

# The Plan – Foundation of our Future

---

## 1.0 Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that lays out a vision of the future with specific recommendations, a recommended Future Land Use Plan and recommendations for changes to zoning and land use regulations to implement the Future Land Use Plan. It is a guide to land use decision-making in the Town. An equally important function of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a framework for assessing proposals that come before the Town. This is the role of the Goals, Objectives and Policies.

Proposals for new development should be evaluated as to whether they further the vision of the future as articulated in the Comprehensive Plan. This gives the town a tool that has flexibly through time to evaluate changes that are unanticipated by the Plan. The entire Comprehensive Plan should be revisited and updated every five years. These revisions should reflect changes in the economic, demographic and other aspects of the community and should incorporate changing goals, objectives and policies. The five-year review is the time to accommodate changes in philosophy or direction.

### 1.1 Defining, Preserving the Character of New Hartford

The Town of New Hartford exists as part of a region with special qualities that set it apart from its neighboring communities. It offers a distinct mix of development from rural to urban, from agricultural land and open space with sweeping and dramatic views to compact and clustered hamlets and villages. It offers a range of residential choices from urban to rural. Its rural areas comprise more than 50 percent of the Town's area. Residential development comprises roughly one-third of the Town. The Town has evolved into a retail and commercial center serving the Mohawk Valley. Its special place in the Region creates unique development opportunities and pressures.

Preserving and enhancing the Town's special character is important to its future as one of the residential areas of choice for the region. At the same time, additional opportunities for economic development need to be identified and accommodated within the Town. Achieving a balance between conservation and development will be a continuing challenge for the future. The role of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a framework to guide decision-making in the future as Town leaders strive to strike the balance they seek. The Comprehensive Plan paints an image of the Town as it desires to be in the future.

The Goals and Objectives will guide change in the Town and help preserve and enhance the special character of the Town while providing opportunities for growth and development. Goals and Objectives are important to the plan because they are the standard against which the accomplishments of implementation of the Plan are measured. The Goals support the overall vision of the future of the Town of New Hartford. The Objectives serve the Goals of the Plan and are milestones along the way to Plan implementation.

Goals and Objectives must be realistic and reasonable. They are flexible enough to accommodate changes in the forces influencing Plan implementation and superimpose an attainable vision of the future upon the reality of today.

The Policies for the New Hartford Comprehensive Plan guide decisions regarding population, housing, the economy, land use, natural resources, transportation, infrastructure and utilities, community services and facilities, parks and recreation, town finances and implementation. They are tools for evaluation of proposals, projects and programs for New Hartford. The Town Board, Town offices and officials, local planning entities; local, county, state and federal agencies; private sector entities; individuals and others can use the Policies as a set of guidelines for forming conclusions and positions on the appropriateness and desirability of specific proposals or about development in general.

Together, the Goals, Objectives and Policies define a character for the Town of New Hartford, better organizing it to prevent the proliferation of sprawl and preserving neighborhoods. Better organized, the Town will function more efficiently and effectively, improving residents' and visitors' experiences of the Town, creating an atmosphere in which the Town is sustained and thrives.

The Comprehensive Plan generally, and the Policies in particular, should be revisited on an annual basis. All Goals, Objectives and Policies should be reviewed for their continued applicability, and revised or amended as appropriate if circumstances have changed. The Town should appoint a representative group to serve as the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee and the committee should meet regularly throughout the year. Amendments, revisions, deletions and additions to the Goals, Objectives and Policies should be brought before the public and the Town Board during a regular Town Board meeting.

## 2.0 Background

The 1995 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of New Hartford laid out a policy framework intended to reach the following goals:

- **Economics, Land Use and Development:**
  - Promote the Town as a suburban community while preserving its rural character
  - Promote agriculture as a viable industry
  - Maintain and develop commercial/retail areas in a safe and aesthetically pleasing manner
  - Promote appropriate industrial development
  - Promote office development
- **Environment and Natural Resources:**
  - Preserve and protect of surface and groundwater
  - Enhance of stormwater management
  - Preserve and protect visual resources

- Preserve and protect agricultural, wooded and other significant open space
- Advance the protection of natural resources
- **Housing**
  - Recognize the importance and value of single family homes to the Town's residents
  - Create a variety of housing types to meet the needs of a diverse population
  - Coordinate housing growth with provision of services
  - Create housing stock compatible with environmental and physical characteristics of the Town
- **Community Facilities and Services**
  - Support and maintain high quality protective services in the Town
  - Develop a library of a suitable size and stature
  - Coordinate with the school districts regarding physical development changes or expansion
  - Provide for environmentally responsible waste disposal
  - Provide for efficient delivery of government services and avoid duplication of effort where possible
- **Water and Sewer**
  - Maintain a high quality water supply outside of water districts
  - Ensure that sewage disposal occurs in an effective and environmentally sound manner
- **Transportation**
  - Increase the use of public bus service
  - Improve the flow of traffic
  - Ensure an infrastructure capable of serving residents
  - Improve pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the Town
- **Recreation**
  - Maintain and enhance the quality of New Hartford's recreation areas
  - Ensure the availability of recreation areas in newly developed areas
- **Fiscal**
  - Meet the service needs of residents in a cost-effective manner
- **Historic and Cultural Resources**
  - Preserve and protect New Hartford's historic and cultural resources

For the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update, the accomplishments and implementation of the 1995 Plan have been weighed to develop a new set of Goals and Objectives. The Goals and Objectives provide a framework to guide development and change in the Town of New Hartford. They also set a regional standard for the Town, County and region to meet in setting and attaining regional goals. Goals and Objectives for the Town of New Hartford Comprehensive Plan update follow.

### 3.0 Goals and Objectives

#### **GOAL 1 - To recognize the need to pursue avenues of both conservation and development in the Town of New Hartford**

- Objective 1 - Attract and retain population to seek an appropriate level of growth
- Objective 2 - Recognize that the Town is part of a diverse region
- Objective 3 - Encourage continued diversification in terms of race, culture socio-economic status and age among the Town's residents
- Objective 4 - Promote a diverse array of housing and employment choices for all incomes and ages
- Objective 5 - Foster a balance between development and conservation
- Objective 6 - Address conflicts among land uses to minimize threats to the environment
- Objective 7 - Address continuing needs for open space and conservation areas

#### **GOAL 2 - To encourage a pattern of development in New Hartford to preserve and strengthen its neighborhoods**

- Objective 8 - Concentrate development in existing neighborhoods providing clear separation of identity among them
- Objective 9 - Link neighborhoods together, integrating them into the whole in order to create better traffic and circulation patterns and healthier, walkable neighborhoods
- Objective 10 - Match housing and commercial needs to neighborhood character
- Objective 11 - Recognize the importance of historical and cultural resources to development patterns in the Town

#### **GOAL 3 - Use public policy as a tool for directing development in the Town**

- Objective 12 - Continue to develop a formal avenue to address the on- and off-site mitigation of the adverse impacts of development

Objective 13 - Base development decisions on assessment of Town-wide and Regional needs

Objective 14 - Address access and transportation issues and impacts regionally

Objective 15 - Address environmental issues, including the impacts of development, air and water quality regionally

Objective 16 - Develop additional transportation and circulation corridors with respect to natural resource and environmental protection

**GOAL 4 - To preserve and enhance the ecology and natural features of the Town of New Hartford**

Objective 17 - Site future developments to avoid and mitigate potential adverse impacts

Objective 18 - Recognize and preserve the quality of water and water resources

Objective 19 - Use urban design principles to concentrate development and improve transportation and commuting choices

Objective 20 - Develop and link greenways throughout the Town as the mainstay of New Hartford's community design

Objective 21 - Concentrate development away from steep slopes, wetlands, habitats and other critical natural areas

**GOAL 5 - To maintain and improve regional competitiveness through cooperative economic development ventures and strategies**

Objective 22 - Attract and retain high-quality jobs

Objective 23 - Encourage the development of housing choices for all income levels

Objective 24 - Encourage the development of mixed-use neighborhoods

Objective 25 - Encourage the adoption of land use regulations encouraging mixed-use, "green" and live/work residential choices

**GOAL 6 - To undertake and support activities which enhance the quality of life in the Town of New Hartford**

Objective 26 - Highlight sound community development in housing, employment, services, environmental protection and historic, cultural and natural resources management

Objective 27 - Develop, communicate and celebrate a unique identity for the Town of New Hartford as a unique destination in the Mohawk Valley

Objective 28 - Maintain and enhance New Hartford's reputation as a center for superior education in its public and private schools

Objective 29 - Develop and maintain connections with communities throughout the region, including physical, social and cultural connections

**GOAL 7 - Encourage efficiency in local government service delivery**

Objective 30 - Assign responsibility and authority to appropriate levels of government

Objective 31 - Promote cooperation, coordination and collaboration among local and regional levels of government

Objective 32 - Avoid duplication of effort within and among jurisdictions where possible

Objective 33 - Deliver services to Town residents in a cost-effective manner

Objective 34 - Bring local laws, zoning and other regulations into conformance with the Comprehensive Plan Update

Objective 35 - Distribute the adopted Comprehensive Plan Update to regional governments and planning agencies to encourage consistency in future planning efforts

## 4.0 Policies

The Policies of the Comprehensive Plan represent the public interest of the residents of the Town of New Hartford. The Policies help guide the Town toward a future balance of conservation and growth. The Policies should be amended and revised on an on-going basis, as noted above, to accommodate changes in circumstances and to reflect changes to the Goals and Objectives reflecting the changing values of the Town residents.

The policies for the Town of New Hartford are broken out into the chapters to which they refer, that is, housing policies are cataloged with the Housing Chapter, transportation policies with the Transportation Chapter and so on.