

TOWN OF HUNTER
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2000

prepared by the Comprehensive Plan Committee, Town of Hunter

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- Map - Town of Hunter Land Use Plan
- Map - Town of Hunter Special Features

- 1991 Town of Hunter Comprehensive Plan
- 1998 Town of Hunter Economic Development Strategy

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I. Introduction

The Catskill Mountaintop region of New York State and the Town of Hunter were originally settled and established without comprehensive plans, review boards, or regulatory controls. Indeed, many of the special qualities that have attracted people to the Town still survive today, including the historic hamlets and homes, forested mountains and slopes, scenic upland valleys, and tourist destinations. Why then is a comprehensive plan necessary?

**The
Plan is
an
overall
guide
or
VISION
for the
Town**

At the beginning of a new millennium, the Town of Hunter has learned that it is directly affected by regional, national and even international trends, markets and rules. Shifts in tourism trends have brought cycles of prosperity and decline and renewal. The patterns of metropolitan prosperity have had major influences on real estate and commercial markets. Evolving public policy and rules towards outdoor recreation, wilderness and watershed protection have affected local priorities. Without a plan for

the Town and without an appreciation of these patterns and trends, it becomes easier for one major housing or commercial project to have unanticipated impacts on public services, on environmental resources, on quality of life.

A comprehensive plan is both a public process and a document that defines what is important to the community. By carefully examining history and trends against current conditions and by understanding public opinion and interest, justifiable recommendations for future action can be established. This Plan's purpose is to guide inevitable change to be as consistent as possible with community goals.

The Plan provides goals and recommendations intended to preserve that environment, while supporting economic and social growth that is compatible with community standards and with essential protection of forest preserve and watershed resources.

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As a statement of community intent, this comprehensive plan serves the following purposes:

- It operates as an overall guide or VISION for the community to be used in day-to-day development decisions;
- It serves as a coordinating mechanism for officials responsible for implementing elements of the plan;
- It provides residents and the public and private sectors with information on how the community expects to develop;
- It provides a legal basis for the specific land use regulations and other local government actions including infrastructure investment by defining the public purposes supporting those regulations and actions; and,
- It provides Town officials and other public agencies with background to guide proposed capital improvements within the Town consistent with Town Law § 272-a and the New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement.

Land use change is almost always initiated by the private sector, by individual decisions to build homes, start new businesses, expand existing businesses, sell farms, or make other changes. However, the private sector responds to opportunities that governments create through zoning, subdivision regulations, infrastructure investment and other official statements of local policy. Local governments can also take the initiative for the protection of valuable resources through the consistent application of comprehensive plan principles and other regulatory actions. The plan seeks to guide market forces so that development opportunities and land use goals will be compatible.

The Planning Process

A committee of Town of Hunter public officials and residents was appointed by the Hunter Town Board to develop this document. The committee was first started in early 1999 when the Town of Hunter, with assistance from the New York Planning Federation, received a grant from the Master Planning and Zoning Incentive Program administered within the west of the Hudson River Watershed region by the New York State Department of State.

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In 1999 the New York Planning Federation began working with the committee to coordinate completion of a comprehensive plan document. Committee members represented the Town Board, the Planning Board, the Economic Development Committee, the adjoining Village of Hunter, and citizens at large. Throughout 1999 this Committee meet monthly to discuss issues relevant to the future of the Town, to review research conducted by the New York Planning Federation, and to help set priority goals and objectives for the community.

Research for this plan involved personal interviews with a range of individuals and organizational leaders to gain insight into issues of concern. Agency representatives from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation were also interviewed to gain perspective on the critical issues of watershed protection and forest preserve management respectively.

This Plan is also built on a foundation of previous work including that done by the Greene County Department of Planning, the Town of Hunter Economic Development Committee, the Mountain Top Historical Society, and the Mountain Top Cooperative Council. This

work includes the 1991 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hunter, adopted by the Town of Hunter Planning Board, along with the 1998 Town of Hunter Economic Development Strategy prepared for the Town Economic Development Committee.

The Comprehensive Plan represents a continuation of that work. It is also a summary of the more recent work of the Hunter Comprehensive Planning Committee based on their research and the comments of standing boards of the Town and the comments of residents and friends of Hunter.

**The Plan is built
on a foundation
of previous
work -
the 1991 Plan
and the 1998
Economic
Development
Strategy**

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II. Land Use History

Until the American Revolution, the area known as the Town of Hunter was primarily forested wilderness. Little is known of any the area's earliest inhabitants. However, as natural routes through the more rugged terrain of the region, both the Kaaterskill and Platte Cloves were undoubtedly used as passages for the Native Americans.

Samuel Elisha, John Haines and Gerson Griffen from Putnam County are credited with having been the first Europeans to settle in this part of the mountains. Their presence was discovered by hunters in 1786. The population grew in the next two decades, as did the settlements, most of which were along the waterways. By 1813 the growth was sufficient to warrant the establishment of the Town (ship) of Hunter.

Although the settlers found the soil rocky and the land unproductive, many cleared the land and farmed it. Quickly they realized that the forests would provide their most important source of income. Sawmills were built along the streams which provided water power for their equipment. The abundance of hemlocks lead to the building of

tanneries, an industry that was predominate throughout the Town of Hunter for a span of almost 50 years.

Col. William Edwards, a tanner from Connecticut, built a tannery along the Schoharie Creek. Around the tannery grew a settlement, originally called Edwardsville. Schools and churches were established, creating a sense of permanence. Edwardsville later was renamed Hunter and was incorporated as a village in 1894.

Products of the land consistently provided the residents of the mountains with their livelihood. Quarries, found in great numbers had a ready market for the slate they produced. The prevalence of maple trees made possible the production of large quantities of maple syrup. Wild animals including bears, wildcats, foxes, beaver and deer were killed for food and for their hides.

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This setting of Hunter was succinctly summarized by J.H. French:

Hunter was formed from Windham as "Greenland", Jan. 27, 1813. Its name was changed April 15, 1814, a part of Saugerties was taken off in 1814, and a part of Jewett in 1849, The surface is rocky and mountainous, not more than one-fourth being susceptible of cultivation. Several of the highest peaks of the Catskills -- among which are High Peak, Round top, and Pine Orchard -- lie within the limits of this town. Two narrow valleys extend quite through the mountains and cross each other at nearly right angles near the center of the town.¹

The importance of the forest to the Hunter area is hard to overemphasize. Sawmills could be found along every stream, tanneries were everywhere, and furniture factories were established and actively producing one of the more important by-products.

Often the living provided to the inhabitants though these activities was minimal; so many households "took in boarders." For those lucky

¹ J.H. French. *Historical and Statistical Gazetteer of New York State*. R.P. Smith, Syracuse, New York, 1860, p. 333.

enough to be living along the turnpike route that is now Route 23A, a small, successful boardinghouse might become a tavern and a hotel as the population grew. As aggressive cutting of the forest reduced essential resource base for the wood industry, tourism was welcomed.

The arrival of the railroads had the greatest impact on the Town of Hunter. The first trains came from the south to Hunter in 1882 bringing with it an unprecedented growth given the new found accessibility of the region to New York City and other metropolitan regions of the eastern seaboard. Hotels and boarding houses were built everywhere. Each hamlet and village grew tremendously in an effort to accommodate the needs of incredible numbers of summer tourists. Tannersville, originally a modest hamlet like the Village of Hunter, grew and became a business center. In 1895, it too became an incorporated village. At its peak summer tourism in the Catskill region is estimated to have grown from 70,000 visitors in 1883 to nearly 400,000 in 1906.

Artists of the "Hudson River school" and authors such as James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving discovered this accessible wilderness region. Through their popular paintings, drawings and writings in the early part of the nineteenth century, the American

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public was introduced to the natural wonders of this area of the Catskills. The interest in nature and the unique qualities found in the mountains enticed more visitors. Small communities of writers, artists, musicians and theatrical people built homes forming residential summer parks. These parks are today survived by the uniquely organized Twilight, Elka and Onteora Parks, distinct and separate residential communities within the Town of Hunter. Hunter, as site of the prominent eastern escarpment of the Catskill Mountains rising abruptly and picturesquely some 2000-2500 feet from the Hudson River Valley, also became the location for a series of prominent tourist hotels. Notable were the Hotel Kaaterskill and the internationally known Catskill Mountain House whose prominent site is still obvious at the escarpment edge near North and South Lakes.

As was the case throughout the United States, the 1930's depression dealt a severe blow to the Town of Hunter. The large hotels were on their way out. Many closed, while others were taken over by various ethnic groups. Armenians, Syrians, Germans, French, and later, Carpathians and Polish refugees sought the mountains which were so reminiscent of their homelands.

By the early 1960s a new emphasis on winter sports began. The

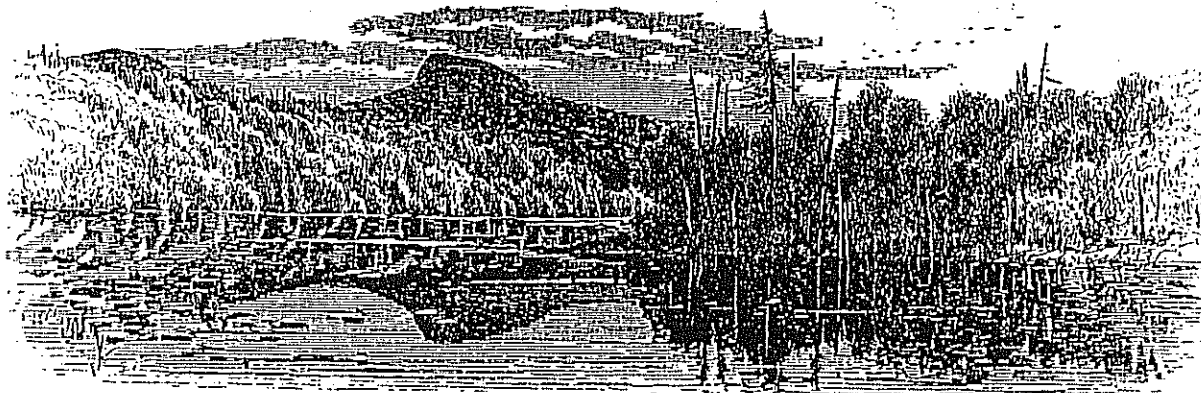
building of ski slopes, first Hunter Mountain, and later Cortina Valley, changed the focus of tourism. With the introduction of summer festivals in the 1970's, warm weather activities began to complement winter sports activity and sustain second home ownership.

The second half of the 1900s also brought increased attention to the region's role as home to a prominent state park as well as the source of New York City's water supply. The Catskill Park and Forest Preserve, like its larger cousin the Adirondack Park and Forest Preserve, is a nationally unique park system with a mixture of public and privately owned lands. Much of the public land is today managed as wilderness or wild forest, limiting use to non-motorized outdoor recreation such as camping, fishing, hunting and hiking.

The Catskill region and nearly all of the Town of Hunter is also within the watershed source for the reservoir system serving the City of New York. During the 1980's and 1990's much debate surrounded how best to protect this watershed supply while equitably protecting residents ability to build and prosper. Today a Memorandum of Agreement between municipalities including Hunter, and key State and New York City agencies seeks to match shared goals with technical and financial assistance necessary to balance these interests.

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Historically and today, residential development is concentrated in and near the Villages of Hunter and Tannersville and the hamlets of Haines Falls and Lanesville. Seasonal residences are concentrated in the distinct, private residential developments of Elka Park, Onteora Park, and Twilight Park as well as at the Hutterite Bruderhof in Platte Clove. Other residential development is sparsely scattered along local roads. Commercial development is also found primarily in the Villages and hamlets, and tends to be a mix of smaller business catering to local or seasonal residential needs.



South Lake.

Scene from the Hunter Region

from *Picturesque America or the Land We Live In*, Part Twenty-Nine (1873), D. Appleton & Co., New York

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New life is being felt among the residents of Hunter

After a recent period of slow growth fostered by the weak economy of the late 1980s and early 1990s, a new life is being felt among the residents of Hunter. Today, new organizations are spearheading efforts to make the community more attractive. Other groups are expanding the arena of tourist interests through the creation of bike paths, fall foliage events, hunting and fishing, hiking and enhanced local festivals. This renewal of activity and attention is a sign of a promising future for the Town of Hunter. Specific, recent initiatives the Town has supported or endorsed include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Business Incubator Proposed for Village of Hunter
- ◆ Greene County Micro enterprise Program to facilitate development of a Mountaintop business resource center.
- ◆ Facade and Signage Improvements along the Route 23A gateways.
- ◆ Mountaintop Historical Society's efforts to establish a multi-purpose history and tourism facility in Haines Falls
- ◆ Recreational Facility Improvements including a town-wide bicycle path and rail to trail project, and improvements to facilities at Dolans Lake Park in the Village of Hunter.
- ◆ Proposed Sewage Infrastructure Construction serving the Village of Hunter and expansion of sewage infrastructure guided by the New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement.

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III. Trends and Public Opinion

Any reliable community planning effort must be based on some sense of where the community has been and where it is headed. This examination of economic and demographic trends is a key source for guiding decision about the priorities for the forthcoming years. This section presents in summary form several trends that best indicate how the Town of Hunter has changed and might be expected to change. This presentation is based on previous important data collection by the Greene County Department of Planning and the Town of Hunter Economic Development Committee².

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

According to the 1990 United States Census the Town of Hunter has a population of 2116 including some 437 residents in the Village of Hunter and 465 in the Village of Tannersville, two village within the

² see Town of Hunter Economic Development Strategy and Appendix, 1998 prepared for the Town of Hunter Economic Development Committee by River Street Planning & Development, Troy, New York.

Town. At the beginning of the century the 1900 population of 2788 appears to be the peak reflecting the busier times of the railroad and tourism eras. By 1970 this population had declined to 1742, noticeably rose in the 1970 but has been modestly declining since 1980. The majority of recent losses has been within the two villages, a trend consistent with regional trends in the Catskills and Hudson Valley as people seek the independence of land ownership outside of villages and cities.

The resident population swells, as it has for decades, by the addition of summer residents

Indeed, the portion of the Town's population outside of the villages rose nearly 15% from 1980 to 1990, although this growth trend has probably declined in the 1990s.

This "resident population" swells, as it has for decades, by the addition of summer residents. Indeed, many of these seasonal residents now stretch their visiting season beyond summer to include a variety of weekends and seasons. While it can be difficult to count these

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seasonal residents, over a half of the Town's 3044 housing units are believed to be seasonal - effectively doubling the Town's population in the summer and on certain weekends.

Household size in recent decades has declined while the median age of the Town's population is rising - both trends consistent with the majority of communities in New York State and the northeastern states. However, unlike many Catskill region communities, the percentage of persons in the population over 65 years of age has declined from about 18% of the total population in 1980 to under 16% in 1990.

In terms of education, while the Town of Hunter enjoys a modestly higher level of education in its population than the larger Greene County, the County and Town as a whole lags behind New York State with 16.4% of the Town residents having a bachelor's degree, 13.4% of County residents having the same, yet 23.1% achieving a bachelor's degree statewide.

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ECONOMIC TRENDS

Economic and development trends show a couple of key influences on the Town of Hunter. First is the tourist basis of much of the economic activity. Of the 3040 housing units found in the Town in 1990, more than half are seasonal with the median value of owner occupied units some \$105,200 or the third highest for a community in the County. Only the similar Mountain Top, residential and tourist based community of Windham and Jewett have higher values.

Further evidence of this seasonal impact to Hunter is found from 1990 research by Greene County. For example, the County estimates that the Town of Hunter may swell with an additional 4000 residents in the summer months, nearly tripling the population. A significant rise in part-time residents since 1970 and through today has increased overall education levels, population age and income levels, as well as home and land values. This is expected to be most noticeably outside the village in the Town, given a market preference for property in more rural settings.

According to statistics keep by the Town Building Department, in recent memory 1988-89 were relatively busy times for development.

In both years more that twenty (20) permits were issued for new single family homes, one condominium project was approved and several commercial buildings. Since 1989 every year has seen four to five new single family homes approved along with one or two permits for commercial businesses. In 1999 approvals appear to be on this same slow pace.

Key is the century of influence by a substantial seasonal and tourist population.

Unusual for many upstate New York communities, only 17% of the Town residents work for government. While the region and the Town is increasing reliant on small, private businesses and self-employment to sustain the economy, the Town of Hunter is also home to Greene County's largest and most successful employer, Hunter Ski Bowl.

The Town's 1998 Economic Development Strategic identified several important conditions and trends. Key is the century of influence by the substantial seasonal and tourist population. Traveling between two and four hours from home, the

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majority of this seasonal population learned about the area from friends or family and came to vacation or ski. On average older, more affluent and better educated than the resident population, seasonal residents are an essential part of Hunter's community character.

Since 1970 the number of residential property owned by part-time residents nearly doubled. Today, almost one half of the jobs in Greene County are those in service and retail, economic sectors strongly influenced by seasonal needs. Primarily small in scale, these businesses saw important growth in the 1980's paralleling the growth of seasonal residents during that decade.

However, anecdotal information reported by the Town Economic Development committee related to business closings and reorganizations, shows that service and retail businesses have had a hard time getting through the weaker economy of the early 1990's. Recognizing this, a consortium of organizations including a new community foundation in the Hunter region have formed an alliance called the Mountain Top Cooperative Council to proactively move an several revitalization efforts and community activities. These efforts are reflected in the Towns Goals and Recommendations outlined in this Plan.

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PUBLIC OPINION

In 1991, for the current Town of Hunter Comprehensive Plan, Greene County Department of Planning conducted a public opinion poll. Of 3,466 written surveys mailed to all postal patrons and all those named in the town property tax rolls, 651 or 19% were returned.

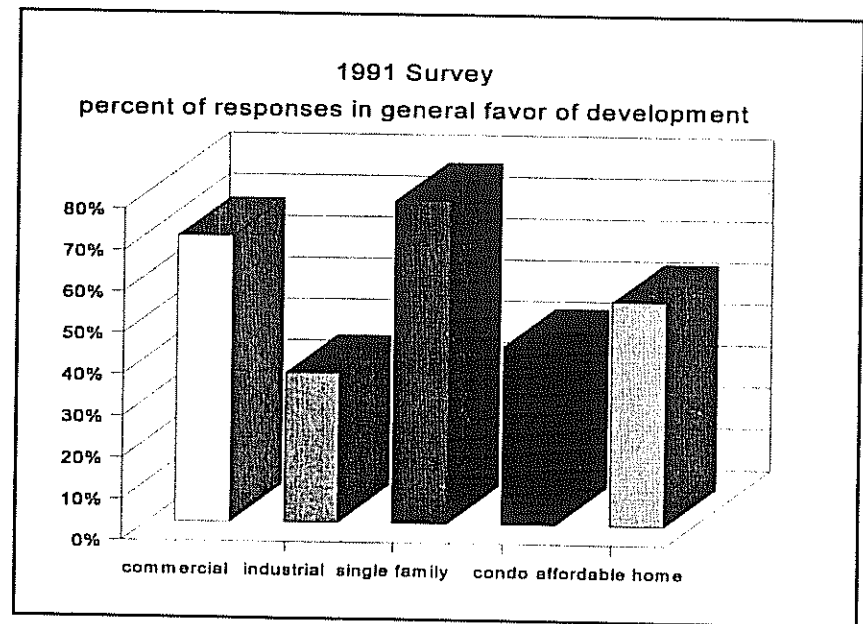
While 90% of the respondents were in favor of planning, results were mixed as to what kinds of development should be planned for and how land use regulations should be used. As seen in the attached chart, a majority of respondents favored more commercial development, single family housing and affordable housing. Solid majorities also favored town use of minimum lot sizes (81%) and zoning (76%).

In 1998 a survey of local business owners was completed by the Town's Economic Development Committee. Twenty five businesses responded with most coming from the lodging, retail and restaurant sectors. Only 8% of the respondents were "new", having been in Hunter for two years or less. Sixty percent of the businesses reported being in Hunter for more than 10 years.

If You Could Shape the Town's Future,
What Would You Do?

- #1 Improve the Look of Town
- #2 Better Enforce Land Use Regulations
- #3 Create a Master Plan

from 1991 Public Opinion Survey - 651 respondents



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Business owners tend to be highly supportive of the scenic beauty, the relaxed and friendly rural setting, the accessibility to urban and suburban markets, and the overall quality of life in Hunter.

They are concerned about the seasonality of the area's economy, the lack of consistent, resident support for local retailers and businesses, and the appearance and condition of properties along Route 23A, the major route into and out of the region.

Every place has assets and liabilities. The key is to enhance the Town's assets and work to overcome liabilities.

In 1998 three public meetings were held. The first by the Town Economic Development Committee and the others by the Hunter Foundation, all focused on the economic development needs of Hunter. In all, more than 300 people attended these meetings.

Key identified strengths of the Town include:

- natural beauty
- proximity to urban areas
- quality of life
- community pride
- great outdoor recreation
- available, under used labor pool
- ample office space, land and housing
- quality schools
- cultural resources - Hudson River School of Art
- cooperative & active non-governmental organizations

Key weaknesses identified include:

- small tax base
- run down appearance
- seasonal markets
- limited medical facilities
- lack of zoning
- challenging climate
- poor communication and duplication in government
- challenges of living in the "watershed"
- lack of public transportation
- commercial transportation challenges
- perception of dominant ski resort as for "singles"
- absentee ownership of rental properties

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The 260 participants in the two 1998 Hunter Foundation sessions also identified economic development opportunities around:

- ◆ proposed performing arts center in Village of Hunter
- ◆ proposed summer festival
- ◆ railroad attractions
- ◆ unique cultural history
- ◆ visitor/resource center
- ◆ need for clothing store
- ◆ need for a quality web site
- ◆ increased environmental protection

These participants also identified a series of threats to economic development including:

- ◆ rundown homes
- ◆ “honky tonk” appearance of businesses
- ◆ need for summer job laborers
- ◆ lack of medical facilities
- ◆ lack of business diversity - one dimensional economy reliant on tourism and weather
- ◆ image attracts singles and teenagers / not families
- ◆ increasing presence of welfare residents renting from absentee landlords
- ◆ competition from large, consolidated ski operations

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IV. Goals and Recommendations

1. SUPPORT THE MAJOR LAND USE PLANNING POLICIES AND LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS FROM THE 1991 HUNTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

The 1991 Town of Hunter Comprehensive Plan contains a series of primary land use policies which are still relevant today. They include:

- ◆ Protect the Rural Character and Social, Environmental and Economic Stability of Hunter. Support efforts to concentrate any future development in and near areas where development already exists.
- ◆ Guide Future Growth to Minimize Conflicts Among Use of Land. Future development should complement existing public facility service areas, road network and development patterns.
- ◆ Balance Municipal Facilities and Services with Population Requirements. As land develops and demographic change, requirements for public services will change as well.
- ◆ Protect the Outstanding Visual Qualities of Hunter's Landscape. Any new development must be sensitive to this quality.
- ◆ Encourage Public Input in All Planning and Land Use Decisions. Public participation in and appreciation of the Town's planning and land use efforts is highly desirable.
- ◆ Provide for a Variety of Housing Types, Living Choices and Affordable Locations in recognition of the critical need of all families and individuals to have adequate housing.

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The 1991 Plan also includes descriptions of a series of general land use areas defining the Town's character. They are:

The Plan describes seven general land use areas making up the Town:

- ◆ FOREST PRESERVE AND CONSERVANCY LAND
- ◆ RURAL
- ◆ COMMUNITY CENTERS
- ◆ LOW/MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- ◆ COMMERCIAL
- ◆ NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL
- ◆ COMMERCIAL RESORT

- ◆ FOREST PRESERVE AND CONSERVANCY LANDS covering more than one half the land area of the Town, State Forest Preserve and private conservancy ownership insures that a significant portion of the Town will remain forested. These lands general cover the bulk of the southern and eastern portions of the Town except along except along Platte Clove and the Lanesville area of Route 214. Future publicly owned conservation lands and lands with conservation easement would be included as well.
- ◆ RURAL - The next largest category by size, this covers private land with moderate to severe soil restrictions and slopes in excess of 8%. The bulk of these lands are north of Route 23A, east of Route 214 near Route 23A and Platte Clover Road and in the uplands off Platte Clove Road. Existing and recommended land uses here include low density or large lot residential, agriculture, forestry, and outdoor recreation.

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- ◆ COMMUNITY CENTERS - The Villages of Hunter and Tannersville and the unique, self-contained Hutterian Bruderhof community in Platte Clove are locations where a mix and density of residential, commercial, civic and religious uses serve larger populations.
- ◆ LOW AND MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL - Areas covering private lands with existing clusters of residential development or with the potential for modest residential development given better soils, immediate access to roads or proximity to community centers. Includes the three seasonal, residential parks (Elka, Onteora, and Twilight), the North Lake area, lands immediately north and northwest of the Village of Tannersville including along Cranbary Road, lands south and east of Sunset Road and lands along the following corridors: (1) Route 214 north and south of Edgewood, (2) Route 214 south of Route 23A, (3) Route 23A in the vicinity of Route 214 and in Haines Falls, (4) Scribner Hollow Road, (5) Platte Clove Road, (6) Haines and Glen Park roads, and (7) short extensions of several roads out from the Village of Hunter.
- ◆ COMMERCIAL - particular segments of Route 23A and Route 214, the main routes into and through the Town, are identified priority areas for commercial uses mixed with residential. Good design recognizing these routes as Town gateways is essential to avoiding any run-down appearance or strip / honky-tonk characteristics. This area includes Route 214 in and south of Lanesville and Route 23A east and west of Tannersville and east of the Village of Hunter.
- ◆ NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL- Recognizing patterns and trends for small neighborhoods to have a mix of uses, particular locations along Platte Clove Road and near North Lake may be suitable to a mix of uses unique to each location.
- ◆ COMMERCIAL RESORT - Resort and ski areas are a significant part of the commercial activity in the Town. They offer recreation, lodging, entertainment and other services consistent in contemporary market needs. Includes the existing Hunter Ski Bowl, Cortina Valley Ski Area, and Hyer Meadows Cross Country Ski Area as well as additional lands for expansion south the villages of Hunter and Tannersville.

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**2. Support the Recommendations of the 1998 Town of Hunter
Economic Development Strategy**

The 1998 Town of Hunter Economic Development Strategy contains a series of recommendations built from the substantial research and public outreach of the Hunter Economic Development Committee and its consultants. These recommendations support steps to fortify the Town's current economic base for lasting profitability and stability. They recognize the historical importance of tourism as well as the significant link of the Town's future with implementation of the New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement. This Comprehensive Plan supports all of the recommendations of that Strategy.

The Strategy's recommendations focused on the areas of tourism, physical improvements, retail mix, business retention, and marketing/networking. The priority recommendations are summarized below:

1. The Town should encourage cooperation with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to increase awareness of the experiences and quality facilities to be found in the Catskill Forest Preserve. Unit Management Plans should be kept up-to-date for the Devil's Tombstone and the North-South Lake campgrounds as well as for other State property units. Better promotional materials and signage is needed to link these properties with other local attractions.
2. On going clean up of the Town Hall and surrounding lands should set an example for improving the appearance of the Route 23A corridor.
3. Support efforts to encourage residents and visitors to "buy local" through such efforts as a community coupon book or community loyalty campaign.

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4. Increased attention and support for facade and streetscape improvements along the Route 23A gateway corridor.
5. Support is needed to attract low impact, environmentally sensitive businesses to the region.
6. Support to sponsor workforce training directed at the development of “sought after skills” in local workers as part of efforts to attract environmentally sensitive businesses.
7. Establishment of incentives to facilitate existing businesses to add permanent jobs.
8. Cooperation between public and private organizations to attract outdoor and recreation enthusiasts and to ensure that information and services supporting these enthusiasts can be found in the region.

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**3. MAINTAIN COOPERATION WITH THE PARTIES TO THE NEW YORK CITY
WATERSHED MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT AND IMPLEMENT ELEMENTS
OF THAT AGREEMENT RELEVANT TO THE TOWN OF HUNTER**

With the exception of the extreme eastern most portions of the Town in Platte Clove and Haines Falls, the majority of the Town is drained by Schoharie and Esopus creek systems as tributary to New York City's Schoharie and Ashokan water supply reservoirs. As such the majority of the Town is subject to the provisions of the 1996 New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). That Agreement outlines terms for a federal, state, regional and local partnership to protect this water supply. Three new programs (land acquisition, watershed rules and regulations, and watershed protection and partnership) were initiated with that Agreement. The following elements of those programs are most important to the Town of Hunter and are identified as priority goals in this Plan:

- ◆ Support to the Village of Hunter in gaining new sewage treatment facilities in solving a long standing need.
- ◆ Continue efforts to secure sewer extensions along designated road corridors from the existing Village of Tannersville district and into the proposed Village of Hunter district as delineated by the NYC Department of Environmental Protection.
- ◆ In support of sewer extensions, adopt a sewer use law using the model developed by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and modified by the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (1999).
- ◆ In support of the MOA, review and update local land use laws to assure that future growth does not exceed the capacity of existing or proposed sewer systems or the carrying capacity of the Town's environment.

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- ◆ Continue to support revitalization in the Villages of Hunter and Tannersville and seek to encourage continued concentration of development within and adjacent to these other existing hamlets and along key road corridors as the preferred land use pattern.

- ◆ Maintain cooperation with all interests in the New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement to advance matters of interest to the Town of Hunter and its municipal neighbors.

Note should be made that in the Town of Hunter two hamlets and several road corridors are eligible for exemption from New York City land acquisition efforts as previously defined through the terms of the MOA. These areas are the hamlets of Onteora Park (410 acres) and Haines Falls (390 acres) as well as the corridors of Route 23A (1/4 mile east & west from the Village of Tannersville) and Route 23A (east & west), Route 296 north, and Route 214 Access (also known as County Route 83) all within 1/4 mile from the Village of Hunter.

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- 4. REVIEW AND UPDATE TOWN LAND USE REGULATIONS TO:**
- ✓ HELP ATTRACT PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT**
 - ✓ RECOGNIZE AND PROTECT THE VALUES OF THE CATSKILL PARK AND FOREST PRESERVE**
 - ✓ HELP DIRECT DEVELOPMENT TO ENVIRONMENTALLY SUITABLE LOCATIONS**
 - ✓ HELP PROTECT A “LIVING WATERSHED”**

This plan updates the 1991 Town Comprehensive Plan and builds on the recommendations of the 1998 Town Economic Development Strategy. A key tool towards implementing these plans and strategies is modernized land use regulations.

Land use regulations provide the Town with a direct means to control the type, location and design of new development activity. Indeed, by updating it's Comprehensive Plan the Town is obligated to review all land use regulations for consistency with the Plan.

The Town now has years of success in working with such tools as subdivision regulations and site plan review and other strategic local laws addressing floodplains, mobile homes and trailers, and dealers in junk and auto parts. Yet changing conditions and community goals also demand that these regulations be updated.

Interviews with community leaders also support the findings of the 1991 Plan and 1998 Economic Development Strategy that it is time to consider a simple zoning code for the Town to help meet community revitalization, appearance and environmental goals.

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Primary objectives of this review and update include:

- ◆ assurances that regulations complement this Plan's goals and recommendations,
- ◆ consideration of zoning as a tool to help attract preferred types and styles of development while discouraging undesirable development,
- ◆ efforts to encourage the concentration of development in or near existing Villages and hamlets or along more settled road corridors which are environmentally suitable,
- ◆ efforts to limit land use conflicts with community initiatives such as the beautification and revitalization efforts along Route 23A,
- ◆ better recognition of the Town's values and responsibilities towards the Catskill Park and Forest Preserve and the Catskill Watershed.

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**5. IMPROVE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TOWN AND THE
VILLAGES OF HUNTER AND TANNERSVILLE AS WELL AS LOCAL
GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
TOWARDS SHARED REGIONAL GOALS**

During the past decade, the Town of Hunter has had important experiences with the benefits of cooperation with government and non-governmental organizations. In particular, participation in the Coalition of Watershed Towns, the Catskill Watershed Corporation, and the Mountaintop Association of Supervisors and Mayors has shown that intermunicipal cooperation can be valuable.

Indeed, given the extent of regional influences on the economy, marketplace and regulatory environment of the Hunter and Mountaintop regions, such cooperation is a necessity.

The Town of Hunter has also been supportive of several regional

projects that involve partnerships between governmental and non-governmental organizations. The efforts of the Mountaintop Coordinating Council provides critical leadership in this area. By working together, five leading organizations (Catskill Mountain Foundation, the Green Room Players, the Hunter Foundation, the Mountaintop Arboretum and the Mountaintop Historical Society) have shown that cooperative efforts can bring new resources and attention to a deserving Town and region.

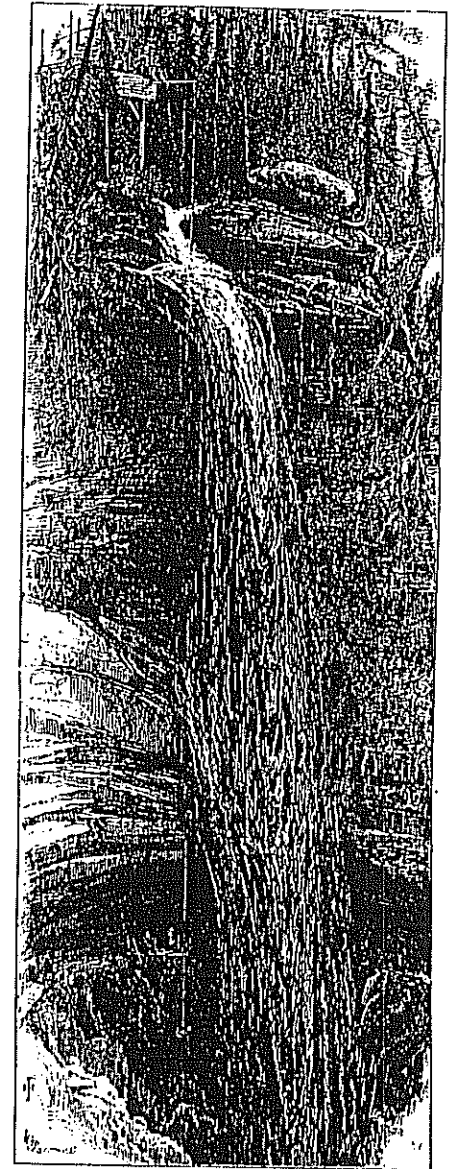
The Town supports the efforts of the Mountaintop Coordinating Council and expects to continue partnership efforts with the Council members and with Hunter's municipal neighbors.

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More specifically this Plan supports:

- ◆ Cooperation and sharing of services between the Town and the Villages of Hunter and Tannersville in recognition of the regional nature of the economy and environment. This includes exploration of the benefits of increased consolidation of services.
- ◆ Grant writing initiatives and capital improvement projects where government and non-government partners seek funds to advance the goals and recommendation of this Plan.
- ◆ Opportunities to build partnerships with public agencies offering technical assistance and funding - particularly for infrastructure improvements and extensions.

Kaaterskill Falls
One of several scenic
waterfalls in Town.
from *Picturesque America*
Part Twenty-Nine (1873).



First Leap of the Falls.

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**6. Support Gateway and Corridor Initiatives to Help Diversify
and Revitalize the Region.**

The Town of Hunter Economic Development Strategy effectively quotes the 1997 book *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities*.

“As we move further into a new economic era characterized by global markets and instantaneous business communication, quality of life will become an increasingly important - maybe the most important - factor in attracting new employers and a skilled workforce . . . Communities that take steps to project their quality of life clearly enhance their economic potential as well.”³

Major elements of the quality of life of the Town of Hunter involve features as the northern gateway community into the Catskill Park and the Mountaintop region. Routes 23A and 214 also immediately link the Town to local and regional sites and facilities. A strategic

community goal is to enhance Hunter as this gateway into a special recreation and park region which is also home to a year round population. As such, the appearance and vitality of the Towns major corridors and gateway sites are critical.

This plan supports various public and private initiatives advancing this gateway role - notably the Mountaintop Historical Society’s “Vision” to locate a visitor/interpretive center in Haines Falls. The plan also supports a series of projects being initiated to help diversify and revitalize the local economy by focusing and certain linear corridors.

Corridor initiatives worthy of support include but are not limited to:

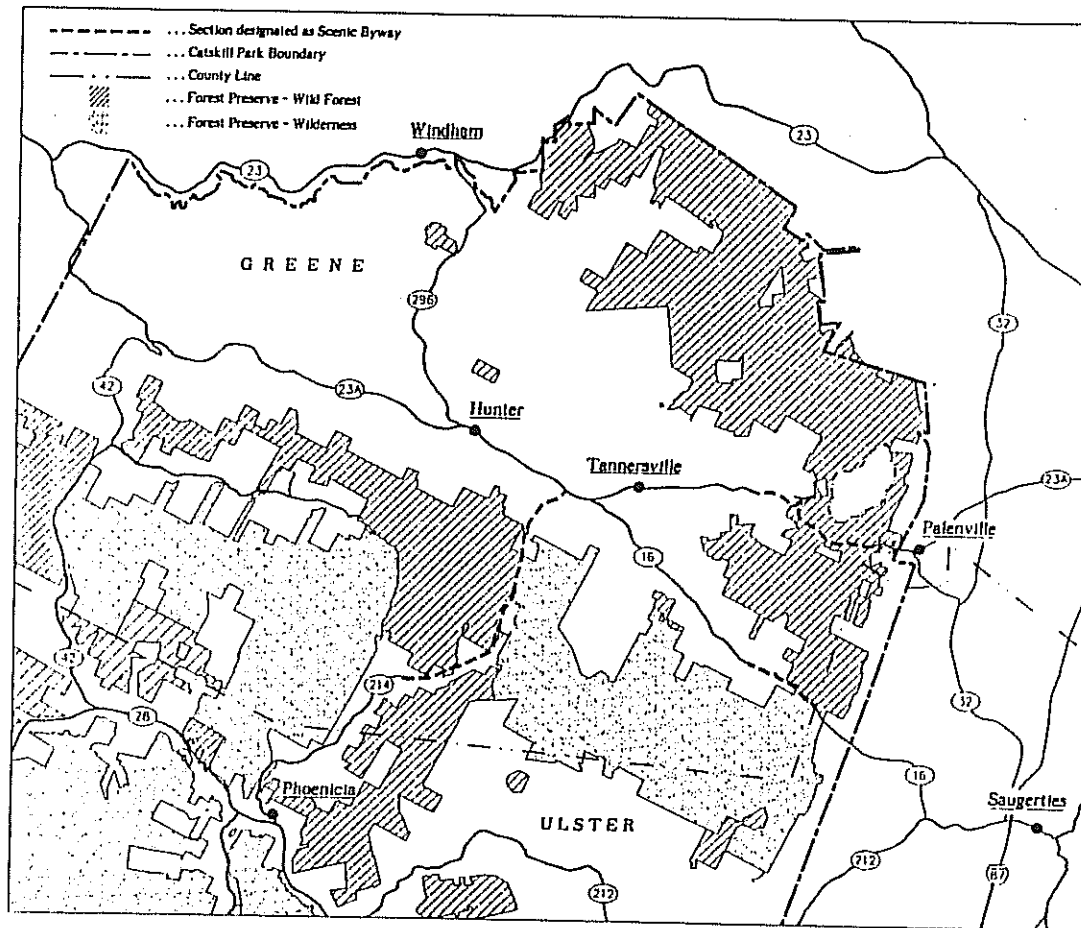
- ◆ Catskill Mountain Heritage Trail designed to enhance the tourism potential of the region by shared promotion of linked cultural, historic and recreational sites in and surrounding Hunter.

³ Jim Howe, Ed McMahon and Luther Propst, *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities*. Island Press, 1997.

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- ◆ Huckleberry Trail project where a short rail/trail in Tannersville would be extended through the Town, substantially expanding and modernizing multi-season recreation.
- ◆ Route 23A Corridor efforts to improve the appearance and services along the Town's main roadway.

◆ State Scenic Byways designations on Route 23A, Route 214 and Platte Clove Road to help market the region and its assets.



State Forest Preserve Lands and the Catskill region's only designated State Scenic Byways in the Town of Hunter.
from *Catskill Forest Preserve Public Access Plan*, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 1999, Map 3.

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**7. SUPPORT INCENTIVE EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC
AND ENVIRONMENTAL VITALITY**

The 1999 *West of Hudson Economic Development Study* by the Catskill Watershed Corporation concludes that the region including Hunter must build on inherent strengths and must respond to changing economic contexts. A foundation for achieving this is providing incentives to support the following:

- ◆ **HAMLETS AND VILLAGES** - these historic, central place should be the focus of expanding commercial, tourism, and residential opportunities.
- ◆ **TOURISM, SKIING, RECREATION AND THE ARTS** - a revived tourism sector drawing on the existing destinations such as Hunter Ski Bowl of Cortina Valley and building a new series of niche-based accommodations and attractions.
- ◆ **MANUFACTURING AND BUSINESS** - a revived business sector focused on specialty manufacturing, artisans and business services.

- ◆ **TRADITIONAL RESOURCE BASED BUSINESSES** - strengthened marketing and attention to agriculture and forestry related businesses in ways that will enhance the environmental quality of the area.

The Town strongly supports work to enhance the tourism base of the local economy while seeking to improve diversity in economic activity. Specifically the Plan supports the identification and use of incentives such as financing, infrastructure investment, tax incentives or streamlined permit review procedures to help attract desirable development activity consistent with the goals of the Plan.

By serving as a facilitators and advisors, Town officials, staff and boards can help property owners, residents, visitors and business owners to understand what at times can be a confusing array of programs, regulations and market circumstances. Through this cooperative approach, the Town expects to achieve that rare balance between economic and environmental vitality which is so crucial to quality of life in the Town of Hunter.