed and planned to fit with the Town's rural and historic character. Greater housing choice, including senior housing, vacation and Town homes will be available. Assertive code enforcement and rehabilitation programs will enhance older homes and rental property.

Context:

Greenville strives to offer quality housing for residents of all ages and incomes at all stages of a family life cycle. The goal is for young couples in Town to buy a starter home, move up into a home large enough for a family, and eventually into Town homes or other retirement options. The community profile found that a significant percentage of residents are "cost burdened" paying more than thirty percent of their income for housing. The rapidly escalating cost of utilities further affects housing affordability. Residents express concern that the cost of housing acts as a gatekeeper to families moving up in the community, becoming new members and retiring "in place." While there is still a supply of affordable or workforce housing for acquisition, and in some cases rehabilitation, the growing cost of housing and utilities and the price targets of new and proposed housing development are out of

the reach of the majority of residents. To mitigate the impact of the economy, it is very important that the Town seek to provide a balanced mix of housing types and residential land uses targeting those uses most likely to have a positive tax base impact. The jobs/housing balance is also critical. There must be a growing and diverse job base if families are to be able to afford a home locally. The County Economic Development Plan and Housing Strategy support this goal, calling on communities to support development of "an array of housing options (affordable, special needs and senior, starter homes, and workforce housing) to meet the varied needs of residents and workers with respect to age, income level, tenure, and affordability, and improving the condition and supply of housing to respond to the needs of a demographically and economically diverse market."

Actions:

3.1 Encourage Life Cycle Housing Choice

The Town, like all sustainable communities, will encourage the development of all types of housing, at all price levels in safe neighborhoods with amenities and easy access to convenient services.

3.1.1 The Town will promote the needs of Greenville residents for affordable housing, while safeguarding the community from becoming saturated by deeply subsidized housing.

3.1.2 The Town will work in partnership with the County, non-profit organizations and qualified developers to pursue grants and incentive programs.

3.1.3 The Town will offer zoning tools such as bonuses and cluster options that help to make new housing more affordable to average homebuyers.

3.1.4 The Town will plan for the needs of seasonal homeowners, ensuring that this housing option that has limited impacts on the school district continues to enhance the community and tax base.

3.2 Implement Recommendations From The Greene County Department Of Aging Senior Housing Study And The Recent County Housing Strategy

Healthy and active baby boom seniors are poised to make enormous demands on the residential real estate market. Maintaining an active senior population in Town is critical to the social fabric of the community. The County Senior Housing study found that there is a significant lack of senior housing and that existing complexes are not properly dispersed across the county. This is important because many seniors report want to grow old in the community where they grew up and raised their families. As they grow older, residents also will require more specialized services such as home delivered meals, personal care and housekeeping that are currently available to a limited degree. The Town will encourage development of a full continuum of senior housing options, from market and affordable senior apartments and condominiums, to elder cottages and in-law apartments, to assisted living and continuing care or nursing home services.

3.2.1 The Town will encourage homebuilders to provide an expanded range of innovative senior housing options that combine the comforts and conveniences of a resort lifestyle with the aesthetics, amenities and independence of a single-family home.

3.2.2 The Town will advocate for the provision of assistance with maintenance and handicapped accessibility for seniors who wish to remain independent in their own homes will require.

3.2.3 The Town will help implement the County Housing Strategy that calls for development of a variety of rental and homeownership housing. It recommends a focus on eliminating barriers to affordable and workforce housing through public education, encouraging municipalities to adopt land management tools that create opportunities for affordable and workforce housing, and continuing to expand or improve infrastructure to facilitate more adequate housing.

3.2.4 Greenville will work with the County to address these needs by creating land use incentives to encourage senior housing, identify properties suitable for housing, and working with quality developers to develop and permit projects.

3.2.5 The Town will continually revise its zoning to make it easier to develop elder cottages, in-law apartments and other affordable senior housing alternatives options.

3.3 Encourage Reinvestment in Housing

Reinvestment in existing is even more important than the development of new housing. It plays an enormous role in protecting rural character.

3.3.1 The Town will utilize financial incentives available under New York State law to encourage home reinvestment and assist lower income residents with housing rehabilitation.

3.3.2 The Town will explore partnerships with the County and community-based housing development organizations to pursue grant funding for housing rehabilitation. Grants such as those available from New York's Division of Housing and Community Renewal address target area or Town-wide housing problems by making grants or forgivable loans available to income-qualified property owners. Grants may be used to correct code violations and other issues.

3.3.3 The Town will identify the residential areas with the greatest needs and conduct a survey of property owners to determine their interest in the program.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal Four:

Greenville will improve and expand municipal infrastructure including public sewer and water systems to support new and existing development. It will encourage state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure (entertainment, phone, wireless internet and high-speed data transfer) to spark business development through technology growth. Excellent transportation will include well-maintained roads, public transit shelters, bike lanes and racks, and a network of sidewalks in the hamlets.

Context:

The ready availability and adequate capacity of utility services is a major factor for meeting basic resident service needs and for attracting new residential and commercial development to the Town. Infrastructure adequacy is critical to maintaining quality of life, encouraging density in the hamlet areas and ensuring that new development does not negatively effect water and septic quality for existing property owners. The Town's existing municipal water system is in excellent condition, though it only serves a small part of the Town (240 customers). The municipal sewer system also serves a small part of the Town (100 homes and 30 businesses). While the sewer

system currently has excess capacity, it will not support significant new development without upgrades, expansion, or development of new facilities. Residents point out that the Town will likely need a second sewer treatment plant or other alternative to support new development in the near future. As technology improves it is common to find smaller municipal systems in place, serving new clusters of development. The presence of many wetlands and watersheds in the Town complicate the extension of infrastructure and require careful planning and evaluation before new development is permitted. The Town does require developers to assist in making upgrades to the municipal infrastructure before approving projects in or adjacent to the service areas. Technology infrastructure must also be improved. The location of additional cell towers or other facilities must be considered.

Actions:

4.1 Develop a Sidewalk Program

Greenville seeks to be a "walkable" community by improving existing sidewalks, implementing traffic calming and increasing accessibility for residents of all ages and abilities. The need for sidewalks and other traffic calming devices around Bryant's Plaza, along Route 32 and linking the school to the hamlet core are particularly important.

4.1.1 The Town will begin to require sidewalks, as appropriate, for all new residential and commercial development specifically in hamlets, commercial corridors, within large developments, especially senior housing projects.

4.1.2 The Town will further protect pedestrians and encourage multiple modes of travel by requiring pedestrian safety amenities in new developments that may include any of the following: raised intersections, curb extensions, textured pavement and crosswalks, speed humps, and pedestrian cross walks in all new developments.

4.1.3 Handicapped accessibility will be required as part of sidewalk initiatives.

4.1.4 Whenever possible the Town will work with NYS Department of Transportation to improve or construct pedestrian amenities as part of roadway maintenance and improvement projects.

4.1.5 The Town will continue to work with the Greenville Central School District to provide safe routes for children who walk to school by ensuring that road design considers the needs of students including use of sidewalks, curbing, and crosswalk design. As possible, the Town will require sidewalks within a 1.5 mile radius of the school campus. The Town will partner with the School District to secure a "Safe Routes To School" grant. In the winter, indoor school facilities offer walking routes and are very heavily used. In the other seasons, the School District would partner with the Town to develop a system of interconnected "walking routes" throughout Greenville. This focus on community health and fitness is key to the long term health of children, youth and adults of all ages.

4.2 Promote a Multi-modal Transportation Network

In addition to addressing the needs of pedestrians as described above, the Town will develop a plan to increase multi-modal opportunities. This plan will address the provision of excellent quality road network, designated truck routes, bicycle facilities and public transit.

4.2.1 The Town will work closely with the County and New York State Department of Transportation to plan for road maintenance and reconstruction, pedestrian amenities and bicycle facilities. It is important to recognize that escalating gas prices also affect the cost of asphalt and paving materials reducing the amount of road repair, paving and reconstruction that the Town can undertake each year and making the need for targeted assessment and planning even more important.

4.2.2 The Town will adopt rural road standards to protect rural character and reduce the cost of new road construction. Such standards typically address the type and location of sidewalks, lane width, road shoulder width, provision of "green" zones along roadways, signage, and traffic control features such as road markings and curbs.

4.2.3 Over time, the Town will implement programs to deal with other issues including reducing erosion and sedimentation from roadsides and ditches to reduce flooding, requiring that new roads be built to Town Road Standards suitable for future dedication, and requiring the use of nontraditional curbing to provide less of a barrier to amphibians and wildlife.

4.2.4 In terms of public transit, the Town will continue to support access to public bus service, promote taxi or van service, plan ahead for the location of park-and-ride lots and bus shelters, and work with the Greene County Planning and Economic Development Department to support, expand and enhance the County's current public transportation system.

4.3 Expand Recycling Programs

There was broad support for the Town's ongoing initiatives to encourage recycling.

4.3.1 As possible, the Town will expand recycling efforts such as the annual "clean and green week."

4.3.2 The Town will work with volunteers and property owners to improve the clean up of roadways through the ongoing "adopt a highway" program.

4.3.3 The Town will recognize organizations and individuals who promote recycling and organizations that implement recycling programs.

4.3.4 As part of this initiative, the Town will lead the way by conducting a recycling audit and implement strategies to improve its internal recycling programs.

4.4 Develop A Long-Range Plan to Maintain and Extend the Existing Municipal Utilities

The Town will plan for expansion of the public infrastructure including, for example, connecting the school campus to the sewer system.

4.4.1 For proposed new housing, the Town will ensure that there is adequate space for infrastructure (water/sewer, septic/wells).

4.4.2 The Town will maintain control of operations and maintenance, avoiding the privatization of services including access to its water supply.

4.4.3 The Town will work with its Engineer to develop an official map showing the likely location of all new streets, highways, rights-of-ways, drainage systems, parks, infrastructure and other physical features. An official map is not a zoning map. It is a guide, showing the actual location of features and where future infrastructure will and will not be and can direct long term growth.

4.4.4 Residents have expressed concern that the existing sewer treatment plant will not be large enough and will not have enough capacity to accommodate planned growth. Planning should begin now for future needs including evaluating expansion options at the existing plant, locating and conserving land suitable for a second treatment plant or considering alternate approaches described in Action 4.5.

4.5 Evaluate and Pilot Alternatives to Large Scale Municipal Infrastructure Systems

Residents expressed interest in having the Town evaluate alternatives to traditional municipal infrastructure extension as a way to improve service delivery and enable support of new development that is not adjacent to existing service areas.

4.5.1 The Town will evaluate the use of alternate waste water systems such as advanced on-site systems (sand filters, aerobic treatment units, trickling filters, constructed wetlands, pressure distribution systems, drip distribution systems, spray distribution systems and disinfection systems) and the use of community lagoons/spray irrigation systems among others. Many of these systems can be used over a much broader range of site and soil conditions than can conventional septic systems. Cluster systems, which use small collection networks to bring wastewater from a limited number of houses (usually less than 100) to a common treatment and disposal area is another alternative. Cluster systems use small-diameter gravity sewers and pressure sewer systems that are less expensive to install than the large pipes used in the centralized approach. The Town may find it most effective to use a combination of systems: cluster systems in areas that are more densely populated or that have poor soil conditions; and on-site systems where soil conditions are favorable.

4.5.2 The Town will establish wastewater planning goals and identify issues relevant to wastewater management addressing public health and environmental quality as well as economic development and growth issues. Future steps will include the study of environmental factors such as soil resources, groundwater quantity and quality, surface water quality to determine whether they can accept and treat additional wastewater loads.

4.5.3 The Town will examine the financial ability of residents and new developments to pay for design, construction and operation of wastewater infrastructure options.

4.5.4 The Town will study alternative water source, treatment and supply options including allowing the use of non-potable water for some uses (such as irrigation), graywater collection and reuse, landscape scale options including lagoons and retention ponds, and rainwater harvesting among others. New York State Shared Services Grants could be sought to pay for these evaluations.

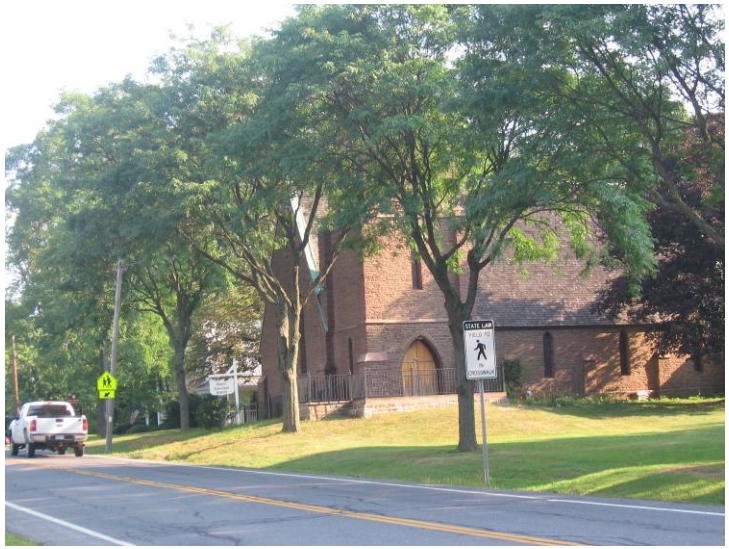
4.6 Develop a Stormwater Management Plan

New development and expansion of existing uses will have a considerable effect on stormwater and must be managed proactively. To address impacts of new development and address current stormwater problems the Town will take the following steps:

4.6.1 The Town will prepare and adopt a stormwater management plan in accordance with State guidance. This plan will require that all stormwater systems on new development to be designed to achieve the highest level of water quality treatment. Systems that use biological treatment methods will be encouraged due to their high efficiency and their secondary benefits to habitat and ecological systems.

4.6.2 The Town will adopt a Stormwater Management Local Law that requires stormwater management practices to meet or exceed State requirements.

4.6.3 The Town will develop local standards that require stormwater systems on major new development to be "oversized" as a method to help mitigate impacts from prior development that preceded current stormwater regulations. The community will consider developing a system of incentives to assist new developments in meeting this requirement.



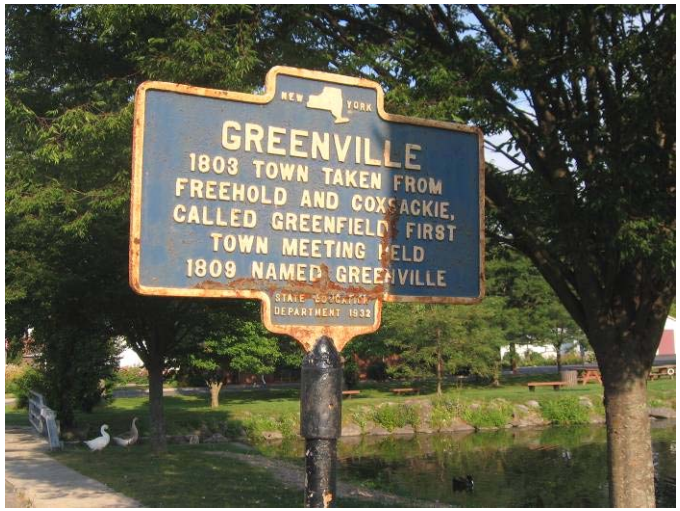
4.6.4 The Town will work cooperatively with the Greene County Soil & Water Conservation District in the review of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SPPP) submitted by developers. The GCSWCD can provide technical assistance in the review of SPPPs prior to approval of the development as well as assist the Town in oversight of stormwater management practices during the construction phase.

4.6.5 The Town will seek future opportunities to "retrofit" existing development sites that do not have stormwater management systems in place. As these sites seek approvals for expansion or redevelopment, the Town will work with site owners to install appropriate stormwater treatment systems to address the entire site.

4.7 Make Greenville A Model Telecommunications Community

For rural communities like Greenville excellent telecommunications infrastructure will be key to economic growth in the future. Without these services, rural communities will remain less competitive and be perceived as a risky location for new business development.

In addition to high speed infrastructure for e-mail and entertainment, the community needs to consider issues related to e-commerce in general, distance learning and telemedicine among other advanced services. In addressing this action, the Town will support The County Economic Development Plan that seeks to "create reliable, high-quality telecommunication infrastructure that meets the needs of existing and emerging industries in Greene County, ensures connectivity, and allows all communities throughout the County to participate in economic development." Objectives include encouraging current telecom providers to fill connectivity gaps and improve service, extending wireless Internet technology to existing business parks, densely settled areas and Main Street areas, continuing to build partnerships with telecommunications providers and the State of New York, and identify funding sources to help expand telecommunications infrastructure and extend service to currently underserved areas. Distinct educational disadvantages have been documented for school aged children who lack advanced telecommunications services. The Town must work cooperatively with land owners to identify future locations for cell towers, microwave and wireless facilities. The School has a significant amount of land on which to locate new telecommunications facilities and is anxious to collaborate with the Town to improve services.



4.7.1 Working cooperatively with the school district, surrounding communities and the County, the Town will investigate alternative approaches such as:

A. Developing a Rural Area Network (RAN). These networks combine a wide range of users, often in a multi-municipal or regional framework, to share usage and pool demand for advanced telecommunication services in order to justify the costs of infrastructure and operations

B. Developing local or regional publically owned municipal infrastructure.

C. Interconnecting to urban areas and piggyback on existing infrastructure. This may be an option for parts of the Town close to the Albany County border or near Routes 9W and 81 as development increases along these corridors.

D. Focusing on wireless technology including microwave and radio transmission as an initial step.

E. Working with local providers who may be more open minded about service expansion than the larger national franchises.

4.7.2 The Town will pursue NYS Shared Services Grants to fund these planning activities.

4.7.3 The Town will work with local Internet Service Providers (ISP's) to continue upgrades and improvements to the existing broadband access network.

4.7.4 The Town will identify possible locations for new technology or energy infrastructure (such as cellular towers or wind turbines) on Town owned land such as the public works garage to ensure that lease revenues flow directly to the Town whenever possible.

4.8 Encourage the Placement of Utility Lines Underground Whenever Possible

Burying electrical, telephone and cable utilities can provide an aesthetic benefit as well as improve reliability by reducing the occurrences of loss of services due to weather, accidents or other impacts. However, the cost of placing utility lines underground is considerable – with some estimates concluding that it is ten times more expensive than conventional above ground lines. Yet many residents expressed support for this action.

4.8.1 Although it will not be possible to place all utility lines underground, the Town will adopt a local regulation requiring that all utilities be buried underground to the maximum extent possible in all new development projects. Across the Country communities have negotiated agreements with utility providers to put utilities underground, usually on a regional level. In most cases, the consumer of developer pays for the cost of excavating and backfilling trenches and any additional differential between conventional overhead costs and underground costs. Other communities use special assessment districts, underground districts, special utility districts, or the set aside of overhead utility fees to create a pool to bury lines in sensitive areas (like historic districts).

4.9 Develop Sustainable Energy

Across the nation, communities are evaluating opportunities to develop alternate energy sources and efficiency plans. New York has established a goal through the Public Service Commission to provide 25% of energy from renewable energy sources by 2013

A variety of energy sources including biomass, biogas, bioliquids, fuel cell technology, geothermal, hydroelectric, solar photovoltaic, geo exchange systems and wind power are being considered.

4.9.1 The Town will analyze the feasibility of creating renewable and sustainable energy.

4.9.2 The Town will seek funding from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. NYSERDA makes a large array of funding programs available to provide technical assistance, evaluate alternative energy potential, increase energy efficiency in existing properties,. model energy efficiency in multi-family housing initiatives, increase energy efficiency of the State's school bus fleet, and improve lighting efficiency in commercial structures and many more. In addition, a variety of guidebooks, data sets and maps are available to assist municipalities to make a very preliminary determination of the potential feasibility of alternative energy modes, including wind power. While investigation of alternate energy sources and efficiencies will be a priority, it will also be important for the Town to balance this opportunity with potential community impacts including visual impacts, environmental issues, habitat destruction and wildlife affects, noise and other issues.

4.9.3 The Town will work closely with the School District and other large property owners to evaluate possible locations for wind turbines.

5. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND RECREATION

Goal Five:

Greenville will offer a full array of recreation and cultural resources and high-performing educational facilities that provide opportunities to residents of all ages.

Context:

As a sustainable community, Greenville seeks to promote extraordinary quality of life with excellent community services, amenities and schools of distinction. Livable places are safe, offering fire and emergency services. While these amenities are obviously important to current residents, they are also increasingly important to site selectors for new business and residential developers. In its recent economic development plan the County identifies the need to "improve the quality of life in Greene County by upgrading and expanding community services, facilities, and amenities" Identified County objectives include supporting efforts to improve the quality, availability and accessibility of health care services, school districts, and recreational and community facilities. A highlight of the visioning workshop was the strong praise for Greenville's schools that were identified as high performing assets that complement small Town quality of life as a great place to raise a family. Consistent with the County Economic Development Plan, Greenville's schools "encourage students to explore career choices in high school, facilitating their ability to participate in an increasingly diverse service and knowledgebase economy. "

Actions:

5.1. Develop and Adopt a Recreation Plan

The Town will evaluate recreational needs and develop a long-term recreation plan that will build upon and strengthen existing resources such as Vanderbilt Park, the Greenville Cultural Arts Center, and the Library. The focus of this plan will be on Vanderbilt Park, both promoting improved recreation facilities and encouraging more events be hosted there.

5.1.1 The Town will also work more closely with the School District to identify a plan for shared use of school facilities. The School District is currently developing a Master Plan and opportunities abound for additional shared planning, services and other collaborations.

5.1.2 The Town will convene a recreation committee to inventory existing facilities and conditions and conduct a survey of park users and recreation groups to identify future needs of both children and adults and establish priorities. The study will allow the community to identify gaps in services, assess the need to improve or expand recreational resources, and make informed decisions in the future. It will also serve as the basis for implementation of the park and recreation fees assessed on new development projects to meet recreation needs in the community.

5.1.3 The Town will work with other organizations, including the School District to develop walking and multi-use trails as new recreational amenities.

5.1.4 The Town will apply for grants available from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and other sources.

5.2. Develop Community Gathering Places

In the action planning workshop there was a lot of discussion about the need to create community gathering spaces and support those that already exist, such as the library and the Greenville Cultural Arts Center. Great community gathering spaces have a distinct identity, are active year round, attract a variety of people of all ages. Whether this takes the place of Town squares in the hamlets, a senior or community center or meeting place at Vanderbilt park the goal is the same – increase community cohesiveness, provide children with opportunities to socialize and create what the Project for Public Spaces calls a "community living room." Ideally, gathering spaces are within walking distances of population centers like the hamlets. If amenities are located at or close to the school, Safe Walk to School Routes help to support community gathering spaces, providing youth with the independence to walk to recreation amenities. These locations are particularly important for some seniors who may become socially isolated as they age. Some residents argued that better coordination of existing spaces like the library or the Greenville Cultural Arts Center could serve this role more efficiently than building new community center or other venue. Others argued that Vanderbilt Park is the logical location for gathering spaces and that the historic barns could serve a central role. A gathering space in the park would need space with weather protection, rest rooms, lighting, pavilion, grills, and later closing hours. The park might be able to offer space for vendor services offering food or an area for a small farmers market. The recreation plan should identify uses that would complement community spaces. Some recreational

activities, like a community skating rink for example, attract both active and passive participation elements that are part of effective community gathering spaces.

5.3. Encourage More Cultural Programming

Cultural activities increase livability and social interaction. The Town will support the Greenville Cultural Arts Center and the Library's range of cultural offerings.

5.3.1 In the action planning workshop, residents discussed opportunities to improve cultural locations as gathering spaces and increase attendance at events. Some residents expressed concern that cultural events are not well attended and that organizations need to be careful to plan and market an array of events that attract a variety of audiences.

5.3.2 Make improvements to existing community gathering spaces to increase their utility.

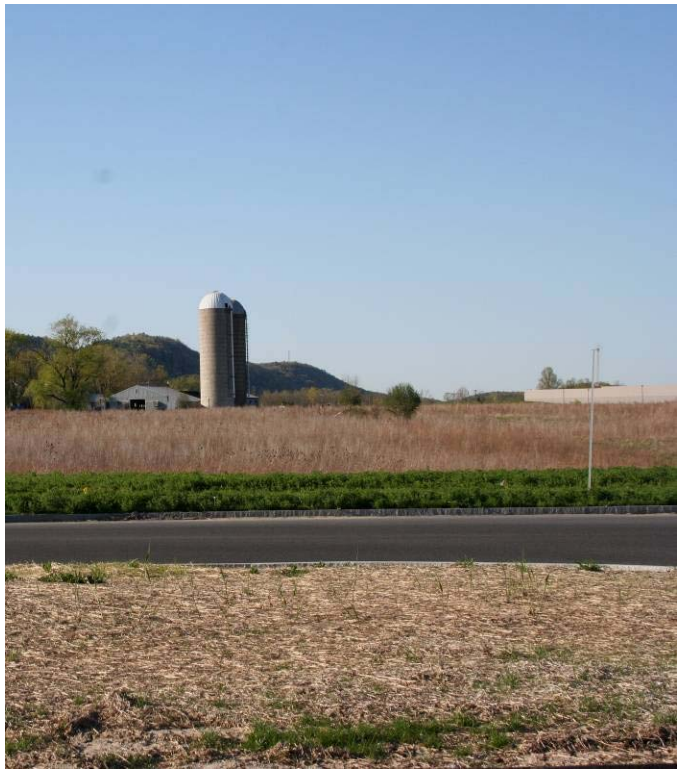
5.3.3 The Town should continue to recognize hard-working community volunteers from community organizations.

5.3.4 As with recreation programs, the Town can work with community groups to fund cultural programs by being a collaborator on grant applications to the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Community-School partnerships will be particularly important. The School can access Arts In Education grants to cover some cost of events.

6. OPEN SPACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Goal Six:

Greenville will conserve its environmental resources including the picturesque natural setting, water resources, farms and open spaces.



Context:

The long-term stability of wildlife species and habitats, ecosystems, and public health and welfare requires careful protection of environmental resource, biodiversity and open space. Rural areas such as Greenville are becoming increasingly aware of the need to find an effective balance between new development, open space preservation and provision of recreational opportunities. In addition to the value of open space for quality of life and general aesthetics, maintaining open space in the community reduces impacts on community resources such as schools and municipal services. While the community has strongly voiced their support for the maintenance of the community's rural character, the Town currently lacks important tools, policies and partnerships to make this happen. Based on the survey, and input at the visioning and action planning sessions, the preservation of farming and protection of agricultural land is also a priority. Greenville is typical of most rural communities in this country in terms of agricultural trends. The small family farm that once was the fabric of rural communities is disappearing, replaced by homes and other development activities. The nature of farming

has been shifting from small family owned farms, with younger people choosing not to be farm owners. Local taxes are burdensome to farmers putting pressure on them to pursue subdivision of land to pay taxes and plan for retirement.

Actions:

6.1. Protect Critical Resources

As part of the parallel zoning update, the Town will adopt land use regulations that protect open spaces, habitats, viewsheds and ridgelines, sensitive sites, and scenic landscapes whenever feasible and appropriate.

6.1.1 Tools such as overlay zones, designation of critical environmental areas, conservation subdivisions and clustering tools will be evaluated.

6.1.2 As an initial step, the Town will inventory existing resources. If appropriate it will convene a Conservation Advisory Committee or use a local Habitat Advisory groups to help with this inventory and evaluate environmental policies and actions. Once resources have been identified, the most effective protective tools can be identified.

6.1.3 The Town will also support training of Planning Board members in the use of specialized tools available under SEQRA including the Visual Impact Assessment process.

61.4 The Town will consider entering into a formal partnership with the Green County Land Trust to conserve critical environmental areas. This partnership could help to facilitate many of the recommendations in this plan. The Greene Land Trust was established to provide an institutional

structure that could assist local communities with wetland, habitat and open space conservation. This partnership would improve the Town's competitiveness for grants that help conserve resources.

6.2. Prepare a Wetlands Management Strategy

In the action planning workshop concern was expressed that wetlands are probably the biggest obstacle to development on the one hand, and the most important safeguard against excessive or poorly located development on the other hand. A number of steps can be taken by the Town to increase awareness of and plan for the management of wetland issues.

6.2.1. The Town will advocate for improved wetland mapping to assist in protection and to determine where new growth can be accommodated and where it cannot. Currently, there are no National Wetland Inventory Maps (NWI) available for the Town. While these maps do not substitute for site-by-site delineation of wetlands, they can be an effective tool to help "guide" potential development. Mapping of wetlands in preferred growth areas can serve as an incentive as it can save developers significant costs.

6.2.2. The Town will, as appropriate, require that development projects complete wetland delineations in digital form so that they can be integrated into a database of known wetlands that is being maintained by Greene County Soil and Water Conservation Department.

6.2.3. The Town will strongly advocate for NYSDEC to update mapping of state regulated wetlands. Existing NYSDEC regulated wetland maps are based on wetland delineations conducted in the mid 1970's or early 1980's and are grossly inaccurate. Currently, developers must have NYSDEC conduct field delineations on a case-by-case basis and are often surprised to find that the wetland boundaries shown on the maps are significantly different from the actual wetlands, on the site today. The availability of accurate wetland mapping can help Greenville, as well as developers, to ensure they have a viable project before it reaches the review stage.

6.2.4. The Town will develop and adopt a local stream corridor, watershed and wetland protection law. The ordinance will provide for a protective buffer along streams and creeks, prevent development of structures and impervious surfaces and promote vegetative buffers. It will protect development impacts near the Town's water supply and watershed's in the Town that may serve other communities.

6.3 Protect Agricultural Lands

The Town will help to implement the County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan.

6.3.1 It will ensure that new development does not create conflicts with farming and work with local agricultural groups to evaluate impacts of new development as necessary and appropriate.

6.3.2 The Town will create public/private partnerships that can improve the economic viability of local farms by increasing access to funding or encouraging recreational leasing of farmland for various recreation activities

6.3.4 The Town will evaluate opportunities that may be available at the County or Regional level to form a program that would purchase farm development rights.

7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal Seven:

Greenville will encourage a knowledge-based, "green" economy that is competitive and prosperous. It will promote commercial expansion, niche retail and specialty farming. Small technology companies will flourish with enhanced telecommunication infrastructure. New and existing commercial property will be visually attractive and complement community character.

Context:

The Town's economic development focus must be on growing and diversifying its tax base. Land and the improvements built upon it are the basis for the municipal taxation system currently in place in the Town of Greenville and across New York State. Greenville's ability to raise revenue to provide infrastructure and services for the community is driven by effective performance of its tax base. The productivity of Greenville's tax base is influenced by how effectively land is used, properties are built and maintained, uses are buffered, and the level of reinvestment by the public and private sectors. From the citizen's perspective, tax burden influences where people buy homes, whether they reinvest in property and where they develop or expand businesses. From the perspective of municipal leadership, its tax base drives its ability to invest in amenities and provide professional services that residents expect.

Today, Greenville's tax base relies heavily on residential property tax with nearly seventy-six cents of every dollar entering the tax pool coming from a residential use. The amount of tax exempt land places a greater share of the tax burden on a limited number of acres. In Greenville, both economic stability and growth depends upon optimizing the tax base by making every acre of land as productive as it can be without compromising community vitality or natural resources. In the nation's increasingly suppressed market, the Town will likely require incentives and other actions for it to be competitive.

The County recently completed a County-wide Economic Development strategy that provides an overall framework for economic development at the municipal level. The Town's economic action plan is consistent with this strategy that has identified the following goals:

1. Expand the quantity and quality of employment opportunities through the Development of a balanced, diverse, and year-round economy.

2. Generate long-term revenue growth in the tourism industry as a strategy for economic development.

3. Preserve and enhance the physical and environmental characteristics that make Greene County a distinct and identifiable place, while providing for the needs of existing and prospective residents.

4. Develop a skilled and educated workforce that will meet the needs of existing businesses and emerging industries in Greene County.
5. Improve the quality of life in Greene County by upgrading and expanding community services, facilities, and amenities.

6. Develop a steady supply of commercial and industrial land, sites and buildings that support the needs of existing and emerging businesses in Greene County.

7. Support the creation of reliable, high-quality telecommunication infrastructure that meets the needs of existing and emerging industries in Greene County, ensures connectivity, and allows all communities throughout the County to participate in economic development.

The County Plan also establishes the importance of "developing catalytic projects, such as new health care centers, sports complexes, art and cultural centers, and a hotel training school or culinary institute that will enhance quality of life and spur economic growth in Greene County".

Actions:

7.1. Expand Tax Base Of Commercial, Retail And Appropriate Light Industrial Uses.

The Town will ensure that there is an adequate supply of property suitable for commercial development necessary to balance the tax base. This action is consistent with the County's desire to "develop a steady supply of commercial and industrial land, sites and buildings that support the needs of existing and emerging businesses…"

7.1.1 Consistent with the County Plan, the Town will try to identify and make "shovel-ready" locations and sites for new businesses and possibly future business and industrial parks, develop affordable flexible space for small and start-up businesses, and encourage adequate infrastructure to support business expansion and new development opportunities.

7.1.2 As the zoning is continually monitored and periodically updated, the Town will identify areas appropriate for new commercial, retail and light-industrial development in the Town.

7.1.3 In addition to identifying proper sites for new commercial development, the Town will continually evaluate its zoning and codes to ensure that they are as "business friendly" as they can be while protecting community character and other important community values. The Town will balance these

values by expanding commercial development zones but requiring careful review by the Planning Board through Special Permit designations.

7.1.4 The Town will assist with efforts to redevelop key vacant and underutilized sites as well as sites along Main Street and in hamlets, creating a cluster of uses that could eventually be served by municipal infrastructure.

7.1.5 The Town will encourage the tax generating reuse of abandoned resorts through incentives such as short-term property tax exemptions or reductions, job creation incentives and Economic Development Zone designation as appropriate.

7.1.6 The Town will also develop a strategy for general commercial and highway commercial development and identify appropriate design guidelines for these development areas and uses.

7.1.7 The Town will also work closely with the Greene County Industrial Development Authority (CGIDA) and the County Economic Development and Planning (GCED&P) staff to refine these plans and market property to potential developers.

7.2. Pursue Business Retention and Expansion

One of the simplest methods to grow the tax base is to encourage the expansion and retention of existing businesses. Given the current economic climate, the Town cannot take for granted that local businesses will

remain. Existing businesses are strong growth targets because they already know the community, its assets and workforce and already have distribution and supply networks in place.

7.2.1 The Town will continually evaluate its zoning to ensure that it allows for appropriate business expansion.

7.2.2 In order to support existing enterprises the Town will support a simple "buy-local" initiative. It will place a list of local businesses with links to their web sites on the Towns web site and consider highlighting one local business at each Town Board meeting. This action is consistent with the County plan which calls on communities to retain existing businesses through regular outreach and assistance, support entrepreneurship and small business growth and maintain or create programs to address the training and education needs of Greene County businesses and residents.

7.2.3 The Town will explore options to provide New York State Empire Zone benefits to redevelopment areas. It will also evaluate the feasibility of offering local tax incentives for businesses considering locations in the Town.

7.3. Support a Business Attraction Initiative and Retail Recruitment Strategy.

The Town will assist the effort to recruit appropriate new businesses especially to Main Street and the hamlet areas and other traditional business locations.

7.3.1 As with business retention actions, the Town will continually evaluate zoning to make sure that it is conducive to new and small business development. The Town will closely evaluate definitions of appropriate uses, making sure that they are allowed "as of right" in appropriate zones. This effort will make site selection easier for business owners and developers.

7.3.2 The Town's efforts to improve the aesthetics of business locations and main streets through application of design standards will increase developer and business owner confidence that the physical environment will support a high quality of life and a distinct sense of place. This will be especially important in recruiting retail businesses that meet the needs of year round residents and tourists.

7.3.3 The Town will increase its effort, in partnership with CGIDA and GCED&P, to recruit new businesses through development of a marketing brochure or inclusion in County marketing efforts.

7.3.4 The Town will identify incentives for small business start up including working with the available County Microenterprise Assistance Program and the County Business Loan programs that are available.

7.3.5 The Town will recruit niche retail. Based on feedback from the community meetings, residents would like to see more retail stores including restaurants in the Town. Niche retail, and eating and drinking establishments should be concentrated in the hamlets.

7.3.6 Existing merchants, residents, and home-based businesses should be made aware of the types of businesses needed in Town. Information about the businesses being targeted should be publicized in local newsletters and press releases. This action is consistent with the County plan which focuses on recruiting businesses in the target industries, attracting businesses identified in Greene County's Empire Zone Development Plan, supporting efforts to increase shopping and dining options in appropriate areas in the hamlets and continuing to support entrepreneurship and small business growth.

7.4. Focus Recruitment in Target Industry Sectors Identified By The County And Other Regional Economic Development Organizations

The Town's plan will be consistent with the County Economic Development strategy and evaluate the possibility of attracting companies from the identified target industry clusters including:

- Traditional Manufacturing: Food processing, printing, plastics and rubber
- Advanced Manufacturing: Fabricated metals, medical devices and electronics
- Emerging Technologies: Nanotechnology, energy production and biotechnology
- Technical/Professional Services: Back office and financial services

7.4.1 The Town will work cooperatively with the County, IDA and regional economic development organizations to determine how Greenville can develop appropriate business locations and infrastructure to support the target industries.

7.4.2 The Town will take advantage of various programs and incentives available through the agencies identified above as well as the Empire Zone Program.

7.4.3 As part of Its own efforts and in conjunction with the County and surrounding municipalities, the Town will market to industry sectors that could be appropriate to Greenville.

7.5. Support Specialized Business Sectors

Greenville will pursue a diverse and growing economy that increasingly requires a community to support specialized business sectors.

7.5.1 In addition to the industry sectors targeted by the County, Greenville will support green business development, tourism, specialty farming and home based businesses of all kinds.

7.5.2 For home based businesses and arts and cultural businesses, the Town will ensure that its zoning policies encourage mixed use where business operators can work and live. Gathering places for entrepreneurs such as internet cafes and a telecommuting center will be encouraged. Town owned and other community spaces will be used to display arts and cultural products and services.

7.5.3 Greenville shares the County's belief that tourism can become a larger part of the Town's economy, specifically through support of the golf and resort industry. The Town's approach will contribute to the Tourism elements of the County Plan by developing new destination venues,

promoting four-season vacation destinations, adapting attractions and accommodations to the expectations of the travel market, using the Internet more effectively in marketing, and developing retail amenities and services for tourists.

7.5.4 Town will continually evaluate its zoning to ensure that it encourages residential development and other amenities around golf courses. It will support other initiatives that accommodate industry trends and allow these uses to become year-round destinations, prosper in the Town and contribute to the County's tourism and economic development goals.

7.5.5 The Town will support development of "niche or artisanal farming." The County Economic Development Strategy also identified agriculture as an important part of the local economy that produces "a variety of quality products for local and regional markets, while serving as the basis for value-added processing and the development of small-scale niche businesses." According to the Agriculture Departments Economic Research Service, the number of organic farms in the United States more than doubled from 1992 to 2005, to 8,500 from 3,600, and the land under their cultivation more than quadrupled, to 4.1 million acres from 935,000 acres. Niche agriculture is typically very small scale and high quality and targets very specific customers. The fresh gourmet greens, baby vegetables and local artisan cheeses, free-range chicken, wild salmon, and fine wine that is emerging from New York State comes from high value added farms and are sometimes even "grown to order" to specific end users such as gourmet shops or restaurants in the metro New York area. These operations typically use less land than traditional farming. Beyond farming itself small-scale business enterprises like farm stands or markets, businesses such as cheese processing or jam and jelly manufacturing create local tax base largely without negative environmental impacts. The Town will

ensure that zoning allows niche agricultural operations, encourage Community Supported Agriculture and identify a location for a seasonal farmers market in Town.

7.5.6 The Town will support green businesses. The Town will continually monitor and review zoning and codes to encourage the use of green building, infrastructure, and site planning principles. They will encourage the development of industry and small businesses with a corporate commitment to carbon-neutral, zero emissions business practices, telecommuting options and use of video conferencing facilities that reduce the need to travel, for instance.

7.6 Improve Hamlets and Main Streets as Economic Investment Areas

The Town shares the County's goal to encourage more densely settled development within existing hamlets and support the revitalization of downtowns and Main Street areas. Earlier actions describe a range of tasks such as the development of design standards, construction of sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities, and telecommunication expansions that are critical to creating a vibrant hamlet or Main Street area.

7.6.1 The Town will actively pursue funding from the New York State Main Street Program and other finding sources that will enable it to make the physical improvements necessary to improve the business environment and customer base.

7.6.2 The Town will actively encourage the rehabilitation of existing hamlet structures and the development of infill projects that are consistent with hamlet character.

7.6.3 The Town will support ongoing focus on beautification and aesthetics in the hamlets including street tree maintenance, plantings, and landscaping.

7.6.4 The Town will use the County's Main Street Business Attraction Initiative that provides matching grants to local organizations for marketing of vacant commercial space and strategic planning. By adding these additional initiatives, the Town is addressing as many of the challenges involved with Main Street revitalization as possible through a targeted, pro-active approach.

7.7 Support Efforts to Prepare Local Residents to Enter a Knowledge–based Economy

The County Economic Development Plan identifies a key goal as "expanding the quantity and quality of employment opportunities through the development of a balanced, diverse, and year-round economy. " It also focuses on "developing a skilled and educated workforce that will meet the needs of existing businesses and emerging industries in Greene County. Identified objectives include addressing the training and education needs of businesses and residents, enhancing the role of local educational institutions in preparing students for today's knowledge-based economy and developing a competitive labor force, and addressing gaps in education and training to respond to the needs of target industries. The Town will work closely with all educational organizations to access resources for local residents that make them more competitive for existing and newly attracted jobs.

Photo Credit: Peter O'Hara, 2008