

Town of Bovina, Delaware County, New York Comprehensive Plan - 2002

5.0 Relationships to Adjoining Communities, the County and the Region and Environmental Impacts

This Comprehensive Plan has been funded with assistance provided in conjunction with the New York City Watershed Agreement. The provisions of that Agreement and the regulations applicable to the watershed were examined as this Plan was assembled. The impacts on adjoining communities and the County as a whole were also considered. Finally, the environmental impacts attendant to the recommendations contained herein were reviewed. Findings with respect to environmental impacts are as follows:

5.1 Phosphorous Levels and Other Impacts

Some of the potential environmental impacts associated with the recommendations contained herein may be found in Section 3.4.1(D) of this Plan. Many of the recommended measures will directly address land use and environmental concerns, but the economic development suggestions, if implemented, could cause some additional growth and development and increase the need for sewage treatment services. Likewise, this development may increase impervious surface and stormwater runoff with attendant impacts on phosphorous levels in the Cannonsville Reservoir if not carefully planned and monitored. Phosphorous is a concern in regard to management of all water bodies, and particularly within the New York Water Supply System watershed, because it is a nutrient that contributes to plant growth, increased sedimentation as those plants grow and die and the early death of a water body. The process is known as "eutrophication" and is accompanied by other conditions that threaten the health of water supplies. The phosphorous can come from agricultural activities, sewage systems, stormwater run-off and even decaying leaves. Increased development, therefore, can lead to increased phosphorous loadings.

Agreements with New York City have made the accommodation of new development (particularly with respect to expansion of sewage treatment plants) dependent on reduction of existing loadings on a 3 to 1 basis - that is to say 3 units of phosphorous must be removed from existing flows for every new unit allowed to be introduced. The arrangements for this off-set program have yet to be fully developed but Delaware County has prepared a "Comprehensive Strategy for Phosphorous Reductions" that sets for a framework. It includes initiatives to work with towns such as Bovina in better controlling stormwater, managing stream corridors and dealings with malfunctioning on-lot sewage systems to reduce phosphorous. Each of these matters is already addressed to some extent in this Plan with specific recommendations along those lines - recommendations that are, most importantly, in the Town's own interest to avoid flooding, pollution and unsafe conditions but that will also help to address County and City concerns. Therefore, this Plan should produce a positive environmental impact with respect to phosphorous.

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5.2 Impacts That Cannot Be Mitigated

There are no environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated by good site plan review procedures contained in the existing Zoning Law. Those procedures will be enhanced by referral to the goals and objectives as outlined in this Plan.

5.3 Irreversible Commitments of Environmental Resources

There are no recommendations contained in this Plan for actions that would constitute an irreversible commitment of environmental resources. Indeed, many of the recommendations relate to protection of those resources. Moreover, it is anticipated that all actions would be subject to individual review under SEQRA.

5.4 Alternatives

The various alternatives for development of the Town have been considered in the context of the land use and economic development discussions contained herein. There are no development alternatives available to the Town that are not environmentally sound. The emphasis, on low-impact development, a necessity to comply with the intent and letter of the Watershed Agreement and the watershed protection regulations. The Town could, of course, attempt to resist new commercial, industrial and residential development, but that course of action will do nothing to improve the environment, whereas carefully planned development subject to site plan review can actually incorporate environmental improvements to deal with stormwater and actually reduce phosphorous impacts, as an example.

5.5 Conclusion

This Plan, if implemented, will cause no significant adverse effects on the environment that could be classified as important. Rather, the Plan will significantly improve the environment by upgrading infrastructure and providing specific goals and objectives relating to environmental protection that can be employed in site plan review. It also provides for low-impact forms of development that are consistent with protection of the environment.