

PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS ON THE FOUR PLAN SCENARIOS

Over the course of four meetings, the residents of Rochester had the opportunity to evaluate alternative scenarios for Rochester's future. There were four scenarios presented; each had potential costs and benefits as well as restrictions and possibilities. The scenarios dealt with issues of zoning, development, regulations, densities, open space, and scenic vistas. The four scenarios presented were: Administrative Clean-Up, "Truth-In-Zoning," Landscape Protection through Regulation, and Landscape Management through Incentives. These four scenarios were described on large boards located around the meeting room and residents were asked to review the descriptions on these boards during the course of the evening. (More detailed descriptions of the scenarios When a resident found something in the scenario that he or she did not like, the resident was instructed to write down their concern on a PINK Post-it and attach it to the scenario. When the resident found something they liked in the scenario, he or she was asked to write it down on a GREEN Post-it note and attach it to the scenario. NOTE: In some instances, it was necessary to add explanatory notes to provide a context for the comments. Those additional notes are indicated by the use of brackets [for example].

The four scenarios presented for evaluation were:

ADMINISTRATIVE CLEAN-UP—Under this scenario, current zoning densities are maintained, but the zoning map and regulations themselves are clarified and simplified.

"TRUTH-IN-ZONING"—Under this scenario, existing zoning densities are adjusted to reflect the density of development that is actually possible given such constraints as soil percolation, steep slopes, etc.

LANDSCAPE PROTECTION THROUGH REGULATIONS—Under this scenario, open space and scenic vistas are protected by reducing density in areas outside of hamlets to at least five acres per unit and by increasing density within hamlets.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT THROUGH INCENTIVES—Under this scenario, local policies and programs are used to create incentives to reward property owners for complying with plan goals and to create market forces to achieve plan goals.

The pages below list the comments received for each of the scenarios at each of the four meetings held.

FIRST MEETING, MONDAY, APRIL 17: ACCORD FIREHOUSE

Scenario 1-ADMINISTRATIVE CLEAN-UP

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- All of Route 209 should be commercial due to it being a main road
- Our Town is out of control with growth under this system. Unplanned growth=unplanned taxes
- No, we must improve not stay the same
- Doesn't reflect/accommodate what we love and want to protect
- Natural resources do not follow clearly delineated lines. The country was made on natural resources and that is what keeps open space!
- Focus on problems that actually exist-leave everything else as is!
- Inadequate
- I don't think we should hurry up becoming Westchester County
- Open space has been saved by working families not by forcing it
- Too much land being set aside for open space
- Do not clarify and simplify the current zoning by changing the meaning of the current law; that would be changing the law, not clarifying it.

Things you LIKE:

- Save open space-they're not making any more of it
- All of Rochester should stay 1 acre zoning
- Not all regulations are obsolete and outmoded!! What about considering them part of the Town's tradition. Don't rush to rewrite!

Scenario 2-"TRUTH-IN-ZONING"

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- Keep the old zoning and don't put new in
- Might work but no confidence
- Too cluster/very ugly/go to the city if you want that look
- Partial solution
- While "clarifying" business uses permitted, some old existing business may be destroyed!

Things you LIKE:

- This could allow development where resources permit; it could also reduce infrastructure costs
- I could live with this but probably couldn't afford the taxes!

Scenario 3-LANDSCAPE PROTECTION THROUGH REGULATION

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- No! No!! No!!! Two-acre minimum is just fine
- This will create an environment where only the wealthy will be able to live. So much for rural character
- People should be able to do what they want with their land
- Let's stay away from more regulation

- Communist Soviet bloc
- Too costly
- Too restrictive
- Do not like restricting land usage outside of hamlets to 5 acres per unit
- Too restrictive

Things you LIKE:

- ADD flexibility/ 5 acres OK but add bonuses for open space
- This is a good concept. Go to 20 acre zoning at steeper part of town!
- Less houses-Less taxes!

Scenario 4-LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT THROUGH INCENTIVES

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- How do you fix zoning when it isn't BROKEN?
- Most farms in our town are supported by farming
- It all comes with COST!!
- Protect my land from me?? For you!!
- High-density ruins rural character we want to keep

Things you LIKE:

- Best of the lot
- This has possibilities but the complexities might make it unmanageable
- Give incentives for keeping open space
- Tax reduction for keeping land open-best incentive!
- Less houses-Less taxes!
- Good idea

SECOND MEETING, TUESDAY, APRIL 18: ALLIGERVILLE FIREHOUSE

Scenario 1-ADMINISTRATIVE CLEAN-UP

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- Segregating the economic classes
- No gated communities
- This would populate our spaces with houses, houses-everywhere!
- Bad idea-misuse and overuse of land
- 1-acre zoning could be DISASTROUS on the water supply, emergency services, and potentially our taxes!
- Restricting and forcing are not the answers! Encourage and discourage appropriately!

Things you LIKE:

- Yes! Clarify regulations
- Very good idea-sooner the better [clarify regulations]
- I agree [with updating outdated regulations]
- Create true business districts
- Yes! [business zone delineation]

Scenario 2-“TRUTH-IN-ZONING”

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- I don't like the wording here-actual development potential of “MOST” makes me a little uneasy
- Cluster housing doesn't fit in rustic Rochester
- Needs to be looked at and clarified [actual zoning versus actual development potential]
- Would this restrict businesses in residential zones regardless if it could coexist?
- Truth in zoning would have been a good idea 20 years ago. We need more

Things you LIKE:

- Yes [adjust zoning to reflect actual conditions]
- Good idea-some areas already overused
- Adding truth in zoning with incentives is a good place to start
- Definitely! [clustering]
- Good idea to use land with smart development

Scenario 3-LANDSCAPE PROTECTION THROUGH REGULATIONS

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- Property owners losing their “rights”
- Fifth amendment rights
- Not everyone wants to be taxed or maintain 5 acres
- Mix up the zoning with 5 acre, 1 acre, etc.
- Not unless there is not enough water to support 1 acre zoning
- Segregation of the middle/low income
- Controls where the lower and moderate income family can afford to live
- No [hamlet as community center]

Things you LIKE:

- Yes! [protect open space]
- Lower my taxes, please
- Protect the land, clean air, water, land
- I agree-you will run out anyone that makes low or middle income [low density=expensive housing]
- Open space accessible for hunting/hiking!

Scenario 4-LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT THROUGH INCENTIVES

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- Does it really have to be so complex? [negotiations]
- Complex OK, but not to extent of driving away business
- This should not be the only high density, as hamlets are very small

Things you LIKE:

- Combine land management with truth in zoning!
- Encouraging and discouraging through appropriate incentives!
- Good way to preserve the area [TDR]
- I like the incentive idea! This is a place to start

- Yes [TDR]
- Good idea [cluster]
- Excellent; keep rural character of our community [by setting aside open space]
- People are more receptive to things when it's done voluntarily
- Need lower income and affordable housing
- We need more affordable housing, but are incentives enough?

THIRD MEETING, THURSDAY, APRIL 20: ROCHESTER TOWN COURT

Scenario 1-ADMINISTRATIVE CLEAN-UP

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- Cannot create cluster subdivision without completion of NRI-need strong aquifer sources!
- Doing nothing, does nothing-growth will still happen and will not be out of control

Things you LIKE:

- Less is best

Scenario 2-"TRUTH-IN-ZONING"

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- Market demand will shape the Town
- Gravel Banks and sawmill should be zone commercial so people know

Things you LIKE: None

Scenario 3-LANDSCAPE PROTECTION THROUGH REGULATION

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- This is only good for the wealthy 2nd homebuyer! Locals cannot afford this plan
- What about 1st time home buyers!
- And then the McMansions!! Ugly and monolithic
- Strongly disagree-zoning sacred
- Buy it-open space
- "Breath"-Life...is needed! Must be intergenerational or will be "rich only" or "seniors only"

Things you LIKE:

- Infrastructure is inevitable [water/sewer]. May as well begin in the hamlets

Scenario 4-LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT THROUGH INCENTIVES

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- Buy it-large open space

Things you LIKE:

- Great idea and very much needed. Helps lower-income home buyers
- Excellent-must be mixed incentives
- This protects large parcel landowners-TDR

FOURTH MEETING, MONDAY, APRIL 24: ROCHESTER II FIREHOUSE

Scenario 1-ADMINISTRATIVE CLEAN-UP

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- This is just moving the deck chairs-no real development
- Need modifications to reflect development over past 30+ years rather than just cleaning up what we have
- I'm concerned about over-development here

Things you LIKE:

- This plan would favor the local person-other plans would have the potential to change zoning densities and make minimum acreage higher-hurting local folks looking to pass land to kids and making building for local folks MUCH more expensive
- I agree-leave current zoning as it is
- This is preferred

Scenario 2-"TRUTH-IN-ZONING"

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- Better than just a clean-up but 1 acre zoning opens up the possibility of over-development
- Too restrictive with no necessary benefits

Things you LIKE:

- This one
- Need different density-[other than just 1 acre]-best way to future

Scenario 3-LANDSCAPE PROTECTION THROUGH REGULATION

Things you DON'T LIKE:

- 5 acre zoning will only hurt local people and drive them out
- 5 acre zoning is too large-moderate income families will have problems affording it
- Some development may "need" the open space to operate-TOO RESTRICTIVE
- -NO-If I own 10 acres of land and have 4 children, I would not be able to give each of them 2 acres to build a home-therefore they leave!

Things you LIKE:

- Use a combination of incentives and regulation
- Although incentives are nice-regulation is definitely needed to mitigate EXTERNALITIES

Scenario 4-LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT THROUGH INCENTIVES

Things you DON'T LIKE: None

Things you LIKE:

- Love it!
- Would help keep large areas of open space
- Use of carrot rather than stick-allows for development based on individual needs
- Use incentives and regulations

Town of Rochester Comprehensive Plan Update: Proposed Plan Scenarios

PLAN SCENARIO:	Administrative Clean Up	"Truth in Zoning"	Landscape Protection Through Regulation	Landscape Management through Incentives & Negotiations
PRIMARY POLICY TOOL:	Maintain current zoning districts but improve clarity of provisions (including map)	Adjust existing zoning to reflect densities that area actually possible given such constraints as soil percolation, etc.,	Protect open space and scenic vistas by reducing density of zoning districts in areas outside hamlets, with densities lowest in those areas most distant from hamlets while also increasing densities within the hamlets	Create a system of local policies/program that rewards property owners for complying with plan goals by providing financial incentives and creating market forces to achieve plan goals.
NEW RESTRICTIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some properties may be rezoned at lower densities to reflect site constraints that prohibit development at currently allowed densities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-acre residential lots would not be allowed outside of hamlet areas. Outlying areas would have minimum lot sizes of five acres or more. • Designated hamlet areas would have increased density 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive zoning would be created to provide density bonuses and other rewards for developments consistent with plan goals. • PDR would be used to achieve plan goals in key areas • TDR would provide market incentives for property owners to reinforce plan goals
NEW POSSIBILITIES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants, property owners and Town would have a better understanding of actual development potential in each zone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large areas of open space would remain in the town in perpetuity. • Potential to develop hamlets as traditional higher-density "community centers" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create "win/win" situation for both Town goals and goals of individual property owners • Solutions could be tailored almost on a site-by-site basis
POTENTIAL COSTS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High density build out could increase cost of community services • Regulations would not direct growth to hamlet centers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If done properly, very few additional costs. • High density development could still increase cost of community services • Regulations would not direct growth to hamlet centers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing would become less affordable. • More land would be required to accommodate development pressures. • Development potential of some individual properties would be reduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No certainty of outcome • Development process could involve costly complex negotiations. • Taxpayers would pay for PDR programs and/or lands taken off tax rolls through conservation easements.
POTENTIAL BENEFITS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved clarity of zoning provisions could lower the costs to applicants and to code enforcement function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If zoning more accurately reflected actual development potential, the process of designing and approving subdivisions would be simplified and improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certainty of outcome • Cost of community services would remain low. • The bulk of development would occur inside designated hamlet areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great flexibility in finding solutions that meet goals of both plan and property owners. • Potential for outcomes that better reflect plan goals with fewer limits on the development potential of lands outside hamlet areas.