

I. GOALS AND POLICIES

An effective and useful town master plan must be more than a thoughtful vision of the community in the future. The master plan must establish a foundation of clear and consistent guidance on development policy if it is to have influence on future growth and quality of life.

The Lewisboro Town Master Plan is based on five comprehensive goals for the future of Lewisboro. These goals were established after three years of extensive research which explored the type of community Lewisboro is today, the physical characteristics of the land, the Town's place in the region and the expressed aspirations of present residents.

Community interest in the planning process has been exceptional. Each of four Plan update information sessions held by the Planning Board in early 1984 attracted the participation of between 100 and 300 residents. A public hearing on a draft of the Master Plan, held in March 1985, was attended by approximately 300 residents. From an overall perspective, little diversity on desired community direction emerged.

Presented below are the five Plan goals. Each goal is followed by several policy statements which are intended to elucidate and to serve as the basis for the more detailed recommendations and implementation techniques which are discussed in subsequent chapters of this Plan.

Proposals for actions or development which substantially vary from the intent of these goals and policies should not be implemented unless they are accompanied by studies of sufficient scope and magnitude to demonstrate that the proposed variance is in the best interests of the community as a whole.

Goal 1: A Residential Community

Although much of Lewisboro remains undeveloped, the Town's residential character is well-established. Future development which takes place consistent with recommendations of this Plan should be predominantly residential and guided by the following policies:

- A. The level of permitted housing density must be related to the physical development limitations of the land.
- B. Distinction and balance must be maintained between the moderately high density hamlet areas and low density/ rural areas.
- C. Opportunities should be provided for a range of housing including type, cost and character.

- D. Business and commercial uses should not be permitted to locate in residential areas shown on the Plan Map. Low profile activities which are incidental to a residence, such as a home occupation, may be permitted as accessory uses.

Goal 2: Four Hamlet Centers

Lewisboro does not have one high density business and community center; instead it has four small neighborhood hamlets. Each hamlet has provided services for Lewisboro residents in the surrounding area for many years, a pattern which should continue. The hamlets can be enhanced through commitment to the following policies:

- A. The hamlets are centers for locally-oriented retail and service businesses. Large retail and office complexes are more appropriately located in larger nearby community centers such as Ridgefield, New Canaan and Mount Kisco.
- B. The existing character of the hamlets should not be permitted to be altered by future development. Key features should be protected and the cohesiveness of each hamlet heightened.
- C. The moderately high density residential areas in the hamlets which are shown on the Plan Map provide important housing opportunities both in terms of existing housing and future housing units. They also provide a residential nucleus for the hamlets and part of the Town's balance of housing stock. These areas should be maintained.
- D. All development in the hamlets should be required to incorporate up-to-date site construction and design standards intended to produce attractive and safe facilities. Detailed attention must be paid to such features as vehicle access, parking, lighting, landscaping, drainage, signing and pedestrian movement.

Goal 3: Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation

The quality of the Lewisboro natural environment is an ever-present part of the life of its residents. Only continual attention to the preservation and protection of natural features and resources will ensure the existence of the present exceptional setting in the future. Adherence to the following policies should maintain and possibly enhance the position of the natural physical environment in the Town as it continues to develop.

- A. Lands which encompass critical environmentally sensitive features are to be protected from most types of disturbance. These features include natural systems - such as major wetlands, streams and adjacent upland buffers, and aquifers and aquifer recharge areas - as well as fragile land forms - such as flood plains and steep slopes.

- B. The existing committed open space system includes land devoted to various purposes owned by the Town, Westchester County, other public agencies and private conservation groups. The system provides a wide range of benefits to Lewisboro residents. All of this land should be maintained as open space, unavailable for development.
- C. Lands which serve an important aesthetic function due to their natural qualities and visible location should be protected from alteration. Such lands include areas immediately adjacent to major roads, natural buffer areas between different types of land use or development density, stream corridor greenbelts and highly visible hillsides and ridgelines.
- D. Public access to open space lands via foot trails contribute to the community's appreciation of these lands. The Town should pursue the establishment of a trail network through and between committed open space parcels.
- E. Town acquisition of additional open space land should be considered only if a specific land area is identified by the Plan as being a critical component of the community open space system and no other option for protection of the land exists.
- F. The development program for the Town's parks, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and recreation programs should incorporate the findings of this Plan so as to both maintain the excellent ratio of facilities to residents and expand the range of services available as the Town's population continues to grow.

Goal 4: Enhance Community Character and Appearance

The terrain of Lewisboro in combination with separated residential areas located mostly off of major roadways, four small hamlet areas and low profile commercial uses has allowed the Town to establish an identity distinct from that of neighboring towns. This "Lewisboro character" should be an active part of discussions in planning for the Town's future. The several components which contribute to the Town's character can be better identified, preserved and enhanced through commitment to the following policies:

- A. The low density residential character of most of the Town's land is to be preserved by maintaining rural and low density development standards and by incorporating major features of the natural and man-made terrain into subdivision design. Stream corridors, wetlands, stone walls and fences, tree lines, fields and wooded areas can and should be retained as integral elements of development proposals.

- B. Architectural review by appropriate Town agencies should be a standard step in the review of new commercial and multifamily developments. Similar review should be applied to large single-family residential developments to assure architectural variety and to avoid problems of repetitious subdivision design.
- C. Areas of special character have been identified and are to be protected. Several sections of Lewisboro establish a unique image due to a combination of building style, land use, landscaping, setback and historical importance. Future development in these areas must be designed to complement the existing setting or the character could be destroyed. Special zoning regulations and architectural review provisions should be enforced if required.
- D. Individual buildings which have historic interest or contribute to the visual character of the community should be protected.

Goal 5: Establish a Regional Position

Lewisboro is located within a suburban area which has been experiencing a high level of growth of new residences, employment centers and commercial business. This external force must be recognized by Town officials and residents in order that development may be dealt with in a manner which balances the rights of property owners, the natural development limitations of the land, and the expressed desires of the community as a whole. Certain policies can be followed by the Town to better ensure that the first four goals listed can continue to be pursued in a period of continual new construction. These are:

- A. The State road network in Lewisboro has limited capacity. The level of development recommended by this Plan does not support and is not consistent with major reconstruction or widening of these roads. Safety and intersection improvements are needed and should be implemented.
- B. Local roads are established to provide safe and adequate access between the Town's residences and the State roads. Maintenance and improvement programs should be based on this intended use from existing and future development at the density levels recommended by this Plan. With the exception of segments which have unsafe features or major maintenance problems, unpaved roads should be retained in recognition of the contribution they make to the community's character.
- C. A limited amount of campus commercial development should be permitted in areas with sufficient access to regional highways subject to compliance of each proposed project with stringent standards on: development density, building and parking area setbacks, buffering from adjacent uses, and operation characteristics such as emissions, noise and

traffic. Land adjacent to Route 22 along Interstate 684 between Route 138 and the Exit 6A ramp is the only area in Lewisboro potentially suitable for this type of land use.

- D. The construction of central sewer or water service over a broad area of Lewisboro is not likely. The level of development recommended by this Plan does not support new large systems. The efficient expansion of centralized systems in the moderately high density hamlets may be possible. In other areas, the improvement or provision of central water systems should be explored, as appropriate, depending on the scale of new construction or the availability of funding.