

# **VILLAGE OF SLOATSBURG**

ROCKLAND COUNTY, NEW YORK

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**



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**Sloatsburg Village Board of Trustees**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

New York State Village Law regulates the preparation of comprehensive plans. Section 7-722 of the Village Law states that a Comprehensive Plan is one that will “identify the goals and objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development” of a village. Preparation of a comprehensive plan is not mandatory. However, if a plan is prepared and adopted by the Village Board of Trustees, all land use regulations must be in accordance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

The Village Board of Trustees, the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Building Inspector and other officials make decisions related to site plans, subdivisions, street improvements, locations for public buildings, expansion of community facilities and services, and other functions and concerns that impact the overall pattern and character of development in the Village. A Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide a framework for these decisions.

The Village of Sloatsburg commenced a comprehensive planning process in the winter of 1999. The previous Comprehensive Plan is almost twenty years old, and its planning policies need to be updated. The Village of Sloatsburg Comprehensive Plan is being prepared in a three-phase process. The first phase involved the preparation of existing condition reports, which provided baseline data on population and housing, natural resources, community facilities, land use, transportation, utilities, economic development and historic and aesthetic resources. The information contained in the existing conditions analyses, and public comment obtained through the 2000 Public Opinion Survey, were used to identify the challenges confronting Sloatsburg. These challenges are:

**Population:** - *Population growth that results from the current level of development allowed by existing zoning could negatively impact the small town feel of Sloatsburg.*

**Housing:** - *Some property owners have deferred maintenance.*  
- *Significant housing growth will change the socioeconomic character of the current population.*

**Land Use:** - *Any new development in the Village has historically been controversial.*  
- *There is too much uncertainty with regard to the type and amount of development that could occur.*  
- *Taxes are high and there has been no discernible increase in nonresidential ratables to balance the costs associated with residential uses.*

### **Economic**

**Development:** - *Local personal service and retail uses have dwindled.*  
- *Commercial space in the central business district is vacant.*  
- *The Village’s administrative and regulatory structure is not business friendly.*  
- *Visitors to the park system have not been “captured” by the local economy.*

### **Environmental**

- Resources:**
- *Poor soils and shallow depth to bedrock are inadequate for septic systems and inadequately treated effluent could impact water quality.*
  - *Properties along Nakoma Brook and Ramapo River are subject to flooding.*
  - *Current regulations do not adequately protect environmentally sensitive features.*

### **Historic**

- Resources:**
- *Historic properties are not protected from alteration/demolition.*

### **Aesthetic**

- Resources:**
- *The poor visual quality of Route 17 detracts from the Village's image.*
  - *Deferred property maintenance contributes to poor visual quality.*
  - *There is a need to beautify the Route 17 corridor.*

### **Transportation:**

- *The lack of alternative routes out of the Village in the event of an emergency is a concern.*
- *Unacceptable levels of traffic travel at excessive speeds on the local roadways, particularly Route 17.*
- *Traffic growth on Route 17, and to a lesser degree, the New York State Thruway and Sterling Mine Road, negatively impacts the Village's environment*
- *A comprehensive system of bikeways and pedestrian walkways does not exist. Some sidewalks are hazardous since they are not adequately separated from the roadway. Pedestrian safety is not adequate.*
- *Route 17 has a detrimental effect on noise levels for residential properties adjoining the corridor.*

### **Utilities:**

- *Septic systems are failing and contributing to pollution of the Village's waterways.*
- *The lack of municipal sewers requires large lot development that is not necessarily consistent with the village settlement pattern.*

### **Community**

- Services:**
- *The Village's recreational resources should be more accessible and open to local residents.*
  - *There is inadequate parking at the library.*

Following a review of existing condition information and the issues confronting the Village, a Comprehensive Plan Committee set out to express a vision of the community's future. The Vision Statement describes the community's philosophy regarding its desired pattern of development and conservation over the next 10-20 years. This Vision is supported by a set of goals and objectives for achieving the Village's vision.

This Comprehensive Plan is the outcome of the second phase of the comprehensive planning process. The Comprehensive Plan document consists of the following elements:

- LAND USE PLAN
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- NATURAL RESOURCES
- UTILITIES
- TRANSPORTATION
- COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES
- HISTORIC RESOURCES
- AESTHETIC RESOURCES

The Land Use Plan establishes the framework within which development will occur. The Land Use Plan identifies existing and planned open space areas, residential neighborhoods, the mixed use central business district and areas intended for nonresidential development. These land use patterns are and will be influenced by: introduction of central wastewater treatment facilities in the community; a need to re-design Route 17 from a highway to a main street corridor; a desire to promote a revitalized mixed use central business district to stimulate the Village's economy; avoidance of sensitive environmental features; and, protection and enhancement of the Village's historic buildings and its aesthetic character.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed the draft Plan, presented it to the public, and revised the document based on public comment, and submitted it to the Village Board of Trustees for their consideration.

The third phase of the comprehensive planning process is adoption of the plan. The Village Board is responsible for reviewing the Comprehensive Plan, revising it as necessary, and holding a public hearing to solicit additional public comment. Public hearings have been held, and the plan has been revised. The Comprehensive Plan is also subject to review in accordance with the regulations implementing the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQRA) Act. Once public and environmental review is completed, the Village Board may adopt the Comprehensive Plan.



## II. COMMUNITY VISION

### A. VISION STATEMENT

The Village of Sloatsburg is a small, closely knit, rural woodland community nestled in the foothills of the Highlands that has managed to retain its traditional village character despite the significant population and developmental growth in the region. Many residents have lived in Sloatsburg for generations. This, and Sloatsburg's small geographic size and condensed land use pattern, lend the Village its "small town" character, which is further enhanced by the community spirit engendered by the numerous village activities and programs available to its citizens. The Village benefits from its proximity to major transportation routes, the forested backdrop and recreational opportunities of Sterling Forest and Bear Mountain/Harriman State Parks, its high-quality school district, and its perceived isolation from the metropolitan region. **Sloatsburg desires to protect its existing rural woodland character, while upgrading and enhancing areas that detract from it, specifically, the Route 17 corridor. Growth should occur at a rate and level the Village can absorb without disrupting Sloatsburg's traditional village character.**

### B. SLOATSBURG TODAY

The Village of Sloatsburg is an incorporated village within the Town of Ramapo, Rockland County, New York (refer to **Figure 1**). This 2.5 square mile community is located in the northwestern corner of Ramapo. Most residents express that the Village is isolated from other parts of Ramapo due to a combination of topography and the physical separation created by the New York State Thruway (I-87) and the Ramapo River. This "isolation" has positive attributes, e.g., residents believe that the major development pressures exerted in the Town have bypassed the Village, allowing it to retain areas that are undeveloped. However, isolation has also created certain challenges as well - most Townwide community and commercial services are distant from Sloatsburg and not readily accessible to children, seniors, or other residents who cannot drive.

According to census data, Sloatsburg had a population of 3,117 persons in 2000, a 2.7 percent increase over the past decade. By comparison, Ramapo's population grew by 16 percent and Rockland County by eight percent (8%). This supports the Village's perception that growth has "bypassed" the community.

TABLE I  
VILLAGE, TOWN, AND COUNTY POPULATION

	2000 Population	1990 Population	Percent Increase	Median Age	Household Size	Family Size
Village of Sloatsburg	3,117	3,035	2.7%	37.0	2.91	3.27
Town of Ramapo	108,905	93,861	16.0%	31.6	3.37	3.82
Rockland County	286,753	265,475	8.0%	36.2	3.01	3.47

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Sloatsburg's population has "aged" over the past decade. The median age of a Sloatsburg resident increased from 33.3 years in 1990 to 37 years of age in 2000. The number of persons 35 years of age and older grew significantly, with the largest percent increase occurring in persons 65 years of age and older. While the Village's total population increased, there was almost no change in total number of schoolage children in the Village. The Village's average household and family sizes in Sloatsburg were 2.91 and 3.27 persons, respectively. This represented a slight decline from 1990 levels of 3.04 persons per household and 3.37 persons per family.

The housing stock in the Village has remained relatively stable, as only 36 dwelling units were added between 1990 and 2000, representing a 3.5 percent increase. Townwide, Ramapo's housing stock grew by approximately nine percent (9%).

The Village's impression that much of the residential development activity that occurred in the last decade bypassed the Village and was experienced elsewhere in the Town and County is borne out by census statistics on population and housing. However, development pressures are being exerted on the community presently, and will continue into the foreseeable future.

In terms of land use, approximately 55 percent of the Village is either vacant land, parkland, or open space (refer to **Figure 2**). Approximately 24 percent of Sloatsburg's land area is residential, while 17 percent of the land area is in transportation/utility use (New York State Thruway right-of-way accounts for much of this category). Local commercial (2%), office/industrial (2%), and community services/government (1%) are minor land use categories in the community. With 37 percent of the Village consisting of vacant land, new development could significantly impact Sloatsburg's existing land use pattern.

### **C. COMMUNITY STRENGTHS**

In order for Sloatsburg to preserve its unique character and sense of place, Comprehensive Plan Committee members and residents were surveyed to identify the best attributes of the Village that should be retained and preserved to achieve the Vision for the Village's future. These attributes are as follows:

#### **Population**

- Its people and community spirit. There is a sense of a close-knit small village community who work together and interact cooperatively.

#### **Regional Location**

- It is in close proximity to New York City, West Point, sports arenas, and parkland.
- It is in close proximity to regional shopping and business centers.

### **Natural Resources**

- The Village is surrounded by significant public open space that buffers it from the negative effects of development, e.g., traffic and noise.
- The state and county park system and the presence of the Ramapo River provide significant outdoor recreational opportunities and a visitor base that could assist in stimulating economic development.

### **Community Facilities and Services**

- The presence of its own elementary school strengthens the sense of a close knit community.
- Good, reliable community facilities and services (Village Hall, Library, Public Works, Court, etc.) are available to meet the needs of the community.
- Sloatsburg has a diverse range and number of recreational / community activity programs.
- The Village has an excellent library, recreational programs and senior center to service its residents.
- The Village's government and officials are accessible.

### **Aesthetic Resources**

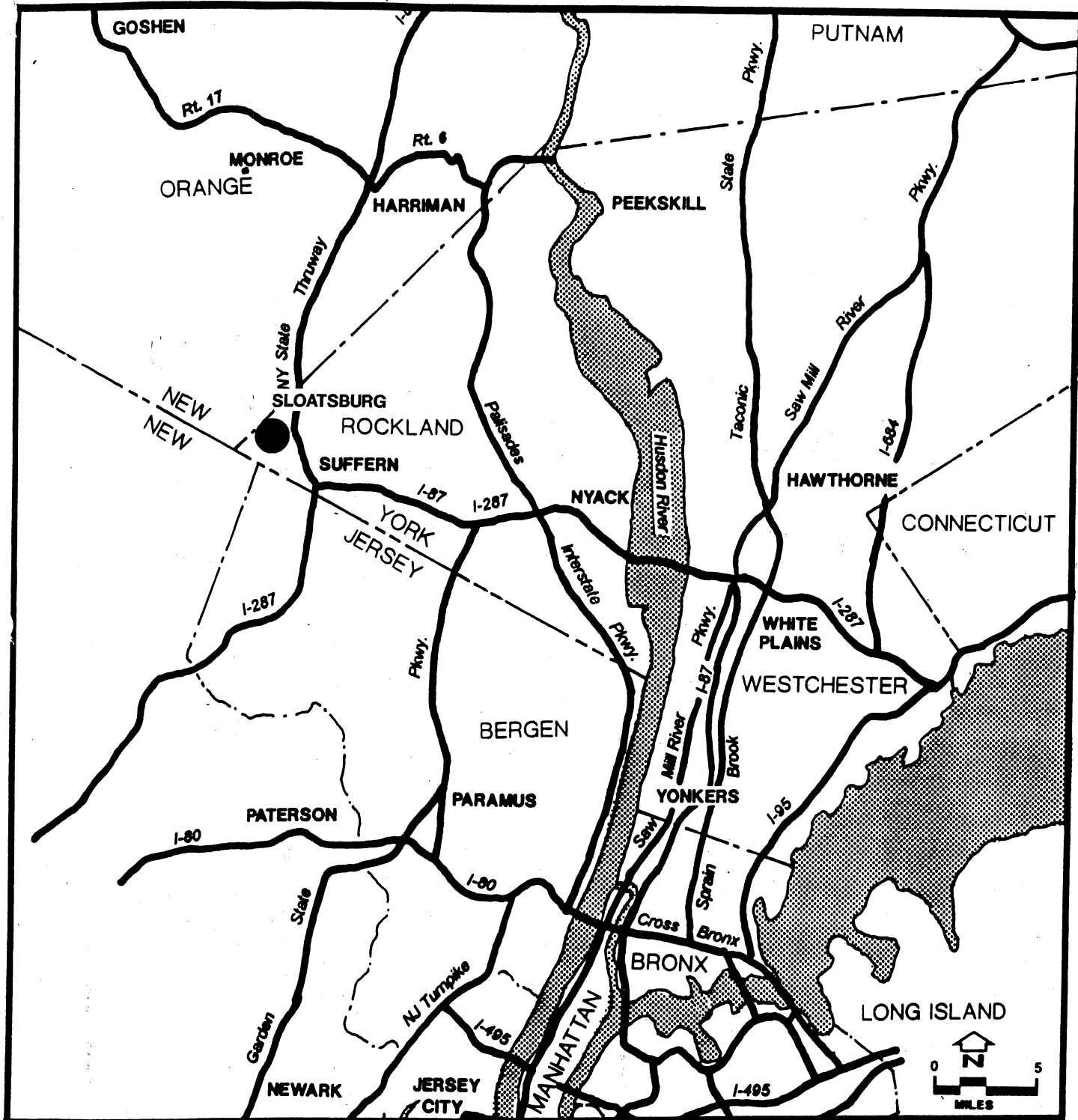
- The community has an attractive woodland, natural environment.
- A traditional village atmosphere is present, represented in the scale of its small buildings and small lot character surrounded by expanses of open space.

### **Transportation**

- The Village is well-served by a mass transit system consisting of bus and rail service to the New York metropolitan region. Mass transit travel has been enhanced by the opening of the Frank Lautenberg Secaucus Junction Station.
- The Village has excellent access to the NYS Thruway, I-287, and Route 17 that connect Sloatsburg to New York metropolitan employment and commercial areas.

### **Housing**

- The Village has historically maintained an affordable housing stock that attracts starter families and allows senior citizens to remain in the community, helping it to retain a diverse population.



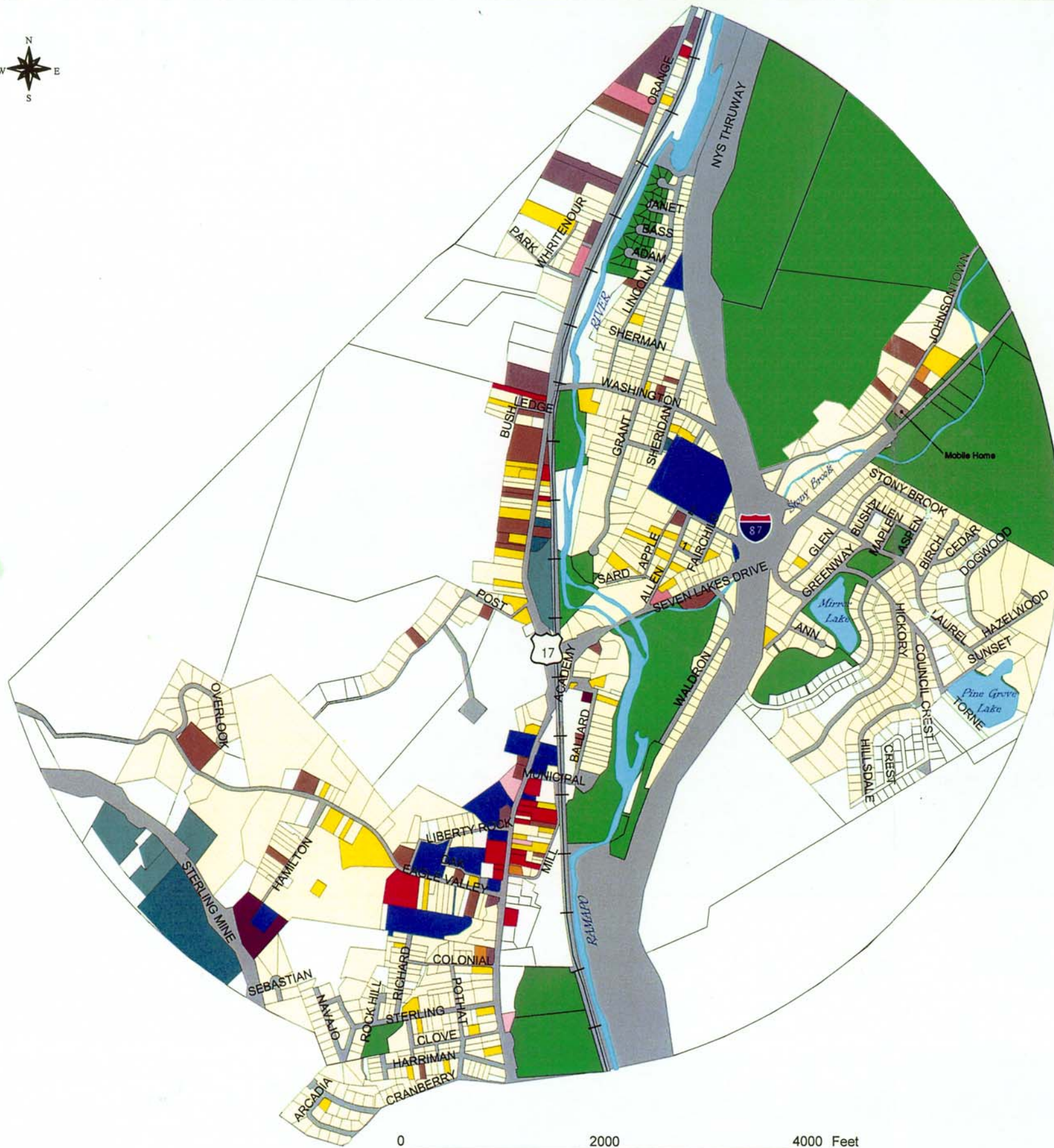
**Figure 1**

Regional Location  
Comprehensive Plan Update

**VILLAGE OF SLOATSBURG  
ROCKLAND COUNTY, NY**

Robert Geneslaw Co.  
Planning and Development Consultants

September 2001



0 2000 4000 Feet

1 Inch = 1200 feet

### Legend

- Lakes, Rivers and Streams
- Single-Family Residential
- Two-Family Residential
- Three-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Local Commercial
- Office
- Eating and Drinking Establishments
- Automotive Related Uses
- Transportation and Utilities
- Light Industrial
- Industrial
- Storage, Warehouse, Distribution
- Community Services
- Parks/Recreation/Open Space
- Vacant

**Figure 2**  
Existing Land Use  
Comprehensive Plan Update

### VILLAGE OF SLOATSBURG ROCKLAND COUNTY, NY

### III. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Comprehensive Plan is based on a set of goals and objectives that will enable the Village of Sloatsburg to achieve its desired land use pattern and maintain its unique sense of community as expressed in the Vision Statement. These goals are value statements that represent the end result if the objectives are followed and implemented. They are consistent with many of the goals expressed in the 1982 Plan, however, the objectives to achieve these goals have been revised and updated.

**LAND USE:** *Guide population growth and development in Sloatsburg in a manner that maintains the Village's rural woodland character and village pattern of development and acknowledges the diverse housing and commercial needs of the community.*

- Establish areas of the Village intended for large lot, single family detached residential development.
- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas as "open space".

#### **ECONOMIC**

**DEVELOPMENT:** *Broaden the Village's tax base and employment opportunities by encouraging the orderly expansion and introduction of nonresidential land uses in a manner consistent with the Village's small-scale character and in appropriate locations based on the nature and potential impacts associated with nonresidential uses.*

- Strengthen the local economy by enhancing the viability of Sloatsburg's central business district.
- Allow limited expansion of nonresidential uses along the Route 17 corridor subject to design guidelines that encourage reuse of existing buildings.

#### **NATURAL**

**RESOURCES:** *Protect the Village's sensitive environmental features and preserve portions of the Village in its "open" natural state.*

- Protect the Ramapo River aquifer by creating a continuous open space system along its length.
- Avoid blasting activities by limiting or prohibiting development in areas with shallow depth to bedrock.
- Protect the wetland and forest ecosystems.
- Protect ridge lines from development.
- Situate development in a pattern that protects meaningful expanses of undisturbed ecological habitat.
- Restrict development on steep slopes.
- Avoid disturbances to watercourses and wetlands, and establish adequate buffers between these resources and adjoining development.

**TRANSPORTATION:** *Provide a safe, adequate, and efficient roadway network that will serve the various types and intensities of traffic generated by the proposed pattern of land use within the Village.*

- Redesign Route 17 to reassert its role as Sloatsburg's "Main Street".
- Calm traffic on Route 17.
- Improve mass transit facilities to be safe and efficient.

**UTILITIES:** *Provide essential infrastructure in existing areas of higher density, village-scale, small-lot development.*

- Promote central sewer service to eliminate potential water quality impacts associated with individual septic systems.
- Promote central sewer service to allow economic development of the central business district (Village Center) in a manner consistent with its existing small lot village character.

## **COMMUNITY**

**FACILITIES:** *Continue to provide and expand, when necessary, existing community facilities that serve the Village community.*

- Expand parking to serve the Village library.
- Expand the passive, linear park along the Ramapo River.

## **HISTORIC**

**RESOURCES:** *Preserve the Village's cultural and historic resources that reinforce its unique identity and sense of place.*

- Protect and revitalize existing historic structures that provide the Village with its sense of place.
- Provide incentives for the adaptive reuse of historically significant buildings by permitting a wider range of uses to occur in historic structures.
- Develop a voluntary recognition program for the Village's historic resources.
- Develop a uniform sign program for identifying historic resources in the community.

## **AESTHETIC**

**RESOURCES:** *Protect the visual quality of Sloatsburg's natural environment and enhance the aesthetic and architectural quality of the buildings, roads, and structures that constitute the Village's "built" environment.*

- Maintain an attractive appearance in the Village, particularly along Route 17, since this road corridor is the primary image that visitors have of Sloatsburg.
- Provide the Planning Board the authority to perform design review for properties within the central business district and located along Route 17.

- Adopt design guidelines for the central business district in order to maintain the small scale and vernacular (or “common”) architectural character of the Village.
- Protect scenic roads.
- Protect scenic ridge lines.
- Retain the forested canopy of the Village’s hillsides to protect its woodland character.



## IV. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS

### A. LAND USE PLAN

This section of the Comprehensive Plan defines the community's preferred pattern of development, and identifies areas that should remain undeveloped and in a natural state.

The Land Use Plan has evolved from consideration of the following:

- The historic and existing land use pattern, which to a large extent influences future development patterns;
- Existing and anticipated demographic trends in the Village and the region, and population growth which exerts demand for housing, commercial services, recreation, and community facilities;
- the natural environment and its sensitivities, including constraints to development created by the presence of steep slopes, freshwater wetlands, flood plains, and sensitive ecological habitat;
- the current and future availability of infrastructure which would service existing and new development, including electricity, water supply, wastewater treatment capacity, and transportation facilities; and,
- the citizen's preferences, as expressed in the Sloatsburg public opinion survey.

The Land Use Plan reflects citizen preferences that were expressed in a 2000 Public Opinion Survey. Preferences include:

- 60 percent of respondents support an increase in the non-residential tax base of the community;
- 64 percent believe that commercial development should be supported along Route 17;
- Respondents would like to see the following non-residential uses encouraged:
  - Shopping/Retail (64%)
  - Offices (51%)
  - Health/Medical Services (50%)
  - Light Industry (34%)
  - Tourist-related uses (29%)
- With regard to residential uses, the Village would like to see the following encouraged:
  - Single family dwellings on large lots (69%)
  - Senior citizen housing (51%)
  - Single family dwellings on small lots (47%)
  - A smaller percentage support townhouses (23%) and accessory apartments (19%)
  - Approximately one-third of the respondents expressed that there is a shortage of housing for first time homebuyers and retirees. Forty-seven percent opined that \$150,-200,000 represents an "affordable housing" value range.
- Respondents also identified environmental and other landscape features that should be preserved:

- The Ramapo River corridor should be acquired for park use/environmental protection (72%)
- Stream/river corridors (79%), scenic beauty (78%), historic buildings (76%), forests (70%), trees along roads (66%), scenic roads and wetlands (62%), and stone walls (58%) are landscape features to preserve.
- 82 percent of respondents believe it is important for developers to set aside open space in new developments, suggesting there is strong support for “cluster type” development (this will be explained in greater detail below).

These preferences have guided the development of this Land Use Plan. The Land Use Plan describes the existing and proposed location and intensity of land uses in the Village. **Figure 3** illustrates ten (10) general land use areas:

<i>Mixed Use Areas:</i>	Village Center Neighborhood Retail/Commercial Limited Commercial/Residential
<i>Residential Areas:</i>	Village Residential Suburban Residential Rural Residential Open Space Residential
<i>Non-Residential Areas:</i>	Light Industrial/Office Park Office/Limited Commercial
<i>Other:</i>	Open Space and Recreation

The following narrative describes each planning area and the types of land uses contemplated within each area. The list of land uses is not exhaustive, but representative of each planning area. Specific land uses and bulk standards will be identified during the zoning process.

### **I. Village Center**

The Village of Sloatsburg has a traditional, mixed use center which straddles Orange Turnpike (Route 17). Traditional villages are characterized by a center, or downtown, that extends approximately 1,000-1,500 feet along and outward from a main road. Sloatsburg’s center is slightly longer, extending from the methodist church just north of the Village Hall to Eagle Valley Road’s intersection with Orange Turnpike (Route 17). The Village’s downtown is elongated since its expansion has been constricted by the existing rail right-of-way to the east and bedrock outcrop to the west (Whispering Valley property). The Village Hall “anchors” the north end of the Village Center, and the post office anchors the south end.

The Village Center is the “heart” or main commercial and social activity area in the Village. The Land Use Plan envisions a mix of commercial, residential, governmental and office uses in this planning area. The Village Center will continue to have a compact, small lot pattern

of development that concentrates uses and encourages pedestrian activity. The Metro-North rail stop located in the Village Center is an important physical attribute important to its long-term viability and growth. Commuters may be induced to shop within the center to meet daily shopping needs. Long-term, residential development may be induced within the Village Center by proximity to a rail connection that provides transportation opportunities to future residents employed in Manhattan or other employment centers in the metropolitan region south of Sloatsburg.

By planning standards, a village center should typically have approximately 25 square feet of retail space per dwelling unit, and 0.75-1.75 jobs per dwelling unit (at 200 square feet of building space per job). According to these standards, and with a Village total of 1,078 housing units in 2000, the Village Center should support approximately 27,000 square feet of retail space, and 162,000 gross floor area of employment space. The Village's primary retail building (which contains a mini-mart) provides approximately 10,500 square feet of retail/commercial space. Other commercial space in the Village Center includes a bank, a hardware store, restaurant, insurance agency, barbershop, and take-out food establishments. The center does not currently support significant office or other business uses. Most residents work outside of the Village (only 6 percent surveyed worked in the Village), and the majority shop outside the Village in Bergen County, NJ, and elsewhere in Rockland County.

With future residential development in the Village, and growth in the adjoining Town of Tuxedo, there may be future demand for commercial services in the Village Center. In addition, once traffic-calming measures are implemented, the Village Center will become more attractive to potential patrons and employees. Additional residential development within the Village Center itself might also provide a market for commercial development. Clearly, the citizen preferences indicate that there is not sufficient diversity in Sloatsburg to meet its local commercial needs.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends expansion of shopping, employment and housing opportunities within the Village Center area by enlarging the area that might accommodate mixed use development during the rezoning process. The Village Center is presently zoned B-1 (Local Business), B-3 (Regional Shopping), and IP (Industrial Park). While the B-1 districts allows a mix of uses, the IP zone only permits light industrial uses, and the B-3 district only permits a regional shopping center. The Land Use Plan proposes that the B-1 zoning district or future zone that encompasses the area of the B-1 district be extended to include property currently zoned IP. This zone should also include the properties currently zoned R-40 to the north of Village Hall, i.e., the methodist church and several single family parcels. The Village Center should also include several properties zoned IP and R-10 which are located to the south of Eagle Valley Road and along Orange Turnpike.

The Village is contemplating the following land uses for this planning area. The uses may be allowed either as permitted or special permit uses. These uses include but are not limited to:

- Retail uses, including clothing, stationery and variety stores
- Grocery store, pharmacy
- Personal service uses, including hair and nail salons, barber shops, dry cleaners, laundromat, repair shops (non-automotive)
- Banks
- Business, medical and professional offices
- Standard restaurants, drinking places, ice cream stands, take out food establishments, delis (no drive throughs), sidewalk cafes.
- Owner-occupied and operated bed and breakfast
- Art galleries, museums, craft studios
- Community services and facilities, including library, senior center, governmental offices, and fire protection services, schools
- Places of worship and educational uses
- One-family, two-family, three-family, and multifamily dwellings (minimum dwelling unit size of 900 square feet).
- Mixed use residential/commercial development in existing structures, where residential use is on the upper floor of the structure and commercial uses are located on the ground floor.
- Dance, art, music, performing art studios
- Social clubs
- Woodworking, cabinet making, pottery and other custom work
- Animal hospital/veterinarian, provided there is no outdoor overnight accommodation of animals
- Day care center
- Printing press
- Movie theater
- Nursery and garden center
- Farmer's market
- Municipal parking lot

The floor area of commercial space will be limited to preclude "big-box" retail development within the Village Center. Existing automotive repair uses and gasoline filling stations will be allowed to continue. However, the Comprehensive Plan does not encourage further expansion of these uses in the Village Center. Existing properties in the Village Center are not large enough to store motor vehicles without having a negative visual impact on the aesthetic character of the Village Center. These uses are not conducive to the pedestrian friendly environment that the Village is trying to restore.

Within the Village Center is a large vacant property known as the "Oakbrook Shopping Center" site. It is an 11.4-acre parcel in the downtown district that is located in the 100-year flood plain. Currently, it is zoned B-3, Regional Shopping. The district does not permit any use by right, but allows "designed shopping centers" as a special use subject to Planning Board approval. The Comprehensive Plan includes this parcel in the Village Center planning area and proposes that it be developed for a new multiple use development. Instead of developing the site for conventional strip retail development, the Plan

recommends that retail uses be encouraged on the ground floor, and office uses on the upper stories. Limited senior citizen (55 and over) housing (no more than 30 dwelling units) could be constructed at the northerly end of the property. The development would be situated on a "Village Common", and village streets with on-street parking would be extended into the property, rather than developing large parking lots. This would accomplish two objectives:

- The Village would allow expansion of commercial uses within the Village Center, but its design would be more consistent with the existing pattern of buildings.
- The Village would encourage limited new senior housing opportunities as part of a village style development that would appeal to rail or bus commuters. The new housing would also enliven the Village Center and provide an alternative option to the Village housing mix without affecting existing residential neighborhoods.

In general, the current bulk standards for the B-1 district are adequate. Maximum height standards should be maintained at the current building height of 2.5 stories or 35 feet. The Village envisions two stories of "usable" floor area space developed for a combination of nonresidential uses. The additional ½-story would permit a gabled roof, or loft space to be integrated into nonresidential space.

It is recommended that the multiple use development include a "green" or similar public outdoor gathering space. This space may be used for a memorial park and may include a band shell or other amenity. It could also include a small pond or other water feature, especially if stormwater detention is required. The exact layout would be determined at the time of a site plan application.

In addition, development in the Village Center would be reviewed in accordance with specific design guidelines. These design guidelines are outlined in a separate plan document entitled "Central Business District Study" prepared by Burgis Associates. The Comprehensive Plan intends that the District Study be adopted as a standalone element of the Comprehensive Plan.

## **2. Neighborhood Retail/Commercial**

The Neighborhood Retail area is intended to support a small retail base in the upper Village to support the local retail needs of existing and future upper Village residents. It is anticipated that potential future development of the vacant properties to the west of Route 17 would create demand for commercial uses. Uses in the Neighborhood Retail area are more limited than those permitted in the Village Center in order to avoid competition and weakening of the market demand in the Village Center. The Village is contemplating the following land uses for this planning area. The uses may be allowed either as permitted or special permit uses. These uses include but are not limited to:

- One-family detached dwellings (one dwelling unit per 10,000-15,000 square feet)
- Two-family dwelling (up and down living arrangement)
- Multifamily dwelling (limited to four dwellings per building, and dwellings no less than 900 square feet gross floor area, subject to design standards)
- Stand alone restaurant (drive-through not permitted), deli, drinking establishment
- Garden nursery
- Antique, book shop
- Farm market/stand
- Municipal parks
- Day care center
- Pre-existing automotive sales and repair
- Wholesale business, provided inventory and business commercial vehicles are located in completely enclosed building ( on a larger lot than other proposed uses)

### **3. Limited Commercial-Residential**

The Limited Commercial-Residential planning area includes properties that have frontage on Route 17 and sufficient lot size and depth to support accessory parking facilities for a limited range of commercial uses. The objective for this planning area is to increase employment opportunities in the Village as well as support uses which might encourage tourist trade. The planning area would also continue to allow residential uses at the same density as the "Suburban Residential" planning area. This planning area would allow the conversion of existing residential structures to commercial use; it is not the Village's intent to encourage demolition of these buildings as they help maintain the Village's existing character. The Village is contemplating the following land uses for this planning area. The uses may be allowed either as permitted or special permit uses. These uses include but are not limited to:

- One-family detached dwellings (one dwelling unit per 10,000-15,000 square feet)
- Two-family dwelling (up and down living arrangement)
- Multifamily dwelling (limited to four dwellings per building, and dwellings no less than 900 square feet gross floor area, subject to design standards)
- Business, medical, and professional offices
- Stand alone restaurant (drive-through not permitted, non-takeout)
- Antique shop, book shop
- Art, music, performing arts studio
- Mixed use, consisting of dwellings above nonresidential uses permitted within this planning area, except animal hospital/veterinarian and day-care center
- Arts and crafts studio and retail, including pottery making, woodworking, etc.
- Bed and breakfast/country inn
- Municipal park
- Places of worship and educational uses
- Day care center
- Funeral parlor

#### **4. Village Residential**

The Village Residential planning area includes existing residential neighborhoods that accommodate medium-high density (one dwelling per 7,500-10,000 square feet) residential uses. This planning area includes residential neighborhoods such as the “Flats”, Pine Grove, and the Washington Avenue neighborhoods. The Village is contemplating the following land uses for this planning area. The uses may be allowed either as permitted or special permit uses. These uses include but are not limited to:

- One-family detached dwellings (one dwelling unit per 7,500-10,000 square feet)
- Two-family dwelling (up and down living arrangement)
- Existing places of worship and public elementary school
- Municipal playgrounds
- Places of worship and educational uses
- Community facilities and services, such as ambulance services
- Day care center
- Funeral parlor

#### **5. Suburban Residential**

The Suburban Residential planning area includes existing residential neighborhoods that accommodate medium density (one dwelling per 15,000-30,000 square feet) residential uses. The planning area also includes vacant properties within these neighborhoods that can accommodate additional residential development.

Cluster development would be allowed within the Suburban Residential area. Generally, a cluster development permits an alternative configuration and design of lots, buildings, structures, roads, utility lines, parks, etc., in comparison to the layout which might result from a conventional subdivision layout meeting the minimum lot size and density requirements applicable to the district in which the development is situated. **IN NO CASE SHALL** a cluster development result in a permitted number of building lots or dwelling units which exceeds the number which would have been permitted in the conventional layout. Therefore, if a conventional subdivision results in the platting of 50 single-family lots, a cluster subdivision shall not permit more than 50 dwellings. However, a smaller lot size, or a different housing type may be permitted at the discretion of the Planning Board.

The Village is contemplating the following land uses for this planning area. The uses may be allowed either as permitted or special permit uses. These uses include but are not limited to:

- One-family detached dwellings (one dwelling unit per 15,000-30,000 square feet)
- One-family detached or attached dwellings as part of a cluster subdivision
- Passive parkland
- Horse Farm/dude ranch
- Bed and breakfast/country inn

- Places of worship and educational uses
- Day care center/nursery
- Village governmental administration and services

## **6. Rural Residential**

The Rural Residential planning area consists primarily of vacant land intended for low-density (one dwelling unit per 1 acre) residential uses. These areas represent locations that are more distant from the services available in the Village Center, where roads are inadequate to accommodate significant amounts of traffic volume, or where environmental features constrain higher densities of residential development. Single-family detached dwellings are encouraged for this area. The Rural Residential planning area applies to existing low density residential neighborhoods, as well as several undeveloped properties located on the west side of Route 17. The Village is contemplating the following land uses for this planning area. The uses may be allowed either as permitted or special permit uses. These uses include but are not limited to:

- One-family detached dwellings (one dwelling unit per 40,000 square feet)
- One-family detached dwellings on small lots (minimum of 10,000 square feet) as part of a cluster subdivision (with no increase in lot count over conventional subdivision)
- Passive parkland
- Bed and Breakfast/country inn/low impact resort with accessory recreational facilities
- Horse farm/dude ranch
- Places of worship and educational uses

## **7. Open Space Residential**

The Open Space-Residential planning area consists primarily of vacant land intended to accommodate very low density (one dwelling unit per 2 acres) residential uses and open space. This planning area applies to areas on the easterly side of the New York State Thruway. Steep slopes make it difficult for these properties to support higher density residential uses. In addition, existing Village roads are not designed to handle significant increases in traffic volume generated from development. A particular concern is that all traffic on the easterly side of the Village relies primarily on the Seven Lakes Drive/Route 17 intersection to access the Village Center and regional employment destinations; the ability of this intersection to accommodate significant increases in traffic volume is limited.

The Village desires to see these properties acquired for open space. The Village is contemplating the following land uses for this planning area. The uses may be allowed either as permitted or special permit uses. These uses include but are not limited to:

- One-family detached dwellings (one dwelling unit per 80,000 square feet)
- One-family detached dwellings on small lots (minimum of 10,000 square feet) as part of a cluster subdivision (with no increase in lot count over conventional subdivision)
- Passive parkland



- Country inn/bed and breakfast/low impact resort with accessory outdoor recreation facilities
- Horse farm/dude ranch
- Places of worship and educational uses

### **8. Light Industrial/Office Park**

The Land Use Plan proposes to eliminate light industrial use zoning from Route 17 properties. The existing light industrial/general commercial area along Sterling Mine Road will continue to allow light industrial uses. The Light Industrial/Office Park area coincides largely with existing IP zoning district boundaries. The Village is contemplating the following land uses for this planning area. The uses may be allowed either as permitted or special permit uses. These uses include but are not limited to:

- Light manufacturing, assembly, processing, packaging
- Distribution facility
- Wholesale retail business
- Warehousing and storage
- Professional and business offices
- Contractor storage yard
- Automotive and mechanical equipment repair
- Garden nurseries
- Sit down (non fast-food) restaurant

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the performance standards for uses allowed within this district be strengthened to protect abutting residential properties. Standards would include more stringent guidelines for reducing the impacts associated with noise, air quality, odor, screening and buffering, and glare.

### **9. Office/Limited Commercial**

This planning area is limited to several properties located at the northeast quadrant of Route 17's intersection with Seven Lakes Drive. These parcels should be retained for nonresidential use (corner property is currently zoned IP), however, the Plan does not favor industrial uses in this location. The Village is contemplating the following land uses for this planning area. The uses may be allowed either as permitted or special permit uses. These uses include but are not limited to:

- Wholesale business, provided inventory and business commercial vehicles are located in a completely enclosed building
- Professional and business offices
- Garden nurseries, landscape contractor yard
- Masonry supply

## **10. Open Space and Recreation**

This planning area includes all publicly-owned properties that are vacant, being used, or intended for use as public parkland. In addition, the Land Use Plan identifies several privately-owned parcels along the Ramapo River which should be acquired for open space or passive parkland uses. This planning area also includes areas with active recreational facilities. When translated to zoning, any privately-owned parcels would be allowed to be developed at the same density as the Open Space Residential planning area.



## **B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **I. Central Business District Expansion**

The Comprehensive Plan intends to promote economic development within the community by expanding the geographic extent of the existing central business district. The land use plan identifies this expanded central business district as the "Village Center." A number of other improvements should be considered to aid in the revitalization of the central business district:

- Wherever, possible, there should be a network of sidewalks to support a safe and effective pedestrian environment. As the central business district expands, additional streets, e.g., Mill Street, will require this infrastructure. Attractive pedestrian connections are required between commuter/shopping parking facilities and adjoining streets.
- The Village, through appropriate design guidelines, needs to create a unified theme to the central business district. Signs, for example, should have a similar aesthetic quality and character that enhance the Village Center visually. New signs in the central business district could be required to be wood with "gold-leaf" lettering.
- Directional signs to municipal parking areas should be installed to guide visitors to appropriate public parking areas or facilities intended to attract visitors, e.g., the Ramapo River Trail.
- The Village should consider allowing increases in density or intensity of use where certain Village amenities are integrated into new development, e.g., a small pocket park with benches.
- Decorative street lighting should be installed to unify the central business district visually.

Design guidelines will be implemented through adoption of a separate report entitled "Central Business District Study" prepared by Burgis Associates.

### **2. Route 17 corridor**

The Comprehensive Plan proposes to allow nonresidential uses along Route 17 to allow for expansion of the Village's ratable base. However, the Comprehensive Plan specifically acknowledges that the majority of properties north of Seven Lakes Drive are in residential use and the introduction of businesses must ensure that there are no deleterious impacts to existing residences. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan recommends that the existing character of the corridor be retained. Zoning revisions should encourage or require that the conversion of a structure to nonresidential use be allowed only where it will result in the preservation of the existing character of the residential buildings along this corridor. Like the Village Center, design guidelines should be implemented to create a unified theme along the corridor, including standards for exterior façade materials, signs and lighting.

## C. NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resources (e.g., geology, topography and soils) are an important determinant of the Village's land use pattern. Early settlers to Sloatsburg established themselves in close proximity to the Ramapo River in areas with sandy gravelly soils since these soils presented minimal constraints to development. Over the years, as vacant land has dwindled, and as building technology and construction practices have advanced, marginally developable land, e.g., those with shallow bedrock or steep topography, are now being subjected to development.

It is the Village's goal to protect its important natural resources. The Village desires to control development and intensity in a manner that limits its impact to Sloatsburg's natural resources (refer to **Figure 4**). The following objectives have been identified to achieve this goal.

### I. Ramapo River and Aquifer

The primary surface water and groundwater resource in Sloatsburg is the Ramapo River and the Ramapo River Basin aquifer (refer to **Figure 5**). The aquifer is a valley-fill aquifer composed of unconsolidated sand and gravel with some silt and clay. All land within the Village drains to the Ramapo River. Flow from upland drainage areas recharges the aquifer in three ways:

- runoff may enter tributary streams, e.g., Nakoma Brook or Stony Brook, which then drain to the Ramapo River and its aquifer;
- runoff drains directly to the aquifer area, which then directly recharges the water table due to the high permeability of the soils;
- runoff may enter bedrock in the highlands, which ultimately recharges the aquifer.

United Water New York maintains wells downstream of the Village within the aquifer area. The Ramapo River Basin Aquifer is a designated a sole-source aquifer by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), Public Law 93-523, of December 16, 1974, contains a provision in Section 1424(e), which states that:

*"If the Administrator [of the USEPA] determines, on his own initiative or upon petition, that an area has an aquifer which is the sole or principal drinking water source for the area and which, if contaminated, would create significant hazard to public health, he shall publish notice of that determination in the Federal Register. After the publication of any such notice, no commitment for federal financial assistance (through a grant, contract, loan guarantee, or otherwise) may be entered into for any project which the Administrator determines may contaminate such aquifer through a recharge zone so as to create a significant hazard to public health, but a commitment for Federal financial assistance may, if authorized under another provision of law, be entered into to plan or design the project to assure that it will not so contaminate the aquifer."*

While designation of the Ramapo River Aquifer provides some protection from federal activities, it does not protect it from activities conducted at a local level that might be detrimental to this resource.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), in accordance with Article 15, Title 27 of the Environmental Conservation Law, has designated the Ramapo River as a “recreational” river. This designation prohibits any alteration to the natural flow of the river via damming, filling, etc., except for the purpose of managing fisheries. It also regulates land uses that may be built on properties located within the Recreational River Corridor Boundary (**refer to Figure 6**).

Uses permitted by NYSDEC within the corridor are all agricultural uses, forest management pursuant to forest management standards, public recreation, limited residential expansions, public roads, bridges, and utilities. NYSDEC requires permit approval for water diversions, impoundments, withdrawals, water-dependent uses that will alter the natural flow of the river, residences, docks, boathouses, fences, stream improvements for fishery management, some public roads, trails, and bridges, private wells, private septic facilities, signs and some public utilities. Uses prohibited by NYSDEC are waste treatment, storage, or disposal; forest management roads within 150 feet of the river; private dwellings within 150 feet of the river or in the 100-year floodplain; and modification of the waterway by impoundment, diversion, rip-rap, bulkheads, etc.

In order to protect the river and aquifer, the following is recommended:

- The Village should work cooperatively with the County and New York State to acquire land or easements along both sides of the riverbanks.
- Where property is not acquired, the Village should establish a 100-foot buffer along each side of the riverbank within which buildings, grading or filling will be limited. The buffer would be in addition to that area regulated as part of the Ramapo Recreational River.
- The Village should consider designating the Ramapo River and/or the aquifer a critical environmental area (CEA) as defined by the regulations implementing the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act. Actions affecting areas that are designated CEAs are scrutinized more closely to determine their potential impact on the CEAs qualities and characteristics.
- In establishing a list of land uses that are appropriate in the community, the Village should limit land uses involving substances or chemicals that could potentially impact the aquifer.
- The site plan and subdivision regulations should be amended to require the installation of water quality devices to reduce potential pollutant loading to the river and aquifer.

## **2. Bedrock Disturbance**

Sloatsburg is located within the Hudson Highlands, a part of the New England Upland physiographic province, which is characterized by a series of northeast-southwest trending

hills separated by narrow valleys. These narrow valleys are filled with glacial till and mountain tops have been scoured by glacial movement resulting in the exposure of bedrock outcrop, composed mostly of metamorphic rock. The Village of Sloatsburg is underlain by quartz plagioclase gneiss with associated minerals and interlayered amphibolite, hornblende gneiss. Gneiss is coarse-grained, imperfectly layered metamorphic rock characterized by alternating dark and light bands that differ in mineral content. Gneiss results from the metamorphism of many igneous or sedimentary rocks and is the most common types of rock found in Precambrian<sup>1</sup> regions. The Village's moderate relief is a reflection of the erosion resistant Precambrian gneisses that underlay the region.

During the SEQRA review of recent development applications, it has become evident that blasting may be necessary in locations to make land developable for roads and buildings. Blasting activities, when not properly controlled and regulated, can have a significant negative impact on adjoining buildings and infrastructure. The Village should limit the amount of blasting allowed in association with new development, and should establish standards to regulate blasting activities where they cannot be avoided. In order to achieve this objective, the following should be considered:

- The Village should adopt a local law regulating blasting activities. Any person proposing to conduct blasting activities should secure a permit from the Village.
- The site plan and subdivision regulations should include the ability of the Planning Board to limit the amount of disturbance to bedrock where it would result in significant bedrock disturbance.
- The Planning Board should be authorized to require "terrain adaptive" housing in areas constrained by bedrock.
- The Planning Board, as part of site plan and subdivision review, should be authorized to require landscaping to mitigate the visual impact of significant cuts and fills.
- The site plan and subdivision regulations should be amended to include design standards for retaining walls.

### **3. Streams and Wetlands**

#### **Streams**

Streams within Sloatsburg provide a variety of benefits including: flood storage and retention, aquifer recharge, habitat for fish and wildlife, and recreation and open space. Visually, water bodies and watercourses add to the community's aesthetic quality and can enhance property values.

The NYSDEC has classified most of the streams in the state according to their specified "best use." This designation is based upon such factors as stream flow, water quality and adjacent land uses. Past, present and possible future uses of each lake, stream or pond are also

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<sup>1</sup> Precambrian time is the oldest and largest division of geologic time, which includes the first two eons of geologic time, the archaean and the proterozoic. This period began with the formation of the earth and concluded with the appearance of primitive forms of life.

considered. The designation means that water quality standards must be protected in order to maintain the best use classification, so surrounding land uses must be planned accordingly.

The NYSDEC stream classifications and best uses are described below. Each class includes all uses for lower classes as well, so that a Class “A” stream is considered suitable for drinking, swimming, fish propagation and fishing. A designation of (t) following any letter indicates that the stream is suitable for trout habitat, while (ts) would indicate suitability for trout spawning.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Best Water Use</u>
AA and A	Drinking and All Other Uses
B	Swimming
C	Fish Propagation
D	Fishing

**Figure 6** illustrates the locations of NYSDEC-classified streams within the Village. The Ramapo River is designated Class “A(t)”. Nakoma Brook and Stony Brook (west of the NYS Thruway overpass) are designated “B”. The Ramapo River tributary which feeds the Ramapo River in the vicinity of Park Avenue is designated “C”, and Stony Brook (east of the NYS Thruway) is designated “C(t)”. Note that there are other intermittent streams located in the Village; those not identified or classified on NYSDEC stream maps are classified “D” streams.

An important objective in stream protection is to preserve the natural character and vegetation of the stream to decrease runoff velocities, reduce erosion, and protect water quality. Title 5, Article 15 of the NYS Environmental Conservation Law, with associated regulations (6 NYCRR Part 608), establish and implement a state policy to preserve and protect lakes, rivers, streams and ponds. Three different categories of activity are regulated by NYSDEC:

- disturbance to the bed or banks of a protected stream, defined as a stream classified “C(t)” or better;
- construction and maintenance of dams;
- excavation and/or filling of navigable waters.

These activities, with certain exemptions, require a permit from NYSDEC. The bed or bank of a protected stream is considered the area below the mean high water as well as the area immediately adjacent to the watercourse that is not in excess of 50 feet, measured horizontally, from the mean high water line. These regulations do not protect streams that are designated “D”. In addition, depending on the proposed development activity, 50 feet is not necessarily considered adequate for purposes of stream protection.

### **Wetlands**

Wetlands are important resources in any community as they assist in maintaining water quality. Hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation help to remove contaminants from the water through involved chemical processes. These plants also help to re-oxygenate the water and provide an area that filters sediment from streams and rivers which slows erosion. Wetlands temporarily store water, protecting downstream areas from flooding. Wetlands



may help to recharge aquifers. As undeveloped land, wetlands provide an aesthetic resource as open space.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is an agency that has federal regulatory jurisdiction over wetlands. The Corps' defines wetlands as follows:

*"Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas."*

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), United States Department of the Interior, is responsible for preparing National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps that illustrate potential locations of wetlands; these locations are shown on **Figure 4**.

In New York State, wetlands are also protected and regulated by the NYSDEC. The NYSDEC is responsible for mapping and regulating activities that occur in or within 100 feet adjacent to a freshwater wetland. Generally, NYSDEC-regulated wetlands are a minimum of 12.4 acres in size (refer to **Figure 4**). The NYSDEC defines wetlands as:

*"Wetland means those areas of the state that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support the growth of hydrophytic vegetation. They include the lands and water of the state that support a preponderance of hydrophytic vegetation and also support other wetlands indicators [hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology]. The protection and conservation of wetlands is of community concern because of the benefits they provide: flood and storm water control; wildlife habitat; water supply; water quality; fisheries; food chains; recreation; open space and aesthetic appreciation; and education and scientific research. The preservation of wetlands includes avoiding their disturbance for development; where such disturbance cannot be avoided, mitigation in the form of wetland creation to replace lost wetland acreage on a 2:1 basis is often required by regulatory agencies."*

State wetlands are classified I, II, III or IV depending on the prevalence of one or more of 43 wetland characteristics. While all wetlands have value, Class I and II wetlands are considered more valuable than Class III and IV wetlands. In Sloatsburg, Delaney Swamp is designated SL-I (Class III) and the Nakoma Brook is designated SL-7 (Class II).

Since the initial review of this Comprehensive Plan in 2003, the Village has adopted a local law to regulate disturbances to freshwater wetlands, and relies on the ACOE and NYSDEC regulatory programs to protect wetlands. The local law will be incorporated into the zoning regulations.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends:

- The zoning local law's "purposes" section should specifically require that property owners avoid disturbances to wetlands and streams.
- Incorporate freshwater wetland and stream protection regulations into the zoning local law.

- Review the permitting program for activities that occur within the wetland, stream or an associated buffer area.
- Protect streams that may be classified “D” and establish a minimum 25-foot buffer area adjacent to “D” streams and intermittent streams.
- As a design standard in the site plan and subdivision regulations, require development to preserve wetlands and stream courses in their natural state.

#### **4. Ecological habitat**

##### **Habitat Systems**

The Village of Sloatsburg is located in the New York-New Jersey Highlands area. Its woodland areas are primarily hardwood forests dominated by oak, ash, and hickory. The following ecological communities are likely to be present in the Village:<sup>2</sup>

- **Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest:** This hardwood community is the predominate type in the Village. It is dominated by mixed varieties of oak species with varying percentages of hickory, ash, maple, and other hardwoods. This community occurs on well-drained sites, often near ridge tops, upper slopes, and on the tops and slopes of lower hills. Species associated with this community include but are not limited to: bear, deer, vole, mice, shrew, long-tailed weasel, squirrel and chipmunk, Coopers hawk, broad-winged hawk, great horned owl, turkey, grouse, woodpecker, several species of passerine birds (warbler, vireo, thrush, nuthatch, tanager, kinglet, flycatcher, and sparrow), several species of salamanders (slimy, red-backed, marbled and spotted), wood frog, wood turtle, box turtle, northern ring-necked snake, black racer, black rat snake, copperhead, and timber rattlesnake.
- **Chestnut Oak Forest:** This hardwood forest occurs on well drained sites in glaciated locations with exposed rock areas. It is most often found on mid-elevation slopes and ridge tops. Dominant vegetation includes chestnut oak and a mix of other oak species and some maple. The American chestnut was once a common species in the community; now only sprouts occur. The shrub layer is usually ericaceous species, including mountain laurel. Blueberry and huckleberry are common associated shrubs. Many wildlife species inhabiting the Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest inhabit the chestnut oak forests.
- **Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest:** This mixed forest occurs on mid-elevation slopes (favoring west to north-facing slopes), in ravines, and on the margins of wet areas. Hemlock makes up from 20 to 100 percent of the canopy. Co-dominant species include beech, maple, cherry, birch, pine, basswood, and oak. The shrub layer is usually sparse because of the dense canopy. Wildlife species in this forest community include black bear, short-tail shrew, small-footed bat, blackburnian

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<sup>2</sup> Ecological habitat information is taken from Sterling Forest Community Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement, 1995. Sterling Forest property analyzed in the DGEIS borders the Village of Sloatsburg.

warbler, hermit thrush, ovenbird, black-throated great warbler, solitary vireo, veery, brown creeper, black-capped chickadee, chipping sparrow, slimy salamander, red-spotted newt, northern red belly snake, and eastern worm snake.

- Pitch Pine-Oak-Heath Rocky Summit: This barren woodland community occurs on high ridge tops and summits that have been scraped to bedrock by the last glacier. Vegetation is sparse and patchy with many outcrops. Dominant vegetation includes pitch pine, chestnut oak, scrub oak, blueberry, and huckleberry, with areas of grass and sedge. Wildlife within this community include small mammals (rabbits, squirrels, mice, and voles), towhee, catbird, prairie warbler, indigo bunting, great crested flycatcher, black-capped chickadee, tufted titmouse, chestnut-sided warbler, northern flicker, and downy woodpecker, black racer, northern copperhead, and five-lined skink.
- Acidic Talus Slope Woodland: This community would occur as microhabitats within the other hardwood forest communities. Talus slopes occur at the bases of noncalcareous cliff communities where fragmented and broken rocks have fallen to create a layer of talus over existing soils. The tree canopy can vary from open to closed. Characteristic trees include oaks, maple, ash and hickory. The shrub layer is light – vines and poison ivy are common. Mosses and ferns are usually common under a closed canopy. Characteristic species include black bear, raccoon, mice, vole, shrew, chipmunk, squirrel, turkey vulture, great crested flycatcher, several species of warbler, vireo, timber rattlesnake, copperhead, black rat snake, black racer, five-lined skink, slimy and red-backed salamanders, and wood frog. When occurring on southern or southwestern exposure, this microhabitat is preferred as den sites by timber rattlesnake.
- Successional Field: This habitat has previously been disturbed but which has been abandoned and is now converting back to woodland habitat. Shrubs include multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle, and sumac. Herbaceous species include moth mullein, tall goldenrod, evening primrose, Deptford pink, grass-leaved goldenrod, old field cinquefoil, wild strawberry, path rush, deertongue grass, and timothy grass.
- Wetlands: As described previously, a variety of freshwater wetland habitats are located throughout the Village.

These habitats are capable of supporting the following species listed by New York State as rare, endangered, threatened, or species of special concern:

- Eastern woodrat (endangered)
- Small-footed bat (special concern)
- Barn owl (special concern)
- Peregrine falcon (endangered)
- Red-shouldered hawk (threatened)
- Osprey (threatened)
- Cooper's Hawk (special concern)

- Eastern bluebird (special concern)
- Timber rattlesnake (threatened)
- Eastern hognose snake (special concern)
- Eastern worm snake (special concern)
- Spotted turtle (special concern)
- Wood turtle (special concern)
- Northern cricket frog (threatened)
- Spotted salamander (special concern)
- Southern leopard frog (special concern)

The presence of significant species or sensitive habitat on a vacant parcel remains unknown until an applicant proposes to develop it. As part of the SEQRA review process, the Planning Board or other lead agency can require that a biodiversity study be conducted to determine the types of habitat present on-site and the species likely to utilize it. To the extent that significant species have been identified or are likely to be present, the Village should seek to preserve these special areas. One method of preserving significant habitat is to “cluster” development in areas that are not environmentally sensitive. Section 7-738 of the New York State Village Law authorizes cluster development, defined as *“a subdivision plat or plats...in which the applicable zoning law is modified to provide an alternative permitted method for the layout, configuration and design of lots, buildings and structures, roads, utility lines and other infrastructure, parks, and landscaping in order to preserve the natural and scenic qualities of open lands.”*

According to Sloatsburg’s zoning law, the Planning Board has the authority to approve a cluster development, provided it first obtains approval from the Village Board of Trustees in accordance with Section VI.2. of the zoning law. In general, it is recommended that the cluster development regulations be updated to reflect current New York State Village Law, e.g., a hearing is required prior to approving a cluster development. Two specific conditions that are unique to the Village’s existing regulations are as follows:

- The property must be two acres in size to qualify for a cluster subdivision.
- The property must have one or more environmental constraints as identified in VI.I.L., or be within a federal flood hazard area or be subject to Rockland County stream regulations or be within the jurisdiction of the Ramapo River Recreational River regulations.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that these two conditions be eliminated for the following reasons:

- Sensitive habitat, e.g., a wetland, can occur anywhere in the Village and is not limited to parcels two acres in size and greater. The Planning Board should have the flexibility to work with an applicant and relax the bulk standards where a sensitive environmental feature would be protected, regardless of parcel size.
- The second condition only allows cluster subdivisions where “environmental constraints” are identified. Environmental constraints are limited to steep slopes or water resources, i.e., flood plains, wetlands, streams, ponds, rock outcrop.

Land could have none of these constraints but may be considered sensitive ecological habitat – the cluster subdivision technique cannot be used to protect this habitat since it is not listed as an environmental constraint. Furthermore, New York State Village Law specifically allows cluster development to protect areas of scenic value, e.g., a forested ridge top. Again, the Village's current regulations would not allow cluster development to protect a ridge top as it is not identified as an environmental constraint. It is recommended that this specific provision in the Village's cluster regulations be eliminated.

- The Village Board and Planning Board should be given the authority to require an applicant to cluster a development where it determines that a conventional development would otherwise be detrimental to the Village's scenic or natural qualities – this authority should be explicitly stated in zoning law revisions.

During the review of development applications, it is recommended that any vacant property in excess of 20 acres be required to submit a biodiversity study of animals and vegetation present or likely to be present as part of the SEQRA process. In addition, an inventory should be updated every three (3) years in the event that the initial project is not pursued or is delayed. These inventories should also take into account seasonal variation and identify species likely to inhabit the Village at all times of the year. Parcels that are smaller in size should also be subjected to study where the reviewing agency determines that an inventory is necessary. For example, it may not be appropriate to conduct a biodiversity study on a small parcel that is otherwise surrounded by building development, however, a small property adjacent to a wetland may be an important habitat for amphibians. The determination of whether or not to conduct a biodiversity study on smaller properties should be made on a case-by-case basis.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Village continue its use of the environmental constraints provisions contained in the zoning law in order to reduce residential or nonresidential density where the environmental constraints effectively limit the development suitability of properties in the Village.

### **Highlands Conservation Act**

In November 2004, subsequent to the initial draft of the Comprehensive Plan, President Bush signed the Highlands Conservation Act. The Act is intended to assist the States of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania in conserving priority land and natural resources in the Highlands region. The purposes of the Act are:

- to recognize the importance of the water, forest, agricultural, wildlife, recreational, and cultural resources of the Highlands region, and the national significance of the Highlands region to the United States;
- to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to work in partnership with the Secretary of Agriculture to provide financial assistance to the Highlands States to preserve and protect high priority conservation land in the Highlands region; and

- to continue the ongoing Forest Service programs in the Highlands region to assist the Highlands states, local units of government, and private forest and farm landowners in the conservation of land and natural resources in the Highlands region.

The Village of Sloatsburg is located in the New York Highlands region covered by the Act. The New York- New Jersey Regional Study: 2002 Update, published in December 2002, included a Conservation Values Assessment. The GIS-based Conservation Values Assessment model weighed the conservation value of various resources in two ways. According to the Study, the model was based on achieving the following goals for five general resource types:

- maintaining an adequate supply of high quality water;
- conserving productive forest lands;
- conserving areas of high biodiversity and habitat value;
- conserving productive agricultural land; and
- providing adequate recreational opportunities for natural, historic and cultural resource-based uses.

Individual resources within each of the five general resource areas were assigned a value ranging from 0 to 5 (highest value). Figure 2-25 of the Study illustrates a composite of conservation values for the NY/NJ Highland Region. The Grant F. Walton Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis (CRSSA) at Rutgers University participated in the Update (2001-2002). CRSSA maintains a geographic information systems (GIS) database which maps the conservation values on a municipal level.<sup>3</sup>

Vacant and open space property in the eastern portion of the Village have extensive areas of "highest" resource value, as does the former Highland Homes site. Areas to the west of Route 17 and Post Road generally have "higher" resource value with inclusions of "low", "moderate", and "highest" resource values. The Ramapo River is shown as having "moderate" to "higher" resource value. During SEQRA review of any proposed project, the conservation value of land within the Village should be considered when determining the appropriate design and layout of a development, and whether the development should be clustered in the case of proposed residential subdivisions.

## **5. Steep slopes**

It is evident from recent residential development in the Pine Grove area that steep slopes are sometimes disturbed to a significant degree to accommodate development. Recent construction of single family dwellings has resulted in significant cuts and fills, with large retaining walls being used to achieve flat building pads. In general, the area of disturbance to create a flat building pad increases as slopes get steeper.

Disturbance to steep slopes is a concern for the following reasons:

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<sup>3</sup> got to <http://dbcrrsa2.rutgers.edu/website/highlands/viewer.htm>.

- Disturbance to steep slopes can create soil erosion and sedimentation problems, such as loss of topsoil, disturbance to natural habitats, degradation of surface water quality, and alteration of drainage patterns resulting in increases in flooding.
- Disturbance to steep slopes can result in the failure of slopes and the mass movement of earth through rock or mudslides, creating hazard to persons and structures.

Impacts can be mitigated through a combination of mitigation measures, including avoidance of the steep slope, or engineered solutions, e.g., retaining walls to limit soil movement. The Village's approach has been to limit development on steep slopes or to require larger lot sizes where steep slopes are prevalent. The Village regulates development on steep slopes through the "environmental constraints" provision of the code. However, the regulations are unclear as to what building or development applications are reviewed for conformity with the environmental constraints regulations. For example, if a property owner proposes a single family dwelling on a previously approved building lot, is the application subject to the environmental constraints provisions (single family dwellings are exempt from site plan review and approval)? Is this section limited to instances where subdivision and site plan review occurs? The zoning revisions should clarify the applicability of these provisions.

The Village should also consider the slope range at which development is no longer permitted. Currently, the environmental constraints provision does not permit construction on slopes in excess of forty percent (40%). However, many communities do not permit construction on slopes in excess of 25-30 percent, or require review and permit approval when disturbance is proposed. Performance standards can also be implemented, e.g., an applicant may be required to construct a "terrain adaptive" building to limit cuts to the slope. Other standards should be implemented to ensure that retaining walls are designed to limit visual impacts as well and to ensure that they are engineered properly. For example, standards should be established to limit wall height and walls should be designed in a material and color which blend with the natural environment. At a minimum, it is recommended that the Village Engineer be involved in the review of building permit and development applications where buildings are proposed on steep slopes.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Village revise the zoning law to clarify to what applications the environmental constraints provisions apply, and to include more detailed performance standards to address development on steep slopes.

## D. TRANSPORTATION

It is the goal of this Comprehensive Plan to ensure access to a safe, adequate, and efficient transportation network that is capable of handling the daily trips generated by the Village's population and commerce. This transportation system consists of the local and regional road and highway network, rail and bus service, and the pedestrian system of sidewalks and trails located throughout the community.

Transportation-related issues were a major focus of the public opinion survey. Issues identified by respondents include but are not limited to:

- 76 percent of the respondents concluded that the Village has a traffic problem;
- 90 percent of the respondents identified Route 17 and/or its intersections as the primary traffic problem confronting the Village;
- 54 percent of the respondents stated that the problems are experienced in both the morning and evening; and
- 89 percent of the respondents support the construction of Interchange 15B

The results of the survey are reflected in the transportation objectives identified in this section. The following provides a brief overview of the transportation system in the Village followed by the objectives for improvement to it. The goals and objectives of the Village were drafted into a "position paper" which was submitted to the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) in July 2001. Throughout the comprehensive planning process, the Village has been meeting and communicating with NYSDOT to develop traffic calming solutions and identify improvements to the Route 17 corridor.

### I. Roads and Highways

The most heavily traveled road in Sloatsburg is Interstate 87, also known as the New York State Thruway (refer to **Figures 7 and 8**) or the Thomas E. Dewey Thruway, and is maintained by the New York State Thruway Authority. Access to the Thruway is via Interchange 15A located south of Sloatsburg in the Town of Ramapo. The Thruway has effectively isolated the eastern portion of the Village - Seven Lakes Drive is the only road that crosses under it to link this portion of the community with the western half of the Village.

The principal road in the Village of Sloatsburg is New York State Route 17. The majority of the Village's non-residential uses maintain frontage on Route 17. Route 17 is under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT).

Seven Lakes Drive is also maintained by the NYSDOT, starting at the entry to the Palisades Interstate Park (PIP) system. Seven Lakes Drive provides access to eastern portions of Sloatsburg and to Harriman State Park, a section of the PIP. Seven Lakes Drive also links Sloatsburg to the Towns of Haverstraw, Stony Point, and Highlands, and the Palisades Interstate Parkway.



Sterling Mine Road (County Route 72) is the only road maintained by the Rockland County Highway Department. Sterling Mine Road provides access to most of the remaining non-residential uses not located along Route 17.

All other roads in the Village of Sloatsburg are maintained by the Village, except for private roads, which are maintained by the owners of property fronting on them (refer to **Figure 7**). Roads in Sloatsburg have been also classified according to their function (see **Figure 8** and **Appendix A**).

There are specific issues that the Village would like addressed as part of any improvements associated with Route 17. They are as follows:

### **Route 17 - Roadway**

- Speeding is major problem in the Village. According to statistics compiled by the Village's Traffic Court, approximately 200 speeding tickets are issued per month on Route 17. These tickets represent traffic enforcement conducted during a limited time of the day/week, therefore, the speeding problem is probably understated.
- According to statistics available from the Town of Ramapo police department, 479 accidents occurred on Route 17 between January 1995 and December 2000. While accidents occur along the road's entire length, many occur north of the central business district where four lanes have been squeezed into a narrow cross section.
- Many buildings along the northern segment of the Route 17 corridor are dilapidated and in need of rehabilitation. The expansion of Route 17 into a four-lane highway has eliminated building setbacks and created a hostile environment for residences on Route 17.
- The entire stretch of Route 17 through the Village of Sloatsburg is too narrow to accommodate four travel lanes and move traffic safely, particularly when trucks are present.
- Roadside beautification on Route 17 is necessary.

### **Route 17 - Sidewalks and Infrastructure**

- There are **NO** safe pedestrian crossings along Route 17, particularly within the Village's central business district, where Village Hall, the Sloatsburg Library, the Senior Center, and the Sloatsburg post office are located among local commercial uses. Even where signalized intersections exist, traffic is observed regularly disobeying the red traffic signal.
- Sidewalks need improvement on Route 17, particularly north of Seven Lakes Drive – existing sidewalks are crumbling or nonexistent.
- Drainage is a problem on Route 17. During storm events, portions of Route 17 puddle and water ponds on sidewalks eroding them.
- There are no safe bus pull-offs on Route 17.

### **Route 17 - Intersections**

- It is difficult to make left turn movements anywhere along Route 17.
- Left turn movements from the "mini-mart" mall onto Route 17 are hazardous due to speeding and traffic volumes, as well as the limited gaps in traffic.
- Turning movements into and out of establishments and driveways onto Route 17 are difficult due to speeding and traffic volumes as well as limited gaps in traffic.
- Seven Lakes Drive/Route 17 – Vehicles and trucks are frequently observed running the red traffic signal. Problems are experienced weekdays and weekends since Seven Lakes Drive is a major entry to Harriman State Park.
- Sterling Avenue/Route 17 - The intersection provides primary access to the Village's pool facility. There is concern with turning movements at this intersection, especially with the higher proportion of vehicles with child occupancy making turning movements from Route 17.
- Liberty Rock Road/Route 17 – This intersection provides primary access to the Sloatsburg Library and the Senior Center. Like Sterling Avenue, concern with turning movements at this intersection, especially with the higher proportion of vehicles with children making turning movements from Route 17.
- Eagle Valley Road/Route 17 – This intersection provides primary access to the Village's recreational fields. Again, there is concern with turning movements at this intersection, especially with the higher proportion of vehicles with children making turning movements from Route 17.
- Washington Avenue (Dater's Crossing) /Route 17 – This is a VERY dangerous intersection, with at least one fatality experienced here. However, the intersection continues to be used since access to the eastern portion of the Village is limited to this intersection, Seven Lakes Drive, and Ballard Avenue/Municipal Plaza.
- Park Avenue/Route 17 – An unsignalized intersection in the northern portion of the Village, where there are excessive delays to turn into and out of Route 17.
- Municipal Plaza/Route 17 – This intersection ultimately provides access to the eastern portion of the Village and is heavily utilized when there are back-ups on Seven Lakes Drive.
- Colonial Avenue/Route 17 – An unsignalized intersection south of the central business district. It is difficult to make left turning movements into this side street.
- Harriman Avenue/Route 17 - An unsignalized intersection south of the central business district. It is difficult to make left turning movements into this side street.

These specific issues are addressed further below.

### **2. Bus and Rail Service**

Commuter bus service to New York City is provided by Shortline, a Coach USA Company. Currently, bus service to Manhattan offers intermediate stops along its route in many northern New Jersey communities such as Ramsey, Allendale, Ridgewood, and Paramus. A number of express buses are also available during commuter hours, which have a limited number of intermediate stops. All bus service from Sloatsburg terminates at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in midtown Manhattan.

The Transport of Rockland offers local bus service to many points in Rockland County. TOR 93 is the only route that travels to Sloatsburg, but from other stops along TOR 93, passengers may transfer to other TOR routes. Destinations along TOR 93 include Hillburn, Downtown Suffern, Suffern High School, Rockland Community College, Viola Road and Route 306, Eckerson Road and Route 45, Spring Valley Marketplace, Nanuet (Middletown Rd. and Smith St.), and the Nanuet Mall.

Norfolk Southern owns the rail line that travels through the Village of Sloatsburg. The company leases track rights to New Jersey Transit, a cooperative member of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). Norfolk Southern has the right to schedule their freight service at any time, but typically avoids using the tracks during peak commuter times thereby freeing up the tracks for use by the MTA. New York Susquehanna and Western, another rail freight company also has track rights on the right-of-way, but the NYSDOT has indicated that they have not exercised these rights in many years. There are no freight stops within the Village and the tracks are used only for through freight movement.

The MTA provides commuter rail service from the Village of Sloatsburg to New York City on the Metro-North Railroad. The Sloatsburg Station is a stop on the Port Jervis Line; this line provides service to communities between New York City and Port Jervis. In New Jersey, the Port Jervis Line shares track with New Jersey Transit's Main and Bergen lines.

City bound trains provide passenger service to the Village of Suffern and to several northern New Jersey communities along the line. New York City bound commuters must disembark at Hoboken and transfer to the Path trains. Path trains provide access to additional destinations in New Jersey such as Journal Square and Newport Center Mall, and then continue under the Hudson River to multiple destinations in Manhattan, such as Christopher Street, and 36<sup>th</sup> Street.

Metro-North ridership data indicates that ridership levels have been relatively stable since 1995 at around 50 to 55 riders inbound to New York City. Ridership levels on outbound trains fluctuate much more from year to year. Generally, off-peak and weekend trips are minimal. Northbound trips along the Port Jervis line also experience minimal ridership from Sloatsburg.

Certain capital improvements to the rail system have shortened the time between Sloatsburg and Manhattan, making Sloatsburg a more attractive location for potential residents who commute to New York City. The Secaucus Transfer Station is now open, and the new station connects New Jersey Transit's rail lines that currently operate out of two hubs, Hoboken and Newark Penn stations. The Transfer Station allows riders on the Port Jervis Line direct access to midtown Manhattan via New York's Penn Station. The opening of the new station allows Sloatsburg residents to travel to midtown Manhattan via rail instead of by bus.

The rail line is a physical barrier to access between the east and west parts of the Village. Within Sloatsburg, only three roads cross the railroad right-of-way: Municipal Plaza and Washington Avenue both cross the tracks at grade and both intersections are signalized

with descending barricades. Seven Lakes Drive crosses the railroad right-of-way via an overpass.

Rail and bus passengers use Sloatsburg's existing commuter lot located on Mill Street. In 2000, the Village issued approximately 100 permits at a price of \$28 per resident and \$103 per non-resident. Permits are issued on a first-come basis although residents are given priority. There is a substantial waiting list for permits for the Sloatsburg lot and it is suspected that some commuters may be using the South Street Grill and Sloatsburg Plaza parking lots, as well as area residences for commuter parking. The Village of Sloatsburg leases its current parking lot from the owner of the hardware store and the lot could accommodate approximately 75 vehicles if properly striped. The Village also owns the parcel on the corner of Mill Street and Municipal Plaza. This parcel is not paved, but has been observed handling overflow parking. It has been estimated that this parcel could accommodate an additional 70 parking spaces.

Given the current conditions of the Village's transportation system, the following sections describe proposed improvements to it.

### **3. Village "Main Street"**

Improving the Route 17 corridor has been a primary goal of the planning process. Route 17 is a major state arterial that bisects the Village and is a major influence on the land use patterns within the community. It is the Village's "main street" where the primary concentration of businesses, community facilities and services, and recreational resources are located. As a result of the large number of commuters and visitors that travel along Route 17, it also shapes the visual impression of Sloatsburg. The Village believes that there is a current imbalance that favors Route 17's function as a highway for fast-traveling commuter "through" traffic, discouraging the ability of the Village to maintain a viable "main street". Basic safety, local access and a safe pedestrian environment have been compromised.

The Comprehensive Plan strongly supports analysis of the reconfiguration of Route 17 into a three-lane road (two travel lanes and a center/median turning lane, or comparable design) as a traffic calming and community improvement solution. The Comprehensive Plan Committee is aware of lane reductions made elsewhere in New York State (i.e., Saratoga and Albany) that have served to "calm" traffic. According to data published in Road Diets - Fixing the Big Roads (Burden and Lagerway, 1999), road segments carrying 30,000 ADT can still safely and efficiently operate with two lanes of traffic. According to 24-hour counts conducted by Wilbur Smith Associates, Route 17 south of Seven Lakes Drive carried approximately 24,000 ADT in 1999, indicating that Route 17 may still be reconfigured to two travel lanes, especially if Interchange 15B to the north of the Village is constructed. The Village's vision for Route 17 is a redesign comparable to the segment of Route 9 south of the Tappan Zee Bridge, where lanes are variable, pedestrian crosswalks are present, sidewalks and curbing are maintained, on-street parking is provided, and traffic operates at reduced speeds.

The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges that development and growth will increase traffic levels in the future, and the Plan proposes to reduce the density and intensity of development in Sloatsburg. The Village is aware of other development proposals in neighboring communities that would similarly impact future traffic levels. However, approvals have not been granted, and buildout will occur over a 20-year period where there is no market certainty that full development will be achieved. **The Village STRONGLY URGES THAT NYSDOT CONSIDER REDUCING TRAVEL LANES ALONG ROUTE 17 IN THE NEAR-TERM to mitigate EXISTING** traffic and safety problems regardless of the future disposition of these projects. If additional residential development occurs, the Village foresees that new residents would patron commercial establishments in the central business district, therefore, it is incumbent upon the community to plan for the future of the downtown now and protect its main street function.

#### 4. Recommended Route 17 Improvements

The following are specific improvements recommended for the Route 17 corridor – **they represent a menu of options which need to be reviewed and analyzed for their ability to meet the village’s objectives:**

- Re-design the road entrances into the Village to alert travelers that they are entering a main street area and should operate at reduced speeds.
- Calm traffic along the entire stretch of Route 17 through Sloatsburg and give priority to improving the central business district.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings along Route 17, particularly within the central business district.
- Signalize key intersections and provide adequate turning lanes to allow safe vehicular turning movements, particularly where the intersections serve major community facilities or neighborhoods.
- Provide “buffer” between buildings and sidewalks along Route 17 and vehicles.
- Provide adequate drainage facilities along Route 17 to alleviate flooding and ponding.
- Reconstruct sidewalks to allow safe pedestrian movement between residential neighborhoods and the Village’s central business district.
- Encourage distribution of existing commuter traffic onto alternative routes to reduce vehicular trips on Route 17.
- Continue to try and limit truck traffic on Route 17 to local deliveries and require trucks traveling regionally to use the New York State Thruway as the main truck route in this region.
- Re-investigate the potential creation of a Route 17 bypass as was envisioned in the Village of Sloatsburg 1958 Master Plan. That plan proposed that a bypass be constructed which would loop around the Village along its boundary through the Tuxedo Park Associates, Hidden Valley, and Eagle Valley properties.

To support this objective, the Village Board of Trustees and the Comprehensive Plan Committee prepared a “position” paper submitted to the NYSDOT to study the following design options to achieve the Village’s goals and objectives:

### **Route 17 – Main Corridor**

- Redesign Route 17 from its border with the Town of Tuxedo/Orange County to a point just south of the Sterling Mine Road southbound ramp onto Route 17 into a two-lane road, with a center turning lane, or appropriate turning lanes at key intersections. This could be accomplished immediately by re-stripping lanes.
- With the removal of one lane on Route 17, consider using any “excess” pavement for shoulders on both sides of Route 17 to buffer existing buildings and pedestrians along the sidewalk from traffic. This would potentially allow cyclists in shoulder. Road cyclists are regularly observed traveling along portions of Route 17 to access the roads in Sterling Forest and Harriman State Park.
- Within the central business district, explore on-street parking in lieu of shoulders.
- Re-surface and improve drainage along Route 17.
- Elevate curbs and reconstruct sidewalks.
- Consider providing medians at intersections to facilitate safe pedestrian crossings, or design bump-outs at street intersections to reduce crossing widths.
- Limit truck traffic on this corridor; require trucks to use the New York State Thruway that is designed to handle regional truck traffic.

### **Route 17 – Intersections (from south to north)**

- Sterling Avenue - Examine installing traffic signal at Sterling Avenue because of heavy family use to village pool.
- Eagle Valley Road – The fourth leg, from the Community Fields, is not under signal control. Add textured crosswalk or rumble strip across Route 17. This will signal that cars are entering the heart of downtown area, and improve access for children going to ball fields. Improve intersection with turning lanes.
- Traffic signal and center island with some deflection (chicane or curb extension) and speed table connecting the mini-mall with the bank (just before Liberty Rock Road) to provide safe pedestrian crossings, to signal heart of downtown, and to slow cars down. Plantings on median (curve to interrupt sight lines).
- Liberty Rock Road – Signalize intersection to this road which provides access to the library and senior center.
- Municipal Plaza – Activate traffic signal to full time operation to provide access to Village Hall and Ballard Avenue. Study whether one traffic signal with two stopping lines could handle the turn into the mini-mart and Liberty Rock Road.
- Seven Lakes Drive - Add a strobe light to discourage running red lights. Larger lens on the traffic lights would improve visibility of the traffic signal. Review right turn signal arrow and signal head alignment on the Route 17 northbound approach as drivers appear to be confused. Provide “blinking” light on the approaches to the intersection.
- Post Road - Add sign at Post Road to identify intersection to Route 17 vehicles, and consider blinking light to make it stand out.

- Washington Avenue – Signalize, or limit to right turns only (allow eastbound from Route 17 to Washington Avenue, and northbound from Washington Avenue onto Route 17).
- Park Avenue – Add sign at Park Avenue to identify intersection to Route 17 vehicles, and consider blinking light to make it stand out.

### **Route 17 - Sidewalks and Infrastructure**

- Provide safe pedestrian crossings along Route 17, particularly within the Village's central business district, where Village Hall, the Sloatsburg Library and the Senior Center, and the Sloatsburg post office are located among local commercial uses. Consider use of textured concrete or stamped colored asphalt to demarcate pedestrian crossings; an example is provided on Route 9 in Dobbs Ferry, Westchester County, NY.
- Reconstruct concrete sidewalks on Route 17, particularly north of Seven Lakes Drive.
- Provide safe northbound and southbound bus pull-off on Route 17 within the central business district.

**The items listed above are recommendations that represent a menu of options to pursue.** The Village awaits NYSDOT's analysis and recommendations as to the appropriate mix of improvements to increase Route 17 safety and allow it to continue to function at appropriate operating conditions for a Village environment.

The possibility exists that levels of service could be reduced. The Village, in conjunction with these improvements, is analyzing the feasibility of consolidating curb cuts and potentially closing existing intersections to allow Route 17 to function at appropriate levels of service and to divert traffic to new signalized intersections. Potential improvements that are being explored by the Village in conjunction with improvements to Route 17 are described below.

### **5. New Road Connections**

The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges that traffic calming measures, including a reduction in the number of lanes along Route 17, could affect overall levels of service on Route 17. The Comprehensive Plan supports other measures that would need to be implemented by the Village to reduce the number of trips made on Route 17. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the following design improvements be studied for their feasibility and that the Village cooperate with other state and county agencies, e.g., the Rockland County Highway Department, to implement these improvements:

- Explore connecting Sterling Mine Road to a new access road into the Village ball fields that would connect with Mill Street. This road would provide a parallel road to Route 17 and provide alternative access to any development that occurs at the Oakbrook Shopping Center site.
- Connect Mill Street to Eagle Valley Road.

- Close driveways onto Route 17 between Mill Street and Municipal Plaza and require use of Mill Street. This would eliminate multiple curb cuts along Route 17. Assure that properties with frontage on Route 17 only have a right of easement that ensures access to Mill Street.
- Connect Eagle Valley Road with Liberty Rock Road across rear of mini-mall and post office property and in conjunction with possible introduction of additional commuter/library parking facilities.
- Require future development to connect to planned signalized intersections. Development of the vacant parcels on the westerly side of Route 17 should be coordinated to link these developments together. This will enable residents to make intra-municipal trips between neighborhoods without necessarily using Route 17.
- Explore consolidating residential driveways on westerly side of Route 17 east of Seven Lakes Drive by introducing private rear alley. Between Post Road and Ledge Road, a number of properties have significant lot depth to allow the introduction of an alley between properties. Curb cuts could be consolidated and closed.
- Explore the extension of Academy Street to connect with Municipal Plaza to provide an alternative route to Seven Lakes Drive.

## **6. Mass Transit**

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that additional bus shelters and pull off lanes be constructed along Route 17 to improve safety along the Route 17 corridor. The location of these pull-off areas should be coordinated with the construction of additional commuter lots in the Village. Should additional residential development occur in the northern segment of the Route 17 corridor, i.e., in the vicinity of Park Avenue, consideration should be given to constructing a bus shelter and pull-off lane in this vicinity.

## **7. Commuter Parking**

As the Village and surrounding residential neighborhoods in adjoining communities grow, e.g., Eagle Valley in Tuxedo, it is anticipated that there may be increased demand for rail and bus service in the Village. This would result in an increased demand for commuter parking within the Village. In addition, the provision of additional parking in the Village could benefit the Village economically by increasing the number of trips within the central business district. Mass transit riders could be induced to make local purchases in the district on their way to and from work. The Comprehensive Plan recommends the following:

- Improve the vacant parking lot located at the corner of Mill Street and Municipal Plaza into commuter parking spaces.
- Work cooperatively with Metro-North to explore potential locations for additional commuter parking within Metro-North's right-of-way.
- An area in the vicinity of Sloat's Dam along the Ramapo River has been purchased for parkland; it is anticipated that this property will be a link in the Ramapo River Trail. It is possible that there will be a need to construct parking facilities for visitor's using the trail – planning for parking facilities should be coordinated with Metro-North to determine whether a shared-use park/commuter lot could be created. This should



be done in a manner that is sensitive to the historic and scenic character of the dam and river.

### **8. Passenger Rail/Bus Station**

The Comprehensive Plan proposes that the Village explore renovation of existing space in the Village Center for a rail and bus “depot” that could contain space for a ticket purchasing room, and an indoor waiting area. Many communities along the Metro-North line have rail stations that have recently been refurbished to provide these amenities to passengers and maintain ridership levels.

### **9. Interchange 15B**

For many years, the New York State Thruway Authority has contemplated constructing an interchange to the New York State Thruway at Routes 17 and 17A just north of the Tuxedo hamlet. This proposed interchange has been designated “15B.” The proposal is anticipated to reduce commuter traffic traveling through Sloatsburg generated by motorists residing north and northwest of Sloatsburg. Commuters from Orange County and Passaic County travel Sterling Mine Road, Route 17A, and 17M to Route 17 to access Interchange 15A in Hillburn, routing them through Sloatsburg’s Village Center.

Construction of 15B would significantly reduce commuter traffic through the Village. This reduction in traffic volume can also be expected to reduce the number of accidents along this heavily utilized corridor. The Comprehensive Plan supports the construction of Interchange 15B and recommends the following:

- The Village Board should pass a resolution indicating its support for the construction of Interchange 15B and periodically readopt its resolution to express its continued support of this improvement.
- The Village should work cooperatively with other communities and agencies, e.g., the Town of Tuxedo, and the New York State Thruway to obtain financing for its construction, including the potential creation of a transportation improvement district should one be created. New construction would be required to pay a fair-share portion of the cost of constructing the new interchange.

### **10. Pedestrian/Hiking/Biking Trails**

It may not in all cases be possible to link roads within a proposed new development to an existing residential neighborhood either because of intervening topography or other environmental constraints, or because an existing neighborhood may have substandard roads which cannot accommodate additional traffic volumes safely. In these instances, residential neighborhoods could be linked through the construction of a trail system. Trails would be a safe alternative for children or others without access to a vehicle to move about safely in the community. As per Rockland County Planning Department recommendations, the Village will explore the introduction of bicycle lanes in appropriate locations in the community, to link neighborhoods throughout the Village. The Comprehensive Plan

recommends that the site plan and subdivision regulations be amended to give the Planning Board the authority to require the construction of trails in new developments which would link neighborhoods with one another. The Planning Board should establish conditions for their continual maintenance at the time of site plan or subdivision approval, particularly where they are not dedicated to the Village.

### **II. Ramapo River Trail**

The Comprehensive Plan supports the construction of a Ramapo River Trail. The route would generally follow the banks of the Ramapo River. The Comprehensive Plan supports the development of this trail for multiple purposes, including bike and pedestrian use. The trail should be linked to the Village Center through appropriate signage. As per Rockland County Planning Department recommendations, the Village will also explore linkages between the Village's trail and the Town of Ramapo River Greenway Trail, the Village Center, and the Eleanor Burlingham Memorial Park, an open space resource on the edge of the central business district.

## E. UTILITIES

It is a Village goal to ensure that adequate utility infrastructure is available to serve existing and prospective development in the community. In particular, the Village's ability to grow in a manner consistent with the conceptual land use plan relies on adequate water supply and the provision of centralized wastewater treatment. The Comprehensive Plan has proposed a land use pattern which reaffirms the existing small-lot, village-scale character of the community along Route 17, and a larger lot pattern radiating out from the center of the community. To achieve the small-lot pattern of development within its center in a manner that is not detrimental to water quality, the Village affirms the need for a centralized wastewater treatment system in the community. Concentrating development, and providing centralized utility systems, is important in order to protect the water quality of the Ramapo River aquifer, as well as the freshwater wetlands and streams that recharge the aquifer.

United Water New York currently provides centralized water service to the Village (refer to **Figure 9**). The Rockland County Sewer District No. 1 (RCSD) was expanded to include the Village of Sloatsburg, and the district is currently planning extension of centralized wastewater treatment to the community. In addition to these two entities, the following utility providers also serve the Village, or maintain major rights-of-way through it:

- Electric and gas service is provided by Orange and Rockland Utilities, Inc. of Pearl River, New York.
- Verizon, formerly Bell Atlantic, owns and maintains local phone facilities within Sloatsburg. Due to industry deregulation, Sloatsburg citizens can contract with other companies for local phone service, but their facilities would still be maintained by Verizon. Verizon maintains a local office near the corner of Route 17 and Eagle Valley Road.
- American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) owns and maintains a transcontinental cable within the Village. The cable runs in an east-west direction and AT&T holds easements along its route.
- Verizon Wireless, formerly Bell Atlantic Mobile, owns a 150-foot monopole tower to enable cellular phone communication in the area. The monopole is designed to accommodate antennae for all major cellular carriers, including Bell Atlantic, Nextel, Omnipoint, Sprint, and AT&T. The existing tower provides coverage for the entire Village and therefore future facilities are not needed.
- Cable service is provided by Cablevision headquartered in West Nyack, New York. Cablevision provides its OptimumTV cable service to residents on a monthly fee basis. Also available to residents is Optimum Online, a high-speed cable Internet service.

It is expected that the Village will continue to be served adequately by the listed service providers. The following objectives are intended to address primarily the implementation of central sewer services, protect water quality, and the community's visual character from inappropriately sited wireless telecommunication providers.

## **I. Water Quality**

It has been recognized for some time that the number and concentration of septic systems in Sloatsburg, particularly those within the highly permeable sand and gravel soils overlying the aquifer, have the potential to negatively impact its water quality. Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan supports implementation of a centralized wastewater treatment system to protect the aquifer's water quality. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan recommends that advanced tertiary treatment be used in wastewater treatment to protect downstream water supply. The Village recommends that the sewer district examine additional, natural polishing, e.g., a constructed wetland system, as part of the system's overall design.

The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges that central sewer service also has the potential to induce additional development in an amount which would not be consistent with other goals and objectives of this Plan, e.g., preserving the Village's woodland character or reducing traffic impacts along Route 17. The Plan supports the provision of centralized sewer service to protect water quality and allow limited redevelopment, as described in the following objective. The Plan also supports central sewer service where it will allow cluster development to preserve meaningful expanses of open space. Any development that is considerably in excess of the amount recommended in the conceptual land use plan would be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the objectives expressed in this section.

## **2. Economic Development**

As mentioned previously, a primary purpose for supporting the extension of central sewer service into the Village is to protect the health and quality of the Ramapo River and the valley's aquifer. A second purpose is to allow limited commercial and residential development within the Village Center planning area and along the Route 17 corridor. The design would be consistent with the existing village-scale, small lot pattern that exists presently. Without central sewer service, this small lot pattern cannot be achieved. Therefore, the Plan supports extension of central sewer service to achieve this objective.

It is anticipated that development may proceed before the sewer system is operational. Even where the zoning may permit small lot areas, the Rockland County Health Department will ultimately have a final determination on whether or not septic systems can be accommodated on a small lot and still maintain the necessary separation distances from other septic systems.

## **3. Electric and cable service**

New development requires the extension of new utilities to service it; in the past, electric and cable utilities have been provided above ground. Above ground utilities are more prone to damage during inclement weather, and can also detract from the visual environment. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that all utilities be located underground in new development. The site plan and subdivision regulations should be amended to specifically reference this design standard.

#### **4. Stormwater management facilities**

The Village of Sloatsburg straddles the Ramapo River which has an extensive flood plain system associated with it. The Village is subject to flooding along either side of the river primarily within the Ramapo River valley floor. Streams associated with the Ramapo River, including Stony Brook and Nakoma Brook, also have flood plains and are subject to flooding.

While the flood plain poses certain risks to development, the land within the flood plain has been the location of building development. Portions of the Village's early developments, including the community's central business district and its older residential neighborhoods, e.g., the "Flats", are located in the 100-year flood plain. New development within the Ramapo River drainage basin has the potential to impact flood flows as it introduces impervious surfaces which in turn increases the rate and amount of stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff also has the potential to negatively impact water quality.

To mitigate the potential impacts from new development, it is Village policy to allow zero net increase in the rate of stormwater runoff. In addition, it is Village policy to require the implementation of appropriate water quality measures in the design of any new development.

To effectuate these policies, the Village should amend the site plan and subdivision regulations to specifically adopt the zero net increase in stormwater runoff as a site plan and subdivision standard. The regulations should also be amended to specifically reference New York State Best Management Practices stormwater design standards for analyzing and implementing appropriate stormwater mitigation measures. In the site plan and subdivision regulations, specific policies should also be established for the long-term maintenance and ownership of stormwater control devices to ensure that they are operated and maintained over the life of the improvement. Ownership and maintenance may be by the property owner, a homeowners association, or the Village.

#### **5. Wireless telecommunication services**

Currently, the Village does not have any zoning regulations for the review and approval of wireless telecommunication services. Zoning regulations should be adopted indicating the Village's preferences for locations where these facilities are permitted. In addition, standards should be developed for their siting and design, e.g., the use of stealth design would potentially limit the visual impacts associated with the infrastructure, e.g., monopoles, used in wireless telecommunication services.

## **F. COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

The Village of Sloatsburg is served adequately by existing community services and facilities. Most of these facilities are located within the Village Center, however, the ambulance corps and DPW buildings are located on Washington Street and Sterling Mine Road, respectively. The locations of the Village's community facilities are shown on **Figure 10**.

### **1. Sloatsburg Library Parking**

The Sloatsburg Library is located at the corner of Liberty Rock Road and Route 17. Parking spaces for the library are located adjacent to the building, and vehicles must back out onto Liberty Rock Road when exiting the facility. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the vacant land recently acquired by the library be developed with additional parking. These parking spaces could also be used for commuters using bus transit; many persons board buses heading southbound along Route 17 in proximity to the library.

### **2. Ramapo River Passive Park**

As expressed in other sections of the Plan, the Village supports the expansion of a Ramapo River passive park along the river's entire length, with a proposed trail running adjacent to the river. Trail improvements should be coordinated with planned trail improvements in the adjoining Towns of Ramapo and Tuxedo. The passive park would allow fishing, canoeing and nature observation. Contained within the park will be the Ramapo River Trail, which is recommended for bicycle (non-motorized) and pedestrian use. The Plan recommends that the Village explore creation of a picnic or gathering spot in the vicinity of Sloat's Dam on the west bank of the river. A pedestrian connection should link the Village's recreational fields and the passive park via Mill Street.

## G. HISTORIC RESOURCES

### Overview

The Leni-Lenape Indians were the earliest inhabitants of present day Sloatsburg<sup>4</sup>. Composed of three tribes, the Minsi, the Unilacto, and the Unami, their territory extended from the Catskills to the Potomac River. They sold much of their land to the Dutch and English, and in 1738 the Minsi tribe sold land to Wyant Van Gelder that would later become Sloatsburg. The area extended from the present Sterling Mine Road to the railroad bridge on Seven Lakes Drive, and from the mountains on the west to the western bank of Stony Brook. Van Gelder gave his property to Isaac Van Duesen, who later gave it to his son-in-law, Steven Sloat.

Stephen Sloat and his wife Marritje had four children, John, Isaac, Elizabeth, and Maria. From 1792 to 1878, they operated various businesses, including a tannery, farm, public house, and textile mill. During the revolution, the old Sloat Stone House and Inn was used as command posts for General Washington's troops. Stephen Sloat was commissioned as Captain in charge of the militia stationed at the Sloat House and Inn. His son, John Sloat, joined the Cornwall Militia as a private. In 1781, Private John Sloat was on leave visiting his parents when he was accidentally shot by a sentry stationed at the Sloat home. He was the first to be buried at Sloatsburg cemetery.

Isaac Van Duesen and Stephen Sloat have been credited for clearing a former path used by Native Americans that became known as the Ramapo Pass and which played a role in the Revolutionary War. Also, during the Revolution, it is said that signals were sent from Liberty Rock (Highland Homes site) to Mt. Torne. This was done to monitor the movement of British troops in New York Bay.

Following the American Revolution, industry in and around Sloatsburg in the 1800s consisted of iron mines, forges, textile mills, manufacturing factories, and lumber sawmills. In 1792, Isaac Sloat opened a tannery. In 1815, his son, Jacob, built a mill for the manufacture of cotton cloth. He lead the New York market at one point. The growth and development of the mill was an important factor in the emergence of Sloatsburg as a village. Abraham Dater came to Sloatsburg and built a dam and a series of iron forges. Its location was on the banks of the Ramapo River near the present intersection of Washington Avenue and Route 17, known locally as "Dater's Crossing." As factory workers moved to the area and built houses in proximity to the forges, the community became known first as "Dater's Works" and then by the late 1800s as "Pleasant Valley." Construction of the Erie Railroad in the 1830s, which extended from Piermont to Goshen, was a major factor in the growth and expansion of the village. Annexed by the Village of Sloatsburg in the early 1900s, Pleasant Valley is still referred to as "Upper Sloatsburg" by older residents. The Village of Sloatsburg incorporated on October 7, 1929.

Each stage of history in Sloatsburg is visible in the many artifacts, buildings and features that still exist in the community, ranging from Greek Revival buildings to remnants of native

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<sup>4</sup> History provided by Mr. Gene Kuykendall, former Village Historian.

American settlements. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to preserve the elements of Sloatsburg's landscape that provide the community its sense of place – its own unique story. As part of the Existing Conditions analyses, Mr. Gene Kuykendall, a Sloatsburg Village Historian, compiled a list identifying potential historic sites (refer to **Table 2**). The locations of these sites are identified in **Figure 11**. Since the initial preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, a group of citizens has constituted itself, the Friends of Harmony Hall Committee, who have furnished additional information on the Village's historic resources. This information is included as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan.

There are many ways in which the Village can actively preserve its historic resources; the following provides a discussion of the objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

### **I. Protection of Historic Structures**

The most effective means of protecting local historic structures is to implement a local historic preservation law. Section 119-dd of the General Municipal Law empowers the Village Board to *“provide by regulations, special conditions and restrictions for the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of places, districts, sites, buildings, structures, works of art and other objectives having a special character or special historical, cultural, aesthetic interest or value.”* Such regulations, special conditions and restrictions may include appropriate and reasonable control of the use or appearance of neighboring private property within the public view, or both.”

The Board may establish a landmark or historic preservation commission to administer the historic preservation regulations. Alternatively, through a community's zoning and planning authority, the Planning Board may also function as a reviewing agency. Generally, persons may not carry out any exterior alteration, restoration, reconstruction, demolition, new construction or moving of a landmark or property within a historic district, or make a material change to the structure or property, without first obtaining a “certificate of appropriateness.” The certificate is required in order for the Building Inspector to grant a building permit.

The purpose of application review and receipt of a certificate of appropriateness is to ensure that landmarks or properties which contribute to the character of a historic district are retained, with their particular historic features altered as little as possible. In addition, structural alterations should be compatible with a landmark or historic district's historic character. Lastly, new construction within a historic district should be compatible with the character of the historic district.

**Without regulations in place, the Village has no authority or control over the demolition or alteration of historic features.** Ultimately, a reviewing agency may decide that a structure is beyond repair or cannot be rehabilitated in a manner whereby the owner still receives a reasonable return on the property; however, at least there is a mechanism for review before the resource is irretrievably lost.



## 2. Adaptive Reuse

***Provide incentives for the adaptive reuse of the Town's historic resources by permitting a wider range of uses to occur in historic structures than might otherwise be permitted in the zoning district in which the property is located.*** The Comprehensive Plan strongly encourages flexibility in land use control for historic structures as an incentive for preserving them. The rehabilitation of historic structures can be a costly endeavor; however, if an owner is provided with a range of opportunities for use of a property, the cost may be offset by a more "marketable" use, thereby encouraging preservation of the structure. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that if a property is designated as a landmark or historic property, that it be permitted to be used for alternative uses, including **but not limited to**:

- bed and breakfast;
- non- fast-food restaurant or dining establishment;
- antique or artisan shop, art gallery, museum;
- limited retail use;
- office use;
- quasi-public uses;
- mixed residential/office use.

The adaptive reuse should be of a nature which would not result in a negative impact, e.g., noise, traffic, to a surrounding residential neighborhood – these impacts may be mitigated by establishing appropriate screening and hours of operation, and allowing adaptive reuse by special permit.

## 3. Historic Recognition Programs

***Develop a voluntary recognition program for the Village's historic structures.*** Numerous communities have instituted voluntary plaque programs as a means of identifying and acknowledging the existence of historic resources in the community.

For example, the Preservation Foundation in Saratoga Springs, and the Greene County Historical Society offer these programs. In Saratoga Springs, a homeowner obtains a plaque application, and conducts research on the history of their home. The plaque is custom-made for each structure, and includes the Preservation Foundation logo, the date of initial construction, the owner or architect, and four or five words describing the significance of the home, e.g., home of blacksmith. A significant amount of neighborhood pride has been generated by the plaque program, and it has acted as an incentive for homeowners to maintain and rehabilitate their residences. Designation as a "significant" property does not impose any restrictions on the structure or the owner. The Preservation Foundation uses the information on the application to develop "house histories" of each property. With this database, the Preservation Foundation uses the information as a basis for developing a self guided tour in the community.

The Greene County Historical Society also administers a voluntary survey program that is very popular; the county has listed 100 properties on their Registry over the last seven years. An application is filled out by the applicant, and a ten member register committee reviews the application and determines its eligibility for designation. The program is designed to identify structures of historic and architectural interest. If selected, the owner may purchase a bronze plaque. The County boundary is outlined on the plaque, and the name of the Greene County Historical Society is embossed on it. The plaques are not customized for the individual properties. The designation does not impose any restriction on the structure or the owner. The structures are identified on the Registry, and the photos accompanying the application have been utilized in a booklet published by the society. In addition, the information contained in the application will be published in a booklet. News releases describing the designation are published in the local newspaper, identifying the designated site.

Several companies, including the Erie Landmark Company, make plaques for historic organizations. Custom-made oval plaques (10"x7") cost approximately \$95 per plaque; Greene County's plaques cost \$45 each since they are ordered in groups of 25, and each plaque is identical.

Another means of perpetuating the historic sense of place is to encourage that new roads or buildings use names that recall the past; the Town of Woodbury has implemented this concept, and has established a committee to develop a list of historical names. Sloatsburg could recommend that streets be named after historic persons or places or significant environmental features. The Village Historian and/or a local preservation group could develop a list, which is then used to name roads or community buildings.

TABLE 2  
SLOATSBURG HISTORIC SITES  
September 2001, June 2007

SITE NUMBER	HISTORICAL SITE	CURRENT CONDITION	PARCEL NUMBER	RECOMMENDATION
1	A&P Market	Midland Tackle	38.52-1-5	Plaque
4	Allen/Whritenour Pond	Existing	38.50-1-15	No Action
2	Allen's Dam	Demolished	30.77-2-7	Marker
2A	Ward's Hoe Handle Factory	Demolished	30.77-2-7	(Marker incl above)
3	Allen's Store & Post Office	Demolished	38.52-1-14	No Action
5	Andy Sovak Market	Burned	38.44-1-4	No Action
6	Ashmore Waldron Home	Residence	38.44-1-16	Preserve
7	Babinski's Market	Residence	38.51-1-24	Plaque
8	Bennett's Confectionary Store	Residence	38.44-1-18	Restore
9	Benton Waldron's Barn	Burned	38.44-1-12	No Action
10	Benton Waldron's House	Residence	38.44-1-17	Preserve
11	Blagden House	Restored Residence	38.42-1-24	Preserve
12	Blanche Rose Store	Antique Shop	29.84-1-1	Plaque
13	Brown Estate/Cappamore Farm	Demolished by NYS Thruway	38.44-2-9	No Action
14	Brown's Gate	National Register site	38.44-2-2	Protect
15	Campfire Girl's Park	Super Seven Gas Station	38.43-1-16	Plaque
16	Collishaw Store/Cheap Store	Demolished by DOT Route 17	38.28-1-1	No Action
17	Dater's Crossing	Replaced with modern bridge	29.76-2-21	Display/Marker Existing
18	Dater's Dam and Forges	Some signs of foundation only	29.68-2-24	Marker
19	Dater's Meadow, Pond & Ice House	Pone & Ice House foundation	29.67-1-1	No Action
20	Dater's Store	Demolished	29.76-1-3	Marker
21	Daughter's of American Clubhouse	Residence	29.84-1-9	Plaque
22	Donnelly Hotel/Famous Door Tavern	Residence	29.68-1-18	Restore
23	Dora Waldron House	Wright Sport Shop	38.52-1-16	Plaque
24	Dr. Gillette's House	Residence	38.27-1-4	Preserve
25	Dr. Benedetto's House	Residence	30.70-1-1	Preserve
26	Dumas Confectionery	Residence	29.76-1-7	Plaque
27	Field Estate - Caretaker's Cottage	Restored Residence	38.41-1-4	Preserve
28	Field Estate - Carriage House	Restored Residence	38.42-1-1	Preserve
29	Field Estate - Dayworkers' House	Restored Residence	38.42-1-19.2	Preserve
30	Field Estate - Fieldstone Farm	Demolished	38.34-1-13	Preserve
30A	Springhouse Indian Rock Shelter	Well preserved	38.34-1-13	Preserve
31	Field Estate - Malcolm Field Home	Restored Residence	38.42-1-25	Preserve
32	Field Estate - Stable	Restored Residence	38.42-1-2	Preserve
33	Field Estate Servant's House	Restored Residence	38.42-1-4	Preserve
34	First Library	Demolished	38.44-1-5	No Action
35	Fitz Randolph Stone House	Residence	38.59-1-33	Preserve
36	Garty's Garage	Auto Classic	29.60-1-2	Plaque
37	Glenwood Hotel	Restored - Characters	38.44-1-8.1	Preserve
37A	Bolan Store and D'Avanzo Barbershop	Demolished	38.44-1-8.1	No Action
38	Goodyear Boarding House and Store	Apartment Building	38.52-1-7	Plaque
39	Grist Mill House	Restored	38.60-1-4	Preserve
40	Hiram Knapp House	Residence	29.84-1-13	Preserve
41	Ike Bower Grocery Store	Residence	29.84-2-10	Plaque
42	Jacob Sloat Mansion - Harmony Hall	Community Center	38.51-1-4	Restore
43	Kelly's Candy Store	Demolished	38.36-1-6	No Action
44	Knapp's Dam and Shoddy Mill	Demolished/Modular Stone Co	29.84-2-13	Marker
45	Lafayette Market	Contractor's office	38.44-1-20	Plaque
46	Liberty Rock	Candidate for National Register	38.35-1-9	Protect
47	Mather Meat Market	Demolished	38.44-1-1	No Action
48	Methodist Church Chapel (1834)	Restored	39.36-1-1	Protect
49	Miele's Deli/Restaurant	Miele's Deli/Restaurant	39.21-1-32	Plaque
50	Walron Home	D'Avanzo Insurance Agency	38.44-1-3	Plaque
50A	Monaido Shoe Shop	Demolished	38.43-1-13	No Action
51	Motorcycle Mike	Antique Shop	29.76-1-4	Plaque
52	Old Elementary School	Burned	38.36-2-4	Marker
53	Orange Turnpike Toll Gate	Removed	38.51-1-27	Marker
54	Peepertown	Preserved area of homes	38.27-1-10	Preserve & Marker
55	Persichetti House	Persichetti House	38.44-1-7	Preserve
56	Pete Marie Garage	Residence	29.84-2-9	Plaque
57	Pucilli Drug Store	Restaurant Supply Store	38.44-1-21	Plaque
58	RR Siding/Feed, Coal & Lumber Yard	Only foundations remain	38.36-2-21.1	Marker
59	Robertson Garage & Auto Agency	M&G Antique Autos	29.52-1-2	Plaque
60	Rozum Hotel & Tavern	Badly Deteriorated	29.60-1-13	No Action
61	Russell Bros Garage and Gas Station	Empty Building	29.84-2-11	No Action
62	Slabtown	Evidence of quarry operations	29360-1-10	No Action
63	Sloat House & Tavern	National and State Registers	38.59-1-34	Protect
64	Sloat's Dam and Mill Pond	National and State Registers	39.29-1-1	Protect
65	Sloat's Mill	Building burned & foundation razed	38.52-1-10	Marker
66	Sloatsburg Cemetery	National and State Registers	38.51-1-30	Protect
67	Sloatsburg's Garage - Taylor & Moffa	Sloatsburg Auto Body	38.51-1-26	Preserve
68	St Joan of Arc RC Church	Preserved	38.51-1-3	Preserve
69	St. Francis Episcopal Church	Preserved/Sloatsburg Library	38.43-1-17	Preserve
70	Stewart Greenhouse	Demolished	29.60-1-1	No Action
71	Sunnyside Restaurant	Sunnyside Restaurant	29.52-1-3	Plaque
72	Taylor's Hotel & Inn	Replaced with Post Office	38.51-1-9	Marker
73	Telephone Switchboard Office	Residence	38.44-1-15.2	Plaque
74	Texaco Gas Station	Beauty Salon/Barbershop	38.51-1-8	Plaque
75	Tobin's Alley	Village parking lot	38.44-1-8.2	No Action
75A	Sloatsburg Laundry (late 1800s)	Demolished	38.44-1-8.2	No Action
76	Tune Waldron Pond	Village swimming pool	38.59-2-1	No Action
77	Tune Waldron Stone House	Residence	38.44-1-15.1	Preserve
78	Union Hall/Henry Club	Sloatsburg Hardware	38.44-1-10	Preserve
79	Van Waldron's General Store	Apartment Building	38.44-1-2	Plaque
80	Volkmar Barber Shop	Residence	38.44-1-19	Preserve
81	Waldron Blacksmith Shop	Village Hall	38.44-1-6	Display Existing
82	Waldron Bros Tydol Service Station	Demolished	30.77-1-7	No Action
83	Warren Waldron Funeral Parlor	St Joan of Arc Rectory	38.51-1-2	Plaque
		<b>Candy Kitchen</b>	<b>Demolished</b>	<b>No Action</b>
		<b>Sterling Mine RR</b>	<b>Tracks Torn Up</b>	<b>Marker</b>
		<b>Brown's Bridge</b>	<b>Demolished</b>	<b>No Action</b>

Recommendation (of Eugene Kuykendall, Village Historian)

Protect = Site on National Register or other landmark list = Local Law to protect from demolition of major changes w/historic marker  
 Preserve = Structures significant in history of Village in excellent condition = encourage preserving sites  
 Restore = Similar to above but should be refurbished and preserved with historic plaque  
 Marker = Site or original structure significant in history of Village = should be marked with an historic marker.  
 Plaque = Site or structure candidate for an historic plaque at owner discretion  
 No Action - because of condition or relative importance, no specific action recommended.  
 Sites in Bold - changes, additions to be confirmed

Total Sites 91 Local Law Required

Total Candidates: CDRC/PB/ZBA alert/action  
 Protect 7 CDRC/PB/ZBA alert/action  
 Preserve 24 Village to Fund  
 Restore 3 Historical Society to fund  
 Marker 13 No action  
 Plaque 22  
 No Action 22

## H. AESTHETIC (SCENIC) RESOURCES

To outsiders and visitors, the image of Sloatsburg is formed primarily from traveling along Route 17. While there are many positive examples of the Village's aesthetic character along Route 17, e.g., the Sloat House, there are an equal number of negative images, e.g., unscreened automotive repair car storage areas within front yards. Yet, to travel off of Route 17 onto the Village's local road is to see an overall attractive landscape of well-maintained buildings with scenic features, such as tree rows and stone walls, dispersed throughout a woodland setting. **Figure 12** illustrates the locations of the important scenic features that Sloatsburg's citizens identified through the public opinion survey.

Settled portions of Sloatsburg are concentrated on either side of Route 17 along the Ramapo Valley floor. However, development is spreading out from these lower elevation areas onto the steeper hillsides and ridge lines of the community. A challenge of the Comprehensive Plan is to accommodate residential and nonresidential growth in a manner that still preserves the woodland scenic character and qualities of the Village. It is the Village's goal to protect the visual quality of Sloatsburg's natural environment and enhance the quality of the buildings, roads, and structures that constitute its built environment.

### I. Village Aesthetic Quality

The results of the Village's public opinion survey indicated that many of Sloatsburg's citizens are concerned with the visual image of the community as seen from the Route 17 corridor. In general, there appears to be a consensus that buildings and properties are not maintained. A field survey of the buildings and properties along Route 17 does not entirely bear this sentiment out. A few key parcels, both residential and commercial, are in poor condition for a number of reasons including age and small to no yard setbacks on this busy road – highway dust and debris are deposited on these structures and properties. There are a number of existing businesses involved in auto repair that do not have sufficient landscaping or fencing to screen vehicles and auto parts. In general, the Village Board should explore ways of obtaining owner cooperation to repair and maintain private properties, e.g., mow unkempt lawns, remove trash and debris from front yards, and enforce the placement of garbage cans out of view except the night before trash pick-up.

The appearance of Route 17 is also impacted by the poor condition of its infrastructure, e.g., patchy sidewalks. The Village and NYSDOT need to work together and improve this infrastructure. To promote a well-maintained visual environment along Route 17 and throughout the Village, the Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Village consider the following:

- Seek or provide loan assistance or other assistance for façade rehabilitation.
- Enforce property maintenance law outlining minimum expectations for property maintenance, e.g., no major peeling paint on properties, front yards kept weed free and clear of debris, etc.
- Letter or handout from Village outlining importance of property maintenance and expectations of the village, e.g., what should be maintained and how non-maintenance

will be enforced. Information should target property maintenance from the standpoint of civic pride and property values, and stressing voluntary clean-up of neighborhoods;

- Sponsor award programs where nominations are received for “most improved” property – provide plaque, cash award, or gift certificate to home improvement store or local restaurant.
- Hire temporary labor (e.g., summer volunteers) which would be used to clean up properties where residents are elderly, disabled, ill, financially challenged, etc.;
- Assign staff to conduct "windshield surveys" through neighborhoods on a rotating basis, to identify violations and seek cooperative corrections -- with move to active enforcement if cooperation is not achieved. (Routinely rotating through all neighborhoods in the Village should alleviate any concern over selective enforcement.)

A separate Central Business District Study has been prepared. It is recommended that the Study be adopted as a standalone element of the Plan.

## **2. Architectural Review Commission**

The Planning Board has the authority to review and approve site and subdivision plans. In this capacity, the Planning Board reviews the proposed land use and ensures that it meets all the design standards contained in the zoning law, site plan or subdivision regulations. The Planning Board, which recently reviewed development applications for a new post office, a restaurant and office within the central business district with frontage on Route 17, have been able to negotiate certain façade improvements to proposed or renovated buildings to protect the community’s visual character. These have included placement and size of windows, style of awnings and signs, building materials, roof lines, and other elements of the building’s design. However, the Planning Board at this time does not have the authority to incorporate these recommendations into conditions of site plan or subdivision plan approval outside the SEQRA process. Ultimately, buildings could be approved that are significantly out of character with the Village’s existing setting.

The Village desires that these existing buildings be rehabilitated for appropriate uses, and supplemented by new construction that revitalizes the central business district and the Route 17 corridor. To encourage development, the Village does not want to create unnecessary delay in the review process. The zoning law sometimes requires the submission of a site plan for the reuse of an existing building even where issues associated with the redevelopment have been limited to the design of the building’s façade.

To ensure that buildings are designed in a manner consistent with the Village’s overall character, the Comprehensive Plan recommends that the zoning be amended to give the Planning Board the authority to act as an architectural review commission for certain activities within the Village Center planning area and properties with frontage on Route 17. This would allow review of building elevations concurrently with the site plan application. It is anticipated that the Village would review plans for 2-, 3-, and multifamily dwellings as well as nonresidential uses.

It is also recommended that the zoning law be amended to allow the submission of building elevations only in instances where the Planning Board finds that proposed reuse of an existing building will have no effect on the overall site and that changes are limited to alterations to the façade.

### **3. Route 17 and Village Center design guidelines**

A visitor traveling along Route 17 and through the Village Center planning area will observe buildings and structures with a particular character and architectural design. In several locations, there are consistent patterns of building architecture, materials, height, front yard setbacks, and other elements that establish a particular scale and sense of place. New buildings, when inserted within this pattern, can either enhance or detract from it.

Development within the Village Center planning area should be guided by a set of architectural and landscape design standards that guide Planning Board review of proposed improvements so that they enhance the visual quality of the corridor. A separate Central Business District Study has been prepared by Burgis Associates. It is recommended that the Study be finalized and adopted as a standalone element of, and consistent with, the Plan.

### **4. Ridge Line Protection**

It is an objective of the Comprehensive Plan to limit disturbance to the Village's ridge lines. The best method to protect the scenic quality of ridge lines is to establish appropriate setbacks from it, particularly where development could be visible from major public roads, and to limit the amount of clear cutting permitted on a property that would remove vegetation from the ridge line. In addition, it is important to limit a building's height so that the proposed structure does not extend beyond the existing tree canopy. Where it is not possible to avoid disturbance to the ridge line, the color of the building façade and roof should be selected and the building itself situated on the property in a manner that makes the structure less visible.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the zoning law be amended to give the Planning Board the authority to require a viewshed analysis as part of site plan or subdivision review where it determines that a proposed development may have a significant visual impact. Based on the findings of this analysis, the Planning Board should be given authority to establish conditions, including use of building materials, creation of additional setbacks, and clear limit lines, to protect the ridge line. The Planning Board may also consider the impact of new development on views from Harriman State Park and the trails therein.

### **5. Tree Protection**

It is an objective of the Comprehensive Plan to limit clear cutting and grading in a manner that would create large gaps in the existing forested canopy that helps maintain the rural woodland character of Sloatsburg. To this end, the Comprehensive Plan recommends that the site plan and subdivision regulations be amended to establish the following:

- Add a requirement that a tree survey be conducted for site plan and subdivision plan applications;
- A maximum percent of clear cutting on an individual property;
- Where the maximum percent of clear cutting is exceeded, an applicant will be required to plant trees and/or other vegetation in a manner that minimizes the appearance of the clear cut in the long-term;
- Standards for tree plantings should be established including recommendations on minimum size at the time of planting, and a list of native species which would be appropriate for planting.

## 6. Scenic Road Protection

Sloatsburg has scenic roads that have certain positive aesthetic qualities which set them apart from more conventional roads. These qualities include but are not limited to: a concentration of historic structures, scenic views from vantage points along the road, or a unique set of details such as stone fences or mature tree rows. These corridors are important visual elements of the Village. The public opinion survey documented the following as examples of roads that are considered “scenic” in Sloatsburg:

- Eagle Valley Road
- Seven Lakes Drive, the gateway to Harriman State Park, which also affords views of the Ramapo River
- Johnstown Road, particularly the views of Stony Brook
- Sard and Allen Street stone walls
- Greenway Street and the patch of pines adjoining it
- Sunset Street and views of Pine Grove Lake
- Route 17, between Dunkin Donuts and the bedrock outcrop at Seven Lakes Drive – existing older structures on this segment
- Hanging canopy along Route 17 north of Park Avenue

The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges that there are other roads, or road segments, which are similarly attractive and could be considered scenic. In order to preserve the scenic elements of the Village’s roads, the following is recommended:

- The existing road alignments of scenic roads should not be altered. The winding character of a road may provide it with its unique character and visual interest. The Village should consider exceptions to Village road standards where these exceptions will preserve the scenic quality of the road.
- Specific details that lend a road its character, e.g., mature tree rows and stone walls, should be preserved. Subdivisions and site plans should incorporate these elements into their overall design and layout and disturbance to these features should be minimized as conditions to site plan or subdivision approval.

- Where possible, setbacks should be provided along roads with scenic views to maintain a scenic vista. In this case, the layout of landscaping and proposed structures should be designed in a manner that maintains portions of the scenic vista.
- Developments within the viewshed of scenic roads should be reviewed for their visual impact. For example, significant topographic changes, such as hillside cuts or grading, may impact scenic views or the scenic character of a road. Development should be designed in a manner that preserves mature vegetation and the existing topography to the extent practicable.
- Improvements to roads should avoid “day-lighting,” i.e., development that requires tree removal of mature trees adjacent to road rights-of-way. Existing tree canopies should be retained to the extent practicable.

It is recommended that the Planning Board be given the authority to establish conditions to any site plan or subdivision approval to ensure that the scenic characteristics of a road are protected. These include roads identified above, or any other roads that have similar characteristics as documented by the Planning Board during site or subdivision plan review.



## **V. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **A. PLAN ADOPTION AND ZONING**

The Sloatsburg Comprehensive Plan provides a framework within which to achieve the collective vision of the village. This vision, and the goals and objectives for achieving it, find their ultimate expression in a plan that portrays the preferred pattern of development and land use within the community.

Sloatsburg citizens must be committed in the short and long-term to making decisions and undertaking activities that are consistent with the Vision expressed in this Plan. The first and most important action to be undertaken is the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Village Board of Trustees establishes the Plan as the official expression of village policy related to its future. Plan approval alone will not ensure that growth occurs in a manner consistent with Plan; the Plan must be implemented by a series of regulations, as well as public and private investment. To effectuate the Plan, existing regulations must be reviewed and revised and new regulations implemented that are consistent with it.

Public investment in capital improvements, e.g., community facilities and infrastructure, are key elements of the Plan's implementation. The Plan provides the framework for decisions by various governmental units affecting the Village, including the school district, as well as town, county, state and federal agencies.

The Implementation section outlines the broad regulatory mechanisms that should be amended and made consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Adoption of zoning regulations and a zoning map consistent with the Plan will go a long way towards enabling officials to effectively control development in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Specific implementation measures are outlined in each element of the Plan document.

#### **I. Zoning Regulations**

As mentioned previously, zoning regulations are adopted to effectuate the planning goals and objectives contained in the Village's Comprehensive Plan. Generally, zoning accomplishes this objective by regulating the type of land use, the density, the location of development, and design. In drafting zoning regulations, a certain amount of flexibility is desirable in order to respond to changing needs and markets while protecting the community from potential negative impacts. Within the zoning framework, it is possible to create additional provisions or incentives to accomplish particular Comprehensive Plan objectives. These techniques are outlined below.

Generally, a community is divided into districts, or zones, and each zone is governed by a particular set of regulations establishing uses and density of uses permitted within the zone.

The zoning map is an integral element of the zoning law. The map must be adopted by the Village Board and filed with the Clerk with any amendments which may be made to the map from time to time. The zoning map illustrates each community divided into districts, or zones.

The boundaries of the zones are illustrated on the map. Each zone, as mentioned previously, has its own specific set of land use, density (bulk), and in some instances, performance standards regulating development on properties within each zone.

A zoning map will be adopted consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and zoning law. The zoning local law will include a number of important provisions, definitions, purposes, zoning district designations, categories of uses, and various zoning techniques. Several of the key elements, in addition to the zoning districts, are described here.

#### **a. Special Uses**

Most zoning districts list a number of permitted uses that are allowed, provided they comply with specific standards that govern the siting of the use on a particular parcel of land. These dimensional requirements are referred to as bulk standards. Uses that comply with the bulk standards of the zone are referred to as permitted uses. In addition to bulk standards, there are often additional requirements concerning parking, lighting, drainage, signs, etc., which require specific review as they may apply to a particular property, which must be approved in accordance with a site plan (see below).

Thus, a zoning law will often include "special uses" that are allowed by permit. Special uses are authorized by Section 7-725-b of the New York State Village Law. A special use permit is defined by Village Law as the "*authorization of a particular land use which is permitted in a zoning local law, subject to requirements imposed by such local law to assure the proposed use is in harmony with such local law and will not adversely affect the neighborhood if such requirements are met.*" These uses are allowed provided they meet additional standards, usually related to the potential impact of the specific use. Special uses, while they may be desirable since they meet specific community needs, could impact adjoining uses because of the characteristics of the special use; a special use may not be appropriate in all locations within a district.

The zoning regulations will set forth individual standards for special uses and procedures for the approval of a special use permit. These uses can be approved by the Village Board, Planning Board, or the Zoning Board of Appeals although most communities assign this function to the Planning Board except for unusual or very large-scale uses. Examples of uses that are often only allowed by special use permit include but are not limited to: fast-food establishments with drive-throughs, gas stations, live entertainment, dry cleaning establishments, institutional uses (including places of worship and educational uses) and home occupations. Specific conditions would be established for the various special uses to protect the public health, safety and welfare, weigh potential effects to neighboring land uses, and consider environmental implications that may need to be mitigated at the time the Village Planning Board reviews site-specific development applications.

#### **b. Overlay Districts**

An overlay zone is a mapped zone that is usually applied to a specific geographic area, often an environmentally or historically significant area, and can overlay portions of several zoning districts, or part of a specific zoning district. Overlay zoning is a technique that is often applied

to areas where specific criteria are to be added to the existing zoning to achieve a particular purpose, e.g., protection of historic areas or aquifer recharge areas.

The overlay zone is guided by specific regulations governing the use of the particular area of concern, e.g., design criteria for sensitive viewsheds, elevated structures within flood plains, etc. The overlay district provides regulations that are in addition to the regulations of the underlying zoning district. The Village Board may establish overlay zones as part of the zoning regulations.

### **c. Incentive Zoning**

Incentive zoning is yet another technique to accomplish the goals and objectives of various Comprehensive Plan policies. In accordance with 7-703 of the New York State Village Law, a community may provide for a system of zoning incentives, or bonuses, for purposes of advancing specific physical, cultural, design and social policies in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. An incentive or bonus is an adjustment to the permissible population density, area, height, open space, use or other provisions of a zoning local law to achieve certain community benefits or amenities. These amenities are defined in New York State Village Law, and include preservation of open space, housing for persons of low or moderate income, parks, elder care, day care or other specific physical, social or cultural amenities, or cash in lieu thereof, of benefit to the residents of the community. Where appropriate, the Village Board may establish incentives to accomplish its specific planning objectives.

The Village has deliberated the potential use of incentive zoning and finds that its application at this time should be limited to the creation of senior housing in the Village. It is recommended that an applicant be permitted an increase in the total number of dwelling units up to an additional ten percent (after the development density has been calculated taking into consideration all environmental constraints), provided the additional units are set aside for dwellings for senior citizens that are 65 years or older. The density bonus would be permitted by approval of the Village Board. The senior housing may be small lot or attached dwellings. Restrictive covenants would be placed on the units to ensure that the housing remains occupied by seniors at the time of any sale or other transfer. At the time the zoning is drafted to allow senior housing, the Village should consider adopting separate standards such as: maximum selling price of the dwelling to assure that the dwelling remains affordable to senior citizens; the minimum floor area for a unit; the districts in which the increase would be permitted; and, other considerations. The intent is to provide senior housing where the dwelling units are integrated into the Village's neighborhoods, rather than constructing a stand-alone senior housing facility.

## **2. Community Design Guidelines**

The Plan recommends that general design guidelines be created for the Village Center planning area (i.e., the central business district) that describe methods for accommodating development in a manner consistent with the Village's vision, and nurturing communities with a sense of place. These guidelines should be used during site and subdivision plan review, and should be referenced in the site plan and subdivision regulations. The Village Board retained Burgis

Associates who have prepared a "Central Business District Study". The Village Board will adopt the Central Business District Study separately, but as an element of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **3. Site Plan Review**

Section 7-725-a of the New York State Village Law sets forth regulations regarding the review and approval of site plans. A site plan is defined as "*a rendering, drawing, or sketch prepared to specifications and containing necessary elements, as set forth in the applicable zoning ordinance or local law, which shows the arrangement, layout and design of the proposed use of a single parcel of land...*"

The zoning law must identify the land uses which require site plan approval and the elements to be included on plans submitted for approval; site plan review and approval is usually conducted by a Planning Board. The enabling legislation specifies that the elements may include, where appropriate, those related to parking, means of access, screening, signs, landscaping, architectural features, location and dimensions of buildings, impact of the proposed use on adjacent land uses and such other elements as may be reasonably be related to the health, safety, and general welfare of the community. These are to be adopted by the Village Board.

The site plan enabling legislation establishes that the Planning Board, in approving a residential site plan (see also subdivision regulations), may require that the site plan include a park or parks suitably located for playground or other recreational uses. This requirement must be based on findings that a need exists for such a facility, and based on an evaluation of present and anticipated future needs, taking into account anticipated population growth to which the site plan will contribute. In the event that a park may not be suitably located on the same parcel of land, the Planning Board can require a payment in lieu of land, the sum to be established by the Village Board.

It is anticipated that the site plan regulations will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, along with any proposed revisions to the zoning law. In particular, the regulations should be updated to specifically require certain infrastructure, including stormwater controls, to protect water quality, and enhanced landscape design guidelines to protect the visual character of the community. This is in addition to other recommendations identified throughout this Comprehensive Plan document.

### **B. OTHER REGULATORY MECHANISMS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The following regulatory mechanisms should be revised or adopted to implement the Comprehensive Plan. Implementation of these procedures should follow immediately after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and revised zoning law and map to ensure decisions and activities are carried out in a manner consistent with the Plan.

## **I. Subdivision Regulations**

Section 7-728 of the New York State Village Law authorizes the Village Board to delegate their authority to the Planning Board to review and approve subdivisions. A subdivision is defined as *"the subdivision of a parcel of land into a number of lots, blocks or sites as specified in a local ordinance, law, rule or regulation, with or without streets and highways, for the purpose of sale, transfer of ownership, or development."*

The review and approval of subdivisions is intended to provide for the future growth and development of the village by ensuring adequate facilities for the housing, transportation, distribution, comfort, convenience, safety, health and welfare of its population.

The subdivision regulations are obsolete and should be reviewed and amended to ensure their consistency with the Plan.

## **2. Official Map**

Section 7-724 of the New York State Village Law authorizes the Village Board to establish and adopt an official map, after appropriate notice and public hearing, illustrating streets, highways, parks, and drainage systems. The map, upon adoption, is final and conclusive with regard to the location and width of streets and highways, drainage systems and the location of parks.

The official map sets important community policy regarding future improvements related to the infrastructure listed above. A purpose of adopting an official map is to show the location of future improvements, including proposed new roadways, drainage systems, and parks, so that the public is informed of the reservation of certain lands for these purposes. The official map also serves to inform other governmental and regulatory agencies of the Village's intent with respect to streets, highways, parks and drainage within its borders, thus insuring a greater degree of cooperation among regulatory agencies. The official map should be reviewed and revised, if necessary, every five years, by the Village Board.

## **3. Cluster Subdivision**

Section 7-738 of the New York State Village Law allows the Village Board to grant authority to the Planning Board to approve a cluster subdivision simultaneously with the approval of a plat or plats. A cluster development is defined as a *"subdivision plat or plats...in which the applicable zoning local law is modified to provide an alternative permitted method for the layout, configuration and design of lots, buildings and structures, roads, utility lines and other infrastructure, parks, and landscaping in order to preserve the natural and scenic qualities of open lands."* This method of development generally permits the development of land at the density that would have occurred on the entire parcel to be located on only a portion of the land, thus keeping the remaining land open.

Cluster development results in a more compact arrangement of buildings and/or lots, reduced infrastructure and expanded common open space that has no greater density and no more

dwelling units than would have occurred if the subdivision had been designed utilizing the minimum lot dimensions for the applicable zoning district.

### C. OPTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

There are a number of optional regulatory mechanisms that would further assist the Village in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

#### I. Architectural or Design Review Board

Despite the widespread use of architectural review boards (ARB), also referred to as design review boards, there is no specific enabling legislation to guide their creation. Most municipalities in New York State base their authority to establish these boards on Section 96-a of the General Municipal Law. This section empowers a municipality to provide regulations, special conditions and restrictions to protect, enhance, perpetuate and use "places, districts, sites, buildings, structures, works of art, and other objects having a special character or special historical or **aesthetic interest** or value." Such regulations may include appropriate and reasonable control of the use and/or appearance of a neighboring private property within public view.

Typically, a local law is enacted establishing an ARB. The board's authority may apply to the visual environment of the entire municipality, or may apply to specific areas that the municipality would like to protect. Many ARBs have the power to approve or disapprove an application for a building permit based on a set of specified criteria, e.g., excessive similarity and excessive dissimilarity. **In some communities, the Planning Board is given the powers of an ARB.** The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Village give the Sloatsburg Planning Board this function.

Generally, an ARB local law should establish the following:

- Membership of the ARB, which should include practitioners in the fields of architecture, graphic arts, community planning, land development or other relevant profession;
- application and submission procedures;
- well-defined criteria for approving and disapproving applications and the relevance to building permits;
- appeal process; and
- the review process should be flexible but it should define the parameters of discretion and avoid the establishment of styles or predetermined solutions.

Many communities do not enact an architectural review law because of concerns that it would unduly burden businesses or new residential developments, particularly small scale projects which may not have the financial resources for a design professional to prepare renderings or building elevations of the proposed improvements. However, the following is noted:

- financial institutions lending money for the construction of new commercial buildings sometimes require a rendering or building elevation;

- an Architectural Review Board could limit its review to applications that impact the Village Center and properties with frontage on Route 17.

## **2. Local Historic Preservation Law**

The historic resources identified in the Comprehensive Plan are important elements of Sloatsburg's landscape. The Plan recognizes that the buildings and features that make up the Village's unique history are worth preserving. The Village should give serious consideration to enacting a local preservation law to protect these resources. State and National Register of Historic Places designations primarily safeguard properties from state and federal actions; these properties are not safeguarded from local activities, including demolition.

Enabling legislation to enact a local historic preservation law comes from four sources: Sections 96-a and Article 5-k of the General Municipal Law; the zoning enabling statute, and Municipal Home Rule Law. The Preservation League of New York has prepared a model ordinance to guide municipalities in the creation of a local historic preservation law. These regulations typically include the following:

- Statement of Purpose
- Establishment of an Administrative Entity
- Description of the Conduct Being Regulated
- Standards for Decisions
- Procedures
- An appeals mechanism

If the historic preservation law is enacted under the authority granted by the Municipal General Law or the Municipal Home Rule Law, an existing entity, e.g., the Planning Board, or a new entity, e.g., a Village Historic Commission, may be used to administer the regulations. If enacted by the zoning enabling statute contained in the New York State Village Law, the administrative body must be the Village Board, the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Appeals. It is recommended that the Village Board consider creating a separate Historic Commission to review applications that might impact historic resources, but that the actual designation of historic properties be adopted by the Village Board.

## **3. Conservation Easements**

Every parcel of land has attached to it a bundle of rights. Among these rights is the right to develop the property for uses consistent with a municipality's zoning law. It is possible to separate this development right from the property and sell or donate the right to an organization interested in preserving a property or structure. A conservation easement is placed on the property, restricting its use to that outlined in the easement. The conservation easement is used as a method of preserving open space, farmland, land within or contributing to scenic vistas, and other important community resources.

A benefit of the conservation easement program is that the easement does not eliminate the full value of the property from the tax roll, as does a land transfer or sale to a tax-exempt

organization. It also allows an individual to retain ownership of a parcel of property, and to realize some equity from its sale, if the easement is sold rather than donated. If donated, the land owner realizes tax benefits from the donation of the development rights. The tax assessor must take into consideration the limitation on development placed on the property and resulting potential diminution of property value with the conservation easement.

The Village is empowered to acquire interests or rights in real property or the preservation of open areas in accordance with the regulations contained in Section 247 of the General Municipal Law. This right could be exercised to protect land along the Ramapo River, vacant land adjoining Harriman State Park, or other areas that constitute Sloatsburg's open space system.

#### **D. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

In accordance with Section 99-g of the General Municipal Law, a municipality may undertake the planning and execution of a capital improvement program. A capital improvement program is defined as a plan of capital projects proposed to be undertaken during a six-year period, the estimated cost of the improvements, and the proposed method of financing. A tentative budget is prepared according to the projects to be undertaken. For each project, a description of the following is required:

- Description of project and total cost;
- method of financing, including a breakdown of the sources of the finances; and
- an estimate of the impact of the project on the municipality's operating budget for three fiscal years following the project's completion.

If Sloatsburg proactively undertakes improvements in the community consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, these improvements should be structured into the overall fiscal program of the Village. By long-term planning and financing of the improvements, it reduces the impact of the cost of a new project on any single fiscal year by creating a more even level of capital expenditures and thus adding uniformity and predictability to debt service. In addition, with a clear itinerary and prioritization of projects, the Village can also seek funds for any improvements from various county, state, regional and federal funding sources.

#### **E. SEQRA**

New York State's Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) establishes a process to review a project's potential impact on a community and its environment, and to mitigate any adverse impacts which may result. SEQRA identifies and establishes thresholds for the types of activities likely to require no environmental review (Type II action), or, conversely, activities likely to require the preparation of full documentation in the form of a draft and/or final environmental impact statement (Type I actions).

A municipality is required to make an environmental determination of significance for Unlisted actions not identified in the environmental regulations implementing SEQRA. A municipality can adopt its own list of Type I and Type II actions. The adoption of Type I and Type II actions



can streamline the review process by providing some certainty as to the anticipated environmental procedures that will be required.

In addition, SEQRA allows a local agency to designate a specific geographic area as a Critical Environmental Area (CEA). A CEA is a specific geographic area designated by a state or local agency having exceptional or unique environmental characteristics. The CEA must cover one or more of the following:

- benefit or threat to human health;
- a natural setting (e.g., fish and wildlife habitat, forest and vegetation, open space and areas of important aesthetic or scenic quality);
- agricultural, social, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational or educational values or
- an inherent ecological, geological, or hydrological sensitivity to change that may be adversely affected by any change.

Following designation, the potential impact of a Type I or Unlisted action on the environmental characteristics of a CEA is a relevant area of environmental concern and must be evaluated in the determination of significance. The Village of Sloatsburg should consider designating the Ramapo River as a critical environmental area based on its numerous environmental sensitivities, e.g., sole source aquifer designation, recreational river, flood plain, etc.

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan itself is subject to SEQRA.

## **F. ANNEXATION**

As development proceeds within unincorporated Ramapo on properties that directly abut the Village of Sloatsburg, it is anticipated that the Village will service these new developments. In particular, demand may be placed on the Village's roads, library, recreational space, commuter parking, and emergency services including ambulance and fire protection. As the new development would not be located in the Village, the Village would not receive the tax revenues generated by the new development to offset the costs to service it. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Village Board enter into a dialogue with the Town at the initial stages of any development proposal in order to analyze the potential community service and fiscal impacts to Sloatsburg and determine whether it would be in the best interests of the Village and Town for the proposed development to be annexed into the Village to offset any impacts and better serve the new development.

## **G. SUMMARY**

In conclusion, the Village possesses many tools to implement the Comprehensive Plan. Dedication to the vision, and long-term consistency with the Plan, will safeguard the unique characteristics of the Village of Sloatsburg and promote responsible development.

## Addendum

### List of Historic Sites, updated to 2007

This list has been compiled from information submitted by Mr. Peter Bush, Friends of Harmony Hall Committee, in 2007. This inventory may overlap the historic resources listed in Table 2 of the Comprehensive Plan. However, to ensure that all potential historic sites are identified in the Comprehensive Plan, this list has not been amended and does not exclude any buildings or sites already identified in Table 2. The list was not accompanied by a map showing the locations of these resources, so Village historic groups will need to verify the location of the resources identified herein.

1. Harmony Hall.
2. Henry Club, significant design, mixed use concept ahead. Center of many cultural and community activities in Sloatsburg since the early 20th century. Build by Mrs. Loomis of Tuxedo Park.
3. Characters Restaurant, the original Glenwood Hotel and restaurant.
4. D'Avanzo Insurance Building.
5. Former Allens Dry Goods. Small newly restored house across from the former Allen's pond adjacent to former Bait and Tackle shop.
6. Methodist Chapels. Both are pending OPRHP listings to the National and State Register. The parsonage of the Methodist Church.
7. Former St. Francis Chapel pre-dates later Methodist Church. Retains original exterior and interior design elements circa 1900s site and property historically linked to the Sloat Family.
8. Workers houses on Mill Street.
9. Barns that face Mill Street and older homes along Liberty Rock Road.
10. Entire line of remaining older homes across from Sloatsburg
11. Sloatsburg Library.
12. Liberty Rock outlook proper. 19th century painter Jules Arnaut did a large canvas depiction of Sloatsburg circa 1856 looking south, it is thought from the vantage point of Liberty Rock.
13. Upper Sloatsburg - all older houses and outbuildings. Including all older homes between Seven Lakes Drive intersection and Daters Crossing. The Catherine Stewart homestead now boarded up. Old Rozum's bar.
14. Jefferson House.
15. The former Henrietta Sloat Reeves farmhouse which pre-dates the Revolutionary War on Johnstontown Road - includes barns and stone walls. Direct history to Claudius Smith, Revolutionary War. Restored.
16. All farmhouse buildings on Johnstontown Road which pre-date the 1950s.
17. German town camp and all homes including Dr. Benedetto's place and stables.
18. Homes around Green in Pine Grove. Excellent extant examples of 20th century colonial revival influence.
19. The George McCrumb homestead, next to old Sloatsburg Elementary School site. Mr. McCrumb was an accomplished 20th century painter and friend of famed ceramicist/painter known as Cockcroft. Ms. Cockcroft's ceramics were sold to Tiffany and Company in NY. She studied in Paris and was a well known painter as well. Her home overlooks Sloats Pond.
20. The small barbershop building which originally was a gas station in the village north of the post office.