



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Town of Orangetown Town Board

FROM: VHB

DATE: February 10, 2012

RE: Suggested Action Items: Orangetown Comprehensive Plan Update Study

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Based upon the analyses included in the study and the feedback from the various board members that participated in a series of meetings on the study, we concluded that, with one exception (Rockland Psychiatric Center), the 2003 Comprehensive Plan does not need to be fully updated at this time. Its recommendations are still valid and, as such, provide direction for the Town in terms of land use, open space, and community services.

### Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC)

As noted above, the one exception to the need to update the 2003 Comprehensive Plan relates to the changes likely to occur at the RPC site in terms of the availability of the Children's Hospital, Staff Court, and the power plant; three sites that would have the potentially beneficial effect the marketability of the property for re-use. The 2003 Comprehensive Plan called for "low impact use" on the site and suggested senior housing, research, and development as possibilities. Although the previous K. Hovnanian proposal for a mostly age-restricted housing development was dropped because of economic conditions, the DGEIS prepared for that plan clearly indicated the community's concern for additional traffic along Convent Road and the local streets north of the RPC site.

The Town will need help from the State in the redevelopment of RPC, including assistance in the acquisition of the three additional properties and in funding building demolition, as well as asbestos and lead paint removal. Other approvals that will be needed include: SHPO approval of building demolition and State approval of modifications to the open space on the RPC site.

In order to address both the State and local issues, it would be appropriate to develop a new plan for RPC, building on the wealth of existing information, and garnering community input through a public participation process. The end result would be a plan, built on community consensus, that the Town Board can adopt (following a generic SEQRA review) as an amendment to the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. The Plan would then provide a solid basis for the Town's negotiations with the State, and for future developer proposals designed to implement the RPC plan.

### Route 303

The update study did identify a number of implementation actions recommended in 2003 that have not been fully implemented. These include a number of possible zoning modifications and the provision of additional support for design and aesthetic enhancements in key locations, as follows.

1. Along Route 303, the 2003 Comprehensive Plan and the 2012 update study suggested some zoning map and text changes to further protect the Town from strip commercial development changes along this roadway. The suggested map changes are in the CC-zoned area north of Orangeburg Road.
2. The Route 303 Overlay Zone does not need to be modified for new development, but the Town should consider how the overlay can be modified to incentivize revitalization of existing properties.
3. Related to the above, the Town should prepare Design Guidelines that illustrate best practices in terms of site layout, parking, landscape treatment, façade, and sign design for new development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation projects.
4. The Erie Street area and the Orangeburg Road/Route 340 area have seen little improvement since 2003 (an exception is the new Chase Bank). Detailed redevelopment plans for the area should accompany the design guidelines, with a focus on possible techniques to make these two areas more cohesive and attractive for shoppers and pedestrians.

### Hamlet Centers/Pearl River

In addition to RPC and Route 303, the Comprehensive Plan and the update study also looked at the hamlet centers. The 2003 Comprehensive Plan's suggested rezoning for the Orangeburg and Blauvelt areas (from CS to CC) should be considered. In addition, a number of zoning map and text changes in Pearl River should also be considered, which would be designed to focus retail and restaurant uses on Central Avenue, as recommended in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. In addition:

1. The Town should encourage additional development in downtown Pearl River by increasing the FAR for new development and consider permitting apartment development (including as part of mixed-use) near the railroad station, with small units (mostly one-bedroom) marketed to young professionals who would like to live in a downtown environment. Known as transit-oriented development (TOD), this approach has been successful in a variety of local communities around the region.
2. Other methods to enhance commercial business in Pearl River would include a facelift of the street and sidewalk amenities along Central Avenue and Main Street (which I understand is being planned). Off-street parking has been significantly increased in Pearl River since 2003; better signage directing motorists to these lots should be part of the facelift.
3. The Town should also pursue commercial façade and signage grant program, available with outside funding from time to time, and couple this assistance with downtown design guidelines that the 2003 Comprehensive Plan recommended for Pearl River. The guidelines would address site design as well as façade and signage improvements in order to cover Central Avenue, Main Street and other area adjacent to the downtown core.

All of the above should be coordinated with the Chamber of Commerce.