

Canaan Strategic Plan
Preliminary Draft (16 September 2003)

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Canaan Strategic Plan – Preliminary Draft

I. INTRODUCTION

The Canaan Strategic Plan is a continuing process, not a final product. The document, which follows, has evolved over the past nine months. What you will read is presented as a preliminary draft so you may offer your comments, additions, and corrections. We welcome your response either at the public meeting on Saturday, September 20th or submitted in writing or verbally to the Strategic Plan Committee.

The Strategic Plan process formally began over a year ago, when in August 2002, the Town Board voted to apply for a New York State Small Cities Technical Assistance Grant. That application was accepted and money was given to Canaan. After an open selection process, the 15 newly chosen members trudged through the cold and snow to the first meeting of the Strategic Plan Committee in January 2003. Many of us were strangers to each other, bound together not by a common philosophy, but by a desire to help improve our community. That meeting, like all subsequent events, attracted an audience of concerned citizens.

Through the winter months and into the spring, a Community Survey was developed, distributed, filled out by 379 Canaan households, returned, compiled, and analyzed. This response of over 34% of Canaan households showed an extraordinary degree of concern about the future of our Town. The full survey results are available from the Town Clerk.

Two well attended public meetings on April 26th and June 14th followed the Community Survey. These combined introductory presentations with small group discussions and public comment. The results were then summarized in charts showing the issues of concern reflected at the meetings.

We repeatedly heard the following priorities from the residents who submitted the survey and attended the public meetings:

- Preserve farmland, historic buildings and sites, open spaces, scenic views, and woodlands
- Encourage single family housing
- Insure environmental quality, particularly with concern for water quality, noise levels, traffic, and visual character
- Support interaction, communication, and volunteerism among Canaan residents
- Maintain the rural atmosphere of the community
- Limit major commercial development while encouraging local business and agriculture

Based on this public input, the Committee went to work drafting outlines and papers on specific topics. Five working groups were formed:

- Conservation and Preservation of History, Agriculture, Open Space
- Natural Resources and Environment
- Economic Development

- Housing
- Community Services/Outreach

What follow this introduction are the draft recommendations that were produced by the working groups and reviewed by the Committee as a whole. As these recommendations are preliminary, we welcome your additions, corrections, and comments. What do you like? What is not included? Does this preliminary Strategic Plan address your concerns? Be a constructive part of the process and let us know what you think.

We will have the Town we want - today and tomorrow - only if we develop a consensus on our goals and how to achieve them. Tools exist to maintain Canaan's quality of life. The question remains whether or not we choose to use those tools. The Strategic Plan is part of a process of defining goals and identifying strategies to achieve those goals. We share a process; the product will be the Canaan we agree to preserve.

II. PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION: HISTORY, AGRICULTURE, OPEN SPACE

Keep Canaan's quality of life. This is the recurrent theme of Canaan residents during the Strategic Plan process. The responses to the survey, comments at Committee meetings, statements at public meetings, all concur: *People like the town just as it is* (Chatham Courier, June 26, 2003). Preservation and conservation are the keys to achieving the goal. This section of the Strategic Plan deals with strategies for preserving and conserving the history, farms, and open space of Canaan.

1. Historic Preservation

"The historic buildings in a community are tangible links with the nation's past that help provide a sense of identity and stability that is often missing in this era of constant change... Preservation is an anchor that keeps communities together and re-establishes pride and economic vitality."

-Excerpt from a 1981 U.S. Dept of the Interior policy directive

Historic preservation is an invaluable part of a long-term sustained effort to preserve Canaan's rural character while ensuring stability and economic development. Successful protection of the town's heritage will benefit residents as a whole for the following reasons:

- Enhancement of our quality of life
- Physical and psychological link to our past
- Educational benefits
- Economic benefit through tourism
- Attract new residents who will contribute to the town
- Increases property values over time

The following are proposed actions in the realm of historic preservation.

A. Continue to make local history available to the public. Current resources include:

- Historical Societies in Canaan, Red Rock and Kinderhook (Columbia County Historical Society)
- Historical markers
- Booklets published in 1959 and 1979 by the Canaan Historical Society

B. Continue to build on the historical work that has been done and find new ways to bring Canaan's history to the attention of residents and visitors alike. Potential projects in this direction are:

1. Commission a historical survey of the town and its immediate surroundings
2. Create a series of maps, based on maps stored at the County Historical Society, that could be sold at the Historical Societies, showing the town at four different times in history (e.g., 1776, 1835, 1890, 1945)
3. Create a pamphlet and map to guide visitors on a driving, hiking and walking tours
4. Apply for additional historical markers
5. Produce a history of farming and farms in Canaan

C. Identify sources of funding and support to preserve historic houses and sites, and provide this information and/or support to residents. Often, there is a perception that the cost for preserving historic houses and sites is too high, especially when the burden falls on the individual property-owner. However, there are many programs in place that are designed to make preservation feasible and even potentially lucrative.

Federal Programs: The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 created the National Register of Historic Places, the official list of properties significant in the history, architecture, archeology, and culture of the United States. Once a property is on this list, it is eligible for federal and state funding. State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) administer the national program at the state level.

State Programs: The New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 created the New York State Register of Historic Places. The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Places (OPRHP) was created as a reviewing body for state-level funding and maintains an informative website. Major benefits of listing on the Federal or State Registers of Historic Places include:

- Owners of depreciable, certified historic properties may take a 20% federal income tax credit for costs of substantial rehabilitation
- Access to a wider variety of funding sources for maintenance and renovation
- No restrictions placed on private owners of registered properties

D. Investigate forming a citizen board on historic preservation to identify and protect treasured historic properties. Preservation needs to be a community effort in order to share the work and the benefits. A citizen board, such as a historic preservation commission, would perform the following functions:

1. Survey the area to identify historic properties
2. Research funding and support options
3. Help coordinate applications for grants, other funding, and/or Register of Historic Places
4. Begin to identify Historic Districts. Possibilities might be:
 - Four Corners
Canaan town center (Town Hall, park, etc.)
 - Old Canaan Center (Warner Crossing and Route 5)
 - Frisbee Street
 - Red Rock

E. Investigate the possibility of setting aside Historic Districts and applying for New York Certified Local Government (CLG) status. Designating Historic Districts and targeting these areas for preservation would achieve the following:

1. Conserve the historic feeling of the town and prevent older buildings from being lost to neglect or ruin
2. Help define the area and encourage a wider vision of preservation
3. Foster a sense of pride in the town
4. Dovetail well with the idea of a town center, where there could be a pedestrian area, small shops, perhaps a coffee-shop, all housed in buildings that fit into the character of the area
5. Key step in fund-raising; larger grants become accessible when the goal is preservation on a larger scale, because many of the grants are earmarked for public areas

Many of the major grants of state-administered federal money are only open to municipalities that have CLG status. Since 1985, New York has given out almost one million dollars in more than 130 subgrants to its CLGs.

2. Agricultural Conservation

Encouragement of farmers and conservation of agricultural lands are central to maintaining Canaan's current quality of life. This irreplaceable land produces our food and provides a diversity of scenery, as well as wildlife habitat. It also contributes to the economic viability of

the Town. *See Section III: Natural Resources and Environment and Section IV: Economic Development for further consideration of this topic.*

A. Ensure that residents who wish to farm are encouraged and supported, as part of an overall effort to maintain the town's rural feeling and its open spaces. Locally, Canaan could support farmers by providing the following:

- Farmers' Market
- Clearinghouse where landowners could identify potential farmers and vice-versa, to farm currently fallow land
- A forum for participation in regional marketing and advertising programs

B. Encourage programs that support the expansion and preservation of agriculture.

Canaan should provide support and assistance to farmers through supportive laws, timely information on grants, and/or other support both financial and technical. Some of the tools used in farmland conservation are:

- Agricultural Protective Zoning
- Conservation easements
- Acquisition and/or transfer of Development Rights
- Right to Farm
- Agricultural District Programs
- Zoning law allowing additional housing density on farms
- State and Federal programs which support small-scale farming

C. Coordinate with other strategic plan programs. As part of the effort to emphasize history, tourism, and economic development, Canaan should encourage farm tours, Bed & Breakfast farms, special Canaan Day activities that feature agriculture, and the purchase and consumption of locally produced food.

3. Non-Agricultural Open Space

Preserving non-agricultural vacant land is critical to maintaining Canaan's quality of life. Meadows, wetlands, and wood lots provide the texture and unspoilt environment. Open lands combined with concentrating development gives the best opportunity for meeting future agricultural needs, conserving wildlife habitat, maintaining water quality, and providing areas for outdoor recreation.

A. Provide opportunities for individual landowners to preserve land.

1. Establish a clearinghouse for information on programs and methods of open space preservation
2. Encourage donation of land to the Town or not-for-profit organizations

3. Coordinate with not-for-profit organizations, such as the Columbia Land Conservancy, Inc., to accept conservation easements
4. Aid landowners in participating in programs such as timber management, wetlands reserve program, and wildlife habitat incentive programs

B. Through the Town government, actively pursue open space initiatives and support the establishment of open space for hunting, public recreation, open vistas and wildlife habitat. This is of particular importance given the lack of public land in Canaan.

1. Work with existing organizations such as Canaan Sportsman Club and Columbia Land Conservancy
2. Pursue New York State funds for open space and cost of community services studies
3. Apply for New York State funds for the acquisition of park and recreation lands for public use
4. Work with elected officials to arrange Forest Legacy grants and other programs to acquire undeveloped land
5. Investigate the creation of a Canaan land acquisition fund to be funded as part of the real estate tax

See Section III: Natural Resources and Environment and Section V: Housing for further discussion on open space.

III. NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

In the area of natural resources and environment, this plan puts forward the following goal: **To provide the leadership and citizens of Canaan with strategies to protect and promote the natural resources that define the “rural character” of our community and enhance our quality of life.** The following objectives are critical to reaching this goal:

- Support the conservation of undeveloped land
- Increase publicly accessible nature areas for recreational and educational use
- Monitor and maintain surface water quality in Canaan
- Maintain adequate and safe household water supplies
- Preserve dark skies
- Support measures to maintain/improve Canaan air quality
- Limit noise pollution

Following are the proposed actions to reach these objectives.

A. Support the conservation of undeveloped land

1. Partner with the Columbia County Land Conservancy to increase public awareness of tools available to maintain a desirable open space standard for Canaan
2. Promote the consideration of conservation easements by private landowners
3. Partner with Columbia County Land Conservancy and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia County to support citizens in the acquisition of grants to place conservation easements on farmlands

See Section II: Preservation and Conservation and Section V: Housing for other discussion on this topic.

B. Increase publicly accessible nature areas for recreational and educational use

1. Support the formation of a citizens' group to pursue ways to create an array of lands accessible to the public. Such lands could be used for a variety of recreational and educational uses including but not limited to: wetlands for canoeing, forests for hiking and hunting, separated trails for both motorized and non-motorized enjoyment, ridgelines for scenic splendor.
2. Support the development of a wetland walkway through the town owned land that parallels Route 295
3. Support inclusion of a pedestrian zone along County Route 30 in conjunction with the proposed Queechy Lake storm drain project
4. Include material on living with wild flora and fauna and respectful use of our nature areas in Welcome Wagon packet educational
5. Include Queechy Lake Good Neighbor Guidelines in Welcome Wagon packet

See Section VI: Community Services/Outreach for more on this topic.

C. Monitor and maintain surface water quality in Canaan

1. Support Queechy Lake Club Management Plan, specifically proposals related to storm water management and sewer district (see Appendix 1)
2. Support the development of a plan to assess the quality of other surface waters to include but not be limited to creeks, ponds, and lakes

D. Encourage the maintenance of adequate and safe household water supplies

1. Collect information on the quality and availability of drinking water in Canaan from the Department of Environmental Conservation
2. Conduct a ground water assessment as outlined in New York Rural Water Association document and from this formulate suggested water-source protection guidelines in relation to development
3. Include guidelines for conscientious water use and information on well water testing in Welcome Wagon information packet

E. Preserve dark skies

1. Review and enforce current zoning regulations on exterior lighting
2. Assess the effects of light pollution on our quality of rural life and, if warranted, research, and enact existing models for Town ordinances relating to outdoor lighting
3. Promote the use of technologies available for reducing light pollution through Welcome Wagon information

See Appendix 2 for discussion of light pollution. *See also Section VI: Community Services/Outreach for complementary recommendations.*

F. Support measures to maintain/improve Canaan air quality

1. Enforce diesel idle laws along the Exit B-3 area of the NYS Thruway
2. Make clean air a priority when considering commercial development
3. Monitor anecdotal medical evidence of poor air quality
4. Work with regional initiatives that seek to limit long-range air pollution problems

G. Limit noise pollution

1. Enforce zoning regulations regarding decibel tolerance
2. Review adequacy of current zoning regulations and, if deemed necessary, research models for town ordinances regarding noise pollution
3. Include Good Neighbor Guidelines regarding noise in Welcome Wagon packet

See also Section VI: Community Services/Outreach for complementary recommendations.

IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Discussion focused on five areas that collectively represent a comprehensive approach to appropriate and sustainable economic development for Canaan, which would also have a positive impact on preserving the quality of life most important to Canaan residents. These are practical opportunities that constitute a healthy blend of traditional and historical Canaan resources and new technologies and economic endeavors.

The five areas of potential economic development identified by the committee are:

- Organic and niche farming
- Development of the area around Exit B-3
- Home-based businesses
- Canaan town center
- Tourism

A. Promote organic and niche farming

The committee drew extensively from the comments and emphasis relating to bringing back farming to the forefront of the economic life in Canaan, a theme that was reported by virtually all of the small groups at the two Saturday Public Meetings.

The committee recommends that a detailed fact-finding effort be initiated as part of the Strategic Planning process to identify a variety of specific areas and resources:

- Incentives, regulations, and zoning codes
- Technical assistance
- Supportive grant funding
- Farmers' market collaboration with information and databases of relevant farming-related agencies
- University agricultural schools and departments and community-based farming groups

These resources can provide the basis for developing Canaan-specific guidelines for expanding farming in Canaan as a viable economic activity, especially organic and niche farming.

Inherent in this approach is also the preservation of much of Canaan's open space, because the pressure to develop open land with residential and commercial expansion will be partially satisfied by keeping the open space as economically viable farmland.

B. Develop the area around Exit B-3 in ways that do not intrude on the rural nature of Canaan

A number of the small working groups at the Saturday Public Meetings and a number of comments in the surveys identified the development of the Commercial Zone surrounding Exit B-3 as critical to the overall economic and lifestyle issues in Canaan. There appears to be a

strongly held belief among a majority of the residents of Canaan that the development of the Commercial Zone surrounding Exit B-3 should not be allowed to intrude on the rural nature of Canaan, while at the same time it should be a major contributing factor in the future economic stability of Canaan.

Although some Canaan residents feel that it would be ideal if there were simply to be no additional commercial development at the Exit B-3 Commercial Zone, the committee feels that to do nothing regarding a balanced strategic plan for the development of this major commercial zone in Canaan would simply invite some accidental non-planned use that might be counter to the desires of the majority of Canaan residents at some future point, over which the town would have no retroactive recourse.

To achieve this critical balance the committee recommends exploring the establishment at Exit B-3 of a small high tech office and laboratory complex that might serve as an auxiliary to the high tech center being forged in the Albany area surrounding the University at Albany, State University of New York, and RPI. The unique location of Exit B-3 along the Massachusetts Turnpike – I-90 with its close proximity to Albany and convenient proximity to New York City and Boston make such an exploration a realistic possibility for small- to medium-sized high tech businesses desiring to enjoy the close proximity to Albany, but with significantly less expensive space for relocation or expansion.

It is important to include in any such high tech development proposal **amenities such as a pharmacy, restaurants, and other specialty stores**. It is also deemed desirable to consider **architectural motifs** that draw on the cultural traditions of the Canaan area, such as Shaker design, for the conceptual and artistic appearance of the buildings and public spaces.

In pursuing this recommendation, the town should endeavor to meet with existing stakeholders in the economic life of the Exit B-3 area to gain additional insights into existing needs and problems and potential successful approaches to maximize the potential for positive economic development in this critical Canaan commercial district.

The Strategic Plan Committee has already contacted the University at Albany, Department of Regional and Urban Planning about providing consultation and other assistance in our planning for this important location. They have agreed to assist us in the planning around Exit B-3 as well as with the Town Center proposal below.

C. Encourage home-based businesses through incentives and changes to town ordinances

There was a strong consensus among the small groups at the Saturday Public Meetings that home-based businesses are a positive but under-supported part of the economic life in Canaan. The committee believes that an essential component of positive future economic development in Canaan is the creative expansion of home-based businesses in Canaan through appropriate incentives and changes in Town ordinances. An extensive review of the means by which Canaan can create such a network of incentives and ordinance changes, including improved high-speed internet access, should be initiated as part of the ongoing Canaan Strategic Planning activities.

D. Develop a designated Canaan Town Center

For reasons related to cultural-historical benefits, as well as economic development, the committee endorses the development of a designated Canaan Town Center. This concept was raised frequently in the small groups, which met at the two Saturday Public Meetings and received a great deal of support in those discussions.

The most logical geographic location of such a center is in the **corridor stretching south from the intersection of Route 5 and Route 295**, along Route 5 past the park and Town Hall. Ideas to explore include:

- Expansion of the park
- Expansion of the property owned by the Town surrounding the Town Hall
- Establishment of services and amenities in that area, including hiking trails running parallel to the railroad tracks West from Route 5 and South of Route 295

These ideas and others need to be fully explored to develop a comprehensive and realistic design for such a Canaan Town Center. Historical, cultural, and artistic/architectural traditions of Canaan and the region should be a major part of the conceptual development of this initiative. The working group is eager to explore other locations that may also serve to advance this important goal for Canaan. Such exploration, including possible funding to support planning and implementation stages, should be a part of the continuing work of the Canaan Strategic Planning effort.

See the recommendations in Section II: Preservation and Conservation.

E. Promote tourism and tourism-related businesses

Exploration should be made into ways to promote tourism-related businesses that are consistent with the traditions and priorities identified as part of the Canaan Strategic Planning process. Business opportunities such as a Farmers' Market near the center of town at the blinking light on Route 295 and Route 5 and specialized crafts markets featuring crafts of the Berkshire-Hudson River region are examples of such tourism-related business opportunities, the development of which would enhance the economic health of Canaan and be reinforcing of its rich traditions. An attempt should be made to develop a Canaan tourism slogan, which can be consistently used to promote Canaan tourism. Such a slogan should also be part of the Canaan website, which should be used to provide detailed promotional information about Canaan.

F. To support the above 5 recommendations, the following steps are recommended:

1. **Take this comprehensive set of areas of economic development for Canaan as an integrated approach.** It is our belief that significant exploration of all five of these areas should follow as ongoing work of the Canaan Strategic Planning effort. Canaan's economic development will be the most successful if it can rely on a set of specific implementation steps that draw as extensively as possible from all five of these areas.

2. **Improve infrastructure to remove barriers and limitations for businesses.** An important part of an excellent economic development plan for Canaan should be the successful and creative addressing of infrastructure issues. A number of new technologies need to be considered for advancing the overall economic development of Canaan, such as improved high-speed Internet access and waste and water treatment facilities. In regard to waste and water treatment, there is some local expertise from the innovative work being done at the Darrow School and elsewhere that should be reviewed for potential consideration in the economic development approach for Canaan.
3. **Give special attention to assisting existing and dormant businesses in Canaan.** One of the principles of economic development that is key to broad-based support among Canaan residents is that there should be a concerted effort to assist existing Canaan businesses through the development of the economic development strategies that the town adopts. The town should also develop strategies that look to assist in revitalizing dormant businesses in Canaan, either for their original or newly developed purposes.
4. **Take steps to attract young individuals and young families to Canaan.** Essential to the development and implementation of a successful economic development approach for Canaan is the attraction and retention of young individuals and young families who are committed to preserving and enhancing the quality of life that Canaan represents. In a number of these potential areas of economic development, and potentially with others as well, strategies should be developed to strengthen the attraction of living in Canaan for young individuals and young families. As we develop more opportunities in Canaan and improve and maintain the quality of life, we will encourage younger people and families to stay and settle in our town.

The committee recommends strongly that these areas be explored thoroughly and in a timely manner, but notes that there is no requirement to establish a set of premature implementation target dates that could jeopardize for Canaan a balanced and sustainable plan of economic growth, the breadth of community support, and the excellence of implementation.

V. HOUSING

With near unanimity those who responded to the survey or participated in the public hearings want to see the rural character of the Town maintained and, to the extent possible, its open spaces preserved. To achieve these goals we believe the following recommendations about housing are important for serious study and possible action by the Town.

A. Explore ways to control housing development through mechanisms that preserve the rural character of the town.

1. **Determine what areas** outside the commercial zoning districts are currently undeveloped, which are unsuitable for development (because of topography or because they are wetlands etc.) and which (with priorities) are **important to preserve**.

2. **Anticipate**, with the advice of experts and financed if possible by a grant, what our **housing needs** will be during, let us say, the next decade and what kinds of new residents (like weekenders, retirees, those attracted by any new employment opportunities that the Town can generate or that may arise in nearby areas) are likely to produce those needs. This might help in forecasting how much pressure there will be on our open spaces. In addition, the Town needs to know in what ways and to what extent these expected needs will affect environmental matters such as water availability and quality, as well as community services such as fire protection and road maintenance.
3. **Consider open space preservation** techniques including incentives and zoning law changes.
 - a. **Scenic and conservation easements** may provide federal and state income tax deductions. If there are ways to ensure that such easements will remain permanent and will not have significant adverse property tax effects on the Town or other property owners, it might be appropriate for the Town to publicize and promote them, perhaps through the Town website, for example. We understand that it is the current Town Assessor's position that such easements do not reduce assessed values but the Town should make sure that this would survive a legal challenge.
 - b. **So-called "cluster" housing** that creates a hamlet style of development can preserve significant amounts of open space. It permits either all or some portion of the number of single family houses allowed on a given tract (after deducting unbuildable land) to be built on smaller lots (and thus "clustered") than would otherwise be required provided that the remainder of the tract is effectively dedicated as open space that can never be developed (although recreational use, consistent with open space, may be permitted). It therefore tends to prevent "checkerboard" or Levittown type developments. It may also result in conservation of water resources. Among issues involved in a study of the desirability of this technique are how to ensure that the housing is consistent with the general quality of housing in the Town (that is, not "low income" or shoddy), that the dedication of the open space is permanent and that property tax assessments are not less than they would have been had the houses been built on lots of the size normally required by the zoning law density provisions, as well as the effect of clustering on ground pollution and whether the houses should be separate or could, to at least some extent, be attached. The Town should seek information from communities similar to ours which have adopted this technique to see what their experience with it has been and what matters, in addition to those discussed above, are important to consider before making a decision as to the desirability of cluster housing in Canaan. See Appendix 3 for more on this topic.
 - c. Study possibility of **changing RA-4 density** from 5 to 10 acre minimum and seek community opinion as to the current density (minimum lot size) requirements in the other zoning districts.
 - d. Consult rural housing, conservation, and planning experts to see if there are **other open space preservation techniques** that might be appropriate for Canaan.

- e. See also point C below and the attachments to this report.

B. Examine whether or not there is sufficient affordable housing in Canaan

An inventory of current housing in Canaan (by type, single family, two family, multifamily, mobile home, approximate age and value, lot size) might be useful in addressing a concern or uncertainty expressed by many in the survey about whether there is enough affordable housing in Canaan. Perhaps the Town could obtain a grant to finance such an inventory. Affordability is perhaps of greatest relevance to the Town's ability to attract younger persons as residents and to permit older, retired residents to continue to live here, and the Town should define its concept of and expectations for "affordability."

C. Review/revise Canaan's zoning law to ensure that all provisions promote the type of development that preserves the town's rural character and open space

1. Canaan's zoning law currently prohibits new **two family dwellings** but allows multifamily units in the C-II and C-III commercial districts. Only a small number of survey respondents voted to prohibit two family dwellings, while a majority of those who addressed the question voted to prohibit multifamily dwellings and attached housing such as condominiums. **The reasons for, continued appropriateness of, and effects on open space preservation of the two family prohibition should be studied.**
2. The current zoning provisions concerning **multifamily housing** are extensive and seem to be aimed at ensuring high quality and reasonable size. They require a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals and site plan approval by the Planning Board. They do not seem to exclude attached units such as condominiums. We believe that most of those who voted against multifamily and attached units are unaware of these provisions and probably equate multifamily and condos with low-income, high-rise, or large, sprawling construction. Since multifamily housing (including attached units) can favorably impact other concerns expressed in the survey and public meetings, such as housing affordability generally, availability of affordable rental housing for seniors, and preservation of open space, it seems appropriate to review the current provisions to ensure that they adequately address matters of quality, appearance, scale, height, and other relevant matters. **Whether multifamily housing would be appropriate in areas of the Town other than the C-II and C-III districts might also be addressed.**
3. The Zoning Law currently allows **mobile home parks** in the RA-3 district with a special permit and site plan approval. A large majority of survey respondents voted to prohibit mobile home parks and it therefore seems appropriate that **consideration be given to banning them from all districts.** New individual mobile homes are permitted but only in the RA-3 district. The survey questions didn't cover the desirability of individual mobile homes in that or any other zoning district, but we understand that they cannot legally be entirely excluded from the Town.

VI. COMMUNITY SERVICES/OUTREACH

The overall goal of the strategic plan is to improve the quality of life in Canaan over the coming five years. The overall goal for this segment of the strategic plan, Community Services/Outreach, is to improve the quality of life in Canaan through:

- Enhanced community services, including those provided by the town as well as those provided by other organizations
- Greater outreach to residents in ways that allow them to benefit fully from all this town has to offer
- Initiatives that strengthen relationships among residents
- Measures that reduce negative forces on the quality of life

A. Improve communications between town government and residents

1. Print an expanded **brochure** including a map of the town including, but not limited to, the locations of the town hall, town garage, Stoddard Park, natural areas accessible to the public, Queechy Lake boat launch, historical societies, post offices, firehouses, and the library.
2. Encourage residents to use the **town website** to read Board minutes (Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals), to download forms and applications, to learn about town services, to know of volunteer opportunities, and to access town laws. Make computer access to the website available at the Town Hall for those who do not have computers in their homes.
3. Make available in hard copy in the Clerk's office **information sheets** on town services and volunteer opportunities.
4. Have **e-mail addresses** for town officials and bodies: Town Supervisor, Town Clerk, Highway Superintendent, Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

B. Ensure that town laws and their application serve to promote and protect the desirable quality of life in Canaan

1. Find ways to **educate residents** about the town's current Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations, as well as other local laws. Use these educational opportunities to make residents aware of the existence and purpose of zoning restrictions, to reduce the frequency of people proceeding without zoning approval, and to promote a uniform standard for fairness. Post all town laws on the town website. Make the Zoning Law easier to use, for example, by indexing the current document.
2. When the **Zoning Law is revised**, make copies available to residents at no cost, for a limited time, at the town hall. Outline the revisions for ease of identification.

3. Improve **enforcement of zoning regulations** through Town Board oversight, review, and evaluation of the work of the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer to ensure skilled and knowledgeable enforcement. Promote proactive versus reactive efforts to keep activity within the law.
4. Strengthen **enforcement of other laws**, including noise and lighting control and speed limits on roads. *See Section III: Natural Resources and Environment.*

C. Provide residents with expanded and enhanced recreational opportunities and enrichment programs

1. Promote greater use of **Stoddard Park and the Town Hall** through better advertisement of who, individuals and groups, may use the facilities and the rules for that use. Improve Stoddard Park, including repair and maintenance of the tennis courts, basketball court, benches, playground, and baseball field. *These measures should assist with enhancing a sense of a town center. See the recommendations in Section IV: Economic Development.*
2. Increase the number of **natural areas** accessible to the public and do more to inform residents of existing such areas. Create a trail or boardwalk between the town hall and town garage. *See the recommendations in Section III: Natural Resources and Environment.*
3. Assess the extent to which residents are not using **Queechy Lake** because of the cost and if significant, seek ways to overcome this barrier.
4. Increase participation by town residents in **enrichment programs**. Expand participation in current programs (the Senior Group, the summer Town Recreation Program, and Meals on Wheels). Assess the demand for additional programs such as RSVP (for senior citizens) and encourage such groups to come into Canaan.

D. Promote volunteerism, community service, and civic responsibility among all ages and groups of the Canaan population

1. Provide information about **volunteer opportunities** through the website and information provided in the Clerk's office (see Objective #1.C. above).
2. Provide **support to and incentives for volunteer** organizations and the individuals who staff them, e.g., through tax breaks for community service. (Current NYS law allows this for volunteer firefighters if the county and town choose to adopt such a program.) Consider financial and non-monetary ways to support all who volunteer their time and talents for the benefit of the town. Have the Town Supervisor and Town Board provide, on an ongoing basis, recognition of individuals and groups who service the town.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of Queechy Lake Club Management Plan

This is a spring-fed lake with no inlet other than run-off from surrounding land. The watershed is about 500 acres. The lake size is approximately 135 acres with the deepest part being 45 feet; the lake averages 19 feet in depth. A solid core dam was constructed in 1919 at the outlet, which increased the water surface area by about 200% and added 18 inches to the lake depth. The shoreline is approximately four miles with 25% to 30% owned by the Berkshire Farm. Queechy is a two-tier lake with the shallow portion warmer than the deeper portion, thus the lake can support both bass and trout, which are stocked by the DEC Department of Fisheries. The lake elevation is 1,021 feet above sea level. It takes 2.8 years for the lake to flush itself of its total volume of water. The only public access is the DEC Car Top Boat Launch at the northern part of the lake. There is a swimming facility, Adams Point, which is open to resident members of the towns of Canaan and New Lebanon.

Queechy Lake's water quality and clarity is in the top 5% of Federation of Lakes/Department of Conservation/Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program sponsored lakes, which currently number approximately 200.

The Queechy Lake Club, Inc. has in place a State of the Lakes and Management Plan aimed at preserving and improving the water quality and surroundings of Queechy Lake. Copies of this plan are available to those interested.

A primary goal in this plan is to better manage and continue the club's efforts to reduce the two most conspicuous sources of phosphorus and sediment loading into Queechy Lake:

1. Road run-off containing nutrients, salt, and silt, especially at the western shore County Route 30 side
2. Overused, under-maintained, and malfunctioning septic systems

To date the club has received a DEC 50% matching grant of \$18,500 to address goal #1 and has initiated a feasibility study to accomplish reduced County Route 30 run-off into the lake. Also, the club has recently received a \$1,000 grant from the Hudson River Bank, plus pledges from the Berkshire Farm and individuals totaling \$4,000 additional to conduct a sewer feasibility study for the lake to address goal #2. Cost of this feasibility study is estimated to run \$10,000.

Appendix 2: Light Pollution

Introduction

Light pollution can occur on a localized (e.g., one house's lighting which invades a neighbors yard) scale or a more regional (i.e., a set of lights that illuminates the night sky for miles around) scale. In both cases, several solutions are possible. These include light shields which reduce light lost in unintended directions, better light orientation and positioning which focuses lighting on desired objects only, and light choice which chooses the type of light (e.g., mercury vapor, high pressure sodium) best suited to the task. It has been amply demonstrated that very satisfactory lighting can be had while reducing light pollution; indeed, light pollution is wasted light and improved fixtures and focusing can often improve lighting in the intended areas and reduce light pollution at the same time. Many lights can be retrofitted, meaning that shielding and even orientation can be improved without the need to replace the lighting system.

The Thruway tollbooths, the businesses associated with Exit B-3, and the Berkshire Farm School on Route 22 may be the largest "regional" light polluters. However, it also seems that some house owners and small businesses install all-night, poorly shielded, high-wattage lighting that affects neighbors.

Various municipalities have implemented lighting charters, and models for such charters and the process of getting them improved are available. Grants are available for some lighting improvement work, and it need not be seen as a *we* (the star-gazing resident) vs. *them* (the well lit business) issue. If well planned, lighting improvement can be a win-win situation.

Proposal

That the Town investigate the problem in more detail, identify the problem areas and possible solutions and then move towards improving them, possibly via grant-assisted light modifications. The appropriateness of a Town ordinance on lighting should depend on the extent of the problem and the willingness of the "polluters" to collaborate voluntarily. At the least, "appropriate-lighting" guidelines might be written and shared with new and existing businesses and the owners of large, lit properties.

Resources

Various organizations and resources provide information for pursuing these ideas. For starters, see the following:

To understand the general concept of light pollution and its resolution:

New England Light Pollution Advisory Group (NELPAG)

<http://cfa-www.harvard.edu/cfa/ps/nelpag.html>

International DarkSky Association,

<http://www.darksky.org>

To find information on the relevant technologies:

The above organizations plus the following

The Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA), www.iesna.org
www.buildinggreen.com

To find information on municipal policies relating to light pollution:

The above organizations and the following:

Chittenden County (Vermont) Regional Planning Commission, 1996, *The Outdoor Lighting Manual for Vermont Municipalities*. Highly recommended. Available from the PTI Publications Center at (800) 784-8976 or (301) 490-2188, pubs@pti.org. Ask for publication # 95 308.

The Indiana Council on Outdoor Lighting Education (ICOLE), <http://icole.home.att.net>

Appendix 3: Cluster Housing

See attached documents from two websites:

<http://www.plannersweb.com/articles/are015.html>

<http://ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/1270.html>