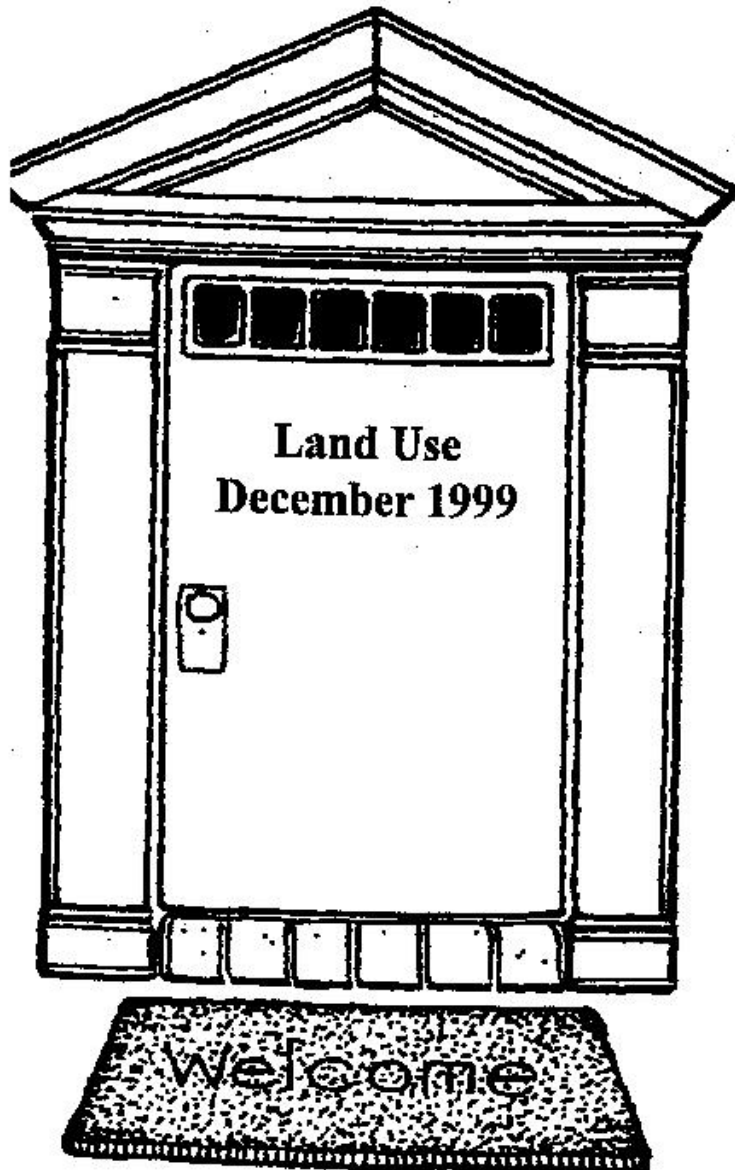


VILLAGE OF COBLESKILL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**Community Goals, Policies and
Strategies**

Acknowledgments

This plan was developed with the assistance and input of the following:

Village Board of Trustees

Mayor A. Toohig
Carol McGuire, Trustee
William Gilmore, Trustee
Bruce Russell, Trustee
Floyd Holmes, Trustee

Cobleskill Steering Committee

Walton Brown
Joanne Darcy Crum
Patricia Eaves
Jacqui Hauser
Jeanne Kane
George Konta
Donna Lavigne
Alton Makely
A. I. "Sandy" MacKay
Clemens McGiver
John O'Donnell
Sandy Poole
Timothy Snyder

Nan Stolzenburg, Consulting Planner, Community Planning & Environmental Associates

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INTRODUCTION

This comprehensive set of land use and development goals, policies, and strategies addresses a series of important and on-going issues of land use and development in the Village of Cobleskill. Issues of special concern to the community include increased commercial growth along the Route 7 corridor, aesthetic impacts of development, village character, and pedestrian and traffic issues.

Planning Efforts

This plan is the result of over a year of planning activities coordinated by the Village Board and the Cobleskill Steering Committee. Its development is coordinated with, and has been built upon, past planning efforts. Those efforts include: 1) Town and Village of Cobleskill, New York - Master Plan, 1964; 2) Business Area Plan, Village of Cobleskill, 1972; 3) Housing Market Analysis, Village of Cobleskill, 1973; 4) Alternatives for Future Growth, Town and Village of Cobleskill, 1974; 5) Cobleskill Development Study, 1975; 6) Village of Cobleskill Planning and Development Strategy, 1983; 7) 1986 Cobleskill Master Plan; 8) Downtown Audit - Hyatt-Palma, 1996 and 8) the Main Street Study, 1998. Plans and studies since 1983 should be referred to provide background and planning history in the Village.

For both past and current planning activities, considerable public input occurred. This input is the basis of this Comprehensive Plan. During development of the 1986 plan, six public participation workshops and one formal public hearing were conducted. Additionally, Village officials and community members were individually interviewed for their views on the various issues under consideration. The Downtown Audit, conducted in 1996 by Hyatt-Palma consultants, provided another recent public participation opportunity.

In the summer of 1998, the Village initiated a planning study and public outreach process specific to Route 7/Main Street issues. A visual preference slide survey was done to gain input on how the residents and landowners in the Village of Cobleskill feel about various aesthetic concerns. Since village character is a major concern to people, the Visual Preference Survey was used to help determine what kind of "look" is preferred. The survey documented people's preferences for a variety of scenes typical to the village such as buildings, landscapes, streetscapes, signs, and parking lots. Additionally, it analyzed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as perceived by participants. This process expanded and updated community goals and

values.

The planning study resulted in the development of a set of recommendations to meet the goals of the community. The Village Board appointed a volunteer, ad hoc steering committee made up of representatives of a variety of village interests. Their goal was to review and begin implementing recommendations made in this study. This set of comprehensive goals and strategies is a result of that group's work.

These goals and strategies will serve as a reference point from which public policy makers, private investors, and community residents can view and evaluate the specific elements of proposed development activities in the Village of Cobleskill. The Comprehensive Plan will serve as the basis for revisions to the Village Zoning Law, and it should guide the Zoning Board of Appeals in the consideration of administrative reviews and variance requests, guide the Village Planning Board in its review of development proposals and site plans, and assist the Board of Trustees in its overall decision making. This document is also designed to aid private investors and developers in understanding the long-term needs and objectives of the Village so that new proposals can be appropriately designed. The plan outlines a variety of desired performance standards to be addressed in future zoning amendments.

Preamble

It is desired that the Village of Cobleskill remain a quality place to live and conduct business. Policies of the Village should reflect the desires of the community to protect and restore historic properties and character, to enhance the small village and pedestrian atmosphere, to maintain the uniqueness that is the Village, to enhance economic development opportunities that contribute to and support these characteristics, and to ensure that the traditional central business core of the village is dynamic. In order to accomplish these goals, the Village shall use appropriate techniques and programs outlined in this plan. Among specific programs called for in this plan, certain "neo-traditional planning techniques," such as performance-based zoning, allowing mixed-use development, traffic calming and control of traffic access, and building on traditional patterns of development, are considered to be important tools to accomplish the stated goals.

Contained in the "Cobleskill Planning and Development Strategy" (1983) is a statement of goals and objectives for the Village of Cobleskill which is as appropriate today as it was then. These goals shall form the overall direction upon which planning and development in the Village of Cobleskill should proceed. They are:

- ❖ To provide adequate public facilities and improved services, both public and private; to allow for reasonable growth on adequate and properly served sites; to maintain a favorable balance between municipal costs and revenues and other benefits associated with new development;
- ❖ To enhance the appearance and small-town character of the Village; to conserve the natural amenities of the Village; and to promote the protection of buildings with historic and/or aesthetic value while enhancing the National Register District status of the central area of the Village;
- ❖ To promote and maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods; to conserve the existing housing stock and to create increased and affordable housing for people of all income groups;
- ❖ To promote the retention and creation of local employment opportunities;
- ❖ To strengthen the position of Cobleskill as a regional shopping center; and
- ❖ To encourage the reinforcement, rehabilitation and development of the Central Business District, the Industrial Corridor along the railroad, and the East End or "Village Gateway" commercial center.

GENERAL POLICY

The general tenor of public input throughout the current and past planning efforts has reflected the on-going tension between the desire for economic growth, and preservation of the small town atmosphere of Cobleskill. Most participants involved in the planning process through the years have characterized growth as desirable and inevitable. Most participants have also characterized the preservation and enhancement of the Village ambience as essential and primary.

Throughout the various studies, a clear sense of priority has emerged in the public participation process. That is the importance of the



The Village policy is to discourage commercial development outside existing commercial areas.

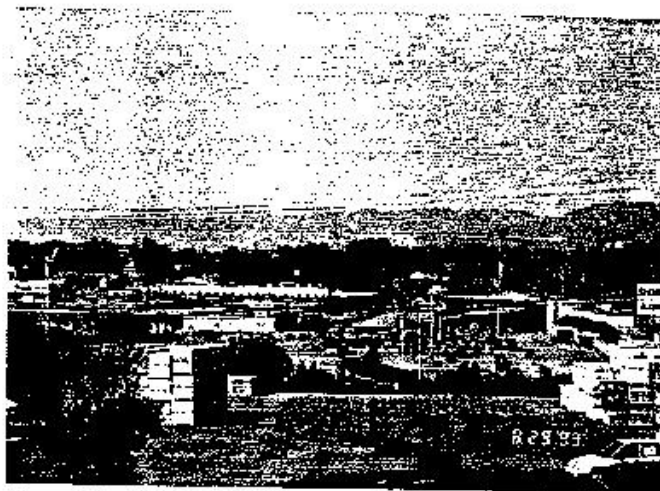
preservation of the small town atmosphere. The consensus expressed is that the ambience of Cobleskill, with its turn-of-the-century village feeling, is too important to be lost. Growth is both acceptable and desirable as a source of jobs and community income, but not at the sacrifice of the older elements which together make up the sense of community identity.

Goals, Policies and Strategies

Commercial Development

Concentration, rather than spreading out of commercial development along Route 7 is a primary goal. Sprawl development tends to discourage infill or redevelopment investment in the existing commercial areas and will have a major negative impact on the visual ambience and the pedestrian atmosphere of the Village, ultimately decreasing the value of both residential and commercial property. Strip development over the years along Route 7 has increased traffic congestion. Current zoning and land use practices in the Village of Cobleskill will perpetuate this style of development.

New, large-scale commercial uses should be directed to existing commercial zones to prevent sprawl, at least until those areas are completely utilized. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings along Main Street should be encouraged for service and small retail uses. Once the East End, the Central Business District, and the Railroad Corridor are fully developed, the Village should consider opening other areas up for commercial development.



View of the Village showing visual character not preferred.

The Village policy is to permit conversion of single-family dwellings to multi-family only when they meet strict performance standards that ensure quality housing.

The main goal of Village planning should be to encourage development that contributes to Cobleskill as a unique place by reflecting its village character and adding to it in appropriate ways.

Performance Standards

Performance standards are specific requirements that a land use activity must conform to in order to meet the goals and expectations of a community in relation to protection of the health, safety, welfare, and quality of life. Several performance standards should be implemented in the Village of Cobleskill for commercial uses including, but not limited to those for parking, traffic patterns and access, screening, noise, lighting, signage, hours of operation and building architecture.

Housing Development

Conversion of existing dwellings from single-family to multi-family should be limited. Small and narrow lots, narrow streets, and high population density with resulting parking and traffic problems have created overwhelming sentiment on the part of property owners that further apartment conversions are undesirable.

Single family to multi-family conversions should be subject to strict site plan review, performance standards, and enforcement. The Village should provide opportunities for private investment in providing additional desired housing. In addition, portions of the undeveloped area within the Village should be made available for development of new rental apartments to meet rental demand.

Village Character

During the summer of 1998, the Village sponsored a Visual Preference Survey to gather public opinions on various design and aesthetic characteristics. The results of this study offer insight into the preferences of the community for its future.

People in Cobleskill, from an aesthetic point of view, rejected patterns and spatial characteristics typical of "sprawl" or highway commercial strip growth in favor of more traditional images. These results do not show that Village participants rejected new development. Rather, they rejected images that portray new development built in a very particular way. Preferred development patterns were such that they a) have a 19th century traditional relationship of the building to the street, b) are on streets that allow on-street parking, sidewalks and shade trees, c) have buildings that use traditional 19th century looking signage, d) have green space and landscaping, e) have a variety of buildings and uses, f) have buildings that have peaked roofs, inviting entrances and human scale design (rather than designed for the automobile), g) have areas

The Village should adopt design guidelines for all commercial development to maintain the Village's unique character and quality of place.



Character of Commercial Building Not Preferred



Character of Commercial Building Not Preferred



Character of Commercial Building Preferred



Character of Commercial Building Preferred



Character of Commercial Building Preferred



Character of Commercial Building not Preferred

where street

frontages and parking lots are landscaped, and h) have all parking to the rear or side of the building. Flat-topped buildings were considered appropriate mainly in the traditional Central Business District.

Building designs that are not preferred in Cobleskill are flat-topped and box-shaped buildings with windowless walls, surrounded by asphalt. Auto-oriented layouts, with parking lots located directly in front of the front doors and without pedestrian amenities, were also rejected.

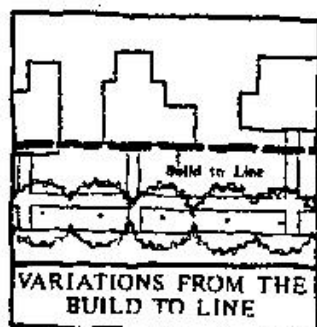
General design and layout principles recommended for incorporating in Village land use laws are:



*Example of Traditional Building
in Central Business District*



*Example of Traditional
Residential Building*



The Village policy is that historic architecture is a major ingredient in the ambience that gives the Cobleskill community its sense of identity and that must be preserved.

● Buildings and building layouts should be designed with the emphasis on people, rather than automobiles. Designs should create a sense of neighborhood and community. Design should reflect pedestrian dimensions through compact form, layout and streetscape characteristics. Streetscapes create the form and scale of the community and must accommodate both the pedestrian and the vehicle. Pedestrian accessibility to services and retail opportunities are vital and should be an important component of all development within the Village.

● Buildings and building layouts should be designed in harmony with nature and the existing community. They should capitalize on unique features in Cobleskill such as diversity of architecture, turn-of-the-century design, green areas, and shade trees.

● Landscaping, street trees, and natural vegetation are important to maintain and enhance village character. Land use regulations should ensure that there is adequate internal and peripheral open, green or landscaped space.

● Regulations should allow reasonable variation of lot sizes in width, depth and setbacks to create new development patterns that are in keeping with the desired, traditional layout of the village. Setbacks should be compatible with the neighborhood.

● Regulations should allow mixed land uses along Main Street to create a balanced community, improve building utilization, reduce traffic congestion and municipal service costs, and expand the tax base.

● The physical nature of the village should be unified by encouraging common design features, including building mass and style, facade treatment, materials, colors, landscape and streetscape details.

Historic Buildings

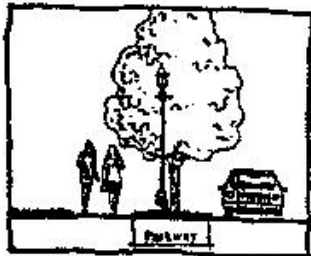
The historic architecture of the Village in general, and of the Historic District in particular, must be protected from demolition or major alteration. Residents feel that the historic character of the Village creates the sense of identity. Threats to that sense of identity create fears among many about the impact of economic growth on the Village.

Village land use and development policy should include adequate protection for historic architecture. The current Historic District regulations need clarification, more detailed review standards, better administrative procedures, and closing of some legal and procedural



Example of Traditional Residential Building Adapted for Commercial Use.

The Village Policy is that street trees and landscaping requirements should be incorporated into all Village land use policies and laws.



loopholes. Additionally, the Historic District regulations should be changed to reflect the model New York State Historic District law to rectify such problems as the administration of certificates of appropriateness for demolition, hardship application procedures, and alternative use plans. The Village needs to address mechanisms to ensure long term maintenance of historic properties and to prevent landowners from using poor maintenance as a reason for demolition.

Trees and Landscaping

Landscaping and tree-lined streets are highly valued in Cobleskill and should be encouraged wherever feasible. A strong preference for tree-lined streets emerged from the Visual Preference Survey. Lack of landscaping in Cobleskill, especially in the East Main Street Commercial Area which is devoid of street trees, is a major issue. Trees that line other streets, such as South Grand Street, add to the aesthetics of the neighborhood and are a critical component to be protected.

Landscaping requirements in the zoning law should reflect the following principles:

- Landscaping standards should be established, and should be an integral part of every project. Landscape standards shall take into consideration the placement of utilities, the requirements of utility companies and the NYSDOT, and characteristics of desired tree species. Additionally, landscaping should buffer the site from and integrate the site with the surrounding area.
- Building placement and lot layouts should be designed to relate to and incorporate existing vegetation.
- Landscape treatments should combine with appropriate walks and street surfaces to provide an attractive development pattern.
- When new development occurs, trees should be required to be planted in the "parkway" between the street curb and the sidewalk along all Village streets to reinforce Village character, provide a buffer between vehicular traffic and pedestrians, and provide traffic calming.
- The Village should institute a street tree planting program to include an inventory of existing trees and conditions, identification of locations needing new trees, an outline of budget and staffing needs, and a plan for long-term tree maintenance and replacement.
- The Village should continue to work with the New York State

The Village policy is that planning should be a continuing process. This Plan and the zoning district regulations and related local laws should be reviewed and amended as needed every five years.

The Village policy is that zoning shall be revised to improve its ability to meet the goals of this comprehensive plan.

Department of Transportation to implement fully a street tree and landscape plan along state roads in the Village and to provide for property-friendly snow removal.

Planning, Administration and Enforcement

Planning

The actual amount of growth in housing, jobs and commercial activity, the extent of continued market demand for further growth in each use, and the extent to which land designated for various uses is utilized will be continually in flux. The Village Planning Board should conduct a review of the Comprehensive Plan for the Trustees at least every five years, in light of emerging and changing uses and demands, to incorporate any needed adjustments in designated zoning districts or regulations. The Village Board of Trustees and Planning Board should realize that these adjustments in land-use policy are necessary and should be attentive to the need for them. This will prevent land use policy making in a crisis context in the future; and will provide sufficient flexibility in policy, based on considered rather than ad hoc judgments.

Such considered flexibility in legislative policy, combined with firm enforcement of that policy by the Zoning Enforcement Officer, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, and the Village Attorney should lead to a predictable policy atmosphere. As such, all public and private participants in the development and land use process will know what can and cannot be done, and should ensure that policy goals reflected in the Comprehensive Plan and land use laws are implemented in the real world.

Zoning Regulations

The 1998 Main Street Study detailed numerous ways in which the zoning regulations lack clear language and ties to the comprehensive plan. In particular, the regulations fail to adequately address aesthetic character. The zoning law be amended with the Cobleskill Ad Hoc Steering Committee input and as recommended in the Main Street Study to rectify limitations. The areas needing specific and immediate attention include use regulations, area and bulk regulations, signs, parking, design guidelines, Historic District regulations, and sidewalks.

To ensure that new development meets the goals of this plan, it is recommended that as part of the zoning application, applicants shall be

The Village's goal is to implement performance zoning, where development is controlled through specific criteria or standards so that it will perform to the Village's expectations.

It is the policy of the Village to foster mixed uses along the total length of Main Street, in all zoning districts.



Example of Residential Building Adapted for Commercial Use in a Mixed Use Setting

required to submit a statement in writing at the Sketch Plan Conference that describes how their proposal is consistent with this comprehensive plan and presented.

The Planning Board shall review all projects to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and in addition include, in its application process, steps to review consistency of projects. The zoning law should be amended to reflect this requirement of consistency and clarify that the burden of proof falls on the applicant rather than on the Village Planning Board.

Use Regulations

Current zoning in Cobleskill has rigid and mostly inflexible limitations on uses. It is designed to regulate uses, rather than the impact of uses on the neighborhood and Village. Because Village residents are so concerned about quality of life issues, community character, and Village atmosphere, regulations should be more consistent with performance zoning which allows more flexibility in uses; thus, a rigid use schedule will become less important. The Village of Cobleskill should concentrate zoning efforts along these lines to ensure that community goals and standards are met.

Mixed Uses

Current land use regulations in the Village require a strict separation of uses, except in the Central Business District. Zoning districts throughout the village, and especially along Main Street, are designed to be either residential or commercial. This is in contrast to Village development that evolved in the pre-automobile era. Mixed uses are where different uses are allowed to be mixed together in either the same building (commercial below and residential above) or in adjacent buildings. Mixed-uses still make economic and social sense. They promote community activities, help conserve resources, make shopping a more personal experience, and build community identity by offering a fuller sense of place.

Businesses can also benefit from shared driveway access and parking, from the collective attractiveness of many nearby products and services, and from the surrounding strong residential base of support. In contrast, when commercial and residential development are isolated, and especially when commercial development is allowed to move away from core Village areas, the local budget can be strained to provide expanded services such as roads, utilities, enforcement, and snow removal for outlying areas.

Mixed uses along Main Street will allow adaptive reuse of existing structures and increased economic development opportunities for both property owners and the Village. Mixed uses should be allowed within all districts along Main Street and if this is beneficial to the Village, expansion of this option should be considered for other locations in the future. A list of land uses that would not be compatible should be developed as well. To ensure that commercial and residential uses are compatible, the Village should adopt clear performance standards for design, maintenance, traffic and parking, signage, lighting and landscaping, and land use. Village zoning should be amended to allow funeral homes as a permitted use in residential areas subject to strong performance standards to ensure compatibility with nearby residences.

Area and Bulk Regulations

Maintenance of the traditional village character has been a primary goal of planning in the Village of Cobleskill for many years. The 1998 Main Street Study outlined how current zoning regulations result in suburban, sprawl style development. Current required lot sizes and setbacks do not honor traditional patterns and do not offer mechanisms for site-specific layouts to enhance design and assure uniformity from one location to the next. Zoning should be amended to allow preferred traditional patterns.

Parking

Parking standards in the current law have the potential to allow creation of large parking lots. Lack of guidance on parking lot design, including location, screening, and lighting, could result in negative impacts to village character. Parking standards should be addressed to control flow of traffic, aesthetic character, landscaping, and safety of vehicles and pedestrians.

Parking areas in the Central Business District, including public, semi-public, and private lots should be evaluated for adequacy and additional parking developed, if needed. All options should be investigated as to feasibility, cost, and number and distribution of resulting parking capacity. Long-term maintenance should be considered as well. All alternatives to increasing parking should be explored including layout improvements, acquisition of new parking lots, and use of on-street parking.

Over the past several years, several streets in the Village have had on-street parking removed. As a consequence, traffic speed has increased, and pedestrian safety has been decreased. The Village should investigate and take steps to bring back on-street parking on West

Village policy is not to allow overbuilt parking lots because they detract from village character and not desired from an aesthetic point of view.

It is recommended that the Village evaluate parking needs and explore all alternatives to increase parking.

On-street parking should be maintained and re-instated where possible, as a traffic calming technique.

The Village should amend its laws to ensure better sign design in all commercial areas.

Main Street and Elm Street, in particular, and other locations that may be appropriate. The Village should work with the New York State Department of Transportation in this effort.

Signs

Current regulations often result in signs that are too large and too tall, and often ones that are aesthetically inappropriate. The zoning law should provide sign standards on a district by district basis to ensure that the stated goals of each district are maintained and so that standards reflect the goals of this plan. A thorough review process will contribute toward better sign design that is in keeping with Village design goals. The Village should ensure that sign regulations are especially consistent with goals that encourage adaptive re-use and mixed uses along Main Street.

Land Use Areas

Many of the recommendations included in the 1986 Master Plan have been incorporated into zoning. Few changes to the boundaries of land use areas are recommended in this plan. However, the following description does outline some changes and needs related to land use areas.

Commercial Land Use

Several commercial areas are designated to accommodate such activity. The existing commercial areas are: The Central Business District ; Highway Business; and General Business.

Commercial areas should continue to be surrounded and defined by areas of residential use. This policy will serve to avoid scattered commercial activity and strip development, both of which will dilute the energy of concentrated commercial centers and have a detrimental effect on the small town ambience which is Cobleskill's major attraction, especially for residential growth.

East End Commercial Area (Zoned Highway Business)

The East End commercial area has roles as a shopping center and as the entry point for all traffic from the east. As such, it is an area that gives the first visual impression of the Village to most visitors. Both roles should be considered in development of the East End. Traffic

Over time, it is the objective of this plan to develop a more traditional village streetscape in the east end commercial area of the Village.

control and access management should be applied in this location to minimize the impact of development on traffic. Building lot and design standards should be implemented to improve the appearance of this area and to ensure that traditional village character is developed.

The zoning law should be amended to apply similar design standards to the East End as those which currently exist for the General Business District, but adapted for the Highway Business District. This includes standards for parking, signage, sidewalks, landscaping and building design. However, lot size and other dimensional requirements must recognize the conditions of this zone.

West End Commercial Area (Zoned Highway Business)

This small highway commercial area has developed along Route 7 west across from the college. This area is surrounded and limited by college lands to the south and west and the railroad tracks to the north, leaving little or no room for further commercial development. Like the East End Commercial Area, pedestrian access to this area is difficult for lack of sidewalk connections from the MacArthur Avenue intersection westward. Sidewalks should be installed along the north side of the road, behind the guide rails in this area.

East Main Street Corridor (Zoned General Business)

This area is suitable for mixed commercial/residential use. The narrow street and Village character should be maintained at this location. New construction in this area should be consistent with traditional styles and should aesthetically fit into the neighborhood. Further development should encourage construction of a connector street through the area to help alleviate traffic difficulties on Route 7.

Central Business District

This plan recommends maintenance of this district. Standards contained within the zoning law for this district should ensure that the traditional elements of the Central Business District are maintained. The Village should ensure that existing facades be maintained or the architectural style replicated, while allowing flexibility of building behind the facade. The Village should work with the Cobleskill Partnership and existing businesses to continue efforts to revitalize this downtown area.

Residential Land Use Areas

Areas already developed for residential use should continue to be





limited to residential use. Opportunities for multiple housing of moderate density should be accommodated. Very low density residential development (1 dwelling unit /acre) or continued agriculture or forest use is appropriate where higher elevations make it difficult to supply municipal water. Low density, single-family only areas (1 dwelling unit/ 12,000 sf.) should be adjacent to existing developments in the northeastern sector of the Village where the area is wooded and relatively steep. Moderate density housing (1 dwelling unit/9000 sf.), preferably with mixed single family and duplex construction, should continue to be accommodated. Apartment development, or high-density residential development should be maintained in the Village. For these areas, it is important that site plans be reviewed by the Planning Board to ensure adequacy of parking, landscaping, and other utilities.

In the event that additional lands for residential development are needed, the Village can explore the feasibility of annexing certain areas. Areas for which residential annexation may be appropriate are on Mineral Springs Road across from the Industrial Park, North Grand street along Route 145 to Lawyersville, Upper Quarry Street, Elm Street, Barnerville Road, Route 7 east, and southeast of the Village on the Boreali property.

Industrial Land Use

The recommended policy on industrial land use is to require all new industrial development to locate in the newly-established Schoharie County Industrial Park at the south edge of the Village. The exception to this rule should be for Planning Board and Board of Trustees approved proposals for light industrial use in the Redevelopment Zone. However, some light and cottage industries may be suitable for locations along Route 7. Adequate site plan review and special permit criteria should be in place to ensure that such development fits in and performs according to the standards and desires outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.

Redevelopment Zone

A number of areas in the Village should continue to be designated as Redevelopment Zones. Within those areas, any future use would require approval of both land use and development specifics by the Village Planning Board and Board of Trustees. No use would be permitted by right, as in other zones, but any permitted use could be allowed upon approval of the Planning Board and the Board of Trustees.

Land Conservation and Parks

Several areas within the Village are still suitable for Land Conservation and park use areas. Such designation will protect these areas from development and will allow natural functioning of the floodway. Existing Village-owned parks (Village swimming pool complex and land), Center Park, Golding Park and Youth Center, Clinton Circle Park, and all land within the floodway of Mill Creek and the Cobleskill Creek, as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, should continue to be in this land use area. It is recommended that the Legion-Campus Drive pond area, which is necessary as a flood damper in high-runoff periods, continue to be designated for land conservation and transferred to municipal control. This location may be excellent for development of a nature walk. A buffer zone approximately 250 feet wide, surrounding the stone quarry at the northeast corner of the Village, should be maintained as land conservation and planted to evergreen trees to buffer quarry activities from residential areas.

Flood Hazard Area

It should be recognized that, in addition to land within the floodways designated for land conservation and park use, all of the 100-year flood plain of the Mill and Cobleskill Creeks should be designated as a Flood Hazard Area Overlay in which any structure to be built should be of flood resistant construction. Flood Hazard regulations must be in addition to the requirements of the underlying zoning district.

Enforcement

Enforcement of existing and proposed local land use laws is an important consideration. There has been on-going concern about lax, inadequate, or inequitable enforcement. It should be a long-term goal to ensure adequate enforcement of all zoning and land use regulations. Because of the increased difficulty and time demands on the position of Zoning Enforcement Officer, the Village should maintain the Zoning Enforcement Officer as a full-time position and ensure that appropriate compensation be provided.

Administration

Given the increased and increasing demands on the time of members of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Village Board, the Village should consider a full-time or part-time Village Manager.

The Village should ensure that a full-time enforcement position be continued.

The Village should consider having a professional manager.

The Village should develop a policy on annexation to guide future decision making.

The benefits to the Village would not be limited to land use planning, administration, and enforcement, but would extend to public utility management, budgetary planning, and overall Village administration. In either case, salary must be commensurate with a position which would provide continuity in planning, administration, and management that cannot be provided by part-time public servants in a growing community.

Annexation

Annexation of new areas into the Village has a variety of benefits and detriments. Some of the concerns related to annexation include the possibility of increasing commercial sprawl, fostering more strip development along Route 7, lack of consistency between Town and Village zoning codes and requirements, and provision of water and sewer services outside the Village.

It is strongly recommended that the Village of Cobleskill immediately commission a study of annexation and develop a policy that will guide future annexation decisions especially relating to water, sewer, utility, other infrastructure, and other Village services. A cornerstone of that policy should be that all developments proposed for annexation must meet all Village standards and expectations. Further, no annexation should occur until such policy is developed and implemented.

The Village policy should be to communicate regularly with the Town and develop mutual goals and programs to meet those goals.

Town and Village Interactions

In order to avoid policy dissonance between the Town and Village, both jurisdictions would benefit from serious and far-reaching considerations of common land use policy. Land use policies established by and for the Village can be seriously weakened by policies pursued by the surrounding Towns. If, for instance, the Village pursues a policy of concentration of commercial development, as recommended elsewhere in this Plan, while the Town encourages commercial strip development along Route 7 to the east, Village and Town policy would work at cross purposes. It is also easy to conceive of development situations in which the Village and Town could find themselves in a competitive stance toward each other, and ultimately to the disadvantage of both.

The Village of Cobleskill should open up lines of communication with the Town of Cobleskill and other surrounding towns to develop and implement mutually beneficial land use planning goals. This relationship could range from regular discussions of policy, to requesting recommendations from the counterpart body, to the creation

The Village should take an active role in its own economic development destiny.

The Village economic development policy should be to welcome new businesses and to support existing ones, but at the same time to expect quality growth based on performance standards and design criteria.

Increased traffic congestion is of concern to businesses and residents and should be a consideration in the planning process.

of common planning mechanisms, or to the ultimate consolidation of the two jurisdictions into one. There are sufficient areas of common concern and decision making to justify consideration of any of these levels of common endeavor. At a minimum, a standard mechanism of communication between the two municipalities is needed when policy decisions are under consideration.

Economic Development

Economic development should be an important activity in which the Village is involved. The area's economic policy has generally been one of "waiting" and reacting to whatever proposals may arise. This "reactive" strategy can result in economic growth that is not desired or appropriate to meet the stated goals of the Village.

The Village should adopt the following economic development strategies:

- A Government/Business/Citizen/College Economic Development Committee should be formed to identify and recruit specific, desired businesses. To further enhance Cobleskill's economic base and its role as a regional shopping center, the Village should take an active role in ensuring that desired, needed and quality businesses are targeted and recruited to the Village. This committee should especially explore, recruit and support home businesses, telecommuting, clean industries, and small businesses.
- This new committee should use the Village's historic character to develop an economic theme, especially in the Central Business District, because of the architecture of the area. A unified approach will increase economic activities, including tourism, and promote quality development.
- The Village should consider having professional assistance available to implement economic development programs.

Traffic Patterns and the Pedestrian Network

Streets

The Village of Cobleskill has developed primarily in an east-west linear pattern, a function of geography and transportation facilities. This has

The Village must communicate regularly with New York State Department of Transportation and railways to convey Village policy and goals as it relates to highways and railways.

Traffic access management and traffic calming should be used as the preferred techniques of controlling traffic.

Streets should not be widened as a method for traffic congestion relief.

created an overall Village traffic pattern that resembles a two-ended funnel. Traffic congestion has increased over the years and is of concern to both businesses and residents. Streets, traffic patterns, and the pedestrian network are critical aspects of the Village. Impacts to traffic flow, aesthetic character of streets, and pedestrian access and safety all should be given serious review and consideration during any development proposal.

Some specific strategies to control traffic and enhance transportation and pedestrian opportunities through the village are as follows:

●The Village of Cobleskill's policy should be to actively and regularly communicate with Region 9 of the New York State Department of Transportation and the railway operators to ensure that rail work and DOT road work is consistent with Village policies on street character, pedestrian facilities, and Village character. To facilitate this, the Village should forward copies of this plan and any zoning amendments and site plan requirements to appropriate staff at Region 9, NYS DOT, and to the railway operators. Other strategies include requesting road and bridge plans in the Village from NYS DOT and requesting public hearings be held on any proposed road, rail, bridge or other infrastructure work. The Village should participate in and be aware of DOT's road work so that plans can be made for landscaping and possible burying of overhead wires as a coordinated effort.

●The Village should work cooperatively with NYS DOT to implement both this plan and DOT's Comprehensive Long Range Plan as it relates to the Village of Cobleskill. A committee should be appointed to work closely with DOT on their small urban area program of which Cobleskill is a part of.

●Adopt traffic access management in all locations, but especially in the east end of the Village. The Village should work with NYSDOT to develop an Access Management Plan for Route 7 before any major road alterations are considered and instead of major road widening. Communicate these goals with NYSDOT and convey the desire that Main Street should not be widened as a solution to traffic increases. The Village should work to decrease Route 7 traffic problems by encouraging and developing, when possible, access between lots to minimize multiple curb cuts. Bike lanes on Route 7 should also be explored as they may provide an additional traffic calming effect.

●It is recommended that the Village evaluate the current Official Map that identifies all current and future road corridors and right of ways. As part of this evaluation, origin and destination information would be helpful to collect. After streets are evaluated, the Official Map should

Vital non-dedicated streets should be brought up to Village specifications and taken over as public streets

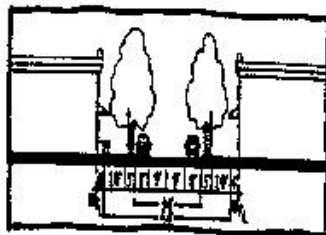
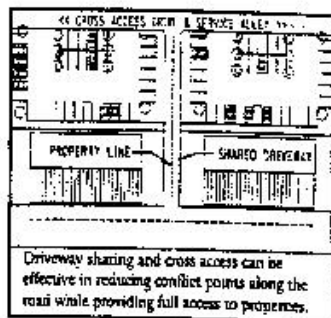


Diagram and dimensions for illustrative purposes only.



be amended to reflect appropriate changes including considering deleting certain residential streets as connectors.

- Work with NYS DOT and the railroad to explore the feasibility and applicability of re-construction of the railroad overpass at Route 7.

- A transportation priority should be to work with DOT to develop a by-pass route for the Village.

- A number of streets currently in use have never been accepted as Village streets. Should they become totally unusable or be closed to public use, traffic patterns would be seriously disrupted. Therefore, every effort should be made to encourage current owners to discuss with the Village ways to bring them up to an acceptable standard. If no avenue to get improvements accomplished by current owners is available, the Village should consider doing so at public expense. This includes "Diner Drive".

- Several private streets are used regularly by the public but they are not crucial to Village traffic patterns and thus would not justify expenditure of public funds to bring them up to Village specifications for dedication. France Lane should be constructed or reconstructed to Village specifications if and when development is contemplated and preferably at the cost of the developer.

- The Village should amend where necessary, local land use regulations to allow for more sensitive design of Village streets that will maintain traditional streetscapes and character. A general narrowing of road widths and right of ways is needed to prevent over-built roads. Flexibility should be allowed to create appropriate village scale streets on a site by site basis.

- To facilitate safe pedestrian crossings along Route 7, the Village should work closely with NYSDOT to evaluate, and change if needed, signal timings at lights and to explore the feasibility of alternative options such as "bulb outs" and pedestrian refuge islands.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks form the pedestrian network throughout the Village. Participants of the Visual Preference Slide Survey indicated that they prefer locations with sidewalks. Sidewalks also contribute to the character and safety of an area. A sidewalk program should be



Example of Preferred Tree-lined Street With Trees in "Parkway".

It is recommended that the Village develop a coordinated program for proper installation and maintenance of sidewalks.

developed to include the following strategies:

- An inventory of all sidewalks should be conducted to identify sidewalk conditions and identify locations lacking sidewalks. The Village should develop a capital improvement plan that outlines a priority schedule of sidewalk maintenance, repair, and building and budgetary needs. The plan should further outline an ongoing, multi-year program to implement the sidewalk projects.
- The Village should explore and implement options to better manage and enforce snow and ice removal requirements for sidewalks. Additionally, the Village should work with NYS DOT on sidewalk issues, especially relating to problems with snow plowing.
- The Village is encouraged to explore different mechanisms to implement sidewalk replacement. One recommended option is Village funding of the full cost of a sidewalk program with public funds and supplemental grant and aid monies, or both. Alternatively, to ensure quality standards and keep costs down, the Village could develop a list of pre-approved contractors to replace sidewalks to Village standards. Homeowners could contract directly with these contractors and then be reimbursed from the Village for related expenses. Finally, the Village could hire employees with the specific task of sidewalk replacement as part of their job descriptions.
- Zoning regulations should require sidewalks for all new construction in the future except in the areas designated for very low density residential land use, and the Planning Board should pursue a firm policy of pedestrian access in all construction requiring site plan or subdivision approval.

CONCLUSION

The Village of Cobleskill has both a past and a future that must be considered in public planning policy. The 19th century homes and commercial architecture, and the 80-year-old maples along the streets create an ambience of graciousness that makes Cobleskill an attractive place to live, to work, to stroll, to play, to raise children. That ambience must be protected. The future of Cobleskill undoubtedly includes growth in population, in commercial activity, and in residential development, with the attendant problems and possibilities those present. Thoughtful planning, including the implementation of the strategies discussed in this plan, can do much to anticipate and avoid the possible clashes between the values of past and future that force land use policy decisions into a crisis context.

Coupled with well developed local land use regulations and enforcement it is desired that implementation of these strategies and policies will result in a predictable atmosphere for businesses and residents so that both future growth and maintenance of values and desired quality of life are accommodated.

REFERENCES

A. The following plans and studies should be consulted for specific details referenced in this plan. Copies of these are on file at the Village Clerk's Office:

1. 1964 Town and Village of Cobleskill Master Plan
2. 1972 Business Area Plan, Village of Cobleskill
3. 1973 Housing Market Analysis, Village of Cobleskill
4. 1974 Alternatives for Future Growth, Town and Village of Cobleskill
5. 1975 Cobleskill Development Study
6. 1983 Village of Cobleskill Planning and Development Strategy
7. 1986 Village of Cobleskill Master Plan
8. 1996 Downtown Audit
9. 1998 Village of Cobleskill Main Street Study

B. Other references used include:

1. Visions for a New American Dream. 1994. By Anton Nelessen. APA Planners Press, Chicago, IL.
2. Best Practices in Arterial Management. 1997. New York State Association of Metropolitan Organizations and the New York State Department of Transportation.
3. Highway Design Manual. Chapter 25 - Traffic Calming, Revision 33. 1998. New York State Department of Transportation.
4. Traffic Calming. By Cynthia Hoyle. American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service Report Number 456.
5. Rural By Design. By Randall Arendt. 1994. APA Planners Press. Chicago. IL.
6. Well Grounded: Shaping the Destiny of the Empire State (Local Land Use Law and Practice). By John R. Nolon. 1998. Pace University School of Law. White Plains, NY
7. Revitalizing Downtown: The Professional's Guide to the Main Street Approach. 1998. National Trust Main Street Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation.
8. Street Design Guidelines. By Dan Burden. New Urban News. Volume 4, Number 4, July 1999.

Illustrations From

1. Visions for a New American Dream. 1994. By Anton Nelessen. APA Planners Press, Chicago. IL.
2. Best Practices in Arterial Management. 1997. New York State Association of Metropolitan Organizations and the New York State Department of Transportation.

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