

ROCHESTER REPORTER



News & Facts about our Town

Published by the Rochester Town Board to keep residents informed and involved

Register to receive the electronic version of the Rochester Reporter at www.townofrochester.net (click on Subscribe to News on the Home Page)

CONTACTS

Supervisor:

Pam Duke.....626-3043

Council Members:

Francis Gray.....626-4527

Alex Miller.....626-8144

Ron Santosky.....626-4314

Tony Spano.....626-4822

Town Offices:

Town Clerk.....626-7384

Fax: 626-3702

Building/Codes....626-2433

Planning/Zoning..626-2434

Highway.....626-7221

Transfer Station...626-5273

Tax Assessor.....626-0920

Dog Control.....626-5979

Town Court.....626-2522

Youth Dept.....626-2115

MEETINGS & EVENTS

8/08 (Tu) ZBA, 7:30pm TH

8/09 (W) Comp. Plan Update Committee, 8pm TH

8/10 (Th) Code Task Force, 6pm TH

8/15 (Tu) Planning Board, 7pm TH

8/16 (W) Youth Dept. Board, 9:30am CC

8/16 (W) Fire Commissioner Board Meeting, 7:30pm AcF

8/21 (M) Comprehensive Plan Update Committee, 7pm TH

8/29 (Tu) PZC Public Hearing on Draft Comprehensive Plan, 7pm AcF

8/30 (W) Town Board (Audit), 4:30pm TH

9/01 (F) School tax bills mailed

9/05 (Tu) SEQA Review; Com. Plan to UC Planning Board

9/07 (Th) Town Board Meeting, 7pm TH

TH=Town Hall
CC=Community Center
AcF=Accord Firehouse

Comprehensive Plan Preliminary Draft Released

Following more than six months of work involving numerous committee meetings and 9 town-wide meetings, a preliminary draft of the Town's updated Comprehensive Plan has been made available for public view.

The current draft is expected to be formally reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Committee (PZC) during its August 9 and August 21 meetings, to which the public is invited. An important part of the review process will be a public hearing that is scheduled to take place on August 29 at 7:00 pm in the Accord Fire Department Social Hall.

The Town Board does not have a formal role at this stage of the Plan's development. Rather, it will wait to review the version of the Plan that is recommended to it by the PZC. The Town Board's review will also be done in open meetings and with the benefit of a separate public hearing process.

A summary of the Preliminary Draft is provided below and continues on the back. It is only a brief outline of the draft; readers are strongly encouraged to read the complete document, which can be downloaded from the website (www.townofrochester.net) or from the Town Clerk's office.

Summary of Draft Plan

The Town of Rochester began the process of updating its comprehensive plan in January 2006. The updated Comprehensive Plan is intended to ensure that the Town of Rochester has

policies in place so that the property rights of landowners and the community as a whole are both protected by employing a balanced set of standards for preserving the rights to use land as desired while also addressing the impacts of such development on adjacent landowners and their property rights. This plan is to replace the Town's current plan, which was completed and adopted in 1969.

Since 1969, Rochester has remained a community with great natural beauty, a

The General Approach of the Plan has been to seek a reasonable balance in all of its recommendations, meaning balance among the varying interests of different citizens. It also means finding balance among the types of development promoted. In sum, this means keeping reasonable balance between important community goals and the rights of individual property owners so that:

- Growth can take place without compromising the quantity and quality of drinking water available to residents.
- New development is sited and designed to minimize the amount of taxes that must be raised to provide new facilities and services to support it.
- Town government expands its ability to collaborate and share services and purchasing with a variety of other government entities, including the School District as part of cost-saving efforts.
- Rochester may take advantage of changes in the national and regional economy to build the Town's economic base by encouraging small business, tourism, arts, agriculture and historic preservation.
- To the extent possible, the Town remains an affordable place for all to live.
- Development complements and strengthens Rochester's small town quality.

(Continued on page 2)

Public Hearing

A public hearing on the draft Comprehensive Plan Update will be conducted by the Planning & Zoning Committee on Tuesday, Aug. 29 at the Accord Fire House. All residents are welcome and encouraged to attend.

strong sense of history and a high quality of life. To be an effective guide for the future, a plan should consider all of these factors—natural beauty, history and quality of life—along with others such as economic opportunities and community values. This plan and its recommendations are intended to enable to the Town to respond to changes it faces in ways that keep these essential qualities intact.

Board of Assessment Review Completes Its Work

The Board of Assessment Review (BAR) held its annual Grievance Day on May 23-24. The BAR met in person with 74 complainants and acted upon grievances filed by another 32 complainants. The BAR then met in June to address each of the grievances.

Of the 106 cases, the BAR determined that 38 properties were properly or under-assessed and that no further reductions were warranted; 5 grievances were voluntarily withdrawn or dismissed; and the remaining 63 had their assessments reduced. The value

of these reductions totaled approximately \$2.9 million.

In addition, the BAR assisted 8 property owners reduce their tax burden by combining contiguous lots, providing a total savings of about \$35,000.

(Continued from page 1)

- Growth occurs in a way that minimizes loss of open spaces or scenic views.

As indicated above, the Comprehensive Plan is intended to set a direction for development in the Town and then define the actions, policies and other tools that will be used to move the Town in that direction

The Plan provides 6 goals that set a direction for subsequent actions by the Town related to its growth and development. These goals are listed below, along with related objectives.

1. Environmental Quality

Goal: Strike a balance so that growth can take place in a way that protects the environmental resources we all need to live.

Objectives:

- i. Protect the quantity and quality of the water supply by:
 - strengthening measures to prevent groundwater contamination, such as limiting density of development in areas of lowest groundwater yields and in aquifer recharge areas
 - developing standards to assure protection of surface waters, including standards for development to assure stream bank protection
 - protecting the quality of wetlands and other water bodies
 - providing sewage collection and treatment for hamlets such as Accord
- ii. Protect the Town's important natural resources as identified through the Town's Natural Resources Inventory as adopted by the Town Board.
- iii. Minimize disturbance to wildlife and vegetation from the effects of new development and the activities that accompany it.

2. Land Use

Goal: Shape future development so that it a) minimizes tax increases needed to support new growth b) maximizes the ability of people of all means to find an affordable place to

live in Rochester by providing for a range of housing choices and lot sizes

Objectives:

- i. Direct growth to where it works best by encouraging concentrations of new residential and mixed-used, and non-residential developments in areas which presently are or which can conveniently be served by roads, utilities, schools and other facilities.
- ii. Direct large-scale or intensive development away from more remote areas with difficult accessibility which would likely result in greater environmental impacts and would involve excessive costs for road improvements, road maintenance, and utility installation.
- iii. Broaden housing opportunities in the Town of Rochester to provide housing for all populations including senior citizens, working families and households, single adults, and others.
- iv. Use incentives to encourage better site design and green design principles in new development projects.

3. Community Character

Goal: Shape growth so that it contributes to and strengthens the qualities that make Rochester unique and define the character of the area from a public perspective, including such qualities as scenic views, open space and history.

Objectives:

- i. Develop standards of ridgeline protection for the Catskills and the Shawangunk Ridge that limit clearing and intensity of use so as to maintain existing character.
- ii. Create standards and/or guidelines for development and landscaping that maintain a high quality built environment while preserving and using natural beauty wherever possible.
- iii. Where appropriate, recognize historical small neighborhoods or settlements in zoning to preserve small-scale mixed use where it remains viable.
- iv. Protect and preserve the Town's historically significant buildings and sites in a manner that actively involves private owners of such properties.
- v. Prevent intrusion of incompatible uses in residential areas
- vi. Ensure that signage in Town is

both attractive and functional.

vii. Create an Open Space Plan to provide for significant areas of open space including preserving wooded areas and agricultural lands to the extent possible. The plan should define a system of open spaces and park and recreation facilities.

4. Economic Development

Goal: Enhance both the tax base and local employment opportunities by supporting a diverse economic base that includes tourism, agriculture, services and manufacturing all sited and scaled to blend in with the historic character of Rochester.

Objectives:

- i. Encourage the tourism and vacation industry in the Town including but not limited to well planned resort, recreation and Bed and Breakfast development.
- ii. Recognize and respond to the economic impact of 2nd home development in ways that strengthens Rochester's economy and community.
- iii. Provide for continued commercial and industrial growth compatible with the Land Use Goals of the Comprehensive Plan, including but not limited to allowing higher density development in hamlet areas.
- iv. Create community and cultural facilities integrated with commercial development in hamlet areas.
- v. Promote hiking, sightseeing and other outdoor recreation related businesses.
- vi. Provide sites for compatible industries (keeping in mind that the predominant character of the Town is residential)
- vii. Permit home occupations while regulating their size and the type of use permitted.
- viii. Promote energy conservation and renewable energy resources.
- ix. Promote broadband Internet access and expanded cellular access throughout the Town.
- x. Take measures to preserve productive farmlands as a viable industry resource and as a means for maintaining open space by maintaining right to farm protections.
- xi. Support creation of local Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs and/or Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs designed to encourage participation by farmers.
- xii. Provide opportunities for farmers to earn supplemental income as a means for remaining in farming.
- xiii. Encourage or support agri-tourism activities by farms in the town.
- xiv. Consider creating a plan to proactively promote & develop agriculture in the Town.

5. Infrastructure

Goal: Adopt Town Policies to minimize costs associated with construct-

ing and maintaining public infrastructure needed to accommodate growth.

Objectives:

- i. Provide adequate sewer and water capacity to accommodate growth of the Accord hamlet or other hamlets, if appropriate.
- ii. Promote concepts to reduce traffic congestion along highways in the Town.
- iii. Improve the safety of the roads in the Town by: developing high standards for constructing and maintaining private roads; evaluating and addressing the intensity of use compared to highway capacity when reviewing proposed land uses and/or development projects; employing capital improvement programming to correct safety problems.
- iv. Require adequate setbacks and off-street parking for both residential and nonresidential uses with public road frontage.
- v. Seek alternatives to strip commercial development along Route 209 and other frontage access highways, by directing such development to hamlet areas and/or concentrated nodes that minimize the road frontage and necessary curb cuts.
- vi. Ensure that new construction provides adequate access for emergency services.

6. Government Services

Goal: Provide effective and cost-efficient services for the residents of the Town.

Objectives:

- i. Create and maintain reliable communication resources for the town so that residents can better participate in local government.
- ii. Improve municipal codes and code enforcement by improving the clarity of code language, simplifying enforcement procedures and seeking to continually improve code enforcement practices in the Town.
- iii. Provide a capital facilities planning process with appropriate policies and incentives to ensure that the Town has adequate equipment and facilities for such needs as public safety (e.g., fire and rescue services), highways and transportation, recreation, and overall administration.
- iv. Ensure that local policies and regulations encourage development that minimizes the risk from fire and other hazards.
- v. Continue to pursue opportunities to work with other municipalities and agencies to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of government services such as: planning for open space for recreation (e.g., the rail trail); identification and conservation of contiguous areas of natural habitat; economic development including agriculture; planning for areas such as the Route 209 corridor.

Phase 1 Cell & Internet Study Completed

As reported in the June Rochester Reporter, Homeland Towers was to conduct reception tests throughout Rochester, with the intention of identifying potential sites to erect towers for improving cell phone and broadband capabilities. These tests are now done.

The test results provided reception levels on all county and state roads in the town. The next phase of the assessment will be to set transmitters on cranes at two recommended sites and

then conduct a second series of drive-around tests.

If these results are positive and the recommended site(s) involve Town property, Homeland Towers will propose entering into a contract with the Town, whereby the Town receives fees in exchange for the right to erect and operate the new communications facility, similar to the arrangements involving the cable services provider, Time Warner. Stayed tuned!