

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Recommended Changes to Draft Plan

The following changes to the February 2025 version of the Town and Village of Schoharie Comprehensive are recommended by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee based on public input received from their February public hearing and comment period:

Redated the Document to March 2025

Added additional footnotes for explanatory material

Pg 7 added text to refer to the Town's Smart Growth Grant: **During the preparation of this Plan, the Town of Schoharie learned that it is a recipient of a grant from the New York State Smart Growth Program to develop new zoning for the I-88 interchange area to align future land use in that location with smart growth principles and this Comprehensive Plan.1 Implementing this grant and developing this new zoning should be considered the next phase of the Town's planning and is the immediate next action after adoption of this Plan.**

Pg 14 updated planning process to reflect current information and added listing of public engagement methods: **Public engagement provided the basis for this Plan from interviews with local officials, a town-wide survey, two open houses, input from a volunteer, municipally appointed committee, and two public hearings.**

Pg 17 added highlights of public comments received on draft: **Public comments derived from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee's public hearing held in February 2025 include the following:**

- 1. Define 'community character' as it is such an important term, and the Planning Board needs guidance to properly apply this term. This definition should be in both the Plan and in zoning/subdivision regulations.**
- 2. Development, especially in the Gateway District, needs clear and strict rules for the best control and follow-through. Consider adding a maximum building size to be allowed in that district. Letters received by the Town and Village urged thoughtful development for economic growth that compliments rather than overwhelms the landscape and urged for inclusion of height and size restrictions in the Gateway District. Further, ensure that zoning for the Gateway District is comprehensive and that it addresses both form and use-based zoning controls to ensure that future development aligns with community values and vision.**

Pg 27 – changed title of graphic to reflect that it should be considered the definition of Schoharie's character.

Pg 42 – updated description of the I-88/Schoharie Business Park/Route 7 Commercial Area Focus Area to more fully reflect foundational principles established for this area. Several clarifying edits were made to existing text and the following text was added: **As we chart the future of the Gateway District, it is essential to balance our community's character, economic objectives, and environmental sustainability. The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges concerns about developments that significantly exceed established norms for size, often referred to as 'very large-scale' projects. We are committed to ensuring that all development aligns with our town's character, upholds high aesthetic standards, and prioritizes sustainability and environmental protection while recognizing the benefits of new businesses and facilities that offer substantial employment and tax revenue that contribute to local vitality. This plan promotes a diverse mix of building sizes and uses, thoughtfully integrated through quality landscaping, site planning, and**

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sustainable design practices to minimize ecological impact and preserve natural resources. To achieve this balance, detailed regulations to be implemented under the Gateway District Zoning Regulations will carefully define building size in relation to economic, community, and environmental impact, allowing for a variety of development scales while maintaining the integrity of our long-term goals for growth, preservation, and sustainability. This approach establishes clear boundaries while ensuring the flexibility needed to attract and accommodate responsible development that respects both our community and its natural surroundings.

Pg 59 – Options to Establish a Gateway District was updated as follows:

Added new (a) to better reflect Town’s grant and work to come: **Initiate work on the Town’s New York State Smart Growth Grant to establish a Gateway District and develop new zoning that aligns with the policy direction and recommendations of this Plan. (See Box about Smart Growth on Page 71.)**

Added to (b) a reference that new zoning via a form-based code would also coordinate with Use Table showing allowed uses.

Added to (c) the following: **Require large buildings to integrate with smaller structures and green spaces to avoid a monolithic appearance.**

Added to (d) the following: **Use tiered size allowances based on location, ensuring that larger buildings are placed where they have the least impact.**

Added to (e) the following: **Encourage mixed-use developments that blend commercial and green spaces to soften the visual impact. Require architectural features that reflect the town’s character, such as varied rooflines, facades with depth and use of natural materials. Require landscaping buffers, setbacks, and tree preservation to reduce the dominance of large structures.**

Added new (h): **Use incentives within zoning to advance designs, scales, or provision of desired community benefits and amenities when development is proposed (such as, but not limited to integrating green space, pedestrian pathways, or natural buffers) into site plans to address other needs in the Town, Village and Hamlet.**

Pg 71 – added an explanatory box outlining more information about the NYS Smart Growth Grant that the Town received and listed the Smart Growth Principles expected to be met via that grant when the Town updates its zoning. Further, on page 73, another reference was made to this smart growth grant (**The Town will also begin work to implement their New York State Smart Growth grant oriented to developing new zoning at the I-88 interchange.**). Further references for clarification were added to the priority actions on the implementation table, page 76.

Pg 152 – Added in summary of public input received from the first hearing including reference to the 49 letters received.

Pg 154 – Added definition of community character as: **The unique identity and distinctive features of a place, encompassing its visual appearance, natural environment, built environment, social fabric, cultural heritage, economic aspects, and overall feel that sets it apart from other communities, essentially defining what makes a place "special" and contributing to its sense of place for residents and visitors alike. Based on input received from members of the community, key aspects of Schoharie’s community character have been defined and include Schoharie’s scenic beauty, its rural nature, agriculture and farming, natural beauty and outdoor lifestyle, historical significance, quiet and peaceful living, and its friendly and supportive community. These are further detailed on pages 25 through 27 of Part I of the Town and Village of Schoharie Comprehensive Plan.**