



TOWN OF PHILIPSTOWN
2030 Comprehensive Plan
November 2021

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 5/6/2021 DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

Philipstown's Comprehensive Plan is a framework for the future. The political, social, and environmental shifts that have taken place since the 2006 adoption of our current Comprehensive Plan have impacted our local economy and altered the Town’s planning priorities. In 2017, the Town appointed a Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) and this draft reflects their work. The new Comprehensive Plan sets forth goals, strategies, and action items that will enable Philipstown to navigate these shifts and continue to thrive as a desirable place to live, work, and play for the next 10 years.

About Philipstown

The Town of Philipstown is a 51.5 square mile rural historic community in western Putnam County with a population of just under 10,000 people. Our defining and valued attributes are: access to the Hudson River, a sense of history, an extensive parkland and open space network, excellent schools, active nonprofits, two charming villages, a central location in the New York metropolitan region and the Hudson Valley, and a long tradition of community involvement.

The combination of an engaged community dedicated to the preservation of a high quality of life, non-profit institutional expertise, and a proactive local government willing to listen and take action has been an important agent of positive change in the Town. The development of a rare, bi-partisan trust between the private and public sectors over many years has led to a partnership that has positioned Philipstown as a leader in important national issues, including land use, natural resource protection, and climate change mitigation.

The residents of Philipstown continue to responsibly express their ideas about the future of the Town through community information sharing initiatives. These initiatives include a series of 2016 [Community Conversations](#) followed by a Community Survey organized by the Desmond Fish Public Library; a series of public forums organized by the Ecological Citizens Project (ECP), known as the [Philipstown Community Congress](#), leading to a Community Vote in 2017 in which over 750 ballots were cast; and an innovative community inventory of greenhouse gas emissions organized by the ECP and spearheaded by the [Philipstown Climate Smart Communities Task Force in 2019-2020](#).

Acknowledging the need to become a more resilient community in the face of growing climate change concerns, public officials in Philipstown voted to join New York State's Climate Smart Communities initiative in June 2017. Inspired by the actions of our elected officials and the activism of the volunteers involved in [Climate Smart Philipstown](#) and other organizations, including the CPUC, we have emerged as both a national and local leader in the fight against climate change by supporting the goal of reaching 100% community carbon neutrality by 2040. Led by volunteers associated with the ECP and the Climate Smart Philipstown Task Force, who will engage in a neighbor-to-neighbor community-wide engagement project, the Town launched the [Philipstown Fights Dirty](#) campaign on Earth Day 2021. The campaign's goal is to support each resident's effort to reduce his or her metric CO2 emissions by one ton a year for the next 20 years.

The Town of Philipstown also adopted a [Complete Streets](#) policy in February 2020. This approach to mobility planning attempts to ensure that people of all ages and abilities are able to move around their communities safely and easily. We recognize that transportation infrastructure should accommodate a range of transportation modes such as biking, walking, and driving.

Finally, national events in 2020 spurred an increased commitment by many local organizations to work harder to make Philipstown a place where all residents are treated justly and fairly. Philipstown institutions including schools, libraries, governments, and non-profit organizations have taken actions to make their own operations more committed to social justice and are increasingly working together to achieve the goals of equity, diversity and inclusion.

Our Community Vision

Although 15 years have passed since the adoption of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, Philipstown remains remarkably unchanged in many respects. The Comprehensive Plan sets forth our Community Vision for preserving the Town's strengths and infrastructure and addressing its future needs. It is a policy document that is meant to guide and hold accountable all stakeholders responsible for maintaining a high quality of life in Philipstown. The Plan is dynamic in that the content will be kept current by a participatory and transparent process that provides public input and feedback, similar to the manner in which the Plan was written.

The fundamental aspects of our Community Vision include:

- Retaining our Town's bucolic feel, low-density residential character, and peaceful sense of place and connection, with Cold Spring serving as the Town's main center of retail activity and community gathering. This includes adjusting access to visitor sites to prevent overburdening of existing road and trail infrastructure.
- Recognizing that a healthy 21st century town is a place where all residents can live, shop, congregate, and spend their time in safety and comfort with their civil rights respected.
- Developing a variety of housing types at various price points in locations that have the infrastructure and amenities to support them, while acknowledging that large-scale residential development of any kind faces a myriad of environmental and infrastructure challenges.
- Revitalizing the Town's neighborhoods as more modern, mixed-use communities and establishing policies that will help support our businesses in a changing economy.
- Maintaining a physical space that is aesthetically pleasing and easy to navigate for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.
- Building a place that offers services and stores that attract community residents and visitors.

- Achieving the goals/strategies/action items in the Plan through safe and ecologically sound infrastructure and land use management.

In order to preserve these aspects of Philipstown, the Plan combines best practices in sustainable planning with community input to inform policies that will preserve these enviable assets for generations to come, while considering practical key issues that may affect how we achieve specific goals.

Key Issues:

The issues we face in Philipstown today are at once very similar to and very different from those we faced in 2006. Today, the preservation of the Town's residential character and natural condition is still of utmost importance, as is the protection of its environmental features, especially the quality of our water. Maintenance of valuable municipal infrastructure such as roads and power lines is also critical. And we must meet the housing needs of changing demographics, including seniors, workforce employees, and young families. Meanwhile, a host of new challenges, including those introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic, have appeared over the last 15 years, changing the way land use and community planning must be approached.

We don't yet know if the spike in relocations of people leaving New York City, brought on by the pandemic, will continue after the virus is controlled. We also don't know whether working and schooling from home will become a permanent way of life in Philipstown. But we do know that consumers choose to shop online rather than in-person with increasing frequency. As a result, e-commerce is transforming the American "downtown" and affecting the actions local businesses must take to remain relevant and successful in this new market. At the same time, as our Millennials' economic self-sufficiency increases and our Baby Boomers age, these populations are becoming more interested in amenities, housing, and service options that are accessible without a personal vehicle or through public transit. We also recognize a trend toward introducing healthy living and active lifestyles into everyday actions and a "health-in-all-policies" approach to planning.

The pursuit of an active lifestyle coupled with the beauty and majesty of the Hudson Highlands in Philipstown have produced an unexpected challenge to our quality of life in recent years. Pedestrian safety and crowd management issues have arisen along Route 9D and its tributary

roads, as well as in the Villages, brought on by an increase in the number of visitors to certain hiking trails (most notably Breakneck Ridge). The Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail project, which is expected to be completed over the course of this planning period, is designed as a comprehensive congestion-management initiative in response to these challenges, but the expectation of a continued increase in the numbers of visitors will make the evolution of a visitor-management strategy a planning priority for years to come—we want to maximize the economic benefits of tourism without increasing the risk to our public safety or overburdening our infrastructure. The Town is encouraged to work with other jurisdictions and agencies to solve issues like hiker parking, and to review the Town building code to tailor it to new realities.

In addition, even in Philipstown, which is relatively free of crime and security threats, the drug crisis potentially affects all Philipstown families, and must be considered in community planning. As a community, we have recognized the increase in drug abuse, and the Town must continue to work to mitigate it. The [Philipstown Behavioral Health Hub](#) is a key resource that should continue to receive public and private support in its efforts.

Finally, as described above, climate change is a national and global crisis that will be with us for the next 100 years. Philipstown has developed more robust environmental disaster and adaptation plans to combat increasingly frequent and intense weather events. Our increasingly sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of global climate change has also emboldened Philipstown to take action to curb air emissions, implement sustainability measures in Town operations, and encourage more responsible resident behavior. The recent commitment to zero emissions by 2040 is a strong manifestation of this resolve.

How a New Comprehensive Plan Was Written

In November 2017, when the Town formed the CPUC, a diverse group of 14 volunteers came together to begin work on a new Plan. A total of 25 residents have worked with the Committee since that time. Early on, we created a [Website](#) asking for community input. In addition we organized two town-wide surveys to continue gathering community feedback. The first was an online survey completed in 2018 and the second, which used a survey template and is described below, was completed in 2020. We had a total of approximately 1,000 responses to our surveys.

In the 2020 survey, the CPUC sought to get an understanding of what the residents wanted to see in the Comprehensive Plan. We promoted the survey in the local newspapers, on social

media and municipal websites. We utilized the email lists of our two local libraries, the Climate Smart Philipstown Taskforce, and the Philipstown Trails Committee. We had more than 700 participants. Our topics covered demographics, housing, economic development, recreation, and infrastructure. A few of the questions asked the participants to write in what they loved about the town, to describe their vision for its future, and to identify areas of concern that should be addressed in the next few years. These responses showed an overwhelming love for our great natural beauty and community feel. Top areas of concern included tourist management, traffic, taxes, and infrastructure issues like septic tanks.

We also held two public meetings in late 2018, one in the North Highlands and the other in Continental Village. In 2019, we successfully applied for a Hudson River Valley Greenway grant, which enabled us to gain the perspective of a professional planner in 2020. Throughout our history as a committee, our volunteers met individually with as many elected and appointed officials, representatives of Town Departments and institutional stakeholders as possible. Two members of the Town Board attended our meetings as ex-officio members, and we regularly updated the Town Board about our activities at public meetings.

Following the initial submission of a draft of the new Comprehensive Plan to the Town Board in December 2020, and in accordance with Section 272-A of NYS Municipal Law, the CPUC co-hosted with the Desmond Fish Public Library a series of three virtual public meetings on March 1 and March 6, 2021 for the purpose of providing the residents of the Town an opportunity to hear about and ask questions about the new draft Plan. Members of the CPUC provided a summary of the Goals section of the Plan. A total of approximately 100 people participated in these meetings, and [the feedback gathered in the process was incorporated into this revised draft of the new Comprehensive Plan.](#)

On March 23, 2021, the Cold Spring Chamber of Commerce hosted an open meeting to provide an opportunity for representatives of local businesses to review and ask questions about the Economic Development Goals contained in the new Comprehensive Plan. Members of the CPUC provided a summary of these Goals and approximately 40 people participated in this meeting.

At 7:00PM before its regular monthly meeting on August 5, 2021, in accordance with Section 272-A of NYS Municipal Law, the Town Board of Philipstown held a Public Hearing for the purpose of providing an opportunity for any resident of the Town to comment on the proposed new Comprehensive Plan. 3 residents made comments at this time and their comments were

considered in revising the draft of the new Comprehensive Plan. The Public Hearing was continued by the Town Board at 7:00PM on September 2, 2021 before its regular monthly meeting. Since no resident had any comments to make, the Town Board closed the Public Hearing on the new Comprehensive Plan.

How the Comprehensive Plan is Structured

This Plan is founded on the desire for Philipstown to be a sustainable community. Because sustainability is something that is long lasting and can withstand time, it intrinsically recognizes that there is a relationship between the social, environmental and economic aspects of the community. The Committee recognized the interrelationship of the "silos" that were identified in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. Seeking a unifying structure for the new Plan, the CPUC determined that the American Planning Association Comprehensive Plan Standards and Best Practices provided the most complete sustainability framework. This framework positions the Comprehensive Plan in a manner that aligns with Federal, State and regional planning objectives.

In addition to presenting goals and strategies, the Plan also identifies the action items that should be implemented to achieve each of the goals. These action items should be incorporated into the Town's annual planning and budget process. As part of its budget submission, the Town Board should receive recommendations associated with the action items outlined in the Plan and be given the opportunity to review and budget for those specific actions that it deems a priority for implementation during the following year. The action items are the elements of this Plan that will change more frequently over time and will be revisited in association with the Town's yearly budget process.

In addition to the annual review process outlined above and in accordance with Section 272-A of NYS Municipal Law, the Town Board of Philipstown shall provide as a condition of the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan that the maximum interval at which the Plan will be reviewed is 10 years.

The Comprehensive Plan adopts a multi-disciplinary approach that recognizes the interwoven complexity of the world in which we live. The Plan's thirteen Goals embrace the six planning principles used by the APA. These principles are:

1. Livable Built Environment

Ensure that all elements of the built environment, including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure, work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreation, with a high quality of life.

[GOAL 1: SUSTAIN OUR RURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER](#)

[GOAL 2: PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF HOUSING](#)

[GOAL 3: DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN](#)

[GOAL 4: EMBRACE “SMART GROWTH” PLANNING PRINCIPLES](#)

2. Harmony with Nature

Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their health is a primary objective.

[GOAL 5: PROTECT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES](#)

3. Resilient Economy

Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and to initiate sustainable development and redevelopment strategies that foster green business growth and build reliance on local assets.

[GOAL 6: SEEK A FAIR AND BALANCED TAX STRATEGY](#)

[GOAL 7: PURSUE A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY](#)

[GOAL 8: PROMOTE THE CONTINUED USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR FARMING](#)

4. Healthy Community

Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, health care, environmental justice and safe neighborhoods.

[GOAL 9: STRENGTHEN OUR TOWN-WIDE SENSE OF COMMUNITY](#)

[GOAL 10: EXPAND OUR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES](#)

[GOAL 11: ENSURE THAT RESIDENTS CAN ENJOY GOOD HEALTH](#)

5. Responsible Regionalism

Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

[GOAL 12: PURSUE PARTNERSHIPS WITH NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES](#)

6. Interwoven Equity

Ensure fairness and equity in providing for the housing, services, health, safety and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups, and actively discourage discriminatory practices—particularly with regard to economic development and opportunity, schooling and land use or development.

Applies to all Goals.

[GOAL 13: ENSURE THAT THE LAWS OF THE TOWN AND THE GOALS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ARE CONSISTENT](#)

Planning Principle I: Livable Built Environment

GOAL 1: SUSTAIN OUR RURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER

Preserving our community character in a sustainable way is the overarching theme of the Comprehensive Plan. Philipstown is a unique place characterized by great natural beauty, historic places, and a sense of small-town community. This uniqueness is fragile and could be lost through a rapid influx of development. The existence of open space is critical to maintaining our unique character. Development should be done in a way that is sensitive to the Town's special nature. The long term sustainability, resilience, and safety of the town and health of its residents should be considered in every action taken.

Strategy I. Encourage development in areas designated for future growth.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Provide incentives to developers for voluntary density reductions.
2. Practice "conservation development," or clustering, where appropriate; promoting connectivity of open spaces and avoiding fragmentation. Ensure that conservation development does not lead to a more negative environmental impact than would occur under conventional development.
3. Require that development is in scale and in character with its surroundings and lot size.
4. Require that new rural roads be compatible with the existing road system. In particular, new roads off of dirt roads should be in character with the surroundings.
5. Encourage institutional uses that fit the character of the community, and maintain good zoning control over those uses.

Strategy II. Preserve elements that contribute to Philipstown’s rural and historic character — dirt roads; stone walls; historic structures, sites and areas; significant trees, ridgelines, farmland, and forests; the Hudson River shoreline and scenic viewsheds.

ACTION ITEMS:

6. Preserve the character of historic dirt roads. Use techniques and materials in maintaining these roads that enhance their safety, aesthetics, resilience and regeneration, without adversely impacting the environment.
7. Preserve our stone walls, historic structures and large trees, and require consideration of these in the building permit process.
8. Prevent overburdening of the Town’s infrastructure by visitors. Provide alternative access to visitor attractions that does not infringe on residents’ safety and privacy.
9. Conduct a town-wide inventory of historic structures and sites and examine methods for their continued protection.
10. Form a town-wide Tree Advisory Committee whose mission would be to educate the residents of the town on best practices for the maintenance of historic trees.

Strategy III. Commit to achieving community carbon neutrality by 2040.

ACTION ITEMS:

11. Initiate changes to existing regulations that will help achieve community carbon neutrality.
12. Incorporate recommendations made in the [Philipstown 2020 Greenhouse Gas \(GHG\) Inventory Report](#) in all policies.
13. Amend building code to mandate the use of renewable energy for primary heating sources on new construction or renovations.
14. Establish sites for electric car charging and mandate car charging stations for new developments based on the number of parking spaces.
15. Support the [Philipstown Fights Dirty](#) neighbor-to-neighbor campaign to help residents reduce their metric CO2 emissions sponsored by the ECP and the Climate Smart Philipstown Task Force volunteers.

16. Develop a Philipstown solar energy policy, along the lines recommended by [Scenic Hudson's How to Solar Now](#) blueprint for communities.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF HOUSING

There is a chronic need for a wide range of housing solutions in Philipstown. Our quality of life relies on affordable housing and access to a diversified economy within the Town. Residents who work in the community strengthen Philipstown's small-town character. This character is threatened by escalating housing costs. Creative solutions for securing a range of housing that fits the community character for a variety of income levels should be pursued, and home-based businesses providing a range of services should be encouraged.

Strategy: Increase the availability of mixed-priced rental and ownership housing with appropriate controls on their location and impact.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Create an inventory of developable land to understand what housing might be added in Philipstown and how that would be affected by zoning.
2. Encourage the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), allowed by right, to increase the stock of smaller-scale housing units.
3. Encourage two-family and three-family housing with appropriate controls on location and impact.
4. Encourage multi-family housing near mixed-use centers or as an adaptive re-use of existing structures on Institutional properties.
5. Encourage a mixture of housing types and require mixed-priced housing in new developments over a set size threshold.
6. Encourage mixed-use development where housing is mixed with commercial uses.
7. Encourage multi-family housing that serves local needs where a unique opportunity exists to replace an undesirable use.
8. Explore the incorporation of "co-housing" and "co-living" developments to provide more housing alternatives.

9. Encourage senior housing that addresses local and regional income levels and needs, and is in keeping with the scale of Philipstown and the goals of this Plan.
10. Provide incentives and/or requirements for the permanent dedication of units as affordable housing.
11. Partner with and promote awareness of existing non-profits working to increase affordable housing in the county and in the region.
12. Incentivize landlords who convert (and maintain) existing rental units to permanent affordable housing through state programs.
13. “Workshop” redevelopment alternatives with large institutional property owners to pre-approve concepts that are in keeping with the goals of this Plan.
14. Encourage the rehabilitation of older, seasonal housing units (and related septic and utility systems), to increase permanent, year-round housing.
15. Explore policies related to short-term rentals to prevent the loss of a diverse housing stock.
16. Expand upon the current New York State housing non-discrimination ordinance locally to cover two-family, owner-occupied housing.

GOAL 3: DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Philipstown’s transportation plan should embrace the mobility planning principles of its [Complete Streets](#) policy and seek to reduce our reliance on motor vehicles.

Strategy: Update the Town’s transportation infrastructure to address safety, health, environmental concerns, traffic congestion, quality of life, and accessibility issues for residents of all ages.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Ensure that planning for new roads and the maintenance and repairs of existing roads are evaluated within the framework of our Complete Streets policy by creating a review process for the integration of this policy into road design and maintenance plans.
2. Support the adoption of a Complete Streets policy for Putnam County.

3. Create new bike paths/lanes, walking trails, and sidewalks to link important community spaces such as schools, libraries, the Philipstown Recreation Center, Cold Spring, and the Garrison Landing with parking areas.
4. In coordination with the villages of Cold Spring and Nelsonville, develop an Active Transportation Master Plan to guide strategic development of walking and biking infrastructure and amenities.
5. Establish a hiking link to Constitution Marsh from Boscobel and the Cold Spring Metro North Train Station. Consider augmenting the existing raised walkways to provide a scenic hiking access to these sites.
6. Ensure that biking and walking options are safe for people of all ages.
7. Proactively engage with neighboring municipalities to expand public transportation for both residents and tourists. (For example, Philipstown could explore a collaboration with Highland Falls, which has proposed the development of a riverfront park. A collaboration could lead to the establishment of a water taxi that could connect West Point, Garrison's Landing and Cold Spring, thus encouraging the movement of people around the three areas without the burden of more road traffic and a need for parking.)
8. Work with Putnam County and New York State to improve road conditions and safety on key roadways in Philipstown, reduce motor vehicle fatalities and severe injuries, and improve pedestrian safety.
9. Use modern design elements to promote safety (traffic calming, road diets, raised crosswalks, medians), aesthetics (plantings, medians) and access (curb cuts, safe biking and walking paths) where possible.
10. Explore public/private partnership funding options for public transportation.
11. Form an advisory group to examine transportation to medical appointments and services for seniors and other residents with mobility restrictions.
12. Work with Putnam County and New York State to plan for appropriate road improvements along Route 9D to develop safe, off-road bike paths.
13. Develop a Philipstown link to the Greenway Trail and the Northern Putnam Trail.
14. Maintain the existing horse trail network and consider additional horse trails where appropriate.
15. Request and review New York State Department of Transportation traffic studies post-pandemic, once normal volume resumes, to identify safety issues, especially considering daily commuter traffic on Route 9 and Route 9D, local use patterns, and issues from curb cuts for ingress and egress traffic.

16. Recommend needed upgrades and assess traffic conditions on developable vacant sites that are zoned for commercial activities, and determine where additional parking could be created.

GOAL 4: EMBRACE “SMART GROWTH” PLANNING PRINCIPLES

New development should be located only where it can be supported by existing infrastructure, and new infrastructure should be developed only where it supports the Town’s development and conservation goals. Philipstown should continue to promote smart growth principles in its land use policies. At the core of the Town’s character is growth and development that so far has remained within the scale of the community.

Strategy: Direct development to areas where it can be reasonably supported.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Concentrate new commercial and industrial development in designated mixed use or industrial areas.
2. Locate denser development adjacent to existing areas of settlement.
3. With active local community involvement, study appropriate areas for new mixed use development, explore use of central sewer and water where appropriate, and consider developing master plans that balance community character and development potential, while avoiding landscape fragmentation.
4. Anticipate redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and mixed income housing opportunities in discussions with owners of institutional properties, large tracts of land, and old industrial sites. Encourage the involvement of open space preservation and land conservation organizations in these discussions.
5. Allow denser mixed use development areas that can become community hubs, creating more pedestrian oriented environments.

Planning Principle II: Harmony With Nature

GOAL 5: PROTECT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

The Town's natural resources, which require ongoing protection, are its green infrastructure and water sources contributing to public health, habitat, recreation, and community character. As called for in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, the Town adopted a Natural Resources Protection Plan (NRPP) in 2007. In 2020, the Climate Smart Philipstown Task Force updated the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) that formed a basis for the NRPP. In addition, the Town adopted an updated Open Space Index (OSI) in 2016 to update the maps in the NRPP. With the adoption of the NRPP and the OSI (and the fact that over half of the town is protected as state park land or by conservation organizations), Philipstown is in a strong position to protect its natural resources. However, landscape fragmentation, whereby development patterns create gaps in open space corridors, results in detrimental consequences for wildlife and continues to pose a threat.

Strategy I. Protect water quality and quantity.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Monitor and protect aquifers, recharge areas and stream corridors.
2. Protect existing wetlands/wetland buffers to help mitigate the impact of climate change (increase in large storm events and associated flooding).
3. Develop a program for septic system maintenance, remediation and education measures to minimize risk of surface and groundwater contamination.
4. Protect the quality of our water supply by identifying areas most critical to the water supply and ensuring that land use practices do not threaten water quality and quantity.
5. Implement best practices for road de-icing in winter to minimize adverse impacts on our water resources; use less salt.
6. Develop a watershed coalition for Foundry Brook and Clove Creek that will monitor water quality.

7. Support New York City in its efforts to avoid filtration of Catskill water supply serving Continental Village.
8. Update Town-wide water resource studies every 5-10 years.

Strategy II. Identify critical parcels of land for preservation.

ACTION ITEMS

9. Continue to implement the recommendations of the NRPP through land use regulations and other measures.
10. Update the Open Space Index (OSI) every 5-10 years, and add a focus on connectivity of open spaces.
11. Supplement the OSI with an index of properties critical to key drinking water resources, namely, the Clove Creek Aquifer and Foundry Brook.
12. Educate residents and commercial owners about protecting the natural resources on their properties.
13. Provide ongoing training to all town board and volunteer board members on how to protect natural resources in the development approval process.
14. Create a [Community Preservation Plan](#) to update the NRPP using the most recent NRI and OSI and appoint an advisory board to oversee the implementation of this Plan.
15. Explore and establish sustainable sources of funding to carry out the Community Preservation Plan.

Strategy III. Prevent landscape fragmentation.

ACTION ITEMS

16. Preserve habitat and scenic resources.
17. Encourage use of conservation development (clustering) through the Town building code.
18. Clarify regulations around open space development and amend conservation subdivision rules to better protect natural resources.
19. Continue to assess and identify areas that may have high habitat value for biodiversity.

Strategy IV. Facilitate the community's enjoyment of the Hudson River.

ACTION ITEMS

20. Encourage access to and use of the riverfront and its tributaries. Explore the Scenic Hudson Guide, [*Revitalizing Hudson Riverfronts*](#), recommended when considering the promotion and development of waterfront areas that seek to serve the needs of both local people and tourists and to conserve the surrounding natural resources. (A successful example of the application of the Scenic Hudson guidelines is West Point Foundry Preserve, where locals and tourists can enjoy walking along the Cold Spring riverfront, but also have access to a green area that provides safe access for all ages, including wayfinding signs, gravel and dirt trails, picnic areas, handicapped parking, bathrooms and a system for waste management.)
21. Safeguard and enhance the habitat of the river and its tributaries through formation of watershed coalitions.

Strategy V. Protect environmentally sensitive areas identified in the NRPP.

ACTION ITEMS:

22. These areas include, but are not limited to: Garrison Golf Club, Cold Spring Reservoir and Foundry Brook, Scofield Ridge, large contiguous forest blocks (i.e. matrix forest), the Hudson River shoreline, Constitution Marsh, brooks, wetlands and riparian buffer zone, ridgelines and steep slope, and corridors between already protected lands. Other areas may be identified through a Community Preservation Plan.

Strategy VI. Develop strategies to protect against environmentally hazardous materials

ACTION ITEMS

23. Work with county, state and federal agencies to identify hazardous materials and safeguards against them.
24. Identify sites that may be a source of contaminants into key waterbodies and implement sampling, testing and mitigation protocols through the watershed coalitions.

Strategy VII. Encourage sustainable commercial and residential construction practices.

ACTION ITEMS:

25. Sustainability practices include: water conservation, recycling programs, renewable energy applications, incorporation of materials with longer life versus use of biodegradable materials, efficient use of lighting, reduction of impervious surface area, and adoption of new waste treatment methods to reduce the impact of current septic requirements on the landscape.

Planning Principle III: Resilient Economy

GOAL 6: SEEK A FAIR AND BALANCED TAX STRATEGY

The Town should continue to look for opportunities to increase tax revenues, explore shared services, and address the variability of school taxes among the residents of the Town. Our taxes are lower than neighboring municipalities in the Lower Hudson Valley. Maintaining these rates is helpful in retaining current taxpayers and attracting new residents and businesses to Philipstown.

The issue of development versus land preservation, and the impact of each on property taxes and municipal services costs, is an area of concern. However, there is a strong consensus that making decisions based on fiscal impact alone will result in plans that dilute the special character that is the town's core value.

The school tax situation is complex. Philipstown residents are currently located in one of four school districts. Tax rates vary significantly between the districts; the end result is that taxpayers with equal assessments who live in different school districts within Philipstown have total property tax bills that vary a great deal.

Strategy I. Increase local tax revenues.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Maximize tax revenues by attracting commercial development in locations with suitable infrastructure. All conversations about potential new development must consider retaining Philipstown's unique character.
2. Weigh the benefit of potential development for increasing the Town's tax base against the cost of providing additional services to new homes and businesses. To be considered beneficial, the tax revenues associated with the development, net of costs to the Town resulting from the development and subsequent operation and maintenance of the site, should exceed the net tax revenues from the site prior to being developed.

Strategy II. Explore shared services.

ACTION ITEMS

3. Reduce the cost of providing municipal services through budget cuts achieved by implementing efficiencies and exploring shared service opportunities with neighboring municipalities.
4. Explore the formation of districts as a potential means for delivering services to residents and maintaining public facilities in a cost-effective manner.

Strategy III. Address the variability of school taxes.

ACTION ITEMS

5. Encourage the formation of a citizen task force to examine school tax issues, including reassessment strategies and state-level initiatives. The latter could include, for example, creating an additional level of STAR, which reimburses residents who pay significantly higher taxes than the rest of the town.
6. Recommend that the elected officials of the Town, Villages and School Districts and any other taxing entities meet to discuss shared concerns and needs, including discussions about innovative ways to cross traditional boundary lines to deliver improved services so that all Philipstown students—regardless of the district in which they reside—are able to access and benefit from the educational and recreational opportunities that fit their skills, abilities and interests.

GOAL 7: PURSUE A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Identify the type and location of commercial activity that is desirable in Philipstown. Existing businesses provide a range of products, services and employment to the town and region. They also play a major role in shaping our special small-town character.

New commercial development should be consistent with the town's aesthetic and qualitative goals, while contributing to a strong economy. In addition, technology is creating a new group of workers who can work and tele-commute from their homes. Developing specific guidelines for managing connectivity infrastructure will make it easier for appropriate businesses and home offices to locate in Philipstown.

Strategy I. Attract commercial activity that is consistent with Town values.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Encourage home-based businesses consistent with the zoning code, provide safe parking for employees or clients, and assess the impact on adjacent properties.
2. Recognize the importance of nonprofits and religious organizations because of their affinity with the town and their contributions to the town's quality of life.
3. Discourage national franchises.
4. Encourage experienced regional business owners with a limited number of other locations wishing to expand into Philipstown.

Strategy II. Accommodate commercial activity in designated areas.

5. Locate commercial activity in locations that complement the town's traffic patterns, community interests and design guidelines.
6. Concentrate retail development at high traffic hubs and in numbers that can be supported by local demand.
7. Discourage "big box" architecture, strip commercial development and "urban sprawl" in general.

8. Encourage hamlet-type development that provides opportunities for local businesses to locate near each other.

Strategy III. Develop spaces for growing small and medium-sized businesses.

ACTION ITEMS:

9. Create small-scale mixed-use village-type centers where local businesses can locate and thrive.
10. Encourage development of professional office/commercial space, in keeping with the scale of Philipstown and the goals of this plan, to decrease commuting time for local workers, and stimulate the day-time economy in Philipstown.

Strategy IV. Improve the character of development on Route 9.

ACTION ITEMS:

11. Focus on managing safe ingress and egress at mixed-use hubs such as the Philipstown Square area or other appropriate locations.
12. Improve traffic light and safety at the intersection of Route 9 and Fishkill Road, as well as Route 9 and Snake Hill Road.
13. Adopt further design guidelines for signage and site improvements.
14. Provide adequate buffers between commercial and residential districts.
15. Apply aquifer protection guidelines and remove invasive species.
16. Prohibit noisy and obtrusive uses.
17. Prohibit additional soil mining.
18. Encourage the maintenance and landscaping of unoccupied or abandoned structures.

GOAL 8: PROMOTE THE CONTINUED USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR FARMING

Farming has been an important part of Philipstown's history. [Glynwood](#), a leading institution in farming development and education, is headquartered here. The Town should promote the conservation and development of local food systems.

Strategy: Support agriculture in Philipstown.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Create an inventory of all current "agricultural" ventures, large and small.
2. Continually reference and update previous resources such as [Keep Putnam Farming](#) and work with partners at the County level to mutually share information to ensure a holistic view of food production in Philipstown.
3. Educate the community about the preservation of open spaces as fields rather than lawns.
4. Promote the incorporation of "food forests" into land management plans.
5. Encourage small-scale food production and educate the residents about good farming practices.
6. Provide a Town-wide compost area and educate the residents on using it.
7. Identify land access opportunities within Philipstown for new and beginning farmers, encourage underrepresented communities within agriculture, such as BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and women farmers. List these opportunities on local land reparations maps, such as www.soulfirefarm.org.

Planning Principle IV: Healthy Community

GOAL 9: STRENGTHEN OUR TOWN-WIDE SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Philipstown's communities are separated by our mountainous geography and municipal boundaries, which can isolate residents from each other. A Philipstown in which people can connect with each other will be a stronger, healthier community.

Strategy: Enable people to connect with one another so that Philipstown retains its small-town character and tradition of volunteerism.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Enhance the Town's website and add streaming capability to the meetings of the Town's various Boards.
2. Provide improved Town Hall and Community Center facilities (youth, senior, administrative, recreation) which will help bring together residents from various parts of the Town.
3. Explore further cooperation among school districts and/or the possibility of creating a unified Philipstown school district that serves residents in Garrison, Cold Spring, Nelsonville, North Highlands, and Continental Village.
4. Encourage the Town, the Village of Nelsonville, and the Village of Cold Spring to consider consolidation of jurisdictions to increase community cohesion, and provide more equitable representation and distribution of services.
5. Encourage the provision of additional health care facilities.
6. Enhance the use of the Town's television channel to share programs and information.
7. Maintain the volunteer fire and ambulance corps, and explore further cooperation between the emergency services, considering human resource and capital needs.
8. Support several town-wide events each year and maintain a town-wide calendar of events, including multigenerational activities.

9. Support the public libraries in Philipstown as they provide foundational programs and services that support the high quality of life we enjoy. Encourage them to serve as citizens' forums to sponsor programs, discussion and education.
10. Actively promote and support diversity. Increasing representation should be a primary consideration when appointing members to Board positions. Discourage appointed and elected officials from enacting policies and decisions that directly or indirectly discriminate against business owners and residents of any race, creed, color, orientation, or religion. To achieve these goals, the Town Board should consult with a community-based advisory committee to build awareness and provide guidance on policy choices. The Town Government should adopt a diversity and inclusion program with training, and ensure that job postings reach the broadest applicant pool possible.
11. Translate the Town website and online resources into Spanish.

GOAL 10: EXPAND OUR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Expand the Town's capacity to meet current and future demand for recreation, while providing a wide range of activities serving all ages at an affordable cost. Recreation pulls different segments of the community together and encourages people of all ages to improve their health and well-being.

Strategy I. Offer a wide variety of Recreation Department programs.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Educate the public about Town recreational offerings and the offerings of other local recreation providers.
2. Balance specialty programming that is tailored to the needs of particular groups such as teens and senior citizens with intergenerational activities that permit residents of different age groups to share experiences.
3. Develop and implement a cooperative recreation plan with all interested parties, linking it to other Town programs and regulations.
 - a. identify opportunities to develop partnerships with schools to increase youth physical activity and encourage use of other facilities owned by schools and nonprofits

- b. encourage the use of facilities owned by schools and nonprofits to increase opportunities for physical activity and recreation across all age groups
- 4. Explore opportunities to develop expanded recreational activities through municipal, private, and non-profit development projects.
- 5. Explore the full range of options for funding recreational properties and improve the Town's ability to apply for grant funding for recreational programming and infrastructure.
- 6. Identify possible sites for new Town recreational facilities that could also serve as a focal point for the community. Residents have indicated a strong interest in a swimming pool and a synthetic surfaced athletic field with lights.

Strategy II. Consider designating land for hunting.

ACTION ITEMS

- 7. Work with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to enhance local hunting opportunities, including on state owned land.

Strategy III. Facilitate visual and physical access to the Hudson River.

ACTION ITEMS

- 8. Improve riverfront and tributary access. Make use of Scenic Hudson's [Revitalizing Hudson Riverfronts](#), a guide to the promotion and development of Riverfront plans.
- 9. Support the [Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail Project](#) and remain engaged in discussions around Fjord Trail mapping, design and implementation. Consider hiring a planning consultant to represent the Village and the Town in these discussions. Create connections from the Fjord Trail to key Village and Town locations and ensure that there is adequate parking. Increase the number of public restrooms.

GOAL 11: ENSURE THAT RESIDENTS ENJOY GOOD HEALTH

A 2017 New York State directive calls on Philipstown to embrace a "health across all policies" initiative, which calls for incorporating health considerations into policies,

programs, and initiatives led by non-health agencies. Our health is shaped by the community in which we live. In the past, health concerns were not explicitly integrated into the planning process.

Strategy I. Recognize the health needs of specific age groups.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Promote supportive environments for parents with infants and young children by expanding access to high quality parent support and early learning opportunities.
2. Collaborate with school districts and community organizations to support positive youth development by providing a wide range of recreational, enrichment and skill-building programs for youth at low or no cost.
3. Use zoning restrictions and other approaches to restrict youth access to tobacco, e-cigs/vape products, alcohol, and associated advertising (e.g. Town could prohibit tobacco advertising or sales within a certain radius of schools); adopt a smoke-free air law for Philipstown that includes vape products, prohibiting smoking in parks, playgrounds, and on town buildings and grounds.
4. Collaborate with other government and social service agencies to prevent youth access to illegal drugs and continue to support the efforts of the [Philipstown Behavioral Health Hub](#).
5. Address the needs of seniors across multiple domains including housing, transportation, social inclusion, and social and health services.
6. Recognize opportunities for intergenerational activities, events, and hiking on [universal trails](#).

Strategy II. Promote active lifestyles.

ACTION ITEMS:

7. Ensure that parks and recreational spaces address needs across all age groups and abilities.
8. Support the development of biking and walking paths as a way to promote physical activity.
9. Support access to affordable recreational activities for residents of all ages.

10. Explore partnerships with school districts to allow access to district recreation facilities for low or no cost.

Strategy III. Support healthy foods and prevent food insecurity.

ACTION ITEMS:

11. Support access to affordable healthy foods by supporting and developing local food systems. Engage with partners such as [Putnam Food Systems Coalition](#), the [Hudson Valley Food Systems Coalition](#), and the Glynwood Center, to ensure local efforts are nested within regional strategies.
12. Support community garden concepts and home grown food production.
13. Work with community-based agencies/organizations to address food insecurity/hunger, with an emphasis on seeking out solutions to food insecurity that both promote food sovereignty and support local agriculture (such as the [Food Sovereignty Fund](#)).

Strategy IV. Promote environmental health.

ACTION ITEMS:

14. Support initiatives that reduce air pollution (non-motorized transport, public transport and solar energy).
15. Develop and implement strategies to reduce solid waste disposal including incentivizing recycling and composting.
16. Preserve and protect drinking water resources. Protect surface and groundwater from overuse of salt on roadways by exploring more environmentally friendly options. Limit use of pesticides on roadways and near waterways where possible. Use biopesticides/non-toxic pesticides.
17. Plan for public health issues associated with climate change including increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters such as hurricanes, severe snow/ice storms, flooding and extreme heat events; in particular plan for the needs of sensitive populations including infants and the elderly (for example, providing and publicizing cooling centers during extreme heat events).

Strategy V. Provide access to healthcare and social services.

ACTION ITEMS:

18. Promote improved access to physical health, mental health and social services for residents of all ages.
19. Partner with local, state and federal agencies to prevent drug and alcohol use and abuse.

Planning Principle V: Responsible Regionalism

GOAL 12. PURSUE PARTNERSHIPS WITH NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES

Philipstown's recreation opportunities, restaurants, local businesses, and arts and cultural institutions attract visitors and generate income for our local retail and hospitality service providers. A policy of responsible regionalism can foster cooperation in the management of the increasing number of visitors to Philipstown and provide guidance on climate change mitigation, connectivity and technology issues. Visitor management, a complicated issue involving several New York State agencies, local governments, and other private and public entities--some of which have conflicting missions and limited resources--has become a planning priority.

Strategy I. Ensure that tourism and tourism-related businesses do not threaten the character of the town or the safety and privacy of its residents.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Encourage cooperation between all municipalities and institutions involved.
2. Limit parking at points of interest within the Town's jurisdiction.
3. Educate the public about the use of outdoor attractions.
4. Study existing parking areas and determine if they can be utilized to service popular destinations where parking is limited.

Strategy II. Form a Regional Advisory Committee to provide guidance to the Town on issues such as climate change mitigation, connectivity and technology.

ACTION ITEMS:

5. Form a Committee Including residents of Philipstown and other towns in Putnam County, as well as representatives from other communities in the Mid Hudson region.

6. Address telecommunications and future connectivity issues such as improved fiber-optics, cell tower locations and appearances, and the introduction of 5G technology.
7. Address climate change mitigation and future power generation requirements.
8. Address the impact, management and integration of technological innovation in our daily lives.

Planning Principle VI: Interwoven Equity

Note: The principle of interwoven equity applies to all thirteen goals of this plan.

GOAL 13: ENSURE THAT THE LAWS OF THE TOWN AND THE GOALS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ARE CONSISTENT

Update Philipstown's laws to ensure that they are consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The laws of Philipstown should be consistent with the town's goals and clear enough that supporters of development find it easy to navigate the planning process.

Strategy I: Create consistency and harmony between our Town's laws and the Comprehensive Plan.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Enforce existing regulations.
2. Provide the best available technology to all those who are involved in the planning process.
3. Update the zoning code to ensure that it is consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, understandable, and easy to administer.
4. Review environmental, architectural and sanitary standards as they apply to Manitou, Lake Valhalla, and Continental Village, and other places where non-conforming lots create special circumstances.
5. Explore a referendum option in the Town code.

Strategy II: Maintain a standing committee to oversee the implementation of the action items outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

ACTION ITEMS:

6. Conduct annual planning “charrettes” with public input, to address new challenges and opportunities as they arise. Ensure these are timed to achieve public input during the annual review of the action items for priority.
7. Conduct annual reviews in conjunction with the Town’s budget planning process to select and recommend action items for priority in the next year.
8. For those action items selected as a priority, consider the need for a means of measurement to track their progress to completion. If required, facilitate the development of measures.
9. Consider/recommend synergy opportunities among visitor sites, local businesses and/or other municipalities which may facilitate accomplishment of selected action items.