

Town of Orangetown Comprehensive Plan Update Study

Prepared for **Town Board of the Town Orangetown**
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December 2011

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I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

In May of 2003, the Town Board of the Town of Orangetown adopted the *Town of Orangetown Comprehensive Plan (2003 Comprehensive Plan)*. During its two-year planning process, an extensive public involvement process took place, including establishing the Comprehensive Plan Committee, public and committee meetings, hearings, and an environmental review process (SEQRA). A concurrent study was undertaken at that time of New York State Route 303 (entitled *Route 303 Sustainable Development Study*), addressing land use and traffic issues along this major north-south roadway. The *2003 Comprehensive Plan* focused on a number of key issues in the Town, including:

- Open space and recreational facilities
- Hamlets and local business areas
- Route 303, other roadways, and pedestrian trails
- Vacant and under-utilized lands, most notably the Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) site.

Between 2003 and 2011, a number of the Plan's recommendations had been implemented.

In 2011, the Town Supervisor and Town Board decided to take a fresh look at the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* and consider updating it, if necessary, to reflect current conditions and policies.

The planning consultant that assisted the Town with the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* was charged with the task of helping the Town Board decide what needed to be updated. At an initial meeting, it was determined that the Town had not changed significantly since 2003, and that most of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* recommendations appeared to remain valid. For the most part, the Town's residential character was stable and strong, and its defining open space characteristics had been strengthened with the construction of recreation fields in the southern portions of RPC site, as called for in the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*. Although some significant development had occurred, and some improvements had been made along Route 303, the overall character of the roadway had not changed, and many of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan's* recommendations for improvement still remained to be implemented. Similarly in the Town's hamlet centers, some of the recommendations from 2003 had been realized, while others had not, but again, to a large measure conditions were much the same as they had been in 2003.

In addition to the construction of recreation fields at RPC, two important planning issues emerged on that site from 2003. The Children's Hospital, a 50-acre site on Convent Road in the northwestern portion of the RPC site, was closed, and is now available for future development. Second, the initiative to rezone most of the RPC lands acquired for development as an age-restricted community was unsuccessful, because of major shifts in economic and market conditions that altered the viability of that use on the RPC site. During the review process on the age-restricted housing proposal, the single-most important community concern was the effects of traffic from development on the RPC site on Convent Road, which abuts RPC on the north, and the need to direct most of the new traffic from any development of the site towards Veterans Memorial Highway, which abuts the RPC site on the south.

As a result of these and other observations, it was determined that the update of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* should focus on several geographic areas, including: a) the Town's hamlet centers, particularly Pearl River; b) Route 303; and c) major vacant and under-utilized

Introduction and Purposes of the Comprehensive Plan Update

sites, including RPC. Further, it was determined that the results of these focused studies should be used to determine whether a full update of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* is needed or not.

Given the nature of this approach, it was further decided that input would be sought from the Town's various land use boards, including the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Architecture and Community Appearance Board of Review (ACABOR), at a series of workshop meetings where issues relating to the focus areas would be discussed. These meetings were held in the late-Summer and Fall of 2011.

This report presents a summary of the issues discussed at these meetings and the consensus reached with the Town Board members that attended the Comprehensive Plan Committee meetings. It begins with an overview of the demographics of the Town, comparing the Year 2000-based demographic information used in the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* with current information from the 2010 United States Census. The report then provides a discussion of the focus areas of the hamlet centers, Route 303, and the vacant and under-utilized sites. Finally, the report presents a number of conclusions, recommendations, and next steps.

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II. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Population

The 2010 United States Census reported a total Town population of 49,212 persons, a modest 3.1 percent increase from the 2000 Census population of 47,711 persons.

Age Distribution

The Town is graying as its median age has increased from 39.3 in 2000 to 42.4 in 2010. The percentage of the population under 18 years of age has decreased from 22.5 percent to 21.6 percent. The percentage of the population over 65 years of age has increased from 15.6 percent to 17.2 percent.

Race/Ethnicity

While the majority of the Town's 2010 population is white (81.9 percent), there has been a decrease in the white population since the 2000 Census, when 84.0 percent of the population was white. In 2010, 6.0 percent of the Town's population was Black or African-American, which is slightly higher than the 5.9 percent in 2000. Similarly, the Asian population has slightly grown, from 6.4 percent in 2000 to 6.9 percent in 2010. The largest growth in minority population has occurred among Hispanics/Latinos, growing from 6.0 percent in 2000 to 9.7 percent in 2010.

Households

The 2010 Census indicated that the average household size for Orangetown is approximately 2.59 persons, which represents a slight decrease from 2.62 persons in 2000.

Housing

In 2010, 72.1 percent of the housing in Orangetown was owner-occupied, as compared with 71.2 in 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, there was an increase in (occupied) housing units from 17,330 to 17,826. However, the percentage of occupied housing units decreased in 2010 to 95.8 percent from 97.2 percent in 2000. Similarly, the number and percentage of vacant housing units in the Town increased between 2000 and 2010, from 497 units/2.8 percent to 785 units/4.2 percent.

A number of important actions were taken since the adoption of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* related to housing and demographic conditions. These included the adoption of a floating zone for senior housing, entitled "Planned Adult Communities (PAC)," which permits age-restricted (55 and over) housing with a density bonus for affordable units. PAC zoning has been approved on several sites, including a former movie theater in Pearl River that was designed to help address senior housing and downtown revitalization needs. A more ambitious senior zoning approach was proposed as part of the unsuccessful K. Hovnanian plan for the RPC site, again focusing on the 55 and over population, in this case fostering a new urbanism approach for the property's redevelopment.

III. FOCUS AREAS

A. Route 303

The *2003 Comprehensive Plan* called for the Town to continue to hold firm on avoiding extensive strip commercial development along Route 303, similar to Route 59 in Clarkstown, which Orangetown has successfully done. The roadway has a mixed-use character, with retail and other commercial uses in limited areas.

The *2003 Comprehensive Plan* called for one notable exception where it recommended an upscale, mixed-use development, with commercial, office, and hospitality at the Route 303/Palisades Interstate Parkway (PIP) interchange, recognizing the regional significance of this location. Zoning was adopted for that area and a site plan was approved for Orangeburg Commons, a 15.8-acre site in the northwest quadrant of the interchange. The approved plan included hotels, a bank, a restaurant, and retail shops. A revised plan, with a supermarket replacing the retail shops, is currently being considered by the Town Board.

The Route 303 Overlay Zoning District was adopted in 2002 as a follow up to a “Sustainable Development” traffic and land use study of Route 303 (*Route 303 Sustainable Development Study*) that was prepared concurrently with the preparation of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*. The Town’s approval agencies and staff indicated that they are generally pleased with the overlay regulations, both in terms of additional site plan controls and their ability to negotiate improved site plans with prospective developers. A summary of the overlay controls is presented in **Table 1, Summary of Route 303 Overlay Zoning Controls**.

The Lowe’s development, located just north of the Route 303/PIP interchange, is a good example of the effectiveness of some of these zoning controls, particularly for the frontage treatment along the roadway.

The Route 303 Overlay Zoning District largely applies to new development, for which it has been effective. Its application to existing developed properties had limited success, since relatively little rehabilitation or redevelopment has occurred on Route 303 since 2003.

Some New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) roadway and intersection improvements have been implemented along Route 303; others are still in the planning stages. Where the highway’s edge has been improved with curbing installed, the appearance of Route 303 is noticeably better. Additional improvements would enhance the roadway’s aesthetics, as well as traffic/safety concerns. Sparkill Creek runs along portions of Route 303, mostly as an unattractive drainage-way, rather than a design element, as suggested in the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*.

Significant warehousing and distribution development has occurred in the northern portions of Route 303, the most recent approval was a 220,000 square-foot (sf) FedEx distribution facility. Just to the south, considerable building is occurring at the Bradley Industrial Park, extending across the railroad tracks. Restaurant Depot is a large and attractive building recently completed on Route 303.

Some additional vacant and underutilized land exists along Route 303, including two subdivided front lots at the FedEx site. With access provided to FedEx, these 14- and 4-acre sites will be ready for development. Much further south on the east side of Route 303, between Mountainview Road and Kings Highway, there are approximately 8 acres of underutilized land next to NicePak. Zoned CC, this site could accommodate a major shopping center, rather than a preferable industrial development like that realized on its neighboring properties. Even further south, a major underutilized parcel is the driving range/go-cart track in the southwest quadrant of the Route 303/PIP interchange. Although currently being expanded, in the long-term future, this site has the potential for a major development given its access to two regional highways.

Between Mountainview Road and Erie Street, there are a number of small vacant and underutilized sites, zoned CC and LO, with “for sale” signs. The *2003 Comprehensive Plan* suggested that some of the vacant and underutilized land area zoned CC along Route 303 be rezoned to avoid additional strip commercial development and that the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in the CC District be reduced from 0.3 to 0.2. It also suggested that parking ratios for certain uses were high and could also be reduced.

The Erie Street area along Route 303, zoned CC and CS, and the general area proximate to Route 340's intersection with Route 303, zoned CC, are among the least attractive portions of the roadway, with an uncoordinated mixture of mostly older commercial establishments that have not changed very much since adoption of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*. Building and site signage in these commercial areas is uncoordinated and often difficult to read. Both of these areas have some sidewalks that connect to the west, including Mountainview Road with Dominican College and Erie Street with Western Highway. The new Chase bank at the Orangeburg Road/Route 303 intersection, which benefitted from the Route 303 Overlay Zoning District, is a welcomed upgrading of this visually prominent area.

The shopping centers near the New Jersey border are zoned CS (FAR 1.0) rather than CC. Since 2003, there has been some upgrading; however, additional landscaping of the parking lots would be helpful. Some of the auto dealerships in the northern portions of Route 303 present visual problems with excessive balloons, flags and banners, and with vehicles for-sale parked very close to the right-of-way. If an amended site plan or a variance were ever requested in the future, the Town should seek improvements to address these conditions.

In terms of moving forward, two items in the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* should be considered:

1. The first is the preparation and adoption of design guidelines for site plans, parking lot design, landscaping, signage, and façade treatment, with text and graphics clearly illustrating what the Town is looking for in commercial development along Route 303.
2. The second is to re-visit the sketch plans prepared as part of the *Route 303 Sustainable Development Study*, showing how a coordinated improvement plan could occur, over time, in the Erie Street and Route 340 commercial segments of the corridor. Plans should be designed to enhance the aesthetics of these two areas, making them more attractive to pedestrians to the extent possible, with specific opportunities indicated for redevelopment and infill development.

In addition, the Town could consider modifying the Route 303 Overlay Zoning District to provide additional incentives to property owners in the upgrading and redevelopment of

Focus Areas

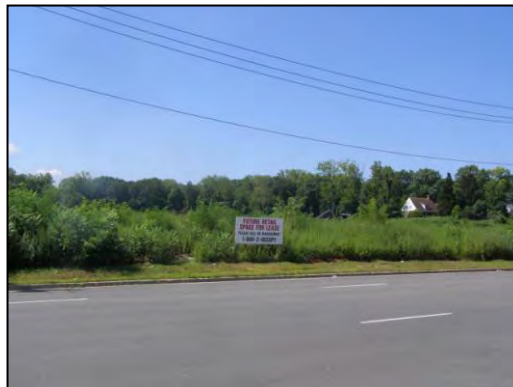
existing built-up sites, in order to encourage them to address the design guidelines established by the Town.

Existing conditions along the five-mile length of Route 303 in Orangetown are highlighted on the photographs that follow. In addition, **Figures 1-10** present the existing zoning, land use, and utilization conditions within the corridor.

Photographs of Route 303 – Section A



Photographs of Route 303 – Section B



Photographs of Route 303 – Section C



Photographs of Route 303 – Section D



Photographs of Route 303 – Section E



TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF ROUTE 303
OVERLAY ZONING CONTROLS

1. Retail in LI, LIO, and LO requires use and area variances

2. 65,000 s.f. maximum for several uses

3. No auto-related uses

4. No movie theaters

5. 25' buffers; no detention in front yard

6. Max 35% of parking in front yard

7. Curb cuts limited

8. Traffic management and traffic impact studies required

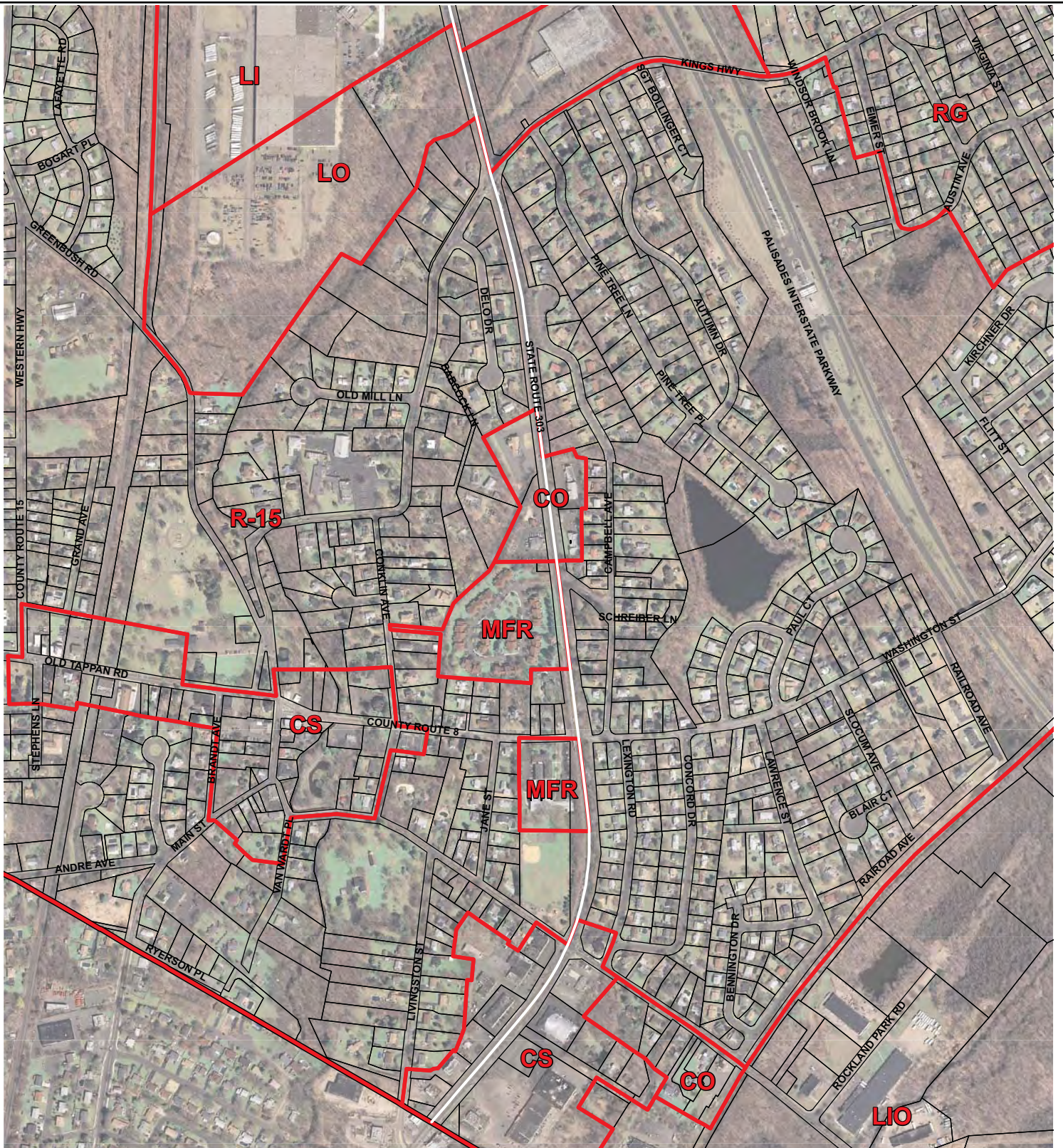
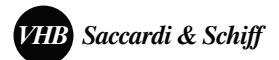


Figure 1
**ROUTE 303 CORRIDOR A
 VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York

 Vacant and Underutilized Land



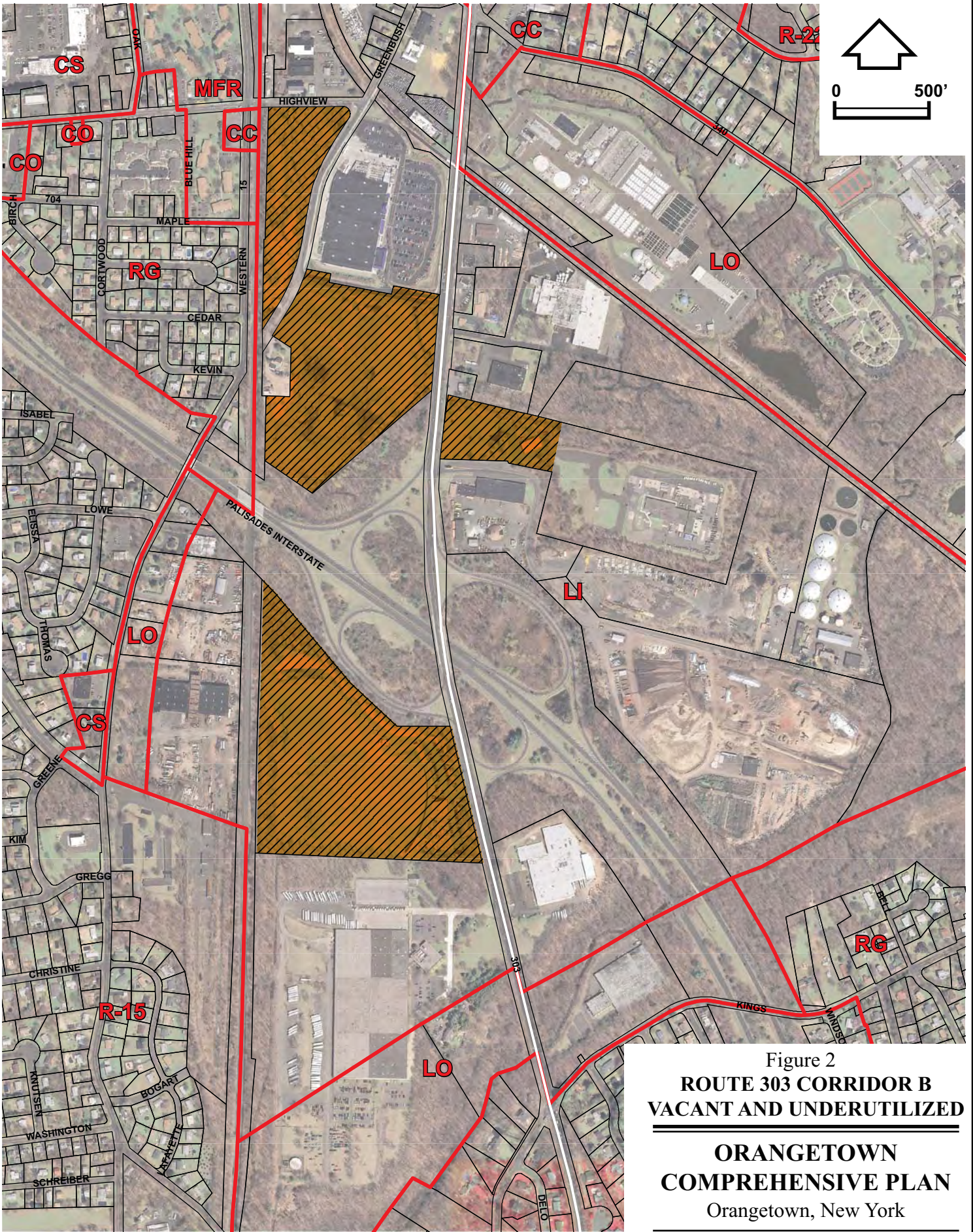



Figure 2
**ROUTE 303 CORRIDOR B
 VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York

 Vacant and Underutilized Land



SOURCE: Rockland County GIS, 2008

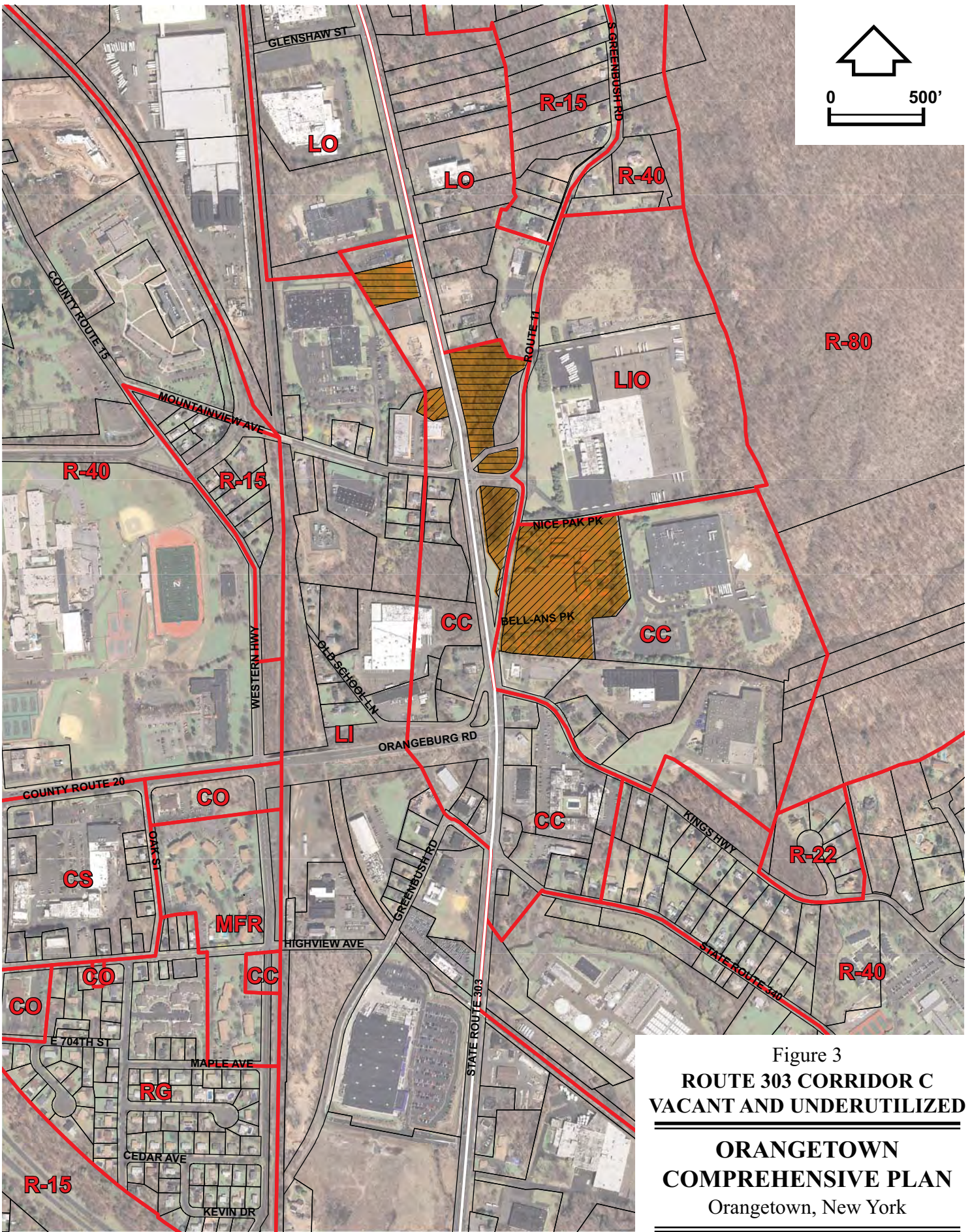



Figure 3
**ROUTE 303 CORRIDOR C
 VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York

 Vacant and Underutilized Land

SOURCE: Rockland County GIS, 2008



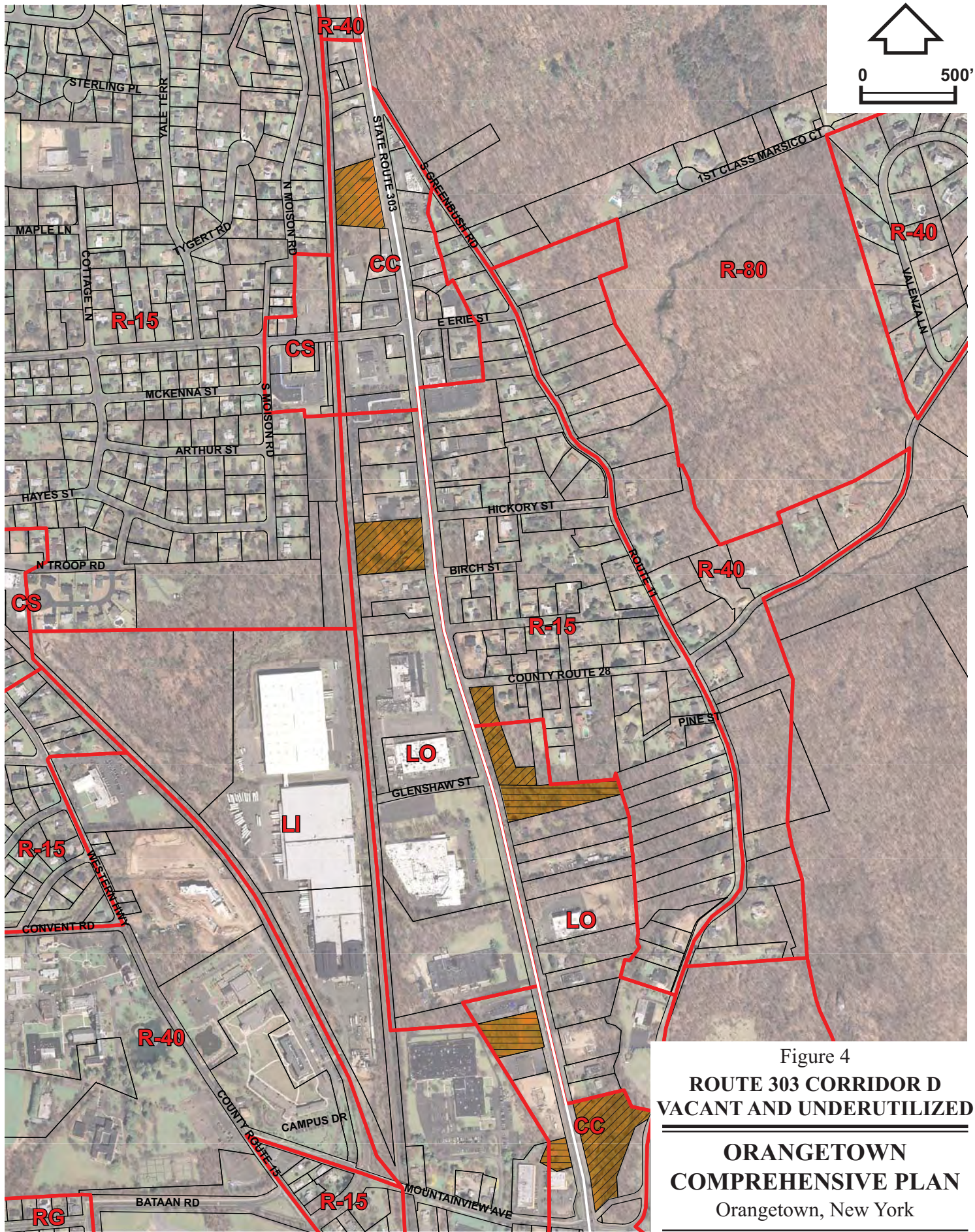



Figure 4
**ROUTE 303 CORRIDOR D
 VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York

 Vacant and Underutilized Land

SOURCE: Rockland County GIS, 2008

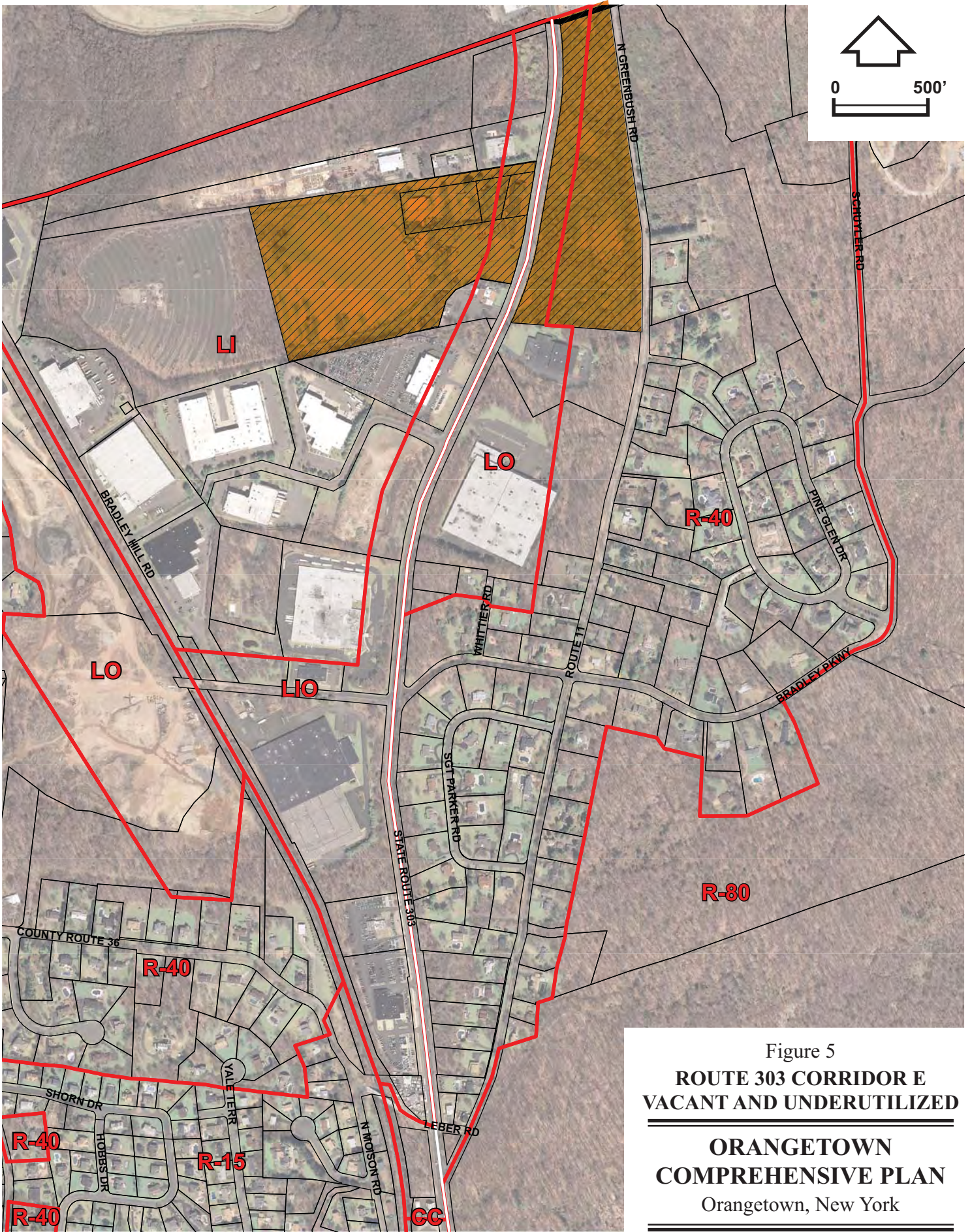


Figure 5
**ROUTE 303 CORRIDOR E
 VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York

 Vacant and Underutilized Land



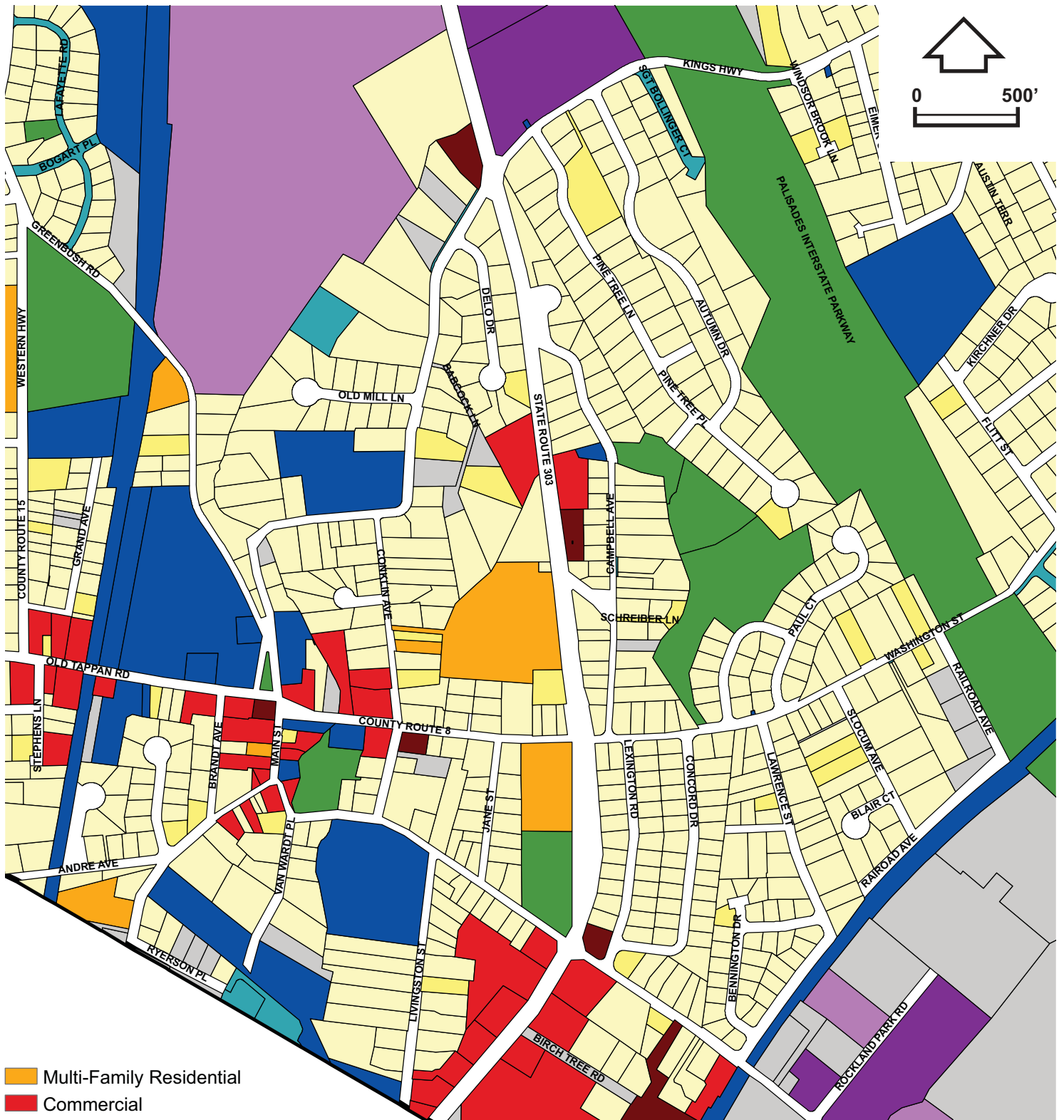


Figure 6
**ROUTE 303 CORRIDOR A
 LAND USE**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York



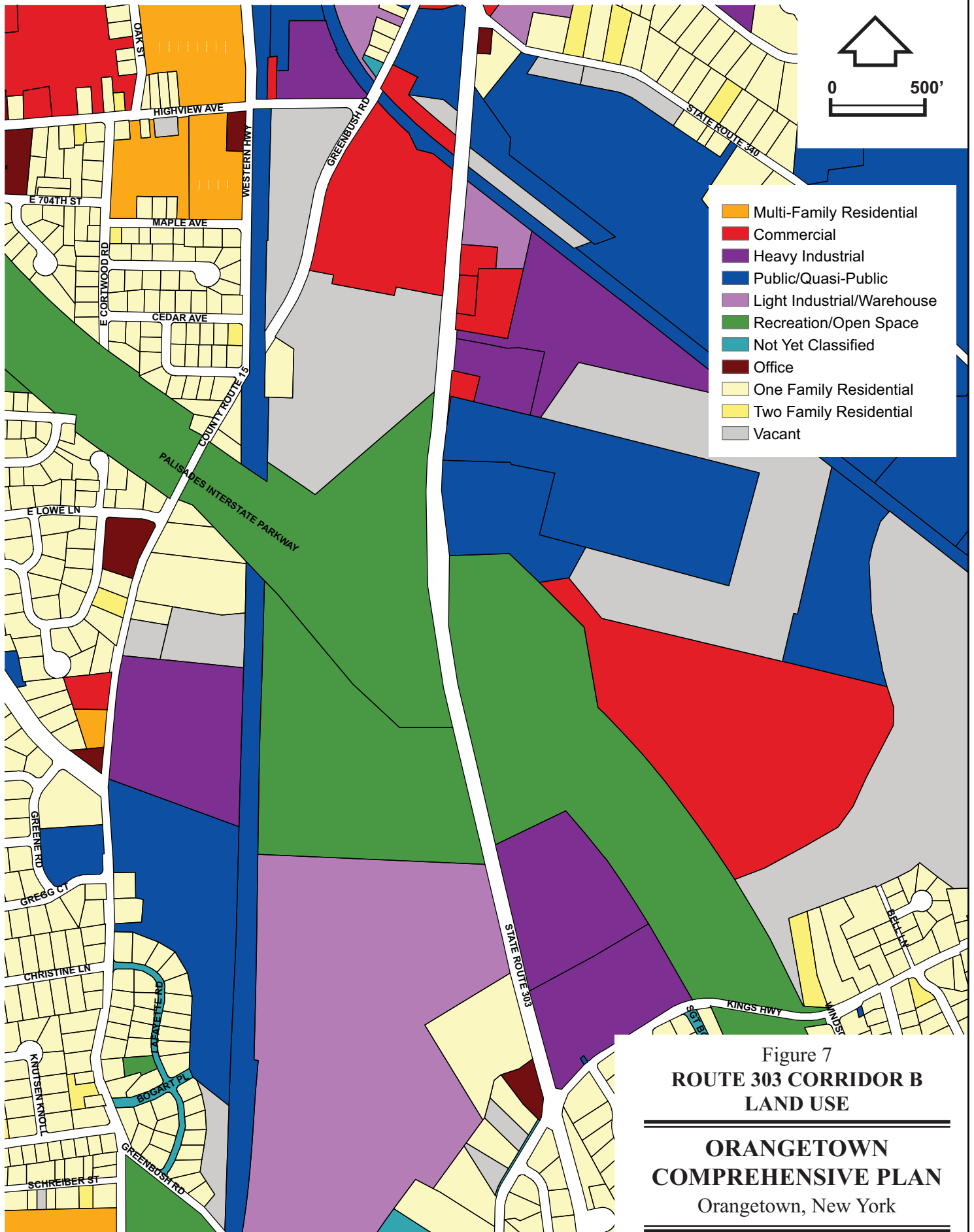


Figure 7
**ROUTE 303 CORRIDOR B
 LAND USE**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Orangetown, New York



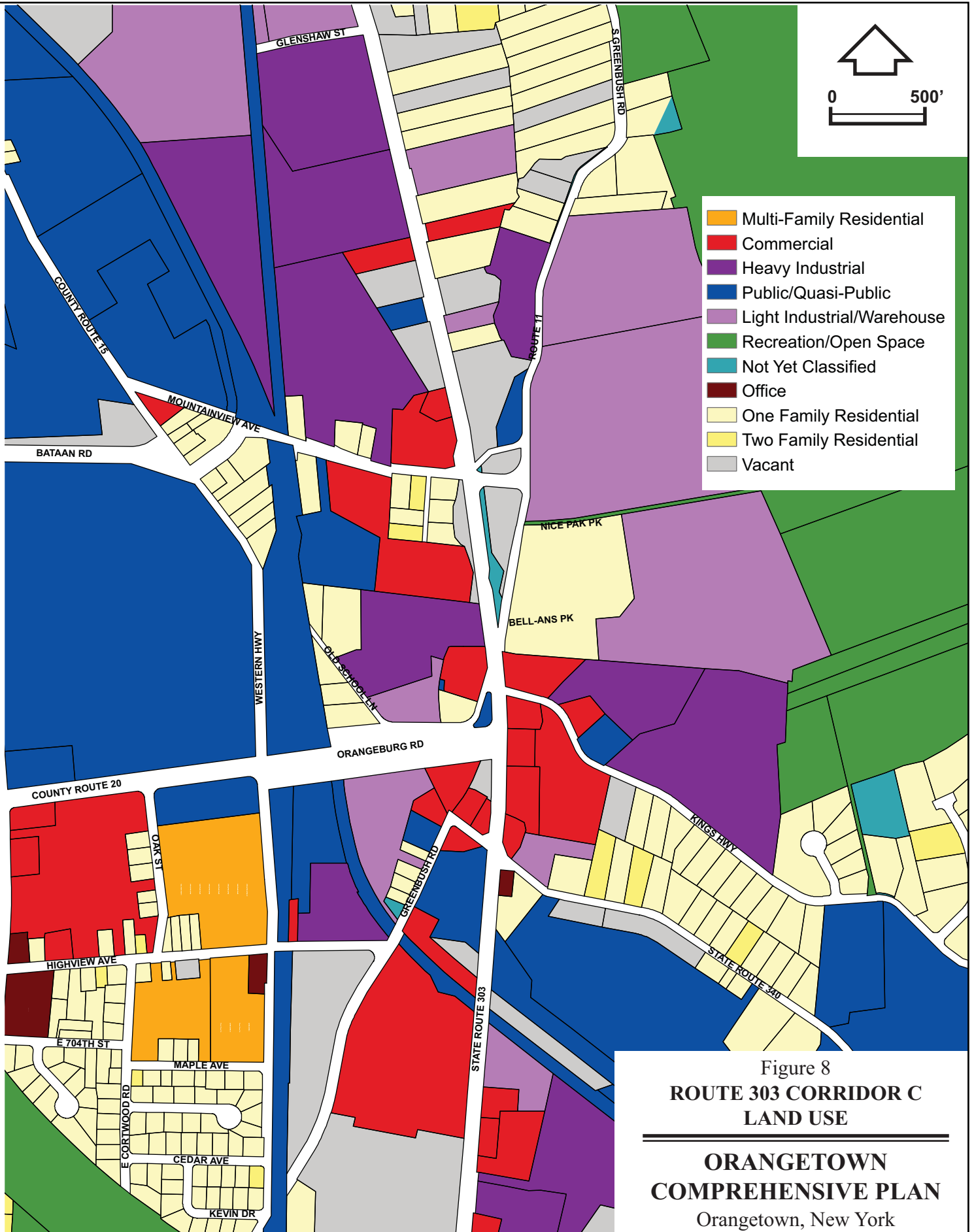
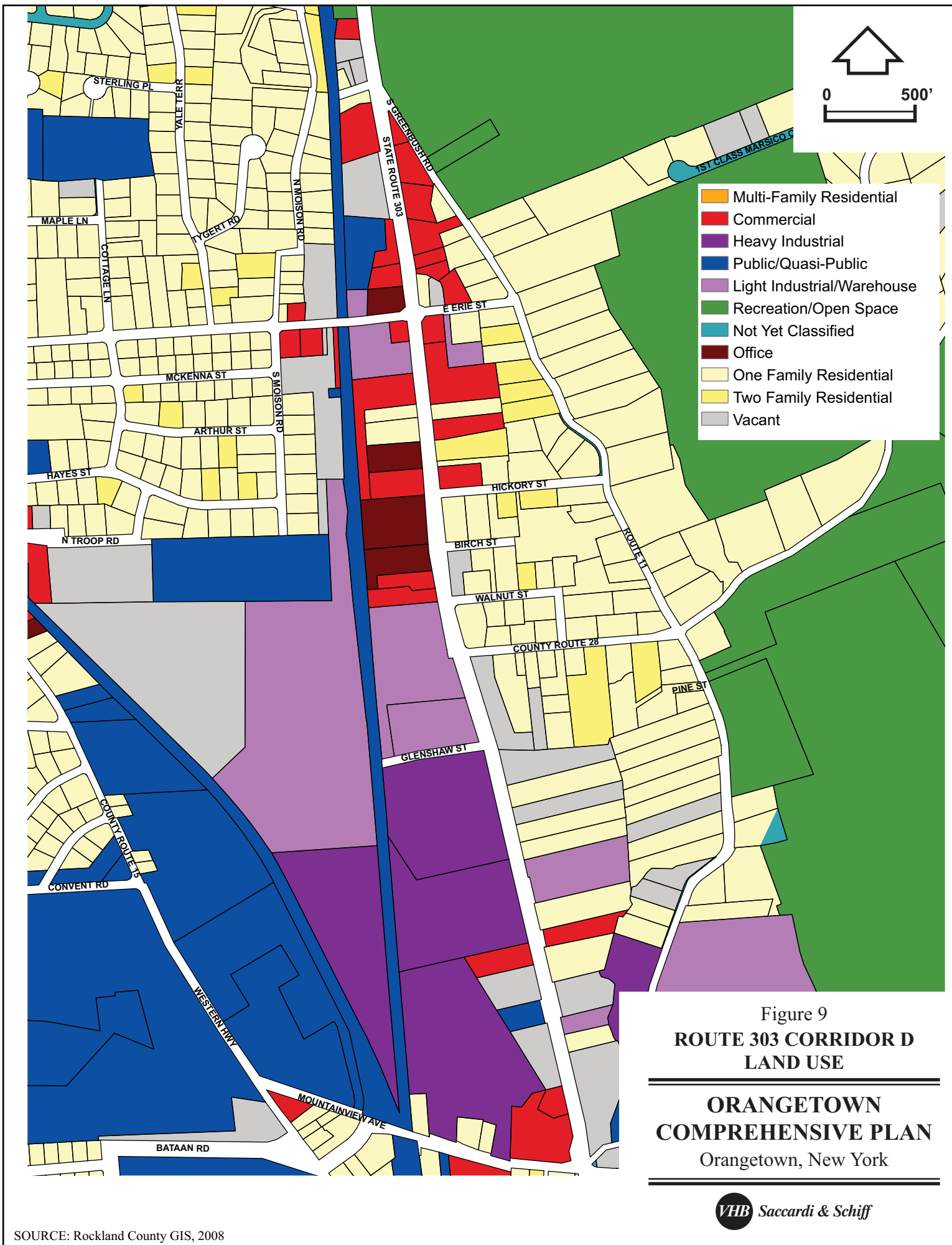


Figure 8
**ROUTE 303 CORRIDOR C
 LAND USE**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Orangetown, New York





- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Heavy Industrial
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Light Industrial/Warehouse
- Recreation/Open Space
- Not Yet Classified
- Office
- One Family Residential
- Two Family Residential
- Vacant

Figure 9
**ROUTE 303 CORRIDOR D
 LAND USE**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York

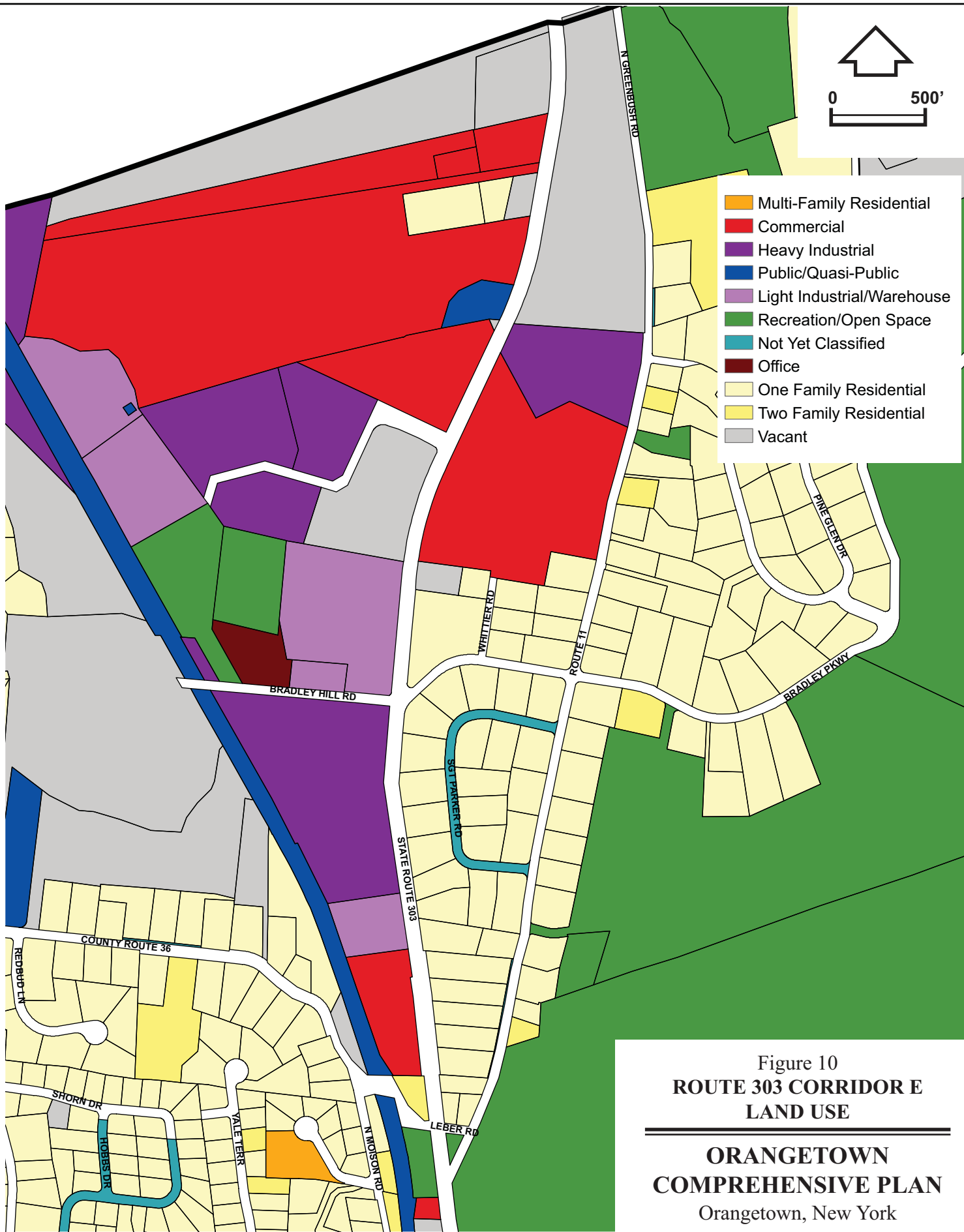


Figure 10
**ROUTE 303 CORRIDOR E
 LAND USE**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Orangetown, New York

B. Pearl River and the Other Hamlet CentersPearl River

Pearl River's downtown area is much larger and has more issues and opportunities than the other hamlet centers. The *2003 Comprehensive Plan's* recommendations for Pearl River, as depicted in **Table 2, Summary of Pearl River Proposals 2003 Comprehensive Plan**, included the following:

1. A major upgrading of the urban design components of the area were recommended, particularly along Central Avenue and Main Street, across from the railroad station, including new decorative sidewalks, street trees and other plantings, coordinated street furniture (benches, light fixtures, and trash receptacles), new off-street parking, angled parking on Central Avenue, and the relocation or removal of overhead wires. The *2003 Comprehensive Plan* also called for upgraded and coordinated public and private signage, including entry signage at gateways to the downtown area. Some of these suggestions have been implemented.
2. In terms of land use and zoning, the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* suggested the possibility of adding senior housing in a former movie theater and permitting outdoor dining as a step to encourage additional business in the area, both of which have been done.
3. The *2003 Comprehensive Plan* also called for a review of the CS zoning in Pearl River, including increasing the FAR from 1.0 to 1.5 to encourage redevelopment. It suggested reducing the CS zoning in the fringe areas where retail is permitted, so as to concentrate development on Central Avenue. Among other areas, this included the hillside portion of Central Avenue, essentially between Henry Street and John Street, where adaptive reuse of the existing houses to office-type uses was recommended over the otherwise permitted conversions of the large structures to retail use. Similarly, the area along Franklin Avenue and William Street, to the south of Central Avenue is also zoned CS, despite the area's mixed-use character. The *2003 Comprehensive Plan* stressed the importance of concentrating retail and restaurant uses on Central Avenue, rather than allowing them to spread onto adjacent blocks and potentially weaken Central Avenue as the hamlet's pedestrian shopping hub.
4. Also noted is the large area of CO zoning to the south of the railroad station along South Main Street and Ridge Street. Again, the existing development here is mixed, commercial and residential. It is unlikely that this area would be redeveloped for office use, given market conditions and other available sites in the Town. Consideration should be given to a zoning pattern that better reflects existing and potential development in the area.
5. In addition to the zoning recommendations, the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* called for the preparation of design guidelines that would provide direction for new façades and storefront signs on commercial properties. Marketing downtown stores by the Chamber of Commerce was also called for in the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*. The possibility of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) to actually fund improvements and special events could also be considered.

Photographs of Pearl River

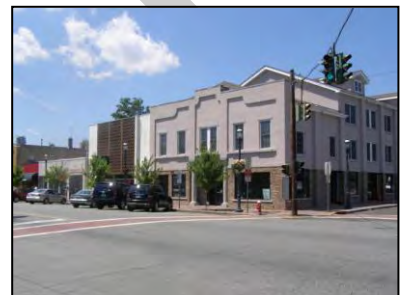


TABLE 2
SUMMARY OF PEARL RIVER PROPOSALS FROM
FROM 2003 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

1. Focus retail and restaurant uses on Central Avenue between the school playfield and Route 304

2. Create additional parking (on-street and off-street)

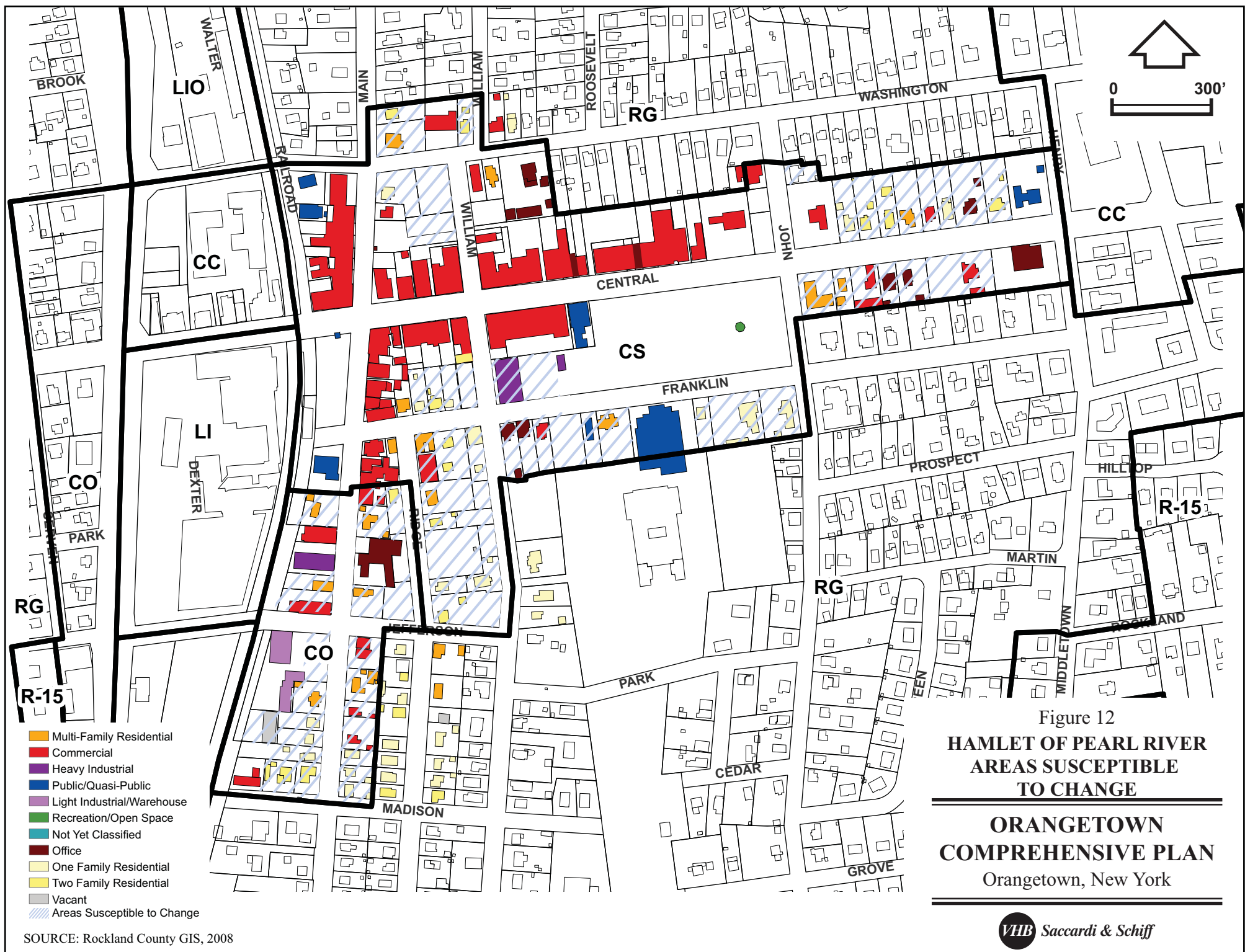
3. Provide additional housing

4. Undertake urban design improvements (facades, streetscape, trees, signage, overhead wires)

5. Develop design guidelines for new development

6. Create an entry focus at North Middletown Road/Central Avenue and Route 304/
Central Avenue intersections

7. Market the area



SOURCE: Rockland County GIS, 2008

Figure 12
HAMLET OF PEARL RIVER
AREAS SUSCEPTIBLE
TO CHANGE

ORANGETOWN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
 Orangetown, New York

Moving forward, the Town may want to consider a more ambitious housing program in Pearl River, building on the presence of the commuter railroad station. Many communities across the region have pursued Transit-Oriented Developments (TOD), with apartments designed for young, commuting professionals. The benefits of this type of housing include the additional purchasing power that would flow to downtown shops and restaurants, along with property tax surpluses that result from households that need very few municipal and school district services.

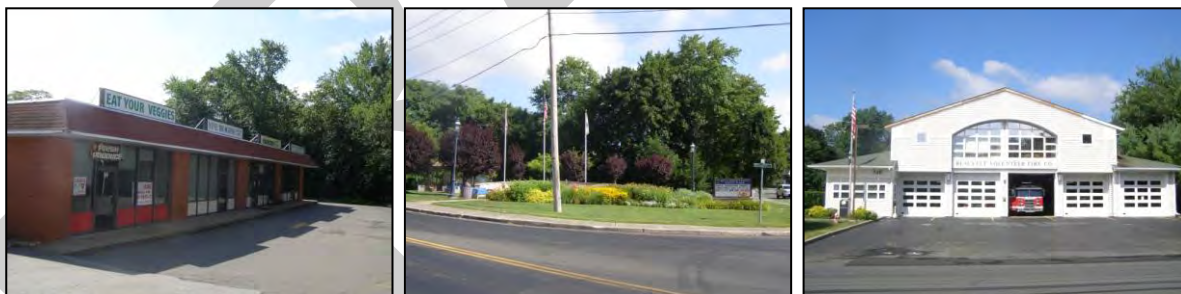
Potential areas for rezoning and TOD are shown as “Areas Susceptible to Change” on **Figure 12, Areas Susceptible to Change, Zoning, Hamlet of Pearl River**, including the previously mentioned CS-zoned area near Franklin and William Streets, which are about a block or so from the railroad station. These areas have some vacant and underutilized parcels that might be suitable for a TOD approach.

Other Hamlet Centers

The *2003 Comprehensive Plan’s* recommendations for the Blauvelt, Orangeburg, Sparkill, and Tappan hamlet centers remain largely unchanged since conditions today are similar to those that existed 10 years ago. The photographs that follow and **Figures 13-16** depict the existing conditions.

- **Blauvelt** – The Blauvelt commercial area on Western Highway exhibits problems associated with its current design in terms of vehicular access, parking, and loading. The limited landscaping and the buildings’ façade and signage treatment need upgrading. The group of stores hidden behind the Post Office lacks the street presence necessary to ensure their viability.

Photographs of Blauvelt



- **Orangeburg** – The shopping centers across from Town Hall in Orangeburg, while very busy, also lack attention to design detail. Here too, there are a group of small stores hidden from view. There is also a large parking area right along Orangeburg Road that is seldom utilized and may have some potential for infill development.

Photographs of Orangeburg



Focus Areas

- **Sparkill and Tappan** – In Sparkill, some zoning changes along Washington Street have been adopted to allow development along this major entry to the hamlet center. Although the rail trail, the park, and the commuter parking lot are all successful, the ambiance of the group of existing buildings in the core of the hamlet center at Union Street still need to be addressed in terms of signage and facades. The overhead wires continue to be an eyesore. New restaurant uses in the hamlet are a positive. The core area of Sparkill has potential to be more like Tappan, which continues to be an attractive historic area. Road improvements have been undertaken in Tappan to address some circulation problems, but drainage and parking issues apparently still continue.

Photographs of Sparkill



Photographs of Tappan



Zoning in these four hamlet centers is CC, a district that is more appropriate for Blauvelt and Orangeburg given their suburban shopping center design. The 2003 *Comprehensive Plan* suggested that Sparkill and Tappan could be re-zoned to CS, the zoning district that applies to Pearl River.

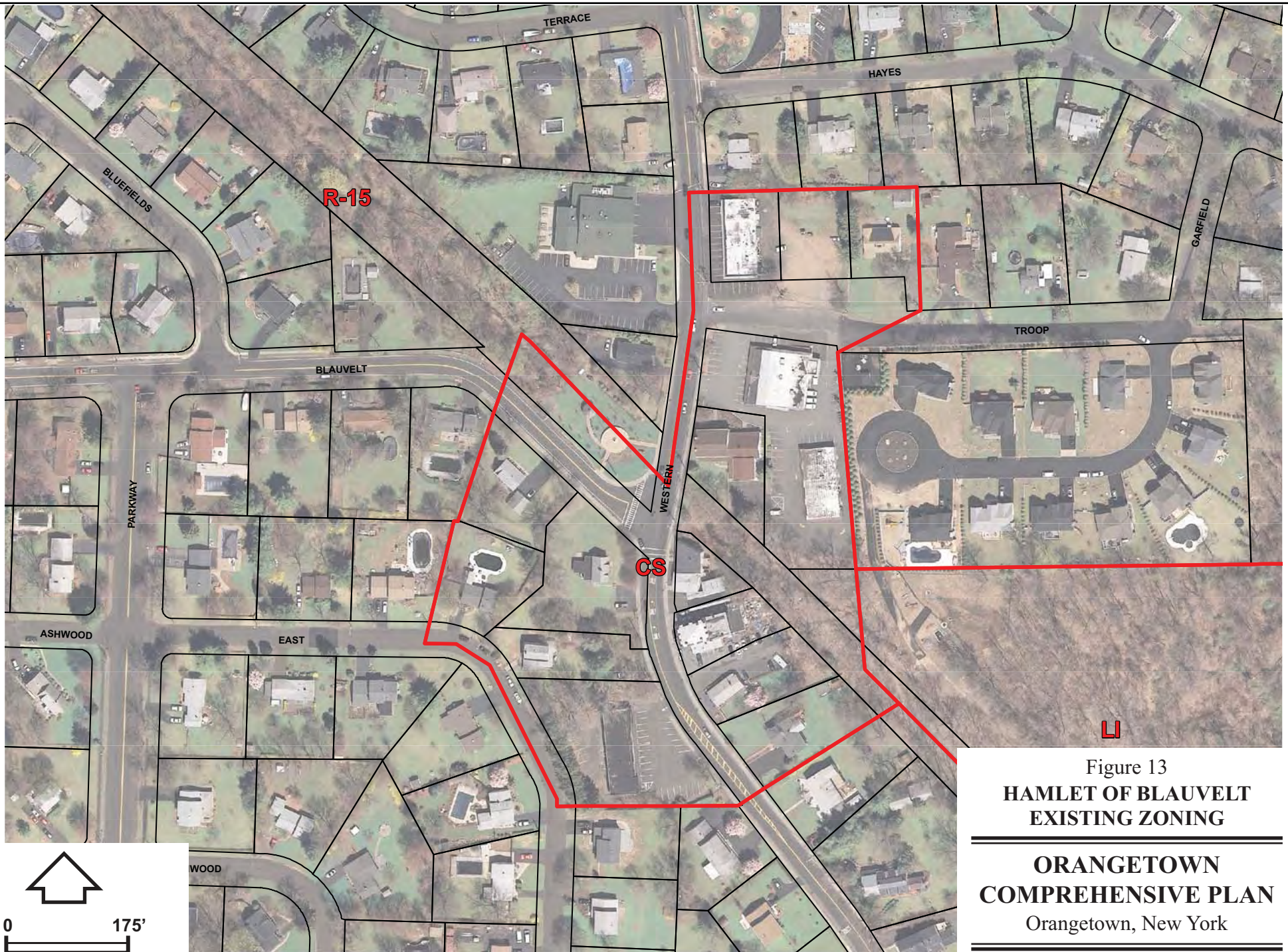


Figure 13
**HAMLET OF BLAUVELT
 EXISTING ZONING**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York



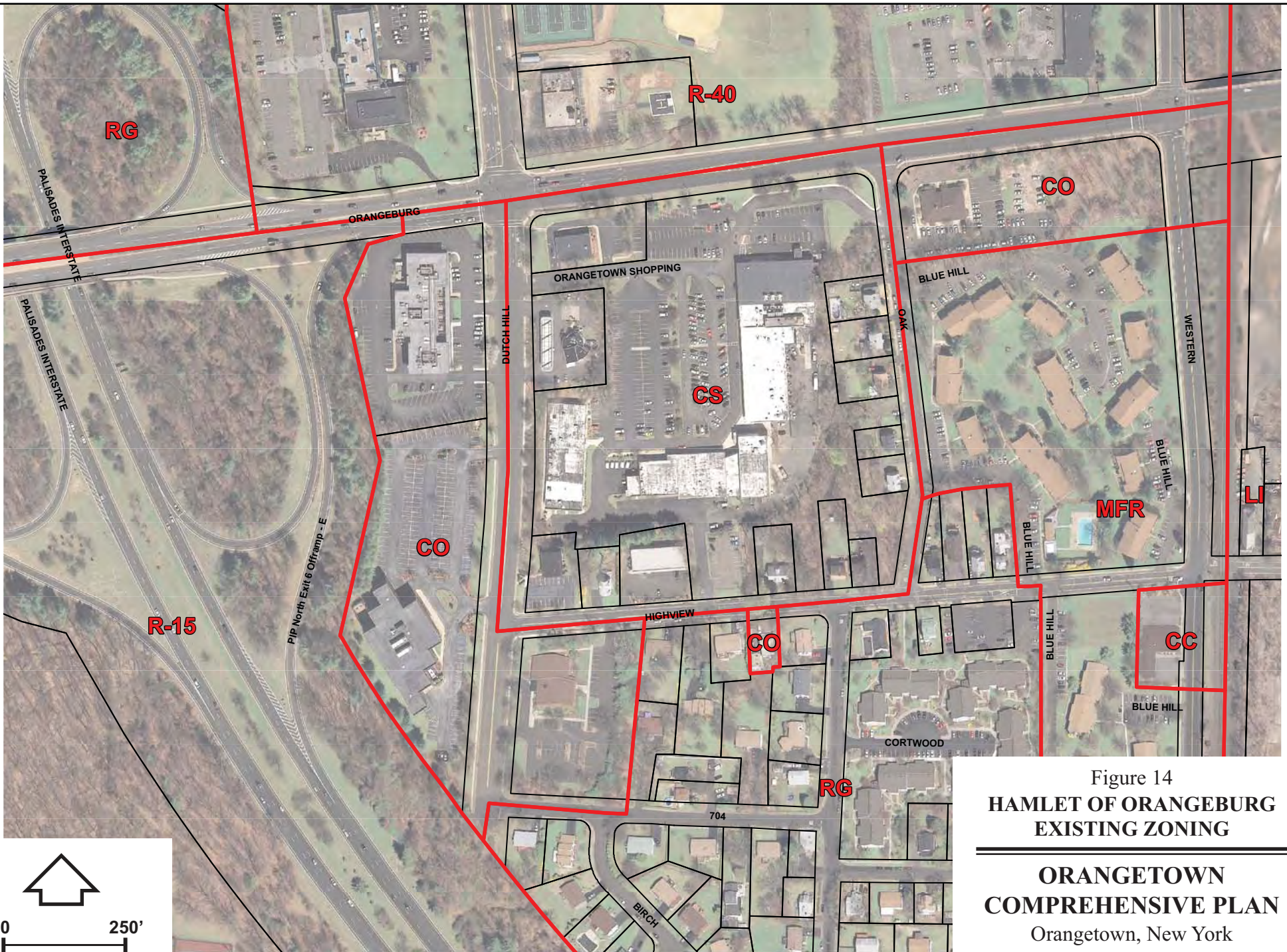


Figure 14
**HAMLET OF ORANGETOWN
 EXISTING ZONING**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York

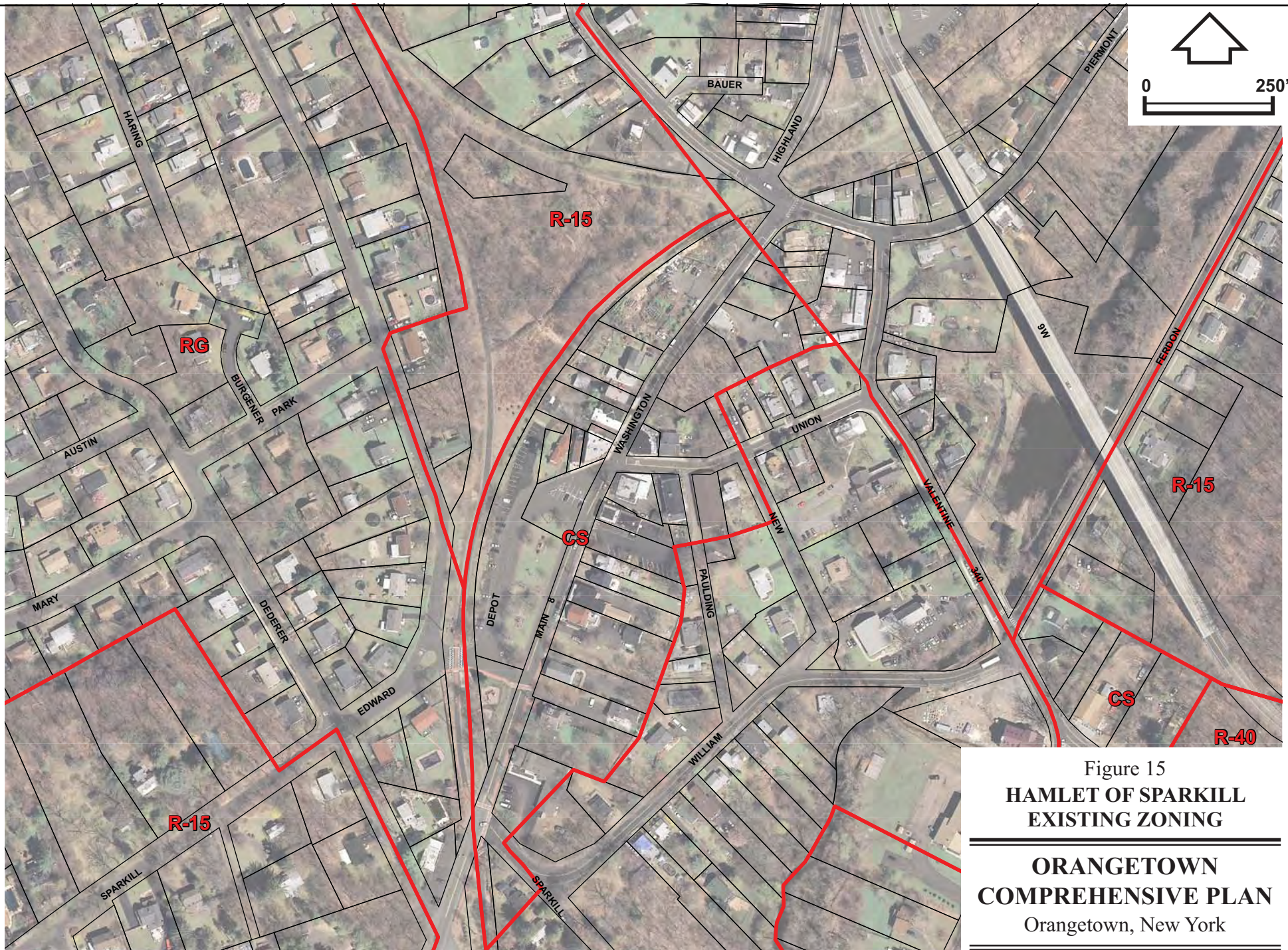


Figure 15
**HAMLET OF SPARKILL
 EXISTING ZONING**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York



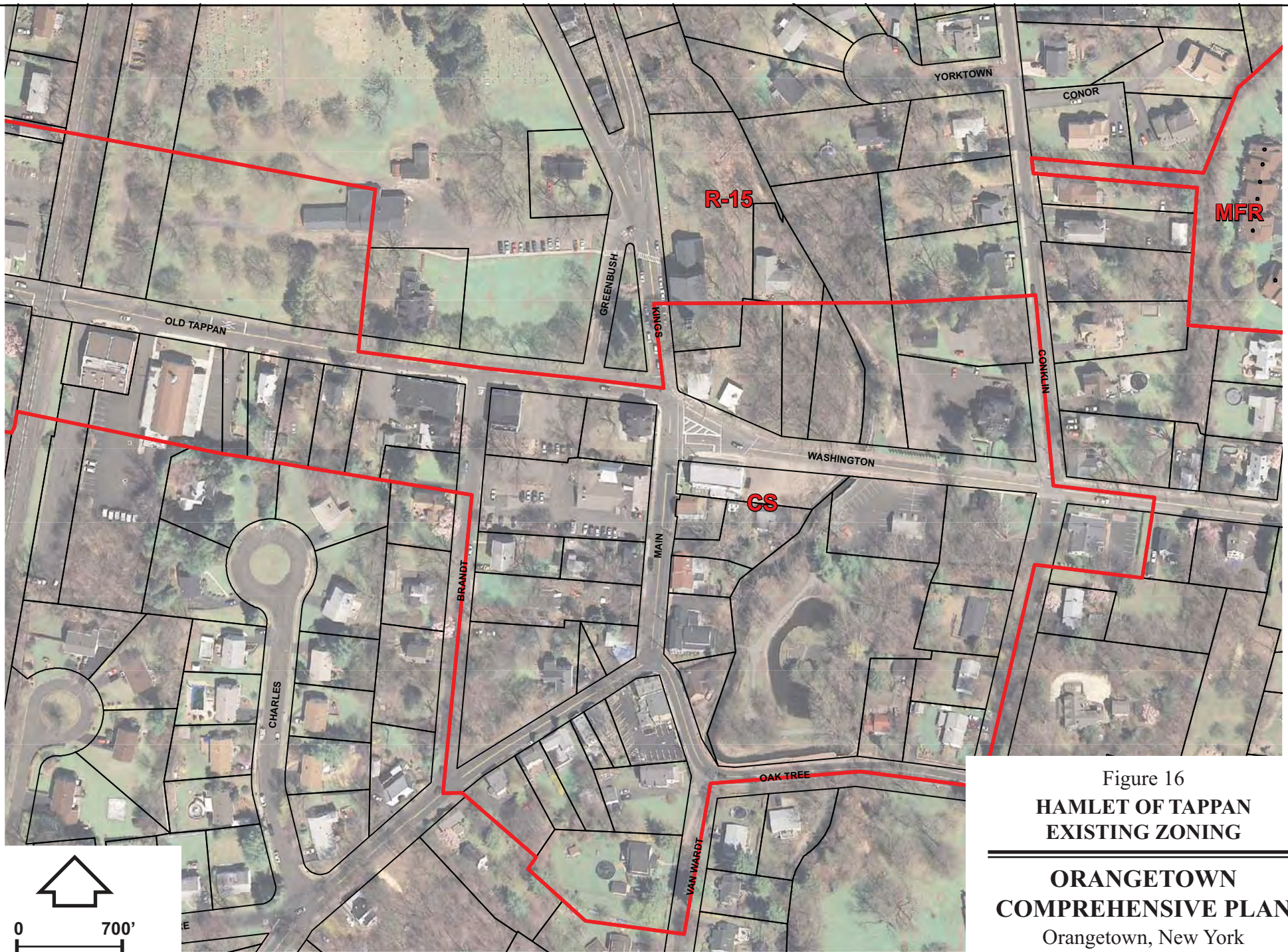


Figure 16
**HAMLET OF TAPPAN
 EXISTING ZONING**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York

C. RPC and the Other Major Properties

The *2003 Comprehensive Plan* had recommendations for the Kaufman Campground, the Masonic Home, and Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) sites. It did not focus on the 50-acre Children's Psychiatric Hospital, since it was still operational at that time. It also included recommendations for the properties at the PIP/Route 303 interchange as noted in item 1 above.

For the Kaufman Campground, Masonic Homes, and RPC sites, the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* used the broad term "Development in an Open Space Setting" to establish a design framework for these sites. The *2003 Comprehensive Plan* presented further guidance for each property, as summarized below.

Kaufman Campground

For the 100-acre Kaufman Campground, which is zoned R-80 (see **Figure 17, Kaufman Campground Existing Zoning**), the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* favored retention of the current use, but recognized that its zoning was for single-family homes on 2-acre lots. If this site were ever developed, its environmental constraints clearly suggest clustering being the preferable approach over a conventional subdivision plan. The attached plans show a hypothetical 47-home conventional plan (see **Figure 18, Kaufman Campground Conventional Lots**) and a 47-home cluster plan (see **Figure 19, Kaufman Campground Cluster Plan**) that preserves natural features. Note that the cluster lots are of a comparable size as the lots in the surrounding areas.

Masonic Home

For the 21-acre Masonic Home site (see **Figure 20, Masonic Home Existing Zoning**), the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* suggested that the existing open space on the east side of Western Highway should remain as open space, either public or private, with the density of that area clustered on the west side of the site. The attached conventional plan for the Masonic Home (see **Figure 21, Masonic Home Conventional Lots**), consistent with R-15 Zoning, shows the potential for about 35 lots. The Nobel Ninth's 100-plus-unit proposal for senior housing complied with the *2003 Comprehensive Plan's* open space on the eastside concept, albeit with a greater density than otherwise allowed by clustering alone (see **Figure 22, Masonic Home Cluster Concept**). That proposal would have required utilization of the Town's Planned Adult Communities (PAC) floating zone or a variation of the PAC to further increase the density. Notwithstanding the density issue, a conceptual approach to clustering for senior housing on the western portion of the site, with open space on both the eastern and western portions, is attached hereto.

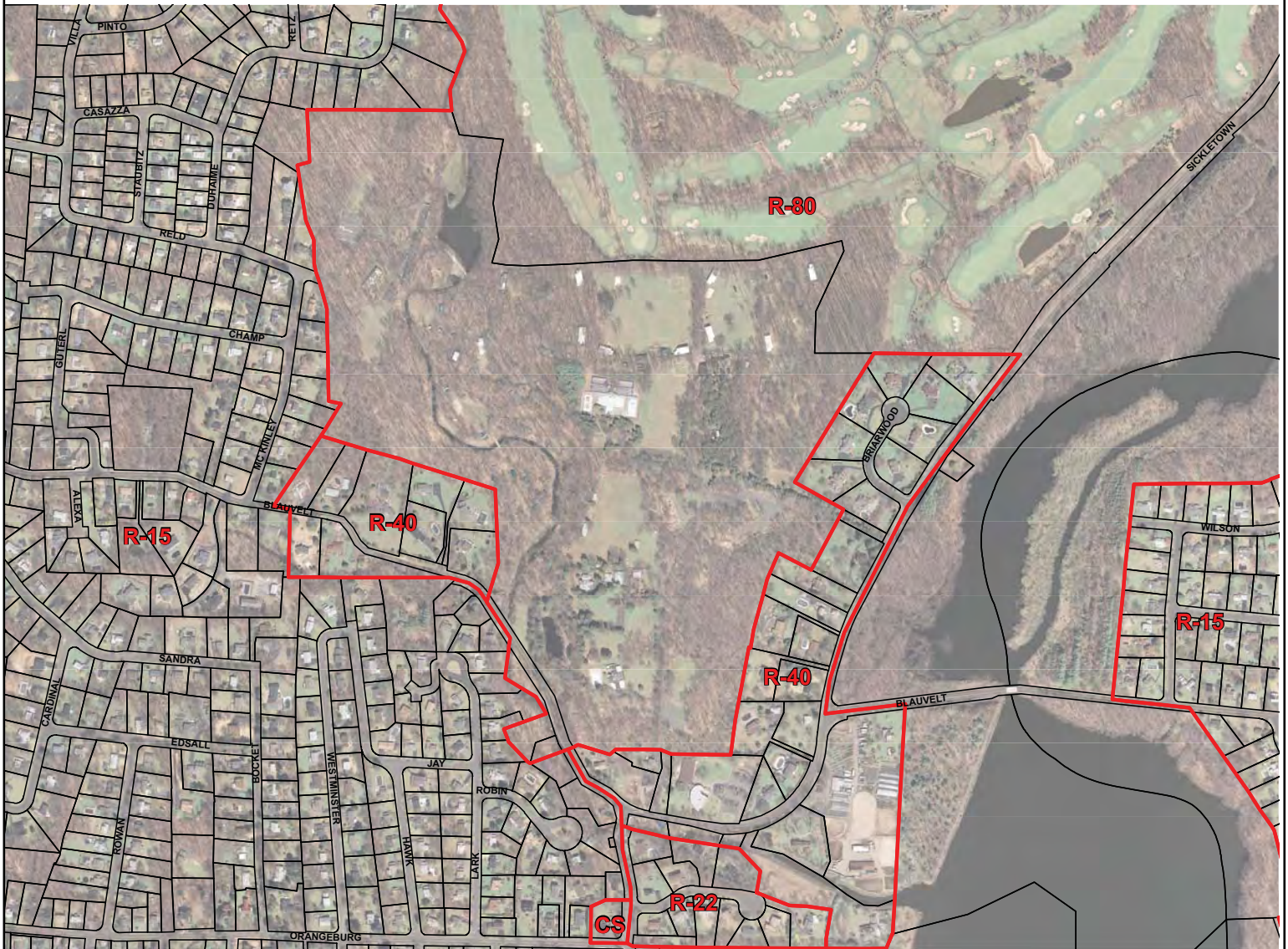
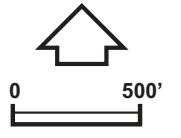


Figure 17
**KAUFMAN CAMPGROUND
EXISTING ZONING**

**ORANGETOWN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
Orangetown, New York



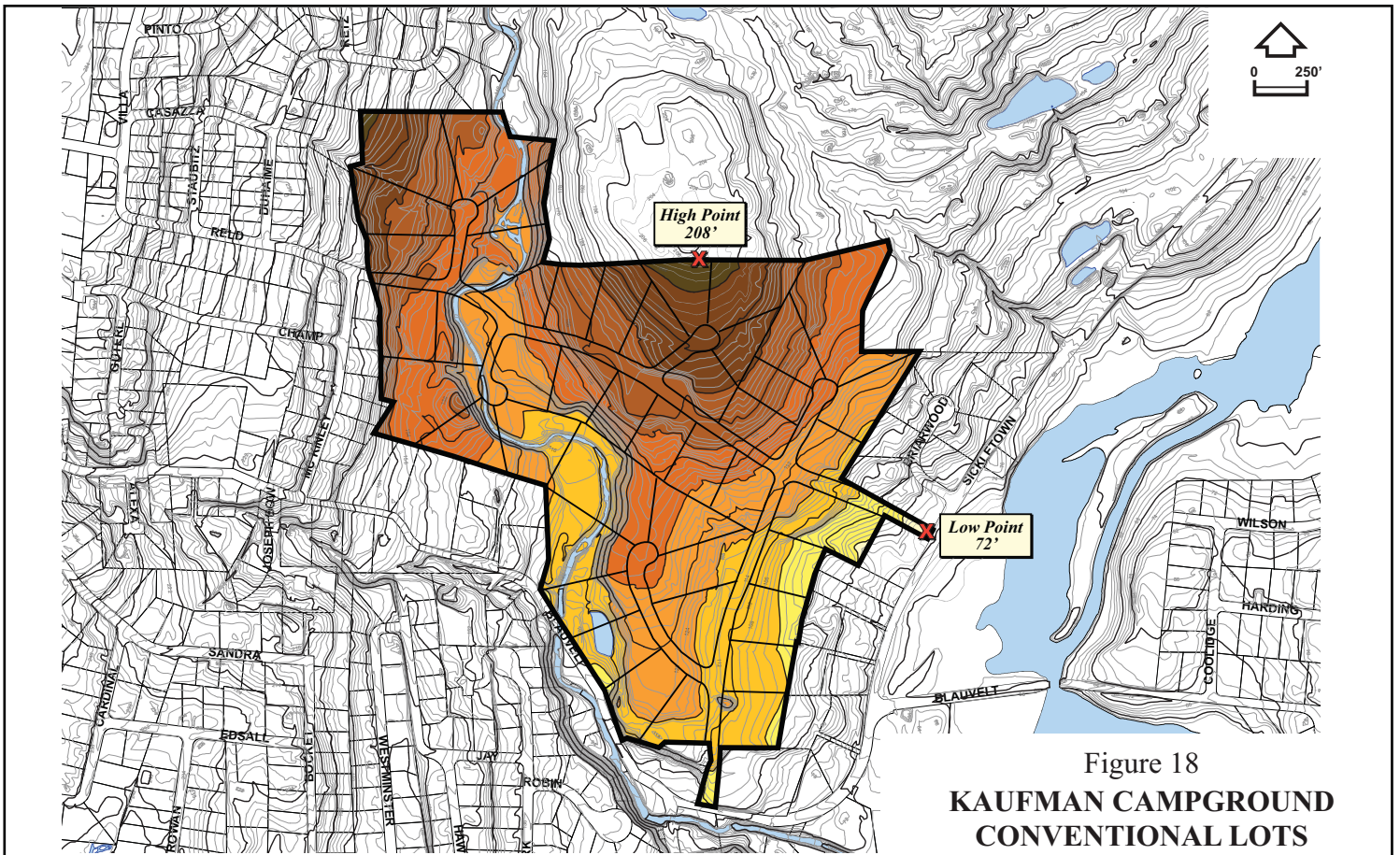


Figure 18
**KAUFMAN CAMPGROUND
 CONVENTIONAL LOTS**

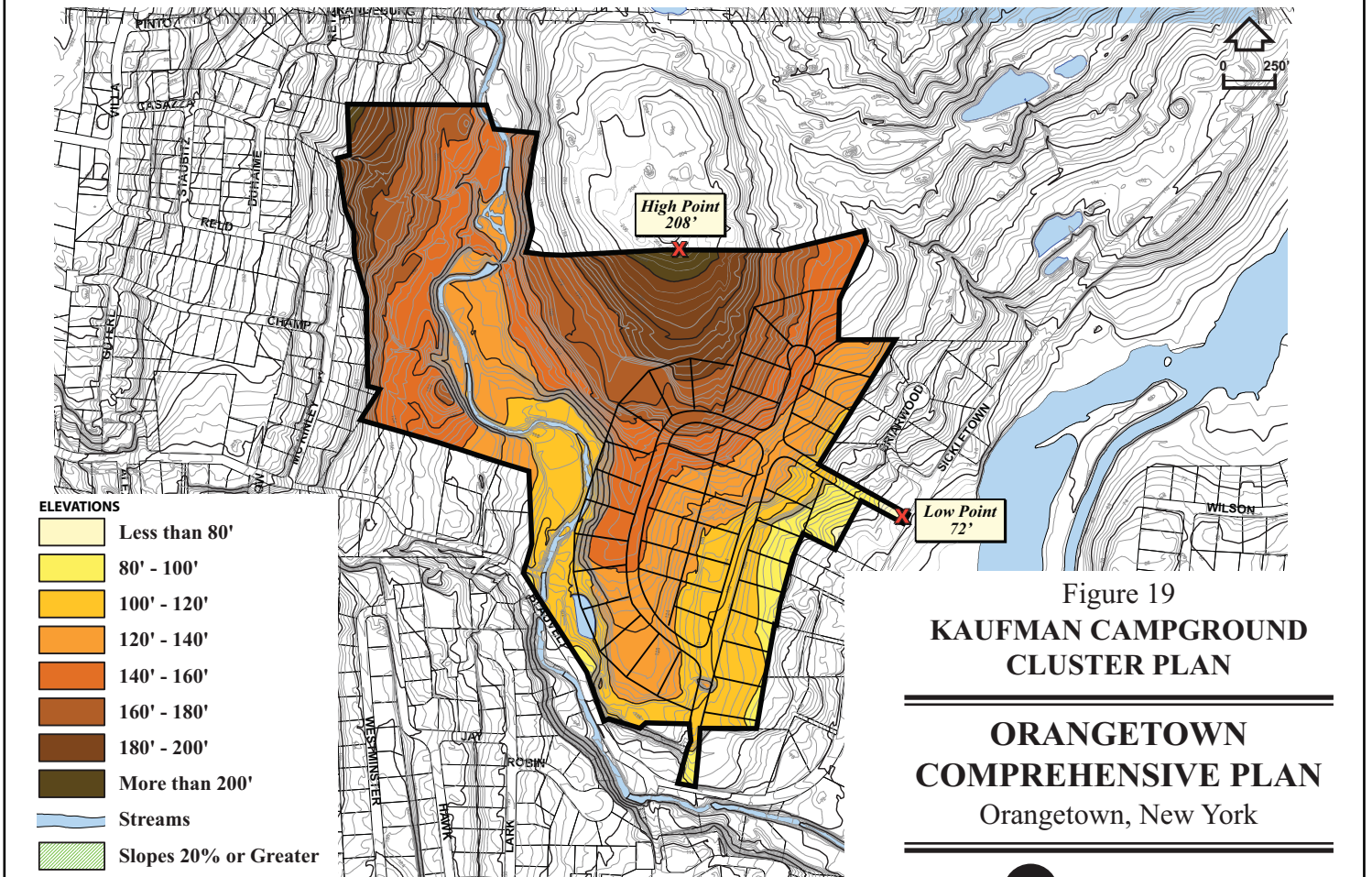


Figure 19
**KAUFMAN CAMPGROUND
 CLUSTER PLAN**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York

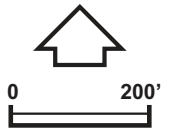


Figure 20
**MASONIC HOME
EXISTING ZONING**

**ORANGETOWN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
Orangetown, New York

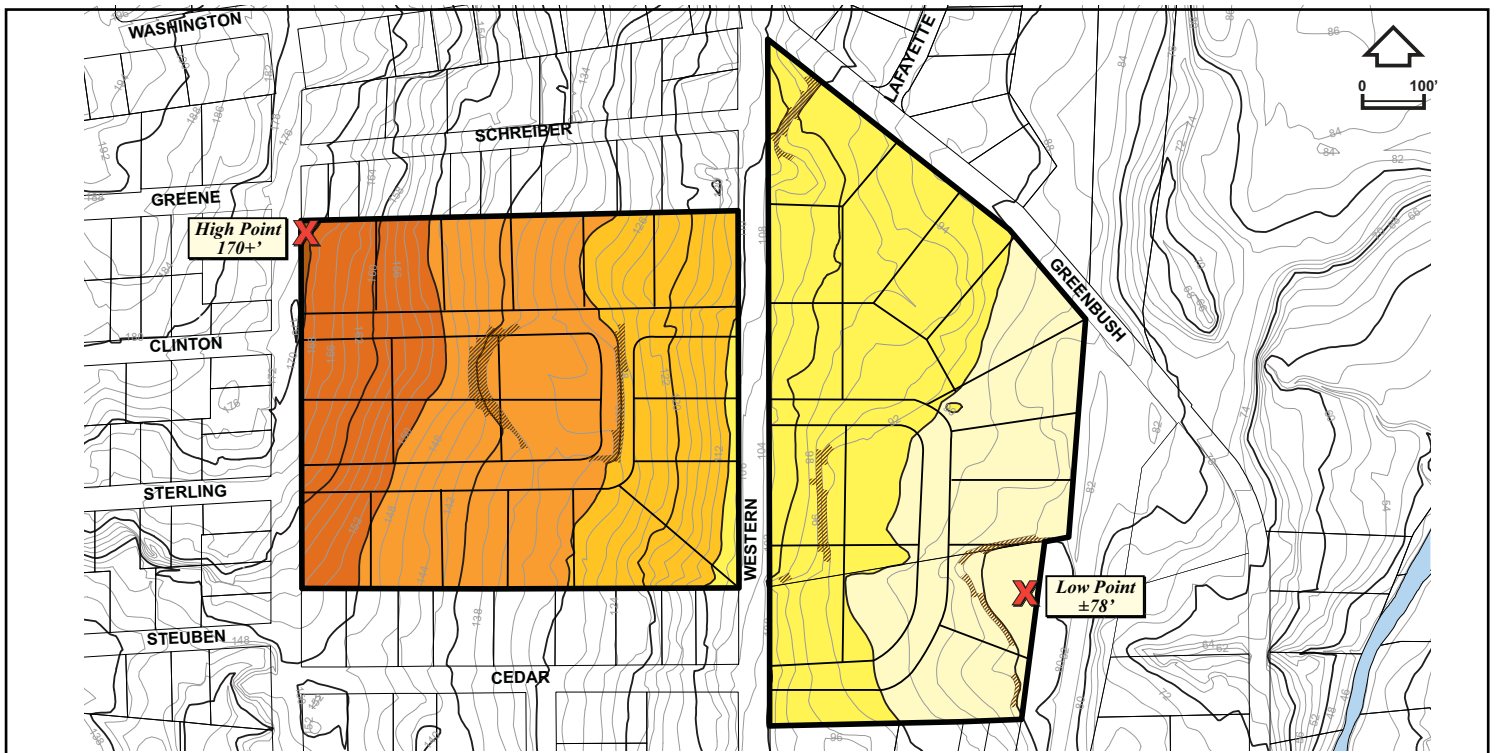


Figure 21
**MASONIC HOME
 CONVENTIONAL LOTS**

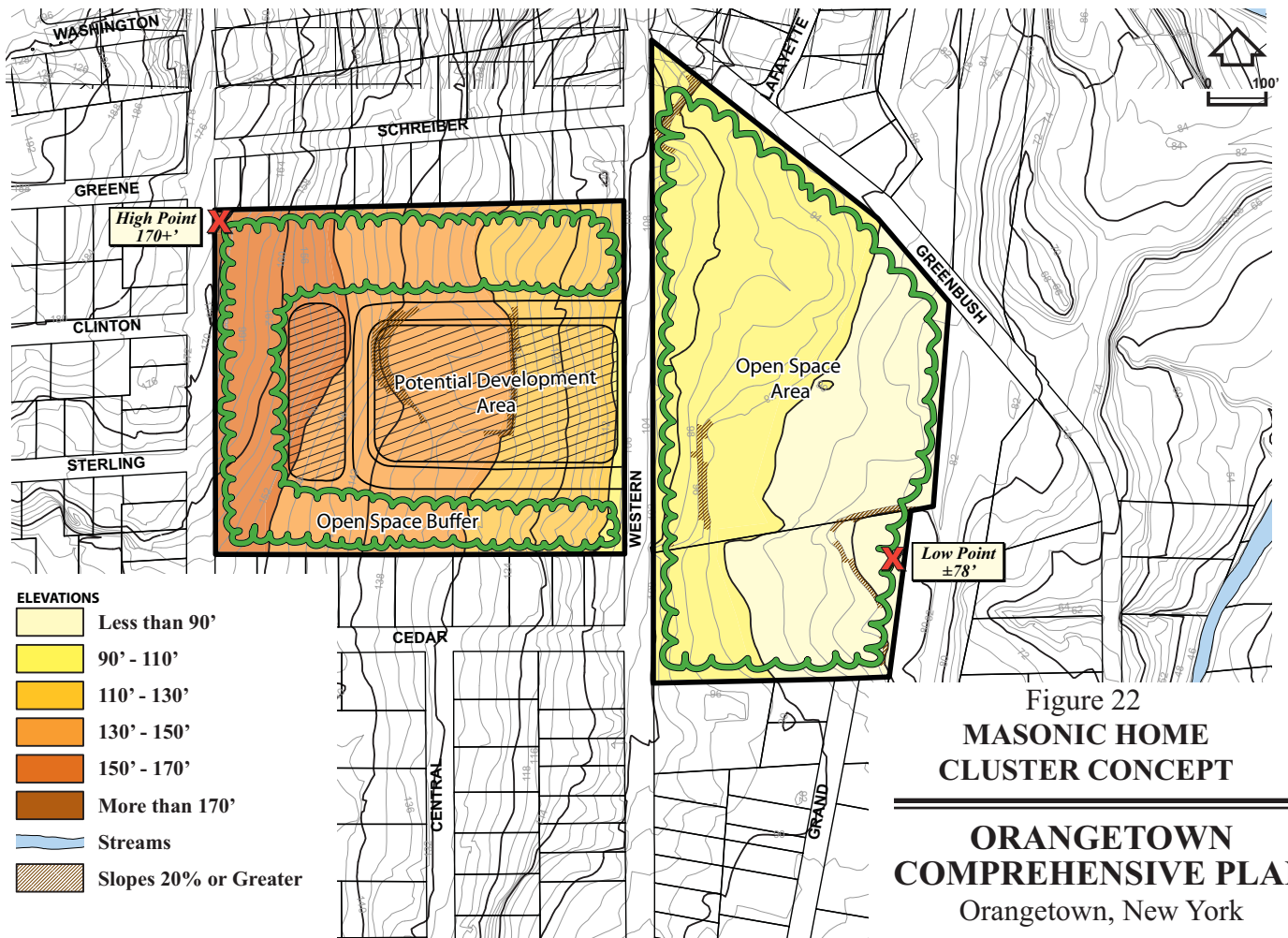


Figure 22
**MASONIC HOME
 CLUSTER CONCEPT**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York

RPC

Planning for the reuse RPC began prior to the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* and continued after its adoption. The site includes a total of 550 acres, with 34 acres of wetlands and 47 acres of water surface. The buildings and underground steam tunnels have lead paint, mold, and asbestos issues. Many of the buildings are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2002, the Town purchased 350 acres of RPC land from New York State, including 64 buildings, with a total of about 1.2 million square feet of floor area. The acquired land is generally located in two segments. The southern portions are north of Veterans Memorial Highway on both sides of Blaisdell Road. To the west of that road, the acquired lands extend on the north side of Old Orangeburg Road up to Lake Tappan. The 68-acre northern portion of the acquired land extends along Convent Road from Third Avenue eastward to First Avenue and the Broadacres Golf Course. This area is laid out in a grid pattern, with tree-lined streets serving existing buildings

Of the 350 acre acquired by the Town, 216 acres must be used as open space, leaving a balance of 134 acres for potential development. Included within the 134 acres is the frontage along both sides of Blaisdell Road, from Veterans Memorial Highway to Old Orangeburg Road, where existing houses are being rented to volunteers as one of Orangetown's housing programs cited in the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*.

The *2003 Comprehensive Plan* suggested "low impact uses" for the northerly lands at RPC, including research and development (R&D), office or senior housing, and it called for recreation and open space for the lands along Old Orangeburg Road to the west of Blaisdell Road. To the east of that road, the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* called for low impact uses. An exception here was Staff Court, a 6-acre site on the south side of Old Orangeburg Road, which was retained by New York State.

Development of the Town-acquired lands was pursued subsequent to the adoption of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*, with extensive recreation facilities built along Old Orangeburg Road, and an RFQ/RFP process undertaken by the Town for the potential development of other lands by the private sector. This process occurred in 2003 and 2004.

Following an exhaustive search, K. Hovnanian Companies was selected to process a (mostly) age-restricted, senior housing development of 575 units. That development included a redesign of the 46-acre Broadacres Golf Course, establishing a buffer between the senior housing proposed in the northern portions of the RPC site and the psychiatric facilities to remain. The golf course was to remain public, but would serve as an amenity for the planned residential community. In the southern portions of the site, K. Hovnanian proposed senior and family housing, both market rate and affordable, including new multifamily units for volunteers, replacing the existing homes on Blaisdell Road. The Staff Court area was not included in the proposal. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was prepared, and public hearings were held. Of the issues raised, traffic on Convent Road and in the neighborhood to the north of Convent Road was a major concern. K. Hovnanian withdrew its proposal four years ago, based on economic conditions.

Traffic will continue to be an issue with other potential uses on the RPC site unless the vast majority of vehicular and truck trips are directed toward Veterans Memorial

Highway. It should be also noted that K. Hovnanian's plans did not include any activity on a potentially developable site along the east side of Lake Tappan. This approximately 50-acre site, located to the west of the Power Plant, and the open space to the south provide an opportunity for a trail along the entire frontage of the lake, extending from the recreation facilities on Old Orangeburg Road north to Convent Road.

As previously noted the 50-acre Children's Psychiatric Hospital site was not part of the above transaction since it was, and still is, owned by New York State. As previously noted, also not included was Staff Court, a 6-acre area along Old Orangeburg Road, which is still retained by New York State. The development potential for the two New York State-owned and the Town-owned parcels at RPC is compiled on **Table 3, Development Potential Rockland Psychiatric Center and Children's Hospital Sites.**

As indicated in **Table 3**, the current zoning for the non-recreation portions of the RPC site is R- 80. Under R-80 zoning, all the sites combined would yield about 50 homes. In contrast, if developed for R&D-type uses, there is potential for about 1.5 million square feet.

The 142,000 sf Children's Psychiatric Hospital site alone could be redeveloped with about 325,000 sf of R&D or related use. Under existing R-80 zoning, about 10 homes could be accommodated on that site, or alternatively, about 10 very upscale lakefront townhomes could be built, leaving the majority of the property as open space. See **Table 3** and **Figures 23-26**. Note that the Town is also considering acquisition of the power plant site. Acquisition of this parcel would provide additional land area and would facilitate the widening of Third Avenue and its connection to Veterans Memorial Highway.

The Town could pursue R&D and similar low impact uses for the RPC land it acquired along with the Children's Psychiatric Hospital and Staff Court. It could aggressively market the RPC site and focus the marketing effort on biotech uses, data centers, or other low, non-residential impact uses. Warehouse and distribution uses, similar to those concentrated in the northern portion of Route 303, are also a possibility for this site given their success on Route 303 and their low vehicular (but high truck) traffic generation rates. However, R&D or data centers would seem to be a better fit for this location.

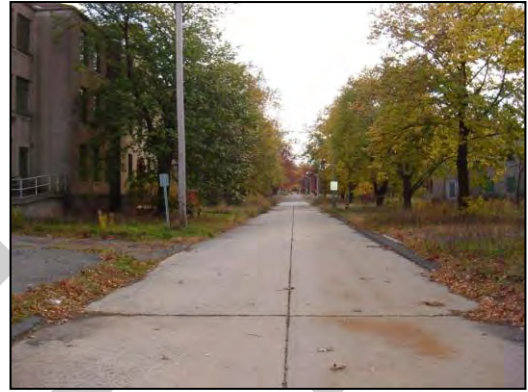
Although it would be desirable to retain some of the existing buildings and the tree-lined roads in the northern portions of the RPC site, this might only be feasible as adaptive re-use for small scale, start-up, R&D incubators, if such start-up operations were seeking space.

Costs for remediation and demolition at the RPC site will be high and outside grant assistance from New York State may be necessary. A market study should also be undertaken to ascertain the amount of various types of economic development uses that could be accommodated on the site. Previously prepared environmental information could be compiled as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), which would reduce developer costs and make sites at RPC closer to "shovel ready." The Governor's new Regional Economic Development Strategy Program, which includes Rockland County as part of the Mid-Hudson Region, may be a vehicle to help achieve economic development on this site.

Focus Areas

Additional details on land use options for each sub-area of the RPC site follows in **Chapter IV** of this report.

Photographs of RPC



Additional Photographs of RPC



Photographs of the Children's Psychiatric Hospital



**TABLE 3
DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL -
ROCKLAND PSYCHIATRIC CENTER AND
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SITES**

Site	Area	Existing Zoning	Wetlands and Streams (approx.)	Net Area	R-80 Potential*	R&D Potential**	Adaptive Reuse Potential
A	60.5 ac.	R-80	1 ac.	59.5 ac.	22 homes	800,750 s.f.	715,000 s.f.,***
B	4 ac.	R-80	0	4 ac.	2 homes	NA	12 homes
C	27.5 ac.	R-80	7.5 ac.	20 ac.	8 homes	250,000 s.f.	NA
D (State-owned)	6 ac.	R-80	0	6 ac.	2 homes	75,000 s.f.	NA
E (State- owned)	49 ac.	R-80	—	25 ac.	10 homes	325,000 s.f.	142,000 s.f.

* Net area minus 20% for roads ÷ 80,000 s.f.

**Based on 0.3 FAR

***1,054,152 s.f. total existing on 60.5 acres = 0.4 FAR. At 715,000 s.f, about 2,145 parking spaces (20 acres) would be needed

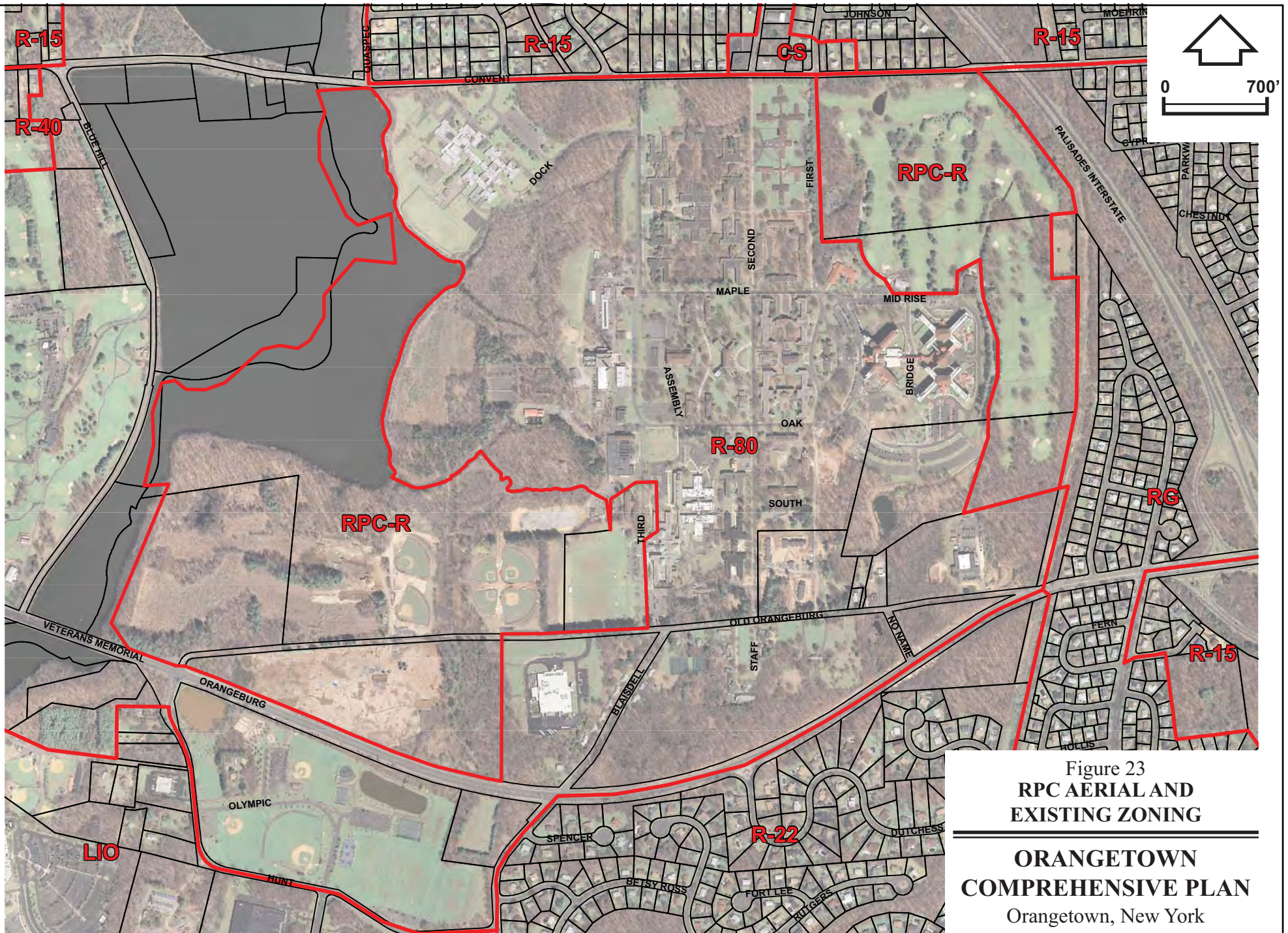
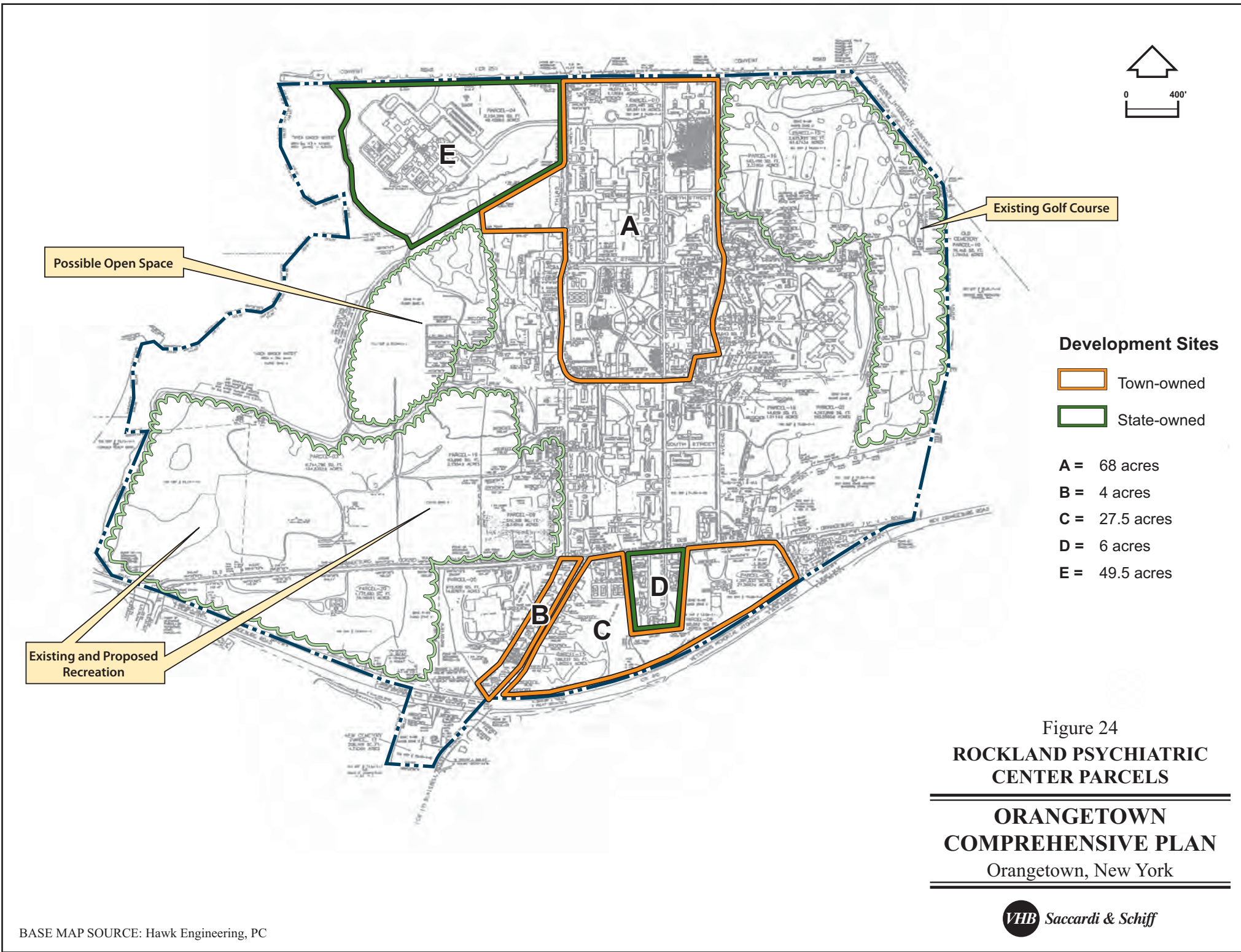


Figure 23
**RPC AERIAL AND
 EXISTING ZONING**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 Orangetown, New York



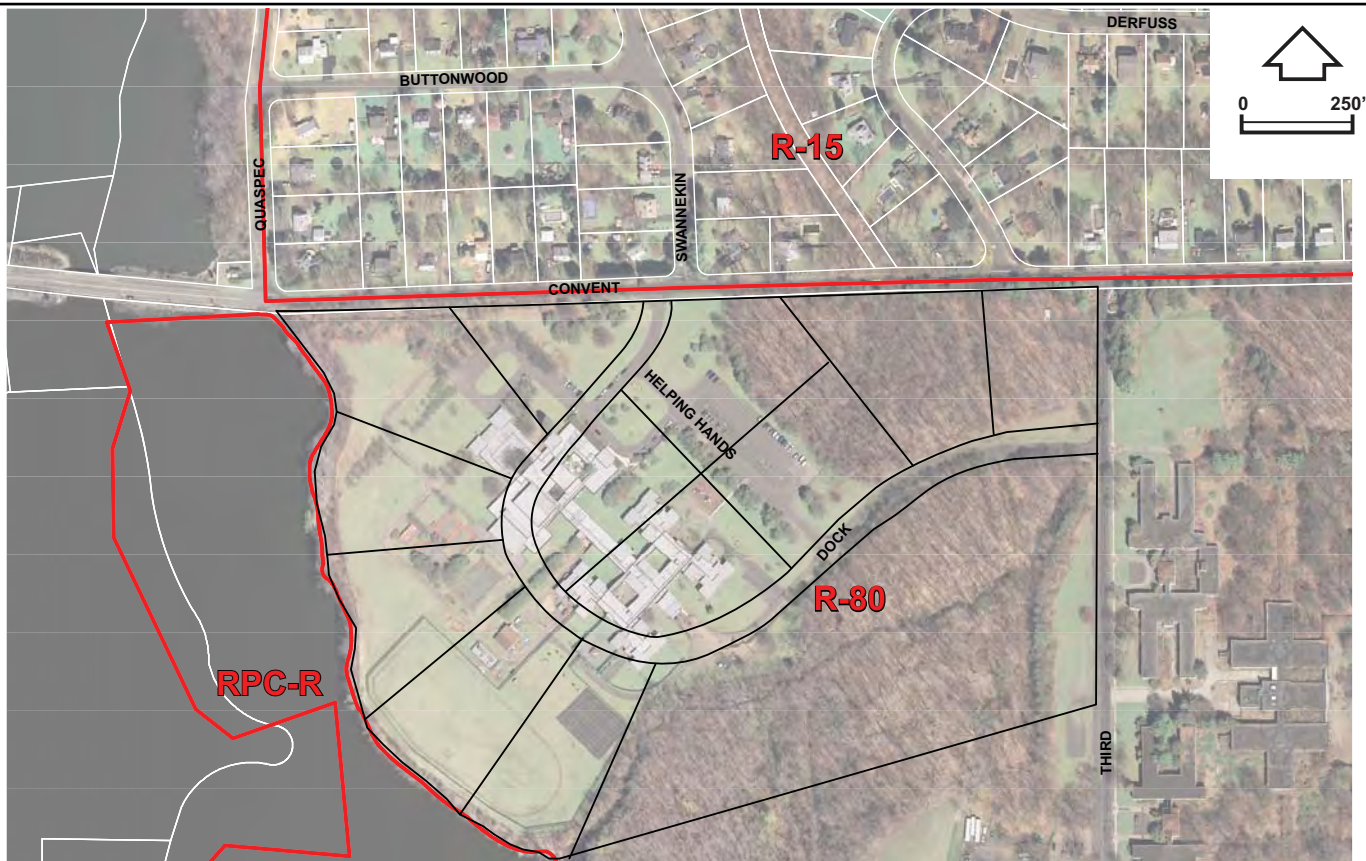


Figure 25
**CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
 AERIAL AND EXISTING ZONING,
 CONVENTIONAL LOTS**



Figure 26
**CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
 AERIAL AND EXISTING ZONING,
 CLUSTER PLAN**

**ORANGETOWN
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Orangetown, New York

IV. ALTERNATIVE LAND USE SCENARIOS OF THE RPC SITE

A. Children's Hospital

If the property is acquired by the Town or if it is sold by the State to a private developer, there are several possible scenarios for its development:

1. It could be developed under existing R-80 zoning. A subdivision plan would result in about 10-12 single family homes, some of which would be lakefront properties. As a sub-alternate, the lots could be clustered to, say, one-acre properties, which would increase the number of properties with homes fronting on Lake Tappan, while keeping the total development to 10-12 homes. If clustered further and developed as 10-12 upscale townhomes, all of the units could front on the lake. With clustering, significant parts of the 50-acre site would be retained as open space. As a residential project, primary access could be derived from the existing curb cut on Convent Road, with secondary or emergency access provided through the existing Third Avenue access at RPC. This type of low density development would generate minimal traffic (approximately seven trips in each of the peak hours¹). There would be some school-age children; fewer from the townhomes than the single-family homes (e.g. 12 compared to 19 for an upscale lakefront development²).
2. The 142,000 sf existing building could be reused, possibly as a hospital or an assisted living facility. It could also be converted into an office building or a research and development (R&D) facility. Access for these uses would need to be provided from both Convent Road and Third Avenue. An assisted living facility, with about 150 beds, would generate the lowest number of vehicular trips, and most of these could be structured to be off-peak, responding to shift changes. Traffic from a hospital, office, or R&D use would be greater than from an assisted living facility. Traffic from an office-type use would be far greater than from an R-80 residential use (223 trips in the peak hour for office uses compared to seven trips for residential).
3. If the building were demolished, the 50-acre site would provide an attractive setting for an office or a R&D building. Approximately 325,000 sf of new space and accessory parking could be accommodated on the upland 25 acres, leaving open space buffers, along would lakefront views. Traffic from such a use would be an issue on Convent Road with a 325,000 sf office, generating about 510 trips in the peak hour. Even if the traffic distribution were split between Veterans Memorial Highway and Convent Road, there still would be traffic concerns for the residential areas north of the RPC site, including concerns for traffic short-cutting through neighborhood streets. A 325,000 sf R&D facility would, however, have slightly fewer trips (390) in the peak hour. Notwithstanding this issue, a major office or R&D facility would have significant economic benefits, including construction and permanent jobs and property tax generation.

¹ Traffic generation rates utilized in the study based upon the multipliers for office, R&D, and residential in *Trip Generation, 8th Edition: An ITE Informational Report* by the Institute of Transportation Engineers.

² School-age children (SAC) generation rates utilized in the study based upon the New York multipliers for Single-Family Detached and 2-4 Units structures in *Residential Demographic Multipliers: Estimates of the Occupants of New Housing* by Rutgers University, Center for Urban Policy Research.

B. The Area East of Lake Tappan

To the south of the Children's Hospital site is a similarly size parcel, with additional lake frontage. The Town has already purchased these 50-acres, generally behind the power plant. About half this acreage is composed of wetlands. Its only access is via a road connection to Third Avenue.

1. This site could be an attractive open space parcel with trails extending along the lake and with connections to the existing recreation areas to the south and to Convent Road to the north.
2. If developed, its access directly through the RPC site and its wetland areas would limit the development potential. Like the Children's Hospital site, it could be appropriate for office or R&D, again with about 300,000 square feet possible. Zoned R-80, it could also accommodate 10-12 lakefront homes; however, their marketability would certainly be adversely affected, given road access through Third Avenue in the middle of the RPC site.
3. If the power plant site were acquired from the State, it would allow additional development and the possibility of widening Third Avenue and its access to Veterans Memorial Highway.

C. The 60.5-Acre Area between Third and First Avenues

This six-block area has 35 buildings and 1.24 million sf of existing space. The roadways are tree-lined and many of the buildings are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Asbestos and lead paint issues need to be remediated prior to demolition or reuse. This is the largest, and perhaps the most problematic portion of the RPC lands purchased by the Town, in terms of the costs to redevelop and the access concerns, since this area abuts Convent Road.

1. This area was the focus of the K. Hovnanian age-restricted housing development (which included additional acreage, for a total of 68 acres). Although some of the southern portions of this area were proposed as replacement golf holes, that same area from the Broadacres Golf Course was utilized for housing in the proposed K. Hovnanian plan. The net result was 543 units³, which raised a number of issues, the most significant of which was traffic on Convent Road. The market for this large an age-restricted community no longer exist and other options must be sought.
2. The other options for the 60.5 acres include the development of approximately 22 single-family homes under existing R-80 zoning, and the possible clustering of this same number of homes, perhaps utilizing the existing road system and its tree-lined streets, in part. Such a development raises school children impact issues (i.e., 22 homes would be expected to generate 35 school-age children). The marketability of single-family homes next to a still-active psychiatric center would also be a concern for a prospective developer. Remediation costs would make this option economically infeasible for only 22 homes.

³ The K. Hovnanian plan called for 575 dwelling units on 68 acres, 543 of which were designed to be targeted to 55 and over households. Thirty-two units located in the southern portions of the site were planned as market rate single family and affordable multi-family housing.

3. Redeveloping the site with new office and/or R&D could yield about 800,750 square feet of space, along with parking for approximately 2,400 vehicles. In addition to the costs for demolition and remediation, the other major factor with this amount of development would be the need to devise a plan to direct the vast majority of the 1,257 peak hour trips to Veterans Memorial Highway, rather than Convent Road. This might require the use of First, Second, and Third Avenues to the south and the closing of the Third Avenue access to the north during peak hours. Beyond the traffic issue, the market for that amount of R&D would also have to be studied, and phasing plan would be required.

Another possible use for all or part of this land would be its development for data centers, a low impact traffic generator, which would yield addition square footage per acre, since its employment needs and associated parking are much lower than office or R&D uses. If the 68-acre area were developed for data centers, offices, or R&D uses, it would be possible to leave a generous open space buffer area along Convent Road, visually separating the mostly residential uses to the north from the larger buildings that would be built over time on the RPC site.

Figure 27, Conceptual Tech Park shows the development of the northern portions of the 60.5-acre site with five data centers. Three of the structures would be approximately 83,000 sf in size and the two other structures would be approximately 142,500 sf in size, with 526 parking spaces provided overall. Note that this plan shows a 100-foot buffer area along Convent Road and the possible closing of the Third Avenue/Convent Road access in order to minimize any impacts to the residential neighborhood to the north.

4. As part of the above or as a separate endeavor, the adaptive reuse of existing buildings could be considered, with some buildings demolished for off-street parking. Such an approach would also yield about 715,000 sf of development, generating about 1,123 trips in the peak hour. As part of adaptive reuse, it is possible that one or more of the existing buildings could be converted for a start-up or incubator business. This would still be costly given asbestos and lead paint abatement requirements.

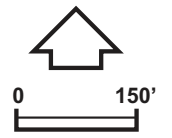


Figure 27
POSSIBLE DATA CENTER DEVELOPMENT
ORANGETOWN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
 Orangetown, New York

D. Old Orangeburg Road/Blaisdell Avenue

The southern portions of the RPC lands that were acquired by the Town include three segments:

1. The areas north and south of Old Orangeburg Road to the west of Blaisdell Road, much of which has been developed for playfields.
2. The Blaisdell Road frontage, which includes 13 single family homes and the historic Depew House at the corner of Blaisdell Road and Veterans Memorial Highway.
3. The area to the east of these homes, but excluding the 6-acre Staff Court, which was retained by the State.

The Blaisdell Road single family homes are part of the Town's volunteer housing program. In the future, these homes can remain as part of this unique rental housing program, or some or all of them could be removed, and potentially replaced with a multifamily apartment building, similar to what had been proposed as part of the K. Hovnanian redevelopment plan. One or two of the homes on the west side of Blaisdell Road, just south of the Old Orangeburg Road intersection, should be removed in the future so that Third Avenue, which extends to the north, can be aligned with Blaisdell Road in a four-way intersection.

Another possibility is to demolish all the homes on the east side of Blaisdell and combine that land with the other previously acquired land to the east, and also with Staff Court. This combined area would encompass approximately 33 acres in total, of which about 25 acres does not include wetlands. Its frontage on Veterans Memorial Highway and its access to Old Orangeburg Road would make it an attractive site for office or related development of about 300,000 sf. Light industrial is also a possible use here due to its proximity to the Rockland Corporate Park. The acquisition of Staff Court is essential as it would create a contiguous property without any major gaps, which would greatly enhance the development potential of this site.

E. Development of Existing Open Spaces

Development of some of the existing recreation facilities on the RPC site would be less costly in terms of site preparation than demolition of existing buildings and associated remediation. The well-utilized playfields along Veterans Memorial Highway and Old Orangeburg Road have excellent highway visibility and access. However, their heavy utilization and the investment made in their construction, would likely preclude the possibly of reuse for anything else now or in the long-term future. In contrast, Broadacres Golf Club is one of the Town's two golf courses, with only 9-holes of play. As such, it could be considered to be a potential redevelopment site in the future. Its frontage along Convent Road, however, raises the same traffic impact issues as other parcels in the northern portions of the RPC site. With 65 acres of land, it could support several hundred-thousand square feet of office or R&D or approximately 25 homes based on R-80 densities.

The golf course site does not have any buildings or steam tunnels to demolish; asbestos or lead paint to remediate; or historic structures to clear through the State Historic

Preservation Office (SHPO). Hence, its redevelopment for an early-action project at RPC for a possible data center or R&D use could be considered.

As part of the acquisition of the 350 acres at RPC, the Town agreed to retain 216 acres as public and open space use. **Figure 28, Potential Open Space Parcels** shows the acreage for various existing and potential open space areas on the RPC site.

DRAFT

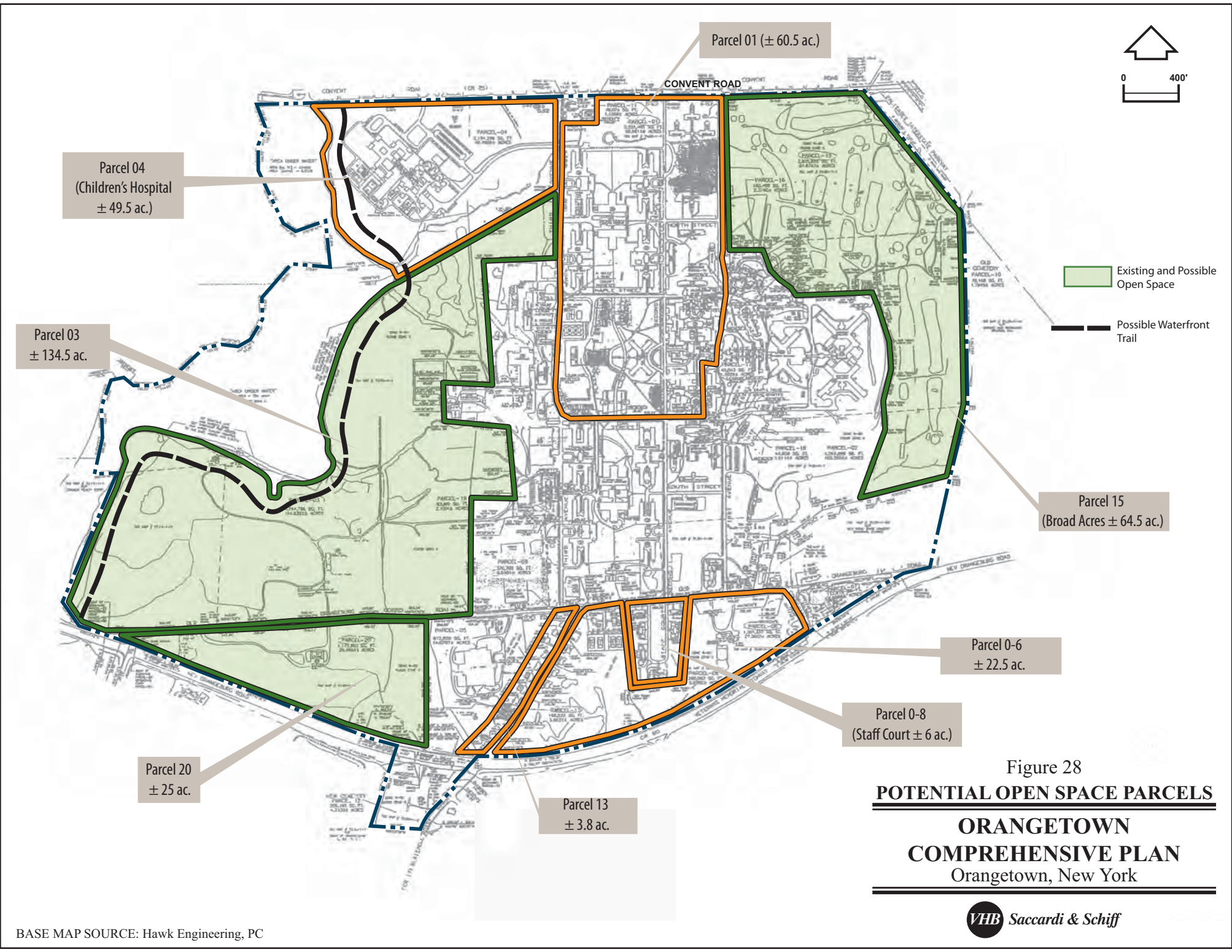


Figure 28
POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE PARCELS
ORANGETOWN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
 Orangetown, New York

V. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

A comprehensive plan for a community does not have to be limited to a single document entitled “Comprehensive Plan.” Rather, it could be the compendium of planning documents that relate to a community. To that end, based upon a thorough review of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* and significant coordination with a committee consisting of members of the Town’s various boards, it can be concluded that, with one exception (Rockland Psychiatric Center), the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* remains valid and does not need to be updated. Rather, many of the recommendations from the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* remain to be implemented. What follows is a discussion of those recommendations that should be implemented.

A. Route 303

Although the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* proposals for Route 303 are still valid, there are several implementation actions that the Town could pursue to better address the aesthetics of the roadway. Design guidelines for Route 303 should be developed. Strip commercial development along Route 303 has been limited, but there are stretches of CC zoning that should be scaled back in several locations. Among others, these include lands north of Orangeburg Road and Mountainview Avenue.

Moreover, the developed commercial areas in the vicinity of Erie Street and in the vicinity of the Orangeburg Road/Route 340 intersection continue to be visually unattractive with a series of individual retail, restaurant, auto related, and general commercial uses, each with its own curb cuts. These areas lack any unifying design elements, including landscaping and coordinated signage. There are some sidewalks present, suggesting that pedestrian activity is sought, but the sidewalks tend to go nowhere. Detailed site development plans should be devised for these areas that address potential redevelopment, infill, and site improvements. Zoning bonuses and other incentives could be considered for site plans and other improvements to existing development that address the Route 303 design guidelines.

B. Pearl River

Design guidelines should also be devised for Pearl River, as suggested in the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*, providing direction for façade improvements, storefront signage, and landscaping and site improvements. Public signage in Pearl River needs to clearly identify and direct motorists to recently constructed off-street parking areas. A major overhaul of the downtown area’s urban design features needs to be undertaken, building upon the streetscape improvements already made. From time to time, outside funding for streetscape and façade improvements is available from the State (such as the Main Street Program).

The Town should also help the Chamber of Commerce in Pearl River enhance the marketing of retail shops and restaurants in Pearl River, by further encouraging outdoor dining, and providing opportunities for transit-oriented apartments close to the train station. The area in Pearl River that is currently zoned CS is far too extensive, with the potential result being a scattering of commercial uses rather than a concentration of these uses along Central Avenue. The proposals for rezoning these areas, as set forth in the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*, should be pursued.

C. Rockland Psychiatric Center

Unlike Pearl River and unlike Route 303, there have been major changes at RPC since the adoption of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*. As a result, an update of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan's* proposals is needed.

This major change is the potential availability of the former Children's Hospital, power plant, and Staff Court sites, which were not included in the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*. The *2003 Comprehensive Plan* also did not fully recognize residents' traffic concerns in the area to the immediate north of RPC, which were clearly articulated when the K. Hovnanian proposal for senior housing, concentrated just south of Convent Road, was analyzed

The Town is now actively pursuing acquisition of the Children's Hospital, Staff Court, and power plant sites from the State, along with funding for building demolition and remediation. The goal is to have shovel-ready sites at RPC for low-impact economic development uses, such as data centers, research and development, and similar uses, which would bring tax ratables and jobs to the community. This should be based on a locally-acceptable master plan, with an environmental analysis that addresses traffic, historic, and environmental issues, and a phasing approach that includes a marketing strategy for the property.

The master plan for the redevelopment of RPC needs to balance open space and development objectives. While it still may call for "low-impact development in an open space setting" as called for in the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*, the new plan for RPC should be a more expansive, addressing all sub-areas with appropriate uses for, and access to, each area.

The new plan for RPC should be recognized as an official part of a compendium of comprehensive plan documents, including the *2003 Plan*, the *Route 303 Study and Overlay Zoning* and the *Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance* that permits mixed use development at the *Route 303/Palisades Interstate Parkway Interchange*. This report should also be part of that compendium.