

Town of Fremont Sullivan County, NY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



December 2007

Prepared by:

Town of Fremont Comprehensive Plan Committee
Town of Fremont Town Board
www.fremontnewyork.us



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Town of Fremont, Sullivan County, New York
Comprehensive Plan - 2007

Foreword

This Plan was prepared by the Town of Fremont Comprehensive Plan Committee with support from the Town of Fremont Planning Board and Town Board.

Funding for this project was made available through the Upper Delaware Council.

Town of Fremont
Comprehensive Plan Committee

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1.0 Introduction

This *Comprehensive Plan* sets forth a combination of strategies to deal with the growth and future needs of the Town of Fremont. The Town is one of unusual beauty and history that connects the Upper Delaware Valley with the Catskills. It is long been a second-home area and includes several farms that give it a special character. The Town has become very attractive to metropolitan area residents who desire a place to which to escape from urban life while retaining a strong connection to it.



An Early Photograph of Long Eddy

The Town of Fremont, as a rural area, is also characterized by limited economic opportunities. Tourism related to second home development constitutes one of those opportunities. This has created a challenge common to communities experiencing new growth on the metropolitan fringe. Businesses and residents economically benefitting from second home development often want more of it, while the second home buyers they attract often want to preserve what they bought and are wary of growth. Growth always tends to produce heavy skepticism regarding further growth. Looked at another way, growth can detract from the very features that make a community attractive to new residents, killing off the economic opportunities it offers.

Notwithstanding this inherent conflict, there are opportunities to meet the challenge, allowing for continued growth while preserving what is best about the Town and which serves to attract continued growth. Known as “smart growth” in many circles, this approach seeks to manage growth by

addressing its impacts through design and other mitigation measures. Experience indicates communities can absorb large amounts of growth and still retain their essential character, if smart growth techniques are applied to land development. That is one of the underlying purposes of this *Comprehensive Plan*.



**Bluestone Mining in the Town of Fremont
One of the Town's Economic Foundations
(Basket Historical Society)**

This *Comprehensive Plan* also addresses issues related to transportation, community facilities and services and economic development. It recognizes farming, lumbering and quarrying are among the industries that have made the Town what it is today and continue to provide for the economic livelihood of numerous residents. These natural resource industries are just as critical to the Town's future as second home development. It is intended, through this *Comprehensive Plan* to establish this as a matter of Town policy and afford both recognition and protection to these industries.



An Early Photograph of Mileses

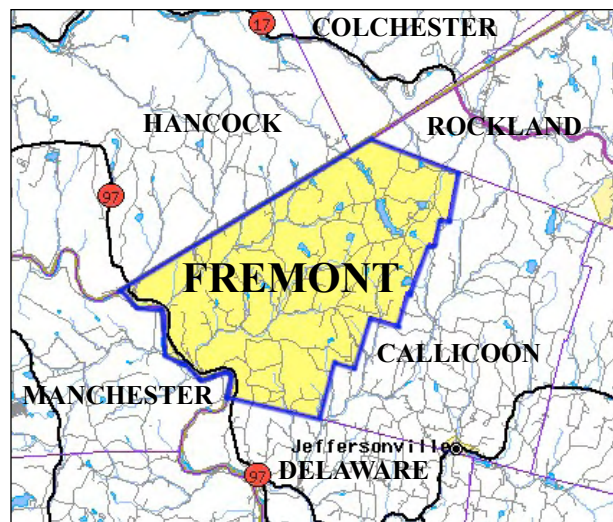
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2.0 Background Studies

2.1 Regional Location and History

2.1.1 Regional Setting

The Town of Fremont is located at a latitude of 41.8431 North and a longitude of 75.0404 degrees West (coordinates for the hamlet of Fremont Center) in the northwestern portion of Sullivan County, along the Upper Delaware River, north of Callicoon and south of Hancock, New York. Adjoining municipalities include the Towns of Hancock and Colchester in Delaware County, Rockland, Callicoon and Delaware in Sullivan County and Manchester Township, Wayne County, Pennsylvania.



The bulk of the Town drains directly to the Upper Delaware River but a portion slopes toward Route 17 and the East Branch of the Delaware River. The Town rises steadily in elevation from the Upper Delaware (780 feet) to Tennenah Lake (2,400 feet), which experiences colder temperatures than much of Sullivan County. The Town consists of approximately 32,800 acres or 51.2 square miles of land.

2.1.2 History

The Town website at www.fremontnewyork.us includes a *Fremont History*, by Charles S. Hick, Town Historian (reprinted from the *Sullivan*

County Democrat of November, 1951, with permission. A brief summary of the highlights is excerpted below:

The Town of Fremont came into existence on November 1, 1851 having been created by dividing the Town of Callicoon - the west half becoming Fremont. General John C. Fremont had several admirers among the men who organized the new town, and it was named in his honor. The Town was the last in the County to be opened up for settlement. There were no roads to it in any direction. The Town was accessible by the Delaware River and its first settlers came to it up the river.

Isaac Simmons was the first settler. He came to the Hankins area in 1780. Two other parts of the Town were independently settled, Long Pond (now Tennenah Lake) and Basket. The settlers at Long Pond came through the Town of Rockland. All contact with the outside world was over that route. A road built in 1833 from Liberty to the Delaware River opened up that portion near North Branch. A road known as the Cannon road was built over the hill to reach the Hankins settlement. This was followed by another road to Fremont Center.

The Erie Railroad led to a real estate boom within the Town. Hankins became a station and many celebrities came through there to reach the Beaverkill where they would fish for trout. They walked overland from Hankins through the mud to the Town of Rockland.

A tannery business was started in 1849 when Charles W. Miles, Benjamin C. Miles and Carlos P. Holcomb built a tannery on the Hankins creek where Mileses now stands. Another tannery in Fremont Center, built by D. P. Buckley and Son of Liberty was larger and produced more leather than the one at Mileses.

A post office was established at Long Eddy in 1855 and a ferry was organized to carry traffic over the river from the Pennsylvania side. A railroad station was established in 1856. The Delaware Bridge Company was chartered in 1866 and built a bridge across the Delaware River. The stock was held by residents of Long Eddy and Little Equinunk (Pennsylvania). Residents of Long Eddy also had vi-

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sions the community would develop similar to Binghamton, Elmira and other points along the Erie. They secured a charter from the state legislature incorporating the place as Douglas City. This was the only incorporated city in Sullivan County.

There was also proposal was made to dam the Delaware River to create a power plant and promote manufacturing. The Long Eddy Hydraulic and Manufacturing Company was organized and a contract for constructing the dam was awarded. Objections to the dam were made by the lumbermen who believed it would interfere with rafting operations. However, a flood in the meantime demolished the dam. Another attempt in 1871 was also destroyed by a flood, ending the dreams for Douglas City, which was formally dissolved and became part of the Town once more.



Historic Hankins, New York Postcard

The Town of Fremont was always a favorite resort for hunters and fisherman. It abounded in deer, bear, panther, wolves and even elk, which inhabited the Town long after they could no longer be found in other parts of Sullivan County. Trout streams were (and remain) common. The Delaware River also offered shad, bass and salmon.

When summer boarders began to come to Sullivan County, there was a movement to change the names of many ponds. Long Pond was renamed Tennenah Lake, which means "mountain river." It became a popular summer resort and in the winter, the snow was scraped off the ice and harness horse racing was staged on the ice. A large hotel was later developed at the end of the Lake.



Tennenah Lake Postcard

Martin A. Smith planted the largest orchard of apple trees in Sullivan County near Fremont Center. He had a small village of his own which included a creamery and a cider mill. He also introduced the first Holstein dairy cattle into the County. He served as Assemblyman and helped build a beet sugar factory at Binghamton and planted his flats to sugar beets, which were shipped in freight cars loaded at Hankins. The venture did not succeed, however.

Obernburg was settled by Catholic families of German heritage who started the first Catholic Church in Sullivan County with a resident priest. The name Obernburg was given this community because it was the community in Bavaria from which many of the early settlers came to America and on to Fremont. Another institution for which Obernburg was known was its brewery, which was operated until about 1905. For many years it supplied the taverns in Western Sullivan County with the beer they used.

A cooperage was developed in Mileses that produced thousands of apple barrels used by packers all over Sullivan County. So immense were the crops of apples produced that one North Branch packer alone shipped 1700 carloads of barreled apples out of the County. These apples were shipped all over the United States.

Fremont also possessed a number of other industries, including creameries that manufactured cheese, other breweries, numerous dairy farms and acid factories where wood alcohol was manufactured. Still another industry was bluestone. The

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first blue stone reached the markets from quarries along the Delaware River. It was used in New York City and others cities in the metropolitan area that needed sidewalks. Flagstones of bluestone were the ideal solution. It was also used for curb along the street, window sills on brick buildings and facing on buildings. Local stone cutters developed great skills in shaping the stone and the industry remains strong today.

Historic hamlets of the Town of Fremont include the following:

- Acidalia – Near the northwest Town line.
- Basket – East of Long Eddy.
- Buck Brook – Eastern part of the Town.
- Fernwood – Western part of the town.
- Fremont Center – The Town center.
- Hankins – Delaware River and Route 97.
- Lakewood – Northeast part of the Town.
- Long Eddy – Delaware River and Route 97.
- Mileses – West of Fremont Center.
- Obernburg – Northeast part of the Town.
- Pleasant Valley – Southern part of the Town.
- Tennanah Lake – Northeast part of the town.

These hamlets are all very quiet communities today, in contrast to their bustling industrial pasts.

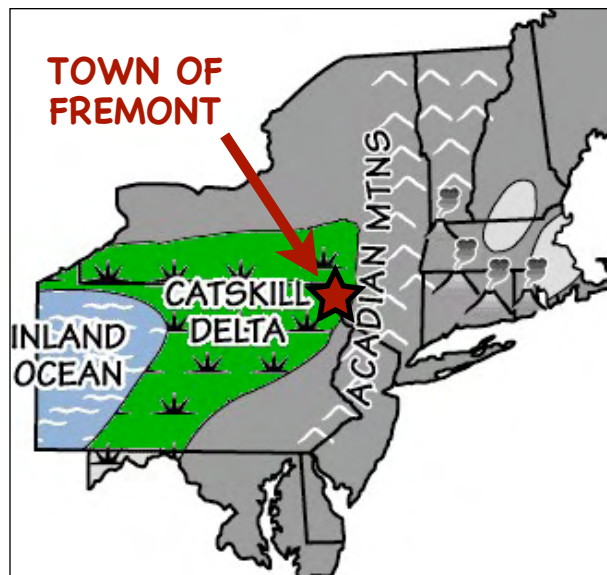
2.2 Natural Features

2.2.1 Geology

The Town of Fremont is located along the northeastern edge of the Allegheny Plateau. This plateau was formed from sedimentary deposits due to the erosion of the Acadian Mountains to the east. They washed into what was an ancient inland ocean, resulting in the formation of the "Catskill Delta."

Bedrock found in the Town of Fremont was created during the late Devonian period that extended from 410 to 360 million years ago. The Town of Fremont is largely within the Lower and Upper Catskill Formations. They consist of conglomerate and sandstone interspersed with shale. The coarse-grained layers of bedrock have proved to be very erosion resistant, leaving in place many of the ridges that define the character of the area. This bedrock has also been uplifted over the eons by

tectonic forces and shaped by glaciers and erosion to produce the current mountainous landscape. It tends to yield good supplies of water, but is often found near the surface, thereby limiting building development and agricultural potential.



The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development describes area surface geology as follows:

"The majority of the surficial geology of the Catskills was determined during the last 1.6 million years. Four ice ages inundated this area, most recently the Wisconsin advance. The Wisconsin glaciers finished retreating from this area only approximately 14,000 years ago. The majority of the region is composed of glacial till. Till (material deposited by a glacier) is unstratified, unsorted, and is made up of a wide range of sizes. For this reason, glacial till generally acts as an aquifer, holding large amounts of groundwater. The high peak regions are entirely comprised of bedrock. These sandstone and conglomerate mountaintops were scoured and scraped by glaciers moving around and over their summits, leaving virtually no loose material."

The National Park Service indicates the following:

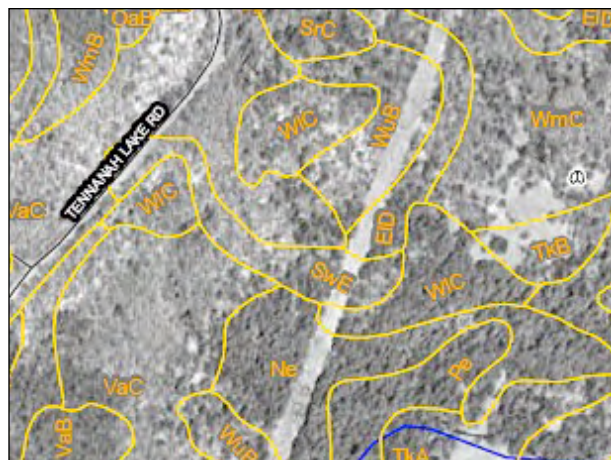
The Upper Delaware River lies between the Appalachian Plateau physiographic province and Catskill physiographic section. The Delaware River

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Gorge has been identified as an outstanding scenic geologic feature. It begins above Matamoras and runs north throughout most of the river segments, ranging between two and three thousand feet in width. Geologic processes have left many economically valuable deposits, including bluestone, sand and gravel, shale and peat.

2.2.2 Soil and Water Resources

The Town of Fremont is located entirely within the Delaware River Basin. It includes significant floodplains and wetlands along the River and other streams. There are also several large lakes and Ponds, including Lake Anawanda, Lake Florence, Lake Muskoday and Tennesah Lake. There are also hydric soil areas throughout the Town.



A soil suitability map prepared for the Town depicts a more serious problem – substantial areas of the Town where the soil depth to the seasonal high water table is very shallow, making it quite difficult to install functioning on-lot sewage disposal systems that are essential for development in this rural area. As much 40-50% of the Town may well fall into that category. These include the WIC Wellsboro and WmC Willowemoc soils depicted above.

A test analysis of soil maps for a 4,600 acre central section of the Town indicates 42% of the top 15 soils categories found (all soils accounting for 2% or more of the selected area) had seasonal high water tables within 24" of the surface, another 32% had bedrock within 24" of the surface and still another 15% had severe slope limitations, rendering

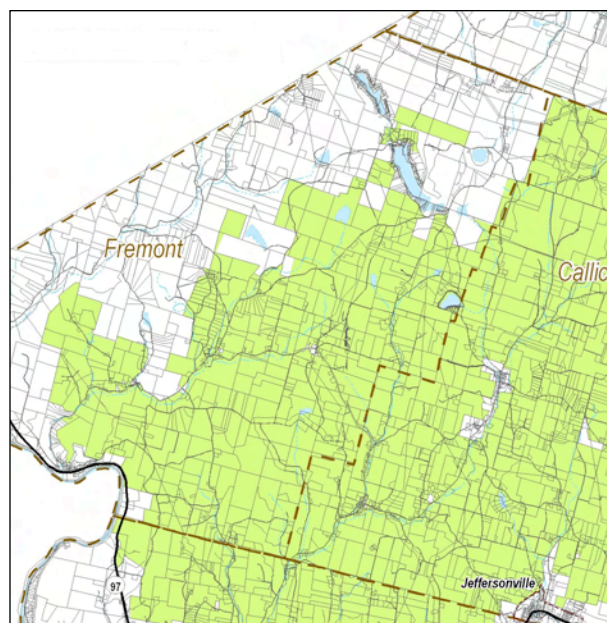
as much as 89% of the area generally unsuitable for subsurface sewage disposal. Pockets of better soils can be found within these areas. Also, smaller or different soils areas may yield better results.

Nevertheless, the overall pattern is clear. Fremont has very difficult soils for development. They tend to be steep, rocky or wet, suggesting that larger lot sizes are needed in many cases to find suitable areas for sewage disposal. The Town also needs to set high standards for soils testing and sewage system design and allow for concentration of density on better soils where they exist, if it is to accommodate growth. It also needs to encourage use of alternative technologies that can make use of lesser quality soils for effluent disposal (e.g. spray irrigation systems that rely more upon evaporation).

Water resources are more plentiful. The local bedrock is heavily fractured and tends to hold water, providing reasonably good supplies and yields.

2.2.3 Agriculture and Forest Resources

The Town of Fremont includes several valuable farms and major timber resources. Among these are dairies, horse farms and small beef operations. About half the Town is part of Sullivan County Ag District No. 1 (depicted in green below).



Sullivan County Ag District No. 1 (July, 2006)

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The area's relatively high elevation and cooler climate is well-suited to grass production and grazing. Several former dairies are still in use as hay farms and provide valuable open spaces that both sustain tourism and create residential appeal. The Town's hardwood forests provide similar benefits and support an active regional timber industry.

2.3 Existing Land Use

An *Existing Land Use Map* has been prepared using data from real property tax records. This map reveals a large proportion of the Town consists of Vacant land, rural residential and agricultural land uses loom large, indicating major potential for further development if the demand for second homes continues to be strong and New York metro area professionals continue to be attracted to the area.

Residential uses, moreover, already represent the largest share of the parcels in the Town of Fremont. Vacant land also accounts for a large share of the parcels. Commercial properties are mostly limited to the hamlets, but there are also numerous home occupations throughout the Town.

Table 2-1 Parcels by Land Use, 2005			
Code	Land Use Description	Parcels	Value
100	Agricultural Properties	66	\$6,735,400
200	Residential Properties	1044	\$108,796,830
300	Vacant Land	691	\$16,708,470
400	Commercial Properties	36	\$7,849,200
500	Recreation and Entertainment	6	\$2,190,500
600	Community Service Properties	32	\$5,896,300
700	Industrial Properties	2	\$808,300
800	Public Service Properties	20	\$8,880,035
900	Public Parks and Conservation	57	\$4,034,810
Total Parcels in All Use Categories		1,550	\$161,899,845

Source: NYS Office of Real Property Services
Note: Value is assessed value by code for 2005

2.4 Population and Economic Base

2.4.1 Population Trends

The following table illustrates the growth of Fremont compared to Sullivan County and the State:

Table 2-2 Population Changes, 1990 - 2000			
Year	New York State	Sullivan County	Town of Fremont
1990	17,990,778	69,277	1,332
2000	18,976,457	73,966	1,391
Change	985,679	4,689	59
% Change	5.5%	6.8%	4.4%
Persons Per Square Mile	402	74	59

Based on the Census Bureau data for 2000, the Town of Fremont grew by only 4.4% between 1990 and 2000. New York State as a whole grew by only 5.5% during this same period with much of that growth occurring in the Metropolitan New York City area. Sullivan County experienced an increase in population of 6.8% between 1990 and 2000. Nevertheless, all these rates of growth were still well below the U.S. average of 13.2% for the decade. Nearby Damascus Township and the Town of Bethel had growth rates exceeding 18%.

The Bureau of Census estimates Fremont's population increased very slightly to 1,401 persons in 2005. While there has been population growth it is very limited. The area is actually becoming more rural, relative to other parts of the country. However, the Town population aged 25-54 years increased by 10.5% over the decade, which is generally good for the long-term economic health of Fremont.

Notwithstanding the modest population growth, there has been greater growth in housing. Second home conversions to permanent residences and in-migration of new permanent residents has resulted in the number of occupied housing units having risen by 98 or 9.0% despite the low level of population increase. This indicates some of Fremont's growth is being masked by shrinkage in household sizes due to aging in place and in-migration of smaller households of retirees and professionals.

Continued conversions of second homes to permanent residences will likely lead to steady but still very slow growth in the Town's population over the next decade.

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2.4.2 Age of Household Members

The Town population by age differs somewhat from that of the County, as Table 2-3 illustrates.

Table 2-3 Population by Age, 2000				
Year	Fremont	%	County	%
Under 5 years	90	6.5%	4,355	5.9%
5 to 9 years	84	6.0%	5,133	6.9%
10 to 14 years	102	7.3%	5,576	7.5%
15 to 19 years	108	7.8%	5,203	7.0%
20 to 24 years	34	2.4%	3,574	4.8%
25 to 34 years	148	10.6%	8,647	11.7%
35 to 44 years	214	15.4%	12,121	16.4%
45 to 54 years	196	14.1%	10,928	14.8%
55 to 59 years	94	6.8%	4,342	5.9%
60 to 64 years	86	6.2%	3,503	4.7%
65 to 74 years	139	10.0%	5,856	7.9%
75 to 84 years	68	4.9%	3,622	4.9%
85 years+	28	2.0%	1,106	1.5%
TOTAL	1,391	100%	73,966	100%
Total < 25 years	418	30.1%	23,841	32.2%
Total 25-54 years	558	40.1%	31,696	42.9%
Total 55-64 years	180	12.9%	7,845	10.6%
Total 65+ years	235	16.9%	10,584	14.3%

The < 25 years group represented 30.1% of total population in the Town but 32.2% Countywide. The 25-54 years category was also smaller at 40.1% for the Town and 42.9% for the County. Some 16.9% of persons were 65+ years of age in the Town, compared to 14.3% in the County. Similar patterns existed among the 55-64 years group, indicating an older community overall. Indeed, the median age within the Town was 41.6 years in 2000, compared to 38.8 years for the County.

2.4.3 Years of Education

The 2000 Census indicated that 794 persons or 81.5% of the population age 25 years or more had a high school diploma. Significantly, only 76.2% of the County and 79.1% of this New York State population as a whole had a high school diploma in 2000. Some 23.8% of Town residents possessed a college degree (Associate or higher), compared to 24.4% for the County and 34.6% for the State. Overall, the Town is rather typical of rural areas of New York State in this regard.

**Table 2-4
Education Levels, 2000**

Education Level	Town of Fremont	Town %	County %
< 12 Yrs Education	180	18.5%	23.8%
12+ Years	562	57.7%	51.8%
Associate Degree	86	8.8%	7.7%
Bachelor's Degree	92	9.4%	9.1%
Graduate Degree	54	5.5%	7.6%
TOTAL	974	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census - 2000, Persons 25+ Years Old

The in-migration of new households from the metro region may have also played a factor in these numbers, as more managers and professionals have moved to the area over the years. It is anticipated this will continue.

2.4.4 Incomes

The 2000 Census, captured in Table 2-5 below, indicates per capita income for the Town of Fremont was, at \$18,087, slightly lower than that of the County as a whole (\$18,892). Per capita income Statewide, nevertheless, was \$23,389, indicating the great need for economic development within the Town, County and this region of New York State as a whole. The State's tax burden, based on higher incomes downstate, cannot be borne without such economic growth.

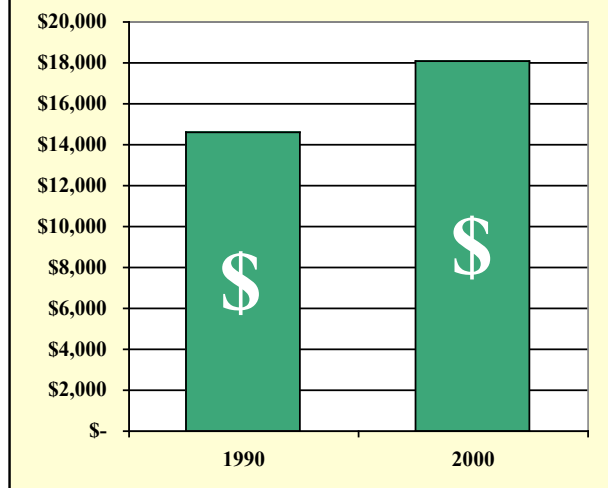
**Table 2-5
Incomes, 1990 - 2000**

Incomes	Town 1990*	Town 2000	County	NY State
Per Capita	\$14,604	\$18,087	\$18,892	\$23,389
Gain 90-00	-	\$3,483	\$2,061	\$1,289
% Gain	-	23.9%	12.2%	5.8%
Median Household	\$32,391	\$33,125	\$36,998	\$43,393
Gain 90-00	-	\$734	\$58	-\$757
% Gain	-	2.3%	0.2%	-1.7%
Median Family	\$43,423	\$40,938	\$43,458	\$51,691
Gain 90-00	-	-\$2,485	-\$1,923	-\$1,534
% Gain	-	-5.7%	-4.2%	-2.9%

* Adjusted for inflation to 2000 dollars.

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**Figure 2-1
Per Capita Income, 1990-2000**



Median family income in the Town was, at \$40,938, well below the County figure of \$43,458. Additionally, the Town median household income was, at \$33,125, also somewhat lower than the County median of \$36,998. Nonetheless, the single most important fact with respect to incomes is that both the Town and County are economically gaining on the State as a whole in both per capita and median household incomes, with inflation adjusted per capita income in the Town growing by a remarkable 23.9% over the decade. Incomes and wealth are shifting toward the exurban areas with migration outward from the metro area.

There are, obviously, still gaps to be dealt with through economic development, but they are closing relatively fast. This is positive news but there are important caveats. First, the State is falling behind more than the Town and County are gaining. This is especially true in the median household income category, where New York actually lost 1.7% while the nation was gaining 4.3% and Fremont was adding 2.3%. Secondly, some growth can simply be attributed to in-migration of wealthier households.

2.4.5 Employment by Industry

Table 2-6 breaks down the employed Town population aged 16 years or more in 2000 by industry.

The largest single industry in which Town residents are employed is education, health and social services, comprising 26.7% share of the employment base. Many are public school employees.

**Table 2-6
Employment by Industry, 2000**

Industry	16+ Years Employed	%
Educational, health, social services	159	26.7%
Retail trade	76	12.8%
Construction	75	12.6%
Manufacturing	53	8.9%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, lodging, food service	45	7.6%
Finance, insurance, real estate	37	6.2%
Public administration	35	5.9%
Professional, management, administrative	34	5.7%
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	32	5.4%
Agricultural, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	18	3.0%
Wholesale Trade	11	1.8%
Other services (except public administration)	11	1.8%
Information	10	1.7%
TOTAL	596	100%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Those persons involved in retail trade made up another 12.8% of the local labor force. Construction at 12.6%, manufacturing at 8.9%, tourism (arts, entertainment, recreation, lodging and food service) at 7.6% and finance, insurance and real estate at 6.2% rounded out the 2000 employment base of the Town of Fremont. Together, these industries comprised 74.7% of jobs held by Town residents.

The agricultural, forestry and mining sector employed 18 individuals or 3.0% of the Town labor force. This does not, however, include all self-employed individuals, many of whom work at non-employer enterprises.

Data on employment by occupation from the 2000 Census is summarized in Table 2-7. The data indicates that 209 or 35.1% of Town residents were employed in management, professional or related occupations. An additional 134 persons, or 22.5%, were employed in sales and office occupations, and 15.1% had jobs in construction and related occupa-

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tions, again confirming the importance of a high quality environment that attracts new homeowners and new home construction, where many of the jobs for existing residents are created.

**Table 2-7
Employment by Occupation, 2000**

Occupation	Persons 16+ Years Employed	
		%
Management, professional	209	35.1%
Sales, office	134	22.5%
Construction, mining, maintenance	90	15.1%
Service	88	14.8%
Production, transportation	66	11.1%
Farming, forestry	9	1.5%
TOTAL	596	100%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

2.4.7 Travel to Work

Some 42 persons, or 7.1% of workers within the Town worked from home in 2000. This was about double the rate of the County. The commute time was a full four minutes or 14.0% higher, reflecting the relative isolation of the Town.

Town of Fremont residents used public transportation at a lower rate than County residents in 2000, with 1.7% having used that mode in the Town, compared to 2.5% Countywide. This is probably due to workers who use public transportation for a part of their commute and may also reflect answers from metro area residents.

**Table 2-9
Travel to Work, 2000**

Geography	Mean Travel Time to Work	% Worked at Home	% Public Transit
Town of Fremont	33.4 Minutes	7.1%	1.7%
Sullivan County	29.3 Minutes	3.7%	2.5%
New York State	31.7 Minutes	3.0%	24.4%
United States	25.5 Minutes	3.3%	4.7%

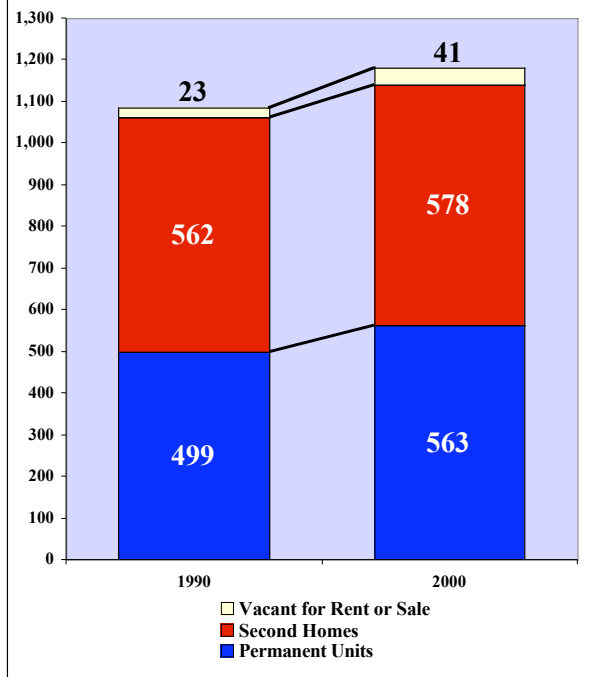
Source: U.S. Census, 2000

2.5 Housing

2.5.1 Housing Stock

The 2000 U.S. Census indicated the Town of Fremont had 1,182 housing units, of which 563 were occupied. Some 443 of these units were owner occupied and 120 were renter occupied.

**Figure 2-1
Fremont Housing Growth**



There was a total increase of 98 housing units between 1990 and 2000. This 9.0% gain, while the population grew by less than half this rate illustrates the impact of shrinking household sizes and, to a lesser extent, second homes on the Town. There were 578 second homes in the Town in 2000, representing 48.9% of the housing stock. This compared to 562 second homes in 1990, when they accounted for 51.8% of the stock. Second homes make up a very large proportion of housing units in the Town, but primary residences are now growing faster.

Second home growth is positive given that these taxpayers do not place as much demand on serv-

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ices, particularly in regards to public schools. Over time, however, as these homes become primary residences, there is the potential for major impacts on local services, as second home owners, who once paid taxes without demanding much in services, become part of the services consuming local population. These impacts are likely to be gradual but the cumulative impact could be quite large.

It is important the Town anticipate the future conversions to first homes in its budgeting and planning. Keeping the costs of government low now while second home revenue is coming in will help tremendously in preserving the tax capacity required in the future to support needed services.

2.5.2 Number of Persons per Household

The number of people living in each household was 2.47 persons in 2000. This was slightly lower than the County average of 2.50 persons and less than the New York average of 2.61 persons per household. These numbers are all quite low and probably close to bottoming out. When this happens, the impact on population growth can be large. Growth in households is then no longer absorbed by declines in household sizes. If the household size had stayed at the 2.67 persons it was in 1990, the 64 new occupied units gained would have added 171 persons to Fremont's population. As it was, only 59 individuals were added, but the impact on schools and services can be great if household sizes stop declining, as they almost surely will in the future. Should the size continue to decline this, also, can be a problem in supporting schools and other services demanding a base population to cover overhead costs.

2.5.3 Housing Values

The 2000 Census revealed a median housing value of \$90,500 for the Town of Fremont, which was somewhat lower than the County at \$93,300. This is, however, very low compared to the Statewide median of \$148,700 in 2000. Nationally, the figure was \$119,600.

These low values also reflect the discounted cost of Upstate New York's relatively high taxes. Nonetheless, within New York State, the area represents

a good housing value, a fact that is likely to encourage more in-migration of New York metropolitan area residents seeking such value.

2.5.4 Housing Type

Single-family homes accounted for 978 units or 82.7% of the Town of Fremont's housing stock in 2000, according to the U.S. Census. Manufactured homes accounted for 153 units or 12.9% of the housing units in the Town, somewhat above the County figure of 10.7%. Both have much higher proportions of manufactured homes than the State or U.S. because the latter include large urban areas where such housing is not typical. Multi-family housing, by contrast, is much more typical in those areas, and even in Sullivan County where it accounts for 12.8% of the housing stock, but represents only 3.0% of Fremont's units. Multi-family housing is a majority of the stock Statewide and is about a third of the national stock.

2.5.5 Contract Rents

Town of Fremont rents were relatively low in 2000, the median being only \$525. The median rent Countywide was slightly higher at \$545.

2.5.6 Owner vs. Renter Occupancy

The percentage of owner occupied units in the Town was 78.7% in 2000. Countywide, only 68.1% of the housing units were owner occupied. These numbers are both significantly higher than New York State where only 53% of all occupied housing units were owner occupied in 2000.

2.5.7 Housing Needs

The Town must ensure its land use regulations do not unnecessarily raise the cost of moderate income housing by arbitrarily requiring large lot sizes over every part of the Town or adding too many regulatory costs. A practical approach to land use regulation that recognizes the varying needs of different segments of the population and different parts of the Town is warranted.

There is also a need to upgrade the quality of a portion of the existing housing stock. Some 9.8% of

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2000 Census surveyed owner-occupied housing stock was valued at less than \$50,000. Also, 38.6% of surveyed renters and 30.7% of homeowners paid out more than 30% of their income as gross rent or monthly owner housing costs, suggested much of the stock is not truly affordable to residents.

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3.0 Goals and Objectives

3.1 Base all land use regulations on a firm foundation of protecting private property rights.

3.1.1 Preserve and respect the rights to use of private property by limiting land use regulations to those essential to health, safety and welfare of the community and for addressing land use conflicts.

3.1.2 Ensure land use standards provide the flexibility to fit individual development circumstances and offer bonuses for landowners who provide additional open spaces, protect important environmental features or otherwise contribute to quality forms of development.

3.1.3 Encourage home occupations and limit oversight to those features having a direct bearing upon adjacent land uses (e.g. noise, lighting).

3.1.4 Ensure land use regulations do not unreasonably impinge on the ability of farmers and other landowners to grant property to children or generate equity for continuation of farming through limited development.

3.2 Provide for orderly growth and development that maintains key aspects of the Town's character while also allowing for change.

3.2.1 Create incentives for use of conservation subdivision and other land development techniques that preserve the valuable open spaces and working landscapes of the Town of Fremont.

3.2.2 Establish land development performance standards applicable to difficult-to-develop soils, steep slopes, wetlands and other areas of the Town with natural resource limitations.

3.2.3 Establish zoning densities that match land development capabilities, steering density away from sensitive areas and towards those with the least limitations.

3.2.4 Create special zoning districts for areas of particular value, such as the Upper Delaware River corridor and the larger lakes within the Town, by applying development standards specifically designed to protect those resources.

3.2.5 Employ combinations of low-density zoning with maximum lot sizes as a technique for preserving particularly valuable open spaces while allowing for limited development.

3.2.6 Provide for transfers and purchases of development rights associated with lands of conservation value, using simple procedures that shift density toward developable areas while allowing for recovery of the land equity by current owners.

3.2.7 Address the need for affordable housing by maintaining reasonable minimum lot sizes throughout the Town and ensuring there are areas within the Town where large lots are not required.

3.2.8 Ensure a high quality housing stock at various price ranges by allowing for manufactured homes and multi-family housing subject to specific development standards for these uses.

3.2.9 Provide sufficient code enforcement resources to effectively implement growth management mechanisms recommended herein.

3.2.10 Create mechanisms for controlling the pace of new development relative to existing development patterns.

3.3 Protect the Town from dangers of flooding, fire and other disasters.

3.3.1 Maintain firefighting equipment needed to ensure the proper capacities of the local fire companies to address emergencies and institute volunteer recruitment incentives.

3.3.2 Apply the Town's Floodplain Damage Prevention Law as a tool to steer development away from dangerous flood locations.

3.3.3 Maintain an up-to-date Emergency Management Plan for the Town.

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3.4 Preserve, where practical, the character of existing rural highways and promote efficient and safe circulation of traffic through the Town.

3.4.1 Require, wherever possible, the use of joint highway accesses onto Town, County and State roads to minimize the potential traffic conflicts.

3.4.2 Reduce speeds on those roads possessing specific hazards and avoid new hazards by adopting speed restrictions and using traffic calming measures in conjunction with new development.

3.4.3 When reviewing site plans, require new roads to be designed to preserve natural topography and tree cover, minimize cuts and fills and preserve important views and features such as stone walls.

3.4.4 Where practical, scale street widths and alignments to neighborhood size (typically 18 feet width) while meeting minimum standards for safety and maintenance.

3.4.6 Require land developers to mitigate existing traffic safety issues, wherever possible, with offsite improvements.

3.4.7 Limit road dedications to the Town by establishing separate high standards for private road construction and dedication.

3.5 Protect surface and ground water quality and maintain a high-quality environment.

3.5.1 Incorporate stormwater management and erosion control planning requirements in both site plan and subdivision reviews.

3.5.2 Allow for and provide density bonuses as an incentive for conservation subdivision designs where lots are clustered to provide open space buffers that can trap stormwater run-off.

3.5.3 Develop and/or update and aggressively enforce junkyard and property maintenance rules,

including inspection and renewal procedures to ensure continued compliance.

3.5.4 Develop lake zoning districts that establish special standards for development in these areas.

3.5.5 Develop septic system design and maintenance standards for areas of high risk for malfunction and require upgrades in conjunction with substantial improvements to properties.

3.6 Economically revitalize the Town and its hamlets.

3.6.1 Use the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River designation as a marketing tool to promote business and historic renovations in the hamlet.

3.6.2 Allow for the development of convenience shopping opportunities, restaurants, lodging and niche service enterprises within the hamlet under zoning regulations.

3.6.3 Ensure all land use regulations are accommodating to small business and home occupations.

3.6.4 Promote tourism and other Town businesses through Town brochures, a town website linked to businesses offering services and materials identifying potential sites for businesses.

3.6.5 Support the continuation of natural resource industries, including, but not limited to the bluestone and forestry sectors.

3.6.6 Provide design standards for hamlet development, conversions of buildings to other uses and special forms of land development such as camps and campgrounds.

3.7 Encourage agricultural niche enterprises with potential to improve incomes, support tourism and protect working landscapes.

3.7.1 Promote the use of the New York State Agricultural District program within the Town on a

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satellite basis as a means of offering farmers additional protection of their rights to farm, complementing local legislation, extending these opportunities, also, to small niche agricultural enterprises.

3.7.2 Arrange for training of Town officials on agricultural planning issues through Cornell Cooperative Extension of Sullivan County and the Sullivan County Planning Division.

3.7.3 Work with landowners, the Sullivan County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, local land trusts, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and others to promote agricultural conservation easements as a public/private tool to preserve valuable farmland.

3.7.4 Actively promote the Town as a location for new farm and agri-business enterprises.

3.7.5 Encourage Sullivan County to continue to fund its Agricultural Economic Development program.

3.8 Protect the Town's valuable scenery through incentives.

3.8.1 Provide and promote options for property cleanup, including identifying and promoting junk hauling services and disposal locations and sponsoring cleanup days and similar events.

3.8.2 Develop growth-neutral design standards and incentives that will allow economic use of property without excessive clearing, applying measures that reward preservation of ridgelines and other areas of valuable scenery.

3.8.3 Develop high standards for lakeside development that address the aesthetic impacts of building within these areas of special limitations and beauty.

3.8.4 Encourage Sullivan County to consider an open space bond issue to fund scenic easement purchases.

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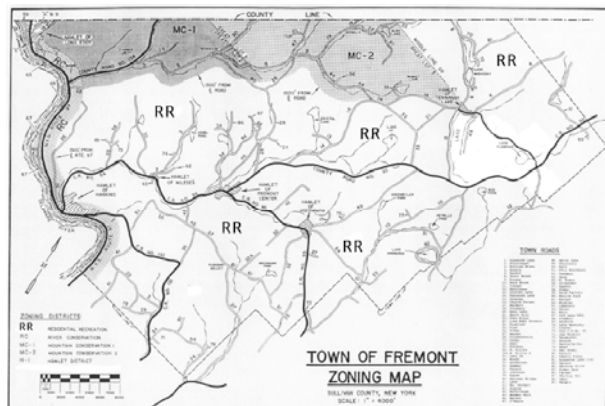
4.0 Plans

4.1 Land Use

4.1.1 Existing Land Use Regulations

The Town of Fremont enacted a Zoning Law several years ago. It has been updated over the years to reflect various changes in circumstances, including the adoption and subsequent repeal of a Planned Unit Development district encompassing the Tennenah Lake Resort and the creation of a River Conservation District to protect the Upper Delaware River corridor. The current Zoning Law also incorporates relatively up-to-date provisions dealing with multi-family housing, conservation subdivisions and other forms of modern development.

The current Zoning law establishes two low-density M-1 and M-2 Mountain Districts along the northern edge of the Town (200,00 square feet and 120,000 square feet minimum lot areas), plus several H Hamlet Districts (30,000 square feet) and the aforementioned RC River Conservation District (120,000 square feet).



The bulk of the Town is included in a moderate density RR Residential Recreation District (40,000 square feet). Recent development patterns have led to a reevaluation of this framework, with the suggestions of providing better protection for lake areas of the Town, linking of minimum lot areas to soils capacities and creation of residential zones around hamlets.

The Town also has a set of Subdivision Regulations that have been in effect for many years and used quite effectively. There are, in addition, some complementary regulations addressing manufactured homes and cellular towers.

The Subdivision Regulations, too, have been periodically updated to address issues such as lake access. They are generally adequate but need updating to address current Town Law and conservation design principles that should be applicable to all subdivisions. Also, some of the matters now addressed in the Zoning Law more properly belong in the Subdivision Regulations where there is additional flexibility to adapt to circumstances and attract innovative designs of subdivisions and land developments.

4.1.2 Future Land Use

It is anticipated additional new development will be attracted to the Town over the next decade. The Town is located on the fringe of the metropolitan area and is easily accessible by both Route 17 (future I-86) and Route 97. Its several lakes and the Upper Delaware River are strong attractions for second-home buyers. The Tennenah Lake Resort property remains undeveloped and its golf course is another powerful draw for prospective homebuilders.

The Town, for all these reasons, is likely to be the site of several new developments. This suggests the Town needs to focus its land use strategy on ensuring this new development is compatible with the capacities of the land on which it will take place. It also needs to guide the forms of this development toward techniques that preserve the existing character serving to attract this very development. Finally, it needs to balance new higher-end growth with the provision of affordable housing for existing residents.

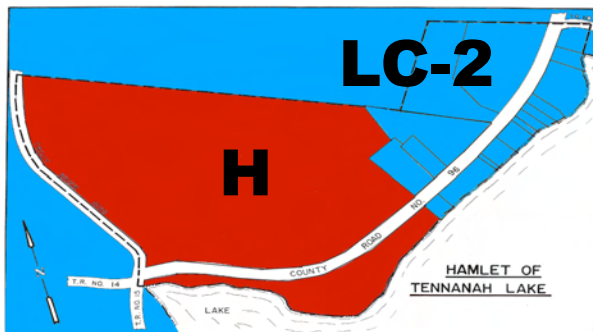
Therefore, the future land use plan of the Town of Fremont provides for recognizing existing lake communities and implementing new regulations designed to protect them from overdevelopment or careless use that would detract from their current appeal and value to the Town. It also calls for using soils data more effectively in the bulk of the

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Town to match density with land use capabilities, while simultaneously creating new residential zoning districts around the Town's existing hamlets to ensure many opportunities remain for current residents to acquire affordable lots for housing development.

This balanced approach is geared less toward controlling density than steering development to existing centers and away from highly valuable natural areas and recreational assets. It recognizes the limited capacities of Fremont's soil and water to absorb new intensive uses absent new infrastructure development that may take decades to realize. Therefore, much of the approach relates to timing of new development, with the mechanisms recommended herein being designed to pace this activity at a realistic level.

The future land use plan is very compatible with the existing zoning map of the Town of Fremont, excepting for the designation of new districts around major lakes and new residential zones around hamlets. It is also proposed to modify some of the H Hamlet Districts to create more practical boundaries. The Tennanah Lake H Hamlet District has been reduced in size (see map below for recommended new boundaries).



It is recommended, however, the Tannanah Lake H Hamlet District, which will continue to allow some commercial development in this vicinity, be subject to LC-2 Lake District standards for residential development to limit potential for overuse of the lake. Proposed land use plans for the Town of Fremont as a whole are reflected on a proposed revised Zoning Map found in the *Appendix* of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

4.1.3 Land Use Recommendations

Specific recommendations relating to land use in the Town of Fremont are provided below:

A. Create new LC Lake Conservation Districts around the larger lakes within the Town to establish development standards specific to these areas and their protection. Minimum lot sizes within these areas should be in the range of 3-5 acres (similar to the MC-1 and MC-2 Mountain Conservation Districts) and restrict lake access to match water use capacity. Other standards with respect to buffers, building heights, septic, lake access and design standards should also be included. The LC Districts should be defined by a combination of soils, watershed boundaries and existing lot layouts. Separate LC Districts should be created for the Anawanda and the Muskoday-Tennanah Lake areas with distinct standards for each.

B. Establish new minimum lot size standards for the RR Residential Recreation District, based upon soils and slopes. The existing 40,000 square feet minimum lot size should apply to soils with a depth to bedrock and/or the seasonal high water table of at least four feet and slopes under 10%. A sliding scale formula that increases the minimum lot size to 5 acres for soils and slopes at the opposite end of the scale should be employed (see proposed table below). It is also recommended the minimum lot area be increased by 40,000 sq. feet where the seasonal high water table or bedrock is four feet or less in depth or by 80,000 sq. feet where these are found at less than two feet.

Table 1	
Slope	Minimum Lot Area**
0-8%	40,000 square feet
8-15%	80,000 square feet
15-25%	120,000 square feet
25% +	200,000 square feet

Lot size averaging should, however, be applied to allow individual lots at the current minimum lot size, creating some flexibility for builders.

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- C. **Create new R Residential Districts around existing H Hamlet Districts in Fremont Center, Mileses and Obernburg to accommodate growth and provide opportunities for affordable housing.** The minimum lot size within these areas should remain at 40,000 square feet. The range of uses should however, be similar to the existing RR Residential Recreation District.
- D. **Address code enforcement issues by creating a formal complaint procedure, especially as related to septic system installation and maintenance in lake communities, and working with the County Clerk to prevent recording of illegal subdivisions.** The Town has limited resources for code enforcement but can make better use of existing resources if a formal complaint procedure is established that will allow the Code Enforcement Officer to focus on the most pressing matters. Such a process and appropriate forms should be developed and publicized on the Town website.

There is also an inherent problem with State law that potentially allows the County Clerk to accept deeds for new parcels that are not referenced on a map and, therefore, do not require evidence of Town subdivision approval. It is recommended a procedure be developed in cooperation with the County Clerk to forestall the illegal recording of such subdivisions. A local law that prohibits building permit issuance in these cases is also warranted.



- E. **Develop supplementary zoning regulations for wind generation facilities.** The Town's high elevations and wind speeds make it a logical candidate for installation of wind generation facilities. The Town should develop supplementary zoning regulations that allow for on-farm, individual and commercial wind generation facilities but subject them to standards for noise, shadow flicker, viewshed protection and other issues connected with such facilities. There is potential for State pre-emption of municipal exclusionary zoning standards related to such facilities. Nevertheless, reasonable regulation is warranted and likely to be legally sustainable.
- F. **Update the lake access provisions of the Town Subdivision Regulations.** Section 4.12 of the Town's current Subdivision Regulations should be updated to ensure a minimum of 200 feet of lake frontage is required to secure lake access within proposed LC-1 and LC-2 Districts. Language is also needed to ensure easements and rights-of-way are not substituted for fee simple ownership, as the former could generate far more lake use than the capacity to accommodate it, provided that existing homeowner associations are not restricted from accessing their community boat launches. Marinas and other multiple boat slip uses within LC Districts should be limited by the same formula such that each new lake access is limited to one boat slip per lot or 200 feet of frontage per boat slip, whichever is less so as to ensure LC District lakes are not subjected to recreational use beyond their carrying capacity. Accessory use permits should also be required for all new boat docks, with standards adopted to limit the use of cantilevered docks.

- G. **Update the non-conforming use provisions of the Zoning Law to grandfather lots made newly non-conforming by the increases in lot sizes in several zoning districts.** The new Lake Conservation District standards will have the effect of making many existing lots newly non-conforming, which demands grandfathering of rights to develop such lots. It is recommended this be accomplished by allowing residential use of such lots provided they meet cer-

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tain minimum standards roughly equivalent to current zoning. Provisions for issuance of Certificates of Non-conformance to owners of non-conforming lots and structures should also be enacted to give owners the ability to document and protect their rights as legally established non-conforming uses. There should, however, also be limits on the ability to use separate accessory uses from principal uses and thereby create new non-conforming uses where none existed previously.

H. Stormwater planning and design criteria for new uses should be adopted to ensure that new development does not create new stormwater or flooding problems but, rather, will serve to mitigate existing problems, thereby making a positive contribution through such new development. If proper stormwater management standards are adopted to require a reduction in runoff below existing conditions, then new development will serve to reduce stormwater and flooding problems, changing the entire dynamic with respect to environmental impacts of new development. It is recommended the Town enact such standards. It is further recommended the Town adopt a graduated sliding scale standard for lot coverage based on lot area (no more than 10,000 square feet for a typical 5-acre building lot) along with driveway construction standards to control runoff from this very common source of stormwater problems. Exceptions should be made, however, where a stormwater management plan is adopted that reduces stormwater runoff below existing conditions.

I. Create design guidelines for new commercial and more intensive forms of residential development. The Town should enact some basic design guidelines for new development, of other than a single-family nature, that address matters such as landscaping, lighting and parking lot layouts. Lighting, for example, should be fully shielded and sodium fixtures generally prohibited. Noise controls should also be considered, provided exceptions are made for agricultural, construction, logging, mining and similar indigenous industries. This will be particularly important as the Town is eyed by ma-

ior developers of new resorts and other non-residential enterprises. These facilities should be designed to high standards that preserve community character and limit off-site impacts.

J. Adopt higher septic system planning and design standards. It is recommended the Town enact its own septic system planning and design criteria to establish standards that exceed those of the New York State Department of Health (DOH) in certain critical areas. It is specifically recommended all lots be required to include a tested 100% replacement area for the absorption field and that all lots, regardless of size, be deep test pit and percolation tested. Finally, it is recommended the design standard for septic systems in Lake Conservation Districts be upgraded to require a minimum of three feet of acceptable soil between the limiting zone and the bottom of the absorption field (as opposed to the two feet required by DOH).

4.2 Community Facilities

4.2.1 Parks and Recreation

The Town has several park and recreation facilities including the side-by-side Bjorklund Field and Fremont Ballpark Association ballfield complexes between Mileses and Fremont Center, the Town boat launch in Long Eddy.



The Town is also bordered by the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River (an element of the National Park System) and participates in the programs of the Upper Delaware Council.

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The ballfields are accompanied by a playground and new rest room facilities are being installed. The Town's field badly needs new fencing. A refreshment stand and maintenance-free bleachers are also needed. The Town should also encourage the further development of Crystal Lake State Park, where trail systems are now being developed.

4.2.2 Town Hall

The Fremont Town Hall is showing many signs of wear and provides inadequate office and public meeting space. The ancillary building across the road is also too small to effectively serve for Town functions. The Town Board has been considering options for replacing these facilities but costs may be prohibitive.

Alternatives are being examined, including renovation and expansion of the larger building to include more room for offices and meeting space, upgraded bathrooms and additional garage bays. This would also serve to convert the Town Hall into more a community center.



It is recommended the Town engage architectural and engineering services for the purpose of costing out alternatives and preparing more detailed plans for upgrading the Town Hall and transforming it into a multi-purpose building.

4.2.3 Fire and Ambulance

There are eight different emergency service providers serving Fremont and its immediate environs. These include the fire companies in Fremont-Hankin, North Branch, Callicoon Center, Roscoe-

Rockland and Long Eddy. The Tenannah Lake Fire district is served by the Fremont and Roscoe departments. Ambulance service is provided by corps in Jeffersonville and Roscoe and the Upper Delaware Valley organization.

Volunteer support is provided from Fremont residents in the case of many of these providers, but it is increasingly difficult everywhere to obtain daytime volunteers, especially in the case of the Long Eddy fire department. Volunteer incentives, including awards and other recognition, high-quality meeting places, the best equipment and other support services need to be developed to maintain the high levels of commitment demanded of volunteers. The Town should participate with its neighbors in supporting emergency providers through these types of incentives.

The highest priority may be extending cellular phone service to the area for emergency purposes. It is recommended the Town consult with providers and consider helping to acquire space for towers to facilitate the provision of such services.

Police services are available from the County Sheriff's office and its sub-station in Hortonville. There is also a State Trooper Barracks in Roscoe. It is recommended the Town work with the Sheriff to establish a closer sub-station. Volunteer "Citizen on Patrol" programs also need to be considered.

4.2.4 Sewage Facilities

Given the scattered development within the Town and increased sophistication of design with respect to on-lot sewage disposal systems, continued use of such systems is warranted. Subsurface disposal is also the preferred option for reducing impacts on both ground and surface water from excess nutrients.

Nevertheless, there are serious soils limitations throughout the Town for subsurface sewage disposal. This experience suggests that, while a septic system management program could be useful around the major lakes, it would probably not do much resolve critical malfunctions. Fortunately, they are limited in number. Therefore, the Town should continue to rely as much as possible on vol-

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untary upgrades using positive incentives.

4.2.5 Water Supplies

Long Eddy has a public water supply system that has recently been upgraded. Otherwise, all homes and businesses are supplied by individual wells. The groundwater supply is both high-quality and plentiful. Given the relatively low density nature of development taking place in the Town, water supply should not become a major issue.

4.3 Transportation

Highways support economic development by allowing the efficient movement of people and goods and, thereby, influence the overall direction of Town growth as well as the location of specific commercial, industrial and residential activities. This plan addresses the needs of this highway system, as well as other modes of transportation to the extent they exist.

4.3.1 Functional Road Classifications

Every road plays a particular role in moving people and goods within and through the Town. Route 97 is the only arterial highway carrying significant volumes of traffic at moderately high speeds and offering access to major traffic generators. It is in reasonably good shape except for streambed problems at certain bridge locations. These need to be cleaned out to protect the bridges and control future flooding.

County Routes 92, 93, 94, 95 and 96 serve as collector roads, carrying traffic from local roads out to Routes 17 and 97 at moderate speeds and volumes. These highways, too, have streambed issues and need ditching and better stormwater management. Cleaning out of these ditches and streams, no longer permitted by DEC in some cases, is becoming a critical need that must be addressed in some manner. It is recommended the Town and County consult with DEC to arrive at acceptable alternative approaches.

Town highways serve as local roads, collecting traffic from homes and businesses and delivering it to the collector and arterial systems. The Town has

a new gradall for ditching that is working well and allowing roads to be very well maintained. There are some bridges that need replacing and the Town needs financial help in this regard. The Crystalk Lake Road bridge needs work, as does the Lake Muskoday Dam and the Horning Road bridge.

Town roads are experiencing problems with damage from construction vehicles. It is recommended this be addressed by establishing weight limits that apply during the Spring thaw period. The Town should, also, enact a Local Road Law incorporating its standards for highways being dedicated to the Town and strictly control new driveway construction with a Highway Occupancy Law.

4.3.2 Other Recommendations

A. Public Transportation

Sullivan County Transportation provides service to the Town of Fremont on a regular basis. There are no serious unmet needs with regard to public transportation.

B. Rail and Air Service

Railroad freight service is available from the Central New York Railroad that operates along the Delaware River. A pedestrian bridge across the railroad is needed at Long Eddy and has been funded but requires cooperation from the railroad that is yet to be forthcoming. There is also a small private airport (Skytop) and a private heliport in the Town. New heliports should be treated as Special Uses under the Town Zoning Law.