
III. VISIONING

Underlying the recommendations of the Rockland County Comprehensive Plan are the following goals which articulate visions for the County's future related to economic development, transportation, housing, open space and land use. These vision statements frame the Plan's approach to land use decision making and emphasize the preservation and enhancement of existing resources, expansion and improvement of the efficiency of the County's infrastructure systems, and the creation of new facilities and uses to promote sustainable growth. The considerable overlap and inter-connectivity between these Plan elements promotes a comprehensive approach to long range planning. The success of the Plan can ultimately be gauged by the extent to which these visions are achieved.

A. The Overall County-Wide Vision

The *overall land use comprehensive planning vision* for Rockland County is one that seeks to promote a suburban county comprised of high quality residential communities of a range of densities surrounding vibrant village and hamlet centers and activity nodes, and well-defined and designed business and residential clusters and corridors.

The *transportation vision* is one of an integrated vehicular, mass transit and alternative transportation infrastructure with an efficient network of intra- and inter-county and state roadways, railways and pathways.

The *economic vision* foresees enhanced opportunities for growth and expansion of first class businesses in Rockland County, providing a broad range of employment opportunities for county residents and a stable tax base for the County, its various communities and other taxing jurisdictions.

The *housing vision* includes expanded housing opportunities for the County's changing population and stabilization of the County's existing housing stock.

The *parks and open space vision* sees enhanced local, County and regional parks, the expansion of parks and open space in areas of highest population density, the promotion of recreation resources serving the diverse needs of the County's population, and preservation of farmland and historic resources.

The *environmental vision* includes the preservation of Rockland's natural land and water resources for citizens of the County and region.

B. Planning Objectives

Specific objectives related to the themes listed above have been developed through public meetings and interviews with community leaders and local officials. Specific objectives for the County's future are as follows:

1. Land Use Objectives

For Residential Communities:

- *focus commercial and high-density residential development in existing mixed-use centers and retain the existing open space and quality of life of neighborhoods outside of the centers.*

For the Waterfront:

- *a waterfront that maximizes positive water-dependent and water-related uses with connections to the immediately surrounding community*
- *maximize opportunities for direct public access to the waterfront through esplanades, upland connections and waterfront plazas and parks, and preserve public enjoyment of the Hudson through protected view corridors while respecting the needs of local residents living near the waterfront*

For Corridor Development:

- *enhance viability of the County's strategic east/west and north/south corridors by promoting the efficient flow of people and goods while maintaining an adjacent land use framework that supports residential, commercial and open space functions*

For Institutional Centers:

- *strengthen institutional centers, community facilities and educational and cultural resources serving the County as a whole and the immediately surrounding communities*
- *foster successful institutions that respect the integrity of surrounding neighborhoods and land uses*

For Large Scale/Vacant/ Underutilized Parcels:

- *reuse and redevelop major parcels in a coordinated manner providing identified housing, recreation, open space, institutional and economic development needs within the context of their local community setting, as well as infrastructure improvements that might be necessary to support such reuse and redevelopment*

2. Transportation Objectives

For Inter- and Intra-County Access:

- *create an efficient roadway, bridge and mass transportation network providing access to key centers within and outside of the County*
- *increase utilization of mass transit alternatives that reduce roadway congestion*

For Parking:

- *designate park-and-ride and parking facilities coordinated with areas of population and business growth that meet the needs of existing and proposed mass transit facilities*

For Congestion

- *promote effective transportation management techniques applied in a coordinated manner with existing and future land use development to reduce roadway congestion*
- *promote successful mechanisms that encourage the use of alternative transportation modes*

For Mass Transit:

- *expand mass transit opportunities to facilitate passenger access to all County residents*

enhance linkages to and from the region's core

For Alternative Transportation

- *provide safe and efficient access to transit stations, major public facilities and shopping areas for pedestrians and cyclists*

3. Economic Development Objectives

For Traditional Downtown Centers:

- *enhance traditional downtowns that capitalize on historic resources and positive elements of older centers*
- *provide linkages among and between centers*
- *develop a hierarchy of centers from most to least dense, with new investment available to communities willing to promote new housing, transportation and parking development opportunities that serve local as well as county-wide needs*
- *create sites for small entrepreneurs to attract start-up enterprises and small scale initiatives*

For Suburban Hubs:

- *create viable regional centers with adequate transportation systems, infrastructure sufficient to maintain their continued success, and employment opportunities accessible for persons both within and outside of the County*

Business and Industrial Centers and Corridors:

- *foster a physical and economic environment that is business friendly and that attracts and maintains a broad range of businesses*
- *identification and promotion by the County of an array of key business growth opportunities, including on specific sites and along growth corridors, and promotion by the County of the advantages of Rockland as a place in which to live and do business*

4. Environment and Open Space Objective

For Parks and Recreation:

- *increase and expand regional active recreational resources such as bikeways, golf courses and waterfront recreation providing recreational options for all age groups and segments of the population, including a linked network of parks and linear open spaces and the reuse of abandoned railway rights-of-way as multi-use recreational trails*

For Open Space:

- *preserve open space resources and environmental features that enhance community appearance and quality of life such as scenic corridors, ridge lines, wooded lands and farmlands*

For Environmentally Sensitive Lands:

- *preserve sensitive environmental features such as steep slopes, stream corridors, wetlands and water bodies and maintain the County's diverse ecosystems*

For Agricultural Uses:

- *preserve remaining farms/orchards and diversified agri-entertainment businesses that are compatible with surrounding uses and maintain the essential open space character of agricultural lands*

For Water Supply:

- *ensure protection of the County's sole-source aquifer with established limitations on impacts from future development, infrastructure improvements and transportation corridors*

For Solid Waste:

- *continue reduction in county waste stream through the use of a comprehensive recycling, reuse, and reduction program*

For Gas and Electric:

- *ensure adequate supply to meet demand for service*

5. Housing and Neighborhood Preservation Objectives

For Improved Housing Resources:

- *encourage new and rehabilitated housing, including higher density and affordable housing, particularly in downtown centers*
- *provide housing resources for all segments of the County's population within an adequate regulatory environment and with respect for surrounding adjacent land uses*
- *foster a well-maintained and revitalized housing stock with housing standards and housing programs that ensure a minimum housing quality for all the County's residents*
- *link affordable and senior citizen housing to job markets, recreational areas and local shopping*

For Neighborhood Preservation:

- *ensured preservation of county historic and cultural resources*