

3.0 THE VILLAGE PLAN

The first part of the Comprehensive Plan describes Briarcliff Manor as it is today – its physical characteristics, population, business areas and neighborhoods, transportation and community facilities and services. The plan demonstrates that some of the Village’s attributes require preservation and others improvement. However, before the plan can recommend specific actions, whether preserving or improving, these actions must be grounded in a vision of the Village’s future. The overall vision is presented here. It is more than a set of general statements. It is a decision-making guide for the Trustees, the Planning Board, and all those charged with land planning in the Village. All the recommendations that follow in this final chapter are based on the vision. And as new concerns and opportunities arise in Village life, unforeseen by this plan, elected and civic leaders will be able to act knowing that their choices are based on the vision.

3.1 Village-Wide Vision

The vision for the Village’s future is based on protecting its neighborhoods and the natural environment. To protect and enhance the good quality of life in the Village, we will:

- Provide open space, parks and both passive and active recreation opportunities for all villagers.
- Provide stewardship over the Village’s unique setting along the Hudson with its slopes, wetlands, views, trees and semi-rural environment.
- Maintain the Village’s neighborhood character of traditional and varied housing.

- Encourage measured growth and physical and visual improvements in our business districts to 1) provide a variety of goods and services to our villagers, 2) expand the Village’s commercial tax base and 3) create a more vibrant downtown experience.
- Improve pedestrian amenities and streetscape experiences throughout the Village.
- Provide a safe circulation network for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles including a particular focus on a safe link between the commercial areas east and west of Route 9A.
- Provide reliable infrastructure maintained in good working service (including drains, water supply and sanitary facilities) in a fiscally sound manner.
- Maintain or enhance the existing quality of Police, Fire, Library, Public Works and Government Administration services while seeking avenues to keep taxes under control.

3.2 Land Use

GOAL: Value and protect the natural and manmade features of the Village (i.e. wetlands, steep slopes, open space, historic structures, etc.)

3.2.1 Open Space and Land Use

For the purposes of this document, open space is precisely defined as undeveloped land that has had its development rights removed to keep the land permanently “open” or undeveloped. Such land can be described as “set aside,” “dedicated,” or “designated.” This is not the same as municipal park or recreation land, other municipally-owned

land that available for public use, or privately-owned and undeveloped properties.

Using this definition, Briarcliff Manor has dedicated open space only in new conservation subdivisions (under Section 220-7 of the Village Code). The Village owns a number of parcels used as natural or recreation areas. Some of these are called open space but have not had their development rights removed. The parcels are the unimproved part of Jackson Road Park, the Nichols Nature Area, Pine Road Park, Pocantico Park, Aspinwall Road Open Space, Larch Road Open Space, Van Lu Van Road Open Space, and McCrum Field. The latter two allow active recreation

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the term open space is often used colloquially to describe unbuilt land that has important visual or environmental features. The public also loosely uses the term to mean recreation or park land. The village uses the term in this way, as shown above. However, it should be noted that only dedicated open space and dedicated park land are protected from development; parks to a lesser degree. Dedicated open space has had its development potential forever removed. This is accomplished in the village using Section 220-7 of the Code or if the village acts to remove development potential from publicly-owned land. Municipal parks cannot be sold or developed without approval of the New York State legislature.

Much of what is informally considered open space within the Village in fact has development potential; without action, the Village should assume that these properties will have their development rights realized. With the exception of the two country clubs and Pace University, most of the informal open space in the Village lies in what has been called the Scarborough Road corridor:

- King's College/Barrington site (56.84 acres)
- Astor Estate (64.69 acres)
- Erani estate (97.15 acres)

- Philips property (97.73 acres) should its current commercial use be discontinued

These properties have the potential for development of housing. Land conservation measures (such as conservation easements, direct acquisition and conservation subdivisions) are techniques to permanently capture or preserve some or all of those open spaces. The plan does not include the country clubs or Pace in this accounting as these properties are already in economically productive use, albeit not housing as foreseen by the zoning, for their owners.

Visual impacts should be considered by the Planning Board when reviewing development applications for all properties. Legislative measures can be adopted or modified to mitigate the visual impacts of development, e.g., up-zoning, increased setbacks, lessened building height and bulk, greater wetlands and slopes protection, and landscaping and screening requirements. These approaches allow land to be developed, under greater restrictions. They do, however, need to be balanced against the existing built environment, as they may make existing homes and lots non-conforming.

Objective # 1: Develop an Open Space Plan for Public and Privately Owned Properties.

The Scarborough Corridor Study defined a 1,011 acre area, which covered most of the remaining undeveloped or partially developed property in the Village. If fully built out under current single-family lot zoning, the result could be an additional 270-330 homes with more than 1,000 residents, including 350 school-aged children. This growth, if realized, would lead to a loss of open space resources, increased traffic and infrastructure pressures and the likelihood for an increased demand for Village and school district services.

Action items:

- A. Create Open Space Policy.
- B. Inventory public and privately owned properties that have the potential to be developed, and agree on preservation and development approaches. While the open space policy would affect the whole Village, the focus should be on the Scarborough Corridor Area. These approaches might include up-zoning (increasing the minimum lot size), more reliance on conservation subdivision regulations, and creating an Estate Zone or Overlay Zone.
- C. Create Open Space legislation that clearly implements the Village's policy.
- D. Review and update zoning law and subdivision regulations to encourage open space in development of properties throughout the Village. In certain cases, the Village may wish to require conservation subdivisions rather than conventional subdivisions, with open space dedication for large properties. Additional development controls should include clearer restrictions on the development of lots with steep slopes, and clearer flag lot restrictions.
- E. Develop a policy for acquisition, management and disposition of Village owned lands.
- F. Encourage the formation of private Land Trusts and encourage relationships with existing land trusts.
- G. Explore Village open space acquisition funding options e.g. a real estate transfer tax, a supplemental tax, etc..
- H. Where feasible, engage regional, state and federal land acquisition and protection resources.
- I. Consider maintaining several Village-owned properties as dedicated open space. Other Village-owned properties should be evaluated for their best use.

Objective #2: Protect Wetlands.

Action items:

- A. Define, reconfirm and identify wetlands.
- B. Establish wetland defining criteria based on vegetation, soils, or other applicable characteristics.
- C. Revise current local law to increase wetland buffers to conform to NYSDEC's 100-foot regulated buffer. In addition to expanding the wetlands buffer, consider increasing the current 50 foot no build buffer, as long as existing built conditions are protected.
- D. Evaluate impacts on existing homes of recommended wetlands setback changes.
- E. Consider limiting types of disturbances within the expanded buffer. Require reconstruction of disturbed wetlands in conformity with NYSDEC's minimum standards.
- F. Require maintenance program for relocated or built-upon wetlands.
- G. Consider requiring conservation easements over wetlands to provide permanent protection.
- H. Monitor and protect wetlands with code enforcement.

Objective # 3: Preserve Trees.

Action items:

- A. Review and update the existing Tree Preservation Law including types of trees, definitions and responsibilities, and restrictions for tree removal on interior of property.
- B. Review Tree Preservation Law for subdivision regulations to protect and preserve trees and prevent planting of invasive species.
- C. Consider creating an inventory and evaluation of trees and invasive species on Village-owned properties.
- D. Strengthen compliance and penalties for violations.

Objective # 4: Preserve and Protect Steep Slopes.**Action items:**

- A. Review and revise existing Steep Slopes provisions to create a separate chapter in the law which expands the definition and categories of steep slopes to include topography, size, soil types and terracing, at minimum, and to clarify the criteria for Planning Board approvals and Zoning Board of Appeals variances.
- B. Review various conservation development models in conjunction with steep slopes impacts and mitigation.
- C. Perform analysis of existing homes and uses on steep slopes to determine impacts of potential amendments to steep slopes legislation.
- D. Educate the public about the environmental issues concerning steep slopes.
- E. Strengthen compliance and penalties for violations.

Objective #5: Establish a Stormwater Pollution Plan.**Action items:**

- A. Implement NYSDEC Phase II Stormwater Management Regulations.
- B. Implement the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.
- C. Enact legislation to address impervious surfaces and run-off for all properties.
- D. Educate the public about stormwater management and impervious surfaces.
- E. Create enforcement procedures and penalties.

Objective #6: Identify and Recognize the Significant and Historic Features of Our Village.**Action items:**

- A. Establish criteria and inventory significant manmade features, such as commercial and residential building, i.e., Whiggs/Patio Engineers, the "laundry", Con Ed and repair shop in the CBD, the AON building, main house at Rosecliff, Dow Hall, the library, Walter Law's house, gate house at Kings/Barrington, Beechwood main building, and Sleepy Hollow Country Club, at minimum, and stone and brick walls (especially within Scarborough Rd corridor).
- B. Establish criteria and inventory significant natural features, such as the Hudson River and Pocantico River.

Objective #7: Demonstrate Leadership in Utilizing Best Practices for Energy Conservation and Sustainable Building Strategies.**Action items:**

- A. Consider creating incentives and requirements for developers to construct buildings that are environmentally sensitive and utilize green technologies.
- B. Define incentives for current homeowners to renovate and update homes in an environmentally friendly and energy efficient manner.
- C. Require commercial construction or renovation to evaluate the use of environmentally friendly and energy efficient technologies.
- D. Village government should take a leadership stance by including environmentally sensitive technologies and practices in its buildings, vehicles, and operations, where feasible.

3.2.2 Open Space and Recreation

GOAL: Maintain and Enhance the Village’s Open Space and Parklands for Active and Passive Enjoyment by Residents.

Objective #1: Develop a Plan for Active and Passive Recreation.

Action items:

- A. Develop policy for active and passive recreational use of Village-owned properties.
- B. Create and continuously update an inventory of recreational assets and needs.
- C. Prioritize and implement appropriate recommendations of the Cherbuliez/Munz, PLLC Trails Study.
- D. Maintain and expand active and passive-use recreational facilities and trails to meet the needs of residents.
- E. Pursue opportunities for limited access to private properties (i.e. off-season access to Trump National, trails across private lands such as Philips Laboratories).
- F. Support and participate in regional trail systems projects including River Walk, the Old Croton Aqueduct, and North County Trailways.

Objective #2: Coordinate Recreational Planning and Use with Schools and Other Entities.

3.3 Housing

Goal: Provide a range of housing styles and alternatives to meet the needs of a varied and diverse population.

Chapter 2.3 described Briarcliff Manor’s changing demographics. While the Village remains solidly a community of traditional families, there are also groups of single-parent households, one-person

households, and a growing number of senior citizens. The demographics of the Village and the county provide a clear indication of housing needs. Most housing should remain aimed at traditional families. However, a peaking school age population and a growing number and proportion of seniors imply the need for special services and alternatives to traditional single family housing. High housing prices and property taxes make the Village increasingly unaffordable to all but the affluent, possibly resulting in a less diverse community. As previously described, a full build out of our remaining open space with conventional housing has the potential for significant adverse impacts. Hence, housing policy must take into consideration a wide range of objectives and considerations, balancing the desire for dedicated open space, less development pressure on environmentally constrained lots, and the need for some variety in housing types.

Objective #1: Up-zone the Scarborough area to minimum 2 acre (R80) lot size.

Action items:

- A. Allow only single family homes on up-zoned lots in the Scarborough Road Corridor
- B. Consider allowing within the Corridor a range of lot sizes within a subdivision, provided that the two acre density threshold is not exceeded for the overall project.
- C. Consider mandating Conservation Subdivisions for all subdivisions over a specific size and require a minimum percentage of open space preservation on the site, in addition to the required recreation set aside.

Objective #2: Provide housing opportunities in areas with well developed infrastructure, and access to public transportation and major highways.

Briarcliff Manor remains a traditional community, with families dominating and married-couple families being the most typical family

type. Both household size and family size are larger than the national average, and unlike much of the country, they are increasing. The Village's population has been growing at a higher rate than most of its neighboring communities, but it remains comparatively less dense.

Although Briarcliff Manor's school-aged population increased from 1990 to 2000, that growth is unlikely to persist, given that the "echo boom" has ended. However, the growth in the Village's retiree population should continue; based on 2000 Census data, about 754 persons will enter the 65 and older age bracket in the next 10 years. The likely increase in the retiree population has implications for housing need, particularly affordable or lower cost housing. Briarcliff Manor residents aged 65 and over have historically significantly lower household incomes than the rest of the population and are more likely to live in poverty. Retirees are also much more likely to be renters than other Briarcliff Manor residents, indicating that they experience a greater burden of housing costs.

Finding local affordable housing is a problem for many Briarcliff Manor residents as well, especially those at the lower end of the income scale. Approximately 27% of all residents paid at least 30% of their monthly household income for monthly owner costs, and most homeowners earning less than \$50,000 a year paid at least 35% of their monthly household income for these costs. A full third of all renters in the Village pay 30% or more of their monthly household income for rent, with about 18% of renters paying at least half.

The Village already contains subsidized housing in North Hill and moderate income units in Wyndcrest and Scarborough Glen complexes which give priority to local residents and local public service employees. Due to high land costs, housing affordable to low or moderate income households is usually implemented via some type of assistance to the developer. Most commonly in the suburbs this assistance takes the form of density incentives and below market-cost land (where the municipality provides the land to the developer). These approaches produce housing that is dedicated as affordable: there are income

limits for eligible households, and restrictions on re-sale of properties. A second approach towards producing lower cost housing is allowing multi-family units. These are typically townhouses, low-rise apartment buildings, and accessory units. Such units may not be dedicated (subsidized) affordable housing, but are typically cost less to purchase than single-family detached houses. The appropriate location for higher density housing is in areas with well developed existing infrastructure and access to public transportation and shopping, such as the current CBD.

Action items:

- A. Allow low-rise buildings or townhouses in the Village's commercial areas to accommodate the needs of the following groups:
 - Senior citizens
 - Start-up families
 - Local employees
- B. Establish design guidelines regarding size, accessibility, and density, to ensure these desired housing needs are met at a scale that is compatible with the overall design of the neighborhood.

Objective: #3: Explore Regional and Cooperative Solutions to Alternative Housing Needs.

Action items:

- A. Coordinate mutual needs with neighboring communities
- B. Collaborate with Westchester County to develop new criteria for affordable housing.

3.4 Business Districts

GOALS:

1. **Create a successful central business district that has a distinct sense of place by building upon intrinsic historic, economic, natural and cultural amenities.**
2. **Create business districts that are pedestrian-friendly to promote a greater sense of community, improve opportunities for social contact and interaction and enhance downtown vitality.**
3. **Increase our commercial tax base.**

As noted, the Village has three principal commercial districts: the Chilmark Shopping Center, the complex at the corner of North State Road and Chappaqua Road, and the Village’s Central Business District comprised of portions of Pleasantville Road (west of Route 9A) and the area bounded by North State Road, Woodside Avenue, and Route 100, east of Route 9A. The Village also has commercial office development along Route 9 and in residential areas, such as the Philips, Mearle and Aon properties. Collectively, however, only approximately six percent of the Village’s tax revenue is from our commercial base – one of the lowest in Westchester County.

Objective #1: Improve CBD character.

Action items:

- A. Define the CBD.
- B. Create generalized site plans for (a) the west side of Pleasantville Road (b) the east side of Pleasantville Road and (c) the area east of 9A. Specify appropriate and inappropriate uses, area and bulk, and design.
- C. Establish design standards for existing buildings, renovations and new construction including signs, colors, exterior and interior lighting, and architectural features.

- D. Create a cohesive identity for commercial areas and enhance the streetscape experience.
- E. Increase the vitality of the CBD by providing for a mix of retail, office, housing and park uses, and adequate parking.
- F. Explore ways to facilitate implementation of comprehensive CBD development efforts, i.e., cooperation amongst individual property owners, and consolidation of individual properties.
- G. Continue efforts to directly connect the east and west sides of the CBD.
- H. Encourage formation of a Business Improvement District (BID).
- I. Amend zoning to allow mixed-use two- and three-story buildings and encourage mixed use buildings that include housing appropriate for seniors, i.e. smaller units on one floor with handicapped-accessible features.
- J. Enforce the code.

See Appendix A for the detailed CBD plan.

Objective #2: Strengthen the commercial tax base.

Action items:

- A. In addition to the above, encourage businesses and offices in campus settings.
- B. Review and update B District requirements including lot coverage, building height, setbacks, and landscape buffers.
- C. Improve the area zoned B-2 that fronts onto Route 9.

3.5 Traffic/Circulation/Parking

GOAL: Provide multiple alternatives for safe and efficient access throughout the Village.

Objective #1: Improve the function and safety of the existing circulation network for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles.

Action items:

- A. Construct sidewalks along major arteries and the downtowns so pedestrians can access central part of Village and neighborhoods.
- B. Create an Access Management Plan that at minimum aims at interconnecting parking behind lots on the east and west sides of Pleasantville Road section of the CBD to supplement parking and enhance circulation.
- C. Improve the physical connection between the east and west sides of the CBD (as divided by the intersection of North State Road and Route 9A) to create one unified commercial area. In the short term, create a left turn lane from Route 9A northbound.

Objective #2: Make roadways and intersections safe and efficient.

Action items:

- A. With NYS DOT, explore safety improvements for Scarborough Road and Route 9, 9A and Chappaqua Road, Route 9A and North State Road.
- B. Institute traffic calming measures where appropriate (four way stops, speed humps, pinch points).
- C. Prohibit left turns out of intersections into busy streets, at least at certain peak times.

- D. Provide the Planning Board with land use tools regarding new development so that the board may mandate traffic patterns maximizing safety and minimizing adverse impacts.

Objective #3: Create a trail system throughout the Village.

Action items:

- A. Prioritize and implement the Cherbuliez/Munz, PLLC Trail Study, as appropriate.
- B. Continue to participate in the RiverWalk, Old Croton Aqueduct and North County Trailway projects.

Objective #4: Address parking shortage at Scarborough Station.

Action items:

- A. Evaluate and implement, as appropriate parking alternatives, especially options and recommendations made in the BFJ Scarborough Station parking study.
- B. Continue to require large parcel developers to operate a shuttle bus to/from station.
- C. Consider expanding for long term solutions.

Objective #5: The Village will remain well connected to the regional transportation network.

Action items:

- A. Encourage housing in areas served by public transportation.

3.6 Infrastructure and Services

GOAL: Village shall respond cost-effectively to the needs of residents and other taxpayers and to various governmental mandates in order to protect the existing quality of life and Village character. The Village shall continue to manage its infrastructure in a sound, planned, and fiscally prudent manner.

Objective #1: Maintain and update the Village's water, sewer and drainage systems

Action items:

- A. Complete project to obtain full water supply from the Catskill/Delaware systems.
- B. Prioritize and phase expansion and upgrades to sewer, drainage and local water delivery systems.
- C. Continue to explore creation of inter-municipal water districts and emergency backup water supplies with Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, Mount Pleasant, Ossining, New Castle, etc.

Objective #2: Address the space needs of the Police, Fire and Administrative departments

Objective #3: Cooperate as appropriate with neighboring communities to consolidate service delivery, including a potential senior center, public works and other natural shared services.